

## Closing the Book on Arell's Tavern\*

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It would be nice if this could be titled "Final Footnotes" or "Tying up the Knots." Such a neat, beknotted bundle, not now possible, perhaps may never be. Many vacant spaces, some of no vast import, are probably impossible to fill; dangling ends may never be woven into the web.

Yet certain conclusions can be clearly demonstrated. There was no question that Arell's Tavern was on the corner of Market Space (Court House Square) and Market Alley (Court House Alley, etc.) as study of Lot 48 (of which this is a part) proved that only this lot remained in the management of Richard Arell throughout the critical period; the balance was leased or sold. On this basis, Tavern Licenses, and the Washington Accounts, there is no question that Richard was the Arell involved.

It is now clear that the brick building presently on the site is not the building leased to John Rick.<sup>1</sup> Arell's Tavern ceased to exist from unknown causes in 1810-1811.

In the *Arlington Historical Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 3, I noted that restudy of an original source clouded the issue. The cloud was darker, more positive than then stated. The record was the re-entry on the lease to John Rick,<sup>1</sup> by John Muncaster, speaking for Arell heirs (being spouse to heir Elizabeth Copper).<sup>2</sup> This re-entry was perhaps just a legal step clearing way for sale to Thomas White.<sup>3</sup> But in the recital of the procedure of crying for payment at dawn, noon, and dusk, it states that this took place on the most public part of the land "There being NO DWELLING-HOUSE THEREON" (capitals supplied).

We surmised the demise of John Rick, Mrs. Rix appearing only, in 1787 tax records, on Court House Square, on Richard Arell property. Subsequent items, which appear in this essay, lend further color to the idea.

Tax records (Alexandria City Land Books and Personal Property Assessments) for after 1800 were found in the State Library, the existence of which was not generally known previously. Studying these, the appearance of Martin Hagner, with John Muncaster as agent, on Gretter's<sup>4</sup> and Court

\*Editor's Note: This article is a sequel to the one written by Mrs. Van Swearingen about Richard Arell, published in *The Arlington Historical Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 4, October, 1964.

<sup>1</sup> Alex. Dd. Bk.U, 1810-1811, p. 235 (recites the original Arell-Rick lease. The original lease, indexed at Fairfax for Fairfax (lost) N, is bound in the back of Vol. 2 of Fairfax Court Order Book 1756-63).

<sup>2</sup> Alex. Deed Book T, p. 449.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Tax Records, Vol. 21, 1806, p. 15.

House Alley<sup>5</sup> caught our attention, Jacob Andrews, with Tavern license, being tenant. These list the property as "H & L" (House & Lott). In 1810<sup>6</sup> the listing, still for "H & L" shows "vacant" (meaning: no tenant). In 1811<sup>7</sup> "Martin Hagner's Est." is lightly crossed out and "Thos. White" written above; the property is shown as "Lot" ONLY.

In 1794 a Martin Hagner is shown in the Presbyterian Meeting House records as marrying, in "Feby," Christiana Rich.<sup>8</sup> Combining these facts makes it virtually certain that Rich is a variant of Rick. We have been tangled before when tax records have listed a wife's property in her husband's name!

Martin Hagner's first appearance in the tax records is as a landless tithable in 1800,<sup>9</sup> then owner occupant of an unidentified H & L in 1801.<sup>10</sup> In 1802 he appears on Love Lane,<sup>11</sup> in 1804 on C. alley,<sup>12</sup> in 1805 on Gretter's Alley.<sup>13</sup> In 1806, still on Gretter's Alley,<sup>14</sup> Jacob Andrews, with Tavern license first appears as tenant.<sup>15</sup> When Michael Gretter and his friend Molly Burnett appeared in the 1787 tax records on Love Alley, we speculated as to where this might be. The interchangeability of Court House, Gretter's and Love seems to clarify a small mystery.

Another mystery has a likely solution. While the funeral notice in the Meeting House register for July 28, 1796 remains as obstinately H. Arell, (aged 77) as ever,<sup>16</sup> it is reasonable to assume that this is Mrs. Eleanor Arell, whose "death in this town on Thursday morning last, aged, 77" appeared in the *Alexandria Gazette* of July 20, 1796.<sup>17</sup> Could someone have known her as Helena, perhaps? While there seems to be no record of Richard Arell's funeral, "The personal estate of Richard Arell, Deceased "was advertised for sale in March 27, 1796.<sup>18</sup>

A cycle of material never used in the "case for Arell's Tavern" being a bit tenuous and perhaps irrelevant then, is of interest. Mrs. Powell, credited by gossips with starting the David Arell legend, speaks of Arell's Indian Queen Tavern.<sup>19</sup> This would have been the first Indian Queen. The

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. 24, 1807 p. 24 & 21.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. 28, pagination 1, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. 28, pag. 2, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Meeting House Register, p. 15.

<sup>9</sup> Tax records, 1800, p. 17.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 1801, p. 11.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 1802 p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. 14, 1804, p. 12.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. 17, 1804, p. 14.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. 22, 1806, p. 15.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Meeting House register, p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> *Columbian Mirror & Alexandria Gazette.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. IV, No. 457.

<sup>19</sup> Powell, p. 125.

second, better known, a story in itself, was a landmark on the corner of King and St. Asaph Streets, attested by too long an array of *Gazette* advertisements, tax records, and land records to cite here. But there is a group of *Gazette* advertisements beginning in 1785 with a "For Rent" notice by John Kleinhoff of his store on "the corner of Royal and Cameron Streets, opposite Mr. Reeder's Tavern."<sup>20a</sup> (Kleinhoff is going out of business because people don't pay their bills!!)<sup>20b</sup> In February, 1785, Francis Farbit will open a dancing school at Mr. Reeder's.<sup>21</sup> In June the Brothers of Lodge #39 "spent the afternoon in the greatest hilarity" at Mr. Reeder's Tavern, after a sermon at the Presbyterian Meeting house given by the Rev. McWhirr, all in celebration of St. John the Baptist Anniversary.<sup>22</sup> December of 1785, Samuell Arell offers to rent "The house & Lot lately occupied by Mr. Thomas Reeder."<sup>23</sup> In February, 1786, Robert Simm informs "his friends and the public in general that he has opened Tavern at the sign of the Indian Queen, the house lately occupied by Mr. Thomas Reeder."<sup>24</sup> The connection of Samuel Arell with this property suggests strongly that at least part of this group applies to Arell's Tavern. (Samuel & David Arell were the sons of the Richard Arell of this period.)<sup>25</sup> On the negative side, it is demonstrable that there is no known connection of the Arell family with Lot 40 (N.W. Corner Cameron & Royal Streets) or the lot whereon is now Gadsby's Tavern. This does not preclude the possibility that Mr. Reeder may show up elsewhere in the neighborhood. Tavern keepers were a peripetetic breed.

Just when the present brick building at the corner of Market Place and Market Alley was constructed is uncertain. Thomas White bought up nearly half of Lot 48 from Arell heirs and others in a series of deeds too long to cite. It is lost in the anonymity of the 1812 tax record: "Thomas White—Hs & Lotts—Fairfax to alley self (meaning occupied by self)."<sup>26</sup> Probably not the brick building insured by heirs of Thomas White in 1846, it is more likely to be a brick one listed to the north.<sup>27</sup>

Of the construction of the original Arell's we are uncertain. But another dangling thread can now be woven into the fabric, since the identification of Martin Hagner. In 1802 the tax records show the heirs of William Rick (or could be read Rich) on Love Lane with Alexander Perry as agent and one of two listed occupants.<sup>28</sup> The holding shows "two frames" meaning

<sup>20</sup> *Virginia Journal & Alexandria Advertiser*—a: Jan. 20; b: Aug. 5.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* Feb. 10, 1785.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* June 30, 1785, #74.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* Dec. 8, 1785.

<sup>24</sup> *Virginia Journal & Alexandria Advertiser*, Feb. 28, 1786.

<sup>25</sup> Fairfax Dd. Bk. Yl, p. 51.

<sup>26</sup> Tax records, Vol. 28, pag. 3, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> Declaration #14.335, Aug. 18, 1846.

<sup>28</sup> Tax records, Vol. 11, 1803, p. 43.

two frame houses. This does not preclude Martin Hagner (whose 1802 listing leaves the housing aspect uncertain) being a tenant on the same premises. We have also met such overlapping entries elsewhere in tax records. What we know of Alexander Perry does not clarify his place in this picture. In William Rick, like the rest of the Ricks, Rix, and Richs, we have another unknown. He might be the William Rix resident on Andrew Wale's property on Fairfax St.<sup>29</sup>

Of one thing we are certain. Arell's is no more.

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* 1790, p. 12.