

REVOLUTIONARY CITY™



See p.2

AMERICANS *Becoming* TODAY

COLLAPSE OF ROYAL GOVERNMENT: 1774 TO 1776

THE HISTORIC AREA



See p. 4

Newsline

**VIRGINIA
1540 to 1781**

- 1540/50s Powhatan and Opechancanough born
- 1570–71 Spanish Jesuit mission on the Pamunkey (York) River
- 1570s Rise of Paramount Chiefdom of Powhatans (Tsenacommacah)
- 1606 Virginia Company of London receives charter to settle in America
- 1607 First permanent English colony in America established at Jamestown
- 1608 First Englishwomen arrive
- 1609–1614 Anglo-Powhatan hostilities
- 1612 Experiments with tobacco cultivation begin
- 1614 John Rolfe marries Pocahontas
- 1618 Death of Powhatan
- 1619 Establishment of representative government—the General Assembly—at Jamestown
- “20 and odd” Africans (Angolans) arrive at Point Comfort
- 1620s Tobacco becomes main export crop of the English colony
- 1622 Powhatan uprising led by Opechancanough
- 1624 Collapse of Virginia Company
- 1625 Virginia becomes a royal colony
- 1633 Middle Plantation (future Williamsburg) established
- 1634 Establishment of eight original Virginia counties
- 1630s–1660s large-scale immigration of English settlers
- 1643 Governor Sir William Berkeley establishes bicameral legislature
- 1644 Second large-scale Powhatan uprising
- 1646 Opechancanough killed. Treaty with Indians ends the war
- 1660s Slave laws enacted at Jamestown
- 1676 Nathaniel Bacon’s Rebellion; Jamestown burned to the ground
- 1677 Treaty of Middle Plantation with Indians
- 1691 Yorktown established by the General Assembly
- 1693 College of William and Mary founded to educate clergy and Indians
- 1699 General Assembly establishes a new capital, Williamsburg, named for King William, at Middle Plantation

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SPRING FOCUS: JAMESTOWN



“The Susan Constant, the Godspeed, and the Discovery” Painted by Griffin Bailey Cole, 1949 Courtesy The Capitol Collection, Courtesy of the Library of Virginia

WHY JAMESTOWN MATTERS

In the summer of 1613, Philip III of Spain received good news from his ambassador in London, Don Alonso de Velasco. Nothing had been heard from the English colony at Jamestown for nine months, Velasco reported with evident satisfaction, and it was generally believed the settlers must have perished from disease, starvation, and Indian attacks. During the previous year rumors of an imminent (or actual) Spanish assault on Virginia swirled around the capitals of Europe. Spain claimed all of the Americas as its own and would not tolerate interlopers. From Madrid, Paris, and Lisbon came dramatic news that warships were on their way to extinguish the colony and that Jamestown had in fact been overthrown by a fleet and army sent from Havana. Alarmed by hearsay that the Virginia Company (chief sponsor of Jamestown) might abandon the colony, Sir Thomas Dale, deputy governor in Virginia, wrote a blunt letter to Company leaders warning that if they did give up they would lose a country as good as, if not better, than any in Europe.

But what if Jamestown had been abandoned by the English? Would it have mattered? Would it have made any difference to America in the long run? I think it would, and here’s why.

Had Jamestown collapsed, as seemed probable on any number of occasions in its first ten years, the English might never have established themselves as the major

colonial power on the mainland. Other European nations, such as the Spanish, French, or Dutch, might have colonized the mid-Atlantic region, which in turn could have discouraged the establishment of English settlements in New England. Instead of settling at Plymouth, the Pilgrims might have ended up in Guiana (a suggested alternative), and Massachusetts settlers might have joined other Puritan groups moving to Providence Island, off the coast of Central America, and islands in the West Indies. It is even possible the English may have turned away from North America altogether and have confined their activities to the Caribbean instead.

But Jamestown survived and by surviving became the first transatlantic site of an empire that would carry the English language, laws, and institutions (secular and religious) across North America. At Jamestown, England’s first efforts to establish profitable commercial enterprises and stable political and social forms took root. The three key requirements for successful colonization—private property in land, a representative assembly for ordering local affairs, and civilian control of the military—were put into practice. Representative government, established in 1619 at Jamestown, would blossom into a vibrant political culture and spread throughout the British colonies, leading in time to a new republican credo expressed in the founding of the United States.

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LEGAL STATUS OF WOMEN

As we focus on the American Revolution and the creation of the new republic consider how the legal status of all women in Virginia did not change as a result of the Revolution.

Femes Covert
MARRIED WOMEN
White and Free
Black Wives

- Had no legal identity separate from their husbands
- Could not own property as an individual without a special marriage settlement
- Could not make contracts, execute deeds, or write wills
- Could not initiate suits at common law
- Could not possess personal property
- Husbands acquired a life interest in lands wives brought to the marriage
- Husbands controlled the family estate including income wives generated

Femes Sole
UNMARRIED WOMEN
Spinsters and Widows (White and Free Black)

- Enjoyed separate legal identity
- Could sue and be sued
- Could enter into contracts
- Could execute deeds
- Could dispose of their estates by will

Enslaved Women
Enslaved African American and American Indian Women

- Were invisible to the law as were their children
- Were defined as the taxable property of their masters
- Had no access to legal marriage or protection of family from sale or separation
- Held legally culpable if they committed a crime or ran away
- Denied the right to a jury trial if accused of committing a felony
- Denied the right to testify against a white person in court

General Nathanael Greene

Nathanael Greene was a largely educated young man who ran the family iron foundry and business in Rhode Island. As the Revolution approached he devoted himself to reading military treatises on the military arts of “tactics, military science, and leadership.”

He helped organize a Rhode Island militia unit, but was disqualified from becoming an officer because of a limp caused by a stiff leg. Determined to be a part of the unit, he marched as a private for eight months in drills until his “handicap” was overlooked. With great determination and skill he persevered and General Washington made him a most trusted general.

While studying military tactics, he read in *Memoirs Concerning the Art of War* by Marshall Maurice de Saxe that “The first of all qualities [of a general] is courage . . . Without this the others are of little value, since they cannot be used. The second is intelligence, which must be strong and fertile in expedients. The third is health.”

[Source: David McCullough, 1776, Simon and Shuster, New York, 2005]

**VIRGINIA TODAY
SNAPSHOT
LIBERTY AND
EQUALITY**

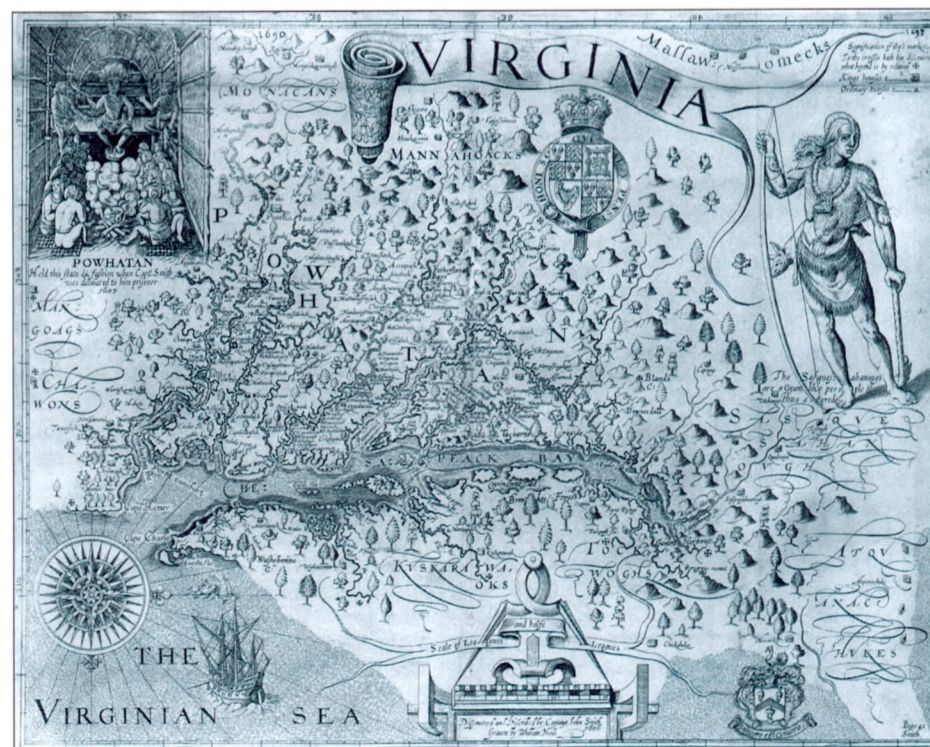
I am an aristocrat; I love liberty, I hate equality.

JOHN RANDOLPH OF ROANOKE, N.D.



A circumstance attending these colonies . . . makes the spirit of liberty still more high and haughty than in those to the northward. It is, that in Virginia and the Carolinas, they have a vast multitude of slaves. Where this is the case in any part of the world, those who are free are by far the more proud and jealous of their freedom. Freedom is to them not only an enjoyment, but a kind of rank and privilege.

EDMUND BURKE ON VIRGINIA, 1775



London, 1624 (originally published in 1612) Black and White Line Engraving

THE COLLAPSE: BEFORE AND AFTER

FLEEING ...



The Scene: May 26, 1774

Enemies of Government Governor Dunmore Dissolves the Assembly

Lord Dunmore arrives at the Capitol most unhappy with the House of Burgesses for their protesting the closing of the port of Boston by the British government. What will he do? How will the burgesses react to his announcements? What does this mean for the people of Williamsburg?

"People of Williamsburg, Virginia, Subjects of his most gracious majesty, King George III . . . I stand before you a vexed and troubled man. I stand before you betrayed. Betrayed as you . . . have been betrayed."

A year later around three o' clock in the morning of June 8, 1775, in the governor's residence in the capital city of Williamsburg in his majesty's colony of Virginia, the unthinkable is about to occur. A husband, wife, children, and some domestics are quietly making preparations to leave their home and many of their belongings, never to return. Perhaps we should look back on those social and political events which led to this fateful June morning.

On the evening of February 26, 1774, this capital city was ablaze with light from bonfires, cressets, and fireworks, all to welcome to Williamsburg the Countess of Dunmore, Charlotte Stewart Murray, lady of the governor, and her charming offspring. This festive occasion, it seems, was enjoyed by the entire population of the city. Imagine his lordship's pleasure at being joined by his wife and family after their long separation, he having arrived in Virginia in the autumn of 1771 from New York to assume the position of royal governor of this colony. During the first years of his tenure here, relations between governor and governed were cordial enough. He supported the Virginians' request for an end to the slave trade, took aggressive action to crush a counterfeiting ring in Pittsylvania County, and sponsored several gala fêtes at the Palace for occasions such as the annual celebration of the King's Accession.

In May 1774 in spite of political machinations between the governor and the House of Burgesses over the "tea party" in Boston, which forced his Excellency to dissolve the House, a ball planned by the burgesses to honor the arrival of Lady Dunmore went ahead as scheduled the next evening. Virginians never let politics interfere with social obligations. "Virginians will dance or die!" said Philip Fithian, tutor to the children of Robert Carter III.

During this summer and fall of 1774, with his Lordship in the west conducting his campaign against the Shawnee, her Ladyship—now in the increasing way with her ninth child—continued to keep the social fires burning. Undoubtedly being visited by and entertaining the ladies of Virginia society, one can imagine the excitement in the city as the time for her delivery drew near.

The Palace, having been the residence of royal governors since 1716, had never witnessed the birth of a governor's child. On December 3, 1774, Lady Dunmore was safely delivered of a daughter. Her husband arrived home the next day triumphant in his victory over the Shawnee Indians in the Ohio Territory and found "that his little brook of fondlings" had increased by one. At the christening, Virginians were pleased to learn that the proud parents had honored their colony by naming their new baby girl Lady Virginia! The college faculty expressed to Lord Dunmore "and may you always feel the enlivening Pleasure of reading in the Countenances around you, wherever you turn your Eyes, such Express-

DEFENDING ...



The Scene: April 29, 1775

News from the North

Eight days before, Governor Dunmore had ordered the removal of the gunpowder stored in the Magazine. When some patriots threatened retaliation against the governor, Virginia's most influential politician and presidents of the Continental Congress, Peyton Randolph, negotiated the truce. Today, as Randolph prepares to return to Philadelphia, word of the battles at Lexington and Concord arrives in town.

"In Lexington the citizens mustered to defend their powder and their rights—but the British troops WOULD NOT hear reason! Instead the King's troops fired upon those assembled!"

April 20, 1775

Virginians were outraged when they learned that the British marines had removed the gunpowder from the Magazine and moved to a ship waiting at anchor in the James River. The governor, however, "was surprised to hear the people were under arms on this occasion, and that he should not think it prudent to put powder into their hands in such a situation."

Under the command of Patrick Henry the Virginia militia marched on Williamsburg. To avoid violence, Carter Braxton negotiated a compromise where the powder would be paid for out of royal accounts.

Circular Letter to the Royal Governors from the Crown

Earl of Dartmouth to the Governors of the Colonies

Whitehall, 19 October 1774

Circular

Sir:

His Majesty having thought fit by his Order in Council this day to prohibit the exportation from Great Britain of Gunpowder, or any sort of Arms or Ammunition, I hereby enclose to you a copy of the Order; and it is his Majesty's command that you do take the most effectual measures for arresting, detaining, and securing any Gunpowder, or any Sort of Arms or Ammunition which may be attempted to be imported into the Province under your Government, unless the master of the ship having such Military Stores on board shall produce a license from his Majesty or the Privy Council for the exportation of the same from some of the Ports of this Kingdom.

sions of Affections as can be derived only from the applauding and grateful hearts."

The following month a ball was held at the Palace in honor of Queen Charlotte's birthday, Lord Dunmore's victory in the west, and the baptism of little Lady Virginia. It's safe to say that the popularity of Virginia's first family was at its zenith. But dark clouds were looming on the horizon, and in a few short months all this good will would evaporate.

Those dark clouds started with a meeting of the Second Virginia Convention in Richmond where a resolution was adopted putting the colony in a "posture of defense," and where delegates were elected to a second Continental Congress. Passions were further inflamed by news of bloodshed at Lexington and Concord, removal of the gunpowder from the Magazine, the "spring gun" incident, and the Royal Governor's threat to arm the slaves and burn the city of Williamsburg if calm was not restored.

Reflecting on the pomp and ceremony of the arrival of her Ladyship and the reuniting of the family just over a year ago, one is struck by the irony of the stark contrast to this scene playing out in the wee hours of the morning of June 8, 1775. In some haste, and certainly with some fear and trepidation for Lady Dunmore and the children, and with no pomp and ceremony this time, the first family of Virginia, under cover of darkness, quietly and with finality, departed the capital city and their Virginia home. Who amongst the residents of Williamsburg or for that matter the colony of Virginia could ever have imagined it coming to this?

[Submitted by Nancy Milton and Phil Shultz]

DECLARING ...

The Scene: May 15, 1776

Virginia Convention Calls for Independence

... Resolved unanimously that the delegates appointed to represent this colony in General Congress be instructed to propose to that respectable body to declare the United Colonies free and independent states absolved from all allegiances to or dependency upon the crown or parliament of Great Britain and that they give the assent of the Colony to such declaration."

"The United Colonies are, and of right ought to be Free and Independent States"

From late 17th- and 18th-century philosophers Virginia's educated political leaders understood that in forming a new republic it was first necessary to enumerate the natural rights of the people that would form that new society. Only then could their rights be protected by a constitution that would regulate the form and practice of government. The great contradiction for George Mason and members of his committee who were charged with drafting the declaration was the problem of slavery and the protection of natural rights and property.

"Robert Carter Nicholas compelled the convention to put on paper what others were content to accept without saying: blacks were not Virginians. Once again Edmund Pendleton found the solution to the Convention's problem by proposing to insert the clause "When they enter into a state of society" in Mason's statement that people could not "by any compact deprive or divest their posterity" of their natural rights. The words derived from the contract theories of government that had been a cornerstone of British and American political thought for almost a century. All persons, including blacks, had certain natural rights that they could not alienate but could be forcibly prevented from enjoying. For this reason people entered into covenants with each other to form societies that would protect their rights and then societies contracted with governments to provide external defense and a means of adjudicating internal disputes. Otherwise, individuals had to rely solely on their own strength and wits to guard their liberty. Thus, if blacks were deemed to be outside society, their enslavement would not be nullified by anything the Virginia constitution might say about personal liberty. While the principle of equality remained universal, the blacks' freedom rested entirely upon their own, virtually nonexistent, ability to preserve it."

[Source: John Selby, book *Virginia during the American Revolution*, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1992.]

Virginia Declaration of Rights

A DECLARATION OF RIGHTS made by the representatives of the good people of Virginia, in full and free Convention; which rights do pertain to them, and their posterity, as the basis and foundation of government.

1. That all Men are by Nature equally free and independent, and have certain inherent Rights, of which when they enter into a State of Society they cannot by any compact deprive divest their Posterity namely the enjoyment of Life and liberty with the means of acquiring and possessing property and pursuing and obtaining happiness and Safety.
2. That all power is vested in and consequently derived from the People that Magistrates are their Trustees and Servants and at all times amenable to them.
3. The Government is or ought to be instituted for the common benefit protection and Security of the People Nation, or Community of all the various Modes and forms of Government that is best which is capable of producing the greatest degree of happiness and Safety and is most effectually secured against the danger of Mal-Administration and that whenever any Government shall be found inadequate or contrary to these purposes a Majority of the Community hath an indubitable inalienable and indefeasible right to reform alter or abolish it in such Manner as shall be judged most conducive to the public Weal.
4. That no Man or set of Men is entitled to exclusive or separate Emoluments or Privileges from the Community, but in Consideration of Public Services, which not being descendible, neither ought the Offices of Magistrate, Legislator, or Judge to be hereditary.



5. That the Legislative and Executive and powers of the State should be separate and Distinct from the Judicative; and that the Members of the two first may be restrained from oppression by feeling and participating the burthens of the People they should be fixed Periods be reduced to a private station return into the Body from which they were originally taken and the vacancies be supplied by frequent certain and regular Elections in which all or part of the former Members to be again eligible or ineligible as the laws shall direct.

6. That Elections of Members to serve as representatives of the People in Assembly ought to be free and that all Men, having sufficient evidence of permanent common Interest with and attachment to the Community have the right of Suffrage and cannot be taxed or deprived of their Property for Public Uses without their own Consent or that of their Representatives so Elected nor bound by any Law to which they have not in like manner assented for the public good.

7. That all Power of suspending Laws or the execution of Laws by any Authority without consent of the Representatives of the Peoples injurious to their rights and ought not to be exercised.

8. That in all Capital or Criminal Prosecutions a Man hath a Right to demand the Cause and Nature of his Accusation to be confronted with the Accusers and Witnesses to call for Evidence in his favour, and to a speedy Trial by an impartial Jury of his Vicinage without whose unanimous consent He cannot be found guilty, nor can he be compelled to give Evidence against himself that no Man be deprived of his liberty except by the Law of the Land or the Judgment of his Peers.

9. That excessive bail ought not to be required nor excessive Fines imposed nor cruel and unusual Punishments be inflicted.

10. That General Warrants whereby any Officer or Messenger may be commanded to search suspected places without evidence of a fact committed Or to seize any Person or Persons not named or whose Offences not particularly described and supported by evidence are grievous and oppressive and ought not to be granted.

11. That in controversies respecting Property and in suits between Man and Man the ancient Trial by Jury is preferable to any other and ought to be held sacred.

12. That the freedom of the Press is one of the great Bulwarks of liberty and can never be restrained but by despotic Government.

13. That a well regulated Militia composed of the Body of the People trained to Arms is the proper natural and safe Defence of a free State that standing Armies in time of peace should be avoided as dangerous to liberty and that in all Cases the Military should be under strict Subordination to and governed by the Civil power.

14. That the People have a right to Uniform Government and therefore no Government separate from or Independent of the Government of Virginia ought to be erected or establishment within the Limits thereof.

15. That no free Government or the Blessing of Liberty can be preserved to any People but by a firm adherence to Justice Moderation Temperance Frugality and by frequent recurrence to fundamental Principles.

16. That Religion or the Duty which we owe to our Creator and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and Conviction, not by force or Violence and therefore all Men are equally entitled to the free exercise of Religion, according to the Dictates of Conscience And that it is the mutual Duty of all to practice Christian Forbearance, Love, and Charity, towards each other.

[Edited by Brent Tarter, *Revolutionary Virginia: The Road to Independence*, Published for Virginia Independence Bicentennial Commission, University Press of Virginia, 1983, Volume VII, Part Two, pp.449-450.]

FORUM



Letter from James Horn RECOVERING VIRGINIA'S FORGOTTEN HISTORY

What do most people know about Jamestown? Plymouth is associated with the Pilgrims and New England with Puritans, but what of the settlers of Jamestown? Captain John Smith and Pocahontas are probably the best known figures of this time and yet their story is completely misunderstood. Pocahontas was only 11 or 12 when she met 28-year-old Smith. They certainly knew one another, perhaps were fond of each other, but they were not in love. Smith never had the slightest intention of marrying her, and although she married an Englishman named John it was John Rolfe, not Smith.

Then there is Jamestown of the “death, disease, and starvation” variety. Consider this comment from Nathaniel Philbrick’s current book *Mayflower*: “Jamestown could hardly be counted a success. During the first year, 70 out of 108 died. The following winter came the “starving time” (he refers to 1609–1610), when 440 of 500 settlers were buried in just six months.” He adds ominously, “the most lethal days in Jamestown were yet to come.” While Plymouth conjures up rosy images of hardy, God-fearing men and women, the first Thanksgiving, and friendship with local Indians, Jamestown is depicted as a depressing chronicle of carnage, greed, and failure in which it is hard to find any enduring lessons. It is a story we would rather forget.

The relegation of Jamestown and Virginia itself has a long history. Following the Civil War, the political ascendancy of the North led to New England’s foundation myth almost completely eclipsing that of the South and becoming in time synonymous with America’s founding. For a century after 1865, the South lagged well behind the North in economic, urban, and cultural development. Successive generations of professional historians, mostly trained in northern universities, constructed a national history (memory) that emphasized the centrality of New England Puritanism to the nation’s cultural roots while depicting the history of the South as largely irrelevant to modern America. In this rewriting, Virginia’s importance as England’s first successful colony, the wealthiest and most populous of British mainland America, and her key role in leading the thirteen colonies into revolution was ignored.

New England was not the beginning of English America, of course. Virginia had been in existence for thirteen years before the *Mayflower* landed at Plymouth, and those years were critical. At Jamestown the hard lessons were learned about how to sustain a colony—the establishment of stable political and social institutions such as the church, representative government, private property, local communities, and family life—lessons that were quickly applied by settlers of Plymouth, Massachusetts, and other English colonies.

With the 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown we have a unique opportunity to recover Virginia’s forgotten history and present to the public a different story of our nation’s beginnings, a story at times conflicted and tragic but which ultimately laid the foundations of modern America.

James Horn



The Three Cherokees

AN OVERVIEW BY RACE AND REGION, 1685–1790

Estimated Population for Virginia (East of the Mountains)

	Red	White	Black	Total
1685	2,900 [7%]	38,100 [87%]	2,600 [6%]	43,600
1700	1,900 [3%]	56,100 [88%]	5,500 [9%]	63,500
1715	1,300 [1%]	74,100 [77%]	20,900 [22%]	96,300
1730	900 [.05%]	103,300 [67%]	49,700 [32%]	153,900
1745	600 [.02%]	148,300 [63%]	85,300 [36%]	234,200
1760	400 [.01%]	196,300 [60%]	130,900 [40%]	327,600
1775	300 [.006%]	279,500 [60%]	186,400 [40%]	466,200
1790	200 [.002%]	442,100 [59%]	305,500 [41%]	747,800

Source: Wood, “The Changing Population” in Wood, et al., eds., *Powhatan’s Mantle*, p. 38.

1700 TO 1780—POPULATION INFORMATION ABOUT INDIANS AND ENSLAVED AFRICAN AMERICANS IN VIRGINIA

- By 1700:** 3 slaves: 1 Native American in Virginia
- By 1730:** 55 slaves: 1 Native American in Virginia
- By 1750:** There were 100,000 slaves in Virginia; no other New World society had a slave population that grew by natural increase so quickly and so early
- In 1750:** One out of every five slaves in Virginia was African-born
- In 1780:** One out of every twenty slaves in Virginia was African-born

Source: Philip D. Morgan Lecture for “Enslaving Virginia” Training, January and February

Why Jamestown Matters

Jamestown witnessed, too, the origins of powerful destructive forces that would also leave an enduring legacy. Hostilities between the English and Powhatan Indians were merely the first in a vicious cycle of war, plunder, and exploitation repeated across the continent during the next two and a half centuries by which Europeans took possession of the land and dispossessed its native peoples. To maximize profits and increase production, planters and farmers required a regular supply of laborers who could be forcibly controlled. The arrival of some two dozen Africans (Angolans) at Jamestown in 1619 presaged the beginning of a system of exploitation and oppression that blighted the lives of countless Africans and their African American descendants and stigmatized American society.

Jamestown matters because it is about coming to terms with our shared past; a past painful and conflicted but which ul-

imately laid the foundations of modern America. From English traditions of the rule of law, political ideas, religious beliefs, and commercial ethos there would emerge a new democratic philosophy that would eventually bring together the different peoples of America as one nation. It is therefore fitting that commemorative events this year to mark the 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown should highlight not just the Virginia colony’s early years but the unique contributions of the three peoples—Indian, European, and African—who first encountered each other at Jamestown and who began the long process by which together they shaped a new world and forged a new people.

[James Horn is vice president of research at The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and author of *A Land As God Made It: Jamestown and the Birth of America* (2005).]

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Newsline

- 1723 Indian School (Brafferton) at College of William and Mary established
- 1730s Number of Virginia-born African Americans exceeds slaves brought from Africa
- Yorktown develops as a major port
- 1765 Stamp Act protests take place in Williamsburg
- Patrick Henry’s Stamp Act Resolves

- 1774 Governor Dunmore dissolves the House of Burgesses
- Yorktown Tea Party
- 1775 Gunpowder incident at Williamsburg’s Magazine
- Dunmore’s Proclamation frees slaves who will fight American rebels
- 1776 Virginia Convention instructs its delegates in the Continental Congress to introduce a motion for independence

- Virginia Declaration of Rights and state constitution adopted in Williamsburg
- 1780 Virginia capital moved to Richmond
- 1781 Williamsburg occupied by British troops
- British General Lord Cornwallis surrenders to American and French forces at Yorktown

BIOGRAPHY

It is interesting to review the life of Elizabeth Randolph before 1774. Consider what may have prepared her for the relentless personal and public challenges that she was forced to grapple with from the spring of 1774 to the summer of 1776. As the wife of Peyton Randolph, Speaker of the House of Burgesses and later President of the Continental Congress, she witnessed personally and publicly the final events that led to the colonies separation from the empire. Then suddenly in October of 1775, while they were in Philadelphia where he was attending the increasingly tense meetings of the Continental Congress, Peyton died. After his temporary burial in Philadelphia, Elizabeth returned to Williamsburg as a widow facing an uncertain future without children to support her and the daunting responsibilities of managing Peyton’s estate and maintaining control over her household of 27 slaves.

ELIZABETH RANDOLPH (b. ca. 1723, d. 1783) was the daughter of Col. Benjamin Harrison of Berkeley Plantation and the wife of Peyton Randolph, Speaker of the House of Burgesses, of Williamsburg.

Her father was a gentleman justice and a member of the House of Burgesses, and her mother was Anne Carter Harrison, a granddaughter of Robert “King” Carter. Elizabeth had six brothers and three sisters. Her father and her sister Hannah died in 1745 in an accident recorded in the *Maryland Gazette*, August 16, 1745; “Last Friday Evening (July 23, 1745) a most terrible Accident happened in Charles City County (Va.); when a violent Thundergust arose, and the Lightning struck the House of Col. Benjamin Harrison, of Berkeley, which kill’d him and his two youngest daughters. He lived some Minutes; but tho’ a Vein was opened by Dr. Monger (who happened to be on the Spot, and was knock’d down by Lightning, but received little Damage), it proved in vain, and he expired without speaking a word.”

Some eight months later, when Elizabeth was 22 years old (in March 1745 or 1746), she married Peyton Randolph of Williamsburg, who then held the important position of Attorney General of Virginia. Elizabeth and Peyton had no children, but they were both members of large and powerful Virginia families. Peyton’s father had been Sir John Randolph. His mother, Lady Susannah Randolph, lived with them in their Nicholson Street house for about ten years before her death.

Evidence indicates that Elizabeth was literate. She would have to be to rise to the challenge of running a complicated household in which she would have managed the work of 27 slaves on the Williamsburg property.

Mrs. Randolph was a leading member of the gentry society in Williamsburg. In 1751 John Blair wrote in his Diary that “Mrs. Bride, Mrs. Grimes, Mrs. Burwell, Mrs. Atto. &c., visited Mrs. Blair who could not go to church” and that “The Govr, his lady and Mrs. Dinwiddie, Mr. Attorney and his lady, the Councilr and his lady dined and supped with us this day.”

In 1766 her husband, Peyton Randolph, was elected Speaker of the House of Burgesses, increasing her responsibilities as his wife and hostess. As the Revolution approached, Peyton Randolph’s participation in the Virginia Conventions in Richmond and the Continental Congresses in Philadelphia put greater social and political demands on both of their lives. In August of 1775 she traveled with her husband to Philadelphia for the meeting of the Second Continental Congress where Randolph was again elected president.

Peyton Randolph died in Philadelphia on October 22, 1775, just as the Revolutionary crisis was escalating in all of the colonies. Elizabeth Randolph was in Philadelphia for some time after his death, leaving the household of slaves without a master or mistress. It was at this time that Dunmore issued his proclamation offering freedom to slaves if they left their patriot masters to fight for the British. In 1781 eight of the 27 slaves from the Williamsburg Randolph household took up the British offer and were “gone to the enemy” when the British were in Virginia waters once again. Perhaps the uncertainty of their futures (now that their master was

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HISTORIC AREA

Spring 1774

April 1, 1774: Good Friday.

Set aside as a memorial of the crucifixion of Jesus. Called "good" because of the beneficial effects of Jesus' sufferings, namely the carrying away of the sins of the penitent by his death and resurrection.

April 3, 1774: Easter Sunday

Easter was the first Sunday after the full moon on or next after the vernal equinox. It was the festival commemorating Jesus' resurrection from the dead. One of the four times a year the Lord's Supper was administered at Bruton Parish. Philip Fithian observed that "this being Easter-Sunday, all the Parish seem'd to meet together High, Low, black, White all come out."

April 4, 1774: Easter Monday

On Easter Monday 1774, Fithian referred to the two-day Easter holiday the slaves enjoyed with cockfights. It was a popular time for cockfights and other amusements throughout the colony, sometimes coupled with a ball.

April 11, 1774: Easter term at the college began.

May 12, 1774: Ascension Day.

This festival commemorates Jesus' ascension into heaven forty days after Easter.

May 14, 1774: Easter term at the college ended.

May 22, 1774: Whitsunday or Pentecost (seventh Sunday after Easter).

Pentecost was an important festival commemorating the descent of the Holy Ghost in flames of fire upon Jesus' apostles. The Lord's Supper was celebrated at Bruton Parish.

May 29, 1774: Trinity Sunday

May 30, 1774: Trinity Term at the college began.

[Source: Linda Rowe, the *Interpreter*, Spring 2002]



The summers of 1774 and 1775 offered considerable challenges to all Virginians as the colony moved closer to a separation from Britain and trade within the empire. As an agricultural economy largely based on tobacco production, Virginia had been required by law since 1660 to export all her tobacco to Britain on British ships to be marketed to the rest of the world by British merchants. In exchange Virginians had become dependent on the manufactured goods British merchants delivered to Virginia from all over the world.

When the Association was passed by the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia in the autumn of 1774, all importation of manufactured goods was disallowed after December of that year. In addition all exports to Britain were required to cease by December 1775. The Association was designed to damage British trade and encourage Parliament to reconsider the Coercive Acts. Now the colonists faced the

difficulty of finding new ways to market their commodities and securing manufactured goods elsewhere.

In addition to the economic challenges in the spring of 1774 Virginia had an early May frost that damaged many apple and peach orchards. That same spring and summer brought a severe drought that ruined much of the tobacco and wheat crop in Virginia.

Before and during the Revolution the relentless demands of the agricultural calendar marked the day's work for all Virginians in the countryside. In addition to the anxieties produced by the approaching war many farms were faced with men leaving to fight in the war and the threat of slaves running to freedom offered by the British in November of 1775. Spring was the crucial time for planting crops, tending orchards, and caring for livestock.

[Submitted by Anne Willis]

SPRING FARMING

Tobacco: Prepare beds, sow seed, make and manure hills, and weed and water beds

Corn: Cut and burn brush, lay out fields, make hills, manure, plant, weed, and replant

Wheat: Thresh and glean, plow fallow, cart wheat to ships or town

Vegetables: Prepare garden; plow and manure; sow carrots, peas, beans, and cabbages; and plant potatoes, pumpkins, and turnips

Orchard: Plant peach seed, nut and fruit trees, and grape vines; graft fruit trees, cart cider to town

Livestock: Heap and turn manure, kill beeves, calves and lambs born, sell lambs, castrate lambs, seine fishing, make butter, shear sheep, kill mutton for sale, breed horses, fish for sturgeon, wean calves, and tend young

Other: Fence and fill gullies, clean ditches, build roads, and cart wood to town



COOK'S CORNER

Traditional Easter foods, like Christian religious symbols for Easter, have their roots in the Jewish celebration of Passover. The components of the Seder meal—lamb, parsley, bitter herbs, and roasted egg—are foods available in the spring in the Middle East, Europe, and North America. In colonial Virginia holiday customs evolved from those practiced in Great Britain. In the 18th century the popular Lenten food, hot cross buns, were eaten only on Good Friday. James Boswell's *Life of Johnson* includes several references to baking buns that support the English superstition that it was good luck to bake on Good Friday.

Philip Fithian, the tutor of Robert Carter's children at Nomini Hall, left a record of an Easter feast in Virginia. Lamb was noticeably absent from the menu.

April 3, 1774, Easter Sunday . . . we had an elegant dinner; Beef & Greens; roast-Pig; fine boil'd Rock-Fish, Pudding, Cheese etc.—Drink; good Porter-Beer, Cyder, Rum & Brandy Toddy.

Journal & Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian 1773–1774: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion

Rockfish was served frequently at the Governor's Palace. Mary Randolph's method of preparing boiled rockfish is simple and delicious.

TO BOIL A ROCK FISH

The best part of the rock is the head and shoulders—clean it nicely, put it into the fish kettle with cold water and salt, boil it gently and skim it well; when done, drain off the water, lay it in the dish, and garnish with scraped horse-radish; have two boats of butter nicely melted with chopped parsley, or for a change, you may have anchovy

butter; the roe and liver should be fried and served in separate dishes. If any of the rock be left, it will make a delicious dish next day;—pick it in small pieces, put it in a stew pan with a gill of water, a good lump of butter, some salt, a large spoonful of lemon pickle, and one of pepper vinegar—shake it over the fire till perfectly hot, and serve it up. It is almost equal to stewed crab.

The Virginia Housewife
by Mary Randolph, 1824

The puddings eaten by Dr. Johnson and the Carter family were 18th-century versions of a 20th-century one-crust pie. Fruit puddings were popular when cherries, apples, peaches, and plums were in season, but bread puddings and rice puddings could be prepared any time of the year. The ingredients in Mary Randolph's rice pudding guarantee a dish that will surprise those skeptics who have childhood memories of an unappetizing dessert.

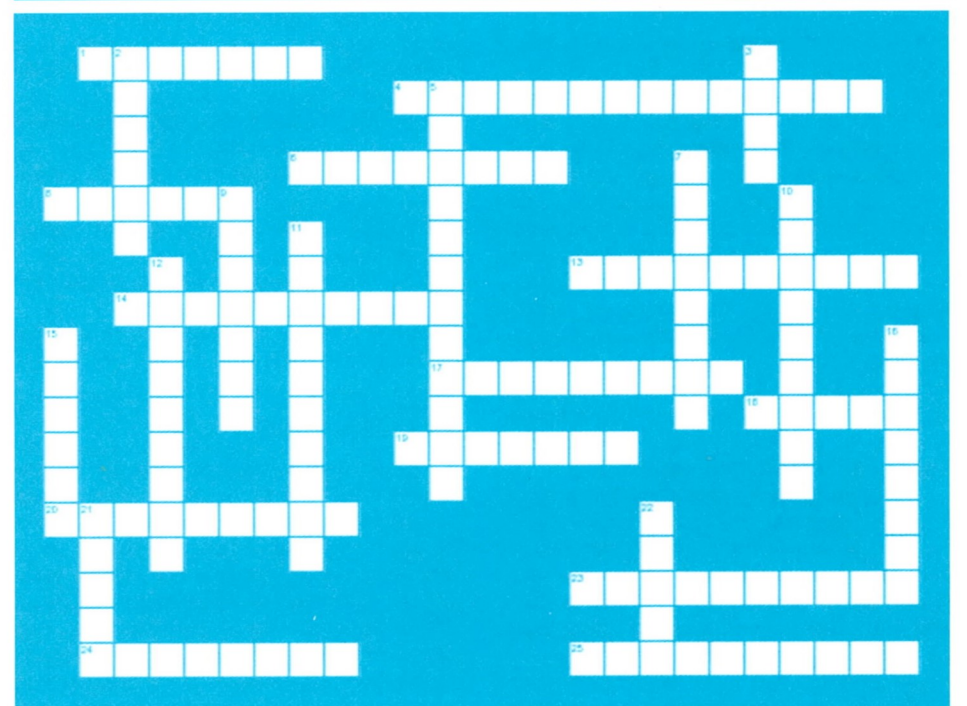
RICE PUDDING

Boil half a pound of rice in milk, until it is quite tender; beat it well with a wooden spoon to mash the grains; add three quarters of a pound of sugar, and the same of melted butter; half a nutmeg, six eggs, a gill of wine, and some grated lemon peel; put a paste in the dish, and bake it. For a change, it may be boiled, and eaten with butter, sugar, and wine.

The Virginia Housewife
by Mary Randolph, 1824

By Laura Arnold for *The Interpreter*

Laura is a member of The Interpreter planning board and is a volunteer for this publication.



ACROSS

- Attempted a 1570 establishment of mission in Virginia
- Brother of Powhatan
- Dunmore's baby
- "Fighting Quaker" general
- Religious culture predominant in New England
- Distinct from legislative and executive
- President of 1776 Convention
- He married Pocahontas
- Tutor to Carter children
- Forty days after Easter
- She did not marry John Smith
- Third capital of Virginia
- This Virginia body called for independence

DOWN

- Feast day celebrated with Lord's Supper in Church of England
- A favorite fish at Governor's palace
- Peyton Randolph's temporary resting place
- Treated in Article 16 of Virginia Declaration of Rights
- Astronomical determiner of Easter
- Seventh Sunday after Easter
- Indian school
- Dartmouth's letter about this

- Origin of first Jamestown Africans
- These blazed for Lady Dunmore's welcome
- Jewish Passover meal
- Jamestown burned in his rebellion

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