



The American Revolution

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Sons of the American Revolution

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Life in Colonial Virginia prior to 1774 Article 2 of 2

A 1760 Fairfax, Virginia, map demonstrates that John and Eleanor Hollis domiciled at a road junction where “Old Mountain Road” (highway 286 today) traversed from East to West and crossed “Hollis’ Rolling Road” (just Rolling Road Expressway today). The rolling road ran North down to the Potomac River where Pohick Creek ran into Pohick Bay. This road terminated at the Tobacco Inspection Station, thus suggesting the real reason for the road. The map shows John’s crossroads dwelling as an “Ordinary.” This industrious family, in addition to tobacco farming, ran a stage inn with adjoining tavern producing it’s own distilled spirits. Ordinaries were colonial Virginia’s travel inns and taverns. The ordinary license allowed the holder to legally distill spirits. John Hollis’ Ordinary was a popular socializing destination, and a gathering place for barrels filled with tobacco at harvest time. Yes, you guessed it, they simply rolled all those barrels a few miles downhill to the inspection station before shipping them out to Europe. Travel in John’s day was by horseback or wagon, and a day’s travel was 15 to 20 miles. A major roadway was a two-rutted wagon trail. All other roads were single lane Indian trails fit only for a man on horseback.

Another Fairfax Quarter Session Court record begins, “Edward Hollis, the cooper...” This Edward is the second son of John Hollis and the term “Cooper” means he

was the maker of barrels, an excellent occupation in a family producing tobacco and distilled spirits. Dried tobacco was stored in barrels, and they were gathered at John's place until the season was finished. Then all the barrels were rolled down to the inspection station before shipment. Tobacco was the economy of colonial Virginia. Tobacco was currency and everything was valued in pounds of grade A tobacco leaf. Printed paper money and coined money were scarce, so it's not surprising that even the Pohick Anglican Church accepted tobacco leaf for their ecclesiastical tax and tithes.

John Hollis and family, along with the Lee's, Fairfax's, Fitzhugh's and Washington's were tithing and tax paying parishioners to the Pohick Anglican Church (originally named the Occoquan Church).



*Washington's Pohick Anglican Church
Lorton, Virginia*

The Pohick Church sat near Hollis' Rolling Road and Pohick Creek where the latter drains into the bay. In 1785, George Washington would finance the rebuilding and relocation of this church to the Lorton area of Fairfax County. Today it is located

on Colchester Avenue in Lorton, Virginia. In colonial Virginia, there was but one religion. It was Protestant and the Church of England.

The Washington's were not the only neighbors. Everyone lived near Native Americans. During the French and Indian War, all colonials between 16 and 60 were

required to do militia service. John, William and Burr Hollis served in the Fairfax Militia during this war, a service rendered under command of Colonel George Washington.

John and Eleanor Hollis raised a family of seven boys and one girl. All of the children immigrated to South Carolina, where yeomen could actually own their own land. Edward was the first to go, after receiving a 450 acre land grant from the King of England. Next, came brother Moses Hollis with a similar 400 acre royal grant. All siblings followed, making their homes in Camden District along the Wateree River of South Carolina, where they would reside in 1774.