

## D. Downman Family Bible

The information about the English ancestry of the Balls of Virginia in the oft-cited Downman family Bible,<sup>D1</sup> which is stated to be taken from the original record book of the Visitation of London in 1633-35 at the College of Arms in London,<sup>D2</sup> comprises a narrative recitation of the family tree of the Balls of Barkham and Wokingham recorded before the Heralds by William Ball of Lincoln's Inn.

The information recorded by the Heralds is supplemented by the erroneous additional statement that William Ball of Barkham who is said to have died in 1480 was lord of the manor of Barkham.

The entry goes on to say that 'Colonel' William emigrated to Virginia in 1657, whereas the 1779 inscription (according to Hayden by Colonel Burgess Ball) on the reverse of the 'illuminated parchment' which 'Colonel' William is said to have brought with him says that he came to Virginia with his family about 1650.<sup>D3</sup>

The opening entries in the family Bible on page 2 (page 1 is the frontsheet) relate to the marriage of Rawleigh Downman and Joseph Ball II's daughter, Frances, in 1750 and contain details of the births and baptisms of their six children born between 1751 and 1762.

The entry about the family's ancestry, which is in a different hand, begins on page 3 and the line of descent continues on page 4 with the pedigree of Joseph Ball I, Joseph Ball II and his daughter Frances. It concludes by referring to the return to Virginia of Rawleigh and Frances Downman in 1765. "They had three children who survived them, Joseph Ball Downman, Rawleigh William Downman & Frances [Fanny] Downman who married Mr James Ball of Bewdley."<sup>D4</sup>

The whole entry appears to have been written at the same time. If so, as Fanny Downman married Colonel James Ball Jr. of 'Bewdley' around 1776,<sup>D5</sup> it seems that the entry cannot have been written in the Bible any earlier than this. The Downman family pedigree continues on page 5, the first succeeding entry being the death of Rawleigh Downman in 1781.

It may be significant that the Bible refers to 'Colonel' William Ball marrying Hannah Atherold (rather than Hannah Atherall or Hannah Athereth).<sup>D6</sup>

There is a transcript of pages 3 and 4 of the Downman family Bible in Appendix III.