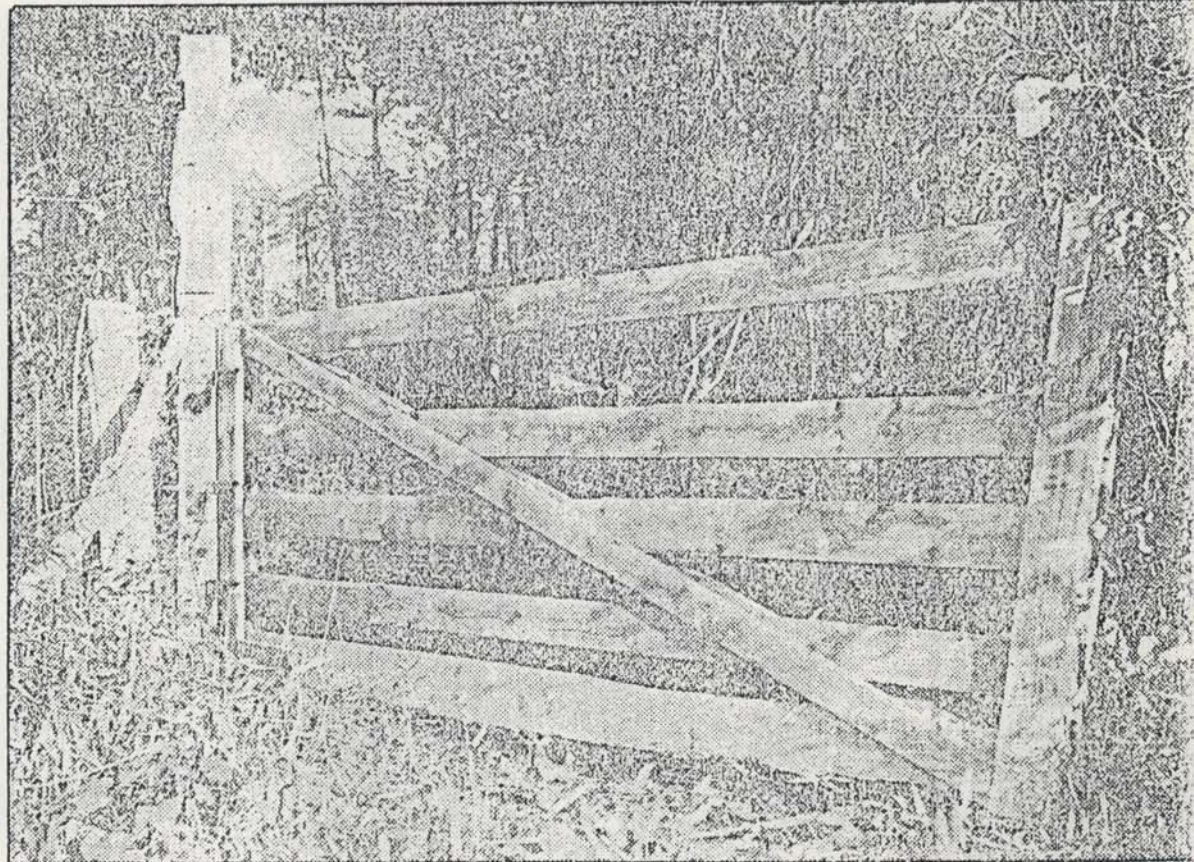


THE RAMBLER WRITES OF EARLY LIFE OF VIRGINIA'S LIGHTHORSE HARRY LEE

ending of Home
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THE ENTRANCE TO LEESYLVANIA. ROAD GUARDED BY THIS GATE IS ABANDONED.

you should stand on a wooded hill on Freestone point, where Light Horse Harry Lee was born, certain reflections would come to us as they came to the Rambler. On the top of the old trees, which per- that gallant soldier knew when as a boy, have been felled, and the tops of saplings grow around the trees and from the roots of the cot- trees. Younger oaks, hickories and birches have lifted their tops and their branches above the earth which was shaded by the older trees. A variety of many kinds are growing here. Honeysuckle, jetted over with its shining black shot-size berries, has woven a net that though green shows in places that frost is touching it with claret colors. Myrtle, clinging against the advance of the honeysuckle is periwinkle, whose leaves are also myrtle, and this has also its own vine over the ground, and in the garden of the Lees. It is, the Rambler said in a previous issue, a lone and somber spot. The Potomac, fourteen miles west, is Mount Vernon, and a line from the site of the home of Lee and Lucy Grymes—the fa- mother of Light Horse Harry Lee—Mount Vernon passes through or a few yards of the home of Lee and Mason, which is called Gun- Hall, and now maintained in the state by Mr. and Mrs. Louis Gunston Hall is seven and a miles above the forsaken site of Lee home and about five miles from the river from the home of Gunston.

onies and of considerable influence in modifying the draft of the United States Constitution, that it might stand a chance of ratification by the requisite number of sovereign states! Though he did not mold it to his own liking, refused to sign the document at Philadelphia and argued at Richmond against its ratification by Virginia, yet without the states' rights arguments of Mason and men of his bent at Philadelphia the ardent and extreme federalists would have per- haps submitted to the states a consti- tution they would not ratify. Then, there was Light Horse Harry Lee, who was born and for some time lived within a trifling distance in miles of the homes of the great men named. He was an efficient revolutionary sol- dier whom Gen. Washington for good and sentimental reasons praised, to whom he gave a number of prefer- ments and whose influence in the Vir- ginia constitutional convention was important in securing ratification of the Constitution by that state. In that convention Lee and Mason were on opposite sides of the grave question, and the convention was so nearly balanced between ratification or rejection that in an assembly of 168 delegates ratification was voted by a majority of only ten. Lee's in- fluence weighed a good deal and but for it it is quite possible that the side

tion," but that was merely a rallying cry and that rallying cry has come down through the generations with such persistency that Americans have come to think it was taxation that made our ancestors rebellious. It was the arrogance and stupidity of the English government under George III in refusing to recognize the political equality of English sub- jects in England and English sub- jects in the colonies that inflamed the anger of so many of our radical an- cestors. Taxation may have been at the root of the evil, but we lodged a great many other complaints against the English crown. The trouble had been brewing for a hundred years in the disputes between royal govern- ors and the popular assemblies of the colonies. Here follows a brief state- ment of grievances as set forth by an association of "his majesty's most loyal subjects, the delegates of the several colonies of New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the three lower coun- ties of Newcastle, Kent and Sussex on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina, deputed to represent them in a Con- tinental Congress held in the city of Philadelphia on the fifth day of Sep- tember, 1774:"

would call today a national boy- cott against British goods.
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 It was a bitter boycott. It was a the first act of the colonies which can be the United States for regulat- ing the price at which goods should be sold. It also urged frugality and economy in private life. As the Rambler thinks, these two features of the famous bo- cott agreement of the colonies, do not seem to him so little known by Amer- icans today as to be worth reproducing even if such reproduction delay the story of Henry Lee of Freestone Point. Here they follow:
 We will, in our several stations, encour- age frugality, economy and industry and promote agriculture, arts and the manufactures of the country, especially that of wool; and will discourage and discourage every species of extravagance and dissipation, especially bo- racing and all kinds of gaming, cock-fights, exhibitions of shows, plays and other expen- sive diversions and entertainments; and on the death of any relative or friend none of us, any of our families will go into further mourning dress than a black crape or ribbon on the arm or hat for gentlemen and a black rib- bon and necklace for ladies, and we will dis- continue the giving of gloves and scarves at funerals.
 Such as are venders of goods or merchan- dises will not take advantage of the scarcity of goods, that may be occasioned by this asso- ciation, but will sell at the same rates as

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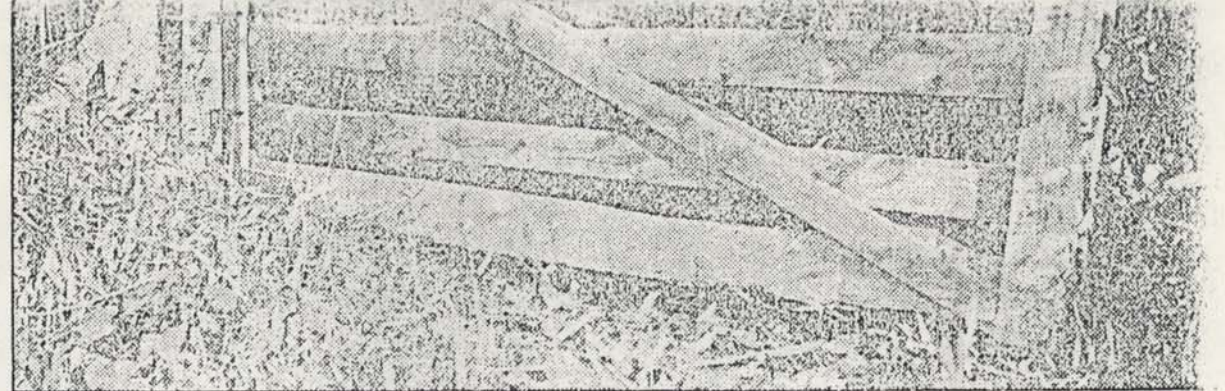
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of many kinds are growing. Honeysuckle, jetted over with its shining black shot-size leaves, has woven a net that though green shows in places that frost reaching it with claret colors. Climbing against the advance of the honeysuckle is periwinkle, whose leaves are also myrtle, and this has also itself over the ground, and in doing this vine puts on pale blue leaves, just as it did when it gladdened the garden of the Lees. It is the Rambler said in a previous issue a lone and somber spot. The Potomac, fourteen miles east, is Mount Vernon, and a line from the site of the home of George Lee and Lucy Grymes—the famous mother of Light Horse Harry Mount Vernon passes through or near a few yards of the home of George Mason, which is called Gunston Hall, and now maintained in the old state by Mr. and Mrs. Louis Gunston Hall is seven and a half miles above the forsaken site of the Lee home and about five miles from the river from the home of Mount Vernon.

When where Light Horse Harry was born, you may look southeast to the Potomac river and the head of Mattawoman creek to the west and Chickamuxen creek to the east, four miles from Freestone point, is the home of Gen. William Smallwood of the Continental Congress, a man to whose gallantry and service George Washington, Commander your ancestors in the new republic paid just remark. By a reflection against the Maryland sky the Rambler picked out what he could identify as the smallwood farm, and he would if the old house in which Smallwood lived is still standing, was nearly fallen down when the Rambler visited it three or four years ago.

reflections that came to the Rambler about George Washington, George Mason, Light Horse Harry Lee and William Smallwood! He said, "What a neighborhood of old and revolutionary notables in Washington, the first soldier



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In that convention Lee and Mason were on opposite sides of the grave question, and the convention was so nearly balanced between ratification or rejection that in an assembly of 168 delegates ratification was voted by a majority of only ten. Lee's influence weighed a good deal and but for it it is quite possible that the side opposed to ratification, including a number of eminent and patriotic men, would have prevailed. Much of this is speculation. But, as the Rambler sat in the lonely spot of Freestone point far from a habitation, surrounded by gaunt and leafless trees, with mighty vistas of the Potomac before him, and by a brush fire to keep him warm, he could not help and did not try to keep from indulging in the luxury of these speculations or reflections. Some stories are all speculation, and some of them are rank speculation, with emphasis on "rank."

The Rambler is under obligation to tell you the story of Light Horse Harry Lee, and into this story must enter parts of the stories of the war of the revolution, the near-breakdown of the republic under the articles of confederation, the attempt to amend that instrument into a working agreement between the states, the inception and proceedings of the constitutional convention at Philadelphia and the conventions called for the ratification or rejection of that paper at Annapolis and Richmond. It makes

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It was the arrogance and stupidity of the English government under George III in refusing to recognize the political equality of English subjects in England and English subjects in the colonies that inflamed the anger of so many of our radical ancestors. Taxation may have been at the root of the evil, but we lodged a great many other complaints against the English crown. The trouble had been brewing for a hundred years in the disputes between royal governors and the popular assemblies of the colonies. Here follows a brief statement of grievances as set forth by an association of "his majesty's most loyal subjects, the delegates of the several colonies of New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the three lower counties of Newcastle, Kent and Sussex on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina, deputed to represent them in a Continental Congress held in the city of Philadelphia on the fifth day of September, 1774:"

Avowing our allegiance to his majesty, our affection and regard for our fellow-subjects in Great Britain and elsewhere, affected with the deepest anxiety and most alarming apprehensions, at those grievances and distresses with which his majesty's American subjects are oppressed; and having taken under our most serious deliberation, the state of the whole continent, find, that the present unhappy situation of our affairs is occasioned by a ruinous system of colony administration, adopted by the British ministry about the year 1763, evidently calculated for enslaving these colonies and with them, the British empire.

In prosecution of which system, various acts of parliament have been passed, for raising a revenue in America, for depriving the American subjects in many instances of the constitutional trial by jury, exposing their lives to danger, by directing a new and illegal trial beyond the seas for crimes alleged to have been committed in America; and in prosecution of the same system, several late, cruel and oppressive acts have been passed, respecting the town of Boston and Massachusetts Bay, and also an act for extending the Province of Quebec, so as to border on the western frontiers of these colonies, establishing an arbitrary government therein, and discouraging the settlement of British subjects in that wide extended country; thus by the influence of civil principles and ancient prejudices, to dispose the inhabitants to act with hostility against the free Protestant colonies, whenever a wicked Ministry shall choose so to direct them.

would call today a national boycott against British goods.

It was a bitter boycott. It was the first act of the colonies which came to be the United States for regulating the price at which goods should be sold. It also urged frugality and economy in private life. As the Rambler thinks these two features of the famous boycott agreement of the colonies, do not seem to him so little known by Americans today as to be worth reproduction, even if such reproduction delay the story of Henry Lee of Freestone Point. Here they follow:

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Such as are venders of goods or merchandise will not take advantage of the scarcity of goods, that may be occasioned by this association, but will sell at the same rates we have been respectively accustomed to do for two months last past. And if any vender of goods or merchandise shall sell such goods on his terms or shall in any manner or by any device whatsoever violate or depart from this agreement, no person ought, nor will any of us deal with any such person, or his or her father or agent, at any time thereafter, for any commodity whatever.

Well, while these things were going on at Philadelphia and a little later in the neighborhood of Boston, Henry Lee in historic Prince William, Fairfax and Stafford counties was active with nearly all the other young men in organizing and drilling troops called the militia of Virginia. In 1775 he was appointed by Gov. Patrick Henry captain of a troop of cavalry in Col. Theoderick Bland's regiment. Gov. Patrick Henry was a personal friend of young Henry Lee's father and had visited George Mason at Gunston Hall and had no doubt visited at the old Lee home which stood where we have been today. Col. Theoderick Bland was a near relative of Henry Lee and young Henry had a brother named after him—Theoderick Lee. So, you see family influence played its part in the olden time as does now. But, the Rambler has

so that you might lose faith in the Rambler, and thus cause him to lose his job, and yet to do such a craftsmanlike piece of work that a man who knows the constitutional history of the United States will not yawn and lay aside The Sunday Star saying, "Tshaw! What a rotten job this fellow makes of it!"

So, as a beginning, he will outline Light Horse Harry Lee. It has been told that he was a son of Henry Lee of Freestone point and his wife, Lucy Grymes, who without much doubt was the "lowland beauty" with whom George Washington, sixteen years old, was infatuated, and which infatuation was through life a dear memory to him, just as the infatuations of our youth remain until the end of things sweet memories to us.

All that the Rambler knows about the childhood and boyhood of Light Horse Harry is that he was born in the vanished house which stood on this hilltop in the woods; that he toddled in the garden which is now a wild thicket, but in which a few of the old garden flowers are still growing, and that he hunted the woods of Leesylvania, fished in the Potomac at Freestone point and in the creek Neabsco and in that called Powell's. A bare little biographic sketch which the Rambler has found says that "after receiving the usual rudimentary education at home, Henry was sent to Princeton College, where he graduated in 1773." Dr. William Shippen wrote to Richard Henry Lee, in 1770, this letter:

"Your cousin Henry Lee is in college and will be one of the first fellows in this country. He is more than strict in his morality, has fine genius and diligent. Charles is in the grammar school, but Dr. Witherspoon expects much from his genius and application."

When Henry returned from college he took over the management of this estate of 2,000 acres, between Neabsco and Powell's creeks and extending from Freestone point on the Potomac west to where the road from Colchester to Dumfries crosses the "Neck." One reason given by an old chronicle why young Henry was managing the property is that his father Henry Lee, "was absent from home negotiating a treaty with some Indian tribes on behalf of the colony of Virginia." That was in 1773. The next year young Henry was to leave Virginia for England to study law, but the relations between the colonies and Great Britain had become ominous and it seemed that young Virginians would soon have to take up the trade of the soldier. Edmund Jennings Lee, writing of young Henry, says that "his later career seems to have proven him well qualified for the profession of the law, and it is probable that had he entered the political arena he would have made for himself a reputation of no mean proportions as an orator and legislator."

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While many of the older heads in the colonies were talking of possible reconciliation with England on the ground that the mother country must grant the people of the colonies the rights of Englishmen, the younger men were talking revolution. They were talking of a "war of liberation," and people in England were talking of a "revolt of disloyal subjects." The points of view were somewhat different, and it may be observed today that men of different environment and cast of thought will look at the same situation or set of facts from opposite points of view. There was a mighty pothor in Virginia and elsewhere about "no taxation without represen-