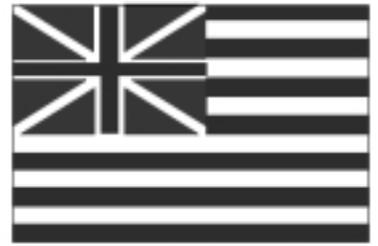




THE RAPPAHANNOCK GAZETTE



Newsletter of the Rappahannock Colonial Heritage Society, Inc.

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Fall 2002



How much do I owe you? - Money in Colonial Virginia

by Trip Wiggins

Shop in any store or restaurant and upon receipt of the bill the question is usually raised, “Cash or credit card?” When we say ‘cash’ we mean, of course, United States currency or coinage. Our colonial ancestors didn’t have it so easy.

The history of money in Virginia and the other colonies is a long and colorful story. It is also an exercise in frustration of those who lived it and those who study it. Just answering the question, “How much do I owe you?” changes from time to time and colony to colony. Why? A lot of reasons - but we’ll emphasize just a few.

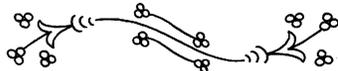
First and foremost, our colony was established to “support” (that is, provide raw materials for) the Mother country, Great Britain. We were expected to cut down trees (a dwindling resource in England), find precious metals of gold and silver (same state as the trees), iron, and other raw materials that were discovered here that had a need (value) in England. Essentially the colonies would provide England the raw materials and in exchange England furnished the colonists finished products. Additionally Great Britain furnished a market for the raw materials and protection for the colonists. The term for this is ‘mercantilism.’ With it, there was little need for hard currency (money) in the pockets of the colonists - there simply wasn’t much for them to buy.

Add to this the fact that England had rapidly dwindling supplies of gold and silver with which to mint money - and most of the money that was minted was needed in England. So, little money actually ended up in the colonies.

(coins available at Jas Townsend & Son
picture from their website)

con’t on page 4

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.



2002 RCHS OFFICERS

President: Trip Wiggins
Trip Wig@cox.net

Vice-President:

Secretary: Catherine Bell
scot.forlife@verizon.net

Treasurer: Al Piercey
pierceyunderthehill@yahoo.com

THE PRESIDENT'S PEN



Hello RCHS!

2002 has been an active year, and 2003 will be even more so! Looking back, it's amazing all of the things we have been involved with. Schools, George Washington's birthday, Monroe Block Party, Dumfries' Colonial Day Camp, the most magnificent tea, our first "Open House," dancing our toes off – what a year. Even more so, our membership continues to grow – both on the society side and on the dance side. This year we ventured over to Mary Washington College, and lo we have 4 new dancers from the History and Historic Preservation departments! But the year isn't quite over. We still have our annual wreath event, our annual dinner, Dumfries Christmas program and the Candlelight Tour – both dancing and at the newly-renovated Fielding Lewis store. Without ALL of you, we couldn't have done it. Thank you ever so much!

What's in store for 2003? Besides much of the same, there is also the 275th year-long birthday celebration for Fredericksburg. We have volunteered to assist in three large events. First the Colonial Market Faire in March, the Cemetery walking tour in October, and an event that many have been hoping for for a long time – a Colonial Ball in November (co-hosted with the Fredericksburg Museum). Lots of fun coming up.

Lastly, to our returning members and our new found friends, thank you for a great year by contributing so much of your time and energy. Here's to 2003 and what we will collectively do in 2003. Finally, Happy Holidays to all!

Remember, since we have our dinner in December, we will not be having a regular business meeting in December. We have plenty of other things going on to keep you busy!

RAPPAHANNOCK COLONIAL HERITAGE SOCIETY DANCERS



We are looking for people who will be dedicated to coming to rehearsals, 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 Tina Buchanan 898-2113. We rehearse at St. George's Episcopal Church, 905 Princess Anne St. Our next rehearsals are:

November 22
 December 13
 January 10 & 24

Upcoming Demonstrations

Dec. 14 - 7:30pm - Candlelight Tour-1300 Caroline St
 Dec. 14 - 5-6:30pm - Dumfries Christmas Program

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:

- Nov. 30 - 10a-2p - Wreath making demonstrations - The Christmas Barn - 718 Sophia Street
- Dec 5 & 6 - Premaking wreaths at the Nolan's home - time TBA
- Dec. 7 - Wreath making / sales - next to Spanky's Restaurant on Caroline Street
- Feb 22, 2003 - George Washington Birthday Celebration - Ferry Farm

TIME TO PAY YOUR 2003 DUES

Please take just a moment to send in your dues for next year. Individual dues are \$10.00 and family dues are \$15. A family is defined in our bylaws as "consist of two or more related persons, or members of the same household." We have a lot of fun activities coming up next year and don't want you to miss out on them! This is the 275th anniversary of the signing of the charter for Fredericksburg & Falmouth and we are involved in a lot of things coming up. Due to liability concerns of the corporation, *your membership must be current* in order to participate in any events the group is asked to do. The address to mail to is PO Box 7823, Fredericksburg, VA 22404-7823.



EVENTS OF INTEREST IN THE AREA

Nov 2-30 - Needlework Exhibit - Stratford Hall. For the first time ever, a spectacular needlework exhibition will be on display.

Nov 16-Dec 13 - Market Fair Shop Sale -

Claude Moore Farm. 10am-5pm. Do your holiday gift shopping at the Farm Offices while helping to support the only privately operated National park in the US.

Nov. 17 - Threshing Day - Claude Moore Farm. 1-4pm. Pick up a flail and help beat the seeds away from the stalks of wheat.

Nov. 23 - Games People Played: Genteel Entertainment of the 18th century. Gadsby's Tavern. 9:30a-4p. Gentry Workshop presented by the Living History Foundation. Dinner and Ball following.

Dec 6 & 7 - A Plantation Christmas & Holiday Buffet. Gunston Hall. 7-10pm. Step back in time to an 18th century holiday season on the plantation.

Dec 7 - Saturday Chore - Claude Moore Farm. 1-4pm. Come learn about the many contributions livestock make to the family's life.

Dec. 7-Jan 6, 2003 - Fifth Annual "Holidays at Home" Exhibit. Montpelier. Holiday decorations in the historic Mansion.

Dec 8 - Grand Illumination - Colonial Williamsburg. Welcome the Christmas season with an unforgettable display of candles, fireworks and music. Begins at 4:45pm

Dec. 8 - Wassail - Claude Moore Farm. 1-4pm. Gather in the Farm's orchard to wassail the trees with singing, dancing and chants to ensure a "howling crop" during the coming year.

Dec 8 - Christmas Tea & Holiday Tour - Gunston Hall. 1-5pm. Celebrate the holiday season with an elegant tea and special holiday tour of Gunston Hall.

Dec 14 - Christmas at Popes Creek - George Washington Birthplace National Monument. Open until 7pm, the Memorial House will be decorated for Christmas, candlelit, and filled with colonial music.

Dec 14 & 15 - Christmas Candlelight Celebration - Stratford Hall. The Great House will be decked out in traditional 18th & 19th century decorations and costumed historic figures.

Ongoing - Colonial Williamsburg - DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum. The Language of Clothing showcases Colonial Williamsburg's superb collection of antique clothing, featuring garments ranging from masterpiece court gowns to maternity wear. Discover how clothing offers clues to understanding people of the past. The objects are grouped thematically around such topics as changing style, consumerism, the definition of beauty, formal dress, the retention of out-dated styles, clothing for work, and dressing for the life cycle. Through February 16, 2004.

RULES OF CIVILITY

3d. Ne faites pas voir a' vostre compagon, ce qui luy pourroit faire mal au coeur.

Show nothing to your companion that may grieve him, since that might provoke a misunderstanding.

Annual Wreath Sale
Saturday Dec. 7, 2002
Next to Spanky's Restaurant
917 Caroline Street



Fresh Cut Mixed Greenery
10 am - 3 pm

\$15 wreath or swag

Order yours now! Advance orders ready for pickup by noon
Dec. 7

call Tina 898-2113 or Myra 371-3906 for more information

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The nominating committee has submitted the following slate of officers for 2003. Elections will take place at the annual meeting in January. Nominations will be taken from the floor providing the consent of the nominee has been obtained prior to the meeting.

President	Trip Wiggins
Vice-President	Al Piercey
Secretary	Catherine Bell
Treasurer	Myra Wiggins

<---- WEB SITES FOR LISTED EVENTS

George Washington Birthplace National Monument
www.nps.gov/gewa

Montpelier
www.montpelier.org

Gunston Hall
www.gunstonhall.org

Claude Moore Colonial Farm
www.1771.org

Stratford Hall
www.stratfordhall.org

Gadsby's Tavern
www.gadsbystavern.org

Colonial Williamsburg
www.history.org

Money (con't)

Like it or not, goods and services were available to the colonists by other colonists and there needed to be some sort of money to make these transactions. Without English hard currency what would they use? Ingenuity and trade.

In the Northeast wampum was popular in the 1600s. It originated with the native Indians and migrated to the colonists and consisted primarily of seashells.

A World of Coins

Since the Spanish had come to the “New World” over a hundred years before the English they had a strong foothold in Central and South America. They even established mints and eventually started trading with the English colonists using their hard currency - the silver Spanish milled dollar, or 8 *reale* (the famous “pieces of eight”). The *reale* was often cut into its 8 individual *reales* that were pie-shaped - each known by the colonists as a bit - which gave us the expression “2 bits” meaning a quarter of a dollar. The milled dollar would remain legal tender in the United States until 1857! Two bit pieces were also known as the *pisterene*.

The Spanish also minted a series of gold coins in the 1, 2, 4, and 8 *escudo* denominations. The *escudo* was also called the “*shield*” and equaled 16 *reales* or 2 Spanish dollars. The two-*escudo* piece was called the *pistole* and the four-*escudo* the double *pistole* or sometimes the *doubloon*. All Spanish coinage was common in colonial Virginia.

But it doesn't stop there. Also exploring and colonizing were the Dutch and the French. (Remember New York was settled by the Dutch, and New Orleans by the French.) These two also brought their hard currency with them. The Dutch used the *leeuwendaalder* (or Lion dollar) and to a lesser extent the *ducatoon* (or silver rider) and the *rijksdaalder* (rix dollar) while the French brought the *ecu*. Most of these silver ‘dollars’ were about an ounce in weight and were roughly equivalent in buying power. A rough exchange rate in English units:

Coin	British exchange rate
Lion dollar	between 4s 6d and 5s 6d (1)
<i>Ducatoon</i>	about 6s
Rix dollar	about 5s or 1 Spanish Milled dollar or 1 French <i>Ecu</i> .

There's still more. The Germans and Scandinavians, at the city level, minted coins called *thalers* in their native areas but called “Rix dollars of the Empire” by the English. (Empire refers to the loose confederation of German states known as the Holy Roman Empire.)

And don't forget the Portuguese. Where do you think Madeira comes from? They had the gold *dobras* (*Johannes and Half Johannes* – commonly called Joes and Half-Joes) and the gold *Moidores*. James Madison, while attending the College of New Jersey (Princeton), wrote home asking, “Send a few Half-Jos by Dr. Witherspoon or Colo. [Fielding] Lewis's sons if they return...”

Each year in the *Virginia Almanac* a conversion chart was printed depicting gold and silver coins of several countries and their equivalent British coinage value.

Coins of Great Britain

But the primary coinage in colonial America - scarce as it was - remained the coins of Great Britain. We'll look at them from the bottom up. We start with the copper coins. While English gold and silver was officially restricted from the colonies, this restriction was never laid on the British coppers.

The smallest is the farthing. Two farthings equal a halfpence or halfpenny. Two halfpence equals one penny. (Pence is the plural form of penny.) The farthing and halfpence were discontinued in 1754 but reintroduced in the 1770s.

While coppers were the coins in largest circulation, there was a need for silver coins as this was where the bulk of the transactions occurred. Rarely was an item or service only a farthing or halfpence; but rather in pence, shillings and crowns. The denominations minted by the Royal Mint were:

Coin	Value
Penny	1d
Twopence	2d
Threepence	3d
Fourpence	4d
Sixpence	6d
Shilling	1s or 12d
Half crown	2s 6d
Crown	5s

Although England restricted the export of its silver coinage, it's clear that some British silver found its way to the American colonies. It was brought over by settlers, British officials, merchants, soldiers and sailors - to name but a few. It was the basis of all trade and all other world coinage was valued with respect to the pound, shilling and pence.

Some British gold was traded in the colonies. It consisted of four coins - the Guinea and its various combinations. It was not widely traded here.

Coin	Value
Half Guinea	10s 6d
Guinea	21s or £1 1s
2 Guinea	42s (stopped in 1753)
5 Guinea	105s (stopped in 1753)

Missing from our lists is the British Pound (£). That's because it was not a coin at all! Rather it was British paper currency (and also not widely distributed in the colonies.) It had a value of 20s. Prices may have been specified in £/s/d but were actually paid using shillings and pence. (The *pound* [or *Sovereign*] was a minted coin until 1660 and did not resume production until 1830.)

Colonial Coinage

While Britain restricted its coinage from being exported to the colonies it did allow, on occasions, for the colonies to mint their own coins. Almost every colony minted some coins at some time - but here I'll restrict my remarks to Virginia. Although we had authority to mint coinage from the 1609 Charter for the Virginia Plantations, we chose not to get into the minting business until 1773. Sort of. The Virginia Assembly in 1773 authorized the minting of a halfpenny - at the Tower Mint in London. They were made of copper and the run of about 670,000 arrived in New York aboard the ship “Virginia” in

Money (cont)

February, 1774, but were not distributed until written royal permission was received in February, 1775. With the outbreak of the war just two months later, most of the copper coins were hoarded by Virginians until the end of the war. Although they bore the portrait of George III, they continued to be traded in Virginia well after the war.

Value of Coinage in America

If you've traveled overseas, you are constantly checking the exchange rate to see how the US dollar is doing in the local currency. Would you believe in colonial America you had to do this in each of our colonies. Really!

Since having British coins was at a premium in the colonies, most coins were accepted above their face value - and fluctuated from locale to locale. For example:

Coin	Value (in s/d)	New York	Boston	Philadelphia
Sp. milled dollar		8s	6s	7s 6d
Shilling (in halfpence)	24 1/2d	18 1/2d	15 1/2d	

The fluctuation was large and often throughout the period. Add to this the problem of counterfeits - which were numerous - and the picture gets confusing quickly. The following table is from 1759 describing the value of various coins in England, NY and Philadelphia.

A Table of Coins, as they now pass in the following Places			
	England	Philadelphia	New York
	£ s d	£ s d	£ s d
English Sixpence	0 0 6	0 0 9	0 0 9
English Crown	0 5 0	0 7 6	0 8 0
French Crown	0 5 0	0 7 6	0 8 0
Guinea	1 1 0	1 14 0	1 16 0
Spanish Pistole	0 16 0	1 7 0	1 9 0
French Pistole	0 16 0	1 6 6	1 8 0
Portuguese Moydore	1 7 0	2 3 6	2 6 0
Portuguese Johannes	3 12 0	5 15 0	6 6 0
Portuguese Half Johannes	1 16 0	2 17 6	3 3 0
Spanish Doubloon	3 6 0	5 8 0	5 16 0
Spanish Dollar	0 7 6	0 8 0	
Spanish Pisterene	0 1 4	0 1 6	

Note: Most sorts of Spanish silver are sold in London, by the Ounce and often varies, but seldom or ever exceeds 5s 5d.

These rates continued, off and on, until the mid 1770s when war inflation took hold.

If you think some of these are strange, so did a lot of our ancestors. One in particular, a Virginian, was able to persuade his new nation in the 1780s to adopt a *decimal* coinage system. Growing up in Virginia, Thomas Jefferson had to use the British system of counting money and he abhorred it. To him, an average American would be "puzzled with adding the farthings, taking out the fours and carrying them on; adding the pence, taking out the twelves and carrying them on; adding the shillings, taking out the twenties and carrying them on." Thank you, Mr. Jefferson!

Milled Coins

Have you ever noticed that many coins have an edge that is not smooth but rather a series of raised lines. This is

"reeding" created when a coin is "milled" - or goes through a press to stamp ridges on its edge. Why was it done? Simple. Many people were slicing small slivers off the edges of their unmilled silver and gold coins and melting them down. These small slivers added up to a great deal of money when you look at the colonies as a whole. Coins were getting smaller and smaller and losing their bullion content and therefore their value. To ensure they were not being cheated most merchants had a set of scales to check the weight of each silver or gold coin but a better solution had to be found. It was with milling. Then instantly a merchant could tell whether someone was shaving the coin due to its reeded edge and the practice of shaving stopped.

Paper Money (Currency)

While many colonies had had "bills of credit" or paper currency for decades, Virginia had no need for it until they were forced to during the French and Indian war in the 1750s. Why the use of paper? Hard currency (coinage) was depleted with the growing expenses of the war so "bills of credit" were issued to cover debts. They were not redeemable for gold or silver; essentially they were a promissory note that said, "This piece of paper is the equivalent of x shillings," etc. In our colony prices were often given in both pounds sterling (British hard currency) and Virginia currency (paper money). Generally Virginia currency was valued at about 80% of British hard currency it represented. We could spend an entire article on currency, but I'll stop for now except to say that in the 1770s it was widely used and accepted.

Tobacco

You can't discuss money in Virginia without mentioning its primary crop - that "yellow weed" of tobacco. Once Virginians discovered the enormous wealth in growing and selling tobacco, coinage became almost unnecessary for the day-to-day livelihood of its planters. They would ship their vast amounts of tobacco to the waiting markets in England and Scotland and in return received the goods and services they had requested. Any additional profits were usually just tracked on the books of their London and Glasgow factors who handled their accounts. Pure mercantilism. Food was raised by the planters on their self-sustaining plantations so that most of their money earned was spent on furnishings, clothes and luxuries - of course from British merchants. As long as tobacco was king, there was little need for hard currency by the planters.

In fact, throughout Virginia, most prices were listed in British pound sterling, Spanish milled dollars, and pounds (weight) of tobacco. The minister of St. George's church was paid an annual salary of 16,000 pounds of tobacco that he could use as a commodity in trade or sell through his British factor for the goods that he desired.

Even the prices for tavern food, drink and lodging were given in pounds of tobacco. Until shortly before the revolution tobacco was the gold of Virginia.

Wages and Salaries

Before we can discuss prices of goods and services, we should touch on how much people earned so to see the value of 5 items. (Did it cost a day's wages or a year's?)

Money (cont)

Alas, few records remain detailing wages. Those at the low end are left out completely, and the high-end planters are also off the list. What remains are precious few and for the middling class - journeymen, teachers, merchants - like most of us. Most of these made roughly between 25 and 300£ per year. A bit more detail shows journeymen in the 25-50£ range, teachers about 50-70£, and merchants from 50 to 300£, depending on their products, customers, and whether they were in business for themselves or worked for another. Even that can be misleading because many teachers and journeymen worked for a planter(s) and received room and board in addition to their salary. But it is a starting point from which to see how much of your income would be spent on various items.

Remember too, that many grew their own food, caught their own fish and game, and trading goods for services was common. In a word, the times were much different than we live in today and a comparison is very difficult at best.

The Prices (early 1770s)

What follows is a listing of what common items cost in the money of the day. Some prices were fixed by the local government (tavern food, drink, & lodging), some "what the market could bear."

Item	Price
Foods:	
Dozen eggs	6d
1 lb. Coffee	1s
1 lb. Bacon	6d
1 Turkey	2s
1 bushel Apples	2s
1 lb. Tea	10s
1 Chicken	6d
1 lb. Cornmeal	2d
1 lb. Chocolate	3s
1 lb. Butter	7.5d to 1/3
1 lb. Cheese	7.5d
1 bushel salt	2/6 to 4/0
Molassas (qt.)	1s
Sugar	
Brown (lb.)	3 to 7.5d
Double Refined (lb.)	11.25d to 1/6
Loaf, single refined (lb.)	1/6
Beer (qt.)	
Virginia middling	3.75d
London & Bristol	1/3
Virginia Ale	7.5d
Wine (bottle - usually qt.)	
Lisbon	4/9
Madiera	2/6 to 5/4
Claret	3/1 to 7/6
Virginia (qt.)	5/0
Dozen Oranges	3s
1 barrel Flour	20s
1 barrel Corn	10s
West Indian Rum (Qt.)	1/3
Virginia Brandy (qt.)	2s
Virginia Cyder (qt.)	3.25d
Arrack Punch (qt.)	2/6
Bowl of Bumbo	1/3

Item	Price
Clothing:	
Thread (1 oz.)	6d
1 yd. Linen	4s
Handkerchief	1s
Petticoat	10s
Cap	4s
Shirt (cotton)	6/0
Pr. Breeches	7-12s
Silk Waistcoat	7s
"suite" of clothes	25s
1 doz. Silver Buttons	11d
Spectacles	1s
Gloves	1/6 to 7/0
Hose	
Men's Thread	3/4
White knit thread	6/0
Women's worsted	5/0
Men's brown thread	5/6
Men's worsted	6/0
Plaid	1/4
Silk	£1/2/6
Shoes	
Virginia	6/6 to 10/0
Calamanco	6/8
Coarse	6/0
Didsbury	5/9
Men's Turned Up	7/6
Women's	5/0
Women's silk damask	17/6
Women's leather	2/6 to 5/0
Wigs	
Brown dress queue wig and ribbon	£2/4/0
Brown dress bag wig	£1/12/6 to £2/3/0
Brown drop queue wig and ribbon	£2/3/0
Brown bob wig	£1/12/6 to £2/3/0
Brown dress queue wig	£2/3/0
Pair of curls	7/6 to £1
Books & Stationary:	
Almanac	7.5d
Hornbook	3 to 7.5d
Spelling Book	1/6 to 2/0
Primmer	6 to 10d
Paper (Quire) (2)	7d to 2/3
Pencil	3.25d
Ink Powder	4 to 9d
Sealing Wax (stick)	5d
Bible	
Common	1/9
Complete	6/9
Quarto (6x8")	17/6
Large	£1/1/0
Blank Book	5/0 to 15/0
Gulliver's Travels (1 Vol.)	5/0
Watt's Hymns/Psalms	6/6
Burnett's History	£1/2/0

Money (cont)

Item	Price
Miscellaneous:	
Axe	3/6 to 7/6
Bedstead (Walnut)	12/6
Candles (lb.)	3.5d to 1/3
Candlesticks (pr.)	
Iron	10d to 1/3
Flat Brass	9/0
Candle Wax (lb.)	1/3
Cards	
Playing (pack)	7.5d to 1/0
Cotton (pr.)	3/4 to 6/0
Wool (pr.)	2/4 to 2/6
Coach (From London)	£120/0/0
Riding Chair	£40/0/0
Firewood (cord)	7/6
Ferry (over Potomac)	7/6 or \$1 (Spanish)
Lodging (at tavern)	6d and up
Razor	1/3
Pistols (pr.)	£3/15/3
Plates (dozen)	
Pewter	12s
Porcelain	8s
Creamware	3s
Tin Glazed	2s
Cups & Saucers (dozen)	
Porcelain	4s
Creamware	2s
Saddle	£1/16/0 to £2/5/0
Fiddle & Bow	19/6
Violin & Bow	£1/0/0
Knife	4d to 1/0
Hoe	2/0 to 6/6
Saw	5/0 to 9/0
Hard Soap	1/6
Padlock	10d

Postal rates of Virginia (10 Oct 1765)

Single sheet letters

By sea

Port to Port in America 4d

Inland

Up to 60 miles 4d

60 to 100 miles 6d

Each additional 100 mi. 2d

On each incoming private ship, letter for anyplace beyond port of entry to inland postage add 2d

Two sheets	double
Three sheets	triple
1 - 1.25 oz.	Quadruple
1.25 - 1.5 oz.	Quintuple
(proportional for each 1/4 ounce.)	

1. shillings are abbreviated with an 's,' (which comes from the Roman coin the solidus which equaled 12 denarii) while pence are shown with a 'd' for denarius (which was a small denomination Roman coin). Pounds may be expressed using the symbol '£' derived from the word "livre" which means pound. One pound equaled 20 shillings. For example, three pounds 6 shillings and three pence would be noted as £3 6s 3d and normally written 3/6/3. Fractions of 1/2d and 1/4d were used to designate a halfpenny and a farthing - but I'm getting ahead of myself.

2. Quire. 1/20th of a ream of paper (24 or 25 sheets of paper)

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One good Husband is worth two good Wives: for the scarcer things are, the more they're valued.

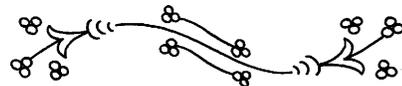
--Benjamin Franklin

Mrs. McGonagle's 'Afternoon Tea'

On October 19, 2002, RCHS hosted their second annual 'Afternoon Tea' which was a huge success. The tea was held in the Family Room of St. George's Episcopal Church on Princess Anne Street. St. George's has always been most supportive of our events and we would like to thank them for that support.

There were 41 people who attended the tea this year. And we have a lot of names of people who couldn't come this year but want to be sure they get an invitation for the one next year. Once again Mrs. McGonagle was a delightful hostess. This year we had the good fortune of having our event listed in the Richmond Times as one of their "short hops" for weekend excursions. Thank you Kate Cook for the wonderful article. Kate attended last year but was unable to make it for the tea this year.

Here are a few pictures of the day:



The Virginia Gazette

July 26, 1770. Number 220. Page 4, Column 1

WILLIAM WADDELL, Stay-maker,
HAS just opened shop in the town of Fredericksburg, opposite to
Mr. William Reed's store, and as he has just imported from
London a complete assortment of every thing necessary in that
branch of business, he flatters himself that he shall be happy
enough to give satisfaction to all Ladies who shall favour him with
their commands, being determined to serve them on the easiest
terms, and in the neatest manner.



SUGAR'S ADVENTURES

Written by John Hardia as dictated by Sugar the Parrott

Sugar & The Cooper

Do you know how many barrels there are in the world? My master gets tobacco in more barrels than I have feathers and takes them to the ships but I have seen barrels with white flour, black flour, apples, pieces of salt meat (ycch), water, and other kinds of water that smells strong and will make you dizzy if you drink it. I don't think we could live without barrels. There are barrels that are bigger than my master and all different sizes right down to one that would be the perfect size for me to sleep in.

Well we went for a walk today and we saw the man who makes barrels. He has hundreds of pieces of wood. While he talked to my master he worked on a board with a piece of iron and made long curls of wood and gave me some to play with. Then he put lots of pieces of wood in a circle and put an iron ring around them so they were like a barrel on one end but separate pieces of wood on the other end and then he put this part barrel on a little fire and put more iron rings on and pretty soon he had a barrel. Of course he still had to make a bottom and top otherwise the barrel couldn't hold anything.

After the barrel was finished my master and the barrel man talked for a long time and they made marks on the barrel with a stick. Then they shook hands and the man handed my master a perfect little barrel just my size and we left.

(Sugar is a parrott 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.)

Deadline for submissions to the next issue of the newsletter is January 8, 2003.



The Orange County Historical Society is embarking on the mission of inventorying and cataloguing all the "goodies" in their vault. Anyone who might be interested in helping with this worthwhile project, email Mary - maryq@summit.net or Tina - purrs4me@wwlnk.net; or call Tina at 540-898-2113.



Prestwoud Plantation

Tina Buchanan



On July 20th, 2002 a small number of the ladies in our dance group made a journey to Prestwoud Plantation, in Clarksville, VA. In our opinion, this is the best-kept secret in the state of Virginia! It was the home of Sir Peyton Skipwith, Baronet and Lady Jean Skipwith. The house itself is in wonderful condition. The Prestwoud Foundation has been very careful in their restoration. Prestwoud is considered the best-documented non-political home in Virginia. Lady Jean Skipwith kept meticulous records. When Sir Peyton died Lady Skipwith had to make an inventory of his estate. What made her inventory unusual was that she made it room by room so that they know what was in each one. When the contents of the estate were auctioned off in 1946 its remote location saved the furnishings. The antique dealers from the 'city' didn't know about the sale, so local people bought most of the pieces, and as they were sold the name of the person that purchased the items was recorded. The Prestwoud Foundation has received many pieces back and I believe the docent who gave us our tour said now they have 80% of the original furnishings. With the estate inventory that Lady Jean took they can place the furniture back in the room it came out of. We could all move in tomorrow and be very comfortable! To quote from their brochure: "The house, built of stone quarried on the plantation, was laid out in 1793 and completed in 1795. When built, it was one of the largest and most complex gentry houses in Virginia. Today the house retains an exceptional degree of its original interior and exterior detail, including three Federal-era porches and distinctly regional Georgian woodwork. Prestwoud is also noted for the survival of its exquisite eighteenth century English botanical wallpapers and a series of French scenic wallpapers from early in the nineteenth century." Scalandre has been collaborating with the Prestwoud Foundation for over 10 years to replicate, reproduce, and conserve the soft furnishings that once embellished the interiors. The three docents that were staffing the house that day were very nice. I could go on and on about the house – it was so beautiful. I was in awe of the restoration that has been done and is going on now. This is a small community and they are doing a great job. We had a lovely time and plan to go back again. It is open from April 15 through October 31, Monday through Saturday 12:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. and Sunday 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. There was some discussion among us ladies that maybe we should try and get together a bus trip and go back in the Spring. If anyone is interested please contact me (Tina) at Purrs4me@wwlnk.net.

Games from the Colonial Period



Bowls or Lawn Bowling

A small white ball (the “jack”) is rolled onto the green to act as a target. Each player receives two “bowls” or balls. Players then roll their bowls in turn, trying to place them close to the jack. As the bowls are not perfect spheres, but rather slightly flattened, skill is necessary to roll them in the desired direction and distance. An opponent’s bowl, the jack, or your own bowl may be hit on a roll and knocked away. At the end of each round or “end” the player closest to the jack earns the point. A number of points required to win the match is agreed to by the players and play continues until one player wins—normally 16 “ends”.

The Compleat Gamester didn’t go much into rules of games (most were commonly known). Rather the author discussed the game. As to Bowls:

In bowling there is a great art in chusing his ground, and preventing the windings, hangings, and many turning advantages of the same, whether it be in open wide places... or in close bowling alleys. Where note that in bowling the chusing of the bowl is the greatest cunning. Flat bowls are best for close alleys; round byassed bowls for open grounds of advantage, and bowls round as a ball for green swarths that are plain and level.

There is no advising by writing how to bowl, practice must be your best tutor, which must advise you the risings, fallings and all the several advantages that are to be had in divers greens, and bowling-alleys; all that I can say, have a care you are not in the first place rookd out of your money, and in the next place you go not to these places of pleasure unseasonably, that is when your more weighty business and concern require your being at home, or some where else.

The RCHS Newsletter is published quarterly in Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall. All members receive a copy. Membership is \$10.00 per year for individuals, \$15.00 per year for families. **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@cox.net.

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Liberty’s Kids

Through the eyes of two young apprentice reporters named Sarah and James, viewers of Liberty’s Kids go on adventures in search of the real stories of the American Revolution. The show is produced using high-quality animation, creating an exciting world through which today’s kids can experience characters, events and issues at the heart of the American Revolutionary War and the founding of the United States. Liberty’s Kids is a revolutionary children’s animated series that tells the story of the birth of democracy in America, told through the eyes of two teenagers and their young friend working in Benjamin Franklin’s print shop.

This series is being shown on the PBS stations (www.pbs.org). Trip has been watching it almost every day and thinks it’s a really good show. It is geared for kids 7-12 (or those of us who think we are).

In publishing these guidelines, I am aware that I have not been in compliance on my end for getting you your newsletter in a timely fashion. However, things have settled down at my job, which had been the primary reason. I am dedicated in 2003 to getting back on track and making this a regular publication again. I look back at past issues and can tell exactly what was going on in our group up until last year. However, I also know that without your submissions and ideas, I wouldn’t be able to get the newsletter out. So, please, contribute ideas, articles, 2 or 3 sentences, pictures of events - anything helps.

Myra

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 being 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 articles(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 quarterly in Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall. My target date to have the newsletter published is the 15th of January, April, July and October. In order to do that, I will need any submissions by the 8th of those months. You may mail to the PO Box, or email me at myrawig@cox.net.
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 issue.
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. So please let me know if you have a particular interest.