



NEWS AND NOTES

from

The Fauquier Historical Society

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WARRENTON, VIRGINIA

Summer 1982

Life in Fauquier Before the Revolution

Before 1775, the County of Fauquier spread like a great forested blanket over the Virginia piedmont. To the west rose the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Throughout the county the smoke from the chimneys of cabins in small clearings curled upward through the forest. The population was thinly scattered. The ancient trees, taller than man-made objects, arched over their heads. The forests were still thronged with wild life; the roads through them were dark, sometimes hardly visible and always incredibly bad, especially in winter.

Though the population of Fauquier was small, possibly fewer than 14,000, there was not in all its 664 square miles one town or village of any importance.

On the site of an ancient Indian town on Hedgman's River, in the area of Elk Marsh, the forest was broken by savannahs of rich, dark soil which supported reeds that reached incredible heights. In these sunlit glades in the lower county, the settlement of Fauquier had begun some sixty years before. The settlers were few, brave and cautious, because Indians still used the Shenandoah Hunting Path that skirted the Bull Run Mountains and crossed Fauquier to a ford across Hedgman's River.

In 1687 a block house had been built at Brent Town on Town Run to "observe" the Indians and offer some shelter for the few hardy souls who had ventured so far from civilization.

With the Treaty of Albany, in 1722, Governor Spotswood had put an end to that threat. The



Photo by Isabelle Palmer

Thomas Marshall, father of John Marshall built this house, probably around 1765, when he moved his family to the northern part of the county from his first settlement on Licking Run.

Indians promised to keep west of the Blue Ridge and not disturb the settlement of the piedmont, if the white man would not penetrate beyond the mountains. The Indians kept their promise, though the white man did not, and no Indian raids are known to have taken place in Fauquier in the fifty-three years before the Revolution. Secure behind the Blue Ridge, the settlers cleared the forest and sowed their crops undisturbed.

The historian, researching county records, finds that names reveal a common English background. There had been attempts to settle foreigners in the county, but none had a lasting influence on its development. As

early as 1686 the proprietors of the Brent Town tract, of which part lay in Fauquier, had tried to induce immigrant French Huguenot families to settle there. Despite alluring terms and the blandishments of Nicholas Hayward in England and Giles Brent in Virginia, the Huguenots had, to a man, refused to come.

In 1718 a small group of German miners from Westphalia, who had been brought to Virginia by Governor Spotswood applied to Robert Carter, agent for the vast Fairfax Proprietary, for a grant of land on Licking Run. Here they established the tiny village of Germantown. There were only 12 families comprising some 43

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Fauquier Before the Revolution

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persons. Germantown lasted less than twenty years. By 1745, many had moved back to Culpeper County, where they had originally been settled by Governor Spotswood. The remainder secured grants elsewhere and their children intermarried with their English neighbors. The only real relic of the German settlement was the continuance of names like Holtzclaw, Fishback, Rector and Weaver.

Possibly the nearest thing to a lasting influence from an alien ethnic group came from the Scotch-Irish. These were mostly lowland Scottish Protestants who had been planted in northern Ireland in Cromwell's time in a vain British effort to curb the wild Irish tribesmen and to convert them from the Catholic faith.

When their 60 year leases expired, in 1717 and 1718, they were evicted from the land and by the thousands emigrated to America. Some found their way to Virginia.

These newcomers hated the English, they hated Catholics but, most of all, they hated landlords. Forced to the hostile terrain and poor soil of the hillsides, by the appropriation of prime lands by Robert Carter and his friends,

some settled on the rugged, rocky hills east of the Pignut Mountain and in other less desirable areas along the Bull Run Ranges. Their numbers were never great and, as the result of the poverty of their acres, their economic state was seldom flourishing before the Revolution. By that time their ethnic peculiarities, except for an inherent love of a good good fight, had largely disappeared.

Another natural clearing in the forest was found at White Plains, just west of Thoroughfare Gap, in the Bull Run Mountains which separated Fauquier and Prince William Counties. But this loosely organized settlement oriented more closely to Prince William.

The only formally established town in Fauquier was Maidstone, the idea of John Rector of Germantown. Rector town, as it was known later, existed mostly on paper. The merchants who John Rector "desired to settle there," had, by 1775, not arrived. The tiny village is, today, of great charm and quiet inconsequence.

Fauquier Courthouse, located at almost the exact center of the county on property that had been patented in 1718 by the powerful Lee family, was the county seat. Its site could hardly have been

more fortunate. Situated on an eminence near the junction of two main highways through the county, it became, by its very nature, the hub about which the county revolved. It boasted a brick courthouse, completed in 1769, and a jail, barely strong enough to hold those who had no particular desire to escape.

In the center of the town was a building known as the "Red Store," established as a trading post before 1764, which received stiff competition from one across the street. The best known tavern in the town was run by Andrew Edwards, to whom a license was granted in July 1759. There also was a tavern run by one Waters and several "grog shops" to supply thirsty litigants on court days.

There was a blacksmith's shop, a saddler's shop and probably, a cabinet shop. In addition, in the few private homes thereabouts, a certain amount of trade was carried on, as millinery, clock making and tailoring, according to notices posted on the porch of the ordinary. Somewhat remotely situated and, of course, complained of by its near neighbors, was a tannery. The only church was on Turkey Run about two miles south of town. It was a great barn-like frame building of no architectural merit, but it held a large congregation.

The County Court usually sat on the fourth Monday in the month and might last into the second day. Coinciding with it in reasonable propitious weather in April or May and again in October or November, Muster Day was held, when the county militia went through its paces on the muster field at the edge of town. The militiamen and their fractious admirers added an element of excitement to Court Day. Spirits ran high and tempers flared, leading sometimes to lethal consequences.

It must be remembered that fighting in the 18th century was not governed by Marquis of Queensbury rules. To have one's eye gouged out, nose bitten off or to receive a swift knee in the groin were commonplace social hazards, scarcely worth mentioning. However, if one had an ear bitten

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Annual Meeting

More than one hundred members and guests attended the annual meeting of the Fauquier Historical Society on Wednesday, June 2nd, at Airlie.

After an excellent dinner, accompanied by piano music by Mrs. Elizabeth Flathers, a short business meeting was called to order by President Dr. Robert Anderson, Jr.

William Parkinson, nominating committee chairman, presented recommendations for the Board of Directors. Re-elected to the board were Dr. Anderson and H. P. Monroe. New board members were Mrs. Edward J. Jones, Mrs. Eastham Carter, George S. Coyle, John M. Cheatwood and Edgar McVoy.

The Society's first certificates of appreciation were presented by Dr. Anderson to William W. Parkinson, who was instrumental in the organization of the present Historical Society and in saving the old jail when it was marked for demolition in favor of a parking lot, and to John K. Gott, local historian and genealogist who has very ably recorded the history of Fauquier in several books and numerous articles.

Following the business meeting Mr. Gott spoke on Life in Fauquier Before the Revolution.

Loudoun Area Basketry

An exhibit at Loudoun Museum in Leesburg features antique baskets made or used locally. Samples of traditional materials and illustrations of basket construction techniques supplement the display.

The baskets come in all shapes and sizes, from miniature rib-constructed gift baskets to a huge oak splint laundry basket.

Of special interest are the Madeira-style honeysuckle baskets made by gypsies camping in Loudoun in the early 20th century.

The exhibit will run through July 26th. Museum hours are Monday through Saturday 10-5 and Sunday 1-5.



Photo by Jennings Flathers

Dr. Robert Anderson presents certificates of appreciation for "faithful and valuable contributions made toward the preservation of the history of Fauquier County" to John Gott (left) and William Parkinson (right).

Clara Stover McCarty

Clara Stover McCarty, 88, genealogist, historian, boxwood expert and teacher, died April 20, 1982. She was born February 2, 1894, at Broad Run, Fauquier County, Virginia, the daughter of Robert and Ella (Carrington) Stover.

Her expert knowledge of the northern part of Fauquier County history and genealogy has been a source of help to many. Besides her notebooks of data and poetry her published books are *Boxwood, Foothills of the Blue Ridge*,¹ a history of that part of Fauquier, a genealogy *The McCartys of Virginia*, and *Dueling in Virginia and Bladensburg*.

For a number of years she had a private school at her home Waverly, near Delaplane, teaching the first through sixth grades. Besides teaching in public schools she was supervisor of elementary instruction in Fauquier County.

She raised boxwood commercially at Waverly, where she grew them in a lovely landscape design.

In her younger days Mrs. McCarty was active in the Episcopal Church at Little Georgetown and also after her marriage to James Benjamin McCarty, who preceded her in death. She was the mainstay of Emmanuel Episcopal Church for many years.

She is survived by two sons, Capt. James Benjamin McCarty, Jr., and John Barcroft McCarty, three grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

—NANCY CHAPPELEAR BAIRD

¹May be purchased at the Delaplane Store, Delaplane, VA 22025.

Membership

The Society is now accepting annual membership renewal dues for the fiscal year May 1982-83. If you would like to continue on our mailing list please mail your check with membership form on page 5.

Fauquier

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off one would do well to make it a matter of public record. The severance of an ear was also a prescribed punishment for theft. Mayhem was acceptable, but conviction of a felony carried with it a certain social stigma. Public records of ears respectably detached are frequent in Fauquier County Minute Books.

At Fauquier Courthouse the people gathered when court was in session, settled their deals, replenished their supplies, spread their gossip and aired their views on politics, religion and the state of the world. They also came for news, a rare and precious commodity in colonial days. Copies of one or more of the three Virginia Gazettes, published in Williamsburg, were posted on the porches of the taverns or the courthouse.

The centers of population were linked by a system of roads too awful for modern experience to contemplate. Travel in Fauquier was thus on horseback or on foot. Women stayed home or rode behind their menfolk. It was usually inconvenient for them to appear in court. Their depositions were taken at home or in the house of a neighbor when the need arose. Opportunities for shopping, that

great restorative of female morale, came seldom, if at all.

Travelling was not something that one did for pleasure. Except for infrequent trips to the county seat for legal matters, most farmers stayed home and tended their crops.

As corn had to be ground, reasonable access to a water-powered grist mill was necessary. The earliest mill on record was Col. Thomas Harrison's mill on Cedar Run which existed for many years prior to its first record in 1744.

If the reader is laboring under any delusion that there were private houses dating from before the Revolution that were even reasonably comfortable or attractive, then such fancies should be promptly squelched. There is no positive record of any brick houses as were frequently found in the Tidewater counties. Field stone, which could be had in abundance, was, in general, used only for chimneys. Entire houses of stone were uncommon, though outbuildings subject to fire hazard, such as kitchens and blacksmith's shops, were frequently stone. Because of better insulation, so also were at least the lower parts of ice houses and dairies.

There were many log houses, but Tidewater tradition and the building of saw mills on the rapid

streams facilitated the use of a sort of balloon frame construction made of timbers dressed at least on one side and covered with wood siding. Usually there were two rooms below, and a loft above. The rooms below, which could be heated by a fireplace, housed the adults. The loft, which was often divided but seldom sheathed, was for children or housed servants, miscellaneous persons or stray visitors.

Without screens and with the customary intimate association with draft animals, control of flies and fleas was next to impossible. Lice, bedbugs and ticks were inevitably at home, however resolute the war against them. Some writers, Washington among them, complained bitterly but accepted them with resignation and took their sleeping bags into the woods. Most were not so particular.

The costume of the back country was usually simple homespun, however, men like Thomas Marshall and James Scott, delegates from Fauquier to the House of Burgesses dressed like "men of fashion." A probable exception to current fashion was that they "wore their own hair." A powdered wig was messy, uncomfortable and a nuisance in the backwoods. Also, wigs were not as prevalent in Virginia as usually imagined. In modern pageants, common soldiers found wandering around with wigs under their tricorns are absurd.

A very high percentage of the people in Fauquier owned slaves. Few families had many, but there were usually enough to help substantially with household chores. The planter and his sons usually worked their land along with his Negroes. Except for the settlement of estates or the satisfaction of hopeless debt they were rarely bought or sold.

Though life in Fauquier was rugged before the Revolution it also had many compensations. The climate was pleasant, food plentiful and the troubles of the world seemed remote and irrelevant. However the religious question was both clear cut and perplexing.

The settlers were all Protestants and belonged, for the



Photo by Isabelle Palmer

Auctioneer Wilbur Shumate (upper left) and Clerk Ray Davis (upper right) auction a pair of folding chairs on the steps of the Warrenton Library building.

most part, to one or the other of only two sects. There were no Catholics. In fact, one who had Catholic leanings would do well not to mention it. Candidates for public office had to swear to uphold the Protestant succession, and to abjure belief in the doctrine of transubstantiation, under oath. To profess Catholicism was to court political and social oblivion. If any votive candles burned in Fauquier before the Revolution, they have escaped the notice of historians.

The two remaining sects were, therefore, members of the established church of England and the Society of Baptists.

Aside from periodic outbursts of mayhem on Muster days and an occasional exercise of mob violence against unoffending ministers of the gospel, public records indicate that the people of Fauquier were moral and law-abiding. However, when we say this, we must remember that it was a violent time, that the plantation houses were far apart, and that time lay heavy on many hands. The old houses kept their secrets well; the cemeteries were even less talkative. Few of the descendants of those who lived in the county at that time are without at least one family skeleton, grinning impudently over their shoulders.

Looking backward over a span of two centuries into the hearts and minds of the people of Fauquier before the Revolution, one finds many curious anomalies. The elaborate historical facade we have built over the years has many carefully carved niches into which they do not fit. These people were not pioneers, facing unknown danger in unexplored wilderness; life was hard, but not heroically so.

Neither were they Tidewater grandees in powdered perukes, perpetually dressed as though for a court ball. They were neither rich nor poor. There were few temptations to lavish spending, and they seldom were heavily in debt as were their tidewater cousins. The stern Calvinism that was sweeping the county encouraged frugality, and the boycott of luxury goods from England barely touched them.

Politically they were confused.

They were still transplanted Englishmen struggling with a hostile environment and their roots were still deep in English culture, but almost none had visited England and fewer wanted to do so. They had no cash crop that made trade with England important. They grew little tobacco and that of poor quality. They had no ports and many had never glimpsed the sea. That "all men were created equal" was an engaging concept, meaning to these settlers that all white freeholders over twenty-one were created equal. They had no concept of a classless society. Secure in their English heritage and their ties by blood and marriage to the ruling families of the Northern Neck, they were well aware that some were born to rule and that others labored in the vineyard. Nepotism, far from being frowned upon, was a way of life.

To an almost unbelievable extent the leading families were related, by blood or marriage or both. Settlers often moved in family groups, taking up tracts of land in close proximity. Great tracts of land were patented and held on speculation. On the death of the original patentee, it was divided among his children, thus establishing several brothers and sisters on adjoining farms. Propinquity did the rest.

Next below the gentry came the freeholders who had, by enterprise and hard work, gained title to smaller amounts of land

and lesser estates. They seldom sought public office and were not ashamed to sign their names with a firm "X." They were proud, penny-pinching and sometimes contrary, but they usually voted with the gentry because power and money were, to them, almost the same. Their sons were the rank and file in the war that was soon to come.

Below these came "the meaner sort of people," the dropouts from society, convicts and the perpetually indigent and irresponsible. If they caused trouble they were whipped, if too much trouble they were hanged. These were the unknowns, who, to the established community, lived in the next county, over the nearest mountain or, at least, beyond the bend in the road.

At the bottom were the blacks. Too much has been written about slavery in Virginia for us to hope to add anything new. In Fauquier County their number was about the same as that of the whites. Economics and a measure of humanitarian interest determined that it was better to keep them together in family groups. Their living conditions were atrocious but usually better than those of the lower class whites. Their role was to stay at home and take care of things while their masters fought for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, concepts that meant nothing to them.

— John K. Gott

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Please Return To:
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Number in family membership

Name: _____

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Check appropriate membership category: () — Sustaining — \$25 and over
() — Individual or family — \$10
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How would you be willing to help the Society this year?

Can You Help?

News and Notes will contain in each issue a list of as many persons as possible who are conducting genealogical or historical research on persons or places related to Fauquier County. To be included in this column write The Fauquier Historical Society, P. O. Box 675, Warrenton, VA 22186. Please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope.

DARNALL. Mrs. Mary Belle Wells, 23635 Community St., Canoga Park, CA 91304 would like to know if "wife Dianna", whose first daughter by Benjamin Garner was b. about 1765, may have been the same lady who married George Wheatley in 1760.

FARQUIER, FARQUER, FARQUHAR, CHADDUCK. Mrs. Dorothy Nelson, 609 3rd St., SE, Valley City, ND 58072 would like info. on the foregoing from about 1750-1850.

FLOWERREE. David E. Riggs, P. O. Box 349, Vicksburg, MI 39180 wants info. on the family of Col. Charles Conway Flowerree, 1842-1929 b. Marshall, Va.; for 2 yrs. commanded the 7th Va. Infantry Regiment, C. S. A. He was the son of Daniel Rout Flowerree, b. 1799, and Nancy Rector Flowerree, d. 2 Aug 1892.

GLASCOCK. Mrs. Naomi Glascock Medford, 3047 Oliver St., N.W., Washington, D. C. 20015 is

searching for info. on the Glascock family. They lived in the Broad Run, Marshall, Paris and The Plains areas.

HEADLEY. Dr. Marvin D. Headley, 2923 Windsor Place, Blue Springs, MO 64015 wants to locate the parents of John Headley, b. 7 Apr 1785. Father may be James Headley who m. Lucy Jeffries, 14 Jun 1783, in Frederick Co., Va. January Court, 1793, shows appointment "to appraise estate of James Headley, Dec'd in Fauquier." Would also like info. on any Headley family in Fauquier.

McCLANAHAN. Mrs. Garnett Kemp Wood, 1808 Madison Ave. Covington, KY 41014 wants info. on the family of James, the Elder, McClanahan who went to Kentucky, 1817-1819, from Fauquier. He had 7 sons and 1 dau. Jane McC. Feagan. She wants to know if these McClanahans were Quakers and if there was a Quaker settlement in Fauquier.

MENASCO/MANASCO/MAM-ASKER and other spellings. Muriel Menasco, 612 Glenwood Place, Anaheim, CA 92805 seeks info. on all Menascos (whatever the spelling). A will of Edward Carter, proved 29 Nov 1682, mentions his "other plantation called Monasco Plantation, lying also on the N side of Rappahannock River, now in

possession of overseers to my son, Edward Carter."

PALMER. Mrs. Eugenie Fellows, 21 Williams Blvd. Zepherhills, FL 33599 needs the parents, grandparents, birthplace/date of Lucy Palmer, daughter of John Palmer. Lucy b. c. 1798, Va., d. 22 Jan 1835, Fairfield Co., Ohio; m. 30 Jul 1819 in Fauquier to Joseph H. Fanning, b. Fauquier 1792 or 1795, d. Fairfield Co., Ohio 13 Aug 1846. Children: Mary, Nancy, John Walker.

SUTHARD. Mrs. Clara Biddle, 29 Laura Lane, Mt. Dora, FL 32757 would like to know the ancestors of William W. Suthard, b. ca. 1786 and lived to be 105. Had 12 children. A son John T., b. 17 Jan 1832, lived in New Baltimore where his son James Lee was born, 1 Sep 1863. The family later lived at Bealeton in Fauquier.

TAYLOR. James A. Kirkpatrick, Apt. 1020 E. 4201 Cathedral Ave., N.W., Washington, D. C. 20016 wants info. on the Joseph Pannill Taylor family who lived in or near Warrenton, during 1850's. A Joseph P. Taylor owned and operated the Warrenton Female Institute until the late 1850's. Two sons, Joseph Hancock and John, served in the Federal Army.

The Fauquier Historical Society

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