



Col. William Grayson Chapter *Sons of the American Revolution* —*Newsletter*—



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Volume 14, Issue 2

April-June 2021

Prince William County Revolutionary War History Trail

The Prince William County Office of Historic Preservation is developing a Revolutionary War History Trail, which will initially be on-line, and which will later feature a driving tour and tour map. This trail and tour is being developed in anticipation of the 250th Anniversary of American independence in 2026.

The following sites will be on the Prince William County Revolutionary War History Trail:

- Belmont Bay
- Occoquan (Mill House Museum)
- Wolf Run Shoals
- William Grayson's Tomb
- Rippon Lodge
- Neabsco Boardwalk (Iron Works)
- Leesylvania
- Weems Botts Museum
- Prince William Forest Park
- Marine Corps Museum (Kings Highway)
- Locust Shade Park

Attached is a link to the first draft of the new Revolutionary War Trail web page:

<https://www.visitpwc.com/history/revolutionary-war-trail/>

The County Office of Historic Preservation is soliciting comments, edits and or questions and is happy to include any pictures or text that pertain to the sites which will be featured.

President's Comments: Ross H. Schwalm

On April 16, I virtually attended the World War I Memorial First Colors Ceremony. The flag that was raised had been all over the world and flown at numerous sites before it was hoisted over the new memorial.

First Colors Ceremony



On Saturday, April 24, my Grandson Lincoln Bauer Schwalm, age 5, and I attended the 263rd Anniversary of James Monroe's Birthday at his former residence near Charlottesville, VA, called Highland. Several other Chapter Members were present for the post event photo event. This was my grandson's first ever SAR event. He was good until the rifle squad conducted the musket salute. A video was recorded of the event and I shared it with my son, Ross N. Schwalm our chapter webmaster. He and Lincoln watched it and my son reports that Lincoln still did not like the musket firing!



On April 30 and May 1, I helped set up and conduct some public history outreach at the Mount Vernon Revolutionary War Days. Setting up tents in 60 mile an hour wind gusts was not a lot of fun. What impressed me was the number of volunteer re-enactors that came out to support this event. The public arrived in force on Saturday with approximately 1500 in attendance and we gave them quite a show. The Mills Family was out in force as visitors and our Historian Chuck Mills saw me in action as a hefty Hessian Musketeer trotting to and fro to get into firing position up and down the slopes west of Mount Vernon. It was grand fun. I am the one on the left end of the blue Hessian firing line in the photo below.



The rest of March through May was spent working with Compatriot Thadd Hartman and the Chapter Officers on planning out two events for the same day, May 15. After several years of work by the Graves Registration and Graves Marking Committee, Vice President Curtis Robb handed over detailed planning duties for the Ebenezer Cemetery Plaque Dedication to Thadd Hartman. We had a great level of participation from the SAR National Society, State SAR Societies including Virginia, West Virginia and Texas, the Daughters of the American Revolution, The Children of the American Revolution and the Society of the War of 1812 along with our long time support from the Organization of Founders and Patriots who had their national meeting on the same weekend but still sent a representative to our event.

On May 22, I attended the VASSAR Norfolk Chapter meeting and presented a talk on Hessians in Dumfries. In January 1777, 49 prisoners captured at Trenton arrived in Dumfries. This location was ordered by the Continental Congress. Hessian officers comprised 26 of the 49 prisoners. Col William Grayson interacted with these prisoners as the Committee of Safety had oversight of these “guests”. I will present this brief via Zoom hosted by Historic Dumfries Virginia on September 18, 2021. Chapter members are welcome to attend.

On the same day after a quick trip from Virginia Beach to Richmond, I attended the Shockoe Cemetery Monument Dedication with other members of the Chapter. (See the story and photo in the “Chapter Activities”.)

On June 12, I attended the Daughters of the American Revolution Never Forget Garden Dedication at the Prince William County Government Center Memorial Park. I offered comments on my four family members who died in service to our country from the Civil War, World War I and World War II. Event was attended by multiple DAR chapters from across Virginia and Maryland as well as local politicians and county administrators.



Upcoming Events

Note: All events subject to change or cancellation due to the coronavirus situation.

July 3: Richard Henry Lee Wreath Ceremony, Saturday, 3 Jul, 8:15 am, Lee Family Cemetery, Burnt House Field, Coles Point, VA.

July 3: Patriot Francis Lightfoot Lee Grave Marking, Saturday, 3 Jul, time 11:00am, Mount Airy Farm, 361 Millpond Road, Warsaw, VA.

July 4: Independence Day at Mt. Vernon, Sunday, 4 July, 9:00am, Mount Vernon. Come march up the Bowling Green to the Mansion then down to the Grove and the Tomb (both color guard & civilian dress).

July 5: Patriot Benjamin Harrison, Signer of the Declaration of Independence, Grave Marking, Monday, 5 Jul, 11:00am, [Berkley Plantation](#), 12602 Harrison Landing Rd, Charles City, VA.

July 10: Battle of Cricket Hill at Gwynn's Island Plaque Dedication, Saturday, 10 Jul, 11:00am, Morningstar Marinas, 249 Mill Point Rd, Hudgins, VA.

July 10-14: 131st NSSAR Congress, 10-14 Jul, Renton, WA.

July 17: 247th Commemoration of the Signing of the Fairfax Resolves, Saturday, 17 Jul, 11:00am, Pohick Church 9301 Richmond Highway Lorton, VA (US 1 & Telegraph Road)

July 24: Patriot Grave Marking at New Jerusalem Church, Saturday, 24 Jul, 1:00pm, Lutheran Church, 12942 Lutheran Church Road, Lovettsville, VA.

August 13-14: Mid-Atlantic District Meeting, Friday - Saturday 13-14 Aug, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Annapolis, MD.

August 21: Patriot Grave Marking for William Clark, 21 Aug, time TBD, Madden Cemetery, Lignum, VA

August 21-22: Nansemond Indian Pow Wow, Saturday & Sunday, 21-22 Aug, Mattanock Town, 1001 Pembroke Lane, Suffolk, VA. Color Guard will participate in opening and closing ceremonies each day and man a recruiting tent - come help the Nansemond Indian Patriots Chapter and have a great time!

August 28: Multi-Chapter Meeting at Graves Mountain Lodge, Saturday, August 28, 11:00am, [Graves Mountain Lodge](#), Syria, VA.

September 4: 240th Anniversary of the Battle of the Capes, Saturday, 4 Sep, Time TBD, Fort Story, VA.

September 10 -11: Virginia SAR Semi-Annual Meeting, 10-11 Sep, [Berry Hill Plantation](#), South Boston, VA.

September 18: Vigil at Washington's Tomb, Saturday, 18 Sep, Mount Vernon. A Color Guard event. [Sign up](#) and come in uniform to stand guard at General Washington's Tomb.

September 18: President General's Wreath Presentation at Tomb of the Unknown, Saturday, 18 Sep, 4:15pm, Tomb of the Unknown, Arlington National Cemetery, VA.

Registrar's Report

New Members Approved in April – June 2021

	Applicant	Date Approved	Patriot
1	Stehen Nugent	9 April 2021	Edward Storey/Story , Private Virginia Line under Captain Francis Goode; later in the Virginia Militia under Captain Archibald Walthall.
2	Paul Nisson	9 April 2021	John Bowles , Private in Captain Faulkner's Company, 5 th Virginia Regiment under Colonel Charles Scott.
3	Daryl Jacobs	9 April 2021	Jeremiah Jacobs who signed the Oath of Fidelity in Maryland in 1778.
4	Paxton Duncan (Junior Member)	16 April 2021	George Helm , who served under Captain Abraham Shepherd of the Virginia Line; was also a Prisoner of War who returned to service after his release. Paid the Supply Tax of 1783.
5	Timothy Cline	14 May 2021	Walter Davis , Private in the 6 th and 10 th Regiments of the Virginia Continental Line and Prisoner of War.
6	William Reynolds and sons William, Robert and Joseph	14 May 2021	James Reynolds , who paid taxes in Albemarle County, Virginia in 1782.

Four new member applications are pending review at the National Headquarters.

Supplemental Applications Approved in March - May 2021

	Applicant	Date Approved	Patriot
1	Kevin Schwoerer	9 April 2021	David Betts , Private under Captains John King and John Spoor.

Three supplemental applications are pending review at the National Headquarters.

At present, new member applications are being reviewed at the Headquarters about three months after submission; supplements are reviewed eight months after receipt.

Color Guard Commander and Quartermaster Reports

Color Guard:

A recent survey was conducted amongst the members of the Color Guard to determine our present size and availability. Presently, the Color Guard stands with six active members. Any Compatriot

who wishes to join the Color Guard should contact the Commander via email at fedallgen@yahoo.com at their earliest convenience.

Compatriots Leamon Duncan, Andrew Mills, and Jack Mills have completed the requisite number of Grave Markings to receive their medal. In addition, Compatriot Duncan is also eligible to receive his Bronze Color Guard Medal.

Quartermaster:

Any Compatriot who has any 18th century clothing or items which can be donated to the Color Guard should notify the Quartermaster and Color Guard Commander so as to make arrangements for delivery and/or pick up.

Chapter Activities and News

April 2, 2021: Oration Contest Report

The Colonel William Grayson Chapter was proudly represented at the VASSAR Oration contest by Ms. Gabriella Lucchetti, who has represented our Chapter for the last three years. This year, she presented an essay on Ethan Allen and the capture of Fort Ticonderoga. Gabriella advanced to the state competition, where she came in 3rd place.

April 10, 2021: Grave Marking for Patriot William Ewing at Stephens City, Virginia

Three members of the Colonel William Grayson (CWG) Chapter participated in a grave marking ceremony sponsored by the Colonel James Wood II (CJWII) Chapter of the Virginia Society Sons of the American Revolution. Patriot William Ewing was honored for Material Contributions to the cause of the Revolution. Patriot Ewing was born in 1711 in Ireland and migrated with his parents to the American Colonies when he was 16 years old. The family first settled in southern Pennsylvania near the Maryland border. As a young adult, Patriot Ewing migrated to the northern part of the Shenandoah Valley just south of Winchester. He settled on farmland now part of Stephens City, Virginia. He is buried in the Ewing Family cemetery in an open field next door to 145 Brandenburg Court, Stephens City.

Former CWG President Mike Weyler carried the Chapter flag as part of Color Guard during presentation of Colors. CWG Dual Member Barry Schwoerer presented the Chapter wreath, was lead musket for Color Guard for presentation of Colors and participated in a three shot musket volley. CWG Dual Member Marc Robinson organized the event as President of the CJWII Chapter and conducted a Zoom program. CJWII Member Jacob Schwoerer and member of the CWG Society C.A.R , grandson of Barry, carried the SAR Flag in Color Guard and presented the CWG Society C.A.R wreath. All compatriots wore either Revolutionary War Regimental uniforms or militia uniforms.



L-R: Mike Weyler, Barry Schwoerer, Jacob Schwoerer, Marc Robinson

April 11, 2021: 278th Anniversary Commemoration of the birth of Thomas Jefferson

The Colonel William Grayson Chapter participated in the 278th Anniversary Commemoration of the birth of Thomas Jefferson. The ceremony was held at the Tuckahoe Plantation, Virginia, Jefferson's boyhood home. Participating with the Virginia State Color Guard were Colonel James Wood II Chapter members and dual members, including Compatriot Mike Weyler, dual member Colonel William Grayson Chapter and Governor, Virginia Order of Founders and Patriots of America (OFPA)).



April 12, 2021: 245th Halifax Resolves Anniversary Commemoration

Compatriot Andrew Mills, then Quartermaster of the Colonel William Grayson Chapter, participated in the 245th Halifax Resolves Anniversary Commemoration via Zoom. During the event, Compatriot Mills presented the Chapter wreath. Also in attendance was former Chapter President, Compatriot Michael Weyler, via Zoom.



April 17, 2021: Patriot Grave Marking for General Edward Stevens, Patriots Day, Gathering & Blessing of Virginia Soil for Waxhaws. Multiple event at Culpeper Masonic Cemetery, Culpeper, Virginia

Four members of the Colonel William Grayson Chapter, VASSAR, participated in multiple events sponsored by the Culpeper Minutemen Chapter. Mike Weyler and Dual members Dale Corey, Ken Morris, and Barry Schwoerer represented the CWG Chapter

Barry Schwoerer carried the Chapter flag for presentation of Colors and presented the Chapter wreath in honor of General Stevens. He also participated in a musket volley as the shroud covering the SAR Patriot marker was unveiled.

Barry invited and encouraged attendance by his Grandson, Jacob Schwoerer, of the Colonel William Grayson Society, C.A.R and his own spouse, Paula Schwoerer, of the Elizabeth McIntosh Hammill Chapter NSDAR. Jacob was recruited by the Culpeper Minuteman Chapter to carry a musket for presentation of Colors and to stand as sentry for the grave of General Stevens. He also presented the Society wreath in honor of General

Stevens. Paula carried her chapter flag for presentation of colors and presented her chapter wreath. Jacob is a primary member of the Colonel James Wood II VASSAR Chapter.

Three events took place:

1. **Patriots Day.** A ceremony honoring the Patriots who were involved in the “Shot Heard Around the World” at Lexington & Concord, and the Patriots who died at the Battle of Menotomy during the British retreat from the fighting field at Lexington and Concord.
2. **Patriot Grave Marking.** A SAR Patriot Marker was dedicated for General Edward Stevens. As the shroud was lifted from the marker a SAR Musket squad fired a volley in honor of General Stevens. Edward Stevens was born in Culpeper County, Virginia in 1745. As a Captain he led Culpeper’s Independent Company in response to the alarm over the seizure of weapons and gunpowder from the Williamsburg Magazine in April of 1775. On December 9, 1775 he led the victorious Culpeper Minute Battalion in the crucial Battle of Great Bridge. He then was commissioned as a Colonel of the 10th Virginia Regiment and fought at Brandywine and Germantown. He returned to Culpeper and was commissioned a Brigadier General of Virginia Militia and led militia at Camden, Guilford Courthouse, and Yorktown. After our Independence was gained, Edward Stevens returned to Culpeper where he served as a state senator and died in 1820. The Cemetery where he is buried is on land he donated.
3. **Blessing of Virginia Soil for Waxhaws.** Soil dug during the installation of the SAR Patriot Marker for General Stevens was placed in an urn and blessed by Father Henry Minich. VASSAR President Jeff Thomas will take the blessed soil to the annual commemoration of the Battle of Waxhaws near Lancaster, SC and spread it on the mass grave of Virginia Revolutionary Soldiers killed during the battle. The Battle happened on 29 May, 1780 and is also known as Buford’s massacre, named for the Commander of the 3rd Virginia Regiment, Colonel Abraham Buford who was born in Culpeper County, VA.



L-R: Compatriots Dale Corey, Ken Morris, Mike Weyler, Barry Schwoerer



(L-R). Jacob Schwoerer, Barry Schwoerer Paula Schwoerer
All standing by the SAR Patriot Marker for General Edward Stevens

April 22, 2021: SAR Law Enforcement Commendation Certificates and Medals Awarded to Virginia State Police Troopers

Compatriot Bill Collier, on behalf of the Colonel William Grayson Chapter, presented the SAR Law Enforcement Commendation Certificates and Medals to Virginia State Police Troopers Justin C. Clack and Matthew R. Molesky at the Virginia State Police Area 45 Headquarters Arlington, VA.

Their citations read:

Trooper Justin C. Clack, a three year veteran of the Virginia State Police, who's attention to detail and professional conduct set the example for other Virginia State Troopers to emulate. Trooper Clack's enforcement activity demonstrates his dedication to highway safety as evidenced by the hundreds of Virginia Uniform Summonses while on duty during a period of 259 days and over 53,586 miles driven while on patrol. Trooper Clack additionally made 25 criminal arrests for various felony and misdemeanor offenses. In addition to his traffic enforcement and promotion of highway safety, Trooper Clack also investigated 78 crashes during this time frame. Trooper Clack performance of duty brings great credit not only to himself but the Virginia Department of State Police.

Virginia State Police Trooper Matthew R. Molesky has served with distinction and devotion in the Law Enforcement Field. He has earned an Extraordinary Contributor Rating in 2020. During that time, Trooper Molesky affected 489 traffic charges and 15 Driving Under the Influence Arrests. Additionally he also affected 54 criminal arrests, comprised of 26 Felonies, 13 Misdemeanors, and 15 Drug/Narcotics charges. He additionally searched 29 vehicles and confiscated at least 16 firearms. Trooper Molesky is recognized by his peers as a top tier criminal enforcer. Trooper Matthew R. Molesky sustained performance of duty protecting the

Citizens of Virginia has brought great credit to himself, the Virginia State Police and the entire Law Enforcement Profession.



Picture: (L) Trooper Molesky, Compatriot Bill Collier, (R) Trooper Clack

April 24, 2021: Commemoration of the 263rd Anniversary of the birth of President James Monroe

Ross H. Schwalm, President of the Colonel William Grayson Chapter, presented the Chapter wreath at the Virginia SAR commemoration ceremony honoring the 263rd Anniversary of the birth of President James Monroe. The event was held at James Monroe's "Highland". <https://youtu.be/0CDthetq1Qk>



James Monroe Statue at “Highland”

May 5, 2021: The Sons of the American Revolution ROTC Bronze Medal and Certificate was mailed and received by the Potomac High School Senior Military Instructor. Presentation to c/SN Khahl Boddie was made virtually.

May 6, 2021: SAR Law Enforcement Commendation Certificates and Medals Awarded to Virginia State Police Troopers

On May 6, Compatriot Bill Collier, on behalf of the Colonel William Grayson Chapter, presented the SAR Law Enforcement Commendation Certificates and Medals to Virginia State Police Captain Jean-Paul N. Koushel and Virginia State Police Troopers Andrew Arredondo and Jordan S. Corvin at the Virginia State Police Area 48 Headquarters Springfield, Virginia.

Captain Koushel and the Virginia State Police Tactical Field Force succeeded in moving thousands of protestors away from the Capitol building in a measured and methodical manner during the events of January 6, 2021. Captain Koushel’s sustained performance and professional knowledge and leadership has brought great credit to himself and to the Virginia Department of State Police.

Troopers Andrew Arredondo and Jordan S. Corvin risked their lives to protect citizens when they responded to a violent shooting incident where a County Deputy Sherriff and two security officers were shot during an attempted arrest. The State Troopers succeeded in pursuing and arresting an extremely violent and dangerous criminal.



Compatriot Bill Collier and Captain Koushel



(L-R) Compatriot Bill Collier, Trooper Arredondo, Trooper Corvin, Capt. Koushel

May 11, 2021: The Sons of the American Revolution ROTC Bronze Medal and Certificate was mailed to the Quantico Middle/High School Senior Military Instructor. Presentation to c/1stSgt Rowan Cato was made virtually.

May 13, 2021: The Sons of the American Revolution ROTC Bronze Medal and Certificate was mailed to the Unity Reed High School Senior Military Instructor. Presentation to Cadet Alexander Bravo-Ramos was made virtually.

May 15, 2021: Multi-Grave marking Ceremony at Ebenezer Church in Bluemont, Virginia

This ceremony was co-sponsored by the Colonel William Grayson and Fairfax Resolves Chapters with support from 10 SAR Chapters, seven Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Chapters and two Children of the American Revolution (C.A.R.) Societies. Thirteen patriots from the Revolutionary War and 24 patriots from the War of 1812 were recognized in a plaque dedication to these men buried at the Ebenezer Church Cemetery.

VASSAR President Jeff Thomas has posted a video of the Grave Marking Ceremony on Youtube:
<https://youtu.be/DM0nLFoQLJ8>

May 15, 2021: Multiple ROTC Awards

The Sons of the American Revolution ROTC Bronze Medal and Certificate was mailed to the Hylton High School Senior Military Instructor. Virtual presentation to c/SSgt Keilana M. Smith was made virtually.

The Sons of the American Revolution ROTC Bronze Medal and Certificate was mailed and received by the Woodbridge High School Senior Military Instructor. Virtual presentation to c/SGM Noah Gilley was on 15 May 2021 with Compatriot Roy Richey attending.



C/SGM Noah Gilley

The Colonel William Grayson Chapter Certificate of Appreciation for five (5) years Association with the Chapter and service to the community was mailed to the Woodbridge High School Senior Military Instructor, LTC Victor Burnette. Presentation to LTC Victor Burnette, USA (Ret), Woodbridge High School, was at a virtual meeting attended by Compatriot Roy Richey.



LTC Victor Burnette, USA (Ret)

The Colonel William Grayson Chapter Certificate of Appreciation for five (5) years Association with the Chapter and service to the community was mailed to the Woodbridge High School Senior Military, LTC Victor Burnette for presentation to 1SG Daniel Jackson.



1SG Daniel Jackson, USA (Ret),

Presentation to 1SG Daniel Jackson, USA (Ret), Woodbridge High School, was at a virtual meeting attended by Compatriot Roy Richey.

May 18, 2021: The Sons of the American Revolution Eagle Scout Certificates - President Schwalm and Compatriot Aaron Bills participated in the Eagle Scout Court of Honor Ceremony for Troop 577 conducted at Izzac Walton League Park in Clifton, VA.

May 20, 2021: The Sons of the American Revolution ROTC Bronze Medal and Certificate was mailed to the American Military Academy Senior Military Instructor. Presentation to c/CPT Ricardo Medero was made virtually.

May 20, 2021: The Sons of the American Revolution ROTC Bronze Medal and Certificate was mailed and received by the Garfield High School Senior Military Instructor. Virtual presentation to c/LCpl Bryan Vasquez was made virtually.

May 21, 2021: The Sons of the American Revolution ROTC Bronze Medal and Certificate was mailed and received by the Osborn Park High School Senior Military Instructor. Presentation to Cadet Forest Chris was made virtually.

May 22, 2021: Patriot Monument Dedication and Grave Marking at Shockoe Hill Cemetery in Richmond, Virginia.

Compatriots from the Col William Grayson Chapter, Virginia SAR, participated in the Patriot Monument Dedication and Grave Marking at Shockoe Hill Cemetery in Richmond, VA. President Ross Schwalm presented the chapter wreath. Compatriots Leamon Duncan, Mike Weyler, and (dual members) Pat Kelly, Dale Corey, and Marc Robinson participated in the Color Guard. Compatriots Duncan, Robinson, and Kelly also participated in the musket salute.



L-R: Leamon Duncan, Pat Kelly, CWG President Ross Schwalm, Dale Corey, Mike Weyler, and Marc Robinson.

June 5, 2021: Commemoration of Wayne's Crossing, Leesburg, Virginia

On June 5, The Colonel William Grayson Chapter participated both physically and by Zoom in the commemoration of Wayne's Crossing, honoring our patriot forefathers who participated in the events of May 31-June 3, 1781, when General Anthony Wayne crossed the Potomac, passing through Leesburg, to join Lafayette near the Rapidan. Colonel William Grayson Chapter President, Ross Schwalm, presented the Chapter wreath.



Commemoration of Wayne's Crossing, Leesburg, Virginia

June 6, 2021: Compatriot John Callaway presented the SAR Sea Cadet, Bronze Good Citizenship Medal to Cadet Petty Officer 3 Joshua Young, USNSCC Vikings.



June 26, 2021: Commemoration Battle of Spencer's Ordinary, James City County, Virginia

Compatriots Andrew Mills, Color Guard Commander, Jack Mills, Quarter Master, and Chuck Mills Chapter Historian took part in the Commemoration of the Battle of Spencer's Ordinary. The battle took place in 1781 and saw Patriot forces under the Marquis de Lafayette in combat with Loyalist and Hessian troops under the command of Lieutenant Colonel John Graves Simcoe. Compatriots Andrew and Jack Mills participated as

members of the Color Guard. Compatriot Chuck Mills presented the Chapter wreath. Seven other SAR Chapters, three DAR Chapters and two CAR Chapters participated.



(L-R) Compatriots Jack and Andrew Mills

June 26, 2021: Commemoration of Patrick Henry's Election as the First Independent Governor of Virginia, Governor's Palace, Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia

Compatriots Andrew Mills, Color Guard Commander, Jack Mills, Quarter Master, and Chuck Mills, Chapter Historian, took part in the Commemoration. Compatriots Andrew and Jack Mills participated as members of the

Color Guard. Compatriot Chuck Mills presented the Chapter wreath. Nine other SAR Chapters, three DAR Chapters and two CAR Chapters participated.



Compatriot Andrew Mills with Governor Patrick Henry



Compatriot Chuck Mills

Historical Notes: George Washington and the Death of a Child

George Washington was the “Indispensable Man.” What made him so was his character and integrity. He was the exemplar of what a leader should be. We often lose sight of George Washington the man while admiring Washington the legend. But George Washington the man faced problems that many men before and since have faced.



“Patsy”

George Washington married Martha Dandridge Custis on January 6, 1759. He was 26, she was 27. Washington suddenly found himself responsible for a ready-made family. Martha Parke “Patsy” Custis aged two, and John Parke “Jackie” Custis aged four. In addition to the normal duties of a father in terms of providing love, warmth, and sympathy, George Washington was also charged with being the administrator of the children’s business affairs, which were not inconsiderable, considering that their late father, Daniel Parke Custis was perhaps the wealthiest man in Virginia. Martha Washington, herself, was required to relinquish her rights in the dower share of her late husband’s estate to the management of her new husband (If unmarried, Martha would have received 1/3 of Daniel’s Parke Custis’ estate for her use and maintenance during her lifetime. As it was the use of this money was left to the decisions of her new husband, George Washington). By all accounts George Washington was not only a loving husband and step father, but a conscientious guardian of the property rights of both his wife and her children.

The stage was set for familial peace and tranquility, but fate took a hand. By the time Patsy was eleven, she was plagued with seizures. Patsy was afflicted with epilepsy. The progression of Patsy’s epilepsy can be traced in George Washington’s diaries but only with difficulty. Washington’s diary entries are sparse, and never betray his inner emotions, which were under tight control.

George and Martha Washington were willing to try almost anything, even improbable folk remedies. The distraught parents relied, mainly, on conventional 18th-century medical treatments for epilepsy. This was doomed from the start. In colonial times, most physicians were either self-trained or trained by another physician. No medical college existed in the colonies before the Revolution. Lack of knowledge of the causes and cures of most diseases, effective medicines and pain-killers, and instruments such as the thermometer and stethoscope handicapped colonial doctors. The doctor's principal role was to provide comfort and support, set broken bones, and prescribe herbal remedies. Theories of medicine at the time were based on the notion that disease was caused by an imbalance in bodily "humors," or fluids. The practice of bloodletting for almost any disease was universal. Doctors also employed emetics, diuretics and leeches. The cures often killed the patient more quickly than did the disease.

The Washingtons consulted with numerous doctors to no avail. Patsy's seizures increased. George Washington kept a log of these episodes. During an eighty-six day period, Patsy had seizures on twenty-six days.

Around four in the afternoon on June 19, 1773, after everyone had finished dinner, Patsy (aged 17) and a girl friend were talking quietly. Patsy went to her room to retrieve a letter. Hearing a strange noise coming from Patsy's room, her friend found Patsy in the throes of a life-threatening seizure. Martha Washington was frantic. George Washington knelt beside his beloved step daughter he had raised from infancy with tears running down his cheeks. She was dead within two minutes.

In a letter to his brother-in-law written the following day, George Washington relayed the news that Patsy, described as his "Sweet Innocent Girl," had been buried earlier in the day and that the situation had "... reduced my poor Wife to the lowest ebb of Misery."