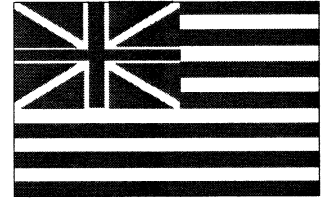


THE RAPPAHANNOCK GAZETTE



Newsletter of the Rappahannock Colonial Heritage Society, Inc.

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www.rchsinc.org

April 2008

Calendar of Events

To sign up or for more information, please contact the Event Coordinator (EC) or Committee Chairperson.

Apr. 18 – Sewing Circle:

6:30-9:30 p.m., St. George's Faulkner Hall. Work on riding habits. EC: Sharon Brunacci.

Apr. 22 – Garden Days at Bowling Green:

10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Caroline County Courthouse. EC: Lyn Padgett.

Apr. 25 – Sewing Circle:

6:30-9:30 p.m., St. George's Faulkner Hall. EC: Sharon Brunacci.

Apr. 27 – Coaching Day at Stratford Hall:

9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. EC: Elaine Sturgeon.

May 6 – Monthly Business meeting:

7:30 p.m., St. George's room 300. Chair: Sharon Brunacci.

May 10 – Dumfries Charter Day:

11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Merchant Park. EC: Lyn Padgett.

May 11 – Mother's Day with Mrs. Washington:

Mary Washington House. EC: Trip Wiggins.

May 30 – Sewing Circle:

6:30-9:30 p.m., Joyce Matherly's house. EC: Sharon Brunacci.

Reminder: Due to liability concerns of the corporation, your membership must be current in order to participate in these events.

English Country Dancing

English Country Dance classes are held on the second and fourth Fridays of each month at 7:30 p.m., Faulkner Hall, St. George's Episcopal Church.

Classes are open to the public (\$2 per class). Dance Mistress: Elaine Sturgeon, 540-785-2168.

Apr. 25 – Open

May 9 – Open

May 23 – Open

April 27 – Stratford Hall Plantation's Coaching Day

By Elaine Sturgeon

Once again RCHS has been asked to participate in this event which is held once every three years. The focus of the event is the antique coaches that are brought in from around the country. They are paraded around the esplanade, in front of the Manor house, in all their splendor with costumed drivers and riders. The famous Budweiser Hitch with the resplendent Clydesdales will also be on display and performing their maneuvers. The Manor house and all of the outbuildings will be open for touring.

We will be there to represent what it would have been like to have traveled by coach in the 18th century. The most obvious representation will be our 18th century attire, which is why it's so important to make sure your entire ensemble (not just your clothes) is period correct—it's the first thing people see.

Our tent will take the place of an inn or tavern that our coach would have stopped at to provide food and/or lodging. In the tent we will have set up an 18th century food display which will also serve as our lunch. The menu is already set and everything will be provided, you won't need to bring any food. You will need to bring your own personal eating utensils (plate, fork, and glass or mug). A punch

will be provided but you might wish to bring some additional beverage for yourself—make sure it's in an appropriate container, no Coke cans.

Since it will be a very full day (10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.), be sure to bring something to sit on—a small chair, a stool, a cushion or quilt. Whatever you bring, please make sure it looks period appropriate. In Wal-Mart's camping department, they used to have wooden fold-up stools with a canvas seat for about \$6 or \$7. If you use a cushion or something with fabric on it, make sure that it is a solid color or that the fabric is period appropriate.

Elaine Sturgeon is the Event Coordinator, please contact her for any questions you may have. (540-785-2168 or miselaineus@yahoo.com)

An Urgent Plea

We are in dire need of members to join us for the SOL (Standards of Learning) School Program. We teach 4th and 5th grades about life in the Colonies in 1773. We try to limit school visits to two schools a month. We hold open Thursdays for our programs since this seems best for most of the already participating members.

We each develop a persona of someone living in the Fredericksburg/Stafford general area. You would be required to do your own research on who you would like to portray. There are other members in the group who would be willing to help you if you ask. We do require period-appropriate attire, which you need to have approved. It needs to be neatly cleaned and pressed.

We also teach Colonial Dancing to a few schools. What we do, whether it's SOL or dance, depends on what fits for them.

Please consider joining us in educating young people. It is a commitment we have made to our community as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and a way to help RCHS grow.

Sharon Brunacci
President and School Coordinator

Education Committee Notes

If you are interested in participating in our next school program, please contact Sharon Brunacci at 540-659-2080. The date is listed below:

May 2:

Colonial Dance demonstration at Grafton Elementary School

Sewing Committee

We have scheduled sewing circles on April 18 and April 25 to help members sew clothes needed for Coaching Day and an unspecified sewing circle on May 30. If you plan to attend, please let Sharon Brunacci know in advance. We will cancel these events if no one needs assistance. Remember to bring your sewing machine, supplies and materials.

Media Committee

If you would like to receive *The Rappahannock Gazette* as a PDF, please send an e-mail to nana4979@comcast.net and we'll make it happen!

If you would like RCHS business cards to hand out at events, contact Greg Brunacci at 540-659-2080 or gbrunacci@comcast.net for more information.

Treasurer's Report

Balance at the beginning of March: \$8,720.54
Balance at the end of March: \$8,071.40

Secretary's Report

Members who did not receive a copy of the minutes for the last monthly Business Meeting may request a copy from Secretary Greg Brunacci.

The purpose of the Rappahannock Colonial Heritage Society is to bring together persons interested in preserving and perpetuating the heritage and culture of the colonial era in and around the Rappahannock River Valley of Virginia; to conduct historical research of persons, places and 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 ways of life of our forbears in this area.

The Fitzhugh Family

By Trip Wiggins

In our last newsletter, we looked at the first three generations of the powerful Fitzhugh family of Stafford and King George counties. This month we look at the most notable member of the fourth generation of this interesting family—William Fitzhugh of “Chatham.”



William Fitzhugh

4th Generation

William Fitzhugh (Sep. 4, 1741- Dec. 19, 1809)

[Henry 3, William 2, William 1] of “Chatham”

As the only son of Henry, William inherited most of his father’s estate. Born to an ample fortune and high intellectual gifts, William exercised his personality for the welfare of his age, serving as a Stafford county court justice, member of the House of Burgesses, of all the Revolutionary conventions, the House of Delegates, the state Senate and, for a short time, the Continental Congress. He was one of the wealthiest landowners of pre-revolutionary Virginia.

Following his father’s death when William was but an infant, his mother, daughter of the rich and powerful Robert “King” Carter, married in 1748 Col. Nathaniel Harrison of “Brandon,” who brought his two children, Elizabeth and Benjamin, to live with Lucy and her children: Elizabeth Landon, Anne, Lucy and William. Benjamin received a whip for his birthday and in playing with it, he accidentally hit William in the face causing the loss of an eye. Growing up in the Northern Neck, William spent much of his youth at the home of his maternal uncle, Charles Carter of “Cleve” (in King George County). His formal schooling is unknown, but it is thought that he was educated in England, like many of his class.

William married (1763) Anne “Nancy” Marie Randolph (May 13, 1747-Aug. 10, 1805), daughter of Peter Randolph of “Chatsworth” of Henrico County. Theirs would be a long and happy marriage. She was the second cousin of Thomas Jefferson.

Although “Eagle’s Nest” was willed to William, he let his sister Elizabeth remain there following the death of their mother. Eventually he willed it to his three nephews, William Fitzhugh Grymes,

Benjamin Fitzhugh Grymes and George Nicholas Grymes. It remained in the Grymes family until 1949. William remained true to his nephews, even Benjamin Grymes, who had a checkered life.

William and Anne lived at “Somerset,” the second of the two plantations Fitzhugh inherited. It was located adjacent to the “Eagle’s Nest” property. Having as yet no children and being desirous of company, the couple sold nearly 10,000 acres of land in Spotsylvania County to finance the building of another home, this on the banks of the Rappahannock River just across from Fredericksburg. They named the house “Chatham” after William Pitt, the Earl of Chatham, who as England’s prime minister in the 1750s had brought the French and Indian War to a successful conclusion, and as opposition leader had, one decade later, been the chief spokesman for Americans against the Crown in the growing tax disputes.

Construction of the home began around 1768 and was completed about 1771. The large home, 210 ft. by 30 ft. and two stories, had only 10 rooms. It was, like many of the gentry homes of its day, all about symmetry and power. The location dominated the Fredericksburg skyline. Fitzhugh wanted all who saw it to know “this is me; this is mine.” Typical for the gentry of his day, bigger was indeed better regardless of the cost.



Chatham Manor as it looks today from the Rappahannock River.

Photograph courtesy of the Photo Gallery at www.nds.gov.

A horse enthusiast, William helped establish horse racing and the Fredericksburg Jockey Club to the region. His horses were renowned for their racing abilities—Regulus, Kitty Fisher, Brilliant, Silver Legs, Volunteer, etc. Regulus was a perennial winner—a sort of “Seattle Slew” of his day. He was also wealthy enough to have his own billiards table at “Chatham”—one on only a handful of billiards tables in the region. He enjoyed entertaining at his house—to a degree.

After completion of “Chatham,” Fitzhugh put his name up for election to the House of Burgesses, serving between 1772 and 1775. When the assembly was dissolved by Lord Dunmore, Fitzhugh continued to serve King George County in ad hoc meetings of the legislature held in Williamsburg and Richmond (the Virginia Conventions). He was also a member of the Revolutionary Committee of Safety at this time (1774-75). Fitzhugh was a strong supporter of the revolution. During the war he acted as a commissioner of both Fielding Lewis’ Gunnery and James Hunter’s Iron Works/Rappahannock Forge, while also serving as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates (1776-77), the Continental Congress (1779) and later as a state senator (1780-87).

Let’s amplify that. While he “served” and “supported,” he did not do so to the extent of the other “patriots” you read about in history books.

At the Rappahannock Forge and the Fredericksburg Gunnery, while he was a commissioner, he seems to have left the actual running of the operations to others (James Hunter; Fielding Lewis/Charles Dick, respectively). He offered his moral support and perhaps some money to keep the operations running. And while he took his state offices seriously, he did not enthusiastically jump into his role as a member of the Continental Congress (he was appointed by the state legislature). He was sworn in on Sep. 13, 1779, in Philadelphia. He resigned due to health and other reasons just weeks later. This was not a role he wished and knew he was in over his head. He belonged in Virginia.

After the war, Fitzhugh continued to be active in politics, farming and racing as well as a variety of speculative ventures. And then there was entertaining. “Chatham,” situated just over the

Rappahannock from Fredericksburg near the major north-south road of that day (the King’s Highway), was constantly besieged by visitors. It was customary for travelers to stay at private homes (*within your class*), and Fitzhugh, a man of noted hospitality, was a favorite destination for many a traveler. A Swiss traveler noted that you could cross Virginia without ever having to pay for a meal or lodging. William is reported to have entertained 43 such guests on *one occasion*. Among his visitors was George Washington, an old political associate from Fitzhugh’s days as a burgess.

Wrote Washington of his time at Chatham, “I have put my legs oftener under your mahogany at Chatham than anywhere else in the world, and I have enjoyed your good dinners, good wine and good company more than any other.”

Were Fitzhugh and Washington close friends? Probably not, at least for most of their lives. A close reading of letters between them suggest it was more business—cordial and friendly—but not particularly close. Washington, along with Jefferson, Madison, Monroe and others, did seek out Fitzhugh’s advice when it came to horses. He was a recognized expert in that area.

As was the case of many of the gentry, Fitzhugh was ‘land rich; money poor.’ He spent a fortune on entertaining and another fortune on sustaining the *image* of being a good host. Speaking of his constant entertaining of guests, “As long as we stay, our friends will keep dropping in.” And of hard currency in his pocket, he said in 1798, “...I have not \$2 in the entire world....”

Years of entertaining took their toll on his wealth and Fitzhugh was driven into debt by these visitors (and falling tobacco prices). He would leave “Chatham” in the 1790s, later putting the house and nearly 1,300 acres up for sale and selling it to Major Churchill Jones in 1806 for \$20,000.

Throughout his life William would sell annually slaves, land or both to try to pay the mountain of debt his lifestyle had created. In 1805 he offered for sale “230 negroes of different ages, sizes and descriptions.” On the plus side, whether for humanitarian or economic reasons, he tended to sell his slaves as intact families. Perhaps it was this that first induced his son to get active in the American Colonization Society.

He moved to Alexandria, Virginia, on the

outskirts of the new nation's capital. He and Washington visited one another on occasion until the latter's death in 1799. The last person Washington visited outside of Mount Vernon before his death was William Fitzhugh.

In 1796 he built "Ravensworth," their "summer retreat" on land that the family (William I) purchased in 1695. "Ravensworth" was located just southeast of today's intersection of I-495 and Braddock Road (Ravensworth Shopping Center). Here Ann died in 1805 following the marriage of her two daughters. Following her death, William's health deteriorated rapidly.

Fitzhugh himself died four years later at the age of 68, leaving behind two children. He was initially buried at "Ravensworth," but was moved, with Ann, to Pohick Church graveyard when the mansion was destroyed in the 20th century.

William & Ann Fitzhugh's children:

Lucy (1771-1777)

Betty Randolph (1773-1774)

Ann Randolph "Little Nancy" (1783-1806)

Married Judge William Craik, son of George Washington's military physician, Dr. James Craik, in Oct. 1800. William Craik was governor of Maryland and a U.S. Congressman. They had no children.

Martha Carter "Patsy" (1786-1793)

Mary Lee "Molly" (Apr. 22, 1788-Apr. 23, 1853) Married George Washington Parke Custis (Apr. 30, 1781-Oct. 19, 1857), of "Arlington" (Washington's adopted grandson) in 1804, and their daughter, Mary Ann Randolph Custis (1808-1873), married in 1831 Robert E. Lee (1807-1870) reuniting the Fitzhugh and Lee family trees. Mary inherited the Alexandria and "Ravensworth" properties following the death of her brother William Henry Fitzhugh. George and Molly Custis are buried at "Arlington"—now Arlington National Cemetery. They had three other children—none of whom survived to adulthood.

William Henry (Mar. 9, 1792-May 21, 1830) Inherited the Alexandria and "Ravensworth" properties. Graduated from Princeton University in 1808. Rented the Alexandria home at a nominal price, to Robert E. Lee's mother (Ann Carter, distantly related to Fitzhugh), who had fallen on hard times. The future Confederate general was

raised at this Oronoco Street residence (today known as the Boyhood Home of Robert E. Lee). William Henry married Anna Maria Goldsborough (Nov. 15, 1796-Apr. 17, 1874) in 1814; she was the daughter of the Maryland governor, Charles Goldsborough. [Anna Marie was always known as "Aunt Maria" to Robert E Lee and his family.] They had no children. W.H. Fitzhugh was a delegate in the Virginia legislature and participated in the Virginia Constitutional Convention in 1829-30. He was a zealous member and Vice President of the American Colonization Society—an organization dedicated to emancipating slaves and returning them to Africa. He died as a result of a fall from his horse. Oddly, he was also a slave owner and in his will he asked that all of his slaves be freed by 1850. Anna died at her beloved "Ravensworth." Anna and William are buried along side his parents at Pohick Church.

A typical family of the area? No. But they sure were interesting. Who's in your family tree?

Sources:

Books

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Eby, Jerrilynn. *They Called Stafford Home*. (1997)
Felder, Paula. *Fielding Lewis & the Washington Family*. (1998)
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Happel, Ralph. *Chatham, the Life of a House*. (1984)
Hauk, Carol. *Descendants of William Fitzhugh of Virginia*. (1997)
Lawrence, Liza. *The Vistas of Eagle's Nest*. (1970)
Riley, Edward M (editor). *Journal of John Harrower 1773-76*. (1963)
Smoot, Betty C. *Days in an Old Town*. (1934)
Wright, Louis. *The First Gentlemen of Virginia*. (1964)

Talks

Hennessey, John. "William Fitzhugh" at Central Rappahannock Regional Library, Fredericksburg, VA Jan 2008

Web pages

- The Spectacle, May 2004.
www.nps.gov/archives/arho/tour/spectacle_2004-05.pdf
Fitzhugh Genealogy Web Pages: (most are poor, these three are okay)
Members.aol.com/rphs44/Fitzhugh.html
Freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~tspangsoorigin/gp815.htm
Freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~celticlady/thornton/Thornton-Fitzhugh.htm
Wikipedia web site for both William Fitzhugh and William Henry Fitzhugh
History of Annandale, VA (Annandale.va.us/history.htm)
Chatham and William Fitzhugh

(<http://www.nps.gov/frsp/fitzchm.htm>)

Chatham Mansion

(<http://www.gengateway.com/genealogy/chatham.htm>)

Robert E. Lee Boyhood Home.

(<http://members.aol.com/rphs44/fitzhugh.html>)

“Southern Women and Their Families in the 19th Century:

Papers & Diaries.” Virginia Historical Society [items pertaining to A.M Goldsborough Fitzhugh]

(www.lexisnexis.com/documents/academic/upa_cis/2662_South_WomSerDPt1.pdf)

Descendants of John Carter (www.carter-cousins.org/kits/17720.pdf)

Arlington National Cemetery

(<http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/gwpcusti.htm>)

Newspapers

Virginia Gazette, various editions

Virginia Herald, various editions

Tobacco Pricing in Virginia

From the *Virginia Gazette*, 5 May 1738, a set of letters describing tobacco pricing in Virginia. The planters desire to sell tobacco to both Great Britain and France. Most tobacco from our Fredericksburg region was destined for the tobacco lords of Glasgow, Scotland, but as can be seen here, there was a strong interest in selling to France also. Philopatris was an anonymous name for some local planter, probably written by or at the request of one of the planters who signed the second letter. Their theory, ‘if we sell to France, that is less we have to sell to London and Glasgow, so prices should go up and we make a better profit.’

Williamsburg, May 5, 1738

Sir,

I had the Pleasure of your Letter, with the inclos’d Plan of Mont. Huber, as it was at last agreed to by some eminent Gentlemen, who wish well to their Country. And since you do me the Honour to ask my Opinion of it, I shall obey your Commands in a few Words. The Sum of Five Pounds Sterling, allowed for every Hogshead of Aronko Tobacco, weighing 900 lbs. at the Inspection Scales, is certainly a living Price; especially as it is without Risque or Deduction, and all the Money paid down. ‘Tis true, some fortunate Gentlemen may have had more, since the Law; but I may venture to say, that where One has had more for this Sort of Tobacco, Three have had less: And if we can supply the French with what they want from hence, ‘tis likely that the rest of the Tobacco we shall sent to

England, will yield a better Price than usual, as the Merchants will have less to manage, and the irresistible Charms of Ready Money will be removed. ‘Tis evident that the Execution of this Plan will bring a large sum of Money into the Country, with which the Planter may go to Market, and purchase his Goods much cheaper; and at the same Time the Merchants here will be able to make quicker Returns, and contract fewer desperate and outstanding Debts. The multiplying of Money will naturally raise the Value of Land, and lessen the Price of Labour; the workmen expecting to be paid in Cash, with which he may buy all his Necessaries cheaper: Besides, if the Scheme succeed, it will induce the Inhabitants of Norfolk, and other Places, to build Ships to carry away the large Quantity of Tobacco that will be purchased, whereby great Sums will be saved to this Country, many Artisans brought in, and many Sailors bred of our own; which will be to many Hands taken off from planting Tobacco, and much more usefully employ’d. In one Word, which way soever I turn this Plan, it appears, to my View, big with Advantages to this Country, and in no instance prejudicial to the general Interest of Great Britain. These, Sir, are my sentiments, which are, however, submitted to your better Judgment, by

Your most humble Servant,

PHILOPATRIS

To Mr.—

On Monday last, there was a Meeting here, of many eminent Gentlemen, to consult the Scheme mentioned in the above Letter; who, after Mr. Huber’s Proposals, and maturely deliberating thereon, came to a final Determination to agree on the following Terms:

Whereas Mr. Edward Barradall, of Williamsburg, in Virginia, and Mr. Philip Thomas, of Anne-Arundel County, in Maryland, and impowered by the Agent of the Farmers General of the United Farms of France, to buy for the said Farmers, Fifteen Thousand Hogsheads of Tobacco: And propose to purchase Tobacco of the Growth of Virginia, upon the following Terms, viz.

To pay for every Hogshead of Tobacco, delivered at some Publick Warehouse, upon Potomack,

Rappahannock, or James River, weighing 900 lbs. nett, £5 0 0 Sterl.

And so in proportion for every Hogshead weighing more than 900 lbs. nett.

For every Hogshead delivered as aforesaid, weighing 850 lbs. nett, 4 12 0

And for so much as the same shall weigh more than 850 lbs. nett, at the Rate of Eleven Shillings Sterling per Hundred.

For every Hogshead weighing 800 lbs. nett, 4 4 0

And so in proportion for so much as the same shall weigh more than 800 lbs. nett. But no Hogshead to be accepted under 800 lbs. nett.

And where one Person sells and delivers any Number of Hogsheads, the Weight of the same to be taken upon an Average, in Proportion to the Weight of the Whole.

The Purchase Money to be paid upon Delivery of the Inspector's Notes, and according to the Weight mentioned in the said Notes, either in Bills of Exchange, or Cash, with an allowance of 25 per Cent. for the Difference of Exchange. But no Allowance is to be made to the Seller, for Cask, the Charge of Inspecting, or other Charge whatsoever.

Upon which Terms the said Mr. Barradall, and Mr. Thomas, propose to contract for Two Years, viz. for the Years 1739 and 1740. And expect in a short Time to have a sufficient Power to contract for Four Years more.

NOW We, whose Names are hereunto subscribed, approving and being willing to encourage the said Proposal, Do hereby severally engage to deliver to the said Mr. Barradall and Mr. Thomas, or either of them, their, or either of their Assigns, upon the Terms aforesaid, so many Hogsheads of Tobacco, at such Time and Place, and to accept for the same, either Bills of Exchange or Cash, as shall be particularly mentioned and set down against our respective Names hereunto subscrib'd.

N.B. The latest Time of delivering the Tobacco must be the last of July.

William Byrd	John Robinson
John Grymes	John Tayloe
Philip Lightfoot	Thomas Lee
Robert Bolling	Henry Fitzhugh
William Fairfax	Matthew Kemp
Benjamin Walker	John Mercer

Trip's note: These signers represented the largest/wealthiest tobacco planters in Virginia at the time. Most were either leading Burgesses or members of the Governor's Council. They were the "movers and shakers" of their age. What they requested usually got approved.

Henry Fitzhugh (1706-1742) was of Eagle's Nest and was the grandson of the immigrant.

Note on tobacco prices: £4 12 0 is read as 4 pounds 12 shillings 0 pence.

Events of Interest in the Area

The following were gathered from various sources and are subject to change.

Apr. 21-26 – Spring Opening of St. James' House. 1:00-4:00 p.m. Tour an 18th century gentlemen's cottage. Visit www.apva.org for info. \$

Apr. 24-27 – 18th Century Market Fair: Fort Frederick State Park: Big Pool, MD. 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. (closes at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday). Visit www.friendsoffortfrederick.info/market_fair.htm for more info, including a list of 138 sutlers. \$

Apr. 27 – Open House: James Monroe Museum. 1:00-4:00 p.m. To celebrate the 250th anniversary of James Monroe's birth. Go to <http://www.umw.edu/jamesmonroemuseum/> for details. Free

May 10 – Dumfries Charter Day. 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. To celebrate the town's 259th anniversary. Call 703-221-2218 for more information.

May 11 – Mother's Day Tea and 18th Century Fashion Show, Gunston Hall Plantation. "World of Women" plantation tours are at 1:00 and 4:00 p.m., tea is at 2:00 p.m. Reservations required. Visit www.gunstonhall.org for info. \$

May 17-18 – Spring 18th Century Market Fair, Claude Moore Colonial Farm at Turkey Run: McLean. 11:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Go to www.1771.org for more information. \$

To be SOLD,

METAL boning coated in white plastic for pocket hoops. Each roll contains 10 yards. Four rolls are available and are being sold at cost for \$21.00 each. Whoever has a Mind to purchase, may apply to Denise at ivbeavers@verizon.net.