

HOUSE AND GARDEN TOUR

Please note on your calendar that the Charles County Tour of the Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage will be held on Sunday, April 27, 1980. The Tour will feature Preference, St. Ignatius Church, St. Thomas Manor, White Hall, Mt. Air, Christ Church, William and Mary Parish, Locust Grove, Maiden Point, Mt. Victoria, Yatten, and Westwood Manor. Tickets for the tour are \$8.00 or \$2.00 for a single house. Tour hours are 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. A copy of the complete Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage may be obtained by sending \$1.00 to the Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage 600 W. Chesapeake Ave., Towson, Md. 21204.

MARYLAND DAY

The St. Mary's City Commission, St. Mary's College of Maryland and the Commissioners of St. Mary's County have invited the membership to participate in Maryland Day at Old St. Mary's City, Sunday, March 23, 1980. The program, celebrating the 346th anniversary of the founding of Maryland will begin at 12:30 p.m.

RAFFLE RESULTS

The winner in the drawing for the antique sideboard was Ray Tilghman. The Ways and Means Committee wishes to thank all those who participated in the sale of the raffle tickets.

SPRING MEETING

The Spring Dinner Meeting of the Historical Society will be held on Saturday, May 17, 1980 at the Methodist Church in La Plata. More details will be sent later.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Articles of historic interest to Charles County are welcome for possible publication in **The RECORD**. Please send contributions to: Editor, **The RECORD**, Box 273, La Plata, Maryland 20646.



The RECORD

Publication of the Historical Society of Charles County, Inc.

February 1980

George C. Dyson, *President*Charles G. LaHood, Jr., *Editor*

Insights Into The American Revolution In Charles County In 1781 As Revealed By Letters Of Daniel Jenifer To Governor Thomas Simm Lee

by Watson M. Perrygo

In reviewing some of the letters written to Governor Lee of Maryland in 1781 by Daniel Jenifer, Commissary Officer from Charles County, there are some interesting insights into what went on in the county during that year of the American Revolution. By way of biographical information, Daniel Jenifer (?-1795) was the son of Dr. Daniel Jenifer and Elizabeth Rogers (widow of John Rogers of His Excellency's Gift). He was brother of Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, one of the signers of the Constitution from the state of Maryland. He lived near Port Tobacco at Coates Retirement, later renamed Ellerslie.

As Commissary Officer it was Jenifer's duty to find, purchase/requisition such needed supplies as horses, clothing, food, etc. for the troops and to arrange to have them delivered to whatever locations that were specified by the Governor and the Council.

A letter dated January 15, 1781¹ requests Governor Lee to send him 30 or 40 bushels of Allum Salt to cure 10,000 pounds of pork and the same amount of beef. The pork was to be purchased at £ 240 p ct and the beef 4 dollars p lb. It seems that some people wanted 300 for their pork and "are in these scarce times very fickle and must be coaxed as well as paid." An interesting P. S. requested "a Box of State Sugar if to be spared."

On April 8, 1781² Jenifer sent the following letter to Gov. Lee. "By Col. Wares desire (he being stationed at a place without the convenience of writing) I have to inform your excellency, that on thursday evening two arm'd Schooners with a Cutter and some Barges came above Cedar point. Landed some of their Men at Mrs. Youngs Ferry, and plundered her of her most valuable Effects; at 2 o'Clock friday morning this town was alarm'd with an Acct of two barges being at the Ware house, possibly they being apprized of an Alarm being given was the means of preventing any damage being done either to the Ware house or town. From thence they proceeded to Walter Hanson Esq^r., pillaged himself and family of every kind of wearing apparel and other valuable Effects and carried off his son Sam^l a Lieutenant of the State REgiment and exceedingly insulted the whole Family. They then moved to the Rev^d. Mr. Matthew's and committed the same Devastages, and then removed farther down

and shewed an intension of Landing at G. B. Causin Esq^r., which was prevented by the appearance of some Militia who had march'd from this place; from thence they proceeded to the Elegant Seat of Geo. Dent Esq^r. (this is the site on which Keechland now stands) and after having plundered him refired; But being strongly Reenforced with three additional Barges; they again Landed and reduced to Ashes all the houses in the place save the Corn house which happened to stand at a considerable distance. The Evening of the same day some Barges were sent into Nanjemy Creek where they took out a Vessel Loaded with Indian corn and returned to their Vessels without doing further damage. Yesterday (as is supposed) upon observing some people busied in removing tobacco from Cedar point Warehouse, they immediately fell down and secured it; by lying three Vessels in such manner as to Subject any person opposing "em to a Cross fire from the Vessels; However some few of the Militia march'd down and attacked their Centries by which one of their Men was killed. The situation of these few Men being too dangerous they retired. Many were busied all night in getting the tobacco on Board their Vessels, which they perfectly Effectuated, having only 2 Hhd's in the Warehouse and a bulk of unpriized tobacco belonging to the State. The armed Schooners still lay at Cedar point. Two Ships and two other Vessels are standing up the River; Their object manifestly is plunder, and We are by no means prepared to prevent their Designs taking Effect; having an extent of coast but few arms and less amunition. I have it therefore, in order from the Col to request Your Ex^{cy} to forward some musquets, powder and Ball Cartridge paper and if possible two or three small field p^s well mounted upon light Carriages. The Militia seem Ready and willing to Act with vigour if suuplied with the means." On the same day a letter from Lt. Jos. Beall to Gov. Lee states that the "Enemy burnt Port Tobacco Warehouse last Friday."

On June 30, 1781³ Jenifer reported to Gov. Lee that he was tired and had been such abused in completing the quota of horses for the county. States he would have finished sooner if it had not been for the "refractoriness of some and the wickedness of others in endeavoring to down the Credit of the certificates". Thomas Crackels, Samuel Mitchell and Walter Hanson, Jr. were named as offenders and Walter Hanson the worst because "he is or ought to be a gentleman." In the same letter he states that the goods of a Port Tobacco merchant, Mr. Ridgate, are so trifling "I have not yet done anything with them. I confess that I must think that Mr. Ridgate had more goods but what has become of them he best knows."

The Historical Society of Charles County
Port Tobacco, Maryland 20677



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On July 10, 1781⁴ Jenifer informs the Governor that the quota of horses has been made and that keeping them is burdensome to his son. He expresses fear that the post has lost or mislaid his letter as he has received no answer.

By letter of July 15, 1781⁵ Jenifer states that he has already, by two letters, informed the Governor and the Council that the quota of horses for the county has been met and asks what disposition to make of the surplus. He asks the Governor and Council to please give orders that those for the troops be "immediately taken away as they are in some danger from the Enemy in case any barges should come up the river. They are exceedingly burdensome to my son who is obliged to keep constant watch on them." He closes by saying "I am exceedingly indisposed."

A July 22, 1781⁶ letter to the Governor states that since he was appointed Commissary Officer by His Excellency's letter, he has been looking for Bacon but "am unhappy to tell you that it will not be in my power to procure above 6 or 7,000 wt Wheat and Beef I shall be able to get . . . but not without money; therefore, should be glad if your Excellency will fill by hands. It will, I believe be in my power to prevail on the people to take half Certificates but their necessities are such that they must have some money. I have sent to the Treasury by Col. Stone 30 crop notes taken on loan and likewise an Acct of the money borrowed since my last return, which is only 32 Dollars and 400 paid in to me by Mr. Hamersly."

On July 25, 1781⁷ he writes that he has sent 190 hats taken from Mr. Ridgate, with a list enclosed. He states that he thought the asking price too high but that the Governor and Council should fix the price. He also states that he returned all the surplus horses (15 in no.) and that the rest are "very fat as may be seen by the appearance of those two in the Cart." He also says that times are so hard that he is "obliged to tear up my old Books for paper."

On Sept. 11, 1781⁸ Jenifer wrote that he had a "great inclination to go to the Southward, to have the pleasure of seeing a finishing Stroke put to the War; I will thank your Ex^{cy} to supercede me in the office of Reg. of Wills for Cha^s County. It is an office that cannot be executed by Deputy, otherwise I should depute in my Absence. It is also a post of very great trust, and that it may be well filled is the wish of Your Excellency's most obt^d sert."

On October 6, 1781⁹ he writes that "he has sent by John Verden 17 head of stray cattle with more left in Dr. Jenifer's Meadow, they being too poor to drive up. I expect to be in Annapolis next week when I shall close my Accounts."

These letters, selected from many that were written, show that Daniel Jenifer and others played a very vital role in the Revolution and that Charles County was singled out for pillage, plunder and burning by the British.

All references are from letters to the Governor and Council, briefed in the Calendar of Maryland State Papers.

- 1. Red Book No. 22, Letter 22
- 2. Red Book No. 26, Letter 3
- 3. Red Book No. 22, Letter 12
- 4. Red Book No. 22, Letter 11

- 5. Red Book No. 22, Letter 10
- 6. Red Book No. 29, Letter 5
- 7. Red Book No. 22, Letter 9
- 8. Red Book No. 29, Letter 25
- 9. Red Book No. 22, Letter 8

Halkerstone Family - Revolutionary Records
(also Halkerston, Halkerson)

by Susan Shaffer

In the **Maryland Gazette** of 23 March 1769, there is an advertisement for property to be sold at "Port-Tobacco, on Tuesday, the 3^d Day of April next." The property consisted of three lots, of which one had a "very commodious and well frequented Tavern, which is now in the Occupation of Mrs. Halkerston." The article described the three properties after commenting favorably upon the reputation of Mrs. Halkerston's tavern. This same Mrs. (Ann) Halkerson's will was probated in Charles County on 6 September 1777. It is an interesting document which leaves property to her three sons, John, Robert and William. It also states, very specifically, that the youngest son, William was to be properly educated by selling her personal possessions.

In this article the three sons will be studied. The two older boys - John and Robert, saw service in the Revolution, while the youngest - William did not. However, William has been included in the survey for any interested genealogists.

John Halkerstone

b. before 1777 (the oldest of the three brothers)

d. _____

m. Elizabeth Hanson (daughter of William and Rachel Hanson) on 4 November 1779, in William and Mary Parish of Picawaxon by Reverend John McPherson.

John was the Second Lieutenant of Beall's Independent Maryland Company, 14 January 1776. He became the First Lieutenant, July 1776, and served to _____.

In the Maryland Hall of Records, there are 17 documents with John Halkerstone's name on them during the Revolutionary period. Most of them pertain to supplying the army with beef, buckskin breeches, and flour. Several of them refer to John Halkerstone as a "Quartermaster." His correspondence was with Sergeant Philip Spalding, Sergeant Pryor Berry, Sergeant John B. Turner, Captain Richard B. Mitchell, Captain Benjamin Harwood, Sergeant Edward Gwinn, Quartermaster Thomas Evans, William McPherson, Captain James Hindman and Captain Samuel Smallwood.

With the assistance of Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer in 1783, Robert Halkerstone directed that his eighty dollars pay be given to John. Then, according to the documents, John gave the money to a Mrs. Rachael Forry on 20 July. This Mrs. Forry was a widow living in Port Tobacco at the time.

In addition there is an advertisement in the 23rd October 1783, **Maryland Gazette**, for "John Halkerston renting houses and lots in Port Tobacco where he now keeps tavern; . . . fronting the courthouse . . . all necessary buildings . . . large lot at back with a fine tree . . . well of good water with pump in it."

The final mention of John comes in the 1790 Census for Prince Georges County. He had 2 free white males of 16 and older, 1 free white female, 1 other free person and 4 slaves.

Robert Halkerstone

b. before 1777

d. 17 February 1825

m. Malinda _____

Child: daughter, who married Walter Boswell before 1825.

In the Revolutionary War, Robert Halkerstone's record was quite impressive. He was a Sergeant in the Third Regiment on 5 February 1777. Then he became an Ensign of the Fourth Regiment, 26 January 1780. On 1 January 1781, he was transferred to the First Regiment, where he became a Second Lieutenant 25 April 1781. On 12 April 1783, he was retained in Gunby's Battalion and served to 15 November 1783.

In the Maryland Hall of Records there is a note from Robert Halkerstone to Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, Esq. to "Please pay Mr. John Halkerstone Eighty Dollars being four months pay due me as Ensign in the 3^d Maryland Regiment."

In 1817, he began receiving the half pay of a Lieutenant, for life, in quarterly sums, as an "old Revolutionary War officer."

In the 1810 and 1820 census, Robert Halkerstone is listed as residing in Charles County.

William Halkerstone

b. before 1777

d. before 1825

m. Eleanor _____

There was no record of William serving in the Revolutionary War in any capacity.

In the 1790 census William Halkerstone is listed with one free white male of 16 or older (himself), one free white female (probably his wife) and nine slaves.

In 1795, William and his wife Eleanor sold "Durham" or "Durham Freehold" for ten shillings to Mary Turner. However, they reserved the use of the land and premises to Eleanor for her natural life and for William's use for six years after Eleanor's death.

In 1796, William Halkerstone was a member of the Panel of Jurors for Charles County for which he was allowed the sum of one dollar for Petit Juror and six dollars for six days attendance as Grand Juror.

The sources for this article were:

- Land Records and Wills in the Charles County Courthouse
- Maryland Hall of Records, Annapolis
- The Southern Maryland Room, LRC, Charles County Community College
- Charles County Library, La Plata (**Maryland Gazette**)

FRIENDSHIP HOUSE DOLLS

The popular Friendship House Dolls are again in supply. The Dolls are available at the Southern Maryland Room, Charles County Community College; at The Added Touch, or directly from Mrs. John Hanson Mitchell on 934-2877.

STATE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

For some years the Historical Society of Charles County has co-sponsored high school juniors to the American Legion Boy's and Girl's State Leadership program. This in-depth program explores the legislative process at the state, county, and local levels and helps to develop leadership qualities in our young people. Preference is given to children of members of the Historical Society.

This year the committee would like the membership to assist by calling to its attention those students who may be eligible. In order to be aware of these students, the committee would appreciate a phone call or postcard with the following information:

Student Name _____

Phone _____

High School attending _____

Year in School _____

Please contact Committee Chairperson Sandra Mitchell, Box 722, La Plata, Maryland 20646, Tel. 934-8086.

NEWS FROM THE
MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The present Membership Committee was formed and began operating in September 1979. Since then it has approved, and submitted to the Board of Directors, sixty-three (63) new members.

The total membership of the Historical Society at this time is 152 Family and 117 Single for a total of 417 members.

If any member wishes to sponsor someone for membership, please contact one of the following members of the Committee:

Dorothy Crist	934-8986
Mrs. George Gibson	274-3295
Mrs. Richmond Gough	259-2200
Olga Hamer	645-4465
Mrs. George Heinze	934-4352
Mrs. Leo Middleton	645-5227
Sandra Mitchell	934-8086
Vivian Malczyk	246-4218
Nellie Shelor	645-5897
Jane Wheeler	934-8904
Gertrude Wright	375-9039
Gilbert Milstead	246-4676
Chairman	

The Membership Committee requests that members please remit the annual dues so that the Committee can maintain the membership files on a current basis.