

The Colonial Williamsburg

Animal News

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FAIR DAYS ARE HERE

On September 2 and 3 we hold the Colonial Fair, but in the eighteenth century the fair was held two times a year on April 23 and December 12 of every year. The first fair publicized in the *Virginia Gazette* was the fair of 1739, 12th of December. Before that, earlier fairs met with little success.

The fair was a market place for the sale and vending of all livestock, produce, wares, and merchandise. Prizes or bounties were sometimes offered for the best stock or the person who brought the most stock.

Livestock played an important role in the fair not only for marketing but also entertainment. Horse racing was a favored sport, as well as the game of catch the pig with the soapy tail. Here is part of the advertisement that appeared in the *Virginia Gazette* December 7, 1739 that tells about the upcoming fair:

IT is therefore Agreed upon, and Ordered, That the following Sums of Money shall be given as *Bounties*, at the next F A I R, to be held at *Williamsburg*, on the 12th Instant, *viz.*

TO the Person that brings most Horses to the said F A I R, and there offers them to Publick Sale, at a reasonable Price, there shall be paid him, as a Bounty, (whether he sells them, or not,) a Pistole.

TO the Person that brings the best Draught Horse for Sale, as aforesaid, a good Horse-whip shall be given.

TO the Person that brings most Cows, Steers, or other horned Cattle, and there offers them for Sale, as aforesaid, a Pistole shall be given.

TO the Person that brings the most Sheep, and there offers them for Sale, as aforesaid, for each Sheep, Six Pence shall be given.

TO the Person that brings most fat Hogs, and there offers them for Sale, as aforesaid, for each Hog, Eight Pence shall be given.

AND that suitable Encouragement shall be given to all Persons that shall bring any Sorts of Goods, Wares, or Merchandizes, and offers them to Sale, as aforesaid, in the Place where the F A I R is usually held.

N.B. None of the *Bounties* are intended to be given for the Stocks of Cattle, &c. that belong to *Williamsburg*.

Pens will be prepar'd for keeping up Sheep, Hogs, &c. in the Fair.

AND for the *Entertainment and Diversion* of all

Gentlemen and others, that shall resort thereto, the following P R I Z E S are given to be contended for, at the Fair, *viz.*

A Pair of Silver Buckles, Value 20s. to be run for by Men, from the *College* to the *Capitol*. A Pair of Shoes to be given to him that comes in Second. And a Pair of Gloves to the Third.

A Pair of Pumps to be danc'd for by Men.

A handsome Firelock to be exercis'd for; and given to the Person that performs the Manual Exercise best.

A Pig, with his Tail soap'd, to be run after; and to be given to the Person that catches him, and lifts him off the Ground fairly by the Tail.

There will be several other Prizes given: And as the Fair is to hold Three Days, there will be Horse-racing, and a Variety of Diversions every Day; and the Prizes not here particularly mentioned, (for want of Room) will be then publickly declared, and appropriated in the best Manner.

A good Hat to be Cudgell'd for; and to be given to the Person that fairly wins it, by the common Rules of Play.

A Saddle of 40 s. Value, to be run for, once round the Mile Course, adjacent to this City, by any Horse, Mare or Gelding, carrying Horseman's Weight, and allowing Weight for Inches. A handsome Bridle to be given to the Horse that comes in Second. And a good Whip to the Horse that comes in Third.

Although Coach and Livestock will not have a pig that you can catch by a soapy tail, we do hope that you will visit the animals and watch some of the demonstrations, and don't forget to see the horse races at York Street pasture!!!

SUMMER PROGRAMS

Here is a list of some programs we are offering this summer from the Coach and Livestock department. We ask that you please check the *Visitor's Companion* for the correct place and time as they do change. Most of these programs are weather permitting.

Carriage and Wagon Rides to provide the Visitor chance to view the town by carriage.

Stage Wagon Tour is a half hour tour that interprets the nature of travel and transportation.

Ox Cart Rides are free to children 8 years and younger.

Interpretation of How Women Traveled and Used Horses in the eighteenth century.

Interpretation of Cattle and Their Uses.

Interpretation of the Craft of the Farrier.

Interpretation of Horses and Stables.

Interpretation of Carts and Carting.

Interpretation of How Oxen Were Used.

4-H Livestock Program where young people interpret to their peers in the Historic Area.

If you have any other ideas of livestock related subjects that the visitors may find interesting, please let us know and we will see what we can do.

HOT WEATHER SCHEDULE

It is not easy to set an exact temperature to pull carriages off the street. Low humidity and a good breeze can make a 90 degree day seem quite pleasant, or at least tolerable.

Horses are like people in the same respect that some take the heat better than others. The mules for instance, with their white coats, do far better than the Percherons, which have black coats. Also body weight and build can sometimes make a difference. New horses from cooler climates tend to have a hard time adjusting their first year but get better as time goes by.

As a general rule, if humidity is moderate and temperature is high the horses will get one break in afternoon and skip a ride. If both humidity and temperature are high, then they get two breaks and skip two rides. In extreme heat and humidity (i.e. 95 degrees + 100 humidity) carriages will only go out in early morning hours or not at all.

As we know, Virginia weather can be a little unpredictable. It is up to the manager and the coachmen to decide what they feel a particular team is up to doing in a given day. If a thunderstorm comes up or weather turns a little hotter than expected, don't be surprised to see the carriages head for the stable early.



CONTEST!!

We are looking for a logo for the Coach and Livestock Department. Here is one entry below:



by Paul Vosteen
(Anthony Hay Shop)

The winner will receive 2 dozen eggs and a quart of milk all from our C. W. livestock. The winner will appear in the *Animal News*. Here are the rules:

1. You must be a C.W.F. employee
2. It must be a fairly simple design
3. Any shape or size
4. Enter as many times as you want

Any kind of paper will do. Simply put your name, department, and extension number on the back. Send all entries to Mr. Nicoll, Coach and Livestock, or bring it by the stable. Contest ends August 18.

10 MOST ASKED HORSE QUESTIONS

1. How many horses do we have at Colonial Williamsburg? Right now we have 23 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.

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 and 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.



Please help us during this busy season in reminding guests not to feed our animals. This is for their own safety, as well as for the health and safety of the animals.



QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? Please write to: **Animal Editor, MHW, Colonial Williamsburg** *Animal News* is published by Coach and Livestock Operation, Historic Trades Department
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