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Preface

It is the desire of the writer to create in you a growing interest in the part the waters through and around Virginia played in her sea going life. Her home ports, shipping, builders, owners, names of vessels, cargoes, distant ports, dangers and westward eyes.

Most of the material has come from the Virginia Gazettes of 1736 through 1766. The bibliography acknowledges the remainder.

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Home Ports

Fingers pointing ever eastward and to the land called home--far away to be sure--measured in miles, and measured in time in the eighteenth century, but still home. A place where the customs, the fashions, the food, clothing, buildings, flowers, lanes, in fact, everything, was a little dearer and a little better than anywhere else in the world.

Fingers made by the paths which were the connecting link with the former homes of the early settlers. Water paths, made by the broad blue rivers, the Potowmack, York, Rappahannock and James along which the settlers traveled and built their homes. Then the numerous lesser rivers as Nansemond, Pamunkey, Mattaponi, and many creeks and inlets gave to Virginia wonderful transportation facilities. Small and large water ways led to the great inland sea, Chesapeake bay, and thence out to the great Atlantic where the frail craft tossed about for weeks and months before reaching their destination. Few were the people who made the trip back home, but many boats ploughed through those bright green waters carrying necessities and luxuries back and forth.

The settlers chose their home sites along the shores of the rivers or creeks for many reasons. By the water's edge meant cheap transportation for crops, easy access to ones neighbors, who also lived on the river side, cooling breezes on hot summer days, lovely vistas across shady lawns to the water where craft of some kind were always passing.

The creeks were deep and many, there being on the Potowmack alone seventeen which were navigable, Wicomico, Coan, Yeocomico, Nomini Bay, Matox, Aquia, Quantico, Gunston Cove, Rosier, Doque Creek and many others--affording sheltered and safe landings.

If the homestead was small and far up the creek or where the water was shallow the cargo to be shipped away was put on flats and floated down to some landing belonging to one of the large planters, where a ship was waiting for a full cargo to start on her trip.

A neighborly call was made by river, fishing and crabbing parties, ~~which~~ gave diversion and helped the family larder.

The rivers were loved and enjoyed but many also were the tragedies, for near the mouths they were wide and dangerous.

The winds were sudden and treacherous, and at times a gallant youth going on a pleasure trip, possibly to see a charming lady in another part of the colony, would be lost because of sudden squalls. Such was the son of Mrs. Sarah Pache who was sailing down York River in one of Capt. Perrin's Schooners; "A hopeful youth of about eighteen years of age; had on a scarlet great coat, a new green Cloth Waistcoat with white Mettal Buttons, a new pair of Leather Breeches, a new Pair of Boots, a Silver watch in his pocket with a Silver ^{Seal} hanging to it; and a Mourning Ring on one of his Fingers". *

So desirable was it to own land which was of easy access to a river, that in advertising it for sale, one of the principal inducements was, that there was "a main Road from it to ... River".

* Virginia Gazette April 1741

Each large plantation had its own wharf and thus Virginia in her early days had many ports. The planter shipped his tobacco and received his consignment of European Goods at his own landing.

The captains who awaited their cargo were welcomed and often were entertained in the planter's homes, and attended to many commissions of buying, and delivering parcels to the relatives or friends across the water.

Shipping

The great advantage of these waterways early turned men's minds toward building boats for transportation.

I

Builders

In the year 1611 boats of 12 or 13 ton were built in Virginia and in 1613 a frigate was built at Point Comfort by Sir Samuel Arg^oll. In 1620 the Virginia Company at London subscribed a special fund to send shipwrights to Virginia, realizing that here were the materials, but not the workmen. The following year twenty-five came. In Jamestown were built shallops or small boats for the rivers, but the enterprise was not a great success and soon only a few competent shipwrights were left. The necessity for communication from plantation to plantation on the rivers later started great activity again in the construction of small boats, but few ships were built. At Norfolk there was some building of vessels going on most of the time although in colonial times it never grew into a great industry.

In 1751 "in the Borough Norfolk, the Sloop Molly, and also the Hull of a new Sloop both belonging to the Estate of Mr. Durham Hall deceas'd," were advertised by the executors Robert Tucker and Christopher Perkins. "Mr. William Rice desires to sell the Hull of a vessel now upon stocks at Norfolk and Thomas Talbore advertised two new vessels for sale, of 150 ton and 100 ton Burthen respectively. At Burwell's Ferry John Brown and Thomas M Cullock had new vessels for sale.

The firm of John Glasford and Co. of Glasgow contracted with Smith Sparrows for a ship in 1761 but few were sold outside of Virginia.

Even special inducements failed to start the ship building industry. England wanted tobacco and wanted her ships to carry it, so sent after it for many years. Indeed she passed laws which discouraged the building and owning of vessels by Virginians.

II

Owners

Still the ships, barks, brigs, brigantines, pinks and snows which crossed and recrossed the ocean, and the schooners, sloops, shallops, longboats, and flats which plied the bay; rivers and creeks, were many of them, Virginia built and Virginia owned.

Not only some of the planters owned sailing craft but merchants as well. The inventory of Robert Tucker in 1823 of Norfolk showed that he owned one brigantine, three sloops and three flats. John Tucker also owned three sloops and Zachariah Hutchings of Norfolk, owned quite a fleet of vessels, the schooner Catherine, the Sloop Nancy, Brigantine Jenny, Sloop Two Friends, Schooner Dinwiddie and the Sloop Polly. A merchant of Nansemond County, Theophilus Pugh, having borrowed large sums of money from Robert Cary of the city of London, mortgaged, besides lands and slaves, his ships William and Betty, Prosperous Esther, Sloops Little Molly, Little Betty, Schooners Nansemond Frigate and Pugh.

Col. Benj. Harrison was the owner of the Sloop Charming Anne and the Betty, and Col. Lewis of Gloucester of the Grampus, and

and Col. Mackensie of a Brigantine which tied up to the wharf at Hampton constantly.

At Mr. Littlepage's wharf in Pamunkey River was to be found the Snow John and Mary owned by Capt Perrin, and a schooner belonging to the late Capt. Dandridge, which was to be sold. Capt. Perrin also owned the Schooner Sarah "A Prime Sailor" which could be found in Sarah's Creek, York River. Capt. Hutchins of Norfolk owned the ship Industry, capacity 250 hogshead, built in Norfolk and turned into a "privateer".

Richard Hobday and Thomas Roberts were owners of a Sloop lying in Wormley's Creek near York Town, Jacob Johnson Wishart, of a schooner in Elizabeth River. Neil Jameson would let on charter the King of Prussia, 500 ton Burthen, and the Snow John and Snow Young Samuel. The Ship Caesar and the Sloop Indian Creek were owned by Capt. Nathaniel Tatum of Norfolk, the Emilia belonged to Hampton, as did one commanded by Capt. Wiltshire. One half the Sloop Dolphin belonged to Capt. George Bevan and even the Rev. Adam Dickie had owned a Schooner of 50 hogshead and a flat, which his administrator Anne Dickie desired to sell at Essex Court House. It could be seen at Hob's Hole. The medium of measurement of boats was so many hogshead of tobacco.

In 1764 Virginians owned 102 sea going vessels and they were manned by 827 sailors. *

III

Names

Most interesting are the names of all these white winged birds which fluttered backward and forward across the ocean and alighted in our coves and harbors for a brief period.. After exhausting the Mollys, Polly, Betty, Mary and all the other

* Public Record Office, London, Fauquier to Board of Trade.

women's and men's names and adding Little or Pretty to them, family and town names were chosen, as Dunlop, Wilcox, Gooch, Spotswood, Langborne, Meriwether, Harrison, Tayloe, Fairfax, Hopewell, Jamestown, Tappahannock, Fredericksburg, Prince of Denmark and then for novelty, Race Horse, Industry, Adventure, Success and Dolphin.

IV
Cargoes

The Duke of Cumberland or the Dutchess of Queensberry arrived in Virginia laden with European Goods, linens, woolens, Kersey, Rugs, Hats, both men and womens, Fustain, worsted and Thread stockings, cutlery, Haberdashery, Powder, shot, corks, copper stills, Cardage of all Sizes, drugs of all kinds, including "Carraway Comfits". Then there was a "Choice Parcel of Hair" and an occasional passenger.

They left for Britain laden principally with tobacco, barrel staves and "skins", deer and beaver especially, "In 1633 a certain merchant exported from the Potomac alone beaver skins to the value of 40,000 gold crowns". * Iron was sent and sassafras root, snakeroot and ginseng which were probably returned to us as drugs. Many ton of elephant teeth were sent over, having come to Virginia in the slave ships. From the West Indies we received Rum, Sugar and Molasses, and sent back Corn, "pease", pork, beef and shingles. Enormous quantities of rum came into the colony and was often used as partial payment for work done. A ship carpenter in 1759 was paid four shillings and one pint of rum, a day. Coastwise vessels brought Wooden ware, Iron ware, fish, cheese, bricks by 80,000 at

* Wilstach Potomac Landings, p. ?

a time, and the always sure seller, rum; and took home wheat, corn, pease. Tar, pitch and turpentine were brought in from North Carolina and sent off to England or the West Indies.

From Africa came "choice young slaves", elephants' teeth and once some scrivilloes; but there were few vessels which returned direct to Africa. Most of them took on tobacco for England. Often the names of ships in the slave trade and the Masters names, are omitted from the papers.

There was one port from which a vessel was always welcome, and that was the Isle of May. From there came the major supply of salt and often in winter and stormy weather the colony was in dire need of salt.

Virginia appears to have furnished large quantities of grain to ^{the} West Indies and to the other colonies.

V

Ports

Her ports of entrance were many, the places from which her cargoes came were numerous, as the following list indicates; from London, Glasgow, York, Aberdeen, St. Kitts, Barbary, Montrose, Lisbon, Cape d' Verd, Dublin, Liverpool, Bassaterre, Bristol, Whitehaven, Nevis, Bordeaux, Boston, Anguilla, Nova Scotia, Curacoa, Rhode Island, Salem, St. Croix, Piscataqua, Philadelphia, Antigua, St. Christopher's, Madeira, North Carolina, Halifax, Guinea, Virgin Islands, Isle of May, Diep, Exeter, Jamaica, New Hampshire, Perth Amboy, Gainsborough, Brest, Gold Coast, Irvine, Leith, Turks Island, Guernsey, Limerick, New York, Gambia, Lynn Regis, Cadiz, Hull, Gibraltar, Greenock, Montferat, Dumfries, Newcastle, Louisburg and the Straits.

VI

Dangers

They returned to the same ports facing many dangers on each journey, for there were storms to weather through, accidents to masts or ruddens, and leaks in the hull, or the same fate as the Speedwell under Capt. Clark--might await them; burning at sea. The sailors were sturdy, and tempests and all the other dangers had no terrors for them. They stuck to their posts.

During the times when countries were at war with one another, the seas were infested by pirates, and many daring young men in search of adventure and profit, fitted out vessels as privateers. These were encouraged by the governor of the Colony.

While England was at war with Spain, the Spanish vessels combed the sea lanes to catch the traders who ventured out alone, or even with one or two more in the company.

How anxious the relatives and friends of the men at sea must have been when these added perils came, and there must have been a sigh of relief and a prayer of thanksgiving when the newspaper came into their hands with this news, "Arrived in England safe from Rappahannock Virginia, The Herriott and Theodosia, Wm Read; Union, William Moverly; Charles, Thomas Teage; from James River The Kitty and Nora, James McCulloch; William and Betty, John Turner; Amy, Jonas Newham; Mercury, William Clack; Sally, Thomas Bolling."

What sorrow when the following appeared "Arrived at Hampton---; and some Seamen belonging to the Ship Jenny, Capt. Bogle, from Glasgow; who gave an account of the said Ship being taken on

her Passage to Virginia by a Spanish Register Ship. The John, Capt. Bland, mentioned in our last, is certainly taken, as is also the --- Capt. Higgins from Rappahannock."

The men taken on the captured vessels were put into prisons and often suffered great hardships.

Prize Ships were brought into Virginia and advertised, "To be sold, at Swan Tavern in York Town to the highest bidders, for ready Money, Prize Ships Czar of Muscovy and St. Vincent, with their Guns and apparel, also their Cargoes, consisting of Sugar, Rum, Coffee, Indigo, Ginger and Cotton--John Hunter."

Into York River came Capt. Robinson, Capt. Whiting and Capt. Crawford from London with the Elizabeth, a French Prize Ship. The Three Captains went to Court about the division of the spoils. The Court decided they should share equally so the cargo of sugar, indigo and a parcel of choice Mahogany Plank was sold. "The Capt., Mate and others are brought up and made Prisoners". One wonders into whose mansion went that "choice Mahogany Plank" or whether unknowingly one may be living in the same house with some furniture made from it.

Virginia gentlemen fitted out ships for the same purpose of taking prizes, as the following notice testifies, "The Earl of Stair, a new Snow Privateer Commanded by Walter Codd only, burdened 150 Ton, mounted with 18 Carriage and 30 Swivel Guns, intended to carry 150 men, being the compleatest Vessel that ever was built in this Colony for the Purpose, will be ready to proceed on a Cruize, by the 1st of November at farthest. All persons that incline to go in said Vessel, as Officers or otherwise, let them repair to the Town of Norfolk, with the greatest Dispatch, where they shall

meet with good Encouragement from Walter Codd". *

The Privateer Raleigh lying at Norfolk Town, Capt. Mason Miller, was to sail on a Cruize by 10th of October at farthest. The gentlemen who "ventured" their money fitting out the Raleigh were rewarded when she captured a French Ship worth above 5000 £, and a small sloop. The wine was brought to Virginia and the other part of the cargo disposed of at St. Kitts. Many a toast undoubtedly was given using that wine, when the men returned home

"We have Advice, That the Ship Hanover, Capt. Churchman, and the James River, Capt. Kennon bound from Bristol to Virginia are taken and carried into France."

So many vessels were captured that the Governor and Council hir'd a Sloop belonging to Col. Mackenzie to be fitted out "for a Guard la Coast."

So great were the dangers in venturing out on the open sea, that trade suffered, and boats went in small fleets, or under convoy.

Capt. Charles Friend in the Ship Carteret bound for London, knows the perils and takes precautions, so going down the James River to Hampton, he is joyn'd by a Ship and a Brig which he has charter'd; so also by the following ships from Maryland, which lie in Hampton Road ready for sailing, viz; The Baltimore, Biggs; the Charles, Seahorse, Alexander, Philip and Peter, Priscilla, Cambridge, Bond, Ruby, William and Ann."

Governor William Gooch issued a proclamation announcing "That I shall be ready to Grant Commission of Marque and Reprizal for Arming and Fitting out private Ships of War, for the apprehending, Seizing, and taking the Ships, Vessels and Goods, belonging to the King of Spain, his Vassals and subjects. Several of our Merchants

* Sent. 19-26--1746 Va. Gaz.

have been long complaining of the Difficulties and Dangers they underwent in sending their Vessels to Sea, lest they should be taken by the Spaniards, they have now a fair opportunity of redressing their Grievances, by making Reprisals on their Enemies; and it is not doubted but there are Men of Spirit as well as ability, in this Colony, who will fit out Vessels for that Purpose, to the Honour and Interest of themselves and their Country."

Westward Eyes

Seafaring in a broad sense surely were the people of early Virginia, for from creek to creek, the barks and shallops of the traders went, gathering furs and grains, or the flats of the planters floated, down to some boat waiting in a nearby river or loading for the trip overseas. As ships became larger they found difficulty in ascending the rivers. Eyes, hearts and interests gradually were turning from over seas, and desirable land on the rivers having been taken, settlements were extending far into the interior where produce had to be hauled to some landing. Gradually there came to be certain points where the waters were deep which were collecting places, and there the ships awaited their cargoes. That meant fewer ports or entrance landings. Loading by piecemeal was not economical, and owners of vessels desired them loaded quickly so they could be on their way again. Norfolk became one of the assembling places and Byrd in his writings speaks of the number of vessels to be seen any day at the wharves there, although the Virginia Gazette rarely had shipping news from that place. As though to recall the ^awandering eyes, and catch and hold the interest of the public to the sea, the advertisements in the newspaper printed a picture. The first picture to appear in the Virginia Gazette. Amid the pages, one or two, of advertisements for run away slaves, land and house notices, and live stock "ads". there suddenly arises a picture of a ship, her stern toward you and her bows pointed to some far off shore. That picture I am sure riveted the attention of all

readers when it appeared on November 7th, 1754.

The value of imports into Virginia in a year at about the middle of the century, principally at the Ports of Norfolk and Portsmouth was \$4,300,000. *

At some of the Potomac landings "there were six ships riding in the Harbour and a number of Schooners and smaller Vessels."

In the middle of the 18th Century "there were in the tobacco trade alone between Virginia and England 330 ships and 3000 sailors." * Vessels in local trade and ships between river landings, in coast wise, and West Indian trade, increased the number enormously.

Vessels from London and British ports were as familiar in the rivers as local schooners and sloops and what joy must have been in the hearts of captain and sailors alike when, after battling for weeks and often more than three whole months with the storms and waves of the Atlantic, they sailed lazily and securely up one of the rivers.

The quiet waters reflecting the blue sky, and the vivid green of tree or field on either side. Like tired birds with white wings drooping they must have nestled close to their landings.

Deep in the hearts of the young girls of the household was the thrill of anticipation as they watched them from shaded porch or lawn. Anticipation of some new piece of jewelry, silks for dresses, or some of London's latest fashion fancies, which were to come from some of the unloaded boxes on the morrow. Mother would be wondering if her commissions had been filled properly or must

* Burton, History of Norfolk, Va.

* Wilstach, Potomac Landings.

be returned, whether the new table linen, glass or china had arrived. The whole family would look forward to the unloading, and father would be equally interested as to when the ship was going to be loaded for her return journey, and the cargo be taken in payment for the received "European Goods".

So did the sea, for it runs its hundred and more miles back up the rivers, beat not only upon the shores of Virginia, but upon the hearts and lives of her people.

Ship Priscilla Richard Williams

Sloop John & Mary Richard Tillidge

Bringantine Henry & Benjamin

Sloop Betty

Schooner Sanders

Sloop Providence

Brig. Polly

Brig. Charming Anne

Sloop Anne

Schooner Catherine

Brig. Abington

Schooner Lark

Sloop Molly

Snow Mary & John

Sloop phoenix

Sloop Robert

Brig. Priscilla

Sloop Industry John White

Brig Mary

Schooner Grampus

Sloop Coan

Sloop Susannah

Brig. Little Molly

Sloop Nancy

Snow Kitty & Nora

Brig Robert & John

Brig. Pretty Betsy

Sloop Dolphin

- Schooner Penguin
- Ship Banff
- Schooner Sarah
- Brigt. Loetitia
- Schooner. John & Eleanor
- Ship Bobby
- Sloop Johnston
- Schooner Wilcox
- Schooner Fredericksburg
- Schooner Bon Accord
- Sloop Tappahannock
- Fairfax
- Dunlop
- Judith
- Caple
- Hopewell
- Harrison
- Tayloe

Ships in Slave Trade - Virginia Gazette - 1736-1766

Alice	Capt. Richard Jackson
Black Prince	William Millar
Tryal	Joseph Little
Boyne	William Wilkinson
Snow Castleton	Henry Tindall
Snow Two Brothers	
Ship Gildart	
Snow Planter	Thomas Foulkes
Ship Johnson of Liverpool	James Gildart
Ship Hobhouse of Bristol	John Bartlett
Ship Brice of Bristol	Abraham Saunders
Bridget	
Ship Faulcon of London	Halden Young
Anna of London	James Straghan
Ship Prince of Orange	Japhet Bird
Sloop Bobby	Paul Loyall
Ship Penelope	Anthony Gother
Greyhound	Capt. Davis
Snow Levant of Bristol	James McMurde
Samuel and James	John Smith
Little Harry	James Mudie
Betsie	Cornelius Oncal
Snow George	Charles Cook
Happy Snow of Whitehaven	Henry Harrison
Elizabeth of Liverpool	William Hayes
Snow Penelope of Bristol	John Clark
Minerva of Liverpool	Thomas Jordan
Fredericksburg of Rappahannock	William Holmes

Schooner Bon Accord of Virginia

James Nisbett

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Snow Africa

James Lundin

Ann Galley

Alexander Robe

Ship Hampton

Edward Wittshire

Brigantine Orrel

Ship Appolo

Elias Glover

Bassa

Richard Clegg