

Manassas Journal

August 1904
fragment

Journal Aug 1904

PRINCE WILLIAM IN COLONIAL DAYS.

A VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO OUR LOCAL HISTORY.

THE LONG VANISHED TOWN OF COLCHESTER ON THE OCCOQUAN RIVER.

By W. H. SNOWDEN.

[CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK.]

the few years of the troubles with the French and Indians the prosperity of Colchester was slow, but the prosperity came again with the return of peace. The colonies of settlement along the Shenandoah and the mountains beyond, now secure in their possessions and pursuits were augmented by large accessions of German and other immigrants; and the overland trade by the great roads leading to the mountains, Vestal and Ashby's gaps were pushed more than ever before. The commerce came and went with their cargoes, and the town expanded and grew into importance as a port of entry and trading center. The "General Assembly" in 1722 authorized the court of Fairfax to erect, build and completely furnish so many strong, close substantial houses as shall be sufficient to contain the tobacco coming to Colchester for inspection."

Colchester was the great highway or "fast road" from Baltimore to Frederickburg and other important points in the southern tidewater region, and in an old advertisement giving the details of stage coach travel at the beginning of the present century:

Stage Line From Baltimore to Richmond.—The traveling public is informed that stages leave Baltimore daily at 10 a. m. Arrive at Colchester in Virginia the same evening before dark, 66 miles. Leave Colchester 3 a. m., arrive at White Chimneys, Hanover county, the same dark, 70 miles. Leave White Chimneys, 3 a. m., and arrive at Richmond by 10 a. m. 30 miles. Returning leave Richmond 8 a. m., arrive at Bowling Green same evening—47 miles. Leave Bowling Green 3 a. m. and arrive at Alexandria by dark—72 miles. Leave Alexandria at 3 a. m. and arrive at Baltimore by 2 p. m."

Nathaniel Twining was, by an act of the general assembly, granted the sole and exclusive right of conveyance of passengers between Alexandria and Colchester, for each passenger five pence and five pence for every pound of baggage exceeding 14 pounds conveyed in stage coach. In 1791 Hoomee was granted the exclusive right for the same service at 8 pence per passenger, and 150 pounds for 150 pounds of baggage. Twining in one of his diaries thus describes some of his experiences at the ferry. "In attempting to cross the Occoquan, April, 1791, with the person who stood before me, the leaders got overboard, but was in swimming water. I was rescued from the shore. With much difficulty he escaped drowning before he was disengaged. His struggling threw the others in such a manner that they were another in quick succession got overboard, harnessed as they were, and with the

as having "semi-elliptical arches scarce inferior to those of princely London." This was erected by Thomas Mason in 1795. Its building was authorized by the general assembly. In a letter written by George Mason dated 1791, he makes mention of a ship going out from the port laden with tobacco and another lying at the warehouse loading with the same commodity. Among other industries of the place were extensive iron works, a furnace and a forge. The iron was made from a combination of surface or bog ore found near Colchester and magnetic or mountain ore brought down in scows from the Virginia shore near the Great Falls of the Potomac. Some of the cannon and round shot used in the battles of the revolution were cast there. Burnaby in his description of the place says there were two flour mills and a saw mill. This was in 1759. The Hendersons and Cockburns were prominent merchants of the town and sent goods they had imported by coasting vessel to New York and Philadelphia and the rising towns of the South, which appears by old ledgers still preserved. Many of their commodities were sent by wagons to the frontier settlements as far as the Shenandoah Valley and beyond through the different gaps. The names of other merchants of Colchester that we have met with in our researches are Grayson, Ross, Chapin Mitchell, Linton, Barnes & Ridgate, Lindsay, Gurden, Jenifer & Hooe Hartshorn & Co., Ferguson & Gibson, Bayley & Stone, Thompson & Washington, Stuart & Muschett, Mick & Ward, Ellicott, Campbell & Wheeler, McCrea & Co., Harrison, Walker, Hoskins, Skelton, Mason, Carson, Willet, McPherson and Belt.

The star of Colchester which dawned so promisingly had reached its zenith and was beginning to wane before 1800. Like many another town such as Jamestown and Dumfries in Virginia, and St. Marys and Joppa and Queen Anne and Charlestown in Maryland for all of which their projectors doubtless forecasted "old walls and happy days," it was compelled to yield to the shapings of new conditions of trade and traffic, and travel born of the progress of invention and discovery until its glory passed away forever. The yield of tobacco from the surrounding lands had greatly diminished and Alexandria, on the main river, but a few miles above with a situation far better for commerce, though but a few years older, diverted its business and completely overshadowed its growth and existence.

In 1809 a great flood swept away the "grand bridge with its semi-elliptical arches" and filled up the deep channel of the stream so that its navigation was difficult and foreign vessels came no more for cargoes to its docks. The iron works, tanneries, cooperies and

Washington club will encamp at Oc-
 tober week or ten days. Among
 the principal of the Washington
 club and others.
 Richmond, Fredericksburg, and
 a large company is fencing in
 their track. They recently
 a new bridge across the road in
 county.

EVERGREEN.

Our Reporter in Society.

Mr. Taylor is visiting friends in
 county.
 H. Hope of Nokesville, this
 county in town Monday.
 V. King of Washington visited
 Nash here on Monday.
 F. Leachman of near Bristow,
 county was in town Tuesday.
 W. Wenrich has returned from
 a visit to Hagerstown, Md.
 F. Lynn spent Saturday and
 with the family of Mr. Geo. F.
 Camper of Orange, Va., is
 with his brother, Mr. Henry
 H. Brown, who resides near
 this county, was in town on
 speaks of Dumfries is vis-
 itor in law, Mrs. G. Raymond
 and Averel of Orange, Va., is
 a night agent at Camp No. 1,
 and children of Hagers-
 town is visiting Mrs. Walter S.
 Janney, a prominent mer-
 chant here, this county, was in
 county.
 W. Wyckoff of Fairfax, Va.,
 with parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. W.
 here on Sunday.
 A. Hynson and her daughter,
 here, have returned from an
 visit to the South.
 S. Williams of Mississippi,
 John Sharp Williams, is here
 with Mrs. J. B. T. Thornton.
 and Englar of Baltimore.
 have been visiting Miss Rena
 returned to their home last
 Edward Brown of Vienna
 is a flying visit during the
 with Anna Akers accompanied
 Prince of Washington, D.
 returned from a pleasant visit to
 Mrs. Walter M. Baker.
 R. I.
 of Hillsboro, Md., and
 of Baltimore, Md., visited
 Mr. J. A. Morgan, here
 county.
 Lynchburg, travelling
 on the Southern Railway,
 of Washington, trav-
 eling on the Southern and Mr.
 inspector for the B. & O.
 stopping at the home of
 here in this place.

Hundred Dollars Reward.

wards are offered for
 shall convict and punish
 any violator of the
 of Virginia, or the U. S.
 of any regulation or
 subject of the U. S.
 town of Manassas: \$25
 and \$15 for subse-
 This applies to such
 on or after August 19,
 Area of Manœuvres, or
 of the town of
 any person to assist the
 authorities in enforcing the

S. KANN'S
 8th ST. & PA.
 THE BUSY C
WASHINGTON

**TIMELY BARGAIN
 OUT-OF-TOWN B**

Come to Washington for
 Besides choosing from big as
 apparel you also save money.
 women appreciate.



cuff, the other a plain fly-front coat style

WALKING SK

A lot of pure Irish Linen Skirts, na
 with kilts or trimmed with straps at the
 Waist sizes 22 to 28. Reduced from
 to
 Brilliantine Skirts, black only, with
 hem. Reduced from \$8.95 and \$4.98 to
 White Butchers' Linen Skirts made
 4-inch hem; lengths 89 to 42-inches;
 inches. Reduced from \$4.00 to

Remember our ma
 with its corps of experience
 ready to serve you. Purcha
 are sent transportation char
 dents of Maryland, Virginia

carriage escaped - being dragged from them, as the whole of it happened swimming water and at a distance from the shore, providentially, indeed miraculously, by the exertions of persons who went off in boats and jumped into the river as soon as the batteau was forced into wading water. No passage was sustained by the horses, carriage or harness." The first President had just started out that morning from Mount Vernon, eight miles above, on a friendly tour, the first after the Revolution, through the States of the North. It was not a very auspicious beginning, but as he was not a superstitious man he kept on, according to the story, a few extracts of which we will show his ways of traveling:

"I proceeded on to Dumfries where I arrived after which I visited and drank tea with my niece, Mrs. Thomas Lee, on the 5th. Set out about 6 o'clock; breakfasted at Stafford Courthouse and lodged at my sister Lewis's in Fredericksburg."

"On Saturday 9th, dined at an entertainment given by the citizens of the town. He arrived and answered an address from the corporation. Sunday, 19th, left Fredericksburg about 6 o'clock; myself, Major Jackson and one servant breakfasted at Gen. Spotswood's - the rest of my servants continued on to Todd's ordinaries where they also breakfasted. Lined at Bowling Green, and lodged at Kinnor's tavern 14 miles farther, in all 50 miles."

A wide contrast we perceive between the primitive and cumbrous way of a chief magistrate making his official rounds among his people with coach and four a century ago and the rapid luxurious ways of transit which he may have at his disposal in our day and generation.

Two years before this experience Washington had crossed the Occoquan by the same ferry with his ragged and battered army, going down to checkmate the movements of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown. General Lafayette also passed down the same way. The troops of both commands were quartered at Winchester for several days to recruit for the long march before them, and ample commissary supplies were laid in from the stores and mills of the neighborhood.

The county lieutenants had been instructed by Washington, "to order out the local militia to repair the roads through which the troops were to march, and make them passable for wagons, as the heavy trains of the American forces, consisting of Infantry, artillery and cavalry and the beef cattle were all to take the route," and Washington also wrote to prominent citizens of the different neighborhoods through which the troops were to pass "as a pleasing attention" to assist the French general Lafayette, Rochambeau, Chastellain and others with their carriages to the point.

George Mason of Gunston landed on the Occoquan ferry after the ferries were abolished for some years and he paid for its maintenance and operation two thousand pounds of tobacco annually. Davis, the traveler, reported, speaks of a "grand bridge" which had supplanted the ferry

the inhabitants with occupations gone migrated to new homes then opening everywhere in the great West and the Alleghanies, and one by one the warehouses, stores and ordinaries ceased their traffic and were closed. Numbers of those who still remained fell victims it is related of an epidemic of "pleurisy."

As the years passed new highways were opened diverting the tide of travel. In 1815 a drunken woman accidentally set fire on a windy day to some tenements. The flames rapidly spreading left nearly every building of the ill-fated town in ruins. Thus the work of destruction by flood and pestilence and fire was complete. The stones, bricks and other valuable materials of these ruins served afterwards to build up farm house on neighboring lands. The plough-share long since turned up their foundations and the very streets on which they stood. Of all the tenements but two or three are now remaining. These stand ghost-like and forlorn in their loneliness, mute but eloquent witnesses of a century and more of passing strange events. One of these buildings is the old hostelry, known as the "Arms of Fairfax." It shows all over it the marks of age but it is quite well preserved considering the many destructive mutations which it has survived. Under its roof sheltered from time to time many of the foremost actors in the great struggle which led to our national independence. In its rooms were held many meetings of the Virginia patriots in those stirring days to consider the grave issues born of the oppressive measures of the British parliament. In the palmy days of the town when the tide of travel surged by its door over the old "Kings Highway" from Williamsburg up over the Occoquan and on through the estate of Mount Vernon to Alexandria and beyond to the Blue Ridge mountains it was a hostelry of great repute near and afar. It was the inn where the red and yellow lumbering stage coach always stopped with its wayfarers. It was the place where the politicians of the surrounding neighborhood came to fix up their slates for the coming elections and where the loungers did congregate to get the "freshest advices" dropped by the passing travelers. The old weather beaten structure on account of interesting historic associations surely deserves that timely care of some of our patriotic societies which might make possible its yet long continuance as a land mark of the vanished town.

[CONTINUED NEXT WEEK]

Lynchburg Horse Show October 11-14, 1904.

Southern Railway will sell round trip tickets to Lynchburg, Va., from points in Va., including Washington, D. C., at one fare plus fifty cents admission fee, October 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14, final return limit Oct. 16, 1904.

Reunion Confederate Veterans, Lynchburg, Va., Sept. 14-16, 1904.

Southern Railway will sell round trip tickets to Lynchburg Sept. 12-14 from all points in Virginia rate of one fare plus twenty-five cents, limit Sept 18, 1904. See ticket agents for full information

Soldiers Win.

Interesting game of base ball was played at Round's ball field between U. S. Army Corps, composed of Co. E. and Co. F. A marvelous game, allowing for hits. Hannon has pitched for the Nashville team in the league two years ago, and will play in his old time form. He is for the Manassas team when they play the strong team from Culpeper in the future.

Out of the soldiers' team, was the score of the team excepting, 8 runs, 10 hits, 10 errors. The total of the Manassas, 7; Engineers 17. The Manassas team, was the home team, getting two runs, 10 hits made.

Seeking Trouble.

HAVEN CONN., Aug. 20.—A company of sixty-eight men of the 6888 Central Postal Directory, a detachment of colored soldiers, is being sent to participate in the maneuvers at Camp Meade next month, and despite the fact that his men will be boycotted by the white militiamen, Captain James H. Hargett, said today that he would not show proper respect for his soldiers. "If I am to take my turn as officer," he added "I shall see that my soldiers are obeyed by men of color as well as by my own." "I shall come home alive," said Hargett. "Ross is a mulatto."

Capt. Seiecman Exonerated.

Investigation a few days ago at the Custom House by the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, resulted in the exoneration of Capt. J. Seiecman and crew in the case of the sinking of Thomas Murray, coasting off the Virginia coast a few weeks ago about two miles from the shore. The steamer E. J. Seiecman, commanded by Capt. Seiecman, it is remembered, accidentally sank the steamer containing Murray and other men.—Alexandria

The Virginia Quartette

AT NICOL'S HALL

Friday Night, Aug. 26

(EVENING NIGHT ONLY)

The quartette is composed of select

- Miss Belle Brown.
- Miss H. Clows.
- Miss H. Clows.
- Miss Lohman.
- Miss Mr. Kirk Matthews.

Tickets on sale at Shannon's

Pasturage!

100 Acres, two miles from town, will furnish pasturage for 100 head of cattle in an enviable area. For particulars apply to GEORGE C. ROUND.

ODD THINGS NOT FOUND

BERRY & WHITE

Diamonds, Watches Stationery, Etc.

Sole Agents for the Tiffany District of Columbia

Also a full line of plated ware consisting of Dishes, Vegetable Dishes, Bread Trays, Cakes, etc. ware, in fact all the requisites for table use.

Hall Clocks, French Clocks, and Travelling Clocks, specially made for convenience and safety.

Crest work, Engraving, Stamping and special attention paid to invitations of all kinds.

Designing and remodelling old jewelry.

Odd and exclusive designs in jewelry and

Ask to see the "Brown Betty Teapot,"

Repair work of all kinds. Nothing too good or too new pieces made to order. Old gold and

Mail orders receive our personal attention packages sent upon request.

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PHONE 10

Any old dead
float, but it
live ones to
stream.

SENATOR

has won its way

Coal and

WHITE AND RED ASH, SHAMOK

FROM THE FAMOUS MINES OF THE STATE

PURE COAL, WELL SCREENED,

CUMBERLAND AND

FINE, DAIRY, TABLE, G. A. AND

AND AMERICAN, SHIPPED

WORKS OR FROM S

ORDERS SOLICITED.

J. R. ZIMMERMAN

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GOVERNOR MONTAGUE
THE PRINCIPAL SPEAKER.

The Unveiling of Groveton Monument.

Monday next, Aug. 30, will be the forty anniversary of the second battle of Bull Run, and on that day, at the Groveton Cemetery, will be unveiled a monument erected to the Confederate soldiers who were killed in the first and second battles of Bull Run.

Governor Montague has promised to be present and deliver an address. Mr. Swanson, Mr. Cade and several other distinguished speakers have accepted an invitation to be present.

The Bull Run Chapter, U. D. C., gives a cordial invitation to all Confederate veterans, the Manassas and 8th Regiments and all who are in sympathy

and co operation with us to be present on this occasion and help us to make the day a success.

Verily, soldiers do possess our land at the present time. They are on all sides and while we give them, the defenders of our land, a hearty welcome and are glad to have their bright boyish faces around us, let us of the Southland turn aside from the hurly burly that prevails and give this one day to the memory of the gallant boys who died almost half a century ago to defend her, and whose graves have a remembrance so long.

Crosses of Honor will be conferred upon fifteen veterans. Come, bring full baskets and spend a day neath the shade of the trees.

X.

MEETING AT

Journal.

OUR MOT
For Reade

GENERAL PROGRAMME

THE MOVEMENT OF THE "TWO ARMIES."



PROMOTED THE MANŒUVRES.

LIEUT. CLARKSON. CAPT. J. E. HERRELL. LIEUT. GEO. C. ROUND.

and the time will regard to offensive move