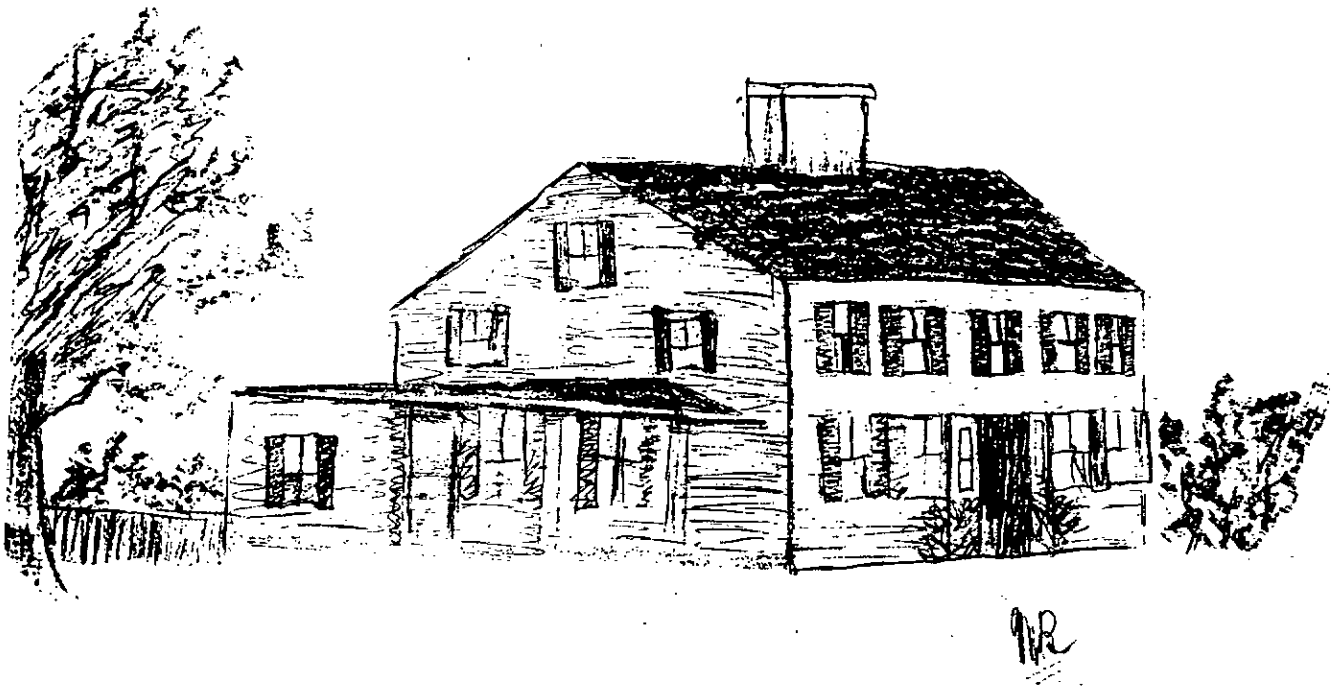


THE BURLEY FAMILY

(1768 - 1800)



BY

THE NEWMARKET JUNIOR HIGH

CHALLENGE TEAM

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New Market Historical
Society

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(1768 - 1800)

By

The Challenge Team

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1993

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May Beth Anderson
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DEDICATION

We dedicate this book to Philip B. Mitchell and Helen Mitchell, who are the descendants of the Burley family and who now live in the homestead on Bald Hill Road. They welcomed us into their home and provided encouragement as well as research information.

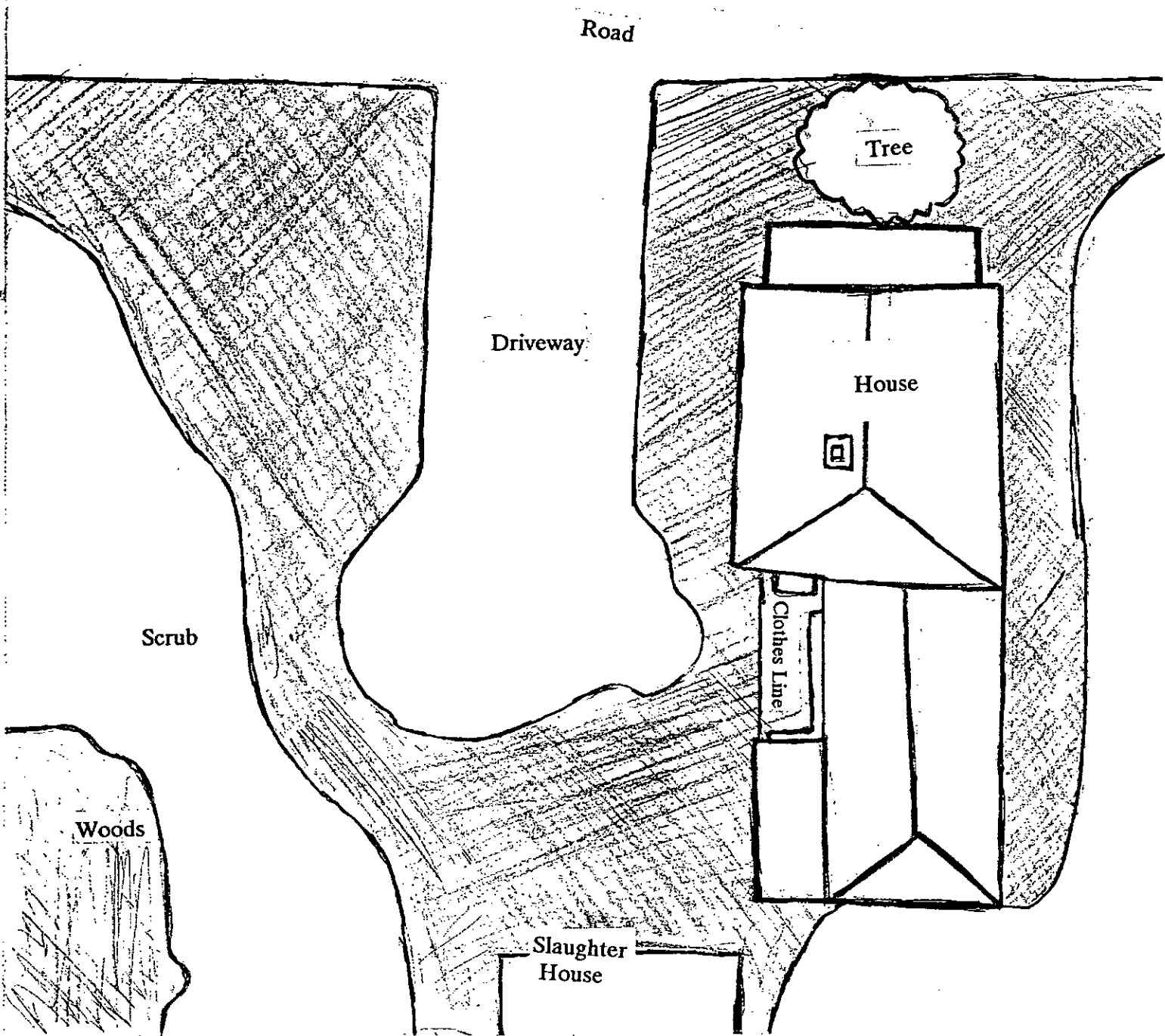
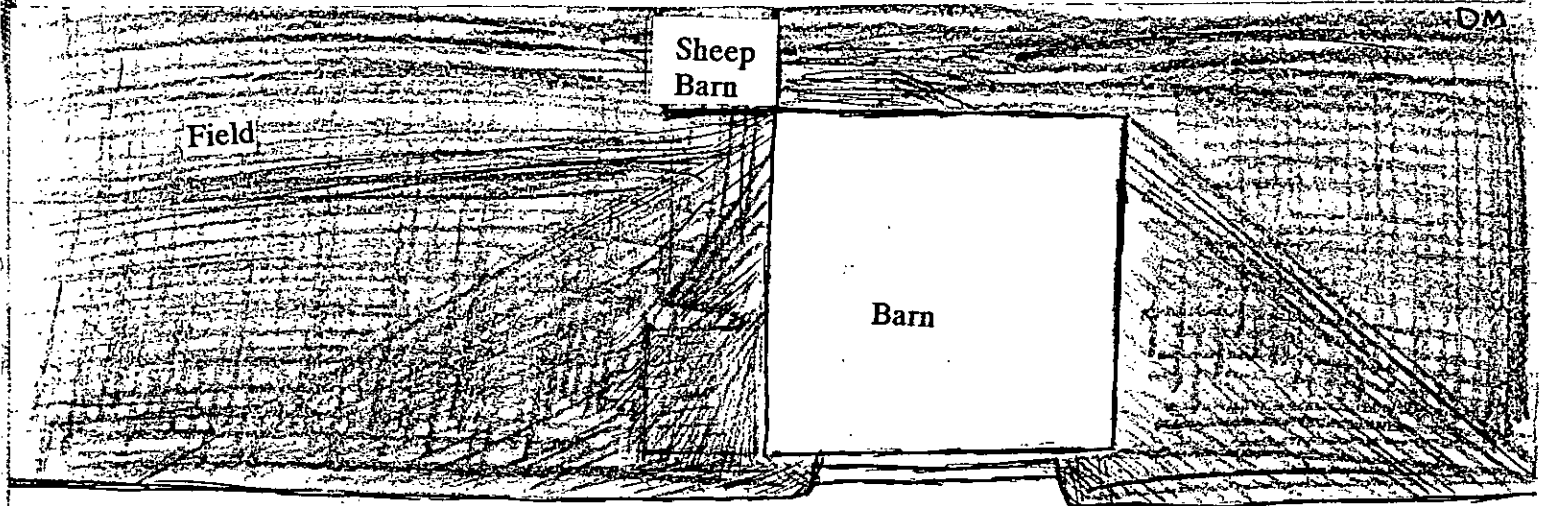


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INTRODUCTION

The Challenge Team was established in September, 1991, as an enrichment activity for the Sixth Grade at Newmarket Junior High School. Initially, twelve students, four staff members and two parent volunteers assembled to discuss a project that would provide enhancement in subjects and skills such as English, history (oral and written), geography, reading, creative writing, research, organization and cooperation.

The students chose to research one of Newmarket's oldest homesteads, The Burley-Mitchell home on Bald Hill Road. The following report is the result of the Team's research and will provide the reader with a feeling of what life was like for some families in Colonial America during the time period 1768-1800.

* * *

Josiah Burley, Jr. was born in 1728 to Josiah and Hannah Wiggin Burley. He was the third generation of Burleys to live in Newmarket. When his father died in 1756, Josiah sold their Doe-Perkins Chesley home, and in 1768 he built a home on Bald Hill Road. He and his wife, the former Judith Tuttle, built their house on pasture land and set up a farmstead.

When they were ready to build a barn, friends and neighbors gathered for the event, which was known as a "barn raising." They carried tools, and if possible, brought workhorses and oxen to help lift the heavy beams in place.

TOOLS

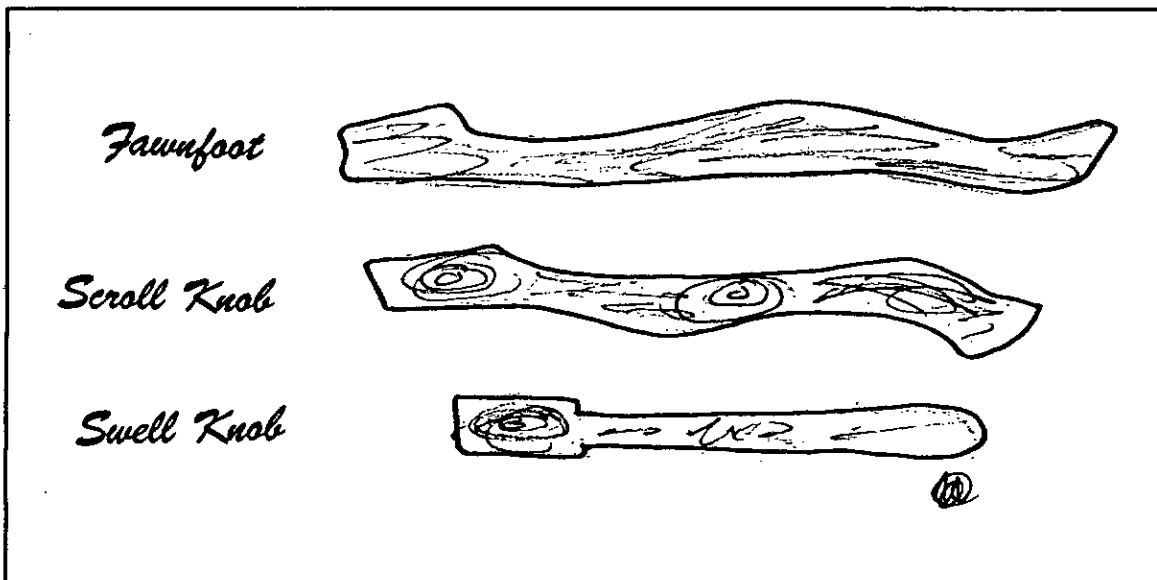


Figure A.
Ax Handles

Hardware stores did not exist in 1768, so people made their own tools. Tools were forged by a blacksmith and they were very important possessions, as the colonists needed to do their own work. A close relative, Jacob Burley, was a blacksmith and farmer who lived nearby. Most families didn't have enough money to pay someone to work for them, and many homes were at least six miles apart. Oftentimes skills were bartered between men, i.e., a blacksmith would trade his services with those of a harness maker or food from a nearby farmer.

Three different kinds of ax handles were common: the Fawnfoot, scroll knob and swell knob. There were at least 12 different ax heads used with these handles. (See Figure A) Axes were used for a number of jobs, such as chopping wood and slaughtering animals.

They also used many other kinds of tools, such as the adze, which was used for chipping pieces of wood off a board to make the board smaller. (See Figure B) Some other common tools were the drawknife and the auger. The drawknife was used for shaving or rounding wood. For example, vertical beams in a house and barn, plus the masts of ships were round

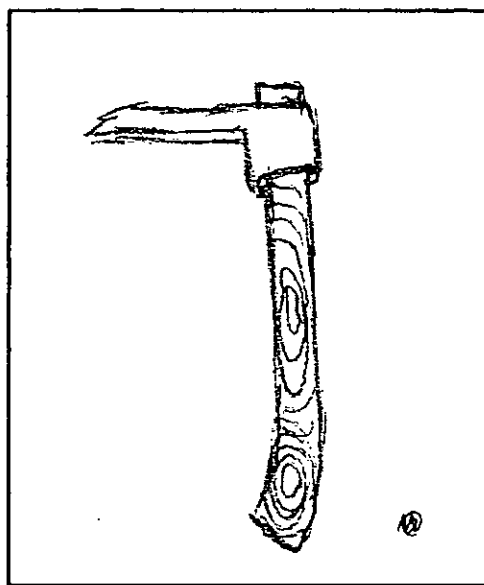


Figure B.
Carpenter's Adze

and smooth. The auger is the old-fashioned version of our modern-day electric drill. (See Figure C)

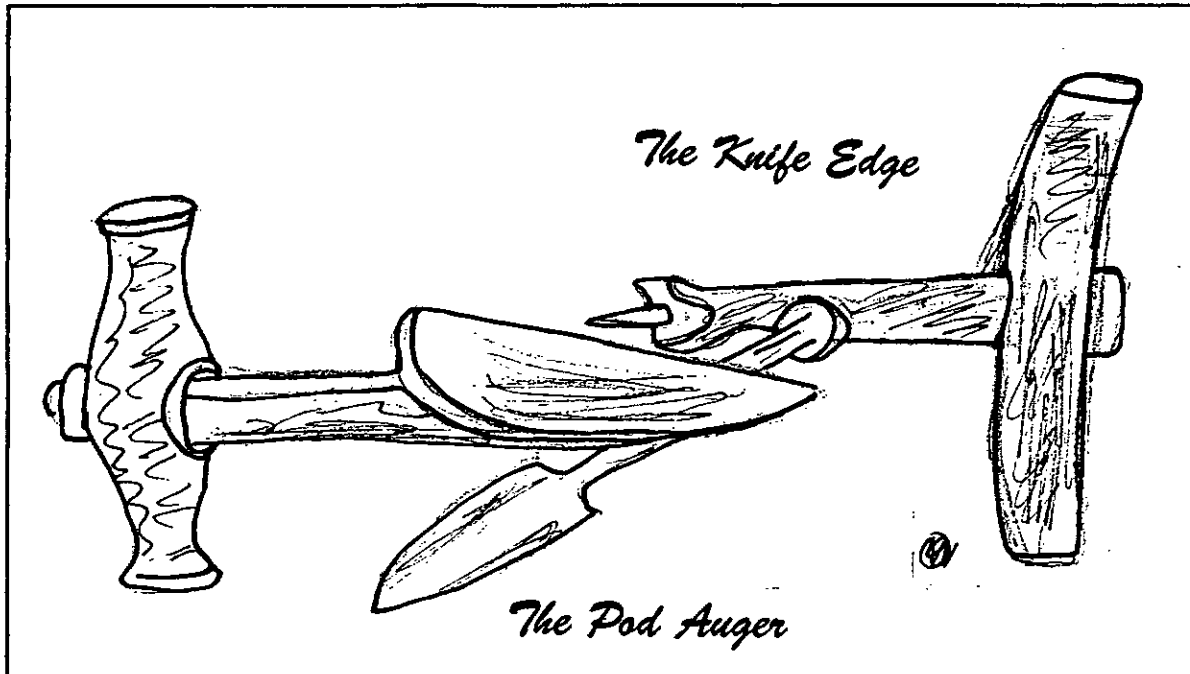


Figure C
The Auger

While the men were busy building, their wives were occupied with child care and supplying food for everyone. Usually at a barn raising a picnic-type meal was prepared and served outside.

* * *

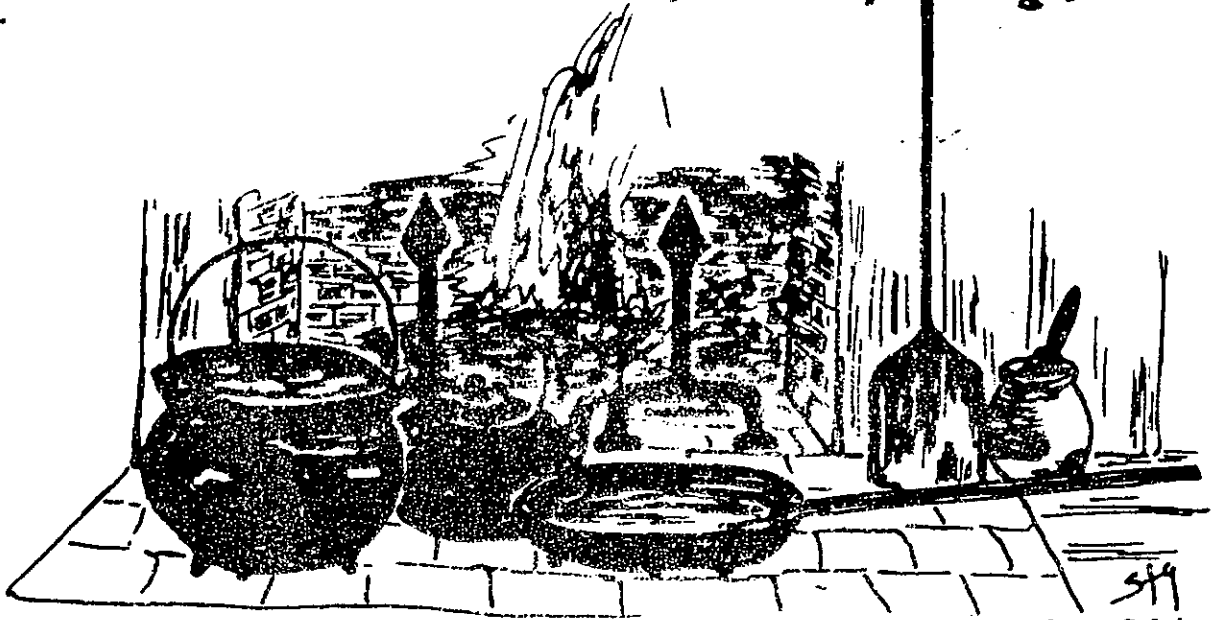
FOOD

The early settler's food was very basic, but they made it as interesting as possible. The first people to bring food to the new land were the English when they landed in Virginia in 1607. They survived for the first few months on ship stores like barley, salt biscuits, and salted meat and fish. As they established homes and gardens, the Indians showed them how to use lobster and fish as a fertilizer.

The settlers moved up to New England around 1620, where the fish, lobsters and other food was plentiful. The woods provided them with nuts and berries and wild animals. In the years between 1620 and 1700, the settlers also ate a variety of fish, oysters, and crabs. Birds and animals deep in the woods rounded out the remainder of their meat supply.

The Colonists would cook over an open hearth fire. They used a big pot over the fire in which they boiled water and prepared many stews. The stews consisted mainly of fish, but sometimes it would contain rabbit or venison. They also had many vegetables like carrots, potatoes, green beans and corn which had been grown earlier in their gardens.

Iron kettles and pans made by blacksmiths like Joshua Brackett, Jacob Burley, John Palmer, and Gideon Knight were used by the women of Lamprey River Village to make their venison and rabbit stews, Indian puddings, and barley cakes.



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A number of superstitions accompanied the preparation of the Colonists' food, particularly the baking of bread, which was a daily task. Some of these are:

- To burn bread means a preacher is coming or your sweetheart is angry with you.
- A big hole in a loaf of bread is a sign of an open grave.
- If all the bread is eaten at table, the next day is sure to be fair.
- If a crumb of bread drops out of your mouth, death will be upon you in a week.
- Leave bread and coffee under the house to prevent ghosts from calling.
- Wheat should not be cut in the light of the moon or the bread will be dark.
- She that pricks bread with fork or knife, will never be happy, maid or wife.

To two quarts of juice of Blackberries, add
one pound loaf sugar
half oz. nutmeg, half oz. cinnamon pulverized
half oz. cloves quarter oz. allspice
Boil all together for a short time, and when cold, add
a pint of fourth proof brandy.
From a teaspoonful to a wine glass according to the
age of the patient. till relieved, is to be given

[Old recipe found among old papers from
the Jacob Barley house.]

— A cure for...? what? —

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* * *

GAMES/RECREATION

In the 1700s children were kept busy with a great amount of chores, undoubtedly much more so than today. However, they did find time for fun and they played many games together. They played football and baseball, both of which were a great deal more rough and strenuous than today's games. These playoffs, particularly football, were a rough and tumble scrimmage without guidelines or rules. Each team could have any number of players who lined up

against each other and tried to push the ball through the opposite side. This was accompanied by bloody noses, head smashing and occasionally a free-for-all fight.

Children also played tag and went hunting and fishing and planned picnics.

During the winter months there was sledding and ice skating.

For indoor play the children had a variety of toys such as dolls, cards, tops and wooden shapes. In some areas playing cards were called devil's picture books and were illegal. Where allowed, they played card games called "Patience" and "Whist."

Dancing was also a popular activity, although probably more so in the Southern States. Some dances lasted all night and into the next morning.

Dolls were a favorite toy, and the most popular doll was made out of plaster. They were easy to produce (cast), yet there are no known surviving plaster dolls today. Some dolls were made from wood, rags, corn husks (See Figure D), paper mâché, porcelain or earthenware, and woodpulp. A modeling material made from a combination of rye or meal with



Figure D
Cornhusk Dolls

glue size were known as "brotteig." These were easy to construct, however they were usually eaten by rats as many homes were rat infested. The porcelain or earthenware dolls were very inexpensive to produce and were made mainly from waste materials. Flat or "paper" dolls were sold in sheet form and were also very popular.

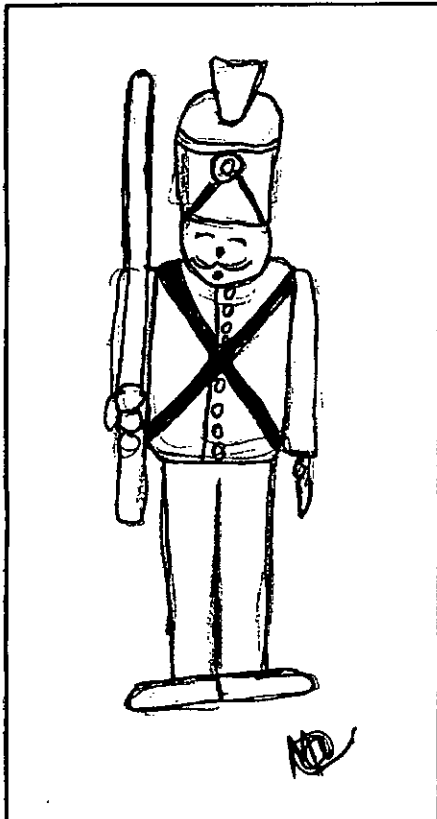


Figure E
Wooden Soldier

Fairs were a great source of excitement to children as well as a place to buy toys. The Chapmen or peddlers who travelled the country also brought dolls, toy soldiers and new, attractive books for instruction and amusement. Most of the peddler's dolls were made from materials that were cheaply available such as wood, wax and earthenware.

* * *

CLOTHING

Clothing was quite different in the year 1768. Women did not wear slacks, and for most, their daily clothing consisted of ankle-length dresses covered with long, full aprons. They wore flat shoes while working around the home, but for church and visiting they had higher-heels. "Important" women (distinguished by being the wives of "important" men) wore wigs and always powdered their face. Their hair was also dressed in elaborate coiffeurs as opposed to the average housewife's simple bun. Fancy beaded, fur and feathered hats were worn to church or for socializing, and they carried beaded, leather or wooden parasols.

Men wore hats at all times, except indoors. "Important" men, such as lawyers, mayors, judges and ministers, wore wigs. For work and church they had knee-length pants worn with a good white shirt and a good, stylish jacket. (See Figure F)

Babies, both boys and girls, wore long, white-laced gowns. The children who lived in a rural home wore clothing much the same as their parents. Girls, like their mothers, covered their long dresses with full, white aprons and wore flat shoes. Children of the judges and lawyers were dressed more fancy.

Boys of lawyers, ministers or farmers followed their father's example for every-day and church outfits. However, some of their playwear resembled "dress-like" outfits. (An idea that was immediately "challenged" by the authors.)

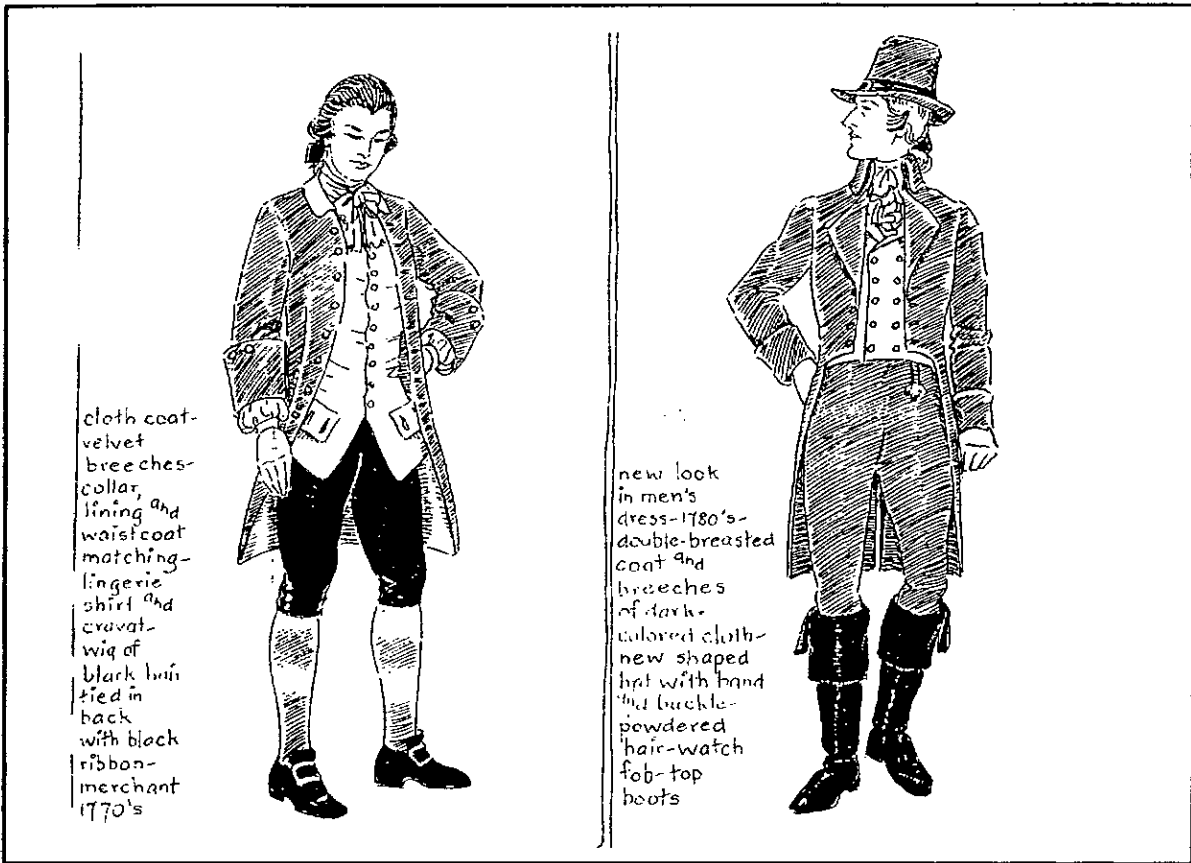


Figure F
Clothing

* * *

STORY

The Challenge Team members were given an assignment in which they utilized their research to complete a story. The story was started by the coordinators and each member was given a different theme. The following story is submitted.

It was the last day of school for the year and all the students were excited and unable to sit still at their desks. For once, they were not expected to work at their lessons, because the teacher had planned a big surprise. Special games would be played all day, and lunch was going to be a picnic in the glen. After the picnic the children would play more games then go home and prepare for the dance. The girls were most excited about the dance, but the boys couldn't wait to play football in the afternoon. They thought that if someone was lucky enough, he might get injured with a bloody nose or a punch in the ribs, thereby enabling him to miss the evening's festivities.

Late in the morning everyone carried something to the picnic site. Baskets, tablecloths, blankets, kegs full of lemonade and fresh pies were just some of the shared load. As the crowd rounded the crest of a hill and looked into the glen, loud gasps were heard. Before them ...

Two coydogs were fighting. Immediately there was total panic. Kids ran in every direction. One child just stood there staring at the battle. He picked up a rock and threw it at the coydogs. One of the coydogs charged at the boy and started snapping his jaws at the boy's face. Just then there was a gun shot and the coydog fell dead on the ground. A hunter walked out of the woods.

The children cheered and thanked the hunter. The boy who was attacked had only a cut-up arm. A doctor came to the glen and put the boy's arm in a sling and took him home.

* * *

NEWS/WEATHER

A few colonial newspapers were in print at this time, however, news traveled primarily by word of mouth. Most of its content concerned weather, Indians, Spaniards and trade, as well as the unsettling conditions existing between England and the Colonies.

Almanacs contained information useful and important to the colonists, and the early almanacs were printed on one sheet of paper. Distribution was available through bookshops and peddlers. However, a peddler's progress was slow, and it was not uncommon for him to spend a few hours or an evening at one particular location. In addition to planting information, its calendar listed the sabbaths and important religious feasts as well as listings of artillery meetings, election dates and court sessions. Almanacs were not primarily concerned with world affairs, and information printed therein reflected local or regional events and news.

We, The Challenge Team, thank you for reading our book. This project took us a great deal of time, and it's been a hard two years. But, we brought this project together and finally finished it. Now others can share our knowledge of life in the colonial times. We hope you tell your family and friends about this book.

Patrick Boyle
Heath Holman
Erin A. Green
Matt Miller

