

Letter from William Lee Esq. of Virginia, dated Great Tower Hill,
London 1771 - to Rev. Dr. H. Lee Warden of Winchester College, England

Sir,

1198
It gave me much pleasure to find from a conversation
the other day with Mr. Bateson my banker, who speaks very highly
in your praise that we were of the same family. He tells me
you are the 2nd Son of the late Eldred Lancet Lee of Cotou
in Shropshire & that your Elder Brother is now at Aix in the
South of France for the recovery of his health. I know your
father corresponded with mine who was one of the Kings privy
Council in Virginia & when he died was president ¹¹⁹⁸ &
Commander in Chief over that Colony & I remember when a
little boy in Virginia to have seen & had a very sensible
letter and well written from your father to mine giving
an accurate genealogical account of our family from so
old a date as the Saxon Government in this Country, from
which people I am sure he traced the descent of our family
from that account it appeared that Cotton or Cotou, was
the eldest Branch; & my immediate predecessor who went to
Virginia about 130 years ago as Secretary of the Kings privy
Council, was a younger brother. I remember one observation he
made, which struck my young mind very forcibly - he says "tis
worthy of remark that in so long a period there has been neither
Spendthrift nor Waster in the family - The children moderately
using the patrimony left them, without adding much to
the store, by which means they have always continued
independent, and not being ambitious, they have kept nearly
the same rank in life, through so many centuries as the
original stock was in, which is more than can be said of
most families in the Kingdom" - which ¹¹⁹⁸ remark is surprisingly
verified by the family in Virginia; which has continued
from father to Son to be placed in the highest Offices of
honor in the Colonies ever since the first Richard Lee
my Great Grandfather, who went there 130 years ago to this
very day - and I believe every inch of property left there
as his (which was considerable) is now in the possession
of his immediate descendants - As your Father was a Gentleman
of learning & observation, I do not doubt his having left