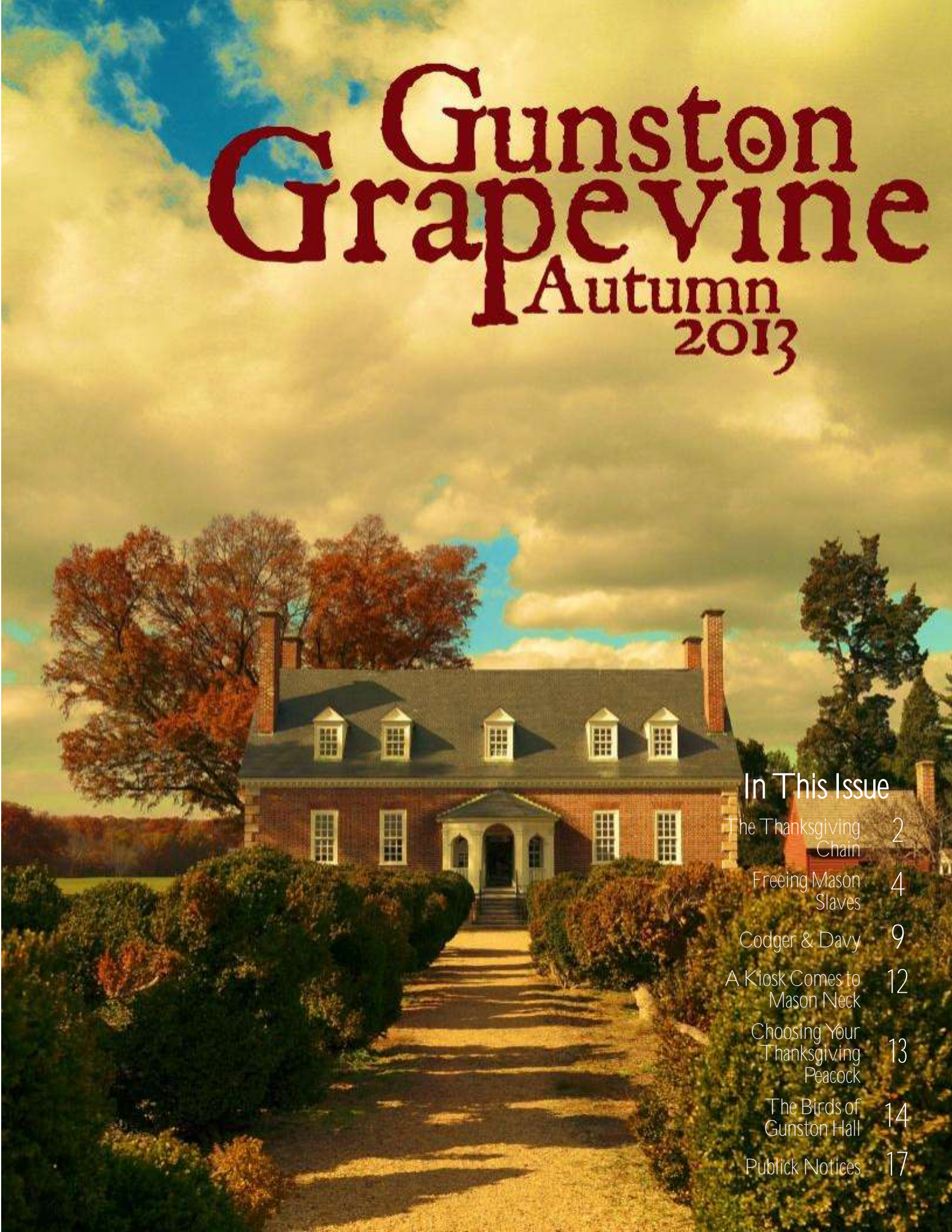


Gunston Grapevine

Autumn
2013



In This Issue

The Thanksgiving Chain	2
Freeing Mason Slaves	4
Codger & Davy	9
A Kiosk Comes to Mason Neck	12
Choosing Your Thanksgiving Peacock	13
The Birds of Gunston Hall	14
Public Notices	17

THE THANKSGIVING CHAIN

AS I WRITE THIS ARTICLE, I CAN ALMOST SMELL THE MAGNIFICENCE OF THANKSGIVING.

Turkey, oyster stuffing, sweet potato pie, and so many other olfactory delights are circling my mind—and nose—as I sit at my desk and anticipate what my family and I will enjoy in just a few more days.

Forget about the traffic on I-95, the time spent preparing the meal, and even forget about all those dirty dishes. We are going to eat big and eat **well and I can't wait!**

But as I write this article, several other things come to mind.

First, I am reminded that as much as I anticipate what is to come, Thanksgiving is equally about what has come before. I remember traditions begun in my childhood such as making a chain of wrapping paper with each loop representing a day until Christmas, a loop eagerly torn off each morning until December 25. I remember my Granny on the Eastern Shore with whom we spent many Thanksgiving holidays surrounded by family, enlivened by stories, and enriched by fellowship.

More recently, I remember building our Thanksgiving Tree out of construction paper with my daughters and adding leaves upon which we have recorded what we are thankful for. And I remember friendly debates with my wife about whether the first Thanksgiving occurred in Flor-

ida or Virginia (sorry Massachusetts!).

I am also reminded that this grand feast will feed more than my body; it will feed my mind, my heart, my soul, and my spirit. These other forms of nourishment are rooted in the traditions of my personal history, but will also result from the togetherness we will experience on Thursday.

Furthermore, this nourishment is a result of the powerful ability of a moment in time to shine a light on future journeys. Just as my brother and I made the Thanksgiving chain as children, Rebecca and Rachel will make a chain this year. This simple act, connecting generations, will not end once Thanksgiving 2013 is itself a memory. Future chains will be built by future generations of Strohs and the continuum will continue.

This Thanksgiving, therefore, I am particularly aware of the connection between people, places, traditions, experiences, and togetherness over time. This is in part because this Thanksgiving will be the first in several that I will spend in Philadelphia, in a place where many of the chains described above were made and hung.

But, this feeling is also a result of my first Thanksgiving at Gunston Hall. I am incredibly thankful for the opportunity to be at Gunston Hall. I am thankful for the opportunity to spend each day with an amazingly talented team of individuals who are committed to excellence. I am thankful for the leadership, vision, and example of service provided by our Board of Regents, those who currently serve and those who came before. I am thankful for the abundant nature which defines our setting. I am thankful for the history and humanity which so compellingly characterizes Gunston Hall and still provides great life and vitality to the mansion and surrounding grounds. I am thankful for our Friends, neighbors and supporters who have invested in us and our future.

Perhaps most importantly, I am thankful to serve as one loop in a chain connecting generations of individuals, traditions, experiences, dreams, and accomplishments over time at Gunston Hall; a chain which has been built every day going back over two hundred years. A chain which, guided by our vision for the future and



Gunston Hall Mission

To utilize fully the physical and scholarly resources of Gunston Hall to stimulate continuing public exploration of democratic ideals as first presented by George Mason in the 1776 Virginia Declaration of Rights.

About the cover: The Hall in the Fall—the riverfront boxwood allée in early November.

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

defined by our own diversity of perspective, will continue to be built in each succeeding year by each succeeding generation.

I frequently say that “It is a new day for Gunston Hall” and in many ways it is a new day. But this Thanksgiving I am thankful for all the days at Gunston Hall before this new one, I am thankful to be part of our today and **the “feast” of opportunity** laid out before us, and I am thankful for the ability to contribute to the foundation of traditions and experiences which will continue to make Gunston Hall great.

So join us, find some wrapping paper, and **let’s build a chain to the future.** Each loop will represent a dream, an idea, or a hope for Gunston Hall.

We will tear off a loop each day as each goal is achieved. We will ensure that those who follow know how to build the chain but are empowered to do so in their own creative way. And, we will feast on the knowledge that we are feeding more than ourselves; we are feeding all those who visit or connect with Gunston Hall. It is going to be a long, bright, colorful chain of many sizes and shapes, but it is going to be

beautiful and it is going to be fun!

Thank you all and best wishes for a safe and festive Thanksgiving.

It is a great day at Gunston Hall,
Scott



(Continued from page 4)

the height of six feet, a notable stature for the time.

Among the tasks for which Demus was hired out were wood cutting and seine hauling (Figures 1 and 2).

During the spring 1816 and 1817 fishing seasons, he was engaged by William Eilbeck Mason at \$30 a season to haul seine.¹²



Figure 2. Payments owed by William Eilbeck Mason to his brother R.B. Mason for the rental of slaves, Tom, Demus, and Davy.

During January, February, and March, 1818, Demus was hired out to William Alliston and William Beard at \$8 a month.¹³

On September 2, 1817, R.B. Mason began his long military career, being appointed a 2nd Lieutenant in the 8th U.S. Infantry.^{14, 15} On January 16, 1818, he came of legal age. As his military duties took him away from Virginia, he entrusted his slaves and his local affairs to his older brother, George Mason VI.¹⁶

By the end of 1818, Richard Mason had made arrangements with Richard Barnes Alexander of Prince William County, a family acquaintance, to take charge of his slaves.¹⁷ By the end of the summer of 1819, Alexander had transported R.B. Mason's slaves to his own farm in Breckenridge County, Kentucky.¹⁸ Mason planned for his slaves to work for Alexander on shares until the legal status of his Kentucky lands could be resolved. To accomplish the latter, he had retained Kentucky lawyer, Charles A. Wickliffe, on contin-

gency in 1818 to argue his case.¹⁹

On December 3, 1821, Richard B. Alexander died while Mason was stationed at Fort Howard in Wisconsin.²⁰ On February 5, 1822, Richard wrote to his brother, George, that he was leaving on March 15 via Prairies du Chien for a new posting at Baton Rouge Barracks in Louisiana. He hoped to “stop in Kentucky” while en-route and later to get permission for a furlough “over the summer to make some arrangement about my land & negroes.”

Apparently, his plans changed, and he spent most of the year being “Absent not joined” from Baton Rouge and in December was listed as “Absent on furlough until 31 March 1823.”²¹ During the fall of 1822, a favorable decision had been reached in court about the ownership of the contested Kentucky lands.²² Mason planned to “select the best Farm for myself on which I shall put my negroes . . .” and to rent several farms to Wickliffe for terms of one, two, or three years. It seems, however, that his plans changed again, and that he sold most if not all of his Kentucky lands as well as some of his slaves.²³

What arrangements he made at that time for his remaining slaves are currently unknown although they likely remained in Kentucky.

Over the next several years, Mason was stationed at numerous posts west of the Mississippi. Perhaps as early as the winter of 1822, he had purchased through his older brother George a slave named Aaron Baker for a body servant.²⁴ On March 4, 1833, he joined the newly formed Dragoons as a major and would remain with that unit until his death.

On November 2, 1835, he took a six month leave from Fort Gibson in present day Oklahoma, to look after personal matters.²⁵ During this leave, he married Margaret Hunter on January 28, 1836, in New Orleans, traveled to Washington, D.C., where he stayed with his father-in-law Colonel John W. Hunter, and likely visited his slaves and property in Kentucky.^{26, 27} After the nuptials, it appears that he added his remaining

(Continued on page 6)

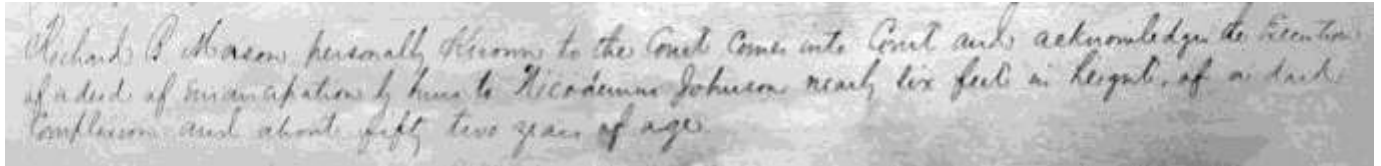


Figure 3. St. Louis County, Missouri Circuit Court Book entry dated June 7, 1850.

(Continued from page 5)

slaves, about 5 in number, to his household at Fort Gibson. These slaves included Nicodemus Johnson and his family.

By the time then Brevet Brigadier General R.B. Mason assumed command of Jefferson Barracks in Saint Louis on October 4, 1849,²⁸ Nicodemus Johnson had replaced Aaron Baker as Mason's body servant.²⁹

June 7 of the following summer, Mason recorded a deed of emancipation for Nicodemus Johnson (Figure 3) and, on June 10, posted \$500.00 in security for Johnson's freedman's bond (Figure 4).³⁰ Shortly afterwards on June 25, 1850, Richard Barnes Mason died of the cholera, leaving an estate valued at \$32,229.06 after debts and expenses.³¹

At the time of his demise, Mason owned 8 slaves, not including the newly freed Nicodemus.³² Among these slaves were Nicodemus' wife Betsey, his daughter, Matilda, and his four grandchildren, Clement, William, Nicodemus, and one child whose name has not been determined.³³ The latter child ostensibly died between 1850 and 1852.

After R.B. Mason's death, Nicodemus remained in Saint Louis perhaps continuing to be employed by Mason's widow for a while and then working as a porter and nurse.³⁴ In 1860, Nicodemus lived with this son and daughter, Sina and Grandanson, in St. Louis' Ward 7.³⁵ Both children were listed as free negroes. Due to the uncertainties of the time, Nicodemus felt the need to renew his free negro bond in 1861.³⁶ In the ab-

sence of his former master, he looked to Thomas T. Gantt, a prominent local attorney, to secure his free negro bond; Gantt had served as a trustee to Margaret Mason during the settlement of R.B. Mason's estate and was a friend and lawyer to her second husband, Don Carlos Buell. During the Civil War, Nicodemus may have made his way to Washington, D.C. as a Nicodemus John-

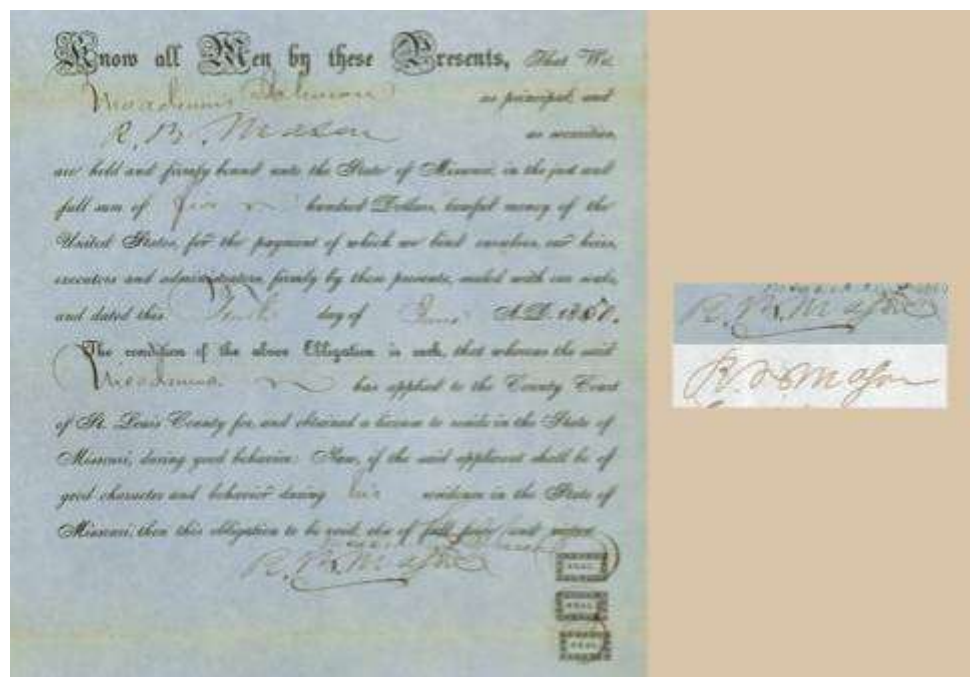


Figure 4. Freedman's security bond for Nicodemus Johnson, June 10, 1850 (Missouri History Museum, Dexter P. Tiffany Collection). R.B. Mason's signature on the bond compared to his signature on an authenticated document, indicating that the individual securing the bond was General R.B. Mason.

son of similar age was listed on the rolls of the Freedman's Bureau there.³⁷

In 1870, Nicodemus resided in St. Louis' Ward 8 along with his daughter, Matilda; her teenage daughters, Mora and Nellie; and his wife Betsey.³⁸ Nicodemus was listed as a "Porter Ins [insurance] Office." His fate after that date is unknown.

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

Endnotes

1. George Mason, II's will, *Fairfax County Land Causes*, 1716.
2. French Mason's will, *Fairfax County Will Book A1:256-257*.
3. French Mason's estate inventory, *Fairfax County Will Book A1:287-290*.
4. George Mason, IV's will, *Fairfax County Will Book G1:254a-261*. Recorded on December 19, 1796.
5. George Mason, IV's estate inventory, *Fairfax County Will Book H1:38-52*. Taken on January 10, 1797; returned and recorded on December 16, 1799.
6. Demus appears in both George Mason, V's will and estate inventory as "Dennis." As subsequent records of the slaves owned by Richard Barnes Mason before he reached legal age list a Demus but not a Dennis, it is probable that the latter name was a transcribing error made by the clerk when the original will and estate inventory were copied into the Fairfax County Will Book.
7. In a codicil dated November 3, 1796, George Mason V of Lexington revised his will to provide for a then unborn heir: "my situation is now altered by my wife being now pregnant if the child should be born alive & arrive at the years of twenty one years or Marrys which ever may first happen I then give him or her, and Heirs forever all my Lands in Kentucky hereby revoking that part of my will respecting my Kentucky Lands. I also give to him or her Nell & her increase forever & the boy called Jeremy & at his or her Mothers Death Sarah & Phillis & their increase from this time & five hundred Dollars to be paid out of the profits of my Estate at the age of twenty one years or sooner if my Executors think proper." *Fairfax County Will Book G1:254a-260*. Recorded December 19, 1796.
8. George Mason, V of Lexington's estate inventory returned and recorded on December 16, 1799 indicates that the increase born to Sarah (30), a maid, were Jine (9), Humphrey (7), and Bill (7 months); the increase born to Nell (25), a maid, was Tom (1); and the increase born to Phillis (40) were Dennis [Demus] (5), Henry (3), and Davy (1). In the inventory, Jeremy's age was noted as 14. All these slaves resided on Lexington Plantation or Quarter (*Fairfax County Will Book H1:38-52*). Tom was the Tom Clarke about whom R.B. Mason had an unresolved dispute over ownership with his older brother William. Although undetermined, it is possible that R.B. Mason acquired additional slaves through children born to Sarah, Nell, or Phillis in later years.
9. After their marriage, George Graham brought a large number of slaves from his Prince William County estate to Dogue Neck to help work the lands granted to Elizabeth for use during her life (*1810 U.S. Federal Census: Fairfax County, Virginia*). The 45 slaves attributed to him in the 1810 census probably included those owned by Elizabeth and by her son, Richard. Her older sons, George and William, had an additional 31 and 28 slaves, respectively, on the Neck during this time.
10. According to the will and codicil of Elizabeth Mary Ann Barnes Hooe [Mason] Graham of Lexington (presented to the court on October 17, 1814 and recorded June 17, 1816, *Fairfax County Will Book L1:60-61*), Elizabeth bequeathed, "I give to my dearly beloved son Richard Barnes Mason the following negroes, viz Anthony, Joe, and rose and also my gold watch and I request my trustee to purchase a gold chain seal and key for it."
11. At the time of his mother's death, Richard's father's surviving executors were his father's brothers—William Mason (1757-1818), Thomson Mason (1759-1820), and John Mason (1766-1849). It is unknown whether these executors also exercised control over the slaves willed by his mother.
12. Charles County, Maryland estate accounts of William Mason, son of George Mason of Lexington. Demus' brother Davy had also been hired at \$30 a season for the spring 1816 and spring 1817 fish runs.
13. Tucker and Thompson were merchant tailors in Georgetown (*Daily National Intelligencer*, December 11, 1816, pg. 4). The "jail fees 10" were likely for a runaway slave who had been captured and incarcerated. Broechis' payment was for clothes which had been made for R.B. Mason in 1816 (invoice for May 30 and August 13, 1816 for making four pairs of pants, a jacket, and a vest). William Johnston was credited for the use of his man in cutting wood over the winter (letter from R.B. Mason to William Johnson [sic Johnston] dated February 8, 1817 from Lexington; William Johnston's receipt of \$19.66 payment from R.B. Mason via George Mason). Demus and Gibb had been hired out to William Alliston and William Beard through R.B. Mason's agent, George Mason, for the months January, February, and March 1818 (Alliston and Beard statement of agreement, January 6, 1818). Alliston and Beard were to pay \$8.00 a month for Demus and \$4 a month for Gibb. William Morgan was a boat maker (May 1821 entry on tally sheet).
14. Richard B. Mason's appointment likely had been arranged through the influence of his stepfather, George Graham. At the time, Graham was serving as the Secretary of War ad interim (October 6, 1816 to December 9, 1817).
15. F.B. Heitman, 1890, *Historical Register of the United States Army*, National Tribune, Washington, D.C., p. 456.
16. Letter from R.B. Mason to his brother George on December 1, 1818 from Camp Jefferson in the Alabama Territory (American Antiquarian Society). In this letter, R.B. wrote, "You say you have all my accounts arranged after the settlement of them[,] the money that my Negroes hire for[,] please to enclose to me without delay . . ."
17. Letters from R.B. Mason to his brother George sent from Huntsville on August 17, 1818 and from Camp Jefferson on December 1, 1818 (American Antiquarian Society).
18. Letter from R.B. Mason to his brother George sent from Camp Gibson on August 27, 1819 (American Antiquarian Society).
19. Letter from R.B. Mason to his brother George sent from Danville, Mercer County, Kentucky on July 24, 1818 (American Antiquarian Society). "Wickliffe is to undertake my interest in the land for one half, if it is recovered, he paying my part of the taxes, and also my part of all the expenses that have or may be incurd [sic]." Charles A. Wickliffe would later serve six terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, a partial

(Continued from page 7)

term as Governor, and four years as U.S. Postmaster General.

20. Letter from R.B. Mason to his brother George sent from Cantonment Smith at Green Bay, Wisconsin on February 5, 1822 (American Antiquarian Society). Alexander died while on a visit to Park Gate, Prince William County (Obituary: Richard Barnes Alexander, *Alexandria Gazette*, November 28, 1821, p. 3).

21. National Archives and Records Administration Microfilm Serial M617, *Returns from U.S. Military Posts, 1800-1916*, Baton Rouge Barracks (January 1822 to December 1822).

22. Letter from R.B. Mason to his brother George sent from Louisville, Kentucky on September 25, 1822 (American Antiquarian Society). The Kentucky property were lands which R.B. Mason's grandfather had patented and which had been passed on to him by his father as part of his inheritance.

23. Darrel E. Bigham, 1998, *Towns and Villages of the Lower Ohio*, University of Kentucky Press, Lexington, p. 65.

24. Over the winter of 1822, Mason expressed his desire to purchase a slave "for a servant to keep always with me [body servant]" (Letter from R.B. Mason to his brother George sent from Cantonment Smith at Green Bay on February 5, 1822 (American Antiquarian Society)). Mason preferred a slave named Bill. However, the slave who eventually became his body servant was one named, Aaron Baker. Aaron was a slave who Mason had earlier tried to acquire (Letters from R.B. Mason to his brother George sent from Camp Jefferson on December 1, 1818 and from Camp Gibson on August 27, 1819). Aaron was well regarded. General William T. Sherman who served as Mason's Adjutant in California recalled in his memoirs (1891, *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman by Himself*, Volume I, D. Appleton & Company, New York): "Many of our regulars did desert [for the gold fields] . . . Our servants also left us . . . Colonel Mason's black boy, Aaron, alone of all our then servants proving faithful" (p. 56) and "I confess that the fidelity of Colonel Mason's boy "**Aaron**," . . . , at a time when every white man laughed at promises as something made to be broken, **has given me a kindly feeling of respect for negroes, and makes me hope that they will find an honorable "status" in the jumble of affairs in which we now live**" (p. 66) [emphasis

added]. As Aaron departed with Mason from California in the spring of 1849 but was not with him when Mason arrived at Jefferson Barracks in Saint Louis, it is possible that Aaron was freed at Washington, D.C. during Mason's return voyage to his new posting.

25. National Archives and Records Administration Microfilm Serial M617, *Returns from U.S. Military Posts, 1800-1916*, Fort Gibson (November 1835), Adjutant General's Office Special Order No. 116 of 1835.

26. *Commercial Advertiser* (New York City), February 5, 1836, p. 2; *Army and Navy Chronicle* 2(6):96, February 11, 1836. Margaret Hunter was born in Pennsylvania and grew up in Georgia. She was the daughter of Colonel John W. Hunter and his wife Margaret. Hunter was a noted Revolutionary War veteran and later Doorkeeper of the House of Representatives (*National Intelligencer*, December 14, 1841, p. 3).

27. Major R.B. Mason arrived in Washington, D.C. on March 11, 1836 and stayed at the home of Col. John W. Hunter, his father-in-law (*Army and Navy Chronicle* 2 (11):170, March 17, 1836). Although Hunter employed two free colored females, he himself owned no slaves (*U.S. Census for Washington City, District of Columbia, 1840*).

28. National Archives and Records Administration Microfilm Serial M617, *Returns from U.S. Military Posts, 1800-1916*, Jefferson Barracks (October 1849). Mason had arrived at Jefferson Barracks from his previous position as Military Governor of California via Washington, D.C.

29. *U.S. Census for St. Louis County, Missouri, 1850*, taken August 18, 1850. Nicodemus is probably the "Bermis" mentioned in the census as the free black male, "Servant to Gen^l M.," as no other free persons of color were bonded in Missouri by Mason.

30. Deed of emancipation for Nicodemus Johnson, Civil Record Book 20, pg. 68, Friday, June 7, 1850, St. Louis Circuit Court, Missouri State Archives-St. Louis. The record book entry described Nicodemus as "nearly six feet in height, of a dark complexion and about fifty two years of age." Freedman's bond for Nicodemus Johnson, Missouri History Museum, Dexter P. Tiffany Collection.

31. When R.B. Mason died, he left an estate worth \$32,229.06 according to the inventory and appraisal filed with the St.

Louis County Probate Court on May 1, 1852. Of this total, his slaves accounted for \$1,950 by appraisal.

32. *U.S. Slave Schedule for St. Louis County, Missouri, 1850*.

33. The slaves were listed as Joseph (31), Anne (30), Betsey (51), Matilda (30), and Matilda's children (Clement (13), William (9), and Nicodemus (3)). R.B. Mason's estate inventory and appraisal filed with the St. Louis County Probate Court on May 1, 1852.

34. St. Louis County, Missouri freedman's bond, April 16, 1861, Missouri History Museum, Dexter P. Tiffany Collection. A handwritten notation at the bottom of the bond described Demes [Demus] Johnson "6 ft 61 years old, very dark, long hair, high cheek bones. Porter & nurse"

35. *U.S. Census for St. Louis, Missouri, 1860*. Nicodemus Johnson was listed as Dennis [Demus] Johnson (61) a porter along with his children, Sina (37) and Grandson (27) a porter. Grandson may have been named after Grandison, a slave who had lived at Lexington Plantation during Nicodemus' youth.

36. St. Louis County, Missouri freedman's bond, April 16, 1861. Stephen D. Engle, 1999, *Don Carlos Buell: Most Promising of All*, University of North Carolina Press, p. 50.

Richard Barnes Mason probate file, St. Louis County, Missouri Probate Court.

37. *Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the District of Columbia Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1869*, National Archives Publication M1055, Roll 21: "Miscellaneous Reports and Lists." *Census of Dependent Freedpeople at Freedman's Village, c. 1865*, National Archives Microfilm Publication M1055, Roll 21.

38. *U.S. Census for St. Louis, Missouri, 1870*. Although \$8,000 in real estate and \$500 in personal estate are listed with Dennis [Demus] Johnson, these values, as occasionally happened in the enumeration, were likely meant for Mary McGrath, the individual in the listing above.

Acknowledgements:

Michael Everman, Archivist, Missouri State Archives-St. Louis; Jackie Penny, Rights and Reproduction Coordinator, American Antiquarian Society; and Lee Grady, Archivist, Wisconsin Historical Society are acknowledged for their assistance.

CODGER AND DAVY, MATRIARCH AND DESCENDANT, AT GUNSTON HALL

By Jerry Foster and Claudia Wendling,
archaeology volunteers

This article will not attempt to analyze the corrosive institution of slavery in the United States, but rather, for that, refer the reader to works of the imminent African-American historian, John Hope Franklin, and two of his works – *From Slavery to Freedom, a History of African Americans* and *Runaway Slaves, Rebels on the Plantation*.¹

AT THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, on August 22, 1787, George Mason, in a plea against slavery, said **“Every master of slaves is born a petty tyrant. They bring the judgment of heaven on a Country. As nations can not be rewarded or punished in the next world they must be in this.”**

Even the most benevolent and progressive masters were caught up in this pernicious system, but this article will focus, to the extent possible based on limited documentation, on two slaves – Codger and her descendant, Davy.

The primary sources of information regarding these slaves are the letters of George Graham and the memoirs and letters of his son, George Mason Graham, as compiled by the **latter’s grandson, Dr. George Mason Graham** Stafford. We begin with the matriarch, Codger.

CODGER

We know little about George Mason’s own slaves, and their daily lives at Gunston Hall. His son, John Mason, in his *Recollections*, talks about James: “They (wigs) were dressed & prepared by his man James, a mulattoe man, who attended on his person and traveled with him.”

John also mentions the Log-Town slave quarters northwest of Gunston Hall: **“Here lived several families of the slaves serving about the mansion house. Among them were my father’s body servant, James, a mulattoe man & his family, and those of several negro carpenters.”**

Sarah Brent, late in life, married George Mason April 11, 1780, as his second wife. She brought her slave Codger to Gunston Hall.⁴

Codger may have been Sarah Brent Mason’s counterpart, or partial counterpart, to her new

husband’s James, but we really don’t know what her function was without documentation. What we can probably assume, based on her long-time connection to Sarah Brent Mason, is **that Codger was a “house” slave, meaning that** she probably was employed using her talents in the immediate vicinity of Gunston Hall.

Codger was given to Sarah as a “little negress” by the latter’s Bermudian maternal grandmother shortly after Sarah’s birth in Bermuda circa 1731.⁵

Sarah Brent Mason’s father, George Brent, although from Virginia, married in Bermuda, but later returned to his estate in Stafford County - Woodstock. Codger, whose description seems to have been that of a child at **Sarah’s birth, and based on that assumption,** could have been as young as six or as old as twelve with a birth year circa 1719-1725.

Sarah, upon her marriage to George Mason, also brought her ten-year-old nephew, George Graham, with her, who would likely have known Codger in this family setting. He joined **classes with the tutor of Mason’s children,** David Constable, who was also teaching another ten-year-old, **George Mason’s youngest son, Thomas.** Thomas in later years would become **George Graham’s brother-in-law** as they married sisters.

A little over a year after George and Sarah’s marriage, a British movement up the Potomac River caused the evacuation of Gunston Hall. In a letter dated 31 May 1781, George Mason wrote to Pearson Chapman of Charles County, Maryland: **“The rapid march of the enemy obliges me to send as many of my effects, as I can readily remove, to Maryland, and I expect to follow immediately with Mrs. Mason and my daughters.”**⁶ Did Codger accompany her mistress? She was certainly resident at Gunston when this occurred.

After Revolutionary War victory, Washington **returned to Mount Vernon, and George Mason’s** letters to him almost always end with Mrs. Mason sending greetings to Martha Washington. Its possible Codger may have accompanied her mistress to Mount Vernon, or been present when Martha Washington called at Gunston Hall. Once again, we must speculate due to lack of documentation.

Codger would have waited on a fashionable mis-

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

dress: Sarah Brent Mason was the possible recipient, from an Amsterdam merchant in the summer of 1780, shortly **after her April wedding to George Mason, of a woman's black silk hat, a white silk hat, a pair of middle sized women's white kid gloves, and a pair of purple middle sized women's kid gloves ordered by George Mason.**⁷; she wore a Breguet gold watch selected at her request by George Mason, Jr. in Paris in 1782;⁸ And, she would hold a political fan, and wear new gloves, selected for her by John Mason in France in late 1790.⁹

But there was also illness at Gunston Hall in January **1784, with George Mason acting as physician to "my People," and treating the "flux" among them with concoctions that seemed to come out of a medieval herbalist: "Take of White Oak bark, 2 handfuls, flowering Ash and Pear tree roots, of each one handful, bark of Dogwood root half a handful, root of cros-wort, one handful, wild Indigo root half a handful put them all into one gallon of water; boil it gradually to half a gallon..." (If Codger was caught up in this, she clearly survived.)**¹⁰ A more scientific approach to illness occurred when George Mason, in a letter to son John 16 April 1791, stated he would have everyone inoculated for smallpox, likely including Codger.¹¹

Just prior to the "flux" outbreak, in late November or early December 1783, James Madison was an overnight guest.¹² Codger may have seen other prominent individuals who called as well: **George Washington's diary entry for 10 March 1785 states he stayed overnight at Gunston Hall, and left about noon the next day; Dr. Arthur Lee, Richard Henry Lee's younger brother, came to Gunston in the spring of 1787 to discuss the upcoming Constitutional Convention**¹³; George Mason, in a letter to James Monroe (20 January 1792) invites Monroe and his wife to **"spend a day or two" at Gunston on their return from Congress**¹⁴; and, a week before George Mason died, Thomas Jefferson visited Gunston Hall (30 September 1792).¹⁵

After George Mason's death, Sarah Brent Mason moved to her sister's home in Dumfries taking Codger with her.¹⁶ **At this juncture, Codger's history is murky until she moves to Kentucky.**

George Mason Graham stated all the slaves his father owned descended from Codger.¹⁷ Difficult to argue with his first-hand knowledge. These slaves, and those owned by his brothers, were sent by George Graham and his brothers to the vast acreage in Kentucky along the Ohio River known as **"Graham's Station," and Codger went there with one of the "early migrations" of the Graham slaves – her extended family.**¹⁸

In 1823, George Graham moved most of his slaves from Kentucky to his new plantation in Louisiana, but Codger, who was near 100 years of age or beyond, along with other slaves were left behind. She remained with a progressive slave owner, Chauncey Berkeley Shepard,

who freed a slave (Nancy Glaswell) with the following words: **"...do restore her to that freedom which is the natural gift and birthright of every human being."**¹⁹

Shepard described Codger late in life as having keen eyesight, she could see hogs grazing across the Ohio River, having a new set of teeth, and having long, wavy hair down her back. She died in 1825, near or beyond the century mark, after birth in Bermuda, time served in proximity to Founding Fathers, and a migration to Kentucky. Quite a lady.²⁰

DAVY

Elizabeth Mary Ann Barnes Mason, widow of George Mason, Jr, married George Graham 16 July 1803, and afterwards they resided at Lexington – the Mason estate adjacent to Gunston Hall. Their son, George Mason Graham, **was born there August 21, 1807. After his wife's death on May 28, 1814, after nearly 11 years of marriage, George Graham moved to Washington, D.C., where he was interim Secretary of War from October 16, 1816, to December 9, 1817. Shortly afterwards he was asked, in May, 1818, by Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, at the behest of President Monroe, to undertake an investigation of French "adventurers" who had landed at Galveston, Texas. This portion of Texas was an area claimed by the U.S. as being within the borders of the Louisiana Purchase.**²¹

His sole companion on this expedition was a slave, Davy, who, if George Mason Graham was correct, was a descendent of the matriarch, Codger. We know nothing of where Davy was born, nor the date of his birth. However, George Graham must have had a regular acquaintance-ship with Davy as a basis for selecting him as a lone companion on so important a trip for the federal government.

Arriving in Texas, George Graham met with Napoleon's former general François Antoine "Charles" Lallemand, who was spearheading the settlement, and also with the pirate, Jean Lafitte. An eyewitness described **Davy's owner, George Graham, as wearing knee breeches and boots trimmed with fur.**²²

On his return trip to Washington, George Graham and **Davy stopped at General Andrew Jackson's Tennessee home, The Hermitage, where Graham reported on his findings to Jackson, who was commander of forces for the U.S.'s southern division.**²³

George Graham arrived back in Washington in November, 1818.²⁴ At this juncture we lose track of Davy, who was probably sent to Graham Station, Kentucky. Davy does not appear in D.C. records, but there were **slaves attached to George Graham's household who do, and in one instance, on May 3, 1827, Graham hosted in his home the wedding of his female slave, Susan Smith, which was conducted by Reverend Hawley of St. John's Church at Lafayette Square.**²⁵ Clearly, George Graham, like Chauncey Shepard, attempted to be progressive.

As mentioned above, in 1823, George Graham moved his slaves, presumably including Davy, from Kentucky to

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

his plantation in Louisiana. George Graham died in 1830, and his son George Mason Graham inherited the plantation. But, we continue to hear nothing of Davy.

Later, in Virginia in 1840, Eleanor Mason – widow of George Mason VI half-brother of George Mason Graham – has inherited Gunston Hall as her dower right but is in financial difficulties. Gunston Hall is to be auctioned to the highest bidder, and that bidder was George Mason Graham, who came to the rescue of his sister-in-law, and gave her life-time tenancy.²⁶

Still later when the Mexican-American War broke out, George Mason Graham signed up as a volunteer in May, 1846 and continued for nine months according to his service pension in the National Archives. This is **when Davy's documentation reappears. He is George Mason Graham's highly-commended servant during the battle for Monterey, Mexico, as seen in Davy's obituary.**

Incredibly, we learn that the earlier Davy, servant to George Graham, and the later Davy, servant to his son, George Mason Graham, are one and the same individual.²⁷ Davy, after the Mexican-American war, was sent to Gunston Hall.²⁸

The first documentation of that is a letter written, September 4, 1848, by George Mason Graham in Louisiana to his sister-in-law, Eleanor Mason, residing at Gunston Hall in Virginia. He asks that when Davy goes to Washington, he stop by his half-sister **Jeannies' home in Georgetown.**²⁹

Shortly after this, Eleanor Mason leaves Virginia for a stay in Louisiana, and George Mason Graham, prior to her departure in a letter **dated October 6, 1848, suggests "... leaving Davy in charge of everything at Gunston, to go on and make another crop next year – I feel quite as proud as he does to hear of his fine crops – I am only afraid of his exposing himself too much to the inclemencies of the weather in his anxiety to save it – tell him his policy is to make other people work, and not to over-**

work himself."³⁰

In the Gunston Hall library's archive is a December 9, 1848, letter written by George Mason Graham in Louisiana, to an "unknown recipient in Occoquan, Virginia", but most likely to Joseph Janney, acting as Eleanor's agent while she is in Louisiana. Graham writes "at any time that my most excellent and trustworthy servant Davy may come to the Occoquan will you do me the favor to say to him that my wife, my child, and myself are all well – that my boy is really a fine fellow, lacking a few days of being six months old has already six teeth. That in the partition of the people here I lose Andrew, and get no one that replace him. That I lost Harry, but bought him and his family at a high price, being obliged to have him."

Finally, it is not until Davy's obituary - in the *Alexandria Gazette* May 24, 1853 – that we learn his full name:

Died on Saturday morning 21st. May, at Gunston Hall, DAVID SEALS. The deceased was a colored servant of George M. Graham, esq., now of Rapides, Louisiana, formerly of Virginia, of most courteous manners, and a character strongly marked by good sense, truth, honesty, and industry. He accompanied his master as body servant, in the Northern Army of Occupation in Mexico, and is remembered with interest by many officers who participated in the Campaigns which were crowned by the capture of Monterey. After the war he was sent back to Virginia, and duties entrusted to him which for several years he per-

formed with unsurpassed zeal and fidelity, in grateful appreciation of which, space is requested in the gazette, for the insertion of these few lines of commemoration.

Was Davy buried at Gunston Hall, and, if so, where? We know too little about Codger and Davy, as well as how they functioned in the running of Gunston Hall. And, these brief, fragmentary sketches – with so many gaps - **don't do justice to them. It's** comforting to think that, perhaps, their spirits still hover over Gunston keeping an eye on all of us who work there today, so many years and cultural changes later.

With many thanks to those who helped fill in the gaps: Charlene Bonnette, Head of Louisiana Collection, State Library of Louisiana; Cay Chamness of the Research Library at Kentucky Gateway Museum Center in Maysville, Kentucky; Sarah Huggins, Reference Librarian, Library of Virginia; Katrina Krempasky at Fairfax Circuit Court Historic Records; Elaine McHale in the Virginia Room at Fairfax County Public Library; Beverly Veness and Don Wilson of Ruth E. Lloyd Information Center for Genealogy and Local History (RELIC) at Prince William Public Library; Staff at Kiplinger Research Library, Historical Society of Washington, D.C.; Bob Ellis, Archivist at National Archives; staff at District of Columbia Archives.

Endnotes

¹ Franklin, John Hope and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *From Slavery to Freedom – A History of African Americans*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010). And Franklin, John Hope and Loren Schwening, *Runaway Slaves – Rebels on the Plantation*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

² Stafford, George Mason Graham, *General George Mason Graham of Tyrone Plantation and His*

(Continued from page 11)

People, (Baton Rouge: Claitor's Publishing Division, 1947).

³Dunn, Terry K., editor, *The Recollections of John Mason – George Mason's Son Remembers His Father and Life at Gunston Hall*. (Marshall, Virginia: EPM Publications, Inc., 2004), pp. 33, 69, 77.

⁴ Stafford, George Mason Graham, *op cit*, p. 124.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 124.

⁶ Rutland, Robert A., *The Papers of George Mason 1725-1792*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), pp. 688-689.

⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 666-667.

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 760.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 1219.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 791-793.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 1227.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 790.

¹³ *Ibid*, pp. 882-883.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 1256.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 1275-1276.

¹⁶ Stafford, *op cit*, p. 124.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 124.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 125.

¹⁹ Maysville, Kentucky Court Record. Deed Book 30, p. 417.

²⁰ Stafford, *op cit*, p. 125.

²¹ Adams, Charles Francis, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lilppincott & Co., 1875), Vol. 4, p. 97.

²² Stafford, *op cit*, p. 85.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 83.

²⁴ Adams, *op cit*, Vol. 4, p175.

²⁵ "Weddings at St. John's Church." *Weddings at St. John's Church*. N.p., n.d. Web. 09 July 2013. <<http://www.whitehousehistory.org/decatur-house/african-american-tour/content/Weddings-at-St-Johns-Church>>.

²⁶ Fairfax County, Virginia Court Record. Deed Book G3, 1841-42, p. 270.

²⁷ Stafford, *op cit*, p. 149.

²⁸ Davy's obituary.

²⁹ Louisiana State University Library. Special Collections. George Mason Graham Letters, 1848-1849.

³⁰ *Ibid*.

CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON MASON NECK GATEWAY KIOSK

Construction of a Mason Neck Gateway kiosk began in early November and will continue through early winter.

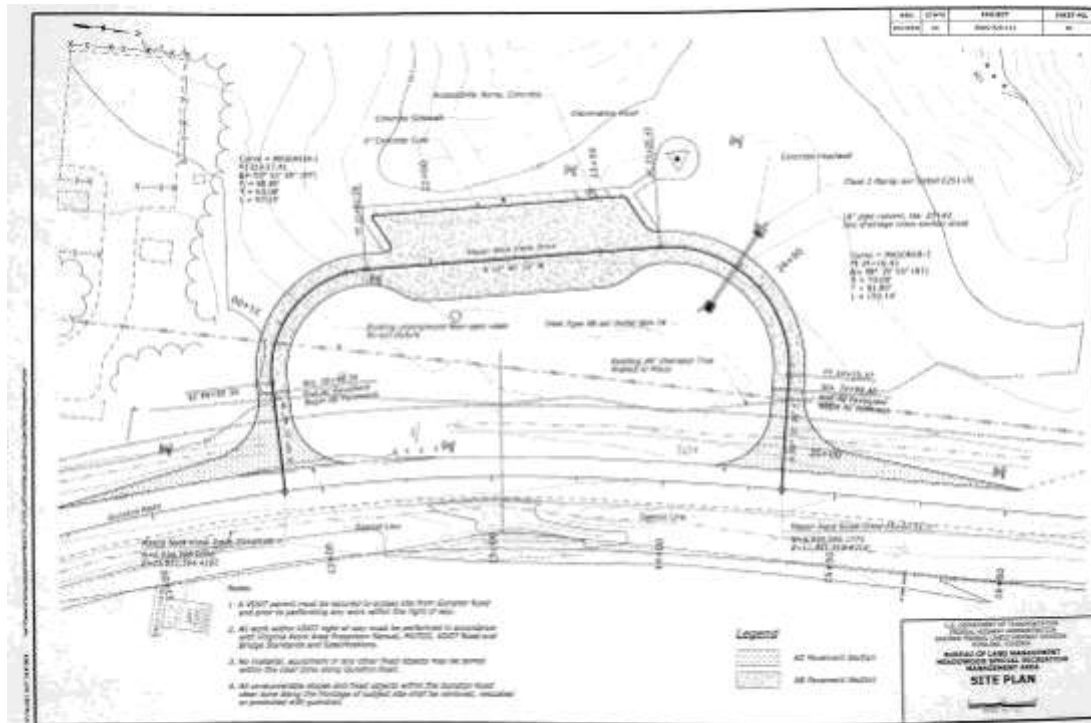
Planning for the project began nearly seven years ago. The kiosk will highlight the **area's history and the exceptional outdoor recreational opportunities** available on the Mason Neck peninsula.

The wayside exhibit is located on Gunston Road between the Verizon building and Gunston Elementary School. Part of a larger network, the kiosk will serve as a major trail-head for the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail and Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail.

A network of existing and planned trails will

enhance the visitor experience by facilitating access to Gunston Hall, Pohick Bay Regional Park, Mason Neck State Park, Elizabeth Hartwell Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge, and Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area.

Project features will include an access road, covered kiosk with in-



Above: The site plan for the Mason Neck Gateway Kiosk now being built on Gunston Road. The kiosk is designed to inform visitors about opportunities available on Mason Neck.

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

formation panels, lighting, and access to the South Branch Loop trail. The Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District will also install a rain garden for storm water drainage.

Many federal, state, and local government agencies collaborated on the project, as well as the Friends of Meadowood, who submitted the initial proposal for partial funding in 2006.

Project funds are from a variety of sources, including the Virginia Department of Transportation Enhancement Program, Bureau of Land Management, Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Office, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Virginia State Parks, Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, and Gunston Hall.

—from Bureau of Land Management Eastern States press release Oct. 31, 2013

Poultry-How to Choofe.

Just in time for the holidays, our 18th century food consultant, Amelia Simmons, an American orphan, is back to help us properly choofe our bird for the feasts to come. Enjoy!

The female in almost every instance, is preferable to the male, and peculiarly fo in the Peacock, which, tho' beautifully plumaged, is tough, hard, stringy, and untasted, and even indelicious--while the Pea Hen is exactly otherwife, and the queen of all birds.

So also in a degree, Turkey.

Hen Turkey, is higher and richer flavor'd, eafier fattened and plumper--they are no odds in market.

Dunghill Fowls, are from their frequent ufe, a tolerable proof of the former birds.

Chickens, of either kind are good, and the yellow leg'd the best, and their taste the sweetest.

Capons, if young are good, are known by fhort fpurs and fsmooth legs.

All birds are known, whether fresh killed or stale, by a tight vent in the former, and a loofe open vent if old
or stale; their fmell denotes their goodness; fpeckled rough legs denote age, while fsmooth legs and combs prove them young.

A Goofe, if young, the bill will be yellow, and will have but few hairs, the bones will crack eafily; but if old, the contrary, the bill will be red, and the pads still redder; the joints stiff and difficultly difjointed; if young, otherwife; choofe one not very fleshy on the breast, but fat in the rump.

Ducks, are fimilar to geefe.

Wild Ducks, have redder pads, and fsmaller than the tame ones, otherwife are like the goofe or tame duck, or to be chofen by the same rules.

Wood Cocks, ought to be thick, fat and flefh firm, the nofe dry, and throat clear.

Snipes, if young and fat, have full veins under the wing, and are fmall in the veins, otherwife like the Woodcock.

Partridges, if young, will have black bills, yellowifh legs; if old, the legs look bluifh; if old or stale, it may be perceived by fmelling at their mouths.

Pigeons, young, have light red legs, and the flesh of a colour, and prick eafly--old have red legs, blackifh in parts, more hairs, plumper and loofe vents--fo also of grey or green Plover, Blade Birds, Thraff, Lark, and wild Fowl in general.

From AMERICAN COOKERY, OR THE ART OF DRESSING VIANDS, FISH, POULTRY AND VEGETABLES, AND THE BEST MODES OF MAKING PASTES, PUFFS, PIES, TARTS, PUDDINGS, CUSTARDS AND PRESERVES, AND ALL KINDS OF CAKES, FROM THE IMPERIAL PLUMB TO PLAIN CAKE.

By Amelia Simmons, AN AMERICAN ORPHAN. PUBLISHED ACCORDING TO ACT OF CONGRESS. HARTFORD PRINTED BY HUDSON & GOODWIN, FOR THE AUTHOR. 1796

BIRDS OF GUNSTON HALL

by Janice Brose, Archaeology Volunteer¹

VISITORS COME TO GUNSTON HALL to see the mansion. They admire the grounds. They absorb the history. Only rarely do they notice the birds. They have no idea what they are missing.

In just a few hours this Mothers' Day, walking along the River Trail, across the Deer Park, and around the mansion, I saw or heard 46 different bird species. Some of them live here year round; others breed nearby or pass through during migration.

This is hardly a new phenomenon. For centuries, large numbers and varieties of birds have been seen in Northern Virginia. Colonial Americans not only watched and admired them, but found uses for them.

In 18th century Williamsburg, for example, residents often placed wide-mouthed earthenware bottles, approximately 8 ½ inches long near the open windows of their homes. The idea was to attract insect-eating birds, such as Tree Swallows, that like to nest in cavities such as woodpecker holes and bird houses. The birds, in effect, acted as the forerunner of modern-day window screens.

In the 1960s, archaeologists discovered a bird bottle while excavating the James Geddy House yard in Colonial Williamsburg, and they are now available as collector's items on the Colonial Williamsburg Market place website.² I have seen Tree Swallows nesting in the Bluebird box on the right side of the drive approaching Gunston Hall.

George Mason apparently kept caged Northern Mockingbirds at Gunston Hall. In 1789 he wrote to his son John, who at the time was in France,

We have had a Mocking-Bird for you, ever since last Summer; which is quite tame and domestic; and intended to send it out this Spring; but it proves a Female, and they seldom sing; this hardly attempts a single Note; and therefore we shall not send it abroad, to disgrace it's native Country. I wou'd turn it out of the Cage, but I am afraid it's liberty, after such a long Confinement, wou'd only make the poor thing a Prey to the first Hawk, that came in it's Way.³

Thomas Jefferson also kept several caged Northern Mockingbirds at his home at Monticello. Jefferson's favorite and constant companion around the house was named Dick, a bird said to have been both affectionate and intelligent.⁴

Dick was not unique, at least in his intelligence. By one estimate, Northern Mockingbirds can sing up to 200 different songs.⁵ According to birding expert Pete Dunne, Northern Mockingbirds like to sit high and con-

spicuously as they "integrate other sounds into the ensemble, sounds including car horns, door chimes, and snatches of popular songs."⁶



The Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) males and females are marked alike, so George Mason's raising of a non-singing female is understandable. Photo by the author.

Jefferson probably did not hear Dick imitating car horns, but he may well have recognized bits of current tunes. Unfortunately, in the 19th Century so many Northern Mockingbirds were kept as caged birds that they nearly disappeared from the wild in the eastern United States.⁷ Still, one or two can usually be seen on or near the Gunston Hall mansion, perched on the chimneys, the roof, or the tops of trees as they sing their varied songs.

The list of bird species I observed around Gunston Hall bears a distinct resemblance – but also a remarkable difference – to a list that was compiled 300 years ago by Mark Catesby, considered by some to be "the founder of ornithology."⁸

Catesby, an English artist and naturalist, came to Williamsburg in 1712 to visit his married sister. Between then and 1719, and again from 1722 to 1725, Catesby traveled the southeastern colonies and islands with the goal of painting every bird he saw.

He eventually published his two volume work, *Natural History of Carolina, Florida and the Bahama Islands*, which included 220 hand-colored plates. Regrettably for Catesby, his work was printed before Carolus Linnaeus published his *System Naturae* in 1758, which established the nomenclature for classifying organisms that we still use today. Catesby, of course, could not have followed Linnaeus's system, and as a result his accomplishment is largely forgotten.⁹ Jefferson, however, did see Catesby's list of birds, and came up with his own list of Virginia birds in 1787.

(Continued on page 15)

One expert dismisses Jefferson’s list as having “little if any importance,” since it is essentially Catesby’s list with some minor additions.¹⁰

Below are the 46 species on my own Gunston Hall bird list, together with the counterparts on Catesby’s list from the early 1700s.¹¹ Exactly half appear in both columns, although some have different names.



The Tree Swallow (Tachycineta bicolor) is one of the many bird residents of Gunston Hall. Unlike the Northern Mockingbird which is a year-round tenant, tree swallows spend the winter in warmer climates such as the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central America. Photo by the author.



Sometimes, just coming to work at Gunston Hall is a challenge because of birds. Education manager Lacey Villiva snapped this portrait of a bird of prey blocking the driveway one August morning.

Endnotes:

¹ I would like to thank my friend and fellow archaeology volunteer Claudia Wendling for suggesting this article and providing helpful guidance and my husband Steve for editing.

(Continued on page 16)

GUNSTON HALL LIST	CATESBY’S LIST
Canada Goose	Canada Goose
Wood Duck	Summer Duck
Great Blue Heron	
Black Vulture	
Turkey Vulture	Turkey Buzzard
Bald Eagle	Bald Eagle
Red-shouldered Hawk	
Mourning Dove	Turtle of Carolina
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Cuckow of Carolina
Chimney Swift	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Red-bellied Woodpecker
Pileated Woodpecker	
Eastern Wood-Pee-wee	Little brown Fly-catcher
Acadian Flycatcher	
Great Crested Flycatcher	Crested Fly-catcher
Red-eyed Vireo	Red ey’d Fly-catcher
Blue Jay	Blew Jay
American Crow	
Tree Swallow	
Barn Swallow	
Carolina Chickadee	
Tufted Titmouse	Crested Titmouse
White-breasted Nuthatch	Nuthatch
Carolina Wren	
Eastern Bluebird	Blew Bird
Wood Thrush	
American Robin	American Robin
Gray Catbird	
Northern Mockingbird	Mock-bird
Brown Thrasher	Fox Coloured Thrush
European Starling	
Ovenbird	
Yellow-rumped Warbler	Yellow-rump
Northern Parula	Finch-creeper
Blackpoll Warbler	
Black-throated Green Warbler	
Black-throated Blue Warbler	
White-throated Sparrow	
Chipping Sparrow	
Scarlet Tanager	
Northern Cardinal	Red Bird
Indigo Bunting	Blew Linnet
Brown-headed Cowbird	Cowpen Bird
Baltimore Oriole	
House Finch	
American Goldfinch	American Goldfinch

(Continued from page 15)

² Marcia Davis, "Bird Bottles Attract Insect Eaters," <http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2009/apr/05>. Web search 1 June 2013.

³ www.gunstonhall.org/mansion/room_use_study/decoration.html. Web search 16 June 2013.

⁴ <http://www.monticello.org/site/research-andcollections/mockingbird>. Web search 1 June 2013.

⁵ Donald E. Kroodsma, "Vocal Behavior" (ch. 7, p.81), in *Cornell Lab of Ornithology Handbook of Bird Biology* (2d ed.) (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

⁶ Pete Dunne, *Pete Dunne's Essential Field Companion Guide* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2006), p. 507-508.

⁷ http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Northern_Mockingbird/lifehistory (Cornell Lab of Ornithology). Web search 1 June 2013.

⁸ Sandy Padulka, Marie Eckhardt and Daniel Otis (ch. H, p.23), in *Cornell Lab of Ornithology Handbook*.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Alan Feduccia, ed., *Catesby's Birds of Colonial America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), p. 10.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-13.

CHESAPEAKE BOOK INVENTORY DATABASE By Mark Whatford, librarian/archivist

Goal: *To enter into a logically retrievable database all books listed in the inventories collected and transcribed for the Gunston Hall Room Use Study/Probate Inventory.*

Barbara and Dick Farner have been working on a Chesapeake Book Inventory Database to supplement our Probate Inventory Database, available through our website and online at GMU. Of the 350 probate inventories from the Chesapeake area dating from 1742 to 1810, 150 include books by title. Within in those 150 inventories, 4,437 books, magazines and pamphlets, either as groups or by title, are listed. The database consists of each printed matter entry from those identified 150 inventories comprising 4,437 records.

An attempt has been made to identify each book, by full title and author along with the modern source used for identification. At present all but 187 titles have been identified.

The process of identifying book titles was hampered by unique spelling, handwriting, apparent mishearing, regional accents, and abbreviations obvious only to the inventory taker. As a result, many of the titles contain in the note field the word "Likely" to identify those that are most likely the title listed in the inventory. The date of the publication and the frequency of publication, as well as the availability in the Founding Fathers Library Consortium collections, helped to identify many books. A field has been added to identify the 18th century catalog or newspaper where a book has been found. In some cases, this is the only place where the title is found.

If all goes as planned, the Probate database will be updated with this new information in January 2014.

GH TO BE DESTINATION FOR GMU

Gunston Hall will be a featured destination for George Mason University alumni during the month of December.

In collaboration with GMU, we will be offering a 50% discount on an adult admission to GMU alumni and any other adults in a party including one GMU alumni. We will also be offering a 10% discount on purchases in the Museum Shop to these individuals or groups.

This promotion is coordinated by the GMU Alumni Office. This office has created an online community for GMU alumni. To benefit from this promotion, the alum will have to enter this online community and download/print a "validation badge" to present upon arrival at Gunston Hall and in the Shop.

According to Executive Director Scott Stroh "I am excited about this collaboration for several reasons. First, it further enhances our growing partnership with GMU and their alumni. Second, alumni entering the online community are proactively making a decision to do so and therefore more engaged and more likely to respond favorably to the promotion, and, by extension, visit Gunston Hall."

He went on to say, "Since getting people on site is critical to developing a relationship with our community and building support, this targeted approach is strategic and of value. Lastly, this promotion will generate increased visitation and retail sales, resulting in more income, which is also good."

Gunston Hall has agreed to offer the same promotion during GMU's homecoming weekend, Feb.14-16.

PUBLIC NOTICE: UPCOMING EVENTS

THANKSGIVING DAY- THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28- MANSION & MUSEUM CLOSED

Offices are closed from noon on Wednesday, November 27 through Friday, November 29

PLANTATION CHRISTMAS -SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2:00-7:00 P.M.

Let Christmas Past become part of your Christmas Present. Ride in a horse-drawn carriage, sip warm cider by the fire, and sample period food prepared in the hearth kitchen. Return to the 18th-century as costumed characters greet you in the house and throughout the grounds. Visit with Santa! \$15 adults \$5 children.

WREATH LAYING AND LECTURE PRESENTED BY THE SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS, VIRGINIA CHAPTER-SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1:30 P.M.

The Society of Professional Journalists' Virginia chapter will hold an afternoon of activities commemorating patriot George Mason's birthday Dec. 14 at Gunston Hall.

A wreath-laying ceremony at Mason's grave at 1:30 p.m. will be followed by a guided tour of the mansion and a talk on "Threats to Press Freedom Today" by Paul Fletcher, SPJ's national secretary-treasurer and publisher-editor of Virginia Lawyers Weekly. Holiday-themed refreshments will close out the celebration. Open to the public. Suggested Contribution.

BREAKFAST WITH ST. NICK-SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 10 A.M.-1 P.M.



Children and their adult companions enjoy a buffet breakfast and a visit with St. Nick. Visit our gift shop for special holiday items. Buffet Breakfast provided by Kitchen Gourmet & Co. featuring scrambled eggs, bacon, Belgian waffle sticks, mini pancakes, sausages, juices, coffee & tea and other breakfast treats. \$30 for a child and adult companion, \$20 adults, \$15 children. Reservations Required, seating is limited. Mansion tour included.

Call 703-550-9220 or click [here](#) for reservations.

CHRISTMAS DAY -Wednesday, December 25 -MANSION & MUSEUM CLOSED

Offices are closed Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

NEW YEAR'S DAY -Wednesday, January 1-MANSION, OFFICES & MUSEUM CLOSED



Administration of the Oath of Allegiance by Sarah Taylor of the USCIS



New citizens reciting the Oath of Allegiance



Congratulatory remarks by Ford Bell, President of the American Alliance of Museums



Keynote address by David K. Mineta from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy



Closing remarks by Scott Stroh, Executive Director, Gunston Hall



Sarah Taylor congratulates one of America's newest citizens



One of the youngest new citizens is welcomed by Elizabeth Nottingham, President of NSCDA-DC



A new citizen proudly displays her certificate of citizenship



The Nation Anthem & celebratory music performed by George Mason University School of Music

Special Citizenship Ceremony at Gunston Hall September 14, 2013
Organized jointly by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services and Gunston Hall
Sponsored by the Washington, D.C. Society of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America



Refreshments donated by Alexandria Cupcake



Presentation of Colors by the Civil Air Patrol