



# NEWS AND NOTES

from

## *The Fauquier Historical Society*

Vol. 6, No. 3

WARRENTON, VIRGINIA

Summer 1984

### Colonel Thomas Harrison: *Fauquier's Forgotten Founder*

At the first session of the court of the newly established Fauquier County held May 24, 1759 eight justices were present. The name leading the list and the signature on the minutes was that of Thomas Harrison.

Yet this man, preeminent among the founders of the county, is almost forgotten. No district of the county, not even a street, is named for him. No portrait of him or plaque with his name can be found in the court house.

His services to the county deserve recall.

Fauquier's Harrison was not one of the Tidewater Presidential family. His grandfather, Burr Harrison, arrived in the colony about 1660 and worked as an overseer on a backwoods plantation in Stafford county before getting land of his own on Chappawamsic creek on the boundary between modern Stafford and Prince William.

#### **Born in Alexandria**

The future founder of Fauquier was born about 1702, four or five years after his grandfather died, at what is now Alexandria. Then it was still frontier; only two or three years earlier three children and two adults "baby-sitting" them had been tomahawked to death by a roving band of Indians.

About 1707 Captain Thomas Harrison moved his family, including his second son and namesake, to his late father's seat on the Chappawamsic. The captain had gained his military title in 1703 in the Stafford militia. He was a justice of the Stafford court and in 1731, when Prince William was carved out of the older county, he was first-ranked of its original thirteen justices. He was also the first county lieutenant commanding its militia, a

post he held almost continuously until his death at age 81 in 1746.

The earliest mention of Thomas Harrison Jr. is found in the 1724 Overwharton Parish Register of tobacco planters. In the first agricultural production control act in U.S. history, Virginia had limited each grower to 6000 plants per "laboring person" plus 3000 per male between 10 and 16 years of age.

In accord with this law Captain Harrison declared 44,924 plants, making him the biggest grower in the parish, and he listed his son among the men on his plantation.

The younger Harrison formed his own household in 1731, the year he received a grant from the Proprietor of 271 acres on Holmes Run in present-day Falls Church.

This tract adjoined one bought the previous year by a young widow, Ann Quarles, nee Grayson. Ann was a Scottish lassie, a sister of a wealthy land speculator. (A nephew, William Grayson, was one of Virginia's first two U.S. senators.)

Thomas and Ann Quarles Harrison raised to adulthood a daughter and two sons by her first marriage and four sons and three daughters of their own.

No record of Ann is found after the birth of their youngest child in 1749.

In 1740 Harrison bought from his father the nucleus of an estate lying in

what later became Fauquier County. Expansion over the years enabled a bequest to his son Benjamin of "the old plantation, mill and land purchased of my father lying on Cedar Run below the mouth of Dorrell's Run, also adjoining land purchased of Thomas Whitledge, also adjoining tract purchased of John Orear, also the plantation and land whereon I now live formerly the Glebe of Hamilton joining the aforesaid land, also the land I purchased of Bertrand Ewell joining the aforesaid land."

The Harrisons were living there in 1745 when the Dettingen Parish vestry permitted the then-Major Thomas Harrison "to build a gallerie for the use of himself and family in Broad Run Chapple."

#### **Life of Public Service**

Soon after his marriage Thomas Harrison Jr. began his public career, becoming sheriff of Prince William in 1733. By 1744 he had replaced his father as the first justice of the county, and in 1747 succeeded him as county lieutenant with its rank of colonel.

Whether he or his father was the Thomas Harrison who with William Fairfax was chosen to represent Prince William in the House of Burgesses which met from 1742 to 1747

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**DUES:**

Individual or Family Membership	\$10.00 per year
Contributing Membership	\$15.00 per year
Sustaining Membership	\$25.00 and over per year
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Correspondence should be directed to:

The Fauquier Historical Society  
 P.O. Box 675  
 Warrenton, Virginia 22186

Telephone:  
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Newsletter Chairman and Editor: Isabelle S. Palmer,  
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## Harrison

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cannot be ascertained, but in 1748 (after the death of the elder Harrison) and again in the next poll in 1752, Prince William elected Thomas Harrison and Joseph Blackwell, both from the section which became Fauquier. Perhaps the reason the two were unseated in 1756 was growing sectionalism which led to the partition three years later.

Harrison and John Bell were the first Burgesses elected from Fauquier. Thomas Marshall took Bell's seat in November 1761. He and Harrison were reelected in 1766, but when Marshall resigned to become sheriff in 1768, James Scott (whose wife was a niece of Harrison) replaced him.

Harrison and Scott were sent to Williamsburg again for the short-lived House which met in May 1769.

However, in the poll of September, 1769, the aging aristocrat ran a poor third behind Marshall and Scott. Marshall received 329 votes, Scott 273 and Harrison 196.

Eligible to vote were all freeholders, whether residents of the county or not, except convicts transported from Britain or Ireland, blacks, mulattos, or Indians. A freeholder owned or had a life lease on more than 50 acres or 25 acres with his house.

Each could cast his vote for two candidates; thus about 400 persons participated in that election.

### Fauquier Court Days

Colonel Harrison took his responsibilities as justice of Fauquier seriously. From 1759 to 1771 he was present at most of the monthly court sessions, presiding except in September 1762 and July 1763 when Lord Fairfax attended.

The opening day of court was devoted to such county business as appointing "surveyors" for maintaining the roads, granting licenses for ordinaries (taverns), probating wills, registering deeds, sentencing women to twenty lashes for "bearing a bastard child," and appropriating funds for county needs.

Usually it was the Colonel who was authorized to receive or disburse county money, acting as treasurer and purchasing agent.

Generally the court sat two more days trying civil cases for debt, trespass, breach of promise (i.e. contract), assault, etc. The citizenry were quick to take their neighbors to court, in spite of seemingly endless continuations of their cases.

What now-a-days would be a boring loss of time was then a social occasion, spent with friends in drinking, gambling at cards or dice, or when arguments broke out, wrestling with no holds barred before a circle of spectators.

Probably Colonel Harrison stayed with his gentlemen friends, but their diversions were similar to those of the planters and artisans at the ordinary, except the stakes were higher.

Twice a year a grand jury would report its indictments for such misdemeanors as selling liquor without a license, failure of a road surveyor to perform his duty, or swearing an oath, usually "By God." Conviction was punished by fines payable to the parish treasury.

On one occasion the jurors indicted half the gentlemen of the county, including Colonel Harrison, for failure to declare their "wheeled carriages" on their tithing returns. Needless to say the court threw out all those indictments.

Residents accused of felonies were bound over to the next General Court at Williamsburg, but slaves were tried at a court of "oyer and terminer," which in practice was heard by the same justices as those of the county court. Almost every felony committed by a slave was punishable by death, but normally the sentence was commuted to branding in the presence of the justices followed by thirty or more lashes well laid-on at the public whipping post.

### Second County Lieutenant

Henry Churchill was Fauquier's first county lieutenant, but Harrison succeeded him in 1761, apparently holding the post until his death. The position was largely honorary, with the annual muster day being another opportunity for socializing.

In September 1773 the now elderly gentleman had a serious illness, possibly a heart attack. "Being weak of body but of perfect sense and memory," he made his will. He must have recovered well and quickly, because on October 25 he received a commission from Governor Dunmore to be sheriff of Fauquier County "during pleasure," and on November 22 he appeared at court to take the oath of office.

On November 27 the vestry of Dettingen Parish, on which he had served for over twenty-five years, honored him by naming him and Henry Lee as the two churchwardens for the ensuing year.

However, the end came late in December 1773. William Edmonds'

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# Society Joins Preservation Group

The Fauquier Historical Society has joined the Preservation Alliance of Virginia as a charter member. Membership dues were provided by private contribution.

The Preservation Alliance of Virginia, a non-profit corporation, was officially established at an evening ceremony at Monticello, one of the state's most famous historical sites, on February 23rd in connection with a preservation conference at the University of Virginia.

The Preservation Alliance, which has established headquarters at Waterford, in Northern Virginia, will provide technical information and services to the many local preservation groups in the state which are often understaffed and underfinanced.

"We are going to support local efforts and provide a forum for preservation groups to meet and exchange ideas," said Constance K. Chamberlin, president of the Alliance.

The group will lobby the General Assembly for laws to preserve the historic and cultural resources of Virginia and work to gain support of the

public for preservation work. It will also establish a fund to purchase historical property which might otherwise be destroyed. Such properties could then be resold with protective covenants.

Jaquelin T. Robertson, dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Virginia, speaking at the conference, said efforts to preserve historical buildings and sites "is in a critical stage now. An alliance is a key to success in a risky time."

Michael Ainslie, president of the National Trust, echoing Mr. Robertson's sentiment, said the need was "imperative to have state historic preservation associations."

A 30-member board of trustees will govern the organization, which is open to membership to any group whose purpose is to preserve the state's historic, cultural and natural resources.

Inquiries regarding group or individual membership should be addressed to the Preservation Alliance of Virginia, P.O. Box 142, Waterford, Virginia 22190.



Photo by John Toler

DR. GEORGE B. OLIVER

## Annual Meeting

More than 135 members and guests attended the 1984 annual meeting at Airlie on Thursday, June 7th.

President J. Willard Lineweaver announced the passing of board member Raymond Y. Bartlett of Marshall. A moment of silent prayer was observed.

During the short business meeting which followed dinner, nominating committee chairman Mrs. Herbert N. Heston presented the slate of nominees for the board of directors.

Nominated for re-election to the board for a second term were: J. H. Bartenstein, Mrs. Lewis F. Lee, Jr. and John K. Gott. Also nominated were Col. David H. Rumbough, Edward N. Cooper and Mrs. Meade Palmer.

Mr. Lineweaver announced the awarding of honorary lifetime memberships to three longtime members and enthusiastic volunteers, Mrs. Richard M. Cutts and Mrs. Charles G. Turner of The Plains and Mrs. Frances C. Ritter of Warrenton.

Bill Sudduth, program chairman, introduced Dr. George Brown Oliver of the Randolph-Macon College history department, who spoke on Nineteenth Century U.S. Social History.

Dr. Oliver discussed George Tucker's *Valley of Shenandoah* and John Pendleton Kennedy's *Swallow Barn*, citing the two historical novels as aids to the understanding of Southern social life of the early 1800s.

## 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.*

CARTER. Mr. Edmund Berkeley, 42 Canterbury Road, Bellair, Charlottesville, VA 22901, is seeking information on Bernard Moore Carter, 1780-1860, who inherited several thousand acres of land in Fauquier from his father, Charles Carter of Shirley. Wife: Lucy Grymes Lee, 1796-1860; dau. Charlotte Williams Carter, 1812-1879.

CORLEY. Mrs. Lillie J. Corley, Rt. 1, Box 221, Rivesville, W. Va. 26588, seeks info on Monoah Corley, b. 1740, d. 1823 in Fauquier. Will recorded 26 May 1823. Wife, Jane Fogg Corley d. 3 Nov. 1845.

LAKENAN/LAKEMAN. Richard A. Hayden, 111 Orchard Square,

Pittsburgh, PA 15229, seeks info on parents, grandparents, etc. of Abner Jesse Lakenan/Lakeman, b. 19 Oct. 1826, in Paris, Fauquier, in early 1800s.

PALMER. Eugenie Fellows, 21 Williams Blvd., Zephyrhills, FL 34249, seeks info on the birth and parents, ancestors of John Palmer. Will probated Fauquier 28 May 1821. Wife Elizabeth who may have died 1835 Fauquier. Will names children Judah (dau.); Lucy m. Joseph B. Fanning 1819 Fauquier; Mary Mayes; John Palmer m. Delilah Cooksey 1818, Elizabeth Blackabay; Sarah Kemper; James m. Sally Kemper; Joseph m. Nancy R. Rowles (?) 21 Feb 1823; William m. Louisa Parker. Signatories of will were Ewell Jeffries m. Ender Fanning; William Hitt; Jesse Payne.

REED. Mrs. Judy Inman, 519 W. Toledo Pl., Broken Arrow, OK 74012, is searching for info on Henry Allen Reed, b. ca. 1780-1790. Other names possibly in Fauquier: Jacob, John, William and Aaron.

# Fauquier's Founders—

## *Not Quite a Closed Corporation*

"At the courthouse of Fauquier County the twenty-fourth day of May one thousand seven hundred and fifty nine:

A Commission of Peace bearing date the seventh day of May last" was presented. Eighteen gentlemen had been named by Governor Fauquier and the Council, but no more than twelve of these played an active part in the affairs of the new county at its beginning.

It appears that John Frogg, Duff Green, Wharton Ransdell, Elias Edmonds, Thomas McClanahan and Richard Foote did not even take the oaths to qualify as justices. At least they were not recorded as doing so in the extant court minutes for 1759 and 1760. (The minute book has no entries from October 1759 through January 1760 although sessions were supposed to be held monthly.)

The remaining members of the commission were Thomas Harrison, Joseph Blackwell, John Wright, William Blackwell, John Bell, William Eustace, John Churchill, William Grant, John Crump, Yelverton Peyton, Thomas Marshall and George Lamkin, in order of rank fixed in Williamsburg.

Those named through William Grant were "of the quorum;" at least one of them plus any three other justices were required to constitute a quorum.

Joseph Blackwell produced his appointment by the Governor to the salaried office of Sheriff. Therefore, he could not qualify as a justice until May 1761 when John Bell took over the Sheriff's position.

Humphrey Brooke, who submitted his commission as Clerk of Court immediately after the justices were sworn in, must also be counted among the founders. He was 31, destined to serve as clerk until 1793 when he retired in favor of his son, Francis, who held the office until 1805.

Henry Churchill should also be included. The youngest brother of the justice, John Churchill, was only 28 years old when he presented his commission signed by the governor to be County Lieutenant, the commander of Fauquier's militia.

William Blackwell and John Bell were both made Colonels under

Churchill; William Eustace was commissioned Major, and Henry's older brother, Armistead Churchill, was one of the captains.

It would seem that Colonel Churchill must have had some formal military training to have been selected for the command over his seniors in age but no record of when or where has survived apparently. The young man died of pleurisy in December 1760.

At the June court William Grant showed his appointment from Williamsburg as the first county coroner, evidently a position of some prestige.

Thomas Marshall, the father of the Chief Justice, received his nomination as county surveyor from the President and Fellows of the College of William and Mary. He was just twenty-nine in May 1759, but he had been a deputy surveyor for Culpeper County ten years previously under George Washington. (When appointed, Washington was only seventeen, two years younger than his assistant.)

Sometime in 1759 Thomas Harrison and John Bell were chosen by the freeholders of the new county as their first representatives in the House of Burgesses.

Justices, Burgesses, Coroner and militia officers served without pay. The Sheriff and the Clerk of Court each received 1050 pounds of tobacco for their first year, not much when compared to the 25 pounds that a witness was paid for a day in court. Undoubtedly Messrs. Blackwell and Brooke earned much more in fees than in salary.

The fourteen Founders ranged in age from 57 or thereabouts (Thomas Harrison) to about 25 (Yelverton Peyton). John Wright, the second oldest, was 49. Discounting the differences in age the Founders had much in common. All were aristocrats from families long established in the proprietary of the Northern Neck. Nearly every member of the group was related to at least one of the others by blood or marriage. Joseph and William Blackwell were brothers, as were John and Henry Churchill. John Bell was the brother-in-law of William Eustace as John Crump was of William Blackwell.

Harrison, Joseph Blackwell, and Bell had been Burgesses for the parent county of Prince William. The others, almost without exception, had fathers, grandfathers or great-grandfathers who had served in the Assembly at Jamestown or Williamsburg. Most had been justices of the Prince William court and were vestrymen of Hamilton parish, the limits of which were essentially those of the new county.

Despite the family ties and common interests, discord appeared at the first session of the court. John Bell, Duff Green, Wharton Ransdell and Elias Edmonds refused to take their oaths of office until the court was "in judgment" concerning the place for the courthouse. The dissenters all lived somewhat to the north of what became Warrenton a half-century later, but so did William Eustace, Yelverton Peyton and, probably, George Lamkin.

Why Bell and his cohort decided to dramatize the issue is unclear. However, the sitting justices selected a location near the Turkey Run Church about a mile south of present day Warrenton for recommendation to the Governor.

This satisfied the dissidents, and they offered to subscribe to the oath. But now the court refused to permit this pending final action by the Governor.

Probably both sides were surprised in June when the Governor set aside the local recommendation in favor of a site in Richard Henry Lee's land. Lee lived in Westmoreland County and has inherited his Fauquier property from his father, Thomas Lee of Stratford Hall.

Ironically the Royal Governor, in accepting Lee's offer of two acres, greatly increased the value of the rest of the large tract. He thus favored the man who seventeen years later would move at the Philadelphia Congress that "These united colonies are, and of a right ought to be, free and independent states."

At any rate, John Bell took the oath in June, although his three associates did not. From the records of the minute book the justices then settled down to the business of organizing the new county's affairs.

We are the inheritors of the work of these fourteen Founders and their many successors over the intervening two hundred and twenty-five years.

—John P. Alcock

## Harrison

(Continued from Page 2)

commission as sheriff is dated January 12, 1774.

One wonders how Colonel Harrison felt about the upsurging troubles with England, the parent country. Almost certainly at his age he would have been more conservative than young firebrands like Patrick Henry. However, as a tobacco planter forced by law to sell his product to England, he must have had his grievances.

One thing is known. His last act in Williamsburg was to sign, along with Scott and such notables as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, the Association to promote a boycott of imports from Britain in May 1769. This was an important harbinger of the Revolution. Furthermore, it is significant that two sons and a slew of nephews were officers in the Continental line or in the Virginia militia, and none of the family was a Loyalist.

### End of the Line

One also wonders why no Harrison in the Colonel's line followed him in public service in Fauquier, although Harrisons descended from his brothers have been prominent, especially in Loudoun and Frederick counties, up to the present day.

Of Thomas Harrison's sons, Thomas lived over the line in Prince William and may have gone to Kentucky after 1780.

Burr quickly sold off the land left to him by his father and rented a farm near Marshall. In 1782, or thereabouts, he apparently moved to Fairfield County, South Carolina.

Tragedy struck down William, who had been moderately active in county affairs. In January 1775 he was killed by four slaves given him in his father's will.

The youngest son, Benjamin, and a long list of colleagues, refused to take the oath as a justice in 1787. No doubt he was in the wrong political faction.

By 1800 only four descendants of the founder bearing the Harrison name remained in Fauquier, and by 1900 none was left.

That may be the chief reason that Colonel Thomas Harrison has been forgotten by the people of the county he served so well at its beginnings.

—John P. Alcock

## A New Acquisition

The Society has been given an original document which contains the signature of Francis Fauquier, Lieutenant-Governor of Virginia from 1765 to 1768.

The document is a gift from the 1983-84 board of directors. The purchase price of \$250 was shared by the members of the board.

An appointment of trial judges for a felony case at Charlotte Courthouse, the document is dated August 7, 1765. The text is as follows:

"Virginia, fc

*Francis Fauquier* Esq.; his Majesty's Lieutenant-Governour, and Commander in Chief of the said Colony and Dominion:

To *Paul Carrington, Thomas Read, Thomas Boulden, Matthen Marrable, James Taylor, William Goode, David Caldwell, Elisha White, Thomas Spencer, Joseph Moreton, John White & Henry Isbell of the County of Charlotte Gent. Greeting*

Know YE that whereas I have constituted and appointed you Justices of OYER and TERMINER for the Trial of

*Will, a Negro Man Slave belonging to Thomas Bedford for Felony*

I do therefore, by Virtue of the Powers and Authorities to me granted by his Majesty, as Commander in Chief of this Dominion, authorize and appoint that, the Commission being read as usual, any one of you the said *Paul Carrington, Thomas Read, Thomas Boulden, Matthen Marrable, James Taylor or William Goode*

Having first taken the Oaths appointed by Act of Parliament, to be taken, instead of the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, the Oath appointed to be taken by an Act of Parliament made in the first Year of the Reign of his late Majesty King GEORGE the first, entitled, "*An Act for the further security of his Majesty's Person and Government, and the Succession of the Crown in the Heirs of the late Princess SOPHIA, being Protestants, and for extinguishing the Hopes of the pretended Prince of Wales, and his open and secret Abettors,*" as also the Test, together with the Oath for duly executing the Office of a Justice of Oyer and Terminer, which the said *David Caldwell and Elisha White*, or any two in the Commission above-named, are hereby required and empowered to give and administer to you, you administer to the above Justices, and every of them, in the Commission above-named, the above mentioned Oaths and Test, together with the Oath for duly executing the Office of a Justice of Oyer and Terminer, of the Performance of which you are to make due Return to the Secretary's Office. Given under my Hand, and the Seal of the Colony, at *Williamsburg*, the *Seventh Day of August*. One Thousand Seven Hundred and *Sixty Six* in the *Sixth* Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord King GEORGE the Third.

*Fran: Fauquier*

.....  
Please Return To:  
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How would you be willing to help the Society this year?  
\_\_\_\_\_

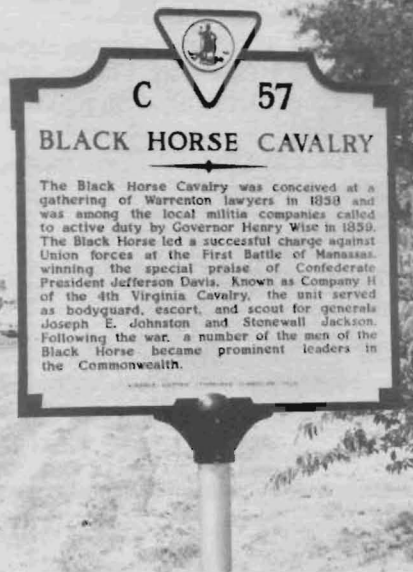


Photo by Isabelle Palmer

### Roadside marker honors Black Horse Cavalry

The United Daughters of the Confederacy, Black Horse Chapter<sup>1</sup> honored the members of the Black Horse Cavalry<sup>2</sup> with a roadside marker placed at Waterloo Street and Route 29 on May 20th.

Historian H. Lynn Hopewell, who is writing a book on the unit and is a grandson of one member of the troop, spoke briefly about the cavalry unit which became known as "the bravest of the brave."

Among the distinguished members of the troop were William Payne, John Scott, Robert Randolph, Charles Gordon, Dixon Payne, James Keith and many others whose names have become a part of the history of Fauquier.

Amy Norman, great-great granddaughter of Nimrod Green, a member of the troop, unveiled the marker which had been installed by the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission.

Warrenton Mayor J. Willard Lineweaver also spoke during the short ceremony, requesting that the brave men of the troop not be forgotten.

1. News and Notes, Vol. 5, No. 3.

2. News and Notes, Vol 5, No. 1.



Photo by John Toler

### The Honorable Thomas M. Moncure, Jr. and board member John H. Bartenstein at annual meeting.

## October Board Meeting

As announced in the Winter issue of News and Notes, the board of directors is holding its meetings at the Municipal Building at Hotel and Court Streets in Warrenton on the first Wednesday of each month. All members are invited to attend.

However the hour of meeting has been changed to 7:30 p.m.

Program chairman Bill Sudduth is planning occasional short programs

during these meetings which will be of interest to members and visitors.

At the October 3rd meeting there will be a short business meeting, after which we will move to the John Barton Payne (the old library) building. Historian Woody Herrell of the Manassas Battlefield Park will talk about the battlefield.

Please call Mr. Sudduth at 347-4094 if you plan to attend.

## *The Fauquier Historical Society*

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