



Coachmen of the Past

We are highlighting and honoring the many contributions of African American coachmen to Colonial Williamsburg and the Coach and Livestock program. In this issue, we spotlight the achievements of John Sheppard. John Sheppard was born 5/15/1908 in Charles City, VA. He was employed by the Foundation for 34 years, making his way to Coach in Livestock on 6/9/1956 and retiring from the Foundation in 1971. He died 12/3/1973 and is buried in the Chickahominy Baptist Church Cemetery in Toano, VA.

CW News 1950 Nov. p.1, 4

Mount Vernon Coach Work Completed By CW's Coach Expert

Mount Vernon took on the appearance of Williamsburg recently, when a combination of CW talents and experience took over a coach operation there for a day. Colonel Paul Downing, Tom Williams, John Sheppard and Ben Spraggins and a pair of horses moved there to help the Ladies Association of Mount Vernon mark their big day. The occasion was the putting in

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Mt. Vernon
(Continued from Page 1)

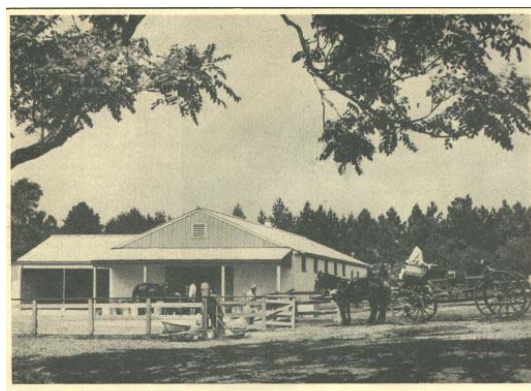
service of an authentic eighteenth century coach that had once belonged to the mayor of Philadelphia, one Samuel Powel.

Of 1785 Period

The coach came into the possession of the Mount Vernon group with the reputation of actually having belonged to General Washington but this was later proved wrong. At the time, several alterations had been made to the vehicle, and when it was to be restored to its original date of 1785 the logical man for the job was, of course, CW's Colonel Downing.

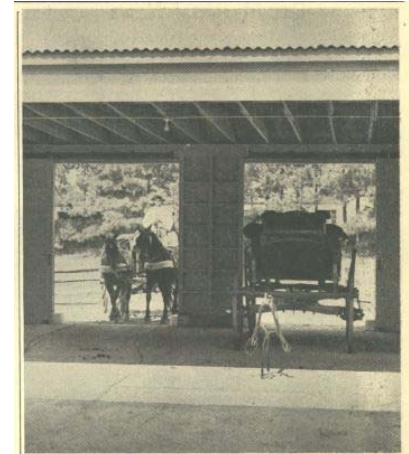


AT MOUNT VERNON. John Sheppard and Ben Spraggins are shown here conducting Mount Vernon's new coach beside Washington's home. See story, this page, for other details.



FROM PAST TO PRESENT come horses, carriage and driver after a tour of the restored area, as Willie Meekins, stableman, opens the gateway to their new twentieth century home. John Sheppard at the reins holds the horses in check at the gate, while Ben Spraggins (background) leads a second team into their stalls. The building was opened shortly after Labor Day.

CW News 1952 Sept. p 4



THE NEW PARKING AREA for the 18th century carriages used for public tours has everything modern but the occupants. Complete with colonial costume driver, John Sheppard, brings carriage and horses home for a well earned rest.

Veteran In Charge

Supervised through the office of Monier Williams, and under the direct operation of W. D. "Mac" McPherson, the stables are in the competent hands of Willie Meekins, probably one of the best stablemen in Virginia. A long-time employee of CW, Willie was one of the first drivers hired by CW, being retired to the stables only this year following a leg injury.

Willie has worked in almost every stable in Virginia at one time or another, and has a native love and knowledge of horses. He says the only ones who have shown any inconvenience in the new move have been the horses, and he says that is only because he hasn't quite convinced them this is their new home.

And it is a new home for Willie, too, since the provisions of the new building include quarters for the stableman in order that he can be on hand to care for the horses at all hours.

Drivers Care for Coaches

Also closely tied in with the operation of the new stable are the drivers, John Sheppard and Ben Spraggins, who have the responsibility of the care and handling of the coaches and horses away from the stables. This group also includes Reuben Hill, relief driver.

Ruby Steel, is in charge of the ticket sales which support the operation.

An added aid to the operation is the spacious shed for housing the carriages, the Blue Phaeton, Mulberry Phaeton and Randolph coach. With the adequate storage space and facility for repairs, it is believed they will remain in more constant use.

Kolton and Lukedrini

We have some new additions to our carriage horse herd! Please welcome, from Pennsylvania, Kolton and Lukedrini (Lukey for short). These two boys are both Dutch Harness horses and have already been taught how to pull a carriage. They are the youngest horses we have in our carriage group. Lukedrini is 4 years old and Kolton is 5 years old. These boys will be out and about often during the next few months as we get them used to the sights and sounds of the historic area., especially greeting guests. If you see them on the street, please stop and say hi!

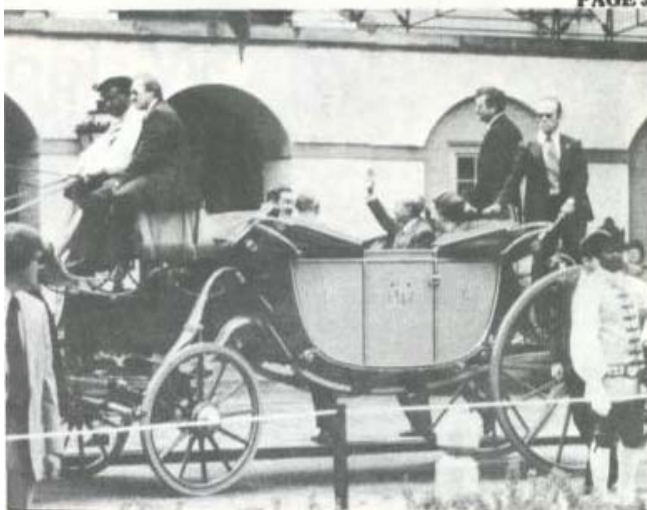


Lukey (Brown) and Kolton (Black)

The Landau

The Landau is a reproduction “convertible top” carriage, built by Colonial Williamsburg in 1960. It was restored between 1988 and 1993. In 1975, when the emperor of Japan paid a visit to Williamsburg, it was decided to add Kevlar plates to the inside of the carriage. When the 1983 G7 Summit was held in Colonial Williamsburg, this carriage was used to transport dignitaries to and from the events. Its most recent claim to fame is that it was used in 2007 to transport Queen Elizabeth II during her visit to Williamsburg. The coat-of-arms is that of Philip Ludwell Lee, who reportedly owned a landau in 18th- century Virginia.

- CW News 1975 October P.3



Nankin Chickens

Colonial Williamsburg's Rare Breeds program includes several rare breeds of poultry including the Nankin Bantam. The Nankin is a very old breed, often referred to in the 18th century as the Yellow Bantam. The name Nankin is believed to come from the same word which is a reference to a color of cloth. The Nankin is a true bantam, which means they have no large fowl counterpart. Many breeds of bantams are just "miniature" versions of the large fowl, making true bantams a unique genetic resource.



Nankin Rooster

The Nankins come in two comb types, Rose (flat comb close to the head with spikes) and Straight (tall flat comb with five points). Colonial Williamsburg has both types. The Nankin was very popular before the advent of electric incubators because the hens get broody easily. That is, they want to sit on eggs to hatch them, a job that takes 21 or more days. The Nankin was a good choice for gamekeepers because they will sit on the eggs of pheasants and quail without breaking them. When electric incubators became popular the little birds lost their job and they slowly became more rare. They



Nankin Hen

are a foundation breed, which makes them important genetically. They were used to

create other breeds of bantams including the Seabright. They are classified as "critical" by the

Livestock Conservancy. Please visit our little poultry ambassadors at the Wythe or the Powell chicken coops.

Training Carriages

Often times throughout the year you may see vehicles like these driving around town. These are our training carriages. We currently have 6 training vehicles in our fleet, and use them to train new horses, train new drivers, rehab injured horses, and to provide exercise for horses that do not pull carriages on a daily basis. These vehicles are lighter than



our reproduction carriages, and also have some 21st century additions.

Both the carriages pictures

here have disc brakes. Should anything go wrong, our drivers are able to stop the carriage quickly and safely. If you see one of these out in town stop and say hi. We always enjoy talking about the extra activities we do to make carriage rides safe and enjoyable for our guests.



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