

Colonial Williamsburg

A GIANT STEP BACK IN TIME

by Patti Simon

A short morning bus ride and suddenly it is 1740. As on many days in that year, this one included some time at Bruton Parish Church. Surrounded by friends, this day began with an organ concert by James Darling, organist and choirmaster, a 1980s gentleman surrounded by the mystique of an earlier time.

Following the concert, we were able to visit many of the homes in the town. George Wyeth's two-story Colonial, home to Mr. Wyeth and his two daughters, and where future leaders were created in his classroom, is an example of total restoration.

For so many music enthusiasts, a stop at the Music Instrument Maker was a necessity. A partially constructed lute and a nearly completed violen attested to the great skill and loving care with which these instruments are still made.

A visit to the reconstructed Governor's Mansion, with its display of arms to show strength and a display of fine china and crystal to show the elegance of an earlier time, created a mood of awe and curiosity for the visitors. Fine silk wallpaper and antique furnishings indicated that life in the 1700s was not totally without comfort. The guests entered the ballroom where the visitor's imagination could conjure up ladies in fine silks and gentlemen abounding with chivalry . . . the guide curtsies to the footman . . . you *have* come a long way, baby!

A stop in the kitchen, always remote from the house because of the threat of fire as well as the heat and odors of almost constant food preparation, was fascinating to the gourmets among us. Numerous dishes were displayed on the table, but no samples for the visitors

because, although it is all freshly prepared, the methods of preparation are from Colonial times and do not meet the standards set by current laws.

Following a cocktail for, perhaps, our last chance to converse with friends, there was a Colonial Feast. This conjured up visions of whole pigs displayed on tables, to be attacked as though we were descendants of Henry VIII, but the Colonial fathers were English gentlemen who knew how to experience the finest of lifestyles by 1700 standards. The Feast, though accompanied by giant bibs tied on each guest, was a meal featuring recipes from early Virginia, starting with peanut soup (it was delicious!), chicken breast stuffed with Virginia baked ham, and baked potatoes.

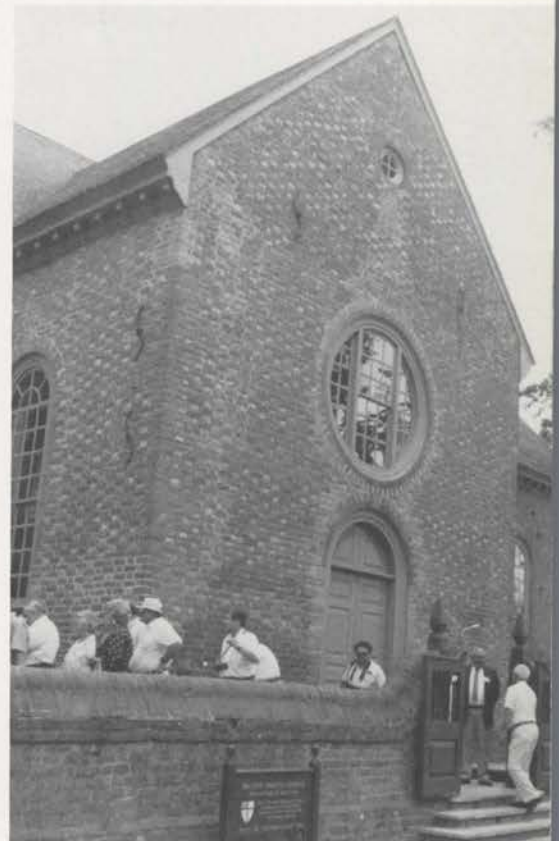
Too soon, it was time to bid goodbye to Williamsburg. With so many bits of history to be learned, another day or two would be worthwhile for anyone planning to return. The visit to Williamsburg was the perfect afterglow to a convention that never hurried nor ever bored, that was always efficient but ever friendly and always made everyone WELCOME.

Rallentando

To Dave and Sharolyn Heatwole, David Barnett, Alden Stockebrand, Miles Rudisill, the members of Virginia Chapter and the magnificent men who made the music, we run the risk of sounding "unjournalistic" when searching for the exact words that will express our very special appreciation for a remarkable week. The convention booklet is one of the finest we have seen, and it is especially nice to have the roster of attendees as a reminder of

"all those old stinkers" who came from near and far to share our mutual love for the King of Instruments.

Our heartfelt THANKS to all of you! □



Bruton Parish Church, Williamsburg

(Ward)

Conventioners waiting for the concert in Wren Chapel.

(Ward)

ATOS visitors in Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg.

(Ward)

