

What Happened to the Ships of Nathaniel Bacon and Others

The wills of deceased persons sometimes revealed ownership of vessels. Of particular interest is the will of Nathaniel Bacon, Senior, in which he bequeathed to his wife and his nephew, Lewis Burwell, "all ships or parts of ships to me belonging in any part of the world."

These were to be disposed of by Abigail, his wife, and the nephew as they saw fit. An inventory of the estate of one Thomas Lloyd of Richmond County dated October 27, 1699 lists one decked sloop on the stocks, unfinished, of about thirty tons; one small open sloop newly launched, not finished, of twenty-five tons; one new flat, one old ditto; one old barge; one parcel of handsaws, etc.

Sir Edmund Andros, Governor of Virginia in 1698, in answering the inquiries of the Council of Trade and Plantations, the clearing house for colonial affairs, stated that there were 70,000 inhabitants in Virginia, and the number of vessels reported by the owners were four ships, two barks, four brigantines, and seventeen sloops. His report for the previous year had named eight ships, eleven brigantines, and fifteen sloops that had been built for which carpenters, iron work, rigging, and sails had been brought from England.

Source: Some Notes On Shipbuilding and Source: Shipping In Colonial Virginia by Cerinda W. Evans.