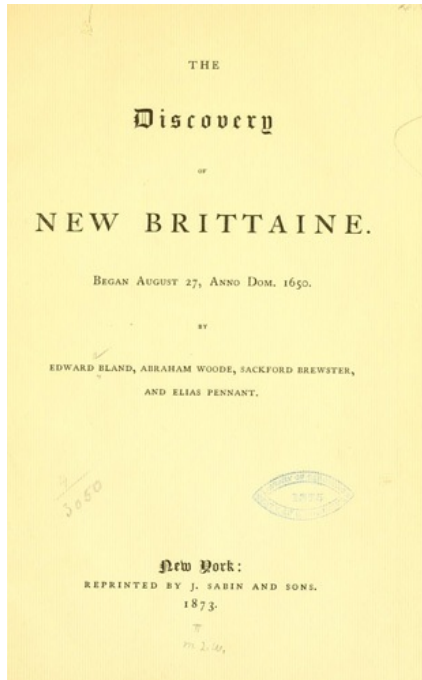


Bland, Edward ^[1]

Bland, Edward

by James H. Boykin, 1979

d. 1653



"The discovery of New Brittain" by Edward Bland. Image courtesy of the Internet Archive.

^[2]Edward Bland, explorer, was the son of John Bland, a London merchant, and Susan Bland; John and Susan had four children, Susanna, John, Edward, and Theodoric. John, the oldest son, was a member of the old Virginia Company ^[3] and sent Edward and Theodoric to manage his estate in Virginia.

When Edward Bland came to Virginia in 1647, he brought with him a nephew, George Proby, and twenty-four others. In a grant dated 10 Mar. 1647, he obtained thirteen hundred acres of land. He lived at Lownes Creek on the James River and at Kimages in Charles City County, establishing an eight-thousand-acre estate. He married Jane Gregory, daughter of his uncle, Gregory Bland; they had a son, Edward of Kimages.

Bland accompanied Abraham Woode, Sackford Brewster, and Elias Pennant as one of the leaders of an exploration expedition to upper Carolina in August and early September 1650. They traveled southwest from Fort Henry, now Petersburg, to Lake Gaston and the Clarksville, Va., area and from there to the Roanoke River ^[4] and Albemarle ^[5] in upper Carolina. Bland made a careful and apparently accurate note of distances, directions, and the streams crossed at every stage of the journey. He faithfully described the drainage, timber, and vegetation and named upper Carolina "New Brittain."

After the expedition returned to Virginia, he petitioned the Virginia Assembly ^[6] to allow him to explore and colonize the new territory. His petition was granted on 20 Oct. 1650, after he had sailed for England, on condition that he recruit one hundred able-bodied men for this purpose. His book *The Discovery of New Brittain* was published in London in 1651 to assist him in recruiting the necessary pioneers to colonize Carolina, but he died on his Charles City County estate before he could carry out his plans.

He was buried on his estate. His widow Jane married John Holmwood of Surry County ^[7], died in 1664, and was buried at Westover.

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