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Gathering Places, Cultivating Spaces: An Archaeology of a Chesapeake Neighborhood through Enslavement and Emancipation, 1775–1905

Jon Jason Boroughs
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**Gathering Places, Cultivating Spaces: An Archaeology of a Chesapeake
Neighborhood through Enslavement and Emancipation, 1775-1905**

Jon Jason Boroughs

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**Master of Arts, College of William and Mary, 2004
Bachelor of Arts, University of Virginia, 1997**

**A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the College of William and Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

Department of Anthropology


**The College of William and Mary
January, 2013**

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APPROVAL PAGE

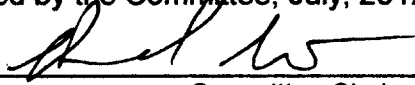
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Doctor of Philosophy



Jon Jason Burroughs

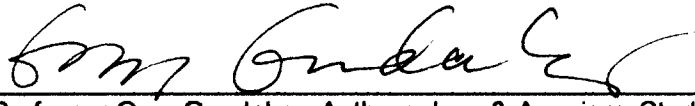
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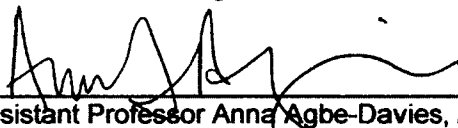
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ABSTRACT PAGE

This study is a community-level analysis of an African American plantation neighborhood grounded in archaeological excavations at the Quarterpath Site (44WB0124), an antebellum quartering complex and post-Emancipation tenant residence occupied circa 1840s-1905 in lower James City County, Virginia. It asserts that the Quarterpath domestic quarter was a gathering place, a locus of social interaction in a vibrant and long established Chesapeake plantation neighborhood complex.

By the antebellum period, as marriage “abroad,” or off-plantation, became the most common form of long term social union within plantation communities, enslaved social and kin ties in the Chesapeake region were typically geographically dispersed, enjoining multiple domestic areas across dynamic rural plantation neighborhoods. Such neighborhoods came to comprise 1) Sets of interrelated places common across virtually all large Chesapeake plantations, and 2) Sets of social relationships that transcended plantation borders, becoming invested and embedded in local places over time.

This work examines the ways in which structures of community became embedded in a variety of familiar places across the Quarterpath neighborhood as enslaved persons appropriated plantation landscapes through habitual practices and meaningful bodily orientations. It expands the frame of reference beyond the core domestic homesites to embrace the other grounds and places where residents spent much of their time, places in which relationships were built with neighbors performing common tasks on familiar grounds. It offers new insights to archaeological analyses concerning African American domestic sites throughout the African Atlantic diaspora, envisioning home grounds as dynamic social configurations embedded within mosaics of local places that came to embody community, family, and roots. It is an archaeology of a community in transition but it is also an archaeology of landscapes. It adopts a methodologically innovative approach intended to address often overlooked interpretive contexts and horizons of meaning, exploring mechanisms of community development and associated processes of place-making in a pre- and post-Emancipation African American community.

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To Céline, the love of my life, my inspiration, and my joy
and for my parents, who have been my greatest teachers

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I conducted fieldwork at the Quarterpath Site while working as a project archaeologist for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation's Department of Archaeological Research in 2003-2004. I am indebted to the field and curatorial staff at Colonial Williamsburg, many of whom have since moved on to pursue new projects in other locales.

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Introduction

Il faut cultiver notre jardin. – Voltaire

October 29, 1862: Jamestown, Virginia. An expeditionary force of 500 mounted Confederate cavalymen descends, in battle formation, upon a local plantation with the intent of quelling a burgeoning insurrection and breaking up an impromptu gathering of around 100 enslaved persons. Two weeks previous, perhaps emboldened by the recent presence of the United States Army in lower James City County, factions within the group had burned the manor home along with several other buildings on Jamestown Island and captured and executed a group of plantation managers on a neighboring farm. The Richmond *Daily Dispatch* reported that the cavalry unit “left the vicinity of Richmond at day-dawn of Sunday, the 26th ultimo and proceeded, without important incident or interruption, to ‘Neck of Land’ near Williamsburg, where it was represented the camp of negroes existed . . . The object of the expedition was to break up this camp, and capture the negroes connected with it.” As the cavalry unit approached the main quartering complex along the creek that formed the sole geographic boundary between the plantations of Jamestown Island and Neck of Land, they found it deserted. Word of mouth was apparently faster than the swift moving cavalry, as news of the approaching military expedition had traveled from plantation to plantation across the peninsula, reaching the camp in advance, “Much to the disappointment of the troops, and the officer in command it was soon discovered that the negroes . . . hearing of the approach of Col. Ball's command, had broken up their encampment on the day previous, and retired to the rear of Fort Magruder, below Williamsburg.” With the city of Williamsburg and the

adjacent Fort Magruder both in the hands of United States troops, the commanding officer “deemed it prudent to retire without making an attack”, returning to Richmond empty handed. (*Daily Dispatch* November 3, 1862: University of Richmond, Richmond)

This brief historical episode presents a unique window into the intimate geographies of social relations that enjoined multiple domestic spaces across local plantation communities in the antebellum era. Extant historical documents indicate that at the outset of the Civil War around 60 persons occupied multiple quarters across the adjoined plantations of Neck of Land and Jamestown Island. The region had been in relative chaos since nearly 73,000 soldiers crossed swords at the Battle of Williamsburg a few months prior. In the ensuing turmoil, civilians of all sorts sought relative safety and companionship offered by familiar faces. According to an eyewitness, a free-black man that survived the encounter with the party of armed conspirators that initiated the cavalry advance, the quarter at Neck of Land had swelled with local refugees. He recognized many of the individuals as residents of the two plantations. Others, he noted, were from “the neighborhood” (Flournoy 1968 [1893]: Vol XI, 233-236). Perhaps among those counted from the neighborhood were residents of another local quarter – residents who maintained close relations from plantation grounds at Kingsmill, just over a mile to the east along the James River, people whose homesite I would have the privilege to excavate nearly a century and a half later.

My association with the Quarterpath Site (44WB0124/CWF 51AG) began in the spring of 2003. By the early years of the new millennium, attendance at historical sites

such as Colonial Williamsburg, and historical tourism in general for that matter, was in a relative declining trend. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation decided to liquidate several wooded properties outside of the Historic Area in order to finance recent construction projects and museum renovations. Colonial Williamsburg archaeologists had conducted a broad survey of the area in 1990 and identified several potential archaeological sites on the tracts intended for sale. In the interest of responsible historical and archaeological stewardship, the Foundation would not open the parcels for potential development until revisiting and investigating the cultural resources in question. As a project archaeologist in the employ of the Foundation's Department of Archaeological Research I was given the task of doing just that, of relocating and assessing the integrity and significance of the archaeological deposits identified a decade earlier.

After an additional survey followed by a more intensive archaeological investigation that blossomed into a full scale data recovery project completed with the help of students of two field schools in historical archaeology, conducted in conjunction with the College of William and Mary in the summer of 2004, it became apparent that the domestic homesite that we dubbed the Quarterpath Site because of its proximity to Quarterpath Road was a unique archaeological resource. Not in the sense that it was originally a quartering site. It was not at all surprising to discover a domestic quarter along *Quarterpath* Road, on a tract of land identified as a working plantation (albeit two different operations) on both eighteenth and nineteenth century maps and plats. What made the site unique archaeologically was its range of occupation, circa 1840s-1905. The Quarterpath Site began its life as an antebellum quartering complex. Two dwellings

housed enslaved workers adjacent to a compound of agricultural fields on the northern extremity of the recently consolidated Kingsmill plantation enterprise, on grounds that had formerly comprised three independent farms. Archaeological evidence suggests a continuous period of occupation from its inception until the incineration of one of the dwellings prompted site abandonment around 1905. After Emancipation the residents remained on the site as tenants and continued to work the same fields to which they had been previously bound by enslavement. The Quarterpath Site remains to date the only African American domestic site spanning Emancipation excavated by Colonial Williamsburg.

With a rich archaeological legacy at places such as Colonial Williamsburg, Jamestown Island, and Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, among others, and paralleling the growth and development of historical archaeology as a discipline alongside the budding field of cultural resource management, the Chesapeake Bay region is arguably one of the most archaeologically documented in America. It was the earliest nexus of British colonial efforts in the New World and it became a core area of experimentation and development in the Atlantic plantation complex. Yet with regards to Chesapeake plantations, despite an increasing body of data generated from research and compliance projects since the late 1960s, there is much we have yet to address. In a recent (2012) blog posting on the Society for Historical Archaeology's website, two Chesapeake archaeologists explain, "For all that archaeologists and historians have learned from studying plantations in southeastern Virginia, there is a remarkable amount we still do not know." "Much of this gap", the authors assert, "exists under the guise of things we *think* we know. . . . If we accept that plantations essentially operated as small towns, complete

with systems of roads, quarters, agricultural buildings, fields, docks, and manor houses, and often complemented with mills, manufacturing enterprises, and formal gardens, how do we explain why a region so densely populated with historical archaeologists and so inherently connected with the history of colonial America has made so little progress in understanding the majority of this landscape?” (Brown and Harpole 2012, my italics)

Brown and Harpole make a compelling point. As archaeologists, we have focused our attention primarily upon domestic homesites, with good reason, but for all that we have learned there is still a fundamental disengagement between many archaeological inquiries pertaining to domestic sites and the greater plantation settings of which they were a part. Much of the problem is epistemological, arising from the methodology attached to the cultural resource (section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act) compliance process, under which the vast majority of archaeological excavations are conducted (including excavation of the Quarterpath Site). The primary objectives of compliance archaeology are to determine: 1) if a cultural resource is eligible for National Register listing and 2) to collect and record in great detail as much information as possible from threatened cultural resources. Technical reports are generated with these goals in mind. Although we often use other venues such as academic conferences and occasional publications to synthesize our data, we often do not have the resources to “connect the dots” between related sites across time and space in compliance documents. This is not to say that compliance archaeology is somehow sub-par. On the contrary, most compliance projects are done to the highest standards of archaeological professionalism, however the stated goals of compliance driven projects often determine the analytical trajectories of technical reports.

Yet even in the context of archaeological projects conducted under the auspice of cultural resource management, perhaps it would be beneficial to adopt a more comprehensive view of plantations as complex mosaics of interconnected places, “small towns” that incorporated a variety of common elements – domestic areas, work spaces, supportive infrastructure, and the like. Perhaps we might begin to open new avenues of inquiry into the lives of those to whom we cast our interpretive gaze and add nuance to our archaeological works. When the fieldwork at the Quarterpath Site was completed and I settled down to analyze our field results and began thinking about enslaved household structures, basically trying to answer the question: Who actually lived on the Quarterpath Site? and When?, it became readily apparent that this seemingly, perhaps deceptively simple inquiry had a much more complex answer, one that could only be addressed by adopting a much broader frame of reference.

The Quarterpath Site was a domestic field quarter on one of the largest plantations in the region. Kingsmill was a 4000 acre plantation enterprise containing three large agricultural field complexes, each of which were formerly independent plantations before being integrated into a single operation shortly after the turn of the nineteenth century. The consolidated estate included multiple quartering sites, a brick manor home, numerous agricultural buildings and provisioning facilities, a mill, and a large wharf. Kingsmill was one of several large holdings inherited by William Orgain Allen from his great uncle while still in his infancy in 1831. By the time he came of age in the 1850s, Allen assumed control of a network of plantations that comprised nearly 26,000 acres of land and 350 enslaved persons in several counties. In James City his holdings included roughly 8,000 acres, including Kingsmill and adjoining plantations on the Neck of Land

and Jamestown Island. With the exception of a single farm between Kingsmill and Neck of Land-Jamestown Island, the two operations occupied a nearly contiguous, roughly eight mile stretch of James River coastline, tended by an enslaved labor force of about 100 persons scattered throughout various local quarters. From its inception the Quarterpath Site was an integral component in a multi-plantation agricultural enterprise. Primary sources suggest that the Quarterpath residents may have been transfers from other Allen family estates in James City or across the James River in Surry County. Whether or not they may have been recent arrivals from other quarters at Kingsmill, Neck of Land-Jamestown Island, or from the opposite shore of the James River in Surry, the residents of quarters across these estates were neighbors. They may have been consolidated into common labor units during harvest times and it is likely that they extended social ties across networked Allen family lands, perhaps incorporating other local farms and settlements in the process.

Enslaved household structures and residence patterns in the antebellum period must be contextualized in terms of a social practice commonly known during the era as marriage “abroad”, or off-plantation (also “broad marriage”). Although not legally sanctioned, as the eighteenth century progressed it became one of the most common forms of long term social union between men and women in enslaved Virginian communities. By the antebellum era the practice was so prevalent that 82% of Virginia freedpersons interviewed in the early twentieth century reported that they had been children of divided residence families under enslavement (Stevenson 1991: 108, Perdue et al. 1976). Under enslavement, statutory regulations enforced matrifocal residence patterns. Virginia law imposed a state of hereditary enslavement, meaning that children

inherited the status of the mother and were considered the property of the mother's owner. As such, children typically remained upon the mother's quarter of residence. Freedpersons explained that fathers residing upon other plantations typically "had privileges, you know like married folks", often traveling abroad to visit at night, on Sundays, and holidays (Perdue et al. 1976: 94). Artifacts associated with the presence of children at the Quarterpath Site date primarily from the 1870s, implying several potential scenarios: perhaps of the birth of children in more optimistic times, or, in the context of marriage abroad, this pattern could also prove to be a material indicator of household reconfiguration, of divided residence families uniting under a single roof after Emancipation.

Perhaps the most useful frame of reference concerning the composition of the Quarterpath households and how they may have changed over time comes from those who were raised within contemporaneous plantation communities: Neighborhood. There are nearly forty independent references to neighborhood in *Weevils in the Wheat* (Perdue et. al 1976), the published compilation of the testimonies of approximately 150 formerly enslaved Virginians recorded by federal interviewers between 1936-1939. The question of the reliability of the interviewing process as well as the testimonies of elderly individuals who were children at the time of Emancipation arises occasionally in scholarly works (see Osofsky 1969, Hill 1998) and need not be revisited here. In many ways, the narratives are artifacts of the 1930s inasmuch as primary accounts of life under enslavement. However neighborhood also appears time and again as a primary context of social relations in the narratives of individuals who lived in contemporaneous enslaved communities in the Chesapeake region, such as Nat Turner (Gray 1831), James L. Smith

(1881), and Frederick Douglass (1845, 1882), as well as the surviving eyewitness to the 1862 Neck of Land-Jamestown Island insurrection, among others.

Revisiting the Quarterpath Neighborhood

Growing primarily from natural increase and at a rapid rate by the mid-eighteenth century, the African American population of the Chesapeake Bay region achieved a level of stability and maturity that its counterparts in other core plantation areas in the British Atlantic, including the South Carolina and Georgia Lowcountry and the British West Indies, would not experience for decades (Morgan 1998: 80-84). I submit that the creation of geographically dispersed plantation neighborhoods not only paralleled but contributed significantly to these processes. As enslaved men and women reoriented themselves to Chesapeake landscapes and communities they laid down new roots that took hold and spread across grounds that became increasingly familiar through the generations. By the antebellum era the Upper York and James River valleys had experienced a black majority for at least half a century (Chambers 1996: 329, Morgan 1998: 81-101, Sobel 1987: 3-5). Although whites may have assumed legal ownership, plantations were undeniably “black places” (Vlach 1993: 16-17) and the residents of the Quarterpath domestic complex lived in a Chesapeake plantation neighborhood that had been a century in the making.

Historical references to plantation neighborhoods are common in primary sources but they beg further inquiry and elaboration. What, for instance, might these neighborhoods actually have encompassed? What might it have meant to be a neighbor?

How might we approach this archaeologically? And how might this lend an insight into the lives of the Quarterpath residents that would otherwise remain elusive? Plantation neighborhoods incorporated diverse yet intimately entwined physical and social elements, including:

Sets of interrelated places common across virtually all large Chesapeake plantations – including (but not limited to) multiple quartering sites and other domestic spaces, agricultural fields, stables and maintenance facilities, processing and provisioning sites, outbuildings and other work areas, wharves and landings, roads, byways, and informal paths, and liminal spaces such as forests, bottomlands, creeks and waterways.

Sets of social relationships that crisscrossed and transcended plantation borders, becoming invested and embedded in various ways in local places over time.

Stimulated by an ethic of landkeeping that incorporated notions of reciprocity between place, community, and individuals, neighborhood building was a multigenerational process involving both individual and collective investments in particular lands and places. Places, like selves, are in a perpetual state of making, remaking, and becoming. “A place” asserts Edward Casey “is more an *event* than a *thing* to be assimilated to known categories . . . places not only *are they happen*”, thus “To live is to live locally and to know is first of all to know the places one is in” (Casey 1996:18, 26-27, original italics). Plantation neighborhoods constituted the physical domain of daily routine, as arenas of activity as well as loci of social interaction. As enslaved men and women built relationships that cut across plantation borders, neighborhoods came to

encompass the terrain of social alliances and rivalries, the grounds of contestation, of struggle, solidarity, and division – in short, the horizons of everyday life. If we are truly interested in interpreting the daily lives and experiences of people such as the Quarterpath residents, it would be useful to expand the frame of reference beyond the core domestic homesites to embrace other related grounds and places upon which the residents spent much of their time, places in which relationships were built with neighbors performing common tasks on familiar grounds.

Bearing these notions in mind, how did the Quarterpath Site fit within the greater plantation landscape at Kingsmill and within the broader neighborhood? And for that matter, how do we define the geographic expanse of the plantation neighborhood that enveloped the Quarterpath domestic quarter? As mosaics of interconnected places plantation landscapes came to be marked by the types of activities performed upon them. The antebellum Quarterpath neighborhood comprised at least eight domestic homesites including the Quarterpath quarter, a multitude of bounded fields and agricultural support structures connected by a network of roads, pathways, and river landings, and liminal spaces – forests, creeks, and marshlands, perhaps cut by informal footpaths and well worn trails. Through a variety of habitual practices and bodily orientations the residents of these estates shared in labors and experiences, formed common bonds, and built a plantation neighborhood on grounds that became increasingly familiar through the generations.

The widespread prevalence of marriage abroad is a testament to the fact that enslaved persons routinely overcame many of the obstacles to mobility that defined the statutory terms of enslavement, customarily traversing a variety of familiar landscapes,

occasionally at fairly great distances and often with relative impunity. With permeable boundaries, neighborhoods invariably had different focal points depending upon the orientation of individual persons. As domestic sites, quarters such as Quarterpath were *gathering places*, grounds in which the ties of kinship and camaraderie overlapped at maximum density. We may never know the names of the Quarterpath residents or of many of those to whom they extended the most intimate of social bonds. Most of the historical sources that could have provided such information were either destroyed or displaced during the Civil War. However, certain historical events provide subtle clues as to the geographic extent of neighborhood social networks, such as the 1862 insurrection on related plantation grounds at Neck of Land-Jamestown Island. Archaeological sources, in conjunction with surviving documents, provide a window into the sorts of common undertakings of the Quarterpath residents, activities that extended beyond the homesite, opening a panorama into other familiar places and landscapes, both physical and social. Virginia freedpersons explained that enslaved men, women, and children often relied upon emplaced neighborhood networks for support in times of need or distress. Deploying an intimate knowledge of liminal plantation spaces gained through practical activities in conjunction with the assistance of various neighbors many successfully effected changes that carried weight in the balance of power. Many of the same testimonies also imply an inherent danger of places in which these networks *did not* exist.

The creation of plantation neighborhoods lay at the interstice of initiative on the part of enslaved persons who extended social ties across geographically dispersed quarters and settlements and economic, social, and political imperatives of planters. To

understand the neighborhood complex in which the Quarterpath residents lived, it is worthwhile to trace the unique histories of these local plantations and the generations of people, planters and enslaved alike, who constructed, modified, and dwelled upon them. Part I (Chapters 1-3) explores the varied sociohistorical processes and mechanisms of community development that gave rise to the Quarterpath neighborhood. Chapter 1 traces the development of several large Chesapeake estates and the entangled social alliances that developed between elite planter families with the intent of tracking parallel geographic migrations, through purchase, inheritance, and dowry, of those who preceded the Quarterpath residents, and from whom the residents may have descended. The majority of these cross plantation movements were local. As enslaved men, women, and children were transferred to new quarters, many undoubtedly continued to maintain ties with those from previous quarters of residence, expanding the geographic range of enslaved social networks that contributed to the emergence and development of multi-plantation neighborhoods such as the one that enveloped the antebellum Quarterpath quarter. Chapter 2 examines these connections, the historical processes that led to geographic concentrations of members of particular African ethnic groups on home and neighboring tidewater plantations, and the legal conventions that afforded a degree of generational continuity on the estates that contributed to the development of the Quarterpath neighborhood. Chapter 3 contributes to a regional chronology of change in an archaeologically observable pattern that parallels these sociohistorical processes, drawing connections between architectural forms and orientation of domestic structures at the Quarterpath Site with others throughout the region as cultivated spaces that promoted social interaction between the Quarterpath households and with neighbors.

Landscape Perspectives and Archaeologies of Place

Historical archaeology has lent much to our understanding of the varied lifeways within enslaved plantation communities in the Chesapeake region. Associated patterns in material culture, archaeologically observable modifications to physical environments, and most recently, new lines of environmental data have proven invaluable in interpreting the lives of peoples whose histories are largely undocumented. As archaeologists we are tasked with recovering and interpreting the physical remnants of everyday activities and behaviors. But what about the areas we cannot excavate but nevertheless figured prominently in the lives of those who resided upon the quarters and domestic spaces we seek to interpret? And what of the immaterial aspects of the lives of people such as the Quarterpath residents? Should they not remain within the scope of archaeological inquiry? What of the emotional impact of enslavement on the residents and the community of which they were a part? Are intangibles such as sensation, experience, and emotion archaeologically recoverable?

Andrew Agha writes in a brief article concerning plantations in South Carolina that “Landscape may be the most powerful interpretive, theoretical, and tangible unit of analysis in historical archaeology today” (Agha 2006: 53). I agree with Agha. I also think that Agha is spot on in his assertion that the concept is often poorly defined or simply taken for granted in many historical archaeological works. The editors of the recently published *Handbook of Landscape Archaeology* (2008), a collaborative effort sponsored by the World Archaeological Congress, explain that despite the breadth of archaeological approaches, “the notion of landscape archaeology retains its usefulness as an orienting concept, one that directs the archaeologist to unpack *emplacement*, in all or

any of its dimensions” (David and Thomas 2008: 19, original italics). Strains of thought that embrace place are proving to be quite fruitful in a variety of recent archaeological works (see Ashmore 2002 for an overview), and are becoming more conspicuous in American historical archaeology.

Yet there is often an analytical disjunction between conceptions of place and space that underlie many archaeological interpretations, resounding throughout the pages of otherwise solid archaeological works, whereby place is often implicitly understood as something that is created from “space”, a sort of a priori medium that implies emptiness or absence, a material substrate upon which cultural forms are inscribed through human activity. In the introduction to her excellent book, *On the Edge of Purgatory: An Archaeology of Place in Hispanic Colorado* (2011), Bonnie Clark cites Julian Thomas’ assertion that “it is through inhabitation that a space *becomes* a place” (Clark 2011: xxiv, Thomas 1996: 86, my italics). Anne Yentsch echoes these sentiments as well, beginning an insightful archaeological study of colonial interactions in the Chesapeake with a chapter entitled “Transforming Space into Place” (Yentsch 1994). Likewise, in his plea for incorporating notions of place in African American historical archaeologies, Agha writes, “Technically, we can identify landscapes as sets of places within space” (Agha 2006: 55). The assumption that space is both general and universal and place specific and contained is a particularity born of an epistemology espoused by Continental philosophers, scientists, and mathematicians during the Enlightenment that, for all intents and purposes, continues to pervade not only ethnographic and archaeological texts but persists in popular thought concerning place and space as well (see Casey 1997). Yet it is

a set of perspectives that was not necessarily embraced by peoples of non-Western descent (or amongst many Westerners for that matter) throughout the recent past.

It is my contention that historical archaeology has much to benefit from what the philosopher Edward Casey has termed “the phenomenological enterprise” (Ibid). A recurring theme in phenomenological works is the assertion of the primacy of place, articulated eloquently by Casey: “The world is, minimally and forever, a place-world” (Casey 1997: 4). Phenomenological lines of reasoning argue that the varied processes of emplacement are not only inextricably bound with but revolve around the circumstances of embodiment (Merleau-Ponty 1962, Csordas 1990, 1994, Casey 1996, Ingold 2011). So what exactly is landscape? In a recent collection of essays, archaeologist Tim Ingold opened a discussion by explaining what the landscape *is not*, “It is not ‘land’, it is not ‘nature’, and it is not ‘space’” (Ingold 2000: 190). Informed by intersecting discourse on embodiment and emplacement by scholars such as Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Bourdieu, Edward Casey, Thomas Csordas, Keith Basso, and Tim Ingold, perhaps we can begin to redefine landscape not as a *thing* but a *process*.

If we begin with a consideration of place as a basic unit of lived experience (Casey 2008: 44) closely aligned with embodiment, in which sensations and perception are emplaced and informed by social and cultural processes, perhaps we can open new avenues of inquiry. We write of place-making but what we are really contemplating is the *relationship* between people, as embodied, knowing-sensing beings, and places – the complex, dynamic, and intimate process of embedding and retrieving, renewing and transforming meanings relevant to the places we experience – that is at the core of landscape. Ingold (following Heidegger 1996, Merleau-Ponty 1962) asserts that “If the

body is the form in which a creature is present as a being-in-the-world, then the world of its being-in presents itself in the form of the landscape” (Ingold 2000: 193). People experience places through sensations generated in the course of practical activity, both gathering and embedding meaning through bodily interaction with landscapes. We modify places in meaningful ways that, in turn, may generate new horizons of significance and we develop intimate psychological and emotional bonds to certain places. Archaeological field methods are crafted with an eye towards identifying patterning in physical alteration and material culture signatures relevant to these processes but phenomenologically informed perspectives have the potential to bring intangibles such as sensations, experience, memory, and *emotion* – the very essences that make us human – into the scope of anthropological inquiry as well. After all, it is the people behind the material culture in which we are most interested. And with regard to people who constructed meaningful lives in spite of regimes of enslavement that sought to dehumanize them as commodities, perhaps we owe them as much. “*People* lie at the core of a landscape archaeology . . . A landscape archaeology is an archaeology of place . . . in all its lived dimensions” (David and Thomas 2008: 38, original italics). At its core, archaeology *is* a landscape practice.

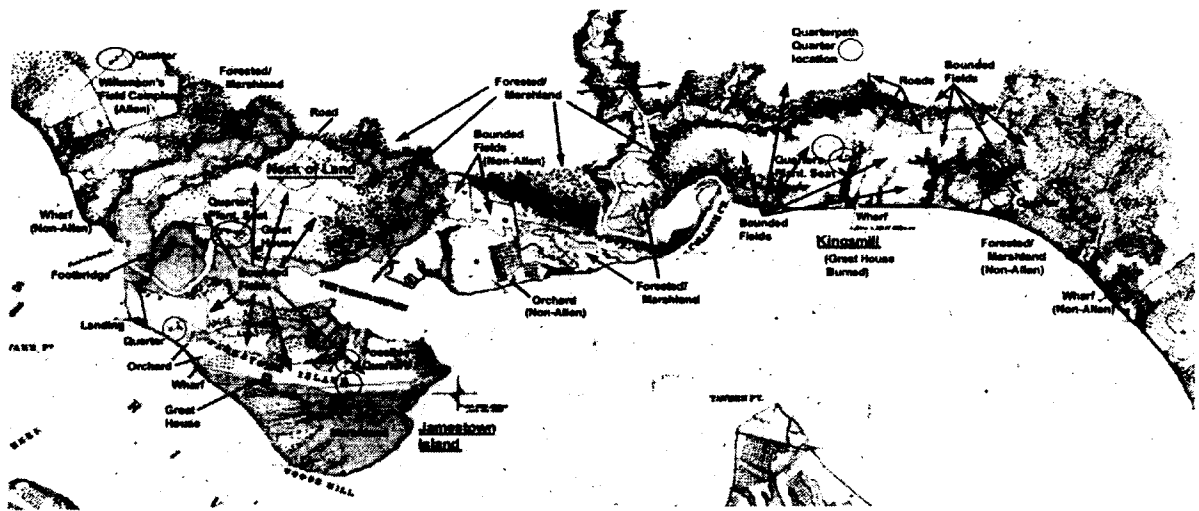
Archaeologists working in a variety of regions and temporal contexts have deployed several promising approaches in contemplating the dynamic relationship between people and place conveyed as landscape, including “sensuous geography” (Agha 2006, following Tuan 1977, Rodaway 1994), “life histories of place” (Ashmore 2002), and a “dwelling perspective” in which landscape “is constituted as an enduring record of – and testimony to – the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it,

and in so doing, have left there something of themselves” (Ingold 2000: 189). Each of these perspectives approach place from the dimension of lived experience with both individual and communal elements through “the experiential and expressive ways places are known, imagined, yearned for, held, remembered, voiced, lived, contested, and struggled over; and the multiple ways places are metonymically and metaphorically tied to identities” (Feld and Basso 1996: 11). The senses of place (Ibid) that arise out of “the business of dwelling” (Heidegger 1996, Ingold 2011, 2000) and the ways in which they relate to senses of community and self may ultimately prove to hold great promise for historical and archaeological queries of landscape.

With regard to African Diasporic archaeologies, Ogundiran and Falola assert that “There is perhaps no other domain in the archaeological record of the Americas where group identity, race, power, and class intersect and are most succinctly expressed as the landscape” (Ogundiran and Falola 2007: 29, Kelso and Most 1990). As mosaics of interconnected places plantation neighborhoods encompassed landscapes of contestation, solidarity, and division replete with daily struggles and triumphs. Saturated with intersecting and contrasting horizons of meaning dependent upon the orientation of individual persons and bodies and informed by one’s station within the hierarchy of slaveholding societies these landscapes were both multiscalar and polyvalent. Thus it is simply less productive to view domestic sites such as Quarterpath in isolation. By drawing connections with the places and people that shaped the contours of the broader plantation neighborhood, perhaps we might be afforded a more comprehensive insight into the lives of the Quarterpath residents and how they might have negotiated the significant sociopolitical changes wrought through the period of occupation.

Part II (chapters 4-6) employs a multiscalar landscape approach in interrogating the Quarterpath domestic site and the broader plantation neighborhood. Chapter 4 examines commonalities in ethics of place-making amongst African Americans in the Chesapeake, drawing connections between the Quarterpath Site and other contemporaneous quarters to broader plantation and neighborhood landscapes. Chapter 5 is a consideration of the varied processes through which the Quarterpath residents appropriated and fashioned intimate domestic spaces into familiar home grounds, most notably through domestic landscape practices that reference broader neighborhood community relationships. Chapter 6 traces the impact of Civil War and the sweeping changes that accompanied the Freedom that followed as the Quarterpath residents and their neighbors collectively realigned households, struggled towards self-determination, and strove towards self-improvement.

This is first and foremost an archaeology of a community in transition but it is also an archaeology of landscapes. This approach is intended to address often overlooked interpretive contexts and horizons of meaning relevant to a particular domestic homesite. While the Quarterpath Site may be unique archaeologically, at least for the moment, it is by no means unique historically and it is my belief that insights from studies such as this have the potential to broaden our archaeological interpretations of homesites in plantation contexts throughout the greater expanse of the African Atlantic diaspora and, perhaps, to lend a richer and more nuanced perspective into the lives of those who dwelled upon them.



The Greater Antebellum Quarterpath Neighborhood: (Quarterpath Quarter location at top right), other domestic quarters across Kingsmill Neck (Right) and Neck of Land-Jamestown Island (left) circled – map details approximately nine linear miles of James River shoreline in lower James City County.

**Part I: Laying Down Roots: Enslaved Social
Networks and the Makings of a Chesapeake
Neighborhood**

Chapter 1

Mirrored Alliances: Plantation Development and the Geographic Expansion of Enslaved Social Networks in the Virginia Tidewater, 1618-1861

The plantation neighborhood that came to envelop the Quarterpath Site in the antebellum era was a conglomeration of several earlier agricultural enterprises and numerous domestic quarters constructed on some of the earliest grounds to be settled by non-Indigenous peoples in the region. The residents of these earlier plantations, many of them counted among the charter generations of Africans in the Virginia colony, built early colonial plantation communities through the decades of the eighteenth century only to be displaced as the owners of these estates moved their operations and people westward in the years following the American Revolution. Many of the antebellum residents of the Quarterpath neighborhood may have had roots in these earlier communities and within a related group of eighteenth century quarters on the Southside of the James River. Thus to understand the neighborhood complex in which the Quarterpath residents lived it is worthwhile to trace the entwined histories of the generations of people – planters and enslaved alike – that contributed to the development and expansion of successive communities on these colonial and antebellum plantation grounds. In tracking the development of these large Chesapeake estates and the entangled social alliances that developed between elite planter families, we may also track parallel geographic migrations, through purchase, inheritance, and dowry, of those who preceded the Quarterpath residents, and from whom the residents may have descended. These migrations were instrumental in expanding the geographic range of

early social networks cultivated by enslaved persons that, in turn, constituted the foundation upon which local plantation neighborhoods were constructed.

Early Settlement, 1618-1660s

On the twelfth of May, 1607, the day before a diverse group of colonists landed on the shores of a low-lying yet defensible island that they would rechristen Jamestown in honor of their king, they debarked at the mouth of a creek eight miles downriver to explore another potential site of settlement. George Percy, who would become deputy governor of the Virginia colony in 1611, wrote of the episode,

“we . . . discovered a point of Land, called Archers Hope, which was sufficient with a little labour to defend our selues against any Enemy. The soils were good and fruitfull, with excellent good Timber. There are also great store of Vines, in bignesse of a mans thigh . . . We also did see many Squirels, Conies [rabbits] . . . and diuerse other Fowles and Birds of diuerse and sundrie collours . . . We found store of Turkie nests and many Egges. If it had not beene disliked because the ship could not ride neere the shoare, we had settled there to all the Collonies contentment” (Percy and Quinn 1967: 15; Hatch 1957: 467-484; Goodwin 1958: 4)

Land patents were granted at Archer’s Hope shortly after the Virginia Company approved the “Great Charter” of 1618, which authorized the dispersal of lands to individual planters beyond the confines of Jamestown Island. There were probably few people living in the area initially.¹ A list of “all the Titles and Estates of Land” in Virginia indicates that 3000 acres at Archer’s Hope were held by fourteen individuals in 1625, at

¹ Virginia Company records indicate only five casualties at Archer’s Hope due to the Powhatan assault on March 22, 1622, on the lands (300 acres) held jointly by Ensign William Spence and Joseph Fowler, while seventy-nine deaths were recorded on the nearby (within earshot) settlement at Martin’s Hundred. (Kingsbury 1933: Vol. III, 570; Goodwin 1958: 6)

least some of which was under cultivation. By 1629 the population of Archer's Hope had increased to the extent that it warranted representation in the House of Burgesses.² During the same year, John Browning served as representative for "Several Plantations in the area between Archer's Hope and Martin's Hundred", suggesting that there were already multiple settlements scattered across the neck of land on the east side of Archer's Hope (College) Creek (Kelso 1984: 33-37; Hening 1820: Vol. I, 147-149).

Richard Kingsmill came to Virginia aboard the *Delaware* in 1620 and was living on the Neck of Land adjacent to Jamestown Island by 1625. According to records of the General Court, 300 acres owned by Kingsmill at Archer's Hope were "laid out and begun to be planted" by 1626 (Goodwin 1958: 8). Kingsmill served as a representative for James City in the General Assemblies of 1623/4, 1625, and 1629. Goodwin reports that although his name is not found in surviving records after 1630 (he probably died between 1631-1638), Richard Kingsmill's land at Archer's Hope continued to be associated with him in later decades. Subsequent patents for adjacent properties in 1637/8 and in 1646 reference "Kingsmill's Neck" and "Kings Mill Neck" respectively (Goodwin 1958: 7-10). A 1781 map drawn by Jean Nicolas Desandrouins, a French cartographer attached to the army of Rochambeau, depicts "Arche's-hope" as a spit of land adjacent to "King's Mill", formed by the confluence of the James River and Archer's Hope Creek, renamed

² Goodwin notes that the lists of burgesses indicate "special representation for the Archer's Hope area from 1629-1640". In 1629, Archer's Hope sent two representatives to the General Assembly. The following year, two burgesses represented "Archer's Hope and Glebe Land". The Glebe lies in between the Neck of Land and Archer's Hope/Kingsmill Neck, suggesting that early settlements may have been concentrated on the west side of College Creek. Archer's Hope and Glebe Land continue to be listed together with two burgesses between 1631-1633. James City County was organized by order of Charles I in 1634. In 1639/40 "Johnson's Neck, Archer's Hope, and Neck of Land" were collectively represented by one burgess. After 1640, Archer's Hope was no longer listed individually, being represented by one of the burgesses for James City County. (Goodwin 1958: 4-5)

“College Creek” following the chartering of the College of William and Mary in 1693 (Figure 1.1).³

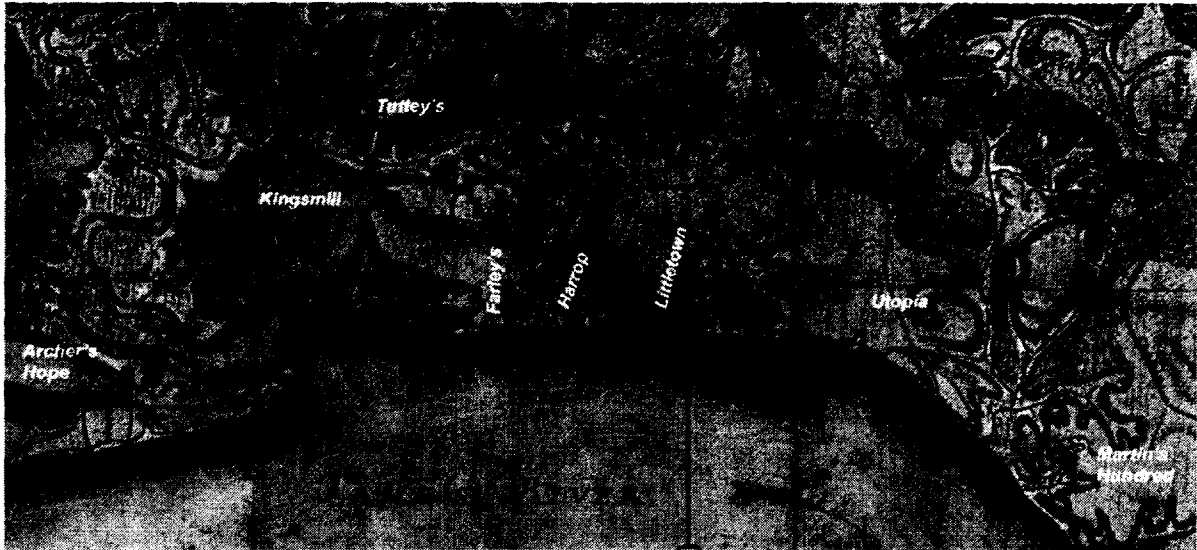


Figure 1.1 – Detail of 1781 Desandrouins Map: 17th century place names in white, 18th century place names circled – from left: “Arche’s Hope”, “King’s Mill”, and “Little Town”. Archer’s Hope Creek renamed “College’s Creek”, “Jame’s City Glebe” located immediately west of “Arche’s Hope”.⁴ Sources: CWF Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg; Kelso 1984: 34; VA DHR, Richmond

By 1650, numerous small agricultural operations were scattered across Kingsmill Neck. The number of plantations in tidewater Virginia increased exponentially throughout the second half of the seventeenth century as European newcomers – adventurers and servants alike – endeavored to benefit from the commercial production of tobacco. A confluence of factors, including an increasing life expectancy of

³ Desandrouins map series, 1781: CWF Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg. Nearly a century later, J.W. Donn’s 1873 map entitled “James River, VA From Burwell’s Bay to College Creek” depicts Archer’s Hope as the spit of land at the mouth of College Creek adjacent to “King’s Mill Wharf” (See Figure 4.2)

⁴ Note – Although the encircled location identified as “Little Town” on the Desandrouins map detail is in the upper right corner of Kingsmill Neck, historical records and archaeological evidence suggest that the manor house and seat of Bray’s 18th century estate may be the complex of structures depicted on the original 17th century bluff designated as Littletown (See Kelso 1984, Fesler 2004).

indentured servants and the rising demand for labor to cultivate, cure, and export the labor intensive tobacco crop prompted colonial administrators to orchestrate a transition in modes of labor across tidewater Virginia plantations beginning around the mid-seventeenth century (Parent 2003, Morgan 1975). Thus it is probably not coincidental that the cultivated lands across Kingsmill Neck between Archer's Hope/College Creek and Martin's Hundred were consolidated into two large plantation holdings as area planters began to adopt a new system of bonded African labor.

By the mid-seventeenth century, Virginia's elite planters, most of which were also active participants in governmental affairs, acting with the support of royal administrators and with the sponsorship of the Royal African Company, deliberately and strategically implemented a series of legal resolutions intended to further their collective economic interests, transitioning modes of labor from indentured servitude to race-based and hereditarily transferrable enslavement in the colony (Parent 2003, Jordan 1993, Morgan 1975, Lee 1988).⁵ Utopia (44JC32), initially a tenant site dating from the 1660s located on the eastern half of Kingsmill Neck (Figure 1.1) illustrates this transition across Virginia plantations during the period, as a series of quarters housing the first generations of enslaved Africans and their Virginia-born descendants was constructed on the property in successive decades (Kelso 1984, Fesler 2004). In the latter half of the seventeenth century, as Virginia's enslaved population began to increase, colonial officials created various legal mechanisms to distance themselves physically and socially from emerging enslaved communities. The Atkinson Site (CWF CG-10), excavated by the Colonial

⁵ Each group held a vested interest in the transition in modes of labor. The Royal African Company, chartered in 1660, maintained a monopoly on the British trade in enslaved persons until 1695, when the trade was opened to private interests. Virginia planters sought to expand their agricultural enterprises and bolster social prestige and the Crown had a stake in the increase and expansion of British commerce.

Williamsburg Foundation between 2000-2002, located on the grounds of Carter's Grove bordering the Littletown Plantation, illustrates the shift from indentured servitude to enslavement between 1680-1710, as evidenced by changes in architectural forms and associated physical boundaries during the later period of occupation of the domestic complex that suggest that social distance materialized on the landscape in the form of physical barriers and geographic distance (see Chapter 3).

Plantation Development and the Growth of Enslaved Social Networks across Kingsmill Neck and Beyond, 1670s-1770s

By the closing decades of the seventeenth century the eastern half of Kingsmill Neck consisting primarily of the Littletown and Utopia farms had been consolidated by the Pettus family into a single large plantation operation of some 1280 acres (Hatch 1957). The opening decades of the eighteenth century witnessed the consolidation of the remaining independent farms, approximately 1500 acres on the western half of the neck adjacent to the newly renamed College Creek. The whole of Kingsmill Neck was eventually brought under the control of two prominent tidewater families – the Brays and Burwells – each of which endeavored to build large neighboring agricultural operations. Across the James River in Surry County, the Allens, another elite planting family, began to accrue and consolidate parcels and persons into large plantation operations as well. These estates would become highly profitable enterprises as proponents and producers of the Virginia colony's core commodities: tobacco and enslaved persons. Historical evidence also suggests that these networked estates may have become grounds upon

which a burgeoning influx of forced African migrants began to cultivate the region's earliest black neighborhoods.

Littletown

Thomas Pettus passed away in 1669 leaving his Littletown plantation holdings to his son, also named Thomas. The younger Pettus continued to reside on the estate that his father had built at Littletown. A document recording a transaction by an agent acting on his behalf “for payment for the production of [indentured] servants and a negro woman, and 14 crops of tobacco”, implies that Pettus had a mixed labor force of indentures and enslaved persons working his estate at Littletown (Kelso 1984: 36; McIlwaine 1924: 253, 259, 276). A probate inventory compiled after his death in 1691 contains a list of servants, including an English indenture with “about 5 years to serve”, and several “Negro” servants, including two men named Briby and Sylliman of 25 and 50 years of age, a 12 year old boy named Webb, and two women, Nan and Moll, ages 30 and 32 respectively, and precedes an inventory of possessions at his manor house, implying that they may have resided in the primary domestic complex with the Pettus family at Littletown. Fesler suggests that by the time of the inventory many of the indentures as well as enslaved persons may have been either sold to cover existing debts or they may have been appropriated and redistributed by other family members. He also speculates that the adults included on the list of “Negroes” may have essentially been two married couples (Fesler 2004: 104).

James Bray II married Mourning Glenn Pettus, the second wife and widow of Thomas Pettus, junior, shortly after his death in 1690. It appears that Bray II may have been living at Littletown as early as 1691 when the inventory was recorded. After an exhaustive legal battle, the 1280 acre Littletown property was released by Pettus's surviving heirs and formally deeded to James Bray II along with 1500 acres along the Chickahominy River in New Kent County in the year 1700 (VMHB 1938: 52-55; Fesler 2004: 103-104; Kelso 1984: 36-38). In 1704, he held 3500 acres in James City including his 1280 acre Littletown property as well as 1500 acres comprising his Rockahock plantation in New Kent County (Stephenson 1963: 20; VMHB 1938: 52-55). Bray raised tobacco on his Littletown and Utopia farms on the eastern half of Kingsmill Neck and continued to expand his holdings at Rockahock along the Chickahominy River some twenty miles up the peninsula from 1500 to 2200 acres until his death in 1725. Each of these expansion events was likely accompanied by additional purchases and transfers of enslaved persons between these estates. Bray's holdings on Kingsmill Neck and at Rockahock each contained multiple domestic quartering sites, several of which may have served as "seasoning" quarters (Fesler 2004: 112-113), places in which new arrivals, or "saltwater" Africans (Smallwood 2007), resided for a period of orientation to the regimes of plantation life. For those that survived the initial period of seasoning, it was common practice amongst many elite planter families to transfer enslaved persons to other working quarters across networked agricultural operations such as those held by the Brays. Many of these individuals may have been presented with opportunities to maintain social ties with persons in their previous and neighboring quarters of residence,

expanding the geographic range of emerging enslaved social networks during the period of highest importation (1700-1750).

By his 1725 will, James Bray II left his Williamsburg residence and town lots to his son Thomas and bequeathed his 2200 acre Rockahock estate to his daughter Elizabeth (Bray) Allen in addition to giving her exclusive rights to “Land and plantation stock and Negroes that is to say all that are now on and that properly belong to that Plantation called Little Town untill my Grandson James Bray [III] comes to the age of twenty one years” at which point the said property would pass to his grandson and heirs to be held in perpetuity (James Bray Will, MS 00 1725 Nov 18: CWF Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg). Elizabeth Bray had married Arthur Allen III (c. 1689-1727) of Surry County and resided upon the Allen estate in the brick manor home that had come to be known as “Bacon’s Castle” in Surry County. This marriage also produced a dowry transfer of enslaved persons, an early connection in a network of elite alliances that may have contributed to the geographic expansion of parallel social networks between enslaved persons on these estates, made all the more significant in that Bray and Allen plantations were eventually consolidated into the agricultural enterprise in which the Quarterpath Site was to become a key domestic component. Elizabeth sold her rights to Littletown to her brother Thomas Bray II in 1728, who operated and managed the plantation for his son James Bray III until he came of age in 1736 (Fesler 2004: 120-121; Stephenson 1963: 19).

As he came of age and assumed control of Littletown, the Tutter’s (Tuttey’s) Neck farm on the northwestern corner of Kingsmill Neck (Figure 1.1) passed in title to James Bray III as well, by way of a series of complicated property transfers that had

begun years before with the acquisition of the property by the sister-in-law of his grandfather, James Bray II (Kelso 1984: 38; Stephenson 1963: 22). Thus Bray's agricultural operation came to encompass multiple quarters scattered across Kingsmill Neck, circumscribing the neighboring 1500 acre plantation operated by the Burwells. The Desandrouins map, drawn a few decades later, indicates that most of the quarters across Kingsmill Neck were connected by a network of roads, pathways, and bounded agricultural fields. Most of these domestic quartering sites were located within a geographic range of fewer than three miles with several well under a mile distant. Some may have been situated along mutual lines of sight, across open and cultivated fields, or certainly within earshot. The residents of these quarters may have begun to cultivate social relationships that extended into adjacent and nearby homesites as these plantation operations expanded across Kingsmill Neck.

James Bray III died without issue in 1744 and attempted to leave Littleton to his wife Frances Thacker Bray, but due to an entail, a Virginia legal convention that inhibited the sale and removal of enslaved persons from inherited lands (see Chapter 2)⁶, placed upon the plantation grounds and its workforce decades before, ownership of the estate and the majority of its enslaved population reverted to his father Thomas Bray II. In January of the following year, Francis Thacker Bray married Lewis Burwell IV of the neighboring Kingsmill plantation. Thomas Bray II negotiated an agreement with the newly married couple, deeding the Utopia farm and 29 enslaved persons, presumably the residents of the Utopia quarter, to Frances in exchange for relinquishing her dower rights. The records do not indicate whether Utopia's enslaved residents remained in their

⁶ The legal convention and social practice of entail and its ramifications for community development on the properties in question will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

quarters of residence or if individuals may have been transferred to others across Kingsmill or beyond. Life for many of these residents may not have been impacted significantly by the change in ownership and many may have already established ties with residents in neighboring quarters across Kingsmill Neck. Yet it is significant that the Burwells acquired the ability to sell or transfer individuals throughout the expanding network of quarters across Burwell family operations on Kingsmill Neck and throughout middle tidewater.

Burwell and his wife retained rights to Utopia, operating the farm for three decades between 1745-1775. Thomas Bray II died in 1751, the right of inheritance to the remaining Littletown estate passing to his surviving daughter and sister of James Bray III, Elizabeth Bray Johnson and her husband Philip Johnson. Frances Bray Burwell and Lewis Burwell IV initiated a series of unsuccessful legal suits during the 1750s with the intent of acquiring the enslaved community residing at Littletown originally entailed by James Bray II in 1725. Philip and Elizabeth Bray Johnson and heirs retained ownership of Littletown from 1751-1796, effectively sandwiched between the Kingsmill estate and Utopia farm owned by Lewis Burwell IV and Frances Bray Burwell between 1745-1775. The intermarried Brays and Burwells retained mixed ownership of the two largest estates and associated farms on Kingsmill Neck through the 1770s and the associated turmoil of the American Revolution (Fesler 2004: 129-131; Kelso 1984: 40), yet the Brays in particular expanded their own social network to include the Allens of Surry County, a relationship that could very well have been paralleled by the enslaved communities across these networked familial operations. Thus it is not altogether surprising that the

Allens moved to acquire and consolidate the estates of Kingsmill Neck as the Brays and Burwells relocated their operations westward in the years following the Revolution.

Kingsmill

The son of Edward Burwell, an original investor in the Virginia Company, Lewis Burwell was typical of the generation of Englishmen that immigrated to Virginia during the height of the early tobacco boom. Lewis arrived in Virginia in 1635 to claim rights to lands inherited from his father. With a family fortune at his disposal, he transported himself and enough persons to the colony to claim a significant amount of headrights⁷, or the right to patent thousands of additional acres in tidewater. He built a family seat at Fairfield in Gloucester County. The often harsh Virginia climate with a host of associated perils and diseases alien to European bodies eventually got the better of Burwell. He succumbed to illness in 1653. His son and firstborn in Virginia, Lewis Burwell II (c. 1646-1710), built upon his inherited wealth, adding additional properties and peoples to his increasing estates and intertwining political and social ties with many of Virginia's wealthiest planter families in the process, "[enabling] his offspring to operate comfortably in the highest circles of power in the colony" (Walsh 1997: 23-24). All of Burwell's sons as well as several of his grand and great-grandsons were elected

⁷ The headright provision recorded in the Great Charter of 1618 allowed any person who settled in Virginia or paid the transportation fees to the colony for another to patent 50 acres per transportee, or "head". This was the primary means of acquiring land during the seventeenth century. Headrights were often bought and sold and were subject to various abuses. Legal statutes also specified that patented lands must be improved upon by either the owner or the installation of a tenant by the landholder within several years after the initial patent or the land would be considered forfeit and open to be patented by another. Although the headright provision was not officially discontinued until the 1770s, it was rarely enacted during the eighteenth century.

burgesses, two of which also served on the Governor's Council. The Burwells presented a united front in advancing their family interests, acquiring more lands and enslaved persons and bolstering their social prestige. In a letter to the Board of Trade in 1714, several years after Burwell II's death, Governor Alexander Spotswood decried that "the greater part of the present Council are related to the Family of the Burwells. . . . there will be no less than seven so near related that they will go off the Bench whenever a cause of the Burwells come to be tryed" (Ibid: 24). In their collective motivation to amass wealth and prestige, Burwell II and his contemporaries comprised the generation of planters that orchestrated the critical transition in modes of labor from indentured servitude to enslavement throughout the Chesapeake region as they tuned their tobacco enterprises and created tremendous fortunes seated upon the labors of individuals whose bodies had become commodities in and of themselves and whose status had become inheritable.⁸

By the time of his death in 1710 Lewis Burwell II had accumulated substantial holdings in lands and persons by a combination of inheritance, marriage, and purchase in at least seven tidewater Virginia counties (Table 1.1). His eldest son, Nathaniel (1680-1721) inherited the home plantation at Fairfield in Gloucester. James (1690-1718) received the King's Creek estate in York County and a nearby quarter in James City, and Lewis III (c. 1699-1744), his youngest son, inherited a patchwork of farms and quarters on the western half of Kingsmill Neck, including "Farlow's Neck with all the appurtenances thereunto . . . Harrup Plantation and the Quarter land as it is Called" (see

⁸ After 1662, Virginia law decreed that one's status as free or enslaved was inherited and dependent upon the status of the mother. Children of mixed ancestry occasionally challenged the law, such as Billy, born in 1704 to an indentured white woman and an enslaved black man. It was decided that he would serve until 32 years of age, after which he was to be free. Though Lorena Walsh notes that 13 other mulattos, the children or grandchildren of black women and white men, were ordered to serve for life (Walsh 1997: 35-36).

Figure 1.1. York County Records, Orders, Wills: Book XIV (1709-1716), 60-64; Walsh 1997: 40-41; Kelso 1984: 41-43). Burwell's sons likely bolstered their workforces with new purchases as well as transfers across these estates. Enslaved persons residing in domestic quarters across Burwell family estates clustered along the York and James River basins were, in many instances, either in close geographic proximity (within short walking distance) or separated by a matter of no more than 10-15 miles. The Desandrouins map indicates that there were multiple quarters across the Burwell and Bray estates on Kingsmill Neck, typically separated only by bounded agricultural fields or small patches of forest. The enslaved residents of these estates may have subsequently begun to cultivate cross plantation social networks on these neighboring operations during this period (see Walsh 1997). Furthermore, it was common for servants to accompany elite planters such as the Burwells, Brays, and others who frequently called upon relatives and friends upon area plantations and within the city of Williamsburg (Walsh 1997: 24; Kelso 1984: 37; Tinling 1941: 438-439; Gregory 1990: 33). The mobility afforded to certain enslaved persons may have also presented opportunities

Table 1.1 – Burwell landholdings: Quitrent Rolls of 1704

<i>County</i>	<i>Persons Listed</i>	<i>No. of Persons owning</i>					<i>Burwell Acreage</i>
		<i>1000 +</i>	<i>2000+</i>	<i>3000+</i>	<i>4000+</i>	<i>5000+</i>	
Gloucester	383	33	10	4	0	0	3300
York	205	11	3	0	0	0	2100
James City	288	27	6	4	3	1	1350
Charles City	98	13	5	3	2	2	8000
King William	217	28	13	8	4	1	4700
New Kent	492	28	11	5	2	1	200
Isle of Wight	256	27	7	4	2	2	7000
Total:							26,650

* Source: Blair 1964: 326

to cultivate new relationships, to visit, socialize, and pass along news to other residents within geographically dispersed plantation quarters.

Lewis Burwell III was appointed Naval Officer of the Upper District of the James River in 1728, a lucrative and prestigious post that entitled him to “extract great fees” by inspecting the cargos of incoming and outbound ships, assuring that each vessel adhered to the “acts of Parliament and General Assembly about Trade and Navigation” and collecting a percentage of export duties on “servants and liquors” in the process (Goodwin 1958: xxii; Kelso 1984: 44). Burwell had a vested interest in increasing the trade, and the revenues he was entitled to collect, in enslaved persons arriving at the Kingsmill wharf. The deep water landing on the point at Farlow’s Neck, depicted as “Burwell’s Ferry” on the 1781 Desandrouins map (see Figure 1.1), served as the port of call nearest the city of Williamsburg, and a major commercial route that would eventually come to be known alternatively as the road to Kingsmill or Quarterpath Road connected the landing to the city.

A petition on behalf of Lewis Burwell III to the General Assembly in August, 1736 references a “Mansion-house” associated with Burwell’s 1400 acres of land on Kingsmill Neck, “whereas the said Lewis Burwell hath laid out great sums of money, in building a mansion-house, and other outhouses, and in making gardens, and other considerable improvements, upon part of the said fourteen hundred acres of land, intending the same for the seat of the eldest son of the family.” Burwell sought to enhance not only his own prestige but also that of his family and of his future progeny in creating an estate that would communicate political and social prominence in a very visual manner. To finance his vision, he petitioned the General Assembly to dock the

entail placed by his father upon 120 enslaved persons residing upon 4800 acres of inherited land in King William County so that persons and parcel might be sold to pay for his Kingsmill improvements. Many of these individuals were likely sold to other local planters with similar interests in opening new parcels to development. Burwell also placed a new entail upon 22 enslaved persons “and their future increase . . . to be annexed to, and . . . forever hereafter remain, go, and descend, with the said . . . parcels of land [upon his Kingsmill estate and a related Burwell plantation across the James River in Isle of Wight County]” (Hening 1820: Vol IV, 534-537; Goodwin 1958: xxiv-xxvi), actions which may have promoted the growth and development of an emerging enslaved community across Kingsmill Neck, a colonial antecedent to the antebellum Quarterpath neighborhood (see Chapter 2, also see Walsh 1997).⁹

Following the deaths of Burwell III in 1744 and his widow in 1745 their eldest son Lewis Burwell IV (1716-1784) became the principal heir to the recently consolidated and improved estate. Burwell IV married the widow of James Bray III the same year, redoubling ties between the planter families and producing a transfer of enslaved persons across Kingsmill Neck, as he acquired and consolidated the Utopia quarter on the neighboring Littletown plantation with his Kingsmill operation. There are no surviving property tax records for James City County prior to 1782, except for the years 1768-1769, in which Lewis Burwell IV was charged against 1502 acres (James City County [JCC] Tax Lists 1768-1769: CWF Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg), an increase of 102 acres from his father’s petition to the General Assembly in 1736. It is quite likely that Burwell

⁹ The petition is entitled “An Act to dock the Entail of certain Lands, whereof Lewis Burwell, Esq. is seised: and for settling other Lands and Slaves, of greater value, to the same uses”, dated August 10, 1736 in the reign of King George II (Hening 1820: Vol IV, 534-537)

acquired and incorporated the Tutter's (Tuttey's) Neck parcel and quarter on the northwest corner of Kingsmill Neck from the Brays, either through his marriage to James Bray III's widow or by purchase from Thomas Bray II prior to 1751 or from Philip and Elizabeth Bray Johnson thereafter, granting him leave to redistribute his enslaved workforce across the multiple domestic quarters of Kingsmill Neck as he saw fit. Burwell's cousin Carter Burwell, son of Lewis III's brother Nathaniel of Fairfield and grandson of Robert "King" Carter of Corotoman on the Rappahannock River, inherited the neighboring plantation lands at Martin's (Merchant's) Hundred, which had subsequently been renamed Carter's Grove (Walsh 1997: 42, 276). In her detailed study of the eighteenth century Carter's Grove enslaved community, Lorena Walsh (Walsh 1997) details the frequency in which enslaved persons were transferred within the elite planting family networks that resided upon Kingsmill Neck and across related family estates throughout middle tidewater (including those of the Burwells, Brays, and others). Enslaved persons residing on these estates were likely presented with opportunities to maintain ties with those remaining in their home and neighboring quarters of previous residence, expanding the geographic range of cross-plantation social networks that were instrumental in the development of neighborhoods transcending plantation boundaries.

By the 1750s, many of the Burwells of tidewater had begun to construct plantation enterprises in the western part of the colony, acting upon plans originally set in motion by Robert "King" Carter decades before. Carter had served as proprietary agent for the Northern Neck, patenting thousands of acres in the names of his children and grandchildren in the present day counties of Prince William, Fauquier, Loudoun, Frederick, and Clarke (Walsh 1997: 205). Taking a cue from his kin and cousins, Lewis

IV had also patented lands in 1745 on the Roanoke River near the North Carolina border in what would become Mecklenburg County (Ibid: 211). Upon the marriage of his son Lewis Burwell V, the elder Burwell decided to retire to his Mecklenburg County estate, leaving Kingsmill and adjacent lands in title to his son in 1775. In the years that followed, Burwell V alienated his peers by expressing a degree of sympathy towards the British as the Revolution encroached upon Virginia's Lower Peninsula, "[Burwell] seems to have been rather opportunistic during the war, supplying rum and shelter to American troops with one hand and later stocking Cornwallis's troops with the other" (Kelso 1984: 47; Walsh 1997: 211). In 1778, he placed an advertisement for a plantation manager to oversee his affairs at Kingsmill (*Virginia Gazette*, August 18, 1778: CWF Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg) and in 1781 Burwell began advertising to sell his Kingsmill estate, moving to the city of Richmond and installing tenants and managers in his absence (Ibid: xliii; Kelso 1984: 47). Four years later, he joined his remaining kin in Mecklenburg County. At the time of his removal, Lewis Burwell V owned 172 enslaved persons on quarters in four Southside counties, many of which made the journey west with the Burwells to more distant estates (Walsh 1997: 211).

Historical sources associated with the removal of the Burwells provide a window into the complexity of social networks that had developed across quarters upon Burwell family estates such as Kingsmill, Utopia, Carter's Grove, and others, transcending plantation boundaries onto neighboring operations and into the city of Williamsburg. Facing sale to new owners, removal to western lands, and ultimately separation from family and friends, many resisted the impending forced uprooting, taking to the surrounding forests and waterways. Twenty or so advertisements appear in the *Virginia*

Gazette for runaways associated with the sale of Burwell properties, an extraordinary number in and of itself, especially, as Walsh notes, that “others likely ran off but were apprehended before their masters resorted to public notices” (Walsh 1997: 213). Many, such as Will and his 19 year old brother James who ran away from new owners near the North Carolina border, and Joe, a man born at Kingsmill around 1743 who ran away from new owners in Hanover County, were suspected of attempting to return to Kingsmill. Another Will, a former ferryman at Kingsmill that had made the westward trek with the elder Burwell in 1775, was captured south of Richmond as he too was attempting to make his way back to Kingsmill Neck. There are nearly as many documented cases of runaways apprehended en route to adjacent quarters at Carter’s Grove in association with the removal of the neighboring Burwell family operation that had also been relocated westward in the 1770s. Still others protested removal by seeking shelter with friends and relatives in the neighborhood, such as Sally, sold in 1776 to a man in Charles City County, who hid herself with the aid of friends and family in Williamsburg, and Tom, who ran off from Kingsmill in 1779 to avoid being sold or transferred to the west (Walsh 1997: 210-215)¹⁰. The forced removal of enslaved persons from Kingsmill transformed the contours of a social terrain that had been shaped over several generations, exposing a geography of intimate relations and underscoring the resolve of enslaved persons to return to communities that had laid deep roots in grounds that had become intimately familiar through the decades.

¹⁰ *Virginia Gazette* advertisements for runaways associated with removal from Kingsmill: (Purdie and Dixon) 3 August 1769, (Dixon and Nicholson) 24 August 1776, (Purdie) 10 July 1778, (Purdie) 2 August 1776, (Dixon and Nicholson) 26 February 1779; CWF Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg

Following the departure of the Burwells, the 1500 acre Kingsmill tract passed through a series of short term owners until it was consolidated with the neighboring Littletown estate and an adjoining quarter to the north by William Allen II of Surry County at the turn of the nineteenth century. These operations were integrated with several others along the James River in lower James City County and peopled primarily with transfers from numerous quarters across a familial network of agricultural enterprises across the river to the south. These consolidated estates constituted grounds that were appropriated by successive generations of enslaved Virginians, who, through their works, lives, and experiences, gave rise to the antebellum Quarterpath neighborhood.

Consolidation: Emergence of the Quarterpath Neighborhood, 1780s-1861

The ascendance of the Allens of Surry County into the upper tier of Virginia's material, social, and political elite follows a similar historical narrative to that of other prominent colonial planter families. Arthur Allen, a merchant-planter born circa 1608 in Bristol, England, claimed headrights for transporting himself and three others to the colony, patenting 200 acres along Lower Chippokes Creek on the south side of the James River in March, 1650. Allen purchased an additional 500 acres adjoining his estate in 1661. Four years later, at the age of 57, he began construction on a brick dwelling of substantial size and expense for the time. Brick construction was a rarity in seventeenth century Virginia that served as a physical marker of permanence set upon the landscape in a time when the majority of planters favored dwellings of less substantial earthfast

(post-in-ground) construction.¹¹ Constructed in the twilight of his life, the brick manor was a material statement intended to convey to neighbors and passers-by Allen's resolve to create an enduring family legacy in the Virginia colony. He died in 1669, leaving the house and more than 2000 acres of land to his son, Arthur Allen II. In retaliation for his support of the royal leadership of the colony, Allen II's brick dwelling was occupied and his crops and livestock pillaged by forces opposing Governor William Berkeley during Bacon's Rebellion of 1676.¹² (Gregory 1990: 1-32)

Arthur Allen II continued to cultivate the wealth left to him by his father, accumulating significant holdings along Upper Chippokes Creek, a few miles upriver from Jamestown opposite the Chickahominy River. He died in 1710, bequeathing his "manor house" in perpetuity to his widow. His eldest son John (c. 1684-1742) established a household on the Upper Chippokes parcel and was residing on the estate by 1728 (Ibid: 33; See Figure 1.2 for location). Allen had inherited 1300 acres when his father died in 1710 and acquired additional lands through marriage ten years later. Following these acquisitions, he began accumulating additional properties and people almost immediately. By 1730, he held title to more than 10,000 acres in multiple counties. The lands and persons inherited from his father near the brick manor-house and at Upper Chippokes had been entailed (Ibid: 35). In 1732 Allen petitioned the General Assembly to dock the entail placed by his father upon the Upper Chippokes parcel in an

¹¹ The Page house at Middle Plantation was similar in construction methods and floor plan, and also dates from the 1660s. It was excavated by the CWF during construction activities at the Foundation's Bruton Heights School Education Center in 1989 (See Metz et al. 1998; For a detailed discussion of the impermanent nature of earthfast construction in early Virginia, see Carson et al. 1988).

¹² Allen's brick house, currently owned by Preservation Virginia, is commonly known today as "Bacon's Castle", although there is no evidence that Nathaniel Bacon played any role in the occupation of the estate.

act stating that he had made “considerable improvements” upon the plantation and intended to “lay out more money in other improvements” if freed of the legal restrictions upon his lands and persons (McIlwaine 1910: 129). He was granted approval to transfer entail from 550 acres at his home farm and principal residence along Upper Chippokes Creek to 3570 acres distributed across other farms and quarters, opening a series of ancillary quarters and redistributing his enslaved workforce across his Southside estates. By the time of his death in 1742, John Allen had amassed over 24,000 acres and 229 enslaved people on seven primary quarters in the Southside counties of Surry, Isle of Wight, Nansemond, and Brunswick (Gregory 1990: 33; Table 1.2). As with the Bray and Burwell family enterprises across middle tidewater, the Allens likely bolstered these newly opened quarters with a combination of additional purchases and transfers from other family estates. John Allen certainly redistributed many individuals that were not sold to other local operations across his own ancillary quarters following the Assembly’s approval to transfer the entail across his newly acquired plantations. It is quite likely that many of the residents of the antebellum Quarterpath neighborhood, perhaps the Quarterpath residents themselves, had roots in this networked group of Southside Allen family quarters.

Like many of their peers the Allens intermarried with other elite planter families. John Allen’s younger brother, Arthur III (c. 1689-1727), married Elizabeth Bray of Littletown on Kingsmill Neck and continued to reside upon the original Allen estate in the brick-manor built by his grandfather. Elizabeth Bray had inherited her father’s Rockahock plantation in New Kent County in 1725 and retained control of Littletown until selling her interest in the estate to her brother a year after her husband’s death in

1728. Through inheritance, purchase, and particularly through marriage, elite planter families such as the Allens, Brays, and Burwells accumulated great wealth, lands, and

Table 1.2 – Summary of Enslaved Persons by Quarter of Residence listed in John Allen's Estate - 1742

<i>Plantation</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Sex Unknown</i>	<i>Total</i>
Home House	S	30	12	8	50
Nottoway Quarter	S,IW,N	18	21	4	43
Three Creeks	S,B	23	14	2	39
Fort & Kellys	B	9	7	1	17
Cypress Swamp	S	5	4	3	12
Old Brick House & Coomers	IW	16	8	1	25
Poplar Swamp	S,B	22	16	5	43
Totals:		123	82	24	229

Legend: S=Surry, IW=Isle of Wight, N=Nansemond, B=Brunswick; (Gregory 1990: 42)

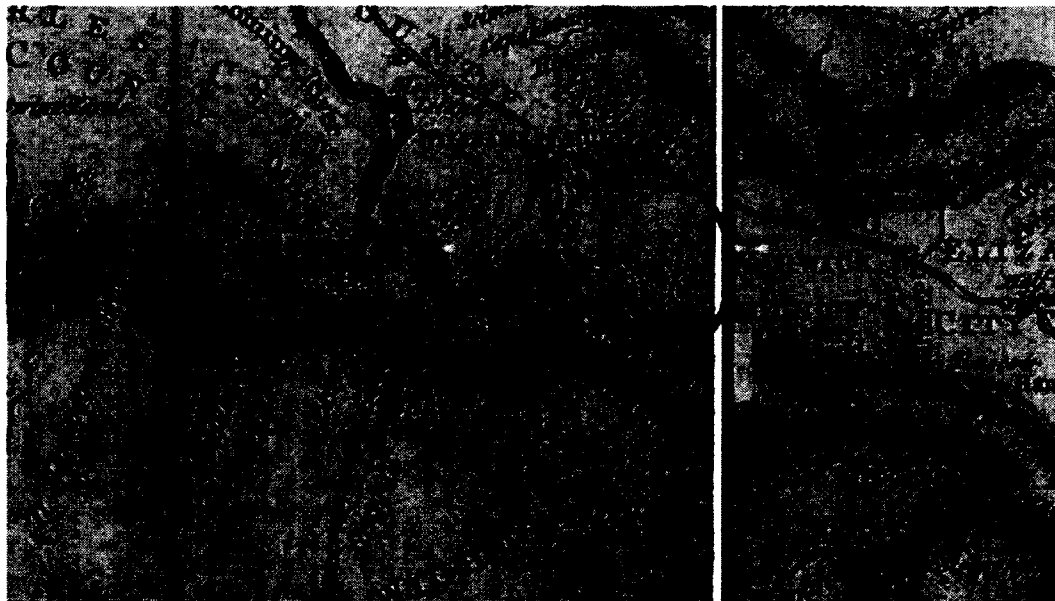


Figure 1.2 – Detail of the Frye-Jefferson map, drafted in 1751. Circled areas depicts core Burwell, Bray, and Allen family plantations that contributed to the emergence of the 19th century Quarterpath neighborhood. Source: Joshua Fry and Peter Jefferson 1755, “A map of the most inhabited part of Virginia containing the whole province of Maryland with part of Pensilvania, New Jersey and North Carolina.” Library of Congress: Washington D.C.

persons as they intertwined ties amongst themselves throughout the eighteenth century. The frustrations of royally appointed governors became apparent as regional colonial leaders and burgesses – a consolidated body of close kin, cousins, and in-laws by the mid eighteenth century – typically presented a united front in representing and promoting their own interests, which lay primarily in enhancing their wealth and prestige with an eye towards creating enduring family legacies by expanding their estates, lands, and people, often at odds with the imperatives of colonial administrators. The social and political influence of these new generations of planters not only expedited the transition in modes of labor in the Virginia colony. They were characteristic of and served to influence regional economic and socio-political dynamics within the greater British Atlantic world (Parent 2003, Jordan 1993, Morgan 1975, Lee 1988, Isaac 1982).

Ownership of enslaved persons often exchanged hands along the lines of elite social unions and alliances, resulting in subsequent transfers of enslaved men and women to ancillary quarters throughout the Virginia tidewater. In tracing the entangled social alliances that developed between elite planter families on the plantations in question, we may also track parallel geographic migrations, through purchase, inheritance, and dowry, of those who preceded the residents of the Quarterpath Site (c. 1840s-1905), and from whom they may have descended. Although Figure 1.3 is a much simplified map illustrating a few of the historically documented transfers¹³ of enslaved persons across local Allen, Bray, and Burwell plantations between 1720-1750, it is a visual representation of the frequency of geographic movements of enslaved persons across

¹³ This illustration does not include the movements of recent Africans purchased from local markets - see Chapter 2 for details.

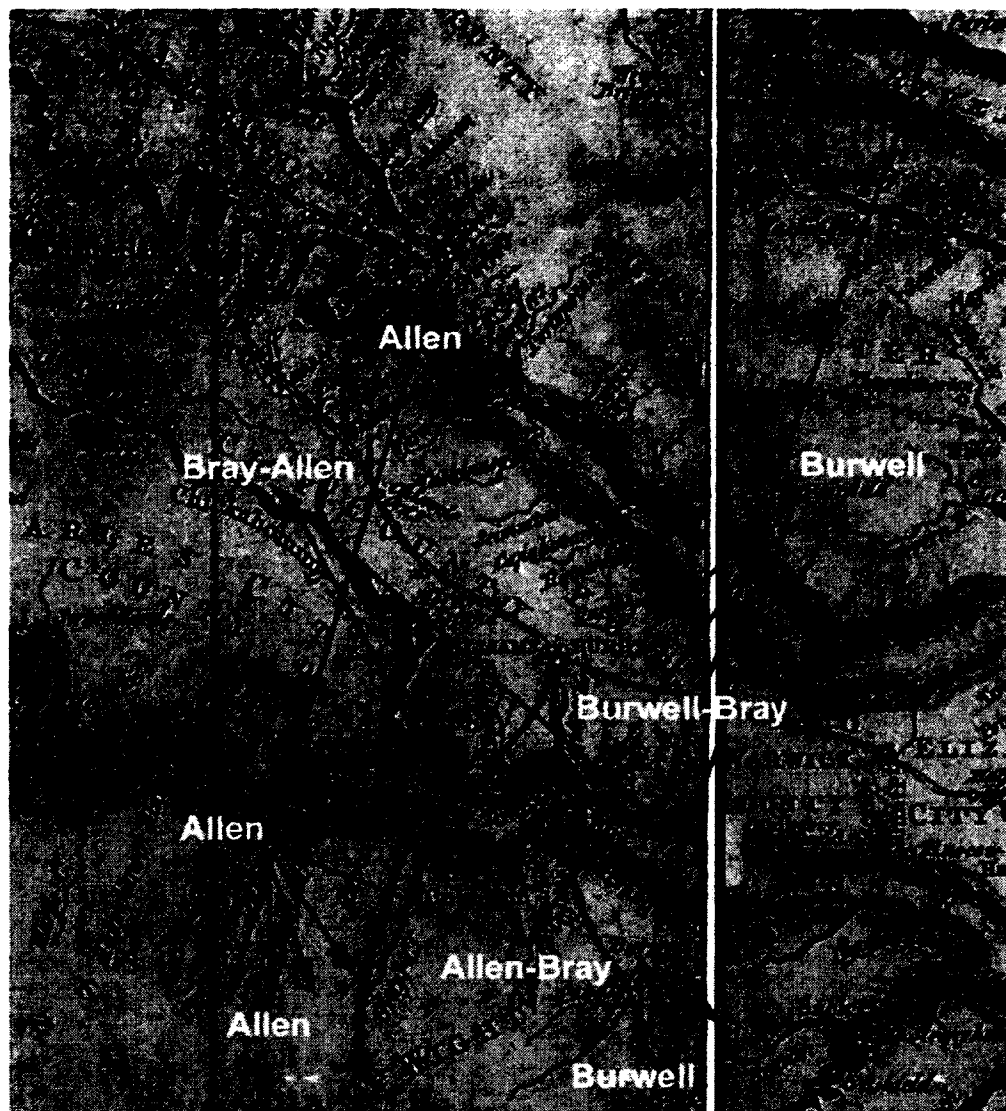


Figure 1.3 – A simplified map of social alliances among the Allens, Brays, and Burwells. Blue arrows indicate transfers of enslaved persons by inheritance and dowry between Allen, Bray, and Burwell plantations between the years 1720-1750. Detail of 1751 Frye-Jefferson map: Library of Congress.

these networked estates during the period. The majority of these cross plantation movements were local. As enslaved persons were transferred to new quarters, it is probable that many would have had opportunities to maintain ties with kin, loved ones, and friends from previous quarters of residence. Thus enslaved social networks may

have come to mirror the geographic expansion of large familial agricultural enterprises across the region. The antebellum neighborhood complex that enveloped the Quarterpath Site was cultivated of deep roots that had initially been laid by enslaved men and women decades previous along these distinct patterns of geographic dispersal.

John Allen died without issue in 1742, bequeathing his home estate at Upper Chippokes to William Allen (1734-1793), his nephew and son of his younger brother Joseph. Joseph Allen was living in New Kent County, serving as a member of the county commission by 1732 (Ibid: 45). He died when his only son William was two years of age. His widow Hannah and brother John Allen obtained an Act of Assembly in 1736 to remove the entail on Joseph's estates in order to sell a portion of his lands and persons to cover existing debts, subsequently leaving 900 acres in Isle of Wight, 2000 acres in Surry, 720 acres in New Kent, and at least 30 enslaved persons to his infant son (Ibid: 45; Hening 1820: Vol. IV, 539). William retained the estate inherited from his father in New Kent as his primary residence before taking possession of the Upper Chippokes plantation, perhaps bolstering the enslaved workforce on his Surry property with transfers from his New Kent holdings (Ibid: 45, see Figure 1.3).

William Allen became eligible to claim his inheritance in 1755 and was probably living on the Surry County tract shortly thereafter, appearing in a Williamsburg merchant's account book in multiple references the same year as "William Allen, Esq. of Surry" and "William Allen, Esq. Chipac's [Chippokes]" (Ibid: 46) and constructing a new manor house on the estate shortly thereafter. Although William focused his attention primarily on his Southside holdings (Table 1.3), his sons John and William II (1768-1831) saw an opportunity for expansion across the James River in the vacuum created by

the departure of the Burwells and others who journeyed westward. John and the elder William Allen worked out an agreement with a James City planter in 1785 in which John Allen acquired the 2000 acre Neck of Land operation adjacent to Jamestown Island in exchange for 2144 acres on the Southside (Ibid: 128; JCC land tax records 1782-1832: CWF Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg). John Allen likely transferred the bulk of the labor force that worked the fields at Neck of Land from the network of family quarters across the river to the south. This was the first of a series of transactions by the Allen brothers who moved to acquire several large James City County holdings recently vacated as planters such as the Brays and Burwells removed their operations westward. Around the turn of the nineteenth century these holdings were consolidated and integrated into an immense antebellum plantation enterprise stretched along the James River watershed from tidewater to the city of Richmond.

Table 1.3 - Acres Held by William Allen I in Surviving Land Tax Records, 1782-1793

<i>County</i>	<i>Acres</i>		
	1782-1784	1786-1787	1792-1793
Brunswick	4000	4000	4000
Greensville	3800	3800	3800
Nansemond	1000	0	0
New Kent	750	906	906
Southampton	4500	4500	4500
Surry	4011	1571	1348
Sussex	7269	7269	7269
Totals:	25,330	22,046	21,823

** Source: Gregory 1990: 48*

Both John and the elder William Allen died in 1793, leaving William Allen II the primary heir to the bulk of Allen family lands and persons. William II remained on the Upper Chippokes estate, renamed Claremont by the time of the Revolution. He appears

in James City County land tax records as “William Allen, SC [Surry County]” with the purchase of the 1280 acre Littletown plantation on Kingsmill Neck from the estate of James Bray Johnson in 1796, followed by the acquisition of the neighboring 1500 acre Kingsmill tract five years later (JCC Land Tax Records 1782-1832; CWF Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg). In 1803 Allen purchased an adjacent 920 acre plantation from the executors of the estate of James Southall, a recently deceased (1802) plantation speculator and late proprietor of the Raleigh Tavern in Williamsburg. Depicted on the 1781 Desandrouins map, “Southall’s Quarter” directly abutted the Kingsmill and Littletown tracts to the north, increasing Allen’s Kingsmill enterprise to 3700 contiguous acres and extending his operation from the James River coastline to within a mile or so of the city of Williamsburg (Figure 1.4). The Quarterpath Site would be constructed on this parcel within a few decades. In 1805, after nearly a decade of legal proceedings following the death of his brother John, who had left no apparent heir, William Allen II obtained rights to the Neck of Land plantation as well. Over the next two decades he acquired several additional tracts adjacent to Neck of Land as well as a 12 acre parcel abutting his Kingsmill operation, increasing his holdings to 2271 contiguous acres at Neck of Land and 3712 at Kingsmill. (Table 1.4). (JCC Land Tax Records 1782-1832: CWF Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg)

In removing operations from Kingsmill Neck the Burwells and Brays had taken the majority of their labor forces westward, although some were left behind (Walsh 1997). It is possible that some of the original Burwell and Bray group may have been sold along with the Kingsmill estates or to other area plantations. However the majority of the people that worked the grounds at Allen’s Kingsmill and Neck of Land estates in

Table 1.4 – Summary of Lands Acquired in James City County by William Allen II with Assessed Values

<i>Parcel</i>	<i>Year of Acquisition</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Value of Buildings</i>	<i>Value of Land & Buildings</i>
Littletown	1796	1280	\$2,500	\$8,890
Kingsmill	1801	1500	\$7,000	\$18,990
Southall's Quarter	1803	920	-	\$3,220
Tyler's	1810	12	-	\$42
<i>Kingsmill Operation</i>		<i>3712</i>	<i>\$9,500</i>	<i>\$31,142</i>
Neck of Land	1805	2000	\$1,200	\$11,200
Broadribb's	1810	126	-	\$441
Wilkinson's	1826	145	-	\$725
<i>Neck of Land Operation</i>		<i>2271</i>	<i>\$1,200</i>	<i>\$12,366</i>
Totals:		5983	\$10,700	\$43,508

** Values after readjustment in 1820 JCC Land Tax Records, Wilkinson's from 1828 Land Tax, Littletown values include a mill assessed at \$1500, labeled "Johnson's Mill" on 1781 Desandrouins Map (See Figure 1.6) (JCC Land Tax Records 1782-1832: CWF Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg).*

the antebellum era were likely transferred from the network of quarters across Allen family enterprises on the Southside. Some may have had more distant roots in the eighteenth century Bray-Allen dowry transfers from Kingsmill Neck (see Figure 1.3). After consolidating his holdings in lower James City County, William Allen II placed great emphasis upon maintaining his enslaved labor force intact across his conglomerated estates. He ordered in his 1832 will that his estate “both ‘real and personal,’ be ‘kept together . . . for the term of five years’ after his death in order that his debts and legacies could be paid out of the profits, after which time his executor would dispose of what ‘he thinks proper’ of the personal estate, *other than slaves or plate*” (Goodwin 1958: lx, my italics). Allen died without issue in 1831, bequeathing a life interest in his estates to his grand-nephew William Griffin Orgain (1829-1875) “upon condition that he take the name of William Allen” (Ibid: lx). His grand-nephew stood to inherit “lands and

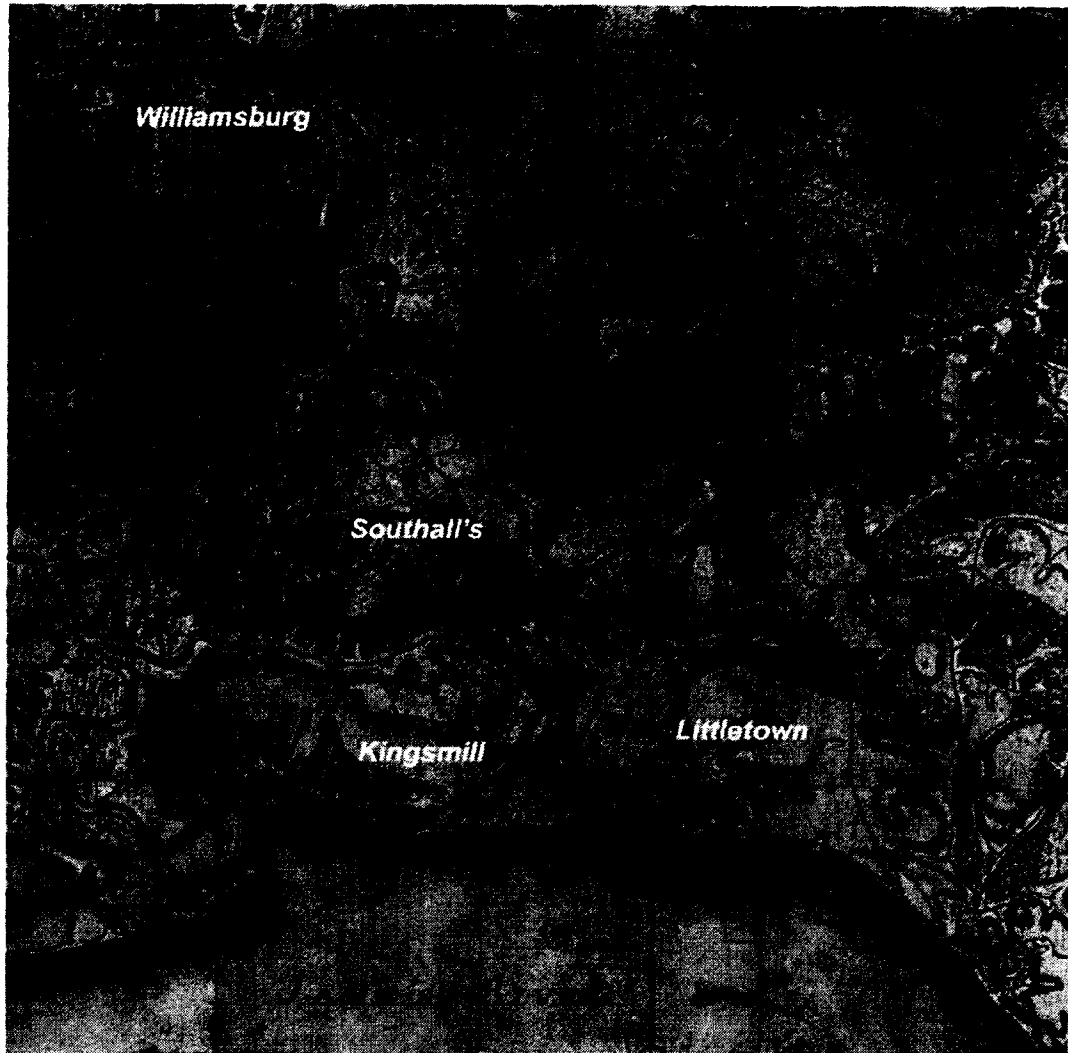


Figure 1.4 – Detail of 1781 Desandrouins Map. Adjacent tracts “King’s Mill”, “Little Town”, and “Southall’s Quarter” purchased and consolidated by William Allen II into a single agricultural estate with multiple quartering sites between 1796-1803.

plantations in Curls Neck in Henrico, and all the slaves now upon the same,’ all lands, plantations and slaves in the County of Surry, including ‘Claremont,’ with all plate, furniture, etc. not otherwise disposed of by the will; all ‘lands and plantations in the County of James City which lies on the right of the road leading from Williamsburg to York Town (Kingsmill), and all the Slaves & other personal estate now at and upon the same”. (Ibid: lx)

William Griffin Orgain subsequently changed his name to William Allen. In December of 1842, his mother purchased Jamestown Island in its entirety and consolidated the property with the adjoining Neck of Land tract, installing an overseer on the island and increasing the Neck of Land operation in size to 3046 acres (JCC Land Tax Records 1833-1861: CWF Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg; Goodwin 1958: ix-lxiii; Gregory 1990: 65). By the time he came of age in 1850, William (Orgain) Allen assumed control of a network of plantations that comprised nearly 23,000 acres of land and 347 enslaved persons in Surry, Henrico, Charles City, and James City Counties (Table 1.5, Figure 1.5). The consolidated plantations of Kingsmill Neck and adjoining operations on the Neck of Land and Jamestown Island, tended by an enslaved labor force of between 98-114 persons scattered across multiple domestic quarters, comprised just over a third of his total holdings.

The two archaeologically identified dwellings at the Quarterpath domestic quarter were constructed adjacent to a large agricultural field complex on the previously independent Southall's Quarter tract in the second quarter of the nineteenth century (Figures 1.4, 1.6). From its inception the quartering site was an integral component and a key domestic locus in a multi-plantation agricultural enterprise. With the exception of a single farm between Kingsmill and Neck of Land-Jamestown Island, the two operations occupied a nearly contiguous, roughly nine mile stretch of James River coastline, tended by an enslaved labor force of about 100 persons scattered throughout at least eight quarters adjacent to the major field complexes. These included bounded agricultural fields on each of the original Kingsmill, Littleton, and Southall's tracts, Jamestown Island, Neck of Land, and several ancillary fields adjacent to Neck of Land opposite

Table 1.5 - Acres Held by William (Orgain) Allen Reported in Surviving Land Tax Records, 1834 - 1875

County	Acres						
	1834	1841	1847	1850	1857	1861	1875
Brunswick	1098	0	0	0	0	0	0
Charles City	0	0	925	925	0	0	0
Henrico	3201	3201	3201	4245	4245	4245	3207
James City	5983	5983	5983	7686	8090	8090	8090
City of Richmond	0	0	0	0	0	1 lot	2 lots
Southampton	6448	0	0	0	0	0	0
Surry	9686	9470	9711	9711	13,025	13,002	9750
York	0	494	394	404	0	0	0
Totals:	26,416	19,148	20,214	22,961	25,764	25,337	21,047

* In 1834, 1098 acres in Brunswick bequeathed to Dr. Robert B. Starke and 6448 acres in Brunswick to guardians of William Allen II's nephews and nieces. 404 ½ acres switched from York County to James City as a result of county survey and realignment in 1856 (JCC Land Tax Records 1833-1861: CWF Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg). Sources: Gregory 1990: 68; JCC Land Tax Records 1833-1861



Figure 1.5 – Major estates in the Allen family network of plantations along the James River by 1850. From left to right: Curle’s Neck (Henrico County), Berkeley (Charles City County), Claremont (Surry County), Neck of Land-Jamestown Island, and Kingsmill (James City County)

Powhatan creek (see Figure 4.2). The plantation seat for the consolidated Kingsmill estate lay at the original site of the Burwell period manor home south of the Quarterpath Site along Quarterpath Road. Brick manor homes from earlier independent operations existed at Neck of Land and Jamestown Island as well. Enslaved workers across these estates were not directly overseen by the Allens, who ran their network of plantations from the family seat at Claremont in Surry, employing managers to oversee local operations, and residents of more isolated quarters such as Quarterpath may have had a reprieve from the continual surveillance of plantation managers.

In moving to purchase adjoined plantations the Allens streamlined their agricultural operations in lower James City County. Bounded fields, processing facilities, supportive infrastructure, nodes of transportation, and enslaved laborers were consolidated into centralized units. Enslaved individuals across these adjoined and neighboring enterprises were almost certainly consolidated into common labor pools during the intensive activities that marked harvest times (see Chapter 4). Yet engaging in common labors was probably not the extent of interaction between residents across these large networked estates. The antebellum neighborhood that enveloped the Quarterpath Site may have essentially been the product of a series of *incidental convergences*. In striving towards greater agricultural productivity and increased profits, the Allens developed and expanded the infrastructure – roads, carriage paths, wharves, river landings, and footbridges – that connected agricultural field complexes across these formerly independent plantations with barns, stables, and other agricultural support facilities and they constructed additional quartering sites such as the Quarterpath domestic complex adjacent to bounded agricultural fields (see Figure 4.2). Enslaved

residents likely took advantage of these developments as well. For those that could muster the energy to make a one or two hour walk to a neighboring quarter or a longer trek to a more distant quarter after nightfall or on Sunday, the geographic proximity and structural improvements between the major domestic loci presented opportunities to visit and to socialize, to initiate romantic liaisons, to create new social unions and to contest others, often without crossing beyond plantation borders and risking potentially severe bodily punishment if caught traveling without leave to do so. Likewise, the more liminal areas between domestic quarters – places such as the forests and bottomlands in which enslaved persons typically knew more intimately than whites – provided a degree of seclusion from the prying eyes of plantation managers, cover for clandestine meetings, and shelter for runaways within reach of friends and family.

Figure 1.6 details the approximate locations of known contemporaneous field quarters across these estates. At least eight known field quarters (archaeologically documented and historic map projections) were occupied simultaneously across Kingsmill and Neck of Land-Jamestown Island, along with several other contemporaneous quarters on neighboring plantation grounds. Quarters on these consolidated estates were connected by a network of roads and pathways adjacent to bounded agricultural fields and most were sited within a short walking distance. Neighboring quarters across the Kingsmill tracts were likely within an hour by foot, with more distant quarters no more than a one to two hour walk. Quarters at Neck of Land and Jamestown Island were well within an hour by foot across the connecting bridge, perhaps less by canoe or skiff. The Kingsmill and Neck of Land-Jamestown Island operations were connected by way of an inland road that extended through the city of

Williamsburg, by less formal carriage paths paralleling the shoreline, and likely by footpaths and informal trails cutting through the communicating forests and bottomlands. Each operation maintained a deep water wharf with ferry service as well as informal river landings. It is about a two to three hour voyage by manually powered watercraft upriver from the shores of Kingsmill to Jamestown Island, with the completion of the return trip downriver in about half the time.



Figure 1.6 – Locations of antebellum quartering sites in simultaneous occupation. Aerial view of lower James City County. Approximate boundaries of Neck of Land–Jamestown Island and Kingsmill plantation operations in yellow, the Quarterpath Site “Qpath” in turquoise, city of Williamsburg and local plantations in white. Sites of known or potential antebellum quarters in turquoise (archaeologically excavated and historic map projections). Sources: aerial image taken April, 2010: Google Earth; 1781 Desandrouins map series, 1871 land plat, James City County Land Tax Records, 1782-1832, 1833-1861: CWF Rockefeller Library Archives, Williamsburg; VA DHR, Richmond.

Archaeological evidence suggests a continuous period of occupation at the Quarterpath Site, perhaps by one or two extended family groups, from its inception circa 1840s through Emancipation and until site abandonment circa 1905. Many of the residents of the quarters across the antebellum networked estates of Kingsmill and Neck of Land-Jamestown Island may have been third or fourth (or perhaps fifth) generation descendants of the enslaved residents of those who originally opened the grounds of Allen family plantations on the Southside of the James River to cultivation in the first half of the eighteenth century. Whether or not they may have been recent arrivals from other quarters at Kingsmill, Neck of Land-Jamestown Island, or from the opposite shore of the James River in Surry, the residents of quarters across these adjoined estates were essentially neighbors, thus it might be productive to adopt a “neighborhood focused” approach in the interpretation the Quarterpath Site. Subsequent chapters will explore these connections, the sociohistorical factors that promoted geographically dispersed social networks amongst this group of enslaved residents and the manners in which these networks became emplaced across a diverse array of plantation landscapes.

Chapter 2

Quarterpath Prelude: Mechanisms of Neighborhood Development in the Lower Chesapeake

By the 1840s the Quarterpath quarter was one of at least eight affiliated domestic quartering sites positioned across the consolidated plantations of Kingsmill Neck and upon neighboring operations at Neck of Land-Jamestown Island. The Quarterpath domestic complex was a gathering place, a key domestic locus in a vibrant antebellum plantation neighborhood complex that materialized along the lines of social networks cultivated by enslaved persons, enjoining multiple quartering sites as well as a host of other local places. Although they lived in a neighborhood that had been decades in the making, the Quarterpath residents may have had roots in earlier plantation communities along the James River watershed. Plantation neighborhoods such as the antebellum complex that enveloped the Quarterpath domestic quarter were often cultivated in the midst of series of incidental convergences between initiatives on the part of enslaved men and women, who extended and maintained ties of kinship and camaraderie to residents of other quarters within and beyond plantation boundaries, and circumstances dictated by the political and economic imperatives of planters. This chapter explores these complex mechanisms of community development and the manners in which they may have stimulated the growth of geographically dispersed social networks that, in turn, contributed to the emergence and development of the antebellum Quarterpath neighborhood and others throughout the region.

Neighborhood Prelude: Population Density, Stabilization, and Growth in Enslaved Chesapeake Communities

1619 was a year marked by many significant events in the struggling Virginia colony. The Virginia Company had ended its monopoly on land ownership the previous year, authorizing the dispersal of lands to individuals and initiating the system of headrights, encouraging private investment and settlement beyond the confines of Jamestown Island. The Company's change of heart spurred population growth associated with a pattern of plantation development characterized by dispersal across greater distances. The "Great Charter" outlined a new system of governance to accommodate population growth and expansion in the colony. In the midst of an outbreak of malaria, the House of Burgesses held its first meeting on Jamestown Island in late July, 1619 with representatives from various larger plantations and locales. Despite an increase in immigration and a new representative government, the Virginia colony continued to suffer from a chronic labor shortage that effectively restricted the amount of arable land that was able to be put to the plow. The following month a Dutch man-of-war arrived at Point Comfort and made contact with the seat of government at Jamestown. John Rolfe recounted that the Dutch vessel "brought not any thing but 20 and odd Negroes, w^{ch} the Governo^r and Cape Marchant bought for victualle at the best and easyest rate they could" (Sluiter 1997: 396). These "20 and odd Negroes" represent the first presence of Africans in the British North American colonies.

Before berthing in Virginia, the Dutch ship "of Flushing" had chanced upon the *Treasurer*, an English man-of-war, in the West Indies. The captains agreed to a "consortship", a temporary alliance with the intent of raiding Spanish routes of commerce

on the high seas and sharing in profit and plunder. Documents recently discovered in a Spanish archive detail an attack off Campeche in late July or early August, 1619 by English “corsairs” upon the Portuguese captained *São João Bautista*, bound from Luanda, the capital of the Portuguese colony of Angola, to Vera Cruz in accordance with an *asiento*, a license to deliver enslaved laborers to Spanish colonies. The *Bautista* was en route with a cargo of 350 enslaved Africans, of which “the English corsairs left [Captain Manuel Mendes de Acunha] with only 147, including 24 slave boys he was forced to sell in Jamaica, where he had to refresh, for he had many sick aboard, and many had already died” (Ibid: 397). John Thornton suggests that the Africans captured from the *Bautista* were likely victims of a Portuguese military campaign against the neighboring Kingdom of Ndongo between 1618-1620, in which some 50,000 Africans were captured and exported, “If the victims of Mendes de Vasconcelos's war were among the twenty slaves brought to Virginia in 1619, they did not conform to the stereotyped, parochial image of Africans from precolonial villages. They were more likely from an urban or at least urbanized area (though they probably knew how to raise crops and domesticate animals) and they had learned the rudiments of Christianity” (Thornton 1998: 422-434).

The “20 and odd” Africans purchased by colony officials were almost certainly put to labor as indentured servants¹⁴, as were other Africans that trickled into the colony in the next few decades. The association of the group of West Central Africans with Christianity in particular may have been viewed as an attribute barring them from being

¹⁴ James Deetz asserts that 15 of the “20 and odd” Africans arriving in 1620 were sent to labor at Flowerdew Hundred, one of the original “particular plantations” that had begun to be settled and planted along the James River the previous year (Deetz 1993: 3).

considered servants for life by early English colonists. Yet two decades after the arrival of the first Africans at Jamestown the House of Burgesses moved to enact legislation that signaled a legal distinction between the rights of colonists of European and African descent, "ALL persons except negroes to be provided with arms and ammunition or be fined at pleasure of the Governor and Council" (Hening 1820: Vol. I, 226). The following year three servants attempted to breach indenture by fleeing to Maryland. They were eventually captured and sentenced to thirty "stripes", or lashes. As an additional punishment James Gregory and Victor were saddled with an additional four years of servitude. John Punch, a black man and third of the runaways subsequently became the first documented person in the Virginia colony ordered to serve for life (Catterall 1968: Vol I, 77).

In 1662 colonial legislators began to define and codify a system of hereditarily transferrable chattel enslavement. The statute defined the status of a child as enslaved or free based upon the legal condition of the mother¹⁵ and was probably intended to curtail interracial unions by discriminating against children of composite ancestry. The passage of statutory regulations intended to maintain discrete populations heralds the fact that several types of mixed populations had emerged in the colony by the mid-seventeenth century and suggests that colonial legislators expressed concern over the prevalence of such unions as well as an increase in Virginia's free black population. A 1691 act "for suppressing outlying Slaves" forbade marriage between English and "negroes, mulattoes,

¹⁵ "WHEREAS some doubts have arrisen whether children got by any Englishman upon a negro woman should be slave or ffree, Be it therefore enacted and declared by this present grand assembly, that all children borne in this country shalbe held bond or free only according to the condition of the mother" (Hening 1820: Vol. II, 170). The statute ordered that children of composite ancestry born to English women were to serve as indentured servants until 30 years of age (see Chapter 1, footnote 12, Walsh 1997: 35-36).

and Indians” altogether, under penalty of fine and removal from the colony.¹⁶ In 1705 the Virginia House of Burgesses passed a series of laws effectively consolidating the system of enslavement and regulating interactions between citizens and enslaved individuals. The statutes defined enslaved persons as real estate and allowed for transfer by rite of inheritance (or dower) to widows, descendants, and heirs, and to be held or sold as payment against outstanding debts. Those who accidentally killed enslaved persons during bouts of corporal punishment were not to be held legally accountable¹⁷ and movements of enslaved individuals were severely restricted by necessitating written permission to travel “abroad”, or off plantation. Although Christian rites of baptism had been disallowed as a route to freedom since 1667, the 1705 laws formally declared that all non-Christian servants entering the colony were to be immediately enslaved (Hening 1820: Vol III, 229-278, 298, 333-336, 447-462).

Enslaved population statistics vary among historians due to the sheer magnitude of ships, nations and private interests, colonies and ports of entry involved in the transatlantic trade. However it is quite clear that the numbers of enslaved persons imported into Chesapeake ports, including direct importation from the African continent and secondary importation from British colonies in the West Indies, began to increase exponentially after 1650, peaking in the mid-eighteenth century and waning after the

¹⁶ “Be it enacted by the authoritie aforesaid, and it is hereby enacted, that for the time to come, whatsoever English or other white man or woman being free shall intermarry with a negroe, mulatto, or Indian man or woman bond or free shall within three months after such marriage be banished and removed from this dominion forever” (Hening 1820: Vol III, 86-88). This section of the law remained in force until the U.S. Supreme Court rendered it unconstitutional in *Loving v. Virginia* in 1967 (Law Library of Congress, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/awhhtml/awlaw3/notes.html#i35>).

¹⁷ A 1669 act about the “casuall killing of slaves” had removed legal protection for the lives of enslaved persons, rationalizing that corporal punishment was necessary since time of service could not be extended in the case of those already serving for life (Hening 1820: Vol II, 270).

Table 2.1 - Estimated Number of Enslaved Persons Arriving at Major Regions in the British Atlantic World, 1601-1866

	Mainland North America			British Caribbean		
	Chesapeake Bay	Carolinas/ Georgia	Northern Colonies	Jamaica	Barbados	Other Islands
1601-1625	0	0	0	100	0	500
1626-1650	100	0	0	0	26,000	800
1651-1675	2,900	0	1,100	18,000	63,000	6,300
1676-1700	9,200	0	1,700	73,000	93,000	30,600
1701-1725	30,000	5,500	1,300	135,000	96,000	50,200
1726-1750	54,000	36,000	12,000	188,000	74,000	95,100
1751-1775	31,000	76,000	11,000	232,000	107,000	241,300
1776-1800	500	27,000	300	300,000	28,000	265,200
1801-1825	70	67,000	300	69,000	6,800	108,600
1826-1850	0	0	0	2,400	400	7,900
1851-1866	0	300	0	0	0	0
Total:	127,770	211,800	27,700	1,017,500	494,200	806,500

Source: *Eltis & Richardson 2010: 200-1*. Note: Chesapeake Bay includes VA and MD naval districts.

Table 2.2 - Enslaved Persons Arriving in Virginia Naval Districts, 1698-1774

	York	Upper James	Lower James	Rappahannock	South Potomac	District Unknown	Total
1698-1703	1,620+	15+	?	45+	21+	181	1,882+
1704-1718	4,370	166	743	927	174	4,915	11,295
1719-1730	11,011	197	183	2,785	--	1,291	15,467
1731-1745	11,727	3,405	2,433	3,212	1,169	640	22,586
1746-1760	4,283	5,764	1,302	1,279	480	2,123	15,231
1761-1774	281	6,732+	1,110	2,412	214	883	16,532
Total:	33,292+	16,279+	5,771	10,660+	2,058+	10,033	78,093

Source: *Walsh 2001: 139-170*. Walsh notes that data includes all known Africans as well as enslaved persons imported from the West Indies and other mainland colonies. Note port-of-entry for Upper James Naval District at Burwell's Landing at Kingsmill was most active between 1731-1775, the period in which Lewis Burwell III and his son Burwell IV served as successive Naval Officers for the district.

Table 2.3 - Enslaved Population Growth in Virginia by decade, 1700-1800

	Enslaved Population	African Born	Virginia Born	Percent African Born	Rate of Natural Increase
1700	13,000	6,500	6,500	50%	0.2%
1710	19,500	10,161	9,339	52%	0.9%
1720	27,000	12,209	14,791	45%	1.0%
1730	40,000	17,530	22,470	44%	3.0%
1740	65,000	22,288	42,712	34%	4.7%
1750	105,000	22,544	82,456	21%	2.7%
1760	140,500	19,236	121,264	14%	2.3%
1770	180,500	15,973	164,527	9%	2.4%
1780	224,000	10,916	213,084	5%	1.8%
1790	293,000	4,740	288,260	2%	3.1%
1800	346,000	678	345,322	0.5%	1.8%

Source: Morgan 1998: 61, 81

Revolution (Tables 2.1, 2.2). The proportion of Virginia-born enslaved persons continued to increase and eventually surpassed the number of Africans in the colony towards the mid-eighteenth century (Table 2.3). Morgan notes that “As early as the second decade of the eighteenth century, Virginia’s slave population began to grow from natural increase, an unprecedented event for any New World slave population.” Comparing Virginia to South Carolina, he continues, “From about midcentury, the African American population of the Chesapeake . . . had reached a stability and maturity . . . that its Lowcountry counterpart would not experience for at least another sixty years. It grew *primarily* from natural increase, and at a rapid rate.” (Ibid: 80-84, original italics). Another way of phrasing this would be to say that mechanisms of family and community development may have become successful in the Chesapeake much earlier than in other diasporic communities. Given the disproportionate sex ratios that characterized enslaved populations in quarters across the majority of Chesapeake plantations throughout the first

half of the eighteenth century, these data suggest that residents across Chesapeake quarters likely fostered intimate relationships across plantation borders. Amongst large plantations, such as those that eventually gave rise to the Quarterpath neighborhood, enslaved persons were commonly transferred across networked quarters along the lines of elite social alliances (see Figure 1.3). These populations were, in turn, bolstered with an influx of new Africans purchased as ancillary quarters were opened. Some elite tidewater planters, such as Robert “King” Carter, employed strategies “for forcing new Africans to become productive workers and reconciling them to bondage” by actively encouraging them to “form families” within plantation boundaries “as soon as possible” (see Walsh 1997: 83-84). Enslaved men and women also began to cultivate social networks throughout quarters at home and on more distant plantations. The creation of geographically dispersed plantation neighborhoods not only paralleled but contributed significantly to the emergence and continuity of settled African American populations in the region.

Lorena Walsh notes that on the largest tidewater Virginia plantation operations, such as those maintained by the Allens, Burwells, Brays, and others, “the last concentrated additions of forced African migrants were confined to a relatively brief span of time in the first third of the eighteenth century” (Walsh 1998: 137). She cites a hypothetical demographic model after the Rutmans (1984) detailing changes in population dynamics occurring over a period of fifty years in a single cargo of enslaved Africans entering the Chesapeake during the early eighteenth century, “Upon arrival the group would have consisted . . . primarily of young men and women between the ages of fifteen and twenty-nine, with males outnumbering females by two to one, and a handful

of children of younger age.” Accounting for a mortality rate among newcomers, “victims of the trauma of enslavement and forced transatlantic transportation, as well as of exposure to new diseases in an unaccustomed environment”, she concludes that after two decades, “the group would include a disproportionate number of aging African-born adults with men outnumbering women by nearly two to one”. Younger people would be mostly Virginia-born. After forty years the numbers of older men and women would remain disproportionately high but the proportion of children and young persons would begin to approach levels one would expect of a stable, closed population. The ratio of Virginia-born persons, those under about age forty-five, would by this time greatly outnumber those whose origins could be traced back to the African continent, “still nearly 20 percent of the whole, would be aging African-born survivors”, persons who potentially wielded great influence in developing enslaved communities (Walsh 1998: 137-140, Rutman and Rutman 1984). The utility of hypothetical demographic models when compared against the weight of actual works and lives forged under brutal conditions wrought by a colonial society built upon a system of enslavement is limited to be certain. Yet the models presented by scholars such as Walsh and the Rutmans are useful in visualizing and interpreting the human dimension represented by general historical population statistics, in successive generations comprised of diverse groups of individuals that contributed in a multitude of unique and deeply *personal* ways to the creation of dynamic enslaved communities in the Chesapeake region.

In a letter written in July, 1736 to the Earl of Edgemont, William Byrd II of Westover in Charles City County lamented, “They import so many negroes hither, that I fear this colony will some time or other be confirmed by the name of New Guinea”

(Tinling 1977: Vol II, 487). Byrd's sentiment was born of the decade with the highest proportion of vessels arriving with cargoes of enslaved Africans at nearby ports of call along the Upper James River at Burwell's landing on Kingsmill Neck and at the deep water landing on the York River across the Peninsula at Yorktown. 1740-1790, a fifty year period articulated as "the transformation of Virginia" by the prolific social historian Rhys Isaac (Isaac 1982), was marked by a steady increase in the proportion of enslaved persons across tidewater Virginia counties even as direct importation of Africans declined in the years leading to the Revolution, a phenomenon that weighed heavily upon prominent colonials such as Byrd and his contemporaries as they sought to enforce the mechanisms of statutory dominion that upheld the system of enslavement in the colony – "Numbers," Byrd continued, "make them insolent, & then foul means must do, what fair will not" (Ibid: 488). Yet these population statistics can be somewhat deceiving, as Kulikoff's research illustrates that the majority of enslaved persons in tidewater counties with some of the highest proportions of enslaved residents typically lived in units of either 11-20 or 21+ persons, in quarters upon larger plantation complexes (Kulikoff: 1993: 474).¹⁸ The points of view of differing historical protagonists must be taken into account in historical and archaeological works, for the lives and experiences of each – enslaved persons residing upon small or large plantation operations, middling or elite planters, free black agriculturalists and artisans, townsfolk, etc. – differed accordingly.

¹⁸ Thus Morgan notes that "even in the counties with the largest slave populations, at least a quarter of the households owned no slaves at all" (Morgan 1998: 100).

Mechanisms of Neighborhood Development in Virginia's Middle Tidewater

Several distinct approaches have been applied by scholars in regards to the development of multi-ethnic communities in the composite Atlantic World throughout the period of enslavement. Kulikoff asserts that Africans and African-Americans in the Chesapeake developed “a settled community life very slowly”. He posits three stages of community development¹⁹ spanning from the mid-seventeenth to the turn of the nineteenth centuries:

“From roughly 1650 to 1690, blacks assimilated the norms of white society, but the growth of the number of blacks also triggered white repression. The period from about 1690 to 1740 was an era of heavy black immigration, small plantation sizes, and social conflicts among blacks. The infusion of Africans often disrupted newly formed slave communities. Finally, from 1740 to 1790, immigration declined and then stopped, plantation sizes increased, the proportion of blacks in the population grew, and divisions among slaves disappeared, consequently native blacks in the tidewater formed settled communities” (Kulikoff 1993: 456).

Kulikoff's model of community formation relies upon 1) patterning in geographic origins among various Chesapeake localities extrapolated from documentary sources relevant to the heaviest period of forced migration (1720-1740) at one of the Chesapeake's busiest ports-of-entry (York), 2) linguistic models associated with development of various pidgins and creoles on both sides of Atlantic, and 3) plantation size. Recent scholarly works are helping add nuance to our comprehension of some of the manners in which members of various African ethnicities may have contributed to the emergence of cohesive communities in the Americas (see Gomez 1998, Thornton 1998, Heywood 2002, Smallwood 2007, Young 2011). Local markets in enslaved persons reflected a

¹⁹ Berlin (1998) and Morgan (1998) also posit three stages of African & African American community development in the Chesapeake. Although the timing of the periods varies slightly between each model, the historical characteristics and trajectories of each are quite similar. Berlin cites Charter, Plantation, and Revolutionary Generations while Morgan posits Frontier, Institution building, and Mature phases.

complex and fluctuating array of transatlantic economic and trade relationships involving systems of credit and speculation against successive commodity crops and personal relationships between planters, sea captains, and entrepreneurs. Yet, newly published findings on forced migration patterns²⁰ continue to demonstrate and refine “strongly patterned distributions of Africans in receiving colonies”, contradicting “the widely accepted supposition of almost random migration flows” previously held by many scholars (Walsh 2001: 139-140).

Walsh (2001) presents a recently refined and detailed body of data that suggests regional and temporal distinctions in the compositions of enslaved populations throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed between 1698-1774. Refuting the notion, “firmly entrenched in Chesapeake historiography”, that “many of the region's slaves were a mixed lot of seasoned hands, or perhaps were Caribbean-born creoles, brought from the West Indies after a long period of ecological and cultural adjustment”, Walsh explains that over 90% of enslaved persons disembarking in Chesapeake ports in the eighteenth century, and 97% of forced migrants brought into the York, Upper James, and Rappahannock naval districts, “either arrived directly from Africa or were transshipped from the West Indies after only a [very] brief period of recuperation from their transatlantic ordeal” (Ibid: 144-145). Furthermore, emerging communities in some Chesapeake localities may have been less heterogeneous than originally anticipated by many historians. “The Chesapeake – where settlement was dispersed, landing sites multiple, and slave buyers forced by relative poverty to build up African labor forces piecemeal”, explains Walsh, “has been considered a region where a randomized trade

²⁰ Walsh cites the W.E.B. DuBois Institute slave-trade project (Walsh 2001:140). Also see Eltis and Richardson, *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (2010: Yale University Press).

threw together a bewildering mix of African peoples who were isolated from one another by a ‘Babel of languages’”. While she concedes that a “cursory look at Virginia naval office shipping lists reinforces this view”, she asserts that “Systematic analysis of the Virginia and Maryland materials, however, reveals a more patterned trade”, characterized by “much less initial random mixing of African groups in the Chesapeake than has been commonly supposed” (Ibid: 144-145). These new data suggest that we need to rethink many of our previously held conceptions regarding the manners in which enslaved persons developed local communities in the Chesapeake.

Though the proportions and primary regions of origin varied by naval district over time, Walsh’s data strongly suggests the predominance of persons drawn largely from one or two African regions in enslaved workforces across many Chesapeake estates. The earliest core areas of settlement radiating outward from the riverine basins and estuaries of the tidal Chesapeake exhibit two distinct demographic patterns throughout the eighteenth century: “about three quarters of the Africans whose regional origins are known and who were brought to the upper Chesapeake”, including Maryland and the Potomac basin (and to the Lower James) embarked from Upper West Africa, with regional origins of exported persons extending from Senegambia southward through Upper Guinea and easterly along the Windward and Gold Coasts. In lower Virginia, half of the Africans disembarking in the York and Upper James River naval districts (the region in which the core plantations that gave rise to the antebellum Quarterpath neighborhood are situated) whose geographic origins are known departed from the Bight of Biafra with an additional quarter from West Central Africa. Interestingly, patterns of importation and distribution of persons of various African origins roughly coincided with

geographic divisions between sweet-scented, Oronoco, and peripheral tobacco growing areas, “an outcome apparently unrelated to the crop itself but instead the result of complex interactions of African, British, and colonial trading patterns” (Ibid: 145, 159-160; Figure 2.1).

Similarities in estate-building strategies among elite tidewater planters such as the Allens, Brays, and Burwells, including correlations between timing and manner of purchase by which enslaved workforces were assembled, may have unwittingly contributed to concentrations of persons from similar African origins residing upon related quarters across middle tidewater. Prior to 1750, more than 80% of enslaved individuals entering Virginia disembarked in the York and Rappahannock naval districts.²¹ Primarily imported by slavers from London and Bristol, the greatest share of the nearly 50,000 Africans entering the colony by 1745 arrived in the port of York, approximately 56% of which had come directly from the Bight of Biafra. An additional 20% arrived from West Central Africa, 10% came from the Windward and Gold Coasts, and smaller percentages embarked from Senegambia and Madagascar.²² The generation of elite planters that proceeded to build large familial plantation enterprises from a base of inherited lands along the James and York Rivers, including John Allen, Lewis Burwell III, and James Bray II, came of age in the first third of the eighteenth century. In order to

²¹ Under the influence of the Lewis Burwell III and IV as successively appointed Naval Officers the Upper James emerged as the colony’s largest entrepot for enslaved persons after mid-century.

²² Region of embarkation is known for 60% of ships entering York prior to 1745 – Most arrived directly from Africa in vessels carrying 125 persons on average. Walsh notes that London slavers predominated in the York at the turn of the eighteenth century and were supplanted by Bristol shippers over the next several decades. Slavers from Liverpool, trading along a more diverse array of West African ports, came to prominence after 1740 and typically did not distinguish between Chesapeake destinations. Imports into York declined after 1740 and the Upper James emerged as the colony’s primary port-of-entry for enslaved persons. Due to shifting trade patterns and an increase in imports by Liverpool shippers, the percentage of West Central Africans and to a lesser extent Upper Guineans in Lower Chesapeake populations increased after 1745 (Walsh 2001: 139-170).

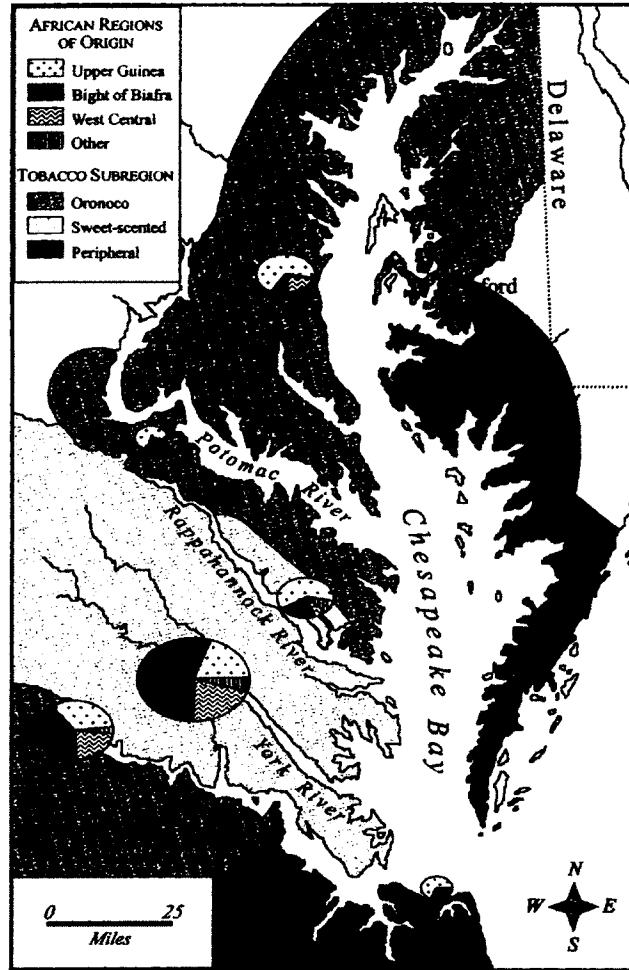


Figure 2.1 – Coastal origins of Africans arriving in the Chesapeake Bay watershed between 1698-1774 and strain of tobacco planted by region (Illustration from Walsh 2001: 170).

develop inherited farms and quarters and to increase the productivity of newly purchased landholdings these second and third generation planters required additional labor. Enslaved workforces were composed of a mix of persons acquired by inheritance (especially on quarters already in operation at the time of bequest), through marriage, and by additional purchase, the majority of which were likely selected from populations entering the busy port of York during the first third of the eighteenth century (Walsh 1998: 137).

Following 1740 imports into the York River basin subsequently diminished. With the increase in prominence of Liverpool slavers after 1745, a higher proportion of West Central Africans and Upper Guineans arrived in Virginia, primarily to the Upper James, though the Bight of Biafra remained the principal region of exploitation for ships entering the colony. Factors including timing of purchase and complex kinship networks and familial alliances amongst elite planters directly contributed to the diversity, or lack thereof, of geographic origins and ethnic affiliations potentially represented within enslaved communities on the largest tidewater plantation enterprises. “On the peninsula south of Williamsburg and on other plantations just across the York and James Rivers,” Walsh explains, “around 1750 perhaps 200 Africans and their descendants, who had arrived in the 1710s, 1720s, and early 1730s, lived on five separate estates and numerous ancillary quarters owned by the Burwell family.” She relates that “many of the Africans on these interconnected quarters shared common geographic origins in the Bight of Biafra, as they did with others living on adjoining estates who had been purchased in these same years.” Yet on the nearby Custis plantations, “whose owner began buying new Africans a few years later than the Burwells”, West Central Africans predominated (Ibid: 157).

On the Southside of the James River, John Allen expanded his home farm and opened six additional quarters between 1710-1742 (see Table 1.2). Though many of the 229 residents across these quarters may have been transfers from other estates, it is likely that his workforce was bolstered with additional purchases. The bulk of new arrivals on Allen’s home and auxiliary quarters were probably purchased in the 1720s and 1730s from the assembly of vessels frequenting the busy port of York across the Peninsula to

the north. Given the similarities in timing between the development of ancillary quarters by the Allens and Burwells, Walsh's portrayal of the enslaved communities across the Burwell plantation network may very well have held true for those residing upon Southside Allen family plantations as well. Most newly integrated residents across John Allen's plantations would have probably embarked from either the Bight of Biafra or West Central Africa. If Allen's quarters were characteristic of other enslaved communities in Virginia at the time (see Table 2.3) and the rate of childbirth followed the regional pattern for those residing upon other large agricultural estates then it is quite likely that many of the residents of antebellum Allen family plantations, including the Quarterpath quarter and others across Kingsmill and Neck of Land-Jamestown Island, may have had roots in these earlier communities. Furthermore, it is probable, as Walsh asserts, that "even isolated, recently arrived Africans" to the Lower Chesapeake during the first half of the eighteenth century "were likely to find members of their own coastal or interior region on adjacent plantations if not on their home quarter" (Walsh 2001: 156). Most quarters during this period were fairly small, typically housing between 10-30 persons adjacent to agricultural fields (see Chapter 3). Given the recent data, there is a good chance that recent arrivals could have found others from common homelands in home or neighboring quarters. New arrivals to Allen's Southside quarters as well as others throughout the Virginia tidewater were likely to be within a few miles, perhaps less, of additional quartering complexes and may have sought others nearby who spoke the same or similar languages and remembered common traditions. Assuming that the rate of natural increase of Virginia's enslaved population presented by Morgan (Table 2.3) is accurate, then enslaved men and women may have forged new social ties and

alliances, started new families, and built communities encompassing home, neighboring, and more distant quarters earlier than previously anticipated.

The Bight of Biafra held a number of ethnic groups, including the Igbo, the Ibibio, Igala, Efik, Moko, the Ijo, and the Ogoni, however, the “overwhelming majority” of captives that embarked from the region were Igbo (Ibo, Eboe), and Ibibio secondarily (Gomez 1998: 124, Lovejoy 1989: 375, Walsh 1997: 67). Igbo spoke a variety of closely related dialects of the eastern Kwa group of the Niger-Congo language family, “Although there are numerous dialects, these are broadly understood among all groups” (Walsh 1997: 71). Thornton observed of peoples of eastern Lower Guinea that “Although they spoke several different languages, many were so similar in grammar and vocabulary that multilingualism was not particularly difficult” (Thornton 1998: 189-90). The Ibibio and Efik, on the other hand, spoke a variety of languages closely related to the Bantu language family. West Central Africans spoke similar Bantu languages as well, principally Kikongo and Kimbundu (Walsh 2001: 160). Those who survived the Middle Passage, so-called “outlandish”, “saltwater”, or “new Negroes” (Gomez 1998: 168, Smallwood 2007), could expect to endure a period of “seasoning” upon arrival on Chesapeake plantations and quarters. Countless men and women in various quarters undoubtedly acted as cultural intermediaries, serving to orient new arrivals to life in the New World and facilitating the creation of new social ties amongst peoples sharing a common burden in a strange new land, “Their efforts to coax communities and cultural norms out of the oppressive conditions of their enslavement formed the bedrock on which succeeding diasporic generations built meaningful lives in the New World” (Smallwood 2007: 201).

It is quite possible that the initial seeds of community may have been sown in the dark holds of an unrelenting and seemingly interminable procession of wooden sailing vessels amongst captives – more often than not from similar regions and approaching similar destinations – who unwillingly became enjoined by the particular horrors that came to embody a shared experience of the Atlantic crossing. In his autobiography, Robert Russa Moton, the educator and administrator of Tuskegee Institute, recalled a story told to him by his grandmother of her great grandfather, the son of a headman who sold several prisoners of war from a rival faction to the captain of a slaving vessel on an unnamed piece of shoreline along the western coast of Africa. Moton’s ancestor was tricked into boarding the ship and sold into bondage in Virginia in the 1730s, “My grandmother said of him that he learned very little of the English language and used that little always with a pronounced foreign accent. He never grew to like America or Americans, white or black; and certain days, after the passing of so many moons, he observed religiously throughout his life”. Moton explained “These were feast days with certain ceremonies of their own, in which, when possible, two other members of that same party though not of his tribe would join him. Each understood the tribal language of the others. These days, so my grandmother said, which occurred about three times a year, his owner permitted him to take off, leaving him undisturbed . . .” (Moton 1921: 3-5). Throughout his life in Virginia Moton’s great grandfather continued to maintain relations with former shipmates to whom he had originally brokered into enslavement. Social ties cultivated among shipmates and with others from similar African regions residing upon quarters near and distant across emerging Chesapeake plantation neighborhoods facilitated the maintenance of remembered traditions and ethnic

affiliations in the New World and helped foster diasporic transformations across time and space.

Historical precedent suggests that John Allen likely followed the example of his peers and fellow planters, bolstering his labor force with additional purchases around the time that Moton's ancestor arrived in Virginia. Although his 1742 estate appraisal did not list acreage for individual properties it did include an inventory of enslaved persons by quarter of residence (see Table 1.3). In addition to his home farm at Upper Chippokes, Allen developed six ancillary quarters in the Southside counties of Surry, Isle of Wight, Brunswick, and Nansemond between 1713 and 1742. At least 229 enslaved persons, including 123 men, 82 women, and 24 individuals of unspecified sex were residing on Allen's plantations in 1742, primarily in communities of between 40-50 people. Of the seven quarters listed, four included between 39-50 residents (39, 43, 43, and 50 persons respectively). Residents at the smallest three quarters included 12, 17, and 25 persons. The fewest number of individuals listed in Allen's estate inventory (12 persons) resided at the "Cypress Swamp" quarter located in Surry County near his larger "Home House" and "Three Creeks" quarters, with 50 and 39 respective residents (See Table 1.3). Given that sex is unknown for 24 of 229 listed individuals in Allen's inventory, the disproportionate sex ratio is a demographic pattern typical of communities of relatively recent African immigrants. Sex ratios vary across Allen's plantations, yet men greatly outnumbered women on all but one of his seven quarters. His "Home House" quarter had the highest disproportion of men to women at 2.5 (30 men, 12 women), others varied (2.0, 1.64, 1.38, 1.29, 1.25, and 0.85). Given the disproportionate sex ration across Allen's quarters, it is quite possible, if not probable, that enslaved

residents could have extended social and kin ties across Allen's nearby quarters and other adjacent farms, enjoining multiple domestic quarters on plantations home and abroad.

Prominent Chesapeake planter Robert "King" Carter kept an inventory of living arrangements and kin affiliations for enslaved households across his quarters in 1733 that illustrate the rapidity with which men and women forged new social ties across area plantations. Carter was known to have encouraged the formation of enslaved family groups on his plantations. He promoted marriage among his enslaved people as a strategy intended to transform new Africans into productive workers and add to the possibility of long-term returns in the form of enslaved children. Like most planters, including John Allen, "He generally bought nearly twice as many men as women" but he encouraged "those men who could find mates to enter into regular unions" so that by 1733 "almost no adult women . . . lived by themselves; most either were married according to whatever understanding they and their husbands had negotiated between themselves and with Carter or else were part of a household consisting of two or three other apparently unrelated men and women." Carter's inventory includes a list of 221 households, comprised of 399 adult and 699 total enslaved persons on his estates. 114 households (52%) included children under the age of 16. 64 households (29%) are listed under the heading "Man, wife, and children", 27 (12%) are listed as "Man and wife", 31 (14%) are described as "Woman and children", and 12 (5%) are described as "Man and children". An additional 7 households (3%) are listed as "Old people, couple, and children". Finally 80 households (37%) are described as either "Single man, woman, or older child", "Two or more single men or women", or "Unrelated men and women". (Walsh 1997: 83-84) There are many unknowns concerning the forms of social unions

that developed across emerging plantation communities during the period however Carter's observations tend to suggest that, in many cases, enslaved men and women formed long term unions fairly early. Skewed sex ratios across area quarters further imply that many of these unions would have been geographically dispersed. Carter nonetheless encouraged geographically dispersed unions across his own quarters as well, often allowing for the transfer of divided residence couples to cohabitate on a common plantation (Ibid).

Following the reclassification of enslaved persons as real estate by the Virginia legislature in 1705, most of the colony's more affluent planters took advantage of a legal statute intended to foster continued wealth through the generations by regulating inheritance (Tomlins 2010: 453). Its unintended consequence may have been to further perpetuate concentrations of particular African ethnicities on large middle tidewater plantation estates increasingly networked through kinship and intermarriage among various planter families. The practice of *entail* emerged in the Chesapeake as a legal construct borrowed from planters and fellow participants in the English Atlantic plantation-economic complex on the island colony of Barbados. The motivation of Virginia planters to reclassify servants follows a 1668 precedent from Barbados, in which the colony's assembly classified enslaved persons as real estate instead of chattels "so that slaves could be legally tied to particular plantations, thus preventing executors or creditors from dismantling viable working units in probate settlements" (Walsh 1997: 44). The 1705 statute allowed planters to entail enslaved persons as well as land for the purpose of inheritance. Virginia legislators followed the 1705 law with an additional act in 1727 that made provision for attaching servants to particular tracts of land "so that

both plantation and workers would be passed to a single heir” (Ibid: 44). In short, the colony’s assembly provided a legal mechanism to *annex* – in the legal jargon of the time – particular persons to specific places. This meant that “the entailed slaves could not be sold but instead were to be transferred to whichever man inherited the land”. Yet this did not imply that entailed persons “could not be removed to other tracts their current master owned” (Ibid: 44). Furthermore, even if many persons residing on a particular quarter were entailed typically some were not. Thus non-entailed persons were still subject to sale in periods of economic downturn, to cover outstanding debts, or as punishment, and to transfer by will or dower upon the death of the primary landholder.

The practice of entail stimulated the growth and development of enslaved communities within and across the boundaries of the largest tidewater estates in several ways. First, as more planters chose to entail a significant proportion of their labor pools following the 1710s and until the practice was abolished following the American Revolution, the legal restriction of the sale of entailed individuals “afforded the largest and most ethnically concentrated enslaved communities more settled places of residence and more generational continuity than was the lot of most Chesapeake slaves” (Walsh 2001: 157; 1997: 44-45, 148, 224). For the better part of the eighteenth century, entail afforded a degree of relative stability for those that had been legally annexed to particular plantations and quarters – It provided time for emerging communities to become settled, to lay down roots that spread through newly constructed kin networks both within and beyond plantation borders and across new physical and social landscapes, taking hold within and across a variety of plantation spaces that were becoming increasingly familiar through the generations.

Second, although entail provided a relative degree of protection from outright sale it did allow for transfer to other estates held by the current landholder. Entail was typically utilized by the Chesapeake elite, entrepreneurs who had amassed immense tracts of land through a variety of means, and they networked their plantation holdings into vast familial enterprises that often spanned multiple counties and occasionally cut across regions. As planters such as John Allen, James Bray III and Lewis Burwell III came of age, it was not uncommon for them to realign their labor forces in the process of reorganizing inherited plantations and opening ancillary quarters. While newly purchased individuals were typically sent to auxiliary quarters, more acclimated Africans or Virginia-born individuals were often tasked with orienting new arrivals on quarters away from their home plantations. In 1732 John Allen redistributed an unspecified number of entailed persons from his home farm at Upper Chippokes to various newly opened Southside quarters, where, in all likelihood, they joined African newcomers. Robert Carter, like many of his peers, typically integrated “new Negroes” with those who had become accustomed to life in Virginia on various quarters, “probably hoping to speed the assimilation process” (Walsh 1997: 85). Thus early enslaved communities on larger Chesapeake estates came to embrace a heterogeneous assortment of “seasoned” Africans, Virginia-born children, and “new Negroes” (Smallwood 2007: 200). Fesler suggests that two of James Bray II’s quarters at his Rockahock plantation in New Kent County, which passed to Bray’s daughter and became affiliated through marriage with the Allens as well, may have served as “training” or “seasoning” quarters, “places where newly arrived slaves adjusted to their enslavement, to the demands of fieldwork, and to the daily regimen that would characterize the remainder of their lives” (Fesler 2004: 112-113). If

such quarters did indeed serve as places of orientation and seasoning, then it is also implies that, for many at least, residence in them may not have been intended to be permanent. Many new arrivals that had acclimated to the regimes of plantation life may have eventually been transferred to other networked local quarters.

Transfer and integration of more acclimated enslaved persons with recently arrived individuals on plantations networked either by a single landholder or held in trust by various members of a particular family facilitated the extension of social networks that spanned across related farms and quarters and directly contributed to the emergence of dynamic enslaved neighborhoods that encompassed multiple Chesapeake plantations. By the mid eighteenth century large plantation enterprises along the James and York River basins were networked by complex webs of kinship and alliance among elite planter families. For instance, in his 1725 will James Bray II bequeathed his 2200 acre Rockahock estate in New Kent County to his daughter Elizabeth Bray Allen, who had married Arthur Allen III of Surry County, the younger brother of John Allen. She also retained a controlling interest in the Littletown estate in James City County until selling her share to her brother Thomas in 1728, to be held in trust for his son James Bray III. James Bray III's widow married neighboring planter Lewis Burwell IV of Kingsmill, resulting in the transfer of ownership of 29 enslaved persons residing on the Utopia quarter in 1745. It is quite possible that enslaved persons residing in local Bray, Allen, and Burwell family quarters may have had opportunities to establish social alliances and kin ties across these related plantations as well, as transfers and realignments of labor forces typically followed bequeathals and as dowry wealth, resulting in mergers of large plantation enterprises between prominent planter families (see Figure 1.4).

It is therefore probably not coincidental that the African American population in the Lower Chesapeake grew primarily from natural increase by the mid eighteenth century despite the prevalence of disproportionate sex ratios among adults in many domestic quarters. By midcentury the greater part of the tidewater region experienced a black majority (see Morgan 1998: 81-101, Sobel 1987: 3-5). Extant historical records suggest that the majority of enslaved persons resided in quarters on estates of substantial size, typically in communities of between 11-20 or more than 21 persons (Kulikoff 1993: 474, Morgan 1998: 41, Table 2.4). Plantation size, including the residential capacities of and distances between various quarters within and across plantation borders undoubtedly played a role in promoting the development of enslaved social networks. Yet at the heart of these networks lay the desire and the drive of diverse men and women to foster intimate relationships and construct meaningful lives in spite of the terrific hardships presented by enslavement, not simply to endure but to build new ties of kinship and camaraderie – in short, to create new roots.

The number and distance between, residential capacities and sex ratios of home and neighboring quarters varied by plantation size and by locality and played a significant role in the cultivation and maintenance of short and long term romantic relationships, intimate liaisons, and social unions by enslaved men and women. In terms of lands and people at their disposal, the Allens, Brays, and Burwells were among the top tier of Chesapeake planters and estates such as Claremont, Kingsmill, and Littletown were characterized by multiple quarters networked with others across the region, often inhabited by people that were entailed to the plantation grounds they worked. The enslaved residents of these large plantation operations may have had opportunities to

Table 2.4 - Sizes of Plantations and Enslaved Residential Units in Middle Tidewater, 1726-1784

		<i>percent of enslaved persons living on plantations of</i>			
		1 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 20	21+
James Bray II Will	1726	--	--	--	100%
John Allen Inventory	1742	--	--	13%	87%
York County	1740s	19%	24%	36%	22%
	1750s	12%	13%	26%	49%
	1760s	7%	17%	40%	37%
	1770s	12%	17%	33%	39%
	1780s	16%	20%	30%	33%
James City County	1783	12%	22%	28%	38%
Charles City County	1784	11%	16%	26%	47%

Sources: York, James, and Charles City figures taken from personal property tax lists, York County wills and inventories: (Kulikoff 1993: 474). James Bray II's will included an inventory of 28 persons on 3 quarters at Littletown in James City County (though it did not specify the number of occupants at each quarter) and 49 persons residing on 6 quarters at Rockahock in New Kent County (ranging from 5-13+ per quarter) (CWF Rockefeller Library). John Allen's Estate Inventory included a summary of enslaved residents on an unspecified number of quarters on 7 plantations in 4 Southside counties (Gregory 1990: 42, see Table 1.3).

foster intimate relationships in either their home quarters or others within the boundaries of their home plantations. Yet even on the largest plantations throughout much of the eighteenth century men typically outnumbered women (see Table 1.3). As a consequence, enslaved kinship ties frequently came to encompass multiple quarters on home, neighboring, and related plantation lands and across other local settlements, reflecting a common social practice known as marriage “abroad”²³, or across plantation borders. Virginia law enforced a state of hereditary enslavement, meaning that children

²³ a.k.a. “broad marriage”. Although marriage among enslaved individuals was not legally sanctioned in either the colony or the state of Virginia, diverse primary sources describe marriage as well as a variety of more informal social unions that spanned quarters across plantations home and abroad (see below).

inherited the status of the mother and were considered the property of the mother's owner. As such, children typically remained upon the mother's quarter of residence. Data on enslaved household structures across mid-late eighteenth century Chesapeake estates of varying size compiled from documentary sources (Table 2.5) reflect the notion that enslaved men and women frequently nurtured and maintained kin ties that enjoined multiple quarters across plantations both home and abroad.

Table 2.5 - Enslaved Household Structures on Chesapeake Estates of Varying Size, 1740s-1780s

Household type	<i>Proportion</i>			
	Men	Women	Children	Total
7 Small Virginia Estates, 1744-1775				
	N=12	N=18	N=33	N=63
Husband-Wife	17%	11%	0%	6%
Husband-Wife children	8%	5%	6%	6%
Single parent	0%	56%	82%	59%
Solitary	75%	28%	12%	29%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
6 Large Chesapeake Estates, 1740-1788				
	N=289	N=233	N=529	N=1051
Husband-Wife	10%	13%	0%	6%
Husband-Wife children	33%	40%	53%	45%
Single parent	6%	21%	24%	19%
Extended	7%	11%	8%	9%
Sibling	1%	1%	3%	2%
Solitary	42%	14%	11%	20%
Total	99%	100%	99%	100%

Data from estate inventories and a will comprise "7 Small Virginia estates" (four from York County, two from Essex County, and one from Loudoun County), "6 Large Chesapeake estates" includes data from primary sources associated with four plantations in Virginia and two in Maryland: (Morgan 1998: 504-505).

These data (Morgan 1998: 504-505) reflect contrasting demographic trends in household structure and residence patterns between tidewater plantation operations of varying size that demonstrate the geographic expansion and increasing complexity of kin ties across emerging enslaved neighborhoods as the eighteenth century progressed. Although more pronounced on smaller plantations, a high percentage of solitary men resided upon all estates represented. It is also of note that women actually outnumbered men in the representative sample of smaller estates, yet the percentage of solitary women was much lower than that of men on both small and large plantation operations. Furthermore, children slightly outnumbered adults in all instances, a testament to the rapidity and vigor of community formation by enslaved men and women in the Chesapeake region.

The terms “solitary” and “single parent” are not terms characteristic of the period. They are constructs of modern historians. As such, they are somewhat problematic and should be contextualized in terms of the common historical practice of marrying abroad. It is quite likely that many of the male “solitaries” in particular may have fathered children across plantation borders. Under enslavement, matrilineal residence patterns were enforced by statutory dominion. Thus in this particular sampling 56% of women on small estates and 21% of women on larger plantations lived in households as single parents with 82% and 24% of children on small and large estates respectively residing with one parent. It is probable that some single mothers may have been widows, some may have either been abandoned by or severed ties with a former partner, and others may have become so because a father was sold away from the neighborhood. Yet contemporaneous accounts suggest that it is also quite possible that many fathers resided

on neighboring or distant quarters beyond the bounds of associated home farms. In other words, male “solitaries” may have formed common households in their respective quarters but many were almost certainly “solitary” *because* they extended familial bonds to distant quarters across plantation borders.

Divided-residence families were extremely common in the Chesapeake region, so much so that enslaved men were typically not punished for traveling to distant quarters to visit wives and families provided that it did not interfere with expected work routines. In a 1799 court case in Louisa County, a judge outlined one major exception to the prohibition of movements off home plantations in specifically defining “general leave” to travel by citing “a negro [who] has a wife” on another plantation (Morgan 1998: 508-510). An observer in Virginia in the 1790s noted that “It is an usual practice for the negroes to go to see their wives on the Saturday night”. Husbands, he observed, often borrowed horses and rode *upwards of 10-14 miles* to do so. The practice was so common and “looked upon as so slight an offence” that he had “never heard” of an enslaved man “being brought to justice for it” (Ibid: 509). On the other hand, planters in possession of large estates typically encouraged enslaved men and women to form families on quarters on home farms or within local plantation neighborhoods. Quarters across Kingsmill Neck and Neck of Land ranged between a half-mile to several miles distant, well under the 10-14 mile journey enslaved men were observed undertaking in other locales (see Figure 1.6). The data suggest that larger plantation operations may have presented more opportunities for enslaved residents to form kin-based common households on home farms. While only 25% of men in the sample demographic from smaller Chesapeake

estates resided either as husband-wife or husband-wife-children, 43% of men on larger estates were able to do so, with an additional 7% residing in extended family households.

In the decades following the Revolution marriage abroad seems to have become even more common in the region's enslaved communities. Sex ratios stabilized as the rate of importation of new Africans into Chesapeake Bay slowed. Virginia lawmakers banned the continued transatlantic importation of enslaved persons in 1778, three decades ahead of the termination of the trade by the newly formed United States. With the collapse of the tobacco market, the prime commodities of many Virginia plantations had become the enslaved workers themselves. Kinship networks had become extremely complex across many neighborhoods as enslaved communities became more settled through several generations. Thus even on larger plantation operations, enslaved persons frequently ventured across the borders of lands to which they were essentially bound, initiating a variety of short and long term social unions. Virginia freedpersons commonly articulated the practice of marrying abroad to early twentieth century interviewers. Mrs. Minnie Folkes recalled, "when a slave wanted to marry, why he would jes' ask his master to go over an' ask de tother master could he take un to himself this certain gal fer a wife." She explained that both would continue to reside on their respective owner's lands, "but dey had privileges, you know like married folks . . . Ef chillun was born all o' 'em no matter how many, 'longed to de master whar de woman stayed" (Perdue et al. 1976: 94). 82% of Virginia freedmen and women interviewed by the Virginia Writer's Project spoke of the physical presence of mothers during their childhood years while only 42% recalled the continuous physical presence of fathers, a third of which stated that fathers were only

given leave to visit on days off, typically Sundays and holidays such as Easter and Christmas (Stevenson 1991: 108, Perdue et al. 1976).²⁴

In the opening decades of the nineteenth century, as William Allen II and his grand-nephew successively consolidated plantation operations across Kingsmill Neck, Neck of Land, and Jamestown Island they were integrated with other Allen family estates across the James River to the south. The African American communities on Allen plantations in James City were likely composed principally of peoples and their descendants that had been transferred from Southside operations. At the time of John Allen's purchase of the Neck of Land plantation in 1785, his father William Allen I had inherited and built upon a family empire of more than 25,000 acres and hundreds of enslaved persons. John Allen first appears in James City County personal property tax lists in 1787, at which point he was assessed for a plantation manager or overseer, 36 enslaved persons (26 over and 10 below the age of 16), 14 horses, and 64 cattle (JCC Personal Property Tax Lists, 1782-1824, CWF Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg).²⁵ It is highly likely that Allen transferred persons to Neck of Land from other family owned plantations in either Surry or Nansemond Counties, as large parcels were sold from each between 1784-1787 (see Table 1.4). Both John and William Allen I died in 1793, leaving William Allen II as the sole heir and administrator of a vast network of related

²⁴ The question of the reliability of the interviewing process as well as the testimonies of elderly individuals who were children at the time of Emancipation arises occasionally in scholarly works (see Osofsky 1969, Hill 1998). In many ways, the narratives are artifacts of the 1930s inasmuch as primary accounts of life under enslavement. However, they do provide a baseline from which to interpret the experiences of individuals that lived in enslaved communities and should be considered, if approached cautiously.

²⁵ Allen reduced his Neck of Land workforce the following year, as he was assessed for 27 enslaved persons. In 1789 and 1790 he paid taxes on 25 and 27 enslaved persons respectively and in 1793, the year of his death, he was assessed for 15 individuals, suggesting that some of his enslaved persons may have been claimed by his brother William after his death (JCC Personal Property Tax Lists, 1782-1824, CWF Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg).

plantations and people. William II purchased Littletown in 1796, followed by Kingsmill in 1801 and Southall's Quarter in 1803, integrating the estates of Kingsmill Neck into one agricultural enterprise. He came into legal possession of his brother's Neck of Land estate in 1805 and consolidated nearly 6000 acres in James City County into two neighboring plantation operations (see Table 1.5).

William Allen II was assessed for a labor force of 43 enslaved persons in James City County in 1796 (Table 2.6), an unusually high number of persons to work his 1280 acre Littletown parcel. Although he did not take possession of Neck of Land until 1805 it is possible that these 43 individuals may have conceivably tended both plantations. Before his death John Allen had typically maintained a labor force of between 25-27 people to work the 2000 acre Neck of Land plantation, a substantially larger operation than Littletown. Allen died without issue and his estate does not appear in James City personal property tax lists after his death. It is possible that his brother William managed Neck of Land while seeking legal ownership of the property. William Allen II is not assessed for an increased amount of enslaved persons in conjunction with his acquisition of Neck of Land in 1805, suggesting that he may have already had a sufficient workforce settled on the property. He did, however, bolster his enslaved workforce with an additional 30 or so individuals, almost certainly transferred from his other estates following the acquisition and consolidation of Kingsmill and Southall's Quarter with Littletown between 1801-1803. By 1805 Allen maintained an enslaved population of at least 79 persons distributed across his neighboring James City plantation operations. To manage his workforce Allen employed and was assessed for several managers, likely distributed among his two principal operations (see Table 2.6). The number of free white

Table 2.6 - William Allen II Personal Property Tax Assessments, James City County

	William Allen II, 1796-1831				Estate of William Allen II, 1832-1851				
	Enslaved Persons				Enslaved Persons				
	F.W.M.	Age 16+	Age 12+	Horses	F.W.M.	Age 16+	Age 12+	Horses	
1796	2	37	6	13	1832	--	91	4	23
1797	2	45	2	12	1833	--	91	4	23
1798	2	41	6	13	1834	--	91	5	21
1799	2	41	5	17	1835	--	91	4	23
1800	2	41	7	19	1836	--	79	4	24
1801	2	42	5	21	1837	--	71	3	22
1802	3	67	8	29	1838	--	81	6	25
1803	3	72	7	29	1839	--	86	8	23
1804	3	66	9	30	1840	--	84	5	27
1805	3	66	13	37	1841	--	81	7	30
1806	3	68	11	38	1842	--	79	6	30
1809	3	74	9	40	1843	--	80	9	28
1810	3	74	9	40	1844	--	--	90	26
1811	3	71	12	45	1845	--	80	8	28
1812	0	66	13	45	1846	--	82	8	26
1813	2	74	10	37	1847	--	90	11	34
1814	2	73	12	37	1848	--	91	10	41
1815	2	--	79	34	1849	--	90	9	38
1816	2	--	80	31	1850	--	90	8	36
1817	2	--	78	30	1851	--	95	3	40
1818	2	--	74	23					
1819	3	--	73	26					
1820	1	--	83	29					
1821	--	--	85	29					
1822	--	--	87	28					
1823	--	--	86	25					
1824	--	--	83	26					
1830	1	86	4	24					
1831	1	87	8	25					

* F.W.M. (Free White Males). Although Allen's grand-nephew William (Orgain) Allen was the primary heir to Allen's James City, Surry, and Henrico County estates, his properties were charged to William Allen II's estate until he came of age and legally took possession in 1852 (see Table 2.7). Sources: James City County Personal Property Tax Lists: 1782-1824, 1825-1844, 1845-1861, CWF Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg

males assessed on his properties fluctuated. In the 1820s he was assessed for more than 80 enslaved persons yet he paid no taxes for free whites on his properties. Either Allen employed white overseers who paid their own tithes or he may have appointed members of his own enslaved workforce as overseers, drivers, and field managers.

In December of 1842 Martha Orgain petitioned the Virginia General Assembly for permission to purchase additional lands using profits held in trust for her underage son with the stipulation that the labor force would be comprised with transfers from other quarters in James City and Surry Counties,

“That the Lands in the County of Surry, on which there are about two hundred Slaves, are exceedingly poor and unproductive, and the situation of some of them deemed to be unhealthy. That so many slaves cannot be profitably employed in their cultivation. *That the said slaves are mostly in families*, and in the opinion of your petitioner cannot be hired out to advantage. That if she were authorized . . . to purchase more fertile lands in a healthier part of the State . . . *and remove a part of the slaves from Surry and James City, on the lands so purchased with a view to their more profitable employment*, it would promote the true interest of her said Son, and greatly add to the health and comfort of the said Slaves” (Williamsburg & James City County Petitions: CWF Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg. my italics).

Orgain purchased Jamestown Island on behalf of her son and consolidated the property with the Neck of Land tract (see Figure 1.6). In legal phrasing and with an air of benevolence clearly intended to imply that the purchase of additional lands would benefit all involved parties, including enslaved individuals, Orgain explained that the majority of enslaved persons working Allen plantations in Surry were “mostly in families.” Although what she may have understood to be enslaved “families” is open to interpretation, this document suggests that many residents cohabited in common households composed of immediate or extended kin-based units, which would not be altogether surprising considering that enslaved communities had been fairly settled across

the Allen's Southside quarters for the better part of a century by 1842. Orgain was clearly seeking to disentangle a portion of her son's inherited wealth to add to its increase. Although it may have been a ploy to secure permission to purchase additional properties, she further implied that it would not have been conscionable to break said families apart by hiring out individuals to work other farms (although this was indeed a frequent occurrence). If we take Orgain at her word, the stipulations within the petition suggest that either individual solitaries or entire family units were ultimately transferred across newly incorporated farms. Either way, it is still quite likely that the Quarterpath Site, which was constructed around the time of this petition, as well as newly opened quarters at Jamestown Island were peopled with transfers from across other Allen estates, either from quarters across the Allen's Southside holdings or from Neck of Land and Kingsmill, or perhaps from multiple operations. In either instance, these transfers may have effectively redoubled social ties on both shores of the James River and across the Kingsmill and Neck of Land enterprises.

Orgain installed an overseer on Jamestown Island in 1846. Transfers from other quarters across the network of plantations maintained by the Allens in Surry and James City brought the total enslaved labor force on the Kingsmill and Neck of Land-Jamestown Island operations to over 100. Tax assessments subdivided by plantation operation following 1855 indicate that Allen maintained an enslaved community of between 42-46 persons on the Kingsmill estate. These figures include the residents of the Quarterpath quarter, who worked the former Southall's Quarter tract, as well as others residing in quarters across the original Kingsmill and Littleton tracts (Table 2.7). Communities of around 30 persons each lived upon and worked the fields across the

Neck of Land and Jamestown Island operations, adjoined by a footbridge spanning Powhatan Creek.

Table 2.7 - William (Orgain) Allen Personal Property Tax Assesments, James City County

	Enslaved Pers.			Enslaved Pers.			Enslaved Pers.		
	Age 16+	Age 12+	Horses	Age 16+	Age 12+	Horses	Age 16+	Age 12+	Horses
1852	94	102	46						
1853	96	105	46						
1854	95	101	45						
	Kingsmill			Neck of Land			Jamestown Island		
1855	40	44	22	27	31	17	19	21	12
1856	38	44	18	26	34	18	22	24	12
1857	40	42	18	26	36	17	23	25	13
1858	43	46	18	24	30	14	27	29	14
1859	43	45	17	22	28	15	24	27	14
1860	43	45	17	21	27	13	27	28	15
1861	--	45	18	--	25	16	--	32	14

Source: James City County Personal Property Tax Lists, 1845-1861, CWF Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg

There is an intriguing documentary inconsistency associated with the estate of William Allen II that could potentially call in to question the documented size of enslaved communities residing upon his Kingsmill and Neck of Land operations. While the younger Allen was separately assessed for Jamestown Island between 1851-1861, the lands originally acquired by William Allen II were continually charged against his estate until the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. This is likely due to the wording of Allen II's will. Although he named his grand-nephew as principle heir, he essentially bequeathed him a life interest in the property. He could pass the estates and persons to his own progeny but was prohibited from breaking up the parcels *or the communities that*

resided upon them for sale or profit, a clause that in effect performed a similar function as the ancient practice of entail, defunct since the Revolution. The condition of his inheritance may have afforded the residents of Allen's estates at least a small degree of community stability not experienced on other local plantations and settlements. Between 1832-1849 lands charged to the estate of Allen II are grouped according to contiguity in the ledgers. The 2000 and 126 acre Neck of Land and Broadribb's parcels are enjoined with a parenthesis, as are the 1500 acre Kingsmill tract and the 920 acre Southall's Quarter parcel. The 1280 acre Littleton estate is typically located adjacent to the rest of the Kingsmill properties, although not enjoined by a parenthesis. Following 1850 the tracts are consolidated under the following headings with acreage: "Neck of Land" at 3046 acres, "Kings Mill" at 2792 acres (or 3196 ½ acres following a county realignment in 1857 that charged 404 ½ acres formerly assessed by York County (JCC Land Tax Records 1833-1861: CWF Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg). The Kingsmill acreage included the Kingsmill and Littleton tracts as well as a small 12 acre parcel acquired from Samuel Tyler in 1810, while the Neck of Land acreage was comprised of the principle 2000 acre estate as well as the 126 acre Broadribb's parcel and the 920 acre Southall's Quarter tract although it was part of the Kingsmill operation and abutted the 1500 acre Kingsmill estate. It is intriguing that the Southall's parcel was recorded under the heading of Neck of Land, a clerical slight of hand that could potentially signal a corresponding readjustment of the assessed number of enslaved persons residing at Kingsmill and Neck of Land. Yet it is more likely that this discrepancy is simply a clerical error that was repeated out of convenience as the estate boundaries remained unchanged for several decades. It may, however, be taken as indicative not only of the

scant geographic distance between the plantation operations but potentially demonstrative of the close reciprocal ties between peoples residing upon them as well.

By the antebellum era consolidated operations at Kingsmill and Neck of Land-Jamestown Island occupied a nearly contiguous, roughly nine mile stretch of James River coastline with at least eight field quarters in simultaneous occupation (Figure 1.6). The Quarterpath homesite and the other domestic quarters were loci of social interaction, gathering places that provided the setting for a host of domestic activities. Yet they were not the only places in which social bonds were forged. The Quarterpath neighborhood included multiple agricultural field complexes, livestock pastures, barns, stables, a host of agricultural support structures, processing facilities and provisioning grounds, places in which neighbors commonly shared in labors, and liminal spaces such as forests, waterways, and bottomlands. Plantation landscapes were marked by the types of activities performed upon them. Grounds across the Quarterpath neighborhood reverberated with the comings and goings of successive generations, processes which will be interrogated in following chapters.

Chapter 3

Domestic Loci, Divided Residence: Architectural Form and the Dynamics of Community and Place in the Lower Chesapeake

The household emerged as a fundamental unit of archaeological inquiry almost from the inception of scientific excavation techniques. Yet in contexts of rural North American enslavement, in which the bonds of kinship typically materialized along complex and often precarious social networks that incorporated multiple domestic spaces across adjacent farms and settlements, neighborhood may provide a more useful frame of reference as a relational context and an interpretive window into communities in transition. Enslaved households were organized along the lines of statutory regulations that regarded bodies as commodities, enforced matrilineal residence patterns, and promoted geographically dispersed familial ties. Over the past several decades an increasing body of archaeological deposits on former plantation quartering sites stretched across Virginia's tidewater and piedmont regions – the physical remnants of myriad human activities of enslaved residents and visitors – have been identified and excavated. The resulting temporal and spatial patterning in domestic architectural forms, including construction techniques, orientations and alignments, and associated subsurface cultural features reflect the emergence and growth of geographically dispersed plantation communities. Two dwellings identified during the course of excavations at the Quarterpath Site follow these trends as well. The residents of the Quarterpath dwellings, likely kin-based groups, were bonded by a shared domestic space that beckoned activity

and promoted social interaction extending beyond the immediate homesite, connecting the residents with others throughout the broader plantation neighborhood.

Over the course of decades of research in the region scholars from a related body of fields and disciplines have united in a common intellectual enterprise, endeavoring to document and interpret the material conditions of life in the early years of the Chesapeake colonies. Even a cursory glance of the scholarly literature generated by diverse archaeologists, historians, architecture historians, and folklorists demonstrates the prevalence of *earthfast* (or post-in-ground) construction techniques in the early colonial Chesapeake. In a multidisciplinary collaborative effort that culminated in a now classic article published in the *Winterthur Portfolio*, Cary Carson and colleagues sought to “reintroduce the vernacular architecture of seventeenth-century Virginia and Maryland” (Carson et al. 1981: 135-196). As it stands, only six extant structures erected during the seventeenth century have been identified throughout the Chesapeake region. The authors argued that an ever increasing body of research evidenced pragmatic choices faced by seventeenth-century homesteaders that influenced the nature of material life in the colony, namely that early colonists collectively revived a medieval English building tradition that subsequently thrived in the colonial Chesapeake (Figure 3.1), elements of which would eventually enter into the common building vernacular of American architectural tradition. Earthfast construction, they argued, was *intended* to be impermanent, a temporary solution that permitted early planters to allocate the lion’s share of resources towards the clearing of lands and cultivation of new fields with the colony’s core commodity: tobacco.

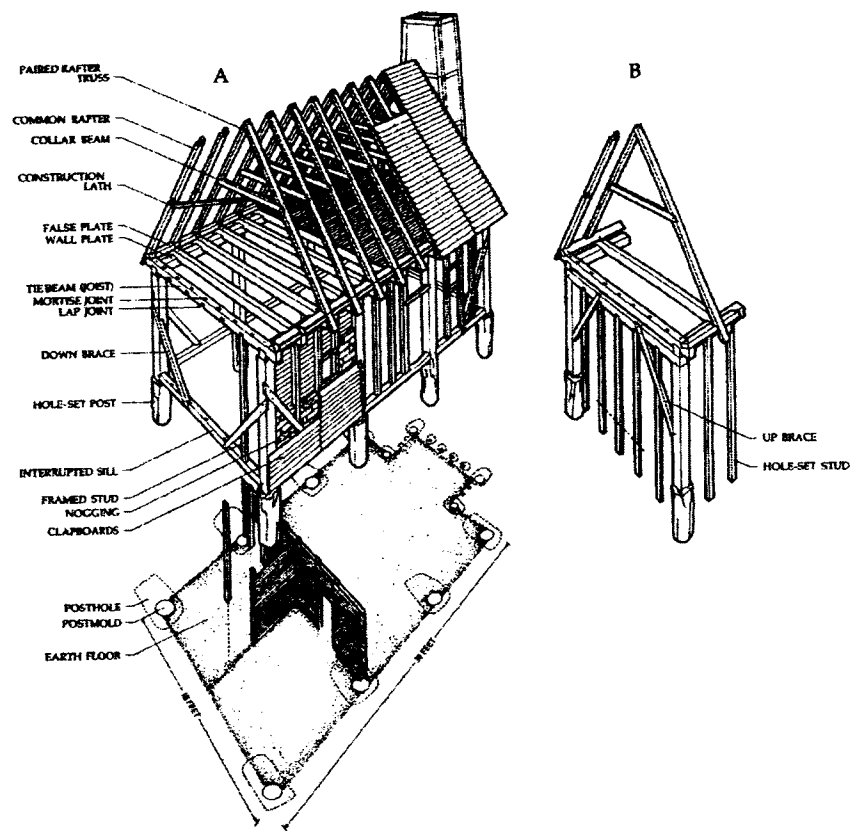


Figure 3.1 – Typical Chesapeake dwelling of earthfast construction with interrupted sill (A - more common) and variation with hole-set studs in place of sill, up braces, and tilted false plates (B). Composite model based upon archaeological and documentary evidence (Illustration from Carson et al. 1981: 143)

Although the archaeological record does provide a few exceptions, earthfast construction, in which structural framing members were leveled and set within rectangular holes and backfilled, was *the* primary method of building construction employed in the Chesapeake colonies throughout the seventeenth century. As the century progressed, an increasing number of immigrants arrived in the Lower Chesapeake in the hope of improving their stations in life and perhaps becoming wealthy in the process. Earthfast dwellings, outbuildings, and agricultural structures (especially tobacco barns)

subsequently dotted the landscape as forests and plantations were replaced by cultivated fields radiating inland along the principal watersheds of the tidal Chesapeake. The notion of impermanence in Chesapeake building traditions put forth by diverse scholars essentially arises from planter's collective concerns involving allocation of resources in the midst of perpetual labor shortages and market fluctuations associated with labor intensive seventeenth century tobacco monoculture. In order to turn a profit during the boom years of the Chesapeake tobacco market, a substantial workforce was required to clear and maintain new and existing fields and to cultivate and care for the delicate plant. Cultivation of tobacco was a year-long intensive process that began with the germination of seeds and transplanting the seedlings to new beds. The young plants demanded vigilant and continuous care, including constant eradication of invasive vegetation by persistent hoeing as well as hand-removal of damaging insects. Following the harvest, the broad leaves were dried and cured, packed and shipped from plantation wharves and Chesapeake ports. As plantations increased in both number and size the colony's need for additional labor grew exponentially. In response Chesapeake planters collectively and deliberately engineered a transition in modes of labor towards hereditarily transferrable race-based enslavement. The architectural form and orientation of archaeologically identified dwellings and laborer's quarters mirror the changing social order that was becoming salient across Virginia plantation landscapes.

In the decades following the Virginia Company's initial authorization for the patenting of lands to individuals, landholders typically maintained residences at Jamestown and installed tenants to clear fields and tend their new plantations. Tenant settlements with ranges of occupations between the 1620s-1650s have been discovered

along the James River basin on some of the earliest patented lands, including the Reverend Richard Bucke Site (Mallios 1999) on the Neck of Land, the George Sandys Site (Mallios 2000) and Kingsmill Tenement (Kelso 1984), both located on Kingsmill Neck, and a number of early sites at Martin's (Edwards 2004) and Flowerdew Hundreds (Deetz 1993). By mid-century a new generation of planters began to arrive in the colony and they typically constructed new residences upon their respective lands. After consolidating multiple plantations into a single operation, Thomas Pettus became the first documented landholder to reside on Kingsmill Neck as he set about constructing a new residence on a high bluff overlooking the James River at his Littletown estate circa 1640-1641. Archaeological evidence suggests that the earthfast dwelling, of substantial size for the time, was occupied between 1640-1692 (Kelso 1984: 62-81). The Pettus residence was initially comprised of a core dwelling that appears to have grown organically into an S-shaped complex of communicating structures (Figure 3.2). An adjacent dwelling functioned as a quarter for servants. If Pettus followed the example of his fellow planters then his initial workforce was likely composed primarily of indentures who had bartered passage from the British Isles in exchange for a period of servitude in the New World.²⁶ The quarter is located immediately adjacent and is arranged symmetrically and in line with the core domestic complex, a spatial arrangement that suggests that Pettus seems to have been quite comfortable residing in close proximity to members of his workforce. Enclosed between the principal dwelling and outbuildings, the quarter was an intimate spatial component of the plantation complex. It is quite possible, if not probable, that at least a few servants may have resided in the Pettus

²⁶ Kelso asserts that "the first slaves at Kingsmill worked for Col. Thomas Pettus and lived at Littletown" and that it is likely that the first enslaved persons on Kingsmill Neck arrived after 1670 (Kelso 1984: 103).

dwelling complex as well, perhaps in either or both of the ell-kitchen additions. Kelso suggests that the 18 x 32 foot east wing of the Pettus manor, a later addition, may have housed servants – indentured, enslaved, or a mix of the two. Alternatively, he submits that the east wing may have housed white indentures while the quarter dwelling was reserved as a residence exclusively for enslaved individuals (Kelso 1984: 103-104, also see Fesler 2004: 263).

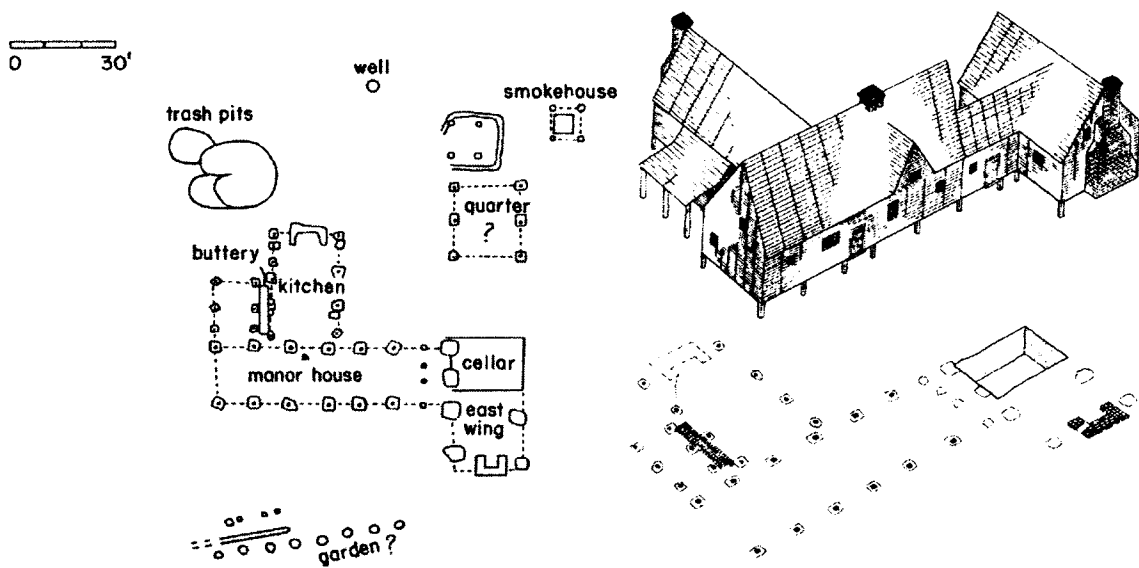


Figure 3.2 – Site plan of Pettus residence at Littletown and artist rendering of principal dwelling complex, occupied circa 1640-1692 (Illustrations from Kelso 1984: 72,79)

Documentary evidence suggests that, at least in the first half of the seventeenth century, black and white servants associated intimately with each other, shared in various exploits and cohabitated in early quarters, often in close proximity to landholders and their families. John Punch, a black man and the first documented person ordered to serve for life in the Virginia colony was captured with two white servants while the trio was attempting to escape indenture by fleeing to Maryland in 1640 (Catterall 1968: Vol I, 77).

Yet as the century progressed and Chesapeake planters collectively and strategically engineered a shift in modes of labor from voluntary indenture to hereditary enslavement, changing social mores became replicated in architectural forms in two very distinct ways. First, as planters created new social and political conventions in an effort to distance themselves from the influx into the colony of African “others” towards the turn of the eighteenth century²⁷, they modified their plantation worlds. Social distance became salient on the landscape in the form of various physical barriers. Second, like Pettus, a new immigrant generation of wealthy landholders arriving around mid-century began to consolidate disparate plantation lands into large estates and build new manor homes, typically of earthfast construction though marked by an increasing use of brick (especially in substantial hearths and cellars)²⁸, with an eye towards establishing enduring familial legacies in the New World. Both trends resulted in a reordering of plantation landscapes to accommodate an emerging social order premised on the institution of slavery.

Situated on the south shore of the Potomac River in Westmoreland County, site 44WM33, better known as the Clifts Plantation, was occupied between 1670-1730, a critical half-century that encompassed the wholesale implementation of African enslavement in the colony. Archaeological evidence suggests a four phase chronology of construction and modification at the site. From 1670-1685 the plantation was comprised

²⁷ Major legislation was passed between the 1660s and 1705 that regulated interaction between Europeans, Africans, and Indians and codified the system of hereditary enslavement in the colony. The Royal African Company ended its monopoly of the transatlantic trade in enslaved persons in 1698 due to increased demand in the colonies, giving rise to the Bristol and Liverpool slaving industries and fueling an exponential increase in importation into Chesapeake Bay. (See chapters 1&2)

²⁸ Bacon’s Castle in Surry County, built by Arthur Allen in 1665, and the John Page house constructed at Middle Plantation in 1662 (See Metz et al. 1998) are notable exceptions of full brick construction.

of a principal dwelling, or “manner house”, enclosed by a wooden palisade with two circular towers on opposite corners, a rectangular quarter roughly 50 feet to the southwest of the fortified dwelling and several small outbuildings. All of the structures were timber-framed and of earthfast construction. The principal dwelling originally exhibited a three bay, central chimney hall-and-parlor floorplan with a cross-passage leading to a work or service room attached to the rear of the structure. Between 1685-1705 a series of distinct architectural modifications were completed. As the turmoil surrounding Bacon’s Rebellion subsided, the fortifying palisade was removed. Around 1690 the original single bay quarter was razed and a larger and more elaborate two cell quarter-kitchen was constructed in its place. Ten years later the cross-passage was removed from the principal dwelling and the hall expanded in its stead, creating an expanded two room floorplan.

The latter modifications were associated with a changing composition in the plantation’s workforce, corresponding with the initial arrival of Irish indentures and enslaved Africans shortly thereafter. Although the larger quarter was erected roughly 20-25 feet closer to the manor house, the removal of the cross-passage severed the servant’s access to the dwelling’s interior and restricted admittance to intimate living spaces to a single front entrance. Subsequent modifications to the plantation landscape between 1705-1730 gradually isolated activity areas associated with servants from those of the planter’s family and directly correspond with an increase in the presence of enslaved Africans on the estate. New outbuildings were constructed further from the manor house and a series of progressively well constructed fences altered the paths of circulation between the principal dwelling, quarter, and outbuildings, further restricting access to the

living spaces within and adjacent to the principal dwelling. By the end of the occupation, the manor house “had become a residence whose interior arrangements were contrived to control access to outsiders and interaction with them” (Neiman 1980: 35).

The domestic core of the Atkinson Site (CWF CG-10), the seat of a small plantation adjacent to Kingsmill Neck at Martin’s Hundred, offers a striking visual example of how emerging social inequality became salient across plantation landscapes. Occupied between 1680-1710, the domestic core consisted of a principal dwelling, a quarter, and several small outbuildings, each of earthfast construction (Figure 3.3). Artifacts recovered from the quarter imply the presence of Africans or African-Americans, although it is possible that the structure may have housed a mix of indentured and enslaved residents. A north-south fence line isolated the principal dwelling from the quarter and associated outbuildings. Access between the lots was provided by a central gate. The fence was of palisade-type construction, in which puncheons – roughhewn and split timber posts – were set within a shallow slot-trench and backfilled with clay. Gaps between posts were likely filled with interwoven saplings and twigs, so that lines of sight between the principal dwelling and the quarter-work yard could be severed completely. Colonial Williamsburg archaeologists concluded that “Although Atkinson was merely a middling planter, relatively low on the economic ladder, he nonetheless sought to distinguish his status as a cut above those working for him” (Archer 2002).²⁹ The same manner of construction was employed to replace the original worm-type fencing³⁰ at the

²⁹ Final analyses of the Atkinson Site are still pending. As of July, 2011, interim results are published on a project website maintained by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation at: http://research.history.org/Archaeological_Research/MHPage/Index.htm

³⁰ “Worm” or “Virginia” fencing entailed fashioning, interlocking, and laying split-timbers horizontally. Such fencing was easily constructed, ground-laid, and typically followed a zig-zag pattern.

Clifts Plantation around 1705 (Neiman 1986, 1980: 25-26). At each site, landscape modifications involving concealment were erected as enslaved Africans became significant components of Chesapeake plantation labor pools. Fence lines, however, are two-way obstructions. As planters isolated their domestic spaces from those of their servants and lines of sight became obscured, the quarter's residents were afforded a relative degree of freedom from the planter's gaze. Yet other sensory components, including sound and smell, would nevertheless have remained salient across domestic landscapes at both the Clifts Plantation and at the Atkinson Site.

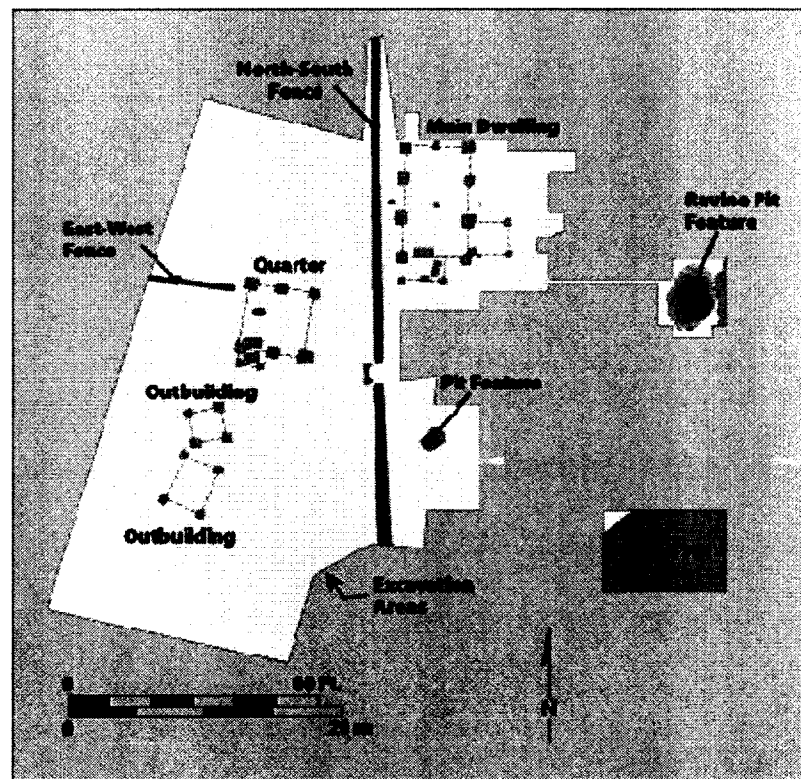


Figure 3.3 – Atkinson Site (CWF CG-10) plan (Department of Architectural and Archaeological Research, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation)

In the opening decades of the eighteenth century, a new generation of elite Virginia-born planters sought to build upon existing familial plantation enterprises. As second and third born sons moved off of home plantations to establish their own family seats, they constructed new brick manor homes on inherited estates and opened additional and ancillary quarters upon inherited and newly procured lands. And they acquired the muscle to work their expanding plantation operations from the interminable convoys of wooden sailing vessels, holds replete with human cargos, stretched across the Atlantic, connecting the varied coastlines of West Africa with the Chesapeake Bay. New quarters were constructed as additional fields were opened to cultivation and enslaved African laborers replaced the previous mix of indentured and enslaved individuals in plantation labor pools. Across Kingsmill Neck, new quarters replaced seventeenth century tenements at Kingsmill, Littletown, and Utopia as Lewis Burwell III and James Bray II occupied themselves with the construction of new brick manors and plantation seats (Kelso 1984). Across the river in Surry County, John Allen followed the example set by his peers, constructing a new home and opening additional quarters as he incorporated new lands into his emerging plantation enterprise.

As the body of identified and archaeologically investigated quartering sites in the Chesapeake region continues to expand, several architectural trends have become apparent. Temporal patterning in architectural forms, construction techniques, and associated sub-surface cultural features converges with documentary lines of evidence that reflect the emergence and growth of enslaved communities within and across plantation boundaries. In his 2004 PhD dissertation, Fesler created a comparative dataset of 73 archaeologically identified quarter dwellings erected between 1675-1840, to which

he submitted a battery of statistical tests that essentially confirmed the field observations of many Chesapeake archaeologists – that the average size of enslaved housing units across the tidewater and piedmont regions collectively and persistently decreased as the eighteenth century progressed, “the typical slave housing unit in the 19th century was half the size of those in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. The statistical tests indicate that quarters built before 1780 were significantly larger than those built after 1780” (Fesler 2004: 262-265, 434-436). Fesler notes that the average housing unit in the dataset is 345 square feet which corresponds exactly with the findings of a 1993 architectural survey (Wells 1993) of quarters based upon descriptions listed in the *Virginia Gazette* between 1750-1800. He relates that, “by the mid-18th century the average Chesapeake slave quarter was approximately 350 square feet, what amounted to a 16’ by 22’ structure.” Yet “fifty years earlier” the average quarter was more than 400 square feet, “roughly 18’ by 24’ in size”, and “by the early 19th century the average size had dropped to approximately 200 square feet, something like a 12’ by 16’ cabin” (Fesler 2004: 262).

Albeit the data set is admittedly small, the earliest excavated quarters that appear to have been constructed for the purpose of exclusively housing enslaved individuals exhibit many similar characteristics. A quarter dwelling (44JC298)³¹ excavated on the Governor’s Land, just west of Jamestown Island in James City County, is a classic example of early housing for a newly assembled enslaved workforce in the Lower Chesapeake. The dwelling, of earthfast construction, measured 16 x 26 feet partitioned

³¹ Unless otherwise indicated, site descriptions, plan maps, and associated data for archaeological sites, including the Governor’s Land quarter, Utopia II, III, and IV, were accessed online at the Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery (DAACS), maintained by the Thomas Jefferson Foundation at <http://www.daacs.org>. Individual citations are included within the body of the text per format indicated by DAACS guidelines (<http://www.daacs.org/guidelines.html/>), accessed 19 July 2011.

into two 10 foot bays to which a six foot shed addition had been constructed along the eastern gabled end, for a total of 416 square feet of living space in three bays (See Chapter 3 Appendix: Archaeological Site Plans). The structure had an earthen floor upon which a patch of burnt subsoil indicated that an internal hearth, likely of stick and clay construction, had been erected along the western gabled end. Archaeologists estimated a range of occupation between 1680-1700. Although other subsurface cultural features, including evidence of other structures, were documented at the site, the excavating archaeologists concluded that these features had been either filled and abandoned before or postdated the range of occupation of the quarter. In other words, the quarter had stood in isolation. (Fesler 2003: 44JC298: Background, The Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery (DAACS), 19 July 2011 (<http://www.daacs.org>))

The Governor's Land quarter was expanded from an initial 320 square feet by the addition of an extra 100 square foot bay that accommodated the addition of new residents in later seasons. During this period of increasing importation into the Chesapeake region, early quarters are sometimes likened to barracks, intended to house groups of recently arrived Africans, typically purchased a few at a time. Historical demographics suggest that the residents would almost certainly have been recent arrivals, mostly, if not exclusively, young men. Thus a group of nonrelated individuals, perhaps from similar African regions and of similar language groups, cohabitated in a rather isolated field quarter and likely cultivated nearby agricultural fields with tobacco and corn.

A series of 14 rectangular, oblong, and irregular shaped pits were cut into the earthen floor by the dwelling's occupants. These features, which have become a hallmark of eighteenth century quarters throughout the region, are positioned throughout

the dwelling's interior. Sub-floor pits, the rather generic moniker by which these cultural features are now typically known, were constructed by enslaved residents and likely served multiple functions. Some may have functioned as repositories for root crops or food rations, especially those located adjacent to hearths. There is a growing body of evidence that certain sub-floor pits and the contents and configuration of the materials enclosed within them may have served as sites of negotiation between the worlds of the living and those of the dead, perhaps being employed in protective or healing capacities by displaced West and West Central Africans and their descendants in the Chesapeake (Samford 1999, Boroughs 2004, Pullins et al. 2003: 168-169). Based upon the types of artifacts and small finds typical of the fills within them, the majority of sub-floor pits appear to have been utilized as receptacles for personal effects in crowded living arrangements and amongst nonrelated individuals.

Recent excavations at the Utopia quarter at Littletown provide a useful chronology of architectural modifications in field quarter construction through the first three quarters of the eighteenth century. Utopia is essentially comprised of four discrete and successive archaeological sites located within close proximity. Originally one of Thomas Pettus' quarters, three generations of enslaved residents were housed in successive quarters under the Brays and Burwells with new constructions at roughly 20-30 year intervals. Utopia II was constructed by James Bray II around 1700, the year that he came into full legal possession of the 1280 acre estate through his marriage to Pettus' widow, and was occupied for the next 25-30 years. Bray may have acquired enslaved persons through inheritance and dower but it is very likely that the bulk of the quarter's residents were recent arrivals purchased from the York River market. The quarter

consisted of three earthfast dwellings of three bays each, arranged in a U-shaped compound and flanked by an adjacent outbuilding (See Chapter 3 Appendix: Archaeological Site Plans). Two of the structures measured 12 x 28 feet (336 square feet) while the third and largest dwelling measured 16 x 32 feet with an attached 6 x 8½ foot shed addition on the western gable (563 square feet). The remains of internal hearths were discovered along the east gables of two of the dwellings. Sub-floor pits were identified within each structure, however they occurred with most frequency in the largest of the dwellings. (Fesler 2005: Utopia II: Background, DAACS, 19 July 2011 (<http://www.daacs.org>))

Noting that the few indentured servants that remained part of Bray's workforce were housed elsewhere, Fesler observed that "all three housing units were large enough to serve as group residences for an enslaved African workforce". However, due to the considerable increase in square footage of the largest dwelling, he suggests that "it alone may have been used as a barracks", whereas the other structures "could have been built with a smaller group in mind". Each of the dwellings, he estimated, could house upwards of a dozen or more enslaved residents. The orientation of the dwellings around a common space "bespoke of a communal atmosphere", a characteristic that Fesler notes would have been familiar to "the African members of the community". The paths of circulation that such a spatial orientation fostered likely encouraged social interaction between residents and potentially "hastened the process of family formation at Utopia" (Fesler 2004: 262-265). Engaging with the landscape is a bodily process - patterns of movement through the landscape generate bodily sensations (sight, touch, smell, taste, etc.) which are, in turn, interpreted by individuals and weighted with meaning in terms of

social and cultural norms (ie. the *act* of perception, Merleau-Ponty 1962, Csordas 1990). Fesler is essentially arguing that much of the meaning(s) that would have been gathered by the residents in circulating through this domestic landscape would have already been understood as familiar, as accustomed forms of dwelling (Heidegger 1996, Ingold 2000) that were historically and culturally specific in relation to similar domestic landscapes across the Atlantic, especially in the loosely affiliated rural village democracies that typically characterized communities across the Igbo hinterland (Gomez 2005). The orientation of the Utopia dwellings around a central open area is characteristic of many field quarters in the region throughout the eighteenth century and into the antebellum era. The dwellings in the antebellum Quarterpath quarter were oriented in a similar manner and will be addressed below.

Several hundred feet to the north, Utopia III was occupied circa 1730-1750, the period in which ownership of Littletown passed to James Bray II's son, Thomas Bray II, and grandson, James Bray III. Thomas Bray II successfully petitioned the General Assembly to dock the entail placed by his father upon some of his smaller holdings, redistributing some of his enslaved labors, liquidating some of his smaller tracts and using the money to purchase more enslaved laborers, some of which were almost certainly installed at Utopia. In 1745, Lewis Burwell IV acquired the rights to 29 enslaved individuals at Utopia through his marriage to Francis Thacker Bray and absorbed the quarter into his Kingsmill estate.

Consisting of two earthfast dwellings and an outbuilding, several dissimilarities with Utopia II are immediately apparent (See Chapter 3 Appendix: Archaeological Site Plans). Upon first glance, the dwellings seem to be located almost randomly in relation

to each other and at a fair distance apart, a stark contrast with the symmetrical order of the compound configuration of Utopia II. Furthermore, each dwelling is of a different size and internal arrangement. Yet the dwellings were originally constructed as identical two bay structures, both 12 x 16 feet in size (192 square feet). During the course of occupation, shed additions measuring 6 x 16 feet were added to the gabled ends of Structure 50, increasing its overall dimensions to 16 x 24 feet and doubling the internal floor space to 384 square feet. A total of 18 sub-floor pits were cut into the earthen floor of Structure 50, many cutting into earlier backfilled pits, yet only three were identified within Structure 40's interior. A large pit 15 feet off of the east gable of Structure 50 was likely filled by the dwelling's residents. The southern façade of Structure 40 opened into an enclosed space or activity area, perhaps an animal pen or vegetable garden. The dwelling was almost certainly occupied by related individuals of one or more kin-based family groups. (Fesler 2005: Utopia III: Background, DAACS, 19 July 2011 (<http://www.daacs.org>))

Based upon the internal arrangement of the sub-floor pits within Structure 50, it appears that the dwelling may have been partitioned into three cells. The center bay comprised the core of the original dwelling and contained 12 of 18 documented sub-floor pits. Although the core dwelling was occupied for a greater period of time than the flanking additions, it stands to reason that due to the sheer number of sub-floor pits, the central bay, at least, was likely utilized as a barracks for solitary or nonrelated individuals. If Thomas Bray II's additions to Utopia's workforce resided upon this particular quarter, then it is quite likely that they would have joined the occupants of Structure 50. The flanking additions increased the holding capacity of the dwelling and it

is possible given the paucity of sub-floor pits and the likelihood that the wings were partitioned from the larger central bay that they may have been occupied by kin-based groups. Feature 44, a rectangular sub-floor pit in the eastern addition and the southeastern corner of the dwelling, contained numerous materials – including fossilized shells, fragments of animal bone, and kaolin clay tobacco pipe stem fragments – set upon a carefully prepared earthen platform. Soil samples taken from the platform indicated high quantities of grape pollen, suggesting that libations of wine may have been poured upon the mound. The material items, earthen platform, libations, and the feature's location suggest that the pit and associated objects could have been collectively employed in a single context of use. As a material construction that addressed broad community relationships, namely the reciprocal association between living and deceased members of the Utopia community, the dwelling's residents may have created and utilized the pit as a nexus of social interaction in an intimate domestic space, perhaps in a healing or protective capacity (Samford 1999, Boroughs 2004). It is a vivid material expression of the significance of reciprocal ties between community members that may have been at the heart of an emerging sense of place across many tidewater Virginia quarters.

Utopia IV, the final quarter excavated on the parcel, was constructed under Lewis Burwell IV and was occupied circa 1750 until around 1775, about the time when Burwell made the trek from Kingsmill to his plantation in Mecklenburg County, suggesting that Utopia IV's residents may have either accompanied Burwell on the journey westward or were transferred to other parcels at Kingsmill under his son, Lewis Burwell V. The quarter was comprised of three dwellings, each of varying dimensions (See Chapter 3 Appendix: Archaeological Site Plans). None of the structures at Utopia IV are of

earthfast construction. By the mid-eighteenth century, methods of construction in Chesapeake field quarters began to vary. Although post-in-ground construction was not completely abandoned, Chesapeake planters began to favor cabins framed atop sills that either rested directly on the ground surface or upon small piers of wood or brick that elevated the structure a foot or so off of the ground. Each of the structures at Utopia IV were likely erected upon ground laid sills, traces of which would have been all but eradicated through years of plowing and eventual reclamation by new growth forests. (Fesler 2005: Utopia IV: Background, DAACS, 19 July 2011 (<http://www.daacs.org>))

Structure 140, the largest of the dwellings, measured 22 x 32 feet, although the identification of an interior partition, end chimneys, and separate exterior entrances suggests that the structure was a duplex, essentially two discrete housing units under a common roof. This is not uncommon for the time. One of the quarter dwellings at the nearby Richneck Plantation (CWF 68AL, see Figure 1.6 for location) was of a similar size, manner of construction, and period of occupation (Franklin 2004, See Chapter 3 Appendix: Archaeological Site Plans). Both the Richneck quarter and Structure 140 contained numerous sub-floor pits, 15 in all at the Richneck duplex and 22 within Structure 140 at Utopia. The total floor space of Structure 140 surpassed 700 feet, and, Fesler notes, “it *could* have served as an immense group residence”. “But”, he continues, “Burwell was faced with a different slave population than his predecessors. He purchased only an occasional new African, relying instead on his slaves to increase their population through childbirth . . . Because of this, *it was to Burwell’s advantage, and met the wishes of his slaves, to quarter them in discrete housing units whose membership was limited to family members*” (Fesler 2004: 264-265, my italics). Each of the duplex

compartments was large enough to have housed discrete family groups as Fesler suggests, however the sheer number of sub-floor pits suggests that the residents could also have been nonrelated individuals or cohabitating solitaries, in which case they may have been either unmarried individuals or men married to women who lived elsewhere, perhaps in another quarter on Kingsmill Neck or further abroad. By the third quarter of the eighteenth century, marriage abroad had become an extremely common social construct and the practice must be taken into account in archaeological analyses. Structures 150 and 160, on the other hand, were both single bay structures, each containing just a single sub-floor pit. Structure 150 was conjectured to measure roughly 15 x 17 feet (255 square feet) and Structure 160 was perhaps a bit smaller in dimension. In all likelihood these dwellings were indeed constructed to accommodate residents that shared kinship ties, perhaps immediate or extended family groups.

Overlapping with the range of occupation at Utopia IV, the three archaeologically documented structures that comprised Southall's Quarter (44JC969), directly adjacent to Kingsmill and Littleton and the immediate predecessor to the antebellum Quarterpath quarter, exhibit varied construction techniques through the period of occupation (See Chapter 3 Appendix: Archaeological Site Plans). The quarter, depicted on the 1781 Desandrouins Map (See Figure 1.4), was occupied circa 1750-1802 (Pullins et al. 2003). In 1803 William Allen II purchased the 920 acre parcel from the estate of James Southall and integrated the property into his Kingsmill operation. The Quarterpath quarter was built on the same parcel in the following decades. Structure 2, the earliest dwelling at the site, was a 15 x 20 foot (300 square feet) structure with an internal hearth that appears to have been partitioned into two living units in a very similar internal arrangement to the

quarter dwelling at Richneck, with the exception of a small shed addition attached to the dwelling's southeastern corner. Nine sub-floor pits were identified within the dwelling. Feature 34, a semi-rectangular pit within the shed addition bears striking resemblance in its spatial orientation in the southeastern corner of the dwelling and in both content and arrangement of material items with Feature 44 at Utopia III and a similar sub-floor pit at the Eden house site (31BR52) in Edenton, North Carolina (Lautzenheiser et al. 1998, Samford 1999, Boroughs 2004). Its similarity with the other archaeologically identified examples in similar domestic contexts (Pullins et al. 2003: 167-169) suggests that it may have also been utilized as a nexus of interaction between living and deceased community members. Structure 1 also measured 15 x 20 feet (300 square feet) and was probably of log construction set upon ground laid sills. Two sub-floor pits were documented within the dwelling's interior. Structure 3 was of the same dimension and manner of construction as Structure 1 and contained a single sub-floor pit. (Pullins et al. 2003)

In 1782 James Southall kept 45 cattle, which were more than likely housed upon the fields and enclosures depicted at Southall's Quarter on the Desandrouins map. Between 1782 and 1800 Southall was also assessed for one free white man, presumably an overseer or farm manager, and between 9-14 enslaved individuals (JCC Personal Property Tax Lists 1782-1824: CWF Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg). Although he may have put some to work in Williamsburg at the Raleigh Tavern, to which he was also proprietor, most or all of his enslaved people were likely housed at this particular quarter, as the city of Williamsburg was easily within an hour's walk along well maintained roads. While Structure 2 may have housed nonrelated individuals, cohabiting solitaires,

or men with families on plantations abroad, Structures 1 and 3 bear the hallmarks of kin-based housing, perhaps several distinct family or extended family groups.

Common trends in field quarter construction and material residues of activity implied in archaeological patterning across these domestic homesites may reflect geographic scales of dispersion of kinship ties amongst enslaved persons residing across large tidewater estates. Many of the individuals that resided in the quartering sites presented in this section were likely entailed, annexed to the lands in which they were legally bound to cultivate, a factor that likely contributed to what one scholar has described as “Enslaved Virginian’s profoundly local, plantation based identities” (Sidbury 1997: 26). On the largest tidewater plantations such as those maintained by the Allens, Brays, and Burwells, places in which entail was most often utilized, residents were more commonly afforded a degree of relative temporal and generational stability on grounds that became increasingly familiar through the decades. Perhaps another incidental convergence, the convention of entail, intended to facilitate the passing of wealth between generations of elite planting families, may have also stimulated the increasing prominence of marriage abroad in enslaved communities. Yet for marriage abroad to have become so exceedingly widespread, first and foremost there must have also been a great degree of social interaction abroad. The removal of multigenerational black communities from plantation neighborhoods such as the one that materialized across Kingsmill Neck in the eighteenth century exposed intimate bonds that had been forged between residents in quarters at home and abroad across decades of social interaction, ties that may have “linked the residents of the slave quarters of Virginia into village communities similar to those in the hinterland of the Bight of Biafra” (Ibid: 28).

The skewed sex ratios of early quarters such as Utopia II and those opened by John Allen in the first half of the eighteenth century are most often associated with larger “barracks-style” dwellings in which nonrelated individuals, often new arrivals or “saltwater” Africans and mostly men, cohabitated. New arrivals during this period, such as Robert Russa Moton’s great great grandfather, sought others nearby who spoke familiar languages and remembered customs performed on ancestral lands across the Atlantic. Domestic quarters invariably became *gathering places* as men and women took advantage of opportunities to visit residents of other quarters at home and abroad and maintained connections with those in quarters of previous residence, initiating brief romantic liaisons as well as a variety of long term social unions (see Sidbury 1997: 22). As the size of enslaved housing units decreased persistently and single bay structures increased in frequency, communal housing designed to quarter a motley crew of nonrelated individuals and recent African arrivals was slowly replaced with dwellings intended to accommodate smaller numbers of related persons. Consequently, sub-floor pits all but disappear by the turn of the nineteenth century (Fesler 2004: 350, 434-436).

Geographic scales of social interaction are reflected in the changing form of domestic structures across plantation quarters. The increasing prevalence of smaller dwellings with few to no sub-floor pits may reflect both intra-plantation (social ties within a single quarter or across multiple quarters on a particular plantation) and extra-plantation (social ties extended between quarters at home and abroad) kinship affiliations. Single bay dwellings with few to no sub-floor pits may have housed immediate and extended family cohabitating within a single quarter, such as those upon Robert Carter’s plantations in the first half of the eighteenth century (see Walsh 1997: 84). But kinship

affiliations tended to become increasingly dispersed throughout the eighteenth century, thus observers reported that it was not uncommon in some Virginia counties by the turn of the nineteenth century for enslaved men to borrow horses and ride upwards of 15 miles in a single night to visit wives and children that lived on more distant quarters (Morgan 1998: 508-510). Children with fathers abroad typically lived with mothers but they often cohabitated with a host of other kin as well, most likely in the smaller dwelling form. A visitor to Allen's Kingsmill in the antebellum era, one that may have called upon the Quarterpath residents, noted that it was not unusual for three generations of extended family members to be housed under a single roof (see Chapter 6). The dwellings at the antebellum Quarterpath quarter were both small single bay dwellings and may have housed discrete family or extended kin groups, yet artifacts associated with the presence of children at the site following the Civil War may also imply that bonds of kinship that had been maintained by individuals across geographic space under enslavement may have been rejoined in a single dwelling after Emancipation.

Architectural Dynamics at the Quarterpath Site (44WB0124/CWF 51AG)

Archaeological Field Methods

In 1990, Colonial Williamsburg archaeologists conducted a Phase I archaeological survey on the Quarterpath tract as part of a larger project that encompassed Foundation properties on both sides of Quarterpath Road between Richmond Road and State Route 199. The team of archaeologists discovered two significant and spatially distinct historic deposits on the 12 acre tract. The first was

located directly adjacent to Quarterpath Road and was composed principally of late-eighteenth and nineteenth century artifacts. The second deposit, located some 50 meters to the west, was determined to be a nineteenth century occupation. As the newly discovered concentrations, simply labeled Sites 1 and 2, were not threatened by commercial development at the time, the archaeologists recommended no further action need be taken.

We returned to the parcel in 2003 in advance of the impending sale and potential development of the tract to reevaluate the historic deposits discovered in 1990. The first order of business was to conduct a systematic survey of the wooded tract with the goal of defining the spatial extent of the potential sites. Colonial Williamsburg archaeologists placed shovel test pits, 30 centimeters in diameter, at 10 meter (33 foot) intervals and excavated to sterile subsoil. Once the initial phase of shovel testing was complete, two distinct areas of concentration were identified, roughly corresponding with the areas delineated as Sites 1 and 2 in the 1990 phase I survey. In order to ascertain more definitive site boundaries, 50 × 50 centimeter test units were placed between shovel tests that yielded positive evidence of historic occupation and excavated by cultural strata to sterile subsoil. It was immediately apparent that the tract had been reclaimed as arable farmland, being plowed and cultivated after site abandonment.

The area originally designated as Site 1 in 1990 was characterized by a small concentration of artifacts across an area of roughly 30 × 30 meters (100 × 100 feet). A few seventeenth century artifacts were accompanied by a light brick scattering within a deposit composed principally of late-eighteenth and nineteenth century ceramics and bottle glass. The earliest recovered ceramic type was a single fragment of locally

produced coarse earthenware, possibly made during the first half of the seventeenth century. Other than a light brick scattering, most likely distributed across the area by years of plowing, only three small sherds of window glass and a few nail fragments could be classified as architectural debris.

A historic deposit covering an area of approximately 70 x 50 meters (230 × 165 feet) was discovered roughly 50 meters (165 feet) west of the first area of concentration. This deposit was more intensely concentrated than the first and was composed primarily of nineteenth century artifacts. A significant amount of architectural material was recovered from this deposit. Fist-sized chunks of handmade brick, shell and sand mortar, fragments of window glass, an iron hinge, and a multitude of machine-cut nails, manufactured circa 1835-1890 hinted at the presence of a historic structure nearby. Seven contiguous 1 x 1 meter test units were placed in the center of the concentration in order to better analyze and assess the significance of the deposit. A U-shaped brick hearth three courses wide and nearly five feet in length was discovered in conjunction with several other cultural features roughly a foot below the ground surface (Figure 3.4). In 1990 this deposit was labeled as Site 2, however it seemed more likely that the areas initially identified as Sites 1 and 2 were multiple components of one larger site with a range of occupation between the second quarter of the nineteenth through the turn of the twentieth centuries. At the close of the Phase I/II survey, Sites 1 and 2 were therefore redesignated as *Area 1* and *Area 2* for further archaeological investigation.

The Department of Archaeological Research (DAR) at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, in conjunction with the Anthropology Department of the College of William and Mary, recognized the unique opportunity presented by the Quarterpath Site, and

approved opening the excavation as a case study for teaching purposes. With a field crew consisting of college students and several able graduate instructors, we returned to the site in late spring of 2004. Over a ten week period between June and August, we conducted a Phase III campaign of intensive open-area excavation, which became the primary curriculum for students of two field schools in historical archaeology.



Figure 3.4 – Brick hearth and associated cultural features (Structure 1), exposed during the Phase II archaeological investigation.

A total of 118 1 x 1 meter test units were excavated by cultural strata to sterile subsoil – 94 in Area 2 and 23 in Area 1 – with the intention of exposing sub-surface cultural features. After extensive and strategic sampling of the plowzone, we made the decision to mechanically strip Areas 1 and 2 to subsoil in order to maximize allotted time and available resources (Figure 3.5). Architectural features associated with two archaeologically identified dwellings were exposed during the course of excavation and

30 of 40 documented sub-surface cultural features were excavated. 100% of soils from cultural features were retained for flotation, with the single exception of Feature 35, a square cellar underlying Structure 2, which was quartered with 50% of the soil retained for flotation. The vast majority of the nearly 23,000 artifacts that comprise the Quarterpath assemblage, however, were salvaged from test units in Excavation Areas 1 and 2, from the thick layers of plowzone that blanketed the site.

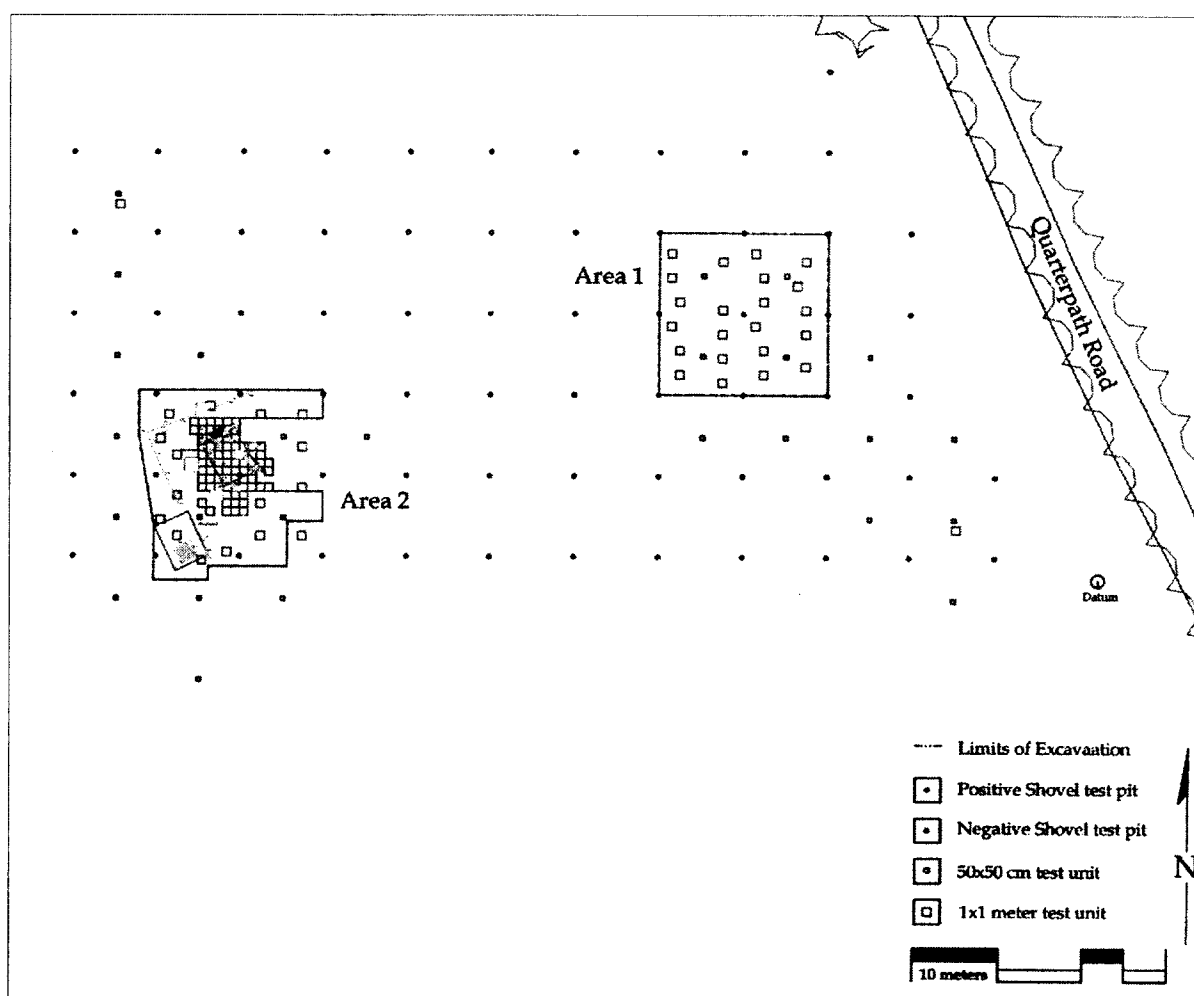


Figure 3.5 – Placement of shovel test pits and test units across the area of interest and limits of excavation of Areas 1 and 2.

Area 2: Domestic Complex

The domestic complex at the Quarterpath Site consisted of two archaeologically identified dwellings, a boundary fence composed of two intersecting lines of timber posts, and associated subsurface cultural features (Figure 3.6). Initially constructed under the stewardship of the young William (Orgain) Allen's trustees³², the site was occupied circa 1840s-1905, when the incineration of Structure 1 apparently prompted site abandonment. The dwellings were constructed on a level plateau raised slightly above the surrounding area. Historic maps (see Figure 6.2) indicate that the dwellings abutted an agricultural field complex directly to the west, on the landform between College Creek and a smaller tributary, branching off to the east into Tutter's Neck Pond and marking the northern boundary of the Kingsmill estate. The smaller tributary and the pond are both a short walking distance from the site and may have been the primary water source for the residents other than the catchment of rainwater. Although Structures 1 and 2 varied in manner of construction, they were oriented along a common axis. Artifact assemblages confirm that the structures were contemporaneous and simultaneously occupied throughout the life of the site.

Structure 1 was a timber-framed dwelling measuring 15 x 19 feet (285 square feet) in dimension with a well constructed brick hearth centered along its northern gabled end (Figure 3.7). A linear depression (Feature 25) cut into the subsoil implies that the structure may have had either a centrally located stair-step entrance or perhaps a covered porch projecting along its eastern façade (see Figures 3.6, 3.9). The remains of structural framing supports were identified at the dwelling's corners. Load-bearing framing

³² William (Orgain) Allen came of age and took full legal possession of his inherited estates in 1850.

members in earlier dwellings of earthfast construction were leveled and set within rectangular holes cut a fair depth into the clay subsoil in order to sustain and stabilize the structures they supported. Although the structural features at each corner of Structure 1

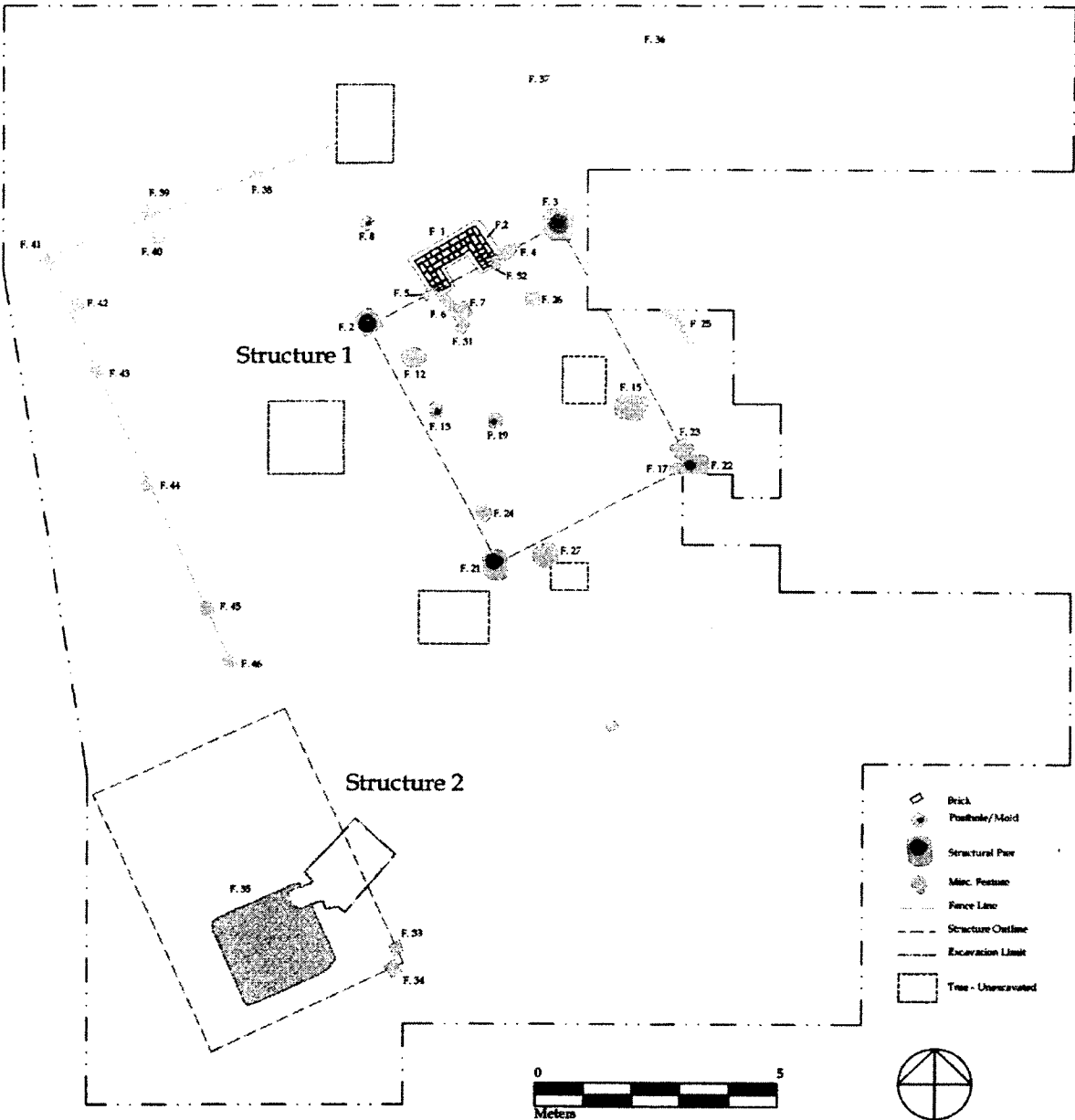


Figure 3.6 – Quarterpath domestic complex (Area 2), occupied circa 1840s-1905.

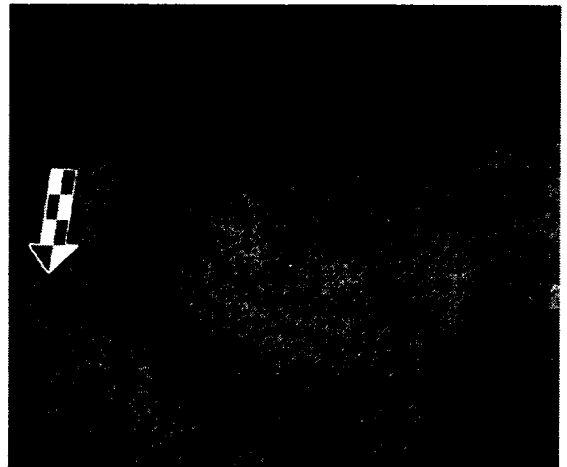


Figure 3.7 – Top: Composite overview of field school students cleaning Structure 1 after excavation of cultural features. Projection of dwelling outlined in black. Feature 3 in center foreground. Bottom: Detail of Feature 3, remains of a wooden structural pier on northeast corner of Structure 1 before and after excavation.

are roughly rectangular in plan, the excavated profiles of each are shallow and dish-shaped, indicating that the dwelling was framed with sills resting atop wooden piers, lifting the floor of the cabin a foot or so above the ground surface and leaving a crawlspace underneath. Photographs taken of contemporaneous cabins in plantation quarters throughout the Depression-era South illustrate this manner of construction. In a photograph labeled by architects of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) as a

detail shot of a “Negro Cabin” the dwelling is clearly situated upon a wooden block or pier (Figure 3.8). It is difficult to determine whether the support is inserted into or merely rests atop the ground surface, nevertheless construction upon wooden piers set into shallow depressions would conceivably leave an architectural footprint similar to that of Structure 1. Of comparable dimensions to Structure 1, a recently (2007) erected cabin in Freedom Park in James City County is constructed in a like manner. Based upon a variety of local archaeological, architectural, and documentary lines of evidence the structure is intended to serve as a public interpretive model, a common dwelling that one

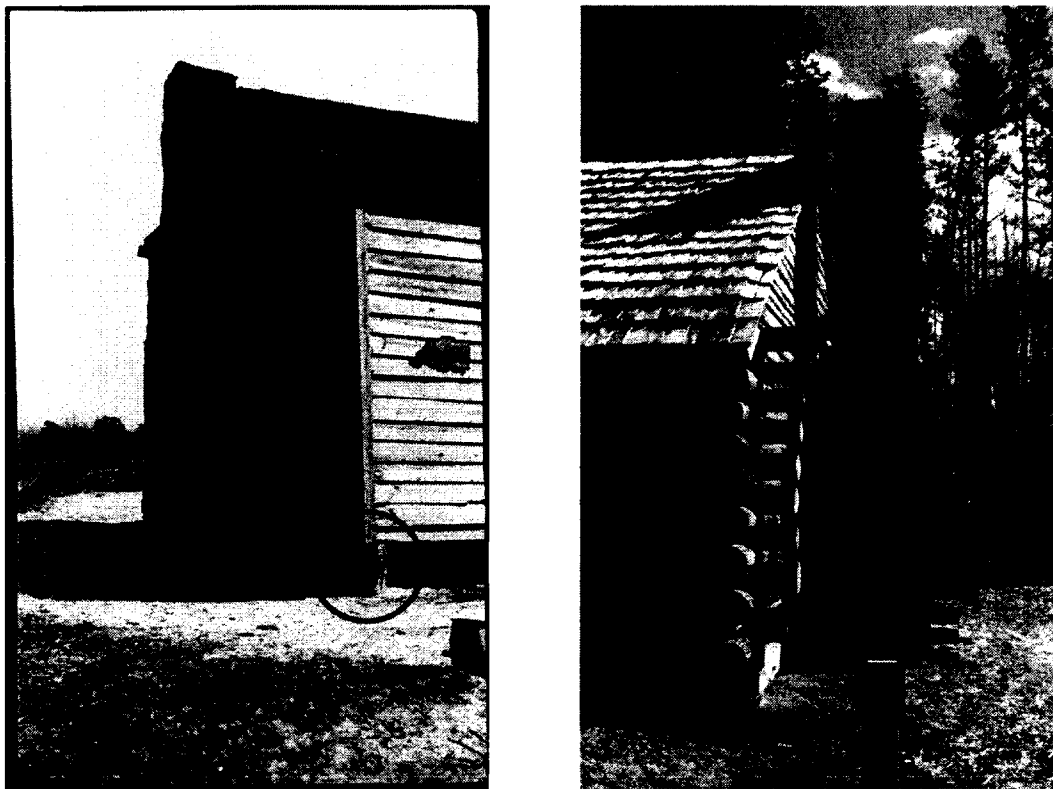


Figure 3.8 – Left: “Negro Cabin” framed atop wooden block or pier, Sumter County, South Carolina, photographed circa 1933-1940: Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division (HABS SC,43-SUMT.V,1: DIGID <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/hhh.sc0386>). Right: Detail of reconstructed cabin of log construction with joined sills set upon hole-set wooden piers: Freedom Park, James City County, Virginia, 2007. Photo by the author.

might have encountered in quarters across area plantations throughout the nineteenth century. Although the walls are constructed of logs, the structure is supported by hewn and interlocked sills resting upon hole-set wooden piers, slightly elevating the wooden floor above the ground surface.

No load-bearing structural features were identified in association with Structure 2, suggesting that the dwelling may have been constructed upon ground-laid sills. Archaeological evidence of such a construction technique in the form of ephemeral soil stains would likely not have survived years of intrusive plowing and subsequent logging activities that followed in the decades after site abandonment. A small square cellar, roughly 6 x 6 feet, was cut into the clay subsoil underlying the structure. The conjectured outline of Structure 2 (see Figure 3.6) is based upon the relative size and orientation of Feature 35 as well as two small supports (Features 33 and 34) that may have been utilized to stabilize or repair the dwelling's southeastern corner. Other landscape features, such as the point of termination and alignment of the western fence line with features associated with both dwellings, support this projection as well. Structure 2 may have been comparable in size to Structure 1. Given the absence of structural footings and the paucity of recovered nails relative to Structure 1 (Table 3.1) the dwelling may have been of log construction with a stick and clay chimney and could have been very similar in appearance with the cabin reconstructed in Freedom Park (see Figure 3.8) and with a contemporaneous dwelling near Richmond, Virginia, photographed in 1888 (Figure 3.9).

The frequency and types of architectural items present in the Quarterpath assemblage provide significant insight into manners of external sheathing, interior wall treatment, and potential furnishings. Of the more than 5000 nails recovered from

Excavation Area 2, 98% of identifiable examples were machine-cut and headed, manufactured circa 1835-1890. The near absence of wire nails that came into widespread usage around the turn of the twentieth century follows the general pattern of the assemblage of the nearly 20,000 artifacts recovered from the site and lends additional support for site abandonment circa 1905. The vast majority of nails were recovered from depositional contexts associated with Structure 1 (Tables 3.1, 3.2). The multitude of 2-4 inch cut nails associated with the dwelling suggests that it may have been sheathed in wooden clapboards or weatherboards, perhaps with wooden shingles (see Figure 3.9). Fragments of lime plaster with exterior impressions from strips of wooden lathing and the



Figure 3.9 – Dwelling of log construction with stick-and-clay chimney, glazed four-panel windows, and covered porch addition, near Richmond, Virginia, 1888. (Valentine Richmond History Center Special Collections and Archives; Virginia Commonwealth University digital collection, negative 1436 <http://dig.library.vcu.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/cook/id/251/rec/225>)

Table 3.1 - Frequency of Architectural Items (except brick)

	Area 1	Area 2	Str. 1	Str. 2
nail	21	5160	2420	539
window glass	25	1150	339	74
plaster	0	91	38	0
daub	0	39	39	0
screw	0	19	13	0
bolt	0	6	3	0
stone, architectural	0	4	1	0
roofing tile	1	1	0	0
Total:	47	6470	2853	613

Table 3.2 – Nail frequency, type, and percentage by Excavation Area and Structure

Nail Type:	Area 1	Area 2	Str. 1	(%)	Str. 2	(%)
brad	0	13	0	0.00	13	2.41
cut, 2-4 in	2	2452	1498	61.90	22	4.08
cut, 2-4 in, clinched	0	1	1	0.04	0	0.00
cut, frag	0	680	209	8.64	79	14.66
cut, < 2 in	2	1125	599	24.75	29	5.38
cut, < 4 in	0	2	0	0.00	0	0.00
horseshoe	0	1	1	0.04	0	0.00
indeterminate, 2-4 in	0	1	0	0.00	1	0.19
indeterminate, frag	7	829	98	4.05	373	69.20
indeterminate, < 2 in	0	3	1	0.04	1	0.19
wire, 2-4 in	0	1	1	0.04	0	0.00
wire, frag	0	8	0	0.00	8	1.48
wire, < 2 in	2	6	5	0.21	0	0.00
wrought, 2-4 in	2	20	0	0.00	9	1.67
wrought, 2-4 in, clinched	0	1	1	0.04	0	0.00
wrought, < 2 in	2	17	6	0.25	4	0.74
wrought, frag	2	0	0	0.00	0	0.00
wrought, frag, clinched	2	0	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total:	21	5160	2420	100.00%	539	100.00%
Wrought Nails	8	38	7	0.29	13	2.47
Cut Nails	4	4260	2307	95.37	130	24.71
Wire Nails	2	15	6	0.25	8	1.52
Indeterminate	7	833	99	4.09	375	71.29
Total:	21	5146	2419	100.00%	526	100.00%

recovery of nearly 600 cut nails of less than two inches in length implies that the interior walls were plastered a gleaming white at the time of the dwelling's incineration. The cut nails and fragments recovered from the footprint of Structure 2 could have been used in the construction of a stick-and-clay chimney, for exterior wooden strips used as chinking between logs, or for roof treatment. Several brads were recovered in association with Structure 2 as well. These small nails may have been used to join wooden flooring. The relative paucity of nails in comparison with Structure 1 suggests that the roof of Structure 2 may have been sheathed in clapboarding which would require fewer fasteners as opposed to individual shingles. Fragments of window glass were recovered from contexts associated with both dwellings, suggesting that the interiors of each were illuminated by small glazed sash windows (Figure 3.10, also see Figures 3.8 and 3.9).

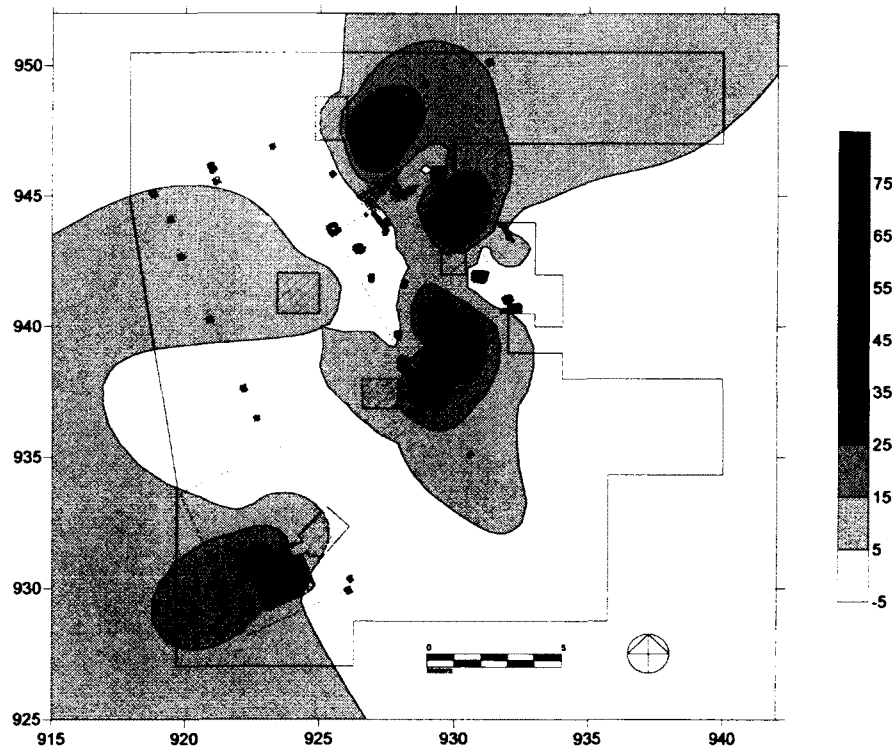


Figure 3.10 – Distribution of window glass fragments across domestic complex.

Architectural features and artifacts associated with Structure 1 hint at the manner of its destruction. A layer of ash blanketed the archaeological deposits surrounding the dwelling and the remains of the structural supports exhibited evidence of charring (Figure 3.11). Many of the recovered ceramic fragments are blackened by flame and most archaeologically salvaged nails have been essentially case-hardened through prolonged exposure to intensive heat, rendering them resistant to corrosion. Scattering beaded glass droplets were recovered throughout the interior of the cabin, evidence that the fire burned very intensely and for such duration as to melt thick bottle glass. Fragments of daub, essentially burned clay, may have been purposefully employed as insulation between walls or may simply be a byproduct of the dwelling's incineration, especially considering that the structure was timber-framed and had a chimney of brick construction. The presence of several iron alloy furniture or box locks, copper and iron alloy escutcheons, and a handful of screws manufactured after 1846, remnants of internal furnishings that perished within the blaze, suggest that the fire was swift and unexpected, leaving the residents with little time to salvage items from the dwelling.

The incineration of Structure 1 circa 1905 seems to have prompted the immediate abandonment of Structure 2 as well. The square cellar (Feature 35) beneath Structure 2 exhibited none of the telltale archaeological signs of being open to the elements for any extended period of time, such as wash-in or sidewall slumping. In profile, the feature exhibited vertically straight sidewalls and a flat, carefully leveled floor. It was filled with domestic refuse and architectural debris and contained just a single stratigraphic layer, indicating that it was filled rapidly, perhaps in a single depositional episode (Figure 3.11). After the incineration of Structure 1 and subsequent abandonment of Structure 2 it

appears that some bricks were salvaged from the remains of Structure 1, leaving smaller fragments to accumulate in the voids left by the burned and decaying wooden piers.

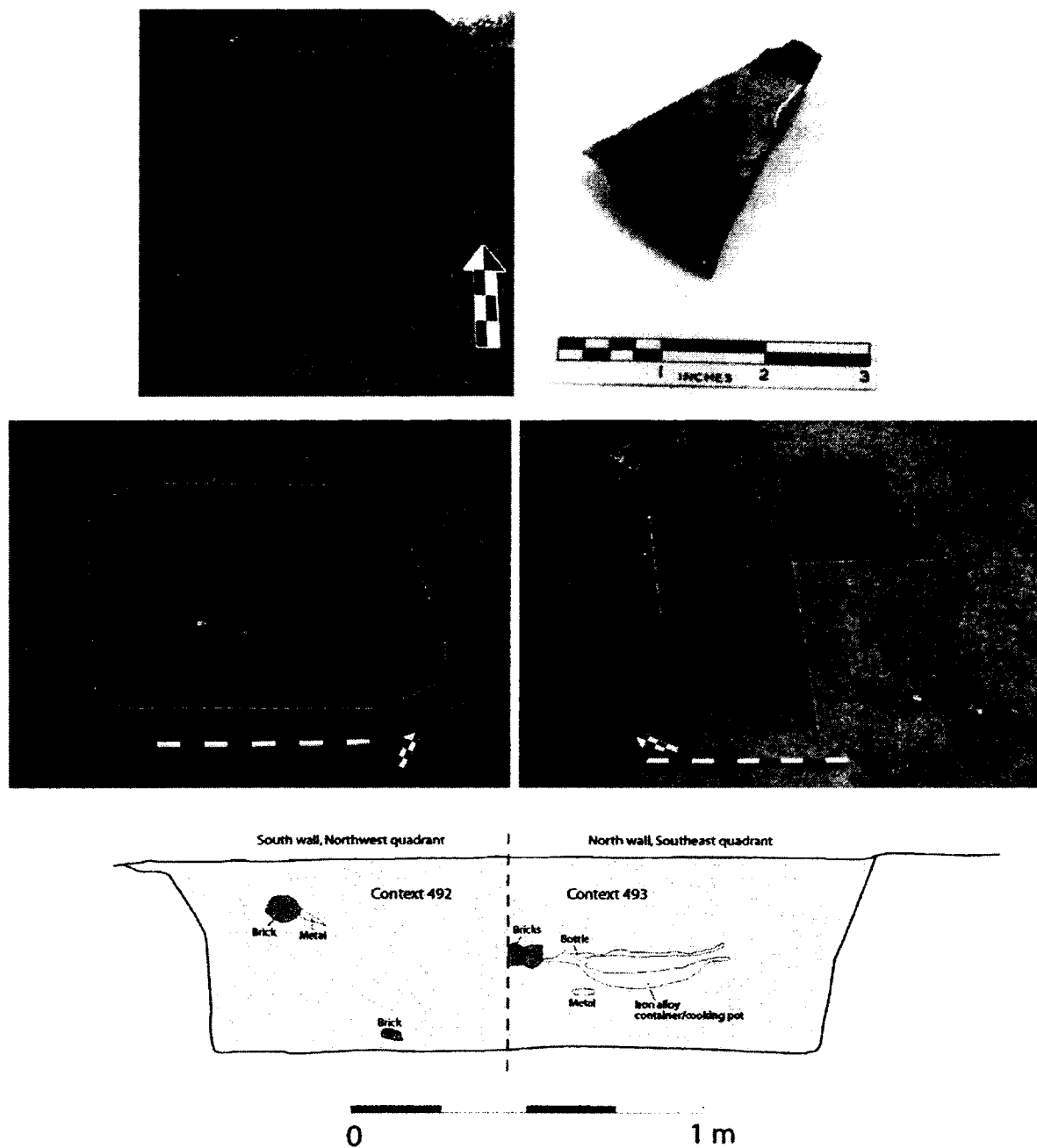


Figure 3.11 – Top: Feature 21, the charred remains of a wooden structural pier on the southwest corner of Structure 1 and Wedgwood trademark on burned whiteware plate fragment. Middle: Feature 35, square cellar underneath Structure 2, prior to and in process of excavation. Bottom: Profile of Feature 35. The presence of a single stratum implies rapid filling and abandonment.

Although varying in manner of construction, Structures 1 and 2 were both single bay dwellings of comparable size, perhaps with lofts under the eaves for additional sleeping quarters or storage. The dwellings were occupied circa 1840s-1905 although the precise date of construction was unable to be determined by archaeological means. Feature 2, the builder's trench associated with the construction of the brick hearth attached to Structure 1 was devoid of diagnostic artifacts (see Figure 3.6). However the construction of the quarter may coincide with Martha Orgain's 1842 petition authorizing the purchase of Jamestown Island and subsequent transfer of enslaved persons across Allen family operations in Surry and James City Counties. By the conditions of William Allen II's will, his grand-nephew retained a life interest in his inherited estates but was prohibited from sale of the plantation tracts *and* the enslaved communities that resided upon them, a clause that essentially mimicked the defunct convention of entail. Yet, as with entail, he was free to transfer persons across his own networked holdings. By the 1840s soils across many older tidewater estates had been exhausted by nearly two centuries of intensive cultivation (see Ruffin 1837, 1852, 1855). Prior to acquisition and integration of the Quarterpath tract into the larger Kingsmill operation by the Allens, James Southall had primarily utilized the parcel to maintain a relatively large livestock operation, perhaps serving the choicest cuts of meat in his tavern operation in nearby Williamsburg. Thus the lands may have been a bit more productive than others in the region. The "fertile lands" Orgain mentions in her petition could very well have been applicable to the Quarterpath tract. As smaller single bay structures with but a single sub-floor pit/small cellar under the floor of Structure 2, the Quarterpath dwellings bear the architectural hallmarks of kin-based living quarters. Given the relative dates of

occupation and the architectural forms of the Quarterpath dwellings, it is entirely possible that the initial residents of the Quarterpath Site may have been kin-based groups relocated *in totum* from other quarters across Allen family estates.

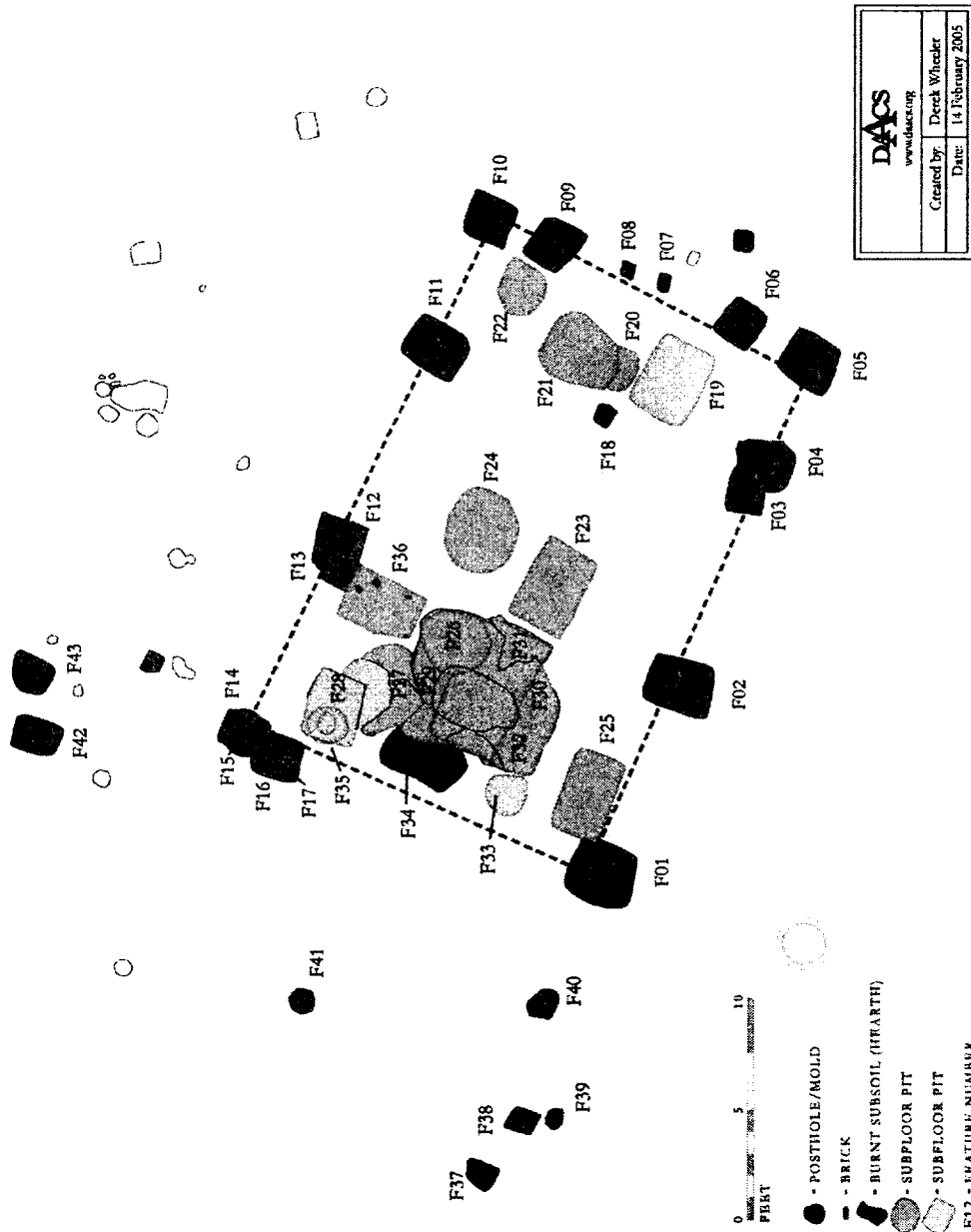
While many of the quarters across Kingsmill and Littletown may have remained from the Burwell and Bray period occupations, perhaps becoming reappropriated by enslaved persons in the antebellum era, the Quarterpath quarter was a key domestic locus in a multi-plantation agricultural enterprise *from its inception*. The residents were transfers from other quarters across the Allen family plantation network. They may have moved out of other local quarters, perhaps as close as the neighboring Kingsmill or Littletown tracts or from Neck of Land, just a mile or so to the west from Kingsmill Neck (see Figures 1.6, 4.2), or they may have been resettled from the Allen family seat at Claremont or other ancillary quarters on the opposite shores of the James River in Surry County. In either case, the Quarterpath residents had roots elsewhere and they may have been presented with opportunities to retain ties to previous quarters and communities of residence. The Allens were assessed for between 98-114 enslaved persons residing in quarters across Kingsmill and Neck of Land-Jamestown Island throughout the 1840s until the eve of the Civil War in 1861. Many of the commonplace tasks of plantation life would have called for the movement of enslaved persons between these quarters, such as distributing food rations and clothing to homesites across these two large agricultural operations, processing and milling corn into meal at the mill maintained by the Allens at the center of Kingsmill, caring for livestock, plowing, sowing, and harvesting in particular. Three wharves and multiple landings connected Kingsmill, Jamestown Island, and Claremont and were kept in constant use by plantation managers, often with the

accompaniment of enslaved laborers. Domestic quarters such as Quarterpath invariably became neighborhood gathering places and loci of activity as enslaved persons received neighbors at home and traveled to visit kin, friends, and loved ones in adjacent and more distant quarters in the course of plantation labors and of their own prerogative.

The orientation of the Quarterpath dwellings along a shared axis with a common space between also implies a variety of activities that linked the residents of the dwellings with each other and to neighbors and visitors beyond. Across the West and West Central African pan-tropics people tended to live “around” their dwellings, using houses primarily for “sleeping, storage, and shelter . . . working, cooking, eating, and socializing [took] place outside” (Ferguson 1992: 69-71), a set of practices that was perpetuated across Virginia quarters as well. The residents of the Quarterpath dwellings, likely kin-based groups, were bonded by a shared domestic space that beckoned activity and promoted social interaction. Patterning in the distribution of artifacts across the domestic complex suggests that the Quarterpath households meticulously presided over the space between the dwellings, preparing the yardscape as a site for social activities that extended beyond the immediate homesite, connecting the residents with others throughout the broader plantation neighborhood. Visitors were greeted, meals were prepared and shared between residents and with visitors, neighborhood children played together, neighbors socialized and traded news, and a host of other activities were typically performed on common ground at the heart of the domestic complex (see Chapter 5). Ties of kinship and camaraderie overlapped at maximum density in domestic homesites such as the Quarterpath quarter. These places were at the heart of plantation neighborhoods. The following chapters will explore these connections and the manners in which various

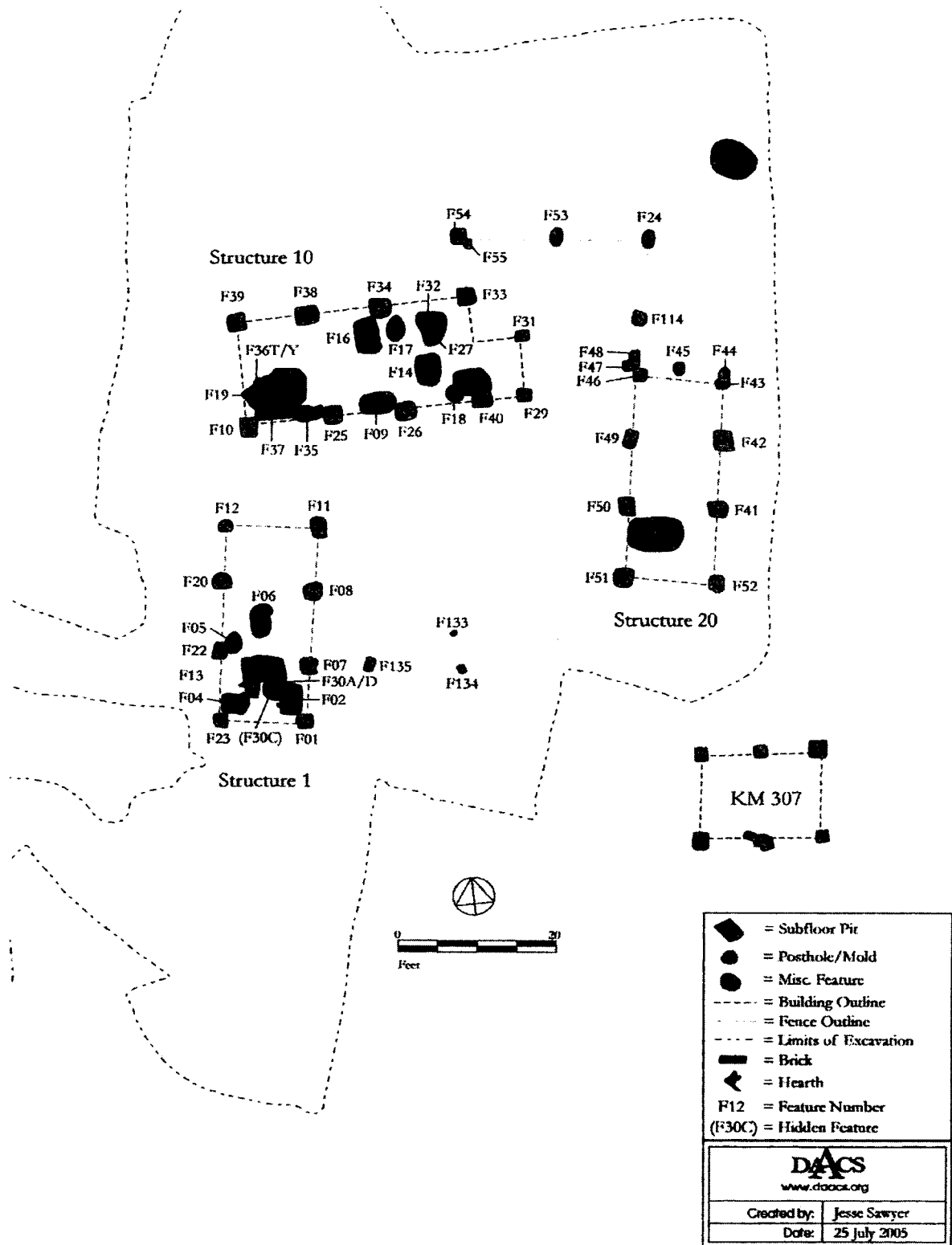
structures of community became embedded in familiar local places across the antebellum Quarterpath neighborhood.

Chapter 3 Appendix: Archaeological Site Plans



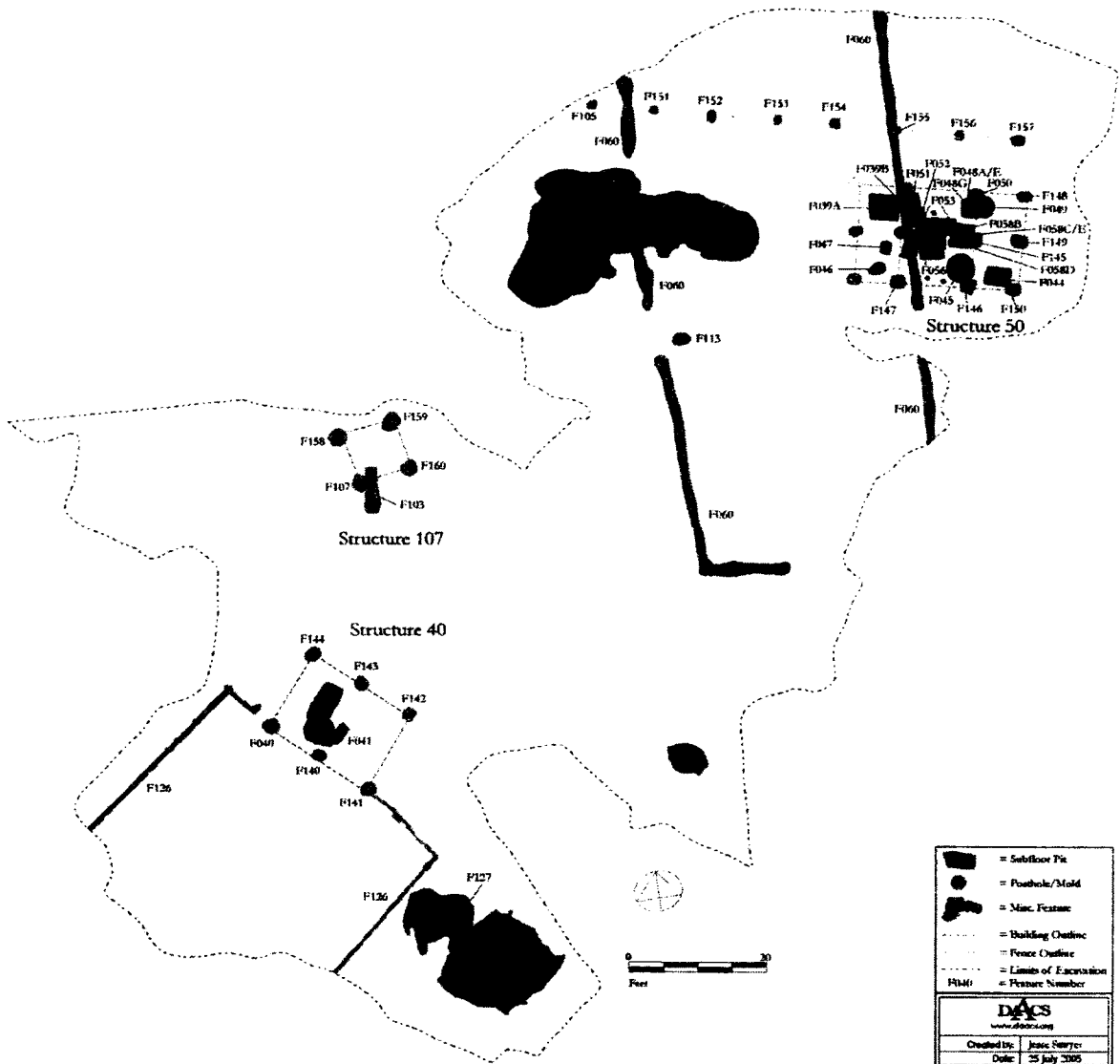
Site 44JC298 (Governor's Land):

Fesler 1992: 44JC298: Site Images, DAACS, 19 July 2011 (<http://www.daacs.org>)



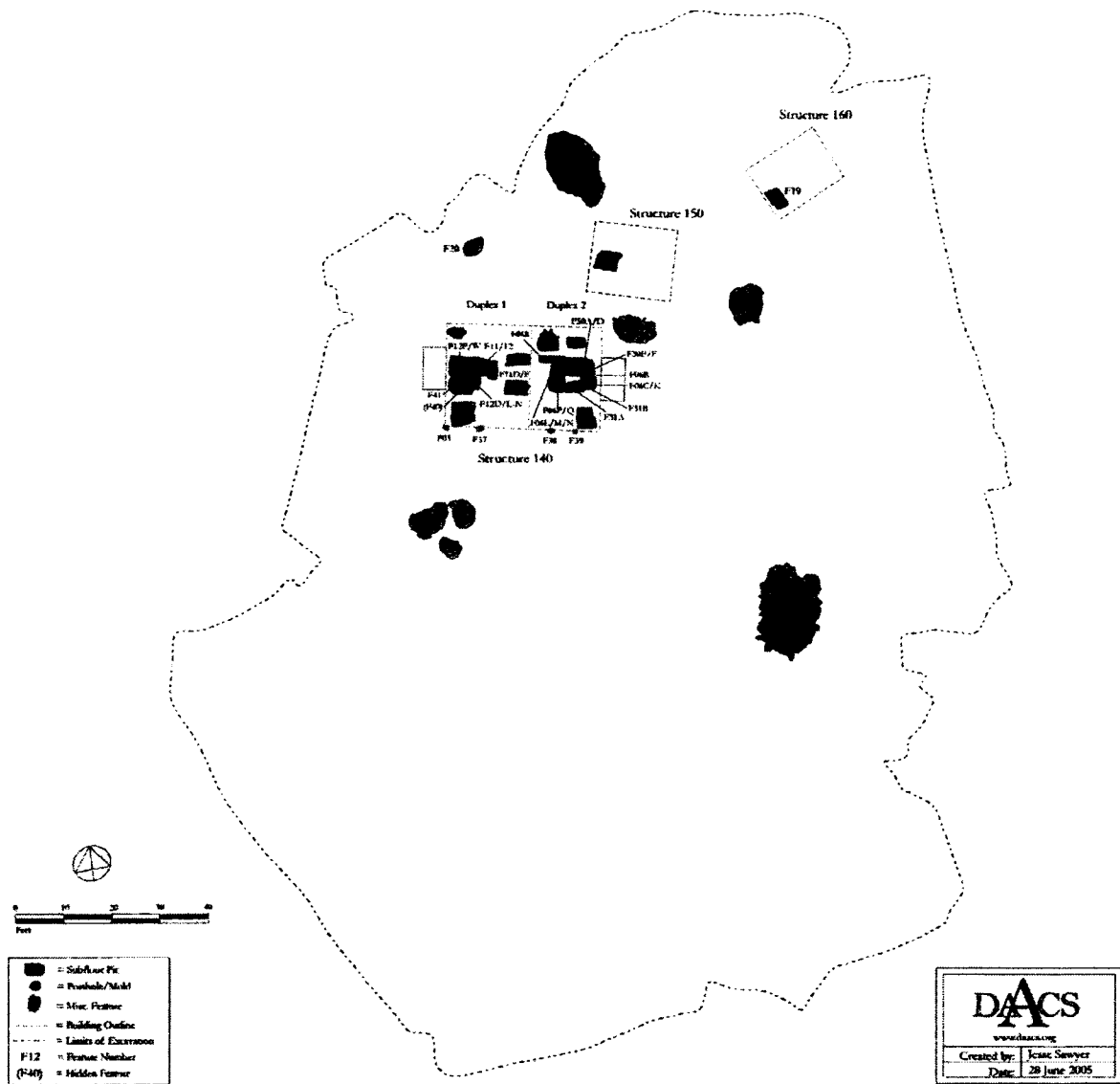
Utopia II (Littletown):

Fesler 1996: Utopia II: Site Images, DAACS, 19 July 2011 (<http://www.daacs.org>)



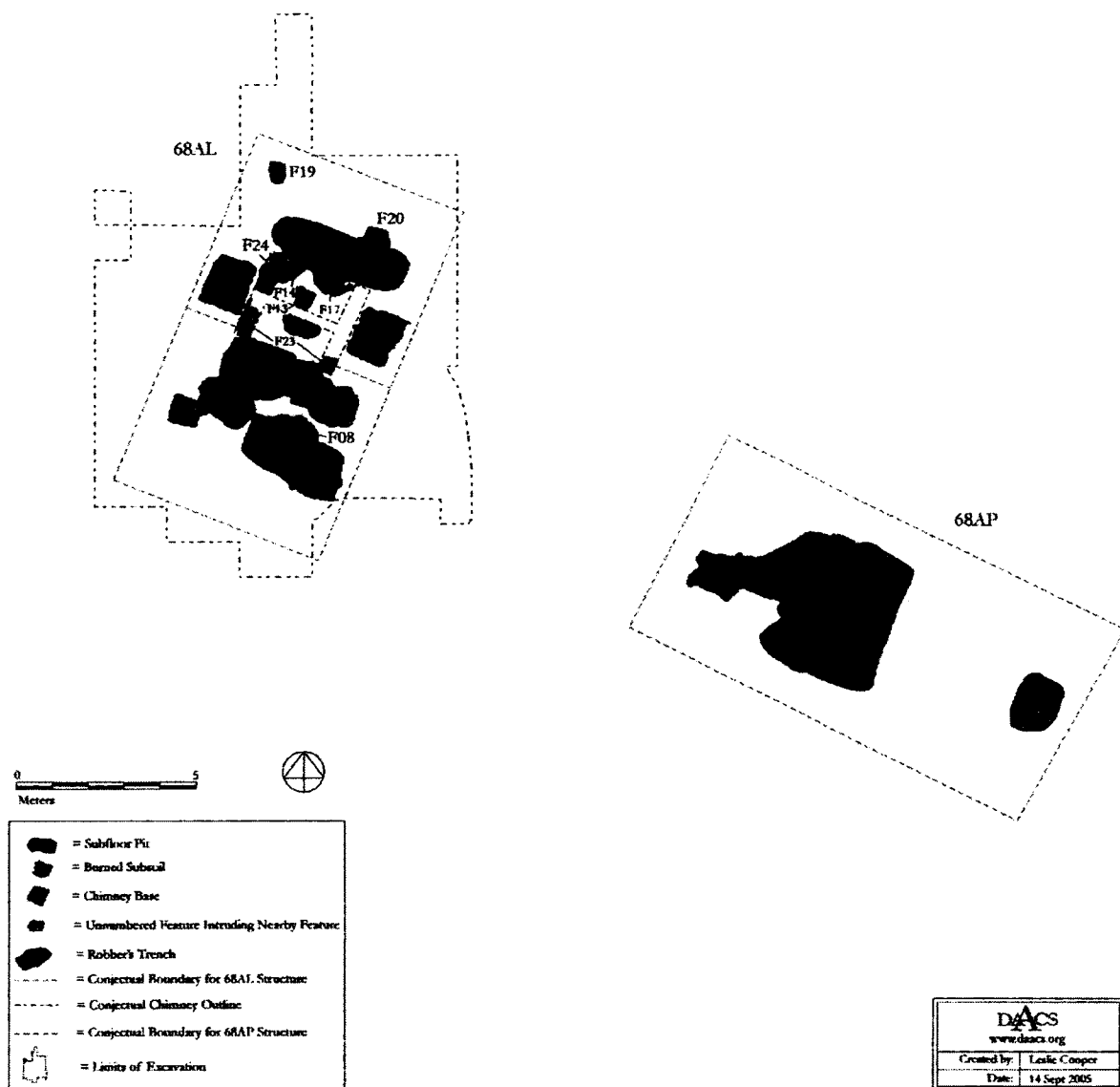
Utopia III (Littleton):

Fesler 1997: Utopia III: Site Images, DAACS, 19 July 2011 (<http://www.daacs.org>)



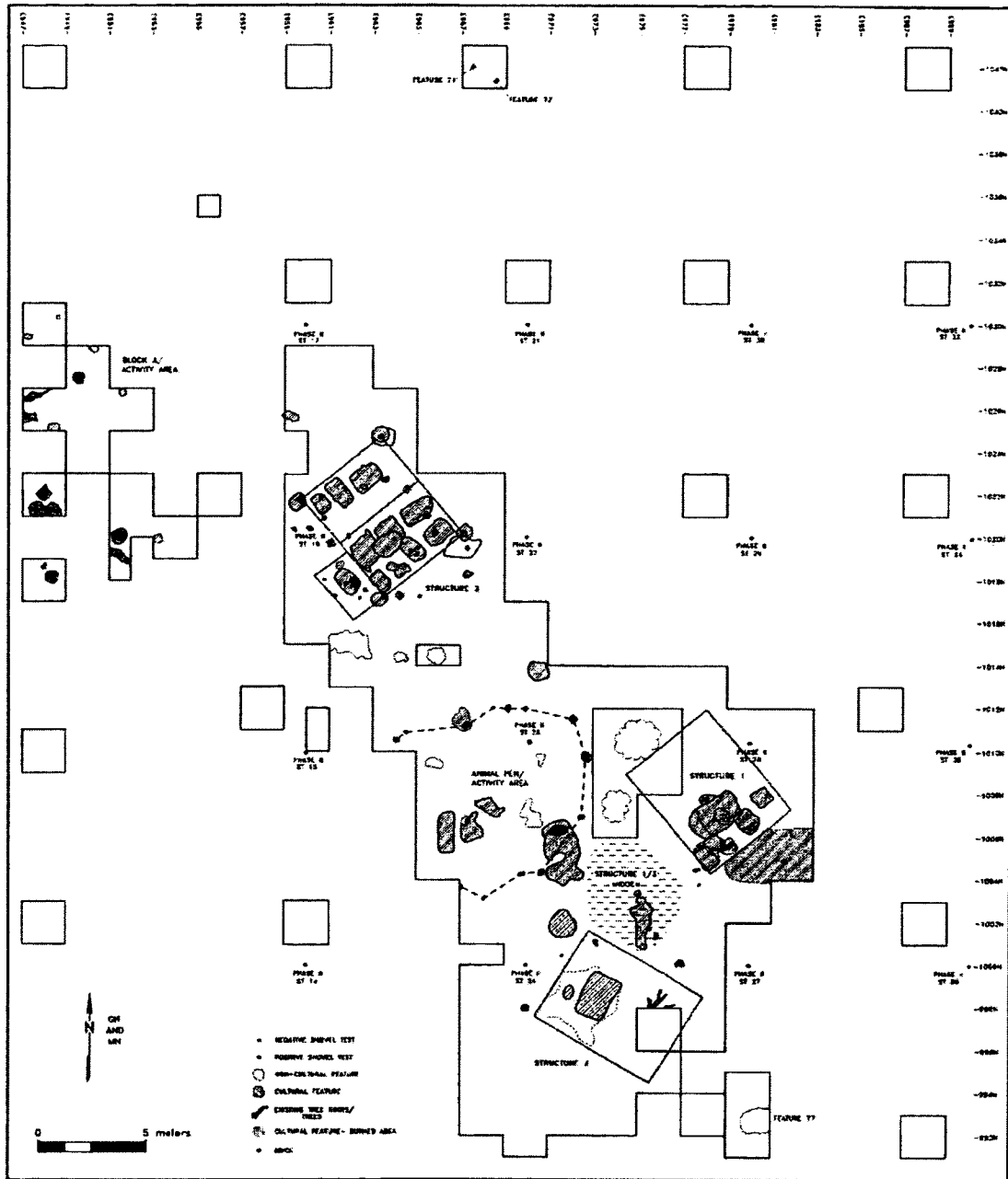
Utopia IV (Littletown):

Fesler 1994: Utopia IV: Site Images, DAACS 19 July 2011 (<http://www.daacs.org>)



Richneck Quarter (Richneck Plantation):

Franklin and Agbe-Davies 1995: Richneck Quarter: Site Images, DAACS 19 July 2011 (<http://www.daacs.org>)



Site 44JC969 (Southall's Quarter):

William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research (Pullins et al. 2003: 31)

**Part II: A Neighborhood in Transition: Towards an
Archaeology of Social Landscapes**

Chapter 4

Wrought in the Landscape: Neighborhood, Community, and Place-Making at Quarterpath and Beyond

Domestic sites comprise the primary source material for the bulk of archaeological analyses concerning Africans and their descendants throughout the diaspora, and with good reason. Homesites are places in which the material record is more likely to reflect directly the mores of those who dwelled upon them. But in the case of quartering sites upon rural plantations, such as the Quarterpath Site and other associated quarters across Kingsmill and Neck of Land-Jamestown Island, it also makes sense to look beyond the core domestic areas to the diversity of local places in which the peoples that resided upon them spent much of their time, places in which relationships were built with neighbors performing common tasks on familiar grounds. As mosaics of interconnected places plantation landscapes came to be marked by the types of activities performed upon them. The antebellum Quarterpath neighborhood comprised at least eight domestic homesites including the Quarterpath quarter, a multitude of bounded fields and agricultural support structures connected by a network of roads, pathways, and river landings, and liminal spaces – forests, creeks, and marshlands, perhaps cut by informal footpaths and well worn trails. Through a variety of habitual practices and bodily orientations the residents of these estates shared in labors and experiences, formed common bonds, and built a plantation neighborhood on grounds that became increasingly familiar through the generations.

Becoming (Re)emplaced: Reorientation to Chesapeake Plantation Landscapes

In her treatise on African-Atlantic crossings Stephanie Smallwood observes that “Rather than reflecting the absence of connection . . . the African migration produced a *unique kind* of connection” (Smallwood 2007: 201, my italics). She continues, “The echo produced by the serial repetition of one-way departures, the voices of saltwater slaves, could not reverberate back to Africa. The individual stories of saltwater slavery form the antithesis of historical narrative, for they feature not an evolving plot of change over time but rather a tale of endless repetition that allows no temporal progression. Every protagonist was a pioneer, blazing a trail on the same ground traveled by predecessors . . . but without the benefit of historical memory. It is a narrative in which time *seems* to stand still.” (Ibid: 202, original italics). In a historical narrative defined by continuous and repetitive processes marked by departure, “a chain of migration” that “continually projected the ‘saltwater’ into the American present of diasporic Africa” (Ibid: 202), perhaps time, in a sense, did indeed seem to stand still. Yet the series of arrivals was also distinguished by another unique set of connections: *reorientation* and *re-emplacement*. In communities “increasingly dominated by American-born, or ‘creole,’ slaves – [worlds] rooted more firmly in the African diaspora in America than in Africa itself” (Ibid: 202), new arrivals, in order to survive, reoriented themselves to New World landscapes and communities. Following the traumatic displacement of the Atlantic crossing, Africans throughout the Chesapeake constructed new kin ties in emerging plantation communities, investing local landscapes with new horizons of meaning, infusing them with new roots. Time, in a sense, began anew.

Sobel remarks that “most West Africans believed that individuals, families, clans, forefathers, and divinities were attached to place” and, furthermore, that particular places were endowed with individual and collective significance (Sobel 1987: 71, also see Gomez 1998: 127-130). As sites of ancestral memory local places figured prominently in West African epistemologies. Family and lineage histories were quite literally emplaced. Enshrined within local landscapes, they informed collective and individual senses of self and foretold of futures yet to be written upon grounds trod upon by generations of ancestors (MacGaffey 1986, Gomez 1998, Brown 2002, Gyekye 2003, Sobel 1987, Afigbo 1980). “Landing on American soil”, however, “put Africans into a new relationship to time-space, one that was at first a temporal and spatial disconnect.” Smallwood thus poses the question, “How did African captives guard against the disintegration of self in diaspora, following the implosion of the categories by which they had understood themselves and their world?” (Smallwood 2007: 184). The vast Atlantic severed Africans in the Chesapeake from familiar places that had been demarcated by the experiences and lives of generations of ancestors. The Atlantic crossing was, in many ways, a Middle Passage to a New World of experiences. Likely involving a series of diverse acts and gestures, processes of reorientation following the rift opened by the forced Atlantic crossing were deeply personal and surely varied from person to person, across communities, and through generations.

Yet it was this new set of experiences shared by pioneering generations of Africans that formed the foundation upon which new communities and institutions were built throughout the African-Atlantic. Recovering from disorientation and the associated horrors of the Atlantic crossing and saddled by a legal status that disenfranchised

enslaved persons and their descendants and looked upon laboring bodies as commodities to be bought and sold, recently arrived Africans in the Chesapeake had much with which to become accustomed. Yet in comparison with other African diasporic communities throughout the Americas, emerging Chesapeake communities became settled relatively quickly (see Table 2.3, Morgan 1998: 80-84). Through the initial period of “seasoning” most new arrivals were introduced into working plantation quarters to labor as agricultural field workers growing tobacco, corn, and other crops. Living in close quarters and despite potential language barriers relationships were built and the seeds of community initially cultivated.



Figure 4.1 – Tidewater landscapes, James City County and Williamsburg, Virginia. Photos by the author.

The process of seasoning involved orientation to new places and social landscapes. In the tropical heat that typically accompanied Chesapeake summers, some places may have seemed familiar. The varied plants, wetlands, and waterways that characterized the tidewater region may have resembled in some small capacity the forested expanses and riverine environs of western and central Africa (Figure 4.1). For

those that survived in spite of the hardships presented by enslavement in a strange and harsh new land many of these places would become increasingly familiar. As enslaved men and women laid down new roots, they appropriated a variety of plantation landscapes through an increasing and intimate familiarity brought about through successive generations marked by distinctive lives and works.

Land – or rather specific notions of community invested in particular lands and places – figured prominently among the lifeways of the ethnic groups most frequently imported into the plantations of Virginia’s middle tidewater. Gomez explains that “In every aspect of Igbo civilization, land was critical. It was not only the basis for the support of physical life but also played a central role in the cosmological and overall philosophical understanding of the Igbo”. It held a “very prominent place in Igbo religion and cosmology” and “more or less became the center of Igbo existence. It was for them not only the most important economic asset, but also the most vital and the most active spirit force in their lives”. In the Bight of Biafra, as in many other West African localities, the care and maintenance of land constituted a *moral imperative*. Land (*ala*) was inextricably associated with the goddess *Ala* or *Ana*, “functionally the most important deity in most Igbo communities”, as well as the most feared and respected.

“The land ‘imposed innumerable laws and taboos to guide conduct between man and man and between man and itself. The transgression of any of these rules, known as *omenala* [conduct not sanctioned by the land] was promptly punished.’ Any violation of *omenala* – which included homicide, suicide, kidnapping, adultery, birthing twins . . . poisoning, stealing, and yam stealing – was considered an abomination (*nso ani*). Such crimes were not only punished but also required that the land itself be cleansed by way of special rites.”

For the Igbo, lands were held in trust by particular lineages. Communal, or *ofo*, lands were overseen by lineage heads (*okpara*), who were responsible for its equitable distribution among lineage members. “To be removed from the land”, observes Gomez, “was to be severed from the ancestors, an additional source of stress for those transplanted to North America”. He continues, “The Igbo ancestors (*ndichie*) were believed to live in the land of spirits (*ala mmuo*), and each village maintained at least one ancestral shrine. The dead maintained contact with the living through the latter’s sacrifices and prayers, a relationship dramatized by publicly performed masquerades or masked rituals.” (Gomez 1998: 128-130)

Among the BaKongo of West Central Africa, local landscapes were permeated with notions of reciprocity and interaction between generations past and present. Certain places served as focal points of community and as nodes of contact between the worlds of the living and the dead. MacGaffey observes that in contemporary BaKongo societies, “Cemeteries are usually situated in the mixed forests that grow up on the sites of abandoned villages.” “Formerly”, he explains, “it was the custom, when a chief died, to abandon his village and establish his successor in a new one. The old chief’s household fence of quickset poles became the stockade around his grave, and his dependents would in due course be buried about its gate.” Thus “each village of the living then had its counterpart of the previous generation, the village of the dead in the forest. . . . The crossroads or parting of the ways (*mpambu a nzila*), or a place so designated, is the conventional point at which the living in the village are separated from the dead in the cemetery; here medicated palm branches or other charms may be placed to restrict unwelcome traffic between the worlds” (MacGaffey 1986: 56). Contemporary BaKongo

speaking of the dead “point downward”, but “the vertical dimension is only one way of describing the difference between the two abodes. The dead are also said to live ‘in the water’ as opposed to on the dry land, ‘in the forest’ as opposed to in the village.” In the past, however, “many other expressions referred to the land of the dead”, including *ku mfinda* (in the forest), *ku bonde* (in the forest), and *ku maza* (in the water) (Ibid: 54-55).

Primary sources suggest that fundamental associations between local places and notions of community espoused by various African ethnic groups resonated throughout emerging black communities and across continually expanding Chesapeake plantation neighborhoods, becoming syncretized and transformed through the generations. Gomez makes a persuasive connection between collective efforts at resistance by Igbo communities along the Atlantic Coastal South and an essential West African perception of time-space defined by communal relationships. “Without question”, he writes, “captives from all over West and West Central Africa reacted to enslavement and dislocation by committing suicide. An unthinkable act in Igbo and most other African societies, self-destruction became a plausible solution to many transplanted into the hostile world of white ‘spirits’” (Gomez 1998: 117). Compiling a diverse list of historical observations variously characterizing Igbo as “suicidally despondent”, “prone to suicide”, and “melancholy and suicidal, sickly . . . and superstitious”, he asserts that there is indeed potentially corroborative evidence that more closely associates suicide with the Igbo than with other African ethnicities, in documented instances of group suicide by willful drowning in Jamaica, South Carolina and Georgia, and in North Carolina, and in the tales of “flying Africans” recorded in the early twentieth century by interviewers employed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

In WPA narratives collected from coastal communities along Georgia and South Carolina, informants related that the ability to fly was associated exclusively with native-born Africans who were believed to possess an apparent capacity to return to the African continent at will,

“Doze folks could fly too. Dey tell me deah’s a lot ub um wut wuz bring heah an dey ain much good. Duh massuh wuz fixin tuh tie um up tuh whip um. Dey say, ‘Massah, yuh ain gwine lick me,’ and wid dat dey runs down tuh duh ribbuh. Duh obuhseeuh he sho tought he ketch um wen dey git tuh duh ribbuh. But fo he could git tuh um, dey riz up in duh eah an fly away. Dey fly right back tuh Africa” (Georgia Writer’s Project 1986 [1940]: 160).

Gomez connects multiple accounts of flying Africans with a single historical event, a documented early nineteenth century Igbo group suicide at a place named “Ebo Landing” on St. Simons Island, Georgia, “When asked about Ebo Landing, Floyd White of St. Simons stated that he was very familiar with the account, but that he knew the Igbo had not flown back to Africa.” “That is”, he asserts, “Floyd White knew what the contemporaries of these flying Africans also knew, that the Igbo had committed collective suicide by marching into the river and drowning themselves” (Gomez 1998: 119). Gomez cites a parallel between the events at Ebo Landing and a similar occurrence on a North Carolina plantation, in which a number of enslaved men engaged in building a canal committed suicide in a similar manner. The overseer’s account was related to another and recorded, “At night they would begin to sing their native songs, and in a short while would become so wrought up that . . . they would grasp their bundles of personal effects, swing them on their shoulders, and setting their faces towards Africa, would march down into the water singing as they marched. The owners lost a number of

them this way, and finally had to stop the evening singing” (Bassett 1899: 92-93, Gomez 1998: 120).

The connecting thread between historical instances of Igbo responses to enslavement by group suicide seems to lie in collective notions revolving around time and space, regeneration and renewal, “The belief was very strong within the African-based community that at death one returned to the land of one’s birth. Thus flying via suicide was a sure way, perhaps the only way, to get back, at which point one could be reincarnated and live in the land of family and relations, far away from the experience called America” (Ibid: 120). Through collective drowning, Igbo men and women may have attempted to fulfill a metaphysical desire to rejoin the regenerative order of temporal rhythms effectively severed by the Middle Passage – by returning, via flight, to the lands of ancestral memory and experience across the Atlantic.

Yet for many of those that remained behind, survival literally entailed building meaningful lives and relationships in spite of the often brutal circumstances presented by enslavement in America. In Virginia, driven by the initiative and determination of diverse men and women, charter generations of Africans formed relatively stable communities fairly rapidly. On the largest tidewater plantations, similarities in estate building strategies and intermarriage among the gentry effectively concentrated groups of Africans from similar regions and backgrounds upon nearby quarters and across networked plantation enterprises and socioeconomic and legal mechanisms such as entail stimulated the growth and development of emerging enslaved communities and promoted the widespread prevalence of marriage abroad. Plantation spaces became increasingly familiar through the generations as enslaved men and women oriented themselves to new

physical and social landscapes, formed new relationships, and constructed new kin networks.

Elements of a core aesthetic revolving around ancestral ties to place and reflected in the moral order of landkeeping – elements likely held in common by persons of West and West Central African descent – seem to have been transplanted across generations to New World spaces as enslaved men and women appropriated plantation landscapes through habitual activities across lifetimes of individual and collective experiences and works. In 1855, Benjamin Drew, a journalist and abolitionist from Boston, traveled to Canada, interviewing more than a hundred men and women who had fled from bondage in the American South. Eight years later, Samuel Gridley Howe, another American abolitionist, followed in Drew’s footsteps, interviewing many of the same individuals, citing the fact that Drew admitted that he had made “verbal alterations” and had “studiously omitted” some comments from his published interviews. Howe proceeded to record the testimonies of his informants “word for word” and duly deposited them in the archives of the American Freedmen’s Inquiry Commission (Blassingame 1977: 369). Susan Boggs, one of Howe’s twenty-eight interviewees, had been born into bondage in antebellum Williamsburg. Relating that she had “seen a great deal of barbarity in the treatment of slaves in Virginia”, she explained that her only son had been sold away following a division of inheritance among descendants. In secrecy, Boggs plucked her fifteen-year old son from the tavern in which he had been hired out and started him along the perilous route to Canada before his new owner could take possession. She related to Howe, “They telegraphed to try to catch him, and put me in jail, and I lay there three weeks. . . . I started him along, and he got into people’s hands who said they would see

him through.” Boggs received a letter while in jail, in response to which her owner paid a visit, declaring, “Susan, we hear that young rascal of yours is in Canada. If he had sense enough to go, he may go. However, we believe you know all about his going; and we’ll not own you any longer.” Boggs explained that several months after her sale she followed in her son’s tracks, eventually making her way to Canada. In the midst of the Civil War, she confided to her interviewer that “We would like to travel back there if we live, but I don’t think we will ever live to go back. We would like to see our old friends and kindred. *I would just like to walk over the ground where my father and mother are buried*” (Ibid: 418-421, my italics).

James L. Smith, another Virginian that escaped bondage by fleeing north, similarly expressed an intense desire to return home in the midst of war. Born on a farm along the Wicomico River in Northumberland County on Virginia’s Northern Neck, Smith’s narrative is a wealth of information about antebellum plantation life. After suffering a severe knee injury in a logging accident as a child, he was apprenticed to a cobbler at Fairfield Plantation in Gloucester County. He returned to his home plantation several years later to be hired out locally as a shoemaker. At the age of eighteen Smith actively sought and received a conversion experience and commenced to tend flock as a lay-preacher among quarters throughout his neighborhood. Eventually he made his way north to New England, settling in Norwich, Connecticut in 1842. He gained literacy in a school taught by missionaries and compiled his experiences in an autobiography in an effort to promote understanding among his readers and in the hope of ameliorating, in some small capacity, “the condition of his now suffering people” (Smith 1969 [1881]: v).

Upon the eve of war, Smith articulated that “For many years, while slavery

existed. I have never ceased to pray that God, in his all wise providence would bring it to pass that *I might return to the land that gave me birth*" (Ibid: 77, my italics).

The wording of the sentiments of both Smith and Boggs is not only profound in its elegance, it also bears witness to an aesthetic that enveloped ancestral and communal ties within local places that had through the generations effectively become *home grounds* (Gundaker 1998). As a young man, Smith witnessed the sale and subsequent removal of several of his brothers and sisters away from his neighborhood. He dedicated his autobiography to the memory of his father, Charles Payne, "who lies in a nameless, unknown grave" (Ibid: frontispiece) and he related that his mother was buried "in a field where there was no other dead deposited", lamenting that "no stone marks her resting place; no fragrant flowers adorn the sod that covers her silent house" (Ibid: 14). Yet, for Smith, the landscapes of his youth held very intimate memories. The land not only embodied the collective experiences of Smith and his immediate family, it served as a repository of sweat, tears, and blood shed by generations of kin and other community members. The land that had given him birth ultimately received the corporeal remains of his mother and father and it was these grounds upon which he yearned to tread once again.

Smith returned to the land of his youth in 1867, and revisited meaningful sites along his way to a reunion with a brother he had not seen for several decades. Pausing at the mill in which he had formerly worked as a shoemaker, Smith related, "I remembered the joys and sorrows that I had passed through" and "then went to look for the old spring where I used to get water; I found it and knelt down by the side of it and drank therefrom." He recalled, "No language could express my feeling while I knelt over that

spring.” Smith came to a “cross-path” and paused for several minutes, recognizing the parting of ways as an appropriate place of reflection, “As I viewed the place, old scenes seemed so natural to me that I could not help praising God in the highest for bringing me back to the place of my birth.” Eventually reaching the town of Heathsville, he came upon a second spring, “here I got out also and stooped to drink.” Smith continued to the house of his brother, where the two were reunited, after which he had a brief but apparently amiable encounter with the widow of his former owner and continued along his way to search for his mother’s former cabin. No evidence of the cabin remained,

“All was desolate in the extreme . . . Nothing occupied that sacred spot . . . I turned from here in pursuit of the spring from which I had carried so many buckets of water. After much search and labor, crawling through the bushes and fallen trees, I found the old spring and drank therefrom. The old gum tree that was near this spring in my childhood days, I found there still . . . It was once noted for its healing properties . . .” (Ibid: 94-99)

For Smith, the springs held meaning not only as significant physical features set within familiar landscapes, but as loci in which material and social worlds were intimately aligned, as places that enfolded the present with and allowed access to manifold pasts, including his own formative years as a young man in Virginia. Smith’s sentiments bear a striking affinity with MacGaffey’s description (MacGaffey 1986) of contemporary BaKongo philosophies that express a profound and reciprocal connection between place, community, and individuals. The flowing springs that had the capacity to nourish and sustain corporeal life also embodied relations between living and deceased community members. Generations of relatives, friends, and other community members had drank from the same sources. The spring nearest the site of his mother’s cabin served as a powerful touchstone upon the landscape, bridging worlds past and present and

conjuring memories of departed siblings that had imbibed of the same waters, “I thought how often my brothers and sisters with myself, came to and from that spring; but now we were separated, nearly all of us, never more to meet, till we meet in that heavenly land where father, mother and children shall never part” (Smith 1969 [1881]: 99). Perhaps the gum tree, a living thing that grew and acquired experience over time, was noted for its healing properties precisely because it was rooted quite literally in the spring – a powerful nexus that brought into alignment generations past and present and a common feature across many domestic quarters, including the Quarterpath homesite. Kneeling and offering his “heart in prayer and thanksgiving”, Smith asserted that the very waters *sympathized* with the plights of those that knew them best, “These three springs that I have mentioned” quenched not only the thirst of friends and family, but he reckoned had also sustained “many a weary soldier . . . at the time of the great rebellion.” Coming across an oak tree that stood near the site of his mother’s cabin, he recalled an episode witnessed in his youth in which an enslaved man was hung by his arms from a limb of the very same tree and flogged “till the ground beneath him was stained with his blood.” He related, “I tried to find the same limb, but although the tree appeared to be in perfect health and strength, that limb seemed to have withered and dropped off” (Ibid: 98-99). Home grounds – as mosaics of familiar places that came to embody community, family, and *roots* – continued to carry within them an air of *morality* and *judgment*.

Wrought in the Landscape: Daily Practice, Bodily Orientation and Habituality in the Quarterpath Neighborhood

Frederick Douglass, in his 1882 memoir, powerfully and eloquently articulated the circumstances under which enslaved communities became deeply rooted in plantation landscapes. “Free people” he observed, “generally . . . have less attachment to the places where they are born and brought up, than had the slaves.” The “freedom to come and go, to be here or there”, he argued “prevents any extravagant attachment” by free people to “any one particular place.” “The slave”, however, “was a fixture . . . pegged down to one single spot, *[he] must take root there or nowhere*” (Douglass 2007 [1882]: 55, my italics). Wrought by a variety of individual and communal activities and forged under mechanisms of authority that were intended to enforce rigidly defined hierarchies plantation landscapes were both multiscalar and polyvalent. Experience of one’s surroundings was dependent upon the individual orientation of bodies and persons as well as one’s station within the hierarchies fashioned by slaveholding societies.

Landscapes are defined by movement – Places are experienced, inhabited, and ultimately known by moving, or being moved, through them (see Casey 1996: 18-24; Ingold 2011: 145-155, 2000: 229). Isaac (1999) and Upton (1984) note that various members within plantation societies moved through assorted landscapes in socially prescribed ways. Rhys Isaac poses the question, “How would Virginians of different ranks have experienced their surroundings as they went through them, heading out from home along the ways that connected places?” (Isaac 1999: 52). Upton explains that elite planters in eighteenth century Virginia adopted similar visual elements and architectural forms as those known in Europe at the time, however, Chesapeake planters adapted them

in unique ways to accommodate “a particular, already extant, social setting” (Upton 1984: 59). Planters incorporated structures of power and authority into plantation landscapes that were intended to reinforce the legal dominion upon which the system of slavery depended. “The landscape”, Isaac writes, “was marked by the signs that the masters possessed it according to the same system that classified the slave himself as property: boundary trees, fenced fields, tobacco houses, carriage roads.” Architectural and physical elements intended to legitimize planter authority were contrasted, and often circumvented, by “another set of marks, most visible to the slave – signs of the occupancy of his own people – places with associations arising from the opportunities the slaves seized within a system that denied them the right to possess” (Ibid: 52).

Landscapes are also wrought by activity – Plantation landscapes were marked by the types of activities performed upon them. Infused with individual and collective experience through habitual practices and bodily orientations, local places became invested with new horizons of meaning across generations. Everyday activities contributed to the extension and maintenance of social networks and the appropriation of physical landscapes by enslaved persons. As loci of domestic activity, quarters served as dynamic focal points of community interaction, arenas of activity in which enslaved persons extended and maintained bonds of kinship and camaraderie. Yet domestic quarters were by no means the sole nexus of communal interaction across plantation neighborhoods. Work routines for the Quarterpath residents would have been marked by the seasonal rhythms of agricultural labors performed across a variety of places, upon the bounded field complex adjacent to the homesite and the neighboring fields across Kingsmill Neck and Neck of Land-Jamestown Island, within the stables, barns, and

threshing areas at the plantation seat a half hour's walk to the south, and upon the pasturage and fallow areas enclosed by broad fencelines, among others.

The locations and configurations of bounded agricultural fields across Allen's Kingsmill operations in J. W. Donn's (1873) detailed James River cartographic surveys (Figure 4.2) are nearly identical with the Desandrouins map series composed nearly a century earlier (see Figures 1.5, 1.6, 1.9 for comparison). Unfortunately Donn did not extend his cartographic gaze much beyond the immediate shoreline of the James River, having chosen the tributary of College Creek that marked the southern bounds of the Quarterpath tract as the boundary of his survey. Civil War era maps, however, (see Figure 6.2) do indicate that the area directly adjacent to the Quarterpath domestic quarter, bordered on the south and west by tributaries of College Creek and bounded by Quarterpath Road, was open to cultivation. Large bounded field complexes were also present on the Kingsmill and Littleton tracts and across wide swaths of arable ground at Neck of Land and Jamestown Island. Donn's surveys also indicate that, by the 1870s, at least eight surviving domestic quartering sites were associated with agricultural field complexes across the agricultural enterprises owned by the Allens. A footbridge joined operations at Neck of Land and Jamestown Island and many of the quarters and associated agricultural fields across Kingsmill Neck and Neck of Land-Jamestown Island were connected by a network of roads and pathways and perhaps by informal trails and footpaths through the forests and marshlands that bordered these areas. The Allens also maintained an orchard on Jamestown Island and connected operations at Kingsmill, Jamestown Island, and Claremont with substantial wharves and river landings.

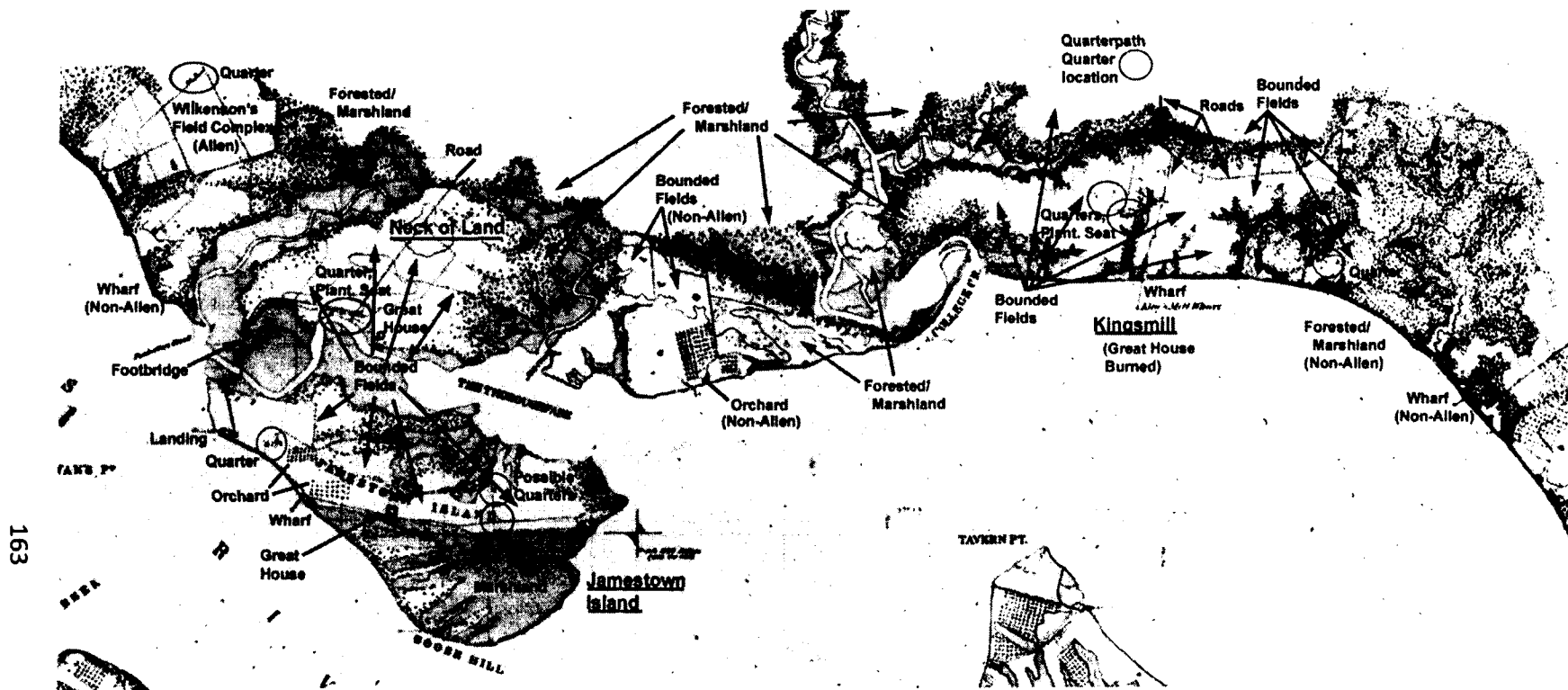


Figure 4.2 – The Quarterpath Neighborhood: Composite details of JW Donn’s 1873 James River surveys: “Burwell’s Bay to College Creek” and “College Creek to the Chickahominy River”. The Quarterpath tract is just beyond the scope of Donn’s survey to the north. Maps housed in a digital archive maintained by the University of Alabama and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) – ([http://alabamamaps.ua.edu/historicalmaps/Coastal Survey Maps/virginia.htm](http://alabamamaps.ua.edu/historicalmaps/Coastal%20Survey%20Maps/virginia.htm)), accessed 29 March 2010.

By the antebellum period most tidewater planters had diversified the types of crops grown as principal commodities in order to continue to turn a profit after the downward turn of the tobacco market in decades previous. Prompted by an incessant fall in tobacco prices as well as soils exhausted by more than a century of intensive tobacco cultivation the neighboring Brays and Burwells began to experiment with crop diversification relatively early in comparison with many of their peers (by the mid-eighteenth century), so that by the time William Allen II consolidated the plantations of Kingsmill Neck (1796-1803) agricultural operations had already been adapted to accommodate the cultivation of wheat as a primary commodity crop.³³ In contrast with tobacco monoculture, activities and work tasks associated with the cultivation of cereal grains were diverse and necessitated a smaller yet more skilled, experienced labor force.

The number of horses kept by William Allen II suggests that each of his James City agricultural operations was actively engaged in the cultivation of cereal grains from the time of initial purchase. In 1796 he was assessed for 13 horses at Littletown. By 1803, he had consolidated the three primary plantations comprising his Kingsmill operation and was subsequently assessed for 29 horses, a number that increased to 45 with his acquisitions of Neck of Land and several contiguous properties seven years later. His successor William Orgain Allen was assessed for between 17-22 horses at Kingsmill, 13-18 at Neck of Land, and 12-15 on Jamestown Island for the years 1855-1861 (see Tables 2.6, 2.7). These sources imply that the Allens also possessed laborers skilled in handling significant populations of draft animals on each of their respective James City

³³ James Bray III recorded sales of tobacco, wheat, and corn grown at Littletown between 1736 and his death in 1744 in a surviving ledger. His ledger also includes several sketches of agricultural fields accompanied by calculations for rotating the planting of tobacco, wheat, and clover (a fodder crop) (CWF Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg).

plantation operations. The recovery of a harness ring and multiple horseshoe nails from the Quarterpath domestic complex suggests that the Quarterpath residents may have been among this body of skilled livestock handlers (Boroughs 2007). Draft animals required dedicated pasturage and maintenance facilities. Barns and stables were located at the plantation seats on the Kingsmill tract, at Neck of Land, and on Jamestown Island. Along with increased corn production a proportion of the fields on each of Allen's major plantation operations was likely cultivated with fodder crops such as clover and timothy that could be rationed as winter foods for farm animals and rotated on a prescribed schedule with provisioning and commodity crops.³⁴

In addition to cultivating and processing hay and other fodder grains, the practice of manuring and the application of additives such as marl to increase soil fecundity was pioneered in the region and promoted by local agronomists such as Edmund Ruffin. This set of agricultural practices required the use of specialized equipment and the development of new skillsets by enslaved laborers (see Ruffin 1852). The *Yorktown Formation*, an ancient fossil bed exposed along the high plateaus adjacent to the James River at Kingsmill, was an easily accessible source of marl and it is possible that skilled laborers residing on Kingsmill Neck could have been put to work exploiting this natural resource to increase the productivity of the agricultural fields across Allen's estates.

The diversification of agriculture across local plantations following the decline of the tobacco market entailed a new set of associated practices, involving a more complex scheduling of agricultural activities that required skilled labor pools to accommodate

³⁴ During the Civil War William Orgain Allen frequently provided hay, timber, and victuals produced on his estates for the Confederate Army (Gregory 1990:68)

multiple and specific tasks, in turn giving rise to new styles of plantation management that also held significant social ramifications for enslaved residents. With the level of specialization associated with multiple crop production, managers of large plantation operations across Virginia often found themselves in possession of surplus labor. With the exception of seasonal harvest events, agricultural tasks essentially required smaller, yet more skilled labor forces. In order to reduce operating costs, antebellum planters typically entertained several options, each with significant impacts upon long established enslaved communities. Out-hiring or apprenticeship to skilled craftsmen at home or abroad became more commonplace. The experiences of James L. Smith were in many ways typical of the region during the antebellum era. After suffering an accident on his home plantation that rendered him unfit for agricultural labor, Smith was “bound out” and apprenticed to a cobbler at the nearby Fairfield Plantation (Smith 1969 [1881]: 13). “Hirelings” also joined teams of agricultural laborers across area plantations (Ruffin 1852: 319-321, 1855: 150-163). Young enslaved persons that found themselves hired abroad extended social ties to other neighborhoods and locales, often returning after multiyear periods to serve new functions on home plantations. Others, however, were removed from home plantations to distant localities, disrupting family and community relations. Martha Orgain argued in her 1842 petition to the Virginia General Assembly that the surplus labor represented by nearly 200 enslaved persons across Allen plantation holdings in Surry County could not be “hired out to advantage” *specifically because* they resided “mostly in families” (Williamsburg & James City County Petitions: CWF Rockefeller Library). Another more drastic option involved the sale of surplus laborers to the burgeoning cotton plantations of the Deep South. Long used as both a deterrent

and a punishment for unruly behavior, sale of surplus laborers became a way for plantation owners who found themselves in financial turmoil to liquidate assets. Although it appears that enslaved persons residing on Kingsmill and Neck of Land may have had a relative degree of protection from long distance sale, others in the area with whom the residents may have extended social ties, such as spouses that lived abroad, aunts, uncles, cousins and more distant relatives and friends that did not enjoy the same protection may have lived in a state of perpetual anxiety for fear of removal from the community.

For the Quarterpath residents and others engaged in agricultural labors across Kingsmill Neck and Neck of Land-Jamestown Island seasonal activities would have been marked by varying degrees of social interaction across several places. Arable grounds needed to be turned and new furrows laid each season to accommodate the cultivation and rotation of provisioning and commodity crops, primarily various strands of corn accompanied by cereal grains. Contemporaneous accounts suggest that residents of Allen-owned quarters across the Quarterpath neighborhood would likely have engaged in various agricultural tasks throughout a typical year as follows:

<u>Season</u>	<u>Agricultural Task</u>	<u>Locale: Potential Degree of Social Interaction</u>
October-before frosts: November-March:	plowing, sowing wheat off-season, tending animals, repairing equipment, rejuvenating soils, processing provisions	fields: low, high plantation seat, pasturage: low-mid
March-April: April-June:	plowing, sowing corn tending crops, weeding, pest removal	fields: low, high fields: mid-high
Mid-late June-mid July: September-October:	harvesting wheat, hay harvesting corn, hay, threshing wheat	fields: high fields, plantation seat: mid-high

Although a toilsome and difficult task requiring long hours and intense physical exertion, plowing, for experienced laborers, was a relatively solitary affair that could be accomplished under minimal supervision. Harvesting, on the other hand, was an event that required an extremely intense burst of activity in short but specific intervals to ensure that crops were picked at the peak of maturity. Harvest times thus became periods of intense communal activity within agricultural fields across home and networked plantations (Figure 4.3).

Local planter, agronomist, and firebrand, Edmund Ruffin kept a schedule of labors and agricultural output attached to the wheat harvests on his tidewater plantations for each season between 1818-1855 that would have paralleled those on other James River plantations such as Kingsmill and Neck of Land-Jamestown Island. Ruffin typically harvested between 230-275 acres of wheat on each of his plantations, a two to three week process that usually occupied his laborers between mid-late June to early-mid July, suggesting that the wheat would have initially been sowed in the fall months before the coming of the first frosts. These large harvest events were followed by the reaping and processing of provisioning and fodder corn between mid-late September and October, extending the major harvest season from June to late October, after which fields were either plowed and resowed with wheat, rotated with clover and timothy, rested and replanted with corn the following spring, or fallowed for the season. Ruffin explained that the proper time to begin the reaping of wheat was before peak ripeness, typically in mid-late June “when the grains have just reached the ‘doughy’ condition; or when they are still so soft as to be easily mashed between the finger and thumb” (Ruffin 1855: 150).

As the harvest progressed, additional laborers were needed and efforts were accelerated to prevent the wheat from becoming overripe, “Usually, before half the harvest labors are over, the remaining wheat is so ripe, by the time it can be reaped that it may be shocked (stacked) immediately. . . the danger from delay of reaping . . . is very great” (Ibid: 161). Skilled laborers played a critical role in acquiring the greatest market return on a season’s planting. Ruffin asserted that “No laborers . . . worth having can be hired here” (Ibid: 162).

Labors associated with the harvesting of wheat included reaping, binding the cut wheat into “sheaves”, and stacking the wheat into vertical “shocks” to cure. “The things most important for the perfection of harvest labors” Ruffin asserted, “are 1st. that the wheat shall be cut well and laid evenly and regularly by the reapers; 2d. that the binders shall gather up the wheat without too much scattering and waste, and tie the sheaves securely, and 3d. that the ‘shocks’ are built and roofed over well, so as to stand erect, and to exclude rain” (Ibid: 156). Until the mid-nineteenth century, reaping was typically done by hand, either with scythes or, perhaps more frequently with “cradles”, a hand-held multi-purpose tool consisting of a blade with attached raking implements intended to gather wheat in loose bundles as it is cut. Explaining that his enslaved laborers developed their own efficient methods of reaping, Ruffin asserted “I use for reaping only the scythe and cradle”. Mechanical reapers, initially patented in the mid-1830s and in more frequent use by the 1850s, required laborers skilled at driving teams of horses or mules to tow the machines across planted fields. Regardless of method, each reaper was followed by a binder, who carried a light wooden rake, “conveniently used to straighten and gather up the wheat for the sheaf”. Barring inclement weather, sheaves of wheat

were left in the fields for between three to eight days to dry, after which teams of bearers, “mostly small hands”, gathered the sheaves and constructed larger vertical shocks to cure the wheat until it could be threshed. Ruffin typically set eight to ten of his most skilled laborers at reaping, clearing an average of around two acres per day. To complete the harvest, he put all of his hands including “house-servants as could be spared” and occasional “hirelings” to work binding and constructing shocks. Harvesting 200-300 acres of wheat typically required a combined force of around 30 persons working between 7-11 hour days throughout the harvest season. (Ruffin 1855: 150-173) Given the acreage under cultivation across the Kingsmill and Neck of Land-Jamestown Island operations, the Allens would have needed to assemble a much larger labor pool in order to reap the fragile grain without experiencing major losses.

During the precarious harvest season planters on large agricultural enterprises such as those maintained by the Allens typically compiled large harvesting teams with skilled and unskilled laborers drawn from multiple quarters that could perform harvest labors in larger numbers and with more concerted efforts.³⁵ On his home farm in central Virginia Bacchus White recalled that “dar w’uld be sixty or seventy cradles jes a cutting de wheat” , implying that additional hands were needed to bind sheaves and construct shocks. Frank Bell of northern Virginia explained that there was not only a division of labor among residents on his plantation but he also implied that residents worked primarily in kin-based groups during the harvest season. Bell’s former owner “had ‘bout 150 servants . . . *Put everybody in de field* . . . Growed mostly wheat . . . de men would

³⁵ Morgan notes that in order to harvest wheat before it shed its bounty of grains many planters offered rewards, “pressed tradesworkers, domestics, and almost every able-bodied hand into service; and hired additional help when necessary” (Morgan 1998: 171)

scythe and cradle while de women folks would rake and bind. Den us little chillun, boys an' girls, would come along an' stack.” He continued, “Used to wuk in family groups, we did. . . . In dat way one could help de other when dey got behind. . . . Ole overseer on some plantations wouldn't let families work together, 'cause dey ain't gonna work as fast . . . but Marse . . . had a black foreman what was my mother's brother, my uncle. . . . and he always looked out for his kinfolk” (Perdue et al. 1976: 304, 26, my italics). The experiences of White and Bell would likely have resonated with residents throughout the antebellum Quarterpath neighborhood. In possession of vast contiguous and neighboring operations and in order to maximize efficiency it is quite likely that two successive generations of Allens may have incidentally promoted the extension and redoubling of geographically dispersed social ties by assembling seasonal harvesting teams composed of residents from quarters across their two principle James City plantation enterprises. Each season, the Quarterpath residents would have joined with others throughout the neighborhood to perform communal harvest labors on each of the major field complexes indicated on period maps (see Figures 4.2, 4.3, 6.2).

Agricultural fields thus became the nearly exclusive domain of black laborers. They were landscapes of labor, wrought by communal activities and marked by social interaction. Upon large operations such as Kingsmill and Neck of Land-Jamestown Island harvests were the products of concerted neighborhood efforts. These efforts were extended temporally beyond the harvest seasons, as agricultural fields necessitated a great deal of yearly maintenance, and they were extended spatially into domestic homesites, where a host of neighbors provided a means of communal support for those that departed daily for the fields. James L. Smith recalled that hands were called to the fields by a horn



Figure 4.3 – Top: Plowing with a team of draft animals, Central VA, Late 19th century. Bottom: Harvesting wheat with mechanical reapers, Curle's Neck, Henrico County, VA, circa 1900 (Valentine Richmond History Center Special Collections and Archives; Virginia Commonwealth University digital collection, negatives 0994, 0990, <http://dig.library.vcu.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/cook/id/152/rec/185>, [id/150/rec/3](http://dig.library.vcu.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/cook/id/150/rec/3))

that resonated in quarters throughout his own neighborhood, “The field hands having no time to prepare any thing for their morning meals, took up . . . any thing that was near at hand, and then, with rakes or hoes in the hand, hurried off to the fields at early dawn, for the loud horn called them to their labors” (Smith 1969 [1881]: 8). As mothers were called to the field, kin and neighbors beyond working age tended children too young to perform agricultural tasks in their own and in neighboring quarters (Ibid). Prior to the harvest, both corn and wheat necessitated a degree of nearly constant attention. Skilled laborers developed certain practices, such as constructing specialized corn cribs at plantation seats, to combat the advance of “moth weevils” or “black weevils”, which tended to threaten both corn and wheat harvests in eastern Virginia (Ruffin 1855: 190-211). Despite his injury, Smith was sent off to the corn fields to fend off another pest, attending “to the crows, to prevent them pulling up the corn” (Ibid: 21). He weighted his work task in terms of social interaction that took place across the fields, “This exercise did very well during the week days” when others accompanied him, yet “The Sabbath day was a lonesome day to me, because the field hands were away that day; the boys would be away frolicking at some place they had chosen” (Ibid).

As the harvest season approached, many planters offered incentives to coax increased levels of productivity from enslaved laborers. Perhaps chief among them were neighborhood social events that took place across plantation seats following the harvesting of the primary staple crop in October. A “combination of labor and recreation”, Blassingame explains that “In order to finish the work of removing the husks from his corn, a planter would invite all of the slaves in the neighborhood to gather one night at his barn. The slaves received whiskey and a big meal in payment for their labor. .

. .” Corn-shuckings were heavily anticipated social events. They provided venues in which residents from quarters across plantation neighborhoods gathered, “The slaves enjoyed the evening away from the quarters, meeting friends and sweethearts, drinking the cider or hard liquor, eating cakes and pies, telling tall stories and singing hilarious songs” (Blassingame 1979: 117-118). Mary Livermore, a New Englander employed as a tutor on a Virginia plantation in the 1840s, recalled a corn-shucking in which her benefactor hosted enslaved men and women from four neighboring plantations, “Long before we saw [them], we heard their melodious songs echoing and re-echoing through the woods . . . They came in four companies from as many different directions, across lots, by cart-paths, and through the forest, all entering upon our field of vision at one and the same time . . .” Observing that “their enthusiasm knew no bounds”, Livermore described a scene marked by socializing, “flirting and coquetting”, and singing, followed by a husking competition and a communal feast of slow-roasted pig (Figure 4.4, Livermore 1897: 332-341). Echoing Livermore’s observations, Blassingame asserts that “Corn-shucking probably produced more secular songs than any other kind of work” (Blassingame 1979: 117, also see Sobel 1987, Hardeman and Steele 1981).

Historical observations of gatherings such as these provide glimpses into the intimate geographies of social relations extended between residents of multiple domestic areas across rural plantation neighborhoods, rejoined and renewed in the course of regular neighborhood activities performed across a variety of local places – at local plantation seats in the case of harvest season corn shuckings. Livermore’s recollection that attendees at her neighborhood corn-shucking arrived at the plantation seat by various means brings to light another important characteristic of plantation landscapes: routes of



Figure 4.4 – Captioned “A Plantation ‘Corn-Shucking’ – Social Meeting of Slaves”, an illustration from Livermore’s 1897 autobiography based upon her recollection of events on a Virginia plantation in the 1840s (Livermore 1897: 337).

circulation. Roads, carriage paths, and byways, and less formal, yet well-traveled routes – trails, footpaths, and the like – crisscrossed the forests and fields, creeks and waterways that encompassed tidewater plantation neighborhoods, connecting domestic quarters such as Quarterpath with other significant loci of activity, “the bush was full of criss-crossing pathways, which easily confused those unfamiliar with the neighborhood” (Chambers 1996: 370). Observers in antebellum Virginia noted that “going from one plantation to another” or “walking round a plantation, you deviate into a hundred narrow Indian-like foot, or bridle-paths” (Ibid). While Quarterpath Road may have served as an easily accessible route of access to the city of Williamsburg, a scant mile or so from the Quarterpath quarter and Kingsmill’s northern extremity, the very proximity of Allen’s

other principle James City County operations suggests that there would have likely been other less formal routes connecting core domestic areas to each other and to other significant local places.

Donn's surveys (Figure 4.2) illustrate the geographic intimacy of Allen's Kingsmill and Neck of Land-Jamestown Island plantations. With the exception of a single farm between College and Mill Creeks, William Allen's conglomerated operations commanded a significant and nearly contiguous stretch of James River frontage, occupied by more than 100 enslaved residents scattered throughout at least eight domestic quarters. A quartering complex fronting Powhatan Creek was connected to Jamestown Island and several additional quarters via a footbridge across the marsh land, the three adjoining tracts that comprised Kingsmill each contained multiple quartering sites connected by a network of roads and pathways, and the two plantation operations were accessible by formal roads through Williamsburg and parallel to the shoreline, by river travel between landings at Kingsmill and Jamestown Island, by canoe or skiff across the creeks and wetlands, and within walking distance through the forests and bottomlands. Quarters on Kingsmill Neck were typically within an hour to less than a two hour walk on foot. Travel by manual watercraft between landings at Kingsmill and Jamestown Island could be accomplished upriver within about three hours, with a return trip downriver considerably less with the aid of the river current. At their closest points, Kingsmill and Neck of Land were a scant mile and a half distant. Contemporaneous observers throughout the region noted that it was not uncommon for enslaved persons to walk upwards of ten miles or borrow horses and ride 10-15 miles to visit kin on more distant quarters at night or on days off (Smith 1969 [1881] 24, Morgan 1998: 508-510).

Historical sources also suggest that Allen's James City operations were networked by frequent river travel to the landing at Claremont on the south shore of the James River (Flournoy 1968 [1893]: Vol XI, 233).

By the antebellum period on plantations large and small across eastern Virginia marriage abroad was more the rule than the exception. Enslaved persons regularly extended social ties across geographically dispersed settlements, frequently using nights, Sundays, and holidays to visit friends and family and to court sweethearts that resided in more distant quarters. Given the relative proximity of Allen's holdings in James City, it is quite likely that the enslaved residents would have followed suit as well, making their way through the forests and across the bottomlands to visit kin, friends, and loved ones in other domestic quarters across Allen's estates, perhaps extending ties to residents upon other local farms and settlements as well (see Figure 4.5). As enslaved men and women extended the bonds of kinship and camaraderie across quarters home and distant, worked the fields and reaped seasonal harvests, cared for livestock, and performed the myriad other tasks required of plantation life, they sank deep roots into particular locales that came to be known intimately through generations. Plantations such as Kingsmill came to encompass a variety of intimate and familiar places entwined with intersecting spaces of contestation.

Enslaved men and women utilized the varied physical and social landscapes of their own local neighborhoods to enliven everyday struggles that carried weight in the balance of power and relied upon neighborhood networks for support in their endeavors. Enslaved persons commonly protested maltreatment and contested the terms of the burdensome legal codes upon which slaveholding societies depended by ignoring,

circumventing, or denying structures of authority. Restrictions upon the movements of enslaved persons could be severe, as Douglass noted, but were generally tolerated in the context of visiting spouses that lived on plantations abroad.³⁶ Yet even though marriage abroad was a generally accepted and widespread social convention, some antebellum planters, especially on smaller operations where absences were more noticeable, proved to have limits and tended to resort to more drastic measures in response to unauthorized or persistent absences. In the case of Mary Pope of Southampton County, whose husband had been sold away from the neighborhood in response to persistent absence on his home plantation because he was traveling abroad to visit her, she waited for an opportune moment and absconded with their children, collectively making their way into Federally held territory in Suffolk as the Civil War encroached upon the area in 1864 (Blassingame 1977: 455-457).

Lorenzo Ivy, born into bondage on a Virginia plantation around 1850 explained to an interviewer that there were two kinds of runaways, “dem what hid in de woods an’ dem what ran away to free [land].” “Mos’ slaves”, he related, “jes’ runaway an’ hide in de woods . . .”,

“Sometimes slaves jus’ run’ ‘way to de woods fo’ a week or two to git a res’ fum de fiel’, an’ den dey come on back. Never come back till dey git de word, dough. Arter dey been gone ‘long ‘nough old Marse would come down to de quarters an’ let out, ‘Guess Jim gittin’ purty hungry out in de woods. Rained de other night, an’ he must of got good an’ wet.’ Den someone say, ‘Guess [he] scared to come back, Marse, scared you gonna whup him.’ ‘Who said I was gonna whup him?’ answered Marse. ‘But I will whup him ef he don’ hurry back here.’”

³⁶ A “fundamental feature” of the slave codes was the restriction of movements off-plantation, yet, marriage abroad had become such a prevalent social practice that “the law had to come to terms with this widespread social convention.” In a 1799 court decision a Louisa County judge specifically permitted one exception, “where the slave had ‘general leave’ to be absent”, citing “a negro [who] has a wife” on another plantation (Morgan 1998: 509).

“Dat de word, you see”, explained Ivy, “Marse mean by dat dat ef Jim come back fo’ work de nex’ Monday mornin’ he wasn’t gonna beat him, an dat was all Jim was waitin’ for.” He related another episode that occurred before his birth, told to him by his mother about his grandmother, Sallie Douchard, who “stayed in de woods for three or four weeks”. Douchard was a cook, “ole Marsa . . . would beat her ef he didn’t like what she cooked. So she run ‘way to de woods”, where she spent the daylight hours in hiding, “My mama say she used to always put out food fo’ her an’ she would slip up nights an’ git it”,

“After gramma been out in de woods fo’ couple of weeks, ole Marsa come down . . . an’ tell her to tell ole Sallie to come on back . . . Mama swore she ain’t seed her – didn’t know where she was. ‘Sho, I know, Mamie, but if you do see her you tell her if she gits back Monday I ain’t gonna hide (whip) her, but if she don’t I gonna give her 500 lashes.’ Mama told gramma dat night, an’ dey talked ‘bout it . . . Finally gramma decided to come on back, so on Monday mornin’ dar she was in de kitchen’, an Marsa kept his word – didn’t give her nary a lick” (Perdue et al. 1976: 151-154).

As a young man, Frederick Douglass, having fled to the woods after a string of brutal punishments, encountered an enslaved man traveling through the forest at night on his way to spend Sunday with his wife, a free-black woman that lived in the neighborhood. Sandy, “a man as famous among the slaves of the neighborhood for his good nature as for his good sense” provided sanctuary at the home of his wife, offering Douglass food and protection and counseling him to return to the plantation “as though nothing had happened” (Douglass 2007 [1882]: 81-84).

One of the most common avenues of protest were various forms of *petit maronnage*, in which enslaved persons drew upon an intimate familiarity with various physical elements of plantation landscapes and relied upon emplaced social networks for

support in their endeavors. Although the consequences for harboring fugitives could be extremely severe, some runaways found sanctuary in other quarters throughout local neighborhoods. Most, however, absconded to nearby places that afforded protective cover and provided access to domestic areas. Forests and bottomlands in particular were common places which enslaved persons typically knew more intimately than whites. Such places provided spaces of liminality in which enslaved persons could take brief respites, “a rest from the field” or the kitchen – temporary escapes from the day to day tribulations of life under enslavement enabled by the extension of support from other community members that provided food and served as intermediaries with plantation managers.

This form of protest was extremely common throughout Virginia, especially on larger plantations across the tidewater region. It is entirely possible that it was a practice in which the Quarterpath households or their neighbors would have been familiar. The landscape throughout the Quarterpath neighborhood was dotted with forests, creeks, and marshlands, many of which were directly adjacent to domestic quarters. Ralph Roberts, born around 1794 on a large plantation near Richmond, paraphrased by a journalist in 1857, asserted, “The running away of slaves, that is, their concealment on or near their master’s premises, or sometimes at a distance of several miles, is inevitable. . . . In almost every instance, the fear of the infliction of bodily punishment drives the slave to the woods [to] lurk about the neighborhood. . . . many resort to it in the hope that the master’s desire for them to return to their labor will induce him to overlook a fault which the slave persuades himself does not deserve stripes.” Roberts’ voice comes through as he related a personal narrative to the journalist, “In one instance,” he explained, “I knew

two men to live more than a year . . . in a large wood, about a mile from their master's house. The stock on the adjacent farms supplied them with meat, and bread was easily gotten from their fellow-slaves – for, *in almost every such case, regular communication is kept up between the fugitive and his class, always in the night, and the runaway often visits the adjacent cabins*” (Putnam's Monthly 1857: Issue 54, 613-620, my italics). Although it may seem that these are instances that were put into motion by individual actors, petit marronage was a *communal act* that implied collective decision making by residents of various domestic quarters in conjunction with others throughout the neighborhood with whom they shared bonds. Support from emplaced community elements not only emboldened, but made it possible for enslaved men and women to protest maltreatment by withholding labor for a time, effectively threatening planters with permanent abscondence and occasionally prompting negotiations between plantation managers and broader enslaved communities acting on the behalf of friends and relatives. For individuals such as Sallie Douchard, petit maronnage was a strategic gamble in which she effected changes that had immediate and significant consequences in her daily life, and it was one in which she could not have been successful without a commanding knowledge of neighborhood places and without the assistance of a host of neighbors and relatives.

With respect to the Quarterpath neighborhood, we may never be able to identify the particular cast of neighbors – relatives, friends, and rivals – or the specific nature of these relationships to the Quarterpath residents. Very few sources reference the Quarterpath neighborhood specifically, although there is one particular historical account that may imply a direct encounter with the Quarterpath households (see Chapter 6). But

we can draw analogies with other contemporaneous plantation neighborhoods. It is apparent that enslaved persons throughout these communities commonly relied upon the networks of familiar people and places that comprised neighborhood landscapes for support in times of need or distress, a notion that is reflected in the perceived danger of places in which emplaced social networks *did not* exist. Because of the nature of his profession, James L. Smith was able to travel throughout much of the Northern Neck with relative impunity, a significant feat for an enslaved person in antebellum Virginia. After his conversion, he became a lay preacher and “commenced holding meetings among the people”, often traveling great distances at night and by foot to distant quarters. He recalled holding a meeting at a cabin in a quarter ten miles distant from his home, “we continued to sing and pray till daybreak”, after which he and two others set out to hold another meeting two miles farther, “Then I had to walk back ten miles to my home, making in all twenty-four miles that day.” He traversed several distinct neighborhoods in his travels that day. Though he explained that “I knew the road pretty well” he articulated a degree of inherent danger in the absence of familiar social relations along the route, “There used to be a great many run-aways in that section, and they would hide away in the woods and swamps, and if they found a person alone as I was, they would spring out at them and rob them.” Although he encountered no one, Smith reported that the danger he perceived kept him alert despite his fatigue, “till I had reached the neighborhood of my home” and relative safety. (Smith 1881: 26-28)

Enslaved individuals frequently drew upon a knowledge and intimate familiarity of liminal plantation spaces gained through practical activities to contest the terms of planter authority. To return to Rhys Isaac’s observation, plantation landscapes were

indeed marked in significant ways by enslaved persons, comprising what he describes as “an alternate territorial system” replete with “landmarks of slave opportunism” (Isaac



Figure 4.5 – Left: Woman traveling on rural trail, central Virginia, circa 1900. Right: Children gathering raw materials, central Virginia, late 19th century. (Valentine Richmond History Center Special Collections and Archives; Virginia Commonwealth University digital collection, negatives 0013, 1504 <http://dig.library.vcu.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/cook/id/114/rec/118, id/309/rec/1>)

1999: 52-53). Isaac’s observations are insightful, yet due to the sheer demographic presence of enslaved persons residing across plantations such as Kingsmill, I would argue that white planters lived in the midst of black neighborhoods, begging the question as to which territorial system was actually “alternate”. As enslaved men and women extended the bonds of kinship and camaraderie across plantation borders, constructing robust and vibrant neighborhoods in the process, they *appropriated* a variety of plantation spaces that came to be known intimately through the generations. In traveling abroad to visit

family, friends, and loved ones, countless men and women cut new footpaths and trod upon well-worn trails through familiar forests, traversed across bottomlands, and through bounded agricultural fields. Many of the same locations provided cover for clandestine social and spiritual gatherings and served as hiding spots within reach of domestic areas and communal support in times of need. Many were exploited as foraging areas, places in which enslaved men, women, and children attempted to supplement meager rations of salt pork and cornmeal, hunting forest mammals, fishing in tidal creeks and ponds, and gathering other foods, raw materials, and medicines intended to heal afflicted bodies and spirits (Figure 4.5). Through individual and collective investments of labor, of time, and of *experience* local places were infused with new and multiple horizons of meaning across generations. Plantation landscapes, such as those that would have been intimately familiar to the Quarterpath residents and others throughout the broader neighborhood incorporated the labors and loves, the struggles, tragedies, and triumphs of enslaved individuals and communities, and perhaps most importantly they came to incorporate ancestral and communal ties with the successive passing of generations.

Chapter 5

Creating Home Ground: Appropriation, Investment, and the Maintenance of Domestic Spaces at the Quarterpath Site

In the introduction to an edited volume, Grey Gundaker observes that “Few historical descriptions exist of African American landscapes in the southern United States or the West Indies where residents worked their own will.” Noting that “we are left to follow scholars like Dell Upton and Mechal Sobel in imagining how peoples of African and European descent sometimes differed and sometimes joined forces as they brought meaning to the same land”, she poses the question, “what about the spaces that were occupied primarily or solely by African Americans?” (Gundaker 1998: 3). Grounded in analyses of historical and contemporary African American domestic spaces throughout the Southeast, she articulates *home ground* as a frame of reference that enfolds ancestral ties, moral orientation, and distinctive personae within familiar homeplaces. Emphasizing practical activity and social relations, Gundaker declares that the “most important goal” is “control over the surroundings in which one lives . . . But the crucial investment that makes a place home ground is not investment of money but of connections, of roots; thus land becomes the place of happenings: births, deaths, labor, friendships, disputes, and goings and comings of the generations”, and, furthermore, that “the places where these connections exist . . . African Americans have called ‘home’ whether they own the land or not” (Ibid: 15).

Under the stifling legal and social conventions of enslavement throughout the plantation South, control in any context may seem to be something unattainable, beyond

the grasp of a people who had been collectively disenfranchised of many basic human as well as civil rights, yet enslaved persons repeatedly and routinely contested the terms of planter authority, prompting renegotiation and occasionally effecting meaningful changes. Enslaved persons relied upon an intimate knowledge of familiar places, coupled with the support of emplaced social networks throughout local neighborhoods for support in times of need or distress. John Vlach asserts that the “formidable demographic presence” of more than two and a half million enslaved men, women, and children held on plantations in 1860 “clearly dominated the southern countryside”, transforming plantations into “undeniably black places.” “Consequently”, he proclaims, “southern plantations can only be described accurately and analyzed fully if we remember the territorial prerogatives claimed and exercised repeatedly by slaves” (Vlach 1993: 16-17). This chapter will explore some of the varied processes through which the Quarterpath residents appropriated and fashioned intimate domestic spaces into familiar home grounds.

Creating Home Ground

Successive generations of enslaved Africans and their descendants appropriated a variety of local places through individual and collective investments in labor and in experience as they built meaningful relationships and extended ties of kinship and camaraderie across geographically dispersed plantation neighborhoods. Acts of appropriation were often subtle, and as Vlach counsels, more or less tend to “leave few physical marks” (Ibid: 17). Fortunately, archaeological techniques and field methods are well suited to discerning subtle material patterns, yet a variety of historical sources also

illustrate a common and widespread aesthetic of appropriation expressed by African Americans throughout not only the Chesapeake region but across the greater plantation South. Upton asserts that plantation work areas “other than the main house” were typically “the slaves’ domain”, citing a late eighteenth century account by Philip Fithian, a tutor at Nomini Hall in Westmoreland County, Virginia, “Fithian attended slaves’ cockfights at the stables. He clearly thought of the shops and stables as black areas, and recorded with disapproval the preference of his pupil Harry Carter for spending time ‘either in the Kitchen, or at the Blacksmiths, or Carpenters Shop.’” Upton explains that “The slaves asserted this division of space and work rights”, challenging unwarranted intrusion by unauthorized whites, thus at Nomini Hall “Fithian was obliged to pay a forfeit of seven and one-half pence to the baker for an unspecified trespass . . . and another to Natt the plowman for touching the plowlines” (Upton 1984: 70).

Throughout the plantation South a variety of commodity crops comprised the primary sources of revenue for operations great and small. Agricultural fields became the nearly exclusive domain of enslaved workers who broke ground with the plow or the hoe, sowed and tended the fields, and harvested the fruits of their labor. Enslaved men and women were acutely conscious of the fact that the seasonal harvests upon which the prosperity of the planters depended were the products of their efforts and in certain contentious situations endeavored to remind them as such. At the turn of the twentieth century a formerly enslaved tenant named Morris who was about to be evicted from the South Carolina plantation where he had lived all his life eloquently stated his case, “I was born on dis place before Freedom. My Mammy and Daddy worked de rice fields. Dey’s buried here. De fust ting I remember are dose rice banks. I growed up in dem from dat

high . . .” Asserting that “*De strength of dese arms and dese legs and of dis old back . . . is in your rice banks*”, he proclaimed “It won’t be long before de good Lord take de rest of pore old Morris away too. An’ de rest of dis body want to be with de strength of de arms and de legs and de back dat is already buried in your rice banks. No . . . you ain’t agoin’ to run old Morris off dis place” (Joyner 1984: 42-43, my italics). A Philadelphia school teacher volunteering her services to educate recently freed African Americans on the outskirts of Williamsburg, Virginia shortly after the close of the Civil War recorded in her journal a similar encounter with a community of formerly enslaved agricultural workers, then tenants, in a March, 1867 visit to a local plantation on the York River near Yorktown,

“These people have all been ordered to move away by the first of May, and are in great distress as most of them have no idea where they can go . . . We told them that Mr. Warren did not want them to live any longer on this land, and that they will find places provided at Yorktown where they can stay until they decided where they wish to live, *but they declared they would not move, the land was theirs, they had toiled on it all their lives, without wages. . . .* We tried to make them understand that they would not be allowed to remain, but we failed to convince them of the justice of it all, our arguments seemed as weak to them as they did to ourselves” (Thorpe and Morton 1956: 194-195, my italics).

If these examples are taken as characteristic, then it is quite possible that emancipated residents may have often used communal investment in labors performed by themselves, other community members, and ancestors as leverage to exert claims over other neighborhood places, most notably domestic homesites.

Domestic quarters were intimate living spaces in which enslaved persons claimed as their own in myriad ways – through subtle adjustments that were likely to be overlooked by plantation managers and in more brazen assertions of proprietorship through highly visible means. In his travels, commissioned by the *New York Daily Times*

in the 1850s, Frederick Law Olmsted, with the keen eye of a budding landscape architect, recorded many details about the organization and arrangement of domestic quarters across plantations throughout the South. In Georgia, Olmsted accompanied a prominent planter on a daily round of inspections across his plantation grounds, “After a ride of several miles through the woods, in the rear of the plantation we came to his largest negro-settlement. . . . Each cabin was a framed building, the walls boarded and whitewashed on the outside, lathed and plastered within, the roof shingled . . .” Observing that “Each tenement is occupied, on an average, by five persons”, he related “There were in them closets, with locks and keys, and a varying quantity of rude furniture . . . The people were nearly all absent at work, and had locked their outer doors, taking the keys with them” (Olmsted 1861, Vol. 1: 237). Not wishing to disrupt the inner workings of enslaved communities as long as sufficient levels of productivity were maintained, domestic claims to ownership by enslaved individuals were often ignored or overlooked by plantation managers.

Although the Quarterpath quarter was a much smaller settlement than the plantation village observed by Olmsted in Georgia, several parallels exist in the architectural design and construction techniques of the cabins as well in the behaviors of the respective residents. Whereas the Georgia dwellings were double-pen, duplex style structures partitioned into two discrete living areas, intended to house multiple family groups under a single roof, the domestic units of both the Georgia quarter and Structures 1 and 2 at the Quarterpath Site were of relatively comparable size. The exterior of Structure 1 was either clapboarded or covered in weatherboards, the interior was lathed and plastered and likely contained a similar internal arrangement, including “closets” or

similar furnishings secured under lock and key. The occupants of Structure 2 likely salvaged much from the interior of the dwelling before it was vacated. Structure 1, however, appears to have incinerated quickly and unexpectedly, leaving the material remnants of various furnishings in the immediate vicinity of their original locations within the dwelling’s interior. A copper alloy and two iron alloy escutcheon plates, each with keyhole sleeves, a copper alloy keyhole sleeve from a door lock, and a single complete steel key were recovered from test units within the interior of Structure 1 (Table 5.1, Figures 5.1, 5.2). The escutcheons were likely all that remained of wooden furniture such as armoires, cabinets, or chests of drawers and could date from either the period of enslavement or tenancy. The steel key, however, was machine cut and manufactured circa 1900, just a few years before the site was ultimately abandoned. Although the Quarterpath residents had gained their freedom, as tenants they still did not have legal proprietorship of either the dwellings in which they resided or the land upon which they

Table 5.1 – Frequency of Furniture Related Artifacts by Excavation Area and Structure

	Area 1	Area 2	Str. 1	Str. 2
bracket, indeterminate	0	1	0	0
caster	0	2	1	0
door knob or pull	0	27	14	0
escutcheon	0	8	4	0
hardware, furniture	0	2	2	0
hinge	0	4	1	0
key	0	1	1	0
lock or lock part	0	7	7	0
tack	0	7	4	0
TOTAL:	0	59	34	0

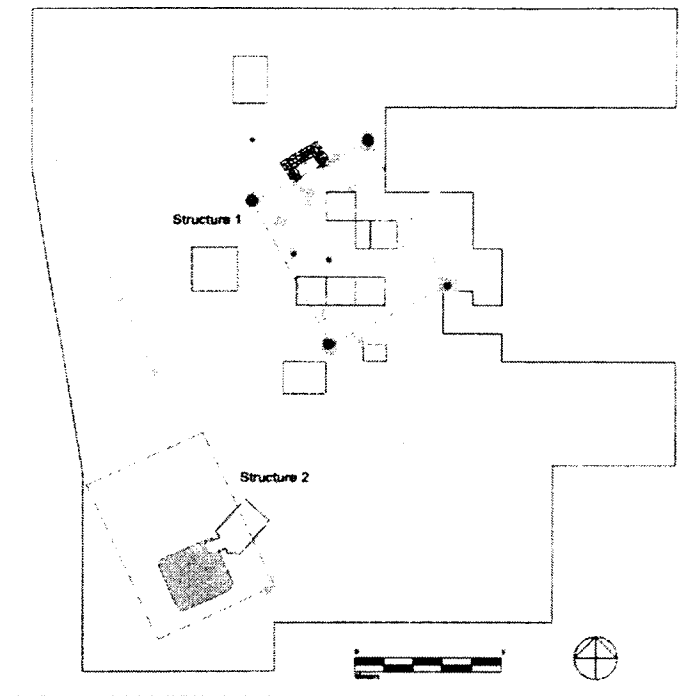


Figure 5.1 – Locations of test units within Structure 1 (in gray) at the Quarterpath domestic complex from which a single key and multiple lock parts were recovered.

were constructed. Nevertheless, they laid claim not only to their homes but through their labors and experiences they extended those claims to the interconnected spaces that comprised their intimate domestic world.

Archaeological evidence suggests that the destruction of Structure 1 was an event that prompted the abandonment of the Quarterpath Site circa 1905, a supposition that is supported by the fact that the small square cellar beneath Structure 2 (Feature 35) was assigned a *terminus post quem* of 1903³⁷ for the assemblage of artifacts recovered from the fill. The feature contained a single layer and does not appear to have been open to the elements for an extended period of time, a stratigraphic profile that suggests that the

³⁷ The *terminus post quem* (tpq) was based upon the recovery of several fragments of bottle glass with Owen's scars, resulting from a manufacturing technique that was invented in 1903. The bottles could have been manufactured after 1903 or may have been in use for several years before site abandonment, thus a tpq of 1903 coincides fairly well with the conjectured date of site abandonment, circa 1905.

cellar was filled rapidly, perhaps in a single depositional event (Figure 3.11). Thus it appears that the residents may have salvaged a few possessions from Structure 2 shortly after the incineration of Structure 1 and then quit the site. A scenario of rapid abandonment without successive occupation implies that the site was probably not substantially modified after the departure of the Quarterpath residents, at least not until it was ultimately reclaimed as agricultural land sometime in the early twentieth century.



Figure 5.2 – Interior of dwelling contemporaneous with and comparable in size to the Quarterpath structures, with assorted furnishings, Richmond, Virginia, 1898. (Valentine Richmond History Center Special Collections and Archives; Virginia Commonwealth University digital collection, negative 1439 <http://dig.library.vcu.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/cook/id/253/rec/16>)

The site was eventually plowed, yet Chesapeake archaeologists have repeatedly demonstrated that the material items within the plowzone – the stratum created by the mixing of the top layers of soil and the artifacts within by a plow blade – do not stray far

from their original depositional contexts (see King 2004).³⁸ Thus the integrity of the stratigraphic deposits left by the Quarterpath residents was not substantially compromised. Consequently, a unique material pattern was discerned within the core domestic area at the Quarterpath Site, the product of a meaningful and distinctive sociocultural aesthetic and the result of a long term investment of labor and experience shared by the residents as they collectively fashioned the site into familiar home ground.

A total of 19,519 artifacts were recovered from cultural features and stratigraphic deposits at the Quarterpath Site. Of these, objects associated with food preparation and storage comprised the third largest grouping of items within the total artifact assemblage (2049 objects, or 11% of the total assemblage), yet the faunal remains consisted of just ten items – nine fragments of animal bone and a single eggshell, or 0.05% of the total assemblage of artifacts (Tables 5.2-5.4).³⁹ Over a period of six decades of occupation we would expect to recover more than a mere handful of faunal remains, several of which appear to have been contemporary, perhaps the remnants of a meal discarded by an engineer recently engaged in surveying property lines or utility rights-of-way. Given the substantial disparity between food preparation and storage items and faunal remains, the extent of the area of investigation as well as the intensity of the open-area excavation of the core domestic area, and considering that 100% of soils from cultural features were

³⁸ Julia King, in a brief paper (2004) titled “The Importance of Plowzone Archaeology” explains the analytical value of plowzone deposits, which, she asserts “has emerged as an important tool in the interpretation of historic period Chesapeake sites”. It has become standard practice in Chesapeake archaeology to incorporate plowzone sampling into archaeological research designs. King’s paper is available on the NEH-VA DHR funded online database, “A Comparative Archaeological Study of Colonial Chesapeake Culture” (<http://www.chesapeakearchaeology.org>), and is part of a larger work by the same author: *A Review and Assessment of Archaeological Investigations at 44RD183, Warsaw, Virginia*, prepared for the Council of Virginia Archaeologists (COVA), June 2004.

³⁹ 945 artifacts were recovered from shovel test pits during the Phase I archaeological testing of the Quarterpath Site. These objects are not included in the assemblage represented by Table 5.1.

Table 5.2 – Frequency of Artifact Groups Recovered from Excavation Areas 1 and 2

Group	(N)	(%)
Unassigned	8735	47.03%
Architectural	6517	35.09%
Food Prep. & Storage	2049	11.03%
Shell	697	3.75%
Clothing	310	1.67%
Health & Hygiene	82	0.44%
Tools / Activity	76	0.41%
Furniture	59	0.32%
Personal Items / Small Finds	40	0.22%
Faunal Remains	10	0.05%
Total:	18,575	100.00%

Table 5.3 – Frequency of Recovered Artifacts from Food Preparation and Storage and Unassigned Groups by Excavation Area and Structure

Food Preparation and Storage	Area 1	Area 2	Str. 1	Str. 2
Bottle glass, food or condiment	0	36	0	22
Bottle glass, indeterminate	0	269	40	139
Bottle glass, liquor	0	29	0	26
Bottle glass, wine	41	374	192	35
Ceramic cooking / storage	3	776	525	5
Ceramic tableware	1	152	99	22
Glass canning jar / lid liner	0	109	69	26
Glass, storage container	0	219	99	0
Glass tableware	0	31	7	4
Iron alloy cooking pot / pan	0	4	3	1
Utensils - knife, fork	0	5	4	1
Total:	45	2004	1038	281

Unassigned	Area 1	Area 2	Str. 1	Str. 2
Ceramic, indeterminate	72	2262	1160	60
Glass, indeterminate	33	6331	3844	752
hardware, indeterminate	0	37	7	0
Total:	105	8630	5011	812

Table 5.4 – Frequency of Recovered Faunal Remains by Excavation Area and Structure

	Area 1	Area 2	Str. 1	Str. 2
Animal bone	1	8	1	3
Egg shell	0	1	1	0
Total:	1	9	2	3

subject to flotation (with the exception of Feature 35 in which 50% of excavated soils were reserved for flotation), it is almost certain that the residents transported food remains a considerable distance from the primary domestic area for disposal. The relative absence of faunal remains evidences a pattern of behavior that is further indicated by patterning in the distribution of domestic refuse throughout Area 2, the domestic core of the Quarterpath Site.

Initial field observations at the site suggested that there was a marked decrease in recovered artifacts from one-meter square test units located several meters away and radiating outward from Structures 1 and 2 in comparison with test units from within the interiors of and immediately adjacent to the dwellings. This was not particularly unexpected as Structure 1 likely collapsed as it burned, leaving a debris field in the immediate vicinity and the majority of objects from Structure 2 were recovered from the backfilled cellar. However, given that nearly all of the test units excavated within Area 2 exhibited a virtually identical stratigraphic profile with a comparable layer of olive-brown plowzone,⁴⁰ it was striking just how “clean” many of the test units were, an observation made all the more prescient considering that the density of artifacts recovered from excavation units located a greater distance from the dwellings increased and, conversely, test units located at the limits of the excavation area were nearly devoid of cultural materials. Archaeologists are trained to identify and interpret meaningful patterns, material signatures that may tell us something of the daily lives and experiences of those who left behind the scattered and fragmented remains of the most commonplace

⁴⁰ The test units within the interior and immediately adjacent to Structure 1 contained a greater quantity of charcoal and ash, resulting from the incineration of the dwelling, yet all of the test units within Area 2 contained a layer of olive brown plowzone of comparable thickness.

of objects that typically make up archaeological sites. Everyday practices are the primary scope of archaeological inquiry and these initial observations certainly warranted further analysis. It was apparent that the Quarterpath residents intentionally removed faunal remains for disposal away from the domestic core of the site, perhaps somewhere beyond the limits of excavation, and, in essence, I wanted to know if the Quarterpath residents had maintained the spaces that enclosed the dwellings by removing other categories of material debris as well as invasive vegetation to an exterior periphery some distance from the core of the domestic complex.

Over the course of two seasons of archaeological investigation and with the aid of students of two field schools in historical archaeology 110 one-meter square test units were excavated by hand in and around the domestic complex before the area was mechanically stripped of the remaining plowzone to expose subsurface cultural features (Figure 3.7). Seventy-two of the test units formed a contiguous block over Structure 1 and were excavated in a checkerboard fashion in order to maintain strict spatial control



Figure 5.3 – Field school students from the College of William and Mary at work excavating test units, 2004.

(Figure 5.3). The remaining test units were distributed throughout the areas adjacent to the two dwellings. Thirty-four test units located within the interiors of Structures 1 and 2 were removed from the sample, leaving a total of 76 for spatial and statistical analyses.

Spatial distribution maps measuring artifact density per test unit confirmed initial field observations (Figure 5.4). Although they can be powerful tools in identifying spatial anomalies on archaeological sites, digital mapping programs typically extrapolate data in the absence of information, such as unexcavated areas between test units, plotting distributions that may not necessarily be indicative of actual depositional contexts. Thus a battery of additional and in-depth statistical tests was initiated in order to determine if the apparent correlation between the field observations and distribution plots held true. The distance between the northwest corners of each test unit to an arbitrarily chosen point fixed at the center of each structure was measured, creating a ratio based index for comparison. Scatter plots were generated illustrating the relationship between artifact density per square meter and proximity to each dwelling. The scatter plot for Structure 2 is disorganized at best, as it appears that the close proximity of the two dwellings causes a great deal of noise in the data. The plot for Structure 1, however, indicated a cohesive, nonlinear relationship that obliged further exploration (Figures 5.5, 5.6).

Two cardinally oriented planes were extended from the fixed center point of Structure 1, dividing the site into four hemispheres and four cardinal quadrants. The areas above and below the horizontal line were defined as the northern and southern hemispheres, the vertical plane divided the eastern and western hemispheres, and the intersection of the two delineated four cardinal quadrants: northeast, southeast, southwest, and northwest (Figure 5.6). The creation of nominal spatial categories was

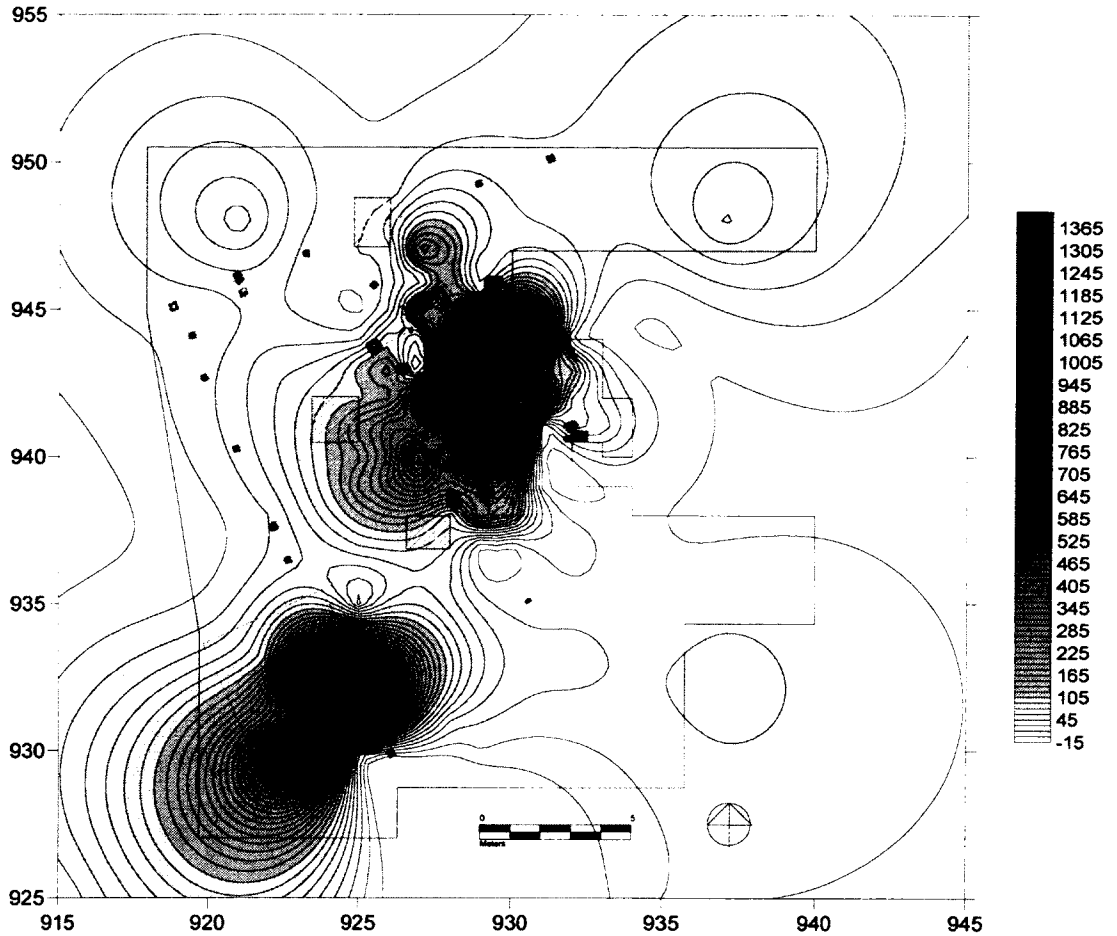


Figure 5.4 – Density of artifacts recovered throughout Area 2 domestic complex. Note the relative paucity of artifacts (in white and pale yellow) followed by several “hotspots” (darker yellow) as distance increases from the two dwellings.

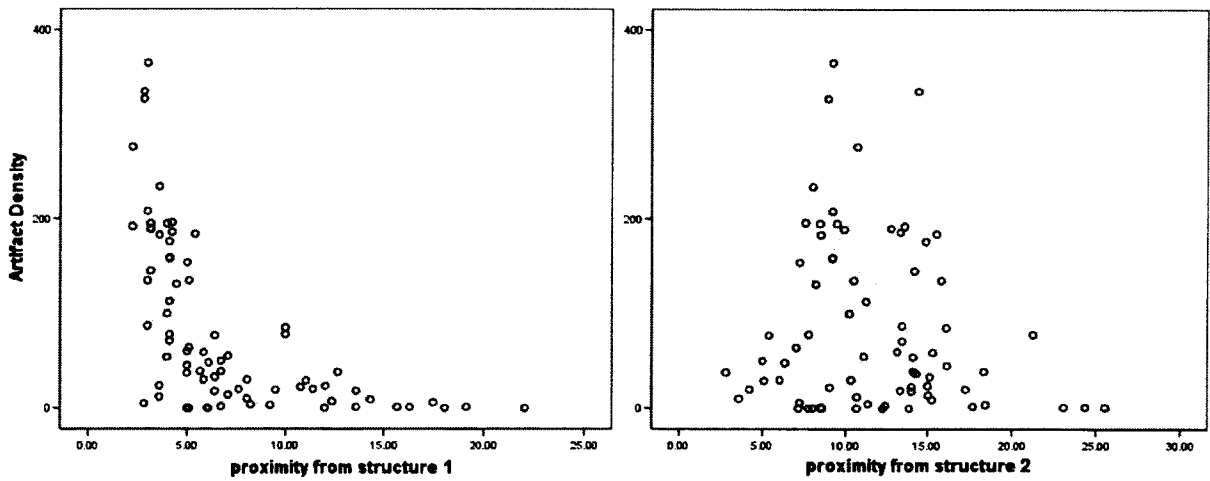


Figure 5.5 – Scatter plots illustrating artifact density by proximity in meters to Structure 1 (left) and Structure 2 (right)

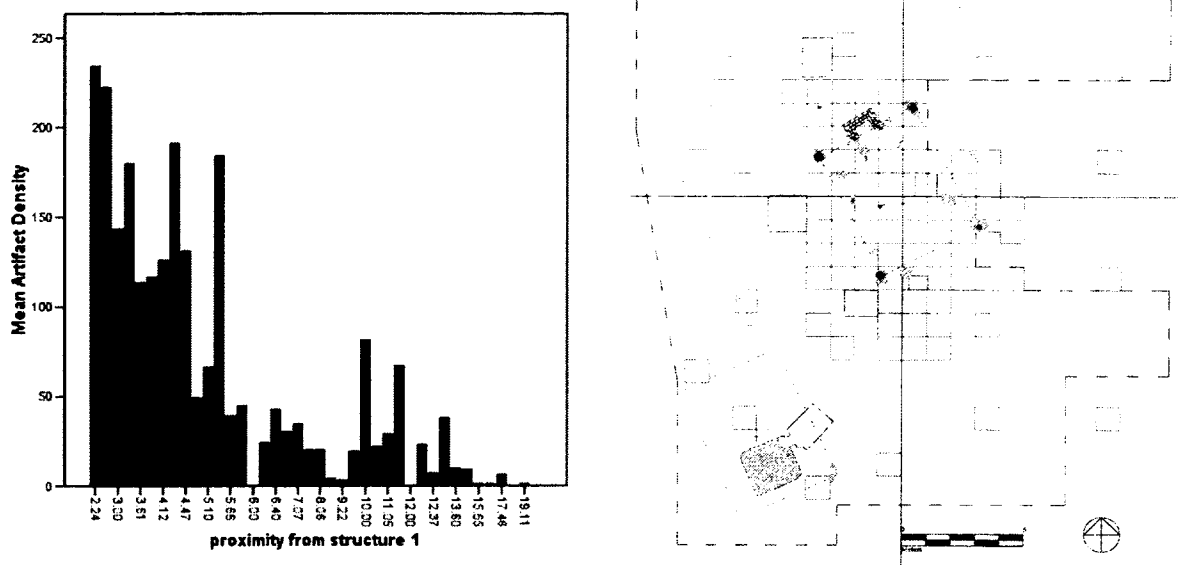


Figure 5.6 – Left: Mean artifact density by proximity to Structure 1. Right: Division of Excavation Area 2 into hemispheres and cardinal quadrants and distribution of test units.

intended to compare all areas of the site against each other to either determine if artifact distributions were consistent across the excavation area or to identify and isolate regions with divergent distributions. Graphs comparing artifact density and proximity to the dwelling for each hemisphere and across all quadrants indicate similar bimodal distributions. Following the distribution peaks from these graphs, six concentric zones radiating from the center point of Structure 1 were defined for further comparison and box plots were generated to visually identify the central tendencies and interquartile ranges of artifact densities from test units within each concentric zone. The box plots indicate that test units with the highest artifact densities are within 5.5 meters of the center point of the structure, not at all surprising considering that the dwelling burned and more than likely collapsed upon itself, creating a debris field among its incinerated footprint. Test units within the next two concentric zones, between 5.6 – 7 and 8 – 9.9 meters respectively, exhibited a steep, continuous drop in mean artifact density. Yet

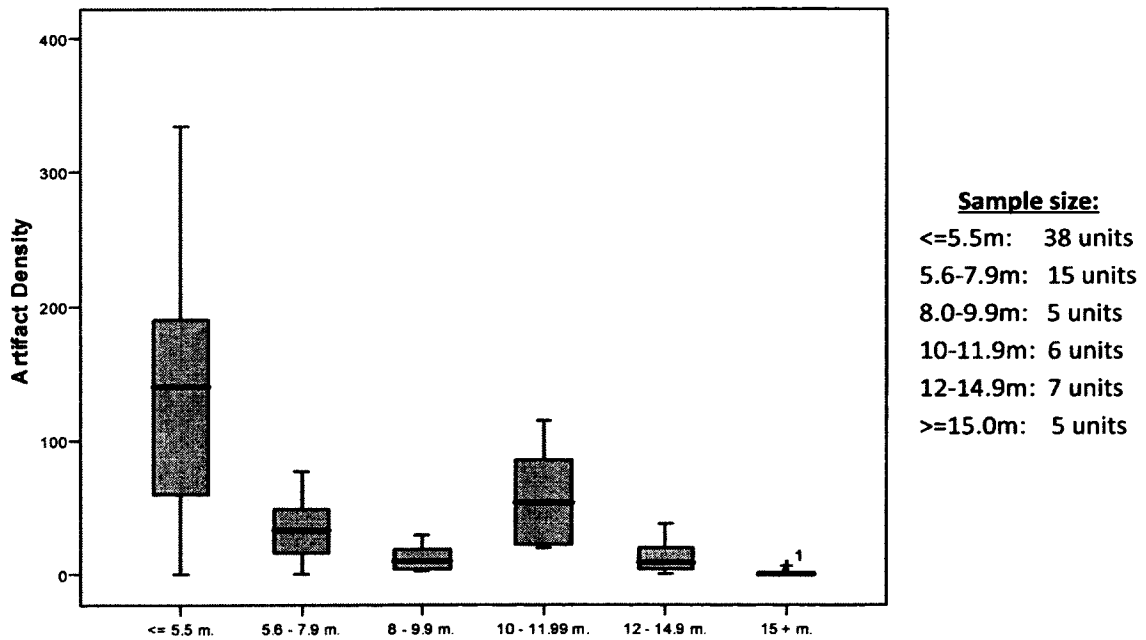
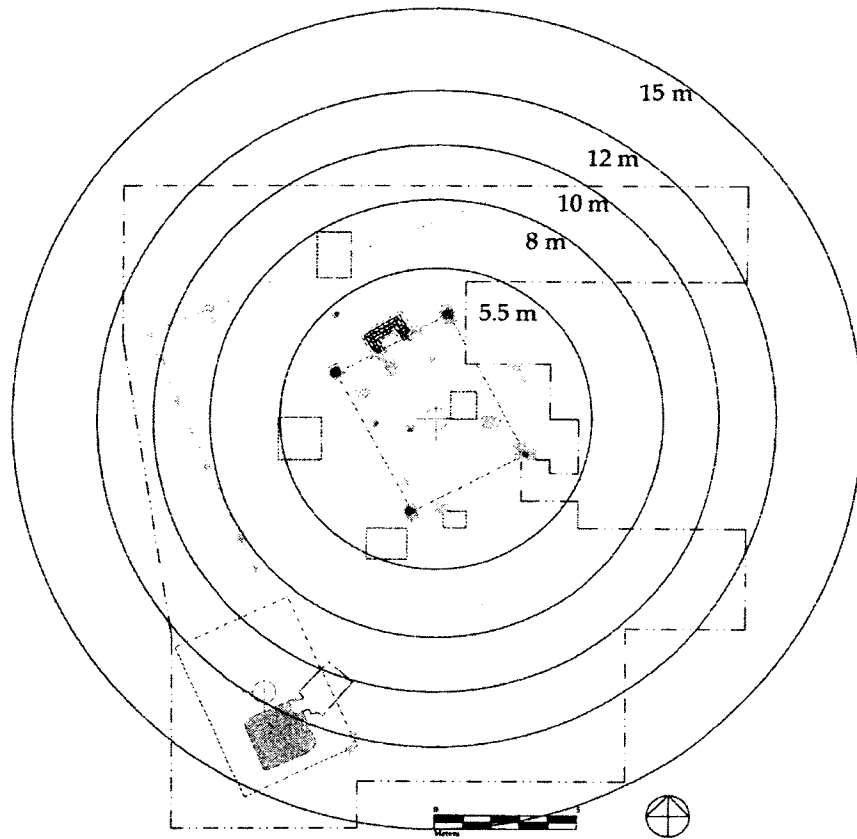


Figure 5.7 – Top: Concentric zones, Area 2 domestic complex. Bottom: Box plot of artifact density by concentric zone.

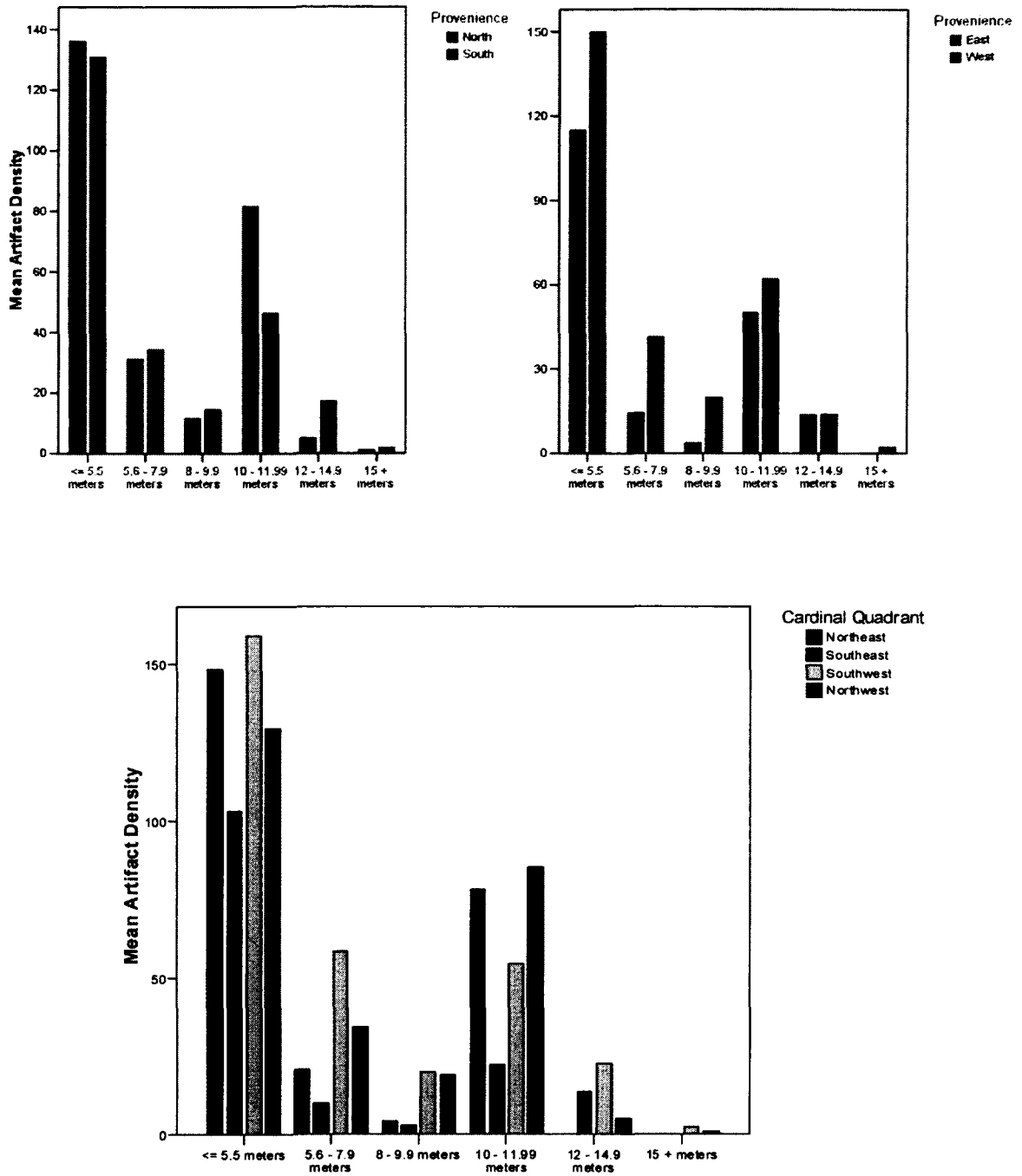


Figure 5.8 – Top: Mean artifact density by concentric zone and hemisphere. Bottom: Mean artifact density by concentric zone and cardinal quadrant.

between 10 – 11.99 meters artifact densities in test units throughout each cardinal quadrant increased by a factor of 300% or more from levels in the adjacent concentric zones. Artifact densities from test units in the remaining two zones, between 12 – 14.9 and beyond 15 meters, dropped exponentially, approaching zero by 20 meters (Figures 5.7, 5.8). The pattern was repeated across all hemispheres and cardinal quadrants.

Statistical tests were run to confirm the tentative results illustrated by the graphs and to determine if the pattern indicated by the box plots held true for each nominal region. To correct for positive skewness, artifact density was transformed and measured on a square root scale, creating a normal distribution for parametric testing. A two-tailed independent samples t-test indicated that mean artifact densities between test units in the northern and southern hemispheres are nearly identical, ($t = -.057$, $p = .954$, $df = 75$). The same test was run comparing artifact density between test units in the eastern and western hemispheres. The results were not quite as conclusive, however the significance level surpassed 20%, ($t = -1.287$, $p = .202$, $df = 75$). A one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that the mean artifact densities between test units in each of the cardinal quadrants do not differ significantly, ($p = .314$, $f = 1.205$, $n_1 = 10$, $n_2 = 23$, $n_3 = 26$, $n_4 = 18$). However, an additional ANOVA test indicated that mean artifact density between test units in the concentric zones is indeed statistically significant ($p < .001$, $f = 11.593$, $n_1 = 38$, $n_2 = 15$, $n_3 = 5$, $n_4 = 6$, $n_5 = 7$, $n_6 = 5$).

The pattern of distribution in artifacts recovered from the plowzone within test units across Area 2 would seemingly indicate an absence of activity yet it is the product of just the opposite, *of prolonged and intensive activity*. It is likely the result of a continuous and persistent campaign of domestic maintenance by the Quarterpath

households, representing a long-term commitment by the Quarterpath residents in maintaining living spaces by removing – probably by sweeping – material debris as well as invasive vegetation to a periphery of 10-12 meters (33-40 feet) from the domestic core of the site (Figure 5.9). The spatial bounds of maintenance activities may also be read as the outer periphery of the resident’s most intimate living space, the area that enclosed the dwellings and provided the setting for a host of domestic activities – the yard. In an archaeological study of quarters housing enslaved field workers in the late eighteenth century Virginia piedmont, Heath and Bennett define the yard as “the area of land bounded and usually enclosed, which immediately surrounds a domestic structure and is

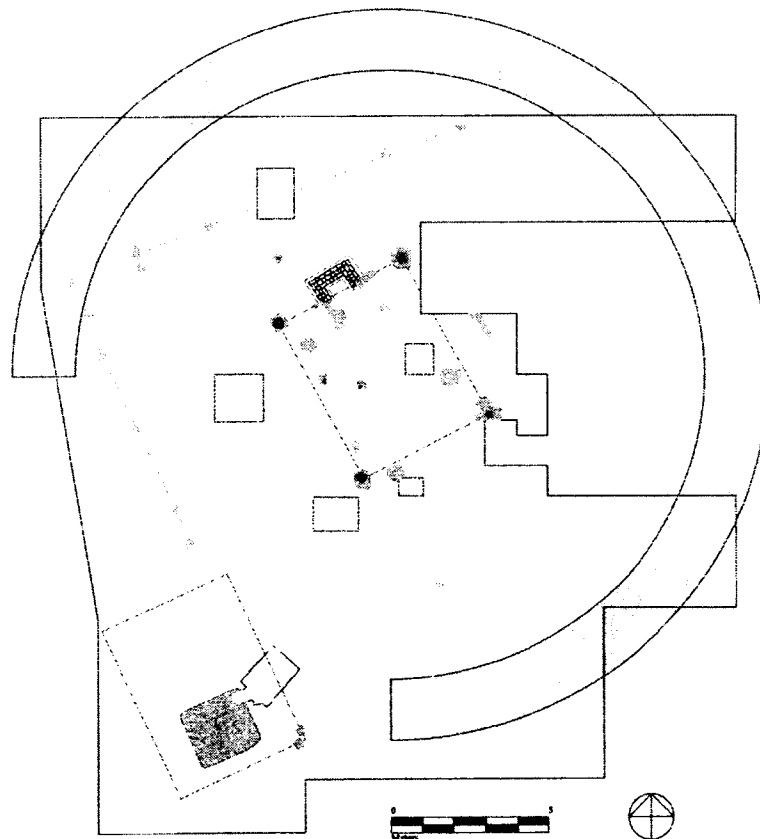


Figure 5.9 – Zone of high artifact density and proposed spatial bounds of sweeping activity, with southwest cardinal quadrant removed.

considered an extension of that dwelling” (Heath and Bennett 2000: 38-55). There are several points to be made concerning this definition. First is the notion that the yard is essentially considered an extension of a dwelling (or dwellings). Across African American settlements through the periods of enslavement and tenancy upon rural southern plantations yards were typically arenas of intense activity and by considering the yard as an extension of the domicile Heath and Bennett are not only defining these spaces as areas of activity but also hinting at the types of activities that took place upon them. The second has to do with the idea of enclosure. The authors suggest that yards are bounded spaces. Boundaries come in many shapes and forms and we need not necessarily envision white picket fences, although the Quarterpath residents did indeed make use of fencing in areas. Yet it could also be argued that the residents left behind additional indicators as to how they may have defined the bounds of their yard in practice, in the spatial extent of maintenance activities which actually exceed the physical boundary represented by the fence aligned with the two dwellings. Furthermore, as an extension of the domiciles the bounded yard enclosed and *sealed* the dwellings, acting as a buffer that isolated internal living areas from places and influences beyond, a concept that will be discussed in further detail below.

The removal of material debris and invasive vegetation discouraged pests such as insects and rodents and promoted a healthful and aesthetically pleasing environment. It heightened the distinction between prepared earth and cultivated plants, which were often collected from other locales and transplanted in domestic contexts, and transformed the yard into a prepared space, an area that begged activity and promoted social interaction: work and leisure activities, such as cooking, eating, laundering, maintenance of animals,

and socializing were commonplace upon African American yardscapes (Figure 5.10).

Virginia freedpersons recalled the quarters and the yards that surrounded them as the



Figure 5.10 – Activity area in swept yard, Southern Pines, NC, 1914. Notice the row of shrubs and transplanted tree arranged to form a border in the background. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division (LOC PPD): Call number: LC-USZ62-45882, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3a46068>

setting for a diversity of social activities, “We sat on the ground around the quarters to eat with wooden spoons . . .”, “We played around the quarters . . .”, “An’ we chillun ‘d go down an set around in the yard . . . an’ we’d call it a party”, “Sundays de slaves would get together an’ would sing an’ have a big time. . . . On dem days we would play ring plays, jump rope an’ dance. Then nights we’d dance juba” (Perdue et al. 1976: 81, 5-6, 96-97).

Yard sweeping remains common across contemporary West and West Central Africa and if placed in the broader context of the African Atlantic it is both an historical practice and an embodiment of a set of sociocultural aesthetics that is rooted in traditions with

antecedents that reverberated throughout diverse communities across the diaspora (Figures 5.11, 5.12).

It embodies an ethic of *landkeeping* (Gundaker 1998: 6, Gundaker and McWillie 2005: 81) that entails a *moral obligation* to the land, a concept that was held in common by members of the largest ethnic groups imported into Virginia's middle tidewater, elements of which appear to have taken root in plantation communities, resounding across subsequent generations. Diverse West and West Central African philosophies (Wiredu 1998: 319-320, Gomez 1998: 128-130, MacGaffey 1988: 54-56) maintained that in order for a people to be prosperous it was necessary to cultivate the land, yet the same modes of thought also suggest that *the land, in turn, also cultivates people*. Far from being a given, Gyekye and Wiredu explain that, in traditional West African epistemologies, personhood is something that must be *achieved* through an individual's actions. Constituted in part by reciprocal communal obligations it incorporated a sense of morality, revolving around "the existence and appreciation of a sense of common life or common (collective) good" (Gyekye 1998: 297), partially rooted in the land, "conceived as including the ancestors, the living members, and those yet to be born" (Wiredu 1998: 319). The level of care invested in this particular domestic homesite reflects a *moral orientation* held in common by the Quarterpath households. The yard not only embodied the distinct personae of the residents but, to observers it also served as a highly visible indicator of meaningful and well-lived lives. It was an ethic that involved generations, both in philosophy – care of the land in turn promoted the wellbeing and moral fortitude of succeeding generations – and in practice, as one of the primary work tasks reported by those who were raised in quarters upon plantations throughout the rural South before

Emancipation involved the maintenance of domestic spaces: “I wus too little to work much but I played a lot an’ swept yards”, “I swept yards, churned, fed the chickens”, “I washed dishes, swept de yard, and kept de yard clean wid weed brush brooms”, “All de [children] he’ped bring in wood. Den us swept de yards wid brush brooms”. (Federal Writer’s Project (FWP): North Carolina Narratives: Chaney Hews, Hannah Crasson; Oklahoma Narratives: Annie Young; Mississippi Narratives: Charlie Davenport, LOC: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/>)⁴¹



Figure 5.11 – Contemporary BaKongo village, dwellings with swept yards, Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire). MacGaffey suggests that the resident of this particular house is visually and publicly advertising pretensions to chiefship through the use of trees planted in rows to form an enclosure around the dwelling-yard complex (illustration from MacGaffey 1986: 56-57).

⁴¹ I am using the original, unedited FWP interviews currently housed in a digital archive maintained by the Library of Congress (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/>). Although they have been typed, they often contain handwritten margin notes not available in the collection edited by George Rawick, entitled *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, Greenwood Press: Westport, Conn. 1972-1979.

Yards may have also been gendered spaces (see Battle Baptiste 2007). In Igboland, villages often had “men’s houses (okonko or juju houses)” while women “worked in the houseyards and kitchen-gardens” (Chambers 1996: 362). Women were held in esteem as mothers, wives, and “keepers of the soil. . . . they enjoyed a special connection to Ala (or Ana), the earth mother. Ala and the land (ala) were highly esteemed and inextricably woven, forming the basis of Igbo law” (Gomez 2005: 70). Yards surrounding Igbo dwellings were kept by women. Likewise, an English ethnographer living among the BaKongo at the turn of the twentieth century noted that wives “of the owner of a compound keep not only the ground inside the fences weeded and swept, but also the lanes running around it.” For those of more modest means, women, he noted, “keep their houses free from grass and rubbish, generally sweeping every morning.” Emphasizing that “There is no other law for this other than public opinion”, he explained that the measure of the head of the household was reflected in the domestic landscape tended by his wife and was continually assessed by neighbors, for the man whose yard is “untidy and neglected becomes the butt of his neighbours’ jeers and gibes. The grass immediately at the back of his house may be high enough to cast its shadow on the roof, but the front and sides must be clean, weeded, and swept” (Weeks 1914: 94). Under enslavement in field quarters on large plantations such as Kingsmill, young children often performed rudimentary tasks such as gathering wood, tending to poultry, and sweeping yards as adult men and women were engaged in agricultural activities. However, older women who were beyond their prime working years often stayed behind as others “went off to the fields in companies”, remaining in the quarters and tending to young children, supervising tasks associated with domestic maintenance

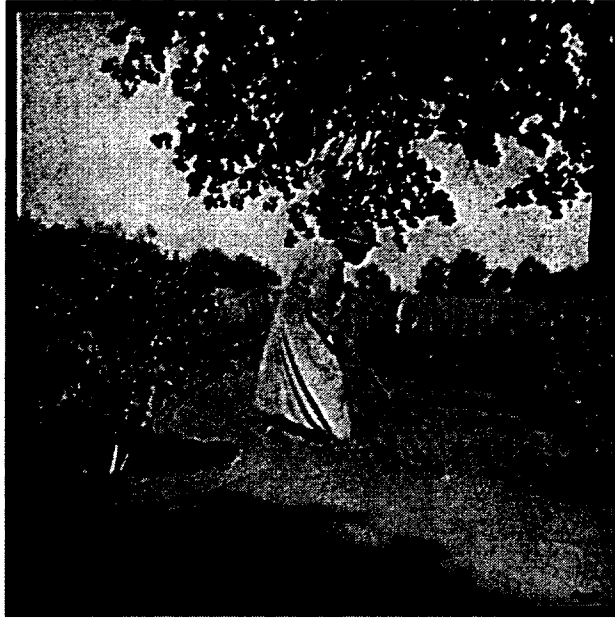


Figure 5.12 – Top: photo titled “Caroline Atwater, wife of Negro owner, has a well-swept yard”, Orange County, North Carolina, July, 1939. Bottom: Under the supervision of women, “Children of Frederick Oliver, tenant purchase client, sweeping yard in front of new home. Summerton, South Carolina”, June, 1939. LOC PPD: Call numbers LC-USF34- 019811-E, LC-USF34- 051931-D, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8b33826>, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8c10415>

(Smith 1881: 8). African American yards may have indeed been marked by women's activities as gendered spaces. Historic photos tend to support this notion and could suggest that yards may have continued to be the domain of women across African American communities into the twentieth century (Figures 5.10, 5.12).

Historically, in African America, illness has not been defined solely in terms of biological mediation between the physical body and the natural environment, but was embedded within various sets of reciprocal social relationships that defined the community. Plantation neighborhoods were grounds of both solidarity and division. Neighbors created and maintained alliances and also fostered conflict and derision. Sharla Fett argues that African Americans in plantation contexts throughout the rural South collectively maintained a "relational vision" of health and well-being that "fundamentally diverged from slaveholder notions of slave soundness",

"This relational vision connected individual health to broader community relationships; it insisted on a collective context for both affliction and healing; it honored kinship relations by bridging the worlds of ancestors and living generations; it located a healer's authority in the wisdom of elders and divine revelation."

"In these respects", she asserts, "the relational vision of health carried forward important dimensions of West and West Central African religions and worldviews . . . [It] was, at the same time, a concept forged in the crucible of North American enslavement." Fett is quick to note that the relational vision of health "did not reflect among enslaved African Americans a romanticized ideal of communal harmony." Rather it assumed that conflict would be present both "in community life and in relations with slaveholders" (Fett 2002: 6).

Sudden, extended, or unexplained illness was often perceived as an indication that the afflicted had been “rooted, tricked, or fixed” by a skilled conjurer, “Yuh heah lots bout roots an fixin. Folks is alluz sayin somebody bin rooted mos anytime somebody git sick fuh a long spell” (GWP 1986 [1940]: 20). Matilda “Sweet Ma” Perry, born on a plantation in Danville, Virginia in 1852, explained to an interviewer in 1937, “I was conjured once an’ don’ wan’ to be conjured no mo’. I was conjured an’ de spell brung big bumps under both my arms. . . . I declare dem bumps was so big dat de petticoat what I used to tie roun’ me up under my arms, I had to fasten by shoulder straps over top of my shoulders” (Perdue et al. 1976: 221-226). While the ability and skill of a conjurer was essential in the formation and activation of conjure bundles, efficacy was based in proximity to the intended victim. As distance to the victim’s body decreased, the potency of malign substances increased, especially if ingested. Likewise, the longer one remained exposed to a well hidden or well placed bottle, bag, or bundle, the more persistent a malady might become. Personal protection thus demanded constant vigilance, for if strangers or enemies gained access to familiar spaces there was always a chance of contamination by leaving something unwanted, undesirable, or dangerous behind. Mrs. Perry clearly understood her affliction in the context of communal relations and as a malefic intrusion upon domestic space by an unknown assailant, as she confided to her interviewer, “Couldn’t figger out who conjured me. Only one [woman] could git to me. She de only [woman] what ever come in my house an’ she didn’t hab no cause to conjure me.” She was eventually convinced by her husband to pay a visit to a local black healer, who offered to cure her by a combination of roots and other prepared medicines and instruction received through a self-induced state of trance. He declared that the person

responsible for her illness would eventually confess, “I went home an’ taken de medicine. Sho’ ‘nough on de ninth day . . . Carolina Crip commence a hollerin’ an’ runnin’ all up an’ down her neighborhood.” Relating to her interviewer “Dat medicine sho’ was workin’ powerful strong on [Crip]”, she explained that she confronted her potential assailant “an’ I been all right ever since”. At a crossroad behind Mrs. Perry’s house, she and her husband discovered the root of her malady, “On each side o’ de paths was trees wid auger holes bored in ‘em. Dese auger holes had conjure things in ‘em” (Ibid: 222-223).

Scholars are just beginning to explore the broad influence of diverse philosophies conceived by various West and West Central African ethnic groups, exploring the complexities of transformations of sociocultural elements that resounded throughout diasporic communities in transatlantic contexts. Among these, the BaKongo of West Central Africa appear to have been highly influential. In terms of the number of people imported into the Lower Chesapeake, West Central Africa was second only to the Bight of Biafra as the region of primary exploitation and by the mid-eighteenth century individuals from the region were likely represented across most Virginia plantation neighborhoods. BaKongo modes of thought held much in common with those of other West African societies, elements of which likely resonated with members of other ethnic groups in emerging plantation communities. The BaKongo *minkisi* complex (singular: nkisi) in particular embodies both a system of knowledge and a set of practices that may

prove to be at the heart of an African Atlantic diasporic material expression associated most often with traditions of healing and harming.⁴²

Kongolese scholar and practicing *nganga* (ritual specialist), Dr. Fu-Kiau Bunseki explains the complex system of sacred medicines developed by the BaKongo,

“Man’s life attention . . . is centered on the n’kisi which is the central and most important element in that world. It is the force-element that has the power to ‘kinsa’, root-word of n’kisi, meaning to take care, to cure, to heal . . . The n’kisi takes care of human beings in all his aspects of life in the world because he has a material body that needs care by n’kisi. Because he lives in a world surrounded by matadi (M), minerals, bimbena (B), plants, and bulu (b), animals, his n’kisi must be made of compounds from M-B-b” (Fu-Kiau 2001: 37).

Fostering a material connection between humans, ancestors, and *Nzambi* (God/Supreme being), *minkisi*, explains Fu-Kiau, are intended to affect change within people’s lives, generally in a healing or protective capacity. An *nkisi* is in essence a manufactured spiritual being, a material object that typically contains a formulaic amalgamation of sacred medicines and other substances intended to capture a spirit in motion. BaKongo *minkisi*, in order to be effective, must be inhabited by one of a host of territorial spirits, most of which are tied through generational bonds of kinship to specific local places. MacGaffey explains that, in contemporary BaKongo societies, lineally defined ancestors may eventually become transformed into locally defined spirits as successive generations lay claim to a particular location. Through enplaced kinship ties represented by lineal descent from individuals buried in a specific locale, descendants may eventually come to be regarded as “owners of the land, as descendants of ‘original’ founders, and thus as

⁴² Many elements of the *minkisi* complex resonated with practices and philosophies espoused by other West African ethnic groups. The manufacture of *gris-gris* (Mandan) in Senegambia, for instance, also seems to have been influential in African diasporic communities across the Americas (Chireau 2003: 46-47). Elements of each may prove to be staple components in African American healing and harming traditions.

having lived there forever. . . . The expression *mufwa mukuntu*, ‘foremost of the dead,’ referred to the founder of the village, considered to have become, after his death, the principal *nkita* (spirit) of the place” (MacGaffey 1986: 101). In the rural African American South, evidence suggests that variants of the *minkisi* complex likely referenced emplaced notions of community as well – including relationships between the living, recent dead/ancestors, long deceased/spirits, and God/Holy Spirit embedded in various local landscapes that comprised plantation neighborhoods.⁴³ In her treatise on African American healing and harming traditions, Yvonne Chireau explains that “*Minkisi* were spiritual beings who interacted with and often assisted humans in earthly endeavors . . . As the loci of supernatural power, *minkisi* were believed to incorporate divine forces, and through them humans could produce transformations within the natural world” (Chireau 2003: 46).

Once activated, an *nkisi* had a disposition and a life of its own and could be mobilized in a beneficial capacity to heal or to cure, or conversely, directed to injure. In the case of malicious conjure, bottles, bundles, or bags needed to be placed in close proximity to the intended victim. However, if malign objects could be safely and quickly removed, the chance of recovery increased,

“I know ole Lewis McIver . . . wut foun a bottle buried in his mattress. He wuz sick and somebody wuz tryin tuh fix im. . . . It hab [yellow-like] oily lookin stuff in it an deah wuz a piece uh [cloth] stuck tru wid needles an pins in it. . . . nobody know who put it deah. But Lewis is bettuh since it wuz took out.” (GWP 1986 [1940]: 84)

“In one case where there was reason to suspect conjuring, a bottle filled with roots, stones, and reddish powder was found under the doorstep, and in the yard

⁴³ Fett argues that the relational vision of health in plantation communities was a concept forged under the experience of North American enslavement, an integral component in an African American philosophy that infused Christianity into various “African holistic concepts of well-being” (Fett 2002: 6).

more bottles with beans, nails and the same powder. The man burned them up and got well.” (Puckett 1969 [1924]:231)

Further compounding the danger associated with conjure is that many practitioners did so in secret. In her travels and experiences in African American communities throughout the Depression-era South, Zora Neale Hurston related that, “Nobody knows for sure how many thousands in America are warmed by the fire of hoodoo⁴⁴, because the worship is bound in secrecy. It is not the accepted theology of the Nation and so believers conceal their faith. Brother from sister, husband from wife. Nobody can say where it begins or ends. Mouths don’t empty themselves unless the ears are sympathetic and knowing” (Hurston 1935: 185).

Thus, in certain contexts, sweeping was an act that potentially held social and cosmological connotations. Sweeping the most intimate of domestic spaces, the living quarters within a dwelling’s interior, was as much a form of self protection as a means to create a tidy living environment. Brooms kept potentially dangerous substances a safe distance from the body for removal. The thick straw at the business end of a broom essentially functioned as a filter, trapping negative energy and malicious intent. In certain regions, simply displaying a broom near thresholds, such as doors, windows, and hearths, was understood to protect one from nighttime invaders and spiritual assailants,

“Deah’s witches. Wy, deah’s a ole [woman] neah yuh what people say is at witch wut rides folks. . . . We shuts duh doe ef we sees uh comin. She come lak a nightmeah tuh duh folks wile dey sleepin. *But ef yuh puts duh bruhm cross duh doe, yuh kin keep any witch out duh [room] at night. Witches jis [can’t] cross obuh a bruhmstick.*”

⁴⁴ In 19th and early 20th century rural southern African American communities a common vernacular expression for a set of practices involving harming traditions in particular was “hoodoo”.

“Martha Major, aged sixty, related to us the time a witch had ‘worried’ her. ‘It jump on me,’ she declared, ‘an it choke me neah tuh det. But I knowd who it wuz. *She come tuh see me duh bery nex day but she ain nebuh been back sence, cuz I put a bruhm by duh bed.*” (GWP 1986 [1940]: 4, 25, my italics)

Areas of high traffic and visibility were extremely vulnerable to surreptitious intrusion by malcontents and potential enemies as ideal places to hide objects of malign conjure. As with interior living spaces, yard sweeping thus became a means of self protection and a form of preventative social maintenance, “A thoroughly tended yard also implies that members of the household are vigilant about their own security; it would be hard for someone to scatter powders or hide harmful substances in a well-kept yard because perfect surfaces, like white cloth, mark easily and visibly” (Gundaker and McWillie 2005: 111). As sweeping implements, brooms were powerful objects in and of themselves. They were often personified, so that as they aged, like humans, they acquired experience and developed individual personalities. Brooms became associated with the spaces in which they “knew” best: “It is bad luck to move a broom from one house to another”, “It is bad luck to sweep the yard with the house-broom” (Puckett 1969 [1924]: 398).

By the same token, one had to be careful about how the broom was employed, for brooms swept away more than dust and debris. Newbell Niles Puckett observed that “Carelessness with fire is foolhardy, but *carelessness with a broom is rank danger*. Even a slight stroke on a person’s foot will soon send him away from home . . .” (Ibid: 395-397, my italics). Protective traditions associated with sweeping suggest that African American conceptions of personhood extended beyond the confines of one’s skin. The orientation of a body and its patterns of movement connected the person with the space in

which it had come into contact even as the body continued its locomotive efforts, so that as one moved across the landscape, traces of oneself were inevitably left in the wake of one's own footpath. Sweeping eliminated traces of the residents, including bodily residues such as foot tracks, which could be "picked up" and used maliciously.⁴⁵ Likewise, contamination by ambient bodily residues could also be potentially harmful. In ambiguous social situations, if an unknown person or potential malcontent was allowed into the home for instance, quickly sweeping the area and following with a sprinkling of salt over the foot tracks and an additional sweeping would insure that a suspected foe would not return by sterilizing the contaminated area in which the questionable body had come into contact, neutralizing potentially harmful residues and providing a spatially localized protective barrier against future contamination by the same body/person (GWP 1986 [1940]: 83).⁴⁶ Restrictions on sweeping interior living spaces associated with this extension of bodily space within the domicile included "sweeping under [one's] feet or under the chair in which he is seated", "sweep[ing] the room while the child is asleep", and finally, "Never sweep under a sick man's bed unless you just want him to die" (Puckett 1969 [1924]: 397, 339, 398).

Hoes were used as well as sedge, brush, or husk brooms to keep yards clean of weeds and other invasive vegetation, and, if need be, to dig up and remove intrusive or dangerous objects. As a result, hoes often became personified in much the same way as

⁴⁵ Born on a Virginia plantation in 1854, Virginia Hayes Shepherd explained, "If an enemy wanted to fix you so you couldn't walk they would get the dirt out of your right track, carry it to the graveyard and you would then pine away . . . If they wanted to put you in a slow state they got graveyard dirt and threw it around where you had to walk. If you walked on it you would just pine away" (Perdue et al. 1976: 263).

⁴⁶ May Satterfield, born in 1861 in Lynchburg, Virginia, explained that salt had multiple uses, "Ef you sprinkle a little salt all 'round de house, nothin' can bother you. De spir'ts can't git to you." (Perdue et al. 1976: 247).

brooms (Figure 5.13). Federal interviewers recorded many stories about enslaved persons with the ability to command hoes to tend fields under their own power,

“Duh ole folks use tuh tell dat story bout duh hoe wut could wuk by itsef. It stan right up in duh fiel widout nobody holdin tuh it. Das ef yuh knowd how tuh wuk it. Doze Africans knowd how tuh make dat hoe wuk an dey knowd how tuh wuk roots.”

“Catching site of a few crudely made farm implements propped up against one of the buildings, we recalled a belief prevailing in most of the Negro communities already visited. ‘Does a hoe possess magic qualities?’ we wanted to know. Uncled Ben and Reuben glanced at each other, then muttered in unison, ‘*Yes’m, duh hoe is magic sho nuff.*’” (GWP 1986 [1940]: 63,168, 137, my italics)

An unknown Virginia informant conveyed a story to an interviewer with the Virginia Writer’s Project (VWP) about an enslaved man resting under a shade tree. Approached by an overseer, he was told to “Git up an’ hoe dat groun’ or yo’ll git nine an’ thirty lashes. . . . Git up an’ go to work, I say.” The man “spoke to his hoe an’ de hoe hoed de groun’ and made de rows. . . . De boss drive de overseer way, dressed de [man] an’ give ‘im de job. He said, ‘Nigger you too smart to work.’ . . . [He] didn’t git de nine an’ thirty lashes either” (Perdue et al. 1976: 347-348). As with brooms, hoes were most effective in the places they “knew” best. Puckett observed that bringing a hoe into the house was not only extremely bad luck, but implied that “you will dig a grave soon” (Puckett 1969 [1924]: 411).

The removal of material objects and invasive vegetation highlighted the distinction between prepared earth and intentionally placed items, including cultivated plants and material objects. Historic photos (Figures 5.10, 5.12, 5.14) indicate that plants were often employed to create aesthetically pleasing boundaries, made all the more



Figure 5.13 - Maugan Shepherd, Eufala, Alabama, tending his yard when WPA interviewers arrived. Note how Mr. Shepherd has dressed the hoe with his hat to resemble a person. Photo taken between 1936-1938. LOC PPD: DIGITAL ID: mesnp 010340, <http://memory.loc.gov/mss/mesn/mesnp/010/010340v.jpg>



Figure 5.14 – Flowering plants with leaves resembling the upturned brush of a broom, employed as aesthetically pleasing and perhaps doubling as protective borders. “Uncle Daniel’s Cabin – Bon Air, Virginia”, 1888. Valentine Richmond History Center Special Collections and Archives, Virginia Commonwealth University digital collection, negative 1437, <http://dig.library.vcu.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/cook/id/252/rec/3>

visible in contrast with the clean packed surface of a well tended yard. Although none of the cultural features identified during the course of excavations at the Quarterpath Site appear to have been the residual evidence of planting activities, it should not necessarily be taken as evidence of the absence of cultivated plants.⁴⁷ It is quite likely that years of plowing would have eradicated shallow planting features. Furthermore, given that the site was reclaimed by new growth forest in the latter half of the twentieth century, it would be exceedingly difficult to distinguish between archaeological features associated with varieties of ornamental plants or trees planted by the residents from naturally occurring processes associated with reforestation. If historical photos and WPA interviews are to be taken as representative examples then it is quite probable that the Quarterpath residents followed suit as well, employing the use of a variety of cultivated plants in domestic contexts. Typically arranged to create pleasant and attractive boundaries intended to enclose and isolate intimate living spaces, cultivated plants were primarily used to add an air of privacy or seclusion from external places and influences, including the gaze of plantation managers and landlords.

However, historical sources also suggest that, in some locales, certain plants were selected specifically because of inherent protective or healing attributes and strategically positioned throughout dwelling-yard complexes, as WPA interviewers discovered, “Nathaniel Lewis’ somber gaze had all this time been directed through the open door to his garden. It was a pretty little green enclosure . . . We commented on the vines and ferns, which showed careful cultivation. ‘You like my gahden?’ Lewis said mournfully.

⁴⁷ In fact, it is quite likely that the Quarterpath residents may have cultivated and maintained a vegetable garden adjacent to the domestic complex in excavation Area 1. I have interpreted the scattering of artifacts across Area 1 as the material residue of composting or manuring activities (see Boroughs 2007).

‘That’s all I can think of, my gahden. Theah’s a bush out theah that’s goin to protect me frum any othuh enemies. *Nobody can conjuh me now because of that bush.*’⁴⁸ Lewis explained to his interviewers, “You have to go to the woods in the dahk of night an find it faw yuhself” (GWP 1986 [1940]: 14, my italics). Lewis’ testimony implies that some plants may have served dual roles, as attractive ornamentals but also as powerful living sentinels that had the capacity to block malicious intent, shielding residents from negative energy and bad luck. The fact that the flowering plant needed to be collected from the forest and at night in order to be most effective suggests a correlation between plants in forests/uncultivated areas with spiritual presence or reserves of power that appears to have resonated throughout the African Atlantic.

The association between locality and the healing or protective capacities of plants is a notion held in common across much of West and West Central Africa. Among the BaKongo “Plants are classified according to the place where they grow, whether forest, grassland, water, or the margins between, and are used accordingly by healers . . .” (MacGaffey 1986: 129-131).⁴⁹ Likewise, Fett emphasizes the broad influence of the Yoruba concept of *ashé* in a variety of African diasporic religious traditions, as a creative, “vital force” residing within certain plants, representing “power, energy, and strength” (Fett: 2002: 76-77). She cites the sentiments of Silvia King, a formerly

⁴⁸ In lowland Georgia communities, others remarked that planting *Rosa laevigata*, the Cherokee Rose, adjacent to a dwelling’s entrance would bring good luck: “Indicating a small bush growing beside the doorway of her little cabin, Sophie told us . . . ‘Yuh see dis lill bush – it call Cherokee an mos uh duh folks yuh plants it at duh doe. It bring um good luck.’, “‘But dis lill plant heah called ‘Cherokee’ is spose tuh bring good luck ef yuh plants it by duh front doe step,’ said Susie.” (GWP 1986 [1940]: 74, 77). Cherokee rose bushes produce white flowers, a color often associated with ancestors, healing, and protection in African American religious contexts. Furthermore, like all flowering roses, the Cherokee Rose is covered in thorns, which may be another reason that the plant was selected for display in a protective role.

⁴⁹ MacGaffey explains that plants are also accorded significance based upon physical attributes, bananas for reproductive capacity, “a large tree with spikes, is likened to an elder – too formidable to get a grip on” (MacGaffey 1986: 129-131).

enslaved healer stolen from West Africa as a young woman and smuggled into Texas, who observed that “whites seemed oblivious to the sacred power of forest plants”, declaring “White folks just go through de woods and don’t know nothin” (Fett 2002: 69). As enslaved persons explored the vast pharmacopeia represented by New World forests and landscapes, they fostered the continuity of healing traditions in communities across emerging plantation neighborhoods, transmitting knowledge through the generations by personal instruction and by word of mouth, “I don’t know as I could find ‘em now, but I uster know ev’y weed and root in de woods. My grandma tole ‘em to me” (Perdue et al. 1976: 246).

As with plants, certain material objects may have also served multiple roles in certain domestic contexts. The Quarterpath residents exerted great effort to dispose of faunal remains and kept the dwelling-yard complex free of material debris and invasive vegetation, yet they placed great quantities of marine shell (3.75% of the total artifact assemblage – see Table 5.1) in contexts associated with Structures 1 and 2. Shell is particularly concentrated within the footprint of Structure 1 and within Feature 35, the square cellar underlying Structure 2. Structure 1 was of timber framed construction resting atop wooden piers, a building technique that would have likely elevated the wooden floorboards a foot or so above the ground surface. The shell may have been intentionally placed beneath the dwelling to aid in drainage or to reduce the flow of torrential rains that frequently cut erosion gullies following heavy spring and summer storms. Structure 2 was either constructed upon ground-laid sills or upon a foundation of hewn logs resting upon the ground surface, thus runoff and soil erosion would probably not have been of grave concern for the occupants, although heavy rains could have

proven to be a nuisance as well. The shell could have provided some protection against water seepage into the clay walled cellar, but was probably not intentionally deposited to aid in drainage. The shell in Feature 35 was mixed throughout the fill, suggesting that it may have been simply lying on the ground surface around the dwelling when the cellar was filled. (Figure 5.15)

Ywone Edwards-Ingram suggests that shell, “when scattered around slave dwellings”, may have served as an effective warning system signaling the approach of others (Edwards 1998: 265). At the Quarterpath Site, the shell is spatially concentrated. It is not scattered throughout the domestic complex and does not appear to have been placed along potential footpaths, thus it probably would not have performed well as a warning device. Furthermore, as a field quarter located a fair distance from the plantation seat and surrounded by agricultural fields, the Quarterpath residents lived in relative isolation in comparison with other domestic quarters at Kingsmill. The distribution pattern suggests that the shell could have been arranged in such a fashion as to form borders adjacent to the dwellings, aiding in drainage from the eaves of the roofs along the drip lines. There is sufficient evidence, however, to entertain the possibility that the shell may have been employed in multiple working contexts.

A number of small shells typically no more than a few centimeters in width with holes pierced by waterborne worms were recovered amongst debris associated with Structure 1 (Figure 5.15). The shell was probably collected from the *Yorktown Formation*, a fossil outcropping exposed along the banks of the James River a short walk to the south. Pierced shell appears nowhere else within the bounds of archaeological survey and excavation at the Quarterpath Site, suggesting that it was intentionally

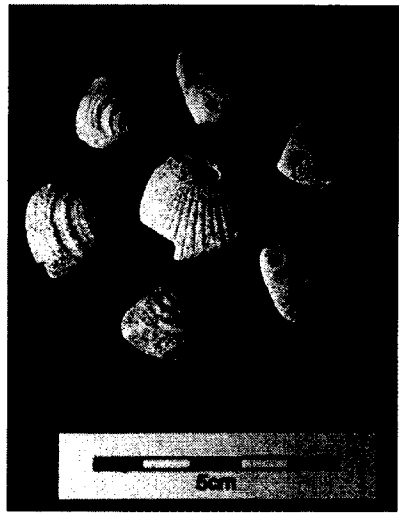
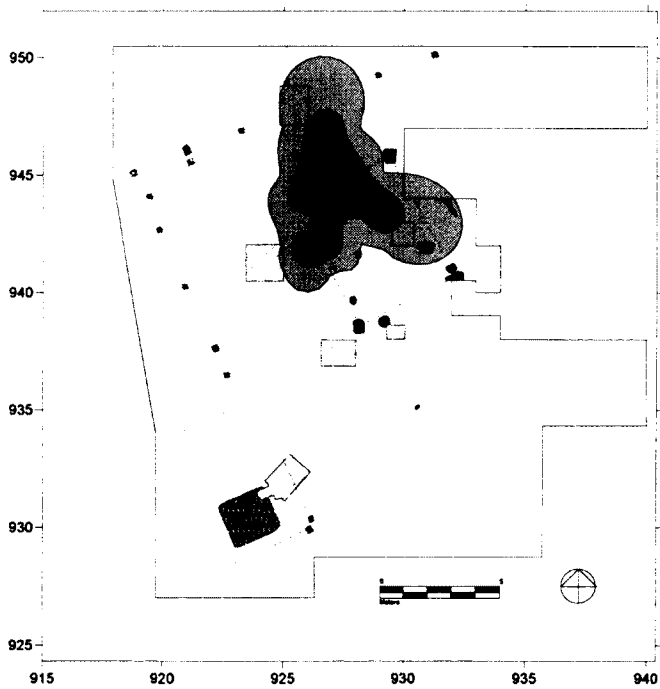
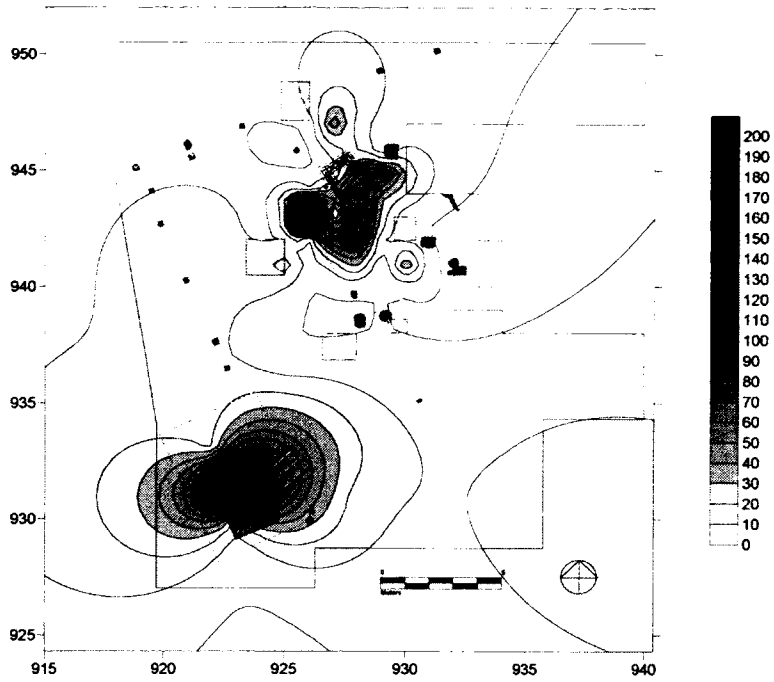


Figure 5.15 – Top: Distribution of shell by weight in grams across domestic complex. Bottom: Distribution of pierced shell (n) across domestic complex and recovered examples.

gathered and placed either inside, underneath, or directly adjacent to Structure 1. As the distribution of pierced shell generally emulates the pattern of shell distribution associated with Structure 1, it was likely mixed in with the rest of the shell deposited under or around the dwelling. However, there is a possibility that the shells, although not pierced by the Quarterpath residents, could have served as items of adornment or decoration as well.

The same type of pierced shell, likely from the same fossil outcropping, has been recovered from nearby eighteenth century quarters at Utopia and at Rich Neck (see Figure 1.6, also see Fesler 2004, Franklin 2004). At Rich Neck, naturally pierced shell was discovered in association with intentionally modified items, including drilled pewter spoon handles and pierced tobacco pipe bowls, presumably strung and worn in various fashion as objects that adorned bodies, likely in a protective or healing capacity (Franklin 2004). In particular, materials associated with smoke or water, as substances in motion—substances that travel, and the color white, often associated with ancestors, frequently appear in healing and protective contexts in African diasporic communities. White clay tobacco pipes have been archaeologically documented in African and African American burials in the Chesapeake region in late seventeenth century contexts at Patuxent Point in Maryland and in multiple eighteenth century quartering sites at Utopia on Kingsmill Neck (King and Ubelaker 1996, Fesler 2004). Edwards-Ingram explains that marine shell intentionally placed in African American domestic areas in plantation settings may have served as “reminders of the transparency and the whiteness of the watery world of the dead . . . as reflections of the potentials of the inhabitants of these yards.” “Surrounding themselves with certain objects linked to ancestral and other spiritual

power”, she asserts, “probably served to bolster slaves’ courage, helped to keep their thoughts clear of potentially dangerous intentions, and renewed their hopes” (Edwards 1998: 265). It is possible that shell at the Quarterpath Site may have also been employed in a similar manner by the residents, effectively performing multiple and simultaneous roles. Spatially concentrated and intentionally arranged in such a way that was probably intended to promote drainage, perhaps forming borders that enclosed the dwellings, the shell may have potentially functioned in a similar protective capacity as Nathaniel Lewis’ flowering white rosebush, as a means of demarcating and promoting an aesthetically pleasing, healthful, and safe domestic environment for the residents and for visitors to whom they extended significant social and kin ties.

A set of related practices represented by the types and patterns of distribution of artifacts throughout the Quarterpath domestic complex suggest long-term investments in labor and in experience by the residents as they appropriated and fashioned a domestic quartering site into familiar home ground. Such practices reflected notions of reciprocity between a group of people and the land upon which they resided. The level of care invested in this particular domestic homesite implies a moral orientation held in common by the residents, as an obligation to the land and an ethic that, in turn, fostered the well-being and moral fortitude of successive generations residing upon grounds shaped by forebears. To visitors and observers alike, the Quarterpath residents presented their homesite as a highly cultivated space, a tangible and highly visible indication of meaningful and well-lived lives. Archaeologically unpacking notions of emplacement also affords us a glimpse of the emotional “mood” of a domestic space maintained by people that presented themselves as a collective of individuals that strove to be as

transparently honest as a clean, meticulously prepared domestic space. And although the Quarterpath Site may be unique archaeologically, at least until more domestic sites spanning Emancipation are excavated in the region, it is by no means unique historically. Period photos suggest that a similar ethic prevailed within many contemporaneous African American communities, as exemplified by domestic homesites throughout the Chesapeake region and across the greater rural South.

Chapter 6

Civil War, Emancipation, and Community Reorganization

On a Monday afternoon in late October of 1862 a boat set out from Claremont plantation on the south shore of the James River in Surry County, Virginia, landing an hour later on Jamestown Island. Five men stepped ashore near the ruins of a seventeenth century church tower, all that remained of the original English settlement, at least all that remained above ground. Gilbert Wooton, a free black man that resided in Surry and worked odd jobs for William (Orgain) Allen, the master of Claremont as well as many other plantations along the James River including Jamestown Island and the adjacent Neck of Land, was one of two survivors from that original party, giving testimony of the events of that day in court nearly a week later.

Wooton and an enslaved man named Littleton accompanied three white men, plantation managers making the rounds, checking on the progress of the fall wheat harvest in Allen's wartime absence. Wooton testified that he heard voices "towards the bridge which crosses to Neck of Land, and saw seven negro men coming towards the boat, all armed with guns." When queried about the identity of the men Wooton explained "I knew them all", identifying each as "slaves of Mr. Wm. Allen [that] lived at Neck of Land." The party of five exchanged words with the armed men, two of which seized Wooton, reembarked the boat and traveled "round the upper end of the Island to the bridge [to] Neck of Land." Wooton remained on the bridge under guard until the remaining members of his party arrived under armed escort. The group was then

marched “up the Neck of Land to the Great House” (Figure 6.1). Along the way, one of the plantation managers inquired about the group of recently burned houses on Jamestown Island, a query which was met with silence. Wooton related that the party was brought before Windsor, an enslaved man “belonging to somebody in the neighborhood”, and subjected to a sort of trial, after which a group of armed men opened fire, shooting each of the party save for Littleton. Wounded but alive, Wooton escaped by hiding in a marsh for several hours until nightfall, eventually making his way to the house of an acquaintance at Green Spring several miles inland (Flournoy 1968 [1893]: Vol XI, 233-236). Had the country’s attention not been engaged by McClellan’s recently failed march towards Richmond, this insurrection would likely have been national news in the manner of Nat Turner’s rebellion three decades previous.

This historical episode gives modern observers an invaluable glimpse into the intimate geographies of social relations across a spatially dispersed Virginia plantation neighborhood. Gilbert Wooton kept close ties with the Allen family. He worked informally for William Allen before the Civil War and later bought a parcel of land at Claremont from Allen’s son, Willie (Gregory 1990: 68). His testimony suggests that he was clearly familiar with the residents of Allen’s quarters across the two adjoined plantations.⁵⁰ Although he did not specify the locations of particular quarters (or plantation) of residence, he recognized “about fifteen or twenty” men that accompanied his party from the encounter with Windsor at Neck of Land back to the bridge, the site of

⁵⁰ Wooton may have served as an informal plantation manager for William Allen, which might explain the animosity towards him by members of Allen’s enslaved workforce. He received multiple threats by those he identified as belonging to Allen: “Joe Parsons said: ‘Wooton is the very boy we have long time been wanting’”, “Norborne Baker asked me if when I came there I expected to go back home again. . . . He said he didn’t think I would go back” (Flournoy 1968 (1893): Vol XI, 333-334).



Figure 6.1 – Jamestown Island and Neck of Land plantations - detail of J.W. Donn’s 1873 map, “Burwell’s Bay to College Creek”. The footbridge to Neck of Land crosses Powhatan Creek at the center left. The Neck of Land quarters and the “Great House” are circled and labeled (center). Several additional quartering sites on Jamestown Island are circled. See Figure 4.2 for locations of additional quarters in the Quarterpath neighborhood and for bibliographic information.

the violence, as “all slaves of Mr. Allen, except one hireling boy.” He stated that Windsor belonged to “someone in the neighborhood”, presumably someone other than William Allen, and he testified that there were around 100 men, women, and children at Neck of Land when the party was brought before Windsor.

William Allen’s 1861 personal property tax records indicate that 57 enslaved persons above age 12 resided in quarters on Jamestown Island and at Neck of Land, the remaining 40 or so individuals were likely enslaved refugees that took advantage of the turmoil caused by the encroaching Union Army, fleeing from other plantations and

staying with friends and relatives on Allen's adjoined properties. Allen's personal property tax listings indicate that 45 enslaved persons over the age of 12 resided in multiple quarters at Kingsmill (see Table 2.7). It is quite likely that in the chaos of war, the Quarterpath residents as well as others from Kingsmill may have absconded, perhaps taking shelter with friends and family in the neighborhood at Neck of Land.

Civil War, Emancipation, and Migration

Several months previous, the Civil War quite literally landed on the doorsteps of the Quarterpath residents as well as those of William Allen's other locally networked quarters as the United States Army established a beachhead at Kingsmill, commandeering the plantation as a base of operations from which to commence an assault on the city of Williamsburg. The Peninsula Campaign was a bold yet unsuccessful strategy intended to bring an effective and quick end to the war. As Union forces pushed up the Peninsula towards Richmond, the Confederate Army prepared the city for an inevitable assault, constructing a string of thirteen earthen redoubts stretched in an east-west line towards the York and James Rivers, just east of Williamsburg with Fort Magruder at its center (Figure 6.2). William Allen invested heavily in the war effort, organizing and helping to fund the "Jamestown Heavy Artillery" in May, 1861. Renamed Company D of the 10th Battalion of the Confederate Army, Allen became the unit's first Captain (Flournoy 1968 [1893]: Vol XI, 195). Jamestown Island retained strategic importance and like Williamsburg it was fortified with a series of redoubts and defensive works. Allen drew upon his personal fortune to help outfit the unit and it has been suggested that the

earthworks on Jamestown Island were constructed by Allen's enslaved labor force (Gregory 1990: 65), in which case it would have been necessary to compose large teams of laborers to move substantial amounts of earth, members of which would likely have been drawn from local quarters at Neck of Land, Jamestown Island, and Kingsmill, and perhaps from across the river at Claremont.

On May 4, 1862, as the Union Army occupied Yorktown and began the march up the Peninsula towards Williamsburg Allen's company was evacuated from Jamestown Island, retreating to bolster the defense of Richmond. The following day nearly 41,000 Federal and 32,000 Confederate troops clashed amid the string of redoubts flanking Williamsburg in a battle described by a wounded participant as "one of the most sanguinary engagements of the war" (Burns 1865: 17). A division of U.S. forces occupied Kingsmill, using Quarterpath Road as a route of access leading directly into the line of Confederate earthworks. Caught between the lines of battle, the residents of the Quarterpath quarter likely evacuated to safer grounds. Although the battle proved to be indecisive, more than 3,800 casualties were reported as Confederate forces retreated to Richmond and Federal troops entered and occupied the city of Williamsburg.

In the months following the battle many of Allen's middle tidewater plantations were sporadically occupied by Federal forces, his schooners that had been profitably engaged in moving cargo before the war were scuttled or captured, and his losses continued to mount. In August, 1862, Allen tendered his resignation to the Confederate Secretary of War. Reasoning that he had lost "some four hundred and fifty thousand dollars" he reckoned that he was "perhaps the largest loser in the southern confederacy",



Figure 6.2 – Top: Detail of campaign map titled “Yorktown to Williamsburg” (1862), prepared by U.S. Army engineers. During the battle of Williamsburg on 5 May 1862 “King’s Mill Wharf” and grounds were seized by a U.S. regiment and Quarterpath Road used by cavalry as a point of access to the string of Confederate earthworks flanking Ft. Magruder (center). Approximate location of Quarterpath quarter circled and labeled “Qpath”. Bottom: Detail of sketch by an eyewitness to the attack on Ft. Magruder, “Hancock’s Brigade repulsing the enemy. Battle of Williamsburg”.
LOC: DIGID: (map) g3883y cw0600000, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3883y.cw0600000>,
(sketch) ppmsca 22581, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/ppmsca.22581>

declaring “now that the army has left the vicinity of my Estates I can devote my time, if relieved from service, in gathering together the small portion left to me with which I can at least be as much service to the Government as in the position which I now hold” (Gregory 1990: 67-68).

In the midst of the chaos, the Quarterpath residents may have absconded behind Federal lines or sought refuge with relations and friends in the neighborhood. They may have been among the refugees encountered by Gilbert Wooton at Neck of Land in October, 1862. Few artifacts associated with the battle have been recovered at the Quarterpath Site, save for a few .58 caliber *minié balls* and a small assortment of grapeshot, each collected by the residents and put to use as food procurement items. The lead *minié balls* were modified and pierced by the most commonly recovered type of nail at the site, a square-shafted machine cut nail used in the construction of Structures 1 and 2. These items were likely utilized as hand line or net casting weights for fishing in the James River or its tidal tributaries (Figure 6.3). The grapeshot would also have made great casting weights if woven into fishing netting and may have also served in a similar capacity.

Slavery in America officially ended with the ratification of the thirteenth amendment to the Constitution following the close of the war in December, 1865.⁵¹ Booker T. Washington recalled the level of anticipation on his Franklin County, Virginia plantation as the news was exchanged from person to person along the lines of

⁵¹ Freedom came sporadically at different times across particular locales depending upon local circumstances. Portions of Virginia in Federal hands, such as York County, were specifically exempted from the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation. Passage of the 13th amendment on December 6, 1865 officially outlawed slavery and involuntary servitude in all territories under United States jurisdiction.

neighborhood networks, “The ‘grape-vine telegraph’ was kept busy night and day. The news and mutterings of great events were swiftly carried from one plantation to another. . . As the great day drew nearer, there was more singing in the slave quarters than usual.” Washington and the other residents of his quarter were told to report to the great house, “The most distinct thing that I now recall”, he explained, was a United States officer that “made a little speech and then read a rather long paper . . .we were told that we were all free, and could go when and where we pleased. My mother . . . leaned over and kissed her children, while tears of joy ran down her cheeks. She explained to us what it all meant, that this was the day for which she had been so long praying, but fearing that she would never live to see” (Washington 1995 [1901]: 9-11).

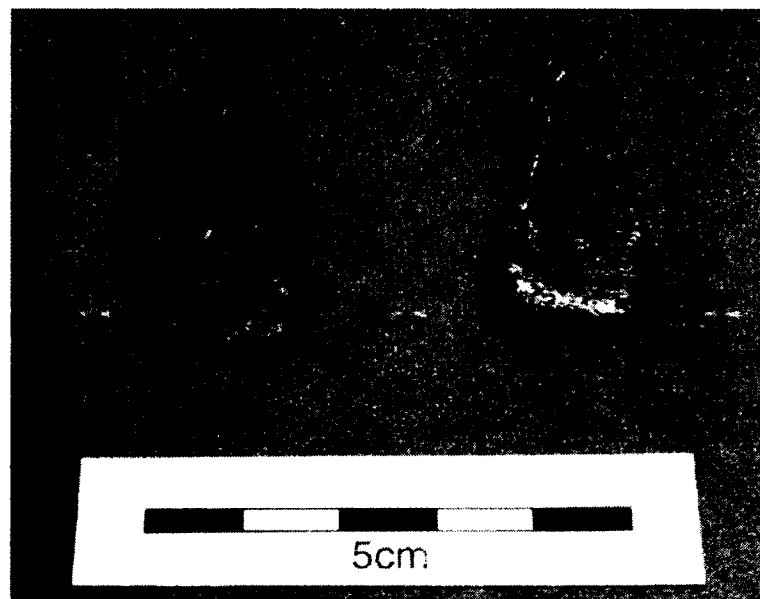


Figure 6.3 – .58 caliber *minié balls* modified into fishing implements, as hand line or net casting weights. Recovered from the Quarterpath domestic complex.

The immediate consequence and for many the very essence of the reality of newfound freedom in black communities throughout the plantation South was without

question the ability to move at will. The restriction on movement that had been articulated so eloquently by Frederick Douglass as a defining characteristic of life under enslavement was instantly dissolved, “Former slaves prized nothing more than the right to travel freely, which they believed to be an essential element of their new freedom. Everywhere, it seemed, black people were on the move. . . . Former slaveholders and some federal officials complained loudly about the freedpeople’s ‘wandering propensities’ and the seemingly endless comings and goings . . . They could do little to stop it” (Berlin 2010: 132). Refugees from countless plantations flooded highways and rural routes seeking family and friends from which many had been either forcibly separated under enslavement or dispersed in the turmoil of war.⁵² Others set out seeking better living conditions or with hopes of a fresh start. For many black expatriates, persons such as James L. Smith that had successfully fled from bondage and watched from afar with anticipation, the years following the war were defined by homecomings as ancient ties of kinship and camaraderie were reestablished and roots mended. For the fortunate ones, families were reunited and communities reassembled from fractured and dispersed elements. Others, however, would not be so fortunate (Williams 2012).

Following Emancipation spouses that lived on plantations abroad found themselves free to relocate. Families that had been geographically divided under enslavement often united under a single roof. Extended families, often composed of several generations, and more distant kin from across local neighborhoods congregated in swelling communities on larger plantations. With aid from the Friends’ Association of

⁵² In 1860, the majority (54.4%) of the population of James City County was enslaved (McCartney 1997: 275). After Emancipation, formerly enslaved folks were free to relocate with relatives, extended kin, and friends. Eyewitness accounts in the months following the close of the war suggest that refugee camps sprang up across the county and large plantation communities swelled (see below).

Philadelphia and Its Vicinity for the Relief of the Colored Freedmen, Margaret Newbold Thorpe, a teacher from Philadelphia, journeyed south, opening a school to educate recently freed African Americans at Fort Magruder in February of 1866. The following month she recorded her impressions of a visit to the “Warren Farm”, a plantation on the south side of the York River near Yorktown, “We found the plantation beautifully situated on the York river, the ‘great house’ was partly destroyed during the war.” She observed that “A large number of Mr. Warren’s former slaves still remain on the farm, and some other ‘freedmen’ have moved there; they occupy cabins erected either by themselves or by the government, while the former slaves still live in the old ‘Quarters’” (Thorpe and Morton 1956: 194-195).

As the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen’s Bureau) struggled to accommodate the newly freed masses, impromptu settlements composed of refugees searching for lost relations and familiar faces from local neighborhoods sprang up around various centers of federal administration. Upon her arrival in February, 1866, Thorpe described an encampment “of about three hundred negroes” that had left local plantations, congregating at Fort Magruder, “This was always spoken of as ‘The Camp’” (Ibid: 184). The Freedmen’s Bureau was a bureaucratic arm of the War Department, and as such, it had the authority to reassign private property that “had been abandoned by its owners or confiscated for back taxes” (McCartney 1997: 340), thus lands that had been confiscated by U.S. Army officials during the war were often redistributed amongst formerly enslaved residents. An 1866 map indicates that small plots, so-called “Government Farms”, were parceled out to black refugees on parts of Neck of Land, on the west side of College Creek adjacent to Kingsmill, and at the

neighboring estate of Carter's Grove (Ibid: 339-340). Conditions at Kingsmill after the war were quite dire, as Thorpe wrote of a visit to the plantation in January, 1867, "To-day we went to King's Mills, about three and a half miles from here (Ft. Magruder), over a road (Quarterpath Road) made up principally of large holes and ice. . . . At the negro settlement we found there had been no exaggeration in the report we had heard of the suffering." "A few families", she observed, "were moderately comfortable but most were in terrible condition. They lived in old frame houses which were formerly used as 'Quarters' In one room were three women and seven children In another room was a one legged woman with four children; and in still another was a man who certainly was more than ninety years old" (Thorpe and Morton 1956: 191-192). Many of Kingsmill's formerly enslaved residents, including those living in the Quarterpath dwellings, remained and continued to work the same grounds as tenants after Emancipation. After the war, most plantations were in disrepair and those that remained were employed in the monumental task of restoring them to working condition. The aged and infirm residents that Thorpe encountered may have remained in the quarters to tend to young children while others performed work tasks on the plantation grounds. It is quite likely that there were additional tenants whom Thorpe did not encounter.

Although the residence would have been situated along the route to the series of quarters nearest the plantation seat, it is not clear if Thorpe stopped to call upon the residents at the Quarterpath settlement on her visit to Kingsmill. As an outlying and fairly recent quarter perhaps the residents were among the few families "moderately comfortable" on the plantation. In dire circumstances, it appears that the Quarterpath residents may have pooled resources, perhaps rejoining with kin from other locales.

Artifacts associated with the presence of children at the Quarterpath Site postdate Emancipation and imply several potential scenarios, each related to familial and community reorganization following the Civil War.

First, the presence of children in post-Emancipation contexts suggests that the Quarterpath households may have been reconfigured after war was brought to a close. Perhaps a family that had formerly been of divided residence, with members inhabiting multiple quarters upon distinct plantations, across or on opposite ends of the same or adjacent neighborhoods, reunited under a single roof in a common domestic homesite. If this were indeed the case then it would suggest that a father (or fathers) would have resided at the Quarterpath Site before Emancipation, perhaps living with immediate or extended kin in either or both of the dwellings, with rights to visitation at night, on weekends, and holidays. As children born of divided residence unions were considered the property of the mother's owner, this scenario implies that it is likely that a mother (or mothers) and young children that had lived in a separate quarter abroad under enslavement would have relocated, uniting at the Quarterpath domestic complex after Emancipation.

Second, the majority of major and decisive battles fought during the Civil War were done so on Virginia soil. In the aftermath of war all accounts suggest that the region was essentially in shambles, in light of which Thorpe's postbellum observations of the swelling community of freedpersons at the Warren farm near Yorktown suggest another possibility. She indicated that many formerly enslaved persons had remained on the plantation and continued to live in the same quarters while others relocated to the farm and proceeded to construct new cabins. If the neighborhood encompassing Allen's

plantation operations may be taken as representative of the middle tidewater region then it is likely that many of the relocated freedpersons at the Warren farm probably maintained ties of kinship across other neighborhood plantations. Thus it is quite probable that those relocating to the Warren farm did so in order to cohabitate with immediate and extended kin, perhaps banding together to pool resources in tough times. It is a distinct possibility that the presence of children at the Quarterpath Site after Emancipation may be an indication of individuals relocating from other neighborhood plantations for the purpose of cohabitating with extended kin and in potentially better circumstances at Kingsmill.

Finally, the assemblage of artifacts could indicate the birth of children to residents at the site in more optimistic times. The so-called “black codes”, laws passed in most ex-Confederate states, including Virginia, that were essentially intended to restrict the newfound freedoms of formerly enslaved individuals were nullified en masse by the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 by Congress.⁵³ Authorities under the auspices of the Freedmen’s Bureau ensured a degree of federal protection for formerly enslaved persons and various missionary and relief organizations donated labor and goods to individuals and communities. The passage by Congress of the Reconstruction Acts in 1867 officially suspended habeas corpus and effectively placed Virginia under military control as *Military District Number 1*. Although primary sources suggest that the Ku Klux Klan was active in the vicinity of Williamsburg, James City, and York Counties as

⁵³ In Virginia most of the restrictive legislation was passed in the months of January and February, 1866. The Civil Rights Act of 1866, formally titled: *An Act to protect all Persons in the United States in their Civil Rights, and furnish the Means of their vindication*, was enacted by Congress on April 9 and declared that all persons born in the United States and not subject to a foreign power, regardless of color, were entitled to citizenship. The 14th amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1868, overturned the 1857 *Dred Scott v. Sanford* Supreme Court ruling and reaffirmed the citizenship of persons of color.

early as 1866 (Thorpe and Morton 1956: 202-203), the same accounts also imply that most freedpersons espoused a generally optimistic view of the future. Perhaps individuals among those residing at the Quarterpath Site deemed it a proper time to either conceive a new family or to expand upon an existing one.

Artifacts specifically associated with children at the Quarterpath Site include several three-hole infant clothing buttons. These examples are Prosser-type buttons manufactured between 1840-1900 (Sprague 2002), a period which coincides almost perfectly with the greater range of occupation at the site, making it difficult to ascertain either when the buttons were purchased or when they may have been in use. However, a series of fragmented glass bottles that once held medicines associated both with children's health and with child birthing was recovered throughout the core domestic complex as well. The majority of identifiable pharmaceutical bottles, including all of those that could have been related with children, contained substances that were patented throughout the 1870s.

A total of 813 bottle glass fragments (33% of all glass artifacts) were recovered at the Quarterpath Site, the majority (95%) from test units in the core domestic complex. 252 (31%) bottle fragments were of indeterminate form, the remaining falling into the following six categories: wine 51.05%, pharmaceutical 9.84%, food or condiment 3.69%, liquor 3.57%, case 0.74%, and ink 0.12%. The composition of glass bottle fragments differs strikingly between the two dwellings, however the fire that destroyed Structure 1 was intense, burning long and hot enough to melt glass. Wine bottles are relatively thick and typically a shade of dark green due to relative impurities in the chemical compositions of the bottles. Clear beaded glass "droplets", likely the melted remnants of

smaller bottles often used to contain pharmaceuticals or condiments or of canning jars used to preserve food were distributed throughout the dwelling's interior. Thus the final counts of recovered bottle glass fragments are likely skewed in favor of more durable wine bottles (Table 6.1). As such, the majority of bottle glass recovered from within the footprint of Structure 1 was primarily in the form of fragmented wine bottles (77%), followed by pharmaceuticals (7%). Despite a higher percentage of indeterminate bottle sherds (50%), Structure 2 contained a more diverse assemblage. Most identifiable fragments were of pharmaceuticals (21%), followed by wine (13%), liquor (9%), and food or condiment bottles (7%) (Figure 6.4). A minimum of at least 50 glass bottles were identified during laboratory analysis (Table 6.2). Among these 31 (62%) were identified as pharmaceuticals, of which 10 were patented medicines and 21 either locally distributed or non-patented. Six non-patented pharmaceuticals comprise the only complete and unbroken examples unearthed at the site (Figure 6.6). There is a clear spike in the frequency of glass bottles consumed by the Quarterpath households between 1870-1891 (Figure 6.5), due in particular to the consumption of patented and non-patented medicines immediately postdating Emancipation.

Nineteen of at least 50 identifiable bottles (38%) were embossed, including 14 pharmaceuticals. The contents of bottles without molded markings were not identifiable as the paper labels had long since decayed, however ten pharmaceutical bottles bore molded inscriptions that aided in identification. Of these, eight contained medicines that were typically associated with children's health and with child birthing. The assemblage

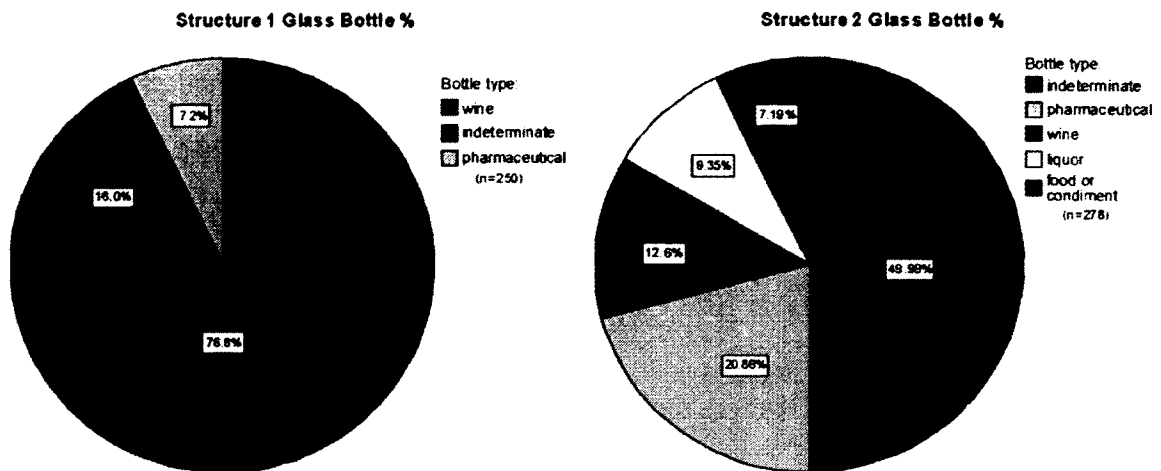


Figure 6.4 – Glass bottle types and percentages for Structures 1 and 2

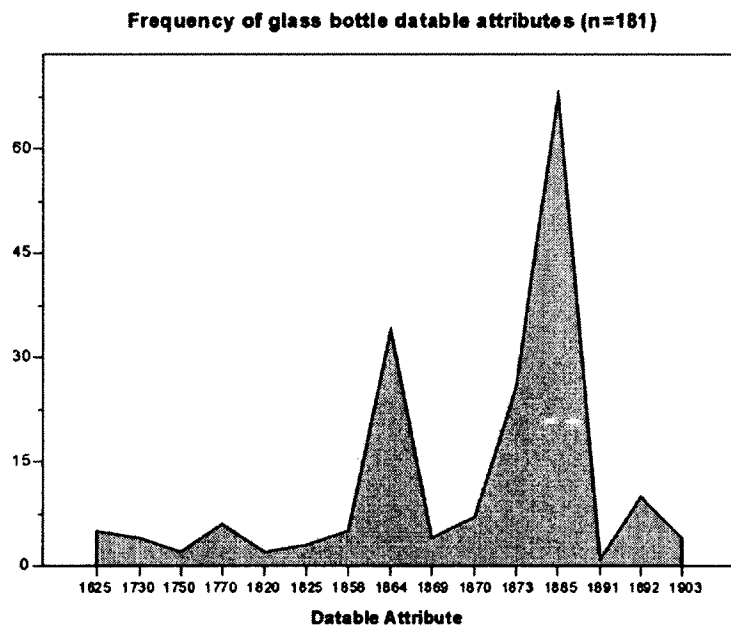


Figure 6.5 – Frequency of glass bottle datable attributes recovered from the Quarterpath domestic complex

contained a minimum of six dark amber bottles identified as *Phillip's Palatable Cod Liver Oil* (Figure 6.7) and an additional fragment of another preparation produced by the Phillips Company, embossed with the letters "LIPS / RK". Fragments of a single aqua blue bottle bore the inscription *Dr. Pitcher's Castoria*, and a small intact clear cylindrical

glass phial was embossed with the title *Virginia Worm Killer* (Figure 6.6). Each of these medicines was likely purchased in the 1870s.

Table 6.1 – Bottle Glass Form and Frequency in the Core Domestic Area (Excavation Area 2) and by Structure

Bottle type:	Area 2	(%)	Str. 1	(%)	Str. 2	(%)
indeterminate	252	32.81%	40	16.00%	139	50.00%
case	5	0.65%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
food or condiment	30	3.91%	0	0.00%	20	7.19%
ink	1	0.13%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
liquor	29	3.78%	0	0.00%	26	9.35%
pharmaceutical	77	10.03%	18	7.20%	58	20.86%
wine, cylindrical	16	2.08%	0	0.00%	15	5.40%
wine, dip-molded	2	0.26%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
wine, indeterminate	257	33.46%	135	54.00%	15	5.40%
wine, mold blown, indeterminate	91	11.85%	55	22.00%	0	0.00%
wine, Rickett's mold	5	0.65%	0	0.00%	5	1.80%
wine, three-piece mold	3	0.39%	2	0.80%	0	0.00%
TOTAL:	768	100.00%	250	100.00%	278	100.00%

Table 6.2 – Glass Bottle Minimum Vessel Counts

Bottle Type	Min. bottles	(%)	Embossed	(%) Total	Complete	(%) Total
Pharmaceutical - Non-Patent	21	42%	4	8%	6	12%
Pharmaceutical - Patent	10	20%	10	20%	0	0%
Spirits / Wine / Cider	7	14%	0	0%	0	0%
Canning Jar	3	6%	2	4%	0	0%
Beer / Lager	1	2%	1	2%	0	0%
Mineral / Soda Water	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%
Unidentified / Other	7	14%	2	4%	0	0%
TOTAL:	50	100%	19	38%	6	12%

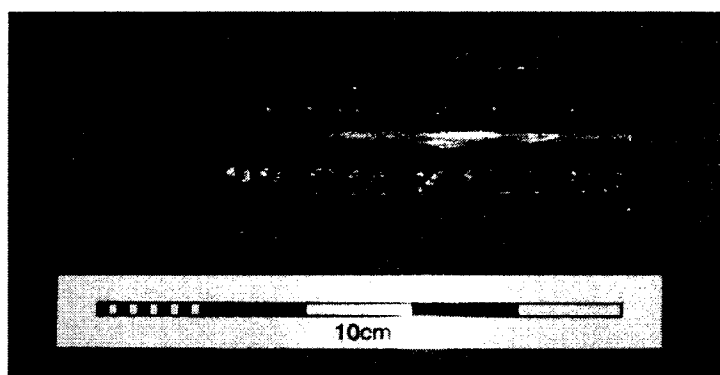
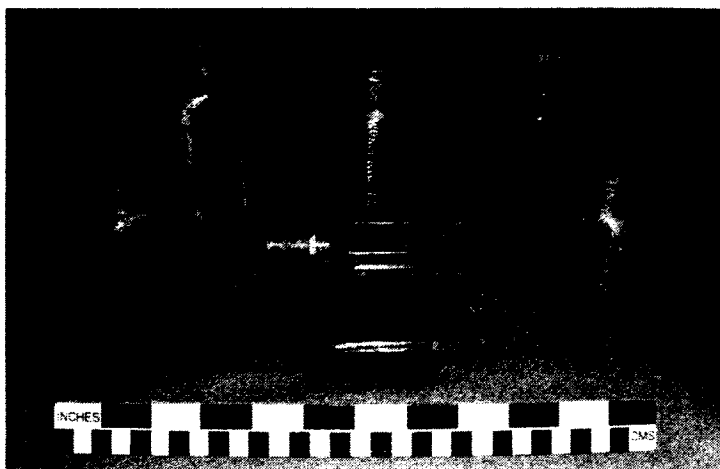
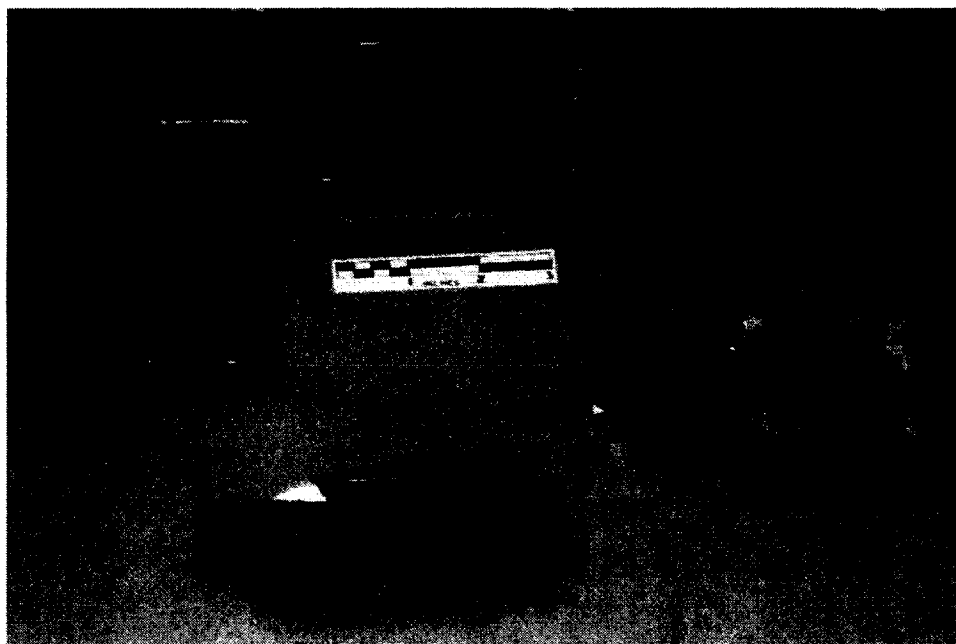


Figure 6.6 – Top: Six intact bottles and a nearly complete pharmaceutical bottle. Bottom: *Virginia Worm Killer*. All recovered from Feature 35, the square cellar underlying Structure 2.



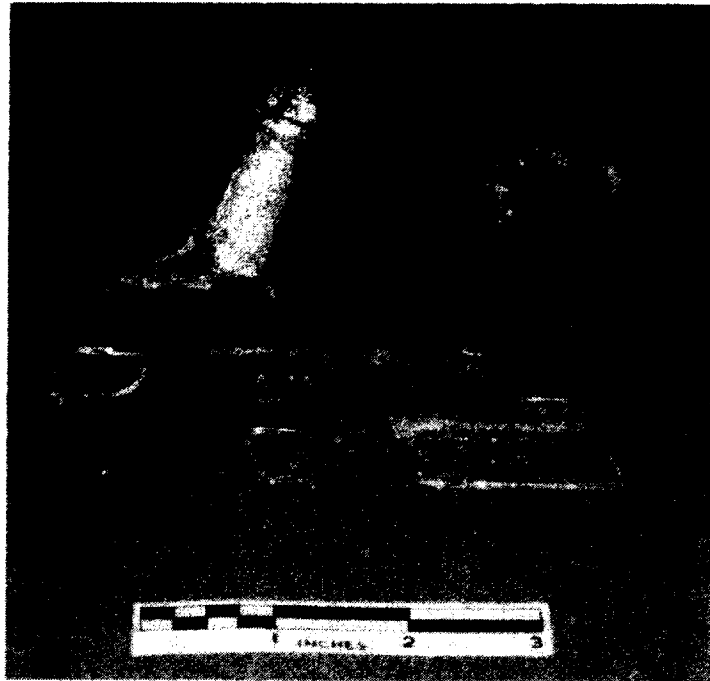


Figure 6.7 – Top: Recovered bottles bearing the inscription *Phillips Palatable Cod Liver Oil*. Bottom: Fragments of an aqua tinted bottle of *Dr. Pitcher's Castoria*. Recovered from the core domestic complex.

The Phillips Company was founded by Charles Phillips, a British pharmacist that immigrated to the Northeast, opening a laboratory in Glenbrook, Connecticut in 1849 and marketing pharmaceutical preparations as the Charles H. Phillips Chemical Company. Phillips sold a variety of substances, including camphor and essential oils, and medicinal preparations, including cod liver oil, which appears to have been marketed a few years before Phillips obtained a patent for his most popular emulsion “Milk of Magnesia” in 1873. An advertisement published in 1880 in the *Homeopathic Medical Register, of New York, New Jersey, and New England States* touts Phillips’ preparation of cod liver oil as a remedy for “Consumption, Emaciation, Wasting, Scrofula, Rickets, and Weaknesses and Diseases of the Lungs; also for Nursing Mothers” (Chatterton 1880: 11). A single aqua tinted clear glass bottle with vertical side panels marked “Castoria” on one side and “Dr.

Pitcher's" on the other was identified as a medicinal preparation patented in 1868 and marketed as *Dr. Pitcher's Castoria* until the patent was sold to Charles H. Fletcher in 1877, at which point the cathartic was repackaged in clear glass bottles with Fletcher's signature embossed on a side panel. Castoria bottle fragments recovered from the Quarterpath domestic complex are of the earlier type, suggesting a purchase date between 1868-1877. Finally, the *Virginia Worm Killer* bottle, probably a local medicine produced in either Richmond or Hampton Roads, was constructed of glass blown into a two piece mold, a technique that became obsolete around 1880.

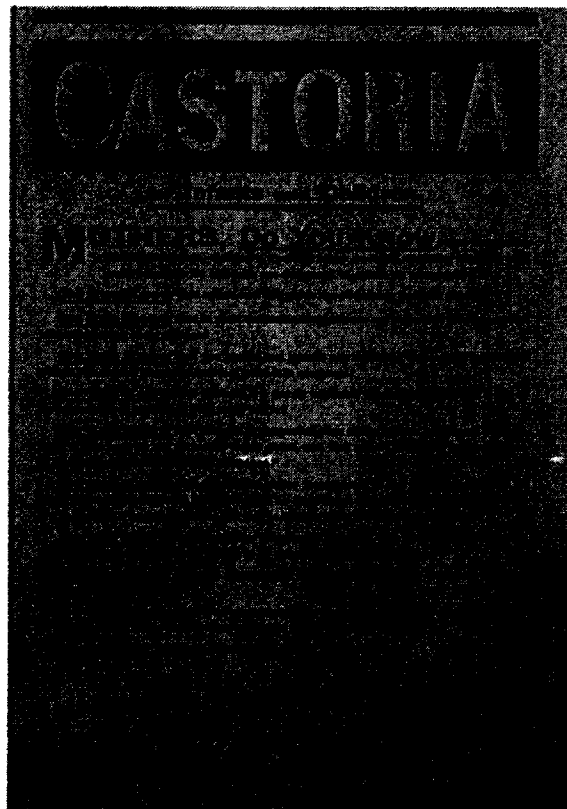


Figure 6.8 – Ad for Dr. Pitcher's Castoria in the *Virginia Gazette*, 22 February 1896.

Laurie Wilkie has suggested that African American midwives during the nineteenth century often employed emulsions of cod liver oil in conjunction with

preparations of castor oil or castoria to accelerate the process of labor and ease the delivery of children (Wilkie 2003: 133, 185, 196). Primary sources suggest that cod liver oil, castor oil, and castoria were each associated with the health of children as well as cathartics that were commonly used to aid in the birthing of children. *Dr. Pitcher's Castoria* was specifically marketed as a medicine for children, as evidenced by an ad bearing the inscription "Children Cry for Pitcher's Castoria" that was distributed along the East Coast, making an appearance in the *Virginia Gazette* in 1896 (Figure 6.8). At Fort Magruder, Margaret Newbold Thorpe noted in the winter of 1866-1867 that "the demand for castor oil was becoming exorbitant, and upon close observation found that the cup to hold the oil was always brought by a child with a pathetic story of a sick baby at home" (Thorpe and Morton 1956: 185). Cod liver oil continued to play an important role in children's health within African American communities into the early twentieth century, as Sylvia Watkins, living in Tennessee with roots in Virginia, explained to a WPA interviewer, "As far as I know de ex-slaves hab wuked at diff'ent kinds ob jobs en now sum I know ez in de po-house . . . en uthers ez lak mahself, hab dere homes en 'getting long bes' dey kin. *I needs milk en cod liver oil fer dis little boy but can't buy it.*" (FWP: Tennessee Narratives: Sylvia Watkins, LOC, DIGID: mesn 150/079076, my italics).

In a study of disease and health care across African American communities in antebellum Virginia, Savitt identifies a host of maladies that "struck black children frequently" as caused by a variety of parasitic worms. *Ascaris lumbricoides*, an intestinal roundworm, in particular was, and remains, one of the most common human parasites, the eggs of which thrived in the damp clay soils of eastern Virginia. Simply putting

one's hands in the mouth could lead to infection (Savitt 2002: 64-69, 128). *Virginia Worm Killer* was likely an anti-helminthic preparation intended to aid in the removal of gastrointestinal parasites that commonly infected children. Although this particular bottle was likely manufactured before 1880, an ad for "Picot's Virginia Worm Killer" appearing in a 1910 directory of "druggists" associates the medicine with children. Marketed by the Bodeker Drug Company in Richmond as "The best, safest, and most pleasant remedy for worms ever discovered" the ad borrows a line from another children's medicine, declaring "Children cry for it" (D.O. Haynes & Co. 1910: 281). It is not clear if *Virginia Worm Killer* refers to a specific medicinal preparation or was a colloquial name for a class of parasites (ie. "Virginia" worms), however the Bodeker Drug Company was established in 1846 and may have been the initial producer of the medicine, as the ad specifically identifies the pharmacy as proprietors of "the celebrated Picot's Virginia Worm Killer . . . For over fifty years", suggesting that the Quarterpath residents acquired the bottle between 1860-1880 (Figure 6.9).

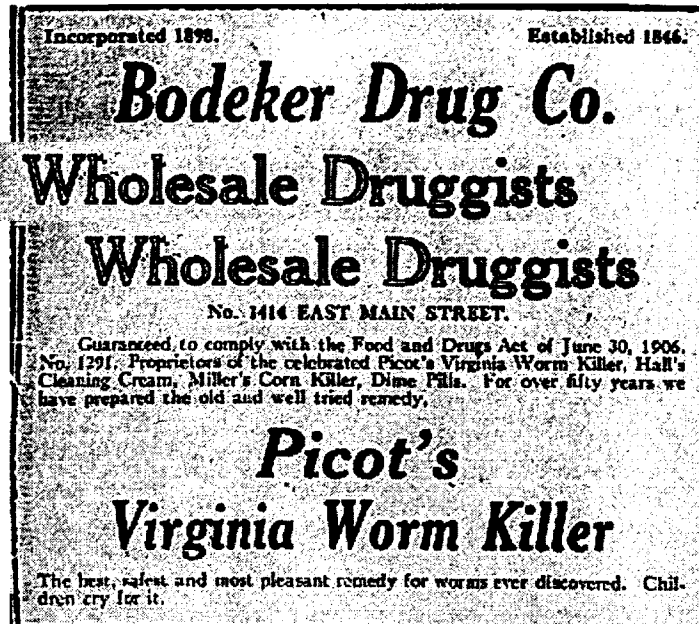


Figure 6.9 – 1910 ad identifying Bodeker’s Drug Company of Richmond, Virginia as proprietors of “the celebrated Picot’s Virginia Worm Killer . . . For over fifty years” (D.O. Haynes & Co. 1910: 281).

“Right Living”: Self-Sufficiency and Self-Improvement

William (Orgain) Allen held a life interest in the estates that he inherited from his great uncle William Allen II. Although much of his personal fortune was forfeit with the loss of the Confederacy in the Civil War, by the conditions of his great uncle’s will he was forbidden from parceling inherited lands for sale. He sold all of the lands that he acquired outside of his inheritance in Surry and Henrico Counties and he had already leased Jamestown Island by May, 1865 (McCartney 1997: 353) but he retained Kingsmill and Neck of Land, as evidenced by post-war land tax records for James City County (see Table 1.6). He adjusted his position following the war as he went from one of the wealthiest individuals in the Upper South, the master of a vast plantation enterprise built upon the backs of enslaved laborers, to landlord of a series of large agricultural estates in

disrepair from which, by law, he was forbidden to part. Consequently many formerly enslaved residents across his plantations remained, becoming tenants and paying rent with a share of the crops that they brought to harvest. Such was the decision of the Quarterpath residents. With newfound freedom and in the midst of black masses in perpetual movement they remained and continued to work the same fields to which they had been previously bound by enslavement, perhaps with recent additions that may have swelled the occupancies of the two dwellings.

In order to survive and as a strategy born of the immediate realities of day to day life under enslavement, self-sufficiency was a trait that was integral to plantation communities from the time Africans took their first steps out of the dark holds and down the gangways of an interminable line of wooden slaving ships onto Chesapeake soils. With meager rations, substandard clothing, and in poor living conditions, Africans and their descendants created ways to survive. They hunted, fished, and gathered foods, raw materials, and medicines as they oriented themselves to a variety of new landscapes, and as they built meaningful lives, establishing new relationships and families in the process, they laid down deep roots across locales that became intimately familiar as the generations progressed.

Plantation provisioning systems were one of the most frequent points of contention as related by freedpersons in the early twentieth century. Joseph Brooks recalled that on plantations in his neighborhood in Mathews County, Virginia, “Dey use to gib de slaves bout 6 pounds meat an’ 5 pounds o’ flour a week . . . If you got chillum, you git a little mo’. Well dat ain’ ‘nough lasten a dog a day” (Perdue et al. 1976: 56-57). Weekly rations of salt pork and cornmeal, occasionally with various adjuncts such as

dried beans, potatoes or sweet potatoes, and greens such as collards or kale, did not typically provide a sufficient daily caloric intake to perform the often intense physical regimes required of plantation life. Edmund Ruffin, in an 1852 farming manual, advised area planters that total provisions for an adult enslaved man per year should constitute “19 ½ bushels of Indian corn” and “130 lbs. bacon”, about 2.3 pounds of bacon per week (Ruffin 1852: 319-320). In order to supplement rations, diverse strategies abounded, including hunting, fishing, and gathering, typically during free time in the dark of night, and pilfering. Most planters recognized that rations were insufficient and often overlooked the limited pilfering of provisioning gardens or occasional nighttime raid on assorted smokehouses, yet these were risky endeavors, as Brooks explained, “when dey steal dey git caught an’ when you git caught you git beat. I seen ‘em take ‘em in-a-de barn an’ jes’ tie ‘em over lak dis an’ den beat ‘em ‘twell de blood run down. Den dey wash ‘em in salt water. Some times dey beat ‘em so bad dey run away an’ hide in de woods.” (Ibid: 57).⁵⁴ In order to limit the effects of pilfering many planters, particularly during the antebellum era, accorded small plots within quarters in which residents often maintained vegetable gardens or kept poultry and fowl. The psychological impact of garden plots, what John Vlach has described as the “foremost spatial statements” of African American autonomy and self-sufficiency may have been equally as important as the sustenance that they provided, “The space around the slave cabins was highly charged with social symbolism. In their gardens, the part of the quarters for which they were

⁵⁴ “Pickling” or “Brining” was a common punishment in Virginia in which “stripes” were cut into backs by the impact of leather strips after which salt water was poured over the wounds – see Perdue et al. 1976: 3, 4, 57, 85, 93, 116, 124, 162, 194, 202, 206, 256, 267, 274, 299 for contemporaneous descriptions.

most responsible, slaves were most effective in establishing a territorial claim within the plantation's confines" (Vlach 1993: 168-169).

The Quarterpath residents may have cultivated a vegetable garden adjacent to the core domestic complex in Excavation Area 1. Originally designated as a potential archaeological site in the initial Phase I shovel test survey in 1990, Area 1 was characterized by a light concentration of artifacts across an area of roughly thirty by thirty meters. A sampling strategy was developed in which two one meter units were selected for excavation, where trees permitted, from each five meter square block (see Figure 3.5). A total of 22 one meter test units were excavated in Area 1. The plowzone was then mechanically removed and the area stripped to sterile subsoil. No cultural features were identified. Other than a light brick scattering, most likely distributed across the area by years of plowing, only a few sherds of window glass and some nail fragments could be classified as architectural. Thus the area was characterized by a spatially distinct yet fairly light scattering of artifacts. In the absence of architectural materials and cultural features the horizontal deposit could be interpreted as the residual evidence of composting activities associated with the maintenance of a vegetable garden by the Quarterpath residents.

Manuring and composting are both historically documented activities for increasing soil fecundity in the region. William Byrd II of Westover Plantation in Charles City, Virginia, observed of North Carolinians in 1728 that, "Both cattle and hogs ramble into the neighboring marshes and swamps, where they maintain themselves the whole winter long and are not fetched home till the spring. Thus these indolent wretches during one half of the year lose the advantage of the milk of their cattle, *as well as their*

dung ...” (Wright 1966: 184-185). The fact that Byrd was shocked by his observations suggests that it was common in eastern Virginia as early as the third decade of the eighteenth century to keep livestock nearby for meat, milk, *and* manure. It is not clear if the Quarterpath residents may have utilized Area 1 as a garden plot under enslavement, but as freedpersons they were no longer participants in a plantation provisioning system. As such, they almost certainly would have maintained a vegetable garden after Emancipation. 109 fragments of glass canning jars were recovered from the domestic complex, 69 within the footprint of Structure 1 and 26 from the fill within Feature 35, the square cellar underlying Structure 2. The recovery of multiple canning seals from Feature 35, one bearing the markings "AS", "ATE", "OV. 3", "185" and another partially embossed with "PAT", "NOV" are likely examples of canning lids patented by John L. Mason on November 3, 1858. Multiple fragments of a glass Mason lid liner bearing the marking "ASON", patented in 1869, was recovered by flotation from a sealed context within Structure 1 as well, suggesting that multiple households at the Quarterpath Site were engaged in preserving food items, perhaps before but certainly after Emancipation, that may have been produced on grounds at the residence.

In addition to glass canning jars and related paraphernalia, 219 fragments of other assorted types of glass storage containers were recovered from Area 2. Although no non-canning glass storage vessels were found to be in association with Structure 2, at least 99 glass sherds were recovered from depositional contexts associated with Structure 1. The majority of recovered ceramics from the core domestic complex follow the same general pattern. Storage jars were by far the most frequently recovered vessel form across the domestic complex. 509 of a total of 961 (53%) ceramic sherds of determinable vessel

form were identified as containers primarily for the storage of foodstuffs (Table 6.3). Storage jars of the period were primarily various types of American stonewares. Consequently 2448 of 3269 total ceramic sherds recovered from the Area 2 domestic complex are American Stonewares (Table 6.5), yet the profiles of the ceramic assemblages recovered from contexts associated with each of the dwellings differ strikingly (Table 6.4). Stonewares comprise 79% of ceramics recovered within the footprint of Structure 1, followed by refined earthenwares (20%). Structure 2 exhibits the

Table 6.3 - Ceramic Frequency and Percentage by Determinable Vessel Form

	(n)	(%)
Storage Jar	509	52.97%
Hollow Form	189	19.67%
Plate	108	11.24%
Cup	52	5.41%
Teapot	48	4.99%
Teapot, Spout	21	2.18%
Hollow Form, Handled	16	1.66%
Bottle	10	1.04%
Teabowl	2	0.21%
Tureen	2	0.21%
Mug	2	0.21%
Lid	1	0.10%
Saucer	1	0.10%
Total:	961	100%

Table 6.4 – Ceramic Ware Groups: Frequency and Percentage by Structure

	(n)	Str. 1	(n)	Str. 2
Stoneware	1417	79.29%	4	4.21%
Refined Earthenware	362	20.26%	84	88.42%
Porcelain	7	0.39%	1	1.05%
Tin-enameled	0	0.00%	6	6.32%
Native American	1	0.06%	0	0.00%
Total:	1787	100.00%	95	100.00%

Table 6.5 – Ceramic Frequency by Ware Type Recovered in Area 2 by Structure

	AREA 2	(%)	STR. 1	(%)	STR. 2	(%)
REFINED EARTHENWARE:						
Bennington / Rockingham	115	3.52%	66	3.69%	10	10.53%
Black-Glazed Redware	2	0.06%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Creamware	29	0.89%	6	0.34%	4	4.21%
Ironstone / White Granite Ware	96	2.94%	62	3.47%	1	1.05%
Jackfield	1	0.03%	1	0.06%	0	0.00%
North Midlands Slipware	1	0.03%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Pearlware	5	0.15%	1	0.06%	2	2.11%
Redware, Indeterminate	96	2.94%	59	3.30%	3	3.16%
Refined Earthenware, Indeterminate	68	2.08%	27	1.51%	6	6.32%
Whiteware	268	8.20%	139	7.78%	54	56.84%
Yellow ware	6	0.18%	1	0.06%	4	4.21%
COARSE EARTHENWARE:						
Coarse Agate Ware	1	0.03%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Coarseware, Indeterminate	6	0.18%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Staffordshire Mottled Ware	2	0.06%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
TIN-ENAMELED:						
English Delftware	4	0.12%	0	0.00%	1	1.05%
Tin-Enameled Ware	6	0.18%	0	0.00%	5	5.26%
STONEWARE:						
American Blue and Gray Stoneware	212	6.49%	169	9.46%	0	0.00%
American Brown Stoneware	19	0.58%	7	0.39%	2	2.11%
American Stoneware	2217	67.82%	1220	68.27%	1	1.05%
English Stoneware, Indeterminate	16	0.49%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Fulham-type Stoneware	12	0.37%	4	0.22%	0	0.00%
Staffordshire Brown Stoneware	2	0.06%	0	0.00%	1	1.05%
Westerwald	18	0.55%	9	0.50%	0	0.00%
White Salt-Glazed Stoneware	13	0.40%	6	0.34%	0	0.00%
Yorktown-type Stoneware	2	0.06%	2	0.11%	0	0.00%
PORCELAIN:						
Chinese Porcelain	15	0.46%	6	0.34%	1	1.05%
Porcellaneous	3	0.09%	1	0.06%	0	0.00%
NATIVE AMERICAN:						
Native American, Sand-Tempered	1	0.03%	1	0.06%	0	0.00%
INDETERMINATE:						
Indeterminate	33	1.01%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Total:	3269	100.00%	1787	100.00%	95	100.00%

pattern in reverse, with stonewares comprising just 4% of the total assemblage and the vast majority (94%) consisting of refined and tin-enameled earthenwares. At a total of just 95 sherds, the ceramic assemblage for Structure 2 is quite small and may explain the disparity between patterns of recovered ceramics associated with the two dwellings. The

Quarterpath residents likely removed items from Structure 2 before ultimately abandoning the site and it is quite possible that the profile of ware types employed by the residents of the dwelling during the period of occupation may have paralleled those of the occupants of Structure 1. However the pattern could also reflect a pooling of resources between the residents of the two dwellings. Unfortunately American stonewares have a broad range of manufacture (1750-1920), thus it would be exceedingly difficult to observe shifts in consumption or patterns of usage throughout the period of occupation.

The majority of flatwares that graced the tables of the Quarterpath residents were of several types of solid white refined earthenwares known as Whiteware and Ironstone, or White Granite Ware. Examples of the same wares often appear in historic photographs in contemporaneous African American domestic contexts (see Figure 5.2, Figure 6.10). Matched sets of tablewares were popular during the Victorian era yet they were also potentially very expensive. The Quarterpath residents may have endeavored to compile a matched set of flatwares piece by piece, plain white wares being the easiest to match with future purchases. Among other refined earthenwares, the fractured remains of two Rockingham teapots were recovered from depositional contexts associated with each dwelling. The mottled brown teapots (Figure 6.10) were decorated with the “Rebekah at the Well” motif in raised relief, illustrating a scene from the Old Testament. As the story goes, Abraham sent forth his most trusted servant to find a wife for his son Isaac. During the course of his quest, the servant sought refuge in a village, stopping at a well where women were gathering to fetch water. He prayed to God, asking for a sign, the young woman who would give him a drink and offer to water his camels shall be the one he is destined to marry. Soon after, a girl from the village saw the servant waiting by

the well and offered water to both him and the camels. Thus, the young girl, named Rebekah, was chosen to be Isaac's wife. The teapots were commonplace in American homes as the best selling teapots between the years of 1850 and 1930, the range of manufacture by various American potters (Goldberg 1994: 30; Spargo 1974: 333-334). Bearing an image of charity and hospitality, the Rockingham teapots complimented individual place settings of gleaming white tablewares as the Quarterpath residents visually communicated an air of domesticity and "right living" to visitors and guests.

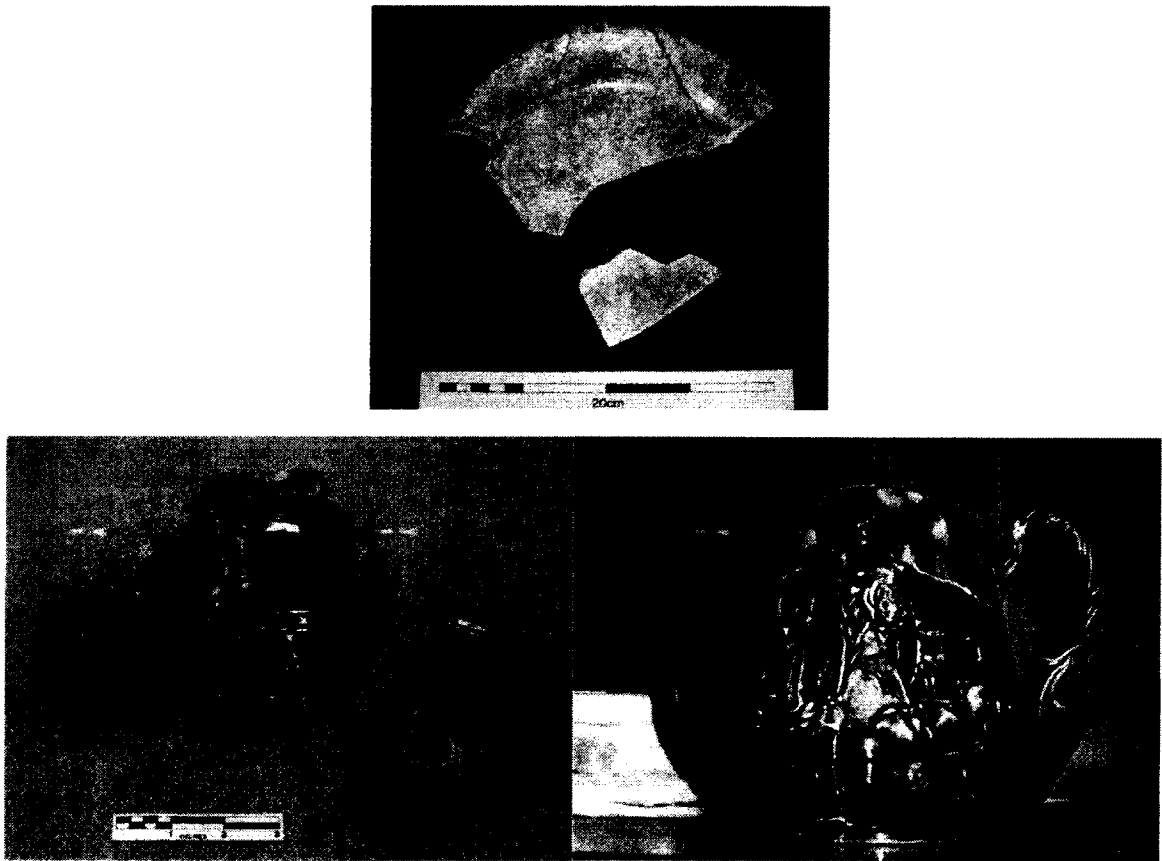


Figure 6.10 – Top: Fragments of a burned Whiteware plate, recovered from Structure 1. Bottom left: Fragments of two Rockingham teapots with “Rebekah at the Well” motif. The darker fragments are burned. Bottom right: Nearly complete example in CWF-DAAR collection.

A copper-alloy clasp and a porcelain shirt stud complement an assortment of 130 buttons recovered from the domestic complex. 120 of the buttons were manufactured

using the Prosser or “dust” process. These high-fired glasslike ceramic buttons, also known as “chinas”, were manufactured between 1840 and 1900 (Sprague 2002). Most of the recovered Prosser buttons are plain white with little decoration. Exceptions include three white agate buttons that had been coated in blue paint and several red shirt buttons. Seven serrated edge “piecrust” buttons were listed in the 1895 *Montgomery Ward* catalog as “White Fancy Pearl Agates,” under the heading “Pearl Dress Buttons” (Montgomery Ward 1969 [1895]: 85). With the exception of two fragments of a one-piece button recovered from Area 1, all clothing fasteners are associated with the dwellings in the domestic complex of Area 2 (Figure 6.11). In unearthing this collection of buttons my first inclination was that the Quarterpath residents may have been engaged in laundering clothes as a means of supplementing meager incomes. Yet if these buttons were associated with laundering, that is if they had become unattached as clothing was agitated or hung, they would probably be more randomly distributed, especially throughout the yard as it would have most likely been the site of laundering activities. But the pattern of distribution suggests that these buttons were kept within the interiors of the dwellings. Furthermore, the majority of the buttons are of the same style, color (white – with the exception of those modified by the residents), and manufacturing technique, suggesting that this particular assemblage may have been purchased in bulk, save for the few embellished examples, and are likely associated with mending or the home production of clothing. The “Pearl Agates” may have been a relative luxury item specially purchased in order to adorn a prized item of clothing, perhaps a dress reserved for special occasions.

The remnants of at least two ink bottles were unearthed in contexts associated with each dwelling at the Quarterpath Site. These small, seemingly inconsequential

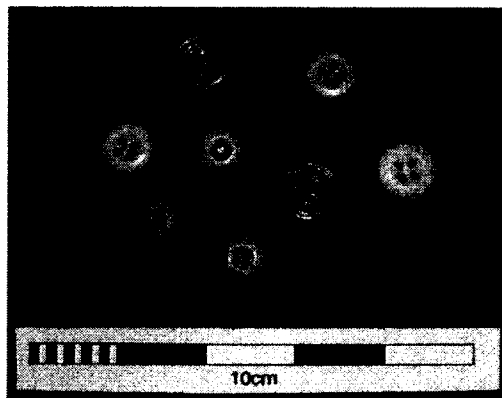
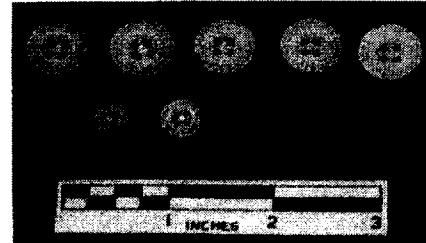
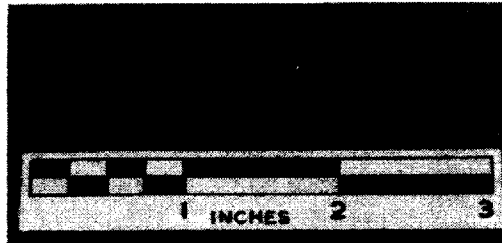
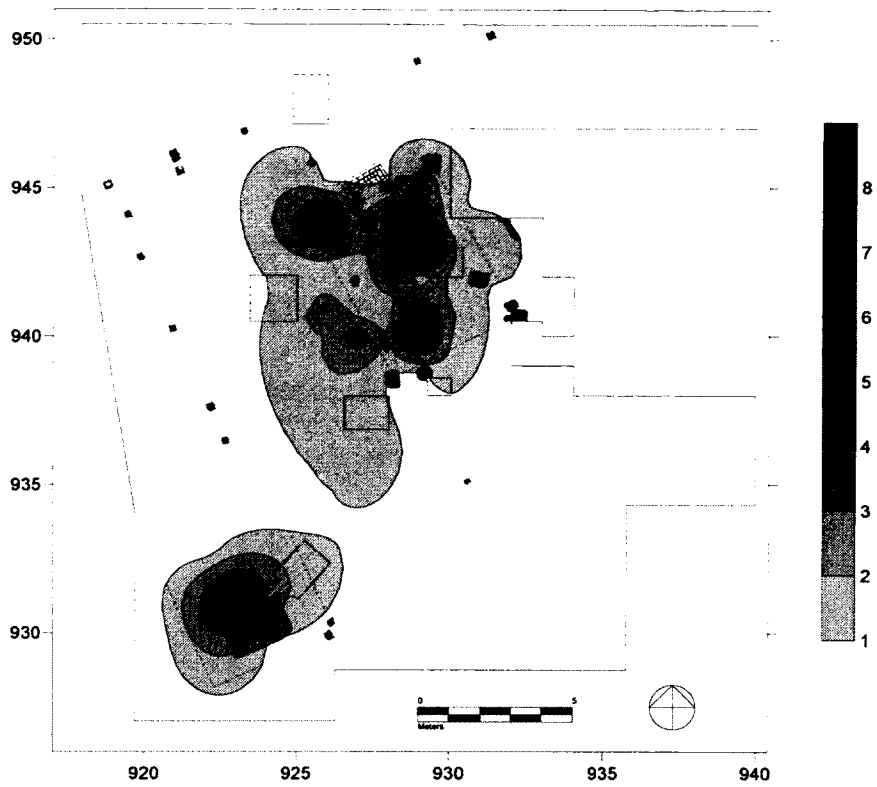


Figure 6.11 – Top: Distribution of buttons across the Quarterpath domestic complex. Bottom: Red Prosser shirt buttons, “White Fancy Pearl Agate” or “Piecrust” dress buttons, White Prosser buttons of various size. All recovered from Structures 1 and 2.

fragments are perhaps the greatest material embodiments of practices associated both with self-sufficiency and self-improvement by the residents. The first, consisting of 16 sherds, base and body fragments of an American Stoneware bottle covered in Albany slip manufactured between 1805 and 1900, was recovered from within the footprint of Structure 1. The second bottle, base and shoulder fragments of which were removed from the cellar fill underlying Structure 2, was a mold blown aqua colored conically shaped glass vessel with a rounded opening for accessing its contents (Figure 6.12). As it had formerly been illegal under enslavement to teach enslaved persons to read (although it did occasionally happen, Frederick Douglass being a regional example), literacy became an actively sought and highly valued skill in African American communities following Emancipation. These commonplace objects represent the pursuit of literacy by individuals within both households at the Quarterpath Site. Perhaps with hopes of overturning the ancient vestiges and injustices of the former plantation system, the residents may have sought literacy as students at the school for freedpersons established at Fort Magruder, a short walk up Quarterpath Road towards Williamsburg, following the close of the war.

Margaret Newbold Thorpe recalled that her pupils at Fort Magruder were not only numerous, but “industrious”, “uncomplaining”, and “anxious to train their children aright [as] they struggled to know how to read and write.” Thorpe and Martha Haines conducted basic literacy courses at Fort Magruder and in Yorktown between 1866-1869. Haines, a Quaker from Philadelphia, later married an Army officer serving with General Samuel Chapman Armstrong as they gathered support and prepared to open the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute for the education of freedpersons in 1868. The day

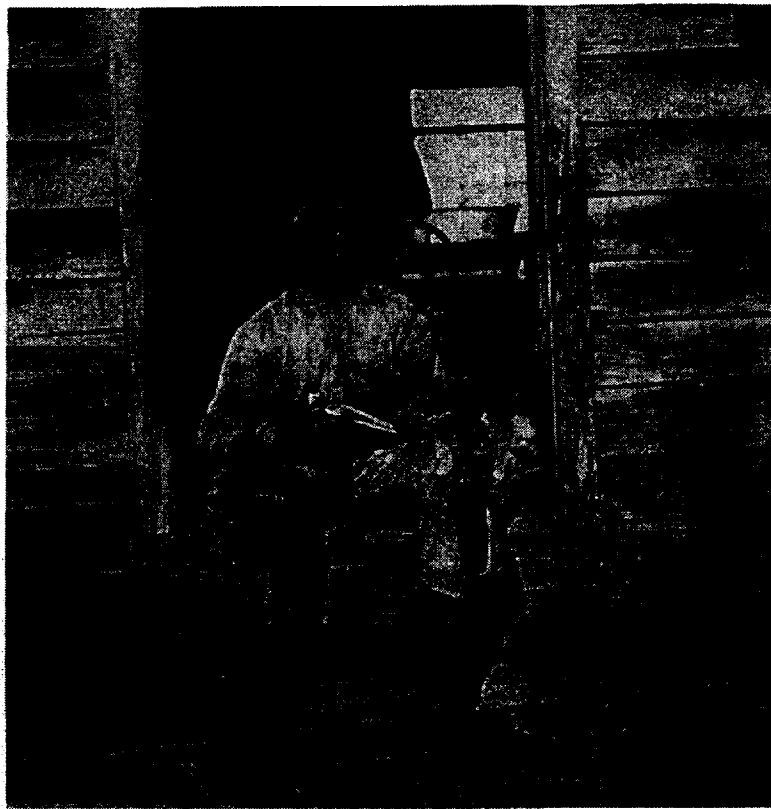
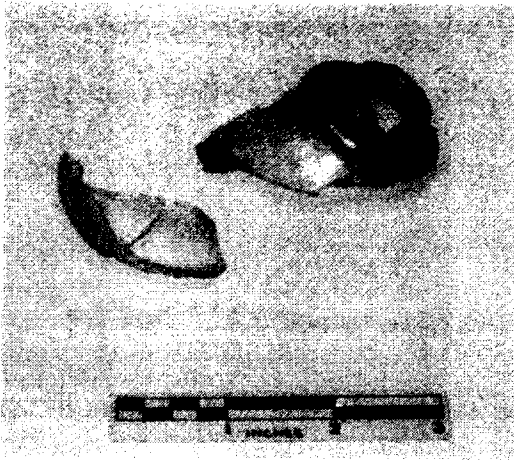


Figure 6.12 – Top: Base and body fragments of an aqua colored conically shaped glass ink bottle. Recovered from Feature 35, the square cellar underlying Structure 2. Bottom: “Man with Book Sitting in Doorway”, probably Central Virginia, late 19th century (Valentine Richmond History Center Special Collections and Archives; Virginia Commonwealth University digital collection, negative 1568 <http://dig.library.vcu.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/cook/id/321/rec/1>)

school at Fort Magruder was primarily for the education of children too young to perform tasks associated with restoring the area's fields, many of which had been either abandoned or were in states of neglect or disrepair, to states that might approach prewar levels of agricultural productivity.⁵⁵ The students were eager, with an insatiable appetite for knowledge which they had, by law, been unable to attain under enslavement. For young pupils, "Being kept away from school", she mused, was used as a punishment for bad behavior, as the sibling of a fellow student notified her that "Mammy says Ned can't come to school to-day [because] he is such a villyan." The night school commenced at seven and "professed" to close at nine, "but it was often an hour later before we would have the courage to say, 'Now you MUST go!'" Thorpe explained that "Nearly all the night scholars were grown men and women, some so old that their bowed heads were covered with white hair."

Many of the night scholars worked long hours, traveling great distances from various area plantations to attend classes and often facing intimidation from area whites, threats which were felt by Thorpe and Haines as well⁵⁶, "One man with daughter and graddaughter lived three miles from the school house, and very seldom missed their six miles walk. After the Ku Klux came into our neighborhood, this old man always came armed with sword and gun, both so large, clumsy and rusty we concluded they were relics of the Revolution." Kingsmill is about three miles from Fort Magruder and it is

⁵⁵ Thorpe observed that "All the fences had been torn down during the war, and the soil was very poor, so poor that vegetation was exceedingly scant. Our school house appeared to stand in the middle of a barren plain." She described the soils as "exhausted" and "clayey" (Thorpe and Morton 1956: 186, 205).

⁵⁶ Thorpe had a few "unpleasant little affairs" in encountering resistance from local whites: "Once I was struck by a stone thrown by a man, white of course; another time a bull dog was hissed on my horse . . . Another time a colored man told me that he heard some white men say, 'Well if that don't get her off her horse, we wont try any more.'" She also related that "The Ku Klux have been in our neighborhood, and we have received notice that they intend giving us a call" (Thorpe and Morton 1956: 201).

tempting to imagine that three generations of students from a single family may have resided in the neighborhood or possibly at the Quarterpath tenancy. The presence of the ink containers as well as a gun lock from a late seventeenth or early eighteenth century firearm recovered in a depositional context in association with Structure 2 at the Quarterpath Site could perhaps imply that the family described by Thorpe could have, in fact, resided at the Quarterpath tenancy. She continued, “The weapons would be carefully placed in the corner of the room, the Primer taken from the pocket, and the poor old worn white head bent over its pages as he patiently spelled the words over and over.”

The sentiments of the older pupils in particular are moving, as folks who had been denied literacy all of their lives under threat of corporal punishment greatly valued their newfound and hard-earned knowledge, “his triumph when he mastered one was most touching. Often he would say ‘Isn’t this a most blessed privilege? Many a time I have been whipped for being found with a book, for I always wanted to learn to read.’” Thorpe noticed that “both old and young”, however, had “an intense desire to read the Bible”, often breaking into collective song or prayer over classroom accomplishments, such as “uncle Jim”, who gleefully exhorted, “O Lord! Bless de two young ladies who has left der good homes in de far Norf . . . You has brought us out ob de house ob bondage, and made us free people, make us praise Yer name fer eber and eber . . .” “One old man” she recalled, “came night after night, and every Sunday no matter how stormy carrying his Bible . . . He walked over five miles every time he came but he was very old . . . at last he accomplished this task, and it almost made me cry to see his joy.” “Book learning”, she explained, “is so new . . . it is no wonder that in this sudden glow of education that has burst upon them, the[y] frequently ‘see men as trees walking.’”

Several years later, as her time in Virginia came to a close, she wrote, “I would pay a tribute to the kind hearts and brave patient spirits of the colored people. Under a mountain load of discouragement, sickness and poverty they constantly pressed forward on the road to learning and right living, and they taught us many a lesson in patience, faith, hope and trust.” (Thorpe and Morton 1956: 185-187, 189, 203, 207)

Ira Berlin notes that “In 1860, some 90 percent of the black population resided in the slave states. That figure did not change significantly over the course of the next four decades. At the beginning of the twentieth century, nine out of ten African Americans still lived in the South and fully three-quarters of these in the Southern countryside.” Place, he asserts, “emerged as the dominant force shaping African American society” (Berlin 2010: 131-132). The Quarterpath residents lived in a plantation neighborhood complex that was shaped by generations, under circumstances that were locally unique to the Chesapeake region, yet the various sets of meanings invested in particular places and landscapes as well as notions of community that bonded residents across particular locales into geographically dispersed neighborhoods were comprised of diverse practices and beliefs that commonly intersected and reverberated within black communities throughout the diaspora. The laying down of roots by successive generations of Africans and their descendants was a meaningful and reciprocal investment in places and landscapes that became intimately and increasingly familiar. Thorpe recognized the powerful and emotionally intimate bonds created by lifetimes of individual and communal investments in local landscapes by her students, “Many of these men and women have lived right here, and toiled on this land from childhood to old age and they love it” (Thorpe and Morton 1956: 205). After Emancipation, the Quarterpath residents

remained on grounds in which they had invested much, on a homesite that they had shaped and appropriated through lifetimes of practical activity and meaningful experiences. Through their actions and in the material signatures of the things they left behind it becomes apparent that they continually strived towards self-sufficiency, self-improvement, and “right living” on grounds – fields, forests, workspaces and living areas – that had served as the repository of generations of sweat, tears, and blood as they looked with optimism to extend ancient roots to children born upon familiar home ground.

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Abbreviations and Notes on Digital Archives

CWF: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

DAACS: Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery (www.daacs.org)

HABS: Historic American Buildings Survey

LOC: Library of Congress

LOC PPD: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

VA DHR: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

I have drawn a number of primary sources from digital archives and have cited these materials per the citation formats specified by each institution. The Library of Congress employs the use of digital ids (DIGID) for the majority of digitized materials. However, some materials that were not assigned digital ids by the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division are cited instead by digital call number. Stable URLs have also been included in citations of sources from digital archives. Several archives use digital access portals housed at partnering institutions, such as the Valentine Richmond History Center Special Collections and Archives-Virginia Commonwealth University and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration-University of Alabama. Where applicable, partnering institutions have been cited as well.

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