

Historic Bath State
Historic Site

Spring 2020
Volume 2, Issue 2

The Port Ledger

THE SPRING 2020 ISSUE

Hello, and welcome to The Port Ledger, a newsletter produced by the staff at Historic Bath State Historic Site!



UPDATES

Happy Spring! We hope you are all well and safe at home while the world weathers the COVID-19 storm. Historic Bath has suspended public operations until further notice, which means that the visitor center and all buildings are closed to the public. However, the grounds of Historic Bath remain open for visitor use.

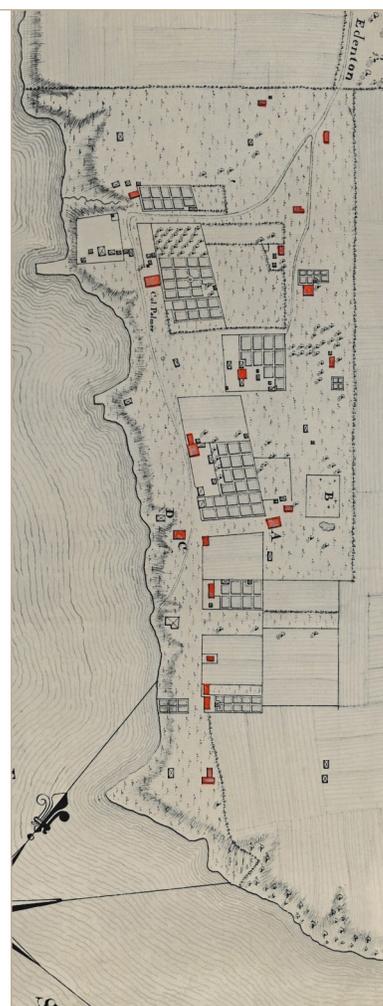
If you would like to visit Historic Bath, please practice social distancing while on the grounds.

Copies of the walking tour are available by the front door of the Visitor Center.

For updates about our future reopening, and information about rescheduled events, please visit our website and social media pages listed on the back page of the newsletter. We'll also be offering fun history facts, interactive educational material and more! Check those spaces and visit us virtually.

The staff at Historic Bath wish you all the best!

- Laura, Robin, Wayne, A.J., and Hope



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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Volunteer Opportunities
- Ships Built in Bath
- Writing in the 18th and
19th Centuries



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Historic Bath is recruiting Volunteers! If you have an interest in American History from the 18th and 19th Centuries, or if you are just looking for general volunteer opportunities please let us know. We encourage volunteers of all ages.

Our volunteers help with a number of different activities. Whether it's greeting visitors, working in the gift shop, giving tours of Historic Homes, demonstrating 18/19th century skills and trades, or costumed interpretation, we have something for you.

Of note—while we are not currently accepting volunteer hours or offering training, we still want to hear from you. If you're interested, contact us!

Call 252.923.3971 or email laura.rogers@ncdcr.gov.

PLANTS FROM THE 18TH CENTURY GARDEN

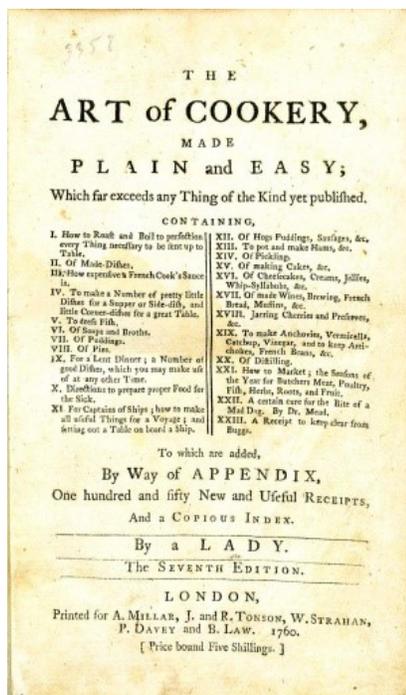
Today's garden often contains plants quite familiar to our modern tastes – summery flavors of tomatoes and bell peppers come to mind, with herbs like basil and rosemary to compliment. More adventurous gardeners might venture into plants like asparagus and artichokes, which were popular in 18th century gardens as well. But those gardens, while boasting similar plants to ours (strawberries! cabbage! peas!), also held a few plants that are less commonly used today. Let's take a look at a few of those plants:

An interesting sort of vegetable that you may already be familiar with, but that is not often seen in grocery stores, is cymlins. Today they are more often called pattypan squash – they taste quite similar to the usual yellow squash, but look more like a white or yellow flying saucer!

Cowslips are a small yellow flowering herb, often mentioned in English literature (including a nod from Shakespeare). They make an appearance in Hannah Glasse's cookbook as an addendum to wine but were often used for cooking and medicine as well.

Burnet or salad burnet, which can sometimes be found growing wild, was a common herb and medicinal plant in the 17th and 18th centuries. It has small leaves and purple flowers. It makes a delightful addition to salads and sandwiches, with a light cucumber-like flavor.

Salsify is primarily a root vegetable, and has a mild earthy flavor. It has a thin root that can be eaten like a parsnip or potato – mashed, fried, or sautéed – and is known for its soft, buttery texture. It was commonly grown in 18th century gardens, including Thomas Jefferson's!



Hannah Glasse's cookbook *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* (available for free on Google books) is an interesting read for learning more about the plants available in the 18th century garden. Her receipts for everything from pickles to medicinal remedies reference these and more, including odd plants such as mugwort, mistletoe, and maidenhair. The purposes of these plants are unfamiliar now, but provide a glimpse into the past and the lives of the people who grew them.

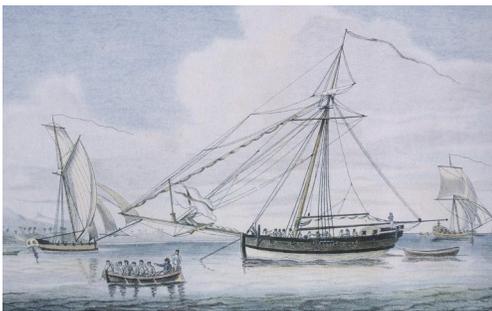


A Brigantine

THE SEA TRADE IN BATH

Throughout much of Bath's history, seaborne trade was the life's blood of its economy. Natives of Bath and Eastern North Carolina exported many raw materials and products from their farms and businesses. At the same time, they imported manufactured goods from Great Britain, the Caribbean, and the other British Colonies in North America. While shipping large amounts of these goods was important, the shallow depth of Bath's harbor limited the size and maximum cargo of the Ships that came into Bath. As larger port cities came into being, the importance of Bath to trade in North Carolina began to decrease. Still, it was this trade that would help Bath survive throughout the many tumultuous events of the 18th century.

Of the many exports that were shipped out of North Carolina at the time, probably the most prolific were those of the naval stores industry. The products of tar pitch and turpentine, harvested from the pine trees of North Carolina, were essential to the construction and maintenance of the wooden sailing ships of the era. Between the years of 1768 and 1772, Bath contributed between five to eighteen percent of the naval stores exports of North Carolina. Other exports from Bath tied to the lumber industry were sawn lumber, shingles, and staves. Between 1768 and 1772, Bath exported four to sixteen percent of the state's lumber-



based products. Many of the other exports shipped out of Bath in the 18th century were agricultural products from the farms and plantations in the outlying lands around the town.

Despite being important to trade in North Carolina, Bath did not develop a major shipbuilding industry. However, that does not mean there were no instances of shipbuilding in Bath. Both Thomas Harding and William Powell are documented as shipbuilders in Bath in the 18th century. ...Continued on page 4

THE SHIPS BUILT IN BATH

Bath did not have a major shipbuilding industry, but at least 5 ships are recorded as having been built in Bath prior to the American Revolution, though there may be more that do not appear in the records.

-The Piraqua *Adventure*, built in 1725

-The Schooner *Virginity*, built in 1725, owned by John West

-The Schooner *William*, built in 1754

-The Brig *Bath Packett*, built in 1763, owned by Robert Newell

-The Brig *Charming Molly*, built in 1770

The Schooner *Tryon* was also possibly built in Bath. It was listed as built "in the plantations" in the year 1763 and owned by "William Palmer and Co." The connection to the Palmer family makes it a strong possibility that it was built in Bath.

WRITING INSTRUMENTS OF THE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURY

What did people write with before the advent of the ballpoint pen? The #2 pencil? Or even before the fountain pen?

Feathers.

In the 18th century, carefully selected pinions (outer wing feathers), usually from large birds such as geese and turkeys, would be cured and carved into a perfect writing point, then dipped in ink repeatedly during the writing process. Some of our nations most defining documents would be written with a quill pen.

In the 19th century, technological advancements led to the increasing availability of steel dip pens, which would replace quills due to their longevity.



SEA TRADE IN BATH, CONTINUED

In an agreement dated on January 8th, 1710, Governor Thomas Cary contracted Harding to build a sloop that was 46 ft long, 18 ft wide, and 8ft deep. At least five other ships were built in Bath during the 18th century, and there may have been more that do not appear in the records.

Bath was very much a shallow water port, which limited the size of ships that could enter. Large ships had to stop at Ocracoke Island to unload their cargo, then reload it onto smaller vessels to make the trek to Bath. Over time, the importance of Bath to trade began to decrease. Ports like Beaufort, Brunswick and Roanoke began to see increases in the number of ships coming in, while the number of ships coming into Bath began to decline. A major contributing factor to this decline may have been the water depth around Bath, though it was certainly not the only one. Eventually, cities like New Bern, Edenton, and Washington would become the major trade ports in the Pamlico Sound. While Bath would continue, it's days as a mainstay of North Carolina trade was behind her.

ARTIFACTS OF INTEREST: LAP DESK

In a time without laptop computers and smartphones, the lap desk was the ultimate tool for working on the go. It allowed people to travel away from their desks while still having the ability to write, which was a major way in which people communicated both personally and professionally. There is a beautiful example of a lap desk on display in the Bonner House.



Lap desk dating to the 1790s

This desk dates to the 1790s and is a wonderful example of skilled craftsmanship of the time period. It is constructed out of rich mahogany wood and when folded closed one can see the top, which is inlaid with ivory. The pattern on the front resembles a spread fan with nine rib sections and is surrounded along the edges with scalloped geometric designs.

When opened, the writing surface is covered with green felt making a pleasant, flat surface to write upon. Above the writing surface is space for ink and quills or dip pen. The functionality of this lap desk would not be complete without a place to store ones writings—the writing area lifts up to reveal a compartment, perfect to store any letters or other documents.

The lap desks of the past allowed people to work on location, from different areas of the house, to different areas of the growing country. Just like today, people valued the freedom and ability to work in ways that fit into their busy lives.

THE ART OF COOKERY

This quarter we're sharing a "receipt" for Salmagundy, a popular salad dish in the 18th century. It's a familiar dish with a funny name—the salad is created with a variety of meats, fish, eggs and vegetables, just like the salads we eat today. The original recipe below was published by Hannah Glasse in 1747 in her book *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy*.

"To Make Salamongundy"

Take two or three Roman or Cabbage Lettice, then beginning at the open End, cut them cross-ways, as fine as a good big Thread, and lay the Lettices so cut, about an Inch thick all over the Bottom of the Dish. When you have thus garnished your Dish, take a Couple of cold roasted Chickens, and cut the Flesh off the Breasts and Wings into Slices, about three Inches long, a Quarter of an Inch broad, and as thin as a Shilling; lay them upon the Lettice round the End to the Middle of the Dish and the other towards the Brim; then having boned and cut six Anchovies each into eight Pieces, lay them all between each Slice of the Fowls, then cut the lean Meat of the Legs into Dice, and cut a Lemon into small Dice; then mince the Yolks of four Eggs, three or four Anchovies, and a little Parsley, and make a round Heap of these in your Dish, piling it up in the Form of a Sugar-loaf, and garnish it with Onions, as big as the Yolk of Eggs, boiled in a good deal of Water very tender and white. Put the largest of the Onions in the Middle on the Top of the Salamongundy, and lay the rest all round the Brim of the Dish, as thick as you can lay them; then beat some Sallat-Oil up with Vinegar, Salt and Pepper and pour over it all. Garnish with Grapes just scalded, or French beans blanched, or Station [nasturtium] Flowers, and serve it up for a first Course."

Notes for the modern kitchen:

This recipe is quite similar to the modern cobb salad, dressed with oil and vinegar. The emphasis is on the presentation: a bed of lettuce is created on which the meats, eggs, and other garnishes are displayed heaped up in a large pyramid shape in the middle. Small, cooked onions are laid on top. If you make it at home, try topping your salad with grapes, green beans, or nasturtium flowers just like the original!



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Did you enjoy the newsletter? Please consider sharing! Give a recommendation to a friend.

Drop us a line at bath@ncdcr.gov and we'll add you to our mailing list. Thanks!

HISTORIC BATH STATE HISTORIC SITE

European settlement near the Pamlico River in the 1690s led to the founding of Bath, North Carolina's first town, in 1705. By 1708, Bath had 50 people and 12 houses, and soon became North Carolina's first port. Its original town limits encompass a historic district today.

At Historic Bath, you can visit three historic homes, the Exhibit Center, a 1-mile walking tour, and a 15-minute orientation film in our Visitor's Center. St. Thomas's Church is also open to the public.

FIND US ON THE WEB

Visit our website and social media for up-to-date information on events and exhibits, as well as tour information, resources for educators, and further history of the site.

Website: historicsites.nc.gov/bath

Facebook: www.facebook.com/HistoricBath

Instagram: @historicbathsite

Twitter: twitter.com/HistBathSiteNC



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Hours:

*Please note, hours of operation
are temporarily suspended*

9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Tuesday-Saturday

Closed Sunday, Monday, and
most major holidays



