

B. Authorities

Set out below are précis of the findings of the principal authoritative writers on the ancestry of the Balls of Berkshire, Northamptonshire and Virginia, in order of publication.

Rev.d H.E. Hayden, 'Virginia Genealogies' etc., 1891

1.(a) The Rev.d H.E. Hayden's '*Virginia Genealogies*', published in 1891, includes 99 pages devoted to an extensive analysis of the Ball pedigree.^{B1} Hayden, who was himself descended from one of the lines of New England Balls,^{B2} consulted various family papers, including Joseph Ball II's letter book (see Section C), as well as local county records and church registers.

Hayden begins by setting out *verbatim* a letter from Colonel James Ball Jr. of 'Bewdley' to his nephew, Colonel Burgess Ball, dated 11 September 1789, which contains a detailed narrative family pedigree.^{B3}

(b) Hayden admitted that he had not discovered any tradition in the Virginia family as to the origin of Colonel William Ball's line in England. "The many Ball charts preserved by the families of the Va. line very incorrectly deduce Col. Wm. Ball's descent from the Balls of Barkham. This deduction, or rather 'guess work', is simply based upon the fact that the last male member of the Barkham line, as recorded in the Essex Visitation of 1634, was a William Ball.^{B4} The fatal error in this deduction is the utter absence of any similarity in the arms and crest of the two families. I regret to see that Mr. M.D. Conway, in his very interesting volume published by the L.I. His. Soc. on '*Washington and Mt. Vernon*', 1890, repeats this groundless deduction."^{B5}

(c) Hayden identifies six Balls who are recorded as being in Virginia prior to 1624, and conjectured that it was possible that 'Colonel' William could have been the son of one of these early settlers, especially since Joseph Ball II had been unable to locate any of his grandfather's ancestors in England.^{B6}

(d) 'Colonel' William's eldest son was called Richard, and Hayden believed that he was named after his own father. "It was very common in those days to name the first son and daughter after the grand parents, and the second after the parents."^{B7}

(e) Hayden notes that the family arms engraved on the 'illuminated parchment' said to have been brought by 'Colonel' William to Virginia are attributed in Burke's '*General Armory*' to the Balls of Northamptonshire.^{B8}

(f) Hayden also mentions four lines of Ball descent deriving from four brothers who are said to have settled in New England 1640-1650, each claiming a relationship with the Virginia Balls.^{B9}

One of the brothers was Alling Ball, whose pedigree is the subject of Bradley's book (*post*). His eldest son, John (1649-1731),^{B10} handed down an engraved copper plate of the arms of the New Haven Balls. The description of the shield is the same as the shields of the Balls of Virginia and the Balls of Northamptonshire, although there is a different crest (*a stag trippant proper*) and motto (*Semper Caveto*).^{B11}

(g) The Rev.d Eliphalet Ball (1722-1797), who was the grandson of Alling Ball's eldest son, John, and who founded Ballston (or Ballstown) near Saratoga N.Y. in 1767, claimed to be George Washington's third cousin, and Washington apparently recognised this when he visited Ballston in 1783 and was the guest of the Rev.d Ball.^{B12}

(h) Hayden produced a deliberative family tree showing the lines of descent from the supposed brothers, including 'Colonel' William and Alling.^{B13}

(i) Hayden states that 'Colonel' William was born around 1615,^{B14} but he does not cite any authority for this, which would make him about 23 when he is said to have married Hannah Atherold in 1638.

(j) Hayden notes the tradition that 'Colonel' William came to Virginia with his wife and family around 1650, although it seems that he did not immediately acquire land. Hayden says he first appears in the Northumberland county records in 1661 as 'William Ball, Merchant', and that he did not acquire land in the Colony until January 1663/64, when he purchased 300 acres on Narrow Neck Creek, Lancaster county.^{B15}

(k) Hayden observes that in 1667 Colonel (then Major) William Ball and Thomas Chetwood received a grant of 1600 acres on account of 'head rights' attributable to "Will Ball, His sonn, Hanah Ball, Her Daughters, Mary Jones, Martha Jones, Ran Grevill, Jos. Haseldownie," &c., &c., &c.^{B16}

This caused Hayden to suggest that:

(i) 'Colonel' William's wife and remaining children did not leave England until 1667,^{B17} and

(ii) Hannah Atherold was a widow who had two daughters from a previous marriage.^{B18}

(l) Some of the information in '*Virginia Genealogies*', such as when 'Colonel' William first came to Virginia, was revised by Hayden in his article on '*Mary Washington*' published in the Magazine of American History in 1893.^{B19}

In his '*Virginia Genealogies*' Hayden suggested that the son referred to in the 1667 land grant was probably his first son, Richard (impliedly born 1639/40),^{B20} whereas in his subsequent article he suggested that it was his youngest son, Joseph (born 1649).^{B21}

(m) Hayden also used his article to criticise other writers, who "have all woven so much fiction into the life of the mother of Washington, and the history of her family, that it is time for some one to rescue her from her friends".^{B22}

He took particular exception to '*The Story of Mary Washington*' by the popular writer Marion Harland (Mrs Terhune) published the previous year.^{B23} Hayden instances various inaccuracies and descriptions of fictitious events in her book. "Such

speculations and theories as fill *The Century* article, and *The Story of Mary Washington*, destroy faith in historical writers."^{B24}

Rev.d William Ball Wright, 'Ball Family Records' etc., 1908

2.(a) The Rev.d William Ball Wright's *'Ball Family Records'*, second edition, was published in 1908.^{B25} He noted that 'Colonel' William was spoken of in the 'Cheshire Visitation' as a 'soldier' under Fairfax,^{B26} serving in the Royal Army, and that he emigrated to Virginia after the execution of Charles I, where he became a zealous supporter of the Church of England in Virginia.^{B27} Wright also opined that: "There are some reasons for believing that he was a younger brother of John Ball, of Kent, who was extolled for his piety and learning by Fuller."^{B28}

Wright's views give rise to several difficulties:

(i) Sir Thomas (third Baron) Fairfax was a leading Parliamentary general during the Civil War, playing a decisive role at the battles of Marston Moor and Naseby (where according to Wright 'Colonel' William fought with the Royalists).

(ii) There was a Visitation of Cheshire by the Heralds in 1663, but there is no record of any reference to 'Colonel' William.^{B29} Even if he had been an officer under Fairfax, this is not the type of information which the Heralds would have recorded.

(iii) Wright produces no evidence to support the suggestion that 'Colonel' William was from the same line as John Ball of Kent.

(b) At variance with the conventionally accepted belief that 'Colonel' William's eldest son, Richard, died in infancy, Wright noted that there was a family tradition that Richard was a 'loner', and that he was given an estate in Richmond county (subsequently known as 'Cobham Park'), where he died a bachelor and was buried.^{B30}

Wright also refers to another story that Richard was a 'Missing Ball' who married in Maryland and died there, leaving a daughter, to whom he devised property.^{B31}

(c) According to Wright, Joseph Ball II "was married in England, and lived there during the greater part of his married life, although his letter book now in the possession of a descendant shows that he made many voyages across the ocean, and took a keen interest in the affairs of the colony, especially in everything relating to the church there."^{B32} Joseph Ball II's letter book, which begins in 1744, in fact evidences no such thing, although there could be some element of truth in Wright's assertions in relation to his career prior to settling permanently in England. See Section C.1.

(d) Wright observed that it had been established that the arms of the Balls of Virginia were the same as the arms of the Balls of Northamptonshire, but otherwise refrained from speculating as to the English ancestry of Colonel William, simply commenting that little was definitely known about it.^{B33}

However, in his description of the six successive generations of William Ball of Millenbeck, Wright first refers to "Colonel William Ball, of Northamptonshire, England, settled there about the year 1650, bringing with him from England his wife, Hannah Atherall, and four children, William, Joseph, Richard, and Hannah."^{B34}

(e) Wright's book contains a monochrome photograph of the family arms engraved on the 'illuminated parchment' which 'Colonel' William is said to have brought with him to Virginia.^{B35}

(f) While Wright was given access to family papers and visited historic family sites in Virginia, he otherwise seems to have relied on published sources such as Hayden's '*Virginia Genealogies*'.^{B36}

Rev.d P.H. Ditchfield, '*Out of the Ivory Palaces*', 1911

3.(a) The Rev.d P.H. Ditchfield, Rector of Barkham 1886-1930, included an essay on the subject in his collection of essays, '*Out of the Ivory Palaces*', published in 1911.^{B37}

Ditchfield, who was an eminent historian, enthusiastically subscribed to the story that the ancestors of Mary Ball lived at Barkham in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, "when as lords of the ancient manor they ruled as long ago as A.D. 1480"^{B38} (when the pedigree of the Balls of Berkshire recorded by William Ball of Lincoln's Inn begins with the reputed death of William Ball of Barkham).^{B39} Unfortunately, this assertion is completely unfounded, as it is well documented that the Bullock family were lords of the manor from the 1330s until 1589.^{B40}

(b) Ditchfield was aware that "the biographer of 'the Mother of George Washington' " had attributed to the Balls of Virginia the arms of the Balls of Northamptonshire, but he insisted that the family arms were those recorded by William Ball of Lincoln's Inn before the Heralds around 1634. "But the Heralds' College shows that this description is as inaccurate as the statement that Barkham is identical with Barkhampstead."^{B41}

(c) Ditchfield was also under the misimpression that the manor house had always been on its present site,^{B42} whereas in mediæval times the manor house was located close by the parish church. This again is well documented, as discussed in Section J.2.

(d) Ditchfield appears to have consulted mainly the Barkham parish records, wills of local members of the family and copies of some correspondence in 1750 between Joseph Ball II and a Mrs Johnson of Wokingham extracted from Joseph Ball II's letter book by his near neighbour, Lady Russell of Swallowfield Park. Unfortunately, Ditchfield erroneously identified this Mrs Johnson with Mary (Johnson) Ball, the second wife of Joseph Ball I and mother of Mary Ball, who died in 1721.^{B43}

(e) Prompted by a letter from a reader, Ditchfield wrote a two-part article about 'The Balls of Barkham and Wokingham' in his weekly 'Notes and Queries' column in the *Reading Mercury* in 1924,^{B44} in which he repeated what he had written in his essay in '*Out of the Ivory Palaces*'. However, in his chapter on Barkham in Volume III of

The Victoria History of the County of Berkshire, published in 1923, of which Ditchfield was co-editor, he contented himself with saying: "Another family resident in the parish were the Balls, the reputed ancestors of Mary Ball, mother of George Washington" and did not mention the family when describing the line of descent of the lordship.^{B45}

(f) In an article in his 'Notes and Queries' column in the *Reading Mercury* in 1929 about a manorial property dispute in Barkham in the 1330s, Ditchfield says that the Bullock family were lords of the manor for several centuries thereafter.^{B46}

Leonard Abram Bradley, *History of the New Haven Balls*, 1916

4.(a) While Leonard Abram Bradley completed his '*History of the Ball Family - Genealogy of the New Haven Branch*' in 1864, his painstaking research remained unpublished until some years after his death, when it was published by his cousin, J.M. Andreini, in 1916.^{B47}

As Bradley's footnotes show, he consulted all available historical, property and probate records as well as visiting various cemeteries.^{B48} Strangely, the editor seems to have been unaware of the parallel research published in Hayden's '*Virginia Genealogies*' (1891), notwithstanding that Hayden was a member of another line of the New England family.

(b) After discussing five other Ball families recorded as being in New England 1635-1690,^{B49} Bradley focuses on the members of the Ball family who settled at New Haven, Connecticut.

Alling (or Allen) Ball and his brother, William, first appear in the New Haven town records in 1643.^{B50} Bradley conjectures that they may have come over with the Rev.d John Davenport and other members of the congregation at St Stephen's, Coleman Street, in the City of London in 1637. William died, however, in 1648, intestate and (according to Bradley) probably without issue.^{B51}

(c) Bradley also refers (albeit in a footnote) to a family tradition that there were three brothers who came over from England: that one remained in Massachusetts, one settled in New Haven and one went on to Virginia.^{B52}

(d) Alling Ball's eldest son, John (1649-1731),^{B53} handed down an engraved copper plate of the arms of the New Haven Balls. While the shield is the same as the shields of the Balls of Virginia and the Balls of Northamptonshire, there is a different crest (*a stag trippant proper*) and motto (*Semper Caveto*).^{B54}

Bradley concluded that the progenitors of the New Haven Balls and the Virginia Balls must have been brothers, and that the progenitor of the Virginia branch was probably the elder brother.^{B55}

(e) There was a family tradition (per Flamen Ball who died in 1816) that the arms were granted to Sir Richard Ball, Baronet, around the fifteenth century.^{B56} Bradley dismisses this on the grounds that the shield and crest were granted to the Rev.d Richard Ball, son of Lawrence Ball of Northampton, in 1613.^{B57}

Unfortunately, Bradley was not aware that the 1613 grant related to the addition of a crest to the family arms and that the entitlement of the Rev.d Richard Ball to bear arms had been confirmed at the same time. In other words, the Northamptonshire Balls already possessed the right to bear arms.^{B58}

(f) There is a comprehensive list of Alling Ball's descendants down to 1864,^{B59} including Dr Eliphalet Ball (1722-1797) who founded Ballston (or Ballstown) near Saratoga N.Y. in 1767.^{B60}

(g) Bradley's conclusion that Alling Ball and William Ball (died 1648) were brothers and that there was a close connection between Alling and the Virginia Balls was challenged by Donald Lines Jacobus in an article in *The American Genealogist* in 1935.^{B61}

Apart from researching relevant New Haven archives, Jacobus cited the evidence of the will of John Ball, clothworker, of St Mary le Bow in the City of London, who died in 1638.^{B62} John Ball's will contained unusually numerous bequests to various of his relatives, including "my cousin Mary Russell" and "her brother Allen Ball (one of the sonnes of my Uncle Allen Ball)".^{B63} Mary (Ball) Russell was the wife of James Russell of New Haven and Jacobus deduces that her brother was the Alling Ball who first appears in New Haven records in 1643.

(h) The doubts expressed by Donald Lines Jacobus have been corroborated by the DNA tests undertaken by the New England Ball Project. These show that none of the early Ball immigrants to New England are genetically related to each other or to Colonel William of Millenbeck.^{B64}

Earl L.W. Heck, 'Colonel William Ball of Virginia', 1928

5.(a) Earl L.W. Heck in his book, *'Colonel William Ball of Virginia, the Great-Grandfather of Washington'*, published in 1928,^{B65} attempted to trace the English ancestry of Colonel William Ball on the basis of heraldry and concluded that he was a younger son of the Rev.d Richard Ball, Vicar of St Helen's, Bishopsgate 1603-1614, of the Northamptonshire line of the family.^{B66}

According to Heck, that Colonel William "was one of a family of four or five brothers who came to America between 1619 and 1650 seems highly probable, and there is much evidence that he was born in Virginia and went to England at an early age, to return finally to America about 1650 and to settle permanently in Lancaster County, Virginia."^{B67}

(b) In the second part of his book, Heck discusses the role played by Colonel William in the commercial, political and religious affairs of the Colony.^{B68}

Heck opined that: "There is some evidence, however, that he spent [the 1650s] operating a vessel between England and Virginia", but without producing any evidence in support.^{B69}

Heck believed it very likely that Colonel William was engaged in the tobacco trade before himself becoming a planter, which commonly would have involved relatively frequent trips to London.

(c) Heck makes no reference to the claims attributed to the Balls of Berkshire, although through Hayden he would have been well aware of them.

(d) While Heck consulted various Virginia colonial records, original documents at the British Museum (now held by the British Library) and original records at St Helen's, Bishopsgate,^{B70} citing his sources in footnotes, he draws heavily on published works, particularly Hayden, Bradley and Wright.^{B71}

(e) Heck also contributed a one page article about the Rev.d Richard Ball, "the Great-Grandfather of Mary Ball", to the William and Mary Quarterly Magazine in 1928, in which he claimed that the "ancient records" of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate showed that Richard Ball had returned to his former parish and was vicar as late as 1631.^{B72}

Heck also asserted, without adducing any evidence, that it seemed "quite likely" that 'Colonel' William was born in Oxford and that Richard Ball was buried "either in his adopted Oxford or in Gloucestershire, his native county".

Burke's 'American Families with British Ancestry', 1939

6. The 16th edition of '*Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry*' published in 1939 was a special edition including a section on '*American Families with British Ancestry*'.^{B73}

The entry for 'Ball *formerly* of Barkham' on page 2545 contains a number of errors.

(a) William Ball who is said to have died in 1480 is wrongly described as lord of the manor of Barkham, whereas he was merely an inhabitant of the parish, probably of yeoman farmer or husbandman status.^{B74}

(b) When William Ball of Wokingham died in 1550, his heir was John Ball, who married twice. When John Ball died in 1599, he was succeeded by his eldest son by his second wife, also called John Ball, who died in 1628.^{B75}

Burke's erroneously conflates the two John Balls and omits the second wife of John Ball I, Agnes Holloway, who was the mother of John Ball II. Elizabeth Webb of Ruscombe (near Wokingham, not per Burke's in Gloucestershire), who was the wife of John Ball II and mother of William Ball of Lincoln's Inn, is described as the second wife of the conflated John Ball I/II.

(c) Burke's also conflates William Ball, the eldest son of John Ball I by his first wife, Alice Haynes of Finchampstead, and William Ball of Lincoln's Inn, the eldest son of John Ball II and the reputed father of 'Colonel' William, who is stated to have had six sons. However, his will proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury in 1647 refers to four daughters and two sons other than 'Colonel' William (who is not mentioned).^{B76}

(d) Burke's states that 'Colonel' William was born around 1615, when his supposed father, William Ball of Lincoln's Inn, was no more than 14, and perhaps only 12,^{B77} and did not marry until 1627.^{B78}

(e) The description of the arms of the Berkshire family at the end of the entry wrongly accords with the arms of the Balls of Northamptonshire, not the arms of the Balls of Berkshire recorded by William Ball of Lincoln's Inn before the Heralds around 1634. A colour illustration corresponding to the arms of the Balls of Northamptonshire, and wrongly attributed to the Balls of Barkham, is reproduced in Plate XIII between pages 2528 and 2529.^{B79}

Peter Walne, 'The English Ancestry of Colonel William Ball of Millenbeck', 1959

7.(a) The Berkshire County Archivist, Peter Walne, wrote a comprehensively researched and well argued article entitled '*The English Ancestry of Colonel William Ball of Millenbeck*' in 1959,^{B80} based on a close perusal of the original record sources relating to the Balls of Barkham and Wokingham. As regards published sources, however, Walne incorrectly grouped Hayden with those writers who accepted that Colonel William was descended from the family of Ball of Berkshire.

(b) In discussing the pedigree of the Balls of Berkshire, Walne noted that William Ball who is said to have died in 1480 was not lord of the manor of Barkham as erroneously stated in the Downman family Bible and Burke's '*Landed Gentry*' 1939 (*supra*), "but merely an inhabitant of the parish possibly of yeoman status".^{B81}

(c) While the parish registers of Wokingham, All Saints do not survive before 1674 and the Bishops' Transcripts of the Wokingham registers which survive are incomplete and not wholly legible, Walne established by reference to an uncle's *Inquisition Post Mortem* that William Ball of Lincoln's Inn, the reputed father of Colonel William of Millenbeck and eldest son of John Ball II of Wokingham, was born around 1603.^{B82} Walne also notes that he married in 1627.^{B83}

(d) Although when William Ball of Lincoln's Inn died in 1647 his will made no reference to a son called William,^{B84} Walne cites a reference to William Ball and an elder son called William in a 1641 Wokingham charity deed.^{B85}

While it would have been feasible for son William to have gone to Virginia around 1650, when he would have been about 22, Walne observes that he would have been no older than ten when he is supposed to have married Hannah Atherold in 1638.^{B86}

However, at variance with the tradition that William, son of William Ball of Lincoln's Inn, went to Virginia to found a new dynasty, Walne cites records evidencing that son William continued to live in the locality until at least 1687.^{B87}

(e) Walne also highlighted the lack of any surviving contemporaneous records concerning Hannah Atherold of Burgh, Suffolk, whom 'Colonel' William is reputed to have married "in London" in 1638. Walne was unable to trace any record of either her baptism or marriage.^{B88}

(f) Walne concluded that the claims of the Balls of Berkshire to be the English ancestors of the Balls of Virginia could not be substantiated by reference to original records but that the heraldic evidence strongly suggested a line of descent from the Balls of Northamptonshire.^{B89}