

THE FRENCH & INDIAN WAR FOUNDATION'S

FORT LOUDOUN DISPATCH

"Preserving and Interpreting the Colonial History of Virginia's Frontier"

Winchester's Fort Loudoun Property History, Outlot #49

By Donna Leight

In January 2020, Steven Resan of the French & Indian War Foundation (FIWF) issued a report that documented the "West Fort Hill" real estate title transfers. It spans 250 years, from the 1753 Lord Fairfax Proprietor's Grant to the sale of the 419 North Loudoun Street property to the French & Indian War Foundation in 2002.

The French & Indian War Foundation is headquartered at the property that started as "Outlot 49" when Winchester was formed. It was part of the area that became known as "Fort Hill."

The FIWF recently launched an online series of articles that tell the stories of the families who owned the Fort Loudoun property from 1753 to 2002. This is Story 3. (To see all the stories, go to <https://fiwf.org/the-families-of-fort-hill>.)

From Robert Rutherford to John Peyton

John Peyton purchased Outlot 49 from Robert Rutherford in November 1785, on which Fort Loudoun once stood. He would own the property until his death in 1800 (Ref 1).

John built a home on Outlot 49 at what is now 406 N. Loudoun Street around 1780, when he married Robert Rutherford's daughter Susannah. John's father, Colonel Henry Peyton, who had served with George Washington in the French & Indian War, lived in the wing (Ref 2). Note that at this time, Loudoun Street did not extend beyond Piccadilly. "Loudoun Street was opened as a road from Cork to Piccadilly in 1761 – through what they termed quagmire... It was not until after 1842 that Loudoun Street was extended from Fairfax Lane north and through the stockade on Federal Hill" (Ref 3).

John Peyton's estate was involved financially for many years after his death but in 1833, daughter Louisa's husband, William L. Clark, purchased Outlot 49. Clark had been a tutor of the Peyton children and according to deed records, a school building had been built on the lot for his use, known as the Academy (Ref 4). Over the next several decades, Outlot 49 would be split into multiple parcels.

Who Was John Peyton?

It has been difficult to find information on John Peyton (1757-1800). The Williamsburg Virginia Gazette newspaper of June 2, 1775, (Ref 5) contains both the names of John Peyton and his father Henry. It seems they were present during a meeting of the special committee for Prince Williams County, in Dumfries on May 22, 1775.

His Excellency Lord Dunmore had made a proclamation and placed it in the publick papers, "*charging a certain Patrick Henry, and his followers, with rebellious practices, for extorting from the Receiver General the sum of 330l. in satisfaction for the powder his Lordship thought proper to remove from the publick magazine in Williamsburg...*"

The committee found that Dunmore had no right to remove the powder, that the powder should be returned, and that "*the powder removed from the publick magazine in Williamsburg did of right belong to this colony. This committee being farther of opinion, that the late violent and hostile proceedings of his Majesty's troops in the Massachusetts Bay, in attempting to seize the military stores of that colony, would have justified reprisals of a much greater MAGNITUDE, Resolved therefore, unanimously, that the thanks of this committee are justly due to captain PATRICK HENRY, and the GENTLEMEN VOLUNTEERS who attended him, for their proper and spirited conduct on that alarming occasion.*"



Williamsburg Power Magazine

From this article, we learn that John and his father Henry were actively involved with political events of the day, including those that influenced the American Revolution.

John would remain active in politics, serving in the local general assembly in the 1790's, approving funding for Winchester projects, and settling complex Fairfax property disputes. He was the first clerk to the first chancery court in 1793 (Ref 3). Chancery courts dealt with cases that were mainly based on equity and fairness such as trusts, wills, probate, and custody, as opposed to criminal matters.

John and his family lived just below the southeast bastion of Fort Loudoun. He died around 1800. Susannah lived in the home with other family members until her death in 1829.

In 1785, Peyton obtained permission to build on the Commons (old Outlot 49) and multiple buildings were constructed. In 1876, William Greenway Russell wrote "*On the west side of Loudoun St, and north of Peyton, stood a tall log building painted yellow, many years ago. About 1820 it was occupied by Thomas Brown, whose wife was a Miss Fawsett. They kept an oyster house... This house was taken down and moved near Fairfax Lane by William L Clark, and fitted for a dwelling... The lot was sold to Joseph Baker...*" (Ref 6).

American 250th Minute - The 5th Virginia Convention

By Marc Robinson & Donna Leight

As we celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the Founding of our Country, the Foundation made the decision to incorporate small articles about local individuals or events that had an influence on the founding of our country. For the next several years, an 'American 250th Minute' will capture an important event that occurred during that period 250 years ago. We hope you find these short articles interesting.

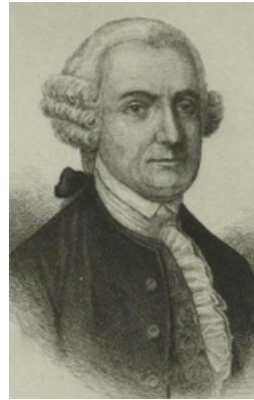
During the quarter of July through September of 1776, arguably the most important event that occurred was the signing of the Declaration of Independence by the 13 colonies in Philadelphia. The question arises - who, if anyone, from our local area signed the declaration or had an impact on the creation of one of the most important documents created in world history?

There were no local representatives that signed the Declaration of Independence. However, several men had a direct impact on its creation.

The 5th Virginia Convention was held May 6-July 5, 1776. Each county sent two representatives. West of the Blue Ridge Mountains, James Wood and Isaac Zane represented Frederick County. Robert Rutherford and William Drew represented Berkeley County to the north. Abraham Bird and John Tipton represented Dunmore County to the south (renamed Shenandoah County in 1778). Abraham Hite and James Mercer represented Hampshire County to the west.

On May 15 of 1776, these members of the convention instructed the Virginia delegates in Congress to introduce a motion "to declare the United Colonies free and independent states" and to create a committee "to prepare a Declaration of Rights..." On June 29, the convention approved the first Constitution of Virginia and selected Patrick Henry as the first governor of the new Commonwealth of Virginia.

This action informed and confirmed to the delegates the desire of many of its citizens to break away from Great Britain and on July 2, Congress voted for independence and on July 4, Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence.



James Mercer

Local delegate James Mercer was the brother of George Mercer, who we wrote about in our Spring newsletter. He went on to have an eventful and fruitful political and judicial career serving in the Continental Congress and serving as a judge in several Courts.

James died in office in Richmond on October 31, 1793, and is buried in the St John's Episcopal Churchyard in Richmond, Virginia. This is the same church that Patrick Henry made his famous speech, depicted below.

We thank and honor James Mercer and the other delegates for their service to their communities and the formation of this great country.



Famous painting of Patrick Henry's "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death" speech at the 2nd Virginia Convention in March 1776, published by Currier and Ives.

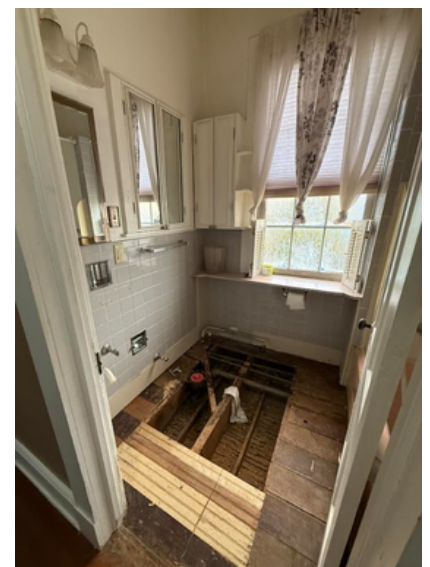
The 2026 House Refresh has begun!

The work permits have been approved. Repairs are underway in the main bathroom (photo on right). The upstairs apartment kitchenette design has been finalized and cabinetry has been ordered. Roof replacement is being scheduled and will be completed this summer. Much of the refresh scope will be completed over the next several months, including interior painting, exterior two-story shed and porch repairs, and electrical and plumbing work.

Built in the 1830s, this home witnessed almost 200 years of life on Loudoun Street and survived the destructive Civil War. Its last major renovation was in 1954, over 70 years ago! The Foundation is responsible for this valuable piece of local history and is proud to move forward with the project.

We thank everyone who has contributed to this project, with a special thanks to the James R. Wilkins, Sr. Foundation, Roberta Muncke, Brett Osborn, Donna Leight, Rex Ritchie, and Andres & Eleanor Salazar for their generous donations.

Donate today and help us turn this house into our Future Historical Resource & Interpretive Center



Fort Loudoun Day 2026

The Fort Loudoun Historical Site was filled with a wide array of colorful uniforms and interested visitors on May 16.

The day included military musters and drills, living history demonstrations, book sales, a Fort Loudoun tour, an informative talk about George Mercer, and the debut and dedication of the restored Fort Loudoun Well. The event was followed by a memorial to our fallen board members David Grosso, Jim Moyer, and Stevan Resan, which drew a large number of friends and family members.



Photos by
Larry Allen Clowser Webb



We celebrate Fort Loudoun Day each year in mid-May, which is when Washington began fort construction in 1756.

Below is an excerpt from George Washington's letter to Lieutenant Colonel Adam Stephen of the Virginia Regiment, on May 18, 1756, written in Winchester. The full letter can be found at Founders Online, an online resource of the National Archives.

"Sir, ... as I wait, at this place, the arrival of an association of Gentlemen; who are, I am told by the Governor, to point out the places for Forts to be built on our Frontiers. I am also detained here to construct and erect a fort, which the Governor has ordered to be done with expedition. As it will be necessary to have a number of Carpenters, &c. to carry on the work with spirit, and vigour; you are desired to send down all the men of Captain George Mercers Company; those that are there of Captain Bells - all the men that are really skilled in masonry: and if all these do not make up fifty, you are to complete the party to that number, out of the best Carpenters in other Companies... Go.W."



American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804

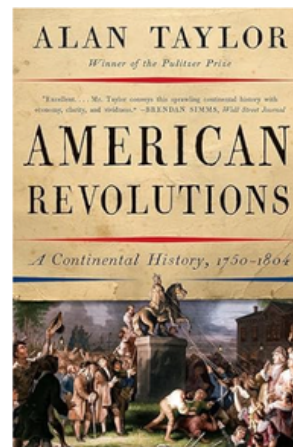
Author: Alan Taylor

The American Revolution is often portrayed as a high-minded, orderly event whose capstone, the Constitution, provided the nation its democratic framework.

Alan Taylor, a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner, gives us a different creation story. The American Revolution builds like a ground fire overspreading Britain's colonies, fueled by local conditions and resistant to control. Emerging from the continental rivalries of European empires and their native allies, the revolution pivoted on western expansion as well as seaboard resistance to British taxes.

When war erupted, Patriot crowds harassed Loyalists and nonpartisans into compliance with their cause. The war exploded in set battles like Saratoga and Yorktown and spread through continuing frontier violence.

The discord smoldering within the fragile new nation called forth a movement to concentrate power through a Federal Constitution. Assuming the mantle of "We the People," the advocates of national power ratified the new frame of government. But it was Jefferson's expansive "empire of liberty" that carried the revolution forward, propelling white settlement and slavery west, preparing the ground for a new conflagration.



*Have a recommendation? Let us know!
We welcome subjects related to early American history, the Colonial and French & Indian War eras, and their people.*

John Peyton and William Lawrence Clark's Ownership 1785-1837

continued from page 1

Mr. Russell also recollects *"about the end of the year 1824 or the commencement of 1825, a party from Thespian Hall, who had been indulging in eggnog were invited to take a walk. On arriving at the top of the hill, they found the old "Six Pounder", a cannon that had been brought to Winchester in 1812, at the time of the organization of Col. William Morris' company. It was decided to shoot the old year out and welcome the new. The cartridges had been previously prepared, and they gave some dozen rounds. Next day, it was discovered that havoc had been played with Mrs. Peyton's windows, some twenty or more panes of glass being broken. Mr. Samuel Reed was deputized to go and ascertain the damage. The old lady would not listen to any offers for payment, nor would she report the number broken, but treated the ambassador to a glass of wine and some new year's cake and dismissed him."* (Ref 6)

It would seem that Susannah Rutherford Peyton inherited the generous heart of her father, Robert Rutherford, who was discussed in Story 2.

Colonel Henry Peyton (John's Father)

John's father Henry, knew Outlot 49 quite well, having served with George Washington in the French & Indian War. Founders Online (Ref 7) has several letters between Peyton and Washington. Below is an example.

From George Washington to Henry Peyton
Winchester, 17 May 1756

To Colonel Henry Peyton: of the Prince-William Militia.

Sir,
I had yours last night; and observe your dangers from the Indians about the Neighbourhood. I would have you consult with Governor Innes upon the most expedient measures to pursue: and by all means, let me advise you never to be unguarded in case of a Surprise.

I have had some conversation with people from the Branch since I wrote to you last; and find it more requisite to continue your command on these waters, to range and scout about, and to secure the Grain and Cattle of the inhabitants from the Enemy; than to build that Fort on Capecacon, for sometime yet.

Before this reaches you, you may (perhaps) have marched from Pearsalls; as I understand you intend it. Upon your return from escorting Governor Innes, I would have you make Pearsalls your Head-Quarters, and to send out your scouting parties as low as the mouth of the River.

If you learn any further intelligence about the strength and motions of the Enemy, which you may think worth regarding—I desire you would lose no time in communicating it to me.

I am &c. G:W.

There are several articles in the Williamsburg Virginia Gazette that involve Col. Henry Peyton. In 1768, he sold 470 acres in Prince Williams County, where he then lived, as well as 293 acres in Frederick County. In 1771, the same Gazette shows he was involved in a dispute related to Fairfax property settlements. Later in life, Henry served as a Deputy Clerk of the Court in Winchester, March 1789 (Ref 3) and John's brother Henry Peyton Jr, took the oath as attorney at the same time.

John & Susannah Peyton's Children

John and Susannah had nine children and many grandchildren. Their oldest daughter, Mary Howe Peyton married Addison Bowles Armistead, who died in February 1813, during the War of 1812, at Fort Moultrie, Charleston, SC. He left three children (Ref 8).



Fort Moultrie, Charleston, SC

Their youngest daughter Louisa married William Lawrence Clark. As mentioned above, they purchased Outlot 49 in 1833 from the Peyton estate. In 1837, Clark sold "about 1 acre and 20 poles" to Joseph Baker which includes current Loudoun Street properties from Peyton Street (Fort Condominiums) to 419 N. Loudoun Street. Census records show that Louisa and William owned eleven slaves in 1850. By 1860, records reflect they only had one slave, a 65-year-old man.



William Lawrence Clark, 1850s. Courtesy of the Handley Archives, Winchester VA

This may have been "Old Jack", recalled by Mr. Russell in 1876. *"When a boy, I have frequently gone to the Fort and dug up cannon balls and grape shot, would borrow tools to dig with from Peyton's "Old Jack". An old family servant... had been a body servant of Mr. John Peyton; he was a good old darkey..."* (Ref 6)

Russell also wrote *"I have been informed by John Hodgson, that about the year 1836, whilst he and Mr. Robert Reather, were digging in the foundation for one of the houses now in the fort, they came upon and dug up the skeleton of a man, supposed to have been a British soldier, perhaps an officer. The leather belt was much decayed, the buckle was plated and plating well preserved, though the tongue was rusted off. The spurs also plated, were still on the heels, with rowels rusted out. The heels of the boots still clung together."* (Ref 6)

Check out our New Videos on YouTube.

More coming soon.



[YouTube.com/@FrenchIndianWarFoundation](https://www.youtube.com/@FrenchIndianWarFoundation)

John Peyton and William Lawrence Clark's Ownership 1785-1837

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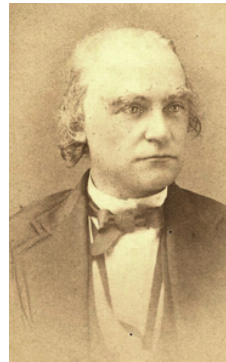
Louisa and William's son, William Lawrence Clark, Jr. served the Confederacy as a captain on Stonewall Jackson's staff. He later became the mayor of Winchester from 1876-1884 and also served as a judge. Louisa and William's daughter Susan Peyton Clark married Major Francis B. Jones of Vaucluse, who was also on Stonewall Jackson's staff. He lost his life in 1862 while serving the Confederacy (Refs 2 & 9).

Many of the Peyton descendants are buried in Winchester's Mt. Hebron Cemetery. When the cemetery was dedicated in June 1844, *"there were so many removals of bodies from the old grave-yards together with slabs and monuments, that the cemetery was given the appearance of age. ...William L. Clark, Esq., made the principal address... and Rev. Joseph Baker pronounced the benediction"* (Ref 2).

We will talk about Rev. Baker in Story 4. He would purchase part of Outlot 49 in 1837 from the Clarks, including 419 N. Loudoun Street.

References:

1. Frederick County Virginia Deed Book 21, Page 170
2. Green, Katherine Glass Greene. Winchester Virginia an Its Beginnings 1743-1814. Shenandoah Publishing House, Strasburg, VA. 1926
3. Cartmell, T.K. Shenandoah Valley Pioneers and Their Descendants: A History of Frederick County, Virginia, From its Formation in 1738 to 1908. The Eddy Press Corporation, Winchester, VA 1909
4. Quarles, Garland R. The Story of One Hundred Old Homes in Winchester, Virginia. Prepared for the Farmers and Merchants National Bank, Winchester, Virginia 1967
5. Williamsburg VA Gazette Newspaper, June 2, 1775, pg.4.
6. Russell, William Greenway. What I Know About Winchester: Recollections of William Greenway Russell, 1800-1891. Volume II: The Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society Papers, 1953
7. Founders Online, <https://founders.archives.gov>, National Archives and Records Administration, From George Washington to Henry Peyton, 17 May 1756
8. Ancestry.com
9. Barton Colt, Margareta. Defend the Valley: A Shenandoah Family in the Civil War. Orion Books, New York, 1994.



Left: Grandson John Peyton Clark, 1870s.

Right: Judge William Lawrence Clark, Jr. and Family, 1892.
Courtesy of the Stewart Bell Jr. Archives, Handley Regional Library,
Winchester, Va.

Call for Award Nominations

Each year the Foundation presents honorary awards to individuals in recognition of outstanding contributions to the preservation or interpretation of the colonial history of the Virginia frontier during the French and Indian War era or for service to, or support of, the Foundation.

Nominations must include a biography and detailed statement of why the individual warrants consideration for the specified award or certificate. Nominations may be made by any Foundation member in good standing.

Nominations must be made in writing to the Foundation no later than September 1, 2026, for consideration. They may be forwarded via e-mail to fiwf419@gmail.com or through the U.S. Postal Service to P.O. Box 751, Winchester, VA, 22604.

We are currently soliciting nominations for the following:

Fort Loudoun Award - This award will be presented in recognition of outstanding contributions in the area of leadership in promoting the colonial history of the Virginia frontier.

Judge Robert K. Woltz History Award - This award will be presented in recognition of outstanding contributions in the area of scholarship which furthers understanding of the French and Indian War Period in American History.

Leo Bernstein Award - This award will be presented in recognition of outstanding contributions in the area of finance for securing major financial support for the French and Indian War Foundation.

Foundation Outstanding Service Award - This award will be presented to a foundation member in recognition of outstanding service to the foundation.

Certificates of Appreciation - Certificates of Appreciation may be awarded to organizations or individuals who have made significant contributions toward educating the public regarding the French and Indian War era and its significance to the history of the United States.

Washington's Well is Looking Good!

The Fort Loudoun Well Top Restoration Project is essentially complete and the well made its debut appearance at Fort Loudoun Day. Visitors were able to see inside the well, viewing the dry-laid stonework and bedrock walls that had been covered for most of its 268-year life. The only remaining restoration item is an interpretive sign, which will be added later in 2026.



Well Dedication at Fort Loudoun Day

Save the Dates

July 18, 2026 | Colonial Kids Day, 11:00am - 4:00pm
Burwell-Morgan Mill, 15 Tannery Lane, Millwood, VA

July 25, 2026 | Washington's Election to the Va House of Burgesses 1758, 5:00-8:00pm
Loudoun Street Walking Mall, 20 North Loudoun Street, Winchester, VA

October 3-4, 2026 | French & Indian War Weekend at Abram's Delight, 10:00am-4:00pm
1340 S. Pleasant Valley Road, Winchester, VA

November 15, 2026 | FIWF Annual Meeting, 2:00-4:00pm
Godfrey Miller Home, 28 S Loudoun Street, Winchester, VA

From the Archives: The Worldwide War

Jim Moyer spoke at the Lions Club meeting in April 2025, giving a brief outline of the extent of this worldwide war we know as the French & Indian War.

This war was just one “theatre” of a worldwide war. Once it ended, the contemporaries called it simply “the late war.” Generations since have known it variously as The French and Indian War (United States), The Third Silesian War (German areas), The Third Carnatic War (India), The Seven Years War (Central Europe) and the best name of all The War of Conquest (Francophone Canada) because after this war, the phrase developed that the sun never set on the British Empire.

Historians settled on the Seven Years’ War, since the King of Great Britain declared War on France officially in 1756, but hostilities began in 1754. The name of Loudoun is known well in Winchester and in Portugal. After he led all North American forces, he was called later to help an old ally Portugal from Spanish invasion when it joined France. This also led to battles in the Portuguese colony of Brazil.

A ship from this war was recently discovered sunk near Montevideo, Uruguay. The Admiral George Anson leading the whole British Navy of the Seven Years War was basically a billionaire in modern terms from plundering a Spanish galleon in a previous war on its annual trip from Acapulco to Hong Kong and Manila Philippines.

In this war, the British took over Manila. They also attacked the French slave prisons in Africa.

And the Caribbean?

That was the big prize. In fact, it was still the big prize, 20 years later in another worldwide war we call the War of Independence.

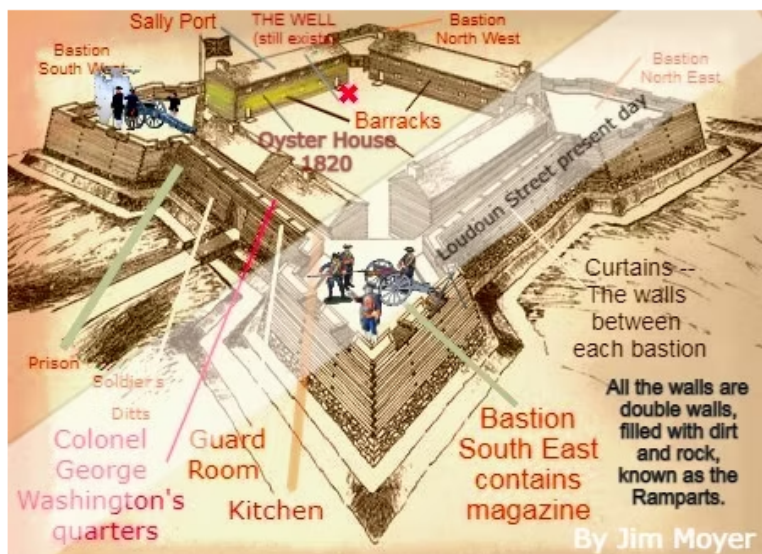
The French ships that arrived at Yorktown first went to the Caribbean.



Jim Moyer, Linda Ross, Steve Resan

Building Fort Loudoun

Don't forget about our comprehensive Online Exhibit “*From Surveyor to Patriot: The Story of George Washington & Fort Loudoun*” located on our website FIWF.org. Below is a sketch from the chapter titled “*Building Fort Loudoun*”.



Historical Interpretation of Fort Loudoun's Layout, created by Jim Moyer

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Call for Committee Members!

If you have ideas, time, or resources, we need your help! To serve on any of the above committees, please email fiwf419@gmail.com.

Join our monthly meeting!

The Board of Directors currently meets at 3:30 p.m. on the 1st Thursday of the month.

Meetings are hybrid, conducted both in person and via Zoom.

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Join today! Individual memberships start at \$30/year. Visit fiwf.org/Join-Us or email fiwf419@gmail.com.

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French & Indian War Foundation

Preserving and Interpreting the Colonial History of Virginia's Frontier

George Washington's Election to the Virginia House of Burgesses, 1758

Saturday, July 25, 2026 - 5 to 8:00 PM
20 N. Loudoun Street, Winchester, VA

Washington's political career began at this site! Come & cast your vote for George!



Event is FREE!

www.FIWF.org

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