Governor John Blackwell:
His Life in England and Ireland

John Blackwell is best known to American readers as an early governor of Pennsylvania, the most recent account of his governorship having been published in this Magazine in 1950. Little, however, has been written about his services to the Commonwealth government, first as one of Oliver Cromwell's trusted cavalry officers and, subsequently, as his Treasurer at War, a position of considerable importance and responsibility.¹

John Blackwell was born in 1624,² the eldest son of John Blackwell, Sr., who exercised considerable influence on his son's upbringing and activities. John Blackwell, Sr., Grocer to King Charles I, was a wealthy London merchant who lived in the City and had a country house at Mortlake, on the outskirts of London.³ In 1640, when the

¹ Nicholas B. Wainwright, "Governor John Blackwell," The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography (PMHB), LXXIV (1950), 457-472. I am indebted to Professor Wallace Notestein for advice and suggestions.
² John Blackwell, Jr., was born Mar. 8, 1624. Miscellanea Heraldica et Genealogica, New Series, I (London, 1874), 177.
³ John Blackwell, Sr., was born at Watford, Herts., Aug. 25, 1594. He married his first wife Juliana (Gillian) in 1621; she died in 1640, and was buried at St. Thomas the Apostle, London, having borne him ten children. On Mar. 9, 1642, he married Martha Smithsby, by whom he had eight children. Ibid., 177-178. For Blackwell arms, see J. Foster, ed., Grantees...
King was contemplating making a forced loan in the City, the senior Blackwell was mentioned as being one of the principal citizens of the Vintry Ward, and was among those highest assessed in ability to contribute to the proposed loan. Subsequently, in 1641 and 1642, he voluntarily “lent upon Proposition of Parliament £1,176 for service of England and Wales.”

At this time, the Long Parliament devoted much time to religious matters, appointing lay commissioners to take over jurisdiction of the Church, and making a declaration to suppress ritualism. John Blackwell, Sr., was completely in agreement with these puritanical ideas, since in June, 1641, he and others, “having stricken the churchwardens [of St. Thomas the Apostle] with great violence pulled down the altar rails, and afterwards broke them up, burnt them outside the church and threatened that, if the parson came to read service in his surplice, they would burn him and his surplice too.” An order was drawn up for their arrest and the House of Commons instructed the Grand Committee for Religion to consider the matter, but, as their violence was approved by some of the parishioners, it does not appear that any action was taken.

His first wife having died, John Blackwell, Sr., married Martha Smithsby, eldest daughter of Thomas Smithsby, Saddler to Charles I and Underkeeper to the Duke of Hamilton of the “capital mansion, house and new garden and orchard” of Hampton Court. In 1640, Thomas Smithsby lent the King £10,000, secured by the Farmers of the Customs, and later became Master of the Saddlers’ Company. His brother, William Smithsby, Keeper of the Privy Lodgings and Standing Wardrobe at Hampton Court, was married to Rabsey, born Cromwell alias Williams of Huntingdon, a relative of Oliver Cromwell. Their eldest son, George Smithsby, who had been in...
Cromwell's life guard, took part in the Hispaniola Expedition of 1654 which captured Jamaica from the Spaniards. Throughout his life, John Blackwell, Jr., was close to Thomas Smithsby's family, and in 1647 married Elizabeth Smithsby. This marriage connection with the Protector's family may have helped in his advancement.

In 1642, when there was danger of the King's forces attacking London, the City Trained Bands under popular Major General Philip Skippon were called out to reinforce the Earl of Essex's Parliamentarian army. The Trained Bands were composed of six regiments, each commanded by an alderman with the rank of colonel. The troops were recruited in each ward and formed into companies, under the command of captains. John Blackwell, Sr., was a captain in the Fourth Regiment and commanded a troop of horse known as "The Maiden Troop." John Blackwell, Jr., who was eighteen years of age, was an ensign in the same regiment. In the autumn of this disturbed year, the Puritan Lord Mayor, Isaac Penington, issued orders for a general alarm and Parliament gave further instructions for the defense of London. Finally, in November, when a battle at Turnham Green appeared imminent, General Skippon mustered all

5 Patent Roll C66/2354, No. 13 (Mar. 18, 1626), Public Record Office (P.R.O.), London; J. H. Sherwell, Guild of Saddlers (London, 1889), 207; Calendar of State Papers, Domestic (September, 1640-May, 1641), 252 (Nov. 9, 1640), hereinafter cited as C.S.P.D.; State Paper 38/18, P.R.O.; C.S.P.D. (September, 1640-May, 1641), 96 (Sept. 25, 1640). Smithsby paid half the sum lent the King to several of the King's servants to whom money was owing. Clarendon State Papers, II (Oxford, 1772), 123; C.S.P.D. (January-September, 1644), 71; (1654), 347; Patent Roll C66/3073, No. 44; Calendar of MSS. of the House of Lords, H.M.C., 9th Report, Pt. II (1844), Appendix, 56-57; L.J., XII, 258; C.S.P.D. (1688-1689), 557. For Thomas Smithsby, Jr., clerk of the Protector's Privy Seal and Fellow of All Souls', Oxford, see Register of the Visitors of the University of Oxford, 1647-1658 . . . (Camden Society, New Series, XXIX [1881], 278, 477; Patent Roll C66/2913, No. 34; C.S.P.D. (1656-1657), 263; for Privy Seals signed by him, see E403/2608, P.R.O. For Rabyse Smithsby, see Chancery Proceedings, C2/Chas 1/S24/33, C33/164, fol. 185 William Smithsby/John Hampden and Henry Cromwell (first cousin and uncle, respectively, of Oliver Cromwell); Herald's Visitation, Middlesex (1634), College Arms fol. C28/45, P.R.O. For George Smithsby, see MSS. of the Duke of Portland, H.M.C., 13th Report, Appendix, II (1893), 88. When Oliver Cromwell wrote to Admiral William Penn recommending Smithsby, he referred to him as "my kinsman."

6 John Blackwell, Jr., married Elizabeth Smithsby on June 9, 1647, at St. Andrew Undershaft. She was the daughter of James Smithsby, probably a first cousin of Thomas Smithsby. In the register of St. Margaret's, Westminster, there is a record of the baptism of one of his sons on March 18, 1654; in the Mortlake Parish Register is a record of a child of his being buried on May 16, 1656.

7 Thomason Tract 669, fol. 6 (10), British Museum, London; Rawlinson MSS. B48, fol. 24.
his volunteers, addressing them with these words: "Come, my Boys, my Brave Boys, let us pray heartily and fight heartily, I will run the same fortunes and hazards with you. Remember this cause is for God, and for the defence of yourselves, your wives and children. Come, my honest brave Boys, pray heartily and fight heartily, and God will bless us." Fortunately for London, no fighting took place closer than the suburbs of Brentford, after which the Royalist army withdrew, heavily outnumbered by their opponents.

John Blackwell, Jr., later became a cornet in Captain Juxon's troop of horse in Colonel Harvey's regiment. As an officer in the Parliamentary army, he took part, in January, 1644, in a successful assault on a Royalist army under Lord John Byron, which was besieging a Parliamentary garrison in Nantwich. For a short time after this engagement he was reported missing.

In June, 1645, he fought at the Battle of Naseby and came to the notice of Oliver Cromwell. Cromwell's own regiment of horse was commanded by a major and four captains. One of these captains, Captain Bush, was killed in the battle and was replaced by young Blackwell. In July of the same year, Blackwell was present at the Battle of Langport in Somerset, about which he wrote to his father, giving an account of the defeat of the Royalists. After some preliminary reconnaissances, the Parliamentarians had marched toward Lord Goring's army "with 7 Regiments of horse and one Company of Dragoons and 8 Regiments of foot, and drew up against them in a Campania within a mile of Langport. . . . We resolved about 10 of the clocke in the morning to force our way. . . . having drawne up our Great Guns, and given them about 50 or 60 great shott, their horse began to retreat, and their foote could not abide so much heat, as they found in our Musquettiers, . . . whereupon our horse began to advance up the way and their foote ran from the hedges. Major Bethel . . . gave the horse such a gallant charge up the hill, that they after a long dispute with him quitted the ground, and gave liberty for the rest of our Horse to come up . . . and therefore

charging them desperately the enemy all faced about and ran away both horse and foote most shamefully. . . . Our Horse, pursuing with the Lieutenant Generall Cromwell, untill they came within a mile of Bridgewater, killing many of them, and taking many prisoners. . . . They set the further end of the Towne [Langport] on fire in a narrow streete, thinking thereby to have hindered us that we could not come after them. But although the fire burnt very violently on both sides, so that many durst not venture, the Lieut-Generall himselfe advanced in the head of 6 Troups of Horse, with about 3 of Dragoons to pursue them. Although their number was farre greater, yet it pleased the Lord to strike them with such feare that the greatest part of them ran away and hid themselves, but we took hundreds of their prisoners. . . .” In conclusion, he wrote, “Sire, wee doe, doe you also blesse God, who hath raised up a poore company of men to do him such service, men who were by some thought not fitt to be tollerated in the Kingdome, but faithfull to God and those who have employed them, without any other ends than God’s glory, and the publique welfare of this poor Kingdome. . . . your most dutifull sonne, John Blackwell.”

With the conclusion of the great civil war, John Blackwell entered the field of financial administration and politics. In April, 1647, Cromwell’s regiment of horse was among those units which objected to being disbanded and which appealed for arrears of pay in a “Petition of Officers of the Army under Command of Sir Thos. Fairfax on behalf of themselves and the soldiers of the Army,” signed by one hundred and fifty commissioned officers. Among the signers was “John Blackwell, Captain and Treasurer.” Referring to the New Model Army in 1647, a contemporary writer has remarked that “the treasurers were men of public spirit to the state and army, and were usually ready to present some pay upon every success, which was likewise after work, and cheered up the common spirit to more activity. . . . The two treasurers at war were Sir John Wollaston and Captain John Blackwell.” It would appear that

11 Thomason Tract E293 (8). For a recent account of the battle of Langport, see C. V. Wedgwood, The King’s War (London, 1958), 465.
Blackwell's position was that of deputy to Sir John Wollaston, a wealthy man who had been Lord Mayor of London. In addition, he retained his position as captain in Cromwell's regiment of horse, and it was not until June, 1648, that the command of his troop was handed over to Joseph Wallington.

In the meanwhile, John Blackwell, Sr., had been appointed a contractor for the sale of bishops' lands which had been confiscated by the state, and was subsequently given the same appointment for the sale of dean and chapters' lands. The numerous purchasers of bishops' lands included Lord Fairfax, Sir John Wollaston, Major General John Lambert and both the John Blackwells, who between 1647 and 1651 acquired church land in different parts of the country to the value of £9,809. Among these tracts was the manor of Lambeth, the London seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the purchase of which was begun by Blackwell, Sr., and completed by his son. In addition, the younger Blackwell bought sequestered Crown lands, including the manor of Egham. By purchasing confiscated estates, he became a large landowner in England.

In 1649, the elder John Blackwell was one of the judges who signed the death warrants of the Duke of Hamilton, the Earl of Holland, and Lord Capel. He was not among the judges appointed for the trial of King Charles, but did assist in the administration and was paid £1,000 by the House of Commons for expenses he incurred in connection with the King's trial and the 1649 court of justice. In the

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15 Firth and Davies, *Regimental History of Cromwell's Army*, 201.

16 *Acts and Ordinances*, I, 889–890 (November, 1646); II, 87 (April, 1649).

17 *Collectanea Topographica Genealogica*, I (London, 1834), 3, 123, 127, 287, 288; Rawlinson MSS. B239. Blackwell, Jr.'s largest purchases were £3,382 in September, 1647, for the manor of Reculver, Kent, etc.; £3,161 in March, 1648/9 for the manor of Lambeth, etc. Lambeth MSS. 951, fol. 11, Lambeth, London; T. Allen, *History of Lambeth* (London, 1826), 279.

18 *C.J.*, VI, 23 (September, 1648). The reason for noncompletion by Blackwell, Sr., was that at the time contractors were prohibited from purchasing bishops' lands, a provision which was subsequently withdrawn. *Ibid.*, 56.


20 Calendar of MSS. of the House of Lords, H.M.C., 7th Report, Appendix, 71. The original death warrants with signatures and seals are preserved. *C.J.*, VI, 117–118, 132, 169.
following year, he served on another court of justice, which tried and executed the Royalist conspirators Eusebius Andrews, Brown Bushell, and Christopher Love. He was also a commissioner for raising monthly tax assessments required for the army.

While his father was acting as a judge, Judge Blackwell, Jr., continued to render important service to the Commonwealth as Deputy Treasurer at War. The government was finding it difficult to meet the heavy expenditure incurred by the army. In December, 1651, a council of war was held at Whitehall, at which the senior officers present set up a committee to speak to Richard Blackwell and Captain Richard Dean, secretary to the Committee for the Army, about the arrears of pay due the officers and soldiers for their recent service in Scotland. Because of the shortage of government funds, the horse troops were thirty weeks in arrears and the foot, twenty weeks. Blackwell and Dean agreed to pay the horse troops twenty weeks' arrears and the foot, thirteen weeks'.

In January, 1652, John Blackwell's position was strengthened by his appointment, jointly with William Leman, as one of the Treasurers at War. Then, in July, 1653, after Cromwell had driven out the Long Parliament, Blackwell and Dean were appointed Treasurers at War and subsequently Receivers-General for Assessments. In letters patent issued by Oliver Cromwell under the Great Seal in March of that year, their appointment read as follows: "We reposing special trust and confidence in your fidelity and diligence and having good and sufficient experience of your abilities to discharge this great trust and service to which we have designed and appointed you. . . ."
Blackwell and Dean kept an office in the Guildhall of the City of London and were allowed £2,400 a year for their salaries and those of their staff. Their principal assistants were two cashiers, one accountant, two tellers, and two deputies—one for Scotland and one for Ireland; the total salaries paid to their staff of eleven persons in 1653 was £1,271. The records show that this small but efficient office kept meticulously detailed and accurate accounts of moneys received and expended. The totals for their term of office are as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Total Receipts to the Army</th>
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<tr>
<td>December 25, 1651, to July 24, 1653</td>
<td>£1,773,726</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 24, 1653, to February 2, 1659</td>
<td>£5,580,209</td>
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These funds were mostly obtained from monthly tax assessments, supplemented by other sources, such as money from the sale of and fines derived from delinquents’ properties and from farm of beer. The army was also partly paid with money which did not pass through the hands of the Treasurers at War. The principal payments made by the Treasurers at War to other departments were those to Richard Hutchinson, Treasurer of the Navy.

In addition to being a Treasurer at War, John Blackwell, like his father, was a commissioner for assessments. Also in 1653, both Blackwells were appointed justices of the peace, the father for the county of Surrey and the son for Middlesex. That year there was

C.J., VII, 289; Rawlinson MSS. A208, fols. 307–308. Such expenses as fire and candles were extra.

Pipe Rolls E351/304 and 305; in addition, see 306, which gives particulars of £310,760 paid to senior officers, etc., between July, 1653, and December, 1657; 307, for similar data of £135,793 between December, 1657, and February, 1659. Rawlinson MSS. A208 contains 4,327 payments to senior army officers: English army, £754,518 (November, 1653–December, 1657); army in Scotland, £310,682 (August, 1653–March, 1655); army in Ireland, £378,319 (September, 1653–January, 1655).

Pipe Rolls E351/306; Fourth Report of the Deputy Keeper of Public Records (London, 1843), Appendix II, 191, 198; Letters Patent, Jan. 19, 1654/5, £92,616 from farm of beer, etc. Rawlinson MSS. A208 shows that the Treasurers at War paid £726,233 to the navy. The finances of the army during the Protectorate have been described by M. Ashley, Financial and Commercial Policy under the Cromwellian Protectorate (London, 1962); pages 9, 47, 77, 82, 113 include references to Blackwell.


For appointment of Blackwell, Sr., see C.J., VII, 286; Mortlake Parish Register, November, 1653; Index 4213, fol. 332 (1656), P.R.O. He was also a commissioner in Surrey for ejecting scandalous ministers. Acts and Ordinances, II, 971. For appointment of Blackwell, Jr., see Index 4213, fol. 273 (October, 1653), P.R.O.
a Royalist plot to assassinate Cromwell on his way from Whitehall to Hampton Court, but he escaped by traveling as far as Chelsea by water instead of by land, as was his usual custom. On information obtained by John Thurloe's spies, several hundred persons were arrested and examined by twenty-eight commissioners, including the younger Blackwell. He was also appointed a judge on the High Court of Justice, which tried and sentenced to death John Gerard, Peter Vowell, and Somerset Fox, ringleaders in the assassination attempt.

In September, 1653, an act was passed for the “satisfaction of Adventurers in Ireland and arrears due to soldiery there and other debts and for the encouragement of Protestants to plant and inhabit Ireland.” Oliver Cromwell's policy was to transfer large tracts of land from Irish to English ownership; by this means, the government was able to finance the reconquest of Ireland. In return for money advanced, English subscribers were allocated lands in Ireland, and between July, 1649, and November, 1656, the Treasurers at War were thus able to transmit to Ireland £1,491,580. Treasurer Blackwell, who was one of the many purchasers of Irish lands, was permitted, in return for £2,350 “advanced by way of adventure upon the Propositions for Rebels Lands in Ireland,” to have assigned to him the acreage due him in such places as he might choose within the counties of Dublin, Kildare, and Cork. Partly as a result of individuals endeavoring to obtain such special advantages, a Parliamentary committee was set up “for determining differences among Adventurers.” As a member of this committee, the elder Blackwell visited Ireland, and Secretary John Thurloe wrote to Henry Cromwell, major general of the army there, commending him as “a person who deserves well of the State, and is of great use dayle in the things which relate to his trust.” Blackwell’s principal duty was to “settle a method for determining by lot how many and which of the adventurers’ proportions shall fall.” He was hardly a disinterested person

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32 Acts and Ordinances, II, 781 (Nov. 21, 1652); C.S.P.D. (1654), 204–205.
33 C. H. Firth, “Account of Money Spent in Cromwellian Reconquest of Ireland, 1649–56,” English Historical Review, XIV (1899), 106.
34 Acts and Ordinances, II, 753; Calendar of State Papers, Ireland (1647–1660), 470, 474, 510; Calendar of State Papers, Ireland Adventurers (1642–1653), 109, 134; R. Dunlop, Ireland under the Commonwealth (Manchester, 1913), II, 358.
since both he and his son were "adventurers." Nevertheless, a year later John Blackwell, Jr., still had not acquired the lands of his choice, the Protector having received a letter requesting him to give the matter consideration, "there being scruples in Ireland about lands settled on him by Ordinance."

After the Protector's unsuccessful attempt to rule England by military law through major generals, a general election was held at which John Blackwell, Jr., was chosen as member of Parliament for Surrey. He was a most active member of the military party in the 1656-1658 Parliament, serving on a number of committees, including those for the perusal of the petition and advice, investigation into public revenue, trade, the peace of the nation, excise duties, court of chancery, abuses in alehouses, and excessive price of wines, as well as a committee to consider information regarding the blasphemy of the notorious James Naylor. In January, 1657, when the Commons voted funds for war with Spain, Blackwell raised the matter in the House on behalf of the Protector, and was given as a reply that £400,000 had been voted for the war. In addition, he took care of his "adventurer's" interests in securing the lands of his choice in Ireland by "An Act for establishing of divers lands in the Counties of Dublin and Kildare, settled by letters patent upon John Blackwell junior his heirs and assigns." The bill, which was criticized during its second reading on the grounds that the profit would be exorbitant, received the approval of Parliament and the Protector in 1657.

Meanwhile, the services of his father were recognized by his appointment as sheriff for the county of Surrey, an appointment which culminated his career. In January, 1658, in his sixty-third year, John Blackwell, Sr., was "stricken of the sinking of which he died at

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38 J. T. Rutt, ed., Diary of Thomas Burton . . . (London, 1828), II, 32-33; for other occasions when he spoke or did duty in the House, see ibid., 62, 203; C.J., VII, 514, 537, 542-543.

39 Rutt, Diary of Thomas Burton, I, 244-245, 282. The sum ventured was £2,350, augmented by "doubling" to £4,100; in 1657, the land was said to be worth £20,000.

40 List of sheriffs, P.R.O. Lists and Indexes, IX (London, 1898); Mercurius Politicus, Nov. 29, 1657; Acts and Ordinances, II, 1071, 1081, 1247.
his house near Cripplegate,” leaving verbal instructions bequeathing
his property to his son. In the same year, the Protector became
seriously ill and on September 3, the great man breathed his last.
Among the many officers who walked in his funeral from Somerset
House to the Abbey was Captain Blackwell. A year later, Thomas
Smithsby died, naming as his executors his two sons-in-law,
Hezekiah Haynes and Simon Middleton, and John Blackwell, who
were made guardians of Smithsby’s younger children. Major Haynes,
who for many years had commanded a regiment of horse, had been
major general for the eastern counties of England and also a member
of the 1656 Parliament. He was the son of John Haynes, a distin-
guished Puritan who emigrated to America, where he was chosen as
third governor of Massachusetts and first governor of Connecticut.
Simon Middleton was secretary of the New River Company,
founded by his father Sir Hugh Middleton, who brought the first
regular water supply to London.

The state of calm which prevailed when Richard Cromwell was
proclaimed Protector on September 3, 1658, was of short duration. “The young Gentleman” was faced with discontent in the army
arising from arrears of pay and the personal ambitions of some
leaders. The officers in London held regular meetings at which they
aired their grievances, and, by March of the next year, were split into
three factions—the Republicans, a group headed by General Charles
Fleetwood, and a clique which adhered to the Protector. Those asso-
ciated with Fleetwood were said to have “advanced Mr. Richard
Cromwell in expectation of governing all as they pleased.” It might
equally be said that most of them considered it their duty to God and
their country to intervene in public affairs. The group was known as
the Wallingford House Party, because it met in Fleetwood’s house in

41 John Blackwell, Sr., was buried at St. Thomas the Apostle, London, Jan. 2, 1658; for his
will, Jan. 1, 1658, see records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (P.C.C.), Wooton.
Miscellanea Heraldica et Genealogica, New Series, I, 178. His second wife, Martha, was buried
at St. Thomas the Apostle, Apr. 28, 1652, and on Mar. 12, 1657, he married Mary Rose. Later
she became the wife of Col. John Okey, who was executed as a regicide. H. G. Tibbutt, *Colonel
John Okey, 1606–1662* (Bedfordshire Historical Record Society Publications, XXXV [1958]),
91.

42 Thomas Smithsby was buried on Sept. 21, 1658, at St. Dunstan’s in the West, London;
his will, Sept. 4, 1658, is in P.C.C., Wooton, 627.


Whitehall, and its members included General Fleetwood, Colonels John Desborough, William Sydenham, Thomas Kelsey, and James Berry, Major Hezekiah Haynes, Captain John Blackwell, and some others.

On April 2, 1659, a general meeting of the Council of Officers in London, numbering some four hundred officers, was held, after which a petition signed by "the officers great and small that are in and near London" was submitted to the Protector. Its most important requests were that the arrears of pay of the army be settled and that the officers be indemnified for their past actions in preserving the peace. The House of Commons, fearing that the officers intended to challenge their authority, ordered that no general council or meetings of officers should henceforth be held without the assent of the Protector and both Houses of Parliament, and also that the officers should undertake not to disturb meetings of Parliament. The officers were then instructed to return to their regiments, an order which they disobeyed. They continued to meet, and openly declared that they wanted Parliament dissolved. At this stage, the greater part of the army supported Fleetwood. Richard Cromwell, whose support had dwindled to but a few regiments, was consequently forced to dissolve Parliament.

Matters had now gone much farther than Fleetwood and the other senior officers had intended. Being a weak character, Fleetwood vacillated and thus failed to guide the insurrection he had been largely responsible for starting. Partly because of the necessity of having to raise money to meet the arrears of pay due the army, a group of officers inspired by Colonel Lambert, who wanted to return to power, met the Republican leaders and agreed to the restoration of the Rump of the Long Parliament. On May 6, 1659, a group of senior officers—Colonels Ashfield, Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper, Berry, Sir Arthur Hesilrige, Kelsey, Lambert, Lilburne, John Okey, Packer, Salmond and Sankey, Lieutenant Colonels Allen and Pierson, Major Haynes and Captain Blackwell—delivered to the former Speaker of the Commons, William Lenthall, a declaration signed by them in the name of Fleetwood and the Council of Officers, inviting the members of the Long Parliament who had continued sitting until April 20, 1653, "to return to the Exercise and discharge
of the trust.” Thus, on May 7, the Rump was restored and Richard Cromwell’s Protectorate came to an end.\footnote{C. H. Firth, ed., Clarke Papers, III (Camden Society, New Series, LX [1899]), 187; Public Intelligencer, Apr. 26, 1659; Davies, Restoration of Charles II, 76; B. Whitelocke, Memorials of the English Affairs... (London, 1682), IV, 344; Cobbett, Parliamentary History, III, 1546; J. Berry and S. G. Lee, A Cromwellian Major General: Career of Colonel James Berry (London, 1938), 221-223; Thomason Tract E980, No. 20.}

Shortly after the re-establishment of the Commonwealth, a Council of State was set up with Richard Dean as secretary.\footnote{Council of State meetings, May 19-Aug. 10, 1659, Rawlinson MSS. C179, fols. 123, 131-132, 189. In July, 1659, the Treasurers at War were instructed to issue two months’ pay to the army, one month’s pay for troops near London being defrayed out of £15,000 borrowed from the East India Company.} It included the leading Republicans and the principal officers of the army. A majority of these men believed in the subordination of the military to civilian authority, and, naturally, they had the full support of Parliament. By now, the unstable relationship between the army and Parliament served to raise the hopes of the Royalists, and in August Sir George Booth started an insurrection in Chester which was quickly crushed by Major General Lambert, who had been put in charge of the Parliamentary forces. Because of the dangers arising from Royalist risings elsewhere, local militia were organized throughout England; Captain John Blackwell and another officer were assigned the command of the militia in Surrey.\footnote{C.J., VII, 749, 772, 774. Blackwell’s commission was dated Sept. 1, 1659. C.S.P.D. (1659-1660), 563.}

Immediately after Lambert’s victory, the army drew up a petition at Derby, which was presented to Parliament. The main requests were that Fleetwood should be made permanent commander in chief, with Lambert second in command, Desborough in charge of the horse, and Monck in command of the foot. These proposals failed to receive any support from General Monck, who commanded the army in Scotland, and Parliament, finding them unacceptable, ordered that the army be administered by seven commissioners and that loyal troops be placed on guard at Westminster Hall. This order caused Lambert to rally his forces in London and to surround Westminster. Army leaders thereupon decided against allowing the Rump Parliament to resume its sittings.
In November, the Council of Officers nominated a committee of safety to handle day-to-day affairs of government. This committee, in its turn, appointed as commissioners of the Treasury, Fleetwood, Desborough, Blackwell, and four others. 48 By now, the unpopularity of the military leaders had become general, Monck declaring that he aimed at seeing his country “free from the intolerable slavery of sword government.” Finally, Fleetwood, in a state of perplexed paralysis, handed the Speaker the keys of Parliament House and on Christmas Day, 1659, the Rump resumed its sitting.

Lambert and other senior officers were cashiered and ordered to leave London. Similarly, on February 2, 1660, Captains John Blackwell and Richard Dean had their services as Treasurers at War terminated. 49 On February 4, General Monck marched into London. Lambert was arrested, but shortly afterward escaped from the Tower of London. A proclamation was then issued stating that information had been received “that there is an endeavour by Colonel John Lambert and other officers lately reduced, to raise a new War . . . and hinder the members in the next parliament.” 50 The ten officers concerned, including Captain John Blackwell, who “lurked privately about the town and bent to engage with the said Colonel John Lambert in disturbing the peace,” were ordered to submit to the Council at Whitehall within three days “under pains and penalties of being proceeded against and having their estates forthwith seized and sequestered for the use of the Commonwealth.”

After his escape, Lambert sent emissaries to his adherents in the army inviting them to a rendezvous, and succeeded in assembling a small force near Daventry in the English Midlands. Monck ordered Colonel Richard Ingoldsby to engage him, and Lambert was captured. So ended the last attempt of the army leaders to assert themselves. The wheel was now approaching a full circle; the military were discredited and the tide of royalism was sweeping all before it.

When the celebrations for the return of King Charles II were over, the first measure brought before Parliament was the Bill of Indem-


49 Acts and Ordinances, II, 1407; Calendar of Treasury Books (1662–1667), 204.

50 Thomason Tract 669, fol. 24; Tibbutt, Colonel John Okey, 127; Davies, Restoration of Charles II, 335.
nity and Oblivion, under which the regicides, that is, the judges who had signed the death warrant of Charles I, were not to be pardoned. They were tried for high treason, and thirteen of them were executed. In addition, twenty others were excluded from pardon, including John Lambert, John Blackwell, and Richard Dean. On June 12, 1660, the House of Commons passed a resolution which included the following: “That John Blackwell of Moreclack [Mortlake] shall be one of the Twenty Persons to be excepted out of the Act of Pardon and Oblivion, for and in respect only of such Pains, Penalties and Forfeitures (not extending unto Life) as shall be thought fit to be inflicted on him by another Act, intended to be hereafter passed for that Purpose.”

Five days later, on the grounds that the Commons had voted “to forfeit his Estate as well Real and Personal for divers misdemeanours and crimes committed,” the “Mansion House in Mortlake,” which Blackwell had inherited from his father, was granted by Charles II for twenty-one years to Henry Seymour, a groom of his bedchamber who had helped him during his exile.

On June 29, Parliament decided that Queen Henrietta Maria should be forthwith restored to the possession of properties which had been part of her jointure, and which had been purchased by persons whose estates were liable to forfeiture. Thus, the Crown received back the manor of Egham in Surrey which John Blackwell had purchased from the trustees appointed by the Long Parliament for the sale of royal properties. In addition, he was compelled to restore church lands, including the manor of Lambeth, and so appears to have lost his entire fortune in England.

Blackwell was also placed under a perpetual ban of incapacitation from holding any official position in England and Wales. Lambert

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51 C.J., VIII, 65; the text of the resolution in the Parliamentary Intelligencer, June 11-18, 1660, differs in that Blackwell is described as “late Treasurer at War”; Mercurius Politicus, June 14-21, 1660. The House of Lords resolution was on May 18, 1660. Lambeth MSS. 951, fol. 11. John Blackwell, Sr., whose death was at first not known by the Lords, was also to be exempted out of the bill and secured. Richard Dean, who stated that he had not purchased confiscated properties or served on any court of justice, received the same treatment as Blackwell, Jr. C.J., VIII, 61, 67, 118, 286; Rawlinson MSS. C366, fol. 246.

52 June 20, 1660, Egerton MSS. 2542, fols. 372, 374, British Museum.

53 C.J., VIII, 73 (June 23, 1660); L.J., XI, 78 (June 29, 1660); E315/174, fol. 4; E320/R52, P.R.O.

54 Lambeth MSS. 951, fol. 11. The purchase value of the bishops’ lands restored was £5,076.
was even less fortunate. Although not a regicide, he was kept in prison while Parliament considered whether or not he should suffer the death penalty. Finally, in June, 1662, he was tried, found guilty of treason, and given a sentence of death, which was commuted by the King to life imprisonment.

In October, Blackwell began experiencing difficulties with his extensive properties in Ireland. His enemies made a determined attempt to deprive him of some two thousand acres near Dublin and five thousand acres in County Kildare, which he had been granted by Act of Parliament in 1657. Claims were made on these lands on the grounds that they had been granted by the “favour of the late usurper.” Every kind of base accusation was made against him, in particular that he had obtained the lands by fraud, a charge his enemies could not substantiate. Among the more absurd things of which he was accused was that he had “built the fatal scaffold for execution of his late Majesty.” On investigation it was shown that he “had no hand in that business more than in the execution of his office to issue money defraying the charge, he being Treasurer.”

In 1660, Blackwell sold a substantial part of his disputed lands to his friend Lord Kingston, who, as Colonel John King, had been knighted in 1658 by Henry Cromwell, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, for fighting against the Catholics in Ireland. Subsequently, he had been created an Irish peer by Charles II for helping in his restoration. Blackwell’s conveyance of lands to Lord Kingston led to further complications, since the King shortly requested Kingston to return the lands in question to the original owners, the most important of

55 Calendar of State Papers, Ireland (1660-1662), 67, 204, 227, 270, 400, 433-436; (1663-1665), 271, 336; Carte MSS., XLIV, fols. 404, 474, 477, 479, Bodleian Library, Oxford; J. P. Prendergast, Ireland from the Restoration to the Revolution, 1660 to 1690 (London, 1887), 9; Dunlop, Ireland under the Commonwealth, II, 358-359; J. O'Hart, The Irish and Anglo-Irish Gentry (Dublin, 1884), 238. The lands in County Dublin had belonged to delinquent Protestants and were granted to Blackwell in February and March, 1654. One of Blackwell’s troubles seems to have arisen from the fact that his name had not been recorded as an Adventurer on the vouchers at Grocers’ Hall, the right to pick lands having been a personal favor of Oliver Cromwell. The Duke of Ormonde recovered the estate of Kilcash from Blackwell for his brother Richard Butler.

56 Dictionary of National Biography; Calendar of State Papers, Ireland (1660-1662), 286; (1663-1665), 426; LR5/13, P.R.O., an undated manuscript, states that Lord Kingston's claim to lands in Ireland was 42,000 acres, of which he was possessed of 26,000 acres. C.S.P.D. (1675-1676), 578; Calendar of Treasury Papers (1556-1696), 540.
whom was Lord Dungan, afterward Earl of Limerick, whose properties in County Kildare had been confiscated by the Crown during the Irish rebellion of 1641. In return for allowing Lord Dungan to take back his properties, Lord Kingston was given assurance that he would be granted lands of equivalent value elsewhere in Ireland. In the end, Kingston did receive other lands, out of which Blackwell obtained properties with a yearly value, or rent, of £484.57

During the years following the Restoration, Blackwell lived both in Ireland and in England. While in London in the spring of 1665, he came under the suspicion of the authorities, and on March 31, Lord Arlington, the Secretary of State, instructed a messenger to put him in custody. Two weeks later, after examination, Lord Kingston having intervened on his behalf, he was discharged.58 Soon after, because the plague had broken out in London, Blackwell wanted to leave the capital, and Kingston generously lent him the use of his house, Bidston Hall, in Cheshire.59 However, on his arrival there, the deputy lieutenant of the county seized him as a dangerous person, whereupon Kingston once more came to his assistance and wrote to Arlington, requesting that Blackwell be given freedom to live at Bidston Hall and also to go to Ireland to attend to his lands. Kingston wrote: “Mr. Blackwell is a perfect stranger in the country and had only a wife, seven small children and two maid servants, no man servant in the house and not even a pocket pistol. Yet he was seized as dangerous. Pray you arrange his release. He has not been criminal since the king’s restoration and is, I know, penitent for what he did.” In March, 1669, his wife, Elizabeth Smithsby, died in Dublin, and about two years later Blackwell was described as “a widower with seven children and no great estate.”60

57 Calendar of Treasury Papers (1556–1696), 279 (Feb. 20, 1693); T1/21, No. 29, P.R.O.
In 1693, Blackwell claimed that during the previous thirty-two years he should have been entitled to an additional £241 a year. Calendar of Treasury Papers (1556–1696), 540 (Aug. 21, 1666), T1/39, No. 49. He also failed to obtain satisfaction of this claim. C.S.P.D. (1693), 113, 393; (1697), 703 (1699–1700), 201.
58 C.S.P.D. (1664–1665), 282, 318; State Paper 44/22, fols. 75, 88, P.R.O.
59 Calendar of State Papers, Ireland (1663–1665), 645; Carte MSS., CXLIV, fol. 265, Bodleian Library, Oxford.
60 Henry F. Berry, ed., The Registers of the Church of St. Michan, Dublin, 1636 to 1685 [Parish Register Society of Dublin, III] (Dublin, 1907), 175 (Mar. 25, 1669); Massachusetts Historical Society (M.H.S.) Collections, 3rd Series, I (1825), 61.
In October, 1669, Blackwell was back in London, submitting, jointly with Simon Middleton, James Smithsby, Thomas and Rebecca Hartley and Mary Smithsby, a petition to the House of Lords regarding Thomas Smithsby's estate. As his executors, Blackwell and Middleton were endeavoring to recover more of the money due from the farmers of the customs in connection with the loan of £10,000 which Thomas Smithsby had made to Charles I in 1640. They were not successful in their efforts.

About a year later, Blackwell submitted a petition to the King which read: "That your Petitioner, about twelve years since, became bound in one thousand pounds obligation for payment of five hundred pounds with Interest for Colonel John Lambert, now your Majesty's prisoner in the island of Plymouth and hath already been forced to pay £120 for the interest thereof and expects to be speedily charged with the remainder; which he presumes would be otherwise satisfied, and your Petitioner secured therefrom by the said Colonel Lambert and his Lady, if your Petr. were in the place to mannage that affayre with them. . . .

"Your Petr. most humbly Prayes, your Majesty will be graciously pleased to grant him leave (under such observation as your Matie shall direct) personally to apply unto and conferre with the said Colonel Lambert in the said Island, in order to his security or discharge from the said debt."

There is no record that his request was granted, but it can be surmised what he had in mind when he wrote, "otherwise satisfied." The probability is that he was prepared to settle the debt of his friend Lambert as part of a contract which included his marriage to Lambert's second daughter, Frances. In February, 1668, she had been with her father when he was imprisoned in Guernsey, and in
October, 1670, she had landed at Portsmouth with her mother and sister Mary, who, to the chagrin of her father, had clandestinely married Charles Hatton, son of Lord Hatton, his gaoler at Guernsey. John Blackwell probably married Frances Lambert in 1672.

During the next ten years or so, Blackwell lived in Dublin and attended to his properties in the vicinity. In 1684, a local clergyman wrote of him: “I have known him many years. Hee did sundry years dwell in this Citty. For serious, real piety, and nobleness of spirit, prudence, etc., I have not been acquainted with many that equall him.”

Blackwell was still full of energy and enterprise. In December, 1684, at sixty years of age, he set off for America, accompanied by his wife and daughter. On landing in Boston, he was well received by the governor and other influential members of the New England Puritan colony. Shortly after his arrival, he, together with others, was granted a tract of land of eight square miles “in any free place within this colony where he shall judge it convenient for a township to be laid out . . . for settling at least thirty families.” In 1686, he was appointed a justice of the peace and a commissioner for the King’s province, and also set about establishing a credit bank, the first chartered bank in Massachusetts, a venture which was, however, short-lived.

The last phase of John Blackwell’s public life was his appointment as governor of Pennsylvania. At that time, William Penn was the absolute proprietor of the colony he had founded under a charter granted to him by Charles II in 1681. Penn had himself served as governor and had drawn up a constitution in which his aim had been “to lay the foundation of a free colony for all mankind,” incorporat-
ing in it his ideas of democracy, freedom, and justice. When Penn returned to England in 1684, he placed the executive power in the hands of the Provincial Council, but, as this control did not prove satisfactory, in 1687 he appointed a five-man commission to exercise the powers of governor. This change also was a failure, local notions of what constituted a free democracy leading to administrative chaos.

Penn then perceived that the only way of resolving the internal confusion in his colony was to appoint a strong governor. He offered the post to a prominent Philadelphia Quaker, Thomas Lloyd, who refused it. It was at this stage that John Blackwell's wife, who had returned to England, visited Penn. Penn, who knew Blackwell, decided that he had the qualifications needed to resolve the differences among his leaders in Philadelphia and so restore harmony in the colony. He therefore wrote to Friends, informing them that he was appointing Blackwell as governor: “Since no Friend would undertake the Governor's place, I took one that was not, and a stranger, that he might be impartial and more reverenced. He is in England and Ireland of great repute for ability and integrity and virtue.” In another letter, he described Blackwell as “a grave, sober, wise man. . . .” “He has a mighty repute of all sorts of honest people, where he inhabited, which with my knowledge, has made me venture upon him.” In July, 1688, when Blackwell received his commission as governor of Pennsylvania, he expressed his surprise, writing Penn: “I retired myself and spread it with my case before the Lord, casting myself under some consternation.” Penn's instructions to Blackwell were quite specific. He was “to inspect the animosities, to use some expedient, and if no way else, authoritatively to end them, at least suppress them.” He was also told to “rule the meek meekly; and those that will not be ruled, rule with authority.”

When Blackwell arrived in Pennsylvania, no effort was made to meet him, and it became apparent from the outset that Lloyd bitterly resented his appointment and consequently placed every kind of obstacle in his way, including refusing to set the Great Seal, which he held, on Blackwell's commissions. There followed a period of constant bickering between some who were prepared to co-operate with Blackwell and others, headed by Lloyd, who opposed him. Blackwell was accused of using a “high and mighty hand over Friends.” He found himself unable to make any progress toward
solving local problems. Considering the circumstance of his being a Puritan placed over Quakers, it is doubtful that any other person in his position could have done better.

After six months, Blackwell wrote to Thomas Hartley, the husband of Rebecca Smithsby, in England, expressing his candid views of the situation: "I do not hesitate (and you may tell Mr. Penn so if you see him) to declare that the wild beasts that fill his forests can better govern than the witless zealots who make a monkey-house of his assembly. . . . I hope soon to be well out of it. Mr. Penn will receive my resignation by the next ship." On January 1, 1690, he made his farewell speech to the Council and, shortly afterward, in a letter to Penn, he wrote: "I have to do with a people whom neither God or man can prevayle [for they] despise all Dominion and dignity that is not in themselves. Alas! Alas Poore Governor of Pennsil-vania." He returned to Boston and later sailed for England.

The last account of Blackwell was in August, 1696: when he had "grown antient and infirme and unable to attend the further prosecu-tion of this affair he assigned his interest to his son Sir Lambert Blackwell." The affair referred to was an outstanding claim regarding his lands in Ireland. By his two marriages he is said to have had seventeen children, one of the younger sons by his first marriage being Sir Lambert Blackwell, Bart., who was envoy to the Grand Duke of Tuscany and the Republic of Genoa.

John Blackwell died in 1701, survived by his widow, Frances, who lived at Bethnal Green, Middlesex, the home of his son and heir, John Blackwell, merchant. Thus, at the age of seventy-seven, Blackwell’s long and active life came to an end after a stirring career in which he had looked to God for guidance and performed his services to mankind with a strong sense of duty.

Richmond, Surrey

W. F. L. Nuttall

66 John Blackwell’s case, T1/39, No. 49, P.R.O.
68 In the burial register of St. Dunstan’s Church, Stepney, there is an entry that on July 6, 1701, Blackwell’s body was taken from Bethnal Green to Kensington. The Dublin records of 1703 state that he died intestate. Appendix to the Twenty-Sixth Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records . . . in Ireland (Dublin, 1895), 66.