

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BENJAMIN AZARIAH COLONNA OF ACCOMAC COUNTY,
VIRGINIA, AND OF WASHINGTON, D.C., AND A SKETCH OF HIS ANCESTORS
AND THEIR WAY OF LIVING IN COLONIAL DAYS AND DURING THE EARLY
DAYS OF THE REPUBLIC.

BEGUN MARCH 1st A. D. 1903.

PREFACE.

There is no written narrative of my ancestors and the memory of their days is rapidly passing. In a short while the early history of the family, its home life and early surroundings, which has been passed down by spoken words about the yule-log, by our good old people, will have passed, along with them, into the silence of the great forgotten past. That I may preserve these, I have imposed upon myself the task of historian, and I dedicate the following to my children, and thus through them to generations to come, trusting to find one, at intervals, who will take up and continue the work, to the end, that in the course of time we may know ourselves.

Benjamin Azariah Colonna
Sunday, March 1st, 1903.

138 B Street N. E.,
Washington, D.C.

CHAPTER I
GENEALOGY OF THE AMERICAN COLONNAS

Of the family before it came from Europe to America I know nothing, and I have not lost any sleep on that account. That it appeared in Virginia as early as A. D. 1661 I am quite certain.

The only written record of which I am aware is the will of Owen Connolly 1st, found in the court record of Accomac County 1693, a copy of which follows, and the family Bible of my Grandfather, Benjamin Colonna, the son of Major. This edition bears no date of publication or of issue. In the preface there is a reference to "The Oxford Edition of 1784 by Jackson and Hamilton", showing that the publication must have been after that date. On the title page, at the bottom, is printed:

"Steriotyped by E. White, New York"
"Edited by Robert P. Desilver
No. 255 Market Street
Philadelphia."

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Washington D. C., June 30, 1914.

In order that I may preserve for the information of my children and other relatives some account of what I have heard and learned concerning our family, I make this dictation to daughter, Eileen A. Colonna, stenographer and typist.

I was born October 17, 1843, near Pungeteague in Accomac County, Virginia, about one mile from that village, on a road leading in a southwesterly direction to Craddockville. From my father, my uncles, and to a small degree from my grandfather, I learned many of the things which I shall narrate.

The ancestry of the people is recorded in the Bible which belonged to my Grandfather, and which is now in the possession of my family. This Bible was published in Philadelphia but bears no imprint of the date of publication, though I suppose it to have been about 1834.

From the records of Accomac County, Virginia, the following was extracted by my friend, Mr. Thomas T. Upsher, and presented to me.

* * *

"Extracts from the Will of Owen Collony, the first:

(Accomac Co. Va. Court records -- Vol. 1663 -
1666, p. 22. Dated August 17, 1663.

Owen Colonna: Name appears in the
Certificate for 1500 Acres of land
applied for by Lt. Col John West, Gent.

/Signed/Thos. T. Upsher
Massawoddox, Northampton Co., Va.
Oct. 1905)

"Son Owen, (2nd.) to have the plantation where he lived, containing 300 acres, 2 best feather beds in the two chambers below stairs, with curtains and vallens, and bedsteads, and all belonging to them, all wearing apparrell both linen and woolen, and his horse called "Golding", and bridle and saddle and other furniture. The long table ye (undecipherable) wch will now form a three square table, a turned couch, six chairs, a large pair of andirons, two steelyards, a great one and a small one, a fire shovel and tongues, an hand mill, 2 guns, a large iron dripping pan, an iron spitt, a pair of bellows, an iron pot that is large, an iron kettle, a brass stew pan, a chafing dish and gridiron, and all other iron work that belong

to me, a looking glass, 2 casks of salt, and all other casks, old and new, and other wooden ware belonging to me. I give to my daughter Esther Sill, three pewter dishes, three saucers, three porringers, a pewter (undecipherable) the round table in ye hall, three flag chairs, and three plant bottom chairs, an hair couch, a feather bed that is in ye chamber above stairs with a pair of sheets, a pair of blankets, a rug belonging to it, two iron pots and pot hooks, one small and ye other large, two cows named "Cherry" and "Brindle", one piece of blue linen, one remnant of white linen, which I guess to be about eleven or twelve yards, 6 yards more white linen, bought of Rich and Lucas; a woman servant, Margaret Moon, a broadcloth waistcoat, 3 1/2 yards white linen bought of Rich and Lucas, also two chests, one called a Dutch chest and the other the Elm chest; and to her daughter Eleanor Sill, one cow called Little Thing; and to the other daughter of Esther Sill named Susanna he gave one red Cow called Beggar. To her Grandson Bryan Collony he gave ye island neck of land up to the hdline towards Kellam's land, and bounding otherwise by ye 300a formerly given his father Owen Collony, also one cow called "Mealy Mouth", one Mare called Mall. I give unto my son-in-law William Sill 1/3 profits of an orchard on the land given unto my Grandson Brian Collony, for ye space of seven years, provided he will keep and maintain said orchard fence in sufficient repair, and I give him ye benefit of the great pasture for his own creatures in moyreeling (mireing) time, together with my son Owen Collony for ye space of four years provided he help my son Owen Collony to keep up and secure ye sd. pasture fence, same is to be understood my meaning about ye orchard fence, that he contribute due keep to me maintaining of ye fence. I give unto my son-in-law Stephen Warrington a Kersie gown lined with purple baze and his wife one cow called Prittie. I give unto Arnold Harrison my son-in-law a purple gown. To my son-in-law William Sill, a red penny stone waist coat, and remainder of his estate he gave to son Owen Collony and appointed him executor, but desired his friend Mr. Thomas Teackle to be overseer over what he had given to his Grandson Brian, and he gave to his daughter. Esther Sill the last of all, three pewter plates.

Dated Dec. 5, 1693"

Proven September 19, 1693-4 by oaths of Thomas Teackle and Provis Nelson, the witnesses to said will.

9
3 of 10

Following the general rule of the day, my early ancestors in this country were illiterates, and therefore, wherever the name was written it was always necessary that it be spelled by the writer phonetically. This gave rise to an almost unlimited number of ways of spelling it. After a few generations when the whole of them had learned to read and write, at the suggestion of Doctor Sherar of Pungoteague, the family, in August 1835, held a meeting at his house for the purpose of determining upon a uniform method of spelling the name. They deliberated all day, but could come to no conclusion and were about to leave for home when Doctor Sherar mounted a tumbler cart and addressing them, said that it was a pity that so large a family, occupying a good position in the neighborhood, should not be able to decide upon one particular way to spell the name, so that they might more readily trace their relationship in after years. He then said that since each one wished to have the name spelled as he spelled his and none was satisfied, he would propose a name to them which was not the exact name of anyone of them but was, nevertheless, a very honorable name of which none of them need be ashamed. He then proposed that they should call themselves "Colonna", which was like the spelling of the name of many of them but not exactly the same. They all agreed upon this and adopted the spelling "Colonna".

Thereupon my Grandfather, Benjamin Colony, being the oldest member of the family at that time and one of the old men of the county, dropped the "Y" from his name and added "A", thus becoming Benjamin Colonna. The name was then, and was continued to be pronounced "Culny".

Grandfather at once secured a new Bible, the same that is now in my possession, and proceeded to have the family registered so far as descent was concerned, entered therein. This, in Grandfather's bible, is in the handwriting of my father John W. Colonna, and of this I herewith present a copy.

The following diagram has been made from the will of Owen Collony 1st recorded in Accomac Co. Court in Dec. 1793, and from Grandfather's Bible down to and including some of his grandchildren. Thence down from my father's Family Bible. Some of the collateral branches are from my own knowledge, and some are from Cap. John C. Watson, of Accomac and Northampton Counties, who died about 1896 at the age of 83 years.

ANCESTRY OF BENJ. A. COLONNA, BORN OCT. 17, 1843

1st Generation: OWEN COLLONY - 1st

Came from Great Britain to America in 1661. His will probated Dec. 1693. In this will is mentioned his son, Owen 2nd. The name of the wife of Owen 1st is unknown. The children as named in his will are Owen 2nd; Esther (Sill); a daughter, the wife of Stephen Warrington; a daughter, the wife of Arnold Harrison.

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2nd Generation: OWEN COLLONY - 2nd

Owen 2nd, son of Owen 1st, married Wenefeth -- His son, Brian Collony -- this from the will of Owen 1st.

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3d Generation: BRIAN COLLONY

Name of wife unknown: son Benjamin Collony 1st. Brian's identity is established by the will of Owen 1st.

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4th Generation: BENJAMIN COLLONY 1st

Sone of Brian, born in Accomac Co., Va., June 16, 1701, died in Accomac Co. Va., April 2, 1776; Married Esther Whales, daughter of Wm., born in Accomac Co., Va. Aug. 20, 1709, and had a son Major Collony, born July 22, 1736.

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5th Generation: No. 1. MAJOR COLLONY

Born July 22, 1736 and died Nov. 3, 1811, American soldier in Revolutionary War.
1st wife: Joice Hutchinson married Mar. 30, 1760
2nd wife: Peggy Watson, married May 5, 1775 in Accomac Co. Va.

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5th Generation: No. 2. JOICE COLLONY

Born Sept. 2, 1740, died Oct. 17, 1773, no record that she ever married.

6th Generation:
Born of Major
and his 1st
wife
Joice Hutchman

- No. 1. Elizabeth Collony
Born Apr. 24, 1761
Died Feb. 12, 1794
Did Not Marry.
- No. 2. BENJAMIN COLLONY
Born Feb. 16, 1763
Died July 1, 1851, American
soldier Revolutionary War
and War of 1812. Married
July 29, 1802 to Elizabeth
Beach (B Oct. 17, 1784 D.
Jan. 18, 1848)
- No. 3. Major Collony
Born Apr. 24, 1766
Died Apr. 16, 1769, a child
of 3 yrs.
- No. 4. John Collony
Born Feb. 16, 1769
Died Apr. 20, 1783
- No. 5. Susan Collony
Born Feb. 16, 1771
Died Apr. 20, 1836
Married Aug. 10, 1811 to
Benj. Watson (b. May 28, 1767)
- No. 6. Major Collony
Born Feb. 17, 1776
Died Sept. 21, 1823
- No. 7. Watson Collony
Born Apr. 17, 1777
Died
First wife Peggie Bailey
2nd wife Rose Fowler
- No. 8. Joshua Collony
Born Dec. 15, 1778
Died
Enlisted in U. S. Navy about
1810 and was never heard
from again. Had violent
temper.

6th Generation cont.
Born of Major
and his 2nd wife
Peggy Watson

- No. 9. Edward Collony
 B May 19, 1781
 D Sept. 25, 1795
- No. 10. Eburn Collony
 B Dec. 3, 1782
 D
 Married Mary Lawson
- No. 11. Mary Collony
 B Dec. 5, 1784
 D
- No. 12. Peggy Collony "Aunt Peggy"
 B Oct. 10, 1786
 D June 1870
 Married Jephtha Doughty.
 She, in her old age, raised the
 children of John W. Colonna. She
 was a first class woman.
- No. 13. Joice Collony
 B Feb. 14, 1789
 D
 Married Upsher Folio
- No. 14. John A. Collony
 B Feb. 3, 1794
 D Nov. 8, 1794
- No. 15. James Collony
 B Dec. 12, 1796
 D

Here, for the sake of uniformity in the spelling of the name,
 "COLONNA" was adopted.

• 7th Generation:
 Born of Benjamin
 and his wife
 Elizabeth Beach

- No. 1. Patrick B. Colonna
 B May 28, 1803
 D Mar. 13, 1843 Bachelor
- No. 2. JOHN WATSON COLONNA
 B Aug. 15, 1805 1st wife 11/30/1836
 D Apr. 8, 1871 Sarah Boggs
 B Apr. 2, 1813
 D Oct. 3, 1841
 2nd wife Dec. 17, 1842
 MARGARET JONES B June 6, 1818
 D Dec. 30, 1856

- No. 3. Major B. Colonna
 B Sept. 22, 1808
 D Feb. 16, 1853
 M Sallie Beach
- No. 4. Mary R. Colonna
 B Aug. 28, 1810
 D
 M John R. Doughty
- No. 5. Abel B. Colonna
 B Oct. 14, 1813
 D Mar. 12, 1872
 M Margaret Powell about 1839
- No. 6. Elizabeth E. Colonna
 B Aug. 26, 1815
 D June 5, 1836
 Unmarried
- No. 7. Joice Colonna
 B Aug. 6, 1818
 D Aug. 11, 1818
- No. 8. Benjamin S. Colonna
 B July 24, 1820
 D Nov. 3, 1861
 M Mollie Powell
- No. 9. George Colonna
 B June 15, 1822
 D June 20, 1822
- No. 10. Joice S. Colonna
 B Apr. 27, 1824
 D Oct. 14, 1826
-

8th Generation
 Born of
 John Watson Colonna
 1st, by Sarah Boggs
 his first wife one,
 all others by second
 wife Margaret Jones

- No. 1. John Thomas Colonna, son of Sarah
 B Jan. 28, 1840
 D May 11, 1864
 Murdered along with 5 other
 prisoners in cold blood by
 the 26th Mass. Negro Regi-
 ment under Col. Draper
- No. 2. BENJAMIN AZARIAH COLONNA, SON of M.J.
 B Oct. 17, 1843
 D Mar. 11, 1925
 M Fannie Bindon Bailey at

9
 8 of 10

Washington D. C. Nov. 3, 1890,
who was born Feb. 18, 1862
and died Feb. 7, 1941.

- No. 3. Elizabeth Esther Colonna
B Oct. 1, 1845
D June 25, 1945
M Capt. Eldred R. Holt
who died Oct. 13, 1860,
murdered by a negro who
entered his store.
M George Jones of Norfolk, VA.
The two children by this
marriage both died.
- No. 4. Sarah Cornelia Colonna
B Aug. 20, 1847
D Mar. 29, 1870
M Louis W. Stewart in May 1869
A son, Cornelius C., was
born Mar. 28, 1870, (d. 1930)
and his mother died next day.
Cornelius married Hannah
who later married John Lingo
of Pungoteague, Va.
- No. 5. Charles Jones Colonna
B Aug. 28, 1849
D
M Maggie Dunstan of Norfolk, Va.
in 1877, who died June 1893
leaving 6 children.
M Fannie Fentress of Norfolk, Va.
Jan. 30, 1902, one child
Bruce.
- No. 6. Major D. Colonna
B Aug. 22, 1852
D
M Lizzie of
Chester, Pa., no issue
- No. 7. Rebecca Robb Colonna
B Sept. 24, 1854
D Wed. Sept. 30, 1863, of
diphtheria. Yankees would
not allow doctor until Father
took allegiance to the U. S.,
and it consumed precious time and
proved fatal.

No. 8. was a baby boy, stillborn, Dec. 29, 1856. Mother died Dec. 30 and was buried Dec. 31, 1856. Then, in about 6 days, say Jan. 6th, came the Great Blizzard, freezing Chesapeake Bay from shore to shore.

No. 8. Baby Boy, still born, Dec. 29, 1856. Mother died Dec. 30 and was buried Dec. 31, 1856. Then in about 6 days, say Jan. 6th, came the Great Blizzard, freezing Chesapeake Bay from shore to shore.

9th Generation
Children of
Benjamin Asariah
and Fannie Bindon
Railey.

- No. 1. Benjamin Bindon Colonna
Born Sat. Aug. 22, 1891, died same
day, He was a fine, large
boy with spot or flenish,
138 B St., N. E., Wash., D.C.
- No. 2. Eileen Alton Colonna
B Sunday Dec. 18, 1892 at 7.15 a. m. at
138 B N. E., Washington, D. C.
- No. 3. Benj. Allison Colonna
B Monday Nov. 12, 1894 at 138 B N. E.
- No. 4. Fannie Bindon Colonna
B Tuesday, June 8, 1897, at 138 B N. E.
- No. 5. John Owen Colonna
B Thursday, Apr. 25, 1901 at 138 B
- No. 6. Flora Colonna
B Wed. Sept. 23, 1904 at 138 B

#9
10 of 10