

## Kith and Kin of King Carter

There used to be an old saying—"everybody in the Northern Neck is kith and kin." This was almost a fact.

It all came about because in the early days the families of wealth and ability assumed leadership locally and in the Colonial Government. It was the custom of these families to intermarry in order to keep the power of wealth and influence within their own circle.

By the end of the eighteenth century it was hardly possible to find a prominent Northern Neck who was not "kin" to some other outstanding Virginian. This rigid rule of "keeping up the bars," as they called it, resulted in an aristocracy similar in many ways to the nobility of the Old World. This system accounts for the high political intelligence for which Tidewater Virginia was noted.

The marriages of King Carter's children illustrate this characteristic of colonial life in the Northern Neck, and in Virginia. King Carter married only twice but he had twelve children.

By his first wife, Judith Armistead, King Carter had four children, John, Elizabeth, Judith and Anne.

Judith died in 1699, and he married Elizabeth Landon Willis, a widow and daughter of Thomas Landon of England. She died in 1719. The best known of her eight children are Robert, Charles, Landon, Mary and Lucy.

Elizabeth, the eldest daughter, was married to Nathaniel Burwell. King Carter gave her Carter's Grove. After Burwell died she married George Nicholas. Judith married Mann page of Rosewell, in Gloucester County. Anne married Benjamin Harrison of Berkeley, on the James.

Mary married George Braxton of Newington, in King and Queen County. Lucy married Colonel Henry Fitzhugh of Eagle's Nest, in Stafford County, on the Potomac.[Pg 101]

John became a barrister in the Middle Temple, London, and married Elizabeth Hill of Shirley, on the James. Robert settled on the plantation of Nomini, on the Potomac. He married Priscilla, the daughter of William Churchill, a member of the Council.

Charles married three times—Mary Walker, Anne, daughter of William Byrd of Westover, and Lucy Taliaferro. His home was Cleve on the Rappahannock.

Landon's home was Sabine Hall, on the Rappahannock. He married

three times—an Armistead of Hesse, a Byrd of Westover and a Wormeley of Rosegill.

King Carter's direct descendants include: a signer of the Declaration of Independence (Carter Braxton), two Presidents of the United States (the Harrisons), and General Robert E. Lee.

Thus King Carter's children were well established. These Carters and the heads of other top-ranking families were sometimes known in the Northern Neck as the "river barons."

Source: The Stronghold A Story of Historic Northern Neck of Virginia and Its People by Miriam Haynie