Presley Tidwell And The Anti-Carter
Faction In The Northern Neck
Tidwell
The people who write the history of a period tend to have an advantage over other participants, and the winners of political power tend to have an advantage over the losers. Most history of colonial Virginia reflects the ultimate ascendancy of the Carter family and their dominance of the Northern Neck in the eighteenth century. It is little recognized that there was at least one strong local group in the Northern Neck which did not belong to the Carter faction and which may have led a long struggle for policies favoring the smaller planters in their local areas in opposition to the policies pursued by the Carters which favored the large planters on a colony-wide basis. In the end, the large planters won the struggle, but the existence of the struggle and its nature help to explain social and economic developments in the early eighteenth century.

I was led to recognize the existence of a strong local faction headed by the Presley family of Northumberland County entirely by accident. In 1945 I began a campaign of research into the history of the
Tidwell family. With considerable good luck I was able to work out the family history in some detail from its origin in Tideswell, Derbyshire, migration to Staffordshire, emigration to Virginia in the 1650's, settlement and migrations in the Northern Neck, and migration to South Carolina after the French and Indian War. My chief unsolved problem was the existence of a number of Tidwell men of the fourth American generation, who lived in South Carolina in the latter part of the eighteenth century, whose relationship with the men of the third generation who migrated to the same area could not be determined. One of these men of the fourth generation was Presley Tidwell.

After puzzling over the origin of his name and his relationship for many years, it finally occurred to me that Presley might represent a family name used as a first name because of some family relationship. If true, this hypothesis suggested that the answer to the origin of Presley Tidwell's name and his relationship to the third generation might be found in Virginia rather than in South Carolina. Accordingly I reopened my research in Virginia and stumbled into what may well be a forgotten aspect of Virginia history.

Almost immediately I discovered that a Presley family lived in Northumberland County during the 1600's and 1700's a short distance from
the property of Richard Tidwell, the immigrant. The genealogical history of the Presley family had already been reported in some detail in various genealogical and historical journals, and I was able to confirm much of it and add a few details by personal research in the Library of Congress and in the records of Northumberland and Westmoreland Counties. 1/

William Presley (b. d. 1657) came to Virginia with his family and a retinue of servants and/or associates, totalling twenty-three persons in all. In 1649 he was granted 1150 acres in Northumberland County for the importation of these persons. In 1657 he was granted an additional 1,000 acres for the importation of twenty persons. He served as Burgess from Northumberland from 1647 to 1651, beginning a long history of public service by the Presley family. His son, William Presley, Jr. (b./l625, d. 1683-5) served as Burgess from 1661 to 1682 and as Justice or Sheriff on several occasions during the same period. Another son, Peter Presley I (b. 1630-47, d. 1693) served as a Burgess in 1660 and 1661.

The longest and strongest Presley impact on the Virginia political scene was made by Peter Presley II (b. prior to 1658, d. 1750). He was the son of William Presley, Jr., but at times it is difficult to

1/ See Tylers Quarterly, Volume 9, p. 265 for example
distinguish records relating to him from those relating to his Uncle, Peter Presley I or his nephew, Peter Presley III (b. 1683, d. 1718).

One or more of the various Peter Presley's held office as Burgess, Justice, or Sheriff of Northumberland County almost continuously from 1675 until 1747. Peter Presley II must have been past ninety when he retired from public life. He was the last Presley to hold office, as he outlived all males of that name. The family influence may be judged in some small part by the extent to which Presley was used as a first name for male children born in the Northern Neck during the eighteenth century. I have encountered records of about thirty men so named. Some of these, like Presley Thornton, Presley Cockrell, Presley Neale, and Presley Nelms were the sons of Presley girls, but most of the remainder, like Presley Tidwell, seem to have had no direct family relationship.

It is obvious from these few facts that the Presley family must have had great political influence and popular support in Northumberland County. In the course of trying to work out what relationship the Tidwell's might have had with the Presley's, I began to understand the role that the Presley faction may have played in opposing the dominance of the Carters. This role and even the existence of an opposition faction
seems to have been ignored, glossed over, or forgotten by subsequent historians who have tended to study the period through the records and the point of view of the victorious Carters and their associates.

In order to set out the events of this story and illustrate their significance, let me tell the story, as well as the evidence will allow me, from the standpoint of the Tidwells.

The Tidwell family derived its name from the village of Tiddeswall (later Tideswell) of Derbyshire. The earliest record of a family using that name is that of a Knight named Warenus de Tideswell in 1208 during the reign of King John. The family appears to have retained Knightly status for some time, but by the time of the wars of the Roses in the mid-fifteenth century, they had become Yeomen living near Ashbourne on the border between Derbyshire and Staffordshire about 20 miles south of Tideswell. They still occupied modest yeoman status when Ralph Tideswall of Denstone, Staffordshire was born in the late sixteenth century.

Ralph Tideswall had two children, Robert/Joanne. Joanne married John Coates (or Coots) on 18 May 1629 and Robert married Marie

1/ Pipe Roll No. 53 for the 9th year of the reign of King John. The medieval records of Derbyshire are in the U. S. Library of Congress in published form.
Marsh of a neighboring parish on 28 January 1633 (1634 new style). Unfortunately the records of St. Peter's, Alton, the Parish in which Denstone was located, did not survive for the period. There is no record, therefore, of the birth of Robert Tiddeswell's children. On the basis of the circumstantial evidence listed below, however, I believe that Robert Tiddeswell was the father of the immigrant Richard Tidwell. (I have seen the name spelled at least fifteen ways in English records, including Tiddeswall, Tideswall, Tidswell, and Tidwell. In America, however, the Tidwell spelling seems to have been used almost exclusively.)

Ralph Tiddeswall's will, probated in 1656, together with a few other facts from the records of Ellastone Parish in Staffordshire, permits one to develop a background that may account for some of the motivation behind Richard Tidwell's emigration to America.

Joanne and John Coates had a son, born in 1631, named Ralph in honor of his grandfather. On 14 February 1634 (1635 new style) John Coates died, and four days later his wife bore a son whom she named John in memory of his father. On 19 May 1636, Ralph Coates, the namesake of Ralph Tiddeswall died of smallpox. Joanne Coates later married a man named Thomas Spooner, but it appears that the sequence of events involving the

1/ Records of Ellastone Parish, Staffordshire.
Coates' boys caused Ralph Tiddeswall to develop a close attachment to them. When he drew up his will he divided the bulk of his property between his son, Robert Tiddeswall and his grandson, John Coates. This meant that Robert Tiddeswall's children might expect to receive a smaller inheritance than they might have expected otherwise. If Richard Tidwell were a younger son of Robert Tiddeswall, this circumstance might have contributed to a decision to emigrate. 1/

There is no way of knowing how much the political situation in England may have influenced Richard Tidwell's decision, except to say that many people emigrated during the later years of Cromwell's rule and that one of the local manors had been besieged by Cromwell's troops in 1647. In the circumstance it would not be unusual for a young man with royalist learnings to seek his fortune in Virginia.

Most of the emigrants of the period left for America from either Bristol or London. The City of Bristol kept a record of all emigrants from 1654 until late in the century and Richard Tidwell's name does not appear among them, even though Bristol might seem a logical port to use from Staffordshire. It is interesting, therefore, to note that Ralph Tiddeswall's

1/ I have searched English records extensively and have also employed the assistance of professional genealogists. This is the only connection that I can hypothesize, concerning Richard Tidwell's origin, that fits the few firm facts available.

2/ The Tolzey Book.
will was proved by John Coates in the Ecclesiastical Court of Canterbury, then located in London, on 18 June 1656. This is especially interesting since the Ecclesiastical Court at Litchfield was much closer to Denstone and was the customary place for the proving of wills in the Midlands.

A trip to London just to prove the will of a Staffordshire yeoman would seem impractical, but if it had the combined objective of seeing Richard Tidwell off on a boat for America it would seem much more rational.

On 23 November 1657, Richard Nelmes of Northumberland County, Virginia, was granted 200 acres for the transportation of four persons. Richard Tidwell was one of the four. Since such grants often took place long after the immigration for which they were made, this grant would be consistent with the arrival of Richard Tidwell in the summer of 1656.

Nelmes himself had emigrated to Virginia from London in 1635. He had a moderately large plantation on the Great Wicomico River in Northumberland County, near the property of William Presley, and may have retained or developed connections in London with someone who could act as his agent and arrange to send him indentured labor when he needed it. On

1/ Northumberland County Order Book 1652-1665, p. 75.
the other hand it is possible that a ship's captain signed on a group of indentured emigrants and then sold the indentures to whichever planter needed the labor. In such a case Richard Tidwell's arrival in Northumberland County would have been accidental.

Nelmes brought in four more immigrants in 1661. If his usual working force included four persons under indenture, those imported in 1661 would have replaced Richard Tidwell's group, imported in 1656. Under the rules for indenture in force at that time, this implies a term of indenture of five years which would mean that Richard Tidwell and his group were between 12 and 21 years old when they were brought in. This would have placed Richard Tidwell's birth date between 1635 and 1644. This is consistent with the 1634 marriage date of Robert Tiddeswall of Denstone.

In 1662, Nelmes had confirmed a grant of 400 acres on the Yeocomico River which had been made to him originally in 1652. On 18 March 1663 (1664 new style) Nelmes gave 350 acres of this land to Richard Tidwell and Robert Jeffrice. This land was several miles from Nelmes' main plantation and he may have originally employed Tidwell and Jeffrice to live there and work the property on shares or as free labor after the termination of Tidwell's indenture. In 1662, however, the price of tobacco hit a new low. Some planters abandoned tobacco and some imported

1/ Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills #1 1653-1671, p. 360.
2/ For information on Tobacco and the issue of Public Ports I leaned heavily on The Virginia Dynasties by Clifford Dowdey, Little Brown and Company, Boston, 1969.
slaves to reduce the cost of production. Nelmes apparently decided to get rid of the Yeocomico property instead and gave it (less fifty acres whose title was in dispute) to Tidwell and Jeffrice.

Richard Tidwell probably came to know members of the Presley family during the time that he worked under indenture. Nelmes' treatment of him suggests that he had a good reputation with the older planters.

The Yeocomico property was on both sides of the west branch of the Yeocomico River and had high ground with ample access to deep water anchorage close to shore. It had about 150 acres of arable land, but the remainder was too swampy or too hilly to plow. It was also about two miles from the Yeocomico church and provided a good landing for anybody who might elect to go to church by boat. The trace of a road from the landing to the church and the outlines of some of the original boundaries of this property can still be identified in aerial photography.

Tidwell and Jeffrice apparently worked the property together for several years. On 29 August 1657, however, Virginia was hit by a devastating tropical hurricane. This may have brought differences between them to a head and in October 1667 they divided the property between them. At some time before 1670 Jeffrice sold his share back to Richard Tidwell and returned to England.

1/ Virginia Magazine of History, Volume 19, p. 252.
2/ Westmoreland County Deed Book #1, p. 361.
3/ Westmoreland County Order Book, p. 629
Tidwell's closest neighbors on the Yeocomico were the Bailey family. Bailey Great House, built in the mid-1700's still stands on property belonging to the Bailey family. I have no firm record of any direct family relationship, but Richard Tidwell's mother-in-law may have been a Bailey and the Tidwells crossed paths with the Baileys in many ways. Other nearby neighbors were the Walkers. Stephen Bailey married the widow of William Walker in 1660, and the Walkers, like the Baileys, crossed paths with the Tidwells.

In 1665 William Bailey and Edward Hamly patented 1,000 acres in the headwaters of Nomini Creek. Hamly sold his share to Martin Cole. In 1670 (new style) Richard Tidwell bought Cole's portion of this property, which, with his Yeocomico property, gave him a total of 850 acres. The exact boundaries of Tidwell's Nomini property are difficult to trace, but it appears that the Carter house, Nomini Hall, later stood on a portion of it. Tidwell property adjoined Bailey property in both locations.

About this time Tidwell appears to have become friendly with the family of one Samuel Leverton. In October 1671 he acted as agent for Leverton to receive payment from a Doctor Edward Helder for Leverton's crop. An indication of his increasing affluence was his gift of a cow and a calf to Samuel's daughter Mary on 26 February 1672 (1673 new style).

1/ Westmoreland County Deed Book #2, p. 104
2/ Northumberland County Record Book 16, p. 201
3/ Westmoreland County Deeds, Patents and Accounts 1665-77, p. 137
He recorded this gift at the County court in the following language:

"... I Richard Tidwell ... give unto Mary Leverton, daughter of Samuel Leverton, one cow and yearling heifer... out of the love and affection I have unto the aforesaid Mary. In case the aforesaid Mary do depart this life before she arrives at sixteen years of age or do die unmarried then the said cow and heifer will revert to Samuel Leverton, son of Samuel Leverton...."

Richard Tidwell would have been between 30 and 39 years old at this time and far older than Mary Leverton. The exact nature of Richard's love for Mary cannot be known, however, because within a few months he was married to Anna Barnett, age 17 or younger.\footnote{Old Rappahannock County Deed Book #5, 1672-1676, p. 234} Anna was the daughter of one Peter Barnett, but she had lived on Farnham Creek, about 15 miles south of the Yeocomico, with her stepfathers, Richard Powell and James Tune. She brought with her an inheritance of cattle left her by her father.\footnote{Wills of Rappahannock County Virginia 1656-1692, Wm. Montgomery Sweeney, Lynchburg, 1947, p. 111} The Baileys had relatives near Farnham Creek and records indicate contacts over a period of many years involving Baileys and the Tune half-siblings of Anna Barnett. It is possible that Anna Barnett's mother was a Bailey. This could account for the close relationship.
On 17 November 1675 Richard Tidwell was made the administrator of the estate of Thomas Cross who had left his chest with Tidwell and had "gone to sea and did not return." This suggests that Tidwell may have provided lodging (and possibly other services) for people using the good anchorage provided by the Yeocomico. William Presley, Jr. and Peter Presley I sat on the Northumberland County court that made the judgment in this case.

It would appear that Richard Tidwell had become well situated. He had built up a good holding of land and had a good anchorage in a strategic location near the church that provided the main focus for social life in the vicinity. Few men started out as indentured laborers and did better.

Judging from later use of the name "Tidwells" for a similar location on the Machodoc river and the almost casual reference to the "land of Richard Tidwell" by the House of Burgesses in 1705, I suspect that the landing on the Yeocomico property was widely known in the Northern Neck during the latter 1600's as "Tidwells." In their minds, it probably already had some status as a quasi-public port or landing.

1/ Northumberland County Records Book.
Richard and Anna Tidwell had at least six children. Martha appears to have been the oldest. Richard II was born in 1679 (died ca. 1740), Ann and John were probably next, Peter was born in 1683 and Robert about 1690 (died 1761). 1/

In January 1689 (1690 new style) Richard Tidwell proved the will of William Clements, a neighbor. 2/ In July 1692 John Minor brought suit against Anna Tidwell as administratrix of Richard's estate. 3/ (If Richard Tidwell died in 1690 he would have been between forty-six and fifty-five years old.) This suit was only one of many difficulties. In 1696 Richard Tidwell II, then 17, asked the Court of Westmoreland County to appoint a guardian to protect his estate from one Lockley Conellin who had married his mother. 4/ She must have died within a few years thereafter because Conellin was alive in 1703 with a wife named Sarah. In 1701 (new style) Richard Tidwell II sold 100 acres of the Yeocomico property to William Walker. 5/ This also suggests that his mother may have been dead by this time and that he had come into full possession of the property.

In the meantime, Martha Tidwell married James Lane, a much older man, and in 1693 had a son named William Lane. 6/ Young Robert Tidwell appears to have lived at least part of the time with James and Martha Lane, perhaps on their portion of the Nomini property. In later years Robert Tidwell and William Lane were almost inseparable.

1/ Robert Tidwell will, Westmoreland County Wills Book 14, p. 49
2/ Westmoreland County Order Book, 1675/6-88/9
3/ Westmoreland County Order Book, 1690-98, p. 72
4/ Westmoreland County Order Book, 1690-98, p. 200
5/ Westmoreland County Order Book 1698-1705, p. 104
6/ This date was given me by Mrs. Orville T. Wilson of Cincinnati, Ohio, a relative of the Lanes. I do not know the origin of the record but it is consistent with all other records of Martha Lane and the Tidwells.
Young Ann Tidwell married Charles Brown sometime before 1701 and in 1698 Peter Tidwell, then 10 years old, was bound out as an apprentice to John Clement. In 1699 someone brought suit on behalf of young Robert Tidwell against Andrew Delabree (De La Brier). Delabree was married to his sister, Martha Lane at that time. In January 1702 (1703 new style) Robert was bound to Andrew Delabree, but on 5 August 1703 Robert Tidwell petitioned the court to appoint his brother Richard Tidwell II as his guardian. This suggests that Martha Lane could no longer provide him a compatible home. This is confirmed in part by a record which indicates that Roger Wiggenton and Richard Tidwell paid a fine for Martha Tidwell who had had a natural child. Presumably, Delabree was dead before this date. Wiggenton was a relative of the Rusts who lived near the Yeocomico.

In 1715, Richard Tidwell II brought suit on behalf of the estate of John Tidwell and in 1716, 4,000 pounds of tobacco was awarded to him from the guardians on the grounds that "the said John Tidwell hath not been heard of for many years." In 1718 Richard and Robert Tidwell were awarded 4,000 pounds of tobacco jointly on behalf of Peter Tidwell with the statement, "neither is it here known whether he be living or dead." If 4,000 pounds of tobacco were equal to 1/6th of the value of the estate left by Richard Tidwell I, the total estate would have been 24,000 pounds or about 216 pounds sterling at the going rate.

1/ Westmoreland County Order Book, 1698-1705, p. 73
2/ Westmoreland County Order Book, 1705-1721, p. 73
4/ Westmoreland County Order Book, 1705 p. 26
5/ This is explained in part by the will of Henry Wiggenton in Westmoreland County Will Book XI probated on 20 July 1748.
6/ Westmoreland County Order Book, pp. 272, 283
7/ Westmoreland County Order Book, p. 362.
During the time that Richard Tidwell I was prospering, the land in the populated part of the Northern Neck had been largely taken up. Planters with no access to the Bay or rivers like the Potomac, Wicomico, Yeocomico, etc., were dependent on those who already owned the land around the relatively few good anchorages.

The desirability of establishing public ports and warehouses for the shipping of tobacco had become an issue in the politics of the Colony. The anchorage in the Yeocomico was one of the locations that was bound to be considered in any plan for the creation of public ports. A number of planters owned property adjoining the Yeocomico and the selection of the precise piece of land to be used for the port would have been subject to many influences and would likely have been a political issue of some local significance. People of local political influence, like the Presleys, would be involved in such issues almost automatically.

In the session of the House of Burgesses beginning in October 1705, a law was passed establishing a number of market towns including, "on the Potomac River, Yohocomico, upon the land of Richard Tidwell (i.e., Richard Tidwell II) of Westmoreland." The law also directs the county to purchase fifty acres to form the site for the town and called the town

1/ The strategic nature of the Yeocomico anchorage was discussed as early as 1667. See Virginia Magazine of History, Volume 19, p. 252.
2/ Henning, Statutes of Virginia, Volume III, p. 415
"Kingsale" or Kinsale as it is called today. Christopher Neale, son-in-law of Peter Presley I, was one of the Burgesses from Northumberland County at this session of the legislature. The Neale family had been neighbors of Richard Nelmes and had probably known Richard Tidwell I from the days of his indenture. One of the Bailey boys was bound out to Neale in 1702. ¹

The establishment of Kinsale may indicate Presley political influence used on behalf of the Tidwells, but the maze of interlocking relationships involving the Tidwells in the Presley faction was growing even more complex.

One of the neighbors of the Tidwells, Baileys, and Lanes in the Nomini Creek area was William Carr (b. ca. 1640, d. 1703). He was a successful planter and owned blacksmith and cooperage tools as well. ² He had a son, Joseph Carr, by a first wife. His second wife, Sarah Eskridge (b. ca. 1660, d. 1726), bore him several daughters. The Eskridges owned Sandy Point about three miles north-east of the Yeocomico Church. (Mary Ball, mother of George Washington, lived with the Eskridges during her childhood) and were relatives of the Rusts who also lived near the Yeocomico Church.

¹/ Northumberland County
²/ Westmoreland County Wills Book III. Will probated 24 February 1703 (new style)
The Carr daughters contracted an interesting series of marriages. Hannah (b. ca. 1695, d. 1764)\(^1\) married Robert Tidwell, Martha married William Lane, Elizabeth (b. 1682, d. 1759), married John Bailey, Jr. (b. 21 March 1681/2) and Mary married William Walker. It is possible that all four of the husbands were related to each other.\(^2\)

The Presley clan was also being extended by marriage. In addition to Jane (b. 1664) who married Christopher Neale, the daughters of Peter Presley I married: Elizabeth (d. 1719) to John Cockrell, Ursula to Daniel Neale and Wharton Ransdall, and Mary to Charnall Cox. (When Charnall Cox died in 1751, Stephen Bailey, Peter Rust, and Charles Brown (husband of Ann Tidwell?) were among the appraisers of his estate.\(^3\) Peter Presley Cox married Fanny Bailey.)

William Presley is reputed to have been one of the leaders in the anti-Berkeley faction in the house of Burgesses at the time of Bacon’s Rebellion in 1676.\(^4\) This, and support for the creation of a public port would be consistent with a primary allegiance to one’s local friends, relatives and neighbors rather than to friends of the same class in other areas. Their reaction to "king" Carter and the proprietors of the Northern Neck also suggests that the Presley faction opposed remote authority.

1/ Hannah Tidwell will, Westmoreland County Will Book 14, p. 263.
2/ For example the will of John Bailey of Lancaster County Virginia probated on 17 March 1694 (1695 new style) mentions a sister, Hannah Lane. She may have been married to a relative of James Lane, father of William Lane.
3/ Westmoreland County Order Book, 1750-52, p. 29
4/ Old Virginia and Her neighbors by John Fiske, London, Macmillan and Co. 1897, pp. 70 and 94.
After the claims of the Proprieters of the Northern Neck had finally been consolidated in England, they appointed William Fitzhugh of Stafford County as their agent in 1693. He was not successful in persuading the planters already holding land in the Northern Neck to recognize the rights of the Proprieters. In the meantime Robert Carter had been speaker of the House of Burgesses and had been appointed to the Governor’s Council. When Fitzhugh died, the Proprieters appointed Carter as their Agent in the spring of 1702, and he began to use his influence and skill to establish their authority. He remained as Agent until 1710 and was reappointed in 1721.

Carter had relatively little difficulty in establishing the Proprieters’ authority in the sparsely settled areas of the Northern Neck, but in the old, established counties he had much more trouble. He eventually persuaded the Lees and enough other prominent citizens to recognize the Proprieters’ authority to make it possible for him to pretend that the matter was all settled. He focused his attention on the frontier and was able to make a great deal of money for himself and for the Proprieters by opening these lands up for settlement.

It is interesting to note the people in Northumberland and Westmoreland Counties, however, who did not recognize the Proprieters.¹ For

¹ The Quit Rents of Virginia and Land Owners of that section called the Northern Neck, compiled by Annie Laurie Wright Smith, Richmond, Virginia, 1957.
example, there is no indication that the Presleys, Baileys, Lanes, Walkers, or Tidwells recognized any authority but the Colony and the Counties in the early years of Carter's Agency. Joseph Carr patented land in Stafford County in 1709, but no Carr land was registered with Carter in Westmoreland County. Richard Tidwell II patented land in Stafford County in the 1720's, but only after he had left Westmoreland County and after the Carter faction had clearly won their struggle. George Eskridge submitted in 1704 and Charles Nelmes in 1707. I have also had the Carter papers in the Virginia Historical Society and the Swem Library at William and Mary searched and have found no reference to the Presleys or Tidwells and almost none to any members of the Presley faction. The two factions appear to have had very little to do with each other.

The issue of public ports was related to Carters' role as Agent for the Proprietors of the Northern Neck. He was not successful in winning over all of the settlers in the old counties, but the absence of public ports caused many of them to sell their property in the tidewater area and move up-river into the new areas being opened where Carter's authority was recognized. As they sold property in the interior of the Northern Neck, Carter and other large land holders bought it up and enlarged their enterprises. Carter's Nomini plantation was created in this manner.
The 1705 action by the House of Burgesses to create public ports was not implemented with any vigor. I have not found any record of Westmoreland County complying with the directive to buy 50 acres from Richard Tidwell II. It must have been done before 1719, however, because in November of that year Tidwell sold 200 acres on the Yeocomico to William Metcalfe for 9,000 pounds of tobacco.\(^1\) This appears to have been all of the original Yeocomico property that remained to him and implies that the 50 acres unaccounted for had been purchased by the county. In September 1721 he sold 150 acres of the Nomini Creek property to the same William Metcalfe.\(^2\) This was probably his share of the original 500 acre tract. The remainder would have gone to Martha Lane, Robert Tidwell and Ann Brown. The deed refers to Tidwell as "late of the County of Westmoreland but now of the County of Stafford."

What happened to turn away the good fortune of 1705 and cause Richard Tidwell II to leave the Tidewater in 1719?

The Act of 1705 did not result in operating ports to relieve the plight of the smaller planters. In 1713 a Tobacco Act was passed under pressure from Governor Spotswood over the opposition of Carter and other large planters. It called for the establishment of Public tobacco warehouses at public ports and the appointment of examining agents to grade the tobacco. This implementation of the public ports would have made it possible to pay the planters for their tobacco much earlier in the process. They could be paid upon acceptance and grading.

\(^1\) Westmoreland County Deed Book #6, p. 585.
\(^2\) Westmoreland County Deed Book #7, p. 332.
of their tobacco instead of having to wait until it was finally sold in
London. A number of tobacco examiners were appointed under this
Act. Each was required to order an expensive set of scales and weights
in order to carry out his examination. Spotswood fell in with the large
planters, however, and switched sides. The Tobacco Act was repealed
in 1717 and the expensive scales were never used. Public tobacco ware-
houses were established at Kinsale by 1730, but in the meantime it must
have seemed that the smaller planters would never get relief.

I suspect that Richard Tidwell II may have been heavily com-
mitted to support the public ports and the Tobacco Act of 1713. He might
even have been one of those unfortunates who obtained the expensive
appointment as a tobacco examiner. The collapse of the Tobacco Act in
1717 was followed in 1718 by the death of Peter Presley III. Presley was
only 35 at the time, but he had already served in a number of political
posts and probably was widely regarded as the future leader of the
Presley faction. Peter Presley II would have been past sixty at
the time. Richard and Robert Tidwell had also cleaned up the last portion
of their father's estate in 1718. In the circumstances Richard may have
decided to accept defeat and follow Joseph Carr and the Neales to
Stafford County.

1/ Henning's Statutes for May of 1730 refer to the Nomini and "the warehouses
at Yeocomico in Westmoreland County under one inspection."
Richard Tidwell II married a girl named Sabina, probably about 1710. I have not been able to find any suggestion of her origin. They had at least four children: Richard Tidwell III appears to have been the oldest, born about 1710–15. William was probably next, and was probably born before their departure for Stafford County in 1719. This surmise is based on the fact that Robert Tidwell had a son, William Carr Tidwell, who was always referred to by his full name, apparently to distinguish him from Richard’s son. After 1719, however, contact between Richard Tidwell II and Robert appears to have been broken because both men had sons named John, and both seem to have been born after 1720. Richard also had a younger son named Francis.

In Stafford County, the Tidwells settled on a branch of Occaquon Creek in what is now Prince William County near the junction of Stafford and Fauquier Counties. The records of Stafford and Prince William Counties are not complete for this period. The rent roles (tax records) for Stafford County survive, but Richard Tidwell’s name does not appear on them.

A family named Helms were neighbors of the Tidwells. In 1731 Joseph Helms and Richard Tidwell III witnessed a deed for Richard Tidwell II. This was the first evidence of a long association between Richard Tidwell and Joseph Helms. The last firm record of Richard Tidwell II in Prince William County was the sale of land in 1733.

1/ Prince William County Deed Book A, p. 67.
2/ Prince William County Deed Book B, p. 58.
In October 1738 Richard Tidwell III opened an account with Adam Reid, a merchant of Orange County, Virginia. He bought nails, cloth and pins. In November he bought salt, two axes, powder and shot, bed linen and additional cloth. On the same date he delivered a bushel of wheat against his account. In February 1739 Richard Tidwell III returned in the company of his father, his brother, John Tidwell, and Joseph Helms. He delivered 211 pounds of pork against his account. Joseph Helms paid 4 shillings and 7 pence and his father paid the remaining 1 pound, 1 shilling and 7 1/2 pence. They also bought a quart of rum, 400 nails and drew 16 shillings in cash. John Tidwell bought sheeting and thread. These purchases suggest that a wedding might have been in the offing and that the previous purchases involved preparations for a house for the newly married couple. In view of the association of Joseph Helms, the wedding might have involved Richard Tidwell III and a sister of Joseph Helms.

This is the last record of Richard Tidwell II. He was 60 years old and the younger Richard was probably in his latter twenties. Prince William County wills for 1734-1744 survive and contain no record of a Tidwell will. Records after that date have been lost, however. On the other hand, his presence on the frontier with Richard Tidwell III suggests that he too might have moved into the Shenandoah Valley.
Richard Tidwell III bought 1/2 bushel of salt in 1739 and appears never to have returned to the store. He left behind a debt of 4 pounds, 8 shillings and 9 and 1/2 pence. In July 1740, the Orange County Court issued a summons to him to answer for this debt, but the original summons is still in the Court files and there is no record of any subsequent action.

Also in 1739, Richard Tidwell signed a petition to have a county court established in Frederick County. The same petition was signed by Jacob Funk who owned a mill where Strasburg, Virginia now stands. (In 1737 John Funk, Ann Funk and Joseph Funk received deeds to land from Robert McKay and Joist Hite, land speculators who attempted to develop land claimed by Lord Fairfax as part of the property of the Proprietor of Northern Neck. The Fairfax Proprietary by Josiah Look Dickinson, Front Royal Virginia 1957. See also The German Element of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia by John Walter Wayland, Charlottesville, Va., 1907, pp. 58, 60 and 66). Richard's brothers, William and John Tidwell and Joseph Helms, were later neighbors of the Funks and William probably married Jacob's daughter, Mary. The 1739 signature might belong to either Richard II or III. The records of Frederick County show that a Richard Tidwell was sued for debt in 1744. [1] The suit was dropped, however, with the notation that the summons had not been served on the defendant suggesting that the suit had been against Richard Tidwell II and that he was now dead.

[1] Frederick County Order Book #1, p. 199
There are several additional records of the Tidwells in Frederick and Prince William Counties until 1755. In 1756 there was a great Indian Raid on the Shenandoah Valley and I have been unable to find any record of this branch of the Tidwell family in Virginia after that date.¹/

At the close of the French and Indian War there was a wave of migration from western Virginia into South Carolina. On 7 April 1763, a grant of 100 acres near Winnsboro, South Carolina, was surveyed for Richard Tidwell III.²/ He may well have occupied the land well in advance of the survey, however. The land description mentions that the property adjoins land belonging to Joseph Helms.

On 4 December 1764, Presley Tidwell was granted 200 acres of land nearby.²/ (The frontier clerks had a great deal of trouble with the spelling of this name. In this record it was spelled Presslot. Sometimes it came out as Prescott and the Census of 1790 even lists a Perry Tidwell who may be Presley. Enough records retain the correct spelling, however, for us to be sure of the true identity.)

A wedding for Richard Tidwell in 1739 would be consistent with a Presley Tidwell old enough in 1764 to obtain his own property. Richard Tidwell III would probably have been old enough in 1719 to remember the circumstances surrounding his family's move away from Tidewater. He must have remembered and retained a high regard for the benign influence of the

¹/ According to Frederick County Order Book #7, p. 76, a suit against Francis Tidwell was dismissed because the summons had not been executed. 3 June 1756

²/ Land Plats of Fairfield County, South Carolina.
Presley family. Presley Tidwell was probably a living memorial to the Presley faction in the Northern Neck.

Robert Tidwell and William Lane stayed on in Westmoreland County. Tidwell bought property on the Machodoc River which in due course became known as "Tidwells" and was a regular port of call for Potomac River boats for many years. Robert, and his sons, William Carr Tidwell (b. ca. 1720, d. 1774) and John Tidwell (b. ca. 1725, d. 1758-60), owned a number of slaves and lived like minor gentry, but appear to have had little or no contact with the Carters who organized the Nomini Planation about 1730. (His daughter, Elizabeth Tidwell, married Caleb Lindsay, a prominent planter from Essex County.) The Lanes, however, retained their portion of the original Tidwell property at Nomini and were among the closest neighbors of Nomini Hall. On 20 August 1760 Joseph Lane was appointed Deputy Collector of Customs for the lower Potomac.¹ His jurisdiction included Kinsale, Virginia.

Philip Fithian, tutor to the Carter children, attended Princeton with the younger Joseph Lane in 1771-2, and his diary records several visits by Mrs. Lane to Nomini Hall. Young Lane was agent for Carter in Loudon County, Virginia for a number of years.²

William Carr Tidwell's son, Reuben, sold the farm at Tidwells, Virginia in 1812 and moved to Warren County, Tennessee. That was the last of the Tidwell family in Virginia, but many relatives remain in the Northern Neck.

¹/ Westmoreland County
²/ William and Mary Quarterly $14, p. 32