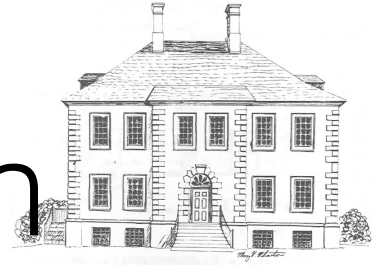


# Carlyle Connection

"It's a fine begin-



## *The James Chater Small Case Clock*

*By Sarah Coster*

For over 30 years, the staff and Friends of Carlyle House have worked to locate and obtain the wonderful collection items you see when you enter the museum. Using John Carlyle's 1780 probate inventory, as well as our Furnishings Plan and Scope of Collections as our tools, we have made huge strides towards the goal of having the museum furnished much as it was in John Carlyle's lifetime. Your support has allowed us to purchase the Bentside Spinet, numerous maps and prints, a pair of matching mahogany dining tables, a new paint scheme for the museum, mannequins, the restoration of John Carlyle's Bible and much more!

One of the last of the key items remaining on the inventory is a "small 8 day clock." On the probate inventory, this item is located directly under "1 large 8 day clock," which is represented in the collection by the tall case clock located in the Parlor. We have searched for the perfect small eight day clock and found very few of the right quality and time period for Carlyle House.

We are pleased to announce that in October Christopher H. Jones, an Alexandria antiques dealer and Friend of Carlyle House, located the ideal clock for our collection. This wonderful small case clock, or



bracket clock, was made by James Chater in London between 1750 and 1754.

The clock is early Rococo in style, but understated in its decor. It features an inverted bell-top case, mounted with a brass carrying handle. The elegant fretwork on the door was typical of the Rococo style, which emphasized movement and curved lines. The current finials, which mount the four corners of the clock's top are replacements, but we can imagine John Carlyle choosing something similar.

The face of the clock features a brass chapter ring, complete with both Roman numerals for the

hours and small Arabic numbers for the minutes. Inside the chapter ring we find the maker's signature "James Chater, London" in





simple, elegant script. The center of the clock is matte with a small aperture to view the day of the month and two winding holes. A smaller dial in the arch shows the words "strike"

and "silent," so the user can simply turn the dial to silence the chime at night. The spandrels, or triangular spaces, on the face of the clock are richly decorated with brass in the Rococo style. Glass windows on all four sides, while likely replacement glass, allow the viewer to see the inner works, including the beautifully engraved black plate done in a floral motif.

One interesting detail on James Chater's clock is the "repeater pull." Pulling the small cord and attached brass bobble causes the clock to strike the last hour. Invented by Rev. Edward Barlow in 1676, repeating clocks feature a "rake and snail" mechanism. In the time before electric lighting, the repeater pull conveniently allowed the owner to tell the time in a darkened room.

According to a biography from the Fitzwilliam Museum in England, James Chater was apprenticed in 1718 and became a member of the Clockmakers Company in 1727. In 1754, James Chater began a partnership with his son, and from then onwards the works were signed James Chater & Son. Their shop was located at 3 Cherry Tree Court, Aldersgate. James Chater died in 1762.

Knowing when he began signing clocks "James Chater & Son" allows us to more accurately date the clock. Dating to the early 1750s, the clock is a rare find and fits ideally with our interpretation at Carlyle House. John Carlyle and his wife, Sarah, first moved into their new home on Fairfax Street in August of 1753. While preparing for the move, it is quite likely that John Carlyle placed orders with merchants in

London for high end items such as a small case clock.

While the clock is elegant and fashionable, it is also in keeping with what we know about John Carlyle's tastes. Like his dressing table and chest-on-chest, this clock reflects a man who knows what is in style for the time and yet values the "plain and neat" fashion favored by many Virginian gentlemen.



*The back plate of the clock. Notice the catch for the pendulum.*

While today we call them bracket clocks, in John Carlyle's time, these clocks did not necessarily sit on a bracket. Instead, they were meant to be carried to where they were needed most. The clock features a "catch" for the pendulum to allow it to be kept still while the clock is being moved.

So with that in mind, where will we put the clock? Luckily, over the years, long before we found this clock, previous museum staff and outside consultants have been giving thought to where the possessions John Carlyle had in 1780 would fit into the house. They created documents based on their research known as "Furnishing Plans." The original furnishings plan for Carlyle House was completed in

1984 by Ellen Donald, Susan Borchardt and Julia Claypool. They note that:

“The presence of two clocks in John Carlyle’s inventory is most unusual when compared to the majority of inventories studied. The small eight day clock may have been the type which is referred to in Gov. Eden’s inventory as ‘an Eight day Table Clock.’ Such a clock might well have found a home on the small walnut table in this room (at that time the Small Parlor).”

In 2005, the staff and board decided a revised furnishings plan was necessary to reflect the ongoing scholarship of the day and the discovery of new Carlyle documents and furniture. Two scholars, Betty Leviner and Robert Leath of Colonial Williamsburg, were hired to complete the revised plan. The new furnishings plan reflected new scholarship in room use, and determined the current configuration of rooms we have today. Leviner and Leath recommended the small eight day clock be placed in the study. Some more recent digging by Collections Committee member Carole Smith confirmed that the study is the appropriate location. The clock, then, will be placed on the round walnut table in the study, as called for by both the original furnishings plan and the revised plan.

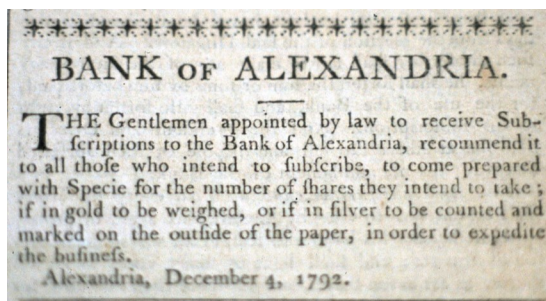


The board of the Friends of Carlyle House and the staff are extremely excited about the clock and hope you will help us make its acquisition

possible by donating to our Annual Appeal. We look forward to giving this rare and beautiful clock a home among the collections of Carlyle House.

## ***Bank of Alexandria to be Featured during annual Historic Alexandria Candlelight Tours***

We are pleased that this year the Bank of Alexandria, a property owned by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, will be a part of the annual *Historic Alexandria Candlelight Tours* on December 8th and 9th. This beautiful federal building has a unique story to tell about early banking in America.



In the early United States, banks were a new concept. People were very suspicious

of them. Although branches of the new Bank of the United States had opened in Baltimore and Philadelphia, Virginia was hesitant about a request from Alexandria to open a branch there.

It was finally approved and a charter created in January 1792. Subscriptions to capital stock sold out in just two hours. William Herbert was one of the original directors. In January 1796 he was elected President.

By 1803, the Bank had outgrown its original headquarters on Cameron Street, a building meant to be a private dwelling. In February, the Bank purchased the lot at the corner of Cameron and Fairfax from John Carlyle Herbert for a sum of \$3,100. 1804 tax records note the walls had been raised about 7 feet. At the end of 1806, the building was completed at a cost of around \$63,000. There were two large masonry vaults and a large banking room on the ground floor. By March 1807, the Bank occupied its new building.

We look forward to opening up the lobby of this wonderful building to the public during Candlelight Tours and hope you will join us.

## *From the Desk of the Curator*

It's been a busy fall at Carlyle House and for visiting our neighbors down the road and in the mountains! This year marked the return of the re-enactment of John Carlyle's funeral. Last year, the event had been cancelled due to



inclement weather. But, happily for Old Town and our faithful visitors, the weather for the event remained good in the lead-up to the hurricane. We had approximately 150 guests visit with Carlyle's daughter, son-in-law and son and heir, George William. In partnership with McLean High School, senior Evan Jarvis volunteered to portray John Carlyle's son. We are grateful to McLean High School for the opportunity to partner with them and work with their students to bring history to life.

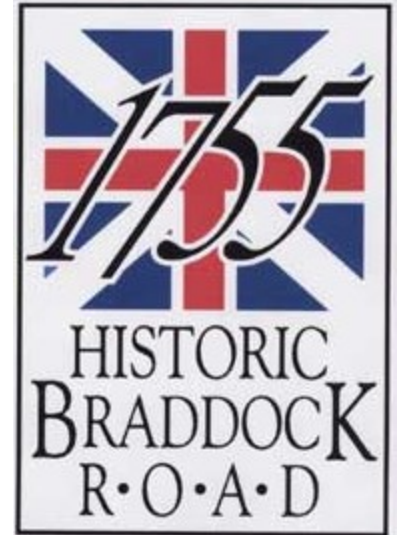


Also, this year marked the return of another staple in the Northern Virginia museum world. Gunston Hall resurrected their long-running symposium in decorative arts. The topic this year was "Hearing the Highlands in Virginia" and it took place on November 1<sup>st</sup>. Carlyle House was invited to talk about John

Carlyle and his Scottish connections, and I presented to a crowd of about 50 local docents and decorative arts experts. Highlighting family objects from the collection, the goal was to show how international Carlyle was and the representation of his taste through the furniture and decorative arts he owned. This includes the dressing table with Celtic influences on its design; the chest-on-chest from Philadelphia; the bed from Belvoir plantation, which G.W. Fairfax may have purchased in Philadelphia; and the family silver from Annapolis and England. Other presenters

focused on the broader picture of merchants and ceramics, furniture, silver and architecture, so we were delighted Carlyle House was highlighted as the example which tied all these things together!

Over the last several months, Carlyle House staff has met with board members and area members of the Braddock Road Preservation



Association (BRPA). The museum had worked closely with the BRPA during the 250<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the French and Indian War to create an excellent exhibit and programming

about what was essentially the first worldwide war. Each year, the BRPA hosts a conference in the mountains near Fort Necessity on the first weekend in November. The organizers bring in historians and authors on the subject of Braddock, George Washington and the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. From November 2-3, I attended this conference and met with several interpreters and historians who are excited to work with Carlyle House. We are where Braddock's journey began prior to his defeat at the Monongahela River in Pennsylvania, and the road continues from Virginia through Maryland and into Pennsylvania. Former weekend staff member and now PhD candidate, Erica Nuckles, presented at the conference on the famous Charlotte Browne. Browne travelled with her brother and the British Army to Alexandria and even met with Mrs. Sarah Fairfax Carlyle. Next April, Braddock Day and the Grandest Congress will take place on Saturday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013. We are looking forward to reigniting the relationship with this active organization as we continue to develop and enhance our programming and interpretation of General Braddock's visit in 1755.

**-Helen Wirka**

## *Notes from the Educator*

Carlyle House has been wonderfully busy this summer and fall, and it feels like time has been flying by. In the Education Department, that means school groups are returning, and programming for next summer has already begun. The Traveling Trunk, which was a part of last year's Annual Appeal, is coming together. The project is a little behind schedule, but we are looking forward to a successful launch before the spring school tour season. The ultimate goal is to be able to reach more students, farther afield, than we can currently accommodate in the museum.

Another major project is a Summer Camp program to launch in July or August of next year. This will be the first time Carlyle House has offered a program of this kind in five years. This is made possible in part by the generosity of the late Doug Thurman, a Friends of Carlyle House board member. I will be planning a one week session of camp, which will allow participants an opportunity to experience life in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and continue to learn in a fun, interactive fashion in the summer months. I am currently in the process of developing activities, marketing and a budget for the program. We are planning to market this program in

conjunction with other NVRPA Summer Camps at Camp Fairs in January and February.

Finally, as students go back to school, we are getting the first wave of school tours here at Carlyle House, and it is shaping up to be a great season. We have already welcomed 243 students for programs this school year. That's right on par with last year, and we expect it to be a full and fulfilling year to come, with just under half our goal for the year scheduled.

**-Lacey Villiva**



## ***SOLDIERS' CHRISTMAS***

*SATURDAY DECEMBER 1  
FROM 12-4 PM*

*IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE  
SCOTTISH WALK*

TAKE PART IN FESTIVE ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING LIVE MUSIC, DEMONSTRATIONS OF MILITARY DRILL, FIFE AND DRUM, GAMING, AND COOKING. SAMPLE HISTORIC BEVERAGES AND MEET THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.



*Friends of  
Carlyle House*

## *Holiday Open House*

*Friday, December 14,  
2012*

*6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.*

*Tour the house by  
candlelight,  
enjoy refreshments  
and period music.*

*Guests welcome.*

*Please RSVP  
Acceptances Only by  
Friday, December 7  
(703) 549-2997 or  
carlyle@nvrpa.org*



## **Carlyle House** *Upcoming Events*

**Saturday, December 1: 12-4 pm**  
*Soldiers' Christmas*

Step back in time to enjoy colonial life in Alexandria during the holidays at the time of the American Revolution. The *Soldiers' Christmas* program will feature re-enactors from the First Virginia Regiment. Take part in festive activities, including live music, demonstrations of military drill, fife and drum, gaming, and cooking. Sample historic beverages and meet the men and women of the American Revolution. The program takes place immediately following the annual Scottish Walk in Old Town Alexandria. *A Soldiers' Christmas* will be held on the grounds and inside the Carlyle House, located at 121 N. Fairfax St. in Alexandria. *\$5 suggested donation.*

**Saturday, December 8: 6-9 pm**  
**Sunday, December 9: 3-6 pm**  
*Historic Alexandria Candlelight Tours*

See – and taste – historic Alexandria in a whole new light this holiday season! Historic Alexandria Candlelight Tours, Alexandria's premier historic holiday event, blends chocolate and history through special tastings, seasonal decorations, period music, and tours highlighting chocolate through time. Four of Old Town Alexandria's finest historic sites will welcome guests on Saturday, December 8 and Sunday, December 9 as "The Historic Division of Mars" sponsors this historic chocolate event. This year's tour includes the historic Bank of Alexandria building. *Cost is \$20 for adults, \$15 for seniors (65 and older), and \$5 for children (ages 6-17).* Pre-sale discounts of \$15 for adults and \$10 for seniors are available before December 1. Reservations are recommended.



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Phone: 703-549-2997  
www.nvrpa.org

Carlyle House Historic Park is accredited by  
the American Alliance of Museums



## News from the Site Director

### Make Time for Carlyle House During This Holiday Season

We hope you will take time from the busy holiday season and enjoy the sights and sounds of Carlyle House this December. There will be many opportunities to get involved and bring your friends or neighbors to our beautiful museum. Kicking it off on December 1st will be our annual *Soldiers' Christmas* program, following the annual Old Town Scottish Walk and featuring re-enactors from the First Virginia Regiment. Take part in festive activities, including live music, demonstrations of military drill, fife and drum, gaming and cooking, perfect for families.



On December 8th and 9th, visitors have the opportunity to visit four historic sites, all bedecked for the Christmas season during the town's *Candlelight Tours*. The sites include Carlyle House, Gadsby's Tavern, Lee-Fendall House, and our very own Bank Building. The Bank of Alexandria, built in 1807, was one of the earliest banks in the country. *Candlelight Tours* this year will be sponsored by the

Historic Division of Mars Chocolate, and guests can sample a variety of authentic period-style chocolate.

Later in the month, for an elegant holiday tradition, join fellow members of the Friends of Carlyle House for our annual Holiday Open House on Friday, December 14th at 6 pm. The event, catered by Great Blue Heron Catering, will feature wonderful music by the Colonial Recorders. We hope to see you there!

### 2012 Annual Appeal to the Friends of Carlyle House

I hope that everyone has received their Annual Appeal letter in the mail. This year, we are raising funds for the purchase of a 1750-1755 bracket clock made by James Chater in London. The cover article to this newsletter features wonderful descriptions of the clock. I think you will agree that this is a unique object that will help the museum continue to tell the story of John Carlyle's home. Please consider making a donation of any amount to help support this endeavor. The clock, with working parts, a strike/silent feature and a "repeating pull" is full of delight and in excellent condition. With your support we can't wait to bring this clock into John Carlyle's study!



Sincerely,

*Sarah Coster*

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# Carlyle House Historic Park

*A property of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority*

121 North Fairfax Street ~ Alexandria, Virginia 22314

[www.nvrpa.org](http://www.nvrpa.org)



Northern Virginia  
Regional Park Authority