

From Baron to Bourgeois: Thomas West, Lord De La Warr, Governor of Virginia (1610–1618)

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No one is quite sure of the appearance of the man for whom the state of Delaware is named. Depictions alleged to be of Thomas West, Baron De La Warr, the first governor of Virginia, should raise as many eyebrows as the claims that he was a member of the Privy Council or fought in the Low Countries—like those myths, they are creations of the nineteenth century. To date, however, neither the images purportedly of Delaware nor his supposed qualifications have drawn much comment.¹ These images depict Delaware as an unpretentious, robust, simple American—a far cry from how his contemporaries regarded him and why they recruited him to serve as governor. Then, he was lauded for his high birth, noble mien, social standing, and connections. But for over a century he has been depicted as a healthy, stalwart, bluff administrator. Even today, nineteenth-century representations of the baron, many of which are copies of other copies, contribute to and reinforce misunderstandings of Lord De La Warr's place in American history. This essay will assess the historicity of these various depictions of De La Warr. References in brackets correspond to works in the *Appendix: Catalogue of Artworks*, where detailed information and links to reproductions of the portraits mentioned may be found.

Little known today, aside from having given his name to a state, a bay, a river, and to the Delaware tribe of the Lenape Indians, Lord De La Warr was an important colonial figure even though his presence in America was brief.² The

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¹ For the only recent treatments of Lord Delaware, see E. M. Rose, "Lord Delaware, First Governor of Virginia, 'the Poorest Baron of this Kingdom'" *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 128, no. 3 (2020), 226-58; J. Frederick Fausz, "West, Thomas, third Baron De La Warr," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (October 4, 2008); Warren Billings, "Thomas West twelfth baron De La Warr," *Encyclopedia Virginia* (December 7, 2020).

² De La Warr does not even appear in Disney's *Pocahontas II: Journey to a New World* (1998), the animated sequel to *Pocahontas* (1995), despite his role in introducing the Native American princess to King James I and Queen Anna.

first nobleman to come to English America, Baron De La Warr rescued the Jamestown colony in 1610 by bringing much-needed men and supplies, but soon fell ill and departed after only ten months. De La Warr returned home to London with his doctor, minister, translator, and fifty men of his personal guard outfitted in his scarlet livery. In 1618, he died at sea on his way back to Virginia for a second tour of duty.



Figure [1]. Original “Buckhurst Portrait” of Thomas West, Baron De La Warr, attributed date ca. 1605. Oil on wood panel. Acc. No. JYF2000.2. Jamestown Settlement, galleries. Courtesy of Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation.

The subject of the seventeenth-century portrait identified for more than a century as Lord De La Warr is almost certainly not the first governor of Virginia. That painting [1]—referred to here as the “Buckhurst Portrait”—which now has pride of place in the Jamestown Settlement, is not in the style of portraits of his contemporaries, social equals, family members, or fellow officers of the Virginia Company. Neither in size, content, pose, nor attributes does it reflect how the baron saw himself and wished to be seen. It does, however, reflect how Americans wished to see the founder of the first permanent English colony in America. Not arrayed in bright colors, fine embroidery, rich brocade, delicate starched lace, or shiny armor, as was typical of the early colonial period, its subject is depicted in simple, serviceable, and sturdy plain attire that accorded with De La Warr’s reputation as a no-nonsense official who put Jamestown on a sound footing.

The Buckhurst Portrait reflects the values of the country that De La Warr is credited with having helped to establish, not those of the country from which he came. Viewed in the context of his family and contemporaries, a more plausible representation of De La Warr would likely have shown him in lace, fur, and brocade, with noble accoutrements such as a sword and helmet. Although an elegant portrayal of this type might have impressed his fellow Englishmen and Virginia investors, that was not what late-nineteenth-century Americans wished to recall of their forefathers. Like English historians of the period, they celebrated “a common Germanic origin, exceptional courage and manliness of the Saxons,” of whom they assumed they were direct descendants.³ Lord De La Warr is usually considered in the context of such rough-and-ready colonists as Captain John Smith, a self-made man of action from England’s middling class. The continued representation of De La Warr as a simple man of the people without furbelows and without question suggests that Americans still wish to see their first founders in that way.

The Buckhurst Portrait, on which all nineteenth-century images of De La Warr were based, was found in the ancestral home of the West family at Buckhurst, Sussex. It bears a label painted in the lower-right corner identifying its subject and the West family motto in the upper-left [1].⁴ Despite previous

³ Hugh A. MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History: Trojans, Teutons, and Anglo-Saxons* (Hanover: University of New England Press, 1982), 94.

⁴ The West family, the De La Warr barons, had their family seat at Wherwell, Hampshire, until the end of the seventeenth century, when the heir acquired Buckhurst. It is a working estate open to visitors, still in the possession of the De La Warr family (elevated to an earldom in the eighteenth century). In the late nineteenth century, the portrait was said by American authors to be housed at another De La Warr estate, Bourn Hall, Cambridgeshire. See Justin Winsor, ed., *Narrative and Critical History of America*, (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1884), 3: 142 n. 2.

attributions, it is neither by the well-known Flemish painter Wybrand de Geest nor by the celebrated English painter Nicholas Hilliard, as is often claimed. It was painted by an unknown artist and came to light only in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The provenance of the portrait is straightforward. From the time it was first identified in the 1870s, it remained at Buckhurst until it was purchased in 2000 on behalf of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation (JYF) for the Jamestown Settlement living history museum, an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia. It now hangs next to the portrait of Lord De La Warr's widow, Cecily [15], in a discordance of styles that goes unremarked. The acquisition of the painting was contingent upon examination by an expert to confirm that it dated from the late sixteenth or the early seventeenth century. Although it was sold in a frame dating from the late nineteenth century, JYF purchased a "more appropriate parcel gilt frame" before it left England. According to the museum's senior curator, "condition reports indicate that it is an oil on oak panel constructed of three boards with vertical grain—typical of many oak panels of the period. The painting is cradled in seven mahogany glued members parallel to the grain. Six sliding oak battens across the grain direction were removed because the cradle was too rigid and probably the cause of some flaking paint. Areas of paint loss were filled by a conservator."⁵ There is no documentation on why it was given a date of 1605.

The portrait has never been featured in any exhibit of Tudor or Stuart paintings on either side of the Atlantic.⁶ Though it has been widely reproduced since the late nineteenth century, its authenticity has never been questioned. The copies in Virginia [2] (by William Ludwell Sheppard, 1877, Virginia State Library); Philadelphia [3] (by Margaret Thomas, 1882, Independence National Historical Park); and Delaware [5] (by William Chadwick, 1916, Old New Castle Court House)⁷ are testaments to nineteenth-century interest in American history and genealogy. A similar replica painting of West, "by Margaret Thomas after Nicholas Hilliard," from Woburn Abbey, was recently sold at auction and is now in a private collection [4].

In late Elizabethan England, portraits became an important family possession. According to early modern British art historian Robert Tittler, "such portraits identified the patrons or his/her family; they established at a glance his or

⁵ Personal communication to the author, Beverly A. Straube, Senior Curator, Jamestown Settlement Museum, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, July 2024.

⁶ See most recently Roy Strong, *The Stuart Image: English Portraiture 1603 to 1649* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2023).

⁷ Another portrait painted in 1883, now lost, formerly hung in the Delaware governor's office. For a description, see *Proceedings of the General Assembly upon the occasion of the presentation of the portrait of Lord Delaware* (Dover: James Kirk & Sons, 1883).

her claims to family ancestry, personal achievement, political and/or religious loyalties, historical associations, habits of mind and other marks of character.”⁸ The size, shape, and content of the artwork, not to mention the colors, brushstrokes, and background, spoke to the patron and the audience. Artistic styles changed markedly immediately after De La Warr’s death, and taste in Britain differed notably from that in America, where the solid merchant deliberately avoided artistic elements associated with depictions of the romantic gentleman.⁹

The most striking aspect of the Buckhurst portrait is the simplicity of De La Warr’s attire. In his time, so important were the signifiers of clothing that “some painters... seem even to have privileged clothing over faces as descriptors of their sitter,”¹⁰ and the clothing a person wore “was seen as a true reflection of his or her status in life.”¹¹ Such self-conscious display was especially important for Thomas West, who complained to Lord Cecil that he could not hold up his status in London because of his poverty, and who traveled across the Atlantic with fifty halberdiers, soldiers carrying ceremonial arms for display incorporating the heraldic arms of the West family with the incised crest of griffins (head of eagle, body of lion).¹² He attended church there with furnishings of green velvet, worthy of remark back home. The Company, or the family, could have rented props and clothing for the governor’s portrait, as was commonly done (and likely was done for the famous portrait of Pocahontas). The officers of the Company were keenly aware of its reputation and highly protective of it. They would have agreed with John Holles’s recommendation to his son in 1615 that he dress to impress, wearing “a bullion paire of carnation velvet, and satten [hose] all embroderd over with riche embroidery of gould, silver, and silke...and a paire of carnation silk stockins.”¹³ At a time when even nightgowns were highly embellished with fur damask, pleating, and the like, a baron with aspirations would not fail to embrace the

⁸ Robert Tittler, “Faces and Spaces: Displaying the Civic Portrait in Early Modern England,” in *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and Its Meanings*, eds. Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 179-80.

⁹ See, for example, Wendy Katz, “Early American Portraits: Private to Public, Colonial to Republic,” *Gilcrease Museum Journal* 16, no. 2 (2008): 40-64, and Wendy Katz, “Portraits and the Production of the Civil Self in Seventeenth-Century Boston,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 39, no. 2/3 (Summer/Autumn 2004): 101-28.

¹⁰ Robert Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics in Provincial England, 1540–1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 144.

¹¹ Tarnya Cooper, *A Guide to Tudor and Jacobean Portraits* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2008), 14.

¹² One example of these arms survives in the collections of Historic Jamestowne, Object No., 07935-JR: <https://historicjamestowne.org/collections/artifacts/halberd>.

¹³ Quoted in Maria Hayward, *Stuart Style: Monarchy, Dress and the Scottish Male Elite* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), 79.

fashionable style of slashing, multicolor embroidery, and passementerie.¹⁴ Other aspects of the governor's portrait should also be considered. His family enjoyed full-length portraits, but the head-and-shoulders Buckhurst portrait is more modest and inexpensive. The sober colors and spare background are also more typical of provincial works than the aesthetics demanded by De La Warr's fellow noblemen during his lifetime.¹⁵

It is especially noteworthy that the supposed portrait of Lord De La Warr is so distinctively English in style, given that Thomas West had taken the Grand Tour and thus had ample opportunity to recognize and model the Italian styles then popular in London and around the court.¹⁶ The Buckhurst Portrait instead modeled its sitter in the emerging portrait genre of the provincial bourgeois: those commissioned by "the middling elites (country gentry, urban professionals, and merchants)" or "civic institutions (such as schools, charitable institutions, town and city governments, and university colleges)."¹⁷ It is this aesthetic into which the Buckhurst portrait fits rather than the courtly milieu of which Thomas West was a part. Lord De La Warr, who was at such pains to present himself in baronial splendor during his lifetime, was visually reduced by later depictions to appear as a respectable bourgeois, a member of the urban elite, not a London sophisticate.



Before the second half of the nineteenth century, there were no known images of Virginia's first governor in America. In the aftermath of the Civil War, however, southerners reclaimed their earlier history and focused on years of success and pride. Twice in the late nineteenth century, the Commonwealth of Virginia commissioned William Ludwell Sheppard to paint portraits of "notable

¹⁴ For a discussion of nightgown ornamentation, see Hayward, *Stuart Style*, 238.

¹⁵ On the relative expense of portraits, see Cooper, *A Guide to Tudor and Jacobean Portraits*, 12. The personal characteristics are worthy of note. The subject is depicted cross-eyed (with strabismus), with a cast in his left eye (as it would have been described in his time), a physical ailment that would likely have drawn comment. Likewise, the red hair depicted in the Buckhurst painting would have been noteworthy.

¹⁶ Rose, "Lord Delaware, First Governor of Virginia," 229.

¹⁷ Robert Tittler and Anne Thackray, "Cultural Relations between London and the Provincial Towns: Portraiture and Publics in Early Modern England, in *Making Publics in Early Modern Europe: People, Things, Forms of Knowledge*, eds. Bronwen Wilson and Paul Yachnin (New York: Routledge, 2010), 126.

people with strong Virginia connections.”¹⁸ Many of these were copies of works by famous European artists. It is not known when and how Sheppard could have seen the Buckhurst Portrait of De La Warr, but his depiction of the governor clearly derives from that work. Sheppard’s painting [2] nonetheless reveals an American sensibility, more puritan than patrician. In it, the governor is shown wearing a plain, short, but wide white square collar, with two ends of a light blue silk tie hanging below, and a severe black suit. He is wrapped in a plain dark robe or a warm cape. The governor is depicted with short reddish hair parted at the center and a neatly trimmed square beard. As one contemporary historian observed, “he is represented as a stout, ruddy-visaged Saxon, with a most benevolent expression of countenance.”¹⁹



Figure [2] (left). Oil on canvas copy, by William Ludwell Sheppard (1877). Acc. No. 1878.2.1. Courtesy of the Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.

Figure [3] (right). Oil on canvas copy, by Margaret Thomas (1882). Object No. INDE 98610. Courtesy of Independence National Park, Philadelphia, Pa.

¹⁸ Ulrich Troubetzkoy, “W. L. Sheppard: Artist of Action,” *Virginia Cavalcade* 11, no. 3 (Winter 1961–62), 20–26; Troubetzkoy, “The Artwork of William Ludwell Sheppard,” *Virginia Cavalcade* 42, no. 1 (Summer 1992): 20–25. See also William A. Crafts, *Pioneers in the settlement of America, from Florida in 1510 to California in 1849, Elegantly illustrated under the supervision of George T. Andrew, from original designs by F.O.C. Darley, Wm. L. Shepard [sic], Granville Perkins, etc.* (Boston: Samuel Walker and Company, 1876). A Richmond native, Sheppard also designed three Civil War monuments erected in Richmond.

¹⁹ Winsor, *Narrative and Critical History of America*, 3: 142 n. 2.

The Sheppard portrait of De La Warr does not resemble any aristocratic portraits of the era in which the baron lived. Gentlemen then were portrayed with rich lace collars, long pointed beards, and lavish embroidered coats with fur trim, as can be seen in an engraving of Sir Thomas Smythe [22], the head of the Virginia Company at the time Lord De La Warr sailed to the New World in 1610 with a commission from the Company. Noble patrons delighted to be pictured in all their finery, including the newly fashionable beaver skin hats of the type Smythe sports, something for which the merchant Sir Lionel Cranfield, another Virginia investor, spent the enormous sum of £2-17s in 1611.²⁰



Figure [24] (left). Sir Edwin Sandys, by Valentine Green after unknown artist (1776). Original painting at Graythwaite Hall. NPG D4173. Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London.

Figure [22] (right). Sir Thomas Smythe, by Simon van de Passe (1882). NPG D26047. Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London.

Even in an earlier portrait, now at the Skinners' Hall, Smythe, a “mere merchant,” sports an embroidered leather jerkin and two swords with his simple lace-trimmed collar [23]. Similar attention to dress can be seen in the portraits of other leaders of the Virginia Company, such as Sir Edwin Sandys [24] and the Earl of Southampton [25], who succeeded Smythe in office. Even Pocahontas, married to a commoner, was famously portrayed in 1616 with a fine beaver hat, but Baron

²⁰ A. P. Newton, ed., *Calendar of the Manuscripts of Major-General Lord Sackville, Preserved at Knole, Sevenoaks, Kent. Volume 1: Cranfield Papers 1551–1612* (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1940), 255.

De La Warr is always pictured bareheaded.²¹ Jacobean gentlemen did not wear slim blue ties around their necks, but elaborate silk lace or linen ruffs with lace trim.²² The artistic conventions of portraits during De La Warr's time included beautiful hands, costly gloves, and objects related to the stature and interests of the sitter, none of which appear in the Buckhurst Portrait or Sheppard's derivative.

Shortly after Sheppard's painting went on display, the British ambassador to the United States at that time, Lionel Sackville-West, a younger brother of the contemporary Earl De La Warr, toured Philadelphia's Independence State Park in 1881. Noting the absence of his ancestor's likeness from the park's "Gallery of Famous Colonial Persons," upon returning home, he commissioned a reproduction [3] of the Buckhurst Portrait and then later presented it to the Gallery.²³ A native of Delaware, Benjamin Comegys, who observed the presentation, then decided to commission a copy of the copy for his brother, Delaware's Chief Justice, to present to the Delaware Assembly.²⁴ This copy, a photograph "finished in crayon," was lost. However, in 1916, John Bancroft presented the State with yet another portrait of De La Warr, one made by his son-in-law, William Chadwick of Connecticut [5].²⁵ For his oil painting, Chadwick relied on photographs of the Buckhurst Portrait as well as the copies in Virginia and Philadelphia, and an engraving supposedly in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, apparently after the Sheppard commission.²⁶ Chadwick's colored portrait of Lord De La

²¹ For an analysis of Pocahontas *chic*, see Kathryn N. Gray and Amy E. Morris, eds., *Matoaka, Pocahontas, Rebecca: Her Atlantic Identities and Afterlives* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2024).

²² See examples in Roy Strong, *The English Icon: Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture* (London: Paul Mellon Foundation for British Art, in association with Routledge & K. Paul, 1969).

²³ Doris Devine Fanelli and Karie Diethorn, eds., *History of the Portrait Collection, Independence National Historical Park* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2001), 327. Portrait [4] was presumably also commissioned by Sackville-West at this time.

²⁴ This copy cannot be located. Benjamin Comegys's Victorian library, c. 1880, was displayed in 1965 in the Smithsonian's "Hall of Everyday Life in the American Past" in the new Museum of History and Technology. See William S. Walker, "A Living Exhibition: The Smithsonian, Folklife, and the Making of the Modern" (Ph.D diss., Brandeis University, 2007), 82-83.

²⁵ *The News Journal*, Wilmington, January 27, 1917, p. 9: "The State of Delaware's picture collection recently was enriched by a very valuable gift a portrait of Thomas West, twelfth Baron de la Warr, for whom we were named presented through the State Portrait Commission by John Bancroft. It is one of the best portraits, artistically speaking, that the State owns, and historically it has great significance." The photograph portrait of 1883 is not mentioned in the files of the Delaware State Portrait Collection and may have been replaced by the Chadwick oil painting. Personal communication to the author, Kira Lyle, Collections Manager, Delaware Department of Historical and Cultural Affairs, July 2024.

²⁶ Personal communication to the author, Ann Baker Horsey, Curator of Collections, Historical and Cultural Affairs, State of Delaware, May 2016.

Warr, now admired by visitors to the old courthouse in New Castle, Delaware, run by the National Parks Service, is thus a painting inspired by a monochrome engraving of a colored copy of a seventeenth-century oil painting that none of the artists knew in the original. An x-ray of the painting reveals that Chadwick's subject originally sported a large wing collar typical of Puritan and theatrical dress of the 1630s and 1640s (now painted over).²⁷ According to a contemporary newspaper article, a curator suggested that the governor be depicted "in armor instead of robes, so as to be more in harmony" with pictorial conventions of the early part of the seventeenth century.²⁸ Another description in the museum's file notes that this painting is copied from a painting in Philadelphia, copied from one in Virginia, which was copied from the one in Sussex. It says the baron is depicted "with short dark hair, armor-plated uniform, and full white scarf attached at the neck." That style of lace cravat only came into fashion in the decades after De La Warr's death.



Figure [5]. Sir Thomas West, Lord De La Warr, William Chadwick (1916).
Acc. No. 1976.172. Old New Castle Court House, Delaware.

²⁷ Personal communication to the author, Elizabeth Coulter, Curator of Collections, Delaware Historical & Cultural Affairs, June 2023.

²⁸ *The News Journal*, Wilmington, January 27, 1917, p. 9.

Around the time Sackville-West commissioned the Buckhurst Portrait's reproduction, an engraving of the work was cut. It was reported that this was the first time an engraving had been made of the governor.²⁹ The likeness was published in the *Magazine of American History* [6] and reproduced in Alexander Brown's popular *Genesis of American History*. It depicts a man with even shorter, neater hair, a shorter, neater beard that reveals a lot of chin, and no collar, but a thin, neat, plain neck kerchief (or scarf) with a visible knot that ends in a plain white (apparently cotton) jabot: it portrays a man more bourgeois than baron. The man has far more face than beard, a trim mustache, and a rounded beard quite unlike the long, pointed ones typical of Jacobean gentlemen. His hair is short enough to reveal an ear, and he has a cowlick on top and a part on the left side. A flip through the pages of *Genesis* shows how different this depiction of Baron De La Warr is from other illustrations of men of his class. He looks far more like plain-spoken Captain John Smith [21] than any peer of the realm.³⁰



Figure [6]. "Lord De La Warr, Founder of Virginia," H.B. Hall, in *Magazine of American History* 9, no. 1 (January 1883).

²⁹ Alexander Brown, "Sir Thomas West, Third Lord De La Warr, *The Magazine of American History with Notes and Queries* 9 (1883): 61, quoting from personal communication of Lionel Sackville-West, June 28, 1882: "It was painted by Hilliard, and I am not aware that it has ever been engraved, and as far as we know no engraving of Thomas West exists. Our engraving follows the original with care, and may be depended upon as correct."

³⁰ Captain John Smith is opposite Alexander Brown, *Genesis of the United States* (Cambridge: The Riverside Company, 1890, 2: 890. However, many of the other pictures Brown reproduces are from the later seventeenth century and reflect much later styles in fashion and art.

The original Buckhurst Portrait finally came to America in 1929 when it was featured as a highlight of the important exhibition sponsored by the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond that year.³¹ While on loan, the colored oil was copied in black and white for Alexander W. Weddell's massive *Virginia Historical Portraiture* [7].



Figure [7]. Thomas West, Third Lord De La Warr, in Alexander W. Weddell, *A Memorial Volume of Virginia Historical Portraiture, 1585–1830* (Richmond, The William Byrd Press, 1930), opposite p. 76.

³¹ See “Early Virginia History to Live Again in Art Exhibit at Richmond,” *Arizona Republic* (April 23, 1929), 2: “A fine portrait of the third Lord De La Warr is being lent by the present earl.” E. G. Swem gives a lengthy background on the exhibition and the participants in his review of Weddell in *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 39, no. 1 (1931): 90-96.

Weddell's monochrome copy featured in the Jamestown anniversary booklets published in 1957 to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the establishment of Jamestown, England's first permanent transatlantic settlement. Weddell's copy was widely reproduced thereafter, and for convenience, it is still reproduced by many publishers rather than the original from which it was copied.³² In the copy, the governor is pictured with even less beard (it doesn't cover his white neck-piece, which seems to be more of a shirt over which he sports a cape tied with a rosette). Although the souvenir of the exhibition of 1957 relied on the print from Weddell, the Buckhurst Portrait was displayed in Wilmington, Delaware, and hung in Winterthur until February 1957, on loan from the Earl De La Warr of that period.³³

Throughout the twentieth century, these were the images of De La Warr presented to Americans and widely reproduced: Sheppard's Virginia commission of 1877 in color, the monochrome engravings after the Buckhurst Portrait, or that by Weddell—all are still replicated today. Indeed, a current lesson plan from the Library of Virginia intended to meet state standards for History and English education reproduces the Sheppard copy (with the anachronistic "blue string tie," more like a ribbon than a neckband) and instructs students to: "Look at the image of Thomas West. Based on your observations, what can you infer about his status and position within English society?"³⁴ No guidance is offered on the appropriate answer. But the status and position of Baron De La Warr is certainly *not* reflected in this supposed depiction of the first governor, just as the curator had pointed out in 1916.



Governor De la Warr's depictions stand in marked contrast to the portraits of other of his family members: his two grandfathers, his aunts, his father and mother, his widow, his son and his son's wife. The governor's paternal

³² The engraving is still reproduced in historical texts regularly, see, for example, Bernard Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years: The Peopling of British North America: The Conflict of Civilizations, 1600–1675* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), 66, which attributes the portrait to Wybrandt de Geest, reproduced with the kind permission from the Earl De La Warr and photo courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. It is a remarkably dark photograph of the Buckhurst painting, decades old, with its old attribution passed down by the family. At the time of publication, the "original" had been hanging on public display in Jamestown for more than a decade.

³³ *Wilmington Morning News*, October 8, 1956, 15.

³⁴ "Portrait of Thomas West, Baron De La Warr," Document Bank of Virginia (DBVa). The DBVa is "the Library of Virginia's initiative to get documents into classrooms," <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/dbva/items/show/58>.

grandfather, William West (c. 1520–1595), the first baron De La Warr, is pictured in the elegant “Portrait of a Gentleman, probably of the West Family 1545–60” which now hangs in the Tate Gallery in London [9]. The Tate website indexes the belt, cloak, codpiece, glove, hat, and jewelry included in the portrait.³⁵ A man long thought to be his son Thomas West (d. 1602), the second earl, appears in a painting at the National Portrait Gallery with lace ruff, finely-worked gold collar, fashionable slashed sleeves, elaborate cuffs, sword handle, belt and leather glove [10].³⁶ The subject is now known to be Anthony Browne, first viscount Montagu (d. 1592), but that the portrait was long believed by the West family to have been their patriarch suggests how his near contemporaries thought he looked. The second earl’s wife, Anne Knollys (d. 1608), was painted by Robert Peake in 1582 when she was about twenty-seven [14]. She, too, is portrayed in an elaborate Tudor ruff and boasts balloon sleeves and pearl necklaces. Her father, the governor’s maternal grandfather, Sir Francis Knollys (d. 1596), was painted in 1586 [11]. His portrait still hangs at his home of Greys Court near Reading (now a National Trust property), on the back stairs of the house along with a portrait of his son and namesake, who was a member of parliament. All these were painted in a late Tudor, early Jacobean portrait style that went out of fashion just before 1620.



Figure [14]. Anne Knollys (1582), Robert Peake the Elder. Object No. TL-17023. Berger Collection Educational Trust, Denver Art Museum.

³⁵ For a full technical analysis, Natasha Walker, Karen Hearn and Joyce H. Townsend, “Tate’s Painting of a Man in Tudor Costume: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait or a Nineteenth-Century Pastiche?” *Tate Papers* no. 20 (Autumn 2013).

³⁶ For example, as of July 2024, it is still used to illustrate the Wikipedia article on Thomas West: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_West_2nd_Baron_De_La_Warr.



Figure [11] (left). Sir Francis Knollys the elder, Lord Treasurer of the Household (1583). NT 196014. The National Trust, Greys Court, Oxfordshire, The Brunner Collection.
 Figure [12] (right). Lettice Knollys (c. 1595), George Gower. Longleat House, Collection of the Marquess of Bath.



Figure [15] (left). Lady De La Warr (c. 1630s), Circle of Cornelius Johnson. Acc. No. JYF2005.54. Jamestown Settlement, Va. Courtesy of Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation.
 Figure [16] (right). Henry 4th Lord De La Warr (1627), Wybrand Simonsz De Geest the Elder. Sold at Sotheby's, New York, January 12, 1995 (Sale 6654), Lot 87, Private collection. Courtesy of Sotheby's.

Thomas West came from an especially sartorially conscious family. His aunts, Lettice Knollys, Countess of Essex and of Leicester [12], and Elizabeth Knollys, Lady Leighton, are considered representative of the late Tudor obsession with adornment, known for their magnificent jewelry and sumptuous dress. A bust-length portrait depicts Lettice Knollys in a black doublet, lace ruff, and pearl-decorated cap [12A], while a miniature jeweled portrait believed to be her likeness shows a woman with “her tightly curled fair hair adorned with a diadem, wearing a white dress richly embroidered in silver and gold, deep lace ruff and jeweled chains” [12B]. Lady Leighton’s portrait of 1577 shows elaborate concern with lace, feathers, brocades, and jewels [13]. Lady Leighton had a special interest in clothes and accessories “as she was almost certainly the person who had day-to-day care of Elizabeth I’s fabulous wardrobe.”³⁷ Modern collectors well understand that “the definitive status symbol for Elizabethans and Jacobean of influence was the portrait. Likenesses featuring rich robes, plus the paraphernalia of piety or dashing pursuits, painted a thousand words about the sitter’s wealth and status.”³⁸ Thomas West’s surviving portrait reveals none of this.

With the accession of Charles I in 1625, a new look came into fashion, exemplified by the elegant portraits of Anthony van Dyck. The governor’s widow, Cecily, is depicted draped in pearls and wearing pearl earrings and huge cuffs in a portrait by Cornelius Johnson (or someone in his circle), now in Virginia [15]. She is shown wearing such a large and elaborate ruff that her head seems to be floating in clouds. Her son, Henry, who inherited the De La Warr lands and title, was also painted in the latest fashion without any accompanying heraldic arms or motto [16]. The young man is shown wearing armor, a sash, and a large, stylish, flat collar. Henry died young, and his widow, Isabella, the daughter of Sir Thomas Edmunds, was painted by Anthony van Dyck as a full-length standing figure in a white satin gown trimmed with a profusion of lace and enhanced with a jeweled belt, large brooch, pearl earrings, and pearl necklace [17]. None of these elegant and luxurious portraits with elaborate fabric and embellishment accord with the painting said to portray the first governor of Virginia.

The Buckhurst Portrait is remarkably unlike pictures of his family members, and it is a far cry from those of other gentlemen and aristocrats involved in the settlement of America. The portrait pales in comparison with portraits of two of his underlings in Virginia, Sir Thomas Dale [18] and Sir Thomas Gates [19], depictions which likewise are widely reproduced but have received little scholarly attention. The full-length paintings of these military captains (one now in Virginia, one in Bermuda) appear to have been part of a series made c. 1615 for Sir Horace de Vere to commemorate their army service in the Low Countries; they

³⁷ Cooper, *A Guide to Tudor and Jacobean Portraits*, 16.

³⁸ Katrina Burroughs, “Tudor and Stuart Portraits,” *Financial Times*, June 25, 2011.

were dispersed at a sale in 1904.³⁹ Both soldiers are shown as elegant men of taste and fashion with the accoutrements of their profession. Gates is dressed in armor, white leather boots and stockings, a lace collar, matching lace cuffs, and a sash. Hand on a feathered helmet, and foot on the edge of an oriental carpet draped over a table, Gates sports a neatly trimmed pointed beard. Dale likewise has the same pose, with a similarly pointed beard as well as a mustache, lace collar, black hose, large rosette buckles on his shoes, and a sword. Bareheaded, he holds a tall black hat with an especially finely-worked hatband. Hand on a table covered in costly red fabrics, Dale stands in front of a luxurious thick red velvet curtain, probably a standard prop of the artist's workshop. These paintings were evidently commissioned from the workshop of Jan Anthonisz van Ravesteyn either by the English captains themselves or by their commander in The Hague.



Figure [18] (left). Sir Thomas Dale (c. 1615), Marcus Geerarts. Acc. No. 52.8. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Va.

Figure [19] (right). Sir Thomas Gates (c. 1615). Bermuda Archives, at The Bermuda National Trust. Previously hung in The Cabinet Office of Bermuda, Hamilton.

³⁹ Edward Town, "The Vere Captains at Raynham Hall," *Art & the Country House* (2020), <https://doi.org/10.17658/ACH/RNE572>.

Although now believed to commemorate the participation of English army captains in the siege of Jülich (1610–1614), these portraits must have been commissioned in relation to a different occasion.⁴⁰ The identities of the sitters were added in yellow ochre in the late seventeenth century.⁴¹ These military gentlemen show a nice leg and polished leather boots. Someone must have used a goffering iron to crimp and frill their lace—the kind of goffering irons excavated in Jamestown from this period (of which five have been found so far).⁴² De La Warr's hand-picked replacement, George Percy, the eighth son of the Earl of Northumberland, had requested that starch be sent to the colony, which allowed ruffs to be stiffened and extended far beyond the neck.⁴³ We know that starch was present in the colony because it was boiled and eaten as gruel during the winter Starving Time (1609–10) just before De La Warr's arrival. The nineteenth-century depictions of De La Warr do not suggest any use of starch. Even in the outback of America, serious attention was paid to elegant attire and its proper care and presentation. In the list of expenses “to furnish and transport six men to Virginia” in 1623, in addition to expenditures on food, apparel, tools, and arms, the organizer calculated for himself one pound for a hat and band, 13 s-4p for garters and ribboning, and one pound for a ruff.⁴⁴

Sir Thomas Gates is also shown wearing an elaborate sash—the kind of sash of office that was worn by De La Warr's nephew, Captain William West, in 1611 when he was buried in the Jamestown church.⁴⁵ Although West's body has dematerialized, archeologists retrieved silver threads from the fringed sash that covered his ribcage. The men of the governor's entourage were equipped with the bright scarlet livery of his family's colors and carried elaborately chased halberds

⁴⁰ Gates did not participate in the siege of Jülich. He sailed for Virginia in June 1609 and was shipwrecked for a year on Bermuda. He eventually made it to the mainland and served as governor of Jamestown for a month until De La Warr arrived in June 1610 and took control of the colony. Gates remained in Virginia until 1616, with one brief trip back to England to rally support for the colony. He left Virginia to fight in the Netherlands in 1621, where he died the following year.

⁴¹ Town, “The Vere Captains.”

⁴² Excavations at Jamestown have revealed goffering irons to crimp ruffs: <https://historicjamestowne.org/collections/artifacts/goffering-iron>.

⁴³ John W. Shirley, “George Percy at Jamestown 1607–12,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 57, no. 3 (1949), 227–43. At p. 235, the accounts of the earl show that he spent more on starch for his younger brother than on ink and wax combined.

⁴⁴ “A proportion of the Charge to furnishe and transport six men to Virginia,” 1623?, CO 1/2, fol. 254r, The National Archives, Kew, UK.

⁴⁵ Excavation of West's grave unearthed the captain's silk sash with silver spangles: <https://historicjamestowne.org/collections/artifacts/captains-sash>.

depicting griffins, the West family heraldic symbol.⁴⁶ Among the early-seventeenth-century artifacts discovered in the vicinity of Jamestown are gilded spurs, cutlery inlaid with gold and silver, and pieces of elaborate armor.⁴⁷ In addition to glass and pearl beads, pewter badges, and jewelry, archeologists have also found silver doublet buttons and metal aglets for the tips of fine laces. These were the kinds of accoutrements that the elite colonists brought to Jamestown, and they were among the personal possessions one expected to see on display in contemporary formal portraits.⁴⁸

Attention to luxury apparel was not limited to the upper echelons of Jamestown society. When Lord De La Warr triumphantly arrived and ordered a clean-up of the settlement, a well was filled with detritus, including the decorative part of an obsolete firearm. Carved and incised on bone, it featured an image of a gentleman soldier with a ruff, a slashed doublet, Venetian breeches, a hat with a large feather, and holding a sword in his right hand [26]. De La Warr's family was acutely cognizant of such finely worked luxury goods. The governor's mother-in-law bequeathed to his widow a number of costly items, including an "ebony bedstead with the tester, valance, curtains, quilt, chair, and stool thereunto belonging or therewithal used, and also two Persian carpets, with two window carpets and my largest carpet of Turkey work, a silver casting-bottle and a gilt trencher-salt." To her grandson, the governor's heir, among other possessions she left him "six of my high stools of silk needlework, two low stools of silk needlework, my chair of silk needlework, and five of my chairs of crewel needlework, my right Persian carpet." To her granddaughters she bequeathed silver gilt spoons, a silver porringer, needlework carpets, many fine linens (described in detail), including "my carpet of needlework of gillyflowers and woodbines, my Turkey carpet of cucumbers, and a piece of fine Holland to be taken out of my chest to make his Lordship shirts withal."⁴⁹

The sole near-contemporary depiction of Baron De La Warr, a polychrome wax portrait said to be by the renowned French sculptor Guillaume Dupré (d. 1643), is now in the Delaware Historical Society [8]. Like the Buckhurst Portrait,

⁴⁶ One of these halberds was unearthed during the excavations at Jamestown: <https://historicjamestowne.org/collections/artifacts/halberd>.

⁴⁷ Ivor Noël Hume, *Discoveries in Martin's Hundred* (Williamsburg: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1983), 31. Additional items for personal adornment deposited 1610 have recently been excavated and put on display at Jamestown: <https://historicjamestowne.org/collections/artifacts/category/dress-personal>.

⁴⁸ R. Langton Douglas, "Some Portraits of Ceremony of the Jacobean School," *The Connoisseur* 126, no. 519 (January 1951), 162-66.

⁴⁹ Quotations in this paragraph from the will of Anne Shirley (née Kempe) TNA PROB 11/141/330, fol. 271^r, transcription by Nina Green (2009) in normalized orthography on *The Oxford Authorship Site*, <http://oxford-shakespeare.com>.

it bears a label identifying the presumed subject and the artist. But this waxwork is not likely to have been created during the baron's lifetime, nor by Dupré.⁵⁰ Named Sculptor to the King of France in 1611, Dupré is not known to have traveled to England nor to have depicted any other English subject. In the 1610s, he was working in Mantua, Florence, Venice, and Savoy, as well as in Paris. The facial hair (mustache and small, pointed beard) and the costume (Van Dyck lace collar) of the sitter reflect the tastes of the later seventeenth century, not of Jacobean England.



Figure [8]. Lord De La Warr Wax Portrait (c. 1610), attributed to Guillaume Dupré.
Object Id. 1973.003.002. Delaware Historical Society, Wilmington, Del.

The wax image may, however, be intended as a representation of De La Warr by an artist of the following century. One of the great modelers of the early eighteenth century, for example, Isaac Gosset, was known for making wax portraits of “people of quality and learned men.” Merchants from Virginia came to

⁵⁰ It is not listed in the impressive catalogue of 68 of Guillaume Dupré's works in American collections, for which see Laure de Margerie's project, *The French Sculpture Census*, <https://frenchsculpture.org>.

London to acquire such portraits and present them as gifts, especially images of subjects thought to embody a commitment to civil and religious liberties.⁵¹ This wax likeness, however, did not appeal to the later American aesthetic and was never reproduced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.



The Jamestown Settlement of the Commonwealth of Virginia's Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation now features, in its galleries and online, the framed oil painting on panel of the third baron De La Warr from Buckhurst that is said to be a contemporary representation [1]. On exhibit since its purchase in 2000, this is the original "Buckhurst Portrait" on which the earlier oil paintings are based.⁵² It is captioned, "Done by an unknown English artist on an oak panel, the painting dates to about 1605 and was altered sometime later." Other than having an added inscription, it is unclear in what way the portrait was altered or enhanced.

There is little to suggest that this is a portrait from 1605 when Lord De La Warr, the supposed subject, would have been about twenty-seven years old and recently come into the barony.⁵³ It is not in the style of Tudor-Jacobean aristocratic portraits. It does not accord with the paintings of De La Warr's family, nor is it documented in the early seventeenth century. Having left Oxford without a degree, Thomas West, along with many others, was awarded an M.A. when the King visited the university in late August 1605. The added date may be an attempt to account for the dark robe or gown in which the sitter is enveloped. The painting is not mentioned as having been at Wherwell, Hampshire, the family seat until 1695. It is not documented whatsoever prior to 1877. The portrait is more representative of the myth than of the man. It accords well with American political values of the nineteenth century and the plain ways Americans wanted to see themselves, rather than with the sophisticated, luxurious, and hierarchical aesthetic embraced by English nobles in the early Jacobean era.

The third baron, De La Warr, cared deeply about his image at court, once complaining to Cecil, Lord Salisbury, that he was "spoiled of all means to

⁵¹ Ingrid Roscoe, Emma Hardy, and M.G. Sullivan, eds., *A Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain, 1660–1851* (New Haven: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre, 2009), s.v. "Gosset."

⁵² "The portrait was acquired with part of a gift from the Gladys and Franklin Clark Foundation for the development and care of the collection of Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, the state agency that administers Jamestown Settlement": <https://www.dailypress.com/2001/06/14/area-briefs-1445>.

⁵³ No one knows how the date of 1605 came to be attached to the portrait. Personal communication to the author, Thomas Davidson, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, June 2016.

maintain the honour of nobility, so that he can neither give attendance at Court nor hold fashion with men of his own rank.”⁵⁴ For the Virginia Company as well, the public expression of the baron’s supposed wealth was an important element in establishing his credibility. The Company insisted in printed advertisements that neither his “honour nor fortune needs not any desperate medicine.”⁵⁵ It is therefore almost inconceivable that De La Warr would not have been depicted without an appropriate device or coat-of-arms, garbed in obviously deluxe textiles, and accompanied by some conventional signs of authority. Indeed, even today at the Jamestown Settlement, modern re-enactments of Lord De la Warr’s arrival in Virginia [27] portray him wearing a hat, white ruff, and fashionable slashed sleeves, rather than the simple garb of his supposed portrait hanging nearby. There is much circumstantial evidence to suggest that the Buckhurst Portrait was a work confected in the nineteenth century if not created then.

The De La Warr Buckhurst portrait did not surface when the chairman of the Virginia Historical Society, Conway Robinson, traveled to England in 1854 and commissioned copies of portraits of the early governors of Virginia. It was because of Robinson’s initiative that a copy of the portrait of George Percy, first president of the Council, son of the earl of Northumberland, and acting governor for a brief period on De La Warr’s sudden departure in 1611, came to Virginia.⁵⁶ The original [20] from which that copy was made remains at Syon House, the London home of the Earls of Northumberland since the sixteenth century, and is not known to have been exhibited or ever previously reproduced.⁵⁷ The picture of Percy shows a young beardless man with a mustache, wrapped in a lush red velvet cape over a billowing white shirt with a full lace piccadill neckpiece (a broad lace cutwork collar) at his throat.

⁵⁴ Lord De La Warre to Viscount Cranborne, December 12, 1604, in M. S. Giuseppi, ed., *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House: Volume 16, 1604* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1933), 379.

⁵⁵ [Virginia Company of London], *A true and sincere declaration of the purpose and ends of the plantation begun in Virginia* (London: I. Stepneth, 1610), 21. Further bibliographic details for this work can be found in the English Short Title Catalogue, where it is known as ESTC S106908. Lord De La Warr was among those who submitted the publication to the Stationers on December 14, 1609.

⁵⁶ Personal communication to the author, Elizabeth Klaczynski, Virginia Museum of History and Culture, July 2024.

⁵⁷ Personal communication to the author, Sherree Bellingham, Syon Park, August 2024. The painting is first mentioned in an inventory of 1847 when it was attributed either to John de Critz (d. 1642) or Frederic Zuccherò (d. 1609); its earlier provenance is unrecorded. The copy painted by Herbert Ludlow Smith, now widely reproduced, was first put on display in Virginia in 2007. Personal communication to the author, Elizabeth Klaczynski, Virginia Museum of History and Culture, July 2024.



Figure [20]. Captain George Percy, 1580-1632 (1615), attributed to John de Critz.
Collection of the Duke of Northumberland, Syon House, London.

Nor did the Buckhurst portrait of De La Warr come to light during the great series of Victorian exhibitions featuring portraits of figures in British history.⁵⁸ In 1868, the final installment of this series of exhibitions included some paintings which had been overlooked earlier. This exhibit included the portrait supposedly

⁵⁸ Samuel Redgrave, *Catalogue of the third and concluding exhibition of national portraits commencing with the fortieth year of the reign of George the Third and ending with the year MDCCCLXVII. On loan to the South Kensington museum. April 13, 1868* (London: Strangeways and Walden, 1868). It was lent by Countess De La Warr to the National Portrait Exhibition, London, 1868 (no. 705). The national portrait exhibition also featured portraits of Thomas West's aunt Lettice Knollys (no. 683) and the portrait at the time thought to be of William West, the governor's father, attributed to Holbein (no. 629), lent by another MP.

of the governor's father and the Van Dyck portrait of Governor De La Warr's daughter-in-law, a full-length painting that hung at Buckhurst and is now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. That portrait of Isabella, Lady De La Warr, was exhibited in 1844, 1857, and, 1887, as well as, and 1868; it left De La Warr family ownership shortly after 1877.⁵⁹

The Buckhurst portrait of Thomas West first came to light on the occasion of Shepherd's trip to England. As noted, the painting includes a cartouche at the lower right-hand corner of the work that identifies the subject as "Tho. L^d De Lawarr/Governer & Cap^t/Generall in Virginia." It was not unusual, however, for biographical information to be "added later, often after death, by other parties,"⁶⁰ as with the Percy portrait. The cartouche on the governor's portrait is similar in style to the cartouche on the Isabella portrait on the lower left-hand side and could have been "pirated" from that.⁶¹

The inscription in the upper left-hand corner of the Buckhurst portrait is difficult to decipher and is absent in most of the copies. It says, "Jour de ma vie," the motto used by the first baron De La Warr (d. 1554) to commemorate his ancestor's capture of the king of France at the battle of Poitiers. It remains the motto of the De la Warr family today and was included in many nineteenth-century books of heraldry, but it is not evident that the motto was embraced in the seventeenth century by the governor's family, the De La Warr barons of the second creation (which is why Thomas West is described as the third baron or the twelfth baron). It is noteworthy that the portrait includes only the family motto and not any heraldic crest; the reverse would have been more common. The motto does not appear in portraits of Thomas West's grandfather nor in that of his son.

Considering their social status, one might well expect that Percy and West would have been depicted in similar guise. Each came to the early Virginia settlement from an English aristocratic family and served as governor before returning home to Britain.⁶² The similar size and comparable artistic quality of the two portraits would, at first glance, lead us to expect that they were made for the same segment of the market. Percy's lace and velvet, however, stand in stark contrast to De La Warr's plain and practical cloak. In the early seventeenth century, luxurious fabrics and stylish dress signaled the high social status of the

⁵⁹ Provenance information from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts: <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/32373>.

⁶⁰ Robert Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics in Provincial England, 1540–1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 142.

⁶¹ Personal communication to the author, Barry Tsirelson, who has made a study of the portraits of the Vere captains, June 2024.

⁶² This paragraph benefits from observations made by one of the anonymous readers for *The New American Antiquarian*.

sitters. Yet such features are conspicuously absent from the De La Warr portrait. Like the Buckhurst Portrait said to represent De La Warr, the portrait of Percy was only recorded in the mid-nineteenth century and copied soon after. Both reflected interest among historically minded Americans to acquire images of the founding fathers. On their part, members of English aristocratic families derived some prestige by providing copies of images of their noble forbears to hang in American collections.



One can have little confidence today of De La Warr's likeness or how he and his family wished him to be depicted and remembered. The copies of copies exhibited around the United States tell us much more about the values and preferences of their makers than those likely to have been of concern to Baron De La Warr and his contemporaries. The painting said to be of Lord De La Warr shows a man with a wide, neatly trimmed beard and double blue kerchief who resembles a substantial seaman or minister rather than a Jacobean aristocrat. It is striking that the likeness has been, and is, widely reproduced without a single previous comment as to the improbability that it represents an English baron painted before Jamestown was established in 1607. This suggests that even today, Americans cling to a notion of democratic origins at odds with the reality of the early settlement: Thomas West was chosen governor for his noble birth, not his unproven ability. The frequently reproduced prints based on copies of the Buckhurst Portrait obscure that simple fact.

American institutions authenticate, reproduce, and replicate this image in the same way that they market jewelry supposedly owned by Pocahontas and passed down to descendants of her husband in England: they appropriate a tradition created long after the fact. The history of these paintings is a history of America as much as it is a history of the British Empire; the artwork is a primary source for the nineteenth, not the seventeenth century; for the New World, not the Old.

Appendix: Catalogue of Artworks

Governor Thomas West, 3rd Baron De La Warr (1577–1618)

1. Original “Buckhurst Portrait” of Thomas West, Baron De La Warr (attributed date c. 1605), often attributed to Nicholas Hilliard or Wybrand de Geest.

Jamestown Settlement, Va. Formerly at Buckhurst Park, Sussex.

Oil on wood panel.

Reference: Acc. No. JYF2000.2.

Credit: Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation.

Copy Portraits of Thomas West

2. Oil on canvas copy (1877), William Ludwell Sheppard.

Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.

Commissioned by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Reference: Acc. No. 1878.2.1.

Credit: Courtesy of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

3. Oil on canvas copy (1882), Margaret Thomas.

Philadelphia, Independence National Historical Park

Reference: Object No. INDE 98610.

Presented by British ambassador Lionel Sackville-West to Independence National Historical Park in 1883.

Described and reproduced in: Doris Devine Fanelli and Karie Diethorn, eds., *History of the Portrait Collection, Independence National Historical Park* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2001), 327.

Credit: Courtesy of Independence National Historical Park.

4. A (second?) oil on canvas portrait (1882), Margaret Thomas.

“After Nicholas Hilliard.”

From the ducal collection, Woburn Abbey, Bedford.

Sold at Christie’s London, 20 September 2004, sale 7013, lot 557.

Catalog record with reproduction:

<https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-4345894>

5. Sir Thomas West, Lord De La Warr (1916), William Chadwick.

Old New Castle Court House, Delaware (National Parks Service).

Reference: Acc. No. 1976.172

Back of canvas note: “Painted from photograph of original portrait owned by Earl Delaware, from the copy at Independence Hall.”

Credit: Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs.

6. Engraving (1883), H.B. Hall.

Magazine of American History 9, no. 1 (1883), frontispiece.

Described in Charles Knowles Brown, *The Founders: Portraits of Persons Born Abroad...* (Boston: The Boston Athenaeum, 1919), 2: 619: “H.B. Hall & Sons engraved a portrait of the original painting by Nicholas Hilliard, at the seat of Earl De la Warr, Buckhurst, County Sussex...the face is very benevolent, but rather modern in expression. The neckcloth is knotted under the short beard and the ends are concealed by a robe.”

Reproduced in: Alexander Brown, *Genesis of the United States* (Cambridge: The Riverside Company, 1890), 2: after p. 1010. “From Hall’s engraving of a photograph of the original painting by Hilliard...at Buckhurst Park,” 1: xxxvi.

7. Engraving (1930), Alexander W. Weddell.

A Memorial Volume of Virginia Historical Portraiture, 1585–1830 (Richmond, The William Byrd Press, 1930), opposite p. 76.

Reprinted in Wesley Frank Craven, *The Virginia Company of London, 1606–1624*, ed. E.G. Swem (Williamsburg: Jamestown 350th Anniversary Historical Booklet No. 5, 1957), after p. 28.

8. Lord De La Warr Wax Portrait (c. 1610), attributed to Guillaume Dupré.

Delaware Historical Society, Wilmington, Del.

Reference: Object Id. 1973.003.002.

Description in catalog: “The 3 ½” x 2 ¼” high relief wax image depicts a bust view of a man facing right. The subject has curly hair and a short beard and mustache and wears an elaborate lace collar with Van Dyke points. The portrait has an overall brown tint and is mounted onto a greenish glass background. It is contained within a shadowbox frame with a mahogany veneer and gold beaded inner frame. There is a ½” diameter hanging ring at the top and an old hand-written label on the back: “Lord de la Warr / Governor of / Virginia 1609. Made in France? By Guillaume Dupré (1574–1643).”

Catalog record with reproduction:

<https://dehistory.pastperfectonline.com/Webobject/D67B98E2-26B8-4D84-8FB0-568765631777>.

Family Portraits

9. Portrait of William, First Lord De La Warr (c. 1550).

Paternal Grandfather: William West, 1st Baron De La Warr (c.1530–1595).

Initially attributed to Hans Holbein when first noticed 1868.

Oil on wood.

Reference: Acc. No. 4252.

Tate Britain, London.

Reproduced by Tate Images:

<https://tate-images.com/preview.asp?item=N04252>.

10. Portrait once thought to be Thomas West (1569).

Father: Thomas West, 2nd Baron De La Warr (c. 1550–1602).

Oil on panel, 1569.

Reference: NPG 842.

Reproduced by the National Portrait Gallery:

<https://npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw04479>.

National Portrait Gallery, London.

This portrait was long identified as Thomas West, second Baron De La Warr, the father of three governors of Virginia, and is still widely reproduced as such. The painting was purchased by the National Portrait Gallery in 1890 as a portrait of “William Herbert, first Earl of Pembroke,” although now the date, authorship and subject matter have been revised: it is now identified as a portrait of Anthony Browne, first Viscount Montagu, painted by Hans Eworth in 1569. The long-held misattribution suggests how art historians, as well as the West family, expected the West patriarch to present himself.

11. Sir Francis Knollys the elder, Lord Treasurer of the Household (1583).

Maternal Grandfather: Sir Francis Knollys (1514–1596).

Oil on panel.

Reference: NT 196014.

Reproduced by The National Trust:

<https://nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/196014>.

The National Trust, Greys Court, Oxfordshire, The Brunner Collection.

Catalog Description: Inscribed at the top right corner “Ao. AETIS. 72” in gold.

A half-length portrait of a man with head turned to the left wearing a black coat with chain of office from which a St George [cross] hangs, with a staff in his right hand. Black crowned hat with ear flaps and ties, white ruff and grey beard. In top left corner a belt and buckle shield enclosing an elephant in profile on a helmet and the legend “Honi soit qui mal y pense” [“Shamed be he who thinks evil of it,” the motto of the British chivalric Order of the Garter]. Knollys was Lord Treasurer of the Household, 1572–96. Dark wood gilt and black feathered painted frame with rectangular design and leaf and vine design on outside.

12. Lettice Knollys (c. 1595), George Gower.

Aunt: Lettice Knollys, Countess of Essex and of Leicester (1543–1634)

Longleat House, Collection of the Marquess of Bath.

Reproduced on Wikipedia:

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/0e/Lettice_Knollys1.jpg

12A. Portrait of Lettice Knollys, (c. 1600), Circle of George Gower.

Bust length, in a black doublet, lace ruff and pearl-decorated cap.

Sold at London, Sotheby's 4 February 2020, Lot 600.

Catalog record with reproduction:

<https://sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2020/old-masters-online/circle-of-george-gower-portrait-of-lettice-knollys>.

12B. Portrait of a Noblewoman, possibly Lettice Knollys (c. 1580s), Nicholas Hilliard.

Sold at London, Sotheby's 14 July, 2010, Lot 2.

Catalog record with reproduction:

<https://sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2010/an-exceptional-eye-a-private-british-collection-110041/lot.2.html>.

13. Elizabeth Knollys (1577), George Gower.

Aunt: Elizabeth Knollys, Lady Leighton (1549–c. 1605).

Reference: NT 597954.

The National Trust, Montacute House, Somerset, The Malcolm Stewart Bequest.

Reproduced by The National Trust:

<https://nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/597954>.

Catalog Description: "Oil painting on panel, Elizabeth Knollys, Lady Leighton (b.1549), attributed to George Gower (c. 1540– London 1596), inscribed in far top left: 'Ano DNI 1577.' Above her to the top left is a coat of arms, above which are her initials, EK, flanking the family crest, an elephant. Daughter of Sir Francis Knollys and Katherine Carey; married Sir Thomas Leighton. Portrait of Lady Leighton as a young woman, head and shoulders, turned slightly to the left, gazing at spectator, reddish tightly curled hair, wearing an elaborately decorated and slashed dress of black and orange, high ruff and a tall-crowned black hat with a hat-band of jewels and a pink (?ostrich) feather fastened to the right with an elaborate jewel in the form of a starfish and corals. Among her many jewels are a Renaissance pendant at her breast in the form of a dove and snake, emblems of mildness and prudence respectively; another is of a parrot, all suspended by ropes of pearls forming a sash worn over her right shoulder and disappearing under her left arm."

14. Anne Knollys (1582), Robert Peake the Elder.
 Mother: Anne Knollys (1555–1608), daughter of Sir Francis Knollys and Catherine Carey.
 Oil paint on panel.
 Reference: Object No. TL-17023.
 Berger Collection Educational Trust, Denver Art Museum.

15. Lady De La Warr (c. 1630s), Circle of Cornelius Johnson.
 Wife: Cecily [Cesellye] Shirley (c. 1542–1623), youngest daughter of Sir Thomas Shirley and Anne Kempe.
 Oil on canvas.
 Reference: Acc. No. JYF2005.54.
 Jamestown Settlement, Va.

16. Henry 4th Lord De La Warr (1627), Wybrand-Simonsz De Geest the Elder.
 Son: Henry 4th Lord De La Warr (1603–1628).
 Sold at Sotheby's, New York, 12 January, 1995 (Sale 6654), Lot 87, Private collection.

17. Lady de La Warr (c. 1638), Anthony van Dyck
 Daughter-in-law: Isabella, Lady de La Warr (1607–1677?).
 Oil on canvas.
 Reference: Acc. No. 30.445.
 Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), Boston, Harriet J. Bradbury Fund. On view in the William I. Koch Gallery (Gallery 250).
 Catalog description: “While in England as court painter to Charles I, Van Dyck executed refined portraits for the local aristocracy. Isabella, pictured here, was the daughter of diplomat Thomas Edmonds and wife of Henry, the 4th Lord de la Warr, also a diplomat and treasurer to Charles I. Van Dyck likely modeled her portrait on that of his slightly earlier Anne Killigrew, Mrs. Kirke (Huntington Art Gallery, San Marino, CA). In both paintings the sumptuously dressed women gesture to a rosebush—a possible allusion to love.”
 Note: Isabella’s husband died at age 24, a full decade before her portrait was painted.

Colleagues: Underlings

18. Sir Thomas Dale (c. 1615), formerly attributed to the workshop of Jan Anthonisz van Ravesteyn, currently attributed to Marcus Geerearts.

Reference: Acc. No. 52.8.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond.

Reproduced by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts:

<https://vmfa.museum/piction/7898216-51978802>.

Catalog description: “Depicted wearing fashionable period attire, including a flat lace collar, bulbous breeches, and black hose, Dale’s professional identity as a commander is indicated by the armor resting on the table behind him.”

19. Sir Thomas Gates (c. 1615), formerly attributed to the workshop of Jan Anthonisz van Ravesteyn.

Oil on canvas.

Bermuda Archives, at The Bermuda National Trust. Formerly hung in The Cabinet Office of Bermuda, Hamilton. As a result of queries for this article, the painting will be returned to display in 2024 at the Globe Museum, Bermuda.

Personal communication to the author, Dr. Charlotte Andrews, Head of Cultural Heritage at The Bermuda Trust, April 2024.

20. Captain George Percy, 1580–1632 (1615), attributed to John de Critz. Deputy (acting) Governor of Virginia, 1611.

Oil on panel, in a carved wood frame, 28 3/4 ins by 24 ins.

Description: Half-length, standing, three-quarters left. White shirt, red cloak over left shoulder and arm, his left hand with maimed second finger to outside of his mantle. Inscribed: “Captaine George Percy, brother to Henry Earle of Northumberland 1615.”

Credit: Collection of the Duke of Northumberland, Syon House.

21. Captain John Smith (1624), Simon van de Passe.

Generall Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles (London: Printed by I.D. and I.H. for Michael Sparkes, 1624), after p. 202.

Reference: ESTC S111882.

Colleagues: Virginia Company Employers

22. Sir Thomas Smythe (1616) by Simon van de Passe.

Engraving.

Reference: NPG D26047.

National Portrait Gallery, London.

Reproduced by the National Portrait Gallery:

<https://npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw129152>.

23. Sir Thomas Smythe, oil on canvas.

Reference: Object No. Skinners004.

Description: Bust-length portrait owned by 'The Skinners' Company, of which Smythe was head, and kept at Skinners' Hall in London. He sports a gold-embroidered leather jerkin, lace trimmed plain white collar, a sword on either side, and elaborate sleeves.

Credit: By kind permission of The Skinners' Company.

24. Sir Edwin Sandys (1776) by Valentine Green, after unknown artist.

Mezzotint of Sir Edwin Sandys (1561–1629).

Reference: NPG D4173.

National Portrait Gallery, London.

Reproduced by the National Portrait Gallery:

<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw38444>.

25. Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton (c. 1618), after Daniel Mytens.

Reference: NPG 52.

National Portrait Gallery, London.

Reproduced by the National Portrait Gallery:

<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp04202/henry-wriothesley-3rd-earl-of-southampton>.

26. Gentleman soldier.

Carved and incised bone inlay from Structure 191

Reproduced by Historic Jamestowne:

<https://historicjamestowne.org/september-2012-2/carved-incised-bone-inlay-from-structure-191>.

Credit: Jamestown Rediscovery, Historic Jamestowne.

27. Modern Reenactment of Lord De La Warr's arrival in 1609,

Video, Jamestown, Virginia. See the reenacted governor in fashionable attire at the end (5:44) of a discussion of seventeenth-century clothing:

<https://www.jfymuseums.org/learn/videos/historical-clothing>.

Credit: Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation.