



Ancient Planters

Francis Chapman who arrived in Virginia on the Starr was listed as an Ancient Planter under the year 1609. He is probably the first Chapman to me to America and survive.

[The following was published as part of the Introduction to Second Edition Cavaliers and Pioneers Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants 1623-1666 by Nell Marion Nugent. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, Inc. 1963) Originally published in 1934. It cites, for part of the article, Records of the Virginia Company, Vol 1, 373. There are several references to later pages, but those pages are not included here.]

For more information on Ancient Planters, please visit the ORDER OF DESCENDANTS OF ANCIENT PLANTERS at [www. ancientplanters.org](http://www.ancientplanters.org)

According to the Charter of Orders from Sir Thomas Smythe (referred to as “the late Treasurer” in patents in this book), November 18, 1618 the following provision was made: “**** And forasmuch as our intent is to establish our equal Plantations whereof we shall speak afterwards be reduced into four cities or Boroughs namely the chief city called James Town, Charles City, Henrico, and the Borough of Kiccotan [later Elizabeth City], And that in all those aforesaid cities or Boroughs the ancient adventurers and Planters which were transported thither with Intent to Inhabit at their own costs and charges before the coming away of Sir Thomas Dale Knight, and have so continued during the space of three years, shall have upon a first Division to be by us augmented one hundred acres of land for their personal adventure and as much for every single share of twelve pounds ten shillings paid for such share allotted and set out to be held by them their Heirs and assigns forever.

“And that for all such planters as were brought thither at the Company’s charge to Inhabit there before the coming away of the said Sir Thomas Dale after their time of service to the Company on the common land agreed shall be expired there be set out one hundred acres of Land for each of their Heirs and assigns for ever paying for every fifty acres the yearly fee Rent of one shilling to the said Treasurer and company and their successors at one entire payment the feast day of Saint Michaels the Archangel forever. And in regard that by the Singular Industry and virtue of the said Sir Thomas Dale the former Difficulties and Dangers were in greatest part overcome to the great ease and security of such as have been since that time transported thither, we do therefore hereby ordain that all such persons as since the coming away of the said Sir Thomas Dale have at their own charges been transported thither to Inhabit and so continued as aforesaid there be allotted and set out at first Division fifty acres of Land to them and their Heirs forever from their Personal adventure paying a fee rent of one Shilling yearly in manner aforesaid and that all persons which since the going away of the said Sir Thomas Dale have been transported thither at we company’s charges or which hereafter shall be so transported be placed as Tenants on the company’s lands for the term of seven years to occupy the same to the half part of the profits as is above said.”

Those who had worked on the Company’s land had had their disappointments: “A little before the departure of Sir Thomas Gates many of the Ancient planters (by the instigation of Sir Thomas Dale), upon promise of an absolute freedom after three years more to be expired (having most of them served the Colony six or seven years in that general slavery) were yet contented to serve in the building of Charles City and Hundred with very little allowance of clothing and victuals.”

But Ancient Planters were to have immunities as well as rewards, as appears from the Laws & Orders of the General Assembly, March 5, 1623/4: “That all the old planters that were here before or came in at the coming of Sir Thomas Gates they and their posterity shall be exempted from their personal service to the war and any public charge (church duties excepted that belong particularly to their persons (not including their families)) except such as shall be employed to command in chief.”

In compliance with the Charter of Orders Sir George Yeardley, in 1619, made without doubt a number of grants to “Ancient Planters” of which only one is now extant—that to William Fairfax, (see page 109). A copy of a bill of adventure, dated July 15, 1608, in consideration of the payment of 12 lbs. 10 shillings, to Henry Dawkes is cited in connection with a patent to his son William Dawkes “of Verinas.” (See page 15).

The following list includes those who are known to have come to Virginia before the close of the year 1616, survived the massacre, appear in the Muster of 1624/5 as then living in Virginia and to most of whom the term "Ancient Planter" may with justification be applied.

Certain "Ancient Planters"—Samuel Jordan, for instance—had, at the time the Muster was taken, recently died. (See page 226).