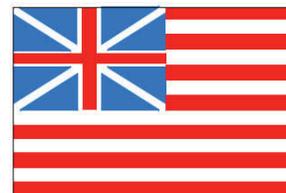




The Rappahannock Gazette

Newsletter of the Rappahannock Colonial Heritage Society, Inc.



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.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Oct. 24 - John Waller Presentation:** EC: Myra & Trip Wiggins.
- Oct. 30 & 31 - RCHS 8th Annual Cemetery Tour:** EC: Trip Wiggins.
- Nov. 2 - Business Meeting:** Mary Washington House. 7:30 p.m. Chair: Sharon Brunacci.
- Nov. 7 - First Thanksgiving Festival at Berkeley Plantation:** EC: Elaine Sturgeon.
- Nov. 13 - DRMI Holiday Open House:** 2:00 p.m. EC: Trip Wiggins.
- Nov. 13 - Night at the Tavern:** St. George's Church, 5:00-9:00 p.m. EC: Naomi McPherson.
- Nov. 28 - Cutting O' the Greens for Holiday Wreaths:** 9:00 a.m. EC: Catherine Bell.
- Dec. 2 & 3 - Make Holiday Wreaths:** 9:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. EC: Catherine Bell.
- Dec. 4 - Holiday Wreath Pick-up:** 9:00-11:00 a.m. EC: Trip Wiggins.

ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCE CLASSES

- Oct. 22 - Open**
- Oct. 29 - Dance social**
- Nov. 5 - Demo**
- Nov. 12 - Open**

ORDINARIES OF THE FREDERICKSBURG AREA

By Trip Wiggins

From the World Book Dictionary: Ordinary - n. 1. A meal served at a fixed price, 2a. an inn, 2b. the dining room of an inn

With the spread of roads in the colonies, ordinaries or taverns started populating the countryside. On the heavily traveled routes they were generally situated about 15 miles apart, the normal distance a person or stage might be expected to travel in a day. The word "hotel" would not creep into our language for some time. In rural areas they were established to assist the traveler. They offered a place to stay for the night and a meal. In towns and cities they became the social center of life with food, drink, entertainment, gossip and politics.

Ordinaries had to be licensed by the town or county and it was the local authority and not the owner who set the prices for food, drink and accommodation. Anyone who has visited our own

Rising Sun Tavern knows that the accommodations were spartan by today's standards, but back then all a traveler wanted was a bite to eat, a dram to drink, and a place to rest their body for a few hours until they were up at first light and back on their way.

As they were regulated by the local magistrates, care was taken to select reputable men (and occasionally women) to run them. Often these same men were given responsibilities in the growing towns. Here the most common jobs assigned tavern keepers were constable, gaoler (jailer), court house caretaker, and "keeper of the streets." It was also the task of the keeper to not let the festivities within their establishment get unruly. Initially (late 1600s and early 1700s) taverns were not permitted to sell any alcohol stronger than sherry to travelers, nor could he permit the playing of games, singing, or dancing. (Makes you wonder how any of them stayed in business.)

(continued on page 6)

O F F I C E R S C O R N E R

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Please join me in welcoming the Polk family (Allen, Laura and their daughter Langley) to RCHS. We're always delighted to welcome new members!

Our deepest condolences to the family of Betty Ann Lee Gillelan, who passed away in May. She was a Society member in good standing and had been a loyal supporter for many years.

The next RCHS Business Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 2nd, at 7:30 p.m. in the Mary Washington House activity room.

Sharon Brunacci

TREASURER'S REPORT

April Beginning Balance: \$8,158.33

April Ending Balance: \$8,716.80

May Ending Balance: \$8,891.33

June Ending Balance: \$9,311.33

July Ending Balance: \$8,949.49

August Ending Balance: \$8,949.49

September Ending Balance: \$9,455.49

Joyce Matherly

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

E V E N T S C O M M I T T E E

Sunday, October 24**John Waller Presentation:**

At the invitation of the Middlesex County Museum and Historical Society, RCHS will be performing a play about John Waller, an 18th-century religious leader. For more information or to participate, please contact Event Coordinators Myra or Trip Wiggins at 540/371-3906 or online at myrawig@cox.net or tripwig@cox.net.

**Saturday & Sunday, October 30 & 31 Historic Cemetery Tours:**

Take a trolley ride and tour three of Fredericksburg's oldest cemeteries. You'll learn about those who have permanent resident status in St. George's Episcopal Church cemetery, the Masonic Cemetery and the Gordon/Washington

Cemetery near Historic Kenmore (and a few buried in cemeteries which no longer exist).

Tours will be given on Saturday at 11:00 a.m., 12:45 and 2:30 p.m. and on Sunday at 1:00 and 2:45 p.m. We'll board the trolley in front of the Fredericksburg Visitor Center (706 Caroline Street). We are requesting a donation of \$4 per adult and \$1 per child under 10.

Volunteers—please plan to be at St. George's on Saturday from 10:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. and on Sunday from 12:30 until 4:30 p.m. All that is required is be attired, lead the group through a cemetery and read a script. Before the tours, Trip will walk you around to point out the headstones and give you a copy of the script.

If you are interested and have not

already signed up, please contact Event Coordinator Trip Wiggins at 540/371-3906 or tripwig@cox.net.

**Tuesday, November 2****Events Committee Meeting:**

We will be meeting at the Mary Washington House from 6:30 until 7:30 p.m. If you have questions, please contact Events Chairperson Myra Wiggins at 540/371-3906.

**Sunday, November 7****First Thanksgiving Festival at Berkeley Plantation:**

The First Thanksgiving Festival celebrates the 1619 landing of the original colonists at Berkeley Plantation and educates the public about the first thanksgiving and 17th- and 18th-century life. RCHS will be involved by providing color,

dancing demonstrations and audience participation.

We will be representing the merchant and upper-merchant classes and dress is “undress.”

If you would like to participate, please contact Event Coordinator Elaine Sturgeon at 540/785-2168 or online at miselaineus@yahoo.com.



Saturday, November 13

DRMI Holiday Open House:

Every year, Society members entertain the shoppers and shopkeepers for the Downtown Retail Merchants Holiday Open House. We’ll meet at St. George’s Church at 2:00 p.m., then stroll along Caroline Street and sing 18th-century Christmas carols. For more information, please contact Event Coordinator Trip Wiggins at 540/371-3906 or tripwig@cox.net.



Saturday, November 13

Night at the Tavern:

Society members are invited to an evening of 18th-century entertainment, games and dances, beginning with a covered-dish supper. Our family “night at the tavern” is from 5:00 until 9:00 p.m. in the Family Room at St. George’s Episcopal Church.

RCHS will provide the meats—roasted turkey and roasted pork loin. Please plan to contribute a period-appropriate side dish, beverage or dessert to share (enough for a family of six). Below you’ll find a list of suggestions. If you need a recipe or more guidance, you may call Myra Wiggins at 540/842-4327. After you’ve selected your dish, please let Naomi McPherson know what you are planning to bring.

We would like you to wear period-appropriate daytime or “undress” attire. Or if you prefer, wear casual modern attire.

Please bring a plate, cup, napkin and eating utensils for each person in your party.

If you have questions, contact Event Coordinator Naomi at 540/752-4979 or online at nana4979@comcast.net.

Suggestions:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Stuffing | Corn |
| Green beans | Turnips |
| Sweet potatoes | Greens |
| Onions | Potatoes |
| Parsnips | Carrots |
| Winter squash | Pumpkins |
| Beets | Eggs |
| Brussels sprouts | Soup |
| Bread and butter | Cheese |
| Biscuits | Apple cider |
| Punch | Lemonade |
| Hot chocolate | Syllabub |
| Pumpkin pie | Apple pie |
| Bread pudding | Gingerbread |
| Fruit crumble | Fruit cobbler |
| Cake or pudding | |
| Dried fruit & nuts | |



Sunday, November 28

Cutting O’ the Greens:

Please don’t forget to mark your calendars for our annual cutting of the wreath greens. I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again, it’s still the most fun you’ll have in your wellies.

We will, as always, meet at 9:00 a.m. and convoy to Caroline County. The more we have, the quicker it goes and as always, we need as many trucks as is humanly possible.

To sign up, please contact Event

Coordinator Catherine Bell online at scot.forlife@verizon.net.



Thursday & Friday, Dec. 2 & 3 Annual Wreath Making:

It’s hard to imagine that almost a year has come and gone since last we clipped and bundled together for our annual wreath making fundraiser. I’m constantly amazed by the quality of what we do with truck loads of randomly gathered greenery. Not mentioning days of back-breaking work and very sore hands, the camaraderie and good nature of all involved is nothing short of inspiring. So with that said, I plead with you all to set one or both days to come on out to the Buchanan’s and help us from 9:00 a.m. ‘til 9:00 p.m. on the 2nd and/or 3rd of December.

To sign up, please contact Catherine Bell online at scot.forlife@verizon.net.



Sunday, December 12

Historic Fredericksburg Foundation Candlelight Tour:

Mary Washington House has asked the members of RCHS to assist with the HFFI Candlelight Tour this year. If you are interested in participating, please contact Event Coordinator Myra Wiggins at 540/371-3906 or online at myrawig@cox.net.



ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCE CLASSES

English Country Dance classes are usually held in the Family Room of St. George's Episcopal Church. Classes begin at 7:00 p.m. and are open to the public (\$2 per class).

Dance Mistress: Elaine Sturgeon,
540/785-2168 or miselaineus@
yahoo.com.

Classes:

Oct. 22 - Open
Oct. 29 - Dance social
(bring finger food to share)
Nov. 5 - Demo

Nov. 12 - Open
Nov. 26 - TBD
Dec. 3 - Demo
Dec. 10 - Demo

Performances:

Nov. 7 - First Thanksgiving
Festival at Berkeley Plantation
Dec. 4 - Scotchtown's Colonial
Christmas Tour
Dec. 11 - 1774: A Stratford Hall
Christmastide



Illustration by [unreadable]

NEWSLETTER GUIDELINES

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.

Any member may, and is encouraged to, submit articles for publication. Committee

chairpersons are especially encouraged to write reports of past and upcoming activities. The newsletter is distributed to and read by people with varying degrees of expertise. Articles should be accurate in detail, sources/references must be given for factual information and opinions of the writer must be clearly identified as such. This newsletter will be posted online, so be very careful about listing your sources and getting permission for reprints. The editor has the final say on content, format and

deadlines. Items for the newsletter should be addressed to the Editor, c/o RCHS, P.O. Box 7823, Fredericksburg, VA 22404 or e-mailed to nana4979@comcast.net.

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E D U C A T I O N C O M M I T T E E

On May 7th, RCHS participated in Grafton Elementary School's Colonial Day. After breakfast, we all enjoyed watching members of the U.S. Army Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps perform and talk about their uniforms and instruments. Then we taught many groups of students to dance "The Morning

Gazette" and the proper way to honor their dance partners.

On June 1st, we participated in Holy Family Catholic School's Colonial Day. Residents from 1770s Fredericksburg and Stafford County shared stories about their lives and the impact of the Stamp Act of 1765. Mrs. Morag

McGonagle (Catherine Bell), Mr. William Allison (Trip Wiggins), Miss Patience FitzEfferie (Elaine Sturgeon), Miss Amelia Ball (Sandra Piercey) and Mrs. Charlotte McPherson (Naomi McPherson) shared stories about living and working in the Fredericksburg area.

V I S I T T O T H E J A M E S M O N R O E M U S E U M



Left to right: Bob Serafini, Sandra Piercey, Elaine Sturgeon, Eve Blackwell, Jim Eppes, Lynne Eppes, Jo Buchanan, Denise Beavers, Lyn Padgett and Joyce Matherly.

Photo by Naomi McPherson.

On April 10th, 22 members of RCHS enjoyed a tour of the exhibit "Our Face to the World: The Clothing of James and Elizabeth Monroe." Meghan Budinger, Assistant Director & Curator of the James Monroe Museum and Memorial Library, talked to us about the collection, the work that was done and answered many, many questions.

Laura Castro-Gilchrist was the lucky recipient of our "door prize"—an exhibit catalog.

R C H S T E A

JUST ARRIVED

A NEW SHIPMENT OF RCHS BLEND TEA

The sales of RCHS Blend Tea at our Spring Tea were overwhelming and as a result many potential buyers were disappointed as the tea ran out before they could make their purchases.

I have just taken delivery of fresh order of tea and if you or a friend are interested in purchasing our special RCHS Tea blend (served at all our

teas), please contact me and I will fill your order as expeditiously as possible.

RCHS Tea, in 4-ounce bags, is available for \$8.00 per bag.

Call Lyn Padgett at 703/681-5526 (days) or 540/841-7275 (evenings).

Ordinaries (continued from page 1)

That changed rapidly. Slower change came to the signs of the taverns. The hand-carved/forged masterpieces by local gilders, painters-stainers, smiths, and joiners remain to this day a “sign of the times.”

Some of the fixed prices established by the Spotsylvania County justices in 1731 contained: (you could pay in money or tobacco).

Item / Money / Tobacco in Pounds

Diet (the meal)	1s	10
Lodging (featherbed with clean sheets)	7½s	6
Lodging (flock bed with clean sheets)	3s	2½
Rum (gallon)	8s	80
Punch (quart)	1s	10
Madiera (quart)	2s6p	25
Bristol Beer (quart)	1s3p	12½

Note: s = shilling, p = pence

Another important aspect of the tavern was its role in bringing the news to the local inhabitants. The keeper regularly met with travelers of all types at his establishment and kept abreast of all the happenings in the area and throughout the colonies. Often they were appointed (or acted) as the local postmaster. Locals would come for a drink, pick up their mail and learn of the strife in Massachusetts. It was rapidly becoming the social center for the gentlemen of the area.

So what did we have in the immediate area?

The first tavern to be licensed in Spotsylvania County was owned by John Finlason, in Germanna, who was awarded his license on Nov., 4, 1722. He was also required to provide “lodging, Diett, and provisions” for the county justices,

and their horses, while court was in session. It did NOT include strong liquors! For this Finlason would be paid the proscribed rate. He was also appointed jailer of the county jail and supplied food for the prisoners.

One of the earliest ordinaries in the Fredericksburg area was operated on the current Sophia Street by Dr. William Livingston in 1727. He was operating it from his home and rolling house very near to where Barefoot Greens is now located even before there was a Fredericksburg as people were using the area to load tobacco on ships. Where men congregate to do work, entrepreneurs will fill the void, and he did. When he died in 1728 his wife, Susannah, continued the operation for some time. It was during this time that the county court moved to Fredericksburg and similar arrangements were made with Mrs. Livingston. It was in operation as late as 1732.

Between 1730 and 1755 over 50 taverns were granted licenses in Spotsylvania County alone.

The four big taverns of the area were the Gordon’s Tavern, Weedon’s Tavern, Long Ordinary, and the Rising Sun Tavern. They collectively cover an era of roughly 100 years but the four never all operated at the same time.

With the establishment of Fredericksburg in 1727/8 that great businessman Henry Willis got the ball rolling. He started with a ferry service across the river and to keep his customers happy built a tavern. His operations were centered near the modern intersection of Sophia and Wolfe Streets. His really great tavern credit was his bringing a

small tavern owner to the newly created (but unpopulated) town. That man was John Gordon.

Gordon had built a tavern in Germanna in 1728, (the year Finlason moved to current Lignum area). While there he also inherited Finlason’s old job of jailer. Willis convinced him of the potential of the waterfront community and Gordon came east and in 1735 built his Gordon’s Tavern on the north side of William Street between Sophia and Caroline. He was a hit with the few locals. By the time he died (1750) his tavern had developed the reputation as THE place to go in the small community being on the waterfront and only two blocks from the court house. It was where the area’s gentlemen congregated to discuss the day’s events, and to eat, drink and be merry. His wife Margaret continued the operation after his death and it was arranged that when his two daughters were married, the tavern would be sold and the profits to be divided among them and their mother.

Here we join George Weedon. Raised as a gentleman from King George and recently returned from service in the French and Indian War he was not content to return to life on the plantation. It was 1760 and he enjoyed life in the town. Gordon’s was where he and his fellow veterans gathered to swap war stories and discuss politics. Here George became interested in running a tavern. Here, too, he met his wife, Kitty, daughter of John Gordon. They were married and in the mid 60s he finally purchased the tavern from Margaret and renamed it Weedon’s Tavern. (Gordon’s other daughter, Isabella,

married another war veteran and newcomer to town, Dr. Hugh Mercer, thus making George and Hugh brothers-in-law!

Weedon continued in the success of Gordon and expanded. He brought in a billiards table, had a card room, and even was a founding member of the Fredericksburg Jockey Club, a horse racing organization headquartered at Weedon's, of course. (One regular customer was William Fitzhugh of Chatham who may have been the town pool shark as he reportedly had the only other billiards table in the area. He was also a founder of the Jockey Club and often raced his horses.) Weedon's Tavern remained the social center of town for many years.

In the early 70s, Weedon's was the place where the talk of "revolution" was heard most fervently; Weedon himself being the most vocal. With the advent of the Revolution Weedon sought service in the Army and rented his tavern to William Smith. Smith never quite lived up to the reputation Weedon had established and the business slowly went down hill.

Following the war Weedon closed the tavern and moved back in to the building as his home. He again rented it out in 1784 to Nathaniel Twining; later to James Pottinger; in '88 to John Benson; Mrs. Hackley; and Thomas Clark. The tavern was destroyed with much of the rest of the town in the fire of 1807 after serving the town as the premier tavern for over 70 years.

While Gordon was enjoying his success others decided to try their lot. The most successful was the Long Ordinary. It was in operation

by 1740 at the NW corner of Caroline and Hanover Streets, right behind the court house. As they say in real estate, "location, location, location!" That it had. Where Weedon hosted the area's gentry, Long was the tavern for all in town on court business; and there were always plenty. Members and petitioners of the court made a point to stop by after court for refreshment. Additionally it hosted meetings of the Vestry of St. George's and thereby earned a special respect in the community. Unlike the more-successful Gordon's, it had a series of owners/keepers starting with Joseph Colvert.

John Thornton purchased it in 1741 and sold it in 1744 to take over the management of Col. John Lewis' store. It was again sold in 1752 by owner Charles Colson who then moved to the "five-mile fork" area and opened yet another tavern. It disappears from records in the 1770s or early 80s. There is some conjecture that it too was destroyed by a fire. Colson is also remembered for bringing horse racing to the area in 1751 while he owned Long's.

The Rising Sun is the last survivor. It began as the home of Charles Washington, brother of George, about 1760. He sold it when he moved to Charles Town, VA (West Virginia), about 1780. It was built in the "new" upper section of Fredericksburg, and there remains. In 1792 the house was leased to John Frazier who operated it as the Golden Eagle Tavern. Later, under various owners, it was also operated as the Eagle Tavern. Finally in 1821, the new owner

named it the Rising Sun Tavern, the name it kept until reverting back to a private home just 6 years later.

These may be the big ones remembered, but there were more. Many more. By 1743 there were also taverns in Fredericksburg operated by John Doncastle, Joseph Bell, and Patrick Dowdall. John Allan, the first sub-division builder, was running a tavern in 1741.

In 1749, John and Barbara Jones opened Jones' Tavern on the NW corner of Caroline and Amelia Streets. John died in 1752 and Barbara continued operating it until her death in 1763. They accommodated overnight visitors with four beds. They were also one of the first gathering places for the newly formed chapter of the Masonic Lodge.

Charles Julian and wife Phoebe (daughter of Barbara Jones) opened his ordinary across from Jones, on the NE corner of Caroline and Amelia Streets in 1752. He joined the Masons in 1756 after which the Lodge began meeting "at brother Julian's." Following his death in 1763, Phoebe operated the business as Julian's Coffee House.

The Jones Tavern building was leased by Dr. Hugh Mercer. Following the departure of his first partner, Dr. Ewen Clements, he joined in partnership with Dr. John Julian, the son of Charles and Phoebe Julian and the grandson of Barbara Jones. Both the Jones' and Julian's taverns burned in the great fire of 1807.

At the SW corner of Caroline and Fauquier Streets was the Brown Tavern in the 1780s. Other operators of taverns in the

(continued on page 8)

EVENTS OF INTEREST IN THE AREA

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

Oct. 16 & 17 – Autumn 18th Century Market Fair, Claude Moore Colonial Farm, McLean. 11:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Go to www.1771.org for more information. \$

Oct. 18 – 22nd Annual James Monroe Lecture, “James Monroe and the Communications Revolution in the Early Republic.” Great Hall, UMW. 7:00 p.m. Presented by Richard John, Professor in the Columbia University Graduate School of

Journalism. Visit www.umw.edu/jamesmonroe museum for more info. FREE

Oct. 23, 24, 30 & 31 – Here Lieth the Body: Death in 18th-Century Virginia: Rippon Lodge Historic Site. 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. See Rippon Lodge draped in black crepe as family members mourn the 1757 death of Richard Blackburn. Learn about 18th-century mourning customs and visit the Rippon Lodge cemetery where Richard and his family are buried. Call 703/792-5546 for more info. \$

Oct. 30-31– 8th Annual Cemetery Tours, Fredericksburg. Tours on

Sat. at 11:00 a.m., 12:45 and 2:30 p.m. Tours on Sun. at 1:00 and 2:45 p.m. Board the trolley in front of the Fredericksburg Visitor Center and tour the Masonic Cemetery, the Gordon/Washington cemetery and the St. George’s Episcopal Church cemetery with RCHS. \$

Nov. 6 – Scotchtown Fall Festival. 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Celebrate the harvest with colonial crafts, games and food. Enjoy demonstrations of hearth cooking, candle dipping, spinning, wood carving, basket weaving and more. Call 804/227-3500 for information. \$



Visit us at www.RCHSinc.org



Ordinaries (continued from page 7)

Fredericksburg area in the 1740s include: John Anderson, Joseph Bell, William Black, Joseph Calvert, Andrew Crawford, George Doggett, John Edwards, and Thomas Thornton.

In Stafford County, one of the big taverns was Peyton’s, operated by Yelverton Peyton from the 1760s until his death in 1794/5. It continued operations under his widow well into the 19th century.

Taverns have taken an important role in the development of America. Serving travelers with food and rest, a place in the local area for entertainment, and a hotbed of political discussions. They were not isolated to only Boston, Philadelphia, New York and

Williamsburg. Look around and discover for yourself of the interesting people and events that took place right in your own back yard!

For more information, please check out these at the Central Rappahannock Regional Library:

Eby, Jerrilynn. *They Called Stafford Home.*

Felder, Paula. *Forgotten Companions.*

Felder, Paula. *Fielding Lewis and the Washington Family.*

Mansfield, James. *A History of Early Spotsylvania.*

Ward, Harry M. *Duty, Honor or Country: General George Weedon and the American Revolution*