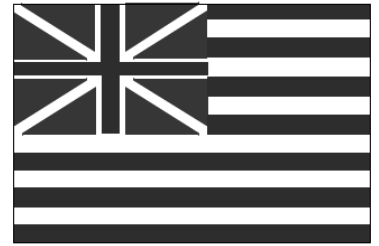




# THE RAPPAHANNOCK GAZETTE



*Newsletter of the Rappahannock Colonial Heritage Society, Inc.*

*Volume 4 Number 1*

*January/February 2001*



## VIRGINIA MILITIA FROM EARLIEST TIMES TO THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

(Based on Militia Treatises, James B. Whisker. <http://www.constitution.org/jw/jbwhisker.htm>)

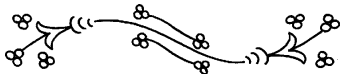
**Condensed by Skip Nolan**

All of the American colonies early formed militia units for the protection of their colonies. There were varying opinions among the settlers, some believing that in order to maintain an independence and separation from the Mother Country they must provide for their own defense, and others concluding from the disinterest in their welfare shown by the Crown that they must look after themselves. The history of militia goes back to ancient times in western culture. It was called posse comitatus in Anglo Saxon times, and refers to the power or force of the county. In medieval times a sheriff could summon all able bodied men, 15 years of age or older, to assist in the enforcement of the peace and the pursuit and apprehension of felons. The ages of compulsory service in the colonies was universally all men between the ages of 16 and 60. The colony of Massachusetts even organized boys between the ages of 10 and 15 into groups for training in arms so that they might be prepared to enter into the active militia at 16.

In 1606 the English King provided a charter to the Virginia Company of London. It required the civil authority to recruit and train a militia and other preparations for defense to “encounter, repulse, and resist” all of the king’s and the colony’s enemies, suppress insurrection and treason, and to enforce the law.” The Virginia Charter of 1612 required the government to provide the citizenry with “Armour, Weapons, Ordinance, munition, Powder (and) Shot” for its defense. The history of early Virginia is a continuing record of violence and troubles.

con’t on page 8

*The purpose of the Rappahannock Colonial Heritage Society is to bring together persons interested in preserving & perpetuating the heritage and culture of the colonial era in & around the Rappahannock River Valley of Virginia; to conduct historical research of persons, places & events relating to the Rappahannock River Valley in Colonial times, and to organize activities related to the Colonial era in an effort to educate the public about the way of life of our forebears in this area.*



### **2001 RCHS OFFICERS**

- President:** Diane Nolan  
*Diane344nolan@aol.com*
- Vice-President:** Al Piercey  
*pierceyunderthehill@yahoo.com*
- Secretary:** Trip Wiggins  
*TripWig@aol.com*
- Treasurer:** Myra Wiggins  
*MyraWig@aol.com*



### **THE PRESIDENT'S PEN**



#### **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

We are only two weeks into the new year and already our calendar is full of exciting events and activities.

The dancers are looking forward to attending a country dance workshop to be held in Williamsburg this month. This will help us to perfect our skills and also prepare us for the upcoming Cherries Jubilee to be held in Dumfries in February and the George Washington Ball in Williamsburg in March.

March will also offer us an opportunity to learn more about period attire as several of our members plan to attend the Historic Fashions Forum. The forum will offer programs on important subjects such as fabrics, ladies gowns, men's waistcoats, standards of appearance for period reenactments, and pattern making.

The Society continues to receive invitations to schools for talks on 18th century living. It is fun to dress up and talk to children about how their ancestors lived during that period in the Rappahannock area. Our next big opportunity to demonstrate colonial life will be the James Monroe Block Party to be held on April 28th. This is a celebration of Monroe's birthday, his Scottish Heritage and the colonial era in which he lived and practiced law in Fredericksburg.

Come learn with us and join in the fun as we share this wonderful history with others.

*Diane*

## **COLONIAL FREDERICKSBURG FACTS**



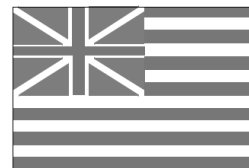
**1726**-Jael Johnson operates a ferry across Rappahannock River (vicinity of Blue-Gray Parkway Bridge). Ran til the 1750's

**Feb 1749**-Spotsylvania Co. court Justices appointed: Fielding Lewis, Benjamin Grymes John Spotswood (son of former Governor) and Charles Dick. The first three were already in the "gentry", and Charles Dick now entered it and became a gentleman.

**April 1754**-Charles Dick appointed a commissary for the VA regiments. Builds a warehouse at the corner of Sophia and William St.



### **AMERICAN HISTORY TIDBITS**



**1752**-Copperplate printing on textile was developed in England.

**May 9, 1754**-The Pennsylvania Gazette published America's first newspaper cartoon, a picture of a snake cut into sections, each representing a colony, and the caption "Join or Die."

**1755**-An organ was installed at Bruton Parish Church; Peter Pelham became the first organist.

**April 9, 1758**-Noted Welsh poet Goronwy Owen became master of the Grammar School at William and Mary.

**1762**-Josiah Wedgwood perfected cream-colored earthenware and presented a service to Queen Charlotte, who allowed him to call it "Queen's Ware."

**October 26, 1768**-Norborne Berkeley, baron de Botetourt arrived in Williamsburg and was met with great celebrating by citizens. He was Virginia's first full governor in residence in nearly 60 years. In office, Botetourt proved himself to be both a diplomatic and a trendsetting governor.

**April 7, 1773**-England ordered all colonial governors to cease granting lands except to veterans of the French and Indian War. In Virginia, Dunmore gave this order the most liberal interpretation possible and included colonial troops as well as regular British Army soldiers.

## UPCOMING EVENTS



**Now through Feb 28, 2001 - Shipbuilding in Colonial Virginia.** Nine-month exhibition traces the shipbuilding industry from the colony's earliest days through the Revolution. Examples of tools used in design & construction exhibited along with paintings, prints, maps etc. **Yorktown Victory Center**

**Jan 2-Feb. 28, 2001 - Winter in Colonial Virginia.** At **Jamestown Settlement**, learn how English settlers and Powhatan Indians adapted to life in close quarters and survived on a limited food supply. At **Yorktown Victory Center**, discover ways Rev. War soldiers passed the time by making gunpowder cartridges and training for battle while Virginia farmers worked to repair tools and live off stockpiled goods in the 18th century.

**Jan 7, 14, 21, 28 - Winter on the Plantation. Gunston Hall.** Take a seasonal guided tour, listen to winter tales, observe costumed characters at work, and participate in craft activities and games. 1-4pm

**Jan. 17-20 - Third Annual Textile Art Studies at Colonial Williamsburg.** For information call 1-757-220-7174 or email <dcountrymann@cwf.org>

**Jan 18-22 - First Ladies Teas. Mt. Vernon.** Visitors will enjoy tea with Martha Washington, Abigail Adams and Dolly Madison. 1:30-3:30pm. 703-780-2000

**Feb. 4, 11, 18, 28 - Black History Focus. Gunston Hall.** African-American heritage is discussed in the house and on the plantation grounds with special tours focusing on the lives of George Mason's slaves. 1-4pm

**Feb. 19 - George Washington's birthday-Federal Holiday.** Fee free. **George Washington Birthplace National Monument.**

**Feb. 22 - George Washington's birthday.** Fee free. **George Washington Birthplace National Monument.**

**March 4-6 - 18th Century Women. Colonial Williamsburg.** How did women really fare during the 1700's? What does recent research tell us about their lives? What was it like to be a woman living in the 18th century. Join us to consider these and other questions you have always wanted to ask about 18th century women. Williamsburg Institute program.

**March 17 - James Madison 250th Birthday Celebration. King George Historical Society.** 663-2664 or 775-2771

**March 17-18, - Military Through the Ages. Jamestown Settlement.** Re-enactment groups depicting soldiers and military encounters throughout history.

**March 25-27 - The Power of the Pocketbook: Consumerism in Colonial Virginia.** Join Colonial Williamsburg's curators, conservators, historians and tradesmen as they discuss the fashions, foods, decorative arts and architecture that represent the 18th century consumer revolution. Williamsburg Institute program.

**March 31 - Advanced Hearth Cooking Class. Gunston Hall.** Experience the intricacies of 18th century open-hearth cooking in Gunston Hall's own kitchen. 10:30am-4:30pm Call 703-227-2231 to register. \$55

**April 26-29 - Fort Frederick Market Fair. Ft. Frederick State Park**

**April 28 - Scottish Block Party and Colonial Children's Festival. James Monroe Museum.** 908 Charles St. Fredericksburg.

**April 28 - Tavern Night. Historic Port Royal.** 804-742-5036 or 804-742-5406.

**May 19 - Old Port Royal School Day. Historic Port Royal.** 804-742-5036 or 804-742-5406.

### WEB SITES FOR ABOVE EVENTS:

George Washington Birthplace National Monument  
[www.nps.gov/gewa](http://www.nps.gov/gewa)

Montpelier  
[www.montpelier.org](http://www.montpelier.org)

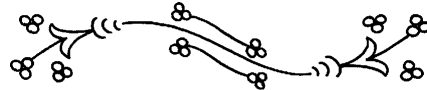
Yorktown/Jamestown  
[www.nps.gov/colo](http://www.nps.gov/colo)

Jamestown Settlement  
[www.historyisfun.org](http://www.historyisfun.org)

Colonial Williamsburg Foundation  
[www.history.org](http://www.history.org)

Gunston Hall  
[www.gunstonhall.org/events](http://www.gunstonhall.org/events)

Fort Frederick  
[www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/fortfrederick.html](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/fortfrederick.html)



## RAPPAHANNOCK COLONIAL HERITAGE SOCIETY DANCERS



We are looking for people who will be dedicated to coming to rehearsal, getting the proper attire together and be available when we have a commitment to do a demonstration. This will be a team striving to develop a level of expertise in this type of dance over time. For anyone who wants to be on the demo team, contact Elaine Sturgeon, coordinator 540-785-2168 or Diane Nolan 540-373-7651. Upcoming demonstrations are:

**Feb 10 - Cherrie Jubilee - Historic Dumfries**

### RCHS ACTIVITIES

In addition to the dancers the group has several other activities lined up in the near future. Come join us for some fun:

**Jan. 20, 2001- Country Dance Workshop. Williamsburg**

**Feb. 10, 2001 - Salem Church Library. Kids event. We have been asked to have a program geared for kids**

**Mar. 3, 2001 - George Washington Ball in Williamsburg.**  
**Mar. 8-10 - Details Details. Historic Fashion Forum, Clothing Symposium. Fredericksburg**  
[www.historicfashionsforum.com](http://www.historicfashionsforum.com)

**April 22 - Covered dish evening at Donna & Hans Wauer's. More info later**

**April 28 - Scottish Block Party and Colonial Children's Festival**

**April 28 - Historic Port Royal Tavern Night**  
**May - Colonial Tea. Ferry Farm. Date TBA**

## NOTABLE COLONIAL PERSONS



### Benjamin Harrison “The Signer”

by Trip Wiggins

This month we meet another Virginia signer of the Declaration of Independence, Mr. Benjamin Harrison – a man who spent nearly all of his adult life in service to his county, state, and nation.

He was the 5<sup>th</sup> Benjamin in a direct line of Harrisons. He was known as “The Signer” to differentiate him from all the others. Benjamin made his appearance in the world on April 5, 1726 in Charles City county, Virginia, at the family mansion “Berkeley,” probably pronounced as “Barclay” as was recorded by Thomas Jefferson. He was the son of a wealthy planter and the grandson of “King” Carter. This made him a cousin of another signer, Carter Braxton.

He began his studies at William and Mary but was forced to leave to take over the family plantation following his father’s death. He took a strong interest in politics (as his father before him) and won his seat in the House of Burgesses in 1749 at the age of 23. By 1773 he was a senior member of the legislature and was selected as one of the original members of the eleven-man pre-revolutionary Virginia Committee of Correspondence. With war eminent he was elected as one of our original delegates to the Continental Congress in 1774 (along with Peyton Randolph, Richard Henry Lee, George Washington, Edmund Pendleton, Patrick Henry, and Richard Bland) where he served until 1778.

He was a robust champion of colonial rights, but not to the extent of fellow delegate Patrick Henry. Never-the-less he stated that he would go to Philadelphia on foot if necessary. (Remember, in those days the gentry never went anywhere on foot – so this was a declaration of his loyalty to the cause.) In Congress he was a strong local patriot and was not keen on the gentlemen from New England. Perhaps that is why John Adams called him an ‘indolent, luxurious, heavy gentleman’ who Adams considered useless in Congress. He played key roles in the formation of our government serving as chairman of the Committee of the Whole and the head of the Board of War. He presided over the debate that led to the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. When he signed it, he joked that his weight of more than 200 lbs insured him a quick death if the British hanged him!

During the war Berkeley was plundered by British forces under the command of Benedict Arnold and Harrison was reduced to near poverty. He left the Congress in 1778 and returned to Virginia where he returned to the legislature as Speaker of the House of Delegates for three years. In 1781 he was elected Governor and served three years. In 1783 the Assembly passed legislation to enforce agreements made by

masters that slaves who had served in the armed forces in their stead would be given freedom at the end of hostilities. As the war was winding down the masters sought to recover their lost slaves. Gov. Harrison was indignant at this violation of the ‘common principles of justice and humanity’ and took the Assembly to task which then decreed that each slave who had served as a substitute was henceforth fully and completely emancipated!

Leaving the Governorship in 1784 he returned to his seat as Speaker of the House. In the state convention over the U.S. Constitution he urged the inclusion of a Bill of Rights to be added before adoption rather than after. He continued in his Speaker position until his death at Berkeley on April 24, 1791 at the age of 65.

He was married to Elizabeth Bassett and the couple had 7 children who survived infancy. One son, William Henry Harrison, became President of the United States as did William’s grandson, Benjamin Harrison.



## WREATH MAKING A HUGE SUCCESS!!

Many thanks to those of you who turned out to help with our annual wreathmaking fundraiser. This year was a huge success. Our thanks also to The American History Company for the use of the corner by their store. Allan and Pat have been so very supportive of all our efforts and we really appreciate it. Our dollar amount was \$745. Last year’s total was \$411. To those of you who couldn’t make it, you really missed a good time. We set up our tables, interacted with the public, and had a wonderful lunch. The weather turned out beautiful, the people in town were wonderful and very patient when told that there was a waiting list and asked would they come back to pick up their wreath. All in all---it was a good day. Plans are already underway for making this year’s event even better. Make your plans now to join us. It will be the first Saturday in December. Mark your calendars now. If you don’t have period clothes, we have a lending closet.

## SUGAR'S ADVENTURES

Written by John Hardia as dictated by Sugar the Parrott

### SUGAR AND THE MAN THAT CRIED



I know it kind of cold outside because my master reached for his heavy coat but I hope he takes me with him anyway. Just to be sure he notices me I ring my bell over and over. Oh good he is taking me!

We walked up the street from my house and it is pretty cold. I think I get to go walking with him a lot less when it is cold. I hope it warms up soon! As we walk along I see a lot of my friends and several times we stop and talk to some of my old friends and they pay a lot of attention to me. One of them gave me something sweet to eat. After a while we get to a corner where a lot of people are gathered around a stone taller than me with a guy standing next to it. Then two men walk up to the stone and one of them took his shirt off and his skin was blacker than my feet are. He was shaking a lot because of the cold and he didn't have a shirt or feathers to keep him warm. Then the black man got up on the stone and several people walked up to him and went around him and looked at him and asked to see his teeth. Then the man standing next to the stone started singing a song. After a while he stopped singing and the black man put his shirt on and went away with another man.

Then two other men walked up to the block and the black man started yelling at the other man but the other man pulled the black man's shirt off and made him stand up on the block. The black man was shaking partly from the cold and partly because he was angry. People walked up to the black man and looked at him and poked him with a stick. Then the singing man started his song again and after the song was over the black man started crying and a different man that I have never seen before came up and tried to grab the black man but the black man tried to get away. Someone beat the black man with a stick and then put a piece of iron on his hands. The black man cried and cried. Then we left and a lot of other people left too.

*(Sugar is a parrot living with his master, John. John and Sugar reside on Water Street in 1790 Virginia. John is a 'factor', an import/export agent that arranges for purchases and sales between the newly independent colonies and England. He visits the waterfront docks daily.)*



## CALL OUT THE MILITIA!

Mike Caras

All able bodied men over the age of 16 are requested to consider performing their duty to either the Crown or Liberty (depending on the time period you choose) with a new organization starting up in the Fredericksburg area....

### **THE FREDERICKSBURG INDEPENDENT COMPANY OF MILITIA AND 3<sup>RD</sup> VIRGINIA REGIMENT**

....are looking for volunteers, men and women, who would like to experience our Colonial heritage by exhibiting this aspect of our common defense. If you are skilled in other aspects of Colonial society and want to expand your familiarity of the period, you are most welcome to join us and share your experience. If you are new to re-enacting the colonial period or new to re-enacting, period, please consider us! The core of this organization is made up of "refugees" from other time periods as well as those that are completely new to the hobby.

#### **What We Are About**

We want to recreate the militia as it would appear in the Rappahannock valley during the 18th century. We narrow the period from 1750-1790, thus covering the French & Indian War as well as the War of Independence. We are a family friendly unit that encourages women and children to participate as it would have been in colonial times.

We strive for accuracy but realize that in order to be accurate we all must give it effort and TIME. Like any participant of a hobby we are committed to learning about it, doing it well, AND HAVING FUN!

Even though we are attempting to recreate the 3<sup>rd</sup> Virginia Regiment, we are concentrating on the militia aspect of our unit FIRST! Don't be threatened by the idea of purchasing a "regimental," all you need is a traditional civilian persona or a desire to put one together.

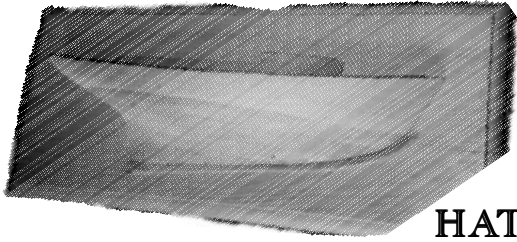
#### **Our Plan For The Militia**

Many of us are members of other units where we participate in other events and learn from those experienced in this hobby. We have participated in events at Williamsburg, "drilled" with the resident unit at Fort Frederick, and done numerous living history events in Virginia and Maryland. We have found that there is an interest in the colonial period in the local area, but that there are few units close by that provide our niche. We are going to expand our presence by calling attention to the rich colonial history that is so abundant in our own backyard.

#### **To Place Your Mark**

Contact Mike Caras at (540) 786-6122 or email him at <MLCaras@cs.com>. We look forward to hearing from you and know that you will do your duty!





## HATTIE by Al Piercey

This is about a half hull model of a fishing boat called Hattie which is of a type called "friendship" sloop. I sometimes wondered about the people who came up with the name friendship to describe a type of boat. Were they always smiling and dancing around? It turns out that the name of the town in Maine where this type developed is Friendship so I guess the whole town was smiling and dancing around.

In Maine every coastal town is involved in fishing and boat building and a "type" is developed for a specific set of needs. It is almost certain that the original friendship took form as a half hull model and went through a scrutiny by its potential builders with each of them picking at some points and pushing others depending on their own experience and sense of beauty. Friendship sloops were typically around 30 feet long so they needed to go farther out than the immediate coast where you could fish with a 16 foot dory and yet they were not equipped with sleeping accommodations for the crew so they could not compete with the banks schooners that would spend the whole fishing season away from home.

You can bet that in the vicinity of the town of Friendship there was a very good fishing ground between one and three hours from their harbor that they could comfortably get to and back in one day. It was no farther than this though, because there was not a lot of concern with speed which was sacrificed for more carrying capacity. This fishing ground was not protected by islands, however, so the front end of the boat was generous with a lot of flair to deal with rough water and still keep the crew dry. The latter part of the boat was built close to the water to make the job of fishing easier.

Once the shape of the hull was agreed upon, the half hull was used to plan the full sized boat through a process called lofting which is still confusing to me and I suspect involved not a little magic.

## JENNY'S JOURNAL

Jenny Washington

Dec 6, 17 - -

We have just returned from Gunston Hall, Mr. George Mason's home. We were invited to his house to spend the day and to participate in his daughter's wedding. Momma and Papa visited often with the Masons at Gunston Hall, when Papa was the overseer for Uncle George. Bushrod said that it would be nothing but people mingling around. But it truly was not!

We were staying at Aunt Martha's and Uncle George's. Uncle George had his barge take us downriver. He is rather proud of it - the men say it is "yar". It must be as we got there rather earlier than Papa expected. Mr. Mason sent his carriages down to his landing to fetch us to the house. Since we arrived about mid-day we wore our good day gowns. Momma said we would change into our good dress gowns shortly before the wedding.

Not long after we arrived, Millie Posey and her dear family arrived. Cousin Patsy was so busy playing the piano and conversing with the ladies that she took no notice of her dear friend. Millie and I both love horses so we went out to the stables and looked at all the horses that Mr. Mason had.

When the time for the wedding finally drew near, Momma and I went above stairs with the rest of the ladies and changed into our gowns.

While we were changing, Mrs. Mason informed us that there was a servant wedding going on. Mr. Mason was allowing these servants to marry in celebration of his daughter's own marriage. Momma said that we might hear a lot of laughing and screaming, hooting and hollering, but not to pay any attention to it. After we had gotten dressed, we went outside and watched some of the wedding and thought at times 'twas rather amusing. Especially how they jumped the broom! The servants danced and shouted, hollered and hooted just like Momma said.

Mistress Mason's wedding 'twas beautiful and quiet. The Rector of Truro Parish had the bride and groom join him on the steps of the large staircase, while the bride's parents stood nearby, everyone else stood around the passage. While Capt. Posey was standing, listening to the ceremony, the candle wax dripped onto his wig. Millie

and I tried to hide our giggles but somehow Millie's came out more of a snort and that really started us to giggling! 'Tis a strange coincidence that one of Mr. Mason's daughters reminded me greatly of my Aunt Betty Lewis. And the groom very much resembled Dr. Payne of Alexandria!

Once we finally calmed down and the wedding was over, the candle dripping had made a sort of pile on Capt. Posey's head and everyone was starting to notice! The food prepared for the guests was a delight, as Momma said. It seemed as though the dancing would go on for days.

Finally, we bid everyone farewell, got in the carriage and left to get on the barge. The trip back upriver to Mount Vernon in the moonlight was lovely. Lanterns were lit on deck, and the cressets were burning at Uncle George's landing to welcome us. And today we just got home and now I am very tired.

Momma just said that we now must go to bed!

I bid thee farewell until the next day I may write,

Your faithful servant

Jenny Washington



Dear Madame Fitzefferie,

We were much dismayed that you was unable to join us at Mrs. Graham's for Tea. We had hoped to hear about the latest Minuets and Cotillions. As ever Mrs. Graham was a warm and gracious Hostess. There was a prodigious amount of foods and her Teas was of the finest quality. There seems to be a certain advantage to have a Ships Captain for a husband. The room was quite lovely. She had chose to attend the fire herself as she was training a new servant and she shared

with us that earlier in the day she had taken her to task for a problem with some of the Refreshment preparations. Mrs. Graham did say that she was quite biddable and she was certain that she could train her to the appropriate tasks and that she had a most light Hand with Pastries.

Mrs. Washington was there with her lovely Mother and daughter Jenny. We had not saw them for some time so it was quite nice that they were able to attend. Mrs. Washington mentioned that her Mother had presented her with a beautiful Pewter Teapot and she was quite anxious to put it to use. I hope this may mean an invitation to her Home for Tea in the Future. I know this may sound forward but the life of an unmarried woman can lack a certain amount of vivacity. I do love abiding with Mother and my good Brother and his Family but these instances afford me such Pleasure I marvel that the Good Lord does not chastise me for it. I am sure you would have known the other ladies in attendance since we have all had the good Fortune to number ourselves as your Students of dance at some point in time. Mrs. Graham as ever the Spirit of Hospitality had invited a new neighbor Mrs. Saundra Stoler who has just moved to our fair City. We were all quite taken with her. She seems a gentle soul with much kindness in her manner. We all admired Mrs. Graham's new apron. she said that Mr. Graham had presented it to her on his last voyage home. It is a lovely fine white mull with the most exquisite sprig'd embroidery a la mode.

It was a very fine afternoon. In my estimation while most of us are not given to frivolous gayeties we all do enjoy a well brewed pot of Tea and genteel Discourse. I am most sorry that you were not there and 'tis my hope that we may be able to meet sometime soon. May the Blessed Lord keep you safe and in good Health until then.

Yr. Humble Servant,  
Isabella Christina Buchanan  
Rollingwood House

## Virginia Militia (con't)

1610-1614	War with the Powhatan and Chickahominies
1622	Indian attack along the James River killed 347 colonists
1632	War with Powhatans
1644	War with Powhatans
1645	War with Mansimums
1675-1676	War with the Senecas, Susquehannocs, and Piscataways
1676	Bacon's Rebellion, slaughter of the Occaneechee and capture of Jamestown
1711-1712	War with Tuscarora
1702-1713	Queen Ann's War
1739	War of Jenkin's Ear
1742	Clashes on frontier with Indians accompanied by Frenchmen
1743	French treaty with Spain and attack on Nova Scotia
1750's	Continuing clashes on frontier with French and Indians
1754-1763	French and Indian War
1774	War with Shawnees and Ottawa.
1775	Governor Dunmore seizes the gunpowder at Williamsburg.

During the first fifteen years of Virginia's existence as many as 10,000 settlers and their slaves had come to the colony, but in 1622 only about 2200 remained. Many died and others returned to England. The legislature in 1624 provided that militiamen wounded or otherwise injured while in the public service would receive public support and the families of those killed while in service would be supported at the public expense. When a militiaman was impressed into duty his neighbors were required to spend one day a week assisting with his duties and chores at home. The Virginia Company failed in 1624 shortly after the militia law was passed and the colony hereafter would be under the Crown. Defense remained a local obligation. All able-bodied males between 16 and 60 years of age, excepting older veterans and certain newcomers, were enrolled in the militia. Those not serving in the militia were taxed for its support and were required to offer assistance on the farms of those who were in actual militia service. Gentlemen were to be placed in proper ranks, so that there was no social leveling and they were not reduced to serving as common soldiers. Regular drill was mandated by law.

In 1632 the Virginia House of Burgesses ordered that every physically fit free white male bring his gun to church services so that, immediately following Sunday service, he might join his neighbors in exercising with it.

In April, 1643, the Northampton County Court ordered that "no person or persons whatsoever within the County of Northampton except those of the commission, shall from henceforth travel from house to house within said county without a sufficient fixed gun with powder and shot." Penalty for non-compliance was 100 pounds of tobacco, with the possibility of imprisonment for repeated failures to carry a gun. Following this local legislation, the Virginia legislature enacted

a similar law. That law required that "every family shall bring with them to Church on Sundays, one fixed and serviceable gun...under penalty of ten pounds of tobacco." White male servants who were required otherwise to bear arms were to receive guns from their masters. If they failed to carry their guns to church they were subject to the penalty of "twenty lashes, well laid on."

In 1658 the Virginia House of Burgesses created a rudimentary militia act which required that "every man able to beare armes have in his house a fitt gunn, two pounds of powder and eight pound of shott at least which are to be provided by every man for his family before the last of March next, and whosoever shall faile of making such provision to be fined fiftie pounds of tobacco to bee laid out by the county courts for a common stock of amunition for the for the county."

In 1679 the Assembly decided to construct four garrison-houses on the headwaters of the four great rivers, Potomac, Rappahannock, Mattapony, and James, "and that every 40 tithables within this colony be assessed and be obliged to fitt out and sett forth one able and sufficient man and horse with furniture well and completely armed with a case of good pistols, carbine or short gunn, and a sword." The settlers on the Rappahanock were to have "in readiness upon all occasions, at the beat of drum, fifty able men well armed." Additionally, two hundred men were to be counted as reserves, to be called when needed. Major Lawrence Smith was to organize the militia and for this service was to receive 14,000 acres of land.

In 1680 Virginia reconsidered its militia policy. Few poor men could realistically afford to buy their firearms and other militia supplies so the colony undertook to finance many expenses for individual militiamen. The government could not afford to both maintain the militia and provide static fortifications. By recruiting only among gentlemen the colony was freed from having to make contributions to the support of the militiamen. No formal law or edict disarmed the poor. They were merely relegated to a position as inactive militia. Disarmament occurred by attrition. No one inspected arms or mustered the great militia and the poor neglected to maintain and update their arms.

In April, 1684 Charles II approved a major change in the colony's militia law. The law is significant in several ways. It decreed the right, as well as obligation, of colonists to own their own weapons; and it protected the arms owned by the subjects from government confiscation.

Those exempted from militia service in the 1690's included physicians, surgeons, readers, clerks, ferrymen and persons of color. By effectively disarming the poorer classes the authorities had less cause to worry about a popular uprising.

One of the unique functions of the militia in the late seventeenth, and early eighteenth, centuries was the enforcement of religious participation. The militia was charged with forcing all persons, whether religious or not, to attend services at the Church of England.

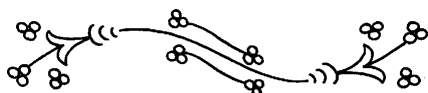
In 1710 the Assembly authorized the lieutenant-governor, as military commander of the colony, to form several bands of rangers. Each county lieutenant "shall choose out and enlist eleven able-bodied men, with horses and accouterments,



arms, and ammunition, residing as near as conveniently may to that frontier station.” The lieutenant served simultaneously as county militia commander and commandant of the rangers.

By 1737 the militia training days, especially the annual regimental muster, had become important social events in Virginia. The militia put on a public demonstration of its skills at a county fair, passing in review before those assembled and practicing the manual of arms and other drill exercises. The militia musicians played music for the entertainment of the spectators “and gave as great Satisfaction, in general, as could be possibly expected.” Refreshments, games and general socializing followed the militia’s performance. The most accomplished regimental trumpeter often displayed his skills in support of a horse race. Few events were more popular among the spectators than the culminating parade in which all militia units passed in formal review before the highest ranking militia officers and various political authorities.

In April, 1775 Lord Dunmore moved 20 kegs of gunpowder from the public magazine in Williamsburg. Patrick Henry assumed political leadership and summoned the militia. A significant body of armed men gathered at Fredericksburg. Dunmore referred to the minutemen as “shirtmen” on account of their habit of wearing buckskin of homespun shirts instead of regular uniforms. Dunmore was aware of the deadly accuracy of the rifle equipped shirtmen, having seen them in action during Dunmore’s War, just two years earlier. Moreover, at the Battle of Great Bridge, on 9 December 1775, the shirtmen killed or mortally wounded 62 British troops with their deadly rifle fire, while losing no men of their own.



## 250th Anniversary of Aquia Church



Founded in 1781, Aquia Church in Stafford will celebrate its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary beginning in February. The congregation, which has families who have been members for 16 generations, has planned a series of events to honor and celebrate the church’s past, present and future. The first of these events will take place on February 11 at 4 pm when Jerrilynn Eby, author of the book *They Called Stafford Home*, will present a lecture on the history of Aquia Church.

Aquia Episcopal Church was established in Stafford County sometime before 1680. Although it is unknown when the first church building was erected, construction of the current building began in 1751. A registered national historic landmark, the church is noted for being built of bricks made with native Aquia Creek sandstone. Despite being at the crossroads of three of America’s early wars, the interior of Aquia Church still contains some of the best-preserved examples of 18<sup>th</sup> century woodwork, including a unique triple-tiered pulpit. The interior walls also are etched with the graffiti of various Civil War regiments, both Yankee and Confederate. The Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission notes, “As it stands today, Aquia Church is one of the most elaborate, as well as one of the more preserved of Virginia’s colonial churches. It ranks as one of the more important examples of colonial ecclesiastical architecture in the nation. Its rich interior appointments are among the finest in the state...”

The Eby lecture is free, as are the majority of the anniversary events. However, donations are accepted and any proceeds will benefit Aquia Church’s Anniversary Outreach: the Stafford County Head Start Program and the building of its new playground. Upcoming events include a lecture on colonial church architecture by Dr. Lounsbury of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, a concert by the Fredericksburg Chamber chorale, a birthday ball and silent auction, evensong service, and church tours. The celebration will culminate with a Rededication Service on the occasion of the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Aquia Episcopal Church on June 3, 2001. For more information about any of Aquia’s anniversary events, call 1-540-659-4007

Schedule of events from internet

[www.aquiachurch.com/jubileel.html](http://www.aquiachurch.com/jubileel.html)

**History series - Sun, Feb 11, 4pm.** The History of Aquia Church, Jerrilynn Eby.

**Sunday Mar 18, 4pm.** Colonial Church Architecture by Dr. Carl L. Lounsbury, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

**Concert - Sun, April 29, 4pm.** A program of Colonial music presented by Fredericksburg Chamber Chorale. Tickets will be sold. Proceeds to 250th Birthday Outreach

**Birthday Ball - Fri May 18, 6:30-11pm.** An evening of dinner and dancing. Also silent auction. Riverside Center. Tickets will be sold. Proceeds to 250th Birthday Outreach

Also Church tours (Mar 10, 25, April 7, 22 [candlelight tour], May 5, and May 20-see website for times or call number above), Evensong and Rededication.

## MEETING RECAP

The January meeting is our annual meeting. At this meeting we elect our officers for the upcoming year. The slate of officers presented by the nominating committee consisted of the current officers and was passed unanimously.

We discussed past activities—Christmas Open House at Dumfries, Wreath making day and a few others. It has been a very busy year. We discussed the possibility of having a fiddler to accompany the dancers at some events and will look into that further. We decided not to have an encampment as a group at the Colonial Farm but several people indicated they would like to attend one this year. It was decided to have a new member packet sent to all new members. Myra will take care of this. Myra and Tina have been checking out ways to keep RCHS' name in the public eye via newspapers and web sites. We also decided to video/audio tape the programs and make those available for loan to members who were unable to attend the meeting.



# HISTORIC FASHIONS FORUM

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Anyone who received a brochure at dance class please note:

### IMPORTANT MESSAGE!

There was an error on our registration form relating to Friday's schedule which has been corrected on the website (1/10/2001). However, those of you who received a brochure in the mail should note the changes.

*Friday should read:*

*10:00- 12:30 Waistcoats Up Close*

*1:30- 4:00 Textiles for Colonial Clothing*

We apologize for any confusion and inconvenience this may have caused!

## FUTURE MEETINGS

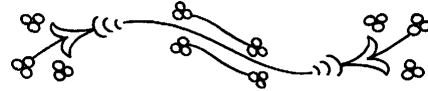
As topics for the new year's meeting are decided on, I will update this. The dates for the next few meetings are:

February 6

March 6

April 3

May 1



## NEWSLETTER GUIDELINES

In order to produce a good newsletter, accurate and in a timely manner, please try to use these guidelines.

1. Our time period and location is 18th Century Virginia with our area of concentration Fredericksburg and the Rappahannock River Valley. The Rappahannock River Valley covers from the ford of the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers down to the Chesapeake Bay. Our particular interests lie in the areas of Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania, Stafford, King George, and Caroline counties.
2. Any member may, and is **encouraged to**, submit article(s) for publication. The newsletter is distributed to and read by people with varying degrees of expertise. Some of us are not as well versed on Colonial life and times as others, so in order to be as accurate as possible, please check your facts prior to submitting an article.
3. Sources/references must be given for factual information. This enables the reader to go to the original source for more information, gives credit to the source, and also lets the editor of the newsletter off the hook if the information is challenged. This includes information from the internet. If you write to someone for permission to reprint and receive it, I would appreciate a copy for my files.
4. Opinions of the writer must be clearly identified as such.
5. The newsletter is published every other month in January, March, May, July, September, and November. My target date to have the newsletter published is the 15th of those months. In order to do that I will need any submissions by the 8th of the month. You may mail to the PO Box, or email me at <MyraWig@aol.com>.
6. The editor has the final say on content, format and deadlines. I try to keep the newsletter to 12 pages for postage. If I receive several articles and we also have a good bit of news to go into the newsletter, it may be necessary for me to edit, publish as a two part article or use it in the following month's publication.
7. If you have an idea for an article but don't have the time, resources, etc. to write it yourself, we have someone who is willing to do the research and write the article.

The RCHS Newsletter is published bi-monthly in January, March, May, July, September, & November. All members receive a copy. Membership is \$10.00 per year for individuals, \$15.00 per year for families. Initial dues are pro-rated quarterly. **RCHS does not maintain an office.** All correspondence should be addressed to RCHS at P.O. Box 7823, Fredericksburg, VA 22404-7823. Items for the newsletter should be addressed to the Editor c/o RCHS or e-mailed to [MyraWig@aol.com](mailto:MyraWig@aol.com).

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