

# GUNSTON GRAPEVINE



JUNE  
2017

ONE OF THE MANY THINGS THAT I ADMIRE AND RESPECT ABOUT GEORGE MASON is his frequent expression of his first duty and obligation being that of husband and father.

Clearly, while also managing his plantation and serving publicly in a variety of capacities, Mason understood what was ultimately most important—his family. It is with Mason's example as a model that we work diligently and thoughtfully to create, support, and sustain the Gunston Hall family today.

Comprised of Regents, Former Regents, members of the Board of Visitors, staff, volunteers, and friends, neighbors, and supporters, the Gunston Hall family is large, diverse, and strong. It is this family that allows us to effectively and successfully serve as stewards of Gunston Hall, educate thousands of students and families, operate a complex business enterprise, and generate and manage the resources necessary to make it all happen 363 days each year.

As such, it is with a great sense of respect and admiration, as well as with a sincere sense of sadness, that I am announcing Frank Barker's retirement from the staff at Gunston Hall. Frank, our Assistant Education Coordinator for 8 years and a former (and future) member of the Gunston Hall Docents' Association, has been and always

will be part of the Gunston Hall family.

As many of you know, Frank's role at Gunston Hall included serving as Editor and creative director of the *Grapevine* and this issue will be the last *Grapevine* published by Frank.

Enjoyed by friends of Gunston Hall too numerous to document, the *Grapevine* has informed, educated, inspired, and promoted the stories and history of Gunston Hall since its inception. The detailed and meticulously researched articles, the compelling and artistic photographs, and the attractive and inviting design have served as a hallmark of our organization's public programming for years.

It is fitting, therefore, that I and we all take this opportunity to recognize Frank's exemplary and dedicated work in publishing this superb newsletter—thank you, Frank!

Additionally, Frank, a Navy veteran and retired public school teacher, has been a critical member of our education team and his work as Assistant Education Coordinator has focused on facilitating and coordinating all school and student based field trips and associated programs at Gunston Hall.

Close to 100,000 students have benefited from Frank's efforts in this regard since he joined our team and the success of these important and mission critical programs is due in large

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part to Frank’s dedicated service.

Finally, Frank has performed a host of “other duties as assigned” at Gunston Hall including serving as our staff photographer, performing as a living history interpreter, providing the blessing at wreath laying ceremonies and other functions, and supporting his colleagues and our organization in any way possible as our offerings have grown and expanded.

Frank is retiring for the purpose of spending more time with his family and his growing number of grandchildren.



Frank Barker in his role as a storyteller during Kite Festival 2017. Believe what he says at your peril, because as he tells his listeners, “I’m a storyteller, and I lie.” photo by Janis Harless

While we will miss Frank, our friend George Mason would surely recognize and appreciate the value of serving first as husband, father, and grandfather and the entirety of Frank’s Gunston Hall family does as well. Thank you, Frank, and enjoy your time with family!

In closing, please rest as-

sured that even after Frank’s departure, Gunston Hall will continue publishing a newsletter. We are presently implementing strategies supporting this commitment and stay tuned for future issues!

Scott Muir Stroh III  
Executive Director

### *In this issue*

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### **Gunston Grapevine**

The Grapevine is a news magazine for, of, and by the Gunston Hall community. It is an open forum and welcomes all articles, questions, and comments. It has been edited since July 2009 by me, Frank Barker. This is my final issue, as I am retiring. It has been a pleasure. Thank you for the articles, the feedback, and for taking the time to read and view the Grapevine. May we all have fair winds and following seas

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# SPRING at Gunston Hall



Above: at Cocktails by Candlelight in March  
hearth cook **Renée Mahoney** prepares syllabub  
for visitors.

Below: The Capital Triumph Register hosted  
hundreds of vintage British vehicles for their an-  
nual Britain on the Green event at Gunston Hall  
in April.

Museum Shop assistant  
**Anna Griffin** inspects the  
inside of a light globe during  
a spring cleaning session in  
the Ann Mason room.



Members of the 2nd Virginia portray the Fairfax Independent  
Militia Company at Revolutionary War Day in May.

Fourth grader **Blake Christensen** won this year's Gunston Hall Writing Award with his essay "The Right to Trial by Jury." Here, Blake is flanked by his proud parents. He is a student in **Julianne Roque's** class at Freedom Hill Elementary School in Vienna. Blake won \$75 and a scholarship to the Writing Workshop in May. Photo by Lacey Villiva



## The Spring Adventures Continue

Above: poet **Carolyn Kreiter-Foronda** listens as a young writer shares her own poetry at the Writing Workshop at Gunston Hall on May 6. Far left: an appropriately dressed family visits and stops for a photo session at the smokehouse. Left: a young guest rolls the dice during a human-sized game of the American Revolution based on George Mason's writings. Below: an ice cream man draws the attention of visitors, both human and canine, during the Britain on the Green event in April.



Docent **Nancy Sage** and consultant **Tiffany McGettigan** discuss the nuances of a tour in the Little Parlor. Tiffany has been working with the docents and educational staff to update the school tours to align with new Virginia Standards of Learning.

Docent **John Murphy** instructs 4th graders in proper deportment during Colonial Day. Two spring Colonial Days attracted a total of 670 students from 7 different schools.





**The Sights of  
Kite Festival**

**April 1,  
2017**



## Rare Insights

a continuing feature about Gunston Hall's collections

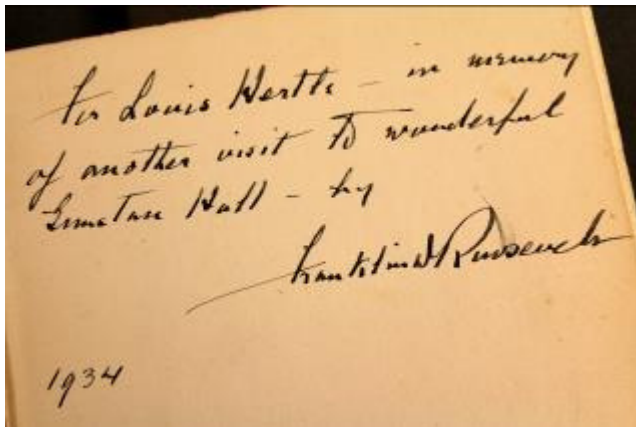
By Bill Huntington & Kevin Culhane,  
Research Volunteers

# The Roosevelts and Gunston Hall

ON A SHELF IN THE RARE BOOK AND ARCHIVES ROOM, nestled among 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> century tomes bound in leather, are two rather down-at-the-heels looking volumes in modern blue cloth bindings.

The titles on the spine are indecipherable and their significance is not apparent until you open them. Entitled *On Our Way* (1933) and *Looking Forward* (1934), their author, Franklin D. Roosevelt [FDR] personally inscribed each volume to Gunston Hall's last private owner, Louis Hertle.

These volumes are material evidence of an enduring relationship between the Hertles and the Roosevelts. The origins of this friendship are unclear, but papers in the Hertle collection at Gunston Hall indicate it went back at least to the late 1920s when FDR was governor of New York.



On the first page of *Looking Forward*, Roosevelt noted that it was presented to Mr. Hertle "in memory of another visit to wonderful Gunston Hall. 1934."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hertle further expands upon the visit in his Sunday, April 29, 1934, journal entry. He recorded that "The President with Mrs. Roosevelt and son came bringing luncheon and 14 Todhunter School graduating class. Had two hours of delightful visit with the President and son in Pergola. His last word in waving good bye was he would change Ft Humphrey [sic] to Ft Belvoir."<sup>2</sup>

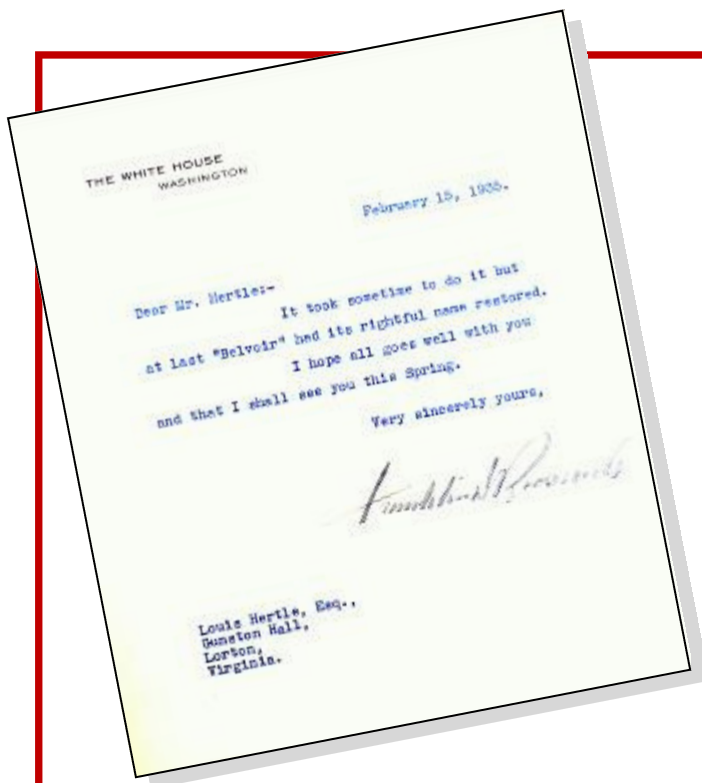
The area that is now Fort Belvoir was established in 1917 as Camp Humphreys where the Army trained engineers during World War I. A.A. Humphreys was a noted Civil War general and after the war became the Army's Chief of Engineers. In 1922 the camp was designated a permanent military facility, Fort Humphreys, and was the home of one of the Army's engineering regiments.

For the locals, however, this was always a site associated with William Fairfax's Belvoir plantation.<sup>3</sup> It seems Mr. Hertle was also most unhappy with the Army's name choice. He clearly lobbied his friend President Roosevelt during this visit to return the name "Belvoir" to this historic area.

On Feb. 19, 1935, Hertle received a note on White House stationery from Roosevelt. The Commander-in-Chief wrote that he had kept his parting promise, and that "It took some time to do it but at last 'Belvoir' had its rightful name restored. I hope all goes well with you and that I shall see you this Spring."<sup>4</sup>

It is unclear if Roosevelt was able to return to Gunston Hall, although Eleanor Roosevelt appears to have made several repeat visits. On Aug. 13, 1934, Louis Hertle recorded that Mrs. Roosevelt, her secretary and two other ladies had come for tea. For many years he sent her "Lavender bags" as a Christmas present. The First Lady always responded with a handwritten note of

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thanks. The relationship between FDR and Mr. Hertle endured.

In 1935, he appointed Hertle to the Board of the Natural Parks Trust Fund. Hertle, for his part, reciprocated this esteem. For example, at least through 1942, he noted the occasion of Roosevelt's birthday in his journal.

It is interesting to think that Gunston Hall, where Washington and Jefferson found respite, would also become a place in which another president also found rest from a hectic public life.

<sup>1</sup>*Looking Forward* is a compendium of speeches and policy papers describing FDR's plans to end the Great Depression. It is still in print.

<sup>2</sup>The Todhunter School was a private preparatory high school in New York City that catered to upper-class girls. Eleanor and several friends bought the school in 1927. She taught courses in American literature, English, and current affairs until her husband was elected President. She continued to be associated with the school until 1938. In 1939, at Eleanor's urging,

Todhunter merged with the Dalton School, which still operates today as a member of the Ivy Preparatory School League.

<sup>3</sup>Locals were not happy about the establishment of Camp Humphreys because it involved resettlement of many families who owned the land around the proposed camp site as their property was condemned and taken over by the government through the right of eminent domain.

<sup>4</sup>Stories circulated that the reason there are no photographs from this visit in 1934 was due to Roosevelt's sensitivity about any photograph that might underscore the difficulty of his handicap. Moving the President from the house to the pergola in his wheelchair over a gravel path was not an easy undertaking. As a result, all staff and onlookers were asked to keep their distance and respect the visitors' privacy.

The Fort Belvoir area still has ties to Major General Humphreys through the nearby Army Corps of Engineers Humphreys Center.





# Emma Specht and The Gunston Cult

**By Claudia Wendling**  
Archaeology Volunteer

The presentation of Gunston Hall focuses – quite rightly – on its founder and most famous resident, George Mason. The years since Mason’s death has seen Gunston Hall occupied by a series of individuals who could be considered interesting and even colorful. Most of them have rather engaging stories emerging from their time at Gunston. What follows is one of those stories. It has been excerpted and slightly edited from a paper originally included in an archaeology annual report\*. (By the way, “The Gunston Cult” was originally a headline in a newspaper at the time the events described took place.)

Dave Shonyo, staff archaeologist

**T**HE FAIRFAX HERALD ISSUE OF JULY 24, 1891, contained the following item: “Gunston, the home of the celebrated George Mason, of this county, has been sold by Col. Edward Daniel [Daniels] to Mrs. Emma H. Specht, wife of Jos. Specht, of St. Louis. The tract sold contains 315 acres, including the dwelling house and the price paid was \$10,000.”

It wasn’t long after the sale to Emma Specht that Gunston Hall, its inhabitants and some of their neighbors became the subject of local, national and international news. Gunston Hall received much attention, but not for its hallowed halls, but for scandalous events. *The New York Times* ran Joseph Specht’s obituary in their Sept. 14, 1902, issue. According to this obituary Joseph Specht was a wealthy merchant of St. Louis; had bought Gunston Hall ten years prior to his death and had acquired additional acreage, giving him around 1,000 acres.

It also says he planted with the help of many men 50,000 rose bushes. Now that we know a little about Joseph Specht a



Gunston Hall as it appeared when it was the home of Joseph and Emma Specht, circa 1900.  
From the Gunston Hall archives

glimpse of Emma Specht is in order. This glimpse comes to us in *The Washington Times* gossip column. Published in the paper on May 27, 1894, the pertinent sections are as follows:

A party of St. Louis ladies were discussing the Specht story that recently appeared in the Times.

“Yes, I knew Mrs. Specht well in St. Louis,” said one. “The Spechts lived in one of the most elegant houses on West Pine Street, one of the fashionable neighborhoods of the city. Mrs. Specht was a great swell in St. Louis Society, but was always thought to be rather peculiar.

“She wrote an exoteric novel called ‘Alferida,’ [Alfreda] was pretty thoroughly roasted by the papers in which Mr. Specht was not an advertiser. Nobody ever read the book that I know of, although some of her friends had periodical spells of attempting to do so. It was a wishy washy version of a love affair of her own,

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with some unintelligible mysticism thrown in. She sent a copy of it to Queen Victoria.

Mrs. Specht professed to be the most unselfish of women, and posed generally before the public as a follower of Prince Gautama, but her generosity existed mainly in giving large amounts where they would redound to her credit publicly." ...

"Mrs. Specht had a class of ladies in St. Louis who met at her house to study the occult arts. These studies were directed by Dr. Howard, who received applicants if he approved their character, which he said he could read from their autograph. ...

"Mrs. Specht was enthusiastic about her life at Gunston Hall after Mr. Specht purchased the property. She described the old house full of memories of the past. To her friends in St. Louis the crystal well water, the golden butter, the home-made bread, and the abundant fruit that grew there were dwelt upon, and she invited them all to visit her. ..."

The scandalous events that happened in and around Gunston Hall were reported by many newspapers of the time. However, an account that was published by a New Zealand newspaper, *The Nelson Evening Mail*, did a great job of explaining the various events that transpired. The fact that this news made it to a New Zealand paper speaks to the enormity of the scandal to the people of this era. The newspaper's account was published Sept. 14, 1894, on page four, is titled, *A Sensational Story, Charmed by a Fakir* and appeared as follows:

Washington, July 22. -----

Divorce proceedings have been instituted at Fairfax Courthouse by Mrs. Specht against Millionaire Joseph Specht, formerly of St. Louis, but now residing in Gunston Hall, a few miles below this city.

The action of Mrs. Specht in filing the suit for divorce is probably the beginning of the last chapter in one of the most sensational dramas that has ever been played in real life.

While living in St. Louis some years ago there entered into the household of the Spechts Dr Granby Staunton Howard, according to himself, a man of many titles, the descendant of thirty barons and high priest of the Occidental Order of Sat Bal Kooha.

He gave everyone who met him the impression that he was exceedingly wealthy and dropped vague hints of a supernatural power of compact with the evil one and of various other like attainments he possessed.

He was of prepossessing appearance, gifted with splendid conversational powers, and as a result was cordially welcomed into the circle in which the Spechts moved.

The Spechts, however, were persons whom he especially cultivated, and he soon gained a control over Mrs. Specht which that lady has evidently been unable to withstand. Mr. Specht, becoming tired of St. Louis, purchased the Gunston Hall estate, on the Virginia bank of the Potomac River, and removed his family to his new home.

Dr. Howard came with them

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and started a school of occultism, of which Mrs. Specht was to be made high priestess. He made this institution, it is alleged, the means of draining thousands of dollars from Mrs. Specht. Mr. Specht remonstrated in vain. His wife would not give up the Sage of Aru, as Dr. Howard called himself.

In the meantime Gunston Hall and Benvenue [now Overlook], another of Mr. Specht's estates, had been deeded to Mrs. Specht. Mrs. Specht made a demand for an increase of 3000dol. in her allowance in March last. Her request was refused. She thereupon declared if her wish was not complied with she would not reside any longer in Gunston Hall.

In April she made a will giving Howard Gunston Hall and her daughter Adelaide, Benvenue, and appointing Howard executor. Mr. Specht employed detectives to find out who Howard was, and fearing exposure, the "Sage of Aru" fled.

In her application for a divorce Mrs. Specht alleges cruel treatment, and asks for alimony. The allegation of cruelty made by her is said to grow out of her husband's attempt to bring to an end the influence of Howard.

The Specht's story was definitely sensational for its time and obviously sent a shock wave through the community that spread like wild fire through this country and other parts of the world. *The Washington Times* ran an article covering the latest events and happenings of the story on May 15, 1894.

The article gives an interesting account of Mr. Howard and also the report of a Gunston resident and former Gunston Hall employee of the Spechts, Mr. Walter Haislip. The following section of the article paints a vivid picture of Dr. Granby S. Howard:

The accomplishments of this man seemed unlimited, his learning appeared unbounded, he was apparently possessed of strange occult powers. He averred that a most peculiar array of spirits frequented his abode. The devil came to him and had little chats. Noted men of the past who had tread the floors of Gunston Hall came to his bedside at night and made his acquaintance . . .

The self-asserting and fanatical snide kept his weird and fantastical schemes before his people continually, until he succeeded in exerting a hypnotic and almost supernatural influence over them, particularly Mrs. Specht....

Valuable corroboration of the story was given last night by Mr. Walter Haislup, of the city, who was at one time the foreman of the Specht estate. He says it is almost impossible to make an estimate of the amount of money swindled from the people, as there were several residents of Baltimore and other places who succumbed to the senseless protestations of this duper. ...

Mrs. Haislup said that Mrs. Specht had often talked to her upon the subject and appeared to be sane on what she said, but she was so hypnotized she would sell anything to give money to Howard.

Mrs. Haislip may have been right in

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her opinion about Mrs. Specht's willingness to part with her worldly goods for Dr. Howard -- possibly even Gunston Hall, which was deeded in her name. Dr. Granby S. Howard gives his side of the story in an interview for *The Washington Times*. He had fled to Montreal, Canada, and was living there with his wife when the interview took place. Published on June 19, 1894, the following excerpt, explaining his side of the story, is as follows:

In 1890 Col. Price lectured on the new doctrine, and he was sent for to assist him. His success was such that on his return to Montreal he received letters suggesting that he should organize a home for students of their religion and the aged and sick.

He was to teach Brahminism [Brahmanism] as it was before the days of Buddha, as preserved by a certain sect of priests in India. Mrs. Specht having offered to furnish funds, he went to St. Louis and was given \$500 without any condition as to its application or control....

The money was spent on the purchase and improvement of a

five-acre park, with houses, adjoining Gunston Hall. He claims that all was going well until a few months ago, when Specht and his son endeavored to steal from Mrs. Specht the right to the Gunston Hall property.



He met Mr. and Mrs. Specht and son at the St. James hotel, Washington, on May 10, where Specht tried to force his wife to give up her claim. Failing in this, he locked her in her room, and, with his son, got out a warrant charging her with lunacy.

Howard was to be called as a material wit-

ness, but it was soon seen that before a jury who knew nothing of the strange religions, Mrs. Specht had accepted the doctor's testimony of his oaths and obligations she had taken would surely result in a verdict in accordance with the charge of lunacy.

In order to save Mrs. Specht he departed for Canada.

Most likely the truth lies somewhere in the middle of all the player's stories. Perhaps, Mr. Specht did indeed only turn on Howard when he feared Gunston Hall would become the property of Dr. Howard.

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It is uncertain who the real villain was, but despite who was to blame, these events proved tragic to the Specht family. Caught in the midst of all of this were four Specht children – one a minor girl named Adelaide. Mrs. Specht ended up filing for divorce in Fairfax County in July of 1894. Joseph Specht's response to her charges of cruelty appeared in *The Washington Times* on August 5, 1894, as follows:

Specht denies his wife's charges of cruelty, and alleges that she is not in her right mind. Mrs. Specht, according to her husband's statements, is under the influence and control of Dr. Granby Staunton Howard, whom, he says, is an imposter claiming to be a dual incarnation of Christ and Buddha.

He further alleges that Dr. Howard is responsible for the alienation of his wife's affections, and his doctrines have caused her to become mentally irresponsible. Mr. Specht says that his wife lavished money upon Dr. Howard "and his schemes of humbuggery, even going so far as to pawn her jewels for him." Believing his wife to be insane, Specht asks the court to grant the custody of their daughter to him. He does not deny his wealth nor refuse to make ample and suitable provision for his deluded wife. (TWT, 5 August 1894:1)

Joseph and Emma Specht did not get divorced in the end. Instead, they entered into an indenture or a contractual agreement. The Washington Loan and Trust Company was the trustee of the agreement. Among other

things Mr. and Mrs. Specht agreed to separate and not cohabit for the remainder of their marriage. Mr. Specht agreed to deposit with the trustee \$150.00 on the first day of each month to be given to his wife. He also agreed to deposit with the trustee \$30,000 in stocks of his company, Famous Shoe and Clothing Company of St. Louis, Mo., to be held as collateral for the monthly payments to his wife through the trustee.

Most importantly are the terms of the agreement concerning Gunston Hall. Per the agreement, Emma Specht was to do the following:

...to execute such conveyances of the property in Fairfax County, State of Virginia, known as Gunston Hall and Ben Venue as shall be necessary to vest title to same in said party hereto of the first part [Joseph Specht], and if requested by him, is to unite with him in any future deed or deeds of said property and also of any other real estate, owned or to be owned by him, .... (FCCC 1895)

This agreement between Joseph Specht and Emma Specht was signed



JOSEPH SPECHT.

Joseph and Emma Specht of St. Louis purchased Gunston Hall in 1891. It remained in the family until 1907.

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on Dec. 18, 1895. The same day the deed to Gunston Hall was conveyed by Emma E. H. Specht and Joseph Specht to Jesse E. Potbury and by deed, also dated Dec. 18, 1895, Jesse E. Potbury conveyed the property to Joseph Specht (HAT (1947), GHA). So, in a nutshell, Emma Specht traded her title to Gunston Hall and Ben Venue for her freedom and \$150 a month for her lifetime.

Joseph Specht lived out the rest of

his life at Gunston Hall and died there in September of 1902, leaving no will. Adelaide Specht, daughter of Joseph and Emma Specht sold Gunston Hall to its next owner Paul and Vaughn Kester in 1907.

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\* The full text and citations may be found in: Miervaldis, Wendy and Claudia Wendling. 2011. "Coming Full Circle at Gunston Hall," in Archaeological Investigations at Gunston Hall (44FX113): Report on 2010 Activities. Pages 45 – 143. Manuscript on file at Gunston Hall.



*Gunston Hall in more contemporary times,, 11:23 a.m. on Tuesday, May 23, 2017.*

By Jerry Foster  
Archaeological  
Volunteer

**S**EVERAL  
YEARS AGO,  
Dr. Gary  
Knipling  
conducted a fall  
nature walk lead-  
ing from Gunston  
Hall along the  
path to the Poto-  
mac River.

We stopped by  
a pawpaw tree,  
and sang the old  
song:

Where oh where is dear little Nellie?  
Where oh where is dear little Nellie?  
Where oh where is dear little Nellie?  
'Way down yonder in the paw-paw patch.  
Come on boys, let's go find her,  
Come on boys, let's go find her,  
Come on boys, let's go find her,  
'Way down yonder in the paw-paw patch.  
Picking up paw-paws, puttin' 'em in your  
pocket,  
Picking up paw-paws, puttin' 'em in your  
pocket,  
Picking up paw-paws, puttin' 'em in your  
pocket.  
'Way down yonder in the paw-paw patch.  
(Smithsonian)

After the song, Gary distributed samples of the  
ripe, delicious pawpaw. And, recently Lesley  
Rakowski, archaeological volunteer accompanied  
by fellow volunteer Carol Boland, discovered a  
pawpaw patch in bloom in a ravine immediately  
south of Guston's formal garden; It was Carol,  
who asked to have the flower identified, and initi-  
ated this article.

We don't know whether George Mason cultivat-  
ed, or even ate pawpaws, but we do know neigh-  
bor George Washington made a point to trans-  
plant them, sometimes not successfully, into what  
he called his "shrubberies." There is a rumor that,

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# Way down yonder *Gunston's pawpaws: a native American tree*



*Part of Gunston Hall's pawpaw patch in May. This patch is near the River Trail. Photo by F. Barker.*



*The pawpaw flower, destined to turn into a fruit that's been described as tasting like a cross between a mango and a banana. Photo courtesy of Carol Boland.*

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when in season, he ate chilled pawpaw fruit for dessert.<sup>1</sup>

### NATIVE AMERICANS

Native Americans may have initiated a selective breeding process by which seeds from the most flavorful pawpaw fruit were selected for reproduction, or by weeding out trees that were not so productive. Later generations, including African Americans, would continue this process, and we benefit from that today.

“To extend the pawpaw harvest, the fruit was often dried and later cooked into stews and sauces. The Iroquois, for example, who called the fruit hadi'ot, dried and mixed them in sauces, as well as cooking them into corn cakes. Since corn is low in digestible niacin, Iroquoian cuisine demonstrates a beneficial pairing: pawpaws are incredibly high in this particular nutrient. Other breads, cakes, sauces, and relishes were also made from fresh and dried pawpaws.”<sup>2</sup>



*A ripe pawpaw fruit. From the U.S. Department of Agriculture Pomological Watercolor Collection. Rare and Special Collections, National Agricultural Library, Beltsville, MD 20705*

### AFRICAN AMERICANS

“For enslaved African Americans, pawpaws were among the wild foods that supplemented meager provisions - that is, of course, if they were afforded the liberty to forage or hunt at all. Often, these activities occurred at night, when paw-

paws offered a second advantage- the sweet fruit baited raccoons, opossums, and other small nocturnal animals that wound up in frying pans and stews. Culinary historian Michael W. Twitty has noted that a former slave cabin standing today in southern Maryland remains surrounded by a grove of pawpaws.”<sup>3</sup>



*Baby pawpaws growing and putting on weight at Gunston Hall.*

### EUROPEAN NOVELTY

John Bartram, the Philadelphia nurseryman who became “his Majesty's Botanist for North America,” sent in September 1738, flowers and fruit of the pawpaw to the English naturalist, Mark Catesby, which appeared in Catesby's *Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands* (1731-43). At about this time Philip Miller, head of the Chelsea Physic Garden in London, was able to raise some pawpaw trees from seeds.<sup>4</sup>

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The Marquis de LaFayette, in a letter to George Washington dated Dec. 17, 1784, asked for seeds of the pawpaw for “the king’s garden.”<sup>5</sup> Thomas Jefferson, in a letter to John Bannister dated Aug. 9, 1788, asked for, among other things, a pawpaw plant for the Comtesse de Tessé to be placed in her gardens at the Chateau de Chaville.<sup>6</sup>

### PAW-PAW TREES: THE FACTS

“The North American pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) has a well-established place in folklore and rural culture. “Way Down Yonder in the Pawpaw Patch’ is an American folk song that was quite popular, and fall hunting for pawpaws in the woods is still a cherished tradition for many rural families.

Pawpaws are highly nutritious, with a strong aroma and unique flavor that resembles a combination of banana, mango, and pineapple. Pawpaws are ripe when soft and are usually harvested from September to October across their native range. When ripe, skin color ranges from green to yellow and flesh color ranges from creamy white to shades of orange. The fruit should be harvested prior to the first frost.”<sup>7</sup>



A zebra butterfly: the larvae of both zebra butterfly (*Heliconius charitonius*) and the pawpaw sphinx moth (*Dolba hyloeus*) depend on leaves of the paw-paw. Photograph courtesy of Deb Platt. Copyright TrekOhio.com

With special thanks to Frank Barker, who’s been a terrific editor, and to Lesley Rakowski, Carol Boland, and Gary Knipling. Also to Allison Heinbaugh, John D. Rockefeller Library, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. And, to Elaine McRey, of the Virginia Room, Fairfax County Public Library, who consumed pawpaw fruit while hiking the Appalachian Trail.

<sup>1</sup> “[Diary Entry: 7 March 1785]”, *Founders Online*, National Archives.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Moore, *Pawpaw – In Search of America’s Forgotten Fruit* (White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2015), p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Edmund Berkeley and Dorothy Smith Berkeley, *The Life and Travels of John Bartram* (Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, 1982), p. 53. Andrea Wulf, *The Brother Gardeners – Botany, Empire, and the Birth of an Obsession* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), p. 43.

<sup>5</sup> “To George Washington from Lafayette 17 December 1784,” *Founders Online*, National Archives.

<sup>6</sup> “From Thomas Jefferson to John Bannister, Jr. with Enclosure, 9 August 1788,” *Founders Online*, National Archives.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew F. Smith, editor, *Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 244.

What do you do if you have a bumper crop of pawpaws this fall? The answer is as easy as pie. Click below for a video from our friends at Jas. Townsend & Sons for instructions.

<https://youtu.be/W3-85vpDKEI>

# COMING UP AT GUNSTON HALL

Saturdays, June, July, August

## Summer Saturdays

10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

No boring summers here!

Kids and the young at heart should visit Gunston Hall every Saturday June, July, and August for unique, hands-on adventures. No RSVP required. Included with admission.

June 10

## Declaration Day

10 a.m.-4 p.m.

*Celebrating George Mason and the Virginia Declaration of Rights*

Join Gunston Hall for a historic event commemorating the anniversary of the ratification of the Virginia Declaration of Rights! The day will begin with a special naturalization ceremony followed by an afternoon of fun and educational activities for all ages. Converse with living history interpreters, immerse yourself in 18th-century Virginia, and explore George Mason's ideas and legacy. Attend a talk on American rights by noted Constitutional expert Linda Monk.

Guided tours will be available throughout the day. Food vendors will be on site. Admission for George Mason Day is complimentary.

For information about these events and all things Gunston Hall call 703-550-9220, email [historic@gunstonhall.org](mailto:historic@gunstonhall.org) or go to [www.gunstonhall.org](http://www.gunstonhall.org).



## Mason Sighting at New Museum

By Frank Barker, Education Coordinator & Grapevine Editor

**T**HE AMERICAN REVOLUTION MUSEUM AT YORKTOWN opened this spring and George Mason is prominently featured in several locations throughout the museum.

The museum's scope begins with the lead-up to the Revolution and takes visitors through the war and continues beyond the making of the Constitution.

Mason's Virginia Declaration of Rights is featured as is his role at the Federal Convention in 1787.

A nearly full-length portrait of Mason appears in a film

about the creation of the Constitution which ends with Mason and fellow Founding Fathers Roger Sherman and James Madison under the protective umbrella of the Bill of Rights.

Outside is a living history component with a military encampment and a reproduction middling farm with a home-stead, several outbuildings, and livestock,

The museum, which replaces the old Yorktown Victory Center, is located at 200 Water Street in Yorktown. It's open 9-5 year-round. \$23.00 for adults, \$12.00 for ages 6-12; under 6 free. Parking is free.



Top: We know the face, but we've never seen a body with it. The usual Hesselius/Boudet portrait of George Mason has been extended in a film in the New Nation gallery at the American Revolution Museum at Yorktown.

Middle: Mason and other Founding Fathers under the protection of the Bill of

Rights. Mason stands next to Roger Sherman of Connecticut who signed all four of the major founding documents, the Continental Association, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution. Mason signed none of these.

All photos by Frank Barker



Top: the hearth kitchen in the farmhouse outside the museum. Above: an artillery battery is recreated on the museum ground with interactive demonstrations by costumed interpreters.