

FOREWORD

History is never fixed. The revelations contained in one long-lost or overlooked manuscript, a rediscovered copperplate, a shard of glass or pewter artifact can change the course of what is written and shared in the textbooks of the world forever.

Except for one tantalizing piece of parchment, which we will get to later, any preserved archive of official activity by the Magical American Revolutionary Society has been, sadly, lost to history. However, a few far-flung memories have surfaced, giving us a fresh peek into those turbulent times of our country's birth.

As Field Investigator of Colonial Mysteries for Colonial Williamsburg's Restoration Project, I was fortunate to discover one such document in a musty wrapping behind an overturned armoire in the back corner of a Hudson Valley farmhouse attic. In this memoir of his youth, Col. William Matthias Samuelson provides a fascinating account of the Magical American Revolutionary Society. History owes him a load of gratitude.

W.R.S.

October 1, 1931

To the Reader,



any years ago, as an idealistic youth in the city of Williamsburg during the time of our country's founding, I had the good fortune to reside within a stone's throw of a man of remarkable powers.

Among his many unique qualities, this man could capture the imagination in ways that, even now, seem mysterious.

He seemed almost a sorcerer.

But do such powers really exist? If so, the truth may never be revealed. Even now, the practice of such an art, if proven, could lead both master and follower to an early grave.

It is conceivable that the man in question merely had a curious ability to convince others, through both word and action, of all that is right and good in this world. Be that as it may, as youths, we proudly followed this man in an organization of his founding, an organization that was, it seemed to us, magical. In fact—and perhaps defiantly—it was named as such.

In spite of the perilous nature of those days, we felt relatively safe in that gathering of companions. We fully trusted in each other that the Magical American Revolutionary Society would never be discovered by the greater populace until much of the history had passed into the fog of legend.

With this account, that fog is lifted.

Years later, my fellow patriots and I still shake our heads and wonder how the impossible became, not only possible, but real.

Yet, during that era of revolution, we bonded over a larger concern:

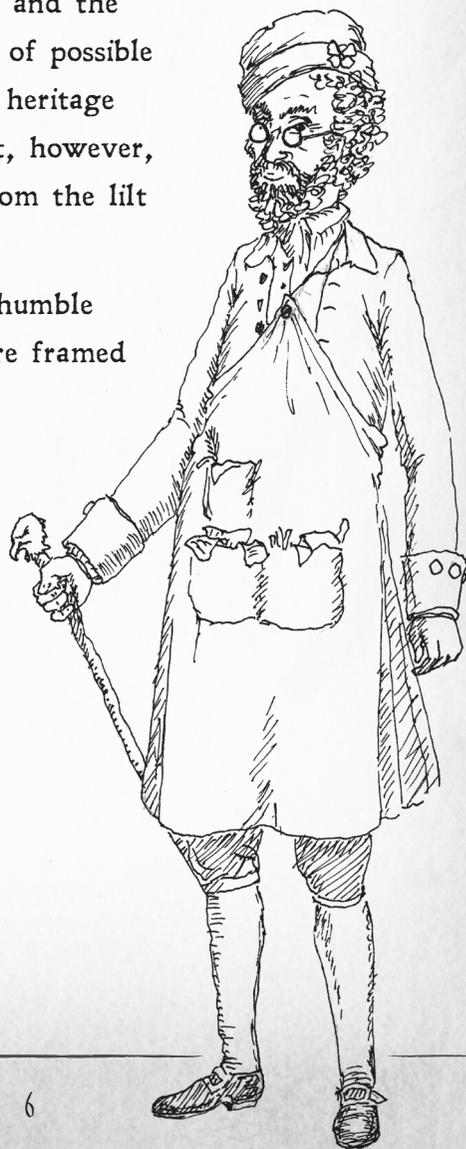
There was a war to win.



THE IMPRECISE APPEARANCE OF MR. C. THADDEUS FORREST

In appearance, Mr. C. Thaddeus Forrest was neither too young nor too old; neither too short nor too tall. I remember his girth as typical for a man of his times. One was immediately drawn to his piercing, greyish-blue eyes and the full speckled beard that bespoke of possible Scottish ancestry. Whether that heritage was of the distant or recent past, however, could not be readily discerned from the lilt of his speech.

His manner of dress reflected a humble and practical disposition. He wore framed spectacles like those invented by our fellow Revolutionary, Ben Franklin. Finally, he possessed a slight limp after walking short distances, suggesting a past injury of a serious nature. Hence, he would often carry a walking stick, carved from holly and topped with a head in the shape of a bird of prey.



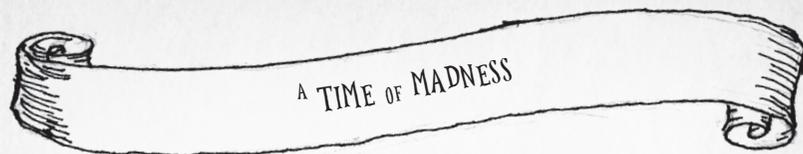
If truth be told, I cannot recall with any precision when Mr. Forrest moved into our community. It was as if he had not been there one day and had always been there the next. I can find no written record of his residency in the Virginia colony's capital city. But by the spring of 1775, this cheerful, yet very private, tradesman was the proprietor of a small shop on a lane not far from the hustle and bustle of Duke of Gloucester Street.

MR. FORREST'S SHOP OF WONDERS

I can shut my eyes and journey back across the years to that marvelous shop of wonders with its clapboard siding, large front window, and occasional wafts of purple and gold smoke rising out of the red-bricked chimney. The inventory of Mr. Forrest's cozy establishment consisted of well-crafted wooden toys and tasty sweets that appeared to have a gossamer lightness and inner glow as if they had come from the storehouses of a fairyland. But amazingly, nearly all of these wares were conjured up by the master carver and confectioner within the confines of his workshop in the back of the building.

And whilst other shop shelves in the colonial capital were soon laid bare due to the boycott of British goods and other forces, Mr. Forrest's establishment never appeared to suffer the difficulties of the times.





I was awakened by the cheers of a raucous celebration in the vicinity of the Capitol building. Residing not far from the many Williamsburg taverns, I was accustomed to unrestrained sounds of both merriment and strife. But on this particular night, it struck me as something beyond those familiar gatherings. Curiosity trumped my desire to remain in my warm bed, and shortly thereafter I was running up a fog-laden and deserted Duke of Gloucester Street.

The Capitol building loomed before me. Shouts of "God save the king!" boomed in a chorus from drunken throats in the Capitol's inner yard. A flash of fabric, illuminated by the harsh red flame of torches, caught my eye overhead. Gazing up at the building's cupola, the flag of the Hanoverian family was waving in the wind. "How can this be?" I thought. I knew that this particular banner would fly only in the presence of the king himself, and the king was an ocean away.

Drums pounded. A regiment of British troops appeared.

I thought of rushing to warn the city's patriots that we were under attack! And yet, could not all of Williamsburg hear what I heard? Did they not see? How was this possible?

Suddenly, the blood in my veins ran cold. I froze in place.

Appearing before me was a magnificent stallion, midnight in color, with his dark eyes bulging and steam pouring forth from his giant

