

The People Differences in Virginia: a Checklist of Characteristics

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The people who settled Virginia--when all was Virginia--had specific differences that help distinguish them from each other.

English

- Cluster on plantations; often own more than one plantation
- Younger sons of great English families who came to America to establish their own fortunes
- Marry within their social class
- Maintain households with servants—or, when indentured, usually related to the family
- Amass land holdings in more than one county; more than one state
- May become Quaker or Baptist before it is legal to practice their religion

Scots

- Merchants and their factors are almost always related to each other
- Concentrated along rivers and major roads: trade routes
- Trade with the Indians and intermarry with them (called *alliances*)
- Do not fight the Indians; usually *not* soldiers
- Purchase plantations as a seat of operations and to qualify to vote
- Rely on others to prefer, appoint, recommend, and aid
- Not frontiersmen *per se*, arrange trade zones and centers around their residences
- Employ only their own relatives!
- May be Loyalists—low legal profile, stay out of public eye, *seem to disappear* for 2-3 generations after the Revolutionary War

Welsh

__ Clannish, congregate in “Welsh tracts;” move from one Welsh tract to another to be near their own kind

__ Acquire landholdings—land is essential for an on-going pedigree in Wales and that characteristic is brought to America when they come

__ Immediate family members often have *different surnames*—versions of the same patronymic or metronymic

__ Migrate in groups of families, usually interrelated *before* they move

Scots-Irish—also called Ulstermen, Ulster Scots

__ Protestants who lived in Scotland and settled in Ireland before coming to America—one or more generations in Ireland.

__ Neither Scots nor Irish as a race, their origins are shrouded in the mists of Eastern Europe; tartans have been found in the hoarfrost of Western China

__ Frontiersmen, always pushing westward away from the crowds

__ Willing to fight—in court for their rights, in battle for their freedom

__ Willing to fight the Indians for control of lands

__ Attend church, religious participation is a *passion*. They accepted their relationship with God by Covenant before they left Scotland; they taught their children the same relationship with God

__ Marry within their own blood, brothers frequently marry sisters to keep their lands and property within the family

__ Own land wherever they settle—move on quickly if owning land is not an option, or if land ownership requires too much chaos

Indian

__ Includes Melungeon background—VA, NC, TN, and into KY

__ Cherokee most common; Shawnee, Iroquois including Seneca, Chickasaw, Creek, Seminole (less common), Choctaw, smaller tribes from NC and SC

__ May speak English from the time of early settlement

__ Identified as “free people of color” or “all other free persons” on censuses; also classified as “mulatto” and of “mixed blood” in records

__ 20% of the American people have Native American blood in their veins: shovelled teeth, extra bones in jaw or feet, small hands and feet

__ Ally themselves with frontiersmen

German

__Settle on the outskirts of the other groups; live on self-contained farms

__Often *Anabaptist* by religion: Dunkards, Mennonites, Brethren, Schwenckfelders, as well as German Reformed and Lutheran

__Law-abiding, willing to pay fines for refusal to muster and fight

__Attend court-days, serve on road details and juries willingly

__Culturally adaptive, very compatible with Scots-Irish, often intermarry

Huguenot

__Merge identity into other groups so they do not call attention to themselves—even attend whatever church is nearby (except Roman Catholic), although they prefer the Reformed religion. Especially compatible with Presbyterians.

__Origins in Europe—Switzerland, Italy, German provinces, Netherlands where they fled for refuge from French persecution. So while considered French, they are almost always something else too

__Usually speak English before coming to America—indicating that they spent time in England or Ireland

__Low legal profile, stay out of public eye if possible—unwilling to fight if it calls attention to themselves

Do any of these sound like your ancestors? Review the information you have collected on your Virginia ancestors—who do they most closely fit? Your favorite Virginia genealogist, Arlene Eakle <http://arleneeakle.com> Check out my Virginia blog. The link is on my home page.

PS I have developed several NEW presentations on Virginia Genealogy and Southern Research. Watch for the posting of these topics on my Home Page. If your group needs a speaker—I may be available on your chosen seminar date.

PPS This is the handout that I promised at Jamboree 2010--so you could distinguish your ancestors from those around them with the same names. Pay careful attention to the context in which yours ancestors lived. Their choice of residence is always a key to their origins. "**Origin deafness**" may be the block you are experiencing in finding hard-to-find ancestors. This is especially true in Virginia, although you can use these tips throughout the United States.