● THE COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG

interpreter

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Are We Having Fun Yet?

by Barbara Beaman

Barbara is master teacher in the Department of Interpretive Education and served as the editor of this publication for the first eight years of its existence.

At least one of every four visitors we see during the summer months and holiday seasons is a school-aged youngster, a captive of family vacation plans. How does this large segment of our audience rate our performance? Are they enjoying themselves? Are they learning that education can be fun and that museums are enjoyable places to visit?

Answers to questions like these are hard to find for an outdoor history museum. It's *not* hard to spot youngsters with their parents and other adults completely enthralled with some story, demonstration, or discussion conducted by an adroit Colonial Williamsburg interpreter. It happens all the time. But systematic studies are not available that reveal what works and doesn't work for families with children visiting as part of the general public in a history museum with live interpretation.

Professional journal articles, books, and many masters' theses are written about audience research, but their findings on families aren't usually relevant to us. Most studies are done in art or science museums and the like, and the focus is on families' interactions with static exhibits or with each other. "Which parent answers most of their children's questions?" "How long does a particular exhibit (or animal in a zoo) hold the family's attention?" Not much help there.

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Interpreters Without a Site: An Inside View of Reenacting

by Jim Daniel

Jim heads the eighteenth-century contingent of the North Carolina Historical Reenactment Society, better known as the Sixth North Carolina Regiment, Continental Line. They will camp on Market Square this Labor Day Weekend as part of Colonial Williamsburg's Publick Times. "The Sixth" has been a regular participant in the event for nearly a decade.

"Spend Your Weekends Somewhere REALLY Different . . . The Eighteenth Century!" So begins a recruiting poster for a historical reenactment group. This suggestion of active participation in the past is a powerful lure. It's often the element that attracts and binds reenactors to the hobby.

Reenactors are often asked why we chose this hobby. The answers are many and diverse, but the common thread is a deep love of history. Reenacting is our answer to the question "Wouldn't you love to have lived back then?" Other common responses reflect personal experiences and the satisfaction of knowing that we're helping to educate the public in our history.

Reenacting got its start in the early 1960s during the Civil War centennial. Reenactors, immersed in swirls of black powder smoke on battlefields up and down the East Coast, their senses inundated with the sounds and images of huge scale battles, found momentary "highs" from the experience. For incredible moments, it *was* the 1860s and each of us *knew* what it was like to be a Civil War soldier in a way that no history book could ever relate. Such personal experiences are a reenactor's

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Families, *continued*

What we at Colonial Williamsburg might want to ask is "Are we keeping children four through fourteen interested in interpretations without boring those in the group who do not have or did not bring children? Do we succeed in teaching all ages, all members of our diverse audience something worth knowing? Are we addressing sensitive issues without offending? Do we demonstrate that learning and enjoyment can have a cause and effect relationship?"

Our own admissions marketing department conducts extensive research on a year-round basis for purposes of attracting visitors to Williamsburg, learning what choices they make while here, and measuring how satisfied they are with those choices. One question on this survey asks respondents to rate their satisfaction with certain aspects of their visit on a scale of 5 (Excellent) to 1 (Poor). The list includes the number of things to see and do in the Historic Area, Historic Area employees, and children's enjoyment. Compared to the other factors, with ratings of 4.5 and above in 1989, the children gave us pretty faint praise at 3.5 and below. At least that's how the parents (who presumably completed the surveys) sized up their children's enjoyment.

Surely we can improve on this, but first we need to know more. What did "enjoyment" and "welcome" mean to the children and to the interpreters of their enjoyment, the parents? What *didn't* they like? Can we change what they didn't like? Did they discover some of the many programs and activities designed especially to appeal to families?

Two smaller studies conducted in HAPO last summer examined in more detail what works and doesn't work with children visiting with their families. One survey measured reactions to two tours for children, "Once Upon a Town" and "Young Apprentice," as well as a family tour, "Stepping into the Past." The purposes of this study were to learn how the families found out about the tours, if the programs met their expectations, how they met them or why they did not, what was enjoyed most, and what suggestions for improvements the parents and children had. Many of the visitors surveyed had difficulty getting information about these tours although their ratings on liking the programs and having expectations met were very high for all three. Parents commented that their children especially enjoyed the activities and that they had learned about period clothing, games, houses, crafts, raw materials, animals, and so forth, matching the goals of the tours. One said that their daughter felt very important as they revisited places she'd already seen on her tour. Words like "fun" and "excitement" appear throughout the remarks.

These overwhelmingly positive ratings and comments indicate both the need for such programs and the success they have achieved. But is it enough to produce special family programs while suspecting that much of our basic offering to the general public at sites and on tours will leave children somewhere between mystified and miserable? Many interpreters don't think so, and the experiences they generate for the very mixed audiences they work with during summer months and holidays earn obvious approval and appreciation.

A second survey begun last summer in HAPO focused on just this kind of concern—the reactions of children and their parents to our exhibition sites and tours offered to the general public as opposed to special programs for families. Objectives of this study were to find out if school-aged children could see the objects and processes being interpreted and if they understood what was being said. Other objectives were to determine what children enjoyed most, what was learned, and the extent to which they felt involved in the interpretation.

Responses to this survey were mixed, but some clear patterns emerged. Over half of the children said they could see in the various buildings and shops in spite of their height handicap, but most of those had maneuvered themselves into favorable positions rather than having been invited by interpreters to come up front. Some of those who could not see were either thwarted in their attempts to move forward or were less assertive youngsters thoroughly schooled not to "break in line," particularly in front of adults.

The responses to the question about being able to understand what was being said took a curious turn: sometimes grade-school children said that the "guides" talked both to the grown-ups and the kids, but older siblings, fourteen or so, quietly contradicted them with a "No, they were talking to the adults." The teenagers seemed to recognize what their

Clarity is the key, not kiddie talk.

kid brothers and sisters were missing: did they *understand* the information? The fact that understanding might be a problem was borne out by responses to other questions relating to what had been learned. Far more of the answers dealt with the lack of cars and electricity in the colonial period (the children probably knew this before they left I-64) than with information learned in the Historic Area.

The most exciting and significant part of the study came from answers to the question about whether the children had felt involved in interpretations. Most of the families could cite at least one instance when the guide had talked directly to their children, asked them questions to be sure they understood, or invited them to do something. The moment was described with animation, and best of all, the children could remember *exactly* what was said: "I got to hold the gun; it was heavy. I heard him say it weighed ten pounds." Just as all of us remember encounters with celebrities or important people in our lives, these children were reliving with precision their exchanges with a costumed person—a really special event.

It's a tough job studying the uneven line of faces, some on tall, mature bodies, others on smaller, restless forms. How does one meet the anticipation or overcome the nonchalance on those faces as they pour through the door hour after hour?

Successful interpreters take three basic steps when children make up part of their groups: they make sure that all can see the object or process they are talking about; they adjust their vocabulary so that youngsters can understand, and they check that understanding periodically; and they make children feel involved by directing discussion and questions to them from time to time and asking them to participate. Effective interpreters do all this without ignoring or boring the adults in the group. Clarity is the key, not kiddie talk.

An interpretation well-crafted enough to capture the attention and interest of children is likely to do the same for most of the adults in your audience. Grown-ups *like* to see kids enjoying themselves and learning something about their nation's past.

By offering interpretations like these and by actively steering families to the myriad of programs and activities with particular appeal for them, we ought to be about the best family attraction around.

Reenactment, *continued*

treasure. They provide an intimate understanding of history from the viewpoint of the individual participant.

In those early days, reenacting soon ceased to be limited to the battlefield and quickly expanded into camp life. In a form of one-upmanship, each group tried to be more "authentic" than its peers. That meant more research and more and better reproduction gear and accoutrements. Failures were as numerous as successes. We learned from both.

Eventually "Sears' work shirt" uniforms and the like disappeared altogether, replaced by improved reproductions furnished by an ever growing group of suppliers to the hobby. As authenticity became the rule we coined the adjective "farby," meaning less than acceptably authentic. It remains the ultimate insult in reenacting.

Once improved, our camps became as attractive to the visiting public as the reenacted battles. Driven by the public's questions and our fondness for sharing our love of history, we began to interpret—awkwardly at first, then more expertly. The hobby was maturing and many of us found substantial rewards in working with the public.

The end of the Civil War centennial was expected to close the curtain on reenacting, but an army of devotees wouldn't give it up. Reenacting struggled, survived, and then gained impetus, new directions, and fresh followers from the bicentennial of the American Revolution. Today there are perhaps 25,000 reenactors in the United States. These modern reenactment groups cover a wide range of time periods with the American Civil War period being by far the most popular. The Revolutionary War era is a solid second. There are seventeenth-century reenactors and World War I and II units grow in popularity each year. The War of 1812, the Spanish-American War, and other conflicts all have their adherents.

Equally as wide as the range of historic periods reenacted is the variety of approaches reenactment groups take to the hobby. The level of interpretive effort, the desire for authenticity, and the range of activities portrayed vary considerably among groups. Each group seeks its own level of satisfaction driven by their own interests and the demands imposed upon them by their leadership, the public, and those historic sites and museums with which they work.

There are several groups whose programming and standards are on a par with many historic sites. They are characterized by a quest for excellence in all they do—life-style interpretation, interaction with the public, costuming, drill, and period food preparation, for example—and solid, experienced leadership. They use various methods of interpretation and demonstration rather than relying solely on visual impact. Typically, they have an involved membership and can provide substantial references attesting to their accomplishments.

At the other end of the scale are those reenactment groups that lack direction, a fault that manifests itself in a lack of consistency of performance and appearance. Many of these latter groups will be short-lived, lacking a commonality of interest to hold them together. Some may find direction through a change of leadership or through an outside source such as a host historic site.

The trend causing the greatest impact on reenacting today is the movement away from purely military interpretation into the civilian realm. Some groups have abandoned their military portrayal altogether while, for others, it's now just one facet of their repertoire.

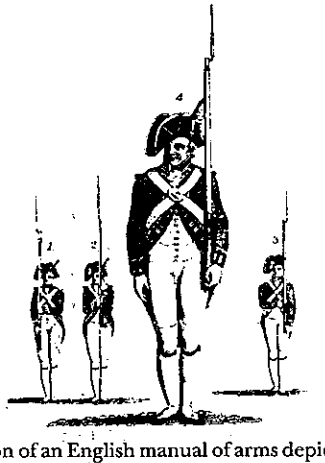
The causes for this exodus are many. Not least is that civilian roles are the only ones available to a sizable segment of reenactors; female family members and children often are excluded from a strict military portrayal. Rather than be left out, they soon appeared along the sidelines in period civilian garb. Driven by the same standards as their military counterparts, they improved their portrayals and their interpretive skills. Fathers and brothers and sons came out of camp to join them and found that civilian portrayals were an enjoyable adjunct to the hobby.

Another force in the demilitarization of reenacting is the expansion of reenactor-historic site relations. A growing number of non-military sites are eager to utilize this large body of fully costumed volunteer interpreters, but, in keeping with their site's identity, they are asking for more civilian activities and fewer military portrayals. (An excellent article on site-reenactor relationships is "Reenactors and History" by Carol Deakin, *History News*, May-June 1986.)

Those groups that can provide a full repertoire, meeting the requirements of a range of sites and museums, are much in demand and can be selective in their appearances. This provides them with exposure and opportunities to grow and mature. Those that can't meet the requirements are pressured to adapt or to restrict their activities to military sites and battle reenactments. An active reenactment group much in demand can easily fill twenty or more weekends a year, plus as many lectures and school visitations as their membership can stand.

Despite these increasing demands and greater interest in non-military interpretation, it is unlikely that the hobby will soon move far from its roots, for, despite the less militaristic age that we live in, the color, pageantry, and spectacle of a military reenactment are still major crowd pleasers and will always be prime attractants to new reenactors.

I am often asked two questions about becoming a reenactor. The first is "How do I get started?" My recommendation to prospects is to attend several events where there are reenactors. These may be battle reenactments or "living history" encampments. Look at all of them and talk with individuals from



A portion of an English manual of arms depicting various parts of the British Army's close order drill. The Continental armies generally adopted the same routines for drilling American troops.

each group. Look beyond the period clothing at the group itself. Are they emphasizing things that interest you? Is their approach to history one that appeals to you? Are you comfortable with the size of the unit? (Membership can range from a few members to over a hundred, though the average size tends to be between twenty-five to forty participants.) Are they well organized? Does their schedule offer sufficient opportunities for you to participate? What do they require from members?

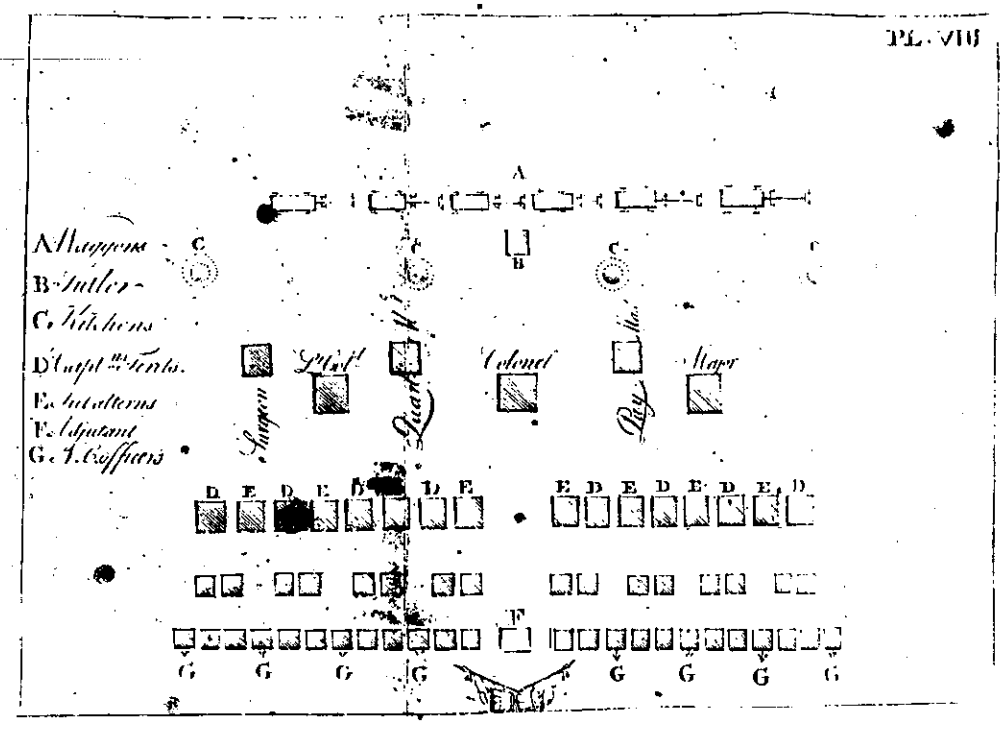
Once you have reviewed the opportunities, try to attend some activity with the group that you have chosen. Only by actual participation can you get the feel of reenacting. If your outing is a positive one, and most are, you're on your way.

The second question I am asked is, "What does it cost?" As a rule of thumb the basic gear and equipment, including weaponry, for a reenactor portraying a Revolutionary era soldier costs about $1,200. Civil War soldier's gear is slightly less expensive. A female reenactor of the eighteenth century can expect to spend about half of what her male counterpart does, while a nineteenth-century woman's clothing costs somewhat more.

Most of us acquire far more than basic items over the years. It's not uncommon for a single reenactor to have in excess of $5,000 invested in his clothing and equipment. If his portrayal requires additional supporting paraphernalia (such as a surgeon would have), the total may be twice that.

These estimates are based on buying everything from a supplier to the hobby. We strongly discourage our members from doing that. There are two reasons. Foremost is that most units have standard patterns, materials, and colors for their clothing. Second, there are substantial savings if you or someone you know can sew period clothing for you. Someone in the group can usually provide a source for patterns or can help with construction. Beyond the savings, there is a certain satisfaction to be had from making your own equipment.

Once you have become involved in reenacting, the rewards are considerable—the satisfaction of serving as a trustee of our heritage, the deeper personal understanding of our forebears that comes from trying on their shoes, and the sharing of experiences with like-minded folks. Reenactors of history are amateurs in the truest meaning of the word—they do it for the love of it.



The layout of a camp for a regiment. This engraving appeared in the *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States,* written by baron von Steuben in 1779.

Publick Times

by Mark Howell and Emma Powers

This year Colonial Williamsburg will be presenting Publick Times on September 1 and 2. Although we traditionally re-create this event every Labor Day Weekend, historically, it would have occurred in April and October, when the General Court was in session, and again in June and December, during sessions of the Oyer and Terminer Court. The Meeting of Merchants usually coincided with court dates. As Governor Fauquier wrote in 1765, all "persons engaged in Business of any kind constantly attend" the Meeting of Merchants when they determined exchange rates and commodity prices.

Large numbers of people flocked to Williamsburg during Publick Times to resolve legal matters and conduct business: lawyers, judges, creditors, debtors, planters, merchants, Scottish factors; some with their families and personal servants. Naturally, all of them had to eat, drink, and sleep; consequently, taverns were unusually busy at these times. An anonymous Frenchman who visited Williamsburg during the April 1765 court wrote that he and his party "had great Difficulty to get lodgings but thanks to mr sprowl I got a room at mrs. vaubes's tavern, where all the best people resorted." This same traveler reported—probably with a good deal of exaggeration—that "there might be 5 or 6000 people here Dureing the Courts." While it may be that the Stamp Act turmoil brought that many visitors to the capital city, it is difficult to believe that little Williamsburg could accommodate such crowds every Publick Times.

Ironically, this increased activity did not translate into an upsurge of economic activity. Store records show that business remained steady throughout the year, with no upswing during the court sessions, although, for example, milliner Catherine Rathells's advertisements in the *Virginia Gazette* were often inserted during the times that the Court was convened. Be aware, however, that this conclusion is based on surviving credit accounts; records of cash transactions, which may have increased, do not survive. Perhaps a few craftsmen did sell more goods or had more commissions during these periods. A bookish merchant from a rural county on a rare visit to the "metropolis" probably checked over the books for sale at the printer's or looked for a gift for his wife and daughters. Maybe a broken clock from a plantation house was brought to Mr. Geddy for repairs. These are undocumented but likely scenarios.

To take advantage of the large numbers of visitors in town various activities were scheduled by food vendors, entertainers, and tavern keepers, among others, to coincide with Publick Times. These varied from year to year but usually included such events as auctions, horse races, balls and assemblies, special lectures, theatrical performances, and other kinds of entertainments. On April 19, 1771, Hudson Muse, from the Northern Neck, wrote about the play he attended in Williamsburg: "I spent the time very agreeably, at the plays every night... thinking Miss Hallam super fine. But must confess her luster was much sullied by the number of Beauties that appeared at that court. The house was crowded every night, and the gentlemen who have generally attended that place agreed there was treble the number of fine Ladyes that was ever seen in town before." Though the events that occurred are mentioned, Publick Times as a specific event is not.

Publick Times as it will be represented over Labor Day Weekend is an attempt to show what varied activity might have occurred. The governor will be in residence at the Palace and Market Square will be alive with music, dancing, children's games, a magician, fire engine demonstrations, and auctions. New to Publick Times this year will be a horse auction and a raffle drawing, commemorating the 250th anniversary of the Prentis Store. As militia retreats may have coincided with Publick Times in the eighteenth century, we will have an encampment of various units for the weekend. Participating units will include the 1st Maryland, the Maryland Company of Wayne's Light Infantry, the 2nd and 6th North Carolina, the 1st Virginia, the 2nd South Carolina, the First Continental, and a German Regiment from Pennsylvania. British units will be represented by the 3rd, 33rd, 64th, and 66th Regiments of Foot, the 4th Royal Artillery, and the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers. A pleasure garden, modeled after the likes of Vauxhall and Ranelagh Gardens, using the Governor's Palace grounds, has been scheduled for the

reenactors as recompense for their attendance over the weekend. Of course, street vendors and entertainers will also be plying and amusing the public with their wares and abilities all weekend. As occurred last year, the event will climax with a number of quarter-mile horse races on the edge of town.

(Take note that no fair will be held during this time. A "fair" was a planned, coordinated series of activities, primarily of an agricultural nature. There is little evidence that eighteenth-century Williamsburg held fairs regularly.)

Try to use this information in your interpretation while Publick Times is in swing. Think of how Publick Times affected your site, what impact it had on it, or how *your* site affected Publick Times. The meeting of the court had a community-wide impact and this Labor Day Weekend will give us all an excellent opportunity to interpret our sites in a community context. Use Publick Times! Remember:

- The term "Publick Times" refers to the period of time when the General Court was in session.
- The General Court met twice annually, each time for 24 days, starting on April 10 and October 19.
- The General Court heard civil cases (with a minimum value on cases at £8) and all felonies committed by whites that were punishable by loss of life or limb.
- There is no "event" called Publick Times; it is simply a period of time when the most important colonial courts met.
- Separate events that were scheduled to coincide with Publick Times included horse races, balls and assemblies, theatrical performances, auctions, and lectures.
- Economic activity did not significantly increase among established shops and trades during Publick Times.

A Visit to Jamestown Settlement

by Jodi Norman

Jodi is a visitor aide and represents her department on the planning board of this publication.

Jamestown Settlement is a living history museum dedicated to the re-creation and interpretation of that early seventeenth-century English settlement. The museum (along with the Yorktown Victory Center) is operated by the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The former Jamestown Festival Park was founded in 1957 as part of Virginia's 350th anniversary celebration of the settling of Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in the New World. The twenty-five-acre site was intended to serve as a temporary exhibit for visitors to Jamestown that year, but in response to overwhelming public appreciation and demand, the exhibit later became a permanent year-round park.

For thirty years the Festival Park remained relatively unchanged, continuing to function as a patriotic and historic attraction. In the late 1970s, however, a new educational direction replaced the 1957 view of the site as a celebratory shrine. Exhaustive research was begun in earnest with a 1607-1707 time frame and a renewed focus on social history. Along with this new direction and research came the decision to replace the Old World and New World Pavilion exhibits, which had remained much the same as when they were first viewed in 1957. Newly designed galleries would be installed to present the story of Jamestown in comprehensive detail.

In April 1990 this reinterpretation culminated with the completion of a multimillion dollar expansion and renovation project that resulted in a new 30,000-square-foot exhibit gallery and a new orientation film. With the opening of the gallery, the museum was officially renamed Jamestown Settlement to reflect more accurately its historical and educational mission.

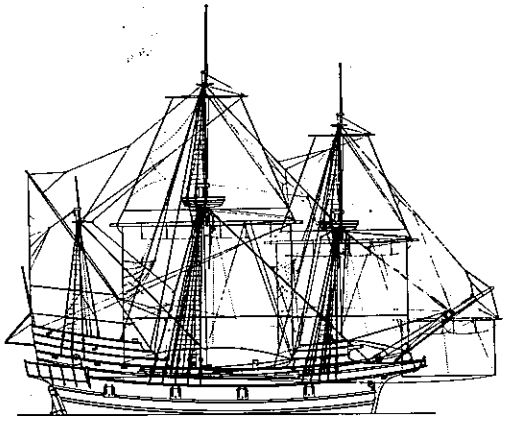
The new film and exhibit galleries are invaluable aids to visitors, preparing them for their exploration of the reconstructed settlement. The captivating twenty-minute film effectively relates the origins of Jamestown and its first twenty years. The new galleries then expand upon the information presented in the film by showing the Jamestown experience from a broad range of perspectives.

The exhibit area is logically divided into three contiguous and sequential galleries: The English Gallery which sets the stage and explains the internal and external factors that led England to colonize the New World; The Powhatan Gallery which presents, with a great measure of care and sensitivity, the history and culture of the native Powhatan Indians (a definite improvement over the rather abbreviated interpretation of American Indian culture that was presented in the 1957 exhibit); and The Jamestown Gallery, which re-creates in voluminous detail the lives and experiences of the Jamestown settlers. The indoor exhibit concludes with a precise one-sentence summary describing the "legacy of Jamestown" as the permanent establishment of English language, culture, and government in the New World.

Having completed the tour of the indoor galleries, visitors are well prepared for the outdoor exhibits. The Indian village, James Fort, and the ships—one of which, the Susan Constant, is now under construction—all, both visually and physically, reinforce the wealth of information that is detailed in the three new galleries. The interpretation provided by costumed employees in the outdoor exhibits effectively drives home the historical information that the museum wishes to convey to its visitors: an understanding and appreciation of what life was like for both the native and the colonist during the difficult early years of the Virginia colony. In this regard Jamestown Settlement is truly successful; it is an effective and complementary merger of exhibits and living history that present visitors with a comprehensive view of Virginia in the early seventeenth century.

Jamestown Settlement currently receives approximately 250,000 visitors per year, roughly 90,000 of whom arrive as school groups. During peak season visitation averages between three to four thousand visitors daily. A staff of twenty-five to thirty interpreters in period clothing work in the outdoor exhibits during the summer season (staff is smaller during the rest of the year). It is recommended that a half day be allowed for a visit to Jamestown Settlement.

From now through the end of October, Powhatan's Mantle, traditionally regarded to have once been the property of Wahunsunacock, the "Powhatan" who ruled the tribes in this area during the early seventeenth century, will be exhibited by Jamestown Settlement. The deerskin garment is on loan from the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford.



The Susan Constant was a medium-size merchant ship, about a year old in 1606 when she was leased by the Virginia Company. Although no plans of the original vessel survive, the ship's cargo capacity is documented in a court case, suggesting the ship's size. This evidence has come to light since the 1950s and will lead to a ship that will not simply be a copy of the first reconstruction but a more accurate rendering of the original's appearance.

Questions & Answers

Trees on "the Duke"

Were there trees on the Duke of Gloucester Street in the eighteenth century? If not, when did they first appear and when were the trees that are here now planted?

The documentation we have available suggests there were probably very few, if any, trees on Duke of Gloucester Street in the eighteenth century. Despite all of the Foundation's early goals and considerable efforts for visual authenticity within the Historic Area, the eighteenth-century city of Williamsburg and its surrounding area looked *very* different from today's re-created townscape. Archaeological evidence is also conclusive about the fact that even the topography in several places was very different then from what it is today.

At least seven surviving accounts by eighteenth-century visitors contain specific remarks about the sandy, dusty streets at that time. One account, by J. F. D. Smyth, dating from 1770, is particularly revealing: "The street deep with sand, (not being paved) makes a singular appearance to an European; and is very disagreeable to walk in, especially in summer, when the rays of the sun are intensely hot, and not a little increased by the reflection of the white sand, wherein every step is almost above the shoe, and *where there is no shade or shelter to walk under, unless you carry an umbrella* (emphasis added). The first reference that establishes that trees grew along the main street dates from 1848.

We have at least eight accounts by travelers who expressly mention the ability to see the city from a great distance as one approached it, and of its being situated on an "open plain." The French Desandroüins's military map, showing Williamsburg and its environs in 1782, graphically attests to this openness surrounding the city. Ebenezer Hazard's 1777 account of his climb to the roof of the College is also revealing. He wrote that he could see the "beautiful Prospect of the City and the adjacent Country; James River may be seen from it, as may York River in a clear Day."

Together these sources suggest the appearance of a city vastly different from the one we know today. This evidence, however, does *not* indicate that there were no trees within the city. We have several old trees that we think date from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. If our dating methods are correct, these unique specimens are also good indicators that at least some shade trees were growing within the city limits at that time. But the most common trees here were probably the smaller fruit trees growing in back lots and orchards.

If we could compare the colonial city to today's Historic Area we would probably find it much too stark and rough-looking to have much appeal. Yet travelers probably regarded Williamsburg in its setting of open fields as an "oasis" within a peninsula that was largely rural. Instead of today's ubiquitous trees and lush vegetation within the town, we would have had largely unimpeded and expansive views out into an open countryside of cultivated fields, fences, and orchards. That this condition continued until the mid-nineteenth century is noted in John Graham's surviving panoramic drawing of the city (circa 1859-1860) as seen from the area of today's Marshall-Wythe School of Law building. (The drawing is now on view in the Public Hospital exhibit.)

Surviving late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century photographs also attest to the fact that this open, rural character remained largely unchanged even after the turn of this century. While many show some trees along the streets, there appears to be little regularity in their placement. This could indicate that, prior to the restoration, street tree plantings might have been the result of private rather than planned, municipal initiatives. In any event, the growth and development that began to change the visual character of the area seems to have coincided with the military presence and buildup at the onset of World War I and it has continued unabated since that time.

As a direct result of that growth our CW predecessors were almost forced to create an essentially closed, insulated historic district with all the necessary fencing and landscaping to screen out views of surrounding modern buildings, cars, roads, and other visual intrusions. In the 1930s new trees were planted with regularity along Duke of Gloucester Street to augment the sporadically placed existing

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Erratum: Peter Scott as Tenant

I must confess that I made an error in my article about Williamsburg tenants in a recent issue of the *interpreter* ("Williamsburg for Rent" by Emma Powers, Vol. 10, no. 5, November 1989) when I stated that "some like Peter Scott seemed content to remain tenants throughout their lives." While it is certainly true that Peter Scott was a long-time tenant on the Custis property across from Bruton Parish Church, he owned two town lots during at least part of the time that he rented. Scott advertised in the September 12, 1755, issue of the *Virginia Gazette* that he was leaving for Great Britain and was auctioning off two slaves and a house built on two lots "on the back street near Colonel Custis's." He did not go to England as planned—nor did he after announcing in 1773, "I intend to leave the Colony soon." (For some unknown reason the second announcement had a Fredericksburg dateline.)

The 1755 ad is the only reference to Scott's property. We don't know exactly which lots he owned, when he bought them or from whom, or if he really auctioned them off in 1755, because they were in James City County for which no deeds survive. While his business apparently brought in enough profit for him to buy property, he chose to remain a tenant on the Custis property on Duke of Gloucester Street. Perhaps it was the best location for his cabinet shop; maybe no comparable lots were available for purchase or, if they were, he couldn't afford them. Possibly he worked at one site and lived on the other; alternatively, maybe he both lived and ran his shop on Duke of Gloucester Street while renting out his Francis Street property.

Scott's incentives for simultaneously renting and owning Williamsburg property are far from clear, but I find it very interesting that he remained a tenant for such a long time despite his obvious success.

—ELP

Trees, *continued*

trees. The functional reason for this effort was to provide much-needed shade in the summer for the comfort of visitors and employees. A large number of these now-mature trees still survive today.

Aesthetic concerns inevitably had the greatest influence on the decision to plant the streets with more trees. After the Industrial Revolution, a world war, and the Depression, Americans took an idealistic and nostalgic view of their colonial past. This mind-set, which we have come to call the Colonial Revival, was largely responsible for the dramatic changes in the general appearance of our restored city. Despite all the surviving evidence to the contrary, our predecessors thought that an idyllic, tree-shaded town was much more appealing and marketable to potential visitors than the stark historical reality of the eighteenth-century city so succinctly (if somewhat uncharitably) described by a 1777 visitor as "a small, regular, sandy, dusty, wooden, unpaved city."

M. Kent Brinkley, Landscape Architect,
Department of Landscape Services

Asking Questions Made Easy

Nestled within these pages you will find a form that will make it easy to get answers to those nagging, lingering questions that keep you awake at night. Just fill it in and stick it into the nearest interoffice mail pouch. We'll do the rest! As always, if you have discovered an interesting fact, quote, or story send it in and we'll do our best to include it in the next *interpreter.*

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