Extraordinary Stranger

From VIRGINIA: An Account of the Life and Death of

Mr. Robert Jones,

The Interesting Narrative of His Most Unusual Adventures and

Remarkable Deliverance.

By Consent Submitted and Published by

James Lear,

In the Year of our Lord 1789.
Bacon’s Rebellion

In the early fall of 1676, armed horsemen cantered along the Middlesex road. Tumult, riot, and rebellion had come to Virginia. The troubles had begun far from the Indians and English were still in contact (as they were not in Middlesex), and the depredations of one upon the other provoked bloodshed. The residents of the inland counties and Virginia’s governor, Sir William Berkeley, disagreed as to the best way to counter Indian assaults. Even in the lower counties, those closest to the bay—there was discontent as levies to pay for what proved to be an ineffective defense rose to a point where a man relying on his own labor, possibly supporting a wife and children was obligated to pay between a quarter and a half of his crop in county, vestry, and colony taxes. Virginians along the freshes of the James River soon found a champion in Nathaniel Bacon, a man “young bold, active, of an inviting Aspect, and powerful Elocution,” who would search out and kill Indians rather than pay for forts and garrisons to guard against their raids.

Bacon’s defiance of the governor on Indian matters spiraled into mutiny during the summer of 1676, and then into rebellion. Titling himself “Gen’l By the Consent of the People,” Bacon labeled Berkeley “as one, who hath Traiterously attempted, violated and Injured his Majesty’s Interest,” demanding in the name of the “Commons of Virginia” that Sir William surrender himself and mandating confiscation of the estates of all who supported him. At the same time, he distributed an oath to be sworn to by the inhabitants. They were to acknowledge the legality of all his doings and the illegality of Berkeley’s, oblige themselves “to oppose what forces shall be sent out of England by his Majesty against mee….Divulge what you shall heare at any time spoken against me….and keepe my secrets, and not discover them to any person.” (Nathaniel Bacon)

Active warfare broke out when Berkeley, having abandoned the mainland counties for the Eastern Shore, recrossed the Chesapeake to seize Jamestown, whereupon Bacon gave up Indian chasing, besieged the town, and ultimately forced Berkeley to retire once again across the Bay. Burning Jamestown on the night of September 19th, Bacon crossed the York River into Gloucester, both to impose his oath upon the inhabitants and to counter a force of the governor’s supporters moving down from the Potomac counties under Giles Brent. No battle was fought, however. Brent’s men abandoned him when they heard the fate of Jamestown. The rebellion—led by Joseph Ingram after Bacon succumbed to disease in October—became a matter of isolated skirmishes as the rebels fortified houses here and there along the York and James Rivers and the governor conducted a river-line campaign against them, sending flying companies to drive the rebels from their strong points or to force their surrender. By mid-January it was all over, with Ingram surrendering on January 2nd and his remaining captains following his example within the next two weeks or fleeing the colony.

It is impossible to say exactly how much of this turbulence spilled over into Middlesex County. Certainly the affair disrupted the county. No courts met between May 1676 and March 1677. At some point, the early records of the vestry were defaced and pages ripped out. Certainly, too Bacon’s oath was administered in Middlesex. In the
aftermath of the rebellion, William Dudley’s widow petitioned for the restitution of tobacco seized from her husband as penalty for administering the oath, claiming that Dudley had been forced to the act and even then had done so “with a salvo to his allegiance to his Majesties.”

Certainly, too, armed men had been abroad in the county. In all likelihood, Brent’s “army of the north” forded the Rappahannock upriver and moved down the county’s main road, crossing to Gloucester and the battle that never fought via the Dragon Bridge. And in October or November, according to one account, there was a vague ‘rising” of Middlesex men against the rebels, implying that for a time the Baconians were in control. But the loyalists ” were no sooner got upon their feet” than the rebels “reslaves” to bring them on their knees” again, Ingram sending his second in command “with a party of Horses, to do the work.”

As we scan the list of Middlesex Baconians, twenty-four in all, they were not idle wandering men. They ranged in age from twenty to forty, averaging around thirty years of age. Two were native born sons of Middlesex families, eleven others had arrived in the county in the 1660’s or earlier, and another four were identifiable as residents as early as 1671. Only three cannot be placed in the county before the rebellion. Of the twenty-four, nine were married, and six of these had children. All were enmeshed in what we have called the early Chesapeake system. Aggregated, they appear as a cross section, a slice of the population encompassing men at all points of the process, from newly freed servants working as tenant farmers and croppers, through the newly landed and the successful, on to native sons. Eight of the twenty-four can be identified as ex-servants, but it is difficult to identify servitude from the records, hence there were probably more than eight ex-servants in the group. Fifteen of the Bacon followers were tenant or sharecropper farmers. Seven of these would go on after the rebellion to obtain land on their own. Six men after the rebellion acquired land by purchase and one by marriage to the heiress of three hundred acres. The Bacon followers were known to one another prior to their participation in the rebellion. Some had purchased land from one another and some knew each other through marriage. One was a prior servant to another and one was an overseer to another’s property. Riots and rebellions are concocted from men who know each other face to face and speak regularly. John Richens was banished from the colony as ordered from the Governor and the others were either pardoned or ignored. Two Baconians, Matthew Bentley and Robert Boodle, married wealthy widows and were not given the social position in the county as the prior husbands maintained. Riding with Nathaniel Bacon could be a substitute position they never held. The two native Middlesex sons had been cut from their family inheritances by circumstances out of their control.

The Rebellion ended in Middlesex as Captain Beverley led the Governor’s troopers into the county. The Baconians clattered homeward and quietly took up their lives, repairing ignored fences and preparing their seedbeds for another year’s tobacco crop. They were neither hanged nor hounded for their actions. On the contrary, the remarkable thing is their immediate reacceptance into society of the county. Captain Bentley was briefly jailed but released by Beverley. Both Boodle and Bentley were required by the county court to find securities-in effect bail money- for their abearing themselves “peacefully and quietly towards the King’s Majestie and all his Leige People.” Only John Richens would be banished for “uttering publiquely very scandalous, and adverse words to the court.”
Bacon’s Epitaph

Death why so crevish: what no other way
To manifest thy spleene, but thus to slay
Our hopes of safety, liberty, our all
Which through thy tyranny, with him must fall
To its late caess! Had thy rigid force
Binded by retale, and not thus in gross
Griefe had bin silent: Now wee must complaine
Since those in him, hast more then thousand slain
Whose lives and safetys did so much depend
On him there set, with them there lives must end.

Is’t be a sin to thinke, Death bea’d can be
Griefe must be guilty; say twas bribery
Guided the fatall shaft, verging as foes
To whom for secret Crimes, just Vengeance owes
Disjaured plagues, dying there, just disart
Corrupted Death by Paragellian art
Him to destroy, who a well tried courage such.
There heartless haunts, no arms, nor strength could our
Tho who now must those wounds, or stop that blood
The Heathen made, and drew in to a flood...
Bacon's Epitaph, made by his Man.

Death why so crevill: what no other way
To manifest thy spleene, but thus to slay...
Our hopes of safety, liberty, our all
Which, through thy tyrany, with him must fall
To its late caes. Had thy riged force
Bindell by retale, and not thus in gros.
Griese had bin silent: Now wee must complaine
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Whose lives and safeties did so much depend
On him there lie, with him there lives must e.
Is't be a sin to thinke Death bribe can be
Tree must be guilty; saw was bribery
Guided the fatal shaft. Verginias foes
To whom for secrit crimes, just: Vengance onces
Disarved plagyes, dreading there just diart
Corrupted Death by Parascellian art
Him to destroy, whose well triade courage such.
There heartless hafts, nor arms, nor strength could tore
Who now must these wounds, or stop that blood
The Heathen made, and drew into a flood.
Perhaps one reason the revolt in Massachusetts succeeded was because there was a great deal of unity among its inhabitants; indeed, there was some sort of majority rule (or at least majority dissent). That had not been the case over a decade earlier in Virginia when the colonists there split between those who supported Governor William Berkeley's Indian policies and defended his administration, and those who favored Nathaniel Bacon's ideas. Bacon's Rebellion (1676), which was ultimately a battle over who was to rule at home, showed that aggressive Indians were not just an external threat to colonial life, but that their actions could create reactions from the colonists that consequently produced violent schisms within settler communities. Bacon was a recent immigrant to Virginia and a young man still in his twenties when he challenged Governor William Berkeley's authority. Representing the small farmers of the frontier who had been battling the natives, he called for the extermination of the Indians so as to secure the territory. When Berkeley appeared to be more interested in subduing the frontiersmen than the Indians, Bacon and his adherents marched against the government in Jamestown to force the issue. Having been declared a rebel, pardoned, and then condemned again, Bacon rebutted the charges against him and other rebels in a public declaration that outlined their motivation and purpose.

. . . [I]f there bee as sure there is, a just God to appeal too, if Religion and Justice be a sanctuary here, If to plead the cause of the oppressed, If sincerely to aime at his Majesties Honour and the Publick good without any reservation or by Interest, If to stand in the Gap after soe much blood of our dear Brethren bought and sold, If after the losse of a great part of his Majesties Colony deserted and dispeopled, freely with our lives and estates to indeavor to save the remaynders bee Treason God Almighty Judge and lett guilty dye, But since wee cannot in our hearts find one single spott of Rebellion or Treason or that wee have in any manner aimed at subverting the setled Government or attempting of the Person of any either magistrate or private man not with standing the severall Reproaches and Threats of some who for sinister ends were disaffected to us and censured our ino[cent] and honest designes, and since all people in all places where wee have yet bin can attest our civill quiet peaseable behaviour farre different from that of Rebellion and tumultuous persons let Trueth be bold and all the world know the real Foundations of pretended giult, Wee appeale to the Country itselве what and of what nature their Oppressions have bin or by what Caball and mistery the designes of many of those whom wee call great men have bin transacted and caryed on, but let us trace these men in Authority and Favour to whose hands the dispensation of the Countries wealth has been commited; let us observe the sudden Rise of their Estates composed with the Quality in which they first entered this Country Or the Reputation they have held here amongst wise and discerning men, And lett us see wither their extractions and Education have not bin vile, And by what pretence of learning and vertue they could soo soon into Implemements of so great Trust and consequence, let us consider their sudden advancement and let us also consider wither any Publick work for our safety and defence or for the Advancement and propogation of Trade, liberall Arts or sciences is here Extant in any [way] adaquate to our vast chardg, now let us compare these things toget[her] and see what spounges have suckt up the Publique Treasure and wither it hath not bin
privately contrived away by unworthy Favourites and juggling Parasites whose tottering Fortunes have been repaired and supported at the Public charge, now if it be so Judge what greater guilt can be then to offer to pry into these and to unravel the mysterious wiles of a powerful Cabal let all people Judge what can be of more dangerous Import then to suspect the so long Safe proceedings of Some of our Grandees and wither People may with safety open their Eyes in so close a Concern.

Another main article of our Guilt is our open and manifest aversion of all, not onely the Foreign but the protected and Darling Indians, this we are informed is Rebellion of a deep dye For that both the Governour and Councell are by Colonell Coales Assertion bound to defend the Queen and Appamatococks with their blood Now whereas we do declare and can prove that they have bin for these Many years enemies to the King and Country, Robbers and Theeves and Invaders of his Majestys' Right and our Interest and Estates, but yet have by persons in Authority bin defended and protected even against His Majesties loyall Subjects and that in so high a nature that even the Complaints and oaths of his Majesties Most loyall Subjects in a lawfull Manner proffered by them against those barborous Outlawes have bin by the right honourable Governour rejected and the Delinquents from his presence dismissed not only with pardon and indemnity but with all encouragement and favour, . . .

Another main article of our Guilt is our Design not only to ruine and extirpate all Indians in generall but all Manner of Trade and Commerce with them, Judge who can be innocent that strike at this tender Eye of Interest; Since the Right honourable the Governour hath bin pleased by his Commission to warrant this trade who dare oppose it, or opposing it can be innocent, Although Plantations be deserted, the blood of our dear Brethren Split, . . .

Another Article of our Guilt is To Assert all those neighbour Indians as well as others to be outlawed, wholly unqualifieyd for the benefit and Protection of the law, For that the law does reciprocally protect and punish, and that all people offending must either in person or Estate make equivalent satisfaction or Restitution according to the manner and merit of the Offences Debts or Trespasses; Now since the Indians cannot according to the tenure and forme of any law to us known be prosecuted, Seised or Complained against, Their Persons being difficulty distinguished or known, Their many nations languages, and their subterfuges such as makes them incapable to make us Restitution or satisfaction would it not be very guiltly to say They have bin unjustly defended and protected these many years.

If it should be said that the very foundation of all these disasters the Grant of the Beaver trade to the Right Honourable Governour was illegall and not granteable by any power here present as being a monopoly, were not this to deserve the name of Rebell and Traytor.

Judge therefore all wise and unprejudiced men who may or can faithfully or truely with an honest heart attempt the country's good, their vindication and libertie without the asperation of Traitor and Rebell, since as soe doing they must of necessity gall such tender and dear concerns, But to manifest Sincerity and loyalty to the World, and how much wee abhorre those bitter names, may all the world know that we doe unanimously desire to represent our sad and heavy grievances to his most sacred Majesty as our Refuge and Sanctuary, where wee doe well know that all our Causes will be impartially heard and
Equall Justice administrd to all men.

1. Further editorial insertions that appear in square brackets are from Billings' edition.

Bacon’s Rebellion of 1676

in Robert Beverley, *The History and Present State of Virginia*, 1705

Bacon’s Rebellion appears at first sight to be a simple uprising of backwoods farmers against the ruling class of rich planters in Virginia, and indeed, the author of this account labels it a “civil war,” but it was more layered than that. The leaders of the rebellion, primarily Nathaniel Bacon, were well-to-do men themselves who were excluded from the powered elite led by Governor William Berkeley (among them Robert Beverley, the father of the author of this account). In addition, they were excluded from the lucrative Indian trade monopolized by Berkeley’s friends. Using the very real grievances of the common farmers — falling tobacco profits, rising taxes, reduced opportunities to buy their own farms, harsh shipping regulations imposed by England, and finally, the outbreak of war between the backwoods farmers and the Susquehannock Indians (with whom Berkeley wanted to maintain trade) — Bacon led the farmers in armed rebellion. Jamestown was occupied and burned; tidewater plantations were attacked and plundered. When Bacon died suddenly of dysentery, the rebellion ended. Governor Berkeley hanged twenty-three of the rebellion’s leaders.

Berkeley himself had foreseen the vulnerability of the disenfranchised farmers to a call for rebellion. “A large part of the people are so desperately poor,” he wrote in 1673, “that they may reasonably be expected upon any small advantage of the enemy [the Dutch of New Netherland, who had attacked Virginia in 1667 and 1673] to revolt to them in hopes of bettering their condition by sharing the plunder of the colony with them.”

The Occasion of this Rebellion is not easy to be discovered: But ’tis certain here were many Things that concur’d towards it. For it cannot be imagined, that upon the Instigation of two or three Traders only, who aim’d at a Monopoly of the Indian Trade, as some pretend to say, the whole Country would have fallen into so much Distraction; in which People did not only hazard their Necks by Rebellion, but endeavour’d to ruin a Governor, whom they all entirely loved, and had unanimously chosen, a Gentleman who had devoted his whole Life and Estate to the Service of the Country and against whom in Thirty Five Years Experience there had never been one single Complaint. Neither can it be supposed that upon so slight Grounds they would make Choice of a Leader they hardly knew, to oppose a Gentleman that had been so long and so deservedly the Darling of the People. So that in all Probability there was something else in the Wind, without which the Body of the Country [would have] never been engaged in that Insurrection.

Four Things may be reckon’d to have been the main Ingredients towards this intestine [internal] Commotion, viz.

**First,** The extreme low Price of Tobacco, and the ill Usage of the Planters in the Exchange of Goods for it, which the Country, with all their earnest Endeavors, could not remedy.

**Secondly,** The splitting the Colony into Proprieties, contrary to the original Charters; and the extravagant Taxes they were forced to undergo to relieve themselves from those Grants.

**Thirdly,** The heavy Restraints and Burdens laid upon their Trade by Act of Parliament in England.

**Fourthly,** The Disturbance given by the Indians.

Of all which I beg leave to speak in their Order.

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First, Of the low Price of Tobacco, and the Disappointment of all Sort of Remedy, I have spoken sufficiently before.  

Secondly, Of splitting the Country into Proprieties. King Charles the Second, to gratify some Nobles about him, made two great Grants out of that Country [Carolina]. These Grants were not of the uncultivated Wood-Land only, but also of Plantations, which for many Years had been seated and improv’d, under the Encouragement of several Charters granted by his Royal Ancestors to that Colony. Those Grants were distinguished by the Names of the Northern and Southern Grants of Virginia, and the same Men were concern’d in both. They were kept dormant some Years after they were made, and in the Year 1674 begun to be put in Execution. As soon as ever the Country came to know this, they remonstrated against them; and the Assembly drew up an humble Address to his Majesty, complaining of the said Grants, as derogatory to the previous Charters and Privileges granted to that Colony, by his Majesty and his Royal Progenitors. . . .

Thirdly, Upon the Back of all these Misfortunes came out the Act of 25 Car. II. for better securing the Plantation Trade. By this Act several Duties were laid on the Trade from one Plantation to another. This was a new Hardship, and the rather, because the Revenue arising by this Act was not applied to the Use of the Plantation wherein it was raised: But given clear away; nay, in that Country it seem’d to be of no other Use but to burden the Trade or create a good Income to the Officers; for the Collector had Half, the Comptroller a Quarter, and the remaining Quarter was subdivided into Salaries, till it was lost. . . .

Fourthly, These were the Afflictions that Country labor’d under when the fourth Accident happen’d, viz. The Disturbance offer’d by the Indians to the Frontiers.

This was occasion’d [caused], First, By the Indians on the Head of the [Chesapeake] Bay. Secondly, By the Indians on their own Frontiers.

First, The Indians at the Head of the Bay drove a constant Trade with the Dutch in Monadas, now call’d New-York; and to carry on this, they used to come every Year by the Frontiers of Virginia, to hunt and purchase Skins and Furs of the Indians to the Southward. This Trade was carried on peaceably while the Dutch held Monadas; and the Indians used to call on the English in Virginia on their Return, to whom they would sell Part of their Furs, and with the rest go on to Monadas. But after the English came to possess that Place [in 1664] and understood the Advantages the Virginians made by the Trade of their Indians, they inspired them with such a Hatred to the Inhabitants of Virginia that, instead of coming

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2 On Jamestown in 1621: "The people began to grow numerous, Thirteen Hundred settling there that Year; which was the Occasion of making so much Tobacco, as to overstock the Market. Wherefore his Majesty, out of Pity to the Country, sent his Commands, That they should not suffer [allow] their Planters to make above One Hundred Pounds of Tobacco per Man; for the Market was so low, that he cou’d not afford to give ‘em above Three Shillings the Pound for it. He advised them to turn their spare Time towards providing Corn and Stock, and towards the Making of Potash, or other Manufactures." [Beverley, The History and Present State of Virginia, 1705, ed. Louis B. Wright, pp. 49-50]
peaceably to trade with them, as they had done for several Years before, they afterwards never came but only to commit Robberies and Murders upon the People.

Secondly, The Indians upon their own Frontiers were likewise inspir'd with ill Thoughts of 'em. For their Indian Merchants had lost a considerable Branch of their Trade they knew not how; and apprehended the Consequences of [Governor] Sir William Berkeley’s intended Discoveries, which were espoused by the Assembly, might take away the remaining Part of their Profit. This made them very troublesome to the Neighbor Indians; who on their Part, observing an unusual Uneasiness in the English, and being terrified by their rough Usage, immediately suspected some wicked Design against their Lives and so fled to their remoter Habitations. This confirm’d the English in the Belief that they had been the Murderers, till at last they provoked them to be so in earnest.

This Addition of Mischief to Minds already full of Discontent made People ready to vent all their Resentment against the poor Indians. There was nothing to be got by Tobacco; neither could they turn any other Manufacture to Advantage; so that most of the poorer Sort were willing to quit their unprofitable Employments, and go Volunteers against the Indians.

At first they flock'd together tumultuously, running in Troops from one Plantation to another without a Head; till at last the seditious Humor [temperament] of Colonel Nath. Bacon led him to be of the Party. This Gentleman had been brought up at one of the Inns of Court in England and had a moderate Fortune. He was young, bold, active, of an inviting Aspect, and powerful Elocution. In a Word, he was every way qualified to head a giddy and unthinking Multitude. Before he had been three Years in the Country, he was, for his extraordinary Qualifications, made one of the Council, and in great Honor and Esteem among the People. For this reason he no sooner gave Countenance to this riotous Mob, but they all presently fixed their Eyes upon him for their General, and accordingly made their Addresses to him. As soon as he found this, he harangued them publicly. He aggravated the Indian Mischiefs, complaining that they were occasion'd for Want of a due Regulation of their Trade. He recounted particularly the other Grievances and Pressures they lay under; and pretended that he accepted of their Command with no other Intention but to do them and the Country Service, in which he was willing to encounter the greatest Difficulties and Dangers. He farther assured them he would never lay down his Arms till he had revenged their Sufferings upon the Indians and redressed all their other Grievances.

By these Insinuations he wrought his Men into so perfect an Unanimity that they were one and all at his Devotion. He took care to exasperate them to the utmost by representing all their Misfortunes. After he had begun to muster them, he dispatch'd a Messenger to the Governor, by whom he aggravated the Mischiefs done by the Indians, and desired a Commission of General to go out against them. This Gentleman was in so great Esteem at that time with the Council that the Governor did not think fit to give him a flat Refusal: But sent him Word he would consult the Council and return him a farther Answer.

In the meantime, Bacon was expeditious in his Preparations, and having all things in Readiness, began his March depending on the Authority the People had given him. He would not lose so much Time as to stay...
for his Commission; but dispatched several Messengers to the Governor to hasten it. On the other hand, the Governor, instead of a Commission, sent positive Orders to him to disperse his Men and come down in Person to him, upon Pain of being declared a Rebel.

This unexpected Order was a great Surprise to Bacon and not a little Trouble to his Men. However, he was resolved to prosecute his first Intentions, depending upon his Strength and Interest with the People. Nevertheless, he intended to wait upon the Governor, but not altogether defenseless. Pursuant to this Resolution, he took about Forty of his Men down with him in a Sloop to James-Town, where the Governor was with his Council.

Matters did not succeed there to Mr. Bacon’s Satisfaction; wherefore he express’d himself a little too freely. For which being suspended from the Council, he went away again in a Huff with his Sloop and Followers. The Governor fill’d a Long-Boat with Men and pursued the Sloop so close that Colonel Bacon removed into his Boat to make more Haste. But the Governor had sent up by Land to the Ships at Sandy-Point, where he was stopp’d and sent down again. Upon his Return he was kindly received by the Governor who, knowing he had gone a Step beyond his Instructions in having suspended him, was glad to admit him again of the Council; after which he hoped all things might be pacified.

Notwithstanding this, Col. Bacon still insisted upon a Commission to be General of the Volunteers and to go out against the Indians; from which the Governor endeavor’d to dissuade him, but to no Purpose, because he had some secret Project in View. He had the Luck to be countenanced in his Importunities by the News of fresh Murder and Robberies committed by the Indians. However, not being able to accomplish his Ends by fair Means, he stole privately out of Town; and having put himself at the Head of six hundred Volunteers, marched directly to James-Town, where the Assembly was then sitting. He presented himself before the Assembly and drew up his Men in Battalia before the House wherein they sat. He urged to them his Preparations and alleged that, if the Commission had not been delayed so long, the War against the Indians might have been finish’d.

The Governor resented this insolent Usage worst of all, and now obstinately refused to grant him any thing, offering his naked Breast against the presented Arms of his Followers. But the Assembly, fearing the fatal Consequence of provoking a discontented Multitude ready arm’d, who had the Governor, Council, and Assembly entirely in their Power, address’d the Governor to grant Bacon his Request. They prepar’d themselves the Commission, constituting him General of the Forces of Virginia, and brought it to the Governor to be sign’d.

With much Reluctancy his Excellency sign’d it and thereby put the Power of War and Peace into Bacon’s Hands. Upon this he march’d away immediately, having gained his End, which was in effect a Power to secure a Monopoly of the Indian Trade to himself and his Friends.

As soon as General Bacon had march’d to such a convenient Distance from James-Town, that the Assembly thought they might deliberate with Safety, the Governor, by their Advice, issued a Proclamation of Rebellion against him, commanding his Followers to surrender him and forthwith disperse themselves. Not contented with this, he likewise gave Orders at the same time for raising the Militia of the Country against him.
The People being much exasperated, and General *Bacon* by his Address and Eloquence having gain'd an absolute Dominion over their Hearts, they unanimously resolved that not a Hair of his Head shou'd fall to the Ground, much less that they shou'd surrender him as a Rebel. Therefore they kept to their Arms, and instead of proceeding against the *Indians*, they march'd back to *James-Town*; directing their Fury against such of their Friends and Countrymen as should dare to oppose them.

The Governor, seeing this, fled over the Bay to *Accomack*, whither he hoped the Infection of *Bacon*’s Conspiracy had not reach'd. But there, instead of People’s receiving him with open Arms, in Remembrance of the former Services he had done them; they began to make Terms with him for Redress of their Grievances, and for the Ease and Liberty of Trade. Thus Sir *William*, who had been almost the Idol of the People, was, by reason of the loyal Part he acted, abandon’d by all, except some few who went over to him from the Western Shore in Sloops and Boats.³ So that it was some time before he could make head against *Bacon*: But he left him to range through the country at Discretion.

General *Bacon* at first held a Convention of such of the chief Gentlemen of the Country as would come to him, especially of those about *Middle-Plantations*,⁴ who were near at Hand. At this Convention they made a Declaration to justify his unlawful Proceedings and obliged People to take an Oath of Obedience to him as their General. Then, by their Advice, on Pretense of the Governor’s Abdication, he call’d an Assembly, by Writs signed by himself, and four others of the Council.

The Oath was Word-for-Word as follows.

> Whereas the Country hath raised an Army against our common Enemy the *Indians*, and the same under the Command of General *Bacon*, being upon the Point to march forth against the said common Enemy, hath been diverted, and necessitated to move to the suppressing of Forces, by evil disposed Persons raised against the said General *Bacon*, purposely to foment and stir up Civil War among us, to the Ruin of this his Majesty’s Country.

> And, Whereas it is notoriously manifest, that Sir *William Berkeley*, Knight, Governor of the Country, assisted, counselled and abetted by those evil disposed Persons aforesaid, hath not only commanded, fomented and stirr’d up the People to the said Civil War; but failing therein, hath withdrawn himself, to the great Astonishment of the People, and the Unsettlement of the Country.

> And, Whereas the said Army, raised by the Country for the Causes aforesaid, remain full of Dissatisfaction in the Middle of the Country, expecting Attempts from the said Governor and the evil Councilors aforesaid. And since no proper Means have been found out for the Settlement of the Distractions, and preventing the horrid Outrages and Murders daily committed in many Places of the Country by the barbarous Enemy; It hath been thought fit by the said General, to call unto him all such sober and discreet Gentlemen, as the present Circumstances of the Country will admit, to the *Middle-Plantation*, to consult and advise of re-establishing the Peace of the Country. So we the said Gentlemen, being this 3d of *August*, 1676,

³ *among which one Major Robert Beverley was the most active and successful Commander.* [completion of sentence in 2d. ed., 1722]

⁴ *Middle-Plantations: early name for the site chosen for the town of Williamsburg.* [Beverley, 1705; ed., Louis B. Wright, note, p. 352]
accordingly met, do advise, resolve, declare and conclude, and for our selves do swear in manner following.

First. That we will at all Times join with the said General Bacon and his Army, against the common Enemy in all Points whatsoever.

Secondly, That whereas certain Persons have lately contrived and design'd the raising Forces against the said General, and the Army under his Command, thereby to beget a Civil War; We will endeavor the Discovery and Apprehending of all and every of those evil disposed Persons, and them secure, until farther Order from the General.

Thirdly, And whereas it is credibly reported, that the Governor hath inform'd the King’s Majesty, that the said General, and the People of the Country in Arms under his Command, their Aiders and Abettors, are rebellious, and removed from their Allegiance; and that upon such like Information, he the said Governor hath advised and petition'd the King to send Forces to reduce them; We do farther declare and believe in our Consciences. That it consists with the Welfare of this Country, and with our Allegiance to his most Sacred Majesty, that we the Inhabitants of Virginia, to the utmost of our Power, do oppose and suppress all Forces whatsoever of that Nature, until such time as the King be fully inform'd of the State of the Case, by such Person or Persons, as shall be sent from the said Nathaniel Bacon, in the Behalf of the People; and the Determination thereof be remitted hither. And we do swear, That we will him the said General, and the Army under his Command, aid and assist accordingly.

By this Time the Governor had got together a small Party to side with him. These he furnished with Sloops, Arms, and Ammunition, in order to cross the Bay and oppose the Malcontents. By this means there happen'd some Skirmishes, in which several were kill'd, and others taken Prisoners. Thus they were going on by a Civil War to destroy one another and lay waste their Infant Country; when it pleased God, after some Months Confusion, to put an End to their Misfortunes, as well as to Bacon’s Designs, by his natural Death.

He died at Dr. Green’s in Gloucester County: But where he was bury’d was never yet discover’d; tho’ afterward there was great Enquiry made, with Design to expose his Bones to public Infamy.

In the meanwhile, those Disorders occasioned a general Neglect of Husbandry [farming], and a great Destruction of the Stocks [of Cattle]; so that People had a dreadful Prospect of Want and Famine. But the Malcontents being thus disunited by the Loss of their General, in whom they all confided; they began to squabble among themselves; and every Man’s Business was how to make the best Terms he could for himself.

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5 “under Command of Major Robert Beverley” [phrase added in 2d. ed., 1722]
Lieutenant-General Ingram (whose true Name was Johnson) and Major-General Walklate surrender'd on Condition of Pardon for themselves and their Followers; tho' they were both forced to submit to an Incapacity of bearing Office in that Country for the future.

Peace being thus restored, Sir William Berkeley returned to his former Seat of Government, and every Man to his several Habitation. . . .

When this Storm, occasion'd by Bacon, was blown over, and all things quiet again, Sir William Berkeley called an Assembly for settling the Affairs of the Country and for making Reparation to such as had been oppressed. After which a Regiment of Soldiers arrived from England, which were sent to suppress the Insurrection: But they coming after the Business was over, had no Occasion to exercise their Courage. However, they were kept on Foot there about three Years after, and in the Lord Cole-pepper's Time paid off, and disbanded. . . .

The Confusion occasion'd by the Civil War, and the Advantage the Indians made of it in butchering the English upon all their Frontiers, caused such a Desolation and put the Country so far back, that to this Day [1704], they had seated [settled] very little beyond the Boundaries that were then inhabited. At that Time James-Town was again burnt down to the Ground by Richard Lawrence, one of Bacon's Captains, who, when his own Men that abhor'd such Barbarity refused to obey his Command, he himself became the Executioner and fired the Houses with his own Hands.

This unhappy Town did never after arrive at the Perfection it then had: And now it is almost deserted by the wild Project of Governor Nicholson, who procured that the Assembly and General Court should be removed from thence to Williamsburgh, an inland Place about seven Miles from it.

5 "his man": referring to the man who tended his body.
Bacon’s Rebellion of 1676
in Robert Beverley, The History and Present State of Virginia, 1705

Bacon’s Rebellion appears at first sight to be a simple uprising of backwoods farmers against the ruling class of rich planters in Virginia, and indeed, the author of this account labels it a “civil war,” but it was more layered than that. The leaders of the rebellion, primarily Nathaniel Bacon, were well-to-do men themselves who were excluded from the powered elite led by Governor William Berkeley (among them Robert Beverley, the father of the author of this account). In addition, they were excluded from the lucrative Indian trade monopolized by Berkeley’s friends. Using the very real grievances of the common farmers—falling tobacco profits, rising taxes, reduced opportunities to buy their own farms, harsh shipping regulations imposed by England, and finally, the outbreak of war between the backwoods farmers and the Susquehannock Indians (with whom Berkeley wanted to maintain trade)—Bacon led the farmers in armed rebellion. Jamestown was occupied and burned; tidewater plantations were attacked and plundered. When Bacon died suddenly of dysentery, the rebellion ended. Governor Berkeley hanged twenty-three of the rebellion’s leaders.

Berkeley himself had foreseen the vulnerability of the disenfranchised farmers to a call for rebellion. “A large part of the people are so desperately poor,” he wrote in 1673, “that they may reasonably be expected upon any slight advantage of the enemy [the Dutch of New Netherland, who had attacked Virginia in 1667 and 1673] to revolt to them in hopes of bettering their condition by sharing the plunder of the colony with them.”

The Occasion of this Rebellion is not easy to be discovered: But ’tis certain here were many Things that concur’d towards it. For it cannot be imagined, that upon the Instigation of two or three Traders only, who aim’d at a Monopoly of the Indian Trade, as some pretend to say, the whole Country would have fallen into so much Distraction; in which People did not only hazard their Necks by Rebellion, but endeavor’d to ruin a Governor, whom they all entirely loved, and had unanimously chosen, a Gentleman who had devoted his whole Life and Estate to the Service of the Country and against whom in Thirty Five Years Experience there had never been one single Complaint. Neither can it be supposed that upon so slight Grounds they would make Choice of a Leader they hardly knew, to oppose a Gentleman that had been so long and so deservedly the Darling of the People. So that in all Probability there was something else in the Wind, without which the Body of the Country [would have] never been engaged in that Insurrection.

Four Things may be reckon’d to have been the main Ingredients towards this intestine [internal] Commotion, viz.

First, The extreme low Price of Tobacco, and the ill Usage of the Planters in the Exchange of Goods for it, which the Country, with all their earnest Endeavors, could not remedy.

Secondly, The splitting the Colony into Proprieties, contrary to the original Charters; and the extravagant Taxes they were forced to undergo to relieve themselves from those Grants.

Thirdly, The heavy Restraints and Burdens laid upon their Trade by Act of Parliament in England.

Fourthly, The Disturbance given by the Indians.

Of all which I beg leave to speak in their Order.
First, Of the low Price of Tobacco, and the Disappointment of all Sort of Remedy, I have spoken sufficiently before. 2

Secondly, Of splitting the Country into Proprieties. King Charles the Second, to gratify some Nobles about him, made two great Grants out of that Country [Carolina]. These Grants were not of the uncultivated Wood-Land only, but also of Plantations, which for many Years had been seated and improv’d, under the Encouragement of several Charters granted by his Royal Ancestors to that Colony. Those Grants were distinguished by the Names of the Northern and Southern Grants of Virginia, and the same Men were concern’d in both. They were kept dormant some Years after they were made, and in the Year 1674 begun to be put in Execution. As soon as ever the Country came to know this, they remonstrated against them; and the Assembly drew up an humble Address to his Majesty, complaining of the said Grants, as derogatory to the previous Charters and Privileges granted to that Colony, by his Majesty and his Royal Progenitors. . . .

Thirdly, Upon the Back of all these Misfortunes came out the Act of 25 Car. II. for better securing the Plantation Trade. By this Act several Duties were laid on the Trade from one Plantation to another. This was a new Hardship, and the rather, because the Revenue arising by this Act was not applied to the Use of the Plantation wherein it was raised: But given clear away; nay, in that Country it seem’d to be of no other Use but to burden the Trade or create a good Income to the Officers; for the Collector had Half, the Comptroller a Quarter, and the remaining Quarter was subdivided into Salaries, till it was lost. . . .

[Fourthly,] These were the Afflictions that Country labor’d under when the fourth Accident happen’d, viz. The Disturbance offer’d by the Indians to the Frontiers.

This was occasion’d [caused], First, By the Indians on the Head of the [Chesapeake] Bay. Secondly, By the Indians on their own Frontiers.

First, The Indians at the Head of the Bay drove a constant Trade with the Dutch in Monadas, now call’d New-York; and to carry on this, they used to come every Year by the Frontiers of Virginia, to hunt and purchase Skins and Furs of the Indians to the Southward. This Trade was carried on peaceably while the Dutch held Monadas; and the Indians used to call on the English in Virginia on their Return, to whom they would sell Part of their Furs, and with the rest go on to Monadas. But after the English came to possess that Place [in 1664] and understood the Advantages the Virginians made by the Trade of their Indians, they inspired them with such a Hatred to the Inhabitants of Virginia that, instead of coming

2 On Jamestown in 1621: “The people began to grow numerous, Thirteen Hundred settling there that Year; which was the Occasion of making so much Tobacco, as to overstock the Market. Wherefore his Majesty, out of Pity to the Country, sent his Commands, That they should not suffer [allow] their Planters to make above One Hundred Pounds of Tobacco per Man; for the Market was so low, that he could not afford to give 'em above Three Shillings the Pound for it. He advised them to turn their spare Time towards providing Corn and Stock, and towards the Making of Potash, or other Manufactures.” [Beverley, The History and Present State of Virginia, 1705, ed. Louis S. Wright, pp. 49-50]
peaceably to trade with them, as they had done for several years before, they afterwards never came but only to commit Robberies and Murders upon the People.

Secondly, The Indians upon their own Frontiers were likewise inspir'd with ill Thoughts of 'em. For their Indian Merchants had lost a considerable Branch of their Trade they knew not how; and apprehended the Consequences of [Governor] Sir William Berkeley’s intended Discoveries, which were espoused by the Assembly, might take away the remaining Part of their Profit. This made them very troublesome to the Neighbor Indians; who on their Part, observing an unusual Uneasiness in the English, and being terrified by their rough Usage, immediately suspected some wicked Design against their Lives and so fled to their remoter Habitations. This confirm'd the English in the Belief that they had been the Murderers, till at last they provoked them to be so in earnest.

This Addition of Mischief to Minds already full of Discontent made People ready to vent all their Resentment against the poor Indians. There was nothing to be got by Tobacco; neither could they turn any other Manufacture to Advantage; so that most of the poorer Sort were willing to quit their unprofitable Employments, and go Volunteers against the Indians.

At first they flock'd together tumultuously, running in Troops from one Plantation to another without a Head; till at last the seditious Humor [temperament] of Colonel Nath. Bacon led him to be of the Party. This Gentleman had been brought up at one of the Inns of Court in England and had a moderate Fortune. He was young, bold, active, of an inviting Aspect, and powerful Elocution. In a Word, he was every way qualified to head a giddy and unthinking Multitude. Before he had been three Years in the Country, he was, for his extraordinary Qualifications, made one of the Council, and in great Honor and Esteem among the People. For this reason he no sooner gave Countenance to this riotous Mob, but they all presently fixed their Eyes upon him for their General, and accordingly made their Addresses to him. As soon as he found this, he harangued them publicly. He aggravated the Indian Mischiefs, complaining that they were occasion'd for Want of a due Regulation of their Trade. He recounted particularly the other Grievances and Pressures they lay under; and pretended that he accepted of their Command with no other Intention but to do them and the Country Service, in which he was willing to encounter the greatest Difficulties and Dangers. He farther assured them he would never lay down his Arms till he had revenged their Sufferings upon the Indians and redressed all their other Grievances.

By these Insinuations he wrought his Men into so perfect an Unanimity that they were one and all at his Devotion. He took care to exasperate them to the utmost by representing all their Misfortunes. After he had begun to muster them, he dispatch'd a Messenger to the Governor, by whom he aggravated the Mischiefs done by the Indians, and desired a Commission of General to go out against them. This Gentleman was in so great Esteem at that time with the Council that the Governor did not think fit to give him a flat Refusal: But sent him Word he would consult the Council and return him a farther Answer.

In the meantime, Bacon was expeditious in his Preparations, and having all things in Readiness, began his March depending on the Authority the People had given him. He would not lose so much Time as to stay
for his Commission; but dispatched several Messengers to the Governor to hasten it. On the other hand, the Governor, instead of a Commission, sent positive Orders to him to disperse his Men and come down in Person to him, upon Pain of being declared a Rebel.

This unexpected Order was a great Surprise to Bacon and not a little Trouble to his Men. However, he was resolved to prosecute his first Intentions, depending upon his Strength and Interest with the People. Nevertheless, he intended to wait upon the Governor, but not altogether defenseless. Pursuant to this Resolution, he took about Forty of his Men down with him in a Sloop to James-Town, where the Governor was with his Council.

Matters did not succeed there to Mr. Bacon’s Satisfaction; wherefore he express’d himself a little too freely. For which being suspended from the Council, he went away again in a Huff with his Sloop and Followers. The Governor fill’d a Long-Boat with Men and pursued the Sloop so close that Colonel Bacon removed into his Boat to make more Haste. But the Governor had sent up by Land to the Ships at Sandy-Point, where he was stopp’d and sent down again. Upon his Return he was kindly received by the Governor who, knowing he had gone a Step beyond his Instructions in having suspended him, was glad to admit him again of the Council; after which he hoped all things might be pacified.

Notwithstanding this, Col. Bacon still insisted upon a Commission to be General of the Volunteers and to go out against the Indians; from which the Governor endeavor’d to dissuade him, but to no Purpose, because he had some secret Project in View. He had the Luck to be countenanced in his Importunities by the News of fresh Murders and Robberies committed by the Indians. However, not being able to accomplish his Ends by fair Means, he stole privately out of Town; and having put himself at the Head of six hundred Volunteers, marched directly to James-Town, where the Assembly was then fitting. He presented himself before the Assembly and drew up his Men in Battalia before the House wherein they sat. He urged to them his Preparations and alleged that, if the Commission had not been delayed so long, the War against the Indians might have been finish’d.

The Governor resented this insolent Usage worst of all, and now obstinately refused to grant him any thing, offering his naked Breast against the presented Arms of his Followers. But the Assembly, fearing the fatal Consequence of provoking a discontented Multitude ready arm’d, who had the Governor, Council, and Assembly entirely in their Power, address’d the Governor to grant Bacon his Request. They prepar’d themselves the Commission, constituting him General of the Forces of Virginia, and brought it to the Governor to be sign’d.

With much Reluctancy his Excellency sign’d it and thereby put the Power of War and Peace into Bacon’s Hands. Upon this he march’d away immediately, having gained his End, which was in effect a Power to secure a Monopoly of the Indian Trade to himself and his Friends.

As soon as General Bacon had march’d to such a convenient Distance from James-Town, that the Assembly thought they might deliberate with Safety, the Governor, by their Advice, issued a Proclamation of Rebellion against him, commanding his Followers to surrender him and forthwith disperse themselves. Not contented with this, he likewise gave Orders at the same time for raising the Militia of the Country against him.
The People being much exasperated, and General Bacon by his Address and Eloquence having gain'd an absolute Dominion over their Hearts, they unanimously resolved that not a Hair of his Head shou'd fall to the Ground, much less that they shou'd surrender him as a Rebel. Therefore they kept to their Arms, and instead of proceeding against the Indians, they march'd back to James-Town; directing their Fury against such of their Friends and Countrymen as should dare to oppose them.

The Governor, seeing this, fled over the Bay to Accomack, whither he hoped the Infection of Bacon's Conspiracy had not reach'd. But there, instead of People's receiving him with open Arms, in Remembrance of the former Services he had done them; they began to make Terms with him for Redress of their Grievances, and for the Ease and Liberty of Trade. Thus Sir William, who had been almost the Idol of the People, was, by reason of the loyal Part he acted, abandon'd by all, except some few who went over to him from the Western Shore in Sloops and Boats. So that it was some time before he could make head against Bacon: But he left him to range through the country at Discretion.

General Bacon at first held a Convention of such of the chief Gentlemen of the Country as would come to him, especially of those about Middle-Plantations, who were near at Hand. At this Convention they made a Declaration to justify his unlawful Proceedings and obliged People to take an Oath of Obedience to him as their General. Then, by their Advice, on Pretense of the Governor's Abdication, he call'd an Assembly, by Writs signed by himself, and four others of the Council.

The Oath was Word-for-Word as follows.

Whereas the Country hath rais'd an Army against our common Enemy the Indians, and the same under the Command of General Bacon, being upon the Point to march forth against the said common Enemy, hath been diverted, and necessitated to move to the suppressing of Forces, by evil disposed Persons raised against the said General Bacon, purposely to foment and stir up Civil War among us, to the Ruin of this his Majesty's Country.

And, Whereas it is notoriously manifest, that Sir William Berkeley, Knight, Governor of the Country, assisted, counselled and abetted by those evil disposed Persons aforesaid, hath not only commanded, fomented and stirr'd up the People to the said Civil War; but failing therein, hath withdraw'd himself, to the great Astonishment of the People, and the Unsettlement of the Country.

And, Whereas the said Army, rais'd by the Country for the Causes aforesaid, remain full of Dissatisfaction in the Middle of the Country, expecting Attempts from the said Governor and the evil Councilors aforesaid. And since no proper Means have been found out for the Settlement of the Distractions, and preventing the horrid Outrages and Murders daily committed in many Places of the Country by the barbarous Enemy; It hath been thought fit by the said General, to call unto him all such sober and discreet Gentlemen, as the present Circumstances of the Country will admit, to the Middle-Plantation, to consult and advise of re-establishing the Peace of the Country. So we the said Gentlemen, being this 3d of August, 1676,

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3 "among which one Major Robert Beverley was the most active and successful Commander." [completion of sentence in 2d. ed., 1722]
4 Middle-Plantations: early name for the site chosen for the town of Williamsburg. [Beverley, 1705; ed., Louis B. Wright, note, p. 352]
accordingly met, do advise, resolve, declare and conclude, and for our selves do swear in manner following.

First, That we will at all Times join with the said General Bacon and his Army, against the common Enemy in all Points whatsoever.

Secondly, That whereas certain Persons have lately contrived and design'd the raising Forces against the said General, and the Army under his Command, thereby to beget a Civil War; We will endeavor the Discovery and Apprehending of all and every of those evil disposed Persons, and them secure, until farther Order from the General.

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By this Time the Governor had got together a small Party to side with him. These he furnished with Sloops, Arms, and Ammunition,\(^5\) in order to cross the Bay and oppose the Malcontents. By this means there happen'd some Skirmishes, in which several were kill'd, and others taken Prisoners. Thus they were going on by a Civil War to destroy one another and lay waste their Infant Country; when it pleased God, after some Months Confusion, to put an End to their Misfortunes, as well as to Bacon’s Designs, by his natural Death.

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5 "his man": referring to the man who tended his body.
The declaration and Remonstrance of Sir William Berkeley
his most sacred Majesties Governor and Captain Generall
of Virginia

Sheweth That about the yeare 1660 CoII. Mathews the then Governor dyed
and then in consideration of the service I had don the Country, in defending
them from, and destroying great numbers of the Indians, without the loss of
three men, in all the time that warr lasted, and in contemplation of the equall
and uncorrupt Justice I had distributed to all men, Not onely the Assembly
but the unanimous votes of all the Country, concurred to make me Governor
in a time, when if the Rebells in England had prevailed, I had certainly dyed
for accepting itt, `twas Gentlemen an unfortunat Love, shewed to me, for to
shew myselfe gratefull for this, I was willing to accept of this Governement
againe, when by my gracious Kings favour I might have had other places
much more proffitable, and lesse toylesome then this hath beene. Since that
time that I returned into the Country, I call the great God Judge of all things
in heaven and earth to witnes, that I doe not know of any thing relateive to
this Country wherein I have acted unjustly, corruptly, or negligently in
distributing equall Justice to all men, and takeing all possible care to
preserve their proprietys, and defend the from their barbarous enimies.

But for all this, perhaps I have erred in things I know not of, if I have I am
soe conscious of humane frailty, and my owne defects, that I will not onely
acknowledge them, but repent of, and amend them, and not like the Rebell
Bacon persist in an error, onely because I have comitted itt, and tells me in
diverse of his Letters that itt is not for his honnor to confess a fault, but I am
of opinion that itt is onely for divells to be incorrigable, and men of principles
like the worst of divells, and these he hath, if truth be reported to me, of
diverse of his ex pressions of Atheisme, tending to take away all Religion and
Laws.

And now I will state the Question betwixt me as a Governor and Mr. Bacon,
and say that if any enimies should invade England, any Councellor Justice of
peace or other inferiour officer, might raise what forces they could to protect
his Majesties subjects, But I say againe, if after the Kings knowledge of this
invasion, any the greatest peere of England, should raise forces against the
kings prohibition this would be now, and ever was in all ages and Nations
accompted treason. Nay I will goe further, that though this peere was truly
zealous for the preservation of his King, and subjects, and had better and
greater abillitys then all the rest of his fellow subjects, doe his King and
Country service, yett if the King (though by false information) should suspect
the contrary, itt were treason in this Noble peere to proceed after the King's
prohibition, and for the truth of this I appeale to all the laws of England, and
the Laws and constitutions of all other Nations in the world, And yett further
itt is declared by this Parliament that the takeing up Armes for the King and
Parliament is treason, for the event shewed that what ever the pretence was
to seduce ignorant and well affected people, yett the end was ruinous both to
King and people, as this will be if not prevented, I doe therefore againe declarie that Bacon proceedeing against all Laws of all Nations modern and ancient, is Rebell to his sacred Majesty and this Country, nor will I insist upon the sweareing of men to live and dye togeather, which is treason by the very words of the Law.

Now my friends I have lived 34 yeares amongst you, as uncorrupt and dilligent as ever Governor was, Bacon is a man of two yeares amongst you, his person and qualities unknowne to most of you, and to all men else, by any vertuous action that ever I heard of, And that very action which he boasts of, was sickly and fooleishly, and as I am informed treacherously carried to the dishonner of the English Nation, yett in itt, he lost more men then I did in three yeares Warr, and by the grace of God will putt myselfe to the same daingers and troubles againe when I have brought Bacon to acknowledge the Laws are above him, and I doubt not but by God's assistance to have better success then Bacon hath had, the reason of my hopes are, that I will take Councell of wiser men then my selfe, but Mr. Bacon hath none about him, but the lowest of the people.

Yett I must further enlarge, that I cannot without your helpe, doe any thinge in this but dye in defence of my King, his laws, and subjects, which I will cheerefully doe, though alone I doe itt, and considering my poore fortunes, I can not leave my poore Wife and friends a better legacy then by dyeing for my King and you: for his sacred Majesty will easely distinguish betweene Mr. Bacons actions and myne, and Kinges have long Armes, either to reward or punish.

Now after all this, if Mr. Bacon can shew one precedens or example where such actings in any Nation what ever, was approved of, I will mediate with the King and you for a pardon, and excuce for him, but I can shew him an hundred examples where brave and great men have beene putt to death for gaineing Victorys against the Comand of their Superiors.

Lastly my most assured friends I would have preserved those Indians that I knew were howerly att our mercy, to have beeue our spies and intelligence, to finde out our bloody enimies, but as soone as I had the least intelligence that they alsoe were trecherous enimies, I gave out Commissions to distrOy them all as the Commissions themselves will speake itt.

To conclude, I have don what was possible both to friend and enimy, have granted Mr. BacOn three pardons, which he hath scornefully rejected, suppoaseing himselfe stronger to subvert then I and you to maineteyne the Laws, by which onely and Gods assisting grace and mercy, all men mwt hope for peace and safety. I will add noe more though much more is still remaineing to Justifie me and condemne Mr. Bacon, but to desier that this declaration may be read in every County Court in the Country, and that a Court be presently called to doe itt, before the Assembly meet, That your approbation or dissattisfaction of this declaration may be knowne to all the
Country, and the Kings Councell to whose most revered Judgments itt is submitted, Given the xxixth day of May, a happy day in the xxv"ith yeare of his most sacred Majesties Reigne, Charles the second, who God grant long and prosperously to Reigne, and lett all his good subjects say Amen.
The Declaration of the People Against Sir William Berkeley, 1676

First Hand Accounts of Virginia, 1575-1705
From the Virtual Jamestown Project

This document is Nathaniel Bacon's summary of the grievances of the people of Virginia against Sir William Berkeley, governor of the colony, and his advisors. The declaration includes a list of each of the grievances and of Berkeley's "wicked and Pernicious Councellours and Confederates, Aiders and Assistants against the Commonality.

The Declaration of the People, against Sir William Berkeley, and Present Governors of Virginia

For having upon specious Pretences of public Works raised unjust Taxes, upon the Commonalty, For advancing of Private favorites. And other sinister Ends, but no visible Effect, in any Measure adequate.

For not having during the Long time of his Government, In any Measure advanced, this hopeful colony, either by Fortifications, Towns, or Trade.

For having abused, and rendered contemptible, his Mates: Justice, by advancing to Places of Judicature, scandalous and ignorant favorites.

For having wronged his mates: Prorogative, and Interest, by assuming the monopoly of the beaver Trade.

For having in that unjust gain, betrayed and sold, His Mate: country, and the Liberties of his loyal Subjects to the Barbarous Heathen.

For having,Protected, favored, and emboldened the Indians against his Mates: most loyal Subjects; never Contriving, requiring, or appointing any due or proper means of Satisfaction; for their many Incursions, murders, and Robberies, Committed upon Us.

For having when the army of the English, was upon the Tract of the Indians, which now in all Places, burn spoil, and Murder, And when we might with ease, have destroyed them, who were in open hostility.

For having expressly, countermanded, and sent back, our army, by Passing his word, for the Peaceable demeanors of the said Indians, who immediately prosecuted their evil Intentions - Committing horrid Murders and Robberies, in all Places, being Protected by the said Engagement, and word passed by Him the said Sr: Wm: Berkeley having Ruined and made Desolate, a great Part of his Mates: country, having now drawn themselves into such obscure and remote places, and are by their success so emboldened, and Confirmed, and by their Confederates strengthened. That the cries of Blood, are in all Places, and the Terror, and Consternation of the People so great, That They are not only become difficult, but a very formidable enemy Who might with Ease have been destroyed.
When upon the loud outcries of Blood, the Assembly had with all Care, raised and framed an army, for the Prevention of future mischief, and safe guard of his Mates: colony.

For having only with the privacy of a few favorites, without the acquainting of the People, only by Alteration of a Figure forged a Commission, by I know not what hand, not only without, but against the Consent of the People, for the Raising and Effecting of civil war, and Destruction, which being happily and without Bloodshed prevented.

For having the second time attempted the same, thereby calling down our forces from the defense of the frontiers, and most weakened and Exposed Places, for the prevention of civil mischief, and ruin amongst our selves; while the barbarous enemy in all places did Invade Murder and spoil us, his Mates: loyal Subjects.

Of these the aforesaid Articles we accuse Sr. Wm: Berkeley as guilty of Each and every of the same. As one who hath traitorously attempted, violated and Injured his Mates: Interest here, by the loss of a great Part of his Mates: colony, and many of his faithful and loyal Subjects, by Him betrayed in a Barbarous and shameful Manner Exposed to the Incursion, and murder of the Heathen. And We further declare the Ensuing Persons in this List to have been his wicked and Pernicious counsellors and Confederates, Aiders, and Assistants against the Commonalty in these our civil Commotions.

Sr: Henrie Chichekly  Wm: Cole
Phillip Ludwell  Rich: Spencer  Jon: Cuffe:  Clerk
Robert Beverlie  Joseph Bridges  Hub: Farrill
Richard Lee  Jon. Page:  
Wm. Claybourne
Thom: Hawkins  John: West
Wm. Sherwood.  Math: Kemp  Tho: Readmuch

And we further Command that the said Sir William Berkeley with all the Persons in this List be forthwith delivered up, or Surrender Themselves, within four days after the notice hereof, or otherwise we declare as follows.

That in whatsoever place, House, or ship, any of the said Persons shall Reside, be hid, or protected, we do declare the Owners, Masters and Inhabitants of the said Parties, to be Confederates, traitors to the People and the Estates, of them; as also of all the aforesaid Persons, to be Confiscated, this we the Commons of Virginia do declare.
Desiring a firm union amongst our Selves, that we may jointly and with one accord defend our selves against the Common enemy, and let not the faults of the guilty, be the Reproach of the Innocent, or the faults and Crimes of the oppressors, divide and separate us who have suffered, by their oppressions.

These are therefore in his mates: name to command you: forthwith to seize the Persons above mentioned, as traitors to the King, and country, and Them to bring to the Middle Plantations, and there to secure them till further Order and in Case of opposition, if you: want any further Assistance, you are forthwith to demand It. In the name of the People, in all the Counties of Virginia.

Nathaniell Bacon
General, by Consent of the People.
Discussion Questions from the Video

Note: These questions appear in the DVD corresponding with each section of the video.

A New Beginning

1. Nathaniel Bacon was sent to Virginia in hopes he might improve. Do you think he can a person change? Why or why not?

2. What do you think Elizabeth Bacon means when she says young Nathaniel Bacon thought he was above the company he found in the colony?

3. If you were one of the large planters in Virginia and not a member of the Council, how would you feel about Nathaniel Bacon’s appointment to the Council?

4. Do you think that the fact that Nathaniel Bacon was related to Berkeley’s wife had anything to do with his appointment?

5. Can you think of any circumstances that would allow for the requirements for a position to be changed by the Governor? What would be acceptable in your opinion? What would be considered unacceptable?
Discussion Questions from the Video Section 2

1646 Treaty with the Powhatans

1. The Powhatans live in isolated areas segregated from the English. Should they be paying tribute to the Governor for protection?

2. Should the Susquenahannock chiefs have been allowed to leave the meeting alive?

Indian Troubles Increase

1. Should the Governor have allowed Chicheley to pursue the Susquehannocks even though they wanted to make peace?

2. Did the Governor’s overall actions show more concern for the welfare of the Indians than for the English settlers as Mrs. Grindon and Mrs. Haviland claimed?

3. Should Nathaniel Bacon have been given his commission to attack the Pamunky Indians? Why or Why not?
**Background**

Bacon’s Rebellion was the first time colonists rose up against the British Government. Nathaniel Bacon had several complaints about the reign of Governor William Berkley in Virginia, including his Native American policies. After gathering a strong following of discontent farmers from the Virginia frontier, Nathaniel Bacon raided Jamestown, eventually burning several government buildings. The rebellion fell apart after Bacon’s death from an unknown illness. Other rebels were captured, tried, convicted and executed for their part in the insurrection.

After studying the causes and effects of Bacon’s Rebellion, students will be able to decide how effective Berkley’s Indian policies were.

**GLE’s**

5.4.1 Evaluates and interprets other points of view on an issue within a paper or presentation.

1.3.1 Analyzes and evaluates the causes and effects of Colonial foreign policy on people in the United States and across the world.

5.4.2. Creates strategies to avoid plagiarism and respects intellectual property when developing a paper or presentation. (10th Grade) (EALR 5.4. Creates a product...)

5.2.2 Evaluates the validity, reliability, and credibility of sources while researching an issue or event.

**Essential Question**

From their earliest history, Americans have challenged their leader’s policies dealing with foreign nations and have left its citizens faced with the pivotal choice of revolution or resolution. Bacon’s Rebellion was the first time that this unique characteristic showed itself in our country’s history. Using this event, in a cohesive paper, you will analyze the effectiveness of Governor Berkley’s policies toward the Powhatan Indians and their impact (costs or benefits) on the colonists and Indians. You must also discuss why the policy was implemented for national and/or colonial interests from two of the following social science perspectives:

- geographic
- cultural
- political
- economic
- sociological
- psychological
Background Information Resources for Teachers

+ The American Republic Since 1877, 2003 Edition Chapter 4 pages 59-60
+ OSPI Foreign Policy Rubric
+ Bacon’s Epitaph - Bacon's Epitaph

Student Resources and Handouts
+ Brief History of the Powhatan Indians (Living with the Powhatans) pdfdoc
+ With Reverence for the Past - worddoc
+ A Place in Time: Middlesex County 1650-1750- worddoc
+ Questions from the DVD- worddoc
+ Grading Rubric For Paper- pdfdoc
+ Bacon’s Manifesto- worddoc
+ The Declaration of the People Against Sir William Berkeley, 1676- worddoc
+ Berkely’s account of the Rebellion- worddoc
+ Facts from the DVD- worddoc
+ Pros and Cons handout - worddoc
+ Thomas Matthews’ Narrative- worddoc
+ Primary Source Analysis- worddoc
+ Paper Outline Version One Paper Outline
+ Paper Outline Version Two Paper Outline

Suggested Activities
+ Show the Introduction of Elizabeth Bacon’s Story from the Pickett DVD
+ In-Class Discussion
+ Intro paper Pass out rubric
+ Popcorn for points read - With Reverence for the Past: Gloucester County, VA and • A Place in Time: Middlesex County 1650-1750
+ Timeline activity-
Students will create an accurate timeline chronicling all the events of Bacon’s Rebellion from 1676-1677.
Display timelines

✦ Debate topic “In your opinion, which event made the uprising officially a “rebellion” against Berkley’s policies.
Students will read and take Cornell notes in class together.

✦ In class discussion
Is it slanted?/ Lesson on Points of View- Use textbook pgs 59-60 American Republic, Video so far In class Discussion – Elizabeth’s Point of view? With Reverence for the Past? Textbook?

✦ Show DVD A new Beginning/1646 Treaty with the Powhatans/Indian Troubles Increase
Students will respond to DVD questions in writing – the answers to these questions will be used to help students write their paper.

✦ In-class Discussion
In class activity- What were Berkley’s policies regarding the Indians- One paragraph Response.
✦ Berkley’s policies protected Indians who paid him tribute
✦ Berkley considered the Powhatan Indians British subjects
✦ Berkley wanted to use friendly Indians as allies against hostile Indian nations
✦ Berkley wanted to tax colonists to build forts to protect them against hostile Indian nations.
✦ Berkley revokes colonists licenses to trade with Indian nations

✦ Show DVD New Elections/Reclaiming Position on the Council/Confrontation Over the Commission
Students Respond to DVD questions in writing

✦ Primary Source Document Analysis
Jigsaw the following primary source documents- Each group fill out the following handout for each primary source document.
Handout-Primary source Analysis
Groups will present their analyses while the audience fills out primary source hand outs for each document. Each student will end up with a primary source analysis for all four primary source documents.

Primary Source Documents
The Declaration of the People Against Sir William Berkeley, 1676
Thomas Matthews’ narrative
Bacon’s Manifesto, 1676
Berkley’s Account of the Rebellion
Show the DVD
Difficult Times/Capturing Women as Tactics of War/Jamestown
Burns/Nathanial Bacon’s Death/Conclusion

Students respond to DVD questions in writing.
In Class Discussion.

Pro/Con Activity.
In Class students will fill out a pro con handout after analyzing Berkeley’s policies and their impact from these three perspectives. Bacon/Berkley/Indian Nation.

Student Activity to address Social Science Perspectives
Option One- Economic-lecture
Option Two- Cultural-lecture
Facts from the Video
Note: These facts appear in the DVD corresponding with each section of the video.

A New Beginning

Governor Berkeley names young Nathaniel Bacon to the Council of Government after he had been in the colony for only one year. In the past the position of Councilor had always been given to important planters who have lived in Virginia for a number of years and who had served in county government or in the House of Burgesses.

1646 Treaty with the Powhatans

In July of 1675 Indians from Maryland began to raid settlements in the Northern Neck area of Virginia. In September militia units from both Maryland and Virginia join forces to punish the Indians. They surround a fortified village in Maryland belonging to the Susquehannock Indians. The Susquehannock deny any part in the raids and send five of their chief men to talk with the English. These men are promptly seized and executed. The Susquehannocks escape from the village and vow to kill ten English settlers for every one of their executed chiefs. When Governor Berkeley hears of the execution of the Susquehannock chiefs he says: “If they had killed my grandfather and grandmother, my father and mother, and all my friends, yet if they came to treat of peace, they ought to have gone in peace.” (Force’s Tracts)

Indian Troubles Increase

In September of 1765 Governor Berkeley reprimands Nathaniel Bacon for seizing some friendly Appotmattox Indians for allegedly stealing corn, although the corn was not his or his neighbor’s. By law English settlers are allowed to enslave any Indian caught stealing. The Indians deny that they have stolen anything. Following the assassinations of their chiefs, the Susquehannocks begin raiding in the upper parts of the colony in February of 1676.

Governor Berkeley orders Sir Henry Chicheley with a company of militiamen to follow them, but then orders them back when the Susquehannocks indicate by messenger that they have venged the deaths of their chiefs and are ready to make peace.

In view of the Susquehannocks raids on the northern part of the colony, Bacon asks for a commission from the Governor to raise volunteers to attack the Pamunky – a tribe of friendly Powhatan Indians who pay tribute to the Governor each year for protection. The Governor along with Colonel Bacon and other members of the Council refuse. Colonel Bacon tells the people in New Kent County that the Pamunky and Appomattox Indians are “…our friends that we ought to defend them with our blood.” (The Governor and the Rebel, p. 34 FN77)

As a result of these actions on the part of the Governor, two women, Mrs. Grindon and Mrs. Haviland, began to spread rumors about Governor Berkeley. The Governor complained that “twas presently through the whole country that I was a greater friend to the Indians than to the English.” (The Governor and the Rebel p.40)
New Elections

Without a commission Bacon takes a group of volunteers and marches to the southwest looking for the Susquehannocks, disobeying the Governor’s orders. The Governor calls this an act of treason. Bacon says in taking men to fight the Indians he is only doing what any responsible citizen has the right to do—protect his homeland. There is a hidden criticism of the Governor in this statement as Bacon is implying that he has to go fight the Indians because the Governor is not doing enough to protect the colony. The Governor in his response says that any English subject has the right to raise an army to protect the kingdom. However, he continues, if the king or his representative orders that subject to disband his army and he refuses—that is treason.

Reclaiming Position on the Council

Governor Berkeley called for new elections in May 1676. Prior to this, he had called for no new elections to the House of Burgesses for 15 years, which means that the House was made up of the same men during that whole period of time. At the county level, the same men held positions of authority for many years and some of them even hold more than one office at a time. A closed circle of men, friends of the Governor, holds all the power in the colony and those with no opportunity to join that circle are resentful.

In 1661, the General Assembly passed a law that prohibited the arrest of any of the burgesses during or ten days after a session of the assembly.

Difficult Times

As an answer to the Indian problem Berkeley proposes to build new forts and send out roving horse patrols to scout the frontier. He wants the soldiers to come from the southern part of the colony so that men on the frontier can stay home and protect their families. There are many bitter complaints about the new taxes to build the forts and pay for the army. There is a general belief that the new measures for defense against the Indians will not work. In early 1676, news of an Indian war (King Philip’s War) being fought in New England reaches Virginia. All the Indians in New England have put aside their differences and banded together to drive the English settlers out of Massachusetts Bay Colony. People in Virginia are afraid that the Powhatan Indians will join forces with the Susquehannocks, their traditional enemies, to wage war on them. Berkeley is anxious to keep the local Indians friendly and on his side.

It is the policy of Berkeley and his Council to keep those small bands of local Indians as spies, buffers and allies against the real enemy. To prevent the local Indians from joining any uprising, Berkeley stops the trade of guns and ammunition to them and cancels the trading licenses of some traders. For many years the English have been carrying on a very profitable business by trading with the Indians for beaver pelts. The traders that keep their licenses under Berkeley’s plan happen to be the Governor’s friends. Young Bacon and his partner, William Byrd, have their licenses cancelled.
Nathaniel Bacon’s Death

There was quite a bit of plundering and looting on both sides. At first it was the rebels who were in control and they looted the property of the loyalists. Then when the loyalists got the upper hand they began to loot rebel property. The commissioners complained that rebel property was being seized illegally as none of the men whose property was being taken had been found guilty as yet.

Bacon had his followers sign a paper swearing that they would continue fighting until the king had a chance to hear their case—even if in the meantime the king sent troops to the colony. Most of his followers were uneasy about putting their names to such a document, so they signed reluctantly. The Commissioners decided that most of the men had been coerced into signing it and therefore were not guilty of treason. Berkeley, on the other hand, felt that anyone who signed the oath was guilty of treason and should be hanged. And so he hanged 23 men after they had been tried in a military court. In a military trial the accused is guilty until proven innocent, is not entitled to be tried by a jury and has no right to appeal the verdict.
US Foreign Policy CBA

How the United States government interacts with the world affects people across the globe. You will evaluate a specific U.S. foreign policy based on an analysis of its causes and effects.

Directions to students

In a cohesive paper you will:

☐ State a position on the effectiveness of a specific Colonial policy that outlines reasons in support of your position.

☐ Provide reason(s) for your position that include:
  • An analysis of why the policy was implemented for national and/or colonial interests from two or more of the following social science perspectives:
    o geographic
    o cultural
    o political
    o economic
    o sociological
    o psychological
  • An analysis of the effects of the policy including a discussion of:
    o How the policy affected stakeholders in the Colonies.
    o How the policy imposed costs OR provided benefits for Indian nations.

☐ Make explicit references within the paper to three or more credible sources that provide relevant information AND cite sources within the paper, presentation, or bibliography.

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1 This directions page guides students towards the “proficient” level (level “3”) for this CBA. To help students reach “excellent” (level “4”), please refer to the rubric or, if available, the graphic organizer.

2 Students may do a paper or presentation in response to the CBA provided that for either format, there is documentation of this response that someone outside their classroom could easily understand and review using the rubric (e.g., a videotaped presentation, an electronic written document).

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction – July 2008
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GLE</th>
<th>4 - Excellent</th>
<th>3 - Proficient</th>
<th>2 - Partial</th>
<th>1 - Minimal</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A - POSITION</strong>&lt;br&gt;5.4.1 Evaluates and interprets other points of view on an issue within a paper or presentation.</td>
<td>States a position on the chosen colonial policy that outlines reasons in support of the position. AND&lt;br&gt;Drawing a conclusion about why studying this colonial policy helps us to understand current issues and/or the position supported by evidence.</td>
<td>States a position on the effectiveness of the chosen foreign policy that outlines reasons in support of the position. Provides reason(s) for the position supported by evidence.</td>
<td>States a position on the chosen foreign policy but does not outline reasons in support of the position. Provides reason(s) for the position supported by evidence.</td>
<td>Addresses a foreign policy without stating a position. Provides evidence for the position WITHOUT using any specific social science perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B - CAUSES</strong>&lt;br&gt;1.3.1 Analyzes and evaluates the causes and effects of Colonial foreign policy on people in the United States and across the world</td>
<td>The evidence includes: □ An analysis of why the policy was implemented for National and/or colonial interests from three or more of the following social science perspectives: • geographic • cultural • political • economic • sociological • psychological. Provides reason(s) for the position supported by evidence.</td>
<td>The evidence includes: □ An analysis of why the policy was implemented for national and/or international interests from two of the following social science perspectives: • geographic • cultural • political • economic • sociological • psychological. Provides reason(s) for the position supported by evidence.</td>
<td>The evidence includes: □ An analysis of why the policy was implemented for national and/or international interests from one of the following social science perspectives: • geographic • cultural • political • economic • sociological • psychological. Provides reason(s) for the position supported by evidence.</td>
<td>States how the chosen foreign policy imposed costs AND provided benefits for other nations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C - EFFECTS</strong>&lt;br&gt;supported by evidence.</td>
<td>The evidence includes an analysis of the effects of the policy including a discussion of: • how the policy affected stakeholders in the Colonies. AND • how the policy imposed costs AND provided benefits for other nations. Provides reason(s) for the position supported by evidence.</td>
<td>The evidence includes an analysis of the effects of the policy including a discussion of: • how the policy affected stakeholders in the Colonies. AND • how the policy imposed costs OR provided benefits for other nations. Provides reason(s) for the position supported by evidence.</td>
<td>The evidence includes an analysis of the effects of the policy including a discussion of: • how the policy imposed costs AND provided benefits for other nations. Provides reason(s) for the position supported by evidence.</td>
<td>States how the chosen foreign policy imposed costs on AND/OR provided benefits for other nations without explicit support from relevant evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D - SOURCES</strong>&lt;br&gt;5.4.2. Creates strategies to avoid plagiarism and respects intellectual property when developing a paper or presentation. (10th Grade) (EALR 5.4. Creates a product...)</td>
<td>Makes explicit references within the paper or presentation to four or more credible sources that provide relevant information. Cites sources within the paper, presentation, or bibliography.</td>
<td>Makes explicit references within the paper or presentation to three credible sources that provide relevant information. Cites sources within the paper, presentation, or bibliography.</td>
<td>Makes explicit references within the paper or presentation to two credible sources that provide relevant information. Cites sources within the paper, presentation, or bibliography.</td>
<td>Makes explicit references within the paper or presentation to one credible source that provides relevant information. Cites the source within the paper, presentation, or bibliography.</td>
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*OSPI recommends that this CBA be used at a particular grade level and thus, the GLEs included in the rubric are for that grade. However, if the CBA is used at another grade level within the grade band (3-5, 6-8, or 9-12), the GLEs may need to change to match the appropriate content.

**Please also refer to the document “Scoring Notes for Secondary Social Studies CBAs” when evaluating student work.*
In-class Discussion
In class activity- What were Berkley’s policies regarding the Indians- One paragraph Response.
• Berkley’s policies protected Indians who paid him tribute
• Berkley considered the Powhaten Indians British subjects
• Berkley wanted to use friendly Indians as allies against hostile Indian nations
• Berkley wanted to tax colonists to build forts to protect them against hostile Indian nations.
• Berkley revokes colonists licenses to trade with Indian nations
Introduction

Archaeologists believe the American Indians were the first people to arrive in North America, perhaps having migrated from Asia more than 16,000 years ago. During this Paleolithic period, these Indians rapidly spread throughout America and were the first people to live in Virginia. During the Woodland period, which began around 1200 B.C., Indian culture reached its highest level of complexity. By the late 16th century, Indian people in Coastal Plain Virginia, united under the leadership of Wahunsonacock, had organized themselves into approximately 32 tribes. Wahunsonacock was the paramount or supreme chief, having held the title “Powhatan.” Not a personal name, the Powhatan title was used by English settlers to identify both the leader of the tribes and the people of the paramount chieftain he ruled. Although the Powhatan people lived in separate towns and tribes, each led by its own chief, their language, social structure, religious beliefs and cultural traditions were shared. By the time the first English settlers set foot in “Tienacommacah, or “densely inhabited land,” the Powhatan Indians had developed a complex culture with a centralized political system.

Living With the Indians is a story of the Powhatan people who lived in early 17th-century Virginia—their social, political, economic structures and everyday life ways. It is the story of individuals, cultural interactions, events and consequences that frequently challenged the survival of the Powhatan people. It is the story of how a unique culture, through strong kinship networks and tradition, has endured and maintained tribal identities in Virginia right up to the present day.

Where did the Powhatan Indians live?

When the humans who crossed the Bering Straits at the end of the last great Ice Age first arrived on the Virginia landscape, the environment was vastly different than today. Although the regions comprising the Blue Ridge Mountains, Piedmont, Ridge and Valley, and Coastal Plain were in place, the effects of the glaciers to the north caused long, hard winters and short, cool summers. As Virginia’s climate changed to a warmer, drier one and sea level rose, open grassland gave way to a rich floodplain with woods of pine and oak, and vegetation became profuse. The floodplain that developed on Virginia’s Coastal Plain contained numerous environmental zones that produced a variety of marine, fresh water and terrestrial life. The mixed forest zone in particular provided the greatest variety and abundance of plant and animal life. It was rich in nuts and berries, gave access to fish and shellfish, and provided an abundance of animals and birds including white-tailed deer, turkey, ducks, opossum, raccoon, black bear, river otters, skunks, red and gray foxes, civet cats and wolves. Many plants and roots were available for gathering, and the rich soil made the eventual cultivation of crops possible.

In the late 16th century, the inhabitants of Virginia lived along waterways which also provided their main form of transportation. The Chesapeake Bay, created when warming caused sea levels to rise, was really the valley of the Susquehanna River flowing down from the north, which was flooded by the rising ocean. This valley, now the Bay, is fed by tributaries which lie in the Virginia Coastal Plain—the Potomac, Rappahannock, York and James Rivers. These tributaries are actually tidal estuaries; they consist of freshwater flowing downstream and meeting with saltwater from the ocean.

A typical Powhatan “town,” as the English called them, lay along a stream or river in a cleared area of deciduous forested land in Virginia’s Coastal Plain. Immediately surrounding the settlement were cultivated fields, dotted haphazardly with tree stumps burned to create the fields. Just beyond the fields lay a variety of environments used by the people. The forest provided game and plants to gather for food, trees to cut for housing and tool production and roots for medicines. Nearby marshes provided reeds to weave into mats and tallow for food. The streams and rivers provided fresh water fish and shellfish beyond the saltwater zone and marine and shellfish down river. Rivers and ponds also provided a habitat for wild birds and aquatic plants.

What language did the Powhatan Indians speak?

The Powhatan people spoke a very different language from the English. At the time Columbus arrived in the New World, more than 220 different languages and dialects could be found being spoken throughout the North American Indian tribal populations. The Powhatan people spoke a form of Eastern Algonquian, a family of languages used by various tribes along the Atlantic Coast from North Carolina to Canada, and had no form of written communication.

Depending upon their location on the Coastal Plain, the Powhatan groups in Virginia may have spoken a number of varying dialects of Powhatan Algonquian. Variation can be seen in the word lists compiled by some English observers. Some of their words, like moccasin and tomahack (tomahawk), are familiar to us today. Powhatan Algonquian does not survive today as a spoken language, and no one knows precisely what it sounded like.
What were the social structures of the Powhatan Indians?

In 1612, John Smith recorded the following observation about how inheritance of Powhatan's paramount chiefdom was decided in Powhatan society. "His kingdom descendeth not to his sons nor children, but first to his brethren...and after their decease to his sisters. First to the eldest sister then to the rest and after them to the heires male and female of the eldest sister, but never to the heires of the males." Powhatan society was matrilineal, with kinship and inheritance passing through the female line. In the last quarter of the 16th century, through his mother's line, Powhatan inherited the control of six tribes in the Tidewater area of Virginia. Through intimidation or warfare, he also began consolidating others. By the time the English arrived, Powhatan loosely controlled approximately 32 tribal groups and had centrally located his headquarters at Werowocomoco on what's now the York River.

The Powhatan people lived in a ranked society of rulers, great warriors, priests and commoners, with status being determined by inheritance or achievement. Chiefs inherited their positions of authority and granted positions of rank to outstanding hunters and warriors. As a result, individuals in these newly granted positions were often set up as trusted advisors or counselors and were included in elaborate feasts. Priests were men of power, often having a great influence over rulers. They wore badges of distinction, were organized into their own hierarchy and performed duties in the temples.

Larger homes, more wives, and more elaborate clothing, meals and burial customs were afforded to Powhatans of higher status. They possessed and controlled goods such as copper (made into gorgets and beads), shell beads, fresh water pearls and furs. Although political positions were inherited through women, little political authority was given to them except in the case of a female chief, or "werowansqua."

How did the Powhatan people express their religious beliefs?

Powhatan Indians worshipped a hierarchy of gods and spirits. They believed in two major gods, Ahone, the creator and giver of good things, and Oke, the evil spirit, whom they tried to appease with offerings of tobacco, beads, furs and foods. The people believed in an afterlife for important leaders; therefore, the bodies of important chiefs and priests were preserved and placed on scaffolds in the temples.

The Powhatan priesthood was divided into two classes. Priests presided over religious rituals, kept tribal history and maintained the temples. Lower-class conjurors specialized in foretelling enemy plans and curing illnesses with treatments in sweat lodges, herbal teas and chants. Religious leaders acted as advisors to tribal leaders. Priests and conjurors were distinguished by their striking appearances, painting their faces and wearing feather capes and headdresses made of mink and weasel skins. They fastened bird claws and blackbirds to their ears.

What form of government did the Powhatan Indians have?

Powhatan, the supreme chief, dominated their government. All villages in the same region belonged to one tribe. Each tribe had its own chief called a werowance (male) or werowansqua (female), and villages within a tribe had their own leaders who answered to the tribal chief. Everyone paid tribute taxes to the tribal chief, in the form of skins, beads, copper, deer, turkeys and corn. These goods were stored in large temples until used by a chief or given to loyal followers or guests. John Smith noted in 1612, "the fame of their Common wealth is a monarchical government, one as Emperoure ruleth over many kings or governors. Their chiefes rulle is called Powhatan...His inferior kings whom they call werowances are tied to rule by customs, and have power of life and death at their command."

Powhatan ruled by a system of customary law, coupled with his own commands. He and his chiefs enforced their orders with the assistance of trusted priests and counselors. For those who disobeyed, punishment could be severe, such as clubbing or burning to death for theft, murder and other major offenses. Minor offenses yielded beatings and other less severe punishment. Sculpding and slow death by torture were reserved for enemies and trespassers.

How did the Powhatan people acquire food?

The local environment provided the Powhatan people with their every need. They obtained about half of their food through farming, which was done in the summer months. Using a system of small mounds, women and children planted corn and bean crops, placing squash and gourds in-between. Corn, the most important crop, as well as beans and squash, were dried and preserved for later use throughout the year. Dried gourds could be used as musical instruments or for bowls, cups and scoops. To supplement their field crops, particularly in late winter and spring, they gathered fruit, nuts, grain, tubers and roots. Alone or in small groups, hunting was the chief occupation of Powhatan men. They used bows and arrows to kill large game like the white tailed deer and captured small animals such as the beaver with traps or snares. These animals provided the people with many needed resources and materials like clothing, food and tools. It is likely that most hunting was done in the winter months when brush was sparse. Fishing was done mostly in the spring and early summer; the men caught fresh water fish, ocean fish and shellfish. They used canoes made from hollowed out cypress logs or waded in shallow water to fish. Large numbers of fish were trapped in weirs stretched across waterways.
How did the Powhatan people obtain things they needed?

Powhatan men fashioned tools and weapons from wood, bone, shell and stone. Using a process of grinding and polishing stone, they made axes, mortars and pestles. Arrow points and tools used for cutting and scraping were shaped by knapping or flaking stone. This process involved striking one stone with another harder stone in an effort to reduce the softer stone bit-by-bit. Men crafted fish nets and fish traps from plant fibers and hollowed out large trees to make canoes. With local clays, Powhatan women made pottery vessels for cooking and storage. They also produced clothing from deer hides and woven mats out of reeds to cover houses.

The Powhatan Indians participated in an extensive trading network featuring luxury goods. Controlled by the elite, this exclusive type of trading was used as a means to increase social status. Indians who lived upstream traded fresh water pearls for ornaments made from large marine shells collected by eastern people. Metals were scarce in Tidewater Virginia, so the Powhatans also traded for copper from groups outside the chiefdom, some of which came from as far as the Great Lakes. To the south of the chiefdom, they traded for puccoon, a red dye used to make a highly-valued paint. The arrival of the English expanded trade opportunities for the Powhatan Indians—in 1611 Sir Thomas Dale related that he hoped to establish “a trade of furs, to be obtained with the savages in the northern rivers.”

What were Powhatan homes like?

Due to their agricultural tie to the land, the Powhatan Indians built semi-permanent “towns”, as the English called them. Most Powhatan settlements were small, with fewer than 100 people. Ten to twenty houses, called yehakins, were randomly scattered among shade trees and fields. Some yehakins were small and round, while others were oblong, with rounded ends to make them more wind resistant. Young saplings were used to create a frame for the house. The people covered their houses with bark shingles stripped from trees, or with mats woven from cut marsh reeds. In warm weather these mats could be rolled up. Natural resources provided the Indians with what was needed for their survival.

Most houses were only a single room. Furniture was limited to a stool or mat-covered sleeping benches built along the walls with drying lofts above. At night, additional beds made of deerskins or reed mats were laid directly on the ground. A fire placed in the center of the room served as the main source of light and heat. A smoke hole cut in the roof directly over the fire, as well as doors, provided ventilation and additional light. Because of poor lighting, houses were mainly used for sleeping and storage.

What roles did men, women and children have in Powhatan society?

Women and children did not stay at home. To accomplish much of their work, such as gathering firewood, wild plant foods, reeds for mats, clay for pottery, and drawing water, they often had to leave the village. Women also built houses, grew crops and cooked meals. Men were hunters and warriors. They made fishing equipment, built canoes and made stone tools to supply their hunting gear.

Powhatan children learned their roles and responsibilities from tribal elders. Girls would weed gardens, pound corn and care for younger children. Boys were taught to fish and hunt. While they worked, women with babies carried them on cradle boards strapped to their backs. William Strachey wrote in 1612: “They love Children very dearly.” Men and women married at puberty. A man paid a bride price to the family of his future wife as compensation for the loss of her labor. Marriage was accompanied by exchanging gifts and feasting. Men were allowed to have as many wives as they could afford.

How did the Powhatan people look and dress?

John Smith’s 1612 description of the Powhatan Indians said they were “generally tall and straight, of a comely proportion, and of a colour brownes….Their hair is generally black, but few have any beards. The men wear their half their heads shaved, the other half full long…. The [women’s] hair are cut in many fashions agreeable to their years.” Powhatan men and women painted their faces with a mixture of red paint and nut oil and used bear fat to ward off winter cold and summer insects. Women tattooed their bodies with abstract designs or pictures of flowers, fruits, snakes and lizards. As a mark of status, the elite wore beaded necklaces, bracelets and earrings. Common materials used in Powhatan jewelry include shell beads, freshwater pearls, copper and animal parts, such as teeth or bones.

The Powhatan people wore little clothing. Although other types of clothing could be made, typically Powhatan men and women wore an apron of deerskin around the waist. Men wore fur cloaks, loose sleeves and leggings. Moccasins were worn on trips into the forest. Powhatan men were armed with the bow and arrow and war club.

Indian women made clothing from hides and furs. They tanned the hides and used bone awls, bone needles and deer sinew to fasten garments together. Clothing was often decorated with fringe, beads, bones, teeth or painted designs.

In what types of recreational activities did the Powhatan Indians participate?

Leisure activities brought Powhatan people together with games, music and dancing. Men and boys wrestled and ran foot races. Everyone participated in games, similar to soccer or field hockey [stickball]. A popular gambling game, similar to pick-up-sticks, was played with reeds.
The Powhatan Indians had songs and dances for virtually every occasion, including mourning, ceremonial feasting, war and social events. Usually men and women danced in circles keeping time with their feet. They used rhythm instruments, such as dried gourd and turtle shell rattles, to accompany their songs and dances. Wooden drums covered with skins often had walnuts attached to make a rattling sound. Another instrument Powhatan Indians played was the reed flute. Although the people did not create objects as art pieces, they put much creativity and beauty into everyday utensils and other things they made. Women wove baskets and bags out of reeds and cordage. They made pottery and decorated clothing with beads, shells and painted designs. Even the tattooing on their bodies was a form of artistic expression.

What prior knowledge did the Powhatan Indians have of European cultures before the English arrived?

Contact with Europeans began in the early 16th century when French and Spanish ships sailed the Chesapeake Bay. In the mid-16th century, an Englishman on board a French privateer described a "very good bay" at about 37 degrees latitude. A Virginia Indian was taken from his home about the year 1560 and sent on a ship to strange lands. His Spanish captors gave him a new name, Don Luis. For ten years he lived in their culture and learned their ways. He may have shown them that his own culture was not as backward or uncivilized as some of them thought.

Don Luis left this culture behind him when he was taken and forced to live among the Spanish for ten years in their various capitals - Mexico City, Madrid, and Havana. In 1570 he was asked by missionaries to assist them in establishing a mission in his home territory. He accompanied a group of Jesuits to the peninsula between what is now the James and York Rivers in coastal plain Virginia. But he soon went back to his own people, leaving the Jesuits to fend for themselves. When the priests’ food supply ran out, they asked Don Luis to help them. His response was to have his people kill the Jesuits, sparing only one boy. A Spanish military expedition retrieved this boy in 1572, and nothing more is known about Don Luis thereafter.

Powhatan was certainly aware of these foreign intruders within and on the edges of his territory. Their presence, along with the alarming prophecy of destruction by invaders, undoubtedly influenced his attitude toward the Jamestown settlers who sailed into Tsenacommacah in 1607.

When was first contact made with the English?

On December 20, 1606, three English ships carrying 144 men and boys set sail from London bound for Virginia. The ships traveled the favored southerly course across the Atlantic Ocean, taking advantage of trade winds and stopping at numerous islands to re-supply. After 6,000 miles and over four months at sea in cramped quarters and unsanitary conditions, the English sighted the coast of Virginia. In 1607, George Percy noted, “…about four a clocke in the morning, we descried the Land of Virginia. The same day, wee entered into the Bay of Chesapeque directly, without any let or hindrance.”

While the ships anchored off Cape Henry, a scouting party went ashore to explore. An unexpected attack by a small band of Indians sent them back to the ships with two wounded men. That same night they opened the Virginia Company of London’s orders and read the names of seven men appointed to the governing council in Virginia. Several days later the settlers raised a cross and named the cape in honor of Prince Henry, the son of James I. This confirmed English claims to Virginia, established twenty years earlier by the Roanoke colony. On May 14, 1607 the English disembarked at Jamestown Island.

Where was the closest Powhatan tribe to the Jamestown colony?

The closest Powhatan tribe to the Jamestown colony was that of the Paspehegh, who had towns upriver from Jamestown on both sides of the Chickahominy River. This tribe of at least 200 people was one of the core tribes of the Powhatan chiefdom. The people lived in a rich environment where two water zones merged, providing both fresh and salt water fish.

The Paspehegh welcomed the English to Virginia at first. When the newcomers settled on Jamestown Island in Paspehegh country, however, the Indians wavered between assisting the English and attacking James Fort. Conti-ued English pressure for food led to the Indian siege on the fort during the starving time in winter of 1609-10. After the English made retaliatory attacks in 1610, numerous Paspehegh Indians were killed, including the chief and his family. The remainder abandoned the area and joined other groups. In 1618, this tract of land, set aside by the English to support the Governor, was described as “Land formerly conquer’d or purchased of the Pashpehiques.”

Why did the Powhatan Indians go to war?

“When they intend any warres, the Weroances (chief) usually have the advice of their Priests and Conjurors, and their Allies and ancient friends. They seldom make warre for lands or goods, but for women and children, and principally for revenge.” John Smith noted in 1612.

The Powhatan people went to war to defend their territory, to seek revenge or to capture women and children for adoption into the tribe, increasing the population and workforce. Warfare provided men with an opportunity to gain honor and prestige. Battle trophies such as scalps were worn as signs of bravery. Enemy warriors were killed in combat or captured and tortured.

Most battles were small surprise attacks fought from behind trees or tall grass. This is the tactic used when local Indians such as the Paspehegh attacked James Fort. Occasionally, the people used half-moon or square formations, attacking in ordered ranks and fighting in hand-to-hand-combat. Bows, arrows and clubs were the weapons of war. Large numbers of arrow points were found by APVA - Preservation Virginia archaeologists in excavations at James Fort. Powhatan warriors also used stone knives, wooden swords and shields made of bark.

When did the Powhatan people begin to experience conflict with the English?

From the beginning of English settlement the Powhatan Indians and the English were in contact. Sometimes the contact was for trade and diplomacy. At other times conflict resulted. Indians attacked the colonists several times within the first year. After the English demanded food in 1609, war broke out and the Indians laid siege to James Fort. With the development of new settlements between 1611 and 1613, the English pushed the Powhatan people off their best riverfront land. Both groups raided each other, kidnapped each other and tortured each other. A tenuous peace did not come until 1614.
The 1622 attack was followed by a decade of open warfare with intermittent raids, kidnappings and ambushes by both sides. A treaty in 1632 created a decade of peace among the inhabitants.

The spread of settlement strained relations again by 1644. On April 18, Opechancanough launched a second major uprising, killing more than 400 colonists. Indian resistance was short-lived, however. Again, English retaliatory raids destroyed villages and cornfields, and the Indians hid in the forests. In 1646, the English captured Opechancanough and took him to Jamestown, where he was shot and killed. The remaining Powhatan people were defeated.

Although often mistrusted, the interpreters remained loyal to English values. Henry Spelman lived for more than a year with the Patowomeks on the Potomac River, where he was treated as a special guest and recorded his observations of their language and life ways in his *Relation of Virginia*. Savage and Poole became wealthy through the Virginia fur trade.

Pocahontas was a “gift” from Captain Christopher Newport to Powhatan in 1608, in exchange for Powhatan's servant. Henry Spelman arrived in Virginia in 1609 and was sent to the Indians to “ensure the good behaviour” of Indian settlers living upstream. Robert Poole came in 1614 and was assigned to Opechancanough, Powhatan's brother, as an interpreter in 1614. Both sides manipulated these boys as pawns in the struggle for power.

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Powhatan people also served as emissaries, either willingly or unwillingly living with the English. John Smith held two as prisoners in James Fort to show the English how to plant corn. When Christopher Newport traded Thomas Savage to Powhatan in 1608, Powhatan's servant Namontack was exchanged. Newport took Namontack to England and introduced him as the son of “the emperor of Virginia,” and he returned to Virginia with greater knowledge of English culture.

Powhatan Indians and English in 1622?

By 1622, Chief Powhatan and Pocahontas were dead, and the English had spread deep into Powhatan territory. The English forced the Indians to move inland away from their traditional river valley homes. Native leaders under Opechancanough, Powhatan's half-brother and successor, had privately adopted a more militant attitude toward the English.

On March 22, 1622, Opechancanough led a coordinated attack on several English plantations, killing more than 300 of the 1,200 colonists. Jamestown was warned and escaped destruction. Colonists from outlying areas were ordered into fortified settlements, where severe food shortages occurred and contagious diseases spread. The settlers retaliated, burning Indian villages, taking their corn in “feed fights”, and killing the inhabitants.

The 1622 attack was followed by a decade of open warfare with intermittent raids, kidnappings and ambushes by both sides. A treaty in 1632 created a decade of peace. However, all Indians were barred from traveling on the lower James-York peninsula.

Why did war break out between the Powhatan Indians and English in 1622?

Why did peace between the Powhatan people and English end?

As both sides struggled for dominance, relations between the two groups deteriorated. The Indians had not developed the land or exploited its natural resources for profit, the English continued to claim it as their own. They established more plantations along the James River after 1616. The Powhatan Indians resented the intrusion of English settlements on Indian lands and attempts to change their culture and convert them to Christianity.

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In 1646, Neocotowance, Opechancanough’s successor, made a formal peace treaty with the Virginia government. The Indians had to pay an annual tribute to Virginia officials and withdraw from the James-York peninsula. All native messengers entering this English territory had to wear a special striped coat or face death. The Powhatan people experienced confinement to land north of the York River by the middle of the 17th century, losing critical access to traditional hunting and fishing grounds. A 1652 law required Indians to carry a pass or ticket wherever they wanted to hunt or fish or forage within the colonial designated areas. A 1662 law made them wear silver or copper badges inscribed with their tribe’s name whenever they entered these areas. Settlers were forbidden to encroach on designated Indian lands, but planters paid little heed as they ventured farther and farther north. For self-preservation, smaller tribal groups merged with larger ones, losing their independent identity.
How did life change for the Powhatan people in the late 17th century?

As English plantations expanded and Indian-controlled lands shrank, it became much harder for the Powhatan people to support themselves. There was less unclaimed land available for hunting and agriculture, and Powhatan participation in the fur trade declined. Other Indian groups beyond the limits of the English settlement took over this valuable trade.

The Powhatan people still desired English goods, however, so they had to find other ways to pay for them. A few Indians became planters themselves, buying or patenting land under English law. Some became tenant farmers, renting English-owned land. Many other Indians combined their traditional economic activities with part-time work for the English in a variety of different jobs.

Indian craftsmen also began making items to sell to the English. In 1676, the Virginia government set up regular markets in the colony where Indians could sell items like clay pots, tobacco pipes and woven mats to the English. All of these endeavors helped the remaining Indian communities survive in a world that was increasingly dominated by English people and institutions.

The end of the Powhatan paramount chiefdom left the Indians of the Virginia coastal plain divided into several different tribal groups, each of whom had to find their own way of dealing with a rapidly changing world. Some of these groups broke apart into even smaller units, but others joined together, forming new tribal alliances to help maintain a way of life different from that of Virginia’s English majority.

It is clear that most Indians preferred to keep their own customs and institutions, despite pressure from Virginia’s colonial government to adopt English ways. Some Powhatan people, especially tribal leaders, learned to speak English in order to deal with governmental authorities, and by the end of the 17th century, younger Indians had begun to speak English as their first language. Even so, most Indians chose to live lives that were different from the lives of their English neighbors.

What became of the Powhatan Indians?

The Powhatan Indians overcame many obstacles, including years of discrimination, and learned to adapt in order to survive. As a way of economic survival, smaller tribes merged with larger ones, jeopardizing independent identity. Strong kinship networks helped tribal identities endure even when economic necessity led to the dispersal of tribal populations. Family became the chief mechanism for the survival of Powhatan culture, a tradition that endures right up to the present day, with eight recognized tribes in Virginia. These include seven Powhatan tribes—Chickahominy, Eastern Chickahominy, Mattaponi, Nansemond, Pamunkey, Rappahannock, Upper Mattaponi- and the Monacan Nation in Virginia’s Piedmont.

Historical background materials made possible by Archibald Andrews Marks.
I. Introduction
A. (Step Backward) Virginia settlement and the colonial government (royal governor)
B. Indian policy
C. End result: Bacon’s Rebellion
D. Thesis
II. 1st body paragraph
A. Indian policy
1. Why was it implemented? Choose two of the following to explain why it was implemented.
   a. geographic
   b. cultural
   c. political
   d. economic
   e. sociological (social/society)
   f. psychological
III. 2nd body paragraph
A. Effectiveness towards Indians
1. To help, choose two or three of the following to prove or disprove its effectiveness.
   a. geographic
   b. cultural
   c. political
   d. economic
   e. sociological (social/society)
   f. psychological
IV. 3rd body paragraph
A. Effectiveness towards colonists
1. To help, choose two or three of the following to prove or disprove its effectiveness.
   a. geographic
   b. cultural
   c. political
   d. economic
   e. sociological (social/society)
   f. psychological
V. Conclusion
1. Restate in one or two sentences your thesis again.
2. (Step forward) Talk about the implications to the American Revolution
Sample Thesis:
Although the purpose of Governor Berkley’s Indian policy was to protect both settlers and Indians, it was ineffective for both groups, culminating in the first major rebellion against British government.
Now we’re ready to write the paper. You have to decide, was Governor Berkley’s treaty with the Powhatan Indians of 1646 an effective foreign policy for early Virginia colonists and the Indian nations? Be sure you say why you think it was or wasn’t?

Intro Paragraph

1st body paragraph
Indian policy- Treaty of 1646
Why was it implemented? Choose one of the following social perspectives and explain what Berkley’s motives were for implementing the policy and explain how it impacted both the colonists and the Indian nations. Our class is going to talk about the economic aspects of this treaty and how the treaty impacted both the colonists and the Indians from this social perspective.

gEographic
cultural
political
economic
sociological (social/society)
psychological

1st Body paragraph

2nd body paragraph
Indian policy- Treaty of 1646
Why was it implemented? Choose one of the following social perspectives and explain what Berkley’s motives were for implementing the policy and explain how it impacted both the colonists and the Indian nations.

Our class is going to talk about the cultural aspects of this treaty and its impact on both the indains nations and the colonists.

gEographic
Now we’re going to talk about how this policy, the treaty of 1646 affected the stakeholders in the Colonies- Be sure to include points of view from both Governor Berkeley and the Royalists and Bacon and his followers.

How about the Indian nations? How did the treaty of 1646 affect them? Be sure to mention specifics. Look at the costs and benefits for this group. You may want to mention the execution of the Susquehanna Indians or Bacon enslaving Indians who he accused of stealing corn.
psychological

Conclusion

Restate in one or two sentences your thesis again.
(Step forward) Talk about the implications to the American Revolution. Don’t leave your audience hanging, this is your chance to wrap up strong and emphasize your opinion!
Although the purpose of Governor Berkley’s Indian policy was to protect both settlers and Indians, it was ineffective for both groups, culminating in the first major rebellion against British government.
Primary Source Analysis
Searching for Clues

Please answer the following questions about each document.

1. Who authored each of the documents?

2. When was the document authored?

3. What type of document is this?

4. How are the Powhatans or Natives and/or the English colonists portrayed?

5. What clues are provided about the rebellion and how different people felt about it?

6. What questions did you ask while evaluating these sources?

7. On what points do the accounts agree? On what points do the accounts differ?

8. Which of these sources is most reliable in determining what actually happened during the rebellion of 1676 in Jamestown? Why do you think so? Does the time lapse of thirty years affect the way Thomas Matthews describes the events? Does your memory change over time?

9. Describe the difficulties in developing an accurate account of historical events like Bacon’s Rebellion in Jamestown.

10. If you were asked to write your own historical account of the events, how would you go about doing so? From whose point of view would you choose to tell the events?
## Pros/Cons Analysis

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### Pros

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Discussion Questions from the Video
Note: These questions appear in the DVD corresponding with each section of the video.

A New Beginning

1. Nathaniel Bacon was sent to Virginia in hopes he might improve. Do you think can a person change? Why or why not?
2. What do you think Elizabeth Bacon means when she says young Nathaniel Bacon thought he was above the company he found in the colony?
3. If you were one of the large planters in Virginia and not a member of the Council, how would you feel about Nathaniel Bacon’s appointment to the Council?
4. Do you think that the fact that Nathaniel Bacon was related to Berkeley’s wife had anything to do with his appointment?
5. Can you think of any circumstances that would allow for the requirements for a position to be changed by the Governor? What would be acceptable in your opinion? What would be considered unacceptable?

1646 Treaty with the Powhatans

1. The Powhatans live in isolated areas segregated from the English. Should they be paying tribute to the Governor for protection?
2. Should the Susquenahannock chiefs have been allowed to leave the meeting alive?

Indian Troubles Increase

1. Should the Governor have allowed Chicheley to pursue the Susquehannocks even though they wanted to make peace?
2. Did the Governor’s overall actions show more concern for the welfare of the Indians than for the English settlers as Mrs. Grindon and Mrs. Haviland claimed?
3. Should Nathaniel Bacon have been given his commission to attack the Pamunky Indians? Why or Why not?

New Elections

1. Were Bacon’s actions in disobeying the Governor’s orders an act of treason? Should Nathaniel Bacon have attacked both friendly and hostile Indians?
2. Bacon thought the government was ineffective at protecting the English people against the hostile attacks. Do you think he had the right to disobey the Governor?

Reclaiming Position on the Council

1. If Bacon was a legally elected a House of Burgesses member from his county, should he have been arrested when he came to town?
2. Why do you think Governor Berkeley called for free elections to the House of Burgesses when he had not done so in fifteen years?
Confrontation Over the Commission

1. Were Bacon and his followers justified in the way they acquired the commission to fight the Indians?
2. Was Berkeley justified in not wanting to grant the commission?

Difficult Times

1. If you were a small planter, would you support the governor’s plan to build forts, raising your taxes, or would you have supported Bacon who wanted to hunt down the Indians with a mobile army of local militia?
2. Which “Indian Policy “ would be more effective: Berkeley’s plan to use friendly Indians as allies or Bacon’s policy of attacking all Indians as enemies?

Capturing Women as Tactics of War

1. Why might families be divided in times of war?
2. Was Bacon right to use the wives of “loyalists” as a shield against Berkeley’s cannon, or do you think he was wrong? Why or why not?
3. Did Elizabeth Bacon feel as if Nathaniel the younger was her son? How do you think she felt about him after the rebellion?

Jamestown Burns

1. Were Bacon and his followers justified in burning Jamestown to the ground so Berkeley and his forces could not return and use it as a base again, or was destroying the capital and the church an unnecessary act of arson?

Nathaniel Bacon’s Death

1. Was it fair to expect the loyalists not to loot the property of rebels when the rebels had been looting loyalist property for many months?
2. Was Berkeley right to have tried the captured rebels in a military court where they had none of the ordinary rights of an English subject?
3. Was the rebellion a war and the captured rebels prisoners of war who deserved to be tried in a military court?

The Aftermath

1. Based on the testimony of Elizabeth Bacon, which side do you support in this disagreement and conflict: Nathaniel Bacon the younger or Governor Sir William Berkeley? Why?
2. Do you think Elizabeth Bacon presented a biased or unbiased account of what happened? Why or why not?
3. Can you only rely on one historical account or document to get a clear understanding of past events? Why or why not?
4. Could the colonists in Virginia have solved their problems in a different way, instead of burning Jamestown?
5. Once the rebellion was ended, did Berkeley go too far in dealing with the rebels? Why or why not?
6. When else in American history were citizens faced with the pivotal choice of revolution or resolution?
STRANGE NEWS FROM VIRGINIA;
Being a full and true ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE and DEATH OF Nathanael Bacon Esquire,
Who was the only Cause and Original of all the late Troubles in that COUNTRY.
With a full Relation of all the Accidents which have happened in the late War there between the Christians and Indians.

LONDON,
Printed for William Harris, next door to the Turn-Stile without Moor-gate. 1677.
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Introduction

This DVD brings to life a pivotal moment in Virginia’s (and by extension, America’s) history as told by Mrs. Elizabeth Bacon, wife of Colonel Bacon (Nathaniel Bacon’s uncle). This video is meant to be interactive with discussion and activities. The teacher is encouraged to pause the video at the end of each of the segments or at any time a “teachable moment” arises. The student activities are meant to enhance the video and bring more depth to the actual rebellion. In the bigger picture, the video is meant to spur discussion of why a rebellion occurs in history and why it should be admired or avoided. More directly, this exploration leads to future discussions about the American Revolution and how this rebellion is similar.

This exploration of Bacon’s Rebellion in Virginia is the first in a series of DVD’s that focus on pivotal decisions in American history. Each product in the series traces key events that have helped shape American History. The events are tied to specific events in neighborhoods, local governments and even families that represent larger issues faced by Americans at various points in time. Each DVD will focus on a single event and make connections with the fundamental ideals struggles and challenges of the American “experiment.”

In Bacon’s Rebellion, we explore the revolution that some historians point to as a precursor to the American Revolution. Only seventy years after the formation of Jamestown in 1607, it was burned to the ground and destroyed at the hands of young Nathaniel Bacon and his followers. Nathaniel Bacon, a new settler in Virginia, became a leader to farmers and neighbors just getting out of indenture-hood. These men organized in an effort to protect their homes, neighbors, and
property on the Virginia frontier. The governor of Virginia, Sir William Berkeley failed to pro-
vide adequate defense for the colony’s outskirts and surrounding estates. This rebellion was a
clash of personalities, cultures, classes, and lifestyles. Berkeley declared Bacon a rebel and thus
set the chain of events in motion.
Teacher Lesson Plans

To support you in implementing the Bacon’s Rebellion materials in your classroom, we include two different lesson plans in this packet. The first lesson plan is a relatively basic approach to using the Bacon’s Rebellion video in your classroom. The second plan is based on the Historical Scene Investigation project (http://www.hsionline.org) which positions students in the role of detectives. As they work through the video clips and the additional documents provided, they must answer the question of whether Nathaniel Bacon is a hero or traitor. This approach requires more class time and higher level thinking and may be an effective way to differentiate the activity for students in your classroom.

We encourage you to also explore the additional materials and activities to make the activity your own. We understand that a “one-size-fits-all” approach to curriculum is not always optimal. The Word documents for the two lesson plans are included on this CD to enable you to customize them to better meet your needs. We hope to provide enough ideas and resources for you to implement the materials in the best way for your students.
Bacon’s Rebellion Core Lesson Plan

- Created by Julie Bray, Toano Middle School, Toano, Virginia

Objectives/Essential Knowledge/Vocabulary/Key People/Places

Essential Understandings: The colonies were made up of different groups of people whose lives varied depending upon their social position.

Focus Questions: How did England impose its political and economic control over the colonies? What was the colonial governor’s position in the colonies?

*Political relationships—colonists had to obey English laws that were enforced by governors; colonial governors were appointed by the king or by the proprietor. Colonial legislatures made laws for each colony; monitored by colonial governors. England wanted to remain a world power and control the trade within the colonies. Some colonists resented power of colonial governors.

Key People/terms: Nathaniel Bacon, Governor Sir William Berkeley, Elizabeth Bacon, Colonel Bacon, Doeg Indians, Pamunky Indians, Susquehannock Indians, Backcountry, frontier, headright, indentured servants, tobacco, House of Burgesses

Materials Needed:
LCD Projector, Computer
Video Clips of Revolution or Resolution? Bacon’s Rebellion in Virginia
Student Activity Sheets for Taking Notes and Forming Analysis

Prior Knowledge:
☐ WYW ☐ Anticipatory Set  ☐ Preview/Review
Students watch the introduction clip to Elizabeth Bacon, she sets the place, event, and tone for the lesson. Teacher can add some further background information to set the stage.

Procedure:
1. Students have read Cobblestone Bacon’s Rebellion prior to class.
2. Show each of the ten two–three minute scenes of Elizabeth Bacon telling her experience within Bacon’s Rebellion.
3. Students fill out a T-chart of the Pro’s and Con’s for Berkeley and Bacon.
4. Students stop after each segment and discuss the facts and questions within cooperative groups. Filling out T-chart as they go. Discuss charts when complete.
5. Students complete the plus and minus chart on Nathaniel Bacon and write a summary as to whether they tend to agree with Bacon or Berkeley.
6. Field Trip to Jamestown Historical Island lets students continue discussion of Bacon’s Rebellion.

Closure:
Share summaries of Nathaniel Bacon with classmates. Read aloud one of each side-Bacon and Berkeley.
Exit Pass—Discuss the difficulties of a corrupt government. Should people rebel when
the government is showing favoritism toward one particular class of citizens. Discuss the
class system of Colonial America. Discuss the idea that Bacon was the first possible step
toward the American Revolution.

Assessment:
- Student Self-assessment
- Practice Problems
- Short Written Response

Homework
- Teacher Observation

Student T-charts, summaries, discussions, and plus and minus charts. Summary can be
written for homework.

Research Based Strategies Used:
- Similarities & Differences
- Reinforcing Effort & Providing Recognition
- Non Linguistic Representations
- Setting Objectives & Providing Feedback
- Cues, Questions, & Advanced Organizers

Differentiated Instructional Strategies Used:
- Verbal/Linguistic
- Interpersonal
- Bodily/Kinesthetic

Musical/Rhythmic
- Intrapersonal
- Naturalist/Environmental

Logical Mathematical
- Visual/Spatial

Generating & Testing Hypotheses
- Cooperative Learning

Homework & Practice

Notes: Summaries can be written for homework and shared the next day.
Students can move on a continuum within the classroom as to how they feel about Na-
thaniel Bacon as they share their summaries. Include a Pro-Bacon supporter and a Pro-
Berkeley supporter.
Bacon’s Rebellion H.S.I. Activity Plan

- Created by Julie Bray, Toano Middle School, Toano, Virginia

Virginia at the Crossroads: Was Nathaniel Bacon a Hero or a Traitor?

Teacher Notes:

Introduction to Case:
In this case, students will determine whether Nathaniel Bacon should be honored as a hero or looked upon as a traitor to a beloved governor. Just as New England struggled over land in Metacomet’s war, Virginia faced a more complicated uprising here in the Chesapeake. Nathaniel Bacon’s rebellion was a struggle between immigrants, wealthy land owners, and Native Americans for control over sections of land. Low tobacco prices and high land prices made the dream of obtaining plantations in the Chesapeake next to impossible. Did Native Americans hold too much land in the treaty of 1646? Many immigrants felt they did and headrights could not provide them with their desired land. Each of these groups of people had conflicts and distrust between themselves. The class system played an important role within this event. Twenty-nine year old Nathaniel Bacon became the leader for the landless immigrants even though he himself came from a different class. Students will analysis and evaluate text, primary sources, and secondary sources to come to their own personal conclusions about Nathaniel Bacon. After watching video clips, reading text and completing activities, students will write a summary concerning the outcome of this rebellion. Was Nathaniel Bacon a colonial Robin Hood and someone to admire or was he a scoundrel and traitor who deserved his early death? Students should use the voices of the participants within the rebellion to support their opinions. Historians over time have changed their opinions about Nathaniel Bacon’s behavior. Students can conclude with telling whether there was enough evidence to support the events or were there questions still left unanswered.

Acknowledgements:
This activity was inspired by the living history character of Elizabeth Bacon, played by Peggy Pickett. Her monologue told in an inquiry method continues to inspire the listener to come to their own conclusions. The following text below are also used within the investigation.


Standards:

NCSS Theme II: Time, Continuity and Change
Focus on reading and reconstructing the past to:
1. Include various perspectives on historical events;
2. Draw upon historical knowledge during the examination of social issues;
3. Develop the habits of mind that historians and scholars employ.

National Center for History in the Schools
Standard 2: Historical Comprehension
Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation
Standard 4: Historical Research Capabilities
Standard 5: Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making

Essential Understandings: The colonies were made up of different groups of people whose lives varied depending upon their social position.

Focus Questions: How did England impose its political and economic control over the colonies? What was the colonial governor’s position in the colonies?

* Political relationships—colonists had to obey English laws that were enforced by governors; colonial governors were appointed by the king or by the proprietor. Colonial legislatures made laws for each colony; monitored by colonial governors. England wanted to remain a world power and control the trade within the colonies. Some colonists resented power of colonial governors.

The student will develop skills for historical and geographical analysis, including the ability to identify and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history to 1877.

The student will demonstrate knowledge of European exploration in North America and West Africa by describing cultural interactions between Europeans and American Indians (First Americans) that led to cooperation and conflict;

Becoming a Detective

This investigation can be conducted entirely online or offline. The video clips can be projected on a classroom screen. Documents can be given as handouts and discussion questions can be done via the computer or as handouts.

1. Students read the Cobblestone version of Bacon’s Rebellion as a source of information.
2. Students watch the video clips and participate within the discussion questions given for each segment.
3. Students fill out the Pro and Con T-chart concerning Nathaniel Bacon and Sir William Berkeley as they hear the facts presented by Elizabeth Bacon.
4. Students complete the plus and minus chart. They read each statement and give a response. Finally they write a summarizing paragraph or paper based on the information given. Was Nathaniel Bacon considered a traitor or a hero? The response is a personal response based on what they read and heard.

5. Students share their responses with the class. Class votes on whether they feel he is hero or a traitor.

6. More in-depth study of the events, students are given historical copies of the documents surrounding Nathaniel Bacon’s rebellion to help formulate their opinion papers. Students will include at least three statements from the documents within their response papers.

**Investigating the Evidence**

1. Students watch the video segments presented by Elizabeth Bacon. Students respond to the discussion questions within their cooperative groups.

2. Student’s complete plus and minus **Hero or Traitor** worksheet.

3. Students read the documents and the Cobblestone story of Nathaniel Bacon.

4. Students write their response paper and formulate a personal opinion about Nathaniel Bacon.

5. To go deeper into the material, students work through one or more of the following additional documents, answering the questions in the Searching for Clues section below:

   - **Document A** - Thomas Mathews Narrative: *The Beginning, Process, and Conclusion of Bacon’s Rebellion, 1675-1676 (1705)* found within the Narratives of the Insurrection 1675-1690 (1705) by Charles N. Andrews (pages 9-40) written in Matthews’ voice and with his spellings
   - **Document B** - The History of Bacon’s and Ingram’s Rebellion, 1676 unknown author found within the Narratives of the Insurrection 1675-1690 (1705) by Charles N. Andrews (pages 43-97) written in writer’s voice and spellings
   - **Document C** - A Place in Time: Middlesex County, Virginia 1650-1750 by Darrett B. Rutman and Anita H. Rutman (pages 79-83)
   - **Document D** - With Reverence for the Past: Gloucester County, Virginia by Martha W. McCartney (pages 58-63)
   - **Document F** - Bacon’s Manifesto, 1676
Searching for Clues

Please answer the following questions about each document.

1. Who authored each of the documents?
2. When was the document authored?
3. What type of document is this?
4. How are the Powhatans or Natives and/or the English colonists portrayed?
5. What clues are provided about the rebellion and how different people felt about it?
6. What questions did you ask while evaluating these sources?
7. On what points do the accounts agree? On what points do the accounts differ?
8. Which of these sources is most reliable in determining what actually happened during the rebellion of 1676 in Jamestown? Why do you think so? Does the time lapse of thirty years affect the way Thomas Matthews describes the events? Does your memory change over time?
9. Describe the difficulties in developing an accurate account of historical events like Bacon’s Rebellion in Jamestown.
10. If you were asked to write your own historical account of the events, how would you go about doing so? From whose point of view would you choose to tell the events?

Cracking the Case

Based on your analysis of the documents and citing evidence to support your answer, please write a paper or paragraph or two answering the following questions: So what happened that caused Nathaniel Bacon to burn down Jamestown statehouse and church? Was Nathaniel Bacon a hero or a traitor in your words? Within your analysis, please indicate whether you were satisfied with the evidence and list any additional questions that have been left unanswered through your investigation.
Student Documents

The following activities are included to engage students in their exploration of Bacon’s Rebellion beyond the core questions embedded in the video. The Word documents for the student activities are also included on this CD to enable you to customize them to better meet your needs.
Facts from the Video

Note: These facts appear in the DVD corresponding with each section of the video.

A New Beginning

Governor Berkeley names young Nathaniel Bacon to the Council of Government after he had been in the colony for only one year. In the past the position of Councilor had always been given to important planters who have lived in Virginia for a number of years and who had served in county government or in the House of Burgesses.

1646 Treaty with the Powhatans

In July of 1675 Indians from Maryland began to raid settlements in the Northern Neck area of Virginia. In September militia units from both Maryland and Virginia join forces to punish the Indians. They surround a fortified village in Maryland belonging to the Susquehannock Indians. The Susquehannock deny any part in the raids and send five of their chief men to talk with the English. These men are promptly seized and executed. The Susquehannocks escape from the village and vow to kill ten English settlers for every one of their executed chiefs.

When Governor Berkeley hears of the execution of the Susquehannock chiefs he says:

“If they had killed my grandfather and grandmother, my father and mother, and all my friends, yet if they came to treat of peace, they ought to have gone in peace.” (Force’s Tracts)

Indian Troubles Increase

In September of 1675 Governor Berkeley reprimands Nathaniel Bacon for seizing some friendly Appotmattox Indians for allegedly stealing corn, although the corn was not his or his neighbor’s. By law English settlers are allowed to enslave any Indian caught stealing. The Indians deny that they have stolen anything. Following the assassinations of their chiefs, the Susquehannocks begin raiding in the upper parts of the colony in February of 1676.

Governor Berkeley orders Sir Henry Chicheley with a company of militiamen to follow them, but then orders them back when the Susquehannocks indicate by messenger that they have venged the deaths of their chiefs and are ready to make peace.

In view of the Susquehannocks raids on the northern part of the colony, Bacon asks for a commission from the Governor to raise volunteers to attack the Pamunky—a tribe of friendly Powhatan Indians who pay tribute to the Governor each year for protection. The Governor along with Colonel Bacon and other members of the Council refuse. Colonel Bacon tells the people in New Kent County that the Pamunky and Appomattox Indians are “…our friends that we ought to defend them with our blood.”

(The Governor and the Rebel, p. 34 FN77)

As a result of these actions on the part of the Governor, two women, Mrs. Grindon and Mrs. Haviland, began to spread rumors about Governor Berkeley. The Governor complained that “twas presently through the whole country that I was a greater friend to the Indians than to the English.” (The Governor and the Rebel p. 40)
New Elections

Without a commission Bacon takes a group of volunteers and marches to the southwest looking for the Susquehannocks, disobeying the Governor’s orders. The Governor calls this an act of treason. Bacon says in taking men to fight the Indians he is only doing what any responsible citizen has the right to do—protect his homeland. There is a hidden criticism of the Governor in this statement as Bacon is implying that he has to go fight the Indians because the Governor is not doing enough to protect the colony. The Governor in his response says that any English subject has the right to raise an army to protect the kingdom. However, he continues, if the king or his representative orders that subject to disband his army and he refuses—that is treason.

Reclaiming Position on the Council

Governor Berkeley called for new elections in May 1676. Prior to this, he had called for no new elections to the House of Burgesses for 15 years, which means that the House was made up of the same men during that whole period of time. At the county level, the same men held positions of authority for many years and some of them even hold more than one office at a time. A closed circle of men, friends of the Governor, holds all the power in the colony and those with no opportunity to join that circle are resentful.

In 1661, the General Assembly passed a law that prohibited the arrest of any of the burgesses during or ten days after a session of the assembly.

Difficult Times

As an answer to the Indian problem Berkeley proposes to build new forts and send out roving horse patrols to scout the frontier. He wants the soldiers to come from the southern part of the colony so that men on the frontier can stay home and protect their families. There are many bitter complaints about the new taxes to build the forts and pay for the army. There is a general belief that the new measures for defense against the Indians will not work.

In early 1676, news of an Indian war (King Philip’s War) being fought in New England reaches Virginia. All the Indians in New England have put aside their differences and banded together to drive the English settlers out of Massachusetts Bay Colony. People in Virginia are afraid that the Powhatan Indians will join forces with the Susquehannocks, their traditional enemies, to wage war on them. Berkeley is anxious to keep the local Indians friendly and on his side.

It is the policy of Berkeley and his Council to keep those small bands of local Indians as spies, buffers and allies against the real enemy. To prevent the local Indians from joining any uprising, Berkeley stops the trade of guns and ammunition to them and cancels the trading licenses of some traders. For many years the English have been carrying on a very profitable business by trading with the Indians for beaver pelts. The traders that keep their licenses under Berkeley’s plan happen to be the Governor’s friends. Young Bacon and his partner, William Byrd, have their licenses cancelled.
Nathaniel Bacon’s Death

There was quite a bit of plundering and looting on both sides. At first it was the rebels who were in control and they looted the property of the loyalists. Then when the loyalists got the upper hand they began to loot rebel property. The commissioners complained that rebel property was being seized illegally as none of the men whose property was being taken had been found guilty as yet.

Bacon had his followers sign a paper swearing that they would continue fighting until the king had a chance to hear their case—even if in the meantime the king sent troops to the colony. Most of his followers were uneasy about putting their names to such a document, so they signed reluctantly. The Commissioners decided that most of the men had been coerced into signing it and therefore were not guilty of treason. Berkeley, on the other hand, felt that anyone who signed the oath was guilty of treason and should be hanged. And so he hanged 23 men after they had been tried in a military court. In a military trial the accused is guilty until proven innocent, is not entitled to be tried by a jury and has no right to appeal the verdict.
Discussion Questions from the Video
Note: These questions appear in the DVD corresponding with each section of the video.

A New Beginning

1. Nathaniel Bacon was sent to Virginia in hopes he might improve. Do you think can a person change? Why or why not?
2. What do you think Elizabeth Bacon means when she says young Nathaniel Bacon thought he was above the company he found in the colony?
3. If you were one of the large planters in Virginia and not a member of the Council, how would you feel about Nathaniel Bacon’s appointment to the Council?
4. Do you think that the fact that Nathaniel Bacon was related to Berkeley’s wife had anything to do with his appointment?
5. Can you think of any circumstances that would allow for the requirements for a position to be changed by the Governor? What would be acceptable in your opinion? What would be considered unacceptable?

1646 Treaty with the Powhatans

1. The Powhatans live in isolated areas segregated from the English. Should they be paying tribute to the Governor for protection?
2. Should the Susquenahannock chiefs have been allowed to leave the meeting alive?

Indian Troubles Increase

1. Should the Governor have allowed Chicheley to pursue the Susquehannocks even though they wanted to make peace?
2. Did the Governor’s overall actions show more concern for the welfare of the Indians than for the English settlers as Mrs. Grindon and Mrs. Haviland claimed?
3. Should Nathaniel Bacon have been given his commission to attack the Pamunky Indians? Why or Why not?

New Elections

1. Were Bacon’s actions in disobeying the Governor’s orders an act of treason? Should Nathaniel Bacon have attacked both friendly and hostile Indians?
2. Bacon thought the government was ineffective at protecting the English people against the hostile attacks. Do you think he had the right to disobey the Governor?

Reclaiming Position on the Council

1. If Bacon was a legally elected a House of Burgesses member from his county, should he have been arrested when he came to town?
2. Why do you think Governor Berkeley called for free elections to the House of Burgesses when he had not done so in fifteen years?
Confrontation Over the Commission
1. Were Bacon and his followers justified in the way they acquired the commission to fight the Indians?
2. Was Berkeley justified in not wanting to grant the commission?

Difficult Times
1. If you were a small planter, would you support the governor’s plan to build forts, raising your taxes, or would you have supported Bacon who wanted to hunt down the Indians with a mobile army of local militia?
2. Which “Indian Policy” would be more effective: Berkeley’s plan to use friendly Indians as allies or Bacon’s policy of attacking all Indians as enemies?

Capturing Women as Tactics of War
1. Why might families be divided in times of war?
2. Was Bacon right to use the wives of “loyalists” as a shield against Berkeley’s cannon, or do you think he was wrong? Why or why not?
3. Did Elizabeth Bacon feel as if Nathaniel the younger was her son? How do you think she felt about him after the rebellion?

Jamestown Burns
1. Were Bacon and his followers justified in burning Jamestown to the ground so Berkeley and his forces could not return and use it as a base again, or was destroying the capital and the church an unnecessary act of arson?

Nathaniel Bacon’s Death
1. Was it fair to expect the loyalists not to loot the property of rebels when the rebels had been looting loyalist property for many months?
2. Was Berkeley right to have tried the captured rebels in a military court where they had none of the ordinary rights of an English subject?
3. Was the rebellion a war and the captured rebels prisoners of war who deserved to be tried in a military court?

The Aftermath
1. Based on the testimony of Elizabeth Bacon, which side do you support in this disagreement and conflict: Nathaniel Bacon the younger or Governor Sir William Berkeley? Why?
2. Do you think Elizabeth Bacon presented a biased or unbiased account of what happened? Why or why not?
3. Can you only rely on one historical account or document to get a clear understanding of past events? Why or why not?
4. Could the colonists in Virginia have solved their problems in a different way, instead of burning Jamestown?
5. Once the rebellion was ended, did Berkeley go too far in dealing with the rebels? Why or why not?
6. When else in American history were citizens faced with the pivotal choice of revolution or resolution?
## Pros/Cons Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nathaniel Bacon</td>
<td>Governor William Berkeley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pros:
- ...
- ...
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- ...

Cons:
- ...
- ...
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Note: The table allows for the comparison of pros and cons between Nathaniel Bacon and Governor William Berkeley.
Hero or Traitor?

**Directions:** Was Nathaniel Bacon a hero or a traitor? Review the evidence to develop your own informed opinion. Consider whether each of the following facts are a plus (+) or minus (-) in Bacon’s favor. Place the plus or minus sign beside each statement. (Adapted from Nathaniel Bacon *Cobblestone* activity)

_____ A. Nathaniel Bacon stood up to a government that did not adequately protect people on the frontier.

_____ B. Bacon attacked both friendly and hostile Indians.

_____ C. Bacon promised to protect the families of his followers.

_____ D. Bacon was appointed to the Council by Governor Berkeley without living in the colony very long. (exception to normal guidelines)

_____ E. Bacon protested unfair taxation, building of forts, and corrupt practices by Berkeley’s government.

_____ F. Bacon was related to Governor Berkeley’s wife.

_____ G. Bacon spent little time at the Council meetings, apparently he did not try reforming the government from the inside.

_____ H. Bacon rallied up to 600 people to his cause, including more than 80 blacks.

_____ I. Bacon’s Rebellion encouraged disloyalty to the colonial government and England.

_____ J. Bacon’s friends encouraged him to lead them in fighting against the Indian tribes.

_____ K. Bacon was willing to stand up for people who were not rich, including former indentured servants and slaves.

_____ L. Bacon and his men destroyed Jamestown, the capital of Virginia, by burning it.

_____ M. Bacon knew fighting the Indians without the governor’s authority was against colonial law.

_____ N. Bacon was denied a commission to fight the Indians until Berkeley was coerced.

_____ O. Bacon resumed his rebellion after the governor had publicly forgiven him and reinstated him into the House of Burgesses. Apparently, Berkeley was about to attempt another arrest of Bacon.

_____ P. Bacon’s Rebellion aggravated existing rivalries between the rich and the less privileged classes.

_____ Q. Does Bacon or any citizen have the right to obey only the orders he or she agrees with and disobey the ones he does not agree with?

_____ R. Nathaniel Bacon and his followers raided neighboring plantations of the wealthy to feed his army.
Summary: Look above at your plus and minuses. If you have a total number greater than zero (positive number), your number indicates that you see Nathaniel Bacon as a hero. If your total number is below zero (negative number), your number suggest that you feel his actions were wrong, a traitor. Please summarize your analysis of Bacon’s Rebellion in a three paragraph paper. After seeing the video clips and discussing questions with your classmates. Tell honestly how you feel about Nathaniel Bacon and his actions. You can add your values to your comments. (Ex. If you feel violence is wrong or you cheer for someone who challenges authority) Please add these thoughts to your summary.

Activity Idea from Cobblestone: Bacon’s Rebellion

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Quotations About Nathaniel Bacon
(Adapted from Nathaniel Bacon Cobblestone activity)

“Very good parts, and a quick wit, but impatient of labor, and indeed his temper will not admit long study.”
   John Ray, Nathaniel Bacon’s boyhood tutor

Reaction: ______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________

“Indifferent tall but slender, black-haired and of an ominous, pensive, melancholy aspect, of a pestilent and logical discourse tending to atheism, but given to much talk, or to make sudden replies, of a most imperious and dangerous hidden pride of heart, despising the wisest of his neighbors for their ignorance, and very ambitious and arrogant.”
   Royal Commissioners’ Report

Reaction: ______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________

“He had broken into some extravagancies, and could not contain himself within bounds.”
   Thomas Bacon, Nathaniel’s father, explaining why he had to withdraw Nathaniel from Cambridge University after two and a half years residency.

Reaction: ______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________
Other facts about Nathaniel Bacon:

- Bacon married a rich heiress, Elizabeth Duke, without waiting for permission. Eliza -
  beth’s father was so unhappy with her choice of husbands he disowned her.
- Bacon was well off, but always spent more than he had. He got involved in a scheme to
defraud a neighboring young man out of his inheritance. When Bacon’s father found out, he decided it was time to ship Nathaniel off to Virginia.
- Bacon had a wealthy uncle (also named Nathaniel Bacon) in Virginia, who helped intro-
  duce him to the rich and powerful in the colony. He secured young Nathaniel a place on
  the Governor’s Council.
- Bacon was related to Governor Berkeley through marriage. Berkeley’s wife was Nathan -
  iel’s cousin.
- Bacon could have easily acquired land closer to Jamestown, but he decided to purchase
  (with the governor and his uncle’s help) 1230 acres far up the James River. Bacon
  claimed he had “always been delighted in solitude and mystic employments.”
- The governor granted Bacon a commission to trade with the Indians for furs, a lucrative
  license that many people wanted.
- Bacon was only twenty-seven when he arrived in Virginia.

Given this information, speculate on the following:

1. How likely is it that this man would cause trouble in his new home of Virginia?
   Explain your answer.
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________

2. How well do you think Bacon will get along with the governor, William Berkeley,
   based on what you know?
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
Cobblestone Reading and Questions


Teacher’s Guide for COBBLESTONE:® _Bacon’s Rebellion_  
October 2001

_Teacher Guide prepared by: Stephen Currie, a frequent contributor to COBBLESTONE_

**Viewpoints**

- Describe Bacon’s entry into Jamestown from the perspective of one of his soldiers. Then describe the same event from the perspective of one of Berkeley’s supporters.

- What were some of the good things about the way Virginia government was set up? What were some of the drawbacks? Discuss your ideas with a partner. Then make a list and present it to another group.

**Writing**

- Write a skit telling how Thomas Larrimore took back the _Rebecca_ from Bacon’s men. Act it out for classmates.

- Write a letter to Berkeley from a poor Virginian - a slave, small farmer, or indentured servant. Have the letter tell what makes the writer’s life hard and what Berkeley can do to help.

- Was Bacon justified in burning Jamestown? Write a paragraph explaining your answer.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. How would the story of Bacon’s Rebellion have been different if the women of the colony had not played the role they did?

2. Were there other ways of settling the arguments between Bacon and Berkeley? If so, what were they? If not, why not?

3. How did disease contribute to the tensions in the colony?

4. Which adjectives might best describe William Berkeley’s personality? Which traits helped him be a good leader for Virginia? Which ones made it hard or impossible for him to be a good leader?

**For Further Research**

- Find information about the American Revolution. Compare the Revolution to Bacon’s Rebellion. In what ways were they similar? In what ways were they different?

- Learn more about the Indians of eastern Virginia. Make a poster or booklet to display your findings.

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Art

• Draw a detailed picture of one of the events described in the magazine. Be sure to read the description of the event carefully. Compare your version with a classmate’s.

• Make a mobile with wire, straws, and string. Write the names of important people and events from the issue on tagboard and fasten them to the mobile. Arrange the names so that the ones that hang down the furthest are the ones you think were the most important. Compare your creation with a classmate’s.

Just for Fun

• Create a word search using the names of important people and places in this issue. Use a grid that measures 15 letters in each direction. Hide the words by placing them forwards, backwards, up, down, or diagonally.

• Design a board game about Bacon’s Rebellion. Play it with a friend.

• Write four or five of your own true-or-false Brain Ticklers like those on page 43. Give them to a classmate to solve.

Wrap Up

Compare Bacon and Berkeley. What was good about each of them? What was bad about them? Whose ideas and behavior were more appealing to you? Why? Discuss your answers with classmates.

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Culminating Activity

Below are four key events to Bacon’s Rebellion (Confronting Governor Berkeley, Jamestown Burns, The Fur Trading Businesses, and Pardon and Forgiveness). Describe what happened for each picture and why they were important to the Rebellion.

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Virginia Gazette Article Activity

Directions: Write a letter to Governor Sir William Berkeley from one of the points of view below:

• a poor Virginia farmer
• an indentured servant getting out of his indenture-hood
• a slave
• a woman who heard Nathaniel Bacon was unhappy about losing his commission

Have the letter tell what makes the writer’s life difficult and describe how Governor Berkeley can help improve your life.

Dear Governor Berkeley,

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Sincerely, ___________________________

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My Manifesto

Manifesto- A public declaration of policy, purpose, or views. Pretend your school has started taxing each student who uses a piece of paper, textbook, or workbook. How will you react? Write a manifesto to your classmates that declares how you feel about the tax.

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Additional Resources

The following additional resources are included for you to use when implementing the Historical Scene Investigation lesson plan above or to provide additional depth for your students in exploring Bacon’s Rebellion.
Thomas Matthews Narrative

The Beginning, Progress, and Conclusion of Bacon’s Rebellion, 1675-1676
Thomas Matthew’s Narrative

Excerpts: The 13th. July 1705
a) To the Right Honoble Robert Harley, Esquire Her Majties Principal Secretary of State, and One of her Most Honoble Privy Council.

“Beseecching your honour will vouchsafe to Allow, that in 30 Years, divers occur-
rences are laps’d out of mind, and others Imperfectly retained.” Thomas Matthews

b) “My Dwelling was in Northumberland, the lowest County on Potomack River, Stafford being the upmost; where having also a Plantation, Servant’s, cattle, etc... My Overseer there had agreed with one Robert Hen to come thither, and be my Herdsman, who then lived Ten Miles above it; But on a Sabbath day Morning in the summer Anno 1675, People in their way to church, saw this Hen lying th’wart his Threshold, and an Indian with out the Door, both Chopt on their Heads, Arms and other parts, as if done with Indian Hatchetts. Th’ Indian was dead, but Hen when ask’d who did that? An-
swered “Doeg, Doegs,” and soon died, then a Boy came out from under a Bed, where he had hid himself, and told them, Indians had come at break of day and done those Mur-
ders.
From this Englishman’s blood did (by degrees) arise Bacon’s Rebellion with the following Mischiefs which Overspread all Virginia and twice endangered Maryland, as by the ensuing Account is Evident.”
(Stafford County Virginia lay farthest from Jamestown, being a frontier region a hundred miles away by land and much more by water. The Doegs were an Indian tribe dwelling in Maryland)

c) “The Susquehanoughs were newly driven from their inhabitations, at the head of the Chesapeake Bay, by the Cineka-Indians (Senecas,”the greatest and most considerable nation,” were at this time pressing down from the north upon the Susquehanoughs), down to the head of Potomack, where they sought protection under the Pascataway Indians where they had a fort near the head of that river, and were also our Friends.”
The Walls of this fort were high banks of Earth, with Flankers having many loop holes, and a ditch round all, and without this a row of tall trees fastened 3 foot Deep in the Earth, their bodies from 5 to 8 inches diameter, watled 6 inches apart to shoot through the tops twisted together, and artificially wrought, as our men could make no breach to storm it, nor being low land could they undermine it by reason of water—neither had they cannon to batter it. So that twas not taken, until famine drove the Indians out of it. These escaped Indians forsaking Maryland, took their route over the head of the Potomack River, and thence over the heads of the Rappahannock and York Rivers, killing whom they found of the upmost Plantations until they came to the head of James River where
(with Bacon and others) they slew Mr. Bacon’s overseer whom he much loved, and one of his servants whose blood he vowed to revenged if possible.

d) In these frightful times the most exposed small families withdrew into our houses of better numbers, which we fortified with palisades and redoubts, neighbors in bodies joined their labours from each plantation to others. Alternately, taking their arms into fields and setting sentinels; no man stirred out of door unarmed. Indians were (ever and anon) espied, Three, 4, 5, or 6 in a party lurking throughout the whole land, yet (what was remarkable) I rarely heard of any houses burnt, tho abundance was forsaken, nor ever, of any corn or Tobacco cut up, or other injury done, besides murders, except the killing a very few cattle and swine. Frequent complaints of bloodshed were sent to Sir William Berkeley (then Governor) from the heads of the rivers, which were often answered with promises of assistance.

These at the heads of James and York Rivers (having now most people destroyed by the Indians flight thither from Potomack) grew impatient at the many slaughters of their neighbours and rose for their own defense, who chusing Mr. Nathaniel Bacon for their leader sent often times to the Governor, humbly beseeching a commission to go against those Indians at their own charge which his Honor as often promised but did not send; the Misteries of these delays, were wondered at and which I ne’er heard any could penetrate into, other than the effects of his passion, and a new (not to be mentioned) occasion of Avarice, to both which he was (by the common vogue) more than a little addicted; whatever were the popular surmises and murmurings vizt. “That no bullets would pierce Bever Skins.” “Rebells forfeitures would be loyal inheritances etc.”

During these Protractions and People often Slaine, most or all the Officers, Civill and Military, with as many Dwellers next the Heads of the Rivers as made up 300 Men, taking Mr. Bacon for their Commandr, met, and Concerted together, the Danger of going without a Commissn on the one Part, and the Continuall Murders of their Neighbours on th’ other Part (not knowing whose or how many of their own turns might be next) and Came to this Resolution vizt. To prepare themselves with necessaries for a March, but interim to send again for a Commission, which if could or could not be Obtayd by a certaine day, they woud proceed Commission or no Commission.

This day Lapsing and no Commission come, They march’d into the Wilderness in Quest of these Indians after whom the Governour sent his Proclamation, Denouncing all Rebells, who should not return within a Limited Day. Whereupon those of Estates obey’d; But Mr. Bacon with 57 men proceeded until their Provisions were Spent, without finding Enemy’s, when coming nigh a Fort of Friend Indians, on th’ other Side a Branch of James River, they desired reliefe offering payment, which these Indians kindly promised to help them with on the Morrow, but put them off with promises until the Third day, So as having then eaten their last Morsells, They could not return, but must have starved in the Way homeward and now ‘twas Suspected, these Indians had received private Messages from the Governour and those to be the Causes of these Delusive procrastinations; Whereupon the Pallisado’s still intreating and tendering Pay, for Victuals; But that evening a shot from the Place they left on th’ other side of that Branch kill’d one of Mr. Bacon’s Men, which made them believe, those in the Fort had sent for other Indians to come behind ’em and Cut ’em off.
Hereupon they fired the Palisado’s, Storm’d and burnt the Fort and Cabins, and (with the losse of Three English) Slewed 150 Indians. The Circumstances of this expedition Mr. Bacon Entertained me with, at his own Chamber, on a visit I made him, the occasion whereof is hereafter mentioned.

From hence they returned home where Writts were come up to elect Members for an Assembly, When Mr. Bacon unanimously Chosen for One, who coming down the River was Commanded by a ship with Guns to come on board, where waited Major Hone the High Sheriff of Jamestown ready to seize him, by whom he was carried down to the Governour and by him received with a Surprizing Civility in the following words, ” Mr. Bacon have you forgot to be a Gentlemen?” “No, May it please your Honour,” answered Mr. Bacon; “Then, “ replyed the Governour “I’le take your Parol,” and Gave him his Liberty. (Mr. Thomas Matthews was also chosen to serve on the assembly went to Jamestown)

e) The next forenoon, th’ Assembly being met in a chamber over the generall court and our Speaker chosen, the governour sent for us down, where his honor with a pathetic Emphasis made a short abrupt Speech wherein were these words.

“If they had killed my Grandfather and Grandmother, my father and my mother and all my friends, yet if they had come to treat of peace, they ought to have gone in Peace,” and sat down. The two chief commanders at the forementioned siege, who slew the four Indian Great men, being present and part of our Assembly.

The Governour stood up againe and said,” if there be joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repeneth, there is joy now, for we have a penitent sinner come before us, call Mr.Bacon;” then did Mr. Bacon upon one knee at the Bar deliver a Sheet of paper Confessing his Crimes, and begging Pardon of God the King and the Governour, Whereto (after a short pause) He answered” God forgive you, I forgive you,” thrice repeating the same words: When Collo. Cole (One of the Councill) said, “and all that were with him,” “yea,” said the Governour “ and all that were with him,” Twenty or more Persons being then in Irons Who were taken Coming down in the same and other Vessels with Mr. Bacon.

About a Minute after this the Governour, Starting up from his Chair a Third time said,” Mr. Bacon! If you will live Civilly but till next Quarter Court (doubling the Words) but till next Quarter Court, Ile promise to restore you againe to your Place There,” pointing with his hand to Mr. Bacon’s Seat, he having been of the Councill before these troubles, tho’ he had been a very short time in Virginia but was Deposied by the foresaid Proclamation, and in the afternoon passing by the Court door, in my way up to our Chamber, I saw Mr. Bacon on his quondam Seat with the Governour and Councill, which Seemed a Marvelous Indulgence to one whom he had so lately Proscribed as a Rebell.

f) One Morning early a Bruit ran about the Town, “Bacon is fled, Bacon is Fled,” Whereupon I went straight to Mr. Lawrence, Who (formerly) was of Oxford University, and for Wit Learning and Sobriety was equall’d there by few. Mr. Lawrence complained loudly of the Governour bore him a Grudge and now shaking his head, said, “Old Treacherous Villian,” and that his House was searcht that Morning, at day break, but Bacon was Escaped into the Country, having Intimation that the Governours Generosity in Pardoning him and his followers and restoring him to his Seat in Councill, were no
other than Previous Wheadles to amuse him and his Adherents and to Circumvent them Stratagem, forasmuch as the taking Mr. Bacon again into the Council was first to keep him out of the Assembly, and in the next place the Governour knew the Country People were hasting down with Dreadfull Threatenings to double revenge all Wrongs shou’d be done to Mr. Bacon or his Men, or whoever shou’d have had the least hand in ‘em.

g) In Three or Four daies after this Escape, upon News that Mr. Bacon was 30 Miles up the River, at the head of four hundred Men, The Governour sent to the Parts adjacent, on both Sides James River for the Militia and all Men could be gotten to Come and Defend the Town. Express’s Came almost hourly of th’ Army’s Approaches, who in less than 4 daies after the first Account of ‘em att 2 of the Clock entred the town, without being withstood, and form’d a Body upon a green, not a flight Shot from the End of the State-house, of Horse and Foot, as well regular as vetran Troops, who forthwith Possesst themselves of all the Avenues, Disarming all in Town, and Coming thither in Boats or by Land.

In half an hour more Mr. Bacon came with a file of Fusileers on either hand near the Corner of the Statehouse where the Governour and Councill went forth to him: We Saw from the Window the Governour open his Brest, and Bacon Strutting betwixt his Two files of Men with his Left Arm on Kenbow flinging his Right Arm every Way both like men Distracted; and if in this Moment of fury, that Enraged Multitude had fal’n upon The Governour and Councill. We of the Assembly Expected the same Immediate fate; I Stept down and amongst the Crowd of Spectators found the Seaman of my sloop, who pray’d me not to Stir from them, when in Two Minutes, the Governour Walk’d towards his Private Apartm, a Coits cast Distant at th’ other end of the Statehouse, the Gentlemen of the Councill following him, and after them walked Mr. Bacon with outrageous Postures of his Head, Arms, Body, and Leggs, often tossing his hand from his Sword to his Hat and after him came a Detachment of Fusileers (Musketts not being there in Use) Who with their Cocks Bent presented their Fusils at a Window of the Assembly Chamber filled with faces, repeating with Menacing Voices, “We will have it, We will have itt,” half a Minute when as one of our house a person known to many of them Shook his Handkercher out at the Window, Saying “You shall have it, You shall have itt,” 3 or 4 times; at these Words they sate Down their fusils, unbent their Locks and stood Still untill Bacon coming back, they followed him to their Main Body; In this hubbub a Servant of mine got so nigh as to hear the Governours Words, and also followed Mr. Bacon, and heard what he said, who came and to the Governour, That When the Governour opened his Brest he said, “Here! Shoot me, foregod, fair Mark, Shoot,” often Rehearsing the same, without any other Words; Whereto Mr. Bacon Answer’d “No May it please your honor, We will not hurt a hair of your Head, nor of any other Mans, We are Come for a Comission to save our Lives from th’ Indians, which you have so often promised, and now We Will have it before we go;”

But when Mr. Bacon followed the Governour and Councill with the forementioned impetuous (like Delirious) Actions whil’st that Party presented their fusils at the Window full of Faces, He said “Dam my boud, I’le Kill Governr Councill Assembly and all, and then Ile Sheath my Sword in my own heart’s bloud” and afterwards ‘twas Said Bacon had Given a Signal to his Men who presented their fusils at those Gasing out at the
Window, that if he should draw his Sword, they were on sight of it to fire, and Slay us, So near was the Masacre of us all that very Minute, had Bacon in that Paroxism of Phrentick fury was drawn his Sword, before the Pacifick Handkercher was Shaken out at Window.

In an hour or more after these violent Concussions Mr. Bacon came up to our Chamber and Desired a Commission from us to go against the Indians; Our Speaker sat Silent, When one Mr. Blayton a Neighbour to Mr. Bacon and elected with him a member of Assembly for the same County (Who therefore durst Speak to him), made Answer, “twas not in our Province, or Power, nor of any other, save the Kings Vicegerent our Governour,” he pressed hard nigh half an hours Harangue on the Preserving our lives from the Indians, Inspecting the Publick Revenues, th’exhorbitant Taxes and redressing the Grievances and Calamities of that Deplorable Country, Whereto having no other Answer, He went away Dissatisfied.

h) The next day there was a rumour the Governour and Councill had agreed Mr. Bacon shou’d have a Commission to Go Generall of the Forces, we then were raising. (This assembly commonly called the Reforming or Bacon’s Assembly, met at Jamestown, June 5, and sat until June 25, the day before Bacon Marched out of town. All the acts of this assembly were afterwards declared void both by royal instruction and proclamation, and by formal act of the assembly which met at Green Springs, February 20, 1677. Bacon took the title “General of the Virginia War” and issued commissions to his followers, authorizing them to “impress horse, armies, and furniture for and in order to their present march.” July 1676. Many who accepted commissions went vigorously to work to aid him, until the commission was rescinded by Governour Berkeley, when they withdrew.)

i) Thomas Matthews went home to Patomack, were reports afterwards were various; We had Account that Generall Bacon was March’d with a Thousand Men into the Forest to seek the Enemy Indians, and in a few daies after our next News was, that the Governour had summoned together the militia of Gloucester and Middlesex Counties to the Number of Twelve Hundred Men, and proposed to them to follow and Suppress that Rebell Bacon; “whereupon arose a murmuring before his face “Bacon, Bacon, Bacon,” and all walked out of the field, muttering as they went “Bacon, Bacon, Bacon,” leaving the Governour and those that came with him to themselves, who being thus abandoned wafted over Chesepiacke Bay 30 miles to Accomack where are two counties of Virginia. (Berkeley lived in the house of Colonel John Custis)  

j) The Governour made a 2nd attempt coming over from Accomack with what men he could procure in Sloops and Boats, forty Miles up the River to James Town, which Bacon hearing of, Came againe down from his Forest Persuit, and finding a Bank not a flight Shot long, Cast up thwart the Neck of the Peninsula there in James Town, in which Attack were 12 Men Slaine and Wounded But the Governour with most of his followers fled back, down the River in their Vessells.  

Here resting a few daies they Concerted the Burning of the Town, wherein Mr. Laurence and Mr. Drummond owning the Two best houses save One, Set fire to his own house, which Example the Souldiers following Laid the whole Town (with Church and Statehouse) in Ashes, Saying, The Rogues shoud harbour no more there.
On these Reiterated Molestacions Bacon Calls a Convention at Midle Plantation 15 miles from James Town in the Month of August 1676, Where an Oath with one or more Proclamations were formed, and Writts by him Issued for an assembly; The Oaths or Writts I never Saw, but One Proclamation Commanded all Men in the Land on Pain of Death to Joine him, and retire into the Wildernesse upon Arivall of the forces Expected from England, and opposed them until they shoud propose or accept to treat of an Accomodation, which we who lived Comfortably coud not have undergone, so as the whole Land must have become an Acedema if Gods exceeding Mercy had not timely removed him.

k) Mr. Bacon now returns from his last Expedition Sick of a Flux, without finding any enemy Indians, having not gone far by reason of the Vexations behind him, nor had he one dry day in all his Marches to and fro in the Forrest whilst the Plantations (not 50 miles distant) had a summer so dry as stinted the Indian Corn and Tobacco etc. Which the people ascribed to the Pawawings, ie the Sorceries of the Indians, in a While Bacon dyes and was succeeded by his Lieutenant Genll. Ingram. Bacon’s Body was so made away, as his Bones were never found to be Exposed on a Gibbet as was purpos’d, Stones being laid in his coffin, Supposed to be done by Laurence.
The History of Bacon’s and Ingram’s Rebellion, 1676

Unknown author, Burwell Manuscripts of the Virginia Historical Society

A) It seemes, in the first rise of the War, this Gentleman had made som overtures unto the Governour for a commission, to go and put a stop to the Indian proceedings. But the Governour, at present, eather not willing to commence the quarill (on his part) till more suitable reasons presented, for to urge his more severe prosecution of the same, against the heathen: or that he doubted Bacon’s temper, as he appear’d Populerly inclin’d; A constitution not consistent with the times, and the people’s dispositions; being generally discontented, for impositions lade upon them, too grate (as they saide) for them to beare, and against which they had som considerable time complained, without the least redress. For these, or som other reasons the Governour refused to comply with Bacon’s proposals. Which he looking upon as an undervaluing as well to his parts, as a dispersidgment to his pretentions, hee in som elated and passionate expressions sware, Commission or no Commission, the next man or woman that he heard should be kild by the Indians, he would goe out against them, though some 20 men would adventure the servis with him. Now it so unhappily fell out, that the next person that the Indians did kill, was one of his owne Familey. Where upon having got together som 70 to 80 persons, most good Howsekeepers, well armed, and seeing that he could not legally procure a Commission (after som struglings with the Governour …..Scuffell) and som of his best friends, co …...terprise, he applyes hi…..his oath, and so forth ….ans. The Governour could not …..this insolent deportment of Bacon at his proceed ings. Which …..instead of seeking means to appease his anger, they devised means to increase it, by frameing specious pretences, which they grounded upon the bouldness of Bacons actions, and the peoples affections. They began (som of them) to have Bacons Merits in mistrust, as a Luminary that threatened an eclipse to there rising glories. For though he was but a young man, yet they found that he was master and owner of those induments which constitutes a Compleate Man (as to intrincecalls), wisdom to apprehend and discretion to chuse. By which imbelishments (if he should continue in the Governours favour) of Seniours they might becom juniours, while there younger Brother, through the nimbleness of his wit, might steale away that blessing, which they accounted there owne by birthright. This rash proceedings of Bacon, if it did not undo himselfe, by his failinge in the enterprise, might chance to undo them in the affections of the people; which to prevent, they thought it conduceable to there intress and establishment, for to get the Governours name, it must needs breed bad blodd between Bacon and Sir William, not easely to be purged. For though Sir William might forgive what Bacon, as yet, had acted; yet it might be questionable whether Bacon might forget what Sir William had don; However, according to there desires, Bacon and all his adhereance was proclaimed a Rebell, May the 29, and forces raised to reduce him to his duty. With which the Governour advanced from the middle Plantation to finde him out, and if neede was to fight him, if the Indians had not knock’d him, and those with him, on the head, as som were in hope they had don, and which by som was ernistly desired.
B) The first thing that Bacon fell upon (after that he had settled himselfe at the Midle Plantation) was to prepare his paper of the 29th of May, as in answer to the Governours proclamation. Putting both papers upon these Declarations, he asks Whether Parsons wholly devoted to there King and at the Countrys good, and indeviouring to the utmost of there power, to the hazards of there lives and fortunes,......destroy those that are in Arms against King and ..... that never plotted, contrived, nor indevioured ......ion, detriment or wrong of any of his Majesties (subjects, in) there lives, names, fortunes, or estates, can deserve the appellations of Rebells and Traters? He cites the wholl country to testifye his and his soulders peaceable behaviors; upbrades som in Authorety with the meaness of there parts; other, now welthey, with the meanness of there estates, when the came first in to the Country; and questions by what just ways, or meanes, they have obtained the same; and whether they have not been the spunges that have suck’d up and devored the common tresurye? Questions what Arts, Ciences, Schooles of learning or Manufacteres hath bin promoted by any now in Authority? Justifyes his aversion (in generall) against the Indians? Upbrades the Governour for maintaining there quarill (though never so unjust) against the Christains rites and interes; His refusing to admit an English man’s oath against an Indian, when that an (Indians words shall be a sufficient proofe against an Engliah Man; Saith som thing against the Governour concerning the Beaver trade, as not in his power to de.....off, as being a Monopoly appertaineing to the Crown; questions whether the Traders at the heads of the rivers do not buy and sell the blood of there deare Brother.....untrey men; Aaignes on Colonel Coles ascertainment for saying that the English are bound to protect the Indians..... or to the hased of there blood; and so concludes with an appeale to King and Parliament, where he has no doubt but that his and the Peoples cause will be impartially heard.
Bacon’s Rebellion

In the early fall of 1676, armed horsemen cantered along the Middlesex road. Tumult, riot, and rebellion had come to Virginia. The troubles had begun far from the Indians and English were still in contact (as they were not in Middlesex), and the deprivations of one upon the other provoked bloodshed. The residents of the inland counties and Virginia’s governor, Sir William Berkeley, disagreed as to the best way to counter Indian assaults. Even in the lower counties, those closest to the bay—there was discontent as levies to pay for what proved to be an ineffective defense rose to a point where a man relying on his own labor, possibly supporting a wife and children was obligated to pay between a quarter and a half of his crop in county, vestry, and colony taxes. Virginians along the freshes of the James River soon found a champion in Nathaniel Bacon, a man “young bold, active, of an inviting Aspect, and powerful Eloquence,” who would search out and kill Indians rather than pay for forts and garrisons to guard against their raids.

Bacon’s defiance of the governor on Indian matters spiraled into mutiny during the summer of 1676, and then into rebellion. Titling himself “Gen’l By the Consent of the People,” Bacon labeled Berkeley “as one, who hath Traiterously attempted, violated and Injured his Majesty’s Interest,” demanding in the name of the “Commons of Virginia” that Sir William surrender himself and mandating confiscation of the estates of all who supported him. At the same time, he distributed an oath to be sworn to by the inhabitants. They were to acknowledge the legality of all his doings and the illegality of Berkeley’s, oblige themselves “to oppose what forces shall be sent out of England by his Majesty against mee….Divulge what you shall heare at any time spoken against me….and keepe my secrets, and not discover them to any person.” (Nathaniel Bacon)

Active warfare broke out when Berkeley, having abandoned the mainland counties for the Eastern Shore, recrossed the Chesapeake to seize Jamestown, whereupon Bacon gave up Indian chasing, besieged the town, and ultimately forced Berkeley to retire once again across the Bay. Burning Jamestown on the night of September 19th, Bacon crossed the York River into Gloucester, both to impose his oath upon the inhabitants and to counter a force of the governor’s supporters moving down from the Potomac counties under Giles Brent. No battle was fought, however. Brent’s men abandoned him when they heard the fate of Jamestown. The rebellion—led by Joseph Ingram after Bacon succumbed to disease in October—became a matter of isolated skirmishes as the rebels fortified houses here and there along the York and James Rivers and the governor conducted a river-line campaign against them, sending flying companies to drive the rebels from their strong points or to force their surrender. By mid-January it was all over, with Ingram surrendering on January 2nd and his remaining captains following his example within the next two weeks or fleeing the colony.

It is impossible to say exactly how much of this turbulence spilled over into Middlesex County. Certainly the affair disrupted the county. No courts met between May 1676 and March 1677. At some point, the early records of the vestry were defaced and pages ripped out. Certainly, too Bacon’s oath was administered in Middlesex. In the af-
termath of the rebellion, William Dudley’s widow petitioned for the restitution of tobacco seized from her husband as penalty for administering the oath, claiming that Dudley had been forced to the act and even then had done so “with a salvo to his allegiance to his Majesties.”

Certainly, too, armed men had been abroad in the county. In all likelihood, Brent’s “army of the north” forded the Rappahannock upriver and moved down the county’s main road, crossing to Gloucester and the battle that never fought via the Dragon Bridge. And in October or November, according to one account, there was a vague “rising” of Middlesex men against the rebels, implying that for a time the Baconians were in control. But the loyalists “were no sooner got upon their feet” than the rebels “reslaves” to bring them on their knees” again, Ingram sending his second in command “with a party of Horses, to do the work.”

As we scan the list of Middlesex Baconians, twenty-four in all, they were not idle wandering men. They ranged in age from twenty to forty, averaging around thirty years of age. Two were native born sons of Middlesex families, eleven others had arrived in the county in the 1660’s or earlier, and another four were identifiable as residents as early as 1671. Only three cannot be placed in the county before the rebellion. Of the twenty-four, nine were married, and six of these had children. All were enmeshed in what we have called the early Chesapeake system. Aggregated, they appear as a cross section, a slice of the population encompassing men at all points of the process, from newly freed servants working as tenant farmers and croppers, through the newly landed and the successful, on to native sons. Eight of the twenty-four can be identified as ex-servants, but it is difficult to identify servitude from the records, hence there were probably more than eight ex-servants in the group. Fifteen of the Bacon followers were tenant or sharecropper farmers. Seven of these would go on after the rebellion to obtain land on their own. Six men after the rebellion acquired land by purchase and one by marriage to the heiress of three hundred acres. The Bacon followers were known to one another prior to their participation in the rebellion. Some had purchased land from one another and some knew each other through marriage. One was a prior servant to another and one was an overseer to another’s property. Riots and rebellions are concocted from men who know each other face to face and speak regularly. John Richens was banished from the colony as ordered from the Governor and the others were either pardoned or ignored. Two Baconians, Matthew Bentley and Robert Boodle, married wealthy widows and were not given the social position in the county as the prior husbands maintained. Riding with Nathaniel Bacon could be a substitute position they never held. The two native Middlesex sons had been cut from their family inheritances by circumstances out of their control.

The Rebellion ended in Middlesex as Captain Beverley led the Governor’s troopers into the county. The Baconians clattered homeward and quietly took up their lives, repairing ignored fences and preparing their seedbeds for another year’s tobacco crop. They were neither hanged nor hounded for their actions. On the contrary, the remarkable thing is their immediate reacceptance into society of the county. Captain Bentley was briefly jailed but released by Beverley. Both Boodle and Bentley were required by the county court to find securities—effect bail money—for their abearing themselves “peacefully and quietly towards the King’s Majestie and all his Leige People.” Only John Richens would be banished for “uttering publiquely very scandalous, and abusive words to the court.”
By the mid-1670’s, Governor William Berkeley had held office for a total of nearly thirty years. During his administration the planter elite had solidified their political power. As a result public officials were perceived as opportunists who profited handsomely from performing duties that were a public trust. The colonists chafed under the restraints of the Navigation Acts and they were uneasy about the king’s bestowing grants of Virginia land upon his favorites, along with the right to collect revenues. As taxes soared, there were rumors of Indian troubles in the New England colonies. There were also sporadic outbreaks of violence on the fringes of Virginia’s frontiers, where strong warlike Natives who lived above the fall line, sometimes attacked outlying homesteads. Hostile Natives also fell upon the colony’s Tributary Indians, who had moved inland just ahead of the continuously advancing frontier.

In March 1676 Virginia’s governing officials, who were obligated to protect colonists and Indian tribes that were tributaries to the Crown, decided to construct garrisons at nine locations that were considered strategically important. The one nearest Gloucester County was on the lower side of the Mattaponi River across from western King and Queen County. These forts, which were built at public expense, were extremely unpopular. As they were designed to withstand assault, it soon became painfully clear that they were useless against highly mobile bands of Natives whose strategy was one of ambuscade.

Young Nathaniel Bacon, whose Henrico County Plantation was attacked, volunteered to lead an unauthorized march against the Indians. Thus began the popular uprising known as Bacon’s Rebellion, which during 1676 spread throughout Tidewater Virginia. When Bacon and his followers converged on Jamestown, he demanded a commission that would allow him to pursue the Indians. Later he and his men returned and at gunpoint, forced the Assembly to enact a group of new laws. One made it legal to patent Indian land as soon as it had been abandoned. This gave unethical planters an incentive to drive the Natives from the acreage that had been reserved for their use.

After Bacon left Jamestown, he roamed about the countryside, trying to rally men. Governor Berkeley, meanwhile, received a petition from some people in Gloucester County, who questioned the validity of Bacon’s commission. If it was not a legitimate, they wanted protection from his men, who were confiscating their horses, arms, and ammunition, leaving them defenseless. Berkeley set out for Gloucester, “a place the best replenished for men, arms, and affection of any County in Virginia.” But when he tried to recruit men, he met with little success. Gloucester’s citizens reportedly declared their loyalty to Berkeley but were unwilling to oppose Bacon, whom they believed was pursuing the Indians, their avowed enemy. Berkeley, uneasy about the lack of support, eventually withdrew to the Eastern Shore. Bacon on the other hand, marched to Middle
Plantation, where he drafted a “Declaration of the People,” and a little later, his “Manifesto.”

When Governor William Berkeley returned to Jamestown on September 7, 1676, he found the capital city garrisoned by five hundred of Bacon’s men. They were under the command of Colonel Thomas Hansford of York County, whose family also had land in Gloucester. Although Berkeley offered to pardon Bacon’s common soldiers if they would lay down their arms, many of them feared repercussions and fled.

Meanwhile, Nathaniel Bacon, who had been unable to muster enough men to march against the Natives at the fringes of the frontier, turned his wrath upon a convenient target, Pamunkey Indians who recently had signed a peace agreement with the Berkeley government. Bacon and his followers pursued the Pamunkeys into Dragon Swamp, where they killed men, women, and children indiscriminately, took captives, and plundered the goods of the Natives. Bacon then set out for Jamestown, displaying his Pamunkey prisoners along the way to demonstrate his prowess as an Indian fighter. Upon reaching the isthmus that connected Jamestown Island to the mainland, he had his men dig a defensive trench. From that position he commenced shelling the capital city. Governor Berkeley, who realized that he was badly outnumbered, boarded a ship and returned to the safety of the Eastern Shore. As soon as Berkeley departed, Bacon and his men entered Jamestown, purposely putting its buildings to the torch. In the fierce blaze that occurred on September 19, 1676, the colony’s statehouse was destroyed, along with the parish church and most of the community’s houses and business establishments.

Afterward Nathaniel Bacon and many of his followers withdrew to Tindall’s Point, where they took an oath of loyalty to their leader. While in Gloucester County Bacon made Colonel Augustine Warner’s house his headquarters. He drafted a document that denounced the Berkeley government. Then he summoned the men of Gloucester County to the Courthouse, where he asked them to sign the paper he had prepared. Instead, many of them preferred to remain neutral. That angered Bacon’s men, who began looting and plundering property of those perceived as Berkeley’s supporters. One such man was Augustine Warner of Warner hall, who paid dearly for his loyalty.

On October 26, 1676, the popular uprising literally was dealt a mortal blow. Nathaniel Bacon reported succumbed to the bloody flux and a “lousy disease” while at the Pate home in Gloucester County, probably the residence of Colonel Thomas Pate whose property was on the east side of the Pocomoke River’s head. Upon learning of Bacon’s death, Governor Berkeley proffered that he had been felled by the hand of Providence. He cited Bacon’s often blasphemous language and quoted “an honest Minister,” who reportedly wrote the following epitaph: “Bacon is Dead I am sorry at my hart That lice and flux should take the hangman’s part.” Where Nathaniel Bacon’s corpse was buried remains a mystery. According to one contemporary account, “his bones were neer found to be exposed on a gibbet as was purpos’d, stones being laid in his coffin,” purportedly by Richard Lawrence, one of his most staunch supporters.

Nathaniel Bacon’s successor, Joseph Ingram, was an uninspiring and most cautious leader who lacked Bacon’s charisma and sense of purpose. In the words of one eyewitness to Bacon’s Rebellion, “The Lion had no sooner made his exit, but the Ape (by indubitable right) steps upon the stage.” Another writer said that “the Titmouse...was becom an Elliphant.” Ingram divided his men into small groups and had them withdraw
into the countryside near the head of the York River. There they braced themselves for an attack they considered inevitable. One of the places in which Ingram’s men were holed up was Colonel Pate’s, where Bacon died.

Governor William Berkeley’s men seized the opportunity to quell the uprising and during November and December 1676 many of the rebel leaders were hunted down and captured, some in their strongholds. Sands Knowles of Kingston Parish in Gloucester County was taken into custody on October 20, 1676, and transported to the Eastern Shore where he was presented to Governor Berkeley. Knowles’ property was seized for the use of loyalist troops and he was imprisoned until March 15, 1677, at which time he partook of the general pardon issued by King Charles II. Knowles then asked for a return of his confiscated property. Another Gloucester County man, George Seaton, also was captured and taken to the Eastern Shore. His property, like Knowles’, was seized. Later he too was released and pardoned.

On January 11th and 12th, 1677, four rebel leaders were hauled before Governor Berkeley and his Council and tried in a court martial hearing held aboard a ship anchored at Tindall’s Point. All four, who were convicted and sentenced to be hanged, were executed on the south side of the York River at Colonel Read’s plantation. On January 16th the rebel commander Joseph Ingram surrendered in his stronghold at West Point. Four days later court martial proceedings were held at Middle Plantation, where two more rebel leaders were tried, convicted, and sentenced to death. When Governor William Berkeley returned to Jamestown on January 22nd, he discovered that the capital city lay in ruins. He then withdrew to Green Spring, where he found his plantation “much spoilt and plundered in his absence.”

Colonel Thomas Hansford reportedly was captured by Robert Beverley I while paying “his obligations in the Temple of Venus” and brought before Governor Berkeley. Although he asked to be shot like a soldier not “hanged like a dog,” Berkeley insisted that since he had taken up arms against the king, he was guilty of treason and the mode of his execution was proscribed by law. On February 10, 1677, Governor Berkeley authorized the justices of York County “to keep Court in the house lately belonging to Thomas Hansford, whose Estate for his rebellion and treason is forfeited to his sacred Majestie.”

In early January 1677 Captain Thomas Grantham took his ship the Concord to West Point where he persuaded approximately three hundred of Bacon’s men to surrender. He promised to see that they were pardoned. Afterward, the men marched to Tindall’s Point, where Grantham broke out a barrel of brandy. There the redeemed rebels drank toasts to Governor Berkeley and the King. Later in the month several of Bacon’s followers were hauled before a military tribunal held at Green Spring, then the interim seat of government. According to Governor Berkeley’s own account, his soldiers killed four of Bacon’s “most obstinate officers” and two others died in prison. A total of fourteen men were executed. Many of Bacon’s followers simply surrendered. John Williams, who lived near Tindall’s Point, regained possession of three sloops that had been seized from him by Nathaniel Bacon supporters.

When the King’s Special Commissioners arrived in Virginia in January 1677 with troops that had been sent to quell the popular uprising, they learned that Governor Berkeley and his supporters had gained the upper hand, Bacon was dead, and there was much destruction throughout the countryside. The Commissioners asked each county’s freeholders to submit a petition in which they stated why they were dissatisfied with the
Berkeley government. The list of grievances Gloucester County free-holders complied included complaints about taxes and the costliness and ineffectiveness of the forts built to defend the colonists against the Indians. The Gloucester men claimed that Assembly meetings (which were funded by tax revenues) were being held too frequently, and that Major Robert Beverley I (one of Governor Berkeley’s supporters) had abused his power by conscripting soldiers and then using them to cut down trees on his property. They also stressed the importance of seeing that the colony’s arms and ammunition were kept in a secure place. Sands Knowles of Gloucester County was among those that complained about Robert Beverley I’s actions. In a formal petition he sent to the king, he alleged that on October 20, 1676, Beverley’s men raided his plantation and carried off slaves, servants, and goods that were worth four hundred pounds sterling. He said that he was imprisoned for three months. James Bridgeforth, John Bond, and Thomas Whittinoll attested to the validity of Knowles’ claim. William Howard claimed that Robert Beverley I had entered his home on pretext of searching for Howard’s son-in-law, John Harris, who was in Bacon’s army, but that he left with servants and goods valued at five-hundred pounds sterling. George Seaton also contended that his goods had been seized by Robert Beverley I.
The Declaration of the People Against Sir William Berkeley, 1676

First Hand Accounts of Virginia, 1575-1705
From the Virtual Jamestown Project

This document is Nathaniel Bacon’s summary of the grievances of the people of Virginia against Sir William Berkeley, governor of the colony, and his advisors. The declaration includes a list of each of the grievances and of Berkeley’s “wicked and Pernicious Councellours and Confederates, Aiders and Assistants against the Commonality.

The Declaration of the People, against Sir William Berkeley, and Present Governors of Virginia

For having upon specious Pretences of public Works raised unjust Taxes, upon the Commonalty. For advancing of Private favorites. And other sinister Ends, but no visible Effect, in any Measure adequate.

For not having during the Long time of his Government, In any Measure advanced, this hopeful colony, either by Fortifications, Towns, or Trade.

For having abused, and rendered contemptible, his Mates: Justice, by advancing to Places of Judicature, scandalous and ignorant favorites.

For having wronged his mates: Prorogative, and Interest, by assuming the monopoly of the beaver Trade.

For having in that unjust gain, betrayed and sold, His Mate: country, and the Liberties of his loyal Subjects to the Barbarous Heathen.

For having, Protected, favored, and emboldened the Indians against his Mates: most loyal Subjects; never Contriving, requiring, or appointing any due or proper means of Satisfaction; for their many Incursions, murders, and Robberies, Committed upon Us.

For having when the army of the English, was upon the Tract of the Indians, which now in all Places, burn spoil, and Murder, And when we might with ease, have destroyed them, who were in open hostility.

For having expressly, countermanded, and sent back, our army, by Passing his word, for the Peaceable demeanors of the said Indians, who immediately prosecuted their evil Intentions - Committing horrid Murders and Robberies, in all Places, being Protected by the said Engagement, and word passed by Him the said Sr: Wm: Berkeley having Ruined and made Desolate, a great Part of his Mates: country, having now drawn themselves into such obscure and remote places, and are by their success so emboldened, and Confirmed, and by their Confederates strengthened. That the cries of Blood, are in all Places, and the Terror, and Consternation of the People so great, That They are not only become difficult, but a very formidable enemy Who might with Ease have been destroyed.
When upon the loud outcries of Blood, the Assembly had with all Care, raised and framed an army, for the Prevention of future mischief, and safe guard of his Mates: colony.

For having only with the privacy of a few favorites, without the acquainting of the People, only by Alteration of a Figure forged a Commission, by I know not what hand, not only without, but against the Consent of the People, for the Raising and Effecting of civil war, and Destruction, which being happily and without Bloodshed prevented.

For having the second time attempted the same, thereby calling down our forces from the defense of the frontiers, and most weakened and Exposed Places, for the prevention of civil mischief, and ruin amongst our selves; while the barbarous enemy in all places did Invade Murder and spoil us, his Mates: loyal Subjects.

Of these the aforesaid Articles we accuse Sr. Wm: Berkeley as guilty of Each and every of the same. As one who hath traitorously attempted, violated and Injured his Mates: Interest here, by the loss of a great Part of his Mates: colony, and many of his faithful and loyal Subjects, by Him betrayed in a Barbarous and shameful Manner Exposed to the Incursion, and murder of the Heathen. And We further declare the Ensuing Persons in this List to have been his wicked and Pernicious counsellors and Confederates, Aiders, and Assistants against the Commonalty in these our civil Commotions.

Sr: Henrie Chicekly       Wm: Cole
Phillip Ludwell          Rich: Spencer  Jon: Cuffe: Clerk
Robert Beverlie          Joseph Bridges  Hub: Farrill
Richard Lee              Wm. Claybourne
Thomas Ballard           Thom: Hawkins  John: West
Wm. Sherwood.            Math: Kemp      Tho: Readmuch

And we further Command that the said Sir William Berkeley with all the Persons in this List be forthwith delivered up, or Surrender Themselves, within four days after the notice hereof, or otherwise we declare as follows.

That in whatsoever place, House, or ship, any of the said Persons shall Reside, be hid, or protected, we do declare the Owners, Masters and Inhabitants of the said Parties, to be Confederates, traitors to the People and the Estates, of them; as also of all the aforesaid Persons, to be Confiscated, this we the Commons of Virginia do declare.

Desiring a firm union amongst our Selves, that we may jointly and with one accord defend our selves against the Common enemy, and let not the faults of the guilty, be the Reproach of the Innocent, or the faults and Crimes of the oppressors, divide and separate us who have suffered, by their oppressions.
These are therefore in his mates: name to command you: forthwith to seize the Persons above mentioned, as traitors to the King, and country, and Them to bring to the Middle Plantations, and there to secure them till further Order and in Case of opposition, if you: want any further Assistance, you are forthwith to demand It. In the name of the People, in all the Counties of Virginia.

Nathaniell Bacon
General, by Consent of the People.
Bacon’s Manifesto, 1676

Perhaps one reason the revolt in Massachusetts succeeded was because there was a great deal of unity among its inhabitants; indeed, there was some sort of majority rule (or at least majority dissent). That had not been the case over a decade earlier in Virginia when the colonists there split between those who supported Governor William Berkeley’s Indian policies and defended his administration, and those who favored Nathaniel Bacon’s ideas. Bacon’s Rebellion (1676), which was ultimately a battle over who was to rule at home, showed that aggressive Indians were not just an external threat to colonial life, but that their actions could create reactions from the colonists that consequently produced violent schisms within settler communities. Bacon was a recent immigrant to Virginia and a young man still in his twenties when he challenged Governor William Berkeley’s authority. Representing the small farmers of the frontier who had been battling the natives, he called for the extermination of the Indians so as to secure the territory. When Berkeley appeared to be more interested in subduing the frontiersmen than the Indians, Bacon and his adherents marched against the government in Jamestown to force the issue. Having been declared a rebel, pardoned, and then condemned again, Bacon rebutted the charges against him and other rebels in a public declaration that outlined their motivation and purpose.

. . . [I]f there bee as sure there is, a just God to appeal too, if Religion and Justice be a sanctuary here, If to plead the cause of the oppressed, If sincerely to aime at his Majesties Honour and the Publick good without any reservation or by Interest, If to stand in the Gap after soe much blood of our dear Brethren bought and sold, If after the losse of a great part of his Majesties Colony deserted and dispeopled, freely with our lives and estates to indevor to save the remaynders bee Treason God Almighty Judge and lett guilty dye, But since wee cannot in our hearts find one single spott of Rebellion or Treason or that wee have in any manner aimed at subverting the setled Government or attempting of the Person of any either magistrate or private man not with standing the severall Re-proaches and Threats of some who for sinister ends were disaffected to us and censured our innocent and honest designes, and since all people in all places where wee have yet been can attest our civill quiet peaseable behaviour farre different from that of Rebellion and tumultuous persons let Trueth be bold and all the world know the real Foundations of pretended giult, Wee appeale to the Country itselfe what and of what nature their Op-pressions have bin or by what Caball and mistery the designes of many of those whom wee call great men have bin transacted and caryed on, but let us trace these men in Authority and Favour to whose hands the dispensation of the Countries wealth has been commited; let us observe the sudden Rise of their Estates composed with the Quality in which they first entered this Country Or the Reputation they have held here amongst wise and discerning men, And lett us see wither their extractions and Education have not bin vile, And by what pretence of learning and vertue they could soe soon into Imple-ments of so great Trust and consequence, let us consider their sudden advancement and let us also consider wither any Publick work for our safety and defence or for the Ad-
vancement and propogation of Trade, liberall Arts or sciences is here Extant in any [way]
adaquate to our vast chardg, now let us compare these things togith[er] and see what
spounges have suckt up the Publique Treasure and wither it hath not bin privately con-
trived away by unworthy Favourites and juggling Parasites whose tottering Fortunes have
bin repaired and supported at the Publique chardg, now if it be so Judg what greater giult
can bee then to offer to pry into these and to unriddle the mysterious wiles of a powerfull
Cabal let all people Judge what can be of more dangerous Import then to suspect the soc
long Safe proceedings of Some of our Grandees and wither People may with safety open
their Eyes in soc nice a Concerne.

Another main article of our Giult is our open and manifest aversion of all, not onely the
Foreign but the protected and Darling Indians, this wee are informed is Rebellion of a
deep dye For that both the Governour and Councell are by Colonell Coales Assertion
bound to defend the Queen and Appamatocks with their blood Now whereas we doe de-
clare and can prove that they have bin for these Many years enemies to the King and
Country, Robbers and Theeves and Invaders of his Majesties’ Right and our Interest and
Estates, but yet have by persons in Authority bin defended and protected even against
His Majesties loyall Subjects and that in soc high a nature that even the Complaints and
oaths of his Majesties Most loyall Subjects in a lawfull Manner proffered by them against
those barborous Outlawes have bin by the right honourable Governour rejected and the
Delinquents from his presence dismissed not only with pardon and indemnitye but with
all incouragement and favour, . . .

Another main article of our Giult is our Design not only to ruine and extirpate all Indians
in Generall but all Manner of Trade and Commerce with them, Judge who can be inno-
cent that strike at this tender Eye of Interest; Since the Right honourable the Governour
hath bin pleased by his Commission to warrant this trade who dare oppose it, or oppos-
ing it can be innocent, Although Plantations be deserted, the blood of our dear Brethren
Split, . . .

Another Article of our Giult is To Assert all those neighbour Indians as well as others to
be outlawed, wholly unqualifyed for the benefitt and Protection of the law, For that the
law does reciprocally protect and punish, and that all people offending must either in
person or Estate make equivalent satisfaction or Restitution according to the manner and
merit of the Offences Debts or Trespasses; Now since the Indians cannot according to
the tenure and forme of any law to us known be prosecuted, Seised or Complained
against, Their Persons being difficulty distinguished or known, Their many nations lan-
guages, and their subterfuges such as makes them incapeable to make us Restitution or
satisfaction would it not be very giulty to say They have bin unjustly defended and pro-
tected these many years.

If it should be said that the very foundation of all these disasters the Grant of the Beaver
trade to the Right Honourable Governour was illegall and not granteable by any power
here present as being a monopoly, were not this to deserve the name of Rebell and Tray-
tor.

Judge therefore all wise and unprejudiced men who may or can faithfully or truely with an
honest heart attempt the country’s good, their vindication and libertie without the asper-
sion of Traitor and Rebell, since as soc doing they must of necessity gall such tender and
dear concernes, But to manifest Sincerity and loyalty to the World, and how much wee abhorre those bitter names, may all the world know that we doe unanimously desire to represent our sad and heavy grievances to his most sacred Majesty as our Refuge and Sanctuary, where wee doe well know that all our Causes will be impartially heard and Equall Justice administred to all men.

1. Further editorial insertions that appear in square brackets are from Billings’ edition.

Credits

Living History Character - Peggy Pickett
Lesson Plans and Activities - Julie Bray
Technological Director - Mark Hofer
Jamestown Historic Park Services Consultant - Bill Warder
Music Composition - Blake Bray
Narration - Steve Whitaker

Books:


Pictures and Photographs:

Pictures provided by the National Parks Service at Historic Jamestowne and the Library of Congress. Painting of Giles Hanging and Governor Berkeley from Berkeley Plantation.
The declaration and Remonstrance of Sir William Berkeley
his most sacred Majesties Governor and Captain Generall
of Virginia

Sheweth That about the yeare 1660 CoIl. Mathews the then Governor dyed
and then in consideration of the service I had don the Country, in defending
them from, and destroying great numbers of the Indians, without the loss of
three men, in all the time that warr lasted, and in contemplation of the equall
and uncorrupt Justice I had distributed to all men, Not onely the Assembly
but the unanimous votes of all the Country, concurred to make me Governor
in a time, when if the Rebells in England had prevailed, I had certainly dyed
for accepting itt, `twas Gentlemen an unfortunate Love, shewed to me, for to
shew myselfe gratefull for this, I was willing to accept of this Governement
againe, when by my gracious Kings favour I might have had other places
much more profitable, and lesse toylesome then this hath beene. Since that
time that I returned into the Country, I call the great God Judge of all things
in heaven and earth to witnes, that I doe not know of any thing relateive to
this Country wherein I have acted unjustly, corruptly, or negligently in
distributeing equall Justice to all men, and takeing all possible care to
preserve their proprietys, and defend the from their barbarous enimies.

But for all this, perhapps I have erred in things I know not of, if I have I am
soe conscious of humane frailty, and my owne defects, that I will not onely
acknowledge them, but repent of, and amend them, and not like the Rebell
Bacon persist in an error, onely because I have comitted itt, and tells me in
diverse of his Letters that itt is not for his honnor to confess a fault, but I am
of opinion that itt is onely for divells to be incorrigable, and men of principles
like the worst of divells, and these he hath, if truth be reported to me, of
diverse of his ex pressions of Atheisme, tending to take away all Religion and
Laws.

And now I will state the Question betwixt me as a Governor and Mr. Bacon,
and say that if any enimies should invade England, any Councellor Justice of
peace or other inferiour officer, might raise what forces they could to protect
his Majesties subjects, But I say againe, if after the Kings knowledge of this
invasion, any the greatest peere of England, should raise forces against the
kings prohibition this would be now, and ever was in all ages and Nations
accompted treason. Nay I will goe further, that though this peere was truly
zealous for the preservation of his King, and subjects, and had better and
greater abilitys then all the rest of his fellow subjects, doe his King and
Country service, yett if the King (though by false information) should suspect
the contrary, itt were treason in this Noble peere to proceed after the King's
prohibition, and for the truth of this I appeale to all the laws of England, and
the Laws and constitutions of all other Nations in the world, And yett further
itt is declared by this Parliament that the takeing up Armes for the King and
Parliament is treason, for the event shewed that what ever the pretence was
to seduce ignorant and well affected people, yett the end was ruinous both to
King and people, as this will be if not prevented, I doe therefore againe declair that Bacon proceeedinge against all Laws of all Nations modern and ancient, is Rebell to his sacred Majesty and this Country, nor will I insist upon the sweareing of men to live and dye togeather, which is treason by the very words of the Law.

Now my friends I have lived 34 yeares amongst you, as uncorrupt and dilligent as ever Governor was, Bacon is a man of two yeares amongst you, his person and qualities unknowne to most of you, and to all men else, by any vertuous action that ever I heard of, And that very action which he boasts of, was sickly and fooleishly, and as I am informed treacherously carried to the dishonnor of the English Nation, yett in itt, he lost more men then I did in three yeares Warr, and by the grace of God will putt myselfe to the same daingers and troubles againe when I have brought Bacon to acknowledge the Laws are above him, and I doubt not but by God's assistance to have better success then Bacon hath had, the reason of my hopes are, that I will take Councell of wiser men then my selfe, but Mr. Bacon hath none about him, but the lowest of the people.

Yett I must further enlarge, that I cannot without your helpe, doe any thinge in this but dye in defence of my King, his laws, and subjects, which I will cheerfully doe, though alone I doe itt, and considering my poore fortunes, I can not leave my poore Wife and friends a better legacy then by dyeing for my King and you: for his sacred Majesty will easeily distinguish betweene Mr. Bacons actions and myne, and Kinges have long Armes, either to reward or punish.

Now after all this, if Mr. Bacon can shew one precedens or example where such actings in any Nation what ever, was approved of, I will mediate with the King and you for a pardon, and excuce for him, but I can shew him an hundred examples where brave and great men have beeue putt to death for gaineing Victorys against the Comand of their Superiors.

Lastly my most assured friends I would have preserved those Indians that I knew were powerly att our mercy, to have beeue our spies and intelligence, to finde out our bloody enimies, but as soone as I had the least intelligence that they alsoe were trecherous enimies, I gave out Commissions to distrOy them all as the Commissions themselves will speake itt.

To conclude, I have don what was possible both to friend and enimy, have granted Mr. BacOn three pardons, which he hath scornefullly rejected, suppoaseing himselfe stronger to subvert then I and you to maineteyne the Laws, by which onely and Gods assisting grace and mercy, all men mwt hope for peace and safety. I will add noe more though much more is still remaineinge to Justifie me and condemne Mr. Bacon, but to desier that this declaration may be read in every County Court in the Country, and that a Court be presently called to doe itt, before the Assembly meet, That your approbation or dissatissfaction of this declaration may be knowne to all the
Country, and the Kings Councell to whose most revered Judgments itt is submitted, Given the xxith day of May, a happy day in the xxv"ith yeare of his most sacred Majesties Reigne, Charles the second, who God grant long and prosperously to Reigne, and lett all his good subjects say Amen.
Maryland: 1. Danger — 59:60
Cap. L冠军船 Profst. — 60
Col. Warner Spook of Iotting Marko on the Denmark Men The Ship Surprised & taken by the Govrn. party — 61
Cap. Core Eversdom
F. Sidney Sheldonys Danger Distast — 62
Gow. Barons Doath — 63
Ingram was let Submitted and pardoned
M. Drumond put to Doath
Larsen with 4 othred never honed of Gow. Barons Bones never found — 64
The Fleet arrived from England
Bland emany othred Ecluded Fleet return to England — 65
Gowrn. & Doath — 66
Thomas Matthews Narrative

Photo of actual primary source document attached at the bottom of this translation.

The Beginning, Progress, and Conclusion of Bacon’s Rebellion, 1675-1676
Thomas Matthew’s Narrative

Excerpts: The 13th. July  1705
a) To the Right Honoble Robert Harley, Esquire Her Majties Principal Secretary of State, and One of her Most Honoble Privy Council.

“Beseeching your honour will vouchsafe to Allow, that in 30 Years, divers occurrences are laps’d out of mind, and others Imperfectly retained.” Thomas Matthews

b) “ My Dwelling was in Northumberland, the lowest County on Potomack River, Stafford being the upmost; where having also a Plantation, Servant’s, cattle, etc… My Overseer there had agreed with one Robert Hen to come thither, and be my Herdsman, who then lived Ten Miles above it; But on a Sabbath day Morning in the summer Anno 1675, People in their way to church, saw this Hen lying th’wart his Threshold, and an Indian with out the Door, both Chopt on their Heads, Arms and other parts, as if done with Indian Hatchetts. Th’ Indian was dead, but Hen when ask’d who did that? Answered “Doeg, Doegs,” and soon died, then a Boy came out from under a Bed, where he had hid himself, and told them, Indians had come at break of day and done those Murders.

From this Englishman’s blood did (by degrees) arise Bacon’s Rebellion with the following Mischiefs which Overspread all Virginia and twice endangered Maryland, as by the ensuing Account is Evident.”

(Stafford County Virginia lay farthest from Jamestown, being a frontier region a hundred miles away by land and much more by water. The Doegs were an Indian tribe dwelling in Maryland)

c) “The Susquehanoughs were newly driven from their inhabitations, at the head of the Chesapeake Bay, by the Cineka-Indians (Senecas,”the greatest and most considerable nation,” were at this time pressing down from the north upon the Susquehanoughs), down to the head of Potomack, where they sought protection under the Pascataway Indians where they had a fort near the head of that river, and were also our Friends.”

The Walls of this fort were high banks of Earth, with Flankers having many loop holes, and a ditch round all, and without this a row of tall trees fastened 3 foot Deep in the Earth, their bodies from 5 to 8 inches diameter, watled 6 inches apart to shoot through the tops twisted together, and articially wrought, as our men could make no breach to storm it, nor being low land could they undermine it by reason of water-neither had they cannon to batter it. So that twas not taken, until famine drove the Indians out of it. These escaped Indians forsaking Maryland, took their route over the head of the Potomack River, and thence over the heads of the Rappahannock and York Rivers, killing whom they found of the upmost Plantations until they came to the head of James River where (with Bacon and
others) they slew Mr. Bacon’s overseer whom he much loved, and one of his servants whose blood he vowed to revenged if possible.

d) In these frightful times the most exposed small families withdrew into our houses of better numbers, which we fortified with palisades and redoubts, neighbors in bodies joined their labours from each plantation to others Alternately, taking their arms into fields and setting centinels; no man stirred out of door unarmed, Indians were (ever and anon) espied, Three, 4, 5, or 6 in a party lurking throughout the whole land, yet (what was remarkable) I rarely heard of any houses burnt, tho abundance was forsaken, nor ever, of any corn or Tobacco cut up, or other injury done, besides murders, except the killing a very few cattle and swine. Frequent complaints of bloodshed were sent to Sir William Berkeley (then Governor) from the heads of the rivers, which were often answered with promises of assistance.

These at the heads of James and York Rivers (having now most people destroyed by the Indians flight thither from Potomack) grew impatient at the many slaughters of their neighbours and rose for their own defense, who chusing Mr. Nathaniel Bacon for their leader sent often times to the Governor, humbly beseeching a commission to go against those Indians at their own charge which his Honor as often promised but did not send; the Misteryes of these delays, were wondered at and which I ne’ver heard any could Penetrate into, other than the effects of his passion, and a new ( not to be mentioned) occasion of Avarice, to both which he was (by the common vogue) more than a littled addicted; whatever were the popular surmises and murmurings vizt. “That no bullets would pierce Bever Skins.” “Rebells forfeitures woud be loyall inheritances etc.”

During these Protractions and People often Slaine, most or all the Officers, Civill and Military, with as many Dwellers next the Heads of the Rivers as made up 300 Men, taking Mr. Bacon for their Commandr, met, and Concerted together, the Danger of going without a Commissn on the one Part, and the Continuall Murders of their Neighbours on th’ other Part (not knowing whose or how many of their own turns might be next) and Came to this Resolution vizt. To prepare themselves with necessaries for a March, but interim to send again for a Commission, which if could or could not be Obteyed by a certaine day, they woud proceed Commission or no Commission.

This day Lapsing and no Commission come, They march’d into the Wilderness in Quest of these Indians after whom the Governour sent his Proclamation, Denouncing all Rebells, who should not return within a Limited Day, Whereupon those of Estates obey’d; But Mr. Bacon with 57 men proceeded until their Provisions were Spent, without finding Enemy’s, when coming nigh a Fort of Friend Indians, on th’ other Side a Branch of James River, they desired reliefe offering payment, which these Indians kindly promised to help them with on the Morrow, but put them off with promises until the Third day, So as having then eaten their last Morsells, They could not return, but must have starved in the Way homeward and now ‘twas Suspected, these Indians had received private Messages from the Governour and those to be the Causes of these Delusive procrastinations; Whereupon the Pallisado’s still intreating and tendering Pay, for Victuals; But that evening a shot from the Place they left on th’ other side of that Branch kill’d one of Mr. Bacon’s Men, which made them believe, those in the Fort had sent for other Indians to come behind ’em and Cut ‘em off.
Hereupon they fired the Palisado’s, Storm’d and burnt the Fort and Cabins, and (with the losse of Three English) Slew 150 Indians. The Circumstances of this expedition Mr. Bacon Entertained me with, at his own Chamber, on a visit I made him, the occasion whereof is hereafter mentioned.

From hence they returned home where Writts were come up to elect Members for an Assemby, When Mr. Bacon unanimously Chosen for One, who coming down the River was Commanded by a ship with Guns to come on board, where waited Major Hone the High Sheriff of Jamestown ready to seize him, by whom he was carried down to the Governour and by him received with a Surprising Civillity in the following words, “Mr. Bacon have you forgot to be a Gentlemen?” “No, May it please your Honour, “ answered Mr. Bacon; “Then, “ replyed the Governour ‘I’le take your Parol,” and Gave him his Liberty. (Mr. Thomas Matthews was also chosen to serve on the assembly went to Jamestown)

e) The next forenoon, th’ Assembly being met in a chamber over the generall court and our Speaker chosen, the governour sent for us down, where his honor with a pathetic Emphasis made a short abrupt Speech wherein were these words.
“If they had killed my Grandfather and Grandmother, my father and my mother and all my friends, yet if they had come to treat of peace, they ought to have gone in Peace,” and sat down. The two chief commanders at the forementioned siege, who slew the four Indian Great men, being present and part of our Assembly.

The Governour stood up againe and said,” if there be joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repenteth, there is joy now, for we have a penitent sinner come before us, call Mr. Bacon;” then did Mr. Bacon upon one knee at the Bar deliver a Sheet of paper Confessing his Crimes, and begging Pardon of God the King and the Governour, Whereeto (after a short pause) He answered” God forgive you, I forgive you,” thrice repeating the same words: When Collo. Cole (One of the Councill) said, “and all that were with him,” “yea,” said the Governour “and all that were with him,” Twenty or more Persons being then in Irons Who were taken Coming down in the same and other Vessels with Mr. Bacon.

About a Minute after this the Governour, Starting up from his Chair a Third time said,” Mr. Bacon! If you will live Civilly but till next Quarter Court (doubling the Words) but till next Quarter Court, Ile promise to restore you againe to your Place There,” pointing with his hand to Mr. Bacon’s Seat, he having been of the Councill before these troubles, tho’ he had been a very short time in Virginia but was Deposed by the foresaid Proclamation, and in the afternoon passing by the Court door, in my way up to our Chamber, I saw Mr. Bacon on his quondam Seat with the Governour and Councill, which Seemed a Marveilous Indulgence to one whom he had so lately Proscribed as a Rebell.

f) One Morning early a Bruit ran about the Town, “Bacon is fled, Bacon is Fled,” Whereupon I went straight to Mr. Lawrence, Who (formerly) was of Oxford University, and for Wit Learning and Sobriety was equall’d there by few. Mr. Lawrence complained loudly of the Governour bore him a Grudge and now shaking his head, said, “Old Treacherous Villian,” and that his House was searcht that Morning, at day break, but Bacon was Escaped into the Country, having Intimation that the Governours Generosity in Pardoning him and his followers and restoring him to his Seat in Councill, were no
other than Previous Wheadles to amuse him and his Adherents and to Circumvent them Stratagem, forasmuch as the taking Mr. Bacon again into the Councill was first to keep him out of the Assembly, and in the next place the Governour knew the Country People were hasting down with Dreadfull Threatenings to double revenge all Wrongs shou’d be done to Mr. Bacon or his Men, or whoever shou’d have had the least hand in ‘em.

g) In Three or Four daies after this Escape, upon News that Mr. Bacon was 30 Miles up the River, at the head of four hundred Men, The Governour sent to the Parts adjacent, on both Sides James River for the Militia and all Men could be gotten to Come and Defend the Town. Express’s Came almost hourly of th’ Army’s Approaches, who in less than 4 daies after the first Account of ‘em att 2 of the Clock entred the town, without being withstood, and form’d a Body upon a green, not a flight Shot from the End of the Statehouse, of Horse and Foot, as well regular as vetran Troops, who forthwith Possest themselves of all the Avenues, Disarming all in Town, and Coming thither in Boats or by Land.

In half an hour more Mr. Bacon came with a file of Fusileers on either hand near the Corner of the Statehouse where the Governour and Councill went forth to him: We Saw from the Window the Governour open his Brest, and Bacon Strutting betwixt his Two files of Men with his Left Arm on Kenbow flinging his Right Arm every Way both like men Distracted; and if in this Moment of fury, that Enraged Multitude had fal’n upon The Governour and Councill. We of the Assembly Expected the same Immediate fate; I Stept down and amongst the Crowd of Spectators found the Seaman of my sloop, who pray’d me not to Stir from them, when in Two Minutes, the Governour Walk’d towards his Private Apartm, a Coits cast Distant at th’ other end of the Statehouse, the Gentlemen of the Councill following him, and after them walked Mr. Bacon with outrageous Postures of his Head, Arms, Body, and Leggs, often tossing his hand from his Sword to his Hat and after him came a Detachment of Fusileers (Musketts not being there in Use) Who with their Cocks Bent presented their Fusils at a Window of the Assembly Chamber filled with faces, repeating with Menacing Voices, “We will have it, We will have itt,” half a Minute when as one of our house a person known to many of them Shook his Handkercher out at the Window, Saying “You shall have it, You shall have itt,” 3 or 4 times; at these Words they sate Down their fusils, unbent their Locks and stood Still until Bacon coming back, they followed him to their Main Body; In this hubbub a Servant of mine got so nigh as to hear the Governours Words, and also followed Mr. Bacon, and heard what he said, who came and to the Governour, That When the Governour opened his Brest he said, “Here! Shoot me, foregod, fair Mark, Shoot,” often Rehearsing the same, without any other Words; Whereto Mr. Bacon Answer’d “No May it please your honor, We will not hurt a hair of your Head, nor of any other Mans, We are Come for a Comission to save our Lives from th’ Indians, which you have so often promised, and now We Will have it before we go;”

But when Mr. Bacon followed the Governour and Councill with the forementioned impetuous (like Delirious) Actions whil’st that Party presented their fusils at the Window full of Faces, He said “Dam my boud, I’le Kill Governr Councill Assembly and all, and then Ile Sheath my Sword in my own heart’s bloud” and afterwards ‘twas Said Bacon had Given a Signal to his Men who presented their fusils at
those Gasing out at the Window, that if he shou'd draw his Sword, they were on sight of it
to fire, and Slay us, So near was the Masacre of us all that very Minute, had Bacon in that
Paroxism of Phrentick fury was drawn his Sword, before the Pacifick Handkercher was
Shaken out at Window.

In an hour or more after these violent Concussions Mr. Bacon came up to our
Chamber and Desired a Commission from us to go against the Indians; Our Speaker sat
Silent, When one Mr. Blayton a Neighbour to Mr. Bacon and elected with him a member
of Assembly for the same County ( Who therefore durst Speak to him), made Answer,
“twas not in our Province, or Power, nor of any other, save the Kings Vicegerent our
Governour,” he pressed hard nigh half an hours Harangue on the Preserving our lives
from the Indians, Inspecting the Publick Revenues, th’ exhorbitant Taxes and redressing
the Grievances and Calamities of that Deplorable Country, Whereto having no other
Answer, He went away Dissatisfied.

h) The next day there was a rumour the Governour and Councill had agreed Mr. Bacon
shou’d have a Commission to Go Generall of the Forces, we then were raising.(This
assembly commonly called the Reforming or Bacon’s Assembly, met at Jamestown, June
5, and sat until June 25, the day before Bacon Marched out of town. All the acts of this
assembly were afterwards declared void both by royal instruction and proclamation, and
by formal act of the assembly which met at Green Springs, February 20, 1677. Bacon
took the title “General of the Virginia War” and issued commissions to his followers,
authorizing them to “impress horse, armies, and furniture for and in order to their present
march,” July 1676. Many who accepted commissions went vigorously to work to aid him,
until the commission was recinded by Governour Berkeley, when they withdrew.)

i) Thomas Matthews went home to Patomack, were reports afterwards were various; We
had Account that Generall Bacon was March’d with a Thousand Men into the Forest to
seek the Enemy Indians, and in a few daies after our next News was, that the Governour
had summoned together the militia of Gloucester and Middlesex Counties to the Number
of Twelve Hundred Men, and proposed to them to follow and Suppress that Rebell
Bacon; “ whereupon arose a murmuring before his face “Bacon, Bacon, Bacon,” and all
walked out of the field, muttering as they went “ Bacon, Bacon, Bacon,” leaving the
Governour and those that came with him to themselves, who being thus abandoned
wafted over Chesepiacke Bay 30 miles to Accomack where are two counties of Virginia.
(Berkeley lived in the house of Colonel John Custis)

j) The Governour made a 2nd attempt coming over from Accomack with what men he
could procure in Sloops and Boats, forty Miles up the River to James Town, which Bacon
hearing of, Came againe down from his Forest Pursuit, and finding a Bank not a flight
Shot long, Cast up thwart the Neck of the Peninsula there in James Town, in which Attack
were 12 Men Slaine and Wounded But the Governour with most of his followers fled
back, down the River in their Vessells.

Here resting a few daies they Concerted the Burning of the Town, wherein Mr.
Laurence and Mr. Drummond owning the Two best houses save One, Set fire to his own
house, which Example the Souldiers following Laid the whole Town (with Church and
Statehouse) in Ashes, Saying, The Rogues shoud harbour no more there.
On these Reiterated Molestacions Bacon Calls a Convention at Midle Plantation 15 miles from James Town in the Month of August 1676, Where an Oath with one or more Proclamations were formed, and Writts by him Issued for an assembly; The Oaths or Writts I never Saw, but One Proclamation Commanded all Men in the Land on Pain of Death to Joine him, and retire into the Wildernesse upon Arivall of the forces Expected from England, and opposed them until they shoud propose or accept to treat of an Accomodation, which we who lived Comfortably coul not have undergone, so as the whole Land must have become an Aceldema if Gods exceeding Mercy had not timely removed him.

k) Mr. Bacon now returns from his last Expedition Sick of a Flux, without finding any enemy Indians, having not gone far by reason of the Vexations behind him, nor had he one dry day in all his Marches to and fro in the Forrest whilst the Plantations (not 50 miles distant) had a summer so dry as stinted the Indian Corn and Tobacco etc. Which the people ascribed to the Pawawings, ie the Sorceries of the Indians, in a While Bacon dyes and was succeeded by his Lieutenant Genll. Ingram. Bacon’s Body was so made away, as his Bones were never found to be Exposed on a Gibbet as was purpos’d, Stones being laid in his coffin, Supposed to be done by Laurence.
With Reverence for the Past: Gloucester County, VA

Bacon’s Rebellion –Gloucester County
By Martha McCartney

By the mid-1670’s, Governor William Berkeley had held office for a total of nearly thirty years. During his administration the planter elite had solidified their political power. As a result public officials were perceived as opportunists who profited handsomely from performing duties that were a public trust. The colonists chafed under the restraints of the Navigation Acts and they were uneasy about the king’s bestowing grants of Virginia land upon his favorites, along with the right to collect revenues. As taxes soared, there were rumors of Indian troubles in the New England colonies. There were also sporadic outbreaks of violence on the fringes of Virginia’s frontiers, where strong warlike Natives who lived above the fall line, sometimes attacked outlying homesteads. Hostile Natives also fell upon the colony’s Tributary Indians, who had moved inland just ahead of the continuously advancing frontier.

In March 1676 Virginia’s governing officials, who were obligated to protect colonists and Indian tribes that were tributaries to the Crown, decided to construct garrisons at nine locations that were considered strategically important. The one nearest Gloucester County was on the lower side of the Mattaponi River across from western King and Queen County. These forts, which were built at public expense, were extremely unpopular. As they were designed to withstand assault, it soon became painfully clear that they were useless against highly mobile bands of Natives whose strategy was one of ambush.

Young Nathaniel Bacon, whose Henrico County Plantation was attacked, volunteered to lead an unauthorized march against the Indians. Thus began the popular uprising known as Bacon’s Rebellion, which during 1676 spread throughout Tidewater Virginia. When Bacon and his followers converged on Jamestown, he demanded a commission that would allow him to pursue the Indians. Later he and his men returned and at gunpoint, forced the Assembly to enact a group of new laws. One made it legal to patent Indian land as soon as it had been abandoned. This gave unethical planters an incentive to drive the Natives from the acreage that had been reserved for their use.

After Bacon left Jamestown, he roamed about the countryside, trying to rally men. Governor Berkeley, meanwhile, received a petition from some people in Gloucester County, who questioned the validity of Bacon’s commission. If it was not a legitimate, they wanted protection from his men, who were confiscating their horses, arms, and ammunition, leaving them defenseless. Berkeley set out for Gloucester, “a place the best replenished for men, arms, and affection of any County in Virginia.” But when he tried to recruit men, he met with little success. Gloucester’s citizens reportedly declared their loyalty to Berkeley but were unwilling to oppose Bacon, whom they believed was pursuing the Indians, their avowed enemy. Berkeley, uneasy about the lack of support, eventually withdrew to the Eastern Shore. Bacon on the other hand, marched to Middle Plantation, where he drafted a “Declaration of the People,” and a little later, his “Manifesto.”

When Governor William Berkeley returned to Jamestown on September 7, 1676, he found the capital city garrisoned by five hundred of Bacon’s men. They were under
the command of Colonel Thomas Hansford of York County, whose family also had land in Gloucester. Although Berkeley offered to pardon Bacon’s common soldiers if they would lay down their arms, many of them feared repercussions and fled.

Meanwhile, Nathaniel Bacon, who had been unable to muster enough men to march against the Natives at the fringes of the frontier, turned his wrath upon a convenient target, Pamunkey Indians who recently had signed a peace agreement with the Berkeley government. Bacon and his followers pursued the Pamunkeys into Dragon Swamp, where they killed men, women, and children indiscriminately, took captives, and plundered the goods of the Natives. Bacon then set out for Jamestown, displaying his Pamunkey prisoners along the way to demonstrate his prowess as an Indian fighter. Upon reaching the isthmus that connected Jamestown Island to the main land, he had his men dig a defensive trench. From that position he commenced shelling the capital city. Governor Berkeley, who realized that he was badly outnumbered, boarded a ship and returned to the safety of the Eastern Shore. As soon as Berkeley departed, Bacon and his men entered Jamestown, purposely putting its buildings to the torch. In the fierce blaze that occurred on September 19, 1676, the colony’s statehouse was destroyed, along with the parish church and most of the community’s houses and business establishments.

Afterward Nathaniel Bacon and many of his followers withdrew to Tindall’s Point, where they took an oath of loyalty to their leader. While in Gloucester County Bacon made Colonel Augustine Warner’s house his headquarters. He drafted a document that denounced the Berkeley government. Then he summoned the men of Gloucester County to the Courthouse, where he asked them to sign the paper he had prepared. Instead, many of them preferred to remain neutral. That angered Bacon’s men, who began looting and plundering property of those perceived as Berkeley’s supporters. One such man was Augustine Warner of Warner hall, who paid dearly for his loyalty.

On October 26, 1676, the popular uprising literally was dealt a mortal blow. Nathaniel Bacon reported succumbed to the bloody flux and a “lousey disease” while at the Pate home in Gloucester County, probably the residence of Colonel Thomas Pate whose property was on the east side of the Poropotank River’s head. Upon learning of Bacon’s death, Governor Berkeley proffered that he had been felled by the hand of Providence. He cited Bacon’s often blasphemous language and quoted “an honest Minister,” who reportedly wrote the following epitaph: “Bacon is Dead I am sorry at my hart That lice and flux should take the hangman’s part.” Where Nathaniel Bacon’s corpse was buried remains a mystery. According to one contemporary account, “his bones were neer found to be exposed on a gibbet as was purpos’d, stones being laid in his coffin,” purportedly by Richard Lawrence, one of his most staunch supporters.

Nathaniel Bacon’s successor, Joseph Ingram, was an uninspiring and most cautious leader who lacked Bacon’s charisma and sense of purpose. In the words of one eyewitness to Bacon’s Rebellion, “The Lion had no sooner made his exit, but the Ape (by indubitable right) steps upon the stage.” Another writer said that “the Titmouse…was becom an Elliphant.” Ingram divided his men into small groups and had them withdraw into the countryside near the head of the York River. There they braced themselves for an attack they considered inevitable. One of the places in which Ingram’s men were holed up was Colonel Pate’s, where Bacon died.

Governor William Berkeley’s men seized the opportunity to quell the uprising and during November and December 1676 many of the rebel leaders were hunted down
and captured, some in their strongholds. Sands Knowles of Kingston Parish in Gloucester County was taken into custody on October 20, 1676, and transported to the Eastern Shore where he was presented to Governor Berkeley. Knowles’ property was seized for the use of loyalist troops and he was imprisoned until March 15, 1677, at which time he partook of the general pardon issued by King Charles II. Knowles then asked for a return of his confiscated property. Another Gloucester County man, George Seaton, also was captured and taken to the Eastern Shore. His property, like Knowles’, was seized. Later he too was released and pardoned.

On January 11th and 12th, 1677, four rebel leaders were hauled before Governor Berkeley and his Council and tried in a court martial hearing held aboard a ship anchored at Tindall’s Point. All four, who were convicted and sentenced to be hanged, were executed on the south side of the York River at Colonel Read’s plantation. On January 16th the rebel commander Joseph Ingram surrendered in his stronghold at West Point. Four days later court martial proceedings were held at Middle Plantation, where two more rebel leaders were tried, convicted, and sentenced to death. When Governor William Berkeley returned to Jamestown on January 22nd, he discovered that the capital city lay in ruins. He then withdrew to Green Spring, where he found his plantation “much spoilt and plundered in his absence.”

Colonel Thomas Hansford reportedly was captured by Robert Beverley I while paying “his obligations in the Temple of Venus” and brought before Governor Berkeley. Although he asked to be shot like a soldier not “hanged like a dog,” Berkeley insisted that since he had taken up arms against the king, he was guilty of treason and the mode of his execution was proscribed by law. On February 10, 1677, Governor Berkeley authorized the justices of York County “to keep Court in the house lately belonging to Thomas Hansford, whose Estate for his rebellion and treason is forfeited to his sacred Majestie.”

In early January 1677 Captain Thomas Grantham took his ship the Concord to West Point where he persuaded approximately three hundred of Bacon’s men to surrender. He promised to see that they were pardoned. Afterward, the men marched to Tindall’s Point, where Grantham broke out a barrel of brandy. There the redeemed rebels drank toasts to Governor Berkeley and the King. Later in the month several of Bacon’s followers were hauled before a military tribunal held at Green Spring, then the interim seat of government. According to Governor Berkeley’s own account, his soldiers killed four of Bacon’s “most obstinate officers” and two others died in prison. A total of fourteen men were executed. Many of Bacon’s followers simply surrendered. John Williams, who lived near Tindall’s Point, regained possession of three sloops that had been seized from him by Nathaniel Bacon supporters.

When the King’s Special Commissioners arrived in Virginia in January 1677 with troops that had been sent to quell the popular uprising, they learned that Governor Berkeley and his supporters had gained the upper hand, Bacon was dead, and there was much destruction throughout the countryside. The Commissioners asked each county’s freeholders to submit a petition in which they stated why they were dissatisfied with the Berkeley government. The list of grievances Gloucester Count free-holders compiled included complaints about taxes and the costliness and ineffectiveness of the forts built to defend the colonists against the Indians. The Gloucester men claimed that Assembly meetings (which were funded by tax revenues) were being held too frequently, and that Major Robert Beverley I (one of Governor Berkeley’s supporters) had abused his power
by conscripting soldiers and then using them to cut down trees on his property. They also stressed the importance of seeing that the colony’s arms and ammunition were kept in a secure place. Sands Knowles of Gloucester County was among those that complained about Robert Beverley I’s actions. In a formal petition he sent to the king, he alleged that on October 20, 1676, Beverley’s men raided his plantation and carried off slaves, servants, and goods that were worth four hundred pounds sterling. He said that he was imprisoned for three months. James Bridgeforth, John Bond, and Thomas Whittinoll attested to the validity of Knowles’ claim. William Howard claimed that Robert Beverley I had entered his home on pretext of searching for Howard’s son-in-law, John Harris, who was in Bacon’s army, but that he left with servants and goods valued at five-hundred pounds sterling. George Seaton also contended that his goods had been seized by Robert Beverley I.