



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

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

AUGUST 1776
August 1-7, 1776

August 2, 1776

The Ship *Oxford*, a Prize of 200 Tons Burthen, with her Tackle, Apparel, Rigging, and Furniture, all in excellent Order, will be sold at public Sale, for ready Money, on Monday the 19th Instant, before the Raleigh Tavern in Williamsburg, at 6 o'Clock in the Afternoon. The Ship, with her Furniture, may be seen by applying to Capt. James Gregory of Prince George, who has an Inventory of the same.

James Hubard.

Randolph Price, a planter of Surry County, thought he would take advantage of the crowd of buyers assembled to bid on the ship to show and sell his race horse.

For Sale, The noted swift horse IRISHMAN, that has often proved himself to be as swift as any horse in Virginia or North Carolina, agreeable to the rules of racing. He is remarkable for getting very delicate colts, and is now rising 8 years old. As this horse is so well known, I think a farther description of him needless. He will be shewn at the Raleigh tavern, in Williamsburg, the 19th of this instant, when the terms will be made known by

Randolph Price.

Unfortunately for Mr. Price, the auction of the ship was canceled, and we are left in the dark as to whether or not he sold Irishman.

August 6, 1776

The Council of Virginia, concerned because the citizens of Williamsburg were inconvenienced by soldiers quartered in the town, ordered:

That it be recommended to Brigadier General Lewis to provide Barracks for the Continental Army stationed here to be built on that part of the Park, which the Governor lately gave up for the use of the Troops; as a Measure, at once more agreeable to the Inhabitants of Williamsburg, and in the Opinion of this Board less expensive to the Continent than renting Houses for that Purpose.

On August 9, William Finnie, Deputy Quarter Master General, announced that the contract for building the barracks would be let to the lowest bidder:

The building of a sufficient number of WOODEN BARRACKS to hold 1000 troops, also a large STABLE for the horses belonging to the army, will be let to the lowest bidder on Saturday the 17th instant, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, before the Raleigh tavern.

In September the Council discovered that the barracks should be double the size originally planned, so it ordered that the barracks be made to accommodate 2,000 troops and the stables be enlarged to house 100 horses. The barracks, built on the Palace lands northeast of the Palace, were burned by the British in 1781.



PAMPHLET FILE

August 8-14, 1976

August 10, 1776

On this day the Council ordered the payment of "two pounds and three pence for cloaths and other necessaries furnished Alexander Silver a prisoner of War."

Alexander Silver was captured twice by the Virginia forces. The first time he was captured, he was considered harmless and was released to return to the British lines. On his second capture, though, the Virginians were forced to keep him. The *Virginia Gazette* reported on August 24:

Master Alex Silver, a little Gentleman, who was taken at Norfolk gathering strawberries in a garden, and discharged, and again taken at Gwyn's island, in the sloop Lady Charlotte tender, and who is said to be a relation of Capt. Squire's, [Matthew Squire, captain of HMS *Otter*] was put to school in this city by order of the Council, and is now very happily situated.

On August 7 the Council ordered: "That Alexander Silver, a little boy taken on Board the Lady Charlotte tender at Gwyns Island, be put to school under Mr. Fry in this City, and boarded there also at public expence until further orders." There was no way to return Silver to the British because they had fled to sea. Most prisoners of war were sent to the western part of the state, but Alexander was a small boy and the Council felt responsible for his well-being and made him a ward of the state.

Robert Fry had been a schoolmaster in Norfolk from about 1762 until the destruction of his school when Norfolk was burned in January 1776. He then moved to Williamsburg and opened another school near the College. Robert Fry died in Isle of Wight County in 1783, and nothing more is known of Alexander Silver.

Compiled by Harold B. Gill, Jr.



The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation