



“These Boisterous Times...”
THE WEEK IN '76

*Alexander Purdie, *Virginia Gazette*,
 January 1, 1776



PAMPHLET FILE

MARCH 1976

March 14—20, 1976

March 19, 1776

On March 19 Blovet Pasteur received payment from the Committee of Safety for “maintenance” of a prisoner of war.

Blovet Pasteur was the son of Jean Pasteur, a Huguenot barber and wigmaker, who arrived in Williamsburg in 1700. Pasteur, a silversmith, owned a house on Nicholson Street but evidently rented a shop next to the Raleigh Tavern from Alexander Craig. In 1767 he described his shop “next door below the Raleigh tavern.” Like other Williamsburg craftsmen, Pasteur sold imported merchandise in his shop:

Just Imported by the Subscriber, and to be Sold reasonably, at his Shop, in Williamsburg, A Choice Assortment of Silver and Stone Work, consisting of Buckles, Buttons, etc. of the newest Fashions.
 Blovet Pasteur.

In 1778 Pasteur made buckles and buttons and mended “several small articles” for William Cabell, a member of the General Assembly from Amherst County.

Pasteur died about 1790. Thomas Nelson wrote in 1802 that “he had been a mechanic and was before the peace and until his death a perfect cripple. I believe he lived principally upon the bounty of a brother.” His benevolent brother was William Pasteur, the well-known Williamsburg physician.

March 21—27, 1976

March 23, 1776

Run away from the Vineyard, a little below Williamsburg, a Negro Man named Saundy, 5 Feet 6 Inches high, about 27 Years old, knock kneed; had on, when he went away, a dark red Newmarket Coat. I have been informed he is lurking about Williamsburg. Whoever brings him to me shall have 15 s. Reward, besides what the law allows.

Andrew Estave.

Andrew Estave, a native of Bordeaux, France, arrived in Virginia about 1770. Encouraged by Lord Botetourt, the House of Burgesses purchased a tract of land on York Road about a mile east of Williamsburg for the purpose of establishing a wine industry in the Colony. Estave was engaged to develop the vineyard using wild local grapes that he claimed resembled the “Burgundy king.” The Assembly allowed Estave six years to produce a marketable wine. In 1776 the Assembly appointed a committee to report on the state of the vineyard. The committee found that about ten acres were planted with 30,000 vines, the buildings were in good repair, and the slaves were healthy, and it recommended that the project be financed for a year or two longer. Despite the report, the Assembly decided to discontinue the project and dispose of the land and slaves. The vineyard buildings served as a hospital during the Revolution and the land was later given to the College of William and Mary.

March 28—31, 1976

Williamsburg, March 29

This day his excellency Charles Lee, esq; major-general in the continental army, arrived at headquarters in this city, to take the command of the Virginia troops, attended by Otway Byrd and Lewis Morris, esqrs, his excellency's aids-de-camp, his secretary, mr. Nourse, mons. Le Brun, engineer, and the rest of his suite.

Charles Lee, a retired British officer who had served in America during the French and Indian War and later served as a major general in the Polish army, arrived in America in 1773. He immediately encouraged the patriot leaders to raise an army and on June 17, 1775, the Continental Congress appointed him a major general in the Continental army. After serving in the Boston seige, where "his dirty habits and obscenity gave offense," on March 17, 1776, Congress assigned him the command of the Southern Department.

When Lee arrived in Williamsburg, the Virginia officers in the city expressed their "high satisfaction" on his appointment. But Lee's high-handed behavior soon caused some Virginia leaders to be uneasy. After he appropriated the College of William and Mary for a military hospital, the Committee of Safety warned Lee not to "repeat such acts of power which though not intended may produce destructive consequences as it will convey to the people an Idea of our being subjected to an absolute military government whilst we are straining every nerve in defence of liberty."

At the Battle of Monmouth, in June 1778, Lee faced his first test as a field commander and he failed it miserably. He was courtmartialed for his conduct and was suspended from service for a year. At the end of the year Lee heard that Congress intended to dismiss him and he wrote such an offensive letter to Congress that he was dismissed. He died in Philadelphia in 1782.

Compiled by Harold B. Gill, Jr.



Colonial Williamsburg Foundation