
Questions & Answers

Vol. 10, NO. 1

February 1989

February is Black History month. This issue of Questions & Answers replies to questions about schools for slaves in Williamsburg. These answers come from Thad Tate's The Negro in Eighteenth-Century Williamsburg.

1. Were there schools for slaves in Williamsburg?

There is some evidence of interest in education for Negroes in Williamsburg as early as the 1740s. On December 22, 1743, Commissary Dawson wrote to England asking for a copy of school rules "which, with some little alteration, will suit a Negro school in our Metropolis, when we shall have the Pleasure of seeing One established." Then only a few years later, in 1750, he wrote the Bishop of London about Negro schools, "There are three such schools in my parish, these I sometimes visit." Whether these were no more than occasional catechism classes or more regular instruction is a complete mystery. It hardly seems likely that they could have had a very long history without attracting wider notice.

2. What was the group known as Dr. Bray's Associates?

Dr. Bray's Associates were English philanthropists from the larger groups called the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. This group expended a part of its missionary effort "amongst the Poorer sort of people, as also among the Blacks and Native Indians." In the 1760s Dr. Bray's Associates decided that Williamsburg was worth a try as the location of one of its schools for blacks.

3. Who were the trustees of the Williamsburg school?

Benjamin Franklin, who in January 1760 took his place as a newly elected member of the Associates, recommended William Hunter (Williamsburg postmaster and printer of the Virginia Gazette) and Thomas Dawson (president of William and Mary and rector of Bruton Parish) as trustees for the Williamsburg school. Both were approved. Hunter and Dawson had to organize the school, find a teacher and a place for it to meet, and supervise its day-to-day operation. Since Thomas Dawson died just as the school opened, Hunter undertook most of the responsibilities connected with the establishment of the school.

SUBJECT INDEX: Black Schools

4. When did the Bray School open?

The Williamsburg school began to operate on Michaelmas (September 29), 1760.

5. How large was the enrollment? At what age did children attend?

At the request of the Associates, Robert Carter Nicholas, Treasurer of the Colony of Virginia, raised the enrollment from twenty-four to thirty, and it remained close to or a little above that figure for the duration of the school. Most pupils were six to eight years old, a few as young as three, and one or two as old as nine and ten.

6. How many teachers did the school employ?

Hunter engaged as a teacher Mrs. Ann Wager, who was to be the only instructor the school ever had. Upon her death the school closed in 1774.

7. What were the course of study and methods of teaching employed at the school?

In 1763 Nicholas and Hunter's successor William Yates drew up rules for the guidance of the schoolmistress. Mrs. Wager was to take only scholars approved by the trustees, open the school at seven o'clock in the winter and six in the summer, enforce regular attendance, and keep her pupils "diligently to their Business during the Hours of Schooling." A number of rules governed religious instruction and worship: the students were to learn to read the Bible, the instructor was to catechize them according to the doctrines of the Church of England, and the teacher was to take the children to church regularly as well as conduct prayers in the school. The teacher was also expected to insist upon personal cleanliness, neatness of dress, and moral behavior from the students. Finally, she was to "teach her Scholars the true Spelling of Names, make them mind their Stops [possibly punctuation] and endeavour to bring them to pronounce and read distinctly." While the heaviest emphasis was on religion, it is still clear that the intention was to provide a reasonable amount of formal academic training for the youngsters.

8. Where was the Bray School located?

From 1763 to 1765 the Associates engaged a house owned by Dudley Digges (possibly located on the northeast corner of Henry and Ireland streets). It proved too small, and in the latter part of 1765 the school moved to a house owned by John Blair, where it remained until it closed in 1774.

9. What kinds of masters allowed their slave children to attend the school?

The thirty or so Williamsburg slaveowners who enrolled slaves in the school represented a cross section of political leaders like John Blair, Robert Carter Nicholas, and John Randolph and of craftsmen, shopkeepers, and innkeepers like Anthony Hay, Hugh Orr, Alexander Craig, and Jane Vobe. The college also enrolled two of its slaves in 1769. Three of the children in 1762 and two in 1769 were free.

10. How successful was the Williamsburg school?

In Virginia educational opportunities for slaves were all but nonexistent. Dr. Bray's Associates' school in Williamsburg stands out as a notable establishment for the colonial period. Although the entire life of the school was not quite fifteen years, it was at the very least a moderate success. Classes operated at capacity even in the face of too brief an attendance from most of the scholars. Masters were willing to have some of their young slaves educated at the school (perhaps mostly because it was a cheap nursery). What may be most significant of all is the indisputable fact that some of the scholars were learning to read and write, even under relatively adverse conditions. Nicholas described those children who remained for an adequate time as able "to read pretty well." If nothing else, these young scholars had proved the slaves' capacity for education.

Questions & Answers

This is a reprint of the popular "rumor" issue from December 1982. Because many of these myths still have not been dismissed (dismythed?), we thought you would appreciate reading it again.

1. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

People were shorter in the eighteenth century. The short antique beds prove it.

People were not significantly shorter in the eighteenth century. Records indicate that soldiers (white males) during the Revolution averaged only .63 inches shorter than U. S. Army recruits in 1957 and 1958. The antique beds are actually about six feet long, the same as modern standard-size beds. For example, a random sample of beds in our exhibition buildings shows that none is shorter than 74" (6'2"), most are several inches longer than that, and some are as long as 80 1/2". They appear shorter because of high ceilings and tall bedsteads.

2. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

For sanitary reasons, a bit of the stem was broken off pipes before they were reused.

Archaeologists find many pipestem fragments because pipes are easily broken. There is no evidence that smokers broke off the end of the stem to make a clean mouthpiece. Furthermore, eighteenth-century people weren't aware of germs anyway.

3. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

Williamsburg has so many one and one-half houses because there was a tax on two-story houses.

There were no taxes on buildings during the colonial period, so this does not explain the prevalence of story-and-a-half houses in Williamsburg. These simply follow the pattern of the vast majority of houses in colonial Virginia. They are single-story houses with finished attics for additional living space.

4. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

Glazed headers tell us that a building dates from the early eighteenth century because after 1750 there was a law against burning hardwoods. Hardwoods were required to make a fire hot enough to glaze brick. There was no colonial Virginia law against burning

hardwoods.

5. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

Mirrors came in two pieces because a tax was placed on larger pieces of glass.

The old story about a tax on large pieces of glass appears to be completely without foundation. Harold Gill has determined that no such law existed in Virginia. In England every attempt was made to encourage manufacturing in the eighteenth century, not to hamper it. Also, if one compares very large, two-piece looking glasses with smaller examples of the same form, the larger mirror will often have a single unit containing more surface area than that of the combined surfaces of the smaller ones.

6. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

A French traveler remarked that in bad weather, Duke of Gloucester street was a mile long and a mile deep.

In Jane Carson's We Were There, Descriptions of Williamsburg, 1699-1859, none of the travelers described Duke of Gloucester Street (or the main street) as a mile long and a mile deep. Several of them wrote of the unpaved main street that it was deep with sand and aggravating in summer because of the dust, sand, and heat; one described the main street as "sloppy" during a rainy period.

7. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

Thomas Jefferson jogged up and down Duke of Gloucester Street.

Jefferson clearly believed that exercise was beneficial to health. In letters to his wife and to Peter Carr he recommended it highly. "Walking is the best possible exercise," he told Carr. "Games played with the ball and others of that nature, are too violent for the body and stamp on character on the mind." Whether he felt that "jogging" or running were "too violent," we don't know. Jefferson recommended that Carr walk in the afternoons and said that half an hour's walk in the morning was also beneficial. One might well have seen Jefferson walking for exercise in Williamsburg when he was a student here and later in his various governmental capacities. But "jogging up and down the Duke"--probably not.

8. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

Thomas Jefferson wrote that Palace green was planted with catalpa trees.

On his drawing of the Palace (circa 1779), Thomas Jefferson noted the "rows of trees 100f. apart" on Palace Street. He did not mention the type of tree. These were doubtless the trees that General de Lauberdriere mentioned in his journal (July 1782), in which he noted the "very fine palace, built at

the extremity of a handsome street planted with catalpas." De Lauberdiere's is the first statement we have that the trees were catalpas.

9. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

Pigs were free to roam the streets of Williamsburg.

By law pigs were penned to prevent their escaping from the small farms into the streets of Williamsburg.

10. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

Town criers announced the news to Williamsburg residents.

Purdie and Dixon's Virginia Gazette for July 16, 1772, reported that the Williamsburg Court of Common Hall had enacted a by-law

for constituting a WATCH, to consist of four sober and discreet People, who are to patrol the Streets of the City from ten o'Clock every Night till Daylight the next Morning, to cry the Hours, and use their best Endeavours to preserve Peace and good Order, by apprehending and bringing to Justice all disorderly People, Slaves, as well as others.

The watchmen were essentially policemen and firemen and only incidentally "criers" of the hours. The term "town crier" is associated with early New England, not colonial Virginia.

11. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

George Washington refused to marry Martha until she let her hair grow longer.

There is no evidence that George Washington "refused" to marry Martha Custis for any reason, let alone for such a frivolous and meaningless reason as the length of her hair. From what we know of Washington such an action would have been totally out of character.

12. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

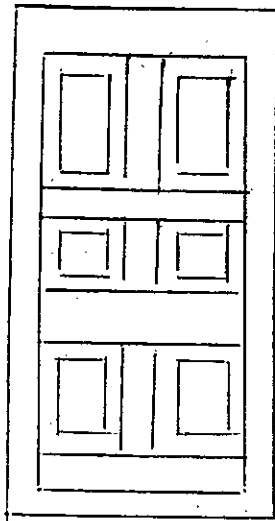
Cobblestones were used to line the streets of Williamsburg.

There is no evidence that cobblestones lined the streets of Williamsburg.

13. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

"H" panels in doors had a religious significance, meaning heaven and hell.

Architectural historian Mark R. Wenger has found no eighteenth-century source indicating religious significance in paneled doors--neither "H" for heaven and hell nor the "cross and Bible." The configuration of door joinery was determined by traditional methods of assembling paneled elements:



- A. Panels are enclosed by a frame composed of vertical members (stiles) and horizontal members (rails).
- B. On the outer edges of a paneled element (whether a door or an entire wall) the outer stiles run all the way through.
- C. Within these outer stiles, rails are continuous.
- D. Inner stiles are therefore broken by the rails.

A six-panel door is a good example of this. It is best, then, not to attribute door panel configurations to religious symbolism.

14. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

A button in the newel post indicated that the house was paid for.

As in the preceding case, the tradition concerning an ivory button in the newel post appears to have no basis in historical documents. Occasionally such traditions are proven to be true. However, in the absence of this sort of confirmation, we should avoid making traditional explanations part of our interpretation. Let's try to stick with what we can demonstrate or at least infer from historical documents.

15. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

A man could legally beat his wife with a stick if it was not bigger than his thumb.

No law to this effect existed in colonial Virginia. Completely false.

16. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

A woman could be put in the pillory for showing her ankles.

There is no evidence whatsoever for this. Many illustrations dating from the colonial period show working women wearing their hems at ankle length or above.

17. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

The "refusal room" at Carter's Grove is so called because it was there that Mary Cary refused George Washington's proposal of marriage, as did Rebecca Burwell when Thomas Jefferson proposed marriage.

George Washington was never enamored of Mary Cary. Rather,

his infatuation was with her sister Sally Cary Fairfax, wife of George William Fairfax. It began in the early 1750s and continued for seven or eight years. Although Washington seems to have been genuinely in love with Sally, she was married to his friend and neighbor. Though they sometimes corresponded, circumstances precluded any proposal of marriage in the so-called "refusal room" at Carter's Grove or anywhere else. The Washingtons and Fairfaxes remained friends for many years.

Jefferson had a schoolboy infatuation for Rebecca Burwell of Fairfield, Gloucester County. Although he seems to have contemplated marrying Rebecca, he never actually proposed in the "refusal room" or elsewhere. He indicated at one time that a proposal might be in the offing, but that he would ask her to wait for marriage until he had traveled abroad. In the meantime Rebecca married Jacquelin Ambler. Somehow this youthful romance has overshadowed Jefferson's marriage to Martha Wayles Skelton on New Year's Day 1772, which Dumas Malone says "ushered in the happiest period of his life."

18. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

There was a law in Williamsburg that stated sheets in the taverns had to be changed once every two months.

The law required eighteenth-century tavern keepers to furnish "good, wholesome, and cleanly lodging and diet for travellers," but there was no specific reference to changing sheets. Conditions varied in taverns as in today's hotels and motels. Clean sheets seem to have been the exception rather than the rule if travelers' accounts are accurate. One person even went so far as to carry his own sheets with him. However, inventories of the better taverns in Williamsburg list more sheets than beds, so clean linen was probably available at those taverns most of the time.

19. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

People did not bathe or change their clothes very often in the eighteenth century.

People rarely record such personal and routine information about themselves, so there is no way to answer such questions adequately. There is no reason to think that most colonial Virginians did not bathe and change clothes regularly. William Byrd II in his History of the Dividing Line indicates on occasion that he was relieved to be able to bathe after several days' travel in the wilderness. Inventories, newspaper ads, and other sources refer to outbuildings used as laundries, soaps, and laundering equipment. The curator of textiles tells us that methods of "dry cleaning" were used on silks and other fancy fabrics.

20. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

There are two necessaries in each garden in Williamsburg because one was used while the other was cleaned. Many Williamsburg house lots had only one necessary

house and some had none. Even at Westover plantation the evidence is conclusive that there was only one necessary house. No evidence points to a "spare" house.

21. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

Women were not allowed to come in the front door of an eighteenth-century tavern.

First of all, women were not usually tavern customers, although there were instances of them sleeping there of necessity when traveling, or dining at taverns with family or friends, or attending balls at taverns. Furthermore, there is no evidence that when an eighteenth-century woman entered a tavern she had to use a back or side door. It is likely that most women would not have wanted to be in a boisterous barroom. The custom of a separate ladies' entrance or waiting room appears to be a nineteenth-century one. Today some English pubs still have a public bar and a quieter lounge bar. Quite recently women customers have begun frequenting public bars as well as lounge bars, where women felt more welcome in the past.

22. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

The pineapple became a symbol of hospitality because it resembles the pinecone, a symbol of hospitality to the Greeks.

The research staff checked several reference books on symbols and found nothing about the Greeks' using the pinecone as a symbol of hospitality. To them it was a fertility symbol.

The traditional explanation for the pineapple's use as a symbol of hospitality is that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when the fruit was so exotic and rare, it was a mark of the host's special esteem for his guest to serve pineapple.

23. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

Publick Times was when the burgesses were in session.

To the colonists Publick Times meant only that the General Court or Court of Oyer and Terminer was in session. Publick Times were in April and October (when the General Court met) and again in June and December (sessions of Oyer and Terminer). The Meeting of Merchants usually coincided with court dates. The General Assembly met for long periods--sometimes months at a time. Thus, the House of Burgesses were sometimes in session during Publick Times.

24. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

Kitchens were separate from houses because this arrangement was thought to reduce the danger of fire to the main house.

In 1705 Robert Beverley wrote, "All Their [Virginians'] Drudgeries of Cookery, Washing, Daries, etc. are perform'd in

offices detach from the Dwelling Houses, which by this means are kept more cool and Sweet." Current scholarship on detached kitchens in the Chesapeake area emphasizes their role in the segregation of different social groups. Reducing the risk of fire was not a reason for separating kitchens from the main houses.

A balanced explanation of separate kitchens should mention a concern for fire, but the emphasis should be on a social factors. The wisdom of this approach is apparent when we consider that dozens of seventeenth-century frame houses survive in New England where cooking was done in the house. In Virginia, where kitchens were separate, not one seventeenth-century frame house is known to exist.

25. RUMOR HAS IT THAT . . .

Portrait painters in the eighteenth century had canvases already made up with figures and torsos and just painted in their clients' heads.

The "headless body myth" seems to have begun in the 1930s. The formula-like poses and prodigious output of certain artists engendered the theory that itinerant portrait painters spent their winters preparing a supply of canvases with painted bodies and backgrounds. The myth has been applied to both eighteenth- and nineteenth-century painters without much evidence to support it.

It probably would be erroneous to state that the technique was never employed by artists working in eighteenth-century America since we can only judge by the incomplete evidence available to us today. The evidence we do have consists of the surviving paintings and the slim recorded documentation on artists' methods during those years, as in the cases of Jeremiah Theus in Charleston from about 1740 to 1774, and Charles Willson Peale whose early career in the mid-Atlantic colonies is well known. No mention of such a practice is made in any references to these two painters or their work, although we do learn that several sittings with the subject were required for completing a likeness. Furthermore, no large-scale (meaning oil on canvas and near life size) headless likenesses by eighteenth-century portraitists in America have been discovered.

Finally, scholars have not been able to detect any physical evidence in existing paintings that bodies were painted well in advance of the heads. Such physical evidence might include overlapping paint layers along the neck and chin areas as well as along the circumference of the head where it joins the background.

On a slightly different but related subject, new research indicates that American portrait painters often showed exactly the same clothing, objects, and poses used in English paintings. This does not mean that American painters only

filled in the faces of their subjects--they painted the whole figure and entire background but sometimes borrowed designs from other artists.

Questions & Answers

Vol. 10, No. 3

June 1989

This issue of Questions and Answers explains in some detail a number of new programs our visitor's can expect to see this summer.

Military Encampment

The Brickyard

Tailoring

Children's Programs

SUBJECT INDEX: Summer Programs

MILITARY ENCAMPMENT

The themes and topics identified for the interpretation at the Magazine, Guardhouse, and Magazine yard can be presented more effectively by moving the outdoor activities to a separate military encampment (for the nine busiest months of the year).

For several years, the desire to interpret the role of the Magazine as a military warehouse and the desire to interpret military life and focus on the Revolution has caused tension in the interpretation. Important aspects of weapons, tactics, camp life, etc. have been demonstrated and interpreted in the Magazine yard because these subjects were not being addressed anywhere else. Unfortunately, many of these activities never took place at the Magazine in the period. We have successfully presented the subjects, but in so doing, we have created a scene that never existed.

During the years 1775 to 1781, numerous troops were camped in the Williamsburg area. Others were quartered in the town itself. Developing a small (company size) camp within the Historic Area would allow the Magazine staff, with the seasonal aid of some Fife and Drum members, to continue to expand the interpretation of military life in a more appropriate location.

With the fencing, tents, cooking fires, etc. removed from the Magazine area, the interpretation there would focus on broader issues without the need to explain away the historic inaccuracies of the present site.

Guardhouse: When the encampment is open, the Guardhouse will be closed.

Encampment: Of those sites examined, the best combination of space, level ground, visitor accessibility, and support facilities seems to be the wooded lot behind the Tayloe House on Nicholson Street. A total of fifteen tents will make a believable company size camp. At the head of the company street, a marquee will serve as the officers' or headquarters tent. Flanking the street will be two lieutenants' wall tents and twelve "A" tents for troops. (See attached sketch for additional details and the layout of the site.)

The camp will be fenced and access will be controlled through an entrance on Nicholson Street.

Key topics for interpreters introducing visitors to the site will be:

During the Revolutionary War, troops camped in and around Williamsburg because, as the capital, it was the military center of Virginia.

Troops camped here for a number of reasons: recruiting and assembling new units; equipping and training recruits; gathering units for specific campaigns; and supplying the troops to guard the public buildings.

Ongoing interpretive activities and demonstrations will include: musket cleaning, cooking, casting musket balls, making cartridges, washing clothes, maintenance of gear and equipment, field music, drum repair, building and maintaining the camp itself, posting sentries, etc.

Special or times events will include: musket and cannon firing, a parade of uniforms, in-depth interpretive or specific topics ranging from tactics to the role of camp followers, revelry, first person tours, wagons bringing in supplies from the Magazine, etc.

"Hands-on" activities will include: helping to build the camps, making wooden fortifications (gabions), drill and manual of arms, drum playing, tomahawk throwing, dry firing cannon, trying on uniforms, etc.

Exhibits will include: furnished tent interiors, bell of arms, uniforms of different units, practice targets.

Logistics: The Magazine will operate seven days a week in the spring, summer and fall and five days a week in the winter as was scheduled in 1989. The encampment will be open 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday (firing of muskets and cannon is prohibited on Sundays) from mid-March until December. The Guardhouse will be open only when the encampment is closed for the season.

THE BRICKYARD

Brickmaking will begin the first week in June. The work will reflect everything learned about molding bricks over the past eighteen years. Research has led to some conclusions regarding the process used by the colonial Virginia brickmaker, the ways in which the trade was organized, how it functioned in the colonial economy, and the people involved in brickmaking.

Every document and reference still available relating to brickmaking in Virginia from 1600 through the nineteenth century, focusing specifically on Williamsburg in the colonial period, was carefully examined, and an exhaustive study of several English accounts was undertaken. The most complete accounts came from a French encyclopedia published in 1761. Over forty folio size pages of text were translated. This French source also yielded several paintings showing all aspects of work.

As a result of this research Historic Trades had to rethink some of the commonly held ideas about brickmaking.

One popular notion says that the clay used to make bricks came from the excavations of cellars and footings at building sites, and that bricks were always made on site for a proposed building. While this may have been true in some cases, it can't be used as a statement of common practice. Where the clay is concerned, not just any claylike subsoil will make good bricks. Knowledgeable brickmakers sought clay of a particular consistency and texture. All subsoil, the material found beneath the loamy, organic topsoil layer, is composed of clay particles and quartz (sand), with small amounts of minerals such as iron, lime, and magnesium. Good brick clay is approximately two to three parts clay particle to sand. The brickmaker relied on his training and experience to judge the qualities of a potential brick clay.

Firing, or "burning," the bricks is another critical part of the operation that requires skill and care. Church vestry records usually stipulate that only "well burnt" bricks be used in the construction of a proposed church building. This brings up a controversial point on terminology related to how the bricks were burned.

The terms "clamp" and "kiln" may have been used interchangeably in general usage from the Middle Ages through the mid-nineteenth century. A clamp can be a pile of anything--hay, potatoes, or bricks. In brickmaking specifically, a clamp is a volume of unfired bricks stacked for the purpose of firing, and the entire mass is disassembled when the firing is completed. A kiln is a permanent or semi-permanent shell of burned bricks that is periodically filled with unfired bricks for the purpose of firing them. By the late seventeenth century, people writing about the brickmaking trade clearly indicate that clamps and

kilns worked in distinctly different ways. Kilns fit the above general description and were fired with wood. Clamps were similarly constructed, but without the thick burned brick shell (one layer of burned bricks would sometimes be used to cover the outside of a clamp). The significant difference was that, during construction, crushed coal was layered around and between the unfired bricks as they were stacked. Tunnels at the base were filled with a combination of wood and coal, the wood being used to ignite the coal. Once the coal was ignited, a clamp burned on its own until the fuel was spent. A kiln had to be fueled and tended constantly during the course of the burn. Documentation indicates that kilns produced higher percentages of "well-burnt," or good quality brick, but clamps did not require the intense labor and management in firing.

The term "clamp" never appears in any of the colonial Virginia documents that we have examined. "Kiln" or "Kill" is always used. The records seem to indicate that bricks in Virginia were wood fired, after the manner of English country kilns.

As with other trades in Virginia, the skills were first imported and then passed on. As early as 1610, "brickmakers," along with bricklayers, lime burners, and other tradesmen, were being recruited to come to Virginia. The distinction made between brickmaker and bricklayer signifies that the two were recognized as different skills and separate trades.

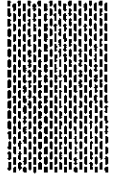
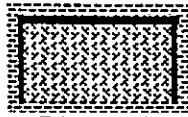
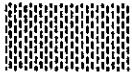
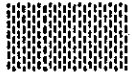
Some skilled brickmakers were evidently itinerant, moving from place to place, contracting with whomever required bricks. On the other hand, brickyards would operate for a period of years in one place, supplying bricks for a particular locale. Humphrey Harwood, Williamsburg builder and bricklayer, maintained brickyards that supplied bricks for different jobs in numbers from two to three hundred to upward of 30,000.

The skill and labor for making bricks was provided by slaves and indentured servants. The following entry from Harwood's ledger indicates the skills embodied in one of his slaves, a man named Sam.

The quality of bricks made in the colonial period ranges from the excellent examples found in the Wythe and Palmer Houses to the very poor bricks in the east wall of Prentis Store and the Powell smokehouse. Our goal is to produce hard, durable bricks that can be used to repair and restore Williamsburg's historic buildings and for reconstruction projects. The bricks that we make this summer may be used to rebuild the fireplaces in the Courthouse.

In the course of producing bricks that are "well tempered and well burned," we want to show Williamsburg's visitors a dynamic picture of the trade as it traditionally existed.

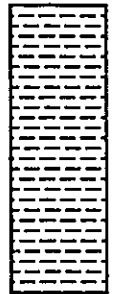
Building Trades Yard - 1989



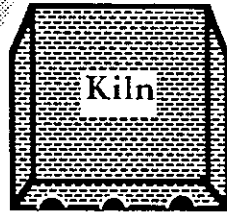
Fired Brick

Clay Pit

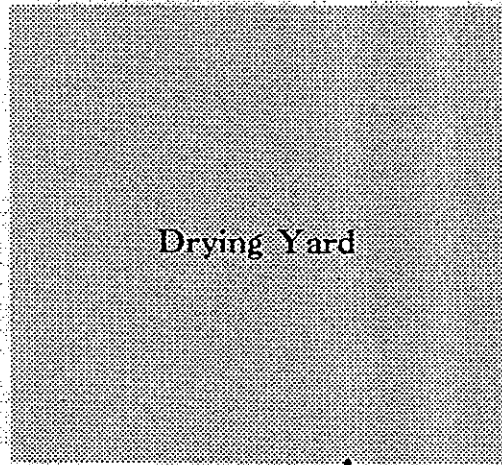
Wood Piles



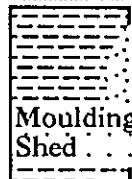
Drying Shed



Kiln



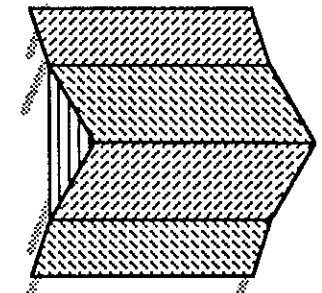
Drying Yard



Moulding Shed

Tree

Tree



Carpentry Shop

Tree

Well

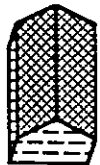


Clay Pit

Framing Yard



Clay Pile



Privy

Nicholson Street

TAILORING

It has long been a dream of Colonial Williamsburg to be able to exhibit the tailoring trade. The authors of Teaching History at Colonial Williamsburg advocated the inclusion of this craft in the future development of the Historic Area. Our research at present has identified 70 tailors and one tailoress who resided at one time in Williamsburg during the eighteenth century. (There are over 700 tailors identified in colonial Virginia.) The next closest trade to tailors in numbers was carpenters/joiners, of whom we have identified 50 individual craftsmen in Williamsburg. By exhibiting this craft we have an excellent opportunity to show the tailor as a merchant, local competitor, user of English imported goods, and employer. Technical processes such as the skills involved in measuring, cutting, and constructing a three-dimensional and fashionable garment from a flat pattern can be demonstrated. Interpreting tailoring would complement the Millinery and Wig Shops in discussing the changing fashions of eighteenth-century Virginia. In fact, the fashion, clothing, and textiles trades represented 35.5 percent of all trades in eighteenth-century Williamsburg. The next closest group of trades were metal workers, who represented 16.5 percent of the total.

We will open the Boot Shop as an operating Tailor Shop three days a week (Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday) throughout the spring and summer. Those three days were selected because on Wednesday the Millinery Shop is closed and Friday and Saturday are the busiest days of visitation in the Historic Area based upon visitation patterns over the past few years. The Millinery Shop will continue a six-day operation and the textile area will maintain a five-day operation. During the summer we will either propose continuing the tailoring program throughout the rest of 1989 or be able to reopen the Boot Shop.

Goals and Objectives:

The overall goal for this site will be: to accurately interpret the work, lives, and environment of tailoring as represented in eighteenth-century Williamsburg and to establish and preserve the technology, processes, and skills of the trade. The interpretive objectives will be:

- to interpret the role of the tailor in Williamsburg and Virginia
- to interpret the technology, processes, skills, organization, and working environment of tailoring
- to identify those individuals who were tailors and interpret their lives

-to compare and contrast Williamsburg tailors with English tailors

-to link the interpretation to the knowledge and interest of the visitors

Throughout the experimental period the tailors will make a number of different items, including breeches, waistcoat, coat, child's waistcoat, breeches, and coat, suit consisting of a frock, waistcoat, and breeches, riding habit waistcoat, and banyan. The list of clothing represents the period 1750-1790 and the articles will be exact reproductions of existing pieces in our collection. Additional research needs to be done on men's pre-1750 fashions before we can make exact reproductions from that period of the eighteenth century.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Once Upon a Town

Children ages 4-6. Costumed interpreters and local children in costume will lead young visitors on a walking tour of the Palace green neighborhood and explore the lives of young people in eighteenth-century Williamsburg. Games, puppets, visiting the livestock, and other participatory activities will occur. The program varies daily.

Tickets are sold at the Courthouse in the Historic Area. Limited to 14 children per program.

Young Apprentice Tour

Children ages 10-12. Led by a costumed historical interpreter, tour participants focus on young American at work and play as they walk through an eighteenth-century community. Actively participating in activities of trade and domestic crafts, today's young visitors learn about their eighteenth-century counterparts. Who became an apprentice? Who was educated at home? How did opportunities differ for boys versus girls? White and black? How was leisure time spent?

Special "hands-on" and active inquiry activities vary daily and encourage participants to interact with the restored eighteenth-century community that was the heart of Britain's largest continental colony.

Tickets are sold at the Courthouse in the Historic Area. Limited to 20 children per tour.

Stepping into the Past: Families at work and play in colonial Virginia

Twentieth-century families will "step back in time" to investigate family life in this colonial community. The roles of men, women, and children of varying ages will be examined through activities that re-create the work patterns and leisure-time activities of a different era. This participatory program will encourage parents and children to learn together about family life in colonial Virginia.

Tickets are sold at the Courthouse in the Historic Area. Limited to 16 people per tour. (Activities are designed for the participation of children over seven years old.)

All programs begin and end at the flag on Market Spare green near the Courthouse, weather permitting. Check the "Visitor's Companion" for times and ticket information.

Family Tours at the Capitol

Designed primarily for families with children 6-12 years of age. This 35 minute tour of the Capitol provides a thought-provoking participatory exploration of the basic processes of 18th-century government.

For more information see the Visitor's Companion.

Young Curator's Tours at the DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Gallery

This hour-long tour for children ages 7-11 explores the Gallery to find new ways of looking at objects. The tour emphasizes interactive and participatory techniques to involve the "young curators" in exciting discovery experiences.

The tour is limited to ten children per tour, and reservations may be made by calling extension 2936. For more information see the Visitor's Companion.

Special summer tours offered June 19 through August 20, 1989

Young Colonials Club Childrens Program

Beginning Monday, June 13th and continuing through the summer, there will be two children's activity programs exclusively for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation hotel guest children ages 5-10 years of age.

The programs will run from 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. and from 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m daily. The afternoon program is held in the historic area, and the evening program is held on the Motor House grounds. Each program includes a meal. The cost is \$10.00 per child, per program and will be charged to the guests room.

Please make a special effort to inform the guest about this program.

Questions & Answers

Vol. 10, No. 4

August 1989

This issue of Questions and Answers responds to the many inquiries we have received about, how were clothes cleaned in the eighteenth century? Instead of the usual format of Questions and Answers we have excerpted receipts from original sources, thus we have made no attempt to correct the spelling. For additional reading we have included a bibliography suggested by Su Carter, Senior Historic Trades Interpreter.

Soaft Soap

16 lb potash 25 lb fat hot water to dissolve the potash it must bear an egg to dissolve the fat then pour it on the fat the lye and let it boil for soap 5 lb potash makes 2 pails lye

hard soap of Snow

1 lb hard soap Sliced melt it slow over the fire then take 8 lb frech snow stiring it often till it rises a skum then add 1 wine Glassfull Salt in it, it will give 6 for 1 it wants 3 hours boiling, I had but 3 for one

hard soap

when you boil your soap take out 2 pails of the best soap trow it in a tub, stirr in a Sup plate Salt while hot when stired well till Dissolve'd then trow a little water in the botom of a tub to civer the bottom then trow your soap, in the next day cut it out

stains

1 pail water with a little weak Lye 1 table spoon turpentine in, will boil any stains out Linen or Cotton very good for corse things to git clean you must wet them first when put in

dip your ink stain's in clean Candle Grease Melted and let it dry on the linen till washing

stains

rub it with fine rosin and hogs lard then rub soap on it then pour hot lye on it 2 or 3 times till the Stains disapears then wash it in Clean soap suds

SUBJECT INDEX: CARE OF CLOTHING

A ball to take out stains from linnen

Take foure ounces of white hard Soape, beate it in a mortar with two small Lemmons sliced, and as much roche allome as an hasell nut, roll it up in a ball, rub the staine therewith, and after fetch it out with warme water if neede be.

Iron mould out of Linen and Grease out of Woolen & Silk

4 Oz of Spirits of turpentine of the essence of Lemon mixt well together put in a bottle for use

To remove Iron Molds from Cotton or Linen.

Take an earthen vessel, pour into it boiling water, then spread the stained parts of your cloth over it, let it remain until well penetrated with the steam, then rub on the places sorrel juice mixed with salt until it is well soaked. Such cloths washed afterwards in common lye, will be made free from spots of mold.

To remove Carriage Wheel Grease from Woollen Cloth

To effect this, the spots of grease must be first rubbed with fresh butter, then lay on two or three strips of blotting paper and apply a hot flat iron to it; this will entirely take out the spots.

To Extract Grease or Stains from Mourning

Take a good handfull of fig leaves, boil them on two quarts of water till the quantity is reduced to a pint, put it in a bottle for use. This liquor will take any stains or spots of grease out of Ladies mourning dresses, such as bombasines, crapes, cloths, etc. It is only necessary to rub the soiled part with a sponge dipped in the liquor.

To Take Mildew out of Linen

Wet the linen which contains the mildew with soft water, rub it well with white soap, then scrape some fine chalk to powder and rub it well into the linen, lay it out on the grass in the sunshine, watching to keep it damp with soft water. Repeat the process the next day, and in a few hours the mildew will entirely disappear.

To Take Off Spots of Any Sort, From Any Kind of Cloth

Take half a pound of crude honey, the yolk of a new laid egg, and the bulk of a nut of aromatic salt, then mix all well together, then put some on the spots; having left it there awhile, then wash it off with clean water, and the spot will

immediately disappear. This receipt is of great importance to servants that have the care of their master's wardrobe, and in many other similar cases.

To Remove Ink Stains From Cloth, Plaid, Silk or Worsted, &c

Take one pint of rain or other soft water, dissolve in it half an ounce of oxalic, citric, or tartaric acid; the half ounce will be sufficient to mix the pint strong enough, cork it very close and shake it well; to use it, lay the part affected over a bowl of hot water, but not to touch the water, and let the steam evaporate through, then shake up the solution and dip a sponge into it, and rub well the part affected until the stain disappears, then hang it out in the sun, and this solution will not hurt the finest fabric.

Dolcey's Mode of Doing up Muslin, Silk, Camb[ric]k, Stuff

Muslin, Cambk, and common clothes (except flannel)-- wash in two waters as hot as you can bear it with hard soap, strong suds then boil in blue water until white--if very yellow they must be rubbed with hard soap when put into the Kettle. the water must be just warm in the kettle when the clothes are put in. Then well boiled. When white enough take them out, wring and dry them--for thin muslin use very thick starch, for thick muslin and cambk very thin--squeeze out the starch, wring them in old linen or diaper, then dry them again the cambk must be sprinkled before it is ironed. the muslin must only be clapped until perfectly clear, then placed smooth with the hands and ironed when dry. muslin should always be boiled in a brown linen bag not too thick--brown rolls is the best. dresses never boiled with anything but muslin articles. silk, stuff, color'd clothes and flannel must be washed twice in mild warm suds then wrung out clear, roll'd smooth. silk and stuff iron'd on the wrong side before they are dry--this gives a gloss. color'd clothes sprinkled and iron'd as cambks. flannel smooth'd with the hands after shaking them a little then hung out to dry. silk hose done up as other silks. white are ting'd with pink by drop cake made like blue water. Black crape is washed in clear water then stiffen'd with gum arabic, clapped and very lightly ironed. color'd winter vests in milk warm suds, twice, iron'd when damp, on the wrong side.

Old Dolls Method of Washing Color'd Dresses

Wash them in two lathers of milk warm water, rinse them in fair water milk warm then have ready their starch enough to wet the whole dress. 3 table spoonsful of starch to half a handful of salt, make it thick, and thin it afterwards. run the dress through it, and hang it out to dry--starching with salt prevents the colour from running.

To Wash Flannels

In washing flannels--make a lather of milk warm water wash them in this, and in two more lathers of milk warm water then wring out the suds and hang out to dry. never rinse in cold or fair water, it makes the flannel shrink.

To wash silk stockings

Take weak Lye such as is used for washing clothes, wash the stockings in it cold very clean with soap, then soak them well, put them in clean lye and boil them 'till all the old blue comes out. then chop up some soap and put it into a pint of Lye, put it on the fire and let it boil till the soap is melted, then take it off and add to it 2 large spoonfulls of liquid blue, strain it and put in the stockings while it is scalding hot rub them well in it, then take them out and rub them again well with the hands, then let them hang in the shade 'till about half dry then mangle them. NB. a pint of Lye with 2 spoonfulls of Blue will do about 4 or 5 pair of stockings.

To restore Whiteness to scorched Linen

Ingredients--1/2 pint of vinegar, 2 oz. of fuller's-earth, 1 oz. of dried fowls' dung, 1/2 oz. of soap, the juice of 2 large onions.

Mode--Boil all these ingredients together to the consistency of paste; spread the composition thickly over the damaged part, and if the threads be not actually consumed, after it has been allowed to dry on, and the place has subsequently been washed once or twice, every trace of scorching will disappear.

Preservatives against the Ravages of Moths

Place pieces of camphor, cedar-wood, Russia leather, tobacco-leaves, bog-myrtle, or anything else strongly aromatic, in the drawers or boxes where furs or other things to be preserved from moths are kept, and they will never take harm.

To Make Starch

Peel and grate a quantity of potatoes, put the pulp into a coarse cloth, between two boards, and press it into a dry cake; the juice thus pressed out of the potatoe, must be mixed with an equal quantity of water, and in an hour's time it will deposit a fine sediment, which may be used as starch.

Nelly Custis Lewis's Housekeeping Book

edited by Patricia Brady Smith, New Orleans: Historic New Orleans
Collection, 1982
TX 153 .L65 1982 COLL HIST INT

Marquart, John

Six Hundred Receipts, worth their weight in gold.... (facsimile of 1867
edition), Paducah Ky.: Collector Books, n.d.
641.55 M357

Roberts, Robert

The House Servant's Directory. (facsimile of 1827 edition), Waltham,
Mass.: The Gore Place Society, 1977.
647.2 R647

Bryan, Lettice

The Kentucky Housewife. (reprint of 1839 edition), Paducah, Ky.:
Collector Books, 1970.
TX715 .B915 1970

Plat, Sir Hugh

Delightes for Ladies. (reprint of edition), London: Lockwood, 1948.
COLL DA 110 .P42

A Colonial Plantation Cookbook: The Receipt Book of Harriott Pinckney

Horry, 1770

edited by Richard Hooker, Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina
Press, 1984.
TX703 .H67 1984 CRAFT COLL

On the Score of Hospitality: Selected Receipts of a VanRensselaer Family,
Albany, New York, 1785-1835

edited by Jane Carpenter Kellar, Ellen Miller, Paul Stambach.
Albany, N.Y.: Historic Cherry Hill, 1986.
TX703 .05 1986

Grant, Elizabeth (Raper)

The Receipt Book of Elizabeth Raper and a Portion of her Cipher Journal.
edited by Bartle Grant. Soho (Eng.): Nonesuch Press, 1924.
TX705 .G72 COLL

Warren, Jane

"Sweet Home" Cook Book. (facsimile of undated edition), Paducah, Ky.:
Collector Books, n.d.
641.55 W289

Martha Washington's Booke of Cookery.

edited by Karen Hess, New York: Columbia Universtiy Press, 1981.
TX705 .M368 COLL CRAFT

Smith, Eliza

The Compleat Housewife, or, Accomplished Gentlewoman's Companion.
(reprint of 1758 edition), King's Langley, Herts., Eng.: Arlon
House Pub., 1983.
TX705 .S53 1983 CRAFT

August 1, 1989

TO: All HAPO Supervisors and Interpreters
FROM: Conny Graft
SUBJECT: Evaluation of Questions and Answers

The publication Questions and Answers was created in August 1980, for the purpose of answering historical questions that interpreters' receive from visitors and are unable to answer. Interpreters have been invited to send or call in their questions to Jane Strauss, the editor, and she has been responsible for finding the answers and publishing an issue six times a year.

Over the past few years, Jane Strauss has received very few questions. The question now arises, "Is the time and effort spent on Questions and Answers worthwhile?" "Are interpreter's aware that they have a place to send their questions?" "Does anyone read the issues when they arrive?" "Is the information useful?"

I would like to hear your candid assessment of Questions and Answers along with your suggestions for the future. Please take a minute to fill out the form on the back of this sheet and return it to Conny Graft at the Davidson Shop through interoffice mail.

Conny
Conny Graft

SURVEY FOR QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Date: _____ Department: _____

1) Were you aware of the purpose of Questions and Answers and how it worked?

YES _____ NO _____

2) Do you find the information in this publication useful?

YES _____ NO _____

3) If so how? If not, why not?

4) Please check the statement below that best reflects your opinion.

_____ I would like to see this publication continued.

_____ I do not want to see this publication continued.

_____ I would like to see it continued with some changes.

I would like to suggest the following changes:

5) Do you have any other comments you would like to make regarding Questions and Answers?

Questions & Answers

Vol. 10, No. 5

October 1989

SUBJECT INDEX: Eighteenth-Century Cosmetics

This issue of Questions and Answers addresses the use of cosmetics in the eighteenth century. Kris Dippre, Pasteur & Galt Apothecary, supplied the answers to the most frequently asked questions about this subject.

1. Did Women Wear Cosmetics in the Eighteenth Century?

First of all, let's define the word "cosmetics."

Cosmetic is derived from the word "cosmos," which according to dictionaries is "the world or universe considered as an orderly system . . . any harmonious and complete system."

The Greeks used the word "kosmetikos," which meant "skill in decorating."

With these thoughts in mind, the eighteenth century was indeed interested in perfecting what was not already perfected, that is, not always in harmony.

Horace Walpole is quoted as saying, "The characteristics of the Age are frenzy, folly, extravagance and insensibility."

Yes, women--and sometimes men--wore cosmetics in the eighteenth century, sometimes very noticeably.

The "Macaroni Club," for example, was established in England for those young gentlemen who had traveled abroad and had returned home, bringing with them the "worldly" knowledge of the latest in fashion and hygiene. They not only worshiped the finest in fabrics and tailored cuts but apparently painted their faces with a bit of color and doused themselves with the latest in colognes.

2. What Were Cosmetics Made From?

Everything. Animal, vegetable, and mineral. Cosmetics are still made that way today.

Clays like kaolin, commonly known as fuller's earth, were used in the eighteenth century and are still used in the twentieth century in skin masks for drying oils.

Animal fats and oils such as tallow and lanolin were used. They are still used in ointments and creams.

Some of the same minerals, animals, and chemicals are still used to tint and color makeup, including carmine, which can be produced from the cochineal insect to create the color red. Carmine can also be produced from brazilwood (Caesalpinia echinata), an often used tropical tree bark found in fabric and leather dyes. Gum gamboge (Garcinia hanburyi), a gum tree resin from Cambodia, produces an orange-red-yellow color and was also a popular rouge. It is a color used on canvas in oil painting today.

Other plants gums like tragacanth and arabic (Mucilago Tragacanthae and Arabaca respectively) are resins from Middle Eastern plants that are still found in cosmetics such as hair gels and are even used in foods today as thickeners.

3. Some of the Ingredients Used in Cosmetics Were Apparently Not Very Safe. For example, Is It True That Women Would Swallow Small Amounts of Arsenic to Clear the Complexion?

I have searched and am still searching through primary documents and cannot find one reference that includes arsenic as an ingredient internally or externally for cosmetic purposes. The thought of arsenic as an additive in order to whiten or clear the skin is perhaps a twentieth-century idea and needs further investigation before officially being incorporated in interpretations.

When looking up arsenic in an eighteenth-century medical dictionary, it's hard to imagine where the clearing concept was derived from. In quoting the Encyclopedia Britannica, 1771 edition, arsenic is "the most volatile of all the semi-metals" (so don't light a match). Also, when extracted from cobalt arsenic is a white powder. It can also be red or yellow depending on the amount of sulphur added to it. And even if it starts as a white powder, using it externally or internally will give you the following results:

According to the 1955 U. S. Dispensatory: "All the preparations of arsenic are exceedingly poisonous to both man and the lower animals. The specific symptoms of arsenicalism, the drug may give rise to alterations of the skin, the most important of these are particular dryness and a tendency to the overgrowth of Keratin (proteins) as shown by the formation of warts, ridges on the finger nails of coarseness of the hair . . . In some instances the internal use of arsenic causes a rash not unlike that of measles attended as in that affection with catarrhal symptoms (inflammation of mucous membranes). Sometimes salivation is produced, and occasionally the hair and nails fall off."

They were aware of this in the eighteenth century.

Quoting the Edinburgh New Dispensatory, 1794:

"The pure white arsenic has a penetrating corrosive taste; and taken into the body to the extent even of only a few grains, proves a most violent poison."

The book continues, recommending arsenic in tiny doses for "Fever, periodic headaches . . ." even as an application for "cancerous tumours." But nowhere is arsenic recommended for cosmetics, and because of its obvious side effects, one can probably understand why.

4. Did Some Cosmetics Really Contain Lead?

Yes, I can find several recipes of cosmetics containing lead or carbonate of lead, often referred to as "ceruse" or "Cerussa," which is Latin for "white lead."

Apothecaries often made this product available in their shops, either by importing the finished product from Europe or by preparing it on the site with the aid of one of many dispensaries.

White lead was considered a base for holding color, just like lead was used as a base for house and wall paints for years. So it could be spread on the face as a foundation, or color could be added to use as rouge and lip color. Quoting one source, Powder and Paint by Neville Williams (1957): "Once coloring was added, ceruse became paint and paint it was nearly always called."

Sir Robert Moray is given credit for its invention. He told an audience in a lecture in 1661 how he had made ceruse:

"(I) cast pigs of clean, soft lead, into thin plates and then rolled them. Each plate was put into a pot, being prevented from touching the bottom of it by a bar. Vinegar was added "to effect the conversion. The pots were separately covered with lead plates and stacked and boarded up in a bed of fresh horse droppings and left for three weeks digestion. The plates from the top as well as from inside each pot were then unrolled, laid on a board and beaten with battledores (flat paddles) till the flakes came off. These flakes were then ground in a mill to a very fine powder; water was added and the mixture was left to dry in the sun until it was hard. The resulting ceruse was then ready for the appropriate coloring and perfume." Sir Robert also noted the possible accidents to the work-men during these processes. These included "Contorsion of the stomach, constipation, shortness of breath, dizziness, great pains in the brows and even blindness, all caused by noxious fumes from the lead."

A much safer and much more expensive base for rouges and creams was "bear's grease"--literally the fat of the animal melted down.

5. How Were Colors Produced?

Many home guides on every topic including producing one's own cosmetics were written in the eighteenth century. I think the best way to illustrate colors is to list some of the actual recipes found in one of the most popular guides, the Toila de Flora, published at Fleet Street and St. Paul's Church Yard, London, 1784. Colonial Williamsburg's Boundary Street Research Library has an original copy:

"A Rouge for the Face

Alkanet Root strikes a beautiful red when mixed with Oils or Pomatums. A scarlet or Rose-colored Ribband wetted with water or brandy, gives the cheeks, if rubbed with it, a beautiful bloom that can hardly be distinguished from the natural color. Others only use a Red Sponge, which tinges the cheeks of a fine carnation color."

"Another

Take Brazil Wood Shavings, and Roch Alum, beat them together in a coarse powder, and boil in a sufficient quantity of Red Wine, till two thirds of the Liquor are consumed. When this decoction had stood till cold, rub a little on the cheeks with a bit of cotton."

6. What Was a Beauty Patch and What Was the Purpose Behind Wearing One?

Patching the face, a fashion just beginning at the end of the sixteenth century, reached fantastic proportions in the later seventeenth century and persisted to the eighteenth.

Patches were usually cut from black taffeta or from very thin Spanish leather, generally red. They were always perfumed. Gummed paper was used for economy's sake.

Favorite shapes included stars, crescents, and diamonds. Patches were placed on either side of the face and forehead. Sometimes several were worn at one time.

Gummed paper patches were gummed with plant resins such as benzoin, mastic, or arabic, which were sold by apothecaries.

Another way to adhere patches to the skin was simply to wet and reapply them.

Samuel Pepys recorded a wonderful description of a Lady Castlemaine as he sat near her at the theater one night. He noticed her "call to one of her attendants for a little patch off her face, and put it into her own mouth and wetted it, and so clapped it upon her own by the side of her mouth." I suppose," he continued, "she feeling a pimple rising there."

Apparently, before long yet another use for this practice was found. In the early eighteenth century during the great battles between the rival political parties in Queen Anne's reign, many women wore patches as party favors. Whig ladies patched the right side, Tories the left. For the politically unbiased, both cheeks could be patched at once.

Patches were also worn to covering scarring. Remember, smallpox, an illness famous for literally leaving its mark, was a major concern. Smallpox left marks on the face more than anywhere else because of the virus's affect on the sebaceous glands. Patches could cover these pits in a decorative way.

7. Were There Recipes for Corrective Makeups?

In a sense, yes. Smallpox seemed to be the big threat of the eighteenth century, and several recipes can be found for healing and hiding the scars it caused. For example:

(Quoting the Toila de Flora):

"A cosmetic water, of great use, to prevent pits after the Smallpox:

Dissolve an ounce and a half of Salt in a pint of Mint-Water; boil them together, and skim the Liguor. *This is a very useful Wash for the face after the Small-pox, in order to clear away the scabs, allay the itching, and remove the redness."*

Smallpox wasn't the only concern, of course. For example:

"To remove Freckles:

Take Houseleek, and Celandine, of each an equal quantity; distill it in a sand heat, and wash with the distilled Water.

"To remove Worms in the Face:

Make use of the distilled Waters of the Whites of Eggs, Bean Flowers, Water Lilies, White Lilies, Melon Seeds, Iris Roots, Solomon's Seal, White Roses, of Crumb of Wheaten Bread, either mixed together, or separately, with the addition of the White of a new-laid Egg.

"A Remedy for St. Antony's Fire or Erysipelatous Eruptions on the Face.

Take Narcissus Roots, an ounce; fresh Nettle-seeds, half an ounce; beat them together into a soft paste with a sufficient quantity of White Wine Vinegar, and anoint the eruptions therewith every night; or, bathe the part affected with the Juice of Cresses."

(All from Toila da Flora, 1784)

8. Was the Complete Look Comparable to Today's Look?

Let me describe it, and I'll let you decide.

Starting at the top, it seems that hair styles, whether a person's own or a wig, were generally worn with some height above the forehead, whether with bangs or not. The forehead was preferably exposed, to allow more expression to the eyes. The eyes were not usually accentuated with shadows or mascaras (mascara is more recent) but the expressive accent was on the eyebrows. Eyebrows, even when wearing a white wig, were dark and very arched. I have found recipes for darkening the brows. Virginia gentlemen prized this feature on a woman, according to Philip Vickers Fithian, an eighteenth-century tutor at Nomini Hall, and thought it odd if a woman tried to lighten the brows or cut them. References to mouseskin eyebrows have been found. Literally made of mouse skin, including the fir, these appliances could be added over one's own brows with a little gum resin adhesive, or with one's own spittle.

The face itself could be brushed with a little rice powder or pearl powder (literally), the latter giving the face a bit of a luster. "Brushes" could be a soft rag or a piece of cotton.

The cheeks, as mentioned before, were rouged, especially for special occasions, and this included Englishwomen. Originally known for their natural look, once Italian styles traveled abroad, Englishwomen by the mid-eighteenth century looked "very Italianate" according to one traveler's observations, and countrywomen, when stepping out for an evening, were apparently not to be outdone by their city sisters. Rouge was not necessarily blended to look natural, beauty patches were put in place, and the "crayons" (lipstick is a twentieth-century phrase) were dabbed on liberally.

Last, but by no means least, if the lady was missing a few necessary items, such as teeth, dentures of many substances, including porcelain, could be bought, and so could a pair of "plumpers," round balls of cork cut in half and slid inside the mouth on both sides between the cheeks and gums to create a healthy look by filling out the sunken cheeks.

The suntan was not popular yet, and many recipes for "washing out a tan" have been found (none of which I think would work). In fact, to some, tanned skin meant "working class," and covering the head with a wide-brimmed hat was often done. Fithian noted that local Virginia women placed scarves over their heads and tied them under their chins (like the 1960s movie star look), perhaps to protect the skin from the harsh elements of the sun and the sandy, dusty streets. His original thought when first arriving in the colony and seeing this fashion was that an incredible number of Virginia women "suffered from the Toothache!"

So, as far as a comparative look, I'll let the reader be the judge.

The subject has proven to be fascinating.

For further reading, I suggest the following books, from which I have derived my quotes:

Powder and Paint, Neville Williams, 1957 (Historic Trades Library)

The Artificial Face, Fenja Gunn, 1973 (Collections Library)

The Toila De Flora, London, 1784 (Boundary Street Research Library) Rare Section

The Diary of Philip Vickers Fithian, edited by Hunter Dickinson Farish, 1957 (All Colonial Williamsburg libraries)

The Secrets of Arts and Trades, London, 1784 (Historic Trades Library)

Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. I, Edinburgh, 1771 (Historic Trades Library)

The Edinburgh New Dispensatory, London, 1794 (Pasteur & Galt Apothecary Library)

This is the final issue of Questions and Answers. We want to thank our readers who responded to the survey, as well as sharing their ideas and suggestions as to how we can be more successful in gathering and distributing this information to interpreters. Out of 400 potential surveys only 36 were returned. This suggests that the need and interest in the publication has waned.

The Interpreter Planning Board will incorporate a Questions and Answers section in future issues of The Interpreter when the need arises. If you have a question that you would like to see addressed, please contact your departmental representative. Representatives are:

Company of Colonial Performers
Department

Kristi Everly

Afro American Interpretation &
Presentations

Rosemarie Byrd

Historic Trades Department

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