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*The Colonial Williamsburg*

Mary Hall

GOD

PAMPHLET FILE



# ANIMAL NEWS

## 4-H COLONIAL LIVESTOCK PROGRAM RETURNS THIS JUNE

by Allison Harcourt

Ah, here comes summer, warmer temperatures, and lots and lots of families exploring Colonial Williamsburg. Summer also means the welcome return of Sarah, Emily, Jill, and Lance, some of our twelve 4-H'ers, ages 12-16, who are participating in our 4-H Colonial Livestock program. They each spend at least one morning a week from late June through August, in costume working with the livestock, learning about animal care in both the 18th and 20th century, and sharing their knowledge with visitors their own age.

The program was developed by Allison Harcourt and Elaine Shirley three years ago to provide local 4-H'ers the opportunity to work with a variety of domestic livestock, to teach them interpretive skills, and help them gain confidence through interaction with the public. The 4-H'ers also increase the visibility of young people in costume throughout the Historic Area, and enhance our interpretation of family life.

Throughout the summer the 4-H'ers learn about carts, carriages, and transportation from Allison, and our cart and chair horses, Star and Toby. They learn to harness and drive Star and teach visiting children safe ways to approach and enjoy horses, along with the role of the horse in the 18th century. Just when the kids think they know everything, Star gently reminds them of their "place in life" by wandering off in the opposite direction at the dizzying speed of molasses in January. Elaine, with the help of our sheep and cattle, teaches the role of animals in clothing and foodways. Our 4-H'ers have helped to worm sheep, trim their hooves, and herd them on the green. Nora and Elaine teach them how to milk, the mysteries of the ruminant stomach, and the use of dairy products. John King and Lance Hopkins mastered the art of hitting the milk bucket instead of your shoe, and talking at the same time. Easier said than done! All of our kids have the chance to show off their skills at the Colonial Fair.

Occasionally, being involved in Colonial Livestock means being a television star. While feeding Hannah, some of our 4-H'ers helped with filming for "Curley's Kids," a network children's show. They were supposed to pretend our young heifer, Hannah, was a bull. Changing a little girl cow into a bull involved some convincing acting!

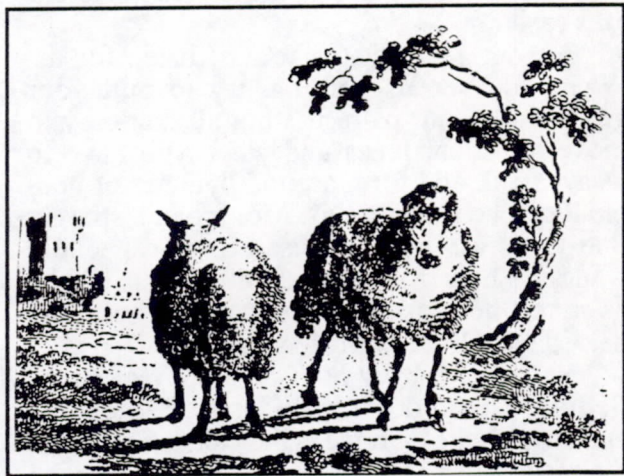
Not every activity was enthusiastically received by the 4-H'ers. After standing in the hot sun picking tobacco worms, the kids named the worms Allison and Elaine before they squashed them. The sticky tobacco leaves, the hot sun,

and the seemingly endless rows gave them more insight into the life of a plantation slave than all of our words could ever describe. At the end of the year, each 4-H'er must complete a project book, recording activities and answering questions about facts and concepts learned, to be judged by a 4-H leader.

This summer one-half of our kids will return for the third year and will help teach the first timers. Everyone will herd sheep and our new geese, milk the cow, drive the cart, assist with children's programs at the Wythe property, learn embryology with Coach and Livestock's new incubator, and most important, talk to the public, especially visiting children their own age.

4-H offers to all youngsters many programs covering a wide range of subjects — rocketry, photography, bicycles, gardening, and cooking, just to name a few. Record keeping and public speaking are just two of the many skills kids learn through 4-H that will be useful to them in their adult lives. Teaching responsibility and self-confidence is another aim of the 4-H program. Allison and Elaine see these characteristics develop first-hand as they watch their once shy 4-H'er help an unsure child discover a real live sheep.

If your child wants to join the fun in 4-H, call the Virginia Cooperative Extension Office at 566-1367 for more information.



## BELTANE AND QUENTIN RETURN TO FLOCK

The two most severely injured sheep in the dog attack of February 24 have recovered sufficiently to return to the flock with the rest of their woolly buddies. Beltane still has a small wound on his neck which is going to be "spray-painted" with a blue-green colored medicine for some time. In answer to visitor questions you will hear: No, his ears will not grow back; and No, he does not have gangrene.





## TO HI'S LEADING GROUPS

by Topsy

This is the city. Williamsburg, Virginia. Population: anywhere from nobody to 3 people per square foot. My name's Topsy. I pull a carriage. I've got more brains and looks than all the coachmen put together.

I work with Prince. He's a sucker for a cookie. We're the biggest Percherons at Colonial Williamsburg. We're the good looking ones with one white sock on our left hind foot. Confuse us with Bill and Bruce and I'll step on your toe. And you can say, "good-bye toe."

I've worked here for three years now. It's a good way to make a living. Me and Prince have made a lotta good two-legged friends here. We just have one suggestion for you guys who lead tour groups. Please, please help make our jobs easier.

For our sake, watch for us, listen for us. When you see us coming, try to pull your group out of our path. It's not all that easy to move these carriages and when you have to weave back and forth around bunches of people it can be rough on us. Moving in a straight line takes a whole lot less effort, especially when it's hot. If you can do this for us it'd be as much help as if you put on harness and helped us pull the carriage yourself.

And, as I lay my hoof on a copy of *Black Beauty*, please don't make us stop. Stopping and starting the carriage is the worst. That takes the most effort of all. Grant us the kindness of drawing our loads at a steady pace and in a straight line, and we will always be grateful.

To those HI's who we know already give us all the help they can -- well, your kindness to animals is recognized and very much appreciated.

Thanks for listening to what one mare has to say. It may seem small to you, but to us horses (and those silly mules) it means so very much.

I'm dictating this to the editor, and if she don't write it like I'm telling it, I will sit on her and squash her like a shrewsberry cake the next time she tries to shoe me.

## 10 MOST ASKED HORSE QUESTIONS

by Karen V. Smith

1. How many horses do we have at Colonial Williamsburg? Right now we have 17 horses and two mules. The number of horses that we have will change as we acquire new horses and retire old ones.

2. At what age do we retire a horse? We do not have a particular age at which to retire a horse. We look more at the animal's mental and physical condition. Some horses seem to go on forever, such as Star. She is in her mid to late twenties and is perfect for our 4-H program.

3. What happens to a horse after we retire it? Most are adopted by people who can provide a good home.

4. Do we breed our own horses at Colonial Williamsburg? Not at this time. We just don't have the facility to breed and train young horses. Maybe in the future.

5. What breed of horse do we look for? We don't look for a particular breed of horse. We look for a horse that has the mental and physical abilities to deal with our special needs, pulling carriages on a hard surface road and keeping calm under stressful conditions.

6. How many days do the horses work? We try to keep them on a five day work week with two days off.

7. How often do their shoes need to be replaced? The farrier resets a set of shoes as often as every two weeks and makes new shoes approximately every 4 weeks if the horse is being used on a regular basis.

8. Why don't we use rubber shoes? There are a lot of reasons we choose not to use rubber shoes. In the past we have tried to use rubber shoes and found they cracked up the horses hooves. In the warm months the combination of rubber on tar sticks together and will rip the shoe off the hoof. This also causes stress on the horse's legs which could lead to other problems.

9. What do you feed our horses? We feed Timothy and Alfalfa hay, and a balanced sweet feed. They are also turned out in area pastures to graze. Every horse has free access to water and salt blocks in their stalls and in the pastures.

10. Do the horses get rabies shots? Yes. Our horses and oxen are vaccinated as part of our regular program of veterinary care which includes inoculations and wormings.

## HORSE LATITUDES

The term "horse" in "horse latitudes" has a sad reference. This region which belts in the neighborhood of 30° north and 30° south latitude is characterized by high pressure, calms, and light winds. It got its name because ships of horses going to America were sometimes stranded there so long the horses died.

## QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

Please write to: Animal Editor, MHW. Colonial Williamsburg Animal News is published by Coach and Livestock Operations, Historic Trades Department. Kay Williams, Editor; Richard Nicoll, Manager.