



# OLD KENT

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## UPDATE TO ANNUAL FUND LIST

Since the previous issue, the following have made contributions to the Annual Fund:

William Cleaver, III, Piper Builders  
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## JOHN CADWALADER and GEORGE WASHINGTON, The Story of a Friendship by Benjamin Kohl

[Talk for the Annual Meeting of the Historical Society of Kent County, Maryland, April 25, 2002]



George Washington is universally known as the father of his country, a title earned when he was commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, and borne honorably ever since. However, George Washington was the biological father to none; he became the stepfather of two children, John Parke Custis and Martha Parke Custis (Jackie and Patsy), when he married the attractive and vivacious widow, Martha Dandridge Custis in 1759. For undetermined reasons, the couple was unable to have children of their own. Without engaging in psychobabble, it is worth noting that Washington did serve as an emotional, even a substitute, father and mentor to many of the young men who joined the American cause in the early years of the Revolution.

The most famous, perhaps, was the Marquis de Lafayette who was the only teenaged general in the Continental army--though he turned twenty just in time to receive his first wound in battle at Brandywine, September 11, 1777. Lafayette was a notorious favorite of Washington's and repaid the compliment of the great man's affection by following an eighteenth-century convention of naming his firstborn son George Washington Lafayette, after the boy's spiritual grandfather. Among native born American officers, younger by perhaps half a generation than the commander-in-chief, the Rhode Islander Nathaniel Greene had an especially close relationship with Washington. This author's personal favorite is the portly, bespectacled Boston bookseller, Henry Knox, who served Washington as commander of the Continental artillery and went on to become the nation's first Secretary of War.

Among those who served as aide-de-camp on his staff, or "family" as Washington called his headquarters unit, was Alexander Hamilton, the brilliant and brave officer who became the country's first Secretary of Treasury. And there is the Eastern Shore's own Tench Tilghman who, as Washington's secretary, probably penned more letters that went out over the commander-in-chief's signature than any other man in history.

These were famous younger men of Washington's inner circle. Here, I will discuss the relation between Washington and a younger man of his outer circle and explore the friendship that developed over more than a decade with Kent County's more famous Revolutionary War general, John Cadwalader of Philadelphia and Shrewsbury Neck.

Cadwalader was born in Philadelphia in 1742 into a well-to-do, cultured Welsh Quaker family. His grandfather John had been a close friend of William Penn and was among the earlier settlers who migrated to that city at the end of the seventeenth century. Gen. Cadwalader's father, Thomas, was a physician who received his medical training in Germany before returning to America to marry Hanna Lambert, a New Jersey heiress whose family gave its name to Lambertville, NJ. Hanna was to bear seven children--five daughters and two sons: John, named for his grandfather and Lambert born a year later, christened with his mother's surname. The Cadwalader brothers were educated at Franklin's new College of Philadelphia, which was the forerunner of the University of Pennsylvania. There they studied under their father's close friend, the Anglican clergyman, William Smith who later founded Washington College in Chestertown. By c. 1760, the two young men left the college apparently without taking a degree, and their father had been expelled from the Society of Friends for making war by investing in shares of a privateer during the Seven Years' War.

Like so many other failed Quakers, Thomas and his family soon joined the Church of England. It seems probable that young John then went to England and traveled across the continent on "The Grand Tour." At one point, he states knowingly that anyone who failed to travel on to Italy after visiting France would be making a great mistake, an admonition that I share as well.

In the mid-1760s John and Lambert set up a drygoods business in Philadelphia that proved moderately successful. Soon John's life and fortunes were to be transformed. On 25 September 1768, he married Betsy Lloyd (1742-76), a wealthy Eastern Shore heiress, daughter of prominent Talbot County landowner and politician, Edward Lloyd III. Betsy brought with her an enormous estate of land, slaves, houses, and livestock in the form of several plantations in Talbot and Queen Anne's counties. At first Cadwalader was largely an absentee landlord, electing instead to remain in Philadelphia running his business. On her father's death in 1770, Betsy came into an even greater inheritance; this she and John consolidated by trading off land and property in Talbot County and elsewhere for cash and a farm of some 1,700 acres on Shrewsbury Neck. Essentially the couple acquired what was known as Bennett's Regulation which



By the early 1770s, when the Cadwalader brothers had become successful, John began construction of his mansion on 2nd Street in Philadelphia. Forty by forty feet with a detached kitchen, it was an impressive residence, filled with the best furniture, silver plate and wall hangings. Though it was torn down in the middle of the 19th century, the house's appearance and furnishings were carefully and lovingly reconstructed in Nicholas Biddle Wainwright's book *Colonial Grandeur in Philadelphia*. If you visit Odessa, Delaware, you can simply think of the Cadwalader home as a slightly larger version of the Corbit-Sharp House there.

In these elegant surroundings Betsy and John Cadwalader began their family life. Their first child, Anne, was born in 1771. In Charles Willson Peale's portrait of John and Betsy Cadwalader, with infant Anne, painted in the summer of 1772, we see recorded an idealized image of the confident provincial aristocrat offering a peach to Anne. By spring 1773, Cadwalader had been elected vice-president of the newly formed Jockey Club of Philadelphia, of which Gov. John Penn was president. In this context, Cadwalader first got to know George Washington who visited Philadelphia in the spring of 1773 on his way to enroll his stepson in King's College in New York. Jackie and his stepfather who were also ardent race fans dined with John Cadwalader at his home on 20 May 1773 before going off to the races.

By this time, the troubles in Massachusetts Bay had spread to the other colonies. The Boston Port Act of March 1774 led to the Chestertown Tea Party on 23 May 1774, and subsequently to the convening of the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia. Among other notables who attended were George Washington and John Adams, who dined at Cadwalader's home on Second Street. From the first, the Cadwalader brothers were staunch supporters of American independence. By summer 1775, John was made captain of the Philadelphia City Troop, or "Silk Stocking Company" which drilled near his townhouse. The Troop then undertook a long march to William Smith's estate at the Falls of the Schuylkill.

In the summer of 1774, a second daughter, Elizabeth, was born, joined in February 1776 by a third daughter, Maria. A few days after Maria's birth, Betsy Cadwalader died--some say of stress caused by fear of war. The young widower was moved to employ Anne Dingwell as caretaker for the three daughters.

On July 4, 1776, American Independence was proclaimed in Philadelphia, and that summer Col. John Cadwalader took command of one of the battalions of the Philadelphia militia. At year's end he was made brigadier general in command of 1,500 Pennsylvania Militiamen. George Washington came to count on Cadwalader's forces as he formulated his plan to counterattack the Hessian garrison stationed across the Delaware.

The American forces were divided into three units: the main army on the north under Washington, James Ewing's troops at Trenton in the middle, and Cadwalader with a thousand Philadelphia Associators, a Rhode Island brigade and Thomas Rodney's Dover Company at Bristol, PA to the south. A diversion was needed for the planned attack on Trenton. Early on Christmas Day, Washington ordered Cadwalader to move his troops across the Delaware at all costs. "I am determined, as the Night is favourable, to cross the River and make the Attack upon Trenton in the Morning. If you can do nothing real, at least create as great a diversion as possible." (*Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War*

*Series*, 7:439).

Cadwalader was not able to move both men and artillery across the Delaware in time to participate in the victory at Trenton, but he did move his forces into New Jersey the next day, and fought with valor in the battle of Princeton.

Back in Pennsylvania early in 1777, he entreated his Pennsylvania militia battalions to remain in the army. But with their enlistment expired, they refused. About this time, on Washington's recommendation, Cadwalader was offered--but declined--promotion to rank of brigadier general in the Continental army.

There followed a spring and summer of indecision. With the British advance up the Chesapeake in July 1777, Cadwalader moved his family to Shrewsbury. On 28 August 1777, Washington wrote Cadwalader ordering him to take command of Maryland Militia in Kent County at the time of the British invasion from the Elk River. Wrote Washington: "I must request your Good offices and interest in assisting to assemble [the militia] ... that they may be in a situation to annoy the Enemy should they make a push against Philadelphia, giving such advice and direction to the officers as shall appear to you necessary and proper" ("Military Papers," 167, and *Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series*, 11:82). But John Cadwalader was a conspicuous failure in leading the militia of Kent County who were afraid to move against the superior British forces. Their leadership eventually came into the more capable hands of Cadwalader's friend and neighbor Col. Donaldson Yeates.

Cadwalader did join Washington as a volunteer and fought alongside Lafayette in the battle of the Brandywine, 11 September 1777. In October, John Cadwalader fought in the battle of Germantown. [Editor's note: both Brandywine and Germantown were American defeats.]

With British occupation of Philadelphia, Cadwalader returned to stay permanently with the nurse and his three daughters at Shrewsbury Farm while Washington and his small army went into cantonment at Valley Forge. At the end of January 1778, Cadwalader received an important letter from Valley Forge by way of Shoreman Tench Tilghman concerning Thomas Conway's Cabal. Gates and Conway were trying to use members of Congress to remove Washington from his post as commander-in-chief. Tilghman enlisted Cadwalader's aid in defending Washington's honor and position. ("Military Papers," pp. 169-70, 18 Jan. 1778, Tench Tilghman to John Cadwalader on Conway's Cabal)

From the late autumn of 1777 until June 1778 Cadwalader resided with Anne Dingwell and his three daughters at Shrewsbury where he was nominally in command of the local militia. This was a period of hardship and despair for the young widower. He spent part of that time in a dalliance with the children's nurse, Anne Dingwell; about Christmas, she conceived a daughter, Sarah, who was born in early autumn, 1778. Anne and infant Sarah left Shrewsbury when Cadwalader moved back to Philadelphia following the British evacuation. While Cadwalader never acknowledged his illegitimate daughter during his life, he provided handsomely for Anne and Sarah in his will, granting a legacy of 100 pounds to Anne Dingwell who had subsequently married. He established an interest-bearing trust of 200 pounds, administered by his brother Lambert, who was to pay out the entire amount when Sarah reached eighteen or married.

In late June 1778 Cadwalader served with Washington's army in New Jersey where he led units of the Pennsylvania militia against the British at the

battle of Monmouth. He returned to Philadelphia to settle scores with Thomas Conway, long one of Washington's most vocal and hostile critics. At Valley Forge, with the aid of Baron vonSteuben, Washington and his American officers had fashioned a new, highly trained Continental army which acquitted itself well, if not flawlessly, at Monmouth.

With Washington now vindicated as an able field commander, Cadwalader called upon Conway to retract his criticism or face his fate on the field of honor. On the outskirts of Philadelphia, 4 July 1778, Cadwalader met Gen. Thomas Conway in a duel to defend Washington's honor. Conway fired first and missed, but bravely stood to receive the return volley. Cadwalader shot to kill, and his bullet struck Conway's jaw. Conway fell to the ground gushing blood, severely and it seemed mortally wounded. Cadwalader is reported to have said, "At last, I've stopped that lying mouth." Conway's seconds were able to staunch the blood, and he was carried from the field, disgraced and fearing death. Upon recovering, he apologized to Washington for his criticisms but was forced to leave America. Conway returned to France where he served for a time in the royal army. He died in India in 1800, having survived both his former adversaries.

About this time, Cadwalader received a second offer for the post, this time as a brigadier general in charge of the Cavalry of the Continental army. He again rejected the invitation, writing, "I will not accept General of Cavalry." (*Military Papers*, p. 171, 19 Sept. 1778)

Early 1779 saw a great change of good fortune. On 30 January 1779, Cadwalader married a great Philadelphia beauty, Williamina Bond (d. 1837), daughter of Phineas Bond, MD. They were a prominent local family of known Tory sympathies. At the same time, Betsy and John's three daughters were placed in the care of her sister in Philadelphia. Nine months to the day after their wedding, Cadwalader's first son, Thomas, was born in Philadelphia. Cadwalader soon moved his new family to Shrewsbury Farm where he became involved in Maryland politics. From 1780 to 1784, Cadwalader served several terms as Delegate from Kent to the Maryland General Assembly and contributed to local causes, including the founding of Washington College. In May 1784 a second son, John Jr., was born only to die at Shrewsbury fourteen months later.

On 1 May 1785, Cadwalader met with Washington for the last time, when he visited Mount Vernon as one of three Maryland delegates on the creation of Potomac River Company furthering cooperation between the two states for development of transportation to the interior.

That summer he helped organize the Philadelphia Society for the Promotion of Agriculture. After spending Christmas in his townhouse, he returned to Shrewsbury Farm to go duck hunting on the Sassafras. There in January 1786, he contracted pneumonia, dying at Shrewsbury on 11 February 1786 at the age of 44.

His funeral was conducted by Rev. William Smith, founder of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the U.S. and of Washington College. Smith's eulogy apparently does not survive, but one written by Tom Paine for a Philadelphia paper does. It was excerpted by the Cadwalader children for his epitaph. The stone is badly weathered. Taken from the printed edition in Katherine M. DeProspero's *A History of Shrewsbury Parish Church* (Chesapeake College Press, 1988).

"In Memory of Genl. John Cadwalader who departed



this life the 11th February 1786

Aged 44 years, 1 month, 1 day.

The Following character was given him by Thomas Paine who during his life time had been his violent political enemy.

His early and inflexible Patriotism Will endear his memory to all the true friends of the American revolution.

It may with strictest justice be said of him

That he possessed a heart incapable of deceiving.

His manners were formed on the nicest sense of Honor and the whole tenor of his Life was governed by this principle.

The companions of his youth were The companions of his Manhood.

He never lost a Friend by Insincerity Nor made one by deception. His domestic virtues were truly exemplary, While they serve to endear the Remembrance, they embitter the loss of him to All his numerous friends and connexions."

This stone is placed by his affectionate children to mark the spot where his remains are deposited.

"Also in Memory of His Son JOHN who died the 10th day of July 1785 Age 1 year 2 months 9 days Whose remains are here deposited."

The conclusion of this paper will appear in the Fall 2002 issue.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

There is no detailed biography of John Cadwalader, but Nicholas B. Wainwright has devoted a monograph to his home and furnishings in *Colonial Grandeur in Philadelphia, The House and Furniture of Gen. John Cadwalader* (Phila.: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1964), with information on his life and family on pp. 1-3, 61-65, 68. Biographical sketches appear in Paul David Nelson, "Cadwalader, John" *National Biography* 4 (New York, 1999): 168-69, with some errors; "Cadwalader, John," in *A Biographical Dictionary of the Maryland Legislature, 1635-1789*, compiled by Edward C. Papenfuss et al. (3 vols., Baltimore, 1979), Vol. 2, p. 183; and Katherine M. DeProspero, *A History of Shrewsbury Parish Church* (Wye Mills, MD: Chesapeake College Press, 1988), pp. 224-26. A summary of his Will of April 29, 1785 has been published in *Abstracts of Kent County Wills*, Vol. 1, 1777-1816, compiled by Christos Christou, Jr. and John Anthony Barnhouser (Westminster, MD: Family Line Publications, 1990), pp. 53-55. The most detailed information on his relations with William Smith is noted in Horace Wemyss Smith, *Life and Correspondence of the Rev. William Smith, D.D.* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1880). Over twenty letters documenting the friendship between Washington and Cadwalader were first published in "Selections from the Military Papers of Gen. John Cadwalader (1776-1780)," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 32 (1908): 149-74; most of these appear in later critical editions in *The Papers of George Washington*, Revolutionary War series, edited by W. W. Abbott, Philander Chase et al. (11 vols. to date. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1984-2001), and *The Writings of George Washington*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick (40 vols. Washington, D.C., 1932-44). The exchange between Washington and young Thomas Cadwalader is published in *Papers of George Washington, retirement series*, edited by W. W. Abbott (4 vols., Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992-95), 2:446-47).

## NEW YARMOUTH QUESTERS

### CONTINUE TO HONOR A DECEASED MEMBER

The Historical Society's herb garden was created in 1990. In 1999 the New Yarmouth Questers dedicated it to honor their friend and late member, Carol Tarbutton. A new plaque was unveiled in Dec. 2001. The members present were Fran Baldwin, Susan O'Hara, Elle Bayne, Doris Winter, Barbara Miller, Heather Davidson, Ann Wachenfeld, Lilian Linduska, Pearl Armbruster, Ann Long, Margaret Briscoe, Evelyn Stevenson, Jean Johnson and Jean Baldwin. Also attending were Frank Tarbutton and daughter Polly.

This Quester chapter has cultivated the plot behind the rear kitchen with herbs for a dozen years. According to Ann Wachenfeld, Helen Mirenda of Chestertown contributed many of the plants, and Flo Malcolm, a newcomer to New Yarmouth Questers, donated herb name tags.

Mrs. Malcolm describes the herbs and their benefits as follows:

1. Golden Marjoram--Medicinal: colds, dropsy, stiff joints; Culinary: flavoring
2. Feverfew--Medicinal: to bring down fever, remedy for dizziness
3. Rue--Medicinal: treat many diseases, preserve vision
4. Lemon Balm--Melissa=Greek for Bee; to scour bee hives. Culinary: flavor tea, punch; Fragrant: dried
5. Rosemary--Medicinal: restore memory, prevent witchcraft, disinfect; Culinary: flavoring; Fragrant
6. Chives--Culinary: mild onion flavor
7. Oregano--Medicinal: sour stomach, consumption, snake bite, toothache; Culinary: flavoring stews
8. Nasturtium--Culinary: salad herb, leaves and flowers edible
9. Parsley--Culinary: as a vegetable; to sweeten breath
10. Winter Savory--Culinary: peppery seasoning, bean dishes
11. Thyme--Medicinal: contains thymos for coughs; Culinary: flavor meat, especially lamb
12. Sage--Culinary: flavor poultry; Medicinal a bee plant
13. Fennel--Medicinal: increase milk, stop hiccoughs, snake bite, cleanse blood; Culinary: flavoring
14. Lavender--Medicinal: tea for nervousness; Fragrant: baths, soap
15. Comfrey--Medicinal: roots apply to wounds, boiled for ulcers, hemorrhoids, ease pain



NEW YARMOUTH QUESTERS CHAPTER 1048 met at Geddes Piper House to unveil and dedicate a plaque at the herb garden honoring one of its founding members, the late Carol S. Tarbutton.

### VOLUNTEERS of the SPRING MONTHS:

For MARCH is Board member Suzanne Fischer who crafted the New Members' and Volunteer Reception, March 17, bringing together new members and docents and volunteers. Her efforts insured the enjoyment of all who attended. Bonnie Brockschmidt assisted with food and hospitality.

For APRIL is Mackey Dutton, keeping busy since retiring, most recently chairing the Kent County part of the Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage, April 27th. Blue skies brought hundreds of visitors to Kent County, and the Geddes-Piper House was among those sites. The bit of back yard here was improved when the New Yarmouth Questers refreshed the herbs in the 'Carol Tarbutton Memorial Garden.' (See article on the Questers contribution in this issue.)

For MAY are Heron Pointers Beth Meree and Priscilla Williams for spending many hours to inventory/describe hundreds of articles of clothing. We will have a complete list of garments worn by women and men, and children's slips and christening gowns. Better conservation of the clothing, careful storage and use of the costumes in displays are side benefits of their work.