



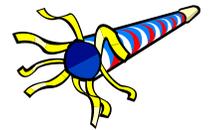
Isaiah Davenport House Volunteer Newsletter

January 2013

www.davenportmuseum.org

Become a Facebook fan at "Davenport House Museum"

912/236-8097



Georgia and South Carolina ALMANACS, for 1823

For sale by
S. C. Schenk

Savannah Daily Republican, January 3, 1823

Five Dollars Reward

Lost, a bundle containing due bills payable to the Savannah Poor House and Hospital Society – The above reward will be paid on delivering them to

JNO Haupt

Savannah Daily Republican, January 3, 1823

Independent Presbyterian Church

Those persons who purchased or rented Pews in this Church, at auction on Thursday, the 5th inst. are requested to call on the Subscribers and settle for the same.

BAKER & MINTON

Savannah Daily Republican, January 3, 1823

NOTICE

An Election for five trustees will be held at the Independent Presbyterian Church, on the first Monday in January next. Poll to open at 12 and close at 2 o'clock.

OLIVER STURGES

Chairman Board of Trustees

Savannah Daily Republican, January 3, 1823

J.B. HEBERT & CO.

Offer for sale Pew, No. 63, in the Episcopal Church, in fee simple. If not sold previous to the first Tuesday in January, it will be then sold before the Court-House between the hours of 11 and 12 o'clock.

Savannah Daily Republican, January 3, 1823

Window Blinds—At Cost

The subscriber intending shortly to leave Savannah, will dispose of his stock of Blinds and hang and trim them at the following prices:



Venetian Blinds, at \$3 to 4.50

Mahogany Parlour Blinds, \$4 to 5

25 pairs shutter Blinds, \$5 per window.

Persons wishing to purchase can be supplied by applying at Cabinet

Manufactory of Mr. Geo. Stow,
Broughton Street.

ADAMS. NEWHOUSE.

Savannah Daily Republican, January 24, 1823.

EIGHT OF JANUARY

This is the seventh anniversary of that memorable day on which GENERAL JACKSON and his brave companions saved New-Orleans from the British, and drove them with the violence of a whirlwind, from before the hasty entrenchments on the banks



of the Mississippi. History even weeps to record the carnage on that day, although against our enemies. It was a most glorious victory, in fact and consequence, that propitious HEAVEN ever graced to the arms of a nation—a victory almost bloodless on our part—but deeply, fatally crimsoned with the gore of the invading enemy. What a precious, glorious recollection! He who does not feel the thrill through every fibre of his frame, and beat in every pulsation of his heart, is anything but a good American. Nothing so attracts the heart of noble daring, revives feelings of patriotism, and stimulates to emulation than public rejoicing, and display commemorative of great national events. It warms with recollections of the past and pants for the scenes of glory. We believe that when a nation ceases to commemorate the deeds of her heroes and patriots she ceases to prize the attributes that constitute them—it is a prelude to her decay. We proudly notice the imposing parade that greets the eye on the present occasion in our city. The "spirit stirring drum" and "ear piercing fife," the gay uniform of the citizen soldiers, the display of the "starry standard" of our country, and the loud roar of cannon, told a tale of the heart's joy, and evinced that we had not

ceased to remember the deeds of our heroes. Retired, with the gallant chief who directed them, to the peaceful shades of domestic life, may their laurels ever flourish green and fresh as should be the recollection of their achievements; and on this memorable day of each succeeding year, may they receive a nation's gratitude.

Savannah Republican, January 8, 1823.

DAVENPORT HOUSE CALENDAR: JANUARY 2013

Tuesday, January 1, 2013 – Museum Closed – Happy New Year!

Wednesday, January 3 at 5 p.m. in the Kennedy Pharmacy – Dance Rehearsal

Wednesday, January 9 at 5 p.m. in the Kennedy Pharmacy – Dance Rehearsal

Thursday, January 10 at 2 p.m. – Preservation Fest meeting

Monday, January 14 through Friday, January 18 – Davenport House Annual Cleaning (house closed to visitors Monday through Friday)

Tuesday, January 15 at noon in the Kennedy Pharmacy – Davenport House Committee meeting

Wednesday, January 16 at 5 p.m. in the Kennedy Pharmacy – Dance Rehearsal

Thursday, January 17 from 4 until 8:30 in the Kennedy Pharmacy – 13th Colony Gathering (HSF)

Friday, January 18 at 2 p.m. in the DH– Collections Committee and Cleaning Review

Tuesday, January 22 at 6:30 p.m. in the Kennedy Pharmacy – Junior Interpreter Meeting

Wednesday, January 23 at 5 p.m. in the Kennedy Pharmacy – Dance Rehearsal

SHOP NEWS:

- Ben Head and Adrienne Williams will attend the Atlanta Gift Market January 13 through 16.

They will look for inexpensive items which fit with our interpretation and/or historic preservation. Over the past few years, as the economy has changed, shop management has made a concerted effort to find quality, inexpensive items which extend the museum visit for patrons.

DOCENTS:

Docent Training Planned: The next DH Docent Training Program will be held in February. Please let your friends know this is taking place. We anticipate needing new docents as spring approaches. Let Jamie or Dottie know of potential docents.

JIs IN THE NEW YEAR:

Ji meeting: The January Ji meeting will be on Tuesday, January 22 at 6:30 p.m. The meeting is for participating JIs including the newly trained SAA JIs and veteran JIs. We will discuss upcoming activities such as **SuperMuseumSunday**, which is scheduled for February 10. In the past JIs have staffed the house for this important community day when most area museums are open free-of-charge. There will also be a program on career development and parlaying JIs skills into something wonderful.

ANNUAL CLEANING:

The museum will be closed to the public the week of January 14 when staff and volunteers clean the exhibit area. Raleigh Marcell coordinates the work, and Jamie coordinates the volunteer help. The work crew will review correct cleaning practices on Monday, January 14 at 9 a.m.

Prior to this, staff puts away the holiday interpretation materials, cleans and organizes the attic, which houses collection storage as well as decorations and catering supplies. During the cleaning week each exhibit room's walls and blinds are wiped down with electrostatic cloths. The mouldings and woodwork are dusted with natural bristle brushes.



Collection items are evaluated and cleaned as necessary. The textiles are shaken and/or vacuumed. The brass is polished and there are touch ups to the floorcloth (which is not sealed during cleaning because of its close proximity to **SuperMuseumSunday**). If time and manpower allow, some of the floors will be waxed. Aren't you pleased that we can clean and care for the house!

WINTER VOLUNTEER TRIP: STATESBORO – WE WON'T BE SINGING THE "STATESBORO BLUES!"

Isn't it sad we live so close to Statesboro and know so little about it! Well, no more. The DH is taking its volunteer trip to the Bulloch County seat. **Statesboro** is also the home of Georgia Southern University – the fourth largest institution in The University of Georgia System. Details for the trip will be made by mid-January and emailed to you. The tentative date is Friday, February 20 from 8:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. The itinerary may include visiting the **Georgia Southern Museum** where we hope to hear about the extraordinary discovery of relics from Camp Lawton, a Civil War prison site which was presumed lost to time. Other stops may be the **Georgia Southern Botanical Garden** and the **Center for Wildlife Education and Lamar Q. Ball, Jr. Raptor Center**. We will eat someplace tasty in town. Please join in!



PLANNING FOR 2013 PROGRAMMING:

Please be aware of 2013 programs and DH volunteer needs. Staff will present the **Potable Gold: Savannah's Madeira Traditions** at 5:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday evenings in February. Our **Road Scholars** series begins at the end February. Towards the end of March the DH will need help for our Madeira motor coach series which runs throughout the spring. Also, mark your calendars for the **Savannah Tour of**

Homes and Gardens—Trolley Back in Time with our Madeira program on Friday, March 22. We see 115 people that evening!

- **Madeira series dates:** 3/21, 3/22, 3/28, 3/29, 4/4, 4/5, 4/11, 4/12, 4/18, 4/19, 4/25, 4/26, 5/2, 5/3, 5/9, 5/10, 5/16 and 5/17. We will have a refresher/training for this in March

- **AASU/Road Scholars dates** 2/21, 2/28, 3/7, 3/14, 3/28, 4/11, 4/18, 4/25, 5/2, 5/9 and 5/16. The DH will offer a training and instruction in how to assist staff in presenting this program in February. Also note, the DH will present its **TEA PROGRAMS** in March and May. Of course we will need bakers!

NOW IS THE SEASON OF THANK YOU: THE DH HOLIDAY EXPERIENCE:

It was a beautiful and long holiday season at the DH beginning with our End-of-Year-Holidays Interpretation being put together in the house, followed by SAA Ji Days and docent training, then came wreath preparation and the Christmas Party, **Holly Jolly Trolley Tours** and finally with Holiday Evening Tours. Our community pulled together for a terrific showing. The house was well-staffed with informed and enthusiastic docents and support people. It was clean and festive. All were kind and knowledgeable for our guests! **THANK YOU ALL AROUND:** End-of-Year Holiday Interpretation (November 19 through January 1) was put in place on November 19 by **Linda Meyer, Debbie Yeagley and Abby Schreiber.**

All was ready for the season when **Holly Jolly Trolley Tours** began the day after Thanksgiving. For the next 28 days (November 23 through December 23) the DH welcomed one and often 2, 3, 4 and even 5 trol-



leys of visitors each evening. These patrons received a tour of the museum's first floor featuring the holiday interpretation. This partnership with **Old Town Trolley** began in 2005 and has grown steadily. Raleigh, Jeff and Jamie worked the program with assistance from **John Leonti, Gayle Mongrandi, and Jody Christie**. The OTT staff was terrific including **Jamee, Joyce, Michael, Cindy** and **Carol** as well as their wonderful drivers.

Jan Vach, Linda Meyer and **Debbie Yeagley** with assistance from **Greg Vach** and **Raleigh Marcell** put the holiday window display together featuring gift shop items in the Kennedy Pharmacy.

Jan Vach, Linda Meyer, Abby Schreiber and **Debbie Yeagley** embellished the holiday wreathes purchased from the **Trustees Garden Club's Annual Greenery Sale**. A wreath was placed on the front façade and on the back porch. Staff moved the back porch wreath to the front by the end of December replacing the weather-worn one.

A goodly number of volunteer and staff docents, as well as JIs attended the holiday interpretation training and refresher. Others reviewed the printed materials and were ready for our visitors who expected a different interpretation during December. The museum is extremely grateful for the adaptability of its guiding staff in handling the shift of interpretation for the month. All could handle the questions such as "Where is the Christmas tree?" and "Are these *Christmas* decorations?"

We partied in a spirited fashion on December 1 with a crowd of about 100 for the annual Davenport House Christmas Party. It was the largest holiday party in memory. And though a number of ole-time faithful DHers were not in attendance, there were many new and joyful faces. New this year was the protein on the table. **Brooke Wilford** supplemented the table with beef and ham, and the DH provided the shrimp, figuring there should be

substantial fare, as well as party favorites and sweets. Thank you to everyone who attended and brought wine and a treat for the table. It was a grand spread with convivial company. Our JI wait staff - **Irune Aparicio, Deanna Clarke, Rosie Lu, Madeleine Hardage, Katie Morris** and **Cierra Smith** - was the absolute best, helping from set up to clean up.

The media was generous to the Museum for End-of-Year Programming. Listings of the December interpretation and Holiday Evening Tours by Candlelight were on local posting venues including Savannah Morning News, VisitSavannah and Explore Georgia. Local inns and lodging promoted our offerings and allowed us to leave posters and post cards about the Holiday Evening Tours in their establishments. Many businesses in the historic district allowed us to put posters in their windows and/ or staff bulletins boards. Thank you to **Tristen Persons** and **Debbie Yeagley** for distributing media around town. The event appeared on the Comcast Town Crier and WTOC Events Bulletin Board. **Jody Chapin** of WTOC hosted staff for an appearance on **Mid-Morning Live** and **Jessica Kiss** of WJCL had staff on **Good Morning Savannah** the day after Christmas. WJCL also sent out a camera person to shoot the site for their holiday programming. ConnectSavannah listed the event in its calendar and the event received the cover of the "Accent" section of the Savannah Morning News the Sunday before Christmas. We are grateful to **Linda Sickler** and **Richard Burkhart** for that. If you saw or heard other listings, please let us know so we can be aware of their generosity.

This was all in preparation for our Holiday Evening Tours by Candlelight which saw many people the week between Christmas and New Year's. A happy and generous crowd visited the museum to see costumed interpreters in the candlelit rooms and hear our story. **Raleigh**

Marcell is applauded for creating a new addition to the program. He and **Lauren Purcell** performed as uncle and niece both having discovered the newly published "A Visit from St. Nicholas." They re-enacted portions of the poem for visitors. Also news this year was the dance performance each evening in the Kennedy Pharmacy following the last tour. **Jeff Freeman, Stacy Hess, Pat Fraker, Stephen Morrison, Raleigh Marcell** and **Jamie Credle** all took their turns on the dance floor before the happy crowd. Thank you to musical performers **Liana Mosley, Irune Aparicio, Kate Bosen, Katherine Albert** and **The Back Porch Band** with **Shari Laist**. Docents included **Adam Caracci, Jody Christie, Pete Connolly, Pamela Eaton, Clare Devlin, Claudette Engvall, Jeff Freeman, Pat Fraker, De Gassman, Katherine Hewitt, Fran Molietere, Katie Morris, Betty Schwarz, Abby Schreiber, Cierra Smith, Mary Ann Scott, and Jan Vach**. The shop workers was phenomenal. Thank you to **Gail Connolly, Nicole Ausset, Pamela Eaton, Deanna Clarke** and Chassidy Malloy.

Our Holiday Evenings Tours program began modestly in 2003 with 262 patrons and has evolved into a capacity attended (600 people) community spirited effort during the busy week between Christmas and New Year's. For the month of December, DH is open day and night telling its story in ever expanding ways. This would not be possible without the time and commitment of staff and volunteers. Hurray to you – now go take a nap!!



Happy New Year!

WORTH MENTIONING:

- **Holiday Goodies** – Staff members are grateful for the treats, cards and good wishes extended their way during the holiday season.
- **Annual Giving** – The currently campaign is coming together nicely. Currently, there are 126 contributors to the effort.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Tristen Persons

DH: How did you come to be associated with the Davenport House?



Tristen: When I first moved to Savannah I knew the city was rich in history and I wanted to get involved at a historic house. I researched a few places and the Davenport House seemed like the right fit. I graduated with a history degree and working at a place like this is my dream job.

DH: What is your favorite thing to do in Savannah?

Tristen: I like to paint and take my dog Penny on walks around our neighborhood. I am a die-hard Florida Gators fan so when it's football season, I never miss a game. When my husband isn't deployed we like to travel.

DH: What is your favorite thing about the Davenport House?

Tristen: My favorite thing about the Davenport House is meeting other people who love history just as much as I do. There is always something new to learn so talking to other volunteers or visitors is interesting.

DH: What is the most unusual thing that has happened to you at the Davenport House?

Tristen: Nothing really unusual has happened to me so far which is actually surprising. Weird things happen to me a lot!

DH: How long have you lived in Savannah and where are you from originally?

Tristen: I moved to Savannah in May after graduating college at Jacksonville State University in Alabama.

I am originally from a little town in south Alabama called Magnolia Springs. It's my favorite place and I will most likely move back there one day.

DH: Where else have you lived?

Tristen: I lived in Jacksonville, Alabama for five years before moving to Savannah. I liked living there because it was a small town but if you needed the big city atmosphere it was only an hour and a half away.

DH: What is your favorite season in Savannah and why?

Tristen: My favorite season in Savannah is winter. I love the holiday season so seeing all of the decorations and lights mixed with the natural beauty is awesome. Plus, it isn't freezing cold!

DH: What else do you like to do in Savannah?

Tristen: I love to eat so it's nice to live in a place with so many restaurants and different types of food. So far, my favorite places are Vinnie Van Go-Gos and Corleone's.



A look at the DH Guest Register:

During the month of November (2012), the DH saw visitors from 35 states and 5 countries. Our foreign visitors traveled from Brazil, Canada, England, Japan and Mexico. Interesting hometown included Eagle River, AK, Holiday Island, AR, Fruitland Park, FL, Soperton, GA, Bossier City, IL, Virden, IL, Manhattan, KS, Roscommon, MI, Broken Box, NE, Crown City, OH, Claremore, OK, and Troutdale, OR.

How They Heard About Us (in descending order of frequency):

Tour guides (Andrew Low, Juliette Gordon Low, carriage tour); Inter-

net (Group On); trolley tours (Old Town Trolley, Old Savannah Tours); brochures; friends; guide books (AAA); concierges (Marshall House, Hilton, Kehoe House, Ballastone Inn, Westin); Visitors Center; HSF; relatives; newspaper; repeat visit; history books.

What They Had To Say

"Beautiful." "Great tour."
"Enjoyed all of the tidbits as well as the history." "Lovely Federal décor." "Excellent preservation."
"Thank you for saving the history."
"Loved the tour." "Well preserved."
"Such a great guide!" "Great guide, Gayle. Great experience!"
"Excellent!" "Quite interesting and lovely; great preservation. Thank you for dancing." "Great Marty!"
"Fantastic tour!" "Jeff and Jan were great!" "Very interesting to hear about life in the 1820's." "Very pretty." "Rachael does a superb job." "Beautiful house. Informative tour." "Awesome." "Claudette was superior." "Our tour guide was superb!" "Wonderful tour. Loved the history." "Gorgeous home!"

The Happy Condition

The man, who, for life is blest with a wife,
Is, sure, in happy condition:
Go things as they will, she's fond of him still,
She's comforter, friend and physician.
Pray where is the joy, to trifle and toy!
Yet dread some disaster from beauty!
But sweet is the bliss of a conjugal kiss,
Where love mingles pleasure with duty.
One extravagant Miss won't cost him less
Than twenty good wives that are saving;
For, wives they will spare, that their children may share,
But Misses forever are craving.
Savannah Republican, December, 18, 1819.



What's Up: In the Museum World by Jamie Credle

It was a chore but someone had to do it – go to Williamsburg to attend a conference (which Savannah will host in 2013). In November, I attended the Southeastern Museums Conferences (SEMC) Annual Meeting in Virginia primarily to give a reprise of a panel discussion on Collections Policies that was given at last year's Georgia Association of Museums and Galleries (GAMG). I represented the small house museum perspective. A colleague from the Atlanta History Center talked about history museums and another colleague from the Georgia Museum of Art represented art museums. The most intriguing panelist though (at least from the non-living collection standpoint) was the Director of the Virginia Zoo who provided the “living collection” perspective. There is tremendous collaboration between living collections (zoos, botanic gardens, arboretums, etc.) to insure the continuation of species. *Ask me about this if you want to know more.*

I did my duty on the panel, as well as representing the local arrangement committee at the awards luncheon welcoming SEMC to Savannah in October 2013. Mark your calendars for October 6 through 9, 2013 when 400 to 600 museum folks from the southeastern region will descend on Savannah. The DH will be involved with the conference presenting a

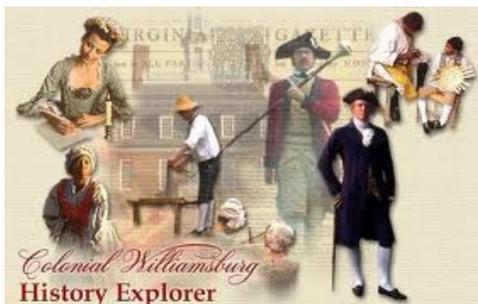
Yellow Fever performance on Sunday October 6 as well as a walking tour of *1820s Savannah* on October 8. You will hear more about SEMC in Savannah in the coming months.

Back to SEMC 2012 in Williamsburg: My job here is to let you know what museum folks are talking about and what they are concerned about. What follows are impressions from the sessions and events I attended. Two sessions **Five Design Ideas Everyone Should Know** and **Case Study of Interpreting Historical Figures (Patrick Henry, A Case Study)**, as well as the Town Hall Meeting discussion on **The Future of African American Interpretation in Museums** impressed me the most.

But before we get to that . . . I must have been sleeping when our national museum organization changed its name from the **American Association of Museums** to the **American Alliance of Museums**. I felt like Rip Van Winkle when the change was discussed in Williamsburg. SEMC is the southern regional affiliation of the national organization. The 100 year-old national organization adopted a new strategic plan in 2009. During the planning process, the consensus was that “association” did not represent what the organization is, nor did it represent what the museum field needs it to be—“*an inclusive, collaborative organization prepared to work with museum professionals and volunteers, [as well as working] with those who do business with museums, and with those who just love museums.*” *The organization maintains the acronym AAM.*

Change, the fear of change, coping with change, adapting to change, thriving on change is what museums are talking about, particularly as funding sources change, as audiences change and as technology changes.

Designer Ideas Are Not Just for Designers: As an example of the of extraordinary change which has taken place in the museum business, SEMC was all about identifying and adapting to change in positive ways. The session **Design Ideas Everyone Should Know** was presented by veteran exhibit designers who want to understand how the museum experience has changed over the past thirty years. What they had to offer is that museum designers (and museum people in general) have to “make it (what people “get” in a museum) something other than an experience people can get on a Smart-phone.” Historically designers have categorized museum viewers as **Streakers**, **Strollers**, and **Studiers**. These titles are self-evident – **streakers** are those who walk through quickly and say they have done it; **strollers** go through sometimes reading labels sometimes not, often in random order, and the **studiers** are those who take their time and read EVERY label.



While exhibit designers continue to believe this is a good way to categorize exhibit patrons, to identify and satisfy the contemporary museum visitor, the panelists offered “People are weighing how much they want to invest in time and money” in a museum experience.

From the beginning, patrons must feel welcome and feel that what they are going to experience is worth the investment in time and money.”

The designers offer that their exhibits can foster visitors’ interaction with each other as well as with the artifacts hoping the museum experience can be something other than solitary. One audience member who – like many people – spends her day in front of a computer said, “People do not come to a museum to look at a screen.” And at this time of technological change the designers said they use technology where it is relevant but sometimes the best experience is the pure experience of seeing an artifact in a thoughtfully arranged environment without bells and whistles.

The profound change for museums through the technological revolution is that we (the museum folks) are no longer the “gate keepers to information about our sites and our collections.” With all the data and images available, museums have got to offer creative ways to experience the real thing – their sites, artifacts, etc. The panelists recommended a book entitled **A Whole New Mind** by Daniel Pink, which expresses that “right brain” thinkers (whose attributes are being: intuitive, thoughtful and subjective) will *take over the world.*” A thought put forth in the book is that “what is important is interpretation done in creative ways.” The equation presented is “interpretation plus creativity equals engagement” (interpretation + creativity = engagement). One of the conclusions the panelists presented is that each museum must understand “What draws people to you? What is the essence?”

Welcome Citizen: Colin Campbell, CEO, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (CW) welcomed conference attendees to the Town Hall Meeting expressing the change that CW has undergone. Every several years CW re-invents itself following thoughtful planning. Campbell said, *Welcome Citizen. People will not look forward to prosperity without looking backward to our ancestors. As the nation’s premier living history site, we are committed to engaging people on the issues of the day by looking at the past because we know that democracy is not self-maintaining. It needs virtuous people. Colonial Williamsburg is repositioning itself to be a center of history and citizenship finding contemporary relevance to our 18th century revolutionary experiences. There were social trends and political choices made in the late 18th century which relate to today. These include, but are not limited to, the role of the media in national government, the role of the military, the role of religion and democratic aspects of the American nation. All of our conversations will be done within the framework of the American Revolution. CW is dedicated to being the Center*



of History and Citizenship providing a more thoughtful discussion and a new direction for our site. So again, Welcome Citizen!

Let’s Get Creative: The Future of African American Interpretation in Museums was the Town Hall Meeting topic presented by a group of noted leaders in the museum field - **Kym Rice** of George Washington University, **John F. Franklin** of the Smithsonian Institution and **Christy Coleman** of American Civil War Center. The initial discussion question was **Where does the interpretation of**

African American History stand in museums today?



The consensus is that it is “uneven but improving.”

Franklin noted that even an eminent institution like the Smithsonian sometimes hardly includes African Americans in the narrative. He cited the recent **Price of Freedom: Americans at War** exhibition as an example. Yet in other places such as the South Carolina Museum of History, the African American experience is fully integrated. The strongest words on the question came from Christy Coleman, who began her career at Colonial Williamsburg and is now the president of the American Civil War Center in Richmond, offering that “it is stunning that the same issues and questions are being debated twenty-five years later.” She asked “Why don’t people go ahead and do it?” She commended some institutions for having taken on the topic of slavery and African American history including Monticello and its house tour. But, “Mulberry Row [the quarters at Monticello] is still not there.” She says, “A part of me really wants to see it.” But she added she would “hate to see curators get their hands on it,” expecting it would end up being a sterile experience. She would hope that it could look lived in – where real people lived. That was the experience created at the quarters at Carter’s Grove, “but that is gone now.” [CW sold Carter’s Grove when it could not be made financially viable.] She emphasized a continual conversation with curators who say, “We don’t have information? [to recreate the lives of African Americans]” She declared, “Be creative! Go out there and figure it out. We can’t let fear be our driver when our job is supposed to be about education!” The panel continued that the 20th century is “the past to young people. We are going to need to make

that experience accessible to young people as well.”



Give Me a Realistic Presentation or Give Me . . . : The final session I attended was a case study about **Patrick Henry**. Included in the panel were directors of house museums related to PH, as well as scholars who research and interpret his life. A trail of sites has been put together of places associated with the orator who spoke the famous call to revolution ***Give me Liberty or Give Me Death***. The sites range from St. John’s Church in Richmond, where he spoke “Give me Liberty . . .” to his home Scotchtown where he lived from 1771 to 1778 in Beaverdam, VA to Hampton Sydney College where six of his sons studied to Red Hill in Brookneal, which was his last home. Many of these sites are in sparsely populated areas whose competition are more well-known sites such as Monticello and Ashlawn. The administrator at Red Hill says her historic site presents “*the theater of real people*” where the “*real words*” [meaning quotes for the historical characters] are spoken and the visitor maneuvers through the “*theatrics of daily life*.” She also noted archeology played a big role in determining the site’s interpretation. An interpreter with Colonial Williamsburg spoke of the new technology that is accessible for education – primary documents are online; CW does a weekly podcast, etc. For many years CW has offered electronic field trips which are museum experiences broadcast to subscribing classrooms all over the country. In these, characters from the past tell their story in first person. He

showed a video clip from a recent electronic field trip with a “Meet the Press” format where the moderator asked Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry “***Are we a Christian country?***”

He suggested we think of questions we could ask the people who lived at our sites if we could, questions, such as “What is it like being a slave?” and then construct a credible narrative to answer these questions from the research available. Another scholar talked about how the field of writing has changed from full-fledged biographies to books that focus on a particular aspect of the founding fathers. In Patrick Henry’s case, there are new books on Henry the lawyer, Henry the poet, Henry the orator, etc. And there is so much available through the Internet. **Google-books** has millions of searchable titles. There is **JSTOR** of academic journals, the Library of Congress website, **FamilyTrail.com**, museum websites, **Ancestry.com**, **Archeology.com**, **Archives.com** as well as counties which have put documents online. As for Patrick Henry, the panelist said, “There is a lot more to the guy than his utterance of the ‘Give Me Liberty’ speech” As a prolific writer all one has to do is listen to what people are talking about and there will probably be a parallel to Henry and his time. He had things to say on the role of church and state, the size of government, equal rights, justice, economy, the national debt, guns, etc. The final person to speak was the actor who spends his workdays portraying Patrick Henry in Colonial Williamsburg’s historic area. Before being sent out to the public he had to master the biographical and philosophical nature of the man and then figure out how to convey that in first person to crowds in Williamsburg. And, a lot of what he says (through Patrick Henry) is controversial. Things like:

The great object is that every man be armed. Everyone who is able may have a gun.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians, not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ!

The distinctions between Virginians, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers, and New Englanders are no more. I Am Not A Virginian, But An American!

If this be treason, make the most of it.

Sometimes people take the words he says which are historically accurate to be his (the interpreter’s) own opinions and/or those of Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. In fact on at least one occasion his words so offended CW guests that they went to the Vice President for the Historic Area and complained. After listening courteously the VP told complainers “that sometimes one learns from being uncomfortable.”

What I took away from all of this is that we are all struggling with change but that we must be open to it. There are many opportunities to learn history out there and that what we do at historic sites still has relevance IF WE MAKE IT SO. We have got to be open to new ideas as well as remembering the old ideas. First person interpretation in an historic site is still as thrilling as it was to me when I met a young aide-de-camp to Lafayette in Yorktown in 1977.

What I hope those of us at the DH will do is keep the conversation open, talk with each other, talk with our guests and learn how to make it all work for the good of the DH and the edification of our visitors. And, remember what Patrick Henry said, “I know of no way of judging the future but by the past.”