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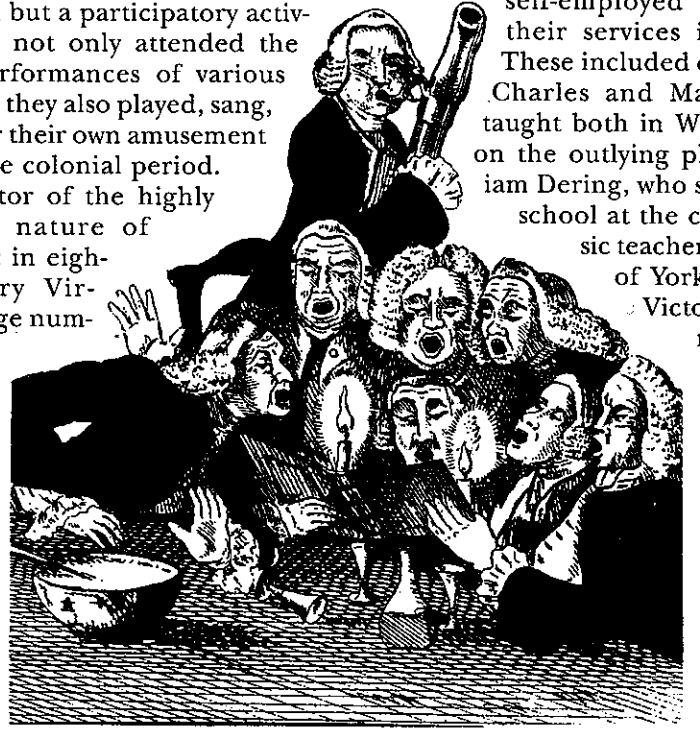
"All the Divertisment One Could Wish"

by Barry Trott

Barry has been involved in the research and performance of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century popular music for Colonial Williamsburg since 1984. Since 1988 he has also performed as a member of The Virginia Company.

"From every house a constant tuting may be listened to upon one instrument or another, whilst the Vocal dogs will no doubt complete the howl." So Landon Carter noted the pervasiveness of music in Williamsburg in his journal in 1771. In truth, music was as commonly heard in colonial Virginia as it is today, where we are bombarded with background music virtually everywhere. However, music in eighteenth-century Virginia was not a passive background to life, but a participatory activity. Virginians not only attended the occasional performances of various types of music, they also played, sang, and danced for their own amusement throughout the colonial period.

One indicator of the highly participatory nature of popular music in eighteenth-century Virginia is the large number of references to musical instruments. Wills and inventories of many Virginians list musical instruments, as do notices in the *Virginia Gazette*. Violins predominated, but flutes, reed instruments, guitars, keyboards, horns, mandolins, and drums are also represented. Many tavern keepers had instruments on hand for patrons: James Shields kept "in the Barr . . . one old fiddle, one old Hautboy [oboe]." As in English taverns, the patrons no doubt sang catches or rounds as well as popular drinking songs to the accompaniment of these instruments. Notices of runaway servants and slaves frequently mention the ability of the runaway to play an instrument. An advertisement in the December 22, 1768, *Virginia Gazette* noted the arrival of "120 healthy servants," one of whom "plays well on the French Horn, flute and other instruments," a skill that added to his value. In 1757 Philip Ludwell Lee advertised for the return of Charles Love, professor of music and dancing, who had fled his employ (taking with him Lee's bassoon!).



More commonly, music teachers were self-employed and advertised their services in the *Gazette*. These included dancing masters Charles and Mary Stagg, who taught both in Williamsburg and on the outlying plantations, William Dering, who set up a dancing school at the college, and music teachers Cuthbert Ogle of York County, John Victor, Charles Leonard, and Francis Russworm, who between them taught many instruments, including flute, violin, guitar, and keyboard. Children learned music from an early age, both through formal instruc-

tion and on their own. Formal instruction was usually provided by a music master, though Robert Carter instructed his daughter on the guitar as her music teacher was unfamiliar with that instrument. Carter himself was an accomplished musician who owned and played the flute, harpsichord, piano forte, organ, and armonica (musical glasses), as well as the guitar. The journal of Philip Fithian, tutor to the Carter children, contains many references to the musical life at Nomini Hall. Other children seemed to have picked up music naturally. William Downman wrote his brother in 1752 that "my little Rawlegh is a very brisk boy and sings mightily. He can sing almost any of the common tunes our fiddlers play."

Like their English counterparts, Virginians could draw on a wide range of sources for their musical entertainment. Published collections of popular songs such as the *Musical Entertainer* and the *Musical Miscellany* were offered for sale at the printing office, as was the *Beggar's Opera,* still popular in 1770, over forty years after its premiere. In 1764-1765 the daybook of the printing office lists the sale of two collections of Scottish songs then in fashion. Other music was imported as well. In 1771 Philip Lee wrote to his brother, a London merchant: "I wish you would send me every year, instead of newspapers if you can't both, the best new minuets, songs and Country Dances, both music notes and words." Colonel John Waller of Spotsylvania County had a copy of Thomas D'Urfey's *Wit and Mirth or Pills to Purge Melancholy* (1719) in his library. Robert Bremner's *Keyboard Miscellany* was owned by both Thomas Jefferson and Martha Washington and no doubt its tunes were played at both Monticello and Mount Vernon. Jefferson's large collection of music included not only chamber works but also country dances and two volumes of drinking songs, including the tavern favorite "Nottingham Ale." Robert Beverley's 1734 estate inventory included volume two of *The Dancing Master* (1728), the penultimate edition of this collection of dance music originally published in 1650 by John Playford. The collected papers of the Carter family from Shirley plantation contain two boxes of music from the latter part of the eighteenth century. The music displays a variety typical of the period, including eight ballad opera scores, several keyboard studies, a collection of Scots songs by Allan Ramsay, country dances, and many single sheet songs bound together.

Various periodicals also published songs and dance tunes. Songs on such subjects as the Boston Tea Party, American liberty, aging, friendship, harmony, mourning, women, love, and "The British Herring Fishery" can be found in the *Virginia Gazette.* In May 1768 William Rind advertised in the *Gazette* for subscribers to *The Gentleman's Magazine.* Circulated widely throughout the colonies, this periodical presented articles on a variety of subjects, held poetry contests, and regularly printed songs and dance tunes. Between 1744 and 1755, 125 songs and dances were published, revealing a cross-section of British popular music drawn from contemporaneous ballad operas, English and Scots songs, and public garden concerts, as well as new compositions and pieces composed for special occasions.

Another popular English music tradition, printed broadsides, also made their appearance in the colonies. Although no references exist to the publication of broadsides in Williamsburg, numerous examples survive from colonies to the north and south. Printed on single sheets, broadsides were sold individually by the printer and also offered "very Cheap to travelling traders." Boston printer Nathaniel Coverly advertised "verses of popular interest for sale by the Groze or the Dozen." In 1713 Cotton Mather lamented that "people are much corrupted by foolish Songs and Ballads which the Hawkers and Peddlers carry into all parts of the Country." Nonetheless, the popularity of the broadside continued to spread. The *Virginia Gazette* for October 7, 1737, notes an entertainment to be held on St. Andrew's Day in Hanover County. Among other contests, "a Quire of ballads [was] to be sung for by a number of songsters, the best to have the prize, and all of them to have liquor to clear their windpipes." A dancing contest and a fiddling contest were also held as well as an entertainment with "Drums, trumpets and Hautboys &c."

Ballads and tunes also survived in the oral tradition. Though there is no written record of such transmissions in North

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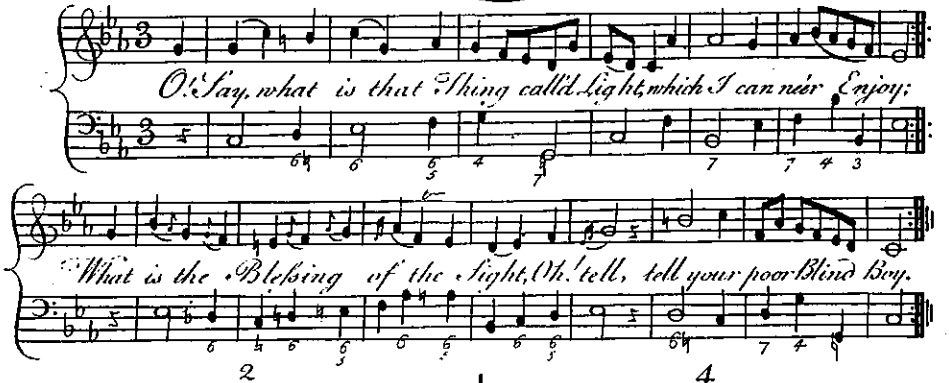
THE *Blind Boy.*



2

You talk of wondrous Things you ſee,
You ſay the Sun ſhines bright;
I feel him warm but how can he
Then make it Day or Night!

3

My Day or Night my ſelf I make,
When e'er I wake or play,
And could I ever keep awake
It would be always Day.

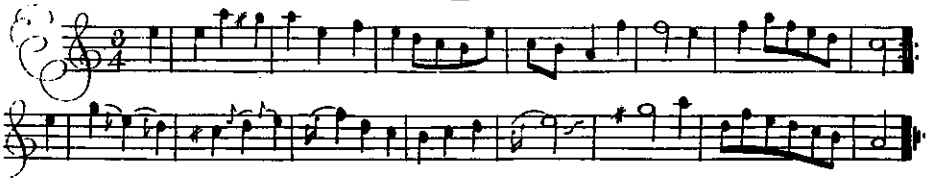
4

With heavy Sighs I often hear
You mourn my hapleſs Woe,
But ſure with Patience I may bear
A Loſs I ne'er can know.

5

Then let not what I cannot have
My Cheer of Mind deſtroy,
Whilſt thus I ſing I am a King,
Altho' a poor Blind Boy.

For the Flute.



The Blind Boy **was engraved and published in 1737 by George Bickham in a collection of 100 songs entitled *The Musical Entertainer.* They included hunting songs, satirical songs, drinking songs, and many love songs. Lyric-writers included John Lockwood with occasional verses by the likes of John Gay and William Congreve. Composers included such notables as Thomas Arne, William Boyce, Purcell, Corelli, and Handel.**

Music, *continued*

America until the ballad collectors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries began their work, there can be no doubt that music was passed on orally from player to player in taverns, homes, and elsewhere. A ballad tells a story in song form, and the Virginia Folklore Society's collection *Traditional Ballads of Virginia* lists fifty-one songs collected in early twentieth-century Virginia. All of them are variants on originals dating to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including thirty-six versions of "Barbara Allen." The stories of the songs range from unrequited love ("Barbara Allen") to requited love ("The Bailiff's Daughter of Slington"), religious stories ("Dives and Lazarus"), sex, treachery, and murder ("Lord Randall," "Matty Groves," "Lady Isabel and the Elf Knight"). In short, ballads satisfied the same interests as television programs do today, from soap operas to adventure shows to talk TV. Undoubtedly, the early colonists brought many of these songs with them to the New World, where in the course of time they were changed from the original. These changes could be either the result of faulty memory or the intentional substitution of local persons, places, or events to fit the basic story line and make it more interesting.

As has been mentioned above, Virginians not only sang but also played a wide variety of instruments. More than twenty different types of musical instruments appear in Virginia sources, in inventories and wills, offered for sale, either privately or in the *Virginia Gazette,* used in performances, in advertisements for lessons, or in journal references.

The violin (or fiddle) may have been the most popular instrument of the colonial period. In her Colonial Williamsburg research report on musical instruments, Mary Goodwin lists 126 references to the violin (or members of that family and the viol family) in Virginia from 1624 to 1795. *The Virginia Gazette* for November 19-26, 1736, advertised a fiddling contest to be held in conjunction with a St. Andrew's Day fair in Hanover County, "a fine Cremona fiddle to be played for." Inventories and wills from all over the colony list violins, and the violin is frequently mentioned in runaway slave and servant notices. Prominent Virginia fiddlers include Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry (who is said to have entertained patrons of his father-in-law's tavern with his playing). Fiddles were also sold by several merchants in Williamsburg, along with strings and bows.

Williamsburg stores also regularly offered flutes and fifes for sale. Generally, the German or transverse flute superseded the English or common flute (recorder) in preference during the eighteenth century. Both instruments were played in Virginia and tutors for both were available in Williamsburg. Fifes and tin whistles could be purchased at Greenhow's store as well, and the military use of the fife is well documented by the many notices seeking fifers for militia groups in the 1770s.

Another popular instrument of the period that causes some confusion today is the guitar. The baroque guitar, predecessor to today's Spanish-style guitar, was most popular in England during the Restoration (King Charles II played as did his brother James). It is certainly possible that guitars made their way to Virginia at this time, although no sure record exists. In the early eighteenth century the English guitar (often referred to simply as "guitar") became popular and remained so through the end of the century. A member of the cittern family, the English guitar had a pear-shaped body and ten strings (two fine examples may be seen in the DeWitt Wallace Gallery). It was not related to the Spanish-style guitar. The numerous references to guitars in colonial America generally make no distinction as to which style of guitar is being referred to.

While not as popular as the guitar, the mandolin was also known in the colonies. A Mr. Wall's concert advertisement in the *Maryland Gazette* had him performing on mandolin as well as guitar. It is very likely that this is the same Mr. Wall who in 1784 inserted a notice in the *Virginia Gazette and Weekly Advertiser* (Richmond) that he would teach "Ladies and Gentlemen . . . Guitar and Mandoline." Further, the Philadelphia musician, composer, and teacher John Gualdo performed his "Six Easy Evening Entertainments for Two Mandolins" in concert in that city in 1769.

Keyboard instruments enjoyed wide popularity in eighteenth-century Virginia; Benjamin Bucktrout saw enough of a need to

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Investigations at the Brush-Everard House

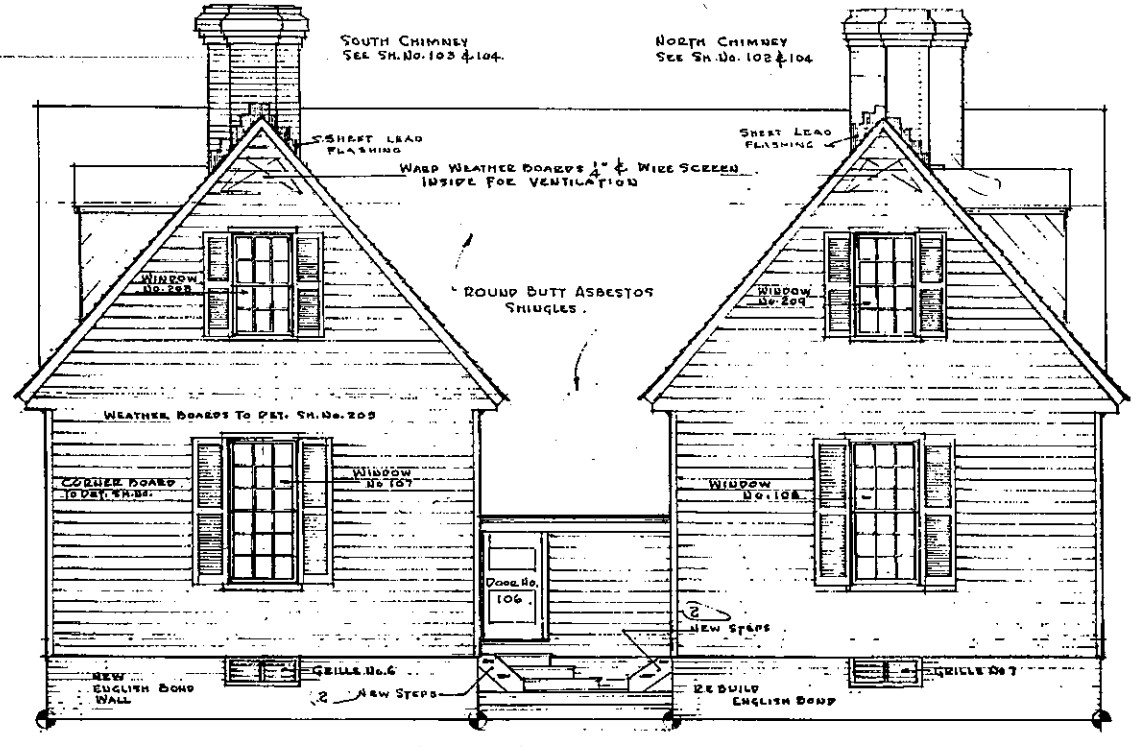
by Mark R. Wenger

This is the last in a series of articles written by the staff of the department of Architectural Research updating our current understanding of the houses we exhibit. In the next issue Ed Chappell offers a summary of our understanding of domestic dwellings.

Summertime will see the renewal of architectural explorations at the Brush-Everard House, part of a continuing probe to be completed before the building's heating and cooling systems are upgraded later this year. For the first time in nearly half a century, the "guts" of this puzzling house will be open to view. With any luck, we will be able to settle some long-standing questions about its physical history.

New information on the Brush-Everard property has been accumulating for more than a decade. In 1982 Herman J. Heikkenen arrived at a construction date for the house using dendrochronology, a technique that establishes the age of timber framing members by the varying patterns of their annual growth rings. Between 1987 and 1989 staff archaeologists Meredith Moodey and Patricia Samford supervised excavations in yards north and south of the house. In March 1991 historical paint consultant Frank Welsh sampled early finishes throughout the interior of the house documenting the character of numerous paint layers. Last summer, F&PM personnel removed the plywood interior of the dining room buffet and pulled down bushels of plaster in the back stair well to facilitate the study of those areas. The interlocking evidence yielded by these endeavors now allows us to draw some tentative conclusions about the dwelling's physical and social history.

Traces of plaster behind the parlor cornice raise questions about the date of the dwelling's interior trim. Obviously, the cornice cannot be original if there was once plaster in this location. Paint layers on the cornice leave no doubt that it is contemporary with the earliest woodwork elsewhere in the house. From this evidence, we conclude that extant interior trim post dates the Brush period. From a purely stylistic standpoint, this makes good sense. We believe that Henry Cary had most of the present interior woodwork installed, probably in the 1730s. At that time virtu-



Rear elevation of the Brush-Everard House.

ally all of this trim was painted a "medium reddish brown" color referred to in the period as "Spanish brown." Heavy accumulations of dirt on this initial finish indicate that many years passed before the rooms were painted again.

In the dining room, we were surprised to find that the early Spanish brown paint layer extended to the cupboard or "buffet," as it was then called. Ron Hurst finds evidence of free standing buffets as early as the 1730s, and in 1728 appraisers from Charles City County mentioned a built-in buffet in the inventory of Benjamin Harrison. If this example dates from Cary's tenure, it is one of the earliest buffets to survive in a Virginia house.

Frank Welsh's research indicated that these fixtures were often painted a bright orange-red color inside, probably to create a vivid contrast with the ceramics and silver they displayed. When the modern innards of our buffet were finally removed, Frank delighted everyone by finding traces of this color on an original interior surface.

Certain highly finished exterior elements—dormers, sash, window frames, cornice, and such—may also date to the Cary period. These elements were first painted Spanish brown, followed by numerous layers of white confirming what sampling at other sites had already suggested: that Spanish brown was the preferred color for exterior painting until sometime during the third quarter of the eighteenth century, when white seems to have become the universal choice. Evidence of this switch has been uncovered at the Bruton Parish Church, Prentis Store, Public Records Office, Ludwell-Paradise House, and, most recently, the Peyton Randolph House.

Certain other elements appear to post date the Cary period. Except in the passage, raised-panel wainscoting on the first floor lacks the early paint layers found on other woodwork and must therefore have been added at some later time—almost certainly during Everard's tenure.

Finally, physical evidence leaves little doubt that the back stair was added in the nineteenth century: the stair enclosure that intrudes into the upstairs room of the north wing is assembled with cut nails, and paint layers on this and other elements in the stairwell are all relatively late.

The significance of these findings is best understood in the context of an architectural chronology:

Period I

In 1717 John Brush purchased lots 165 and 166 from the city trustees and soon began building the present house. Dendrochronology reveals that timbers for the front portion were cut in 1718, those for the north wing in 1720. Archaeological evidence suggests that there was originally some sort of south wing as well. Several feet below the foundation of the present wing was a 20-inch-thick masonry fragment, evidently the remains of a cellar wall. Within a few years of buying his lots, then, Brush had completed a house laid out in the form of a "U." It seems, however, that the south wing was soon demolished because large chunks from the massive foundation found their way into a privy hole filled before Brush's death in 1726. The remaining house had an L-shaped footprint, of which the north wing formed the shorter leg.

It's difficult to say much about the interior of the house at this time—the stair location has changed since period I and, except for some whitewashed framing in the north wing, none of the first-period finishes have survived. Plaster stains behind the parlor cornice leave little doubt that the front rooms downstairs were finished off, but whitewashed framing in the back stair suggests that the north wing may have remained unplastered for a time.

Period II

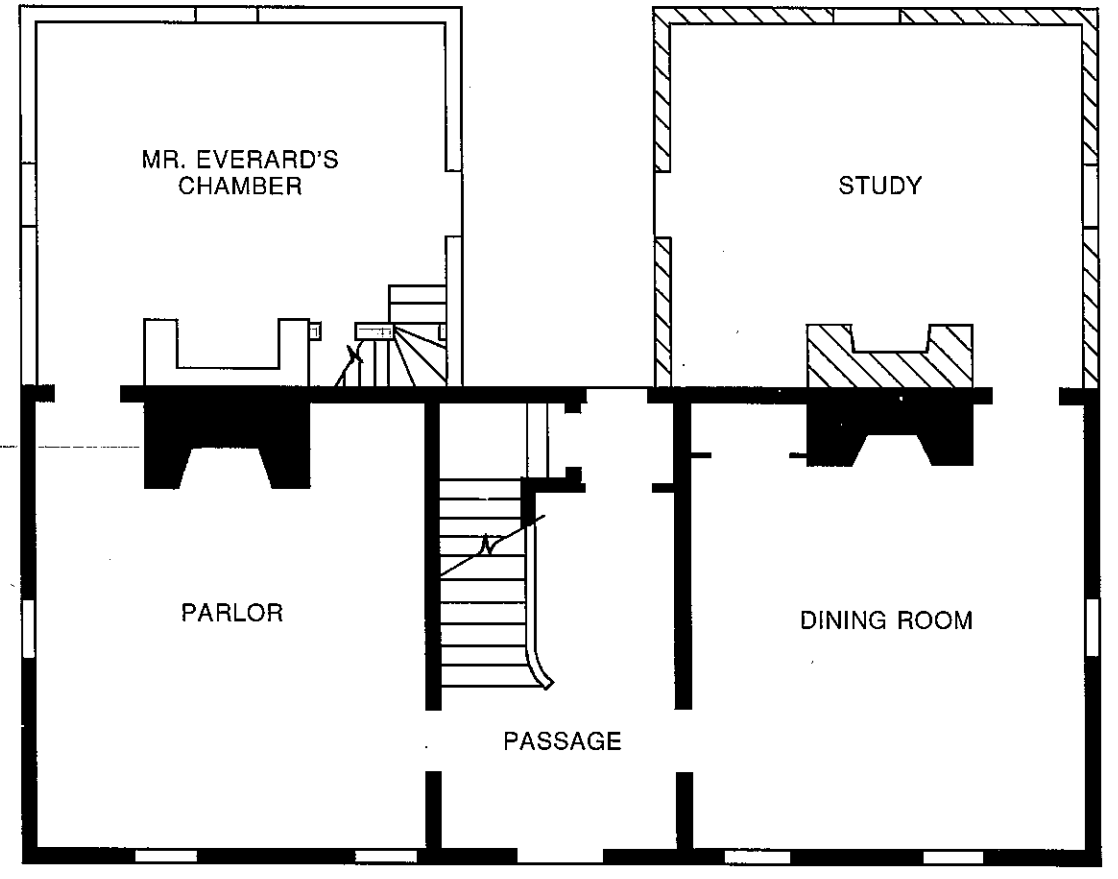
Sometime between 1729 and 1742, Henry Cary married Elizabeth Russell (who had purchased the house from Brush's daughter, Susanna) and by this means assumed control of the property. Most of the present woodwork was probably installed at this time. The new trim included cornices, chairboards, bases, doors in front rooms, a buffet in the dining room, and virtually all existing woodwork in the passage, including the stair. This new means of ascent seems to have blocked an original door opening in the rear wall.

The remodeled interior displayed a genteel quality commensurate with Cary's social station—his brother was a member of

the Council and Cary himself was a justice of the peace for James City County. The renovation also reflected his extensive experience as an undertaker of various public building projects. Among other things, Cary was responsible for completing the Governor's Palace and for building the chapel and president's house at the College.

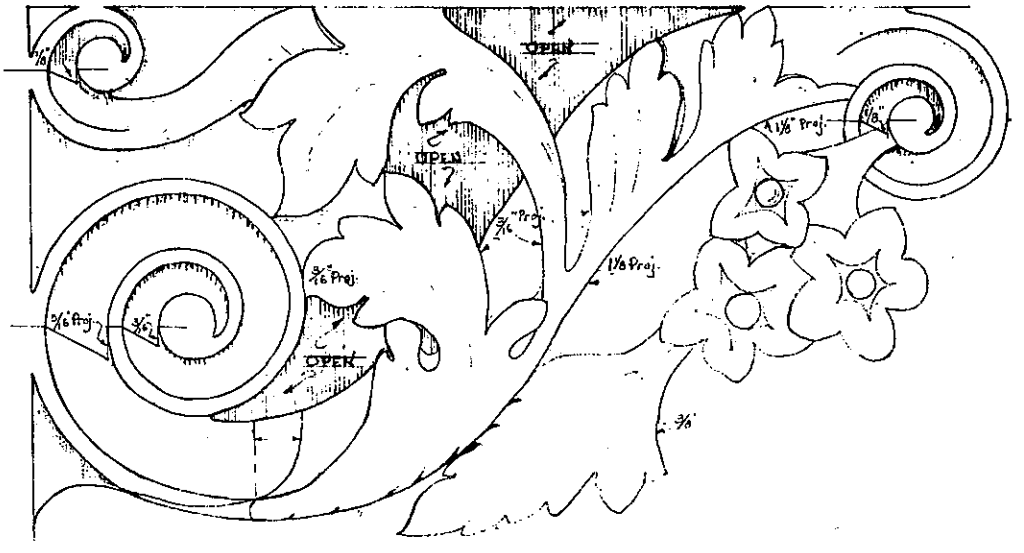
Period IIIa

In 1742 Henry and Elizabeth Cary sold the house to portrait painter and dancing master William Dering. Within a couple of years, Dering mortgaged the property to secure a debt of £400 to William Prentis. By 1749 Dering was in financial difficulty and left the colony. After 1751 he completely disappears from county records. Undoubtedly, the holder of Dering's mortgage, William Lightfoot, foreclosed and disposed of the house, but no record of this sale has survived. Circumstantial evidence places Thomas Everard on the premises by 1756, when he sold his house on Nicolson Street and, we assume, moved to Palace green. By this time, Henry Cary's Spanish brown paint had acquired a thick coat of grime. At first, repainting the house—inside and out—seems to have been the only significant change Everard made. It was probably at this time that the house received it first coat of white paint.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN
BRUSH-EVERARD HOUSE

- c. 1718
- c. 1720
- c. 1770?
- EARLY 19TH CENTURY?



Drawing of one of the brackets on the front stairs made during the initial investigations of the house in the 1930s.

For more than a decade, Everard left Dering's house pretty much as he found it.

Period IIIb

By the early 1770s, Everard was engaged in an ambitious campaign of renovation. On several occasions between 1769 and 1773 he purchased large quantities of nails, glass, and paint. In a ravine north of the house, archaeology revealed a substantial accumulation of construction debris dating to the Everard period. According to the archaeologists, some of this material sealed a layer of clay fill deposited about 1770, the very period during which Everard was stockpiling architectural supplies.

Just what did Everard's renovation involve? According to the paint chronology, all first-floor chimneypieces and wainscoting (except in the passage) date to this period, as do certain trim elements in the first-floor room of the north wing. The latter observation is particularly important since wallpaper found here during the restoration was clearly associated with the Everard-period window trim. It follows that the wallpaper—of a pattern popular in the 1760s and 1770s—also dates to this renovation. Though the south wing was reconstructed in 1949, the mantelpiece and the paneling over the door are original. Paint evidence clearly links these elements to Everard's time. Remembering that the period I structure in this location was pulled down during the Brush tenure, it seems likely that Thomas Everard was the owner who rebuilt the wing. At the very least, he retrimmed it.

His renovation enlarged and transformed the interior of the house—new wainscoting, new wallpaper, and new paint amplified its already genteel character and imparted to the whole a decidedly up-to-date look. The endeavor was almost certainly linked to Everard's growing stature in public affairs during the late 1760s. Having served for many years as clerk of the York County Court, Everard become mayor of Williamsburg in 1766. In 1769 he assumed three additional positions of local or colony-wide importance—vestryman of Bruton Parish, clerk of the House of Burgesses' Committee for Courts and Justices, and trustee for founding the Public Hospital—all indicative of the confidence and prestige he now enjoyed.

Looking back on his humble origins, Thomas Everard must have taken some pride in his remarkable ascent. In 1772 he purchased caps for a pair of postilions. Evidently he was now traveling by coach, a manner of conveyance reserved for leading members of the gentry. Like a coach with liveried postilions, Everard's newly adorned house aptly expressed his social attainments.

Period IV

Sometime during the first half of the nineteenth century, a back stair was cre-

ated next to the chimney in the north wing. About 1850 the south wing was demolished for the second time and rebuilt as a narrow shed. At this time the back stair was altered to land in the new shed. The new arrangement made it possible to go upstairs from any first-floor room without using the main stair. Perhaps it was at this time that a veranda was added across the front. Railing in the roof deck of this porch produced an outdoor living space that could be reached from the upper floor. To facilitate access, the central dormer was enlarged to create a generously proportioned doorway. Together with the back stair, this change reflected the growing importance of the upper floor in the private life of the family.

* * *

Beginning in June, this chronology will be tested against new evidence gleaned from the building itself. In the process, we hope to learn more about the period I house. Where was the first stair? Is the passage original? How about the dormers and windows? If all of these prove to be first-period features, then the Brush-Everard house takes on special importance as an early example of features that later characterized domestic building here–central passage, symmetrical fenestration, dormers, sash windows, classical cornices, and the like. In any case, the findings will enable us to talk more confidently about the evolution, use, and significance of Thomas Everard's remarkable house.

George Washington: The Man Behind the Image

He may possess the most famous face in America, but according to those who know him best, George Washington remains a mystery to a vast majority of Americans. No longer: the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association have mounted a creative new exhibit entitled "George Washington: The Man behind the Image" at the DAR Museum located adjacent to Constitution Hall (1776 D Street, NW) in downtown Washington, D. C. It will run from now to September 1, 1994, and is free of charge.

The goal of the exhibit is a challenging one—to communicate the personality and character of Washington by investigating the imagery that has represented this venerated hero over a span of two centuries. Most Americans would probably agree with Nathaniel Hawthorne, who imagined that Washington "was born with his clothes on and his hair powdered, and made a stately bow on his first appearance in the world." Recent scholarship has demonstrated that Washington's image was carefully crafted even during his lifetime, and that Washington himself was aware of the importance of his reputation and carefully considered every public action for its potential effect.

Visitors will be shown evidence of Washington's physical characteristics and appearance, as well as artifacts that illustrate his activities and interests. For more information, call (202) 879-3241.

Music, *continued*

advertise his willingness to repair keyboard instruments.

Harpsichord, spinet, piano forte and organ could all be found in Virginia homes, and keyboard music dominated many music collections. Like the guitar and mandolin, the keyboard was used as an accompaniment to singing as well as for solo or ensemble works. Several appear in Williamsburg estate inventories and one even seems to have found its way into the home of silversmith James Geddy, prompting a poem to appear in the *Virginia Gazette* extolling the virtues of his daughter, Anne Geddy.

Various reed and brass instruments could also be heard in colonial Virginia. John Greenhow offered bugles and hunting horns for sale at his store in Williamsburg. The French horn was played in concerts and at dances, and several notices in the *Gazette* mention runaways who played the instrument. Bassoons and clarinets are mentioned along with the trumpet for use in military bands for the "harmony and discipline of the corps." Oboes (often called hautboys) are also found in many inventories, including that of tavern keeper James Shields.

Benjamin Franklin's invention, the armonica, found a place in Virginia. George Washington noted in his journal that he spent three shillings, ninepence "to hear the Armonica," and Robert Carter's playing of his "harmonica" overwhelmed Philip Fithian, who called it "the most captivating instrument I have ever heard." The armonica, an improvement over a series of tuned "musical glasses" set into a wooden box (an example of which is at the Wallace Gallery), was a series of tuned glasses mounted on a turning spindle and played with moistened fingers.

Among other instruments, the banjo ("banger," "banjar," etc.) appears in several eighteenth-century reports of African-American music. Jefferson referred to the banjar as being brought to the colony from Africa. Fithian noted that "several Negros and Ben and Harry (sons of Robert Carter) [were] playing on a banjoe and dancing." The predecessor of today's five-string banjo, the early banjo had a variable number of strings and was used primarily as a rhythmic accompaniment to dancing and singing.

Other instruments mentioned in Virginia documents include drums (military and civilian uses), bagpipes (listed in at least one runaway notice), pedal harp (for sale in Norfolk), and Jew's harp (found in excavations in both Jamestown and Williamsburg).

Music indeed played a important part in the lives of all classes of Virginians in the eighteenth century. From planter to slave, Virginians entertained themselves with songs and tunes, and the interaction of the English and African cultures led eventually to new forms of music in America. The rigid categorization of music so prevalent today was less common in colonial Virginia. A drinking song with a rousing chorus knew few class boundaries. Truly, Virginians delighted in music of all sorts.

The department of Interpretive Education has both CD and cassette recordings of many of the types of songs discussed in this article. Each recording also comes with excellent liner notes. The generous editor would be more than willing to loan them out for a week at a time. Call x7626 if you care to borrow a copy.

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