"The Best of Wives": Martha Bland Blodget Corran, nee Daingerfield

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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on Martha Bland Blodget Corran, an eighteenth-century plantation mistress from Prince George County, Virginia. Its purpose is 1) to provide insight into the life of a woman for whom the American Revolution and its aftermath had significant and direct personal repercussions and 2) to shed greater light on the range of norms that existed for women of the patriarchal planter class in Revolutionary Virginia.

Primary documents dated between 1769 and 1804 have provided the information that exists regarding Martha Corran. The majority of these documents are letters housed in the Tucker-Coleman Collection in the Special Collections of Earl Gregg Swem of the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. An assortment of letters and account books maintained by Dr. Theodorick Bland are held in the Bland Family Papers of the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond, Virginia. Associated documents and notes on both Martha and Theodorick Bland can be found in the papers of Charles Campbell in the Special Collections Library, Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. The documents in these collections have been transcribed from the original.

The letters often approximate memos or notes of a few lines, while others comprise several pages. Likewise, the diary entries are of unequal length. The spelling and grammar are uneven at best. Often only syntax serves to distinguish one sentence or paragraph from another. Punctuation, consistency and grammar have not been changed in order to preserve the original documents in their truest form. Time, insects, water and careless handling likewise have taken their toll on those primary documents that remain. A fire in the mid-1840s destroyed the barn which contained several trunks of account books, ledgers, diaries, and letters.

Secondary documents have provided additional information. Marion Tinling edited diary excerpts by Martha Blodget, originally compiled by Charles Campbell and now located in the Brock Collection of the Huntington Library. These excerpts and associated notes were published in the William and Mary Quarterly, third series, III in 1946. Additionally, a variety of secondary documents contain references and comments regarding Martha, Theodorick Bland and Nathan Blodget.

In conclusion, this review of Martha Bland Blodget Corran helps to broaden the understanding of what plantation mistresses could achieve within their spheres of influence, especially with the support of a broad and well-placed family network. Her life, letters and diary reflect the wide range of accepted extremes that existed in the planter class of Revolutionary Virginia.
“The Best of Wives”

MARTHA BLAND BLODGET CORRAN,
NEE DAINGERFIELD
INTRODUCTION

Martha Bland Blodget Corran, nee Daingerfield, lived from approximately 1750 until 1804. By birth and by marriage she was a member of Virginia’s planter class, a position of social rank and political status, if not always one of financial independence. She was married three times: first to Colonel Theodorick Bland, Jr. (1766 - 1790); second to Nathan Blodget (1792 - ~1795) and third to Patrick Corran (~1797-1804). Hereafter, Martha Bland Blodget Corran will be referred to as “Martha.” Colonel Theodorick Bland hereafter shall be referred to as “Theodorick.” Nathan Blodget and Patrick Corran, likewise, shall be referred to by their first names.

Martha’s primary residence was Cawsons, a plantation in Prince George County, Virginia. As a member of the planter class, Martha was raised with the expectation of being a plantation mistress upon marriage. Her education and training prepared her to run a large estate. Martha’s principal duty as a wife was to produce children to carry on the family name and traditions. Her main function as a plantation mistress was ensuring that the domestic portions of the holdings were well maintained. Undoubtedly, Martha was aware of the growing climate of political change, for Theodorick supported the expansion of colonial rights. In 1775, Theodorick openly joined the effort for American independence.
In times of war, women historically have assumed male roles. Martha was no different; she shouldered the additional role of plantation manager, juggling it with that of wife and plantation mistress. It is a tribute to her skill that this role remained hers for almost thirty years. Upon Theodorick’s death in 1790, Martha inherited the Bland family plantations in her own right. Martha’s will demonstrated that she retained a strong and vital interest in the viability of the estate and its many resources throughout her life.

Martha traveled extensively between Massachusetts and Tidewater Virginia from 1777 and 1796. Her travels were an effort to remain with her husbands, as she balanced wifely duties and plantation management. Theodorick, Nathan and Patrick each had political responsibilities, familial obligations or business ventures that demanded the journeys. The trips were planned well in advance, and a small retinue of slaves and horses accompanied her. These excursions generally lasted for a period of several months. Martha evidently felt her presence at the plantations less mandatory during the growing seasons, usually leaving after planting and returning in time for harvests.

During their brief marriage, Martha and Nathan Blodget spent six months of each year in Boston, presumably for family reasons. Between 1801 and 1804, Martha and Patrick Corran, her third husband, relocated to France to promote his business endeavors. With most of her close friends and family now deceased, Martha left the plantations under the control of a trusted nephew.

Martha was a prolific correspondent, eager to share her experiences and anxious to maintain close ties with her large circle of friends and relations. Her
far-reaching travels and adventures were major topics, although household concerns, news and gossip also fill her letters. Both letters and diary entries contain observations, family jokes, reminiscences, menus, and other exchanges of information. Frequently, names were referenced only through initials. Viewed as a whole, these documents provide an intimate, albeit episodic, glimpse of family interaction as well as insight into Martha herself.

Martha’s correspondence was comprehensive. In addition to her family members, she also wrote to many peers, such as Martha Washington, Patrick Henry, and Thomas Jefferson. Her letters came to the attention of outsiders when Charles Campbell, journalist and Virginia historian, was visiting Petersburg in the 1840s and was served a meal wrapped in a letter to Martha signed by George Washington. Excited, Campbell learned that the letter was only one of many available in the barn at Cawsons and that townspeople pilfered Martha’s effects to sell as curiosities. He sought and received permission to copy items he might find in a search through the numbers of trunks containing the original documents of Martha and her three husbands. Before he could complete the task, however, the main house, barn and all outbuildings burned in a fire. Campbell used the information he had gleaned to publish a book about Theodorick; Martha’s diary entries were the basis for a series of newspaper articles. In 1946, Marion Tinling edited a portion of Martha’s diary excerpts in the *William and Mary Quarterly.*

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1 Charles Campbell, ed., *The Bland Papers: Being A Selection from the Manuscripts of Colonel Theodorick Bland* (Petersburg, 1840 and 1843), I, xiv. Martha’s diary excerpts for the years 1762 - 1797 are housed in the Huntington Library in San Francisco.
CHAPTER I - LIFE IN PRE-WAR YEARS

Martha was the daughter of Hannah Bassett Allen and Edwin Daingerfield, who were planters in northern Virginia, possibly in New Kent County.\textsuperscript{1} Few details about her early life remain. Her father, Edwin, acted as vestryman and churchwarden of Blisland Parish and served in the county militia, first as a captain and later a major. Her mother, Hannah, was the widow of Joseph Allen and had a son by him, named William Allen. Hannah and Edwin Daingerfield had two children, Martha and William. Like Edwin, William shunned politics in favor of a quiet lifestyle on his plantation, Belvidera in Spotsylvania County.\textsuperscript{2} Neither Martha's letters nor her will make reference to other siblings; she did make provisions for the children of both William Allen and William Daingerfield.\textsuperscript{3}

Although no records remain regarding the details of her education, it is evident that as a child Martha began preparing for her future role in society, plantation mistress. The preparation was typical, and mastery of the various

\textsuperscript{1} Letter to Frances Bland Randolph, May 24, 1774, from Martha Bland, Tucker-Coleman Collection. The letter mentions Martha's plans to visit Brunswick, an estate that could have been her childhood home.
\textsuperscript{3} Will, Martha Bland Blodget Corran, September 24, 1804, Tucker-Coleman Collection.
elements required years of effort. Her training involved learning the prevailing methods of food preservation and clothing production, a woman’s primary responsibilities after child bearing. Running a household required knowing how to run a dairy; raise poultry; tend an herb patch, a vegetable garden and an orchard. Martha mastered techniques of how to cook and bake; select items for a menu; preserve fruits, meats and vegetables; wash, mend and darn; make candles, and clean the great house correctly. She learned how to weave, knit and prepare clothing. Besides learning how to perform these tasks and how best to supervise their completion, Martha became skilled in the timely ordering of chores, their appropriate sequence and their correct season. Other important facets of her education were fine needlework, riding, music, reading, writing, dancing and other social graces considered necessary for the proper entertainment of guests. Martha’s preparation as plantation mistress was typical and served her well.

Kinship was an important factor within planter society in Colonial Virginia. It endowed a person with a social or political worth far beyond that of the individual, especially for members of a leading family. Kinship conveyed status as well as obligation. A primary purpose of marriage in planter society was to augment the political, social or economic position for the mutual enhancement of both families. Marital happiness depended on a balance of social, political and economic attributes as well as personal charm and character. Parental approval of a suitor was essential. Paramount to any romantic

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5 Mary Beth Norton, Liberty’s Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800 (Boston,
involvement was the ultimate goal to maintain the compatible interests of the
two families. Therefore, family connections - whether by marriage or birth -
were of extreme importance.⁶

As a Daingerfield, Martha was related in varying degrees to a broad array
of esteemed planter families, including the Custises, Parks, Balls, Nelsons, Pages,
Bassetts, Byrds, Carters, and Taliaferros. These families were among the most
distinguished within the Virginia planter community. Martha’s extensive
kinship was a valuable asset. For example, her maternal grandparents were the
Bassetts of Williamsburg, who had both wealth and influence. Their prominence
doubtless benefited Martha in her range of marriage choices.

Martha Daingerfield and Theodorick Bland, Jr. married in June of 1766.
The match was one of felicity and background. Theodorick was the only son of
Theodorick Bland, Sr. and Frances Bolling. Theodorick had four sisters, Mary,
Anna, Elizabeth and Frances (called Fanny), who were her chief correspondents.
Successful and well-established planters, the Blands were affluent and respected.
The Blands were direct descendants of Matoca (“Pochantas”), a source of pride
and distinction and a darker complexion for Fanny and some of her children (the
subject of much family teasing). Richard Bland, Virginia’s highly respected
political writer and outstanding lawyer, was Theodorick’s paternal uncle, and his
political mentor.⁷ The marriage to Theodorick broadened Martha’s kinship

⁷ Jeffrey J. Crow and Larry E. Tise, eds. The Southern Experience in the American Revolution (Chapel Hill,
1978), pp.71-108. Richard Bland was a political moderate. He advocated internal colonial independence
under the external rule of Parliament. He saw the flaws inherent to the Virginia’s constitutional safeguards
and doubted the stability of its political structure. He was a member of the first Continental Congress.
network to include other elite planter families: the Eppes, Carys, Banisters, Bollings, Hayes, Pothyresses, Randolphs, and Ruffins.

As a result of her extended kinship network, Martha now was related to all but a few of the wealthiest and most powerful families in Virginia. Martha was proud of these ties and endeavored to represent her very comprehensive family connections to the best of her abilities. In 1777, Martha advised her widowed sister-in-law Fanny Randolph: “Settle well yr prospect of future happiness before you form another connection,” a clear indication of how seriously she herself considered the business of marriage.8 This statement further demonstrated the high social status that the Blands enjoyed.

Subsequent to their marriage, Martha and Theodorick took up residence at Farmingdell, one of several plantations owned by the Bland family.9 Located in Prince George County, Virginia, Farmingdell was a few miles south of Hopewell. Farmingdell consisted of approximately 500 acres, the size of a medium plantation by the end of the Colonial period. The site comprised the typical planter structures: great house, slave quarters, barns and several outbuildings. It also included a smaller house that Theodorick used as a medical office. Having been educated as medical doctor in Edinburgh, Theodorick had established a medical practice upon his return to Virginia in 1764.

His medical practice notwithstanding, Theodorick’s principal role was as planter. Administering the social and economic microcosm of a plantation was a

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8 Letter to Frances Bland Randolph, August 12, 1777, from Martha Bland, Tucker-Coleman Collection.
9 Martha’s nephew, John Randolph of Roanoke, stated the true name of this plantation was Kippax. Marion Tinling, “Cawsons, Virginia, in 1795-1796,” William and Mary Quarterly, third series, III (1946), pp. 282-283.
considerable undertaking. Planters and plantation mistresses knew that the dignified, affluent lifestyle inherent to a plantation setting, including vast acreage, great house, numerous outbuildings and many slaves required constant attention to the most minute of details and responsibilities.\footnote{Charles S. Sydnor, \textit{American Revolutionaries in the Making: Political Practices in Washington's Virginia}, (New York, 1965), p. 15.}

The smooth and efficient running of holdings was a matter of pride for colonial planters; such efficiency was not easily accomplished. Running the plantation involved keeping the accounts, buying and selling goods as needed, deciding which fields and crops to plant, maintaining the various buildings and fences, hiring overseers, and allocating food for animal and human consumption. Theodorick was responsible for the actual business of the plantations. His duties involved the legal, financial, and economic concerns necessary to operating the family plantations. A planter’s responsibilities were complex and exacting. Like Martha, he had begun training for his planter responsibilities while still a child. Theodorick apparently found the duties satisfying and was quite an effective manager. No doubt his training as a medical doctor enhanced his ability to reconcile the various elements essential to plantation management.

His position as planter endowed Theodorick with patriarchal obligations regarding his slaves. He had authority over the purchase or sale of slaves, separation of slave families, slave marriages, necessary medical treatment for slaves, and the specialties to be learned by young slaves. His decisions affected the equilibrium of the slaves’ social system, their families, their future and their welfare. Theodorick mastered a balance between the problems intrinsic to an
enslaved workforce and the vagaries of nature, and adapted his plantation affairs accordingly.\textsuperscript{11} 

Theodorick was an innovative planter. In the eighteenth-century, farmers typically followed rather than led the market; Theodorick attempted to avoid over-producing an abundant commodity. He chose to raise cotton and potatoes and harvest timber while the majority of Virginia planters focused on tobacco, corn and grain crops. It is likely that at least some portion of his fields were dedicated to the traditional "staple" products. However, Theodorick's decision to produce different crops was very resourceful. It allowed those fields drained by the demands of raising tobacco and corn to replenish themselves. It also enhanced his capital by producing cash crops in high demand. Under Theodorick's management, the business side of Farmingdell plantation thrived. Theodorick's pride in managing his plantation was justifiable.

Martha's primary role during this period was that of plantation mistress, a direct corollary to Theodorick's as planter. The part as plantation mistress was an important but undistinguished one. In many ways, the mistress was the 'glue' that held the plantation together. Her duties focused around domestic routines. Her responsibilities comprised basic supervisory, social, cultural and familial elements. Gracious living required attention to such details for daily comfort and continued status. While the functions performed were mundane, success at carrying them out was not. The repetitive nature of these tasks was uninspiring, dull and tedious. Mary Jones, an older cousin of Theodorick and Fanny wrote:

\textsuperscript{11} Sydnor, pp. 15-16.
Domestick Business confines the Mind to one particular subject without suffering it to entertain itself with the contemplation of any thing New or improving it even deprives thought of its Native freedom.\textsuperscript{12}

It is likely that Martha read this letter, and she may have agreed. Domestic routines lacked diversity and opportunity for intellectual challenge.\textsuperscript{13} Dull and uninspiring though the chores might have been, they were essential.

The daily routines were all the more tiring due to poor lighting, insufficient ventilation, and inadequate heating. The use of tallow candles, combined with wood burning fireplaces resulted in an ever-present pallor of ashes, smoke and soot. Unscreened windows allowed dust, insects and other pests easy access into the great house.\textsuperscript{14} Balancing the demands and the resources of the household required various administrative skills and abilities. Advanced planning, appropriate allocation of supplies, constant supervision of slaves, and attention to detail necessitated confidence, authority, foresight and experience.

Typically, days began early for a plantation mistress with a tour of the great house itself. Upon rising she would make the “Grand Rounds from the Kitchen to the Larder, then to the Poultry Yard & so on by the Garret & Store Room home to the Parlour,” during which time she issued instruction for care or orders for the day’s routines.\textsuperscript{15} Following this process, she had breakfast. Afterwards, she determined the day’s menu. For her, the scheduled workday ended early, but as a reliable supervisor, she must be available to handle any

\textsuperscript{12} Letter to Frances Bland Randolph, May 10, 1769, from Mary Jones, Tucker-Coleman Collection.
\textsuperscript{13} Norton, pp. 34-35.
\textsuperscript{14} Sydnor, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{15} Norton, p. 26.
situation that might arise, such as the arrival of unexpected guests who required rooms and food or the discovery of thievery by unruly slaves.

This morning routine created the opportunity for Martha to pursue other interests and activities. Her afternoons were easily filled: visiting and entertaining, fine needlework, going on outings, reading and writing were among her chief activities. Fine needlework and decorative sewing were among her diary’s most noted pastime, second to visiting and writing.\textsuperscript{16} Martha enjoyed attending plays, balls, and other festivities; she mentioned these activities frequently in her letters and diary.

A copious correspondent, Martha helped to maintain the extremely close familial bonds within the various Bland family alliances by writing daily to several family members. Additionally, Martha maintained a diary, which served to help her keep track of her decisions, menus, guests, opinions and experiences. Friends, acquaintances, household matters and social events were principal subjects. Her letters and diary most frequently mentioned the following members of her large circle of friends and family: Theodorick Bland, Sr. [d.1783], his first wife, Frances Bolling [dates unknown], and his second wife, Elizabeth Yates [dates unknown]; St. George Tucker [1752-1827] and his first wife, Frances Bland Randolph [1752-1788]; Maria Waller Coalter [dates unknown]; Elizabeth Bland Banister [d. 1777] and her husband John Banister [dates unknown] and various Banister, Randolph and Tucker children. Martha’s letters demonstrate that she was cultured and educated. Her letters were entertaining, including

\textsuperscript{16} Tinling, pp. 282-291.
chatty descriptions of visits, soirees and galas as a diversion. Martha was careful to follow accepted conventions regarding appropriate topics and expressions of emotion.

Visits, “both of ceremony & of friendship,” were important to Martha and her planter peers.\(^\text{17}\) Formal and casual visits, both received and made, were carefully noted in diaries for future reference and were regarded as social credits and debits.\(^\text{18}\) Martha and Theodorick kept no register of visitations with immediate family members. Theodorick wrote to brother-in-law John Randolph that “I have a large Ballance of Visits to settle with my Formal Friends, but between you and me no books are kept on that score.”\(^\text{19}\) Martha spent a considerable amount of time with Fanny Randolph, partaking of “that sweet intercourse which two amiable women so closely allied in every friendly tye they cannot fail to enjoy in each other’s society.”\(^\text{20}\) The friendship between the two women was deep and abiding, supporting both throughout their lives.

Another important, fundamental part of Martha’s role as plantation mistress was that of providing hospitality. Social graces and refinement were necessary attributes of plantation mistresses, who were expected to represent the social standing of their husbands. Martha had learned appropriate behavior and conversational arts during her years of preparation as a girl; as a hostess, she put


\(^\text{19}\) Ibid.

\(^\text{20}\) Letter to Frances Bland Randolph, November 1777, from Theodorick Bland, Jr., Tucker-Coleman Collection.
those skills into effect. Etiquette required that she be adroit in suiting her topics
to the capacity and taste of her company, however trifling or momentous.21
Martha was well aware of her duties as a hostess. Planter society put a premium
on entertainment such as balls, dances, plays, parties and other soirees. Martha
was no different, and often wrote Fanny to share her experiences. A diary
maintained between 1795 and 1796 frequently notes the arrival, departure and
the entertainment of company. On March 1, 1795, she wrote:

Mrs Bland at Cawsons. Dr. Walker & E.S. dined here. Boiled a ham,
goose, turkey, turtled head, pegeon pye, saucages & eggs, vegetables,
mince pye, jelly, custards, plums, almonds, nuts, apples &c.22

For a few years, Theodorick and Martha lived happily at Farmingdell.
They had every reason to anticipate enjoying their lives as planters and
welcoming children, family, friends and guests to share in it. In 1771,
Theodorick considered ending his medical practice, preferring instead to devote
himself totally to the role of planter. In a letter to Mr. Bland, he explained that he
sought a “calm, quiet and philosophical life in a rural situation,” stating that
“immense fatigue, labor, toil, and trouble would soon put a period to [his]
existence.”23 Mr. and Mrs. Bland were strongly opposed to his idea; he was
compelled to honor their opinion. Theodorick continued his practice, although
in later years he restricted it to his large family. He also maintained his
responsibilities and duties as a planter, juggling the demand of two critical and
exacting professions.

22 Martha’s diary entry for March 1, 1795, Tinling, pp. 285-286.
23 Letter to Theodorick Bland, Sr., January 1, 1777, from Theodorick Bland, Jr. Quoted in Smith, p. 118.
Successful management of the plantations involved more than planting and harvesting crops on their various holdings, or even accurately determining which crops would yield the highest returns. For Theodorick and Martha, the plantations' resource management entailed judicious field and crop rotation; timber harvesting; livestock breeding, handling and culling; and the allocation or redistribution of slaves. The successful management of resources also required balancing the very basic aspect of agrarian life: harvesting crops and getting them to market. With a ready labor source, harvesting of crops was rarely a problem. However, the task of getting harvested goods to market was not a simple matter. Poor roads made most over-land passage unsatisfactory; therefore waterways served as major transportation routes. Once the crops were at market, receipts for hogsheads of tobacco circulated and were accepted in lieu of currency.24

Plantation economics was based on a complex credit-debit system encouraged by the paucity of coin, the unpredictability and tardiness of crop returns and the extravagant lifestyle of the planters themselves. Planters relied either on agents - other planters or merchants who would buy large quantities of crops - or on factors - usually the representatives of British mercantile firms - to carry out both their buying and selling. The agents or factors, who sold the accumulated produce in bulk, took harvested crops on account. Planters received credit for their potential earnings from these factors. Without a quick return for crops and without ready cash, arrangements for desired goods became

24 See letters in Tucker-Coleman Collection between various family members. See also Account of Theodorick Munford, 1764 and Account of William Greenhill, 1781-1784, The Bland Family Papers.
a debit, to be weighed against the anticipated—often-overvalued—prospects of money.

Because "hard money" was scarce, relatives and neighbors turned to one another for coin; letters and records witness this constant "favoring." Bookkeeping was a complicated matter involving cash, assets, tobacco receipts, and the obligations of favors. The precariousness of the plantation economy was heightened by its dependence on an indirect trade with exporters and the lengthy delay for crop proceeds incumbent with this system. This indirect market system could, and did, tempt many planters into over-indulgence, anticipating a higher return than was realized.

The temptations of the factor system ruined many. It was with this in mind that Theodorick's mother, Frances Bolling Bland, wrote a simple and poignant reminder of squandered fortunes. In a letter to Fanny, she encouraged a vigilant and conservative manner as mistress: "enough to live on handsomely with care and frugality, without which the best Estates in Virginia soon dwindle and come to little." Mrs. Bland cautioned constant scrutiny and reserve, warning against the casual spending of hard-earned credits and cash. Theodorick and Martha seem to have taken this maternal advice to heart.

In 1774, Theodorick and Martha moved from Farmingdell into the larger and more impressive house at Cawsons. The move to Cawsons established Theodorick as the head of the Bland family, and many political offices previously

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26 Letter to Frances Bland Randolph, 1771, from Frances Bolling Bland, Tucker-Coleman Collection.
held by Mr. Bland soon came to him. Martha and Theodorick also became responsible management of three plantations: Farmingdell, Cawsons, and the Amelia Quarter. Martha’s role of plantation mistress expanded to encompass all three. Like Theodorick, Martha’s responsibilities increased dramatically with the move to Cawsons and her experience as mistress for Farmingdell served her well.

Purchased by early members of the Bland family in the mid-1690s, Cawsons served as the family seat. Originally called Cawsey’s Mill, Cawsons was located in Prince George County, Virginia. A medium sized plantation, it was situated at the confluence of the Appomattox and James Rivers and offered a superlative view of the surrounding areas. Three hundred of its 500 acres began at the mouth of the Appomattox, the south side bounded west by a great creek and bounded east by a small creek known as Causey’s Field Creek. The great house and its dependencies sat on a high promontory overlooking the last bend of the Appomattox.28 Immediately east-southeast was the town of City’s Point, dominated by warehouses as it was the outport of Richmond and Petersburg. A little further south was Hopewell. Cawsons was ten miles north of the four towns of Petersburg, Blandford, Pocahontas and Ravenscroft (united as Petersburg in 1784).29 Cawsons, easily accessible by water or by land, was twenty miles southeast of Richmond. Jamestown and Williamsburg were thirty

28 The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, VII, p. 191. Recent archaeological excavations may have located the site of the great house at Cawsons, according to a report by Jim Berry in the Richmond Times-Dispatch, July 16, 1997.
miles away, and Yorktown forty, southwest of Cawsons.

In addition to the main house were numerous outbuildings, including a two-story frame house for Theodorick's medical practice, which also served as a hospital for ill family members or guests. Martha mentioned using it herself, noting to Fanny that she was at last well enough to dine at the "other house."30 During Martha’s tenure as mistress, Cawsons was at its prime, rivaling such premier plantations as Westover, Nomini Hall and Tuckahoe. John Randolph of Roanoke, Martha’s nephew, praised Cawsons as noble.31 The Marquis de Chastellux, aide-de-camp to General Lafayette, likewise admired Cawsons, and considered it to be outstanding among the premier plantations he visited during travels from Richmond to Williamsburg.32

The grounds provided a fine setting for the house and featured serpentine walks, formal and informal gardens and other ornamentation.33 While Martha and Theodorick owned it, Cawsons was famed for its cheerful and gracious hospitality.34 Martha's simple comment was that "every body does as they please in the house at Cawsons."35 Cawsons quickly became Martha’s favorite place. It epitomized the happiest time of her life.

While Martha was justifiably proud of the hospitality and efficiency of her household at Cawsons, she could also be proud of its significant domestic

30 Letter to Frances Bland Randolph Tucker, April 2, 1787, from Martha Bland, Tucker-Coleman Collection.
31 W.A. Bruce, John Randolph of Roanoke (Boston, 1882), p.4.
32 Francois Jean, the Marquis de Chastellux, Travels in North America In the Years 1780, 1781, and 1782 (Dublin: 1787) II, p. 162.
33 Bland, I, ix.
34 Henry Adams, John Randolph (Boston, 1882), p.3.
35 Martha’s diary entry for February 19, 1795, Tinling, p. 285.
industry: the spinning and weaving of cloth. Martha can be credited with this addition, for it fell within her domain under the supervising of domestic activities. Weaving was a costly industry to develop, requiring appropriate equipment and space (generally its own small house) and skilled weavers were scarce. Cloth production was an increasingly popular (and patriotic) enterprise during the years prior to the outbreak of war with Great Britain. Martha’s investment proved sound, and the cottage industry prospered. Diary entries in 1795 and 1796 refer to its continued success.\textsuperscript{36}

The Amelia Quarter, or “the Quarter,” was located near Farmville on the Appomattox, approximately seventy miles west of Cawsons. Its precise size is uncertain, but it was at least 500 acres, perhaps larger, based on its output. Its primary function was as supplier, providing raw materials, supplies, foodstuffs, and livestock for Cawsons and Farmingdell. For her part, Martha carefully managed and supervised the Quarter, evidently recognizing its role in the Blands’ resources. Throughout Martha’s diary frequent references note drawing upon the Quarter’s stock. Undoubtedly, its production kept pace with the demands. Utilization of the Quarter was managed with care, thus balancing the demand for resources with its capacity to supply them.

\textsuperscript{36} Martha’s diary entries for March 24 and April 13, 1795, Tinling pp. 284-289. It is quite possible that Lucy wove the clothe used for the clothes distributed annually to the slaves in January or December.
CHAPTER II - THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

AND ITS AFTERMATH

Despite whatever quiet satisfaction they derived from their personal lives, Theodorick and Martha were well aware that troubles were growing within Virginia, and indeed in all the colonies. Differences of opinion between those advocating increased political rights for the colonies and those opposing it were becoming ever stronger. In December 1774, Theodorick responded as follows to a request from his factor in Bristol:

You will therefore excuse my not complying with your request to assist Captain Aselby in his loading. I should have vested the small proceeds in goods, by the present political disputes between these Colonies & the mother-country which threatens us with a deprivation of our liberties & every thing that is dear to us, forbid such a step & induce us to exert every nerve to imitate the Silkworm, & spin from our own bowels although the web should be our winding-sheet.¹

The statement left little to the imagination: Theodorick completely supported the colonial cause. In early 1775, Theodorick departed Cawsons for Williamsburg to serve in the House of Burgesses. Martha endorsed his decision wholeheartedly. When Theodorick left, she undertook his role as planter.

¹ Letter to an unnamed factor, summer of 1771, from Theodorick Bland, Jr., Charles Campbell Collection.
It was not unusual for Martha to take on the position of planter during Theodorick’s absence. Such arrangements were based on precedence in addition to logic. Husbands often delegated responsibilities to their wives during long-term absences. The law was explicitly male-ordered. It did, however, consign a wife the right to transact business, to make contracts and to bring suit during her husband’s absence. On his return, a man simply resumed his authority and duties. This spousal transfer of authority insured that land, the source of a family’s economic, social and political status, was secure while simultaneously ensuring a man’s position as dominant male. Following this custom, Theodorick established Martha as planter in his absence.

Once in Williamsburg, Theodorick became involved in the growing indignation developing around the royalist governor, John Murray, the Earl of Dunmore. Dunmore’s strident belief in colonial subservience was insulting to many planters, men who considered themselves members of the political, financial and social elite. Theodorick actively engaged in the support of colonial rights. He was appointed by the Burgesses to serve as superintendent of the Powder Magazine in Williamsburg. On June 24, 1775, Theodorick joined twenty-three like-minded planters who removed arms from the Governor’s Palace to the Powder Magazine. This gesture of extreme distrust of the governor, and the ensuing commotion over its implications, served to aggravate the situation. It

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3 Notes regarding this event are among Charles Campbell’s papers, housed at Duke University.
generated a paper-war between the proponents and opponents of colonial rights. The tension escalated further. It reached a fervor pitch after Dunmore arranged for the arms and munitions to be re-taken from the Powder Magazine.

In November 1775, Dunmore moved to control the rebellious planters by urging slave uprisings, anticipating that the planters would relent in their opposition to his policies or return home to protect their families and property. Dunmore’s hopes for a slave insurrection did not materialize, nor did the planters succumb to his pressure. His reckless appeal to this bane of all planters led many to question his authority. As a result, the contentious planters redoubled their efforts to undermine his position. Theodorick joined other planters in the paper war. In December, Theodorick submitted scathing letters to the Virginia Gazette under the pseudonym “Cassius” denouncing the governor. These letters were answered with remarks equally embittered. The heightened hostility between the two groups resonated with acrimony and self-righteous anger. Theodorick, Mr. Bland, and John Banister, Theodorick’s brother-in-law, undertook to replenish the stolen munitions via the sale of forty of their slaves.

In June 1776, Theodorick mustered Virginia’s first troop of cavalry; the Convention at Williamsburg appointed him its captain. In time, Theodorick was promoted to colonel commanding a regiment of cavalry and posted to the main

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4 The military and political careers of Theodorick Bland, Jr., are well documented in several sources, especially in the Dictionary of American Biography, I, pp. 355-356 and in Bruce, pp. 18-24.
army in September 1777.\textsuperscript{5} He and his troops served primarily in reconnaissance. Due to the variable nature of colonial warfare, Theodorick was not required at the front lines continually. His letters allude to various appointments. He served in New Jersey as an advance scout at the Battle of the Brandywine in September 1777, by December he was in Williamsburg as a member of the Virginia Senate. In early 1778, Theodorick was reassigned as commandant for the British prisoners of convention garrisoned in Charlottesville, Virginia. He remained there until late 1779, when the British prisoners were transported to Maryland for parole or exchange. From 1780 through 1783, Theodorick was in Philadelphia representing Virginia in the Continental Congresses.

While serving in his military and political posts, neither distance nor involvement in the war efforts overshadowed Theodorick’s sense of obligation as a planter. He corresponded constantly with family members, relating information about his plantation affairs along with news regarding the war. Theodorick sent Martha explicit written instructions regarding those various ‘masculine’ aspects of plantation management for which she had no prior training, in particular handling accounts. Martha, in turn, quoted Theodorick’s instruction in a letter to St. George Tucker: “Mr Bland, when he left me gave me written instructions, relative to his transactions in Virginia as well as his own

\textsuperscript{5} Notes in the Charles Campbell Collection state that six troops of cavalry were combined into this regiment.
Over time, Theodorick came to rely upon Martha’s abilities to handle even critical ‘masculine’ matters effectively. His appreciation for her competence no doubt grew as she gained experience. Martha’s extended tenure as planter during his prolonged absence indicated Theodorick’s satisfaction with her handling of plantation affairs.

Applying similar skills she had developed as plantation mistress, Martha’s new duties as plantation manager took time away from her leisure activities. Her additional responsibilities required time for a tour of the fields, time with the overseer to determine tasks and maintenance schedules, and time for handling the accounts. Martha proved herself adept at managing the varied plantation routines. These routines included the diverse plantation industries of a smithy, mill, ferry, fishing, spinning and weaving. Each of these activities provided services needed on the plantations, and in high demand within the local community. One industry was added under Martha’s tenure, albeit at Theodorick’s instruction. Between 1777 and 1778, a salt-petre works was established at Farmingdell. Salt-petre was in short supply and was a critical resource. The factory provided badly needed material essential for the war effort. As evident by successfully managing the plantation businesses, Martha

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6 Letter to St. George Tucker, March 29, 1789, from Martha Bland, Tucker-Coleman Collection. It is clear that Theodorick sent numerous letters of instruction to Martha. The only surviving letter from him to her is contained within Charles Campbell, ed. The Bland Papers: Being a Selection from the Manuscripts of Colonel Theodorick Bland, (Petersburg, 1840 and 1848).

7 Letter to Theodorick Bland, Jr., August 1782, from Jacob Rubsamen, the Bland Family Papers. The plant never reached its full potential, as it was destroyed in 1781 by the British troops under General Phillips. It was not rebuilt. Its loss was a blow to the war effort and to the Blands themselves.
was a faithful steward in Theodorick’s absence, effective and diligent in implementing Theodorick’s written instructions.

It is doubtful that Theodorick had discussed either financial affairs, the factor system, or ‘favoring’ and obligations with Martha prior to his departure. Few planters discussed business matters with their wives.\(^8\) Therefore Martha presumably had little or no familiarity with this critical aspect of plantation management. Of all of her additional responsibilities, Martha probably found the challenge of keeping accounts the most exacting. Relying on Theodorick’s written instructions and the advice of trusted relatives, such as St. George Tucker and Mr. Bland, Martha developed her own grasp for handling financial matters and settling accounts.

Accounts were rarely finalized quickly. Martha’s letters to St. George Tucker and her diary entries indicate that she routinely dealt with unresolved accounts over six years old. Between 1782 and 1792, letters to St. George displayed her new found familiarity with favors, obligations, loans of cash and tobacco receipts in the settling of accounts. One such letter to St. George included verbatim the directions Theodorick had given her regarding the settling of some long-standing family accounts:

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\text{in form Mr Tucker that unless that affair is speedily setled if Theo}^k\text{ Ruffin shoud call on us for his Legacy, I shall be necessitated to call on him for his proportion, as the whole of the Loan Office debt will not be sufficient to pay me what my fathers Estate owes me. . . Mr Bland left with me an}
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\(^8\) Norton, p. 7.
account against Mr John Randolphs Estate which he desired me to inform you, had been mislaid at the time he paid you the Hhd of tobacco for his bal lance of his debt due Mr Randolph for Negroes bt as he could not at that time recollect the sum, he said nothing about it. but has since found it . . . I shall be extremly obliged to you to pay it immediately as that amongst some other accts which he knows will be honourd he has left to pay his acct with Quessnell the only store debt he has stand viz. if you woud write to Quessnell & assume the payment in any mode convenient to you both, it woud Confer a favor on me I take the liberty of Enclosing you an act ing of Mr Blairs which I shall be much obliged to you to receive for me.  

These instructions demonstrate Theodorick’s confidence that Martha could settle these accounts satisfactorily. By adding her own requests that St. George oblige her by assuming the debt to Mr. Blair and that he favor her by paying the bill to Quessnell, Martha displayed her mastery of plantation economics. She was, indeed, more than just passing along Theodorick’s instructions. Rather, she was serving as estate manager, successfully using recently acquired skills while also being the dutiful wife, a delicate and demanding balance she had established for herself.

Martha strove to adjust to her dissimilar roles: wife, plantation mistress, planter and patriot. The social climate and prevalent view of male superiority sustained by the patriarchal system affected Martha’s management of the plantations. The traditional division of roles along gender lines relegated women to a narrow circle of domestic concerns. Both men and women believed that women were incapable of handling business matters. This prevailing

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10 Norton, pp. 3-39.
sentiment of female incompetence created a pervasive attitude of mistrust of women in leadership roles. Mistresses like Martha, who were performing their husbands’ roles in addition to their own, had this powerful obstacle to overcome. As much these women might have preferred to deal with the domestic aspects of plantation management, the situation allowed no choices. Martha simply did her best at balancing the varied duties, and longed for the chance to resume her former life with Theodorick at her side.

Accustomed to giving orders and supervising domestic chores, Martha adapted easily to running the agricultural aspect of the plantations. Knowing each slave, assigning appropriate tasks, and having orders promptly carried out were important tenets of plantation management and also provided a public demonstration of capability within the patriarchal system. She relied on overseers to supervise the actual completion of daily assignments by the field hands. Martha expected the overseers to follow her directions and to apprise her of progress or problems, as they would have Theodorick. Also, Martha needed them to provide accurate assessments of livestock, field and crop conditions, as well as the state of the plantation’s buildings and fences.¹¹ Such information was essential in the planning for routine maintenance and repairs, necessary expenditures for supplies or for the rotation of slaves among plantations.

¹¹ Mullin, pp. 28-32. See also various diary entries in Tinling, pp. 283-291.
The use of overseers was necessary, but not without frustrations. In her diary, Martha repeatedly commented on their misuse of equipment and indifferent discipline. While good estate management depended upon the planter’s delegation of authority so that the overseer could supervise effectively, such delegation was predicated upon a reliable and capable overseer.12 Diary entries reflect that she was well aware of her slaves and their abilities; Martha’s main frustrations were founded on her overseers’ inefficiency in employing all of the plantation resources productively. “Rode to Farmingdell,” she wrote in 1795, “saw F. Sturdivant who was my overseer last year & who then took his pleasure, hard at work in Billy Gilliam’s cornfield,” referring to Sturdivant’s lapse of duty while she was absent.13 Other complaints were of swapping horses between plantations without her consent, negligence that led to the arbitrary killing of several animals (mostly horses), a reckless disregard for the treatment of horses, and drunkenness. These acts were all the more annoying because they provided an embarrassing public demonstration of managerial ineptitude that reflected on Martha. Moreover, an incompetent overseer damaged the interdependence between planter and slaves, raising questions of her judgment and supervisory capabilities.

Martha’s writings reveal her view that slavery was a given aspect of plantation living, and was neither good nor bad. Her diary entries noted the

12 Mullin, p. 19.
13 Martha’s diary entry for February 22, 1795, Tinling, p. 284.
conduct and actions of forty-four slaves specifically associated with Cawsons, including ownership of property, entrepreneurial efforts, thefts, runaways, rewards, and punishments. At Cawsons, several of the slaves were employed in specialized tasks: Lucy was the weaver; George Innes was the foreman; Chloe was a lady’s maid. Martha’s diary excerpts included a list of “some of the negroes at Cawsons,” naming forty-four individuals.14 Farmmingdell and the Amelia Quarter must have needed at least thirty slaves to operate. Collectively, Martha may have owned between 100 and 120 slaves.

Martha understood that her slaves’ feelings and temperaments could easily affect the productivity at each plantation. Martha’s diary excerpts portray her relationship with many of her slaves, and is peppered with the rewards earned and corrections ordered. For example, on April 15, 1795 she noted:

Our Company being gone, thought it necessary to take up the Rogues who robb’d us: accordingly Billy & Jacob was taken; confessed the fact & got well whipt, but not severely. Esther Runaway: took all her cloaths. . . meet a boy who was bringing a parsel of young opossams, the old one & 10 young; but I had no desire to plague myself with them. . .Gave Paul 6 middlins of bacon; gave him a good cloth coat of his master’s, a white cloth lined with dove-colored Satten, for his faithful conduct to his mistress.15

These comments reflect the complexities of owning people and valuing them as property, while simultaneously recognizing each one’s individual characteristics.

14 Martha’s diary entry, undated, Tinling, p. 291. Presumably other slaves were not mentioned, and the total for Cawsons was larger. Unfortunately, no such list of slaves exists for the other plantations.
15 Martha’s diary entry for April 15, 1795, Tinling, p. 284.
Generous rewards, tolerance of minor transgressions, and the use of appropriate discipline were characteristics of a capable planter. Based on the remarks in her diary and letters, Martha qualified as a able mistress, aware of the influence of rewards and punishments and allowing the slaves their customs and enterprises. In her diary, Martha observed the routine behavior, misbehavior, and beliefs of her slaves. On January 9, 1796, she remarked:

salted up 14 hoggs 1450 wt. With one fatned at Cawsons making in all 15 Hoggs for house use: the reason why I kept only this quantity of pork, my negroes stole 9 fat Hoggs from me, whilst I was from home & I am determined no to give them any of the pork, rais’d at the quarter.

The organized pilfering of food stores, carefully noted in Martha’s diary for reference, was a common act of defiance and disrespect for this time period. Martha believed herself as judicious in her dealings with the slaves as she was with other property, whether animate or inanimate. Under her direction, the three plantations thrived. This success was dependent upon her management, and the relationship that existed between mistress, overseers and slaves.

Meanwhile, the War had profound economic influence on running plantations. Trade with other countries was virtually suspended. Harvest prices dropped. Prices for war-time essentials, such as food and horses, rose to astronomical levels, while hard goods like mirrors, needles and pins were

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16 Mullin, p. 70.
17 Martha’s diary entry for January 9, 1796, Tinling, p 286.
18 Mullin, p.60.
frequently hard to find and coveted by both men and women.\textsuperscript{20} Inflation was rampant; with a population that was primarily rural and agriculturally based, the shortages caused by war were considerable.

Cash became an even scarcer commodity. The War's interference in bringing goods to market and the fluctuation of returns, indeed the entire factor process, created an even more precarious economy for planters.\textsuperscript{21} Fortunately, Cawsons was largely self-sufficient, producing most of its needed food stuffs, except flour, spices and sugar. Martha used its smithy, mill, ferry, looms and fishing well, receiving much needed currency, favors, obligations, or receipts for hogsheads of tobacco for the services provided.

Farmingdell and the Amelia Quarter were fruitful, too. Productivity at the Amelia Quarter was critical, especially while Theodorick served as commandant of the prisoner of convention camp in Charlottesville in 1778.\textsuperscript{22} Due to the war and its impact on commerce, supplies were desperately needed; prisoners and prison officials alike suffered considerably from exposure and malnutrition. Supplements from the Amelia Quarter made the difference in survival for many and in comfort for all.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{20} Letter to unnamed merchant (possibly Dick Bates) in Petersburg, circa 1782, from, Martha Bland, The Bland Family Papers.
\textsuperscript{21} Handlin, p.19.
\textsuperscript{22}The Bland Family Papers contain a wide array of documents by Theodorick while he served as Commandant in Charlottesville. These accounts record the extensive supplies provided by the Amelia Quarter.
\textsuperscript{23} Correspondence between Colonel Theodorick Bland, Jr. and General William Phillips, commander of the British troops reflect Bland's generosity and Phillips' deep appreciation, The Bland Family Papers.
Martha traded surpluses from each of her plantations, such as asparagus, peaches, apples and fish with her neighbors. At times, the trade became an obligation, to be returned in kind later. Only one diary entry noted a complaint with this routine trading practice:

Sent to beg a few Colliflowers plants of Mrs - but was refused, notwithstanding I had sent her a few days before everything she sent for & sent them with pleasure: this doing one good turn for another & like the R- race, who are a selfish disagreeable people.24

The refusal plainly stung. Noting it in her diary ensured that Martha would remember it the next time her unobliging neighbor presented a request. Given the extensive use of bartering, it was best to weigh the end-result of any refusal.

Just as the War disrupted the economy, it ruptured the daily lives of those involved in the war effort. Not surprisingly, it had a profound effect on Theodorick and Martha in their personal lives. In 1775, Theodorick was thirty-three; Martha was perhaps as young as twenty-three. In 1777, after more than ten years of marriage, Martha was “the best of wives;” in 1782, Theodorick was “mu caro sposo.”25 The couple clearly loved and supported each other. Their one disappointment must have been that they had no surviving children. The War’s prolonged duration jeopardized their chance for children.

Given Theodorick’s prolonged absences, Martha’s only recourse was to travel to be with him. Because the plantation mistress was indispensable, the

24 Martha's diary entry for June 4, 1796, Tinling, p.287.
responsibilities of the plantation’s daily management could not be left untended. Therefore, whenever Martha planned to be away for an extended period she arranged for a substitute. Choosing the right person to fill in for her was important; an inexperienced supervisor could cause waste or ruin the tasks. Martha turned to trusted family members for a substitute. Mrs. Bland, Elizabeth Banister, Betsy Carloss and Maria Coalter served as her replacement from time to time. Elizabeth Banister was one of Theodorick’s older sisters. Betsy Carloss and Maria Coalter were “poor relations” who often assisted with Martha’s household obligations during her absences.26

Since Martha also served as planter, her frequent absences necessitated a substitute planter. Mr. Bland frequently responded to her requests. While he supervised Cawsons during the summer of 1781, Mr. Bland wrote to Theodorick, advising him on current prices, on the productivity of his “people,” and on the re-establishment of a smithy, damaged or destroyed during raids by General Phillips’ troops.27 Mr. Bland respected Theodorick’s final approval of such matters. After Mr. Bland’s death in 1784, Martha continued to need alternates to serve in her own absence.28 Records do not remain to document who served as a substitute planter, although it is possible that Jacob Rubsamen assisted from time to time, as he had served as a trusted agent in other financial matters.

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26 Letter to Frances Bland Randolph, May 12, 1777, from Martha Bland, Tucker-Coleman Collection.
27 Letter to Theodorick Bland, Jr., August 1781, from Theodorick Bland, Sr., The Bland Family Papers.
28 Letter to St. George Tucker, October 13, 1784, from Theodorick Bland, Jr., announced the death of Mrs. Bland, and letter to St. George Tucker, circa 1784, from Theodorick Bland, Jr., refers to settling the estate of
During her travels, Martha relied upon the skills she had developed as mistress to manage each new household. So integral were the slaves to her daily routine, when Martha traveled for any considerable time, several slaves accompanied her. Ever observant, she recognized that in Philadelphia “the inhabitants seem to be rather disgustd at their bringing so many negroes amongst them”, and kept her own retinue at a minimum. She was forced to compensate with the house, furnishings, and servants of someone else to establish the lifestyle to which she had been born and which she expected to continue. Likewise, the friendships and support systems women of her class needed and were expected to maintain had to be developed.

Martha’s first adventure to join Theodorick was in 1777, when she journeyed to Morristown, New Jersey. In preparation, she was inoculated for small pox, which left her forehead scarred. Martha blithely remarked that “Every face almost keeps me in Countenance here are few smo[o]th faces & no beautys, so that one does very well to pass.” In the same letter, Martha described George Washington and his aides de camp, explaining to Fanny that despite the war, Washington would relax, indeed become very “impudent.” Martha regaled Fanny with details of picnics and riding parties with the General

Mr. Bland, Tucker-Coleman Collection.
30 Letter to Frances Bland Randolph, May 12, 1777, from Martha Bland, Tucker-Coleman Collection.
and his entourage; the business of war did not preclude diversions in the afternoon or evening.\textsuperscript{31}

Martha stayed in close approximation to Theodorick for a portion of each year thereafter. Her travels took her throughout New Jersey, New York, Charlottesville, and Philadelphia. She occupied her time by writing, visiting, riding, socializing, and attending soirees, performances and plays. Martha was avid in her correspondence. She wrote to those at home, sharing her experiences and begging for news in return. Her letters were witty and vivacious, containing many references to events, her comments on fashion, and close friends and associates. Martha intended for her gaiety and her experiences to entertain her family and friends at home in Virginia.

Martha’s travels to be with Theodorick were not unusual; many other officers’ wives did the same. This was a privilege reserved for officers, especially those in favor with upper echelons of the army. Her successive travels to be with Theodorick were a tacit approval of Martha as well.\textsuperscript{32} The officers of the Colonial Army were members of the upper class; they expected a social environment wherever they went and created one when it was lacking. For those involved in this elite group, different rules of interaction and social behavior developed. Indiscretions were more likely in a smaller social sphere where ladies were few;

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
intrigues of unmarried couples were titillating, mostly flirtations. Martha’s friends and family at home were shocked to read about the excesses and revelry. They clearly understood that traditional rules of propriety were frequently breached, and Martha’s involvement worried them. Secure within their routines at home, neither family nor friends appreciated the suffering and privations caused by being away from home for extended periods, or how strangers drew close and supported each other in a substitution for family.

Equally shocking, Martha’s letters implied that her own standards had changed. Letters to Fanny and St. George Tucker abound with accounts of her adventures in the elite social sphere that developed in Philadelphia. Martha’s reports of frivolity and dissipation were so frequent that they raised pointed questions about her new attitudes from her beloved Fanny. Martha countered Fanny’s opinion of her by stating

\begin{quote}
indeed my dear fanny! you Greatly deceive yourself on supposeing me so losd to the feelings of friendship - of Sympathy - to Enjoy the amusements of this place in their fullest force, when my country and my friends are in the power of such a merciless band.\footnote{Letter to Frances Bland R. Tucker, August 3, 1781, Martha Bland, Tucker-Coleman Collection.}
\end{quote}

No doubt, Martha’s reassurances were small consolation to Fanny and St. George. Martha herself showed little thought to future repercussions in the traditional, conservative social circle at home.

Martha’s repeated travels changed her permanently. The majority of her
letters, and certainly the most exciting, focused on her experiences in a world far removed from Cawsons. Martha’s letters serve as picaresque documentaries, sharing all her adventures for the benefit of her beloved Fanny, whose high spirits and social graces Martha admired. In 1777, Martha longingly noted on several occasions that if the two could exchange places, both would be happier and better suited to surrounding events. Gradually, however, Martha’s letters document her transition from a “domestic” to a cosmopolitan, enjoying her intrigues and sweethearts.34

Martha’s initial letters to Fanny detailed her difficult transition to this transient lifestyle. In May 1777, Martha wrote from Morristown, New Jersey of her trepidation at entering the camp and noted that only Martha Washington’s presence alleviated her concerns.35 Until Theodorick’s appointment to the Continental Congress in the 1780s, Martha’s letters were filled with such mundane concerns as food, housing, scenery and acquaintances. It was inevitable, though, that Martha would change once situated in a more sophisticated society. As time passed, and as she gained more confidence, Martha began to relish and delight in her newer - and freer - lifestyle. In a letter to St. George Tucker dated October 8, 1780, Martha was very insightful as she wrote:

the horr’d thought to be out the Stile for my part, I wish not to be singular,

therefore, I am willing to be in fashion, not to the extremes, but in keeping in view the mediocrity of my husband's purse.36

Subsequent letters about plays and soirees with diplomats reflect her acceptance of the behavior and mores associated with the prevailing cosmopolitan atmosphere of the political elite in Philadelphia. Martha's letters clearly show the turnabout that Fanny was the domestic.

During her travels meanwhile, war raged in Virginia. Tidewater Virginia suffered considerable property loss and damage during the years of hostilities. Plantations along the lower James River suffered badly late in the war, with economic havoc wreaked by the armies of Generals Arnold, Phillips and Cornwallis. City's Point, Hopewell and Petersburg were main supply depots and easily accessible by water and became specific targets for the British.37 A letter from Richard Henry Lee to Arthur Lee dated June 4, 1781, reflects the desperation and abandonment that civilians and soldiers alike were feeling:

The people feel their pressure, find themselves abandoned, and they are exposed to the infinite acts and fraud of our enemies and of our internal Tories. . . The enemy affect to leave harmless the poor and they take everything from those they call the rich. Tis said that 2 or 3000 Negroes march in their train, that every kind of stock which they cannot remove they destroy - eating up the green wheat and by destroying the fences expose to destruction the other growing grains. . . The fine houses on the James River have furnished them with a numerous and powerful cavalry - 'tis said to consist of 800.38

35 Letter to St. George Tucker, October 8, 1780, from Martha Bland, Tucker-Coleman Collection.
An exception, Cawsons was unscathed, saved by the express orders of Major General Phillips, who felt indebted to Theodorick for his generosity while commandant at Charlottesville. Phillips had issued orders that Theodorick’s kindness and gentlemanly conduct merited such protection. His unexpected death during the siege resulted in partial violation of the orders; Farmingdell was looted and burned along with Petersburg and Hopewell. The destruction was devastating for Martha, who was in Philadelphia during the event. In a sharp note, Martha wrote to Fanny:

I think it was a particular piece of ill fortune, that none of our friends used their efforts to save a few of our goods - We shall have the world to begin again . . . when I think of the number of pretty little things that we possessed towards housekeeping, being destroyd I cant say but it brings a sigh or two.

In an effort to escape the British rampages, most planters had retreated from the scene of action. Fanny and her children had moved to Bizar, a smaller holding, remote and less vulnerable. St. George was currently assigned to General Granville’s command and also was out of the area. Martha was well aware of the absences of Fanny and St. George; whom did she expect to have done anything to salvage some of her “pretty little things?” Undoubtedly, Martha had little appreciation for the terror and helplessness experienced by her neighbors, friends and family. Her comment shows she was deeply hurt, as well as out of touch.

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In early 1781, Martha's tone and attitude toward friends and family in Prince George County in general and toward Fanny especially began to alter, with such comments as "I am sorry to see your letter dated from Bizzar how do you amuse yourself?"\textsuperscript{40} This letter served in some ways as Martha's own declaration of independence. Martha wrote further:

you judge right my dear, in supposing that I am taken up by the Gay scenes of Philadelphia you woud wonder, who used to call me domestic, to see me so deeply enter the disipation of the place - and Yett I am moderate in comparison.\textsuperscript{41}

Between the spring and summer of 1781, events and actions in Philadelphia created a crisis for Martha in Prince George County, Virginia. Her activities apparently were the subject of open discussion and condemnation. Hurt and surprised by the reaction, Martha's letters consisted of vague references and strong protests of moderation. Many letters reflected fears that the letters would go astray or be intercepted; her worries were well-founded. In Petersburg that summer, men who recognized her handwriting tore open her letters and read them aloud, to the amusement and delight of the gathered crowd.\textsuperscript{42} At least one was published in Rivington's \textit{Gazette}, a journal with a large distribution and whose subscribers evidently were quite familiar with Martha and Theodorick.\textsuperscript{43}

Especially after that summer, local resentment was heightened by Phillips'
orders to protect the Blands’ properties. During her many lengthy journeys, filled with pleasure and frolicking, friends lost everything and family members died. Martha’s absences were sorely felt as Fanny remarked plaintively, “I had not the sweet delight of a partaker in my griefs.” Martha apparently was deemed disloyal, enjoying the “high life” in Philadelphia while family, friends and neighbors had to contend with brutalities of Generals Arnold and Phillips. Martha was regarded as a pariah for being away and for not being at the home, where other action and dangers existed. Explaining to Fanny that there was nothing she could do to alleviate the situation, Martha claimed:

> you greatly deceive yourself on supposing me so los’d to the feelings of friendship - of Sympathy - to Enjoy the amusements of this place in their fullest force, when my country & my friends are in the power of such a merciless band.

When British troops looted and burned Farmingdell, no effort was made by either family or friends to save any of its treasures. Martha returned in the fall, and in February, 1782, Theodorick begged St. George for a visit, saying he had little to chance to visit due to the lack of a coachman. Martha often commented to Fanny that visiting was prohibited due to unexpected lack of horses, especially after the looting and pillaging by enemy troops. In the spring

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44 Letter to Theodorick Bland, Jr., September 18, 1777, from Frances B. Randolph, Tucker-Coleman Collection.
46 Letter to St. George Tucker, February 2, 1782, from Theodorick Bland, Jr., Tucker-Coleman Collection.
of 1782, Martha lamented her inability to travel from Cawsons to nearby Matoax:

"My horses were sent to Amelia the week after Col° Bland left Cawsons."47

In May, 1782, Martha wrote to St. George Tucker:

'tis being buried alive to stay at Cawsons without mu Caro Sposo. . .had it not been for the Company of some Brilliant Chevaliers, I sho'd have loss'd my belle Esperences of seeing a rational being while IRemaind here.48

Rather than having company from the neighboring planters and from her own large, extended family, Martha's company tended to be men such as Rochambeau and the Marquis de Chastellux. While no doubt charming, they were foreigners, and only temporary guests in her home and country. Clearly Martha desperately needed to re-establish her connection with her peers but the ability to do so evidently remained beyond her.

Once she returned to Virginia in the late fall of 1781, Martha must have found it difficult to remain at Cawsons, especially given the current judgment about her. Located in a provincial area of Virginia, it was quiet and far removed from the dissipation she had found in Philadelphia. No doubt the mundane aspects of daily life were far more tedious and boring after the intensity of living at the peak of excitement, enjoying soirees with the Ministers from Spain and France. Her old friends and neighbors did not appreciate, even resented, the changes she had undergone or the experiences she had had. Old bonds of family and friendship were damaged by her absences and were hard to repair. Martha

was either unaware of or unconcerned by the seriousness of her predicament, and the resentment building towards her.

When Martha returned to Philadelphia, she remained away longer than she had before. She readily resumed her participation in the "gaieties of this place," but remarked to Fanny that "I believe the people in V- know every transaction of this place." By spring 1783, Martha’s reputation was seriously marred; the issue was no slight concern, as a woman’s reputation was dearly earned yet easily ruined. Martha was unprepared of the reaction. She protested to Fanny that any reported misbehavior on her part was exaggerated: “I am not a great rake - I have so much more agreeable Company at home that I find I alwais loose by the change.”

Martha tried to reassure Fanny of the situation by writing:

it is quite fashionable to be the tea table talk here; and you are quite a Naught if a Count or Chevalier does not once a fortnight hide himself under your bed... Within this newly formed social circle where she had achieved some status, Martha certainly did not want to be “a Naught;” she had lived before in the shadow of Fanny, however pleasing and comfortable that position had been. Friends and family at home did not understand the prevailing rules for this group, nor Martha’s new status. Whatever the misadventure, Theodorick’s

49 Letter to Frances R. Bland R. Tucker, January 25, 1783, from Martha Bland, Tucker-Coleman Collection
50 Ibid.
support and love do not seem to have wavered. Martha wrote to Fanny in March 1783:

Your Brother...is indeed very Gallant; every [single] time he has three minutes for me the advantage is used I have a Charming suitor devois to me in him its a point to intrest each with the others intregues (good lord! if mamma or my father was to see this!) it insures to either that there is No Harm going on.52

Once back at Cawsons, Martha found herself again having to create a support system among those who did not share her background. Martha’s war time experiences changed her; she became more worldly and stronger. Few understood what she lost. Unrecognized by others, Martha served the cause for American independence in her own way. She sacrificed her most precious things: time with Theodorick, time with her family enclave, her reputation within a highly structured society, and a chance for healthy children. The life she had once yearned for as a “domestic” plantation mistress in Tidewater Virginia had been exchanged for a poised and charming lady who was equally at home in a front-line war camp in Morristown or in sophisticated Philadelphia.

Estranged from her peers by those experiences, Martha cherished them; they were uniquely hers. Poorly understood by peers at home, Martha knew that without those experiences her later years might have been spent differently. The highly structured society created by the colonial patriarchal system was restrictive, and seems to have damned her for her individuality. Martha herself

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did not accept that damnation; she believed in the war and did not regret its costs. As Theodorick had written in the early stages of the war, Martha, in those later years surely felt she could choose:

only to deplore the loss of those precious enjoyments for which no earthly reward but the satisfaction of having had a hand in freeing his Country can make amends.53

In February 1784, Theodorick wrote from Cawsons to St. George and Fanny, apologizing for their weeks of silence. He asked for a visit from them, saying:

Cawsons at present affords no other variety except the Maladie Venesienne for which it has been a hospital almost ever since I have been fix’ed at home and the new arrived guest adds one to the number. . . we are now somewhat better prepared to enjoy your company than when you were last here - and be assured that nothing w'd give greater pleasure.54

This letter refers to a confinement, presumably Martha’s. Sadly, this child was not mentioned again, and presumably did not survive its infancy. It is ironic that all of the travels Martha took in her attempts at pregnancy ended in this manner. Perversely, it seems to have helped bridge the gap that had developed with family and friends. Her absences from Cawsons were less frequent after this event.

Upon the War’s end, Theodorick did not resume the role of planter, as he had expected. His commitment to the new country focused instead on its

54 Letter to St. George Tucker, February 3, 1784, from Theodorick Bland, Jr., Tucker-Coleman Collection.
political development. A patriot and proponent of freedom, he did not support democracy. He advocated stronger powers for the president, supported a more royalist type of government and counseled against the ratification of the Constitution. Nevertheless, when the Constitution was ratified, he was appointed as Senator and seems to have served with the same vigorous determination that he used in the war effort. His many political absences left Martha in charge of Cawsons yet again. His early death in 1790 while serving as a Senator left Martha totally responsible for the management of all his property. In his will, Theodorick evidenced his own complete support of her by making Martha his sole executrix.\footnote{Will, Theodorick Bland, Jr., Tucker-Coleman Collection.}

Upon Theodorick’s death in 1790, Martha followed her advice on re-marriage, and carefully considered her prospects. Contemporary practices made it unlikely that Martha would marry outside her sphere of known acquaintances. Moreover, as the executrix of an extensive estate, she would have been negligent in marrying anyone whose social position was dissimilar. Martha used prenuptial agreements to insure that subsequent marriages allowed for her continued control of the vast Bland holdings.

Prudence alone would have prevented Martha from marrying outside her social and financial rank, or in anyway jeopardize the holdings she held in trust. Martha did not limit her choice of husbands to the eligible bachelors within
Virginia's planter society. Rather, she considered the much larger universe of planter society, including those successful and wealthy businessmen accepted within the social and financial ranks of that elite society. Selecting a husband from outside the exclusive set of planters was not unusual; her sister-in-law, Frances Randolph, had married St. George Tucker, a native of the West Indies. Her second and third husbands were a part of the business community affiliated with planter society, and had interacted with both Theodorick and Martha prior to 1790.

Martha's second husband, Nathan Blodget, was raised in Boston. His parents often socialized with John Adams, whose 1765 diary entries refers to spending an enjoyable evening with them: "We were never in better Spirits, or more Social."\(^\text{56}\) Nathan's father was Samuel Blodget and was involved in the planning of Washington, D.C. Nathan himself was educated as a lawyer. Like Theodorick, his family that used its connections to further his career. Adams' diary also noted that Nathan was a purser on board the *Alliance*, and a partisan in a mutiny against French Captain Landais and his American officers while in port in Paris.\(^\text{57}\) Adams seems to have brought Nathan to Benjamin Franklin's attention, who later took him on as a member of the delegation seeking aid and subsidies from Louis XVI. He also served as an officer on several ships during the War.

\(^{57}\) Butterfield, II, pp. 372-373, and 378.
After the war, Nathan settled in the Petersburg, Virginia area. Working as both a factor and a lawyer, he dealt with Theodorick and his peers. A friend of St. George Tucker, letters from Martha to Fanny indicate that Nathan was a frequent guest at Cawsons during the late 1780s. Martha and Nathan signed a prenuptial agreement in 1792, confirming that Martha would retain:

the same unlimited and uncontrolled estate in and power over the said lands, slaves, and moveable chattels as she now hath and as she would or could have exercised, has she remained sole and discovert.

The marriage to Nathan was short lived; by 1796, Martha was again a widow. A diary she maintained in 1795 and 1796 provides the deepest insight to the management of her estate. Farmingdell was managed from Cawsons, although a separate overseer was installed. The Amelia Quarter likewise remained under the immediate control of Martha at Cawsons.

In both 1795 and 1796, Martha left Cawsons in the summer for a journey to Boston via Philadelphia and New York, returning on Christmas Day. During those absences, Samuel Perkins served as her chaperone. She took three slaves with her as attendants: Billy, Leonard/Leander, as groom and Chloe, her maid. Also, she took a phaeton with four gray horses. Upon her return, Martha noted

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60 Notes accompanying the text state that Martha was a widow by this time; no evidence has been found to contradict or to support this comment. Tinling, p. 282.
61 Martha's diary entries for June 28, 1795, December 25, 1795, and December 25, 1796, Tinling, p. 286, 288-289.
62 Ibid. Martha's references to "Leonard" on June 28 are not consistent with that of "Leander" on all other instances. Presumably this is a transcription error by Charles Campbell and his assistants. The phaeton was a small, light-weight, four-wheeled open carriage and drawn by a pair of horses, with either one or two seats facing forward. The extra pair of horses may have been intended for riding purposes.
that Billy was left in Boston, being "one of the greatest Villains & Rogues that remained unhung," a reference to her decision to sell Billy due to his undisciplined behavior.63 Interestingly, Martha made no mention of her choices as substitute plantation mistress or planter. On her return, she had no difficulty in resuming her position in charge of the estates left her by Theodorick. The diary also references Martha’s companion, Polly I. of New England, who remained with Martha for eleven months.64

Diary entries for April 13, 1795, June 4, 1796 and July 3, 1796 mention "Captain C"; the Captain in question could well have been Patrick Corran.65 Martha’s third husband, Patrick Corran, served as purser under John Paul Jones during the Revolutionary War. When naval service took Jones to France, Patrick was posted there, too. In France, he could well have joined Nathan [Blodget] and other American naval officers in socializing with Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson.

After the War, Patrick was a sea captain and had extensive mercantile contacts in France. He owned his own vessel and was a successful entrepreneur, shipping along the coastal United States, the islands and Europe. It is likely that Patrick shipped cargo from Cawsons, as the plantation had a boat launch, and historically the Blands acted as agents for other planters. The couple may have

63 Martha’s diary entry for December 25, 1795, Tinling, p. 286.
64 Martha’s diary entries for February 22, 1796 and July 3, 1796, Tinling, pp. 286-287, 290
65 Martha’s diary entries for April 13, 1795, June, 4 and July 3, 1796, Tinling, pp. 287 and 290, respectively.
married as early 1796. The couple moved to France to further Patrick’s shipping business, perhaps in 1801.\textsuperscript{66} This move so far from her beloved Cawsons is understandable; all of Martha’s dearest female friends were now dead, the ties binding to her to the Tidewater region were very loose, indeed. Martha’s will was dated September 24, 1804, at Montremont near St. Cloud. In it, she relinquished her claim to property Patrick Corran had purchased in France, albeit “according to the Laws of France I have at present a right of one half.”\textsuperscript{67}

Additionally, in her will Martha made arrangements for the manumission of five slaves from Cawsons: Pa[u]l, Leander, Will Smith, Peg Innes and Kate. This document also mentioned four other slaves, Louisa, Ampy, Cooper George and Chloe, and included instructions for their relocation with specific heirs. Two passages referred to the disbursement of “all the negroes” from her parents and Theodorick’s parents.\textsuperscript{68} In this process, those slaves given to Martha by her parents were given in turn to her brother’s daughter, Hannah Bassett Mosely. Likewise, those slaves inherited from Mr. and Mrs. Bland were divided among John Randolph, Henry Tucker and Beverly Tucker, her nephews by Fanny and

\textsuperscript{66} Helen Bullock, \textit{The Williamsburg Art of Cookery or Accomplish’d Gentlewoman’s Companion}, (Williamsburg, 1966), contains at least twenty-one recipes from a manuscript cookbook, circa 1801, belonging to Frances Tucker Coalter, Martha’s niece. Page 81 references a note attached to a page of the cookbook is signed “with much love Mrs. B’s recipes,” a strong reference to Martha. Frances’ mother, Fanny, was Martha’s closest friend and she died when Frances was still a young child. It seems reasonable that Martha would have passed along to her niece this collection of the favorite family recipes, especially once Frances was old enough to anticipate her own marriage.

\textsuperscript{67} Will, Martha Bland Blodget Corran, September 24, 1804, Tucker-Coleman Collection.

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
St. George. Martha’s will reflected constant patriarchal concern for the future of her slaves. The strong concern demonstrated in her will for the effective distribution of the slaves was no doubt as resolute during Martha’s years of direct plantation management.

It was Martha’s decision that determined the disposition of properties after her death. As mentioned, the slaves were provided for in specific detail. By long-standing practice, management of Cawsons seems to have included responsibility for the remaining plantations. Nephew Samuel Perkins managed Cawsons, and presumably the other plantations as well, until his death sometime in 1807. At that point, the estate passed to nephew John Randolph; it remained in the Randolph family until 1833. Thereafter, it was owned by the Meades, also relatives of the Blands. Between 1833 and 1846, Cawsons was used as rental units, being divided into no fewer than thirty apartments. A mysterious fire in 1846 destroyed Cawsons; arson was suspected. The fire consumed the carriage house or barn that housed many trunks and barrels containing the letters and effects of Martha, Theodorick, Nathan and Patrick.

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69 Campbell, I, p. ix.
CONCLUSION

As previously stated, it was not unusual for Martha to assume the position of planter while her patriotic husband was absent for many years of military and political service. Like other wives whose husbands were similarly involved in the fight for independence, Martha was unprepared for the new responsibilities and struggled to maintain the additional burdens for which she had no training. Martha and her peers were little celebrated or recognized for their contributions to the war effort. As women, their roles were far more narrowly defined, and they received no accolades for managing the home front alone.

Martha’s attempts to balance the diverse roles of plantation mistress, planter and patriot with wife and mother appear to have been well managed. Martha strove to equalize her duties as wife - bearing children and supporting her husband - with the obligations of a plantation mistress/planter - providing daily administration for their various holdings - during the tumultuous years establishing a new nation. The positions of wife and plantation mistress/planter conflicted at times, but Martha managed them both with skill and flair.
For her part, Martha aspired to excel as plantation mistress. She took her role as good wife seriously. When Theodorick entrusted her with his position as plantation manager in 1775, Martha resolved to perform his responsibilities to the best of her ability. She regarded her performance of his duties as an extension of her wifely obligations, and did not expect public recognition for her efforts. Whenever Theodorick returned to Cawsons, as he did on an irregular basis, Martha relinquished the concerns of managing the plantation. The ability to relinquish and then resume planter duties and obligation required more than a little finesse. From all indications, Martha handled the matter gracefully and tactfully. Her support of Nathan Blodget, her second husband, and Patrick Corran, her third, was no less as complete as it had been for Theodorick.

Individually, each of the three men she married was highly regarded. Each was financially secure and moved easily within the planter sphere, as did Martha and her extended family connections. Theodorick, Nathan and Patrick had the occasion to associate and correspond with such men as Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, John Adams and Benjamin Franklin. Therefore, while Martha’s husbands may not have been the pre-eminent political figures of her generation, certainly they were important minor figures. All three men were patriots and served with distinction in forming the new nation.

For eighteenth century plantation mistresses, fame usually rested on “receipts” or charm or a remarkable singing voice to entertain guests and family. Their value was bound to the prestige of the men in their lives: fathers, husbands, brothers or sons. Like her peers, Martha socialized with George
Washington, James Madison, Baron de Kalb, and countless diplomats and ambassadors. Appropriately, she concerned herself with making a good impression, being a thoughtful and gracious hostess or visitor, and entertaining her guests.

Martha’s numerous and far-reaching travels were unusual for her time, but understandable due to the Blands’ continued childlessness. The journeys took her into the midst of front-line war camps while family and friends remained at home. She endured hardships her peers did not: leaving her cherished Cawsons during the vagaries of war-time, the inconvenience and discomfort of traveling, the strange beds and indifferent meals, inoculation for smallpox and a reaction so severe she almost died, all without a friend or companion for solace. She undertook such journeys not once, but several times, as she traveled to join Theodorick wherever his military appointments sent him. Martha showed courage, dedication and determination in her efforts to produce an heir. Later trips to Philadelphia took her to a sophisticated yet superficial social scene that captivated her, while her own family and friends were left to deal with an enemy at close-hand. The traveling changed Martha irrevocably from retiring and domestic plantation mistress to self-assured cosmopolitan businesswoman.

Martha embraced her life with zeal and determination. She found inner resources to draw upon as a result of the responsibility of managing plantations and developed new capabilities as a direct result of her travels. Martha often seemed caught between her sense of duty as plantation mistress/planter, her
enjoyment of the social life that developed in Philadelphia and her part as a central figure there, and her ultimate responsibility as wife to bear healthy children. Perhaps more important to Martha than any thing else was her position within the Bland family, for it helped her to define herself and kept her focused on her true role. Fanny's death in 1788 left her bereft; Martha’s ties with Fanny’s children was not strong enough to carry through their adulthood. Without children of her own to nurture, Martha was more alone than she had been since her journey to Morristown to be with Theodorick in 1777.

With the passing of Martha, Theodorick, Fanny, St. George and the others of that generation, the family changed and its unity seems to have dissolved. As a whole, it lost its strongest bonds. The change is clear in the settling of Martha’s will, which took many years as various members pressed for their “fair share” - an unimaginable state of affairs for those who had risked all - property, happiness, family, children, life - to support the war effort. It reflects a definite shift within society to promote a view of women as weak vessels, and indeed shunned the character that the previous generation relied upon from Martha and many of her generation. Their strength, independence and self-reliance made support for independence.

All of the women in the Bland kinship were clearly valued as individuals and encouraged in their education and pursuits. The Tucker-Coleman Collection presents a unique situation with the letters and documents pertaining to a large - and close - extended family consisting of the Blands, Randolphps, Tuckers, Meades, Ruffins, Hayes, and Banisters. The family pattern of sharing letters
made possible the large set of documents intact in the Tucker-Coleman Collection. An examination should be expanded to include all the papers from this valuable network of planter families. Its purpose should be to further an understanding of the norms within planter society. The examination should focus on the background and achievements of the broad kinship network that peaked in the mid to late eighteenth century.
Dear Sister

I am greatly obliged to my Mother for her kind present, and am very glad to hear you are all well. after the storm we have had, I never was so frighted in my life I expected Every moment The house wou’d fall over our heads. there wasn’t a place in the house dry Enough to set a table and such havok amongst the trees, - was it as bad with you if it was I think Mr Randolph much to blame to take so long a jorney when there is no possibility of Driving a chair up this way I was Extreamly sorry I couldn’t goe down the other day when my mother was so kind to send the Chair up but Mrs Wills Came & prevented me just as I was preparing to goe, she set off yesterday for Cawsons to give you the Day she owes you but to my great mortification she returnd here about An hour agoe & got no further than Mrs Murrays. I am in hopes of Mr Bland Coming home to night, if he doesnt make another twelve day trip I will be down as soon as there is any travailing in a Carriage present my Duty to My Father & Mother & believe me to be Dr Fann: your Ever affectionate

M Bland
[May 24 1774]

Dear Sister

As nobody will write to you from Cawsons I think I will, tho you don’t deserve it, your Mama has been extremely ill, but is now recovering but Nancy Currie is very ill. Everybody down here will be glad to see you if ’tis but a week & my mother says you must bring Jacke, at any rate, I Beg, you will bring my boy. If you shod come to stay so little a while I Fear I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you as I shall sett off to Brunswick the day after tomorrow but my sister Bannister has promised to take care of The° till I come back as it is late I must conclude with our joint Loves & best wishes for you & yours.

Your affectionate sister

M. Bland

May 24 1774

To Mrs Randolph

Bizzarr

Morristown May 12 1777

it was my dr fanny, with great pleasure that I read your agreeable letter, & heard of all your healths but it is so long since the date that you may be all married, or dead by this time, four months may bring many unforeseen things to
light, I have wrote to you three letters, two to my sister Banister & one to Mr. Banister, many to Miss Betty Carliss, - (who so kindly took charge of my family,) relative to domestick matters but no doubt many of them are lossd of Never got to hand -- as yours have been a quarter of a year traviling this distance I got well of the [missing] small pox in Feb'y but was for four weeks very ill, & had them severely for Inoculation I had many pocks on my face, all of which are at present visible & I shall be pited with them. Your Brother used to Laugh at my poor forhead & say the de--l thrash'd homoniy buns upon it, and now as the Sailor's phrase is the D-le has thrash'd black Eyed peas upon it - so with the two threshings it is a jumbled piece of work. how ever Every face almost keeps me in Countenance here are few smoth faces & no beautys, so that one does very well to pass I left Philadelphia last month (the first day) & came to Morristown, where Gen'l Washington keeps Head quarters. Mrs Washington had arrived three weeks before me. so that I coud with a good face make a visit to the Camp. I had been from Jan'y till Ap'l from your Brother & you may suppose we were very glad to meet, tho I had many a qualm about visiting a Camp - however a very agreable Gentleman and Lady was Coming to Morristown on their way to Boston & with them I left my winter quarters I found Mor'sis is a clever little village situated in a most beautiful valley at the foot of 5 mountains, it has three houses with Steeples which gives It a Consequential Look - & is some thing larger than Blandford it has two familys, refugees from New York in it otherwais it is inhabited by the erentest rusticks you ever beheld - you cunn't travil three miles without passing through one of those villages all of them
having Meeting houses Court houses & &c Decorated with steeples which gives them a pretty airy look & the farmes between the Mountains are the most rural sweet spots in Nature their Medows of a fine Luxurious grass - which looks like a bed of Velvet enterspered with Yellow, Blue & White flowers They represent us with Just such scenes as the poets paint Arcadia - purlying rills Mossey beds & &c but not dying swains & Lovly Nymphs tho there are some exceeding pritty Girls. but they appear to have souls formd for the distaff, rather than the tender passions, and realy I never met with such peasant looking creatures & the most inhospitable mortals breathing - You can get nothing from them but "dredful good water" as they term Every thing that is good desprate & dredful are their favorite words you’d Laugh to hear them talk - I have made several excursians into the lower parts of this Jerseys which have pleased me much, & I have been with-in 7 miles of New York at a place call’d New Ark I have been too at Elizabeth town, the place where Dr Manlove used to live I have seen several Genteel familys who spoke of him in the highest terms, I think he was a f--l to leave the only place in the world where he has been liked if you see Rubsaman, tell him, the Girls on the Rarreton deserve to be remembred to him, Miss Van Horn particularly - that his partner Mr ------ is gone over to the Enemy and become a L' Horse Man; Expanding from small to great things --- now let me speak of our Noble and Agreeable Commander (for he Commands both sexes, one by his Excellent Skill in military matters - the other by his affibility, politeness & attention) We visit them twice or three times a week by particular invitation - Every day frequently from Inclination, he is Generaly busy in the fore noon - but
from dinner till night he is free for all Company his worthy Lady seems to be in perfect felicity while she is by the side of her old man as she calls him, we often make party's on horse back the Genl his Lady Miss Livingstons & his aide de camps who are - Col° FitzGarrayd an agreeable broad shoulderd Irishman - Col° Johnston Brother of Mrs Malone who is exceedingly witty at Every Body's expense but cant allow other people to be so at his own! tho they often take the Liberty, Col° Hamilton a sensible Genteel polite young fellow a Westindian - Col° Meade - Col° Tillman a modest worthy young man who from his attachment to the Genl volenterely lives in his family and acts in any Capacity that is upermost with out fee or reward Col° Harrison Brother of Billy Harrison that kept store in Petersburg & as much like him as possible a worthy man - Capl Gibbs of the Genls Guard a good naturd Yankee who makes a thousand Blunders in the Yankee stile & keeps all the dinner table in Constant Laugh - these are the Genls family all polite sociable Gentlemen who make the day pass of with a great deal of satisfaction to the Visitors, - but I had forgot my subject almost, there is our riding party Generaly - at which time General Washington throws of the Hero & Takes up the chatty agreeable Companion - he can be down right impudent some times - such impudence Fanny as you & I like - and realy I have wished often for you it is a life that is Calculated for one of your temper - I shewed Your Brother your letters he was much pleased with them. I seconded your request & he has promised to give us all his miniture when he goes to Philadelphia (that is you & his Sr B), myself, I shall carry my Dr Little boys som thing that is clever tho I love them all yet Th° will allwais be my favorite it is an
attachment which has long been riveted & time or place will make no difference I
prefer him to his Brothers & Cousins & now my dear fanny remember me
affectionately to my sister Banister the Girls & all the Boys

God Bless You Adieu
M Bland

Mrs Randolph
near Petersburg Va

Princeton Aug: 1st 1777

My dear Fanny

I am very glad of an oppy by Cap' Barr ed to write you. I have been very
uneasy at a report We Have had of my sisters Bannisters death, God forbid it
shoud be truth, I think it is of too much Consiquence to be Not to have been
informed of it by our friends - I have been very ill for three weeks but I thank
God that I am now much better - I need not repeat how agreably I have spent my
time - I am still in the Jerseys - but Your Brother is gone over to Philadelphia
with his reg Yesterd. Yesterday he left his station at Trenton - I begin to long to see you
all, & shall set off the first of September - we have various accts of the Enemy -
last week your Brother was orderd up by the North river in New England - this
week they are orderd to Philadelphia - such is the changeable situation of
military men - Your little Cole is now with me - he has been very ill along time &
as two Envaleids we travell together - in the Charriot & I believe will go to
Virginia with me - give my d'r boys a thousand kisses all my acquaintences my
best love

God Bless You Adieu

MBland

Mrs Randolph
Near Petersburg, Va
Favor'd by Cap'n Barrerd

New Jersey 12th Aug: 1777

indeed my dear Fanny I do most sincerely lament (with you) the death of
our worthy sister, & from the bottom of my heart pity the poor Girls for a loss
they soe early in life experience, Providence has been kind in furnishing them
with such a friend as yrself to direct their Conduct, & they have yet; More than
many poor Girls in their situation - a Father alwais fond of his Children, a good
Grandmother, Aunt, & Uncle - are four Blessings which does not often fall to the
motherless I am very much concernd to hear that poor Theo is likely to have a
dropsy - You don't mention little bob where is he? does he live with you? When
I go home I intend to beg him of his papa - but as you say my d'r Fanny it is of
little use to dwell long on melancholy Subjects - We are all to leave this World &
happy is it to the dying (& - happy to their sorry friends,) to leave this world
with a Conscience as free from Evil as our poor Sisters was your Brother is hearty & well & grown into such a Gallant that all the widows & Girls are pulling Caps for him he has been stationed in Phila & got one miniture picture taken for me - he promises me fairly - to give you one which I’ll assure you he is oftin oblig to repeat as I am anxious to Carry it to you - I have not heard anything that has pleased me so much as My Father’s Courting Mrs Yates - old Col° Harrison writes us that he is, - of all the women in the world - I shall like her best, for him - I hope she will have him - I coud launch out in praise of this place - but my pen is so bad that I can scarcely write however I must tell you I am at the seat of Mrs Fields a widow Lady of distinction - and one of the best of wemen. it is delightfull in deed a very Elegant house seatd on the banks of the delawar with avenues & walks - Groves - &c &c her whole Studdy to pass life off with-out care Your Brother got a furlow last Saterday to Come & see me here - & is now enjoying him-self fast a sleep in a fine lofty room, which to him (you know) is a Luxery, in deed, we were on a visiting party yesterday at a Mrs Recheas over delawar a sister of Mrs Field where we were Elegantly entertaind & such a quantity of plate I never saw - there were two of Mrs Simses sisters Miss Hoops - by this time, our friend Cole Diggs is arrived in Virg -- we were to have gone together but he has given me the slip - he has different attractions - for his Love fit has mauld his poor Carcase off - he can’t give you up yet: but take care of my d° sist° & Settle well y° prospect of future happiness before you form another conection. No fear of our little soldier, tho I believe, - hitherto you have done well The man will Come in time to make you again Happy ----- coud you
suppose your company an incumberence - often have I wish’d for you - when I have been in scenes of life exactly cut out for you - I never faild to talk of you - Gen H--ton-- is as agreable in person as in mind. rather too slender, the Gen¹ has got Peter P Thornton in the room of poor Johnston - a miserable substitute, our friend R K M--- is well and most intolerable impudent I had a letter from him the other day filld with abuse and Double Entendres - Oh! Id like to have forgot, Colo Harrison (old) writes yr Brother that he is most sadly in Love with you & prays to the Gods to take 30 yrs off from his Shoulders - God Bless you remember me affect to the Girls & Kiss My d¹ Boys
Adieu my d¹

M B

[spring or summer 1779]

My dear Fanny

I have a thousand things to say to you, but a thousand other things prevent me from indulging my Inclination at present. - The next opportunity that offers, I will write you a long letter. & give you the History of Charlottes'ille & the redcoats in it. - we are just seting out on a party to the top of a beautiful Mountain the only inviting object (except one) that has presented itself to my Eyes - since I arrived God Bless you & Your Hero! y’r d¹ little ones! & believe me
I am Sincerely yr affect Sister

& believe me I am starved to death,
   Such Cooking! never was seen!
it makes out the old adage
   "God sens meats but the Devil sends Cooks,"
Adieu! Excuse this Blotted letter, tis wrote in a second.
I tho' woud look unkind not to say how do ye MB

[on outer fold:] do my dear, get me 2 papers of Pins,
at Dick Bates's and send up to me. by the first opportunity

Mon chere Amie

The reception of a letter with your Signature, was flattering to my vanity, & pleasing to that friendship I profess towards you,- but my good Brother the next you write, let it be in the mad stile of St G T-r no wonder, poor thing! that your letter wanted your normal vivacity, when you wrote it at Matoax, your family away - and only the dear city of Petersburg & its still dearer vicinity, to enliven your spirits, no saucy Fanny to jog your Elbow.-you say I desired you to write me the news of the place, true, I did- but out of the little engaging

Randolphins House, Chestnut Street
Oct 8th 80

MBland
occurrences of our own family. I care not how they roll on, who stumbles, who
spreined their Ankle, who hates or who loves, who lyes or who speaks the truth,
but take notice, my total carelessness extends no farther, than the neighborhood
of Petersburg I can ill detest, therefore, will assuredly excuse you choosing that
subject. the praise, or dispraise, of either private, or publick characters ought
now, to be conscioisaly dealt out. the precious master of his province, prevents
those, who really fancy themselves very deserving, finding out the wretch who
call you his friend, while he would so criticize you to his own Interest, & we are
liable from the belated impositions of that no more, to judge too hastily of honest
men, such there are, to be sure in this wide world. the politicks is a theme, I am
by no means Capable of dwelling upon, yet, as tis now, the Great Question "did
you ever hear of such a villain, as this Arnold"? -- I must ask you, if you have
known in history, such a villain? You have heard, by this, in how many different
forms and fashions, the Devil, has displayd, himself in the l*** Gen Arnold. I
shall, therefore, just give you a little account of the Effect it had upon the
Virtueus part of this Town. - They, out of kindness to the two friends mounted
them on a platform raisd on a cart, Arnold set in a chair, his lame leg rested on a
stool. he was represented with two faces, the Devil at his Back, dress’d in a
parsons Gown, holding in one hand, a purse, in the other a mask, a rope
suspended on his right, one of his faces look’d with eager desire on the purse, the
other with horror on the halter, a Gallows created before him, the likeness taken
by Peel and done by the life, the devil, was truly the most Grotesque figure I
Ever beheld, in this manner they were paraded through the streets, attended by
many thousands of the citizens, preceded by the Gen\textsuperscript{12} light Horse, at last a bon
fire was lighted & the devil set on fire, gazing down upon Arnold, caught him in
his fangs & held into the Air, where they Blazed together for some time amidst
the shouts of many thousands, he has brought in his Aides, for a share in the
villainy Majr Franks is run off, & that fop, Clarkson, is in jail.

You are mistaken my friend! here is not the Agreeable variety you
suppose, to fill a letter, true, here are some characters, but it is difficult to Explore
them, Grotesque figures, too-- you need look no farther than the Ladies heads for
a laughable subject, when I can assure you that fashion has raised them to so
preposterous an height, that the Ladys are strangers to the swais of natural
beings, they are literally brothers to themselves - & if unfortunately a wind
makes them rougher than the soft breath of a Gentle Zephyr, they are, in the
\textit{sailors phrase} thrown all a back. & it is with difficulty, they regain their poise, on
the slender support of a shoe heel, - these things are ridiculous, to a mind, not
wholly absorbd in its fantastic frippery - but in a measure we must conform &
join in massing together the links of folly or (Oh! Heavens.) the horr’d thought be
out of the Stile for my part, I wish not to be singular therefore I am willing to be
in fashion, not to the extremes, but keeping in view the mediocrity of my
\textit{husbands} purse, I dress as they do, visit, am visited, make nonsense, laugh, then
I foolish thing, make a pritty mouth, and \textit{wonder!} at the Immense sagacity of the
speaker, Dear M’amie, did you ever see any thing so beautiful, & so pritty, I
protest, he is an amazing pretty fellow - And did you see Miss V- today - She had
on a hat in such a quantity of White & red “---” ‘tis a pity, M’amie, People don’t
consult the natural display of such and then perhaps they would not be so lead to a Discovery "Oh! Ma’ma M---, is there a more Generous Creature alive? Why shoud not Ma’ma do otherwise [for] Monsr de Stats, [blurred] the sack [several blurred words] by existing native in faith!" "Good Sir! is it possible that Miss S-is not for all those characters she seems ---! For in my life I never saw such finer hair and saw a more lovely Gown - please thou" "Good Sir I am utterly astounded at You, Why she has naught but a miserable plasterer Her hair looks, for all the world, as if twas stuck on with binders pins ....The wine is quite poor, & Miss V- proclaims you know ......" Good Lord! What a world do we live in - I leave you to Judge how agreeably I can fill a letter to my friend but in the old way of "this leave me weak, d’r God!" I hope she will find you & yours Also, in good faith, Tucker, after all, & it is I believe this the best road to Heaven, the Bill is Constantcy, & Consoling, God knows Who’s won, Comes the end, so in serious sadness I wish you & yours every blessing, & believe me very sincerely

yr affec1

M bland

Fairy Hill, March 30th 1781

My dear Fanny

I was very happy to receive a letter from you last week, the first line have had from you, but you give such good reasons for not writing that I shoud be
unpardonable to refuse accepting them - I am sorry to see your letter dated from Bizzar how do you amuse yourself? Coud you perswade your friends who used to flock to you at Matoax to visit you at Bizzar and spend a whole winter in Exile with you? - I dare answer No! such is this world - I felt for you I assure you when you say "Mr Tucker is with Gran" I am very sorry to find that you will know the anxieties of that situation, you judge right my dear, In supposing that I am taken up by the Gay scenes of Philadelphia you woud wonder, who used to call me domestic, to see me so deeply enter into the disipation of the place - and Yett I am moderate in comparison - dont believe, however, that I have ever forgot you, & those I really love, amidst those Gay amusements - I have thought of you, I have written frequently to you - but I have great reason to fear my letters have miscarry'd one in particular which I wrote to Mr Tucker a Gentleman told me he saw in the post office in Richmond, torn to pieces - he knew my hand & tho it was directed by a Gentleman (your Brother being out of the way) yet Curiosity prevaild so far, as to open it and Let it be thrown about, the Gentleman told me he made out something very saucy - 'tis very likely - for I well remember a long History I gave him of the Balls at the french ministers and particularizing a pete metre, - oh my dear! such a swarm of french bears you woud have been delighted with some Marquisses, Counts, Viscounts, Barons & Chevaliers, among the latter - the Chevalier de la Luzern the Ministre of France, is my greatest favorite he is one of the most amiable, the politest easiest behavd man I ever knew - I may be partial perhaps - and give my opinion in two high a strane, as he has been particularly attentive and even fondly to HIM since I first knew
him, and your old acquaintance Colo. Dubysson aid de Camp, to the Baron deKalb - figures away here, amazingly among the Gallants of the season - has recoverd from his wounds - and as an acquaintance of my Charming Sister (yr Ladyship) visits me regularly every day -

Yesterday we left the noises & Smell of the city, & took possession of a country seat - the seat of the fairies, I expect a poem from my friend addressd to me queen of that little race - it is 4 miles from the city on the branch of the Schulekill delightfully situated, amidst scenes of every disposition, here, is art a bundantly displayd & Nature in her rudest shapes - the stately palace, and the humble cottage at one view, the river tumbling over rocks above you, & beloe, the finest mirror in Nature, which is only rippild by the sporting of the little urchins of that Element. we have a Good Garden, - at the foor of which is a sweet little medow, in that medow, is a clump of trees - the delightfull shade to a simple cottage on verdant mound - the habitation of the Gardeners. In short, my dear, 'tis call'd Fairy Hill, & a very applicable name I shall expect them to dance on the Grass - by moonlight

A fresh supply of paper induces me to write on, and give my dear Fanny a little more of my hodge podge for I think my letters may be justly calld so - they are as inconsistent as my disposition, and easily shew the unsteadyness of the mind - I cannot for my life fix my self. in one train, when I am writing a friend, and carry on my Epistle as methodically, as a parson woud his sermon, but I fly from one subject to another as they occur to me, - your Brother set up very late, writing to you last night - I hope he has made ample amends for his long silence,
as you suppose, but I can assure you, and alwais put a postcrypt to Mr Tuckers letters - addressd to you, I hope by this your fears upon Cornwellis are ended - and your soldier returnd - with laurells. He has not, but with health, and a determination to map out a military life - it is not suitable to his constitution and he can be of service in a more secure situation. - Meriwether Smith is going to resign his seat in Congress - I wish Mr Tucker woud manage matters so as to fill it. - to be sure fanny, Virginia is most curiously represented - Taking one out - Here are the compleatest trio, I ever saw - Mr Madison a Gloomy shift [missing] creature, they say he is clever in congress, but out of it, he has nothing engaging, or even bearable in his Manners, - the most unsociable creature in Existence, Mr Jones who looks like a presbyterian Priest his complection as sable as his habet he alwais weres black - yr Cousin Mr Smith with all the Grimace of a Babbon, and exactly like one in figure, I often laugh at Mr B- & tell him it absolutely necessary he shoud display all his pleasing qualities, to make up for the amazing deficiencies of his Brethren. if this letter shoud have the fate of my others - I shall certainly be taken up - I have dwelt very little upon that part of your letter which you call dolefull because I woud wish to enliven you with my nonsense, for even nonsense in Exile is agreeable, we had an oratories at the Ministers last Tuesday, it was very clever - he gives a Ball one week a Concert the next, the characters in the oratorio were Minerva, the Genius of France, of America the high Priest of Minerva by Miss Bond - a snubnosd girl about four feet high sings very smartly for a Philadelphian & with Great Boldness - the Genius of France a Mr Brown who sings delightfully the Genius of America by Mr Dick Peters of the board of
war, the high Priest by Mr Bache son in law to Dr Franklin - as big and as fat as
dear Hall, but not so high, the minister sacrifices his time to the happiness of
others - or rather to the policy of the french court - he dislikes music never
dances and is a domestick man yet he has a Ball or Concert every week, and his
house full to dinner every day - he had a Play performd by the students in the
College, a few weeks ago - when there was the greatest Crowd I ever saw, I went
accompanyd by Mr Marboys & Mr Otto the two petit ministers of france, Don
Francisco the Spanish Minister, and Miss Shippin we went at 5 o'clock, but found
several hundred people in the yard waiting for the opening of dores - they were
shut & we were not inclined to join the crowd so drove round two or three
squares of the city - when we returnd we found the dores open'd and the people
climbing up the walls to get in some mounted the heads of others and in short,
such a mob, that it was impossible to describe if Garrick had been to perform it
could not have been greater - Mr Marboys took hold of one of my arms don
francisco of the other - Miss Shippin of his and Mr Otto of her - in this manner
we attempted to get through the crowd - they forc'd us about half way the
passage but I was almost suffocated and declared I woud not go up the stairs a
large woman broke our chain, forcing Mr Marboys hand from mine - our little
party retired into a room in the College untill the Hurly Burly was over - and
then we went up into the Gallery we took possession of a seat where we cou'd
neither hear nor see any thing actd upon the stage and were unenvied - but I was
more entertaind at the nature of the men & women than I cou'd have been at the
first play performed in Europe, Governors, Ladys, Presidents Ladys, Chief
Justices & Merchants Ladys, sallow chandlers and cake women – shewmakers wives & members of congress - all pulling caps for the best places, and pushing each other down for air it unluckily was the warmest night we have had - one lady lost her cap, another her drop curls, another her shoes, another her hat, in such a scene I believe never was Exhibited in America a chief justices Lady seized a Gentle man who was in her way - by the que of his hair, and broke her fan over his head - a presidents Lady faintd three times - and lost her cap - at last was pulld through a little trap dore about as large as a chariot window and the Lady full as large as Betty Wammach, oh Fanny! - what would I give to have you in a corner at some of those scenes of high life below stairs! what a string of, what shall I call it? you know I have no turn for slander and ridicule, but indeed it would be impossible to refrain from dippin a little into it at some transactions in this place I was sorry to see my country women expose themselves to the contempt of the french Gentlemen, there were several french noblemen at the show - well now my dear, am I not very good to send you such a long letter, or rather, you will be very good to have the patience to read it, adieu once more, kiss the whole house for me

MB

[May 11, 1781]

I am very sorry that my paper will not admit of my saying more than to acquaint you that peel has finished Mr Randolphps picture, I can see some likeness Tho not
as great as at first, he is for ever making alterations in his pictures; however it is like what he was - his price is six Guineas your locket is not yet mended, he expects some Glass every day -- you dont mention the little fellow -just like the lady [blurred] - hay? pray remember me to all the little walks about Bizzar - the little river, that poor Nancy Curry & me went bathing - to all your Ducks & chickins - but sincerely, to your good man & the dear children - & to Mrs Johnson - Adieu my dear fanny - where ever I am - in what ever situation, I am & shall every be yr friend - and truly affect sister

MBlanD
May 11, 1781

Philadelphia Aug* 3d 1781

My dear Fanny

It was with great pleasure that I received you letter, & Mr Tuckers, by Captain Archer, last Eve & tho they were of so late a date, yet they afforded infinate satisfaction to me, tell Mr Tucker that I want words to Express the high sense I have of his attention to me, amidst the tumult of war - in which he has so deservedly shone, yet can I speak too highly of the Eligant poem addresd to his unworthy friend, it is greatly admired, and a Gentleman has promised me to get it set to music, indeed my dear fanny! you Greatly deceive yourself on supposing me so losd to the feelings of friendship - of Sympathy - to Enjoy the amusements of this place in their fullest force, when my country and my friends are in the
power of such a merciless band, rely it has been in too black a dye! is it possible
that the ashes of the dead could be so impiously disturb’d? if true, will Jerman
Baker suffer the wretched Phillips to lay at peace in the Church? I am quite low
spirited at the Horrid tale, and if the post did not wait for one letter I shoud be
tempted to lay my pen by till I have spirits to Enliven a letter, for surely you
might expect some little matter of Entertainment to make up for those hours of
uneasiness you have undergone.

Your acquaintance Monsr Raphonsoil spent last Eve with us, and sung
very agreeable, but I think you have spoild him a good deel, since he left
Philadelphia, he has losd the bashfull reserve, which was pleasing in him before
he went to Virginia, and I must say My Country, can sooner spoil a Clever
fellow, than any other place within my knowledge.

I made your friend Mrs Harlston a Visit last Eve but was not fortunate
enough to find her at home, she lives with her mother Mrs Multre, who arrived a
few days before her.- this place is alive with South Carolinians, sent by the
commanding office, from Charlestown, they are penniless and are intirely
supported by the bounty of the Philadelphia citizens,- a bitter pill to be sure,- for
people to swallow, who have been used to affluence. the inhabitants seem to be
rather disgustd at their bringing so many negroes amongst them so that all
together I fear their time with be very disagreeable spent.

We have been very frequently told that you were on the road to this place,
but it carried with it such an air of improbability that I never woud suffer myself
to believe it. the day Mrs Harlston arrive, Colonel Dubuyisson came out to Fairy
hill and informed me that I should see you in two hours - It would have given me pleasure indeed. Your brother talks of going to Virginia the first of October whether he will put his intentions into execution I don't know. He is anxious to see you all, and to pick up the wreck of his fortune, I think it was a particular piece of ill fortune, that none of our friends used their efforts to save a few of our goods - we shall have the world to begin again when we return - when I think of the number of pretty little things that we possess'd towards housekeeping, being destroyed I can't say but it calls forth a sigh or two.

Indeed my dear Fanny you were not mistaken in supposing that I had wrote several letters to you which have never got to hand. I have wrote many to you, & three to Mr Tucker, one he received, one other being destroyed in the post office at Richmond and God knows what became of the third. I sent off a large packet last week - to you, to Patsy, & to Mr Banister, which was taken in Wilmington, so that its probable that you will see me shine in Rivington's Gaz" Bob joins me in Love to you his sisters & cousins, he is a fine Boy Give both the S's a kiss for me, and little ones Adieu my dear - I am sorry I am come to the end of my paper

MB

May 20th 1782

hah! a letter from Matoax! Upon my word I thought you were all dead you'll say "Why did you depend on chance to undeceive you" - for the very
reason you give me. My horses were sent to Amelia the week after Colº Bland left Cawsons, and shall be very glad to visit you while B Gen’l Moultrie his lady & Mrs Harlston are with you. I have never ceas’d to look out for your & my sister every Saturday evª but alas! you woud not come.

You are right mon ami. ‘tis being buried alive to stay at Cawsons without mu Caro Sposo. or some agre’able Companion to join in admiration of its beauties. - and had it not been for the Company of some Brilliant Chevaliers, I shou’d have loss’d my belle Esperances of seeing a rational being while I remaind here. I expect two of Count Rochambeaus aids in a few days and I dont know but I may Introduce them to my lady sister. How does she? has she got over those little attacks of the stomach, naughty people are liable to? how does fanny & Henry? dont call him Harry! I give you a kiss for each.

Adieu mon ami Je suis tout mon couer, votre belle

MBland

addressed: Mrs Tucker Mr Banister Matoax

I received with great pleasure my dear Fannys letter by Mº Bland, whose return afforded me the Happiness of seeing his health much improved by his Journey - indeed he is so fat that I shoud hardly have known him if some certain marks of long standing had not remain’d - you say his anxiety to return was as great as if it was to a mistress instead of a wife to whom he has been married nineteen years pray my good sister dont cheat old time of his property - he syths down the
years quite quick enough without your adding assistance and one year & half makes a great difference in the set of ones Cap -- you dont mention your Brother, pray did he leave his heart in Philadelphia? - is he gone to Carolina? Jack Banister braves out finely his recall to V- but I can see it is nothing but the flesh he carries with him; you will say tis enough; in hight at least, - but the superior parts are certainly centerd in Philadelphia I am glad you like your Cap -- but its robbd of its beauty by the mode of the hair in Virginia - which is not calculated for such a cap - I coud tell you a great deal about the gaieties of this place but I know you have such a quick intelligence that it woud be spending time for nothing I believe the people in V- know every transaction of this place, for my part 'tho they do me the favor to invite me out frequently I am not a great rake I have so much more agreeable Company at home that I find I alwais loose by the change - but my favorites are gone, at least the greatest part, the minister and a few others are left -- I believe you have not quite so great a partiality for the T- - men as I have or as the V- gentlemen who go from here woud make you believe, - I have heard what Mr Jones told you and can assure you it is a fact tell Mr Tucker that I am happy to see once More his hand writing and that a person who candidly acknowledges his faults is alwais sure to receive forgiveness from me - I shall begin to write again to him soon and when once I begin I shall never know when to leave off yr B. tells me you have got a fine boy - of that kind which seems more proper (missing) to you - A Black Boy - does little Hen(ry) begin to talk yet? is fann Spoilt? I coud ask you a thousand questions but you are looth to answer them I know -- Kiss your (missing) and all the children for Me write to
me (missing) and do believe me sincerely your affectionate sister

MBland

your Brother to had a double
tie to bring him a wife and a mistress,
too are enough to bring a Man
three hundred miles in the middle of winter

Union Street Phila Jany 25th 1783

Philadelphia March 24th 1783

My dear fanny

You will find by the date of my letter that I pay all the attention to yours
that affection can dictate Nothing can give me more pleasure than to hear of your
health & happiness with Mr T you must have a large share of the latter and if
you say you are well I am sure you are happy god almighty bestow’d Excellent
disposition to both you and my self, for the full gratification of what ever comes
within our possession - that bears especial, and I look upon it as one of the first
virtues to be thankful & make Good use of it - life is brief and we ought to be
politic in the disposal of it.

I forgot the subject of my last letter to you but I trust Your Brother’s
Galantries made up He is indeed very Gallant; every single time he has three
minutes for me the advantage [is used] I have a Charming suitor devois to me in
him it a point to intrest each with the others intregues (good lord! if mamma or
my father was to see this!) it insures to either that there is No Harm going on. I
know my friend Tuckers Jealous pate woud not allow you half the liberty that I
take, but I believe he woud have some reason to be Jealous for your Charms woud indeed Captivate; Whereas My Sweethearts are only Nominal  it is quite fashionable to be the tea table talk here; and you are quite a Naught if a Count or Chevalier does not once a fortnight hide himself under your bed - as I suppose Jack has told you - appropo, you ask me who is his favorite, tis a blooming Girl of fifteen, a Miss Schgriebes, but I have heard [s]trange stories of him since he went away [A] Young Lady of the name of Donaldson [kept] physicians for a fortnight attending [her] -[a]ll the Volitiles in the Shops coud [not k]eep her from fainting away. My Aunt say so! Upon [the] best boys in the world such tricks; I am glad [illegible] is disengaged for if I shoud be a widow I intend to point my views that way, and if you are not in to Great a Hurry we will go to Bermuda together: but your present Brother is so fair & so lovely that I believe he will not agree to my taking another husband in the Lawful way soon - and indeed he is so good and so Endulgent to my Numerous faults that I believe I had better be contentd with him, I am in a train for writing nonsense and thus the point did not oblige me to stop for Non-sense is some time the most agreable sense. God Bless you! kiss your Husband & your house full of children (God help you!) for me twenty times

March 16/17th 1786

Dear Sir

I am very sorry to hear of my sister Tuckers indisposition, but (with you) I
hope it proceeds only from the milk and that a day or two will relieve her. I would go up immediately but Col° Bland has the horse with him, which is absolutely necessary to afix in the Chariot I hope he will be at home to night, and if he is I will be at Matoax tomorrow, my best love to fanny and I congratulate her on being thus far out of her nine months scrape. Adieu and believe me your affect friend.

my love to Maria & the children

MBland

[Mar 1787]

My dear Fanny

I am glad to hear by Abraham that you are better, what then is to prevent your coming to Cawsons? Pray let me see you as soon as you are able to undertake the journey. A violent rain fell appropo for the cabbage plants - I have sent you 6 cat fish to make you some soup I know it will do you good. God Bless You

Yrs Most Afty

MB

Bring Blodgett when you come
tell Mr Tucker for me I shall be glad
to see him at Cawsons when you come down
Mrs Tucker
Cawsons 2d April 87

I am much obliged to you, My dear Fanny! for your kind inquiries after my health - I have had a sever fit of the Collick which left me very disorderd - but I am Better and able to dine in the other house, Mr Bland had a slight touch of the Gout, last night but this morns feels but little of it and is hailing the anniversary of his birth - with as much pleasure as if it announced twenty five instead of --5-- we shall be extremely happy to see you and the children while you are in the widowd state and any conveyance wither by land or water that we possess shall alwais be at your Command at the shortest notice we join in every affectionate sentiment and believe yours sincerely & truly MB

I am sorry to hear poor little fan - had the aque but, expect you have stopt it by this - Mr B - begs you will send him down, at the season you think best, 20 jessamines with the Earth about them

Mrs Tucker

Apr 12 1787

My dear Fanny

I have sent you a good dish of Asp's and intended to have sent you more but before I had given orderes about it yesterday - they had Cut it & scraped it for dinner - I didnot intend to order it for dinner Wishing you to have two good
dishes, I have sent you the veals head which I kept on purpose for you after I
heard you Expected so much company - I have had it parboil'd so that it will soon
be redy - I had a very large Shagtail turtle which I have dres'd in its stead, & I
have sent you a dish of Crawfish - O: Mrs B - did not come the rest of our Guests
are still with us - but we are all Going up to day to Church - I am much better
and think a little trip from home will be of service to me we shall dine at Dick
Taylors by appointment - If you don't see me at Matoax, believe it not from
inattention to you - Mr Blands Jaunt to Amelia - in a few days will hurry us
down again  Adieu My dear - present my Love to M'r Tucker & the best on the
family

  We [superimposed over I] am glad to hear from the boys that they are
well & happy - alwais give my affectionate regards to them and tell them that I
hope we shall see them return clever fellows Tell The° in particular - not to forget
promises he made me when I part'd from him - tell him I know he is tenacious of
his word - & he gave it to me - very solemnly ----

    Yrs affly

    MBland

Cawsons 12th April 1787

the beef woud have done credit to Leaden Hall instead of p- Market is, was done
to credit to, yesterday a dinner & I was much oblgd

Mrs Tucker
Dear Sir

I send to see how my sister Tucker does & hope to have a favorable acct, I sent out yesterday & this morn, to try to get some ducks, but was unsuccessfull - pray desire Maria to send my thread - and ask her if there are any potatoes of Either kind if not - I will send up a few bushels My best love attend you all, how does the Bantling? Mr Bland sets off at 3 o'clock for Rich'd - see how My [Miserably?] stored I am of paper

Your affect

MBland Colonel Bland

Richmond

St George Tucker, Esqr

Cawsons Jan'y 17th 1788

I have pas'd the last night My dr Mr Tucker, in Great uneasiness - listning to the complaints of my husband - whose pain is exquisite, and our mutual anxiety for our dear Fanny - alas! I fear to ask you, how does she? - if she still exists! What may we not hope? I have never ceased to think of her, of you, of every body at matoax, if you can write, tell me I entreat you how it is - if not, desire Maria to do it, anything is better then a state of suspense, God Bless you, and give you fortitude - to bare an event which must give pain to so many - Adieu - Believe me very affectionately yours

MBland
Dear Sir

I received your friendly letter that day week I arrived at Cawsons from my Norfolk trip. It would give me great pleasure to see you and your dear children for whom I have a sincere affection - I intended, & wished much to call on you, so I came up - the difficulty of getting from the river to Williamsburg deterred me from the attempt. I am infinetely obligd to you for offering yourself as an escort to N. York & shall think myself happy under such protection, I propose to go to baltimore where Mr Bland intends to meet me about the middle of August, it will be impossible for me to leave home sooner, & I much fear it will not be in my power, to accept your kind invitation this summer, as I have given up to the overseer in Amelia two of my cherest nags, & have left on this place only two Mr Bland, when he left me gave me written instructions, relative to his transactions in Virginia as well as his own fathers affairs I will if you please Just take a copy of what relates to your self you will be so good as to write to Mr Tucker concerning the debt due from T Bland - get him to give you an account how that matter stands & press the Lawer who has it now in his hands & to inform me of who that Lawer is and let me know his answer on all these heads - in form Mr Tucker that unless that affair is speedily setled if Theo\(^k\) Ruffin shoud call on us for his Legacy, I shall be necessitated to call on him for his proportion, as the whole of the Loan Office debt will not be sufficient to pay me what my fathers Estate owes me - Thus, D'r Sir, I have transcribed exactly what Mr Bland says upon that subject I have enclosed a letter from Mr Prentis on that subject.
Mr Bland left with me an account against Mr John Randolphs Estate which he desired me to inform you, had been mislaid at the time he payd you the Hhd of tobacco for his ballance of his debt due Mr Randolph for Negroes b¹ as he could not at that time recollect the sum, he said nothing about it. but has since found it the sum is 33 L which is drawn off once properly proved Mr W Slate has it with him at Petersburg, or I shoud enclose it I shall be extreamly obliged to you to pay it immediately as that amongst some other accts which he knows will be honourd he has left to pay his acct with Quessnell the only store debt he has stand viz. if you woud write to Quessnell & assume the payment in any mode convenient to you both, it woud Confer a favor on me I take the liberty of Enclosing you an accting of Mr Blairs which I shall be much obliged to you to receive for me distribute a thousand kisses & believe me d¹ sir yours with Great Regd

M bland

Cawsons July 15th ‘89

Dear Sir

Mr Curtis informs me he was unsuccessful in his application to you for the am¹ of the acc¹ against Mr Randolphs Estate perhaps it was for want of being properly proved which has done & now Enclosed you will very much oblige Mr Bland in discharging it & in favor of Mr Curtis who is Authorityed to give you a recet - the acc¹ is 34..8..5 - after Mr Randolphs death (Mr Bland desired me to inform you)
he never charged his sister with attendance or Medicine & he thinks it but just
that an acct of long standing shoud be discharged - Mr Randolph having had an
open acct against him which was kept on application tobacco will answer the end
- if you will be so good as to give an order, on the ware house & Enclose it to Mr
McConnico - who will receive the tobacco - at the Current Petersb® price
My affec regds attend you & the children & am alwais

Yr affect

MBland

Mr Bland sends you & the children his kindest-regards he is not able to write or
woud transact the business himself

MB

Cawsons September 28th 1790

Dear Sir

I shall be much obliged to you to inform me by the earliest opportunity your
intention relative to the affairs of my father as it is now time to come to some
determination with them. I shoud suppose that they will be best in your hands
for a good many reasons - first that they will be liable to fewer impositions when
you are known to interfere and secondly My affairs will be more detached which
will at a future day be to the advantage of your children; and those for whom
you interest your self - if you do not intend to act I shall put all the Estate Books
& papers into the hands of your attorney, as I am determind to have nothing to
do with them our own affairs & Colonel Blands have been kept separate; Mr
Bland cautiously avoided blending them, do come up in the midst(?) of this fall
and let us consult what will be best for our mutual interest

Give my love to Theodorick and tell him that the report of the day is - that he
is to be married immediately and that I am to put him in possession of Cawsons
as soon as the Happy Event takes place; what it coud originate from I cant
possibly think that he will alwais be welcome in this house as in his mothers is
undoubted as a visitor, or while he is single as a resident (if he pleases) with me,
but I sincerely believe it never originated in him, at least if it did, It must have
been well Built upon - but tell Theo⁴ he must learn to keep my secrets, or I shall
never trust him again -; people must have something to talk about, and if they
will confine themselves to things which may take place twenty or thirty years
hence, as far as relates to me they are welcome God Bless you Mr Tucker &
believe me your sincere friend

MBland

My Best love to all the children I shall go to Claremont next week or the week
after Suppose you come to see me there?

NB  Will you think me very uncivil if I put you in the mind of the acct which was
sent in last Jany indeed I am much put to it to collect any money if it Int[erest]ed
you to pay it (Mr Randolphps) it woud confer a favor upon me

MB
Cawsons feby 2 1792

Dear Sir

it is necessary I think to have the large demand which Col Bland senrs Estate has against Theo Bland & which has been in the hands of lawyers reassumed - I am entirely ignorant of all the circumstances relating thereto I know that you have been made fully acquainted with them I shall be much obliged to you to write to Mr Blodget & give him the necessary information demands are made frequently against the Estate and no funds belonging to it in my hands - the heavy demand upon it from My husband took up the principle of all the paper money & the interest with the very little money that has been collected has been ever since his death applyd by his son towards the payments of his debts will you sir present me to Mrs Carter & kiss all your children for me? Mr Blodget joins me in affectionate wishes for your Health & Happiness

I am dr sir

Your affectate srv

Mblodget
DIARY EXCERPTS

No date. Gave Peg a calico gown & a mourning ring (for her old mistress F.B.) for her care & fidelity in managing my Bacon, Gave Paul a mourning ring for Mrs M.H-- his old Masters 2d daughter - he being a faithful good servant.

Old George died about 4 o'clock, having lived 17 years free from labor: supposed to be about eighty years of age.

Sunday: plaid cards, all day, except Mrs B-: (the Company were Jews) every body does as they please in the house at Cawson's.

Play'd cards. At night it was reported among the negroes that the world would be at an end on the 1st of March. The story ran thus: - an old man was digging a well & at the bottom found a rock that on the 1st of March the world wou'd be at an end.

Feb. 7, 1795. Snow above the shoe deep, snowing all day. Soup, veal, turkey, tongue, fish, veal's head, (drest turtle fashion) jelly, creams, mince pies, puffs, chesecakes, flumery, apples, nuts, raisins & almonds &c. 2 bottle porter, 4 table-beer; play'd at Nant one till 11 o’clock.

Made Jemmy whip Easther & Easther whip Jemmy for their having quarrelled some time ago.
Feb. 22. Awoke this morning by the firing of guns in celebration of George Washington’s birthday. He is 65 years old this day, he having told me 12 years ago that he was 53 years old: for dinner boil’d a ham, goose, turkey, tongue, turtled head, pigeon pye, saucege & eggs, vegetables, mince pye, jelly, custards, plumbs, almonds, nuts, apples, &c.

Turned out 10 turkey-hens, two cocks, one young one, 6 old hens, 4 old, which in all makes 12. Up fatning 4 young cocks, 6 young hens, 5 geese, 2 ducks.

Mrs. B- with Palermo went in the chair, as far as Mrs’ B’s hill: then walked over the field by the grave of her late departed good friend. She gave a sigh & could have dropt many tears to his memory, but reflected that in a short time we shou’d be in the same situation -- vain-glorious, thoughtless as we are at the time present.

Spent the day very agreeably: the boat with Billy & Leander came for me in the evening: got home by sunset. Nedly M- came in the evening all alone: got his 2 hoes, not paid for yet.

Rode to Farmingdell; saw F. Sturdivant who was my overseer last year & who then took his pleasure, hard at work in Billy Gilliam’s cornfield, following the plough. Mr G- know how to manage an overseer.

Saturday, February 28, 1795. About 8 o-clock J.H- came & offered to be Mrs. B’s overseer for the 9th part. Mrs B- partly agreed. About 3 Mr Perkins came from Petersburg: bro’t cloves, nutmeg, allum & cake for Mrs B. Mrs Bland continues with Mrs. Blodget: play’d cards at night.
Sunday 1st of March 1795. A very fine day. Mrs Bland at Cawsons. Dr Walker & E.S. dined here. Boiled a ham, goose, turkey, tongue, turtled head, pigeon pye, saucages & eggs, vegetables, mince pye, jelly, custards, plums, almonds, nuts, apples, &c. In the evening Dr Gilliam came on a visit to Mrs B who continues indisposed.

Tuesday 14. Mr M & Mr P went in Phaeton & four horse to the Court-house it being election-day. J.C- formerly a bricklayer & afterwards a common Soldier in Col. Bland’s Regt. of dragoons, with George Keith Taylor were chosen & R.C. of Surry, a Senator. Bo’t a large turtle for bacon: dined on drest turtle, cold turkey, rost beef, stued fish, tongue, sturgeon cutlets, citron pudding, potatoe pudding, cheese-cakes, custards, plenty of asparagus every day; play’d cards.

March 24, 1795. A very fine day: the old mill-house moving off out of sight: made ginger-bread; boil’d sholder of forward bacon; sent 7 goose eggs to Mrs M- to set under a hen; sent 3 lbs. of filli for cloth that Lucy is weaving. Mrs M- sent me a fine shad yesterday, the first this year. Gatherd Hyacynths, Jonquils & Narcissas for the first: had Persian Irises a fortnight. Mr Perkins killed a hare which we had for dinner: proved very good & tender. Soup, bacon, wild ducks, hare, carrots, turnips, potatoes, puffs, &c.

Wednesday Mr Perkins went to Petersburg: drove Felix in the chair;
carried Mr M’s rose-bushes, tube-roses & five large bunches of asparagus.

Monday April 13. Cloudy foggy morning. Captain C- went to Petersburg: called here & bro’t an iron hoop to make work for the ship. About 12 clear’d up & proved a fine day. Mrs B & Mr Perkins rode as far as Farmingdell: saw the effects of a great fire upon my fence-rails. About 12 Mrs M- came to see about warping cloth: we dined; & at 4 Mr & Mrs M- came down: they had not dined: Walked about a great deal; played cards.

April 14, 1795. Got information of a robbery committed on me by Billy, Jacob & Easther of 22 gallons peach Brandy, a quantity of Wine, flour, &c. Breaking a paine of glass out of the upper window of the store-room & by a ladder committed the robbery: all the stolen goods were sent to Mrs B’s to a free mulatto girl who, we find, has been for a length of time supported by my boy Billy in luxurious ease.

Poor little Dickey a favorite mocking-bird died with sore eyes.

April 15. Our Company being gone, thought it necessary to take up the Rogues who robb’d us: accordingly Billy & Jacob was taken; confessed the fact & got well whipt, but not severely. Esther Runaway: took all her cloaths.

Boil’d a delightful ham; killed muscovy duck, & my buck rabbet choaked himself: had him for dinner: proved excellent.

Rec’d a letter from Count Rochambeau. In the evening rode in the chair,
about 2 miles; meet a boy who was bringing a parcel of young opossums, the old one & 10 young; but I had no desire to plague myself with them.

Gave Paul 6 middlins of bacon; gave him a good cloth coat of his master's, a white cloth lined with dove-colored Satten, for his faithful conduct to his mistress.

Sunday June 28, 1795. Left Cawsons with Mr Perkins, Billy, & Leonard & Cloe, for a long journey to Philadelphia, New York, & Boston by way of Newport. Phaeton with 4 grays: Billy rode Polly Hazenclever & carried Mrs Bland a jug of brandy & a pot of lard.

December 25th 1795. Cawsons, Virginia. This day Mr Perkins, Leander & myself with the Coach & 3 grays & Polly Hazenclever, returned from our long journey which took place the 28th of June, 1795, to Philadelphia New York, Newport & Boston, having sent Cloe by sea in a vessell of Mr J.E. & left Billy in Boston, who turned out one of the greatest Villains & Rogues that remained unhung. We came over at Broadway in Mr F B's Scow: paid two dollars for our passage: stopt at Graves' at Broadway who treated us very kindly: got home about sunset.

Christmas day very warm: the windows all open.

Cawson's January 9, 1796. Delivered Toney shirts: Tony, Peter, Ned, Davy, Cook, Cymon, each 2 Shirts: Jack one shirt & each a pair of shoes & five
yards of napt cotton, bo’t of Mr M-, each five yards: Rose, Nancy, Sukey, Liddy, Betty, Great Hannah, Mima, each two shifts, a peticoate, waste-coate & pr shoes; little Peter a waste-coate, britches & one shirt: gave the Amelia people the offals of the Hogs: overseer carried one of the Cawsons grubing hoes. G- at City Point: bo’t 1025 wt of Pork at 40S gave his note payable 1st of March L20.10.

G- had 2 hogs weight 204 wt. paid L4.1.6. Captain W- had 1074 wt. at 40S: salted up 14 hoggs 1450 wt. with one fatned at Cawsons making in all 15 Hoggs for house use: the reason why I kept only this quantity of pork, my negroes stole 9 fat Hoggs from me, whilst I was from home & I am determined not to give them any of the pork, rais’d at the quarter.

Monday, Feb. 22. King George Washington’s birth-day: rode with P- to a notary publick’s; gave him an agentcy to receive money from the Treasury.

Visited Dr Gilliam & Lady: helped Polly to dress, white silk & body & coat trimed with silver fringe, elegant painted sash (her own work.) Mr. M- & myself play’d at Backgammon: bo’t clamp brush.

Feb 25th, Wednesday, 1796. Clear cold & exceedingly high winds: awoke very much indisposed: a man came to beg assistance to get his vessell off, which had run aground on the opposite shore. Sent my boat & Arthur to assist: wind blew so high they coud not get her to the vessell, but fastned the boat to a tree & after much difficulty they walked through the swamp to the sloop. Mrs B- very uneasy least they might perish. Mr Perkins returnd from the ball in honor of
George Washington's birth-day in Petersburg.

Sent Mr. Gerry at Cambridge a jugg 4 gallons old peach brandy, a box toys to the children & received the Phaeton from New York.

A play performed at City Point: they did me the honor to send me a Bill.

The Treaty squeezed into the corner of the paper: the Printers have complimented George Washington's Proclamation of the Treaty with a Corner of the newspaper in a rude manner.

Cut up the old hair pillow that belonged to Mr B. to fill my soffy pillows.

Saturday, March 26. Very fine day: all the people at Farmingdell ploughing; Paul & Jacob repairing the houses there. Leander drove Bazillico & Polly to Petersburg in the tumbril & bro't a b'll of flour from Mr White, 3 gallons molasses, 10 lb. brown Sugar from O.P- molasses at the shocking price of 5s.6d per gallon, sugar 11d per pound. Mrs. Bland sent me a shad: sent to me for peach-Brandy: gave her a jugfull & basket of potatoes & vegetables. Sukey bro't me two shadds. Billy Gilliam asks the moderate price of L3.2.6 per hundred: what will this World come to!!! boil'd beef, fry'd fish, boil'd fowl, spinach & eggs, potatoes, fry'd homoney, pudden: open'd flour: very indifferent: 15 doll's bll.

[April 6] Set a goose upon 11 eggs: "6 April" marked on them. B. G. lost 48 dollars at billiards last week: bo't two snapping turtles.

Set a turkey upon 17 eggs.
Found that my two overseers had been swaping away my horses at the Amelia Quarter.

3d May, 1796. People making up cotton hills. Polly Hazenclever had a foal last night - a mare jet Black - the father Mr D’s Black & all Black.

Mr P- set four guns in the smoke-house.

Cawsons. Tuesday 19th May. Recd a letter from Mr C B H- at Congress, one from Judge Tudor of Boston & one from Parson Belknap, Secretary to the Historical Society of that Town, thanking me for the Pen which signed the Confederation, & a bone of a man’s leg with oysters growing upon it, which I sent the Museum of Boston.

Cawsons. Saturday, June 4, 1796. Mr Perkins went to the Hundred in our boat, to try to get a turtle that came in a vessel from the Bay of Hondurous: the Captain at Richmond: bro’t an Indian paddle, a sawfish’d nose & a floating stone. Sent to beg a few Colliflower plants of Mrs. - but was refused, notwithstanding I had sent her a few days before everything she sent for & sent them with pleasure: this is doing one good turn for another & like the R- race who are a disagreeable people.

Recd a note from Mr Gilliam informing me that Isaac had killed one of his shoats: the Hog was found in the Bushes near to my cornfield fence tyed up in a bag: the proof was very strong: I sent Isaac to Mr G- & desired him to do with him what he pleased: after a parade of going to whip him, he was excused. Mr
P.I. of - sent me word that Ampy had stolen 10 sheep from him in two months: walk’d over my potatoe-patch: found one half dug with hoes & spades; suspect only my own negroes to whom I gave as many potatoe plantings as they chose to plant, last spring & all of them had fine potatoe-patches.

Bo’t of Mrs Bland’s Antony 6 fine chickens: gave him in money 9d a-piece with the approbation of their master & mistress, I making it a rule never to buy of a negro without leave of their owners. Janey ran away without any cause; stay’d two days: made George Innis give her a good correction for it: put up a veall to fatten, 3 days old. Got intelligence that Ampy, Isaac & Leander kill’d a yearling which I miss’d a week before.

A funeral being in the neighbourhood, gave all my negroes leave to go, which emptied the plantation of all but children, old people & sick.

The oldest mule died last night: been sick a long time: lost a rabbet (doe).

Peg burnt my new dining-room carpet -- being always drunk: play’d cards in the evening.

George was so faithful in his conduct as to come home drunk & ruined a fine mule & a full-blooded mare, that he drove out in the tumbril.

**Sunday 3d July, 1796.** Had a very severe clap of thunder: the lightening fill’d the franklin & charged so high that it fill’d my chamber full of flame: the franklin prevented the house from being torn to pieces.

Col. Harrison of Brandon & Carter Harrison of Maycox call’d on their way from Petersburg; stay’d dinner & went to Westover in the afternoon.
Twelve of my chickens that I keep in the celler stolen; nobody but the house people are the thieves.

Mr C- went over three times for peaches & his people not only carried baskets but bags of peaches: Great Robbery upon the Peach orchard, besides enumerable beggars. Mr S- took [a] painting of Cawsons very well done.

Capt. G. & J S came in the night & caught a runaway fellow of H R’s: he was caught asleep in my coach-house loft & had the key of the kitchen of Farmingdell in his pocket, where he’d stay’d all day & kill’d 7 or 8 hoggs.

Mr & Mrs Robert Carter & two Miss Nelsons Miss Carter & Mrs Carter’s two sons came here.

Miss Polly I- embarked for Boston: I paid 14 Dollars Passage; gave her a suit of Lace, -cost L4. a black silk dress worth L6 - a pair of stays 12 dollars, a yellow silke dress, two paste buttons, a gold locket for the neck & pr. garnet bracelet buckles a garnet ring and pair of garnet ear-rings with 33 dollars pocket money. I paid her expenses from New England to this house which was L20 by land & she lived 11 months with me.

Threshed out all the oats. J.H- made which were 3 1/2 bushels (Vile old wretch) walked to the Bower & saw the fence the people made to keep out G’s hogs from the Corne-field.

J T bro’t acct to settle of 30 years standing: paid him one of 10 years that seemed to have more probability of truth.

Cawson’s Dec 25th, 1796. Christmas dinner a very large rock from
Chickahomony: a saddle of the finest mutton I ever saw, ham of new bacon, wild ducks & roast turkey, veal’s head, cabbage pudding, Colliflowers, artichokes, cheese-cakes, gooseberry tarts jellys, crems, raisons, grapes, nuts, almonds, apples &c &c.

Bro’t a carpet for the chamber from Boston; bro’t a silver Coffee-pot, a silver tea-pot & four bottle-stands of solid silver: Coffee pot L28.10s. Tea-pot L15.10 & the bottle stands given to me by my father S.B. bro’t two callicos from Mr Gurley, corner of William Street & maiden lane, 1 green ground 1 yelloe: Mrs Bland sent me two hams new bacon, souces & saucegaes: sent Mrs B[land] 3 gallons peach brandy, 2 beeves tongues from Boston & large piece of chease; bo’t a barrel tongues in Boston, gave 10 Dollars: there were 17 tongues.

Look’d at my young rabbets found them all to be does.

Cut out 2 shirts & 2 shifts a piece for all the negroes except Jack who has only one cotton shirt yet & Little Peter who has none.

My negroes stole 9 fat hoggs from me whilst I was from home & I am determined not to give them any of the pork raised at the quarter.

Salted up one firkin gut fat two pots 1/2 flake fat, sauceges, & blood-puddens made.
WILL OF MARTHA BLAND BLODGET CORRAN

In the name of God Amen I the undersigned Martha Corran late of Cawsons in the Commonwealth of Virginia but residing in the French republic do make the following disposition of my estate, hereby revoking all others which I may have made desiring that this testament alone may take effect.

Imprimis I desire that the body of my late husband deceased, Theodorick Bland Junior may be brought from the vault of Commodore James Nicholson in the Trinity Churchyard, New York, and deposited under the weeping willows on the bank of Cawsons and that my nephew Samuel Perkins now residing there, do see this executed, I desire that an handsome marble monument suitable to the occasion be made as soon as convenient under the direction of my friend Mr Corran and sent to Virginia to be placed over the grave, and it is my Will that five hundred pounds of my Union Bank of Boston Stock be applied to the purchase of the said monument, all the rest, and residue of my bank stock or certificates of whatsoever nature, I give to my friend Mr Patrick Corran for his sole use and benefit, I also give money arising from the sale of my lands and negroes in Virginia lately made by Samuel Perkins and Robert More my agents there, to him and his heirs forever, and farther I relinquish all my rights and title to any lands or property that Mr Corran may have purchased, or may purchase, by which according to the Laws of France I have at present the right of one half, to him and his heirs forever.
Lend to the use of my Estate in Virginia real and personal not heretofore mentioned to my nephew Samuel Perkins during his natural life, except such as hereafter may be particularly mentioned.

I give to William Basset Mosely my Negro Woman Louisa and her increase, but it is my will that his mother, Hannah Basset Mosely, wife of Samuel Mosely have the use of said negro and her increase untill her son arrives at the age of twenty one years, to him and his heirs forever. I give to David Organ the land which my late husband Theodorick Bland Lent him, containing three acres to him and his heirs forever, also five pounds p annum during his natural life to be paid by Mr Perkins. I give to each of my nieces, Mary Newsum and Ann Stark, thirty pounds p annum to be paid out of the increase of the Estate lent to my nephew Mr Perkins.

I also desire that at my death my negroes Leander, Kate, Peg Innes, Will Smith, and Pa[u]l, be emancipated or made free, and that a set of carpenters tools be given to Pa[u]l and a sett of tools to Will Smith according to the direction of Mr Perkins who is to pay for the same - and at the death of the said Samuel Perkins I desire that all the lands not sold which I possessed by the will of my Husband Theodorick Bland except such as I shall hereafter mention be equally divided between John Randolph, Henry Tucker and Beverly Tucker, sons of my deceased sister Francis Tucker, the Estate of Cawsons to be included in the portion allotted to John Randolph. I also give all the negroes belonging to the Bland estate under the wills of my husband Theodorick Blands father and mother to be equally divided between John Randolph, Henry Tucker and
Beverly Tucker, they paying to Mary Newsum, Ann Stark and Hannah Bassett Mosely each, two hundred pounds after the death of Samuel Perkins.

It is my will that all the negroes given by my father and mother, Edwin and Hannah Daingerfield, shall be given to my Nephew William Allen Daingerfield, to him and his heirs forever.

The negroes purchased by my late husband Theodorick Bland, viz, Ampy, Cooper George, Chloe and her increase I give to my niece Mary Newsum to her and her heirs forever, I also tax the estate hereafter bequeathed to my nephews John Randolph, Henry Tucker and Beverly Tucker with four hundred pounds to be paid to the children of Theodorick Bland Ruffin.

I give to Samuel Perkins two lots of land in the Town of Blandford and a piece of land near Blandford Church purchased of William Stark senior, to him and his heirs forever.

After the death of the said Samuel Perkins all my Stock, plantation utensils and furniture that may be found upon the aforesaid estates bequeathed to my three nephews John Randolph, Henry Tucker and Beverly Tucker, I give to my three nieces, Mary Newsum, Ann Stark, and Hannah Bassett Mosely to be equally divided among them. To my friend Patrick Corran I give all my plate and furniture that may be found at my death here. Whatever lands may be belonging to me in the Western Country of the United States of America I give to my nephew William Allen Daingerfield, appointing him and Samuel Perkins now residing at Cawsons, my Executors, and it is my desire that there shall be no inventory taken of my estate, or any security required by my executors.
Declaring this to be my Last Will and Testament I hereunto affix my hand and
seal this twentyforth day of September and first day of Vendemire, twelfth year
of the French Republic, dated at Montretout near St Cloud.

Signed and seal'd

Martha Corran

Witnesses
Wm. H. Sargeant
Lew. Callaghan
Paul Bentalow

With Mr Skipwith's certificate annexed
WILL OF COLONEL THEODORICK BLAND

In the name of the one Eternal and ever living God, I, Theodorick Bland of the County of Prince George, in the State of Virginia, being of sound mind and memory, do constitute, ordain and appoint this to be my last will and testament, and I do hereby revoke, annul all other wills by me heretofore made:

I give and bequeath to Robert Bolling of Petersburg, Benjamin Harrison of Brandon, Peter Epes, Inman Baker, St. George Tucker, Thos. Griffin Peachy, and Dr. Issac Hall, In Trust, two acres of ground fronting the church on the top of Blandford Hill, together with a street of one hundred feet wide to the East, and one sixty feet wide to the South of the aforesaid lot, on which two-acre-lot it is my desire the Publick may erect a College for the Education of Youth within 15 years after my decease, otherwise it is my desire that the said land shall revert to my nephew, Robert Banister, to him and his heirs forever. I give and bequeath to my wife, Martha Bland, to her and her heirs forever, all rest and residue of my estate both real and personal, together with my rights, Titles to lands in the Western waters which I obtained as Bounty of my services as an officer in the American Revolution. I give and bequeath to my nephew, Theodorick Bland Randolph, my silver hilted sword, which I used in the cause of American freedom. I give to my nephew Robert Banister my carbine. I give to my nephew
John Randolph my Hessian rifle. I constitute and appoint my wife, Martha Bland, my whole and sole executrix of this, my last will and Testament.

In witness whereof I have hereto set my hand and affixed my seal the 5th day of Nov'r, 1789.

TH'D'K BLAND [sealed with wax]

Teste: EDWARD GLOVER,

ASA GIFFORD,

HARRISON FITZHUGH.

[Communicated by Col. F. P. Leavenworth]
My dear Fanny

I recd yours by My Daddy wherein you acquaint me with your last resolution which gives me great pleasure, but more so could I be a witness to the disposal of my Dear Fannys hand where she Loves and is beloved = but the arrival of my Brother John with his Wife and several of her Friends among us has put my Fathers Family (which I have undertaken to superintend) into so great confusion that really my Dr it will be impracticable for me to prepare my best Bib and Tucker at so short a notice, or rather, while this confusion reigns among us - and to appear in a mean dress I think woud not doe such Honor as the Nuptials of my Friend is incumbent upon me to shew, and moreover, it might be suspected to discover indifference for her happiness. These reasons I am hopeful will induce my dear Cous to excuse me from not accepting her kind invitation - notwithstanding which believe me not one of your Maids of Honor or any of your guests more sincerely wishes you all the joy and happiness which is to be found in the Married State than does your

ever affectionate Cousin
and Friend
Mjones

PS Mr Jones desires his best respects to you and Mr Randolph
MJones
February 28th 1769
Buckskin April 10th 1769

I am extremely concerned to find that my Dear Fanny has so great cause to complain of my long silence, but I hope she believes it does not proceed from disrespect or disinclination but for want of a safe conveyance I should have given myself the pleasure of your most agreeable company at Cawsons on Wednesday Evening had not my Aunt Walker disappointed me but you may depend on my being with you the first day in May if you are to be found within an hundred miles of Buckskin - Oh my Dr Cousin how sincerely do I wish we lived nearer to each other that I might have frequent opportunities to convince you of my regard and Friendship for believe that there is no person more anxious for your welfare & happiness

I assure you that I could not have conceived that our long separation would have given me so much uneasiness as it has however it is in your power to make your absence more tolerable by frequently giving me the inexpressable satisfaction of hearing from you and you may rely on the fidelity of

Your Unalterable Friend & Affect Cousin

Mary Jones

give my best respects to Cousin Jack

MJ
Broomfield May the 10th 1769

I believe my Dr Fanny begins to think that I intend to Resent her long silence by my own, or that I obsolve Punctilious. - But experience will convince you (when you take upon you the cares of a Family) of the Difficulty of getting time to keep up a strict Correspondence for Domestick Business confines the Mind to one particular subject without suffering it to entertain itself with the contemplation of any thing New or improving it even deprives thought of its Native freedom: I am not at all Able to make a great and splendid appearance but I must confess that I very much desire to make our aboad agreable to our Friends whenever its worth their while to visit us My best Compliments to M' Randolph and accept the same from

Your Unalterable Friend and Affectionate

Cousin Mary Jones

Broomfield October 15th 1769

I cannot but acknowledge myself extreemly Oblig'd to my Dear Fanny, for her agreable and entertaining letter, tho I must confess you have great cause to complain of my Neglegence in not writing to yu in so long a time - It gives me infinate concern to hear that we are to be seperated at so great a distance from each other, but you may depend I shall embrace every opportunity of letting you
knoe my sentiments in black & white, and if ever it is in my power shall with the greatest pleasure imaginable make you a Visit: Our obscure part of the world affords me no News worth your attention, only your old acquaintance Mrs Broadnax is safely deliverd of a fine Girl: I shoud have writ more fully but it is very late so conclude with wishing you may enjoy every blessing in life and believe you have the Affections of

Your sincere Friend

Mary Jones

PS Mr Jones joins me in our best respects to you both MJ -

[1770]

My D\textsuperscript{r} Child

Nothing could have given me such pleasure expect your D\textsuperscript{r} Company as your letter by Cyros - with infinate satisfaction I hear you like your situation, as I am well assur'd that it is the only thing wanting to make your life compleatly happy in this world yet such a Dr good husband and enough to live on handsomely with care and frugality, without which the best Estates in Virginia soon dwindle & come to little I hope my Dear Fan you will distinguish your self by making a Virtuous kind & affectionate wife & parent, a humane mistress & a kind neighbor for blessed is she that of whom many worthy deeds are recorded
Bestow not too much of your time & cares of this world is doomed to Eternity, prize the Joy that will last when time shall be no more, the joys that no accident can destroy: Such a life will reflect honor & opens a ravishing prospect to future of which aught to be no small consideration as our abode on this Earth is so uncertain; that you may both enjoy every comfort of this life is the ardent wish of

Yr affec mother
Frances Bland

PS give my dr little sweet baby ten thousand kisses I am just distracted to see you all I still continue lame with one foot

Williamsburg May 2th 70
I Cordialy congratulate My Dear Mrs Randolph on the birth of her sweet boy and do most heartily wish it had been my good fortune to have seen you at Petersburgh but I am very much afraid you will forgete that their ever was an M Waller of your acquaintance, but when I think of the many happy hours we have spent together it revives my spirits and makes me think sure she is married but certainly that shall not make any great change in her way of thinking and so my Dear I had a mind to try you see. Mrs Bannister flattered us with the hopes of seeing Mrs Bland which gave my Mama inexpresible Joy. She was exceeding sorry it was not in her power to call at Cawsons but we were deeply laden many of us in Company and they told us it was much out of the way besides many
other excuses which I hope Mrs Bland will take no offence, but we shall be
extremely glad to see her My Mama Joins me in Compnts to your Papa and Mama
Miss Betty Carloss and Cousin Eppes kiss the dear little stranger for me

Yr unalterable Friend

still Maria Waller

june the 19 1772

Dear Sister

I am extremly sorry to hear of Mr Randolphs indisposition by my mama who
arrived hear on Tuesday last after a disagreeable journey occasiond by the roads
being very dusty, I think he had better come down to be convenient to the
Doctor as his Cavalry will not travil that distance, in my pore opinion health is
the first thing to be considered. Plantations affirs after I mention them next
because I hear that is his objection to comeing I donot doubt if he coud be
prevailed on to leave home & disingage his mind from worldly affairs which
moste of us are to apt to be taken up with it woud contribute greatly towards his
recovery. am apprehensive if I say eny thing more in this subject you might
think it impertinent. conclude with our best wishes to the Family.

Ebanister

[note on back]

we had a present of a Turtle to day & intend to have drest towards the later end
of harvest at which time it would give us great pleasure to see you both if do not come before, it will be a fortnight.

Mr Rose has given you all kinds garden seeds I shall send them by the first safe opportunity

E

Mrs Randolph

Matoax

Dear Aunt

My Mama was taken very ill on Wednesday night and still continues so she has a fever and pains all over her My Uncle visited her yesterday and prescribed Jalop and verlerian.

As there is not any to be had in the shops she would be much obliged to you to furnish her with some I am sorry it is not in my power to see you to day as I intended I do not think it would be right for me to leave my Mama and hope you will excuse me be assured it will give me great pleasure to visit you, as soon as Mama gets better I shall come which I hope will be very soon

Am your affectionate niece

Frances Banister

Battersea Jan 15th 1775

Per Negro
Phill

To Mrs Randolph

Matoax

Ampthill Novr 18th 1775

Dear Sister

I thought it better to Keep your Man and Send the Hemp Home by him than he should have Another Trip, more so that he might acquire some foresight. the Hemp was but indifferent. However their is not so much loss as I expected You have send 136 Is of the best kind. 60 of a Second and 60 w't of another makes 25 b 29 h brought less 300 which was Dirt and Hards.

It Gives us Pleasure to hear you are Got better and that the Dear Children are Well Your sister sends [love] Of Coarse Nurishing Nudles one for Little Miss Careless one for your Sister We all Joyne in Sincere Love and I hope you believe me

Your aff't Brother

Archibald Cary

[May 1777]

Madam

I hope you received the letter safe that I brought from Col' Bland for you
I never saw him look better not in Higher Spirits, he wou’d inform you of Mrs Blands indisposition; he never heard of Mrs Banister’s Death untill I told him of it, whose loss he truly lamented, as a most affectionate Brother, It was near Eleven O’clock at night when he came into Philad & it was nearly in the morning before his kind enquiries for Relations & friends was over, he enquir’d particularly about every one even the youngest of his Nieces & Nephews, both he & I regretted being obliged to part as soon as 10 o’clock next Day; he at the head of a fine Regiment of Horse, was ordered to Camp about 10 miles from Phil & I had the honour of riding fourteen miles on my way home in Company of his Excellency Genl Washington by whom I was politely receiv’d among a Crowd of Fine looking Officers, he appr’d like a Demi-God & withal so mild & placid, that his condescending whatever encourag’d even the youngest & most diffident of his officers to approach him with [missing] 

I saw your Brother Col Mead there, he never lookd better than he does, he desired to be remember’d in the kindest & most affectionate manner to you, his aunt Murray & all his other Friends & acquaintances in this part of the World 

I bespoke a Pair stays for you @ M. Verg Curry if you Chuse them at that price & will send me the measure I will procure you a Pair of the best that can be had in Philad - silk stockings of Middling Quality & I thought too Dear at [missing] is [missing] oz of Another Dye to be had in Phila The Dyers bought it all up some months ago to dye hunting shirts 

You cannot imagine how much I was vex’d to hear of the bad order the Bay Colt was Brought to you from Carolina, especially as I was told by Betty
Johnston the Day I set out for Philadelphia that he was in fine order Will you indulge me so far as to permit Mr Instance Hall in Blandford to take him unto his care for a few weeks to put him in good order & break him as Mr Hall is one of the best hands in the Colony for that purpose, he is so convenient that you can get the Colt at any time when he is fit to use & I wou’d by no means think of giving your people the trouble of putting him in order I gave Mr Long directions about him.

Please offer my most respectful Compliments to Miss Fanny & Miss Patsy give my Love to the Boys particularly my God Son and God Daughter Kiss Baby Banister for me

I am with the greatest

[attributed John Banister]

Sept 18 1777

Dear Brother

You never had a greater proof of my sincere attachment to you than my writing by our Friend for want of lite I am at this time employ’d using lighting, the particulars of which I refer you to him than you see my [illegible] by correspondence with the unfortunate, you seldom meet with any thing extraordinary but I assure you without vanity I hear all this like a heroine, tho- I had not the sweet delight of a partaker in my griefs. Friendship I enjoy in its greatest excellence, but in this to one who has experienced conjugal felicity our
good Papa repair'd his loss by his connection with Mrs Yates who is now our
Mother, an epithet I give her with the greatest plesure which she has the highest
title to form her kindness to me. I am now surrounded by a Mob of the sweetest
Mad Caps you envision & added to that I have parted with an [illegible] worth
L50.00 so you must not expect anything clever from me who only wrote to assure
you of those dear regards of

Your affect Sister
Frances Randolph

My dear Sister,
You shall no longer complain that I have neglected writing to you; believe me
that has not been my fault. My letters must have miscarried, or you wd have
received at least half a dozen since I left you. I cannot answer your last because I
have it not with me, being at this time far removed from my baggage where it
was safe deposited untill I had a favorable opp^ly of answering it. Be assured tho
the fortunes of war has so long seperated me from you that my affection for you
& y'r dear little Family glow with unabating warmth, & the thoughts of y'r welfare
and theirs frequently engross the greatest part of my leisure moments. - I wrote
you in my last my opinion or y'r Tutor. I have endeavord to get one for y'r Boys
my attempts have been hitherto in vain but trust they will not be always fruitless.
it was ever my opinion that a bad one was worse that none. no time is lost. let
their bodies be invigorated with Exercise and their manners watched with a
prudent care & I will undertake that their minds shall not want Cultivation shd I survive these tumultuous times, the paltry jargon of schools constitute the smallest part of a Gent’s Education but learning is not a despicable acquirement when rightly understood. a few months may perhaps afford me once more an opportunity of conversing with my dear & now my only sister. when I will enlarge more on this interesting topic - Patsy will tell you everything better than I can by letter, She having been long near the scene of action. we have at length come to a resolution to part. for a short time, I hope; as I am a little sanguine in my expectations (how ever unfashionable at present I may be) of defeating the British army. The author of all goodness will surely not frown on our Virtuous efforts to save a great and rising generation from the fangs of the Tyrant, the Oppressor, the Murderer, the Ravisher, and smile on their nefarious deeds - By Heavens! it cannot be - Our Father I hope is happy once more in a domestic companion. let it be our endeavor to contribute all we can to make the evening of his days cheerfull & agreeable. I have written of the Military occurences in [these] parts to him, Mr Banister Col. Nathl Harrison & Mr Page - from these & Patsy you will hear of them all I know. God Bless you my dear Fanny and believe me to be with the warmest affection & truth y’r loving Brother

Tedk Bland

Reading Sept’ 26th

1777

Mrs Randolph, Matoax
Frederick Town in Maryland

Friday 26th of September [1777]

Dear Madam

We arrived at this Town the night before last, after an agreeable ride of half the day thro a fine Country which is bounded in the West by the blue ridge, or at least our view of it. This is one of the best Places I have seen for becoming a large manufacturing Town, being situated in so fertile a Country that the Necessaries & Comforts of Life will always be attainable at an easy reach.

The Company is however the Case in this hive of Commotion, as all the Troops from the South pass through here, and increase the demand for everything besides it is now become a stage for all Travellers going to & from the Camp, Philadelphia, etc.

The inhabitants of this well built little town are Dutch, who carry on with Great Industry all kinds of manufactures, & like the dutch in all countries, where they acquire wealth. They delight in Good Houses. These are of Brick, & not a few of beautiful blue stone, with which the Country here abounds. The Cement of Lime-stone is as plenty as present & future demand can require.

Here I met with Col Loyd of Annapolis, who retreated here, as to an asylum when the Fleet appeared in the Bay. I was much delighted at an Interview in this Place, too, with an acquaintance of my early youth the Honb Geo. Plattere, a Gentleman equally estimable for his Service & Merit. The
Recollection of many pleasing Scenes in which we had mutually shared afford'd us you may well conceive a Satisfaction only known to those who can feel Mr Izzard of South Carolina & his Lady with a Superb Equipage are here. He presented me with a letter from our Acquaintance Genl Howe[?] to which I shoud have paid Great attention if I had seen him at home. He is much the Gentleman in his manner & address. The Boys are getting ready for a march, & I shall be oglid to stop the current of my Pen, as I long ardently to see the two armies before a genl action, The account we had of a victory was not here, it was a defeat, but their loss by far the greatest. We lost the day by the Folly & inconsideration of G. Tulservant If he had been off the Place of action with all his Men we shoud in all human Probability have cut to pieces a great part of Howe's army - This will not surprise you when you are informd that his division fled & Struck the rest with a panick by falling back upon them in confusion & disorder. Particular time will not permit an Explanation of. The Armies are now facing each other. Our heroic General & the destrous Howe, at the head of their respective Bodies - the former at the Banks of the Schulykill on the Philadelphia side, strongly posted, the latter on this side determined to force his way to that City.

A conflict of the utmost importance must evitably ensure upon Howe's attempting to cross at this River - In Howe's rear there are up wards of 6 or 7000 Militia. Passed here Yesterday 2000 men consisting of Regulars and Militia on their way to Camps. We shall overpower Howe's army with Multitudes if he delays his grand Stroke but a few daies.
My Love to the Girls & all the Children. Did you see my delectable, fair &c the [illegible]? Adieu & believe I shall always hold you in Remembrance being y'r Friend

Banister

Philadelphia is gone Howe has foild us

October 1777

Dr Fanny
You have become lately so constant and agreeable a Correspondent, that I sh'd hold myself inexcusable were I to omit writing to my dear and now my only sister by every opportunity. I cannot doubt but that any letters tho far from containing those lively sallies of fancy & good sense which shine in you must give you some degree of that pleasure which yours certainly affords me. Amidst the tumult of War, you must not believe that the Imagination, or the Heart which is so deeply [missing] in the great events of almost every day, can display any finer feelings which a more calm and retired life on the Banks of the Appomatox produce. - I parted with your dear sister and the best of wives, last Sunday fort night as she shaped her course for Virginia and I for Bellons then my dear did I feel in their utmost force the empathetic words of that beautiful song - “Alas too soon dear Creature”- Since that time, vis last Sunday we made a severe and
Bloody Engagement, in which altho we were obliged to leave the Enemy Masters of the Field as usual, we in effect the Conquerors, & had we known it had Victory sure in our Hands. I have given yr Sister a particular account of the action which I think can be depended upon Poor Thom's Edmonds [illegible] Nephew was Badly Wounded and Genl Francis [illegible] now dead of his wounds which was by a Cannon Ball that shattered his thigh. These are all yr acquaintances I believe who are either killd or wounded Walker Baylor of the Horse (Cornet) in Baylors Regt and Matt Smith Brother to Austin are also wounded but likely to do well. I Have engagd with some difficulty Mr Tho's Davis as a Tutor to my dear little Boys His living with me twelve months had given me that knowledge. I wd wish to have a man who wants to take that Charge of Children of my own, as such I signed yours. he is a man of a polite taste, and in manners a Gentleman his foibles are triffling and such as his good sense will testify His Candor admits me the openest expostulation at least with me whom he esteem s I believe as a Friend, as such I shall be always pleasd to be esteemed by him - I think him a valuable man, & possesses of liberal sentiments, and fine feelings. I Hope my sister will be pleasd with the Choice I have made - He is about to enter into the married state with an amiable Lady and will live in Brandon Parish (I expect) this will afford you an opp^ of frequently seeing the Boys and one if I return alive of frequently communicating my sentiments regarding their Preceptor I have explained to Mr Davis my full sentiments on the Education of youth both before and since we signed and I doubt not as they exactly coincided with those of our deceased Friend they will be pleasing to you
and advantageous to the Boys I am sorry that I am obliged to drop this agreeable subject. I have not seen Mr Banister yet but have just heard that Bob Bolling is in Camp, & therefore expect soon to see them both shortly D'r Sis'r Yr ever loving & affect' Bro'

Thedk Bland

Mrs Randolph

Matoax

near Petersburgh

Virginia

Nov 1777

Dear Fanny

Long before this my dear Patsy will have arrived with my Fanny that sweet intercourse which two amiable women so closely allied in every friendly tye cannot fail to enjoy in each other's society, while affect' Brother has only to deplore the loss of those precious enjoyments for which no earthly reward but the satisfaction of having had a hand in freeing his Country can make up tolerable amends I now feel the want of a friend & companion and amidst thousands am alone. the thoughts of my dear friends are the only solace I have, and these thoughts expanded on paper the only testimony for them this they will attend a farewell offering

Theodorick Bland
York Pennsylvania

20\textsuperscript{th} March 1778

The hurry of Business in this Place & the constant attention required for the discharge of important duties of Congress, admit little time for the paying that Regard I owe to my Friends so frequently as I wish. Besides these Reasons am in accommodations - without Fire in the Morning or Evening renders it almost impossible to write the letter which I relish and the strongest attachment to my little Circle of Friends at Matoax would impel me to, but in a few days I hope some of these obstacles will be removed & I shall be regular in corresponding with you & the Girls. In the Mean Time I beg you not to forget your share in this agreeable Intercourse. There is not the least News of an interesting Nature, but this means you may rely on the Campaign now approaching will be great in its Events.

The Impertinacity of the English still continues & other steady pursuit of the Conquest of America is their favorite object for which Purpose they voted a Reinforcement of twenty thousand Soldiers, & in all instances at the opening session the Parliament have submitted to dictatorial --- by echoing back his speech, & without even a Question voting the required supplies.

Tell the Girls I shall write them by the next opportunity & to believe that nothing could be more pleasing to me than to hear of their Improvement, In like attainment of every valuable accomplishment, it is by these means they will either be happy or deserve it.
How is my friend Miss Hall? This is the highest Stile of Regard I am at Liberty to entertain for any of your charming [friends]

But is it not hard that I am to loose this precious season of my Life, cut off as I am from the Society of my female Friends, & perhaps forever from a connection I most ardently wish and deam essential to Happiness - Mr Penn has just called for the letter & I must conclude by wishing you every felicity & assure you that I am most affectionately

Your Friend
Banister

I write so hastily with Mr Penn hurrying me that I fear you will not be able to read the letter Regards to Mr Buchanon & his Lady & Mr Leigh

Charlottesville First June 1779

My Dear Fanny

I hope you will think it a sincere Mark of my love & esteem for you when notwithstanding my long silence for two months and my perpetual rush of Business I can find time to breath forth to you on paper, my tender sentiments of fraternal affection & regard Will not your mind approach you of something like forgetfulness when you reflect that I have been two months in this dreary desart, without one token of remembrance from an only Sister whom I love [two lines missing]

attributed to Theodorick Bland
My dear Fanny

It is with great pleasure that I can inform you My Father is much better - Nancy’s information was wrong - he tells me that he was yesterday in violent Pain - he now sets up & is pretty Cheerfull & free from pain in a great measure I think there is every appearance of the gout going off regularly - Our best and sincerest wishes for all your healths and happiness attend you & believe me to be now and at all times hereafter, unless you or I shd be transformed into inaccountable creatures (for there is nothing stable & fixed in this transitory life) y’r sincerely loving & affectionate

Brother

Theok Bland

My father sends his Blessing

Cawsons Feb 3rd 1784

Dear Tucker

I am greatly obliged to you for the trouble you have had with my foolish Negro who I am informed went from Petersburgh to Matoax as the shortest way to Cawson

I am told you passed within a Mile or two of us the other day - could you not have called and blessed us with the sight of your countenance - I have been a close prisoner for some weeks past with the Gout - we have been frozen up so
long here that there has been no possibility of getting shed of shads for some
time past of sh'd have sent you some by the return of the Mules - Cawson at
present affords no other variety except the Maladie Venesienne for which it has
been a hospital almost ever since I have been fix'd at home and the new arrived
guest adds one to the number a long absence from home has given me an
Augean stable to cleanse - the want of a Coachman has prevented Patsy and my
self from paying you a Visit as soon as that want can be supplied we shall
certainly do ourselves that pleasure - but what have you to prevent you coming
this way - we are now somewhat better prepared to enjoy your company than
when you were last here - and be assured that nothing wd give greater pleasure
to your Friend, Thedk Bland Jr
My love to Fanny the Boys & Girls

Petersburg 30 March 95
Col° Tucker
Mr Stockholm has settled with us honorably. I wish therefore that our suit in
Chancery may be stop'd - Your acct against B & Gilman, & that of Tilly Merrick
may be settled whenever you please
I am with much respect for your Lady & self

Your N Blodget
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Tucker-Coleman Collection, Special Collections, Earl Gregg Swem Library, the College of William and Mary.


VITA

Madelyn Claire Redd Foard

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, February 6, 1956. B.A., Agnes Scott College, June, 1978, with a major in History and minor in English. M.Ed., Georgia State University, December, 1982, with a major in Secondary Social Studies. In July, 1983, the author entered the College of William and Mary as a graduate student in the Department of History and, concurrently, as an apprenticeship in Archives and Manuscripts Collections within both the College and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Subsequent to completing the course requirements for this degree, the author married and, in time, had two children. In August, 1991, the author became a lecturer at the University of Southern Indiana in the Department of History. In May, 1992, the author and her children moved to Atlanta, Georgia. From September, 1992 through August, 1998, the author was employed in grants administration and contract management for the State of Georgia. The author expects to expand her research on this fascinating family and to continue writing on a variety of subjects.