

# interpreter

## REVOLUTIONARY OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFRICAN-AMERICANS

by Michael L. Nicholls

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The rapid deterioration in relations between the colonists and Imperial authority in 1775 created new and immediately felt changes in Virginia. African-Americans found new crevasses opening up in the slave system as both sides took up arms to preserve liberty or empire. A revolutionary ideology stressing freedom and a rhetoric likening the position of white colonists to slaves led some to question slavery itself. Before the Peace of 1783 had been signed, the Virginia State Assembly had modified the colonial strictures on individual private manumissions. On the other hand, the institution of slavery survived the crisis and war intact, only a handful of white Virginians being willing to support a general emancipation or an end to slavery. Indeed, some argued that while all men might be created equal, not all residents of Virginia were entitled to life, liberty, and property. African-Americans were not considered part of Old Dominion society and hence did not enjoy the natural rights constituent members of society enjoyed.

African-American slaves did not need

the ideology of the American Revolution in order to seek freedom. What the Revolution created was a unique and immediate opportunity for blacks to obtain freedom by joining armed forces at war with their masters. Never before had such a situation existed for Virginia slaves, and it was not long before some began to take advantage of it. Almost as quickly

as Governor Dunmore uttered his comments about raising the royal standard and inviting loyalists to rally to the cause in the wake of the powder-seizing incident in late April 1775, a few black men appeared at the Palace offering their services. Informed of their intentions by one of his servants, Dunmore admonished them through the servant to return to their masters.

Both sides were acutely aware of the potential threat to white Virginians of appealing to their slaves, but the governor waited until November 1775 before issuing his proclamation.

Although Dunmore delayed the offer of freedom to all servants and slaves belonging to rebels who would bear arms against their masters until the fall, many slaves did not wait for the formal invitation. After leaving Williamsburg for the



safety of a ship at Yorktown, Dunmore sailed down to Norfolk and by midsummer was joined by British troops from St. Augustine. The British vessels took in some slaves from Norfolk who had managed to escape. Ship commanders protested they neither encouraged nor harbored runaways, but soon returned some-refugees from the borough and adjacent countryside who had joined them, runaways who may have been with them all along. Word soon spread of Dunmore's location and runaways sought to join the fleet. A Northern Neck owner believed one of his slaves had left for Norfolk, the prevailing opinion being that one could find safety there.

Seven days into November, Dunmore signed a proclamation promising freedom for men belonging to rebels who could join him and bear arms. English authority was clearly eroding, not just because of Dunmore's evacuation but because of the military events in the Chesapeake and far away in New England. Virginians had met in convention, organized committees of safety, and basically created a substitute government that functioned in the face of Dunmore's

ship of state. With the proclamation, white Virginians became incensed. Probably no other single act could have alienated slave owners from British authority so much. The official reaction took many forms. The *Virginia Gazette* addressed slaves warning them not to expect to find freedom with Dunmore and claiming that the British were the ones who kept up the slave trade in spite of Virginians' efforts to abolish it. The convention offered pardons to those who willingly returned from the governor and death to those who took up arms and did not desert. All told, it has been estimated that some eight hundred slaves made it to Dunmore's standard. A good number of them died of smallpox and fever on board his ships or at his encampment on Gwynn's Island.

Perhaps more might have attempted to join him, but many were wary. The *Gazette* gleefully quoted Caesar, "the famous barber of Yorktown" (whose chosen name was John Hope) to the effect that since Dunmore had not freed his own slaves, why should any others trust him? A few years later, Hope's mistress, Susannah Riddel, successfully petitioned the legislature for his freedom, no



Recent portrayal of Dunmore's Ethiopian Regiment.

Photo by Lorraine Brooks

doubt influenced in part by these expressions of apparent loyalty. But Hope may have revealed the feelings of many. Given the risks and danger in even trying to reach Dunmore, why should this white official be trusted, himself a slave owner and no real friend to freedom. In addition, between the governor's proclamation in early November and his departure the following summer, he hardly had a base of operations to flee to, especially after the loss of Norfolk. Most slaves who made it to his ships were likely the ones who found one of the tenders and barges that raided the coastal waters of the Old Dominion during this period.

John Hope himself had personal reasons for resisting Dunmore's offer. He had at least one son, Aberdeen, who belonged to Hugh Nelson, and possibly a wife at Nelson's as well. An individual effort meant abandoning his family. Many other slaves were caught in the same dilemma. In Norfolk, what appears to be the largest single group to join Dunmore did not make the effort until spring 1776. Somewhere between 87 and 97 of John Willoughby, Sr.'s slaves, including a handful belonging to his son, left en masse. They did not decide to go, however, until the committee of safety on the urging of General Charles Lee ordered the evacuation of all residents north and east of Great Bridge on April 10. All male slaves above the age of thirteen were to be segregated and kept by military authorities until their owners were relocated farther inland. When this order arrived, John Willoughby protested and had his patriotism questioned, but his slaves deserted on April 14. Willoughby's slaves alone would have made up a significant proportion of Dunmore's slave entourage as he sailed up the Chesapeake Bay some five weeks later.

It is often forgotten how little time British forces actually spent in Virginia during the War for Independence. When ships and men did appear, local slaves were drawn to them like a magnet, especially after General Henry Clinton's more general proclamation that promised freedom to all slaves who made it to British lines. Outside of a few raiding vessels in the Chesapeake, only the short visit in 1779 of Matthews interrupted the tranquility of Virginians before the arrival of Leslie, Arnold, and Phillips in late 1780. The first did not stay long and apparently refused to accept runaways. But the greatest opportunities for freedom flights came with the

latter's raids, and the army of Cornwallis that marched about the Peninsula and its hinterlands before the fateful encampment at Yorktown. The best evidence of slave flight comes from this period.

What is strikingly different about the Revolutionary runaways is the aggregate profile of those who ran during these years. Unlike normal times, the presence of the British army and navy encouraged whole families to escape. Where earlier in the century only one or two out of every ten runaways was a woman, during the war the proportion of adult females at least doubled. Children were gathered up by parents too, and many women bore children while behind British lines. Of approximately 960 African-Americans evacuated with the British from New York in 1783 claiming an origin in Virginia, 30 percent were women and just over one fourth were children, a number of them born after their mothers ran. Not surprisingly, given its prominent role in the war, many of these former slaves were from Norfolk, Portsmouth, and their environs. Former owners claimed the loss of 741 slaves from Norfolk County, including the borough and its smaller neighboring town, the greatest number of any county with surviving records. Women com-



The choice to run away was not an easy one.  
Michelle Clawson and daughter, Kindra.

prised 30 percent of the adults and children 27 percent of those whose age and gender were described, both proportions far in excess of the pattern among runaways earlier in the century.

The presence of the army at Yorktown also allowed larger numbers of slaves from York County to join the British than was typical of many more remote and less affected areas. The 112 slaves owners asserted had been lost by their joining the British totaled only a fraction of those claimed from Norfolk, although the defeat of Cornwallis allowed owners to retake many who had joined. Among those who left with Imperial forces from New York were a number from "Little York." Seventy-year-old Daniel Barber, described as "worn out," claimed he had been freed, apparently informally, by Austin Moore; while Jacob Adams, a "stout fellow" aged twenty-six, asserted his freeborn status to the British military clerk as did the forty-two-year-old mulatto carpenter Thomas Plumb. Robert Lee identified Thomas Edwards as his previous owner, while Dick Richard named Peter Willis and Samuel Tomkin named Richard Tomkin. Like Samuel Tomkin, the remaining evacuated slaves appear to have their former owner's last name attached to them by the British clerk: Lewis who belonged to John Kirby, Mary identified as Captain Tomkins's, Daniel held by Thomas Archer, and Joe, once Joseph Freeman's.

Like York County residents, Williamsburgers permanently lost comparatively few slaves given the military action in the area. Only eight unnamed slaves were claimed as lost to the British, but it is not clear that the short list of total losses is complete. James Carter submitted a claim for three, John Carter for one, and John Greenhow for four. Twelve of Peyton and Betty Randolph's slaves fled, but, like many in the area, were either recaptured or returned. No claim was submitted by James and Elizabeth Cocke, whom St. George Tucker reported losing "favorite man Clem" and their cook in the summer of 1781. Other Williamsburg owners placed advertisements in the *Gazette* seeking the aid of readers. John Saunders asked people to be on the lookout for Sally who had left with the British but was last heard of moving north with the French soldiers when they departed months after the capitulation at Yorktown. Fanny had joined the British temporarily, too. However, Ambrose Davenport reported that this slave who had once belonged to

Dudley Digges, Jr., was then reputed to be with a cabinetmaker husband who belonged to a man near Petersburg.

Some sixteen African-Americans above the age of twelve reporting Williamsburg origins made it to New York with the British. Included were John Jones, forty years old in 1783, who abandoned Richard Jones in favor of Governor Dunmore. Twenty-year-old Sally Dennis freed herself from "Lucas" Burwell, and by the time she boarded the ship in New York, she had a nineteen-month-old boy named John. Nancy Dixon, sick and with a six-year-old child, slipped away from John Dixon three years before. John Gustice, nineteen, and Sally Stewart, twenty-six, both left John "Tassell" behind, while Hannah Jackson, aged thirty-three, Hannah Jackson, aged twelve, and Robert Holt, twenty-four, escaped from William Holt. Simon Johnson had served as a trumpeter in the American Legion, and John Gray had been put into the army by "Captain Harrard" from which he had deserted and joined the British. James Rea was missing a leg, but whether he lost it during the war is not known. He listed his previous owner as one George Wilk.

The ultimate fate of most slaves who ran and survived the war cannot be determined. Of those who made it to New York, some went to Nova Scotia and others kept going to England. Both destinations later contributed new settlers who moved to the British-sponsored colony of Sierra Leone. Several may have been from Virginia. The immediate fate of a few is known, most of whom were slaves belonging to loyalists. George Mills's experience provides an interesting example. Born on the coast of Guinea in Africa, he survived the middle passage to land in Virginia about five years before the Revolution. He served a Captain Avery in Portsmouth and then joined Dunmore. After spending about a year with the governor, Mills arrived in New York and served the British on a vessel for the remainder of the war. Mills sought compensation for property losses totaling £10, but the adjustment board doubted such an accumulation of property, and since his freedom had been gained as a result of the war, decided the British government owed him no other compensation. This was the decision for a good many black applicants.

Peter Anderson was a free-born man who lived in Norfolk when the war began. His accumulation of property, some chests of clothes, four feather beds and furniture, twenty hogs, and about \$200, possessions



The presence of the British army and navy encouraged whole families to escape.

“he had slaved very hard for,” was destroyed by Dunmore’s corps. His slave wife and children apparently were left behind when he joined Dunmore and went to work for the army. Lacking any proof, and giving “an incredible story as to his property,” Anderson’s claim in England for reimbursement was denied.

William Aitcheson, mercantile partner of James Parker, sometime Burgess for the borough, alderman, and justice of the peace, sided with Dunmore. Taken to Williamsburg and kept on parole, he apparently died in the fall of 1776. Jack, his gardener, Smart, a coachman, and George, his waiting man, all died from disease in Dunmore’s fleet. Peggy, who served as a “waiting woman,” and her three children took advantage of General Clinton’s proclamation and claimed their freedom from the Aitcheson family.

Twenty-nine of Andrew Sprowle’s slaves died in the Dunmore fleet. Jack, a waiting man belonging to the loyalist merchants William and John Brown of Norfolk died on shipboard, too. Tonny served as a soldier in a Captain Collet’s Black Company, made it to New York, and was not heard of again by the Browns. Similarly, James Dunn

who worked as a gaol keeper for Dunmore in Norfolk, as well as a guide and carpenter, had three slaves. Lucy went on shipboard, but on returning to shore was captured by “a rebel colonel.” His two other slaves made it to New York, but refused to go to Nova Scotia and “left their Master in the night.” Penelope Forsyth D’Endé, the widow of William Forsyth, submitted a claim for two slaves. One, a valuable shoemaker who worked in their shoe factory, was killed at the battle of Great Bridge in December 1775, while her “excellent woman servant” was seized by American forces in Williamsburg. Scattered too were the slaves William Farrer once claimed. Dinah deserted in Norfolk but finally made her way to New York and then disappeared. James was drafted for the crew of a man-of-war while York was taken by Virginians when the British fleet sat off Norfolk. They too disappeared. Francis was seized on board a privateer, shipped to Philadelphia, and sold. Penelope and Patty made it to England via New York but became “totally lost” to Farrer.

Other loyalist owners took their slaves to the West Indies for sale. Many who were left or lost to local forces were seized and sold to new owners. The latter was the fate of many of Dunmore’s own slaves. Other loyalists disposed

of slaves as best they could. William Hunter of Williamsburg had taken over his father's printing business in 1775 after reaching his majority. One of his slaves was lost to the British, and died in Portsmouth serving as a pioneer. He gave fifteen other slaves to his father-in-law, Joseph Davenport, for the support of his children after leaving Virginia with the British bound for England via New York and Nova Scotia.

Just as the war divided white allegiances, not all African-Americans identified with the British. William Flora, a free black man, served with bravery in the fighting at Great Bridge south of Norfolk in 1775. The orphan of the free black woman Mary Flora, he had been bound in 1763 to Joshua Gammons on the Portsmouth side of the river. Saul served throughout the war but did not fall within the conditions set by the Assembly in 1783 emancipating those who had been enlisted by their owners as free substitutes for drafted whites and who had served the full term of enlistment. Since owner George Kelly was unwilling to manumit him, Saul had to petition the legislature in 1792 for his freedom. He claimed that he had early taken up arms for the patriots for he had been "taught to know that war was levied upon America, not for the Emancipation of Blacks, but for the subjugation of Whites, and he thought the number of Bond-men ought not to be augmented." While Saul's choice of words was calculated to appeal to "the Legislators of a Republic," they may reflect his thinking at the time he chose sides.

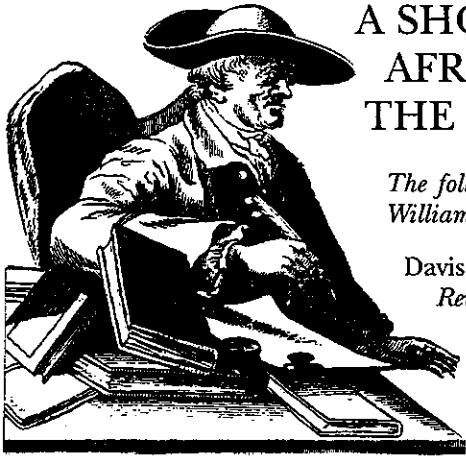
The war broadened the range of choices African-Americans faced. The proximity of British armies and navies coupled with British proclamations of freedom encouraged some slaves to join them. This also allowed many women and children to flee successfully in far greater numbers and proportions than normally obtained for runaways. An uncertain freedom had to be measured against the realities of the dangers and diseases that always followed armies and navies; a good many slaves risked the odds. Others simply took advantage of the disruptions and dislocations of the war to leave masters, or perhaps were abandoned by them, and to pass as free. One wonders, given the small number of manumissions during the 1780s, if a few of the free people of color counted in the census of 1790 might not have been slaves who succeeded in establishing them-

selves as free individuals, particularly in the rapidly growing towns of the Old Dominion.

Norfolk and Williamsburg were both casualties of the War for Independence with significant results for their African-American populations. First Dunmore's troops and then patriot soldiers set fire to buildings in Norfolk in early January, and the Virginia Convention ordered the city's complete destruction in February to prevent its use by Dunmore. Some slaves had already left to join British forces, but as residents seeking refuge fled to nearby counties, one can well imagine the destruction of slave families as owners took their various routes to differing destinations. This may have had the effect of encouraging the members of already fractured families to join later British expeditions to the region.

Williamsburg was not destroyed in the same manner as Norfolk. Long under siege by western burgesses who sought a more central location for the capital, it fell in 1779. Fearful of its vulnerable location, the Assembly moved the capital to Richmond. This place proved no safer, but since the new capitol was located in a nondescript building, Benedict Arnold's troops failed to identify and destroy it. Williamsburg shopkeepers, lawyers, craftsmen, and tavern keepers migrated to the new capital. Their removal also threatened the integrity of Williamsburg slave families. How many were affected when Serafina Formicola relocated his tavern, when Robert Gilbert, the boot- and shoemaker moved to Richmond? Or as Jane Vobe departed for Manchester or Anthony Singleton for the new capital? As was noted earlier, a considerable turnover in the Williamsburg slave population took place in the 1780s, some of it certainly caused by slave owners who left to seek better business opportunities elsewhere. Thus, the disruptions begun by the Revolution continued.

The Revolution disrupted the lives of all Norfolk and Williamsburg residents. The war created new and different opportunities for slaves of both genders and of nearly all ages to run to freedom. Others actively fought for the patriot cause. By loosening the restrictions on manumissions, revolutionary and dissenting religious ideology also contributed to the growth in the numbers of free people of color. This complicated Virginia's social order even more and made the identification between race and status even less consistent than it already was. ■



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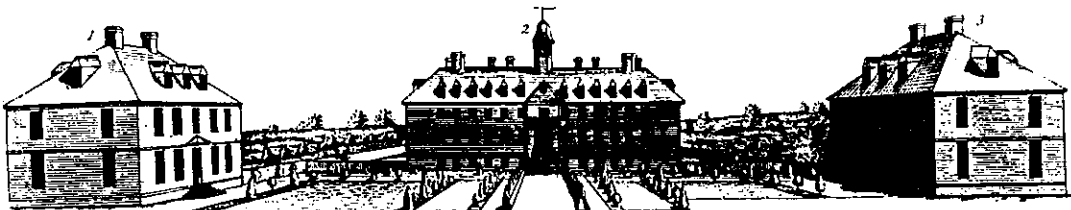
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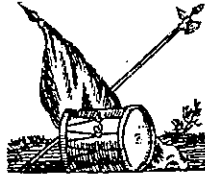
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# THE INDEPENDENT COMPANIES OF VIRGINIA 1774-1775



By Bill White

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The independent companies of Virginia have long been either ignored or misrepresented. All too often they are assumed to have been a part of the military forces raised by the Virginia Convention of July 1775, while, in fact, it was that convention which dissolved them. They have been termed regular forces when they were more closely akin to the militia. In short, they were very distinctive in their organization, yet they are seldom recognized as such.

These volunteer units appeared in Virginia at a time when there was no occasion for direct armed conflict. In fact, their effectiveness on the field of battle was never tested. Despite this, they played an important part in opening the final breach with the mother country and thrusting Virginia into revolution.

Edmund Randolph, looking back on those initial years of the conflict between Great Britain and her American colonies, relates that it was obvious that sooner or later "the sword of America" would have to be drawn. He describes Virginia in 1774 as dependent on her mother country. Britain was the major market for the sale of her raw materials, the only place where the credit so necessary to the sustenance of the southern planters could be obtained. In addition, the mother country had cut off the colonies from intercourse with other nations, commercially at least, by prohibitive laws and regulations. Virginia was "without military stores; without discipline in the militia . . . ; without a man who had inspired an absolute confidence in him as a military leader . . . ; [and] with a conviction

that the merciless tomahawk would be uplifted against her." The political leaders in Virginia, who were attached to the patriot cause, prepared Virginians for the possibility of armed conflict. Daily the discontent, exaggerated truths, and rumors heightened the fervor.

The port of Boston was closed in June of 1774. The city had been placed under a military governor and was increasingly the scene of British military action. Virginians in July of 1774 denounced what they considered to be the military orientation of the mother country.

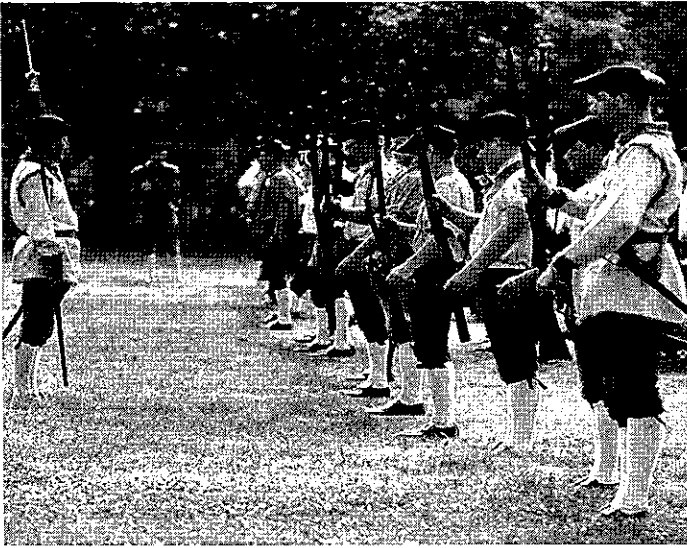
*Instead of subjecting the military to the civil power, his majesty has expressly made the civil subordinate to the military. But can his majesty thus put down all law under his feet? Can he erect a power superior to that which erected himself? He has done it indeed by force; but let him remember that force cannot give right.*

Virginia was becoming wary of what might happen within her boundaries. Fearful of being subjugated as Boston had been, or even of attack by troops from the mother country, she began to prepare herself.

In October 1774 the Continental Congress established a boycott on all commerce with Great Britain. The Association, as it was called, was to be supervised, supported, and enforced by county committees. When the resolves were known in Virginia, the counties began to form committees of safety which were to serve this purpose.

In March 1775 the Virginia Convention met, an extra-legal assembly dedicated to patriotic principles. Edmund Randolph recalls that there was a rumor afoot that Lord Dunmore, the royal governor of the colony, was inflaming the Indians against whites in order to provide himself with an ally should the patriots choose to incite the people of Virginia. Dunmore had recently returned from an expedition against the Indians who had been harassing the western frontiers, and it was feared that he might possibly be able to intimidate them into supporting him in any conflict that might arise. The Convention felt it necessary to prepare at once for such an eventuality and suggested that troops be raised. Feeling that "a well regulated militia composed of Gentlemen and Yeomen, is the natural strength, and only security of a free government," they made several proposals. The militia law of 1738 was to be reactivated, ammunition was to be stockpiled,





and volunteer companies raised.

The date of formation of these volunteer, independent, or gentlemen companies (the terms are used interchangeably) is difficult to determine. They, like the county committees of safety, were extra-legal organizations. It would appear that they were formed gradually between September of 1774 and about May or June of 1775. Twenty-seven such companies can be identified. Accomack, Albemarle, Amherst, Caroline, Charles City, Chesterfield, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Dunmore, Fairfax, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, James City, King George, Lancaster, Louisa, Prince George, Prince William, Richmond, Southampton, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Surrey counties and the cities of Stephensburg, Williamsburg, and Winchester each raised an independent company. Each company drew up associations or agreements to which the members subscribed their names. These associations usually outlined the purposes of the company and the guidelines under which it operated.

Fairfax County was, apparently, the first to form an independent company in Virginia. At a meeting of several "Gentlemen & Freeholders" of the county on September 21, 1774, the Fairfax County Militia Association was organized. They resolved that "in this Time of extreme Danger, with the Indian Enemy in our Country, and threat'ned with the Destruction of our Civil rights, & Liberty . . . we will form ourselves into a Company, not exceeding one hundred Men, by the Name of the Fairfax independant [*sic*] Company of Voluntiers [*sic*]." The company

was to choose its own officers as soon as fifty men had enlisted, and was to devote time to "practising the military Exercise & Discipline." Each man was to provide for himself "a regular Uniform," musket, bayonet, cartridge box, tomahawk, and keep on hand a quantity of shot and powder.

The Albemarle Independent Company, formed probably sometime prior to April 1775, solemnly bound the members "by the sacred ties of virtue, Honor and love to our Country," to be ready at any time to defend the rights

of America. They resolved that if any member should fail to honor this bond he was "to be held as unworthy [of] the rights of freemen, and as inimical to the cause of America." Each member promised to obey the orders of the officers which had been elected, to muster at least four times a year, and to provide himself with a gun, shotpouch, powderhorn, and a hunting shirt.

The Prince William County Independent Company of Cadets, formed in November 1774, selected as its motto *Aut liber, aut nullus* [Either Liberty or death], which was to be fixed to its colors. The First Independent Company of Dunmore County resolved to "embody ourselves in one Company, . . . And do bind ourselves by all ties of Honour Love to our Country, and the words of Gentlemen to adhere strictly to such resolves which shall be entered into by a Majority of the Company—"

Keeping in mind the principle of civil authority over military authority, these companies were placed under the direction of their local committees of safety. The Albemarle Committee resolved "That the Companies, when raised, should not be led to duty without the voice of the Committee." In addition to being under the control of the local committee, the members of the company itself were required to vote on any action to be taken, making the officers little more than figureheads in a military sense and chairmen in a civil sense. This voting requirement excluded those who were not property owners qualified for the vote.

Virginians turned their attention towards



procuring the necessities for the independent companies. The committees of safety began to collect money to purchase munition. The Albemarle Committee imposed a tax of one shilling six pence on all tithables in the county, and

Fairfax County a tax of three shillings per tithable to raise money for this purpose. George Washington, who, upon their request, had become the commander in chief of several of the companies, spent a good amount of time assisting them in purchasing muskets, sashes, gorgets, shoulder knots, drums, fifes, colors, and copies of *The Manual Exercise as ordered by His Majesty in 1764*.

The Dinwiddie Independent Company advertised in the *Virginia Gazette* for "an expert adjutant to instruct them in military Discipline." Thomas Hookins and Thomas Sterling of Alexandria advertised their willingness to teach "any Number of Boys the military musick of the Fife and drum: and also supply any Persons with Music of the said Instruments." Virginia was preparing.

Gifts were presented to the independent companies as a token of one's patriotism. In February 1775 Mr. Carr of Prince William County presented the local independent company of his county with a stand of colors, two drums, and two fifes. Later in the year Edmund Pendleton made a gift of a stand of colors, a drum, and two fifes to the Caroline Independent Company, and was revered by the company as a supporter of "the cause of liberty and freedom."

The independent companies spent their time until April of 1775 preparing themselves, purchasing equipment, and basking in the elite notions of being the gentlemen and yeomen defenders of their God-given rights as freemen. They gathered at musters to train and to consider matters relating to the company. Between January and May of

1775 George Washington attended six such musters, as the commander of the independent companies. Philip Vickers Fithian, a Presbyterian preacher in western Virginia, attended such a muster in Stephensburg on June 8, 1775, in which "One *Shipe* of this town was backward . . . in his Attendance with the Company of Independants [*sic*].—A File was sent to bring him—he made some Resistance but was compelled at length, & is now in great Fear, & very humble, since he hears many of his Townsmen talking of Tar & Feathers."

The independent companies were most effective as the strong arms of the county committees of safety. It is apparent that they devoted much of their time to enforcing a "voluntary" compliance with the Continental Association. Their influence is probably best demonstrated in the case of John Sharlock. Sharlock had apparently made his feelings against the Virginia patriots and the Continental Association well known. He was called upon by the Accomack Committee of Safety to account for himself. Foolishly, he refused to appear and the local independent company was sent to fetch him. After arming himself with two loaded guns, Sharlock reconsidered and allowed himself to be taken by the company to the "Liberty Pole," where he made the following recantation of his views.

*Whereas I the subscriber have thoughtlessly and imprudently, at sundry times, expressed myself to the following purpose: That such people as oppose the present ministerial measures, respecting America, are rebels, and that I expect to be employed at a future day in hanging them, and if no hemp could be had I had flax enough, and that I wanted no greater bondage, under the name of liberty, than to be bound by this association, and I have also expressed myself very imprudently in calling the Independent Company of this county an unlawful mob, and many other idle and foolish words; I do hereby, in the most solemn and serious manner, declare that at those times, when I have held such language, I did not mean as much as I said, and I do hereby declare my most unfeigned sorrow for what I have done or said, and in the most humble manner ask the pardon of the said Independent Company (which was accordingly done by application being made to each member of the said Company respectfully) and I declare I look upon the said Company as a very respectful body of men, and, upon the most calm*

*reflection, I declare my opinion to be altered. I most heartily wish success to this my native country in her present honest struggle for liberty with the mother country, and do here promise to do all in my power to retrieve my character with my countrymen. This acknowledgment and confession I make freely and voluntarily, and desire the same may be published in the public papers.*

*John Sharlock*

As may be seen, such strong-arm tactics did prove very effective. Certainly, a visit from the local independent company would be enough to make any man, after "calm reflection," recant almost any view he held. The humiliation factor is also great in these proceedings. The very act of forced submission and public apology is a belittling process.

It is possible to gain more insight into such high-handed methods by examining the case of John Hook, a merchant in the town of New London. In June 1775 the Bedford County Committee of Safety proceeded against him. The charges were pressed by Charles Lynch, who testified to the committee that in a conversation Hook had made statements against the American cause. Hook was alleged to have made a statement that "there never will be peace till Americans get well flogged," and was accused of circulating pamphlets against the American cause. A copy of the committee proceedings, including the testimony and the name of his accuser, was then presented to Hook, along with a summons to appear before the committee. Hook did not actually appear, but instead wrote a letter to the committee defending his position. In his letter he asserted that the statements he was accused of making were both out of context and misquoted. He admitted to having a pamphlet which spoke against the American cause, but insisted that he had many pamphlets written both for and against American liberties, and that he had purchased them in order to better inform himself on both sides of the argument. Hook delivered his pamphlets to the committee so that they might dispose of them in whatever manner they saw fit. His defense must have satisfied the committee, for no further proceedings, concerning this incident, were directed against him.

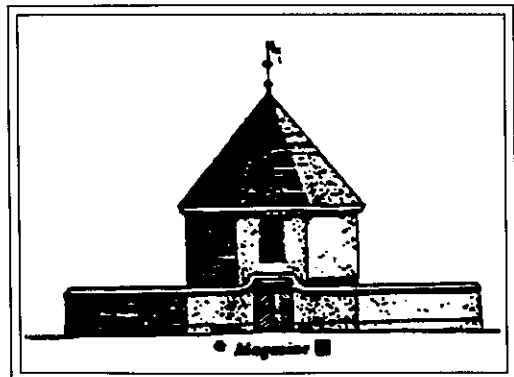
The independent companies had served well as the enforcing agent against what was deemed to be the oppressive measures of the mother country and as potent testimony

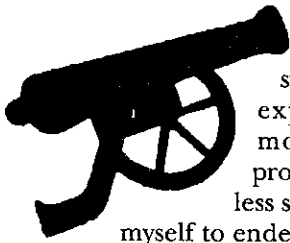
of the colonists' intention to stand up for their rights as they saw them. However, they had not had to demonstrate their effectiveness as a military force. In the months ahead it would become plain that they would be seriously lacking in this area.

Lord Dunmore, Virginia's royal governor, was increasingly alarmed by the activities and preparation which surrounded him. He wrote to the Earl of Dartmouth in March 1775 that the colony was preparing for war. He described the county committees' taxes for the purchase of war materiel and the Virginia Convention's resolves to raise troops. It is clear that the governor was beginning to feel threatened by the growing militarism in Virginia, and he took drastic action in a futile attempt to arrest the movement.

In the early morning hours of April 21, 1775, Lieutenant Collins from the H.M.S. *Magdalen*, moored at Burwell's Ferry, with a detachment of twenty men went to the public magazine at Williamsburg and removed the gunpowder stored there. Apparently as they were leaving the detachment was discovered and the city erupted with activity. As Dunmore described it: "Notice was given immediately to the Inhabitants of this place. Drums were then sent through the City. The Independent Company got under arms. All the People assembled, and during their consultation, continued threats were brought to my House."

Shortly after dawn a procession moved up the Palace Green. The city officials, mayor, recorder, aldermen, and common council, were in front followed by the Independent Company of Williamsburg, under arms. The mayor addressed the governor, requesting that he inform them "upon what particular purpose the powder has been carried off in such a manner," and earnestly entreating him "to order it to be immediately returned





to the magazine." Dunmore's answer was vague. He explained to Dartmouth: "I thought proper, in the defenceless state in which I find myself to endeavor to sooth them and answer verbally to the effect, that I had removed the Powder lest the Negroes might have siezed upon it to a place of security from whence, when I saw occasion I would at any time deliver it to the People." The truth was that the fifteen and one-half barrels of confiscated powder were destined to be loaded onto the man-of-war *Fowey*. The city officials seemed to be conscious of the fact that this was not the proper time to enter into direct confrontation with royal authority. They returned to the crowd of armed citizens and attempted to pacify them with Dunmore's vague explanations and assurances that the powder was not far away. Their authority and calm manner prevailed and the angry citizens dispersed.

News of the commotions in Williamsburg reached Fredericksburg on April 23. The independent company there had appointed the twenty-fourth as a meeting day, and, when the company assembled, it resolved to march to Williamsburg "to inquire into this affair and there to take such steps as may best answer the purpose of recovering the powder & securing the Arms now in the Magazine." Saturday, April 29, was set as the day of departure in order that other independent companies who wished to participate in this mission might have an opportunity to make their way to Fredericksburg. Express riders to the surrounding counties trumpeted the call for additional gentlemen companies.

On April 27, the gathering independent companies sent an express rider, Mann Page, Jr., a member of the Spotsylvania Independent Company, to inquire whether or not the powder had been returned. He reported to the citizens that there were 2,000 men gathering in Fredericksburg preparing to march. Peyton Randolph, the speaker of the House, sent Page back to Fredericksburg with a message imploring the companies to disband. He himself was preparing to embark on his journey to Philadelphia to attend the Second Continental Congress, but upon receiving the news from Fredericksburg, he

made arrangements to go by that town and left on the twenty-ninth to meet with the gathering.

It would appear that the companies waited in Fredericksburg for Randolph's arrival. On Saturday, the day appointed for the march, the officers met in a "Council of war." More than likely the council wished to consider Randolph's letter, which must have brought home to them the implications of the actions they were about to take. Until this time, they probably had not realized just how closely they were approaching revolution. Randolph arrived sometime on Monday, May 1, and that evening the council made known its resolutions. They included a condemnation of Dunmore's actions and an order for the independent companies to return home. Several of the companies, instead of going directly home, escorted Randolph and other delegates to the Continental Congress to Hooe's Ferry and saw them safely into Maryland.

Patrick Henry and the Hanover Independent Company did not attend the rally at Fredericksburg though he certainly must have known about the gathering. Henry sent out word to the Hanover Volunteers during the latter days of April to meet at the Tavern at New Castle on May 1. When the Hanover Independent Company assembled, the county committee with Patrick Henry went into a long session. They deliberated for the entire day, "There being some disagreement among them as we were told." It is possible that they had been informed of the contents of Randolph's letter to the companies at Fredericksburg and there was opposition to any action that would counter his advice. But finally the committee's approval was obtained and Henry, as captain of the company, proceeded. A detachment of sixteen men was sent to the residence of Richard Corbin, the king's receiver general, but found that he was in Williamsburg. The entire company reassembled at Duncastle's Ordinary, sixteen miles above Williamsburg. On the evening of May 3, Carter Braxton, an influential planter and son-in-law of Richard Corbin, with a few others met with Henry. They persuaded him to remain at Duncastle's while Braxton acted as the go-between. Payment for the misappropriated powder was negotiated at £330 and Henry was pacified. The Hanover Independent Company then proceeded north to escort Henry to Mary-

land on his way to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia.

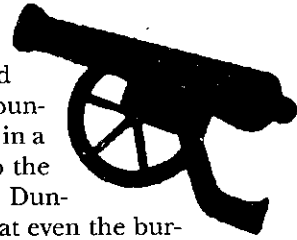
The actions of the Hanover Company could not be ignored by royal authority. Thus far, the political leaders of Virginia had been able to prevent an actual armed conflict. Commotions had been raised and armed bodies massed, but the governor could choose to overlook these as only slightly treasonable if he wished. Henry, though, had extracted payment for the powder under the threat of armed conflict and such a defiance of royal authority could not be ignored.

Tensions rose in Virginia during the following weeks. On June 3 a group of boys broke into the magazine in Williamsburg and three of them were wounded by a spring gun which had been rigged to a trip wire. On June 5, a number of citizens forced their way into the magazine about noon and carried off about 400 stand of arms. Rumor circulated that the governor had installed a subterranean fuse from the Palace to the magazine, with the intention of blowing up the city. On the eighth of June, Dunmore, in fear for his life, left the city and with his family made his residence on board the *Fowey*, then lying at Yorktown.

The independent companies remained active. The *Virginia Gazettes* are filled with their resolves to support each other and their congratulations to one another. On May 30 the Williamsburg Independent Company in great military panoply escorted Peyton Randolph from Ruffin's Ferry to Williamsburg on his return from the Continental Congress. Upon their arrival in the city the volunteers proceeded to the Raleigh Tavern "with many other respectable Gentlemen, and spent an hour or two in harmony and cheerfulness, and drank several patriotic toasts." Philip Vickers Fithian observed similar displays in Stephensburg and Winchester. The entries in his diary indicate that he was very much impressed by the martial spirit which prevailed: "Here every Presence is warlike, every Sound is martial! Drums beating, Fifes & Bag-Pipes playing, & only sonorous & heroic Tunes—Every Man has a hunting-Shirt, . . . Almost all have a Cockade, & Bucks-Tale in their Hats, to represent that they are hardy, resolute, & invincible Natives of the Woods of America."

Indeed, the uniform which the independent companies had almost universally adopted truly symbolized their cause. The

hunting shirt, a purely American garment adapted from its Indian counterpart, was worn in a similar manner to the European smock. Dun-



more reported that even the bur-gesses in Williamsburg could be seen wearing these shirts "of Course linnen or Canvass over their Cloaths and a Tomahawk by their Sides." George Wythe was reported to have appeared in his hunting shirt with his musket during the times of "Hostility from the last British governor." In a like manner, the bucks tail, worn in the hat, and the tomahawk, worn in the belt, became symbols of the independent companies and of the American cause.

By the end of June Williamsburg was becoming a garrison manned by the independent companies. Dunmore reported that a constant guard was being kept, and that it was relieved daily by the companies of the adjacent counties. In the first weeks of July other companies were arriving. The Albemarle Independent Company arrived on the thirteenth. On the fourteenth the *Virginia Gazette* reported that the Goochland, Louisa, Spotsylvania, King George, and Stafford volunteers had also arrived, and that they had chosen Captain Charles Scott of the Caroline Company, already in Williamsburg, as their commander in chief. By the nineteenth the Henrico, Prince George, and King William companies had also assembled. On the twenty-sixth the Southampton and Charles City independent companies marched into camp. This made a total of fifteen companies and if one makes the assumption that each of these was at the official enlisted strength of 68, with officers, the force would have totaled over 700 armed men. George Gilmer of the Albemarle Company reported, however, that there were only 250. He himself marched to Williamsburg with only 27 men. This would indicate that the companies were significantly under strength, and given the boredom of camp life, many individuals, and possibly entire companies, may have returned home.

It is evident that the problems of discipline were great. The method of voting prior to each decision made officers ineffective and enlisted men insubordinate. Officers refused to obey the commands of their commander in chief, and enlisted men as well as

officers absented themselves as often as they liked for trips to the tavern. Disorder was the order of the day. Attempts to deal with these problems were somewhat less than successful. On July 18 the officers met and passed resolutions which they hoped would correct the discipline problem, but the fact remained that the democratic principles upon which the companies were founded simply were not adapted to a regular military force. The officers could not enforce a more stringent punishment for deserting one's post than a reprimand from the company officer for the first offence, a reprimand by the commander in chief in the presence of all the assembled companies for the second offence, and expulsion for the third. Men fired weapons for no apparent reason, an action which caused great confusion among green recruits fearful of attack and wasted precious powder. It was resolved that on such an occasion the offender would be confined for two hours without food or drink. As one can imagine, such a regulation had little effect.

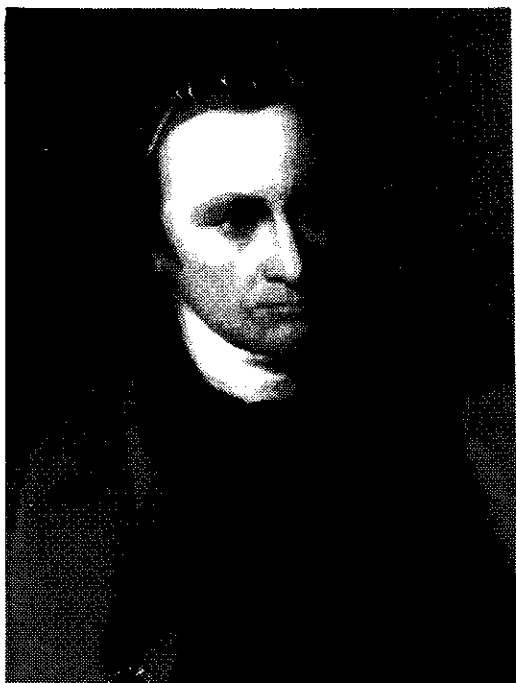
The independent companies further demonstrated the problem of controlling their actions when in July, without the authorization of the Virginia Convention, they resolved to collect all of the king's money which they could lay their hands on to prevent it from being removed from the colony. When the Convention was informed (after the collection of the money had already begun), they issued an order that the practice should cease. Wormeley Carter, a member of the Convention, wrote that they did not censure them, "as we believed they acted from good motives," but it was clear to the members meeting in Richmond that volunteer companies were not closely enough regulated by civil powers and that a more effective defensive force for the protection of Virginia would

have to be raised.

On August 19 the Virginia Convention passed a bill entitled "An ordinance for raising and embodying a sufficient force for the defence and protection of this colony." Designed to bring into being an effective military force, the bill provided for the raising of three regular regiments. In addition, it divided Virginia into military districts and minuteman companies of 680 men were to be raised in each. The officers for these companies were to be appointed by a committee from the military district comprised of three members from each of the county committees of safety. The remaining eligible men in Virginia were to be required to serve in the militia. The independent companies were disbanded.

The Convention had set definite guidelines for the military forces in Virginia with sufficient civil controls, a chain of command, and effective means of disciplining the troops. Virginia was heading into a new phase of the struggle against Great Britain. The military pageantry, speeches, and bombastic resolves of the independent companies had proved quite effective in the early stages of political maneuvering, but would have little effect on trained British Regulars. By the middle of October 1775 the independent companies were gone. Those former members of independent companies who chose to enlist in one of the newly organized state corps found their concept of the military totally changed. Many of them may have looked back with longing on those days in the spring and summer of 1775 when the military panoply of the volunteer company was glorious pageantry rather than bloody struggle; when victories were won by threats of actions never taken, and not on the battlefield. ■





## WHAT DID HE SAY?

### An In-Depth Look at Patrick Henry's Stamp Act Speech

By Mark Couvillon

*Mark, an interpreter in Historic Buildings, has done extensive research on Patrick Henry.*

What tour of the Capitol would be complete without a mention of Patrick Henry's defiant speech against the Stamp Act delivered on May 30, 1765: "Caesar had his Brutus, Charles I his Cromwell, and George III, ("Treason," cried the Speaker: treason, treason!" echoed from every part of the house) "may profit by their example. If this be treason, make the most of it."

Judge John Tyler, father of the President, gave this traditional account of the speech to Patrick Henry's first biographer, William Wirt, in 1805. Tyler, then an eighteen year-old law student of Robert Carter Nicholas, was present in the lobby of the Hall of the House of Burgesses (the balcony not being built until a year later) when Henry "gave the first impulse of the revolution." Over the years, Tyler would often "cry out in a tragic

manner the defiance of Henry," which he had heard, to provoke his conservative father.

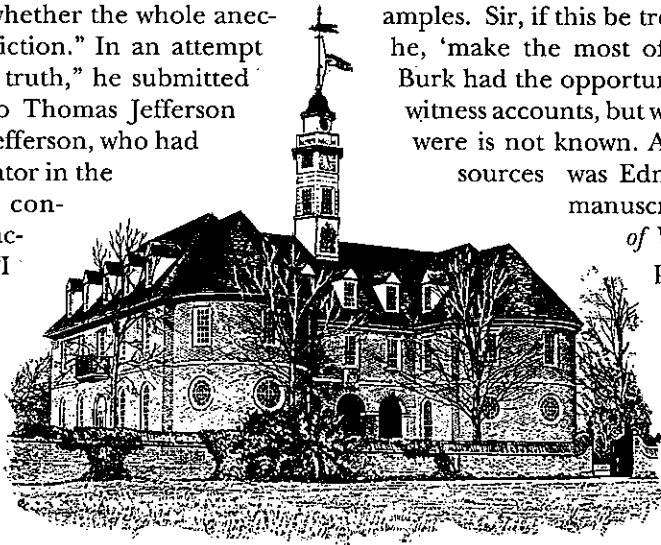
John Tyler's account of Henry's speech remained the accepted version in the history books until 1921 when the journal of an unknown Frenchman who had also been present that day was published. His eyewitness account of the speech written shortly after the event seems to take some of the fire out of Henry's defiance:

May the 30th . . . Shortly after I came in, one of the members stood up and said he had read in former times Tarquin and Julius had their Brutus, Charles had his Cromwell, and he did not doubt but some good American would stand up in favor of his Country; but (says he) in a more moderate manner, and was going to continue, when the Speaker of the House rose and, said he, the last that stood up had spoken treason, and was sore to see that not one of the members of the House was loyal enough to stop him before he had gone so far. Upon which the same member stood up again (his name is Henery) and said that if he had affronted the Speaker or the House, he was ready to ask pardon, and he would show his loyalty to his Majesty, King George the third at the expence of the last drop of his blood; but what he had said must be attributed to the interest of his country's dying liberty which he had at heart, and the heat of the passion might have lead him to have said something more than he intended; but, again, if he had said anything wrong, he begged the Speaker and the House's pardon. Some of the other members stood up and backed him, on which that affair was dropped.

Though both versions have Henry comparing the king to Caesar and Charles I, which evoked cries of "treason!" that is where the similarities end. Modern historians tend to prefer the less dramatic account by the Frenchman to that of Tyler's, believing the latter to be, if not fanciful, than at least romanticized with time. However, existing evidence suggests that Tyler's version may be the more accurate in capturing the spirit of Henry's speech.

Upon obtaining Tyler's recollections, Wirt, who had heard so many different endings of Henry's speech after the cry of "treason!,"

began to doubt whether the whole anecdote "might be fiction." In an attempt "to ascertain the truth," he submitted Tyler's version to Thomas Jefferson for verification. Jefferson, who had also been a spectator in the lobby that day, confirmed Tyler's account, adding: "I well remember the cry of treason, the pause of Mr. Henry at the name of George III, and the presence of mind with which he closed



his sentence, and baffled the charge vociferated." "The incident, therefore," wrote Wirt, "becomes authentic history." Jefferson's statement carries even more weight as he had a falling out with Henry years earlier and was quick to criticize him. William Wirt also sought information from another eyewitness, Paul Carrington. Carrington, a burgess from Charlotte County in 1765, also upheld Tyler's account, stating: "Mr. Henry . . . went on to support his resolutions in a manner beyond my power of description. . . . It was that which brought forward speaker Robinson crying out 'treason, treason' and Mr. Henry's presence of mind in reply, of which you must have read or heard." Carrington assured Wirt that he remembered "events which took place 50 years ago" better than those "of just a few months."

Two earlier accounts of Henry's Stamp Act speech appeared before William Wirt's biography was published in 1817 which Carrington may have been referring to. The first is in William Gordon's, *The History of the Independence of the U.S.*, published in 1788. Gordon states that "upon reading these resolves the Scotch gentlemen in the house, cried treason, & c. They were however adopted." The other is in John Burk's *History of Virginia 1805*. Burk's version is almost identical to Tyler's: "'Caesar,' said he, 'had his Brutus, Charles his Cromwell, and (pausing) George the third (here a cry of treason, treason was heard, supposed to issue from the chair, but with admirable presence of mind he proceeded) may profit by their ex-

amples. Sir, if this be treason,' continued he, 'make the most of it.'" Like Wirt, Burk had the opportunity to collect eyewitness accounts, but who his informants were is not known. Another of Wirt's sources was Edmund Randolph's manuscript on the *History of Virginia* as yet unpublished. Although Randolph was not present during the debate, he may have received the account from his father, John, who was clerk

that day. Randolph gave a slightly different ending to Henry's reply: "'Caesar, (said he) had his Brutus. Charles the first his Cromwell. And George III'—'Treason, Sir,' exclaimed the Speaker, to which Henry instantly replied, 'and George the third, may he never have either.'" "This dexterous escape or retreat," wrote Randolph, "if it did not savour of lively eloquence, was in itself a victory."

Three contemporary comments recorded shortly after the speech uphold the boldness of Henry's language. On June 5, 1765, Governor Fauquier, who dissolved the House after the passage of the four Resolutions, notified the Board of Trade that "very indecent language was used by a Mr. Henry a young lawyer." On June 21, an anonymous Virginian wrote to the *London Gazetteer* that "Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ has lately blazed out in the assembly, where he compared \_\_\_\_\_ to a Tarquin, a Caesar, a Charles the First, threatening him with a Brutus, or an Oliver Cromwell; yet Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ was not sent to the tower; but having prevailed to get some ridiculous violent Resolves passed, rode off in triumph." Commissary William Robinson, cousin of the Speaker, wrote to the Bishop of London on August 12, that Henry "blazed out in a violent speech against the Authority of parliament and the King, comparing his Majesty to a Tarquin, a Caesar, and a Charles I and not sparing insinuations that he wishes another Cromwell would rise."

In 1790, James Madison wrote to Edmund Pendleton seeking information on the Stamp Act crisis. Pendleton, no admirer of Henry,



replied to Madison: "I remember to have heard a Gentleman commend Mr. Henry's dexterity in playing on the line of treason, without passing it, and recollect to have heard a part of his Declamation of the Occasion 'Caesar found a Brutus, Our Charles met with a Cromwell; And who knows but in our day some Cromwell may arise and procure Justice.' " As for Patrick Henry's remarks on the event, shortly before his death, he wrote: "Upon offering them [resolutions] to the House violent Debates ensued. Many threats were uttered and much abuse cast upon me by the party for submission—After a long and warm contest the resolutions passed by a very small Majority—perhaps of one or two only."

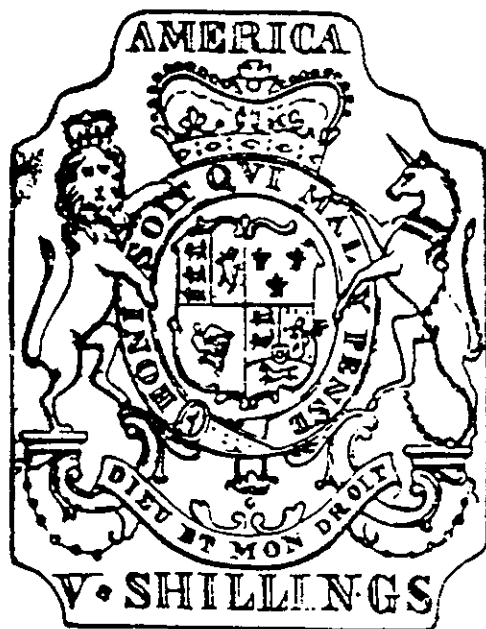
Though the above "English accounts of Henry's speech differ in exact wording, a few prevailing themes keep appearing: 1) that Henry compared the King to former tyrants, which brought forth cries of treason, 2) that Henry made some sort of witty reply to the charge of treason, 3) the event was dramatic.

What is puzzling is why the Frenchman did not remark on the witty reply mentioned so distinctly by the other eyewitnesses. Perhaps he could not follow the proceedings due to the clamor that would have followed the cries of "treason!" and missed Henry's off-the-cuff reply to the Speaker; or perhaps due to the language barrier he didn't catch the cleverness or subtlety of Henry's play of words, as could the others. What was a "dexterous retreat" to his fellow Virginians might have been viewed as apologetic to the Frenchman. One other aspect must be taken into account. Though the Frenchman's version was written down the closest to the event, it was not done on the spot. He, too, had to rely on his memory.

Did Patrick Henry apologize? In all probability yes. After the heat of the battle was over, Henry may have realized that he was treading on dangerous ground. Although members of the House were given "Parliamentary Privilege" to speak freely without fear of arrest, it did not cover treason. The reason why an apology is not found in Jefferson's, Tyler's, or Carrington's eyewitness accounts is that such an affirmation of loyalty to the King would have been so commonplace that it wasn't worth including.

Assuming that the Frenchman's account is accurate and Henry did apologize, the apology did not diminish the importance of his resolutions which, Jefferson remarked, "Started the Ball rolling towards Independence." Nor did it water down the boldness of his speech. This is evident by the vivid impact it created on the memories of those who heard it. Paul Carrington stated that "Mr. Henry's Manly eloquence surpassed everything of the kind I had ever heard before." Jefferson wrote that "torrents of sublime eloquence" from Henry "saved the day." An account from an unknown eyewitness supports these comments: "I heard Patrick Henry's great speech on the Stamp Act, and truly great it was!—I never knew what eloquence meant before: for I never felt its power until then." These remarks certainly do not give the impression that Henry recanted.

One last note. Two years earlier, when cries of "treason!" were shouted at Patrick Henry for calling the king a tyrant during the "Parson's Cause," he did not back down from the charge but "went on in the same treasonable and licentious strain." After the trial, however, Henry went to the plaintiff parson and apologized if he had given offense. ■



# YOUR NOT GETTING OLDER, YOU'RE GETTING BETTER! INTERPRETING TO OLDER ADULTS

By Peggy McDonald Howells

*Peggy is manager, Museum Professional Services, in the Department of Historic Trades/Presentations and Tours. One of her responsibilities is coordinating the Elderhostel program at Colonial Williamsburg.*

Based on information gathered from Elderhostel participants and faculty members, suggestions and ideas for successful interpreting to and teaching older adults have been compiled over time. These suggestions are useful whether you are in a classroom setting, a traditional museum, or walking the streets of the Historic Area.

One of the most important considerations is that Elderhostelers and other seniors have chosen to participate in a program or activity. They want to be here. It is also important to understand that they have many years of experience as a frame of reference. In some cases, they can teach us. Genuine respect for their wisdom and background is key for any individual who interacts with these "lifelong learners."

A study by Knox and Sjogren (1965) is still one of the pioneer works in the area of adult learning. From 650 volunteers, the authors selected 211 subjects, 208 of whom completed the six-month project. The subjects engaged in four learning experiments that were replicated several times using different content. The subjects took a pretest, engaged in a specific learning activity under established conditions, took a posttest, and finally participated in a retest after several weeks.

Three major findings were reported:

1. Age was not found to be associated with performance on the learning activities.
2. Pretest scores of participants who had engaged in some learning activities in the previous five years were significantly higher than those who had not. Researchers interpreted these findings as support-

ing the theory that learning ability can decline with disuse.

3. Learners performed best at their own pace. Those who set a faster pace based in part upon prior learning activities and education levels achieved significantly better.

Some research has been done on factors that affect learning ability. Physiological changes, most notably visual and aural, do occur in part as a result of the primary aging process. Primary aging is defined as "those events and developments that occur simply with the passage of time." Secondary aging includes "those events such as disease and trauma, related to longevity, that individuals randomly experience and accumulate with longer life." The complete association between physical condition and intellectual functioning has not been fully explained.

The evidence that psychomotor responses such as handwriting and automobile driving skills slow with age is overwhelming. Some experts believe that older people may take longer to monitor and then respond to incoming signals. Their judgment and resulting action(s) are correct but require more time.

Studies including Monge and Gardner (1976) have concluded that the extent to



Elderhostel participants visit the Costume Design Center.

which older adults are either positively or negatively inclined toward new learning experiences is more important than their specific abilities. Several important factors that have been identified as contributing to the attitude toward learning include achievement motivation, learning apprehension (anxiety), life style, and dogmatism, (defined as "a strongly held opinion based upon insufficiently examined premises)."

The concept that social climate is an important variable in the education of adults is a popular one. The **instructor** is usually represented as the **key figure** responsible for the development and maintenance of the appropriate social relationships within the adult learning program. Adult learners prefer teachers with whom they can identify and who are competent in both subject matter and interpersonal skills. An instructor who is not well versed in his or her field of study cannot overcome that deficit by being a "jolly good fellow."

When an instructor (defined as tour leader, historical interpreter, tradesperson, etc.) speaks, explains a process, allows for "hands-on" activities, he or she assumes that the students (visitors) are learning. It is valuable to understand under what general conditions learning occurs at any age, but particularly among older adults (Herem 1976):

1. Learning requires motivation to change.
2. Active involvement of the learner promotes effective learning.
3. Learning depends on past experience.
4. Learning effectiveness depends on feedback.
5. An informal atmosphere aids the learning process.

Practical suggestions for working with seniors are frequently a matter of sound judgment and respect for their years of experience. Expect and encourage questions, comments, and frequently, opinions. **Do not, however, allow one or more persons to dominate the group.** Guide the discussion so that you keep on the subject or theme. Follow the tour or program description and stick to the topic.

Be prepared. This age group resents wasting its time with an instructor/interpreter who obviously has thrown together a presentation or who is operating by rote. **Do not underestimate either the intelligence or the**



Follow the tour or program description and stick to the topic.

### **background of your group members.**

Check your presentation style. Do you speak in a monotone or patronizing tone? Do you speak too fast? Do you speak too softly? Do you pronounce the words distinctly? Older adults become frustrated quickly if they cannot hear what is being said. Depending upon the situation, you may want to check occasionally to make certain that you are being heard and understood.

Understanding of learners is critical and can be clouded by the use of technical jargon or "in-house" words or phrases. Define and explain your terms when appropriate.

Relate the presentation to your audience's experiences. Base your questions on experience as well. Formal education is not always the basis for knowledge. No older adult wants to appear foolish or unlearned in front of others, especially his or her peers.

Senior citizens usually are very prompt. In fact, they frequently will show up early for a tour or a presentation. They also leave on schedule or earlier. Based upon many years of meeting appointments or punching time clocks, this group tends to continue to practice the same activities at the same time and at the same locations. Too much divergence from set routines and schedules is upsetting to them. Elderhostel language refers to such persons as "Old-Liners." These are individuals who are less interested in new technologies, enjoy the social aspects of Elderhostel, and are less likely to attend programs farther away from home.

Know your audience! At the very least, determine from what parts of the country or the world they come. During your tour or presentation, you may be able to relate particular information to a participant's home

area. Older adults enjoy connections to either their experiences or their geographic locations.

One of the greatest benefits of touring with or presenting to seniors is the instant feedback you will receive. Check for understanding, for further elaboration of an idea or statement you have just made. Also remember to check for physical comfort or needs. Perhaps a rest stop is in order.

Be acutely aware of general physical limitations as well as any special needs within your group. In addition to hearing, a tour leader or presenter needs to be cognizant of difficulties in vision. Pointing out a location on a map or holding up an object that cannot be seen is frustrating. Again, ask for feedback and offer extra help if needed. Perhaps the item can be passed around.

Labels and other written materials should be printed in bold and large print. It's not just this age group who appreciates this courtesy! No visitor or participant likes to strain his or her eyes to try to decipher a document with small type.

Realize that not everyone can keep up with your pace. You may have to adjust your speed and possibly your itinerary. Many seniors tend to want to stroll and chat with one another.

In all of your considerations of your older audience, keep in mind that they expect you to respond to their requests for assistance. Offer once and then wait for them to ask you. **Do not become overly solicitous.** They resent being treated as less than what they are: intelligent, experienced, interested, and interesting individuals.

It's no secret that a large segment of the population of the United States is "graying." Marketing gurus already have prepared and implemented campaigns to appeal to this very large, affluent, and influential portion of the population. There is more to come. Historical organizations, museums, and other types of attractions must also gear their programs and their publicity effort toward these older adults whose numbers will increase in the years to come. What kind of experience they encounter when they arrive at our sites is our responsibility. ■



## MUNGRIL DOGS AND TAME DEER

By Allison Harcourt



*Allison is an interpreter and cart/chair driver with Coach and Livestock in the Department of Historic Trades/ Presentations and Tours.*

"Are you taking your horse (cow, sheep, oxen, etc.) for a walk?" For some visitors the query is a joke, for others a serious question. Placing domestic animals in a pet frame of reference is not surprising as American pet owners support a multi-million dollar industry. Another frequently asked question, "Did they have pets?", is not so easily answered. Yes, pets were kept in the eighteenth century. Eighteenth-century thinking underwent a subtle shift from the moral right of man to use "brute creation" as he pleased to arguments for better treatment of animals, thus setting the stage for the humane movement that would evolve in the nineteenth century.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a pet as "any animal that is domesticated or tamed and kept as a favorite, or treated with indulgence and fondness." The word "pet" did not come into general use in the English

language until the nineteenth century. Whether or not they called them pets, eighteenth-century Virginians certainly kept a variety of animals for pleasure.

Cats and dogs were kept both for companionship and service to man. Cats have long been valued for their ability to eliminate rodents, as evidenced by King Howel the Good of Wales. In 948 a.d., his legislation set the price of cats from one penny for a kitten before its eyes were open to fourpence for a good mouser. The fine for stealing a good hunter from a granary was the payment of an unshorn milking ewe with a lamb. Unsung Virginia cats labored in this fashion but some seem to have made the move to more exalted status. Kittens were a great favorite of children then as now. William Byrd gave the son of Drury Stith "a little cat to carry to his sister." Robert Wormley Carter

noted the death of the "old cat Coorytang" on April 26, 1780. He also noted that "the cat must have been near 17 years old. He was the favorite of my Fathers and I have taken great care of him on that account, tho' very troublesome." Perhaps Coorytang had been successful in making the transition from barn cat to house cat as did Hodge, the cat of Samuel Johnson.

The earliest dogs imported to Virginia were prized first and foremost for their usefulness. These dogs assisted in the hunting of game and were valuable enough that an act of the General Assembly in 1619 prohibited giving or selling of dogs "of the English race" to the Indians. The creation of the majority of dog and cat breeds occurred in the nineteenth century along with the popularity of kennel clubs and dog shows. The first cat show was held in London in 1871. Still, some breeds can be identified by advertisements in the *Virginia Gazette*. Mentioned as lost or stolen were bulldogs like Lord Dunmore's "Glasgow," taken in 1774, as well as mastiffs, pointers, and pomeranians. The earliest references to dogs fail to point out any breed or even give general descriptions. In 1686 the Reverend John Clayton wrote, "Every house keeps three or four mungril dogs to destroy vermin, such as Wolves, Foxes, Rackoons, Opossums, etc. but they never Hunt with Hounds . . . . Neither do they keep Grey-hounds." Also mentioned are the "little currs" for vermin and "Great Dogs" for wolves, bears, panthers, and other large beasts. We can only guess that these "mungril" dogs were any sort of combination, having at least some of terrier, hound, and who knows what. Benjamin Bucktrout's runaway apprentice took with him "a brown shagged Dog with a shorn tail, that had an Iron Collar."

While not considered pets, foxhound breeding and training occupied the time, thoughts, and energies of many Virginians, George Washington in particular. Dr. Walker of Castle Hill in Albemarle County had one of the earliest packs with his importation of English foxhounds in 1742. By 1770, Thomas Jett ordered "a pair of the best foxhounds to be got in England." A French officer reported that General Rochambeau enjoyed foxhunting after the battle of Yorktown, saying "M. De Rochambeau, who liked hunting very much, amused himself during the whole winter riding through the woods, followed by twenty or so enthusi-



asts . . . the dog packs belonging to the Gentlemen of the neighborhood are wonderful . . . the country around Williamsburg favors this kind of hunting."

George Washington's diary entry for August 24, 1785, reads, "Received Seven hounds sent me from France by the Marqs. de la Fayette, by way of New York viz. 3 dogs and four bitches." The hounds were escorted from France to New York by a young John Quincy Adams and then shipped to Mount Vernon on the sloop *Dove*. George Washington Parke Curtis, who accompanied Washington on many a hunting morn, described Washington, the foxhunter, in an article for *The American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*. He mentioned these French hounds: "Of the French hounds, there was one named Vulcan, and we bear him the better in reminiscence, from having often bestrid his ample back in the days juvenility." Just as a large party of guests was sitting down to dinner at Mount Vernon, Mrs. Washington noticed that the ham was missing from the table. Frank, the butler, told the tale of Vulcan taking the ham from the kitchen. Although the cooks "stood bravely to such arms as they could get . . . Vulcan had finally triumphed and bore off the prize." Mrs. Washington was not amused. She "uttered some remarks by no means favourable to old Vulcan, or indeed to dogs in general, while the Chief, having heard the story, communicated it to his guests and with them laughed heartily at the exploit of the stag hound."

Dogs were also valued as herding and stock dogs for sheep, cattle, and pigs. Thomas Jefferson sent "shepherd dogs" to George Washington in 1791. They were of French origin. Jefferson did not keep dogs as pets, keeping only the shepherd dogs. Cattle and hogs frequently ran loose in marsh and wooded areas, so a good stock dog was extremely important in rounding up wild and

semi-wild stock. These dogs had to be swift enough to chase and turn the fleet horned cattle, and tough and strong enough to face down a feral razorback hog.

Legislation to control dogs in Williamsburg appeared in 1739 and later in 1772 when "An Act to Prevent Mischief from Dogs" was passed, in part because of the "fierce dogs and others, in too great numbers running at large within the limits." Dogs were to be kept on a chain, and to wear a collar with the owner's initials marked upon it. Officials at the College of William and Mary also felt overrun by dogs, and in 1752 "Resol: That no Student, or Scholar be permitted to keep a horse, or a Dog in, or about the College." In 1772, the press of dogs again led the officials to state "That the order 'forbidding Dogs to be kept at the College' be strictly enforced."

Dogs were also kept just for companionship like the pets of the English General Lee, who came to visit the parents of young Helen Calvert near Norfolk. He brought with him "four ugly little dogs, which he petted, pestered everybody with, in a nauseous style. One of them he called Lady Caroline, and another Lady Catherine, and one named Busy, he said, had been obliged to leave behind at Williamsburg to lie in." General Lee was given "our great chamber" and together with his dogs retired for the night. "How was my good mother scandalized next morning when the maid came to her and told her that the strange General not satisfied with occupying one of the beds himself, had actually clapped all his ugly dogs into the other."

Squirrels and deer were purchased or tamed by Virginia children. A *Virginia Gazette* of 1769 gave an account of the narrow escape of the son of the Reverend Mr. Dunlop who survived being struck by lightning during a summer thunderstorm. Unfortunately, the squirrel he carried in his pocket did not live to tell the tale. Tame deer were enjoyed by little children and adults alike. William Byrd wrote of visiting Alexander Spotswood in Germanna and encountering Mrs. Spotswood and her sister playing with tame

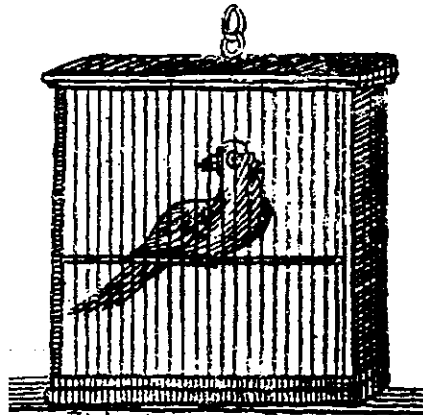
deer who ran in and out of the house. One wonders if they were equally enjoyed by the house slaves who had the duty of sweeping up after them. When George Washington was forced by the press of federal responsibilities to give up his pack of foxhounds in 1787, he turned his attentions to his deer park instead. In Pennsylvania the children of John Stanly were painted petting a fawn by portraitist Charles Willson Peale. The portrait hangs today in Tryon Palace in North Carolina. Tame deer were mentioned in Stanly's inventory.

A popular craze for keeping small birds and teaching them to sing was enjoyed in both Europe and the colonies. Virginians kept cardinals and mockingbirds and also sent them to friends in England. Francis Louis Michel noted that mockingbirds were sent to England where they sold for two guineas.

John Norton was given an order for "a very Small Organ for teaching Birds" on behalf of Lord Dunmore. Eliza Lucas of Charleston wrote to her friend, Miss Bartlett, in 1742, "I promised to tell you when the mocking bird began to sing the little warbler has done wonders the first time he opened his soft pipe this spring he inspired me with the spirit of rhyming and produced the 3 following lines while I was lacing my

stays "Sing on thou mimick of the feathered kind And let the rational a lesson learn'd from thee to mimick (not defects) but harmony."

While an interpreter can find written evidence of pets along with their likenesses in portraits and even occasionally artifact evidence, trying to grasp the attitude of eighteenth-century Virginians remains elusive. During medieval times, the church officially frowned on the practice of pet keeping. By the sixteenth century, pets were looked upon as an aristocratic self-indulgence. William Harrison wrote a blistering attack on "These Sybaritically puppies, the smaller they be the better they are accepted, the more pleasure they also provoke, as meet plaiefellowes for minsing mistresses to beare in their bosoms . . . nourish with meat at bord, to lie in their laps, and licke their lips as they lie in their



*Bird in a Cage*

wagons and coches." During the seventeenth century, some philosophers and theologians argued against animal abuse on the grounds that cruelty to animals led in turn to cruelty to humans. Moral and biblical arguments proposed man's stewardship over all creatures.

Another seventeenth- and eighteenth-century influence was that of René Descartes who, in his *Discours de la methods*, compared animals to manmade machines differing only in their degree of complexity. In looking at animals as machines, Descartes's followers discounted any ability by the animal to think, reason, use emotions, and, most important, suffer. This view, coupled with the Age of Enlightenment's thirst for scientific knowledge, led to vivisection and the use of animals for scientific experiments. The air pump at the George Wythe House is an excellent example. Not everyone was in favor of using animals for experiments. Alexander Pope and Samuel Johnson attacked the practice of vivisection in essays published in their papers, *The Guardian* (1713) and *The Idler* (1758). In 1720, Captain Hall of South Carolina encountered such resistance among the local citizens that he was forced to halt his experiments on the effects of rattlesnake poison. He reported that "Dogs and cats were not to be had; for the good women whose dogs had been killed exclaimed so much that I durst not meddle with one afterwards."

By the end of the seventeenth century, keeping pets purely for companionship was widely accepted. John Locke, whose views on education flourished among enlightened Virginia parents, recognized the importance of pets and of training children to be kind. He wrote, "Children should from the beginning be brought up in an abhorrence of killing or tormenting any living creature." He advised giving children "dogs, squirrels, birds or any such things as young girls use to be delighted with; but when they had them, they must be sure to keep them

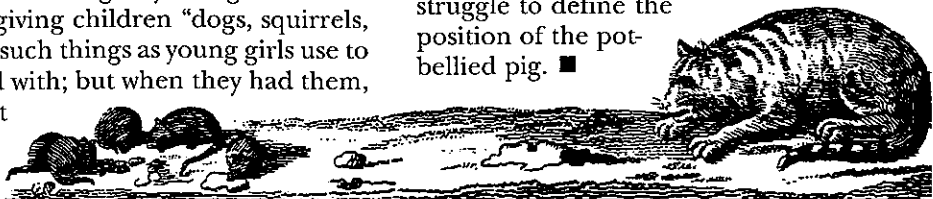


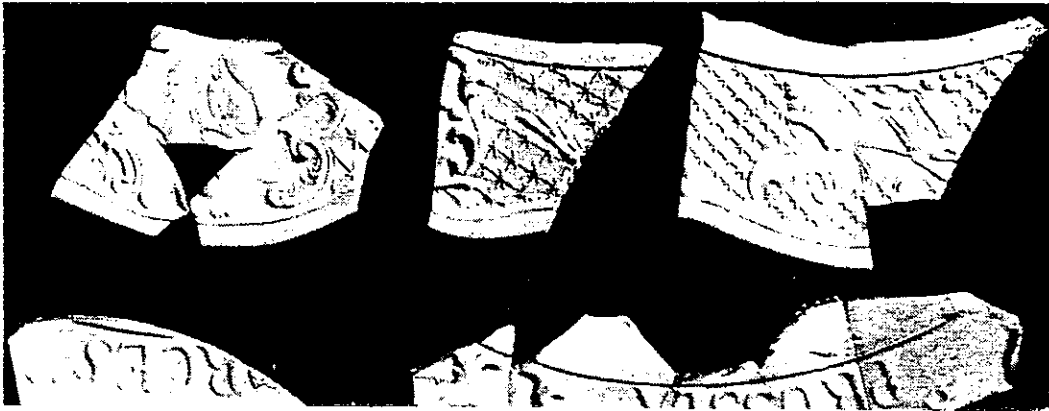
Allison Harcourt of Coach and Livestock.

well and look diligently after them, that they wanted nothing or were not ill-used. For if they were negligent in their care for them, it was counted as a great fault." His views were also reflected in children's literature such as *Goody Two-Shoes* (1765) whose heroine, Margery Meanwell, cares for poor, mistreated animals.

The capstone to the debate over animals was given by Jeremy Bentham, who summed up the philosophical discussion neatly with his impassioned declaration, "The question is not, can they reason? nor Can they talk? but, can they suffer?" In comparing the treatment of animals in England to that of human slavery, Bentham argued for both animal rights and the abolition of slavery. His ideas set the tone for the attitudes of the nineteenth century. In 1824, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was established in London. Americans followed suit more slowly. Henry Bergh founded the ASPCA in New York City in 1866.

The eighteenth century foreshadowed a more widespread practice of pet keeping and the establishment of the humane movement in the nineteenth century. Eighteenth-century Williamsburg was a mix of urban and rural with animals closely interwoven with human population. The death of an old cat could be recorded, perhaps even mourned, and a fifteen-year-old boy could exclaim at a cock fight, "Oh, it is a charming diversion!" Animals were to be used by divine right or just simply because the need existed. Clearly, the tenor of the eighteenth-century Virginia psyche cannot be summed up in simple words like compassionate or cruel. Somewhere in these two extremes, we may find the roots of our own tangled perceptions of animals in the twentieth century, as urban city managers struggle to define the position of the pot-bellied pig. ■





## As the Dust Settles

### A Summary of the 1996 Summer Excavations

by Meredith Poole

*Meredith is a staff archaeologist in the Department of Archaeological Research.*

During one week in late June, the excavators dispatched daily from the Department of Archaeological Research numbered close to eighty—certainly a record! While this wind-fall of field school students, Learning Weeks in Archaeology participants, and the occasional-experienced volunteer did not swell our ranks for the entire ten-week field season, their efforts contributed toward a very successful summer of excavation on four sites both in and outside of the Historic Area.

For the fourth consecutive year, a joint William and Mary/Colonial Williamsburg field school was held on the site of Richneck Plantation. This site, located off of Jamestown Road in the Holly Hills subdivision, was the mid-seventeenth-century home of brothers Phillip and Thomas Ludwell. Previous years' excavations have focused on the substantial brick plantation house, which stood from roughly 1640 until 1680 or 1690, and a related outbuilding, believed to be a kitchen. The 1996 project undertook a closer examination of the area between the house and kitchen and explored two brick cellars on the east and west ends of the kitchen.

Excavation of the area between the two buildings revealed surprisingly few artifacts—a significant archaeological discovery. Whereas previous excavations had turned

up dense trash at the back and sides of the Ludwells' plantation house, the front appears to have been intentionally cleaned. The presence of planting holes as well as a fence line enclosing the area adds to the perception of a well-maintained, perhaps even "formal" living space in this Middle Plantation setting. Phytolith analysis is planned to determine the type of planting that may have surrounded the plantation house.

A second goal of the 1996 project at Richneck was to excavate partially the two kitchen cellars in the hope of learning more about the individuals who lived there at the time of its destruction. The cellars were substantial features, measuring roughly 3 meters by 8 meters each, with a depth of slightly more than 1 meter. They had been carefully constructed, with brick linings and floors of glazed paving tiles.

Only a few seemingly minor details distinguished the east cellar from the west. The east had an unlined sump for drainage, and an untiled area 2 meters square in one corner that may have been, according to one theory, the location of a stairwell. The western cellar included two small brick-lined pits in the bottom that were clearly not sumps, though their true function has not been determined. The absence of wear on flooring tiles in a 1½–2 foot area around the cellar edges also raises the possibility that the west cellar may have been lined with shelves.

The contents of both cellars reveal two rather quick episodes of filling between the end of the seventeenth century and the first decade of the eighteenth. An early layer of loosely packed rubble is sealed in each by a layer of soil, then by a second layer of loosely packed rubble. Though results are, of course,



preliminary, the recovery of shell beads (similar to those found on the nearby eighteenth-century slave quarter site), and locally manufactured tobacco pipes decorated with (arguably) African motifs suggests that the people living at Richneck at the time of its abandonment were slaves. Staff Archaeologist David Muraca looks forward to at least one more season of excavation to clarify this and other issues.

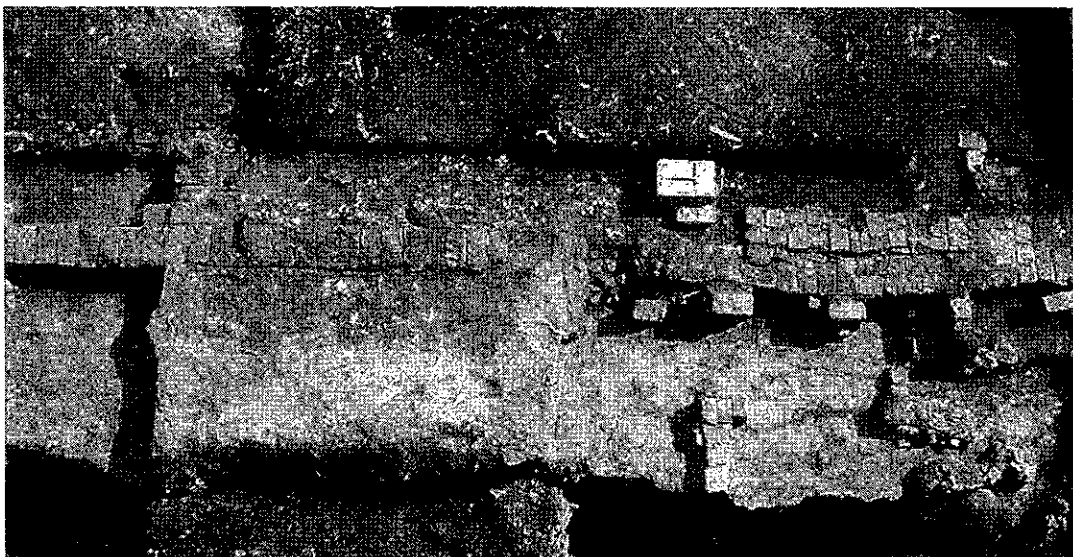
Another project of long-standing—excavation behind the Peyton Randolph house—was included on the agenda for 1996. Between 1982 and 1985, most of the Peyton Randolph backyard was excavated as a first step toward the eventual reconstruction of outbuildings, fences, walkways, and other landscape features. As the plans for rebuilding have become more definite, new and more specific questions have surfaced that require additional excavation.

The 1996 project at Peyton Randolph, like that at Richneck, was undertaken by students from the joint William and Mary/Colonial Williamsburg field school, under the direction of staff archaeologist Andrew Edwards and project archaeologist Paul Moyer. The ten-week excavation focused on locating an eighteenth-century fence line delineating the east property line and separating the backyards of the tenement and the main house. The fence marking the east property line was a long-standing feature that stood on eight-foot centers.

While the Peyton Randolph excavation very successfully answered specific questions posed by architectural historians, perhaps an even greater success was the public interpretation conducted on the site. A steady stream of visitors from North England Street stopped to read interpretive signs placed at various locations around the site and to talk with students involved in the excavation.

The Yorktown waterfront was the site of yet another excavation undertaken by the summer field school. The Yorktown Foundation, the National Park Service Colonial National Historical Park, Colonial Williamsburg, and the College of William and Mary all contributed to this ten-week archaeological testing project that is part of a long-term effort to learn more about the Yorktown waterfront.

As the major port supplying Williamsburg, the Yorktown waterfront was not only a busy spot but a lively one as well. This year's testing of the two- to three-acre parcel between the Archer Cottage and Read Street focused on locating the Warehouse District. Under the direction of staff archaeologist Andrew Edwards, project archaeologist Rob Galgano, and graduate teaching assistants from William and Mary's Department of Anthropology, students successfully identified warehouse foundations. Fill layers overlying those foundations contributed valuable evidence of Civil War activity and the 1814 fire that destroyed Yorktown's waterfront.



The Armistead excavation.



Mary Cate Garden talks with visitors.

Like the other summer field school projects, the Yorktown project ended in early August. Future excavations focusing on a warehouse featured on the Berthier map (1782) are planned for Yorktown in September.

As of this writing, the only ongoing field project is the Armistead excavation at the east end of Duke of Gloucester Street. Work began in early May as an initial step in reconstructing the property to its eighteenth-century appearance.

Historical evidence suggests a very long and varied history for the Cary Peyton Armistead site that was shaped, perhaps more than usual, by location and political events. During the early years of the eighteenth century, deep ravines bisected the property, leaving it difficult to build on. Only repeated episodes of filling, beginning after 1720, made Lot 58 a viable location for any structure.

From the 1750s through the third quarter of the eighteenth century, Lot 58 saw tremendous success as a business location due to its proximity to the Capitol. First a storehouse, then a coffee house (from which porch Governor Fauquier allegedly faced down protestors of the Stamp Act), and finally a tavern occupied the lot. With the

removal of the capital to Richmond, the property's function became decidedly more residential.

Archaeological questions in 1996 have focused on the physical evolution of the lot. For instance, we want to know whether the storehouse structure *became* the coffeehouse, which then *became* the tavern, or whether there were two, or even three, successive structures on Lot 58.

The operation of coffeehouses and taverns are also subjects for this archaeological inquiry. In either operation, one would expect the quantity of drinking vessels (from tankards to tea cups) to dominate the ceramic assemblage. The number of plate, tankard, punch bowl, and wine glass fragments should also be much greater than the number generated by a single household. And what about the quality? How did Richard Charlton's tavern stack up against his competitors not just around town, but on the same block? To whom did he cater?

Some of the work of "cracking" the history of the site was accomplished last summer by excavators from Virginia Commonwealth University. In preparation for moving the late nineteenth-century Armistead house off of its foundations, test holes were opened

in areas that were likely to be disturbed by heavy equipment. These were subsequently expanded into two large excavation areas in which VCU archaeologists identified seven "structures," including a fence line, the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century portions of the house foundations, porches, two outbuildings, and a portion of a north/south brick foundation called Structure 1 that may tie into the eighteenth-century section of the house.

Since May Colonial Williamsburg's archaeological field crew, under the direction of project archaeologist Mary Cate Garden, has been investigating these structures. The area around the front (or south) of the foundation has been expanded, and more of the porch identified by VCU has been exposed. This mortared brick stoop appears to date no later than the late eighteenth century, making this feature a possible candidate for Governor Fauquier's perch.

The one-meter segment of Structure 1 identified last year is currently being reexposed and expanded in the hope of tightening the date of its construction. The three remaining courses of brick are sealed between a layer dating after 1720, and a very thick layer of eighteenth-century fill, indicating that Structure 1, whatever its function, dates to the eighteenth century. Plans

for later in the year include excavation of a trash midden, identified last summer, to recover additional information regarding coffeehouse and tavern activities.

Excavation on the west side of the Armistead foundation has contributed significantly to the accumulation of architectural evidence. An unusually clean builder's trench was sealed by a thick deposit of ceramics, believed to have come from Burdett's Ordinary to the west. The ceramic dates have helped to narrow the date of construction for this portion of the house to the mid-eighteenth century.

Participants in the Learning Weeks in Archaeology program, a two-week introductory course for novices, have focused on a ten-foot square outbuilding on the east side of the property. Initially this structure was believed to be of nineteenth-century construction; however, last summer's testing raised the possibility that it may be of earlier vintage. Two sessions of the Learning Weeks program slated for September should help to resolve this matter.

As the only project not staffed by the summer field school, the Armistead excavation is expected to continue into the fall. Other attentions have turned to the lab, and the analysis and interpretation of a busy and successful summer in the field. ■

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## THE IRREPRESSIBLE "RULE OF THUMB"

by Jeremy Fried

*Jeremy is in the Department of Historic Trades/Presentations and Tours. He portrays the eighteenth-century Williamsburg attorney, James Hubard, and is developing interpretive material for the courthouse and the "Possessing the Land" storyline team.*

For many years, the expression "rule of thumb" has been understood by some to mean that a husband might beat his wife with a stick no thicker than his thumb. Available evidence suggests that the marriage of the phrase to this particular meaning occurred sometime well after 1782; if it oc-

curred at all. Certainly, no English speaking "colonial" would have ever used it in regard to wife beating.

So, why do we hear it defined that way so much?

As an expression, "rule of thumb" was in use in England by the end of the seventeenth century. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines: "Rule of thumb. A method or procedure derived entirely from practice or experience, without any basis in scientific knowledge; a roughly practical method." In 1785 *The Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* stated "by rule of thumb, to do a thing by dint of practice." Here, it is worthy of note that this latter publication, which concerned itself candidly with popular rather than proper uses of English speech, makes no hint of any connection between "rule of thumb" and wife beating.

The misunderstanding arises in that the phrase existed at the same time as did a patriarchal society, which expected the head of each household to keep peace, and empowered him, or her, to use corporal punishment to do so. Looking back through time, it is we who make the connection between the phrase and spousal abuse, not they. Our confusion may be excused, in part, by the fact that eighteenth-century British society was itself ambiguous on the subject of how to keep domestic harmony. It at once gave power of chastisement, but demanded moderation. Furthermore, what was "moderate" varied according to time, place, and the relationship of the individuals involved.

According to the 1744 edition of *A New Law Dictionary* by Giles Jacob: "By Marriage the Husband hath Power over his Wife's Person; and he may correct his Wife. But if he threaten to kill her, &c. She may make him find Surety of the Peace." The 1724 edition of *Pleas of the Crown* states: "All Persons whatsoever, under the King's Protection, . . . have a right to demand surety of the peace. However it is certain, That a Wife may demand it against her Husband threatening to beat her outrageously, and that a Husband also may have it against his Wife. Also there are some actual Assaults on the Person of another, which do not amount to a Forfeiture of such a Recognizance; . . . or even a Husband his Wife, as some say." Clearly, there was no fixed rule separating a husband's responsibility to discipline his wife from the wife's right to protection from the crown.

This lack of clarity led to a Justice Buller in a 1782 legal case reportedly saying that a husband could thrash his wife with impunity provided that the stick he used was no bigger than his thumb. This, in turn, led to the publication of a satirical print by W. Humphry entitled "JUDGE THUMB. Or \_\_\_ Patent Sticks for Family Correction: Warrented Lawful!" Carrying two bundles of rods carved at the ends into the shape of a thumb, a high court judge hawks: "Who wants a cure for a nasty Wife? Here's your nice Family Amusement for Winter Evenings. Who buys here?"



In the background, a man wields such a rod against his wife who cries: "Help! Murder for God sake, Murder!" The husband retorts: "Murder, hey? It's law you Bitch! It's not bigger than my Thumb!"

What should be concluded from this print? Humphry's print mockingly conveys the idea that a husband could beat his wife with a thumb-sized stick. No matter how clearly this standard is depicted in a caricature, however, it never became part of British society's rule of conduct. Humor finds its root in the familiar. Doubtless, some punsters of that era could not resist making jokes based on the similarity of these expressions; though none are known to me. If "rule of thumb" was ever associated with domestic correction, it was done so as a joke; not as an accepted practice.

More research is needed into the legal cases which set the boundaries for eighteenth-century family conduct. The idea of petit treason is as foreign to us as women's liberation would have been to them. We must, therefore, be careful not to study a subject with preconceived notions.

What was a marriage like in 1765? "The husband also (by the old law) might give his wife moderate correction. For, as he is to answer for her misbehaviour, the law thought it reasonable to intrust him with this power of restraining her, by domestic chastisement, in the same moderation that a man is allowed to correct his servants or children; . . . But this power of correction

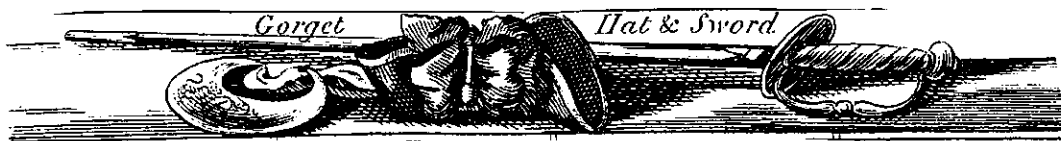
was confined within reasonable bounds; and the husband was prohibited to use any violence to his wife, . . . But with us, in the politer reign of Charles the second, this power of correction began to be doubted: and a wife may now have security of the peace against her husband; . . . Yet the lower rank of people, who were always fond of the old common law, still claim and exert their antient privilege: and the courts of law will still permit a husband to restrain a wife of her liberty, in case of any gross misbehaviour . . . even the disabilities, which the wife lies under, are the most part intended for her protection and benefit. So great a favourite is the female sex of the laws of England." ■



# The King's English



- Adjustment Board** The committee designated to review, decide upon, and compensate for loyalist claims of lost property, most often slaves.
- Berthier Map** (**BERTH ee ā**) A billeting map drawn in 1782 to identify locations that could be used for quartering soldiers.
- gorgets** (**GOR jets**) Vestiges of the knight's breast plate; worn by officers in the eighteenth century as a symbol of rank.
- Liberty Pole** A center of protest; there is some belief that the Liberty Pole of Williamsburg was situated near the Raleigh Tavern, flanked by a bag of feathers and a barrel of tar.
- manumission** The private act of freeing slaves; before the Manumission Act of 1782, any persons wishing to free their slaves could not do so without first petitioning the Governor's Council for approval.
- midden** A large trash deposit; a concentrated area of artifacts.
- petit treason** (**PET ty**) A murder committed under one of three conditions: a servant killing his master or mistress; a wife killing her husband; or an "Ecclesiastical Person" murdering his superior. The primary question in such cases was one of "Obedience and allegiance." Men found guilty of petit treason were to be hanged and quartered; women were to be strangled into insensibility then burned.
- phytolith** Hydrated silica (a white or colorless crystalline compound) deposited in and between plant cells, particularly grasses, and some trees. When plants die the organic material decays, but the silica which has been deposited in the shape of the plant cells remains in the soil. It can later be removed in soil samples and studied under the microscope to identify what kind of shrubs, grasses, and trees existed in the past.
- pioneer** A workman in the military; one of a unit of "pioneers" within the military which specialized in certain tasks.
- Sierra Leone** A country on the west coast of Africa (between Liberia and Guinea); founded in 1787 by the British as the destination for freed black slaves.
- stand of colors** The colors belonging to and identifying a military unit.



# REVOLUTION IN TASTE

## News from the Curators

For several months now, the metals and ceramics galleries at the Wallace Gallery have been closed to allow the removal of the original displays and the installation of exciting new exhibits arranged thematically. Metals and ceramics from Colonial Williamsburg's extensive collections will tell the story of the expanded buying power enjoyed throughout the Anglo-American world during the eighteenth century and give an indication of the vastly increased range of products to choose from.

Exciting new products such as elegant creamware teapots, delicate English porcelain figurines, and richly decorated Sheffield-plated silver candlesticks became increasingly important commodities in the eighteenth century.

British metal, ceramic, and glass drove production up and prices down. This created a revolution in householders on both sides of the Atlantic as a world of choice never before imagined became available for the first time.



Dramatic advances in the metal and glass industries and prices down. This taste for fashion-conscious of the Atlantic as a world of choice never before imagined became available for the first time.

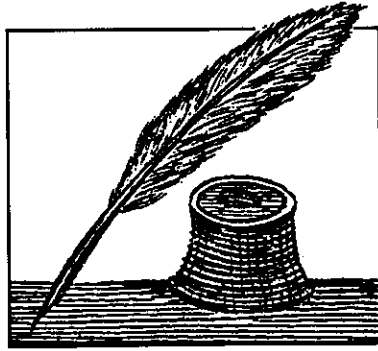
Men and women of social ambition used stylish tablewares and household furnishings to mark their place in society, much as modern Americans use automobiles and home entertainment systems to proclaim their taste and affluence.

Social rituals gradually changed. Fine dishes and gleaming silver assumed ever-increasing importance. Expanding world trade fed the craze for fashionable new beverages such as coffee, tea, and chocolate. Along with the popularity of these warm drinks came the need for teapots and coffeepots, cups and saucers, trays, and a host of additional equipage. English producers were ready with a seemingly endless array of tempting goods.

This display of antique metals and ceramics will be complemented by several video components, each of which will show a segment on period fabrication techniques such as the creation of a certain ceramic type or metal process. New to the Wallace Gallery will be a computer resource center in the exhibit that will allow visitors to access additional information on the metal and ceramic objects shown.

*Revolution in Taste* which opened on September 28 offers visitors a chance to see and understand eighteenth-century objects in a new way. Interpreters will find the exhibit useful to their own interpretations of the consumer world because it will provide them with a resource to which they can direct their visitors. The new perspective offered in the exhibit complements the tours and displays in the Historic Area. Together, the gallery and exhibition buildings will give visitors a more complete picture of the material world of the eighteenth-century consumer.

# Editor's Notes



## Hot Line Reminder

In the May 1995 issue of the interpreter the Department of Interpretive Education and Support announced the activation of a "Questions and Answers" Hot Line. This is to remind everyone that this service is still available. It provides interpreters with a number (ex. 2171) that they may call with any question concerning historical information. Answers will be forwarded to the questioner as soon as possible.

**TO ACCESS the interpreter HOT LINE:** Dial extension 2171 from any in-house phone; wait for the recorded message; give your name and department; and ask your question. If calling from an outside line, dial 229-1000 and ask for extension 2171.

## Footnotes

Because of space limitations we are unable to include most footnotes with articles appearing in *the interpreter*. Anyone who would like these references for a particular article, feel free to contact the editor (ex. 7621) or the assistant editor (ex. 7620).

## Thank yous

To planning board member Laura Arnold in Historic Buildings for all of her help in putting together *the interpreter* survey for this issue; and for giving research aid to Allison Harcourt for her article on "Mungril Dogs and Tame Deer"; to Kevin Kelly in Historical Research for providing a bibliography on African-Americans and the Revolution; to Sarah Thumm, our volunteer, for helping to put together the "King's English," and to Bill White and Meredith Poole for supplying us with definitions for that section.

## Older Adults

More information on interpreting to our older guests is found in Karen Schlicht's article "Our Senior Visitors, Generally Speaking" in the August 1991 issue of *the interpreter*. For an eighteenth-century perspective see Anne Willis's article "Aging in the Colonial Chesapeake" also found in the August 1991 issue.

## Animals

For more information on animals in the colonial era, see Mark Howell's article "Animals and Attitudes" in the August 1989 issue of *the interpreter*.



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*The Colonial Williamsburg interpreter* is a quarterly publication of the Department of Interpretive Education and Support.

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ISSN 0883-2749

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