

AUTHENTICITY AND QUALITY SINCE 1936

A newsletter published by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation for its Licensed Manufacturers and Williamsburg Shops

Bill Murphy Retires



William K. Murphy, marketing representative for the Williamsburg Shops Program, retires May 31 after more than a quarter-century of service. The shop concept was brand new when Bill came to Colonial Williamsburg. Today it bears his indelible mark.

Twenty-six years ago this spring, a young Atlanta commodities broker traded his soybean and peanut futures for the eighteenth-century world of Williamsburg. When Bill joined the Merchandising Division in 1963 the Reproductions Program was flourishing. Licensed manufacturers were producing many full lines and Craft House was showcasing them. Sales were good, but the national potential was largely untapped. The Craft House concept of selling in a room setting was ready for a crucial test—a mini-Craft House in a major metropolitan department store. It was risky business for Colonial Williamsburg and its licensees, for the hustle and bustle of B. Altman's New York store was far removed from the quiet ambience of restored Williamsburg. But it worked! And the rest is history.

Bill brought considerable talents to his new job, including an awesome ability to organize information and keep track of details. He was the critical link between Colonial Williamsburg, the manufacturers, and the stores—creator of the first training manual, coordinator of advertising, planner of in-store promotions, prime mover for sales seminars, watchdog of price changes—in short, communicator par excellence. His love of Williamsburg and his pride in the product lines came shining through, inspiring shop managers to know their

merchandise and show it properly.

Bill was always a visible presence in the Williamsburg Shops, a true people-lover who turned browsers into customers and customers into Williamsburg buffs who visit here year after year. Bill always worked toward excellence, and over the years that diligence has built a solid foundation of operating procedures on which the day-to-day success of the program depends. He leaves an invaluable legacy.

As many of you know, Bill moved out of his Historic Area home and into a condominium in Williamsburg last September. In his retirement he is looking forward to maintaining his world traveler status, planning trips abroad as well as leisurely visits with family members in Florida.

Bill, we appreciate the contribution you have made to the Williamsburg Shops Program and wish you a relaxing and fulfilling retirement.



All in the line of duty—for the cover of the 1967 seasonal mail order catalog, Bill Murphy donned tricorn hat and waistcoat.

Eighteenth-Century Romance Sells Brides

"It is a nice point for a Belle to know when to marry and one in which they are very apt."
—Molly Tilghman, 1780s*

The theme of the 1989 spring mail order catalog, "A Celebration of Beginnings," highlights the special events associated with spring: weddings, bridal and baby showers, graduation, and the rediscovery of gardening.

Products such as the new C. R. Gibson Worcester Floral line (guest registry, stationery, albums, and matching gift wrap), the pewter and brass heart box, and the new brass frames are particularly well suited as wedding and bridal shower gifts.

With weddings in mind, it seemed only natural to promote the Colonial Williamsburg Bridal Registry. The program and its benefits are explained briefly on the catalog's china and crystal page, and to increase interest in the program, drawings for a Colonial Williamsburg honeymoon package are featured on the mail order blank.

Interested brides call our toll-free mail order number and speak with Erin Kelly, the bridal consultant. She is working directly with brides, keeping a record of their gift checklists and assisting friends and family who call in. Erin's personal attention and the convenience of ordering gifts personally selected by the bride through a toll-free number should be well received. Gifts may also be wrapped and shipped to the bride's address.

With the addition of new products such as the tavern dinnerware, lap blankets and pillows, and checked linens, our registry checklist has become a well-rounded "wish list."

Brides who have registered have shown particular interest in our new lap blankets and tavern dinnerware. Some have taken special care to select prints and books.

The registry brochure lists the Williamsburg Shops. Should brides desire to register with a shop near them, we are offering to send a copy of their registry checklist there also.

Winners of the Honeymoon Package for Two are chosen from brides who register and enter. Names will be carried over from each drawing, so



Interested brides-to-be receive the registry brochure, checklist, and cards with the toll-free number, as well as the Reproductions and seasonal catalogs.

brides have four opportunities to win. No purchase is necessary.

The response to the drawing has been outstanding. As of the first week

Ideas for Williamsburg Shops

- Create window displays with suggested wedding gifts amid romantic props of lace, flowers, and beautifully wrapped packages.
- For a special weekend promotion, customers purchasing a wedding/shower gift of \$50 or more could receive a complimentary package of embossed notecards for the bride or for themselves.
- Plan special dates to offer complimentary gift wrapping for wedding purchases.
- With a rehearsal dinner theme in mind, set a dinner table with *Williamsburg* bone china, crystal, and sterling flatware.
- Display bridal gifts on a sideboard with products coming out of wrapped boxes.

of March, fifty-one interested brides have responded. They represent nineteen states and come from the four corners of our country—California, Washington State, Maine, and Florida.

The bride chosen in our first honeymoon drawing is from Pennsylvania, a state which furnishes many Williamsburg visitors.

Perhaps the most interesting of all is the registered bride who is having two weddings—one contemporary and the other eighteenth-century style—in two different states.

Other services are promoted including assistance from our interior design consultants and information and help in planning wedding festivities or honeymoons in Williamsburg.

We are happy to provide this special service and hope it is the beginning of a strong registry program—one that benefits our licensed manufacturers and Williamsburg Shops. The bridal market holds great potential and can be developed into customers of lasting loyalty.

* From the "Molly and Hetty Tilghman letters," as quoted in Daniel Blake Smith, *Inside the Great House*, Cornell University Press, 1980.

Shields Tavern— Hearty Fare and Fine Reproductions

A quality meal served in a warm and friendly atmosphere has traditionally been a favorite activity of visitors to Colonial Williamsburg. This year guests will be able to dine at Shields, a new tavern that opened in January to make tavern dining more accessible to those who want to experience dining eighteenth-century style.

Shields is the largest of Colonial Williamsburg's operating taverns with seating for more than 450. Meals, light and less formal than those offered at the other taverns, are served on a first-come, first-served basis.

Most every detail of Shields—from the menu to the costumes and furnishings—was researched to give guests the most authentic dining experience possible. Decorative items



The sign hanging outside Shields Tavern will serve as the basis for an interpretive kitchen towel from Stevens Linen. The towel will be available this summer.



If you are looking for display ideas for your shop, consider introducing your customers to Shields Tavern via a display of products used to furnish the tavern interior.

and architectural details in each room have been chosen to reflect the rooms' use around 1750 when the tavern was run by James Shields.

A number of Williamsburg reproductions were found to be appropriate for use in the tavern. Guests drink ale from salt-glaze mugs from the Williamsburg Pottery. Also helping to create an authentic tavern environment are large hurricane shades from Royal Leerdam, baluster candlesticks from Virginia Metalcrafters, trestle tables from Eldred Wheeler, the Wetherburn's clock from Kittinger, and, of course, tavern dinnerware by Homer Laughlin.

When suitable looking glasses for the tavern could not be located, Friedman Brothers came to the Foundation's aid. Two walnut adaptations of existing *Williamsburg* mirrors and a new chimney glass were developed for Shields and will become part of Friedman's Williamsburg line.

At Shields you will find not only hearty fare but also fine reproductions!

The Importance of Customer Service

Excellence in customer service is imperative to the success of any business in today's competitive marketplace. It is an important ingredient in good merchandising—one none of us can afford to overlook. Recently Anne Hethcock, manager of mail order fulfillment, reviewed changes that have taken place in the past year in Colonial Williamsburg's customer service department. Here are her comments. Perhaps they will suggest policy or procedural changes appropriate for your business.

At Colonial Williamsburg, we hear many words used to describe how customers feel about our products: quality, value, distinction, authenticity, attention to detail. Our high standards have created many loyal customers who expect and demand the best. Customer service focuses on retaining those valued customers by providing courteous, prompt, professional, and easily accessible assistance for any complaint, problem, or question. We are striving to establish and emphasize in customer service the same rigorous standards that we maintain for our products.

Centralization is essential to an effective customer service operation. Our customer service department was expanded to encompass all retail and mail order operations in early 1988. Centralizing enabled us to establish standards by which all customers would benefit. All returns and customer related mail are processed in one area with attention to speed and equitable treatment. Centralizing also provides a better arena for more intensive analysis of customer service data, trends in product returns, quality concerns with specific merchandise, reaction to depiction of a product in a catalog, and general comments and suggestions.

Service ratings cards are enclosed in each package in our mail order fulfillment operation. These cards give customers the opportunity to respond to questions such as "Was our representative friendly and helpful?" "Was merchandise packed to your satisfaction?" "Did the product meet your expectations?" The cards have

provided us with a way of measuring our service and obtaining useful criticism and suggestions. The enclosure of personalized packers' cards in all packages and the encouragement of representatives to use their names when speaking with customers have resulted in recognition of specific employees by name on the rating cards. This recognition is emphasized by management and has resulted in an increased sense of pride and attention to detail among our employees.

Another means of evaluating and improving our customer service in mail order is by testing and rating our competition. All aspects of an ordering experience are evaluated, beginning with counting the number of rings before the call is answered and ending with critiquing packing material and package inserts. This exercise is very beneficial in improving our awareness of what our customers are experiencing elsewhere, and what their expectations are for Colonial Williamsburg.

Centralization, service rating cards, and evaluation of competition are but a few of the methods that we are using to learn about and accommodate our customers' needs and expectations. At Colonial Williamsburg, customer service is our number one priority. Our goal is to make all of our em-

ployees aware that customer satisfaction is everybody's business.



Hoagland's, owned by former Virginia Metalcrafters sales representatives Dick and Barbara Johann, has been approved as a Williamsburg Gift and Accessory Shop. Their large store will offer customers in Greenwich, Connecticut, a wide assortment of Williamsburg reproductions.

The interior design studio known as *Landmark Furniture* has been appointed as a Williamsburg Interior Design Shop. Located in Kittinger's backyard in Clarence, a western suburb of Buffalo, this store is unique among those appointed to date. A portion of the design studio is located in a former church replete with stained glass windows and vaulted ceilings—a divine setting for reproductions from Colonial Williamsburg!

Greenwich and Clarence, two more cities where the Foundation, its licensees, and its comprehensive product line will be better represented.



New Marketing Representative Appointed

On March 1 Debra Salisbury assumed the position of marketing representative for the Williamsburg Shops Program, filling the position left vacant by Jess Behringer's promotion. Many of you know Debbie. Those of you who do not can rest assured that she is well acquainted with the Williamsburg Reproductions Program.

Debbie joined Colonial Williamsburg in 1985 as merchandise manager, a position that challenged her to balance the inventory the Foundation maintains for the more than twenty stores it operates in Williamsburg. Despite her busy schedule, she found time to represent the licensees in the Williamsburg Showroom in Atlanta during market weeks. With twelve years of retail experience prior to her association with Colonial Williamsburg, Debbie is well prepared to make a lasting contribution to the Shops Program.

Bag It in Style

Colonial Williamsburg is taking advantage of the latest rage in collectible objets d'art—the paper bag! Printed on a high-gloss, quality paper for superb image clarity, these sophisticated, eye-catching bags are irresistible, and they are everywhere—in the closet, in the office, in the gym, and definitely on the street.

This summer Colonial Williamsburg will introduce three new paper gift bags bearing images of objects in the



Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Traveling Exhibit. The bags will be available in time for the show's second opening at the North Carolina Museum of Art. Two small bags (7" x 10") will feature "Baby In Red Chair" and "Boy With Finch," the image which appears on the show's catalog

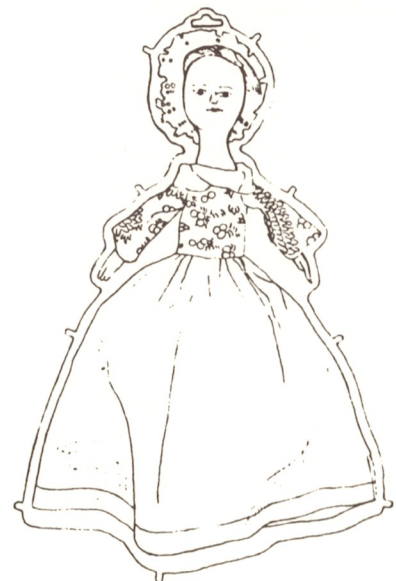
cover. A larger bag (16" x 12") will portray "Basket of Fruit," a nineteenth-century theorem by Mary Bradley.

These high-impact carryalls are functional and inexpensive. Because they can be filled with all sorts of gifts, they can be promoted as instant gift wrap. Stand a tissue-filled "Baby In Red Chair" bag alongside the pewter baby cup and porringers from Kirk Stieff. The bag will add a splash of color to your pewter display and simplify gift giving for customers on the run.

The colorful new bags can be purchased through Colonial Williamsburg's wholesale sales department, P. O. Box C, Williamsburg, VA 23187 (804) 220-7179.



Williamsburg® Christmas ornaments for 1989 are now available from Virginia Metalcrafters and Kirk Stieff. The flowing rococo scroll design of the brass ornament is derived from fretwork carved in wood on the side of a mantel clock case. The opening allowed the sound of chimes to ring through. Kirk Stieff's three-dimensional silverplate ornament is based on an antique doll named "Hagar Tyler" that descended in the family of President John Tyler.



Decoys Approved

Two decoys reproduced from originals in the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Center collection are now available from the Decoy Shop in Bowdoinham, Maine, among the newest of Colonial Williamsburg's growing licensee group. The original decoys, a whistling swan from Maryland circa 1930-1935 and a midwestern canvasback circa 1895-1905, are included in the "Treasures of American Folk Art" exhibit, a two-year traveling exhibition from the AARFAC (see fall 1988 newsletter).

Master carvers from the Decoy Shop, founded by George Soule, have produced wood products since 1937. The skills and abilities learned from Soule's precision decoy carving have served as the basis for the growth and diversification of the Decoy Shop over the last few years. Today, a very talented group of craftspeople proudly produces a large variety of carved products. Decoys and other items are roughed out on duplicating machinery, then finished and painted by hand.

The new whistling swan and canvasback will make collectible and handsome accent pieces for the home. The Decoy Shop plans to add other carved wooden items over the next few years to develop a collection representative of the AARFAC decoy collection.

To order the new decoys, call or write the Decoy Shop, P. O. Box 270, Bowdoinham, ME 04008 (207) 666-8461.



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