

## A Merchant's Account Book Hanover County, Virginia, 1743-44\*

(Continued from Vol. 34, No. 4)

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*A close reading of The Vestry Book of St. Paul's Parish, Hanover County, Virginia, 1707-1786 transcribed by C. G. Chamberlayne (1940, reprinted, Richmond, Va.: Va. State Library and Archives, 1989) provides insights to the accounts abstracted herewith. In abstracting, space considerations limit us to those clues of most interest to the genealogist—dates, marital status, children, economic class, land ownership as indicated by quit rents, the number of tithes paid. Francis Jerdone terms James Allen "Collector" and we note that he receives both quit rents and tithes, the usual office of a county sheriff. The Vestry Book makes clear that he was sheriff in 1743. As most readers know, quit rents were a land tax levied by the Crown. On the other hand, the parish levy was set annually by the Church Wardens, the welfare overseers charged with caring for insolvents, destitute widows, orphans and idiots. The Vestry of each parish totaled the yearly expenses and divided that sum by the number of polls in the parish. Males became tithable at 16. In the year 1743 the parish levy for St. Paul's was 37 pounds of tobacco per poll. We note Elizabeth Davis paid five levies. One may reasonably surmise that as a widow and therefore head of a household, some of her tithables, possibly all, are sons. While slaves, females as well as males were tithable, Hanover had a large Quaker contingent, large landholdings in the county were the exception, and the owners of slaves would not likely pay their tithes through Mr. Jerdone's offices. A further clue from these records: Benjamin Branham paid the Louisa Sheriff 42 lbs. of tobacco; Isaac Davis paid the Louisa Sheriff 84 lbs. Two polls? We further note in these accounts Francis Jerdone collected some of the quit rents and levies for*

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\* Account Book (1743-1745) of Francis Jerdone, merchant, of Hanover County, Va., Earl Gregg Swem Library, Williamsburg, Va. Also available as "Jerdone Family Papers 1736-1918" (Reel 10), Series L, part 2, *Selections from the Earl Gregg Swem Library. College of William and Mary. Records of Antebellum Southern Plantations from the Revolution through the Civil War*, (microfilm), Frederick, Md.: University Publications of America, 1985-1990.

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*James Allen, perhaps as a banking courtesy. These accounts also tell us that James Wade paid rents on 425 acres; the Vestry Book tells us his processioning precinct, indicating the location of his land in the county. Genealogy is more than deeds and wills.*

*Doubtless readers have noted the large number of Louisa account holders in this "1743-44 Hanover" ledger, not surprising since Louisa was cut from Hanover the year before. We can be grateful that Francis Jerdone (indexed under "Jordan" in the Chamberlayne Vestry book transcription) reinforces our deductions of who was cut from St. Paul's when St. Martin's Parish was formed from it in 1727. No early records for St. Martin's exist. If a landholder is designated "in Hanover" by Jerdone but is not listed in a 1743 processioning precinct in St. Paul's Vestry Book, then we can assume he is living in St. Martin's Parish, the western area of Hanover County. Now you might have suspected that when his precinct disappeared in the 1727 processioning, but how far west did he live? Now you know. A new parish was formed for Louisa in 1742, Fredericksville. Jerdone says he's in Hanover, he's not in St. Paul's Parish, then he's in St. Martin's.*

→ *What happened to insolvents when the Revolution encouraged Dissenters (Baptists, Presbyterians, Quakers) to phase out the Church Wardens of the Anglican Church? They were taken over by "Overseers of the Poor" who assigned them to "Poor Houses" or "County Farms." How did that compare with being boarded by Thomas Lankford or others in their neighborhood? Or was that better than staying at home with a subsidy from the Parish, the Vestry paying "Mary Massie for keeping her mother"? Genealogy is a social science. A name is just the beginning in a search for identity.*

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[Folio 27] Hanover County

Mr. James Pyron in Hanover

(Firetongs, needles, materials, buttons, rum, hail oil, Powder, Shott, molasses, sugar, 1 Boys hatt, to Michael Satterwhite – fo: 64); 1743 Octr 14, 20; Novr 24, 26; Decr 21;

Contra [no date]: By Charles Pyron's accot in fol: 68.

Major John Dandridge in New Kent [complete]

Octr 14 To 15½ yds worsted Damask at 2/10 per yard 2/3/11; 1744 July To 1 pr girls Pumps 5/;

Contra 1744: Novr 19 By ballance carried to new accompt.