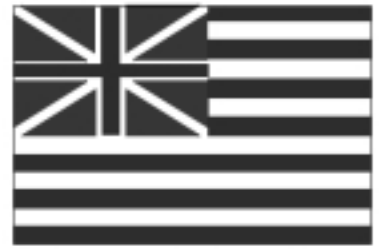




# **THE RAPPAHANNOCK GAZETTE**



---

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

*Volume 5 Number 1*

*Summer 2002*

---



*Federal Hill*

## **The Brooke Family of Fredericksburg**

*by Trip Wiggins*

It seems that wherever you look in 18<sup>th</sup> century Virginia several families are top-heavy with public-minded citizens. The Washingtons, Lees, Taliaferros, Lewises - they are everywhere.

This month we'll look at another family of overachievers who have been all-but-forgotten to all but the most studious of historians. I speak of the Brooke family of "Smithfield." (I can see you scratching your head - Brooke? - never heard of them except for Brooke Road and the Brooke station on the VRE.) Come, let's have a look at this most interesting family.

We start our journey with Robert Brooke, Sr. of Essex county. Robert was born circa 1655 in Essex county and died about 1718. (At the time of his birth Essex stretched all the way to the Blue Ridge - there being no Spotsylvania or Fredericksburg.) He married Catherine Booth of Old Rappahannock county and the couple had five children. Robert, as was the custom of large landowners, was elected Justice of the Peace (today's County Commissioner and Judge rolled into one) for sixteen years and briefly served as the county coroner.

His first son, Robert Jr., made his name as the Surveyor for the Colony and as such accompanied Governor Alexander Spotswood's journey of the "Knights of the Golden Horseshoe" to the top of the Blue Ridge mountains. Major Robert Brooke then established his home at "Farmers Hall" in Essex county.

He and wife Phoebe had four sons (Robert III, William, Humphrey, and Richard). Robert died in 1744. While all of his sons were worthy in their own right, we'll concentrate on Richard and his family.

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.*



**2001 RCHS OFFICERS**

- President:** Trip Wiggins  
*Trip Wig@aol.com*
- Vice-President:**
- Secretary:** Catherine Bell  
*scot.forlife@verizon.net*
- Treasurer:** Al Piercey  
*pierceyunderthehill@yahoo.com*

**THE PRESIDENT'S PEN**



Hello all and welcome to summer. It's HOT and a great time to spend some time indoors doing some research on our fair community and its inhabitants. The year is already half over and it seems it just began!

But this spring hasn't been too hot for many of us to get INVOLVED with RCHS activities. Dancing continues at a brisk pace, the James Monroe Block Party was another huge success, the Colonial Days at Grafton Elementary was just plain fun for all, and of course June culminated with the wedding of our own Al and Sandra. (More later on that).

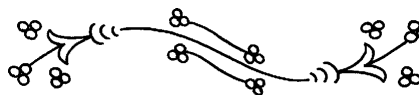
What's coming up? A tea, a dance workshop for the Dumfries Colonial Days kids camp, and we already have two events scheduled for September. We are ACTIVE and it shows. For that, I must doff my hat to all of you who participate and make history come alive. A big thank you.

I believe I owe all an update on the Federal Hill saga. Back in the winter the society voted to assist in preserving this historic Fredericksburg Georgian mansion with a cash gift for preservation. At the time the house was tied up in a legal fight between the executor of the estate (representing the deceased owner) and the rest of the deceased's family who were fighting the will that was to turn Federal Hill into a museum. We had a court date on April 1 and the family got the nod of the court and

the estate is targeted to be handed over to Kenmore to handle to sell for the family. The executor has filed an appeal, but its prognosis is poor – so barring unforeseen court actions, the house will be sold and the money given to the family. We'll await the final outcome but it appears it's a "done deal." All I can say is that many citizens of Fredericksburg and the surrounding communities tried to preserve this stately mansion and all can hold their heads high in that noble attempt!

Finally, I urge any and all to get out there on these hot days, go to a cool library, do some good research on some facet of the colonial area and submit your work to this newsletter. YOU are the Rappahannock Colonial Heritage Society, and this is your newsletter.

Until next time,  
 I remain your most humble servant,  
 Trip



**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 Myra Wiggins 540-371-3906. We rehearse at St. George's Episcopal Church, 905 Princess Anne St. Our next rehearsals are:

August 9 & 23  
 September 13 & 27

*Upcoming Demonstrations*

- July 31 - Weems-Botts Museum Day Camp
- September 7 - St. William of York Catholic Church, Stafford
- September 14 - Hospice-tality, Elks Lodge, Tidewater Trail across from Shannon Airport---12 noon



## EVENTS OF INTEREST IN THE AREA

### Sept 8, Oct 13 - Women on the Plantation

**Tours. Gunston Hall.** 12noon, 1:30pm & 3pm. Learn what it was like to be a woman-gentry, middling or enslaved on Virginia & Maryland plantations.

**Aug. 17, Sept 21, Oct 19 - Hidden History Archaeology Tours. Gunston Hall.** 12noon, 1:30pm & 3pm. Follow archaeologists through excavation sites and learn about the mysterious and fascinating work of uncovering "hidden history".

**Aug 17, Sept 28, Oct 26 - Hoofs & Feathers Farmyard Tours. Gunston Hall.** 12noon, 1:30pm & 3pm. Come meet some rare historic breeds & help out with farm chores. Feed the animals & work the fields with reproduction tools.

**August 3 - Saturday Chore. Claude Moore Farm.** 1-4pm. Help the farm family with a seasonal chore.

**Aug 4, Sept 1, Oct 6 - Slave Life Tours. Gunston Hall.** 12noon, 1:30pm & 3pm. Learn about the slaves at Gunston Hall, including stories of people who ran away. Costumed interpreters discuss slave rations and cook foods typically eaten by slaves.

**Aug. 10 - African-American Slavery. George Washington's Birthplace National Monument.** Costumed interpreters will demonstrate the life and culture of enslaved African-Americans.

**Aug 15 - Historic Garden Symposium. Gunston Hall.** 9am-4pm. Advance registration required. Call 703-550-9220. \$75

**August 18 - Tobacco Harvest. Claude Moore Farm.** 10am-4pm. Help the farmer clean the leaves and watch how he cuts and splits the stems. Help gather the cut plants and hang them on tobacco sticks to cure.

**Sept. 7 - Saturday Chore. Claude Moore Farm.** 1-4pm. Help the farm family with a seasonal chore.

**Sept. 13 & 14. Fall Garage & Plant Sale. Claude Moore Farm.** 9am-1pm. Garage Sale items include books, clothing, household items, small appliances and a glorious conglomeration of bits and pieces. All proceeds benefit the Farm's educational programs.

**Sept. 17 - Constitution Day. Montpelier.** Celebrate the birthday of our nation's charter.

**Sept 15 - Constitution Commemoration. George Washington's Birthplace National Monument.** Visitors will be invited to sign a parchment replica of the Constitution as part of a nationwide observance.

**Sept 29 - Harvest Festival. Gunston Hall.** Press apples into cider, make your own candle, learn about basket weaving. 12-4pm. \$8 adults, \$7seniors, \$4 students grade 1-12, free under 6 yr old.

**Sept. 21 - Rail Burning; an evening event. Claude Moore Farm.** 5-7:30pm. Help the farm family and neighbors build a bonfire from rotten fence rails, which will make good ash to enrich the fields.

**Sept 22 - Autumn Evening: "The Washington-Madison Friendship". Montpelier.** Lecture by Stuart Leibiger, prof. of history at LaSalle Univ. & author of *Founding Friendship: George Washington, James Madison, and the Creation of the American Republic.*

## WEB SITES FOR LISTED EVENTS

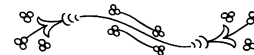
< -----

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

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

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

Claude Moore Colonial Farm  
[www.1771.org](http://www.1771.org)



## The Rappahannock Colonial Heritage Society

invites you to  
'take Tea'

on

October 19

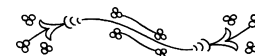
in the Year of our Lord

Two Thousand and Two

at the hour of

One of the Clock.

Please join our costumed hostesses as they discuss the latest issues of the 18th Century. Please attend at Saint George's Episcopal Church 905 Princess Anne Street in downtown Fredericksburg. Call 540-898-2113 for reservations. Seating is limited. \$15.00 per person.



## The Brooke Family of Fredericksburg

### Richard Brooke of "Smithfield"

Richard was the youngest of Robert and Phoebe's sons. He was born in 1732 at "Farmers Hall" in Essex county. He must have inherited well for he was able to marry into the Taliaferro family - a powerful family in the middle reaches of the Rappahannock valley. In fact, to paraphrase the old Smith-Barney commercial - he made his money the old fashioned way, he inherited and married into it!

In the 1750s he married Ann Hay Taliaferro (born Sept. 7, 1731), the daughter of Francis Taliaferro of "Epsom" in Spotsylvania county. Richard and Ann had four boys (Laurence 1758-1803, Robert 1761-1800, Francis 1763-1851, & John 1763-1822) and one daughter, (Elizabeth ?-1800). Francis and John were twins.

"Smithfield" was purchased by Francis Taliaferro from the Grayson family. It was said to be the location of the fort built on the banks of the Rappahannock in 1675 by Captain Lawrence Smith for the protection of the settlers from the Indians. On Taliaferro's death in 1757 it passed to his daughter Ann who established her family there with her marriage to Richard Brooke and named the estate "Smithfield" probably in memory of Captain Lawrence Smith. "Smithfield" was located at today's Fredericksburg Country Club.

As son Francis would say in his later years, "My father had an excellent family library. I was fond of reading history - read Hume's History of England, Robertson's History of Charles V, some of British poets (Shakespeare, Dryden, Pope, etc.) and most of the literature of Queen Anne's reign and even Blackstone's commentaries before I had determined to study law."

While Richard never served as a Burgess, he was elected to St. George's vestry in 1757 (replacing his recently deceased father-in-law, Francis Taliaferro!) - on which he served for his life. He was the Senior Warden for that body on three occasions (1758, 1760, & 1767). He was probably a Justice for Spotsylvania (most members of the vestry were) but that has yet to be confirmed by the author.

His beloved Ann died, probably in the 1770s, and Richard soon remarried - this time to Ann's first cousin, Sarah Taliaferro. To this union one child, William, was born.

With the outbreak of rebellion, Richard, 54, still found a couple of ways to be involved. Both had to do with the Gunnery that was operated by fellow-vestrymen Fielding Lewis and Charles Dick. The land (below the old Walker-Grant school) was purchased by Brooke in 1772 from the estate of Roger Dixon. He sold the land to the state about 1777 for the Gunnery works and then was contracted to build the Powder Magazine at the Gunnery. (He, like many other patriots, was never "paid in full" for his efforts.)

Richard died in 1792 in Fredericksburg.

### The Children of Richard...

Laurence (also spelled Lawrence) was the eldest son, born in 1758 at "Smithfield." At age 16, he and 13-year-old brother

Robert were sent abroad to study at the University of Edinburgh. While there they studied medicine but never graduated. Their studies were cut short with the war and in 1778 the lads left Scotland and journeyed to France to seek transport home. While in Paris Laurence became acquainted with Captain John Paul Jones and was appointed the surgeon of Jones' ship, the *Bonhomme Richard*. (His brother, Francis "Frank" Brooke stated that Laurence met with none other than Benjamin Franklin to secure his appointment. One family legend states that Jones had first met the Brooke family when Jones resided in Fredericksburg prior to the war to settle his brother's [William Paul] estate in 1774. Alas, this is nowhere reliably recorded.)

Following the famed battle against the HMS *Serapis*, Brooke had had his fill of amputations and death and resigned his commission and left Jones' service. He remained in Paris until 1780 probably furthering his study of medicine. He returned to "Smithfield" by August 1780, established a practice of Physick, married Frances Thornton (died Nov 1795) and had two daughters. He resided with his family in a house at 303 Caroline street rented from Joseph Jones. He was actively engaged in the smallpox epidemic of 1790 and died in Fredericksburg in 1803. His grave is unlocated.

Francis Taliaferro "Frank" Brooke was born with his twin, John, in 1763 at "Smithfield." He was a typical young man of the gentry who enjoyed having as much fun as possible, but had a tough time deciding on a career. While a lad of only 16, he like many of his class, received an officer's commission and fought the British as part of Harrison's Artillery (with his twin, John). He returned home to "Smithfield" after the war in August 1783 having served four years. As he said, "I wasted two or three years in fox-hunting, and sometimes in racing..." He tried medicine with Laurence for about a year then switched to the study of law on his brother, Robert's advice. Virginia was fortunate that Robert guided him into the law.

He excelled in law and, like brothers John and Robert, jumped into politics and elected office. He found law and public service stimulating and progressed up the ladder quickly. He started as an attorney in Morgantown, and quickly was appointed Attorney for the Commonwealth.

In 1790-91 he met and subsequently married Mary Randolph Spotswood, daughter of Gen. Alexander Spotswood, great-granddaughter of Gov. Spotswood, grandniece of Gen. George Washington. They were married in October 1791 and had four children - one a career Navy surgeon, one an Army officer and member of the House of Delegates. Mary died on Jan. 5, 1803 during childbirth.

As the custom, he remained a widower only a short time. He had a house full of kids to raise. He met and married Mary Champe Carter the following year (Feb 14, 1804). Eventually Frank purchased land near New Post and built "St. Julien" as the home for his expanding family. (Frank and Mary had two sons and one daughter.)

The 1790s really got Frank into public service. He was twice elected a Delegate from Essex (1794, '95) and moved back to Fredericksburg to take over Robert's law practice as he

was elected Governor. In 1800, Frank was elected to the state Senate and was subsequently elected its Speaker - the second most powerful office in the state (some would say the most powerful). Like his brother, Robert, he was a Jeffersonian Republican (a party that would become the Democrats in the 20<sup>th</sup> century). In 1804 he was appointed a Judge with the General Court and promoted to the Court of Appeals (later reorganized as the Supreme Court) in 1811 - a post he held until his death, one of the longest tenures in the state's history. He was a life-long friend of Henry Clay.

He remained active in military affairs also. In 1796 he was appointed a Major in the Virginia cavalry, in 1800 a Lt. Colonel, and in 1802 a Brigadier general.

His dear Mary died Oct. 25, 1846 after 42 years together and he followed her nearly 4 1/2 years later on March 3, 1851 and is buried at "St. Julien."

John Taliaferro Brooke is the least documented of the four sons - yet even he had a most interesting career. As was stated previously, he too received a commission at age 16 and served with his twin, Francis, in Harrison's Artillery in the war.

Following the war he returned to the Fredericksburg area and began the study of law with his older brother, Robert. He was partnered with James Monroe during Monroe's tenure in Fredericksburg. The politics bug bit him too and he was elected a member of the House of Delegates in 1793. His fellow Spotsylvania delegate was his brother Robert. As he was leaving office in 1794, his twin was being admitted to that house, so for one brief instant all three brothers were Delegates. He bowed out of politics for several years but re-entered when he was established in Stafford county representing that county in the House from 1805 to 1808.

John married Ann Cary Mercer Seldon of "Salvington" in Stafford county. Ann was related to the Mercers of "Marlborough" and the Masons of "Gunston Hall." ("Salvington" was directly across Potomac Creek from "Marlborough.") John and Mary had five children. John then left law and politics and entered into banking and was the founder and first president of the local Farmer's Bank. His bank building still stands on the corner of Princess Anne and George streets, renamed years later as the National Bank of Fredericksburg. John died unexpectedly in April 1821.

Richard and Ann Brooke had but one daughter, Elizabeth or "Betty." As with most women of the period, little is recorded of her aside of her brother's memoirs written late in his life. In it he says she was courted by no less than Capt. (later Gen'l.) William Washington and Major Churchill Jones (later owner of "Chatham"). His heart and hand were won, though, by Fontaine Maury, son of the Huguenot immigrant. They were married in Fredericksburg on Nov. 18, 1785 and had several children. Elizabeth died relatively young on April 22, 1800 - just two months after her famous brother, Robert.

Of note, their grandson, Dabney Herndon Maury, was a General in the Confederate States Army during the Civil War.

Before going into the life of Robert, we'll take a quick glance at William, the only son of Richard and his second wife

Sarah Taliaferro. William, born too late to be engaged in the war with England, followed his half-brothers into the practice of law in the area. He married Eleanor Smith, daughter of Col. Larkin Smith, and was appointed executor of his father-in-law's estate. William died young, but no death date or grave has been identified.

### **Gov. Robert Brooke**

We now turn our attention to Richard's final son - Robert. Robert was born at "Smithfield" about 1761 and with his older brother attended the University of Edinburgh (1774-77) studying medicine. Neither brother graduated from the University. His brother Francis said that Robert was captured returning from Scotland, and sent via New York back to Great Britain. He again made his way to France and eventually returned to Virginia in 1780. Quite an adventure for a teenager!

Once here, he volunteered in a cavalry unit under Capt. Larkin Smith. (Yes, the same Larkin Smith whose daughter would marry Robert's half-brother, William!) In 1781 he, with several of his fellow cavalymen, were captured in an engagement with the enemy at Westham just above Richmond during Cornwallis' invasion into Virginia. Robert was probably paroled for he is next found in Spotsylvania opening his law practice in the fall of that year. (Perhaps he studied law in Scotland but not at the University or in Paris before returning to Virginia. His formal education is unrecorded.)

By 1785 he moved from Spotsylvania to the hustling little town of Fredericksburg and took in his brother John as a partner. In the late 1780s he purchased a small farm west of Fredericksburg and built his home there in the mid 1790s. That home was later named "Federal Hill" - but "Federal" is not a term that Robert would use, as you'll soon discover.

In 1786 Robert found time to court and marry Mary Ritchie Hopper, the new widow of William Hopper who had died in Dec. 1785. Robert and Mary had but one child, Richard, born Aug. 14, 1787 in Fredericksburg.

Robert was the first of the brothers to leap into politics when he was elected as a Delegate from Spotsylvania in 1791. He was returned by the voters for three subsequent terms (1792-94) and had the distinction of serving with his brother John as the two Spotsylvania Delegates in 1793. (Brother Frank would be elected in 1794.)

Throughout the 1780s and into the '90s a new word was creeping into politics. That was "party." Up to that time men tended to run for office based on their reputation in their community or their stand on local issues. As the country grew, there became a gulf separating how issues were viewed. Into the camp of George Washington, a supporter of a strong central government, was given the term "Federalist." Into the camp promoting stronger rights for the states and fewer for the federal government was the terms "Anti-Federalist" or "Republican" - led by Thomas Jefferson.

In 1794 the Republicans controlled the Virginia Assembly. It was into this that the Whiskey Rebellion erupted in Pennsylvania. Essentially it was started over a federal tax on grain and since in western Pennsylvania converted much of their grain to Whiskey, the local distillers did not like the idea of a federal tax on their livelihood. With their vocal protests, Alexander Hamilton persuaded President Washington to send

## Brooke (con't)

out 15,000 soldiers to quell the disturbance. Command of the troops was given to a Virginian - Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee. Unfortunately for Lee, he was also the Governor of Virginia. The Republicans in the Assembly balked at Virginians being sent to Pennsylvania for what was obviously a state - and not a national - emergency.

Lee's (a Federalist) acceptance of a national commission was suddenly a "hot-button" issue. Republicans claimed that Lee had violated the statute prohibiting men from holding both state and federal offices simultaneously, so they no longer considered him their governor. (Never mind that his term would expire at the end of the year anyway.)

So the Republicans held the power and used the occasion to put one of their own in the Governor's office. But who?

Throughout the '90s, Robert Brooke had made a name for himself in the Assembly. He held leadership posts on several powerful committees including: Committee of Privileges and Elections (Chairman), Committee of Propositions and Grievances (ranking member), Committee of Religion (ranking member), Committee of Courts (ranking member), and Committee of Claims. Brooke was to be the Republican's man.

The election of Nov 1794 showed a distinct break with the past. Now, for the first time, a Governor was to be elected for his stand on national issues. Brooke was chosen by the Assembly by a 90-60 margin over James Wood, a political neutral. "Party politics" had busted down the door in Virginia - and Brooke was its new spokesman.

His two years in office were relatively quiet. (The Assembly, years previously, had granted few powers to the Governor remembering the excesses of the Royal Governors. It was still mostly a ceremonial post.) Brooke was faced with a few dilemmas, though.

There was the outbreak of Yellow Fever in the state in 1795. There were the typical problems with the Indians on the western frontier. And then there were the French and the English.

Our revolution was long over, but the French and English were, it seems, constantly at war. This time it was over the French West Indies. Again, politics entered the picture. The Federalists tended to back the English (unofficially) but officially enacted the Act of Neutrality. The Republicans desired to assist their French friends who so ably assisted us during our own war with England. The Act of Neutrality infuriated the Republicans.

Ships were transporting food and material from Virginia ports to the French. At the same time English ships were buying horses and accoutrements in Virginia (officially not for use by their military). The situation was getting tense. Finally the Governor told the English to leave and not return. The dilemma quieted and eventually became a non-issue.

He must have been doing an acceptable job for the Assembly re-elected him in Nov. 1795 for a second one-year term.

Personal tragedy befell Brooke in 1796 with the death of his wife on May 5<sup>th</sup>. He also had some highlights while in office. A life-long Mason, he was elected the grand master of the Grand Lodge of Virginia in Nov. 1795 succeeding John Marshall (destined to be Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court).

Additionally during his administration the first charter was given to an insurance company to operate in Virginia, the U.S. Bank was authorized to establish a branch in the state, and Hampton-Sydney College was established.

In the fall of '96 most of the Assembly anticipated the return of Patrick Henry into politics and the Governor's office. To clear the way for him they elected Brooke to the post of Attorney General (over another regional favorite son, Bushrod Washington, also destined to sit on the nation's highest court). Then Henry announced that he would not seek office, and the Governorship was given to James Wood, Brooke's Lt Governor.

As Attorney General, Brooke made no substantial changes but had one rising-star apprentice who went into national politics - Henry Clay, who remained a close friend of Francis Brooke the rest of their lives. As Brooke was vacating the Governor's office, the Assembly honored him with the naming of one of the western counties for him. Now a part of West Virginia, Brooke county is situated in the panhandle of West Virginia between Pennsylvania and Ohio.

By the summer of 1798 Brooke was heavily in debt but through the efforts of his friend James Monroe and brother-in-law Fontaine Maury he was well on his way to solvency. It was then that he sold his beloved home in Fredericksburg.

Just 38 years old, Robert died in Fredericksburg on Feb. 27, 1800. His final resting place remains a mystery. There are no known portraits of the Governor, but there remains a portrait of his son who is said to be in the image of Robert also. Its location is also a mystery.

What would Robert have become in the Virginia and national political scene is a question that will have to remain unanswered. One thing is almost certain - he wouldn't have retired from politics at his young age.

In the end, what's most remarkable about the Brooke family is that they were not a remarkable family but more of the norm in an era of public-minded families. There were things that had to be done in order for Virginia and the colonies to be independent and a nation and it was families like the Brookes, with the right mix of education, means, and desire who saw it as their duty to do their fair share and much more. Thank you, Richard Brooke and your sons for being so public spirited and giving us the Commonwealth of Virginia and the United States of America.

### Sources:

Sara Bearss (Editor), Dictionary of Virginia Biography (Vol. 2), 2001  
Richard Bosco, Lawrence Brooke: Surgeon of the BonHomme Richard (manuscript), ca 1980  
Francis T. Brooke, A Narrative of My Life: For My Family, 1849  
Richard Beeman, The Old Dominion and the New Nation 1788-1791, 1972  
Oscar Darter, Colonial Fredericksburg and Neighborhood in Perspective, 1957  
Paula Felder, Forgotten Companions, 2000  
Paula Felder, Fielding Lewis and the Washington Family, a Chronicle of 18<sup>th</sup> Century Fredericksburg, 1999  
Lemuel W. Houston, A Bank for Fredericksburg, 1989  
Cynthia Leonard (compiler), The General Assembly of Virginia, July 30, 1619 - Jan 11, 1778, 1978  
Norman Risjord, Chesapeake Politics 1781-1800, 1978  
Virginia Herald, various dates  
St. George Brooke, Brooke Family, William and Mary Quarterly Journal, Vols 13-19, various dates

## LETTERS FROM FRIENDS

My dear Brother Jonathan,

I am sure it was with much regret that you had to miss the festivities surrounding the marriage of Mr. Hardia, our local factor and his betrothed, the Widow Stoler, our resident Milliner. I will make an attempt to describe the events of the evening to you. As you know the wedding took place the Saturday of instant last June 1 at half past the hour of six in Mr. Hardia's Garden. The Right Rev. Marye must have had some difficulty with his horse as he arrived after the appointed time and the lovely Widow Stoler had to wait to be joyned in Holy Matrimony. After the Rev. Marye's arrival the wedding did precede as planned by the Widow Stoler. I know that Men have not the love of details in clothing as Women but



her Gown was a new Sacque that she had stitched as you would expect for this occasion. The Sacque was a lovely cream silke with purple and yellow embroidered flowers and her petticoat was a brilliant purple silk. Her hair was up in the latest 'mode' and her Wedding Slippers was exquisite. I know that you will be interested that she has sewn a new Suit for Mr. Hardia. His breeches and waistcoat was also a cream colored silke and his shirt was a fine Irish linen. His frock coat was of the same purple silke as Her petticoat and he also had a new cocked Hat. After those lovely words of joyning - of which you know I have not had that pleasure so that you know I did shed a tear - they signed the marriage license and Mr. Hardia had paid the tax of which we had heard him protest most vehemently and then we adjourned to the groaning board - and it groaned indeed.

There was Ham, Roast Beef, Turkey, and then assorted victuals to accompany it of which most had been brought by their Friends and Families.

There was quite a surfeit of wine and ale but no punch bowl which I thought was most unusual for this occasion. After we was replete with foods Mr. Hardia's sprightly old mother treated us to some fiddle music.

While this is unusual for a woman to do this in public you know that Mr. Hardia's family is as unusual as he but I am sure that Mrs. Hardia nee Stoler will take him firm in hand - as you know that Men need that at times as your lovely wife Mildred Sue will testify - and keep his impulses in check as to the other women because you know he does have that reputation of loving the company of Laydees. There was some dancing but not as much as usual because the weather was very 'close' and the flutter of fans was much in evidence throughout the evening. The event ended around the midnight hour with I believe a good time had by all. Give my warm regards to Mildred Sue and I wish you a safe Journey home soon.

Your loving Sister,  
Christina  
Rollingwood House

Your loving Sister,  
Christina  
Rollingwood House



**From all of us in RCHS -  
Best wishes to  
the Bride and Groom!**

## SUGAR'S ADVENTURES

Written by John Hardia as dictated by Sugar the Parrott

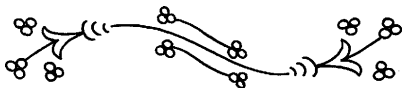
### The Rackety Girl



I think my master was waiting for someone because we were walking back and forth in the same block in the city. It was a beautiful day and it didn't look like rain like it happened once before. Boy, did I get wet that day! While we were waiting a girl came running down the street with a stick racketing along the picket fence. Rackety, rackety, rackety, it was a nice sound and I wish I could do it too. Then she stopped still and stared at me. I have never seen her before and I guess she had never seen me either. She had a big smile on her face and she was so pretty. She said "hello bird" and stuck out her hand and I stepped on to it and was she surprised. She looked at my master and said she was sorry but he never minds it when a pretty girl wants to hold me. She asked lots of questions of my master but she never took her eyes off of me. All of this time I was trying to get the rackety stick. Well finally I get to the stick and climbed on to it. I looked and looked but I couldn't figure out how to make the rackety sound.

After a while the person my master was waiting for came and it was a lady but she was looking at my master and not at me. My master asked the girl if would like to take me for a walk and she said "yes". We walked along the street but we didn't make the rackety sound. We came to a bush with flowers that smelled so good and she gave me some and they had a sweet taste. After a while my master came and took me and we went home. What a nice day.

*(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.)*



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](mailto:maryq@summit.net) or Tina - [purrs4me@wwlnk.net](mailto:purrs4me@wwlnk.net); or call Tina at 540-898-2113.

## Games from the Colonial Period

### Nine Man's Morris



Versions of Nine Man's Morris have been found dating back to ancient Egypt. Also called Merels, the game was very popular in Scandinavia and the British Isles, and is still played today in many parts of the world. Each player alternates placing their nine pegs on the board. If a player places three pieces in a row (called 'forming a mill'), one of their opponent's pieces is removed. Once all the pieces have been placed, players take turns moving any one peg to a vacant adjacent hole.

If a player gets three pieces in a row, again, one of their opponent's pieces is removed. A player wins when only two of their opponent's pieces is left, or when their opponent is blocked from further moves.

*Directions and picture from RTI Heritage Tours website - <http://www.hudert.net/john/games.html>*



## RULES OF CIVILITY

**2d. Gardez-vous bien de toucher de la main aucune partie de vostre corps, de celles qui ne sont point en veue, en la presence d'aucune autre personne. Pour les mains, & le visage, cela leur est ordinaire. Et afin de vous y accoustumer pratiquez ce point de civilite mesme en vostre particulier.**

When in the presence of others, refrain from touching any part of the body that is not usually within view. The hands and face are ordinarily visible. In order to form the habit in this point of etiquette, practice it when you are with your intimate friends.

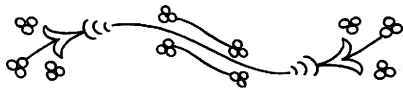


## MEETING RECAP

The July meeting was held on July 2, 2002. During the business meeting, we discussed upcoming events (listed elsewhere in the newsletter), the formation of an events committee to be co-chaired by Sandra Piercey and Tina Buchanan. We will begin planning our fall tea soon. Al & Sandra enjoyed a Trip to Ashville, NC to the Biltmore Mansion. They also stopped at several "old country stores" to check out what things might be available that could be used in our interpretation of the period.

Al offered a short program on what he learned at the Bookkeeping workshop from the Fashion Forum presented by HFFI recently. We hope to continue with other short talks in upcoming meetings.

Jennifer had an announcement to make---there will be a new little one joining their family in January. I'm sure she will have the baby dancing in no time. Congratulations!



## SCOTTISH BLOCK PARTY RECAP

Saturday, April 27 was a warm and sunny day with which to celebrate James Monroe's birthday. The featured attraction was Clan An Drummond from Glasgow, Scotland. A great time was had by all. There was a great turnout by RCHS members. Many thanks to everyone.

The Society donated \$215 from the proceeds to the James Monroe Museum for the restoration of the Monroe piano.



James Monroe Museum

## AMERICAN HISTORY TIDBITS



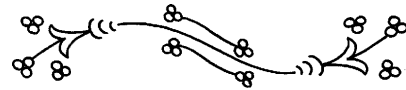
**1752** - Denis Diderot published the first volume of his influential--and eventually 28-volume--*Encyclopedie*.

Francesco Geminiani published *The Art of Playing the Violin*.

**1754** - Francis Hopkinson composed his *Ode to Music*, the first published piece of music by a native-born American.

**1758** - Slaves on William Byrd III's plantation on the Bluestone River in Lunenburg county formed the earliest black church in Virginia.

**1769** - September 14. Benjamin Powell agreed to repair Bruton Parish Church and add the tower for £410.



## 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 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 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 following is an advertisement that was published in the Virginia Herald in 1799. It is advertising the sale of Federal Hill.

The Virginia Herald  
July 30, 1799 pg 4: col 1

To be sold, and possession given the first October next, the house and land adjoining the town of Fredericksburg, formerly the property of Robert Brooke esq. and now in the possession of Mr. John Richards. The dwelling house is large and handsome, two stories high with three rooms and a passage below and above, finished in the highest style, two offices two stories high, with a smoke house, dairy, servants' house, stables, &c. -a good well of water near the house, and 6 acres of fine meadow immediately before the door. -The garden contains 7 acres, is handsomely laid out, with gravel walks and falls. This place for the many beauties and advantages it possesses, is worthy of the attention of any person wishing an elegant situation near the town. The terms will be made known, and a complete title made to the purchaser, by application to the subscriber.

Thomas R. Rootes  
Fredericksburg, July 23, 1799.



Half the Truth is often a great Lie.  
--Benjamin Franklin



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@aol.com](mailto:MyraWig@aol.com).

Copyright 2002 RCHS. The content of the RCHS Newsletter is the property of RCHS, its members and contributors. RCHS is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Donations to the Society are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.