

The Blevins Men **of** **Monocacy and Goochland**

The Southern Migration of the James Bliven Family

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The information contained herein represents both original research and my compilations and interpretations of the work of others. Please address any comments, suggestions, criticisms, or corrections to me:

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Acknowledgment

I wish to gratefully acknowledge the work and contributions of my 4th cousin, once removed, Alton Blevins. Alton has done an enormous amount of original research and *most* of the Rhode Island references and *many* of the later references used within this paper were his original discoveries. Alton prefers to not publish his work beyond his own immediate family sphere but has graciously encouraged me to use his relevant findings herein.

I also wish to acknowledge the critical review of this document provided by both Alton and noted researcher, B. B. Blevins. B. B. began his Blevins research in the early 1970s and was the publisher of an early newsletter called *The Blevins Heritage Magazine*. Over the years he has graciously shared with me many data files and copies of his early, unpublished work products.

Preface

As most researchers know, the surname Blevins has been subjected to a wide array of spelling variations over the years. A detailed discussion of those variations and their likely causes is presented in the Preface of my paper *The Blevins Men of New York and New England*.

In this paper, I generally use the spellings *Blevins* and *Bliven* but present the *questionable* spellings found within the documentation parenthetically or within quotation marks.

I have unilaterally chosen to use in this document, the spelling *Wallen* for the surname variously spelled as *Wallen*, *Walling*, *Wallin*, *Wallens*, *Walden*, etc. within the original or transcribed records. I apologize, in advance, to researchers and members of this family group for my presumption in this regard.

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The Blevins Men of Monocacy and Goochland

Introduction

A pervasive, but provably incorrect Blevins story is that a man named William Blevins, born in 1690, was the patriarch of the Southern Branch of the Blevins family. I don't know the origin of this story but the earliest print mention I have found was in a 1972 document written by Bill Dwayne Blevins of Mountain Home, Arkansas titled *Blevins Ancestry, a Historical and genealogical record of the descendants of Richard Blevins & Rhonda Scott (Volume I)*.

Although this document dealt primarily with the Richard and Rhonda Scott Blevins line, the author presented a two-page preface dealing with what he called *A Glimpse of the Early Day Blevins*. Within this preface he wrote:

It is believed that the patriarch of our Blevins line was a William Blevins who came to America in the late 1600s, and temporarily settled in what is now the state of Maryland. Appearing at this time is a William Blevins born c.a. 1690 who is presumed to be the son of the William Blevins. Also found was a Richard Blevins appearing as a witness to power of attorney paper in Richmond County, Virginia 7 Nov. 1721. It is possible that this Richard is a brother of William.

WILLIAM BLEVINS, born c.a. 1690. His tentative family:

1. John
2. James
3. William
4. Mary, b. c.a. 1710, m. Elisha Walden
5. Daniel

I find his verbiage a bit puzzling where he wrote "Appearing at this time is a William Blevins born c.a. 1690 who is presumed to be the son of the William Blevins." I can only assume he was implying that William, born 1690 had a father named William ("the William Blevins"). This could help explain the Blevins genealogy in broad circulation today that speaks of a William #1, a William #2, and a William #3.

The author was *correct* regarding the record of an early Virginia man named Richard Blevins who served as a witness in 1721. His "possible" relationship to a William Blevins, however, was mere speculation and provably incorrect. This Richard Blevins will be discussed later.

Although the author was *incorrect* naming William as the southern Blevins patriarch, he was almost certainly *correct* concerning the names of the southern Blevins patriarch's *children* (although he presented them in an incorrect order of birth). The author provided a bibliography of information sources, but no source was provided specific to the above.

I am reasonably sure that Bill Dwayne Blevins did not originate the William Blevins story. It was quite probably a part of Blevins family lore for many years prior to 1972.

The 1982 Laccie W. and Ray E. Blevins book *Jonathan Blevins Sr. of Virginia and His Descendants* only briefly touched upon the William Blevins story (on page 21) as follows:

It is believed by some that Elisha Walling married Mary Blevins, daughter of William Blevins, most likely in Prince George's County, Maryland, about 1732-1734....

The author provided no specific reference source for the above statement.

A widely circulated but undated and anonymous Blevins reference reads as follows:

The records of the *Rhode Island Historical Society* show that a William Blevins left Rhode Island in 1724 to join with other Blevins in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

Several contemporary Blevins researchers (myself included) have found no confirmation of this "reference" in any Rhode Island historical document. In fact, we have never found a *single* record supporting the contention that a *man* named "William Blevins" ever lived in Rhode Island during the 17th or early 18th centuries. I must conclude, therefore, that the above "reference" was fabricated based on false assumptions and has no basis in truth.

Another reference, generally attached to the Rhode Island "reference" above, reads as follows:

The records show that Elisha and William Wallen left home in Salem County, NJ and joined the Blevins family in Bucks County, PA.

I have never found *any* original documentation supporting the above "reference" but I consider a Bucks County, Blevins-Wallen connection to be somewhat plausible, albeit without a man named William Blevins. Bucks County includes the eastern-most tip of Pennsylvania and is fairly close to Salem County, New Jersey, the proven birthplace of Elisa Wallen, Senior (also known as Elisha Walling I). A leading researcher of the Wallen family considers the Bucks County connection to be speculation only.

Finally, the 1990 book *Elisha Wallen the Longhunter* by Carolyn D. Wallin repeats the William Blevins misinformation. On page 59, she introduced "Elisha Walling I" (aka Elisha Wallen, Sr., the almost-certain father of Elisha Wallen the Longhunter). Ms. Wallin wrote, on page 59:

Elisha Walling I - Elisha was born on 7-26-1708 in Salem County, New Jersey. His death was possibly between 1783 and 1785 in Henry County, Virginia. He married Mary Blevins. She was born 1710 ca., the daughter of William Blevins. In Mrs. Mattie (Rice) Howard's notes of 2-16-1868, she described Elisha and his wife.

Ms. Wallin heavily annotated her book with reference sources. She specifically cited the previously discussed 1972 Bill Dwayne Blevins document when naming Mary Blevins, her date of birth, and her father's name. She also cited the previously mentioned 1982 Laccie and Ray Blevins book as a second source for *some* of this information. The 1868 Mattie Rice notes mentioned in the above extract *does* provide historically significant Blevins-Wallen information and will be covered in detail later.

The real patriarch of *most* of the southern Blevins families was not a man named William Blevins. Using the New England spelling protocol, his name was James Bliven. I say "most" of the southern Blevins families because I have no doubt that other Blevins ancestors arrived on these shores and found their way south, particularly in the middle of the 19th century. The sons of James Bliven, however, were almost certainly the men who produced the first generations of southern-born Blevins people.

Sometime between 1718 and 1732, James Bliven (before 1688 - after 1745) and his proven wife, Margery Tosh (1689 - before August 1743) removed their family from the town of Westerly in what is now Washington County, Rhode Island. By 1733, and perhaps as early as 1730, they settled in what was then, the Monocacy Hundred of Prince George's County in western Maryland.

When Prince George's County was formed in 1696 (and until 1748) it included the areas of present-day Montgomery, Frederick, and Washington Counties of Maryland. The Monocacy Hundred (also spelled "Monacasia", "Monocasia", "Monococosea", or "Monococosey" in the literature) was an early division of the county located a few miles east of present-day Frederick, Maryland along the Monocacy River. In 1733, this area was part of the American frontier.

Prior to 1721, the Monocacy area was only sparsely populated by a few squatters and traders. Starting about that time, a number of land speculators from eastern Maryland began surveying large parcels of land and obtaining grants for same in the hopes of future profits. Still, much of the land remained undeveloped and unsettled.

According to the 1987 Grace L. Tracey and John P. Dern book *Pioneers of Old Monocacy, The Early Settlement of Fredrick County Maryland 1721-1743*, the Lord Proprietary of Maryland issued a Proclamation on March 2, 1732/33 aimed at encouraging new settlement in western Maryland. This proclamation offered up to two hundred acres of land, in fee simple, for those settling on "vacant back lands on the northern or western boundaries of the Province between the Potomac and Susquehanna." The usual caution money (40 shillings per 100 acres) and quitrents (4 shillings per hundred acres) were not to be due for three years after the land's first settlement.

It is unclear if this offer was the enticement that lead James Bliven and his family south or if he had arrived in advance of this three-year deposit- and rent-deferment offer. What is known is that no land surveys or grants under the name Blevins (or variants) were made in this area between 1721 and 1743.

The Monocacy Footprints

The only extant Blevins records from the Monocacy Hundred area of Maryland are the "*List of Taxables, 1733 Monocose Hundred*" and a list of "*Those that had no tobacco burnt in Monocosea Hund., Aug 1734*".

The 1733 tax list covered more than 100 individuals and included the names Daniel "Blavin" and James "Blavin". Contrary to some contemporary claims, the name William Blevins (in any spelling variation) *did not* appear on this list.

Several other names of interest appeared on the 1733 tax list: Allen "Cocks"; Brewer, John, and Peter Cox; Flower Swift; and Elisha, James, and William "Walling". There were several unrelated Cox family lines in the colonies by this time so it isn't clear if the "Cocks" and Cox men of Monocacy were of the same Cox families that would, by the mid 1740s, frequently interact with the Blevins families in old Brunswick County of southern Virginia. A man named Flower Swift, apparently a grandson or great-grandson of the Flower Swift of Monocacy, would be associated in the later periods of the American Revolution with the Blevins families of old Montgomery County, Virginia.

It is almost certain, however, that the "Walling" men of Monocacy represented the *same* Wallen family that had likely already married into, would continue to marry into, and would heavily interact with the Blevins families by the mid 1740s in old Brunswick County, Virginia.

The 1733 tax list has long been a source of misinterpretation by Blevins researchers. The previously mentioned *Pioneers* book provides an alphabetized listing of all 106 names that appeared on the original tax list. The book cites *Maryland State Papers No. 1 The Black Books, para. 272 in the Calendar* as its source for the 1733 tax list. An examination of *The Black Books* source, however, shows that it simply provides a non-alphabetized transcription of all 106 names that appeared on the original tax list. Although both the *Pioneers* book and its *Black Books* source are undoubtedly accurate, they are somewhat misleading.

An examination of the original, handwritten tax lists (housed at the Maryland Hall of Records in Annapolis, MD) shows that James "Blavin" and Daniel "Blavin" are listed on the *same line* (James listed first) and are assessed "two taxables". The three "Walling" men on this list each appeared on a *separate line* with each assessed "one taxable". Similarly, the Cox men, the "Cocks" man, and Flower Swift each appeared on a *separate line* with each assessed "one taxable".

According to the 1972 Louise Joyner Hinton book *Prince George's Heritage, Sidelights on the Early History of Prince George's County, Maryland 1696-1800*, every free male, every male servant, and every slave (male or female) aged 16 years or older was considered "a taxable" in Maryland at the time. Exceptions were given to clergymen and "those receiving alms". An early Maryland "taxable" was therefore much the same

as a "tithable" in colonial Virginia, although, unlike Virginia, Maryland apparently did not excuse those over the age of 50.

The same-line listing of James and Daniel "Blavin" clearly suggests that Daniel was a 16-year-old (or older) member of the James "Blavin" household. In other words, Daniel was James' son.

This father-son interpretation is supported by the 1985 book (edited by C. E. Schildknecht) *Monocacy and Catoctin.... 1725-1985, Volume 1*. This book presents the 1733 tax information as a list of 92 different "Heads of Families taxed in Monocacy Hundred". This listing *includes* James "Blavin" but *excludes* Daniel.

Brewer, John, and Peter Cox, Allen "Cocks", Flower Swift, and William and Elisha "Walling" also appear on this list as "Heads of Families". For some unknown reason, James "Walling", who was shown as a single-line "one taxable" entry on the original 1733 tax list, is absent from this "Heads of Families" list.

The previously discussed *Elisha Wallen, the Longhunter* book names James "Walling" (born 1705) as a brother of both William (born 1701) and Elisha (born 1708) "Walling"; all sons of Thomas "Walling" and Sarah Elwell. The author also expressed her belief that all three were in Monocacy at the time and further stated that James "Walling" was married between 1724 and 1726 in New Jersey to a woman named Mary DeLashmutt. As such, he was almost certainly a family head in 1773. I suspect his absence from the "Heads of Families" list was simply an error in the *Monocacy and Catoctin* book.

The second Blevins footprint found within the Monocacy Hundred records is an August 1734 court record concerning the burning of tobacco.

Tobacco had been a major export crop for several American colonies since the early 17th century. Tobacco was so valued that it was often used as a medium of exchange for the currency-starved colonists. Fines, taxes, rewards, and debt payments were very often denominated in pounds of tobacco. One unintended consequence of farmland expansion in the early south, however, was an over abundance of the crop in some areas. This excess supply resulted in a reduction in the value of tobacco. The Maryland Colony responded to this excess supply by setting quality standards for tobacco and by mandating that "inferior" quality tobacco be destroyed by burning.

In the November 1733 session of the Prince George's County Court, John Nelson, Sr. was appointed Constable of Monocacy Hundred. One of his duties was to provide the Court with a list of those persons who had *not* burned their tobacco according to law. For the August Court of 1734, Nelson produced just such a list containing the names of 84 individuals. Included on the list were: James "Blevin"; Benj. and John Cox; Peter "Coxe"; and Elisha and William Wallen.

Noticeably absent from the 1734 tobacco list were a few names that had appeared on the 1733 tax list. One was Brewer Cox, but he was very likely the 1734-listed Benjamin

Cox. Also absent from the tobacco list were Allen "Cocks" and Flower Swift. Perhaps these men were lucky and had produced tobacco that met the standards of the day. Or perhaps they simply didn't farm tobacco.

Interestingly, James "Walling" was *also* absent from this list just as he was absent from the "Heads of Families" listing discussed above. He may have grown "good" tobacco or he may have only helped one or both of his brothers as a farm hand.

Daniel "Blavin" was also absent from the tobacco list. Such would be expected because his involvement in tobacco farming was almost certainly limited to being a farm hand for his father, James.

One of the objectives of this study has been to debunk the early William Blevins myth. That being said, it is almost certain that there *was* a William among the Monocacy Blevins group. He would have been a son of James and would have been about 13 years old in 1733. He would also have been one of Daniel's younger brothers. Along with Daniel and William, James had sons named John (about 15 years old in 1733) and James (about 9 years old in 1733). The provenance for James' other sons will be discussed later. James almost certainly also had a daughter named Mary and her provenance will be presented in the next section on Elisha Wallen, Sr. and the Mattie Rice Papers.

The *Pioneers of Old Monocacy* book notes that, in 1742, a petition called for the establishment of Frederick County through a division of Prince George's County. Another 1742 petition called for the establishment of All Saints Parish through a division of Prince George's Parish. No men named Blevins or Wallen (under any spelling variation) signed either Petition. Flower Swift signed the Parish Petition as did a man named Andrew Cox. (It should be noted that a man named Charles Beavan signed the 1742 County Petition but I am reasonably confident he had no relationship to the Blevins group.)

As will be discussed later, the Blevins family of Monocacy had removed to, what was then, Goochland County, Virginia sometime between 1734 and 1736. Although the absence of a signature on a petition does not prove the physical absence of a person, the fact that *most* of the Cox men and *all* of the Wallen men failed to sign either of the above petitions could *suggest* that these men had *also* removed from Monocacy prior to 1742.

I suspect that by 1736, the three-year deferment of quitrents and caution money came to an end and many people simply moved on to new lands.

Elisha Wallen, Sr. and the Mattie Rice Papers

In 1868, 18-year-old Martha Elisabeth "Mattie" Rice wrote down several brief accounts of the Rice, Matlock, and Senter families, which were inserted into her family Bible. Mattie Rice was a daughter of Rev. Henry Rice (1810-1862) who was a son of Isaac Rice (1776-1823). Mattie would later be married to a man with the surname Howard. These Bible entries were transcribed (probably around 1936) by one of Mattie's descendants; Mrs. Henry R. Howard (presumably, her granddaughter, Mary C. Howard) of Chattanooga, Tennessee and are generally referred to as "The Mattie Rice Papers".

A copy of the Mattie Rice Papers is found in the McClung Collection of the East Tennessee Historical Society under the heading: *"Rice Family Records of Riceville and Athens Tennessee Notes from records set down by Mattie Elisabeth Rice Howard. - 1868 - Copied by Mary C. Howard 2201 E. 14th S, Chattanooga, Tennessee"*.

Although Mattie provided a fair amount of information relative to the Rice and other families in her writings, the only information relevant to the Blevins family was transcribed as follows:

"Great Great grandfather Elisha Walden [sic], was large about the size of Rev. Henry Rice, dark skin, black hair and black eyes. One of the stoutest men in Virginia, New River, Surry whipped the great Champion at Chatt. White's store. His wife, Mary Blevins, was fair skin, blue eyes, common size, one of the neatest women in world. Blevins were wealthy.

Their daughter Margery Walden married Isaac Rice. She was dark skin, black eyes, tolerably tall. Betsy Walden married Will Roberts. Sarah Walden married Clem Lee. Their son's [sic]. John Walden married Elizabeth Roberts. Joseph married Milly Jones. Thomas, married Mary Cox. Joseph was killed by Indians. John's wife Elizabeth was killed by the Indians going to the Spring."

Contemporary family researchers have pointed to a number of errors made by Mattie in both the above excerpt and in other family information she provided. Most notably, her identification of Isaac Rice (her grandfather's name) as having married Margery "Walden" (her great-grandmother). Mattie's writing suggested that both her grandfather and great-grandfather were named Isaac, which in and of itself, was quite plausible. Rice family researchers point out, however, that Margery "Walden" was more likely the second (of three) wives of a man named John Rice who died in Roane County, Tennessee in 1815.

In spite of the probable errors in the Mattie Rice Papers, there appears to be universal acceptance of the Elisha "Walden" marriage to Mary Blevins. As Rice family researcher Daniel Mahar (a transcriber of the Mattie Rice Papers) wrote on May 16, 2000:

Mattie's apparent error in regard to the John/Isaac issue, though understandable, raises many other questions about her accounts and sources. Mainly we wonder how the Walden connection fits in. Certainly the oral history is extremely strong here as she provided physical descriptions of these people and it is extremely unlikely that she is wrong in identifying Elisha and Mary (Blevins) Walden as ancestors.

It should be noted that Mattie never mentioned the name of Mary Blevins' father or Mary's date of birth. She also made no mention of the geographical location where her great-great grandparents were married. As it is highly unlikely Mattie was aware that both Elisha Wallen, Sr. (Elisha Walling I) and the James Blevins family were together in 1733-1734 Monocacy, and because her writing predates all of the 20th century Blevins family "theories", I tend to believe her account as well.

The children of Elisha and Mary Blevins "Walden", as listed by Mattie, were Margery, Betsy, Sarah, John, Joseph, and Thomas. These names are repeated in the previously mentioned *Elisha Wallen the Longhunter* book as children of "Elisha Walling I and Mary Blevins" along with the names of three additional sons: Elisha, James, and Allen.

According to the *Elisha Wallen the Longhunter* book, Thomas was born between 1730 and 1733, Elisha was born about 1732, Joseph was born in 1734, and John was born in 1750. James was shown as being born in 1751 but, according to researcher Diana Williams, her ancestor James was actually born July 27, 1746.

No birth years were provided or estimated for Allen, Betsy, Sarah, or Margery but all were presumably born in the gap-years between Joseph and James or between James and John. The birth years for the children of Elisha Wallen, Sr. and Mary Blevins provide critical clues as to both Mary's year of birth and the year she was married to Elisha, Sr.

All of the earlier writings on Mary Blevins suggested that she was born in 1710. These 1710 estimates, however, all seem to be based on a single early estimate; the previously discussed 1972 Bill Dwayne Blevins document. If she really was born in 1710, she would have been 40 years old when her son John was born in 1750. Such is possible, of course, but given that relatively advanced age for motherhood, coupled with the estimated birth years of her younger siblings (to be discussed later), I believe 1714 is a more reasonable birth-year estimate for Mary. Mary is believed to have died in 1757 in what is now Henry County, Virginia. Her husband, Elisha Wallen, Sr. (Elisha Walling I) is believed to have died between 1783 and 1785.

The date of Mary's marriage to Elisha Wallen, Sr. is important as it provides an anchor date as to when and where the Blevins and Wallen groups first met. Given the uncertainty of Thomas Wallen's birth (1730-1733) and the relative confidence in Elisha Wallen, Jr.'s birth (1732), I believe it is reasonable to conclude that the marriage took place sometime between 1730 and 1732. As we know, the Blevins and Wallen people were in Monocacy by at least 1733. It is therefore *possible* that Monocacy was the meeting place. It is also *possible* that the families met at some intermediate migration settlement location, giving some plausibility to the Bucks County, Pennsylvania lore. I suspect we will never know for sure.

Mattie also wrote "Blevins were wealthy", a statement that, on the surface, seems odd relative to a family of (apparently unsuccessful) tobacco farmers. One Wallen

researcher has opined that in Mattie's vernacular, "wealthy" may have simply meant "good looking". I think it is more likely that Mattie was confusing some of her family lore.

As mentioned above, Elisha Wallen the Longhunter, the almost certain son of Elisha Wallen, Sr. and Mary Blevins, is believed to have been born around 1732. It has been *proven* that Elisha Wallen the Longhunter (~1732-1814) married Katherine Blevins (~1750-1834), a daughter of the man known as Captain William Blevins (or William Blevins the Elder) (~1720- after 1783) sometime in the mid-to-late 1760s in what is now Henry County, Virginia. William Blevins the Elder was probably considered to have been relatively wealthy during his adult life. He was a landowner and later records suggest that he owned his own cannon and as many as 10 slaves.

William Blevins the Elder was *also*, almost certainly, the 13-year-old William previously mentioned relative to 1733 Monocacy and was almost certainly a younger brother of Mary Blevins. If these relationships are correct - and I believe they are - then Elisha Wallen the Longhunter married his first cousin. This type of marriage was not at all uncommon in frontier areas.

Another pervasive Blevins myth holds that William Blevins the Elder was married to a woman named Agnes "Walling". We know her given name was Agnes or Agathy, but there is absolutely no documentary evidence to support the claim that her surname was "Walling". I believe that many Wallen family researchers also dismiss this claim citing their belief that no woman named Agnes "Walling" was known to exist at the time.

A final observation concerns the given name of Mattie's ancestor, Margery Wallen. She was very likely named after her maternal grandmother, Margery Tosh Bliven.

The Goochland Footprints

Sometime between 1734 and 1736, the James Blevins family removed from the Monocacy Hundred area of Maryland and settled on new lands in what was then, Goochland County, Virginia. Goochland County was formed from western Henrico Shire in 1728 and originally included all of the land on both sides of the James River from Tuckahoe Creek west to the Blue Ridge Mountains. In 1749, Cumberland County was formed from a part of Goochland that was south of the James River.

Although there is no *single* extant record that proves the tie between Monocacy and Goochland, or between Rhode Island and Monocacy for that matter, the circumstantial and documentary evidence is significant and requires the connection of many historical "dots". These "dots" will be covered in detail in the following discussions.

The first extant Blevins record in Goochland involves not James, but his second-oldest son, John. In August 1736, John Blevins appeared in the *Goochland County Court Records* when he, Rachel Dillon, and William Dillon, Jr. were witnesses for William Lawless of Henrico County, Virginia in his lawsuit against Hugh Boston. They were each paid 60 pounds of tobacco for their two days of court attendance.

John's appearance in court does not provide a definitive clue as to his birth year because males as young as 16 (some sources place the minimum age at 14) were permitted to act as sworn witnesses.

On August 15, 1737, James "Blevin" patented two land parcels in Goochland (now Cumberland) County. The first was for 400 acres on both sides of Little Muddy Creek, bounded by Ashford Hughes. The second was for 295 acres on both sides of Little Muddy Creek, bounded by Ashford Hughes, Richard Taylor, William Walton and Samuel "Nuckolds" (*Virginia Land Patent Book 17, pages 394 & 395*).

On September 22, 1739, John "Blevin" patented a 300-acre tract in Goochland (now Cumberland) County, Virginia (*Virginia Land Patent Book 18, pages 368-369*). His land was "situated on the branches of Turkey Cock Run of Willis River" and adjoined John Cunningham and Thomas Carter. This land patent establishes the fact that John Blevins was *born in, or before*, 1718. The fact that he was not included as "a taxable" on the 1733 Monocacy tax list suggests that he was born *after* 1717. I believe he was born in 1718.

On August 9, 1743, James "Blevin" sold his 400-acre tract to Edward Booker, Junior of Henrico County for £40. The witnesses were Thomas Moseley, Richard Ward, and Lusby Turpin (*Goochland County Deed Book 4, page 263*).

On August 13, 1743, James "Bleving" sold his 295-acre tract to Robert "Duglas" for £25. The witnesses were Robert Walton, Thomas Walton, and Richard Sullings (*Goochland County Deed Book 4, page 218*). The actual conveyance described the land as "a certain tract of land of two hundred ninety five acres in Goochland on the south side of

James River on Little Muddy Creek bounded by Ashford Hughes which land is *part of four hundred acres* patented to said Bleving on August 15, 1737".

Unfortunately for James (but fortunately for Blevins researchers), the tract of land was incorrectly described in his 1743, 295-acre conveyance; the tract was *not* a part of his 400-acre patent but was, instead, the entirety of a *separate* patent. To correct this mistake, James had to issue a *new* deed of conveyance to Robert Douglas two years later and will be discussed below.

The fact that James' wife Margery was not mentioned within either of his August 1743 land sales suggests that she likely died prior to August 1743.

William Blevins entered the extant written record on October 18, 1743 in Goochland County when Christopher Bolling and his wife Lydia conveyed a parcel of land to Tomas Fliphen. The land description included the following information "Scituate lying and being in the parish of Saint James and County of Goochland in the fork of Muddy Creek containing one hundred and fifty acres more or less...bounded viz...on Thomas Waltons line...thence on Ashford Hugheses line... thence on *William Blevens* line...on Ralph Flippens..." (*Goochland County Deed Book 4, page 250*). This was land that Christopher Bolling had purchased from Ashford Hughes on May 17, 1743 and was land that adjoined James "Blevings" at that time.

The above conveyance is significant as it represents the *only* reference to a man named William Blevins in Goochland County. This conveyance, in fact, represents the *earliest* extant documentary mention of a man named William Blevins *anywhere* on the continent.

Note: Some may take exception to the above statement citing a passage from the 1929 book *The History of Pittsylvania County, Virginia* by Maud Carter Clement. On page 42, Clement wrote the following paragraph:

"In 1741 Benjamin Clement, of Amelia, patented land on *Sycamore Creek of Staunton River*, where a few years later he made his home. The names of *William Blevin*, Richard Echols and William Muncus, three first settlers, appear on the *surveyor's record* at this time; also Mary, Henry and Ephraim Sizemore, one of whose patents was on Peter Mitchell's Creek, beginning at "the Roads"; and another included the place on which Ephraim lived."

The above paragraph *suggests* the presence of a man named William Blevins in the area in 1741. Clement's book is an excellent, well researched reference source but she made several provable errors of assumption or statements that could lead to misinterpretation. The above, I believe, is a prime example of both.

The 1749 tax list for Lunenburg County included a William "Blevin" on *Tithables from Falling River to Goose Creek*. Falling River and Goose Creek are both tributaries of the Staunton River. Goose Creek joins the Staunton to the west of the Sycamore Creek confluence. Falling River joins the Staunton to the east of Sycamore Creek at the present-day junction of Campbell, Charlotte, and Halifax counties. The location would *suggest* that this William "Blevin" is the *same* William mentioned in the above Clement 1741 reference and that his home, in 1749, was in the northern part of present-day

Pittsylvania County. I submit that Clement, influenced by the location provided in the 1749 tax list, *assumed* William Blevins was also there in 1741.

There is no mention of a William Blevins in the extant area survey records until March 13, 1748 (*Old Survey Book 1, 1746 - 1782, page 14*) and the first area mention of a William Blevins in any extant record is on October 28, 1745 when William "Bliven" made a land entry for 400 acres on both sides of Little Cherrystone Creek between Burton and "Wallings" Line. The next day, Elisha "Walling" (William's almost-certain brother-in-law) made an entry on 400 acres on both sides of Gt. Cherrystone Creek. (*Entry Record Book 1, 1737-1770, page 20 for both entry citations.*)

I believe that the above records demonstrate that by October of 1745, William Blevins of Goochland had removed to what was then, Brunswick County, Virginia and was living on land (probably as a squatter) in what is now the northern part of Pittsylvania County during his search for a permanent homestead.

There are no extant Goochland records that show a land patent or deed conveyance to William Blevins. The locations and other bordering land owners mentioned in the October 18, 1743, Christopher Bolling conveyance *suggests* that William Blevins had at some point acquired, via an apparently unrecorded conveyance, all, or some portion of his father's (James) original 1737 land patents. Assuming this unrecorded conveyance first occurred in 1743, William's date of birth would have been sometime *before* 1723. I *suspect* it occurred a few years earlier than 1743 because, as discussed above, James sold off all of his land holdings in 1743. The fact that William was not included as "a taxable" on the 1733 Monocacy tax list suggests that he was born *after* 1717. I believe he was born about 1720.

Note: Another common Blevins family "reference" states that this William Blevins was born in 1735. Although his older brother John had a proven son named William who was almost certainly born in the late 1730s, there is no documentary evidence supporting this 1735 birth. In 1756, William Blevins received a Virginia land grant in what is now Henry County, Virginia. I *suspect* that some earlier researcher had reasonably estimated that this William had to have been born *no later than* 1735 in order to qualify for a grant. Over the years this "no later than" qualification disappeared and 1735 became, more or less, definitive (albeit, incorrectly so).

On May 14, 1745, James "Bleavin" Senior of Brunswick County, Virginia issued a corrected 295-acre conveyance to Robert Douglas. John "Blevings" was one of the witnesses on this corrected transfer (*Goochland County Deed Book 4, page 563*).

This record carries significance in four major ways.

First, the specification of Brunswick County, Virginia provides further proof that at least some Blevins men had removed from Goochland to southwestern Virginia by the middle of 1745 (Brunswick County was formed in 1732 and was the mother County of Lunenburg County, formed in 1746. Halifax County was formed in 1752 from Lunenburg. Pittsylvania County was formed from Halifax in 1767. Henry County was formed from Pittsylvania County in 1777).

The second significant aspect is the use of the suffix "Senior" for James Blevins of Brunswick County. The suffix "Senior" strongly suggests that there was a James

Blevins, Junior, either in Goochland County or in Brunswick County in 1745. There are no extant records of a James Blevins, Junior in Goochland but that doesn't disprove his having lived there with his father, James Blevins, Senior. This James Blevins, Junior will significantly enter the records of what was then Lunenburg County beginning in 1747. I believe this James Blevins was born about 1724.

The third significant aspect is that John Blevins (still of Goochland County at the time) signed as a witness to the transfer. The locations of the John and James Blevins land grants were about 5 miles apart, so they weren't exactly Goochland neighbors. John's acting as a witness to James' 1745 corrected conveyance, however, indicates a strong direct connection between these Blevins men.

The fourth, and perhaps most significant aspect of this 1745 corrected transfer involves the signature marks made by John "Blevings" and by James "Bleavin" Senior.

Most people of the day were illiterate and signed legal documents with a simple "X" mark but some people used unique marks. Government clerks were generally consistent in duplicating the marks made when recording official documents.

In all of his Goochland deed recordings, James used a unique signature mark; a cursive, capital letter "J". He had used this exact *same* mark on a 1714 Rhode Island deed transfer document. His proven wife, Margery (Tosh) Bliven *also* signed the 1714 Rhode Island document using a cursive capital letter "M". *Also* signing the 1714 Rhode Island document was James' father, James Bliven, Senior (before 1659 - about 1716) and James' mother, Ann Bliven (birth year and family surname unknown; she probably died before 1715).

James Bliven, Senior and his wife, Ann, also used unique signature marks on this 1714 Rhode Island document. Ann used her initials; "AB" but James Senior's mark consisted of a vertical line with three short horizontal cross lines followed by a block letter capital "B". He used the *same* mark on a separate 1708 Rhode Island document *and* on two different 1687 documents in Oyster Bay, Long Island, Colony of New York.

Note: It is not the objective of this paper to examine the early records of New York and Rhode Island, or the later records in what is now Henry County, VA. Those records will be examined and discussed in detail in separate papers. It is necessary, however, to make occasional mentions of those earlier and later footprints in order to provide the provenance of the family structures being discuss herein.

On this 1745 document, John Blevins first made his mark as a *vertical* line crossed at both ends and in the middle with short horizontal lines. In the memorandum to this indenture, he drew his mark as a *horizontal* line crossed at both ends and in the middle with short vertical lines. (Based on later records, this horizontal orientation was probably his normal mark. This unique mark allows him to be identified in several subsequent documents.)

Note: John's mark was very similar to that of his paternal grandfather absent the capital "B". It interesting to note that John's brothers, Daniel and James were later found to use simple "X" marks but his brother William was later found to consistently use a block letter capital "W" made from two overlapping "V"s as his mark. One of John's sons, Revolutionary War veteran Henry Blevins, also consistently used a unique mark; a run-on of the block capital letters "HB" where the second vertical of the "H" served as the vertical for the "B".

On June 16, 1747, John Blevins of the Parish of Southam in the County of Goochland "in consideration of the sum of forty shillings current money to him in hand" sold about five acres to Thomas Turpin and Nicholas Davies, Churchwardens of Southam Parish. (*Goochland County Deed Book 5, pages 277-278*). John sold only a small part of his 300-acre patent in this conveyance. The disposition of the remainder is unknown, but his name was still being mentioned in Goochland and (later) Cumberland County land records (typically as points of land boundaries within deed descriptions) for at least the next twenty-two years.

The Move to Brunswick-Lunenburg

John Blevins almost certainly removed from Goochland sometime in late 1747 or early 1748 to what was then Lunenburg County, Virginia and John's departure from Goochland almost certainly ended the family's presence in that part of Virginia.

Efforts to "proceed" Goochland lands in 1748, and Cumberland lands in 1751 could not be successfully completed for John Blevins (and for a number of other individuals). Land "proceed" was a procedure prescribed by law for ascertaining and fixing the boundaries of land. The failures to "proceed" John Blevins meant that he was not in Goochland in 1748 or in its successor, Cumberland County, in 1751.

It should be noted that there are no extant Goochland records that show the presence of James' oldest son, Daniel, who I believe was born about 1716. The presumed Goochland presence of James' youngest son, James, Jr., is circumstantial only.

There are also no Goochland records relative to any of the "Walling" men who were found in 1733-1734 Monocacy. Most noticeably absent were James' son-in-law, Elisha Wallen, Sr. and his daughter, Mary Blevins Wallen. (Several men named Walton were landowners in Goochland but Wallen researchers have reported that this was an unrelated family.) There are also no Goochland records on any of the Cox men who were found in 1733-1734 Monocacy.

The absence of a record doesn't prove the absence of a person but the Wallen and Cox men were generally fairly "loud" concerning their documentary footprints. Perhaps Daniel Blevins, his sister Mary, and brother-in-law Elisha Wallen were in Goochland and simply lived quietly on James' land. Perhaps the same is true for some Cox men.

Or perhaps Daniel, Elisha, Mary, and some Cox men remained in Maryland for a few more years and completely bypassed the ten-year Goochland tenure of the other Blevins people. Or perhaps they also left Monocacy after 1734 but migrated southwestwardly towards the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia instead of taking an easterly then south-southwesterly route towards Goochland.

Although the Shenandoah Valley was technically off limits to white settlement at the time, colonial governments were unable to prevent settlers from encroaching on these native lands. In 1743, the Iroquois were on the verge of declaring total war on Virginia until Governor Gooch paid them the sum of £100 sterling for any settled land in the Valley. The *1744 Treaty of Lancaster* fully opened the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia to white settlement and travel and provided a nearly direct, southern route through Virginia and towards Brunswick County.

It is not known if Daniel Blevins, Elisha Wallen, and John Cox came to Brunswick County via the Valley of Virginia after 1744; such is pure speculation on my part.

What is known is that John Cox made his first two Brunswick County land entries on April 7, 1745 (*Entry Record Book 1, 1737-1770, page 16.*) and Elisha "Walling" made his first Brunswick County land entry on October 29, 1745 (*Entry Record Book 1, 1737-1770, page 20*).

Daniel Blevins made no early land entries but we know he was present in the area by *at least* 1746 because his name appeared in the *Lunenburg County Order Book One, 1746-1748* where, on October 14, 1746, he was granted 140 pounds of tobacco for a wolf head (*page 21, December Court 1746*). Daniel's house and horse ford were also mentioned in land entries made by a man named Henry Lansford in November 26, 1748 (*Entry Record Book 1, page 107*).

Although there are numerous Lunenburg (nee Brunswick) records that show the presence of Daniel's brothers William (beginning in 1745), James (beginning in 1747), and John (beginning in 1748), there are no known records of their father, James, following the 1745 Goochland land sale discussed earlier. Perhaps he died not long after his arrival in Brunswick County. Or perhaps he left the area with his son, Daniel, who was *completely absent* from the area records from 1746 (or perhaps 1748) until about 1760.

It is very possible - perhaps probable - that Daniel Blevins had returned to his childhood home in Rhode Island during his 12- to 14-year period of absence.

The first evidence of such a return is found in the November 12, 1832 Revolutionary War pension affidavit of a man named James Blevins (S.32121). In his affidavit, James stated that he was born in 1762 "some place in New England", had moved to Henry County, Virginia when he was an infant, and then moved to Montgomery County, Virginia when he was about ten years of age.

Many researchers (myself included) believe that this James was a grandson of Daniel Blevins. Note that his stated date of birth (1762) and his move as an infant corresponds closely with the years when Daniel Blevins reentered the area records after his long absence.

A second, and even more revealing piece of evidence is found within a July 1, 1771 Pittsylvania County power of attorney executed by Daniel Blevins, Senior and his son Daniel Blevins, Junior. Daniel Senior's wife, Sarah, also signed this document:

1771 - Washington Co., RI - Power of Attorney - 1 July 1771. We *Daniel Blevins, Sr. of Pittsylvania County* in Virginia and *Daniel Blevins son of said Daniel Blevins, Sr. in Botetourt County* in Virginia do appoint our Trusty friend James Rentfrow, Sr. of Pittsylvania County in Virginia our true and lawful attorney for us in our name and to our use to ask Demand Recover or Receive of and from *Joseph Stantone* in Westerly formally Narragancy in newingland one piece of Land containing 100 acres more or less in Westerly newingland....our sole and full Power and authority to follow such Legal Courses....as we our Self might or Could do were we Personally present....all things which may be necessary Concerning the Premises.

Signed: Daniel (X mark) Blevins, Sr.; Sarah (T mark) Blevins; Daniel (X mark) Blevins, Jr.
Witnessed by: Thomas Flowers, George Lumkin, Robert Lumkin, Robert Pewsey

This document provides, what I believe to be, the final "dot" that confirms the Bliven family structure and connects their move from Rhode Island to Monocacy to Goochland and then to Brunswick-Lunenburg County.

First, note that although Daniel Blevins, Sr. lived in Pittsylvania County in 1771, his son, Daniel, Jr. had already moved west into what was then Botetourt County (the New River settlements). The timing of Daniel, Jr.'s move (by 1771) closely corresponds with the 1832 James Blevins affidavit statement that he moved to Montgomery County (a successor county of Botetourt) when he was about ten years of age (about 1772). I do not know if this James was a son of Daniel Blevins, Jr. because Daniel, Sr. had more than one son and all are believed to have eventually moved to the New River settlements.

The most significant aspect of the 1771 Daniel Blevins document, however, requires a final examination of Westerly, Rhode Island records:

On September 21, 1731, Charles Ninigret, Chief Sachem of the Narragansett, sold Captain Christopher Champlin, Jr. a tract of land that was bounded by land of *Colonel Joseph Stanton* that was said to have *formerly belonged unto James Bleavin Sr.*

On March 6, 1732, Charles Ninigret, Chief Sachem of the Narragansett sold Stanton York a 66 acre tract bounded by James Bleavin, *heirs of James Bleavin deceased*, Thomas Brand, and John Enos.

On January 22, 1702/03, Daniel's grandfather, James Bliven (also known as James Bliven, Sr. and James Bliven the "Sayler") had been granted 100 acres by the town of Westerly, Rhode Island because he had lived there for a "considerable time." There are no extant Westerly records that speak to the disposition of this 100 acres before or after the 1716 death of James Bliven the "Sayler".

This was almost certainly the 100 acres of land that Daniel Blevins tried to reclaim from a *Joseph "Stantone"* in his 1771 power of attorney.

Note that the above 1731 conveyance mentions Colonel *Joseph Stanton* as an owner of land that "formally belonged unto James Bleavin Sr.". The language in the 1732 conveyance takes a softer approach and mentions the "heirs of James "Bleavin", deceased". The other James "Bleavin" mentioned as an adjoining land owner in 1732 was almost certainly the son of Edward Bliven of Westerly.

These were still the days of primogeniture, a tradition and element of most probate law that granted the rights to a man's titles, lands, and privileges to his first-born son. Daniel was the first-born son, and hence primary heir of James Bliven, who I refer to henceforth as "the Patriarch".

Although James Bliven the Patriarch was certainly dead by 1771, he had been the proven, first-born son and primary heir of James Bliven, Sr. (James Bliven the "Sayler").

Daniel Blevins, in his 1771 power of attorney, was simply trying to recover land that he believed had rightfully belonged to his father, and now rightfully belonged to him by virtue of the inheritance rights proscribed by law at the time.

Daniel was probably unsuccessful in his attempts to recover this 100-acre parcel in Westerly, Rhode Island. I know of no record that proves otherwise.

Theoretical Family of James Blevins (Bliven)

The following table provides a summary of the theoretical family of James Blevins (Bliven) and Margery Tosh. For the sake of establishing generational parities, I have assigned the suffix "the Patriarch" to James and the suffix "the Matriarch" to Margery and have labeled them as the founding generation of the *Blevins Family Southern Branch*.

I have assigned the suffix "the Elder" to each of their children and have labeled them collectively as the *1st Generation*. Also provided are the names of each 1st generation member's spouse and the estimated birth year of their first-born child (labeled collectively as the *2nd Generation*).

These are my own identifiers only, but William was actually referred to as "the Elder" in a 1771 Pittsylvania County land indenture. I use the term "theoretical" because many of the dates shown are estimates and are subject to challenge.

It is very possible that James and Margery had additional children; daughters who married without record or sons and daughters who died young without record. It should be noted that there are no extant records in Rhode Island or elsewhere that document the births of these children and there is no extant Rhode Island record that documents the marriage of James and Margery (their marriage is otherwise proven by the previously mentioned 1714 Rhode Island deed record and a separate Rhode Island record in 1718).

The naming conventions used by James and Margery for their sons are interesting. Daniel, their oldest son, was probably named for his maternal grandfather, Daniel Tosh (1633- before 1709). William was probably named for his maternal great-grandfather, William Tosh (about 1635-1685). John was probably named for Margery's maternal grandfather, John Ackers (1636-1699). James was probably named for both his father and paternal grandfather, both named James Bliven.

Theoretical Family of The Founding Generation of the Blevins Family Southern Branch

James Blevins (Bliven) the Patriarch (before 1688 - after 1745)
and his wife Margery Tosh the Matriarch (1689 - about 1743)

Children (the 1st Generation)	Birth Year	Child's Spouse	Date of First-born (the 2nd Generation)
Mary Blevins the Elder	~1714	Elisha Wallen, Sr.	~1730-1733
Daniel Blevins the Elder	~1716	Sarah	~1738
John Blevins the Elder	~1718	Rachel or Sarah Dillon	~1738
William Blevins the Elder	~1720	Agnes	~1741
James Blevins the Elder	~1724	Unknown	~1756

Other Early Southern Footprints

A number of other early Blevins footprints appear in the official records of Maryland and Virginia that need to be addressed. Some are quite easy to explain; others less so. It is interesting to note that many of the following references confirm or imply a seafaring heritage for several of the early Blevins men discussed below.

Bartholomew Blevins - 1662. According to *Maryland Land Patents, Liber 5 Folio 400*, a man named Bartholomew Blevins was granted 200 acres on March 5, 1662 for transporting himself to the colony in 1661 and Thomas Beddamine, Edward Emonds, and William Philpotts in 1662. Although cryptic, this reference offers several clues as to its meaning.

Maryland, like several other southern colonies in the 17th century, was faced with an abundance of land but a shortage of people to work it. Prior to the general acceptance and broad use of African enslavement, many southern colonies - including Maryland - adopted an incentive system to attract new people from the old world; the headright system. Under this system, new arrivals were granted land, typically in the amount of 50 acres per person. Technically speaking, the land was to be granted directly to each new arrival and an immigrant family of five could therefore be granted 250 acres.

Such was rarely the case in reality. Most immigrants were impoverished and could not afford the cost of passage to the new world. During the 17th century, the cost of transport from England to the colonies was exorbitant; about £6 per person, which, at the time, far exceeded the value of the promised 50 acres. Ship masters and owners capitalized on the headright system by requiring passengers - in exchange for "free" passage - to assign not only their headrights to the ship's master, but to also commit to a number of years of service in the new world. The contracts (indentures) these passengers signed gave rise to the term indentured servitude.

Ship masters were also eligible for their own headright of 50 acres and they typically sold off their own (and assigned) headright grants and passenger service indentures as soon as possible. (The practice of obtaining - and then selling - service indentures in exchange for passage was very common in the 17th and 18th centuries, even in colonies without headright systems.)

The language in the reference above, describing a single grant and separate transports (in 1661 and 1662), *suggests* that Bartholomew Blevins was a ship's master, not an immigrant. It is unlikely he ever actually settled in Maryland.

Winifred Blevins - 1663. According to the 1992 book *Cavaliers and Pioneers: Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants, Vol. 1: 1623-1666* by Nell M. Nugent, John Whisten was granted 1000 acres in 1663 on the "south side of Patomeke River at the head of the Nomeny, nigh Herring Creek" for having transported 20 persons to the Virginia Colony. Among these persons was a women named Winifred Blevins.

Virginia's headright system of the time was the same as Maryland's; 50 acres per person "transported". The grant being given to Whisten and not to others suggests that Winifred Blevins was very likely bound into indentured servitude. If she had any descendants, they almost certainly wouldn't have been named Blevins.

Henry Blivin - 1682. According to the 2009 Walter Lee Sheppard, Jr. book *Passengers and Ships Prior to 1684, Volume 1 of Penn's Colony*, Henry Blivin was an apprentice crewmember on the ship *Submission*; one of 23 immigrant ships in "Penn's Fleet". She departed Liverpool on July 5, 1682 and first landed on November 2, 1682 at Chesapeake Bay due to an error in navigation. She subsequently sailed up the Delaware River and arrived in Chester County, Pennsylvania.

A second reference says that a Henry Blevins was on the sailing list of the *Submission* when it landed at Choptank, Maryland in 1682. A website for the Clayton surname discusses this Choptank landing (without attribution) as follows:

"In 1682 Penn sailed for America with a large fleet of ships carrying immigrants. Perhaps most of these people were Quakers, but many were not. William Penn himself landed at New Castle, but at least one of his fleet made its way into Chesapeake Bay: the *Submission*, out of Liverpool and Bristol. The *Submission* arrived at Choptank on the Maryland Eastern Shore in November 1682. Many or most of the passengers of the *Submission* disembarked at Choptank and traveled overland to Bucks County, Pa., on the west side of the Delaware River a few miles above Philadelphia."

One contemporary "researcher" has written that this Henry "Blivin" was the father of the infamous William Blevins #1 who was the father of the infamous William Blevins #2, the supposed patriarch of the southern Blevins families.

Henry "Blivin" was not a passenger on the *Submission*; he was a crewmember and an *apprentice* crewmember at that. As such, he was probably still in his early teens on this voyage. He would have almost certainly returned to Liverpool or Bristol with his ship. He very likely eventually had a family in England but there is absolutely no evidence that any of his issue ever came to this continent.

Richard Blevin - 1694. A man named Richard Blevin died in Virginia in 1694. His will was dated August 31, 1693 and named his wife, Elizabeth Blevin as attorney, heir, and executrix. His will was probated in London, England and contained the notation: *The will of Richard Blevin, mariner of the parish of St. Olave, Southwark, Co, Surrey. Testator died in Virginia.* Southwark St. Olave is an old civil parish within Surrey County, England located south and west of London. Clearly, this man, who was a self-described *mariner*, and whose wife was still living in England, was not a permanent resident of Virginia. He was almost certainly *not* a progenitor of any southern Blevins family lines.

Richard Blevins - 1721. On November 7, 1721 a man named Richard Blevins witnessed a power of attorney by Thomas Sell, Henry Moses, and Thomas Willis in Richmond County, Virginia. I have not seen the original record but noted researcher Ronald L. Blevins reports that he has reviewed it and can attest to its authenticity.

This man represents a true mystery to Blevins researchers. There are no further extant records of this man but, again, the absence of records does not prove the absence of a person. He may have been a short-term resident of Virginia or he may have quietly lived out his life in the Richmond County area.

One thing is certain. This man was *not* a brother of the William Blevins "the patriarch" about whom Bill Dwayne Blevins wrote in his 1972 book. The only William Blevins known to be alive on the entire continent at the time would have been the one-year-old son of James Bliven and that family was likely very far north of Virginia and Maryland in 1721.

Thomas Blevins - 1734. In 1734, the *Will Book of Prince William County, Virginia* mentions Mary Blevins as having acted as agent of Thomas Blevins in the settling of his estate in Prince William County, Virginia. In 1734, Prince William County covered most of the eastern part of Virginia's Northern Neck. Thomas Blevins represents another true mystery to Blevins researchers.

The King's Highway passed through Prince William County at this time and this highway was very likely part of the route taken by the James Bliven family in its move from Monocacy to Goochland. The 1734 death of Thomas Blevins also closely corresponds to the time when the James Bliven family would have been passing through this area. It would be very easy to speculate, therefore, that Thomas was somehow a part of James Bliven the Patriarch's family.

The Mary Blevins who helped settle the estate of Thomas Blevins is presumed to have been his widow. She couldn't have been Mary Blevins the Elder because that Mary Blevins had already been married to Elisha Wallen, Sr. for perhaps a year or two prior to 1734.

No one named Thomas Blevins appeared in the Monocacy records. Had he been younger than 16 in 1733, and hence exempt from the Monocacy tax list, he surely wouldn't have had a wife and an estate to settle in 1734.

If Thomas Blevins was a part of James Bliven the Patriarch's immediate family, he had to have been born no later than about 1713 and quite likely earlier, making him James Bliven's oldest child. Perhaps he was the oldest son of James who elected to bypass Monocacy with his wife and settle instead in Virginia. I consider this a highly unlikely scenario.

Researcher Alton Blevins has speculated that Thomas *could* have been an unknown, younger brother of James Bliven. Thomas *could* have departed Rhode Island a few years after James and was on his way to join his extended family but died along the way. I consider this scenario to be much more plausible.

In any case, his death would likely represent the extinction of his line and, perhaps, render all speculation moot.

If Thomas Blevins was, instead, a descendant of Richard Blevins (of 1721), his death could also represent the extinction of this line and, again, render the speculation moot. I suspect we will never know the truth.

James Blevins - 1751. On March 1, 1834, a man named James Blevins filed an Revolutionary War pension affidavit (*W.5221*) in Morgan County, Kentucky. According to his affidavit, he was born in 1751 in *Northumberland County, Virginia*. He first volunteered for service in April 1776 in Henry County, Virginia (it would have been Pittsylvania County in 1776) and reenlisted several times in Henry County up until May of 1781.

Several contemporary researchers have speculated that James was really born in northern Cumberland County and not in Northumberland County. I find this highly unlikely as there had been no known Blevins people in Cumberland County since 1748. Many pension affidavits reference the applicant's county of birth, but I have never seen one that references a specific part of a county (i.e., *north Cumberland*). His pension affidavit clearly reads *Northumberland* and I tend to think James knew where he was born.

James represents less a mystery and more a controversy to Blevins researchers. Clearly, his Northumberland County birth invites speculation that he was a descendant of Richard Blevins of 1721 (Richmond and Northumberland Counties are adjacent). Or perhaps he was connected somehow to the Thomas Blevins of 1734 Prince William County.

Unfortunately, this James Blevins provided no details as to his whereabouts between his 1751 birth in Northumberland and his 1776 enlistment in Pittsylvania. His appearance in Pittsylvania County, however, invites a different course of speculation.

Recall that Daniel Blevins the Elder vanished from the southern records in the period between 1746 and 1760. Recall also that the evidence strongly suggests that Daniel traveled to Rhode Island and back during this long absence. Recall also that another Revolutionary War soldier named James Blevins, who was born "some place in New England" in 1762, is generally believed to have been a grandson of Daniel.

It is possible - and perhaps very likely - that Northumberland County represented a temporary settlement point for Daniel and his family on their journey north to Rhode Island. Northumberland County is in the Tidewater Region of Virginia and is not necessarily a logical stopover location on a northern overland journey. Perhaps Daniel found work in the area while his pregnant wife came to term. Or perhaps Daniel was preparing his family for the final leg of their journey by sea. Whatever his rationale, most researchers (myself included) believe that this James was a son of Daniel Blevins the Elder.

If this theory is correct - and I believe it is - then this James did not first arrive in Pittsylvania in 1776. He would have arrived in (what was then) Halifax County in about 1760 as a nine-year-old boy.

William Blethyn - 1752. The March 27, 1752 issue of *The Virginia Gazette* carried the following advertisement:

Ran away on Saturday the 21st of this instant, from William Byrd's Esq., at Westover, two servant men, belonging to the subscriber; they were both Welshmen, by trade, house-carpenters and joiners viz, James Morris a short well fet [sic] man of brown complexion, with his own short dark colour'd hair; *William Blethyn*, a small sprightly fellow, stoops a little and wears a black wig. Had on when they went away, blue Kersey Pea Jackets, dark green waistcoats, blue breeches and course yarn stockings. They are both suppos'd to be going toward Carolinas and may pretend to be seafaring men. Whoever apprehends and brings to William Byrd's Esq. or to the subscriber, living in King William County, shall have five pistoles reward for each, besides what the law allows. -- Harry Gaines

One contemporary "researcher" has posited that this William Blethyn was the man he calls William Blevins #2 who "was indentured to William Byrd but ran away about 1751 to join his sons who by then had taken up long hunting and exploring in central and southern Virginia." This same "researcher" had, several years earlier, "mistakenly" backdated this advertisement's publication by 20 years or so. This narrative is, of course, absurd.

The William Blethyn referenced in the above advertisement was clearly either a bound apprentice or more likely, given the "servant" referenced in the ad, an indentured servant whose contract "belonged" to Harry Gaines. Both servants and apprentices were valuable commodities and Gaines was offering a reward for his "apprehension". Terms of bound apprentices generally expired when the apprentice reached the age of 21. Terms of indentured servitude at this time generally lasted from four to seven years. This William Blethyn was either still in his late teens in 1752 or had probably only arrived in the colonies sometime *after* 1745.

We have no idea what became of this William Blethyn. He may have been "apprehended" and subsequently returned to his "owner". He may have used his alleged "seafaring" skills and hired on as a crewmember in some port. He may have used his woodworking skills, constructed his own boat, and sailed to Jamaica. He may have changed his name and lived out his life quietly on some Carolina beach. He may have been murdered in a tavern brawl with his associate, James Morris. We will never know. What is certain, however, is that this man was *not* a southern Blevins patriarch.

