

Journal of Cuthbert Powell



Cuthbert Powell

William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine, Vol. 13, No. 1. (Jul., 1904), pp. 53-63.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0043-5597%28190407%291%3A13%3A1%3C53%3AJOCP%3E2.0.CO%3B2-S>

William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine is currently published by Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/omohundro.html>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

The JSTOR Archive is a trusted digital repository providing for long-term preservation and access to leading academic journals and scholarly literature from around the world. The Archive is supported by libraries, scholarly societies, publishers, and foundations. It is an initiative of JSTOR, a not-for-profit organization with a mission to help the scholarly community take advantage of advances in technology. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

31. I have partly agreed with Colo. Brockenbrough for the corn that is to spare in Kelsick's estate.

1771.

January 16. From the 1st day of this month till this day we have had prodigious fine weather indeed, so that I have enjoyed my three day's festival to-wit: The 10, 11 & 12, with great cheerfulness to everybody; in all about 60 people, of whom were Mr. Carter, of Corotoman & his Lady, my nephew, Charles Carter, late of Nanzaticoe, & his Lady, my nephew Fitzhugh, his Lady, Col. P. Lee, his Lady, & all my neighborhood except Col^o. Brockenbrough, although invited & really promised to come.

(*To be Continued.*)

JOURNAL OF CUTHBERT POWELL.

(*Continued from Vol. XII., p. 231.*)

Tuesday. The weather cleared away with the wind at S^oW. We continued during the day running to the North. At 6 o'clock in the afternoon the wind hauled suddenly to the N EsW^d & we stood in for the land at 11 o'clock, made sight of the light on Cape Henry. At 12 o'clock the wind shifted again to about N^oWest & blew hard. It was then directly ahead, & by four in the morning had driven us quite out of sight of the light House. The weather so intensely cold that the salt water froze on our decks & the seamen so knocked up with continued wettings & cold that they could scarcely put the vessel about. There was not a man on board but had taken his turn to be laid up, except an Irishman, a fellow as hard as so much lignum vitæ; after standing his turn at the helm, give him some rum & you might discover it in a moment light up new life in him. The fellow's eyes would sparkle, his colour return and the smook of his breath shoot forth with double vigour. One man cried; actually shed tears copiously at the greatness of his sufferings, which for a sailor to do must prove the severity of the weather.

Wednesday morning, after standing in about 3 hours, made the land & saw the lighthouse again about 20 miles to N^oW of us, the wind still blowing hard ahead, the sea rough & freezing hard

on our decks, saw three sail beating for the capes, one of them a large, handsome schooner we passed close to windward of, she had carried away her Main Boom & had fix'd up her foresail in place of the mainsail. A large whale kept on the same tack with us for about quarter of an hour, so near along side of us that he might have been struck with a biscuit, had so fair a view of him as to see the holes on the sides of his head through which he spouted. Beating about we again lost sight of the lighthouse & land.

Thursday morning, the weather moderate, we discovered eight sail, most of them steering with us for the lighthouse, which we a third time made sight of about 8 o'clock, the wind blowing lightly from the East. We were spoke by a french Privateer, a beautiful 3 masted schooner, just off the capes; they made no other enquiries than from whence we came and where bound; her colours were a handsome Burgee tri-coloured at the upperside, with the American Eagle and stars added. At four o'clock in the evening we were abreast C^a Henry, the wind continuing light at N^o East & the weather cold with fine rain, we stood up the Bay until about nine o'clock, making 12 or 14 miles distance. It then began snowing & raining hard, & the wind shifting to N^o West prevented our laying our course up the Bay. We here held a council whether it was better to put out to sea again or continue in the Bay without a Pilot. Ignorant of the shoals, & the night so dark that we could not see across the Quarter Deck. If the vessel was hove to, she had only 10 or 12 miles to drift before she was ashore which she must do before morning if the tide should be setting out. We at length determined to lay her to & keep the lead going, & if she was found to be getting in shoal water, to make sail & put to sea, very favorably for us the tide was setting in.

Friday at day light found ourselves about six miles within the lighthouse, the wind still blowing fresh at N^oW at 7 o'clock, got a Pilot, & as the wind was ahead attempted to beat into Hampton Road, after beating until four o'clock against a strong tide the Pilot found that we could not get in, & from the appearance of the weather supposing we should have a bad night, put about & stood out of the Capes intending to anchor if he could under cover of Smiths Island; as the sun went down the air got more

intensely cold than ever I felt it. Three men were sent aloft to secure the topsail, & with the greatest difficulty held to the fore yard long enough to make the sail fast; we got pretty near the land, & in order to prevent our drifting off, the pilot let go the anchor, before the lower sails were let down, the Main & fore sails were easily let down & secured; the jib could scarcely be let down for the ice clogg'd on the rigging, which made everything stiff; two men only could stand on deck at last to finish making up the sails. The Captain & myself were in the cabin, & when the work was done, one of the sailors (the most cheerful, active hand aboard) came down to the cabin door with a countenance & manner which made such an impression on me that I can never forget it. Stretching his two hands out before him: "Oh! God, Captain," said he, "I am froze stiff," & knocked his finger ends together, making a noise like the knocking of so many dry bones or stones together. Upon examining they were frozen so hard that they must have broken before they would have bent. The other two men who were with him on the fore yard were also frost-bitten.

Saturday morning found our deck windless, cables & other rigging as high up as the sea flew covered with ice, & not a man able to turn out & clear the vessel of ice or pump her out; the Captain, Mate, Pilot & myself pumped her free, & the weather moderating, we let the men lie below, & after the sun had a little softened the ice with the assistance of warm water, cleand the windlass & cable by one o'clock, when the wind getting to S W we got up all the men that could crawl & with every exertion we could use with difficulty weighd anchor. The wind getting again to N W we continued stretching on & off between the capes & in the night were driven out sight of land.

Christmas day. The weather more moderate, the wind continuing still at the N°. We continued standing on for the land without making sight of it.

Our Cook this morning made report that we had one small piece of beef on hand & about wood enough to boil it, as the weather was moderate it gave us an opportunity of reflecting on & making comparisons on our situation & that of our friends ashore. Three out of four of our seamen frost-bitten we could scarcely get our vessel put about, with head winds & some pros-

pect of our wanting provisions, whilst our friends were keeping Christmas at home by a comfortable fireside, free from the cares of pumping ship or tending sail. I this day did duty by standing six half hour glasses at the Helm.

Monday morning, 9 o'clock. I am this moment from the mast head with a pulse I am convinced beating high with gratitude to the great arranger of winds & weather. The objects presenting themselves from the mast are Cape Henry & the light house to leeward of us & Smith's Island on our Starboard bow, with a gentle N^o East wind drifting us into the capes with the appearance on the water of a fresh breeze from the eastward. At 9 o'clock at night anchored on the Horseshoe near the mouth of Hampton Road.

(Monday) say Tuesday 27th, Dec^r.

About day break got under way & at 2 o'clock anchored at Norfolk, making a passage of 40 Days, of which time we had about four days free winds; on getting into port we heard of a number of vessels which had made still longer passages, of several foundering at sea, of a number driven ashore on the coast, & that about 25 vessels belonging to Norfolk were out of time, & had never been heard of. Merchants & others with whom I made acquaintance in Norfolk were Mr. Otway, of the house of Fletcher & Otway, from whom I received uncommon attention & acts of Friendship,

Mr. Mosler Myers,	}	<i>Merchs.</i>
Capt. Wm. Pennock,		
John Proudfit & Co.,		
Phonehay Dana,		
Cap. Warren Ashley,		
Mr. Nathan McGill,		

Alexander Ferror, of Baltimore, who had been thro the W Indies generally, & from whom I received some necessary information of the different Markets & Productions. Mr. Huron, of our Board at Mrs. & Mr. Cox, Z. Livingstone—in their politicks most bigoted & violent Royalty. Mr. Rincock, a young Englishman also, just to the country, as warm a democrat as his countrymen were of the opposite politicks between whom & some advocates of each opinion at our board we had Politicks & religion well banded; Mr. Boice, a Genteel Young Irishman from the W. Indies

where he had been living several years; Mr. Cook, an Englishman, who resided in the Savanna, in the West Indies Business, just from Hespaneola, & whom I had seen & been slightly acquainted with in Philadelphia. Mr. Grayson, of Petersburg, who I had been acquainted with at the Sweet Springs, Mr. Saunders, O'Neale's * Brother in Law, to whom he introduced me.

Mr. Evans, Mr. Wise, in the Assembly, members from eastern shore, from whom I heard from my father.

Dr. Mortimer, formerly in Alex^a, mentioned his acquaintance with my bro. W., an excellent singer.

January 18, 1797.

Wednesday, four o'clock in the evening, left Norfolk, & dropt down to Hampton road bound for St. Thomas's & Santa Crus—were detained until Sunday morning, 22^d, by contrary winds, during which time our seamen in different parties took it in turn to escape from the vessel all hands; & leave no boat to pursue them with. They were again collected with much difficulty & on Sunday we put to sea with the first commencement of a fine N^o West wind shoving us on about 7 knots per hour.

Commodore Barney's Frigates, the *Medusa* & *Insurgent*, were repairing at Norfolk while I was there. The *Medusa* (the ship in which Citizen Fauchet sailed from N York for France, & narrowly escaped a British 74 in a Fog) the largest, & of the two is a handsome fast sailing ship of 50 Gunn. Mr. Ferror, of Baltimore, who spoke French & myself went on board the *Madusa* & were shown every part of her by one of the Lieutenants, who with much politeness carried us into the different cabins & between her decks.

Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday's running with strong westwardly wind, spoke the Brig *Patty*, Capt. Lee, of Phila., she sailed from Norfolk 6 or 8 days before for Lisbon, had sprung a leak & was beating for Norfolk again; a strong head wind & the lighthouse just perceivable—saw another Brig to leeward of him bound also to Norfolk, who had spoke Capt. Lee that morning, & informed him that he had got more of his sails split some time

* O'Neale, of Baltimore.

before in a gale of wind; we saw two or 3 other vessels beating for the Capes; Wednesday early in the night made the latitude of Bermuda, to Westward of the Island, making a run of nearly 500 miles dist^a in about 3½ days.

Sunday & Monday, last Jan^r.

Laying becalmed between the latitudes 28 & 29 N°, the weather so warm as to make a Cloth coat disagreeable about these latitudes the variable winds cease & the trades commence in consequence of which calms are more frequent than in any other situation on a W Indies passage. On leaving the coast we changed our climate so suddenly that the seamen were throwing off their shoes & stockings on the fourth day, tho it was severe January weather when we left the Contin^t.

Sunday, 5th February.

Since Tuesday last running with light Trade winds & pleasant weather, with some squalls, we fell in with a trade wind as far North as 28 Deg. of latt^{de}. After getting into the trade winds we sprung our fore top mast with a full topsail & top Gallant sail sett. The rigging prevented its going over the side.

Monday, 6th.

A continuation of pleasant weather, with a fresh trade wind. In the afternoon in latitude 20 saw the appearance of a wreck some distance to windward of us, & stood for it. On coming up with it, found it to be a vessel floating with her keel upwards, & her stern drove in, which prevented our discovering her name; she was a sharp built vessel, a fine bottom & model of about 70 to 80 tons burthen—about the size & description of the fast sailing schooners built at Norfolk & Baltimore. From the appearance of her bottom she could not have been long upset.

Tuesday morning at day light were just abreast St. Thomas's about 4 leagues distant, the Island of Tortola in view to windward, with some others of the small Virgin Islands & the N° Ea. end of Porto Rico just perceivable to leeward. At Twelve o'clock came up with the land of St. Thomas's making a passage of fifteen days from land to land, of as pleasant weather as we could

have wished the season of the year brought into consideration—same night came to an anchor in the Bay of St. Thomas's.

Persons with whom I made acquaintance in St. Thomas's,

Mr. Murphy, an Irishman.

Mr. Westerman, a German.

Mr. D. Abendanon, an English Jew.

Gurden Bacchus, formerly merch^t of Petersburg.

Mr. Ridgley, from Baltimore, in a schooner, with Flour & Drygoods, an acquaintance of J. Norwoods, of Alex^a.

Saturday, 11th Feby.

Dined with my Jew acquaintance, Mr. Abendanon, in company with his Sister, a handsome, sprightly widow, her two sons & a young lady, a Jewess, & was very much pleased with the fare & Company; but such is the effects of habit with the Jews that they cannot even entertain you at their table without putting the cheat upon you. Mr. Abendanon cheated us twice at dinner. First in his meat; he observed to us at sitting down that as marketts were bad, he could give us nothing better than a roast turkey & some etceteras. Upon being helped to some of it, we discovered that it was a large Guinea Fowl. Then in his drink; he mentioned that he had Madeira Claret, Port & Champain wines, Porter or brandy & water, which would we drink? As we had just sat down, we chose some brandy & water; he ordered some brandy & water & Porter, & desired us to speak for anything we would drink afterwards. He took very good care to introduce none of his wines, however, tho he had such variety of them. So the old gentleman cheated us at dinner in our Meal & our drink, & I have no doubt that if any other opening had presented itself, he would not have let slip the opp'y of cheating us again. Cap. Rufus, now of the Schooner *Industry*, of Boston, to whom I sold my cargo.

Monday, 13th February.

Left St. Thomas in an Open Boat for Tortola distant twenty-four miles. After beating to windward until 9 o'clock at night, with a strong Ea. Wind & current made the N^o Ea end of St. Johns, from getting wet in showers of rain, & the spray of the sea breaking across the boat found myself sick with a violent headache, got the negro boatmen to put me ashore at the sugar Estate

of a Mr. William Brown, on St. Johns, who I found at his boiling House. I told him my situation, & begd the liberty of staying all night with him. The old Gentⁿ took me cordially by the hand & told me I was welcome; he prescribed me some strong Brandy & water to prevent catching cold, then sent a boy to saddle 2 mules, on which we rode to his dwelling house, pleasantly situated on a high hill above his Sugar House, where I found a handsome supper on the table. He made me acquainted with his wife a sensible, agreeable woman, a native of Anguilla. Tuesday morning after breakfast left St. Johns in a handsome Coble hired of Mr. Brown, with three hands to carry me up to Tortola, where I arrived at one o'clock. Put up at the Boarding House of James Grigg, a native of N England. Found the following vessels in Tortola condemned or lying for adjudication.

Ship *Reimsdyke*, Cap. Aborns, from Bavaria, M Monroe Super Cargo with sugar & spices cond^d, owned by Clark & Nightingale of Providence. Schooner *Swallow*, Cap. Dillingham, of Philadelphia, from Gonives, in S'Domingo, bound to S'Thomas with coffee, Mr. Jos. Doan Super Cargo condemned.

Brig *Fortitude*, Cap. Anby R. Clark, owned by Maleba & Durand, New York, Antony Rickard Super Cargo had on board Drygoods & 22,000 Dol in spice bound from Cape Francois to St. Johns, Porto Rico, condemned. I attended her trial.

Paramarabo, of Baltimore, owned by Wm. Lorman, Super Cargo, Mr. McCandley, bound from Luninan to Baltimore, cap^d first by the English, retaken by a French Privateer & a second time retaken by the British Sloop of War *Fury*—trial not come on.

Three Danish Ships, 2 of which were condemned & sold, the third, tho her trial had not come on, they were disposing of her cargo at Publick sale for the sake of dispatch. Got acquainted with Mr. Sam^l Chollet, of Maitinico, agent for the captors of the Ea India ship, from whom I purchased 150 packages Baravia Sugar, Mr. Dodson, of Domineck, partner of Chollet.

Judge of the Court of Vice Admiralty for the Virgin Islands, Mr. Leonard, King's Attorney—Mark Dyer Agent for the Navy John Dougan. 1st March ship'd my sugar, &c., purchased in Tortola on board the Governor Parry, of Barbados, a sloop commanded by Mr. Ross, & returned in her to St. Thomas. There

were in the Harbour of St. Thomas 3 or 4 French privateer Boats with 2 swivels & a few Muskets & cutlasses manned by Mulalloe, which could only have been fitted out for the purpose of plundering neutral vessels, one of them lay nearly along side of our schooner while she was receiving her cargo from the Tortola sloop, on which I looked with an eye of suspicion & expected to have been pursued by her, our coming out of the harbour in the night probably prevented it. In St. Thomas I lodged at the house of Citizen Dooley, a Genteel Frenchman, who had married in Norfolk, at whose table were Mr. Monroe, Sup. Cargo, & part owner of the ship *Con^d* at Tortola from Baravia, Cap. Salter, of a Boston Brig,

Mr. Sylvester,	}	Natives of the Isl ^d
Mr. Coppinger,		
Cap. Clark,	}	American Cap ^s of cond ^d vessels.
Cap. Aborns,		
Cap. Bain,		

March 7th, left St. Thomas with Captains Clark, Bain, Elliott & Olive with four seamen passengers; cut up an old pump & made four six pounders, which we painted & mounted on the schooner's deck to defend ourselves & arrived in Norfolk on the 19th March, after as pleasant a passage as we could possibly have had, never having occasion on the passage to tack ship, & only once to gib, the trade wind holding with us to the latitude of Bermuda, when we met with a S^o West wind that brought us into port.

19th March to 26th.

Engaged in discharging cargo & ballasting schooner. 26th March drop't down to Hampton Road & came to anchor. There were lying in the Road four British ships of War—*The Asia* of 64 Guns, the *Assistance* of 50, the *Alarm* of 28 guns, the *Topa* of 26 G.

1800—July—After being engaged in the occupation of farmer two Summers under circumstances not very pleasant, to-wit, hired negroes & not enough of them to till my grounds sufficiently, fences out of repair & no pasture or meadow grounds, in making up a conclusion as to the pursuit or business most advisable to me whether farmer or Merchant, I shall possibly be influenced by feelings improperly adverse to farming. There are,

however, several powerful reasons which at this time direct my choice from the life of a farmer to that of a merchant. In the first place my circumstances are not such, as to do away the necessity of active employment in person on my farm, which to my constitution, unaccustomed to it, is oppressive; again, the custom of our State of farming altogether with slaves is an insuperable objection with me; as without severity they will generally be found unprofitable & my feelings revolt at the idea of deriving plenty and perhaps luxury from the painful & unceasing labours of fellow creatures drudging on without a hope of any end to their labours in this world.

I may possibly again enter the world of business & calculate to meet in my walks diversity of character amidst the chicane circumvention & venal arts practiced in the eager pursuit of wealth. I shall still count on meeting frequently the unvarying face of honest integrity & honour—in the hope of friendly intercourse & confidence with the one, & believing myself possessed of discernment enough to discern & counteract the attempts of the other. I am the more readily disposed to enter that mode of life where my own exertions will, if I am successful, afford that competence which I should by farming attain from the unremitted labor of others.

That in my determination I am not actuated by insatiable thirst for wealth I appeal to the great inquisitor of Human motives, hoping that if in poverty my life would be more pleasing to the author of it, & in wealth I should depart from my duty to him, and my fellow-man, that he will of his power & goodness make me poor.

July 20th, 1801.

On taking a wide range through the various occupations of man, their views & pursuits, after scanning with the nicest & most mature exercise of my judgment at this time the advantages, merits and demerits of each, after examining my own education & former habits, my temper & circumstances in life, my opinions at present Religious, Social & political; in short, from emotions warranted by Past experience as well as the fullest present enquiry I am induced to decide on the following sketch as a line of life suited to myself.

My business that of a merchant for life, my residence Alexandria, or some city where my employment would be confined to my place of residence, my wishes and exertions moderate, not aiming with arduous inquietude at great wealth—considering that my own happiness depends much more on a proper arrangement of mind than the possession of much wealth, & that my duty to my family by no means enjoins on me the acquisition of a large fortune. My style of living & expenditures should be moderate & simple so far within my certain income as to guard against all contingencies of expence; to be establishing a fund for the education (somewhat after the manner of my own) of my children & in due time to acquire them a moderate capital to commence life if possible under equal advantages with myself.

This inheritance I place first, tho it should be my care to impress on their minds a just value on what I wish also to transmit to them; I mean an honest fame, not a splendid one, not a wide extended one, but such a one as is derived from the willing voice of the community of merchants to whom I may be known, founded on an unblemished integrity & honour as a merchant & a faithful observance of the social duties as a man.

In my progress through life I may sometimes feel the workings of ambition at heart. I think it will be well to check them. Love of our country is highly laudable. But whether from love of country or love of personal distinction I may even be induced to think of engaging in matter of Govern^t it will be certainly well to pause a while I think to suppress entirely the wish. To acquire popularity requires either such pre-eminence of talents & learning as to silence competition, or it requires such strength of arm & lungs, such pliancy of principles, such exercise of artifice & address to attain a kind of favour with the people as I should be unwilling to practice did I possess the latter description of talents, the former I am entirely satisfied I do not.