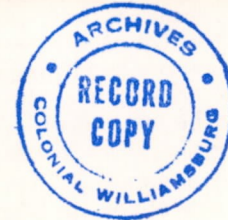


“These Boisterous Times...” THE WEEK IN '76

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

DECEMBER 1976

December 19-25, 1976



PAMPHLET FILE

December 20, 1776

On this day the *Virginia Gazette* reported the destruction by fire of Chericoke, the home of Carter Braxton in King William County:

The elegant house of Carter Braxton esq. one of the delegates for King William, was unfortunately burnt down last Wednesday evening, with a great part of the valuable furniture.

Besides the “valuable furniture.” Benjamin Harrison mourned the loss of the “fine Liquors” in Braxton’s famous wine cellar that had fed the flames.

TEN POUNDS REWARD

Will be given to any person who will deliver me a dark bay horse about 14 hands 2 inches high, formerly the property of mr. Richard Charlton of this city, at present belonging to Capt. Denney of the artillery. His mark is somewhat remarkable, having an S on one of his buttocks (but which I do not remember) that appears very conspicuous when curried, but hardly perceivable without. Whoever has the said horse will please return him immediately to me in York town, or to mr. Russell at capt. Anderson’s tavern. Ten pounds will be given for the thief, fully convicted.

William Pierce, jun.

William Pierce, Jr., returned to the colonial capital in 1775 from Annapolis where he had “studied PAINTING under the celebrated Mr. Peale.” In November of that year the *Virginia Gazette* reported:

Mr. William Pierce, junior, of this city, who was in the late engagement at Hampton (and whose genius is greatly admired for many valuable productions in the celebrated art of painting) we are informed, is now executing a plan of the same in a most elegant and circumstantial manner.

There are no known extant paintings by Pierce. By 1777 he was promoted to captain in the artillery forces and after 1780 he dropped from sight.

On December 20 the *Virginia Gazette* reported:

Last Tuesday George Webb, esq., was chosen by the legislature to be treasurer of this commonwealth, in the room of Robert C. Nicholas, esq., who has resigned that important trust (which he filled with much honour to himself, and applause from his country) rather than forego his best services, as a delegate in Assembly, at this critical conjuncture.

Robert Carter Nicholas, son of Dr. George Nicholas and Elizabeth Carter Burwell Nicholas, was born in or near Williamsburg in 1728. He attended William and Mary and later studied law. When the offices of Speaker of the House of Burgesses and Treasurer of the Colony were separated in 1766 after the death of John Robinson, Nicholas was appointed treasurer. While he held the position he played an important role in the events that led to the Revolution. He was cool, conservative, and a patriot, and his temperment helped keep the fervor of local patriots in check. In 1778 he was appointed to the council of the state. Two years later Nicholas died at his estate in Hanover County.

December 25--31, 1976

December 27, 1776

On this day the *Virginia Gazette* published a resolution passed by the General Assembly on December 21.

Whereas it hath been recommended to the good people of this colony to enter into associations for the support of the wives and children of the poor who shall enter into the several battalions now raising within this commonwealth, and whereas it is not certain that sufficient sums will immediately be subscribed for the purposes aforesaid:

Resolved, that the courts of the several counties be required, and they are hereby empowered, to furnish the wives and children of such poor soldiers, who cannot be maintained by such associations, with necessary provisions, and to draw on the treasurer for such sums of money as shall be requisite, who is hereby required to pay the same.

The families of soldiers certainly suffered during the war, and many of them petitioned the legislature for assistance. Elizabeth Foster, for instance, petitioned the House of Delegates on November 7, 1776, for financial assistance because her husband was killed by a cannon ball at the Battle of Gwynn Island and left her "with a child about nine months old, without a house, or any support." Two weeks later, after an investigation by the Committee of Public Claims, the House resolved to allow Mrs. Foster £20 "for her present support." Mrs. Foster's case was one of many that were to be considered by the House from 1776 until well into the nineteenth century.

ON TIME

O! mark how swift these precious moments fly!
Like man, no sooner are they born than die,
Then snatch this prize! O! clasp this nobel store!
Remember, time once lost is time no more.
And since time's wheel so rapidly doth run,
Reflect how soon the thread of life is spun.
How soon death comes! the common lot to man,
Ere nature's measured out her given span.
O! think, on this depends (therefore no longer wait)
Thy future happiness, thy everlasting fate.
Then use the present as if 'twas thy last,
And then with pleasure thou shalt view the past.

Virginia Gazette (Dixon & Hunter), January 3, 1777.

Compiled by Harold B. Gill, Jr.