

# Gunston Grapevine

Summer 2012



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## INTERIM DIRECTOR HIRED FOR GUNSTON HALL

September 6, 2012

The Board of Regents has hired an Interim Executive Director to provide management and leadership support to Gunston Hall for the next six to twelve months. This action results from Commonwealth budgetary restrictions that prevent us from hiring an Executive Director at this time. We anticipate a resolution to those issues during the next Commonwealth budgetary cycle.

In the meanwhile, with open staff positions needing to be filled and key education and program decisions pending, the Regents recognize that additional management leadership and support is in the best interests of Gunston Hall at this time. The Interim Executive Director will serve only until an Executive Director is hired and is not a candidate for the Executive Director position.

With nearly 30 years of experience with the National Museum of American History (Smithsonian Institution), Patrick Ladden brings a wealth of managerial expertise, collections experience, project management, fundraising knowledge, and an understanding of governmental relations.

The Regents commend and are indebted to Mark Whatford, Gunston Hall Librarian and Archivist, for his exceptional performance in administering Gunston Hall for the past four months. The decision to retain an Interim Executive Director from outside the organization provides leadership and added professional support during this critical transition period.

Wylie Raab

PA Regent

Sara Hill

Chair, Search Committee



*COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA*  
*Office of the Governor*

Robert F. McDonnell  
Governor

June 12, 2012

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia, I am pleased to extend a warm welcome to everyone attending the 236th anniversary celebration of the signing of the Virginia Declaration of Rights.

I commend the organizers of this event for their hard work and dedication to recognizing one of the Founding Fathers of the United States of America, George Mason. It is important that we recognize a man whose Virginia Declaration of Rights would have a profound impact on the world. Through your efforts, it is my hope that attendees gain a better understanding of this remarkable patriot and scholar.

Drafted in 1776, the Virginia Declaration of Rights proclaimed that "all men are born free and independent, and have certain inherent natural Rights." These words and the entirety of this profound historical document impacted the Declaration of Independence, formed the Bill of Rights, and inspired the French Revolution's Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. As citizens, we must continue to honor and remember the legacy of George Mason and of the Virginia Declaration of Rights..

I wish you the best as you celebrate one of our Nation's Founding Fathers and the Virginia Declaration of Rights!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert F. McDonnell".

Robert F. McDonnell





GEORGE MASON DAY  
 COMMEMORATES  
 ANNIVERSARY OF  
 VIRGINIA DECLARATION  
 OF RIGHTS

*Gunston Hall celebrated the 236th anniversary of the ratification of George Mason's Virginia Declaration of Rights in June. Virginia Delegate Scott Surovell (above) spoke of the legacy of Mason's document. State Senator Toddy Puller read Governor Robert McDonnell's letter (previous page) colonial musicians provided background music, and Gunstonians portrayed George Mason and his friends and family. A reception with Virginia cider and other refreshments was held after the ceremonies.*



CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM HOLDS ANNUAL MEETING AT GUNSTON HALL IN JULY

*The Chesapeake Bay Program, a regional partnership that coordinates and conducts the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay, met in the Ann Mason Room at Gunston Hall July 9. Left: Executive Council member Governor Martin O'Malley addresses the group at their afternoon press conference. Center: outgoing Executive Council Chair Lisa P. Jackson, Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is congratulated by the newly elected chair, D.C. Mayor Vincent Gray. Below: television news camera record the event for the nightly news.*







### DERECHO STRIKES GUNSTON HALL IN JUNE

The violent, straight-line storm was called a *derecho*, and it came barreling through Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C. during the evening of June 29, leaving destruction and power outages in its wake.

Damage at Gunston Hall was limited to toppled trees, but the power and water were out until late July 3.

According to Dominion Power, about one million customers lost power in Virginia, which was the largest outage in the state's history not related to a hurricane, and it was the third largest outage including hurricanes, after 2003's Hurricane Isabel and Hurricane Irene in 2011.



Photos by Mark  
Whatford





## GROUNDS PASS PRICING INITIATED

A new Grounds Pass has been added to the admissions price choices. For \$5 for all ages, guests can tour the out-buildings, visit the burying ground, picnic, view the Potomac, and hike our trails all day. If they wish, at a later date, visitors can bring back their grounds pass for a Mansion tour for only \$5 more.

## THE COUNTIES OF MASON

**By Frank Barker, Assistant Education Coordinator**

**S**ix counties in these United States are named Mason County. How many of them are named for George Mason of Gunston Hall? The answer is four. Sort of. One of those counties started in one state and ended up in another. And a fifth county is related to our Mr. Mason.

The first county to honor George Mason was Mason County, Kentucky, founded in 1788, predating Kentucky's admission to the union by four years.

In 1804, the commonwealth of Virginia honored the author of its Declaration of Rights by naming Mason County, Virginia. This county, on the eastern bank of the Ohio River, left Virginia in 1861 when voters in 41 counties decided to form a new state and seceded from Virginia, which had earlier seceded from the Union to join the Confederacy. West Virginia became a state on June 20, 1863, bringing with it Mason County.

The third Mason County was founded in Michigan in 1840. This county is *not* named for George Mason. It is named for Stevens Thomson Mason. Known as "The Boy Governor," Stevens T. Mason was the territorial governor of Michigan at the age of 19. Governor Mason was the great-grandson of Thomson Mason, the younger brother of George Mason of Gunston Hall.

George Mason's next eponymous county is Mason County, Illinois, founded in 1841. On the eastern bank of the Illinois River, this county is known as "The Imperial Valley of the Midwest." Its fertile soil produces popcorn, cucumbers, melons, and tomatoes.

In 1858, Mason County became one of the 254 counties in the state of Texas. This county was named for Fort Mason, a cavalry base within its borders. But Fort Mason

was named for... George Mason.

Second Lieutenant George Thomson Mason, 2<sup>nd</sup> Dragoons, United States Army, killed in action in the Mexican War. This George Mason, a West Point graduate, was born at Gunston Hall in 1818. He was the fourth child of George Mason VI, and a great-grandson of founding father George Mason IV.

Fort Mason, Texas, should not be confused with the Fort Mason in San Francisco. That former U.S. Army post was named for Gen. Richard Barnes Mason. That Mason was born at Lexington Plantation and was the youngest son of George Mason V.

The final Mason County is in the state of Washington. Founded in 1864, this county is named for Charles H. Mason, the first Secretary of State of Washington. This Mason is not a descendant of our George Mason, though in 1830, he was born just up the river from Gunston Hall at Fort Washington, Maryland.



## TRUTH OR YARN: A MASON FAMILY TALE

**By Claudia J. Wendling, Gunston Hall  
Archaeology Volunteer**

In the year 1829, J.S. Skinner (John Stuart Skinner) started publication in Baltimore of his magazine, *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*.

Although the focus of his magazine was the history of bred horses, their pedigrees and their performances, he also carried sketches and anecdotes of hunting, shooting and fishing. Skinner encouraged his readers to send him “curious” stories.

Some of the anecdotes were in the form of letters to the editor sent anonymously or bearing only the initials of the sender. Some were meant to inform and others were meant to amuse the readers. Skinner, through his publication, recorded sportsmen’s exploits in entertaining stories.

In the April 1830 issue of *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine* there is mention by Skinner of George Mason IV of Gunston Hall being “one of the best shots and keenest sportsmen of his day.”<sup>1</sup> This sentiment was echoed by George Mason IV’s son John who referred to his father as a “great sportsman” in his recollections.<sup>2</sup>

There is also a family legend regarding George Mason’s shooting ability. A pair of deer antlers were said to have been part of the

furnishings in Gunston Hall - the deer having been shot and killed by George Mason IV with a single shot.<sup>3</sup>

More than one descendant of George Mason IV was known to be a keen sportsman. Perhaps, George Mason VI (1786 – 1834) son of George Mason V (1753 - 1796) - George Mason IV’s eldest son, was one of them.

He is the subject of an article that appeared in Mr. Skinner’s magazine. The article appeared in 1830 as a letter to the editor. As the story unfolds, the idiom, *the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree*, might come to mind. In Mason’s case did the apple reach the ground or did George shoot and obliterate the apple before it touched the ground?

The year was 1824, and the extraordinary shooting by Mr. George Mason of Gunston, Fairfax County, Va., took place on the grounds of Col. Aug. Smith near Alexandria, D.C.

The author of the letter to the editor – one X.Y.Z. – provides the readers with a list of living witnesses that will attest to George Mason’s skill as a sportsman.

According to X.Y.Z., this George Mason’s contemporaries included “Mr. Taliaferro, member of Congress; Mr. Grymes; Mr. Hooe; and others, of King George county, Va.; Mr. Graham, of the Land office, Washington; Mr. Lyles and Mr. West, of Md.; Mr. G. Alexander, of Kentucky; Mr. John McCarty and Wm. McCarty, late secretary of the territory of Florida, both brothers of Mr. Edgar McCarty; cum multis aliis.”<sup>4</sup>

X.Y.Z. tells us that George Mason accomplished his feats in the autumn of 1824, aided by two dogs. One was his dog Pluto (deserving of his own story for his hunting capabilities). X.Y.Z. says George Mason “killed forty-nine partridges without missing a single shot. Mr. Mason snagged his foot when he first entered the field, and was lame the whole day – he did not fire a gun till after 10 o’clock, and his shot were all expended before sunset, when the birds were most abundant.”<sup>5</sup>

However, this is not the end of the story of the extraordinary shooter. X.Y.Z. continues the letter with tales of other amazing feats of George Mason.

The same gentleman killed two bucks, running, at one shot, with a rifle loaded with a single ball. He once shot at eight partridges, flying,

*(Continued on page 8)*



### WHERE IS THAT? AN INSIDE-OUT LOOK AT GUNSTON HALL

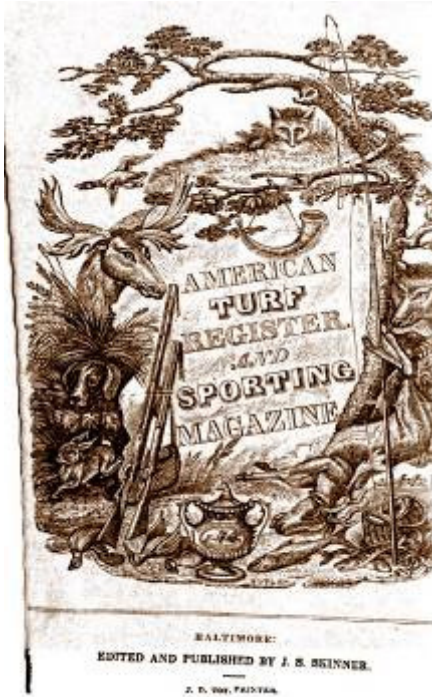
Where is this important part of the fabric of Gunston Hall?

When you think you know the answer, turn to page 15 to see if you are right.

## TRUTH OR YARN: MASON MARKSMANSHIP CONTINUED

*(Continued from page 7)*

and killed them all. He shot at three dippers with a rifle and killed them; struck the two nearest in the head and the other in the neck. I saw him strike a playing card six times running with a pistol, at the distance of thirty yards – the pistol is now in the possession of his brother, Capt. R. B. Mason, of the army – it poises better and fires with more accuracy than any other in the world – it was made by Prosser, of London. I have frequently seen him take a pistol in each hand, distance ten yards, and in the act of advancing rapidly, strike a lath with each. Mr. Mason shot off the heads of twenty-nine squirrels with his rifle, on one day's hunt, in Dogue neck, without missing one: the last shot was with half a bullet. I have seen him kill hares and foxes running, with a rifle. To kill deer running with his rifle, and name the place where they were struck, was a thing so common with him that it ceased to excite any surprise. He can throw into the air two apples at once, and strike each with a double barrel gun, before they fall. I once saw him put a bandage over his eyes so that he could not possibly see, and turn loose ten partridges, one at a time and kill three at the ten shots. Mr. Mason thinks he can kill one partridge in ten shots (flying) with a rifle – I have no doubt of it myself. In Charles county, in Maryland, Mr. Mason shot at a paper with a rifle, the paper cut exactly the size of a quarter of a dollar, and struck it four times in succession, the distance sixty yards. . . . Mr. Mason killed eighteen white backs at six shots, flying over Hallooing point, on the Potomac. I saw him kill, with his rifle, three tame pigeons flying, at six shots. I will mention two curious facts, which were related to me by a gentleman now in Tennessee. Mr. M., when a boy, fixed



on the top of a cherry tree a dead bush, for the cherry birds to light on, (every one knows that if there is a dead limb on a tree those birds will always settle on it, as close as they can cluster,) concealed himself behind a blind, with a large duck gun loaded with mustard seed shot – he fired at forty-four and killed them every one. When first learning to shoot, he fired at a hare closely pursued by a dog, missed it, laid down the gun, picked up a stone and killed it.<sup>6</sup>

X.Y.Z concludes his letter with his thoughts on George Mason's and another shooter's abilities. "I have often inquired of myself, why they should so excel all other sportsmen, and have come to this conclusion – that to be eminently successful, it requires great presence of mind and great muscular powers. These gentlemen certainly possessed those attributes in a high degree. I have seen them repeatedly try who could strain a horse farthest with a fifty-six pound weight on their head, without its falling off."<sup>7</sup>

For those of you who are still pondering whether this story of George Mason is Truth or Yarn, I close with these words of warning. Please, don't try to replicate his feats at home!



## Notes.

1. "Shooting Extraordinary." *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*. Ed. J. S. Skinner. Vol. 1.: J.S. Skinner, 1830. 400. No. 8. *Google EBook*. Web.
2. Mason, John, and Terry K. Dunn. *The Recollections of John Mason: George Mason's Son Remembers His Father and Life at Gunston Hall*. Marshall, VA: EPM Publications, 2004. Print.
3. Borchardt, Susan A., Mickey Crowell, Ellen K. Donald, and Barbara A. Farner. "Gunston Hall Room Use Study." Gunston Hall, 2002. Web. <[http://http://www.gunstonhall.org/mansion/room\\_use\\_study/decoration.html](http://http://www.gunstonhall.org/mansion/room_use_study/decoration.html)>.
4. "Shooting Extraordinary." *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*. Ed. J. S. Skinner. Vol. 1.: J.S. Skinner, 1830. 495-97. No. 10. *Google EBook*. Web.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*





## Constitution Day September 17

Celebrating the 225th anniversary  
of George Mason's refusal to sign  
the Constitution

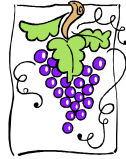
Test your knowledge of the  
Constitution at

[www.constitutionfacts.com](http://www.constitutionfacts.com)

Can you become a  
'Constitutional Whiz Kid'?



Students from a summer session at the Beauvoir School at the National Cathedral sketch the symmetry of Gunston Hall in July.



## Ask Grapeman!

### THE TRUTH ABOUT HOGSHEADS

Dear Grapeman:

*We always talk about the hogsheads of tobacco that plantation owners like George Mason would fill and roll to the wharfs for shipment. Just how big was a hogshead and how much tobacco went into them? And while you're about it, explain how they got filled and how they got that funny name.*

A Docent

That's a pretty big order. To answer your question, Grapeman did more than just use the usual sources like the library, the Internet, and the all-knowing and sometimes reliable Wikipedia—Grapeman and Mrs. Grapeman took a field trip. Some of your answers are on display at the Calvert Marine Museum on Solomon's Island in Southern Maryland.

#### How Big Is a Hogshead?

The answer varies from place-to-place and time-to-time and by the content of the hogshead. A hogshead of claret was 55 gallons while a hogshead of sherry was 65 gallons. Eventually, a hogshead of wine came to be 63 gallons while a hogshead of beer or ale is 54 gallons. That's assuming we're talking about U.S. gallons and not imperial gallons or that metric system thing.

To further confuse the issue, hogsheads were used as a unit of containment, and therefore measurement, for products as varied as sugar and molasses to herrings destined to become sardines.

Eventually, at least tobacco hogsheads became standardized in their dimensions. A standardized tobacco hogshead measured 48 inches long and 30 inches in diameter at the head.

#### How Much Tobacco Was in a Hogshead?

As much as would fit. Hands of tobacco (bundles of approximately 30 leaves of a similar size and quality tied together at their stems) were pressed into the bottom of the hogshead by a worker standing in the hogshead. When as many hands as possible were stuffed in, the worker would get out and a loose fitting lid would be placed on top. Using weights and levers, the tobacco was squeezed down. The process was repeated until as much tobacco as possible was loaded into the hogshead. This process was known as "prizing."

In John Mason's *Recollections* he writes, "[My father's] woods furnished timber and plank for the carpenters and coopers, and . . . His coopers made the hogsheads the tobacco was prized in and the tight casks to hold the cider and other liquors."

Once it was prized, a tight lid was affixed to the top. A fully prized hogshead weighed between 800 and 1600 pounds and easily contained an acre's worth of tobacco. The weight amount varied according to the variety of tobacco and the dryness of the individual leaves.

The hogsheads were weighed and the tare weight (weight of the empty hogshead)

(Continued on page 10)



(Continued from page 9)

and gross weight (tobacco and hogshead) were burned onto the side of the hogshead.

**Why Are They Called Hogsheads?**

While most sources will agree that the first use of the word was in the 14th century, they dodge the origin with “unexplained” (*Dictionary.com*) and “the origin is obscure” (*American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*). The *Oxford English Dictionary* says the word comes from Middle English “from hog + head; the reason for the term is unknown.”

Philologist Walter William Skeat in *A Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (1895) wrote that hogshead is a corruption of the original Old Dutch *oxhoofd* meaning oxhead. “No doubt the cask was at first named from the device or brand of an ‘ox-head’ upon it,” he wrote.

The *New English Dictionary* disagrees and goes the other way,



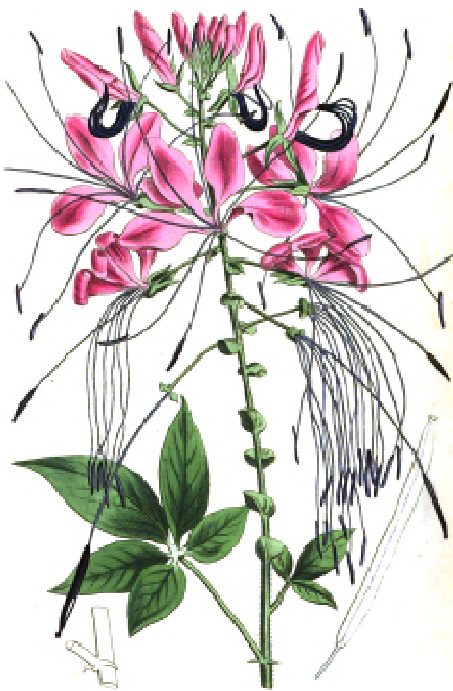
saying the Dutch *oxhoofd* is a corruption of the original English *hogshead*. The best answer for why they are called hogsheads appears to be:

Nobody knows.



*A reproduction tobacco hogshead in Calvert Marine Museum.*

**SURPRISING DISCOVERY IN GEORGE MASON’S KITCHEN TRASH PIT CIRCA 1770 TO MID 1780’S: A TROPICAL FLOWER SEED**



*Spider Flower (Cleome spinosa) that grew in George Mason’s garden. From Curtis’s Botanical Magazine, Vol. XXXIX, by John Sims, M.D. 1814.*

**By Jerry Foster, Archaeological Volunteer**

**I**N A KITCHEN TRASH PIT 300 FEET SOUTHEAST OF GUNSTON HALL’S MANSION HOUSE, the 2004 digging season discovered fragments of elegant 18<sup>th</sup> century ceramics the originals of which were possibly utilized by George Washington, Philip Mazzei, and James Madison during this critical period in American history.<sup>1</sup>

Washington breakfasted at Gunston Hall on the morning of November 28, 1771, prior to deer hunting according to his diary; Mazzei visited during a trip north in May of 1785<sup>2</sup>; Madison said “My private intercourse with him [George Mason] was chiefly on occasional visits to Gunston when journeying to & fro from the North, in which his conversations were always a feast to me.” He was documented, via a letter to Thomas Jefferson, as being at Gunston Hall in December 1783.<sup>3</sup>

Among the kitchen trash pit artifacts were found seeds identified in 2007 by Dr. Joseph Kirkbride of the U.S. National Seed Herbarium. On the dining table would have been, through his identification, such vegetables as beets and the broad genera Brassica – possibilities among the latter are cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, kale, and collards.

Wesley Greene, Garden Historian at Colonial Williamsburg and author of the recent book *Vegetable Gardening the Colonial Williamsburg Way*, said Thomas Jefferson did not grow Brussels sprouts until March 28, 1812, according to the latter’s *Garden Book*. If Brussels sprouts could be definitively placed at Gunston Hall in the above context, that would pre-date Jefferson’s Virginia introduction.

Surprisingly, among these vegetable seeds were the seeds of one tropical flower: *Cleome spinosa* Jacquin (Spider Flower), which originates in the Caribbean’s basin and somewhat beyond.<sup>4</sup> It was given its scientific name in 1760 by Baron Nicolaus Joseph Jacquin who headquartered, for plant gathering expeditions, on the French island of Martinique.<sup>5</sup>

As there is no currently available documentation, various possible sources for this plant in George Mason’s garden present themselves.

(Continued on page 11)



## TROPICAL FLOWERS IN MASON'S GARDEN CONTINUED

(Continued from page 10)

Richard Harrison - a partner in the firm of Hooe and Harrison in Alexandria, Virginia - was successfully promoted by George Mason as representative for Virginia and Maryland committees of safety on Martinique in 1775. He "... was to arrange for the flow of arms and ammunition through ... Martinique to the Chesapeake patriots and for the passage of the produce of Virginia to markets in the West Indies and Europe."<sup>6</sup>

Harrison may have sent his patron, as lagniappe, seeds or plants from the Caribbean.

Another potential source was George Mason, Jr. who sailed to Europe in early April 1779 on one of Hooe and Harrison's ships. He remained in France until summer of 1783. In Paris, he became well acquainted with John Jay, his wife Sarah Livingston Jay, and John Adams. Sarah wrote to her father on July 18, 1783, "Mr. [Ferdinand] Grand, who has a well chosen collection of fruits, flowers & shrubs in his garden has promised Mr. Jay that he will order his gardener to preserve seeds of the choicest fruits &c. which he has, & we will not fail sending them out in time to be sown next spring..."<sup>7</sup>

Ferdinand Grand was a Parisian banker who supported the American cause and was a close associate of John Jay, Benjamin Franklin, and John Adams. George Mason, Jr. was at the home of John Adams on the same day - Sunday, December 8, 1782, - as was Ferdinand Grand. (Adam's diary entry.) It's somewhat tenuous, but possible, that Ferdinand Grand had plants in his garden from the French West Indies the seeds of which he shared with George Mason, Jr. This would have been a round-about but feasible source for the Cleome at both Gunston Hall and George Mason, Jr.'s adjacent estate of Lexington.

Paxton, in his *Botanical Dictionary - Comprising the Names, History, and Culture of all Plants Known in Britain*, states Cleome spinosa appeared in Britain in 1731 in a white form - even earlier than the plant's official naming by Baron Jacquin.

But Wesley Greene stated "Paxton's Cleome spinosa may or may not be the plant we recognize by that name today. The Cleome genus is quite large with 170 species from both hemispheres and pre-Linnaean names are often not reliable. The first clear reference to the ornamental Cleome in a popular gardening book that I can find is in William Hanbury's *A Complete Body of Planting and Gardening* compiled between 1770-71." (e-mail February 19, 2012)

Wesley Greene in a subsequent e-mail states that although American plant exchanges with British gardeners are well documented, that does not preclude tropical plants coming directly from the West Indies, or from other sources.

John and William Bartram, Philadelphia nurserymen, may have been a possible source, but Cleome is not listed in any of their extant catalogues. However, Paul Inashima, archaeologist at George Mason Jr.'s Lexington estate, found a reference to William Bartram's discovery of a distantly-related cleome during

Bartram's 1773 expedition to the southern colonies. Finally, an enterprising ship captain arriving at the international seaport of Alexandria, Virginia could have sold tropical seeds dockside.

Whatever its source, the find at Gunston Hall has set the calendar back for Cleome spinosa Jacquin's arrival in Virginia. Peggy Cornett, Director Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants at Monticello, stated that Jefferson was not known to be growing it until the 1820's, and that was also when it became more widely known in Virginia.

Wesley Greene said "At one time we grew this plant at the Governor's Palace as a plausible ornamental but have since stopped using it until some 18<sup>th</sup> century documentation in Virginia might be found, which, apparently you have!" (e-mail February 14, 2012) In a more recent e-mail he states "I planted Cleome in the garden this year for the first time in 25 years and your find at Gunston Hall has fascinated visitors all summer long!"

The fact that George Mason had one tropical plant in his garden begs the questions: were there others, and did he have a hothouse to overwinter them? There are only two known descriptions of the gardens. William Loughton Smith, Charlestonian and U.S. Representative for South Carolina, during a 1790 visit describes "... a neat garden, at the end of which is a high natural terrace which commands the Potomac."<sup>8</sup>

The other is contained in the *Recollections*<sup>9</sup> of John Mason, George Mason's son, and they are equally limited. Currently, no evidence for a hothouse foundation has been found.

Jefferson is documented in his work *Anas* as having visited George Mason at Gunston Hall on September 30, 1792, a few days before Mason died. It's not likely Jefferson tarried long enough to inspect the gardens or landscape. However, he probably stopped by two years earlier when, in his own stage accompanied by James Madison from New York en route to Monticello and Montpellier, they arrived in September, 1790.<sup>10</sup>

It's not clear what tropical plants would still be blooming as late as September in Virginia before modern hybridization and selective breeding, but this is probably moot as neither Jefferson nor Madison seems to have left any record of their impressions of Gunston Hall's gardens or landscape.

Perhaps future digs will uncover additional seeds or pollen that can be positively identified and used in the restorations, or better understanding, of the gardens at both Gunston Hall and Lexington. Paul Inashima is currently working on a pollen sampling at Lexington, where the former garden areas are undisturbed and could yield additional clues.

It is interesting to think that something like a cleome, as a simple cut flower in a vase, could have borne silent witness to American history. Perhaps the flower will make an eventual return to the house and garden. In the meantime, possibly a note card with an old cleome print could be sold in the gift shop?



(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

WITH MANY THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS:

Dr. Joseph H. Kirkbride, Jr. Director of the U.S. National Seed Herbarium. Peggy Cornett, Director Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants at Monticello. Wesley Greene, Garden Historian at Colonial Williamsburg. Mia D'Avanza, New York Botanical Garden Library. Constance Carter and Alison P. Kelly, Library of Congress Science Reference Desk.

ALSO MANY THANKS TO:

Paul Inashima for research suggestions and for finding the illustration of cleome used in this article. (Curtis's Botanical Magazine, Vol. 39. 1814.) Thanks also to my fellow volunteers who make the Gunston Hall and Lexington digs so much fun. And, finally, to Dave Shonyo, Gunston Hall Staff Archaeologist, who gave free reign and support to do this project.

NOTES

1. The dig was done by volunteers supervised by David Shonyo, Staff Archaeologist. Carol Boland, a volunteer, painstakingly washed debris for seeds.
2. Garlick, Jr. Richard Cecil, Philip Mazzei, Friend of Jefferson: His Life and Letters. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1933), p. 94.
3. Hunt, Gaillard editor, The Writings of James Madison. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1910), p. 295.
4. Iltis, Hugh H., "Studies in the Capparidaceae –VI. Cleome sect. Physostemon: Taxonomy, Geography and Evolution." Brittonia – Publication of American Society of Plant Taxonomists. Volume 11, no. 3. , pp. 123-162.
5. Missouri Botanical Garden. [www.illustratedgarden.org/mobot/rarebooks/author.asp?creator=Jacquin.%20Nikolaus%20Joseph.%20Freiherr%20von&creatorID=80](http://www.illustratedgarden.org/mobot/rarebooks/author.asp?creator=Jacquin.%20Nikolaus%20Joseph.%20Freiherr%20von&creatorID=80) Copeland, Pamela C. and MacMaster, Richard K., The Five George Masons. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1975), pp. 194-195.
6. Freeman, Landa M., North, Louise V., and Wedge, Janet M. Compilers and editors. Selected Letters of John Jay and Sarah Livingston Jay. (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010), pp. 138-139.
7. Matthews, Albert, Journal of William Loughton Smith, 1790-1791. (Cambridge, Mass., 1917), p.64.
8. Dunn, Terry K. editor, The Recollections of John Mason – George Mason's Son Remembers His Father and Life at Gunston Hall. (Marshall, Virginia: EPM Publications, Inc., 2004), pp. 73-78.
9. Jefferson, in a letter dated June 13, 1790, to George Mason states "I have some hope of visiting Virginia in the fall, in which case I shall still flatter myself with the pleasure of seeing you." In September of that year he and James Madison are documented as spending two days at Mount Vernon while traveling together from New York to their homes in Virginia. It seems likely they also visited with George Mason at Gunston Hall.

While much of the writing of George Mason concerns land deals, politics, and the rights of man, many of his letters show the man was primarily a farmer. With a need for seeds.

"We lost all our Cabbage Seed last Spring by the late frost, & as the same thing happened to all our Neighbours, there is not a Seed to be had in this Part of the Country: if your Friends in Fredericksburg have any to spare, I shall be much obliged to you to procure me a little, & if they have none, I must beg the Favour of you to write by the first post to Majr. Mercer or some of yr. friends in Wmsburg, to buy two or three ozs. & send to you by the next post, & that you will be so kind to forward it to me by the first safe Hand, & if none offers soon, to send it by the Post, to Mr. Wm. Thompson, or Mr. John Gibson in Colchester, for me."  
George Mason to James Mercer, February 5, 1780.

Thanks to Claudia Wendling

"...I have since received ...a bundle of Grape-Seeds &c. but for want of exact Endorsations upon all the Papers, I am at a Loss to know the different kinds of grapes, & which are the best worth cultivating." George Mason to George Mason, Jr. in France, January 8, 1783

In a July 31, 1789, letter to son John in Bordeaux George Mason includes a shopping list:

List of sundries to be sent to G. Mason by the first Ship to Potomack River

1/2 [?] of dyed in Grain Silk, bright Colours, of different Shades (a good deal of green) for Tambour Work  
a set of Tambour Needles—  
50 lbs. of prunes  
2 oz. of fresh Cawlyflower seed—\*  
Half a Gross of Claret, at about 30s. per bottle  
Half a Gross of cheaper Claret, at from 24s. to 26s. per bottle.  
Half a Gross of white Wine at from 24s. to 26s. per bottle.

\*That's an estimated 18,000 "Cawlyflower" seeds!



## COMING UP THIS FALL AT GUNSTON HALL

### BOARD OF REGENTS MEETING

OCTOBER 6-8, 2012

### ARCHAEOLOGY DAY: CAN YOU DIG IT?

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13 • NOON – 4 P.M.

Screen for artifacts, clean and mend found objects, and learn basic skills with the archaeology staff. Take the *Hunting for George Mason's Landscape* tour at 1:15 or 3:15 p.m.

*Regular admission. Friends free. \$25 Family admission. Scout and school groups welcome with advance reservation. Call 703-550-9220.*



### TAVERNS & ALES WITH THE YARDS BREWING COMPANY

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20 • 4 TO 8 P.M.

Enjoy an ale of our Founding Fathers at the home of a Founding Father! Join us for an evening of Taverns & Ales with Ian Wallace of the Yards Brewing Company. Featuring Franklin Spruce Ale, Jefferson Ale and Washington Porter, all based on original recipes. Featuring a talk on early taverns & ordinaries by Rod Cofield of Historic London Town & Gardens, our Hearth Cooks in the kitchen, savories, and house tours all included in the ticket price.

*Participants must be 21 years old or older to attend; pre-registration is required. Tickets are \$20 each, \$15 for Friends.*

*Click here to purchase tickets.* <https://secure.qgiv.com/for/gunhal/event/12122/>

### OPEN-HEARTH COOKING CLASS, LEVEL I

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27 AND SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28

10 A.M. – 4 P.M.

Employ 18th century hearth cooking techniques and recipes to make period dishes. Offered in partnership with the Fairfax County Adult and Community Education program.

*\$125 fee includes tuition and materials. Register for class HI03881 by phone at 703-658-1201 or online at [www.fcps.edu/aceclasses](http://www.fcps.edu/aceclasses). For information call 703-658-1222.*

### DECORATIVE ARTS SYMPOSIUM: HEARING THE HIGHLANDS IN VIRGINIA

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1 • 8:30 A.M. – 4 P.M.

Scots influenced 18th century Virginia through immigration and trade. Explore the role of their culture in shaping local style through design, architecture, and material culture. View symposium details here:

[www.gunstonhall.org/events/2011/Symp\\_2012.pdf](http://www.gunstonhall.org/events/2011/Symp_2012.pdf)

*\$90, adults; \$75, Friends; Lunch and symposium packet included. Reservation required. Register by October 15 for a \$10 discount.* <https://secure.qgiv.com/for/gunhal/event/11116/>



## ANOTHER MASON FAMILY HOUSE OPENS TO PUBLIC

Huntley, a former summer home of Thomson Francis Mason, grandson of George Mason, opened to the public in May.

Gunston Hall docents visited the site in the spring and the Gunston Hall interpreters held their September meeting by touring the house.

Historic Huntley, built between 1820 and 1825, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is administered by the Fairfax County Park Authority.

Thomson Francis Mason was born at Gunston Hall and raised at Hollin Hall. His parents were Thomson Mason, George Mason's fourth son, and his wife Sarah McCarty Chichester.



Thomson F. Mason lived in Alexandria, where he was a prominent lawyer. He served three terms as justice of the peace and was elected mayor of Alexandria three times.

For further information about Huntley go to <http://www.historichuntley.org>

## CALLING ON A NEIGHBOR

Fourteen Gunston Hall archaeology volunteers and house guides paid a visit to nearby Rippon Lodge in Prince William County on September 15.

The original part of the house is about ten years older than Gunston Hall. George Mason and Rippon's Richard Blackburn were acquainted and served together as trustees of the town of Dumfries.





## THINKING INSIDE THE BOX

By **Mark Whatford, Librarian & Archivist**

**M**R. LYNN R. BATDORF, CURATOR OF THE NATIONAL BOXWOOD COLLECTION at the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, visited Gunston Hall on August 14, to look at our boxwood. After examining the boxwood and discussing their history, he shared a number of observations.

- ◆ Given the age of our boxwood, it is in relatively good shape; boxwood can live to be 300 to 400 years old.
- ◆ Boxwood roots are very shallow and can extend out a number of feet from the shrub.
- ◆ We have some American boxwood amongst the English boxwood. American boxwood is a tree not a shrub and being a purist, he recommended removing it.
- ◆ He did not observe any signs of disease in our boxwood except for leaf spot, which is controlled through pruning and aphids, which can be sprayed.
- ◆ Some of our boxwood is growing sideways, which will lead to an early death by exposing the trunk to sun and moisture.
- ◆ He recommended soil testing to determine the pH and nutrients of our soil. More than likely the soil will be acidic and require dolomitic lime.
- ◆ Mulch can be applied to keep some moisture, but no more than one inch to avoid suffocating the roots.
- ◆ Thinning the boxwood in November is recommended; the round full shape, while looking healthy, holds in moisture and injures the center of the shrub [leaf spot].
- ◆ Thinning and pruning are best done in November at the end of the boxwood growing season.
- ◆ Boxwood do not require a great deal of water.
- ◆ Consider propagating cuttings of the boxwood.
- ◆ The Hertle era boxwood near the Docent herb garden would be too large to transplant, only transplant boxwood about the size of a basketball or knee high.
- ◆ It would be okay to transplant boxwood in the area viewed from the riverfront porch, otherwise avoid transplanting as you may impact the roots of the healthy boxwood, such as down the allée.

Soil samples have been sent to the Rutgers University lab for testing and Mr. Batdorf asked to be updated on the results and expressed interest in being involved with the preservation of our boxwood.



### A THANK YOU TO THIS SUMMER'S LIBRARY INTERNS

*Michelle Bishop, a rising 11<sup>th</sup> grade home-schooler, assisted with our blueprint and map collection which will soon be listed on-line. Michelle studies piano and works in her church's Children's Ministry.*



*Sean Sowers, is a senior at George Mason University majoring in History. After graduation Sean plans to pursue a career in archives. Sean reviewed over 350 John Mason-associated documents and letters in our collection.*



*Intern photos by Mark Whatford*



## VIEWS FROM THE ANNUAL CHRISTY HARTMAN MYERS WRITING WORKSHOP

Each year, fourth and fifth grade aspiring writers come to Gunston Hall for a day to polish their craft. In small groups, they explore the worlds of a journalist, a historian, a poet, a novelist, and an illustrator. Experts in each of those fields guide the young writers in creating their own stories and illustrations.



*Above left, students were greeted on the garden porch by Miss Betsy Mason, portrayed by Young Gunstonian Phebe Meyer. The workshop participants were also welcomed by Betsy's sister Nancy portrayed by Janis Harless, and by the sisters' father, George Mason, portrayed by Don McAndrews.*

*Above right, former Virginia Poet Laureate Dr. Carolyn Kreiter-Foronda helps a young poet with his work. Right: Starving writers need to be fed. Lunch in the Ann Mason Room is always a highlight of the Writing Workshop.*

The mystery object on page 6 is the backside of one of the beaufats in the Palladian Room. The photograph is looking down from the inside of the attic. This is definitely not a normal view for visitors. This was photographed as part of the planning for the mansion's new roofing project scheduled to begin in 2013.