

James Crewes's Involment in Bacon's Rebellion 1676-77

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One day a group of four prominent Virginia planters were talking together and, naturally, made the "sadness of the times and the fear they all lived in" the subject of their conversation. **These gentlemen were Captain James Crews, of "Turkey Island,"** [Afterward the seat of William Randolph, first of the Randolph family in Virginia] Henrico County; Henry Isham, Colonel William Byrd (first of the name), and Nathaniel Bacon. They were all near neighbors, and lived in the region most exposed and subject to the Indian horrors -Squire Bacon's overseer having been among the latest victims. Their talk also turned upon the little army of volunteers that was collecting in Charles City County, on the other side of the river, to march against the Indians. **Captain Crews told them that he had suggested Bacon to lead the campaign,** and the two other gentlemen at once joined him in urging Squire Bacon to go over and see the troops, and finally persuaded him to do so. No sooner did the soldiers see him approaching than from every throat arose a great shout of, "A Bacon! A Bacon! A Bacon!"----A short time before the meeting of this "June Assembly," as it was commonly called, **Bacon made his friend and neighbor, Captain Crews, the bearer of a letter from him to Sir William Berkeley,** in which he said:"Sir: Loyalty to our King and obedience to your Honor as his Majesty's servant or chief commander here, under him, this was generally the preface in all my proceedings to all men, declaring that I abhorred rebellion or the opposing of laws or government, and if that your Honor were in person to lead or command, I would follow and obey, and that if nobody were present, though I had no order, I would still adventure to go in defence of the country against all Indians in general, for that they were all our enemies; this I have always said and do maintain, but as to the injury or violation of your power, interest, or personal safety, I always accounted magistracy sacred and the justness of your authority a sanctuary; I have never otherwise said, nor ever will have any other thoughts."---- Poor Mr. Drummond was overtaken by some of the Governor's soldiers in Chickahominy Swamp, half starved. He 'had been from the very beginning one of the staunchest adherents of Bacon and the people's party. A friend had advised him to be cautious in his opposition to the Governor, but the only answer he deigned to make was, "I am in over shoes, I will be in over boots."And he was as good as his word. When he was brought under arrest, before Berkeley, Sir William greeted him with a low bow, saying, in mock hospitality:"Mr. Drummond, you are very welcome. I am more glad to see you than any man in Virginia. Mr. Drummond, you shall be hanged in half an hour."The sturdy Scotchman replied, with perfect equanimity, and like show of courtesy:"What your Honor pleases."Sir William, too, was for once as good as his word, and the sentence was executed without delay.Governor Berkeley was evidently bent upon enjoying whatever satisfaction was to be found in the humiliation and death of his enemies. **Those who shared Mr. Drummond's fate numbered no less than twenty, among them Bacon's friend and neighbor, Captain James Crews.**----And was Bacon's Rebellion, then, a failure? Far from it. Judged by its results, it was indeed a signal success, for though the gallant leader himself was cut down by disease at a moment when he himself felt that he had but begun his work, though many of the bravest of his men paid for their allegiance to the popular cause upon the scaffold, that cause was won-not lost. Most of the people's grievances were relieved by the reforms in the administration of the government, and the reenactment of Bacon's Laws made the relief permanent. The worst of all the grievances-the Indian atrocities -was removed once and forever, for Bacon had inspired the savages with a wholesome fear of the pale faces, so that many of them removed their settlements to a safe distance from their English neighbors, and a general treaty of peace, which seems to have been faithfully kept, was effected with the others. And so the colonists never had any more trouble with the red men until they began to make settlements beyond the Blue Ridge.

Sentence of Death* January 24, 1676/77

by nataliedbauman on 1 Sep 2008. Originally submitted by NJProctorTN to Proctor Family Tree on 11 Jun 2007

At a Court Marshall held at Green Spring, present, Sir William Berkeley, Knt., governor and captain general of Virginia; Col. Nathaniel Bacon; Col. Phillip Ludwell; Col. Thomas Ballard; Col. Charles Moryson; Lt. Col. John West; Lt. Col. Edward Ramsey; Lt. Col. Hill; Maj. Page. **James Crewes being brought before the court for treason and rebellion against his most sacred Majesty, and pleading nothing in his defense, and the court being very sensible that the said Crewes was a most notorious actor, aidor, and assistor in the rebellion; therefore the court is unanimously of opinion and does adjudge him guilty of the accusation. Sentence of death therefore past upon him, to return to the prison from whence he came, and from thence (on Friday next [which was January 28, 1676/7]) to be carried to the gallows, there to be hanged by the neck until he be dead.** The same accusation against William Cookson, and sentence of death accordingly past upon him. The same accusation against John Digby, and sentence of death accordingly past upon him. The same accusation against William Rookings, and sentence of death accordingly past upon him. The same accusation against William West, and sentence of death accordingly past upon him. The same accusation against John Turner, and sentence of death accordingly past upon him. Henry West being found guilty of treason and rebellion against his Majesty; but for that he hath not been so notorious as the rest, the court have thought fit (out of the compassion they have), and do accordingly order, that he be banished out of the country for the space of seven years, either to England, Barbados, Jamaica, or any of the islands, and if he return within the said time limit, then to suffer the rigor of the law for his treason and rebellion. and the court doth adjudge his estate to be forfeited to his Majesty, except five pound, which is allowed him to pay his passage.