The Page Family of Rosewell and Mannsfield: A Study in Economic Decline

Betty Crowe. Leviner

College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

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THE PAGE FAMILY OF ROSEWELL AND MANNSFIELD:
A STUDY IN ECONOMIC DECLINE

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
Betty Crowe Leviner
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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Author

Approved, May, 1987

James P. Whittenburg

John E. Selby

Graham Hood
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My fascination with Rosewell has been with me for a dozen years. Its ruined walls have led me to investigate the family who built the house and made their home there. Not content to embark on building one mansion in the 1720s, the family repeated the same feat at another site in the 1760s. In attempting to find answers about architecture, I had to answer questions about the Pages themselves. Answering these questions, in turn, led to this thesis.

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ABSTRACT

The Page family of Rosewell in the opening of the eighteenth century seemed to have the potential for being a potent force culturally, politically, socially, and economically within Virginia. They were responsible for building the grandest, private house for its time and place within the colony, they married well and formed valuable alliances with other prominent families, and individual members achieved some of the highest political offices possible for colonials. Yet by the end of the eighteenth century, the Pages had been reduced to such financial straits that they could barely afford to maintain the houses that helped set them apart in the first place from the vast majority of their fellow Virginians.

This study analyzes the family's economic decline over the course of the century and the causes for it. By embarking on ambitious building programs twice within forty years, by misjudging the tobacco market, by splitting up the family's estates primarily between the two eldest sons during the third generation, and possibly by refusing to curb spending habits, the family lost its premier place within the dynasties of colonial Virginia. Although they retained their social position, their economic and political prominence ended with the passing of the third generation early in the nineteenth century.
INTRODUCTION

In a still relatively undeveloped area of Gloucester County, Virginia, there stands the ruin of what has been called "the finest of all American houses." Begun between 1721 and 1726, Rosewell was the eighteenth-century home of the Page family. A massive, three-story, brick mansion with two cupolas, the house proclaimed its occupants to be powerful, educated, and wealthy. Yet by the end of the century the family had been reduced to such straitened conditions that the current owner of Rosewell considered the possibility of having to sell the estate.

While Rosewell the building first aroused my interest in the Pages, the family itself subsequently intrigued me equally. What had caused so prestigious and well connected a family to deteriorate to such a degree financially in only three generations? Over the course of the eighteenth century, various Pages had intermarried with Carters, Randolphs, and Tayloes. They had been sent to England to study at Eton and Oxford; they had been appointed to the Governor's Council; and they had built not only Rosewell, but also during the 1760s a second mansion house called Mannsfield in Spotsylvania County a few miles south of Fredericksburg. Externally the Pages continued to flourish but internally family records reveal the beginning of a downward spiral: poor quality tobacco, cropfailures, and credit that had to be extended and re-extended.
Still another element of the Pages intrigued me and added to my determination to understand the family's economic decline. Unlike some of the various families with whom they intermarried, few records survive for the Rosewell and Mannsfield Pages. There are virtually no extant records for the family prior to the 1760s. Gloucester County records were destroyed at Richmond in 1865. The few glimpses that can be obtained of Mann Page I, the man who started Rosewell's construction, come from either public records or the diaries and letterbooks of his second father-in-law, Robert "King" Carter of Corotoman. The second Mann Page is an even more shadowy individual since only a few personal references are made to him in the known contemporary sources of his day. Despite the fact that he apparently chose to play a rather limited role in public affairs, preferring involvement at the local rather than colonial level, Mann Page II showed one striking similarity to his father: the need for a house that affirmed his family's continuing social and political prominence in Virginia. This fact heightened my curiosity even further about the family. Why did a man who in his youth had been saddled with the expense of finishing one ambitious family seat choose to embark on an equally ambitious architectural project thirty years later?

Lastly, I was curious to know the effects of these two generations of gentlemen builders on the third generation. In moving to Spotsylvania County, Mann Page II left his eldest son John in possession of a mansion, albeit an old-fashioned one, in which to start his new family. The new house south of Fredericksburg would not only give the father an up-to-date family seat but would also allow, in time, for his namesake Mann
Page III to inherit an establishment separate from his older brother John.

Here written documents have proved to be more helpful since Spotsylvania and Fredericksburg records survive. The wills of Mann Page II, his second wife Ann Corbin Tayloe Page, and Mann Page III can be found in the will books of these two localities. An inventory was also made of the estate of the third Mann Page in 1803 and gives insight into the family's standard of living late in the eighteenth century. While hardly any correspondence of the period exists to shed any light on the family in Spotsylvania, correspondence for John Page in Gloucester has survived in various repositories, some of the most valuable being the Norton and Jefferson Papers and the John Page Papers at Duke University.

In addition to these sources there is a valuable memoir written by John Page in 1808. Although relatively short, Page's recollections about his early life at Rosewell give some information on his father, grandfather, and grandmother as well as some insights into his personality. Still more insight into John Page's tenure as master of Rosewell comes from an archaeological dig conducted on the site in the 1950s. From this investigation comes evidence of the family's standard of consumption as well as the effectiveness of household management.

All of these pieces of evidence, whether in the form of documents or material culture, make it possible to trace the family's economic history over the course of the eighteenth century. This history reveals a family prone to exercise poor judgment and mismanagement of available financial resources throughout three generations. For any family one generation of mismanagement can result in economic suicide. For such mismanagement
to continue through three family heads marked their financial decline as inevitable.
CHAPTER I

MANN PAGE I AND II: THE BUILDERS

In the fall of 1802 a visitor to Mannsfield plantation in Spotsylvania County, Virginia, would have been impressed by a number of things. First of all, the owner of the house, Mann Page III, was a member of a distinguished family that could trace its Virginia origins back to the middle of the seventeenth century and had intermarried with other well-known families. Page himself, along with his brother John, had been a prominent and devoted member of the Revolutionary cause only twenty years earlier. Secondly, his house, while somewhat dated in style, was still impressive in both design and scale and suggested a family sure of itself and its position within Virginia society. Thirdly, the furnishings of the house were a combination of old-fashioned items mixed with modern ones, the sort of jumble one might expect to encounter in any home that had been lived in for nearly forty years and had sheltered two generations of a family. In the dining room, in addition to the usual assortment of tables and chairs, there was a carpet on the floor as well as a tall-case clock. The first floor also contained a variety of Windsor chairs, which had become increasingly fashionable over the last quarter of the eighteenth century. In addition, there were numerous glass and ceramic wares for dining and entertaining. The house was also furnished with several sofas, two mahogany sideboards, and a harpsichord. In short, our visitor, already respectful of Page's social and political prominence, would have been equally impressed with his house and its extensive fur-
nishings. Yet, what the visitor would not have seen would have been the receipts for land sales amounting to over 8,000 acres that had transpired during the previous ten years. Although he continued to present a well-appointed facade to the outside world, Page had liquidated large parcels of real estate in order merely to remain solvent. In Gloucester County, Mann's brother John was also experiencing money problems at Rosewell plantation or, more accurately, continuing his long-standing series of them. Financial difficulties had been John's lot throughout his entire adult life, and the present was merely a continuum of the pattern.

What were the roots of these problems? Were they merely the results of poor management in the third generation of eighteenth-century Pages or did they start earlier with the father and grandfather? Did these difficulties affect the family's consumption of material goods? While it is impossible to provide irrefutable answers to these questions, it is nonetheless possible to furnish some plausible theories for where and how the family went "wrong" financially.

* * *

From the early nineteenth century we need to retreat over a century into the past to the year 1691. Mann Page I was born in 1691 to Matthew Page and Mary Mann and was the first of his family to be born at Rosewell. Of the two girls and two boys born to the couple, Mann was the only one to survive beyond childhood. Mann's grandfather, John Page, had come to Virginia about 1650; settling in the area of Middle Plantation, he quickly began to amass land and to hold positions within the colonial government. His sons, Francis and Matthew, continued in their
father's path by marrying well, obtaining land grants, and assuming the usual responsibilities expected of them as members of the colonial gentry. Matthew did particularly well in these areas and served as a county justice as well as a member of the original Board of Trustees of the College of William and Mary. The heir of his brother Francis who died in 1692, only four months after their father's death, Matthew married Mary Mann, only daughter of John Mann of Timberneck, Gloucester County. At John Mann's death in 1694/5 Matthew and Mary inherited two-thirds of his estate, thus combining holdings that stretched from Gloucester County in the east to New Kent County in the west.

It was through John Mann's Gloucester estate that the Rosewell tract, consisting of 3,000 acres, came into the Page family and it was here that Mann Page was born. Due to the paucity of records little is known about him beyond what is contained in official documents of the period.

In 1703 Matthew Page died, and three years later, in 1706, Mann was sent to England where he studied at Eton. From Eton he went on to St. John's, Oxford, in July, 1709. Although it is not known how long Mann Page stayed at Oxford, by July 10, 1711, he was back in Virginia where he married Judith Wormeley, daughter of Ralph Wormeley II of Rosegill, Middlesex County. With this marriage, Page allied himself with another leading colonial Virginia family of which Judith was a third-generation representative, as was her husband of his. Also like her husband, she had been left fatherless at an early age. Ralph Wormeley II was known for having one of the largest libraries in the colony for his day, for being a lavish entertainer, and for having one of the grandest
establisments in Virginia during the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Influential and enterprising, Wormeley was also president of the Council.

During Page's first marriage, there are some glimpses of him in period documents. On March 9, 1713, Governor Alexander Spotswood recommended him to the Lords Commissioners of Trade for appointment to the Council and described him as "Mr. Mann Page a young gentleman of a liberal education, good parts, and a very plentiful estate, whose father and grandfather both had the honor of the same post." The following year, at the age of 23, he received the appointment despite his lack of "previous service in a vestry, a county court, or the House of Burgesses," although as Robert "King" Carter noted in a letter, "Rising Generally goes by favour."

Two years later two references to Page of a personal nature can be gleaned from a variety of sources. For example, in a catalogue of his books done in 1716, Godfrey Pole, a member of the House of Burgesses and clerk of Northampton County, noted that Mann Page had borrowed "Davenant on Resumptions," evidently a book dealing with public finance. The other reference to Page occurs in his mother-in-law's will dated November 9, 1716. In it Judith Wormeley's mother leaves him "all my money and effects in the hands of or due me by Messrs. Francis and John Willis, of London, merchants, also 20 hogsheads of my tobacco of this year's crops, also to said Mann Page and my daughter Judith his wife, 8 negroes." A month later Judith Wormeley Page herself died, apparently of measles, three days after the birth of their third child. Despite his declaration of bereavement on her tombstone, Page quickly
remarried. His second wife was Judith Carter, daughter of Robert "King" Carter of Corotoman, and it is because of this connection that a picture of Page begins to emerge.

First of all, the records begin to reveal the acquisition of large tracts of land in the Northern Neck of Virginia, a term that his current father-in-law defined as loosely as possible. As agent for Lord Fairfax and his proprietorship in the Northern Neck, Robert Carter amassed huge tracts of land not only for himself but for his entire family. These claims extended beyond the Northern Neck proper into northern Virginia and from there even into the Shenandoah Valley. Despite outcries from settlers in the region, Carter continued to record claim after claim until, at his death in 1732, his holdings amounted to more than 300,000 acres. Mann Page was included in this Carter land grab and obtained grants in excess of 18,000 acres in six years. On August 28, 1724, Page received a grant of 10,610 acres in Stafford County, on December 12, 1728, a grant of 3,500 acres in Spotsylvania County, and on September 23, 1730, a grant of 8,007 acres in Stafford County. In addition, Page held other large tracts in Spotsylvania, Prince William, and other counties. By the time of his death, Mann Page's holdings amounted to 70,000 acres, scattered over nine counties.

In addition to sharing Carter's real estate dealings, Page also joined with Robert Carter and his sons Robert and Charles in the organization of the Frying Pan Company. The purpose of this venture was the mining of copper from the cuprous sandstone formation located on what is now the boundary between Fairfax and Loudoun Counties. While a local assayer had been enthusiastic about the amount of copper found in the
ore, English assayers were less impressed. The business was a commercial failure, but it still could be considered successful in that the partners acquired further land holdings in the process.

It was during this period of business collaboration that the letter-books and diaries of "King" Carter offer us some personal glimpses of Mann Page. It is through his letters that we learn that Page suffered from gout, possibly the cause of his early death and the same malady that affected Carter on occasion. On July 28, 1724, Carter notes in his diary that "Collo Page & his wife came here & 2 days later he had begun to complain . . . with the Gout in one hand." In a letter written three years later, Carter states that "I am thankful to you for your news and believe it tired you heartily to write so much your refuge must be to do as I am forced to write by another hand." Throughout the letterbooks and diaries there are sprinkled references to Mann Page's ill health, although whether or not these are all attributed solely to gout is not specified. In 1728, Carter writes that "Colonel Page's milk diet agrees so well with him that makes me hope he will prolong his life to gray hairs," which statement leads the reader to suspect that Page was often sick.

It is also obvious from the letterbooks that Carter held Page in high esteem. In June of 1729 Carter describes his son-in-law as one "who always appears so strenuously my friend." On another occasion Carter sends "My love and respects to my Daughter & your fireside I should be hugely Glad of ye pleasure of Your Comp sometime in ye Christmass hollidays . . . ." In his most lavish praise of his daughter's husband, Carter writes to Page: "You are blest with so steady a head
and so tenacious a memory that I never doubt your punctual performance of all particulars that you are at any time pleased to take into your command." 27 That so successful an individual as Carter should speak so highly of his son-in-law suggests that Page's abilities were valued and respected by others as well. And Page in return held Carter in high regard. In his will Page speaks of "my ever honoured father-in-law and dear friend, Robert Carter, Esqr . . . . " 28 Further evidence of Page's standing within the colony comes from Governor Hugh Drysdale's "present State of Virginia" compiled for the year 1726. Drysdale lists Page as a member of the Council as well as a judge of the General Court. Under county particulars Page is listed as county lieutenant. 29

It is during the period of his second marriage that Mann Page began building his mansion. As Edmund Morgan pointed out almost 35 years ago, a "building was designed to show off the owner's position in society . . . . It announced to the world that he was a gentleman." 30 Given Rosewell's size and richness, it would seem that Mann Page had no mean estimate of either himself or his social position. The house itself reveals that it was closely related to English housebuilding of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Mann Page went to school in England from roughly 1706 to 1711, and not surprisingly, his house reflected the baroque influence of Wren, a style that Page knew from firsthand observation, as opposed to the more up-to-date Palladian school espoused by Lord Burlington, Colin Campbell, and William Kent. Popularized in 1715 with the publication of Vitruvius Britannicus, Palladian design dominated English architecture for the next 45 years. However, in his choice of a baroque-influenced style, Page was typical of well-
to-do Englishmen in trade during the first quarter of the eighteenth century.

Nevertheless, there is a feeling of one-upmanship about Rosewell that causes one to wonder if pride of family alone was behind the building of such a house. As noted, Page's first wife was the daughter of Ralph Wormeley II, a man whose reputation for lavish living and hospitality survived his death. During the period of Page's first marriage, he would probably have had contact with Robert Carter who acted as one of the two guardians of Wormeley's two sons. After Judith Wormeley Page's death, Page married one of Robert Carter's daughters, and thus would have had closer contact with the most powerful private individual in Virginia at a time when he is thought to have begun building Corotoman, one of the grandest colonial houses of its period.31 Did Mann Page feel the need to compete with his father-in-law? The combined holdings of Page's parents had given him the potential for being one of the richest men in the colony. Did he resent being eclipsed in this respect by Robert Carter whose audacity at acquiring land amazed even his contemporaries? While the degree of resentment, if any, cannot be determined, it certainly seems likely that a certain amount of competitiveness existed. As a way of expressing his individuality, building a house such as Rosewell was an effective symbol, for in addition to underscoring his individualism, it also served to demonstrate his academic exposure to English forms and his ample material resources.32 To those in England who may have sneered at his provincialism, he was stating that, despite being a creole, he was by no means culturally inferior, while in Virginia both politically and socially he was laying legitimate claim to what he perceived as his rightful place in colonial society.
Rosewell was located on the land tract of the same name in Gloucester County. The house and grounds were on a prominence overlooking Carter's Creek to the east and the York River to the south. Although its derivation and architect remain in dispute, it clearly lived up to its reputation of being "a mansion of such grandeur that it rivaled the palace of the Royal Governor in Williamsburg . . ." even in its own time. There can be no dispute that Page was making a clear and definite statement about himself and his family to his contemporaries. The house was the largest, private dwelling of its time in colonial Virginia with three full stories above an English basement and boasted not one but two cupolas as well as end pavilions. It appears to have been richly decorated with paneling of various woods and marble mantels throughout in addition to having had two staircases. With all of these features, it would seem that Mann Page was in competition with the Royal Governor across the river in Williamsburg.

Unfortunately, Page's architectural ambition may have been part of his family's eventual undoing since he overstepped his means in building such a house. Rosewell's construction left both Page and his son, who had to finish the project, in debt, and strapped his grandson with a large house surrounded by worn-out lands that no longer produced the quantity or quality of tobacco they had in his grandfather's day.

On Saturday, January 24, 1730/31, Mann Page died. It is an irony that only through his death is there a glimpse of him as a person. Before daylight on the day of Page's death, John Clayton of Williamsburg received a letter from Dr. George Nicholas who was at Rosewell. Nicholas informed Clayton that Page was dying and wanted to draw up his will and
asked Clayton to come to Rosewell for this purpose. Arriving at the Page home about 9:30 a.m., Clayton went almost immediately into the dying man's bedchamber. Page ordered everyone else out of the room except for a young mulatto messenger boy whom he used to call other people into the room as he needed them. As he dictated his will, Page stopped if anyone, such as his wife, the doctor, or servants, entered the chamber. Clayton worked on the will until seven o'clock that night and then for another hour on a codicil regarding some property which Page had forgotten to mention in the will. Clayton described Page as being sound of mind but troubled that he would not live to see the document finished. He continually pressed Clayton to hurry. The will itself is mostly in Page's own words since he did not want Clayton to take the time to transpose his wishes into proper legal form. At nine o'clock that night, only an hour after finishing the will and the codicil, Mann Page died.37

The will is clear in both its distribution of Page's property and its intentions. Page was obviously concerned about his wife's welfare and left to her a life interest in the buildings at Rosewell as well as the land, stock, and slaves connected with it. In addition, she was to receive one-third of her husband's personal estate and one-seventh of his interest in the Frying Pan Company.

As far as the children were concerned, Ralph Page, as the eldest male, was the most favored. Although his step-mother was given the life interests noted above, Ralph was to inherit these items upon her death as well as all his father's properties, including slaves, cattle, and hogs belonging to the land, located in Gloucester, Hanover, and King William Counties plus the slaves and land from the estate of Mann Page's
first wife, Ralph's mother. Mann II was the next most-favored child in the will's provisions. He received lands lying in Essex, Spotsylvania, and Prince William Counties as well as the slaves located on the properties. Page expressed his expectation that Robert Carter would give to Mann II lands and slaves held in Judith Page's right, evidently as part of her marriage settlement.

The other children were also mentioned and received either money, in the case of the girls, or land and money, in the case of the younger boys. These brothers and sisters would later cause problems for their father's estate as they reached 21, the age at which they were to receive payments under the terms of the will. In 1731, Ralph, the elder son of Mann Page and Judith Wormeley, died unmarried in England of smallpox. As the next in line, Mann II inherited the estate. Over the course of the next fifteen years, he would conceivably have to raise as much as £7,000 sterling to pay all the claims of his brothers and sisters if they lived to their majority.

Unfinished at the time of his death, Rosewell was complete enough for Mann Page I to lie in state in its great hall prior to burial in the family cemetery just east of the mansion. Although the house was left to Judith Page under the provisions of her husband's will, Mann Page II is the one credited with completing the mansion. And this must have been a difficult task since his father's debts exceeded the value of his slaves and personal property. In 1732 an act was passed which enabled Robert Carter, one of the executors of the estate, to pay off Mann Page I's debts and thus protect "the orphans of his deceased Son in Law in order to preserve their Estates from being pulled to pieces by their Father's
Nor was this the end of his father's debts. Twelve years later Mann Page II petitioned the House of Burgesses for permission to break the entail on the Page estate in order to raise money through land sales and thus pay his father's debts as well as the portions of his younger brothers and sisters. An act of assembly was passed in September 1744 docking the entail and authorizing the sale of certain lands for these purposes. \(^{43}\) Some have construed this action on Page's part as being caused by his need for money in order to finish the house. Others interpret the need for money as a consequence of finishing the house on credit prior to his marriage in the early 1740s. Each suggestion has validity since it would seem the house was not finished before 1737. This cut-off point can be determined via a provision of Robert Carter's will. Dated October 11, 1726, and the first of several, the will stipulated that Carter's sons were to pay their sister Judith £100 each upon the completion of Mann Page's mansion house. Records indicate that this had not been done as of June 28, 1737. \(^{44}\)

The state of Mann Page I's affairs must have come as a surprise to his family. As stated earlier, Robert Carter obviously admired his son-in-law's abilities and valued his advice and judgment. It must have been a bitter pill for him to swallow when he was forced to admit that "Colo Pages Books . . . appear to be kept in a very Confused negligent manner . . . ." \(^{45}\) The extent and consequent results of this disorder is reflected clearly in the difficulties encountered by Page's namesake. Aside from these difficulties, however, the second Mann Page seems to have led a fairly uneventful life at Rosewell where he was born in 1718. A graduate of William and Mary in 1740 \(^{46}\) and later on its Board of
Visitors, he married Alice Grymes of Brandon on December 31, 1741. In 1745 he is listed as clerk of the court for Gloucester County.

After Alice's death on January 11, 1746/47, he married Ann Corbin Tayloe of Mt. Airy in 1748. There were the requisite number of children by each wife, ten in all and eight that reached maturity. Scattered references can be found of land transactions, but otherwise there is even less documentary information available on the son than on the father. Also, Mann Page II played only a small part in the colonial politics of the day, even to the point of declining to serve on the Council. He apparently felt that his younger brother John, who had studied law, was more qualified and should fill that role. Mann II was content to play a part within the context of local affairs.

It is an ironic coincidence, as with his father, that only in death do we catch a glimpse of the man. On November 7, 1780, Page wrote out his will in his own hand. Even though it was unwitnessed, the county court was satisfied that the document was legitimate and ordered that it be recorded. Again, like his father, Mann Page was careful to see that his wife and children were each provided for in terms of property, but in terms of actual money, his bequests were much more circumspect. He left his wife £200 per year, £570 to the estate of his deceased daughter's husband, Lewis Burwell, to be divided between his two granddaughters, and £200 to a free school. Thus, the small sum of £970 was the total outlay to be made from his estate with £200 to be paid to his wife thereafter each year she survived. This amount seems miniscule when compared with the £7,000 called for in his father's will. It is possible that Mann Page II did not want to inflict on his family the financial hardships that he had experienced due to an overly generous father.
This is not to say that Mann Page II was unconcerned about his family's future, however, since an event took place around 1765\(^5\) that indicates a man anxious about two of his sons and their inheritance. While other motivations may have been involved, this action laid the seeds for financial difficulty of a different sort for his two sons from what he himself had encountered. As noted above, Page married Ann Corbin Tayloe in 1748. Approximately ten years later her brother, John Tayloe of Mt. Airy, began work on the Palladian mansion that still stands today in Richmond County. Then in the mid-60s Mann Page began work on his own new mansion, known as Mannsfield, in Spotsylvania County. Not surprisingly, in a period of architectural homogeneity, Mann Page was unable to upstage his brother-in-law as his father had done with his father-in-law. Rather, Page was relatively unimaginative in his adaptation of the Tayloe house. In a time when brick was still the preferred material for gentry housebuilding, both Tayloe and Page employed stone. Both houses were double-pile structures with similar floor plans and flanking dependencies connected by quadrant passages to the main house.\(^5\) Although the house burned during the Civil War, we do have one almost contemporary evaluation of it. Benjamin Henry Latrobe wrote on July 19, 1796:

I dined . . . at Mr. Man Page's at Mansfield where I met several Gentlemen of the town and neighborhood. Mr. Page's house is built of Stone of a good but coarse grit in the style of the Country Gentlemen's houses in England of 50 Years ago. It is a tolerably good house but the taste is indifferent.\(^5\)

Given Latrobe's dating, he apparently would have thought the house twenty years out of date even at the time it was built. However, within the context of Virginia, Page would have thought just the opposite. In building such a mansion, while blazing no new ground architecturally, Page was
able to leave behind the old-fashioned Rosewell as well as to demonstrate his family's continued ability to remain at the forefront of Virginia's elite, both culturally and materially.

There was also another motivation for the construction of Mannsfield. His eldest son John had married Frances Burwell about 1765. By quitting Rosewell, Mann Page enabled John to establish himself and his wife at an impressive, if stylistically out-of-date, family seat. Moreover, the new mansion would also permit his elder son and namesake by his second wife to inherit an impressive home as well. Unfortunately, it also saddled both sons with mansions that were expensive to run and maintain as well as divided the family's lands and thus reduced the total revenue available to each son. It should be pointed out that the same sort of division was called for under the terms of the first Mann Page's will. This tactic would have allowed his only living son by his first wife to have inherited the Rosewell estate and his eldest son, Mann II, by his second wife to be established in Spotsylvania. Only Ralph's early death forestalled this property division. If he had lived, Ralph would have had a harder time fulfilling the terms of his father's will than did his brother since he would have received a smaller inheritance.

However, in the 1760s the Pages would have appeared to their contemporaries to be holding their own financially. The owners of the oldest academic brick mansion in private hands in the colony and the current builders of a new family seat just as ambitious architecturally, the father and his two elder sons were probably quite satisfied with their standing both within their extended families and within colonial society. The next few years, unfortunately, would bring home to John
Page the problems that such a division of property entailed for him as the third generation of his family to live at Rosewell.
CHAPTER II
THE INHERITORS

As the decade of the 60s began, John and his younger brother Mann would have appeared to be in an enviable position in Virginia society. Their ancestry in the colony stretched back more than 100 years, they lived in an imposing mansion, they were allied through kinship ties with nearly everybody who was anybody in Virginia, and their father, despite his financial problems of fifteen years earlier, was enjoying the benefits of a relatively stable economic environment. Yet, even as the decade opened, this last factor was beginning to change and would have a lasting impact on the two boys as would the changing political scene of the 70s. By the end of the eighteenth century, the Pages would no longer be the objects of envy as they were forty years earlier.

The eldest son of Mann Page II and his first wife Alice Grymes, John Page was born at Rosewell on April 17, 1743 (old style). Two more children followed in fairly quick succession -- a daughter Judith born on September 24, 1744, and a son Mann on December 28, 1746. Alice Page died two weeks after the birth of her third child on January 11, 1746/47, and her younger son lived only until October 27 of that year.

John thus was left motherless when not yet four years old. His father remarried the following year; his second bride was Ann Corbin Tayloe and a second family soon began with the arrival of a son, also named Mann, in 1749. In a memoir written during the last year of his
life, John Page singles out neither his parents nor his stepmother as special influences in his early life. Rather, he points to his paternal grandmother, Judith Carter Page, as the reason he learned to read and write at an early age. Page describes her as "one of the most sensible and best informed women I ever knew," and she fostered in her grandson a love of reading and an inquisitiveness that he fortunately was able to gratify among his "father's and grandfather's collection [of books], which was no contemptible library."³

In 1752, the year after John's second half-brother was born, his father entered him into a grammar school run by the Reverend William Yates at the glebe house of Abingdon Parish. However, Mr. Yates' "passionate disposition" made it difficult for him to retain students, including John, who left after twelve months. At this point his father hired a tutor, Mr. William Price, to teach John for the next three years. John later attributed to Price's Whiggish principles, among other things, his own ability "to defy the terrible threats of George the 3d. and at last actually oppose his troops in arms. . . ."⁴

At age 13 John was sent to the grammar school at the College of William and Mary, despite the fact that his father had promised his first wife that he would send their son to England for his schooling. However, several Virginians had returned from England about this time "so inconceivably illiterate, and also corrupted and vicious, that he swore no son of his should ever go there, in quest of an education."⁵ At the College John lived with President Thomas Dawson whom Mann Page II had paid to tutor his son privately. John's command of Latin was so able that President Dawson introduced him first to Governor Dinwiddie
and afterwards to his successor Governor Fauquier. After finishing grammar school, John completed the regular course of studies offered by the "Philosophy Schools" where he studied under Professor William Small.6

A portrait of John painted when the young Page was about fifteen shows him in a setting typical of a young English country gentleman. Just returned from shooting, Page is seated outdoors with his hair tied back with a simple black ribbon. His gun is cradled in the crook of his right arm, and he is wearing an olive green suit, a white waistcoat, and a white shirt. Beside him on the ground are his powder flask, hat, and a brace of partridges. His look is that of a cheerful and kindly individual who feels a sense of assurance about his world and his place in it.7 Despite the look of assurance, it was roughly about this time that his grandmother Page died.8 The void created by the death of this influential woman was soon filled by the deep friendship John formed with Thomas Jefferson, also a student at William and Mary.

John's half-brother Mann followed him as a student at the College. While the particulars of Mann's schooling prior to his enrollment at William and Mary are not known, it is probable that he, too, studied under a tutor.9 What is known is that his college career was not as untarnished as his older brother's had been. In July of 1766 Mann and two of his Page cousins were accused of having "transgress'd the Rules of the College, by frequenting the Public Houses in Town and going off their Bounds without Leave. . . . "10 These jaunts to taverns probably included gambling as Mann later admitted to a family friend that "Among the Vices, which prevailed at College in my Time, Gaming had it's [sic]
Place, I was unfortunate, & lost a Sum of Money, I am ashamed to say how much, to Mr. John Page [his cousin] ... One would assume that Mann learned his lesson about gambling since the wording seems to imply that it was a sin which he had put behind him.

The year before the incident that led to the censure by the College president and masters, the Pages probably removed to Spotsylvania County when John married Frances Burwell. By moving to Spotsylvania, Mann Page II left John and Fanny, as she was known, to start their own household at Rosewell. Meanwhile at Mannsfield, Mann Page II and his family by his second wife also established themselves in a new house that eventually provided Mann Page III, or Mann Page Jr. as he was known during his father's lifetime, an established seat separate from his older brother John's.

Once settled in their new situations, both brothers showed a marked preference for public service in contrast to their more retiring father. After being elected to William and Mary's Board of Visitors, John in 1771 was selected to serve as the College's representative in the House of Burgesses, although he does not appear to have attended any of the legislature's sessions that year. He served as the College's burgess for the next two years until Governor Dunmore appointed him to the Council in 1773 to fill the vacancy created by William Nelson's death.

Mann III, despite being six years younger than John, embarked on his public career only a year after his brother. By 1772 he, too, was sitting in the House of Burgesses representing Spotsylvania County. His domestic life also was falling into place for early in 1774 he admitted to "being in Love with Miss Tayloe," a girl whom Robert Bladen Carter
described as "Polly Tayloe the Lovely of Mount-Airy." The daughter of John Tayloe of Mt. Airy, Richmond County, Mary was Mann's first cousin. They were married at her home on April 18, 1776, with Landon Carter being one of the invited guests. The couple made their home at Mannsfield where Mary would have felt at ease since her new in-laws were also her aunt and uncle. While it is unknown whether this domestic situation caused friction between the two generations, the arrangement was a short-lived one since Mann Page II died less than five years later.

As noted earlier, Mann Page II was obviously concerned about providing for his wife and each child although the actual cash outlay was relatively small when compared with the bequests his father made. Ann Corbin Page, in addition to the £200 per year over and above what the law allowed, was left Mannsfield, its furniture and servants, and the coach, chariot, and the horses used to pull these vehicles. After her death, the coach and horses were to go to Mann III (the chariot was left to a younger brother Robert) as well as all the lands, including Mannsfield, part of the slaves, and all of the stock in Spotsylvania, in addition to all of the property, with its slaves and stocks, known as Bull Run in the Northern Neck. John was the other principal legatee. He inherited all his father's land, including Rosewell along with the Negroes and stock, in Gloucester County and in the Dismal Swamp. In addition, John received the Frying Pan tract acquired by his grandfather during his unsuccessful foray into mining copper ore.

While John and Mann were the primary inheritors under the terms of their father's will, their inheritance apparently did not put them on sound footing financially. Proof of this fact comes four years later.
in the will of Ann Corbin Page, John's step-mother and Mann's natural
mother.20 In her will Ann ordered that her share of her deceased hus-
band's estate should be divided among her four younger children "who
have had little or none of their fathers Estate."21 Apparently Mann
did not have sufficient resources to satisfy the conditions of his
father's will as it pertained to his younger siblings. While this de-
ficiency is only implied in the will, Ann Corbin Page makes explicit
reference to her step-son's financial difficulties. She declares that
except for his share of the £200 a year that her husband had left her
she does "not mean to receive from him any of the profits of his Estate
. . . [since] his family is so large I think he Can't spare it without
inconvenience . . . . "22 John and his wife Fanny at this point had
twelve children, seven of whom reached adulthood. As for Mann and
Mary, they had at least the five children still alive in 1803, the year
of Mann's death. And as noted above, in addition to his own family,
Mann Page III had the added responsibility of four younger brothers and
sisters still living at home at the time of his mother's death in 1785.

As their families and domestic responsibilities increased so did
dthe brothers' participation in public affairs. Both were enthusiastic
supporters of the Revolution and gave freely of their time and energy
as political events heated up in Virginia. John was a self-described
adherent of "Whiggish principles, and of course opposed the Tory princi-
pies of the Governor . . . ,"23 and it can be assumed that his brother
Mann, who struck a similar course in his political activities, shared
these sentiments. John's business correspondence, some of which is extant,
shows that the older of the Page brothers at least suffered the same
fears about debt and loss of honor as his peers on the eve of the Revolu-
tion. John's correspondence with the firm of John Norton and Sons is
replete with the typical worries and excuses of the period: crop failures,
predictions of better crops next year, dislike of debt, etc.

Another reason to believe that John possibly subscribed to radical
Country ideas is a more tenuous one that comes from the excavation of a
trash pit at Rosewell. Conducted in the late 1950s, this archaeological
excavation uncovered a variety of household items ranging from ceramics
to metal wares to architectural fragments. Included in this miscellany
was a pewter shoe buckle inscribed at either end with the slogan "NO
EXCISE." Ivor Noel Hume, supervisor of the dig, believes that the trash
pit probably was dug and filled in 1771-72 with an expanded date bracket
of no earlier than 1763 and no later than 1772. Given the political
temper of the times, the slogan is more than likely a reference to John
Wilkes and his denouncement of the excise tax on cider. The discovery
of such an artifact with associations to Wilkes raises the possibility
that John held radical views.

The start of hostilities in 1775 found John sitting on the Council
and Mann representing Spotsylvania in the House of Burgesses. This
quickly changed with Dunmore's flight in June of that year. The follow-
ing month John was elected to the Committee of Safety which was to meet
in Richmond. For the next five years he was involved in Virginia's war-
time politics and at one point even moved away from Rosewell: "we

crowded into a little House in Wmsburg last Winter...." Despite
the inconvenience of his family's accommodations, John was "totally en-
grossed by the public ...."
Mann quickly followed John onto the stage of Revolutionary politics. In 1776 he was elected a delegate to the Continental Congress where he was sitting the following spring when his wife "lost her little one" and was "very ill." The next four years the two brothers continued in their paths of public service. However, by the spring of 1780 John was forced to retire temporarily from political life. The more than four years that he had dedicated to Virginia and the Revolutionary cause had come at a heavy, financial price. Even so, he retired reluctantly. On April 7 of that year he wrote from Williamsburg to Thomas Jefferson, then governor of the state, that "I . . . beg you will be assured that nothing but the particular Situation of my private and domestic Affairs which have suffered extreme[ly] by a four Years and an half almost total Neg[lect] of them could induce me to retire from the Service of my Country during the War . . . . " Six months later, John remained aware that "Nearly 4 1/2 Years total Neglect of my Affairs has rendered my Attention to them so indispensably necessary that my Patriotism can scarcely lead me to neglect them again even during the short Term of a Session of Assembly." Nonetheless he "agreed to make this Sacrifice of my private Interest to the public Service and mean to serve my Country in the next Assembly." Besides serving as a member of the Committee, a member and at times president of the Council of the state of Virginia, and a delegate in the Assembly, he also served as a colonel in a militia regiment during the war.  

It is more than likely that Mann Page III shared his brother's sentiments of putting public affairs before domestic ones since Mann also continued to act almost continually as a public servant during
this period. In addition to filling elective office, he was appointed one of the commissioners or supervisors of the Fredericksburg arms manufactory. One piece of evidence that does point to a similar attitude about public service comes from a letter written in Philadelphia on May 26, 1777, and probably intended for his brother John. Mann states his views in such a way as to indicate that the brothers were in frequent contact with each other and saw eye to eye on a variety of political topics. This agreement would not have been possible if the two had not shared a fairly similar ideological outlook. A number of topics are introduced in the letter and range from Mann's desire for the current news from Virginia to the need for better ethics among congressional delegates.

In addition to his political service, Mann by 1780 was serving as a lieutenant colonel in the Spotsylvania militia. By August of the following year he had been promoted to full colonel. Both brothers obviously took their Revolutionary responsibilities seriously and were dedicated both politically and militarily to achieving independence.

After the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783, John and Mann continued to be active in public affairs. In 1784, the elder brother was appointed to the commission established to determine the boundary between Virginia and Pennsylvania. The following year he resigned his position as commissioner in order to act as a representative for Abingdon Parish at the Deputation of Protestant Episcopalians held in Richmond during May. Unlike his close friend Jefferson, Page was deeply religious, a trait that had been characteristic of his family since the seventeenth century. In fact, one of his uncles had stated in his
1765 will that he "desired[d] neither of my sons may ever be allowed to
go to Horse Races or Cock fights, or to any other public diversion as
they are only consuming of time & that all my children may be piously
brought up to that one and only thing necessary religion." There is
no evidence that John ever subscribed to such a puritanical code for
either himself or his children. However, he does appears to have been
politically conservative in areas concerning religion since he continued
to believe in the need for an established church and a state-supported
clergy. By the end of 1785, John was back in public service where he
remained, except for short intervals, for the rest of his life. From
1803-1805 he served as governor of Virginia for three one-year terms.

But at what personal cost had this practice of public service come
for John Page? As mentioned above, John was forced to retire "from the
Service of my Country" during the late spring and summer of 1780 in order
to attend to his domestic affairs. However, his financial problems did
not have their start during the Revolution. In fact, John first felt the
pinch of straitened domestic finances only a few years after his marriage.

In managing the Rosewell estate after his father's departure to
Spotsylvania, Page quickly became acquainted with the expenses of main­
taining a large plantation. In a letter dated May 27, 1769, to John
Norton, the London merchant, Page writes, "the Great Scarcity of Money
here, the Shortness of my Crops for four Years past, & the necessary
Expenses of an encresing Family joined to the Commencement of House­
keeping in a large House, have forced me to submit to it [debt] for a
while . . . . " Other letters to the same merchant indicate that
Page was in debt almost constantly. Debt is a continual refrain in
his correspondence as well as apologies for failure to repay advances. Other sources reveal that financial embarrassment plagued Page up until the end of his life.

In view of John Page's protestations of practicing "the most strict Economy," it is interesting to consider once again the evidence presented by the artifacts discovered in the trash pit located near the mansion. The artifacts provide some insight into housekeeping practices at Rosewell shortly after John Page was left master there. The objects recovered include the usual broken pottery and glass, shells and bones from the kitchen, small, miscellaneous household items, etc. The only thing that is really remarkable about some of the items is that they were still in serviceable condition. Others were of monetary value. For example, a miniature padlock and key and a harness buckle were found in the pit as well as a brass weight, brass buttons, and silvered harness. Even if the Pages had no further use for them, they could have been bartered or sold. Nor were reusable items the only things of value found in the pit; other contents included a Louis XV half-écu piece and one pair of a set of silver sleeve buttons. While it is certainly possible that some of these items were pilfered by servants, hidden in the trash pit, and then forgotten, the number and variety of these discarded objects are surprising. Whether stolen or thrown away unthinkingly, their discovery in the twentieth century raises the possibility of slack management within the household during a time of increasing financial distress.

In addition to problems with money, John Page may have failed to see eye to eye with his father. There is a hint of disagreement in cor-
respondence dated July 31 and October 11, 1771. John evidently had applied to his father for financial relief during this period but had not been successful. In his letter of October 11, he states that he will try again not only with his father but also Colonel Burwell, his father-in-law, but that he "Despair[s] of getting any Thing." However, more than a hint of familial disharmony can be detected in a letter dated almost twenty years later. Here Page complains of his father having sold land in Essex County that had been entailed on him twice. Also, there is a hint of indignation at the fact that he was not appointed the executor of his father's estate.

The same letter goes on to reveal that John Page was being hounded to pay off his father's debts. Page firmly informed his correspondent that he was not answerable for these debts since he was only one of the heirs of the estate rather than the executor and as such "not bound farther than Assets descending." Despite this disclaimer of responsibility, Page goes on to state that, "The H. Ct. of Chancery is to determine whether I am to pay & what Proportion of my Fathers Debts."

Another cause of Page's financial woes may have arisen as part of his marriage contract. When he and Frances Burwell were married, a contract between Page and Robert Burwell of Isle of Wight County obligated the latter to pay Page £1,000 sterling. This obligation apparently was never met in Burwell's lifetime. At his death more than ten years after the wedding, Burwell left a plantation, Meadow Quarter, to his son-in-law "in lieu of his wife's portion of 1,000 £ sterl., which I was by marriage contract to give her. . . ." The anticipation of £1,000
sterling that failed to materialize must have been a heavy blow to Page's continually straitened finances.

In 1792, John wrote to his good friend St. George Tucker that "I must go to our Court House to endeavour to find a Purchaser of Property sufficient to . . . raise about £300; £165 of which I must remit to Philad. to take up my Note for that Sum in the Bank of N. America. . . . " He goes on to complain that "my Affairs are so perplex'd that I have little or no Leisure to attend to Any thing else . . . . " The following year he again wrote Tucker that "For want of £700 I must expose 1/4 th Share in the Disml. Sp. Co.; 500 Acres of Land on that Swamp in Princess Anne; & my Mill which cost me in the Purchase of it £900, to public Sale by Trustees on the 1st Monday of Augt. next . . . . " This refrain is continued in 1795 when adverse financial conditions even prevented his attending to his Congressional responsibilities: "I am still detained from my Duty as a Representative by griping creditors I passed my Word to one of them that I would not leave the State till I paid him in full." In addition to raising "Cash enough to pay one or two small Debts," Page also hoped to raise enough money "to carry me conveniently to Philada." This need was a legitimate one since earlier in 1795 Page had been stranded in Baltimore with no money. Writing to his cousin Robert Carter of Nomini Hall and Baltimore, Page asks for a loan of $100 since a trip has lasted longer than he expected and thus left him stranded away from home with all of his money gone. This plea is followed by another letter dated May 2 of the same year in which he apologizes for not being able to repay the $100 loan by the time promised.
Although more politically minded than any of his forebears, Page discovered that politics, too, could be an expensive business. In a letter written prior to the Revolution, he complains of "the ridiculous Extravagance of Burgess making." Nor did things improve for him during the Revolution when he patriotically purchased large amounts of treasury notes issued by Virginia only to have the state repudiate them after the British surrender. Also a problem was the fact that so much of his time and energy was spent serving in government -- either as a burgess, a member of the Governor's Council, lieutenant governor, congressman, or governor at different periods of his life -- that he was prevented from giving his personal affairs sufficient attention. This inattention in turn affected his ability to attract votes and thus salaried public office after the Revolution. Voters evidently felt that someone who could not manage his own affairs was not capable of managing the state's.

In addition to the public disappointments that John Page experienced, there were personal ones as well which he seems to have felt much more keenly. In early 1787, Fanny Burwell Page died after a long illness, and in June of that year Page confessed that "Rosewell which was once my Paradise, is now less grateful to me, than would be the Desarts of Arabia . . . . " The following March he still referred to Fanny as "my beloved Wife" and revealed that although "she has been dead almost fourteen Months . . . many of these Months have passed off like a Dream. . . . " Nor was his wife his sole loss. While several children had died in infancy, one boy had lived to the age of 10 only to drown early in 1783 in Carter's Creek which runs east of Rosewell. Page described the youngster as "my dear & promising Son Johnny . . . " and admitted that
"Philosophy afforded no comfort to us; [however] . . . Religion made ample Amends. . . . "\(^58\)

In 1789, while a representative to the first Congress of the United States in New York, Page met Margaret Lowther, whose father was originally from Scotland. Although Margaret was much younger than Page, the two were married the following May. This second marriage also appears to have been a happy one and resulted in eight children, five of whom survived infancy.\(^59\) In the words of a contemporary, "Mrs Page . . . appears extremely amiable. . . . Mr. Page too, is a charming man, and they have certainly a fine family of Young Children." One ominous note is struck by this correspondent, however, for she concedes that "I wish her [Margaret Lowther Page] more happiness, than I fear awaits her at Rosewell."\(^60\) This cryptic comment may refer to the physical state of the mansion. During the time of John Page's tenure at Rosewell and his chronic struggle to make ends meet, the house at first received some maintenance. In October 1771 Page noted that his "House is very much out of Repair," and that he had "engaged a Man to put it in a saving Condition next Spring."\(^61\) To this end he placed an order with his London merchant for various paints and nails, oil, and lamp black. However, as Page's financial condition remained strained and as politics kept him away from home for longer periods of time due to the increased distances involved, it is fair to assume that Rosewell was allowed to deteriorate.\(^62\) To support this assumption, there is the evidence of insurance policies taken out on the house and its dependencies in 1802, 1806, and 1815. Between 1802 and 1806 the valuation of the property dropped $200 from $9,900 to $9,700. From 1806 to 1815, which includes the seven years
following Page's death when the house was uninhabited by the family but apparently rented out, the value of the property was placed at only $8,800 with the policy noting that the house and chimneys were "in bad repair." And what of John's brother Mann during this period of chronic financial crises? How did he fare both professionally and economically? Up until the mid-1790s, Mann Page III also continued to be involved in public life. At one point he was lieutenant of Spotsylvania County and later one of Virginia's Congressional delegates. But about 1795, he withdrew from public service, possibly because of the financial embarrassment he was experiencing in his own private life. His mother's will written ten years before implied that he had not had the resources necessary to allow his younger brothers and sisters to share in their father's estate. By 1793 it had become necessary for him to dispose of fairly large tracts of land, a practice which he continued until 1802, the year before his death. Ill health may also have been partly accountable for his withdrawal from public life. The winter of 1801 found him suffering "from the severest fit of Gout he has ever experienced which prevents him from writing." At the time of his death on March 23, 1803, at Mannsfield, his obituary described him as having "departed this life . . . after a long and painful illness." His brother John lived for another five years until October 11, 1808. At the time of John's death he was living in Richmond, where he was serving as the Commissioner of Loans. Established in 1777 this office was in charge of items relating to the public debt of the United States government and was a political favor from Thomas Jefferson. Unable
to succeed himself after his third term as Virginia's governor ended in 1805, John Page was once again hard pressed for money, and as president, Jefferson was able to offer him this post as a temporary expedient.

With the deaths of these two brothers during the first decade of the nineteenth century came an end to their on-going struggle to make ends meet. It is easy to say that had both men been less mindful of their public duties and more so of their private responsibilities their financial lot might have been an easier one. While an easy response, is it a simplistic one? In the following chapter we will examine some of the other factors that may have affected the Page family's financial well-being.
CHAPTER III
THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL

The most memorable achievement of the Page family was Rosewell which even now, though in ruins, inspires awe and admiration, the same reaction it was intended to arouse in the eighteenth century. As noted earlier, this ambitious structure was one cause of the family's straitened financial condition after the death of Mann Page I. But what of other spending habits of the family. To what level of material consumption were they accustomed? Did they curtail or restrict their levels of consumption as their financial condition worsened? Did they practice stricter economic habits over the course of the eighteenth century? How did they react to long-term trends in the tobacco market? Once again, it is necessary to start at the beginning of the century.

When Mann Page I was 14, his mother decided to remarry. A contract was drawn up between her and her future husband, John Page, a kinsman of her first husband, Matthew Page. Dated September 20, 1705, the document is a prenuptial covenant that outlines the disposition of both husband's and wife's respective estates in case one predeceased the other. The inheritance of Mary Mann Page's children is clearly specified, with Mann, as the only male, being the most favored sibling. At age 21 he was to receive lands in Gloucester, James City, and New Kent Counties as well as slaves, stock, household items and tools, and hogsheads of tobacco amounting to £2,000 sterling. This sum was in addi-
tion to the one-third of his father's estate that he was also to receive at his majority. Already aware of his family's social standing within Virginia, Mann would have had this awareness underscored by the financial arrangements of his mother's prenuptial agreement. The amount of his inheritance served as an economic buttress to his social and future political standing within the colony.

An English education was further evidence both to Mann and to his peers of his family's right to claim a position at the top of the colony's social, political, and economic hierarchy. Not only was he sent to England, he also received a thoroughly academic education, first at Eton and then at St. John's, Oxford. This further separated him from his slightly earlier contemporaries, Robert "King" Carter and William Byrd II, who though sent to England to be educated, received practical training as well as academic instruction. But whether classical or practical, education was necessary for anyone claiming to be a gentleman and planning to manage his own affairs, as the following letter from Nathaniel Burwell to his brother demonstrates:

I'm very much Concern'd for ye occasion of your Sending & more to see how insensible Lewis is of his own Ignorance, for he can nither read as he aught to do, nor give one letter a true Shape when he writes nor spell one line of English & is altogether ignorant of Arithmetick, so that he'll be noways capable of ye management of his own affairs & unfit for any Gentleman's conversation, & therefore a Scandalous person & a Shame to his Relations, not having one single qualification to recommend him; if he would but apply himself heartily one year, to write well, learn ye Mathematics & Consequently arithmetick of Mr. Jones, & to Translate Latin into English of Mr. Ingles to learn him to spell well, I would then take him home & imploy him till he comes of Age in my Office & Plantation Affairs that he might the better be capable to manage his own, & to my knowledge this will be no disservice to him, & a greater than any other method he'll fall into through his own inclination; for my part, tis no advantage to me whether he be a Blockhead or a man of parts, were he not my Brother, but
when I have to do with him, to schoole he shall go, & if he don't
go till I can go over, he then Shall be forced to go whether he
will or not & be made an example off (while I stand by) before ye
face of ye whole College; as for ye pretence of Liveing in ye
College, ye last meeting has taken such care as will effectually
provide better eating for ye Boys, so that need not Scare him, &
therefore he had better go by fare means than fowl, for go he
shall, & Send him forthwith.³

Written in 1718, this letter gives us a striking view of one man's re-
action to an unlearned male relative who compounds the situation by
apparently refusing to learn. With his classical English education,
Mann Page could rest assured that he would never be called a "Blockhead"
or be considered "unfit for any Gentleman's conversation."

Back in Virginia by 1711 and although only 20, Page proceeded to marry
into another premier Virginia family, the Wormeleys of Middlesex County.
Two years after his marriage to Judith Wormeley, Alexander Spotswood was
so impressed with the young man that the governor recommended Page's
appointment to the Council of Virginia, further evidence of his standing
within the colony.

Since no inventory survives for the first Mann Page's estate, it is
necessary to rely on other forms of evidence as to the standard of living
maintained at Rosewell during his tenure as master. In 1709 John Page,
Mann's step-father, made a will that left to his step-son the amount and
value of property specified by the prenuptial agreement of 1705.⁴ However,
these items clearly show that the Page household was an affluent one for
the period. Among these bequests were

a large folio Bible with a Turkey leather cover plated with silver
and clasps, a silver Watch, a Silver hilted sword a Torter shell
and Silver hilted hanger and Belt, one Torter shell and Silver
handed [sic] Horse whip, Crimson Velvett Howsen [housing?] and
Holster caps trimm'd with Silver Lace and a Silver Tobacco box
which were his ffathers.⁵
In addition, Mann was to receive five family portraits "in double lacker'd frames" that were in his step-father's parlor; the subjects were Mann himself, his two sisters, and his parents. It is obvious from this listing that the Pages were quite wealthy. Not only were they literate, as evidenced by a valuable Bible decorated with silver and leather, but they also viewed themselves as gentlemen entitled to carry swords—in this case, one that was expensively outfitted with silver and tortoise shell. No less valuable were the horse whip and the holsters as well as the silver tobacco box. Of course, the five family portraits also underscored the Pages' wealth and claim to status within the emerging patrician culture of eighteenth-century Virginia.

In addition to items inherited from his own family, Page also was the recipient of proceeds from his mother-in-law's estate only five years after his marriage to Judith Wormeley. At the death of his mother-in-law, Elizabeth Wormeley Churchill in November 1716, only a month before her daughter Judith died, Page received all of Elizabeth Churchill's "money and effects in the hands of or due me by Messrs. Francis and John Willis, of London, merchants, also 20 hogsheads of my tobacco of this year's crop . . . ." Page had already benefitted from the will of his deceased father-in-law. Ralph Wormeley in his will dated February 22, 1700, left to his daughter, at the time of her marriage £250 sterling and 1,500 acres of land at Manskin in Pamunkey Neck. All of these legacies underscore Alexander Spotswood's description of Page as "a young gentleman of . . . a very plentiful estate . . . ."

The foregoing facts aside, two observations relating to Page's business affairs can be made: he selected a poor time economically to
commence mansion building given the plummeting tobacco prices of the 1720s, and he was a "very Confus'd negligent" bookkeeper. At the time of his death in 1730/31, he was deeply in debt to his creditors with just one account being "a very great sum . . . ." But he let neither of these considerations stand in his way when it came to building his new house, nor did his last will and testament reflect difficulties. The mansion was an ambitious project that revealed his espousal of an English building style as opposed to the evolving Georgian derivatives that would later satisfy other wealthy Virginians. It demonstrated to his peers that he had a rightful claim to be a leader in colonial society and that he could be as English as the English. Despite his indebtedness, he drew up a will that specified that large sums of money in pounds sterling be left to his younger children, still another clue to his view of himself and his family. Unfortunately, his vision outpaced his ability to manage his estate in an organized and efficient manner and left his heirs and their guardians to cope with untangling his financial disarray.

Regarding life at Rosewell plantation during Mann Page I's tenure as master, a few facts can be gleaned from his second father-in-law's letterbooks and diary. We know that Page was the owner of a coach, which Robert Carter used on August 8, 1726, as well as a boat which Carter used on November 9, 1727. In his cellar Page stocked "Champaigne & Burgundy which provd Extraordinary good," as well as Bristol waters. He and his family joined with their peers in Virginia society to celebrate special occasions such as the observance of the king's birthday, and regular visits were exchanged between
Rosewell and Corotoman. The two households also received the same two papers from London — the *Evening Post* and the *Quarterly Register*. We know from his grandson, John, that Page also owned a collection of books, "which was no contemptible library." After Page's death, his son, Mann II, became the primary heir when his elder half-brother died a few months after their father. Although Ralph had been sent to England to follow in his father's educational footsteps, he encountered difficulties at Eton where he was expelled for drunkenness. Shortly before his death of smallpox, probably contracted from his cousin, Lewis Burwell, he was described as spending "his time in raking about London." Mann II was given no opportunity to emulate his half-brother's conduct in England. Instead, he was sent to the College of William and Mary where he graduated in 1740. The following year he married Alice Grymes, daughter of John Grymes of Middlesex County. After her death, he married in 1748 Ann Corbin Tayloe, daughter of John Tayloe I of Richmond County. We do know a little more about specific items that Mann Page II acquired for furnishing his home than about his father's purchases, and what we do know reveals the opulent lives of the most well-to-do Virginia gentry.

As owner of Rosewell, Mann Page II is credited with finishing the interior of the mansion; it is thought by the early 1740s, the time of his first marriage. In 1744, Page petitioned the House of Burgesses for permission to break the entail on the family estate since his father's debts still had not been discharged and "the portions . . . to the said testator's [Mann Page I] children are mostly yet unpaid." Permission for breaking the entail was granted and in September
Page placed the following advertisement in the Virginia Gazette:

The Lands which I was enabled to sell and dispose of, to raise Money for the Paiment of my Fathers Debts, and Performance of his Will, by an Act passed at the last Assembly, will be expos'd to Sale at public Auction, in the City of Williamsburg, on Wednesday the thirteenth of October next.23

But even as he was selling off lands and in some cases the slaves attached to those lands, he was acquiring items for himself and his family that to the twentieth-century mind would appear to be non-essential. This pattern of consumption continued through his second marriage and his removal to Mannsfield in the mid-1760s.

At some point during the mid-1740s, Mann Page II commissioned a pair of portraits of himself and his wife with their first child John by the English painter Charles Bridges. The subjects are shown in expensive velvets and satins. Mann Page is wearing a brilliant red velvet coat and a long, formal, white wig covering his shaved head. While his right hand is bare, his left is encased in a glove that appears to be made of white leather and holds the mate for his right hand.

The companion portrait of Alice Grymes Page shows her in a white satin wrapper, typical of the costume worn by women in early eighteenth-century English portraits. On her lap is a sort of blue satin drapery while her young son, wearing a red, cloak-like covering, leans against her right knee.24 Alice Grymes died early in 1746, but two years later her father's will revealed that her marriage portion had been paid to Mann Page II as part of John Grymes' estate. Grymes, a member of the Council, also remembered his former son-in-law with "twenty pounds for Mourning for himself and his children and a mourning Ring."25
In 1748 Page remarried, and like his father, his second marriage was as advantageous as the first. His bride, Ann Corbin Tayloe, came from a distinguished Northern Neck family. Her brother John Tayloe II in a few years began construction of Mt. Airy, the Palladian-style country house that still stands a few miles west of Warsaw, Virginia. During his second marriage, Page again commissioned portraits of himself and his wife, this time by John Wollaston. These two portraits do not have the colorful brilliance of the Bridges paintings, but they do underscore Page's continuing pride in his family lineage and its place within Virginia society. Page also commissioned Wollaston to do a painting of his eldest son John in the guise of a young English gentleman just returned from a day's shooting. Page may have also commissioned Wollaston to do a joint painting of two of his children by Ann Corbin Tayloe.

Some of Mann Page's other spending habits can be discerned from the Virginia Gazette Day Books although these habits certainly cannot be described as lavish. During 1764 and 1765, Page used the Gazette and its shop to advertise land sales, to buy writing supplies, and to make book purchases which included works by Swift and Milton. Page's books appear to have been kept in a closet at Rosewell as opposed to a larger room identified as a library or study. This possibility arises from a statement made by Page's eldest son. In the preface of a manuscript not published until the middle of the nineteenth century, John Page states that he saw two book-manuscripts in Commissary Robert Dawson's "library in 1757, and knew them to be the books I had seen in my father's closet . . . ." The ruins of Rosewell reveal two first-floor rooms with
closets that contain fireplaces. It is possible, given the relatively early date of the house, that there was a first-floor bedchamber in one of the two west rooms, and that off this bedchamber there was a closet which held the family's books. The existence of a fireplace would have provided warmth and dryness during the winter. Rooms set aside solely for books were a luxury affordable by only the very wealthy during the eighteenth century. Here again the Pages reveal their place at the top of Virginia's societal pyramid.

Mann Page frequented other area tradesmen besides those at the Williamsburg printing office. These included Augustine Moore at Yorktown and an anonymous cabinetmaker from the Williamsburg area, judging from a spice cabinet in the collection of the Virginia Historical Society. Closely resembling a miniature clothes press of about 1760, the cabinet clearly reveals through its construction, materials, and style its relationship to other Williamsburg pieces of the period.

English furniture was also in use at Rosewell. A settee survives in Gloucester County, and it too has a tradition of having been a Page family piece. The settee is a fully upholstered piece of seating furniture although it lacks its mattress or what we today call a cushion. This settee dates from the mid-1740s, and in view of its attribution, demonstrates that Mann Page II was acquiring quality furnishings from England for his mansion at the same time that he was finding himself unable to meet his father's debts and to carry out the terms of his will.

Page's marriage to Ann Corbin Tayloe in 1748 certainly would have done nothing to lessen temptations toward material consumption. Miss Tayloe was heiress to £2,000 sterling, 500 pounds current money, her
mother's gold watch and furniture, and two slaves, Maria and Venus. 35 Page's new brother-in-law, John Tayloe II, approximately ten years later would present still another temptation when Tayloe began building his new home in Richmond County. Page may have felt the need to compete with his brother-in-law since in the mid-60s he began building his own new home, which closely resembled Mt. Airy, in Spotsylvania County.

With a rapidly growing family by his second wife and the fact that his eldest son had reached his majority and his eldest daughter was set to marry Lewis Burwell just across Carter's Creek at Fairfield, 36 Page may have felt the time was right for a move. Yet there were warning signs. Page was one of the many persons indebted to the Robinson estate, 37 although his debt was miniscule -- only £98.3.17 -- when compared to those of others, like William Byrd III, who owed over £25,000. 38 A more serious aspect of Page's decision to start building during the mid-60s was a fall in tobacco prices. The same problem had confronted his father during the 1720s as he had started construction of Rosewell. 39 Compounding the construction costs were the expenses of furnishing Mannsfield. Only two orders for goods survive for Mann Page II after his move to Spotsylvania, but they are quite revealing. In 1770 Page ordered from John Norton and Sons "1 large Scotch Carpet," "1 dozn. Windsor Chairs for a Passage," and "1 Set Coach Harness for Six Horses." 40 In addition, he ordered French kid gloves for two of his sons and silk handkerchiefs for them as well as for himself. 41 For entertaining he ordered ivory-handled knives and forks, queen's china as well as blue and white, and cut-glass containers for pickles. 42 Apparently there already was a harpsichord at Mannsfield since Page ordered ten
ounces of wire for such an instrument. In his garden there were to be a variety of vegetables ranging from carrots to cauliflower to Windsor beans. Overseering these plantings was a Scottish gardener named Alexander Reid who came to work for Page in 1768.

In 1773 Page placed another large order with Norton; it included two large pewter dishes to be "marked [with] MP Cypher" as well as items for himself, his wife, and at least three of their children. This was the year -- 1773 -- when John Norton of London wrote his kinsman in Virginia that Page's tobacco was of an inferior quality. Norton had "deliv'd a hhd of his MP aday or two ago that had a large part of the hhd dry rotten, perish'd and stunk like a dunghill and is not worth a farthing pr cwt . . . and his Rappa. Tobo. is likewise Trash." This evaluation of his tobacco did not stop Page from drawing on Norton when in a tight spot:

The fourth of November I was pressed by Mr. Montgomerie for some money, and not having it by me, was obliged to draw on You for £100, which shall take as a particular Favour if You'll Honour. -- You may depend on it Sir, nothing but the utmost necessity shall ever oblige me to draw, and when that happens, hope You'll assist me, which shall always be acknowledged as a great Favour Confered [sic] . . . .

Down in Gloucester things were not faring much better for Page's son John who in 1771 also declared to Norton that: "When you recollect my first Letters full of an Abhorrence of Extravagance & Debt; & my others full of fair Promises & large Expectation: I fear you begin to suspect my Honour . . . ." John Page starts this letter with the admission that his "Crop has again fallen extremely short," but near the end predicts that soon he "might well expect to make three Times that Quantity of Tobo. as I have more than three times that Number of good Hands in ye Crop . . . ."
This last quote was a familiar refrain to Norton as well as to other merchants and factors. Virginia planters had a tendency to be overly optimistic about future harvests; as Samuel Athawes noted, they tended to "over value their incomes & live up to their suppositions without providing against Calamities accidents &c." This characteristic was certainly true of John Page whose sanguine predictions remained unfulfilled. It would appear that Page was in debt almost from the beginning of his adult life. In April 1769 Page wrote Norton to apologize for not being able to pay the full amount owed for goods that Page had ordered the previous year "upon going to Housekeeping." A clue as to a more exact date for Page's setting up his household appears in a letter from John Norton to his son Hatley where he refers to having received tobacco from "Mr. Jhn. Page Junr." This letter is dated July 31, 1767, and would seem to confirm the probable date of the mid-1760s as the point at which Mann Page II left Rosewell in John's hands while he moved himself and his second family to Spotsylvania County.

Although John Page assured John Norton on July 31, 1771, of "the most strict Oconomy" being observed at Rosewell, some artifacts discovered during the archaeological excavation conducted at the site between 1957 and 1959 contradict this statement. The dig was concentrated at a trash pit west of the house which was probably filled between 1763 and 1772 and revealed some interesting contents. Not surprisingly, the grade of tablewares was fairly high. According to Ivor Noel Hume who supervised the excavation, the "best of them . . . were on a par with the best examples from the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg." While a number of other ceramics as well as glassware were of varying
quality, the "table glasswares . . . are predominantly of good quality . . . ." Granted, the glassware and ceramics could and probably did include items ordered by Mann Page II and left at Rosewell after his departure, and thus they do not reflect on John Page's standards of consumption. However, they do reflect on the father, a man who had his own difficulties with money. Other artifacts reflect on the son as well since some of the other items unearthed point to slack household management at the very time that the younger Page was supposedly practicing such "strict Oconomy." As noted earlier, Page's idea of economizing apparently did not include keeping a close eye on reusable and, at times, even valuable items relegated to the trash heap.

Still another curious facet of Page's sense of economic priorities is recounted in a nineteenth-century publication. Bishop Meade's Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Old Virginia contains an anecdote about an Algerian named Selim who, through a series of misadventures, wound up in Virginia in the eighteenth century. Supposedly, John Page, while in Philadelphia, had Charles Willson Peale paint Selim's portrait which was shipped to Virginia and hung at Rosewell. There apparently was a picture gallery at the house on the second floor over the great hall and here were exhibited family portraits. John Page's decision to have Selim painted seems an unusual way to spend money at a time when Page appears to have been chronically short of cash.

Unfortunately little else is known about household belongings at Rosewell. While letters exist indicating that orders for goods had been enclosed, the orders themselves do not survive. However, one order for personal items can be found in the Tucker-Coleman Papers. Written by
Frances Page, it was included in one of her husband's letters to St. George Tucker in 1777. Her list includes fourteen pairs of shoes of varying materials, one dozen pairs of women's gloves, and six ivory combs and brushes. While it is often unwise to judge another century's standards by one's own, fourteen pairs of shoes ordered during wartime seems somewhat excessive.

A few pieces of furniture have descended in the family: two side chairs and a desk. Both chairs are similar to two illustrated in Wallace Gusler's *Furniture of Williamsburg and Eastern Virginia, 1710-1790.* Illustration 95 on page 141 closely resembles a chair belonging to Mr. Rosewell Page II of Beaver Dam, Virginia, while illustration 98 on page 143 is almost identical to one owned by Mr. Cecil Wray Page of Gloucester County. Both are relatively simple chairs that date to roughly 1770 and reveal themselves to be products of eastern Virginia. The desk, on the other hand, is a northern piece possibly bought by John Page either as venture cargo to the southern colonies or in his travels. It, like the chairs, is also a fairly straightforward piece of furniture. It is possible that Page compromised his spending habits by cutting back in some areas while overspending in others. In other words, he could have economized by purchasing regional furniture while spending money on a portrait of a person not even related to the family.

One part of Page's estate that did suffer through neglect was Rosewell. While in the fall of 1771 he ordered a number of items from London "to put it [Rosewell] in a saving Condition next Spring," this course of maintenance apparently had been abandoned at least by the beginning of the nineteenth century. By 1815, seven years after John Page's death, the
Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia's policy on the house stated that the house and chimneys were "in bad repair."64 This lack of maintenance was probably due not only to Page's increasingly straitened financial condition but also because politics kept him away from home for longer periods of time.

One fact that cannot be overlooked when discussing John Page's personal affairs is his poor personal and business judgment. Even one of his best friends, Thomas Jefferson, wrote that "I . . . love him as a brother, but I have always known him the worst judge of men existing. He has fallen a sacrifice to the ease with which he gives his confidence to those who deserve it not."65 Even though this assessment was made in 1801, Page thirty years earlier had admitted to John Norton that on at least one occasion he had hired "one of the worst Overseers in the World."66 Coupled with this lack of judgment and easily given confidence was an easy-going nature which made Page "too sociable, and fond of the conversation of my friends."67 Thus, it would appear that John Page's financial problems were compounded by a lack of judgment and discipline in relation to others as well as to himself.

It is much harder to trace the affairs of John's brother, Mann Page III, since no correspondence survives relating to his business dealings. While Mann Page II had named his sons John, Mann III, and Robert to be guardians and executors to his younger sons, John apparently did not consider himself to be otherwise responsible for the estate. Like his father, Mann Page II also left debts, enough debts in fact to raise doubts as to whether his estate would cover them.68 As of 1790 at least some of these debts were still outstanding because John was being hounded
to help with their repayment. He responded angrily to his father's creditor that "I do not look upon myself as answerable for any part of my Father's Debts. I am not his Executor . . . ." It would appear that Mann Page III was left to deal with his father's creditors and this would account for his land sales in the mid-90s. However, his life during the 80s must have been a relatively comfortable one materially.

While his mother lived until 1785, Mann and his wife Mary Tayloe shared Mannsfield and its servants with her as well as the coach and horses that were left to the widow during her lifetime and then descended to Mann.

While there are no known surviving documents relating to spending habits at Mannsfield during Mann Page III's tenure, an inventory exists for that house alone among Page properties of the period. The inventory apparently has been overlooked because it was not entered in the court records until seven years after it was ordered to be taken. From this inventory it is possible not only to determine the value of Page's household furnishings but also to speculate on how up to date some of these furnishings were in 1803. More difficult to decipher is the placement of the goods within the house. A few rooms are labeled but the majority of items are lumped under two categories: "At the Mansion House" which appears to consist of objects found in bedchambers and "Up Stairs" which seems to combine furniture suitable for both public and private spaces, i.e., parlor and dining room versus bedchambers and service areas respectively.

Overall, the furnishings seem to be of fairly good quality. The dining room seems to have been the most expensively outfitted room in the house. There was one large dining table and two smaller ones, the three
worth $40 or £12, a sum that indicates the tables were fairly new and fashionable. There was a carpet on the floor as well as two liquor cases, one with white bottles and the other with black. In addition, the room had the added elegance of a clock worth $25 or £7/10. It may have been in this room that George Washington in June 1788 "dined in a large Company . . ." and eight years later Benjamin Henry Latrobe dined with "several Gentlemen of the town and neighborhood." 

The seven beds listed at the beginning of the inventory average in value about £14 apiece, a respectable sum, once all the component parts are tallied. Surprisingly, however, no curtains are listed although they still would have been used in 1803. Only one bed with curtains is mentioned "In the room below Stairs," possibly a servant's bed since it is described as "small" and worth only $8.00 or £2/8, although admittedly lacking a mattress and pillows. However, china and glassware, such as one might find in a housekeeper's or butler's room where a lower priced bed would be expected, follow the bed in the list.

Some of the items ordered by Mann Page II from John Norton in 1770 may still have been in existence. For example, the "4 sweet meat Glasses" might be the only ones from the 12 ordered more than thirty years previously. The carpet listed in the dining room and worth only $8.00 or £2/8 in 1803 might be the "large Scotch carpet" listed on the earlier order. Also, the harpsichord for which Mann Page needed "10 oz. Wire" might be the one valued at $100 or £30 in his son's inventory.

What is questionable about the inventory is the number of items that do not show up in the document. For example, only one looking glass is cited as well as only one dressing table and one card table. The
absence of bed curtains has been noted already, and no prints or portraits are listed. One possible explanation is that the family had removed items of sentimental value from the house shortly after Mann Page III's death in late March 1803. The inventory was not taken until the end of December. As with the court's ruling with his father's estate, the document had been required by the court, although in the case of the son there was a more pressing need for an enumeration of his belongings. On November 18, 1803, the *Virginia Herald* carried an advertisement for the sale of "all the personal Property belonging to his Estate" at Mannsfield on January 2, 1804. This public auction would certainly argue for the family having removed personal and sentimental items from the house during the intervening months between March and December.

Of those items found at Mannsfield prior to 1803, at least some had been added during Mann Page III's ownership of the property, although the extent of these additions is difficult to determine. The "14 square back windsor Chairs" were more than likely his purchase since that form is typical of the late eighteenth century. It is also possible that the "Mahogany chest of drawers" worth $10 or £3 is the same one now in the collection of the Virginia Historical Society. Given by the late Louise Anderson Patten, a descendant of Mann Page III, the case piece is mahogany, primary wood, and yellow pine and poplar, secondary woods. Although its possible date ranges from 1790 to 1810, the earlier date is probable, given the hand-wrought, T-head nails used to secure the base moldings. The chest of drawers is probably eastern Virginia in origin, likely from Fredericksburg. The handling of its inlay suggests that the piece is of a provincial grade, but the work nonetheless indicates an individual
who is concerned with current styles even if he cannot afford a top-of-the-line product.

Two other items that relate to Mann Page III are a mourning brooch and a miniature of him probably done in the 1790s. The latter is also a Patten gift to the Virginia Historical Society. It may have been a keepsake for his daughter Maria Mann Page upon her marriage to Lewis Burwell since it has the initials "MMP" on the back of the case. The oral history that accompanies the miniature, painted on ivory with a gold casing, is that it was executed by P. A. Peticolas (1760-1842) who worked in Baltimore, New York, and Philadelphia. By coincidence Philadelphia is also the city which produced the mourning brooch associated with Mann Page III. Acquired by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in 1986, the brooch is made of ivory and has two funerary urns on pedestals, the weeping figure of a woman, and two different locks of hair under a glass facing. The back of the case is gold and is inscribed "Mann Page" and "Ann Corbin Page." The brooch is quite rare in that the maker both signed and dated the piece. Microscopic inspection of the brooch's face revealed the inscription "Ro Webb" with "179? [2?]" underneath the hair. Research files at the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, indicate that Robert Webb was listed in the Philadelphia city directory during the last decade of the eighteenth century and first decade of the nineteenth as a "jeweller" and "hair worker." Since John Page, Mann's older half-brother, was serving in the United States Congress in Philadelphia during the 1790s, it is more than probable that he had the brooch commissioned either for or at the direction of Mann Page III.

Although certain comparisons between the two brothers' properties are not possible because of the lack of an inventory for one and the lack
of correspondence for the other, there are two bits of evidence that should be considered. The first is the Mutual Assurance policy which Mann Page had taken out on his house in 1797 and which valued Mannsfield at $13,000. Rosewell, on the other hand, was valued at only $8,000 in 1802. This difference, of course, reflects Rosewell's additional forty years of age, but there is a possibility that Mannsfield suffered the same lack of regular maintenance as did its older counterpart in Gloucester. While the Spotsylvania house with its two dependencies and connecting colonnades was valued at $18,000, the policy states that it would cost $19,500 to rebuild. Confirmation of this lack of maintenance comes from a policy issued on the property in 1806. In that year the three buildings are valued at $20,000, and as "they are lately repaired, they are actually worth Twenty Thousand Dollars." Apparently both brothers tried to save money by putting off repairs.

The other piece of evidence to be considered is that both men invested in mills, a not uncommon practice among their class during the second half of the eighteenth century. Mann Page's mill, located not far from Mannsfield in the direction of Fredericksburg, was "A Merchant Mill House" worth $4,500. It cannot be determined whether or not Page diversified and expanded agriculturally to include grain as well as tobacco; there are no records. However, the size of the mill, 40 by 60 feet and two stories high, and the fact that it is described as a "Merchant Mill" leads one to think that Mann Page either switched to grain cultivation and/or took advantage of other planters who did so by offering facilities for the grinding of grain.

John Page also owned a mill, location unknown, but in 1793 he was in the process of selling it. While money and debt had plagued John
since the mid-60s, these problems seem to have intensified in the 90s, just as they did for his younger brother. Prior to the last decade of the eighteenth century, he had referred to his affairs as being "perplexed" or in a "peculiar Situation." By the 1790s, however, matters had worsened to the point that he had to resort to selling land and slaves to meet the demands of his "gripping creditors." The mill was another casualty to his debts. As in the case of Mann, there is no way of determining whether John Page diversified his crops to include grain or whether he remained true to tobacco out of habit and familiarity with all its stages of cultivation and marketing. The only thing that can be determined is that by the 1790s both brothers were in such dire financial straits that they had to sell off their capital-producing assets, thus further reducing their ability to make money.

The Pages' situation was in no way unique. Another family in similar circumstances was the Nelson family of Yorktown. The heirs of the two families -- who were, not surprisingly, related -- had crossed paths fairly early in life when both John Page and Thomas Nelson had been under the instruction of William Yates in 1751 at his school in Gloucester County. Unlike John, Thomas was sent to England to finish his schooling and did not return to Virginia until 1761. One year later Thomas Nelson married Lucy Grymes, John Page's first cousin. Then in the mid-60s John married Frances Burwell, Thomas' first cousin, once removed. The men's paths continued to cross as political sympathies and familial bonds increased. Both men were committed to Revolutionary ideals and were strong supporters of the struggle for independence. However, even stronger were the family ties that grew one by one until eventually five of John
Page's children were married to five of Thomas Nelson's. But kinship and politics aside, the two men unfortunately shared one destructive trait: the inability to manage their estates. With Page, the inability seems to have run in the family since his grandfather had died in debt as well as his father. Also, John and his brother Mann had had to contend with a divided inheritance that left each brother with half the resources that had been available to their father Mann II. Thomas Nelson, on the other hand, came from a financially solvent family and had inherited the majority of his father's estate. Nelson had much more optimistic prospects, but falling tobacco prices and overextension of credit coupled with his lack of business acumen made his situation on the eve of the Revolution no better than John's. Also, both men in a spirit of Revolutionary fervor contributed their own resources to the war effort. This commitment included not only money but also time to the extent that they neglected their personal affairs.

Both men had grown up in a style of life that their pocketbooks could no longer support, but Thomas apparently failed to accept this fact, and it is more than likely that John as well as his brother Mann suffered from the same inability. It is probable that both tended to "over value their incomes, & live up to their suppositions without providing against Calamities accidents &c." Both Thomas and John were saddled with large families that meant the subdivision of large estates, reducing even further the assets available to each heir. Nowhere is this last statement better illustrated than in the will of Mann Page III. His grandfather, the first Mann Page, had left an estate that called for the division of real property primarily between his two oldest sons, a
division that was staved off for another generation by the death of one of the primary heirs. To his younger children Mann I left large legacies that totaled £7,000 sterling. By the time of Mann III's death in 1803, the family had been reduced to such circumstances that Mann III's will requested "that my sons may be brought up to such Profession as their Guardians shall think their Capacities best suited to, if they are un­qualified for the higher professions it is my Will that they be taught such mechanic art as their genious [sic] shall be best adapted to." Mann Page III, forced to satisfy his father's creditors through land sales, left a family that could no longer qualify as landed gentry. Although their social prominence would survive into the twentieth century, their financial and political prominence was gone forever.
CONCLUSION

What conclusions can be drawn about the Pages' finances during the course of the eighteenth century? As demonstrated, the century opened with the family enjoying wealth, status, and prestige in the colony. The career of Mann Page I, in effect an only child who had no surviving brothers or sisters with whom to share his estate, would seem to have marked the culmination of his family's drive to succeed politically, socially, and financially. He was educated in England, returned home to marry into two of the leading families of the period, was appointed to the Council of Virginia, acquired thousands of acres of land in addition to the thousands already in his family, started the construction of the most ambitious house in the colony, and had numerous children to succeed him and further cement alliances with other leading families through marriage.

However, in the course of succeeding so well in all these areas, he sowed the seed of his family's decline. His death revealed the existence of large debts. Although it is not known precisely what amounts of money were involved or to whom they were owed, the total amount exceeded the value of his personal property and his slaves. His father-in-law was forced to intercede only eighteen months after Page's death to keep his grandchildren's inheritance from being pulled apart by creditors. Twelve years later, Mann Page II found it necessary to petition for an act of assembly to break the entail on his inheritance, thus allowing him to sell land and raise money to finish paying his
father's debts as well as to pay his brothers and sisters the bequests called for in their father's will.

Here, then, are several apparent reasons for the beginning of the family's financial problems. First, Mann Page I spent more money than he had. While the precise nature of his debts is not known, it is reasonable to assume that the cost of his house had something to do with them since even a rough estimate of the expense, whether using Sir John Randolph's estimate for the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg or London figures available for the 1730s, ranges from approximately £7,000 to £11,000. The estate was not able to absorb the burden which could only be discharged through land sales. The second and third reasons are closely connected. By his two wives, Mann Page had four children who reached maturity and married. While this is not a large family compared with others of the period, it is too large when the third cause of the Pages' problems is considered -- the liberal provisions of Mann Page I's will. If all his children had lived, they would have caused a drain of £7,000 on their brother's inheritance. To the three that survived beside Mann II, a sum of £4,500 had to be paid between 1735 and 1743. Here again, land sales were necessary for the younger Page to honor his father's will.

It is to Mann Page II that a fourth reason for the family's reverses can be attributed. By dividing the estate with his move from Rosewell to Mannsfield around 1765, Page showed his concern for his eldest sons by his two wives. Unfortunately, he also decreased their total economic resources through this split. Each son was provided with a large family seat, but neither had sufficient means to adequately sup-
port himself and his family. On the positive side, Mann Page II did not repeat his father's mistake of willing excessive cash payments to his children, but on the other hand, he apparently left debts of his own that became the responsibility of Mann Page III. As for brother John, he appears to have brought on, through mismanagement, a good deal of his own financial distress. He was seemingly in continual need of money. Yet even as he proclaimed his practice of economy, his constant service in Virginia's government caused him to pay insufficient attention to his own finances. His lack of personal and business judgment may have compounded his economic problems. Also, it is possible that both brothers found it difficult to curb their spending habits.

The last reason that should be cited is one external to the family. Times were changing. Land was wearing out from continuous tobacco cultivation, tobacco prices fell in the 1770s, war from 1776 to 1781 brought a devastating period of inflation, and changing economic and trading conditions in the 1780s threatened those caught in the rut of colonial-era financial and agricultural practices with economic extinction.

These, then, were the reasons for the economic decline of the Page family during the eighteenth century. None of them taken separately was necessarily ruinous, but when combined, they overtaxed the family's resources. A patrimony based on large, undeveloped landholdings in the first half of the eighteenth century disappeared through repeated subdivisions of the family estates as the century neared its end. The family simply did not have the economic capacity to cope with the demands on the estate which was slowly consumed by debts and other financial obligations.
Chapter I

1. For a thorough account of the Page family genealogy, see Richard Channing Moore Page, Genealogy of the Page Family in Virginia (reprint of 1893 edition; Harrisonburg, Va.: C. J. Carrier Company, 1972). Unfortunately, the state of Gloucester County records makes it necessary to rely on this secondary source as well as others cited below for a good deal of the information available on the family.

2. For example, within only five years, John Page was elected to the House of Burgesses, "Extracts from Proceedings of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1652-1661," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography (hereafter cited as VMHB), Vol. 8, No. 4 (April, 1901), p. 389.


7. Richard Arthur Austen-Leigh (ed.), The Eton College Register, 1698-1752 (Eton: Spottiswoode, Ballantyne & Co., Ltd., 1927), p. 258. There is also a notation in the entry for Mann Page that states an error was made in Joseph Foster's Alumni Oxoniensis. Austen-Leigh notes that Page is mistakenly described as being of "Abingdon, Berks" instead of Abingdon Parish, Gloucester County, Virginia. Unfortunately, the Oxford notation gives no more information on Page than does the Eton entry. See Joseph Foster, Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1500-1714: Their Parentage, Birthplace and Year of Birth, with a Record of Their Degrees (Oxford: Parker & Co., 1891-92), p. 1105.


14. "Miscellaneous Colonial Documents," VMHB, Vol. 17, No. 2 (April, 1909), pp. 147, 150. This title seems to be an informal rather than a formal one. Charles Davenant (1656-1714) wrote several essays dealing with public revenues and finance, credit, debts, and foreign trade around the turn of the century. It would appear that one of the works by this author is the item referred to in Pole's catalogue.


17. "Alas, grief! She was a most affectionate wife, the best of mothers, and an upright mistress of her family, in whom the utmost gentleness was united with the most graceful suavity of manners and conversation." As quoted in Page, Genealogy, p. 65.

18. See Land Grant Card File, Virginia State Library, for a record of these grants.

20. Ibid.


22. Robert "King" Carter Diary and Letterbooks (#3807), Manuscripts Department, University of Virginia Library (hereafter cited as Carter Diary and Letterbooks, UVA), July 28, 1724.


24. Robert Carter to "My Good Daddy Pratt," August 8, 1728, Carter Letterbook, VSH.


26. Robert Carter to Mann Page, December 5, 1727, Carter Letterbook, VHS.


32. See T. H. Breen, "Horses and Gentlemen: The Cultural Significance of Gambling among the Gentry of Virginia," *WMQ* (III), Vol. 34, No. 2 (April, 1977), pp. 239-257, for a convincing argument as to the social and symbolic functions of competitive activities among Virginia's gentry in the period 1680 to 1720. Also see Carole Shammas, "English-Born and Creole Elites in Turn-of-the Century Virginia," in *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century, Essays on Anglo-American Society & Politics*, ed. by Thad W. Tate and David L. Ammerman (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1979) for another thought-provoking study of colonial elites during this period. Together, these two analyses provide keen in-
sights into the social, cultural, and political needs of colonial elites during this swing period.


35. The tradition of having two cupolas apparently originated in the mid-nineteenth century when a very crude engraving of Rosewell appeared in Bishop Meade's Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. [1857]), Vol. I, between pp. 332 and 333. Although there are no eighteenth-century descriptions of the house, an account of Rosewell's appearance can be found in Lucy Page Saunders' Leonora and the Ghost (Baltimore: Charles Harvey and Co., 1876). Mrs. Saunders was the youngest child of Governor John Page and spent time at the house before it passed out of the family in the late 1830s. She describes the mansion as having two cupolas.

36. See John Page's correspondence with John Norton, a London merchant, for references to this problem, in Frances N. Mason (ed.), John Norton and Sons, Merchants of London and Virginia, Being the Papers from their Counting Houses for the Years 1750 to 1795 (Richmond: Dietz Press, 1937). It is possible to make a rough estimate of what a house such as Rosewell might have cost if it had been built in London. There the cost of building a house during this period was estimated and based on the number of squares (100 square feet) a building would contain as well as the quality and height that was desired. This estimate was done by the architect who drew up the plan for the building. Using No. 10, St. James's Square, London, dated 1734, roughly comparable to Rosewell in quality and costing £110 a square, as a model, Rosewell (59 feet long by 56 feet wide and three stories high) would have cost approximately £10,900 in terms of size alone. This figure would not have included the outbuildings, furnishings, and undertaker's fees, if any. See John Summerson, Georgian London (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), p. 60. While these figures obviously do not apply to Virginia, they do give an idea of the financial scope of undertaking such a building during the period. Another source that does give the cost of building a comparably sized structure in Virginia comes from Sir John Randolph who in 1737 estimated that the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg had cost upwards of £6,600 sterling (Virginia Gazette, April 15-22, 1737 [No. 38]).

38. Like his father, he had been sent to England to attend Eton but had been expelled due to drunkenness. Robert Carter to John Carter, Carter Diary and Letterbooks, UVA, June 23, 1731, and Robert Carter to Alderman Perry, ibid., March 8, 1731/32.


40. Page, Genealogy, p. 58.

41. See Hening, Statutes, Vol. V, p. 280: "And whereas the said testator [Mann Page I], at the time of his death, was considerably indebted unto several persons in Great Britain, and in this colony, more than the value of his slaves and personal estate amounted to; for a great part of which debts, the said testator had engaged, in his life time, to pay interest."

42. Letter of 18 July 1732, Reports from Major William Gooch ... to the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, co 5/1323, 1732-35; copy: Virginia State Library.


45. Robert Carter to Philip Perry, Carter Diary and Letterbooks, UVA, March 2, 1731/32.

46. A Provisional List of Alumni, Grammar School Students, Members of the Faculty, and Members of the Board of Visitors of the College of William and Mary in Virginia, From 1673 to 1888 (Richmond: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1941), p. 31.

47. Ibid., p. 54.


50. There is confusion among several different sources as to the exact identity of Ann Corbin Tayloe. Her correct identification would appear to be that of the daughter of John Tayloe, of Richmond County, who died in 1747. See Colonial Families of the United States of America, ed. by George Norbury Mackenzie (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1966), Vol. II, p. 514. This second source is corroborated by the will of John Tayloe II, dated May 22, 1773, where both Mann Page and Mann Page Jr. are named as executors of his estate and guardians of his


52. After Page's move to Spotsylvania County about 1765, he continued to fill local offices, for example, as a justice of the peace and as a vestryman of St. George's Parish. See The Journal of John Harrower, ed. by Edward Miles Riley (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1963), fn. 92, p. 184.


54. This date can be established roughly from the following sources. John Page wrote in 1769 about the "Commencement of Housekeeping" (John Norton & Sons, p. 94), which probably took place four years earlier upon his marriage to Frances Burwell. While his father was apparently still in Gloucester as of June 25, 1761, when one of his children died in Abingdon Parish (The Register of Abingdon Parish, Gloucester County, Virginia, 1677-1780, comp. by Robert W. Robins [Arlington, Virginia: Honford House, 1981], p. 134), he had moved to Spotsylvania by February 22, 1770, because on that date he wrote John Norton for goods that were "to be landed where I live near Fredericksburg." (John Norton & Sons, p. 123.)


Chapter II

1. While most published sources state his year of birth as 1744, Page himself puts it at 1743 in a memoir which he wrote in 1808 and which appeared in print in 1850. See Virginia Historical Register, Vol. III, pp. 142-151. Most of the available information on Page's early life comes from this memoir.


4. Ibid., pp. 144, 146.

5. Ibid., p. 146. Among these "illiterates" was Mann Page II's first cousin, Robert Carter of Nomini Hall. Ironically, John Page later in the century had to apply to Carter for a loan while stranded in Baltimore.

6. Ibid., 146-47.

7. Portrait of John Page (accession number 1897.004) in the collection of the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia. The painting is the work of John Wollaston, and in the words of Graham Hood, chief curator of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, it is "most unusual in Wollaston's oeuvre." Nearly all of Wollaston's other subjects are shown in three-quarter poses unencumbered with objects relating to their daily lives. Mr. Hood wonders if the unusual presence of the gun, partridges, hat, etc., that appear in the portrait is not a reflection on Page's personality and the effect he may have had on the artist.


9. See John Page to John Norton, September 18, 1772, in John Norton & Sons, p. 271, where Page describes Robert Andrews as having "lived as Tutor in my Father's Family several Years. . . ." Apparently Mann Page II continued with the practice of providing a tutor for his children since he advertised for one in 1777. See Virginia Gazette (Purdie), July 4, 1777.


11. See Mann Page Jr. to St. George Tucker, February 15, 1774, Tucker-Coleman Papers, Box 5, Manuscripts and Rare Books Department, College of William and Mary.

12. Provisional List of Alumni . . . , p. 54.


18. *Ibid.*, p. 1021. Despite his hope that "a little innocent Mirth will produce no harm," Carter nonetheless could not refrain from entertaining "a most lively expectation that I shall be assisted according to my hearty and devout Prayers this, that I may keep my tongue even from good words, rather than offend the most Perverse, most licentious, and most inveterate guest . . . ."

19. See Will Book E, pp. 387-390, Spotsylvania County Court Records. Mann Page II wrote his will on November 7, 1780, and this copy of origin was ordered to be recorded on April 19, 1781.

20. See *ibid.*, Part 2, p. 668. While the will itself is undated, it is followed on p. 669 by an obligation bond on the administrators and executors of her will; this bond is dated June 7, 1785.


28. *Diary of Landon Carter*, Vol. II, p. 1099. Starting about 1775 it is difficult to determine whether Mann Page II or Mann Page III is being referred to in the official records. My reading of the documents
would seem to indicate that Mann Page II had withdrawn completely from politics on the colonial level by this date with his place being taken by Mann Page III. Thus, it appears that when the name Mann Page is given that the son is meant. Although this deviates from the usual practice in that the son is normally indicated by the use of "junior," there is one reference to Mann Page "senior" that points to a reversal of this custom on at least one occasion. On Saturday, November 2, 1776, the Committee of Safety of Virginia ordered that a warrant be issued to "Mann Page Sen. Esqr. for eight pounds and ten pence . . . . " See Journals of the Council of the State of Virginia (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1931), Vol. I, p. 223.


33. See Mann Page III to [John Page], May 26, 1777, in WMQ (II), Vol. VII, No. 3 (July 1927), pp. 215-16.


35. In 1783 John describes himself as a "Vestry Man, Magistrate, Field Officer of ye Militia, & Delegate" in addition to the more domestic offices of "Executor, Guardian, [and] Tutor . . . . " See John Page to St. George Tucker, March 24, 1783, Box 10, Tucker-Coleman Papers.


40. John Norton & Sons, p. 94.

41. Ibid., p. 172.
42. Noël Hume, *Excavations at Rosewell*.


44. John Norton & Sons, pp. 172, 198.


47. For an abstract of Robert Burwell's will, see "Isle of Wight County Records," *WMQ* (I), Vol. VII, No. 4 (April, 1899), pp. 311-13.


56. John Page to St. George Tucker, June 12, 1787, Tucker-Coleman Papers, Box 14.


60. Mary Willing Byrd to Abigail [sic] Mayo, January 5, 1806, VHS (MssZ, Box 9962/a/4).


63. See Margaret Page to St. George Tucker, October 16 [1809], and undated letter, Tucker-Coleman Papers, Box 60.


67. Land Sales in Index to Chancery Court Records, Fredericksburg Corp. Court Records (Deed Books B, p. 57, and E, p. 111).

68. See Mann Page IV to St. George Tucker, April 14, 1801, Tucker-Coleman Papers, Box 22. This was the same disease that had afflicted both his paternal grandfather Mann Page I as well as his great-grandfather Robert "King" Carter and his great, great grandfather John Page (see Philip Alexander Bruce, *Social Life of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century* [Williamstown, Massachusetts: Corner House Publishers, first printed, 1907; reprinted, 1968], p. 180). The malady apparently ran in the family since his uncle Robert Page also was a sufferer who "for several years labored under the afflicting pain of the gout . . . . " (as quoted in Wyndham B. Blanton, *Medicine in Virginia in the Eighteenth Century* [Richmond: Garrett and Massie, Inc., 1931], p. 10).

69. This date is based upon evidence found in a spice chest with a tradition of belonging to the Page family of Mannsfield. It is now in the collection of the VHS. In one of the small drawers within the chest there are numerous locks of hair, each wrapped in a piece of paper. One of these is laid paper, indicative of an eighteenth-century or early nineteenth-century origin. Within this piece of paper is a lock of hair, reddish and curly, which appears to resemble closely the hair of Mann Page III as depicted in a miniature done of him probably in the 1790s. The paper containing the lock of hair is labeled, "The Hair of my Dear Father; who departed this Life March 23d 1803." The only other clue at this point to a death date for Mann Page III is an undated obituary, cited below, in the files of the VHS. The spice chest is numbered FU973.33.

70. Obituary from the *Virginia Herald* [undated], Louise Patten Papers, Section 14, VSH (Mss1/P2775/a/29-30).

71. Tanner, "John Page," p. 84.
Chapter III


4. See Page, Genealogy, pp. 47-51, for a copy of this will.

5. Ibid., p. 48.

6. Ibid.


13. Diary entry for for August 8, 1726, ibid.


16. Robert Carter to "My Good Daddy Pratt," August 8, 1728, Carter Letterbook, VHS.


24. Both of these paintings are owned by the College of William and Mary and are currently hanging in the President's House. The accession number for Mann Page is 1897.010 and for Alice Grymes Page 1897.011. The two portraits are discussed in Graham Hood's Charles Bridges and William Dering, Two Virginia Painters, 1735-1750 (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1978).


26. The portrait of Mann Page II was just added to the collection of the VHS. John Page, accession number 1897.004, is owned by the College and hangs in the President's House. The portrait of Ann Corbin Tayloe Page is in private hands, but is illustrated in The North Carolina Portrait Index, 1700-1860, comp. by Laura MacMillan (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), p. 173.

27. This painting is also at the Virginia Historical Society and is numbered Por973.16. Although the subjects are identified as Mann Page II and his sister Elizabeth and was captioned as such in the Society's exhibit "Virginians in Portraiture" which opened in September, 1983, the girl Elizabeth does not fit in the Page family genealogy. She supposedly was born about 1762. The painting is believed to have been done about 1757. Although four brothers were born between the births of Mann III and Elizabeth, the younger subject in the double portrait is obviously a girl. Even though boys were not breeched, as it was termed, until approximately seven years of age, Elizabeth is shown in a blue satin dress, abundantly trimmed in ruffles and lace, is wearing pink shoes, and is holding a female doll. None of these items show up as apparel or props in portraits of mid-eighteenth-century boys who are shown still in dresses.

28. Virginia Gazette Day Books, February 17, 1764 (p. 12), University of Virginia Library (microfilm copy in the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library).

29. Ibid., March 17, 1764 (p. 24), for example.

30. Ibid., November 17, 1764 (p. 120).


32. Augustine Moore Account Book, University of Virginia Library (microfilm copy in the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library).
33. The spice chest (VSH No. Fu973.33) is made of mahogany and yellow pine, primary and secondary woods respectively. The piece was examined by Sumpter T. Priddy, III, on September 16, 1986, at the VHS. Mr. Priddy, a Richmond, Virginia, dealer specializing in eastern Virginia furniture, had no hesitation in attributing the piece to Williamsburg about 1760. The chest has a family tradition of having first been at Rosewell and then being moved to Mannsfield.

34. See Colonial Williamsburg Foundation's Department of Collections file on "Sofas and Settees" under "Southern Furniture" for reference to this piece.

35. See will of John Tayloe I in the Tayloe Papers, VHS.


38. Ibid., p. 359.

39. See McCusker and Menard, Economy of British America, p. 121.


41. Ibid., pp. 125, 126.

42. Ibid., p. 125.

43. Ibid., p. 126.

44. Ibid.


46. Mann Page to [John Norton], October 25, 1773, John Norton and Sons Papers, 1750-1902, MS 36.3, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, Special Collections.

47. John Norton & Sons, p. 309.


50. Ibid.


52. John Norton & Sons, p. 91.
53. Ibid., p. 29.

54. The following information is taken from Noël Hume's *Excavations at Rosewell*.

55. Ibid., p. 169.

56. Ibid., p. 175.


58. [Saunders], *Leonora and the Ghost*, p. 6.


60. John Page to St. George Tucker, February 17, 1777, Tucker-Coleman Papers, Box 6.


62. This piece is also owned by Mr. Cecil Wray Page.


64. Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, policy number 1910 as cited in Brown, "Rosewell," p. 22.


68. This is implied by the fact that the court ordered "a True & perfect Inventory" to be taken of all the "Goods Chattles and Credits of the said Dec." (see Will Book E, p. 387, Spotsylvania County Court Records). Also see Harold B. Gill and George M. Curtis, III, "Virginia's Colonial Probate Policies and the Preconditions for Economic History," *VMHB*, Vol. 87, No. 1 (January 1979), pp. 68-73. However, if the inventory was taken, it was not recorded since it does not show up later in the will book. One possible reason is the division of jurisdiction caused by the incorporation of Fredericksburg in 1782. After this date documents relating to Mannsfield appear in Fredericksburg City Court records.

70. See Land Sales in Chancery Court Records Index, Fredericksburg Corporation Court Records, Fredericksburg, Virginia.

71. This statement is based on the inventory taken of Mann Page III's estate in 1803.

72. District and Superior Courts of City of Fredericksburg, Wills, Bonds and Inventories, A3, 1789-1831, pp. 303-306.

73. The inventory was computed in dollars. Mr. Harold Gill, whose article is cited above and who is the researcher for the Crafts Department at Colonial Williamsburg, calculates that the exchange rate in 1803 was six shillings to each dollar. This ratio is confirmed in Louis Morton's Robert Carter of Nomini Hall (Charlottesville: Dominion Books, 1964), p. 103, fn. 50. According to Mr. Gill, with the exception of the inflationary period during the Revolution, a shilling in 1770 was worth about the same through the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Thus, comparisons can be made with the standards of living experienced by Mann Page III and contemporaries of his father, Mann Page II.


76. District and Superior Courts of City of Fredericksburg, Wills, Bonds and Inventories, A3, 1789-1831, p. 204.


78. Examination by Sumpter Priddy on September 16, 1986, at the VHS. The chest of drawers is numbered Fu937.39.

79. VHS No. Por972.18.

80. Page, Genealogy, p. 81.


82. See Daniel Blake Smith, Inside the Great House, Planter Family Life in Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Society (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 278. Smith states that "parents, children, and friends often sought to make permanent statements of their affection at the loss of loved ones." The brooch in place of the elaborate gravestones from Mann Page I's generation could be viewed as another example of the family's reduced circumstances.

83. Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia (Vol. IV, Reel 1), Policy #150, Virginia State Library.
84. Ibid., policy #711.
85. Ibid., policy #1040.
86. Ibid., policy #151.
89. John Page to St. George Tucker, December 3, 1795, Tucker-Coleman Papers, Box 19.
90. Thomas and John were second cousins; their grandmothers had been respectively Elizabeth and Judith Carter, daughters of Robert "King" Carter. See Evans, Thomas Nelson, p. 8.
91. Ibid., p. 15.
92. Lucy's father Philip Grymes of Middlesex County was brother to John's mother Alice, first wife of Mann Page II ("Genealogy," VMHB, Vol. 27, Nos. 3 and 4 (July and October, 1919), p. 408.
93. Evans, Nelson, p. 8. Frances' mother Sarah Nelson Burwell was Thomas' first cousin.
94. Page, Genealogy, pp. 78-80.
96. Ibid, p. 29.
98. District and Superior Courts of Fredericksburg, Wills, Bonds, and Inventories, A3, 1789-1831, pp. 200-204.
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VITA

Betty Crowe Leviner


From July, 1981, to July, 1985, the author served as a Curatorial Fellow in the Department of Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. In July, 1985, hired as Associate Curator of Exhibition Buildings for the Department of Collections; promoted to Curator July, 1986.