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Interpretation training manual for the Frontier Culture Museum

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Interpretation Training Manual for the Frontier Culture Museum

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A thesis project submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

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Acknowledgments

While conducting an internship at the Frontier Culture Museum, I had the wonderful opportunity to observe interpreters at work. During these observations and conversations with the staff, I received the inspiration to undertake this project. A museum as heavily reliant on living history as the Frontier Culture Museum needed a manual to train staff and volunteers on the art of interpretation. Thus the following product was born and crafted. It is with the upmost thanks that I express my appreciation to all those who made this project possible.

This project would not have come to fruition without the help of several people. The staff at the Frontier Culture Museum opened up their library, resources, and minds to me throughout this entire process. A special thanks to Eric Bryan, Alex Tillen, Andrew Richardson, and Misty Furr for their assistance with researching and editing, and compiling the FAQs for each site. Second, I would like to thank my thesis committee for their excellent insight and for pushing me to think deeper and more critically. Thank you Dr. Gabrielle Lanier for painstakingly editing and reviewing every single part to this manual, and helping me every step of the way in this process. Thirdly, I would like to thank my fellow graduate students who helped me grow as a researcher, writer, and historian. Finally, to my close friends and family, I thank them for listening to my tangential rants, editing my work, cooking me dinner, and overall making my life slightly easier while I go through this process. To my roommate, Brianna I give special thanks for essentially getting me through graduate school with my sanity intact. This manual was made possible by all of you.

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Abstract

The Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton, Virginia is an outdoor living history museum that uses costumed interpreters to tell visitors about their major themes. By understanding that the Museum seeks to talk about the daily lives of people from West Africa, England, Ireland, and Germany; their immigration experience to America; and how these people interacted with each other and Native American groups to form an American culture, interpreters can pass on this information to visitors. Interpretation, as a bridge between the historical information and the visitor, is a conversation between the interpreter and the visitor where the interpreter can use a variety of techniques to make the objects, ideas, and sites have meaning. By following the two C's and understanding the ART of interpretation, the staff at the Museum can more effectively communicate with visitors. One of the biggest challenges for interpreters is to clearly distill all the historical information for visitors without dumbing or watering down the information.

This manual compiles current scholarly on interpretation and 200 years of history for the five countries represented at the Museum. With the help of Museum staff, this Manual contains the best and most recent information for the training of future and present interpreters. Interpreters reading this manual should come away understanding the history of the Museum, the meaning of interpretation, how to practice interpretation, the content information about each of the exhibit sites, and how the major themes of the Museum can be communicated at each exhibit.

SECTION I

Introduction & Background

Welcome to the Frontier Culture Museum!

Whether you are working here as a full-time or part-time employee or volunteering, this manual is for you. Being on the “front lines” as an interpreter is one of the most important jobs at this museum, and you have the special pleasure of being one of the crew. To prepare you to share your love of history and the story this Museum tells, here is a manual providing an overview of the Museum and its various parts. No matter what farm or site you get assigned to, understanding the whole story of this Museum is paramount to providing visitors with the best experience. This manual is, by no means, comprehensive or complete concerning everything the Museum encompasses. For more information regarding a particular site, seek the guidance of full-time interpretive staff. Above anything else, enjoy this job and opportunity and welcome to the Frontier Culture Museum.

Who Are We?

The Frontier Culture Museum is a state-run, outdoor, living history museum that has moved or reproduced examples of traditional rural buildings from England, Germany, Ireland, West Africa, and America. These eight exhibits are split into two distinct sections on the Museum grounds: Old World versus America.¹ On the Old World side of the Museum, which visitors will typically pass through first, the Museum seeks to show rural life and culture in four homelands – West Africa, England, Ireland, and Germany –

¹ You will note that throughout this manual and at the Museum itself, staff use the term America instead of New World when talking about immigrants crossing the Atlantic to a new land. Typically, Old World is contrasted to a ‘New World,’ which while it was new to some immigrant groups, using this term is offensive to Native American groups for whom America was neither old nor new. Therefore, throughout this manual you will see the term America instead of New World.

of early migrants to the American colonies. American exhibits show the life these same colonists and their descendants created in the colonial backcountry. Between these various exhibits, the Museum covers a time span from the 1600s—1700s on the Old World sites and between the 1700s—1800s on the American sites

Where Have We Been?

In its original conception in the 1970s, the Museum began as a folk museum to celebrate the contribution of English, Scots-Irish, and German cultures in the founding of America. Inspired, and influenced, by the success of the Ulster-American Folk Park in Northern Ireland, a museum was designed in 1975 to be an international cooperative to further educate Americans about their Old World roots. This original plan called for the establishment of an 18th century farm around which three other European farms (English, German, and Irish) would be situated. The planning group hoped to place such a museum in the Appalachian region of Virginia and in 1980 the Virginia General Assembly approved legislation authorizing the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation to plan a museum and eventually establish, operate, and maintain the museum on a tract of land, granted by the Assembly, adjacent to Staunton.² To help fund such a project involving the removal and reassembly of historic structures from across Europe, the American

² Henry Glassie, one of the original planners for the Museum, recommended the Appalachian region because, “it was not until the land rose and swelled that westward moving people developed the distinct frontier culture. In this difficult environment people were forced out of accustomed habits into a willingness to engage in cultural trading,” (Appendix C, 3). Staunton was ultimately chosen due to its proximity to two major transportation routes, I-64 and I-81, in the middle of the Shenandoah Valley.

Frontier Culture Foundation was incorporated in 1982 as a repository for private donations.³

The Museum was officially created and instituted in July of 1986 as a state agency governed by a Board of Trustees whose members are appointed by the Governor of Virginia and the Virginia Legislature. Governance by the Board of Trustees is paired with additional support from the self-appointed Board of Directors that runs the Foundation and provides funds for staff and programs. From 1984 until 1993 the four main structures from the original plan were moved and erected on the Museum grounds. Other additional buildings, such as the Octagonal barn and the two restored original on-site dairy barns, became part of the Museum during the remainder of the 1990s. They now include a lecture hall, research library, staff offices, and educational spaces. Expansion continued in 1997 with the transfer of 140 acres by the Commonwealth of Virginia to the Museum. Part of this property included the old DeJarnette State Sanitarium (an old children's mental hospital from the 1930s) which visitors drive by as they enter the Museum.⁴

During the early 2000s, the Museum sought to expand its influence and gain recognition as a professional museum. In 2002 the Committee on the Future completed the Comprehensive Master Strategic Plan in which the Museum planned how it would expand over the next six years with new exhibits. Since the creation of this plan, the

³ Katharine L. Brown, *Museum of American Frontier Culture Guidebook* (Stanton, VA: American Frontier Culture Foundation, 1997), 5-6; American Frontier Culture Foundation, *Preplanning Study Phase One Construction: Museum of the American Frontier Culture* (Augusta County, VA: American Frontier Culture Foundation, 1985), 1-3.

⁴ Brown, *Guidebook*, 6-9; Committee on the Future, *Framework for the Future: Comprehensive Master Plan* (Virginia: Frontier Culture Museum, 2002), 4-8; Frontier Culture Foundation, "DeJarnette Property Development Progress," *Frontier Culture Museum: Bringing the Past to Life* 18, no. 2 (Summer 2003), 1. For a brief history of the DeJarnette Center see http://opacity.us/site163_dejarnette_sanitarium.htm or http://www.virginiamemory.com/blogs/out_of_the_box/2012/09/19/two-faces-the-personal-files-of-dr-joseph-s-dejarnette/ to learn more about the Sanitarium and its founder.

West African Igbo compound (which required the monstrous move of the 1850s Farm from its original place on the West African site to its current location), the Native American village, the 1740s Settlement Site, the 1820s Farm, and the 1840s schoolhouse have been added. These additions were meant to expand and cultivate the discussion of cultural influences on what would become America. From 2003-2005, the Museum additionally applied for, and earned, museum accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums, expanding the Museum's recognition. To complete this process, curators and the Executive Board worked to define the Museum's collections policy and create a space in one of the dairy barns for collections storage. By April of 2005 the Museum received approval as an accredited museum institution.⁵

Where Are We Headed?

Large portions of the 2002 Master Plan appear in new exhibit spaces, and work continues towards achieving the goals it set forth, albeit with some changes. As of Fall of 2014, the Museum has several projects underway. These projects all contribute to further expansion and the eventual creation of a pre-Civil War frontier town to be named Montgomery Springs, centered on a mill with a church, school, and various businesses.⁶

So far, these various components appear separately throughout the Museum instead of integrated into a town-like space. A small shed, for example, has been constructed and moved to the end of the American loop which houses a nineteenth-century-style tinsmith's shop. Additionally, the Museum is currently reconstructing an

⁵ Committee on the Future, *Framework for the Future*, 16-29; Martin Sullivan to G. John Avoli, April 20, 2005, letter, Administration Archives, Frontier Culture Museum, Virginia. For a more in depth overview of the history of the Museum see Appendix B: Brief History of the FCM.

⁶ Committee on the Future, *Framework for the Future*, 37.

original nineteenth-century African-American church behind the 1820s Farm, to more prominently showcase the African-American story to the American side of the Museum. Finally, an architectural company has been selected to construct a mill for the proposed frontier town. Originally the 2002 plan recommended an historic mill be moved much like the other buildings, and actions were taken to acquire a mill from Timberville, but conflicts with the local community caused controversy, requiring Museum administration to seek alternative options.⁷

Preliminary plans have begun for the construction of a Crossings Gallery, also explained in the 2002 Master Plan, which would sit between the Old World and American sites to explain how these various peoples made it to America and their journey to the Shenandoah Valley or other frontier regions. This proposed exhibit space will primarily deal with the themes of movement and transition in three distinct sections discussing the immigrant experience, the trans-Atlantic voyage, and the American experience. Research into grants shows several options for funding the planning and construction of this exhibit.⁸

What Are We About?

According to the Code of Virginia's enabling legislation for the Frontier Culture Museum, the purpose of the Museum is to "construct, operate, and maintain...an outdoor museum in order to commemorate on an international scale the contribution which the pioneers and colonial frontiersmen and frontierswomen of the eighteenth and nineteenth

⁷ Committee on the Future, *Framework for the Future*, 37.

⁸ Committee on the Future, *Framework for the Future*, 24-25.

centuries made to the creation and development of the United States.”⁹ Using the historic buildings and artifacts in conjunction with historical interpretation and education, employees should communicate to visitors how immigrants to America lived in their homelands, crossed the Atlantic, and traveled to the colonial backcountry, forming a new American culture. The overall purpose of the Museum, as stated on the website, is to:

serve as a setting for interpretive and educational programs designed to increase public knowledge of the diverse Old World origins of early immigrants to America, and how the way of life they created together on the frontier has shaped the success of America.¹⁰

Each exhibit ties into this broader purpose and mission and can be accessed easily by visitors through interpretation and education.

Major Themes and Key Questions:

Interpretation at this Museum can be placed into three broad categories that together help create the broader story and mission explained above. This Museum focuses on stories revolving around immigration, daily life in both the Old World and America, and acculturation. Immigration here means the movement of European and African peoples from the Old World to America, whether by force or by choice. When talking about immigration for the purposes of this Museum, you should address the reason various groups decided to come to America and what factors drew them to emigrate from their homelands. In another vein, this Museum is also about the daily lives lived by people between the 1600s—1800s in the Old World and America. In the content

⁹ Virginia General Assembly, “Frontier Culture Museum of Virginia created; Purpose,” Code of Virginia 23-296, 2000, <http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?000+cod+23-296> (accessed September 10, 2014).

¹⁰ Frontier Culture Museum, “Education,” *Frontier Culture Museum* <http://www.frontiermuseum.org/education/> (accessed October 27, 2014).

sections to come you will see how daily life can speak to the other themes. By discussing their lives, you can highlight why people chose to immigrate and then the cultural contributions people brought to and then used in America. Talking about daily life allows you to interest a wide variety of visitors and works as an excellent hook to bring visitors into your exhibit and interpretation. Finally, the two previous themes address the idea of acculturation occurring from the Old World to America. Acculturation encapsulates the process of Old World cultures coming to America and then melding with the other cultures and practices they encounter. This theme looks at the various Old World cultures represented at the Museum, how they are manifested at the American sites after immigration, and then how these cultures combine with others and change over time as these immigrants settle on the frontier.

Breaking down the mission into themes, with key questions, can help focus your interpretation, but should not limit it. Each site will fit into these themes differently and will include different ‘facts’ and concepts. At each site, however, you will need to keep these themes in mind and focus your interpretation foremost to revolve around them. In the sections to come about each site, information will be provided to lay out the individual subthemes at each of these sites and also how these exhibits fit into the broader story. The main themes and key questions to consider as you interpret are laid out once again below in a bulleted format:

- Immigration = Who are the people that came to America? Why did they come?¹¹
- Daily Life = How did these people live in the Old World and America? How did their lives as an immigrants change as they settled in America?

¹¹ Immigration, migration, and emigration are often confused terms used interchangeably. To further understand the differences between these terms see Appendix C.

- Acculturation/Cultural Contributions = What traditions, practices, and beliefs did these people bring with them from the Old World that would influence and become a part of an American culture? How would these various Old World cultures blend together?

Who's Who at the Museum?

As you begin to work at this Museum, you will see and hear about numerous other staff with various responsibilities. To give you a head start in learning who these various people are, the following is a rough 'chain of command' of who's responsible for whom and what.

Board of Trustees: this body is made up of about 25 members who are appointed by the Governor of Virginia and the state legislature. They consist of 5 delegates (from the House of Delegates) appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates, 3 Senators appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules, and 9 nonlegislative citizens appointed by the Governor. In addition, the Board may also have up to 8 other members appointed by the Governor. These members meet at the Museum biannually, typically in September and April, to discuss current and future projects, make decisions about such projects, and look at the budget and visitation patterns. When they meet, the Board appoints from its own members a chairman and vice-chairman who oversee the proceedings of each meeting.

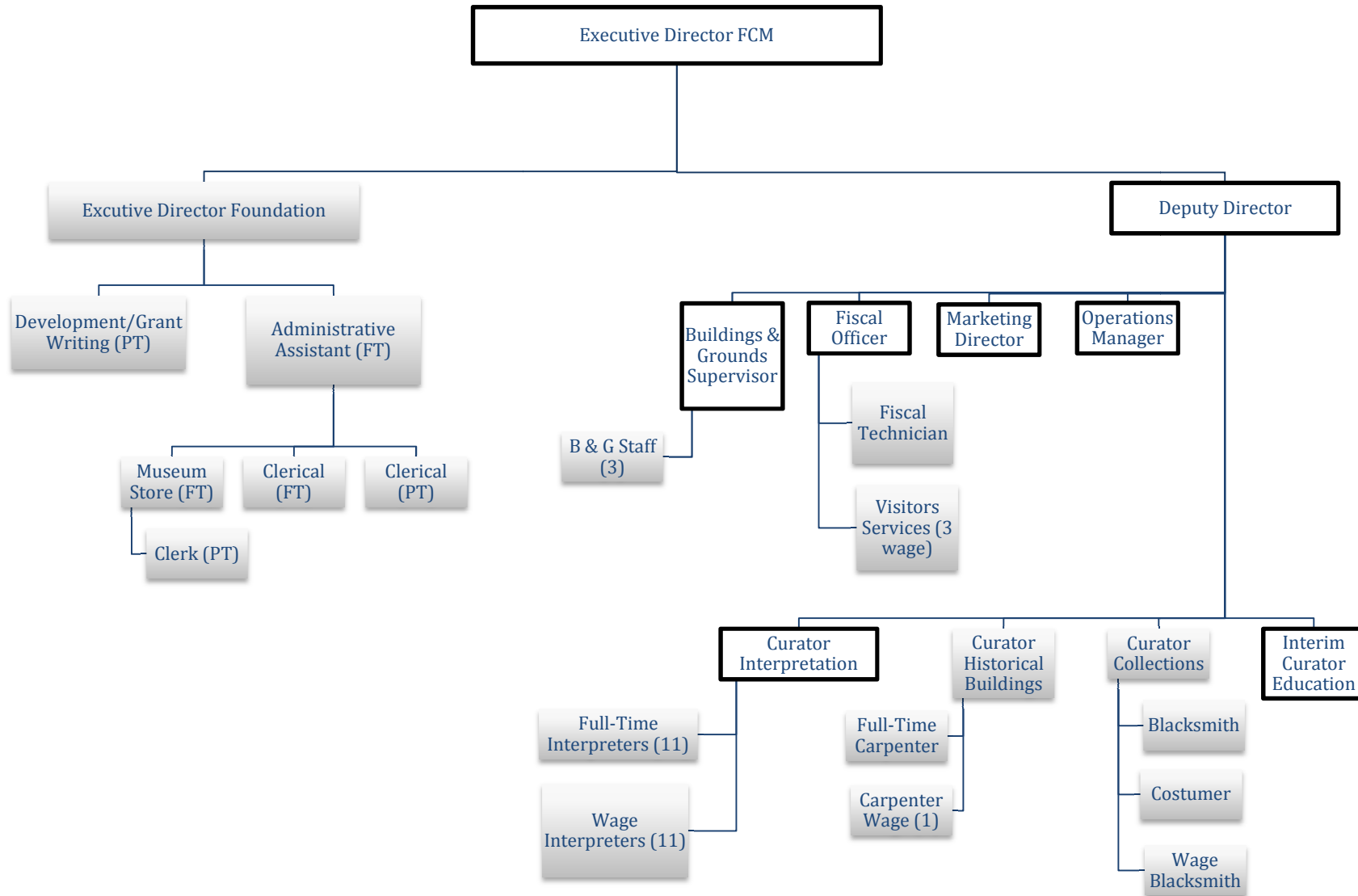
Executive Staff: an eight-member group (see chart below and highlighted boxes) that has management over the major operations at the Museum, handling Museum finances, maintenance, personnel, collections, and interpretation. Since each member has

widely varying responsibilities, the accompanying chart details the relationships between them. The Executive Director at the top of the chart primarily handles communication between the rest of the staff and the Trustees, and represent Museum staff and their concerns to the Frontier Culture Foundation. On the chart, two distinct groups split off from the Executive Director, the Foundation and the Museum staff. Those staff members appearing towards the top of the chart report to the Executive Director and appear at the Board meetings with the Trustees. Many members of the Executive Staff, plus others, appear at weekly meetings to discuss daily and weekly museum operations. Museum staff members can be split into roughly two sections under the Deputy Director: administrative and grounds staff then curatorial and interpretation staff. The number of employees within each section can differ depending on the budget for the year (fiscal years for budget purposes run from July 1 until June 30); those numbers shown in the chart represent current employees.

Find your place on this chart and know who is around you. Each person on this chart is important in making the Museum work, each a different part of the larger operation. Be respectful and consider how your actions may affect someone else on this chart. Communication is vital.

Frontier Culture Museum of Virginia

Staff Organizational Chart



What's in a Day?

The typical work day at the Museum runs from 8:15 to 5:15. No matter if you are a full-time, part-time, or volunteer interpreter, keep these hours in mind. Paid employees should arrive promptly at 8:15, unless other arrangements have been made with the Director of Interpretation. In the event that you fall sick or anticipate being late, call the interpretation break room at 332-7850 ext 150 to let staff know, so they can plan accordingly. Even if no one answers the phone, either leave a message by adding a 7 to the extension number, or notify any staff scheduled to work that day. When you do arrive, you are expected to be dressed in costume no later than 8:30 in advance of the morning meeting. Some situations may warrant additional preparation time such as when a change in farms or a costuming issue arises, in which case you should wait until after the morning meeting to complete costuming. The morning meeting details the assignments for the day, the various tasks/chores for each farm, and any groups (primarily school groups in the fall and spring) that have requested specific programming. It is important that all interpreters attend the morning meeting and pay attention to where everyone has been assigned and what tasks are being performed that day at the various sites (some examples include woodworking, spinning, gardening, house chores, planting, and harvesting). In the case of scheduled groups, it is also important to pay attention to and take note of the rotation of school groups, noting where your site fits in, and what program the group has requested.

After the morning meeting, unless any extenuating circumstances apply, all interpreters should leave together to open up the sites. Usually at least two interpreters are assigned per site and together there are several chores that need to be completed to

open each site, such as: opening the house and barn, feeding and watering livestock, setting up for the day's activity, filling water tubs, etc. Prioritize tasks so that modern equipment is put away before visitors arrive – the Museum opens at 9:00AM from March to November and 10:00AM from December to February.¹² Other tasks, such as feeding the animals, can be seen by visitors and they can even help with those kinds of tasks. As time permits, interpreters should also read the previous day's entries in the farm journal, especially if they haven't been at the site in a couple of days, to catch up on any problems or requests. Keep in mind, however, that the #1 job you have is the visitor; they come first.

With that important task in mind, there are some key tips and guidelines for interacting with the public, your coworkers, and the general job. When it comes to visitors, you should:

- be natural and be yourself
- be approachable
- be visible
- be respectful
- be concise

These five tenets mean that when a visitor enters your exhibit, stand up, smile, make eye contact, and greet them in a clear audible voice. Start the conversation about the site and

¹² Interpreters should also note that during the winter months, exhibits are not actively staffed but rather the Museum offers guided tours when visitors arrive. Guided tours conduct visitors around the entire Museum, making it even more vital that interpreters understand the overall themes and general background for all exhibits. Of the exhibits, only the West African farm shuts down completely during the winter months. Being more representative of a tropical climate, the West African buildings/structures are not meant to withstand cold winters or snow. Therefore, Museum staff add additional supports to the walls and roofs of the buildings to prevent collapse and damage during the winter time. The Museum works on a very seasonal schedule as will be experienced through the heavy visitation between April and November and the much lighter visitation during the winter.

tell them a little bit about what they see. Involving visitors in an activity and moving around the house/farm with them are great ways to make a positive impression and pique visitor interest. You will need to find a balance between simply greeting visitors and asking them for questions, and the opposite extreme of rambling on without considering their interests. Provide the visitors with some interpretation of the site, tell them something but have a point when you interpret. If a visitor does ask you a question you're not sure how to answer, be honest and tell her you don't know instead of making up information. If a visitor finds out you made up information, this discredits you and the museum. Honesty is the best policy. Finally, when visitors are about to leave, thank them for coming and wish them well. Good manners, individual attention, and politeness go a long way towards making a positive museum experience.¹³

Interacting with your co-workers in a similar way is also important, but comes with a different kind of dynamic. Since you are spending almost 8 hours with the coworker at your site, it's imperative that you work as a team, being respectful and sensitive to their feelings. Communication is key in working out lunch schedules (which should be done in the morning), telling each other about your whereabouts and when you plan on leaving, asking questions if unsure about a task, and splitting up assignments. In nice weather, interpreters should cover both outside and inside stations, and switch when possible. Finally, take the opportunity to learn new ideas and crafts from your fellow interpreters. Everyone will talk to visitors in a different way and present different information. Listen, watch, and observe other interpreters to see what you can learn. The way another interpreter explains German immigration to America, for instance, may make more sense. Enjoy your time with this entertaining group of people.

¹³ Alex Tillen, "Basic Guide Lines – Interpretation: 'A Quick Look,'" Frontier Culture Museum.

Lunches consist of a combination of a 15-minute morning break plus a 45-minute lunch break. You have a full hour which starts when you leave the site and ends when you return. Once again, whenever you leave the site, be it for lunch or a restroom break, make sure you inform any other staff on the site. This is largely for safety but is also just common courtesy. During down time when visitation slows down or is light and you have a break, take the opportunity to read and increase your knowledge about the site and museum.

Besides talking to visitors and working with other staff, another portion of your day will involve taking care of artifacts and animals at the site. Some artifacts require different care and cleaning based on their use. For example, on farms that have dairying equipment, wooden buckets and objects should be scrubbed, scoured, scalded (process of pouring boiling water over), and placed in the sun before and after use. Wooden buckets and tubs, in general, should always have water left in them to prevent cracks. Redware, pewter, stoneware, and woodenware, likewise, have similar care considerations, and should not be left in the refrigerator for more than one night. Metal objects, also, should receive special care and attention when washing: dry them immediately by hand or by the fire to prevent rusting.

The farm animals are a major part of the living farm atmosphere and require careful observation and care. Since they can often be unpredictable, listen carefully to the livestock manager and other experienced interpreters in dealing with the animals. Like many operating farms, the Museum occasionally has to sell the animals or return them to their owners. There are even times when the animals go to market and also times (very rarely) when we butcher the animals at the Museum – these are not pets. The bulk

of your interaction with the animals will be spent feeding them, and may only occasionally involve moving them (which should only occur at the permission or request of the livestock manager). If you find you are uncomfortable working with the animals, please inform the Director of Interpretation as soon as possible.¹⁴

Any personal items you carry with you to the site should remain hidden from view in the drawstring bag you will receive from the Costumer. Water can be poured from modern bottles into mugs or cups on site. Empty bottles should be trashed or taken with you, do NOT leave them at the site. The drawstring bag makes up only part of what you will receive from the Costumer. Take proper care of the entire costume (i.e. wash it regularly and report rips) and wear it correctly (just ask if you are unsure about this).

At the end of the day, interpreters should record the day's events and close up the farm. Each farm maintains a daily journal that includes records of the staff and their completed duties for that day, along with any pertinent observations that the next day's staff may need to know. This journal should be read at the beginning of the work day and then updated at the close of the day. When you do write in the journal, write small and be concise as these journals are small. At the minimum, list the date, weather, and names of staff and volunteers at the site, but also keep in mind that anyone (including visitors) could read the journal. In addition to updating the journal, interpreters should share evening chores: sweeping the floors in the house and barn, closing windows, washing dirty dishes/utensils, wiping off table surfaces, putting away or disposing of food, putting away tools, and feeding and watering livestock. The goal is to leave the site as you found it that morning, including restocking any firewood and kindling. If you see

¹⁴ Tillen, "Basic Guide Lines," Frontier Culture Museum; Alex Tillen, "Basic Rules of Good Behavior For Interpreters," Frontier Culture Museum.

something that needs to be done, go ahead and do it. There's no need to ask for or wait on permission to clean and maintain the site. The Museum greatly values the ability to anticipate a problem or need and deal with it before a larger issue arises.¹⁵

Stay on site until the Museum closes at 5pm, at the least, and until all chores have been completed at the site. If you have co-workers with you on site, you should also wait to walk back with them to the Dairy Barn, instead of leaving them alone at the site. Unless previous arrangements have been made with your co-workers and the Director of Interpretation, you should remain on site until all chores have been completed. Before you get hasty to leave work quickly, remember any interpreters on sites by themselves and make sure they return to the Dairy Barn as well. The safety of artifacts, co-workers, and livestock should be a priority before leaving for the day.

What is Your (MAIN) Role?

As an interpreter, you have the pleasure of creating and weaving together a story for the visitor, connecting the various exhibits together to create one big story. Each exhibit can be seen as one chapter or part to the overarching story – no exhibit stands completely alone. No matter what exhibit you find yourself in, keep in mind the primary mission and purpose of this museum. Answer for yourself what the visitor should come away knowing from both the museum and the particular exhibit you are in. Both should relate. The three themes (immigration, daily life, and acculturation) should help you to focus your interpretation so that visitors fully understand who the various immigrants to America were in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and how they influenced American culture.

¹⁵ Tillen, "Basic Rules for Good Behavior For Interpreters," Frontier Culture Museum.

In the Old World, interpreters should call attention to the specific practices and beliefs that became part of American culture later. For example, interpreters at the West African Farm could draw attention to Igbo foodways, highlighting their method of cooking and crop usage that later become enmeshed into American cooking (especially in the South where African slaves became cooks for white households).¹⁶ Drawing attention to these practices should help visitors identify them on the American sites and make them look forward to seeing the entire museum, and hearing the full story. Many of these Old World traditions may appear unfamiliar to visitors, so interpreters should make every effort to relate the past to what visitors may be familiar with. For interpreters on American sites, the goal should be to explain what immigrants brought with them and how they adopted other practices to make a new culture. At these sites, interpreters should draw on the knowledge visitors learned at the Old World sites. As a whole, interpreters have the responsibility to make the museum cohesive to the visitor – so that it is one big story.

¹⁶ For more information regarding African foodways and their contributions to American cooking, see Section 3 and the explanation of the West African Farm.

SECTION II

The How-To Guide of Interpretation

What is Interpretation?

The essence of interpretation is to answer for visitors: why is this important? Interpretation, the very word itself, implies some kind of translation -- a bridge of sorts. You, as the interpreter, act as a bridge between the visitor and the museum resources (i.e. the exhibits, artifacts, and information about them), connecting visitor interests with the meanings of these resources. You ‘translate’ artifacts and physical resources into a language that helps visitors make meaning of these resources, making their experience at the museum personally relevant. According to the National Park Service, interpretation has three tenets which can work well for our Museum:

1. resources possess meaning and have relevance
2. visitors seek something of value
3. interpretation facilitates connections between the two previous parts

At its core, interpretation is done to increase understanding and requires three basic attitudes: “knowledge, enthusiasm, and a little common touch.”¹⁷

Several professionals have pondered the meaning of interpretation since the 1890s and have written books to define and conceptualize this important skill. Most museums will quote from Freeman Tilden’s *Interpreting Our Heritage* which forever changed the field of interpretation, but other scholars have written on interpretation in the years since Tilden’s 1957 work, updating the understanding of interpretation. Sam Ham, for instance, described four qualities of interpretation in 1992, saying that interpretation is

¹⁷ Kevin Bacher, et al. “Foundations of Interpretation: Curriculum Content Narrative,” *National Park Service, Interpretive Development Program* (2007), 1-8; G. Ellis Burcaw, *Introduction to Museum Work* 3rd ed (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 1997), 150; Allison Grinder and E. Sue McCoy, *The Good Guide: A Sourcebook for Interpreters, Docents and Tour Guides* (Scottsdale, AZ: Ironwood Publishing, 1985).

pleasurable, relevant, organized, and thematic.¹⁸ Larry Beck and Ted Cable, by far, offer the most recent look at interpretation that combines many of the ideas of the previous interpretation greats. They lay out fifteen principles for interpretation, a few of which warrant notice here:

1. To spark an interest, interpreters must relate the subject to the lives of visitors.
2. The purpose of interpretation goes beyond providing information to reveal deeper meaning and truth.
3. The interpretive presentation – as a work of art – should be designed as a story that informs, entertains, and enlightens.
4. The purpose of the interpretive story is to inspire and to provoke people to broaden their horizons.
5. Interpretation should present a complete theme or thesis and address the whole person
6. Interpretation for children, teenagers, and seniors – when these comprise uniform groups – should follow fundamentally different approaches.
7. Every place has a history. Interpreters can bring the past alive to make the present more enjoyable and the future more meaningful.
8. Interpreters must concern themselves with the quantity and quality (selection and accuracy) of information presented. Focused, well-researched interpretation will be more powerful than a longer discourse.
9. Quality interpretation depends on the interpreter’s knowledge and skills, which should be developed continually.

¹⁸ Kevin Bacher, et al. “Foundations of Interpretation,” 3.

10. Passion is the essential ingredient for powerful and effective interpretation.¹⁹

How is Interpretation Practiced?

In an attempt to “‘give meaning to a ‘foreign’ landscape or event from the past or present,’” you will find that your job at the Frontier Culture Museum is to offer a “personal service” through one-on-group interaction, discussion, and conversation.²⁰ Before you get daunted about stepping out onto the farms in costume to be an authority for the Museum to the public, take a moment to read over this section. This section is designed to introduce some of the tricks of the trade, to explain several ways interpretation can be done. An easy way to remember the basics of interpretation is to think of the 2Cs and knowledge of ART.

The 2Cs: The first of the Cs is communication. Interpretation requires dialogue. It is direct, personal interaction. It is a conversation. The visitor doesn’t need to be intimidated or daunted. Visitors are people too. For about 20 minutes, and maybe more, you get to have a conversation with someone about something you love. Share your passion.

The second of the Cs is connection. Through that conversation you establish with the visitor, you as the interpreter make the artifacts, houses, and stories of this Museum mean something to the visitor. Interpretation gets the visitor to care for and about the past and the Museum. The connections weave together the messages and collections of

¹⁹ Kevin Bacher, et al. “Foundations of Interpretation,” 3-4. For the rest of the principles as laid down by Beck and Cable, see the National Park Service document on interpretation or the book by the two authors.

²⁰ Kevin Bacher, et al. “Foundations of Interpretation,” 5.

the Museum with the intellectual and emotional world of the visitor, creating that bridge between the goals of the Museum and the visitors' interests.²¹ To make these connections and bridge that gap between the visitor and the museum exhibits, interpreters link the tangible artifacts and stories to an intangible meaning:

Tangibles = the physical elements of the site (having concrete or material qualities) and important people, events, stories, and processes

Ex. immigration, slavery, sheep, yeoman, Wigwam

Intangibles = concepts and ideas the tangibles represent, more abstract

Ex. opportunity, ownership, loss, separation, identity, patriarchy

Linking the tangible resource with the intangible meaning makes the 'stuff' of the Museum more personally relevant to the visitor and therefore increases the likelihood that the visitor will leave having learned something and caring about this Museum.²² Many of the tangibles for the Frontier Culture Museum will relate directly to the themes and key questions explained earlier. They are the primary elements of the site that visitors should walk away understanding. To make them meaningful, the job of the interpreter, you, is to make these elements have meaning. For example, slavery is an element of the West African Farm, relating to why and how these people came to America. Slavery invokes several meanings that can strike an emotional chord in visitors, which help relate the experience of West Africans with something visitors may know such as loss and separation.

²¹ Mary Kay Cunningham, *The Interpreters Training Manual for Museums* (Washington, DC: American Association of Museums, 2004), 60-67.

²² Kevin Bacher, et al. "Foundations of Interpretation," 5-6.

The ART of Interpretation: The 2Cs can be accomplished through a knowledge of the museum **audience, resources** (meaning collections, exhibits, objects), and **techniques**. There are several skills an interpreter needs in order to translate the meanings of the resource that can be illustrated into an interpretive equation. By combining knowledge of the resource, knowledge of the audience, and the appropriate interpretive technique, the interpreter creates an interpretive opportunity.²³ This manual has been created to help you gain these skills, by providing knowledge of the Museum and its various exhibits (Section 3), explaining various types of audiences (explained below), and describing different ways to interpret.

Audience: The people the Museum serves are the audience for your interpretation. Museum visitors typically fall into one of three different types: children, families, and adults. Each of these groups requires slightly different types of interpretation and each brings a different set of factors to the visitor experience. The different seasons will also influence who comes to the Museum. You will find that school children and adult groups tend to appear more at the Museum during the fall and spring, especially on week days. When children come to the Museum, they come as part of a school group or summer camp. They make reservations with the Museum for specific programs that will largely shape the interpretation you will need to offer. Information about these kinds of groups will be detailed in a later section.

Families will usually visit more on weekends and over the summer. Since these types of groups include multiple age groups, it will be important to read the sections on

²³ Kevin Bacher, et al. "Foundations of Interpretation," 10.

children and adults in this manual. These groups, however, offer a great opportunity to you as the interpreter, especially in talking about daily life. Since families lived in the homes the Museum interprets, there are several great connections you can make between the past and present – be it through food, architecture, work, leisure activities, or sleeping. For instance interpretation at the English Farm can draw parallels between the idea of public and private space from the past to today. The interpreter can ask the family if there are any rooms in their own house that are ‘off limits’ or that they rarely go in. Conversely, an interpreter can ask families if strangers or visitors are allowed in bedrooms. These types of connections can go a long way in communicating unfamiliar principles (i.e. the idea of private versus public space) that are important in helping visitors see the transplantation of culture. As a whole, families simply want to be engaged, and they want to be engaged together. Help families have conversations with each other about what they see and use the family dynamic to make the Museum important and meaningful.

There are nine key principles to keep in mind when speaking to family groups, six of which will be described here. These principles come from a research study conducted at Colonial Williamsburg in the early 1990s but many of the principles still have relevance today.

1. The first five minutes a family is in your exhibit are critical to establishing an initial impression. A good first impression goes a long way in creating a great museum experience, so make every effort to immediately capture the attention of children and adults.

2. Attempting to interest and excite children about history can go a long way in making parents happy. An interpreter can bend down, make eye contact, and ask for a child's help with small tasks as a way to make the child feel special and important. Also, consider visibility for children when large groups enter your exhibit, allow children to come to the front of the group and invite them to sit.
3. Many parents want their children to be inspired by the past, to love it. This is an important motivation to consider when speaking to families, so let your enthusiasm for history come through in your voice.
4. Children love to discover and explore things for themselves. Ask observation questions, offer hands-on activities, and invite them to imagine being a particular person (i.e. a mother, father, brother, farmer) to give them avenues to make those discoveries.
5. Leave children some time to answer any questions you may ask them and hear them out completely when they answer. It will mean a lot to parents if you take the time to listen to their child.
6. To teach the mind you will need to touch the heart first. To touch the heart, you will need to engage these families by using concepts and ideas they already know. Make the history relatable so that children and adults alike can make a personal connection to the past.²⁴

Adults will make up a large portion of your visitors. Groups of adults may consist of an older couple or two with no children, some friends, or a senior citizen group. Adult

²⁴ The six principles were paraphrased and adapted from the following article: Conny Grant, "Improving Interaction between Live Interpreters and Children," *Visitor Studies Today* 4, no. 3 (Fall 2001): 3-5.

visitors, you will find, will be able to draw upon many more years of experience when approaching the cultures of the past. Many of the practices and traditions may already be familiar, but there should be at least one thing they won't be able to identify or have previous knowledge of. Take advantage of their previous knowledge to add deeper layers to the conversation. Consider, for example, the primary issues the Museum addresses and their modern equivalents. Immigration did not stop after 1850 but continues to occur in America today, often becoming a highly political issue. For visitors from the local area, for example, you can draw on local knowledge of the growing Hispanic population who find work in the various poultry plants in the area to connect visitors to the tough transitions involved in immigrating to new countries. Adults especially will be able to latch on to these modern equivalents which allow you to make stronger connections to the past. Go beyond just talking to adults and let these visitors touch and experience too.

These visitors, like families, come to museums for a variety of reasons. Visitor motivations fall into several broad categories – education/learning, entertainment, social, duty, or personal – that create different visitor expectations and experiences.²⁵ Research done on visitors to historic sites states that these visitors are motivated by a desire to learn, to feel a sense of the past, and to have fun.²⁶ Those who come to a museum for educational or entertainment reasons typically learn the most from their visit and will be the easiest to engage. The living history component using third person interpretation at this Museum (explained below) will engage visitors seeking a social experience, but it will be important for interpreters to allow these visitors to interact within their group as

²⁵ Johanna Margot Bromberg Craig, "An Exploration of Learning in a Living History Museum: Family Groups, Costumed Interpreters, their Interactions, and the Making of Meaning" (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2012), 39.

²⁶ Institute for Learning Innovation, *The Outdoor Living History Museum Interpretation Research Project* (Annapolis, MD: Institute for Learning Innovation, 2009), 15.

well.²⁷ A simple question asking visitors why they've come to the Museum can uncover many of the reasons listed here, and should then help you tailor your interpretation to suit the needs of those particular visitors.

Resource: Museum resources simply mean the physical artifacts and collections, and intellectual knowledge. For the Frontier Culture Museum, resources include the buildings (i.e. the Indian hamlet), the reproduction artifacts in these buildings (i.e. the moccasins, skins, tools), any original objects, and the intellectual knowledge about the group and time period (i.e. all the historical scholarship published about Indians in Virginia). Some of this knowledge will be detailed in later sections of this manual, but for more specific information you may need to consult other experienced interpreters and books. There are six different cultures represented at this Museum – West African, English, Irish, German, Indian, and American – which means there is a lot of information to learn. This manual just scratches the surface of all this information, but it provides you a good place to start. A list of suggested readings following each section will provide a good second place to start for more in-depth knowledge.

Many of the resources at this Museum are physical. Each building and object has been placed where it sits for a specific reason. Exhibits have a detailed plan that explains why these houses have their particular furnishings. Everything has meaning. Going through whatever exhibit you have been assigned to, think about why these objects have been placed at the Museum and what larger messages they can tell. Objects are a great way to capture visitors' attention, so be prepared to use them to make connections and

²⁷ Research studies have additionally identified five different museum 'selves' taken on by visitors either solely or in combination: the explorer, facilitator, professional/hobbyist, experience seeker, and spiritual pilgrim. Institute for Learning Innovation, *The Outdoor Living History*, 14.

tell the bigger story of that Museum. For further information regarding the furnishings and layout of each house, consult the furnishings plan for the site found in the break room.

Technique: Interpretive techniques are wide-ranging at living history museums, even within the category of third person interpretation. Third person interpretation is the term used by the museum community to refer to interpretation done in costume from the point of view of the modern person speaking about the past. Other museums utilize first person interpretation in which costumed interpreters speak from the point of view of the people of the past and take on a character from a specific time period and place. This style of interpretation is rarely used at the Frontier Culture Museum, and may only be found as a form of theater during special events such as Lantern Tours and Creepy Tales. For the most part, you will be speaking to visitors as yourself bringing the past to life through your dress and actions.

Within the style of third person interpretation, however, there are several different techniques you can use to engage visitors with the site and Museum. The majority of what has been stressed in this manual is a technique called informal interpretation which involves conversation and dialogue with visitors. Unlike formal interpretation, or tours, informal interpretation is spontaneous and occurs whenever a visitor walks into your exhibit. Formal tours, as another technique, are used only occasionally and on a seasonal basis. From December until March, the Museum receives fewer visitors and cold weather forces some sites to shut down. Therefore, the Museum offers on-call tours for any visitors who do come, requiring interpreters to take visitors through the entire

Museum. These tours are more formal and involve a scripted outline for interpreters to follow.

Demonstrations, often called second person interpretation, coincide well with informal interpretation since they involve doing an activity, chore, or task from the past. Since this Museum houses eight working farms, you will be assigned a particular task to perform for the day. This Museum is, after all, a LIVING history museum. Weeding, cooking, sewing, woodworking, farming, and a multitude of other tasks will draw the visitor into the exhibit and create a starting point to begin informal interpretation. Encourage visitors to try out the task for themselves if possible; involve them in the activities of long ago.

The three last techniques can fit into either informal or formal interpretation. First, storytelling involves using the information about an exhibit to tell a story. This kind of technique can be used at the beginning of your interpretation or when answering questions. With this technique, however, you will need to be conscious of the visitor's response and be cognizant that you don't ramble. Storytelling goes beyond merely stating facts or jumping into making connections. Through storytelling, you can paint a picture for the visitors or have them imagine a scenario. While many of their questions will revolve around the artifacts they see and the material culture on display, storytelling as an interpretive technique brings people back into the exhibit. It brings John Bowman Jr., for instance, into the 1820s house to talk about acculturation and the blending of cultures, and to suggest ways in which each successive generation in America gradually adopted traditions and practices from other cultures they encountered. Through his story, visitors can see how adding on the central hall and parlor next to the traditional German

house showcase physically the blending of cultures. For this technique to work, interpreters need to sound like they understand the information. Confidence in what you're saying can go a long way toward making a great story.

Second, questioning as a technique brings visitors directly into the interpretive experience. By asking questions of the visitors, interpreters gather information about what the visitors already know, thus allowing them to make the connections largely on their own. Asking them what kind of tasks would be performed in this room or who they think might live here can get visitors to think about what they see and go beyond just looking. Questioning can also help visitors make connections between sites if you ask them, for instance, how the Irish spinning wheel differs from the English spinning wheel, or you ask at the Indian site what other farm in the Old World looks similar to its shape and format. Learning and meaning-making then are in the hands of the visitor. To make this kind of technique possible, it is important that interpreters fully understand the various exhibits and the connections between them.

Finally, the technique of role play similarly involves visitors in the learning experience, but also brings the past to life. In this technique the interpreter asks the visitors to imagine themselves as people from the past or to take on a role themselves. Children, especially, will latch onto this technique and interpreters can ask them to imagine being in charge of a farm in West Africa or the daughter of a German farmer to get at the daily life of these people. Taking on a role themselves, interpreters can talk about the choices they would make to emigrate from Ireland to America or how they represent an acculturated immigrant at the 1850s Farm. This technique, too, requires a deep understanding of the information about the site so the interpreter can step into the

shoes of people long ago and help visitors to do likewise. All of the above techniques can be combined in a variety of ways. As you learn about the site you will be assigned to, think about how to present this information to the variety of audience groups mentioned earlier.

Interpreting in costume directly with the visitor means that you will need to get a 'read' of the visitors as soon as they arrive, looking at body language, non-verbal cues, and how the visitors generally interact with you. When a visitor first approaches your exhibit, the primary goal should be to relate the main themes and points of that exhibit (explained in the following sections on each exhibit) and how that fits into the broader mission of the museum. Above all else, the visitor should walk away understanding the formation of American culture by the settlement of these various Old World groups. This main information should be introduced as soon as possible when the visitor enters the exhibit. Even if your 'read' on the visitor eventually finds that they don't appear that interested in having a discussion with you, make sure they at least walk away with the main point of that particular exhibit. Keep in mind that most visitors walking through this Museum may only spend on average about 20 minutes at your exhibit. Lay that groundwork quickly, clearly, and succinctly. Once this initial groundwork has been laid, you then have free reign to interact with the visitors and cater to their particular interests. Make it a discussion and interactive. As the visitor asks questions and seeks more detail about the exhibit, keep in mind the possible intangible meanings people, events, objects, and concepts can represent. Tie information back to the main point when possible, though some visitors will ask seemingly random pieces of information which is perfectly ok. Let the visitors be in charge of their own learning.

Who Do We Serve?: Another Word about Visitors

The visitor is who you serve. On the ‘frontlines’ of this museum, you interact personally with the people who support and benefit from this institution. You have a very important job to do, but one that need not be scary or daunting. Just think back to why you decided to become an interpreter at this Museum: you love history and you love sharing your knowledge with others. Take those two loves with you when you go out into the field, and simply have a conversation. Remember, interpretation is about having a discussion with the visitor; talk with the visitor, not at them.

You will find as an interpreter on a *working* farm, that you have a wide range of responsibilities and duties. From feeding livestock to weeding gardens to cooking, there will be many things competing for your attention. The visitor, however, must come first! Yes, perhaps the oatcakes may burn or the fire may die down, but your primary duty is to the visitor. Many of these visitors will only be at the Museum this one time – make it the best experience they could possibly have. A happy visitor may mean a repeat visitor or a visitor who tells all their friends about this great Museum. Those oatcakes will still get cooked and the garden weeded by the end of the day. When that visitor comes around, turn the focus on them. This doesn’t mean that you have to completely stop what you’re doing, unless multitasking is difficult for you. In many situations, the activity you’re doing will be that initial draw to get the visitor interested. Besides, visitors like to see work being done ‘the old fashioned way.’ Use that as a draw and incorporate that activity into your interpretation.

Who are these visitors? They certainly aren’t monolithic but come from a variety of generations having different life experiences and values. When a group of visitors

enters your exhibits, keep in mind that going to a museum is, first of all, a social experience. People come together as a family or group of like-minded people to experience a museum and have fun together. First, because this is meant to be a social experience, make it one. Involve everyone in the interpretation and demonstrations. Create an atmosphere that will not only excite them about history and this Museum, but also that will bring them together. Connect with them and help them connect with each other. Secondly, you as the interpreter can analyze this group. What ages, ethnicities, genders, and experiences does this group represent? Think about how these different categories might connect the visitor to the information you have to present. There are some base line universal experiences that all peoples and cultures can connect with: everyone eats, sleeps, dresses, goes to the restroom, uses technology, and socializes. These same concepts work across generations and across time. If you find that analyzing the group is difficult, start with some universals that everyone can understand.

Finally, to get that 'read' on the visitor that can help direct interpretation, also consider asking questions of your own. Find out where they're from, if they've been to the Museum before, or why they came. Use the questions they ask to determine what strikes their interest. In a sense, being an interpreter gives you a chance to learn something as well. The visitor has a background and experiences that you can learn from. Take advantage of that unique opportunity. Using the information you gather as you interact with the visitor, tailor the interpretation you present. Relate the information to things they know. Remember, this is about the visitors and what they want to know.

Since the visitors come with a certain background and set of experiences, they also come with certain expectations about museums. The Virginia Association of

Museums has laid out some common visitor pet peeves that are good to keep in mind as you interact with the public. Here are some of the most typical complaints visitors make about frontline staff. Visitors get upset about staff who:

- engage in personal conversations – save the personal discussions for the break room; the visitor comes FIRST!
- do not acknowledge visitor’s presence – once again, the visitor comes FIRST!
- do not maintain a professional relationship with visitors
- flatter the visitor insincerely – the visitor can definitely tell)
- pressure the visitor into premature decisions – don’t force them to participate in activities if they don’t want to or even hesitate
- act annoyed when visitors ask questions because they don’t know the real answer or give off the impression that the question is ‘stupid’ or ‘dumb’ – even if it IS the hundredth time you’ve heard the question or the answer may seem obvious to you, still answer it like it’s the first time, with energy and enthusiasm
- make assumptions about the visitor based on appearance alone – you wouldn’t want to be judged by how you look, so don’t judge them; be open to getting to know each and every visitor²⁸

Above all, have patience with yourself. Interpretation is a skill. It takes practice and experience in the field. Listen to those interpreters who have been out on the frontlines and learn from them. Watch their technique and how they handle stressful situations. There will be some days and moments where it feels like you can’t string two

²⁸ Virginia Association of Museums, “Visitor Pet Peeves,” VAM Workshop (2001).

sentences together. We all have those days. Don't be afraid to mess up or be human. Laugh it off and brush it aside. The visitors will understand; they are forgiving.²⁹

A Quick Word About Schoolkids!

A large portion of your visitors will be school-aged children. They make up about 60% of the total visitors to this Museum, coming more frequently of course during the fall and spring. For these kinds of groups, many of the same principles listed above still apply. First, know the program. When you receive the daily list of the school groups scheduled for the day, look at the program listed. If you haven't already, ask the Director of Education for the Education Catalogue with a detailed description of each program and how each site should be involved in that program. Secondly, know your audience. These are school children. Universally they all love to be involved in hands-on activities. We don't expect you to become experts in child psychology; just observe and take note of how these school groups handle your interpretation. Let that be your guide for what works. There are some general principles, however, that you can keep in mind about each age group. Each age has different abilities to grasp knowledge and concepts.

From kindergarten through fifth grade, children fall within one of three categories as they develop. In the younger grades, children need real things they can touch and see. They require concrete things to grasp concepts. Much of the history curriculum for kindergarten up through second grade focuses on 'me and my surroundings.' Children are attempting to understand what is around them and answering what would it be like for them to live in a particular time period. They are making self connections. The next

²⁹ For additional information about museum visitors, see Susie Wilkening and James Chung, *Life Stages of the Museum Visitor: Building Engagement Over a Lifetime* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums Press, 2009).

phase of development is semi-concrete, involving a transition out of needing things to touch and see. Here, children can handle less concrete teaching and be more imaginative, using pictures and other substitutes for the ‘real’ thing. Teaching curriculum from third through fifth grade gradually gets children to think about cause and effect, make generalizations, and think about progress/development over time. In the final category, children can think more abstractly and have little reliance on concrete ‘things’. Children in this phase can do without the ‘real’ and think outside what they see in front of them. To coincide with this type of thinking, public school history curriculum for fourth to fifth graders approaches moral issues and asks children to consider if certain actions were right or just. More abstract in thinking, children are now asked to project how they would feel in a certain situation onto the events of the past, or to imagine how people long ago might have felt to be treated a certain way. These older age groups are seeking to understand other people’s perspectives.

To understand each age group and grade that may come to the museum, here are some quick and easy things to remember about each stage:³⁰

Preschool = learn about the world through play; observation and experimentation; one concept/skill at a time; learning how to form pictures in their minds and how to get along with other

³⁰ The grade-by-grade guide listed below comes from PBS, “Grade-By-Grade Learning Guide,” *PBS Parents*, Education, 2014. Information supported by John W. Santrock, *Children* 8th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2010).

Kindergarten = want to learn about the world and how it works; need active, hands-on exploration and discovery; learn that other people have different points of view

First Grade = love true stories of long ago, though sense of time not well developed (can see differences between past, present, and future); being encouraged to find their own answers to questions; learning to see patterns; learning by doing, emerging interest in reason

Second Grade = life experiences play a large role in learning, build on things they know; learning about peoples and places nearby; can understand riddles and puns

Third Grade = expanding view of the world; understanding change over time; working to understand the reason things happen; love to discuss things; making deeper, more abstract connections

Fourth Grade = will relate characters and story elements to their own lives; typically learning state history; deeper understanding of chronology

Fifth Grade = analyzing stories more in depth to understand purpose and motivation; their approach to early American history typically consists of

comparing people and looking at motivation for actions and consequences;
thinking logically about concrete problems

Middle Schoolers = can conjure up make believe situations, hypothetical possibilities, thinking abstractly, speculating, comparing themselves to others, influenced by peers and culture around them³¹

Thirdly, be relevant. Pay attention to where these groups are coming from in the Museum rotation (a principle that also applies to dealing with other museum visitors). Then connect that knowledge they learned at that other site to what you are presenting at yours. Use that information to make comparisons and contrasts, or better yet guide them to talk about those similarities and differences. Also, think about the world they live in and the knowledge they have about home, family, and community. For example, on the Irish Farm an interpreter can sit a class down on the floor of the house and ask them to close their eyes. In their minds' eye, the children can be asked to put themselves in their kitchen. Standing in their kitchen, children can raise their hands when prompted to consider if they can see their family/living room, their dining room, their front door, and any bedrooms. Each child knows their own house. Whether they say no or yes to these questions, the interpreter can use this information to talk about the open concept plan of houses and multipurpose spaces. When they open their eyes, children can then see and connect to the idea of the Irish Farm house being multipurpose and see the various functions performed in that one main room. These are great areas to connect kids to what may be strange and unfamiliar.

³¹ John W. Santrock, *Children*, 8th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2010), 499-500.

Finally, have fun! Kids are great to interact with. They come to museums and learning with such enthusiasm and energy. These school children also happen to be our next generation of adult museum visitors and supporters. Getting them inspired and excited about museums at this early age can have a tremendous impact on the future of museums. They are the future.

The MOST Frequently Asked Questions

In an age increasingly going virtual and ‘fake,’ the number one question you will get from visitors, mostly children and some younger adults, will refer to the reality of what they see. Over and over again you will hear visitors ask if the house is real, if the animals are real (especially the cats), if the fire is real, if you really do work (i.e. cooking, farming etc), or if you live at the Museum. These reflect a world increasingly viewed through a screen. What we do at this Museum is becoming rare. Each new generation has less and less interaction with the ‘stuff’ of life. The internet can now easily bring pictures and virtual representations of objects from around the world to people’s homes and schools. While the internet is an amazing feat of technology, it does cause some skepticism about object authenticity. ‘Real’ things are locked up in collections storage or behind glass, seen only through these virtual pictures. Our Museum, therefore, does something radically different. We present the ‘real’ things right in front of people. They can touch the real and authentic.

As they begin to realize that what they see around them is very real, then the questions will turn to you and what you do. Most people have a limited understanding of living history, third person interpretation, and what you do. The majority of museums in

the United States consist of large buildings with neatly laid out displays of objects usually behind glass. It's all inside and rarely do visitors see museum staff in the exhibits. Or they recall house museums with either uniformed or costumed docents/tour guides. If visitors are familiar with living history museums, they may think of reenactments or Colonial Williamsburg where costumed interpreters take on characters from the past. The assumption becomes that any person in costume must be reenacting the past in some way.

Even though these questions may get annoying and exasperating, remember their source. Prepare yourself for these questions. The first opening lines of your greeting to visitors can help dispel some of these assumptions. Think carefully about the words you use and how they may be construed. Some good phrases to use are, "I am representing..." or using "real" and "actual" throughout your interpretation to talk about what they see and what you're doing.

Do We Really Need a Manual?

The short answer is yes! The information presented above may all be background about the museum and interpretation, but all of it is good to know to be an effective interpreter. Some of this information may not even click or sink in fully until you've gone out on the frontlines and done actual interpretation, but when you do, you'll be glad to have this background knowledge. In addition to some of the more theoretical information about interpretation and 'reading' the visitor, this manual provides a brief overview of each of the exhibits in the Museum, focusing on how they each fit into the broader mission. It's hoped that you will read ALL of the sections on each of the sites.

Even though this may seem daunting, each part is necessary to understanding the whole. If you find yourself on the German Farm, for instance, it would be helpful for you to know the typical German household layout (for visitors to see the connections later at the 1820s Farm), or that Irish farmers also produced flax, among others.

When you eventually get out onto the frontlines, you will observe a wide variety of different interpretation techniques and styles, as well as some different information. Take note of the different techniques and styles. They may spark and shape your own style. If you come across interpreters who tell visitors information that seems contrary to what you've learned or present new ideas, embrace an opportunity to learn. In the first instance keep in mind that this Museum, like all others, has an oral tradition of its own where information about a site gets passed down from one interpreter to another which can sometimes cause information to get warped and changed. Use discernment in how you approach such information but for all scenarios wait until visitors have left. One possible action could be to respectfully ask the interpreter where s/he got that information, opening up the potential for new learning since this manual is not complete or comprehensive. You could also present the alternative information to the other interpreter and see if s/he has come across it before. Go into this thinking of having an intellectual discussion with a fellow colleague about the best way to present this site to the visitor. If, however, the information presented was clearly incorrect, wait until visitors have left to gently correct the information. Be prepared to cite where your own information came from and once again try to avoid hostility by approaching such conversations as learning opportunities for you both.

This manual, therefore, is important in laying out the groundwork for what you'll need to know to be an interpreter at this Museum. Notations will indicate suggestions for further reading on each of these sites and a short bibliography will detail some of the major works that provide more detailed information. To accomplish the larger goal of talking with visitors about this Museum, you will need to read more than just this manual. Research, and continued learning, is a major part of this job. Seek out the advice of other interpreters, the Director of Interpretation, and the Deputy Director for further suggestions on reading and research. Knowledge of the resource (the various sites) combined with knowledge of the audience and interpretation techniques makes for happy visitors and 'WOW' moments. Interpret to get those 'WOW' moments; they feel amazing. So turn the page and read on!

Suggested Readings – Interpretation Theory & Methodology

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- Leon, Warren and Margaret Piatt. “Living-History Museums.” In *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment*, edited by Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig, 64-97. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989.
- Levy, Barbara Abramoff. “Interpretation Planning: Why and How.” In *Interpreting Historic House Museums*, by Jessica Foy Donnelly, 43-60. New York: AltaMira Press, 2002.

Tilden, Freeman. *Interpreting Our Heritage*, 3rd ed. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.

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SECTION 3

Interpretation on the Ground

As a Whole...

As the two previous sections have indicated, this Museum centers around the ideas of immigration and acculturation, answering who Old World peoples and cultures were and how they then adapted to life in America. Some visitors may get thrown off by the word ‘frontier,’ misunderstanding where this frontier would have been in America. During the 1700s when many of these Old World peoples immigrated to the then-British colonies in North America, the frontier would have been those wild, largely uninhabited regions typically west of the major coastal towns and ports. In the colonies, this was largely represented by the Appalachian Mountains, creating a frontier in New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and farther south. The Museum, as a result, is not tied to the Shenandoah Valley, but instead seeks to focus on these Old World peoples establishing themselves on the early frontier of the British colonies. Therefore, it is important to talk to visitors about where these various Old World peoples settled in America, briefly explaining how the move from the more populated coastal towns and cities of America to the ‘frontier’ differed from their known experiences. Taken as a whole, all of these Old World cultures and peoples lived in more compact towns and villages with largely dependent households, which were replicated in the New England colonies. This more compact living structure contrasted sharply with the experiences of the frontier that dispersed people far and wide.

While significant changes occurred in the transition from Old World to America and differences exist between Old World cultures, all these groups (represented through the eight exhibits) share common features. Telling the story of immigration and acculturation requires that you look at household, farming, community, religion, and the

skills/crafts of each site. These five areas constitute the essence of each site and allow for broader thematic connections. All the existing exhibits will be included in this section, with a brief overview of each site and explanations of the cultural contributions represented. It would be highly beneficial to all interpreters to read about ALL the exhibits, not just the one you have been assigned. As stated before, the information presented here is by no means complete or all-encompassing. For further reading suggestions, consult the Suggested Reading List at the end of each exhibit's section. Finally, each exhibit information section includes the frequently asked questions experienced by current staff members at the Museum. Listing these questions here should help prepare you to answer these questions and consider what visitors tend to be most confused about. As always, consult other scholarly works, the Director of Interpretation, or the Deputy Director about questions regarding interpretation and content.

From West Africa to West of the Blue Ridge

Key Concepts: slavery, common field farming, compound

Site Statement:

The Igbo compound represents the largest group of people that came to America, forcibly removed from their homes to be slaves. These people, even though forced to emigrate, brought with them their knowledge of foodways, music, architecture, and other cultural practices that would later influence American culture.

Introduction to the Site:

The Museum has reconstructed a typical compound or household structure common among the Igbo people of West Africa in the 1700s. Located in what is modern-day Nigeria, along the Bight of Biafra in the Southeastern part of the nation, the Igbo people lived in small compact villages consisting of several compounds like the one on display at this Museum. This compound would have been headed by a free-born, independent, adult male yam farmer who provided for at least two wives and their respective children.

When entering the compound, ask visitors to picture being in their own homes with their multiple rooms. An Igbo compound similarly has several structures, or

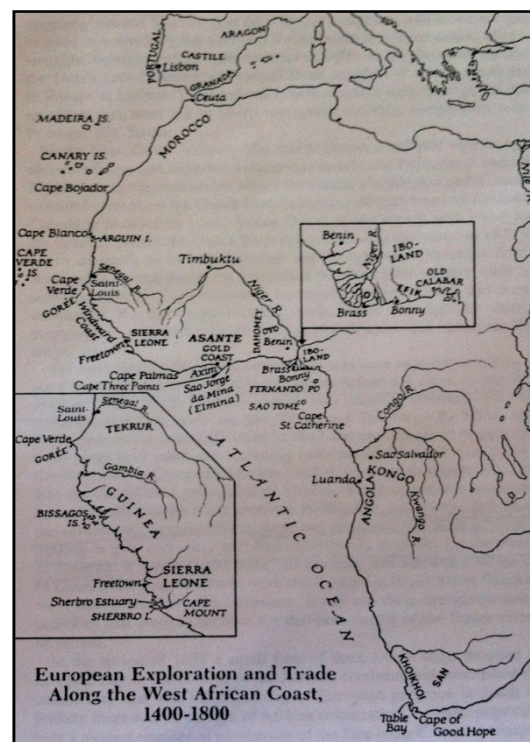


Figure 1

rooms, within the larger compound. The typical compound has a minimum of six structures surrounded by low mud brick walls.

Museum staff studied and researched the construction techniques of Igbo compounds in Nigeria from present-day Igbo peoples. Using local mud and materials, the Museum, with the help of a group of Nigerian people, constructed the site as it stands now. The site closes down over the winter months, from December to March, and protective tarps and reinforcements are added to the structures to prevent snow fall from damaging the roofs and walls. Living near the equator, the Igbo people would not have experienced winters like those found in Virginia; therefore, the Museum takes precautions to care for the site.

Household:

An Igbo household of the 1700s consisted of the head of the compound (the independent male yam farmer), his wives (of whom there could be several depending on the wealth of the family), their various children, slaves, and any other dependent family relations. The compound built at the Museum represents a prosperous yam farmer with two wives. When visitors enter the compound, they will automatically assume they are looking at a village setting. As an interpreter, your first job will be to greet them, welcome them to the site, and immediately explain what visitors are looking at. Tell them they have just walked through the 'front door' of an Igbo home, using the elaborately carved wood doors to explain that notion.

A typical Igbo compound was rectangular in shape and built of mud. Mud brick walls surrounded the entire compound, with openings at the front and back. Each of the structures within the compound had a specific purpose and was delineated for private or

more public uses. Entering through the front entrance of the compound, visitors stand in the first open courtyard in front of the obi, a reception/meeting place for the master of the compound. The obi typically had a low, thatched roof with mud floors and walls, low mat-covered couches, and elaborate decorations such as carved stools and hanging skulls to show the family wealth and power. Isolated from the other structures, this living space was for the head male of the compound and was used for his enjoyment, leisure, and business. Beyond the obi, the compound consisted of several smaller courtyards, fenced areas for animals, and other more private structures. In the center of the compound was the head man's sleeping quarters which consisted of two distinct rooms for the head of the compound and his older sons. On either side of the man's sleeping space were the huts for his wives. These huts were smaller in size and only had one room in which each wife lived with her respective children. Each wife was given her own cooking and garden space in the compound, but overall the first wife would typically have had more privileges, such as a porch off the side of her hut and a larger garden.³²

All the huts and structures are built of mud bricks with openings at the roof line for smoke to pass through and thatched roofs made of raffia palms. The roofs are steeply pitched, extending to within two to three feet off the ground. This allows the heavy monsoon rains of the wet season to run off the huts and provides eaves for protection from the sun during the dry season. A porch off the first wife's hut would similarly provide an outside working space protected from the harsh sunlight. The tropical climate permitted most work to be done outside, although men and women typically performed different tasks. Men spent the majority of their time farming or working at some special

³² Umembe N. Onyejekwe, *Architectural Research: Research on the Igbo Compound – 1700s* (Frontier Culture Museum, N.D.), 8-23.

skill for the village, while women did kitchen gardening, cooking, cloth making, weaving, and child rearing. These segregated tasks meant that men and women had segregated work spaces within the compound. Men usually worked the fields on the outskirts of the village or tended to their harvest in yam barns. Women, on the other hand, sometimes worked in the fields but more likely spent much of their time in the compound. Having a clean, swept yard was the pride and joy of a woman's domain, demonstrating her consciousness about preventing brush fire, weeds, and insect pests in recreational and outdoor work spaces. One of the more neutral spaces within the compound would have been the shrine where family members could place offerings and sacrifices to the gods and their ancestors.³³

Slavery existed in Igbo communities long before Europeans ever touched the African shore. However, Igbo slavery differed from the later institution of slavery that emerged in the British colonies of North America. A person became a slave in Igbo society to pay off debts, through kidnapping, or by capture in war. These slaves were treated like family members and could in some situations achieve freedom again. In contrast to American slavery, African slaves often became "trusted associates of their

³³ Douglas B. Chambers, *Murder at Montpelier: Igbo Africans in Virginia* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005), 42; John McLaughlin, "A Guide to Planting an African-American/African Focused Yard in Miami-Dade County: An Overview of Landscape Design and Plants Grown in Traditional African American Yards," University of Florida, n.d. <http://miami-dade.ifas.ufl.edu/old/programs/urbanhort/publications/PDF/Historical%20Background.PDF> (accessed March 17, 2015), 4. McLaughlin connects the idea of a swept yard found in West Africa, even today, to later traditions practiced by slaves and poor whites in the American South. Tropical areas with a significant dry spell lacked any turf within the compound, therefore dirt yards were more common. McLaughlin states, "One drawback to the swept yard is apparent during the wet months of the year when it can become muddy unless all the loose dirt has been assiduously swept to the side. Not surprisingly, maintenance of such a yard is labor intensive, requiring constant upkeep to remove weeds and smooth out the surface with a brushwood broom. One quote described this task as "ironing" the yard, and it was a weekly chore usually undertaken by the younger members of the family." (4-5)

owners and enjoyed virtual freedom.”³⁴ Children of slaves also had more rights than their later American counterparts since they could not be sold and had a greater possibility of manumission. Owning slaves, like having multiple wives and a large yam crop, signified wealth and status among the Igbo.

Farming:

Southeastern Nigeria, with its abundant rainfall and tropical climate, was heavily invested in agriculture, especially yams, which created the basis for family wealth.³⁵ Both connected and divided by a network of waterways, the Igbo peoples rarely performed agricultural work or other labor in isolation. Rather, work parties were established where cooperation, companionship, and competition were common, adding a social and sportive aspect to work tasks. Cultivating yams required considerable moisture and a lot of attention. After a section of land was prepared, trees cut down and the soil turned, whole families came out to hoe the soil into two-foot mounds into which they placed yam seeds. The farming cycle began around January and February each year when the dry season swept lands clean. Farming at the village level usually occurred on a block system where villagers would make their gardens in one section of village land at a time. By June all yams were planted. They grew during the wet season, and were then harvested in October. Yam cultivation and harvesting was under the domain of Igbo men

³⁴ John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2000), 23.

³⁵ Interpreters should note the difference between yams and sweet potatoes, explaining that the Igbo grew yams instead of sweet potatoes. Yams differ from sweet potatoes in size, being typically longer and bigger, and in taste, being drier and starchier. In a more technical explanation, the yam has only one embryonic seed leaf while a sweet potato has two, both coming from different plant families. Library of Congress, “What is the difference between sweet potatoes and yams?” *Everyday Mysteries: Fun Science Facts from the Library of Congress* (November 2012) <http://www.loc.gov/rr/scitech/mysteries/sweetpotato.html> (accessed February 27, 2015).

while the women would prepare the land and then grow other garden crops on the yam hills (to prevent erosion of the soil and weeds).³⁶

After the harvest, the men would bring the yams to yam barns to be washed and stored. From the yams women would create fufu, a thick paste or dough that made up the majority of the Igbo diet. From other garden crops and the domesticated animals, the Igbo would also eat heavily peppered soups, greens, and stews. The cultivation of palm oil also lent a distinct character and flavor to meals, and was especially useful for frying meat. Other vegetables and crops grown by Igbo women consisted of watermelon, sweet potatoes, plantains, maize, pineapple, peanuts, a variety of beans, okra, collard greens, and black-eyed peas. These foods would uniquely flavor African cuisine, and later influence European and American food traditions. Cooking techniques would similarly shape flavor and diet, and also later influence cuisine worldwide. The preeminence of tools such as wooden cooking spoons and heavy cast iron pots, along with the tendency to shake, pinch, dab, dash, and cook with the tastebuds would prevail over the centuries and were typical of Igbo cooking techniques, though such techniques were not unique to the Igbo.³⁷

Community:

The Igbo people were characterized by their avoidance of centralized political systems. Instead, their government proceeded on the basis of family relationships. Indeed, Igbo society was largely organized around a kinship system with each community being a collection of scattered homesteads governed by a village head and

³⁶ Robert W. July, *A History of the African People*, 4th ed. (Illinois: Waveland Press Inc, 1992), 94-101; Victor C. Uchendu, *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), 1-2, 24-25.

³⁷ Chambers, *Murder at Montpelier*, 39-41; July, *A History of the African People*, 100; Jessica B. Harris, *Iron Pots & Wooden Spoons: Africa's Gifts to New World Cooking* (New York: Atheneum, 1989), xii-xxii.

council of elders. Government and legal matters were primarily handled on a local level through councils and public policing; no centralized political organization existed. The compound on display at the Museum must be seen as part of this larger village with neighbors possibly sharing walls, as villages were composed of adjoining compounds along one or two streets together with outlying fields (which could be located several miles outside of the village).³⁸

These villages were composed primarily of people from a patrilineal kin group, though strangers, freed slaves, and those outside the kin group could make a home in the village. For this reason, most marriages occurred through lineage exogamy, or outside the local group. Within the village, status was accorded based on wealth, age, and individual merit. Older individuals could serve on the council of elders, one of whom was elected the village head due to his intermediate place between the lineage and ancestors. Ritual figures, too, were regarded more highly in the village community for their access to the spirit world. Each village could run itself autonomously but a larger general assembly could be created to resolve issues between villages.³⁹

Markets for trade occurred locally at the village level about every fourth day and were seen as subsidiary to farming. Dominated by women, these local markets “formed a hierarchical market ring where women went to trade basic foodstuffs and local manufactures,” limiting trade to domestic good.⁴⁰ Any surplus goods could be redistributed through the village market and included yams, other vegetables, palm oil, fowl, goats, cloth, woven mats, baskets, and earthenware. At these local markets, Igbo

³⁸ July, *A History of the African People*, 95; Chambers, *Murder at Montpelier*, 41; Uchendu, *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria*, 39.

³⁹ Uchendu, *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria*, 39-41, 49; Chambers, *Murder at Montpelier*, 41.

⁴⁰ Chambers, *Murder at Montpelier*, 47-48.

peoples socialized to share neighborhood news and gossip on the one hand, while also gathering to provide a place for ceremonies and parades. Larger, intergroup markets were held more infrequently over a longer period of time and involved more long-distance trade with a greater diversity of goods. Dominated by men, these higher-level markets also revolved around general provisions but involved goods not easily accessible locally such as salt, slaves, and some animals. All markets were owned by the village and conduct was regulated by the rules of that particular village. These larger markets, then, fell under the domain of the most powerful village groups, with the Aro owning the biggest of the regional fairs during the 1700s. Since Europeans primarily confined themselves to coastal towns, Igbo contact with whites was very limited, and few if any European material goods made their way to the local markets. Groups, such as the Aro, who made their wealth off of brokering trade in the larger markets, created a monopoly over trade, and eventually became the leading group facilitating the slave trade with Europeans. A rare example of a centralized organization, the Aro, an Igbo subgroup, established a mercantile network along which goods and travelers could pass. They became commercial agents of Igboland and came to monopolize the slave trade, targeting the populous Igbo interior. Trade for these slaves and other goods was paid for with manillas (a traditional exchange medium of almost ring-like metal bracelets or armllets made of copper, bronze, or brass), copper rods, iron bars, whiskey, and cowrie shells, all used as currency in Igboland.⁴¹

⁴¹ Chambers, *Murder at Montpelier*, 24-29, 47-49; July, *A History of the African People*, 147; Uchendu, *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria*, 4 & 27; Eric Edwards, "Object Biographies," *Rethinking Pitt-Rivers: Analyzing the Activities of a Nineteenth-Century Collector*, (January 2010) <http://web.prm.ox.ac.uk/rpr/index.php/objectbiographies/78-manilla/> (accessed February 27, 2015)

The Igbo focused on transparency and egalitarianism. Since their social system was group-oriented, the community required openness and transparency about everything; all dirty linen was washed publically. Anyone being secretive was seen as a threat to the community and held in contempt for not being properly socialized. Leaders, especially, had to be accessible to all. Openness was practiced on many levels. For example, childhood nudity, besides being practical in the tropical heat, held a deeper meaning for marriage since girls were expected to be virgins at marriage. Hiding protective medicines and the borrowing or lending of money caused suspicion, since these acts were to be performed in the presence of witnesses. Solitude was seen as a sign of wickedness and evil design. Living transparently also fostered egalitarianism, which ensured that no one person or group could acquire too much control over others. While a deterrent to a strong central government, this principle gave all citizens the ability to achieve success.⁴²

Religion:

Igbo religious practices separated a world of man from the world of spirits, combining a form of animism with a belief in a wide range of deities and the veneration of ancestors. The world of man consisted of all created things, both animate and inanimate, while the world of spirits was the abode of the creator, deities, disembodied and malignant spirits, and ancestral spirits. These two worlds were constantly interacting, creating a duality of existence. A supreme creator controlled everything and everyone but did so indirectly through multiple spirits and deities. In addition, the spirits

⁴² Uchendu, *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria*, 17, 19-18.

of Igbo ancestors watched over the lives of their descendents and therefore demanded honor and regular sacrifice to keep them happy and willing to help out the living.⁴³

Life as a whole was seen as a moving equilibrium which needed to be maintained. This equilibrium could be threatened by social and cosmological calamities such as long droughts, famine, epidemic disease, sorcery, litigation, homicide, and violations of taboos. Therefore it was a principal theme and responsibility of the Igbo to maintain some kind of balance between the social and cosmological. Balance could be achieved through “divination, sacrifice, appeal to the countervailing powers of their ancestors (who are their invisible father-figures) against the powers of the malignant, and nonancestral spirits, and, socially, through constant realignment in their social groupings.”⁴⁴ Misalignments could occur from the death of a young person, practicing sorcery, making a false oath, theft, and other actions. If any of these occurred, families and villages would do what they could to rebalance the world.⁴⁵

Rituals were the most common type of religious practice, and usually occurred in family shrines by the oldest male members. The family patriarch could communicate with the souls of his ancestors and natural forces at sites of veneration which contained holy objects (such as bones of the dead, consecrated pieces of wood, rock, or metal, and statuettes). Sacrifice could be offered to ancestors and spirits at these shrines through the blood of animals or humans (usually prisoners or captives) or through libations of palm wine. These offerings were meant to appease the spirits and gods, and reconnect the two worlds.⁴⁶

⁴³ Franklin and Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom*, 24-25; Uchendu, *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria*, 11-14.

⁴⁴ Uchendu, *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria*, 13.

⁴⁵ Uchendu, *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria*, 13.

⁴⁶ Franklin and Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom*, 25; Chambers, *Murder at Montpelier*, 51-52.

Skills/Crafts:

- woodworking = elaborate doors, stools, drums
- weaving = baskets, thatch for roofs, mats
- carving gourds = bowls, ladles, spoons
- storytelling = moral tales using animals with human characteristics to tell a moral story, use of proverbs
- music = banjo, drums

Cultural Contributions:

Slavery acted as the vehicle that brought West Africans to the American colonies. Becoming enslaved did not separate the Igbo from their culture, despite the disruptive experience of enslavement. Though they may not have been able to bring over physical representations of their culture, these peoples still brought knowledge of their traditional foodways, religion, and society. Knowledge of crops and cooking techniques, for example, survived the dreaded middle passage. Indeed, many Europeans found some African foods to their liking and brought over plants and seeds to grow them. These included such foods as watermelon (now a favorite summer fruit), okra, black-eyed peas, and eventually yams. Traditional cooking techniques, as listed previously, also survived the trip across the Atlantic. Since many slaves served in the kitchens of wealthy American whites, they worked with the knowledge they knew and incorporated some African tastes such as additional spices and vegetables into European cuisines.⁴⁷

Traditional African religious practices, music, architecture, and folklore were carried to America as well. Respect and honor for ancestors and deeply spiritual rituals

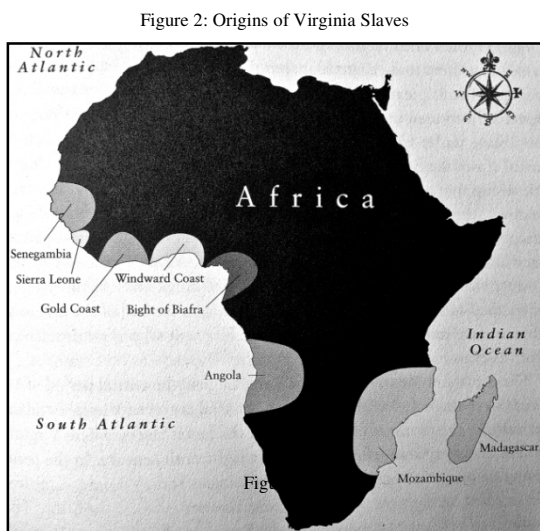
⁴⁷ Harris, *Iron Pots & Wooden Spoons*, xiv.

influenced later African American religion. Music too would shape later American culture as a whole as Africans brought knowledge of instruments similar to the banjo, an instrument that would become central to bluegrass music (ironically a traditionally rural white music genre), to America. Even such popular singers as Elvis Presley would attempt to copy African music styles. Of the cultural categories, West Africans would influence architecture the least, in terms of physical evidence. However, Igbo peoples brought over an architectural idea that was introduced to Europeans, especially those who came to inhabit the American south. Due to the hot weather of West Africa, Igbo people created porches in order to work outside without being directly in the sunlight. This idea of having a covered outdoor workspace would come into practice in the American South with its own warm seasons and hot sun. Looking at stereotypical white southern houses from the antebellum period, porches clearly grace the front, and sometimes back, of these great houses. Noticeably fewer porches appeared in New England where the climate tends to be cooler and slavery was far less prevalent over a much shorter period. Finally, the mode of storytelling and folklore of West Africa influenced America's own literature. The African use of animals with human characteristics to tell moral stories would influence the creation of American folklore and moral stories such as the Anansi fables or the stories of Brer Rabbit.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology of Early American Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1996), 228-229; Marcie Wallace, "Elvis Presley: A Revolutionist," *History*, LaGrange College (2012). https://www.lagrange.edu/resources/pdf/citations/2012/11_Wallace_History.pdf (accessed March 17, 2015), 1.

Tying Everything Together:

Immigration: For the Igbo, slavery acts as the vehicle that brings West Africans to the Americas. In comparison to the other Old World sites, this mode of migration is quite opposite from the other immigration stories. However, talking about immigration occurring through different kinds of vehicles can help bridge that gap. All these groups



made their way to the American colonies through various means, some under their own motivations and

Region of Origin	% imported to Virginia
Bight of Biafra	37.7
Gold Coast	16.0
Angola	15.7
Senegambia	14.9
Windward Coast	6.3
Sierra Leone	5.3
Mozambique / Madagascar	4.1

others forcibly transported. For the Igbo, this meant capture and kidnapping, then a harrowing trip across the Atlantic Ocean (known as the dreaded Middle Passage)

where they would then be sold to labor at a plantation, in someone's home, or as a field hand for a farmer.

Daily Life: The content explained above in the areas of household, farming, community, religion, and skills/crafts provides a glimpse into how the Igbo would have lived their lives in West Africa. When talking about daily life, try to bring up aspects of life that would seem familiar to your visitor first before delving into what makes these people unique and different. Many visitors will be unfamiliar with African life or customs but can latch on to similar foods, for instance, still eaten today. Talk about the universal experiences all humans share such as cooking/eating, shelter, spirituality, and family to begin to make some connections. Another ally with this farm will be visitor

curiosity. Due to its unfamiliarity, visitors will ask a lot of questions about objects or demonstrations that can be used as jumping-off points to connect to broader themes.

Acculturation: Despite the traumatic journey and separation from home and family, Africans did bring with them remnants of their daily lives in Africa to the American colonies. This final category brings the two previous categories together. Here, you can talk about the journey to America and point to what daily life traditions and practices were eventually adopted into mainstream American culture. The section above about the cultural contributions of West Africans in America should aid you in explaining this category. Draw attention to the specific cultural practices that visitors will see in the other exhibits later on, asking them to keep an eye out for porches on houses or okra growing in kitchen gardens.

Connecting all the sites together is important in creating a holistic experience for the visitor. The visitor needs to see that this is one large Museum instead of a compilation of eight separate museums. In the same way that you draw out the cultural practices and traditions that West Africans would bring to America, also point out how the Old World sites, in particular, have similar features. For example, you can point to the structure of the village and compound and make comparisons with the Native American site and the German Farm. Visitors will see the Indian village later in the Museum and may note the similarities with an outer wall and smaller structures within that wall. While they may look the same, interpreters should be careful to delineate between the West African **compound** and the Indian **village**, a one-family home versus a community. The similarities still exist and therefore interpreters can prep visitors at the West African farm for the similarities, and resulting differences, that they will see

between the two sites. Village structure in West Africa in the 1700s would have looked remarkably similar to village formation in Germany, as another connection. Both had homes/compounds close together around a street or village square with the agricultural fields outside the village. Pointing to these similarities gets visitors to think more critically about the exhibits and see the sites not as rural, individual family units but as homes that would have been part of a close-knit community.

Frequently Asked Questions

About the buildings...

1. Is this a village? What would the village have looked like?
2. Doesn't the rain damage the walls?
3. What is the roof made of?
4. Does the roof leak when it rains?
5. What are the buildings and walls made of?
6. How do you build these houses? Did you get help from the Igbo when you built these?
7. Why is it so barren in the compound? You don't plant anything here?

Plants and Animals...

1. Can we pet the goats? Can we go in the goat pen?
2. Would they have used the goats for dairy?
3. What are the plants outside the walls?
4. Is that a sweet potato? What is that (referring to the yam)?

When in the structures...

1. Where do they go to the bathroom?
2. What do you do in the winter time?
3. Why did you pick the Igbo?
4. What is the ring in the man's house for?
5. How many wives could the man have? Was two the maximum number of wives?
6. Where did the children sleep?
7. What are the drums for on the wife's porch?

8. What is the ikanga?
9. What is obwi? What is that board that looks like Mancala?

Suggestions for Further Reading – West African Farm

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The Younger Son's Tale: England in the 1600s

Key Concepts: yeoman, sheep, cattle, cheese, inheritance, indenture/apprenticeship

Site Statement:

The English farm represents a well-to-do family in which younger sons and daughters would be seeking opportunities to gain wealth and employment. As the largest portion of European immigrants to America, these people strongly influenced American culture through language, law, and social structure.

Introduction to the Site:

The Museum has reconstructed an English farmhouse that dates back to the 1630s. This house originally stood in the parish of Hartlebury in the county of Worcester which lies in England's West Midlands not far from the major port of Bristol. Hartlebury was located near the Severn River, which would have provided a good climate for agriculture and a ready

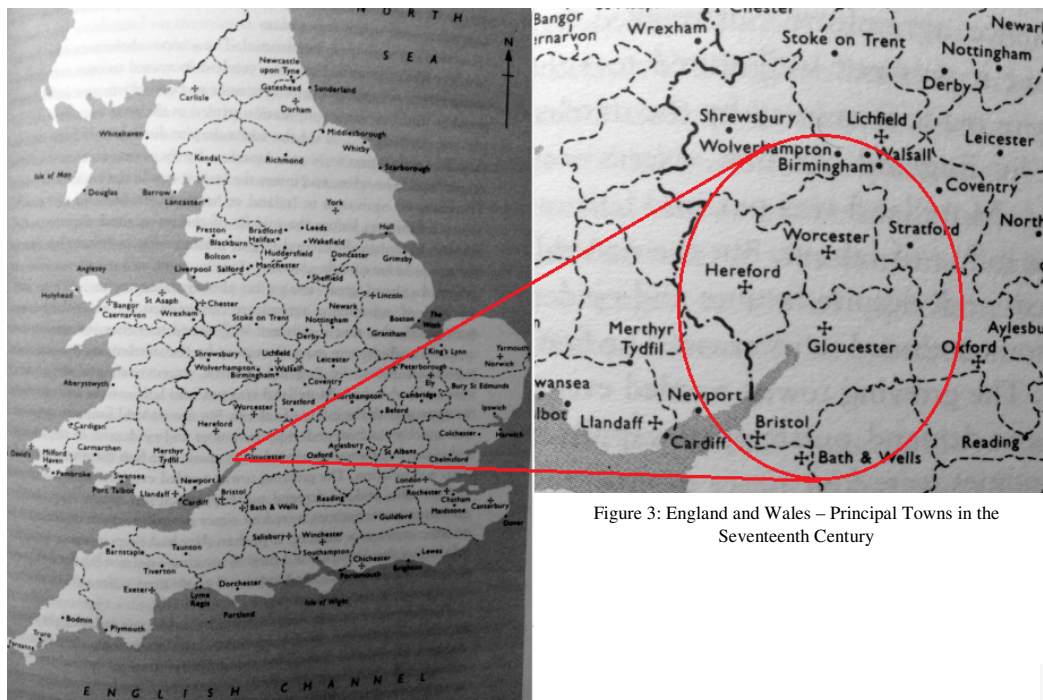


Figure 3: England and Wales – Principal Towns in the Seventeenth Century

transportation route. Taken apart piece by piece, this timber-frame house was labeled

and numbered in preparation for its journey to Virginia. Once at the Museum, staff spent months rebuilding the house piece by piece, recreating the simple square pattern framing that makes this house representative of many English houses of the seventeenth century.⁴⁹

In the 1630s, a prosperous yeoman farmer would have lived in this house with his wife, a few children, and some servants. The two-story house consists of six rooms: a hall, kitchen, and parlor on the first floor and three bedrooms on the second. A central fireplace provides heat to the kitchen, parlor, and the bedrooms above.

Originally, the house would have faced a cobbled foldyard (a functional courtyard to enclose sheep and cattle) surrounded by barns, stables, and other outbuildings to service the needs of household production. At the Museum, only the farm house traveled to Virginia from Hartlebury. A few years later, however, the Museum acquired a cattleshed from West Sussex in the south of England. The barn increases the feel of this being a farm for visitors, therefore interpreters should mention its placement in the farm setting and encourage visitors to see the barn. This English farmhouse, like the other Old World farms at the Museum, was part of a larger village community – a parish. While the farm was self-sustaining in many ways, its inhabitants would have been deeply involved in village affairs. Their house would have bordered other family lands creating a tight village center revolving

⁴⁹ Brown, *Museum of American Frontier Culture Guidebook*, 10 & 18-23; “Fact Sheet on Worcestershire,” *English Farm Interpretive Binder* (Frontier Culture Museum, n.d.), 1; Nancy Sorrells, “Room Interpretation for the English Farm,” *English Farm Interpretive Binder* (Frontier Culture Museum, n.d.), 2.

around a churchyard or a green with the agricultural fields scattered outside the village.⁵⁰

Household:

In describing the English farm to visitors, the first important term to explain is the concept of a yeoman. Many scholars have attempted to define what a yeoman meant in the English social hierarchy of the 1600s. According to their research a yeoman can be described as a successful farmer who might have owned at least some land outright or may have rented land. Many definitions of yeomen describe these farmers as possessing land in freehold, a superior form of land tenure in which the freeholder “might owe a nominal rent to the lord of the manor,” but he “possessed a fully secured title to his land and was free to sell, exchange or devise it by will as he saw fit.”⁵¹ The yeoman worked the land himself, usually alongside supervised help. These farmers typically farmed over 50 acres of land in which they produced enough crops to sustain their family and sell/exchange goods to improve their property and home. In addition, this status of wealth in society translated to positions of power and authority at the village level.⁵²

The yeoman household of the seventeenth century was a primarily nuclear household consisting of a husband, wife, children, and possibly servants. Living in independent and sometimes separate households from their parents, English people typically married later in their mid-20s which allowed women on average 9 pregnancies

⁵⁰ Brown, *Museum of American Frontier Culture Guidebook*, 24; Mark Kishlanksy, *A Monarchy Transformed: Britain 1603-1714* (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 7; “Fact Sheet on Worcestershire,” 2.

⁵¹ Keith Wrightson, *English Society, 1580-1680* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1982), 31.

⁵² Wrightson, *English Society*, 19, 27, 31, 33, and 69; Carl Bridenbaugh, *Vexed and Troubled Englishmen 1590-1642* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 53-56; Allan Kulikoff, *From British Peasants to Colonial American Farmers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 20; Wallace Notestein, *The English People on the Eve of Colonization, 1603-1630* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1954), 71; Eric Bryan, “English Table Manners,” (Frontier Culture Museum, 1999), 3; N.J.G. Pounds, *The Culture of the English People: Iron Age to the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 188.

throughout their childbearing years, resulting in 6-7 births of which 1/3 would survive infancy. A complete family included about 5 to 6 people, though families could be composed of amalgamations of earlier unions with step parents and half siblings. Households on average did not differ much in size as servants and apprentices replaced children moving to other households for similar purposes. Indeed, many children of yeoman households were sent from home by the age of 10 to begin service or training, with younger sons apprenticing in a trade and daughters learning household skills from other women.⁵³

Much like the rest of English society at the time, this household operated through a strict hierarchy that often separated household tasks between men and women. Patriarchalism dominated social relationships, with husbands and fathers holding absolute sway over their families. Men, under the authority of God, had an obligation to rule over those in their sphere, while women shared authority with their husbands in governing the household with the dual responsibility of being a parent and mistress over female servants. These personal relationships had interlocking roles instead of a clear ladder-style hierarchy. Men and women worked together to create a functional household, dividing tasks and duties between them: men typically ploughed, reaped, herded, wove, worked with tools, and manufactured goods while women typically planted, reaped, tended animals, spun, cooked, and sold goods. These largely separated tasks divided household and farm spaces between men and women. For example, food preparation and

⁵³ Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed*, 10-12; Kulikoff, *From British Peasants to Colonial American Farmers*, 23 and 30; Wrightson, *English Society*, 68.

cooking as largely the responsibility of women dictated that kitchens would be female-dominated spaces.⁵⁴

Under this patriarchal order, children were at the bottom of the hierarchy, and were given their own specific household tasks such as gathering crops, sweeping grain after the harvest, watching animals, and learning crafts, cooking, and trade. The practice of primogeniture meant that family inheritance went to the eldest son, privileging sons over daughters. Younger children were then apprenticed out to other families, typically to yeoman or gentry families, out of economic necessity. Since younger children were unable to inherit any of the family wealth, parents strove to set them up with a means of income and to learn some skill or trade. Families placed value on the longevity and continuity of their lineage, which resulted in children being named after relatives, especially their fathers. Religious doctrine of the time stated that children were born with the stain of original sin with a proclivity towards evil, which resulted in the common practice of corporal punishment. Harsh discipline, however, did not mean these parents abused their children; instead, they practiced discipline in moderation as appropriate to the offence.⁵⁵

The typical house of a yeoman farmer reflected his status in the community and the social values he adhered to. Built with a timber frame, the two-story house at the Museum would be a far cry from the hovels typically inhabited by the poor and would instead signify a well-to-do yeoman. Once a frame was constructed, the spaces between timbers were filled with wattle and daub which provided insulation and an exterior wall finish. This filler was made using vertical oak staves inserted into the frame with hazel

⁵⁴ Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed*, 11-12; Kulikoff, *From British Peasants to Colonial American Farmers*, 36.

⁵⁵ Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed*, 12-13; Wrightson, *English Society*, 106-107, 116-117.

or split oak wattles woven around them to create a basket-like appearance. A mixture of clay with some straw, animal hair, lime, sand, and dung, was then spread on both sides of the wattle. A smooth limestone or red sandstone (being the most common in Worcestershire and giving the house its pink look) finish was applied to the inside and outside to protect the wall materials from deteriorating. To further show wealth and status, the roof of this house has red clay tiles, laid in an alternating pattern to keep rain out (a sharp contrast to how Germans would tile their roofs in a grid pattern).⁵⁶

Inside the home, any guest would first enter into the hall, the symbolic center or heart of the home where the bulk of social interaction would take place. A fire would always be lit in the fireplace in the hall to welcome visitors and keep this important room

warm. Many visitors

will note the date

stamped on the top of the

elaborate chimney,

mistaking the date of the

English home for the

1690s when in reality the

date could refer to an

expansion of the

chimney after the repeal

of the hearth tax. Visitors entering the English house will notice the large dining table

and huge fireplace which can be used to talk about the relative wealth of a yeoman family

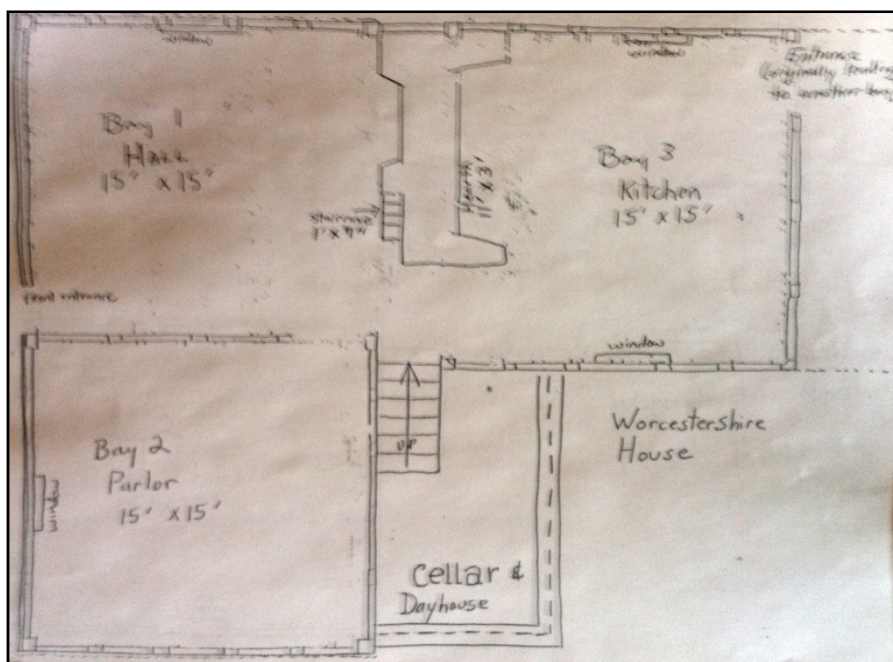


Figure 4: First Floor Plan of English House

⁵⁶ Sorrells, "Room Interpretation for the English Farm," 12; Notestein, *The English People on the Eve of Colonization*, 74; and Brown, *Museum of American Frontier Culture Guidebook*, 20-22.

and the patriarchal society. Breakfast and the big mid-day meals would be served at the all-important table at which the family head would sit at the head of the table in the nicest chair while the wife and children in order of social standing would sit on the sides of the table on benches, stools, or simpler chairs. In some cases, children may have been absent from family dining due to age or disposition. Just the way family sat and conducted meals spoke to these deeper societal structures and values. Rituals of dining and eating further entrenched ideas of wealth and status. Though only using spoons and knives to eat food (forks had yet to enter formal dining practices), English yeomen had a series of etiquette rules and accepted behaviors in dining, such as not putting one's knife in one's mouth or blowing on food, that gave mealtime a 'front' or certain appearance.⁵⁷

Food itself would have been prepared in the large kitchen next to the hall. This service room would have served a variety of roles, such as crop storage, or as an eating or even sleeping space, but by the later seventeenth century it became the main cooking area in English homes. Kitchens, such as the one on display at the Museum, used a large hearth with a fire to cook food in cast iron pots or on griddles. Baking, a luxury and investment for most families, could be done in the small bake oven built into the hearth wall, typically only once a week. Cookery and food preparation took up several hours of each day, and because of its importance, the wife of the household would take charge of putting meals together (rather than servants). Of all, the rooms in the house, the kitchen would have been a highly gendered space meant for work use, a stark difference from the

⁵⁷ Sorrells, "Room Interpretation for the English Farm," 3 and 7; Bryan, "English Table Manners," 5-8.

more multipurpose hall which was meant for dining, socializing, and some work (such as spinning).⁵⁸

A more formal public space was set aside in the final room on the first floor of the English house: the Parlor. This common/sitting room was meant to display material wealth that the family accumulated, such as the nicest furniture, and was reserved for ritual traditions, such as funerals and courtships. All of the nicest goods and materials would go into furnishing the parlor since it served as a place to ‘show off.’ Wood floor boards would appear over standard brick, while looking glasses, pictures, books, clocks, and fancy cupboards would also decorate such a room. Visitors of high distinction, such as local gentry or the church reverend, would be shown to this room in order for the family to demonstrate wealth and status. Beyond high class visitors, however, the family would also sit in the parlor and take light evening meals there, though this would depend on weather as the parlor did not have a fireplace.⁵⁹

A stairway in the hall leads up to the second floor with its three bedrooms. In order to take up as little space as possible, these stairs were quite narrow and steep. To move furniture to the second floor, loose floorboards on the second floor could be removed to lift furniture into bedrooms. These upstairs rooms, which were often called chambers, were set aside for sleeping and storage. Rooms within the house had particular purposes and uses. The best room, immediately at the top of the stairs and directly over the hall, would have the nicest bed and furniture for the husband and wife of the family. This chamber, however, could also be used for storing food and goods since it would be the driest and warmest of the second floor rooms. Additional bedrooms would house

⁵⁸ Sorrells, “Room Interpretation for the English Farm,” 4-5; Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behavior & Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge Press, 1996), 136-156.

⁵⁹ Sorrells, “Room Interpretation for the English Farm,” 5.

children and servants, with servants usually getting the chamber directly above the kitchen with no fancy bedsteads (a frame to hold feather/wool mattresses), and instead only ticking (cloth mattresses filled with hay or straw) on the floor.⁶⁰

Farming:

For the English yeoman, land meant everything. Of the various types of tenure, most well-to-do yeomen held freehold land meaning that they sometimes might pay a small quitrent, though most yeomen had to pay some kind of rent to the lord for the land they farmed. With freeholding, however, a yeoman possessed full security to the title of his land and could therefore be free to sell, exchange, or devise it through a will. By the seventeenth century, many lords were beginning to raise the rents twofold, threefold, and more leading to many complaints from yeomen. The land itself could be either enclosed or unenclosed which made the difference between having several strips of land spread out around the village versus one large consolidated farm. Typically land was held in an open field system, especially in Worcestershire, which meant that homeowners owned small enclosures outside the village. Beyond these smaller enclosures were large arable fields. For yeomen in the West Midlands in the Severn valley, at least 50 acres of land were set aside for agricultural crops, pasturing animals, or industrial use. Farming was less focused on subsistence and more towards making a profit in the market. Therefore, yeomen either cultivated one specialized crop, raised sheep for the wool industry, invested in an industry (such as salt production or iron tool making), participated in an

⁶⁰ Sorrells, "Room Interpretation for the English Farm," 9-11.

artisan trade (such as tanning, painting, carpentry, or blacksmithing), or some combination of these.⁶¹

A typical farming cycle followed the seasons:

In the first two months of the year he [the yeoman] had his fields plowed and harrowed and the manure spread; he set trees and hedges, pruned the fruit trees, and lopped the timber. March and April were the months to stir the fields again and sow the wheat and rye. In May gardens were planted and hop vines trained to poles and ditches scoured. It was also in that month that lambs were weaned and sheep watched lest they get the “rot.” Sheep were washed and sheared in June. Then also the fields were limed and marled and manured. In July hay was cut, dried, and stacked. Harvest came in August when extra help would be called in not only from the neighborhood but from townsmen who took holidays at harvesting. Threshing followed harvesting and winter wheat and rye were sown. During the autumn cider and perry were made...By November the fall planting was finished and the time had come for the killing of cattle and hanging up their salted carcasses for winter meat. Straw would be laid down with dung, to be spread next spring on the fields.⁶²

The yeomen of Worcestershire typically planted apples and pears (from which they made ciders and other beverages), grains of barley and oats, and hops. Several acres of orchards and wheat monopolized much of a yeoman’s land. Smaller kitchen gardens, usually tended by women and servants, housed crops of family sustenance such as potatoes, turnips, carrots, cabbage, cucumbers, melons, and medicinal herbs. Any remaining land would be used to pasture animals, primarily sheep and cattle, from which

⁶¹ Notestein, *The English People On the Eve of Colonization*, 71-76; Wrightson, *English Society*, 31; “Fact Sheet on Worcestershire,” 1; Kulikoff, *From British Peasants to Colonial American Farmers*, 20. Scholar Mark Kishlansky differs on the use of village land stating that villages were surrounded by fields, meadows, and commons that were the site of communal agricultural activities geared for village sustenance, though this did not prohibit families from owning their own land and harvesting their own crops. Since subsistence agriculture was therefore done more communally, Kishlansky argues that the village could weather difficult seasons. Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed*, 7-10.

⁶² Notestein, *The English People On the Eve of Colonization*, 74-75; Perry refers to a typically alcoholic beverage, like apple cider, made with pears.

the yeoman extracted wool and milk that his wife and servants turned to yarn, cloth, cheese, and butter.⁶³

Laboring on all of this land required a yeoman to hire three or four workers and possibly also take on an apprentice from amongst the poor. Since the eldest son typically inherited the family land, he might join his father out in the fields, while younger brothers were apprenticed to other farmers or artisans, in some cases inheriting land from very wealthy yeomen. This would create a labor shortage for a yeoman needing to take care of 50-100 acres of land and farm animals, while managing farming and animal husbandry. It was common practice in England during the seventeenth century to apprentice or indenture younger children, starting around the age of 10, to other yeoman or gentry families where these children might learn a skill or trade; a practice dating back to the medieval period. Going into service or providing services for four to seven years meant, for younger children, social and economic security since in return they could receive land, training, and protection. These traditional practices of sending younger children into service led many to consider the British American colonies as an avenue for service and indenture. The American colonies offered another way for younger children to find opportunities for land and wealth, away from the increasing rents and shrinking amount of land found in England.⁶⁴

Community:

England in the seventeenth century was organized into thousands of small, rural communities with a few hundred towns and a handful of larger cities. For a yeoman and

⁶³ Notestein, *The English People on the Eve of Colonization*, 74; "Fact Sheet on Worcestershire," 2-3.

⁶⁴ Notestein, *The English People On the Eve of Colonization*, 74 and 79; Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed*, 6, 12, and 23; Mildred Cambell, "Social Origins of Some Early Americans," in *Seventeenth-Century America: Essays in Colonial History*, ed. James Morton Smith (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), 69-70.

his family, the parish was the primary unit of community organization within the village or town. As the administrative unit of the church, the parish brought people together for important rituals such as baptism and marriage, defining the social boundaries of the Christian community. Gradual population growth following the Black Death, however, resulted in increased stress on agricultural production leading to an inflation crisis and depressed wages. All these stressor factors eventually led to increased geographic mobilization, with the children of yeomen having to seek opportunities farther away from home. While people were tied to their local communities on the one hand as their place of residence, they did move within a larger world. Economic activities, family relationships, and general sociability brought people out of their local communities. Yeomen, then, operated within two areas: their local community and then broader markets.⁶⁵

Within the local community, yeomen, who stood toward the top of the social hierarchy, were part of the cream of village society. Clearly distinguished from cottagers and laborers by their wealth, this category of people (the ‘middling sort’) could rival members of the gentry and hold important positions within the parish and community. Just as the family observed rituals of dining etiquette, the community also operated under codes of behavior and communal rituals that brought families in the village together. Marriage, for instance, could bind two kin groups and mend any mutual hostility between the two families. Extending the kinship group helped to reduce feuds, but also meant families were less tied to kin. Such communities were characterized by localism and mutual dependence within the village. They were self-governed under a parish council, except in the case of high crime. Beyond its role as a geographical and administrative

⁶⁵ Wrightson, *English Society*, 40-42; Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed*, 7, 15-16

unit, the local community acted as a social system in which people residing within its boundaries shared relationships, concerns, speech, manners, rights, and obligations which could incite fierce local loyalties.⁶⁶

In the expanding global market of the seventeenth century, expanding English shipping also gave yeomen opportunities to expand beyond their own communities and participate in a larger market. Global companies, such as the East India Trading Company, were forming in the seventeenth century and signified this movement of British goods. Raw materials, finished goods, and food crops were now transported around the globe between Britain and her various colonies abroad. Annually, the yeoman would attend fairs in the West Midland region where goods he sold, typically crops and animals, would go to larger ports, such as Bristol, to enter this global market. A yeoman farmer from Worcestershire could grow the wheat sold to a Bristol merchant, who in turn supplied a slave ship, thereby connecting a simple yeoman farmer to wider global forces. Weekly, the yeoman farmer attended markets in one or two neighboring towns where he bought and sold cattle, oxen, pigs, sheep, horses, and farm products such as cheese and wool. To participate in these markets, the yeoman had to be very connected and knowledgeable about market prices.⁶⁷

Religion:

By the 1600s, England had formally broken away from the Roman Catholic Church to create its own Anglican establishment. The Anglican Church combined pagan, animist, and Catholic traditions together, especially at the local village level. While

⁶⁶ Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed*, 26; Bryan, "English Table Manners," 3; Pounds, *The Culture of the English People*, 257, 274

⁶⁷ Notestein, *The English People On the Eve of Colonization*, 75; Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed*, 21-22.

resembling Roman Catholic theology and practice in many ways (something that greatly angered a group of people in England called Puritans), the Anglican Church had adopted many Protestant traditions such as publishing the Bible in English and improving the education of the clergy. By the 1630s, in fact, many parishes could no longer boast of a resident, graduate clergy typically drawn from the upper and middling ranks of society. Indeed, a wealthy yeoman who could afford additional schooling would send a younger son into the clergy. These newly educated clergy sought to infuse their flocks with scriptural knowledge and to eradicate superstitious beliefs.⁶⁸

Since the parish formed the center of village life and religion suffused parish culture, English people of the seventeenth century marked their days by Sunday services and holy days. These religious observances marked the rhythm of labor and occasions of sociability and celebration. Parishes allowed for community members to gather and strengthen their local ties and bonds, creating a wider network of exchange as transportation and communication improved. Religious doctrine even shaped how parents viewed their children. Reformation of the church during the 1600s further strengthened formal rituals in church services, which may have had far-reaching effects into the rituals that began appearing in such daily tasks as dining.⁶⁹

Skills/Crafts:

- wool = spinning and weaving to make cloth
- cattle = yeomen wives could be known for the cheese they made from cow milk
- beverages = making beer, apple and pear ciders

⁶⁸ Wrightson, *English Society*, 199-200, 208-209; Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed*, 8; David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 243.

⁶⁹ Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed*, 8; Wrightson, *English Society*, 214.

Cultural Contributions:

Of all the Old World exhibits at the Museum, the English farm will seem the easiest to interpret. This group of people was the largest group of European immigrants to the British colonies, and many of their cultural practices and traditions have made a huge impact on American culture. But even though they are the largest group, it can be difficult to identify how exactly British culture shaped America, since many traditions and practices are so ingrained into current culture. Focusing on those immigrants who crossed the Atlantic in the late seventeenth century narrows the spectrum and reveals how these people influenced later American culture. The ‘middling sort’ from England, the yeomen, brought first and foremost their language. In Virginia in particular, the regional dialect of southwest England made a long-lasting appearance in the softened consonants, slow drawl, and specific vocabulary words such as howdy, tarry, tote, fresh, grit, belly-ache, skillet, and yonder. While speech patterns and vocabulary shift over time, Americans today still speak in a dialect very similar to that of their English predecessors. English is the language taught in schools, the language spoken by society at large, and the language used to formulate legal and government documents. Though it may seem obvious, point out something as simple as the contribution of language to visitors as this sets up a contrast to some of the other Old World sites where visitors could learn about particular words of another language still used today.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Fischer, *Albion’s Seed*, 256-259. Fischer points out specific words used in Virginia during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that were identified as archaic and provincial by the Oxford English Dictionary and therefore out of popular use in England. These words, however, stayed in the vocabulary of Virginians for at least three centuries. Even dialect used by early Virginians represented their southwest English roots with its soft, slow, melodious drawl and softened consonants. In fact, Fischer states that “virtually all peculiarities of grammar, syntax, vocabulary and pronunciation which have been noted as typical of Virginia were recorded in the English counties of Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, Dorset, Wilshire, Somerset, Oxford, Gloucester, Warwick, and Worcester.”

In addition to language, English immigrants contributed knowledge of law and government to the eventual formation of America. The Founding Fathers used their knowledge of the English Constitution and political thought to put together America's founding documents. With the example of England's Constitution which allowed for a king ruling under divine right and a Parliament of two houses/branches of representatives, the Founding Fathers created a government with three governing branches headed by a popularly elected President. Ideas about checks and balances between governing branches and the rights of the people to choose their leaders came from popular English political thought of the seventeenth century. Immigrants carried over knowledge of the British governing system and the theories of such writers as John Locke that would later influence the formation of America as a nation.

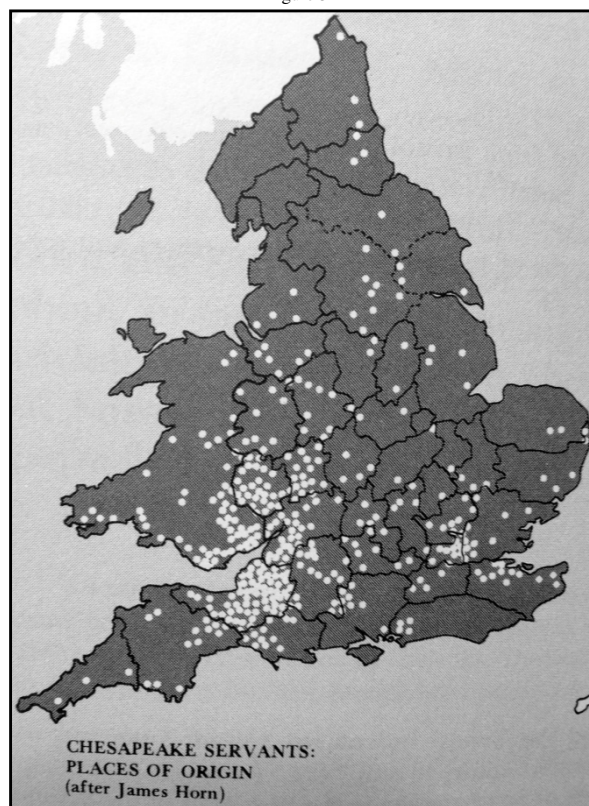
On a cultural level, English immigrants brought their ideas of patriarchy and a social hierarchy. Though American society attempted to stay away from having an aristocracy and king, society still operated on a social hierarchy based on wealth that privileged the wealthy over the poor. Even within the family home and community, as explained in the household section, patriarchy dictated the way households functioned. The man was the head of the house with his wife and children below him. Additionally, tasks were divided among family members based on age and gender, a practice continued in the British colonies. In the communities that developed in Virginia, patriarchy could be seen in the laws which regarded "the slaying of a father by his son, or the killing of a husband by his wife, or the murder of a master by his servant not as homicide but treason," in which the penalty was to be burnt to death.⁷¹

⁷¹ Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 280.

Tying Everything Together:

Immigration: The younger sons and daughters of prosperous yeoman farmers felt the pressure of rising rents, depressed wages, and disappearing land in their quest for successful lives of their own. Religious turmoil during the English Civil War of the 1640s added to the stress these people might have felt as Puritan forces overtook British governance.⁷² The British colonies in America offered a bright ray of hope along with plentiful land and religious toleration. Entering indentures as young adolescents, these younger sons and daughters could work hard for up to 7 years learning skills or a trade and then receive ample rewards. For many, America offered

Figure 5



opportunities that England simply could not, so they decided to stay and make a living in the backcountry of the settled colonies, bringing their culture with them.

Daily Life: The content explained above in the areas of household, farming, community, religion, and skills/crafts provides a glimpse into how the English yeomen would have lived their lives in southwest England. When talking about daily life, try to bring up aspects of life that would seem familiar to your visitor first before delving into

⁷² Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 245-246. Fischer states that the economy of southwest England suffered many hardships in the mid-seventeenth century. Indeed from 1642-1666 the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" rode freely through this region. The violence of the Civil Wars which brought harsh martial law disrupted the wool trade. In addition, epidemic disease devastated the population.

what makes these people unique and different. With the English farm, finding points of connection should be relatively easy. The house layout, for instance, should feel familiar with its specialized rooms and two-story structure. Talking about the universal experiences all humans share such as cooking/eating, shelter, spirituality, and family can help break past any barriers to understanding. For concepts that differ largely from our world today, tie information back to some universal concept first.

Acculturation: Traveling across the Atlantic did not erase the ingrained cultural traditions and practices these English people grew up knowing. Instead, these peoples would typically cling to something familiar in the strange new land of the British colonies. They would continue to build houses and treat them as they had in England. They would continue to cook foods familiar to them, albeit sometimes with new or different ingredients. Finally, they would speak their native language and follow familiar laws to recreate in the colonies the England they knew. Here, you can talk about the journey to America and point to what traditions and practices were eventually adopted into mainstream American culture. The section above about the cultural contributions of the English in America should aid you in explaining this category. Draw attention to the specific cultural practices that visitors will see in the other exhibits later on, asking them to keep an eye out for room specialization, a second floor for bedrooms, the English language, or English cooking.

Connecting all the sites together is important in creating a holistic experience for the visitor. The visitor needs to see that this is one large Museum instead of a compilation of eight separate museums. In the same way you draw out the cultural practices and traditions that the English would bring to America, also point out how the

Old World sites, in particular, have similar features among themselves or point to characteristics adopted by frontier peoples later in America. For example, you can use the knowledge about yeoman market involvement to draw a connection to the slave trade, creating a possible scenario where one yeoman farmer could be growing the crops that eventually supply slave ships. Additionally, you can draw attention to the floorplan of the English house with its distinctly private and public spaces. Visitors to this yeoman's house would enter the hall first and then be directed to the parlor, but distinctly public spaces were meant to show off the family's wealth and status. Rarely would a visitor be shown the kitchen or second floor of the home as these were set aside as work and private spaces. Likewise, on the West African Farm, visitors would be shown to the outer courtyards and the obi which showed the man's prowess at hunting and the wealth he possessed. Space in the compound was similarly broken up into specialized functions with a private versus public distinction. Finally, in the parlor you can draw attention to the purpose and use of this room so that visitors can later see this specialized, 'fancy,' room in the 1820s house.

Frequently Asked Questions

When in the Kitchen...

1. What are the different tubs for? Why do you have so many of them?
2. Is that real cheese? Is the cheese sold in the Museum store?
3. What are those cut outs in the hearth? (referring to the engle nook and the bake oven)
4. Is that food real? What's the food for? Can we eat the food?
5. Do you really cook here?
6. Why do you have pins in your bodice?

When in the Hall...

1. Why is it called a press cupboard?
2. What are those objects on the mantle? (referring to the corn dollies and crown of thorns)
3. Would they really have had windows back then?
4. Can we go upstairs?
5. Where is the charger? What is a charger or what is that bowl on the cupboard?

About the building...

1. What's the material between the logs/frame?
2. How did you get the color of the house?
3. What is the plaque on the chimney?

About the second floor...

1. What is the locked room for?
2. What are the little posts for in the children's bed?

3. Where did they go to the bathroom?

Suggestion for Further Reading – English Farm

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- Kishlansky, Mark. *A Monarchy Transformed: Britain 1603-1714*. London: Penguin Books, 1996.
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- Underdown, David. *Fire From Heaven: Life in an English Town in the Seventeenth Century*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.
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Tenants in Limbo: Ireland in the 1700s

Key Concepts: linen, tenant farming, flax, Presbyterian

Site Statement:

Irish tenant farmers in the early 1700s experienced a variety of push factors that persuaded them that America with its abundance of land that immigrants could OWN would be a good opportunity. Whole families would immigrate to Pennsylvania and then move down to Virginia once English immigrants began decreasing in number. These people brought with them their religious practices and architecture.

Introduction to the Site:

The Museum provides visitors with two distinct sites/exhibits to talk about the daily life of peoples in Northern Ireland during the 1700s. Visitors traveling around the natural paths of the Museum will first come to the



Figure 6: Principal Lordships of Ulster

blacksmith shop from County Fermanagh, demonstrating industry in Ireland during the 1700s, and then they will encounter the Irish farm itself from County Tyrone, demonstrating more agricultural work. As the first of the European farms to arrive at the Museum in 1988, the Irish farm has had time to develop and expand to the point where it is today – as the only completely intact farm with all

of its original buildings. With the help of the Ulster-American Folk Park, the farm was documented and taken down, then eventually shipped to the Museum where it was pieced together stone by stone.⁷³

Both of the Irish sites are similarly constructed with doubled thick stone walls and a thatch roof. The Irish farm, in addition to the main house, shows farm and animal buildings such as the long and short byre (or barn) and the piggery (basically a structure meant to house pigs). These structures are arranged around a small courtyard that houses a kitchen garden. Agricultural fields would have surrounded these structures on a typical farm or, as in the case of the blacksmith site, other industrial use buildings would have been located nearby. An Irish farmer, his wife, and their multiple children would live as a nuclear family unit in this one-to-two room house. Interpretation at the Irish farm is focused on the early eighteenth century, specifically the 1730s, right when a huge wave of

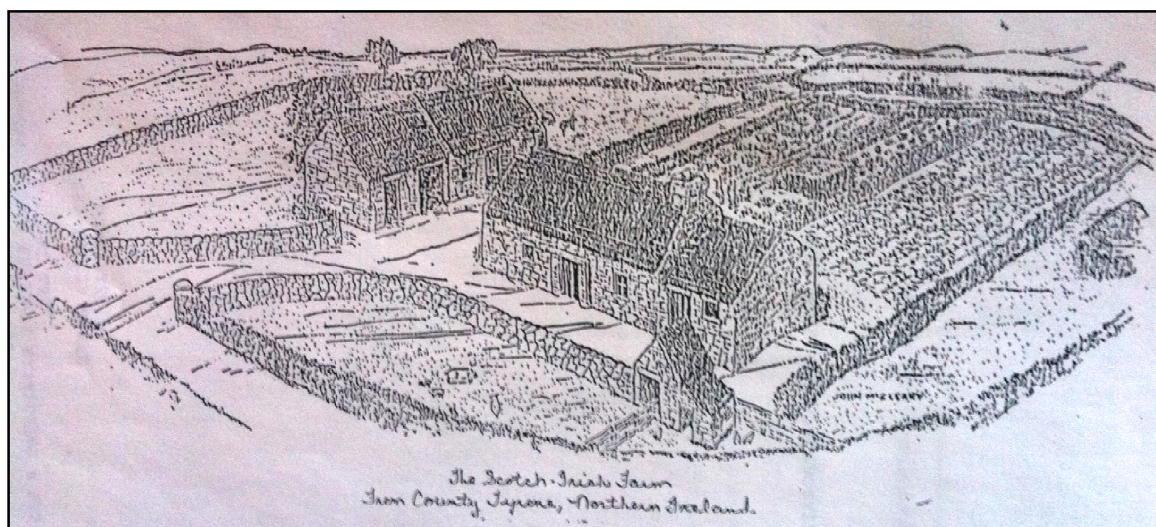


Figure 7

⁷³ Katherine L. Brown and Nancy T. Sorrells, "Personality & Possessions as Clues to the Lives of Ulster Farm Families 1680-1730: What the Scotch-Irish Settlers in America Left Behind," *Irish Farm Interpretation*, Frontier Culture Museum, n.d., 2.; Brown, *Museum of American Frontier Culture Guidebook*, 30 and 49.

immigrants would have been leaving Ireland for America.

Historians and scholars disagree about what to call the group of immigrants this farm represents. In the mid-nineteenth century, these peoples called themselves the Scotch-Irish to separate themselves from the increasing number of Catholic Irish immigrating to America. They attempted to distinguish themselves as Protestant and Scottish in heritage. Many of the terms associated with the group, such as Scotch-Irish and Ulster Scots, have resonances with modern day religious and ethnic tensions ongoing in Ireland. Scholars, then, have come up with a middle ground of calling these people Scots-Irish to achieve a more politically neutral ethnic identifier. Throughout the following explanation, Scots-Irish will be used to refer to this group of immigrants, except in the occasion where other scholars are quoted.⁷⁴

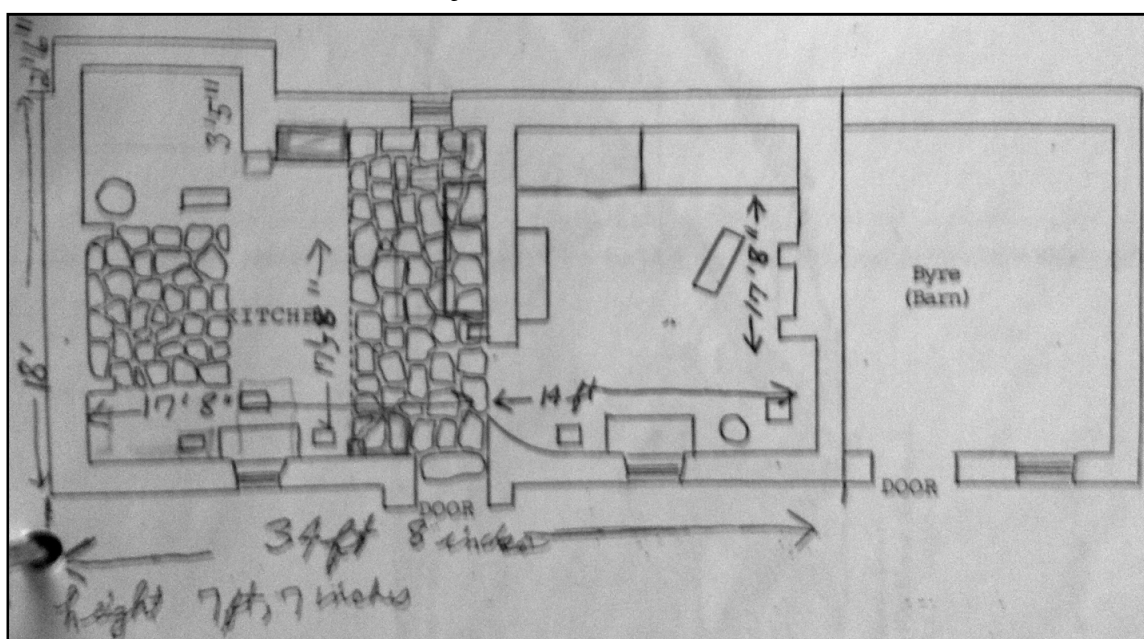
Household:

The Ulster Plantation system was put in place by King James I in 1609 as part of a larger English effort to take over Ireland as a colony. Ideally, land would be divided into estates or manors controlled by propertied, wealthy men who would provide security, leadership, and management of each community while developing the resources of the estate. Part of the plan involved persuading English, and later Scottish, Protestants to migrate to these estates to benefit the English economy and reduce the influence of the native Catholic Irish. James I forcibly seized the lands of native Catholic Irish and turned them over to landlords (called Undertakers) who then recruited British Protestants to rent plots of land. Scottish participation in settling Ulster was not at first a priority but

⁷⁴ Warren R. Hofstra, ed., introduction to *Ulster to America: The Scots-Irish Migration Experience, 1680-1830*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2012), xxvi.

eventually became the mainstay of the enterprise. Lowland Scots had been migrating to Ulster throughout the seventeenth century, but by the 1690s factors in Scotland finally drove immigrants by the thousands into Ulster. Historians estimate that around 50,000 Scots came to Ulster during the 1690s in response to the increased price and decreased availability of land and religious changes that attempted to eradicate Presbyterianism. These Lowland Scots, therefore, migrated to Ulster and rented several acres of land from British lords, signing long-term leases of 21 or 31 years.⁷⁵

Figure 8: Floor Plan of the Irish House



The households these Scots created in Ireland were meant to resemble English customs and practices, but timber shortages required migrants to meld their Scottish heritage with Irish materials. Therefore, by the eighteenth century, “most Ulster Scots

⁷⁵ W.H. Crawford, “Landlord-Tenant Relations in Ulster, 1609-1820,” *Irish Economic and Social History* 2, (1975), 5-6; Kenneth W. Keller, “Irish Life and Emigration, 1600-1800,” *Museum Lecture Series*, “The Homecoming: Reflections of America’s Heritage,” (September 1988), 7-8; David Miller, “Searching for a New World: The Background and Baggage of Scots-Irish Immigrants,” in *Ulster to America: The Scots-Irish Migration Experience, 1680-1830*, ed. Warren R. Hofstra (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2012), 4; James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), 91, 99-107, 131; Patrick Griffin, *The People with No Name: Ireland’s Ulster Scots, America’s Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689-1764* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 21; Vivienne Pollock, “The Household Economy in Early Rural America and Ulster: The Question of Self-Sufficiency” in *Ulster and North America: Transatlantic Perspectives on the Scotch-Irish*, ed. H. Tyler Blethen and Curtis W. Wood, Jr. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997), 64-65.

would have been living in houses whose walls were made of stone or clay,” reserving what limited timber remained for supporting the thatched roof.⁷⁶ Traditionally, these houses were built as one room, maybe two, with two separate stone walls (one interior and one exterior). The cavity between the two walls was filled with small rubble stone, allowing for added insulation against the cold and damp. Both exterior and interior walls would additionally be covered with a white limewash to protect the stones and make the interior of the house lighter. Hard-packed clay flooring would cover the majority of floor space, with the exception of heavy wear areas such as the hearth and doorway which would have had stone flag floors. All of the buildings constructed on a typical Scots-Irish Farm would have a thatch roof consisting of wooden rafters covered with smaller sticks over which was placed a thick layer of sod and a final layer of long-stem rye straw held down with hazel rods bent into a U-shape.⁷⁷

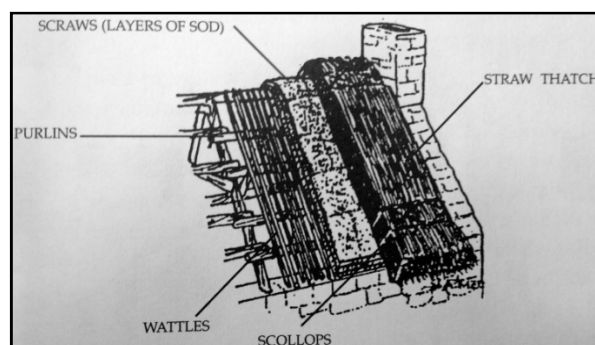


Figure 9: Layers of a Thatched Roof

A typical Irish household revolved around one main room that served as a multi-purpose space, which, while it might seem small and tight, was rather comfortable for a farm family of two parents and 3-4 children. Within this one room families slept, cooked, ate, worked, and relaxed. Unlike the English home with its specialized rooms, the Irish home split functions around one large room. The hearth by far served as the ‘center’ of the home, even though by the late seventeenth century stone chimneys became commonplace at one end of the house. Here the family cooked, served, ate meals, and

⁷⁶ Miller, “Searching for a New World,” 6.

⁷⁷ Brown, *Museum of American Frontier Culture Guidebook*, 41-43.

kept warm by peat-based fires (wood being too costly and rare for burning). At meal time, the family would sit upon creeper stools, or low stools, around the hearth, the only heat source in the home. Meals would have been prepared at a table attached to a side wall. This table could be latched to the wall when not in use and could therefore provide the family more space for other activities. Children in the home would sleep on the floor of the house, close to the fire, on straw mattresses while parents slept in the one bed located in a nook built next to the hearth. Family members would also use this space to perform work such as spinning, carving, sewing, and mending. In the evenings, family could also use this space to relax and enjoy a good book, newspaper, or game.⁷⁸

Once in Ireland, these Scottish immigrants eventually assimilated linguistically and sartorially with their Irish and English neighbors, but held onto their religious heritage creating a strong Presbyterian community and presence. Their unique Scottish culture of violence, a legacy of years of warfare over rulership of the Scottish Lowlands, meant additionally that these people viewed work, sport, time, land, wealth, rank, inheritance, marriage, and gender with a specific attitude, one that was reflected in many respects in their new homeland of Ulster where another culture of violence existed. While these Scottish migrants embraced their new livelihood and created a new life for themselves in Ulster, they experienced economic and religious challenges that made creating a successful life in Ireland difficult. The timeline below details some of the major acts and Parliamentary measures enacted that shaped the Irish economy and restricted religious tolerance. Many of these legislative acts were designed to strengthen

⁷⁸ Brown, *Museum of American Frontier Culture Guidebook*, 42-44; Charlie Piggott, "Turf for the Family Fire," Frontier Culture Museum, *Irish Interpretation Binder*, 1.

the British economy as a whole, often at the expense of the prosperity of these Scots-Irish farmers.⁷⁹

1603 – James IV of Scotland becomes James I of England

Death of Elizabeth bring to an end the Tudor period

1607 – Flight of the Earls

1609-1611 – Beginning of the Plantation of Ulster in Counties Armagh, Cavan, Derry,

Donegal, Fermanagh, and Tyrone

1641 – Outbreak of rebellion by native Irish

1642 – Beginning of English Civil War

1649 – Charles I beheaded, monarchy abolished

1651 – Navigation Act, subjects Ireland to commercial regulation from England

1660 – Monarchy restored, Charles II becomes King

1663/1670 – Navigation Acts direct Irish trade with colonies through the hands of

English middlemen, could not directly import or export

1666 – Cattle Act outlaws import of Irish cattle into England

1682 – shut down Ulster Presbyterian churches

1685 – James II ascended the throne

1688 – William of Orange invited to become king of England; recognizes Church of

Scotland as Presbyterian

1690 – Defeat of James II by William III at the Battle of the Boyne

1692-1727 – Penal Laws designed to deprive Irish Catholics of rights and make Roman

Catholic Church difficult to exist

⁷⁹ Ibid.; Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 628-629.

1696 – Navigation Act tightened enforcement of navigation system, cut duty fees for Irish linen exports to Britain and the American colonies

1699 – Woolens Act outlaws shipping of Irish woolens to colonies

1704 – Test Act restricts office holding to Anglicans ONLY

1717 – beginning of the mass migration of Ulster-Scots to the American Colonies⁸⁰

Family to the Scots-Irish meant more than just the nuclear unit of husband, wife, and children. Living on the borderlands of England, both in Scotland and Ireland, these people structured their understanding of family in concentric rings, in which the outermost rings were thicker and stronger than would be seen among other English families. At the center was the nuclear core where loyalty meant everything and which recognized a special sense of obligation to kin, the product of dealing with a world where violence and disorder were endemic. This nuclear core drew strength from other kin groups within the larger family circle, or clan. Outside the nuclear core lay two strong rings; the first encompassed kin within the span of four generations connecting generations together and governing property inheritance. Beyond this first ring lay the largest ring of kinship where related families lived near one another and “were conscious of a common identity, carried the same surname, claimed descent from common ancestors, and banded together when danger threatened.”⁸¹ In many cases these clan groups migrated together, at least partially, when settling Ulster and later the American backcountry. Historian Ned Landsman describes the distinctive features of the clan’s internal structure and organization as an “emphasis on collateral rather than lineal descent. In the theory of clan relationships, all branches of the family – younger as well

⁸⁰ Keller, “Irish Life and Emigration,” 7-17; Griffin, *The People with No Name*, 9-36; Jonathan Bardon, *A History of Ulster* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1992), 148-182.

⁸¹ Fischer, *Albion’s Seed*, 663

as older, female as well as male – were deemed to be of equal importance. This fits in well with the mobility of the countryside, which prevented the formation of ‘lineal families’ in which sons succeeded to their fathers’ lands.’”⁸² These ideas of family and kin would carry over into Scottish settlement in Northern Ireland and then in the American colonies.⁸³

Farming:

The subordination of the Irish economy to that of Britain combined with the plantation system, which gave thousands of acres of land to English lords to rent out and earn a profit from, meant that settlers in Ulster had few choices in what they would produce and cultivate. On the roughly 30 acres of land each family received, farmers would at first cultivate subsistence crops such as oats, barley, rye, and root vegetables. Popular myth has often associated the Irish with growing lots of potatoes and while the potato did become the staple of the Irish diet, this did not become the norm until the late eighteenth century. Potatoes, during the seventeenth to mid-eighteenth century, were a crop associated with the very poor and were more commonly used as animal feed. With a mountainous and boggy topography, farmers could rarely ripen wheat, peas, or bean crops, limiting the Irish diet to very bland pottages.⁸⁴

Beyond subsistence farming, Irish industry also included wool production, cattle trade, and linen production. Until the 1699 Woolens Act which prohibited the shipment of Irish woolens to the British colonies leading to the demise of the Irish wool industry, sheep flourished on Ulster meadows and linked settlers who made woolen cloth with a

⁸² Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 665.

⁸³ Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 662-668.

⁸⁴ W.H. Crawford, “The Political Economy of Linen: Ulster in the Eighteenth Century,” in *Ulster: An Illustrated History*, ed. Ciaran Brady et al. (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1991), 143; Miller, “Searching for a New World,” 6.

wider Atlantic trade market. Trade restrictions more in favor of the British produced wool meant that Irish farmers had to find other outlets for income. Trading cattle from Ireland to England offered some farmers income opportunities within the British Empire in the first half of the seventeenth century until the Cattle Act of 1666 outlawed the trade once again in favor of British farmers. The linen trade developed to a place of prominence following the collapse of the cattle trade, exploding in the 1690s with the influx of Lowland Scots who came with the skills and knowledge of linen production. With the linen trade, however, the British government lent Irish farmers a hand with the 1696 Navigation Act that allowed merchants to export linen duty-free to Britain and the American colonies. Uninhibited by trade restrictions, this industry flourished and became the mainstay of many Irish farmers' income and livelihood.⁸⁵

Linen was woven from the fibers of the flax plant, a slender stemmed plant that bloomed with blue flowers. Each flax plant consists of a single slender stem about 2-4 feet high that branches out at the top into two or more stems with blue flowers. At the center of each stem lies ligneous matter (stringy fibers that need to be extracted to make linen) surrounded by a bark of fibers bound together by a natural latex. After being planted and sown between March and May, flax is harvested by the farmer in mid-August after 14-15 weeks of growing. Processing the flax to create linen cloth involved nine labor-intensive steps and required the whole family to aid in its production. By the 1700s a cottage industry had developed around the production of linen and mechanized tools were making the extraction of the linen fibers easier.

How to Process Flax to Linen

⁸⁵ Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish*, 115; Keller, "Irish Life and Emigration," 11-13; Crawford, "Landlord-Tenant Relations in Ulster," 9; Griffin, *The People with No Name*, 14, 27.

1. Harvesting = flax crop pulled from the ground to maintain the maximum length of the fibers
2. Stooked = plants tied together in bundles, called beets, and left out for 3-4 days to try to ripen the seeds, seeds then removed and stored
3. Retting = beets of flax immersed in freshwater for 10-14 days, removed from water and spread out in the sun
4. Broken = hard flax straw broken either by hand or with a tool
5. Scutching = beating or flailing of flax to remove the useless score and skin
6. Hackling = crossed and matted fibers separated and laid parallel by drawing them through a series of fixed combs; the short fibers (tow) are combed out to be carded and spun like wool and make a coarse cloth while the long fibers (linen) are used for spinning
7. Spinning = drawing out and twisting the fibers into continuous cylindrical yarn, performed by women
8. Weaving = yarn woven on a loom
9. Bleaching = woven cloth treated and finished with natural bleaching agents, cloth steeped in cold water then boiled several times

Some farmers could only afford to process the flax into yarn, while others could take the flax all the way to a bolt of cloth depending on the skill of the farmer. Larger mechanization processes were in place by the 1710s that moved more some of the complex steps, such as bleaching and spinning, from the farmer's hands and into large factories, specializing and increasing production. Weaving, a highly skilled job, continued to be performed by men on farms throughout the eighteenth century. Often the farmer himself had the skills necessary to work a loom late at night. Such farmers might pass their looms on to their sons, but in other cases farmers would sublet some space on their farm for a weaver to live and work.⁸⁶

Community:

Community for the Scots-Irish revolved around industry and religion. Since the latter will be largely discussed in the next section, here the community of linen producers and farmers will be explained. Each county in Ulster developed slightly different variations of industry and agriculture based on their population base, topography, and climate. County Fermanagh (where the blacksmith shop comes from) had a lower proportion of Scottish immigrants with the necessary weaving skills and very heavy soil perfect for growing flax, leading farmers in that region to produce more linen yarn over woven cloth. Tyrone, on the other hand, consisted of landlords who wanted to prosper from the linen industry, a large Scottish population, and the proper soil so the county developed thriving market towns and initiated successful monthly markets that attracted shopkeepers and tradesmen. This led to the growth of linen production. Growth in the linen trade led a group of wealthy churchmen to establish a Linen Board in Dublin who

⁸⁶ W.A. McCutcheon, *The Industrial Archaeology of Northern Ireland* (Belfast: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1983), 283-290; Brown, *Museum of American Frontier Culture Guidebook*, 48; Griffin, *The People with No Name*, 27-32.

“subsidized the industry, providing cottiers with flaxseed and spinning and weaving equipment at a discount, procuring funds to establish bleachgreens, and awarding prizes for innovation and quality.”⁸⁷ With the aid of such an organization, linen transformed northeast Ulster into a cash economy and made Ulster a major part of a wider global exchange network.⁸⁸ Historian Patrick Griffin explained the vast trading networks created by linen production thus:

Trading networks emerged. At fairs, locals sold their wares to merchants for goods, credit, and flaxseed. Factors from Dublin attended regional fairs, as did yarn jobbers and weavers eager to buy yarn at one fair and sell it for a profit at the next. Location again played an important role in determining which villages sprang up as local markets...As trade increased, linen drapers concentrated on towns with more established linen markets. Local producers then sold their wares to middlemen who then resold the product at regional towns. Weavers mainly marketed unbleached or brown cloth. Linen drapers whitened the linen before reselling it to factors from Dublin who transported the goods to Dublin’s white linen hall for shipment to Britain. Port towns tied this growing network into a larger world.⁸⁹

Scots-Irish men and women were therefore not confined to the local village and parish. The expansion of the linen industry required structures and institutions to market and ship cloth. Fairs and markets became commonplace for the selling of linen-related products, food, and specialty crafts. A blacksmith, such as the one who worked down the road from the Museum’s Irish Farm, might attend fairs to sell specially made crafts for extra income. On the whole, a blacksmith usually serviced the ten surrounding townlands of about 100-200 families making horse shoes and repairing farm tools. The blacksmith’s job

⁸⁷ Crawford, “Political Economy of Linen,” 144-146; and Griffin, *The People with No Name*, 27.

⁸⁸ Keller, “Irish Life and Emigration,” 9; Pollock, “Household Economy in Early Rural America and Ulster,” 66-67.

⁸⁹ Griffin, *The People with No Name*, 29.

represents one of the variety of skilled workers who would inhabit a village and bring the community together. Parishes, the equivalent of towns centered around a church community, would be close knit and include schools (if the village could afford it) and other charitable institutions.⁹⁰

Religion:

Scottish immigrants preferred a portable system of church government and therefore brought their Presbyterian religion with them to Ireland. Presbyterianism as carried to Ulster by Lowland Scots in the 1690s was built around the “claim of literate but unreflective laymen to hold their clergyman to account for his fidelity to the Scottish Presbyterian great tradition of the previous century.”⁹¹ Largely coming out of an Episcopal background, the established Scottish church had presbyteries and synods “made up of parish ministers and lay elders,” called the kirk session, who held more power than their Anglican equivalents. When Scots immigrated to Ulster they transplanted their faith by establishing the General Synod, an overall governing body which helped to oversee moral law and order on a larger scale. Authority within the rural community rested primarily with individual kirk sessions of each parish, creating a comprehensive system of religious and moral discipline. The Presbyterian Church government differed from its Anglican and Catholic contemporaries with its relatively democratic nature. Ministers, for example, were chosen by the congregations they were to serve, and laymen played a part in decision-making.⁹²

⁹⁰ Griffin, *The People with No Name*, 40; Brown, *Museum of the American Frontier Culture Guidebook*, 49-51.

⁹¹ Miller, “Searching for a New World,” 7.

⁹² S.J. Connolly, “Ulster Presbyterians: Religion, Culture, and Politics, 1660-1850,” in *Ulster and North America: Transatlantic Perspectives on the Scotch-Irish*, ed. H. Tyler Blethen and Curtis W. Wood, Jr. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997), 26-29.

Presbyterians in Ulster faced challenges from without and had to reckon with the Anglican establishment who often felt threatened by the growing economic power of Scottish migrants. Fear of Catholicism and any dissenting religious groups led Anglican leaders in Ireland to lash out against the rise of these peoples, especially Presbyterians, to power. The replacement of the traditional Episcopal establishment in Scotland by the Presbyterian Church sparked this fear. During the reign of Queen Ann, the British Parliament joined the Irish Protestant Ascendancy (the political Anglican leaders of Ireland) in checking the power of Presbyterians. In response, a High Church movement arose in 1702 that sought to “reassert the authority of the established church...[and] to block the establishment of new Presbyterian congregations,” by prosecuting participants and officiating ministers in Presbyterian services.⁹³ A largely anti-Catholic statute in 1704, called the Sacramental Test, indirectly targeted Presbyterians by requiring “all holders of offices of profit or trust under the Crown to obtain certificates that they were communicants in the Church of Ireland.”⁹⁴ These acts, in addition to a previously issued statute in 1666 called the Act of Uniformity (which made it illegal for anyone not Episcopally ordained to minister communion and required that all schoolmasters be licensed by the Anglican bishop) and other special tithing requirements, created challenges for Presbyterian congregations and relegated Presbyterians to the middle rung of a tripartite hierarchy of status and privilege.⁹⁵

Divisions within the Presbyterian Church also created tensions and challenges. The challenge from within centered around subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith laid out by Calvinists that legitimated their ecclesiastical church structure

⁹³ Connolly, “Ulster Presbyterians,” 26.

⁹⁴ Connolly, “Ulster Presbyterians,” 26-27.

⁹⁵ Connolly, “Ulster Presbyterians,” 25, 27.

“unfettered by episcopal oversight and lay[ed] out orthodox belief.”⁹⁶ Scottish immigrants brought and adhered to the values expressed in the statement in their new home in Ulster – the Synod of Ulster officially adopting it in 1698. As the Scots settled more firmly in Ulster, members of the synod who held more predestination viewpoints began insisting that presbyteries enforce the measure resulting in mandatory written subscription to the Confession by candidates to the ministry before licensing in 1705. Additionally, Presbyterians hoped that universal subscription to the Confession would demonstrate the doctrinal orthodoxy of their church and therefore strengthen their case for official toleration from the new king, King George I. Mandatory subscription, however, alienated some Presbyterian ministers to the extent that in 1726 these ministers broke away from the General Synod to form a separate Presbytery. New Lights, as these ministers came to be known as, began fusing Reformation concepts such as scriptural authority and the sanctity of conscience with natural rights and “latitudinarian ideas to challenge the constraints of predestinarian interpretations of Calvinist doctrine.”⁹⁷ Theological conservatives also expressed dissatisfaction with the synod’s commitment to orthodoxy and withdrew to set up the Secession Church. Debates then raged within the church over authority, the role of the state, and orthodoxy that Scots-Irish immigrants would carry with them to America.⁹⁸

Skills/Crafts:

- linen = flax production and processing, spinning, weaving
- blacksmithing

⁹⁶ Griffin, *The People with No Name*, 20.

⁹⁷ Griffin, *The People with No Name*, 50.

⁹⁸ Griffin, *The People with No Name*, 20, 47-48; Connolly, “Ulster Presbyterians,” 29.

Cultural Contributions:

Historians estimate that between 150,000—200,000 Scots-Irish immigrated to the American colonies between 1718 and the 1770s. These people brought their Scottish and Irish heritages and world views with them as they made a new home for themselves in the American backcountry. Much like their English counterparts, the Scots-Irish brought political and theological ideas, architectural design, and unique work attitudes and habits with them, though in many ways these cultural contributions differed from the values the English brought. One of the largest contributions they made to American culture was their Presbyterian faith. Their insistence on educated clergy meant the establishment of seminaries, such as the so-called “Log College,” of which Princeton University was a successor.⁹⁹ Additionally, the practice of “holding their ministers to account for departures from what they deemed to be sacred and immutable Presbyterian tradition in matters ranging from Christology to the admissibility of pipe organs” followed Presbyterians to America and later affected other American religious groups. The ability and permission to challenge and denounce ministers indicated a larger issue with authority. Their history of continuous conflict with the English and Irish for a place in society meant that these settlers would seek to settle on the fringes of the colonies, away from untrustworthy authority, preferring instead rural villages.¹⁰⁰ Historians debate about the larger implications of the Scots-Irish authority issue, with some arguing that this mode of thinking aided American revolutionary sentiment in the 1770s.¹⁰¹ It is clear,

⁹⁹ Miller, “Searching for a New World,” 14.

¹⁰⁰ Keller, “Irish Life and Emigration,” 27-28.

¹⁰¹ Historian David Hackett Fischer, for example, argues that peoples from the Borderlands of Britain (in Scotland and Ireland) carried with them ideas of natural freedom to America. Natural liberty, states Fischer, was created by a complex interaction between the American environment and European folk culture that thrived amongst Scots-Irish immigrants. Fischer, *Albion’s Seed*, 777-778.

however, that the Scots-Irish transplanted their unique Presbyterian structure of government. Arriving on the frontier, “some Ulster settlers assembled themselves into congregations, pushed for the establishment of their own presbytery, and tried to impose the Confession of Faith on the church.”¹⁰² A synod was established in Pennsylvania and settlers sought to create communities of people like themselves so they could create a presbytery that would offer moral and spiritual order.

Architecturally, the Irish brought a house structure with one large multi-purpose space the whole family resided in. Adopting the log cabin construction techniques from Swedish immigrants, the Irish added to the idea by creating a house similar to what they left in Ireland.¹⁰³ Frontier houses across the American backcountry would echo this architectural form and become an iconic image of the American frontier. The tradition and influence of multi-purpose space, however, extended beyond those initial settlement years. Looking at the construction of modern housing today, interpreters can point to the similarities with the open concept floor plan in many of today’s homes. An open concept floor plan today seeks to open up space and allow people to interact while doing a variety of tasks. That same mode of thinking existed, perhaps on a more practical level, during the 1690s in Ulster. Beyond just the layout of a house, the Irish also brought with them construction techniques, specifically building with stone. Most Old World people groups used either timber or clay in creating their homes, while the Scots-Irish used stone (an exception being some German groups also using stone).¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Griffin, *The People with No Name*, 100.

¹⁰³ Ron Chespesuik, *The Scotch-Irish: From the North of Ireland to the Making of America* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2000), 130.

¹⁰⁴ Keller, “Irish Life and Emigration,” 27.

While adapting in many ways to the different climate and topography of the American colonies, the Scots-Irish still brought with them their own farming techniques and work attitudes. The climate of America allowed them to grow different crops, such as wheat and corn, but these immigrants continued to grow oats, barley, and most of all flax. Linen production continued in America, though it did not gain the prominence or economic importance it had in Ulster. In the backcountry, however, immigrants continued their mixed economy of domestic manufacturing by simultaneously growing subsistence crops and engaging in cottage industry, such as spinning yarn or weaving cloth. Treatment of animals and livestock on the American frontier also mirrored Scottish practices. Farmers usually allowed herds of grazing animals to browse freely in the forests, rather than in the more English enclosure pasture.¹⁰⁵

Tying Everything Together:

Immigration: Whole Scots-Irish families made their way to the American colonies from 1718 to the 1770s for several reasons. The rapid growth of the linen trade, several natural disasters, a growing population, and the expiration of leases all contributed in forcing the Scots-Irish to leave their traditional homeland. Acquiring their original leases in the 1690s, most of these immigrants began approaching the end of their 21- or 31-year leases by the late 1710s and early 1720s. By the 1710s, however, land had become much more scarce than it had been in the 1690s, allowing landlords to practice rack-renting (raising the rent when a lease on a tenant's land expired). Higher rents and inflated prices due to the rapid growth of the linen trade meant that farmers would not be able to afford to renew their leases. Natural disasters, such as lengthy droughts and smallpox

¹⁰⁵ Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 741-742

epidemics, compounded a farmer's ability to pay higher rents. Farmers foreseeing the coming problem would decide to end their leases early, selling them to the next tenant which would earn their families the money to buy passage to America. While the majority of immigrants came in middle-class family units, about 100,000 came to America as indentured servants, unable to pay passage themselves and usually coming alone. Families that immigrated sought to settle in places where they might know family or friends. Pennsylvania, driven by its religious tolerance and home to the only established Presbytery, therefore became the primary location for these Scots-Irish to settle first.¹⁰⁶

Daily Life: The content explained above in the areas of household, farming, community, religion, and skills/crafts provides a glimpse into how the Scots-Irish tenants would have lived their lives in Ulster. When talking about daily life, try to bring up aspects of life that would seem familiar to your visitor first before delving into what makes these people unique and different. For this group of people, be sure to explain the first migration from Scotland as this impacted the life these people made in Ulster. With the Irish farm, finding points of connection should be relatively easy. Most visitors will have ready assumptions about the Irish, such as that they ate lots of potatoes, that can jump-start great conversations. Talking about the universal experiences all humans share such as cooking/eating, shelter, spirituality, and family can help break past any barriers to understanding. For concepts that differ largely from our world today, tie information back to some universal concept first.

¹⁰⁶ Chepesuk, *The Scotch-Irish*, 96-119; Miller, "Searching for a New World," 10-12; and Keller, "Irish Life and Emigration," 21-26.

Acculturation: Traveling across the Atlantic did not erase the ingrained cultural traditions and practices these Scots-Irish people grew up knowing. Instead, these peoples would typically cling to something familiar in the strange new land of the British colonies. They would continue to build and treat houses as they had in Ulster. They would continue to cook foods familiar to them, albeit sometimes with new or different ingredients. Finally, they would transplant their religious culture and doctrine in the American backcountry. Here, you can talk about the journey to America and point to what daily life traditions and practices were eventually adopted into mainstream American culture. The section above about the cultural contributions of the Scots-Irish in America should aid you in explaining this category. Draw attention to the specific cultural practices that visitors will see in the other exhibits later on, asking them to keep an eye out for one-room, multi-purpose spaces and Presbyterian religious practices.

Connecting all the sites together is important in creating a holistic experience for the visitor. The visitor needs to see that this is one large museum instead of a compilation of eight separate museums. In the same way that you draw out the cultural practices and traditions that the Scots-Irish would have brought to America, also point out how the Old World sites, in particular, have similar features or point to characteristics adopted by frontier peoples later in America. For example, you will be able to tie the history of the English experience to that of the Scots-Irish experience since they both fell under the same government structure. When the English yeoman was seeking to go to America is when the Scottish were experiencing the hardships that sparked their move to Ulster. Additionally, house structure and architecture are very similar between the Irish farm and the 1740s farm. Tying these two together in terms of connecting the

architecture the Scots-Irish knew in Ulster to what they would build on the American frontier is important in connecting the broader themes of the Museum together. Finally, the Scots-Irish rented land from a British lord much as German farmers did, as represented at the German farm. Similarly, both groups of people were recruited and brought to the English colonies by English merchants and land agents, as part of a desire by the British to harness their own people and keep them in the mother country, marking a shift in Britain's view of their colonies. The English still wanted the colonies to generate income so they attempted to recruit Protestant people from different regions to immigrate.

Frequently Asked Questions

About the Building...

1. How is the house made? What is it made of? What is the roof made of?
2. Would they have to replace the roof often? How often would they need to re-thatch the roof?
3. Why is there a separate bed in the second room? Who would sleep there?
4. Where would kids sleep?
5. Where would people eat their food?

About their Food...

1. Didn't the Irish eat potatoes?
2. What did they eat and drink?

About the People...

1. What is the average family size?
2. How long did people live back then?
3. Why did people leave Ireland?
4. Who would weave? Who would spin?

About their Commodities...

1. Did you make this cloth [referring to the bolt of linen] here?
2. Would they spin wool in Ireland?

Suggestions for Further Reading – Irish Farm

- Brown, Katherine L. and Nancy T. Sorrells. "Personality and Possessions as Clues to the Lives of Ulster Farm Families 1680-1730: What the Scotch-Irish Settlers in America Left Behind." Irish Farm Interpretation, Frontier Culture Museum, n.d.
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- Foster, R. F. *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972*. London: Viking Penguin Press, 1988.
- Griffin, Patrick. *The People with No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, America's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689-1764*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.
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- Keller, Kenneth W. "Irish Life and Emigration, 1600-1800." *Museum Lecture Series*, "The Homecoming: Reflections of America's Heritage," September 1988.
- Miller, David. "Searching for a New World: The Background and Baggage of Scots-Irish Immigrants." In *Ulster to America: The Scots-Irish Migration Experience, 1680-1830*, edited by Warren R. Hofstra, 1-23. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2012.
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Mobility in the Rhineland: Germany in the 1700s

Key Concepts: peasant, serf, stube, kammer

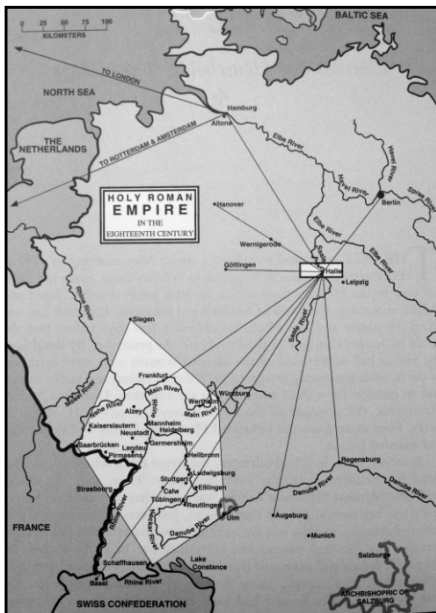


Figure 10: Palatinate Region of the Holy Roman Empire

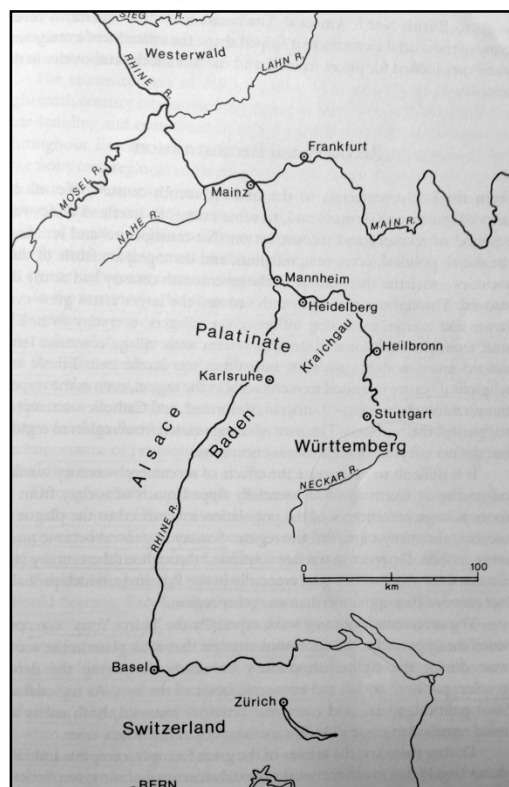
At this site, the Museum portrays a typical timber-framed house of the 1700s common to the principalities of western Germany. The house itself comes from the village of Hördt, located on the western bank of the Rhine River in the Germersheim district at the very southeast of the Rhineland-Palatinate region, and represents a peasant farmer renting land from a wealthier lord. During the 1700s, no unified German state existed but rather several principalities ruled by territorial princes governed the various regions of the later

Site Statement:

German peasants of the 1700s represent the largest group of non-English speaking Europeans to immigrate to America who brought a distinctive culture (i.e. language, foodways, religion, and crafts). Internal stresses often pushed German peasants to consider migration, and when they did migrate it was typically with whole families.

Introduction to the Site:

Figure 11: Principalities of Eighteenth-Century Germany



nation. Four major principalities existed in western Germany during the 1700s – Palatinate Electorate, Margravate of Baden-Durlach, Duchy of Württemberg, and Kraichgau – of which the house at the Museum would have stood in the Palatinate Electorate. Geographically diverse, these various regions produced different farm products with the more mountainous east and west thriving off of a herding economy contrasting with the wine-growing regions around the Rhine River.¹⁰⁷

Estimates date the oldest portion of the house to 1688 with its fachwerk (a building technique that involved large pieces of timber that were left exposed on the exterior, but the wall space between primary framing members was infilled with nonstructural materials such as brick or wattle and covered with a plaster-like duab) and classic German floor plan. Most German homes of the 1700s had at least two main rooms – a stove and hearth room – and some added on an additional third – a ground floor bedchamber – to the ground floor with a second story above for bedrooms. In the Hördt German house at the Museum, the oldest portion of the house contains a *Stube* (a designated space heated by a stove that became a central family space), a *Küche* (specialized space for food preparation), and a *Kammer* (the more private ground floor chamber where money was usually kept). Entering the house, visitors and guests would first greet the inhabitants in a *flur*, or small hall, that precedes the kitchen directly behind it and the living room to its right. The addition to the left of the *flur*, called an *anbau*, enlarged the house and provided the family an additional work space. Currently safety reasons

¹⁰⁷ Brown, *Museum of American Frontier Culture Guidebook*, 54; Aaron Spencer Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717-1775* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 42; A.G. Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property: German Lutherans in Colonial British America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), 38.

prohibit visitors from trekking up to the second floor of the German house, but interpreters can tell them that it contained a hallway with three rooms for sleeping and storage. Additional storage space was provided by the small upper attic where often farmers would place meats to be smoked by the chimney.¹⁰⁸

The house was constructed using vertical timbers to extend from the foundation to the roof and with frames for each side built then raised. Once the timber frame was in place, walls were filled with wattle (made of small branches or saplings interwoven) and daub (a mud mixture of soil, straw, sand, lime, and manure) and then covered with a rough plaster or stucco layer coated with a limewash to protect and seal the building. In many ways the construction of the German house resembles the timber-frame construction of the English house with a few differences. First, the English house, representing a wealthier, independent farmer, has an exterior pink/rust colored coating signifying access to more expensive brick while the German peasant who rents land has a pure white wash inside and out. Secondly, the German house's roof has clay tiles laid in a grid pattern that contrasts sharply with the fancier alternately patterned tiles on the English roof which provided more protection from the rain.¹⁰⁹

Household:

Following the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), Germany suffered severe population and economic decline that wouldn't recover until well into the 1740s, one hundred years later. Southwest Germany, and especially the Palatinate, experienced

¹⁰⁸ Brown, *Museum of American Frontier Culture Guidebook*, 65-67; William Woys Weaver, "The Pennsylvania German House: European Antecedents and New World Forms," *Winterthur Portfolio* 21, no. 4 (Winter 1986), 253-254, 257, and 259.

¹⁰⁹ Brown, *Museum of American Frontier Culture Guidebook*, 65-66.

intermittent warfare from 1648 until 1714, causing more severe population and economic decline than the other regions of Germany. Severe population loss coupled with the devastation war wrought on the landscape provided the impetus for economic change, nearly destroying the demographic, political, social, and economic fabric of the area. In response, regional and provincial rulers created incentives to promote in-migration, while simultaneously prohibiting emigration that could lead to a stronger state. They successfully attracted settlers to the Palatinate from Switzerland, Italy, France, the Netherlands, and other parts of Germany to reestablish nuclear, localist-oriented, subsistence peasant communities. By the 1740s, population had exceeded pre-war numbers and was continuing to grow quickly.¹¹⁰

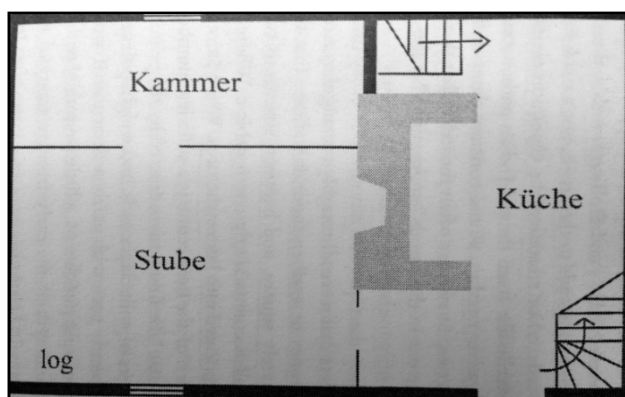
Households established in the Palatinate soon after the Thirty Years' War had access to cheap, arable land of no less than 50 acres per family/household. Rural society contained a hierarchy of wealth which placed the serf at the bottom and the provincial lord at the top. In between these two extremes were landless laborers, peasants, artisans, cotters (the poorest of peasants who resided in the village but who did not have full village rights), and lesser nobility. As a whole, these peasants and serfs rented land from the principal lord and used the profits of that land to feed their family and pay their rent. The individual household within these communities, then, was centered on agricultural production, with specific crops varying by region. With high prices and low wages, these

¹¹⁰ John G. Gagliardo, *Germany under the Old Regime, 1600-1790* (London: Longman Group, 1991), 123-124, 126; Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 18-19, 56.

farmers could earn a substantial profit that allowed them to build larger farmhouses, explaining the appearance of 2-story farmhouses after 1750.¹¹¹

German households were commonly arranged around two rooms – the *Stube* and the *Küche* – and any other plan arrangement was a variable on this standard. Activities within the home centered around the stove, which was centrally located in the *Stube*. Serving as a family gathering space and room to receive guest, the *Stube* held prominence as a semi-public, semi-private space due to the uniquely German stove which dominated

Figure 12: *Flurküchenhaus*



the room. Due to the scarcity and expense of fuel (since all the land and what was on it belonged to the lord), the nobility encouraged peasants to adopt raised hearths and stoves that required less wood and relied on radiated heat for

effectiveness. Combining the stove and hearth allowed for more efficient use of fuel but also meant the adoption of a particular stove design. Often providing the sole source of heat, family would gather in the *Stube* to perform indoor tasks, eat dinner, entertain guests, or relax in the evening. Within this family-centered room, space was divided by gender. A table with benches in one corner near a hanging cupboard or shelf was the primary domain of men, for instance. Here men could gather to eat, play music or games, and converse about politics. The hanging cupboard (as shown in the house at the Museum), would have held religiously significant objects which the men could use to instruct their children or hold family services. Women, conversely, would have gathered

¹¹¹ Arthur E. Imhof, *Lost Worlds: How our European Ancestors Coped with Everyday Life and Why Life is so Hard Today* (Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1996), 11-12; Alan Mayhew, *Rural Settlement and Farming in Germany* (London: B.T. Batsford LTD, 1973), 175.

around the stove to knit, sew, or talk. Eventually, space off of the *Stube* was split off to form the *Kammer*, which created a separate bedchamber for the head of the household and his wife. The matrimonial bed in the *Kammer* held special status as the only four-poster bed in the house, with the rest of the family sleeping on cots or straw mattresses. This bed was farther distinguished by the dower chest placed at its end – the one clearly domestic space for women in German folk culture that the wife brought with her into marriage. It contained special linens and clothes made for marriage.¹¹²

Farming:

Southwest Germany had three distinct topographic regions that produced three different agricultural systems. First, in the rough mountains at the very southwest of Germany, tiny villages on top flats of forested mountains revolved around raising sheep, and its ancillary spinning and weaving industries. Weather and poor soil prevented any commercial agriculture. Second, in the valleys between these mountains and the various rivers, farmers grew a variety of grains such as wheat, barley, and rye. Finally, in the region of the Neckar River and the Kraichgau, average households worked about 13 acres of mixed agriculture, meadow, and vineyards.¹¹³ Cities in the midst of the Rhineland, such as Speyer, focused more on viticulture and were “famed for their wines or fruit trees and brandies, that cast the greatest aura of wealth over the landscapes they controlled.”¹¹⁴ These various modes of agriculture were all highly encouraged by the local lord, who over time attempted to more fully secure their power over peasant property. Southern

¹¹² Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property*, 83; Weaver, “The Pennsylvania German House,” 253, 255, 258; Ann E. McCleary, “Ethnic Influences on the Vernacular Architecture in the Shenandoah Valley,” in *Diversity and Accommodation: Essays on the Cultural Composition of the Virginia Frontier*, edited by Michael J. Puglisi (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 263.

¹¹³ Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property*, 32-38, 110.

¹¹⁴ Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property*, 39.

German farms, for example, held the system of haufendorfer which meant enclosed villages had irregular plots of land and farms. Farmers across northern and southern Germany supplied animals and dairy products to England and France.¹¹⁵

Once German economy and population began to recover from the devastations brought by the Thirty Years' War, relative prosperity and rapid advances in farming allowed for more intensive systems of agriculture. After 1740, rapid population growth steadily pressured the food supply leading to an explosion of interest in agriculture and productivity. In the Rhine Valley in particular, a two-field system of farming evolved involving viticulture and fruit growing combined with commercial crop agriculture during previously fallow years. Prior to the 1700s, farming in Germany resembled that in England, with a three-field system of agriculture and village common lands. Gradually German common lands were enclosed and settlements infilled. More highly speculative viticulture in the Rhine Valley came into greater use after 1700 with fruit trees, potatoes, and other high-yield crops, in conjunction with the use of clover and dung to restore minerals to the soil. Fields previously left fallow for a year to restore soil nutrients were increasingly planted with a variety of crops that used different soil nutrients than those immediately preceding them, making it possible to produce crops for human and animal consumption such as peas, cabbage, lentils or other legumes, or turnips for fodder. Increased agricultural yields fostered growth in the population that cycled back in encouraging farmers to intensify their agricultural production.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Mayhew, *Rural Settlement and Farming in Germany*, 121-126.

¹¹⁶ Thomas Robisheaux, *Rural Society and the Search for Order in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 122-123; Mayhew, *Rural Settlement and Farming in Germany*, 170; Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 18-21; Gagliardo, *Germany under the Old Regime*, 131-132.

While agriculture became more profitable, it simultaneously led to low prices, increased rent, and depressed wages. By the 1700s, the German population almost doubled which resulted in the average farmer owning even smaller pieces of land. German inheritance practices further compounded the population and land issues over the course of the 1700s. In southwest Germany in particular, partible inheritance divided land between children, diminishing a large-scale farms into smaller and smaller plots of land.¹¹⁷ “In most of the areas whence migrants to America came, property was customarily divided equally between all daughters and sons, a consequence of the relatively strong property rights of peasants in those areas,” due to the incentives princes and lords used to draw migrants to their regions.¹¹⁸ Despite attempts by authorities to outlaw partible inheritance, peasants clung to tradition by refusing to comply with such edicts.¹¹⁹

Community:

Migration and immigration were familiar concepts to eighteenth-century Germans. Following the Thirty Years’ War, large numbers of people within Germany moved to new lands and numerous groups of people moved into recently vacated lands from surrounding countries. Between 1600—1700, historians estimate that one in three adults changed their place of residence, with only a small minority of those migrants traveling long distances. Extended family networks, common in village societies, influenced how people migrated. Mass migration abroad to America would occur later in

¹¹⁷ Mayhew, *Rural Settlement and Farming in Germany*, 121-126; Georg Fertig, “Transatlantic Migration from the German-Speaking Parts of Central Europe, 1600-1800: Proportions, Structures, and Explanations,” in *Europeans on the Move: Studies on European Migration, 1500-1800*, ed. Nicholas Canny (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 227.

¹¹⁸ Fertig, “Transatlantic Migration,” 226-227.

¹¹⁹ Gagliardo, *Germany under the Old Regime*, 134; Folgeman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 25.

the 1700s, but the pattern and practice had been established earlier following the Thirty Years' War; society in general was more mobile. Several periods of warfare from the later seventeenth century onward impacted settlement patterns, creating the opportunities for migrants to move to new places. The lack of a national or centralized government over Germany or even within specific regions prevented any beneficial economic planning and instead resulted in innumerable transit tolls, custom duties, and other protectionist and money-raising measures between the various territories that limited economic growth.¹²⁰

At the regional level, Germany was divided into several distinct regions and territories governed by princes or other lesser nobles who reported to the Holy Roman Emperor. Within southwest Germany, an Elector governed the Palatinate around the upper Rhine and Neckar River, a Margrave (regional ruler of the nobility) governed the Baden-Durlach duchy in the lower Rhine region, a coalition of imperial knights oversaw governance in the Kraichgau region to the east of the Rhine, and a Duke governed the duchy of Württemberg in the lower Neckar River. These rulers sought to strengthen their power following the Thirty Years' War, and did so by appointing village officials and placing more direct control over village law. For example, the Palatinate Elector appointed village mayors and strictly recorded village affairs in an attempt to assert power. Local rulers often tried to determine property inheritance and land distribution, especially as the population began to grow into the eighteenth century, but most villages resisted and reasserted their autonomy and right to govern public life for themselves.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Mayhew, *Rural Settlement and Farming in Germany*, 150-151; Fertig, "Transatlantic Migration," 195-196; Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 18, 63; Gagliardo, *Germany under the Old Regime*, 123-124.

¹²¹ Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 39, 15; Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property*, 42-44, 48.

A typical village town was nuclear in shape with a market place, church, and town hall at the centers surrounded by tightly packed residential area. A road that separated people from their fields of work enclosed the entire town. The center of village social life occurred in the local tavern where

communication and support networks could be created. Each village contained an elite group made up of smaller tradesmen, the church pastor, the schoolmaster, and wealthier peasants who dominated the village council and court. For smaller village crimes, such as felling wood, this elite group handed out reprimands to the villagers. These courts typically met every three months and proceeded to investigate every aspect of daily life for villagers, handing out reprimands for absences

at Sunday worship or failure to observe fast days. Over time, however, as the nobility sought to impose more control over these villages, larger more central governing bodies were created that directed taxation and land issues, though these did not completely supersede clan tradition, local custom, princely legal codes, or church prescription.¹²²

Trade within these regions centered around major river towns allowing for goods to be shipped throughout Europe or abroad. The major town of Speyer in the Palatinate, along the Rhine River, for example, supplied “surrounding Palatinate towns with surplus wheat, rye, and fruit, in exchange for wines, which were mixed with brandy in the city for preservation.” Farther down the Rhine, the city of Karlsruhe served a similar purpose as

Figure 13: Major Cities in the Palatinate



¹²² Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 44-45, 56-58; Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property*, 31-33, 64, 84.

the seat of the Baden-Durlach duchy. During the 1700s, principalities in Germany operated under the economic system of mercantilism. In this system governmental initiatives stimulated productivity and its fiscal yield in the form of increasingly coordinated programs of subsidies, monopolies, manipulation of taxes, and the establishment of government-owned and –operated industries, along with a balanced import-export policy. Electors and regional nobles therefore encouraged merchant activity.¹²³

Religion:

After the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 gave territorial princes and rulers complete sovereignty over their principalities, Germans were grouped more by their locality than their religious or cultural affiliations creating regions with religiously diverse populations. In southwest Germany, “repeated changes in religious confession in the Palatinate meant that some Kraichgau villages were predominately Reformed, while others were predominately Catholic or even predominately Lutheran, or had Catholic or Lutheran majorities,” which created conflict and tension within the region.¹²⁴ Three major religious groups existed in southwest Germany following 1648 through the eighteenth century – Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed – with a small minority of radical pietist groups. A period of relative toleration existed after the Thirty Years’ War as rulers attempted to encourage migrants to settle in their territories. The result, of course, was religious diversity that could border on conflict in some villages. Church affairs highly

¹²³ Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property*, 39; Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 15; Gagliardo, *Germany under the Old Regime*, 124-125.

¹²⁴ Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property*, 42.

regulated daily life and dictated holidays. Bibles and hymnals appeared in most houses throughout the Palatinate, especially in Protestant households.¹²⁵

Most Germans that migrated to America came from Protestant backgrounds, particularly Anabaptist or Pietist and Lutheran, that stressed a religious experience and individual responsibility for salvation. Anabaptists make a voluntary covenant with the church as a public symbol of acceptance of any congregational discipline or guidance. Churches in the Anabaptist tradition are made by the congregates and little to no higher structure exists for them. Believers simply pledge to seek a righteous life. Pietists, like Anabaptists, also have a congregational church structure but stress the inner experience as vital to individual salvation. These differ from any German Catholics, or the English Anglicans encountered in America, with their small and community-based church rather than a complex, hierarchical church system with Popes or bishops. Pietist and Anabaptist groups formed the minority of early German settlers to seek opportunities in the British colonies, primarily making their home in Pennsylvania. The climate of disorder following years of warfare and destruction fostered the growth of these more radical pietist groups, such as Mennonites, Swiss Brethren, Moravians, and Waldensians.¹²⁶

Lutheran and Reformed groups of Germans established a more hierarchical church system – indeed the biggest bishopric in the Palatinate was located in Speyer. Theologically, Lutheran and Reformed churches only differ in how they approach Communion, Baptism, and the Law vs. Gospel but otherwise resemble each other very

¹²⁵ Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 21-22.

¹²⁶ Stephen L. Longenecker, “Religion, Pluralism, and Democracy among the Germans in the Shenandoah Valley, 1700-1850,” *Shenandoah Valley Regional Studies Seminar* (November 1991); Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 21.

closely. In communities in Germany where the two existed, tension could escalate in the case where both groups had to share a church, leading some to seek refuge elsewhere.¹²⁷

Skills/Crafts:

- architecture = unique floor plan design, *flurküchenhaus*
- stoves = created to conserve fuel and heat
- foodways = sauerkraut, scrapple, raisin pies, plum or pear butter

Cultural Contributions:

Approximately 40,000 to 50,000 Germans from the Rhineland-Palatinate landed in Philadelphia between 1702 and 1727 and a total of 125,000 immigrants arrived in America between 1600—1800, making them the smallest group of Europeans to come to America, as compared to the English and Irish. These people brought with them their German heritage and world view as they made a new home for themselves in the American backcountry. As they interacted with English, Scotch-Irish, and Native American peoples, they “preserved their own domestic customs, language, and religion,” but also adapted to the surrounding landscape and economy. German immigrants from the Palatinate brought with them a distinct architectural style, foodways, religious denominations, and language that influenced the creation of American culture.¹²⁸

Architecturally, the Germans brought their unique three-room floor plan centered around an interior raised hearth. The *flurküchenhaus* floor arrangement with a kitchen, short hall, and stove/living room was carried across the Atlantic to serve as the primary format for German-American houses. Prepping visitors with this concept will help them see the same floor arrangement at the 1820s Farm. Within these rooms, striking

¹²⁷ Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property*, 42.

¹²⁸ John Walter Wayland, *The German Element of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia* (Bridgewater: C.J. Carrier Company, 1964), 27; Fertig, “Transatlantic Migration,” 217, 201-202.

similarities are carried over from Germany to America, such as the little corner cupboard for religious items by a table and benches in the *Stube*. The addition of the *Kammer*, or ground floor bedroom separated off of the *Stube*, is also carried over with the same purpose in creating a private space for the heads of the household to sleep. Beyond just the house plan itself, German architecture also introduced other European cultures in America to the bank barn. This style of barn, consisting of two levels, was unique to the Germans with its second floor being readily accessible by an earthen bank built to its doors while animals were housed on the lower level.

In the kitchens of German households, wives and daughters prepared foods that reflected the Rhineland-Palatinate vegetation. Many farmers from the Palatinate in particular grew orchards of different fruits, especially apples and pears, from which wives and daughters would make butter and cider. Other uniquely German dishes, such as scrapple and sauerkraut, made use of cabbage and less widely consumed parts of animals that reflected the relative lack of meat in the German diet. Cooking with a raised hearth shaped traditional German cooking as well. Immigrants continued to use raised hearths once they reached America.

Like the English and Scots-Irish, German immigrants clung to their traditional religious practices in traveling to a new place. Anabaptist, Pietist, Lutheran, and Reformed traditions influenced later American-founded Christian denominations such as the Baptists while the Lutheran and Reformed churches became Americanized upon interaction with other religious groups and American institutions such as slavery. More radical German religious groups, such as the Amish and Mennonites, created enclaves for themselves on the American frontier, a frontier that gave them the freedom to practice

their traditions the way they wanted. Of the German religious influences, the Christmas celebration stands out as one of the biggest. Among all German religious groups, huge attention was given to the Christmas celebration, complete with decorations and presents.

Finally, of the immigrants traveling to America, the Germans were one of the most influential non-English speaking groups to contribute several phrases and words to American vocabulary. Traditionally German words, such as Kindergarten, hamburger, frankfurter, wiener, angst, blitz, bratwurst, doppelganger, and berg among others impacted American vocabulary.¹²⁹ One of the biggest influences found across Pennsylvania and Virginia in particular was the practice of naming towns and cities. Adding on ‘burg,’ meaning town, to the end of place names shows a German influence.

Tying Everything Together:

Immigration: Entire German families, typically consisting of about 4 people, made their way across the Atlantic during the eighteenth century for several reasons. The plentiful land promised in America by English land agents attracted German families who witnessed the steady decrease in available land to provide for their children. Studies of German migration show that a combination of bad harvests, deteriorating living conditions in Europe, and increased economic activity in America influenced the decision to travel. Other studies show that increased food prices, stagnant wages, disease outbreaks, insufficient acreage to sustain families, increased cost and general scarcity of wood, and crop failure also contributed to immigration to America. Leaving Germany was no easy feat since regional rulers and imperial knights denied their many subjects the

¹²⁹ Robbin D. Knapp, *German English Words: A Popular Dictionary of German Words Used in English* (US: Lulu.com, 2007), 1-26.

right to emigrate and in some territories they restricted migration by financially manipulating property and requiring people to request permission. Despite regional attempts to halt migration out of Germany, many did leave, and did so at the encouragement of recruiters. The majority of these German migrants landed in Philadelphia and then spread farther westward to settle on the American frontier.¹³⁰

Daily Life: The content explained above in the areas of household, farming, community, religion, and skills/crafts provides a glimpse into how German peasants would have lived their lives in the Rhineland. When talking about daily life, try to bring up aspects of life that would seem familiar to your visitor first before delving into what makes these people unique and different. Migration is a large part of the understanding German peoples of the 1700s, even outside of immigrating to America, so make sure to explain these concepts to visitors. For concepts that differ largely from our world today, tie information back to some universal concept first.

Acculturation: Traveling across the Atlantic did not erase the ingrained cultural traditions and practices these German people grew up knowing. Instead, these peoples would typically cling to something familiar in the strange new land of the British colonies. They would continue to build houses as they had in Germany. They would continue to cook foods familiar to them, albeit sometimes with new or different ingredients. Finally, they would transplant their religious culture and doctrine in the American backcountry. Here, you can talk about the journey to America and point to what traditions and practices were eventually adopted into mainstream American culture. The section above about the cultural contributions of Germans in America should aid you in explaining this category. Draw attention to the specific cultural practices that visitors

¹³⁰ Fertig, "Transatlantic Migration," 225; Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property*, 58, 100, 104, 112.

will see in the other exhibits later on, asking them to keep an eye out for similar floor plans and specific German foods. Acculturation, additionally, will be evident if visitors see immigrants clinging to traditional clothing, language, or religion. Point out the cultural practices these people might have adhered to for visitors to see their impact on later American culture.

Connecting all the sites together is important in creating a holistic experience for the visitor. The visitor needs to see that this is one large museum instead of a compilation of eight separate museums. In the same way that you draw out the cultural practices and traditions that the Germans would bring to America, also point out how the Old World sites, in particular, have similar features amongst themselves or point to characteristics adopted by frontier peoples later in America. For example, similar to the children of English yeoman, the American colonies became one more possible location for people to go to for new opportunities, though that system occurred for different reasons between England and Germany. Migration and movement was common in both England and Germany, especially for young adults. Village formation in Germany strongly resembled West African villages in which the center of town held important village buildings and residential areas while the agricultural fields lay outside the village limits. Additionally, German peasants rented land from a lord just like the Scots-Irish in Ulster. Both groups paid rent to a lord with their harvest or goods. The Germans and Scots-Irish were also both the target of British recruiters attempting to get people to settle the American colonies. Finally the similarities between the German Farm and the 1820s American Farm will be very striking to visitors. From floor plans to food to religious practices, the German and 1820s Farms demonstrate the full story from Old World to

America. Pointing out the connection between these two sites will strengthen the mission of this Museum and showcase the broader themes at work amongst the exhibits.

Frequently Asked Questions

About the House...

1. Is this house really from Germany?
2. How come they don't have a fire in this room [referring to the stube]? Why is it warm in here? What is the kochelhofen [stove]?
3. How do you cook in the kitchen?
4. Did these people own their house?

About the Animals...

1. What breed of chickens are these?
2. Why do your cows have horns? Aren't they bulls?

About Objects...

1. What is that musical instrument?
2. What is that object on the dresser? (referring to the mousetrap)

Other...

1. Did the kids go to school?
2. Where would kids sleep?

Suggestions for Further Reading – German Farm

- Fogleman, Aaron Spencer. *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717-1775*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996.
- Gagliardo, John. *Germany Under the Old Regime, 1600-1790*. London: Longman Group, 1991.
- Mayhew, Alan. *Rural Settlement and Farming in Germany*. London: B.T. Batsford LTD, 1973.
- Robisheaux, Thomas. *Rural Society and the Search for Order in Early Modern Germany*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Roeber, A.G. *Palatines, Liberty, and Property: German Lutherans in Colonial British America*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993.
- Scheer, Teva J. *Our Daily Bread: German Village Life, 1500-1850*. Canada: Aventis Press, 2010.
- Weaver, William Woys. "The Pennsylvania German House: European Antecedents and New World Forms." *Winterthur Portfolio* 21, no. 4 (Winter 1986): 243-264.
- Wokeck, Marianne. *Trade in Strangers: The Beginning of Mass Migration to North America*. University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999.

People of the Eastern Woodlands: American Indians in the 1700s

Key Concepts: palisade, wigwam, maize, trade, hamlet

Site Statement:

The Eastern Woodland Indians in the ‘backcountry’ lived in small, self-sustaining villages that would change dramatically upon contact with Europeans. Even so, Indian crops, local knowledge, and vocabulary did influence and shape European settlers as well.

Introduction to the Site:

This Native American site represents the life and culture of several Eastern Woodland tribes during the 1700s when Europeans were first arriving on the American frontier. Museum staff have reconstructed a typical village, or hamlet, using local materials that these peoples may have inhabited during this time. Stretching along the Appalachian Mountains from New York to Georgia, these groups consisted of several tribes that often came into conflict with one another. In this region, however, from the Mississippi to the Atlantic Ocean, Native Americans oriented their lives around the forests with a typical settlement including small, round wigwams or oval/rectangular longhouses located within a palisaded village or dispersed hamlets among agricultural fields. Since it is difficult to know what groups specifically inhabited the Shenandoah Valley, no particular tribe is being represented at the Museum. Instead, evidence shows that several groups passed through the Valley and therefore the Museum has decided

not to portray a particular tribe or band, but instead represent more generally Native culture and life.

Estimates by historians indicated that approximately 200,000 Native Americans inhabited Virginia alone by the 1600s with those numbers continuing to decline as European settlers pushed steadily westward and conflict with Native groups resulted in death and destruction. Many of the tribes located along the Appalachian Mountains by the 1700s were the remaining peoples left after European encroachment forced them westward. Historians often divide the Eastern Woodland peoples into two geographic regions in talking about their culture and beliefs – the Northeastern and Southeastern – dividing the region with a curved line along the Piedmont regions of Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. Tribes in both regions have been divided by historians into two broad groups that indicate differences in how these people lived and typically indicate what kind of Indian confederation they belonged to: Algonquian and Iroquoian. For the sake of simplicity, this manual will discuss information about Native tribes using those two groups to speak more broadly. If visitors ask about specific tribes, the following are several groups known to have existed along the Appalachians in the 1700s (starting with the Northeast and moving southward): Powhatan, Nottaway, Meherrin, Secotan, Nanticoke, Weapemeoe, Susquehannock, Tuscarora, Shawnee, Saponi, Manacan, Tutelo, Eno, Cherokee, Catawba, Creek, and Yuchi.¹³¹

¹³¹ Robert D. Mitchell, “The Colonial Origins of Anglo-America,” in *North America: The Historical Geography of A Changing Continent*, ed. Thomas F. McIlwraith and Edward K. Muller (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, 2001), 97; Carl Woldman, *Atlas of the North American Indian* (New York: Facts on File Press, 2000), 31-33.

Living in highly forested and well-watered areas with many rivers, streams, and lakes, Eastern Woodland groups lived a semi-nomadic lifestyle following the patterns of nature. This style of living can be clearly represented in the houses these people constructed for themselves. The Museum has decided to showcase Indian wigwams, more representative of Algonquian peoples, arranged in a village setting. About 5-6 wigwams each housing one nuclear family are arranged within a circular palisade interspersed with more communal spaces such as the kitchen and men's and women's work spaces. Plans are in place to also construct a longhouse to one side of the village where Indian peoples would have gathered for ceremonies or received guests. These structures were made using local materials on site at the Museum, including tree bark, saplings, and cattails.

Household:

An Indian household and village typically produced everything the village needed, except certain luxuries, using the labor/tools within the village palisade and the resources of the forest and fields immediately outside the village. A typical village or town varied in size, but both Algonquian and Iroquoian groups maintained strong tribal or band identities, developing loose confederacies.¹³² Across both groups, “family served as the fundamental unit of life and the clan served as the basis for kinship, the village served as the basic face-to-face unit of politics.”¹³³ The Iroquois and Algonquians differed primarily in how they organized their families and clans within villages/towns. A typical Algonquian village consisted of 8-10 marital units with limited lines of shared

¹³² Helen C. Rountree, *The Powhatan Indians of Virginia: Their Traditional Culture* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 32; Woldman, *Atlas of the North American Indian*, 32.

¹³³ James M. Volo and Dorothy Denneen Volo, *Family Life in Native America* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007), 55.

descent that lived and traveled together, residing in single-family dwellings, called wigwams. These small, patrilineal bands wandered from campsite to campsite within a specific geographic region, following seasonal changes in vegetation and the migration patterns of animals. Moving frequently, the small, compact dwellings these people resided in were made of bark supported on a framework of saplings and small tree trunks sunk into the ground and bent over into a dome with a door opening and smoke hole. Algonquians preferred to cover their dwellings with bark, branches, or reed mats that kept inhabitants warm and dry. Inside the wigwams, Indians possessed few pieces of furniture, in



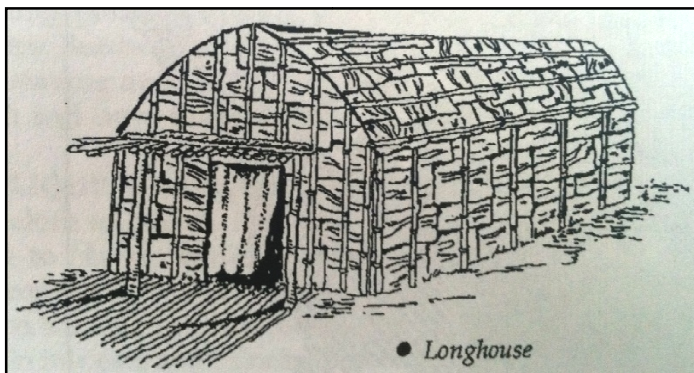
Figure 15

contrast to European settlers, with the exception of a bedstead lashed to the framework of each house. Among more sedentary Algonquian groups, a more permanent village structure similar to longhouses served as a council house. These dwellings were protected from attack and foraging animals by a palisade of stout, tall poles set into the ground close together. At either end of the village, typically outside the palisade, both Algonquian and Iroquoian groups constructed sweathouses (one male, one female) built like smaller wigwams where people would attend to ritual sweating and purification by exposing themselves to heat.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Volo, *Family Life in Native America*, 23, 92, 94-95; Rountree, *The Powhatan Indians of Virginia*, 58, 60-61; Woldman, *Atlas of the North American Indian*, 52.

Iroquoian peoples lived in more settled, matrilineal villages or towns with a culture organized around extensive agricultural activity and established political institutions. Algonquians by contrast had little overall leadership or tribal organization leading to societies where obedience to central authority was not socially expected or valued. The bigger, more centrally organized villages of the Iroquois contained several longhouses which housed nuclear and extended families. Up to 20 feet wide and 20 feet long, longhouses were communal dwellings with a door at each end constructed with a

Figure 16



log frame covered by a variety of local materials. A village or town of several longhouses represented a larger clan or tribe, a vast difference from the smaller kinship groups represented in

Algonquian villages. Construction of longhouses signified permanence as Iroquoian groups established permanent villages and towns with intensive agricultural production.¹³⁵

Within households and villages, duties and responsibilities were divided between men and women, both working together to produce food and goods for the community. In the example village constructed at the Museum, visitors may note the two freestanding half-shelters on opposite sides of the village. Each half-shelter created a gendered space for women and men to create tools and goods. Indian women in the village foraged, farmed, tended the fires, cooked, wove baskets, prepared food, dressed and preserved meats, created ceramic pots, tanned animals skins, and educated children. Eastern

¹³⁵ Volo, *Family Life in Native America*, 23, 46-47, 93; Woldman, *Atlas of the Native American Indian*, 52

Woodland groups highly valued their children. Babies, for instance, spent their days outside the family quarters secured to a cradle board until they were able to walk. Older members of the group, highly valued for their cultural and historical knowledge, played a key role in educating children as well, however Indian women were largely responsible for their care. When not helping with village responsibilities, Indian children played games designed to teach them the skills they would need to make good hunters, warriors, and gatherers. Indian men, conversely, hunted, fished, trapped, cleared land, carved wood and stone tools, and constructed village dwellings. Many European observers criticized Native American peoples for their laziness, citing their irregular eating habits and pointing to the imbalance of responsibilities between men and women. Any imbalance between Indian men and women would have been impacted by the seasons. Both men and women worked equally hard to provide food and shelter for the village. Additionally, any irregularities in eating habits stemmed simply from a different conception of meal time. Indians were more relaxed about eating, allowing people to eat when they were hungry. Women took turns cooking for the entire village, simplifying this task by cooking large potted meals that could simmer all day. Only on special occasions, such as when guests were present, did a set meal time occur.¹³⁶

Farming:

With the addition and centralization of maize crops to Indian horticulture systems of the East after 200 A.D., largely nomadic groups changed into more semi-nomadic agricultural peoples. Eastern Woodland tribes had a mixed horticulture, hunting, fishing,

¹³⁶ Rountree, *The Powhatan Indians of Virginia*, 34, 38, 44, 47, 54, 62; National Park Service, "Eastern Woodland Indian Life," *Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historical Trail* (2007), 1; Volo, *Family Life in Native America*, 69-70, 75, 79-80; Alan MacFarlan, *Book of American Indian Games* (New York: Association Press, 1958), 61.

and foraging system, though the proportion of these various systems varied by tribe and location. Once a Native tribe moved into an area, men and women quickly got to work clearing land for the village and creating small, square fields through the process of slash-and-burn in which trees were felled (the bark and wood being used to construct dwellings) and the ground subsequently burned to create a fertile covering. Unlike the neat gardens and fields of the English, Irish, and Germans who would settle the frontier, Indian fields would have been peppered with burned tree stumps and rough surfaces due to the lack of draft animals or plows to turn the soil and clear land. Between April and mid-June, corn and beans would be planted each month so that when they sprouted, the beans would twine around the corn stalks. Later in the planting season, squash would also be planted between the corn and bean clumps and allowed to run along the ground, contributing more to the European impression of messy fields/gardens.¹³⁷

Corn, squash, beans (popularly called the Three Sisters), and other crops such as sunflowers and pumpkins provided staple crops to Native American diet, but did not provide all the nutrients and food Native groups needed to survive. To supplement their diet, women collected berries, nuts, and roots while men hunted and fished animal resources in the area, such as rabbit, raccoon, deer, turkey, and a variety of fish. Native cultures, as a result, were deeply affected by the types of wood and crops available, which also meant that they used land differently than the Europeans. Due to this lifestyle, Woodland Indians lived seasonally within a variety of ecosystems and traveled geographically to specialized locations within a certain region. Extra food would be

¹³⁷ Linda S. Cordell and Bruce D. Smith, "Indigenous Farmers," in *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*. Vol. I, *North America*. Part I, ed. Bruce G. Trigger and Wilcomb E. Washburn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 235; Rountree, *The Powhatan Indians of Virginia*, 46-47.

stored in baskets or pottery vessels laid in pits lined with bark, grasses, or corn husks for use during colder seasons.¹³⁸

Both hunting and gathering required extensive knowledge of the local terrain and the plants and animals residing there, and this information changed seasonally. Hunting primarily occurred during the colder season. Native hunters tried to get as close as possible to the animal to guarantee a direct hit, whereas Europeans often viewed hitting an animal from a distance as a mark of skill. The games boys played as children sought to teach them the necessary skills of listening, smelling, and seeing to approach an animal and make a kill using simple tools like a bow and arrow (prior to the introduction of British weapons). Gathering, too, required extensive knowledge of plants that were safe to eat and when they should be collected. Such knowledge shaped Indian diet since berries would be picked in summer, nuts collected in fall, and a variety of seeds collected from midsummer through the fall. Since not all seasons produced enough food for a village to eat, agriculture provided that supplemental and necessary security.¹³⁹

Community:

Native American tribes and groups networked and interacted frequently. Seasonal travel patterns between groups moving raw materials and finished artifacts across the cultural landscape of the East shows a clear, if sporadic, communication network among Indian societies. Constant movement created a series of Indian trails 2-3 feet wide that provided ready access to major river valleys, stream crossings, portages (area of land between obstacles in rivers or between lakes), and mountain passes. Of

¹³⁸ Volo, *Family Life in Native America*, 6, 8, 97; Cordell & Smith, "Indigenous Farmers," 248; National Park Service, "Eastern Woodland Indian Life," 1.

¹³⁹ Charles Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1976), 270-273, 286-287.

these trails, the Onondaga Trail and Warrior Path formed two of the major networks that

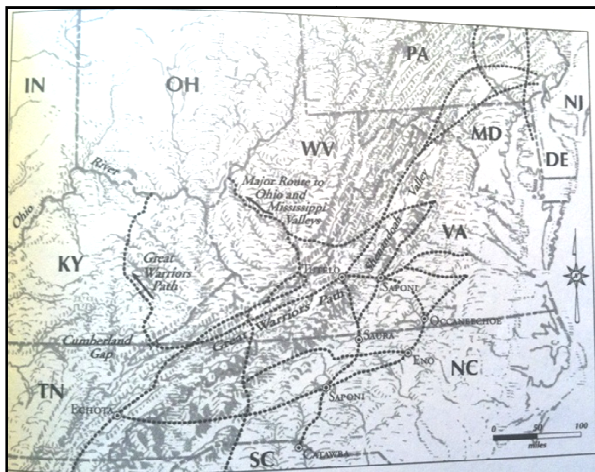


Figure 17: Major Indian Trails

the Warrior Path, would be expanded by these European groups to eventually form major roadways still currently used today – the Warrior Path has since become Route 11.¹⁴⁰

Increasing interaction and conflict with Europeans towards the beginning of the 1700s led to the establishment of Indian confederacies. Most famous were the Five Nations Confederacy of Iroquoian tribes in New York and Pennsylvania following Queen Anne’s War (1702-1713) which “served to extend the enterprise of English merchants to Indians.”¹⁴¹ As traders abused Indian trust and settlers increasingly flooded Indian lands creating tensions with Natives closer to home, several Indian tribes moved west and north to join confederacies like the Five Nations. Smaller tribes joined together to become a larger political and defensive alliances living in larger, centralized villages and stockade towns. Conflicts with Europeans pushed Indians against each other resulting in even more conflict amongst Native groups. In the early eighteenth century, the Five Nations tribes fought 70 years of intermittent warfare with the Catawbas of North and South

¹⁴⁰ Cordell & Smith, “Indigenous Farmers,” 243-244; Volo, *Family Life in Native America*, 13-14.

¹⁴¹ Neal Salisbury, “Native People and European Settlers in Eastern North America, 1600-1783,” in *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*. Vol. I, *North America*. Part I, ed. Bruce G. Trigger and Wilcomb E. Washburn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 404, 429.

Carolina and additionally resumed domestic mourning-wars (when Indian tribes would purposefully make war with other Indian tribes to restore lost population, ensure social continuity, and deal with death) against the more southern Cherokee, Creek, and Yamsee tribes. Such domestic conflicts amongst Indian tribes heightened tensions over conflicting claims to the Susquehanna Valley, western lands, and the Shenandoah Valley. Warring parties of Iroquoian tribes, for example, traveled annually through the Shenandoah Valley on their way south to conduct war, threatening colonial frontier inhabitants and disrupting Virginia Indians (such as the Meherrins, Nottoways, and Tuscaroras) who moved north to join the Five Nations Confederacy.¹⁴²

Village society was primarily based on kinship groups who determined politics, hunting, trade, marriage, and warfare. These societies were mostly egalitarian with no central authority or social hierarchy. They governed social life instead through custom and tradition. Society, therefore, was segmented into autonomous households with no sovereign authority beyond the local group. Any leaders would obtain power by popular will and retain their position through their popularity. Eastern Woodland groups had a mixture of exogamous (where marriage is only allowed outside the social group) matrilineal and patrilineal societies that governed who had a say in village affairs. In a matrilineal society, for example, sons would be primarily raised and influenced by their mother's brothers or other male relatives, instead of any male relatives on their father's side. Similarly, matrilineal societies gave final authority over marriage and intra-tribal relations to the elder women in the tribe. Many of these characteristics of Indian tribes

¹⁴² Salisbury, "Native People and European Settlers in Eastern North America," 429, 435; Warren R. Hofstra, "'The Extension of His Majesties Dominions': The Virginia Backcountry and the Reconfiguration of Imperial Frontiers," *Journal of American History* 84, no. 4 (March 1998), 1288; Volo, *Family Life in Native America*, 14, 22-23; Daniel K. Richter, "War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (October 1983), 529.

and groups explain many of the conflicts and misunderstandings that occurred when negotiating with European groups.¹⁴³

Religion:

Native Americans as a whole held a deep reverence for nature, land, and animals, recognizing humans as one with all other living things and therefore seeking to balance these forces. Plants, animals, inanimate objects, and natural phenomena all had innate souls and human properties since the universe was suffused with preternatural forces and powerful spirits. These spirits governed all living things and the forces of nature, sending omens to humans as encouragement or warning. Most Indian groups believed in a monotheistic omnipotent universal spirit who governed all other spirits. Gifts would be given to these various spirits to appease them, make requests, or return balance to the various spiritual forces. People could also gain the favor of the spirits through ceremonies, sacred objects, vision quests, music, dance, and ritual sacrifice. Some groups even employed a shaman who sought control over the various spirits through magic or who would offer gifts on behalf of the community.¹⁴⁴

For Native American groups, the cosmos could be divided into three distinct parts: This World, the Upper World, and the Under World. Levels of grandeur existed within each of these worlds. The Sun and Moon, for instance, existed in the Upper World while ghosts and monsters inhabited the Under World. Oral tradition passed down through village elders told stories of how the world and people were created. Through these stories, a richness of myths and legends was created which brought people together around festivals and ceremonies. Southeast tribes, for example, celebrated a harvest

¹⁴³ Woldman, *Atlas of Native American Life*, 63-65.

¹⁴⁴ Volo, *Family Life in Native America*, 7; Woldman, *Atlas of Native American Life*, 23, 57; MacFarlan, *Book of American Indian Games*, 17.

festival and a rite of new fire where Native peoples celebrated a fruitful harvest and had a ritual relighting of the community fires (fires in each Wigwam were never extinguished until the tribe moved to the next campground).¹⁴⁵

Skills/Crafts:

- pottery = forming cooking pots out of local clay
- basket making = using reeds and malleable wood to weave various sized baskets
- tool making = carving sharp tools out of rock and bone
- tanning = animals skinned and tanned by women to make blankets and clothing
- woodwork = carving bowls, utensils, bows, arrows, and canoes out of various trees around the village
- music = usually has single voice, a single meter, and short range of notes

Cultural Contributions:

Having inhabited North America well before any European settler arrived, Native Americans already had an established culture in place by the 1700s. Once Europeans landed in America, they soon interacted with a culture they found strange and termed barbaric and savage. Nevertheless these Europeans relied heavily on Native peoples to survive when they first arrived, adopting many of their agricultural practices and modes of clothing. Once Europeans found their footing, however, the cultural influences largely shifted, though Native peoples still influenced American games/sports, clothing, and language.

Games were a large part of how children were raised with the necessary skills to be adults in Indian society. The game of lacrosse, in particular, has Native American

¹⁴⁵ Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*, 122-127; Woldman, *Atlas of Native American Life*, 58.

origins as a game played with a long-handled net and a leather ball. Through this game, young boys in particular could learn to use speed and agility to accurately get a small ball in a net.¹⁴⁶ This sport has since then been adopted into mainstream American culture as a very popular college-level sport. Native Americans also contributed a winter weather sport/activity now commonly found in the Olympics. During snowy season, Native peoples would take narrow sleds and race each other around curved snow banks. This fun activity to enjoy a snowy day evolved into a competitive sport now part of the Olympics called toboggan racing.¹⁴⁷

Native American clothing primarily utilized deer skin and the natural furs of other animals, such as beaver and raccoon. Other than ancient peoples, Europeans had little history of wearing animal skins for clothing, except for shoes. In America, however, no factories or widespread industries existed to create cloth or clothing outside of what an individual family could produce. Most had made clothing from wool or flax which required multiple tools and the right kind of animals/seeds. Once they observed Indian modes of preparing and tanning animal skins, these Europeans soon adopted some animal hide clothing, especially for warmer months. The practice of wearing animal skins has continued since the colonial period with both real and artificial fur coats and boots, and leather jackets and pants.

Finally, several Indian vocabulary words for native species and places have been carried into American culture. In America, Europeans found a wide range of plants and animals that were wholly unfamiliar to them and quite different from any animals in Europe. Bungling with Native languages, Europeans adopted common Native words for

¹⁴⁶ Volo, *Family Life in Native America*, 75.

¹⁴⁷ MacFarlan, *Book of Native American Games*, 15.

these species. For example, such words as hickory, hominy, opossum, persimmon, raccoon, and pecan came from Indian dialects. Other verbal expressions, such as ‘wow,’ have also been adopted into American culture and are still used frequently today. The names of many rivers and regions have additionally retained Native monikers. State names such as Alabama, Michigan, and Ohio come from either tribal names or geographic descriptions of these various areas. Bodies of water, especially rivers, also retain their Native names such as the Susquehanna, Mississippi, and Rappahannock.¹⁴⁸

Tying Everything Together:

Immigration: Just prior to European contact in 1500, historians estimate that approximately 2 to 2.5 million Native Americans resided in what would become the United States. One hundred years later that number had been reduced to about 200,000 Indians. Such a significant loss of life occurred due to the destructive trio of “guns, germs, and steel.”¹⁴⁹ European peoples brought new diseases no Indian had immunity to and more deadly technology that could kill more people than the Native bow and arrow. Colonization by European groups, therefore, posed several challenges to the Indians’ ability to maintain continuity and control over their ways of life, homeland, and cultural identities. Settling on the Atlantic coast, the European trio weakened Native American power and control over their homeland which allowed European groups to steadily push them farther and farther west. For instance, the Powhatan Confederacy, one of the most powerful Indian ‘nations’ when Europeans first arrived in Virginia, was destroyed within

¹⁴⁸ Buck Woodward, “Appendix C: Algonquian Language of Virginia: Powhatan Dialects of the Seventeenth Century and Beyond,” in “A Study of Virginia Indians and Jamestown: The First Century” *National Park Service*, n.d., 7-8.

¹⁴⁹ Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999).

a matter of decades while Piedmont Indians were subject to increasing harassment. Seeking to preserve some semblance of their traditional life and culture, Indian groups had to move westward, immigrating to new areas of the United States.¹⁵⁰

Daily Life: The content explained above in the areas of household, farming, community, religion, and skills/crafts provides a glimpse into how Native Americans would have lived their lives in the British Colonies during the 1700s. When talking about daily life, try to bring up aspects of life that would seem familiar to your visitor first before delving into what makes these people unique and different. With Eastern Woodland Indians, you may want to approach the visitor through common misconceptions about Native life and culture. You could draw the visitor in by addressing such Native American myths like their environmentalism, how they lived in teepees, or the laziness of Indian men. Or you have the option of drawing out the cultural contributions of Native culture that your visitor may be familiar with such as the game of lacrosse. For concepts that differ largely from our world today, tie information back to some universal concept first.

Acculturation: Cultural blending went both ways between Europeans and Native Americans. The cultural contributions explained above should help you lay out for visitors at least some of the ways that Native peoples influenced American culture but you should also keep in mind how European groups influenced and changed Native American life as well. Contact with Europeans forced Indian groups to change their material goods, social structure, and political negotiation techniques in ways that affected their traditional life and culture. Remind visitors of this two-way acculturation and pull

¹⁵⁰ Miller, "The Colonial Origins of Anglo-America," 97; Salisbury, "Native People and European Settlers in Eastern North America." 399, 414-415.

out examples from the content above such as the formation of the Five Nation's Confederacy. Though the Museum site shows a Native group prior to European contact, you can still remind visitors of how European contact forever changed Native life.

Connecting all the sites together is important in creating a holistic experience for the visitor. The visitor needs to see that this is one large museum instead of a compilation of eight separate museums. In the same way that you draw out the cultural practices and traditions that the Native Americans contributed to American culture, also point out how the Old World and Native American sites have similar features amongst themselves or point to characteristics adopted by frontier peoples later in America. For example, like the West African Farm, a wall encloses several structures on the Native American Site. Since visitors will most likely see the West African Farm first, you may get questions about the Indian site being one, single household. Make sure to delineate for visitors that the Igbo **compound** represents one family while the Indian enclosure is a palisade used to protect a small **hamlet** or village of several households.

Frequently Asked Questions

About the Site Generally...

1. What Indian tribe do you represent?
2. Were there Indians in the Valley?
3. Are you Indian? Do you have native heritage? Why doesn't the museum have Indians working on this site?
4. Do you work with local tribes to make the houses or plant food?
5. What are the Eastern Woodlands?
6. What does Ganatastwi mean?

About the Structures...

1. Are these Wigwams or Tipis?
2. Where would the squaw live?
3. Would the house leak when it rains?
4. What are the poles in the ground around all the houses?
5. Is this how they really made canoes? [referring to the fire inside the dugout]

Common Misconceptions...

1. Existence of a Pan-Indian culture
2. First Environmentalists who didn't waste anything
3. Primitive or Noble Savage
4. Good Indian vs. Warring Tribe
5. All Indians died of disease

Suggestions for Further Reading – Native American Site

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Combining Cultures: Immigrants on the American Frontier

Key Concepts: open land, frontier, corn, neighbors, family, tobacco, cabin,

flurkuchenhaus, parlor, slaves, stove, wheat, hearth, clock

Site Statements:

Settlers in the ‘backcountry’ came from a variety of countries, so all used their cultural knowledge and what they learned from others in America to establish themselves on the plentiful land of the frontier.

A German immigrant family could begin their life on the frontier clearly German (through their architecture, foodways, etc.) but as they remained in the Valley through the early 1800s, they began adding on other cultural elements from different peoples due to the market economy.

By the 1850s, settlers on the frontier blended together the various traditions and practices of the Old World shown through their architecture, foodways, and material goods.

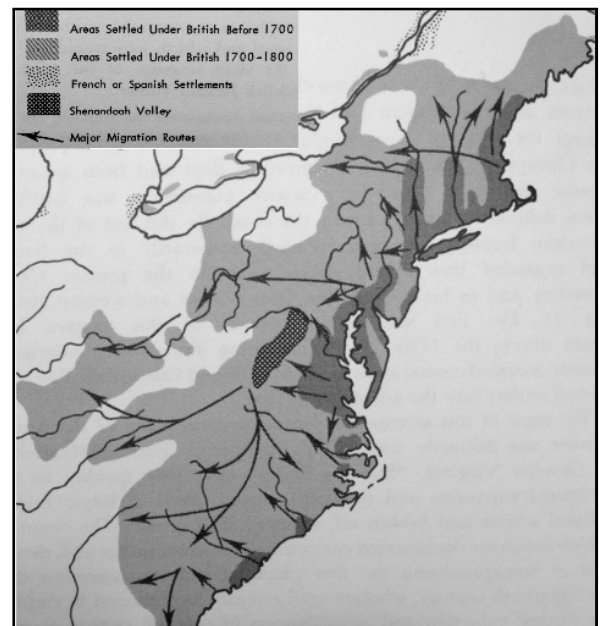


Figure 18: Settled Areas of Eighteenth-Century America

Introduction to the Sites:

1740s Settlement: When English, Scots-Irish, and German peoples came to the British colonies and began spreading westward seeking land and independence,

they typically built simple log structures as they established farms and livelihoods. Museum staff have constructed a typical log cabin using traditional techniques and materials to demonstrate life on the frontier in the 1740s. Colonial governors from New York to Georgia began encouraging settlement at the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains to create a buffer area between the west and the wealthier estates towards the coast. Colonial governments sought to establish a secure buffer “not only from the external threats of foreign peoples outside the Crown’s control but also from the internal threats of alien peoples over whom control was all too complete,” such as Native Americans and African slaves.¹⁵¹ More specifically, the settlement of European Protestants that colonial governments established west of the Blue Ridge between 1730-1745 were part of larger efforts to check French expansion across the interior, extend English domain, secure the western periphery destabilized by Indian conflict, and occupy mountain locations otherwise a refuge to runaway slaves.¹⁵² On these frontier buffers, immigrant families dispersed themselves on holdings of 300-400 acres based on environmental conditions and family aspirations for economic competency. Generous offers of bountiful and fertile land “brought a mix of ethnic and national groups in which the English and Anglo-Americans significantly constituted only a minority among predominately Scots-Irish and German populations,” with only a few African Americans.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Warren R. Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia: Settlement and Landscape in the Shenandoah Valley* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004), 4.

¹⁵² Hofstra, “The Extension of His Majesties Dominions,” 1284.

¹⁵³ Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia*, 7; Hofstra, “The Extension of His Majesties Dominions,” 1281.

Traveling well-worn Indian paths, immigrants were willing to trek into the frontier to find inexpensive arable land creating dispersed and independent farmsteads where timber was plentiful.¹⁵⁴ Despite finding old Indian clearings or fields near streams or bodies of fresh water, immigrants still faced a daunting task in building barns and houses, and clearing large tracts of land for crops. A Scots-Irish or German family would work together to first clear and plow fields since crops would take months to provide the family with food. Next the family might build a barn for food

products and animals.

Finally a family would use

the wood cut down in

clearing fields to begin

constructing a small,

approximately square,

single-room dwelling

between 16 to 20 feet on one side.¹⁵⁵ Relatively isolated from other cultural

groups, though interacting with other ethnic groups, these families clung to their

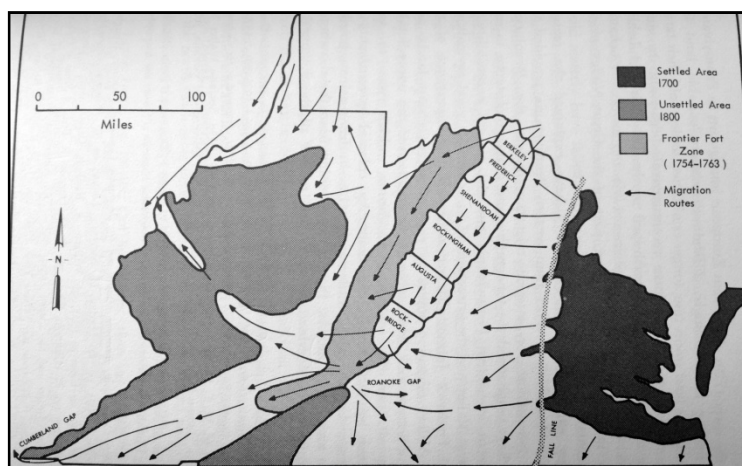
familiar, traditional culture, dressing, cooking, and believing in the same ways

they had in the Old World.

1820s Farm: After establishing themselves on the frontier, families would

eventually expand upon their holdings and buildings. To illustrate this middle

Figure 19: Migration Routes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia



¹⁵⁴ Miller, "Searching for a New World," 13.

¹⁵⁵ Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia*, 38; Ann E. McCleary, "Ethnic Influences on the Vernacular Architecture in the Shenandoah Valley," 253.

phase of settlement, the Museum has relocated a 1820s German-American farmhouse from Timberville, Virginia to the Museum grounds. This particular farm shows the life of a German immigrant on the frontier after a few decades. The house itself exemplifies traditional German architecture meeting and blending with English building styles. An original *flurküchenhaus* has been expanded by 1820 to include a central passageway and parlor, both traditionally English housing elements. German ethnic tradition mixed with the traditions of other cultures. Acculturation and cultural blending occurred most strongly during this time period. This German family is still speaking German, cooking primarily traditional German dishes, and living in a German-style house but gradual influences from other cultures were beginning to make an appearance into all of these areas and more.

1850s Farm: By the 1850s, distinctly ethnic last names would still have distinguished people by their ethnic origins, but even then, people were beginning to intermarry with other ethnic groups. Different cultural elements came together and blended as illustrated by the 1850s farmhouse transported to the Museum from Botetourt County, Virginia. Representing a middle-class family, this house demonstrates a truly 'American' family participating whole-heartedly in the quickly growing commercial grain industry of the Shenandoah Valley. The several outbuildings (such as the traditional German barn, tobacco barn, springhouse, meat house, and washhouse) show a well-established and thriving family. Originally built in the 1830s by people of German descent as a two-story

log structure with an end chimney, the house was expanded in the 1840s to include a kitchen with a storage room above and cellar below, larger front and back porches, and a renovated chimney.¹⁵⁶ No longer is the family clearly German or English or Scots-Irish but rather a melding of all these ethnic traditions. The German barn, Anglo-Irish floor plan, English language, African-influenced cuisine, and new religious denominations (such as Methodism and Baptist revivalists) signified a shift towards the formation of a unique American culture.

Household:

Upon reaching the American frontier in the 1740s, the goal of many households was pure survival. Isolation defined the first years for a family on the frontier since they settled miles from other European groups, encountering thickly wooded stretches of land connected by Indian trails far from market towns. Settlers established dispersed communities of enclosed or self-contained farms clustered fanlike around drainages or tributaries. For the Irish in particular, immigrants settled together in clusters on the fringes of more settled areas, butting up against Indian settlements and the homesteads of traders. Since many structures lay ¼ to ½ mile apart on stream terraces or rudimentary roads, settlers could rarely get together as a community, relying most heavily on family members for labor and social interaction. This typical household of about six people formed part of a nuclear family unit. They were often crammed into tight quarters that became the primary center for production and consumption. Everyday life revolved around survival and farming. People on the frontier, therefore, did not have much in the way of material goods, instead making what they needed like their own sheets and

¹⁵⁶ Brown, *Museum of American Frontier Culture Guidebook*, 76-88.

clothing. All family members were involved in farming, cooking, and constructing buildings. Husband and wife, for instance, worked together to construct their homes out of notched logs from the trees they felled to clear the land. Limited access to tools and other labor sources meant that houses and furnishings were fairly rudimentary, only extending as far as skill and tools would allow.¹⁵⁷

By the 1820s, frontier families still lived in open-country neighborhoods of dispersed small farms. A market revolution in transportation and communication, however, meant more people flocked to the frontier and interacted with one another than they had before. Small hamlets and villages, distinguished by non-farming functions such as stores, artisan shops, or a mill to support a more commercial agricultural system, appeared on the landscape. Even with more neighbors and better roads, the focus of most households still lay with making a successful farm. Men, women, and children worked hard to participate in the growing markets, though tasks and responsibilities were increasingly split along gender lines. On the southern frontier, in particular, farmers connected by roads further signified their growing wealth and prominence by hiring slaves during labor-intensive seasons. Working a 100-to-200-acre farm, families struggled during harvest and butchering seasons to keep up with all the work. Hiring slaves for a day, year, or month could aid even the middling farmer with the work load. Between 1790 and 1860, black populations across the frontier expanded rapidly. In Augusta County alone, black populations increased by 276 percent, compared to the 133

¹⁵⁷ Griffin, *The People with No Name*, 100, 107, 108-109; Hofstra, "The Extension of His Majesties Dominions," 1285; Jack Larkin, *The Reshaping of Everyday Life, 1790-1840* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), 10-12.

percent increase of white populations.¹⁵⁸ The 1820s signified growing prosperity for frontier families as transportation and communication networks improved.

With time and hard work, however, these families could now afford to put more effort into their homes. The rough log cabins built upon arrival were only temporary structures either torn down or expanded upon as farm families established themselves. One-room log cabins were gradually replaced by a more formal Georgian arrangement with two rooms separated by a central passageway. Scots-Irish, English, and German immigrants departed from their traditional architectural styles by adding on elements or reshaping their houses, signifying the beginnings of a cultural blending. For German immigrants represented on the 1820s Farm, the addition of a central hall and parlor space indicated the adoption of some Anglo traditions. These immigrants, however, were not fully ready to depart from their traditional culture. The German family, for instance, may have felt pressured to adopt Anglo ideas, but they clung to tradition through bright decorative painting, elaborate woodgraining, and intricate mantel carvings. Additionally, despite the cheapness and wide availability of timber in America, many German families kept with the tradition of raised hearths to reduce bending and allow cooks greater control over the heat source. Traditional cooking technology coincided with the continuation of traditional ethnic meals and language as well. Interacting with other ethnic groups was

¹⁵⁸ Robert D. Mitchell, "The Settlement Fabric of the Shenandoah Valley, 1790-1860: Pattern, Process, and Structure," in *After the Backcountry: Rural Life in the Great Valley of Virginia, 1800-1900*, ed. Kenneth E. Koons and Warren R. Hofstra (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000), 34; J. Susanne Simmons and Nancy T. Sorrells, "Slave Hire and the Development of Slavery in Augusta County, Virginia," in *After the Backcountry: Rural Life in the Great Valley of Virginia, 1800-1900*, ed. Kenneth E. Koons and Warren R. Hofstra (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000), 169.

by no means easy or simple. The adoption of other cultural elements, such as the parlor and English language, came slowly.¹⁵⁹

Ethnic traditions gradually faded by the 1850s, as witnessed in changing cooking technology, architecture, and household arrangements. Open hearths and cast iron stoves replaced raised German hearths and shallow Scots-Irish peat hearths. The I-house arrangement (meaning two large rooms separated by a central hall) largely replaced the German *flurküchenhaus*, the Irish one-room multi-purpose house, and the English hall-parlor plan in the Shenandoah Valley. German viticulture, Scots-Irish linen industry, and English wool and cheese too were replaced on the American frontier by commercial grain agriculture that shaped and changed household dynamics. Women and men increasingly divided household duties along gender lines creating 'separate spheres' of work, impacted even more by the increased inclusion of hired slave labor. At first men and women's tasks on farms had intertwined and were almost totally interdependent, but space, time, tools, and authority gradually separated the farmyard, garden, house, kitchen and hearth as bound to the woman's realm while men's work circled outward from there. Men and boys worked publicly on the farm, growing crops and raising animals, then taking goods to market towns. Women, on the other hand, focused work inside and close to the home by cooking, caring for young children, sewing, cleaning, and gardening. Hired slaves worked alongside farm families, providing extra hands at particularly busy times of the year when crops were harvested, grain threshed, corn shucked, wood cut, fields plowed, or animals butchered. Success in farming meant families earned enough

¹⁵⁹ Ann E. McCleary, "Forging a Regional Identity: Development of Rural Vernacular Architecture in the Central Shenandoah Valley, 1790-1850," in *After the Backcountry: Rural Life in the Great Valley of Virginia, 1800-1900*, ed. Kenneth E. Koons and Warren R. Hofstra (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000), 94-100; Weaver, "The Pennsylvania German House," 256.

money to buy commercial, mass-produced goods that reached farther into the American frontier due to improved roads, canals, and railroads. Production and consumption still occurred in the family household as it had in the 1740s, but in drastically different ways due to changes in technology.¹⁶⁰

Farming:

In an effort to create a buffer between more coastal settlements and unpredictable French and Indian groups to the west, colonial governments encouraged immigrants to settle the frontier by issuing unprecedented large grants of land through the headright system (a system where officials granted about 50 acres for each potential settler). Thousands of acres at low prices attracted primarily German and Scots-Irish immigrants seeking land and religious freedom. For many immigrants the frontiers of Pennsylvania and Virginia offered this haven where they created dispersed settlements and a diversified economy and society based on 100-200 acre farms. Early immigrants, coming to the backcountry first focused on getting crops planted, adopting Indian staple foods and cultivation practices that involved growing corn, beans, and squash using hoe-hill cultivation methods. These early people learned how to hunt, gather, and live off the land, often even adopting Indian styles of dress by wearing deer skin and fur. Still, it could take years for a settler to clear land, plant crops, and build shelter. One Ulster immigrant, for instance, settled a plot of land, erected a cabin and with an axe could clear no more than one acre of trees his first year, managing to clear 12 acres of plough land and 6-7 for meadows in about 13 years. By the time the second generation of immigrant

¹⁶⁰ McCleary, "Forging a Regional Identity," 98; Simmons and Sorrells, "Slave Hire and the Development of Slavery," 174; Larkin, *The Reshaping of Everyday Life*, 17; McCleary, "Ethnic Influences on Vernacular Architecture," 269

children occupied the land, these peoples could work with and understand the rhythms of their new land.¹⁶¹

Once land was fully cleared, settlers began cultivating the traditional crops they knew back in the Old World including wheat, rye, barley, flax, hemp, buckwheat, spelt, oats, and corn while also raising cattle, horses, sheep, and pigs. These more traditional, Old World crops were eventually combined with native crops (Indian corn, squash, beans, tobacco, and cotton) and other ethnic crops by the early nineteenth century to establish a commercial grain agriculture system. Using oxen or horses with plows, farmers prepared fields for corn, wheat, rye, oats, and sometimes cotton to sell to distant market towns that were becoming increasingly more accessible by the 1820s due to improvements in transportation. Of these crops, wheat became the major trading and market crop, despite the challenges presented by its vulnerability to climate, soil, and pests. Acculturation occurred for many Old World peoples through these changes in farming. The pattern of individual separate farmsteads differed vastly from the traditional settlements formed around nucleated groupings of structures and communal land holdings of the Old World, requiring farmers to rethink how agriculture could be done and redefining the meaning of community.¹⁶²

South of the Mason-Dixon Line (essentially the border between Maryland and Pennsylvania), agricultural production relied on hired slave labor while northern farmers

¹⁶¹ Hofstra, ““The Extension of His Majesties Dominions,”” 1282-1283; Mitchell, “The Colonial Origins of Anglo-America,” 106, 118; Griffin, *The People with No Name*, 108.

¹⁶² Griffin, *The People with No Name*, 108; Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia*, 38; Larkin, *The Reshaping of Everyday Life*, 15; Kenneth W. Keller, “The Wheat Trade on the Upper Potomac, 1800-1900,” in *After the Backcountry: Rural Life in the Great Valley of Virginia, 1800-1900*, ed. Kenneth E. Koons and Warren R. Hofstra (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000), 21; Donald L. Linebaugh, “Folk Art, Architecture, and Artifact: Toward a Material Understanding of the German Culture in the Upper Valley of Virginia,” in *The Southern Backcountry: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Frontier Communities*, edited by David Collin Crass, et al. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998), 205.

depended on family members and hired laborers to help with harvesting. Changes in the slave system due to the transportation and industrial revolutions caused the paternalist system to loosen, resulting in the hiring out of slaves to manufacturing, mining, mercantile activities, and smaller scale farms. Slaveholders, especially on or near the frontier, turned to hiring out their slaves for cash income during slack times using private contracts. Reverend Francis McFarland, a Presbyterian minister in Augusta County, Virginia, described the process of hiring a slave for a year in his diary, first noting that the farmer would enter negotiations with a particular slave's owner. After the two men agreed upon a term of service and payment, both men signed a bond, or official contract. Following that year's worth of work, the farmer paid the slave-owner the agreed-upon amount, deducting any amount for sick time lost by the slave. Farmers could easily enter into such contracts for a day or several months depending on their particular need, typically housing the slaves in any extra storage room available (such as in the 1850s house where slaves could have lived in the storage loft above the kitchen).¹⁶³

Immigrant diet vastly changed once farmers began successfully cultivating crops. For German and Scots-Irish immigrants in particular, meat consumption became more frequent. Cuisine shifted quickly as immigrants encountered new foods, plants, and cooking techniques. West African peoples introduced okra, black-eyed peas, and yams along with the technique of frying foods. American Southern cuisine today is known for its fried chicken and fried steaks. Indian corn similarly shaped American cuisine through such dishes as corn bread, corn meal, popped corn, creamed corn, and corn on the cob.

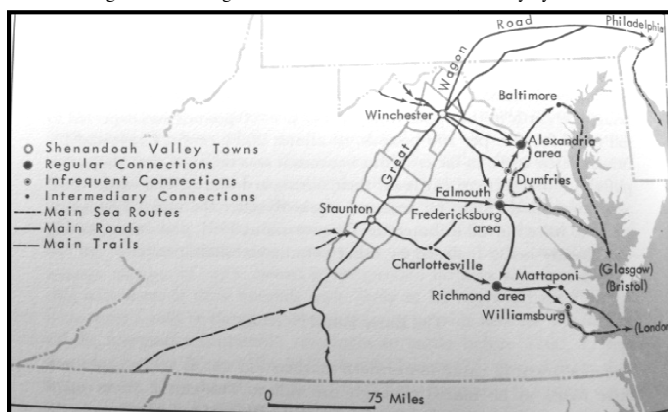
¹⁶³ William A. Link, *Roots of Secession: Slavery and Politics in Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 36-38; Simmons and Sorrells, "Slave Hire and the Development of Slavery," 172.

German, Scots-Irish, and English peoples brought distinctive ethnic dishes and techniques that shaped cooking and eating in America as well.¹⁶⁴

Community:

On the frontier, immigrants settled far from other people, markets, or towns. Their closest neighbors, who usually could be close relatives or neighbors from the Old World, could be over a ½ mile away downstream, far enough away that interactions would be sporadic and infrequent. As a result, open-country neighborhoods were only very loosely defined and composed of various ethnic groups (typically German, Scots-Irish, and Native tribes) who interacted primarily to trade by barter. Trade, especially Indian trade, opened up an

Figure 20: Trading Connections of the Shenandoah Valley by 1760



otherwise very isolated world, allowing inhabitants to pursue economic competence. Being so far from towns or colonial government establishments, these loose communities had to settle their own disputes or otherwise be ruled by violence and drunkenness. Scots-Irish immigrants, in particular, attempted to create social order through the rules and guidelines set down by the Presbyterian Church. Regardless, having no official government structure meant settlers were on their own to face disputes with other settlers and Indians.¹⁶⁵

As more and more settlers claimed their own farms, colonial governments carved the frontier into counties to more directly represent the authority of the royal governor

¹⁶⁴ Miller, "Searching for a New World," 13.

¹⁶⁵ Griffin, *The People with No Name*, 109-110; Hofstra, Introduction, xx.

(and, by extension, the king's interests) and deal with property ownership and crime. Within each of the counties, villages and towns developed around county seats where farmers could travel to exchange goods or grind their grain at the local mill.¹⁶⁶ Of these towns, Winchester, Virginia exemplifies one of the largest and oldest on the frontier with a population of 2,100 by 1800. A town like Winchester, a principal urban center, supported a merchant community of perhaps 50-to-60 storekeepers and wholesalers, "who maintained extensive trading connections with Philadelphia, Alexandria, and Baltimore."¹⁶⁷ Through these more urban centers, farmers were connected to a wider network of goods.

As grain came to dominate frontier farming, producers exchanged goods with distant markets through a web of farms, mills, storage warehouses, and transportation routes (primarily rivers in the 1820s) that connected these rural areas to coastal cities. Community interaction centered around grain production, fostered the growth of frontier newspapers which advertised prices for wheat and other agricultural goods, connecting rural farmers together in a broader community market in yet another way. The centrality of grain to the local economy caused frontier farmers to eventually complain about the expense and inconvenience of shipping by river or over poorly maintained roads. Farmers petitioned for better infrastructure leading to the opening of turnpikes, canals, and eventually railroads after 1830. During the 1820s, then, Americans built a national system of transportation on roads and rivers. This increased the speed by which people could travel and move goods and information, which even impacted the countryside where networks of commerce began to appear. With improved transportation, frontier

¹⁶⁶ Hofstra, "The Extension of His Majesties Dominion," 1285-1286.

¹⁶⁷ Mitchell, "The Settlement Fabric of the Shenandoah Valley," 38.

mill villages appeared to create more locations for farmers to have their grain ground to sell. Communities blossomed around these mill centers, creating commercial towns where farmers could buy and sell goods. In these communities, rural farmers could also gather and socialize around seasonal or agricultural events/activities such as husking corn or a barn raising. Frontier families were no longer as isolated as their grandparents had been 100 years before. As villages grew, so did the number of institutions within them, including taverns, churches, court houses, post offices, and rural stores.¹⁶⁸

Religion:

Settlers coming to America's backcountry practiced dissenting and sectarian faiths that stressed a common humanity. Scots-Irish immigrants in particular relied on the Presbyterian Church to bring order to these new communities, assembling congregations to create a new presbytery in America. However, on the frontier, dispersed settlement and ethnically diverse neighborhoods meant immigrants had to form churches that combined various religious doctrines. For the majority of open-country neighborhoods, traveling ministers combined a variety of theologies and traditions together in sporadic and infrequent services. Otherwise, immigrants were largely responsible for perpetuating their own faith beliefs through private devotion. Where Presbyterians could stress their faith, for instance, "the Confession, presbyteries, and sessions added some certainty and order to the violence, poverty, and chaos gripping migrant enclaves," modeling a form of discipline.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Keller, "The Wheat Trade in the Upper Potomac," 22-24; Larkin, *The Reshaping of Everyday Life*, xiv, 8, 258-268, 281-282.

¹⁶⁹ Hofstra, "The Extension of His Majesties Dominion," 1281; Griffin, *The People with No Name*, 115, 124.

As settlers lived on the frontier longer and more people shared beliefs and traditions, revivalism swept through the new American states. The Second Great Awakening rocked traditional religion in America from the 1790s through the 1830s. In this movement, camp meetings led extraordinary numbers of people to convert due to the efforts of emotionally-driven and enthusiastic preaching styles. Evangelical Methodism and Baptist traditions grew out of these movements. These traditions favored the common man over elites, and emphasized individual piety over formal university training. Individuals could now change their situation for the better and exercise free will in choosing to be saved, a marked difference from traditional Calvinist beliefs that emphasized the deep depravity of humanity.¹⁷⁰ These revivalist movements split traditional Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, and Presbyterian churches over theological and social issues. Slavery, in particular, split many congregations. In addition, immigrants on the frontier began offering bilingual church services as a symbol of increasing acculturation though they did try to cling to tradition by maintaining Old World holidays and celebrations, such as Christmas. The church, in many ways, offered a link to traditional religion and culture.¹⁷¹

By the 1850s most church services were completely in English and wholly ‘American,’ far different from the Old World traditions immigrants had left behind. For most people, Sabbath Sunday was the most important social encounter of their week, making church not only a spiritual experience but also a social one. For people on the frontier who were relatively isolated from neighbors, Sunday church offered an opportunity to interact with people in the community. Americans celebrated many

¹⁷⁰ “Religious Transformation and the Second Great Awakening,” U.S. History: Pre-Columbian to the New Millenium *U.S.History.org* (2014) <http://www.ushistory.org/us/22c.asp> (accessed March, 12, 2015).

¹⁷¹ Linebaugh, “Folk Art, Architecture, and Artifact,” 202-203.

holidays revolving around religious observances, such as saints' days, feasts, and fasts.

Lutheran Germans introduced elaborate celebrations for the Christmas holiday that some groups adopted, with the exception of Presbyterians, Baptists, and Congregationalists.¹⁷²

On the frontier, people shared their beliefs and traditions that contributed towards the gradual creation of an American culture.

Skills/Crafts:

- woodworking = early settlers alone on the frontier had to fell and split logs to make their buildings and structural features; many families on the frontier needed to make their own furniture, tools, and utensils so they became proficient at carving
- linen production = families on the frontier cultivated and processed their own flax into linen
- Fraktur art = brought from Germany and used to record major life events such as births and marriages

Tying Everything Together:

Understanding how these people lived, the households they set up, the way they interacted with their communities, their spiritual and religious practices, and what skills and crafts they devoted their time to brings early American peoples to life. The American farms have an important story to tell which carries through the rest of the museum. In interpreting this exhibit, then, consider how the information presented above relates to other features and cultural traditions you might find at other exhibit sites.

¹⁷² Larkin, *The Reshaping of Everyday Life*, 271-275.

Drawing similarities between sites can aid your own understanding of this information, but it can also help visitors find connecting points between the various sites. The three major themes can also help you bring all the exhibits together and create a common thread for the visitor throughout the museum. For the American farms, these connections may initially seem difficult but given the content information provided, bridges can be built.

Immigration: In the 1740s when immigrants made their way to the frontier, colonial America defined that frontier as a buffer zone between established coastal settlements and the ‘wilds’ beyond the Appalachian Mountains filled with potentially dangerous French and Indian groups. Between 1790 and 1840, population in America expanded rapidly with people moving steadily westward at an unprecedented speed, vigorously and sometimes violently expanding territorial limits of society. Prior to 1840, the frontier expanded to include western sections of New York and Pennsylvania and the new states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, and Arkansas. Settlers in these new territories followed similar patterns of settlement, farming, community, and religion as they had on that first frontier of the 1740s. After 1840 Americans ventured past the Mississippi into Texas, Oregon, and California.¹⁷³ Immigration to frontiers and new places did not stop after 1850 however, and it will be your job as an interpreter to make that clear. Different groups of people have migrated to America over time, shaping and reshaping American culture. This Museum seeks to explain that initial formation and influence, but the story does continue on after 1850.

¹⁷³ Larkin, *The Reshaping of Everyday Life*, xiv, 2; Eric Bryan and David Puckett, “1850s American Farm,” Frontier Culture Museum, Exterior Exhibit Wayside.

Even today, immigrants continually stream into America, contributing new cultural ideas, foods, dress, and beliefs.

Daily Life: The content explained above in the areas of household, farming, community, religion, and skills/crafts provides a glimpse into how the various immigrants would have lived their lives on the American frontier. When talking about daily life, try to bring up aspects of life that would seem familiar to your visitor first before delving into what makes these people unique and different. For concepts that differ largely from our world today, tie information back to some universal concept first. When trying to explain the immigration process over time and how these people settled on frontiers from 1740 to 1850, be careful to not make acculturation or cultural blending seem easy or painless. Use relatable concepts, such as change and unfamiliarity to connect visitors with the immigration experience.

Acculturation: As the content above explains, the American frontier welcomed people of various ethnicities who then interacted and shared with each other. As they connected, married, worshiped, and ate, cultures were blended. West African porches graced the front of American homes, German and Native American cuisine came to American tables, the English language entered American homes, the Scots-Irish love of whiskey permeated American communities, and the German celebration of Christmas provided Americans with a holiday, among so many others. From the 1740s to the 1850s West Africans, English, Scots-Irish, German, and Native American peoples came together and shared their culture. This cultural blending, however, was by no means easy or quick. It took almost 100 years for the English, Scots-Irish, German, and West African to share their cultural practices with one another and then adopt some of the other

traditions. In the meantime, these peoples were dealing with a foreign land, foreign peoples, and in many cases a foreign lifestyle that made acculturation occur slowly. The blending of cultures continues even to today as more and more cultural groups immigrate to America – the process is not done or finished. Communicate to visitors the difficult, painful, and long process of acculturation, bringing out the recognizable features of this acculturation in today's current culture.

Connecting all the sites together is important in creating a holistic experience for the visitor. The visitor needs to see that this is one large museum instead of a compilation of eight separate museums. In the same way that you draw out the cultural practices and traditions that the Old World peoples would bring to America, also point out how the American sites showcase acculturation and have similar features amongst themselves, or point to characteristics adopted by frontier peoples in America. The 1820s Farm, for instance, demonstrates the blending of traditional German (with the *flurküchenhaus* floor plan) and English architecture (with the formal parlor). The parlor, or fancier receiving room for guests, could be found in many American homes such as the 1850s house. Other architectural parallels can be seen with the 1740s Settlement Site and the Scots-Irish Farm. Both have the one-room multipurpose spaces where family lived, worked, ate, and relaxed. Besides architecture, point out to visitors how food, language, and religion all meshed together on the American frontier. Drawing parallels between the various sites, especially at the American farms, helps bring the entire Museum together and create one story for the visitor.

Unstaffed Sites:*1840s American Schoolhouse*

Originally built in 1840 in East Point, Virginia, the Shuler Schoolhouse represents a community school run by local parents who wanted to provide at least some rudimentary education for their children. Since public education did not exist on a wider scale, especially on the frontier, until the 1870s, these schools were run and supplied by parents who took on the task of hiring a schoolmaster. The schoolmaster was usually a young man, rarely with any formal education, who was required to have good moral standing and be mentally and physically strong enough to discipline students. Participating parents additionally donated land for the schoolhouse, helped supply materials for its construction and continual use (such as benches, slates, and a wood stove), and paid tuition for their children to attend. Typically the school master taught spelling, reading, writing, and ciphering (or arithmetic) through rote memorization, oral repetition, and writing exercises. At the minimum, children needed just enough education to know how to handle legal documents and understand the world outside the community. Since many children also helped their families on farms or with businesses, school attendance was often sporadic but school was held year round from 9-5 with a 1-2 hour break in the middle of the day for the children to go home and have lunch. During school hours, the schoolmaster had discretion over how school was run and how discipline would be meted out. In the early nineteenth century, corporal punishment using hickory sticks and switches to

strike scholars across knuckles, hands, legs, and backsides was commonly employed for insolence and unruly behavior.¹⁷⁴

Mount Tabor Log Church

Currently the Museum is working on reconstructing a historic African American church that originally stood near the village of New Hope in Augusta County. This small log structure, according to congregational oral tradition, was the first house of worship for the New Hope African American community, providing the Museum with a site to further explain African American culture and history in a more rural setting. Local historians and church leaders disagree on the exact date for the church and building, but place its construction between 1840 and the 1870s. Since records for the church are few, little information exists about the historic congregation or building. Those historians who have ventured to detail its past claim a variety of stories including that the church served as a Confederate hospital in 1864; served as a church and school in 1885 according to an atlas; was built in the 1870s due to the aid of the Freedman's Bureau; was first called the Round Hill Providence Church with a congregation going back to 1841; stood on one acre of land deeded to five African American men (the trustees of the church) in 1869; and stood as a completed log structure for the use and benefit of the Methodist Episcopal Church by the time of the Civil War. Despite contentious claims about the church's past, the building can still tell the story of Methodism and African American religion prior to and after the Civil War.

¹⁷⁴ Andrew Richardson, "Educational Programs for 2014 Winter Update," (Frontier Culture Museum, 2014), 27.

Methodism prior to the Civil War, for instance, expressed a concern about salvation of enslaved African Americans, welcoming them into their services.

When these African Americans attempted to negotiate the place of slavery and the racial divide, however, these congregations split from African American members to form their own churches, instead allowing African Americans to worship separately under the supervision of a white minister or lay leader. These stories will add a new dimension to the broader museum story and more completely cover the immigrant story of West Africans.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵ Eric Bryan, "Mount Tabor Log Church and the Frontier Culture Museum," Frontier Culture Museum, n.d.; Eric Bryan, "The Mount Tabor Log Church," Frontier Culture Museum, August 2012.

Frequently Asked Questions

1740s Settlement Site...

1. Does the house leak when it rains?
2. Were these people poor?
3. How much land did settlers have?
4. How many people would live in this house?
5. Is this house like Little House on the Prairie?
6. Are the Indians up the hill “friendly?”
7. Does that fence keep animals out?
8. How long does it take to build _____ [a log cabin/barn]?
9. Where would they get tools?
10. Where is the well?

1820s Farm...

1. Is this a real house?
2. When did people start having glass windows?
3. What religion would this German family follow?
4. Were they farmers? What did they farm? What kind of animals would they have?
5. Where did these people come from?
6. Wouldn't these people have had more furniture in the 1820s?
7. How many people would live in this house? How many kids would they have?
8. This is a huge house; would these people have been rich?
9. How many acres would these people own?
10. Where would these people do commerce/trade? Where is the market town?

11. How close are the nearest neighbors?
12. Where's the outhouse or privy? Would they have one?

1850s Farm...

1. Where did this house come from?
2. What is the stone building at the front gate for? What about the wooden building next to the stone one? What is the white building in the side yard?
3. Did they have house cats back then?
4. How often do you catch your dress on fire?
5. Why are both porches slanted away from the house?
6. Why are all those cloth bags hanging near the fire?
7. What is the cylindrical tin thing [referring to the candle safe] hanging on the kitchen wall?
8. What is the wooden bench-like device [Draw Bench] on the front porch?
9. What is that odd iron device [kick toaster] beside the fire?
10. Wouldn't they have had stoves in the 1850s?

1840s Schoolhouse...

1. Would a man or a woman teach in this schoolhouse?
2. Did corporal punishment actually happen?
3. Is this a public school?
4. What subjects were taught?
5. Did they have grades?
6. What was the routine of a school day? Did they get lunch? Recess?

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APPENDIX B

Brief History of the FCM

By: Eric Bryan

The Frontier Culture Museum is the product of an effort that began in the mid-1970s during the planning of the US bicentennial celebration. The idea for the museum was first presented by Mr. Eric Montgomery, then Director of the Ulster-American Folk Park and a member of the Northern Ireland Bicentennial Liaison Committee. In the course of discussions with Bicentennial planners in the United States concerning the role of immigrants from the north of Ireland in settling America, Mr. Montgomery proposed the creation of a museum that would be similar to the Ulster-American Folk Park, but of a more multinational character. He envisioned a museum where Americans of all ages could come to learn about their Old World ancestors and their way of life, and how these ancestors contributed to the creation of the American way of life.

In 1976, Mr. Montgomery and a few of his colleagues from Northern Ireland met with a group of leaders in the American museum and preservation communities at the Smithsonian Institute to discuss his idea. It was well received, and all agreed that the project should proceed. Dr. Henry Glassie, then at the University of Pennsylvania, attended the meeting and was asked to prepare a formal proposal. This proposal, entitled, "A Museum of American Frontier Culture: A Proposal", was completed and published in 1978. In it, Glassie argued that the culture of the frontier was an important aspect of the American character and identity that had not received sufficient attention by American scholars. He envisioned a major outdoor museum where the culture of the frontier would be the central theme, and the problem of American identity would be resolved by direct comparisons of material culture.

Glassie proposed that the museum be comprised of four farms: one from the north of Ireland; one from Germany; one from England; and one from the Appalachian region of the United States. He stressed the importance of identifying and acquiring original structures and restoring them to the earliest pre-modern date feasible. He was opposed to speculative restoration of the buildings, preferring instead that they be restored and dated scientifically so the visitor would encounter them at a date that would make them comparable and accurate. Glassie proposed that the buildings be surrounded by farms and fields, and that each seem like a complete, self-sustaining farming operation that offered natural stages for demonstrations of rural life.

The location of the museum was also identified by Glassie as a key factor. He thought it would be, “historically inept,” for it to be located outside Appalachia because, “it was not until the land rose and swelled that westward moving people developed the distinct frontier culture. In this difficult environment people were forced out of accustomed habits into a willingness to engage in cultural trading”. In Glassie’s view, the proposed museum could be located anywhere from western Pennsylvania south to northern Alabama; however, he identified the southwestern counties of Pennsylvania and the Valley of Virginia as the two most promising locations.

The effort to make this vision of a Museum of American Frontier Culture a reality became focused and organized in the late 1970s with the creation of a Joint International Committee for a Museum of American Frontier Culture, with representatives from the United States, Great Britain and Germany. The effort was also greatly advanced when officials of the state of Virginia took positive action to have the museum located there. In 1980, the Virginia General Assembly authorized the Jamestown/Yorktown Foundation to

work with the Joint International Committee to plan the museum, and the General Assembly offered a 78 acre parcel of state land on the outskirts of Staunton, Virginia, at the intersection of Interstates 64 and 81, as a possible location for the museum.

In mid-November 1980, a three day, "Planning Conference for a Museum of American Frontier Culture", funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities was held at Staunton. The conference was attended by 68 official participants and joined by some 35 guests and observers. Over the course of the three days the proposal for the museum was discussed and the site offered by the state of Virginia was examined. As a result of the deliberations, guidelines and specific directions were established for an on-going development plan for the project; the site offered by the state of Virginia was tentatively determined to be a viable one; an executive committee was created; funding sources for the project were identified; the creation of a private, non-profit foundation was recommended; and the need for land use and economic impact studies was identified and positive action taken to initiate them.

Over the course of the next few years the key recommendations at the 1980 planning conference were successfully acted upon. In May of 1981 the Jamestown/Yorktown Foundation selected the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University to perform land use and economic impacts studies for the proposed museum. Completed the following year, the studies concluded that the project and the Staunton site were economically viable, and presented a number of possible site plans for the museum. The cost for the completion of the project was estimated to be \$2,683,000.

During this period the Joint International Committee was at work as well. Appropriate traditional buildings were identified in Germany, Northern Ireland and

England, and plans for dismantling and restoration were prepared. Financing for this work was arranged through private banks.

An important milestone in the creation of the museum was reached in 1982 with the chartering of the American Frontier Foundation, Inc. Established as a nonprofit corporation under Virginia law, the Foundation became the repository of all gifts of money and materials to the proposed museum. By 1984, the Foundation had received \$1,000,000 dollars toward completion of the project, with over half of that figure being contributed by the local governments of the cities of Staunton and Waynesboro, and Augusta County.

The last half of the 1980s saw what had begun as an idea a decade before become a reality. In early 1985, Mr. Walter Heyer was named Executive Director of the Museum of American Frontier Culture. That same year, the Governor of Virginia, Charles Robb, signed the agreement that transferred the 78 acre parcel at Staunton to the Jamestown/Yorktown Foundation to be the site of the museum, and dedicated it in a ceremony attended by 300 people. In its 1986 legislative session, the Virginia General Assembly passed an act creating the Frontier Culture Museum of Virginia as an independent state agency with an annual appropriation. September of that year also saw the first major event on the museum grounds, the first annual Frontier Festival, which featured demonstrations of traditional crafts, and old-style food booths: an estimated 4000 people attended.

The work of locating and acquiring structures for the museum continued during this period. In 1984 and 1985, the Ulster-American Folk Park numbered and dismantled a stone farmstead in County Tyrone and shipped it to Virginia. In 1987, the Governor of

Virginia, Gerald Baliles laid the corner stone of the Ulster farmhouse in a ceremony at the museum site. The museum also acquired an American farmstead, located in Botetourt County, Virginia, and began the dismantling and restoration of its structures. Progress on the English and German buildings was proving slower than anticipated. The state of Virginia provided funding for the design and construction of a modern visitor center/exhibit/administration complex which was completed during 1987 and 1988.

The Frontier Culture Museum officially opened its gates in September 1988. At that point only the visitor center complex and the Ulster and American farms were in place. Over the course of the museum's first several years the buildings from Germany and England arrived and were reconstructed on their designated sites. In 1992 the museum acquired, relocated, and restored a unique octagonal barn which was located outside of its historic area and used as meeting and special events space. In 1995, an Ulster forge was donated to the museum by the Ulster-American Folk Park and reconstructed on its site by museum staff. In 2001, a second German, timber frame barn from the village of Hayna was added at the German exhibit to provide visitors with a better sense of life in a small Rhineland village of the early modern period.

Since it opened to the public in 1988, the Frontier Culture Museum has been committed to providing its visitors with living history interpretation. The museum employs costumed interpreters who staff each of its historic farm sites and who perform the daily tasks of pre-industrial rural life. The Museum attempts to furnish its historic buildings with reproductions based on historic forms. The Museum's commitment to presenting accurate and honest interpretations of the past have also led it to develop

historic agriculture and livestock programs. This interpretation is based on research into the life ways of the cultures represented, and research efforts are on-going.

Soon after it opened to the public, the leadership of the Frontier Culture Museum began to develop long-range plans for the future. Initially, the museum's land holdings were limited to the 78 acre parcel granted to it in 1985; however, over the ensuing years the state of Virginia transferred an additional 218 acres of surrounding land to it. A portion of this land is designated for the expansion of the Museum's outdoor exhibits. Much of this expansion is intended to enhance the Museum's interpretation of American frontier culture in the 18th and 19th century. The culmination of this planning was the Museum's Board of Trustee's adoption of a long-range Master Plan entitled, **Framework for the Future**.

This plan, adopted by the Museum Board of Trustees in 2002, calls for the expansion and reorganization of the Museum's original outdoor exhibits, the addition of several new ones, including an early American village, and the construction of a modern exhibit gallery. To implement the **Framework for the Future**, the Museum has been divided into two separate exhibit areas: the Old World and America. The Old World includes the original European farms and forge and the West African Farm, was completed in 2010 and represents African contributions to the creation of American frontier culture. The gallery, generally referred to as the Crossing Gallery, will be located between the Old World and the American exhibits and serve to link the two. Crossing Gallery exhibits and programs will focus on transatlantic immigration.

The creation of the American area of the Museum began with completion of the Bowman House relocation and restoration in 2006. It has since been renamed the 1820s

American Farm. The Museum's original American Farm was moved from its original location, where the West African Farm now stands, in late 2007. It was reopened to the public in the spring of 2008, and renamed the 1850s American Farm. At about that same time work began on the 1740s American Farm in 2008. This exhibit is offered as a project in experimental living history, and the programs offered there are designed to show students and the public how early settlers on the 18th century frontier established themselves in the backcountry. The addition of Early American School House is another component called for in **Framework for the Future** that has been completed. Donated to the Museum by the Rockingham County School Board in 2009, this project was completed a year later and is now used on a regular basis to instruct visitors about rural education before the Civil War.

As it begins the second quarter century of its life, a key characteristic of the Museum is that it always has new exhibits and programs underway. In the summer of 2012, an American Indian exhibit was started and has become a place where visitors explore the critical contributions the native cultures of eastern North America made and continue to make to American life and culture. The work of constructing this important exhibit is on-going, and is proving an interesting and rewarding experience for Museum staff and visitors alike. Reconstruction of an early African-American log church donated to the Museum by the trustees and congregation of the Mount Tabor United Methodist Church is also underway, with completion expected in late 2014. Detailed planning for a water-powered mill began in 2014 as well, which raises hopes that construction will begin on this exciting project within a year or two.

The question of when the Crossing Gallery and the Early American village – named Montgomery Springs in honor of Eric Montgomery – will get underway remains open at this point. Both of these projects are exciting and both will enhance the Museum’s ability to deliver quality programs to the public. Both also promise to challenge the fund-raising prowess of the Museum and its supporters in Richmond, the Commonwealth, and all around the United States. Be that as it may, the Museum’s Trustees, management, and its staff will continue to make it a cultural and historical experience that is second to none.

APPENDIX B

Migrate, Emigrate, and Immigrate

By Eric Bryan

This report was prepared in response to a question concerning the meaning and usage of three words: Migrate, Emigrate, and Immigrate. Its purpose is to clarify the meaning and usage of these words, and establish the contexts in which each can and should be used when interpreting issues on the Museum farm sites.¹⁷⁶

One way to explain the differences in meaning and usage between **migrate**, **emigrate**, and **immigrate** is to say that we have a root word, **migrate**, which is a verb which describes movement, and two verbs derived from it, **emigrate** and **immigrate**, to which prefixes have been added to describe specific types of movement.

Migrate is a verb that is used to describe the movement by people from one country or region who intended to settle in another, or it can mean, simply, “to pass from one place to another.”¹⁷⁷ Migrate, unlike **emigrate** and **immigrate**, is also sometimes used to describe the movement of animals, especially some birds and fishes that, “come and go regularly with the seasons.”¹⁷⁸

Emigrate and **immigrate** are used only to describe movements of people, and the difference between them is one of perspective.¹⁷⁹ The prefix, **e**, in the case of **emigrate** is added to indicate movement away, i.e. an **emigrant** is one who is **emigrating** or one who

¹⁷⁶ The term **immigration** is used here because the Museum is in America and the three ethnic groups under discussion came to America and settled.

¹⁷⁷ *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992), 1143; *Oxford English Dictionary* vol. 6 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), 432. It is only very rarely used in this sense to indicate tourist or casual travelers.

¹⁷⁸ *The American Heritage Dictionary*, Usage Note, 1143; *Oxford English Dictionary*, 432. This is regarded as a special, technical use of the word.

¹⁷⁹ *The American Heritage Dictionary*, Usage Note, 1143

is moving away from a place; and it is generally assumed that upon arriving at the intended destination they will remain there permanently.¹⁸⁰ The destination can be another country, another state, or another community just beyond the horizon; but, the **emigrant** *is* leaving.¹⁸¹ The prefix, **im**, in the case of **immigrate** is used to indicate movement into or toward.¹⁸² An **immigrant** is one who is coming to a country where he or she is not a native to take up residence. The **immigrant** *is entering*.¹⁸³

From the perspective of the Palatinate, the Germans who left there in 1708-1709 were **emigrating**. From the perspective of North America, they were **immigrating**. And, from the perspective of history, that movement of people from the Palatinate to North America viewed in its entirety is a **migration**. The same is true of the Scotch-Irish in their movements from Scotland to Ulster, and from Ulster to North America, and of the English and their movements. It is also true of the Virginians who moved west. In Virginia they were **emigrants**, in Tennessee or Kentucky they were **immigrants**, and taken as a mass their movement out of Virginia toward the west was a **migration**.

The terminology of the movement of people is somewhat technical, and it can quickly become complicated and confusing. When an American, or perhaps anyone of any nationality, moves from one residence to another without crossing a national boundary he or she probably does not consider himself or herself an **emigrant** or **immigrant**. The person is just moving, and the English language is sufficiently rich with simple words which convey that meaning without using technical language that might be

¹⁸⁰ *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield: Merriam-Webster Inc., 1991), 391.

¹⁸¹ *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 602; *Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. 3, 121; *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, C.T. Onions, et al., eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 309; Hawkins, Joyce M. ed. *The Oxford Reference Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 271.

¹⁸² *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, 607.

¹⁸³ *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 903; *Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. 5, 65; Onions, 463; Hawkins, 457.

unfamiliar and confusing to many people. But it is important that when the technical language is used, it is used correctly.

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