

They Migrated From Maryland to Virginia – Just 300 Years Apart

OCTOBER 14, 2017MARCH 6, 2021 / JOANNE DICKINSON

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Our eldest son moved his family from Maryland to Lynchburg in Virginia's Southern Piedmont Valley about 12 years ago to allow his sons to attend Christian colleges there. He knew little of the area's history but found a home and a job just outside Bedford County and the City of Lynchburg. As it turns out, he's not the first of my family to migrate from Maryland to this part of Virginia.



(<https://joannedi.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/map-maryland-and-virginia-1685.jpg>)

Straight Line from Maryland to Virginia 1685

And, here's how this story goes:

My Phelps-Bolling Connection

My sixth great grandmother was Martha/Mary Phelps (1737-1767) of Albemarle, Virginia. She married my sixth paternal great-grandfather Major Benjamin Bolling from Wilkes, North Carolina when she was just 16. They had ten children in 16 years. At age 29, she died in Flat Gap, Virginia, giving birth to their daughter Elizabeth Bolling. Major Bolling married four more times before he passed away some 65 years later at age 98 when still residing in Flat Gap.

Martha was also called Mary or Polly. Out of eight children, Martha was the fifth daughter born to Colonel John Phelps (1705-1772), of Albemarle County, Virginia, and Mary C. Gibson (1705-1763) originally of Hanover County, Virginia.

Colonel John was the son of John Phelps, Sr. (1683-1747), from Goochland County, Virginia, and Martha Margaret Talbot



(<https://joannedi.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/john-phelps-sr-1683-1747.jpg>)

John Phelps Sr. 1683-1747 Picture Shared by Taylor Phelps and Shelly Phelps Barnett.

(1684-1747) born in Maryland. John Phelps, Sr. was the son of William Phelps and Ann Rachel Gorsuch (originally from Somerset, England). John Phelps, Sr. along with his sons, had land grants totaling 8000 acres from George II of England in Henrico, Goochland and Bedford Counties, Virginia. (1727-1747)

Founding and Development of Bedford County

In fact, Bedford County was formed in December 1753 from the counties of Albemarle and Lunenburg. It was this second John Phelps, who, with William Callaway, served as Bedford's first two burgesses. He also served four assemblies in the House of Burgesses beginning August 22, 1754. At the time of his appointment, Colonel Phelps already enjoyed a reputation as a respected Justice in Lunenburg and Bedford Counties; he was a Coroner in Lunenburg and an Anglican Vestryman in Lunenburg's Parish of Cumberland.

From *"Our Kin / The Genealogies of Some of the Early Families Who Made History in the Founding and Development of Bedford County Virginia,"* by Ackerly, Mary Denham, and Lula Eastman Jeter Parker, Published by J.P. Bell Co., Inc., Lynchburg, VA, 1930, we learn that Colonel Phelps founded and developed Bedford County, Virginia:

John Phelps, the first of the name of whom we have any authentic record, was already settled in Brunswick County, Va., when Lunenburg was taken from that county, and was one of the first Justices of the new county. He, with Matthew Talbot and others, was present at the first Court of Lunenburg County held May 5, 1746. When the increase in population made it necessary to form still another county from Lunenburg's territory, and Bedford came into being, we find John Phelps again at the head of affairs—"Justice of the Peace, and a Justice of the County Court in Chancery." He and William Callaway were Bedford's first representatives in the House of Burgesses, and from **Hening's Statutes, Vol. VII**, we learn that he was a Colonel in the Colonial Army...

The House of Burgesses in the 1750s



(<https://>

joannedi.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/virginia-house-of-burgesses-1750.jpg)

Virginia House of Burgesses 1750-1774

John Phelps' entered his first session as a burgess with fellow freshman Peter Jefferson of Albemarle County, father of future Declaration of Independence author, Thomas Jefferson. (Thomas Jefferson later represented Albemarle County in the House of Burgesses from 1769-1774). It is likely that Phelps was already acquainted with the family; in 1749 he was sworn in as Justice of

the Peace and Justice of the Chancery with Field Jefferson, uncle of Thomas Jefferson, in Lunenburg County. The two also served as Vestrymen in the Parish of Cumberland.

Further, Phelps served in the House of Burgesses with Augustine Washington (another of my distant relatives), of Westmoreland County, and father of George Washington. In fact, he served in the company of many Virginians who would later become venerable leaders of the American Revolution: Peyton Randolph, Virginia Attorney General and later first president of the Continental Congress; Benjamin Harrison of "Berkeley" in Charles City County and George Wythe of Williamsburg, both signers of the Declaration of Independence and both representatives to the Continental Congress; Richard Bland of Prince George's County, Maryland (and husband of my seventh great grandmother, Mary Elizabeth Bland Blair Bolling), also a member of the Continental Congress. The oratorical and legislative experience these burgesses gained would serve them well in the years to follow when they would forge their own country after the defeat of the British at Yorktown in 1781. The House of Burgesses was dissolved by the Governor in response to its actions against the Townsend Act, so named for Charles Townsend, British Chancellor of the Exchequer. Passed by Parliament in 1767, the Act placed a tax on common products imported into the American Colonies. These items included lead, paper, paint, glass, and tea. In contrast to the Stamp Act of 1765, the laws were not a direct tax, but a tax on imports. The most public display of protest toward the Act was carried out in 1773 in what has become known as the Boston Tea Party. Rather than continue to pay the oppressive import tax, colonial Bostonians dressed as Indians raided British ships carrying imported tea and dumped the leaves into Boston harbor.

John Phelps Service in The French and Indian War (1754-1763)



([https://](https://joannedi.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/french-and-indian-war-rebel-history.jpg)

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French and Indian War – Rebel History

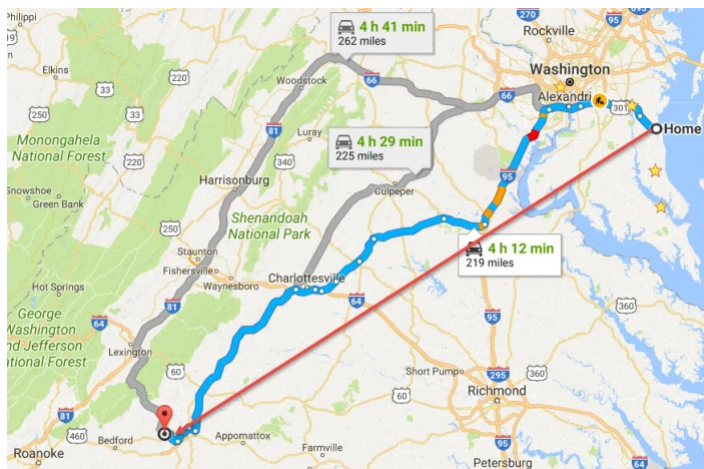
Researcher, Mary Galgan, has done an amazing amount of research on the Phelps Family. She writes that on August 20, 1756, then Captain John Phelps was commissioned to command a Company of Rangers to be raised in Bedford County to protect the settlers from the French and Indians in the area. There is also evidence that six years prior to his Ranger commission, John Phelps and other "Gentlemen" of Lunenburg County were sworn in as "Captains of the Foot in this County." For their service in *"the defence and protection of the frontier of this colony, against the incursions and depredations of the French, and their Indian allies"* members of the Militia of the County of Bedford were paid in September 1758. Captain John Phelps tops the long list of Bedford militia troops, receiving the sum of £2.8.0 for his service.

Captain Phelps returned to Bedford after the French and Indian War, living out the rest of his days quietly with his family on his land near Lynchburg. He died in Bedford County in 1772. His will, recorded in Will Book "A" page 137, lists wife, Mary and children, Jane, Judith, Sarah, Ann, Mary, Betty, John, and Aggey. His son, Lt. John Phelps d 1801, also served as an officer in the militia, and later, as an officer in the Virginia line during the American Revolution.

The French and Indian War made life on the Virginia frontier particularly dangerous, especially for men like Colonel Patton and Captain Phelps who lived west of Albemarle County. During the conflict, the majority of Indian tribes sided with the French, with the one exception of the Iroquois Confederacy who fought on the side of Great Britain and the colonies.

Trading posts and forts were used by both the British and the French forces whose countries went to war over the disputed territory “the Ohio Country,” bounded east to west by the Appalachian mountains and the Mississippi River, and north to south by the Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico. While serving as Lieutenant Governor Virginia from 1751 to 1758, Robert Dinwiddie began granting patents of land in the Ohio Valley to Virginia citizens after learning the French were entrenching themselves in the region (at the time, Virginia stretched from the Chesapeake Bay to the Mississippi). In the winter of 1753-54, Dinwiddie sent a 21-year-old Virginia militia officer, George Washington, to deliver a letter on behalf of the Crown demanding the French vacate the region; however, the French refused. The years 1754 and 1755 included several clashes, but the war didn’t officially begin until May 15, 1756, when Britain declared war on the French, marking the beginning of what is referred to in Europe as the *Seven Years’ War*. Washington suffered his first and only military defeat of his career during the war and mourned the death of his commander, Major General Edward Braddock whom he carried off the battlefield near present-day Pittsburgh on 9 July 1755. It wasn’t until 1758 that the British tide began to turn with victories in the north at Fort Carillon (Ticonderoga) on Lake Champlain and Fort Frontenac on the eastern edge of Lake Ontario. The war ended with the British victorious on 10 February 1763 upon the signing of the Treaty of Paris.

Update: Post College and Outward Migration



([https://](https://joannedi.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/map-owings-to-lynchburg.jpg)

joannedi.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/map-owings-to-lynchburg.jpg) Our three grandsons have since graduated

college; two of the three serve in the United States Armed Forces and are stationed elsewhere; the only one who remains near his parents in Virginia and now a new homeowner works in Law Enforcement. As for our now “empty nester” children—they just recently added a beautiful screened in porch over their patio and refinished their recreation room. Their eldest son married and visits with his family that now includes a one-year-old. We elders keep praying there will be outward migration closer to our home in Maryland, but I’m thinking God has other plans. The good news is our children are just a five-hour commute away!

SOURCES:

The Statutes at Large; Being A Collection Of All The Laws Of Virginia, From The First Session Of The Legislature In The Year 1619. Volume VII. Franklin Press, Richmond, Virginia, 1820.

Our Kin: the genealogies of some of the early families who made history in the founding and development of Bedford County, Virginia. Mary Denham Ackerly. 1930
Colonial Virginia Register, compiled by William Glover and Mary Newton Standard,1902.

The Encyclopædia Britannica, Eleventh Edition (1910–1911)

Bedford County, Virginia, Boling-Dickinson, Lynchburg, Virginia, Places

EARLY VIRGINIA RESIDENTS , LUNENBURG ,
LYNCHBURG , MARYLAND , PHELPS ,
SOUTHERN PIEDMONT VALLEY , VIRGINIA

6 thoughts on “They Migrated From Maryland to Virginia – Just 300 Years Apart”

1. *Curtis Gayle Byrne*

JANUARY 22, 2021 AT 8:09 PM

Very interesting thanks for sharing. John Phelps is my 7th great grandfather love to know as much as I can about him

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2. *Alex*

JANUARY 20, 2018 AT 10:36 PM

I'm not positive where you're getting your info, however good topic. I needs to spend some time studying much more or working out more. Thank you for wonderful information I used to be looking for this information for my mission.

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3. *Alex*

JANUARY 20, 2018 AT 10:12 PM

Wow, fantastic weblog structure! How lengthy have you been blogging for? you made blogging glance easy. The overall glance of your site is magnificent, as neatly as the content!

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o *Joanne Dickinson*

JANUARY 21, 2018 AT 2:15 PM

Thanks for your comments, Alex. I started blogging about six years ago. I recently redesigned my site to help me better integrate my articles with my family tree (which I started building before the Internet made accessing and navigating information so much easier). My next step is to publish a book based on my reorganized information. So very glad you enjoyed your visit.

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4. *Alex*

JANUARY 20, 2018 AT 6:00 PM

You really make it seem so easy along with your presentation but I find this topic to be really something that I think I might by no means understand. It seems too complicated and extremely extensive for me. I am taking a look ahead for your subsequent

submit, I'll attempt to get the hold of it!

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5. ***Jacqi Stevens***

OCTOBER 14, 2017 AT 5:45 PM

Joanne, thanks for sharing that reference to the Mary Denham Ackerly book. I've been (figuratively) stomping around the wilds of colonial Virginia lately, myself, and appreciate learning of references that have been helpful to other researchers for background information on this historic setting.

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