



“*These Boisterous Times...*” \*  
**THE WEEK IN '76**

Alexander Purdie, *Virginia Gazette*,  
January 1, 1776

**OCTOBER 1976**

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**October 1–9, 1976**

**October 2, 1776**

Two Journeymen Chair-Makers, and a Wheelwright will meet with good encouragement by applying to

John Shiphard.

John Shiphard, from London, first appeared in Williamsburg as a journeyman harnessmaker employed by Alexander Craig in 1761. Shiphard entered business for himself after Craig died in 1771. He had opened his shop on Capitol Landing Road by 1772 and expanded his work to include coachmaking as well as harnessmaking. In 1775 he announced in the *Virginia Gazette*:

John Shiphard, Coach, Chaise, and Harness Maker, from LONDON, Informs the Public that he has now on Hand a neat Phaeton, double and single Riding Chairs, &c. which he will dispose of on reasonable Terms, for Cash, European or West India Goods. He returns his most grateful Thanks to all those who have hitherto favoured him with their Custom, and takes this Method to inform them, as well as the Public in general, that he is determined to spare neither Pains nor Expense in prosecuting the different Branches of his Business to the Satisfaction of all who may please to employ him. He will repair Carriages as above-mentioned, either in the Wheels or Bodies, and will attend to the greatest Punctuality.

During the Revolution, Shiphard rented several buildings to the state that were used for barracks. He continued to work in Williamsburg until 1785, when he gave his property to his children.

**October 7, 1776**

On October 11, 1776, the *Virginia Gazette* reported:

The General Assembly of the free and independent State of Virginia met at the Capitol, in this City on Monday last.

The first General Assembly under the new state constitution met at the Capitol on October 7. The constitution provided for members of the Virginia Convention to return as the first House of Delegates. Elections were held for this session only for the Senate. Annual elections were held in the spring thereafter and the Assembly ordinarily met twice a year, in May and October.

At the first session, Edmund Pendleton was elected Speaker of the House of Delegates and Archibald Cary Speaker of the Senate. Thomas Jefferson gave up his seat in the Continental Congress to attend the session to be certain that reforms he considered essential to a republic were carried out.

**October 10–16, 1976**

**October 10, 1776**

Good encouragement will be given to journeymen shoemakers, especially those who understand making of Boots, by

Robert Gilbert.

Robert Gilbert, a boot and shoemaker, established his business in Williamsburg “near the Capitol” in 1768. He announced in the *Virginia Gazette* his expertise in making nearly every known form of footwear:

Robert Gilbert, Boot and Shoemaker, &c. Hereby acquaints the publick that he has opened shop near the Capitol in Williamsburg, where he intends carrying on his business in all its branches, viz. shoe or channel, calf or buckskin boots, jockey do. and spatterdashes, mens plain, sticked, spring, and woodhealed, shoes and pumps, calf or dogskin; campaign, single, double or turned channels, slippers, blue or red turkey, cork soles, and galloches; womens leather, stuff, silk, and braided shoes and pumps, slippers, cork soles, galloches, and clogs. As he imports the whole of his materials from Great Britain, where punctual payments are required, he proposes supplying Ladies and Gentlemen with any of the above articles on the most reasonable terms, for ready money. Those who please to favour him with their custom may depend on their work being speedily executed, in the genteelest and newest fashions, and in such a manner as he hopes will merit a continuance of their favours.

During the Revolution, Gilbert carried on an extensive business of supplying shoes and boots for the army. In 1780 he made 165 pairs of boots for the mounted troops for which he received over £27,000 of nearly worthless money.

Gilbert continued to work in Williamsburg until 1783, when he moved to Richmond.

#### October 10, 1776

Grove Camp, near Williamsburg, October 10, 1776.

The subscribers want to employ workmen immediately to build STABLES for the first and second squadrons of light horse. Those who are willing to undertake the business are desired to apply, as soon as possible, to Edward Irving or John Dandridge, quartermasters.

Grove Camp, one of several military encampments in and around Williamsburg, was located at Waller's Grove on Capitol Landing Road. The encampment was established in the late summer of 1775 and was one of the points where Virginia troops assembled before their march to Washington's army. In 1778 Benjamin Waller, owner of the Grove, was reimbursed £370 for the "Timber and Wood" that the soldiers had used from the Grove.

*Compiled by Harold B. Gill, Jr.*



The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation