Evenings at Home: Family Life in Southside Virginia, 1760-1836

Alicia Liberty Boehm Tucker
College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

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EVENINGS AT HOME

Family Life in Southside Virginia, 1760-1836

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by

Alicia Liberty Boehm Tucker
This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Alicia Liberty Boehm Tucker

Approved, August 1988

James P. Whittenburg

Barbara Carson
Department of American Studies

Helen C. Walker
To Rudy with love, appreciation, and joy.
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ABSTRACT

The Skipwith papers cover three centuries of one Southside Virginia family's life experiences. The papers alone offer great insight into Virginia family life, but the written word is supplemented by the material evidence that survives at the family plantation in Mecklenburg County. This study will only deal with the papers dated from 1760 to 1836 in an effort to understand more fully the patterns and values of the Skipwith family during this period.

This work will explore the Skipwiths' attitudes toward marriage, child-rearing, education, and success during a period of great social change. Through an examination of architecture, consumption patterns, and personal correspondences, an effort will be made to bring family life during the early republic into sharper focus.
EVENINGS AT HOME

Family Life in Southside Virginia, 1760-1836
INTRODUCTION

In Virginia on the campus of the College of William and Mary many uncelebrated treasures are stored in the basement of the Earl Gregg Swem Library where the many rare documents and books are housed within the hushed spaces of the Archives and Manuscript department. Among the large number of documents, kept securely and safely in numerous boxes, is a collection of papers from the Skipwith family of Virginia. This collection may be one of the library's unrecognized treasures.

During the late eighteenth century the Skipwiths lived in southside Virginia on the banks of the Staunton and Dan Rivers, making a very comfortable life for themselves as planters. Despite the fact that Sir Peyton Skipwith was one of the wealthiest men in eighteenth-century Virginia, his name rarely appears in the history books. Thousands have been able to study the early republican period of American history without ever coming across a single family member's name. This is largely due to the fact that the Skipwiths did not publicly participate in politics, thereby making themselves unimportant to political historians who have dominated the writing of history for so long. Even as the new social historians began to revolutionize the historical field, the Skipwiths remained somewhat neglected. When
historian Jan Lewis finally focused on the family life of Virginia planters during the early republic, the Skipwiths were once again passed over. This was a mistake. If the story of the Skipwiths has little to offer to political historians (and this could be debated), it has much to offer scholars interested in Virginia family life.

Perhaps if Jan Lewis had read the Skipwith papers her portrait of Virginia family life might have been more plausible. Although the Skipwiths experienced many of the social changes she documents, their actions are radically different from a major point in Lewis's thesis. In The Pursuit of Happiness: Family and Values in Jefferson's Virginia, Lewis attempts to document changes in family values of Virginians during the early republican years. Lewis sees Virginia families shifting their attention from the public sphere to the private. No longer would they look for happiness through participation in public affairs; now happiness was to be found in new ways. "Religion, property, public affairs—all these shrank in importance . . . whereas the family became the focus of men's and women's deepest longings."¹ Lewis proceeds to explain why such changes took place.

In many ways, as will be explored later, the Skipwiths' experiences exemplify the changes Lewis documents, but in

one major way the Skipwiths differ greatly from Lewis's findings. Lewis devotes a whole chapter to demonstrating how Virginians changed from being entrepreneurial self-made men to men who rejected "commerce and mercantile pursuits more categorically than their Northern counterparts."  

Lewis states that after the Revolution the young men of Virginia were taught and believed that one could not have both wealth and happiness. According to Lewis:

Mercantile professions, Virginia gentlemen believed, promised inevitable ruin, whereas farming, law, and medicine offered modest success and independence, if not great fortune. Further, both the acquisitiveness and the aggression required to reap enormous profits and the effects of that wealth itself were dreaded; the character necessary to procure wealth and the effect of wealth on character were scorned. Here we see the traditional critique of commerce—that it was chancy, that it led inevitably to luxury (which, in turn, would sap the character so necessary for the success of a republican government)—combined with an injunction to settle for a modest living.

The Skipwiths' accomplishments contradict Lewis's theory, and thus raise the question as to what type of experiences were acceptable under republican ideology. Were the Skipwiths abnormal, or has Lewis misinterpreted her evidence? The Skipwiths successfully participated in their Virginia society with little comment from contemporaries as to their abnormality; thus it might be Lewis's reasoning that requires further study.

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2 Ibid., 114.

3 Ibid., 115-116.
Lewis bases her findings on contemporary letters and the writings of three historians: Gordon S. Wood, Drew McCoy, and J. G. A. Pocock. She states that her interpretation of republican ideology is drawn from these authors. Extracting from their arguments the definition of "Classical Republicanism," she concludes that Virginians had assimilated the "traditional critique of commerce." The problem is that it is hard to find the same conclusions in the works of Wood, McCoy, and Pocock. It is important to understand exactly what Wood, McCoy, and Pocock determine in their works in order to perceive how Lewis misinterpreted their findings.

Wood, McCoy, and Pocock all state in varying ways that American republican ideology was based on English opposition writings from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Gordon S. Wood documents in The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787 that English opposition thought included: prohibition of placemen in the House of Commons; attacks against increasing national debt and the representational system; and recommendations for shorter Parliaments and the right to instruct representatives. This

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was the common agenda for moderate opposition Whig leaders. Wood believes, however, that Americans were more attracted to and adopted the ideologies of the radical Whigs. He explains that "the revolutionary character of these radical Whigs came more fundamentally from their fierce and total unwillingness to accept the developments of the eighteenth century. They were reacting against the maturation of the empire, with all that is meant in the use of money and bureaucracy in the running of government."⁶ In Wood's opinion, colonial American politics developed into a very jealous and suspicious system, in part because of the colonists' distance and feeling of alienation from London politics and society. "In such an atmosphere the ideas of Radical Whiggism with their heightened language of intense liberalism and paranoiac mistrust of power were found to be a particularly meaningful way of expressing the anxieties Americans felt."⁷

Americans culled a simple theory of government from their readings and discussions of radical Whig ideology. They felt that "politics was nothing more than a perpetual battle between the passions of the ruler, whether one or a

⁶Gordon S. Wood, The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787, (Chapel Hill, 1969), 15. Although each author utilizes different terminology to refer to people who advocated republican ideas, I felt it was important to use the author's terms when presenting their argument, rather than enforcing a common term of my own.

⁷Ibid., 16-17.
few, and the united interest of the people—an opposition
that was both inevitable and proportional. . . . This
notion of political dualism between rulers and ruled . . .
was at the bottom of the Whigs' beliefs: their conception of
a mutual contract, their understanding of allegiance and
protection, their notion of a dichotomy between power and
liberty, tyranny and licentiousness, their idea of
governmental balance, their theory of revolution."8

Implicit in this Whig ideology was the concept of
"public good." Wood asserts that "the sacrifice of
individual interests to the greater good of the whole formed
the essences of republicanism and comprehended for Americans
the idealistic goal of their Revolution."9 In a republic
the citizens private interests are sacrificed in favor of
the general good or interests of the whole. Keeping this in
mind, Wood holds that the American revolutionaries of 1776
placed an all encompassing importance on the common weal,
calling for individual interests to fade by contrast.10

Wood maintains that American republicans realized that
in creating a republic they were also creating a new order
of authority. No longer would they have the crown with its
standing army and inherited authority to keep the people
loyal to the government through coercion. They realized

8Ibid., 18.
9Ibid., 53.
10Ibid., 60-61.
that the republic would not only need good and virtuous leaders, but also a good and virtuous citizenry from which the republic gained its support. "In a republic . . . each man must somehow be persuaded to submerge his personal wants into the greater good of the whole."11 This desire by the individual to submerge his private interests for the greater good of his country was termed "public virtue." The republic rested on the moral fiber of its people. Wood concludes that American republicans thought "every state in which the people participated needed a degree of virtue; but a republic which rested solely on the people absolutely required it."12

Drew McCoy also documents the "intellectual universe" in which Republican "perceptions were grounded" in The Elusive Republic. McCoy finds the eighteenth century a watershed of economic and intellectual history in Western Europe because of the effects of the commercial revolution. The commercial revolution witnessed a rise in international commerce and the development of more complicated national economies. These national economies were based on an advanced division of labor and a dramatic change in public finances which included funded public debts, large corporations, and the institutionalization of money markets. As a result of these economic changes the

11Ibid., 67.
12Ibid.
eighteenth century witnessed vigorous debates on such matters as the civilizing versus the corrupting tendencies of commercial development, the definition and character of luxury, and, above all, the question of whether some kind of fundamental decay was curiously inherent in social progress. American thinkers were absorbed in these controversies by necessity as much as by choice. The colonists' sudden embrace of republicanism gave immediate and pressing relevance to the question of the relationship between economic chance and public well-being.¹³

The eighteenth-century perception of social development was shaped by a common conceptual approach which attempted to apply scientific methods of inquiry to the study of man and society. McCoy traces this scientific sociological effort to the work of French philosopher Montesquieu and finds that it was refined by the Scottish enlightenment thinkers. McCoy emphasizes, however, that it was "inspired by a prevalent conviction of the age that social change could be understood in terms of a common process that eventually affected every society."¹⁴ Social change was thought of in terms of an evolutionary process with discrete stages of development that started with barbaric simplicity and moved to civilized complexity.¹⁵

By the second half of the eighteenth century, political writers, especially the French and Scottish writers, had developed a theory that enumerated four distinct and


¹⁴Ibid., 18.

¹⁵Ibid.
successive stages of social development, with each based on a different form of subsistence. The first stage was the hunting stage, when fishing and hunting were the forms of survival. This was followed by the pasturage stage, a period of nomadic tribes of herdsmen or shepherds. The third stage, considered the ideal by most American republicans, was the agriculture stage. This was a time of settled husbandmen who tilled soil but had little foreign commerce and no manufacturing except coarse, household manufactures which the private family prepared for their own use. The last and most complex system was the commercial stage. It was characterized by the "advanced division of labor in the production process and the 'polish' or 'luxury' of a people of greatly refined manners and habits." Most areas of civilized eighteenth-century Europe experienced commerce and the manufacturing of "finer" items, thereby representing this final phase of social development known as a commercial society.17

The exact number of social development stages varied depending on a writer's interpretation. This was the framework, nevertheless, that was most often used in discussions on the conditions of American social and economic development. It became the dominant way Americans came to understand themselves, their society, and its

16 Ibid., 18-21.
17 Ibid.
probable future. McCoy contends that an important part of this interpretation was "the idea that each stage of development was characterized not only by a particular form of social and economic organization, but also by appropriate and well-defined patterns of human behavior."18 As men progressed they became less self-sufficient and began to exchange goods and services. Every man, in essence, became his own merchant. McCoy explains that under this philosophy "men were no longer satisfied with the bare 'necessaries' they could produce within their own households but desired instead to produce and consume the more refined 'conveniencies' and 'luxuries' that an advanced division of labor made possible."19 As men's taste and consumption patterns changed, so did their standards and value systems change. Commercialization created new men as well as economic institutions. The discrepancies that arose between eighteenth-century thinkers were over whether these changes were favorable, unfavorable, or some combination of both.20

McCoy finds that the major focus of eighteenth-century philosophical debates on the social development of a modern commercial society usually revolved around luxury. He states that "luxury traditionally referred to the dangerous forms of sensual excess that accompanied men's indulgence in

18 Ibid., 18-21.
19 Ibid., 21.
20 Ibid., 21.
artificial and superfluous pleasure."21 The eighteenth century marked a transition period in the concept of luxury. As individuals were confronted with the new materialistic world of the eighteenth century their attitude toward luxury became more complex and confused. Disagreements arose over the precise meaning and proper application of luxury. McCoy explains that "as society advanced through the stages of development, what had formerly been considered 'luxury' was now viewed by many observers as mere 'convenience' or rational improvement."22

What McCoy discovers is that "an eighteenth-century thinker's concept of luxury generally mirrored his attitude toward the contemporary commercial revolution. While some observers voiced only fear and were unequivocal in their condemnation of the commercialization of life, there were new optimists who, for the first time in Western thought, attempted an unqualified defense of commerce and the luxury it brought with it. These two extreme positions defined the spectrum of debate, with most thinkers exploring some intermediate, more balanced perspective that often led to a guarded ambivalence."23

At one end of the debate, traditional moralists saw luxury as the downfall of all that was good in humanity.

21 Ibid., 21-22.
22 Ibid., 21-22.
23 Ibid., 23.
These thinkers viewed luxury as breeding greed, avarice, and selfishness. Such extremists held the ancient society of Sparta as the ideal, where commerce and accumulation of private wealth were banished in the interests of "austerity and a virtuous, self-denying attention to public good." McCoy points to Rousseau as being the most "sensitive, perceptive and challenging eighteenth-century critic of luxury." On the other end of the spectrum, McCoy identifies Bernard Mandeville as the clearest voice for the pro-luxury faction. In his work entitled The Fable of the Bees, Mandeville defended the idea that commerce, luxury, and individual pursuit of profit was "natural, necessary and socially beneficial." McCoy describes Mandeville's message as resting on the belief that "every powerful and prosperous modern society was, by necessity, built squarely upon the worldly foundations of 'corruption'; namely materialism, money grubbing, and pleasure seeking." Mandeville, in essence, offered the revolutionary proposal that private pursuit of sensual gratification was not a corrupting and selfish motive, but was instead a beneficial force that released the latent productive power of society.

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\(^{24}\text{Ibid.},\ 23-26.\)

\(^{25}\text{Ibid.}\)

\(^{26}\text{Ibid.},\ 23-26.\)

\(^{27}\text{Ibid.}\)
In between the extremes McCoy found many thinkers who promoted a more moderate outlook. He identifies Scottish writer, David Hume, as the most influential defender of "the polished ages." McCoy describes Hume's defense of commercial society as spirited and unequivocal, but at the same time attempting to mediate the claims of the two extremes. According to McCoy, Hume felt that "as society became commercialized, the social as well as economic ties between men promoted all kinds of beneficial intercourse, resulting in a more civilized, refined and learned culture. . . men became truly virtuous when they exercised their natural powers of mind and body--their art and industry--to civilized ends."28

Another point in the republican debate was the role government played in a commercial society's economic development. Many writers, McCoy explains, did not object to government having some role in economic development, but they did object to specific abuses that they felt increased the problems that modern European nations were already experiencing as they underwent commercialization. The major governmental excess identified was the practice of mercantilism.

McCoy holds that contemporary objections to mercantilism included the belief that it retarded natural economic growth by diverting capital away from the more

28Ibid., 26-30
beneficial instrument of agriculture into the less productive channels of manufacturing. With mercantilism a nation developed large manufacturing concerns or an extensive luxury export market before the more beneficial agricultural sector had fully matured. For many eighteenth-century writers the problem with mercantilism was that it reversed the natural order.29

In the end, American revolutionaries, synthesizing the various debates and ideologies, found England to be in a state of irredeemable corruption, from which the colonies could escape only by a complete break with the mother county. McCoy proposes that the Revolution became a fight to "establish a society that would escape the decay and corruption" of the old world. The revolutionaries found it difficult, however, to create a republican form of government because the ideology of a republic was "in flux, caught precariously between the traditional concerns anchored in classical antiquity and the new and unstable conditions of an expansive commercial society. . . . They enthusiastically embraced the republican spirit of classical antiquity that expressed 'virtue' in terms of a primitive economy, but they also seemed to realize that the spirit had to be accommodated to their own dynamic world of commercial complexity."30

29Ibid., 40-47.

30Ibid., 48-49.
Pocock's focus in *The Machiavellian Moment* is different from Wood's and McCoy's. He is more interested in tracing the impact of Florentine thought on Republicanism that developed during the era of Machiavelli than in offering a thorough discussion of colonial American politics. His chapters on English political thought and the American Revolution come at the end of his major study of the development and evolution of classic republicanism and Machiavellian ideology. Because American politics is a subtext, Pocock's conclusions are not as illuminating and applicable to the present discussion and Lewis's thesis as the previous authors are. Describing the English philosophers who incorporated classical republicanism into their discussions, Pocock explains that the Spartan Model of republicanism was incompatible with virtue and liberty in a republic because it included an aversion to commerce.

If a reading of these three authors should stop here, a very plausible case could be made for Lewis's contention that imbued with republican ideology of anti-luxury and anti-commerce, Virginians sacrificed personal economic gains for the greater good of the republic. Certainly these authors have demonstrated that classical republicanism filled most eighteenth-century writings and that the majority of Americans found England's economic development distasteful. Unfortunately for Lewis's argument, Wood, McCoy, and Pocock do not end their discussions at this
point. What all three authors go on to illustrate is that Americans had to adjust the philosophy of classical republicanism to fit a society that had in many respects moved out of an agricultural stage of development to become a more progressive, commercial society.

Wood documents that during the Revolutionary War many American republicans promoted the spartan ideals of a regulated economy. They felt it was important to curb the individual in favor of the commonwealth. A few wanted to carry the idea to the extreme, advocating agrarian legislation which would limit the amount of property an individual could own and sumptuary laws against luxury, extravagant pastimes, dress, and diet. But such ideas were in the minority. Many moderate republicans recognized from the start that there was an inherent conflict between "individual liberty and traditional republican theory." They realized that the republican concepts which secured property rights for individuals inevitably bred industry which begot wealth, leading to luxury which in the end destroyed the virtue necessary for a republic to exist. Yet if the republic attempted to destroy wealth, it would in the process destroy its citizens and liberty. Most republicans thought they had discovered the answer to this dilemma in 1776 through a "more enlightened policy and 'purer system of
religion' of this modern age--'to regulate the use of wealth, but not to exclude it.'"³¹

Wood contends that this recognition by the republicans for a need to change social behavior was the radical element of the revolution. How they were to instill public virtue into the citizenry, Wood does not explain. Somehow the republic was going to reorder the way men developed their private virtues. The republic would help men realize that the fate of one individual affected all others and required a benevolent attitude from all to ensure success of the republic.³²

Implicit in this reordering of society was the principle of equality, which, Wood explains, encompassed two somewhat opposing definitions. It meant both "equality of opportunity which implied social difference and 'distinctions'" and "equality of condition which denied these same social differences and distinctions."³³ He states that the patriots did not want a leveling of social hierarchy. Republicans only wanted to alter the origins of "social and political preeminence," not alter prominence itself. Wood contends that "the ideal, especially in the Southern colonies was the creation and maintenance of a

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³¹Wood, Creation of the American Republic, 64.

³²Ibid., 69.

³³Ibid., 70-71.
truly national aristocracy, based on virtue, temperance, independence, and devotion to commonwealth."34

This ideal of a natural aristocracy and adherence to a social hierarchy, Wood asserts, was a major flaw in the republican system. Republicans hoped that America would be a society where there was neither great wealth nor great poverty, but at the same time felt that if a man fairly acquired great wealth others would accept and honor this distinction. Such an ideal, however, bred the very sources of "bitterness and envy it was designed to eliminate. . . . By the middle of the eighteenth century the peculiarities of social development in the New World had created an extraordinary society, a society so contradictory in its nature that it left contemporaries puzzled and later historians divided."35

Wood alleges that in America, social distinctions and symbols of status were highly desired, but at the same time republican ideals dictated that they be detested. What Wood concludes is that Americans were striving to accumulate status and distinction while at the same time proclaiming their social obscurity. American republicans found themselves struggling between the "attractions and repulsions of the world of prestige and social

34Ibid.
35Ibid., 73-75.
This attitude alone could explain why Lewis found so many Virginians lamenting success and its trappings.

McCoy utilizes the writings of Benjamin Franklin in his discussions about how Americans assimilated and translated republican ideology. He finds Franklin's writings to be representative of American republican thought. Franklin had a strong bias against the English government, viewing it as corrupt and decayed. The American Revolution offered the colonies a chance to escape from England's corrupting tendencies. With America's seeming endless supply of land, Franklin felt that America's population would continue to grow while Europe's was stifled. Without the opportunity to purchase land, young men could not successfully support a family; therefore they remained single and were forced to work in manufacturing at low wages. Franklin felt that manufacturing survived on the poverty of a nation. As long as America had land available, the country could remain in the agricultural state and not move on to the commercial stage.37

A major aspect of the commercial society, that McCoy indicates most republicans objected to, was mercantilism. They felt the mercantilistic practice of creating luxury items for foreign export produced a system that preyed on the landless and poor. Such a system, in republicans' minds, created a unfair balance of wealth. Americans were

37McCoy, Elusive Republic, 49-51.
not, however, against commerce of agricultural goods or the production of necessities. As Franklin explained, mercantilism was a fraudulent enterprise. In his mind nations could acquire wealth in three ways: first by war, which was robbery; second by commerce, which was cheating; and last by agriculture, which was the only honest method in Franklin's opinion. McCoy emphasizes that it is important to understand that "Franklin used the term 'commerce' here to indict only mercantilist countries like England that were 'fond of Manufactures beyond their real value.' Any commerce that followed physiocratic guidelines and was more naturally tied to agriculture and the export of produce to foreign markets, as American commerce was, would clearly not warrant the label 'cheating.'"\(^38\)

A major component of the republican philosophy, identified by McCoy as extracted from this tradition, emphasizes "the sensitive interdependence of government and society, and Franklin's view of England reflected the common belief that political corruption and constitutional decay festered most readily in societies where individuals had lost their economic independence and moral integrity."\(^39\) The republican view of America was just the opposite. In America, a completely different social and moral order was able to arise, where men were able to be comparatively equal

\(^{38}\)Ibid., 54-57.

\(^{39}\)Ibid., 61-63.
in status and wealth. In America, the republican vision portrayed men as "independent and economically competent" individuals. Franklin's belief in this view was anchored by his conviction that America had not reached nor would soon reach the final corrupt stage. 

It is important to understand what Franklin and his contemporaries meant when they said that as long as there was land America would be free of extensive manufacturing. Eighteenth-century Americans made a distinction between household manufacture of what McCoy terms "coarse 'necessaries'" and the more advanced capitalized production of finer manufactures that were also frequently exported to foreign markets." Household manufactures were acceptable to the agricultural stage of development. At such a stage of social development farmers produced the essential clothing and utensils that made subsistence possible. It was the production of more commercialized luxury items expressly made for export that was characteristic of the last more corrupt commercial stage.

During the non-importation movements of 1760-1776 the American commitment to manufacturing stressed the development of household or small-scale manufacturing. American manufacturing was to center around necessities and

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40 Ibid.
41 Ibid., 63.
42 Ibid.
reject foreign luxury. McCoy asserts that "Franklin had no difficulty integrating independent artisans and mechanics into his republican vision as long as they were 'the necessary and useful kinds' who supplied the 'cultivators of the Earth with Houses, and with Furniture and Utensils of the grosser sorts.' Often these artisans began as employees--journeymen--but the sober and industrious ones had an excellent chance in America of becoming masters of their own shops."43 Unlike their European counterparts, these men were useful, respectful citizens who controlled their own skill, labor, and tools. Like their agricultural counterparts, these artisans had control over their own production, which gave them an independence necessary for republican virtue. These men would not be subject to whims of fashion because their product would always be needed, unlike the luxury items that were produced in Europe. For Franklin, "it was only the 'Great Establishments of Manufactures' that had no place in Republican America--establishments that employed poverty-stricken, landless laborers, and especially those that were dependent on government subsidy and promotion."44

In conclusion, McCoy finds that although many revolutionaries dreamed of a "Christian Sparta" established in America, they feared the reality was already an

43Ibid., 64-66.
44Ibid., 66.
agricultural America which had become an advanced commercial society. He insists that republicans realized "that Americans were to a great extent an ambitious commercial people with refined tastes and manners, and that under such conditions inflated expectations of classical public virtue might be unrealistic." Republican thinkers like John Adams increasingly began to discern that if America were to succeed as a republic then commerce and its consequences would have to be assimilated into republican ideology in a more relevant and realistic manner. "Indeed, the Revolutionaries did not seek to reject a proper degree of civilization in the name of republicanism; they wished only to stop at the point where refinement became corruption. By no means would they prohibit 'the improvements which wealth and science are continually producing among mankind' they advised only against 'the love of useless show and pomp.'"

The republican warnings and condemnations against luxury that Lewis stresses in her work, most certainly were against English excesses, not American refinements.

Even Pocock supports the idea that American republicans altered and reinterpreted classical republicanism to fit their unique needs. In Pocock's words:

Let us resume exegesis of the text cited from Jefferson's Notes on Virginia. Commerce--the progress of the arts--corrupts virtue of agrarian

\[\text{\textit{Ibid.}, 69-70.}\]

\[\text{\textit{Ibid.}, 72-73.}\]
man; but, Webster had added and Jefferson had agreed, an agrarian society can absorb commerce, and an expanding agrarian society can absorb an expanding commerce. . . . [Commerce] formed part of the American scene since before the republic began. But on the premise that expanding land is uncorrupted by expanding commerce, the latter can add its dynamic and progressive qualities to the dynamic expansiveness of agrarian virtù, and be seen as contributory to the image of a farmer's empire, at once progressive and pastoral. The synthesis of virtue and virtù, achieved by Polybius and Machiavelli in their more sanguine moments, is recreated in the Jeffersonian-Jacksonian optimism.47

Pocock finds Americans combining agricultural pursuits with more dynamic commercial enterprises. He certainly does not see a society resembling Lewis's description of planters who were failing economically because they rejected the more progressive tendencies of commerce.

It is obvious that these three authors would not agree with Lewis's thesis that Republican ideology was so inculcated into young Virginians' minds that they dreaded financial success and believed a "modest living," even financial ruin, preferable.48 It would be wrong, however, to insinuate that Lewis purposely misinterpreted Wood, McCoy, and Pocock to fit her thesis. Critics have correctly noted that these authors give little attention to the way republicans responded to an increasingly complex commercial world. Historian Lance Banning, the most recent defender of the revisionist position taken by these authors, admits that

47Pocock, Machiavellian Moment, 538-539.

48Lewis, Pursuit of Happiness, 114-117.
the revisionists gave so much space to tracing the political and philosophical heritage of American republicans that they may have given too little attention to what was new and progressive in American republicanism. Banning points to historians like Joyce Appleby for new perspectives on early American republicans. Banning asserts that Appleby has helped historians "see more clearly the differences between the Jeffersonians and eighteenth-century British thinkers, among them differences that they neglected but would not deliberately deny." Quite possibly, Lewis focused too heavily on the revisionists arguments concerning Americans' inheritance of English opposition thought and too lightly on the metamorphosis of this ideology once in the hands of the Americans.

The differences between the revisionists and their major critic, Joyce Appleby, are not great. Neither would call the republicans truly conservative or strict classical republicans. They only differ in the degree of deviation they see American republicans exhibiting. Banning implies, however, that Appleby goes too far when she insists that the republican impulse in America stemmed more from modern liberalism than from classical republicanism. Banning insists that Appleby's desire to discard completely the

English country-court influences on American politics is going one step too far. No revisionist could agree to such an extreme declaration. Banning takes a middle ground, avoiding the adherence to any one school of thought, but acknowledging the influence of both liberalism and classical republicanism.50

Despite Banning's work, Appleby still contends that the majority of people during the 1790s interpreted a good republican government as one that interfered least with a man's pursuit of his own personal interests and goal.51 Sounding very much like David Hume, she explains that "Jeffersonian Republicans . . . invested self-interest with moral values. Self-interest--reconceived--turned out to be a mighty leveller, raising ordinary people to the level of competence and autonomy while reducing the rich, the able, and the well-born to equality."52 In short, Appleby has extracted and amplified the messages of Wood, McCoy, and Pocock, finding American republicans more comfortable with the marriage of commerce and agriculture than their classical republican predecessors.

50Ibid., 11.


52Appleby, Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s, (New York, 1984), 91, 97.
All these modern historians are, in the end, fairly consistent in their descriptions of republican America; only the terminology differs. Regardless of whether American republicans are called liberal or progressively republican, what is important is that they are described as enterprising, commercially active individuals who reinterpreted classical republicanism to meet their own needs. Such an interpretation of early American history causes Lewis's work to appear flawed. Lewis has, in many ways, accurately portrayed Virginia family life, but has faltered in her description of Virginians' attitudes toward success and commerce. This weakness can be corrected by studying Virginia families with a more accurate understanding of the political and ideological heritage under which they lived and operated.

Another problem with Lewis's study is that she only relied on contemporary letters. She did not examine inventories or consumption patterns in an effort to verify her findings. She never matched the actions of her historical figures to their philosophical rhetoric. If Lewis had, she might have discovered that often people say one thing and do another. Lois Carr and Lorena Walsh's consumption study would have helped Lewis realize that by the time of the Revolution Americans were firmly entrenched in the commercial revolution. In "Changing Life Styles and Consumer Behavior," Carr and Walsh trace the consumption
patterns of Chesapeake society from the seventeenth century to the Revolutionary War. They have determined that consumer demand did not increase until the eighteenth century when a rise in real wages and a fall in food prices and manufacturing costs gave the average consumer more money to spend on non-essentials.\textsuperscript{53}

Carr and Walsh identified two major shifts in acquisition patterns for the Chesapeake during the eighteenth century. The first major shift occurred at the beginning of the century, triggered by a rise in the price of tobacco and increase in the importation of English goods. The wealthy began purchasing more goods which "facilitated a style of living that more clearly set them off from the ordinary folk."\textsuperscript{54} Elaborate chests of drawers, tea equipment, sets of chairs, mirrors, individual cutlery, ceramic punch bowls, and timepieces were in demand. Greater ceremony was now associated with entertainment. Lower classes of society did not or could not acquire such luxuries. Luxury items rarely appeared in inventories with values less than £226 and never below £50. Middling planters improved their standard of living by investing in


more "ordinary comforts," such as simple ceramics, linens and books.\textsuperscript{55} The situation, however, was quickly to change.

The second major shift in consumption patterns occurred at mid-century and continued until the Revolutionary War. The conclusion of the Seven Years War heralded a post-war buying spree by all classes of Chesapeake Society. Meanwhile, new techniques in English manufacturing produced a wider range of goods available. "Matched china place settings; walnut or mahogany chairs, tables, buffets, and bookcases; specialized beverage glasses and serving dishes; an impressive array of kitchen gadgetry; garniture; candelabra; prints; tea and coffee services—to name a few—began to fill up larger, more formal dwellings that now boasted separate drawing and dining rooms."\textsuperscript{56} In the homes of the wealthy, social spaces became divorced from work and sleeping quarters with each area requiring specific equipment appropriate to the activities and social importance of the space.

By the 1750s, not only were middle class families purchasing a wider range of non-essentials but the poorer sorts were also involved in this new consumer activity. The middle-class citizen moved "beyond the commonplace decencies, substituting a piece of case furniture for plain, utilitarian chests and trunks; filling fine tables with full

\textsuperscript{55}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{56}Carr and Walsh, 8-10.
ceramic place settings; preparing more varied and elaborate meals with a burgeoning variety of cookware; drinking tea in full ritual fashion; and decorating the house with pictures, mirrors, vases, or flowerpots." At the poorest level the increase in consumption predominantly involved increases in simple amenities such as inexpensive dining equipment (table linens, individual cutlery, and ceramic tableware), chairs, bedsteads, and bed linen. This social group was also developing a taste for the future symbolic luxury item, tea.57

Planters and laborers learned to use their newly acquired goods to make social statements. The local gentry used their clothes and furnishings to set themselves apart from the lower social orders. At the same time the lower classes increasingly attempted to acquire aspects of the gentry's lifestyle. Conspicuous consumption was a habit acquired by most individuals in the latter half of the eighteenth century.58

Fashion came to play an important role in the acquisition behavior of the wealthy. Fashion determined the type of equipment necessary "to live the good life," and a change in fashion could precipitate the immediate purchase of new items. In the seventeenth century, wealthy planters' invoices demanded goods that were practical or "useful for

57Ibid.
58Ibid., 44.
this country." By the middle of the eighteenth century the ultimate criterion for goods was that they were "fashionable." Many European observers remarked on the speed with which fashion moved from London to the Chesapeake. William Eddis wrote in 1771 from Annapolis that "the quick importation of fashions from the mother country is really astonishing. I am almost inclined to believe that a new fashion is adopted earlier by the polished and affluent American than many opulent persons in the great Metropolis . . ."59

T. H. Breen supports Carr and Walsh's findings in his study of Virginians during the non-importation agreements of the 1760s. Breen explains in Tobacco Culture that many wealthy Virginians gathered together in 1769 to sign the Virginia Non-importation Resolution in response to the Townshend Duties levied in 1767. The Townshend Duties taxed colonial imports such as glass, tea, paper, lead, and paint, but the Virginia resolutions went beyond these items. Virginians anxious over their rising debts with English merchants and eager to avoid further debt agreed to boycott additional luxuries. These luxuries included "pewter, clocks, looking glasses, carriages, joiner's and cabinet work, upholstery of all sorts, trinkets and jewelry, plate

59Ibid., 43-44.
and gold, silversmith's work, silk and lace, boots and saddles."\(^{60}\)

In reality Virginians were never really able to comply with the agreements. By 1770 the *Virginia Gazette* ran articles lamenting the end of that "glorious association . . . [so] soon forgotten, so basely deserted, and both the letter and the spirit of it kicked out of doors."\(^{61}\) While the agreement had been enforced Virginians had actually increased the number of goods they imported. In 1768, the year before the association, £670,000 worth of British goods were imported into Virginia and Maryland. Two years later, while the agreement was still in force, the Chesapeake colonies had increased British imports by a million pounds. The all-time high was achieved in 1771 when imports rose some £225,000. This can partly be explained by the fact that many of the "gentlemen" who signed the agreement asked their factors not to send items taxed by the Townshend acts, but failed to include the list of additional luxuries they had agreed to refrain from purchasing.\(^{62}\)

What Carr, Walsh, and Breen demonstrate is that Virginians were very much involved in the consumption of luxury items before the Revolutionary War. What Lewis fails


\(^{61}\)Ibid., 194.

\(^{62}\)Ibid., 194-195.
to demonstrate through the use of inventories or consumption studies is that this attitude changed after the Revolutionary War. The Skipwith papers are ideal for a consumption study and offer the opportunity to study actions versus rhetoric. A better understanding of Virginia family life and attitudes in the early republic can be achieved by combining the intellectual framework of republican America with the life experiences of the Skipwiths.

The Skipwith papers range in time from 1760 to 1977. For the purpose of this paper the evidence from 1760 to 1836 will be consulted. The artifacts that the Skipwiths so diligently collected and preserved offer a detailed record of the family's existence. In addition, Prestwould the family's plantation house, still exists as do many of the family's furnishings. Such important material objects supplement the written record and create an opportunity to judge actions versus philosophical rhetoric. Based on this information, it becomes clear that the Skipwiths can be used effectively as a case study. They are representative of the wealthy Virginia planter families, but also bring a new perspective because they were not members of the Virginia political hierarchy. The number of women's letters in the collection offers additional insight into the lives of those individuals who had little voice in political affairs, but much influence over domestic matters. The Skipwiths were not, however, outside the Virginia political arena. Peyton
Skipwith was very influential in local politics, and the family was related through birth or marriage to some of the most prestigious families of Virginia.

By analyzing the Skipwith family material within the interpretive framework established by Wood, McCoy, Pocock, Banning, and Appleby, I hope to develop a convincing portrait of upper class family life in Virginia. Much of Lewis's work on family life will be substantiated in my paper, but her major contentions concerning success and commerce will be refuted. Building on Lewis's work, I hope this paper will bring Virginia family life during the early republic into sharper focus.
CHAPTER I
BUILDING A HOME AND FAMILY

Peyton Skipwith was born December 11, 1740, in Middlesex County, Virginia. The death of his brother in 1756 allowed Peyton to be the seventh Skipwith to inherit the title of the baronet. It was a title that he would keep throughout his life, despite the political changes that occurred after the American Revolution. Skipwith, like most second sons, was educated in Virginia. When he became heir to the title, his family thought it necessary that his education be completed by a trip to England. In 1763 he was sent on his trip to the British Isles, where he became re-acquainted with Anne Miller, originally of Prince George County, Virginia. At this time Anne was residing in Scotland with her sisters and brother, Jean, Lillias, and Hugh Miller, Jr. Peyton married Anne in 1764, and they returned to the colonies. Over the next fifteen years Anne Skipwith gave birth to four children, Grey (1771-1830), Lelia (also called Lillia – dates unknown), Maria (ca. 1777-1792) and Peyton Junior (1779-1808). Anne Skipwith died as a result of her last pregnancy in 1779. Peyton Skipwith was
left with the challenge of managing his estate and raising his four children, ranging in ages from eight to infancy.  

During the Revolutionary War, Peyton Skipwith's actions earned him neither the title of patriot nor of loyalist. Skipwith's activities suggest that he viewed the war as an economic opportunity. He invested heavily in livestock which he sold to America's French allies stationed in the colonies. This practice, in the end, became more of a financial liability than an opportunity when he lost his contract with the French Army. After the war Peyton was eager to resume commercial relations with England and recoup some of his economic losses. On a business trip in 1784, Peyton met his second wife, Jean Miller. It is the life that Peyton and Jean Skipwith created for themselves and their family in Mecklenburg County that will be the focus of this study.  

Anne Skipwith's sister, Jean Miller, was born February 21, 1748, at Blanford in Prince George County. Her mother, Jane Bolling Miller, died in 1756, and four years later her father, Hugh Miller, moved the family (Anne, Robert, Lillia, Jean, Hugh, Jr.) back to Scotland. Jean was twelve when she

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64John Hetlin to P. Skipwith, May 10, 1782, Skipwith Papers, Box I, fol. 73, Swem Library.
began her new life in Glasgow. Her father died in 1762, providing in his will an income that was to be received by Jean and her sisters when they married or came of age. Jean and her siblings were in many ways left in charge of their own affairs with only the guidance of family advisors and each other. In 1764 Jean's sister Anne left Scotland to begin her new life in America with Peyton. The extent of Jean Miller's formal education is unknown. She lived in Scotland during the Scottish Enlightenment, and the size of her personal library indicates that she was a well read and educated woman.65

No letters between Jean and Anne, or even with Anne's family survive. Lelia Skipwith wrote to her aunt, Lillias Miller Ravenscroft, at the end of the Revolutionary War inquiring into the health of her aunt Jean Miller's health. She had never met Jean Miller and admitted to knowing little about her. On a business visit to the British Isles in 1784, Peyton Skipwith renewed his acquaintance with Jean Miller who was then living with her sister Lillias Ravenscroft at Cairnsmoor in southern Scotland. Peyton Skipwith's visit had a strong effect on his sister-in-law

65Ibid. ; "Notes and Queries," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 10 (1902-1903), 322-323; Jean Miller Skipwith was christened Jane Miller but later changed her name to Jean. For the sake of simplicity, in this paper she will always be referred to as Jean.
for by 1786 Miller was on her way back to Virginia to continue the relationship.  

In 1788 Jean Miller was in residence at Elm Hill in Mecklenburg County. Elm Hill had originally belonged to Miller's father but had passed to Peyton Skipwith through Anne Miller's dowry. Jean Miller was an independent woman. She had controlled her own income since her majority. Such self-sufficiency may have caused her to be cautious about relinquishing independence for marriage. This may explain why the Skipwith-Miller courtship appears more like a negotiation than a romance. Peyton was an ambitious, practical man who could appreciate Jean's taste and gentility. Jean was a strong woman who could recognize the opportunities a marriage with Peyton offered, specifically wealth, status, and a family of her own. Sometime in early September, 1788, Jean Miller received a final proposal of marriage from Sir Peyton Skipwith. She hesitated long enough to prompt an acquaintance of Skipwith to write urging her to marry soon. Evidently she took his advice, for on

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66Ibid., Lelia Skipwith to Lillias Ravenscroft, March 16, 1781, William and Mary Quarterly, XXIII (1914-1915), 281-282.

September 25, 1788, Jean Miller and Sir Peyton Skipwith were married in North Carolina.  

At the time of his second marriage, Sir Peyton Skipwith was one of the wealthiest men in Virginia, making a living by planting agricultural commodities and by mercantile enterprises. Jean Skipwith came to the marriage as a woman who had long enjoyed independence. Within the first year of their marriage Peyton and Jean began their family. At the advanced age of 41 Lady Jean became pregnant for the first time. She endured five pregnancies with only four children surviving infancy. Their first child, Helen (1789-1864) was followed by Humberston (1791-1863), Selina (1793-1870) and Horatio Bronte (ca. 1794-1805).

Peyton and Jean Skipwith began their married life at Elm Hill. They eventually built one of the largest houses

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68 R. Hylbon to Sir Peyton Skipwith, October 12, 1788, Skipwith Papers, Box IV, fol. 76, Manuscript and Rare Book Department, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia; Marriage Certificate, September 25, 1788, Skipwith Papers, Mss2 Sk3662, Virginia Historical Society. The fact that Sir Peyton Skipwith wanted to marry his deceased wife's sister made it illegal for the Skipwiths to marry in Virginia; they had to marry in North Carolina where there was no such restriction.


70 Abraham, "Library of Jean Skipwith," VMHB, 91, (1983), 298-303; Ibid.; P. Skipwith to St. George Tucker, December 12, 1795, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Foundation. The letter is unclear as to the circumstances surrounding the loss of the fifth child.
in southside Virginia and created a way of life that put them at the top of Mecklenburg society.

"A Union on which my future happiness so much, and so immediately depends"

Jan Lewis suggests that "no word better summarizes republican notions of marriage than friendship." She points to contemporary descriptions of the institution that used the words "equal, mutual, and reciprocal." Republican writers argued that marriage was "the most perfect state of friendship" and explained that "mutual interest produces mutual assistance."71 Lewis concludes that despite such declarations, all parties concerned realized that marriage was not fully equal. Men and women felt that they "were opposite sides of the same coin." Wives realized that their husbands still had the upper hand.72 Despite the fact that men occasionally consulted their wives' opinions, women had not yet won the right to control their own property or protect joint property under American law.73

In many respects the marriage of Peyton and Jean Skipwith conforms to Lewis's descriptions of republican marriages. During the first ten years of their marriage,


72Ibid., 708-711.

Peyton and Jean Skipwith spent long periods apart. Peyton was often away on business in Petersburg or overseeing work on his distant quarters, especially at Prestwould. Jean was left behind to administer operations at Elm Hill. The letters exchanged between the Skipwiths during this period reveal a relationship based more on partnership than on patriarchal authority. Jean Skipwith played an active role in the administration of joint property.⁷⁴

Peyton Skipwith often conferred with his wife on different aspects concerning the building of Prestwould. In a letter on the progress of building the plantation he wrote, "In all parts of the finishing we think it best to [wait] until your return." Skipwith realized that his wife was an important partner in this enterprise.⁷⁵ In fact, Peyton Skipwith often left Jean in charge of the plantation and the construction of the mansion. She, in turn, kept him apprised of the progress by writing that the builder was "finishing the upstairs rooms very fast, I saw the sashes in one of them today, they will be ready for Laths and plaster early in next week; I suppose." She also expressed annoyance at being questioned by Peyton Skipwith on a point

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⁷⁴A series of letters between Peyton and Jean Skipwith dating from September 17, 1789 to October 6, 1791, found in the Skipwith Papers, Boxes 4-5, Swem Library, and several undated letters found in Skipwith Papers, Box 21, folders 11-12, Swem Library.

now lost owing to mutilation of the letter. The lost point of controversy is less important than the fact that Jean Skipwith did not appreciate being second guessed, even by her husband.76 Peyton and Jean Skipwith faced business decisions as a team. Peyton often sought his wife's assistance in spurring on the industry of their slaves and monitoring the honesty of a man he identified as the "little Gentleman at the Mill."77

Despite the egalitarian tone of Peyton Skipwith's letters, Jean Skipwith gave signs that she did not consider herself her husband's equal. She exhibited self-doubt over a business decision. Writing to her husband for advice, she explained, "Isac [sic] says there is very good stone at the horseshoe [that can] be marked out, but this distance scares me, and I hardly know what to set them to[,] if there were none but our own people I would send them after stone anywhere."78

Peyton Skipwith did not share his wife's doubts about her abilities. He expressed his confidence in her competence to direct their children's future and manage their vast estate in a letter to his son-in-law, St. George

76 J. Skipwith to P. Skipwith, n.d., Skipwith Papers, Box XXI, fol. 11, Swem Library.

77 P. Skipwith to J. Skipwith, August 15, 1790, Skipwith Papers, Box V, fol. 31, Swem Library.

78 J. Skipwith to P. Skipwith, n.d., Skipwith Papers, Box XXI, fol. 11, Swem Library.
Tucker. He wrote that his will included directions for "Lady Skipwith to have the entire Management of my children by her, and their Fortunes; a confidence she amply merits at my hands, and a trust time will eventually show she is fully equal to the discharge of."79 Firm in his confidence of his wife's talents, he left instructions in his will that Jean Skipwith should not be "ruled by the court to give any security for the due performance of the trust hereby reposed in her."80

Peyton died in 1805 at the age of 65. His children from the first marriage had all reached majority and were on their own. The children from his second marriage with Jean ranged in ages from 16 to 11. Jean was faced with managing an estate and discharging payments which totaled "upwards of $30,000."81 Even though Peyton Skipwith had demonstrated his faith in Jean, she initially expressed doubts as to her ability to manage the estate and responsibilities she inherited from her husband. Soon after Peyton Skipwith's death, Lady Skipwith wrote to her nephew, John Ravenscroft, for advice on how to administer the will. Ravenscroft expressed surprise at finding his Aunt so confused over

79P. Skipwith to St. G. Tucker, February 20, 1795, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Found.

80Peyton Skipwith's Will, Mecklenburg County, August 5, 1805, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Box XXV, fol. 4, Swem Library.

81J. Skipwith to Peyton Short, December 17, 1805, Skipwith Papers, Box VIII, fol. 31, Swem Library.
to find, that you, who have so much strength of mind on all other occasions, should on Pecuniary matters suffer anxiety and doubt to overcome you so far, as from your Letter I find you do. . . . Permit me to say that habitually viewing any thing as arduous and difficult only renders the accomplishment more so and that in your situation, tho new, and probably not exactly to your wish yet there can be no serious difficulty nor eventual injury to the Interest of your family . . . at any rate not one in five hundred would allow their spirits to be overcome and their health to be injured—and you owe it to your Children to counteract such impressions & to prevent such consequences.  

Jean Skipwith must have taken his advice for by the time of her death she had increased the value of the estate.  

What type of affection existed between Peyton and Jean to create such a strong partnership during their time together is difficult to determine. It is obvious that there was mutual respect, but was there love? Jan Lewis has written that love became an important aspect of many republican marriages in Virginia. Men found shelter from the world in the loving arms of their wives, and women looked to their husband's love for protection from a cruel world. Too few letters survive from Lady Skipwith to conclude whether she looked to her husband for love and

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82John Ravenscroft to J. Skipwith, July 6, 1806, Skipwith Papers, Box VIII, fol. 43a, Swem Library.  
83Jean Skipwith's Will, Mecklenburg County, June, 1826, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Box 25, fol. 4, Swem Library.  
84Lewis, Pursuit of Happiness, 190-196.
protection. Only one letter exhibits anticipation at his proposed return. Jean writes, "Our little ones are counting how long it is to Sunday when we hope you will eat a bit of Roast Beef with us."\textsuperscript{85} Peyton Skipwith's letters to her do exhibit a certain affection, but whether or not it was of the magnitude described by Lewis is unclear.

Peyton's affection usually manifested itself in the form of gifts of food. "I have been wracking my Brains," he wrote, "to send something agreable [sic] from hence that you cannot have at Home, but to no purpose; the Pigs are too large, and Mutton you don't like; go on then my dearest to eat your Chicken & Bacon."\textsuperscript{86} In another example he assured her that, "although a most noble piece of Beef that you have sent me, my ever Dear Madam, it did [not] require that or any thing else to remind me of you, many times through the day do I think of your unabated Kindness to me, and, did it require any visible object to remind me of you, I have yet the cheese you gave me to do it."\textsuperscript{87} Hardly the most romantic lines ever written, but they are evidence of a form of affection.

\textsuperscript{85}J. Skipwith to P. Skipwith, n.d., Skipwith Papers, Box XXI, fol. 1.

\textsuperscript{86}P. Skipwith to J. Skipwith, August 15, 1790, Skipwith Papers, Box V, fol. 31, Swem Library.

\textsuperscript{87}P. Skipwith to J. Skipwith, n.d., Skipwith Papers, Box XXI, fol. 11, Swem Library.
For the most part, Peyton and Jean Skipwith's letters speak of a relationship based on friendship and respect. Whether they shared the more emotional relationship described by Lewis as typical is difficult to ascertain. Certainly the birth of four children after the age of 40 is significant, but does it indicate love or lust? Most probably it suggests a marriage of love. Perhaps their love was not as intense as the type Lewis documented, but certainly a strong enough bond existed between Peyton and Jean to make their relationship a "most perfect friendship."

The Skipwiths' marriage was not the only area of their lives that reflected new republican ideas. The beliefs that shaped their marriage and family structure also influenced the architecture of their home.

"A House I will have here"

Virginians ordered their landscape to reflect their definition of social order. Part of this complex landscape included their homes. Virginia houses reflected their owners' attitudes toward structure and regularity in their social relationships. Any changes that Virginians made in the interior arrangement of their houses reflected transitions in the Virginia social order. After the Revolution there was an explosion of building up and down the American coastline. Many Virginians added on to their existing homes or built completely new houses during this
time. Few Virginians would verbally admit that in building new houses they were striving for social distinction and status, but their houses often made strong architectural statements that set them apart from their humbler neighbors. Soon after their marriage, Peyton and Jean Skipwith began to feel that they needed a new house, one large enough hold their growing family and stately enough to impress on their neighbors that they were part of republican America's "natural aristocracy."**

The area of Virginia in which the Skipwith's resided had only recently lost the adjective "frontier." Mecklenburg County was forged out of Lunenburg County on the Virginia frontier in 1764. Even in the mid-eighteenth century, few wealthy men of the Southside had plantation houses on the same grand scale of those in the Tidewater area. Wealthy planters in the Virginia Southside preferred to reinvest their profits in their plantations by buying more land and slaves. Most large plantations houses had only five to six rooms and contained few luxury items.**

**P. Skipwith to J. Skipwith, October 6, 1791, Skipwith Papers, Box V, fol. 51, Swem Library; Dell Upton, "Vernacular Domestic Architecture," Winterthur Portfolio, 19, (1982), 102; Conversation with Ed Chappell, Director of Architectural Research, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, March 2, 1988, 10:00 a.m.; Wood, Creation of the American Republic, 73-75.

This type of house had served as the Skipwiths' "honeymoon cottage." The original house in which Peyton and Jean Skipwith lived no longer exists. Their house was replaced c. 1799-1801 by a slightly larger structure built by Peyton Skipwith, Jr. Along with building a new house on the property, Peyton, Jr. also changed the name from Elm Hill tract to Elm Hill Plantation. An inventory taken in 1791 of "Furniture & c. at Elm Hill" offers the only information on the number of rooms Peyton and Jean had at their disposal. The house had 6 rooms consisting of: a "Parlour", a "Dining room", "my own Chamber," "the Nursery," "the room over the Dining room," and "the room over the Parlour." The inventory also listed a kitchen, which was a detached structure, common to most Virginia properties. Several architectural configurations might be deduced from this inventory, including a typical two-story, single-pile structure with a shed attached to the back. The use of the word "Parlour" rather than "hall" and the use of the word "dining room" suggest the possibility that the house followed a traditional eighteenth-century configuration. Often inventories which utilized these terms described houses with a central passage running the length of the house, separating the parlour and dining room. With this

type of house in mind, a rough diagram of Elm hill can be drawn. Elm Hill fits nicely into the type of house a wealthy southside planter would have found adequate to his needs. It was a house that many in the eighteenth century would have considered large, but it certainly was not on the

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Dell Upton, "Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," Winterthur Portfolio, 17, (1982), 97-106; Inventory of Elm Hill, January 1, 1791, (typed transcript), Skipwith papers, Prestwould Foundation. As of this writing, the original of this inventory has not been located and only exists in typed form at the Prestwould Foundation.
same grand scale as the plantation houses of the wealthy Tidewater planters. The Skipwiths soon found their house inadequate and embarked on a plan to correct the situation.

In the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century economic prosperity increased in the southside to the extent that many of the luxury items that previously had been missing began to appear in inventories. Wealthy planters started to display their success in the form of houses and material comforts.92 Peyton and Jean Skipwith planned to build their own display of success on the property situated between the Dan and Staunton Rivers in Mecklenburg County. Although construction of the smaller house on this site took place in 1789, no mention of building a primary dwelling house occurred until 1791 when Peyton declared, "a House I will have here, I cannot longer bear These separations."93 It took the Skipwiths three more years of planning before a contract was signed with the builder, Jacob Shelor, to build Prestwould Mansion. The design of the house may have begun before 1791. It went

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93P. Skipwith to J. Skipwith, September 17, 1789, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Found.; Contract between P. Skipwith and Jacob Shelor, April 1787, Skipwith Papers, Box IV, fol. 17, Swem Library; P. Skipwith to J. Skipwith, October 6, 1791, Skipwith Papers, Box V, fol. 51, Swem Library.
through several variations before the Skipwiths decided on the final one.\textsuperscript{94}

In the eighteenth century the architecture of planters' houses reflected the semi-public nature of their lives. The hall was the public entertainment area and the heart of the planter's social order. The dining room was usually a multi-purpose room placed at the front of the house where it served as a buffer for the more private "chamber" behind. The dining room was the focal point for family gatherings, while the hall was the center for public activities. The central passage allowed access to all rooms and served as a space for separating guests and family from outsiders.\textsuperscript{95}

Such an arrangement was suited to the type of entertaining popular in England and her colonies at the beginning of the eighteenth century. At that time balls were the popular mode of entertainment. Balls began with dancing and ended with light refreshments, called a banquet or supper depending on the century. It is important to note that at this type of event "the guests did one thing at time, and they all did it together." By the second half of the eighteenth century new forms of entertainment had evolved, most notably the assembly. The assembly involved

\textsuperscript{94}A contract between J. Shelor and P. Skipwith, 1794, (typed transcript), A Preservation Study for Prestwould Plantation, Mecklenburg County, Virginia, December 1, 1974, Appendix A-2, Prestwould Foundation.

several different activities taking place at once. Card playing, tea drinking, walking, dancing, conversation, and dinner all happened simultaneously in different rooms. As the type of entertainment evolved, so did the architecture in which it took place. The Skipwiths expressed this change in attitude through the architectural plans they experimented with during this period.

Three different versions of their house plans survive. All three deviated from traditional eighteenth century homes. Jean and Peyton Skipwith manipulated architectural space in an attempt to create something new. A memo dated August 23, 1787, depicts what may have been the first house plan. It is difficult to determine whether this sketch was done in 1787 and whether it was a planned drawing designed for Prestwould. It does incorporate a reconsideration of architectural space that the Skipwiths used in other preliminary design conceptions for Prestwould. The house plan is based on the typical Georgian square. It possibly was intended as a central passage house with subsidiary passages that separated the four main rooms.


\[97\text{Miscellaneous notes by P. Skipwith, August 23, 1787, Skipwith Papers, Box IV, fol. 31, Swem Library. This drawing appears on the corner of miscellaneous notes written by Peyton Skipwith.; Conversation with Mark Wenger, Architectural Historian, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation on March 23, 1988.}\]
By 1789 Peyton and Jean Skipwith contemplated a different design for their house. The Skipwiths had requested that the builder William R. Curtis build them a house "on the plan of Maycox." When Curtis explained that he would not be available for another year, the Skipwiths went looking for another builder. A drawing accompanied Curtis's letter which offers insights into the type of house the Skipwiths hoped to build.98

This drawing may be a depiction of the house of Lillias and John Ravenscroft, Jean's sister and brother-in-law. Jean lived with them for a time in Scotland, and several documents refer to John as "John Ravenscroft of Maycox."

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98William Curtis to P. Skipwith, February 20, 1789, (typed transcript), with drawing attached, Prestwould Foundation Preservation Report, on file at Prestwould Foundation; Little is known about Curtis, except that he was involved in the building of Brandon in Prince George County Virginia.
This drawing is also very similar to a house in Petersburg known as Battersea. Battersea was built by Colonel John Banister sometime between 1765 and 1770. The Skipwiths very likely knew the Banisters since Jean's uncle, Robert Bolling, was married to Colonel Banister's sister, Martha. In addition, Peyton did a great deal of business in Petersburg and had ample opportunity to see Battersea. Both houses are smaller adaptations of what is generally referred to as the "English Palladian" style of architecture, but they more closely resemble Plate 3 in Robert Morris's *Select Architecture*, published in 1757.99

Both buildings were planned as extended houses that had rooms and service buildings aligned on a single axis, with the rooms symmetrically arranged along the axis. Both houses had a two story central section attached to single story service buildings by connecting passages which were enclosed.100


Fig. 4. Robert Morris's Plate 3, published 1757. From Select Architecture, by Robert Morris.
Fig. 5. "Maycox" house. From Prestwound Preservation Report.

Fig. 6. Battersea Mansion. From Waterman, Mansions of Virginia, 374 and from Faulconer, The Virginia House, 131.
On the same order as the previous plans, the third architectural drawing found in the Skipwith Papers had the rooms designated in Peyton Skipwith's handwriting. The main portion of the house was attached to the service buildings by "open shelter or colonade" passages. The architect of this house, possibly Peyton himself, had unstacked the typical two-story, double-piled Georgian structure and aligned all the rooms on a single axis. This house was also an adaptation of an existing house in Virginia. It closely resembles Chatham, a house in Fredericksburg built by Peyton Skipwith's cousin, William Fitzhugh, c. 1770. Skipwith was familiar with Chatham because his daughter, Lelia, visited there in 1781 on her way to Philadelphia. Peyton Skipwith supplemented the Chatham design with semi-circular window bays which are very similar to those found in Thomas Jefferson's Monticello and Robert Carter's Redlands. Both of those houses were built or remodeled at the same time the

\footnote{Waterman, Mansions of Virginia, 360-363, 415; Lelia Skipwith to P. Skipwith, April, 1781, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Found.; Conversations with Mark Wenger, March 23, 1988.}
Fig. 7. Architectural drawing of Chatham. From Waterman, *Mansions of Virginia*, 360.

Fig. 8. Architectural plan by Peyton Skipwith. From the Skipwith Papers, Swem Library.
Skipwiths were planning Prestwoud. Peyton Skipwith was familiar with Jefferson through his cousins, the Shorts, and with Carter through his daughter, Lelia Skipwith Carter Tucker.\textsuperscript{102}

The main block of the house consisted of four rooms with a large central passage. An unheated passage divided the house into two symmetrical halves. Each of the principal four rooms in the main block had a fireplace that shared its chimney with the adjacent room. There were two main entertaining spaces immediately off each side of the passage. These rooms had projecting semi-circular window bays centered in both the front and rear walls. On the left a passage led from the main entertaining space, past a chamber to the connecting arm. The left wing contained two bedrooms, whose fireplaces shared a central chimney. The right entertaining space led directly into a chamber. A connecting arm attached the chamber to the service wing. The right wing housed the kitchen and the ironing room. There was no second floor included in this plan, but a stairway is faintly etched on the far right chamber.\textsuperscript{103}

All of these houses were typical of architectural expressions popular in Virginia during the late eighteenth


and early nineteenth centuries. During this period, individuals experimented with geometric planning which resulted in new shapes and configurations in architecture. Skipwith and his relatives disassembled the traditional two-story Georgian house to create broad architectural lengths that made formal and impressive design statements. The plans indicate that friends and families shared and utilized the same architectural ideas.\textsuperscript{104} In the end, however, the Skipwiths abandoned these designs for a very conventional exterior, while incorporating new specialized room arrangements on the interior.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig9.png}
\caption{Prestwould Mansion, landside view.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{104}Conversation with Mark Wenger, March 23, 1988.
In 1794 the Skipwiths contracted Jacob Shelor to build them a two story, double-pile house with a basement. Constructed of Ashlar stone rather than the customary brick, the exterior was the traditional square that most Virginians found familiar and preferred. The interior reflected changes in attitudes toward entertainment and family space that had been gaining popularity in England for the last half of the century.105

The first floor had four heated rooms divided by two unheated central rooms.106 Peyton Skipwith's 1805 inventory listed the first floor rooms as the "Drawing Room," the "Saloon," the "Hall," the "Dining Room," the "Parlour," and the "Bedchamber." The treatment of the saloon and hall which made up the central section of the house took the concept of the eighteenth-century hall to its logical conclusion. In the eighteenth century the hall became a place where the family spent a great deal of time, but it was also an area reserved for public use. By placing the partition in that central space and creating two rooms, the Skipwiths were able to use the saloon for private family


106These rooms were probably heated by stoves that were vented through a window. Such stoves were popular in England and were used at the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg.
functions, yet retain the public formality of the hall. This modification follows very closely the attitude in England where the saloon had lost much of its importance as the "formal hub of house" and had become an entertainment space more equal with other rooms in the house.¹⁰⁷

Similarly, the second floor speaks of this desire to find a private space for the family. That floor included a large central lobby, with four main bedrooms at each corner and two smaller rooms along the northwest wall. The large size of the lobby indicated that it was intended for more than circulation. It was an area where the family could gather for private entertainment. This movement by the family to the second floor for privacy became a typical pattern in nineteenth-century Virginia. The house was completed by a cellar with finished molding in three of the rooms, indicating servants' quarters.¹⁰⁸


Fig. 10. Architectural drawings of Prestwould. Adapted from drawings in the Prestwould Preservation Report. Names taken from 1805 inventory of Peyton Skipwith and arranged according to architectural report by Willie Graham (see footnote 96).
The specialized use of space found within Prestwould Mansion is indicative of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century British architecture. Introduction of new room names and new social spaces suggests the family's need to create new entertainment spaces. As entertainment changed over the decades, the old arrangement of the formal house became inadequate. Larger spaces were needed for assemblies, but the hall was unacceptable because it was too close to the front door and a reminder of when unsophisticated tenants were invited into the house. Many English houses began to develop a series of communal rooms exclusive of the hall and all running into each other to create an entertainment circuit. These reception rooms were usually arranged in a circle around a central staircase.¹⁰⁹

Although the design of Prestwould's first floor includes the hall and a chamber, it is not hard to envision that the Skipwiths were trying to create a similar entertainment circuit. Such specialization of rooms and spaces allowed for a house to have different functions. It provided expanded privacy and independence. Entertainment spaces could be sectioned off to meet the needs of the family at any particular time.¹¹⁰

So much emphasis on entertainment and style certainly contradicts Lewis's thesis that Virginians cared nothing for

the trappings of wealth and success. The attention that the Skipwiths and other Virginians lavished on their environment suggests that Americans were very concerned about the impression their houses made on their guests and neighbors. That such a fundamental change in social vision should be expressed in the architecture of the nether regions of Southside Virginia may appear puzzling, but it is important to remember that as late as 1786 Jean Skipwith had been living in England. She was instrumental in the planning that took place in the building of Prestwould. Helen Skipwith gave all of the credit for creating Prestwould to her mother in a letter to Humberston Skipwith's second wife, Lelia. "It is with unmingled pleasure that we take you to our hearts," Helen Skipwith wrote, "not merely as the successor to our Mother in a home created by herself - and fondly cherished to her latest hour."\(^{111}\)

In 1797 the Skipwiths were paying their carpenters, and the house was near completion. By 1800 the Skipwiths had created a house that was described by one visitor as equal to the "Presidents [house] in the City of Washington." They now were firmly settled into a home, designed both for the comfort of their family and the entertainment of their

\(^{111}\)Helen Skipwith Coles to Lelia Skipwith, March 25, 1830, Skipwith Papers, Mss1 Sk366a5, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.
Unfortunately, only a few letters survive that document how Prestwould's guests were entertained.

The Kennons, cousins to Peyton Skipwith, spent quite a bit of time socializing at Prestwould. Elizabeth Kennon often sent her daughter Sally to enjoy the company of Helen and Selina Skipwith. Sally Kennon gives a glimpse of a Prestwould dinner party held in honor of her engagement to Captain Sinclair.

This day fortnight we all, that is Mama, George, Reamus, Captain Sinclair, John, and Hugh Nelson, Blair Burwell and your humble servant; dined at Prestwould, and you may depend on it we had everything in style; the invitation was on Captain Sinclairs account; as she [Lady Skipwith] had seen him a few days before, at Major Nelsons, and was delighted with him that she wished to become better acquainted with her new nephew elect; and consequently she exerted herself to have every thing that was delightful [sic], and we spent a most charming day; she has really I think lost a great deal of her accustomed stiffness, and unbends most surprisingly; your name was mentioned in the course of conservation, and she again expressed a great wish to become acquainted with you; so you must positively come over, if it is

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112 Receipt to Mr. Young from P. Skipwith for use of slaves, August 24, 1797, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Found.; Receipt from John Hill, to P. Skipwith, Jan 6, 1797, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Found.; Wade Hampton to Aaron Burr, October 25, 1800, Skipwith Papers, 1898.55.7-MSC8, Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia.

113 Sally Kennon to Ellen Mordecai, August 2, 1809, VMHB, XXXII, (1924), 81; Elizabeth Kennon to Rachel Mordecai, September 29, 1809, VMHB, XXXII (1924), 83; E. Kennon to J. Skipwith, November, 1810, Skipwith Papers, Box VIII, fol. 97, Swem Library.
The only other description to survive concerns the wedding of Tucker Coles to Helen Skipwith. Tucker's mother, Rebecca Coles describes the wedding dinner given at Prestwould.

We did not enter the dining room until candle light when, instead of meat and vegetables, the table was covered with artificial flowers, picture, oranges, sugar candy, nuts, wine, and silver vases of hot water to set plates on. We took our seats and found a piece of bread wrapped up in a nice napkin, and a gold spoon and silver knife and fork by the side of all our plates. Presently they brought from the next room soup in plates for everybody; then the plates were changed and we all had a piece of turkey and one vegetable and so continued until the plates were changed fifteen times for the meat course and twelve times for the desert.\textsuperscript{115}

Peyton and Jean Skipwith met and married during a period when family structure and social relationships were changing. Their marriage reflected a movement away from an institution based on authority to one based on friendship. Working together, they built a home designed to reflect their position and status in the new republic. During the time they were building Prestwould, they were also restructuring the relationships they had with their children in ways that reflected new republican ideologies.

\textsuperscript{114}S. Kennon to E. Mordecai, July 9, 1809, \textit{VMHB}, XXXI, (1923), 311-312.

\textsuperscript{115}Cited in Elizabeth Langhorne, et. al., \textit{A Virginia Family}, 66-67. The meal described is modeled on the French style of cuisine and considered very elegant dining in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.
CHAPTER II
RAISING LITTLE REPUBLICANS

Peyton and Jean Skipwith spent 17 years together, during which they raised their family and managed their estate. In 1805 Peyton Skipwith died, leaving Jean Skipwith alone to administer the estate and continue the education of their children. Although Jean's stepchildren were grown and on their own, her own children ranged in ages from; Helen, 16, Humberston, 14, Selina 12, and Horatio, 11. She was 57 years old and would live another 21 years. In that time she increased the wealth of the estate, completed the education of three of her children, and launched them into the world. During the same month of her husband's death, her youngest son, Horatio died. She described the events of that month in a straight-forward manner to Peyton's nephew, Peyton Short. She writes, "On the 11th of that month [October] your Uncle after a tedious indisposition, bid adieu to all the bustle and toil of a more than commonly active life.---And in the course of the same month his darling child our youngest son followed him to the grave."116

116J. Skipwith to Peyton Short, December 17, 1805, Box VIII, fol. 31, Skipwith Papers, Swem Library.
In the long span of years from 1788 to 1836 that the Skipwiths raised their family together or singly, the world changed both politically and socially. Republican and Federalist debated what type of government the nation should have. Critics attacked the indulgence of luxuries and warned women that their characters would determine their children's future. Educators stressed education for women, and new types of schools developed exclusively for women. In the midst of this turbulence the Skipwith children were educated, married, and began careers of their own.\textsuperscript{117}

"My Beloved little Family"

Affection and domestic bliss were balanced and controlled in the eighteenth century, according to Jan Lewis. The activity of the outside world was balanced by the tranquility of the domestic realm. Upper class Virginians' private lives were very similar to those of their English counterparts. The excitement of public activities occupied a substantial portion of a man's time, but he looked to home for the peace and tranquility missing in the outside world. Parents demonstrated affection to their children through giving gifts, and children

reciprocated by giving obedience. Yet no Virginian expected to obtain all his happiness at home.118

Lewis found this pattern changing in the nineteenth century. In many Virginia planters' letters she detected an absorption with the home and familial bonds. Parents now demonstrated affection through their emotions, leaving their children confused and unsure about how to reciprocate. "Both men and women hoped for domestic happiness, feelings of pleasure, enjoyed at home, created by one's family." Men and women, however, interpreted domestic happiness differently. Men expected their happiness to be supplied by their wives. Women expected to find fulfillment by creating peace and happiness in their families.119 Just as the political world was in transition during the early republic, so was the American family. Changes were taking place in all aspects of family relationships.

In many ways the relationship between the Skipwiths and their children reflect a transition between eighteenth-century family values and nineteenth-century values. Peyton Skipwith's relationship with his older children from his first marriage, Grey Skipwith and Lelia Skipwith Carter Tucker, resembled more closely the traditional eighteenth-century model. Grey Skipwith was sent at an early age to England for his education. Lelia was kept secure in her

119Ibid., 203.
father's love by a steady supply of gifts. Her early letters are full of thanks for small gifts or favors that Peyton Skipwith had sent her.\textsuperscript{120}

After the marriage of Peyton and Jean Skipwith the relationship between parent and child resembled those typical of the nineteenth century. Peyton, Jr. was nine when his father remarried and since his mother, Anne, died when he was an infant, Jean Skipwith was the only mother he knew. Peyton expressed satisfaction in the relationship between his son and second wife. He wrote to St. George Tucker that he was "better pleased with Peyton, Jr.'s acquirements, in respect to his education, since a more intimate acquaintance, which has taken place this visit, than formerly; we are now upon the cosey, friendly footing that all fathers & sons should be, and for this pleasure I am indebted to his mother, who by degrees has led him on to read to her and converse on various subjects without reserve."\textsuperscript{121}

Peyton Skipwith, Jr., declared his own feelings toward his stepmother after the death of his father. He wrote that he felt "the affection of a Son" toward Jean Skipwith and

\textsuperscript{120}Grey Skipwith to P. Skipwith, July 28, 1785, Skipwith Papers, Box II, fol. 63, Swem Library; L. Skipwith to P. Skipwith, April 4, 1780, Skipwith Papers, MS.C8, Valentine Museum; Lillia Carter to P. Skipwith, June 14, 1784, Skipwith Papers, Mss1 Sk366a8, Virginia Historical Society.

\textsuperscript{121}P. Skipwith to St. G. Tucker, October 23, 1796, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Foundation.
loved her "as a mother." He also assured her that he loved her children "as Brothers and Sisters" and promised to assist them in any way possible. Whether this was a genuine statement of affection or merely a convention of speech is impossible to determine, but on the surface, the relationship between Jean Skipwith and Peyton Skipwith, Jr., was good.122

Stepmothers were common in many Virginia families throughout the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. Typically, there were examples of real affection as well as hostility between stepmothers and children. According to Peyton Skipwith, Jr.'s letter, Jean Skipwith was well-liked by her stepchildren. There is no evidence from her children or stepchildren to indicate she was not a loving mother or that they did not love her. The writings of others send a mixed message.123

Sally Kennon, cousin to the Skipwiths, often wrote to her friend Ellen Mordecai of the happenings in Mecklenburg County and her escapades with her cousin Helen Skipwith. She spoke glowingly of Helen and her sister, Selina Skipwith, but the words she reserved for Jean Skipwith were often negative. Sally Kennon wrote, "Nancy Nelson will be at the races and Helen Skipwith says that she will endeavor

122 P. Skipwith, Jr. to Jean Skipwith, November 7, 1805, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Found.

to prevail on her incorrigible mother to let her also come over to see me at that time; but I do not much expect she will . . ." At another time she referred to Jean Skipwith with satirical emphasis as "my Lady Marchioness." However, at a later meeting, Sally Kennon felt that Jean Skipwith had lost some of her "accustomed Stiff[ness]." To a young girl Jean Skipwith seemed distant and autocratic.124

St. George Tucker held a similar attitude toward Jean Skipwith. He was convinced that Jean's affection toward her stepchildren was not the same she had toward her own children. He felt Lady Skipwith tried to supplant the interests of Peyton Skipwith's children by his first marriage in favor of her own children. Tucker first formulated these feelings when Peyton Skipwith sent a version of his will to Tucker in order to obtain his legal advice. Tucker was shocked at the small legacy, £1000, that Skipwith had left to Lelia Skipwith Tucker and informed Skipwith of his feelings. Peyton Skipwith wrote back to Tucker, thanked him for awakening Skipwith to the injustice he was about to commit against his daughter, and promised to alter his will accordingly. After Peyton Skipwith's death, Tucker found confirmation of his suspicions when Skipwith's

124S. Kennon to E. Mordecai, January 15, 1807, VMHB, XXXI (1923), No. 3, 188-189; S. Kennon to E. Mordecai, July 9, 1809, VMHB, XXXI (1923), No. 4, 311-312.
will was probated. Peyton left Lelia $2000.00 and 3 slaves which were already in her possession.\footnote{St. G. Tucker to J. Skipwith, January 4, 1806, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Found.; St. G. Tucker to J. Skipwith, January 24, 1806, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Found.; P. Skipwith's Will, Mecklenburg County, August 5, 1805, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Box XXV, fol. 4, Swem Library.}

St. George Tucker wrote two versions of the same letter to Jean Skipwith detailing his concerns and outrage over Peyton Skipwith's will. The harsher version, which he chose not to send, contained veiled accusations that Jean Skipwith had been the cause of a change in Lelia's inheritance. In the harsher version he concluded,

> After my receipt of such a Letter you may not improperly suppose, Madam, that the perusal of Sir Peyton's will, in which the former Legacy to his daughter was frittered down to little more than half, produced equal Surprise and disappointment on my part, as Gil-Blas felt, when after being assured by the notary that he was not forgotten, he was made acquainted with the Particulars of his Masters' (the Licentiatte Sedillo's) will. But this was not the case. In spite of that Letter - in spite of the Joy that I have seen Sir Peyton express at the Sight of his Daughter, and the tears that I have seen fall from his cheek on parting with her, I had a presentiment that the same cause which had first brought a deep sleep upon his sense of Justice towards her, might again lull it into an everlasting slumber.\footnote{Ibid.}

St. George Tucker felt that Jean Skipwith was the "cause" that "lulled" Peyton Skipwith's "sense of Justice" to sleep.

Cornelia Greene Skipwith, wife of Peyton Skipwith, Jr., had a different vision of Lady Skipwith. Cornelia Skipwith
was able to break through Jean Skipwith's "stiffness" and find a woman who loved her family deeply. She felt that Jean Skipwith's only fault was the pride which prevented her from demonstrating her love. In a letter to St. George Tucker she tried to convince her brother-in-law that Lady Skipwith was worthy of his affections.

This is the month in which my dearest Lady Skipwith was to have visited Lelia, I hope ere this she is with you, for where ever she can go, she carries conviction strong - of her most dignified worth. And when a greater familiarity that shall vanquish the present prejudices which a succession of untoward events and unexplained misunderstandings have enveloped with the breast of you my much respected and beloved Brother, you will admire, the strength of her mind, the correct principles of her heart and to my mind that qualification which adds a thousand fold to her good qualities, a candour that scorns the smallest dissimulation of her opinions. Mine is a temper naturally obstinate, I went under her roof with the strongest prejudices - And did soon find there were but few points in her character in which I was not entirely mistaken, and the secret of prejudices against her is this point of her character, I think, She is too proud to solicit the affections of those whose hearts and minds she herself loves and would willingly be beloved by - too many professions are sometimes a proof of dissimulation but the honest feelings of the heart, it is no discredit on some occasions to give utterance to, it is in this she fails - she feels keenly but conceives all expressions of them a vain and useless boast.\textsuperscript{127}

Both Peyton and Jean Skipwith were products of the eighteenth century, operating as parents in the changing world of the early republic. Peyton Skipwith followed the

\textsuperscript{127}Cornelia Skipwith to St. G. Tucker, April 24, 1804, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Found.
traditional eighteenth-century patterns in the treatment of his older children, but began to change his attitudes with his younger children. Jean Skipwith clung to her eighteenth-century formality, while in a characteristically nineteenth-century manner, she actively participated in the education of her stepson. This change in attitude is understandable when it is remembered that Jean was influenced by the Scottish Enlightenment that served as the foundation for many American republican writings. In the early nineteenth century education became a focal point for educators and parents. It quickly became a major concern for every "true" republican.

"Make Choice of a School"

Implicit in republican ideology was the belief that in order to preserve the republic, its citizens would have to be educated. Suddenly, the strength of the republic resided in the quality of every individual's education, whether man or woman, parent or child. In the eighteenth century the standard education of a wealthy planter's son included a few years in England, but by the early nineteenth century a shift in educational philosophy kept sons within their own country. Girls were no longer instructed only in the domestic arts. Both parents become involved in the

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education of their children while the standard educational instructions included learning from the example of virtuous parents. The Skipwiths' children represent the transition in education from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. The older children from the first marriage were educated in the traditional eighteenth-century fashion. Peyton, Jr., and the children from the second marriage were instructed according to nineteenth-century prescriptions.

Grey Skipwith was educated in an eighteenth-century manner. By July 1785 Grey, then age 14, was enrolled at "Mr. Cotton's School" in England where he had become the "third boy" in the class. In December 1785 Grey wrote to his father that he was now the second boy in the school and that his guardian in England, Mr. Grymes, proposed to send him to Eton in August. Although the exact date Grey began his studies at Eton is unknown, he resided there from 1788 to 1790. Grey Skipwith would never returned to live in the United States. Perhaps an inheritance of an English estate combined with his English education made him feel more at home in England than in Virginia.

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130 G. Skipwith to P. Skipwith, July 28, 1785, Skipwith Papers, Box II, fol. 63, Swem Library; G. Skipwith to P. Skipwith, December 15, 1785, Skipwith Papers, Box II, fol. 81, Swem Library; G. Skipwith to P. Skipwith, June 26, 1794, (typed transcript), Prestwould Found.
Peyton Skipwith, Jr., and Humberston Skipwith were both educated in the United States. All that survives concerning Humberston Skipwith's education is that he attended Princeton and was "educated for no purpose."

Peyton Skipwith, Jr., was educated at the College of William and Mary. Both Princeton and William and Mary had curriculums established by Scottish trained scholars and were fashioned after the Scottish model of education which greatly influenced American republican thinkers. Peyton discussed with his son-in-law, St. George Tucker, at great length his desires for Peyton, Jr.'s education. This outpouring of parental advice made it easy to compare Peyton Skipwith, Jr.'s experiences with historians' descriptions of Republican education for boys.

Using only contemporary letters, Historian Jan Lewis found that many planters rejected commercial and mercantile pursuits as possible careers for their sons. Lewis cited two letters where the activities of a merchant were reported to cause indolence and extravagance. Instead of mercantile pursuits fathers encouraged their sons to study law and medicine or at least to groom themselves for the virtuous

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life of the planter.133 If this was indeed the case, Peyton Skipwith decided to depart from the norm when he advised St. George Tucker on how he would like Peyton Skipwith, Jr., to be educated. Peyton Skipwith explained,

_It is my desire to bring my Son up to Business and I very sincerely wish I could find out the employment his natural bent inclines to. He wrote me some time ago that he desired to be bound to a Merchant, and to be bred to the business of one, but at present he is in no respect qualified for a Comping House, he writes a most intolerable hand and knows nothing of Arithmetick. If you find he has a mercantile turn, I wish him to be educated for the business Nature seems to have designed him. I ever thought it a misfortune to a Man to be bred a Gentleman, who Nature designed for a Shoemaker._134

Lewis also determined that many of the sons sent to college in the early nineteenth century spent more time gaming, drinking, and increasing their wardrobe than they did in study. Most letters from sons at college included the inevitable request for more money. Money was needed to make the correct impression on their peers. Few wrote for more money to purchase more books in an attempt to further their studies.135 In this aspect the Skipwith letters offer some proof that indeed, Peyton Skipwith, Jr., was not always bent over his books.

133Lewis, _Pursuit of Happiness_, 114-115.

134P. Skipwith to St. G. Tucker, February 20, 1795, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Found.

135Lewis, _Pursuit of Happiness_, 125-130.
In a series of letters to St. George Tucker, Peyton Skipwith spoke of the need to reform Peyton Skipwith, Jr., and influence him to take more interest in his studies. He recommended that Peyton Skipwith, Jr., use "frugality and unremitting attention to his studies." He hoped that Tucker could "bring about a reformation in him, that eventually will prove one of the comforts of my old age; Peyton's aversion to Books and study having long been the source of great uneasiness to me."\(^{136}\) Peyton found satisfaction in his son only after the boy had spent some time at Prestwould, where the influence of both parents was able to improve him. Jean Skipwith's instruction enhanced Peyton Skipwith, Jr's reading and socializing skill, while Peyton was able to make a more "intimate acquaintance" with his son.\(^{137}\)

The Skipwith men were not the only members of the family to enjoy an education. Lelia Skipwith's formal education is unknown, although she spoke French and read French translations of Hume.\(^{138}\) Helen and Selina Skipwith were educated in the traditional republican manner. The

\(^{136}\)P. Skipwith to St. G. Tucker, February 22, 1796, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Found.; P. Skipwith to St. G. Tucker, February 20, 1795, (typed transcript), Prestwould Found.

\(^{137}\)P. Skipwith to St. G. Tucker, October 23, 1796, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Found.

\(^{138}\)L. Skipwith to P. Skipwith, October 8 1781, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Found.
reasons for improvement in women's education between 1790 and 1830 involved both the recent political revolution and the impending industrial revolution. Linda Kerber explained that "the political revolution had been an act of faith. Believing as they did that republics rested on the virtue of their citizens, Revolutionary leaders had to believe not only that Americans of their own generation displayed that virtue, but that Americans of subsequent generations would continue to display the moral character that a republic required." Leaders looked to the home as a place of virtue and to mothers as the guardians of virtue. They promoted education for women in order to create responsible republican wives and mothers in marriage.

In October of 1800 Peyton and Jean Skipwith were prepared to venture to New York to place their daughters, Helen and Selina in school. The name of the school is unknown, but it was probably a girls' academy. Academies became very popular in the late 1780s in Philadelphia, New York, Boston, New Haven, and Medford. The academies usually offered traditional instruction in ornamental accomplishments as well as in the academic subjects of composition, history, and geography. How long Helen and

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140 W. Hampton to A. Burr, October 25, 1800, Skipwith Papers, 1898.55.7-MSC8, Valentine Museum.

Selina Skipwith remained in New York is unknown, but by 1803 Helen Skipwith was in Philadelphia waiting for her mother and stepbrother to take her back to Virginia. Earlier that year Jean Skipwith had searched for a governess, perhaps for her daughters or for her youngest son.\textsuperscript{142} Peyton and Jean Skipwith took seriously the education of all their children. Jean Skipwith felt it was important to monitor her children's education. Her personal library, totaling over 400 books, contained 31 titles of children's literature. Half of the these were "fiction, moral or didactic tales, written to instruct but also to amuse." The rest were essays, letters, or short pieces designed specifically to instruct. Whether Jean Skipwith committed so much energy to the education of her children because she felt it her duty as a republican mother cannot be determined. Many American leaders of educational reformers, particularly Benjamin Rush, were graduates of Edinburgh University and participants in the Scottish Enlightenment. It is possible that Jean developed her educational philosophy before she came to America, but whether the influence was Scottish or republican, the message was the same.\textsuperscript{143}

\textsuperscript{142}P. Skipwith, Jr. to St. G. Tucker, December 28, 1803, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Foundation; Unknown writer to J. Skipwith, February 26, 1803, Skipwith Papers, Box VII, fol. 93, Swem Library.

Education was intended to prepare children for marriage and careers. Just as republican notions affected education, these ideas also influenced the way in which parents approached their children's marriages and careers. Parents were suddenly allowing their children more freedom in these areas.

"My prospects my friend are at present flattering"

Parents in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries began to relinquish their right to decide whom their children would marry, even to the point of yielding the right to veto the child's choice. At the same time, children began to consider it their right to choose their own spouse, although many still conferred with friends and relatives before entering the bonds of matrimony. In addition, many daughters began to dispute the idea that every woman was destined for marriage. Although women still had few "career" opportunities, by the 1780s and 1790s many single women considered spinsterhood to be an honorable position that would not affect a woman's dignity or reputation.\textsuperscript{144}

It is unknown how Peyton Skipwith, Jr., and Humberston Skipwith decided on their brides. No comment made by either parents or children has survived. Lelia Skipwith informed

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{144} Norton, \textit{Liberty's Daughters}, 229-230, 240.
her father of her marriage to George Carter, but Peyton Skipwith was not present at the wedding. After George Carter's death, Lelia married St. George Tucker. Tucker sent a letter, informing Peyton Skipwith that he was marrying Lelia. Unfortunately, Peyton and Jean Skipwith's response was not recorded.143

Helen and Selina Skipwith's romantic escapades do allow a glimpse of how courtship and romance progressed at Prestwould. Both became eligible for marriage after their father's death, leaving their mother to be their primary advisor in this area. Although Jean Skipwith allowed her daughters to choose their own spouses, she did not give up the right to influence strongly their decisions. Elizabeth Kennon sent congratulations to Jean Skipwith on the marriage of Helen Skipwith to Tucker Coles in 1810. Elizabeth Kennon's letter reveals Jean Skipwith's attitude toward the marriage:

Permit me with all the sincerity my heart is capable of to [wish] that the marriage which has taken place in your family (altho I know it is not at present pleasing to you) may be productive of real happiness to you; and that Mr. Coles conduct in every instance, may convince you he was actuated by sincere affection when he addressed your sweet Helen, and that mercenary motives had no influence over him: I have endeavoured since I came here, to discover in what estimation he is held by his acquaintances, and the world in general: and it is with unfeigned pleasure, I have

143L. (Skipwith) Carter to P. Skipwith, June 14, 1784, Mss155k366a8, Virginia Historical Society; St. G. Tucker to P. Skipwith, March 12, 1791, typed transcript, Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Foundation.
it in my power to tell you, that he is universally well spoken of, and appears to be esteem'd, and respect'd, by all [smudged] who know him: and I have never heard the smallest allusion to the slur in his family, relative to Mr. Jeffers. I therefore hope it is without foundation, and but little heard of, or believed.\footnote{E. Kennon to J. Skipwith, January 9, 1810, Skipwith Papers, Mss1 Sk366a15, Virginia Historical Society.}

Evidently there was controversy surrounding this match. Jean Skipwith felt Tucker Coles' interest in Helen Skipwith included an interest in her money. Although he had not won Jean Skipwith's approval, Tucker Coles had Helen Skipwith's, and in the early Republic that was all that was needed. Elizabeth Kennon's daughter, Sally Kennon Sinclair, gave strong evidence as to why Helen Skipwith might have ignored all her mother's objections to the match. Sally describes Tucker Coles as "an extremely clever young man" who she thought was "very handsome."\footnote{Mrs. Arthur Sinclair to E. Mordecai, February 24, 1810, \textit{VMHB} XXXII, (1924), 173.}

In the same letter Sally Kennon Sinclair also mentioned Selina Skipwith, describing her as "one of the finest women I know."\footnote{Ibid.} Her enthusiasm might have been influenced by the fact that her brother, Beverly Kennon, was courting Selina. Beverly Kennon was a cousin to the Skipwiths and served as a midshipman in the United States Navy. No letters survive to indicate what ended the relationship between Selina and Beverly, but the next mention of her
romantic conquests occurred 12 years later and did not include him. At the age of 29, Selina married John Coles who was the brother of Tucker Coles. The new climate that allowed women to wait, or refuse marriage completely, must have made it easier for Selina to wait until she was older to marry. In addition, the example her mother set, by waiting to marry until she was 40, could also have been an influence.\textsuperscript{149}

Parents not only wished a successful marriage for their children, they also hoped for a successful career. Parents wanted a better life for their children than they had enjoyed themselves. Jan Lewis determined that few parents accomplished this. She found that planters' sons in the early nineteenth century were ill equipped to succeed in the changing economic world they had inherited. She felt that the blame for their inadequacies rested in their parents' hands. Eighteenth-century parents spoiled their children's success by trying to give their children independence instead of teaching them to earn it. Jan Lewis described the sons of the Early Republic as "charming yet passive, expecting independence to be given instead of earned"; they were "not prepared for the economic decline that would wither their region in the decades after the Revolution." She stated that they had been taught that commerce and mercantile pursuits were vices and so "clung" to "planting

\textsuperscript{149}Langhorne, et. al., \textit{Virginia Family}, 68-69.
and the professions of law and medicine and to the notions that extolled those occupations as the most virtuous." It was their rejection of entrepreneurial pursuits that doomed them to failure. Those who succeeded did so by moving west and starting a new economic future.150

One problem with Lewis's thesis is that although an individual might call himself a "planter," he might in reality be more. The Skipwith sons do not fit into her pattern and perhaps represent a very different outlook that was emerging in the Southside. Peyton Skipwith made certain that his sons by his first marriage were financially settled before his death. He did this more to ensure that Prestwould would go to his wife and second family than to give his first-born sons their independence. Sir Peyton had stressed throughout his sons' educations the message that they should find a career in which they could succeed rather than groom themselves to become gentlemen.151

Peyton Skipwith, Jr., did follow the pattern of many a Virginian when he moved west and south upon reaching adulthood. He moved to Georgia in 1802 and thought his "prospects" most "flattering." In April of 1802 he married Cornelia Greene. Cornelia was the daughter of Caty Green Miller, who was a part owner of Eli Whitney's cotton gin.


151P. Skipwith to St. G. Tucker, February 20, 1795, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Found.
It is not surprising that one of the crops Peyton, Jr., cultivated was cotton. The other crop he raised was corn. Although Peyton, Jr., was still making his living by farming, he was diversifying.\textsuperscript{152}

Peyton Skipwith, Jr., may have participated in land speculation as well. A letter to St. George Tucker in 1802 expressed shock and anger toward the proceedings of Jefferson's government. Skipwith may well have been angry over the federal government's involvement in the Yazoo Fraud, a land scheme that took place in Georgia. Skipwith's business partner and step-father-in-law, Phineas Miller, was deeply involved in the land scheme, as was his mother-in-law. Skipwith wrote,

\begin{quote}
The late appointments in this State have been degrading to the national character, and we are seriously alarmed for the consequences; property has already depreciated in value...Alarmed at the present state of our country I feel quite at a loss how to proceed in the management of that particular kind of property which I am at present possessed of: I feel doubtful whether any property will long be safe in the United States.\textsuperscript{153}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{152}Peyton Skipwith, Jr. to St. G. Tucker, April 7, 1802, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Foundation; P. Skipwith, Jr. to St. G. Tucker, March 16, 1802, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Foundation; John F. Stegeman and Janet A. Stegeman, \textit{CATY: a Biography of Catherine Littlefield Greene}, (Athens, Georgia, 1985), 161-166.

\textsuperscript{153}Peyton Skipwith, Jr. to St. George Tucker, April 7, 1802, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Foundation; Peyton Skipwith, Jr. to St. George Tucker, March 16, 1802, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Foundation; Peyton Skipwith, Jr. to St. George Tucker, November 7, 1804, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Foundation; George Brown Tindall, \textit{America: a
Peyton Skipwith, Jr., was more than the stereotypical, ineffectual tobacco planter Lewis described. He was a respected businessman and a county court judge. Whether he achieved the success that Lewis found elusive for most Virginian raised in the Early Republic is unknown. Peyton Skipwith, Jr., died on October 2, 1808, at age 29, leaving behind two sons and questions as to his potential for success unanswered.154

Humberston Skipwith's career reveals another problem with Lewis's thesis. Relying solely on an individual's description of his own circumstances can be misleading. Humberston Skipwith described his career as "agricultural, exclusively." In reality, he was also a landlord. He owned improved rental property in Norfolk which he valued at between $20,000 and $25,000. He may also have owned some stock since his mother invested heavily in bonds, and he stated that he owned "50 & 60,000 dollars at interest & on deposit." He did not merely rely on his agricultural pursuits to support him, but as his father had done, diversified his financial interests. Humberston exemplifies Wood's description of a republican striving to accumulate

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154 George N. Skipwith to J. Skipwith, June 20, 1809, Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Foundation; J. F. Stegeman and J. A. Stegeman, Caty, 187, 193.
wealth and status while proclaiming his humble, or at least land-based, origins.\textsuperscript{155}

Neither Peyton Skipwith, Jr., nor Humberston Skipwith lost the enterprising spirit that had characterized their father's generation. Although they styled themselves as gentleman planters, they did not rely exclusively on agriculture to support themselves. Although Lewis found that their contemporaries were warned against the vices of commerce and mercantilism, the Skipwith boys were never so indoctrinated. Peyton Skipwith encouraged his sons to follow whatever profession they felt naturally inclined toward. It is doubtful that Skipwith was unique. In fact, St. George Tucker encouraged self-reliance and entrepreneurial skills in his own sons during the same period. Such evidence seems to follow closely the findings of the revisionist historians. Agricultural America was a country deeply involved in commercial activity.\textsuperscript{156}

The Skipwiths' consumption patterns also corroborate the idea that republican America was producing high quality manufactured goods. Once again Lewis's thesis of anti-luxury and anti-commerce is refuted by the historical

\textsuperscript{155}Humberston Skipwith to Fulwar Skipwith, December 11, 1829, (typed transcript), \textit{VMHB}, XXXV, (1968), 197-198; Langhorne, et. al., 68; Wood, \textit{Creation of the American Republic}, 73-75.

\textsuperscript{156}P. Skipwith to St. G. Tucker, February 20, 1795, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Found.; Lewis, \textit{Pursuit of Happiness}, 154.
reality of the Skipwith family. Local manufactures figured significantly in the furnishing of Prestwound.

"Articles we would have of a very sufficient, good quality"

Contemporary republican writings that dealt with the family often included the definition of virtue. These writings were aimed at women and instructed them to behave virtuously and to monitor their families' morals. Fashion and consumption of luxuries during and after the Revolution became targets of republican rhetoric. Authors warned the American woman that her country could not be truly independent if women continued to be dependent on British fashion and taste. Female qualities even became attached to the concept of vice during this period, when writers equated luxury and corruption with effeminacy and England. Hated "luxury" became interchangeable with "English Goods," and "Patriotism" was exhibited by the purchase of "American Goods."\textsuperscript{157}

Why did republican authors feel a need to wage this debate over luxury and consumption? Were they reacting to an increase in consumption of luxury items after the

Revolutionary War? Were they reacting to the desire of American merchants to supplant their British counterparts? Did American citizens try to be "self-reliant" republicans, or were such ideas merely political rhetoric? The consumption patterns of the Skipwith family from 1771 to 1826 offer partial answers to these questions.

A striking feature of the Skipwiths' consumption pattern over the long term was the small amount—even the absence—of English goods. From 1772 to 1795, the Skipwiths made no purchase directly from England. After 1795, they bought English goods only when they needed luxury items that were not readily manufactured in the United States. The Skipwiths bought English window glass, paint, wallpaper, carpet, globes, gilt mirrors, prints, and an occasional small piece of mahogany furniture. Their largest consumption of goods bought directly from England took place during the period they were building Prestwould. After 1805, direct English purchases were very rare, except for the occasional purchase of a book and the ordering of a carpet in 1816.\textsuperscript{158}

Such a pattern of consumption, however, does not necessarily indicate that the Skipwiths were consciously trying to limit their intake of English products. They purchased many items from merchants in Richmond and

\textsuperscript{158}Invoices from 1771 to 1826 in the Skipwith Papers, Box I to Box 25, Swem Library.
Petersburg, Virginia, and these merchants could very easily have been carrying imported English goods. Republicans who consciously chose to avoid English goods usually cultivated a relationship with a French merchant or agent. This was not the case with the Skipwiths; nonetheless, the fact that the majority of their luxury items were purchased in the United States is significant.\textsuperscript{39}

Convenience motivated the Skipwiths to purchase American goods. It was easier to deal with American tradesmen for goods than to go through the long process of buying goods from England. For example, the majority of the Skipwiths' fabric and textile items were purchased from American merchants. Although merchants often stocked a large supply of foreign textiles, wealthy planters usually purchased their fabrics directly from English factors. The Skipwiths' reliance on American merchants indicates that the combination of low tobacco prices and difficulties in transportation made it more convenient and economical to purchase from a middleman. No receipts for china survive, but the 1791 inventory of Elm Hill listed a large supply of china and glassware which might explain this omission. Other items which were bought through American merchants, but may not have been of American manufacture included 2 wine coolers, a writing desk, a set of knives and forks, a

yew tree tea chest, and a glass dessert service. Additional purchases of glassware exist, but the merchants' place of business cannot be identified.\textsuperscript{160}

Almost all the furniture purchased by the Skipwiths was of American origin. Most of the cabinetmakers were Virginians or at least southern. The Skipwiths went north only for a gilt mirror. Samuel White of Petersburg was the cabinetmaker that Peyton and Jean utilized the most. He furnished bookcases, beds, tables, chairs, a "french sophy," and numerous mahogany pieces. Humberston Skipwith favored Norfolk cabinetmakers, buying heavily from Joshua Moore and James Woodward. He also purchased several items from Baltimore. This pattern not only indicates that it was more convenient to purchase furniture locally, but also that American furniture equaled European goods in quality. Given their wealth and tastes, the Skipwiths would not have furnished their new house with inferior items, especially with the British connection Lady Skipwith brought to the marriage. The majority of Prestwould's furniture, however, came from America.\textsuperscript{161}

\textsuperscript{160}Invoices 1771 to 1826, Skipwith Papers, Box I-XXV, Swem Library; T.H. Breen, "An Empire of Goods: The Anglicization of Colonial America, 1690-1776," \textit{Journal of British Studies}, (October 1986), 491-492; Conversation with Linda Baumgarten, Curator of Textiles, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, March 24, 1988; Elm Hill Inventory, January 1, 1791, (typed transcript), Skipwith Papers, Prestwould Foundation.

\textsuperscript{161}Invoices 1771 to 1826, Skipwith Papers, Box I-XXV, Swem Library.
Fig. 12. American "comforts."
(photos by author)

Republicans did not lead lives of spartan thrift and simplicity. British luxuries might be scorned, but "comforts" were items that all republicans deserved. The word "comfort" came into use during the republican years. "Luxuries conjured up an aristocratic economy of elite consumption and plebeian toil while necessities brought to mind the penury of age-old limits. Comforts, on the other hand, could be generally aimed at and enjoyed without harm to others."162 Although the Skipwiths occasionally succumbed to English "luxuries," they usually bought

162 Appleby, *Capitalism*, 90.
American "comforts." English luxuries purchased by the Skipwiths included window glass, wallpaper, paint, prints, Brussel carpets, gilt mirrors, mahogany cheese tray, mahogany celleret, mahogany oval wine cooler, medicine chest, paper, books, music sheets, and one order for fabric (plains and cottons). American comforts consisted of tent bedsteads, dining tables, card tables, mahogany chairs, side boards, Philadelphia windsor chairs, tea chests, looking glasses, greek rush chairs, sofas, and wash stands.\textsuperscript{163}

\textbf{Fig. 12} English "luxuries."
(photos by author)

\textsuperscript{163}Invoices 1771 to 1826, Skipwith Papers, Box I-XXV, Swem Library.
Just as Jean Skipwith influenced the building of Prestwould, her personality shaped the invoices. From 1771 until 1788 the invoices are sporadic and few. The Revolutionary War may have caused the loss of a few, but the invoices do not become regular until after the 1788 marriage of Jean and Peyton. In addition, several receipts were received by Jean Skipwith while she was single and living in England. She not only kept the receipts, but also transported them across the Atlantic when she returned to Virginia. Such action indicates an affinity for precise record keeping.¹⁶⁴

Most of Jean Skipwith's Scottish receipts were for books. Over her lifetime she compiled one of the largest American libraries of the period. Her holdings included 156 novels and tales; 33 volumes of poetry; 27 essays and periodicals; 8 dramas; and 4 items of miscellaneous literature; totalling 228 titles. In addition, there are 40 titles devoted to travel and geography; 36 to history and biography; 31 to children's literature; 17 to "how to books" or practical works; 12 to reference; and 6 to religion and theology.¹⁶⁵

Jean Skipwith's library was not the scholarly collection that her son-in-law, St. George Tucker possessed.

¹⁶⁴Invoices from 1771 to 1826, Skipwith Papers, Boxes 1 to 21, Swem Library.

Her library was heavily weighted toward fiction, the typical reading for women during this period. Interestingly, most of the works of fiction are by English women: "Maria Edgeworth (8 novels), Agnes Bennet (6), Regina Maria Roche (6), Jane West (6), Anna Maria Porter (5), Amelia Opie (5), and Fanny Burney (3)." Maria Edgeworth was a famous Anglo-Irish novelist, who like many contemporary writers, warned against reading novels full of passion that would cause a woman to neglect her duties to her family. Women were encouraged to read didactic novels. Presumably Maria Edgeworth felt her novels carried the right type of message to women. Jane West wrote on the progress of women through history. In addition, Jean Skipwith's library contained many history books. History was the prescribed scholarly field for women, since it did not strain the female mind too severely.166

Lady Jean Skipwith's buying slowed down around 1805. By this time Peyton Skipwith had died, and Jean Skipwith was 57 years old. At this advanced age her need for additional furnishings had decreased. In 1816, Humberston Skipwith achieved his majority, and the consumption of luxuries began to increase again. In 1819, several months after he married Sarah Nivison, Humberston Skipwith furnished his new home in Norfolk. Just as in 1797, when Peyton and Jean Skipwith began furnishing Prestwould, there was a drastic increase in

166Kerber, Women of the Republic, 24, 252, 23.
the purchase of furniture. Humberston and Sarah Skipwith bought only American goods. They patronized not only Norfolk tradesman, but also purchased the popular Baltimore painted furniture from the well-known shop of Hugh Finley.¹⁶⁷

What, then, does the Skipwith consumption pattern demonstrate? It shows that the Skipwiths were building and buying luxury items in the early republic. Yet, as Joyce Appleby has demonstrated, republicans were not adverse to the consumption of "comforts." No doubt in republican minds, comforts were synonymous with American goods. The items that the Skipwiths purchased from American merchants and artisans most certainly were considered household necessities by good republicans, especially those of the upper class.¹⁶⁸ The Skipwith records also demonstrate that there were alternatives to English goods available. It was easy to be a patriot for most items, even in Mecklenburg County. Only when purchasing luxury items not readily available in the United States did a "Republican" have a moral dilemma. For some the answer was to look for a foreign market other than England, but the Skipwiths did not feel this need. They were most likely not alone in their decision. The Skipwiths found that one advantage of living

¹⁶⁷Invoices 1805 to 1823, Skipwith Papers, Boxes I-XXV, Swem Library.

¹⁶⁸Appleby, Capitalism, 90; McCoy, Elusive Republic, 63-66.
under a Republican government was the freedom to pursue their own business interests and to get the best buy for their money.

In raising their family the Skipwiths followed many of the republican dictates. Their daughters as well as their sons were well educated. All their children chose when and whom they would marry. The Skipwith men forged successful and diversified careers for themselves. Prestwould was furnished with plenty of American "comforts" and only a few English "luxuries." Based on the revisionist historians' interpretation of republicanism there was nothing unusual about how the Skipwiths lived or raised their children. The Skipwiths' actions demonstrate that individuals living in republican America did not fear commerce or view all manufactured items as corrupt.
CONCLUSION

The Skipwith family exhibits many traits that have been described as typical in the early republic. Peyton and Jean shared a marriage that was based on friendship and equality. Jean Skipwith had shared almost equally in the responsibilities of building and maintaining her home and family. They educated their children according to contemporary fashion, in particular, stressing education for their daughters. Each child chose his or her own spouse, with only occasional advice from parents and friends. The Skipwiths' home reflected changes in entertainment spaces and republican attitudes toward status and display. Their consumption patterns also exhibited a growing reliance on American goods as commerce with England became more difficult and republican ideology stressed the purchase of American comforts.

One major way in which the Skipwiths differed from Lewis's descriptions of the republican family was their view that commerce was not a vice. They participated in the economy and consumed luxury items. The sons continued to plant as their father had, but they also participated in other economic endeavors. Because of these traits the family flourished economically.
Such behavior follows closely the revisionist historians' descriptions of republican lifestyle. Here is a family who combined the use of agriculture with the dynamic incentives of commerce. The Skipwiths actively participated in an expanding American economy. They filled their house with the fruits of American manufacturing. Commercial success was not considered a vice by upper class Virginians as long as the individual lived in a refined manner. If the Skipwiths were criticized by their contemporaries, it was for displays of haughtiness rather than for material wealth. The Skipwiths were operating in a society where republican ideas legitimized commerce and the consumption of comforts. The Skipwiths were therefore sharing similar characteristics with their neighbors when participating in their business enterprises. The Skipwiths only appear abnormal when compared to Lewis's description of Virginia republicans.169

The Skipwiths' experiences justify further research on Virginia families during the early republic. It is especially important to determine whether there are regional differences within the state of Virginia. Were the Skipwiths characteristic for the whole state of Virginia or only the more commercially progressive southside? Eventually it will be important to know how the southern republican experience compared with that of the North.

169Wood, Creation of the American Republic, 64-75; McCoy, Elusive Republic, 49-73; Pocock, Machiavellian Moment, 538-539; Appleby, Capitalism, 79-101.
Answers to such questions will not only illuminate the Republican Era, but may also expand our understanding of the antebellum era in American history.
APPENDIX B

Skipwith Purchases -- 1771 to 1826

This list has been compiled from invoices found in the Skipwith papers. In many instances the general nature of the purchase has been listed, but occasionally specific items have been directly copied from the original invoices and listed below. Original invoice spellings have been followed when used. Purchases made by Humberston Skipwith have been distinguished from other household purchases by an "H." Items sent to a "Mrs Skipwith" have also been identified by a "MRS SKP." It is probable that "Mrs Skipwith" refers to Sarah Nivison Skipwith, wife of Humberston.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>MERCHANT/MAKER: PLACE OF BUSINESS</th>
<th>ITEMS PURCHASED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1771</td>
<td>John Kentish: London</td>
<td>jewelry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Philip, John, &amp; Clark Palmer: London</td>
<td>fabric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chris Corral &amp; Dan Blackford: London</td>
<td>fabric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1772</td>
<td>Ind. Borris: unknown</td>
<td>shoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1776</td>
<td>Donald &amp; Stotts: Petersburg</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>MERCHANT/MAKER: PLACE OF BUSINESS</td>
<td>ITEMS PURCHASED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780</td>
<td>Alex Wylies: Dumfries</td>
<td>unknown</td>
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<tr>
<td>1787</td>
<td>Ballads Store: unknown</td>
<td>nails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>Stotts &amp; Donaldson: Petersburg</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mutter &amp; Brown: Virginia</td>
<td>tools</td>
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<td>Stotts &amp; Donaldson: Petersburg</td>
<td>hardware, shoes, copperplates</td>
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<td>Mutter &amp; Brown: Virginia</td>
<td>paper, bed tick, lancets</td>
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<td>Stotts &amp; Donaldson: Petersburg</td>
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<td>Stotts &amp; Donaldson: Petersburg</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Stotts &amp; Donaldson: Petersburg</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Warrington &amp; Keene: unknown</td>
<td>knife cases, backgammon table, shoes, tea kettle</td>
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<td>Wm Fenwick &amp; Co.: Richmond</td>
<td>fabric (cambrick)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Montgomery &amp; Surry: Richmond</td>
<td>fabric - linen, sheeting, calico</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thomas Fiveash: Suffolk</td>
<td>negro cloth, reim</td>
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<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
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<td>Wm Duncan: unknown</td>
<td>food</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Samuel White: Petersburg</td>
<td>tent bedstead</td>
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<td>1791</td>
<td>Henry Mann: unknown</td>
<td>furniture - easy chair, child's chair</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Samuel White: Petersburg</td>
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<td>Basil Rice: unknown</td>
<td>unknown</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Montgomery &amp; Henry: Richmond</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>cape &amp; articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>Boyce &amp; Co.: Richmond</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samuel Myers &amp; Brothers: Petersburg</td>
<td>tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minton Collins: Richmond</td>
<td>flowers &amp; vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boyce &amp; Co.: Richmond</td>
<td>food, 3 blankets, fabric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boyce &amp; Co.: Richmond</td>
<td>fabric, 2 wine coolers, man's fine beaver [torn]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samuel White: Petersburg</td>
<td>low chair, small medicine chest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>MERCHANT/MAKER: PLACE OF BUSINESS</td>
<td>ITEMS PURCHASED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1794</td>
<td>Birchett &amp; Co.: Petersburg</td>
<td>linen &amp; furniture calico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James Geddy: unknown</td>
<td>cleaning clock, clasps, knee buckles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>James Maury: Shipped from Liverpool</td>
<td>window glass, diamond to cut, putty sugar, 100 sacks of Liverpool lath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cooper Perkins &amp; Co.: Birmingham (via J. Maury)</td>
<td>hardware &amp; wallpaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796</td>
<td>Jn &amp; Wm Bell: Petersburg</td>
<td>paper, thread, food, sett of knives, and forks, fabric, 4 doz. woolen caps, negro cotton, blankets, combs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Edwards &amp; Penny: Liverpool (via J. Maury)</td>
<td>paint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797</td>
<td>Gracie &amp; Anderson: Petersburg</td>
<td>hooks, wrappers for nail, weeding hoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>David Ruth: unknown</td>
<td>2 doz. fan-backed scrowled chairs, 2 portic [?] settes, 1 settee, 6 small chairs, 1 child's chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jn &amp; Wm Bell: Petersburg</td>
<td>food, nail rods, gimblet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samuel White: Petersburg</td>
<td>dining table, wash stand, chair, high post bed, french sophy, square card table with drawer, wash stand, gothick bookcase, mahogany chairs, tent bedsteads - birch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798</td>
<td>Mitchell &amp; Gairdou: unknown</td>
<td>furniture calico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samuel White: Petersburg</td>
<td>tent bedstead w/pavilion top, high post bed-mahog, side board, work table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799</td>
<td>Ross &amp; Douglass: Petersburg</td>
<td>writing desk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DATE  MERCHANT/MAKER: PLACE OF BUSINESS  ITEMS PURCHASED

1799  Colzehoun Galewood & Co.: Petersburg
dressing box, lutestring, 2 sheepskins, skillet, morroco skin

1799  McGrury & Nelson: unknown
lutestring parasol, muslin

H.G. Boydill: London (via Dawes Stephenson & Co)
prints

W.M. Moore: unknown
1 doll, 1 windmill, medicinalls, pincushin, trifle box, 3 small toys

Stotts & Donaldson: Petersburg
flannel

Kent Luck & Kent: London (via D. & S.)
brussels carpet & boarder, keddr carpet, pr large gilt mirrors, mahog. cheese tray, mahog. celleret, mahog. oval wine cooler, hair cloth

James Duppa: London
wall paper

Brandram Templeman & Jaques: London
paint

1800  James Stokes: Philadelphia
1 pr large looking glass, 1 smaller, do., brass and irons

John Richard (ironmonger ): Richmond
nails, still pts, cask

A. Maxwell: London (via D. & S.)
mahog. medicine chest

W & S Jones: London
globes

W & Burnett Marshall: Marshallsville
shoemaker's tool

Wm Potts: Petersburg
tea & dishes

1801  Clark & Yellowly: London (via Richardson)
paper
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>MERCHANT/MAKER: PLACE OF BUSINESS</th>
<th>ITEMS PURCHASED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1802</td>
<td>M. Bowden &amp; Co.: Petersburg</td>
<td>commodities, cotton, textiles, sundries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moore &amp; Bowden: Petersburg</td>
<td>thimbles, paper, furniture calico, linen &amp; brown, handkerchiefs, textiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kent &amp; Brown: Baltimore</td>
<td>food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Wabraven: Baltimore</td>
<td>food, parasols, silver (nutmeg grater smelling bottle, caddy still), 1 yew tree tea chest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S. &amp; Jn Lewis: Baltimore</td>
<td>chintz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas &amp; Caldelew &amp; Co.: Baltimore</td>
<td>compleat box colours, drawing paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803</td>
<td>Clementi, Banger, Hyde, Collard &amp; Davis: London</td>
<td>music sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grayson &amp; Noble: London</td>
<td>books &amp; music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804</td>
<td>Clementi, Banger, Hyde, Collard &amp; Davis: London</td>
<td>music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>James Maury: Liverpool</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J. Halliday &amp; J. Hintons: Petersburg</td>
<td>20 yds. carpeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J. Halliday &amp; J. Hintons: Petersburg</td>
<td>40 yds. scotch carpeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James Maury: Liverpool</td>
<td>fabric - plains, cottons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T. Bennett: Petersburg (agent for Grayson &amp; Noble)</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Halliday &amp; Hintons: Petersburg</td>
<td>cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>MERCHANT/MAKER: PLACE OF BUSINESS</td>
<td>ITEMS PURCHASED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1806</td>
<td>John Osborne: Petersburg</td>
<td>safe, Perpetual Oven, boiler, fireback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mutter &amp; Brown: Petersburg</td>
<td>nails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anthony Metcalf: unknown</td>
<td>whip saw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cocke &amp; Sanford: Norfolk</td>
<td>rolls &amp; pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William Buchell Co.: unknown</td>
<td>buttons, vest &amp; brass hinges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bells &amp; McRoe: Petersburg</td>
<td>cotton, small chest lock - the best in town, brass roller drawer do., 1 pr. black silk galoon lunding, 1 jack salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Haliday &amp; Hinton: Petersburg</td>
<td>fabric, trunk lock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wm Prichard: unknown</td>
<td>books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Kent &amp; Co.: Petersburg</td>
<td>cotton, 3 pr. lady's mor. brushes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holloway &amp; Hansend: unknown</td>
<td>2 bell metal skillets, 1 yd. black silk velvet, 1 ps. calico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harts &amp; Wright: Petersburg</td>
<td>copper kettle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gracie Anderson &amp; Co.: unknown</td>
<td>Linen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1807</td>
<td>Bells &amp; McRoe: Petersburg</td>
<td>2 setts knives &amp; forks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wm Potts &amp; Co.: Petersburg</td>
<td>nails &amp; food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wm Potts &amp; Co.: Petersburg</td>
<td>nails, food, bar iron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frances Lynch: unknown</td>
<td>winter gingham</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1807  H. & Hinton: Petersburg
2 pad locks

William Tharpe: unknown
brass cock

Saml. Perriston: unknown
bro. velvet

John B. Read: Petersburg
wagon collars

Whicham: Richmond
fabric, button, food, book for Humberston,
ornamental combs

Birchett & Co.: unknown
fabric, pins, morroco shoes, lace, tin pepper box

Birchett & Co.: unknown
worked muslin dress, ribbon, morroco shoes, muslin

Sommerville & Conrad: Petersburg
books & music

1808  Bells & McRoe: Petersburg
handsom files, knives & forks returned

Daniel Epes & Co.: unknown
cotton cards

Birchett & Duncan: unknown
wool cards

Daniel Peek: Petersburg
mill spindles & apparatus, brass mill

Robert Nelson & Co.: Richmond
willow sheets, linen, tortis comb, riband

Somerville & Conrad: unknown
razor strap, binding of 2 music books

Somerville & Conrad: unknown
subscription to portfolio

John Harding: unknown
gimblets
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>MERCHANT/MAKER: PLACE OF BUSINESS</th>
<th>ITEMS PURCHASED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1808</td>
<td>Birchett &amp; Co.: unknown fabric, buttons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buchanan &amp; Pollok: Petersburg nails, gimblets, screws</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maitland &amp; Christian: unknown food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wm Lotts: Petersburg fabric</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1809</td>
<td>Robert Marshall: unknown flour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John V. Willcox &amp; Co.: Petersburg x-cut saw, knives, steelyards, steel, drawing knives, files, locks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W &amp; J Colzehoun: Petersburg locks, brass butts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John M. Yates &amp; Co.: unknown moroco shoes, cotton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Robert Davison: unknown pr. shoes, shoes &amp; strings, bottoming boots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W. W. Richardson: London (via D. &amp; S.) books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>Webster &amp; Poone: unknown Mhg. wardrobe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pen Kimball: Richmond unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maitland &amp; Christen: unknown pan cart boxes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Francis Follet: Petersburg bookcase bolts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Birchett &amp; Co.: unknown scissors, ladies gloves, lock, augers, [illegible]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sam White: Petersburg drawer locks, commode drawer handles, butter pink</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DATE   MERCHANT/MAKER: PLACE OF BUSINESS
        ITEMS PURCHASED

1810    Francis Follet: Petersburg
        bookcase hinges, bed lather, wood screws

1811    Bells & McRoe: Petersburg
        food, linen

James Mitchell: unknown
        ditching spades

A P Puryear & Co.: unknown
        fabric, ribbon, buttons

James Bream: Richmond
        x-cut sawfiles, handsaw files, hinges, screws,
        bedstead caps, tenant saw

James Bream: Richmond
        cutting knives

James Bream & Andrew Dunn: Richmond
        stock locks

unknown: Richmond
        food, silk shade, 5 vols. Scott's works

1812    H Hannon & Hign: Petersburg
        peacock plough

1813    Wm Pulllock: unknown
        spectacles, tortis combs, cocks, fans, fabric,
        glass tumblers, ribbons, pocket books, gloves,
        hinges, table bolts, sifter, map, pens, hank silk,
        beads

George & Thomas Brown: unknown
        pins, flower pots, locks, thimble, notions, food,
        sugar box, head, dishes, goblets

N. C. Masenburg: Petersburg
        roving cans

Ravenscroft & McQuis: unknown
        domestic spinners, screwdrivers

H Peters & Giere: Petersburg
        coffee machine
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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<th>ITEMS PURCHASED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1814</td>
<td>W. Campbell: Petersburg</td>
<td>book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James Daniel: unknown</td>
<td>fabric, soup ladle, food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>J N Field: Richmond</td>
<td>food, card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Saml. C. Adams: Richmond</td>
<td>nails &amp; cask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sam Pearce: Petersburg</td>
<td>pc. of web</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mabry &amp; Cains: Petersburg</td>
<td>ploughs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Follet &amp; Lea: Petersburg</td>
<td>knives, spade, key hole saw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peters &amp; Grise: Petersburg</td>
<td>rasp, handsaw, tenant saw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Birchett &amp; Somerville: Petersburg</td>
<td>linen, muslin, chest locks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>A R Puryear &amp; Co.: unknown</td>
<td>fabric, pitcher, buttons, thimble, morroco, shoes, scythe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fredrick D. Peters: Petersburg</td>
<td>mounting, locks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F. O. Neill: Liverpool (via Maury &amp; Latham)</td>
<td>superfine orange &amp; harrie carpeting, super gn. &amp; yell. do., binding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1817</td>
<td>John Griffin: unknown</td>
<td>mill wheel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H J Small Kinsmair: Philadelphia</td>
<td>Imperial rug, shawl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S. Kennedy: unknown</td>
<td>4 pier looking glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>H Peyton Bell: Petersburg</td>
<td>coach horses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**DATE** | **MERCHANT/MAKER:** PLACE OF BUSINESS | **ITEMS PURCHASED**
--- | --- | ---
1818 | H Brown & Armistead: Petersburg | carpets

Peters & Tufts: Petersburg
2 looking glasses, fender, andirons shovel, tongs, poker, curtain pins, tools, nut crackers

1819 | H James Woodward: Norfolk | putting up 2 looking glasses & lamps lrg. mahog.
sideboard with brass rails, china press & secretary, dining tables, 2 mahog. bedstead, 2 mahog. field bedsteads, breakfast table, windsor chairs, altering two wash stands, dinner tray

Nathan Hastings: Baltimore
glass dessert service

MRS. SKP Wm Francis: unknown
carpet

MRS. SKP Wm Taylor: unknown
silk fringe

MRS. SKP Neelson & Neal: Norfolk
fringe & furniture dimity

MRS. SKP Vincent & Ronford: Norfolk
curtain dimity

MRS. SKP Neelson & Neal: Norfolk
furniture dimity

H Hugh Finlay: Baltimore
chairs, 1 pr. card tables, rush chairs, greek rush chairs

H Hugh Finlay: Baltimore
one sofa

H Joshua Moore: Norfolk
chairs

H Vincent Parloato: Norfolk
cloth

H Wm Francis: unknown
Imperial rug, bear skin

H J. Moore: Norfolk
rocking chair
<table>
<thead>
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<th>ITEMS PURCHASED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>H J. Moore: Norfolk chairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H Pouches &amp; Brother: Norfolk</td>
<td>shovel, tongs, poker, fender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H David Scott: Norfolk</td>
<td>built stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H Smith &amp; Chiselin: unknown</td>
<td>cupboard, wash stand, bedstead, clothes horse, toilet table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H Nealson &amp; Neale: Norfolk</td>
<td>carpeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H A. De Revere: Norfolk</td>
<td>bed window curtains, glasses, repair looking glass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>H Abr. De Revere: Norfolk</td>
<td>curtains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ferdinand Roberts &amp; Co.: unknown</td>
<td>Mahog. looking glass cased clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H Nealson &amp; Neale: Norfolk</td>
<td>lining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H Mazre &amp; Jenkins: Norfolk</td>
<td>2 bed cornishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>H B. Ford: Norfolk</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H James Woodward: Norfolk</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H W. F. Brette &amp; W. Vincent: Norfolk</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H G. K. Boyd: Norfolk</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H Rob F. Steed: Norfolk</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H J. &amp; M. Southgate: Norfolk</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATE</td>
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<td>ITEMS PURCHASED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>unknown: Manchester chairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>A. R. Cunningham: Petersburg</td>
<td>household goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H U. Sautyau: unknown</td>
<td>materials for mattress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823</td>
<td>A. R. Cunningham: Petersburg</td>
<td>household goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E. Lydnon: unknown</td>
<td>varnish, caster, bolts, decanter, cups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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"Elizabeth Kennon to Rachel Mordecai, September 29, 1809." The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography XXXII (1924): 83.


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Richmond, Virginia Historical Society. MsSl Sk 366.


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VITA

Alicia Liberty Boehm Tucker


In July, 1986, the author entered the College of William and Mary as an M.A. candidate and Museum Intern in the Department of History.