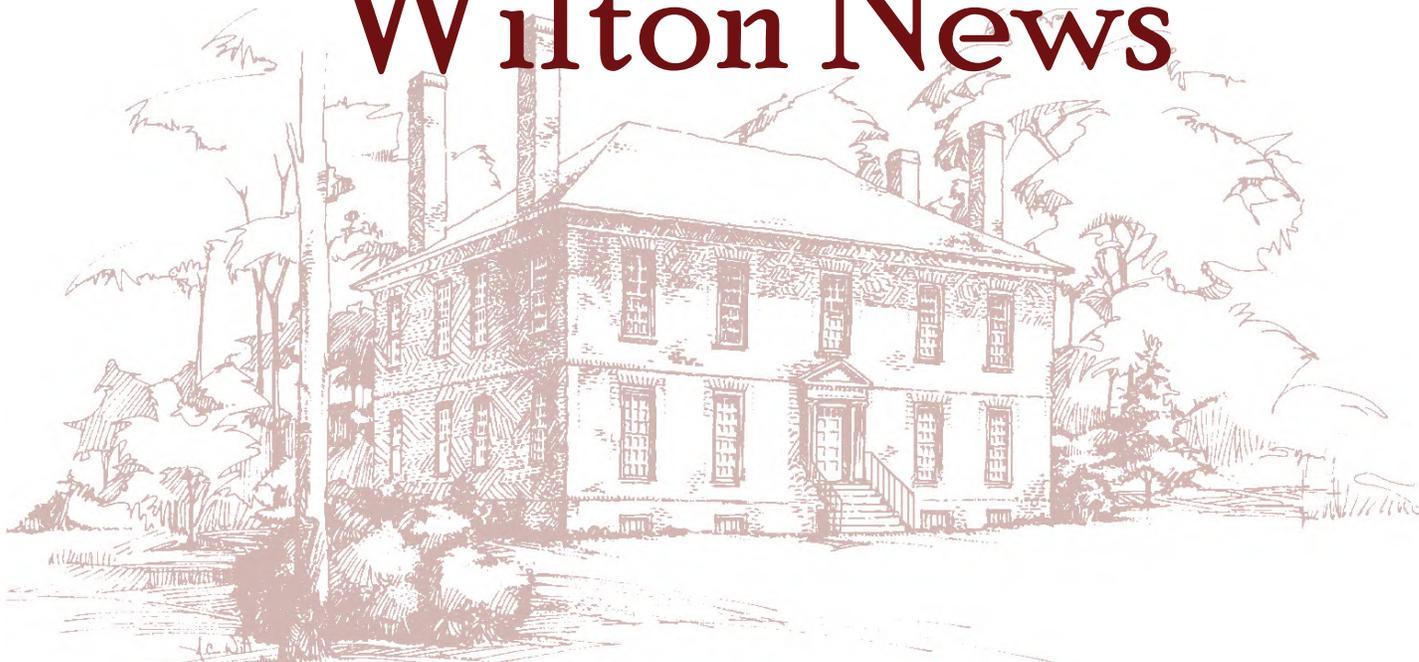


Wilton News



2018 - 2019

Issue 3

Plays in the Passage

Aggy of Turkey Island

Friday, February 8, 2019; 6:00PM–7:30PM



Discover an intimate take on the real events and relationship between Aggy and Ryland – whose portrait hangs in the Wilton House Museum dining room which was part of a conservation effort by the museum in 2005 – and the repercussions of the manumission of her and her children. During their lifetimes, Ryland Randolph and Aggy spent a great deal of time at his Turkey Island estate, known as the Bird Cage, where they most likely got to know one another. Conceiving two children together, one girl named Sylvia Anderson and one boy named Alexander Philip, the two lived together until Ryland's death in 1784. In his will, he left explicit, detailed instructions as to the manumission of Aggy and her children, how much they were to inherit, and that they should go to England so the children could be educated. His brother successfully contested the will, leading to Aggy's lawsuit.

After the success of the first performance of our new series Plays in the Passage, Wilton House Museum is honored to present Mary Hardy Carter in Aggy of Turkey Island, the true and American story of the emancipation of the heroine by Ryland Randolph. This well-researched play explores the personal and the political, illuminating the little understood complexities of life for those who lived enslaved. Mary Hardy Carter is a historian and nation-builder with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, whose research, knowledge, and passion is sure to make Aggy of Turkey Island a memorable performance.

Plays in the Passage occur in the of the historic house. Space is limited.

Tickets for Aggy of Turkey Island are available through Eventbrite.

If you have questions about the performance or how to buy tickets, please contact

Director of Education Katie Watkins at 804-282-5936 ext. 4, or by email at kwatkins@wiltonhousemuseum.org.

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Questions or comments may be referred to nsdda-va@comcast.net

From the Collection: Ryland Randolph and the Pleasants Family



As we covered earlier in this newsletter, Mary Carter's finely crafted and meticulously researched presentation of Aggy of Turkey Island creates a portrait of Aggy, while considering her relationship to Ryland Randolph. Two objects within the Wilton House Museum collection connect directly to this American story. One is an heirloom passed down through the generations, and the second is a utilitarian object discarded after use.

A portrait of Ryland Randolph (1734 - 1784) includes the hallmarks of the artist, John Wollaston (1710-1775) such as porcelain like skin tones, almond shaped eyes, and a nonchalant pose befitting gentleman. Details unusual for the artist's style within the portrait are the elegant blue velvet suit with gold and lace trim. These touches reflect instead Ryland Randolph's refined taste,

which he honed while a student in England. Ryland Randolph's aspirations of gentility were also reflected in his securing a Coat of Arms, in the manner of the European aristocracy, and the transformation of his Turkey Island home into the more fashionable Palladian Style. Wilton House Museum acquired the portrait in 1990 and expertly conserved it in 2004.



The second, and far more discreet, artifact is a glass wine bottle seal, unearthed during the 1974 archeological investigation at the original site of Wilton. Excavated near the site of the original kitchen building were 118 wine bottles, including this one complete wine bottle seal. Commissioned by wealthy colonists, English-made glass wine bottles with a personalized seal represented privilege and pleasure. The name on the seal in the artifacts collections is "J Pleasants," either one of the brothers Jonathan or James Pleasants, who were in turn married to the same sister of William Randolph III. The Pleasants family of Curles Plantation and were largely of the Quaker faith. The Pleasants name gives this object particular significance to the story of Aggy of Turkey Island. One member of the family, noted lawyer and abolitionist Robert Pleasants (1723-1801) represented Aggy of Turkey Island in a case to win freedom for her and her two children.



These objects from the museum collection make tangible distant historical people and provide some insight into their interests and aspirations. Furthermore, they reflect Wilton's historic connectivity amongst Virginia's ruling elite and the people that were held in bondage.

WILTON SUMMER SERIES



Wilton Artists
June 15th, July 20th
& August 17th
at 11 am.

Classes will return this summer for the third Saturday's this June, July, and August. Come get hands-on with arts and crafts of the past and take home your creation!

Wilton Artists is designed for our youngest fans ranging from 2nd to 5th grade. *Reservations Required* *Admission Fee*



Wilton Makers
June 22nd, July 27th
& August 24th
at 11 am.

We debut this program this summer. This exciting new series features an expert artisan of an 18th or 19th century craft or trade. See and hear how it was made back then, and how it's still being made today!

Wilton Makers is open to fans of craftsmanship of all ages. *Reservations Required* *Admission Fee*

UPCOMING MUSEUM EVENTS



Neat and Plain: Dressing the 18th Century Virginian

Thursday, January 24; 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Join us for our annual lecture series. January will feature Neal T. Hurst, Associate Curator of Costume and Textiles, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Admission \$10.00



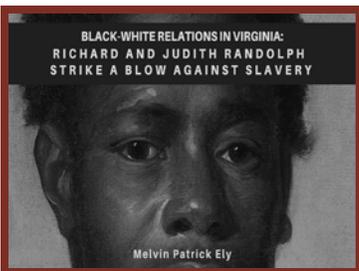
Aggy of Turkey Island

Friday, February 8; 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Join us for our second installment of our Plays in the Passage series.

Mary Hardy Carter will bring Aggy of Turkey Island to life in an intimate gathering at Wilton House Museum.

Admission \$20.00 - This play will take place within the historic interior of Wilton, so space is limited.



Richard and Judith Randolph Strike a Blow Against Slavery

Thursday, February 28; 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Join us for our annual lecture series. February will feature Dr. Melvin P. Ely, Professor of History and Black Studies at the College of William & Mary and author of "Israel on the Appomattox".

Admission \$10.00



Thomas Jefferson: Planting the Arts in America

Thursday, March 28; 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Join us for our annual lecture series. March will feature Susan Stein, Richard Gilder Senior Curator, Special Projects, Monticello.

Admission \$10.00



Shenandoah's Page Valley Style: The Painted Furniture of John Spitler, 1790 -1806

Thursday, April 25; 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Join us for our annual lecture series. April will feature Elizabeth A. Davison, Independent Decorative Arts Historian.

Admission \$10.00



One of a Kind: Manuscript Maps from the Collection at Colonial Williamsburg

Thursday, May 23; 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Join us for our annual lecture series. May will feature Katie McKinney, Assistant Curator of Maps & Prints, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Admission \$10.00

KEEP UP WITH ALL OF WILTON'S PROGRAMS AND EVENTS AT

WWW.WILTONHOUSEMUSEUM.ORG/EVENTS

VCU Student Research Uncovers New Layers of Wilton



HIST 631

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Unearthing Virginia's Stories

Wilton House Museum was pleased to host Dr. Sarah Meacham and her graduate students from Virginia Commonwealth University's Department of History, the evening of December 6, 2018. The partnership between the class and the museum was made with the hope of learning more about the history of the home and the Randolph family. The results of the student's research illuminated previously murky or unexplored facets of life in the late 18th and early 19th centuries at Wilton, in Virginia, and even the nation as a whole.

- Peighton Young - "The Randolph Family Manumissions: A Case Study of Manumission Culture Amongst Virginia's Elite, 1783-1859" explored two of the four large Randolph manumissions and their effects.
- Ana Edwards - "The Manumission of Robert Cowley: Proof of Existence" illuminated more of the history of the one man ever freed from Wilton House prior to nation-wide Emancipation.
- Meagan Coward - "Deathways of the Enslaved Community in Virginia" examined cultural norms surrounding death and funerals within enslaved communities in this state.
- Alexandra Zukas - "Pleasants v. Pleasants": Concepts of Freedom, Abolition, and Property in Revolutionary Virginia" studied the history of this court case where relations were sued to ensure the freedom of hundreds of enslaved peoples.
- Eric Szandzik - "Wilton House Finances from 1784 to 1833" examined the records of the home's finances across several decades, highlighting the care and skill with which Anne Andrews Randolph ran the plantation
- Allison Bell - "Healthcare at Wilton: Discovering the Doctor" studied records to identify the health-care providers at Wilton House, as well as differences between the care given in the home compared to the enslaved community.

We extend special thanks to these students and Dr. Meacham for their work, and look forward to similar collaborations in the future. Copies of these papers and findings will be made available internally.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

The National Society of The
Colonial Dames of America in
the Commonwealth of Virginia
at WILTON
215 South Wilton Road
Richmond, VA 23226