

### **What We Are About!**

This essay is written for the special attention of my TEA Party friends and conservatives everywhere. It is an encouragement to you to begin your understanding of our history, how we came to be who we are and how, by a visit, or a revisit, to the sites of our first American beginnings; the places where the seeds of our republican form of representative government were planted, nurtured, blossomed and which we have now allowed to grow into the God awful, ugly mess we have today.

We spent a week in Colonial Williamsburg this past July, where we drenched ourselves in snippets of Revolutionary history pertinent to America's breaking the chains of Britain's strangle hold on the honest production and commerce of the American colonies. Organized reenactments are performed all over the Williamsburg site, at specific times and identified places, by costumed re-enactors staging realistic performances of true events as they happened and where they happened.

Williamsburg, the Capital of Colonial Virginia, was the center of culture, where all things British, from the social graces to exquisite china tableware and pewter flatware all contributed to gracious living. It was British to the core, or was it? It was the little things at first, those nagging little doubts about top down policies in which the locals had no say that promoted subtle whispers of descent like this item which was recorded in the Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg) 1774: *"Can posterity believe that the constitutional liberties of North America were on the point of being given up for Tea? Is this exotic Plant necessary to Life? But if we must through Custom have some warm Tea once or twice a day, why may we not exchange this slow poison which not only destroy's our Constitutions but endangers our Liberties and drains our Country of so many thousands of Pounds a Year for Teas of our own American Plants..."* (sic)

"Although today we may cling to the Victorian image of genteel tea parties where ladies discussed the latest fashions over steaming cups and petit fours, in the mid-eighteenth century, tea drinking and teapots sometimes became a forum for charged political debate". ...DeWitt - Wallace Museum, Williamsburg.

The British Tea Act of May 1773, resulted in the famous Boston Tea Party on 16 December 1774. We all know the story or think we do, but, in October 1774 a British ship with tea aboard was burned in Annapolis Harbor and then, the Yorktown Tea Party occurred on 07 November 1774, three days after Captain Howard Esten sailed the good ship Virginia into the port of York(town). The York County Committee of Safety, supported by the by Gloucester County's Committee, authorized the dumping of tea into the York River. My, but the word did get around.

Yorktown, of course is where Lord Cornwallis, hiding in a cave for protection from American cannonades, was forced to shamefully surrender the British Army as well as Britain's American colonies, to General George Washington.

You walk the streets of Williamsburg and Yorktown with your children and grandchildren; ignore the other tourists; pick up a weekly guide and go straight for the action. It's everywhere. Let your children see how badly we've messed things up by not paying attention. **"We have given you a Republic, madam, if you can keep it!"**... Ben Franklin. Go get 'em! (6 August 2010)