

**Williamsburg Women**  
See p. 4



**SPRING 1774**

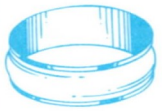
**Newsline**

- March/April 1774  
Committee of Correspondence meets
- March/April 1774  
Report of tithables due
- March 1774  
County levy collected
- April 10, 1774  
General Court meets one to three days. House of Burgesses fails to pass fee bill
- April 20, 1774  
Governor's Council meets
- April 25-26, 1774  
Governor's Council meets

**VIRGINIA TODAY**  
**SNAPSHOT**

**Legal Status of Women in 18th-Century Virginia**

*Femes Coverts*



**Married Women (White and Free Black)**

- Had no legal identity separate from their husband's
- Could not own property as an individual without a special marriage settlement
- Could not make contracts, execute deeds, write wills
- Could not initiate suits at common law
- Husbands possessed wives' personal property
- Husbands acquired a life interest in lands wives brought to the marriage
- Husbands controlled the family estate including income wives generated

*Femes Soles*



**Unmarried Women Spinsters and Widows (White and Free Black)**

- Enjoyed separate legal identity
- Could sue and be sued
- Could enter into contracts
- Could execute deeds
- Could dispose of their estates by will

**Enslaved Women**



**Enslaved African American and American Indian Women**

- Were invisible to the law (as were their children)
- Were defined as the taxable property of their masters
- Had no access to legal marriage or protection of family from sale or separation
- Held legally culpable if they committed a crime or ran away
- Were denied the right to a jury trial if accused of a felony
- Were denied the right to testify against a white person in court

**AMERICANS**  
*Becoming* **TODAY**

NO. 1 IN COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG

**CHARLOTTE SWEETENS COLONIAL TIE WITH BRITAIN**



On the evening of February 26, your narrators of the news witnessed this capital city ablaze with light from bonfires and cressets, its houses and shops illuminated with candles all to "Hail, Noble Charlotte!" to "Welcome to the plain" the Countess of Dunmore, Charlotte Stewart Murray, lady of our Governor, and her "lovely offspring; . . . six [of the] pledges of [his] love." The whole town turned out to express their general regard and genuine affection for Her Ladyship as they escorted her party to the Palace "where your lov'd Lord presides" "while every countenance in the crowd plainly evinced satisfaction and pleasure in welcoming them." The festivities continued a few nights later with a display of fireworks "which though not the most magnificent (as indeed could not be well expected) yet the goodness of Lady Dunmore readily excused it saying that she was extremely thankful for the kind endeavors of the gentlemen who undertook the management of them as well as to everyone else who attended."

We have it on the best authority that her ladyship began this odyssey and "all danger disregard[ed]" by departing London on November 19 of the year past in the *Duchess of Gordon*, Isaac L. Winn, commander. On Wednesday, January 2, in the middle of one of the coldest winters in memory, the *Duchess of Gordon* arrived in New York Harbor after 44 days at sea. The Countess and six of her cherubs, in order to recover from such an arduous journey, remained in that city for near to a month.

The first week of February found our Lady in the City of Brotherly Love, Philadelphia, from whence her journey

south next took her to Baltimore in the colony of Maryland. Her ladyship then set off for Annapolis, arriving in that port city on the 14th day of February eager to soon be reunited with her "lov'd Lord" who "in his arms" she'll meet his "fond reward." After having been honored by that city for 11 days, Lady Dunmore and her bairns—"O charming group! So blooming, and so fair"—embarked on board a yacht, the property of Colonel Lloyd. "On their departure, they were complemented with a discharge of 21 guns from the battery and the same number from the ship *Annapolis* then lying in the harbour."

News of their arrival in the town of York on February 26, "where they received a cannon salute and every mark of respect from the York inhabitants," quickly reached our fair city and so it was that when "Noble Charlotte" arrived at seven in the evening she was feted with a grand welcoming ceremony. Our mayor, aldermen and Common Council seized the opportunity to express their satisfaction in the felicity of His Lordship's government and offered him the grateful applause of a happy people, together with the hope that Virginia might prove "so healthy and in every respect so agreeable" that their residence here may be long and happy. "May health and joy still in your house preside, And sweet content smile round your fire side."

GOD SAVE THE KING.

\*Note: All quotes taken from the poem "By A Lady," *Virginia Gazette* (Rind), March 3, 1774, p. 3 [Submitted by Phil Shultz and Nancy Milton]

**Have You See This Face?**  
See p. 2



**TRACKING THE JOURNEY**

- Nov. 19, 1773:  
Boarded *Duchess of Gordon* (Capt. Isaac Winn, 250 tons with about 18 crew) in London
- Nov. 19, 1773-Jan. 2, 1774:  
London to Portsmouth to New York City—winter North Atlantic Passage of 44 days
- Jan. 2, 1774:  
Arrived in New York
- Feb. 5, 1774:  
Arrived in Philadelphia\*
- Feb. 12, 1774:  
Arrived in Baltimore\*
- Feb. 14, 1774:  
Arrived in Annapolis\*
- Feb. 24, 1774:  
Departed for Yorktown on the yacht of Colonel Lloyd to a 21-gun salute from the shore battery and a 21-gun salute from the *Annapolis* lying in harbor
- Feb. 26, 1774:  
Arrived in Yorktown

**Bitter Winter, North Atlantic Six Children Whose idea was this?!**



**CELEBRATION BACKFIRES**

Amidst the general satisfaction which reigned at York, on account of her ladyship's arrival, an accident happened that gave great pain to all present, and particularly, it is said, to Lady Dunmore. Mr. Thomas Archer, and Mr. Benjamin Minnis, being extremely active in managing the cannon, but by ramming the rod too violently against the iron within, it occasioned a kind of friction, as is supposed, which communicated to the powder, and the above gentlemen being very near the gun when it went off, they received considerable damage; the arms, face, and eyes, of Mr. Archer, being bruised in a most dreadful manner. Mr. Minnis was much hurt in the thigh, and otherwise terribly wounded. Captain Lilly was also bruised about the eye, though slightly. Two Negroes that assisted were dreadfully mangled, one of them having lost three fingers off his right hand; the other is much burnt in the face, and his eyes are so much hurt, that it is thought he will never recover their use. Fortunately, none of their lives are despaired of. *Virginia Gazette* (Rind), Thursday, March 3, 1774

**OUTRAGE IN FINCASTLE**

WILLIAMSBURG, March 17.  
By a gentleman just arrived from New River, in Fincastle county, we are informed that about 40 families were lately murdered on the Okonees by the Indians. Captain Russell, from the same county, who a few days ago came to this city, reports, that the people are in the most dreadful consternation, on account of the outrages committed by those savage people. *Virginia Gazette* (Rind), Thursday, March 17, 1774

**Practice of Religion in Virginia**

1774	2004
Religious toleration, not freedom	Complete religious freedom
Unification of Church of England and Crown	Separation of church and state
Required church attendance and church tax	Worship and church attendance voluntary
Non-Protestants denied political participation	Political participation by members of all faiths

## LIFE

WILLIAMSBURG, March 10.

THE following melancholy Accident happened last Saturday Night: As two valuable Negro Men, belonging to Mrs. Cocke, at Swan's Point, were putting a Negro Woman of Mr. William Brown's, Junior, over Gray's Creek, to Cobham in Surry, in a small Canoe, they were either overset or sunk, and all of them drowned; for the Canoe was found on Monday full of Water, and the two Men taken up by Dragging, but the Woman is not yet got.

*Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon),  
Wednesday, March 23, 1774

To be SOLD, on the 3d of May ensuing, for ready money, at public auction, if not sold before, THE houses and lot where I live, situated on the back street, next to Mr. Blovet Pasteur's, in Williamsburg, and was formerly the residence of the late Nathaniel Walthoe, Esq.: with the household and kitchen furniture, a cart, mare and colt, &c. Any of the above articles may be purchased separately, before the day of sale, by applying to the subscriber. As I intend to leave the colony early in the spring, I beg the favour of all those who have accounts unsettled to come and adjust them immediately; such as fail, may depend that they will be put into a lawyer's hand, as longer indulgence neither can or will be given.

ELIZABETH BOLSAMS

N.B. The above place is deemed exceedingly convenient for any gentleman in want of private lodgings.

*Virginia Gazette* (Rind),  
Thursday, March 10, 1774

JUST arrived the Justitia, Captain Gray, with upwards of 150 healthy SERVANTS, men, women, and boys; among them are smiths, cabinetmakers, carpenters, and joiners, shoemakers, tailors, bricklayers, perukemakers, hairdressers, bakers, weavers, schoolmasters, mantuamakers, sempstresses, a printer, a copperplate printer, a gardener, a surveyor, a dyer, a tanner, and many other tradesmen; there are also many farmers and other country labourers. The sale will commence at Leedstown on Wednesday the 16th of this instant of March, and continue until all are sold. A reasonable credit will be allowed, giving bond, with approved security, to

THOMAS HODGE.

*Virginia Gazette* (Rind),  
Thursday, March 10, 1774

Run away from the subscriber, on Friday the 25th of February, a half Indian fellow who calls himself JACK BROWN, and was formerly the property of Colonel John Bolling of Goochland; he is about 40 years old, 5 feet 6 inches high, is pretty light of sort, his nose is crooked, which appears to have been done a blow, has lost some of his teeth before, which seem to be rotted out, is extremely fond of liquor, speaks very plain and bold, and I imagine will endeavour to pass for a free man, as he once made an elopement for three years, and went under that character. He had on a Negro cotton jacket and breeches, an indifferent shirt, and rappers of blue stripped saddlecloth. All masters of vessels are hereby forewarned from taking him out of the colony. Whoever brings him to me, or confines him, in any of his Majesty's gaols, so that I get him, shall be handsomely rewarded, besides what the law allows.

AUGUSTINE LONGAN

*Virginia Gazette* (Rind),  
Thursday, March 10, 1774

Williamsburg, March 8, 1774  
Strayed from my plantation at King's Creek, about two years ago, a large red and white bull, without horns, of the Guernsey breed, he has been seen at several plantations in Warwick county, where I suppose he now is. I will give a reward of TEN SHILLINGS to any person that will inform me where he is, so that I may get him, or TWENTY SHILLINGS upon his being delivered to my overseer, at said plantation.

WILLIAM PASTEUR  
(*Virginia Gazette*, Rind, March 10, 1774)



## SPRING FARMING

**Tobacco:** Prepare beds, sow seed, make and manure hills, weed and water beds

**Corn:** Cut and burn brush, lay out fields, make hills, manure, plant, weed, re-plant

**Wheat:** Thresh and glean, plow fallow, cart wheat to ships or town

**Vegetables:** Prepare garden, plow and manure, sow carrots, peas, beans, cabbages, plant potatoes, pumpkins, turnips

**Orchard:** Plant peach, nut and fruit trees, grapevines, graft fruit trees, cart cider to town

**Livestock:** Heap and turn manure, kill beeves, deliver calves and lambs, sell lambs, castrate lambs, seine fish, make butter, shear sheep, kill mutton for sale, breed horses, fish for sturgeon, wean calves and tend young

**Other:** Fence and fill gullies, clean ditches, build roads, cart wood to town

## BUILDING TRADES

**Making and burning bricks:** Problem drying green bricks during wet weather.

**Carpentry and tanning:** Much easier to remove bark from trees felled in spring, especially oak; easier to rive wood, bark used in tanning process.

## HEALTH

Dr. John de Sequeyra noted in his diary, "In the Spring a few intermittent Fevers & Colds, but were easily cured."

## WEATHER

March 1774

11th The finest morning we have had yet: the robins and bluebirds singing all around us (Philip Fithian)

28th The day is warm & vastly mild; it is the first day we have in all our rooms without any fire. (Fithian)

April 1774

10th This morning is extremely pleasant the country full of flowers & the branches full of lovely singing birds. (Fithian)

29th Warm in the forepart of the day with showers. Cool in the afternoon with wind blowing violently hard from the northwest which again moderating it set in to raining & rained all night. (George Washington)

## GET READY FOR THE SPRING!

Housekeeping/Gardening/ Food Preservation

**Spring cleaning:** Thorough washing down of all household furnishings and textiles. Blankets and bed rugs stored. Fireplaces covered with chimney boards.

Harvesting early crops such as green peas, asparagus, etc. Drying of fruits, herbs and vegetables. (Lower humidity makes spring drying preferable to summer drying.) Some bottling of fruits and vegetables as well as making of syrups, ketchups, marmalades, jellies and jams and candying flowers.

## MONEY

TREASURY OFFICE, March 16, 1774

THE several Inspectors, and all other Persons whatever, who are Arrear to the Treasury, are desired to discharge their Respective Balances in the Course of the Approaching General Court, **without fail**, As no Indulgencies can be given.

RO. C. NICHOLAS, Treasurer

Mrs. Rind,  
Please to give the following a place in your paper, and oblige

A Constant Customer

## A SENTIMENT

Thirst of Wealth too oft bewitches

The deluded parent's heart:  
But can worldly pomp, or riches,  
Real happiness impart?

Love's the sweetest, dearest pleasure

To the human heart convey'd:

Those who give up love for treasure,

Quit the substance for the shade.

*Virginia Gazette* (Rind),

Thursday, March 10, 1774

## SHIPPING



Entered in the Upper District of JAMES River.

March 11. Brig *Jackie*, Dudley Thompson, from Liverpool, with European Goods.

Ship *Jean*, James Young, from Potowmack, in Ballast.

Ship *Venus*, John Wilson from Port Lewis, with 2500 Bushels of Salt.

April 4. Brigantine *Lark*, John Fulton, from Piscataway, in Ballast.

Cleared Outwards.

March 11. Brig *Innermay*, William Laughton, for Cadiz, with 7700 Bushels of Wheat.

22. Ship *Bowman*, Humphery Taylor, for Glasgow, with 459 Hhds. of Tobacco, 2 Hhds. of Rum, and 12,000 Staves.

24. Schooner *Richmond*, Eppes Greenough, for Piscataway with 13 Barrels of Pork, 8 Barrels of Flower, 800 Bushels of Indian Corn, 30 Bushels of Wheat, 35 Bushels of Pease, 4 Hides of Leather, 12 Kegs of Rum, 1 Pipe of Madeira Wine, and 4 Hhds. of Tobacco.

25. Sloop *Virginia Packet*, Charles Jones, for Antigua, with 2700 Bushels of Indian Corn.

28. Ship *Speirs*, John Dusk, for Cadiz, with 4287 Bushels of Wheat and 1400 Staves.

April 4. Sloop *Savage*, Francis Haynes, for St. Vincent's, with 700 Bushels of Corn, 35 Barrels of Flour, 13 Barrels of Bread, 2 Hhds. of Bacon, 103 Barrels of Oatmeal, and 35,000 Shingles.

Brigantine *Rogers*, Robert Benson, for Cadiz, with 5367 Bushels of Corn, and 1000 Staves.

Ship *Royal Exchange*, John Stevens, for London, with 488 Hhds. of Tobacco, 2 Hhds. and 2 Barrels of Ginseng, 1 cask of Drugs, 1 Cask of Snakeroot, 9900 Staves, 140 Handspikes, and 8 Hhds. and 1 Cask of Deerskins.

*Virginia Gazette* (Purdie & Dixon),  
Thursday, April 7, 1774



## SACRED AND SECULAR CALENDAR

**Wednesday, February 16: Ash Wednesday**

**February 16–April 2: Lent (exact dates each year depend upon the date of Easter)**

A 40-day period of solemnity and abstinence commemorating Jesus' fast of 40 days and 40 nights in the desert. For many centuries, the Lenten season included strict abstinence from red meat, milk, eggs, butter, cheese and lard. Many Anglican parsons in colonial Virginia, including James Blair of Bruton Parish Church, taught the Anglican catechism to girls and boys in the parish on the Sundays in Lent. He also read prayers at the church every Wednesday and Friday during the Lenten season.

**Friday, March 25: Lady Day/Annunciation of Mary**

Set apart as a memorial of the annunciation (declaration) by the Angel Gabriel to Mary that she would be the mother of Jesus. John Blair and others settled their accounts on this day.

**Saturday, March 26: End of Hilary Term at the College of William and Mary**

**Sunday, March 27: Palm Sunday**  
Commemorates Jesus' last and fatal journey to Jerusalem. As he entered the city, the populace spread their garments and branches from palm trees in his path.

**Thursday, March 31: Maundy Thursday**

Thursday before Easter, remembered as the day Jesus instituted the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and mandated its celebration in perpetuity.

**Friday, April 1: Good Friday**

Set aside as a memorial of the crucifixion of Jesus. Called "good" because of the beneficial effects of Jesus' sufferings, namely the carrying away of the sins of the penitent by his death and resurrec-

tion. James Blair held divine service and sermon at Bruton Parish Church on this day.

**Sunday, April 3: Easter Sunday (first Sunday after the full moon on or next after the vernal equinox)**

Festival commemorating Jesus' resurrection from the dead. One of the four times a year the Lord's Supper was administered at Bruton Parish Church. William Byrd II and Philip Fithian both mentioned attending church on Easter and receiving the sacrament. Fithian further observed that "this being Easter-Sunday, all the Parish seem'd to meet together High, Low, black, White all come out." Servants and slaves were usually exempted from labor during Easter.

**Monday, April 4: Easter Monday**

The "Easter holidays" in colonial Virginia included Easter Monday. On Easter Monday 1774, Fithian referred to the two-day Easter holiday the slaves enjoyed with cockfights. It was a popular time for cockfights and other amusements throughout the colony, sometimes coupled with a ball.

**Sunday, April 10: First Sunday after Easter called "Low Sunday" in Virginia Almanacks**

**Monday, April 11: Easter Term at the college begins (the Monday after the first Sunday after Easter)**

**Saturday, April 23: St. George, martyr, patron saint of England**

The Williamsburg charter designated this day for one of the authorized fairs to be held in the city. Public events and fairs were staged on this day elsewhere in the colonies as well.

Linda Rowe,

*The Interpreter*, Spring 2003

# FORUM



Letter from . . .

Margot Créviaux-Gevertz

The spring season is here once again. It's the time when Colonial Williamsburg comes alive with the sounds of animated chatter as families and schoolchildren make their way from one end of town to the other. It's the time we have to fire their imagination and inspire them to learn, to question, to think, to challenge, to teach each other and to get involved with the events that mold their lives and the lives of those around them.

This edition of *Becoming Americans Today* celebrates the lives of women in the 18th century. There is much here for students to ponder in comparing the expectations women would have had of their lives then and the dreams a girl has for her own future today. What would there be to look forward to for a girl in 2004 if things hadn't evolved? How would she feel about it? And how would the boys feel about it? What would be different in their own lives if a woman's place in society was still the way it was in 1774? Are there changes in the roles that women play in society today that the students hope to see in the future? How might they make their voices heard and what was the thinking in 18th-century Williamsburg that paved the way to making this possible?

The subject of women in society is just one of the many topics you will find in this issue that you can draw on to connect with students. You know it's been a good day when you have been able to capture their attention just long enough to focus on an idea that resonates with who they aspire to be, even if they themselves don't know it yet!

So this spring, let's be on the lookout for those "teachable moments," those fabulous windows of opportunity when there's a look, a question, a movement—something that shows a stirring of curiosity. When teachers bring their students or parents bring their children, they are counting on us to help light the spark that will ultimately give them a sense of empowerment to build their own future. They are honoring us with a mission far greater than any job description on paper could truly convey.

We are focused and up to the task. It's time to create our very special brand of magic!

## PROGRAMMING

A few years ago, I was sitting on a cruise ship in the middle of the Pacific wearing a *Cry Witch* cast T-shirt. I overheard a young teenage girl exclaim to her parents, "Look, that guy is in that witch play we saw in Williamsburg." That was the beginning of a long conversation with the family about their Colonial Williamsburg experience. The discussion ran the gamut of all of the things that they had enjoyed from *Cry Witch* to trades to buildings to the Play Booth and talking to the characters. I saw the father later in the day, and he explained to me that their visit to Williamsburg was one of their best family experiences ever.

The strength of the Historic Area is the people—the folks who go out every day to meet the public and the folks behind the scenes who support them. Programming is one of the keys to that support. I enjoyed meeting almost all of you in January during our program rollout sessions. Working together, we can continue the great tradition of the family experience.

The goals of program planning for the rest of the year and 2005 are:

- Establish a program-planning schedule that allows annual program planning to occur 12 to 18 months in advance.
- Create programming that will be diverse and fresh for guests and interpreters but require fewer resources.
- Centralize all program planning for sites, trades, first-person characters, evening, juvenile and special program-



ming in the Department of Public History Development.

- Create programming that is compelling enough to inspire ticket sales.
- Create programming that is varied enough to give repeat guests a slightly different look for each visit seasonally.
- Create programming that is historically correct and demonstrates that we continue to be one of the world leaders in public history.
- Create programs that reflect the Becoming Americans themes.
- Ensure quality.

Programs for 2004 will be day-to-day interpretations driven by the historic events of 1774. Besides our daily 1774 story, we will focus on other events critical to the development of the Revolution in Virginia between 1773 and 1776. Relating to our seasonal focus for 2005, these events will allow us to achieve our goal of advance program planning and to test our strategies for 2005.

## HIGHLIGHTS FOR SPRING 2004 STREETSCAPES

In each major season, three to four times daily, we will stage streetscape scenes in high-traffic areas along Duke of Gloucester Street. These scenes will involve two or more characters engaged in animated conversations about such provocative subjects as family issues, slavery, politics or religion. The interpreters' goal in these discussions is to attract a crowd of guests, involve them in the conversation and provoke them to think about the issue at hand before bringing the scene to a resolution. These scenes will relate to real-time events appropriate to the year being portrayed—1774, 1775 or 1776—and to events appropriate to the lives of the characters. Street scenes will operate from basic scripts developed by Historic Research staff working with Public History Development staff.

Examples:

- Loyalist John Randolph debates with a patriot in reaction to the Boston Tea Party.
- A husband and wife argue about the purchase of cloth for a ball gown.
- Samuel Henley and Robert Carter Nicholas argue traditional versus New Light interpretations of church doctrine and matters of faith.
- Two slaves, or one slave and one free black, talk about assisting a slave who has run away from a nearby plantation and is hiding in Williamsburg.

### Special Themes

April 19–25: Gunpowder Incident (April 1775)

Governor Dunmore removes the gunpowder from the Magazine, and residents of Williamsburg take to the streets

May 10–16: Prelude to Independence (May 1776)

The Fifth Virginia Convention and the Resolutions for Independence

May 24–30: In Support of Boston! (May 1774)

The Resolution for Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer, the Raleigh Tavern, the Association and the beginning of the American Revolution in Virginia

Our spring themes afford us exciting opportunities to validate our approach to 2005 programming. Spring will give us a taste of focused programs from 1774, 1775 and 1776. As we approach these special-focus programs, we will work closely with the departments of Historic Sites, Historic Interpretation and Interpretive Training to produce programming details in a timely fashion.

Looking forward to working with you. See you in the Historic Area.

Robin Reed



## CLEVER COLONEL CONS CONTEMPTIBLE CAREGIVERS

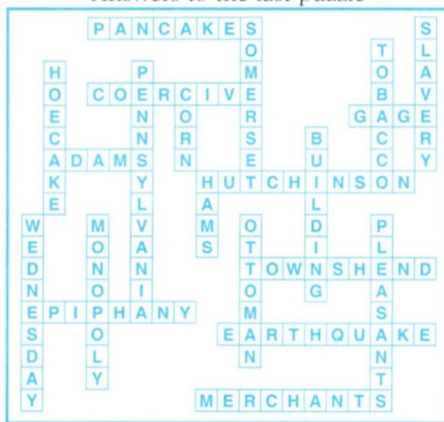
This is to inform the public that Colonial Williamsburg's own Company of Comedians will, in the coming season, perform a new play, viz. *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*, by Susanna Centlivre, one of the most popular comedies ever brought to the American colonies. The play concerns a hapless heiress, who, by the will of her whimsical late father, has been placed under the care of four disparate and stubborn guardians, and the poor girl cannot marry without the consent of them all. Our hero, Colonel Fainwell, is determined to win her hand by assuming the guises of a French fop, an Egyptian, an old steward, a Dutch merchant and a Quaker and thus tricking her guardians into offering their consent. Will the colonel's daring scheme succeed?

N.B. Performances of Mrs. Centlivre's comedy shall commence in April, on a date yet to be determined.

*Totus mundus agit histrionem.*

[Submitted by Sam Miller]

Answers to the last puzzle



### ACROSS

- 5 Lady Dunmore there on Valentine's Day
- 6 Virginia alternative to divorce in case of bad marriage
- 7 Did the legwork of the vestry
- 9 Oh my darlin' Clementina
- 14 *Feme covert* type of woman
- 15 Religion month
- 17 Indian troubles there
- 18 Evangelist Joseph Pilmore part of this Church of England movement
- 19 Church attendance required of free adults on this basis
- 20 Time to prepare the beds
- 21 Robert Carter Nicholas

### DOWN

- 1 Mayor's sidekicks
- 2 Caused unfortunate mishap at Lady D's arrival
- 3 Followed Moses
- 4 Indians had mixed reactions to this
- 8 Widow's right to portion of husband's estate
- 10 Type of *feme sole*
- 11 Special display for the governor's lady
- 12 Women's History Month
- 13 Free black women free of this after 1769
- 16 Not a legal possibility in Virginia

# CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

On Saturday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday last, the following Criminals were brought to the bar of the general Court to take their Trials, viz. John McClure, from Orange, for Horsestealing: Guilty—Catherine Peppers, from Bedford, for Murder; Guilty—Micheal Wheatley, from Williamsburg for Grand Larceny: Guilty—Henry Bullard, from Isle of Wight, for Manslaughter: Guilty—John Conner, from New Kent, for Manslaughter: Guilty—Amos Jenkins from Bedford, for Murder; John Owen from Surry, for Grand Larceny; Thomas Shaw from Fauquier, for a Rape; William Thompson from Amelia, for Burglary: All acquitted by the Grand Jury—William Patterson, from Lunenburg, for passing counterfeit paper Currency: Acquitted—Elizabeth Castle, from New Kent, for Child Murder: Acquitted.

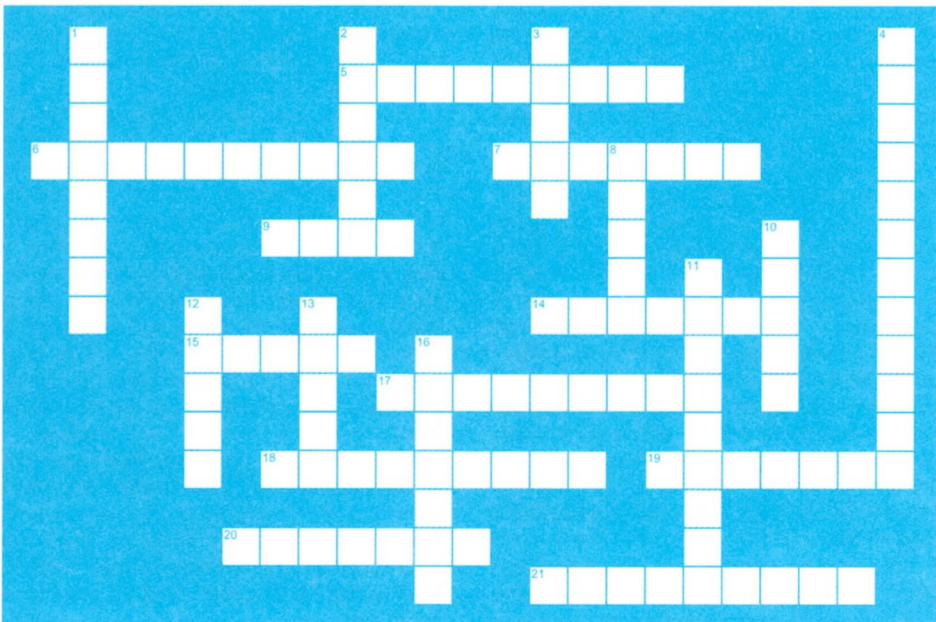
(Purdie and Dixon, *Virginia Gazette*, April 21, 1774.)

At a Court of Oyer and Terminer held at the Courthouse in the town of York the eighth day of March 1774 for the trial of Hannibal a Negro man slave belonging to James Shields for felony

Present: Dudley Digges, Thomas Nelson Jr., David Jameson, Jaquelin Ambler, and William Reynolds gent justices

The sd Hannibal was set to the bar and Benjamin Waller attor for our Lord the King comes into ct and gives the justices aforesd to understand and be informed that the sd Hannibal the thirteenth day of February last w/ force and arms at the Psh of Bruton in the cnty of York eight Turkeys of the value of twenty five shills of the goods and chattels of the right Honourable John Earl of Dunmore his Majestys Lieutenant and Governor General of Virginia then and there found feloniously did take steal and carry away agt the peace of our Lord the King his crown and Dignity to wch the sd Hannibal upon his arraignment pleaded not guilty and of his trial put himself upon the judgmt of the ct whereupon divers witnesses were sworn and examined and the sd Hannibal was heard in his defence on consideration whereof it is the opinion of the whole ct that the sd Hannibal is guilty of the felony aforesd in manner and form as above agt him is alledged and it appearing that the sd Hannibal was at a ct of Oyer & Terminer held in James City Cnty the 4th day of Dec. last convicted of felony and burnt in the hand for the same the record of wch conviction was produced in ct he is now denied the benefit of the act and it being demanded if he had any thing further to say he sd he had nothing. Therefore it is considered by the ct that he be hanged by the neck until he be dead and he is thereupon remanded to gaol and it is ordered that the sherif cause execution of this judgment to be done on Tuesday the twenty second day of this instant March. The sd Hannibal is valued by the ct at seventy five pds. current money.

The minutes of these proceedings were signed Dudley Digges. [York County Judgments and Orders (1772–74): 529.]



# WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



## MARCH 2004

This year one weekend of March (Women's History Month) will be devoted to noting the arrival of a lady who, though not American by any stretch of the imagination, exemplified all of the best that an 18th-century woman could strive to be—Lady Dunmore. Society expected any woman to adhere to a role appropriate to her station in life—be she high born or of low estate, free or enslaved, Indian or frontierswoman. A woman's sphere was that of home, hearth, helpmate and motherhood.

## TWO WILLIAMSBURG WOMEN IN 1774

During her lifetime a woman's legal status changed as she married, had children and became widowed. Two very different Williamsburg women and their lives are examined here. Anne Ashby was a most unusual black woman, while Elizabeth Hay's life more closely followed the norm for a white woman. It is important to remember that regardless of a woman's status—free or enslaved, single, married or widowed—she never was included as a full member of society.

**ANNE ASHBY** (birth and death dates unknown): enslaved woman, wife, mother; free black wife and mother, widow; and free black wife in second marriage

Anne Ashby's life was dramatically transformed, both personally and legally, during her lifetime. She was born a slave of unknown parents. In 1769, her master was Samuel Spurr, a Williamsburg brickmaker who lived on Nicholson Street.

As an enslaved woman, Anne was forbidden to marry legally, leaving her family ties vulnerable to separation and subjecting her and her children's lives to the will of her master. Nevertheless, Anne was recognized as the wife of Matthew Ashby and the mother of his three enslaved children, Anne, John and Mary. Matthew was a free man of mixed race who lived in Williamsburg and worked as a carter and carpenter.

In 1769, Matthew legally purchased his wife, Anne, and their two surviving children from Samuel Spurr for £150. After he had purchased his family as his own slaves, Matthew petitioned the Governor's Council for their freedom, claiming, "she [Anne] has been a faithful and diligent Wife ever since marriage, and praying that he may be permitted to let her and his Children free." The Council, in a most unusual action, without mention of "meritorious service," determined that "the said Anne, John, and Mary were deserving of their freedom, and it was order'd that the said Matthew Ashby have leave to manumit and set them free."

By this manumission, Anne became a free black woman legally recognized as the wife of Matthew Ashby and the mother of their two newly freed children, John and Mary. The marriage was now legal and therefore protected by the laws governing marriage for free Virginians. Anne was no longer identified as taxable property and invisible to the law but a *feme covert* under the legal identity and authority of her husband. The children, too, attained legal status. The family had control over their lives and no longer needed to fear separation.

Anne's life changed tragically on April 15, 1771, when Matthew died less than two years after securing freedom for his family. As a widow (*feme sole*) Anne was granted a "separate legal identity" allowing her access to the courts to sue for debts, enter contracts, execute deeds and dispose of her estate by writing a will.

By January 30, 1772, Anne had married John Jones, again changing her legal status from *feme sole* to *feme covert*. Using his authority as her husband, Jones advertised in the *Virginia Gazette*, "my Wife Anne and myself cannot agree in the Management of our Affairs." Jones then forewarned "all Persons from giving her Credit on Account, as I will not pay any of her Contractions after the date hereof. The Debtors to the Estate of Matthew Ashby, deceased are desired to make speedy Payment, that I may be enabled to pay the Creditors, who are desired to bring their Accounts against the said Estate."

If the rift between Anne and her second husband became intolerable, she could do little under the law. Divorce was

Yet women were as much a part of society as the men under whose (benevolent—or not) governance they found themselves. Although they lived under laws enacted without their consent, they maintained the households that allowed, perhaps even encouraged, men to fight for their rights and liberties. Women's lives formed a strong foundation on which to balance the events that led to and through the American Revolution.

[Submitted by Kristen Spivey]

not possible. The fate of Anne Ashby and her two children is not known. However, they were free persons rather than enslaved because of the actions taken by Matthew Ashby in 1769.

[See *Enslaving Virginia Resource Book*, 603–605]

**ELIZABETH HAY** (March 5, 1729/30–88): free, wife, widow, mother, stepmother and slave owner

Elizabeth Hay was the daughter of Margaret and Joseph Davenport Sr., members of a prominent family in Williamsburg. In about 1758, when Elizabeth was about 28 years old, she married Williamsburg cabinetmaker Anthony Hay after the death of his first wife. Upon marriage she became a *feme covert*—legally one with her husband.

With her marriage, Elizabeth became the stepmother of Barbara (about 6) and Thomas (about 4). Together, she and Anthony had seven children: Joseph (b. July 1758), George (b. 1765), Anthony (b. 1767), Charles, Betsy, Nancy and Sarah.

In 1767, Anthony Hay gave up his cabinetmaking business and began to operate the Raleigh Tavern. In addition to overseeing the care of her children and the day-to-day running of her household, Elizabeth, as the wife of a tavern keeper, undoubtedly supervised a large number of skilled slaves in their work at the tavern. The enslaved members of the household included a number of children, five of whom attended the Bray School.

In 1770, three years after purchasing the tavern, Anthony died after a long and difficult illness. At his death Elizabeth became a *feme sole* and assumed an independent legal identity. As a *feme sole*, she could sue others for debt, enter into contracts, execute deeds and write a will disposing of her own property.

Under the terms of Anthony Hay's will, his property (appraised at £1778.11.10 1/2, including 20 slaves valued at £800) was to be sold to cover his debts. The balance of the proceeds would go to Elizabeth for the support and education of their large family. Elizabeth's portion would have been a sixth of the value of the estate.

Claiming that she needed more of the estate to care for her own children and two stepchildren, Elizabeth renounced the will. The executors then sold the Raleigh and an additional 20 acres to James Southall. Nineteen slaves were also sold, including "a very good Cabinet Maker, a good Coachman and Carter, some fine Waiting Boys, good Cooks, [and] Washers." The widow purchased two slave women, Mary and Sarah, and was the highest bidder for their residence and cabinet shop on Nicholson Street.

As a widow, Elizabeth Hay was not nearly as financially comfortable as she had been as a married woman. The tax records indicate that she continued to hold the Nicholson Street property until her death in 1787 at age 58. The Hay children prospered as adults.

Christ Church, Lancaster County



## APRIL 2004

Observed nationally as Religion in American Life Month, April will bring daily programs on religion to the Hennage Auditorium. Each Wednesday scholars highlight various aspects of religious life in 18th-century America. Several days each week, various character interpreters present their views on religious matters and discuss their experiences.

## RELIGION TIME LINE 1753–76

1753	Act of Parliament permits naturalization of Jews	1771–1773	Bruton Parish controversy involving Samuel Henley
1754	Synagogue built in Newport, Rhode Island	1773	Silver Bluff Church for slaves founded in South Carolina
1760	Bray School for Black Children established in Williamsburg with Anne Wager as mistress	1774	Day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer
1763	Parson's Cause	1774	Anne Wager dies; Bray School is closed
1764	Baptists found Rhode Island College (Brown University)	1776	Virginia Declaration of Rights adopted. Article 16 guarantees "free exercise" of religion but does not disestablish the Anglican Church in Virginia.
1765	Presbyterians receive permission to use Williamsburg house as meetinghouse	1776	By tradition, date of the founding of the black Baptist church in Williamsburg. Moses, followed by Gowan Pamphlet, preaches to slaves in secret at first, then gradually brings the congregation into the open.
1766	Dutch Reformists found Queen's College (Rutgers) in New Jersey	1776	First session of new Virginia House of Delegates suspends tax support for Anglican church.
1769	Congregationalists found Dartmouth College in New Hampshire		<i>Freeing Religion Resource book</i> , 350–351
1769	Committee for Religion established in the House of Burgesses		
1769	Bruton Parish Church tower added		
1771	Episcopacy debate begins		
1772	Joseph Pilmore, Methodist itinerant, preaches in Williamsburg		

## COLONIAL AMERICAN RELIGION

Jon Butler, *Becoming America: The Revolution before 1776* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 185–186.

Colonial American religion became far more varied and rich between 1680 and the American Revolution. . . . By 1770 an unprecedented array of European denominations and sects peopled the eighteenth-century colonies from New England to the Carolinas. Religious groups mastered this potential chaos through powerful new denominational institutions that effectively made Philadelphia, not Boston, the capital of American Protestantism. In turn, these religious groups figuratively and literally sacralized the landscape. They constructed far more church and synagogue buildings to serve more newly organized congregations than ever before, and the increase outpaced the colonies' population growth.

The denominations ushered in—or fell victim to—an evangelical revivalism that divided many of them and, in some cases, established patterns of proselytizing that characterized American culture for two centuries. American Indians underwent their own awakenings, some turning to Christianity, some turning against it with violence. Africans endured a spiritual holocaust that undermined traditional African religious systems. But some traditional African practices survived, and an extensive Christianization took root that would in the next century reshape both African-American society and American Christianity itself. In short, between 1680 and 1770 colonists transformed the religious patterns laid down in the seventeenth century, creating the religious pluralism and vitality long since identified as the very soul of modern American culture.

## CHURCH AND VESTRY

Henry Wiencek, *An Imperfect God: George Washington, His Slaves and the Creation of America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), [need page number]

Churches . . . also served as the focus of temporal power. Attendance at Sunday services was required of all by law, and all heads of households were taxed to support the church. The church's governing body, the vestry, had quasi-public functions, including unusual police powers. The churchwardens naturally kept an eye out for those who neglected to attend services. These miscreants were reported to the county court (reporting was simple because vestrymen usually served as the county justices as well) and fined, with the proceeds going to the support of the church. Since churches provided support for orphans and abandoned children, churchwardens were always alert for the births of illegitimate children who might become an expense for the church. The wardens hauled the mothers into court, where they were duly fined. The churches, formally and informally, were depots of local gossip, news, and official pronouncements.

Runaway slaves could be "outlawed," meaning that they were henceforth outside the protection of the law and could legally be killed with impunity, because they had ceased to exist as far as the law was concerned. Notices identifying outlaws were customarily nailed to the door of the church where all would see them and where they became sharp symbols of the distinction between the saved and the damned.

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