

Thomas Jett
Colonial Merchant
(b. 1725-35-d. 1785)

Introduction

An understanding of the life of Colonel Thomas Jett helps us to understand the life of a Virginia Gentleman in the 1700's. Thomas Jett lived in the same area of the Colonies as his contemporaries George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

Probably the best summary of the life of Col. Thomas Jett can be found in Jeter Lee Jett's Book entitled The Jett and Allied Families. According to this book, Thomas was born in the first quarter of seventeen hundred, probably around 1721. Other sources place his birth between 1725-1730. Interestingly, we do not know exactly when he was born. His parents were William Jett (1700-5-1762) and Ann White (1701-1781). He was born in Richmond County. The area where he was born became part of King George County, Virginia .

Thomas Jett was married twice. The first marriage in 1757 was to Elizabeth "Storke" Washington Vaux. His second marriage was to Susanna Lee ("Sukey") Washington Washington Jett. Yes, a woman named Washington (maiden name) married a man named Washington. For more information on the marriages and children of Thomas Jett see the "Notes" for this chapter.

Thomas was called Colonel in some of his correspondence. It is believed that he served in the Virginia Militia. We know that Thomas Jett acted as a Colonel along with William Barrett in 1775 in Westmoreland County. At the same location, a Peter Jett served as Captain. (See Pension Application of William Bowling S16040) . It is interesting in that William Bowling discusses how part of his service in the Revolutionary War involved watching enemy shipping on the Rappahannock.

Although records are not complete, I did find that Thomas had served in the French and Indian War. He also provided some services during the Revolutionary including being appointed to purchase horses for the Army. Also in the Pension Application of Rawleigh Tappscott (VAS1951) we learn that Thomas was purchasing cattle for the military service in 1782. Although Thomas acted as a Colonel, his real service during the Revolutionary War was as a merchant and in trade. The Virginia Militia played a role in defending against attacks in Virginia and Maryland which tried to disrupt the Colonies through the attacks upon ports, the tobacco industry and fortifications.

Thomas's son, William Storke Jett, enlisted in the Westmoreland County militia in 1779 and served until 1781 when he promoted to first lieutenant and continued service through the close of the war.

Thomas died in 1785.

Thomas Jett as Public Servant

Sheriff

Thomas served in numerous public capacities during his life. Jeter Lee Jett states that Thomas served as “High Sheriff” for his county for a number of years. My research has confirmed that he did serve as one of several “sheriffs” but I could not find that he served as “High Sheriff”. The position of Sheriff was an important position in colonial times. Often the sheriff would be appointed by the governor of Virginia and would serve for a couple of years. Among the responsibilities of the sheriff were to carry out the orders of the local courts, overseeing prisoners and carrying out punishments. In addition, it was the responsibility of the sheriff to collect taxes including colonial, county and vestry taxes. The sheriff served as the head of the county and also oversaw the proper collection of poll taxes on all eligible voting citizens. During the period that a person served as sheriff, it was necessary that the person resign any position held in the Virginia House of Burgesses which was the colonial legislative body which worked with the Governor of the Colony. In some ways, the position of Sheriff seems to be a collection of responsibilities that are now done by Mayors, Sheriffs, County Assessors and Tax Collectors and County Commissioners.

Justice

Jeter Lee Jett says that Thomas served as a “Gentlemen Justice” for his county. This position identified people to be taxed. This list of individuals was known as a “tithables” list. These taxes were a tithe which was used primarily for the expenses of the county along with the parish expenses of the Anglican Church and for the poor. This “tithe” was payable regardless of whether you went to church at all and regardless to what church you went to.

Not surprisingly, Thomas was often engaged in legal matters, making petitions to the Virginia House of Burgesses, serving as Executor on wills and as guardian and trustee on occasion. In fact, in one of his letters to an overseas merchant in Great Britain, he requests that he be sent Blackstone’s **Commentary on the English Law** which was the preeminent book discussing English law. In papers filed by Robert Morris to the Continental Commerce Committee dated February 17, 1778 referred to “Tho. Jett, Esquire” suggesting that Thomas Jett may have been an attorney. He only uses the term “Esquire” with Jett and not with the other merchants. Back in the early years of our country, the term “Esquire” generally (but not always) referred to attorneys.

Tax Official

Thomas Jett in his many capacities was often involved in the area of taxes. We know that Thomas Jett during the years 1783-1784 served as a Tax Commissioner dealing with Specific Taxes on items such as corn, barley, oats, hemp and tobacco. The territory covered by Thomas Jett included, Richmond, King George, Westmoreland and Northumberland counties.

Notary

Thomas Jett was a notary. In 1784 we find him giving a notary on behalf of John Scott (VAS4378) certifying a statement by Captain William Saunders that Scott had served three years in the Virginia Navy. This is interesting not only because Thomas is doing the notarization but also because Captain William Saunders is the same individual who would later certify that John Jett served in the Virginia Navy. Also there is at least one record which indicates that at one point, Thomas Jett served on the Committee overseeing the Virginia Navy.

It would not be surprising for Thomas Jett to act as a notary. One of the tasks for the Colonial notary was to verify bills of exchange. Bills of exchange were documents in maritime trade and acted much like a bank check and could be transferred from person to person. Thomas was involved in the tobacco business and in the business of international trade of tobacco and therefore acting as a notary would be plausible.

Commission of Oyer and Terminer

One may wonder whether a family member ever came into contact with someone famous. In the case of Thomas Jett, there is no need to wonder. Thomas Jett was appointed to a Court of Oyer and Terminer on October 1, 1760. The term Oyer and Terminer means to listen and determine. This was a very important Virginia Court which could hear cases assigned to it including criminal cases. This court, made up of 16 persons, was called to hear a case in King George County involving a slave of Joseph Strother who was accused of murdering her daughter, Joan

Serving on this commission/jury was George Washington who was 28 years old at the time and Thomas Jett who was about 37 at the time. Also serving were two of the richest men in Virginia, Charles ("King") Carter and his son Charles Carter Jr. There were also two of the Skinker family, one of whom would marry into the Jett family. Another was John Knox who came to have a well known fort named after him (Ft. Knox).

A preliminary search by me did not turn up the judgment of this panel. It is interesting, however, that Thomas Jett was included among these rich and powerful men including the young George Washington.

Member of the House of Burgesses

Not only did Thomas make petitions to the House of Burgesses, he served a member of the House on several occasions. The House of Burgesses was the legislative house of Virginia. It originated laws which were then reviewed by the Governor of Virginia and his Council. Although we do not have complete records of the House of Burgesses, we know that Thomas Jett served as representative of King George County from 1777-1788. It was in the House of Burgesses, that Patrick Henry gave his famous "Give me liberty or give me death" speech. From a practical standpoint, the House of Burgesses formally ended. In 1776. The royal governor of Virginia, Lord Dunmore, fled from Williamsburg, Virginia in the face of Patrick Henry and the Hanover militia. Dunmore fled and sought to govern Virginia from a British warship. His efforts against the Revolutionaries included burning Norfolk and plundering rebel plantations on the James, York and Potomac Rivers.

In 1770, Thomas Jett signed the Virginia Nonimportation Resolutions. These resolutions, passed by the House of Burgesses, prohibited a long list of products from Great Britain. The resolutions were promoted by George Washington and George Mason. There were a number of notable patriots who signed this document including George Washington, George Mason, Thomas Jefferson, Richard Lee, Francis Lightfoot Lee, Benjamin Harrison and many others.

The House of Burgesses which continued to meet thereafter became known as the House of Delegates. Virginia's new form of government then consisted of a General Assembly made up of the House of Delegates (the successor to the House of Burgesses) and a Senate. The Governor of Virginia from July 6,

1776 until 1779 was Patrick Henry. Virginia's next governor from June 2, 1779 until June 1781 was Thomas Jefferson.

After the immediate period after which the loyalist governor, Lord Dunmore, fled, the Virginia House of Burgesses set up a Committee of Safety to take over governing of Virginia in the absence of Dunmore. Jeter Lee Jett in his book claims that "Thomas Jett presided as chairman pro tempore of the "Committee of Safety." I have been unable to substantiate that fact.

Vestryman

In Colonial Virginia, the parish like the county, was an important part of the government. Prior to independence, the parish in Virginia was part of the Church of England and taxation was part of the means by which the parish was supported. Each parish had a vestry and it was the vestry which dealt with internal affairs of the parish. These obligations included the support of the priests and the church buildings. It also involved the care of the poor and the responsibilities of seeing that those who acted immorally were submitted to the court system. Part of those responsibilities including setting up the annual parish levy which was one of the primary and largest of the colonial taxes in Virginia. At various times in colonial history the vestries were also responsible for maintaining local roads and ferry services although by 1730, this was primarily handled by the counties in Virginia. Interestingly, at various times it fell to the vestries to act as "tobacco viewers" to make sure that not too much tobacco was being planted in the parish.

Thomas Jett served as one of the Vestrymen for Hanover Parish. Bishop William Meade who was the third American Episcopal Bishop of Virginia lists both Thomas Jett and his Jett's friend friend, John Skinker, as being vestrymen on lists covering from 1723 to 1779.

Director and Trustee of Leeds

The House of Burgesses in March of 1761 appointed Thomas Jett as one of the eight directors and trustees of Leeds. Leeds is a small port town on the Rappahannock River very close to where Thomas lived. Leeds through its history has had a number of different names including Bray's Church, Bray's Warf, Leeds and Leedstown. One of the other members was the patriot Richard Henry Lee who brought the motion in the Second Congressional Congress calling for the liberation of the colonies from England. Another trustee was Charles Carter Jr. who was the son of John ("King") Carter who was the largest and most wealthy landowner in Virginia owning 13,000 acres of land in 13 counties of Virginia and member of the House of Burgesses. Two of the other trustees for Leeds were Philip Ludwell Lee and John Tayloe. Both were attorneys and both served on the Kings Council advising the Governor of Virginia.

Thomas Jett as Merchant

Thomas Jett was a merchant. Not only did he have his own tobacco farm but he had warehouses at Leeds for tobacco and other products. Thomas would grade tobacco and store it. He would also ship tobacco on ships and often receive payment in goods which would be merchandised through his store in Leeds. Also in connection with his shipment of tobacco he would be involved in the financing involved in the transactions. Leeds during the time of Thomas was a "port" city and port cities were at various times in the history of the colonies required to maintain warehouses.

Thomas worked closely in his business with John Morton Jordon of London and Leeds. Morton had three vessels and Thomas Jett worked as his storekeeper in Leeds. After the death of Morton, Thomas bought out Morton's interest in the warehouse and store and began trading directly with England for his own account. A quote by Emory G. Evans about businesses of the Virginia merchants was that they "operated stores, loaned money, served as agents and factors for English firms in both the tobacco and slave trades, managed estates for absentee owners, rented land, owned parts of vessels in the Atlantic trade, operated ferries and ironworks, and held a variety of remunerative public positions." This seems to be a fair description of the businesses of Thomas Jett.

A review of some of the extant documents pertaining to Thomas Jett shows letters in French and English to Bordeaux, France, correspondence to London and letters relating to consignment of goods. In 1777 we know that Thomas Jett, who was a Proprietor of Bray's Warehouse in Leeds, asked to be allowed to remove his warehouse to his land adjoining the town of Leeds. This may have been in response to a command from the House of Burgesses to move those warehouses located next to the waterways. One source which reported that the resolution said:

"And whereas it is represented, that the landing of the warehouse at Bray's, in the town of Leeds, is very inconvenient for the publick, Be it therefore enacted, that Thomas Jett, gentleman, proprietor of the said warehouses shall remove the same to the most convenient place on his lands adjoin to the said town."

Although this has been cited as one of the earlier examples of government regulation, it is much more likely, in my opinion, that since this occurred in 1777 during the first year of the Revolutionary War that Virginia was seeking to make it much more difficult for the British to raid the warehouses along the waterways. As we will discuss later, England used its ships to attack and pillage the key spots of trade along the coast especially those of which were not fortified or protected.

In addition there are various documents relating to the inspection of tobacco at a Public Warehouse at Bray's Warf and bonds given in the presence of Thomas Jett.

The Tobacco Industry

It seems to be that an understanding of colonial history, slavery in Virginia and the Revolutionary War is dependent upon understanding the tobacco industry and how it affected the colonies.

John Rolfe in 1612 obtained Spanish tobacco seeds which produced an outstanding tobacco. The Virginia tobacco became accepted in Europe and Virginia in the early seventeenth century. A system of tobacco inspectors and also established warehouses and developed port towns for the shipment of tobacco quickly developed. Tobacco rapidly became the primary crop of Virginia.

In 1730 the House of Burgesses passed the Tobacco Inspection Act which required that tobacco be inspected and graded at 40 different locations.

To keep the economic system working, tobacco required two items. The first was plenty of land in which to cultivate the tobacco. The second was cheap labor. The property owners initially utilized indentured servants but soon began to use slaves in the tobacco industry.

The labor involved planting tobacco seeds into beds, transferring them to “hills,” weeding the hills, topping off the plants (resulting in the increased growth of the lower leaves), picking off unwanted shoots, keeping insect and worms off the plant and then individually harvesting the leaves by cutting them. The leaves were hung in a barn and cured. They would then be sorted and graded and shipped in barrels called “hogsheads.”

Tobacco was so important in Virginia that it became a “currency.” One could buy goods with tobacco, buy indentured servants and slaves in tobacco and even pay taxes and other fees in pounds of tobacco. In addition, promissory notes payable in tobacco also became a medium of exchange. Those who had large tracts of land sometimes used consignment agents to sell their tobacco in England and the Continent and the consignment agents got a share of the profits. Also sometimes, the purchasers of the tobacco would ship goods to the seller of tobacco as payment or in barter for the tobacco. This is one of the things which happened with Thomas Jett where goods might be paid for in tobacco and then the goods were sold in the colony.

Evidently due to war and other factors the price of tobacco fluctuated. Although the price was relatively stable in the 1740's and 1750's, it began to drop seriously in the 1760's and 1770's putting many of the Virginia planters in debt including people like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson who had large loans in London. Planters would borrow money for farm expenses and these loans would have to be paid back in tobacco or in cash.

In fact Jefferson who was close to losing his properties, felt that the financial interests in London were deliberately doing this so that they could lend at high rates and force the planters in the Colonies to pay back with lost cost tobacco. By doing this, colonists could be kept in economic bondage. Whether this was true or not, the tobacco business in America did not prosper during this period. It is interesting, to me, that conspiracy theories were every much alive in the Colonies as they are today. The result is that major Virginia planters were happy if debts to England for their tobacco business could be cancelled as a result of war.

Moreover, the drop in tobacco prices also was exacerbated by increased duties for taxes which will be discussed later.

Tobacco was the primary crop of Virginia. One of the problems with tobacco was that it quickly depleted the land therefore it was important to have sufficient land.

By 1775, Virginia and Maryland was exporting 100 million pounds of tobacco. Tobacco accounted for about 75 % of the exports from these two colonies.

Tobacco's need for intensive hand work resulted in the increase use of slaves. Later, especially in the deep South, crops like cotton would become more important with the invention of the cotton gin in 1793. This would result in an ever increasing use of slavery.

Slavery

General Comments

In dealing with genealogy and the history of one's family it is necessary to confront the issue of slavery and the fact that one's family line may contain people who owned slaves. If your family came from a Southern state prior to the Civil War, it is likely to have had people who were slave-owners. Further if a search of various social media accounts show black people with your last name it is likely that there may be slave-owners in your family.

Before dealing with slavery in Virginia, let me venture a few comments. It is an understatement to say that slavery was wrong. It is and was horribly wrong. Some have contrasted what they call "Chesapeake slavery" with other slavery. In slavery in the Chesapeake area, owners often worked alongside their slaves. To me, this is like saying there were good Concentration Camp guards and bad concentration camp guards. There may be some slight moral distinction but not much in my opinion.

The fact that slavery was necessary to make the southern economic system or the colonial economic system work does not excuse it.

The fact that seven of the first eight Presidents had slaves did not excuse it.

The fact is that many people of conscience knew that slavery was wrong but simply engaged in it anyway being unwilling to give up present economic benefits for doing what was morally right.

My study in this area of history involves the reading of wills and in so many wills slaves were treated as property and were treated like a chair or horse saddle in the wills where they were passed on to owner to owner is a thing of nightmares. I am not sure that anyone, regardless of color, can understand what it is like to be a slave unless they have been a slave.

Our country's participation in slavery was a terrible thing which resulted in the blood bath which we know as the War of Succession or the Civil War with deaths of many who supported slavery along with the deaths of many who opposed slavery.

General Comments-England and Slavery

The fact of the matter is that the English were more advanced than America in bringing an end to the institution of slavery. By 1770 an abolitionist movement had begun in England. The English passed the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act in 1807. This act prohibited the slave trade in the British Empire. It however did not free slaves. Slavery in the British Empire finally ended with The Abolition Act of 1833. In other words, England dealt with slavery before America did.

The Role of the Church

The role of the church as a whole was against slavery both in England and the United States. States which were founded on the need for religious liberty generally pushed for an end of slavery. Thus you have Quakers who were involved in founding Pennsylvania and Separatists in the North pushing for the gradual or immediate end for slavery. That being said it must be acknowledged that their economies were less tied to the institution of slavery.

From a Biblical standpoint, the Bible often involved people who held slaves. The various books of the Bible were not designed as a emancipation from slavery manifesto but more of a freedom from sin

manifesto. Scripture in the Old Testament involved around the Chosen People, the Jews, who both held slaves and had been slaves in Egypt and Babylon. In the New Testament, Paul dealt with the issue of slavery encouraging Christian slaves to obey their masters and not steal and their masters to remember that they too had a judge in Heaven as well and that they should act accordingly. In James, the author reminded us all that God looks on the poor with favor and that we are to treat in the church all equally. Paul in the New Testament, wrote one book to a slave owner, which is the Book of Philemon

Thus Scripture and the Church acted as both as a genesis for abolition movements against slavery. However, some prelates in the South were able to twist the Bible to justify their economic interests. These individuals justified slavery by focusing upon the fact that the Bible “allowed” slavery and commanded slaves to act toward their masters “as they would to the Lord, Jesus.” In addition they twisted Scripture to say that Blacks could be discriminated against because they were “the sons of Ham” one of the sons of Noah and deserved to be enslaved.

Despite all of this there were groups of true black Christians and slave Christians who followed God and who were the fertile ground through which many of the advances of freedom to those who were black were made. It is not an accident that great civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr. came up through the Christian (in this case, Baptist) Church to help bring freedom into the twentieth century. We will now turn back to slavery in Virginia and in particular in the life of Thomas Jett.

Slavery in Virginia

With the increased predominance to tobacco as a Virginia crop, there was an increase in the need for indentured servants and slaves. Gradually, the use of indentured servants decreased and the use of slaves increased. By 1705, Virginia passed a number of slave codes which tightened the rights of masters over their slaves and kept blacks separated from whites. These laws allowed the free trade of slaves, prohibited slaves from bearing arms, made provision for capturing run-a-way slaves, disallowed interracial marriage, prohibited whites from working for blacks, provided that persons would take on the status of their mothers (children born of slave mothers were slaves) and Christian baptism did not exempt you from slavery

Various political leaders proclaimed freedom in America and at the same time maintained slaves. Often these “fathers of our country” were aware of the evils of slavery but at the same time were unable or unwilling to dismantle the slave economy to do so.

Thomas Jefferson felt that people should be equal and called slavery a “deplorable entanglement.” That being said, Jefferson grew tobacco, had a plantation and over the course of his life had over 600 slaves. A discussion of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings is not within the purview of this chapter but can be investigated easily on the Internet and through a multitude of books and articles.

George Washington is another slave-owner. Washington and his wife Martha had 317 slaves. Washington sought to have these slaves freed upon the death of his wife Martha.

Numerous other Revolutionary patriots deplored slavery as did Patrick Henry; however, they did not free their slaves but continued their use.

Likewise in 1779, Thomas Jett had 53 slaves and his son, William Jett, had 10 slaves. The fact that they were slave-owners may have been acceptable during the mores of the time but in no way excuses our ancestors from moral culpability for their participation in this terrible institution.

Thomas Jett, the Stamp Act of 1765 and the Leedstown Resolutions

In 1765, Great Britain imposed The Stamp Act of 1765 on the colonies. The Stamp Act was a mean to pay for British troops in the Colonies by forcing the colonies to use paper from Britain which had an embossed stamp on it. The tax included magazines, legal documents, newspapers and even playing cards. The American colonists were outraged believing that this was taxation without representation and opposed the tax vehemently.

In fact in Westmoreland County, Virginia, next door to Leeds, a loyalist Archibald McCall tried to collect the tax which had to be paid in English currency and a mob stormed his home in Tappahannock, Virginia and tarred and feathered him.

On February 26, 1766, a group from Virginia passed what is known as the Leedstown Resolutions opposing the taxation without representation. This document is also known as the Westmoreland Resolves, the Westmoreland Association and the Northern Neck Declaration. This is a clear declaration that the colonists will not put up with the Stamp Act and that there should be no taxation without representation. The Leedstown Resolutions are believed to have been handwritten by Richard Henry Lee and signed by 150 signatories including four members of the Washington family. Thomas Jett was one of the signatories of this important document. The Leedstown Resolution became very well known and helped to influence the Colonies to begin resisting efforts of England to tax the colonies. A copy of the Leedstown Resolution is included in the notes to this chapter.

The Tobacco War

One of the goals of the British was to destroy the tobacco trade of the colonies. Part of the reason that this was done was that the tobacco trade helped provide funds for the resistance of the Colonies to the British. Therefore during the period 1780-81, the British attacked ports, burned tobacco and encouraged revolts by the slaves. These attempts to destroy the tobacco trade were headed up by Generals Cornwallis and Phillips and also by the American turncoat, General Benedict Arnold. In addition, the British navy would try to stop ships containing products such as tobacco leaving from various ports.

In Virginia, General Benedict Arnold wrote a letter to Thomas Jefferson offering not to burn Norfolk if Jefferson turned over Norfolk's supply of tobacco. Jefferson ignored the offer. The British attacked a number of localities south of Richmond, burning about 8,000 hogsheads of tobacco.

Some of the efforts of the British to disrupt the tobacco trade in Northern Virginia and in Maryland can be seen by a couple of Pension applications by General John P. Hungerford and by William Storke Jett, the son of Thomas Jett. Hungerford, who was from King George's County, details his experiences under Cols. John Skinker (a close friend of Thomas Jett and executor of his will) and under Col. Richard Henry Lee of Westmoreland County. Apparently two British ships would land from time to time land soldiers on Blackstone's Island on the Potomac River and British troops would make regular raids on Northern Virginia and Maryland. Blackstone Island is today known as St. Clement's Island, Md. The militia was

evidently fairly rag-tag in that they often were unpaid, had no tents, foraged for their own food and had few weapons. General Hungerford then recounted his experiences about going to Yorktown. William Jett acted as a witness for Hungerford's pension application and said that he had always lived about three miles from Hungerford and that they had "frequently been on tours of duty as officers together during the war of the revolution."

We learn more about these military raids in the pension application of William Storke Jett. He states that there was fairly constant activity due to the British ships landing on Blackstone's Island and then raiding into counties in Virginia and Maryland bordering on the Potomac River.

The Dissenters Resolution

In the eighteenth century the religious landscape of Virginia began to change. Unlike some other colonies, Virginia had not been established based upon religious dissent. Virginia was by and large Church of England and its colonists were taxed to support the Church of England. Two events, in my opinion, happened to change this. First there was a wave of religious renewal which spread through the Colonies with the Great Awakening of 1760. This "revival" contributed to the rise of religious groups which were not supported by the Colonies (8 of the states had established religions). In addition, as the Colonists threw off the taxes of England, they also rejected the taxes of the state church, especially the Church of England. Further, the Revolution also caused Virginia to differentiate between the American Episcopal Church from the Church of England.

For instance, in the area around Leeds the Episcopal churches become less attended and other churches begin to develop including Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, Quakers and others. As non-Anglican churches began to be planted in Virginia they are often met with persecution but they continue to grow and gradually become more and more accepted.

In 1776 a totally remarkable document was produced by George Mason and others and approved by Virginia called the Virginia Declaration of Rights. This document is reproduced in the Notes and is a precursor to the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. This document states that the rights are inalienable and its language is largely followed by the Declaration of Independence. Moreover the document covers many of the items which would later be incorporated into the Constitution by the Bill of Rights. In Section 16, the Declaration of Rights says that "all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience and that it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love and charity toward each other."

Also in 1776, a petition was made to disestablish the Church of England as the official church of Virginia and to cease the taxation of people for support of the church. This petition has various names including the Dissenter's Petition and the Ten Thousand Name Petition. It is perhaps not surprising that we do not find the names of Thomas Jett or his son William as one of those signing because of their relationship with the Episcopal church. Interestingly, however, we do find the names of James Jett, John Jett and John Jr. who signed the petition with a group at Little Fork Episcopal Church in Culpepper County Virginia.

Final Comment

A review of the life of Thomas Jett is a microcosm of the life of a relatively prosperous planter and merchant in Virginia. He is in the midst of a revolutionary movement resulting in the declaration of the freedom of the Colonies. His neighbors and contemporaries include such persons as the Washington Family, Thomas Jefferson, Richard Lee and Light Horse Harry Lee. By looking carefully at his life you can see the influences that tobacco and being a landowner had on his life and his unfortunate involvement with slavery along with so many colonists of his time.