

Interpreter

COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG

VOL. 21, NO. 2

SUMMER 2000

Went to Winchester. It is one of the largest towns I have seen in the Colony, the capital of this County. Regularly layd out in Squares, the Buildings are of limestone. Two Churches, one English and one Dutch but the Dutch Church is not finished. General Braddock built a stockade Fort here, in the year 1755, But it is now demolished.

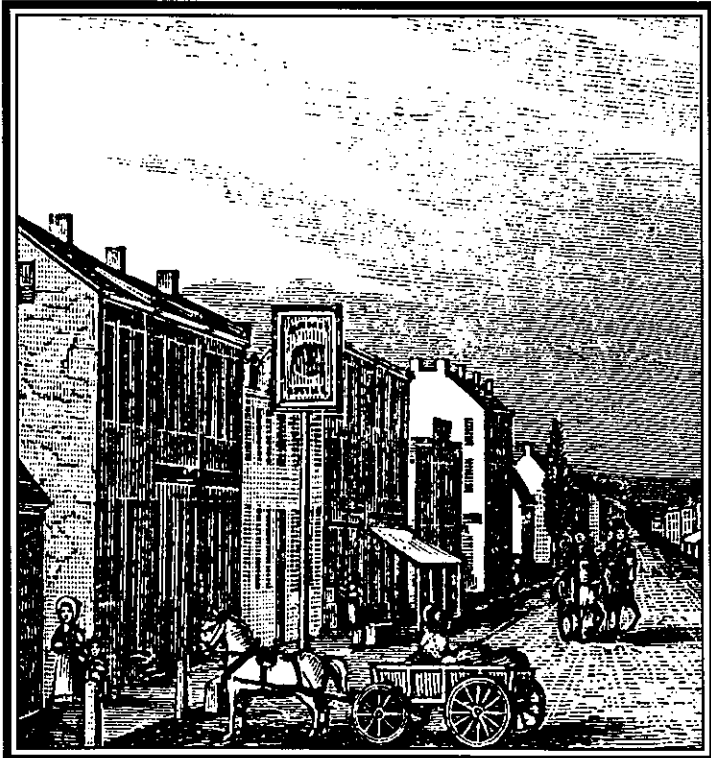
Nicholas Cresswell
Wednesday, December 7, 1774

Dined at Mr. Snickers but he is not at home but his soninlaw gave me a letter to a Certain George Rice whom he recommends as a proper person to go with me. Crosd. the Shanandoe River. Got to Winchester. Land is very rich from the River to the town. All Limestone well watered and very level. I am sorry it is not in my power to Settle here. Winchester is about 80 miles from Alexandria.

Nicholas Cresswell
Monday, April 3rd, 1775

The Country-Town of Frederick [Winchester]—Twenty nine Miles form Martinsburg—It is a smart Village, near half a mile in length, & several Streets broad, & pretty full—the Situation is low & disagreeable—There is on a pleasant Hill North-East from the Town at a Small Distance, a large stone, Dutch-Lutheran Church, with a tall Steeple—In the Town is an English [Anglican] Church—North of the Town are the Ruins of an old Fort wasted & crumbled down by Time!—The Country Road from the Ferry to this Town is thick inhabited—The Land is good, the Country pleasant, the Houses in general large—We were out, this Day, in a most violent Torrent of Rain, Lightning & Thunder—Rode to Day to Stephensburg. Distance 37 Miles.

Philip Vickers Fithian
Winchester, May 22nd, 1775



Winchester, county seat of Frederick County, was the most important of the Valley towns. Washington supplied his army there in 1754, and it was an important frontier outpost after Braddock's defeat the next year. Known first as Opequon, then as Frederick's Town (or Fredericktown), Winchester was not officially established as a town until 1752. According to tradition, it was so named by James Wood, one of the founders, in honor of his birthplace in England.

Questions & Answers: Taking Possession

Where did George Washington receive his surveyor's commission?

On July 29, 1749, before the Culpeper County Court, seventeen-year-old George Washington produced a commission from the "President, Masters, and Professors of the College of William and Mary" appointing him surveyor of that county. The office of surveyor general of Virginia was vested in the college.



Washington as a surveyor.

How, when, and by whom were new counties in Virginia formed?

Since early colonial days, the county has been the basic unit of local government in Virginia. The General Assembly created the first eight counties in Virginia in 1634. They were Accomack, Charles City, Charles River (York), Elizabeth City, Henrico, James City, Warrosquoake (Isle of Wight), and Warwick River (Warwick). A ninth, New Norfolk, added in 1636, was itself divided in 1637 into Lower Norfolk and Upper Norfolk. The number of counties remained at ten for more than a decade before the influx of settlers made additional government divisions necessary. As population grew and settlement expanded, the House of Burgesses continued to create new counties for local administration of justice and to meet the needs of local communities. Another six were carved out by 1656, and the number rose to twenty by 1668. From time to time, residents themselves petitioned the Assembly to divide a large county into two or more counties. A total of fifty-nine counties were established under the colonial General Assembly. The Virginia county courts, which incorporated administrative, civil, criminal, and ecclesiastical jurisdictions, had broader authority than their counterparts in England.

What did Anglican parishes have to do with land ownership in the colonial period?

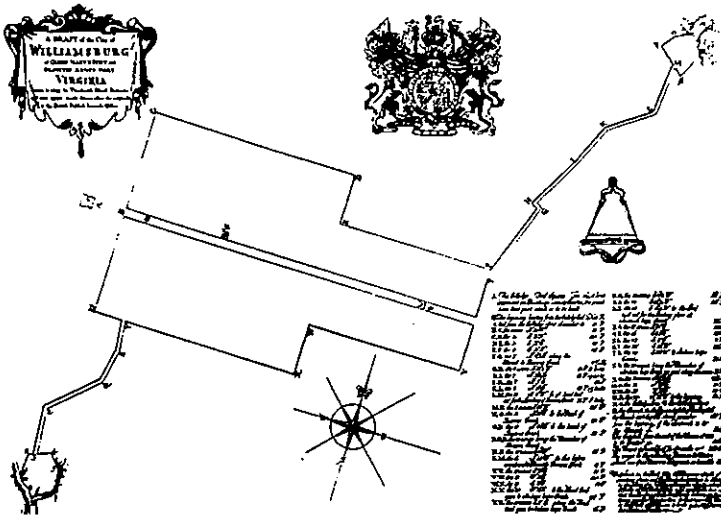
Between 1662 and 1748, the General Assembly repeatedly passed laws that required "once in every four years, the bounds of every person's land shall be processioned, or gone round." Processioning in Virginia, the careful renewal and legal confirmation of property lines, was especially important in rural areas where trees, creeks, or other natural features served as boundary markers. It was similar to the English custom of perambulation or "beating the bounds," in which parishioners walked the boundaries in their parishes every year (sometimes accompanied by considerable merrymaking).

The 1748 Act for Settling the Titles and Bounds of Lands set the next processioning season to begin in the fall of 1751 and be complete by March 31, 1752. During the summer of 1751, county courts were to direct parish vestries to divide their parishes into manageable areas or precincts. That done, vestries set the exact dates between September 30, 1751, and March 31, 1752, when "such processioning shall be made in every precinct." Vestries appointed two "intelligent honest freeholders of every precinct" to carry out processioning and to return to the vestry "an account of every persons land they shall procession." The two managers and the landholders assembled on the prearranged day for each precinct to walk in procession around the boundaries of each tract in that precinct, renewing blazes on trees and noting or replacing landmarks. Information gathered during these walkabouts and names of people taking part were recorded by vestry clerks in special books for that purpose. Property lines processioned three times were "held, deemed, and taken, to be sufficient to settle the bounds, so as the same may never thereafter be altered."

Surry County has processioning records at least as late as the 1760s. After the Revolution, vestries were no longer responsible for processioning, but the practice continued in new divisions called districts. Processioning records exist for York County in the early nineteenth century, and Southampton County has records to 1854. As surveying and recording techniques improved, processioning became obsolete.

Were any towns created in seventeenth-century Virginia other than Jamestown and Williamsburg?

During the last quarter of the seventeenth century, many Virginians became interested in establishing towns to improve the trade and in-



1699 Bland survey of Williamsburg site.

dustry of the colony. By a series of legislative acts in 1680, 1691, and 1705, collectively known as the "Town Acts," twenty towns were "created" in Tidewater Virginia. They were little more than surveyors' drawings on paper or plats of lots, however, when the English government disallowed the acts of 1680 and 1691—primarily because merchants in British ports feared colonial competition. Nonetheless, some lots were sold, and a few people began to settle at the sites. The Yorktown "purchasers of 1692" are a prime example of town developers. Other settlements created by the acts that eventually grew into towns include Norfolk, West Point, Urbanna, and Hobbs Hole (modern Tappahannock). Williamsburg was not part of this development.

How was the original land acquired for the development of Williamsburg in 1699?

When the General Assembly passed the law making Williamsburg the colony's capital in 1699, the land at Middle Plantation, with the exception of that held by the College of William and Mary and Bruton Parish Church, was privately owned by John Page, Henry Tyler, and others. The General Assembly authorized the funds from the colony's treasury to purchase 475 acres from the various owners. After reserving areas for government buildings such as the Governor's House (later called the Governor's Palace), Capitol, and ports and roads at the east and west ends of town, the remaining 220 acres were entrusted to a board of twelve "Feoffees or Trustees" who subdivided the land into half-acre town lots. Proceeds from the sale of these lots reimbursed the colony's treasury for the original land purchase.

How was Williamsburg created and organized?

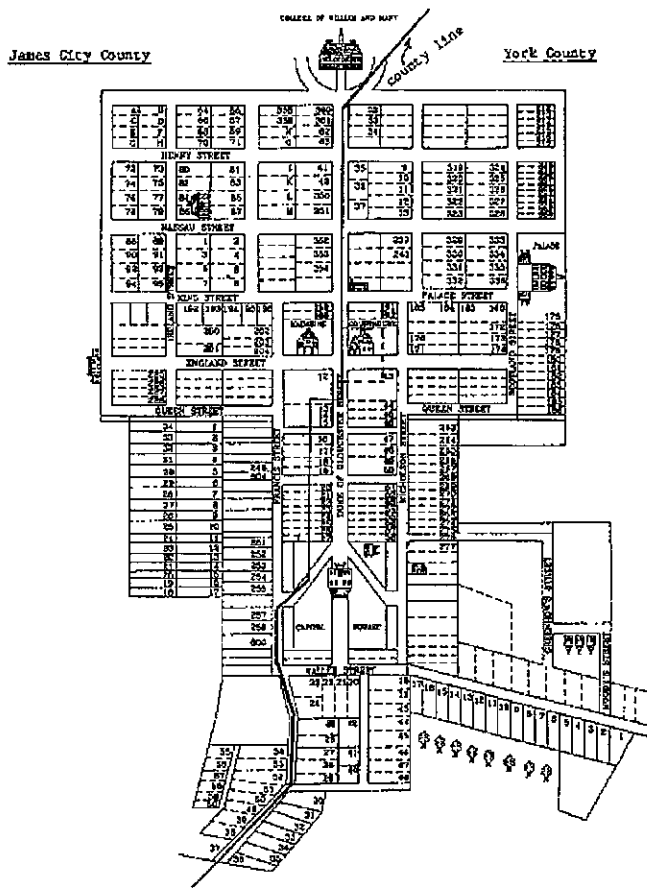
Williamsburg was created by an act of the General Assembly in 1699. Until receiving a charter in 1722 (see below), Williamsburg was a town with no government structure of its own. A group of men called trustees (or feoffees) were named in the 1699 act to oversee the sale of lots. The act also named a group of directors to encourage settlement in Williamsburg and to "make such Rules and Orders and to give such Directions in the Build-

ing of the said City and Portes not already provided for by this act."

What were chartered towns, and how were they different from other towns?

During the colonial period, only two Virginia towns enjoyed the benefits of royal charters: Williamsburg (1722) and Norfolk (1736). The charters specified that Williamsburg and Norfolk would each be represented in the General Assembly by one burgess elected by town freeholders. Williamsburg and Norfolk enjoyed limited self-government through the institutions of a mayor, recorder, aldermen, common council, and hustings court. This court, consisting of the mayor, recorder, and aldermen, had jurisdiction over "all cause personal and mixed not exceeding £20 current money or 4000 pounds of tobacco" that arose within its jurisdiction. It was not, however, a court of record; neither did it try criminal cases. As chartered towns, Williamsburg and Norfolk could hold twice-weekly markets and semiannual fairs as well as levy tolls and fees for using the market. The towns could not, however, raise money separately from the county levy, such as by taxation, without the express permission of a special legislative act.

Williamsburg freeholders did not elect members of the common council or any other city officials. The Charter named the first mayor, recorder, and aldermen, who in turn elected the first common councilmen from among the "most sufficient" free men of the town. Thereafter, the mayor, recorder, aldermen, and common council met annually on St. Andrew's Day (November 30) to elect a mayor from among the aldermen. When vacancies occurred, the whole group met to elect a new alderman from



Block map of eighteenth-century Williamsburg.

among the common councilmen and councilmen from among the substantial townsmen.

How did people acquire land in towns?

Trustees named in acts creating towns oversaw the laying out of town lots and acted as the grantor or seller the first time each lot was sold to a private buyer. If purchasers did not fulfill building requirements specified in town acts, the lots would escheat (revert) to the trustees to be resold. Once a lot had been built upon according to law, its title was permanently confirmed to the grantee or buyer, who was then free to keep the land or sell it to whomever he chose for whatever price he and the new purchaser agreed upon.

How were new towns organized in the eighteenth century?

Towns such as Fredericksburg (1728), Suffolk (1742), Alexandria (1749), and Winchester (1752) were each established by separate acts of the General Assembly. In general, they were directed by trustees named in the acts. Some of

these later towns were, in effect, the "private creations" of particular investors, who already owned the land. The returns from lot sales in these "private towns" went to those who had initially advanced the money to purchase the land.

Who were Mason and Dixon for whom the Mason-Dixon Line is named?

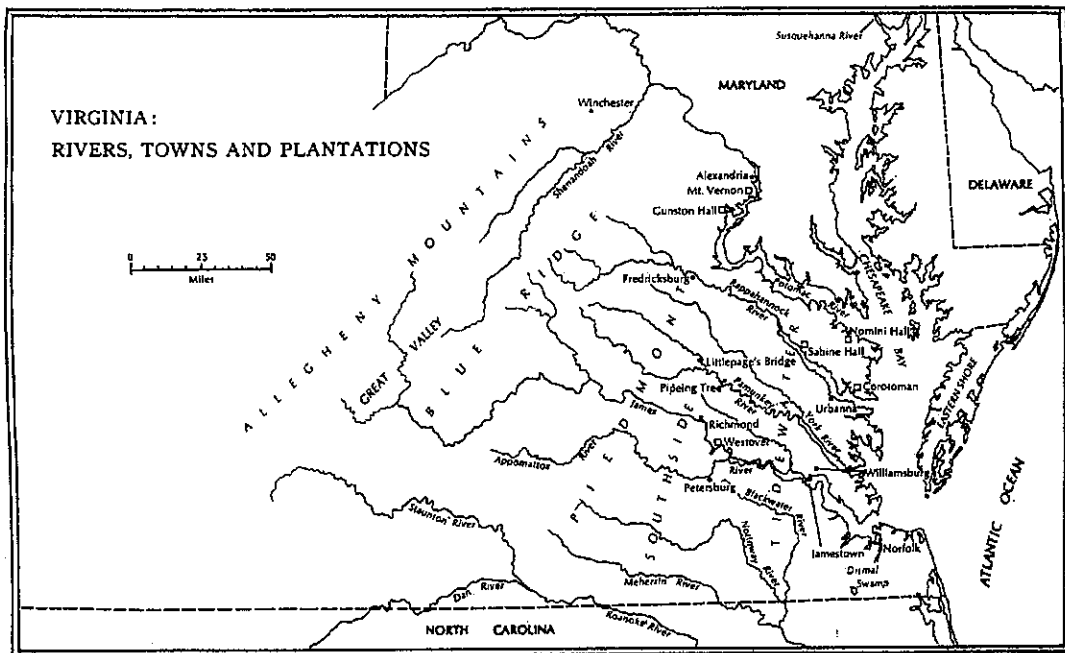
Between 1763 and 1767, English astronomers and surveyors Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon established the dividing line between Pennsylvania to the north and Maryland to the south, settling a long and bitter dispute between the Calverts of Maryland and the Penn family of Pennsylvania. The Mason-Dixon Line came to be regarded as the division between slave and free states before the Civil War.

When and why did the capital of Virginia move from Williamsburg to Richmond?

With the growth of population in Virginia and the westward spread of settlement, the colony's political center of gravity began to shift by the 1740s. When the Capitol in Williamsburg burned on January 30, 1747, a majority of burgesses saw an opportunity to move the seat of government to a more central location. Governor Gooch and others came to the defense of Williamsburg, however, and the city continued as the capital for another thirty-three years. During the Revolution, the General Assembly voted to make Richmond the new capital of the Commonwealth. Legislators favored the move because Richmond, nearly fifty miles farther inland than Williamsburg, was more centrally located and seemed safer from attack during the war. The government packed up and left Williamsburg in April 1780.

View of Richmond, 1818





From *Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia* by Gerald W. Mullin, copyright 1972 by Oxford University Press, Inc. Used by permission of Oxford University Press, Inc.

What conditions contributed to the development of sectional attitudes in Virginia during the late eighteenth century?

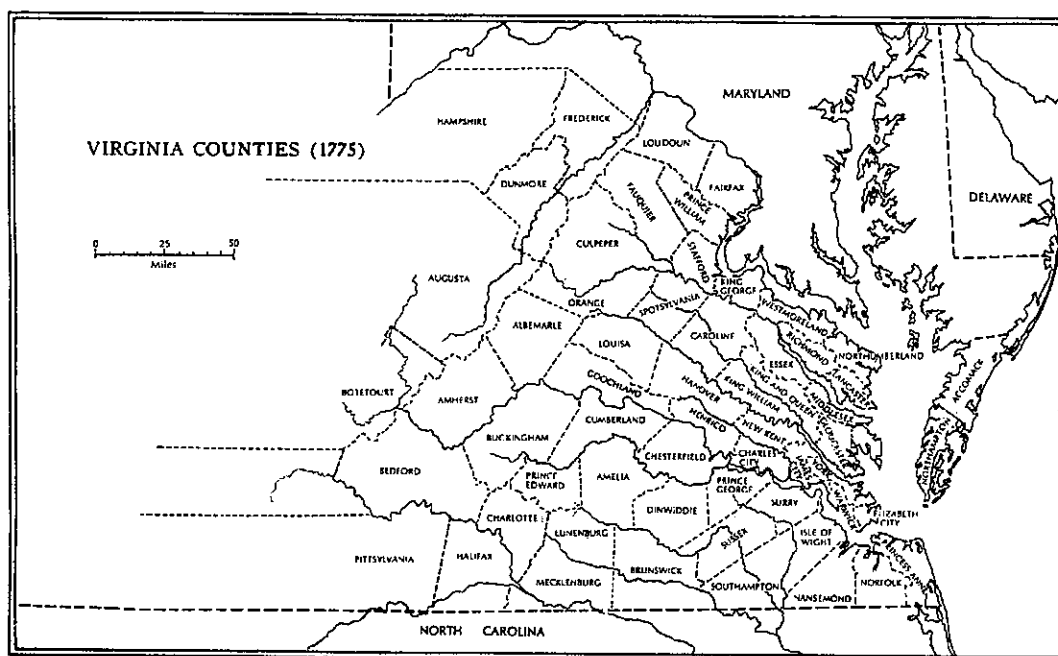
Political rivalries or factions in Virginia during and after the Revolution were based, in part, on geography. Social, political, and economic interests also varied between regions. Although great care should be taken to avoid sweeping generalizations about consensus within sections, the general character of each provides insights about regional distinctions.

Tidewater Virginia lies east of a line drawn from the city of Alexandria through the fall-line towns of Fredericksburg, Richmond, and Petersburg. (See map above.) This area included the somewhat separate section known as the Northern Neck. The Anglican church was predominant. Riverborne commerce, especially in tobacco, knit the region together, and merchants gathered in Alexandria, Norfolk, and the fall-line towns. Slavery was important. By awarding disproportionate representation to the region, the Virginia Constitution of 1776 reaffirmed Tidewater's political strength. (See the table from Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* on page 8.)

The Northern Neck, originally thought of as the area between the Potomac and the Rappahannock Rivers, came to include land west to the Blue Ridge and beyond, including the counties of Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, Stafford, King George, Frederick,

Hampshire, Dunmore (renamed Shenandoah), and Berkeley. (See map on page 6.) The bases of wealth in the Northern Neck were the large grants of land made to relatively few families by the agents of Lord Fairfax. Northern Neck families with Fairfax connections dominated in this area throughout the colonial period and continued to exert strong political and social influence after the Revolution. By the 1780s, soil fertility had declined in the older part of the Northern Neck, and the fertile western lands in the northern Piedmont (Fairfax, Fauquier, and Loudoun Counties) attracted a growing population. Slaveholding among the great landholders declined during the 1780s in this section, while it increased among smaller landowners. In agriculture, this section led in the shift from tobacco to wheat that was well under way by the close of the Revolution. Key to the area was the trade with and through Alexandria. That city's population, black and white, increased from 2,000 to 3,000 in the 1780s. The Northern Neck had a rich ethnic and religious mix, predominately English, with Scots prominent among the merchants in Alexandria, and Germans and Quakers prospering in the rich farmland of Loudoun County.

Southside Virginia refers to the region southward from the James River Valley to the Carolina Piedmont southward and westward from the Appomattox River. The heartland of Virginia tobacco growing in the colonial period



From *Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia* by Gerald W. Mullin, copyright 1972 by Oxford University Press, Inc. Used by permission of Oxford University Press, Inc.

and after the Revolution, the Southside continues as a center of tobacco production to this day. While the total value of Virginia tobacco exported rose during the 1780s, its share of the total value of Virginia exports declined from 68 percent to approximately 54 percent by 1790–1791. The tobacco farmers of this region had not discovered the virtues of fertilizing their lands either with lime or manure. Worn-out lands were left to grow scrub while new lands were cleared. Pasturing cattle on the scrubland prevented a complete reversion to forest. Eventually, fertility was restored to the worn-out lands, which were once again cleared. Most of the land under cultivation was used to raise corn, cereals, cotton, flax, and garden crops. Money was scarce in the region. Limited navigable waterways and roads made transporting crops to market difficult and expensive. Slavery was important and expanded after the Revolution. For reasons of geography, economics, and social characteristics, this region was somewhat isolated, poor, and provincial. The political views and actions of its representatives mirrored this.

Piedmont Virginia is the area between the Blue Ridge and the western edge of Tidewater (the fall line). Rolling land, becoming progressively hilly to the west, shaped this area's mixed agricultural picture. At the end of the Revolution, tobacco, wheat, and corn were the primary crops, but, by the end of the 1780s, tobacco planting was greatly reduced in the region. As tobacco production declined in the 1780s and

1790s, so did the importance of slavery. Small landholders predominated in this region, and they looked to Petersburg and Richmond as markets for their few surplus crops. The northern Piedmont looked to Fredericksburg and, increasingly, Alexandria as their natural outlets. In religion, this area was much more diversified than Southside. Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and Quakers were found there, along with Episcopalians (formerly Church of England), whose numbers were in decline. In economic matters, Piedmont Virginia shared characteristics with Southside.

The Northern Shenandoah Valley or Lower Valley was isolated from eastern Virginia by the Blue Ridge and by ethnic and religious differences. The two northern counties (Frederick and Berkeley) were extremely fertile, enjoying probably the best farmland in the state. The two dominant groups tended to settle in towns distinctly their own: Scots-Irish in Winchester and Staunton and Germans in Martinsburg, Mecklenburg, Stephensburg, and Strasburg. Eastern Virginians, attracted by the productive lands, moved across the Blue Ridge in increasing numbers during and after the Revolution. Their center was Charlestown. Whether native Virginian, Scots-Irish, or German, the farmers and merchants of the Valley looked to Philadelphia as their natural market. By the 1790s, Alexandria and Baltimore were beginning to make some inroads into this Valley trade. As one traveled south in the Valley, the land was

not as fertile or well cleared, with Shenandoah County more cultivated and Rockingham County more forested. Slavery existed in the area, but was far less important than in eastern Virginia; some four-fifths of the landholders in the Valley owned no slaves.

The Southern Shenandoah Valley or Upper Valley (Augusta and Dunmore [renamed Shenandoah] Counties; by 1790 also included Rockbridge and Bath Counties) and Southwest Virginia were similar to the northern Shenandoah Valley in their ethnic pattern of settlement. Native Virginians and Ulster Scots were the leading groups in Augusta and Rockbridge. In Southwest Virginia (Botetourt and Fincastle Counties [reorganized as Wythe, Montgomery, and Kentucky Counties in 1777]), Germans were by far the largest ethnic group. Surplus crops from Augusta and Rockbridge were carted overland to Richmond, but it was an arduous and risky business. Slaveholding was not important in this region. In religion, the region was dominated by Presbyterians and German Pietists (Dunkards, Mennonites, and Brethren). In political and economic matters the entire Valley of Virginia and Southwest Virginia generally had common views in the 1780s. However, this consensus did not entirely hold up during debates over the Constitution of 1787.

Trans-Allegheny Virginia encompassed the vast area that became the states of West Virginia and Kentucky. This region had attracted increasing numbers of settlers as the Revolution progressed. In the 1780s, the population expanded rapidly, reaching an estimated 100,000 by 1790. Landless folk from the Virginia and North Carolina Piedmonts, younger sons of Shenandoah Valley farmers and graziers, and squatters from many states were lured to the area. In some cases, settlers who purchased large tracts of land brought slaves to clear it; others paid squatters to do the work. While many regions of Virginia—especially Tidewater, the Piedmont, and the Valley—tended to have a common sectional economic outlook, the Trans-Allegheny region was fragmented by its isolated settlements, its diversity of interests, and the difficulty of communications. Kentuckians looked down the Ohio to New Orleans as their natural market; on the other hand, northwestern Virginians overwhelmingly looked east to Cumberland, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. In 1787, Trans-Allegheny Virginia split over the ratification of the proposed United States Constitution.

Adapted from Colonial Williamsburg's Questions & Answers (October 1987), compiled by J. Douglas Smith.

What were the internal political rivalries in Virginia at the close of the Revolution?

Differences between and among sections in Virginia had, of course, been apparent during the pre-Revolutionary period. Voting power in the House of Burgesses was weighted heavily toward eastern Virginians. Colonial roads were generally abysmal, but Piedmont and Valley Virginians felt the Assembly was particularly indifferent to their need for better communications. The question of frontier defense against the Indians aroused strong passions in westerners, who often believed the East was negligent in its support. Slavery had a much stronger hold in the East. In religious life, the dissenters of the Piedmont and Valley chafed under policies of the state church. Access to western lands was another divisive factor as different types of farms and agriculture set eastern interests apart from those of the north and west. Ethnic tensions between and among the predominant English stock and Scots, Scots-Irish, German, and Quakers contributed to unrest. Finally, strong feelings about navigational improvements, especially on the Potomac River fueled sectional rivalry.

Internal tensions in Virginia over the conduct of the war aggravated pre-Revolutionary disagreements. Regional tempers flared in discussions over raising troops, conducting strategy, and impressing food supplies. Westerners adamantly demanded troops to protect the frontier, and debate raged over taxation to support the government and the military effort.

One source of bitterness—inequitable political representation—was embedded in the Virginia Constitution of 1776. The old eastern dominance seemed to be enshrined in the new government. Thomas Jefferson, as a westerner, was so perturbed that he included a table in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* that called attention to this imbalance. (See table on page 8.)

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What were some of the issues that caused friction between the different sections of Virginia after the Revolution?

While sectional attitudes developed around political and military concerns, the early 1780s saw the introduction of some new factors and issues, especially economics. Gradually, each section's representatives in the state legislature tended to gravitate toward a particular viewpoint on economic questions, creating political factions. These factions were neither defined

UNEQUAL REPRESENTATION

	Square Miles	Fighting Men	Delegates	Senators
Between the sea and the falls of the rivers	11,205	19,012	71	12
Between the fall of the rivers and the Blue Ridge of mountains	18,759	18,828	46	8
Between the Blue Ridge of mountains and the Alleghenies	11,911	7,673	16	2
Between the Alleghenies and the Ohio	79,650	4,458	16	2

from Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, query XIII

nor disciplined enough to count as political parties. They did, however, begin to reveal internal divisions in state matters and generally reflected the views of their adherents on the national questions that came to the fore as the 1780s progressed.

Most states, including Virginia, had issued a vast amount of paper currency during the Revolution. No one was happy with this situation. Between 1780 and 1784, the General Assembly enacted legislation to reduce this outstanding paper currency. In fact, by 1784 the state was spending more than 80 percent of its annual budget on debt retirement. This meant that there was less money in circulation, which helped to depress prices. In general, farmers—whether plantation owners, middling, or small freeholders—were hurt by the depressed prices, and their representatives tended to unite in efforts to effect relief despite other regional concerns.

Depressed prices also meant difficulty in paying taxes. Western Virginia delegates were able to push through a scale for the property tax—the principal source of state revenue. In 1782, the property tax was levied at ten shillings per pound valuation in the Tidewater, seven shillings sixpence in the Piedmont, five shillings sixpence in the Valley, and three shillings in the Trans-Allegheny. Furthermore, legislators sought to permit farmers to pay taxes in commodities—tobacco, flour, hemp, and deerskins. This relief was extended first to westerners, then to eastern Virginians by 1783. In 1784, legislators chose to postpone the collection of the property tax. The effect of all this was that by 1784 Virginia had redeemed most of the paper

money issued during the Revolution and reduced its debt without creating serious sectional, factional differences.

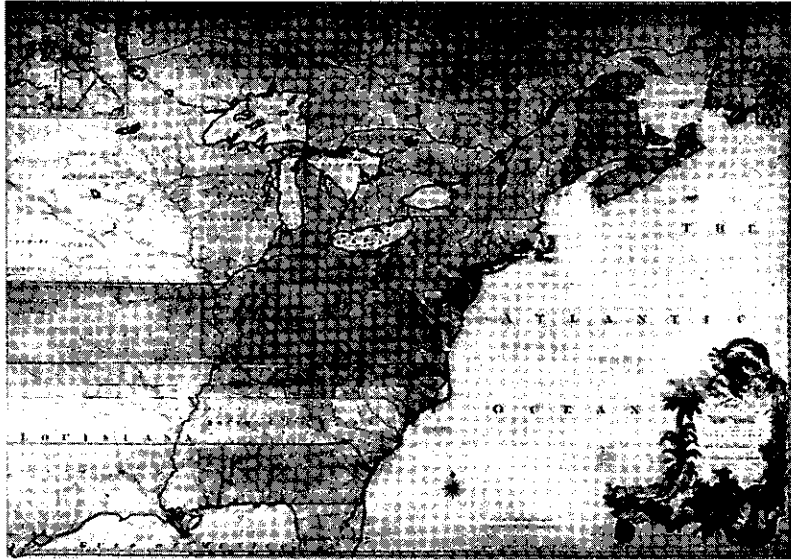
The economic issue that caused the deepest split in Virginia after the Revolution was the debt owed to British merchants. The relative unanimity that prevailed in discussions involving debt retirement and tax relief did not endure. Fairly well-defined political factions began to emerge by 1784 around the positions taken on the British debt question. Two factions developed in the Virginia Assembly between 1782 and 1783. The Nationalist/Creditor group generally stressed the importance of fiscal responsibility (strong currency, payment of debts, fiscal “honor”), economic interdependence through commerce with other states and foreign countries, and greater national strength through correcting the flaws in the Articles of Confederation. They held a relatively cosmopolitan outlook toward the nation and the world. This group had no real leader in the Virginia General Assembly until James Madison took his seat in 1784. However, several extremely important men outside the Assembly supported these views. George Washington brought the immense prestige of his Revolutionary leadership, and his connections with friends in Maryland and farther north gave the faction national influence. Within the Confederation Congress, James Madison (1780–1783) and James Monroe (1783–1786) provided valuable representation. Although not a member of the Assembly, Edmund Randolph, attorney general of Virginia (1776–1786), was in a highly strategic position in Richmond to advise his Nationalist/Creditor

friends of political developments.

On the fringes of this group were Thomas Jefferson and George Mason. Although away from Virginia during most of this period, serving briefly in Congress (1783–1784) and then as ambassador to France (1784–1789), Jefferson corresponded with several Virginians, especially James Madison, who kept him informed of developments in his home state. Mason's prestige greatly assisted the Nationalist/Creditor group. His views on fiscal propriety, however, were founded more on a sense of personal rectitude. That is, a man paid his debts not because the state compelled him, but because it was honorable and expected of a gentleman. If governmental compulsion were required, Mason was prepared to support action by the Commonwealth of Virginia, but he adamantly opposed action by a central government.

In opposition to the Nationalist/Creditors stood a loose-knit faction that can be designated as the State/Debtor group. In general, these men favored a plentiful money supply (paper) to assist debt payment and to drive up prices, tax relief in the form of tax payments in commodities, delays in the collection of taxes, and various other plans to provide debt relief. Their more provincial outlook was focused on state and local concerns. They wanted better roads to Virginia home markets, a chance to acquire fertile lands in the West, and a protected market for their products. Speaker John Tyler, generally allied with this viewpoint, brought a few friends from the lower James River to the State/Debtor group. General Thomas Nelson of Yorktown was in this camp, and Richard Henry Lee led a small following in the House of Delegates. The nominal leader of this faction was Patrick Henry. While his political opponents accused him of frequently shifting his views to coincide with what seemed to be prevailing popular sentiment, it is certainly clear that a majority of the House of Delegates agreed with the State/Debtor faction in the early 1780s.

Adapted from Colonial Williamsburg's Questions & Answers (October 1987), compiled by J. Douglas Smith.



The Mitchell Map shows the extent of colonial land claims

How did Virginia's cession of its western land claims strengthen the new nation?

There were many elements at work in the question of what to do about the western lands between the Appalachians and the Mississippi River. Seven states—Connecticut, Georgia, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia—claimed the lands, which promised economic opportunity and riches through ownership, sales, and development. Not surprisingly, controversy surrounded the claims and distribution of the affected territory.

Small states wanting to reduce the size and influence of larger states sought to make them relinquish claims to trans-Appalachian lands. Settlers on the frontier generally preferred the creation of new states to continued control by a distant eastern state government unable to protect them, provide roads, or encourage and regulate trade. Northern and western boundaries of states needed to be secured against encroachment, especially in the absence of machinery for arbitrating or adjudicating disputes between states with common western borders or overlapping claims to land.

But the most important questions were these: Would the cession of these western lands fatally weaken state sovereignty and dangerously strengthen the central government? On the other hand, if the lands were not ceded, would the states holding them contribute to the destruction of the United States because the central government lacked the power to establish boundaries, settle disputes, and exercise the na-

tional sovereignty required to maintain stability and internal order and to encourage growth and development? These momentous questions inspired strong opinions on both sides. Gradually, however, the view prevailed that the states had far more to gain by strengthening the central government because their very existence might be endangered if they selfishly insisted upon holding on to the western lands.

In late 1780, the Confederation Congress called upon the seven states that held western lands to cede their claims. On January 2, 1781, the Virginia Assembly passed resolutions that began with the clear statement that "being well satisfied that the happiness, strength, and safety of the United States depend under Providence upon the ratification of the Articles of a federal union between the United States heretofore proposed by Congress for the consideration of the said States and preferring the good of their Country to every object of smaller importance do Resolve that this Commonwealth will yeild [sic] to the Congress of the United States for the benefit of the said United States all right title and claim that the said Commonwealth hath to the Lands Northwest of the River Ohio upon the following conditions to wit."

The conditions that the Virginia Assembly spelled out were important. The most significant for the future of the United States required that the new states carved out of this territory would be admitted to the United States as equals to the original states. The resolutions also stipulated that George Rogers Clark and the soldiers who had fought with him to capture and defend western lands be granted a tract of land in payment and appreciation for their efforts, that Congress honor the claims of title to western lands held by Virginians and guarantee title rights to former soldiers who had been given military bounty land claims in lieu of pay, and that Congress void any out-of-state land company claims that had not been authorized by Virginia.

This last clause was the stickiest issue, but the other conditions also bothered some members of the Confederation Congress. For three years, Congress refused to accept Virginia's offer. In March 1784, the opposition in Congress finally recognized the wisdom of accepting the Virginia conditions in order to strengthen the government under the Articles of Confederation and to provide for orderly settlement of the western lands.

Approving the Virginia cession on March 1, 1784, was perhaps the most important action accomplished by the Confederation Congress. By

this action, Congress went far toward removing the chief obstacle in the struggle of the smaller states for equity with the larger states. The controversy over western lands had complicated the life of the new nation principally by delaying until 1781 the ratification of the Articles of Confederation (drafted in 1777). (Maryland, for example, refused to ratify the Articles until Virginia ceded its western lands.) The controversy had probably been the chief cause of trouble in interstate relations under the Articles.

The significance of the cession cannot be overemphasized. It gave all of the states a common interest in the national domain. Virginia and other states that ceded land could more easily support their remaining claims and receive national protection for them. Supporters of state sovereignty could point to the fact that Congress, by recognizing the validity of state titles, had actually strengthened state sovereignty. Equally as important, the ceding states were relieved of the almost impossible task of governing their distant western lands. The cession meant that Virginia had stable, recognizable, and guaranteed boundaries. According to one writer, "In a very concrete way, the cession helped to define what Virginians meant by 'Virginia.'" It is worth noting, however, that Virginia did not give up her claim to Kentucky until 1792.

For the central government, the cessions strengthened the union. The United States at last had property that it owned, which it could sell to raise much needed revenue. The available land offered the stimulating prospect of expanding the United States to the west by creating new, free and equal states. Congress soon began work on plans for laying out states, which culminated in the great Northwest Ordinance of 1787.

Perhaps the greatest significance for the new nation in the western lands debates was the growing realization that there was, in fact, an authentic national interest co-existing alongside the jealously guarded rights of the states. For the union to be preserved and strengthened, the states would each have to give up something in exchange for greater stability and harmony between and among themselves. This lesson began to permeate the thinking of those who sought ways to protect the interests of the several states while at the same time correcting weaknesses in the Confederation. The cession of Virginia's lands thus pointed clearly toward the "miracle" at Philadelphia in 1787.

Adapted from Colonial Williamsburg's Questions & Answers (October 1987), compiled by J. Douglas Smith.

Feeding the Eighteenth-Century Town Folk, or, Whence the Beef?

by Lorena S. Walsh

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Last year, in his address, Peter Coclanis deplored the "lack of interpretive understanding or at least explicit appreciation of the close interrelationship between town and country, factory [or, for earlier centuries, urban processors and distributors] and farm." The time has come "to study diet, broadly conceived, and its social consequences," he urged. "Both the producers of food and the process of food production," he lamented, "have often been . . . relegated to the dustbin, or more appropriately in this case, the scrap heap or compost pile of history." Was this last image pure serendipity? It is hard to imagine a better introduction to what I want to talk about today.¹

For the past eight years, scholars at Colonial Williamsburg have been collaborating in a multi-disciplinary study of food provisioning in early Chesapeake towns. Our main questions are, How was food produced in the surrounding countryside or procured from more distant sources, how was it processed and distributed in towns, and how did seasonal variations in availability affect food distribution and consumption in a prerefrigerator age? To what extent did area farmers respond to the opportunities afforded by growing urban populations? Did the diets of townspeople differ from those of nearby farm families? Did the foods townsfolk ate vary, not only with differences in household wealth, but also by social class, occupation, and the presence or absence of local connections? And finally, How did differing food and fuel distribution networks and changes in prices affect townspeople's welfare?²

Clearly no single source could provide answers to all these questions. We knew that we needed to

pay as much attention to those trash pits as to more conventional archival remains. We chose to concentrate our efforts on the towns of Williamsburg and Annapolis because background research on the local economy and the social and occupational structure was already available, as were numerous well-documented archaeological assemblages. We attempted to reconstruct production and distribution networks, differing urban and rural food

consumption patterns, and changes in the availability and in the nominal and relative prices of various kinds of foods through quantitative analysis of sixteen urban household and retail store account books, of seven farm account books for surrounding areas, of three thousand area probate inventories, and of archaeological evidence (primarily faunal remains) from fifty-three rural and urban sites. As an economist might say, our numbers were reasonably robust.³

Today I want to share with you some of the results about the production, distribution, and consumption of meat in these urban markets.



Hence the subtitle, "Whence the Beef?" You may be wondering, shouldn't the question be instead, "Where's the pork?" Despite stereotypes about the historic Chesapeake diet drawn from literary sources, both archaeology and individual household accounts conclusively demonstrate that colonial Virginians and Marylanders ate more beef than pork. When recovered bones are translated into pounds of usable meat, from the early seventeenth into the early nineteenth century, cattle account for between 40 to 60 percent of the meat consumed on almost all rural and urban sites, while swine account for just under 10 percent, up to a maximum of 32 percent. Poor rural people, both free and enslaved (who are less well represented in archaeological sites), may have eaten somewhat more pork than did better off households, but on no site does the proportion of pork ever surpass that of beef.⁴

Eighteenth-century Williamsburg and Annapolis were small places, of insignificant size by present-day standards, and at best small market towns compared to such contemporary metropolises as Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and larger English cities. In the 1730s each had between 50 and 75 households, with permanent residents numbering fewer than 500. In 1750 the number of households had increased to about 100, and the total populations to just under 900. By 1775 Annapolis's population reached 1,400, Williamsburg's 1,880, with about 200 households in each town. Still, these small places were similar to country towns throughout the North American colonies and in provincial England that had comparable or only slightly larger populations. What is significant is both the faunal remains and the plantation account books clearly demonstrate that even these quite small numbers were sufficient to prompt restructuring of secondary crop mixes and to elicit changes in livestock husbandry among local planters well supplied with land and labor.

Chesapeake town residents obtained the bulk of the foods they did not produce themselves from the adjacent countryside. By the late 1730s, large area slave owners living within one to two hours' travel time by road or, in the case of Annapolis, within reasonable sailing time across Chesapeake Bay had emerged as the primary suppliers of the grains, meat, beverages, fodder, and fuel that the two capitals' inhabitants required. Conventional wisdom, drawn largely from English sources, posits that high transport costs forced urban consumers to rely on closely adjacent areas for their grain supply, while they could draw on more distant markets for meats, since animals could be made to transport themselves to market at little cost. In the Chesapeake, these suppositions turned out to make little sense.⁵

By the mid-eighteenth century, grains had become an increasingly important source of income for large-scale planters. (Small-scale planters often lacked both sufficient land and labor to do anything but continue in the older, tobacco-centered ways.) Rising international grain prices, occasioned by shortages of wheat in Europe and growing slave populations in the West Indies much too numerous to be provisioned from island resources, made raising wheat and corn for export an increasingly attractive way to supplement tobacco revenues. Surplus corn (and its by-product, corn fodder) could also be used for fattening livestock either for local sale or for export.

Planters learned that by making more use of plows for preparing ground and weeding they could produce substantial surplus corn without cutting back on tobacco. Existing plantation workforces could also raise commercial crops of wheat by preparing the ground in the fall just after the tobacco harvest and threshing the grain during slack times in winter. Extra labor was required only during the brief midsummer harvest.⁶

The fact that general management strategies and mixes of major cash crops were similar on large plantations throughout the region initially suggests that planters who lived near towns failed to respond to urban markets. However the effects of local markets cannot be readily distinguished from the effects of rising intercolonial and trans-Atlantic ones. Planters near urban places could choose between selling grain in intercolonial or international markets and selling locally. With grain prices set, in the case of corn by larger regional markets and in the case of wheat by international ones, local sales may not have offered a particular advantage. Local urban demands for carbohydrates were minuscule compared to the demands of already well established trans-Atlantic grain markets. Europe, the West Indies, and the northern colonies constituted much larger markets that, given trade networks centered on trans-Atlantic sea routes, were as easy or easier to reach than many urban markets inside the region. But since Chesapeake planters had already found economical means for shipping surplus grain abroad, getting some portion of their crops to nearby towns was hardly an insurmountable challenge.⁷

In 1775 Williamsburg's 1,880 residents required about 4,500 barrels of corn per year. Between 1765 and 1781, one nearby plantation owned by the Burwell family and worked by between 50 and 60 adult slaves produced enough surplus corn to supply the annual needs of at least 150 adult town dwellers. Ten large planta-



tions producing at a comparable level could have provided enough corn to feed all of Williamsburg's human residents and their domestic animals as well. And in 1810, one great Maryland Eastern Shore planter, Edward Lloyd V, with about 200 adult slaves was producing enough surplus corn to supply at least half of the 5,000 barrels that Annapolitans needed.⁸

Williamsburg's and Annapolis's wheat requirements were probably quite modest—1,400 to 2,000 bushels a year. Plantation records make clear that corn was the predominant grain consumed in the countryside; even elite rural families reserved only a few bushels out of a year's wheat crop for their tables. Urban household accounts show that town dwellers consumed more wheat bread than countryfolk. Cultural preference may well have played a role, especially among European immigrants, as did the ability, seldom present in the countryside, to purchase ready-baked bread in town. For town dwellers who lacked the time or the domestic staff to prepare meals that needed long cooking, wheat bread was a decided convenience. Still, we are certain that free townfolk consumed far less than the pound of wheat bread a day it is estimated adult laborers in Philadelphia ate at this time. The half of Williamsburg's and third of Annapolis's population who were enslaved likely ate little or no wheat. By the mid-1770s the Burwell plantation could also supply between a third and a half of Williamsburg's wheat needs. And in the early 1800s, Edward Lloyd V alone was growing enough wheat to meet the requirements of a town ten times the size of Annapolis. Great planters were not the only nearby farmers producing surplus grains, so it is clear that urban needs could be more than easily met from surrounding plantations.⁹

What town populations afforded local planters were opportunities to profit handsomely from the sale of grain by-products—fodder and straw—and hay, as well as from semiperishables such as cider and butter. Supplying town dwellers with fuel presented another opportunity. High overland transport costs rendered firewood supply a quite localized business. Favorably situated planters stood to make considerable profit, since demand for wood peaked in winter months when enslaved workers, carts, and draft animals might otherwise be underutilized. Plantation account books from larger farms near Chesapeake towns consistently demonstrate a greater volume of sales of these secondary products, which could be produced by keeping slaves fully employed year round with little cutting back on major cash crops.¹⁰

Provisioning of meat, however, was another matter. The 300,000 to 450,000 pounds a year each of the towns required could not all be procured from local farmers. Pork and beef sales from the Burwell plantation averaged only 3,600 pounds a year between 1769 and 1778, enough to feed only ten town dwellers at the rate of a pound of meat per day, the customary allotment for soldiers and free male laborers, but up to seventy at the scanty ration of a pound of meat per week customarily allotted to adult plantation slaves. Large planters in the immediate area could and did increase meat production to some extent, but, absent a thoroughgoing commitment to intensive livestock husbandry, they could not raise enough animals to satisfy the needs of even these quite small towns. The Burwell plantation, for example, could meet a third of Williamsburg's estimated wheat requirements, but just over 1 percent of the meat. On this tobacco-and-grain farm, livestock raising remained a secondary activity, as it typically was for most other large tidewater planters, that generated only around 10 percent of gross plantation revenues. Annapolis's meat supply came in part from more commercialized producers. One was the aforementioned Edward Lloyd V, who by 1818 was marketing nearly 800 animals a year, yielding 36,000 pounds of meat, enough to feed 125 adult urban whites. But even this tenfold increase over Burwell's production satisfied only 8 percent of Annapolitans' estimated needs.¹¹

Urban residents turned to more distant places for meat, not because of low transport costs, but rather because the meat requirements of towns of no more than two thousand could be met only by drawing upon the surplus production of some hundreds of farmers living within a hundred-mile radius. In the last half of the eighteenth century, plantation records show that large tidewater planters consistently sold more surplus pork than beef. They found it much easier to increase pork outputs because additional pigs could be fattened on inferior corn, the supply of which increased with expanded corn production, and on bran, a by-product of milling. On the other hand, the number of cattle that a planter could maintain remained much more dependent on limited and, towards the end of the century, increasingly stressed local woodlands and pastures. Given clear archaeological evidence for continued high consumption of beef, it follows that urban residents regularly drew on more distant sources. One storekeeper who regularly supplied meat to Williamsburg and Yorktown residents in the 1750s and 1760s,

for example, got his beef from planters on the other side of the James River, from farms in a nonadjacent rural county at least thirty miles distant, and from one large supplier located more than two hundred miles to the west.¹²

However this is not to say that nearby planters failed to respond to these challenges at all. Faunal remains provide material evidence for market orientation of a sort that manipulators of standard documentary data are unaccustomed to confronting. Zooarchaeological evidence is both more egalitarian and more revealing of minor shifts in livestock husbandry practices and food distribution networks than are documentary sources. Zooarchaeologists posit that in subsistence-oriented forms of husbandry, farmers raised a variety of livestock for multiple purposes, and the animals were slaughtered only when no longer useful for providing milk, wool, reproduction, or traction. Most were consumed on the farm and only small surpluses occasionally sold. Thus, the ages of animals found in urban assemblages should resemble those from rural sites. But in large-scale economies, farmers shifted to more specialized husbandry, raising quickly and efficiently fattened younger animals specifically destined as meat for town consumers. When this occurs, urban and rural slaughter age profiles should diverge.¹³



The evidence on age at slaughter from Williamsburg and Annapolis and from rural sites nearby shows a surprisingly early divergence in the kinds of meat commonly consumed by townsfolk and by farmers. Over time there was a progressive increase in the proportion of hogs slaughtered between twelve and twenty-four months of age, which encompasses the commercial target age of eighteen to twenty-four months. In the second half of the eighteenth century, proportionately more pigs under a year old were consumed on plantations, while proportionately more between twelve and twenty-four months went to urban markets. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, most sheep were killed during their second and third years, but more lamb was eaten in the towns than on surrounding farms. Later in the century, the proportion of older animals increased markedly in the

rural assemblages, suggesting sheep were more frequently being raised for wool as well as meat. The urban assemblages also reflect this age increase, but they continue to contain proportionately more younger animals.

For cattle, as the eighteenth century progressed, the slaughter population became younger, both on farms and in the towns, and included larger proportions aged twenty-four to forty-four months than older beasts. Animals fed only on grass do not mature to marketable slaughter weights until the autumn of their fourth or fifth year. More intensive husbandry practices, including supplemental feeding, are required to produce cattle that reach an optimal slaughter weight in less than four years. From the early eighteenth century, town dwellers consumed younger beef than did nearby farm families, and especially more beef aged twenty-four to forty-eight months. This proves that planters were specially fattening some animals for the town market, while they themselves continued to eat most of the superannuated cows and worn-out steers. Comparison of urban and rural assemblages also shows that veal was regularly marketed in town, a salable luxury seldom eaten on the farm.

Overall, the age at slaughter evidence shows that the presence of even fifty urban households early in the eighteenth century was sufficient to induce planters to begin producing some younger animals for market. In the second half of the century, when urban households reached two hundred, the kinds of meat urban and rural folk ate changed markedly, demonstrating increasingly specialized, market-oriented livestock management strategies.

Also, according to zooarchaeological theory, in small urban centers, municipal governments did not regulate where the slaughtering, butchering, selling, and disposal of waste parts took place. Residents typically maintained livestock on or near their property and slaughtered the animals and processed the meat near their homes. Distributions of animal body parts found in small town trash pits, therefore, should closely resemble those found in rural assemblages. But in increasingly specialized economies where the array of foods and middlemen selling rural produce to urban consumers increased, municipal governments restricted locations where animals could be slaughtered and regulated what parts of the animals could be sold. Assemblages from highly urbanized market systems, therefore, show an irregular distribution of body parts, a disproportionately large percentage of meat bones, and a low number of

bones that are commonly associated with butchering waste. Element distributions from cattle, calves, swine, and sheep found in town garbage thus indicate when the processing and sale of commercially produced meat began, and measure the extent to which urban consumers depended on commercially produced foods.

The distribution of body parts on urban and rural sites shows that commercial butchers quickly became a regular feature of Chesapeake town life. Middlemen established extensive butchering operations and purchased animals of prime age that they sold to consumers as individual pieces of meat. Most town trash pits dating to the first half of the eighteenth century contain higher proportions of meat bones than rural disposal sites, somewhat fewer animal heads, and many fewer feet. The degree of dependence on market sources varied with the social and economic status of individual households, but by the last quarter of the century, no town household subsisted completely on meats they produced themselves.

How then did townsfolk get their meat? Most wealthy urbanites supplied their tables from their own plantations rather than buy in the market. They had everything from fattened cattle to nuts, fruits, and firewood transported to town from both nearby plantations and, in the case of live cattle and hogs, from other holdings up to two hundred miles away. Through such self-provisioning, elite households retained all the benefits of a varied country diet in the city. Outlays to middlemen were kept to a minimum by substituting the labor time of both urban and rural slaves. The ubiquity of such strategies, examples of which periodically appear in elite correspondence, are amply verified by the archaeological record. Faunal remains from gentry town deposits are a mirror image of those found on plantations.

In contrast, doctors, lawyers, ministers, teachers, and government officials bought much of their meat from big area planters, as did tavernkeepers and some better off artisans. The account books show that large-scale planters supplied selected urban customers with pork, usually in the form of freshly killed whole animals, during the late fall/early winter slaughter time prevailing in the countryside, almost certainly by prior arrangement. They also delivered beef, veal, mutton, and lamb in the appropriate seasons, likely also by prior agreement. These meats were sold in large units, usually whole animals in the case of lambs. Bigger beasts were often sold by the quarter or the side. Planters sought to keep down processing and distribution

costs, and probably also pilfering, by selling sheep, calves, and sometimes even cattle in minimally butchered units. Not surprisingly, it was householders and businesspeople who could use and afford to pay for meat in quantity who bought from the large-scale planters. These planters sometimes sold meat on credit to a few well-established regular customers, but most transactions were either for cash or for offsetting goods and services.

Faunal remains from professional households reveal (through a high proportion of meatier cuts and a scarcity of heads and feet) a greater dependence on commercial suppliers than is found in sites associated with either gentry or artisan families. They were clearly buying a lot of their meat from town middlemen as well as from area planters. Many of these professionals were recent immigrants who lacked connections to country producers and so were more dependent on commercial sources than were native-born householders of similar wealth. If



professionals also purchased most other foods primarily from middlemen, the quality of their diets may have suffered out of proportion to their wealth, a hypothesis that may help to explain the unexpectedly short life spans recently found among urban professionals in early nineteenth-century northern cities.¹⁴

Town craftspeople had more mixed sources of meat supply than either gentry or professionals. Some were also immigrants, but others were locally born with numerous kin in adjacent rural areas. Many owned or rented house lots, and still in the 1780s the majority kept a cow or two in town. Some few had nearby farms from which they could obtain meat, but most did not own substantial amounts of either livestock or real property. Consequently most artisans also depended primarily on commercial sources of food, a dependency that the faunal remains suggest increased as the century progressed.

Chesapeake storekeepers rather unexpectedly emerged along with large-scale planters as major suppliers of town meat, particularly beef. Meat was the second most important foodstuff in the typical urban Chesapeake merchant's stock, ranking just after alcohol in total value of sales. In part, storekeepers simply resold poultry, game, and bigger livestock some customers brought in to exchange for imported goods, but

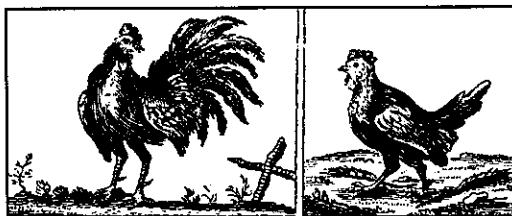
they also purchased additional cattle and pork to stock their stores. Mixed entrepreneurs—a Williamsburg building contractor, for example—were also in the business of periodically vending country-raised beef and veal to urban consumers. Smaller and more perishable sources of animal protein—poultry, eggs, game birds and animals, and fish and shellfish—were in contrast raised or harvested and largely distributed almost solely by petty hucksters. Assorted marginal folk—slaves, free blacks, white tenant farmers, watermen, and urban housewives of varying rank—quickly took advantage of this lacuna in the overall network of supply that established farmers and retailers found too troublesome and unremunerative to pursue.

Poorer free townfolk apparently had to rely almost entirely on public markets, butchers, and shopkeepers for whatever meats they purchased, while urban slaves had to depend primarily on their owners or employers. For these groups our conclusions are much more tentative. Poorer artisans, urban service workers dependent on wages, and poor widows are virtually absent from the big planters' ledgers and make up only a small percentage of the storekeepers' recorded customers. And while there is abundant documentary evidence about the provisioning of rural slaves, there is virtually none for slaves who lived in towns. We were also unable to find any urban faunal assemblages that could be associated with poor free white or black households, nor any for urban slaves that could be clearly distinguished from their owners' refuse.

We do know that the quality of the meats vended in public markets was sometimes questionable, the prices often high, and a stiff middleman's markup part of that high price. One critic wrote of "meat for poverty not fit to eat, and sometimes almost spoiled" hanging overlong in the Williamsburg public market. Vendors charged what they liked, "which is generally exorbitant enough, especially on publick times, or when little meat is at market." If a whole side of beef was not desired, the butcher charged an extra penny per pound to cut it into smaller pieces. Storekeepers may occasionally have extended credit for food purchases to a few needy but well-known customers, but most retail transactions involving townfolk who lacked tangible assets that could be attached to secure debts were for cash only. Butchers, who were typically marginal operators much too poor to be in a position to advance credit, and petty hucksters with few other assets than their perishable stock in hand likely always sold only for ready cash. Free poor people in Chesapeake towns shared the still fa-

miliar disadvantage of paying higher prices and the middleman's markup for inferior food.¹⁵

Eighteenth-century town dwellers' household accounts provide an alternative, consumer's perspective. Grains accounted for only about 15 percent of expenditures among all wealth groups represented by household accounts. Since less expensive corn was the staple grain in the Chesapeake, town residents had to devote only half as much for basic starches as did, for example, Philadelphians, who consumed primarily wheat bread. Gentry and wealthy merchant families spent about a third of their total food budgets on meat, and meat accounted for over 50 percent of expenditures for locally produced foods. Alcohol was the next most significant category, on average 20 percent. Poultry, dairy products, sugar, caffeinated beverages, and fruits and vegetables added variety to the diet, but each accounted for less than 10 percent of food expenses. Less evidence is available for preferences and spending patterns among more middling sorts, and our sense is that consumption patterns in individual households varied widely and sometimes even wildly. Some individuals or families were simply unwilling to go without one or more generous servings of meat almost every day, and to pay accordingly, while others were content to get by on a diet of bread, poultry, eggs, and cheese, regularly washed down with as generous a measure of rum punch as they could afford.¹⁶



To conclude, this study suggests that when exploring interrelationships between town and country, we should concentrate our attention not on grain markets but rather on meat supply. Across the eighteenth century, urban protein demands challenged the productive capabilities of surrounding farmers to a much greater extent than did grain requirements. Zooarchaeology has provided concrete evidence of farmers' unexpectedly quick, albeit cautious, response to quite small urban markets, evidence that directly challenges commonly held assumptions drawn either from general arguments about farmers' mentalité or from standard documentary sources. The leading question then ought indeed to be, not "Where's the corn?" but "Whence the beef?"

¹ Peter A. Coclanis, "Food Chains: The Burdens of the (Re)Past," *Agricultural History* 72 (Fall 1998): 663, 669, 673.

² This project was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, Grant RO-22643-93. Walsh served as project director; Joanne Bowen, Department of Archaeology, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, was the directing zooarchaeologist; and Ann Smart Martin, now of the University of Wisconsin, was the directing historian. Data bases and preliminary results are reported in Lorena S. Walsh, Ann Smart Martin, and Joanne Bowen, "Provisioning Early American Towns, The Chesapeake: A Multidisciplinary Case Study," Final Performance Report to the National Endowment for the Humanities, 1997, typescript, Rockefeller Library, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia. Unless otherwise noted, materials in this address are drawn from this report.

³ Most other studies touching on colonial North American provisioning systems are confined to New England and the Middle Colonies. These include Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); Winifred Barr Rothenberg, *From Market-Places to a Market Economy: The Transformation of Rural Massachusetts, 1750-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Karen J. Friedman, "Victualling Colonial Boston," *Agricultural History* 47 (Summer 1973): 189-205; D. C. Smith and A. E. Bridges, "The Brighton Market: Feeding Nineteenth-Century Boston," *Agricultural History* 56 (Winter 1982): 3-21; J. Ritchie Garrison, "Farm Dynamics and Regional Exchange: The Connecticut Valley Beef Trade, 1670-1850," *Agricultural History* 61 (Summer 1987): 1-17; Andrew H. Baker and Holly V. Izard, "New England Farmers and the Marketplace, 1730-1865: A Case Study," *Agricultural History* 65 (Summer 1991): 29-52; Joanne Bowen, "A Study of Seasonality and Subsistence: Eighteenth-Century Suffield, Connecticut" (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 1990); Joan M. Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds: Mid-Atlantic Farm Women, 1750-1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); and Peter O. Wacker and Paul G. E. Clemens, *Land Use in Early New Jersey: A Historical Geography* (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1995).

⁴ Walsh, Martin, and Bowen, Final Performance Report, 69-73, 140-43, 175-77.

⁵ For England in earlier periods, see Bruce M. S. Campbell, James Galloway, Derek Keene, and Margaret Murphy, *A Medieval Capital and its Grain Supply: Agrarian Production and Distribution in the London Region, c. 1300*, Historical Geography Research Series, no. 30 (Belfast and London: Institute of British Geographers, Historical Geography Research Group, 1993); and Maryanne Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade in Medieval Exeter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁶ The extensive literature on the international market sector is surveyed in John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1985). For large-scale Chesapeake planters' strategies, see Lorena S. Walsh, "Plantation Management in the Chesapeake, 1620-1820," *Journal of Economic History* 49, no. 2 (1989): 393-406; Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "Economic Diversification and Labor Organization in the Chesapeake," in *Work and Labor in Early America*, ed. Stephen Innes (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 144-88; and Lois Green Carr and Russell R. Menard, "Land, Labor, and Economies of

Scale in Early Maryland: Some Limits to Growth in the Chesapeake System of Husbandry," *Journal of Economic History* 49, no. 2 (1989): 407-18.

⁷ Lorena S. Walsh, "Chesapeake Planters and the International Market, 1770-1820," in *Lois Green Carr: The Chesapeake and Beyond—A Celebration* (Crownsville, Md.: Maryland Historical & Cultural Publications, 1992), 205-27.

⁸ For the standard corn ration see Russell R. Menard, Lois Green Carr, and Lorena S. Walsh, *Robert Cole's World: Agriculture and Society in Early Maryland* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 36-37.

⁹ Billy G. Smith, *The "Lower Sort": Philadelphia's Laboring People, 1750-1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 97-98. Smith estimated that in addition to the pound of wheat bread per day, Philadelphia workers consumed forty-five pounds of corn meal per year. If Chesapeake residents ate corn and wheat in inverse proportions, this implies consumption of a bushel of wheat per year.

¹⁰ The incorporation of urban provisioning into international markets is described in Lorena S. Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove: The History of a Virginia Slave Community* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997), chap. 4. See also Walsh, "Chesapeake Planters and the International Market."

¹¹ Smith, *The "Lower Sort,"* 98-99; Philip Ludwell Lee Ledger, 1743-1783, M.S., Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina; Lorena S. Walsh, "Consumer Behavior, Diet, and the Standard of Living in Late Colonial and Early Antebellum America, 1770-1840," in *American Economic Growth and Standards of Living Before the Civil War*, ed. Robert E. Gallman and John Joseph Wallis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 217-64; Lorena S. Walsh, "Work and Resistance in the New Republic: The Case of the Chesapeake, 1770-1820," in *From Chattel Slaves to Wage Slaves: The Dynamics of Labour Bargaining in the Americas*, ed. Mary Turner (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 98-105. The estimates of town meat requirements include only the needs of permanent residents. Both towns were periodically inundated with influxes of visitors during meetings of the provincial court and legislature, and Annapolis was a busy port that had also to provision several hundred sailors for weeks and sometimes months each year, as well as cargos of African slaves and indentured and convict servants awaiting sale. Faunal assemblages from Annapolis have significantly less butchery waste than any Williamsburg assemblages.

¹² Walsh, Martin, and Bowen, Final Performance Report, 108-11.

¹³ See, for example, Joanne Bowen, "A Comparative Analysis of New England and Chesapeake Herding Systems," in *Historical Archaeology of the Chesapeake*, ed. Paul Shackel and Barbara Little (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), 155-68.

¹⁴ John W. Adams and Alice B. Kasakoff, "Migration and Adult Mortality in the American North in the Nineteenth Century" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Social Science History Association, Washington, D.C., 1997); J. David Hacker, "Determinants of Adult Mortality in Early America: Evidence from the Graduates of Yale College, 1701-1805" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Social Science History Association, Chicago, 1995).

¹⁵ "Timothy Telltruth," *Virginia Gazette*, published by Purdie and Dixon, 7 July 1768.

¹⁶ Ann Smart Martin and Lorena S. Walsh, "Reconstructing Food Provisioning Systems in the Chesapeake" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Economic History Association, Durham, N.C., 1998).



COOK'S CORNER

by Laura Arnold

Laura is a member of the Interpreter Planning Board and a volunteer for this publication.

"She is a very civil woman and shews nothing of ruggedness, or Immodesty in her carriage, yett she will carry a gunn in the woods and kill deer, turkey &c., shoot down wild cattle, catch and tye hoggs, knock down beeves with an ax and perform manfull Exercises as well as most men in those parts."

In this 1710 description of a frontier housewife, William Byrd refutes the erroneous impression of a downtrodden female dutifully following her husband to a new home in the West. This year's interpretive theme at Colonial Williamsburg is "Taking Possession," the story of the men and women who claimed the unknown western lands and fought over their possession. The story began in 1607 and continued to unfold into the nineteenth century.

Among its collection of cookbooks, the Rockefeller Library contains a small treasure that supports this story line: *The Backcountry Housewife* by Kay Moss and Kathryn Hoffman (Gastonia, N. C.: Schiele Museum, 1985). The book is a product of the Living History Project of the Schiele Museum in Gastonia, North Carolina. The authors define the *backcountry* as the area "beyond the fall line, in the piedmont and mountains of the Atlantic Coast States." Settlement of this region occurred from north to south following the Great Wagon Road used largely by Pennsylvania immigrants originally from Germany and Northern Ireland (the "Ulster Scots"), who joined the

English, French, and African settlers coming from the coastal regions of Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas.

In their preface, Moss and Hoffman acknowledge that recipes attributed to backcountry housewives are "almost nonexistent" and explain the use of diaries, wills, and inventories to document their research. Quotations from original sources are liberally sprinkled throughout the book, giving it a personal dimension as well as historical perspective. Most of the recipes are taken from the familiar eighteenth- and nineteenth-century classics such as *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* by Hannah Glasse (London, 1760), *Martha Washington's Booke of Cookery* transcribed by Karen Hess (New York: Columbia University, 1981), *The Virginia Housewife or Methodical Cook* by Mary Randolph (Washington, D. C.: P. Thompson, 1828), and *American Cookery* (1796) by Amelia Simmons (repr. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958).

A common misconception about early cookbooks is that if recipes for a particular type of food are not included, those foods were not part of the diet at that time or were not of that era. Salads are a good example of this omission because, as Moss and Hoffman point out, they were a simple, familiar, easily prepared dish for



A frontier farm.

which a written recipe was not needed. The fertile new farms of the frontier yielded wild and cultivated greens such as lettuces, spinach, sorrel, cresses, parsley, and even the flowers of the redbud tree, which, when mixed with an oil and vinegar dressing, made a tasty dish. A Moravian record from North Carolina claims that bear fat "with salad, is as good as Olive Oil" truly a resourceful substitute for a hard-to-obtain ingredient.

Hannah Glasse recommended broccoli as a salad: "Broccoli is a pretty dish by way of salad in the middle of the table; boil it like asparagus . . . lay it in your dish, beat up with oil and vinegar and a little salt. Garnish with nastertium buds." She jumped right into the twenty-first century with her advice on how to cook broccoli (or any fresh vegetable) when she said, "Most people spoil garden things by over-boiling them. All things that are green should have a little crispness, for if they are over-boiled, they neither have any sweetness or beauty." Cabbage was an exception, and her recipe for "Red Cabbage Dressed after the Dutch Way" is a delicious "over-boiled" dish that doubled as "Good for a Cold in the Breast."

*Red Cabbage
Dressed after the Dutch Way*

Take the cabbage, cut it small and boil it soft, then drain it, and put it in a stew-pan with sufficient quantity of oil and butter, a little water and vinegar, and an onion cut small, season it with pepper and salt, and let it simmer on a slow fire till all the liquor is wasted.

Herbs, rather than cabbage, served the dual purpose of flavorings in cooking and remedies for sickness. The brief section on herbs in *Backcountry Housewife* solves the mystery of the meaning of "sweet herbs," an ingredient listed in many recipes without explanation of which herbs to use. Parsley, sage, rosemary, thyme, marjoram, savory, chives, and chervil (or any combination) are defined as sweet herbs. Just as instructions to "salt and pepper to taste" give no specific measurements, "sweet herbs" relied upon the ingenuity and skill of the eighteenth-century cook to use whatever was available. Cooks attempting to duplicate eighteenth-century recipes are sometimes puzzled by the unusual combination of sweet herbs with spices such as cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon, and ginger that today are usually associated with pastries and desserts. Glasse's instructions for making gravy are an example of such a recipe.

To Make Gravy

Take a piece of beef, a piece of veal, and a piece of mutton: cut them into as small pieces as you can, and take a large deep sauce pan with a cover, lay your beef at bottom, then your mutton, then a very little piece of bacon, a slice or two of carrot, some mace, cloves, whole pepper black and white, a large onion cut in slices, a bundle of sweet herbs, and then lay in your veal. Cover it close over a slow fire for six or seven minutes, shaking the sauce-pan now and then: then shake some flour in, and have ready some boiling water; pour it in till you cover the meat and something more. Cover it close, and let it stew until it is quite rich and good; then season it to your taste with salt, and strain it off. This will do for most things.

Another of her unusual recipes for a meat dish not only uses sweet herbs and spices but also includes root vegetables, which benefit from a longer, slower cooking process.

To Stew Beef-Gobbets

Get any Piece of beef except the leg, cut it in pieces about the bigness of a pullet's egg, put them in a stew-pan, cover them with water, let them stew, skim them clean, and when they have stewed an hour, take mace, cloves, and whole pepper tied in a muslin rag loose, some celery cut small, put them into the pan with some salt, turnips and carrots pared and cut in slices, a little parsley, a bundle of sweet herbs, and a large crust of bread. You may put in an ounce of barley or rice, if you like it. Cover it close, and let it stew till it is tender; take out the herbs, spices, and bread, and have ready fried a French roll cut in four. Dish up all together and send it to table.

Line drawings throughout this cookbook are a visual inventory of a frontier kitchen, but the primary quotations give the book its special flavor. By 1809, another impression of a frontier housewife emerged when William D. Martin wrote about meeting a woman in Salisbury, North Carolina. "His lady had every appearance of gentility in her person, features & manners; nor had the qualities of her mind been less the object of Nature's bounty," which leaves little doubt that the backcountry housewife who worked with her hands in the hard, physical labor of creating a new home, also preserved family traditions and civility of manners, which she grafted onto her new life.

New in the Janice McCoy Memorial Collection at the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library

Loretta Frances Ichord has written a cookbook that will delight teachers and parents who want to re-create eighteenth-century foods with their children. *Hasty Pudding, Johnnycakes, and Other Good Stuff: Cooking in Colonial America* (Brookfield, Conn.: Millbrook Press, 1998), a culinary history and cookbook combined in a

cleverly illustrated (by Jan Davey Ellis) paperback book, will appeal to young cooks. The easy-to-follow recipes use modern ingredients and utensils. Each ends with a short paragraph explaining the differences in ingredients and equipment available to colonial cooks making the same dish. Suggestions for using the recipes in the classroom and an excellent bibliography are extra bonuses in a book that provides much-needed information about colonial foodways.

Nicholas Cresswell Journal, 1774–1777

Nicholas Cresswell (1751–1804) of Derbyshire, England, came to America hoping to acquire land and settle permanently. He visited or lived in Barbados, Maryland, Virginia, western Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Philadelphia, and New York before returning to England. In a journal that he kept along the way, Cresswell recorded notes about the people and places he encountered. Of particular interest for the "Taking Possession" story line are his descriptions of the frontier of Virginia and the towns and Native American villages through which he passed, as well as his observations on the customs both of Indians and white people in the region. The journal was published under the title *The Journal of Nicholas Cresswell, 1774–1777* (New York: The Dial Press, 1924; repr. Port Washington, N. Y.: Kennikat Press, 1968). The original manuscript is in Special Collections at the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library.

Leesburg, Loudoun County, Virginia—Sunday, November 27th, 1774

Got to Leesburg, 40 miles from Alexandria. The Land begins to grow better. A Gravelly soil and Produces good Wheat but the roads are very bad, Cut to pieces with the Waggon, number of them we have met to day. Their method of mending the roads is with poles about 10 Foot long layd across the road close together they stick fast in the mud and make an excellent Causeway. Very thinly peopled along the road almost all Woods. Only one Publick house between this place and Alexandria.

Monday, December 5th, 1774

Set out in co[mpany] with Capt. Buddecomb and Mr. Moffit. Crossed the Blue Ridge. This is a High Barren Mountain, produceing nothing but Pines. It runs North and South through Virginia and Maryland, Carolina's and Pennsylvania. Crossed the Shanandoe River on the West Side of the Mountain. Here is some of the Finest Land I have ever seen. This is calld Keys Ferry. Got to Whitheringtons Mill. Lodged at a Poor house. The land is exceedingly fine From the Shan do River to this place—80 miles from Alexandria.

Frederick County, Virginia—Tuesday, December 6th, 1774

Went from the Mill to a place called

Hopewell, a fine Plantation belonging to Mr. Jacob Hite. Here is some of the Finest Land I ever saw either for the plow or pasture. Got to Mr. Wm. Gibbs, an acquaintance of Mr. Kirks. We have traveled over some as fine land to day for about 25 Miles as I would wish to see. Limestone in general. Abounds with Shumack, Wallnut, and Locust trees which are certain indications that the Lands are rich, pretty level, it is Rocky in some places, but affords excellent pasturage and well watered. Produces good Wheat and Barley. The people appears to be more industerous in this part of the Country than they are on the other side of the Blueridge.

[Winchester]—Wednesday, December 7th, 1774

Saw Four Indian Chiefs of the Shawneess Nation Who have been at War with the Virginians this Summer, but have made peace with them, and are sending these people to Williamsburg as Hostages.

They are tall, manly, well shaped men, of a Copper Colour with Black Hair, Quick piercing Eyes, and good features. They have rings of Silver in their nose and bobs to them which hangs over their uper lip. Their ears are cut from the tip, two thirds of the way round and the piece extended with Brass wire till it touches their Shoulders, in this part they hang a thin silver plate wrought in Flourishes about 3 Inches diameter, with plates of Silver round their arms

and in the Hair which is all cut off[f] except a Long Lock on the top of the head, they are in whitemens dress excep Breeches which they refuse to wear, instead of which they have a girdle round them with a piece of Cloath drawn through their Legs and turned over the girdle and appears like a short apron before and behind. All the Hair is pulled from their eye brows and eye lashes and their Face painted in different parts with Vermilion. They walk remarkable streight and cut a Grotesque appearance in this mixed dress. Got to Mr. Gibbs in the evening.



Natural Bridge, Virginia

Sunday—Tuesday, January 8th, 9th, and 10th, 1775

These three days I have spent in making inquireing about the nature and situation of the Land in the Illinois Country and have fortunately met with two Gentlemen who resided there some time. The Lands are exceeding rich, Produces Tobacco, Indigo and Wheat, Situated at the Conjunction of the Ohio with the Mississippi Rivers, about 1000 Miles from New Orleans, And 2000 Miles from this place [Alexandria]. It likewise abounds with Lead and Mines of Copper, But very few inhabitants and those French. I am told by these Gentlemen that their will be some risque in going down the Ohio River, The Indians often cut the White people off, in their passage down to the Mississippi. I Think I have a prospect of making it worthwhile and will hazard the passage.

[Apalachian Mountain]—Saturday, April 8th, 1775

Slept very well last night considering the hardness of our bed. Crossed the Knobby mountain. Called at Creigs Tavern for a supply of Rum—then over the Devils hunting ground to Tittles Tavern. This is the worst road I ever saw large rocks and Boggs. Crossed the Savage mountain, and through the Shades of Death—

This is one of the most dismal places I ever saw. The lofty Pines abscondes the Sun, and the thick Laurels are like a Hedge on each side the Road is very narrow and full of large stones and Boggs. I measured a Pine that was blown down 130 Ft. Long. Camped about 2 Miles West of the Shades 28m.

Sunday, April 9th, 1775

Crossed the Little Meadow Mountain, supposed to be the highest part of the Apalachian or Allegany mountain. The waters begin to fall to the Westward. Crossed the Negro-mountain and the Winding ridge. Crossed the Line between Maryland and Pennsylvania, it is cut through the Woods in a West course from some part of Delawar Bay about 20 Yards wide—it is on the top of the Winding Ridge. Crossed the Youghaganey River at the Begg Crossings. Camped 2 miles West of it. Shot some Pheasants which has made a good supper.

Monday, April 10th, 1775

Crossed the Fallen Timbers. Occasioned by a violent Gust of wind from the East. The Trees are either tore up by the roots or broke off near the ground, some Oaks 2 Foot diameter are broke off and the top carried to a considerable distance. Scarcely one tree left standing. I am told it continues 100 Miles in a West course and about a Mile broad. Dined at the great Meadows—A large Marshey place clear of trees. Saw the Vestages of Fort Necessity, this was a small Picketed Fort built by Colnl. Washington in the Year 1754. About a Mile to the Westward of this Fort General Braddock is buried at a small Run. They tel me he was buried in the middle of the road to prevent the Indians diging up his body.

Crossed the Laurel mountain. Saw the place where Colonel Dunbar was encamped when he received the news of General Braddocks defeat in 1755. Great quantities of broken Bomb Shells Cannon Bullets and other Military stores scattered in the woods. This is called the Laurel mountain from the great quantities of Laurel that grows upon it. A most delightful Prospect of the country to the westward of it. Called at Gist's Fort. Crossed the Yaughagany River at the Stewards Crossings. Got to Zachariah Connels Brotherinlaw to George Rice. Much fatigued this evening. Heavy Rain most part of the day.

West Augusta County, Virginia—Tuesday, April 11th, 1775

The Apalachian or Allegany mountain is not one entire Mountain but a number piled one on

top of another with some narrow Valleys between them. The mountains are Barren and Rocky, But the Valleys th'o very narrow, are in general Rich, very thinly Inhabited. The road is but very indifferent tho loaded Waggon frequently cross it in the Summer. Here is some excellent land about this place and all the way from the foot of the Mountain.

Every necessary of life is very dear here provisions in particular occasioned by the Indian War last Summer. Grain is not to be got for money. In the evening went to Mr. Valentine Craford's with Capt. Douglass—with much difficulty have got half a Bushel of Rye for my horse.

[Fort Pitt], Virginia—Sunday, April 16th, 1775

Left Mr. DeCamp's. Traveled over small hills, Woods and dirty roads to Bush Creek called at a Mill where by acting the Irishman got a feed of Corn for our horses. Crossed Turtle Creek. Dined at Myers Ordinary. After dinner got a man to conduct us to the place where General Braddock was defeated by the French and Indians the 9th of July 1755. It is on the Banks of the Mon-in-ga-ha-ley River, found great numbers of bones both men and horses. The trees are gauged, I suppose by the Artillery.

It appears to me the Front of our Army never extended more then 300 Yards and the greatest slaughter seems to have been made within 400 Yards of the River where it is level and full of under wood farther from the River it is hilly and some Rocks where the Enemy would still have the advantage of the ground. We could not find one whole Skull all of them Broke to pieces in the upper part, some of them had holes broke in them about an Inch diameter, suppose it to be done with a Pipe Tommahawk. I am told the wounded were all Massacred by the Indians. Got to Fort Pitt in the Evening. Land very good but thinly Inhabited. Our Landlord seems to be very uneasy to know where we come from.

Monday, April 17th, 1775

After Breakfast, Waited on Major John Conolly Commandant at the Fort to whom I had a Letter of introduction. Find him a Haughty imperious man. In the Afternoon, viewing the town and Fort. It is pleasantly situated at the conjunction of the Moningahaley and Allegany Rivers the Moningahaley on the S. W. and the Allegany on the North side the town. These two Rivers make the Ohio. The town is small about 30 houses the people Chiefly in Indian trade. The Fort is some distance from the town



Fort Pitt in 1759, sixteen years before Cresswell's visit. Courtesy, Collections of the Pennsylvania Department, The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.

close in the forks of the Rivers. It was built originally by the French deserted by them and the English took possession of it under the Command of General Forbes, November 24th, 1758. Beseiged by the Indians but relieved by Colonel Bouquet in August 1763. Deserted and demolished by our troops about three Years ago, But repaired last summer by the Virginians and has now a small Garrison in it. It is a Pentagonal form. Three of the Bastions and two of the Curtains Faced with Brick the rest Picketed. Barracks for a considerable number of men, and there is the remains of a Genteel house for the Governour but now in ruins, as well as the Gardens which are beautifully situated on the Banks of the Allegany well planted with Apple and Peach trees. It is a strong place for Musquetry, but was Cannon to be brought against it, very defenceless several eminences within Cannon Shot. Spent the evening at Mr. Camblan an Indian trader in town.

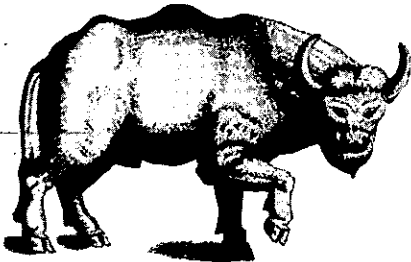
Mon-in-ga-ha-ley River—Tuesday, May 2nd, 1775

Proceeded down the River our Canoes are so heavily loaded that we are in great danger of oversetting the water is within three inches of the Gunnel which added to the exceeding crankness of our vessel makes me uneasy. Called at Fort Pitt and bought some necessaries such as Lead, Flints, & some Silver trinkits to

barter with the Indians. Dined at Mr. John Campbells. After dinner proceeded down the Ohio River passed McKey's Island, it is about a mile long and belongs to Capt. Alexander McKey, Superintendent of Indian affairs. Camped at the lower end of Montures Islands—three fine Islands belonging to John Monture a half Indian—the Land exceedingly rich.

Ohio River—Wednesday, May 17th, 1775

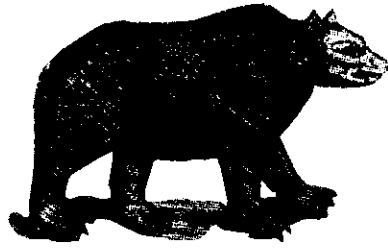
Stopped at Brackens Creek and went a hunting (as they call it here). Mr. Rice, Johnston, and I went together in a short time Mr. Rice fired at a Buffalo. Johnston and I went to him and found him standing behind a tree loading his Gun and the beast lay'd down about 100 yds. from him as soon as he was ready we fired at him again upon which he got up and run about a quarter of a mile where our dogs bayed Him till we came up and shot him. It was a large Bull from his breast to the top of his shoulder measured 3 feet from his nose to his tail 9 feet 6 Inches, black and short hornes all before his shoulders long hair, from that to the tail as short as a mouse. I am certain he would have weighd a Thousand. Camped a little below the Creek.



"Buffelo" from John Brickell, *The Natural History of North Carolina*, 1737.

Thursday, May 18th, 1775

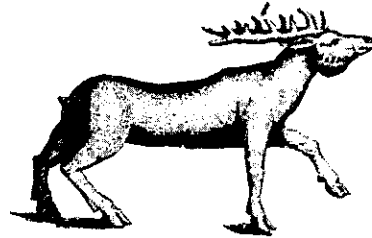
All hands employed in curing our Buffalo meat, which is done in a peculiar manner—the meat is first cut from the bones in thin slices like beef stakes then four forked sticks is stuck in the ground in a square form and small stiks layed on these forks in the form of a gridiron about three feet from the ground, the meat is lay'd on this and a slow fire put under it, and turned till it is drye. This is called Jirking thee meat. I believe it is and Indian method of preserving meat it answers very well where salt is not to be had, and will keep a long time if it be secured from the wet—the leane parts eats very dry The Buffalo flesh difers little from beef—only ranker taste. Hot weather.



"Bear" from John Brickell, *The Natural History of North Carolina*, 1737.

Friday, May 19th, 1775

Proceeded down the River passed the mouth of the little Miamme River on the N:W:, and Salt River or Licking Creek, on the S:E. Saw an Elk and a Bear cross the River but could not get a shot at them. Got to the mouth of the Great Miamme River on the N:W: it is about 100 Yds. wide at the mouth and appears to be pritty gentle current, stoped to Cook and take a view of the land on the S:E. side of the Ohio River it is a little hilly but rich beyond Conception. Wild Clover what they here call wild Oates and Wild Rye in such plenty it might be mown and would turn out a good crop, the great quantity of Grass makes it disagreeable walking. The land is thin of timber and little underwood— drifted all night.



"Elke" from John Brickell, *The Natural History of North Carolina*, 1737.

Ohio River—Sunday, May 21st, 1775

Proceeded down the River about noon got to the mouth of the Kentucky River on the S:E. side. The Ohio is about three quarters of a mile wide here—the Kentucky is about 130 yards wide at the mouth and continued it's width about two miles when we camped in a Beechey bottom. Our Co. in great feare of the Indians some of them insisted on sleeping without a fire after a long contest it was agreed to put the fire out when we went to sleep, but I believe it was not done whatever my companions may be I am not uneasy. I suppose it is because I do not know the danger of our situation. Rainey weather.

Kentucky River—Wednesday, May 24th, 1775

Land in general covered with Beech. Limestone in large flags. Few rivulets empties into the River, or few springs to be seen, which makes me suppose the country is badly watered.



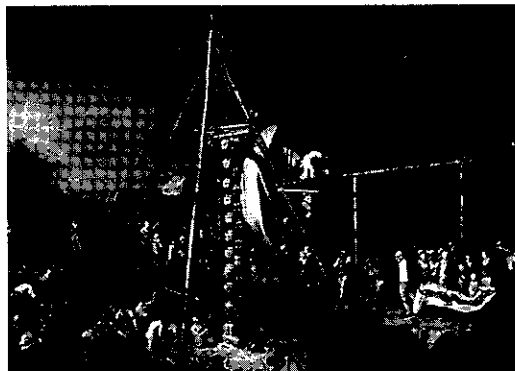
"Bison" by Mark Catesby.

Camped at a place where the Buffaloes cross the River—in the night was alarmed when a plunging in the River, in a little time Mr. Johnston (who slept on board) called out for help, we run to his assistance with our Arms and to our great Mortification and surprize found one of our Canoes that had all our flour on board sunk, and would have been inevitably lost, had it not been fixt to the other. We immediately hauled our shattered Vessel to the shore and Landed our things tho greatly damaged. It was done by the Buffaloes crossing the River from that side where the Vessel was moored. Fortunately for Mr. Johnston he slept in that Canoo next the shore, the Buffaloe jumped over him, into the other and split it about fourteen foot. Mr. Nourses and Mr. Taylors servants usually slept on board, but had by mistake brought their Blankets on shore this evening and were too lazy to go on board again or probably they had both been killed.

Sunday, June 11th, 1775

Buffaloes are a sort of wild cattle but have a large hump on the top of their shoulders all Black and their necks and shoulders covered with long shaggy hair with large bunches of hair growing on their fore thighs, short Horns bending forwards, short noses peircing Eyes and bearded like a goat, in the Summer the hair be-

hind their Shoulders is short as that on a horse. In the winter they are covered with long soft curling hair like wool—their tails are short with a bunch of long hair at the end when they run they carry them erect. Some of them will weigh when fat 14 to 15 Hundred and are good eating particularly the hump which I think makes the finest stakes in the world they feed in large herds and are exceedingly Fierce when wounded. Their sense of smelling is exquisite if you get Leeward of them you may go up to them, or at leaste within shot, but if you are windward they run long before they see you. They are fond of Salt or Brackish water. Springs of this sort have large roads made to them as large as most Publick roads in a populous Country. They eat great quantities of a sort of reddish Clay found near Brakish springs. I have seen amazeing large holes dug or rather cut by them in this sort of earth, wheather it is impregnated with Saline particles or not, I cannot determine—they do not roare like other Cattle but Grunt like Hogs. Got a large fine Canoo out of some drift wood with great Labour, but her stern is beat off and several bullet holes in her bottom which we intend to repair tomorrow. Excessive hot.



"Exhumation of a Mastodon," oil on canvas, by Charles Willson Peale. Courtesy, The Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland.

Ohio River—Saturday, June 17th, 1775

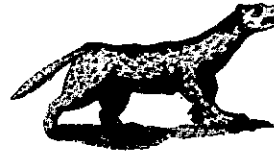
This morning set out for the Ellephant Bone Lick which is only three miles S:E. of the River however we lost our way and I suppose traveled twenty miles before we found it. Where the bones are found is a large muddy Pond a little more than knee deep with a salt Spring in it which I suppose preserves the bones sound. Found several bones of a prodigious size I take them to be Ellephants, for we found a part of a Tusk about two Foot long, Ivory to all appearance, but by leng of time had grown yellow and

very soft. All of us striped and went into the pond to grabble for teeth found several. Joseph Bassiers found a jaw tooth which he gave me, it was judged by the co. to weight 10 pound. I got a shell of a Tusk of Hard and good Ivory about eighteen Inches long. There is a great number of bones in a Bank on the side of this pond of an Enormous size but Decayed and rotten. Ribs 9 inches broad, Thigh bones 10 Inches Diameter. What sort of Animals these was is not Clearly known. All the traditionary accounts by the Indians is that they were White Buffaloes that kiled themselves by Drinking Salt water. It appears to me from the shape of their Teeth that they were Grasseaters. There neither is or ever was any Ellephants in North or South America that I can learne, or any Quadruped one tenth part as large as these was, if one may be allowed to judge from the appearance of these bones, which must have been Considerably larger than they are now. Captn. Hancock Lee told me he had found a Tusk here that was Six Foot long very sound but Yellow. These tusks are like those brought from the Coast of Africa. Saw some Buffaloes but kiled none. Several Indian paintings on the trees. Got plenty of Mulberries very sweet and pleasant fruit but bad for the teeth. One of the co. shot a Deer. The loudest Thunder & Heaviest Rain I ever saw this afternoon. Got to the Camp well wet and most heartily tired. A D-d Irish rascal has broke a piece of my Ellephant tooth, put me in a violent passion can write no more.

Saturday, June 24th, 1775

This morning set out to the Lick without breakfast. The reason was we had nothing to eat, three of us stayed at the Lick till the afternoon waiting for the Buffaloes but saw none. When our out Hunters came loaded with meat and informed us they had kiled a Buffaloe about five mile off set out and found it, and loaded ourselves and returned to the Camp, but never so much fatigued before. Haveing already experienced the want of victuals was willing to guard against it for the future. I believe I have exerted myself more than I can beare, it is judged by the Co. that I brought between 70 and 80 pound of meate, exclusive of my Gun and Shotpouch, to add to my distress my shoesoles came off and I was obliged to walk bare foot for six miles. Find myself very unwell. Shot a Pole Cat. One of our Co. missing all the rest (except Tilling and myself) are for going this evening as they expect he is kiled by the Indians, But I think he has lost himself in the Woods. Very arduous task to per-

swade them to stay as they all expect to be kiled before morning.



"Pole Cat" from
John Brickell, *The
Natural History
of North Carolina*, 1737.

Tuesday, July 4th, 1775

Got to mouth of the Little Conhaway about noon when I found myself very sick at the Stomach for want of meat, went a shore & got a little Ginseng root and chewed it which refresh'd me exceedingly, in the Evening got to one Doctor Briscoe's plantation about a mile from the River, it was night when we got their found the house deserted no Corn, Fowls or meat of any kind.

Wee all went into the Garden dark as it was, to get Cucumbers, or any thing we could find that we wou'd eat, found a Potatoe bed and I eat about a Dozen of them raw and thought them the most delicious food I ever eat in my life. Heavy and constant rain all day—made a fire in the house, dried ourselves, and went to sleep. Very much Fatigued.



Wednesday, July 5th, 1775

This morning one of the Co. went to the Canoo for our Kettle the rest plundered about the plantation and got some young Cabbages, Squashes and Cimbelines.

This medley of Vegetables we boiled all together and seasoned it with pepper & Salt made a most Ellegant repast—proceeded to French Creek where Cresops people overtook us but woud not give a mouthful of Victuals. Rain all day one of our people sick, I gave half a Dollar for about two ounces of Bread for him.

West Augusta—Saturday, August 12th, 1775

No prospect of getting money for Bills upon Mr. Kirk here. This evening Captn. James Wood arived here from the Indian town. He had been sent to invite the Indians to a Treaty at Fort Pitt to be held on the tenth of Septembr. The Convention of Virginia had employed him. He says that an English Officer & a French man from Detroit had been at all the Indian towns to per-

swade the Indians not to go to any Treaty held by the [illegible word]. But tells us his superior Elloquence prevailed and all the different Nations he has been at will certainly attend the Treaty.

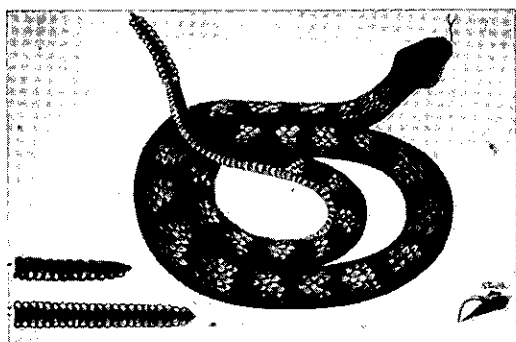
Fort Pitt—Saturday, August 19th, 1775

Waiting for Mr. Anderson—Employed an Indian Woman to make me a pair of Mockeysons, & Leggings. This evening two of the Pennsylvania Delegates to Treat with the Indians, Arrived here Escorted by a party of paltry Light horse—Colnl. Arthur St. Clair and Colnl. James Willson. Suped and spent the evening with them. My Landlady remarkable kind to me owing to my Political sentiments agreeing with hers. She is by nature a most Horrid Vixen.

Indian Country—Saturday, August 26th, 1775

Set out early this morning traveled very hard till noon, when we passed through the largest Plum tree Thicket I ever saw. I believe it was a mile long nothing but Plum & Cherry Trees. Killed a Rattlesnake. Just as the Sun went down we stoped to get our Supper on some Dear Berrys (a small berry something like a Goosberry). Mr. Anderson had done before me and said he would ride on about two miles to a small run where he intended to Camp, as soon as I had got sufficient.

I mounted my Horse and followed him til I came to a place where the road forked, I took the path that I supposed he had gone and rode til it began to be dark when I immagined myself to be wrong, and there was not a possibility of me finding my way back in the night. Determined to stay where I was til morning. I had no sooner lighted from my horse, but I discovered the glimmering of a Fire about four Hundred Yards from me. This rejoiced me exceedingly supposing it was Mr. Anderson.



"Rattlesnake" by Mark Catesby.

When I got there to my great Disappointment and surprize, found Three Indian women and a little Boy. I believe they was as much surprised as I was. None of them could speak English and I cou'd not speak Indian alighted and marked the path I had come, and that I had left, on the ground with the end of my stick, made a small channel in the earth which I poured full of water, layed some fire by the side of it, and then lay'd myself down by the side of the fire repeating the name of Anderson which I soon understood they knew.

Indian Country—Sunday, August 27th, 1775

Proceeded on our Journey and about noon got to an Indian Town called Whale-hak-tup-pake, or the Town with a good Spring, On the banks of the Muskingham, and inhabited by Dellawar Indians.

Christianized under the Moravian Sect, it is a pretty town consisting of about Sixty houses built of Loggs and covered with Clapboards. It is regularly layed out in three spacious streets which meet in the Center where there is a large meeting house built of Loggs Sixty foot square covered with Shingles, Glass in the windows and a Bell, a good plank floor with two rows of forms. Adorned with some few pieces of Scripture painting but very indifferently executed. All about the Meeting house is kept very clean.

In the evening went to the meeting, But never was I more astonished in my life, I expected to have seen nothing but Anarchy and Confusion, as I have been taught to looke upon these beings with contempt. Instead of that, here is the greatest regularity, order, and Decorum, I ever saw in any place of Worship, in my life. With that Solemnity of Behaviour and Modest, Religious deportment would do Honor to the first religious Society on earth, and put a Bigot or Enthusiast out of countenance.

The parson was a Dutchman but preached in English. He had an Indian interpreter that explained it to the Indians by sentences. They sing in the Indian language. The men sits on one rowe of Forms, and the women on the other with the children in the front each sex comes in and goes out on their own side of the house. The Old men sits on each side the parson. Treated with Tea, Coffee & Boiled Bacon at supper the Sugar they make themselves out of the sap of a certain tree. Lodged at white mans house maried to an Indian Woman.

Fort Pitt—Sunday, September 17th, 1775

Here are members of Congress to treat with the Indians. Delegates from the Conventions of Virginia & Pensilvania for the purpose, and Commissioners from the Convention of Virginia to settle the accounts of the last Campaign against the Indians. All Colns., Majors or Captains—and very bigg with their own importance—Confound them alltogether. Collonial disputes are very high between Virginia & Pensilvania and if not timely Suppressed will end in tragical consequences.

Monday, September 25th, 1775

Informed that the Shawnee Indians were at Logstown. Went over the Allegany River with Mr. Douglass to get Island Grapes. This is a small Grape and grows on low vines on the gravilly beeches and Islands in the River, But the most Delicious Grape I ever eat.

Tuesday, September 26th, 1775

This morning N: informed me that the Indians wou'd come to the Council fire, About noon the Shawnee & Dellaware Indians with one of the Ottawa Chiefs crosse'd the River in two Canoos about thirty in number. They were met at the River side by the Delegates and Garrison under arms who saluted them with a Volley, which the Indian Warriors returned, then proceeded to the Council house. Danceing, Beating the Drum, and Singing the Peace Song, all the way. When they got to the Council house the Danceing ceased and all took their

place according to Seniority, and a profound silence ensued for the space of ten minutes. One of their old men then got up and spoke a few words to the Delegates signifying that he hoped they shoud brighten the Chain of Friendship, and gave them a small string of white wampum several others spoke and gave Wampum. Then they lighted a pipe and smoaked with everyone in the house out of one pipe. The Delegates had an artfull speech prepared for them, and adjourned the Business til to-morrow. The Indians seem a little confused.

Saturday, September 30th, 1775

Went over the River and bought a Porcupine Skin of an Indian. It is something like our Hedghog at home, only the Quills are longer, the Indians die them of various colours and work them on their trinkets. Mr. Edward Rice promised me his horse to carry me to V. Craforde on monday. Sold my Gun to Mr. James Berwick, who gave me a copy of the Indian speech. Saw the Indians Dance in the Council house. N: very uneasy she weeps plentifully. I am unhappy that this Honest Creature has taken such a Fancy to me.

Wednesday, October 11th, 1775

Crossed the Falling Timbers, Yaugh-a-gany River, at the Great Crossing, Laurel mountain. Breakfasted at Rices Tavern. Then over the winding ridg, Crossed the Maryland line, and Negro Mountain. Lodged at Tumblestones Tavern on the top of the Allegany mountain.



Dr. John de Sequeyra: A Biographical Sketch

by Susan Pryor

Susan is a historical interpreter in the Galt Apothecary Shop.

Dr. John de Sequeyra, a Sephardic Jew of Portuguese extraction, was born in London in 1712. This distinguished family produced several doctors, including his grandfather, father, and brother. In 1736, de Sequeyra left England to begin medical studies at the University of Leiden in Holland, the leading medical school on the Continent. He reportedly studied with famous clinician Hermann Boerhaave. On February 3, 1739, de Sequeyra received his medical degree, then remained in Holland at least one more year. He sailed for Virginia in 1745, settling in Williamsburg, where he developed a lasting friendship with prominent apothecary John Minson Galt. When Galt left for London in 1767 to continue his medical studies at St. Thomas's Hospital, de Sequeyra presented him with a copy of *Physical Essays on the Parts of the Human Body and Animal Economy* (London, 1734).

Soon after de Sequeyra's arrival in Virginia, he began "Notes on Diseases of Virginia," a yearly account of the prevalent diseases afflicting people in Williamsburg and the surrounding area between 1745 and 1781. His accounts often included treatments and notes on their effectiveness. During the smallpox epidemic of 1747/48, he kept a registry by household of Williamsburg residents. In it, he noted the persons affected by the disease, persons not affected, and the people who died. This registry, "True State of the Small Pox Feby 22d. 1747/48," illustrates how unforgiving a contagious disease like smallpox was, striking rich and poor, prominent and not so prominent, black and white alike. The registry provides historians with census-like information on the population of Williamsburg, during this early time. In addition to these records, de Sequeyra's notebooks contain several other medical essays: "Diseases of Women," "Diseases of Children," "Diseases of Both Sexes," and "Diseases of Virginia."*

In 1773, de Sequeyra became the first visiting physician to the newly opened insane asylum in Williamsburg—the Public Hospital—and received a salary of £150 per year. From 1774 until his death in 1795, he was on the hospital's board of directors. Upon his death, Drs. John Minson



Dr. John de Sequeyra.
Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.

Galt and Philip Barraud were appointed to fill the post as joint visiting physicians. Dr. de Sequeyra reportedly devoted considerable time to treating the mentally ill as well as patients who became physically ill. He relied more on drugs than on bloodletting.

Dr. de Sequeyra was highly respected both by colleagues and citizens of Williamsburg. In October 1770, he and Dr. William Pasteur attended Governor Botetourt in his last illness of bilious fever and St. Anthony's Fire (erysipelas). A year earlier de Sequeyra had been consulted by George Washington to treat his stepdaughter Patsy's epilepsy. The doctor corresponded with Thomas Jefferson who credited him with introducing the tomato into Virginia. Although many thought the fruit to be poisonous, de Sequeyra believed greatly in its life-lengthening powers. He also shared Jefferson's interest in wine. Along with eighty-three other prominent Virginians, the physician subscribed annually for several years to a prize for producing the best wine in the colony.

Why did John de Sequeyra come to the colonies in the first place? Most Jewish immigrants settled in the northern colonies, as they were by and large businessmen. Virginia and the southern colonies had plantation economies that were not typically suited to this way of life, although significant Jewish communities developed in urban areas in the South, such as Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah,

Georgia. Not until after the Revolution did Jews develop communities in commercial areas of Virginia, such as Norfolk and Richmond. It is worth noting that de Sequeyra is the only person of Jewish descent known to have lived in eighteenth-century Williamsburg.

Perhaps a sense of adventure led him to Virginia's capital city. Of course, skilled physicians were always a welcome addition to an eighteenth-century community. Whatever his reasons for settling here, de Sequeyra seems to have been accepted by society, and his religious background apparently was not an issue. He paid his tithes and property taxes that supported both the Anglican Church and the government, avoiding any conflict. His private thoughts about his religious heritage will likely remain hidden.

Little is known of de Sequeyra's private life, though property and tax records indicate that he owned two adult slaves, two horses, and a four-wheeled post chaise. There is no evidence that he ever married. The location of his residence before June 18, 1772, is not known. On that date he signed a seven-year lease with William Goodson, a prominent Williamsburg merchant who owned the building that formerly housed James Shields's tavern. Two other tenants occupied smaller portions of the house, but de Sequeyra's quarters consisted of three rooms on the ground floor, part of the cellar, and

rooms and passages on the second floor as well as a small yard and outbuildings. Because the lease described his part of the house as "now in the possession and occupation of the said John de Sequeyra," he may have lived there for a period of time before 1772.

De Sequeyra died in February 1795 at the age of 83. He had lived and worked for fifty years in Williamsburg. His death notice, printed in the *Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser*, March 18, 1795, said that he "was reputed to be an eminent famous physician."

*The originals of the yearly "Notes on Diseases of Virginia" and the four other essays are in the Galt Papers, Swem Library Special Collections, College of William and Mary. The original of the "True State of the Small Pox Febr. 22d. 1745/8" is at the Library of Congress. See also, "Dr. de Sequeyra's account of Virginia diseases, 1745-1781" in Harold B. Gill, Jr., *The Apothecary in Colonial Virginia* (Williamsburg, Va., [1972]), 95-115 and Harold B. Gill, Jr., "De Sequeyra's 'Diseases of Virginia,'" *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 86 (1978): 295-298; Sarah C. McEntee, "John De Sequeyra's Notes on Diseases" (M.A. thesis, College of William and Mary, 1997); William Quentin Maxwell, ed., "A true State of the small Pox," *VMHB*, 63 (1955): 269-274 (Maxwell did not identify de Sequeyra as the compiler of the smallpox list.); Cathy Hellier and Kevin Kelly, "A Population Profile of Williamsburg in 1748" (Williamsburg, Va., 1987), a research report based on the smallpox list and York County Project biographical files; and Cathy Hellier "Williamsburg at Mid-century: A Population Profile," *The Interpreter* (September 1984): 1-2.



Thomas Craig's
tailor shop

Dr. John de Sequeyra's
residence, ca. 1772-1795

John Draper, blacksmith,
residence (shop in rear)

The property where James Shields kept a tavern around 1750. In the 1770s, merchant William Goodson owned this property and leased it to Craig, de Sequeyra, and Draper.

The Assessment Bill: Virginia's Attempt to Legislate Virtue

by Mark Couvillon

Mark is a historical interpreter in the Capitol Area.

Tax all things, water, air, and light;
If need there is; yea tax the night!
But let our brave heroic minds
Move freely, like celestial winds.
Make vice and folly feel your rod,
But leave our consciences to GOD:
To Mortal power she never bows,
For Heav'n alone claims all her vows.

Part of "The humble address of a country poet" to "the Honourable HOUSE of DELEGATES for the commonwealth of VIRGINIA, now sitting at WILLIAMSBURG. The Virginia Gazette (Dixon and Hunter), October 18, 1776, p. 2.

In 1776, the Virginia General Assembly met for the first time under a new state constitution. Under pressure from dissenting religious sects to make good on the "free exercise of religion" clause in Virginia's Declaration of Rights, the Assembly members passed an act in December 1776 suspending the requirement that dissenters pay taxes in support of the long-established Church of England in Virginia.

This virtually put religion on a volunteer basis. In fact, no Virginia law required dissenters to fund ministers and meetinghouses, not even their own. On the Anglican front, between 1776 and 1779, legislators each year saw fit to suspend the salaries of the established Anglican clergy, thereby temporarily relieving the Anglican laity of the legal requirement to pay clergymen a living. Moreover, Virginians could worship when and where they chose, although the Assembly retained the right to license meetinghouses and dissenting preachers and, until 1780, did not recognize marriages as legal unless an Anglican clergyman officiated.

The 1776 statute also introduced the idea of general assessment—taxing everyone for support of the church or minister of his choice (rather than taxing everyone for the support of the one state church). Because of wartime concerns, however, the issue of tax monies to be distributed among all Christian churches in the state was not again raised by the legislature until 1779.

In June 1779, Thomas Jefferson's bill "for establishing religious freedom"—bill number eighty-two of the general revision of the laws ordered by the legislature in 1776—was put before the House of Delegates meeting in Williamsburg. In keeping with Jefferson's objective to bring the Virginia legal code in line with republican principles, the bill declared "that no man be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry . . . but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities."

Reaction was swift. Petitioners from Lancaster County feared the bill's passage would beget a "Licentious Freedom subversive of true piety and civil Society." Essex County petitioners found the bill "harmful to Christianity" and promoted the idea of a general assessment as "most agreeable." Articles in the *Virginia Gazette* attacked the preamble of Jefferson's bill on the grounds that it contained the "principles of a Deist," which would "exalt individual freedom at the expense of the collective rights of the majority." With public sentiment clearly weighted against Jefferson's religious reforms, the House tabled his bill, and it languished until after the Revolution.

In October 1779, a bill that made clear the limits of religious toleration came before the House of Delegates. While Virginia legislators had no interest in establishing a single state religion, they clearly supported Christianity, as long as it followed certain key tenets. Based on part of the South Carolina constitution adopted in 1778, this new bill specified that only individuals and groups who believed in one God, life after death, and the need for public worship would be "freely tolerated." Further, only denominations that met five conditions of faith were eligible for equal civil and religious privileges, including the right to incorporate. The bill gave the government complete responsibility over the clergy and included an assessment or tax on members and non-members alike to support these Christian denominations.

This bill represented a significant retreat from article sixteen of the Virginia Declaration of Rights and generated such opposition that it barely squeaked through two readings before

being shelved. Jefferson probably breathed a sigh of relief, but Edmund Pendleton—no friend of disestablishment—considered it “Ominous for our Virtue” that the idea of state-regulated religion, even including several denominations of Christians (not just one), generated such heated debate.

The question of state support for the Christian religion arose again in 1783, when three county petitions asking for a general religious tax or assessment were placed before the House. According to petitioners from Amherst County, the worship of God had been replaced by “Vice and Immorality, Lewdness & Profanity.” They urged the Assembly to solve the problem by passing laws that would both punish vice and promote Christianity. Although some members sought to put off the issue to a more convenient time, Patrick Henry thought it of “too much moment” to be deferred to another session. He persuaded the delegates to take up the question of an assessment in the committee of the whole.

A devout Christian and devotee of French political philosopher Montesquieu, Henry believed that a republic could not exist without virtue. This public virtue—the willingness to subordinate one’s private interests for the sake of the whole community—rested upon the sum total of each man’s private virtues and his cooperation in cultivating and practicing them. Henry feared that the rise of greed, corruption, and immorality, brought on (in his opinion) by the late war and the weakened link between church and state, would cause the new republic to die at birth. As early as 1780, Henry wrote to Jefferson of his fear that the body politic in Virginia was dangerously sick. “Tell me, do you remember any instance where tyranny was destroyed and freedom established on its ruins, among a people possessing so small a share of virtue and public spirit? I recollect none.”

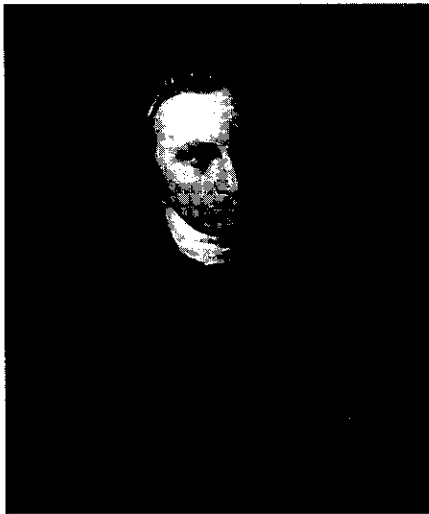
Henry’s concerns for the new republic were shared by Virginia legislators and other influential figures, including George Mason, author of the Virginia Declaration of Rights and of the state constitution adopted in June 1776. “Whether our Independence shall prove a blessing or a curse,” Mason wrote to Henry upon the conclusion of the war, “must depend

upon our own wisdom or folly, Virtue or Wickedness; judging the future from the past, the prospect is not promising.” Henry’s position was echoed in the press. A 1783 article in the *Virginia Gazette* emphasized the need for public virtue to ensure the success of republicanism.

Accounts from outsiders bore witness to the low state of religion in Virginia. One traveler noted that “very little regard is paid by the people in general to Sunday. Indeed, throughout the lower part of Virginia, the people have scarcely any sense of religion, and in the county parts the churches are all falling into decay.” Another visitor wrote in his journal, “One sees not only a smaller number of houses of worship in Virginia than in other provinces, but what there are in a ruinous or ruined condition, and the clergy for the most part dead or driven away and their places unfilled.”

During 1783 and 1784, more county petitions favoring an assessment were sent to the General Assembly. Meanwhile, in a move regarded with alarm by some lawmakers, the Episcopal clergy petitioned the Assembly urging that the Episcopal Church in Virginia (the post-Revolutionary incarnation of the Anglican church) be incorporated, thus securing for the Episcopal Church title to the property and lands of the old established Church of England. With only one petition from the Baptists opposing an assessment for religion, Patrick Henry believed that the majority of Virginians were for, or at least indifferent to, a tax to support the several Christian denominations in Virginia. A firm believer in freedom of conscience, Henry opposed the idea of any one church having a privileged relationship with the state. Instead of tearing down the Episcopal Church, he sought to raise other denominations to its level by creating a multiple establishment of several equal Christian denominations.

The assessment issue lingered in the committee of the whole from the spring 1784 session. That fall, on November 11, Thomas Mathews of Norfolk presented to the House of Delegates the following resolution: “that the people of this Commonwealth, according to their respectful [*sic*] abilities, ought to pay a moderate tax or contribution, annually, for the



Patrick Henry

support of the Christian religion." With that, the battle over church and state finally began in earnest after years of stopgap measures and piecemeal legislation. "The Generals on the opposite sides, were Henry & Madison. The former," wrote Beverly Randolph, "advocated with his usual art, the establishment of the Christian Religion in exclusion of all other Denominations. By this I mean that Turks, Jews & Infidels were to contribute to the support of a Religion whose truth they did not acknowledge."

According to the notes of James Madison, Henry advanced as his chief argument the relation of religion to the prosperity of the state, dwelling upon the evil fate of nations that had neglected religion and inferring the necessity of a religious establishment, however broad. As precedents for a general assessment, Henry cited its use in other American states such as Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and South Carolina.* Madison replied that the question was not whether religion was necessary for a stable government, but, rather, whether religious establishments were necessary for religion. He went on to show that the downfall of nations mentioned by Henry took place where there were religious establishments.

Despite Madison's exertions, Mathews's resolution for a general assessment passed by fifteen votes, and a committee, chaired by Patrick Henry, was appointed to draft the bill. Besides a majority of the House, assessment had the backing of some of the most respected and influential men in the state, including George Washington, John Marshall, and Richard Henry Lee. Lee wrote to Madison: "Refiners may weave reason into as fine a web as they please, but the experience of all time shows religion to be the best guardian of morals; and he must be a very inattentive observer in our country who does not see that avarice is accomplishing the destruction of religion for want of legal obligation to contribute something to its support."

Supporters of a general religious tax or assessment believed that it would promote virtue by creating an educated and stable ministry whose livelihood would not depend upon voluntary contributions. As a consequence, clergymen might be more likely to take even the

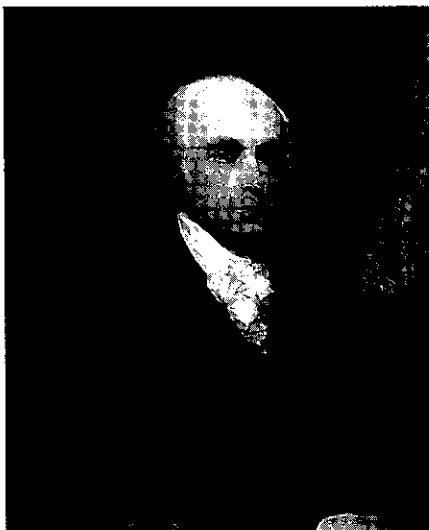
wealthiest of their parishioners to task for unchristian conduct—without fear of losing financial support. Even church attendance, though not legally required under such a scheme, might improve. (Some theorized that people would make the effort to derive some benefit from an institution for which they had paid.)

Neither did supporters of assessment see this type of church tax as contrary to the Virginia Declaration of Rights. It was not dictating one mode of faith or public worship, but rather permitting taxpayers to support the (Christian) church of their choice. As for non-Christians, their views would be tolerated under this plan, but not supported by tax monies. They would still have to pay the religion tax, however, which would go to support Christian churches. Supporters of this position saw Christianity as the principal promoter of good will, honesty, and virtue among citizens. In other words it was dedicated to the common good from which everyone, Christian and non-Christian alike, would benefit. After all, the "Free exercise of religion" clause in the Declaration of Rights ends with the words "it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance."

Confident that such a bill would pass, Henry again accepted the call to be governor of the Commonwealth and left the Assembly on November 17, 1784. Madison, who was instrumental in securing Henry's gubernatorial nomination, described his election as "a circumstance very inauspicious to his offspring [the assessment bill]." On December 2, Francis Corbin presented the bill for "Establishing a Provision for Teachers of the Christian Religion" to the House of Delegates. The bill passed its first two readings and was referred to the committee of the whole. Unlike the 1779 bill,

this one did not mention the establishment of Christianity (although Madison believed it was implied), neither did it set any doctrinal articles or forms of worship. Its brief preamble stated that "a general diffusion of Christian knowledge hath a natural tendency to correct the morals of men, restrain their vices, and preserve the peace of society."

In order to diffuse "Christian knowledge" among the populace, the bill placed a moderate



James Madison

tax on heads of households. This assessment was to be collected by the sheriff of each county and turned over to the elders, vestry, or directors of the religious society designated by the taxpayer for support of the minister and other church expenses. Quakers and Mennonites would be allowed to direct their tax money to a general fund, since they had no formal clergy. Taxpayers who did not designate a particular sect would pay the tax into the public treasury for building schools ("seminaries of learning") within their neighborhoods.

Debate on the bill was postponed for almost three weeks while the House discussed a bill to incorporate the Episcopal Church. On December 22, the assessment bill was brought up again. A motion made on the floor of the House attempted to liberalize the bill by dropping the word Christian so as to include all religions. Benjamin Harrison, who had just stepped down as governor, made a plea with "pathetic zeal" in favor of keeping the word Christian, effectively excluding all non-Christian groups. The other delegates agreed with Harrison. By a margin of 44 to 42 the bill was ordered to be engrossed. A day later, on Christmas Eve, a vote to postpone the final reading until the fall of 1785—nearly a year later—was passed 45 to 38. It was also agreed that copies of the bill be sent to all the counties in order to ascertain public opinion.

Madison and his supporters took this time to wage a campaign against general assessment. Madison composed his "Memorial and Remonstrance," a brilliant synthesis both of religious and rationalist arguments against a church-state connection. It was widely distributed throughout Virginia and to the newspapers. The document warned against the "dangerous abuse of power" should the bill pass into law. Neither society nor the legislature properly had jurisdiction over religion. If the legislature could act in the present case, a dangerous precedent would be set. If the state could establish the Christian religion today, what could stop it reestablishing this or that particular variety of Christianity tomorrow?

The evangelical churches rallied to Madison's standard, pelting the Assembly with petitions calling for complete separation of church and state. "The steps taken throughout the

Country to defeat the Genl. Assessment," wrote Madison, "had produced all the effect that could have been wished." With opposition now coalescing against general assessment and the "father of the scheme" (Henry) gone from the Assembly, Madison introduced Jefferson's bill for establishing religious freedom during the next session. The legislature passed *An Act for establishing religious freedom* in October 1785. The now-famous Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, as it came to be known, took effect in January 1786.

Despite their opposition to the assessment bill and any other form of religious establishment or church/state connection, both Madison and Jefferson believed public virtue to be no less vital to the welfare of America than did Patrick Henry. They just differed on how to best achieve it. Henry felt that some kind of religious establishment could best check the moral decline he observed in postwar Virginia. Madison and Jefferson saw it differently. People had a natural tendency toward religious belief that was only hindered by forced conformity. Madison blamed the problems in Virginia society following the Revolution on the dislocations of war, outdated laws, and poor administration of justice during the long conflict. With a revised legal code and government encouragement and support for education, Madison and Jefferson judged the people themselves to be the best instrument for promoting public and private virtue.

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* Massachusetts had a fully established Congregational Church until adoption of its 1780 constitution. Until full disestablishment occurred in 1833, a local variety of general assessment was in place. The Congregational Church was also the state church in colonial New Hampshire. South Carolina's state church was the Church of England until the new state constitution took effect in 1778.

BRUTON HEIGHTS UPDATE: *New at the Rock*



The John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library has recently acquired the following rare books and manuscripts in its Special Collections section:

[Acts passed] At a General Assembly, begun and held at the capitol, in the city of Williamsburg, on Monday the fifth day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven. Williamsburg, Va.: Alexander Purdie, 1777.

Acts passed at a General Assembly, begun and held at the Capitol, in the City of Williamsburg, on Monday the fourth day of October, in the year of Our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-nine. Williamsburg, Va.: John Dixon & Thomas Nicolson, 1779.

Ferchault de Réaumur, René Antoine. *L'art de Convertir le Fer Forgé en Acier, et l'Art d'adoucir le fer fondu. . . . Paris: M. Brunet, 1722.*

Hepplewhite, A., and Co. *Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide; or, Repository of Designs for Every Article of Household Furniture. . . . London: I. & J. Taylor, 1789.*

The Repertory of Arts and Manufactures; consist-

ing of original communications, specifications of patent inventions, and selections of useful practical papers from the transactions of the philosophical societies of all nations. Vols. 1-13. London, 1794-1800.

Sheraton, Thomas. *Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book. London: T. Bensley, 1793.*

Land grant: April 13, 1783, Patrick Henry to Jacob Vanmeter for land in Jefferson Co., Virginia.

18th- and 19th-century bookplates: Thomas Calvert, Charles Carroll, Richard Champion, Thomas Heyward, William Kingman, John Marshall, New-York Society, Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts, Isaiah Thomas, Ralph Wormeley.

William Graves Perry library: sizable collection on architectural, landscape, literary and historical topics.

Dell Upton collection: architectural research on Virginia and the Chesapeake region.

Compiled by George H. Yetter, associate curator for the architectural drawings and research collection

The Colonial Williamsburg Interpreter is a quarterly publication of the Education Division.

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EDITOR'S NOTES . . .



As you may know, John Hemphill passed away on April 3, 2000.

John, in addition to being a former employee in Colonial Williamsburg's Department of Historical Research, taught history at several colleges and universities and wrote a number of books and articles on Virginia and Maryland history.

He was a friend and mentor to many, both here at the Foundation and around Virginia. A memorial fund has been set up to purchase a rare book or manuscript for the Special Collections section of the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library at Colonial Williamsburg. Gail Greve, special collections librarian/associate curator of rare books and manuscripts, will be accepting checks for the fund until the end of October 2000, at which time an item will be chosen for purchase.

If you are interested in contributing, please send a check made out to "Colonial Williamsburg Foundation" along with a note indicating that the money should go to the John Hemphill Memorial Fund. Please forward your contribution to:

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John will be missed. This is an opportunity to remember him in a way that would have pleased him immensely.

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