

6. William Byrd II, a Land Speculator, Promotes Immigration to Virginia, 1736

Letter of William Byrd II to Mr. Ochs, His Swiss Correspondent

Virginia, July 1736

If you will send over one hundred families to be here by the first day of May next, I will make a present to them of ten Thousand Acres of land lying on or under the South branch of Roanoke. Besides the 10,000 acres of land I propose to give to ye first Colony, I have much more Joining to that, which I propose to sell at the price of £3 pounds current money, per hundred acres. And if it should lye much in your way to help me to Customers for it, I should be obliged to you. If I should fail in my Intention, of planting a Swiss Colony, in this delightful part of the World (which are the People of the Earth I wou'd choose to have) I must then seat my land with Scots-Irish, who crowd from Pennsylvania in such numbers, that there is no Room for them. We have already a pretty many of them settled on the River Gerando, which neither the Clymate nor Soil is comparable to the Lands upon the Roanoke River. After I have so often repeated to you the good opinion we have of the Switzers, you will not question any good Offices, I shall be able to do them. Especially when they shall come recommended from my old Friend.

Letter of William Byrd II to Dr. Zwiffler, His German Correspondent

Virginia, December 20, 1736

Sir,

... I chuse rather to have a Colony of Germans to settle that Frontier. I have a fine Tract of Land on the South Branch of Roanoke River, which I discovered when I ran the Line between this Colony & North Carolina, & have since purchased it of His Majesty. It contains in all 105,000 acres, besides the River, which runs thro the Length of it, & includes a large quantity of good Land within Roanoke, on both sides, so that no Land, can be better watered. It lyes in a mild & temperate Clymate, about 36½° where the Winters, are moderate and short, so that there will not be much trouble to maintain the Cattle. The woods are full of Buffalo's, Deer, & Wild Turkeys, & the Rivers abound with Fish and Wild Fowl. It lyes 40 miles below the Mountains, & is a very level Road from thence to water carriage. It is within the Government of Virginia, under the King, where Liberty & Property is enjoyed, in perfection & the impartial administration of Justices hinders the Poor from every kind of Oppression from the Rich, & the Great. There is not the least danger from the Indians, or any other Enemy, & all we know of War is from Hear-say. The quitrents we pay to the King, are no more than Two Shillings for every Hundred acres, & our Assembly hath made all Forreign Protestants, that will come, & inhabit this Land free from all other taxes, for the Space of Ten years, reckoning from

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the year 1738. And Last winter the Parliament of England, past an Act, to naturalize all strangers that shall live seven years in any of the British Plantations, so that Expence will be saved. The happiness of this Government, appears in nothing more than in its haveing Gold & Silver enough to Supply its occasions, without the vexation of Paper mony. The People too are hospitable to Strangers, nor is there that Envy, and aversion to them, that I have observed in other Places. Besides all these Recommendations of my Land, there is the cheapness of it, which makes it convenient to poor People. If any Person or Number of People will purchase 20,000 acres in one Tract, they shall have it for Three Pounds the Hundred, of this Currancy. Who so ever will purchase under that Quantity, & above 10,000 acres, shall have it for Four Pounds the Hundred of our mony. But if they will buy under that quantity, & buy only smaller Tracts, they must pay five Pounds, the Hundred of our mony, Because of the Trouble of laying off such small quantitys. They will be at no charge about the deeds of Conveyance, because I have had printed a great number, and unless they will have them recorded, when there will be a small Fee to the Clerk.