

*The Most Fatal Widow-makers: Virginia riflemen  
arrive in Williamsburg.*

In December, 1775, the 4<sup>th</sup> Virginia Convention voted to raise an additional 7 regiments of infantry, which would come to form the backbone of the Continental Army. Beginning in February of 1776, these new regiments assembled in Williamsburg and prepared for war. Each regiment was to have 3 companies of riflemen, recruited from Virginia's frontier for their marksmanship and martial prowess. For the 7<sup>th</sup> Virginia Regiment, Nathaniel Cocke, Thomas Posey, and Joseph Crockett were selected as rifle captains. Crockett's company, recruited in Fincastle County, was the last to arrive in Williamsburg, marching into Virginia's capital on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1776. Dressed in a mixture of frontier and Indigenous clothing, and bearing rifles, which Benedict Arnold would enviously describe as "cursed, twisted guns, the most fatal widow and orphan makers in the world," these riflemen would go on to serve at some of the most pivotal battles of the American Revolution, including Brandywine Creek, Germantown, and Saratoga. For Joseph Crockett, a product of the frontier, the captain's commission he received on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 1776 was the start of 7 years of service to the cause of American liberty. Uniquely, Crockett is perhaps the only American officer to exclusively command riflemen throughout the entire war, from 1776-1782, serving throughout Virginia, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Kentucky. *The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation* is proud to recreate this important Semiquincentennial moment, and to highlight these unsung heroes of the American Revolution.

*Rifle Demonstration: The "cursed, twisted guns":* At 11 and 3 O'clock on the Courthouse Green.

*Drumming Up a Soldier's Dinner:* At 12 O'clock at the Military Encampment.

*The Weight of Liberty:* At 1 O'clock on the Courthouse Green.

*Under Arms: The Business of Riflemen:* At 2 O'clock at the Military Encampment.

*In Defence of the just rights of America:* at 4 O'CLOCK beginning at the Magazine.

*Beat the Retreat:* At 4:45 at the Military Encampment.

*“Other related activities around town”*

*Bookbinders:* The bookbinders will be binding military manuals for use by the troops, exploring the written materials used to teach new American soldiers.

*Cooks:* The Palace Kitchen will be comparing and contrasting the high end foods of the officers with much simpler military enlisted rations, showing how civilian social status is reflected in the military.

*Coopers:* The coopers will be making shot casks and other cooperage essential to Virginia's war effort.

*Foundry:* The Foundry will be casting rifle parts that the gunsmiths will assemble into the “cursed twisted guns” Virginia riflemen become famous for carrying.

*Military Encampment:* The military encampment will recreate the daily lives of the soldiers of the 7<sup>th</sup> Virginia Regiment as they arrived in Williamsburg in 1776, including how they prepare their rations, produce ammunition, and make and maintain their equipment.

*Milliners/Mantua Makers:* The Margaret Hunter shop will be repairing and repurposing older worn out garments, highlighting the challenges and importance of maintaining a fashionable appearance with the supply restrictions imposed by the war.

*Printers:* The printers will be discussing the Virginia Declaration of Rights and the Declaration's guarantee of press freedoms.

*Shoemaker:* The shoemakers will be making shot bags and shoes for the military, discussing the role of the Public Shoe Factory in equipping Virginia's troops.

*Wheelwrights:* The Wheelwrights will be repairing and making artillery carriages, highlighting the important role of their trade in keeping Virginia's cannon ready for battle.