

## The Project Unfolds

Image not found or type unknown



[1]

The Chew Family Papers is one of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's largest collections of family papers, spanning approximately 400 linear feet, and covering a period of nearly 300 years. This collection details the family's activities as lawyers and politicians, as well as the events of their daily lives.

The Chews were one of Philadelphia's wealthiest and most influential families. Benjamin Chew (1722-1810), his siblings, and descendants, played fundamental roles in shaping revolutionary and early federal America. They acted as lawyers for the Penn family, served on the Commission to determine the boundary line between Pennsylvania and Maryland, held high public offices, and purchased large amounts of property in the Delaware river valley. As one of the largest slave-owning families in the mid-Atlantic region, the Chews maintained numerous farms and plantations, and kept careful documentation about their practices.

This collection contains rich materials for researchers interested in slavery in the North, as well as more specific information about the lives of the Chew's slaves. In one letter, a slave named Joseph asks to be transferred to another place of employment so that he may be closer to his wife. There are many more such stories in this collection.

The correspondence, journals, accounts, and land records of the Chews illuminate the lives of slaves and servants, women and children, laborers and surveyors. As we open each box and unfold more bundles, new stories emerge.

---

### Links

[1] <https://hsp.org/sites/default/files/images/chew029.jpg>