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Robert Pleasants Letterbook, 1771-1773

Betsy August

College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

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ROBERT PLEASANTS

LETTERBOOK, 1771 - 1773

A Thesis

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

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

by
Betsy August
1976
APPROVAL SHEET

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

Master of Arts

Approved, August 1976

Thad W. Tate

John E. Selby

Charles T. Cullen
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ABSTRACT

A segment of the letterbook of Robert Pleasants is presented to make available in useable form correspondence of a prominent Quaker planter and merchant living in revolutionary Virginia. The introduction attempts to place these letters within a historical perspective. After presenting biographical information about the Pleasants family there follows a discussion of Robert Pleasants' mercantile activities. Other sections of the introduction concentrate on Pleasants' beliefs concerning slavery and pacifism and their relation to contemporary events.

The main body of the thesis contains 106 letters dating from November 1771 to December 1773. They are addressed mainly to Pleasants' relatives and his business associates. These letters contain information about Pleasants' economic activities and to some extent his family affairs. The transcription has sought to follow the manuscript as faithfully as possible. Certain editorial changes, however, have been made to standardize the letters. Annotation is intentionally sparse but does attempt to identify individuals, places, and events and to provide explanatory information.
ROBERT PLEASANTS
LETTERBOOK, 1771 - 1773
INTRODUCTION

I. BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The importance of the Society of Friends in the settlement of Virginia has not been generally recognized. This is unfortunate since by the eighteenth century Quakers were not without influence; they were considerable in number as well as in substance. One Quaker in particular is worthy of notice: Robert Pleasants of Curles. Throughout the second half of the eighteenth century Robert Pleasants not only held a prominent position of leadership among the Society but also was a wealthy and respected planter and merchant. From his plantation on the upper James River Pleasants corresponded with Quakers and non-Quakers throughout the English-speaking world. These letters indicate that by his early fifties, Pleasants was a devoted and active Friend who sought to follow the Quaker doctrine in all he did.

The Pleasants family dates its origins in America back to approximately 1665 when Pleasants' great-grandfather, John Pleasants (1645-1698), immigrated to Virginia. The son of a weaver, John Pleasants came to the New World from Norwich, England, as a factor or assistant to a merchant. Not long after his arrival Pleasants was "convinced of the Blessed Truth [and] became a strict professor thereof held by the people called Quakers".

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FIGURE I
SIMPLIFIED GENEALOGICAL CHART OF THE PLEASANTS FAMILY

John Pleasants (d. 1698)
  ————
John (1672-1713)
  ————
John (1697-1771) 1750 1769
         (d. 1746)          (d. 1775)          (d. 1775)
         ————
Jonathan          Thomas              Mary
            (d. 1775)          (d. 1775)
          ————
John, Jr., (d. 1765) 1753
  ————
Samuel Jane (Sammy) (d. 1811)
          ————
Dorothy Gray Briggs (1730-1807)
                ————
Anne Roger Atkinson (1725-1784)
                ————
Elizabeth Robert Langley
                ————
1762 Samuel Mary Pemberton (1737-1807) (1738-1821)
          ————
1748 1760
1. Mary Webster = ROBERT = 2. Mary Thomas Hill
        (d. 1757) (1722-1801) (ca. 1707-1777)
          ————
Robert, Jr. Mary Ann Margaret = Thomas Pleasants, Jr.
(Bobby) (d. 1777?) (d. 1798)
and apparently was instrumental in establishing the monthly meeting at Curles.² In 1679 Pleasants was ordered not to allow Quakers to meet at his home and was fined 1500 pounds of tobacco. Three years later he and his wife were brought before the law for "living as a man and wife without legal marriage." In addition, they were charged with not attending church and refusing to baptise their children. Again they were fined, this time 7000 pounds of tobacco.³

Although these accounts indicate that life in Virginia was not an easy one for Friends, Pleasants nevertheless amassed large tracts of land and became a man of wealth and influence. Granted "548 acres in Henrico Co. on the north side of James River and Four Mile Creek" in 1679,⁴ he eventually developed his land into a 5000-acre plantation known as Curles.⁵ Twice Pleasants was elected to the House of Burgesses, a position he did not solicit, but declined to serve when required to take the customary oaths.⁶ Upon his death in 1698 Curles reverted to his son, John, the grandfather of Robert Pleasants.⁷

Robert Pleasants was born at Curles in 1722, the second of nine children. His father, John (the third of that name), married three times.

²Henrico, or the Monthly Meeting at Curles, was one of the older monthly meetings belonging to the Virginia Yearly Meeting. Certainly well established by 1699 when its records begin, Curles Meeting after 1723 was generally referred to as the "Monthly Meeting held at White Oak Swamp." In 1841 its membership was transferred to Cedar Creek Monthly Meeting which in turn became Richmond Monthly Meeting in 1875. Phoebe R. Jacobsen, Quaker Records in Maryland (Annapolis, Md., 1965), p. 124.
⁶Ibid.
⁷Will of John Pleasants, September 27, 1690, in The Valentine Papers, II, p. 1053-1063.
His first wife, Margaret Jordan of Nansemond County, was the mother of Robert as well as his two brothers, John, Jr. and Samuel, and three sisters, Dorothy, Elizabeth, and Anne. When Margaret Jordan died in 1746 John remarried four years later and by this marriage to Mary-Woodson had three children, Thomas, Jonathan, and Mary. A third marriage in 1769 to Miriam Hunnicutt left no children.  

Very little is known about the lives of Pleasants' brothers and sisters. His two half-brothers, Jonathan and Thomas, died early in 1776, within five months of each other and while quite young, both being about 21 years of age. John, Jr. lived in Cumberland County and died in 1765 leaving Robert as guardian for his two children. Pleasants' other brother, Samuel (1737-1807), had by at least 1762 moved to Philadelphia where he established a successful mercantile business. Marrying Mary Pemberton (1738-1821), the daughter of Israel Pemberton, "King of the Quakers," in 1762, Samuel became a Quaker of considerable influence in Philadelphia. He was designated by the Pennsylvania Assembly to sign Bills of Credit issued on provincial authority, and he was also a manager of the Pennsylvania Hospital. Later during the American Revolution, Samuel was one of twenty-two Quakers arrested by the Council of Pennsylvania on anti-revolutionary charges and exiled to Winchester, Virginia, for six months. Robert Pleasants' three sisters all married
Quakers. In 1753 Anne married Roger Atkinson (1725-1784), a merchant who lived and traded on the Appomattox River near Petersburg. Pleasants wrote several letters to Atkinson expressing concern over Atkinson's drinking habits but references in later letters indicate that Atkinson was able to control his excesses and maintain a correct and orderly life. Another sister, Dorothy, married Gray Briggs (1730-1807), a lawyer in Dinwiddie County; Elizabeth married Robert Langley in 1749.

Robert Pleasants himself married twice. At the age of twenty-six he married Mary Webster of Baltimore County, Maryland. Three years after her death in 1757 he married Mary Hill of West River, Maryland. Although it is not entirely certain, Pleasants apparently had four children by his first wife: Robert, Jr., Margaret, Mary, and Ann. It was Margaret's husband, Thomas Pleasants, Jr., who together with Robert Pleasants and Robert Pleasants, Jr., later entered into a business partnership.

Born and brought up at Curles, Pleasants lived his entire life there. Virtually nothing is known about Pleasants' early life but by the 1740s his name, along with that of his father, was appearing as one of the signers of epistles from the Virginia Yearly Meeting to the Yearly Meeting in London. By 1772 at the latest he was himself the clerk for the Yearly Meeting. On the death of his father in 1771 the plantation came under Pleasants' direction and ownership. He died at Curles on March 4, 1801, at the age of 79. A testimony approved at the Virginia
Yearly Meeting the following year recited Pleasants' many accomplishments and concluded with the simple statement: "he obtained a good report and his memory is respected." 17

The letterbook from which the following letters are taken indicates that for Robert Pleasants a close relationship existed between his religion, his family, and his business, a relationship that extended far beyond the boundaries of Virginia. Among Friends generally, there existed a strong sense of community that transcended colonial and national boundaries. Friends everywhere had access to the works of the most famous Quaker authors and to a wide variety of tracts on different aspects of the religious testimonies. Pleasants was obviously familiar with the writings and teachings of such luminaries as Anthony Benezet and John Woolman and in his correspondence with them discussed their beliefs.

The transatlantic linkage was further fostered by the voluminous correspondence between the various American yearly meetings and the London Yearly Meeting and by "public Friends" who journeyed from meeting to meeting. These traveling ministers helped to maintain close contact among Quakers in widely separated areas. American Friends not only traveled throughout the colonies but also crossed the ocean to the British Isles while English Friends likewise ministered in the colonies. 18

Virginia Quakers especially gained support and inspiration from living so close to Philadelphia, the center of North American Quakerism.

This sense of fellowship together with a conviction that Quakers were a "peculiar people" called to follow God's word led Virginia Quakers

to feel they had more in common with Quakers in Philadelphia and England than with Presbyterians and Anglicans within their own county. Pleasants also maintained an amazing number of contacts with non-Quakers, particularly those active in government. Nevertheless, Friends in general and Pleasants in particular kept up a constant correspondence with fellow members in other places that encompassed family, personal, and commercial, as well as religious topics. Colonial Quakers such as Robert Pleasants were in close touch with Friends throughout the English-speaking world. The world of Quakerism may have been largely Quaker, but it was not a parochial one. Pleasants' worldwide network of correspondence could not help but broaden his view of the world, and he for one certainly overcame the provincialism so common to a colonial people.

II. MERCANTILE ACTIVITIES

The most obvious theme in the letterbook is Pleasants' involvement with mercantile activities. Initially, Pleasants was a partner in a business venture with his father. In several of the letters there are references to John Pleasants & Co., and one of Pleasants' main concerns throughout the letters is his attempt to settle his father's estate. John Pleasants died in August, 1771 and sometime after Pleasants"entered into a Mercantile Contract" with his son, Robert, Jr., and his son-in-law, Thomas Pleasants. Operating under the name "Robert Pleasants & Co.,"

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the direction and management of the enterprise was primarily left to
Thomas' direction. Apparently, however, the concern was not a complete
success because four years later the company was dissolved by "mutual
Consent." In his will fifteen years later Pleasants wrote that the
"business was attended with great loss so that the Stock of the Company
is greatly deficient to pay the demands against it." By that time
Pleasants was the only surviving partner, and he hoped to be reimbursed
from the estates of the others for having paid off their share of the
debt.¹

The period, then, which the following letters cover are years dur-
ing which Robert Pleasants & Co. was in operation. This company must
have been a concern of some size and importance since its contacts were
not limited either to one firm or even to one port. While small firms
found it difficult to maintain adequate credit relations with many dif-
ferent firms,² Robert Pleasants & Co. sent and received goods from such
diverse areas as Virginia's eastern shore, Philadelphia, Great Britain,
the West Indies, and even Spain and Portugal.

Tobacco was Pleasants' main export although by the eighteenth cen-
tury rising tobacco production had led to a price depression with the
result that a trend toward agricultural diversification was setting in.³
Nevertheless, in the 1770s tobacco continued to be a dominant interest of
Robert Pleasants & Co. Most of Pleasants' business was with merchants
in Bristol, Liverpool, and to some extent, London. Pleasants sent his
tobacco on consignment to England where the British agent supervised the

¹Will of Robert Pleasants.
²Robert B. Thomson, "The Merchant in Virginia, 1700-1775" (Ph.D.
³Arthur Pierce Middleton, Tobacco Coast: A Maritime History of Chesa-
unloading, paid the customs duties, stored the tobacco, and then sold it to the best possible advantage. Deducting from the receipts any necessary expenses of the transaction (including a 2½-3 percent commission) the agent placed the balance to the credit of the planter. The balance was rarely, if ever, remitted to the colony. Generally, Pleasants asked that the proceeds be sent to him in the form of goods. Textiles and agricultural implements predominated in his orders, but equally desirable items such as fashionable clothing and fancy foodstuffs were also ordered. There were times, however, when Pleasants was unable to estimate just how much a shipment would bring. In these instances Pleasants would leave it to the discretion of the agent to fill out the order with additional and appropriate articles. At other times Pleasants asked that bills of exchange be sent from one agent to another to pay off a previous debit.

As far as Robert Pleasants & Co. was concerned, trade with Philadelphia was just as important as that with Bristol and Liverpool. The increasing agricultural diversification in Virginia meant that commodities other than tobacco were available to be sold. It was these commodities which found a ready market northward. In 1772 Virginia shipped more than half of its wheat to other colonies along with one-third of its corn, and considerable quantities of meat, butter, and naval supplies. Pleasants shipped solely to Philadelphia, the major grain and flour market on the continent. In a letter to his brother in Philadelphia, Pleasants attributed the brisk demand for wheat in Virginia "chiefly to fulfill

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5RP to Thomas Applewhaita, May 5, 1775.
6Pleasants to Farell & Jones, January 10, 1774.
orders from Philadelphia. Although Pleasants apparently received orders from Philadelphia, he also consigned wheat to the market there. In exchange for the wheat, tobacco, and iron sent to Pennsylvania, Pleasants ordered such things as books, stoneware, fine furniture, satin bonnets, and woman's stays.

On several occasions Pleasants expressed a desire to import white indentured servants. In 1774 he requested one of his ship captains to procure a blacksmith and a tailor (along with a bull, ram, and ewe) from Liverpool. Philadelphia must also have been another source of labor since Pleasants informed Samuel that there existed an opportunity for an "industrious capable man who understands a Mill and the manufactory of wheat" as well as a "fine opening for a good shoemaker in this neighborhood."

The other two areas with which Pleasants had contact, although on a much smaller scale, were the West Indies and southern Europe. There are instances where Pleasants speaks of his "correspondant" in Lisbon who was to send Portuguese vines and wines. Other letters mention contacts with Spain and Madeira. Pleasants also wrote to merchants in Barbados and Saint Eustatius asking them to accept his tobacco in exchange for sugar, rum, and spices. Notices in the Virginia Gazette announce the arrival of ships from the West Indies, including Antigua.

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7 Pleasants to Samuel Pleasants, December 7, 1773.
8 Pleasants to Samuel Pleasants, August 3, 1772; and Pleasants to James Pemberton, October 8, 1773.
9 Pleasants to Captain Maxwell, July 12, 1774.
10 Pleasants to Samuel Pleasants, March 22, 1774.
11 Pleasants to Robert Bolling, January 10, 1775; and Purdie & Dixon's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg, Va.), March 24, 1768.
12 Pleasants to Thomas Applewhaite, May 5, 1775; Pleasants to Henry Lochead, September 25, 1780; and Pleasants to Captain Brown, December 15, 1780.
13 Purdie & Dixon's Virginia Gazette, December 10, 1767.
With his heavy use of the consignment system Pleasants found it essential to maintain amicable relations with his agents wherever they might be. One's reputation was a serious, guarded business asset; reports of an upstanding character and integrity were an important element of one's business success. Pleasants, for his part, was always courteous and respectful in writing to England or Philadelphia. The consignment system rested on trust; the agent sold the tobacco or wheat for the best price possible and the planter shipped enough to cover the cost of the goods he ordered. Success depended on the mutual credit arrangements of both; each had to trust the other and accept the temporary imbalances in the accounts.\textsuperscript{14}

It was, however, inevitable that misunderstandings would arise. Undoubtedly some planters overextended their accounts by drawing against future sales. On the other hand, planters complained of a lack of care in transacting business on the part of their business agents. On more than one occasion Pleasants had to re-order certain goods. In May 1772 Pleasants asked his brother in Philadelphia to send him a mahogany table. He gave specific measurements, but when the table arrived four months later, it was "three inches shorter than the directions" and Pleasants was obliged to "endeavor to fitt it and then order another of the right size." A smaller table that was sent and which Pleasants expected to sell had "met with an Accident" and hence it was doubtful that a decent price could be asked for it.\textsuperscript{15}

Sometimes letters went astray or perhaps the ship never reached its destination. More than once Pleasants experienced the unhappy situation

\textsuperscript{15} Pleasants to Samuel Pleasants, May 10, 1772 and October 1, 1772.
of discovering that various articles which he had ordered were either defective or damaged in transit. Sometimes the ship captain was at fault for neglecting to properly care for the goods under his care. Much to his consternation did Pleasants realize that the two horses he had ordered from Philadelphia were lost overboard due to the negligence, in Pleasants' opinion, of the captain.16

It was also important that goods from Great Britain or the West Indies be consigned to the right river. Otherwise, they might be lost or, at the least, the consignor was put to additional trouble and expense having them shipped to the river on which he lived. The process of transporting commodities as short a distance as from the York River to Curles was cumbersome and difficult. Pleasants had the unfortunate experience of being unable to find a package of linens he had ordered from London. After examining warehouses in the area and then advertising in the Gazette, Pleasants at length discovered the package in Yorktown "from whence we have so little communication, that I was obliged to send on purpose for it, which will be attended with considerable expense, and the want of it has been no small inconvenience." Pleasants then cautioned the agent to refrain from sending goods to that river, even if it meant a longer delay.17

Occasionally, the ship captain was dishonest and did not deliver the full load placed under his care. As Pleasants discovered, it was often difficult to prove embezzlement, but in one instance Pleasants was fairly certain of the fraud. He was prepared to go to court if not to recover his own effects at least to expose the "Villain" so that it would

16Pleasants to Samuel Pleasants, August 3, 1772 and October 1, 1772.  
17Pleasants to David & John Barclay, January 10, 1774.
be "out of his power to act the same part in future where he is known."\(^{18}\)

In another instance Pleasants arranged for 35 tons of pig iron to be shipped from the eastern shore to Norfolk. Two months after the initial agreement Pleasants had not received the iron and was beginning to suspect that he had been deceived by the captain. When the iron finally did arrive, it was "short of expectation."\(^{19}\)

The frustrating part must have been that Pleasants had so little direct control over not only the goods he ordered but even his own shipments. It was not an easy undertaking operating in the Philadelphia market, let alone in one thousands of miles away. Under normal circumstances a transaction could take months to be completed -- one year was usually the time allowed to settle all matters connected with a tobacco consignment to England -- and if difficulties arose it could conceivably be years before the problem was resolved. At best the consignment system was a clumsy and delicate system. All too often Pleasants found himself the victim of the vagaries of inclement weather, prices, wars, inadequate communication, the deception of unscrupulous men, and the regulation of two governments whose objectives were often at odds. Particularly as relations between the colonies and Great Britain deteriorated, the market itself went into a slump and Pleasants was forced to contend with blockades and taxes which made it doubly difficult to send ships to England. Matters were not helped any by constantly fluctuating market conditions and often the Virginia planters had no way of knowing where the market stood. Compared to Liverpool, Philadelphia was extremely close but this did not make it any easier for Pleasants to know what the going

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\(^{18}\)Pleasants to Samuel Pleasants, May 21, 1772.

\(^{19}\)Pleasants to George Parker, December 21, 1772; Pleasants to John Pemberton, January 3, 1773, March 4, 1773, and March 12, 1773.
prices were at a given time. Usually, he could only hope that prices had remained as last reported. When delay arose, as it so often did, there was very little Pleasants could do. It was infrequent that Pleasants had the opportunity to know the state of the market and to act accordingly; more often he was forced to act and hope for the best. Nevertheless, if parties in a business transaction persevered and managed to work out their differences, the rewards were considerable. The merchant in England who managed his business properly could expect high profits whereas the planter in Virginia received the services of a merchandizing agent and banker.  

In an effort to hold down the risk at his end, Pleasants preferred to buy tobacco and other commodities from men of experience and good reputation who worked good land. This was his best insurance that the material he was buying was of good quality and up to his personal standards. By the 1770s, however, tobacco inspection had been in effect for over thirty years. Under the terms of the law all tobacco exported from Virginia had first to be brought to public warehouses where it was examined and stamped by authorized inspectors. Not only did this procedure assure that the tobacco would always be of acceptable quality but it also provided a soundly backed currency for Virginia. At the time of the inspection the planter was issued a certificate or tobacco note. This paper changed hands when the tobacco was sold or exported and could also be used for the payment of taxes and other debts. During the Revo-

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21 Pleasants to Joshua Fisher & Sons, March 12, 1773.
lutionary War this practice was particularly important because cash was very scarce and often the only way to pay off a debt or settle an account was by the transfer of these notes. Pleasants was familiar with this technique and was forced out of necessity to engage in it, although he might have preferred payment in cash.

Strictly speaking, Robert Pleasants was not merely a planter who sent his own tobacco to England. In Virginia the larger planters consigned not only tobacco produced on their own plantations but also tobacco purchased from smaller planters and farmers. Pleasants sent tobacco from several of his own farms but also negotiated with others to buy tobacco.

The reasons for this practice probably arose in the early part of the century when the expansion of the Piedmont region created a great commercial opportunity for merchants. New settlers required goods and services and had to dispose of their increasing agricultural surpluses; Virginia merchants and planters such as Pleasants sought to avail themselves of these opportunities. The desire to take advantage of this market may have been one of the reasons why Pleasants imported large quantities of European and West Indies goods, far more than he and his family could ever use. In order to compete successfully in the purchasing market, the larger planters often found it beneficial to import goods and to keep a store. This in turn, obliged them to own or charter vessels and to establish a regular correspondence with Caribbean and British merchants. In exchange for the tobacco sent to England the planters imported goods for their stores as well as for themselves. For a store in which he was concerned, Pleasants expected to order $1 or £200 value of goods from
London as an assortment. Simultaneously, this led planters to extend and to engage in other mercantile, as opposed to strictly planting, activities. There are numerous instances in which Pleasants served as a banker and business advisor. He was called on to endorse notes, guarantee bills of exchange, lend money and goods.

Situated as he was on the banks of the best river leading into the interior, Pleasants and his partners were ideally placed to make use of the small urban areas that were appearing. Up until mid-century, the geography of Virginia had imposed a pattern of commercial distribution. Four tributaries allowed ocean-going vessels easy access into inland Virginia making the development of a single port unnecessary. Curles undoubtedly had its own landing from which tobacco could be sent and goods received, but by the 1770s small towns were increasingly performing the business of immediate localities. Pleasants traveled to them to settle his own affairs. Yorktown, Williamsburg, Norfolk, Petersburg, and Richmond all experienced increased mercantile activity, and while Pleasants had contact with all five, the two that most affected him were Norfolk and Williamsburg. Norfolk’s location was such that it was fast becoming the supply depot for the James River valley, particularly where the West Indies and grain trade were concerned. Not terribly far from Curles, Norfolk must have presented a convenient port at which Pleasants’ ships might stop. Thomas Pleasants, and even Robert Pleasants himself, were obliged to spend time in Norfolk settling accounts, organizing cargoes, and outfitting vessels.

Williamsburg also was of economic significance to Pleasants because

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23 Pleasants to Osgood, Hanbury & Co., December 23, 1771.
24 Solow, The Economic Role of Williamsburg, p. 3-4.
25 Middleton, Tobacco Coast, p. 182.
it was here that he met with other merchants and planters from the surrounding area to make payments, draw up contracts, place orders, and transact any other business that might occur. By the mid-1770s, however, depression and political controversy had adversely affected the workings of these meetings. It was in 1774 that Pleasants lamented to a friend:

The time appointed for the Meeting of the Merchants in Williamsburg, have been so badly observed of late, that I apprehend they must fall on some other method in future by which to regulate the fulfilling their contracts; my Son in Law is but this day returned from what they call the January Meeting, and what made it the worse, there was so very few of the Merchants who did attend, that little or no business was done.26

Merely to say, however, that Robert Pleasants was a wealthy planter with extensive mercantile pursuits does not provide a complete picture of this Virginian. It is equally significant that Pleasants was an active and faithful member of the Society of Friends; and this association obviously was essential in everything that Pleasants did. Pleasants almost certainly would have said that his Quakerism was of far greater importance than any of his business successes; in fact, he probably would have said his faith was the reason for his prosperity. Hence, being a Quaker served to give Pleasants' business affairs a distinctive twist.

As noted earlier, the two businesses in which Pleasants was a partner involved family members. Initially, Pleasants worked with his father and brother and then with his son and son-in-law. This reliance on family relations was not unique to Pleasants either as a businessman or as a Quaker. Family connection was important to any planter or merchant who used relatives as contacts in cities throughout the colonies and in Eng-

26Pleasants to Unknown, February 19, 1774. For a complete discussion of the Williamsburg Meeting, see Soltow. The Economic Role of Williamsburg, Chapters 1 and 6.
land. Pleasants carried on very active business relations with his brother, Samuel, in Philadelphia. Samuel's marriage into the wealthy Pemberton family also provided Pleasants with another business contact and one of which he certainly took advantage.

What marked Quaker businessmen as unique, however, was their reliance on members of their own denomination rather than on outsiders. One of the characteristics of the Society of Friends was their strong sense of community, a feeling prevalent in religious as well as business matters and transcending colonial and national boundaries. This tendency is not as obvious in Pleasants' letters as one might expect, perhaps because this letterbook contains only a small fraction of the business letters the company must have written and received during his career. His major contacts in Philadelphia were, of course, Quaker, his brother and the Pembertons. But he also corresponded with William and Joshua Fisher, James & Drinker, Isaac, Joseph, and William Wharton, all Quaker merchants residing in Philadelphia. Pleasants' main correspondent in London was the firm of David & John Barclay & Co., also Quaker merchants. But Pleasants wrote considerably fewer letters to London than he did to Farell & Jones and Dobson, Daltera & Walker, merchants in Bristol and Liverpool respectively. As well as can be determined, neither of these firms were Quaker, although other colonial Quakers did business with them. Nevertheless, Pleasants' correspondence does indicate that an international community of Quakers did exist and this in turn tended to bind the society even closer.

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28 Frost, The Quaker Family in Colonial America, p. 203-204.
The members of the Society of Friends were known for their shrewdness and success in business, a reputation not undeserved. The explanation lies with the religious and social philosophy so distinctive to Quakerism. The basis of this philosophy was the belief that the material world of daily toil was actually God's world in which man was called to do His will which could be carried out more faithfully in the warehouse than in the monastery. By keeping his inner eye turned to the Lord and laboring diligently in his calling, a Quaker could expect God's blessing and favor in the form of material prosperity. Hence, business success was viewed as a sign that one was living "in the Light." 29

The ethical standards for godly business practice were also very clear: honesty, hard work, obedience to the law, fair dealing. If his letters are any indication, Pleasants' standards were of the highest. He was scrupulously honest or at least believed he was. In one instance where he was accused of being lax in paying a debt Pleasants was quite distressed. 30 Another time he diligently sought a solution to a problem that had arisen over a tobacco purchase. Spanning three years and complicated by depreciation of Continental currency, Pleasants in 1780 was anxious to have the matter settled "in an equitable manner" and placed the problem with James Pemberton for arbitration. 31 Pleasants also urged his son and nephew to be diligent in their studies so that they might have the training to be successful in business.

Business, however, was never to be accorded excessive attention. Following one's calling was important, but it should never be indulged in or allowed to dominate one's time so as to exclude time to follow

29Tolles, Meeting House and Counting House, p. 48-58.
30Pleasants to Farrel & Jones, April 14, 1775.
31A State of the Case, n.d. (Pleasants' "Letterbook").
God's word. In a letter to his brother-in-law Pleasants offered the opinion that from his own experience he knew "that the business of a Merchant, does necessarily impose much time and thought... and perhaps may insensibly draw the mind from a proper State of watchfulness." He feared that Samuel "was more engaged in the hurries and bustles of the world, than is perhaps altogether consistent with the self denying principles we profess." The conflict implicit in the Quaker ethic when applied to economic life was not easy to reconcile and Pleasants was aware of this. Friends were encouraged to be industrious in their callings by the promise that God would send his blessing in the form of prosperity. At the same time, however, Friends were warned against allowing the fruits of their labor to accumulate lest they be tempted into luxury and pride. Pleasants cautioned his brother-in-law:

"This I believe some business may be profitable to the mind, as well as in other respects, yet it appears to me to be necessary to guard against the excess of it; otherwise the good purposes propos'd by it, may be a means some times of depriving us not only of the sweet of domestic felicity, and a contented mind, but obstruct the high improvement of the Talents committed to our trust, and retard the accomplishment of the great ends of our Creation wherein consists true satisfaction and happiness."

Mercantile activity engaged in solely for the purpose of acquisition was to be guarded against at all costs and elders of the meetings such as Pleasants made it their concern to ensure proper piety. He warned one young Friend "against engaging in Business or anything else which cannot be conducted consistent with the sure and holy principle of Peace and Righteousness." God's truth was to be followed at all times.

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32 Pleasants to Samuel Pleasants, n.d., Pleasants "Correspondence."
33 Tolles, Meeting House and Counting House, p. 82.
34 Pleasants to John Thomas, July 10, 1785, Pleasants "Correspondence."
35 Pleasants to Robert Crew, June 15, 1780.
The great prosperity of the Quaker merchants indicates the effectiveness of their trading practices, and Pleasants was no exception. Following the dictates of his religion, Pleasants continued to develop the substantial legacy left to him by his father. Always "careful not to engage too much in the spirit of the world, or suffer our minds to be over charged, or much incumbered with the things of this life, so as to obstruct the more important concern of or business of securing an inheritance in a future state of happiness," Pleasants was a Quaker first and businessman second. After all, man did not live by bread alone.

III. THE SLAVERY ISSUE

Although the primary subject in these letters is commerce, there are traces of other themes, for commerce was by no means Pleasants' only concern. Obviously he spent considerable time pursuing his business activities; but Pleasants would not have considered this the most significant aspect of his life. On the basis of another letterbook of Pleasants, secondary sources, and even to some extent these letters, one can say that Pleasants' membership in the Society of Friends was of greater importance to him than any business could have been. As an elder within the Society, Pleasants ministered to other Friends and involved himself

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36 Pleasants to Samuel Pleasants, November 2, 1785, Pleasants "Correspondence."
1 Pleasants "Correspondence." (For complete citation see footnote 9 under "Biographical Background.")
in the many issues affecting Quakers in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. But Pleasants' main interest, and one for which he is well known, was the status of Negro slaves, their emancipation, and the abolition of the slave trade.

As one of the outstanding champions of the Negro in eighteenth-century Virginia, Pleasants probably inherited his principles from his father. John Pleasants was for many years a clerk of the Upper Quarterly Meeting and by his will, August 12, 1771, ordered that all "my poor slaves... shall be free (if they choose it) when they arrive at the age of thirty years and the laws of this land will admit them to be set free without their being transported out of the country." At that time, however, the prevailing law of Virginia did not permit manumission "upon any pretense, except for services to be adjudged by the governor and council to be meritorious" and hence the testament was inoperable. The slaves stayed in the possession of the heirs and executors (Robert Pleasants being one) until 1800 at which time in a suit brought before the High Court of Chancery by Robert Pleasants the freedom of several hundred slaves was confirmed. All those slaves between the ages of 30 and 45 were released immediately while those under 30 were to be set free on attaining that age; those over 45 were to be freed or cared for as their situation required. Robert Pleasants himself also freed all

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2 Will of John Pleasants, August 11, 1771, The Valentine Papers, II, p. 1116-1128.
3 Hening, Statutes at Large, VI, p. 112.
4 For the specific ruling in the case see Helen T. Catterall, ed., Judicial Cases Concerning Slavery and the Negro, I (Washington, D.C., 1926), p. 105-106. See also Virginia, In the High Court of Chancery, March 16, 1799. "Between Robert Pleasants, son and heir of John Pleasants... and Mary Logan..." (Evans Number 38963).
of his slaves by his will (1800) with the same specifications for their welfare.5

Pleasant's philosophy arose from the belief that God had imparted a measure of his spirit to all men, regardless of race, sex, or class. Therefore, all men and women were equal in His sight and must be treated as equals by their fellow men. This explained the Quaker use of "plain language" and their refusal to use titles of address, bow, or uncover the head in the presence of superiors. It led to giving women equal responsibility in meetings for worship and business and to ministering to the poor and unfortunate both within their church and without. Coming to realize the implications of this tenet in their relations with other races, Friends were to lead the attack upon American slavery and to treat American Indians with respect.6

Initially, however, the Society of Friends did not yet see any inconsistency in buying and keeping slaves. Familiar with the Africans only as slaves and never seeing them in a social order of their own, Quakers regarded their slaves as property toward whom they had responsibility as an owner. In a similar position as their neighbors, Quakers also had the same economic interest in employing slave labor. It was only gradually that the conviction grew that slavery was not reconcilable with the Christian faith, although the basic inconsistency had long been there for those who could see it. George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, in 1657 wrote a letter of caution "To Friends Beyond Sea, that Have Black and Indian Slaves." While not condemning slaveholding, Fox did expound on the idea of the equality of all men before God. Four-

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5 Will of Robert Pleasant.
6 Tolles, Meeting House and Counting House, p. 8.
teen years later, after a trip to North America and Barbados, Fox ex-horted Friends to treat their slaves kindly and to instruct them in the basic Christian tenets. He even suggested thirty years as an appropriate term of service for slaves. 7

Eventually Quakers were to view slavery as a fault within themselves. It was John Woolman in mid-eighteenth century who linked the Negro's outward condition with the white man's corruption. 8 Slavery was a flagrant violation of the divinely ordained brotherhood of man and acquiescence in such a practice would ultimately bring God's wrath down upon the world for tolerating it. 9 Slaveholding was seen as the root of all evil. Opponents of slavery argued that it "promote[d] Idleness in the Rich" and prevented the immigration of industrious laboring people. 10 In Pleasants' opinion it was slaves "who discourage Industry, Tradesmen, and more useful Inhabitants in general." 11 Later, Quakers were to argue that slavery itself was one of the "Grand Causes" of divine wrath which led to the American Revolution. Pleasants made frequent allusions to the "depravity of mankind." Particularly as the war continued and the likelihood of peace diminished, Pleasants concluded that "our Sufferings are not so near an end as some have been flattering themselves... as the 'Almighty don't afflict willingly' or without cause, there must be greater Signs of the Cause being remov'd before the effect will cease for

7 Thomas E. Drake, Quakers and Slavery in America (New Haven, Conn., 1950), p. 5-6.
11 Pleasants to Charles Pleasants, July 12, 1774.
it is written 'there is no peace to the wicked.'"12 Pleasants must have been referring in part to the presence of slavery.

This emphasis on slavery as the cause of all evil, however, was not generally accepted among Quakers until after 1750, and it was not until then that actual efforts were made to abolish slavery. Nevertheless, from the beginning Friends were encouraged to treat their slaves well and their inherent humanitarianism was evident in their relations with their slaves. Ideally, Negro slaves were linked by familial bonds to their masters.13 As a whole Quakers were kind to their slaves, often preaching to them and sometimes even providing them with a rudimentary education.14 They may have considered their slaves inferior (certainly they were outside the religious fellowship), but Friends believed that they had an obligation to treat their slaves as they would imperfect Englishmen lacking educational or vocational skills.15 As far back as 1722 the Virginia Yearly Meeting expressed concern about the care of slaves and cautioned its members to treat their slaves well. John Woolman's visit to Virginia in 1757 and the widespread circulation of his tract, Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes, prompted a long running discussion on the nature and necessity of black instruction. Gradually, the Yearly Meeting became more and more specific as to the exact responsibilities of a Quaker slaveowner. Not only was he expected to clothe and feed his slaves but he was to instruct them "in the principles of Christian Religion."16 Pleasants, for one, took his responsi-

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12 Pleasants to John Thomas, 'March 1, 1780.
13 James, A People Among Peoples, p. 103.
14 Drake, Quakers and Slavery in America, p. 48.
15 James, A People Among Peoples, p. 103.
bility seriously. In at least one instance he sent a young Negro boy to his brother in Philadelphia in order that he might be given proper schooling and training in some business so as to "get an honest livelihood." One year later he wished that Jamey would write and report on his success. 17

Undoubtedly Pleasants was one of the moving forces in persuading Virginia Quakers to adopt an active anti-slavery stance. Even though the vast majority of Quakers were not yet convinced of the impropriety of slavery, Pleasants, as early as 1760, was thinking of petitioning the General Assembly to declare that slaves born after a certain time would be free. Pleasants, however, was realistic about his chances: "I don't know whether the minds of the people at large are yet fully ripe for such a revolution." At any rate, agitation could not hurt. 18

Not only did Pleasants agitate by petitions, but by example he showed what a slaveowner might do to help his slaves. Fifteen years prior to the revision of the manumission law in 1782, Pleasants placed "divers of his Negroes on land of his own." "For their encouragement to industry and to remove every inducement to theft and dishonesty," he supported them for one year and allowed them full benefit of their labor. Pleasants' neighbors, however, were not as enthusiastic and apparently raised objections because in answer to one critic Pleasants stubbornly stated his case:

I have an undoubted right to settle my own lands with Negro's, if I choose, without breach of any law Moral or divine, and tho I may not manage my affairs so profitably as my Neighbours, yet so long as I support my family without charge to them, I

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17 Pleasants to Samuel Pleasants, January 11, 1772 and Pleasants to Samuel Pleasants, Jr., March 1773.
18 Pleasants to Freasitt Davis, March 6, 1760, Pleasants "Correspondence."
expect in reason I ought to have the privilege of doing it in my own way. 19

Despite the opposition to this particular practice, the Society of Friends in the 1770s slowly moved towards a policy of first disowning members for importing slaves and then for buying or selling them. In fact, the abolition of the slave trade was Pleasants' initial concern. Practically, he realized the unlikelihood that emancipation could be accomplished; the abolition of the slave trade was a much more realistic goal and he developed arguments that appealed to those outside the Society whose support was essential to any successful program. People should be principled against the slave trade "as well from a Sense of the Injustice to the unhappy people as the good of posterity and sound policy respecting the Security of the State." 20 Continuance of the slave trade was detrimental not only to the present interest of America but also to posterity. Slaves imported from Africa together with the natural increase "will entail the greatest difficulties on the possessors." 21 As of 1774 Pleasants wrote that the Virginia legislature had on several occasions petitioned the king to prohibit further importations. This met with little success because as long as the "Guinea Merchants receive so much Gain, and a Corrupt Ministry retain their influence there is little reason to expect relief by an assent to the one or compliance with the other." For the time being Pleasants could only suggest that individuals refrain from purchasing slaves. 22

The Society, with Pleasants assistance, also turned its efforts to

19 Pleasants to Joseph Lewis, July 29, 1778, Pleasants "Correspondence."
20 Pleasants to Charles Pleasants, July 12, 1774.
21 Pleasants responding to an article published in The Virginia Gazette in August [Illegible year], Pleasants "Correspondence."
22 Pleasants to Charles Pleasants, July 12, 1774.
changing the existing law regarding emancipation. A law of 1723 stated that no slave could be free "except for some meritorious services, to be adjudged and allowed by the governor and council." Slaves set free contrary to this act were to be sold by the churchwardens with the proceeds being used for parish purposes.\(^{23}\) Re-enacted in 1748,\(^{24}\) this was the law the Quakers sought to change during the 1770s and 1780s. It was incomprehensible to Pleasants that a law which invested him with absolute power over his slaves could at the same time keep him from disposing of his property according to his own desires.\(^{25}\) In February 1781 Pleasants reported to his cousin that the Yearly Meeting had petitioned the General Assembly to repeal the law prohibiting the freedom of Negroes or at least to confirm the freedom of those already emancipated by wills and manumissions, but nothing had come of it.\(^{26}\) It was not until 1782 that the Society finally succeeded with the latter part of their demand. Under the provisions of an act in that year slaveowners could manumit by will or by acknowledging the will in court while still alive, provided they made arrangements to support slaves who were aged, infirm, or young.\(^{27}\) Now it was possible for the Yearly Meeting categorically to prohibit slaveowning. A few years later it proclaimed "that none amongst us be concerned in importing, buying, selling, holding or overseeing slaves, and that all bear a faithful testimony against the practice."\(^{28}\)

By this time the influence of the American Revolution was felt; the strong equalitarian strain in Quakerism plus the mounting revolutionary

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\(^{23}\)Hening, *Statutes at Large*, IV, p. 132.  
\(^{24}\)Hening, *Statutes at Large*, VI, p. 112.  
\(^{25}\)Pleasants to Unknown, March 28, 1777, Pleasants "Correspondence."  
\(^{26}\)Pleasants to Evan Thomas, February 1781.  
\(^{27}\)Hening, *Statutes at Large*, XI, p. 39, 40.  
\(^{28}\)Weeks, *Southern Quakers and Slavery*, p. 213.
fervor led Friends naturally toward sympathy with the oppressed. The times seemed to demand that people free their hands from every form of oppression lest the vengeance of the Almighty be further visited upon the land. To any clear thinking Quaker there was an obvious inconsistency between the prevalent ideas of the day and the enslavement of thousands of Africans. It is in this context that Pleasants made numerous pleas for emancipation, such as the following:

But while we are condemning the mother country for endeavoring to deprive us of the latter let us consider our own conduct in respect to those we look upon to be our inferiors and not withhold such valuable privilege from them. "Cast out the beam that is in thy own eye" said our Blessed Savior "and then shall thou see clearly to pluck the mote out of thy Brother's eye" and we are enjoined from the same authority to "do unto others as we would they should do unto us" but alas how are these things regarded our actions don't keep pace with knowledge of the solid arguments which have been advanced in favor of Liberty.29

Time and time again Pleasants sought to apply the noble principles of "the declaration of Rights" to every denomination of man.30 In condemning the acts of Parliament which encroached on colonial privilege, justice demanded that the privilege of slaves be likewise preserved. It was true that at present they were incapable of pleading their own case but, nevertheless, they were entitled to equal justice and ought to receive the benefits of the same undeniable truths which had been advanced to other men.31

The idea of total emancipation met with resistance even among Quakers and as a leading advocate Pleasants had to defend his cause vigorously. For many Friends, slave labor was an indispensable part of the economic

29 Pleasants to John Thomas, May 30, 1775.
30 Pleasants to Unknown, March 28, 1777, Pleasants "Correspondence."
31 Pleasants to Richard Bland, March 15, 1780, Pleasants "Correspondence."
system. In addition, the size of the Negro population made wholesale manumission frightening. Pleasants was very aware of the difference between cautious and theoretical anti-slavery and practical and immediate concern for the rights of the Negro. Appointed to a committee in 1791 by the Humane or Abolition Society to draft a petition to the General Assembly, Pleasants acknowledged that objections would arise from a "general and immediate emancipation" and thus he favored gradual emancipation. He was, he wrote:

not insensible that a people long destitute by the means of mental improvement in some instance, be sunk below the common standard of human nature; accustomed to move at the will of a Master or Overseer, reflection may in some degree be suspended, and reason and Conviction have but little influence on their conduct; They are also sensible of the effect of custom, and the prejudices arising from a habit of looking upon the African race, as an inferior species of mankind, and regarding them only as property.32

As Pleasants pointed out, Quakers could not simply turn their slaves loose. The act of manumission was merely a dramatic movement and did not rectify the wrong. The enslaved people first had to be educated if they were to enjoy their natural liberty, and with emancipation a real possibility, education became even more necessary. Understandably this idea met with resistance because now Quakers were being asked to sacrifice capital to justify their beliefs. To wealthy southern friends, manumitting slaves would mean an end to the social rank and plantation life they enjoyed. Not only that but other difficulties arose. A new labor force would have to be found. The expense required by law to provide for those slaves unable to care for themselves was substantial.33 Not all Friends were as willing to free their slaves as Robert Pleasants, particularly

32 Pleasants "Correspondence," ca. October 1791.
33 James, A People Among Peoples, p. 232-233.
when it might cost them, as it had Pleasants, "a sacrifice of 3000£ sterling."34 Men of such grand philanthropy are rare in any society and ordinary men could hardly be expected to divest themselves voluntarily of their property. Although Pleasants understood these objections and even conceded that they were not without foundation, he would not allow them to justify slaveholding. Because God "hath made of one blood all nations of men," emancipation must take precedence over any other consideration.

In an effort to assuage their consciences, some individuals suggested returning freed slaves to Africa. Pleasants could not accept the reasoning behind this solution and indicated as much in a letter he wrote in answer to an article in the Virginia Independent Chronicle. The author voiced the fear that whites would marry liberated slaves and "form a separate interest and endanger the peace of the Society." To prevent this from happening, he suggested creating a colony in Africa for freed slaves. Pleasants personally believed that whites held such a repugnance toward blacks that it was extremely unlikely that any mixed marriages would ever occur. He went on to say, however, that even if this prejudice was overcome, was that "sufficient reason to deprive so many thousands of fellow creatures of one of the most valuable blessings in life or forcing them to remove to Africa, or any other part of the world?" Pleasants further pointed out that economically it would not be good to deprive the country of so many laborers not to mention that it would be difficult for freed slaves, if sent to Africa, to adjust to a new environment.35

34Marquis de Chastellux, Travels in America in the Years 1780, 1781 and 1782, II (Williamsburg, Va., 1963), p. 596.
35Pleasants "Correspondence," June 22, 1790.
For years Pleasants issued appeals in an effort to win support for a general emancipation. As president of the Humane Society for the Abolition of Slavery, Pleasants drafted petitions to the Virginia General Assembly as well as to the United States Congress while privately continuing to solicit support from James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, and St. George Tucker. In 1777 he appealed to Governor Patrick Henry, a personal friend, for Henry's support against "meddling people, who have threatened to put in force the former most unjust and unreasonable law" whereby churchwardens were empowered "to take up and sell any Negros who had been freed without specific authorization from the government."36 Henry, a slaveholder himself, was in sympathy with Pleasants' proposals, but although he could not justify owning slaves, he was nevertheless "drawn along by the General Inconvenience of living without them."37 In 1785 Pleasants chided George Washington for "now sitting down in a state of ease, and dissipation, and extravagance, on the labour of Slaves" after being one of the "warm advocates for the cause during the war" and urged him to work on the behalf of slaves, all to no avail.38

In the years after the Revolution, Pleasants' efforts to help Negroes took the form of organizing the abolition society (1790) mentioned earlier. This society reflected Pleasants' belief that all men, regardless of religion, should join together in behalf of enslaved Africans, a feeling which ran counter to the Quaker tendency of remaining a people apart. At one point Pleasants reproved a fellow Friend who objected to

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36 Pleasants to Patrick Henry, March 28, 1777, Pleasants "Correspondence."
38 Pleasants to George Washington, December 11, 1785, Pleasants "Correspondence."
"the members of Our religious Society uniting with others in such an undertaking." Pleasants sought to placate him with the observation that Friends in England, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and elsewhere were members of similar societies, and besides, "many hands make light work."  

Pleasants' main emphasis in these years was regaining the freedom of blacks claimed as slaves or kidnapped and sold into slavery, and in sponsoring schools for blacks. Pleasants played an active role in both of these activities. In his will Pleasants left one hundred dollars to the Quaker meeting at Curles to be used either for education or "to be applied towards the prosecuting of suits for the relief of that unhappy people wrongfully detained in Bondage." Also in his will, Pleasants made provision for a free school to be built and maintained on 350 acres of his land so that "the young ones may have learning sufficient to enable them to transact the Common affairs of life." Around 1782 Pleasants had drawn up and circulated some "Proposals for Establishing a free school for the Instruction of the Children of Blacks and people of Colour" in which he appealed to all denominations for contributions to maintain a school in order that freed slaves might be instructed not only in religion but in "Writing, Cyphering and Mechanic arts." He believed that this was the best means by which these people might be made "fit for freedom and to become useful citizens." Nothing concrete ever resulted from this proposal, and hence Pleasants himself provided for such a school in his will of 1800. One was built under the jurisdiction of Pleasants' monthly meeting and continued in operation until at least 1824.

39 Pleasants to Unknown, July 23, 1790, Pleasants "Correspondence."  
40 Will of Robert Pleasants.  
41 Weeks, Southern Quakers and Slavery, p. 215.  
42 James, A People Among Peoples, p. 293.
It was Pleasants' sincere wish that all men should enjoy freedom and that they should have the means to do so. For his part, Pleasants willingly gave of his energy, time, and money so that all men might be free.

IV. PEACE TESTIMONY

In many of the letters which are not transcribed here another aspect of Pleasants' life is evident. Basically covering the decade of the 1770s and the early years of the 1780s, these letters not surprisingly contain references to the conflict between Great Britain and the American colonies. The Revolutionary War was a time of great testing for the Society of Friends. It resulted in renewed attacks on Quakerism and challenged the solidarity and order of the Society. Throughout the colonies, the war, as well as the disturbances leading up to it, subjected Quakers to ordeals of mind, body, and soul. Adherence to a principle of pacifism led Friends to be regarded as hostile to the British as well as the colonial cause. Protestations of strict neutrality were of little help. Quaker assertions that they could not and would not take part in setting up or tearing down governments were contrary to popular opinion, and the population at large continued to suspect the motives of the Society. As colonial, and later state, governments passed legislation with which conscientious Friends could not comply,1 Quakers repeatedly found themselves forced to choose between a devotion to peace.

or a devotion to the state. Inevitably, the events between 1763 and 1782 brought anguish to the Quakers as they sought to apply their religious beliefs to everyday existence. While some Friends adjusted their principles to the pressures of the time, the majority refused and held firm. Robert Pleasants, for one, never wavered in his faith.

The basis of Pleasants' reactions and feelings toward the American Revolution arose out of his adherence to the Quaker testimony of peace. The Society of Friends had generally condemned war since their inception although never setting it forth as a formal creed. The Society that George Fox originated was an experiment in absolute faith in the constructive power of love. The Children of Light wished to reorganize the social order not by revolution, but by actually practicing the Gospel of Christ. This new way of life was to be one of love and sacrifice and patience, "an eminence display of divine benignity and love to mankind." In such a world there would be "no occasion of war" but rather a "covenant of peace." War would be eliminated because hate would no longer exist. Unfortunately, the world was not yet ready, and Quakers were destined to remain a "spiritual remnant," bearers of truths and ideals of a world to come. Quakers could not, therefore, condemn the use of arms by others. However, they not only remained "principled against having arms ourselves," but also refrained from exclamations of joy at triumphs gained through warfare. As Anthony Benezet, reformer and writer of Quaker tracts,

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3 Anthony Benezet, A Short Account of the People Called Quakers (New Bedford, 1799), p. 13.
explained: "They cannot consider victories obtained by the destruction of men, as occasions of rejoicing; much less as subjects of thanksgiving to a God of love, of peace and goodness." In the grand crusade against evil that Quakers had been called by God to wage, it was inconceivable that force could be used. Only inner spiritual weapons were consistent with the teachings of the Holy Spirit. For the time being, it was the duty of Friends to persevere and remain obedient to their testimony against the wickedness and inhumanity of war.

Throughout the colonial period Friends displayed little sympathy for the periodic wars that erupted between European powers and extended to the New World. The Revolutionary War, however, was a different matter. Previously, Quakers had been able to remove themselves from any military contact. But now war directly affected them and they could not escape the consequences. By the mid-eighteenth century most colonial governments had come to terms in varying degrees with most Quaker practices and attitudes. Left generally free to follow their own interests, Friends prospered. As befitted conscientious citizens and astute, sober businessmen, Friends earned the respect of not only their fellow Quakers but also that of the community-at-large. Their position as prominent citizens and successful businessmen together with a deep-running democratic sentiment inclined them to see the viability of American resistance to a discriminatory British policy. Writing in 1775 when the situation was worsening although armed conflict had not yet broken out, Pleasants argued that because Quakers "have suffered so deeply by an arbitrary power, can it be doubted that we are insensible of the Value; or disaffected to the cause of liberty?" In the present situation, Friends

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7Benezet, A Short Account of the People Called Quakers, p. 14.
might be "depended on for firmness and perseverance" as much as any others.  

Logically and historically Quakers were on the side of the colonists. In a letter written some time after Boston's port was closed, Pleasants referred to "the obnoxious Acts of Parliament" and indicated a hope that they might be repealed. That same year, the minutes of a Friends meeting indicated the Society's willingness to work for liberty:

We have a just sense of the value of our religious and civil liberties, and have ever been and are desirous of preserving them by all such measures as are not inconsistent with our Christian profession and principles, and though we believe it to be our duty to submit to the powers which in the course of Divine Providence are set over us, where there hath been or is an oppression or cause of suffering, we are engaged with Christian meekness and firmness to petition and remonstrate against it and to endeavor by just reasoning and arguments to assert our rights and privileges in order to obtain relief.

The Quaker peace testimony, of course, condemned threats of mob violence and illegal assemblies but this certainly did not exclude non-violent or peaceful efforts. Pleasants, at least initially, was sympathetic to the colonial cause.

Just prior to the first Continental Congress in 1774 Pleasants wrote to his old friend and relative by marriage, Israel Pemberton, in Philadelphia, asking that Pemberton welcome the Virginia delegates. In the same letter Pleasants pointed out that with Congress meeting in Philadelphia, Friends were afforded a fine opportunity. He observed:

To endeavor to moderate the resolves of that respectable assembly on which the future welfare of America seems so much to depend; for tho it may be determined to persevere with firmness in opposition to Parliamentary Taxations, yet as it appears to me to be the Duty, so it is likely to be the Interest

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8Pleasants to Robert Bolling, January 10, 1775.
9Pleasants to Dobson, Dalters & Walker, April 14, 1775.
of the Americans to use every lenient measure by way of Peti-
tion from the unlighted Colonies enforced by a respectable
Embassage, before other means of an offensive nature be put in
execution.\footnote{pleasants to Israel Pemberton, August 22, 1774.}

Quakers were not "non-resisters"; they were well aware of the futility
of meeting evil with passive obedience. Their position in the community
as well as their democratic teachings gave them a firm belief in liberty
and they would go to any lengths short of war or other extralegal means
to ensure American freedom.

This was what made the position of the Society of Friends so diffi-
cult; not unmindful of each man's inherent right to liberty, the Quaker
also believed that life was far more sacred than liberty. Pleasants
would have agreed wholeheartedly with William Penn's maxim that "a good
end cannot sanctify evil means, nor must we ever do evil that good may
come of it."\footnote{Sharpless, A History of Quaker Government, II.}
Through inaction liberty might be forfeited yet, if war
were entered into, lives were endangered and this was much more objec-
tionable. In May 1775 Pleasants wrote of his concern and belief to his
brother-in-law:

News of great importance indeed may be expected when the lives,
the property, and liberty both civil and religious of the
people of this continent... may be affected by the present move-
ments of contending parties an awful consideration indeed, and
such as calls loudly to those who are more immediately entrusted
with the affairs of state, to be endowed with best wisdom in
the direction thereof, these inestimable blessings ought never
to be trifled with, especially the lives of men for as it is
bestowed and held by Divine right it appears to me that in very
few instances men have a right to take it away tho liberty and
property are secondary enjoyments they derive their original
from the same source and ought to be held very sacred.\footnote{Pleasants to John Thomas, May 30, 1775.}

The loss of liberty was no justification for war.

Gradually, however, it became more and more apparent that armed con-
conflict was not far off. As of May 1775 it was evident to Pleasants that "the prospect of an accommodation of the dispute between Great Britain and the Collanys seem at present very distant." The revolutionary fervor was growing too hot for Quakers, and sympathetic though they might be, they felt obliged to heed George Fox's testimony against war and denounce all contact with the patriots.

By early 1776, Quaker thought had formulated what was to become the official Quaker position concerning contemporary events. On January 27, just a few days after the publication of Thomas Paine's Common Sense, there appeared in the Pennsylvania Ledger a document composed by the Philadelphia Meeting for Sufferings entitled "The Ancient Testimony & Principles of the People Called Quakers." As the last public effort on the part of Friends to avoid war, this Testimony put forward the Society's justification for their refusal to support the colonial rebels -- even if war were not involved.

Quaker thought had always held the principle that every Friend must remain obedient to the government as long as obedience did not encroach on the conscience. Repeating a portion of the Ancient Testimony of 1696, the Testimony of 1776 presented the basic explanation for the Quaker attitude:

The setting up and putting down Kings and Governments, is God's peculiar Prerogative, for Causes best known to himself and... it is not our business, to have any hand or contrivance therein, nor to be busy bodies above our station, much less to plott and contrive the ruin, or overturn of any of them, but to pray for the King and safety of our Nation, and good of all Men: that we may live a peaceable and quiet Life, in all Godliness

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14 Pleasants to Thomas Applewhaite, May 5, 1775.
and honesty; under the Government which God is pleased to set over us.  

At this point the King's government still reigned supreme, and as much as Quakers might object to certain English measures, their conscience required that Britain be acknowledged as the legitimate government. It was their duty to remain neutral in the fighting and to refuse cooperation with either the Continental or British armies. In general, they must avoid all contact whatsoever with any war activities.

The Testimony also set forth the Quaker explanation for the ever increasing likelihood of war: the present disasters were the result of the judgment of Divine Providence on a sinful nation. As Pleasants explained, "There is an Over Ruling Providence who directs or permits all these things in wisdom and who I know is Merciful and afflicts not the Children of men willingly but believe he hath a controversy against pride and Injustice and the many evils which abound." 17  "Excessive drinking Swearing Gaming cheating and even destroying one another" as well as slaveholding, luxury, and forgetfulness of God's mercy and goodness were "evils more prevalent" than he had ever known. 18  There would be "no peace to the wicked" until all transgressors reformed and subjected themselves to divine wisdom and the gospel of true love. 19

Quakers, however, had a special obligation to this world. Because they knew that the present afflictions were the result, as Pleasants said, of God's judgment on the "depravity of mankind," 20 it was their special duty to follow God's word explicitly. Of course, this would not

16Ibid., p. 156.
17Pleasants to George Walker, July 15, 1780.
18Pleasants to John Thomas, October 1779.
19Ibid.
20Ibid.
be easy. These were trying times and despite an education of brotherly love and peace, Pleasants feared that many fellow Quakers would give in to "the licentiousness of the times" and deviate from "the principle of truth and righteousness." 

Pleasants was particularly concerned about his son; "For altho the times are disturbing in many respects nothing gives me so much pain of mind as a fear that he should be prevailed on (by fear of suffering or the fallacious arguments and example of some who have been favored as well as himself with a Religious Education and turned their backs on it) to take up arms." But regardless of how many Friends should fall to the temptations of the times, Pleasants remained confident that:

> there are still a remnant who have not bow'd to Baal that in the language of the prophet under these discouragements, are ready to say at times, "Spare thy people O Lord, and give not thy heritage to reproach for wherefore should the heathen say where is their God," but not withstanding the great degeneracy of the times, I am ready to conclude and willing to believe... "that a people whom the Lord hath rais'd by his own invincible power and so signally place his name amongst, were never designed to be only the temporary glory of a couple of Centuries, and that the Lord of Hosts will become an eternal Excellency and Jerusalem the praise of the whole Earth." 

Despite what Pleasants might write, however, it was not always easy to know God's word. By the mid-1770s Quakers were feeling the strain imposed by the war and increasingly differences of opinion appeared over doctrine as well as practice. Intellectually Quakers knew where their loyalties lay; practically, the matter was not always so clear. Quaker doctrine had always held that Friends should obey the prevailing government, "be still and quiet... and wait for righteousness." But as more and more colonial governments were taken over by revolutionary regimes,

21 Pleasants to Evan Thomas, February 1781.
22 Pleasants to Mary Pleasants, February 1781.
23 Pleasants to Evan Thomas, February 1781.
it was impossible to tell when the new regime had won the right to be
daccorded the loyalty due an established government.24 Until such time
as the uncertainty was resolved, Friends were admonished to take no part
in the revolutionary government and to maintain strict neutrality. But
they did not always agree as to what exactly this involved. True Quakers
of course refused to fight, but conflict arose when they were urged to
refrain from cooperating with the Continental Congress, which implied
refusal to pay its taxes and fines or to use its paper currency. Although
the Society as a whole did not formulate any general minute forbidding its
members to receive the Continental currency, the Virginia Yearly Meeting
issued such an order.25

There were even greater differences among Virginia Quakers over the
payment of a tax levied by the state. Pleasants was quite concerned
that his taxes were being used "for the express purpose of continuing the
War."26 In 1779 Pleasants addressed himself to a problem that arose
when members of the Society paid taxes a year earlier under the belief
that the money was to be used "for preserving the credit of the paper
Currency." Instead, the money was used to carry on the war and Pleasants
concluded:

Friends consistent with their principle can no more pay the
Tax than to take the Test, for they are both calculated to pro-
mote the same ends, and make us parties in the destruction, the
Violence and the Confusion consequent to such intestine commo-
tions; and would it not be repugnant to reason to contribute
by Taxes to the support of either party who may happen to pre-
vail who we could not under the present unsettled State of
affairs be free to acknowledge?27

When Friends refused to pay war taxes, as inevitably they did, the

24James, A People Among Peoples, p. 243-244.
25Weeks, Southern Quakers and Slavery, p. 185.
26Pleasants to Thomas Nicholson, December 5, 1779.
27Ibid.
colonial governments levied fines against them. Quakers also accrued fines when they refused to hire substitutes to take their place in the militia. By a statute of 1766 and then again in 1780, Virginia Quakers were exempted from personal military duty but were required to furnish a substitute at their own expense. But according to Quaker practices and belief, this was no more acceptable than was actually fighting. In 1780, Pleasants objected not only to the practice of being forced to hire a substitute but also to being taxed "treble" the amount of others. In an appeal to the military commander of Henrico County, he argued that "it seems highly unreasonable to me that men who are not liable to pay a shilling should have it in their power to hire a man in any terms they please at my expense to save themselves from a draft." When he protested, he learned that he ran the risk of having his entire estate seized.

It was this type of hardship rather than loss of life or harsh physical treatment or imprisonment which fell most heavily on Friends. Wherever the opposing armies appeared, Quakers suffered. Caught between "the high demands and Seizures of one party and the plunderings of the Other," they found themselves at the mercy of both sides. In a letter to his brother in 1781, Pleasants related how he had earlier suffered at the hands of the colonists and now he could expect more trials as a British invasion appeared imminent:

I am fully of thy Opinion in respect to an increase of our Suffering, we have had a Specimen (of what in all probability may become more general) in the march of the British Army from Westover (where they landed) to Richmond the particulars of which thou will likely be informed by Bror. Logan, this with

28Hening, Statutes at Large, VIII, p. 246 and I, p. 334.
29Pleasants to Col. Southats, September 3, 1780.
30Pleasants to Evan Thomas, February 1781.
the seizure of every kind of property wanted by the other party, high Taxes, etc., afford indeed a melancholy prospect that it may lead us to a right sense and reformation of and from our multiplied transgressions.³¹

Pleasants lost valuable horses, several slaves ran off, his daughter was robbed "of the greatest part of her Cloths," and two of his warehouses on Four Mile Creek were plundered.³² One of the most discriminatory measures taken against Quakers occurred in Philadelphia when the Council of Pennsylvania ordered the arrest of twenty-two Friends (including Pleasants' brother, Samuel) on vague anti-revolutionary charges. Exiled to Winchester, Virginia, for six months, the Friends were eventually allowed to return home, but without ever being given the right to defend themselves.³³ What with "high taxes, hiring of Soldiers and other such like demands," Pleasants feared that nothing would remain to pay debts or even to support a family.

Despite their suffering at the hands of both armies, their peace policy caused Friends to be regarded by many as hostile to the cause of American independence. Passive noncompliance looked like covert disaffection to the patriots, and Friends were believed to be Tories or at least British sympathizers. Although it is likely that Quaker sympathy as a whole lay with the colonial cause, they scrupulously abstained from any support of the war, either by word or by deed. This non-partisanship was neither quietly accepted nor understood by their fellow countrymen, and Pleasants could not understand why. In one of his most profound letters, he wrote:

I apprehend if we are Sequestered from the rest of the Community

³¹ Pleasants to Samuel Pleasants, February 15, 1781.
³² Pleasants to Samuel and Mary Pleasants, February 15, 1781, Pleasants "Correspondence."
³³ Gilpin, Exiles in Virginia.
we are by no means Culpable for it. It is well known that we have always declined the use of the Sword, as well as the taking any oaths. Supporting a hireling Ministry and some other matters, which tho' peculiar to ourselves, are by no means intended, or in Justice ought to be an exclusion from the Common Interests and privilidges of the Community, nor can I conceive how the Community can be injured by our adherence to those principles; for if we cannot fight for the state, we cannot fight against it, and so long as we keep to the truth (and I believe the Contrary can't be justly charged upon us) Swearing is unnecessary and while we continue to be useful members of Society, and study the peace and welfare of the government we live under, every reasonable man will allow, it is unjust we should be made to Suffer, for not Conforming to a law, in favour of a few Individuals utterly inconsistent with our belief.

The antagonism of the patriots toward the Society was further aggravated by individuals who were nominal Quakers and who actively participated in wartime activities. This hurt the Society considerably. If Quakerism was to survive and maintain the integrity of its peace testimony, it was absolutely essential that all members know and follow the principles without deviation. To this end the Virginia Yearly Meeting sought to preserve and protect its members and testimony. In 1778 it directed the quarterly and monthly meetings "to watch over, and caution their members not to join with or engage in any measures which may be carried on by war and bloodshed, or take any test that may bind them to join with either party whilst the contest subsists." Any inconsistency would lead to criticism and all too often, the Quaker attitude was seen as an evasion of responsibility. Pleasants was well aware of the susceptibility of the Quaker position;

I apprehend too, that such deviations of conduct and sentiment must also tend to weaken and discourage those who conceive it to be their duty to suffer the loss of life, liberty and property rather than violate the testimony of a Good conscience, and also to strengthening the hands of their persecutors; for it

34 Pleasants to Robert Bolling, January 10, 1775.
35 Weeks, Southern Quakers and Slavery, p. 191.
seems natural enough for such to conclude, when the same conduct is not generally observed by the Society...that their refusal proceed from obstinacy, and of course they may be induced to inflict the more severe punishments to promote their designs the tendency whereof hath been surely mark'd in many places with deviation, Cruelty and injustice and depravity of morals exceeding any Era heretofor known in this parts of America.36

Pleasants later cautioned a young Friend who was setting out on an ocean voyage that he be very sure the captain understand that should the vessel be attacked, he could not fight. "It appears absolutely necessary if he has an intention of preserving the unity of his Friends, that the Capt. should not be deceived in time of action."37

Members who did not follow the peace testimony were disowned without leniency. This included Friends who not only took an active part in the war but those who paid war taxes or fines in lieu of military service or even fines for refusing to collect military taxes.38 According to the procedure formulated by the Virginia Yearly Meeting, members who gave such support to the war were warned of the inconsistency of their actions. If they persisted and refused to repent their ways, they were excluded from "being active in the discipline."39 In at least one instance Pleasants was sent by his monthly meeting "to visit and endeavor to convince" his nephew, Matthew, of the impropriety of attending a muster. If Matthew could not be made to see the error of his ways and continued to deviate "in so essential a point," he could not "reasonably expect any other than to be excluded from a right of membership in a Society to whose discipline thou don't choose to conform."40 The integrity of the Society was at stake and must be preserved at all costs.

36 Pleasants to Thomas Nicholson, December 5, 1779.
37 Pleasants to John Crew, October 3, 1780.
38 Jones, Quakers in the American Colonies, p. 564.
39 Weeks, Southern Quakers and Slavery, p. 191.
40 Pleasants to Matthew Pleasants, December 26, 1780.
V. EDITORIAL POLICY

In order to preserve the original intent and flavor of Robert Pleasants' correspondence the editor has sought to present the text as faithfully as possible. At the same time, however, in an effort to provide a readable text, certain editorial changes have been made to standardize the letters.

The original text of the letterbook has been followed as closely as possible. As a general rule the punctuation of the manuscript is maintained with the exception that all sentences begin with a capital letter and end with a period. These corrections have been silently made as necessary to preserve Pleasants' original intentions. Pleasants was frequently inconsistent in his capitalization and thus, if there was a question as to whether a letter was a capital or lower case, the modern usage is followed. Should clarity require a modification in punctuation, the change has been placed in brackets. Dashes at the end of sentences and paragraphs have been silently omitted and replaced with periods.

Common and easily recognized abbreviations such as "Mr.," "Capt.," "hhd.," "mo.," "CWH," and "Junr." are retained. Any unusual abbreviations or any whose abbreviated form might cause confusion are spelled out as are the months of the year. The ampersand (&) and "&c."

have been expanded to "and" and "etc." respectively to conform to modern usage, but "&" (at) is retained. The longtailed "S" is reproduced as the modern case letter and the tailed "p" is printed as "per."

Obvious mistakes of the writer (such as repeated words) are silently corrected. No corrections are made either in spelling or grammar, however, and apostrophes are maintained in such words as "cou'd," "receiv'd," etc. Pleasants varied in his use of monetary expressions: £4.7.2.
£4/7/2, £4/7. With the exception of deleting the unnecessary point following the numbers, they have been reproduced as in the manuscript.

Generally Pleasants placed any form of address at the end of each letter, and it is so placed in the following letters. The place-date line appears in the upper right-hand corner, in the same form and in the same place as it appears in the manuscript. The complimentary close is reproduced as a continuation of the final paragraph. A signature in some form usually appears and is printed on a separate line following the close. Any information that Pleasants considered to be a postscript he designated as such. Where orders, lists, or any other writing follow the complimentary close without being designated as a postscript, they are printed below the letter. All postscripts and orders are printed in paragraph form.

As far as possible, all individuals (and likewise places, events, and objects) in the correspondence are identified only at the first mention. No footnote appears if the person is unidentifiable or if sufficient identification appears within the text. Biographical material on individuals listed in The Dictionary of American Biography and The Dictionary of National Biography is intentionally brief. Information taken from either of these reference works or from periodicals indexed in the Virginia Historical Index has been cited as such. Definitions of words taken from the Oxford English Dictionary are used without citation.

Robert Pleasants' original letterbook contains approximately 210 letters; 170 date from 1771-1775 with the remainder covering 1780-1781. Because this was too large a number to attempt for a master's thesis, it was necessary to limit the number of letters in some way. The years 1771 to 1773 involve 106 items, a manageable selection, and thus 1773 was made the cut-off point. The entire letterbook, however, has been exam-
ined and information from all the letters is used to interpret the edited selections.

The letterbook and two other manuscript volumes containing business accounts are presently owned by the Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia. The records do not indicate when the letterbook actually came into the possession of the college, but it does carry an accession date of January 31, 1942. The original owners apparently were Miss Lutie Pleasants and Mrs. William Archer of Richmond, Virginia. A portion of the letters was published in the William and Mary Quarterly some fifty years ago but the transcription was often incorrect. The present editor hopes that this is a more faithful and accurate representation of one segment of Robert Pleasants' letterbook.

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1 Adair P. Archer, "The Quaker's Attitude Toward the Revolution," William and Mary Quarterly, 2nd Ser., I (1921), 107-113, 167-182; II (1922), 257-275.
Dear Brother

I wrote thee of the 3d. Instant from West River to which refer and have now to advise thee of my safe return with my Dear Nancy, and the welfair of our Relations in a general way. It would give me great pleasure to have the same information from thee respecting thy Family, and the recovery of my Dear Son, who I expect before this may be under enoculation, and doubt not thy kindness in contributing to my Satisfaction therein, as soon, or by the first opportunity after the distemper may turn; and whether it should be the will of Providence to be in his favour or not, it could by no means lighten the affliction to defer the account.

By the Schooner Industry Capt. Gilbert I have Ship'd 700 Bushels

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1Samuel Pleasants (1737-1807), RP's younger brother, moved to Philadelphia by 1762 where he established a successful mercantile business and became an active member of the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting. Parry, "Genealogical Chart of the Pleasants Family."

2West River is located south of Annapolis, Md., opening into the Chesapeake Bay and was the site of West River Monthly Meeting. Jacobsen, Quaker Records in Maryland, p. 5, 19. Apparently a number of RP's relatives and friends lived in this area.

3Robert Pleasants, Jr. (Dobby) (d. by 1794), RP's only son, was at this time living with his uncle, Samuel, in Philadelphia and pursuing his education.
wheat 400 of which on account of our Fathers\footnote{In a will dated August 11, 1771 John Pleasants (1696-1771) appointed his son, RP, one of the executors of his estate. \textit{Will of John Pleasants}, Valentine Papers, II, p. 1116-1128.} Estate and the other 300 on my own which please dispose of in the best manner thou canst and render sales thereof accordingly. Thou will find from the uncommon demand for wheat the price is risen with us to 4/6 and hope it will be in thy power to obtain a higher price for this than thou got for Barry's cargo or there must of course be a considerable loss on it. I suppose T/homas/\footnote{Thomas Pleasants, Jr. (Tommy) married RP's daughter, Margaret, in 1767. \textit{Valentine Papers}, II, p. 1209. Fourteen years later, in 1771, RP, his son Robert, and Thomas "extended into a Mercantile Contract" entitled Robert Pleasants & Co. and under the "direction and management of the said Thomas." \textit{Will of Robert Pleasants.}} P/leasants\footnote{Robert Pleasants} will inform thee of the terms of the Charter of this Vessel together with whatever may be necessary respecting the other part of the Cargo. I send inclos'd a measure for a pair of Stays for my Daughter Polly and two pair leather shoes for Nancy which please to send per return of this Vessel with the things before order'd if not already sent.

Since my return I received Capt. Montgomery, Account of Port Charges at the Offices, which thou some time ago desir'd might be sent, and having deliver'd them to T/homas/\footnote{Robert Pleasants} P/leasants\footnote{Robert Pleasants} for that purpose expect he hath forwarded them per this Opportunity. My Dear love to my Sister and the Children And /Am\footnote{Am} Thy Loving and affectionat\footnote{Am} Brother.

Robt. Pleasants

PS. Please let me have a Copy of my account per return of the Schooner if its convenient.
My Dear Son

I received thy letter by Ben: and was pleas'd to find thou lik'd Phila/delphi/a so well, and that thou had a good heart to undergo the operation thou had undertaken. My earnest desire and prayer is, that thou may be preserved through every danger outward and Inward, and that thou may so conduct as to be happy in thy self, and a Comfort to thy Dear Friends who are so nearly interested in thy welfair. To accomplish these desirable ends I know of no way but that which our worthy ancients and forefathers have trod, that is, a steady attention to the dictates of the divine Spirit manifested in every heart, teaching what is right and what is wrong, and rewarding accordingly with Blessings or otherwise; It may be thy fix'd resolution and constant care ever to be mindful of thy Duty so as not to suffer any present enjoyments or Sensual delights to divert or entice thee from a perseverance in the narrow way which leads to life eternal. I got well home with thy sister on the 8th Instant. We got overset on the way owing to the badness of the Roads, But received no hurt by it except some Damage to the Chaise and Harness which put us to some difficulty, being at a place we could not easily get them repair'd. Thy Sisters writes thee per this opportunity and to them I refer for particulars resting thy acquain-tance here. Thy Trunk is sent per this Vessel and besides the Cloths—as under, thou wilt find thy whip, which was Suppos'd to be lost the Other side Potomack, but was found about 4 miles on this side by a

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6Curl's or Curles was RP's plantation just south of Richmond on the James River.
person going to Maryland, and was by mere Accident discover'd and
claim'd by Gerard Hove. Thou wilt also find in the little Trunk 20
dollars and 4 half dollars, the latter of which I desire thou wilt lay
out in Something for thy four Cousins Jessy, John, Sally and Robert in
something that may be pleasing as a present from their unkle, in which
thou may Consult thy Aunt: there are also a role of Tobacco which I
expect is very fine, and desire unkle Pembertons² acceptance of, also
a few bits of /Cittern/7 which may be agreeable to thy aunt or Cousins.
Wishing thee all Happiness I conclude Thy very affectionate father
R. Pleasants

3. RP TO SAMUEL PLEASANTS (?)

Curl's 11 mo. 22d 1771

Dear Brother

In compliance with thy request, I have now to advise that (tho'
the price is not Certainly fixed), some of the Crop of Corn hath been
sold at 12/6 per barrel and from the demand there seems to be so early
in the Season, I have no expectation of the price being less on this
River. I thought it was necessary to give thee this intelligence as
soon as possible that thou might be better able to Judge what was most
for thy interest to be done in Securing the quantity thou may want. If
I can at any time be Serviceable to thee in that, the sale of Iron
(which I suppose would readily command £20 per Ton this money at about

²On May 13, 1762 Samuel Pleasants married Mary Pemberton (1738-
1821), the daughter of Israel Pemberton (1715-1779), a prominent Quaker
merchant and philanthropist in Philadelphia. Hinshaw, Encyclopedia of
Quaker Genealogy, VI, p. 623. Later letters indicate that RP corresponded
with Israel on personal as well as on business matters.
4 or 6 months Credit) or any other matter thou may freely command. I happen'd lately in company with one John Walker\(^8\) is concern'd with a Company in Liverpool who does much Business to this River, and hapning to mention Crosby & Trafford he tells me that it was fully believed when he left home that the whole of their Debts would be paid and money to spare, and was well advised that no Effects of theirs could be got at in this Country, but would advice thee as soon as possible to forward a power of Attorney with thy account properly proved to thy corrispondant there in order to make a demand of thy dividend which he apprehended would be made by the time such account could get to hand if not before; He gave me leave also to mention their Company to thee, whose firm is Dobson Daltera & Walker and that they would do thee any Service in their power; they are counted a Rich Company and have done business much to the Satisfaction of People this way, believe none are more capable. Our Journey on the whole was tolerably agreeable except one accident which we met with the day after we left West River in oversiting the Chaise and damaging some of the harness and the Iron by which the Horse pull'd - being in a part of the country that did not afford a smith or scarcely a Cobler, but through mercy Nancy or my self received no hurt. It was a bad piece of Road much gully'd on one side and a fence and logg on the other, and endevering to Shun the first, the other which hid a Snagg of the logg tho' if the top had not been up I believe it would not have overset; I had presence of mind to clear my self and Dear Nancy as quick as possible, and the Boy being Just before Stop'd the Horses very soon on the I thought it a mercy we

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\(^8\)John Walker was a partner in the merchant firm of Dobson, Daltera & Walker, Liverpool. See RP to Dobson, Daltera & Walker, January 25, 1773.
came off so well for had we broke any Bones, It is perhaps the most
dysmal part of the road and the least capable of giving assistance.

Nancy is bravely and Joins me in Love and Duty to the Sister and
Cousins with our Friends at \textit{West River}. Thy affection to the Brother.

\textbf{RP.}

\textbf{4. RP TO JOHN HALLOCK}

\textit{Curl’s Virginia 12 mo. 17 1771}

Respected Friend

I wrote thee in answer to thy letter dated the 25th. of 8th mo. 1767 directed as thou desired, but never heard whether or not thou ever received it: and Apprehend from the content of that letter every intellegence of Importance respecting thy Brother\footnote{In 1763 James Hallock was received by certificate from the Monthly Meeting at Mamaroneck, N.Y. into Curles Meeting but was disowned three years later. Hinshaw, \textit{Encyclopedia of Quaker Genealogy}, VI, p. 178. Although apparently repentent when he died in 1771, he had not yet returned to the Society. See RP to John Hallock, October 1, 1772.} would be acceptable.

I have now to advise thee of his Death, which hapned about a week ago after a very short Illness, of (I think) not more than two days, but as I am informed sensible most of the time, the day before the night in which he died, I did hear he was Ill, but not suspecting by that report that he was in eminent danger, or near his end, I did not see him, which otherwise I should have been willing to have done, altho I am Sorry to say his Conduct for some years past hath been very disagreeable.

I think I inform’d thee before, that he was disown’d by Friends, 'and that he possessed about 50 acres of Land about four miles from this place, which I think he gave about 60 or £70 for, and may probably now Sell for 80 or £90 this Currency which fall to his Heir at Law with
you, for tho' he has left (I suppose) two Daughters by a woman he kept, yet as he has left no will, they cannot Inherit and must be reduced to great distress except their Relations with you will do something for them; his Personal Estate was but small, and will not I imagine be much more than pay his Debts, tho' as far as I can find they are not Considerable either. I suppose the Court will grant administration on it the first Court on account of its being a waisting Situation, but as to the Land it must remain as it is until his Heir at Law comes, or impowers some person to act for him in Renting or Selling of it, as may be most agreeable to him. Some time last Summer a Suitable opportunity offering I had a pretty deal of discourse with James, respecting the manner of life he seem'd to lead, he seem'd very Sensible that it was wrong, but I believe did not know how to alter it, for as the woman had had a Child before he did not seem willing to marry her, but said the World should shortly see a reformation in him, how fare his purpose at that time was accomplish'd I must leave, but must think he retain'd a love for Friend and at his particular desire was Buried in our Burying Ground at Curles Meeting House. It is said by those who were with him in his Illness, that he greatly desired to make a Will, and to give what he had to his Children, but the person he sent for being from home nothing was done in it. I am Respectfully Thy Friend RP.

To John Hallock West Chester County, To the Care of the Widdow Tucker Fly Market New York or Daniel Quinby.
Dear Brother

Thy very acceptable letter of the 26th ultimo giving an account of my Dear Son's recovery from the small Pox, came duly to hand, since which, I have received one from him dated the 29th, and had a sight of thine to Thomas Pleasants of the 30th both confirming the same most agreeable intelligence; but thine of the 23d. which thou says was wrote by Holden is not come to hand. I observe thy proposal of being concern'd in the purchase of 4 or 5000 Bushels wheat in case it could be bought here for 4/3 or 4/4 payable in April, but as wheat now generally commands 4/6 and in such great demand that it is become almost a ready money article it is utterly out of our power to comply with thy terms, indeed I don't know whether so large a quantity could be now had even on those terms, however if thou should think proper to direct, we would do the best we could in the purchase, perhaps it might answer to load partly with Indian corn which I suppose might now be engaged at 2/6 but is generally expected to rise 'tho' I am not at present certain whether it might be convenient for us to be concern'd, especially as thou don't say what Market it is intended for and what prospect there may be of its answering.

I find there is little prospect of getting any money from Bannister this year, and as there is a considerable Debt due from our Fathers Estate to Dobson Daltera & Walker, beside some Country Debts, I don't

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1 John Bannister (1734-1788), a member of the Virginia Convention, 1776, and later a member of the House of Burgesses and Continental Congress, lived near Petersburg in Dinwiddie County, Va. Dictionary of American Biography, s.v. "Bannister, John."
at present see how the Ballance due on the Bond to the Widdow Harrison can be paid with this Crop, but if she is not in emediate want of the money it will make but little differance to the Estate, because Bannesters Bond will now carry Interest as well as the other, I will however do every thing in my power to accomplish it. My last was by Capt. Gilbert and inclos'd Bill of Lading for 700 Bushels wheat; 400, of which, on account of the Estate and 300, on my own, which I hope before this is got safe to hand; the measures for the Stays and Shoes for my Girls I find were omitted to be sent, and are now inclos'd. And am with much love and affect. to thee and thine, and also to Bobby, and my good Friends who he informs me have taken particular notice of him and am Thy obig'd Brother.

RP.

To Samuel Pleasants

6. RP TO SAMUEL PLEASANTS (?)

Virginia 12 mo. 17 1771

Dear Brother

I wrote Brother Snowden\(^2\) at his particular request per Post soon after my geting home, and then gave some account of our Journey down, which on the whole was tolerable aerable, except the affair of geting overset, however as that was attended with no injury to our selves, we had great reason to be thankful, and patiently submit to the little inconveniencies we labour'd under until we could get our Chaise and its .

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appertinances put into proper repair again, indeed we found Smiths so scarce about Brian Town that I was ready to think the situation of the people in that part resembled that of Israel in the time of their Bondage under the Philistines: The greatest concern which poor Nancy Seem to be under on the occasion was for the loss of her Bonnet, which got of in the fall, and was cover'd by the Chaise or some of our Saggage and could not for some time to found. She was also under much tribulation the evening before we got home and within about 16 miles of it, we travel'd til it was almost dark to get to a Friends house (Gererd Ellysons) where I hoped to hear from home, but both he and his wife being from home we had new quarters to seek which was about 3/4 of a Mile and being afraid to trust her in the Chaise we had that distance to walk in the dark and through the wood which made her very apprehensive of meeting with Bears, however we got safe through and tho I have at times been poorly as was the case when in Maryland Nancy have had her health bravely and can eat Hominy pretty heartily but as to pone she don't seem at all to relish yet; she often talks of Grandmama Unkle Jonay and Sister, and would as well as my Self be much pleas'd to hear of your welfair and hope soon to have the sattisfaction and am etc. etc.  

RP.
7. RP TO DOBSON, DALTERA & WALKER

Virginia 12 mo. 23d 1771

Respected Friends

I have just to advise that I have drawn a small order on you in favour of Osgood & Hanbury & Co. for £14.3.8 a Ballance I am owing them which I request you will pay, and that I have given orders for 7 hhd's Tobacco to go onboard the Molly Capt. Youghusband belonging to the Estate of my Father on which I desire you will have Insurance made at £10 per hhd. There is a Considerable mistake in the Invoice of goods sent me per the Molly great part of which belong'd to R/o bert7 Pleasants Jur. but intend giting your John Walker to rectifie and advise you hereafter. In hast I am respectfully your Friend

RP.

To D/obson7 D/altera7 & Walker

8. RP TO OSGOOD, HANBURY & CO.

Virginia 12 mo. 23d 1771

Esteemed Friends

This is intended per Capt. Nicks to inclose you a Sketch of your account with me and an order on Dobson Daltera & Walker of Liverpool for £14.3.8 which I make the Ballance, and hope you will find it right, but if it should appear to you Otherwise, please to advise me, and every error shall be rectified. I wish to pay you the Just Ballance with honour, for tho' I have paid full Interest, I acknowledge your favour in waiting for the money until it was convenient for me to pay it,

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and wish our future Correspondance may be to mutual Satisfaction.

You'll find I have Charg'd the missing hhd. Tobacco per Jacob & Joan,\(^7\) at a proportionate price with the other five and hope you'll think it right to allow it, for I not only sent a Certificate from the Naval Officer of its being Ship'd, but have your letter acknowledging the receipt of 6 hhds. per that Ship. I have now to advise you of the Death of my Dear Father in the 8th. mo. last, and that I shall take the first Opportunity to Settle with Balfour & Barrard any Ballance that may appear due from J. Pleasants & Son,\(^4\) which if any must be very small, and am with kind respects your assured Friend.

RP.

PS. I expect a Store I am concern'd in will want hereafter 1 or £200 value of goods from London as an assortment, would you be willing to execute such orders and receive Bills of Exchange for remittances punctually made without our being obliged to ship Tobacco except we choose it.

9. RP TO DAVID & JOHN BARCLAY\(^5\)

Virginia 12 mo., 23d 1771

Esteemed Friends

I wrote you of the 14th. 8 mo. advising that my order to Joseph Tucker did not get to hand, and that I had wrote to Thomas Applewhaite of Barbados to ship me 10 hhds. Rum and 5 Barrels Sugar and to draw on

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\(^4\)According to John Pleasants' will, August 11, 1771, a partnership existed between himself, RP, and Thomas Pleasants (a brother). *Valentine Papers*, II, p. 1119.

\(^5\)David & John Barclay were Quaker merchants in London. *Tolles, Meeting House and Counting House*, p. 91.
you for the amount, Since which I am favour'd with yours of the 8th August and note what you say in respect to the remittance which James Stewart of Oporto was by promise to make to Hindman & Lancaster about the 5th. mo. last however I hope before this time it may be made and that you have received the same and pass'd it to my Credit. Inclosed you'll find a list for goods value about £ which I request you will send me by the first suitable opportunity in the spring, and I believe you may depend on receiving punctual remittance for the same with whatever moneys I may fall indebted to you besides.

I have to advise you of the Death of my Dear Father in the 8 mo. last, you may if you please debt my account for any Ballance he was owing you of which I desire you will transmit me an account and am respectfully Your assured Friend.

RP.

To David & John Barclay.

1000 Eills\(^7\) strong hempen Oznabr.\(^8\) @ Bd.

500 Eills Boles if not high priced, otherwise, half the quantity

2 good Bed Ticks,\(^9\) 1 pair good Sheeting\(^1\) @ 2/ yard

2 6/4 diaper\(^2\) Table Cloths and 2 7/4 ditto

2 8/4 Damask Ditto

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\(^6\)Hindman & Lancaster, merchants in London.

\(^7\)An ell was a measure of length varying in different countries, the English ell being 45 inches.

\(^8\)Osnaburgh, or osnaburg, was a coarse, heavy linen originally made in Osnabrück, Germany and used most often for sacking and bagging.

\(^9\)Tick was a strong linen or cotton material used for bedding and upholstery.

\(^1\)Sheeting was a strong linen or cotton cloth used for bed linen.

\(^2\)Diaper was a linen or cotton fabric woven in a small diamond pattern and used for napkins, towel, diapers, etc.
10. RP TO ROBERT PLEASANTS, JR.

Curl's 1 mo. 11th 1772

My Dear Son

I wrote thee a pretty long letter by Capt. Gilbert by whom I sent thy Trunk, and in it, thy Clothes, whip the Preceptors 20 dollars for thy self, and 4 half dollars which I desired thee to lay out in something for thy four Cousins Jessey, John, Sally and Robert as a present from their uncle that might be more pleasing to them than anything I could conveniently procure here; I also sent a role of Tobacco which I thought very fine for uncle Pemberton but as that vessel sail'd from Hampton Road the 29th. 11 month, Just before some very blustering Cold Weather, and by thy uncles letter dated the 17th. ultimo she was not arrived at Phila/delphi/a I conclude she must inevitably be lost. I have now to acknowledge the receipt of letter giving an account of thy recovery from the Small Pox, which with the information before received from thy uncle, was matter of great Satisfaction and relief, from that anxiety which every tender Parent must feel in the like case, and with both thou and I may be enough thankful for the favour, and in every part of our conduct manifest a Care and Circumspection to act conformable to the dictates of His Divine Principle placed in every heart, in order for its improvement in the best things, and will as it is duly attended to, insure Peace here and Happiness hereafter; which being matters beyond
comparison of the greatest moment, ought to be value'd accordingly.

I have received two letters lately from thy Uncle which don't mention a Word about thee, I think if thou art well it's a little strange thou could not write a line by either of those opportunities, especially as one was so good a one directly by water. I believe I once mentioned something about thy sending me a set of the Philadelphiãn Chiney, but as its scarcely probable those works are brought to much perfection as yet thou need only send me one piece as a Sample such as a quart Bowl or any other piece thou thinks proper. I hope thou wilt be industrious in learning what may be most necessary, in order the sooner to be in readiness to return for as Tommy Pleases still talks of going to Philadelphiã in the spring, it might be a suitable opportunity for thee to return with him, he has much wanted thy assistance this fall. While thou hast an opportunity of improvement make a right use of it, and be sure don't let bad Company or the examples of wild loose people hurt thy morals, there is no doubt many such in that City, tho' professing to be led and guided by an unerring Spirit, who are (I have often thought) the most corrupting to young friends, for being of the same profession, there is commonly less watchfulness, and a more ready compliance with vain foolish and inconsistent fashions and practices.

I must also caution thee against running me much in Debt for as Its probable the 300 Bushels wheat ship'd on my account per Gilbert is lost, it might put me to inconvenience to an immediate remittance.
Dear Brother

My last was of the 17th. ultimo per Post since which thy Favour of the same date to our Company came to hand as also that dated the 23d. 11 mo. which I before inform'd thee was not come to hand. I am sorry to find by the first that Capt. Gilbert was not arrived, and being inform'd that he sail'd from Hampton Road the 29th. 11 mo. two days before the Cold blustering weather we had the beginning of last mo. set in I apprehend he must be inevitably lost; I observe however that the Insurance Order'd on that vessel was effected tho' at a very high premium; I wish thou had mention'd sum for tho' I did not particularly order Insurance on the Estates of my own wheat, Tommy Pleasants, tells me he had advised thee of the quantities in the same letter ordering Insurance for the Company, and am in some expectations thou might (as hath heretofore been the case) have the whole interest cover'd without such particular orders. I observe what thou says about the Plate, the price of which is certainly higher than I expected, but its best that we rightly understand each other in time, for tho' I was willing to have bought it for the reasons before mention'd, yet I cannot think Plate of 15 or 16 old that have gone through such hands as that has, can be of equal value to new, I dont remember much of the waiter or rim more than that one of the legs of the latter was broke, but the Coffee pot beside several bruses, hath the handle Crack'd, so as probably it may not hold long, and must I apprehend in that number of years be considerably lighter.

and so certain I am that the price I offer'd was the full value, that

3 A waiter was a small tray.
I should not agree to give it for any other of equal goodness, however as the Coffee pot is here, the difference in price between thee and me I don't value and conclude to keep it. Thou mentions debiting my account for an error in casting the Rum sent me per Barry but having examind that Invoice can find no Error either in the Cast or extending any part of that Invoice. The Boy, Bobby, mentin'd to his aunt of the name of Jamey, is the same who went to Richmond for letters for thee when last in Virginia, and is a Very handy sensible Boy. If my sister should con­clude to take him and thou wilt agree to give him proper schooling and have him brought up to some Business by which he may be likely to get an honest livelyhood, I have at present no objection to sending him the first suitable opertunity altho he is a very useful Servant of his Size.

I shall take care to send the Hams and hominy by some suitable opertunity towards the spring or the first that offers after they are Sufficience Cured. With much Love to thee and thine I conclude Thy affectionate Brother.

RP.

12. RP TO DOBSON, DALTERA & WALKER

Virginia 2d mo. 20th 1772

Respected Friends

I wrote you of the 23d. 12th. mo. to which refer since which your favour of the 24th. October both to my Deceased Father and self are come to hand and note the Contince. I ship'd 1 hhd. Tobacco onboard the .

Jamey was a fourteen year old Negro slave whom RP proposed sending to his brother in Philadelphia together with a certificate of manumission. See RP to Samuel Pleasants, October 1, 1772 and deed of manumission, October 1, 1772.
Betty and 5 hhds. Tobacco onboard the Molly belonging to the Estate and the like quantity now goes per the True Britton on same account, my own Tobacco could not be get to the warehouse in time for either of these Ships, but expect to have some down for the Watt and that it may be in my power to make good the Remittances for both these accounts this Season, tho the sales of Tobacco you last sent are very discouraging, and will be so loosing a remittance, that nothing but a hope of it doing better hereafter, and to oblige you in the Commission, would induce me to ship this year.

If you will be pleas'd to send me the under mention'd articles on my own and the Estates account by your first fall ship, due Care shall be taken to make remittances for them and am Respectfully your assur'd Friend

R. Pleasants

To Dobson Daltera & Walker

List of goods to be sent R. Pleasants Viz.

2 pr. good Welch plains @ 15d. 11.10
1 pr. ditto 13d. 5.
2 pr. Farnought,\(^5\) 1 ditto green half thick 6.
1 pr. stong 6/4 Blue duffle\(^6\) @ 2/6 3.10
2 pr. Dutch Blanketing 3.10
4 doz. pr. Yarn Hose @ 12 to 14/ 2.10
1 Ct.W. Cheese and pr. Irish Sheeting @ 18d 5.

\(^5\)Farnought was a tough kind of woolen cloth used for outside clothing to be worn in inclement weather.

\(^6\)Duffle, or duffel, was a coarse woolen cloth with a thick nap.
500 lbs. Oakam\(^7\) 4.10
25 lbs. Sail twine, 6 lbs. Brown thread 1.10

Ditto for the Estate Viz.

3 pr. good welch plains @ 15d 17.
2 pr. ditto 13d 10.
2 pr. Faarnaught or Kersey\(^8\) 4.
2 pr. Duffle Blanketing 7.
2 pr. Irish Linen @ 18d and 16d. 3.10
6 doz. yarn Hose @ 12 and 14/ 3.10
6 Sacks Salt 45.

13. RP TO CAPT. YOUNGHUSBAND

Virginia 2d mo. 20 1772

Capt. Younghusband

I depend thou hast left instructions with some person to pay my account for wages, and Freight of Tobacco and goods to and from the Molly, as also thy proportion of disbursements for repairing and fitting out our schooner flatt but admire I have not heard anything from thee about it; the principal Occasion however of my writing to thee at this time is, to correct a mistake in the account I sent thee having omitted to Charge the Freight of hhds. Tobacco and a load of goods which our Skiper had neglected to give me, and which its probable thou may want in settling the Ships account.

I have heard nothing to the Contrary but cousin Molly and the

\(^7\)Oakam, or oakum, a loose fiber obtained by untwisting and picking old rope, was used in caulking ships’ seams.

\(^8\)Kersey was a kind of coarse, woolen cloth made chiefly in Kent and Devonshire, England.
Children are well, she went home soon after thou left it, and have not been at Curles Since. I am respectfully Thy Friend

Robt. Pleasants

Freight of

29 hhds. Tobacco from Warwick @ 3/4.7

ditto of 98 parcels of good 1/3 6.2.6

omitted in the account sent him 10.9.6

14. RP TO FARREL & JONES

Virginia 2d mo. 24th 1772

Respected Friends

Your Favour of the 15th. August per the True Patriot I received together with the goods Ship'd on my account per that Ship in good Order. Inclos'd is Bill of Lading for 3 hhds. Tobacco a less quantity than I intended per this ship, occasion'd chiefly by unfavourable weather for packing etc., but you may depend due care shall be taken to make good my remittance per your next Ship.

If you should send out a ship in the fall I request you will ship me the rarely mention'd below which will oblige Your assured Friend

RP

200 lbs. Sein\(^1\) twine.

2 Coils of white rope for lines

2 ditto Inch Tar'd for Ropes

2 Cwt. Glo/chester\(^2\) Cheese

\(^9\)Farrel (also written as Farell and Farrell) & Jones were merchants in Bristol, England. See RP to Farell & Jones, July 6, 1773.

\(^1\)Sein, or sain, was a fishing net designed to hang vertically in the water, the ends being drawn together to catch the fish; frequently used as in "sein twine."
Respected Friends

Your Favour of the 11th. November both to my self and to the Executors of my Deceased Father John Pleasants I have received, together with the account Current and receipts you therein mention to have inclos'd for the Ballance in your hands, but on comparing your account with my Fathers Book I find you have given No Credit for a Charge of £30 which he has made to you as paid by Roger Atkinson to your attorney Robert & in the year 1769, of which I request you would make enquiry into and if you find it right as I have not the doubt but it is I request you will pay it to Dobson Daltera & Walker of Liverpool as was before expected to have been done. I intend speaking to Roger Atkinson on this matter, and in case I find it necessary shall get him to attest the said payment for your Sattisfaction and am Your Friend

Robert Pleasants

To Hindman & Lancaster

16. RP TO ANN THOMAS

Curles 3d mo. 8 1772

Dear Mother

I wrote Brother Joney the 17th. 12 mo. per Post which I doubt not

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he would receive, but have not the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of a line from any one of my Friends about West River, since I left that place nor have I heard a word respecting their welfare etc., but altho this is a matter which gives me pain, as I have so often earnestly requested it, I must endeavor to reconcile my self to it, and not burthen my friends with my uneasiness. My Dear Nancy is well, and hath been so for the most part of the time she hath been here, and now goes to School in one of my Houses Close by being my self now moved to the place where my Dear Deceased Father lived. I am at present in a very poor State of Health and have been so most part of the winter, this with the care necessary towards the accomodation of our Friends at the Yearly Meeting, and some other affairs, will (I expect) effectually prevent my being at West River sooner than the fall. This is intended by our Worthy Friend Timothy Davis and Companion whose services as a minister of the Gospel hath been very agreeable and acceptable to Friends in general this way. I am with much love and affection to all my friends at West River the Iron works over South River, not forgetting Brother Joney and Henry and am Thy obliged and affectionat7e Son in Law

RP.

To Ann Thomas

17. RP TO FRIEND

Virginia 3 mo. 8 1772

Dear Friend

Having so good an Opportunity per our Worthy Friends Timothy Davis and Companion, I set down to write thee a few lines, not altogether with a view to procure a return in kind, for that it seems is a favour I am not to expect, but principally to revive thee in thy Remembrance and
Cultivate a friendship which I would ever wish to preserve and Cherish.

I was pleas'd to hear by our Friend Patience Brayton, that thou and family were partakers of Health; and tho' I am at this time in but a poore state, and have been so for most part of the winter; my Family are mostly well as are our Friends in a general way hereabouts; and have at times to wish, that every state may be improved to the best advantage, in Order that due preparation may be made in the great and necessary Business we ought all to be earnestly engaged in. My very kind Love to her with thy family.

18. RP TO ROBERT PLEASANTS, JR.

Curles 3 mo. B 1772

My Dear Son

My last was of the 11th. 1st. month per Post which I hope thou hast received, since which thine of the 14th. same month is come to hand, by which I observe thy small Trunk, with the money and other contente (among which were a pair gold Buttons and divers old Silver Buckles, beside other things of less value) were missing. Gilbert is since arrived in Virginia, tho' I have not yet seen him, he tells Tommy Pleasants that he never saw anything of the small Trunk, but as I can prove the delivery and contente of it, if I have an Opportunity of bringing a Suit against him in this County I intend to try whether or not he is liable for it, for I think It will not be doing Justice to the Public not to endeavor at least to expose such Viliny.

This is intended per our Friend Patience Brayton who expects (in case she meets with no hinderance on account of the loss of her Horse) to be at the half Yearly Meeting in Philadelphi a and desire thou wilt write to me by Post or some other direct Opportunity to let me know, what
progress thou hast made in the mathematics, and what time thou would incline to return home. I think it may be best for thee to come the first opportunity after thou may have learnt the most useful Branches, but if no prospect of Company should appear, I suppose Phil, would gladly take a trip up, to see his Friends there and to come down with thee in case an opportunity by water should offer, however if there should be a prospect of any particular Service in thy longer stay, I shall andever to aquiesce, altho I must say, if there is not almost a Certainty of that being the case, it would be much more agreeable to me that thou should return sometime this spring, of which I would have thee consult thy unkle. I have been very poorly most of this winter, and continue in a bad State of health, but not so as to be much confin'd to the House, the rest of the family and our Friends this way are generally pretty well.

When thou does come down I would not have thee omit calling to see thy Grandmother and other Relations at Bush River, it may be the only opportunity thou may ever have of doing so.

I desire thou wilt give my very kind Love to unkle and aunt Pemberton, Sammy and Sally Rhoads, Josey and Nancy Pemberton with any other of my kind Friends and acquaintances who may enquire after thy affectionate Father

RP.

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4Bush River is located just north of Baltimore, Md., opening into the Chesapeake Bay, and was the site of Bush River Monthly Meeting. Jacobsen, Quaker Records in Maryland, p. 63. A number of RP's relatives and friends lived in this area.
19. ACCOUNTS

At this point seven pages of the letterbook are devoted to a list of invoices of goods bought together with the quantity and price paid. The invoice entries date 1766 to 1768.

20. RP TO SAMUEL PLEASANTS

Curles 3 mo. 8 1772

Dear Brother

I wrote thee of the 11th, 1 mo. to which refer and have now to acknowledge the receipt of my account Current dated the 31st. of same month as also that against our Fathers Estate which I have examined, and don't find any material Error except in my Credit for Montgomerys Cargo, thou hast wholly omitted (as I suppose) allowing me anything for the purchase of Barrels Flower, or the £ allow'd Thomas and Robert Pleasants being 3d. per barrel. I paid them more than was Charg'd in the Invoice, or £2.12 allow'd Montgomery for the screenings of a parcel of wheat purchais'd without cleaning to fill him up, it not being to be had on any other terms, these I suppose were overlook'd by thee, for as I find thou hast allow'd me no more than 2£ per barrel for the purchase of thy part of the wheat, I can't suppose thou meant to give me short Credit on the value of the Cargo as well as to reduce the Commission one half, however if thou did advert to these articles in making out thy account, and on second consideration thinks it is not reasonable to allow them, I shall not insist on it.

I observe what thou says about Insurance on the Effects onboard the Industry Gilbert, but if the Insurance order'd in London should be Effected, I suppose it will be done in thy own name, and if that is the
Case I don't see how my property or that of the Estates can be benefitted by it, on this consideration I have defer'd sending either Bill of Lading or Invoice until I hear further from thee depending that if either the Estate or my Self are included in the policy or that any part of the Effects can be cover'd by the Insurance thou order'd thou wilt give me timely advice to forward to thee what may be necessary.

This is intended per our Friend Patience Brayton who expects to be at your half yearly meeting and by the same Opportunity, I have wrote to Bobby to inform me what progress he hath made in his learning and to consult thee when it might be suitable for him to return, for if the prospect of improvement by his longer stay is not very considerable I should much desire his return this spring, and in case no Company by land should be likely to offer and Holden should be in Virginia this spring I make no doubt Phil would gladly go up in order to accompany him down, in that case its likely I shall request thee to procure me a pair of Chaise Horses for them to ride down on.

21. RP TO SAMUEL PLEASANTS

Virginia 3 mo. 23d 1772

Dear Brother

The day after I wrote thee per Friend Patience Brayton, I received thy acceptable letter of 17th 1st. mo. to which this is intended as a reply.

Thou very Justly observes that Bannister has had the use of the money due to our Fathers Estate long enough, but as by the bond he has the privilege to keep it yet longer on interest, there is no insisting on its being discharg'd before the 12th. mo. Next, nor can I see at present how the Money due to the Widdow Harrison can be paid before that
The Debts due from our Fathers Estate are not considerable, as far as I know at present, his debts in this Country did not exceed £100, nor in England much (if any) above £300 ster, beside a debt due to our Brothers Estate for Household Furniture etc, which he directed not to be sold and took on himself at the appraisement. In Order to discharge the first, I suppose the whole Crop of Tobacco will not be more than Sufficient, by reason of the loss therein sustain'd by the fresh, and as Hunt has for some time had a Judgment against our Brothers Estate for a Debt due from Pleasants & Robinson and in order to keep the Estate from being sold by Execution it is absolutely necessary to apply the first moneys which can be collected from the Debts in Cumberland towards the Discharge of that Debt. But as to giving thee an estimate of the debts due to the Estate so as to be anyways exact, its altogether out of my power, tho' I do suppose there may be something like £1000, exclusive of the Cumberland debts, the amount of which I can at present give no guess, for tho' I was up in the 1st. month and had a list of them taken, I was taken sick and return'd without casting it up, or making any Calculation of the amount of those that there may be a probability of getting sometime or other, but this is beyond a doubt, that the greatest part are bad. However if my health permit I do intend up again Shortly, after which, its probable I may form some better Judgment of those affairs. I have not been unmindfull of thy request respecting hams and hominy, but for want of an Opportunity they could not be sent, but as it now groes late and no Certainty of a better, I intend sending them with this to the Care of John Greenwood at Norfolk, and hope they will get safe to hand and prove acceptable. I am pleas'd to hear that Bobby applies himself so well to learning, and hope his next will inform me that he is in readiness to return, when (as I
mention'd before) if no Suitable Company should be likely to offer for him to come down with, I propose sending Phill, who seems very desirous to see his Friends once more in Philadelphi7a, when, if thou and my Sister Concludes to take the Boy, it might be suitable time to send him up in Case any opportunity by water should offer.

My Children Join me in love to thee, their Aunt Brother and Cousins and am Thy affectionate Brother.

RP.

PS. I propose sending Sammy5 to Phil/adelphi7a the first suitable Opportunity.

22. RP TO ROBERT PLEASANTS, JR.

Curles 3 mo. 23d 1772

Dear Bobby

Since writing thee of the 8th. Instant per our Friend Patience Brayton I have received thy letter dated the 28th. 1st. month am well pleased at the account thou gives of thy application to learning, and keeping out of all loose and unprofitable company. I greatly desire thou may so improve thy time, as that thou may have to reflect with Satisfaction on the time spent in thy youthful days, which thou can never do without due attention to the dictates of the Divine Principle whereby thy duty is made manifest and as it is observed, will make thee happy in thy self and truly useful in the Creation. I am very desirous thou should return as soon as thou and thy uncle may think it may be

Samuel Pleasants (Sammy) (d. 1811), the son of RP's older brother, John, Jr., lived at Fine Creek in Powhatan County, Va. At John's death in 1765 RP was appointed guardian for Sammy and his sister Jane. Valentine Papers, II, p. 964, 1168; and Will of RP.
proper and a suitable opportunity offers, however if none such should present, I intend sending up Phil as before intimated in order to come down with thee. Thy sisters are both poorly at present with Colds and feavers, but as to myself I am better than when I last wrote thee and hope shall continue mending having lost some blood and Undergone some evacuation which seem to have been of service to me, and am Dear Child Thy affectionate Father

RP.

23. RP TO WILLIAM FISHER⁶

Virginia 3 mo. 23d 1772

Esteemed Friend

Thy Favour of the 26th. ultimo is now before me and observe the Contence, to which this is intended as a reply; and hope when our Friend Harford⁷ is inform'd of the particular and true Circumstance of his affairs under our care, neither thy nor our reputation will suffer on account of the length of time which they have remain'd unsettled. For information in this matter or at least what relates to the most considerable, I refer thee to a letter from our lawyer, in answer to one wrote him by Express, occasion'd by our uneasiness at the length of time they had been in suit and least thou or Friend Harford should believe (as it might at your distance be very natural to do) that we were unmindful or negligent of them. Whereby thou wilt find that at length there is a Judgment against Clayton & Co., and that an Execution will shortly Issue,

⁶William Fisher was a Quaker merchant.
⁷RP and Thomas Bates (see footnote 1) were appointed attorneys for James Harford, the surviving partner of Robson & Harford, Bristol, England. See RP to David Boyd, April 14, 1772.
and that Roger Dixon is defending and keeping off the suit against him with all the evasions possible, whose conduct most certainly deserves no further indulgence, nor will he have it from us without thine or Friend Harfords particular direction, which I suppose he don't now expect. We order'd Tarpley to be sued a long time ago, but am afraid the lawyer has acted a double part from some late intimations given us. We propose however to send over in a few weeks, and if we find cause, to put the affair into other hands, or at least to retain another lawyer in hopes it may be a means to expedite the Business. We have wrote several times to our Friend Harford acquainting him how his affair with John Dixon was Circumstanced as also that against John Richard but have not received any answer, nothing can be done with either it seems without the account were proved for tho' Richard agree'd to refer the matter, he purposely avoids doing any thing in it. We shall do the best in our power in recovery of the money for the Protest thou sent us, but if the Dignity of the Debt don't secure it, nothing else can out of Tuckers Estate, for he left his affairs in a desperate Situation, but suppose John Dixon may be sufficient. I am with kind respect to self and family for T/homas Bates and Self Thy assured Friend

R. Pleasants

William Fisher Phila/delphia

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9John Dixon (d. 1777) of Gloucester County, Va., was a minister of the Church of England and in 1770 a professor of divinity at the College of William and Mary. Later he was named executor of his brother Roger's estate. "Virginia gleanings in England," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XVIX (1911), p. 285-136.

1According to a notice in the Virginia Gazette, RP and Thomas Bates were attorneys for mortgagees of Roger Dixon. Purdie and Dixon's Vir-
24. RP TO DOBSON, DALTERA & WALKER

Virginia 4 mo. 2d 1772

Respected Friends

I wrote you of the 20th. February per the True Britton, C. Ashburn with 5 hhds. Tobacco belonging to the Estate of my Father to which refer.

I have now to request you will have Insurance made on 10 hhds. Tobacco which I propose Shipping onboard the Watt belonging to the Estate, and 4 hhds. of my own. By Capt. Atkinson I propose writing to you again and am respectfully Your assured Friend

R. Pleasants

To Dobson, Daltera & Walker

25. RP TO RICHARD PARKER

4 mo. 14th 1772

Respected Friends

Having received Instructions to use our utmost endeavors to recover the money due on Colo. Tarpleys Bond in thy hands with all possible Expedition, and having been informed that no such suit was on Richmond Docket about two months ago, we are apprehensive of incurring censure by such long delays and therefore have come to a resolution of employing another attorney to assist thee in the prosecution, for that purpose we have wrote to David Boyd who we are informed practices in that Court; and request no fair promises from Tarpley, as any other considerations may further protract the Business. We have also to desire thou wilt advise us by the bearer how the matter really stands, and let us know

*ginia Gazette (Williamsburg, Va.), October 22, 1772. One of these mort­
gages was James Harford of Robson & Harford. See RP to David Boyd, April 14, 1772.
from time to time what progress may be made in the suit, the better to enable us to give our Friend the satisfaction he requests and has a right to expect from us, which will oblige Thy assured Friends

Robt. Pleased
Thomast Sates

To Richard Parker attorney Richmond County

26. RP TO DAVID BOYD

4 mo. 14 1772

Respected Friend

Having been appointed attorneys for James Harford Surviving partner of Robson & Harford of Bristol, we put into the hands of Richard Parker a Bond of Colo. Tarpleys for £ Sterling dated in order if possible to recover the money; but it seems from fair promises, or some other consideration we have been inform'd that no such suit was on Richmond County Docket about two months ago, and having received late instructions to loose no time in endevoring to recover the money, have come to a resolution to employ another attorney to assist in the prosecution of a Suit, for that purpose; and having been recommended to thee as the most proper person, we have to request thou wilt do everything in thy power in Compliance with our Said instructions, and advise us from time to time what progress may be made in that Business the better to enable us to furnish our said Friends with the necessary advice respecting it.

David Boyd
27. RP TO JOHN DIXON

Curles 4 mo. 15 1772

Friend John Dixon

Robert Tucker's bill dated November 9th. 1770, for £50 indorsed by thee, is return'd under protest; and as Tucker has been applied to, with little or no prospect of his taking it up soon, I have (in behalf of my Friend whose property it is) to advise thee, that the money will be wanted at the ensuing General Court, and depend thou wilt not omit making the necessary provision for the payment thereof at that time. I am Thy Friend

Robt. Pleasants

To John Dixon Gloster Co.

28. RP TO JOHN HALLOCK

Virginia 5 mo. 10 1772

Respected Friend

Thy letter dated the 12th. 2 mo. last inclosing a power of attorney; I received but lately, to which this is intended as an answer; and may Advise that as thy Brother James's Effects were in a wasting situation my Son in Law and Partner Thomas Pleasants Junr. took the administration thereon (he being the largest Creditor) before the receipt of thy letter in Order to secure what little Estate there was which sold for £ of which I suppose the Debts may take about £££ also undertook to rent the plantation for the present year, thinking something better than nothing it is in very bad order and was then late in the season so that he could get but 40/ for it. I highly approve thy generous intention of giving James's Children the residue of the Estate after paying his Debt to thee££ and am very willing to act for thee or them in the best manner
I am capable.

I believe if thou art dispos'd to sell the land the Interest of the money it would fetch, would exceed the Rents of it, more especially, if thou should not choose to give a lease on it for a term of years, for as it is in very bad order, held only for 50 acres, and but little timber of any kind on it, I suppose it would not rent from year to year for more than about £3 but if thou should choose to dispose of it and comes down from the yearly meeting in Phila/delphi 7a I will render thee any assistance in my power, or if thou should conclude to do it by a power of Attorney, I suppose thou might get Capt. John Hylton of New York and some of his men to witness it, who frequently trade up this River from thence; there must be three witnesses at least. I believe from the best information I have received James, Died of an inflamitory disorder, but at present can't inform thee of the day of the month; the County's name is Henrico, the Land lays about one mile and half from James River, but some distance from any Town. I am Respectfully Thy assured Friend

RP.

To John Hallock West Chester County Province of New York

29. RP TO SAMUEL PLEASANTS

Virginia 5 mo. 10 1772

Dear Brother

I wrote thee a few lines the 5th. Instant, relative and at the request of Roger Atkinson, and had only time then to acknowledge the receipt of thy acceptable letter per my son, and Just hint that I intended sending up Sammy Pleasants in company with my Sister Sukey, as fare as Bush River; This is now intended by him as a reply to thy last, and may inform thee that I have wrote to my Brothers Isaac and James
Webster\(^2\) to hire some person to accompany Sammy up to Phila/delphi/\(^7\)a, which if they have an opportunity of doing soon after his getting to that place, he may ride up the mare Bobby left there, and she may be return’d by the same messenger in time to be sent down to Virginia at Sister Sukeys return; but if that can’t be done nor a man and Horses can’t be procur’d at B\(\text{ush}\)\(^7\) River to convey him from thence, he must there wait until thou can send for him, or an opportunity does offer of his getting up. I have deliver’d him for his expenses up and deliver’d him Scald up towards paying the Ballance I now owe thee, or any immediate expense thou may be at for Sammy, for as I had but short notice, he is not so well provided as otherwise he might have been for such a Journey.

Thou may depend the money due to the Widdow Harrison shall be remitted as soon as I may be enabled either by Collections or Crops of the Estate to do it and hope her Circumstancis are not such as to suffer any great inconvenience for the want of it for that time.

It is with great pleasure I observe what thou says respecting my sons conduct while under thy care and think my Self under great Obligations to thee and my Sister for your care of and kindness to him as well as thy kind wishes for his good and my Satisfaction, and if he should be prudent enough to make a right use of the opportunity he has had of improvement in that place, you will have the Satisfaction to think you were instrumental therein altho’ it may not be in my power to make amends Suitable to the favour received therein.

Bobby tells me that Gilbert embasiled part of the wheat saved from

\(^2\)Isaac and James Webster were probably RP’s brothers-in-law by his first marriage to Mary Webster.
the wrack, If it is so, and any proof can be made of it, I request thou would procure and forward it per first opportunity; for as I believe him to be a Villain, I have order'd him to be sued, in hopes if I don't get my money, I may at least expose his villany and put it out of his power to act such another part where he is known. I must refer thee to Thomas Pleasants for an answer to what thou says about the money received of Measy & Caldwell, as well as the Sales of the goods consign'd to us and Hoggs notes Eckarts order on Syme, for tho' he told my son he would pay the corn, there is yet no price fix'd or any agreement about it, but suppose that will be done at the present meeting in Williamsburg for the Court is over. The £3 Bill sent by Bobby is Bad and is now return'd inclos'd agreeable to thy request. I can't at present inform thee the amount of Hunts Judgment against Pleasants & Robinson, but think it may be about £400 sterl, but know of no other demand has against any of our family. I decline writing again to Israel Pember about the insurance for as he never favour'd me with an answer to my former on that subject, I conclude Hunt is a favourite, and the Business disagreeable, so I suppose I must rest satisfied without it, but this I must say and believe, that if Hunt was so desirous to clear up his conduct as he has said on another occasion, that alone might have induced him to have done it without the promises he made that it should be done. I thought I had desired thy acceptance of the Hams, I never thought of making a Charge of them, and wish they may prove good, but am doubtful they are not equal to what we used to have. I am with much love and affection to thee my Sister and the Children Thy Friend and Brother RP.
PS. I am indebted to Anthony Benizet\(^3\) 20\(^{\circ}\) for Books which please to pay.

I am in want of a Mehogany Table to suit the one thou sent per Montgomery and request it may be sent per first opportunity it is square and wants about a quarter of an inch of 4 feet in length and when the leaves are up measures near 3 feet 8 In. wide and is 2 feet 4½ high with claw feet. Please also to send a Mohany side board table and 1 dressing ditto also one Easy chair covered with leather.

30. RP TO JAMES WEBSTER

Virginia 5 mo. 10th 1772

Loving Brother

I am very much oblig'd to thee for accommodating my son with a Nagg to ride down to Virginia on, and as I purpose sending my Nephew Sammy Pleasants to Philad\(\ell\)elphi\(\ell\)a I intend taking this opportunity in Company with Sister Susey as far as Bush River, and to ride thy mare; this will Occasion me to ask another favour which is, that in case there is no prospect of a pretty ready opportunity for him to get forward, that thou wilt write a line by Post, or any other direct opportunity to my Brother in Philad\(\ell\)elphi\(\ell\)a, to send for him, or hire a man and Horses to accompany him up, the expense of which my Brother will pay on Demand, or if a man and one Horse could be emediately provided So as the Messenger might return before Sister Susey sets out for Virginia Sammy might ride up Bobby

\(^3\)Anthony Benezet (1713-1784), a highly active member of the Philad\(\ell\)elphia Monthly Meeting, devoted much of his time to philanthropic work, particularly on the behalf of blacks, and wrote numerous papers and tracts, many being polemics against slavery. Dictionary of American Biography, s.v. "Benezet, Anthony."
mare (if well of her lameness) and then if it can be contrived with any
degree of convenience, I should be glad she could be sent down to Vir­
ginia when my Sister returns.

James Webster

31. RP TO SAMUEL PLEASANTS

Curles 5 mo. 21st 1772

Dear Brother

I wrote thee pretty fully of the 10th. Instant intended per my
Nephew Sammy7 P/leasants7 who was to have gone up as fare as Bush River
in Company with Sukey Pleasant, but just at the time she was to have
taken her departure Cousin Robert was taken very ill, which put a stop
to her Journey; and tho.' I have some thoughts yet of sending him as
fare as James Brooks's in Company with Thomas Pleasant and his family
who propse setting out in 7 days in expectation that he may have
Company to W/est R/iver7 Meeting and from thence quite up to Phila-
delphi7a but as he is young and the way roundabout I am not fully
determined whither or not to send him then, or to wait in expectation
of some Friends being down at our Yearly Meeting, if he goes I propose
sending that letter yet by him, and therefore only propose at this time
mentioning what may be most material and refer thee to the other for
further particulars.

Bobby tells me that Gilbert embasiled part of the Cargo of wheat
saved out of the Schooner Industry, if it is so, and any part of can be
made of It, I request thou wilt furnish me with it as soon as possible,
for as I apprehend he is a Villain, I have order'd him to be sued in
expectation, that if I don't recover my Effects out of his hands, it may
be a means of exposing him, so as to put it out of his power to act the same part in future where he is known.

32. RP TO JOHN TAZEWELL

Curles 6 mo. 4th 1772

Respected Friend

Inclos'd is Robert Tuckers bill endorsed by John Dixon of Williamsburg under protest for £50 ster. on which I request thou wilt immediately bring suit. John Dixon has agreed to give a judgment the first time it is call'd on condition that execution is stay'd 'til October, which I am willing to comply with and am respectfully Thy Friend

Robt. Pleasants

To John Tazewell attorney in Williamsburg.

33. RP TO SAMUEL PLEASANTS

Curles 6 mo. 13th 1772

Dear Brother

I wrote thee of the 10th. 5 mo. last intended by my nephew Sammy Pleasants, who was to have accompany'd Sister Susey as fare Bush River on his way to Phila/adelphia but they were prevented by the Indisposition of Robert Pleasants, who was taken Ill the very day they were to have set out, with a violent Pluracy or inflammatory fever, which terminated (as some think) in a gallopping consumption, and put a period to his life.

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4 John Tazewell (d. 1781) lived and practiced law in Williamsburg. In May 1778 he was appointed a judge of the Virginia General Court. Purdie's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg, Va.), June 5, 1778.

5 This Robert Pleasants was RP's cousin. See RP to Samuel Pleasants, May 21, 1772.
the 7th, Instant about 3 o'clock in the morning the 27th day of his Illness much regreted by most who knew him, but more especially by our Dear sister who seems almost inconsolable for her loss. Indeed she hath much need, for he was an uncommon tender and affectionate Husband and Father, however I believe our Friends at Blush River may rely, that everything will be done in our power to endeavor to mitigate her grief and Serve her and the Children in every needful matter, but if thou with one of our Sisters could come down and stay a while with her, it might contribute greatly to her Comfort and satisfaction. This intelligence I thought proper to communicate knowing by experience, that tho' advices of this sort must be afflict ing, yet it is a Satisfaction to be acquainted with every state and situation of those we Love, and in whose Welfare we are interested; and Dear Brother since we find that nothing (not even Virtue it self) is a defence from the Stoke of Death, and the time of his approach to each of our Tabernacles altogether uncertain, I greatly desire that every day which we may in Mercy be continued on the stage of life, may be improved to the glory of our Creator, and our own eternal felicity, which are inseparable. I received thy acceptable letter dated the 28th. [April7] and observ'd that thou hast been in a poor state of health for many months past but that thou wert then getting the better of it, which I rejoice to hear, and may advise that I too have had but few well days together since last fall, and some part of the time been very ill; I am still poorly, but desire patiently to submit to the will of Providence who knows best what is best and sometimes Permits Afflictions as Blessings in disguise. I am with much love and affection to every Branch of the family Thy Friend and Brother.
Respected Friend

I received a letter from Eliza. Hudson mentioning her willingness to deliver up two of the best negroes to be hired out for the payment of her debt, to which I have inclosed her an answer unsealed to which refer; If she agrees to my proposal to have part of John Hudson's Estate (her late husband) sold, for the payment of his proper debt, I suppose it will be best to get her to give a Judgment immediately, the amount thou may see by the Bonds, one being wholly his, and part of the other, which is her Bond, and include a debt due from him at the time of his Death as mentioned in the bottom thereof; but if she or her Brothers (whose advice I suppose she would follow) should not agree to have a negro sold, I should be willing to take security payable at a future day, and suppose as the Estate will be answerable for such a Judgment, there can be little risque in one of them being bound for the payment thereof; but at any rate I am willing and desirous to receive the two Negroes mentioned in my letter to her for the discharge of her own debt, for in case of her Death it may be feared that part would be would be totally lost; If therefore she complies with her promise in delivering up these Negroes, I must request thy care in forwarding them up by one of the first Vessels from Norfolk, and either dismiss the Suit for her proper debt, or take a Judgment as thou think best and furnish

6A native of Elizabeth City County, Va., William Roscoe Wilson Curie was a member of the Continental Congress, 1774, and later in 1778 or 1779 was appointed a judge of the Admiralty Court. "Virginia Legislative Papers," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XIV (1906-1907), p. 127.
me with a Copy of the Costs. My son in law Thomas Pleasants informed me, thou wert some time ago in a poor state of health. If that should continue to be the case so as to prevent thy attention to this Business, I desire thou wilt get James Holt to finish the affair, and advise me thereof per first opportunity which will greatly oblige Thy assured Friend

Robt. Pleasants

To Wm Roscoe Wilson Curle

35. RP TO JOHN DIXON

Curles 7 mo. 20th 1772

Respected Friend

Observing Thy Advertisement in the Gazette relative to thy Brothers affairs this is intended to advise thee of a pretty large debt due by Mortgage from him to Robson & Harford, which is under the direction of Thomas Bates and my self; The money hath been long due and in Consequence of positive and urgent instructions a Suit was order'd about two years ago to foreclose the equity of redemption in the mortgaged Premises; but whether advice was pass'd or the suit abated by his Death I am not inform'd. If it should be the latter, I request thou wilt advise by the bearer Thomas Pleasants, whether or not thou will engage emediately to Sell so much of the Estate as may discharge the Debt; for as our instructions will not admit of any further indulgence, a Suit must be emediately commenced in case thou wilt not engage to dispose of the Estate, or pay the money without. Thou may know the amount of the Debt

7James Holt, an attorney in Norfolk. See RP to James Holt, July 13, 1774.
by applying to the Clerk of the General Court where the mortgage was re-
corded. I am respectfully Thy Friend

Robt. Pleasants

John Dixon

36. RP TO SAMUEL PLEASANTS

Curses 8 mo. 3d 1772

Dear Brother

Having none of thy Favours unanswer'd, this is intended to accompany
206 Bushels very fine new wheat, and 16/4 Bushels Old per Our Schooner
Peggy. George Crumbie Master, who I wish may have a safe and quick pas-
sage; for tho' we have taken the precaution of shipping the new wheat in
sacks, and it appears to be in uncommon fine Order for the time, yet it
may probably get warm if it should continue long onboard. It was
with inconvenience we could get it ready so soon, but a View of Employing
our new Vessel, and in hope of geting the prices lately going for wheat
in Philadelphi/a we have exerted our selves in her dispatch and doubt
not thy care in the disposal of it to the best prices your Market will
afford, Our Millers now give 5/ this Currency but whither those prices
will continue or not must depend on the demand from abroad. If the
furniture I requested thee some time ago to procure for me should not
be ship'd before the receipt of this I request thou wilt send it by
return of Capt. Crumbie and If it should be convinient to procure me a
pair of good Chaise Horses for about 50, or £60 price not old, and
such as thou thinks would suit me, I request thou would send them also,
with the few articles mention'd below, and in case my remittance per
this Vessel should not be Sufficient to pay the Ballance I owe thee,
and the Cost of these Articles now Order'd, I Expect if this Vessel
returns safe and the prospect of a wheat market should be encouraging, she will immediately load again for Phila/delphia, and in that case shall make up all deficiency, on my Own Account, and probably make a Considerable remittance on Account of the Estate.

I am waiting with impatience for a Suitable opportunity of sending Sammy, and have been for some time in Expectation that Joney Webster or some of our Friends from B/ush River would be down, in that case I intended to have sent him up that way for As he is not willing to go with Capt. Crumble and the Vessel being new I don't choose to force him contrary to his inclination least some accident might happen; but in case no suitable one should offer sooner, I intend taking him up with me to West River in the 9 or 10th. month in case my own health and that of my Family will admit my going up, as at present I intend with my Daughter Nancy, but whither I may have the pleasure of seeing my Brother Sister and Children in Phila/delphia is uncertain tho' I much desire seeing my Sister and the Children but if I find that can't be conveniently accomplish'd would thou meet me at West River.

I have sent per Capt. Crumble a large Bible which I request thou wilt get Bound and (if it can be done in time) to be returned by him. The £3 Bill which I intended to have sent per Sammy is now inclos'd as also Thomas Elsdons note, which thou sent inclos'd to me some time ago for Richard Randolph, and which he desired me to return to thee and inform, that he is a man who Married a nurse that Colo. Byrd had from Phila/delphia, and now lives near or in the City, and may be known by applying to some one of the willing family, and requests thou wilt endeavor to get the money. Roger Atkinson writes thee per this

8 These words have been crossed out in the original.
Operty and no doubt will inform thee that in dependence of thy getting Bills of Exchange on Interest to the amount of 2000£ star. for him he hath got the money here, and will I dare say be a great disappointment if they cannot be had to come by return of our Schooner; his Bond with Sufficient Security being Executed, no doubt he had inclu'd to thee. Inclos'd I send thee Capt. Cramble's receipt for 12 half dollars which pass to the Credit of my account.

RP,

Goods to be sent from Philadelphias
3 doz. Calfskins 2 doz. of which black'd on the Flesh side and 1 doz. on the grain
3 doz. pair womens woоden heals
6 Dutch grass Syths and 6 whitstones for ditto
1 Barrel good Muscovado9 sugar
1 ditto good Jamaica spirits. 12 lbs. Chocolate
2 doz. Antony Benizetts Treatises, and request thou wilt pay him for 1 doz. already received.

37. RP TO WILLIAM FISHER

Virginia 9 mo. 4th 1772

Respected Friend

We have Obtain'd a Judgment against John Dixon endorsor to Tuckers Protest, or rather he confes'd it on Condition of our agreeing to stay Execution until the October Court. But By the Death of Roger Dixon, we are informd the suit so long ago comminced against him to foreclose the

9Muscavado was raw or unrefined sugar.
mortgage; hath abated, however we have come to an agreement with John Dixon, who takes the Administration on the Estate, emi- diately to adver-*tize and Sall in the 9th. month at Six months Credit, so much of the Estate as will discharge the Debt; this we thought would be better than engaging in an other letigious suit at Law, and hope our conduct will meet thy approbation. There is no Judgment yet against Tarpley, nor have we received any part of Clayton & Co's Debt, when we do, thou wilt hear further from Thy Assured Friend

Robt. Pleasants

To W/lillia7m Fisher

38. RP TO JAMES & DRINKER

Virginia S mo. 4 1772

Esteemed Friends

I was Sorry to hear of Capt. Montgomery Miscarriage, as well on account of the people, as those concerned in the Vessel and Cargo, but hope your interest was fully Cover'd; It was a fine Cargo of wheat, and should have been glad it had got safe to a Sutable Market. However if the first attempt hath not discouraged your Speculation in the same way, we have a Crop of Wheat now housed, which I apprehend it equal both in quantity and quality to any ever made in the Colony, a Sample of which you may see by applying to my Brother, to whom my self and Company have ship'd a few hundred Bushels as a tryal to a forward Market in your City. At present the price seem as if it would break high on account of the demand for Flour, the millers agree to give 5/ until the 1st. of 9th mo. but Whither that may be the gineral market is at present uncertain; If

James & Drinker were merchants in Philadelphia.
you should at any time incline to be further adventurers in this or any
other article of our Country produce our situation puts it in our power
to serve you as well and on as good terms as any House in the province,
and be assured the utmost attention will be observed in the Execution
of any Orders you may intrust with my self and Co. for whom I am Your
assured and respected Friend

RP. & Co.

To James & Drinker

39. RP TO MARY PLEASANTS (?)

Virginia 3 mo. 4 1772

Dear sister

I have long wished, and indeed had some expectation of being
favour'd with a few lines from thee, but as I must confess I have been
too deficient my self in writing to thee, I have not so much room to
complain, but must say, whenever thou canst find leisure and inclination
thy letters will be particularly acceptable, more especially if they
convey an account of thine my Brother and the Dear Childrens welfair,
which I much desire, and had I my self a sufficient degree of health and
could accomplish it with any degree of Convenience I would cheerfully
undertake a Journey to Phila/delphi/a the ensuing fall in order to en-
joy the greater sattisfaction of being an eye witness thereof, but tho'
I find my self lately rather better, I have long been in a very poore
State of health and part of the time very Ill so as scarcely to expect
a recovery, beside this I have a large family to care for, and the

__2__Probably to RP's sister-in-law, Mary Pleasants, wife of Samuel Pleasants.
old woman who hath lived with me for some years in quality of a House Keeper proposes to leave me this fall, but that indeed ought to be inducement to exert my self in endeavoring to supply her place with another and I know, no place that abounds more with good ones than Philadelphia were they not so attach'd to the place as not easily to be induced to leave it.

However I must acknowledge the great kindness of my good Friends toward the most near and dear part, that of my Children, and particularly thine to my Son and Daughter which I shall ever remember with gratitude. Sister Langly and Children are well and is now on a Visit to us at Curles, and have some expectation of seeing Sister Atkinson here in a few days. Poor Sister Briggs is in much affliction for the loss of her Daughter Nancy as is poor Sukey for that of an uncommon kind and affectionate Husband Robert Pleasants whose Death I suppose thou sometime ago heard of. I desire my very kind love may be acceptable to unkle and aunt Pemberton with whom I sincerely Sympathize for their great loss of a hopeful son, be pleas'd also to remember me very affectionately to cousin Jony and Nancy also Sammy and Sally Roads and am Thy Very oblig'd and Affectionate Brother.

RP.

I have deliver'd into Capt. Crumbies care a piece of Tabley, which being of a pretty good Colour, I desire thy acceptance of it for a Gown.

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4Anne Pleasants, RP's sister, married Roger Atkinson April 21, 1753.
6This Robert Pleasants was RP's cousin. See RP to Samuel Pleasants, May 21, 1772.
Dear Brother

Thy favour of the 28th. 8 mo. per Capt. Crumbie I received together with the furniture and other articles ship'd me per the Schooner, the Horses only excepted, which it seems were lost from of the Deck in a hard gale of wind he met with soon after he left the Capes of Delaware. This, beside the loss, is a considerable disappointment to me, they being intended for my Northern journey, and will I apprehend effectually deprive me of the pleasure I some times flattered my self with of seeing my Friends in Phila/delphi7a this fall, nor can I help blaming the Capt. seeing he had room and might with so much ease and Safety have brought them in the hold. The furniture I find comes high from Phila-/delphia7 more so than I expected, and by some means or other the workman has made a mistake in the length of the large table being about three inches shorter than the directions which was given exactly to fitt one I had before which purpose this will not answer, for that reason I should have inclined to have returned it, per the Schooner was I certain the Joiner would Chang'd it, as it is I shall endeavor to fitt it and then order another of the right size or get one here. The Table thou sent for sale met with an Accident and got the Cross piece below broke, and am doubtful it will be a due article at a price nearly what mine is Charg'd at, not being (as I think) a handsom piece of Furniture. Inclos'd is Bill of Lading for 300 Bushels wheat which I wish safe and to a good Market, the price here continues to be 5/ nor do I expect it will fall, it is however remarkably good in quality. Its uncertain at present what further quantity I may ship to Phila/delphi7a this year I hope however this may be fully sufficient to Ballance my account with thee
after being Charg'd with the Coffee pot which by thy last account was not done, but if it should be otherwise, a further remittance shall be made sufficient to do it. I suppose Edward Stabler is gone to Cumberland to Order Execution against my Brothers Estate for Hunts Debt for it seems he is detirm'd to wait no longer, and James Pleasants neglect or bad Success has disabled me from paying more than £175 beside an agreement of Tommy Pleasants for £100 Ster. in Consequence of an order given by James Pleasants on James Lyle to the last Court which they agreed to pay at the October Court, beside these sums I suppose there will be a Gallance of upwards of £250 due on that Judgment and at present know not how it will be paid except it be by an order on thee for part of the purchase of wheat for Holden, or can be got on Interest. I don't care the Estate should be sold, and have given directions in case of an Execution to replevy which will 3 months longer time. I also propose to make a Considerable remittance sometime this fall on account of the Estate either in Wheat or Bills. Our Cousin John Pleasants intend going in the Schooner to Philadelphia and have endevard to prevail on Sammy to accompany him but as he seems very averse to it and chooses to go with me by land I am loth to force him for fear of some Accident, in that case I should both blame myself and be blamed by Others, to which I desire to give no Just occasion for. However if I should find it impracticable my self to go as fare as Philadelphia, I intend to send a Servant up with him, for I am very sensible he is loosing time, and am

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8A writ of replevin, or to replevy, is the recovery by a person of goods either distrained or taken from him, upon his giving security to try the matter in court and to return the goods if defeated in the action.
as anxious to get him up as thou canst be, being fully convinced it may
be more to his advantage than anything in my power to do for him, pro-
vided he makes the proper use of the opportunity for his improvement. I
propose to send my Boy Jamey, and with him a Certificate for it is my
intention to give him his freedom at the age of twenty Seven years; he
is now about 14, and is to serve thee on the terms thou proposes, Seven
years, or in case of misbehaviour to have the liberty of returning him,
or rather if it can be done, to put him to a Trade there until he is
21 years of age, but I have little doubt but he will answer thy purpose
as well as any Boy of his Colour that I know. The Expressions of that
great good Man Samuel Fothergill whose removal I was truly concern'd
to hear, were not inclos'd in thy last as thou intended, and hope thou
will send them per next opportunity for everything that came from him I
doubt not was worthy attention, more especially at such an awful period
and will be particularly acceptable to me.

Our monthly meeting having appointed two Friends to Collect the
most material expressions of our Dear Father in his last Illness by way
of Testimony which I expect will be soon accomplished, when it is I pro-
pose sending a Copy thereof. I shall want a few articles per return of
the schooner an account of which is below which please to send me, if
the shoes for Nancy are not sent before the receipt of this, its probable
it might be best when an opportunity offers to send them to West River
as its probable she may be gone up before this Vessel comes back; the
shoes thou sent me were too Small one Size too Short, and too low in the
instip, shall therefore want two other pair per Capt. Crumbie.

1 Ton Bar Iron, Suitable for Country work, Such as Wagons, Hoes, Axes, etc.
1 Woman's Black Satin Bonnet with a Hood
1 Girls ditto
1 doz. Sets fann Riddles
2 pair Shoes for my own use
1 pair good leather Breeches to measure
1 Bushel Flax Seed

I have not received the Key of the Chest Draws which please to send.

41. RP TO JOHN HALLOCK
Curles 10 mo. 1 1772

Respected Friend

I wrote thee of the 10th. 5 mo. last, acknowledged the receipt of thy letter dated the 12th. 2d. mo., and advising, that my Son in Law Thomas Pleasants had administer'd on thy Brother James's Estate, had rented out the Land for 40/ the present year, describing the situation thereof, and giving a tender of any Service, which may be in my power for thee or the Children; since which I have received thine dated the 14th. 5 mo. to which this is intended as a reply. I have supplied the Children with some necessaries, and shall continue to do so, as far as the personal Estate and rents of the land will amount or until thou gives further direction.

The names and ages of the Children I now send thee below, and am inform'd that James died on the 3d. day of the week and 12th. of the 12th

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1A riddle was a coarse-meshed sieve.
month 1771, of an inflammatory or pluralic disorder. The name of the Children's mother is Rachel Liptrott. I am pleas'd to hear of Christian Fritts, I should be glad to hear of his being in a way to do well in every respect, he conducted himself much to his masters satisfaction while in this Country be pleased to Remember me to him and am respectfully Thy Friend

Robt. Pleasants

Martha Born the 31st. 5 mo. 1768
Phaby ditto 7. 6 mo. 1770

42. RP TO WILLIAM FISHER

Virginia 10 mo. 1st 1772

Respected Friend

I wrote thee the 4th. 8 mo., advising that we had obtain'd a Judgment against John Dixon on Tuckers protist, staying Execution till the October Court - and that we had come to an agreement with him to Sell the Mortgaged Effects belonging to his Brothers Estate in the last month at Six months Credit, but when the matter come to the push he would not comply, on a supposition, that the notice, nor time of Credit were not Sufficient to obtain near the value; we have therefore in order to prevent the trouble, and shorten the time, which another suit in our dilatory Courts by Experience would take up to forclose the mortgage, agreed to allow twelve months Credit and hope as matters are Circumstanced our Conduct will not be disaproved by thee or our Friend Harford. Debt will be lost I expect and Danzie Died insolvent some years ago but believe both Debts might have been recov'd had we been at first furnished

2James Harford.
with proved account with John Richards except we can be supplied with a proved account shortly against him for his is going fast down hill and a suit we are told can't be supported without a proved account. I suppose our Friend Harford is satisfied as to John Dixons Debt he says that there was more than sufficient of his Mothers Estate in his hand which he was intitled to pay the Debt, and to that purpose, together with his objections to the account we have several times wrote to our Friend Harford but have never received any answer. We have some expectation of receiving the money for Claytons Debt at the October Court. I am with respects to Self and family Thy Assured Friend

Robt. Pleasants

To William Fisher Philadelpia

43. DEED OF MANUMISSION

1 October 1772

To all people to whom these presents shall come I Robert Pleasants of Henrico County in the Colony of Virginia Merchant Send Greeting, know ye that I the said Robert Pleasants for divers good Causes and Valuable Considerations me thereunto moving and more especially for and in consideration of the sum of five Shillings lawful money of the Said Colony to me in hand paid by my Negro Boy Slave James, The Receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge Have Manumitted remised and released, and by these presents Do manumit remise and release unto the said Negro Boy James all his Servitude from hence forth to Acrue, all my Estate Right Title and Interest whatsoever of in and to the said Negro Boy. And I do declare that it shall not be lawfull for either my Self my Heirs Executors administrators or assigns or any other person or persons whatsoever to deprive the Said Negro Boy of the full free and uninter-
rupted enjoyment of his liberty, but that he shall possess and enjoy
the same as full as any other person who hath never been in Bondage.
Witness my hand and Seal this 1st. day of October 1772.

Robt. Pleasants

Sealed and deliver'd in presence of

44. RP TO CHARLEY

Curles 10 mo. 17 1772

Dear Charley

I wrote to James Pleasants by Friend Harris and then informed him
that Edward Stabler had refused to accept my offer of paying the whole
debt due from Pleasants & Robinson by the April Court, and at the
same time desired him to replevy the Estate taken in Execution and
that thou would be his bondsman. Since then I have made another proposal
to him which he has thought proper to accept which is to give my bills
on Philadelphia at 30 days sight for the amount of the sale of the
Land and Negro's belonging to Samuel and Jane Pleasants, that may be
taken in Execution; I have therefore to request thou wilt attend the
sale, and purchase them in again for the benefit of the Children; but as
I know not at present how I am to come at the money again that I may
advance without having the Security in my own hands I choose to have the
Deed for the Land made to me untill Sammy may come of age to settle the
matter. James Pleasants wrote to me that he expected to receive from
good hands £200 at the October meeting and that he intended to take
care of himself, so that there is no doubt but he may have it in his
own power to secure his property. I suppose the Estate will be sold for
ready money, so that it is presumable it will sell very low. I wish
Hunt may be disappointed of getting his full demand, because when the
whole was offered to be paid to his Attorney so soon as April, he would choose to Distress the Orphans. I wish thou would defer settling, or at least delivering the bills to the Sheriff before the return Court or enjoin him to keep them in his hands at least till then or longer if he can Consistant with Justice in order to give the more time before the money may become due in Philadelphia. I propose sending Ned Gray with this, the Horse he Rides is intended for the plantation at Hugh's Creek, and Ned may come down with the Waggon to Warwick, by him please to let me know, if thou canst, the amount of the Execution when it is returnable, and when it is likely the sale may be If it should be over in time, I request thou wilt let me know if possible before I go my Journey to the Northward the amount of the sale and my Bills which I send inclos'd Blank. Ned is to bring down the saddle he rides and my old saddle lent to Tommy, and send him with the first waggon that comes down, do order Sam Webster to send down the 2 Beaves as soon as possible, and direct all the Overseers to get their Tobacco ready to send down with all possible Expedition. I should be glad to be inform'd whether or not James Pleasants will have the appraisement of the Estate in Bedford and Charlotte done at his going up. Flour is in great demand; do order the wheat from the different plantations to be sent to the Mill as soon as possible, and it will be to our Interest to have the flour got down to Warwick with all possible Expedition. Atkinson and Aselby are in. I am with Love to Self and family Thy Affectionate uncle

RP.

PS. If the reprieve Bonds should be given before this gets to hand let them stand it will give more time and be attended with no Material disadvantage that I know of.
Cousin James Pleasants

Since writing to thee per Harris, I propos'd to Edward Stabler giving my Bills on Philadelphia for the amount of what the Childrens Estate may Sell for at 30 days sight, which he has vouchsafed to accept, so that in case the ripley Bonds are not executed before the receipt of this; I am willing the Estate should be sold and to that purpose have wrote to Charles Woodson, and as thou hast the promise of about £200 from good hands at the October meeting I suppose thou wilt have it in thy power to Secure thy own property as intimated in thy last. I expect the Effects are to be sold for ready money, and in that case will probably sell low. I presume there are very few if any who knows the circumstances of the matter will bid against thee or me, and should not be sorry to hear after they had been Offer'd Security and the Ballance of the Debt paid in April, that they were put to further trouble in recovering any part which this Estate may fall short of paying.

I think it will be highly necessary to Order Suit against Robinson, and as I hear thou intends shortly to Bedford, I wish thou would be advised and take measure accordingly, and as to the Cumberland affairs, order Suits without distinction or delay for all debts which there may be a probability of recovering. If it will suit thee to get my Fathers Estate in Bedford and Charlotte appraised when thou art up I will Satisfy thee for thy trouble in so doing and am Thy Friend and Kinsman

R. Pleasants

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3 According to RP's will, Robert Pleasants & Co. was "concerned in trade with Charles Woodson Junior of Cumberland County now Powhatan which
Dear Brother

I received thine dated yesterday respecting the prospect of making an advantageous purchase of Land and requesting Certainly to know whether I could advance £400 part of my Sisters Legacy in April, in case thou should make that purchase. In answer to which I can only inform thee that the only debt of Consequence now due from our Fathers Estate is one in Philadelphia of about £300 ster. for which I have been much pressed and must first pay, and then intend to discharge the legacies as fast as it is in my power, the present Crop together with all the money due to the Estate which I can Collect shall be applied to these purposes, but as my own engagements are such as will not allow me to advance the sum thou mentions I can't promise the payment of it at that time on any other Conditions than my being enabled from the Estate to do it to which purpose my endeavours if life and Health should be alow'd me will not be wanting. Thy affectionate Brother.

R. Pleasants

PS. If A. May still neglects the settlement of that long winded affair I wish thou would order Execution for the Ballance due on that Judgment an account of which I sent thee sometime ago. If she should appear to be injured I suppose she will have her remedy.

business was carried on under the firm of Charles Woodson & Co." A Charles Woodson was the brother of RP's stepmother, Mary Woodson Pleasants. 
Valentine Papers, II, p. 116?
Dear Roger

Being very sensible thou hast many amiable qualities which together with the connections between us, as parts of the same family, I sincerely desire thy good in every respect. This being the case, everything that may appear to obstruct that good must necessarily give pain, and of course raise earnest desires that the cause may be removed. If therefore the attempt of a week brother to set this matter in a proper light should not at present appear to thee in the same point of view thy good sense cannot allow thee to think but that my intention was upright. I say then that it is with real concern I have observed, and my observation hath been confirmed by the report of others who have had more frequent opportunities of being in thy company, that thou hast of late given too much into the excessive use of strong drink and under the operation thereof hast gone into many extravagant and indecent expressions, unpleasant to most and probably offensive to some who are thy real friends. Consider the tendency of such a conduct. Can it produce satisfaction to thy self or promote virtue in a rising family of fine children just now at a time of life susceptible of impressions which might prove of the utmost importance. I sincerely wish thou may never see any bad effects which some times flow from intemperance or imprudence of Parents. But suppose my fears on that account should be groundless, how canst thou expect true and solid peace at a time when thou may most see the want of it, and be under a necessity of reflecting on past actions? Perhaps thou may say thou depends on the mercies of a long suffering God, who, as some are pleas'd to say cannot consistent with his attributes punish eternally but would it be less than madness, from mere conjecture to risk our own
Salvation, either on our own or other peoples Speculations, contrary to the Writings of inspired men and the Convictions of our own Hearts? But laying aside every Religious Consideration, is it consistent with the prosperity of thy temporal concerns or the promotion of true filicity and union in thy own family? Or is it not more likely to produce contrary Effects? Besides as thou hast thought proper to be joined in marriage to one whom thou must know such Conduct will ever give Sorrowful Concern, true affection, if not Common Complaisance I should think might be inducements sufficient to break off from practices inconsistent with the Character of a Wise or good Man. Don't think these remonstrances proceed from the Sudjestions of my Sistre, that is not the case, but from an earnest desire for thine and thy familys' real happiness in Thy Affec-

R. Pleasants

To Roger Atkinson

48. RP TO SAMUEL PLEASANTS

Virginiæ 10 mo. 27th 1772

Dear Brother

As I propose in Case my own health and that of my Family will admit of it, to set out in Company with Sammy Pleasants and my Daughter Nancy for Maryland in about two days and expecting to have a ready conveyance by Post from Anapolis for letters which may probably get to hand before this I refer thee thereto and only at this time advise that as there was a quantity, say about 70 or 30 lbs. of Rattle Snake root belonging to our Fathers Estate, I have sent a Box of it containing 18 lbs. per Capt. Maxwell to thy address, as a tryal of that market; in case it should answer, I may hereafter send the remainder, but if it should not Command
2/ or 2/6 per lb. at least it may be return'd; I am a Stranger to the matter, whether or not there is any duty on it, but as it is only intended as a Sample I suppose there will be no Occasion to enter or Clear such a trifling quantity. I also send Sammys Trunk With some Books and Cloths as also a pair of Stockins, which Sister Langley desired me to Convey to thee. I am with much Love to thee and thine Thy affectionate Brother

Robt. Pleasants

PS. I have given the Captain a parcel of Tobacco of my own Crop at Curles which I think very good which he has promis'd to have made up and to deliver to thee, I don't certainly remember whether or not thou hast learr'd to use Tobacco since living in Philadelphia but if thou should not perhaps some of thy Acquainse may accept of it.

49. RP TO ROBERT NECKS

Virginia Curles 12 mo. 9 1772

Dear Robert

I deliver'd to thy people a Cask of old puter weight Nett (as well as I remember) 84 lbs. directed to thy Care, which I request thou wilt have Exchanged for New for my own use agreeable to the following memo.

I wish thee a prosperous Voyage and am with respects to thy good woman. Thy Assured Friend

R. Pleasants

6 Deep Dishes Sorlid

3 platts oval ditto of midling Sizes

3 ditto Round ditto of ditto Sizes

Mark'd RP in Cypher.

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*Robert Necks of Norfolk, Va. was a commander in "the Virginia Trade;" he died September 1774. Pinckney's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg, Va.), September 29, 1774.*
Respected Friend

The foregoing is Copy of my last to thee which I now confirm and have now to acknowledge the receipt of thy favour of the 6th. ultimo which only came to hand yesterday, and by which I susjest my last never got to hand, and that Hudsons Bonds are mislaid or lost for thou may be assured they were sent to thee, and to the best of my remembrance were inclos'd at the same time and with William Hudson's Bond and the account proved against Eliz. Hudson in the first letter I wrote thee on the subject dated in the 4 mo. 1769 but as that affair has been of so long standing am in hopes it hath only slip'd thy memory, and that on examination thou wilt find both the Bonds and account among thy papers to enable thee to get Judgment thereon; but least that should not be the Case I send inclos'd a State of my demands both as her own proper Debt and that of her Husband John Hudson to whom she qualified as Executrix, and for which the Estate no doubt is at all times liable, but if the matter can be compromis'd by giving sufficient Security for the payment of my Demand against the Estate and still emediately deliver the two negro's as propos'd to work out her own Debt, It will be agreeable to me to have the matter Setled in that manner in case any objection should be made to selling any part of the Estate.

I request thou wilt advise me as soon as possible how things are likely to be setled or whether my presence will be necessary for if that
should be the case I would endeavor if health permit to be down in February next. I am respectfully Thy Friend.

51. RP TO BILLY

Curles 12 mo. 16 1772

Dear Billy

I received thine some months ago respecting two Books thou desired me to procure for thee but as yet I have not met with any of the kind, however if on receipt of this thou hast not met with any and still desires me to get them please to mention the titles again (for probably I may have mislaid thy letter) and will write for them to Philadelph/a or England.

I have just received a letter from my Friend John Pemberton\(^5\) dated the 30th. last month giving an account of the Decease of our Worthy Friend William Hunt at New Castle in Great Britain the 9th. of the 9 month of the Small Pox who had landed a short time before in the North from Holland had been at meeting at New Castle and Visited a Family or two afterwards, and was Seized Ill that afternoon of the small pox - appear'd the next day of which he had a heavy load. There is no mention of his Companion who must be in a tried Situation. He adds "the loss of such a Worthy is great and I hope as he has left a large family the Bless among you with the fatness of the Earth will remember that they are the offspring of one who gave up all for the gospel sake. If hast opertunity it would be well to convey notice to some prudent Friend or

\(^5\)John Pemberton (1727-1795), member of a wealthy and prominent Quaker family in Philadelphia, was the younger brother of Israel Pemberton. He was an energetic Friend, devoting himself to the service of the church, especially as clerk for the Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting and the Meeting for Sufferings. *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Pemberton, John."
Friends in that neighbourhood to Suitably convey intelligence to his Poor Wife."

I am unacquainted how thou art Situated as to distance from the poor Widdow but have sent this Sorrowful Account to thee not doubting if it should not be anyway Convenient to thee to visit her on the occasion thou wilt Convey it in the most Suitable manners together with my Love tho' personally unknown for I can truly say I sympathise with her as well as Friends in General more especially those whose Situation may most nearly feel the loss of such a Watchman.

I have also received an account of the Death of our Worthy Friend John Woolman\(^6\) with the Same Disorder at York in England who was also on a religious Visit. It is matter of real Concern to Consider how many of the brightest Ornaments have been within a few years removed out of the Church, and how few there seems to be fitted to stand forth in an Eminent degree for the Cause of Truth and Righteousness. It seems at times Clear to me, that it is a day of Close trial when every faith will be proved if not by outward affliction which our forefathers met with in a Sore degree, yet by a lukewarm or worldly Spirit which seems greatly to prevail in many places, and will prove (I fear) to our society much more prejudicial than the former. O may we ever Watch against every snare and temptation of the Enemy? My Dear Love Sallute thee Betty and the Children with thy Brothers and Sisters Generally Thy Affectionate Friend R. Pleasants

PS. Please Speak to Benjamin Jackson or wife about a debt they owe to my Fathers Estate and let me know when its likely to be paid the money is wanting.

\(^6\)John Woolman (1720-1772) was a Quaker minister from New Jersey best
Respected Friends

I am favoured with yours of the 15th. August per Capt. Aselby and
have received the goods you Ship'd me by the True Patriot. I intend
Shipping in that ship 4 hhds. Tobacco belonging to my Fathers Estate and
the same quantity of my own on which please make Insurance at £10 per
hhd.

I shall want a few articles from Bristol the next Spring and shall
be Obliged to you to Ship them by the first good opportunity that may of­
fer agreeable to the inclos'd list and am Your assured Friend.

Farrel & Jones per tho Guineaman

1 Cwt. Spanish Brown in 2 Caggs 1.
½ Cwt. white Lead in 2 ditto .15
¼ Cwt. Olive and ¼ Ct. Wainscot7 Coulered paint .15
½ Cwt. Stone Colour .15
12 Gallons Lincead Oyl in Juggs 2.
1 Cask 10d. Nails, 50 foot Glass 8 by 10 5.10
6 m. 20d. 2 m. 30d. and 2 m.flooring Bradds 5.
20 m. 6d. 20 m.4d. ditto 4.10
1 Ct. Good Glocester Cheese 2.
1 doz. Stand Ivory knives and forks with a Box 1.
1 doz. ditto Breakfast knives .10

£25.5

known for his efforts on the abolition of slavery. He died October 7, 1772. Dictionary of American Biography, s.v. "Woolman, John."

7Wainscot is to grain in imitation of oak.
Esteemed Friend

I send thee inclos'd our Company's Bill on Joseph Wharton Jur. at ten days sight for £ 59.15 Sterling being the amount of R. Tuckers protest and Damages received the beginning of this month but having had no suitable opportunity to procure a Bill on Britain, I judged it might be better to remit it in this manner, than to delay it, not doubting but thou may readily meet with a Suitable one in Philadelphia. Tommy Bates is just returned from Fredricksburg, where he went in order to have attended the Sale of Dixons Estate the 15th Instant but it seems the Lands were not Sold by reason that it was adjudged by an attorney present that Roger Dixons will would not be a sufficient Justification the Administrator to do so, and that it was necessary to exclude the Heir at law from the Equity of redemption by a Decree of Court which by agreement is to be done emdiately or as soon as a Bill can be filed and an answer put in, it being to be done by one attorney and is supposed may be completed in two months, when it will be again advertised for sale payable at the same time it would have been had it been sold as before propos'd except thou directs it to be done for ready money and in that case I suppose it will not Command half the Value, and beside the purchasers will expect a right made to them whenever it is sold. Now as it seemed to be thy Opinion that no personal security aught to be taken there seems to be no alternative from either taking Bonds with undoubted Security or setting the Estate for perhaps less than half its Value in which case be pleased

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8On October 22, 1772 there appeared in the Virginia Gazette an announcement of the sale of Roger Dixon's estate by John Dixon.
to give us thy opinion and direction which we shall follow. There are nine mortgaged Negro's sold to amount at £568 Current for which we have got Bonds with Security - payable in December next,⁹ and Lands to the amount of £1675 for which no Bonds are yet received or and discharges given on account of the illegality of the sale as before mention'd. Be pleased to advise what must be done and am respectfully Thy assured Friend

R. Pleasants

William Fisher Merchant Philadelphia

54. RP TO SAMUHEL PLEASANTS

Curles 12 mo. 19 1772

Dear Brother

I got home the 2d. Instant and had the satisfaction to find my family and Friends generally pretty well, and tho. I have been poorly since my return I think on the whole I am rather more hearty than before I set out on my journey.

I yesterday received thy favour of the 4th. Instant per Capt. Maxwell, and it is with pleasure I received the account of my nephews recovery from the small pox and measles, of which I have advised his mother. I am much oblig'd to thee for the apples, they are very acceptable, as ours laid up for keeping are none of the best, and I forgot to Order from Phila/delphi/a; as I am to my Sister for her kind present of China, I have not yet seen it but being of American production, It will make up

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⁹According to a notice in the Virginia Gazette, November 25, 1773, RP and Thomas Bates planned to be in Fredericksburg on December 15 to collect the bonds due for Negros sold from Roger Dixon's estate. In a letter to William Fisher, June 29, 1774, RP wrote that he and Bates were also to have executed "Deeds for the lands" but because their "power was not sufficient" due to some misunderstanding, RP asked to be relieved of his responsibilities in the case.
for many imperfections if that should be the case as thou intimates. Thou says thou shall debit me with £52.1.10d. the last years Interest due on my Fathers Debt to the Widdow Harrison, but in Order to save me the trouble of making so many different entries, it would be best to let both debt and Interest stand to one account until it be paid, and then send me the whole together; and as Thomas Pleasants hath purchase'd a parcel of Flour from John Bannister he agrees in behalf of our Company to take his Bond due to the Estate and direct thee to pass the amount on the 25th. next mo. to the Credit of that Sterling debt being £273.18 Ster. for £342.7.6 Current money for Bond and Interest to that time. And also to give my account Credit for £100 ster. which he has received towards my Bill on thee passed to Edward Stabler for the amount of three Negro's sold in Execution for John Hunt's demand against Pleasants & Robinson, a sum I did not expect they would have sold for, and had not Charles Woodson bid it I suppose they might have been bought in for much less money. I shall remit thee the Ballance due on that Bill as will as what I owe thee on my private account as soon as I conveniently can. I understand they have another Execution out, with an intent, I suppose, to get a Bit of Land which belong'd to our Brother if they can find it (but that seems to be question'd) or rather as others say to take Negro's belonging to our Fathers Estate to satisfy the Ballance due from Pleasants & Robinson which I apprehend they have not the Shadow of Right to do, and which, if they persist in, I suppose it will engage me in a Suit at Law, for it is what I can't consistant with my duty Submit to. I shall in due time give thee an answer to the Other part of thy letter and refer thee to our Comany Letter for further particulars. Be pleased to give my kind Love to thy unkle John Pemberton and let him know I received his letter per Crombie who arived here the 16th.
Instant and shall Use all possible expedition as well in procuring a Craft to fetch the Iron from the Eastern Shore as in disposing of it agreeable to his directions and most for his Interest, I have a Craft in view that draws little water.

55. RP TO GEORGE PARKER

12 mo. 21 1772

Respected Friend

Inclos'd is a letter from my Friend John Pemberton of Philadelphia received under Cover a few days ago with a request to procure a Craft with all possible expedition to fetch two third parts of a quantity of Pigg Iron and Castings under thy care or direction, in Consequence whereof I have agreed with the bearer Capt. Isaac Jones of the schooner Cobham burden about forty Tons and draws but little water to go for it, and being informed by my said Friend that a Vessl drawing 6½ feet water can load at the place where the Iron lies, and that there is about 35 Tons of Pigg and 7 of Castings saved with a prospect of getting more, of which I have told Capt. Jones he would get about 28 Tons, but in case there is more or any quantity under 40 Tons he is to take it. I hope the Captain will meet with no difficulty in the navigation and have all the dispatch in thy Power to give him, and am respectfully Thy Friend

RP.

To George Parker at Nancock\(^1\) Accomack County

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\(^1\)RP is probably referring to Onancock, a town in Accomack County on the Chesapeake Bay side of the Eastern Shore.
Dear Friend

In a letter to my Brother Samuel of the 19th, ultimo per Post I requested him to inform thee that thy letter per Crombis I had received and would in Conformity thereto would with all possible dispatch do the needful respecting the Iron, since which I am favourd with thine of the 30th. 11 mo. and 22d. ultimo per my kinsman John Pleasants who reached this place the 1st. Instant and have now to advise thee that I agree'd with Isaac Jonas of the Schooner Cobham burthen about 40 Tons 10, or 12 days ago for £18 this Currency to fetch the Iron from Nancock, she is a Vessel that the Capt. says draws but about 5½ feet when loaded and he appearing to be an industrious man I dont think could have found a Vessel more Suitable for the purpose and shall in a few days expect his return both with the Pigs and Castings, for he did not Choose to land a part without the whole at Norfolk nor did I insist upon it believing in case the Castings would not sell here the additional expence of sending down afterwards or Directly to Philadelphiwould not much exceed if any what he would have demanded for landing there on his way up. I think the freight too high but Considering the Vessel was so suitable and that I might not probably meet with another soon I was induced to agree to the terms and hope it may meet thy approbation, he is howiver to bring any
quantity for the same sum under 40 Tons so that if any more should have been saved as thou intimates there was a probability of it will make it come the lighter by the son. I have endeaver'd to dispose of the Piggs, but have not as yet succeeded, tho' I still think there is a prospect of doing it, for that purpose my endevers will be continued and as soon as anything material Occurs thou may expect to hear further from me in the mean time I desire my very kind Love may be acceptable to thee and thy wife from Thy affectionate Friend

R. Pleasants

John Pemberton

PS. I was truly Sorry to hear of the Death of those worthies William Hunt and John Woolman, I have wrote to a Friend in the neighbourhood of the family of the former to convey the account to the poor widow in the most prudent manner.

Virginia 1 mo. 25th 1773

Respected Friends

I wrote you of the 16th. ultimo requesting you to have Insurance made on 8 hhds. on my own and the Estates account intended per the Patriot Capt. Aselby, and to send me per the first suitable opportunity in the spring a few articles agreeable to a list then inclos'd about £25 value. This is intended per Capt. Aselby, and to inclose Bill of Lading for 3 hhds. Tobacco on my own and 2 hhds. on Account of the Estate which is all he could take in; but expect to increase the quantity per your next Ship, in case you should shortly have one in this River. Be pleased to send me the following goods by your fall ship which will oblige Your assured Friend

Robert Pleasants
Farell & Jones.

1 Cask 10d. nails 4.10
15 m. 6d., 10 m. 4d. and 5 m. flooring Bradds 4.10
100 feet glass ? by 9 and 20 lbs. putty 2.10
2 pair good Welch plains 13.
1 pair Duffle Blanketing 3.10
200 lbs. Sain twine 10.
2 Groce empty quart Bottles 2.
10 Sacks Salt 2.10
10 Groce Corks 0.10

47.10

58. RP TO DOBSON, DALTERA & WALKER

Virginia 1 mo. 25th 1773

Respected Friends

Your favour of the 1st. August and 25th. October per the Watt and Peggy with my account Current and Invoice of goods ship'd on account of my Fathers Estate per the former and shippd 6 hlds. Tobacco per the latter came duly to hand, and note the Contence. The Estate Account Current which you say you had sent did not appear and I suppose the Invoice of goods Order'd on my own account you inclos'd to Robert Pleasants Jr., but as it don't appear that he had order'd such goods, and they answering to the list I sent you, I make no doubt it was done through mistake, and accordingly have taken to them, be pleased therefore to give that account Credit and Charge the amount to me. I was from home at the time Capt. Atkinson left Four Mile Creek and not having yet receivd Bills of Lading
can't exactly say what Tobacco is onboard the Watt on mine or the Estates account but suppose 2 of the former and ... of the latter which hope may arrive safe and turn to good account. I propose shipping a few hhd's, on cash account onboard the Peggy per whom I may probably write to you again. I now inclose lists for a few goods on the Estates and my own account which be pleased to send by your fall ship, and am respectfully Your Friend

Rob: Pleasants

To D/obson7 D/altera7 & Walker Liverpool

List of Goods order'd on account of the Estate of John Pleasants from Dobson Daltera & Walker

1 pair white plains 13d.

2 pair ditto 15

2 pair Best ditto 17d.

1 pair fearnaught 2 double Groce Matale Buttons

3 pair Strip'd Duffle

6 doz. pair yarn Hose

6 Sacks Salt

And for my account please to send

1 pair Welch plains @ 14d. 5.5

1 pair ditto 5.10

1 pair ditto 5.0

1 pair Strip'd Blanketing 3.10

2 pair fearnaught. 2 pair Green half thick 7.10

5 doz. pair yarn Hose. 4 lbs. Bro. thread 3.10
1 readymade Great Coate, of a good dark Brown drab
with a Broad Velvet Coller and no Cape for a
person about 5 feet 8 Inch. high

1 double groce Mettle Buttons
1 ditto horn

1 Cwt. good Cheese, 2 Cwt. Oakam

59. RP TO DAVID & JOHN BARCLAY
Virginia 1 mo. 25th 1773

Esteemed Friends
Your favours of the 15th. February and 29th. April Including my ac-
count Current and Invoice of goods you were pleased to ship me per the
Lunn & Lloyd came duly to hand and proves to Satisfaction. These goods
I find brings me a Small sum in Your Debt, which I propose to discharge
as soon as I can meet with a Bill to my taking as well as for the few
linens I now inclose a list for which I request you will send me per
Capt. Necks, or any other suitable opportunity to this River with which
your Compliance will oblige Your assured Friend

Robt. Pleasants
David & John Barclay per Aselby.

2 pair strong Osnaburgh @ 9d.
5 pair good Hampen ditto
2 or 300 Eels Hampen Roles

which please to pack in a Chest
with lock and key or if it
should not be sufficient to
hold all a part of the Roles
may be omitted
60. RP TO JOSHUA FISHER & SONS

Virginia 3 mo. 4th 1773

Respected Friends

Your favour of the 12th. 1st. mo. is now before me and observe the Contence. The Convirsation between your Joshua7 Fisher7 and me had not Sliped my Memory but the want of an Oportunity prevented my Shiping the Tobacco til now, for if Jeremy7 Holden has been in Virginia since I believe he came no higher up than Norfolk, and returned before it could possibly be sent there to him. I have procured 6 hhds. which hath the Character of being very good, and which I am Just about to Ship on-board our schooner Peggy George Crombie Master who is now up the River taking in his Loading and may probably be ready to go down in 4 or 5 days.

If this Tobacco should not suit your purpose, and you should incline to make another triall, I should think it advisable to send by Capt. Crombies return a hand or 2 for a Sample which may by some governmet in the Choice of that article in future. I am very Respectfully Your assured Friend

Robt: Pleasants

Joshua Fisher & Sons

61. RP TO JOHN PEMBERTON

Virginia 3d mo. 4 1773

Dear Friend

I wrote thee of the 3d. 1st.. mo. advising that I had agree'd with the Skiper of a Vessel to fetch the Iron from Nancock; but contrary to

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2Joshua Fisher & Sons was a merchant firm in Philadelphia. See RP to Joshua Fisher & Sons, March 12, 1773.
his Promise and my expectation, he so far deceived me, as not to go til about 3 weeks ago, and have not since heard of him, but am hourly expect­ing his return.

I was informed some time before that he had declined the trip, but not knowing then where to meet with another Vessel so suitable for the purpose I sent him Word that I intended Suing him for damages, if he did not comply with his agreement. However I was at Norfolk about 2 weeks ago, when I fully intended to have got another Vessel, but was told by a Neighbour of his, that in Consequence of my Message, he had a few days before that gone for the Iron, but his longer stay than I expected, makes me begin to suspect that I am still deceived, or that some accident hath detained him, I offer'd £5.10 ster. for the Piggs had it come in time, and don't expect it will be in my power to obtain a higher price for them.

I am with Love to thee and thy Dear Wife Thy affectionat's Friend

R. Pleasants

John Pemberton

62. RP TO JOHN PEMBERTON

Virginia 3 mo. 12th 1773

Dear Friend

I wrote thee of the 4th. Instant per Post to which refer, since which the Iron is come to hand but turns out short of thy expectation, the quantity being according to George Parkers letter as below. I have not yet sold the piggs but am in hopes of meeting with no great diffi­culty in doing it, together with the Backs and some of the Fan Coggs and wheel Boxes, but believe the quantity is too large to be Wholy dispos'd of here, the other articles, with whatever of these can't be sold here, shall be forwarded to Philadelphi'a or any other place thou may direct;
perhaps it might be best to send the West India Bars directly from hence, if thou thinks so and will direct to what Island and to whom to Consign them, I shall take the first Opportunity of doing it.

With kind Love to thee and Wife I remain Thy affectionate Friend and Kinsman

R. Pleasants

40 West India Bars
23 Weights 56 lbs. each
2 ditto 28
3 ditto 14 and 3 ditto 7 lbs. each
76 Fan Coggs. 36 Griddles
288 Window Weights, 7 Iron Backs
2 small kettles, 2 spice mortars
141 Setts Chair Boxes, 101 ditto Cart
27 large Cart Boxes without matches
1,492 lbs. pigg Iron. weighed with Stilards

63. RP TO SAMUEL PLEASANTS

Virginia 3 mo. 12 1773

Dear Brother

I wrote thee of the 19th. 12 mo. to which refer since which I am not favoured with any from thee particularly directed to me. I am now to answer that part of thy letter respecting thy account against our Father, and am sorry to say, that, I apprehend I shall not be clear in making the alteration except the matter could be left to reference and determin'd so as that I might have a Voucher for it not from an apprehension of in-justice on thy part or Suffering on my own but because I think I have no power or right as an Executor to do it; It's true if the account had
perhaps it might be best to send the West India Bars directly from hence, if thou thinks so and will direct to what Island and to whom to Consign them, I shall take the first Opportunity of doing it.

With kind Love to thee and Wife I remain Thy affectionate Friend and Kinsman

R. Pleasants

40 West India Bars
23 Weights 56 lbs. each
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3 ditto 14 and 3 ditto 7 lbs. each
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288 Window Weights, 7 Iron Backs
2 small kettles, 2 spice morters
141 Setts Chair Boxes, 101 ditto Cart
27 large Cart Boxes without matches
1,492 lbs. pigg Iron, weighed with Stilards

63. RP TO SAMUEL PLEASANTS

Virginia 3 mo. 12 1773

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not been stated on my Fathers Book (which I find I had done soon after his Death), it might have been Suppressed; but as I act only in trust, it appears to me, that I dare not have done it; for beside taking on my self to act in a matter that I have no right to do, it might lay me open to Censure, which I wish to avoid, and I dare say thou would not desire me to incur on that score.

This is the result of much Consideration, wherein if there was any bias I am satisfied it was in thy favour, for had not a Brother made the demand I should not have hesitated, and hope when thou Cooly Consider the affair, and place thy Self in my Situation, thou wilt approve of the Conclusion. This is intended by our schooner Peggy Charter'd by Willia7m Hartshorn to load wheat for Phila/olphi7a. By her I send Six hhds. Tobacco for our Friends Joshua Fisher & Sons amounting to £273.18 S terrling, and to my account for £100 sterl. towards the discharge of the last years Interest due on our Fathers Debt to the Widdow Harrison and the Ballance to the Credit of my account. I suppose thou gave due Credit towards the payment of that Debt to the Widdow Harrison for £273.18 Sterling, and to my account for £100 sterl. towards the discharge of my Bill to Hunt as directed by our Company and mentioned in my last. I have heard nothing of late about the Other Execution which was said to be out against our Brothers Estate, or what further Step they propose to take for Getting the Ballance. Perhaps they may begin to see that it would have been more Christianlike, as well as more Consistant with their own present Interest to have accepted my offer of full payment next month, but now they have run the Estate to so much unnecessary expense they must get it as they can for I dont choose to ask any further favours of them. I Request thou wilt send me the under mentioned articles by return of Capt. Crombie or such of them as can be made ready in time
and the remainder if any such there be by the first opportunity. I suppose several of thy friends this way will write to thee by this opportunity so that I need only say they are in general pretty well except my self being yet very poorly, and it sometimes seems to me as if I should never again have the full enjoyment of health as heretofore, but if I can be preserved so as to be kept from making wrong steps I see no great cause to desire long life nor do I conceive it would be a blessing except one could be made instrumental for the good of others especially the young and rising generation. I send by Capt. Crombie half a dozen hams which please to accept and being joined by my children in love to thee their aunt and cousins conclude thy very affectionate brother

Robt. Pleasants

PS. I send by Capt. Crombie 9 half dollars and 8 dollars your money to go to my credit.

6 good hides suitable for chair bottoms
1 girls black sattin bonnet for Polly Pleasants
1 womans ditto with a hood
1 pair ditto stays to measure
1 wheat fan of seller's make for my own use
2 hhds. good northern rum. 2 Barrels sugar
64. RP TO JOSHUA FISHER & SONS

Virginia 3 mo. 12 1773

Respected Friends

Be Pleased to pay unto Samuel Pleasants on order one hundred and fifteen pounds, Current money of Virginia which place to account as per advice from your Assured Friend

Robt. Pleasants

£115

To Joshua Fisher & Sons Merchant Philadelpi7a

65. RP TO SAMMY PLEASANTS

Virginia 3 mo. 1773

Dear Sammy

I received thy letter by Capt. Maxwell. It gave me great pleasure to hear thou went so well recovered from the Small pox and Measles, and that thou had had those disorders in so favourable a manner, of which I hope thou, as well as my self, will be truly thankful to the Author of every Blessing, for believe it Dear Sammy, I greatly desire thy welfair, I know from a degree of experience that the only way to happiness, (altho persued by mankind various ways) can't be attain'd but by a discharge of known duty, or acting Conformably to the dictates of the Divine principle placed in every Conscience, which reproves for Sin and Justifies for well doing, the truth of which I doubt not tho'young in years thou hast in some degree been made acquainted with. Thou hast an opportunity beyond many others of Improvement, as well by the Company of good Friends, which I hope thou wilt seek and Love, as in useful Learning, and may, if thou makes the Right use of it, and hath an eye to him that can Bless or Blast thy endeavours, be made a bright instrument in his hand, but if not
reproach and Condemnation will be thy portion. Let me hear from thee as often as thou canst and tel Jamey when he can write to send me a letter or get thee to write one. Thy mother and sister was lately well, I send thee a letter but of an old date and am Thy affectionate Uncle.

R. Pleasants

Respected Friends

I wrote you of the 4th. Instant per Post to which refer and agreeable thereto I now Inclose you Bill of Lading and Invoice of 6 hhds. Tobacco per the Peggy Capt. Crombie which I wish Safe and to your Satisfaction; and in case the Inspectors at Warwick have made no mistake in the delivery of the Tobacco from thence (which I hope they have not) the whole hath been recommended to me as a Choice parcel made on fresh land and equal in goodness to any in the colony. I will remember your recommending the purchase of it from Shockoe Warehouse, but as little or none of the Mountain Tobacco is yet come down being the sort generally preferred, especially if we know by whom and upon what soil it is Raised or can get a recommendation from the Inspectors which could not be done at this time, I judged it more for your Interest to Ship such as I know was made on fresh and fine Land, than to purchase such that could not be depended on in either of those respects, from any warehouse Whatever. I should be pleas'd to hear that you approve of it, but if it should be otherwise, and you should

3A public warehouse "at Shockoe's on James River on the land of William Byrd, esq." was authorized by law in 1752. Hening, Statutes at Large, VI, p. 223. Apparently Shockoe's was located in Henrico County, very close to early Richmond.
incline to make another trial, be pleased to send me a sample of what will suit you and doubt not having it in my power to please you in the next parcel as well as any person this way. I have inclosed to my Brother Samuel Pleases an Order on you for the amount of this Venture which be pleased to pay being £ Virginia Currency and am with respects to every branch of the family Your Assured Friend

R. Pleasants

Invoice of 6 hhds. Tobacco Shipped by Robt. Pleasants onboard the Schooner Peggy George Crombie Master on the proper Account and risque of Joshua Fisher & Sons Merchants in Philadelphia and to them goes Consigned.

67. RP TO DOBSON, DALTERA & WALKER

Virginia 3 mo. 14 1773

Respected Friends

I wrote you of the 25th. January per the Watt to which please be referred and not having any of your favours unanswered, this Serves only to Inclose Bill of Lading for 3 hhds. Tobacco onboard the Peggy, one on my account and 2 on that of the Estate; and to request you will send me the tools agreeable to the inclosed list by one of your first fall ships on account of your assured Friend

Robt. Pleasants

Dobson Daltera & Walker

2 pair hollows and Rounds half pitched, 2 Setts bench plains
1 Jointer, 1 half pitched trying plain, 2 smoothing ditto
2 Common plains, 2 groving ditto 3/4 and 5/8
1 plow, with 8 Irongs, Sorted, 2 Sash plains, 1/2 Inch and 5/8
2 tooth plains, 1 Round Sole, 1 large Cramp and 2 small ditto
1 hold fast, 3 doz. firmers Sorted, 3 doz. gouges,\(^4\) ditto
3 bench Screws, 1 doz. files and 1 doz. Rasps Sorted
1 hand, 1 Tenant, 1 Sash, and 1 Dovetail Saw
3 Bow Saws, 1 doz. Mortice Irons Sorted
3 doz. hand, 3 doz. tenant, 3 doz. Sash and 3 doz. dovetail files
6 fish Skins and 3 doz. fins
1 Brace with 36 Bits Sorted
1 Oyl Stone and 1 Rub ditto

Ordered by Miriam Pleasants\(^5\) for her son John

68. RP TO JOSHUA FISHER & SONS

Virginia 3d mo. 30 1773

Respected Friends

The foregoing is Copy of my last per Capt. Crombie to which please to referred, and not being since favoured with any from you, I have nothing material to add more than just to say that I am apprehensive the Inspectors have made a mistake in the delivery of the 2hhd. Tobacco no. 3 and 4 and to let you know that in case they prove of inferior quality 1/ per b/\(\text{barrel}\)\(^7\) is to be deducted from the price they are Charged in the foregoing Invoice. I am as above Your assured Friend

RP.

To Joshua Fisher & Sons

\(^4\)A gouge was a chisel with a concave blade for cutting rounded holes or grooves in wood.

\(^5\)Miriam Pleasants was RP's stepmother, his father's third wife.
Dear Brother

I wrote thee fully by Capt. Crombie of the 12th. Instant touching thy additional charge against our Fathers Estate which I hope is before this got to hand, and my observations thereon meet thy approbation, which to hear will give be pleasure. Inclosed in the same letter I sent thee an Order on Joshua Fisher & Sons for £115.4.7 Virginia Currency, and Capt. Crombie receiv'd for £30 Pensylvania Money, to be applied to the discharge of Interest due on our Fathers Debt to Harrison, and the Balance to the Credit of my account, expect by his return to be advised that the former has Credit for £273.18 ster. on the 25 1st mo. last, and the latter for £100 ster. towards my Bill to Hunt remitted by our Company. I yesterday return'd from a Journey to Bedford County via Appomattox, where I found our Friends generally pretty well and met with thy letter per Holden and observe thy uneasiness respecting a report propagated of Rogar7 Atkinson7, which I find is spread in many parts of this Colony as well as with you, but I can with pleasure inform thee that whatever might be the Case last fall there seems to be no remains of it at present; he is now Sober Calm and Reasonable, indeed rather low spirited, and will scarcely believe that his behaviour at any time could be so inconstant as it really was towards his best Friends. It gives me great pleasure to see such a Change for the better; and the Sattisfaction it gives our poor Sister is easier felt than described, I wish it may be lasting, and from what he now suffers from a sense of his past Conduct, and the knowledge of the reports which he has been informed is spread of him here and in Philadelphi7a (for he insisted on Seeing thy letter) I hope it may be so7 Is present difficulty respecting his engagements
for land likewise contributes to his uneasiness and could he get suitable
Company I believe thou would soon see him in Phila/delphi7a indeed I wish
it was possible for thee to procure him the other £500, because on a
dependance of getting it from Phila/delphi7a he received the money here
and promised Bills at the Court in next month which I fear he cannot
otherwise comply with. Last week I was in company with our friend Thomas
Vickers at South River, he is much recovered and expect he may be able
in a short time to return homewards, this no doubt will be acceptable
news to his wife and Children.

Edward7 Stabler not being at home I ask'd one of his Store keepers
if thy Box of Calico's had got to hand, he said it had but was not yet
dispos'd of, tho' he expected as the season for the Caroline Waggons
coming in was now approaching they might probably be dispos'd of to them.

70. RP TO SAMUEL SNOWDEN
Curles 3 mo. 30 1773

Dear Brother

This may Probably be deliver'd thee by our friend William Hartshorn
on his return to Phila/delphi7a and having recommended him to call on thee
I doubt not if that should be the case, he will experience thy usual hos-
pitality. If thou hast any inclination to send down any Bar Iron to
James River for sale there is at present a good demand for it and believe
it would Command £22.10 to £25 - or if thou should not incline to do
that and can afford to send Six Tons per the first opportunity on the terms
thou offer'd me when in Maryland vizt. £25 your money I should be glad
to have that quantity, and will remit for it - either in pork Bills Cash,
or Corn. I lately bought some pork at 63/9 per Barrel but have since of-
fer'd it at 60/. Corn is now at 12/6 but is thought will rise before long.
I am still poorly, but find I am best for sturing about indeed I have had much of that this winter having been several Journeys since my return from the North and only yesterday return'd from one to the mountains. I have just received a letter from Brother J.T. giving an account of the welfair of Friends in Maryland which is the first advise of that sort received since my return. I am with much love and Affection to thee Sister and the Children with all Friends about West River Thy Friend and Brother

R. Pleasants

To Samuel Snowden

71. RP TO WILLIAM DAVIS

Curles 4th mo. 19th 1773

My Friend

Being informed that Thomas Adams intend this week to Rappahanock, in Company with my neighbour the Widow Cocke, to whom it is said he is Shortly to be married, I intend this by him to acknowledge the receipt of thy favour of 10th. ultimo which came to hand but a few days ago. I was glad to hear from thee (not having before had that pleasure since my return from Phila/delphia) but was really sorry to find that thou continues in a low declining state of Health; perhaps thou art low Spirited, but will tell thee for thy encouragement, that a noted Physician a little time ago wish'd me joy on being told I had a tertian ague,\(^6\) Saying it was a Symptom of Long Life, and that from his own Observation it had generally been so. How far Doctors are to

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\(^6\)Tertian ague is a fever characterized by the occurrence of a paroxysm every third day; an intermittent fever.
be depended on I must leave and only remind thee of what I hourly desire to have in Remembrance. How necessary it is to be prepared for a final Change. We read that "afflictions do not arise out of the Dust," I believe they do not, but are often intended for our good, and Sincerely wish every design of Providence may be accomplish'd in each of us, then if we should be incapable of Preaching, either from infirmity of Body, a Consciousness of the insufficiency of Human Acquisition, or from motives of a temporale nature, to appear publickly in that high station, We may nevertheless Preach by our lives and Conversations, and by divine assistance be enabled to accomplish our days work in the day time and so end well at last.

I have not yet heard of Capt. Randolph's arrival; when he comes to Curles, shall endeavour to execute thy Commission tho' if thou hast got clear of thy former Complaints (which I hope from thy Silence on that head thou hast) thou may be able before long to Visit thy friends this way. I dont recollect one material Circumstance relative to thy acquaintance this way worth relating. I rec'd a letter a few days ago from thy Pupil /sammy/ /pleasants/ who was well and hearty after going thro' both measles and Small-Pox together, but says, "he likes Virginia better than Phila/delphia." I shall be pleased to hear from thee whenever it is Convenient, and be assured every account of thy wellfair will be particularly pleasing to Thy affectionate friend.

William Davis
Respected Friend

I sent thee per Bishop (I think) the week before last the account relative to T.H. Christians which I hope thou received and that they would be sufficient to answer the purpose without containing every particular article since the mortgage especially as I sent thee at the same time Copies of Judgments obtained for those Debts in Charles City as Settled by himself, but if anything further be necessary be pleased to let me know it by Thomas Pleasants. I some time ago took the freedom to send my Worthy Friend Anthony Benezette a Copy of thy letter acknowledging the receipt of his Treatise on Slavery, and thy remarks on that trade induced thereto from my approbation thereof and expecting it would be very agreeable to him and not displeasing to thee which hope thou wilt excuse.

I have lately received a letter from him acknowledging the receipt thereof and expressing much satisfaction to find that a principle of Justice towards that unhappy people gains Ground in this Colony where people are so generally involved in the practice, especially among men in thy station so Capable of painting so detestable a Trade in its proper Colours. I have also received a small bundle of Books from him directed to thee which I shall take care to forward by thy neighbour John Harris or some other suitable conveyance that may offer. I should be glad to hear what success the Petition from our assembly to the King had in regard to a prohibition of the further importation of negroes; I find most of the northern Colonies have and are following so good an Example and am pleas'd that our House of Assembly should

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have carried the lead in that as they did in another matter of great Consequence to America and must ever reflect great Honour to the members which compose that House. I am respectfully Thy Friend.

RP.

PS. I have still on hand several of Blount's treatises intended chiefly to be distributed among the members of the House of Assembly. If therefore thou know of any among thy acquaintance to whom they would be acceptable should be glad to furnish them.

73. RP TO HADDOCK, SMITH & HADDOCK

Virginia 5 mo. 17 1773

Respected Friends

Your favour of 13th. July 1771, per Capt. Minion with the Quarter Cask of wine ship'd onboard the Shirly on my account Came duly to hand and note the Balance £2.19.2 in your favour. By Capt. Giles Stanton of the Brigg Polly our Company have had an opportunity of Shipping a small quantity of flour wheat and Corn to your address, to whose letter I refer you, and just add, that you will transfer the Balance of my account to our said Company having no opperture at present of making you a separate remittance and am very respectfully Your assured Friend.

Haddock Smith & Haddock

74. RP TO JOHN GREENWOOD

Respected Friend

Eliza. Hudson and her Brother Thomas Bracie who acted for her, having promised to deliver into thy hands for me a bond for thirty odd pounds of
one Moads or Mouds for the hire of 2 Negro's which they said was at that
time in Norfolk under the care of Henry Bracie or in his Desk as I be-
fore hinted to thee but finding they have not as yet complied therewith
I now send inclosed an order for the delivery of it or good W/est7
I/ndia7 Rum at the Norfolk price which they said Moud was willing to
pay about this time for the discharge of his Bond due in January next
and which I lately wrote them I was willing to take provided I could have
it to be here by the 10th or middle of next mo. I likewise request
thou wilt send me four double and 2 Single Blocks for Tacles. These
troublesome Comissions I hope thou wilt excuse on account of my dis-
tant situation and shall be pleased on any Similar occasion thou would
take the same Freedom with Thy obliged Friend.

John Greenwood

75. RP TO ELIZA, HUDSON OR THOMAS BRESSIE

May 17 1773

Respected Friends

Be pleased to deliver to John Greenwood on order or demand the
Bond for the hire of the 2 Negro's belonging to I/thomas7 Hudson's
Estate due in January next or if more agreeable good W/est7 I/ndia7
Rum at the Norfolk price in time to be here by the 10th, or middle
of next mo. at furthest whose receipt shall be good for so much in
discharge of E/liza.7 Hudson's Bond due 1st. January next according to
agreement with your assured Friend.

E/liza.7 Hudson or Thomas Bressie Norfolk County
Respected Friend

It seems the lott of ground in the Town of Gatesville which was
drawn in thy name, and which by agreement, I paid for, and was to have been
made our to me; was (as I am informed) convey'd by Deed from the Vestry
to thee. It will therefore be necessary to get thy Deed as the matter
now Stands before I can have a proper Right to it. Please therefore
to let me know whether it will be convenient to thee to come up to
our Store in a few days, in order to execute a Deed before Witnesses
that may attend Chesterfield Court, or if it should not to appoint
a Day when I may send a Deed with witnesses to have it done at thy
House for I suppose thou hast no Business which will call thee shortly
to that Court. I am Thy Friend

Rob: Pleasant,

To Richard Hayles per Rob: Pleasant Jur.

To Richard Hayles per Rob: Pleasants Jur.

Dear Friend

I should have acknowledged the receipt of thy favours of the 3d.
and 26th. 4 mo. before now, but being desirous of and expecting an opor-
tunity of disposing of the Pigg Iron with a Considerable quantity of
the Castings from time to time Occasiond my defering it, in hopes of
having it in my power before this to give thee that intelgence but
must now inform thee that my endevours for that purpose have not had

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8Also written as Hales.
the desired effect, owing (I apprehend) to the many failures and the
general Stagnation of Trade in Briton, which has greatly affected
that of this Colony. Thou may depend my endeavors shall be continued
for thy interest in the sale of these articles, but in case it should
not be in my power to Succeed to my wish in that respect I would thou
choose they should be sold for less than £5.10 ster. (the price they
have heretofore sold at, and what I was offer'd for them had they come
to hand in time) or to ship them to England at 7/6 freight and primage.9
A large quantity of Barr Iron I make no doubt might be ship'd from hence
to Bristol London or Liverpool yearly or if thou should choose to sell
any part of what thou may have in Rappahanock or Potomack Rivers, it
is in great demand here, and at present would sell I believe for £25
this Currency Exchange £ 30 per lb. on 6 mos. Credit. With Love to
Self and Wife I am Thy affectionate Friend

Rob: Pleasants

To John Pemberton

78. RP TO JOHN THOMAS

Curles 6 mo. 4 1773

Dear Brother

Thy favour of the 4th. 3d. mo. came duly to hand together with
my Dear Nancys letter inclosed; and was not a little pleased to find
that our Friends in your parts were partakers of Health, a Blessing
without which no temporal enjoyments can have a proper relish, farther
than as they may in prospect promote the Happiness of others, which

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9Primage was a customary allowance or tip paid to a ship's captain
by the shipper to ensure care in the handling of the cargo.
indeed would be no small satisfaction, were we not so often disappointed
in the application of them; and therefore as in Health every temporal
Blessing may be included provided we are not wanting to our Selves,
so it calls not only for thankfulness, but that we may so apply it
so as to sweeten the prospect of a future, when the present enjoyments
afford no real pleasure; this is what I would wish ever to have in View,
tho' the frailties of nature, and the seeming necessary attention to
the present affairs of life may too often occasion a diviation there-
from. I had also the pleasure of hearing of your Welfare by our
Worthy Friends Mark Reaves and Companion who hath attended our Yearly
Meeting much to our Satisfaction, by whom I understood thou Mother
and my Nancy were all from home, but why my Brother Philip could not
afford me a line or two by so direct an opportunity I know not except
it be my unworthyness.

This is intended by our Friend John Foreman who is on his return
from a Religious Visit to Friends in the South, who I recommend to thy
notice, he has but a small Testimony to bear, but I believe he is in the
way of his Duty, and is a tender loving Honest man, and a good Christian.
I long to see my Dear Nancy and Friends at West River, but despair
of having that Satisfaction soon, indeed I have so long been (according
to a frequent expression of one of our Neighbours) so Sorrrily,
that it sometimes seems very doubtful whether ever I may have that
pleasure again being very poorly at this time; and tho' from a Journey
I took to the mountains about 2 months ago I found my self so much bet-
ter as to hope I might have again recover'd my former Health yet my
Fever returning have in a great measure vanished those expectations.

I was sorry to hear of the Death of poor Jacob Fanklin, but be-
lieve he justly meritted the good will of most who knew him and hope he
made a good end, when that is the Case it Signifies very little whether we go now or 20 years hence, it hath been a sickly time in this Country and many have Died, but more particularly among the Negro's of Colo. Harrison of whom it is said upwards of forty already Dead and near as many now Ill of a disorder some say the Effects of much Mercury and going \[\text{?}\] they having been mostly enoculated the last fall for the small Pox but, Others with more probability Suppose it to be a kind of Coal Fever and I imagine it is not much unlike what so many of Samuel Galloways Died of some years ago. I have heard nothing from the Widdow Allan about her sons Estate in Harris hands. If she should continue her request for me to do anything further in it I have been thinking it might be the most undouted way to come at it by her qualifying as administratrix in Maryland and to have it certified and sent together with a power of attorney authenticated by a Seal of the Province.

79. RP TO SAMUEL PLEASANTS (?)

Virginia 6 mo. 7 1773

Dear Brother

Agreeable to what I sujested in my last, I am informed Roger Atkinson intend setting out for Phila/delphi7a, Via Wllia7msburg this day, and expecting he will call here on his way, I set down to acknowledge my Dear Brothers letter of the 8th. 4 mo. per Capt. Crombie (with the things sent me by him) to which this is intended a reply. It is out of my power at present to say or indeed to guess what time I may be enabled to discharge the legacys due from our Fathers Estate for the sums are large and the funds from which they are to be raised very uncertain but propose doing everything in my power to facilitate
the whole for I think its highly reasonable that each legatee should receive in proportion from time to time as the money may be collected. R/oger A/ltkinson's necessity calls loudly for his. C/ray B/riggs has been very solisitous altho not yet due, in short I can't see how such sums of money can be raised in time to give content, nor do I believe the Debts and profits of the Estate while the Children remain in their minority will be Sufficient. I therefore propose taking advise whether or not I can be Justifiable in Selling the Lands, Stocks, etc. not particularly given away, in Order the sooner to discharge the legacys; for I am ready to believe there can be no residuum til after they are fully satisfied; If such a Step can be legally taken, it may Save money to the Estate by Stoping Interest, and be no disad­vantage to the residuary legatees, in case the Lands should be thought liable to satisfy the Cask legacys before any other part of the Estate, I wish thou would also take advice and give me thy Sentiments on this matter for I really desire to do what may most conduces to the Interest of the Concerned and in a manner the most satisfactory.

If my Nancy should at any time write to thee for any necessary apparel I request thou wilt furnish her therewith and debit my account with the same, and should be glad at the expiration of each year thou would transmit me an account of Sammy's disbursements, as well to know the amount of such expence, as to make the necessary entries, and pro­vision towards the payment thereof, I should be glad to hear how he improves in learning, and how he conducts himself in other respects, thou may let him know that his mother etc. was well a few days ago, and tel him, I desire he will write to me by return of his unkle Atkinson, It would also be very agreeable to hear that Jamey Conducted to thy satis­faction.
Roger Atkinson can give thee so particular an account of our friends this way that I need say nothing on that head, more than just to let thee know that I have not yet recovered my former Health, and tho’ I thought I received considerable benefit from a Journey to Bedford County about 2 months ago, being more hearty for a time than for near 2 years past, yet my fevers have lately returned and am again but poorly, I hope this will find thee my Sister and the Children in good health and conclude with much Love to all Thy very affectionate Brother.

80. RP TO JOHN HALLOCK

Virginia 6 mo. 8 1773

Respected Friend

Above is Copy of my last, since which I am not favoured with any from thee, I have rented out the Land for the present year for £3.10 which is the most could be had for it probably it might fetch something more in Case thou resolves not to sell it, and would incline to give a lease for a term of years; but in that case there would be danger of its being renderd of little Value, if the tenant should not be Strictly limited as to cutting timber for there is so little now on it, that it would suit few if any person that has not other land adjoining Sufficient to Supply it with fencing; My Father by his last will and Testament has given me a bit of Land adjoining it, and on that account I should be willing to give the full Value, and in Case thou should resolve to sell it, and can be satisfied that one hundred pounds this Currency Dollars @ 6/ is the full value, I am willing to give that price for it, on thy sending a Deed attested by three Sufficient Witnesses who will attend our Court to prove it, for 50 acres more or less lying in the County of Henrico and colony of Virginia, being the same pur-
chased by James Hallock of John Enroughty by whose demise without Issue, thou as Heirs at Law to the said James hath the Sole Right Title and property in, but if thou chooses to have it exposed to public Sale a Power of attorney or thy own presence will be necessary in Order to convey a Title. I am very respectfully Thy Friend

Robt. Pleasants

To John Hallock West Chester County New York.

I recommend the Children to thy particular Care and notice, at least as soon as they may be of proper age to receive instruction. I am thy assured Friend.

81. RP TO ANN T. PLEASANTS

6 mo. B 1773

My Dear Nancy's letter dated the 30th, February I received with pleasure, It being the first time I had heard from thee Since my return, indeed thy distant situation from me in so unintelligible a Neighbourhood Occasions much Anxiety; but I hope as thou Canst write so prettily thou wilt not be too saving of thy paper and Ink, and I know thou hast frequent opportunitities of sending letters to the Post office, from whence they will meet a ready and safe Conveyance. I got well home, but have been poorly for a Considerable part of the time Since as I now am, so that it is altogether uncertain when or whether ever I may see my Dear Child; If I never should, I leave it as a Charge, as thou values my Blessing, or thy own Happiness to keep low and Humble, Strictly attentive to the dictates of unering Wisdom in thy own Heart, for "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom, and to depart from emiquity is a good understanding" let a degenerate
and depraved word say or think what it pleases. Thy Brother and Sisters have been for the most part pretty well til this day Bobby has had a Sick Stomach and Vomiting followed by a fever, but I hope it will go off again. Thy aunt Langley has been very ill, but I hear is now better, our other relations are as fare as I know pretty well and hope by the first opportunity to be informed of thy welfair and perfect recovery from the fevers thou says thou hast had. I expect thy Unkle Atkinson on his way to Philadelphia may be the bearer of this, by whom I propose sending thee a piece Callico for a Gown, it may probably be Sufficient to make thy little Niece one too if so Ordinary a one would be acceptable, give her a kiss from me, and my Love to thy Grand Mother Brother sister Unkles and Aunts as opportunity may offer. I wish thou would inform me from time to time what things thou may have occasion for the better to enable me to embrace any Suitable opportunity of sending them. I imagine thou wants a Bonnet and Shoes, if thou hast not got them, I expect if thou wilt write to thy unkle Sammy thou may get thy unkle Atkinson to down any Such trifle for L 7 and am Dear Child Thy affectionate Father.

R. Pleasants

To Ann T. Pleasants

62. RP TO WILLIAM BUMPASS

6 mo. 4 1773

Respected Friend

Above is a state of Charles Laynes Debt to me, ballance £14.17.2 including Interest to the 1st. of July next which I request thou wilt endeavor to settle with him as soon as possible, and for his encouragement to discharge it speedily thou may agree to give up about one half
the last article of Interest, and reduce it to £12 provided he will exert himself and pay that sum the ensuing fall, I doubt not thy endeavours agreeable to thy kind offer to collect this debt, and am with respects to self and family Thy Friend

R. Pleasants

PS. Inclos'd is a Copy of the Judgment obtained in the name of John Pleasants & Son, but is my property by agreement with my Father on a settlement of that Partnership. RP.

To William Bumpass Merchant Buckingham per John Lynch

83. RP TO RICHARD HALES

6 mo. 30 1773

Respected Friend

Not having had the pleasure of seeing thee when last at our Store and finding on examination, that if thou did make a Deed for the lot at Osbourns, it was never properly proved, and probably may now lie in the Clerks Office for want thereof, thought it more advisable to get a new Deed, and being desirous to have it prov'd at the Court this week, I send down one prepared with witnesses that I expect will be at Court, and request thou wilt execute it accordingly; I also send the Deed from the Vestry to thee by which thou wilt find thy Deed to me will convey no further title, or contain any further warrantee than thou art invested with by the other. Thy Compliance will Oblige Thy Friend

R. Pleasants

To Richard Hales.
84. RP TO FARLL & JONES

Virginia 7 mo. 6 1773

Respected Friends

Your Favour of the 23d. April per the Virginian inclosing my account Current and Invoice of Goods per Capt. Emms came duly to hand, I have examined my account Current and find it Right, and doubt not the goods being so too, but as yet they are not all come to hand. I have ship'd onboard the Neptune Capt. Seven hhds. Tobacco on my Account and have given Orders for the delivery of 10 hhds. Belonging to the Estate of my Father to go onboard the Virginian Capt. Emms, on both which parcels I request you will make Insurance at £8 per hhd. and am respectfully Your Assured Friend

Robt. Pleasants

Farell & Jones Bristol.

85. RP TO DOBSON, DALTERA & WALKER

Virginia 7 mo. 6 1773

Respected Friends

I intended this per Capt. Ashburn to acknowledge the receipt of your favour per Capt. Atkinson to which I may probably reply per him, this being principally intended to advise you that I ship'd 5 hhds. Tobacco onboard the Molly Younghusband, and 3 hhds. onboard the Jane, belonging to my Fathers Estate, and intend some more of the same Crop per Atkinson (if it can be got down in time) together with some hhds. of my own, and am respectfully Your assur'd Friend

R. Pleasants

Dobson Daltera & Walker
Respected Friend

I visited the prisoners in Chesterfield Goal and delivered thy message to them touching on Hebeas Corpus. I also advised them to that measure as well in expectation they might be relieved by the superior Court, as in the mean time to put them in a more Comfortable and less dangerous situation, than to me they now appear to be in for really I found the heat of the place and Stagnation of Air very great having only two windows tho' a very thick wall enclosed by another wall so high as to obstruct a free Circulation, which added to the natural heat of the season gave me to fear their lives were in danger. They did not seem inclinable to take any steps towards being removed to the publick Goal as not knowing whether or not it might better their condition, yet so long as the court of Chesterfield may think proper to keep them in Confinement, I request as a friend to mankind in general, and recommend it to thee in the strongest manner, as the chief Magistrate of the County to give directions to the Coaler to allow them more air by suffering the inward door to be opened in the day time for I dont imagine (were it practicable) there would be the least danger of an escape by men imprisoned on the Score of Religion and whose offence as far as I can find is no more than preaching. I have not even heard it Suggested (as I remember) by any that seditious words had been spoken or that any doctrines had been advanced by them tending to disturb the peace of the Community.

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1Archibald Cary (1721-1787), a wealthy planter from Chesterfield County, Va., active in local and state politics, was apparently at this time "chief magistrate of the County." He also represented Chesterfield County in the General Assembly, 1756-1776. Dictionary of American Biography, s.v. "Cary, Archibald."
I have long thought Dissenters were tolerated in all the kings Dominions but suppose the act of Toleration should not be deemed to extend to this Colony as the recital of it in our act of assembly seems to imply yet I apprehend both reason and Religion forbids persecution, for if that act is not in force here, surely such that by the spirit and intintion were made to supress to persecuting spirit of popery, aught not to operate against Protestants. Lord Mansfield in his Speech in the house of Lords on a case wherein a dissenter was defendant hath these expressions, "Persecution for a sincere thought \textit{Cercius}\textsuperscript{7}\ Conscience is not to be deduced from reason or the fitness of things. It can only stand upon positive law. Conscience is not controllable by human laws, nor amenable to human tribunals. Persecution or attempts to force conscience will never produce conviction; and are only calculated to make hypocrites or Martyrs. There is nothing certainly more unreasonable, more inconsistent with the rights of human nature, more contrary to the spirits and precept of the Christian religion, more iniquitous and unjust, more impolitic than persecution. It is against natural religion, Revealed Religion and Sound Policy." Indeed I believe there is scarcely an instance where persecution hath not frustrated the end proposed by it, and instead of suppressing generally promotes the doctrines of the persecuted; and always tends to the disadvantage of every Government, especially in young countries, by discouraging useful inhabitants, for instance we need only compare the present state of this Colony with such that from the beginning have allowed a general toleration, and where it hath ever been a maxim never to oppress one sect or denomination of Protestants to support or establish the Chuch or Clergy of another. I am far very far from holding with some of the tenates professed by this people, yet seeing it is the natural right of every man to enjoy his own oppinions, I would never wish
to see them changed but by conviction in their own minds for we find
from experience that every man of Body of men may, and often hath been
mistaken in matters of religion, and therefore it would be unjust and
unreasonable in the highest degree to attempt to fix a Standard of belief,
and endeavour to force Conformity therto, which would in fact be Con-
demning the primitive Christians, the first reformers and justify those
that put them to death. In short I apprehend the direction of Conscience
belongs to no man and persecution to be contrary to the whole scope and
tendency of the Gospel, which breathes, "peace on Earth, good will to
man." Nor do I believe the Christian religion was ever propagated by
the Sword, on the Contrary as Voltair justly observes, "Persecution is
productive only either of hypocrites or Rebels. The more the Christian
religion is divine, the less doth it belong to man to direct it. Can
you think of maintaining by means of the executioner the religion of God,
who was ignominously put to death by the executioner" and that were
councillor among the Jews (Viz:. Gamaliel) saith, "If this work be of
man it will come to naught, but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it,
least haply ye be found fighting against God." It appears by the heads
of some parlementary debates, published in the Virginia Gazette about
two weeks ago, that there are some laws now in force in England against
Dissenters, which are not or have not been put in execution from motives
no doubt of sound policy and an apprehension that they are unreasonable
and unjust: If thou on a Solid Consideration should see such laws of
Virginia in the same light, I can't suppose it could be a duty incum-
bant on thee or any other magistrate to enforce them. My motive considered
I hope thou wilt excuse this long letter and believe me to be respectfully
Thy friend.

PS. I send thee (as promised) an appendix to Blackstone's Commentaries
on the laws of England and recommend to thy serious consideration the
remark of Priestly and Furneaux on some paragraphs of that work; and it
would give me great pleasure to hear thou wert disposed to discharge
the Sufferers from their present confinement, which deprives of the Com-
forts of life, and the greatest temporal blessing they can enjoy for
without liberty we can't be said to enjoy any.

RP.

Colo. Archibald Cary

87. RP TO SAMUEL PLEASANTS (?)

Curles 8 mo. 28 1773

Dear Brother
I have now to acknowledge the receipt of thy favour of the 12th,
ultimo per Roger Atkinson and now inclose thee George Wythes'
Opinion respecting some (to me) doubtful points in our Fathers Will,
which are corroborated by Ben Waller who are esteemed the Best Council
in this Colony. They are both clearly of opinion that the Lands not
otherwise disposed of belong to the residuary legatees, and cannot be
made liable for the payment of Cash legacies but that the Stocks etc.
are, and according to which I propose to act by disposing of the latter
the ensuing fall or so much thereof as can possibly be spared from the
plantations without prejudice to the future Crops. Jonathan and Tommy

2George Wythe (1726-1806), a prominent lawyer living in Williamsburg,
3Will of John Pleasants, Valentine Papers, II, p. 1116-1128.
4Benjamin Waller (1710-1796) was a lawyer of distinction who prac-
ticed in Williamsburg. His career included positions as clerk of the
council, burgess for James City County, 1744-1761, and judge of the state
admiralty and state general courts, 1776-1785. Tyler, Encyclopedia of
Virginia Biography, I, p. 351.
seem very desirous to have the Lands sold this fall and nor have I the least Objection more than from an Emagimation they will likely sell low at a time when Cash is very Scarce, but as it is uncertain when A more favourable Opportunity may offer as to that point, I don't know that it might be attended with any advantage to keep it. If therefore thou wilt join in the Sale and impower some person to act for thee (for I suppose thou would not choose to have a division, as I believe by that means every Share would be rendered of less value) they may be advertised and Sold to the best advantage.

Thou wilt find by Wythes Opinion that in Case the funds appointed for the discharge of Debts and Legacies are not Sufficient, to answer those purposes, the Money legatees must abate in proportion to their several demands, and as I am apprehensive that may be the case, it will be necessary for my Justification, to have the approbation of the legatees, before I can leave the matter respecting Phil to reference, except thou wilt emamnifie me in case of a deficiency, and their dissa sent to my said reference. The appraisement of the Estate is compleated and the amount of the whole is £12143.11. 3/4 of which £9722.10 are Negro's but the Inventory being a long one cant at this time send a Copy of it but if thou desires to have the particulars let me know it, and it shall be sent hereafter. I think our Crop of Wheat is pretty large, but not so good in quality as last year; I have had some thoughts of shiping 1000, or 1500 Bushels to Philadelphia on my own and the Estates account had there been a prospect of its answering, but as it appears at present as if the price here would keep up to 5/ and thou says it is the general Opinion that the price with you will be much lower than for many years it is such a discouragement that I don't know what to do, I wish however thou would emediately inform me what thou thinks a
Cargo of wheat would be likely to fetch at that market in next month, and whether thou would choose to be concerned in it the wheat I propose shipping intended as a remittance for the Ballance due on the Widdow Harrison's Bond and towards thy demand against the Estate. There is an error in thy last account Current against the Estate, I suppose the Ballance was taken from the one I returned including a Charge for Phill, which I informed thee before I could not be slow'd Consistant with my Station as Executor. I have lately been Ill, but am now about again. I should be glad to See thee in Virginia when thou canst make it convenient but have no intention at present of taking a Journey to the Northward this fall. I shall endeavor to execute thy Order for trees if any Opportunity should offer at a suitable Season I suppose the next month would be too early to remove them. I am with much Love to Self and Family Thy Affectionate Brother.

88. RP TO JOHN PEMBERTON

Virginia 8 mo. 28 1773

Dear Friend

Thy Favour of the 5th. ultimo per R/oger A/tkinson came duly to hand and note the content. A few days before the receipt of which I sold the Pigg Iron at £5.5 Ster. but on a long Credit or at least conditionally so, for in case it should not be convenient to him to pay for it at the October Court, he is to have Credit til the January Meeting but as the sale will Enable thee to settle with the Ensurers. I hope the time of payment will not be attended with any inconvenience to thee. But am sorry to tel thee that the quantity has fallen greatly Short of what G/orge Parker mentions it weighed by Stylards the quantity being only 14 3/4 Tons. I can scarcely suppose the Skiper could be such a Villain
as to make way with any part of it and rather conclude the Styliards
were bad or that Parker must have made a mistake in the weight. I ex-
pect to have an Opportunity before long of shiping the Castings which are
unsalable here to Phila[delphia]7 and thou may depend I shall embrace
the first Opportunity of so doing. I have expected before this to have
seen our Friends Mark Reeve and Companion on their return, but as yet
have heard nothing from them more than an imperfect account of their
being sick in some part of Carolina. With Kind Love to Self and Spouse
I am Thy affectionate Friend and Kinsman

R. Pleasants
John Pemberton

89. RP TO FARELL & JONES

Virginia 8 mo. 29 1773

Respected Friends

I wrote you of the 6th. ultimo advising that I had Shiped Seven
hhds. Tobacco onboard the Neptune Capt. and intended ten hhds. be-
longing to my Fathers Estate onboard the Virginian Capt. Emms, and to
desire you to make Insurance on both parcels at £8 per hhd.; since
which I have received none of your Favours. I have now to advise you
that Capt. Emms took only 9 hhds. of the Tobacco belonging to the Estate
but have Ordered three onboard the Nancy Capt. Room belonging to the
said Estate. My Friend Thomas Evans will inform you that by agreement
I have liberty to draw on you for 80 or £100 on this Tobacco's, and hope
as the money will be wanted in the mo. of October towards the payment of
some demands against the Estate, my Bills on you from that Court will
meet due honour; and shall be obliged to you to advise me whether or not
such Consignments will be agreeable to you in future, If so on what terms
will you allow me to draw Bills on you on Tobacco ship'd, making a sufficient allowance for whatever goods I have Occasion to order for the use of the Estate. I am respectfully Your assured Friend

Robt. Pleasants

Farell & Jones

90. RP TO FRIEND

Curles 9 mo. 6 1773

Respected Friend

Having lately been in the neighbourhood, I fully intended to have waited on thee, but being disappointed therein, I have just to request thou wilt advise me how Christians' affair goes on, whether the account sent thee were sufficient, or whether any further information may be necessary; for as I have not seen any mention of it in the papers, as expected, I was apprehensive something might have obstructed its progress; indeed I am apprehensive, if Christian should take it into his head to made defence, neither he nor I might live to see an end to the affair; if that should be the case, which I hope it will not, would it not be advisable to have its dismissed in the General Court, and renew the Suit in one of the County Courts where the land lies, but as the matter is wholly submitted to thy direction, I only mention this for thy consideration in Case it should so happen, not doubting thy care or diligence in forwarding all in thy power an affair which I am very desirous to have brought to a speedy Issue as the nature of case will admit.

Observing that the Books sent by our Friend Anthony Benizett, which were forwarded by John Harris about three months ago remain'd at his

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house, I took them from thence with intention to leave them at thy House but my not going there and forgetting to give any Orders to Leave them afterwards my Servant brought them away which hope thou wilt excuse. They are now returned and am with kind respects Thy oblig'd Friend

R. Pleasants

PS. I send thee Inclosed 50/ on account of thy fee against Christian. per Samuel Parsons.

91. RP TO DOBSON, DALTERA & WALKER

Virginia 9 mo. 25th 1773

Respected Friends

I wrote you of the 6th, 7th. mo. last advising of my having Ship'd 5 hhds. Tobacco onboard the Molly and 3 hhds. onboard the Jane since which I have received your favours of the 30th. May and 10th. July the first inclosing Invoices of Goods both for the Estate and my own account and the latter Covering account Current. I have examined the Estates account and find it right, except the article of Interest, which I have not yet fully exam'd, but find a Credit by his Book of Interest to October 1770 making a Ballance agreeable to your account of £309.15.7½ in your favour at that time which I purpose hereafter to compair with your account of that date, and shall take care to make due remittance for any deficiencies which those not yet accounted for may fall short which are 4 hhds. Tobacco per the Watt, 2 per the Peggy 5 per the Molly and three by the Jane beside what may have been ship'd this fall onboard the Watt and Peggy for which I have received no Bills of Lading or any account of the quantity but its out of my power to make you an e'me'diate remittance as you desire, or at least before the new Crop is Inspected when I hope to have it in my power to compleat it. The goods I received last fall
per the Watt which through mistake were invoiced to Robert Pleasants Junr. amount to £41.16.5 which if not done be pleased to charge to my account; I cant rightly make out the last charge in my account Current said to be for goods per the Watt and Peggy £43.15.10, but suppose a part of that sum is for goods received per the Crosby, be pleased to explain that matter in your next. The Tobacco Ship'd on my own account not yet accounted for are 1 hhd. per the Peggy, 2 ditto per the Watt, and what was now onboard that ship the last voyage, and now in the Peggy, but at present I am not certain of either quantity. I have and shall continue to urge my Partners to forward with all possible expedition the payment of whatever Ballances they may owe you, and have had some reason to expect it will nearly or quite be compleated this fall. It certainly has been longer due than it aught, but you rely on loosing nothing by
Your assured Friend

Rob: Pleasants

PS. Our Company has Ship'd a parcel of Pigg Iron onboard the Peggy esteemed of the best quality.

92. RP TO JOHN HALLOCK

Virginia 9 mo. 27th 1773

Respected Friend

Thine of the 2d. 7th mo. inclosing a power of Attorney to sell the Land which did belong to thy Brother James, is now before me, but whether it will be sufficient to empower my son in Law and me to convey a good right, without being proved by three witnesses in one of our Courts, I can't as yet certainly say, but may inform thee hereafter, in the mean time if it can be done without inconvenience, it may be less liable to be disputed in case of thy Death, if thou would confirm it by thy will. I
propose to remit the money as thou desires this fall, by the way of Phila-
delphia and make no doubt but my brother who will have instructions
about it can do it to Thomas Franklin to his and thy Satisfaction.

Thou may depend on our Care of the Children, and as soon as the ac-
count of Adminst. is passed in Court I propose sending thee a Copy for
thy Satisfaction to see that all Justice is done and intended towards
them. I have had a hint given me that one Rd. Randolph on behalf of one
Sharpe has wrote to William Hylton of New York to make thee some
proposals about the land, and perhaps as they know thou hast impowered
Thomas Pleasants and Self to sell it, something may be insinuated to
our prejudice as a pretence for such application.

I am the more apt to believe this may be the case as I know the one
is too apt to engage in things of that nature without duly examining the
validity, and the other not to stick at trifles to accomplish his ends
or revenge affronts which I understand he has said behind my back I had
given Occasion for; If that should prove to be the case, I should be glad
to know it, and believed it is in my power to Justify my Conduct in re-
spect to the trust committed to our care to thy Satisfaction, in the
mean time I shall just relate the affair as it was. Sharpe has land
joining as well as myself, and seemed desirous to purchase. I had told
him in case thou should send me a power of Attorney to Sell it I would
let him know, accordingly after the receipt of thy last I did inform
him of it, and desired to know what he would give, he evaded that, by
desiring it might be put up at public sale, I told him thou had left that
disintional in us, and as it suited none but him or me he might say what
he would give for it, which he still declined but said it was not worth

6The word "offer" is written in above "proposals."
£100, I sometime after let him know that I had concluded to keep it my self without informing of him what price I was to give for it; but tho' it was not for sale I offered to exchange it for a bit he own'd on the other side of me which he seemed to deline and said no more to Me about it. Now as it was never in my Heart to desire to deceive thee or hurt the Children, yet if thou should have any Doubts in thy mind (as at such a distance insinuations of that sort may naturally enough sudjist) I have not the least objection to thy appointing any other attorney, for I am determined never to gratify any man that would attempt to blast my Character behind my back. I am respectfully Thy Friend

R. Pleasants

PS. There is a Watch belonging to thy Brothers Estate unsold and as I know he expressed great value for it on account of its having been long in the family, would thou choose to have it preserved or sent to thee?

RP.

John Hallock

93. RP TO SAMUEL PLEASANTS (?)

Curles 10 mo. 3d 1773

Dear Brother

Thy favour of the ultimo is come to hand but have not time now to reply to it, this being only to advise, that as I am shipping a quantity of wheat onboard the Rebecca (Jire?) Holden master on account of my Fathers Estate, to request thou wilt have Insurance made thereon in Case he should not arrive by the 25th. Instant to the amount of £400 your Currency or rather leave it discretionally to thee to do it sooner

7The word "purchase" is written in above "keep."
if from Bad weather or any other Circumstance thou should think best, tho,' as Holden is so well acquainted with the Coast I don't apprehend much risque. I expect he will leave this place by the 10th. by whom I intend writing thee more fully, I expect our Company will write thee per this post, and am with much Love to thee and thine Thy affectionate Brother

R. Pleasants

PS. Please to inform thy uncle John Pemberton that the castings are Shiped onboard the Rebecca Holden, or at least such as would not sell here but on very slow and unprofitable terms.

94. RP TO SAMUEL PLEASANTS

Curles 10 mo. 1773

Dear Brother

I wrote thee of the 3d. Instant per post requesting thou would make Insurance (conditionally) on wheat which I was then Shiping onboard the Rebecca, Holden belonging to our Fathers Estate. I now Inclose Bill of Lading for the same being Bushels on that account and on my own. The Net proceeds of what belongs to the Estate must be applied first to discharge the Ballance due to the Widdow Harrison, which I believe is £121.9.6 ster. beside the Interest that may have arisen on that debt since last year, and the Ballance towards the legacies due from the Estate to thee. When this Sale is compleated I should be pleased to have a particular account of Harrisons Bond with the Interest and payments, made out and sent me distinct from any other transactions.

I expect there may be yet remaining up the Country 5 or 600 Bushels more of wheat belonging to the Estate which I propose also if opertunity offer to ship to Phila/delphi7a in case it can be done without Manifest
loss which must depend on future advices. In respect to the proceeds of
my own wheat I request thou wilt as soon as in Cash remit to Thomas Fran­
lin of New York 153 dollars or a Sum equivalent thereto for the use of
John Hallock of that Province being for so much the purchase of a Bit of
Land the late property of his Brother James Hallock Deceased of this
Colony, and desire to have a receipt for that sum accordingly when paid.

This Cargo of wheat is Chiefly of the red kind and as the [Crops] on this River are generally of that sort I apprehend it would scarcely be
practicable to collect any quantity of the white, so that if the Vessel
thou proposes sending to Virginia, is not saild before the receipt of
this, and thou should find the quality of this Cargo not to suit your
market (which I hope will not be the case) and thou still desires of the
white kind, it may be easily procured on Pamunkey River if thou wilt
order the Vessel up to Cumberland Town and direct the Capt. to send an
Express over to us (being about 24 miles) and follow our directions to
take it in at that or other landings where it may happen to be I make no
Doubt it may be procured to thy liking however thou wilt likely have an
opportunity of seeing a sample of the Kind by Capt. Crombie who loads as
thou wilt inform'd for Joseph Wharton in that River by reason of Holdens
refusal to go round and in Consideration of My Shiping the like quantity
in his Vessel, which he (Joseph Wharton) has requested also to have,
but as it is chiefly intended as a remittance to thee towards the dis­
charge of money for which the Estate will be paying Interest, I did ap­
prehend it may be more advantageous to dispose of it on a shorter Credit
than perhaps he might expect and no doubt more agreeable to thee to re-

---

9 The words "in part" are written above "for so much."
9 The words "50 acres" are written above "a Bit."
caive a Commission on it, however I request thou wilt give him the preference to any other purchased and hope it will be in thy power to procure a price that neither my own Interest nor that of the Estate may suffer by the risque. I purpose advertising the Lands for sale belonging to the residuary legatees, thinking it best to dispose of them to the first agreeable offers and as no person will have a right to make Deeds, without thy power of attorney I don't propose to sell them at public sale until I hear from thee again; If thou art dispos'd to send such a power it may be ready in case any such offers should be made for the whole or any part of them, and its likely a very suitable opportunity may offer of having it proved by Capt. Crombie and his men, but I think its necessary there should be three witnesses at least to do it authoritically. I propose sending thee the suppos'd quantity and value of those Lands and also of the Other Lands which our Father Died possed of, and by some future opportunity a Copy of the Inventory and Appraisement of the personal Estate as thou desires. I have not been unmindful of thy request respecting Trees hominy and Potatoes but have only sent a Barrel of the latter per this conveyance which I desire thy acceptance of, for I apprehend it is too early in the season to remove trees, and having no proper Old Corn, and the new being yet too soft for Hominy, neither of those articles can be furnished as yet.

Inclosed is a list for a few articles which I request thou wilt procure and ship onboard the Peggy at her return to Virginia. By the last account I had from our Friends on Appomatox they were mostly pretty well; I have had some expectation of seeing Sister Langley at Curles this week, but perhaps the badness of the weather may have prevented.
165

197 doz. Calf Skins 8 black'd on the grain and 4 on the flesh side
9 yds. Screen wire, 17 Inch Brod
1 doz. fann Riddles of the fine or middle size (Iron wire)
1 doz. mens and 1 doz. womans shoe lasts sorted
2 Black Satin Bonnets for my Dear Polly and Niece Jane Pleasants
1 Best Beaver hatt for my own use, and 1 pair Strong double vamp'd winter Shoes
100 lbs. loaf Sugar Single refined
3 Juggs Linseed oyl (the Juggs sent per Holden) about 8 gallons

about 150 acres of Land Bought of Samuel Wever in
Cumberland Cost £.100, and may probably now be
worth about (its poor land) 125
about 200 ditto Bought of John Salmon in ditto
worth as I am informed about 100
about 400 ditto mortgaged by H. Harcher and sold by
and decree of Cumberland Court and made over to
C. Woodson, but is the property of the Estate,
tho yet in Possession of Hatcher 240
about 200 ditto Bought of ?fra? Brothers in Bucking-
ham for which I was offered last spring 100
about 200 ditto in Prince Edward County Value about 150
about 1150 ditto in Bedford being one half of a larger
tract about 2300 undivided Value unknown but per-
haps about 500

1215
Dear Friend

I received Thy favour of the 15th. ultimo, in answer to which I am still of the opinion a quantity of Barr Iron would sell on the terms before advised, especially if I could receive certain advise of its coming by the time of our Meeting in Williamsburg the beginning of next month, when the Merchants are generally collected, and when they commonly engage the several quantities they may want from the Iron Masters who attend there. I requested my Brother in my letter to him of the 3d, Instant to inform thee that I propos'd shipping the Castings onboard the Schooner Rebecca /Jose? Holden, which I have accordingly done agreeable to the Inclos'd receipt, they being unsellable here or at least at the Original Value, and I did not know whether thou would choose to have them Sold at Vandue for what they would fetch. The Eyes of the Window Weights are so rusty, that people imagin'd they would not Answer, the Boxes are generally too large and greatly mismatch'd so as to render them of little value here, and the West India Barrs would not sell at all but as Pigg Iron.

I am not yet certain whether I can furnish Sales of the Pigs and the castings left behing at this time for want of the weight of a few setts of Boxes sold in our store, if I do not intend forwarding it shortly. The Letter for our Friend Mark Reeve came to hand too late to be deliverrd him in these parts he having past us about a week before, it is now return'd, and desire when opertainment offers thou would give my Dear Love to him and Companion. I shall be pleas'd to hear of the safe arival of our Dear Friends S. and D. Morris, as I am that we may likely have visits from the English Friends thou mentions, and earnestly desire we may make
the right application for such repeated favours. I am with much Love to thee and Spouse Thy Friend and Kinsman

R. Pleasants

John Pemberton

Due John Pemberton in account with R. Pleasants

1773

5 mo. 15 To Cash paid Freight

5 mo. 11 To Commission or

£109.2.9 5 per barrel

To Storing and storage

10 mo. 11 To Commission or

£109.2.9 5 per barrel

To Ballance

5.9.1

84.13.8

109.2.9

1773

8 mo. By 13 3/4 Tons Pigg Iron payable in January next

Exchange @ 30/ per barrel

10 mo. By 7 Iron Backs 973 lbs.

8 weights 119

1092

8.3.9½

49

123

550

21.13.1½

722

6.9.11

12.2

109.2.9

By Ballance per account Sent 84.13.8
96. RP TO JOSEPH WHARTON, JR.

Virginia 10th mo. 8th 1773

Respected Friend

I had a Sight of thy Letter to our Company wherein thou requests that the wheat ship'd onboard the Rebecca, Holden, might go on thy account; I should gladly have obliged thee in that matter, had it not been Circumstanced in the manner it being chiefly ship'd on account of my Fathers Estate, as a remittance for Money which has been some time due to my Brother in Philadelphiæ, who having been solisitous about it I concluded it would be the quickest and most agreeable way to remit it in that manner. In consequence thereof I had wrote to him on the subject, and directed him to make insurance on it, so that I did not think my self clearly at liberty to alter Its destination, altho from the price Current of that article last received I am very doubtful a loss will be Sustain'd, I have however requested my Brother to give thee the preference and hope it may equally answer thy purpose. I am with kind respects to Self and Spouse Thy assured Friend

Robt. Pleasants

Joseph Wharton Jur.

97. RP TO JOHN HALLOCK

Virginia 10th mo. 8 1773

Respected Friend

The foregoing is Copy of what I wrote thee per Post, and having agreeable thereto by this Conveyance made the remittance to my Brother Samuel Pleasants of Philadelphiæ such of which I have directed him to pay Thomas Franklin of New York 153 Dollars in part of the Land the late property of thy Brother James in case thou art fully Sattisfied in
respect to the price offered, but if not I have no Objection to the matter lying until thou art so, for I never meant to deceive thee or take any advantage in the purchase, on the contrary, I should not have recommended the Children to thy Charitable notice had I not been disposed to serve them, and don't wish to purchase the Land at an under value, I still believe the price I offer'd was as much or more than any other person would give, but of that thou wilt be a better Judge if Hylton should have got instructions to make thee an offer on account of Sharpe as before hinted I have not but taken advice whether or not the power of Attorney already received may be sufficient to convey a proper Title, but hearing one Bernard Markham is gone or going to New York by winter with a Cargo of wheat, its probable if this gets in time to hand he and 2 or 3 of the people belonging to the vessel might be good Witnesses to any further Writing thou may choose to execute, but the name of the Captain or Vessel I cannot inform at present but no doubt if thou art disposed to accept my Offer, and will send me an absolute Deed for the 2d. 50 acres of Land more or less lying in the County of Henrico on Four Mile Creek Bounded by Williamsburg Road the Lands of Richmond Sharpe and thy self, or a power of attorney specifying the Bounds thereof, no doubt thou may be informed by an enquiry among the Merchants of the said Markham (who is an acquaintance of mine) and would I doubt not willing undertake do anything of the kind. I am respectfully Thy Friend

R. Pleasants

John Hallock
Dear Friend

As I presume thou still carries on a Considerable trade, and own Sundry Vessels, it may not be disagreeable to receive advice of the situation of our Wheat Market, for if thou should see a prospect of advantage in Speculating in that article, its probable it may be generally done from this Colony, on better terms than from Philadelphia; in that case, I tender our best endevers and believe our Situation and Convenientes are at least equal to any in this part of the Country, as well for the purchase of the best red wheat (which is the kind generally raised on this River) as the dispatch of Vessels. Our Crop is large, the quality midling, but of that thou may have an Opportunity of Judging for thy Self by Holdens Cargo. The price is not yet fixed but the Farmers expect 5/ per Bushel our Exchange at present 30 per b/ushel. There is however so great a Scarcity of money among us, that should thou incline to purchase for ready Cash I make no doubt it might be done in next month to great advantage - perhaps as low as 4/ or 4/6. My Son in Law Thomas Pleasants and son Robert are concerned with me in trade our Firm Robert Pleasants & Co.

I have not yet receive d the promised policy of Insurance from J. Hunt made on Our Tobacco onboard the (being only 3 hhd's. Shiped) the premium on which we paid him £ but by his delaying to give the wanted Sattisfaction it looks as if he never intended to fulfill that

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1James Pemberton (1723-1809), the brother of John and Israel Pemberton, was a highly successful merchant and very active Quaker in Philadelphia. Dictionary of American Biography, s.v. "Pemberton, James."
engagement. I am loth to give my friends unnecessary trouble, but should thou have a convenient opportunity and no particular objection they speaking to him again about it will be an additional obligation. With kind Love to thee thy mother in Law and Children I am Thy oblig'd Friend and Kinsman

R. Pleasants

To James Pemberton

99. RP TO JOHN THOMAS

Curles 10 mo. 14 1773

Dear Brother

Thy Favour of the 23d. ultimo came readily to hand, nor do I apprehend much risque in letters by the Post Miscarrying according to the present regulations thereof, and hope thou wilt not be discourag'd from making further trials, for it always gives me pleasure to hear of the welfair of my Friends at West River more especially my Dear Nancy our Mother etc. and I have little reason to expect that satisfaction from any but thy self or my Nancy who I think might write more often, which at the same time it might be an improvement to her and would be an additional pleasure to me to Observe what improvements she may make in that way; Indeed I am very thoughtful about her learning, and request if it is practicable, Her kind Unkle would endeaver to get some person to instruct her, if it should be but one or two days in a Week it might be of Singular Service, and should Gladly pay the expence, or as My Good mother has now another Motherless, Granddaughter to keep her Company perhaps she might consent to Nancy's boarding at Brother Snowdens or going to Phila/or Phila if a Suitable Opertunity should offer this fall for I have little expectation of seeing her before next Summer or fall, for
being so engaged Matters that can't be deferred, I apprehend if Health should admit (which thro' Mercy is at this present better than for some time past) Such a Journey could not with any degree of Convenience be accomplished Sooner. Thou may let the Widdow Allan know, that Benja-min Harrison has promised to pay the amount of her Sons Estate in his hands, at the Court this month in Williamsburg, but I don't put much dependance of getting it, but if he fails intend to continue duning of him or order suit for it.

Our Company having a Considerable quantity of Lisbon wine on hand which I think very good of the Kind I wish thou would enquire among thy acquaintance and Merchants in Anapolis and advise whether or not 40, or 50 quart Casks Could be dispo'd of at £8 your money beside freight and Commission which probably might be 10/ or 12/ more and in Case thou thinks it would answer, please to let me know whether thou would accept of such a Commission, or if not, who would be the most likely to undertake it.

With much Love and affection to thee Mother Nancy and all Friends I remain Thy Friend and Brother

R. Pleasants

John Thomas WEst River.

100. RP TO FARREL & JONES

Virginia 11 mo. 25th 1773

Respected Friends

I wrote you of the 28th. 8 mo. to which please be refered, since which I have received your favour of the 30th. July per Capt. Samson with the Bale of Cottons etc. Ship'd on my account onboard the Eliza.

This is Just to advise you, that agreeable to my Last I have drawn a Bill on you of this date in favour of Gray Briggs for £50 ster, on
account of my Father's Estate, which I request you will honour and Charge it to account of that Estate accordingly. I propose to defer any further draft until Capt. Samson sails, and by him I intend to ship 4 hdds. Tobacco on the Estates account to your address. I am respectfully Your assured Friend

Robt. Pleasants

To Farrel & Jonas Merchants Bristol

101. RP TO HENRY BRESSIE

November 22d 1773

Friend Henry Bressie

My Son in law Thomas Pleasants informed me that thou or thy Sister was dissatisfied with the Settlement I made with her the last [---ricter] and insinuates that I had taken an advantage of thy absence to impose upon her; which is an unjust surmise; and had thou called upon me as thou gave him to expect, I believe I could have convinced thee that no part of my conduct towards thy sister merits such censure. I did for many years furnish her with necessaries for the support of her family, which was pretty large, and more expensive than the profits of the Estate would answer and who must have Suffer'd without thy assistance and indulgence; This I was induced to allow, as well from respect to the family, as a firm belief of her upright and honest intention, how fare she may deviate therefrom I must at present leave, and only observe at present, that should she take any Step to deprive me of my right, I shall most certainly believe it will be more from the influence of others than her own inclination.

It is not reasonable to Suppose I should at 100 Miles distance know anything of thy absence at the time I was at thy Sisters, nor did I
over understand from any person whatever that thou alone was her dependance in settling her affairs; her brother Thomas was present and privy to the whole, and I believe he and every other unprejudiced person will allow that no advantage could possibly be taken by dismissing a suit than at issue, allowing her a longer time to pay the debt, without the least addition save interest, which I suppose thou wilt readily grant is not an equivalent for the use of money, to me however it is not. As to the particular matter thou mention'd about the hire of the Negro's due from Bonner, I apprehend no reasonable person could suppose me accountable except it had been received, I did hire him two the year before belonging to the estate of Pleasants Jordan, which he paid very honestly, and had not the least doubt of his doing the same with those belonging to that of John Hudson; he agree'd to give considerably more than any other person had offer'd, and could have no other intention than at thy sisters request, to hire them on the best terms I could without fee or reward. I should however be glad to know what I have to depend on, and if thou wilt shew thy sister this letter and inform me of your result, it will oblige thy friend

Robt. Pleasants

102. RP TO ELIZA. HUDSON

November 22d 1773

Respected friend

I wrote thee the 17th. of May last requesting thou would deliver according to agreement to John Greenwood the bond for the hire of Negro's which becomes due in January next, or West India Rum to the amount by the 10 or middle of June last; since which I have not heard anything particular from thee, but understand by a message received from thy brother
Henry that thou or he is dissatisfied with the settlement (altho it was
Exactly agreeable to thy former bond) and that I have nothing to expect
without further trouble. I really imagined what was done had been per-
fectly agreeable both to thee and thy Brother Thomas, indeed I am at a
loss to guess how any one fully acquainted with the circumstance of af-
fairs, and my Conduct towards thee can be dissatisfied. I dismissed a
Suit then at Issue and granted a long indulgence, not because I did not
want the money, but to enable thee to pay it without prejudice to the
Estate but find I am likely to get abuse rather than thanks for any favours
heretofore conferred on thee or the family, altho from thy former conduct
I cannot yet believe such conduct is the result of thy own mind but
rather that influence of other people who perhaps in the end may not
demonstrate the Friend more than the whole of my conduct towards thee has
manifested. I have wrote to thy Brother Henry on this Subject and desired
he would communicate the contents to thee and advise me as soon as possi-
ble Your Result and am respectfully Thy Friend

Robt. Plessants

PS. If thy Son is not engaged, and thou and he are willing he should
come a month or 2 on trial and then be bound, in case he and we approve,
there is now a vacancy, and believe if he is not too old, there may be a
probability of his improvement in our store.

To Eliza, Hudson Great Bridge
103. RP TO RICHARD TEMPLEMAN

November 22d 1773

Respected Friend

I wrote thee last spring that I had left my account proved against the Estate of William Hudson with thy Neighbour to be delivered to thee the Widdow promised to pay it in April last. If it is received be pleased to deduct thy Commission for trouble and pay the Ballance to John Greenwood but if not and no certainty of its being done soon I request thou wilt deliver him the account and am respectfully Thy Friend

Robt. Pleasants

To Richard Templeman Merchant Great Bridge

104. RP TO ROBERT BOLING, JR.

11 mo. 1773

Respected Friend

Thy favour of the 1st. instant is now before me the content whereof is duly noted, and thou may depend I shall omit no suitable opportunity of endeavoring to procure the Vines and Books requested, but wish thy letter had come sooner to hand because as the winter approaches our Communication with Phila and Phila by water is generally obstructed, whereas earlier in the fall opportunities are very frequent, indeed one of our own Vessels is now hourly expected from thence. If my situation or connections should put it in my power to be any way Serviceable to thee either in the promotion of so laudable a design wherein the public may be benifited, or thy own interest or amusement be promoted thou may without appogy freely command. We have Corrispondants both in Spain and Portugal where we sometimes send vessels, and probably in the course of this winter may send to both those Kingdoms, If therefore thou should
think any Vines can be imported from thence suitable to our Climate
(which from the little variation of latitude seems not unlikely) let me
know what kinds thou thinks will be most likely to answer and shall with
the first seasonable opertunity endever to procure them. I am very
respectfully Thy Friend

R. Pleasants

Robert Boling Junr. Buckingham County

105. 'RP TO SAMUEL PLEASANTS (?)

Curles 12 mo. 7 1773

Dear Brother

Thy favours of the 6th. and 10th. ultimo came duly to hand together
with the articles ship'd on my account per Cromble as also thy kind presen-
tent of potatoes Apples and Cranberries which were very acceptable; the
Vessel that brought these things from Norfolk tho', she call'd at Petersburg
was Stuf'd enough to land the apples and 1 Cagg of Cranberries inten-
tended for Sisters Langley and Briggs at this place but I met with an
Opertunity of forwarding them Yesterday. Thy favour of the 22d. to our
Company came to hand last evening and have forwarded it to our T/homas/
P/leasants/ not yet return'd from the meeting of Merchants in w//illia/mburg
who having had (I believe) some offers of Vessels on Charter was
very anxius to hear from thee but I find thine is not finally conclu-
sive on that head which I am apprehensive may be attended with som incon-
venienc.

This is intended by Sammy Fisher on his return from North Carolina,
but his short stay here I expect may prevent me from writing so fully as
otherwise I might do, however shall endever to reply to the most Material
parts of thy letters and give such other Inteligence as may appear
necessary. I observe our Wheat is sold, and tho' at some loss I doubt not thy having done the best in thy power for the Interest of the Concern'd, tho' I cant help thinking by the present very brisk demand for that article here chiefly to fulfill orders from Philadelphi/a that the price must advance with you and probably with us too.

Crombie I suppose may by this time be in Hampton Road and also Holden. I wish he had not taken the freight at this advanced season but hope thou wilt give him all possible dispatch and by that means prevent his being detained by Lee in Delaware; I had not an oportunity of writing by him but directed Bobby to inclose a letter from Robert Boling requesting my indies to procure him some particular kinds of vines, which he has been inform'd may be procured from one Lucock for whom a letter was also directed, now as the Cultivation of vines may be of Singular Service to this Continent, and so good an Opportunity will offer of sending them I request thou wilt if practicable furnish them, as also the Books he there mentions, the expence of which please charge to my account. If my kind Sister should have had an Opportunity of procuring the chairs, they may also come by the same Opportunity and request thou wilt send Me 2 lbs. of the best Hyson Tea. I shall take care to comply with thy request about Hominy when a Suitable opportunity may offer, but there is little prospect of my having it in my power to make thee any considerable remittance on account of our Fathers Estate more than the wheat I before Mention'd to thee, or at least within the time thou requests it, tho' there is Tobacco and Corn to dispose of more than will be necessary to Supply the people and plantations with necessaries but it seems the prices of both those articles are likely to be low thou may however depend I shall use my utmost endevours to give thee and every other claimant all possible Satisfaction.
I suppose Thomas Pleasants will apply for the 51£ thou mentions of Booker & Field, tho' the former is Dead, as is also Capt. Hylton whose Estate I hear is pretty much involved, so that I don't expect thy money will very soon be received but not doubting Thomas Pleasants will advise thee particularly of these matters. I refer thee to his letter and Old Sukey is also Dead, with much love etc.

PS. I send thee inclos'd Capt. Clubs Bill on his wife for £ which please received and pass to the Credit of my account.

106. RP TO JOSEPH WHARTON, JR.

Curles 12 mo. 7 1773

Respected Friend

Having so direct an Opportunity by Sammy Fisher, I have just to advise thee that the Harriot loading was compleated yesterday, and that she left her Moorings early this morning with a fair Wind with 8422½ Bushels wheat and 7 lb. 3 lb. Barrel staves. This cargo I suppose will be short of thy expectation, but really I think her full deep, and as her hold was quite full, together with a Trunk which extended from the Main-mast to the Windlass Bitts I think it would have been imprudent to have desired him to take any more.

I suppose our Thomas Pleasants who is not yet return'd from Williamsburg will inform thee of his having Charter'd the Neptune Capt. White burthen about 1000 Bushels in consequence of thy proposal for Barcelona, and shall expect her at her Moorings in a few days and in the mean time to facilitate her dispatch intend loosing no time in procuring Craft to send out for the Wheat. I propose sending over to York River tomorrow to see how the Schooner comes on in her loading. Wheat is in
great demand am apprehensive of its rising.

Referring thee to our T/homas7 P/leasants7 who I doubt not will keep thee regularly advised from that scene of action I conclude Very respectfully Thy assured Friend

R. Pleasants

Joseph Wharton Junr. Philadelphia
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<td>Younghusband, Capt.</td>
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VITA

Betsy August