

The History and Present State of Virginia. By Robert Beverley.
Edited by Susan Scott Parrish. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, VA, 2013. 384 pp. Notes, illustrations, index. \$45.00. ISBN 978-1-4696-0794-8.

The Dividing Line Histories of William Byrd II of Westover.
Edited by Kevin Joel Berland. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, VA, 2013. 528 pp. Notes, illustrations, map, chart, appendix, bibliography, index. \$59.95. ISBN 978-1-4649-0693-4.

In 2013 the University of North Carolina Press and the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture issued two new scholarly editions of some classics of colonial American literature, Robert Beverley's 1705 history of Virginia, and the pair of quite different accounts that William Byrd II later compiled of the 1728 expedition he led to survey the boundary line between Virginia and North Carolina. (Conflict-of-interest disclosure: The editor of the Byrd narratives kindly thanks me in the acknowledgments for a very small number of extremely minor contributions I made to his research for the annotation.) Readers will appreciate the clarity of the texts in both editions and the publisher's clean design, and specialists will profit from the annotations and editorial apparatus that treat variant versions of the texts and provide additional information about them. Most important, I checked some of the transcriptions in both editions and found them excellent.

Robert Beverley's *History* has occupied an important place in the historical literature since its initial publication in 1705 and in a revised edition in 1722. It has been the subject of good scholarship on its literary properties and is well known to students of Virginia's history as well as of early American literature through the reprint that Louis B. Wright published in 1947. The editor of this scholarly edition, Susan Scott Parrish, of the Department of English at the University of Michigan,

provides a detailed list of all Beverley's deletions, additions, and substitutions for the second edition that is much more thorough than the short list of "Principle Changes" that Wright appended to his edition. Readers will also appreciate the fine reproduction of the illustrations from the original first edition.

Parrish's chapter-length introduction, emphasizing the political context in which Beverley crafted his narrative, and her more than thirty pages of detailed annotation about specific passages in the text enrich and illuminate many portions of the *History*. Rather than take all the credit, as chief editors might easily do, she specifically identifies and thanks editorial assistants who prepared the initial transcription, proofread the text, and compiled the appendix of differences between the two editions. Casual readers and serious scholars will both be perfectly comfortable knowing that she and her assistants carefully prepared an accurate text that can be cited or quoted without reserve. Parrish does not identify the compiler of the index, which is generally well conceived, although the run-in style with numerous long unalphabetized subentries for some subjects—the entry on Indians runs to sixty-six lines—creates some dense tangles of page numbers that make it unnecessarily difficult to locate references to some specific topics.

The editor's focus in the introduction on the place Beverley's history occupies in the historical literature of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Atlantic world evidently diverted her from more deeply exploring some intriguing aspects of how Beverley compiled and wrote his history. Beverley wrote in the preface to the revised edition that one of his motivations in the beginning was to correct errors relating to Virginia that he had seen in the manuscript of John Oldmixon's *The British Empire in America* that was eventually published in 1708, three years after the first edition of Beverley's *History*. Beverley also had access to the manuscript of Henry Hartwell, Edward Chilton, and James Blair, *The Present State of Virginia, and the College* that was not printed until 1727. What Beverley did not acknowledge was that he copied or paraphrased passages from that manuscript and from Captain John Smith's published writings, the reports of John Banister the botanist, and others works, and presented them as his own. Perhaps Beverley was not a plagiarist by the standards of the time, but he did make considerable unattributed use of other people's work.

A more thorough analysis than we have here of Beverley's sources would add an extra layer of richness to our understanding of his historical writing and of

the text itself. It may not be fair to fault Parrish for not doing all that additional work, but she could have used some already executed work of the kind to point out or correct more errors than her annotation identifies and to assess the extent and quality of Beverley's borrowings. For example, Beverley's history contains erroneous accounts of two important stages in the evolution of Virginia's political institutions that he should easily have been able to get right. Even though his father was clerk of the House of Burgesses for nearly a decade beginning in 1677, and he was himself clerk and keeper of the legislative archive in 1703, Beverley misread a passage in the Hartwell, Chilton, and Blair manuscript and dated the introduction of bicameralism and the creation of the separate House of Burgesses to 1680, nearly four decades late. Misinterpreting another passage in the same source, he also misrepresented the manner in which the General Assembly lost its authority to hear appeals from the General Court. Jon Kukla laid all this out very clearly in "Robert Beverley Assailed: Appellate Jurisdiction and the Problem of Bicameralism in Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (1980), which the editor does not cite.

One other thing I noticed, which does not in the least diminish the overall quality of this edition of Beverley's *History*, is that the editor did not follow through on the available leads in the entry on Beverley that the late John M. Hemphill II and I prepared for the *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*. It directed the reader to consult my "Major Robert Beverley (1635–1687) and His Immediate Family," *Magazine of Virginia Genealogy* (1993), where I established that Beverley was born about 1667 or 1668, not in 1673, as has appeared in scholarly articles and reference works for nearly a century.

William Byrd II, Beverley's brother-in-law, composed two significantly different ex post facto accounts of the boundary survey of 1728. They were not published during his lifetime or for many decades afterward, and they exist in multiple variant copies that are in only one instance complete and in none of the instances in the author's own handwriting. The demands on the editor for establishing copy text and taking account of all the differences are immeasurably greater here than with Beverley's lightly revised book. Too, the rich contents of Byrd's two histories, some of which is genuine historical narrative and some of which is certainly fanciful, have never had a full elaboration and annotation to sort out which is which and to identify all the persons, places, things, elusive phrases,

and the sources, other than his own observations, for what Byrd wrote. William Byrd was certainly the best prose stylist to reside in the colony of Virginia, and these texts are two of the most important among his self-conscious presentations of himself as a literary man of rare and original talent. They have long deserved but never before had the sensitive attention of an editor who can help bring out all the many valuable attributes of Byrd's literary creations.

Editor Kevin J. Berland, of the Department of English and Comparative Literature at the Pennsylvania State University, does a remarkably thorough job of dealing with all the textual complications for the informative and somewhat amusing text known as "The History of the Dividing Line" and the shorter, quite different, and funnier satirical text known as "The Secret History of the Line." Both versions have been printed in whole or in part several times since the 1820s, but most of the editions merely recycled faulty early transcriptions. That includes the first volume purporting to contain the full texts of both, *William Byrd's Histories of the Dividing Line Betwixt Virginia and North Carolina* (1929), edited by William K. Boyd. Berland prefaces his completely new edition of the two texts with a long and learned account of Byrd's life and of the literary conventions of his time that he clearly understood and mastered. The editor also provides a full and clear description of each of the surviving texts or fragments and of his rationale for using the Virginia Historical Society's manuscript of the History as one copy text and the American Philosophical Society's manuscript of the Secret History for the other. Berland's analysis of the composition of the two manuscripts is masterful.

Berland includes a biographical appendix fully identifying the main characters mentioned in the two narratives—"Dramatis Personae" he calls it, as fitting the character of the texts as works of literary art rather than straightforward historical records. His annotation is extraordinarily detailed and erudite, noting the literary sources for Byrd's allusions and other material that he incorporated into his writing as if it were his own, not unlike what Robert Beverley did. The editor also thoroughly discusses the state of common knowledge about such animals as rattlesnakes, passenger pigeons, and opossums that intrigued Byrd and his contemporary English readers. Byrd wrote about them from his own observations but also from what other people had written and from what he learned from Indians or other colonists. The same is true about Byrd's other comments on zoology and on botany, geography, meteorology, and Indians.

Berland's annotation fills a large part of this edition. The *History* is 178 pages long with 409 endnotes that fill 97 pages, and the *Secret History* is 89 pages long with 121 endnotes that fill 21 pages.

Scores of footnotes to both texts identify and describe variants between and among the different manuscript versions, and Berland also analyzes what, if anything, they individually and collectively disclose about Byrd's literary craftsmanship. The printed text is clean and clear, and the textual footnotes and contextual endnotes are helpful and unobtrusive. Although it is clear that the editor spent many months collating texts and researching and writing illuminating annotation, it is just as clear and even more important that he regarded the accuracy of the texts as of primary importance. The casual reader may easily enjoy these literary narratives with as much reward as the literary or historical scholar, cultural geographer, biologist, or any other specialist who dips into these well-edited texts for useful historical insights.

The editor and publisher of this fine new edition include some well-chosen contemporary illustrations that nicely complement the narratives and the annotation. The index to the *Dividing Line Histories* is very well planned and executed, with subentries for the longer main entries alphabetized for ease of access. Flora, fauna, literary sources, and of course people and places are all included, as are references to several scholars whose works the editor has occasion to discuss as part of his larger explication of the texts. A few index entries contain rather long runs of undifferentiated page numbers, such as 25 under "rum" and 33 under "Sabbath observance," but sometimes the things referenced do not readily admit of further subdivision.

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