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# Ben Lomond Manor House

## The Carter / Chinn History



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### GRANDSON OF ROBERT 'KING' CARTER

When Robert Carter III reached his majority, he became the master of more than seventy thousand acres including 5,025 acres in old Prince William County, inheriting his father's portion of his grandfather's estate. Young Robert, at age nine, went to the College of William and Mary. When the young man turned twenty-one, he went to England leaving Colonel Lewis in charge of his affairs. For the next two years historians presumed this trip to England was to complete his education following in the footsteps of his grandfather, father and uncles, although it was also a time to explore the arts and other diversions of the day. It was said that a young gentleman, "lacking a broad basis of knowledge would be unfit for any gentlemen's conversation and therefore a scandalous person and a shame to his relations, not having one single qualification to recommend him". It was quoted of one colonial father to have said, "that his children had better be never born than illbred".

Upon young Robert's return to the colony of Virginia in 1751, he was steeped in public duties. At age 28, he was made a member of the Governor's Council and, by virtue of his belonging to the Council, he also served as a colonel in the militia. As was customary, he was known as "Councillor" Carter. He lived at Nomini Hall, the elegant manor house his father built about 1729 in Westmoreland County, overlooking the Potomac and Nomini Rivers, a plantation of about 2,000 acres. The square Georgian style home with four chimneys was made of brick, two stories high, located on a hill with a spectacular view of the rivers. Robert "Councillor" Carter married Frances Ann Tasker (1720-1787) on April 2, 1745, in Annapolis Maryland by the Reverend Mr. Malcolm, the minister of St. Anne's Parish. His wife, the daughter of the Honorable Benjamin Tasker, one of the foremost citizens of the colony of Maryland, brought to the marriage, not only family influence, but also a large dowry. The marriage also enabled her husband to secure a one fifth control of one of her father's businesses, the Baltimore Iron Works.

Together they had seventeen children. Benjamin (1756) dying at age 23, Robert Bladen (1759), who died unmarried at age 34, Priscilla (1760-1823), all born at Nomini Hall. About 1761, Robert "Councillor" and his growing family moved to Williamsburg to a home he purchased adjacent to the Governor's Palace where the following three daughters were born. Ann Tasker (1762- ), Rebecca (1762) who died in infancy, and Frances (1764-1795), returning to Nomini Hall for the birth of his remaining children. Betty Landon (1765-1842), Mary (1767) who died at age four, Harriet Lucy (1768- ), Amelia Churchill (1769) who died in her first year, Rebecca Dulany (1770) who also died in her first year. John Tasker (1772- ), Sarah Fairfax (1773-1829), Judith (1775) who died as an infant, George (1777-1846), Sophia (1778-1832), who died without marrying and Julia Carter (1783- ). In spite of such a large family, "Frances Tasker Carter remained elegant and beautiful in a youthful way, ever cheerful and agreeable". She managed the household with great success and carefully trained and helped educate their children.

Managing seventy thousand acres demanded foresight and planning. Robert III cultivated as many as fifteen large plantations and farms at once. Each plantation and farm had an abundant amount of buildings used for storing tobacco, corn and wheat. Shops for weavers, carpenters, coopers, blacksmiths, as well as the manor houses and/or estate managers quarters. There were many independent buildings such as kitchens, bakeries, dairies, meat houses, slave cabins, stables, mills for grinding grains and factories for the production of textiles. Indentured servants were brought in from Ireland to spin and weave as well as to teach the Carter slaves these skills. The training of slaves in the trades was a necessary result of the conditions of life on large estates where free artisans found it difficult to serve more than a limited clientele. Many Carter slaves were trained as coopers, carpenters, blacksmiths, millers sailors, brick makers and layers and shoemakers. This training also increased their worth.

Though tobacco was the crop of importance, Robert also would devote entire plantations to producing grain and other supplies needed at Nomini Hall. Running the plantation, clearing new land for planting, civic and family duties, proved to be a laborious task. Though the basis of life was agricultural, the great landowners fulfilled a wide variety of other economic functions. They served as factors for their neighbors, buying their crops, and selling them supplies. When European conditions interfered with the import trade, enterprising men frequently set up grist mills, textile factories, and foundries on their plantations, to supply their own and their neighbor's needs.

Robert "Councillor" Carter was a patriot during the American Revolution and as a member of the court of Westmoreland County he took an oath as prescribed by the Virginia Assembly renouncing allegiance to George III, pledging loyalty to Virginia and to the Continental Congress. At one point, he sent 50 bayonets to Captain Burgess Ball and also furnished him with other supplies. He sent Colonel Thomas Jones beef, hops, 2,950 lbs of flour as well as many loaves of bread. In September 1776, he supplied the commissary of Lancaster County with 2,000 lbs of bread and the same amount of flour. He also secured iron for the manufacture of munitions.

During the American Revolution rapid adjustments had to be made. Wheat, corn, hemp, flax, cotton, oats and barley were cultivated extensively by Robert III, while tobacco became less important in his scheme of operations. By the end of the 18th Century, the tobacco industry had sunk into a state of chronic depression. The rapid depletion of soil, the wasteful agricultural methods and over production were all making themselves felt. Robert III was ahead of his time in raising other grains for cash crops. He had set up and equipped so many plantations and farms that he resorted to naming twelve of them after the signs of the zodiac. Two of these farms, Leo, consisting of 809 acres with 309 acres cleared, and Cancer with 700 acres of which 400 were cleared, were dedicated to the growing of tobacco, shipping 79 hogshead of tobacco, between the two in 1785. In 1791, there were 509 slaves, with an estimated worth of well over a hundred thousand dollars, belonging to Robert III, a number that was large enough to generate efficient cultivation of his many plantations. He was also the largest single slave- holder in Virginia at that time. During the year 1791, Robert "Councillor" Carter provided, in a Deed of Manumission, for the freeing of almost all of his 509 slaves. This was to be accomplished on a gradual basis over a period of twenty years since to have set all free at once would have resulted in great distress for the slaves and chaos for the community. He gave or rented lands to some of his former slaves as they were freed.

## **THE BULL RUN PROPERTY**

Upon the death of Robert "Councillor" Carter in 1804, his youngest son George and daughters Priscilla and Sarah Fairfax inherited the Bull Run tract, consisting of the Leo and Cancer farms as well as other property throughout Loudoun and Fairfax Counties.

George's inheritance contained several tracts including the 1,000 acre Goose Creek tract, part of the Leo Plantation in Loudoun County. There he built his estate, Oatlands Plantation, and lived with his wife, Elizabeth Grayson and their family.

Another tract he inherited at Bull Run was later subdivided and sold, making an additional four farms. Selling 172 acres in 1811 to a New Jersey man, Mathew Lee, who built The Wilderness. The house name was changed in 1894 when the new owner, William Hayden, renamed the estate The Commons.

In 1790, after marrying Elizabeth Landon Carter, one of Robert "Councillor" Carter's daughters, Spencer Ball from Northumberland County, moved with his new wife to Pohoke, part of the Bull Run estate belonging to George Carter and named after a local Indian village. In 1812, Spencer Ball purchased the 762 acre estate where he was living from his brother-in-law George. After Pohoke was destroyed by fire, a new manor house was built. Mr. Spencer Ball, having recently returned from a tour of Europe, named the new manor house Portici, after an Italian village that had greatly impressed him. The estate passed to his wife upon his death in 1832 and later to his son Alfred Ball. When Alfred Ball died in 1853, the land where the house stood was the portion given to Fannie Tasker Ball (1792-1853), who had married the Reverend John Taliaferro Lewis (1785-1862), and was happily living at Stepney. (Stepney is a village in England, the home of John Carter's second wife Ann. John and his third wife, Sarah Ludlow, were the parents of Robert "King" Carter.) The Portici estate was immediately given to their son, Francis Ware Lewis (1822-1913). Portici was used as a field hospital during the First Battle of Manassas and was burned to the ground after the second Battle of Manassas in 1862.

Later, George Carter sold another 316 acres to another member of the New Jersey Lees. This tract was later acquired by Alfred Ball and added to the Portici estate. Upon Alfred's death in 1853, this tract was given to his sister, Louisa Ball Weir, the second wife of William J. Weir of Liberia. In 1856, Mrs. Weir's nephew, George F. Carter, purchased the property and in 1858 sold it to Mary A. Conrad, where it was known as the Conrad House.

In 1817, George Carter sold another 333 acre farm to a niece, Elizabeth Carter, and in 1822, after her death, the property, later known as the Henry House, was conveyed to her brother-in-law, Dr. Isaac Henry, who in 1801, married a Carter cousin, Judith (1777-1861). Judith Carter Henry, the daughter of Landon Carter of Pittsylvania, old and bedridden was removed from her home for her safety and taken to a grove of nearby trees during the worst of the first Battle of Bull Run on July 21, 1861. Later that afternoon, she requested that she be returned to her home and her bed, and shortly thereafter her home was hit by a stray shell and she died in her bed that evening.

Priscilla Carter (1760-1823) having already married Robert Mitchell ( -1808), a Carter overseer, inherited 2,860 acres from her father, Robert "Councilor" Carter, and at her death gave to her son, Richard Tasker Mitchell ( - ) 1,200 acres and to her daughter, Harriet Bladen Mitchell (1793-1841), who had married William James Weir (1792-1867), 1,660 acres, also part of the Cancer Farm, where they built their home Liberia around 1829.

On December 6, 1796, another daughter, Sarah Fairfax (1773-1829), who was married to Dr. John Yates Chinn, (1770-1830), also inherited part of the Cancer farm. Dr. Chinn was an MD graduate of St. George and St. Thomas Hospital in London, England. In 1792 he was also the Justice of Richmond County. Living at Dr. Chinn's family's estate Edge Hill, in Richmond County, they had five children, Bartholomew Carter Chinn ( -1852), born at Nomini Hall in Lancaster County, her father's home, Sarah ( - ), Priscilla (1825- ), Benjamin Tasker Chinn (1807-1886) born at Edge Hill in

Richmond County and Sophia Elizabeth (1807-1851) born in Fairfax County. Sarah Fairfax inherited 730 acres of the Cancer farm at Bull Run along with 2,140 acres in Fairfax County across the Bull Run. The income from this land may have been part of her dowry. As a minimum dowry, each of Robert III's daughters received 500 acres of land, 10 slaves, and a quantity of live stock, the total value of 1,000. They were also claimants under the estate of Anne Tasker, their grandmother, for a similar amount.

Robert III's philosophy concerning the dividing of his estate between his heirs was not to divide by age but to give in percentage "to those heirs who bid fairest to be useful to mankind".

## THE CHINN'S OF BEN LOMOND

After her death in 1829 at age 56, Sarah's son, 22 year old Benjamin Tasker Chinn (1807-1886) inherited the 730 acres of the Bull Run property in 1830. Moving to Prince William County with his seven slaves, he cleared land, built a manor house, which later, after he married, was known as Ben Lomond. The house was finished in 1832, a Federal style of red sandstone from a local quarry laid in irregular courses covered with a yellowish gray stucco and scored to resemble large stones so popular in European architecture of the day. The house was 46' long by 23' deep and stands two stories over a full basement containing three rooms and a shallow fireplace. The ground floor walls are 2'6" thick with the first and second floor walls 2' thick with chimneys at each end built flush to the outside face of the wall. The roof is a simple gable design covered with hand made wood shingles.

The first floor entrances have two three-panel doors with a four pane horizontal transom above at either end of a large central hall with two matching 9/6 panel windows with interior bench seats in each room, front and back at each story level. There are keystone lentels over all the windows on the exterior. Each of the two small porch roofs are supported by wood columns made in the Tuscan style. The columns are built on a stone base with flagstone treads and stone risers. The woodwork around the main roof and the porch roofs is made in the classical Revival motif.

Inside the entrance hall one finds an unusually placed open staircase up the back interior wall behind a key molded elliptical arch. The staircase contains a large turned Walnut newel at the main floor and three additional Walnut newels, two at the intermediate landing and one at the top of the run of stairs. The Walnut elliptical profiled handrail is continuous, beginning at the bottom newel and flows up and over the upper newel posts. It makes two mitered corner turns until reaching the top of the stairs where it makes another mitered corner turn and stops at the inside face of the window jamb. The handrail is supported by simple, plain, painted wood pickets.

The two parlors can be entered from the main hall. There are fireplaces with Federal style mantels opposite each other on each floor in each room. Each interior door is surrounded with a six inch wide hand carved reeded trim with bull's eye medallions at the top corners. There are stairs under the main staircase leading to the basement level and to an exterior door used by the servants bringing food into the main dining parlor from the separate and detached kitchen. The house is listed on the 1832 Prince William County Tax Record as being worth \$1,500.

Benjamin Tasker Chinn, at age 31, was a hard working bachelor, farming his estate, growing corn, Oats, Irish potatoes, hay and grass for seed. He has cows for milk and butter, swine and sheep for their wool. He has built a weaving house as well as additional out buildings as needed, all the while hoping to catch the eye of a future wife. In 1836, he purchased from his cousin, Richard Tasker Mitchell, an adjoining Cancer Farm property and, after selling a portion to his older sister, Sarah and her husband Lovel Marders, a Baptist minister, who had married the previous year, he annexed the rest to Ben Lomond, increasing his land holdings to 1,179.5 acres. Benjamin was also listed in the

Prince William County Minute Book from March 6, 1833 to March 2, 1836 as surveyor having surveyed land from New Market to Bethlehem in western Prince William County.

He was a member of the Sudley Methodist Church and was listed on the first actual record of attendance in 1836. Benjamin later became a Class Leader in 1857 and a Steward in 1859. There were few social outlets where Benjamin might meet a future bride. The 1836 Sunday Class Rolls list eighteen married parishioners, twenty single women and six single men, Benjamin Chinn and Edmonia Carter being among the singles mentioned. Between church and social gatherings at his closest neighbor and cousin, Alfred Ball's home, Portici, Benjamin "discovered" his affection for the lovely Edmonia Randolph Carter (1813-1895), a distant cousin, named after her great uncle, Edmond Jennings Randolph, eighth governor of Virginia. Edmonia's mother's sister, Elizabeth Carter Nickolas (1753-1810) married Edmund Jennings Randolph (1753-1813). Alfred Ball had previously married Edmonia's sister, Sarah. Benjamin Tasker Chinn married this 25 year old beauty on January 26, 1838. The wedding took place at Woodland, the home of her parents, Landon and Courtenay Norton Carter, in Loudoun County across the Bull Run.

A story told by her grandson, Bailey Tyler of the Shelter, that his grandmother was not happy with the name of the inherited property 'Cancer' farm and insisted it be changed. Ben Lomond was named after a favorite 3,000 acre Randolph family estate, built in 1736 in Goochland County, known for its outstanding race horses and later owned by John Tayloe III, the Chinn's eldest daughter, Courtenay's future father-in-law. In Scotland "Ben" means mountain, the manor house name coming from Mount Lomond in Scotland.

The Chinn's have two daughters, Courtenay Norton born in 1838 at Hazel Plain, the home of her aunt and Benjamin's younger sister Sophia Elizabeth Downman Jones. It is assumed that since Ben Lomond was quite far from the main Sudley community that Edmonia Chinn spend her "laying in" time with her sister-in-law. Their first daughter, Courtenay Norton was named for her maternal grandmother, Courtenay Norton Lewis Carter. (1753-1810).

Sarah Sophia (Sallie) born in 1839 at Ben Lomond was named after her paternal grandmother, Sarah Fairfax Carter and great grandmother, Sarah Yates, as well as for Benjamin's younger sister, Sophia.

In the 1840's, Benjamin Chinn has a new estate manager, Horation N., Andrus, who moved to Ben Lomond with his family from New York. Living on the property, Mr. Andrus' specialty was raising Morino sheep besides his farming skills. Both Benjamin Chinn and Alfred Ball have, by far, the two largest herds with Ben Lomond running 420 head and Portici, the Ball farm, running 230 head of sheep.

In 1836, Sophia Elizabeth Downman Jones, sister to Benjamin Chinn, purchases Hazel Plain, a neighboring farm, three miles northwest of Ben Lomond off Sudley Road. Built in 1809 by Bernard Hooe, the two story house of ten rooms and basement was situated on 343 acres of land. Mr Hooe later expanded the property to 957 acres. After his death in 1828, the property passed to his wife, Elizabeth Thacker Hooe. In 1830, the property was subdivided and 543 acres and the manor house went to William H. Fowle, who had married the widow Elizabeth Hooe and the balance of the property went to her daughter. Within the next year, the house transferred to John Kemp and then to Sophia Elizabeth Downman Jones, who was living there by 1836.

Moving ahead to 1850, three major changes take place. First, since Benjamin's sister, Sophia, was in failing health, the Chinn's decide to lease Ben Lomond farm and move their family to live with his sister at Hazel Plain The house was larger than Ben Lomond and valued at \$2,000 compared to the

\$1,500 value of Ben Lomond. The land was valued at \$10 an acre whereas Ben Lomond's land had been valued at \$8 per acre. Benjamin could also care for his failing sister much easier. The Chinn's eldest daughter, Courtenay Norton had been born there in 1838. The girl's were 11 and 12 years old when they moved to Hazel Plain and a great help in caring for their failing aunt Sophia. The family owned one of the few pianos in Prince William County so one assumes the girls were trained in music. The girls were also known for their needlework, any of which have survived.

Second, the Chinn's purchased back from his sister Sara and her husband, Lovel Marders, the 560 acres adjoining the estate increasing Ben Lomond to 1,739.5 acres. The Marders were moving to Middleburg, joining many other Chinn relatives.

Third, on January of 1851, the Prince William County Deed Book, Deed 23, page 178, shows that a ten year lease was let to Benjamin Thornton of Orange County, Virginia for \$10,158 to include the manor house and 1,536 acres of land. The following year, Mr. Thornton sub-let the property to British subject, Thomas Pringle. Mr. Pringle, who was already living in Prince William County with his father Andrew Sr. and brother, Andrew Jr., lived and farmed Ben Lomond, also running large herds of Morino sheep on the property for the next nine years, the remainder of the lease.

In 1854, Benjamin purchases the 550 acre estate Hazel Plain, where he and his family are living, from William Y. Downman, his nephew, the eldest son and heir of Benjamin's younger sister, Sophia Elizabeth Downman Jones' estate. Sophia had died November 30, 1851 and was buried in Richmond County, Virginia, the Chinn family home. About that same time, he also purchases Rock Hall farm, a 198.5 acre farm 1.5 miles north of Sudley Methodist Church, then owned by Garner Fortune, a miller and employee at Sudley Mill. The mill was owned by Landon Carter of Woodland, Edmonia Chinn's father. Garner Fortune had originally purchased Rock Hall farm from the Page family in 1822.

Also in 1854, Benjamin adds another ten acres to Hazel Plain and purchases a separate piece of land consisting of 9.5 acres on Young's Branch. The Chinn's remain at Hazel Plain farming the 450 improved acres as well as that part of Ben Lomond that was not leased, and Rock Hall farm with the help of his fifteen slaves. According to 1860 PWC Agricultural Census, Benjamin produced in 1859, 100 bushels of Indian corn, 200 bushels of oats, 140 lbs of wool, 20 lbs of Irish potatoes, 150 lbs of butter, 18 tons of hay and 10 bushels of grass seed as well as 78 gallons of wine. He also keeps 6 horses, 24 cows, 2 oxen, 3 sheep and 20 swine as well. The threat of war is eminent and life in western Prince William County will never be the same.

## **The Chinn's During the Civil War**

Because the eldest Chinn daughter, Courtenay Norton, married in Richmond County in October of 1860, it is assumed that the Chinn's have moved back to the Chinn family home, Edge Hill. In those days, a wedding was usually held in the home of the bride's parents.

Courtenay married at age 22 to Henry Augustine Tayloe (1836-1908) of Mount Airy in Richmond County on October 30, 1860, just nine months before the first Battle of Bull Run at Manassas. They met at Belle Isle, the family home of Raleigh William Downman (1762-1838) and Benjamin's sister, Priscilla Chinn (1767-1812), in Lancaster County, visiting there as children. The elder Downman's had both died by 1838 and Belle Isle was now owned by their daughter, Priscilla Chinn and her husband, Rawleigh William Ball, first cousins to Courtenay Norton and Sarah Sophia Chinn.

Two major events happen in 1861. The Tayloe's first child, a daughter, Henrietta Ogle, is born and Henry Tayloe enlists in the Virginia 40th Infantry, Company B. The regiment was made up of men

from the Northern Neck of Virginia, mostly from Richmond and Lancaster Counties. They were mainly farmers, from a rural setting and who had banded together in this time of need. They fought faithfully through the long years of struggle between 1861 and 1865. The state armed them with percussion muskets but they had to supply their own uniforms.

After enlisting in May, Henry Tayloe spent most of July and August on sick leave, being discharged in September of 1861. In 1862, a son is born, Benjamin Tasker Tayloe, who only lives for two years and died after eating Oleander. At some unknown date in the future, Henry Tayloe reenlists with the Virginia 10th Calvary, Company G. His war record shows he was absent on horse detail for fifteen days beginning March 6, 1865. He received pay on March 28, 1865. He was again absent, sick with neuralgia beginning April 3, 1865 requesting 15 days sick leave. His record ends NFR, which means "no further record" to show when a man's service ended with no reason shown. Another daughter, Sophie Tayloe is born in 1865. A total of thirteen children were born with only ten surviving.

Sarah Sophia (Sallie) married Robert Horner Tyler (1838-1902) of Clifton in Prince William County, son of William and Mary Emily (Bronaugh) Bailey of the Shelter on February 27, 1863, in Tappahannock, Essex County by the Reverend H.W.L. Temple. Robert Tyler graduated from Princeton in 1819 at age 19 with a medal for oration. After Virginia seceded from the United States he joined the 8th Virginia Infantry, Company C in May of 1861 at Haymarket under Captain Berkeley, known at the Bull Run Regulars but later changed their name to the Evergreen Guard. He was promoted to lieutenant in April of 1862 and later promoted to captain in June of 1862. He was part of the company highly recognized for winning the one sided battle of Ball's Bluff. In May of 1863, less than three months after his marriage, he was wounded and captured in Richmond County and held hostage at Fort Lafayette in New York Harbor and later paroled with General W.H.F. Rooney Lee in March of 1864. He was captured again in April of 1865 at Saylor's Creek and released on oath in June of 1865 from Johnson's Island.

The first of their twelve children, Robert Carter Tyler, was born November 14, 1864 at The Shelter, their second child, another son, Bailey Tyler, was born March 20, 1865, also at the Shelter, and Benjamin Chinn Tyler, their third son, was born June 1, 1867 at Ben Lomond. The remaining nine children, five girls and four more boys were all born at the Clifton manor house.

Bailey Tyler (1865-1933) inherits the Shelter and is twice married. His first marriage, in 1898, is to Anner Moss Alrich (1871-1914). She dies days after the birth of their eighth child, Thomas Love Tyler in 1914. All of the Tyler children were born at the Shelter. On August 2, 1916, Bailey marries Anner Moss' old sister, Mary Love Alrich (1870- ). Both marriages took place at the Shelter. Bailey's eldest son, William Bailey Tyler (1900-1972) of Washington, D.C. later inherited the Shelter.

Back in Manassas, the war is being waged around their home at Hazel Plain and Ben Lomond is being used as a field hospital by the confederate army. Portici, now owned by Francis M. Lewis, is being used as the Confederate headquarters for General Johnston as well as a field hospital for wounded and captured Union officers.

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