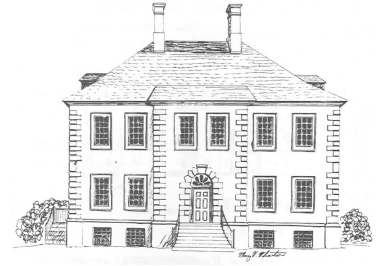


Carlyle Connection

“It’s a fine beginning.”



John Carlyle and the Lords Fairfax

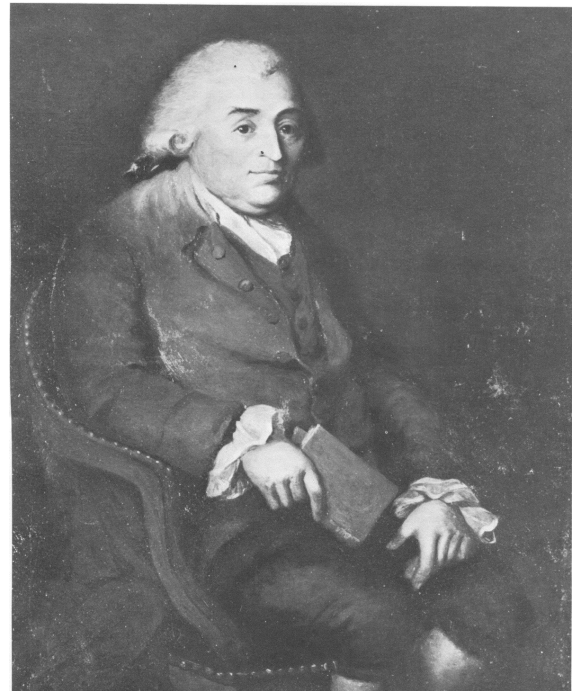
By Bob Madison

Thomas, the Sixth Lord Fairfax (1693- 1781), Baron of Cameron and Lord Proprietor of the Northern Neck in Virginia, controlled 5,282,000 acres between the Potomac and the Rappahannock Rivers. The Proprietary had been given to his ancestors by King Charles II in appreciation of their service to the crown during the Cromwell era. Thomas succeeded to the title when he was sixteen and gained full control of the Proprietary when his mother died in 1719. However, he left management of the Proprietary to agents like Robert “King” Carter during his early life. When Carter died, Lord Fairfax had his cousin, William Fairfax (1691-1757), transferred in 1733 from being Collector of Customs for Salem, Massachusetts, to being Collector of Customs for the South Potomac. At the same time, Lord Fairfax appointed William Fairfax his agent for the Northern Neck Proprietary of Virginia.

Lord Fairfax first visited Virginia in 1735, but he returned to England in 1737, staying for ten years to defend his interests in Virginia before the King’s Privy Council. By 1741, William Fairfax had moved to his newly completed mansion at Belvoir. In 1747, Lord Fairfax moved permanently to Virginia, staying initially with his cousin and agent, William Fairfax, at Belvoir. Thus, Lord Fairfax was present at the wedding and was John Carlyle’s “Second” [best man] when he married William Fairfax’s daughter Sarah on December 31, 1747.

When Alexandria was founded in 1749, five of the original trustees were members of Lord Fairfax’s family by birth or marriage: Lord Fairfax himself; his cousin, William Fairfax; William Fairfax’s son, George William Fairfax (1725-1787); and William Fairfax’s sons-in-law, Lawrence Washington (1718-1752) and John Carlyle. In 1761, Lord Fairfax moved

both his home and the Proprietary land office to Greenway Court in the Shenandoah Valley. He had built a log cabin there in 1748 and a house in 1752. During the American Revolution, Lord Fairfax maintained a policy of strict neutrality, and it appears that he was treated with respect. In a series of acts from 1777 through 1796, the Virginia Assembly effectively dissolved the Northern Neck Proprietary. Thomas, the Sixth Lord Fairfax, died in 1781 at the age of 88. He had never married, and the title passed to his younger brother, Robert Fairfax.



Thomas, the 6th Lord Fairfax

Because of acts passed by the Virginia Assembly, Robert Fairfax was unable to claim his Virginia inheritance. In

1792, an act of Parliament for the relief of American loyalists awarded him 13,758 pounds. The Seventh Lord Fairfax died in 1793.



Towlston Grange, 1213 Towlston Road, Great Falls, built by Bryan Fairfax ca. 1767. Fairfax lived here until 1789/90.

The title then passed to Bryan Fairfax (1736-1802), John Carlyle's brother-in-law. Bryan Fairfax served under George Washington early in the French and Indian War. However, when he was rejected by a young lady in 1757, he resigned his commission and headed north to start a new life. His brother-in-law, John Carlyle, caught up with him in Annapolis and brought him back to Belvoir. When the Fairfax Resolves (John Carlyle signed them) were debated in 1774, Bryan Fairfax sent letters to George Washington, the chairman of the committee considering the Resolves, giving reasons why they should not be adopted; however, Washington did not read the letters to the assembled citizens.

Fairfax's feelings were torn between England and America during the Revolutionary War. On his own in 1777, he decided to be a mediator between the two sides. He was arrested in Lancaster, PA, for refusing to sign a loyalty oath. However, he wrote to his good friend, George Washington, who gave him a pass to travel between the lines. In New York, British officials also required a loyalty oath, which he refused to take. With his mediation attempts a failure, he returned to Virginia for the remainder of the war.

He had long considered a religious life, and he was ordained a Minister of the Episcopal Church in 1789, serving as rector of Christ Church from 1790 to 1792. George Washington's last meal away from Mount Vernon

in 1799 was at Bryan Fairfax's home, Mount Eagle; and Bryan Fairfax was among the last guests at Mount Vernon before Washington died. He was one of the principal mourners at Washington's funeral, and Washington left him a bible in his will.



Mount Eagle, Bryan Fairfax's home from 1790 until his death in 1802.

When the Seventh Lord Fairfax died in 1793, Bryan Fairfax initially ignored the title. However, while in England in 1798 on other business, he presented the necessary proofs to the House of Lords to claim the title. In 1800, after he had returned to Virginia, the peerage was adjudged, and he became the Eighth Lord Fairfax. Bryan Fairfax died in 1802. Mount Eagle was demolished in 1968, and the land is now used for the Montebello Condominiums and the Huntington Metro Station.

Bryan Fairfax's eldest son and John Carlyle's nephew, Thomas Fairfax (1762-1846), became the Ninth Lord Fairfax. He married John Carlyle's granddaughter, Margaret Herbert (his third wife and the mother of all of his children), in 1800. They leased 301 South St. Asaph Street (usually known as the Lafayette House because Lafayette stayed there during his visit to Alexandria in 1824) from 1828 to 1830. They purchased 607 Cameron Street (the Lord Fairfax House) in 1830, and they lived there until he died in 1846. She died in 1850. They lived primarily at their country estates. Vaucluse, their last



Ash Grove, south elevation, May 2007

Ash Grove, 8881 Ashgrove House Lane, McLean, built by Thomas Fairfax ca. 1790. The associated family cemetery was destroyed by the construction of the Dulles Airport Access Road and the Route 7 interchange in 1959.

country house, was sited approximately east of where the Plaza Condominiums are on Howard Street near the Hospital. Vaucluse was destroyed in 1861 to build Civil War fortifications. An obelisk memorializing Bryan, Thomas, and their wives, is in Ivy Hill Cemetery.

Thomas Fairfax's eldest son, Albert, preceded him in death, and the title passed to his grandson, Charles Snowden Fairfax (1829-1869). Thus, the Tenth Lord Fairfax and all succeeding Lords Fairfax are descendants of John Carlyle. At the age of twenty, Charles Snowden Fairfax sailed from the James River to San Francisco Bay for the California Gold Rush. However, politics was more to his liking than mining, and he eventually became Speaker of the California Assembly, Clerk of the California Supreme Court, and Marin County Supervisor. He was Chairman of the California Delegation to the Democratic National Convention in New York in 1868, and he died while visiting in Baltimore in 1869. The town of Fairfax in Marin County, California, is named for him.



Arms of the Lords Fairfax of Cameron, as adopted by Fairfax County

Since Charles Snowden Fairfax had no children, the title reverted to his brother, John Contee Fairfax (1830- 1900), a doctor in Maryland. When John Contee Fairfax died, his eldest son, Albert Kirby Fairfax (1870-1839), became the Twelfth Lord Fairfax. Albert worked for a bank in New York, which transferred him to its London office. He became a British citizen, claimed the title, and his family remained in England. His son, Thomas Brian McKelvie Fairfax (1923-1964) became the Thirteenth Lord Fairfax. Nicholas John Albert Fairfax, the Fourteenth and current Lord Fairfax and Baron of Cameron, succeeded to the title in 1964 when he was eight. He lives north of London and has three sons (the oldest, Edward, born in 1984); so it appears the title will continue.

Selected Sources:

- *The Fairfax Family in Fairfax County*, by Kenton Kilmer & Donald Sweig
- *Lord and Lady Fairfax (as They Were Commonly Called) – Charles and Ada Fairfax as Others Saw and Wrote about Them*, by Fairfax [California] Historical Society and correspondence with Fairfax [California] Historical Society
- *John Carlyle, Gent.*, by James D. Munson

News from the Educator

Our Curator of Education, Allie Kelley, started her new position in early January and has been a whirlwind of activity since her first day. She has revamped several of our school and scout programs, set up a summer reading program in partnership with the City of Alexandria Public Schools, cleaned out numerous closets and storage rooms, created a partnership with Volunteer Alexandria, and come up with several original and creative programming ideas. We are thrilled to have her on board.

We have been absolutely deluged with school tours. Since the last newsletter, we have had over 500 students visit on school tours! On top of that, our December programs, the Scottish Walk Open House and Candlelight Tours, brought in close to 1000 visitors. We had to restrict entry during Candlelight Tours because the house was too crowded.

Finally, we will no longer offer Camp Carlyle in the summer months. In consultation with NOVA Parks headquarters, we determined that we could no longer shoulder the expense of the program. Even with the Friends of Carlyle House generously funding the Educator's salary during the camps, we could not afford to continue. Hopefully, our summer reading program will fill that void. Stay tuned for details.

If you're interested in becoming a docent or a museum teacher, please let Allie know. You can email her at akelley@nvrpa.org.

~Susan Hellman for Allie Kelley

News from the Curator

It has been a very busy winter! I have been settling into my new position here and helping Allie settle into the Curator of Education position. We have been busy working on organizing materials and preparing for our upcoming programs.

I have been busy updating our loan files including many of the objects that are included in the current Civil War exhibit "Who These Wounded Are." We are very excited to be borrowing these objects from other museums and people for at least another year. We also spent a day cleaning the collections closet and reorganizing it to better utilize the space.

On February 4th, we celebrated John Carlyle's birthday with our great group of living historians. Visitors were allowed to join in the dancing and the game playing as well as enjoying shortbread cookies as a birthday treat. We had over 300 people attend despite the chilly weather. On February 11th, we will be hosting our Mercy Street inspired program: Love and Romance Between the Lines. We will have living historians playing Emma Green and Frank Stringfellow, they will be talking about their romance during the Civil War. Old Town Dolci Gelati Café will be serving hot chocolate as a treat. Authors Donald Hakenson and Charles Mauro will be on hand to sell and sign their updated and signed book: *A Tour Guide and History of Col. John S. Mosby's Combat Operations in Fairfax County, Virginia*.

Looking ahead to this Spring we have some great programming coming up. On March 4th we will be having an Open House since the St. Patrick's Day Parade is that morning. We will be talking about Sarah Carlyle Herbert and William Herbert who lived at the house until the 1820s. April 8th will be our annual Braddock Day. We hope to see you all at these events!

~Kerry Mitchell



Carlyle House Upcoming Events

Love and Romance Between the Lines

Saturday, February 11; 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Meet Frank Stringfellow and Emma Green to hear about their love and romance that took place between the lines during the Civil War. Meet Civil War historians/authors Don Hakenson and Chuck Mauro, who will sign copies of their books.

St. Patrick day open house

Saturday, March 4; 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Join us before, during, or after the annual Saint Patrick's Day Parade! It ends at the corner of our garden at Cameron and Lee Streets. We will celebrate the Irish heritage of the Herbert family.

Braddock Day

Saturday, April 8; 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Join us for an exciting day focusing on General Braddock's infamous visit at the start of the French and Indian War. Step back in time for a glimpse at this historic event .

Garden Day Herb & Craft Sale

Saturday, April 22; 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Don't miss your biggest fundraiser of the year! Please come out and support your organization. If you'd like to help out, please email us at carlyle@nvrpa.org.

Attics and Alleys behind-the-scenes tours

Saturdays in May, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Find out what mysteries lie behind the closed doors of four of Alexandria's historic sites! Attics and Alleys is a three-hour walking tour featuring the rarely seen spaces of four sites—the Lee-Fendall House, Gadsby's Tavern Museum, the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum, and Carlyle House Historic Park. Tickets are limited and advance reservations are required: <https://shop.alexandriava.gov/Events.aspx>

Please give us a call or check our website for more details on our happenings.

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

News from the Site Director

You may wonder why I repurposed Bob Madison's excellent October 2004 Docent Dispatch article about the Lords Fairfax and the Carlyle family. Nicholas Fairfax, the 14th Lord Fairfax of Cameron will be in Virginia in June as part of the Fairfax County 275th anniversary celebration. Lord Fairfax of course is the direct descendant of John Carlyle. I have been working hard to convince Fairfax County to allow us to lure Lord Fairfax to visit his ancestral home, Carlyle House, but haven't had any luck yet. However, we may be able to secure a visit this fall by Lord Fairfax's brother. In the meantime, if you'd like to learn more about Fairfax County's celebration, see this website: <http://www.fxva.com/275/>.



Obelisk at the Fairfax family cemetery at Belvoir

We hope that you will join us on February 19 from 11 am to 3 pm at The Westin Alexandria for the Alexandria Wedding Showcase. The featured guests is Monte Durham from TLC's "Say Yes to the Dress." We will share a booth with the Office of Historic Alexandria to promote wedding rentals at historic sites in town. For more information about the event, please go to ALXWeddingShowcase.com.

You may recall that we took up a donation in honor of Dorothy Claypool, a longtime treasured volunteer who passed away last year. In consultation with Dorothy's daughter Julia, we have decided to devote those funds to improving our curatorial and archival storage. Kerry and Allie recently spent a day reorganizing and cleaning out our collections storage, and have some great ideas as to how best to maximize the use of space. The three of us will work together to determine exactly what items we need to properly protect our collection.

Thank you all so much for your generous donations to the Annual Appeal. We will soon begin updating the exhibit space in the cellar, which currently focuses on the Civil War. We plan to interpret the larger history of Carlyle House, and include old photographs and fun activities for children. In the meantime, come see the diorama loaned to us by the Alexandria Black History Museum. Keep an eye out for the annual membership renewal mailing, which should go out this month. We are sending out yearly membership renewals every February in order to keep membership mailings completely separate from the Annual Appeal.

Thank you for your hard work and your financial support on behalf of Carlyle House! We hope to see you soon at one of our upcoming events.

~Susan Hellman

Carlyle House Historic Park

A property of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority

121 North Fairfax Street ~ Alexandria, Virginia 22314

www.novaparks.com

