



THE CONTINENTAL SOLDIER

VOLUME XIX, NUMBER 1 APRIL 2006

WELCOME TO THE SOLDIER!

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2006 edition of The Continental Soldier! I am excited to take on the role of editor for our newsletter, and am happy to have the opportunity to work with the editorial team of Chip Gnam, Anne Henninger and David Valuska. We hope that you will find the content in this issue both informative and entertaining. For our inaugural issue we've tried to provide you with a mix of topics, from the usual officer reports and event listings to historic articles and even a piece from an 18th century "gentlemen's magazine".

Thank you to all of the contributors to this issue of The Continental Soldier. Without your help none of this would have been possible. I've enjoyed working with you, and look forward to doing so in the future.

With that said, we need your help to make future issues of the *Soldier* come together. I'd like to invite you to submit material for publication in our upcoming issue. Whether it's an article you researched about a historic figure, a piece on the French artillery drill, an event listing or something you've put together explaining 18th century fashion, anything that relates to the reenacting hobby or the 18th century is welcome. Please send all submissions, questions or feedback to editor@continentalline.org. If you would prefer to speak to me in person, feel free to call me at 860-416-8227. I look forward to hearing from you! Together, we can continue to make The Continental Soldier a fun and useful tool.

Respectfully,

Matt Schickling
Editor, The Continental Soldier

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INTRODUCING THE SOLDIER STAFF



Anne Henninger was born and raised in Washington, DC, but has lived in Maryland for more years than she will admit. She was employed for 7 ½ years as a Park Ranger with the National Park Service, and is currently a Security Specialist with the U.S. Department of Defense. She is a member of the First Maryland Regiment. She has served on the recruitment committee, been Vice President, and is currently President. In what passes for her free time she enjoys 18th century English Country Dancing. She is also Recording Secretary for the Governor Robert Bowie Chapter, NSDAR, and a member of the Mayflower Society. Anne, her husband, and two mostly-grown children live in the thriving metropolis of Prince Frederick, MD, with seven cats and one incredibly bad dog.



Chip Gnam saw his first living history event when his father took him to the Battle of First Manassas Reenactment in 1961. This event was soon followed by the first of many trips to Colonial Williamsburg, which started his interest in all things 18th century. In 1974 Chip met someone who told him about a Revolutionary War reenactment group being formed for the Bicentennial. He quickly discovered that this new hobby appealed to a lot of his interests at the time - history, making stuff, "playing army." He participated in many of the 200th Anniversary events of the Bicentennial, including Trenton, Princeton, Monmouth, and Yorktown, where he was one of the event organizers. He was also involved in the 1986 trip to England where, as legend would have it, the Continental Line was first conceived. Chip then spent a number of years "AWOL," starting his own (history) magazine publishing company, and returned to the hobby in 1999. Since his return he's made many new friends, as well as rediscovered friendships from the Bicentennial days.



Matt Schickling was born and raised in Lynn, MA and has lived in New England for his entire life. He currently works in the training & development field as an instructional designer, writing training curriculum for unsuspecting financial services employees. He has been interested in both 18th century American and Medieval European history for a long time and is fortunate to have family and friends who tolerate his devotion, some would say addiction, to collecting artifacts and replicas from those eras. Matt has the misfortune of being quoted accurately, but embarrassingly out-of-context, in newspapers, the most recent quote being "I've had a thing for cannon for a long time". Matt's introduction to 18th century reenacting was as a guest at an encampment at Fort Ticonderoga, New York. Upon waking on the first day, he was literally hit in the head with a 2x4. He promptly joined the unit and keeps coming back for more.



Dr. David Valuska taught at Kutztown University for 35 years before retiring in January of 2004. He taught U.S. History with a specialty in Civil War and American War for Independence. Dr. Valuska was also the first person to be appointed to an endowed chair in the Pennsylvania State University System. He also founded and established the Pennsylvania German Heritage Center at Kutztown University. He has published numerous articles and books on the Revolutionary War and Civil War, and is the founder of the First Defenders Civil War Roundtable at Kutztown University and von Heers Revolutionary War living history group. He is currently working on a book about Pennsylvania Germans in the American Revolutionary War and numerous articles on the Civil War and Revolutionary War. Dr. Valuska appeared in the movie "Gettysburg" and portrayed Brigadier General Thomas Francis Meagher in the movie "Gods and Generals".

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Greetings to all Continental Line members:

Welcome to the 2006 season – I hope it will be an exciting one. First and foremost, I would like to thank our past Commander, Jeff Lambert, for an excellent job in managing the Continental Line these past few years; he will be a tough act to follow. I also want to thank everyone for allowing me the privilege of serving as your current Commander. Although this is a new position for me, the incredible amount of help and support from Line members has made for a smooth transition. Over the past few months, I have been in contact with all the Department Coordinators and hope to keep the lines of communication open throughout my tenure.

In my discussions with the Department Coordinators, the one topic that has been brought up consistently is the publication of the Continental Soldier; it has been sorely missed amongst the Line. For many of the units, this was their “line of communication”, not only within their own region but also other regions as well. With this being said, I have decided revitalize this publication and have given Matt Schlickling from the United Train of Artillery the “opportunity” to get it done. Matt has agreed to be the editor with assistance from associate-editors from each of the Departments. The target date for the first publication is the beginning of April and will be available on the Continental Line web site at <http://www.continentalline.org/>. In addition, each Unit Commander will be getting a paper copy to share with their unit members. Please make sure the Adjutant (Sam Ricco at adjutant@continentalline.org) is kept informed of any changes to your Unit's mailing and/or email address.

At this time, there are two Continental Line “sanctioned” events for the upcoming year, both of which are sponsored by the Brigade of the American Revolution (BAR). The first, Ward Pound Ridge Reservation, Cross River (White Plains, New York) will be held on July 22-23. The second will be *the 225th Anniversary of the Siege of Yorktown*, in Yorktown, VA (<https://www.brigade.org/barcal/2006/Yorktown.html>) on October 18-22. Both of these events are open to only the “Big-Three” (Continental Line, BAR, and British Brigade) organizations. Next year there are two big events on the horizon, one being the 20th anniversary of the Continental Line, which will be held in Mount Vernon, VA (date to be announced). The second will be in Bordentown, New Jersey and will be held on June 6-7, 2007.

I would like to take this opportunity to ask you all to take the time and check the Continental Line web site and the Continental Soldier newsletter. Both will be updated frequently and will provide information regarding upcoming events. Any ideas, thoughts, potential articles for the newsletter, please submit them to Matt (mschickling@comcast.net); he will welcome the help. Any other questions or concerns, please contact your Department Coordinator or myself at captuta@verizon.net. Remember a good organization is only as good as its communication.

Have a great year.

Yours in the hobby,

John Taber
Continental Line Chairman

ADJUTANT'S REPORT

Ladies & Gentlemen of the Line,

On the business side of the Continental Line, I am glad that the 19th Annual National Continental Line meeting was a success. 2006 looks to be another great year for the Continental Line.

The Continental Line Officer's Mess has a total of 55 participants as of March 2006. If you are a CL member unit and have not been sent two invitations, this means I do not have your 2006 insurance and census form in my hands. I have also sent many invitations to members of the Line that have not joined.

The web site has been updated with all 2006 events. Additional upgrades/improvements suggestions are always appreciated. Please feel free to let me know what you think of the web site at: adjutant@continentalline.org

This brings me to the last point of my Spring 2006 report. I want to thank all the units that have submitted their 2006 insurance and census forms. Unfortunately, I am still missing some units' up-to-date information. Please forward both your 2006 census and up-to-date insurance to your coordinator.

Thank you,
Sam Ricco
Adjutant, The Continental Line, Inc.

WESTERN DEPARTMENT REPORT

Its been rather quiet out here in the West. Two units have made inquiries about joining the CL; the 1st Continental Artillery from Galion Ohio, and the 4th Massachusetts from Janesville WI.

The 1st Continental Artillery has a 3 pdr iron gun and wants to attend Yorktown. They were at the 200th in 1981.

The 4th Mass has a website at <http://www.rivervalleycolonials.com>. Although this unit is primarily a Fife and Drum Corps, they look good on their website. Only one Major 225th event left, the battle of Blue Licks which will be held in 2007, details unavailable as of yet.

That's all for now.

Thomas Edwards, 10th Virginia
Western Department Coordinator
The Continental Line

NORTHERN DEPARTMENT REPORT

I hope everyone has survived the winter season in good order. After a successful Continental Line meeting, we should be ready to move into the 2006 campaign. In my first report to you, I just want to say that it is truly an honor to be "Your" Northern Department Coordinator. Many of you, I've known for years and there are others I'm just beginning to know. At the meeting of the Directors at the Continental Line meeting, we all agreed that serving in these posts should be considered as a part-time job, which it has become, and I'm agreeable to do the work you require of me. We are very lucky that email can be our primary communication tool, but if you ever need to talk, just call me. With that said, if you are not receiving email from me, then I do not have your contact information. All unit commanders should be taking advantage of the Officers Mess section of the Continental Line website and completing your census form, so your most current contact information is available. Also, please make sure your insurance information is up to date.

There certainly are a lot of local events going on out there this year, and I hope your units can support as many as possible. Between the Northern Department meeting and the Line meeting itself, it was decided that the Northern Department will be supporting the following events this year: Battle Road (April 15th), Cobleskill, NY (May 6&7), Southbury, CT (June 17&18), the Grand Reconnaissance (July 22&23) and the Siege of Yorktown (October 19-22). While it is early, you should have already completed your preliminary registration for Yorktown. If you need information about any of these events, please let me know.

Regarding Yorktown, one issue that I have been dealing with are the non-CL, BAR or BB units out there who want to be invited to Yorktown. The message is getting out there that units not belonging to one of the BIG 3 are not invited, but still the requests for invitations are coming in. As was discussed at the Northern Department meeting, I have had entire units requesting information about joining the CL or a CL unit "just for Yorktown." These folks, or individuals from these units, wanting to become members of your unit, may have already contacted some of you. While some of these units may be acceptable, others are marching chowder societies. Ladies and gentleman, all I can say is that you need to consider the integrity of your unit, the safety record of your unit and the uniform requirements of your unit. Please do not compromise your unit integrity for the likes of a single event.

As for new Northern Department member units, the "applicant" status of both Eames' Rangers and Herrick's Rangers remains the same, as neither unit had a representative at the Continental Line meeting, so no vote taken to upgrade their status to become full members. Four other unit's, however, were accepted as applicant members, and they are: the 11th Massachusetts Regiment, Captain White's Company; the 4th New York Regiment; the 2nd New York Regiment and a company of the 3rd Continental Artillery. Please welcome these folks on the field this year when you see them.

Respectfully submitted by,

Mark B. Richardson, Capt., First NH Regiment
Northern Department Coordinator, Continental Line
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Address: 44 Mt Auburn Street, Somersworth, NH 03878
Phone: 603-692-5491

MID-ATLANTIC DEPARTMENT REPORT

I would like to thank all the Mid-Atlantic units for their attendance at this year's Continental Line Meeting in Annapolis, Maryland.

We have new two units that are applying for membership in the Mid-Atlantic Dept. They are the 8th Pennsylvania Regiment, who are being sponsored by the 6th Pennsylvania Regiment, and the 1st Rhode Island Regiment, who are being sponsored by the 11 Pennsylvania Regiment. Both of these units will be fielding with us and we would like to extend to them a warm welcome.

The following is a list of events for 2006 in the Mid-Atlantic Dept.:

April 8-9	Bound Brook, NJ Hosted by 11th PA	May 5-7	J. P. Martin Challenge Jockey Hollow, NJ Hosted by 2nd NJ
May 5-7	Cobleskill, NY Hosted by 2nd Albany and 1st NY	June 24-25	Monmouth, NJ Hosted by 3rd PA
July 15-16	Green Springs, VA Hosted by Southern BAR	July 22-23	Pound Ridge, NY Hosted by British Brigade and BAR
August 11-13	Head of Elk, Maryland	August 11-13	Old Mill Village, NJ
August 26	Gouvernor's Island, NY Hosted by Doughty's Artillery	Sept. 9-10	Brandywine, PA
Sept. 16-17	W-R 3 at Liberty Corner, NJ Hosted by 2nd NJ	October 7	Germantown, PA
October 15	Red Bank, NJ at Fort Mercer	October 18-22	225th Anniversary of Battle of Yorktown, VA
November 4	Hope Lodge, PA Hosted by 11th PA	November 11-12	Fort Mifflin, Phila., PA
December 9	Mt. Holly, NJ, Iron Works Hill Hosted by 3rd PA	December 30	Trenton, NJ (tentative)

Future Events:

If there is any unit in the Mid-Atlantic Dept. that is planning events for the 2007 or 2008 reenacting years, please let me know so we can get the information out in a timely manner. This would be especially important for Mid-Atlantic Dept. shows.

Census and Insurance:

You will find a link for the census form on the Continental Line webpage. Please fill this out and return it with an updated insurance policy to me at the following address: Patrick Jordan, 345 Gladstone Street, Phila, PA 19148. I will pass them on to our Adjutant, Sam Ricco.

Here's looking forward to seeing everyone at this year's events. We hope for a safe and enjoyable year of reenacting.

Thank you,
Patrick Jordan
MAD Coordinator

SOUTHERN DEPARTMENT REPORT

Greetings and Salutations!

Thanks to the kind offices of Herb Puckett, I was nominated to the position of Southern Department Coordinator at the Continental Line meeting in February. Many of you know me. For those who do not, my family and I have been associated with the First Maryland Regiment for some years and I am currently President of that organization.

At our Department Meeting, I asked the Southern Department to "raise the bar" in three areas over the next two years. The first, and most important, is safety. The second of these is authenticity, and the third is communication. In order to keep safety and authenticity in everyone's mind, it is vital that we communicate among ourselves and with other members of the Continental Line. For this reason, I ask that each Southern Department unit provide a copy of their newsletter to other units within the department, as well as to the Chairman of the Line.

Over the past two years I have lamented the demise of the *Soldier*, both as a communication tool and as a means of sharing the wealth of knowledge that is resident in the reenactor community. During a Friday afternoon thunderstorm at Cowpens, Chip Gnam and I had a long discussion about this very topic and it turns out we were not the only ones to feel this way. The idea of a revitalized *Soldier* came up at the Continental Line meeting with the result that we have a new editor, Matt Schickling, and a goal of putting out two to three issues a year. (Many thanks, Chip, for agreeing to serve on the Editorial Board!) With that in mind, I'd like to encourage all our Southern Department members to consider writing and submitting articles to the resurrected *Soldier* for publication. This is a great way to improve our hobby and share valuable information.

Despite the occasional ice and snow (and wind and thunderstorms) the Southern Department has not gone dormant over the winter. In December, the 7th VA participated in the Battle of Great Bridge in Chesapeake, VA. In January, about 900 reenactors made their way to South Carolina for the 225th anniversary of the Battle of Cowpens. Not only did our genial hosts, the IISC, provide us with all the cartridges we needed and three seasons in one weekend, we caused Larry Babits to seriously consider a revision to his opus, *Devil of a Whipping* because of the short time it took the actual scenario to unfold. If you did not make it, you missed a unique event. February brought the Continental Line meeting in our own historic and scenic state capital, but also took the 7th VA to the Thoroughgood House in Virginia Beach, the IISC, 2nd NC, and 6th NC to Rural Hill, NC, and the 1VA and an errant First Marylander to Ft. Ward in Alexandria. (Herb, would you please consider a future plantation event in February?) Upcoming Southern events include:

March 18-19, Guilford Courthouse 225th, NC
April 1-2, Gunston Hall, VA (7th VA, POC: Mike Cicere)
April 22-23, Petersburg 225th, VA
26-27 August, Head of Elk 225th, MD (6th MD, POC: Fred Allen)
2-3 September, Eutaw Springs 225th, SC (IISC, POC: Herb Puckett)
21-22 October, Yorktown 225th, VA
4-5 November, Camden, SC

As discussed at the Continental Line meeting, the Southern Department has agreed to establish several dates for participating in combined Departmental drills. The first of these is scheduled to occur at the Guilford Courthouse event. There was also some discussion of scheduling a "School of the Officer" within the next two years. Come out and support our Southern events!

There are also several events in the works for 2007, to include Savannah and Mt. Vernon. Stay tuned for further details.

One administrative note: There are still a few units which have not provided me with proof of insurance or unit census or both. Please forward these to me as soon as possible; it would be nice to see a 100% return from the Southern Department on these.

I'd like to close by thanking the Southern Department for their support and encouragement.

Your most humble, but only slightly obedient servant,
Anne Henninger
Southern Department Coordinator
Continental Line

LOOKING AHEAD TO YORKTOWN, OCTOBER 18-22, 2006

Todd Post, Public Information Officer for the Brigade of the American Revolution, provided the following updates about the 225th anniversary of the Siege of Yorktown.

- Planning for Yorktown is proceeding along with both CNHP & Endview Plantation.
- Crown Forces will be under the command of Don Beale and the Allied Troops will be under Paul Ackermann. The staffs and duty assignments in both armies are already being developed.
- We currently have over 1500 men at arms, 600 civilians, 25 cannon & 37 horses listed on the preliminary registration.
- We have three opposed forces tacticals planned at Endview: The Battle of the Hook, The Defense of the Fuziliers' Redoubt and the Storming of Redoubts 9 & 10.
- All troops will participate in large scale demonstrations in the trenches at CNHP and, of course, the final surrender ceremony on Sunday.
- Various activities in the camps and those associated with the siege operations are being developed.
- All the usual amenities will be provided, i.e. straw, firewood, water, porta-sans, hay for horses, etc.
- Cartridges will be issued for all scenarios. Do not bring your own.

More information about the 225th anniversary of the Siege of Yorktown can be found at www.siegeofyorktown.org.

EVENT: WAR IN SCHOHARY

Where: Lansing Manor (New York Power Authority Visitor Center), Blenheim, New York

When: May 6 & 7, 2006

Host: 2nd Regiment, Albany County Militia, McCracken's Co, 1st NY

Registration: www.bvma.org

In May, 2003, the 2nd Albany hosted the 225th Anniversary commemoration of the Battle of Cobleskill, at the New York Power Authority's Lansing Manor Visitor Center, in Schoharie County, New York. The American War for Independence will return to this site May 6 & 7, 2006. The usual amenities will be provided, along with a period dance and tavern Saturday evening.

War games, and tactical demonstrations will be conducted each day.

Located off Rt. 30 in the scenic hills of the northern Catskills, the site provides almost 400 acres of mixed cover for battle and war gaming (for those that participated in the British Brigade war games in Grand Gorge, this site is approximately 10 miles North of Grand Gorge on State Rt. 30). Information about the Blenheim-Gilboa Power Project, and Lansing Manor, can be found at <http://www.nypa.gov/vc/blengil.htm>.

This event is supported by the Northern Department of The Continental Line, the BVMA, and the Northern Brigade; participation by the British Brigade units is welcome.

Please join us the first weekend in May, for a great opportunity to gear up for the 2006 Campaign Season.

For more information, contact:

John Osinski, 2nd Regt., Albany County Militia (1775)

POB 788, Middleburgh, NY 12122

518-827-5429

josinski@midtel.net (h) osinski.j@nypa.gov (W).

Directions:

From Albany and Points east: Thruway to Exit 25A (I-88 Binghamton/Schenectady). After toll, I-88 west to Exit 23 (Schoharie/Central Bridge Rte 30A/Rte 30). Take Rte 30A (South) which becomes Rte 30 (South) through Schoharie and Middleburgh. Visitors Center is on Rte 30, 17 miles South of Middleburgh.

From Utica/Syracuse/Buffalo: New York State Thruway to Exit 29 (Canajoharie). After toll, take Rte 5S (East) to Rte 162 which becomes Rte 30A (South). Follow Rte 30A (South) which will become Rte 30 (South) through Schoharie/Middleburgh. Visitors Center is on Rte 30, 17 miles South of Middleburgh.

From New York City/Long Island/Lower Hudson Valley: Take New York State Thruway to Exit 19 (Kingston). Take Rte 28 (West) to Rte 42 (North) to Lexington. In Lexington, take Rte 23A (West) towards Prattsville. Rte 23A becomes Rte 23 (West). Go through Prattsville to Grand Gorge. At Grand Gorge take Rte 30 (North) approximately 10 miles to Visitors Center.

From Binghamton to (Southern Tier): Take I-88 East to Oneonta exit for Rte 23 (East). Take Rte 23 (East) through Stamford to Grand Gorge. At Grand Gorge take Rte 30 (North) approximately 10 miles to Visitors Center.

EVENT: 2006 ARTILLERY SCHOOL

- Where:** Fort #4, Charlestown, NH
- When:** June 10 & 11, 2006
- Host:** The United Train of Artillery & The 1st New Hampshire Regiment
- Registration:** www.unitedtrainofartillery.org, click on the "Advanced Artillery School" link

The United Train of Artillery and 1st New Hampshire Regiment are pleased to announce another school of artillery. The school will be held at Fort #4 in Charlestown, NH (www.fortat4.com).

This will be another "advanced" school, focusing on maneuver of artillery and working with infantry. There will be lectures, drills and scenarios for both infantry and artillery with what we hope are new experiences.

There will be activities for distaff and children. This will be a fun weekend filled with the exchange of ideas and the implementation of material in the field.

Respondents will receive further mailings.

Camp will be on the grounds around the fort. Classes will be within the fort and in the field. Scenarios will take place in and around the fort.

The school is available to French and Indian War units, Living History Organizations, BAR, British Brigade, Continental Line, Northwest Territories Association, and any other interested organizations.

Questions about the school? Please call John Taber at (508) 748-6682 or captuta@verizon.net

Questions about registration? Please call Janie Ritchie at (978) 686-2837 or najanie@aol.com

Remember, attendance at the school does not certify attendees in any jurisdiction. Look forward to hearing from you!

Directions:

From the North:

Proceed on I-91 South to Exit 7 (Rt. 11, Springfield, VT & Charlestown, NH exits). Proceed on Rt. 11 East to cross over the Connecticut River. Fort #4 is on our right 0.2 miles from the bridge.

From the West:

Proceed on the Massachusetts Turnpike I-90 East to I-91 North. Take I-91 North into Vermont. Take Exit 7 (Rt. 11, Springfield, VT & Charlestown, NH exit). Proceed on Rt. 11 East to cross the Connecticut River. Fort #4 is on the left just after the Ambulance Barn.

From the East:

Proceed on Route 101 across the Live Free or Die State until you reach Keene. Take a right onto Rt. 12 North. Proceed to Charlestown, traveling through the center and continue North. Take a left onto Rt. 11 West. Fort #4 is on the left just after the Ambulance Barn.

From the South:

From I-95 or I-84, proceed on I-91 North out of Connecticut, through Massachusetts and into Vermont. Take Exit 7 (Rt. 11, Springfield, VT & Charlestown, NH exit). Proceed on Rt. 11 South to cross over the Connecticut River. Fort #4 is on your right 0.2 miles from the bridge.

POTOMAC RAIDS: APRIL 1781

ADAPTED FROM *IN THIS TIME OF EXTREME DANGER: NORTHERN VIRGINIA IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION*
MIKE CECERE, 7TH VIRGINIA REGIMENT

Virginians were very anxious in the early months of 1781. The arrival of a British expeditionary force in January under the infamous American traitor, Benedict Arnold, shocked the state. Arnold's movements along the James River and his attack on Richmond, the new capital, were largely unchallenged and highlighted Virginia's weakness and vulnerability. In March it appeared that Virginia, with the help of a French naval squadron, would redeem its honor and capture Arnold and his force in Portsmouth. The plan was cancelled at the last moment when British reinforcements arrived by ship. The news only grew worse in April. Reports of British ships in the Potomac reached Governor Jefferson on April 10th. Edmund Reed, of Caroline County, informed Jefferson that,

The whole of the fleete amounted to two twenty four Gun Ships, two Eighteen [gun ships] and Six Transports and Tenders. They seem to be crowded with men.¹

Reed speculated that Alexandria was their objective. He was apparently unaware that a British privateer visited the town a few days earlier. Henry Lee II gave Jefferson a detailed account of the visit:

On the first [of April] a Small Schoner...tender to the [British] privateer Trimer...with 21 Men...went up to Alexandria and in the Night, Attempted to Cut out before the town a Vessel belonging to Baltimore. Fortunately they were discovered and the wind Changing prevented their Succeeding. They immediately made off down the river and were pursued by two Armed Vessels and... was taken before they got to the Trimer which with the Supprise and another Sloop of War laid at Cedar point...As soon as the Schoner found she Must be taken the Men took to their boats and landed on the Virginia Side of the River.²

Lee reported that sixteen men were captured by local inhabitants. Half were sent to Fredericksburg and the other half to Alexandria. Colonel Lee informed Jefferson that upon word that more British ships were sailing upriver he,

Ordered all the [Prince William County] Militia that Could be Armed to rendezvous at the Mouth of Quantico and there have been these two days about forty there on duty.³

Colonel Lee also revealed disturbing news about British intentions:

If the Enemy had Succeeded at Alexandria they intended; one of the Prisoners say, to have burnt General Washingtons Houses, Plundered Colo. Mason and myself and endeavoured to have made me a prisoner.⁴

Fortunately for Colonel Mason and Colonel Lee, their property was untouched. General Washington was not so lucky. A number of his slaves were taken by a British raider. Lund Washington went aboard the ship and provided refreshments and provisions in an attempt to gain the return of the slaves and protect General Washington's property. Washington's buildings were spared, but his slaves were not returned. When General Washington learned of his cousin's actions he immediately wrote and scolded him:

I am very sorry to hear of your loss; I am a little sorry to hear of my own; but which gives me most concern, is, that you should go on board the enemys Vessels, and furnish them with refreshments. It would have been a less painful circumstance to me, to have heard, that in consequence of your non-compliance with their request, they had burnt my House, and laid the Plantation in ruins. You ought to have considered yourself as my representative, and should have reflected on the bad example of communicating with the enemy, and making a voluntary offer of refreshments to them with a view to prevent a conflagration...But to go on board their Vessels; carry them refreshments; commune with a parcel of plundering Scoundrels, and request a favor by asking the surrender of my Negroes, was exceedingly ill-judged, and 'tis to be feared, will be unhappy in its consequences, as it will be a precedent for others...Unless a stop to [the British raids occurs], I have little doubt of its ending in the loss of all my Negroes, and in the destruction of my Houses; but I am prepared for the event...⁵

POTOMAC RAIDS: APRIL 1781, *CONTINUED*

Fortunately for Washington and the rest of northern Virginia, the British left the Potomac in late April. General Weedon informed Governor Jefferson of their withdrawal on April 21st:

Getting Intelligence of the Ships coming down [river, I] proceeded to Hollis's marsh where a body of Militia ware drawn together under the command of Colo. Richard Henry Lee...As they [the ships] came down they landed at Joetank, took off several of Mr. Washingtons Negroes and did him other damage, again they landed at Mr. Hooes Ferry, distroy'd Mr. Hooes Furniture, broak his Windows, and set his House on fire, which was happily Extinguished. They are now all gone down.⁶

British attention shifted to central Virginia and the American supplies at Petersburg.

To Be Continued...

¹ Julian Boyd, "Edmund Read to Thomas Jefferson, 10 April, 1781," *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 5, 399

² Boyd, "Henry Lee Sr. to Thomas Jefferson, 10 April, 1781," *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 5, 393-94

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ John C. Fitzpatrick, "George Washington to Lund Washington, 30 April, 1781," *The Writings of George Washington*, Vol. 22, 14-15

⁶ Boyd, "George Weedon to Thomas Jefferson, 21 April, 1781," *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 5, 529

DETAILS OF NATHAN HALE'S CAPTURE

BRUCE BATTEN, 1ST NEW HAMPSHIRE REGIMENT, UNITED TRAIN OF ARTILLERY

The details of the capture and execution of Nathan Hale have perplexed historians for years. This confusion may have come to an end because of a manuscript given to the Library of Congress in 2000.

This manuscript was written during, or soon after the war by Consider Tiffany, a shopkeeper from Connecticut, who was also a British sympathizer. The manuscript was donated to the Library of Congress by G. Bradford Tiffany, a descendant. The manuscript details blunders made by Hale that led to his hanging on September 22, 1776. The manuscript identifies Major Robert Rogers, British hero of the French and Indian War as the man who trapped Hale.

Hale, a graduate of Yale College and a Connecticut schoolteacher joined the Continental Army and quickly rose to the rank of captain by 1776. At this time the American army had been driven from Long Island and Washington desperately needed information on the strength and plans of the British. This meant sending a spy into British territory. Hale volunteered.

Captain William Hull, a friend from Hale's regiment tried to discourage Hale from volunteering for such a danger filled mission. Hale told his friend, "I wish to be useful and every kind of service necessary to the public good becomes honorable by being necessary". This was at a time when spying was seen as a dishonorable engagement, but still necessary for the information spies could provide.

Hale, dressed as a civilian crossed by boat from Norwalk, Connecticut to Long Island and slipped behind enemy lines. Hale was untrained in the art of spying and was an easy target for the cunning Major Rogers. Rogers was an expert frontier fighter who had led a group of fierce, resourceful rangers from New Hampshire during the French and Indian War.

Rogers had recently escaped from the Americans and was on Long Island recruiting Tories as troops to fight for the British. According to Tiffany's manuscript, Rogers had been observing Hale for days. Hale's activities raised suspicions for Rogers and led him to believe that Hale was in disguise.

Rogers decided to talk to Hale and he led Hale to believe that they were on the same side. According to the manuscript, Rogers said, "he was upon the business of spying out the inclination of the people and motion of the British troops. Hale then told Rogers of his own mission. Rogers invited Hale to dine with him. At dinner, Rogers and several friends engaged Hale in similar conversation. "But at the height of their conversation, a company of soldiers surrounded the house, and by orders from the commander, seized Captain Hale in an instant," wrote Tiffany.

Captain John Montessor, a British officer sent to Washington's headquarters for an exchange of prisoners told the rest of the story to Hale's old friend Captain William Hull. Montessor told Hull that Hale had taken notes on British forces and was brought before Sir William Howe, British commander. Hull reported, "those papers concealed about his person betrayed his intentions". Hale was hanged as a spy the next day by the British.

Sources:

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GERMAN-AMERICANS IN THE WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE, PART 1

DAVID L. VALUSKA, PH.D.

This will be the first in a series dealing with the role that German Americans played in the War for Independence. Our first series will deal with identifying the Pennsylvania Germans and their influence on Pennsylvania and other colonies; such as Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina, in the period leading up to the break with Great Britain. Scholars estimate that between the years 1717 and 1775 German speaking people constituted more than 27 percent of all white arrivals to the thirteen colonies, and more than 80 percent of those Germans came by way of Philadelphia. Aaron Fogelman contends that between 1700 and 1775 there were nearly 308,000 white immigrants and 84,550 were German speaking people. This is a sizeable number when one considers the total population, excluding Indians but including Africans, was 2,780,000 people. What makes that number more meaningful is that the German speaking immigrants tended to concentrate in regional communities giving greater weight to their concentrated numbers, and in the process preserving their culture, language, and religious beliefs.

The German emigrants came primarily through the ports of Philadelphia, PA, New York City, Baltimore, MD, and Charleston, SC, with the majority settling in Pennsylvania. Many of the Germans coming through Philadelphia spread throughout the colony of Pennsylvania, primarily into the colonial counties of Philadelphia, Berks, Bucks, Northampton, Chester, Lancaster, York, Cumberland, Bedford and Northumberland as well into bordering colonies of Maryland, and the backcountry of Virginia and North Carolina. This whole area of migration is referred to by colonial historians as "Greater Pennsylvania". This Pennsylvania German diaspora soon caused the non German colonists to collectively refer to the German immigrants as the Pennsylvania Dutch regardless of their actual region of residence. The term Pennsylvania Dutch comes from the English bastardizing the German "Pennsilfannisch deutsch" meaning Pennsylvania German to the simpler English term Pennsylvania Dutch. These Pennsylvania Dutch immigrated from the German regions of the Rhine, Palatinate (Pfalz), Baden, Hessen, Darmstadt, Nassau, Hanau-Lichtenberg, Wuerttemberg, Alsace-Lorraine (France), Tyrol (Austria), Netherlands and several cantons of Switzerland.

The majority of Germans immigrating to the American colonies did so for economic and not religious reasons. Roughly 90% of the emigrants were "church folk" being either Lutheran or German Reformed(now United Church of Christ) and had not suffered any significant religious persecution in their native land. In contrast to the church folk were the sect groups such as the: Amish, Mennonites, Schwenkfelders, and Brethren. These sect groups did suffer from religious persecution which was the cause of many immigrating to America. The Moravians must be included in this discussion, but their sense of mission, community and governance set them apart from the other German groups. Many Moravians did not feel a part of the German movement, and saw themselves separate from the larger group.

Religious affiliation was a critical part of any group's cultural identity, and acted as a magnet for other German immigrants seeking communities that shared their religious beliefs. One historian noted that religion... accentuated their group consciousness to such a degree that their religion became an ethnic as well as a spiritual refuge.... Identifying one's religious persuasion is extremely helpful in determining whether they played an active or passive role in supporting the American cause. It is helpful to remember that the pacifistic sect groups (Amish and Mennonites) constituted less than 10% of the total numbers of the Pennsylvania Dutch. One peculiar fact is today many people think of the Pennsylvania Dutch as only being Mennonite or Amish, ignoring the majority Lutherans and Reformed.

GERMAN-AMERICANS IN THE WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE, PART 1, *CONTINUED*

Significantly, the Pennsylvania Germans living in distinct communities with their own unique language, culture and religious beliefs did not openly embrace the ideas of personal liberty and individual worth as did their English counterparts. To many Pennsylvania Dutch church leaders the Revolution had to be supported as it represented “a new order of the ages” and a repudiation of the “Old World”, but it was in a conservative context! The Germans would accept ideas of personal liberty within the framework of their church, culture and community. These restrictions would modify some of their exuberance, but in the long run it would not dampen their ardor for independence. The majority of Pennsylvania Dutch supported the American cause, and supported that cause within the conservative parameters of their religious communities.

In future articles we will deal with other Pennsylvania Dutch topics, including military actions of the Revolution and the units that were strongly identified with the Pennsylvania Germans (i.e.) early Rifle Companies from PA, VA and MD, German Regiment, von Heers Provost Corps, and Armand’s and Pulaski’s Legions. We will discuss German leaders such as Muhlenberg, von Steuben, Haussegger or von Ottendorf to name a few. We will investigate the German Auxiliaries (Hessians) and their role in the war. In addition the role of women, camp followers and women at war will be explored.

FACING PROPER, ACCORDING TO VON STEUBEN

CHIP GNAM, 1ST VIRGINIA REGIMENT

Perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of performing 18th century period drill is keeping our heads turned to the proper position. This was considered an essential aspect of performing the Manual Exercise, as well as for marching in Line. In what direction should a soldier be looking during the von Steuben Manual Exercise, as well as when marching? I have consulted von Steuben, as well as several other period Manuals to find the answer.

The Drill according to von Steuben

Some of the confusion arises when comparing von Steuben's description of the "Position of a Soldier *without Arms*," and the soldier "*under arms*." Chapter Five of the von Steuben manual includes the instruction of recruits and describes the position of a soldier *without arms* (page 10): "...with the head turned to the right so far as to bring the left eye over the waistcoat buttons..." The same chapter ends with a description of the soldier *under arms* (page 15) which is very similar to the first description but makes no mention of the position of the head or eyes.

This omission has led some people to believe that a soldier under arms was to look straight forward. However, I believe this was not what von Steuben intended. Perhaps the best evidence for this can be found in the many illustrations of the Manual made for the several editions of the book in the years that followed its first publication in 1779. Many of these can be found in Capt. E. W. Peterkin's book on the von Steuben drill, [The Exercise of Arms in the Continental Army](#) (Museum Restoration Service, Alexandria Bay, NY, 1989).

Peterkin does a careful evaluation of the various illustrations found in both British and American Manuals published during the late 1700s and early 1800s. The first illustrations showing the von Steuben drill appeared in a 1798 American recruiting poster, followed by illustrations that were included in the von Steuben Manuals published in 1802, 1803, and 1807. In all of these illustrations the soldiers are clearly shown performing the manual exercise with their heads turned to the right, just as the British drill illustrations also show. This similarity between the British and American illustrations demonstrates just how similar the two drills are, and clearly shows that the correct position of a soldier in either army included the head turned to the right.

To further reinforce the point, I have checked earlier drill manuals and found consistency in this detail. [The British Norfolk Discipline](#), published in 1759 describes the position of a soldier under arms, including (page 1): "...the head held up and *turned a little to the right*, except the right-hand man, who looks full to the Major or exercising officer."

Timothy Pickering's [Plan of Discipline for a Militia](#), published in 1775 describes the position of a soldier under arms (page 13): "...the *head erect, and turned to the right, so as to look easily at the fugler*..." Pickering includes a footnote on the same page that further explains the importance of the soldiers looking to the right: "...to accustom them to look to the right, as that he also may see the motion of every man at the same glance of eyes. *Looking to the right is so essentially necessary both in performing the manual exercise and in marching* that at first it might not be amiss to give the command – Look to the Right..."

Marching by the Colors

According to von Steuben not only was a soldier expected to look to the right during the drill but when marching he was expected to look away from the front as well. Which way he looked depended on where he was in the battalion formation. According to the von Steuben Manual (page 33): "In marching to the front, the men must be accustomed to dress to the center, which they will have to do in battalion; and for this purpose a sergeant must be placed six paces in front of center, who will take some object in front to serve as a direction for him to march straight forward; and the *men must look inwards*, and regulate their march by him." This is restated in Chapter Nine describing the "March in Line" (page 56): "The soldier... must have *his eyes continually fixed on the colors*, turning his head more or less, in proportion to his distance from them."

FACING PROPER, ACCORDING TO VON STEUBEN, *CONTINUED*

The concept of having soldiers watch the colors instead of the ground in front is also found in earlier Drill Manuals. According to the Norfolk Discipline (page 23): "In marching on a large front, the men must look inwards towards the center, and regulate their motions by that." Pickering agrees (page 51): "...in marching on a large front, for instance that of a whole battalion, the men must look inwards to the center, and regulate their march by that; for there are placed the colors... all therefore should look to the colors, and take the utmost care to keep even with them."

Marching in Small Units

Of course, soldiers frequently march in small units of squads, platoons or companies without the benefit of the colors. While von Steuben does not describe the direction soldiers were to look in the 1779 published edition of the Manual, his early draft written at Valley Forge directed: "...at the word of command, To the Front March, all the soldiers raise their Left feet at once, **Look to the right, & Advance...**" (from Orderly Book No. 17, 1778, Baron Steubens Instructions, p. 99; quoted by Peterkin)

This is also similar to the earlier Manuals. The Norfolk Discipline states (page 23): "In marching straight forward, the men are to look to the right, and take care to regulate their steps by their right-hand man..." Pickering agrees (page 51): "In marching straight ahead, the men are to look to the right..." As stated above, both these manuals make the distinction that troops look to the colors when in large formations.

Whether marching in a battalion front, or in a smaller unit, on the command "Halt," the soldiers stop and turn their heads back to the right (if they were looking to the left), returning to the position of a soldier under arms, and dressing their line at the same time. This is implied in von Steuben from the above text, and is stipulated in the Norfolk Discipline (page 22-23): "... they are to stop at once... **looking to the right**, and dressing their ranks."

For clarification, the proper head position for soldiers breaks down like this:

In Line formation, stationary: head turned to the right

Marching in company (or smaller) formation, without Colors: head turned to the right

Marching with Colors: head turned toward the Colors

THE CRESCENT

RON VIDEAU



The soldiers from South Carolina have had a long and illustrious attachment with the shape of the crescent moon from the present day shoulder patch of the state national guard back to the time before the American Revolution and its use as a helmet badge. Many a battlefield on land and at sea around the world has been fought by South Carolina's sons wearing their beloved crescent moon.

The first known use of the crescent moon as a helmet badge of South Carolina troops was February 1760. It was at this time that the South Carolina Commons House authorized the formation of a new regiment (SC Provincial Regiment-Middleton's) of ten companies of 100 men

each in order to be used against the Cherokee Indian nation in a forthcoming campaign. A surviving draft of this commission within the state archives shows a sketch of Lieutenant Governor Bull's family seal in which a crescent is prominently displayed. It is believed that this crescent was the model for the insignia of the new regiment. Another item worth noting about this new regiment are the names of two of its officers who would command the regiments light infantry company. These same two men, Capt. William Moultrie and Lt. Francis Marion, would go on to command the 2nd South Carolina regiment during the next war. Also of note is that at the same time that this regiment was formed, another unit composed entirely of "gentlemen of character and very considerable property who propose to go as volunteers with Middleton's Regiment." These men wore a uniform of the same style (including crescent) as Middleton's, but were to be of dark green faced red. Perhaps these same officers carried the use of the crescent as a cap badge into their regiment during the revolution, but that does not explain why so many other units began to take up the crescent as their own. Examples of these units are as follows:

- **Light infantry Company, Charlestown Regiment South Carolina Militia 1773-1776** Their Crescent had PRO PATRIA inscribed on it.
- **Saint Helena Volunteers 1775-1780** whose crescent had LIBERTY OR DEATH inscribed on it.
- **1st South Carolina Regiment 1775-1780** whose crescent also had Liberty or Death inscribed on it, and the officer's crescent had a pair of silver crossed scimitars within the points of the crescent.
- **2nd South Carolina Regiment** with LIBERTY inscribed on the crescent.
- **3rd South Carolina Regiment (Rangers)** with LIBERTY or DEATH inscribed on their crescents.
- **South Carolina State Regiment of Light Dragoons 1779-1780** It is believed that some of its members had crescents on their caps.
- **South Carolina Light Dragoons 1781-1782** This unit is also believed to have had some of its members wearing crescents on their caps.

Another note worth mentioning is the fact that many units from South Carolina used a light infantry cap/helmet as part of their uniforms but did not at anytime wear a crescent on their helmets. One such unit was the 4th South Carolina. As can be seen, many, but not all of South Carolina's troops wore crescents on their caps.

THE CRESCENT, *CONTINUED*

While it has been noted when the crescent first began to be used and that its use was careered into the Revolution, it does not explain *why*. Why did they do it? To answer this, we can look to romantic legend rather than documented fact. During the eighteenth century it was common practice in England for the firstborn son to inherit everything of his father's estate (i.e. the sun) while the second born son inherited nothing (i.e. the moon). Many of the men who came to South Carolina seeking their fortunes were these second sons. Many of these men did indeed make their fortunes in South Carolina as plantation owners growing rice and indigo, or as merchants or shipping magnates. Yes, they came to South Carolina as Second Sons with only the moon as their inheritance and with pride in making their own way in the world; they took the moon as their own symbol. In time the crescent moon would find its way from the troop's helmets onto the color which flew over Fort Moultrie when it was defended by the men of the 11th SC Regt. who defeated a large British fleet on June 28th 1776. Today the dark blue flag with its white crescent can still be seen flying over the great state of South Carolina.

Whatever the reason, whatever twists of fate led the crescent moon to become South Carolina's very own symbol matters little. It is a symbol that to this day is still worn on the shoulder patches of the men and women of the South Carolina National Guard serving both at home as well as on foreign fields. So when you see a soldier wearing the crescent moon of South Carolina on his uniform know that you are standing before a soldier and proud defender of history, his state, and his country.

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University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, SC 1971

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Fourth South Carolina Regiment (Artillery), 1775-1780 Plate No. 485
The Company of Military Historians

South Carolina Navy 1776-1780, Plate No. 489
The Company of Military Historians

The Third South Carolina Regiment (Rangers) 1775-1780 Plate No. 494
The Company of Military Historians

South Carolina Provincial Regiment (Middleton's), 1760-1761 Plate No. 561
The Company of Military Historians

South Carolina Light Dragoons, 1781-1782 plate No. 558
The Company of Military Historians

South Carolina State Regiment of Light Dragoons, 1779-1780 Plate No. 593
The Company of Military Historians

Light Infantry Company, Charlestown Regiment South Carolina Militia, 1773-1776
Plate No. 611 The Company of Military Historians

THE HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF PALLAS & TANTAE

JOE GIAMMARCO, UNITED TRAIN OF ARTILLERY

Early History and Description

Pallas and Tantae are two bronze French cannons that were cast at the foundry in Strasbourg in 1760 by foundry master Jean-Francois Berenger. The guns were named and decorated with ornate engravings as impressive as the firepower these pieces brought to an eighteenth century battlefield. On top of the barrel toward the rear of each piece was the royal crest of the French monarch so all would know the power of France. Toward the muzzle on the topside of the barrel, was an engraved banner bearing the name of the piece. Also on the top of each barrel, at about midpoint on the gun, were two handles fashioned to resemble dolphins or carp. Upon the rear reinforcement band appears the name of the city and the date of the casting. These guns were as much great works of art as they were weapons of war.

Arrival in America and service to the American Cause

From sources in the 1800s, including an oration by the Colonel of the United Train of Artillery in 1873 (who based his history on earlier written records which survive to this day including a letter from the Commander of the United Train of Artillery to the US War Dept. dating to 1815-17 and in the possession of the Rhode Island Historical Society) it appears that Pallas and Tantae arrived in America with a shipment of French ordnance given to the Continental Congress in 1778. A limited number of these guns survive today and most are in the possession of the National Park service. General Sullivan of the Continental army was given a portion of this shipment to outfit his expedition to liberate Newport, RI in the summer of that year. General Sullivan gave the United Train of Artillery in Providence Pallas and Tantae and told the artillery company to leave their iron guns behind in Providence. With their new Rhode Islander crews, Pallas and Tantae took part in the Battle of Rhode Island in August, 1778. After the battle, Pallas and Tantae remained in the possession of the United Train of Artillery (the UTA's iron guns having been absorbed into the national artillery park in exchange). In the war of 1812, Pallas and Tantae served just over 100 days of state service with the United Train of Artillery in manning Rhode Island's defenses.

Town of Warren takes Possession

In 1842, Rhode Island experienced the Dorr Rebellion. The Dorrite rebels stole Pallas and Tantae from the United Train of Artillery's gun house on Canal Street in Providence, but fortunately were unable to fire them. A militia company from the Town of Warren, loyal to the Governor of Rhode Island, came upon the guns and, knowing right well to whom the guns belonged, removed them from their carriages, carting them away when they returned to Warren. The Warren militia became the Warren Artillery Company. After the rebellion dissolved, the General Assembly, as a reward for loyalty to the State in a time of crisis, bestowed Pallas and Tantae upon Warren "on loan from the State." The United Train of Artillery protested vigorously and publicly, claiming that neither the State, nor the Warren Artillery had any claim to the guns as they were gifted outright to the United Train of Artillery by a representative of the Continental Congress (General Sullivan) and that the guns were baptized with the blood of members of the United Train of Artillery. This sparked a feud between the two companies which lasted for about 60 years. To make a long story short, the United Train of Artillery did not win the argument (nor did they lose it with a particularly good grace, given the tone of the Colonel of the UTA's oration in 1873).

The Warren Artillery Company furnished the cannons with new carriages and limbers. These items are some of the first examples of single trail carriages in the United States, precursors to the style prevalent during the Civil War. As such, they are extremely rare today. Shortly after the turn of the last century, the Warren Artillery ceased operations as a chartered command. The guns remained in the Town of Warren.

THE HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF PALLAS & TANTAE, *CONTINUED*

Pallas and Tantae's Present Condition

As many may remember, Pallas and Tantae were stolen on April 10, 1981 and were severely vandalized. The royal crests, the banners with their names, the place of origin, the identifying numbers stamped upon their trunions, all were ground down in an attempt to prevent identification. The dolphin handles were cut off and each barrel cut into segments. The pieces were then discarded in the pond at the Roger Williams Park, where they remained for approximately 13 years. When they were finally recovered, the dolphin handles were not to be found, and one muzzle is still missing (though a recent diving expedition in the pond had a promising hit). The gun segments remained in the evidence room of the Warren Police Station until the fall of 2003 when the Federal Blues of the Town of Warren were granted permission to display them in their museum on Baker Street in Warren for the annual Open House during Warren's Holiday Festival. The United Train of Artillery, assisted by the Federal Blues of Warren and various conscientious citizens of the Town of Warren, are engaged in an effort to restore Pallas and Tantae, arguably the two most important cannons in the history of Rhode Island. The effort has received the blessing of the Town Council of the Town of Warren. Though the guns will never fire again, they can be restored to look as they did when they arrived on our shores in 1778.

Restoration Progress

The first barrel is currently being restored by Cannons Online of Maryland. The various fundraising efforts, which began in late July of 2004 (and which have ranged from direct mail solicitations and raffles to serving up fast food at sporting events), have generated \$25,422 towards our goal of \$34,000. The 1840s limbers are nearly completely restored, and the carriages (of the same period) will be ready to receive the barrels once completed. We are still welcoming donations to this cause and are grateful for any amounts received. Checks may be made payable to The Federal Blues (a 501c3 organization) and mailed to Cannon Restoration Project, C/o Joe Giammarco, 76 Belvidere Blvd., North Providence, RI 02911.



Pallas & Tantae at the turn of the 20th century.

PUTTIN' ON THE DOG: ADVENTURES IN THE IDIOMS OF OUR MOTHER TONGUE

JAMES BREIG

(ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE SUMMER 2002 ISSUE OF THE COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG JOURNAL)
(PICTURES COURTESY OF THE COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG FOUNDATION)

Eighteenth-century Americans enjoyed blessings in disguise and built castles in the air, but none lived on Easy Street or ever put on the dog. They kicked the bucket but never knocked at the pearly gates. They knew mum's the word, but kept nothing under their hats. Which is to say that they enriched their speech with idiomatic expressions that still trip from our tongues, but that some of the colonial derivations given for old folk phrases turn out to ring hollow.

"Blessings in disguise" is a British expression recorded in 1746 and a phrase that could well have been used in colonial Williamsburg. So could have "castles in the air," an expression that dates to the sixteenth century. "Easy Street," however, did not grace the language until 1901, in the book *Peck's Red-headed Boy*, and "putting on the dog" is a nineteenth-century coinage. "Kicking the bucket" is defined as dying in the *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, published in 1785 by Francis Grose. But "pearly gates" did not signify the entrance of heaven until just before the Civil War. William Shakespeare wrote of "keeping your own counsel," in *Hamlet*, 1602, and "mum's the word" is recorded in 1704. But we did not begin to "keep things under our hat" until about the 1940s.

Adventures down the byways of our language are, of course, among the things that attract us to the streets of Colonial Williamsburg. Visitors can travel back in time by riding in carriages, donning three-cornered hats, and admiring a gunsmith make a musket or a silversmith etch a salver. But among the more cerebral ways to recapture the feeling of the eighteenth century is to listen to costumed interpreters speak the words and phrases of that bygone time and to distinguish them from ours.

In a sense, eighteenth-century English is a foreign language, and learning to use idioms deepens the understanding of a tongue. Though Americans of that era had expressions and sayings we use today—such as "one foot in the grave," "the powers that be," and "waste not, want not"—they also employed slang, clichés, and idioms that would baffle us. For example, Gouverneur Morris, an early United States ambassador to France, told William Short, a Virginia protégé of Thomas Jefferson, not to "kick against the pricks," and John Adams, writing from Europe, informed his wife, Abigail, in Massachusetts that he would take a "virgin" to bed if he got cold. Morris meant that Short shouldn't fight a cause that is lost and Adams was employing a British vulgarism for a hot-water bottle, something he explained later in his letter to the distant Abigail.

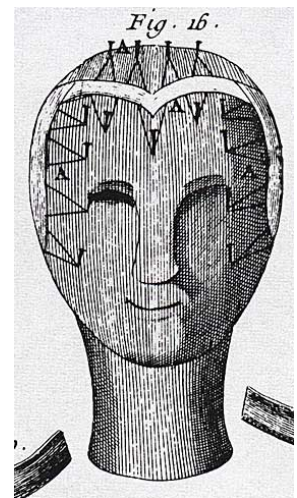
Where the street is named for the Duke of Gloucester, the man in the street—an early nineteenth-century idiom—has a lot to learn about colonial neologisms and Virginia verbalizations. Interpreters don lustrings, an eighteenth-century dress of glossy silk, and spencers, a kind of wig, and pepper their conversations with words like "blockhead," a term derived from the wooden wig stands used in the 1700s. They also take care to avoid linguistic old wives' tales—an expression in use in the eighteenth century.

Myths arise and get passed about as gospel, a process sped up, extended, and given a sheen of authority by the Internet. For instance, though "blockhead" is an authentic expression, "flipping one's wig" did not appear until the twentieth century.



Never mind the old saw about the use of dog skin for shoe leather, Harrison, the pet of journeyman Donna Woodward, is in no danger of being turned into a pair of brogans.
- Dave Doody

Photo courtesy of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation



"Blockhead" derives from wooden forms used to make and maintain wigs.

Photo courtesy of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

PUTTIN' ON THE DOG, *CONTINUED*



"Sleep tight" does not trace to beds with ropes pulled taut by such tools as the one shown.

- Dave Doody

Photo courtesy of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Many a visitor to bedrooms in the homes of Colonial Williamsburg has been told that "sleep tight" derives from tightening the ropes on which mattresses rested 250 years ago. It makes a good story, but it's not true. "Tight," as an adverb, means "soundly," "snugly," or "closely," so the expression means "sleep well." This use has lasted into our times, as anyone knows who has seen *The Wizard of Oz*. Glinda the Good Witch tells Dorothy to "keep tight" inside her ruby slippers. And who hasn't responded to a telephone caller asking for help by saying, "Sit tight; I'll be right over."

There is a propensity not to let the facts stand in the way of a good story, and the enchantment of folk etymologies is sometimes so strong that boneheaded derivations are cheerfully propagated by people who know better, or have at least cause to. Sold in Williamsburg is a durable old pamphlet about eighteenth-century expressions that, after disclaiming pretension to academic accuracy, retails, pig-in-a-poke, word origins collected willy-nilly from tourists and guides. By the way, Chaucer gets credit for recording "pig in a poke" and "willy-nilly" was put to paper by Middleton in 1608.

A "powder room," as the booklet says, was a closet where a man or woman of the 1700s could have a wig repowdered, and "slipshod" did mean "shod in slippers" and therefore slovenly. So far, so good. But the author says "big shot" derives from colonial cannon being fired when someone important came to town. In fact, the term wasn't used in America until the 1920s. Nor does "spooning" come from young eighteenth-century men whittling spoons to keep their hands occupied while courting. The word came into use in the 1870s.

A more popular gaffe is "putting on the dog," which the booklet says came from a colonial custom of making shoes or gloves out of dog skin. That sounds like a fascinating fact from our pre-Revolutionary past, but research in sources like the *Oxford English Dictionary* shows the expression is no older than the 1860s and probably traces to wealthy people with lapdogs. An 1871 reminiscence titled *Four Years at Yale* demonstrates that the phrase had become college slang by that time. The book says: "To put on dog is to make a flashy display, to cut a swell."



A "powder room" was an apartment where wigs were dressed.

Photo courtesy of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Faulty derivations can also be found in such more serious works as *Common Phrases and Where They Came From*, published in 2001. It says eighteenth- and nineteenth-century phrases like "not giving a damn" and "not worth a damn" refer not to damnation but to a monetary unit in India that had little value. The *Oxford English Dictionary* says such an explanation is "ingenious but has no basis in fact." It dismisses the theory that the expression is a shortening of "don't give a tinker's damn," recorded in 1839 by Henry David Thoreau. A tinker's dam is a bowl of dough shaped by a tinker that keeps solder from running off his work area. The dough is used once and discarded, making it worthless. The notion that people observed this and then punned, "I don't give a tinker's dam," says the dictionary, is "baseless conjecture." The expression more likely arises from the propensity of tinkers, like sailors, to curse profusely, making their oaths too common to have power or effect.

PUTTIN' ON THE DOG, *CONTINUED*

With no eighteenth-century audio recordings on which to rely, researchers turn to printed material for accurate reconstruction of eighteenth-century speechways. They pore over letters, diaries, novels, and other documents for expressions to determine when they were in vogue and the context in which they were used. The work is not easy, but it is getting less tedious, according to Linda and Roger Flavell, experts in idioms and co-authors of *The Chronology of Words and Phrases and Dictionary of Proverbs and Their Origins*.

Responding to e-mailed inquiries, they said: “The researcher has to look at the extant records: the written word. One can go to primary sources, the texts themselves, and look for relevant expressions. This is made much easier these days by the availability of digital texts, which are simple to search. Secondary sources—dictionaries, glossaries, contemporary grammars, etc.—can cut down the ‘leg work’ dramatically. But that is not the end of the matter. There are other questions: What exactly did the expression mean at the time? How does it relate to contemporary culture and practices? Has it undergone shifts in meaning, form or function since its early appearances?”

Discerning when an idiom began—or at least when it was written down—is often easy; discovering where it came from is a horse of another color—a saying used in America since at least 1798. Anyone checking the *Oxford English Dictionary* will find sayings labeled “origin obscure.” In other cases, conflicting explanations are offered to show at least something of how an expression arose. Some expressions have a clear genesis. The eighteenth-century British poet William Cowper gets credit for creating expressions you might think have been around for ages: “God moves in mysterious ways,” “the worse for wear,” and “variety is the spice of life.” Other sayings have births just as plain but go through evolutionary modification. Calling someone a “goody two-shoes,” which became colloquial in 1934, traces to a 1765 nursery story about a character named “Little Goody Two-Shoes.” “Goody” is a shortened version of “goodwife,” a style of formal address. Succeeding generations transformed “goody” into an adjective and then a pejorative.

It is not far to seek eighteenth-century expressions in straightforward twenty-first century use. A perusal of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* turns up “many hands make light work” in 1787, “live and let live” in 1772, and “honesty is the best policy” in 1768. Everyone since the 1500s has sometimes been “down in the dumps,” a phrase in use at least since then. But other phrases from colonial times are foreign to modern ears. Twenty-first-century Americans talk of having a sore throat; Adams would say he “caught the pip.” The meanings of other sayings have been altered. To people in the 1700s, “burning the candle at both ends” meant foolishly spending all of one’s savings. Three centuries later, it means taxing not your fiscal but your physical stamina.

Then there is the matter of wild oats and wild grapes, either of which could signify a dissolute youth. In his memoirs, John Woolman, an eighteenth-century New Jersey Quaker and abolitionist, regretted that, at age sixteen, “I perceived a plant in me which produced much wild grapes.” The *Oxford* editors cite that expression as early as a 1547 sermon that defined them as “sour works, unsweet, unsavoury, and unfruitful.” Modern Americans are more familiar with wild oats, which sprouted almost as early—in 1576. In his eighteenth-century novel *Captain Singleton*, Daniel Defoe writes: “Thus ended my first harvest of wild oats.”

The Flavells say that “the mainly rural life of the times certainly means that agricultural expressions, phrases about the weather, etc. were more common than today. One might also say that the growth in shipping led to the introduction of various nautical expressions.”



The small, slovenly man at left in this 1736 Hogarth print is abroad in his slippers, and thus “slipshod.”

Photo courtesy of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation



The iron pots hanging in the fireplace might with justice call the sooty copper kettle black, or little better than they.

Photo courtesy of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

PUTTIN' ON THE DOG, *CONTINUED*

But neither boats nor beans explain some expressions. Whether referring to military strategy or political maneuvering, George Washington liked to say or write, as he did in 1793, that “there is no adage more true than an old Scotch one, that ‘many mickles make a muckle.’” Anyone who heard him use the saying knew what he meant: If you attend to the small things, the big thing will be taken care of. The problem, according to Bartlett Jere Whiting, who wrote *Early American Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases*, is that the expression has “the almost fatal flaw of failure to make sense.” In Washington’s mind, “mickles” were small things that added up to a big thing, a “muckle.” Whiting says “mickle is a large amount and muckle is a dialect variant of mickle, with no change of meaning. Thus Washington’s adage means that ‘Many greats make a great,’ which is not what he had in mind.”

Regardless, the expression suited the first president “to a T,” an idiom found as early as 1693. People in the eighteenth century were just as likely to say “to a hair” or “to a hair’s breadth” to indicate how closely two things fit. Shakespeare used the expression in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. “Egad,” you might say on learning that, and you would be employing an eighteenth-century interjection, one of many that softened such references to the divinity as “Oh, God.” In the same way, modern people avoid “Jesus” by muttering “jeez,” a form that first appeared in the 1920s. A Colonial Williamsburg fact sheet for character interpreters says they will be historically correct if they use the expletive “Oh, La” or “Lard” instead of “Lord” or cry, “Zounds” in place of “by God’s wounds.” Men and women of that time even shouted, “Fudge,” but it was not a substitute for another F-word. It meant “nonsense.”



Interpreter Beverly Henry spins at a “muckle,” or walking wheel, at right, the term being something of an all-purpose word for large.

Photo courtesy of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

This softening is an expression of gentility, the Flavells say. A 1752 article in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* renders a familiar proverb: “The kettle should not call the pot black a—.” The use of the word “arse,” the Flavells say, “was regarded then as too vulgar for polite conversation. Such deficiencies can vary in relation to the climate of the time and to the sensitivity of an individual. This is very obvious in spoken language today; there are many speakers who will not, even now, use many taboo forms.”

Williamsburg’s citizens also had roundabout ways of talking about sex, employing “die” to mean “have an orgasm” and “lie with” in place of cruder terms for sexual intercourse

In the 1700s, as the Colonial Williamsburg document notes, people could choose from an assortment of insults. A loose woman was “baggage” or “a hussy.” A foolish young man was “a puppy.” A coward, then as now, was “a chicken,” a term the Bard of Avon employed.

As for impugning someone’s intelligence, eighteenth-century people could select not only “blockhead” but “idiot,” recorded in 1377; “dolt,” 1543; “dummy,” 1598; and “numskull,” used by Jonathan Swift in 1724. They did not, however, have the options of “moron,” 1910; “jerk,” 1935; or “stooge,” 1913.

With such information in mind and on the tongue, a person of the past—whether “poor as a church mouse,” which dates to 1731, or “rich as Croesus,” in use by 1707—can stroll about Colonial Williamsburg better prepared to present the eighteenth century. Even if it’s “raining cats and dogs,” as it has been since the 1700s.

James Breig is an Albany, New York, writer and editor and contributor to the Colonial Williamsburg Journal.



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Tube, I love thee as my life;
By thee I mean to choose a wife;
Tube thy colour let me find,
In her skin, and in her mind.
Let her have a shape as fine;
Let her breath be sweet as thine:
Let her, when her lips I kiss,
Burn like thee, to give me bliss,
Let her in some smoke or other,
All my failings kindly smother.
Often when my thoughts are low,
Send them where they ought to go.
When to study I incline,
Let her aid be such as thine:
Such as thine her charming pow's,
In the vacant social hour.
Let her live to give delight,
Ever warm, and ever bright,
Let her deeds whene' er she dies,
Mount as incense to the skies

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