

**SOCIAL LIFE OF VIRGINIA IN THE  
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. AN INQUIRY  
INTO THE ORIGIN OF THE HIGHER  
PLANTING CLASS, TOGETHER WITH AN  
ACCOUNT OF THE HABITS, CUSTOMS,  
AND DIVERSIONS OF THE PEOPLE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649082353

Social life of Virginia in the seventeenth century. An inquiry into the origin of the higher planting class, together with an account of the habits, customs, and diversions of the people by Philip Alexander Bruce

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**PHILIP ALEXANDER BRUCE**

**SOCIAL LIFE OF VIRGINIA IN THE  
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. AN INQUIRY  
INTO THE ORIGIN OF THE HIGHER  
PLANTING CLASS, TOGETHER WITH AN  
ACCOUNT OF THE HABITS, CUSTOMS,  
AND DIVERSIONS OF THE PEOPLE**



# Social Life of Virginia.

IN THE

## Seventeenth Century.

AN INQUIRY INTO THE ORIGIN OF THE HIGHER PLANTING  
CLASS, TOGETHER WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE  
HABITS, CUSTOMS, AND DIVERSIONS  
OF THE PEOPLE.

BY

PHILIP ALEXANDER BRUCE,

Late Corresponding Secretary of the Virginia Historical Society; and author of the  
"Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century;" "Plantation  
Negro as a Freeman;" "Rise of the New South;" "Short  
History of the United States," etc., etc.

---

*First Edition Limited to One Thousand Copies.*

---

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR  
BY  
WHITTEY & SHEPPERSON, PRINTERS,  
RICHMOND, VA.

1907.

COPYRIGHT BY  
PHILIP ALEXANDER BRUCE.



THE WILSON ROSSVEIT  
MISSISSIPPI WILSON ROSSVEIT  
1914

1914  
5

**Dedication.**

TO THE MEMORY OF MY FATHER,

**Charles Bruce**, OF STAUNTON HILL, VIRGINIA,

AND OF MY UNCLE,

**James Coles Bruce**, OF BERRY HILL, VIRGINIA,

AS REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL THAT WAS LOFTIEST AND NOBLEST

IN THE LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF THE

GREAT SOUTHERN LANDOWNERS AND SLAVEHOLDERS

OF THE PAST





## PREFACE.

---

No one who studies the purely social aspects of Virginian life in the seventeenth century can fail to be impressed with the paucity and poverty of the materials that touch directly upon the subject. Excepting a few brief summaries of personal observations in the Colony resembling those left by Colonel Henry Norwood, the Rev. John Clayton, and the author of *Leah and Rachel*, nothing that can be correctly described as Travels in the Virginia of that day, after it had become a populous community, with a definite character of its own, is in existence. Nor are there any extended biographies of the principal citizens belonging to the periods following the first colonization to supply indirectly information of value. The nearest approach to personal memoirs is to be found in the letter-books of William Fitzhugh and William Byrd, which, however, are, in substance, simply correspondence about dry business matters. Beverley's History, while full of vivid details, really relates to the last years of the seventeenth century and to the first of the eighteenth. To acquire an accurate conception of the Virginian social life from 1607 to 1700, the student must examine a very large mass of miscellaneous printed and manuscript materials which are primarily concerned with other subjects, such, for instance, as the pamphlets preserved in Force's Historical Tracts, the Virginian parish registers, the original colonial documents now in the custody of the British State Paper Office in

London, and above all, the several hundred volumes of the Virginian county records of the seventeenth century, which still survive. These are the chief, although not the only, sources of information; and to these, as well as to all other sources known to me, I have had access in person, with a view to the preparation of the present volume.

In one particular alone have I been compelled to rely on the special researches of others. The knowledge of American genealogy in general, as so far accumulated, is chiefly the result of the labors of students who respectively have devoted many years,—in some instances, indeed, a lifetime,—to the investigation of the history of a single family in all its ramifications. This is as true of those who have pursued their inquiries in the field of Virginia Genealogy as of those who have pursued their inquiries in the field of New England or New York. It is only quite recently that the study of Virginian family history has been carried on in a thoroughly scientific spirit, but we have already secured, by the zeal and industry of scholars so well known in this department of research as Alexander Brown, Rev. Philip Slaughter, Rev. Horace E. Hayden, Charles P. Keith, Edward Wilson James, William G. Stuard, Lyon G. Tyler, and others who might be named, a great volume of trustworthy genealogical information, which, when considered as a whole, throws a decisive light on the origin of the higher planting class of Virginia in the seventeenth century.

The conclusions touching this subject set forth in the present work are based on the results of the special investigations so far made by all those who have been active in this particular department; and I am

confident that further investigations of the same character will only go to confirm more unmistakably the correctness of these conclusions.

In the present volume I have taken another step forward in the study of the conditions prevailing in Virginia in the seventeenth century begun in my *Economic History*; and I propose following it up with even more extended monographs on *Religion and Morals*, *Education*, *Legal Administration*, *Military System*, and *Political Condition*, which, under the general head of *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth century*, would complete the study of the century as relating to that colony.

PHILIP ALEXANDER BRUCE.

NORFOLK, VA., APRIL 25, 1907.