

GOING BACK IN TIME



Right about now, I think a lot of us are wishing we could go back in time.

And I'd love to have the power to take us all back to the before times, when "Trump" was just a way to win in a game of Bridge.

But the "Going Back in Time" I'm talking about refers to our visit to Colonial Williamsburg on our trip down to Florida back in November. (So, I'm actually going back in time to tell you about going back in time!)

Along with being a quaint tour through a community that has maintained and restored buildings from the Colonial era, it's also a reminder of the calibre of the people who built this country, and what they stood for.

The Visitor Center is set up in a lovely, wooded area, a good walk from the old town.



So, after getting our tickets, we went through the Time Tunnel...



And there we were in Colonial times.



We could tell because suddenly people of all ages were wearing three-cornered hats.



The Historic Area includes 89 original 18th-century buildings, as well as hundreds more buildings, reconstructed based on historical records and archaeological research.





We were excited to arrive at the site of the first theatre in English America.



And disappointed to discover we were too late to see that day's performance.



But not to worry. Another performance approached. We had been alerted by one of the costumed volunteers that the Fife and Drum Band would be coming, and he could virtually guarantee that they'd be playing *Yankee Doodle*. They did not make a liar out of the volunteer.



Once the parade had passed by, we went to the George Wythe House. Neither of us had ever heard of Wythe (pronounced "With"), and we quickly discovered we should have. As this Williamsburg "resident" informed us, Wythe was one of the Founding Fathers of the United States. In fact, he was the first to sign the Declaration of Independence and became a vocal opponent of slavery.

A lawyer, politician and mentor, Wythe was the one who recognized the talents of a young Thomas Jefferson, and supervised his legal training.

They remained lifelong friends and on Wythe's death, he left Jefferson his massive library of books.



The costumed guides inside were very knowledgeable, and happily answered any of our questions.

The young guide in this room could actually explain what each of these instruments was. Wythe was evidently interested in everything from law to classical languages, political philosophy to astronomy.



The house is one of the original buildings, and in 1939 the interior was restored to the form and appearance the Wythe family would have known.





Despite the obvious elegance, there are reminders of how the times have changed.



After our tour of the Wythe house, we wandered around town, which was full of reminders of those times.



There was a market, with an auctioneer trying to generate sales.





We got to see the Colonial version of streetlights.



And their treatment of criminals.



This Powder Magazine building was filled with arms and ammunition, which were dispatched from London for "the defense of the colony". The moment when the (British appointed) Governor absconded with the gunpowder, is said to have ignited the ire of the Colonialists and led to the American Revolution.



And shortly after passing the Powder Magazine, we came upon a re-enactment of that historic moment, with actors dressed in period costume challenging the Governor to explain what happened to the explosives.



The Governor was called to answer to the accusations ...



And audience members were invited to join the inquisition.



The Governor was “persuaded” to admit to his actions on paper. Shortly after, he and his family escaped back to England.



Our final rendezvous with the American past was the Governor's Palace.



It was not only luxurious and elegant...





It was also well armed!



The gardens reminded me of a very reserved version of Versailles. But to be fair it was November.



To the back of the palace there was a separate building that turned out to be the kitchen. We had an interesting chat with the two people who were responsible for cooking all the food. They apparently worked with only the cooking techniques and utensils of Colonial times.



All the food you see here was cooked by them. But as they explained, it was for show only. They admitted that they nibbled on the odd thing, but every day they cooked the kind of meals that would have been served when the palace was in operation ... and then, when the food starts to look tired, they throw it away.



Although this was a fun-looking dish, she admitted it was clearly past its best before date and would be thrown out at end of day.

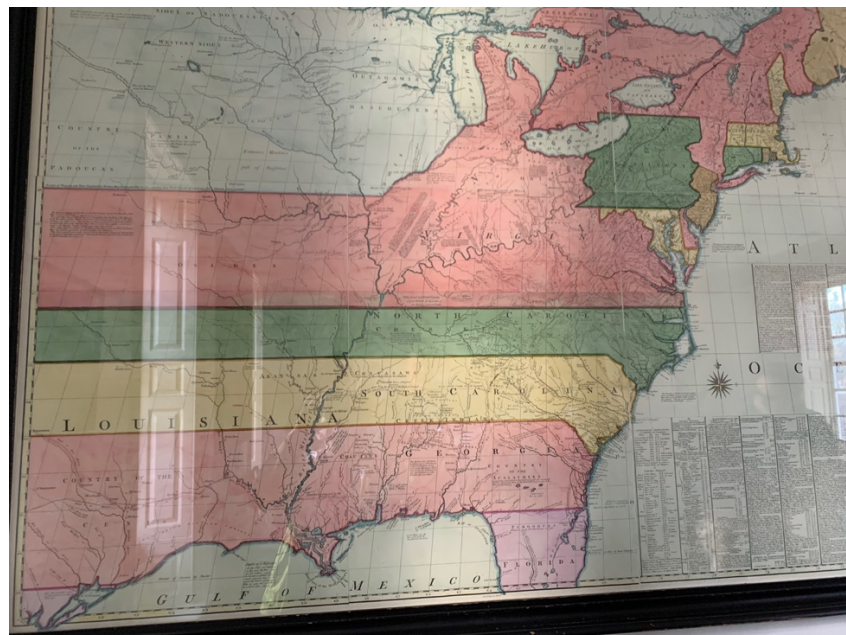


Back in the building, our docent gave us a bit of a history lesson about the pre-revolutionary times.



We took a closer look at the map behind him. That pink area from east of Lake Erie and all the way up to Hudson Bay is labelled on the map as “Six Nations”. I can only assume that the Six Nations people believed that it would always be their land.

Just as we have believed it'll always be Canada.



With any luck, some day in the future, that won't be part of the “before times.”

We could have spent much more time in Colonial Williamsburg, but it was getting late and we had places to go.



After all, who can resist an opportunity to go to a place like this?

