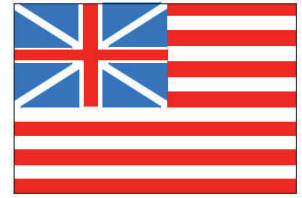




The Rappahannock Gazette

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

Dec. 12 & 13 - Christmas at Stratford Hall Plantation: 4:00-9:00 p.m. EC: Elaine Sturgeon, 540/785-2168.

Dec. 13 & 14 - HFFI Candlelight Tours of Historic Homes: Sentry Box. EC: Catherine Bell, 540/659-5646.

Jan. 3 - Twelfth Night Party: 5:00-11:00 p.m. EC: Catherine Bell, 540/659-5646.

Jan. 6 - Annual Business Meeting: 7:30 p.m., St. George's Church room 300. Chair: Sharon Brunacci, 540/659-2080.

ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCE CLASSES

Dec. 19 - Dance Social

Jan. 2 - Demo

Jan. 9 - Open

Jan. 23 - Open

MEMBERSHIP

As we enjoy the final weeks of 2008, it is also time to start thinking about the year ahead. Society members will find a 2009 Membership/Renewal Application form and envelope enclosed. Please complete and sign the form and return it with a check for your dues—\$10 for individual memberships, \$15 for family memberships. Dues are due at the end of January.

What's new. This year we've added a release, requesting permission to use your name and image on the RCHS Web site, newsletter and in promotional materials. You may choose not to sign this release, but doing so may keep us from using your name and image.

RCHS Bylaws

ARTICLE II - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Membership in RCHS shall be open to any adult upon payment of dues, who subscribes to the purposes and principles of the organization as stated in Article I, and shall continue as a member upon paying the annual dues. Minor children may not join as individuals, but may only be

included in family membership and are not entitled with voting rights. A family membership shall consist of two or more related persons, living in the same household. Initial and annual dues, if any, shall be fixed by majority vote of the members. The method and time of payment of dues shall be determined, and may be changed, from time to time, by majority vote of members present at a regular meeting. **Section 2:** Only adult members (18 and over) present at the annual, monthly or special meeting of the Society shall be entitled to one vote on each matter submitted for a vote of the membership.

Section 3: Membership in RCHS shall be of two classes: Individual or Family.

Section 4: RCHS' fiscal year is January 1 to December 31. The annual membership year shall commence on January 1 and dues are delinquent on February 1. If initial dues are paid after September 1st, they will cover the following year also. Dues

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RCHS COMMITTEE NOTES

EVENTS COMMITTEE

Saturday, January 3**Twelfth Night Party:**

Just a reminder that your entrée selection and money for Twelfth Night should be to Catherine Bell, 2031 Midshipman Drive, Stafford, VA 22554 by December 19.

Directions will be e-mailed to all those attending.

**Tuesday, January 6****Events Committee Meeting:**

The next RCHS Events Committee Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 6 at 6:30 p.m. in St. George's room 300. For more info, please call Lyn Padgett at 703/432-0957.

SEWING COMMITTEE

We are planning three sewing circles. In January we will have a

sloper-making session. (A sloper is a bodice fit perfectly to your body, so that you have a mock up of your body type to make any of our outfits.) In February we will work on sack back gowns (with pleats falling from the back shoulders). In March we will work on English gowns. In preparation, you must purchase all of the materials needed (including thread), wash and press your fabric (if applicable) and then cut it out. More information will be in next month's newsletter. If you have questions, please contact Sharon Brunacci at 540/659-2080.

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

OFFICERS' CORNER

President's Report

The annual RCHS Business Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 6, 2009, at 7:30 p.m. in St. George's room 300. The floor will be open for additional nominations before we elect our officers for 2009. All members are encouraged to attend.

Treasurer's Report

November Balances

Beginning: \$5,789.37

Ending: \$5,603.83

ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCING

English Country Dance classes are usually 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). Due to the holidays and other events, some of the dates have been changed or cancelled. Dance Mistress: Elaine Sturgeon, 540/785-2168 or miselaineus@yahoo.com.

Classes:

Jan. 2 - Demo

Jan. 9 - Open

Jan. 23 - Open

Friday, December 19**Dance Social:**

Begins at 7:00 p.m. Bring your dance shoes and finger foods to share!



Costume: Isabelle d'Elise on 1709. Photo: Saint-Aubin

LET'S MEET OUR NEIGHBORS: CHARLES DICK, GENTLEMAN

By Trip Wiggins

This month we'll meet another interesting member of the Fredericksburg/Spotsylvania community who was an enigma to me for many years, until an e-mail arrived from a descendent who filled in some gaps. Ah, mixing genealogy with colonial history—a perfect match.

In his will, dated July 22, 1779, Charles Dick wrote, "Having for Amusement and Conversation only, never declared my Age, Be it known, I was born October 13, 1715." (Fredericksburg Will Book A, pg. 4.) Of course, he never said WHERE he was born or WHO his parents/siblings were. But he did show a sense of humor.

Well, through my e-mailings with his descendent I have found that Mr. Dick was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, to Thomas and Jean Harvie Dick. Thomas was a merchant and Master of the local merchants guild with eight children. As Charles was the youngest, he had to find a living for himself and decided to try his lot as a merchant in Virginia. His older brother, James, would also immigrate to the area and become a successful merchant in Annapolis.

I'm not sure where Charles first landed in Virginia. He first appears in Fredericksburg in 1743 when he opened a merchant store in a building he rented but was also active just downriver in Caroline Co. As was the case for many merchants trying to collect debts owed, he appears in court records as early as 1744 suing Mr. Robert Tayloe over a two-pound debt. This pattern will continue for many years in various local courts.

In late 1744 he purchased a part of a lot (#51) in Fredericksburg from Scotsman John Allan next to Col. John Lewis' store. Col. Lewis seems to have taken an eye to the 29-year-old Dick and it looks as though Col. Lewis got Dick involved in establishing his own son, Fielding Lewis, as a successful merchant on his own. Dick was not of the "gentry" class, and this was probably a good thing in the Col.'s eyes; many of the gentry who tried to manage stores were not very good at it. But Dick's store was successful almost from the beginning, and as young Fielding Lewis (b. 1725 in Gloucester Co., VA, d. 1781) was learning the trade,

he was also making a lifelong friend, neighbor, mentor and partner in Charles Dick. Lewis may have been the idea man and the leader of the community, but he entrusted Dick to carry out his plans into fruition.

In 1746, Fielding Lewis married Catherine Washington, a cousin of George Washington, and brought his new wife to Fredericksburg. When son John Lewis was born in 1747, Charles Dick was the godfather. To show how tight the family connection will remain, when Fielding's eleventh and last child is born in 1771, the godmothers are Misses Mary and Nelly (Eleanor) Dick—Charles' daughters! The godfather for that last child was Mr. James Mercer, who would soon marry Nelly. Mercer would become a member of the Continental Congress during the Revolution and later a judge in the Virginia Court of Appeals, a post he held until his death. Locally he is remembered as the attorney who drafted the will for Mary Washington, mother of George Washington. He will have many dealings with Charles Dick and his heirs over the next few decades.

In 1749 Dick ventured into land speculation with the establishment of the Loyal Company. It was primarily composed of Piedmont area (of Virginia) planters who were interested in developing about 800,000 acres of the Ohio River Valley—much the same as the previously established Ohio Company. Others in the Loyal Company included Col. John Lewis and mapmakers/surveyors Peter Jefferson and Joshua Fry. (Jefferson/Fry were THE prominent Virginia mapmakers of the 18th century. Additionally, Peter was Thomas Jefferson's father.) No, it was not as successful as the Ohio Company but they did alright. He avoided the Dismal Swamp speculation, in which all partners lost money. Dick had a nose for ventures.

While most men are born into the gentry, some earn their way in. Such was Charles Dick when he was nominated and approved to be a County Justice in 1748 for Spotsylvania Co. (Probably with a little help from his friend, Col. John Lewis.) With the justice position came the title "Gentleman." (In the 18th century you didn't run for office for what today would

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be the county commissioner and county judge rolled into one position. These positions were filled by nominations from the other justices to the Governor, who made the appointments. In fact, there was only one elected position in the colony, that to the House of Burgesses.)

Charles was now, at age 32, not only a successful businessman but a Gentleman of the county court. He had arrived! Since many of the suits brought in court were by merchants trying to collect debts, Dick was well versed in both business and the courts, having sued several himself by this point. He brought a great wealth of experience to the court. It was about this time that he expanded his town holdings, acquiring part of lot 5 on the river and lot 52. This latter lot would be where he would build his home and business. His home still remains at 1107 Princess Anne Street—although the original faced Main (now Caroline) Street down a steep embankment and now faces Princess Anne Street (using the old “back door”). Originally it was a one-story which was 60x24 ft. by the time his son-in-law purchased an insurance policy for it in 1792. Across the street on the north side on lots 83 and 84, Fielding Lewis would build his home and business (lot across from the library).

By 1748 Dick had expanded his business to include a store in the wilds of Virginia to the west—the town of Winchester.

In late 1749/January 1750, exact date unknown, Charles married Mary Roy of Caroline Co. Mary was the daughter of Dr. Mungo and Catherine Roy. (Dr. Roy was born in Scotland in 1698; died Caroline Co. 1758.) A frequent house guest of the Dicks was the Rev. Robert Rose of Caroline Co. (and also a native of Scotland; Church of England minister). [Rose has left a diary of a portion of his life that has been printed at least twice. In it, “April 19, 1750, Came to Fredericksburg early, called on Mr. Charles Dick who was lately married...”] A look at wills and deeds of Spotsy shows that Charles *and* Mary DICK witnessed a will of Richard Childs on 27 Jan 1750. So they were married by then! This is the earliest mention of Mary Dick in county records.

In November 1750, another of Charles’ close friends, John Mercer (father of James), married Ann Roy, Mary’s sister. John Mercer was an Irish (Dublin) immigrant who owned “*Marlborough*,” a 108-foot

long mansion on Marlborough Point in Stafford Co. (since burned down). He was a successful attorney and owned one of the largest personal libraries in Virginia. Ann was his second wife. His first wife, and James Mercer’s mother, was Catherine Mason, daughter of Col. George Mason III. This will make James Mercer the nephew of Col. George Mason IV (writer of the Virginia Declaration of Rights and “Father of the U.S. Bill of Rights”).

Living in the north end of Fredericksburg put Charles in the midst of the Scottish section of town. He was surrounded by the Allans, brothers Robert and James Duncanson (merchants), John Mitchell (merchant), Henry Mitchell (merchant) and Dr. John Sutherland. Yes, Fredericksburg was heavily Scottish, especially among the merchants and tradesmen.

In 1754, war was imminent with the French and Charles and his friend/fellow merchant, Robert Jackson (d. 1764), were appointed by the Governor as Commissaries for the Virginia Troops involved with the war. It was their responsibility to provide supplies for the troops (food, ammo, etc.). This they would do for the next five years of the war. He often transported the supplies to Fort Cumberland to the northwest. Additionally he was authorized to erect a storehouse to store provisions until they were needed by the troops in the field. The warehouse was built on his lot 5 at the foot of William Street where the “Stone Warehouse” would later be built.

It was an honor for someone relatively new to the region to be picked for such a large undertaking. Those who knew him, knew of his business ventures in Winchester and in the frontier. He knew the region and where to find needed supplies. He knew how to manage operations. He also found that the government did not aid his progress much. [He would find this again in 20 years!] He wrote in 1755, “I have sunk my Money in the Service in confidence that I should not suffer, instead of which I am denied my Money, Provisions, Wagga [Wagons], &c contracted by us... for which there are now Suits commenced against me...& not one farthing paid me for all I have done.” While he probably came close, he never did resign.

Also in 1754, Charles found time to join the local Masonic Lodge in Fredericksburg (heavily Scottish)—the same year young George Washington also joined.

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Dick would be an active member of the Lodge for many years.

Fielding Lewis' wife died in 1749 and he soon remarried—to Betty Washington, cousin to his late wife Catherine, and sister of George. Mary (Roy) Dick would be the godmother to Fielding and Betty's fourth son, George, born in 1757.

Also in 1757, Dick got into the potash production business utilizing his lot 5 on the river in town. From the operation he also exported soap to England. He remained active in this venture until at least 1762, when he sent the results of his operation to no less than the Royal Society of Arts in London. He was not just a merchant or a justice. He, like many men of his time, took the time to expand his mind with the latest in science and manufacturing. In 1750 he demonstrated a lightning flash in his home, probably through the use of a Leyden jar. His visitor, the Rev. Robert Rose was fascinated. Yes, Mr. Dick was a man of many talents. He started amassing his own library, probably started by his friend and brother-in-law John Mercer.

Following the French and Indian War, Charles was still active as a county justice and was appointed Sheriff of Spotsylvania Co. (1762-64).

As Sheriff, he had one amusing tale. Seems fellow Scotsman Robert Duncanson had irritated Mr. Benjamin Grymes (but then, almost everyone irritated Mr. Grymes). In this instance Mr. Grymes was successful in having Duncanson incarcerated until he could show security for his good behavior.

What happened next really infuriated Grymes as Duncanson and Dick were good friends (along with most of the other Scots in town). Grymes ended up charging that Dick "suffered and permitted the said Duncanson and sundry others to carry a table, chairs and liquor into the gaol [jail] and there revel 'till late at night." No, Dick was not a teetotaler. Nothing happened with Grymes' charges.

In the late 1760s, several local investors were eyeing land to the west and looking at building a road to the Augusta County hot springs, near Staunton. They had hoped it would become the next "Bath Hot Springs" and hoped for the good times that went with the springs and the prospect of making money in the venture. It was a failure; one of the few failures of his life. Of course he was in good company in this aborted venture—its members including Dick, Fielding Lewis,

Archibald Cary and George Washington, to name a few. All did purchase lots and erect summer cottages at the Bath Hot Springs.

And why did the gentry flock to the springs? Well, for medicinal purposes of course. And it was a nice summer getaway. Phillip Fithian noted in his journal in 1776, "In one part of the little Bush village a splendid Ball—At some Distance & within hearing, a Methodist preacher was haranguing the People... In our dining room Companies at Cards... Amusements in all Shapes, & in high Degrees, are constantly taking Place among so Promiscuous a Company." Yes, it was a vacation and all were having a little relaxation and fun.

In 1768, Charles was elected to the vestry of St. George's—the Anglican Church in Fredericksburg. Charles, never an avid or dedicated churchman, must have resigned from the vestry by 1770 for his name no longer appears on the vestry minutes. (He was presented twice to the court for not attending church in a month back in the 1750s.) Some say he was added to the vestry at Fielding Lewis' request to ensure the votes to split the parish in half.

With the prospect of revolution, Charles showed his real community/Virginia spirit. In 1774 he was appointed, with 11 other local prominent men (including now son-in-law James Mercer), to a Committee of Correspondence in Fredericksburg—to keep the area informed on war preparations throughout Virginia and the colonies. His friend, Fielding Lewis, was the Chair. That same year a committee was also formed in Spotsylvania County with some of the same men, notably with Lewis as Chair. It also had as its Clerk, the young Alexander Dick—Charles' only son.

As the escalation of war increased, Fielding and Charles began the Fredericksburg Manufactory (aka the Gunnery) at the order of the Virginia Convention in 1775. (The Convention was the only Virginia legislative body once the Royal Governor had departed Williamsburg with the advent of war.) While the gunnery had five commissioners, the two who really ran the day-to-day operations were Lewis and Dick. They gave it their all. Their operation was used primarily to repair damaged weapons vice making new weapons (although later many new arms were

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made when they hired good locksmiths). Some of their work is still on display at our museum and at Colonial Williamsburg. The warrant to establish the gunnery was sent from Williamsburg to Fredericksburg by young James Mercer, now a member of the Virginia Convention. Throughout the operation of the gunnery, Dick and Lewis had their hands full, first with hiring the right craftsmen, finding the money in Williamsburg/Richmond to keep it open, and finally keeping the craftsmen when the colony needed more soldiers. When money became hard to find, both Dick and Lewis spent their own money keeping the gunnery in operation. They both lost a tremendous amount in that venture, but the operation was deemed a valued success to the Virginia troops. The Gunnery was located near the old Walker-Grant school off lower Dixon Street.

Of interest is an entry in Ebenezer Hazard's Journal when he came through Fredericksburg in 1777. He only noted two local names while in town, that of Dick and James Mercer.

"May 27th Dined with Charles Dick Esqr. He has near his House about ½ an Acre of Lucerne (alfalfa), which he informs me feeds 4 Horses & four Cows. It is sown in Drills at 3 Feet Distance from each other, & is cut nine Times in a Season. It was sown 20 Years ago. Mr. Dick has a small Vineyard. After Dinner went to view a [cotton] Manufactory belonging to James Mercer Esqr. It is something similar to Mr. West's but not quite so extensive. Saw the Machine (with 22 Spindles) for spinning Cotton at Work; it is useful & Cotton may be more expeditiously spun with it than with a single Spindle, but I observed that the Threads very frequently broke, which occasioned a great Deal of Trouble."

"May 28th Went to see the Gunnery, as it is called, of which Mr. Dick is one of the Overseers. About 20 Musquets [muskets], complete with Bayonets, are made here in a Week. About 60 persons are employed, who have made all their own Tools, & do their Business with great Regularity & Expedition. They labour under some Difficulty for Want of proper Streams of Water, which encreases manual Labour & makes the Manufactory more expensive. The Musquets made here are excellent, lighter than the English, carry an Ounce Ball, and cost the Manufacturer about £ 4.10—Virga. Curry. or 15

Dollars. The Bayonets are 20 Ins. in Length."

The Gunnery worked closely with the other armaments center in the region, that of the Rappahannock Forge & Iron Works just above Falmouth on the Rappahannock River and run by another Scot, James Hunter. Both enterprises were always on the verge of closing due to manpower and cash shortages yet both remained in operation throughout the Revolution producing thousands of weapons and other camp necessities.

Next issue: the end of the war.

Charles served as Executor for Mr. Archibald McPherson, formerly of Caroline Co., when he died.

Virginia Gazette, 28 Feb 1755, Pg. 4, col. 1:

To be SOLD to the highest Bidder, pursuant to the Last Will and Testament of Mr. Archibald Macpherson, deceas'd, on the Second Day of June Fair next; in Fredericksburg,

A VERY convenient Lot and Houses, in the said Town, whereon Mr. Anthony Strother now lives, consisting of a large Dwelling-House, with all other convenient Out-Houses, and a Garden and Lot pailed in. Six Months Credit will be allowed, the Purchaser giving Bond and Security as usual; if any Person chuses to purchase the same sooner, may apply to
Charles Dick, Executor

(NB: The lot was number 20 located at the SE corner of Caroline St. and George St. It will be purchased (1759) by Dr. Henry Heath and his wife Susannah. Following the doctor's death, it will become (1762) the home of the Rev. James Marye, and in 1768 pass to Charles Yates. "Pailed In" means it had a fence around the lot. Mr. McPherson [1705-1754] is buried in St. George's churchyard. He was from County Murray in Scotland. He was survived by his wife, Elizabeth. Dick served as Security, Witness or Executor for MANY wills in the area.)

W R E A T H M A K I N G

By Catherine Bell

WOW! I'm not sure where to begin. At 9:00 a.m. on November 30 in the midst of sometimes heavy and always constant rain, Greg and Sharon Brunacci, Lou Taylor, David Beavers, Trip Wiggins and Cristy Collins—all driving trucks—



were joined by Kitty Taylor, Lyn Padgett, Tina Buchanan, Mr. Buchanan, Elizabeth McDowell, Michael and Naomi McPherson and myself for our annual cutting of the greens. We convoyed to Caroline County and began our rather soggy task at 9:45 a.m. Clippers and loppers in hand, we managed to fill all six trucks by 10:45 a.m. Something of a record in our 10 years of wreath making. We cut only cedar since the rain was so heavy, our vehicles would be



unable to get to the pine area.

Over the next three days, Trip and Myra Wiggins

cut 15 bags of boxwood, two trucks of pine and two bags of nandina berries. While over those same three days, Jo Buchanan clipped untold numbers of bags of the cedar and pine in readiness for our bundlers.

On December 4 and 5 we made **156 wreaths**, fulfilling the most pre orders we have ever had. On Thursday, Naomi, Jo, Trip, Diana



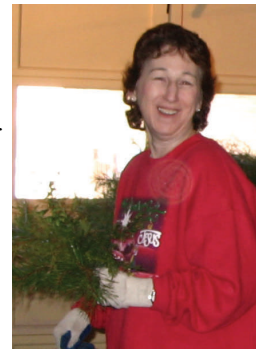
Farrar, Sue and Dennis Buchanan, Lyn, Sharon, Tesa Bell, Tina, Kitty, Elaine Sturgeon, Kathy Miroy, Bryanna

Mueller and myself managed to make 101 of those wreaths, which was another record breaker. On Friday with tired backs, feet and hands, Elaine, Trip, Diana, Sue, Dennis, Sharon, Bryanna, Naomi, Jo and I were joined by Bettie Brezee and Carol Lynne Eppes to finish the last 55. Breaking our last record of this 10th year, we were finished by 2:00 p.m. Trip and Eve Blackwell, of course, spent all morning Saturday distributing the wreaths.

I can't begin to say how much I



appreciate the hard work and sacrifice it took to make this happen. Because we had six trucks we managed to gather all our greens in short order. The same applies to our wreath making; however, although we had a goodly number of people, it was the same people most of the time. I would have liked (if wishes were horses) to



see a few more volunteers just so that each of us could work less. You have my unwavering appreciation for a job very well done. I am humbled by your dedication.



All photographs by Naomi McPherson.



Rappahannock Colonial Heritage Society, Inc.

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Visit our Web site:
www.rchsinc.org

M E M B E R S H I P

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may be changed by recommendation of any member and majority vote of members with two weeks notice of the entire membership prior to the vote at a regular scheduled meeting.

Section 5: Individual and Family memberships may be furnished a

list of members of RCHS, a copy of the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and a copy of the current newsletter.

Section 6: "The Board of Directors may deny or terminate membership at its discretion. Members agree to "hold harmless" RCHS, it's Directors, its Officers

and its agents, individually and severally. Members agree to abide by policies and procedures adopted by the Board, and to support the RCHS' purposes and reputation."

N E W S L E T T E R G U I D E L I N E S

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 en-

couraged 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 newslet-

ter 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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