

WILLIAM BYRD AND WILLIAM BYRD



WILLIAM BYRD
WILLIAM BYRD II

DISAMBIGUATION: There were two William Byrds, one a British choirmaster of the 16th and 17th Centuries ([William Byrd](#), circa 1540-July 4, 1623, click on his image at the left above to hear his "Barely Breake" composition played on a harpsichord) vs. the other an American slavemaster of the 17th and 18th Centuries ([Colonel William Byrd II](#), 1674-1744).

In 1841, Henry Thoreau copied a 1588 *a cappella* song by the Brit choirmaster William Byrd, "The Heard-Man's Happie Life."

**"NARRATIVE HISTORY" AMOUNTS TO FABULATION,
THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY**



WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

1540

In this year (or late in the previous year) [William Byrd](#) was born.

NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT





WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

1588

[Queen Elizabeth](#) had commissioned [Edward Dyer](#) to inquire into manors unjustly alienated from the crown in the west country. His conduct of this mission, or what he found out, was not pleasing to the monarch, but nevertheless she granted him some of the forfeited lands in Somerset.

[William Byrd](#)'s PSALMES, SONETS, & SONGS featured an *a cappella* song for five voices "The Heard-Man's Happie Life."

What pleasure haue great Princes,
More daintie to their choice;
Then Heard-men wilde, who carelesse
In quiet life reioyce ?
And fortune's fate not fearing,
Sing sweet in Sommer morning.

Their dealings plaine and rightfull,
Are voyd of all deceit:
They neuer know how spitefull,
It is to kneele and waite,
On faourite presumptuous,
Whose pride is vaine and sumptuous.

All day their flocks each tendeth.
At night they take their rest:
More quiet then who sendeth
His ship into the east;
Where gold and pearle are plentie,
But getting very daintie.

For lawyers and their pleading,
They 'steeme it not a straw:
They thinke that honest meaning,
Is of itselpe a law ;
Where conscience iudgeth plainely,
They spend no money vainley.

Oh happy who thus liueth,
Not caring much for gold :
With cloathing which suffiseth,
Too keepe him from the cold.
Though poore and plaine his diet,
Yet merrie it is and quiet.



We also find in this volume a poem the first line of which is "My Mind to me a Kingdom is," that would during the 16th and 17th Centuries often be attributed to [Sir Edward Dyer](#) although, more likely, it had been penned by Edward De Vere, 17th earl of Oxford:

My mind to me a kingdom is;
Such perfect joy therein I find
That it excels all other bliss
Which God or nature hath assign'd.
Though much I want that most would have,
Yet still my mind forbids to crave.



WILLIAM BYRD

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No princely port, nor wealthy store,
No force to win a victory,
No wily wit to salve a sore,
No shape to win a loving eye;
To none of these I yield as thrall,—
For why? my mind despise them all.

I see that plenty surfeit oft,
And hasty climbers soonest fall;
I see that such as are aloft
Mishap doth threaten most of all.
These get with toil and keep with fear;
Such cares my mind can never bear.

I press to bear no haughty sway,
I wish no more than may suffice,
I do no more than well I may,
Look, what I want my mind supplies.
Lo ! thus I triumph like a king,
My mind content with anything.

I laugh not at another's loss,
Nor grudge not at another's gain;
No worldly waves my mind can toss;
I brook that is another's bane.
I fear no foe, nor fawn on friend,
I loathe not life, nor dread mine end.

My wealth is health and perfect ease,
And conscience clear my chief defence;
I never seek by bribes to please,
Nor by desert to give offence.
Thus do I live, thus will I die,—
Would all did so as well as I!

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.



WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

1623

July 4, Friday (Old Style): [William Byrd](#) died.



WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

1674

[William Byrd](#) (1652-1704), a Virginia slavemaster, had a son whom we will refer to here (to avoid confusing him not only with his father but also with the British choirmaster named William Byrd who had died in 1623) as [William Byrd II](#).

**LIFE IS LIVED FORWARD BUT UNDERSTOOD BACKWARD?
— NO, THAT’S GIVING TOO MUCH TO THE HISTORIAN’S STORIES.
LIFE ISN’T TO BE UNDERSTOOD EITHER FORWARD OR BACKWARD.**



WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

1712

Virginia slavemaster and colonial government official [William Byrd II](#) (1674-1744) completed a secret diary volume covering the timespan 1709-1712.

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT



WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

1721

Colonial government official [William Byrd II](#) (1674-1744) completed a 2d secret diary volume, the one covering the timespan 1717-1721. In this diary he had mentioned not only his [chocolate](#) drinking and but also his evenings of sex with a variety of women. Owner of nearly 200,000 acres of Virginia [tobacco](#)-land, he wrote up his crop as a cure for the plague, recommending that it be hung in bundles around beds, “and in the apartments where we most converse”:

In England, [the plague] us'd formerly to make a visit about once in twenty or thirty years; but since the universal use of [tobacco](#), it has now been kept off about fifty-four years.

This appeared anonymously as A DISCOURSE CONCERNING PLAGUE, WITH SOME PRESERVATIVES AGAINST IT. This would be the only piece of his writings to be published during his lifetime.



**WHAT I'M WRITING IS TRUE BUT NEVER MIND
YOU CAN ALWAYS LIE TO YOURSELF**



WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

1728

Virginia slavemaster and colonial government official [William Byrd II](#) wrote a HISTORY OF THE DIVIDING LINE, his daily observations as one of the commissioners to survey the border between Virginia and North Carolina (this would not see publication until 1841).

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

1732

Virginia slavemaster and colonial government official [William Byrd II](#) wrote A PROGRESS TO THE MINES, recording his visit to Alexander Spotswood's iron works near Fredericksburg, Virginia, and also JOURNEY TO THE LAND OF EDEN, recording his trip to "Eden," his piece of land near the River Dan in North Carolina, but these would not see publication until 1841.

The British colonial administrator James Oglethorpe introduced cotton into Georgia, by means of seed obtained from the Chelsea Physic Garden in London. This cotton would render plantation slavery economically viable.

THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

1737

[William Byrd II](#) had the city that was to be Richmond laid out on one of his Virginia estates.



WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

1741

Virginia slavemaster and colonial government official [William Byrd II](#) completed his final secret diary volume, the one covering the timespan 1739-1741.



WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

1744

[William Byrd II](#) died leaving a library of some 4,000 volumes at his Westover estate.

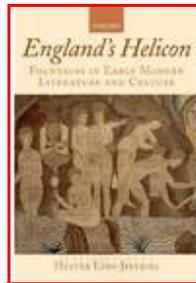


WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

1841

December 8, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) checked out, from [Harvard Library](#), THE PARADISE OF DAINTY DEVICES, REPRINTED FROM THE EDITIONS OF 1576, 1580, & 1600. AND ENGLAND'S HELICON, FROM THE EDITIONS OF 1600 & 1614. WITH INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL, BY SIR EGERTON BRYDGES, K.J. (London: Printed by T. Bensley, Bolt Court, Fleet Street, for Robert Triphook, 37, St. James's Street. 1812).



ENGLAND'S HELICON

He would copy a couple of poems by [Edmund Mary Bolton](#) (E.B.) into his 1st Commonplace Book:

A PASTORALL ODE TO AN HONOURABLE FRIEND.

As to the blooming prime,
Bleake Winter being fled,
From compasse of the clime,
Where Nature lay as dead,
The riuers dull'd with time,
The greene leaues withered.
Fresh Zephyri (the westeren brethren) be :
So th' honour of your fauour is to me.

For as the plaines reuiue,
And put on youthfull greene:
As plants begin to thriue,
That disattir'd had beene ;
And arbours now aliue,
In former pompe are seene.
So if my Spring had any flowers before :
Your breath Fauonius hath encreast the store.
Finis. E.B.

THE SHEPHEARD'S SONG: A CAROLL OR HIMNE FOR [CHRISTMAS](#).

Sweet Musicke, sweeter farre
Then any song is sweet :
Sweet Musicke, heauenly rare,
Mine eares, (O peeres) doth greete



WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

Yon gentle flocks, whose fleeces, pearl'd with dewe,
Resemble heauen, whom golden drops make bright :
Listen, O listen, now, O not to you
Our pipes make sport to shorten wearie night.
But voyces most diuine,
Make blissfull harmonie :
Voyces that seeme to shine,
For what else cleares the skie ?
Tunes can we heare, but not the singers see,
The tunes diuine, and so the singers be.

Loe, how the firmament
Within an azure fold,
The flock of starres hath pent,
That we might them behold.
Yet from their beames proceedeth not this light,
Nor can their christals such reflection giue.
What then doth make the element so bright ?
The heauens are come downe vpon earth to liue.
But harken to the song,
Glory to glories King :
And peace all men among,
These queristers doe sing.
Angels they are, as also (Shepherds) hee,
Whom in our feare we doe admire to see.

Let not amazement blinde
Your soules, (said he) annoy :
To you and all mankinde,
My message bringeth ioy.
For loe the world's great Shepheard now is borne,
A blessed babe, an infant full of power :
After long night, vp-risen is the morne,
Renowing Bethlem in the Sauour.
Sprung is the perfect day,
By prophets seene a farre :
Sprung is the mirthfull May,
Which Winter cannot marre.
In Daud's citie doth this sunne appeare :
Clouded in flesh, yet Shepherds sit we here.
Finis. E.B.

He would also copy an *a cappella* song for five voices from 1588 by [William Byrd](#) (circa 1540-July 4, 1623), into his 1st Commonplace Book:



THE HEARD-MAN'S HAPPIE LIFE.

What pleasure haue great Princes,
More daintie to their choice;
Then Heard-men wilde, who carelesse
In quiet life reioyce ?
And fortune's fate not fearing,



WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

Sing sweet in Sommer morning.

Their dealings plaine and rightfull,
Are voyd of all deceit:
They neuer know how spitefull,
It is to kneele and waite,
On faourite presumptuous,
Whose pride is vaine and sumptuous.

All day their flocks each tendeth.
At night they take their rest:
More quiet then who sendeth
His ship into the east;
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Too keepe him from the cold.
Though poore and plaine his diet,
Yet merrie it is and quiet.

Finis.

Out of M. Bird's set Songs.

He would also copy a couple of poems by [William Hunnis](#) into his Commonplace Book:

Wodenfrides Song in Praise of Amargana.

The sunne the season in each thing
Revives new pleasures, the sweet Spring
Hath put to flight the Winter keene,
To glad our Lovely Sommer Queene.

The pathes where Amargana treads
With flowrie tap'stries Flora spreads,
And Nature clothes the ground in greene,
To glad our lovely Sommer Queene.

The groaves put on their rich aray,
With Hawthorne bloomes imbroydered gay,
And sweet perfum'd with Eglantine,
To glad our lovely Sommer Queene.

The silent River staves his course
Whilst playing on the christall sourse
The silver scaled fish are seene,
To glad our lovely Sommer Queene.

The Woode at her faire sight reioyces
The little birds with their lowd voyces
In consort on the bryers beene,
To glad our lovely Sommer Queene.

The fleecie Flockes doo scud and skip
The Wood-Nymphs, fawnes and Satires trip,
And daunce the Mirtle trees betweene,
To glad our lovely Sommer Queene.

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

Great Pan (our God), for her deere sake
This feast and meeting bids us make
Of Shepheards, Lads, and Lasses sheene,
To glad our lovely Shepheards Queene.

And every Swaine his chaunce doth proue
To winne faire Amargana's love,
In sporting strifes quite voide of spleene,
To glad our lovely Sommer Queene.

All happines let Heaven her lend.
And all the Graces her attend
Thus bid we pray the muses nine.
Long live our lovely Sommer Queene.
Finis. W.H.

Another of the same.

Happy shepheards sit and see, with joy
The peerelesse wight;
For whose sake Pan keepes from ye annoy
And gives delight.
Blessing this pleasant spring
Her praises must I sing.
List you Swaines, list to me;
The whiles your Flocks feeding be.

First her brow a beauteous globe I deme
And golden haire;
And her cheeke Auroraes roabe dooth seeme
But farre more faire,
Her eyes like starres are bright
And dazle with their light.
Rubies her lips to see,
But to tast, nectar they be.

Orient pearles her teeth, her smile dooth linke
the graces three;
Her white necke dooth eyes beguile to thinke
it luorie.
Alas, her Lilly hand
How it dooth me commaund?
Softer silke none can be
And whiter milk none can see.

Circe's wand is not so strait as is
Her body small;
But two pillers beare the waight of this
Maiestick Hall.
Those be I you assure
Of Alabaster pure
Polish'd fine in each part
Ne're Nature yet shewed like Art.

How shall I her pretty tread expresse
when she dooth walke?
Scarse she dooth the Primerose head depresse
or tender stalke
Of blew-veined Violets



WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

Whereon her foote she sets.
Vertuous she is, for we find
In bodye faire, beauteous minde.

Live faire Amargana still extold
In all my rime;
Hand want Art when I want will, t'unfold
her worth divine.
But now my Muse dooth rest,
Dispaire clos'd in my brest,
Of the valour I sing;
Weake faith that no hope dooth bring.

Finis. W.H.



WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

He also checked out the two volumes of [Robert Jamieson](#)'s POPULAR BALLADS AND SONGS, FROM TRADITIONAL MANUSCRIPTS AND SCARCE EDITIONS; WITH TRANSLATIONS OF SIMILAR PIECES FROM THE ANCIENT DANISH LANGUAGE, AND A FEW ORIGINALS BY THE EDITOR. (2 Volumes; Edinburgh: A. Constable and co.; [etc. etc.], 1806), and put his notes on this reading in his "Miscellaneous Extracts, 1836-1840" notebook now on file at the Pierpont Morgan Library under accession number MA594.

JAMIESON'S BALLADS I

JAMIESON'S BALLADS II



WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

[Thoreau](#) also checked out THE WORKS OF [JAMES I. KING OF SCOTLAND](#) (Perth, 1786).



[Thoreau](#) was consulting a edition of this treatise formed upon Tytler's edition and printed in Perth in 1786 by Robert Morison, junior, for R. Morison and son, and sold by G.G.J. and J. Robinson, London, an edition which contained in addition to the original materials some Scottish poems ascribed to him: "The Kingis quair; a poem," "Peblis to the Play," "Christis Kirk on the grene," "The gaberungioman," and "The jolie beggar." Prefixed was a portrait of the King, by Beugo, from the original in the Keilberg Gallery.



WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

Unfortunately, neither the original of this nor its 1786 recapitulation have as yet been electronically captured. All that I am able to show you, electronically, is THE WORKS OF [JAMES THE FIRST, KING OF SCOTLAND](#), TO WHICH IS PREFIXED, A HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL DISSERTATION ON HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS. ALSO, SOME BRIEF REMARKS ON THE INTIMATE CONNEXION OF THE SCOTS LANGUAGE WITH THE OTHER NORTHERN DIALECTS. AND A DISSERTATION ON SCOTTISH MUSIC; THE WHOLE ACCOMPANIED WITH NOTES, HISTORICAL, CRITICAL, AND EXPLANATORY. ... (Perth: Printed by Crerar and Son. For G. Clark, Aberdeen. 1827). How similar this edition is to the one that Thoreau consulted, I cannot say.

WORKS OF JAMES THE FIRST

He also checked out A SELECTION FROM THE POETICAL WORKS OF [THOMAS CAREW](#) (Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme; By John Evans ... and sold by Thomas Fry & Co. ..., Bristol, 1810).



THOMAS CAREW'S POEMS

He would copy some of these poems, such as [Richard Barnfield](#)'s "The Unknown Shepheard's Complaint," into his 1st Commonplace Book.

RICHARD BARNFIELD



WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING, HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY

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“It’s all now you see. Yesterday won’t be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago.”

– Remark by character “Garin Stevens”
in William Faulkner’s INTRUDER IN THE DUST



Prepared: June 8, 2014



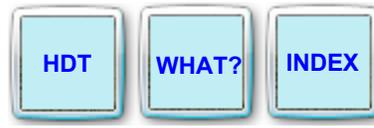
WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

*ARRGH AUTOMATED RESearch REPORT
GENERATION HOTLINE*



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, someone has requested that we pull it out of the hat of a pirate who has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (as above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture (this is data mining). To respond to such a request for information we merely push a button.



WILLIAM BYRD

WILLIAM BYRD

Commonly, the first output of the algorithm has obvious deficiencies and we need to go back into the modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and recompile the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.