

**The Westover Manuscripts:  
Containing the History of the Dividing Line Betwixt Virginia  
and North Carolina;  
A Journey to the Land of Eden, A. D. 1733; and A Progress to  
the Mines.**

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## **HISTORY OF THE DIVIDING LINE:**

**RUN IN THE YEAR 1728.**

BEFORE I enter upon the journal of the line between Virginia and North Carolina, it will be necessary to clear the way to it, by showing how the other British colonies on the Main have, one after another, been carved out of Virginia, by grants from his majesty's royal predecessors. All that part of the northern American continent now under the dominion of the king of Great Britain, and stretching quite as far as the cape of Florida, went at first under the general name of Virginia.

The only distinction, in those early days, was, that all the coast to the southward of Chesapeake bay was called South Virginia, and all to the northward of it, North Virginia.

The first settlement of this fine country was owing to that great ornament of the British nation, sir Walter Raleigh, who obtained a grant thereof from queen Elizabeth of ever-glorious memory, by letters patent, dated March the 25th, 1584.

But whether that gentleman ever made a voyage thither himself is uncertain; because those who have favoured the public with an account of his life mention nothing of it. However, thus much may be depended on, that sir Walter invited sundry persons of distinction to share in his charter, and join their purses with his in the laudable project of fitting out a colony to Virginia.

Accordingly, two ships were sent away that very year, under the command of his good friends Amidas and Barlow, to take possession of the country in the name of his royal mistress, the queen of England.

These worthy commanders, for the advantage of the trade winds, shaped their course first to the Charibbe islands, thence stretching away by the gulf of Florida, dropped anchor not far from Roanoke inlet. They ventured ashore near that place upon an island now called Colleton island, where they set up the arms of England, and claimed the adjacent country in right of their sovereign

lady, the queen; and this ceremony being duly performed, they kindly invited the neighbouring Indian to traffick with them.

These poor people at first approached the English with great caution, having heard much of the treachery of the Spaniards, and not knowing but these strangers might be as treacherous as they. But, at length, discovering a kind of good nature in their looks, they ventured to draw near, and barter their skins and furs for the bawbles and trinkets of the English.

These first adventurers made a very profitable voyage, raising at least a thousand per cent. upon their cargo. Amongst other Indian commodities, they brought over some of that bewitching vegetable, tobacco. And this being the first that ever came to England, sir Walter thought he could do no less than make a present of some of the brightest of it to his royal mistress, for her own smoking. The queen graciously accepted of it, but finding her stomach sicken after two or three whiffs, it was presently whispered by the earl of Leicester's faction, that sir Walter had certainly poisoned her. But her majesty soon recovering her disorder, obliged the countess of Nottingham and all her maids to smoke a whole pipe out amongst them.

As it happened some ages before to be the fashion to saunter to the Holy Land, and go upon other Quixote adventures, so it was now grown the humour to take a trip to America. The Spaniards had lately discovered rich mines in their part of the West Indies, which made their maritime neighbours eager to do so too. This modish frenzy being still more inflamed by the charming account given of Virginia, by the first adventurers, made many fond of removing to such a paradise.

Happy was he, and still happier she, that could get themselves transported, fondly expecting their coarsest utensils, in that happy place, would be of massy silver.

This made it easy for the company to procure as many volunteers as they wanted for their new colony; but, like most other undertakers who have no assistance from the public, they starved the design by too much frugality; for, unwilling to launch out at first into too much expense, they shipped off but few people at a time, and those but scantily provided. The adventurers were, besides, idle and extravagant, and expected they might live without work in so plentiful a country.

These wretches were set ashore not far from Roanoke inlet, but by some fatal disagreement, or laziness, were either starved or cut to pieces by the Indians.

Several repeated misadventures of this kind did, for some time, allay the itch of sailing to this new world; but the distemper broke out again about the year 1606. Then it happened that the earl of Southampton and several other persons, eminent for their quality and estates, were invited into the company, who applied themselves once more to people the then almost abandoned colony. For this purpose they embarked about a hundred men, most of them reprobates of good families, and related to some of the company, who were men of quality and fortune.

The ships that carried them made a shift to find a more direct way to Virginia, and ventured through the capes into the bay of Chesapeake. The same night they came to an anchor at the

mouth of Powhatan, the same as James river, where they built a small fort at a place called Point Comfort.

This settlement stood its ground from that time forward in spite of all the blunders and disagreement of the first adventurers, and the many calamities that befel the colony afterwards.\*

The six gentlemen who were first named of the company by the crown, and who were empowered to choose an annual president from among themselves, were always engaged in factions and quarrels, while the rest detested work more than famine. At this rate the colony must have come to nothing, had it not been for the vigilance and bravery of captain Smith, who struck a terror into all the Indians round about. This gentleman took some pains to persuade the men to plant Indian corn, but they looked upon all labour as a curse. They chose rather to depend upon the musty provisions that were sent from England: and when they failed they were forced to take more pains to seek for wild fruits in the woods, than they would have taken in tilling the ground. Besides, this exposed them to be knocked on the head by the Indians, and gave them fluxes into the bargain, which thinned the plantation very much. To supply this mortality, they were reinforced the year following with a greater number of people, amongst which were fewer gentlemen and more labourers, who, however, took care not to kill themselves with work.

These found the first adventurers in a very starving condition, but relieved their wants with the fresh supply they brought with them. From Kiquotan they extended themselves as far as James-town, where, like true Englishmen, they built a church that cost no more than fifty pounds, and a tavern that cost five hundred.

They had now made peace with the Indians, but there was one thing wanting to make that peace lasting. The natives could, by no means, persuade themselves that the English were heartily their friends, so long as they disdained to intermarry with them. And, in earnest, had the English consulted their own security and the good of the colony--had they intended either to civilize or convert these gentiles, they would have brought their stomachs to embrace this prudent alliance.

The Indians are generally tall and well-proportioned, which may make full amends for the darkness of their complexions. Add to this, that they are healthy and strong, with constitutions untainted by lewdness, and not enfeebled by luxury. Besides, morals and all considered, I cannot think the Indians were much greater heathens than the first adventurers, who, had they been good Christians, would have had the charity to take this only method of converting the natives to Christianity. For, after all that can be said, a sprightly lover is the most prevailing missionary that can be sent amongst these, or any other infidels.

Besides, the poor Indians would have had less reason to complain that the English took away their land, if they had received it by way of portion with their daughters. Had such affinities been contracted in the beginning, how much bloodshed had been prevented, and how populous would the country have been, and, consequently, how considerable? Nor would the shade of the skin have been any reproach at this day; for if a Moor may be washed white in three generations, surely an Indian might have been blanched in two.

The French, for their parts, have not been so squeamish in Canada, who upon trial find abundance of attraction in the Indians. Their late grand monarch thought it not below even the dignity of a Frenchman to become one flesh with this people, and therefore ordered 100 livres for any of his subjects, man or woman, that would intermarry with a native.

By this piece of policy we find the French interest very much strengthened amongst the savages, and their religion, such as it is, propagated just as far as their love. And I heartily wish this well-concerted scheme does not hereafter give the French an advantage over his majesty's good subjects on the northern continent of America.

In the evening we examined our friend Bearskin, concerning the religion of his country, and he explained it to us, without any of that reserve to which his nation is subject. He told us he believed there was one supreme God, who had several subaltern deities under him. And that this master God made the world a long time ago. That he told the sun, the moon, and stars, their business in the beginning, which they, with good looking after, have faithfully performed ever since. That the same Power that made all things at first has taken care to keep them in the same method and motion ever since. He believed that God had formed many worlds before he formed this, but that those worlds either grew old and ruinous, or were destroyed for the dishonesty of the inhabitants. That God is very just and very good--ever well pleased with those men who possess those god-like qualities. That he takes good people into his safe protection, makes them very rich, fills their bellies plentifully, preserves them from sickness, and from being surprised or overcome by their enemies. But all such as tell lies, and cheat those they have dealings with, he never fails to punish with sickness, poverty and hunger, and, after all that, suffers them to be knocked on the head and scalped by those that fight against them. He believed that after death both good and bad people are conducted by a strong guard into a great road, in which departed souls travel together for some time, till at a certain distance this road forks into two paths, the one extremely level, and the other stony and mountainous. Here the good are parted from the bad by a flash of lightning, the first being hurried away to the right, the other to the left. The right hand road leads to a charming warm country, where the spring is everlasting, and every month is May; and as the year is always in its youth, so are the people, and particularly the women are bright as stars, and never scold. That in this happy climate there are deer, turkeys, elks, and buffaloes innumerable, perpetually fat and gentle, while the trees are loaded with delicious fruit quite throughout the four seasons. That the soil brings forth corn spontaneously, without the curse of labour, and so very wholesome, that none who have the happiness to eat of it are ever sick, grow old, or die. Near the entrance into this blessed land sits a venerable old man on a mat richly woven, who examines strictly all that are brought before him, and if they have behaved well, the guards are ordered to open the crystal gate, and let them enter into the land of delight. The left hand path is very rugged and uneven, leading to a dark and barren country, where it is always winter. The ground is the whole year round covered.

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The left hand path is very rugged and uneven, leading to a dark and barren country, where it is always winter. The ground is the whole year round covered with snow, and nothing is to be seen upon the trees but icicles. All the people are hungry, yet have not a morsel of any thing to eat, except a bitter kind of potato, that gives them the dry gripes, and fills their whole body with loathsome ulcers, that stink, and are insupportably painful. Here all the women are old and ugly, having claws like a panther, with which they fly upon the men that slight their passion. For it seems these haggard old furies are intolerably fond, and expect a vast deal of cherishing. They talk much, and exceedingly shrill, giving exquisite pain to the drum of the ear, which in that place of torment is so tender, that every sharp note wounds it to the quick. At the end of this path sits a dreadful old woman on a monstrous toad-stool, whose head is covered with rattle-snakes instead of tresses, with glaring white eyes, that strike a terror unspeakable into all that behold her. This hag pronounces sentence of woe upon all the miserable wretches that hold up their hands at her tribunal. After this they are delivered over to huge turkey-buzzards, like harpies, that fly away with them to the place above mentioned. Here, after they have been tormented a certain number of years, according to their several degrees of guilt, they are again driven back into this world, to try if they will mend their manners, and merit a place the next time in the regions of bliss.

This was the substance of Bearskin's religion, and was as much to the purpose as could be expected from a mere state of nature, without one glimpse of revelation or philosophy. It contained, however, the three great articles of natural religion: the belief of a God; the moral distinction betwixt good and evil; and the expectation of rewards and punishments in another world. Indeed, the Indian notion of a future happiness is a little gross and sensual, like Mahomet's paradise. But how

can it be otherwise, in a people that are contented with Nature as they find her, and have no other lights but what they receive from purblind tradition?

14th. There having been great signs of rain yesterday evening, we had taken our precautions in securing the bread, and trenching in our tent. The men had also stretched their blankets upon poles, pent-house fashion, against the weather, so that nobody was taken unprepared. It began to fall heavily about three o'clock in the morning, and held not up till near noon. Every thing was so thoroughly soaked, that we laid aside all thoughts of decamping that day. This gave leisure to the most expert of our gunners to go and try their fortunes, and they succeeded so well, that they returned about noon with three fat deer, and four wild turkeys. Thus Providence took care of us, and however short the men might be in their bread, it is certain they had meat at full allowance. The cookery went on merrily all night long, to keep the damps from entering our pores; and in truth the impressions of the air are much more powerful upon empty stomachs. In such a glut of provisions, a true woodsman, when he has nothing else to do, like our honest countrymen the Indians, keeps eating on, to avoid the imputation of idleness; though, in a scarcity, the Indian will fast with a much better grace than they. They can subsist several days upon a little rockahominy, which is parched Indian corn reduced to powder. This they moisten in the hollow of their hands with a little water, and it is hardly credible how small a quantity of it will support them. It is true they grow a little lank upon it, but to make themselves feel full, they gird up their loins very tight with a belt, taking up a hole every day. With this slender subsistence they are able to travel very long journeys; but then, to make themselves amends, when they do meet with better cheer, they eat without ceasing, till they have ravened themselves into another famine.