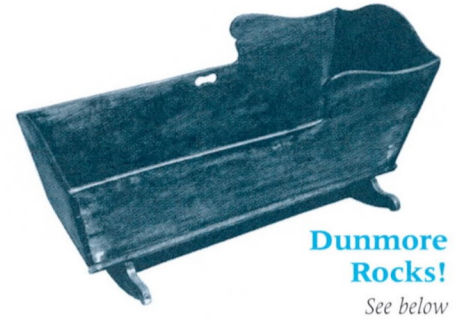


AMERICANS *Becoming* TODAY

NO. 1 IN COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG



December 1774 Newsline

- December 1774*
Local Committee of Safety elected
- December 1, 1774*
No importation of British goods
- December 3, 1774*
Birth of Lady Virginia
- December 4, 1774*
Lord Dunmore returns from the Indian Wars in the West
- December 13, 1774*
Court of Oyer and Terminer (part of General Court) meets to try criminal cases
- December 25, 1774*
Christmas Day

December Weather

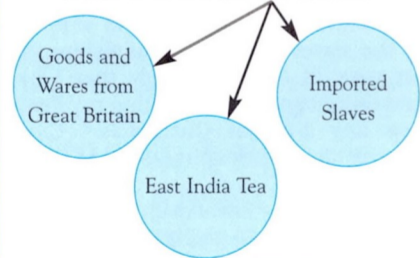
- 13th More moderate, but snowing fast all afternoon. (George Washington)
- 13th Hard frozen. No plowing yesterday, and I am afraid none today. (Landon Carter)
- 25th A glorious day not only fine in the remembrance it occasions but also in the looks of the weather God be praised. Amen and Amen. (Carter)

Agricultural Calendar

- Gather, husk and cart corn
- Clear and plow fields
- Store potatoes, peas, cabbages, carrots, turnips
- Plant grapes and peach trees
- Butcher hogs
- Cut, salt, smoke pork
- Sell muttons and hogs
- Gather oysters and hunt game
- Hoe hills for tobacco
- Sow seed for tobacco
- Cut firewood and timber
- Ditch, grub and fence fields
- Distribute winter clothing to slaves
- New overseers arrive

VIRGINIA TODAY SNAPSHOT

The Association Takes Effect
December 1, 1774
NO IMPORTATION!
What Will You Do WITHOUT?



Tar and Feathers and Freedom? The Association and Committees of Safety

From its inception, the county committees in Virginia assumed an authority that extended well beyond . . . strict regulation of all commerce. At the election of the James City committee on November 25, 1774, freeholders agreed that the resolutions of the Continental Congress would be "the sole rule of their conduct, in all matters respecting their present political engagements." By January, William Carr reported that many county committees exceeded the instructions of the Continental Association, and in Norfolk James Parker complained that "Every thing is managed by Committee."

The committees* in Virginia quickly became far more than local boards for the administration of the association; they became the principal institutions of local government. The formation of committees at the same time that the county courts relinquished many of the most important powers allowed the local political elites to maintain their authority in the counties at the same time that they isolated and subverted royal government. By Christmas, Governor Dunmore was denouncing the assumption of power by committees that supervised every aspect of merchants' business and raised independent militias "for the avowed purpose of protecting" the committees' authority. When the governor tried to cultivate appointed officeholders on the local level he discovered that nearly every justice of the peace was also a committee member and that by closing the county courts, the local political leadership united itself with the yeoman planters. Dunmore was convinced the arbitrary proceedings of the committees and the scarcity of basic supplies would breed popular dissent. Until his wishful predictions were fulfilled, however, the governor could only recommend that Parliament aggravate existing shortages by blockading ports and shutting off all American commerce."

Source: Bruce A. Ragsdale, *A Planters' Republic: The Search for Economic Independence in Revolutionary America* (Madison, Wis.: Madison House, 1996).

*Note: Committees were made up of former burgesses and justices of the peace.

Governor Counts Blessings

Four Shawnees, Nine Children . . . and a Partridge in a Pear Tree



[Winchester]—Wednesday, December 7th, 1774

Saw Four Indian Chiefs of the Shawneese Nation Who have been at War with the Virginians this Summer, but have made peace with them, and are sending these people to Williamsburg as Hostages.

They are tall, manly, well shaped men, of a Copper Colour with Black Hair, Quick piercing Eyes, and good features. They have rings of Silver in their nose and bobs to them which hangs over their upper lip. Their ears are cut from the tip, two thirds of the way round and the piece extended with Brass wire till it touches their Shoulders, in this part they hang a thin silver plate wrought in Flourishes about 3 Inches diameter, with plates of Silver round their arms and in the Hair which is all cut off except a Long Lock on the top of the head, they are in whitemens dress except Breeches which they refuse to wear, instead of which they have a girdle round them with a piece of Cloath drawn through their Legs and turned over the girdle and appears like a short apron before and behind. All the Hair is pulled from their eye brows and eye lashes and their Face painted in different parts with Vermilion. They walk remarkable straight and cut a Grotesque appearance in this mixed dress.

Source: Nicholas Cresswell's Journal

What Will Happen in the New Year?

In December 1774, Virginians are wondering . . .

African Americans

There's much talk about freedom in the colonies. What about me? Will the master keep my family together?

European Americans

Are we giving up freedom in order to gain freedom? Will there be war with Britain?

Native Americans

Will our people be able to hunt to survive? Can we trust these Europeans? What do they really want?

Williamsburg, December 8

LAST Saturday Morning the Right Honourable the COUNTESS OF DUNMORE was safely delivered of a Daughter, at the Palace. Her Ladyship continues in a very favourable Situation, and the young Virginian is in perfect Health.

Sunday last, in the Afternoon, his Excellency the Governour arrived at the Palace in this City, from his Expedition against the Indians, who have been humbled into a Necessity of soliciting Peace themselves, and have delivered Hostages for the due Observance of the Terms; which cannot fail of giving general Satisfaction, as they confine the Indians to Limits that entirely remove the Grounds of future Quarrel between them and the People of Virginia, and lay a Foundation for a fair and extensive Indian Trade, which, if properly followed, must produce the most Beneficial Effects to this Country.

We hear that four of the principal Shawanese Warriours are expected here in a few Days, and that twelve Headmen and Warriours of the Delaware and other Tribes are left at Fort Dunmore, as Hostages. The Indians have delivered up all the white Prisonners in their Towns, with the Horses and other Plunder they took from the Inhabitants, and even offered to give up their own Horses.

To his Excellency, the Right Honourable John Earl of Dunmore, His Majesty's Lieutenant and Governor General of the Colony and Dominion of Virginia, and Vice Admiral of the same:
The humble ADDRESS of the City of Williamsburg

My Lord,

WE his Majesty's most dutiful and loyal Subjects, the Mayor, Recorder, Alderman, and Common Council, of the City of Williamsburg, in Common Hall assembled, beg Leave to embrace the earliest Opportunity of Congratulating your Lordship on the Conclusion of a dangerous and fatiguing Service, in which you have lately been engaged, and on your Return to this City.

It is with Pleasure we hear your Lordship has been able to defeat the Designs of a cruel and insidious Enemy, and at the same Time that Your Lordship has escaped those Dangers to which your Person must have been frequently exposed.

Permit us also, upon this Occasion, to express our Congratulations on the late Addition to your Family by the Birth of a Daughter; and to assure you, that we wish your Lordship every Degree of Felicity, and that we shall contribute towards its Attainment, as far as lies in our Power, during your Residence amongst us.

Virginia Gazette Supplement [P&D],
December 8, 1774

BALANCE OF POWER SHIFTS AT THE PALACE

The joyful news from the Governor's Palace is that Lady Dunmore was delivered of a healthy baby girl in the early morning hours of Saturday, December 3. Will ribbons of blue now appear on the door of the Palace, as is customary with some folk in England, to announce the blessed event? The proud father was not present for the birth but returned the following day from his war efforts in the West to a happy family reunion and a much noisier Palace.



With this birth, the Murray family now has more females in residence at the Palace than males—one son, Leveson, remains in England. It is reported that mother and babe are doing well.

Much to the delight of the inhabitants of this, His Majesty's royal colony, it was announced that the newest member of the Murray household would be christened *Lady Virginia*, in honor

NEWS

THE HOLLY AND THE IVY

For most of the 18th century, Christmas traditions in Virginia were indeed simple. No trees, no Santa, few gifts, no “stockings hung by the chimney with care.” Many of our favorite customs came along later—most in the 19th century. In colonial Virginia, Christmas was an entire season, not a single day—the 12 Days of Christmas stretched from December 25 to Epiphany on January 6.

Dinners, balls and other social occasions were arranged throughout the 12 days. Weddings too often took place at this time of year (the Jeffersons’ and the Washingtons’ are just two examples). Twelfth Night parties, usually held on the evening of January 5, signaled the end of the season.

New Year’s Day was often noted in diaries of the period with sentiments like “Another Year is gone!” but New Year’s Eve parties were not common. Twelfth Night gatherings seemed to have served much the same purpose as ours on December 31.

Philip Vickers Fithian’s diary for 1773 and ’74 gives us an unusually detailed look at Virginians’ holiday practices. For example, on Christmas Eve and again on Christmas morning, Fithian noted that guns were fired—presumably as a means of sending greetings to faraway plantations. They also seem to have functioned as a release of the high spirits brought on by the season. Fithian wrote that the household slaves at Nomini Hall solicited gifts. (see below)

Among Anglicans in Virginia, Christmas, the Feast of the Nativity, was a major religious holiday, second only to Easter. Therefore, attendance at service on that day was expected. It was one of the three or four times in the year that Eucharist was celebrated. In rural parishes short on clergy, church services may not have been possible on December 25 itself, so folks in the countryside observed the holiday on the Sunday closest to that date. In 1773, for example, Christmas fell on a Saturday.

Unfortunately, there is little evidence about how denominations other than Anglicans celebrated. Fithian spent the Christmas of 1775 in western Virginia as a Presbyterian “missionary” to the Scots-Irish settlers there. That holiday was very different from previous ones at Nomini Hall. He wrote, “Not a Gun heard—Not a Shout—No company or Cabal assembled—To Day is like other Days every Way calm & temperate—People go about their daily Business.” . . .

After church on Christmas Day, dinner was the next order of business. Most people tried to get more and better things to eat and drink for the holiday. For the gentry, of course, this presented no problem at all. Fithian described his meal at Nomini Hall on Christmas Day 1773: “Our Dinner was no otherwise than common [that is, it was just like their dinner everyday], yet as elegant a Christmas Dinner as I ever sat Down to.” Those lower down the social scale, of course, had fewer choices of food and drink. Preparing and serving these meals, whether elaborate or simple, required work, so housewives, slaves and servants probably worked as hard or harder on the holiday than at other times. Especially when guests were included, their duties must have been much more onerous.

The custom of decorating churches has been traced to the Old Testament lesson appointed for the Anglican service on Christmas Eve. The 13th verse of Isaiah, chapter 60, reads, “The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary.”

John Brand’s *Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain*, first published in 1777, includes the following rhyme, specifying not only the kinds of foliage to use but where to place the decorations and even the types of containers to hold the greens in 18th-century English homes:

*From every hedge is pluck’d by eager hands
The holy [holly] branch with prickly leaves
replete
And fraught with berries of a crimson hue;
Which, torn asunder from its parent trunk,
Is straight way taken to the neighboring towns,
Where windows, mantels, candlesticks, and
shelves,
Quarts, pints, decanters, pipkins, basons, jugs,
And other articles of household ware,
The verdant garb confess.*

Coins, small toys and educational books were typical holiday presents—and were just as likely to be given at New Year’s as at Christmas. In the 18th century gifts were

not exchanged but bestowed by a superior upon an inferior—parents to children or masters to slaves, servants or apprentices.

The local newspaper in December 1738, for example, advertised a new book, *The Church Catechism Explained*, as “very proper for a New-Year’s Gift to Children.” Robert Wormeley Carter of Richmond County “gave 12/6 [12 shillings, sixpence] to my



five children & 10/ [10 shillings] to Mrs. Carter” on December 25, 1769. In 1770, Yorktown resident Martha Goosley sent two Christmas turkeys to John Norton and his family in London.

St. George Tucker’s relatives in Bermuda sent him “a pair of silk Stockings for a Christmas Box” on January 4, 1773. Palace kitchen accounts show that two shillings sixpence were sent as a “Christmas box to the millar’s servt.” on January 23, 1770.

House slaves at Nomini Hall expected tips from Fithian on Christmas morning 1773. His expenditure totaled “five Bits” when he had given something to one who served him. Fithian could not pay up completely until the middle of the next month.

Source: Emma Lou Powers, *The Colonial Williamsburg Interpreter* (Fall 1999)

PUTTING SLAVIN’ ASIDE

As usual, our sources are biased toward the gentry and upper middling sort. There is no information about how poor whites and free people of color celebrated Christmas in early Virginia. For some of them, the religious aspects of the holiday probably prevailed. With limited incomes, of course, material manifestations of the season—gifts, special meals, decorations, and so on—were simply not possible.

We know more about slaves’ treatment at this time of year because of letters, diaries and other documents written by the masters, mainly gentry planters. A February 1726/7 law that established patrols to guard against invasions and insurrections mentions that slaves usually congregated in some numbers at the three main yearly festivals. As part of the rationale for the patrols, the legislators called to mind the “great danger [that] may happen to the inhabitants of this dominion, from the unlawful concourse of negroes, during the Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide holidays, wherein they are usually exempted from labour.”

Lorena Walsh’s research on plantation management in the colonial Chesapeake shows that slaves were allowed three to five days’ holiday at Christmastime. In 1786, for example, George Washington noted on December 29, “The holidays being over, and the People [slaves] all at work, I rid to the Ferry, Dogue run, and Muddy hole Plantations.” A Christmas respite must have been allowed to field hands more readily than to domestics; house servants had more work than usual when guests were in the house for extended visits or if the master and mistress expected special meals and entertained during the holidays.

Traditionally, slave owners allowed their workers to have alcohol during the Christmas break. Some masters actually made gifts of rum and other spirits to their bondsmen. This was a very manipulative move

CALENDAR

Sacred and Secular:
The Calendar for 1774

Linda Rowe

Monday, December 12. One of the fair days for Williamsburg, as noted in the Williamsburg Charter and *Virginia Almanacks*.

Friday, December 16. End of Trinity term at the College.

Sunday, December 25. Christmas Day. The first day of the Christmas season and one of four times during the colonial year when the Lord’s Supper was celebrated at Bruton Parish Church, and elsewhere in Virginia. Secular observance of the season included entertaining at home.

Monday, December 26. St. Stephen, first Christian martyr. In England and Virginia, the first day of the 12 days of Christmas, which extended through January 6.

Tuesday, December 27. St. John the Evangelist. Minutes of the Williamsburg Lodge of Freemasons show that local Masons celebrated this day annually in the 1770s with great ceremony. Wearing the insignia of their order and walking in the proper rank, they processed as a group from the Lodge to Bruton Parish Church for a sermon. Afterward, they hosted a dinner and ball to which the ladies of the town were invited.

Twelfth Night. The *Oxford English Dictionary* identifies 12th night as 12th Day eve, the evening before 12 Day (Epiphany, January 6). The word night in this usage suggests “to spend the night in enjoyment or reveling,” as in “to make a night of it.” This definition is consistent with the tradition of making the eves of religious feasts the occasion for secular revelries (debaucheries in the eyes of the authorities who sought to control such excesses).



Palace Posting

cont. from page 1

of her place of birth. The christening will take place the afternoon of January 18, the date of the official celebration of the birth of our beloved Queen Charlotte. Lady Virginia’s christening is to be followed in the evening by a ball given in honor of Her Highness, the Queen of England, and the first family of the colony. It is confirmed that this is the first child born in the Governor’s Palace since its official occupation in 1716.

[Submitted by Nancy Milton and Phil Shultz]

Churching of
Lady Dunmore

Did she or didn’t she—go to Bruton Parish that is, for “The Thanksgiving of Women after Child-birth,” commonly called “The Churching of Women”? We don’t know a lot about the practice in Virginia, but the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England includes this ceremony which signals a new mother’s re-entry into the full life of the church after her lying-in. The opening rubric of the rite reads:

The Woman, at the usual time after the Delivery, shall come to the Church, decently apparelled, and there shall kneel down in some convenient place, as hath been accustomed, or as the Ordinary [Bishop] shall direct.

In England, the “usual time after the Delivery” meant a minimum of 30 days. “Decently apparelled” could indicate the wearing of a veil. “Some convenient place” was often just inside the church door. The short series of prayers and psalms occurred at the beginning of the Communion, and included these words.

O Almighty God, we give thee humble thanks for that thou has vouchsafed to deliver this woman thy servant from the great pain and peril of childbirth.

[Bob Doares]



NEXT PAGES RETURN TO BEGINNING OF 1774

"Am I Not a Man and a Brother"



AMERICANS *Becoming* TODAY

NO. 1 IN COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG



Lady D.
at SEA . . .

Says Enough
Already!

January and February 1774

Newsline

January 1, 1774
New Year's Day

1774
CHRISTMAS being gone, a good New Year I wish to all my Readers dear; Doth Health and Wealth, good Meat, strong Beer, And all Things else the Heart to cheer. In our old Habit we once more appear, To sing the Dawning of a new born Year, And give the last its Funeral Obsequy; Nothing remains of it but Memory. And thus we travel through our sliding Years, The last quite gone, and this but just appears. Verses for the New Year

From *Virginia Almanacks*

January 5, 1774

Twelfth Night: "spend the night in enjoyment and reveling" with dinners, balls or a special cake

January 6, 1774

Epiphany or 12th Day

January 7, 1774

Williamsburg Hustings Court meets. (Will meet on the first Monday of each month)

January 14, 1774

James City County Court meets. (Will meet on the second Monday of each month)

January 21, 1774

York County Court meets. (Will meet on the third Monday of each month)

February 1, 1774

Merchants from Norfolk and the lower parts of the country state that they will meet in Williamsburg and stay four days

February 2, 1774

Purification of the Virgin Mary/Candlemas

February 14, 1774

St. Valentine's Day

February 28, 1774

Ash Wednesday. First day of Lent

VIRGINIA TODAY SNAPSHOT

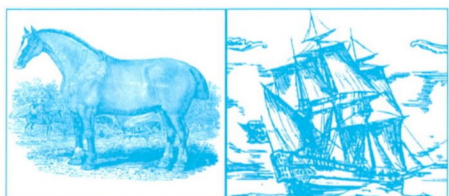
The Party's Over?

Colonies Await Britain's Reaction
The Boston Tea Party

*December 16, 1773:
The Boston Tea Party

*December 22, 1773
Ship leaves Boston for England

*January 19, 1774
News Arrives in Dover, England
News Arrives in London



"No human being, no manufactured item, no bushel of wheat, no side of beef, no letter, no information, no idea, order, or instruction of any kind moved faster" than the speed of a horse over land or a ship over the seas. [Stephen E. Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage*, 52]

EARTH SHAKING NEWS ROUGH WATERS AHEAD



COUNTESS AND BAIRNS BREEZE INTO 'BURG

On the evening of February 26, this capital city was ablaze with light from bonfires and cressets, and the houses and shops illuminated with candles, to honor the arrival of the Countess of Dunmore, Charlotte Stewart Murray, lady of our Governor, and her children. The whole town turned out to express their general regard and genuine affection for her ladyship as they escorted them to the Palace "while every countenance in the crowd plainly evinced satisfaction and pleasure in welcoming them." Assuredly such warm ceremony will do much to ease any anxieties which might be occasioned by their arrival in a new and distant land. The festivities continued a few nights later with a display of fireworks, "which though not the most magnificent (as indeed could not be well expected) yet the goodness of Lady Dunmore readily excused it saying that she was extremely thankful for the kind endeavors of the gentlemen who undertook the management of them as well as to everyone else who attended."

Her ladyship began this odyssey by departing London, November 19 of the year past, in the *Duchess of Gordon*, Isaac L. Winn, commander. On Wednesday, January 2, in the middle of one of the coldest winters in memory, the *Duchess of Gordon* arrived in New York Harbor after 44 days at sea. The Countess and her six children, in order to recover from such an arduous journey, remained in the city for near to a month.

The first week of February found Lady Dunmore in the City of Brotherly Love, Philadelphia, from whence her journey south next took her to Baltimore in the colony of Maryland. Her ladyship then set off for Annapolis, arriving in that port city on the 14th day of February. After having been honored by that city for eleven days, Lady Dunmore and her children embarked on board a yacht, the property of Colonel Lloyd. "On their departure, they were complemented with a discharge of twenty-one guns from the battery and the same number from the ship *Annapolis* then lying in the harbour."

Lady Dunmore and her family arrived in the town of York on February 26 "where they received a cannon salute and every mark of respect from the York inhabitants." While the celebration was in progress, someone brought the news to Williamsburg and so it was that when she arrived at seven in the evening the citizens of our fair city were waiting and eager to begin their grand welcoming ceremony.

The mayor, aldermen and common council seized the opportunity to express their satisfaction in the felicity of his lordship's government and offered him the grateful applause of a happy people, together with the hope that Virginia might prove "so healthy and in every respect so agreeable" that their residence here may be long and happy.

GOD SAVE THE KING
[Submitted by Phil Shultz
and Nancy Milton]

SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL

WILLIAMSBURG, February 24.

LAST Monday, about two o'Clock, a smart Shock of an Earthquake was felt at Westover, the Seat of the Honourable William Byrd, Esq; which shook the Dwelling House very much. It was likewise felt in this City the same Day by a few People, and on Wednesday Night following there was a violent Tremour of the earth. And by a Gentleman from Richmond we learn that the shock was severely felt in that Town, at the same Time it was observed at Westover, accompanied by a loud Noise like Thunder; and at Petersburg and Blandford the Motion of the Earth was still greater, many Houses have been moved considerably off their Foundations, and the Inhabitants so much alarmed as to run out of Doors.

The same Gentleman says, that the Earthquake, he heard, had been much greater up the Country.

The Virginia Gazette (P&D),
Thursday, February 24, 1774

FEBRUARY 2, 1774— ROBERT PLEASANTS TO ANTHONY BENEZET

In this letter, Pleasants, a Quaker and the President of the Virginia Abolition Society, discusses with Benezet, a resident of Philadelphia.

I think the Phisition has handled the subject of Slavery in a masterly manner, altho I suppose he may have very little reason to expect to share with his antagonist the thanks of the Affrican Company, but let that be as it may, he will receive what I expect will be more agreeable to him, the approbation of Judicious sencible men. I highly approved and sincerely wish the several petitions to the King and Parliament may have the desired effect, but I fear there is not virtue and resolution sufficient to forgo or withstand a present (tho false and imaginary) interest in the continuation of a wicked and destructive Trade. I have sent one of the papers containing the address and advice to those Mercht., to the Printer, and doubt not they will shortly appear in our *Gazette* and as it seems the attempts of our Assembly to prohibit the further Importation of Slaves by an imposition of high Dutys, has been frustrated (as I find is the case in N. york) does thou not think that Acts of the Colonys making all free after a certain term of Servitude like other foreigners taking place at a future period so as that all concerned in the Trade might have notice of such law, would not be (when accompanied with pertinent reasons) more effectually to put an end to it, and be more likely to be approved by the King and Council than a prohibition by Duties for I have been told our Governor (and itsnot unlikely others also) has instructions to pass no such laws. I just drop this hint for thy consideration.

Source: Elizabeth Donnan, ed.,
Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America, 4:161.

PAAHTY IN BAAHSTAHN HAABAH

Boston, December 17, 1773

YESTERDAY we had a greater Meeting of the Body than ever, the Country coming in from twenty Miles round, and every Step was taken that was practicable for returning the Teas. The Moment it was known, out of Doors, that Mr. Rotch could not obtain a Pass for his Ship by the Castle, a Number of People huzzaed in the Street, and in a little Time every Ounce of the Teas on Board the captains Hall, Bruce and Coffin, was immersed in the Bay, without the least Injury to private Property. The Spirit of the People on this Occasion surprised all Parties, who viewed the Scene. We conceived it our Duty to afford you the most early Advice of this interesting Event by Express, which, departing immediately, obliges us to conclude.

By Order of the Committee
The Virginia Gazette (P&D),
Thursday, January 6, 1774



PHILADELPHIA, December 27

THE Unanimity, Spirit, and Zeal, which has heretofore animated all the Colonies, from Boston to South Carolina, have been so imminently displayed in the Opposition to the Pernicious Project of the East India Company in sending Tea to America, while it remains subject to a Duty, and the Americans at the same Time confined by the strongest proclivity Laws to import it only from Great Britain, that a particular Account of the Transactions of the City cannot but be acceptable to all our Readers, and every other Friend of American Liberty.

The Virginia Gazette (P&D),
Thursday, January 20, 1774.

"TEA! how I tremble at the baneful Name!
Like Lethe, fatal to the Love of Fame."

Dr. Young

Can Posterity believe that the constitutional Liberties of North America were on the Point of being given up for Tea? Is this exotick Palant necessary to Life? Or does our Health depend upon it? Just the reverse. It was ushered into Europe, A.D. 1679, by the extravagant Encomiums of Cornelius Benetekoe, a Dutch Physician. The Tyranny of Fashion spread it with amazing Rapidity, though the general State of Health has undergone a great Revolution by it; so that our Race is dwindled, and become puny, weak, and disordered, to such a Degree, that were it to prevail a Century more we should be reduced to meager Pigmies.

PHILO-ALETHEIAS
The Virginia Gazette (P&D),
Thursday, January 13, 1774.

MONEY

Commerce

January 1774
Reprinted from *The Virginia Gazette*,
Alexander Purdie and John Dixon,
Thursday, January 6, 1774.

Entered in the Upper District of JAMES RIVER

January 17. Britannia, George Rapall, from Salem, with 20 Casks of Raisins, Six Casks of Spanish Wine, 180 Weight of Coffee, 17 Hhds. of New England Rum, 3 Dozen of Axes, 4 Barrels of Mackerel, and 9 Quintals of Fish.

Polly, John Gillason, from Salem, with 1 Hhd. And 1 Tierce of Molasses, 11 Hhds. and 8 Barrels of New England Rum, 4 Dozen Axes, 50 Weight of Pot Iron, 15 Hhds. of Salt, and sundry Wooden and Earthen Ware.

Cleared Outwards

January 17. Virginia, Alexander Thompson, for Glasgow, with 473 Hhds. of Tobacco, and 15,500 Staves.

Donald, Thomas Ramsey, for Glasgow, with 538 Hhds. of Tobacco, and 15,500 Staves.

Canadian, William Abbott, for Falmouth, with 7766 Bushels of Wheat, and 428 Barrels of Flour.

John and Bella, Andrew Green, for London, with 308 Hhds. of Tobacco, 8000 Staves, and 800 Feet of Plank.

Elizabeth, John Sampson, for Bristol, with 459 Hhds. of Tobacco, 2 Pipes of Wine, and 6800 Staves.

William and John, William Langdell, for Salem, with 118 Bushels of Wheat, 550 Bushels of Corn, and 40 Bushels of Beans.

Weather

January 1774

11th Still a good deal of ice upon the flats. Wind at south west, fresh & cold all day—at night shifted to north west again & grew very cold. (George Washington)

13th River entirely closed in the morning, but free from ice afterwards except upon the flats. Day cloudy but little wind. (Washington)

30th Very stormy this morning with Rain and Hail which instantly freezes; the trees hang bending with Ice, & the ways are all glassy & slippery. . . . Through this whole day it storms but the Evening is terrible! almost an Inundation of Rain; The wind violent at North-East; The Snow, Hail, and Rain freezing together on the Ground! (Philip Fithian)

February 1774

15th Clear & cold with but little wind, & northerly. River quite shut up again. (Washington)

21st Morning lowering, but clear calm & pleasant afterwards. (Washington)

21st Earthquake felt at Williamsburg, Westover and Richmond

Test Your Knowledge

ACROSS

- Better lay in a supply for winter.
- This trade ends in December 1774.
- Holy day after Twelfth Night.
- Time to sow these seeds.
- Season for gathering these mollusks.
- This committee formed in December.
- Twelve-day season.
- Drink often given to slaves at holiday.
- Four Shawnees in Williamsburg.
- Brickmakers are digging this.
- They celebrate St. John's Day.

DOWN

- Communion service on Christmas Day.
- Twelfth Night is the _____ of Epiphany
- Winter rains put a stop to this trade.
- First baby born in Palace.
- These guard against slave insurrection.
- What Christmas boxes mostly ARE.
- These shocks left in February 1774.
- What Christmas boxes likely are NOT.
- Lady Dunmore is one of these.
- Left a terrific journal.
- Boston news reported _____ weeks late.

David Ammerman

In Common Cause: American Response to the Coercive Acts of 1774
(New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1974), 1, 5.
"The Die Is Cast"

By the time Captain Rotch returned to Old South Meeting House [in Boston, December 16, 1773] candles had been lighted to dispel the gathering dusk of the waning winter afternoon. As he explained the failure of his mission, tension mounted in the hall, and then, according to tradition, Sam Adams took the podium to announce that "this meeting" could do nothing more to preserve the liberties of America. That announcement, with an emphasis on the demonstrative pronoun, may well have been a signal, for Adams was answered by war whoops in the street, and a band of "Mohawks" straightway descended on the waterfront. In a few hours the contested cargo [of tea] floated on the tide. The "Indians" and the cold salt waters of the Atlantic had settled the dispute, destroying in the process private property valued at thousands of pounds sterling.

Later, as night settled over the town, there was little to suggest that this had been other than an ordinary day. The streets were quiet and dark, except perhaps for an occasional uncovered window reflected in the puddles still standing before the houses. For the most part, the citizens of Boston gathered behind drawn curtains and talked quietly. Some may have rubbed a bit of war paint from their foreheads as they sat down to dinner; others no doubt brewed a defiant pot of tea and cursed the unruly mob; all speculated about the results of what they may already have termed the Tea Party. But three thousand miles of ocean separated old from New England, and it would be spring before anyone in the colonies would know the nature of Britain's response.



Agricultural Calendar

Gather, husk and cart corn
Clear, manure and plow fields
Thresh wheat and cart to town
Clean, grub and ditch meadows
Sow early vegetables
Cart cider to town
Plant fruit trees
Calves and lambs born
Pen and feed cattle
Kill hogs and fatten bees
Haul out manure
Hunt ducks and seine fishing
Stem and prize tobacco
Prepare beds and sow tobacco seeds
Ditch and fence fields
Cut firewood and cart to town
Build roads and saw timber
Hire out slaves

Building Trades

Brickmaking: Clay dug and left to break up with frost, no burning
Bricklaying: Difficult to work in cold and damp weather; threat of frost in bricks and cold prevents proper binding of mortar; bricks should be covered to prevent freezing.
Mortar Manufacture: Mortar should be harder in winter, less water; but cold

makes it difficult for good bonding.
Plastering: Difficult to work in winter months because of moisture; often no work in winter.
Timbering: Trees felled during this time thought to be stronger.
Carpentry and Joinery: Fewer daylight hours; if working by day, less work done.
Painting: Winter's rains and snows put end to outside painting.

Life Hearth and Home

Housekeeping: Fireplaces are actively burning wood or coal for maximum warmth. Furniture groupings tend to gravitate toward the fireplace

Gardening and Food Preservation: Slaughtering in cold weather, so large cuts of fresh meat are available for the table. Hams to be salted for 6-8 weeks and then smoked. Make sausages, pickle or pot smaller cuts of meat as well as fish, fowl and game. Vegetables include spinach, cauliflower, cabbage and root vegetables (carrots, turnips, potatoes, etc.). Stored items such as apples and pumpkins on hand. By February, eggs become plentiful for Lenten dishes as well as to hatch.

Becoming AMERICANS TODAY

The information in this issue of *Becoming AMERICANS TODAY* informs us of the dynamic interactions of the Becoming Americans story lines that shaped the events of the autumn of 1774.

Taking Possession

Return of Lord Dunmore from the West
Shawnee Hostages in Williamsburg
Nicholas Cresswell's Journal

Enslaving Virginia

Christmas for African Americans
Letter from Robert Pleasants to Anthony Benezet

Redefining Families

Birth of Lady Virginia
Arrival of Lady Dunmore

Freeing Religion

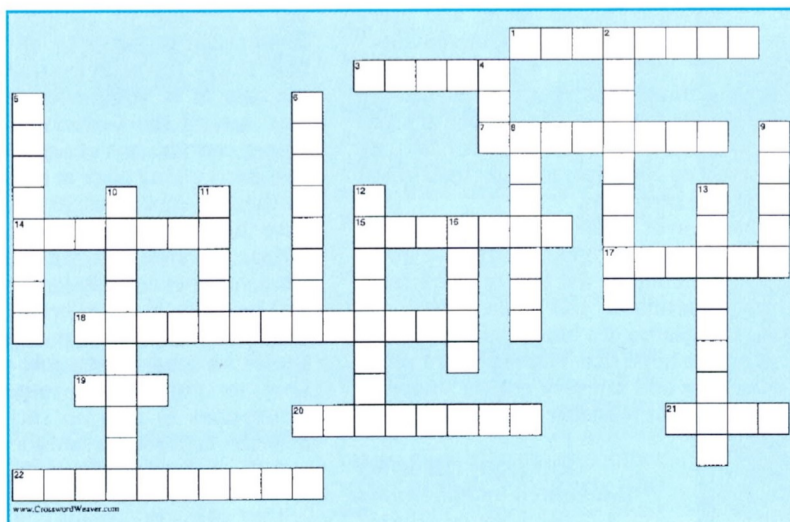
Sacred and Secular Calendar
Christmas Celebrations

Buying Respectability

The Association
Commerce
Advertisements

Choosing Revolution

The Association
Boston Tea Party
David Ammerman



FORUM

Letter from . . .

Margot Créviaux-Gevertz

BA TODAY Gets Thumbs Up!

Thanks to all for the enthusiastic response to *Becoming AMERICANS TODAY*. We are committed to exploring ways to make our training materials interesting, stimulating, provocative and relevant. To ensure that we are meeting your needs, we will solicit your feedback and suggestions at every step of the way!

Our winter issue poses a special challenge, as we are discussing events occurring in December 1774 and then *going back in time to the beginning of the same year* to cover events in January and February! You'll want to keep this in mind as you read through the paper so that the disruption in the flow of events makes sense.

As you consider using seasonal information in your interpretation this winter, we'd like to share a few thoughts suggested by the articles appearing in this issue:

How would you answer these questions or discuss these issues with guests?

Lady Dunmore's Arrival: Why was there such an atmosphere of joy and anticipation around the arrival of Lady Dunmore? What did it mean to the people of Williamsburg?

Christmas: Was Christmas a time of joy for all inhabitants, black and white? And, if traditionally the holiday included 12 days of secular revelry, how did the white population feel about having to curtail festivities in 1774 to comply with the Association mandate?

New Year's: In reading the poem in the *Virginia Almanack*, would a citizen think it likely that he would be in a position to realize the wish for "Health and Wealth, good Meat, strong Beer," and indeed, the "Heart to cheer?" Are we not dealing with unsettling times ourselves as we look to 2003, wondering what the New Year holds for us? **Native Americans:** Reactions to the arrival in Williamsburg of the Shawnee hostages varied based on the origin of the beholder. Local citizens responded with fear and disdain at the sight of a "cruel and insidious Enemy." British traveler Nicholas Cresswell, however, found their appearance grotesque not because of their physical traits, which he speaks of in admiration, but in the attempt to mix white man's clothing with their own traditional garb. Some saw the enemy while others saw the man. What parallels can we draw in our reactions to events in our own century?

Boston Tea Party: News of the event reached Williamsburg on January 6, 1774. As there would be no immediate impact, people just went on with their lives. How long would it take for England to hear about it and then to respond? If it had happened in our century, how long a time lag would there be?

Please let us know about other topics you have been able to weave into your interpretation as well as any other comments and suggestions you may have for our next issue.

All of us at the Department of Interpretive Training wish all of you a joyous holiday season and a happy, healthy New Year!

Becoming AMERICANS TODAY is a publication of the Department of Interpretive Training

Editors:

Margot Créviaux-Gevertz
Anne Willis

Contributors:

Bob Doares, Carl Lounsbury
Kevin Kelly, Rose McAphee
Nancy Milton, Lou Powers,
Linda Rowe, Phil Shultz,
Lorena Walsh

Production:

Department of Print
Production Services

© 2002 The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
All rights reserved. All images are property of
The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, unless
otherwise noted.