

## Blow Family of Surry County, Virginia

See **Chronology of Blow Records** for transcripts of the citations and much more detailed explanations of the referenced records below. My focus in compiling this was the first two generations, but some information is included for the third and fourth generations.

1. **George Blow** (? – c1666/7) We don't know when he arrived in Virginia, or when he was born. It is possible that he was the *George Blowe* named as a headright in a 1639 patent to Henry Catelyn.<sup>1</sup> Or he may have been the *Geo Blower* claimed as a headright in a 1653 patent to Nathaniel Hurd for land in Warwick County only about five miles from where we first find our George Blow in 1661.<sup>2</sup> I note that, because he did not use himself as a headright when he patented land in 1663, he may well have been imported as a servant.

By early 1661 he seems to have been established in the northeastern part of Surry County, for on 2 May 1661 George Blow “of Surry County”, was given security for a bond.<sup>3</sup> A few months later, again as a resident of Surry, he bought and then promptly sold a small piece of land in the area of Lower Chipoakes Creek.<sup>4</sup> He obtained a patent in 1663 for 600 acres just off Green Swamp, a few miles southwest of the area in which he was first found, using several headrights that had already been used nearly thirty years earlier by a neighbor.<sup>5</sup> He sold parts of that patent to John Bynum and to Rowland Hudson and William Hancock almost immediately<sup>6</sup>, but retained a portion of it on which he evidently lived until his death. His wife Margaret Blow [as “Margery”] relinquished dower in both sales, and George Blow signed his name to both deeds. He then obtained a second patent, which is unrecorded but referenced later, for an additional 635 acres a few miles southwest of the first.<sup>7</sup> He was evidently the guardian for an orphan, possibly John Phipps, in 1662 but appears to have been replaced by 1667.<sup>8</sup> He evidently died in the late 1660s, a period for which no probate records survive in Surry County.

He is mentioned in the Surry records seven times in the three-year period from mid-1661 to mid-1664, but appears in no records after August 1664 (beyond mention of his land in a few patents). He may have died as early as 1664 or 1665, and almost certainly died prior to June 1668, as he does not appear among the Surry tithables for 1668, 1669, or 1670. A 1675 record, calling Richard Smith the father-in-law of Richard Blow, is the only record that George Blow's widow Margaret had remarried to Richard Smith, though she probably had done so several years earlier. Margaret was dead by late 1678, when Richard Smith

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<sup>1</sup> Virginia Patent Book 1, p613. The patent, issued on 18 February 1638/9, was for land on the westernmost branch of the Elizabeth River in what is now Norfolk County. This is approximately 30 miles from the Surry County location where we find George Blow in 1661.

<sup>2</sup> Virginia Patent Book 3, p29.

<sup>3</sup> Surry County Deed Book 1, p165. The bond itself is not in the records.

<sup>4</sup> Surry County Deed Book 1, p170 and p184.

<sup>5</sup> Virginia Patent Book 5, p370. Seven of the twelve headrights he used for this grant had been used in 1636 for the patent that George Blow had bought a part of in 1661.

<sup>6</sup> Surry County Deed Book 1, p232 and p246.

<sup>7</sup> The second patent is referenced in Virginia Patent Book 6, p563 and Book 7, p159.

<sup>8</sup> Surry County Deed Book 1, p298

remarried to the widow of John Twyford.<sup>9</sup> It is possible she was dead by 1675, because there is no record that her dower share of the estate was withheld from her sons. Sometime during that second marriage, she had a daughter named Elizabeth by her second husband. The three sons of Richard Smith are clearly by his next wife.<sup>10</sup>

Richard, the eldest Blow son, appears as a tithable of Richard Smith from 1673-75, and again in 1680, 1681, and in 1683. From 1677 through 1679 he had his own household. From records in 1675 it is clear that Richard Smith had been the guardian of both Blow sons prior to that year. Since George Blow likely died intestate, his land was inherited by the eldest son Richard, and his estate (the personal property) was split between the two sons.

Little is known of Margaret Blow. She appears in only two records, in 1663 and 1664, though her remarriage to Richard Smith is inferred from a later record, as is he daughter Elizabeth Smith by that marriage. Note that the 10-year gap between the births of the two sons suggests the possibility that either they had different mothers or there were other children who did not survive.

1.1. **Richard Blow** (1654 - 1687) He was clearly the eldest son by several years. Richard Blow was living with Richard Smith in the tithables of 1673-1675.<sup>11</sup> He apparently reached majority 4 by October 1675 when, as “son and heir of George Blow” he renewed his father’s 1664 patent for 635 acres.<sup>12</sup> A month later (at the next available court on 2 November 1675), he petitioned the court to have his “father in law” Richard Smith deliver to him his share of his deceased father’s estate.<sup>13</sup> Oddly, though, he did not acknowledge receipt for nearly two years, doing so in September 1677.<sup>14</sup> On 7 May 1678 he sold the entire 635 acre repatented tract.<sup>15</sup> From 1677 through 1679 he appears alone in the tithables lists, apparently living on the remaining portion of his father’s 1663 patent and enumerated in Lawnes Creek parish. In early 1680 he sold 100 acres remaining from that original 1663 patent to Nicholas Sessums.<sup>16</sup> Later that year, evidently landless, he again appears in Richard Smith’s household in the 1680 tithables. He bought land on Pidgeon Swamp in early 1681<sup>17</sup>, but was still in Richard Smith’s household in 1681 and in 1683 - he appears with William Edwards in 1682. On 20 April 1684, Richard Blow patented 210 acres on Pidgeon Swamp adjacent Richard Smith and his own land.<sup>18</sup> By early 1685 his younger brother George Blow had turned 21, and on 2 November 1685 Richard Blow and his wife Elizabeth gifted George Blow the 100 acres

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<sup>9</sup> Surry County Order Book 1671-1691, p228, 229, 241

<sup>10</sup> Their first appearance in the tithables tell us that Richard Smith’s sons were born between roughly 1682 and 1687. His daughter Elizabeth’s birth is harder to pin down.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Smith appears in the 1673 and 1674 tithables with a second male tithable who is not named. That was surely Richard Blow who is his second tithable in 1675. The tithables for the years 1671 and 1672 are lost, as is the 1676 list

<sup>12</sup> Virginia Patent Book 6, p563

<sup>13</sup> Surry County Order Book 1671-1691, p106

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p157

<sup>15</sup> Surry County Deed Book 2, p203

<sup>16</sup> Surry County Order Book 1671-1691, p106 and Davis, p250

<sup>17</sup> Surry County Orders 1671-1691, p442. The transaction is referenced later by George Blow.

<sup>18</sup> Virginia Patent Book 7, p372

he had bought in 1681.<sup>19</sup> Richard appeared in the 1684 tithables by himself, and in 1685 and 1686 with John Bynum Jr. in his household.

Richard Blow was alive for the June 1686 tithables, but was dead by 3 May 1687 when his widow Elizabeth Blow was granted administration of his estate.<sup>20</sup> Richard Blow died childless, for his brother George inherited his land, declaring himself to be “the only brother and heir of Richard Blow” when he sold part of that land on 3 March 1688.<sup>21</sup> The widow Elizabeth was still “Elizabeth Blow” when she released her dower interest in that sale.<sup>22</sup> But by 2 July 1689 she had remarried to Robert Grice, when they sued George Blow for her dower interest in her late husband’s land. Elizabeth, who apparently had several children by Robert Grice, may have been the sister of John and James Bynum. [See **Bynum Note** for a more complete review of the evidence.]

- 1.2. **George Blow II** (c1664 - 1717) When his brother Richard reached 21 in 1675 and obtained his share of their father’s personal property, Richard Smith posted a new bond for the guardianship of George Blow alone.<sup>23</sup> A prior bond was voided at the same time, showing that Smith had been the guardian at some earlier date. George Blow appears in the tithables for the first time in 1681 and declared himself to have reached 21 on 3 March 1685 when he requested that Richard Smith pay him his share of his father’s estate.<sup>24</sup> Prior to reaching majority, he appears in the tithables of 1681-1684 twice by himself and twice as a tithable of Mathew Swann.

At the same court at which he requested his share of his father’s estate, George Blow and his wife Elizabeth were granted administration of the estate of her former husband, Thomas Barrow.<sup>25</sup> Thomas Barrow had first appeared in Surry in 1680 buying the land that George Blow Sr. had sold years earlier to Hancock and Hudson. He was still alive on 4 November 1684 but George Blow had married his widow by 3 March 1685, only four months later. Thomas Barrow left his widow with two small sons, Edward (c1675) and Thomas Jr. (c1679) who later appear as tithables of George Blow.

In a two week period in the fall of 1685, George Blow gifted a cow to “my loving sister Elizabeth Smith” (see below) and was in turn gifted with 100 acres by his brother Richard Blow.<sup>26</sup> In early 1687 he sold that 100 acres to John Bynum<sup>27</sup> who was listed with him in the 1687 tithables. As the “only brother and heir of Richard Blow decd” he sold a portion of his brother’s patent in early 1688<sup>28</sup> and the remainder in 1690.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Surry County Deed Book 3, p41.

<sup>20</sup> Surry County Orders 1671-1691, p565-6.

<sup>21</sup> Surry County Deed Book 4, p32.

<sup>22</sup> The widow had a lifetime interest in the land, regardless of who inherited it. She had to release that interest in the sale.

<sup>23</sup> Surry County Orders 1671-1691, p106.

<sup>24</sup> Surry County Orders 1671-1691, p477.

<sup>25</sup> Surry County Orders 1671-1691, p477.

<sup>26</sup> Surry County Deed Book 3, p42 and p41 respectively.

<sup>27</sup> Surry County Deed Book 3, p80.

<sup>28</sup> Surry County Deed Book 4, p32.

<sup>29</sup> Surry County Deed Book 4, p191.

Between the two sale, when Richard Blow's widow remarried Robert Grice, they successfully sued George Blow over Elizabeth's dower interest in the land.<sup>30</sup>

This marked the first of many lawsuits against George Blow. A year later, his securities sued him over his failure to account for the estate of Thomas Barrow.<sup>31</sup> The following year, he unsuccessfully sued Robert Randall for calling him a "rogue" and accusing him of killing a steer. "Rogue" may have been a fair description, for George was sued more or less constantly for the remainder of his life. In 1694 he was convicted of selling trash tobacco, a fairly serious offense at the time.<sup>32</sup> Over the last twenty-five years of his life, nearly every mention of him in the records is a debt suit.<sup>33</sup> His many creditors sued him on a regular basis for debts he clearly was unable to pay. His creditors took some drastic steps, including several seizures of his property and demands for special bail, and he eventually died virtually penniless and still in debt.

He moved south of the Blackwater, onto Seacock Swamp, sometime after 1701 when that area was opened for settlement. He probably lived on a patent there which he obtained in 1702.<sup>34</sup> On 1 March 1709 a bridge was ordered "over the Seacock by George Blow's plantation."<sup>35</sup> And on 18 February 1713 his son Richard Blow was appointed overseer of the highways "from the bridge over the Seacock Swamp near George Blow's..."

George Blow died in 1717, at roughly the age of 53. On 18 September 1717 administration of his estate was given to Benjamin Chapman, his greatest creditor.<sup>36</sup> That is a sure sign that his debts exceeded his estate. His land, of course, was safe from creditors under the law of the time, and was inherited by his son Richard Blow.

1.2.1. **Richard Blow** (c1688 – c1761) He does not appear in any tithables through 1703, the final year for which the Surry tithables survive. That would seem to place his date of birth after June of 1687, otherwise he should have been taxable in 1703. He appears first on 7 April 1700 when his father made him a gift of a cow and calf – probably George Blow's attempt to place his dwindling property beyond the reach of his creditors.<sup>37</sup> He next appears as a witness in a suit on 4 November 1707 (an action that did not require his reaching majority).<sup>38</sup> The first certain indication that he had reached majority was his jury service on 7 November 1710.<sup>39</sup> That would seem to place his birth within a year either side of 1688. Although he was also frequently sued, at least during his father's

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<sup>30</sup> Surry County Orders 1671-1691, p710.

<sup>31</sup> Surry County Orders 1671-1691, p757.

<sup>32</sup> Surry County Orders 1691-1713, p103 and p109.

<sup>33</sup> Surry County Orders 1691-1713, pp122, 124, 125, 126, 140, 153, 175, 269, 340, 384, 389, 360. Surry County Orders 1713-1718, p25,30, 38, 65. And that's just some of them.

<sup>34</sup> Virginia Patent Book 9, p497.

<sup>35</sup> Surry County Orders 1691-1713, p320.

<sup>36</sup> Surry County Orders 1713-1718, p125 – see also p125 and 132.

<sup>37</sup> Surry County Deed Book 5, p202.

<sup>38</sup> Surry County Orders 1691-1713, p303.

<sup>39</sup> Surry County Orders 1691-1713, p352.

lifetime, Richard Blow reached a degree of status and wealth well beyond his father's. He was one of the first churchwardens of Albemarle Parish, and owned a significant amount of land south of the Blackwater. He appears to have lived in the same general vicinity of Seacock Swamp where his father had died, an area that became Sussex County in 1754. He died in Sussex County, where his will was dated 3 September 1761 and proved 18 February 1762. The will gave legacies to grandson Richard Blow (son of his deceased son Richard Blow); to his five living sons Henry Blow, Samuel Blow, John Blow, Nicholas Blow, and Michael Blow; to his daughters Jane Exum and Rebecca Maget; to grandchildren Thomas and Mary Blunt (children of his daughter Ann Blunt); and to sons-in-law Henry Thomas and Micajah Edwards. His sons did quite well for themselves, most becoming moderately wealthy and serving in a variety of public offices.

Richard Blow's wife is given in several deeds as Elizabeth. According to an 1898 autobiographical statement of a great-great-grandson, his wife was Elizabeth Rives Ruffin.<sup>40</sup> He evidently married shortly before 1710, as his two eldest sons seem to have been born about then.

1.2.1.1. **Richard Blow Jr.** (c1710 – c1746) He first appears as “Richard Blow Jr.” witnessing a will in Isle of Wight County on 20 March 1733/4.<sup>41</sup> His wife was named Ann, for both Ann and Richard Blow Jr. witnessed a deed in Isle of Wight six days later.<sup>42</sup> He appears several times in Isle of Wight records over the next ten years, consistently signing as “Jr.” His appraisal is recorded in Isle of Wight on 9 October 1746 by Henry and Ann Vaughn [his widow now remarried], with the notation that it was performed at Contentney [Creek] in Craven County, North Carolina.<sup>43</sup> An accounting was recorded on 14 January 1747.<sup>44</sup> He left three minor children, for on 12 March 1746 John Thomas was appointed guardian to **John Thomas Blow**, **Martha Blow**, and **Richard Blow** (c1738-1786), orphans of Richard Blow Jr.<sup>45</sup> Five years later, on 3 October 1751, another accounting for the three orphans was recorded by John Thomas.<sup>46</sup> The son John Thomas Blow, probably the youngest son, was born 7 August 1741 according to his marriage record.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> American Ancestry, Vol. 9, (Joel Munsell's Sons, Albany, 1898), p69. The statement is made in an autobiographical statement by William Nivison Blow, a grandson of Richard Blow and great-grandson of Samuel Blow.

<sup>41</sup> Isle of Wight Will Book 4, p65.

<sup>42</sup> Isle of Wight Deed Book 6, pp350.

<sup>43</sup> Isle of Wight Will Book 5, p37.

<sup>44</sup> Isle of Wight Will Book 5, p92.

<sup>45</sup> Isle of Wight Order Book 1746-1752, p5 as reported in the *Virginia Genealogical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 2, p50. This appointment is repeated six months later on 9 October (OB, p

<sup>46</sup> Isle of Wight Guardian Accouts 1740-1767, p44.

<sup>47</sup> Marriages of Sussex County, Virginia 1754-1810, Catherine Lindsay Knorr, p8. The record indicates that his guardian John Thomas testified that he was 21 on 7 July 1762. (He married Mary Briggs, daughter of Charles Briggs.)

Richard Blow Jr.'s wife was Ann Thomas, either the sister or daughter of John Thomas, the children's guardian. John Thomas's will, dated 9 April 1763 and recorded 8 March 1770 in Southampton County, distributed virtually the entire estate to Ann's children by both husbands. It gave substantial legacies to all three children of Richard Blow Jr. as well as to four minor children of Henry Vaughn (James Vaughn, Henry Vaughn, Thomas Vaughn, and Mary Briggs Vaughn.)<sup>48</sup>

- 1.2.1.2. **Samuel Blow** (c1710 – 1766) He first appears as witness, along with his father, to a deed on 29 November 1733.<sup>49</sup> His will was dated 6 June 1766 and proved 14 September 1766 in Southampton County. It names wife Martha Blow, a minor son **Richard Blow**, and four daughters: **Martha Hines**, **Lucy Birdsong**, **Mary Mason**, and **Elizabeth Briggs**. Richard Blow and "son in law Charles Briggs" were executors. His wife was Martha Drew, daughter of John Drew, according to the biographical statement of a great-grandson.<sup>50</sup> A family Bible lists several other children who died in infancy or childhood.
- 1.2.1.3. **Henry Blow** (c1720? – ?) He first appears in the records as recipient of a land grant for 390 acres adjoining his father issued on 3 March 1743.<sup>51</sup> He next appears as a witness to a deed for in 1746.<sup>52</sup> He evidently lived on his own land in Surry (later Sussex), and on the adjoining land which his father later devised to him in his will, for most of his life. He appears infrequently in the records and evidently did not marry until quite late in life, as he may be the Henry Blow who married in Sussex County on 11 February 1771 to Rebecca Birdsong, daughter of John Birdsong. He is in the 1782 state census of Sussex County, but was not further traced.
- 1.2.1.4. **Michael Blow** (c1720? – 1799) His first appearance is as a witness to a deed in Isle of Wight County in 1748.<sup>53</sup> He served as a justice in Southampton County, a delegate to the House of Burgesses in 1775, and as chairman of the Committee of Safety during the Revolution. His will is dated 11 Jun 1799 and recorded 3 Oct 1799 in Sussex County.<sup>54</sup> It identifies three living children: **Micajah Blow**, **Thomas R. Blow**, and **Elizabeth Briggs**. A legacy was left to granddaughter Lucy Blow, daughter of his deceased son **Samuel Blow**. It also mentions Sally Blow, widow of (his deceased son) **Henry Blow** and their children Susan and William Blow.

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<sup>48</sup> Southampton County Will Book II, pp304.

<sup>49</sup> Isle of Wight Deed Book 4, p341.

<sup>50</sup> *American Ancestry*, Vol. 9, (Joel Munsell's Sons, Albany, 1898), p69. The statement is made in an autobiographical statement by William Nivison Blow, a grandson of Richard Blow and great-grandson of Samuel Blow.

<sup>51</sup> Virginia Patent Book 20, p501-502.

<sup>52</sup> Surry County Deed Book 4, p448.

<sup>53</sup> Isle of Wight Deed Book 8, p223.

<sup>54</sup> Sussex County Will Book F, pp156.

I might note here that the son Henry Blow left a will in Southampton County dated 27 May 1796 and proven on 13 October 1796 in which he names his wife Lucy (apparently Lucy Myrick, for he mentions Owen Myrick as a brother in law), his children Susan and William, and names his brothers Micajah Blow and Thomas R. Blow (along with Myrick) executors.<sup>55</sup> I mention this because it differentiates this Henry Blow from his uncle.

- 1.2.1.5. **John Blow** (c1720? – ?) His wife was apparently the Priscilla Blow named as a daughter in the 3 December 1758 will of Benjamin Ellis.<sup>56</sup> (Benjamin Ellis was a sponsor at the christening of their first child in 1741.<sup>57</sup>) He appears in no other records until 17 June 1749 when the land occupied by John and Henry Blow (apparently land owned by their father) is mentioned in a deed.<sup>58</sup> He was evidently living in North Carolina when his father wrote his will in 1761, and was not further traced.
- 1.2.1.6. **Nicholas Blow** He rarely appears in records and was not further traced.
- 1.2.1.7. **Jane Blow** She was Jane Exum in her father's will.
- 1.2.1.8. **Rebecca Blow** She was Rebecca "Maget" in her father's will, apparently the wife of Samuel Magget.
- 1.2.1.9. **Mary Blow** She was apparently Mary Thomas, wife of Henry Thomas who was called a son-in-law in her father's will.
- 1.2.1.10. **Elizabeth Blow** was Elizabeth Edwards in her father's will. She is thought to have been the wife of Micajah Edwards, whose will proved in Southampton County in 1770 names his wife Elizabeth and Thomas Blow executors. As noted below, Elizabeth Edwards witnessed the will of her brother-in-law Henry Blunt in 1758.
- 1.2.1.11. **Sarah Blow** She was evidently the wife of Henry Blunt whose Southampton County will, dated 16 January 1758 and proved 14 September 1758, names his wife Sarah and children Thomas and Mary.<sup>59</sup> The will was witnessed by her brother Smuel Blow and her sister Elizabeth Edwards. Sarah Blunt was perhaps dead by the time her father made his will, as Thomas and Mary Blunt were legatees but not

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<sup>55</sup> Southampton County Will Book 4, p?.

<sup>56</sup> Sussex County Will Book A, pp112.

<sup>57</sup> Albemarle Parish Register, (Reprint, 1958), John Bennett Bodie, p15. This shows the christening of two children to John and Priscilla Blow: Rebecca in 1743 and "Mely" (Molly?) in 1741.

<sup>58</sup> Surry County Deed Book 5, p427.

<sup>59</sup> Southampton County Will Book 1, p270.

Sarah.

**Elizabeth Smith** (? - ?) Margaret, widow of George Blow, had another child by her second husband. George Blow made a deed of gift of a cow to his “loving sister Elizabeth Smith” on 26 October 1685.<sup>60</sup> When the gift was recorded in the court minutes, the clerk entered it as a gift to “Elizabeth Smith, daughter of Richard Smith.”<sup>61</sup> The only conclusion we can draw from these records is that Elizabeth must be a child of George Blow’s mother and Richard Smith. Although there are two other possibilities, neither is nearly as plausible.

There is no evidence that there was a daughter named **Rosamond Blow**. This is a theory that appears to ignore the evidence. See **Bynum Notes** for a complete analysis of the evidence for and against this theory.

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<sup>60</sup> Surry County Deed Book 3, p42.

<sup>61</sup> Surry County Orders 1671-1691, p493.