

Courses of Empire: The Thomas Chew Family of Orange County and the Colonial Virginia Recession

by Frederick Madison Smith, Secretary, NSMFD

Despite the burgeoning prosperity of his young family in the emerging Virginia Piedmont, Ambrose Madison's murder in the summer of 1732 left his widow Frances Taylor Madison and his children in a somewhat precarious position legally and financially.

Having divested himself of his holdings in the Tidewater, Ambrose's "Mount Pleasant" estate was his chief capital holding and income source. However, this plantation, a joint patent to Ambrose and his brother-in-law Thomas Chew, husband of his wife's younger and nearest-in-age sister Martha Taylor, had never been formally divided between them and, on Ambrose's death, title to the 4,675 acre tract passed entirely to Chew.

Whatever anxieties, if any, attended this legal fact for Frances Taylor Madison, they were resolved on May 26, 1737 when Chew deeded 2,850 acres of the original patent "to Frances Maddison, widow and James Maddison, son and heir of Ambrose Madison, deceased." This deed, recorded in the Orange County Virginia Deed Book 2, pages 10-13, further recites that "Ambrose Maddison departed this life before any legal division of the land was made, by which the whole was vested in Thomas Chew as survivor." Mirroring the provisions of Ambrose's will, Chew's deed gave Frances a life estate only with the title passing unencumbered on her death to her son, James Madison Sr., the President's father.

Although at his death Ambrose held a one-sixth interest in the 10,000-acre "Brookeby" patent about 11 miles to the west of "Mount Pleasant" and also held interest in another 6,000 acres of land within 30 miles of the "Mount Pleasant" tract, none of this latter acreage had been patented or substantially improved. While she might not be described as unprovided for by any means, the fact that her actual home was not legally hers nor her son's cannot but have been the source of some unease in that highly patriarchal and male-dominated society.

Unprovided widows in colonial Virginia either subsisted on the charity of relatives or at the charge of the Overseers of the Poor, and their sons were, if fortunate, apprenticed out to trades or professions. With pluck and luck, these young men could establish themselves in trade or professionally as did Frances and Martha Taylor's cousin Edmund Pendleton, one of colonial Virginia's premier lawyers and statesman, an orphan at age 14 and, latterly, an intimate friend and correspondent of Thomas Chew's oldest son Joseph.

But James Madison Sr. was not to know this path in life as his uncle Thomas' deed allowed Frances Taylor Madison to continue her extraordinarily successful development of the "Mount Pleasant" tract and nurture her oldest son to carry on the energetic management of an estate which yielded profit sufficient for the family to eventually build one of the 18th century Virginia Piedmont's most substantial and elegant mansion homes where James Sr.'s increasingly well-stocked library - with its English Whig-inspired texts like *The Spectator* and *The Tatler* - was to form the basis of the future President's early literary and intellectual exposure in a family climate of sound economic security.

There is no surviving evidence that Frances Madison initiated any legal process against her brother-in-law to settle the division of this land, and given Thomas' legal experience and his judicial and political standing as county magistrate at that date, it would have been unlikely she could have ventured to do so. As whatever pressures may have been applied among his relatives or by his wife can only be speculative, Thomas Chew's generosity in allowing the "Mount Pleasant" property including "all and Singular houses, buildings, Barns, Dovehouses, Yards, Orchards, Gardens, Woods, Timber, underwoods, waters, Watercourses, Ways, Easements", to pass down unencumbered to James Madison Sr. would not be forgotten or unreciprocated when Chew, a victim, as his son Joseph claimed, of his own open-handedness, fell on hard times later in life.

Born in St. Stephen's Parish, King & Queen County, Virginia in 1698, Thomas Chew was the second but oldest surviving son of Larkin Chew (1676-1729) and Hannah Roy (1680-1734), daughter of John and Dorothy Roy of Port Royal, Virginia. Five children were born to Larkin and Hannah Roy Chew: Joseph (died young), Thomas, Ann, John and Larkin Jr.

The Chew family were among the earliest to settle Virginia, the immigrant John Chew, Larkin Sr.'s grandfather, arriving at Jamestown first in 1618 and more permanently in 1622 in the ship *Charitie*. His wife Sarah Gale arrived with their son John the following year in the *Seafloore*. According to some sources, at the time of their immigration, the family had been resident in Chewton Mendip, Somerset. Some family histories relate that the *Charitie* belonged to the family of Sarah Gale, and that John brought bricks for his intended home at Jamestown as ballast in that ship's hold.

Born in Whalley Parish, Lancashire on July 16, 1587, the immigrant John Chew's possible residence in Somerset (which may have been the home county of his mother, Anne Broddyll Chew; in fact, some early histories and

genealogies placed John's birth in Chewton Mendip) would have put him in contact with the significant promoters of the Virginia colony based in the West Country of England. According to Thomas Chew's son Joseph, Sir William Berkeley, the Somerset-born Royalist Governor whose administration molded colonial Virginia into its most lasting and defining forms, had a "particular regard" for John who was described by another governor, Sir John Harvey, as "one of the ablest merchants in Virginia" in 1624.

Burgess for Hogg Island (1623-39), Burgess from York County (1632-44) and Justice of York (1634-52), John's rising prosperity coincided with Berkeley's promotion of Virginia as a Cavalier refuge from England's Civil War during his first administration of 1642-52.

An historical marker placed in the Jamestown National Historic Site relates that:
John Chew, like several of his immediate neighbors, was a merchant,
one of the oldest in the Colony. He acquired the small plot here "backstreet"
in 1624, and put up a 'house by him now erected and builded in Newtowne
within the precincts of James City.'

The historian Philip Bruce, in his *The Social Life of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century*, notes that in "the early history of the Colony, merchant planters in many instances had residences and storehouses at Jamestown while holding and cultivating large estates elsewhere; this was the case with John Chew" who kept his plantation home on Hogg Island:

Among those engaged in business in Virginia, at a very early date . . . were
George Menifie, John Chew and Abraham Piersey . . . All three rose to wealth
and prominence in the Colony and at least one, Chew, founded a family
of distinction and influence.

Following the death of his first wife, John remarried in 1651 to Rachel Constable, younger sister of Anne Constable Lee, the wife of the immigrant Richard Lee, founder of the Lee family in Virginia and Rachel's guardian at the time of her marriage. According to some genealogists, Rachel Constable's family were also from Chewton Mendip.



The Chew House, or "Cliveden," in Germantown, Philadelphia was built between 1763-67 by Pennsylvania Chief Justice Benjamin Chew, second cousin of Thomas Chew, and remained in the family for seven generations before being donated to The National Trust in 1972. Site of the Battle of Germantown in October 1777, the ashlar stone home is considered one of the most elegant and architecturally significant Philadelphia Georgian buildings and houses one of the country's most important collections of high-style colonial decorative arts and furnishings.

Sometime around 1644, at the time of the Second Indian Uprising, John removed his family to Ann Arundel County, Maryland in spite of Berkeley's attempts to dissuade him. Although John returned to Virginia after the death of his second wife, his oldest son Samuel (1634-76) remained in Maryland, residing at his estate "Herrington" at Herring Bay Calvert County. Married to Ann Ayers of Nansemond County, Virginia in 1658, Samuel, a physician by profession, served as a Burgess in the Maryland assembly, colonel of the Provincial Forces, Chancellor and Secretary of the Province and was appointed to Maryland's upper legislative chamber, the Governor's Council, in 1669, an appointment he retained until his death. From Samuel and Ann Ayers Chew were descended the Chews of Philadelphia, most notable among whom were the Chief Justice of the Province of Pennsylvania, Judge Benjamin Chew (1722-1810) builder of "Cliveden". Samuel's younger brother Joseph, who also lived in Maryland, and his wife Ruth Larkin of Annapolis were the parents of Larkin Chew Sr. Sometime before 1700, this Joseph returned to Virginia where he died in 1716 in what would later become Spotsylvania County.

Larkin Chew Sr. was one of the original burgesses (1723-26) for Spotsylvania County, one of the “mother counties” of Orange, and patented acreage not only in these counties, but on what were then the far frontier lands of the Valley as well. A vestryman of St. George’s Parish, “Gentleman Justice” and sheriff of Spotsylvania, Larkin Sr. apparently arranged for patents to be issued in 1726 to his three sons Thomas, John and Larkin Jr. for lands in what later became Orange County.

Larkin Sr. was not averse to controversy or litigiousness and, as burgess, was embroiled in legislative disputes with his one-time friend Governor Alexander Spotswood in the 1726 and 1728 sessions of the General Assembly over the site of a new town below the falls of the Rappahannock which later became the city of Fredericksburg. One of the original patentees from the colony of a 26,000 acre tract of land in the Great Valley, Larkin Sr.’s Valley claims were at odds with those of Thomas, Sixth Baron Fairfax, owner of the vast, 15-million acre Fairfax Proprietary, who claimed the right to grant lands in that area as his and not the colony’s, these competing claims being eventually settled by the Privy Council in 1745 which confirmed the land titles of Larkin and others who had been granted lands by the colony at the same time it confirmed Lord Fairfax’s boundary claims fully to the greatest extent claimed by him.

Described by Lord Fairfax’s biographer, Stuart E. Brown Jr., as a “sophisticated minor capitalist [and] entrepreneur,” Larkin Sr.’s industriousness and enterprise, as revealed in Virginia Council Journals, the official record of the colonial upper house of the General Assembly, merited the comment of the editor of the Council Journals for the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* in 1924 who noted that Larkin Sr. “was evidently an energetic man, a large buyer and seller of lands and with other irons in the fire.”

Raised in the Rappahannock Tidewater, a lawyer, justice of the peace and sheriff of Spotsylvania County, Thomas Chew allied himself to the Taylor and Madison families by his marriage in 1724 to Martha Taylor, second oldest daughter of James Taylor II of “Bloomsbury.” Removing to Orange County in the 1730s, Thomas was named one of “His Majesty’s Gentleman Justices of the Peace” in the original commission establishing Orange County’s courts on January 21, 1735. In his life a vestryman of St. George’s Parish, St. Mark’s Parish and St. Thomas’s Parish, Thomas also served as Captain of the Militia (1729), Magistrate (1734-45) and Sheriff (1745) of Orange.

The eleven children born to Thomas and Martha Taylor Chew were Joseph, Larkin III, Frances, Hannah, Thomas (died young), Coleby, Elizabeth (Betty), Alice, Mildred (Milly), James and Samuel.

In addition to his share of the 4,675 acre patent he shared with his brother-in-law Ambrose Madison, Thomas’s additional patent of 1726 in what was later to become Orange County was for over 2,000 acres in the area of the present day Barboursville and included what later became the Barboursville estate, now the Barboursville Winery. With these two tracts combined, Thomas landholdings in the county would have exceeded 3,800 acres in the early 1730s; retaining title to the entire Madison-Chew tract that would later become “Montpelier” on the death of Ambrose Madison would have boosted Thomas’ holdings to over 6,500 acres in Orange. It must have been highly unlikely that Thomas would have alienated his kin or brought harm to the family of his wife’s nearest sibling by not deeding out the property according to the originally understood division of the joint patent. Thomas and Ambrose had stood by each other and their father-in-law James Taylor in a protracted legal challenge to the original survey of their joint patent in the years from 1728 to 1730, continuing their mutual defense after Taylor’s death in 1729. Family letters, church and christening records attest to the solidarity and closeness of the Taylor, Chew and Madison families in the ensuing years of the 18th century. Yet, with a growing and substantial family of his own, one might question whether Thomas could have afforded his generosity to his sister-in-law in 1737; there is no record of any regret on his part or the part of his children for his so doing.

The Thomas Chew homeplace in Orange County is commonly sited in the vicinity of the present “Woodley” (which it once encompassed), later the home of President Madison’s younger brother Ambrose. Nothing of the original Chew homesite or family cemetery survive, but the location of this home was probably on the hill to the east of the present U.S. Highway 15 opposite “Woodley” on a site now occupied by a modern subdivision of homes.

Writing to his son Joseph Jr. in 1797, Joseph Chew stated that “my father, Thomas Chew, once was possessed of a large property which he unfortunately lost in becoming security to two persons for a large amount who failed.” In typical Old Virginia fashion, Thomas had co-signed notes for his friends, and the fall-out from their default forced him to sell his property to pay these debts.

As “Montpelier” historian and archaeologist Thomas C. Chapman notes in his thesis on the Madison family cemetery *Who Was Buried in James Madison’s Grave?*:

These debts forced Thomas Chew to sell or deed away most of the land he had acquired during his lifetime, including the original patent land upon which he resided with his wife and family. The home tract was deeded to Thomas' son James Chew who lived in Frederick County, Virginia. James held the deed until 1772 when he sold the land to James Madison Sr. The tract of land included most of the original 1723 patent lands. The sale of the land between James Chew and James Madison, Sr. stipulated that a portion would be reserved "to Thomas the enjoyment of the land during his natural life" and also his wife if he preceded her in death.

While Chapman notes that this life estate stipulation in the deed from James Chew to James Madison Sr. "indicates the attachment the Chew family had for the land," it equally testifies to the due reciprocity James Sr. owed his uncle for the life estate provision made for Frances Taylor Madison in the 1737 deed, and Thomas' securing the title to the "Mount Pleasant"/"Montpelier" property for James Sr. and his descendants at the same time.

The picture of Thomas Chew which survives in the county and Colonial records is of a rather Fieldingesque squire and gentleman justice unafraid to assert his privileges; in particular, a report to the Virginia House of Burgesses concerning a contested 1741 election involving Thomas and his in-law Henry Downs Sr. evokes parallels to William Hogarth's "The Election" series of prints, popular in Anglo-American society of the time, which satirized the high spirits which often attended elections in the 18th century:

. . . Mr. Robert Slaughter, Mr. Henry Downs, Mr. Thomas Wright Belfield, Mr. Thomas Chew, Mr. Zachariah Taylor, Mr. William Russell and Mr. James Wood stood Candidates for the Election; and that the poll was opened on Friday the Twentieth Day of November last, about Twelve of the Clock. That as soon as the poll was opened, John MacCoy, Honourous Powell, John Snow, and Timothy Terrill, and several others throng'd into the Court-house in a riotous manner and made such a disturbance that the Sheriff and Candidates were obliged to go out of the Courthouse, 'til the House was clear'd, and the People appeas'd: And that the said Mr. Chew, whilst he was on the Bench, called for a Bowl of Punch, and had it brought to him; upon which, the Sheriff stay'd the poll, and said he would not have Punch drank on the Bench . . . to which Mr. Chew replied, he would have Punch, and drink of it, and that the Sheriff should not hinder him.

Voting in England and Virginia was a *viva voce* affair at this time, with the candidates sitting in a row on the raised dais or bench of the courthouse as the freeholders of the county filed in one-by-one to declare their votes in open court. As such, the election could take hours, a day or several days until the authorities were satisfied that a significant number of eligible voters had declared their choices.

The sheriff's clearing of the House to "appease the people" was a temporary fix to this impatient and thirsty crowd which later "throng'd into the Court-house in a drunken riotous Manner, one of them jumping upon the Clerk's Table, and dancing among the Papers." Doubtlessly hoping the crowd's inability to hold its liquor would dissipate with a thorough sleep-off, Chew and his fellow candidates asked the sheriff to adjourn the poll and reconvene it the next day.

As sheriff of Orange in 1745, Thomas was responsible for supervising the execution of a capital criminal, a slave named Eve, convicted on January 23, 1745 of poisoning her master Peter Montague. The court's sentence was "that the said Eve be drawn upon a hurdle to the place of execution and there to be burnt" at the stake, a sentence carried out the following week.

Under the English statute law of the time, such murders were actually categorized as "petty treason," a criminal classification which included patricide, matricide as well as the murdering of masters by slaves or servants. While these sentences may seem harsh even by the standards of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the prescribed punishment for crimes of treason, specifically for Grand Treason as noted by Webb's Virginia Justice and mandated by English law at that date, was hanging, disemboweling, drawing, quartering and nailing of the dismembered body parts to the gibbet or gallows, while the heads of these convicts were to be spiked upon poles. In fact, the year 1745 saw the largest mass execution of such sentences when the Scottish Jacobite rebels defeated at the Battle of Culloden were summarily beheaded and their heads spiked on poles along the highway from Scotland to London by the General suppressing the rebellion - the Duke of Cumberland, brother of King George II, afterwards styled "Bloody Cumberland."

In any event, as President Madison's biographer Irving Brant notes, Thomas Chew, as the county's chief law enforcement and administrative officer, most certainly delegated the hands-on business of carrying out sentences to the Under Sheriffs in his charge who performed the necessarily dirtier work associated with this office in colonial Virginia.

The closely knit social world of the allied gentry families in 18th century Orange County depicted in the Diary of Francis "Frank" Taylor, (Martha Taylor Chew's nephew and son of her brother George Taylor) seems a perennial round of fish fries, balls, dances, barbecues, church-goings and visits to the local springs. As with most of upperclass Virginia's endogamous families, the Chews, Taylors, Madisons, Macons, Moores, Lees, Willises, Colemans, Slaughters and Conways of Orange County preserved their bonds of kinship and association not only by intermarriage, but an assiduous cultivation of kin-networks by naming cousins as godparents.

Three of Thomas and Martha Taylor Chew's daughters - Hannah, Milly and Alice - were godmothers to several of Frances Taylor Madison's grandchildren, including Ambrose Madison, Catlett Madison, Nelly Madison (Hite) and William Madison, all siblings of President Madison. The same daughters would also be godmothers to several children of James Madison Sr.'s sisters Frances and Elizabeth. Further cementing families ties, Thomas and Martha's daughter Alice in 1796 married her first cousin Zachary Taylor Jr., son of Martha's brother Zachary Taylor Sr. and Elizabeth Lee of "Ditchley." Zachary Jr.'s younger brother Richard would later become the father of yet another Zachary, know to history as "Old Rough and Ready," celebrated General of the Mexican War and the 12th President of the United States.

Hannah never married and, according to her brother Joseph's correspondence, devoted her life to the care of her parents, while Mildred married Francis Coleman of Orange.

Frances, the oldest daughter, married Henry Downs Jr. of Orange and moved to North Carolina in the 1750s, settling at Providence, Mecklenburg County, near the present city of Charlotte where they raised a family of six children and were prominent in Patriot activities during the Revolution. Henry Jr. was a signer of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, co-founder of Providence Presbyterian Church, Justice of the Peace, Tax Assessor and an Overseer of the Poor for Mecklenburg County. Three of the sons of Henry and Frances Chew Downs - Thomas, Samuel and William - served in Carolina Patriot regiments during the Revolution. Henry Jr.'s younger brother William Downs, an adjutant colonel in the Continental Army under General Gates, was a charter member of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of South Carolina.

Two of the younger sons of Thomas and Martha Taylor Chew, Larkin III and Coleby, were active in the Virginia regiments fighting during the French and Indian or Seven Year's War. Larkin, who never married, served as a lieutenant in Byrd's Second Virginia Regiment against the Cherokees and suffered a permanent wound, his arm being shattered by a musket ball in 1754, while Coleby, an officer in the First Virginia Regiment under George Washington's command in 1757-58, served in the second ill-fated British expedition against Fort Duquesne.

In December 1762, Larkin III petitioned the House of Burgesses for compensation of the losses he sustained in the service as well as for paying the debts of his soldier brother Coleby:

[A]fter the decease of his Brother Coleby Chew, who had been for some Time in the Service, and who was killed bravely fighting for his King and Country near Fort *Du Quesne*, several Debts due from him, to the Amount of £22, were proved and demanded of (Larkin), who paid the same, as he could not think of letting the Memory of a brave Brother be degraded with the Reproach of not paying his Debts, though he had little Money to spare himself; that in the Month of May 1759, in an Engagement with the Enemy, he received a Wound in the Elbow Joint of his right Arm, which shattered the Bones thereof

Larkin further recited that at the time of his wounding, the enemy had taken from him two horses, his baggage, clothes and papers including memoranda of money owed him and receipts for those debts of Coleby's which he had paid - in all, a sum of £87. Moreover, Larkin claimed to have spent £20 for nurses and attendants during his convalescence.

In response, the Burgesses resolved "that the said Larkin Chew be allowed the sum of £100, as a Satisfaction for his Losses, and the Wounds he received in the Service of the Colony; and the Sum of £40 a Year during his Life, for the Loss of the Use of his right Arm," a resolution approved by Governor Fauquier on December 23, 1762. This compensation must have been generous - William Byrd III, admittedly one of the colony's major grandees, was granted £500 with no annuity upon a similar petition for his war losses by the same session of the General Assembly. If this annuity was indeed continued to Larkin until his death in 1796, his total compensation would have been over £1,400. (George Washington's salary in the 1750s as Adjutant of the southern division of Virginia - the colony's senior military rank - was £100 a year; Larkin's yearly pension would have been almost half

this amount.) As Larkin never married and, presumably, lived with his parents and sister Hannah at the homeplace, this annuity must have been one of the family's main sources of income in later years.

Apparently Coleby was taken personally under the wing of then Colonel Washington who recommended him for promotion in dispatches to Governor Dinwiddie in August of 1757, first as ensign and later, as lieutenant. The following year, Coleby sent a detailed and prescient report to Washington of a scouting expedition to Fort Duquesne in which he described the evidence of "a great many Indians" who had been traveling along the densely forested route. At one point, as they neared French held territory, the Indian scout guiding Coleby's party prepared them against any encounters:

[The] Chief Warrior took his conjuring Implements & tyed them abt. the Necks of three young men Indians & told them they could not be hurt: Round my Neck he Tyed the Otter Skin in which the Conjuring Implements had been kept & round the Sergeants neck he tyed a Bag of Paint that had been kept with the Implements, he then told us that not one of us could be shot for those things would turn the balls from us. He then made us strip ourselves of all our Cloaths except our Breech Clouts & mocasons, then shook hands with us & told us to go & fight like men for nothing could hurt us.

Approaching Fort Duquesne in this impenetrable attire, Coleby reported to Washington that he estimated there were about 300 Frenchmen in the fort while the number of Indians he estimated from their "continual Hooping . . . singing & dancing" as about fifty, identified by his Cherokee guides as "all Shawnees." (Coleby and his party were dressed in Indian attire not primarily for reconnaissance, but because the new uniforms for the Virginia Regiment, ordered from England, did not arrive until the following year.)

Coleby's estimate of the route to Fort Duquesne foreshadows the conditions that were to plague an ultimately successful attempt in the Autumn of 1758 by British General John Forbes to take that fort, scene of the disastrous defeat of General Braddock in 1755:

The low grounds & branches I mentioned in my Journal as I went towards Fort Duquesne are very low & liable to be overflowed & consequently very moist & soft so that I am afraid a road through them will be very indifferent for carriages

This indifferent road also would be the doom of Coleby and many of his fellow Virginia officers in September 1758 when an advance party led by Major James Grant of the 77th Highlanders was virtually destroyed attempting to attack the fort. This force - a mixture from the Highlanders, the 60th Royal American Regiment and the Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania Provincial regiments and their Indian scouts - sought on Grant's initiative and, arguably, contrary to Forbes' instructions, to draw the French and Indians into a nighttime ambush in the woods in front of Fort Duquesne. Grant, in a report to Gen. Forbes following the battle, said he chose Coleby and 20 soldiers to lead a vanguard party to the walls of the fort on the night of September 13 to tempt the enemy into a chase back into the woods where Major Lewis of the Virginia Regiment and 200 soldiers lay in wait:

I ordered Mr. Chew to march with a party of fifteen or twenty men to reconnoitre the ground and to try, without exposing himself or the men, to draw a party of the enemy into the ambuscade. . . .He only went with three Indians, who soon left him, and, by that means, in place of returning to Major Lewis about ten o'clock as I expected, he was obliged to conceal himself till night came on, and he joined me upon the march about eleven o'clock at night. But I would not be understood to reflect upon him; he is a good, brisk young lad.

Grant, however, had misjudged his distance from the fort which was actually more than 15 miles from Lewis' position rather than the five miles he had originally estimated; once this had been ascertained by Lewis and reported to Grant on September 14, Grant, infuriated by the delay, rushed forward and pushed the night ambush tactic again. In the thick woods and steep inclines of the approaches to the fort, his troops became scattered and lost in the darkness. As they straggled back to the staging area, Grant sought to reorganize his troops by ordering his Regimental Piper to play. Knowing the bagpipes must have alerted the French and Indians to his presence, Grant was surprised when the forces inside the fort gave no sign of reaction and were, in fact, dead silent. Thinking this a sign the fort was undermanned or cowed, Grant rushed his Highlanders forward into the open plain in front of Fort Duquesne whereupon the French and Indians, some 800 strong, swarmed out and threw themselves onto Grant's troops at the same time Indian detachments spread out on the Monongahela and Allegheny rivers to cut off his retreat. The entire battle lasted, according to Grant, less than half an hour and resulted in the loss of over 300 missing, wounded or killed from among his original 400 men; the remainder,

including Grant, surrendered. Coleby, wounded, fell into the Monongahela and was drowned trying to get back to Gen. Forbes' base at Fort Ligonier.

When the news of his death reached his oldest brother, then living in New London, Connecticut, Joseph Chew wrote to Washington on October 11:

It is very hard for me to tell you the great uneasiness I have laboured under since last post - on acct. of the affair near Fort Duquesne where it is said our Troops commander by Maj. Grant with loss of many Virginians amongst whom I am informed my poor brother makes one. I pray you my dear friend to let me know how that matter was and what fate my dear brother met . . . all his letters have been full of expressions of gratitude towards you and I flatter myself had he lived his actions would have corresponded with them.

Of all Thomas and Martha Taylor Chew's children, Joseph had the most interesting and distinguished career. A Loyalist during the Revolution, Joseph's career presents an interesting flip-side parallel or contrast to his cousin James Madison Jr.

Like his brothers Larkin and Coleby, Joseph served in the colonial forces during the French and Indian Wars, attaining the rank of captain in the New York forces when he was captured by Luc de la Corne Saint-Luc near Saratoga in 1747. Taken prisoner to New France, he was released in 1748 and went into trade in Maryland and, eventually, established himself in New London where, in 1752, he was serving as marshal of the Vice-Admiralty Court. An intimate not only of James Madison Sr. with whom he was raised as a first cousin and close neighbor, but with the young George Washington as well, the abundant surviving correspondence between Joseph, James Madison Sr., his other cousin Edmund Pendleton and Washington, much of it involving the chess-games of 18th century courtship among these "young bloods," is full of high spirits and great charm.

Joseph's letters to Washington are especially revealing of a writer of great sociability, popularity, energy and wit. Writing in July 1757 to Washington, who was notoriously shy and self-conscious about women, Joseph tweaks his friend for his hesitancy in pursuing the New York belle Mary Philipse in language (i.e. "talk of the town") idiomatic of that city's nascent and self-conscious cosmopolitanism:

As to the Latter part of your Letter what Shall I say? I often had the pleasure of Break fasting with the charming Polly. Roger Morris was there (don't be startled) but not always, you know he is a Lady's man, always something to say, The Town talks of it as a sure & settled affair. I can't say I think so. . . but how can you be excused to Continue so long at Phil'a? I think I would have made a kind of Flying March of it if it had only been to see whether the Works were sufficient to withstand a Vigorous Attack, you a Soldier and a Lover.

This picture of Joseph is enforced by a comment from the Connecticut politician and statesman Silas Deane who, in a letter to his wife in 1774, says "[w]e spent the day agreeably at Mr. Bayard's, with some of the delegates and a good old standby on festival occasions, Mr. J. Chew."

Joseph's correspondence with Washington from 1756 to 1758, filled with anxiety and reports of the war situation in New England, often broken with more "talk of the town," are filled with Joseph's solicitation on behalf of his younger brothers, not only for Coleby, but for James as well:

I have a brother who has acted as commissary for Mr. Walker at Winchester; he is young and I hope of a good disposition. I trouble you with the inclosed for him and pray the favour of you to show him any countenance his situation may admit of; and give him on my account any friendly advice you think proper. I hope he himself will be greatfull, and I assure you I shall ever be so, indeed I make not doubt but you will receive a satisfaction in showing favour to a poor youth whose father's bad economy has turned him into the world to shift for himself, but this subject would only be troubling you with melancholly scenes you have no connection withPretty Miss Polly is in the same condition & situation as you saw her

Always in many respects a Virginian (he still referred to his home colony as "my own Country" after residing many years in Connecticut), Joseph thought the New England attitude to warfare worthy of comment when he tells Washington in March 1757 that "our New England *Heroism* seems to be mostly at *an End*." Joseph returned to this theme in greater length the following year when describing to Washington the manner of officer selection among the local troops:

N. England Vanity seems to be at as high a flow as Ever, it would divert you to see many of the Officers they have appointed, one of the finest Fellows in this Colony was absolutely Rejected by the Assembly, for no other thing than using the following words at Lake George when the forces seem'd inclinable to give way --
Dam ye my Lads, stand to the Breastwork & fire away, --you kill them Faster than the Devill can Carry them off.

This was & is Esteemed by Our Pious sanctified *Brutes*, as great Prophaness & shows the want of *Faith & Grace*

The intimacy of Joseph's correspondence with Washington is evidenced not only in the repeated assertions of friendship and affection ("I pray you to give my Love to my Brother and all Friends. Accept a large portion of the same with my best Respects yourself," he says in August of 1758) and in his promotion of Washington's romance with "Miss Polly" (Mary Philpse), but in Washington's use of Joseph's home as a way station on his visits to the North in the Spring of 1756:

I Engaged a Good Boatman to Call on me this day when I Promised to let him know the time you would be here that you might meet with no disappointment in getting to Long Island . . . Your Riding mare has had a pretty Large Swelling under her Belly occasioned I believe by the Buckling of the Girths too Tight . . . all your other horses are well and hearty

From the death of his brother Coleby in 1758, Joseph's correspondence with Washington seems to have died away until March of 1774 when Joseph wrote from Johnstown, New York asking for support to his application for bounty lands to which he was due as heir to his brother:

I am informed my Lord Dunmore is now Granting lands to the Officers who served in the Virga. Regiments during the last war -- my Poor Brother Coleby's Services and Misfortunes will I should think indebt his heir who I am to a Grant . . . I flatter my Self I may Claim your Favour and friendship in this matter, and the more so when I inform you that for some years I have met with such Losses and Misfortunes that I have been obliged to begin the world anew, and have fixed upon this part of the Country for no other Reason than the Continuance and Favor of Sir William. I am sure if a Grant is Obtained in my favour you will extend your kindness and give Mr. Madison (James Sr.) your Advice where to make the survey.

Washington's replied to Joseph from Philadelphia on September 25 of that year regarding this request for a land grant "you claim under your Brother Colby, whose merits well entitles his heir to the King's bounty":

I say to have serv'd you in this affair would have given me a singular pleasure and I should have set about the work with great chearfulness had I not in an exact similar Instance been repuls'd by his Lordship (Dunmore) before; Under these Circumstances . . . I Judg'd it altogether inexpedient to apply till things should put on a different face; but if I can at any time hereafter serve you in this, or any other matters, I shall do it with great chearfulness, as I shall always retain a grateful Remembrance of the Civilities I have received at your hands.

His interest in the development of Indian lands either purchased or ceded and ripe for development a high priority for most of his adult life, Joseph was sent by his Connecticut friend and mentor Sir William Johnson, Baronet, to settle a controversy with the Indians over lands along the Susquehanna River in 1762. Financial reverses in the 1760s prompted Joseph to accept Sir William's offer of settlement and support for overseeing his vast properties in the developing Mohawk Valley at Johnson Hall, Johnstown, New York, were Joseph was also appointed justice of the peace, probably through Johnson's influence.

On July 6, 1774, "Joseph Chew Esqr." was appointed "By the King's Commission" as "Secretary for Indian Affairs" for North America, an office described in the "Return of Officers &c in the Department of Colonel Guy JOHNSON Superintendent of Indian Affairs" dated October 4, 1776 as "an old Officer always held by Commission from His Majesty." In his capacity as Secretary, Joseph attended several conferences with the Six Nations.

At the time of his appointment, Joseph renewed his correspondence with his cousin Edmund Pendelton who, in a reply dated June 20, 1774, rejoices in Joseph's newfound prosperity and briefs him on the legal process

initiated by James Madison Sr. and backed by “Colonel Washington” and the Governor (Lord Dunmore) to secure Joseph’s right to the bounty lands he claimed as the heir of his brother Coleby. Much of the letter, aside from news of their Taylor relatives, Pendleton devotes to a detailed explication of the local reaction to the news of closing of the port of Boston;

For tho’ it should be granted that the Bostonians did wrong in destroying the tea, yet the Parliament giving Judgment and sending ships and troops to do execution in a case of Private property is [an] Attack upon constitutional Rights, of which we could not remain Idle Spectators, but indeed we had too much reason to believe It was a pre-concerted Scheme between the Ministry and East India Company to send the Tea for the very purpose of producing the consequences

The following year, in June 1775, Pendleton, writing from the Continental Congress over which he presided in Philadelphia, laid out in patient and philosophical terms the nature of the growing controversy with the Ministry on which he and Joseph disagreed. “[M]utual Charity should lead Us, not to censure, but to endeavor to convince the Judgment of each other; you are much mistaken, my friend, in the sentiments of your countrymen about paying for the Tea.” Pendleton goes to great lengths to assure Joseph that the Continental Congress had no plans to attack “Colonel Johnston” (Guy Johnson, son of the now deceased Sir William) or his settlements in the Mohawk Valley during this onset of the Revolution:

I am truly sorry for the uneasiness Colonel Johnston has been subject to . . . We have reason to Watch the motions of all Government Officers and especially in your parts when well we know it is projected by our Enemies to pour Mischief upon us from the Canadians and Indians, as far as they can effect it; it was proper therefore to seize and guard the door of Canada . . . Whatever is done in this affair, I consider Virginia as under particular Obligations to Colonel Johnston for his Interposition with the Indians and keeping them from entering into the War against Us law year

Saluting Joseph as “Your very Affectionate friend,” Pendleton, like James Madison Sr. and James Madison Jr. never corresponded with Joseph in future years in any less friendly manner, and the tone of the letters on all sides seems quaint in the interlocutors’ maintenance of a courtliness of expression and emotion despite their strong political differences, a testimony to “family feeling,” genuine affection and respect which outlasted the bitterness of the war.

That Autumn, in November 1775, Joseph accompanied Johnson and a delegation of colonial officials to England to discuss arrangements for New York Governor Sir Guy Carleton’s reorganization of the Indian Department. On his return to New York, Joseph eventually served with the British Army, being taken prisoner by the Americans during a campaign on eastern Long Island in 1777; paroled, he later served with the British in Connecticut.

Perhaps uniquely for a Loyalist, Joseph was successful in his lobby of the British Government after the war to compensate him for his losses during the Revolution, traveling to England as late as 1789 to do so while, at the same time, picking up his duties again as Secretary to the Indian Department were, from his office in Montreal, he was responsible for corresponding with field agents and coordination with other departments of the British Canadian government over a vast territory.

According to the Dictionary of Canadian Biography, “while the British retained the western posts and dreamed of creating a sphere of influence among the Indians of the Ohio-Mississippi country, Chew’s role was vital. In 1794 the signing of Jay’s Treaty, which relinquished the posts, reduced the (Indian) department’s importance. Chew remained active as secretary until his never robust health deteriorated in the autumn of 1798. He died on 24 September apparently of a bronchial disorder. Chew’s last years had been marked by renewed concern for his family’s welfare. He asked that his son John succeed him as secretary and sought a departmental appointment for his younger son William Johnson Chew. It is an indication of the high regard in which Joseph Chew was held that both requests were granted.”

In the letter of September 1797 to his son detailing his family’s history, Joseph Sr. remarked that his mother’s “sister Frances married a Mr. Madison and had a son and two daughters . . . James, her (grand)son, is living in Orange County, Virginia, in affluent circumstances and has been a member of several of the Congresses. He is a person of capacity and a great politician . . . his father is my old, intimate and sincere friend.”

Joseph’s correspondence with James Madison Sr. and Jr. in the closing decade of his life largely concerns his interests in Kentucky bounty lands he claimed as heir of Coleby and in which he deferred to their advice and help, making special mention of the kindnesses shown his parents by the Madisons.

That the family of Thomas Chew knew of their connection to the Philadelphia Chews in some detail in further attested by this same letter:

Benjamin Chew, Esq. was a person of the first consequence in Pennsylvania before the Revolution, Chief Justice of the Province, greatly esteemed as a gentleman and for his knowledge of law. He has a son, Benjamin, equally respectable as his father and several daughters. One married a Mr. Nicklin a merchant of Philadelphia. The eldest Benjamin Chew, has two brothers, Samuel and John, who are both living.

Joseph married Grace Deshon, of New London, Connecticut, and was the father of four children by her: Joseph Jr., William Johnson, John and a daughter, Frances.

Thomas Chew's youngest son Samuel apparently followed Joseph to Connecticut sometime during the 1760s where he married Lucy Miller of New Haven on September of 1770. Taking up the Patriot cause in opposition to his oldest brother, Samuel was appointed by the Marine Committee of the Continental Congress on June 17, 1777 to command the Brigantine *Resistance* "with which," according to the Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, "he had much success against British commerce. The brigantine, carrying then four-pounders, fell in with a British Letter of Marque (20 guns) on 4 March 1778. In the hand-to-hand struggle which ensued, Captain Chew, fighting gallantly, was killed, but his ship managed to break off the battle with its superior opponent and return safely to Boston." (According to some family anecdotes, Samuel was killed when a cannon ball passed through his body.)

In 1918, the U.S. Navy commissioned a destroyer in Samuel's honor, the *USS Chew*. In 1919, the *Chew* set out on her first major voyage to patrol the first transatlantic Navy seaplane flight, visiting the Azores, Gibraltar, Malta and Constantinople before returning to New York; subsequently she was sent to San Diego and placed on reduced commission with the reserves until placed out of commission in June 1922. Recommissioned in October of 1940, *Chew* was sent to Pearl Harbor where she had the honor to be one of the first American ships to open fire on the Japanese during the Dec. 7, 1941 sneak attack:

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor . . . , she was moored in port and opened fire at the enemy planes, aiding in splashing one and hitting two more. She got underway for patrol immediately, making depth charge attacks on eight different contacts. Two of her crew were killed while on board *Pennsylvania* assisting in rescue work. (*ibid*)

Receiving a battle star for her World War II service, *Chew* remained at Pearl Harbor throughout the war on patrol and training duty, also serving convoy escort to San Francisco and Seattle. She was sent to Philadelphia after the war where she was decommissioned and sold for scrap in 1946. (For photographs of *USS Chew*, see <http://www.navsource.org/archives/05/106.htm> .)

Samuel and Lucy Miller Chew were the parents of three children: Coleby, Samuel Jr. and Thomas John. Following his father's footsteps, Thomas John Chew, born in 1777, entered the U.S. Navy on March 9, 1809. Commissioned as a purser in 1812, the year of his marriage to Abby Hortense Hallam, Thomas John served on board the *John Adams*, the *Constitution* and the *Chesapeake* during the War of 1812. He was on board the *Chesapeake* on June 1, 1813 when that ship entered into combat with the *HMS Shannon* off Boston Harbor. During the fierce cannon duel and hand-to-hand fighting which ensued, the American Captain James Lawrence was mortally wounded. Dying in the arms of his ship's purser, Lawrence delivered to Thomas John Chew his famous last command, since the U.S. Navy's motto: "Don't give up the Ship." (For contemporary images of this scene, visit the U.S. Navy's historical website: <http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/events/war1812/atsea/ches-sn2.htm> .) Captured during this action and subsequently paroled, Thomas John served on the *USS Washington* in the Mediterranean from 1816 to 1818; retiring from the Navy in 1832, he spent his remaining years in Brooklyn, New York where he died in 1846.

Thomas and Martha Taylor Chew, like their cousins James Madison Sr. and Nelly Conway Madison, were remarkably long lived for 18th century Virginians- Thomas dying at the age of 83 in 1781, the year of Cornwallis' campaign through Virginia.

Dying before the conclusion of the Revolution, Thomas lived long enough to weather bankruptcy and dependency, to see his eldest son effectually exiled in Canada, one of his sons killed and another permanently wounded fighting for their "King and Country" against the French and Indians, while his youngest son was killed fighting for the Patriot cause. Other than the unmarried Larkin III, his only other surviving son still living in Virginia to carry on the family name was James, who served as a Major in the Revolutionary Militia, married Mary Caldwell, daughter of James and Catherine Buford Caldwell, in 1765 and settled in Monongalia County, now West Virginia.

Conscious of his family's very long and early involvement with the development of Virginia which stretched from the difficult years of the Jamestown Company through its growth into the largest, most prosperous and populous royal colony of British North America in the mid and late 17th Century, and knowing full well the price paid through the wounding, exile and death of his sons to secure the survival, victory and predominance of the Pan-Atlantic British Empire in the Seven Year's War and its aftermath, Thomas must have experienced some of the anguish described in the diaries of his contemporary Landon Carter of "Sabine Hall" who, according to the historian Rhyss Isaac in *Landon Carter's Uneasy Kingdom*, had to survey the destruction of that Empire and the comity between Great Britain and her North American colonies for which they had given so much. As Isaac points out, "it is very hard now . . . to realize the radicalism of this step [the Revolution] and so to understand not only the agony that Landon felt, deep-dyed patriarchal monarchist that he was, but also the kind of collective anguish of the colonists, long so proudly British."

Whatever personal views Thomas had on the political changes being wrought by the Revolution apparently survive in no written record. The fates of his children were not unique, but common to many Virginian families of his class and age where oldest sons often supported the Crown and the younger sons the Patriot cause. Phillip Ludwell Lee of "Stratford," oldest brother of patriot leaders Arthur, Richard Henry and Francis Lightfoot Lee; Colonel Richard Corbin of "Laneville" and Ralph Wormeley of "Rosegill" are comparable examples of an older generation of Loyalists, many of whom adopted a "wait and see" approach to the gathering conflict, some of whom managed to survive it with their property, reputations and high regard within their families and communities intact. The upheaval of their world in the wake of the Revolution was not, as Isaac points out, a mere matter of political differences and disagreements within these families but a radical reordering of the accepted cosmic view of the world which had for so long been anchored to the idea of the universe ruled by a patriarchal God whose authority was delegated down the hierarchical chain through the monarch "Father King" to the individual father heads of families. It might be remarkable that respect and genuine affection within these families could transcend such a more-than-political chasm, but that it evidently did so continues to amaze and edify.



The present village of Chewton Mendip, Somerset, five miles northeast of the Cathedral city of Wells. The River Chew rises nearby and flows into the Avon between the cities of Bath and Bristol, the port city so central to the development of Virginia's tobacco trade in the 17th and 18th centuries. Many historians claim the family of the Jamestown, Virginia settler John Chew emigrated from Chewton Mendip, thought to have been the home of his mother Ann Brodyll Chew and his second wife Rachel Constable. As the home county of Sir William Berkeley, the royalist Governor who promoted the colony as a Cavalier refuge during the English Civil War, Somerset and its nearby West Country counties played a defining role in the customs, government and peopling of Colonial Virginia.

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