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Community in Gloucestertown, Virginia: The Context and Archaeology of Town Development in 17th and 18th Century Virginia

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COMMUNITY IN GLOUCESTERTOWN, VIRGINIA:
THE CONTEXT AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF
TOWN DEVELOPMENT IN
17TH AND 18TH CENTURY VIRGINIA

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Anthropology
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by

Karen B. Fisher

1986

APPROVAL SHEET

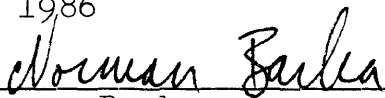
This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts



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Approved, June 1986




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Lastly, but most importantly, I am indebted to Dr. Anne Yentsch who advised me over the several years this research was in progress. Her appreciation and understanding of historical ethnography has greatly influenced my work. Dr. Yentsch's guidance and direction have been invaluable to me.

A NOTE ON HISTORICAL SOURCES

One difficulty facing researchers of historical documents lies in the selective preservation of records over time. This problem seemed to be enhanced in this study as there are few extant records for Gloucester County. The bulk of the county's papers were destroyed by fire during the Civil War. Those documents which have been saved were collected by P.C. Mason in two volumes of Records of Colonial Gloucester County (1946, 1948). There are only a few inventories and wills here, the staple of most archaeological research; there are, however, many land transactions which reveal social networks and patterns of association, something of greater significance for the purposes of this study.

The paucity of official county records is mitigated by the wealth of information to be found in other sources. There are two parish vestry books and a parish register for Gloucester County. References can be found in the papers of adjacent counties --particularly in land deeds-- and especially in York County. Gloucestertown was located directly across the river from Yorktown, a county seat and bustling port town. Gloucestertown merchants and residents

appear regularly in York County transactions. Other colony records used in this research include the Calendar of State Papers, tax lists, the Quit Rent Roll of 1704/5, Hening's Statutes at Large, and several contemporary narratives. Through such 'indirect' sources, a great body of detail was amassed on the community at Gloucestertown, enabling the town's history and development to be traced.

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ABSTRACT

Culture is not an abstract entity, but is shared meaning and value among groups of people; as such, it is meaningful only in the context of those who carry it. The social context of artifactual material, which is culture-specific, can be recovered for past societies by historical archaeologists through the use of analytical techniques of anthropology and through the means of historical ethnography.

The cultural structures which organize, categorize, and give meaning to events in daily life impose constraints on the archaeological record. Thus, an understanding of the cultural and historical context becomes vital for interpreting uncovered material remains.

A study of 17th and 18th century Gloucestertown, Virginia demonstrates the usefulness of historical ethnography for recovering context: the various forces behind the establishment and development of this port town, and the values and social behavior of lot owners and residents.

"In bringing our people to a more regular
settlement and of great advantage to trade..."

COMMUNITY IN GLOUCESTERTOWN, VIRGINIA:
THE CONTEXT AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF
TOWN DEVELOPMENT IN
17TH AND 18TH CENTURY VIRGINIA

People flock'd over thither apace; every one took up Land by Patent to his Liking; and, not minding any thing but to be Masters of great Tracts of Land, they planted themselves separately on their several Plantations....

This Liberty of taking up Land, and the ambition each Man had of being Lord of a vast, tho' unimprov'd Territory, together with the Advantage of the many Rivers, which afforded a commodious Road for Shipping at every Man's Door, has made the Country fall into such an unhappy settlement & Course of Trade; that to this Day they have not any one Place of Cohabitation among them, that may reasonably bear the Name of a Town.

Robert Beverley, 1705
The History and Present State
of Virginia (57-58)

You shall likewise endeavor all you can to dispose the planters to build towns upon every river, as trading very much to their security and profit. And in order there unto, you are to take care that after sufficient notice to provide warehouses and conveniences, no ships whatsoever be permitted to load or unload but at the said places, where the towns are settled.

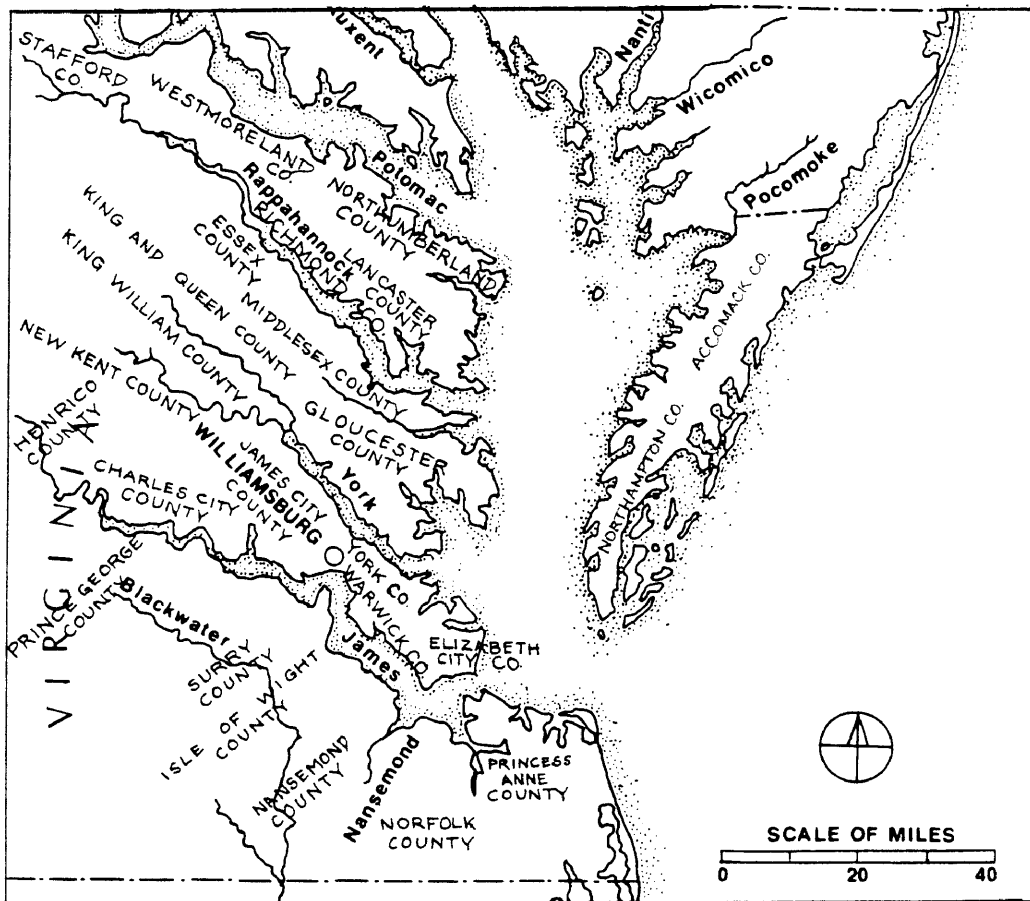
Royal Instructions to the
British Colonial Governor,
December 1678
VMHB25 (1917): 72

INTRODUCTION

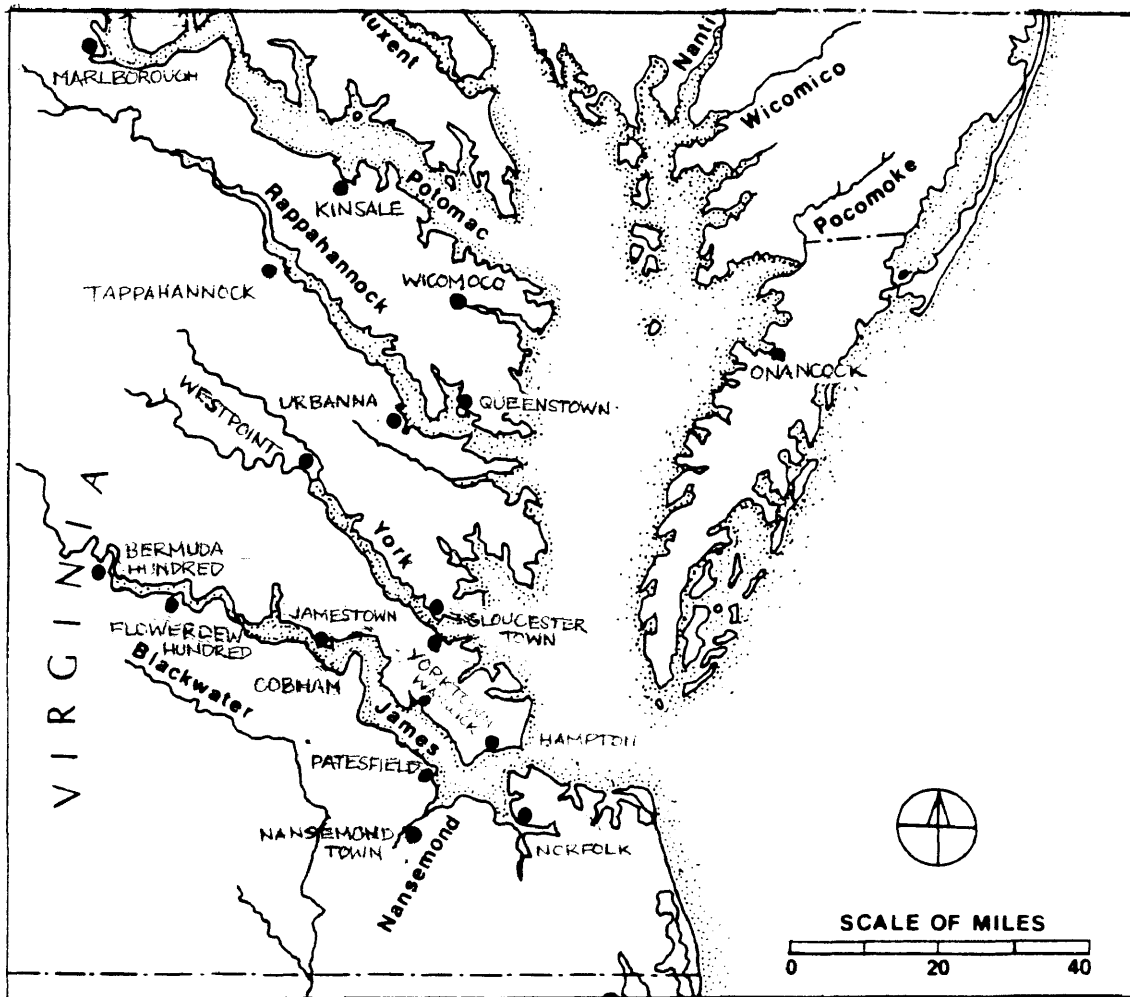
Beginning in 1680, the General Assembly in the colony of Virginia issued a series of legislative acts with the purpose of creating official port towns, mechanisms through which the trade of the colonists could be monitored and taxed. New towns were to be laid out, for Virginia had no such formations to serve in the role of port towns except Jamestown, the seat of the General Assembly. Twenty sites were designated to fill this need, one in each county. While the 1680 "Act was kindly brought to nothing by the Oppositions of the Merchants of London" (Beverley 1705:88), most of these sites were redesignated in the town acts of 1691 and 1705 (See Figure 1). This redesignation resulted in some consistent efforts at development on these sites, but the suspension of the town acts diminished their intended role as major port towns.

Figure 1: Counties and Designated Port Towns of Virginia, 1705

A. Counties, 1705



B. Designated Towns



Note. Four counties were subdivided between 1691 and 1705; the original port towns continued to serve the same sized area. Lower Norfolk was divided into Norfolk and Princess Anne (Norfolk); New Kent to King and Queen, King William, and New Kent (West Point); Rappahannock to Essex and Richmond (Tappahannock); Charles City to Charles City and Prince George (Flowerdew Hundred). The towns of Patesfield, Cobham, Bermuda Hundred and Warwick were designated sites in 1680 and 1691 only. All other towns were listed in all three acts. Northampton's port is not shown on this map because the town was never started and its original location has not been determined.

Gloucestertown, located at Gloucester Point on the York River, was one of the port towns created by this legislation. As a town, it was moderately successful in the eighteenth century, but it was never large and finally dwindled to a few houses in the nineteenth century (Figures 2 and 3). Gloucestertown is a highly significant site historically and archaeologically as a representative form of urban development in the Chesapeake. Its establishment, and that of the other towns, represented a break in the existing settlement pattern for the Tidewater region. This dispersed plantation system was based on a combination of physical and economic features --that of land intensive tobacco cultivation and, in the words of the contemporary historian Robert Beverley, that of "many Rivers, which afforded a commodious Road for Shipping at every Man's Door" (Beverley 1705: 57).

Given that the natural environment of the Tidewater fit this type of existence particularly well, towns were an unnatural feature in the landscape of the 17th and 18th centuries in Virginia. These new settlements met with varying degrees of success due to the existence of certain physical, social and economic conditions; Gloucestertown itself was an anomaly, surviving inspite of these conditions. The information on these town sites becomes very important, then, in understanding the broader currents of change and the beginnings of urban development in the

Figure 2: View of Gloucestertown, 1754
by John Gauntlett. Courtesy of the
Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia.



A View of the Town of Malindi, P. M. on the Indian Ocean

Figure 3: Gloucester Point and Yorktown, May 1862
from Harpers Weekly. Courtesy of the
Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia.



Rehman

Colchester from the river

Sand bags on top of earthwork

44-45



York from the river

Feb. 4. 1863

Tidewater area.

The Chesapeake has become a major area of interest for historians and archaeologists in the last two decades. The work of the social historians, typified by Tate and Ammerman's collection of essays (1979), has directed attention towards the social context of life in Virginia and Maryland in this period with studies of marriage, death, immigration, and other demographic characteristics. These essayists, Lorena Walsh, Lois Carr, Russell Menard and others, continue this line of research based on quantification, ranging from such topics as the developing consumer culture to social mobility in the 17th century. An examination of the lives of Middlesex County residents over a one hundred year period by the Rutmans is a most recent product of this trend (1984). This two volume study amasses demographic information pertaining to Middlesex County, data which is then analyzed to view new social trends and changing lifestyles within this time frame.

Archaeologists have taken a contextual approach to the study of architecture, defining the 'Virginia' house and its social and economic role in 17th century Tidewater Virginia (Neiman 1978; Upton 1980; Carson et al, 1981; Stone 1981); material culture and a related study of folk semantics and cultural categories contained within vessel typology (Beaudry 1978, 1980a, 1980b, n.d.; Beaudry et al, 1983); subsistence, adaptive strategy, use of resources, and social

and economic differences in diet (Miller 1978, 1984); plantation life in its differing contexts for landowner, servant or slave (Hudgins 1982; Kelso 1984); and the plantation settlement pattern, from the importance of marine access to the adaptation of aboriginal sites (Smolek and Clark 1982; Pogue 1984; Potter and Waselkov 1984). There have been economic and historical studies of town formation and development, particularly as it relates to the tobacco industry and demographic characteristics (Earle 1975; Grim 1977; Colonial Williamsburg Foundation 1978; Bergstrom and Kelly 1980, 1984), but as yet no archaeologist has made a holistic study of this phenomenon.

Archaeologists must define the various forces at work in this shifting settlement pattern to examine the effects of urban development on archaeological remains and to understand the behavior behind the material remnants of urban life. This paper will look at town formation using documents to recover the socio-cultural context in which the material remains at a site such as Gloucestertown were deposited. A comparative analysis of towns and a community study, employing the techniques of historical ethnography, are used to aid in the recovery of context, with special attention directed to the social networks operating in the town. This data is used to predict the types of archaeological remains in Gloucestertown.

A contextual approach, derived from both an historical

and anthropological base, is a valuable tool for understanding past societies and for moving research away from a site-specific orientation to a more expansive unit of analysis. It is the purpose of this thesis to examine the mechanisms behind town formation with particular reference to Gloucestertown. However, a study of Gloucestertown's establishment and growth is incomplete without being placed within the broader framework of Virginia's history and the circumstances leading to the town legislation. Certain geographic, demographic, economic and social characteristics made town formation advantageous in some areas while others operated to inhibit and discourage movement away from plantation to nucleated settlement. Although its development was unique, Gloucestertown can be understood best when viewed more broadly against the backdrop of the other legislated towns and certain conditions existing in 17th and 18th century Tidewater Virginia.

This paper will look at town formation and at Gloucestertown's part in a regional network of developing port towns using primary historical documents to recover the socio-cultural context of their establishment and archaeological deposition. In preparing to examine any historical site, a thorough study of available documents is required. The historical record has its obvious use for archaeologists as a source for site-specific details. With such references, it is possible to predict the types of

remains, the size of buildings, to perhaps assign a date or an owner's name to a structure, and so on.

If we stop the analysis at this level, however, we ourselves place limitations on further analysis. Beyond the predictive element, there is yet another more important application for documentary research: the reconstruction of the historical and cultural constraints which have affected the archaeological record. If we ask ourselves why structures were built in a certain manner or at a certain time and what significance lies in their construction and the disposal of other building materials, or what importance lies in the presence of Carribean trade goods or in the breakage and disposal of a certain style of ceramics, then we gain insight into the behavior and values of our subjects. This form of questioning is undertaken here in the study of Gloucestertown.

How do we recover context? Clifford Geertz, in The Interpretation of Cultures (1973: 3-30), suggests a semiotic approach for the analysis of culture wherein the anthropologist looks for "webs of significance", for meaning and signs in social action. Human behavior is symbolic action; action is social discourse. Culture provides the context within which these actions or behaviors can be described because culture exists on a public level and because meaning is shared. This is true of present societies and past, giving us a basis for our study of context.

The reconstruction of context can be achieved through the combining of two disciplines--anthropology and history--into an approach aimed at recovering cultural structures as they existed for past societies. Such an approach has been used by Wallace (1969), Yentsch (1975), Beaudry (1980), Axtell (1981) and others; it has been labelled many things, most frequently historical anthropology or historical ethnography. Historical ethnography juxtaposes the anthropologist's techniques and objectives used in the ethnographic study of present societies with the historian's appreciation for time and change.

There is an interchange and balancing of methods from both disciplines. History provides the material from which the contextual background of past societies is recovered. As a discipline, it offers techniques for data recovery from historical documents. Anthropology moves the study to a broader level, allowing us to examine documents for insights of a cultural nature. As with anything, the guiding structures and motivations of a society change with time. Culture is not a static entity; its fabric is constantly changing. Reconstruction of the past must, by necessity, involve an awareness of change. This awareness is brought to our study by the historian and sets the anthropologist towards the goal of understanding culture change.

It is the goal of the anthropologist to discern the cultural structures and categories which give meaning and

organization to daily living. This is done, hopefully, at an emic level, that is, with the perception of the culture-bearers. It is impossible, of course, to be totally unbiased as an observer, but such strived-for objectivity allows us to most closely feel what was important for these people.

An analysis of lexical and semantic forms by Mary Beaudry has been used to reconstruct 'folk categories' of material culture in early Virginia (Beaudry 1978, 1980a, 1980b, n.d.). In an attempt to discover the mental events or content behind the words, Beaudry has conducted studies of probate inventories and produced a natural or emic typology of vessels and livestock based on the perceptions of the writers and on their classification of the physical world as it changed through time. The vessel types' associated modifiers were based on composition, age, size, function, condition and several other features. Livestock were categorized by sex, age, and reproductive capacity. A vessel typology based on inventories has been developed for the Potomac area using this type of analysis (Beaudry et al, 1983).

Beaudry has also noticed the presence of marked terms which made the distinction between male and female and other categories. Anne Yentsch has studied marking in 18th century inventories from Cape Cod (1977). In this case, marking occurred with items of economic importance to the community. The tools of fishermen were carefully described

while less important items were lumped into broad categories in fishing communities; in agricultural communities, livestock and farming implements were clearly specified while less important objects were lumped.

These studies are good examples of how linguistic analysis of historical documents can be used by archaeologists and ethnohistorians to recover context and to understand underlying patterns of organization, behavior and thought. A classic example can be drawn from In Small Things Forgotten (1977). Jim Deetz remarked on the presence of many looking glasses in New England inventories; it was subsequently noted that looking glass was a euphemism for chamberpot during the 17th and 18th centuries (1977:10). In this case, looking glass had a literal and a figurative meaning; without knowing the context in which the word was used, we would have had an incorrect impression about its meaning.

Another successful use of historical ethnography is found in The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca (1969) by Anthony Wallace. This ethnohistorical study, based on oral tradition and documentary research, highlights the history and changing values of the Seneca in terms of their own cultural categories. A combination of time --through historical documents-- and space --through the study of ethnographical sources-- moves the study beyond ethnocentric perspectives of Indian culture which viewed Indians only in

terms of 'white categories' of colonialism, such as the domination, subjugation, and assimilation of a doomed Indian society and the ideology of a conquering people.

Particularly important for this study of the community in Gloucestertown is Wallace's illustration of how such a bias can limit our perspective. An emic analysis may give us a truer perspective. Using the categories and values of the Seneca, Wallace successfully attempts to isolate and analyze the socio-cultural changes in their world.

The importance of bias and perspective is discussed in an earlier paper which questions the usefulness and appropriateness of operating with present etic value judgments in historical studies (Fisher 1982). This study examines research on the developing consumer culture in the 17th and 18th century Chesapeake region; the researchers' definition of householders was based in part on the absence of certain material goods from probate inventories, items which are considered important parts of material culture today. Those individuals who lacked one or both of the specified goods, bedding and cooking utensils, were eliminated from the study ("Only those two activities, food preparation and sleeping, were in our opinion essential to a self-sufficient household") (Carson and Carson 1976:3-4). While the activities named above are essential to all humans (perhaps food consumption is a better term here), the emphasis on these material goods was misleading in the

selection of their subjects. An examination of inventories from York County and research on the concerned individuals showed that those who would have been labelled non-householders by the Carsons and eliminated from their study quite often were householders or tenants from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Also varied were the reasons for the absence of bedding and cooking utensils from the inventories. An additional consideration certainly is that these individuals were all participants in the developing consumer society, as shown by the presence of other goods on the inventories, representing the poorest of freemen to very wealthy merchants and court justices. By using present etic values in defining their field of subjects, the Carsons left out an important segment of Chesapeake society. This approach also ignores the presence of marked categories in these inventories: land, livestock and clothing appear with far greater frequency than do listings of bedding and cooking utensils among some elements of society.

An ethnohistorical approach to the study of Gloucester-town and its companion settlements is pursued in this thesis. What is learned here provides the basis for a larger analysis of town development in the Chesapeake and can be directly applied to the archaeological record. The recovery of the context of a given site --the behavior and values associated with its deposition-- is also vital for understanding material remains. It is important to be

familiar not only with the relevant historical events, in this case those surrounding the establishment of Gloucester-town, but also with the cultural, physical, and social forces which shaped the very existence of the site. These constraints, whether present on a community level or having a broader influence in the society at large, molded the behavior and, thus, the archaeological remnants of that behavior.

Since the community provides one of the main contexts for understanding the people, events, and archaeological remains of the 17th and 18th centuries, its study is a major portion of this research. A basic premise of this paper is that a community --a social network-- existed in Gloucester-town and provided the basis for its development. The structures of community life shaped the behavior of its members. Through the methods of historical ethnography, we can recover the cultural and social constraints which influenced patterns of association, social interaction, and other types of behavior, patterns which are reflected archaeologically.

Historical ethnography and the community study have great potential and, up to now, both have been largely ignored by archaeologists. This is regrettable, as works by Demos (1970, 1982), Lockridge (1970), and Greven (1979) clearly illustrate the value of information gathering and analysis at the community level. The details of a society

which Clifford Geertz calls "thick description" and which form the basis of any ethnography are found here (1973: 3-30). From the knowledge of small things can be drawn the broader interpretations we call theories. Such studies can provide the basis for a regional analysis which seeks regularities and differences in the structures that guide human behavior. Such an approach, used by archaeologists, would lead to integrated studies and further synthesis of data on a large scale, providing a unit of analysis from which models and theories can be built.

This thesis, then, is a collection of cultural detail --of thick description-- at the community level. It is a reconstruction of the context in which Gloucestertown developed, using historical ethnography. It is an interpretation, as all ethnographies are. When combined with an analysis of physical and demographic conditions from this period, the resulting synthesis paints a picture of life in 17th and 18th century Tidewater Virginia which gives meaning and significance to the archaeological record. The portrait shows us the values and behavioral patterns which are reflected in the location of a brick foundation or in the presence of a fragment of delftware or a brass book clasp. Their significance is translated for the archaeologist through the recovery of their cultural and historical context.

CHAPTER I
THE CONTEXT:
A "Settling in Townships"

Gloucestertown's course was affected by an assortment of conditions arising from a tobacco economy, the town legislation, certain topographical and geographical features present in the Chesapeake, and the quality of life in 17th and 18th century Virginia. Each of these factors affected either directly or indirectly the artifactual remains at Gloucestertown. These elements are not easily separable and were, in fact, intertwined, operating at Gloucestertown in a feedback system.

The inciting factor in the formation of Gloucestertown was, of course, legislation which appeared concurrently in Virginia and Maryland directing the establishment of official port towns. This component of British colonial policy attempted to assert control over trade and manufacture in the colonies by allowing the government to inspect tobacco and collect customs duties in designated areas. In Virginia these acts were "An Act for Cohabitation & Encouragement of Trade and Manufacture" (1680), "An Act for Ports, Etc." (1691), and "An Act for Establishing Ports & Towns" (1705) (Hening 1823, II: 471-478; III: 53-69, 404-419).

The intended purpose of these towns was distinct from Jamestown and other settlements of the early 17th century.

Jamestown was built for commercial enterprise, but this goal was secondary to that of defense in a hostile environment. At the time of the Virginia town legislation, there was no longer such a great need for protection. The aboriginal population, greatly reduced by disease and warfare, had been forced out of the Tidewater or confined to small reservations. This left the colonists free to pursue other concerns, primarily the accommodation of trade. The port towns were to serve twenty counties in 1680 and 1691, and twenty-five in 1705. Estimates by Edmund S. Morgan place the population at 40,600 in 1682 and at 54,750 in 1696 (Morgan 1975: 404); Robert Beverley placed the total at approximately 60,000 individuals in a 1703 census (Beverley 1705: 253).

On discourse with the merchants and traders to Virginia, we find them dissatisfied with this Act as burdensome to their trade and impracticable....

Commissioner of Customs,
Board of Trade, 1680
(Reps 1972:76)

The proposed centralization of trade was inherently difficult, and it is unlikely that these towns would have been constructed without this legislative spur. Virginia and Maryland were unique among the colonies in that the predominant settlement pattern was not formed around small, centrally located towns as in New England, but rather on a dispersed plantation system, spread along the vast waterways

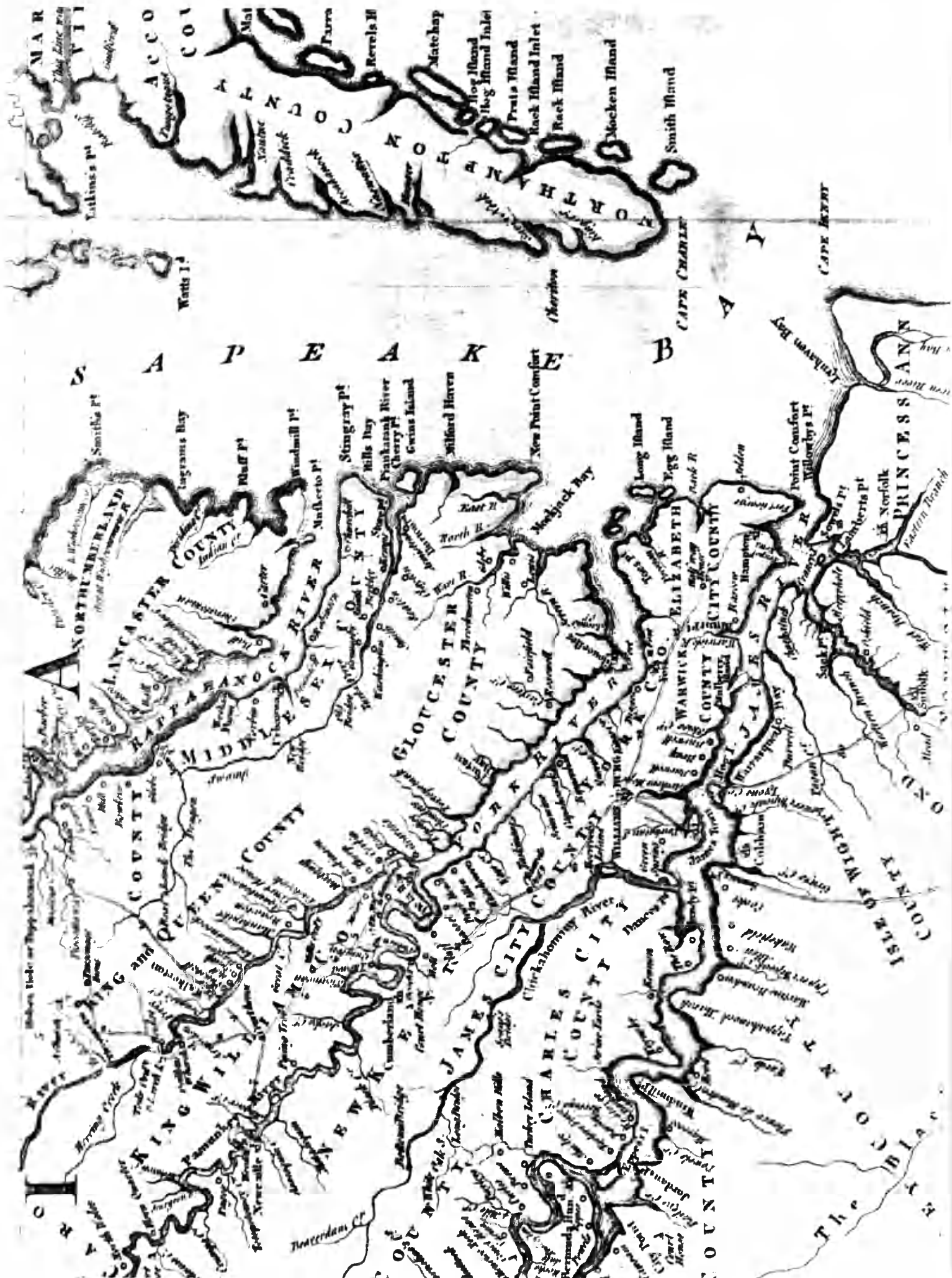
in the area (see Figure 4). Large land grants, virtually unlimited access to navigable waters, and the self-sufficiency of the plantations, which were the core of settlement, created conditions which were not conducive to centralized towns. Most planters, well able to transport and market their goods through the existing system, were ambivalent towards if not resentful of this attempted regulation.

The tobacco trade gave rise to intricate arrangements for shipment and marketing, due in part to levels of production and prices, to the Navigation Acts, and to the sheltered bays and great rivers which brought ships to the planter's door. The Navigation Acts (1650-51, 1660, 1663) gave England a monopoly on all tobacco shipments and on tobacco transport. This offered great profits to British merchants: factors who purchased tobacco in the colony and acted as storekeepers of English commodities, middlemen involved in shipping and transport, merchants who purchased the tobacco in England, distributors working for commission, and suppliers of goods for the Virginia planters. The earnings received by the planters were often left with the English merchants and were "employed according to the planter's orders, chiefly in sending over yearly such goods, apparel, liquors, etc. as they write for, for the use of themselves, their families, slaves and plantations" (Jones 1724: 89).

Figure 4: Settlement Patterns of Tidewater Virginia

A. A New Map of Virginia and Maryland. Herman Moll, 1708.

B. Map of Virginia and Maryland, 1751.



The costs and risks involved in shipping were usually too great for smaller planters who would often sell their harvest to neighboring planters or local merchants. These men would assume the responsibilities for shipping and marketing and could still profit by selling large quantities despite the low prices from overproduction. Other costs of production lay in rolling processed tobacco or hogsheads from plantation to distribution center, done by fastening pins or axles to the middle of each butt, then by further attaching the pins to shafts. "The tobacco is rolled , drawn by horses, or carted to convenient rolling houses, whence it is conveyed on board the ships in flats or sloops" (Jones 1724: 88). The town acts proposed to bypass direct purchase and transport while forcing planters and merchants to engage in the costlier diversion of tobacco to public warehouses, inspection warehouses, and finally to official ports of entry or exit. For the larger planters and merchants who acted as agents-- key figures in the consignment trade-- for lesser planters, such diversion would only reduce their role among the common planters and increase their costs, all to their disadvantage.

Port towns were designed to change the existing structural arrangements for shipping, but in the face of such a comfortable and well fitting system, such change was not easy or popular. Indeed, in 1688 the Maryland legislature felt it necessary to decree that "any words

spoken or published to the effect that building of towns is not for the good of the Country shall be construed as disaffection to the Government and punished accordingly" (Salisbury 1860, XII: 243). Concessions were made to the Virginia planters in the form of fixed transportation costs to the towns and fixed storage fees in the warehouses. Failure to break bulk at the designated ports was punishable by forfeiture of a trader's goods and vessel (Hening 1823, III: 54-55). Despite concessions and threats of seizure and punishment, opposition from planters and English merchants continued; this was in large measure responsible for the repeal of each town act within a few years of its passage.

We are also going to make Towns, if you meet with any tradesmen that will come & live at the Towns, they may have large priviledges & immunitys.

William Fitzhugh, 1680
(Davis 1963: 82)

The town legislation was also intended to promote manufacture and diversification of trade within a colony in which the entire economy was based on the production of tobacco. Years of overproduction and low prices often made the economic picture bleak. In 1682, just after the first town act was proposed, this economic crisis came to a head with the Plant-Cutter Riots. Previous attempts to curtail production or fix prices to ease this chronic problem had failed. During the riots, Gloucester County planters began

to destroy their tobacco crops and those of their neighbors; the unrest spread to New Kent and Middlesex Counties, affecting some two hundred plantations before the riots were quelled. Sir Henry Chicheley, acting governor in the absence of Lord Culpepper, estimated that three-fourths of the Gloucester County tobacco crop, one half of that in New Kent and some in Rappahannock, Middlesex and York Counties was destroyed (Billings 1975: 247-248, 282-287; Morgan 1975: 286). The problem of overproduction remained unsolved, but officials looked to the establishment of towns to foster diversification.

To encourage "carpenters, sawyers, brickmakers, bricklayers, labourers and all other tradesmen to cohabit, dwell and exercise their trades here," new Virginia town residents were temporarily freed from prior claims due to indebtedness in 1680, thus protecting them from arrest and seizure of their estate. Those not growing tobacco were exempted from public levies for a five year period (Hening 1823, II: 476). The 1705 incentives were more extensive, emphasizing the need to create a permanent core of residents practicing diverse trades and the establishment of "a more regular settlement" (Hening 1823, III: 404). The legislation provided traditional means for economic exchange in the form of a twice-weekly market in each town (with exclusive market privileges: no "dead provisions, either of flesh or fish, shall be sold within five miles of any of the

ports or towns"), a yearly fair, and a merchant guild, in addition to similar extensions of immunity from the collection of debts and levies and from muster and march (Hening 1823, III: 406-409).

The Commissioner of Customs noted in 1709 that "The whole Act is designed to Encourage by great Priviledges the settling in Townships, and such settlements will encourage their going on with the Woolen and other Manufactures there...[and] will put them upon further Improvements of the said manufactures, And take them off from the Planting of Tobacco" (Reps 1972: 90-91, Olson 1983). Town development threatened a desirable and advantageous arrangement for distributors, middlemen, and suppliers. Spurred by this, combined lobbying from merchants and planters eventually led to the suspension of the town legislation.

Despite resistance and many adverse conditions, sites were laid out during the years the legislation was in effect. The 1691 act made note of sites which, having been previously laid out by provisions of the 1680 act, had been built upon. Flowerdew Hundred, Hampton and Norfolk had several buildings and warehouses to their credit as did Bermuda Hundred and Jamestown, early 17th century settlements. Courthouses were built in Tappahannock and Onancock. Warwick was the seat of a brick courthouse and a jail by 1691. Middlesex and Nansemond Counties had town sites laid out and developed to a degree as well (Hening 1823, III: 59-

60). The act does not tell us if Yorktown and Gloucester-town were laid out after 1680, but it does mention a ferry transversing the York River between the two sites, indicating some settlement in the area although not necessarily in towns.

Eventually all towns but a few were developed; no construction seems to have taken place in Patesfield, Wicomoco, Kinsale or Northampton. The others saw construction of courthouse, jail, church, warehouse, dwellings, or some combination of these. Specifications in the town legislation were designed to hasten development, providing a three month period in which to survey the town land and initially allotting three months in 1680 and four months in 1691 to build on each lot "one good house" twenty feet square (Hening 1823, II: 474; III: 56). Failure to develop the land within the given time would result in forfeiture of the grant. A 1707 town plat of Gloucestertown provides a list of the previous owners of sixty lots along with the 1707 holders of forty-seven lots, indicating that some development had occurred (see Figure 5).

Were these towns a success? Robert Beverley claimed in 1705, the year of the third town act, that there was no such place that might "reasonably bear the Name of a Town" (1705: 58). As late as 1724, nearly half a century after the first town act, the Reverend Hugh Jones wrote that "neither the interest nor the inclination of the Virginians induce them

Figure 5: 1707 Plat of Gloucestertown.
Courtesy of the Filson Club, Kentucky.

to cohabit in towns; so that they are not forward in contributing their assistance toward the making of particular places...though the towns are laid out and established in each county" (1724: 73-74). Were these gentlemen making unfair comparisons with English towns or were some of these ports legitimately successful in their own form, based on the needs of the colony? The twenty legislated port towns met with varying degrees of success and failure; each town assumed a different form, with several developing into the major ports of the region. The Reverend Jones cited Yorktown, Gloucestertown, Hampton, Elizabeth Town and Urbanna as the best of the settlements, acknowledging the existence of some concentrations of people in the semblance of towns. The nature of these towns and the needs they served must be described to understand these claims and assertions.

Given the difficulty of establishing and maintaining towns, and the great variability in town development, it must be asked why Gloucestertown survived for a time while towns such as Jamestown, Patesfield, and Nansemond did not; why its future was never secure while that of others such as Yorktown and Norfolk seemed assured; and whether the presence or absence of one or another physical, economic, demographic or social characteristic ensured the continuation or the abandonment of a town. The next section begins to outline the factors affecting town development and the actual differences between the twenty port towns.

CHAPTER II
SELECTIVE FACTORS:
PHYSICAL AND CULTURAL DETERMINANTS

They do not reckon this town very healthy because there are great mud banks and wet marshes about it which have a very unwholesome smell at low water.

John Fontaine on Hampton, 1716
(Alexander 1972: 110-111)

Location, in terms of the environment, undoubtedly influenced the successful growth of a town. Carville Earle, in his essay "Environment, Disease, and Mortality in Early Virginia" (Tate and Ammerman 1979: 96-125), shows that the Tidewater rivers are composed of three water zones which are determined by three factors: temperature, salinity, and circulation. The interaction of these features causes water to stagnate or circulate, to increase or decrease in salinity. The quality of these zones directly affected the lives of the colonists. Studies of 17th century mortality indicate that the healthiest area of settlement lay upriver in the freshwater zone; the saltwater zone downriver was less satisfactory; and the transitional or oligohaline zone, where freshwater and saltwater mix, was the most unhealthy.

Earle argues that the residents of Jamestown suffered from typhoid, dysentery, and salt poisoning as a direct consequence of living in this transitional zone. Water

stagnated in the summer and shallow wells in low lying areas drew in contaminated brackish water. Concentrated settlement exacerbated the health problem, while survival rates among early colonists improved when settlement dispersed, particularly upriver to the freshwater zone. Accounts of the early days of settlement at Jamestown attest to the sufferings of the colonists: "...our drinke cold water taken out of the River, which was at a floud verie salt, at a low tide full of slime and filth, which was the destruction of many of our men. Thus we lived for the space of five months in this miserable distresse...Our men were destroyed with cruell diseases as Swellings, Flixes, Burning Fevers..." (Billings 1975: 22-26).

Earle feels this unhealthy situation alone was more significant to the loss of life than famine or the depredations of war with the aboriginal population; taken together, they had a devastating effect on the colonists with mortality rates exceeding 50% at times. Earle estimates the annual disease mortality rate for Virginia between 1618 and 1624 to be 28.3%. Of these deaths, 64.7% occurred in the oligohaline zone; 18.4% occurred in the salt water zone, and 17.0% fell in the freshwater zone (Earle 1979: 118). These rates take on a greater significance when aligned with population percentages: 49.3% of the colonists resided in the oligohaline zone, 22.2% in the saltwater zone, 28.5% in the freshwater zone. Between 1618 and 1624,

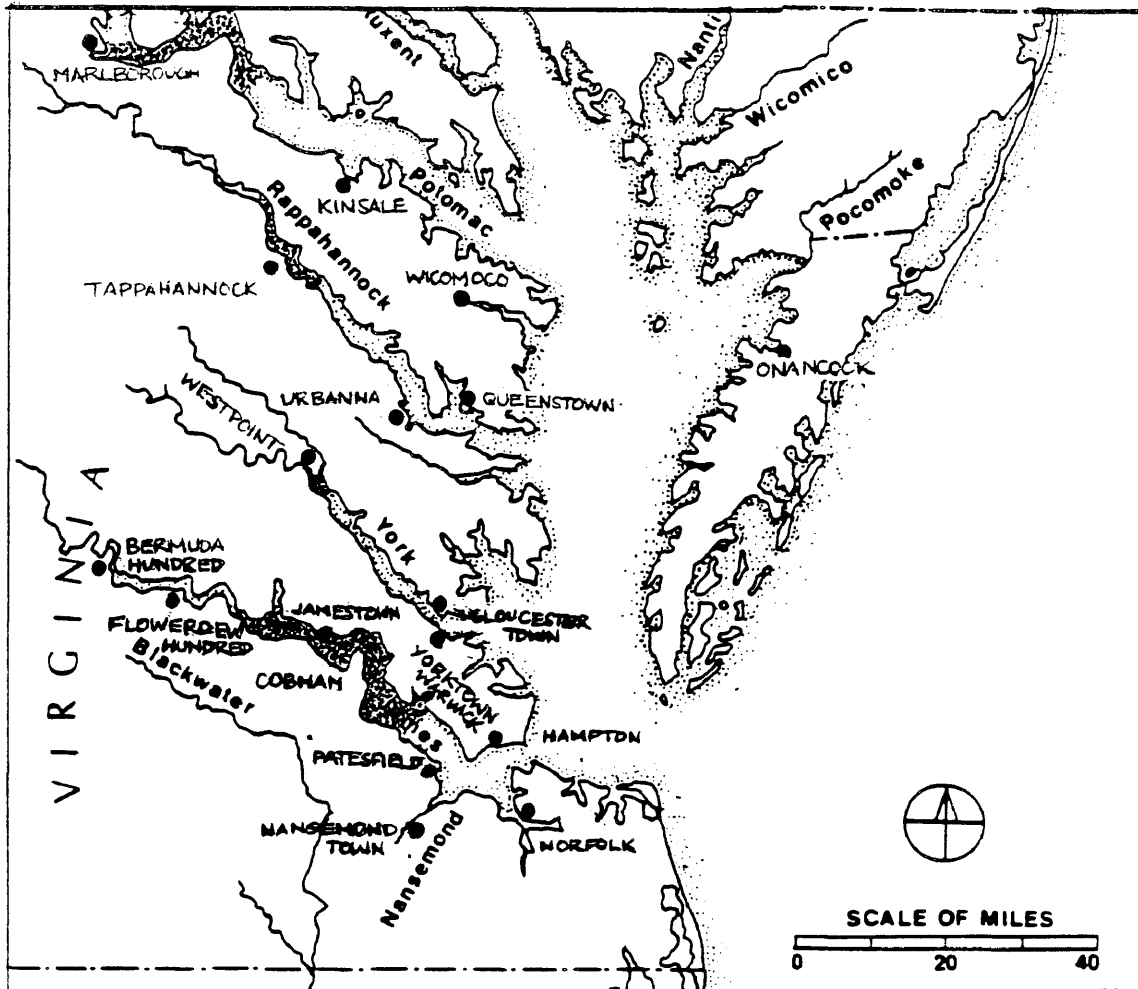
two out of three deaths were attributable to disease.

The threat of disease may have discouraged habitation of other towns located within this estuarine region. The development of those sites on high ground, with freshwater springs, and those situated where the river currents ran strongly were less likely to be impaired by this insalubrious climate. Using this three-zone model it is possible to see in Figure 6 how the growth and survival of these port towns may have been affected. Indeed, there is a strong correspondence to the pattern outlined here.

Three sites were located within the freshwater zone. Flowerdew Hundred was never established as a town, continuing to exist in its role as a plantation or hundred. This is attributable to economic and demographic conditions specific to Flowerdew itself and will be discussed later. However, the other two sites in this zone, Bermuda Hundred and Marlborough, were both places of substantial commercial activity in the 18th century.

Twelve sites were laid out in the saltwater region: Nansemond, Norfolk, Hampton, Patesfield, Yorktown, Gloucestertown, Urbanna, Queenstown, Kinsale, Wicomoco, Onancock and Northampton. Contemporary writers described Norfolk as having "like most others in the country...bad air and bad water"; Hampton was known as an unpleasant site because of the mud and marshes nearby which were "infested by a shocking stench" (Reps 1972: 71-75). However, along

Figure 6: Environmental Zones of the Virginia Tidewater^a



Shaded areas represent oligohaline or transitional zone and projected area of high mortality.

^a After Figures 1 and 2 in "Environment, Disease, and Mortality in Early Virginia" by Carville Earle (Tate and Ammerman 1979: 97, 124).

with the other towns in this zone, Norfolk and Hampton had qualities which made these sites better than their counterparts directly upriver. Norfolk, Nansemond and Patesfield were situated on rivers and creeks that flowed into the James, giving them access to fresh water; Yorktown and Gloucestertown were sited on bluffs overlooking the York River; Hampton was located on Point Comfort; Queenstown and Urbanna were placed on creeks which emptied into the Rappahannock River while Kinsale and Wicomoco were similarly located on tributaries of the Potomac; Onancock and Northampton were located on the Eastern Shore. Each of these locations had access to fresh water and was not subject to the stagnate waters of the oligohaline zone. Of these twelve designated ports, four were among the most important and sizeable towns in the colony: Norfolk, Hampton, Yorktown and Urbanna. Gloucestertown, Onancock, and Queenstown were of moderate size and success. Only five sites apparently never developed into towns: Kinsale, Patesfield, Nansemond, Wicomoco and Northampton.

Four sites were established directly on the river within the oligohaline zone. Jamestown, always unhealthy, was abandoned in the 18th century after the seat of the General Assembly was transferred to Williamsburg in 1699. Its successor, located on high ground between the James and York Rivers and accessible by two creeks, was considered by a traveler, the Reverend Hugh Jones, to be "a healthier and

more convenient place, and freer from the annoyance of muskettoes." The "good air" and freshwater springs made Williamsburg "more...healthful than if built upon a river" (1724: 66). Warwick and West Point were also unsuccessful towns. The exception was Tappahannock, a thriving town in the 18th century. The site had a freshwater spring which may have ameliorated what were otherwise unhealthy conditions created by the oligohaline zone. Cobham in Surry County was situated on a tributary leading into the James; this was the only other town in the zone to see significant development in the 18th century.

There are strong indications, then, that environmental conditions could act as a positive or a negative factor in the existence of these towns and that colonists were aware of this to a certain degree. Two of three towns in the freshwater zone survived (67%) while seven of twelve towns in the saltwater zone were successfully established (58%). Only two of five towns in the oligohaline zone survived (40%). Still, these conditions interacted only to a small degree with other factors of greater significance; they were not the primary selective factors at work here.

Cultural Determinants

That which bears the greatest weight with me, for now I look upon my soul to be in my declining age, is the want of spiritual help & comforts, of which this fertile country is everything else [but in this] is barren and unfruitful....

William Fitzhugh
(Davis 1963: 15)

Key cultural determinants in the success or failure of a town were the presence of public institutions such as a church, courthouse, or jail, and the presence of government facilities such as a tobacco inspection warehouse or customs house. The instability of life in 17th century Virginia contributed to the isolation and separateness of settlements and was reflected in the weakness or absence of many social institutions and structures, even such public rituals as basic as the exchange of gossip. By establishing any of these features, the town was made a focal point of a rural county existence, combining socialization with political, religious, and economic interaction.

In the Maryland town legislation, provisions included "Open Space places to be left On which may be Erected Church or Chappell, & Marckett house, or other publick buildings" (Browne 1889: 612). The Virginia acts made no such specifications for the construction of any structures other than warehouses, dwellings, and wharves. The establishment of a public institution as a direct result of the town legislation depended on the current state of these services

within each county. In some, these functions were already being met elsewhere; in others, there was a need for their formation.

The establishment of these institutions gave stability to a town, but their continued presence was not guaranteed as services might be duplicated or performed better elsewhere. Their removal could jeopardize town advancement. The effect of this process upon the size and duration of the towns can be seen in the following ways: those sites without a given function, public or economic, beyond their port status never took hold; some established towns collapsed or diminished in size after their services were relocated; other sites flourished because as public centers they encouraged residence and, concurrently, the development and expansion of a variety of social, political, and economic resources (Table 1).

Eight towns were abandoned in the late 17th or early 18th century although in some cases they had been developed to an extent: Flowerdew Hundred, Jamestown, Warwick, Patesfield, Nansemond, Wicomoco, Kinsale and Northampton. Three --Bermuda Hundred, Queenstown, and Marlborough-- were converted to farmland after the American Revolution. Cobham, Gloucestertown, and West Point disappeared in the 19th century. Only six towns still exist at the present time: Hampton, Norfolk, Yorktown, Urbanna, Tappahannock, and Onancock.

Table 1: Duration of Virginia Port Towns

| | 1680 Town Act | 1691 Town Act | 1705 Town Act | 1751 map | 1775 map | 1826-27 map | 1835-41 map ^a |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------|----------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Jamestown ^b | | | | | | | |
| Flowerdew | | | | | | | |
| Hampton | | | | | | | |
| Nansemond | | | | | | | |
| Norfolk | | | | | | | |
| Onancock | | | | | | | |
| Tappahannock | | | | | | | |
| Warwick | | | | | | | |
| Gloucestertown | Diagonal lines | | | | | | |
| Marlborough | Diagonal lines | | | | | | |
| Queenstown | Diagonal lines | | | | | | |
| Urbanna | Diagonal lines | | | | | | |
| Yorktown | Diagonal lines | | | | | | |
| Bermuda Hundred | Diagonal lines | Diagonal lines | | | | | |
| Cobham ^c | Diagonal lines | Diagonal lines | | | | | |
| West Point ^d | Diagonal lines | Diagonal lines | | | | | |

- a 1751 and 1775 versions of Jefferson-Fry map; 1826-7 map by John Wood and Herman Boye; 1835-41 Hotchkiss' Geological Map of Virginia and West Virginia by William Rogers. Originals, Virginia State Library.
- b Jamestown, the only settlement to exist prior to the town acts, was abandoned with the removal of the General Assembly. It existed in a dilapidated condition at the time of the town legislation.
- c Smith's Fort was named in 1680 as port town for Surry County; the site was changed to Cobham in 1691.
- d West Point, in its present form, developed with construction of a railroad through the area; it is not the same town established under the town acts.

Public institutions represented values of the community and the society at large; their presence provided the colonists with vehicles for political, social and religious discourse. Bruton Parish, the Capital, the county court, and the College of William and Mary gave life to the Williamsburg community; similar institutions existed in all the counties, and sometimes within the designated port towns. These institutions guided and sustained the lives of the people they served.

to Mrs. Susannah Waters for Keeping John Dickson 80 days wth wine Shugar & Rum & funirall charges on his Sickness.

Petsworth Parish Vestry
Book, 1708
(Chamberlayne 1933: 94)

The importance of churches and courthouses in the twenty port towns can not be underestimated. The church had an active role in colonial life, each parish responding and administering to the needs of the community. Indeed, the church was involved in every part of the life cycle, from birth and baptism to marriage and finally to death and burial. The vestry records of Petsworth Parish in Gloucester County show the concern of parishioners for the poor, the sick, the orphaned, the widowed, and the illegitimate offspring of parish members; these entries also show the role of the vestry in regulating and punishing unacceptable behavior (Chamberlayne 1933). Since church

attendance was required by law, the regularity of parish gatherings generated community interaction and would give stability to the towns in which they were established.

County courts met on a monthly basis to administer legal matters concerning the basic components of life -- land, labor, and the allocation of property. These sessions brought about a centralization of activity involving not only county affairs and judicial matters within the court, but also the generation of social and economic activity outside the court. Socially, such meetings served many public needs: communication and the passage of news to distant parts from this central gathering; social stratification and definition through the parading of wealth and the occupation of special pews or benches in church or court; role differentiation through the holding of office or the indenture of a servant; and normative regulation through punishment or public humiliation and through the display of etiquette. Economically, court day provided the backdrop for the distribution of goods and services. The records of John Norton and Sons, merchants based in London and Yorktown, show that many business transactions were conducted at such court day gatherings in King William, King and Queen, New Kent, and Gloucester Counties (Mason 1937).

Six port towns contained churches in the 18th century: Hampton, Norfolk, Yorktown, Urbanna, Tappahannock and Onancock. Most parish boundaries were established and most

churches built prior to the 1680 legislation. Churches were built concurrently with the town acts in Yorktown, Onancock and Tappahannock; others were built as needed in Norfolk, Hampton and Urbanna to serve growing communities. The towns of Warwick, Hampton, Norfolk, Yorktown, Tappahannock, Urbanna, Queenstown, Marlborough and Onancock acted as county seats in the 18th century. Of these nine, the first five retained their legislative function into the 19th century (see Table 2). Accessibility to county residents was critical. Only six of these towns were centrally located in their counties (Figure 7). Queenstown, Marlborough and Urbanna, in addition to Onancock (one of the six central town sites), lost their courthouses to more central locations in the 18th century.

The relationship between town duration and public institutions, with their consequent centralization and regularity of activity, is evident. Five of these towns -- Hampton, Yorktown, Urbanna, Norfolk and Tappahannock-- were among the most important and substantial towns in Colonial Virginia; along with Onancock, they lasted into the 20th century. Conversely, there is a correlation between the lack of public institutions at seven town sites-- Flowerdew Hundred, Wicomoco, Northampton, Jamestown, Patesfield, Nansemond and Kinsale-- and their immediate failure. Jamestown is an example of how the withdrawal of a service, its government function as the seat of the General

Table 2: Social Functions of Port Towns
Court and Church

| Port Town | Century | Churches | | Courthouses | | |
|------------------------------|---------|----------|-------|-------------|-------|-------|
| | | 17th | 18th | 17th | 18th | 19th |
| Bermuda Hundred ^a | | Black | White | Diagonal | White | White |
| Jamestown | | Black | White | Diagonal | White | White |
| Onancock | | Black | Black | Black | Black | Black |
| Norfolk | | Black | Black | Black | Black | Black |
| Yorktown | | Black | Black | Black | Black | Black |
| Hampton | | Diagonal | Black | Diagonal | Black | Black |
| Urbanna ^b | | Diagonal | Black | Black | White | White |
| Tappahannock | | Diagonal | Black | Black | Black | Black |
| Queenstown | | Diagonal | Black | Black | White | White |
| Marlborough ^c | | Diagonal | Black | Black | Black | Black |
| Warwick | | Diagonal | Black | Black | Black | Black |
| Flowerdew Hundred | | Diagonal | Black | Diagonal | Black | Black |
| Cobham | | Diagonal | Black | Diagonal | Black | Black |
| Patesfield | | Diagonal | Black | Diagonal | Black | Black |
| Nansemond | | Diagonal | Black | Diagonal | Black | Black |
| Gloucestertown | | Diagonal | Black | Diagonal | Black | Black |
| West Point | | Diagonal | Black | Diagonal | Black | Black |
| Wicomoco | | Diagonal | Black | Diagonal | Black | Black |
| Kinsale | | Diagonal | Black | Diagonal | Black | Black |
| Northampton | | Diagonal | Black | Diagonal | Black | Black |

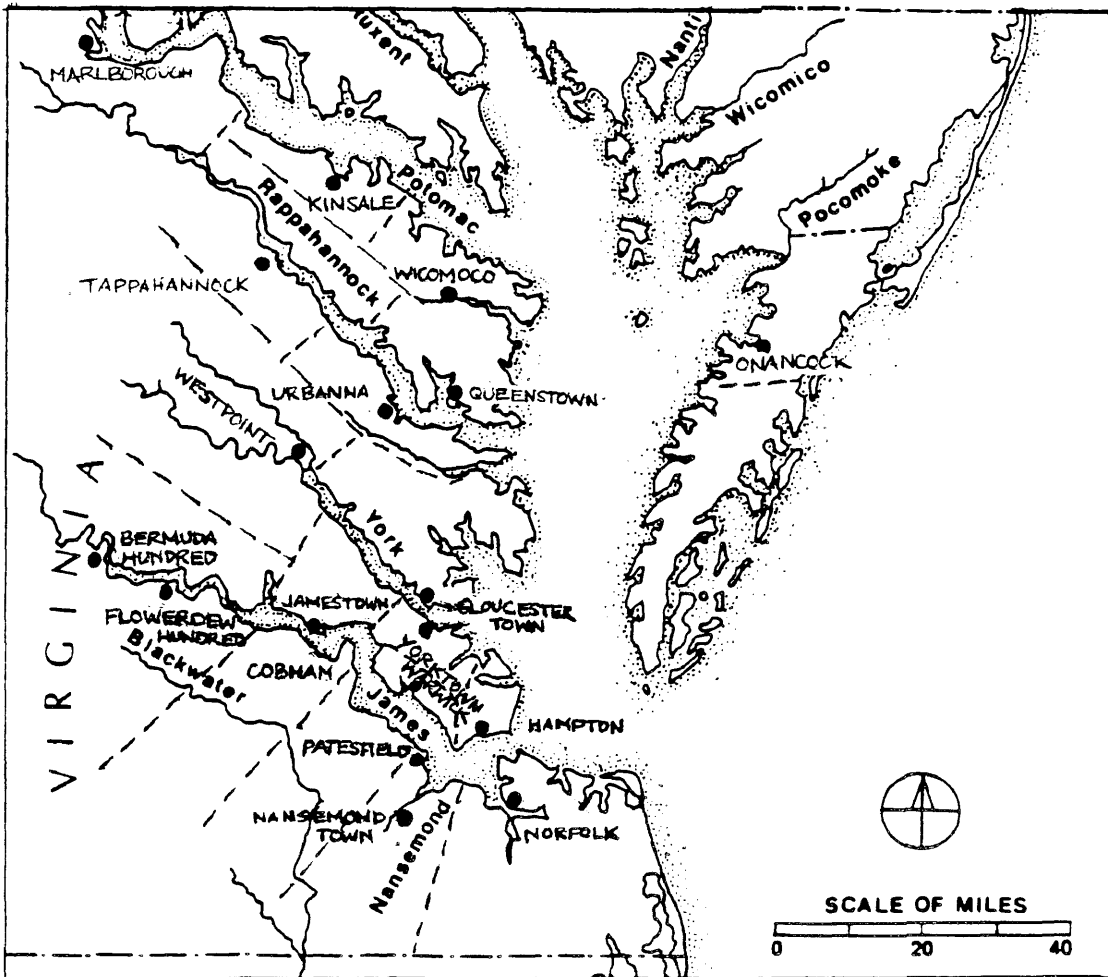
^a The Bermuda Hundred and Jamestown churches of the 17th century were transferred elsewhere in their counties due to destruction by fire or lack of use from poor location.

^b The courthouse was moved from Urbanna sometime in the 18th century.

^c The courthouse was burned in 1718 and the county seat transferred shortly thereafter.

Figure 7: Centrality as a Factor in Town Development

A. County Divisions, 1705



B. 1848 Map of Virginia Showing Adjusted County Lines and Court House Sites. Claudius Crozet. Original in Virginia State Library.

Assembly, led to the abandonment of the town. Even Williamsburg, capital of the Virginia colony, was not immune; the removal of the legislature during the Revolution caused the town to settle back into the rural landscape. A correlation is apparent also at four other sites --Bermuda Hundred, Cobham, West Point and Gloucestertown-- which, although sustained by an economic base, had an early demise. The three remaining sites of Warwick, Queenstown, and Marlborough housed the county seat and met with varying degrees of success, depending on the coexistence of a strong economic foundation and the continued presence of the courthouse at that site.

Marlborough serves as an example of the strong reliance upon public institutions within the towns for their regularity of activity. Though designated as a port town in 1680, the site was not surveyed until 1691. Gloucestertown lot owner William Buckner was responsible for conducting that survey. Twenty-seven lots were purchased by 15 owners in 1692 alone. This can be attributed to the presence of the courthouse within the town, for among the first lot owners were four county justices, four members of the House of Burgesses, and the holders of several other county offices. The role of the court house in encouraging residence is obvious.

Captain Malachi Peale, purchaser of three lots, was the owner of many large tracts of land in Virginia including the

original 50 acres selected as the site for Marlborough. Peale was a county justice as were Robert Alexander; Matthew Thompson, town trustee and land broker; John Withers, also sheriff and owner of three lots; and Captain Martin Scarlett, member of the House of Burgesses and owner of two lots. There are other notable lot purchasers as well. Captain George Brent, law partner of William Fitzhugh, proprietary agent for the Northern Neck and burgess, was a trouble maker among the Indians on the frontier (Morgan 1975: 250-251). An associate in stirring up the aboriginal population, George Mason also bought lots here; Mason was a militia officer and a burgess. Mr. Robert Brent, brother of George, was another lot purchaser. The Brents were in the unique position of being Catholics in an Anglican society; as such, they were required to take an oath as "Popish recusants" in 1693 before they could continue their law practice (Calendar of State Papers 1875: 46-47). Other residents included a doctor, Edward Maddox; a lawyer, Francis Hammersly (Hammersly supplied the two acre tract that would be set aside for the county courthouse); and a burgess and clerk of the Stafford County court, Samuel Hayward.

Many of these gentlemen were most likely engaged in land speculation too. Among these fifteen original owners, there are seven with estates exceeding one thousand acres. The lots with marine access were of greatest value in a port

town. Four men purchased three lots each; all of Mason's were located on the water, while two of Wither's and one of George Andrew's lots fronted Potomac Creek or the Potomac River. Three Marlborough investors purchased two lots each, of which George Brent's and Sampson Darrell's were both on the water. The eight remaining purchasers claimed one lot each, of which four had access to the water. A total of nine men held waterfront property, then; the total holdings of five of these men outside of Marlborough Town were of one thousand acres or more. It seems likely that they were eager to share in the prosperity promised by a burgeoning port town.

The future of Marlborough Town did seem bright indeed, but in 1718 the courthouse and several dwellings were consumed in a fire. The courthouse complex was relocated and the town was slowly abandoned. Marlborough was given a second life when John Mercer began purchasing lots in 1726, sixty-seven all told. Mercer also built a mill, a brewery and a glass factory; his venture renewed shipping to and from the port of Marlborough and encouraged recovery and redevelopment (Reps 1972: 78). Only when an economic role as a manufacturing town replaced its lost public status did Marlborough revive.

Eleven towns had substantial economic roles during the colonial period: Norfolk, Hampton, Gloucestertown, Yorktown, Tappahannock, Urbanna, Bermuda Hundred, Marlborough,

Onancock, Cobham and Warwick. Bermuda Hundred, designated in 1680 and 1691, evolved from a 17th century hundred and palisaded fort into a small commercial center in the 18th century, housing a variety of public and domestic sites: warehouses, taverns, a ferry, dwellings, wharves, storehouses, and, during the 17th century, a church. At the smaller end of the spectrum, Warwick and Cobham probably contained little more than wharves and storehouses but the courthouse in Warwick and Cobham's location at the mouth of Gray's Creek on the James brought in regular activity.

There were different reasons and alternative sources for the economic foundation and activity of each town. These settlements were often sustained by the affluence of their residents. Of importance, too, was any social and economic interaction generated by the presence within the town of inspection warehouses and customs houses.

The warehouses, of course, were central areas of activity because of the law requiring tobacco inspection; concurrent activity was a natural byproduct of this. A contract appears in the Calendar of State Papers in 1714 for the construction of tobacco store houses in Nansemond Town; in 1715 public storehouses were built at several locations in York County as well, including one at Buckner's Landing (Calendar of State Papers 1875: 181-185).

There were seven customs houses for the entering and clearing of ships in the Tidewater by virtue of the 1662 and

1680 Virginia Acts outlining export duties. Two inspectors were designated for the James and Potomac Rivers, and one each for the York and Rappahannock Rivers and the Eastern Shore. Four of these customs houses were located in towns that also were sites of churches and courthouses: Hampton, Norfolk, Urbanna, and Yorktown. All four towns were successful, bustling ports in the 18th century. These towns had a virtual monopoly on shipping, and resultant enterprise, as it was directed through those channels.

The town of Hampton, pronounced by the Reverend Jones to be among the best in the colony, was quickly established after the 1691 act; twenty-six lots were sold by 1693 (Reps 1972: 71). The courthouse was constructed here by 1715, St. John's Church in 1728. John Fontaine extolled the port's virtues and described its several defects in his journal dated 1716:

At Hampton in Virginia. This town lies in a plain within ten miles of the mouth of James River and about one mile inland. From the side of the main river there is a small arm of the river that comes on both sides of this town and within a small matter of making it an island. It is a place of the greatest trade in all Virginia, and commonly where all men of war lie before this arm of the river which comes up to the town. It is not navigable for large ships by reason of a bar of sand which lies between the mouth or coming in and the main channel, but all sloops and small ships can come up to the town. This is the best outlet in all Virginia and Maryland and when there is any fleet made, they make up here and can go out to sea with the first start of a wind. There are about one hundred houses here but very few of any note. There is no church in this town. They have the best oysters and fish of all sorts here of any place in the colony. The inhabitants of this town

drive a great trade with New York and Pennsylvania, and are also convenient to trade with Maryland. They do not reckon this town very healthy because there are great mud banks and wet marshes about it which have a very unwholesome smell at low water.

(Alexander 1972: 110-111)

One could wish Fontaine had been as descriptive about all the towns he visited, especially the settlement on Gloucester Point. There is an obvious disparity in size, importance and success between these two towns as seen by John Fontaine. This very noticeable lack of detail about Gloucestertown (he remarked only upon the ferry and an ordinary) is significant in itself, revealing contemporary perceptions of these ports and their presence within the colonial landscape. That Fontaine devoted many paragraphs to Hampton's description and virtually nothing to portray Gloucestertown indicated the relatively minor status, in his eyes, of Gloucestertown in comparison to Hampton.

As the first or second landfall within the Chesapeake Bay, Hampton was a site of obvious strategic and economic importance. Fontaine noted that fleets would gather here. Its natural attraction for mariners and navies, together with the situation of the customs house here, made Hampton a strong competitor. A petition dated 1717 shows the appreciation merchants and mariners had for the town's great potential. The "Inhabitants of the Port and Town of Hampton" humbly petitioned Governor Spotswood for a new piece of land on which to build a public wharf, "for the use

and benefit of these families and the Encouragement of all persons trading here" (Calendar of State Papers 1875: 183). The owner of the previous wharf had promised free access to the facility for all inhabitants but, in violation of his contract, had begun to demand 'wharfage'. Competition was keen even at this early date.

Norfolk, surveyed after the 1680 act, began its development early. By 1691 it already housed several dwellings and warehouses (Hening 1823, III: 59-60). Sites were designated for a church (a chapel built in 1641 was incorporated into the town plan), a school, and a courthouse and jail; the town would also support a customs house for the lower James River and a 17th century fort. Progress can be measured by the purchase of lots: 10 were sold by 1691, 29 more by 1702, and by 1705 only 10 of the original 50 lots remained (Reps 1972: 74). Subdivision of these lots took place after 1720 as the town's population increased. Such was its size that incorporation of the town of Norfolk took place in 1736 (Hening 1823, IV: 541).

The port grew into a major commercial center for shipping and trade, particularly exports to and imports from the West Indies, and the very lucrative importation of goods from North Carolina such as tar and pitch, other naval supplies, and agricultural products. A petition, dated 1735, appears in the Calendar of State Papers (1875: 221-222) signed by "Merchants, ressell owners and inhabitants of

Norfolk and the same of Princess Anne and Nansemond Co." Its purpose was to encourage the transfer of the collector's office from Hampton to Norfolk. The inventory of merchant John Tucker, dated 1736, lists £469 value for goods in his warehouse, £445 value for three sloops and a shallop, £690 worth of madeira, £851.14.1 for rum, and £223.15.4 3/4 in sugar, among other documented items. (Wertenbaker 1931: 32-59); the importance of shipping and the West Indies trade is clearly shown here. The records of John Norton and Sons chart the regularity with which his ships sailed to Norfolk before heading out to sea or turning into the Bay (Mason 1937).

Wertenbaker notes the presence of a strong and diverse artisan class in Norfolk by 1776, including: coopers, carpenters and ships carpenters, sailmakers and blockmakers, all associated with maritime industries; brick layers, joiners, wheelwrights and tanners, more traditional crafts; and, more unusually, three silversmiths, three bakers, a tallow chandler, shoemakers, a coppersmith, a saddler, a watchmaker, and a hatter (Wertenbaker 1931). With such a strong economic foundation Norfolk continued to develop as the major center of commercial activity, eventually eclipsing Hampton in its importance; this growth was sustained until its activities were sorely disrupted by fire during the Revolution.

Tappahannock served two counties fronting the

Rappahannock River, Essex and Richmond; these originally formed, at the time of the first town act, a single entity known simply as Rappahannock County . Surveyed and laid out in 1680, 'Hobb's Hole' was designated as the county seat. A courthouse and dwellings were quickly built. Seventy-two lots were sold by 1706. "Ffour Lotts" were appropriated for "Publick use" as sites for the courthouse and other official buildings. The courthouse was maintained there throughout the colonial period, adding depth and stability to that given by its intermediary role as a center for the marketing and transportation of tobacco. William Dunlop, master of the snow, Betsey, put in at Tappahannock on a regular basis in the mid 18th century for the purpose of tobacco consignment on behalf of John Norton and Sons (Mason 1937: 82). Such economic activity allowed continued prosperity for the town and its inhabitants. Even after the war, Isaac Weld remarked that Tappahannock housed one hundred dwellings, a smaller number than standing before the Revolution but still an appreciable presence among Virginia towns (Reps 1972:81).

A competitor and associate of Tappahannock lay down river on the south side of the Rappahannock River. Urbanna was the site chosen to serve Middlesex County in each of the town acts. Because of the reluctance of the original owner, Ralph Wormeley, to give up the chosen area, development was delayed until the 1690s. A brick courthouse was completed in 1706 and modeled after the one in Gloucester County, "of

equall goodness and Dimensions with the Brick Courte house lately Built in Gloucester County" (Middlesex Orders, 1680-1694: 200-220). A churchyard and a marketplace were laid out within the town as well. Lots sold rapidly, particularly between 1704 and 1710 when twenty-three lots were sold. The Rutmans (1984) noticed that the number of tithables in the area rose during that period and then diminished, indicating the temporary presence of itinerant laborers attracted by the boom in construction.

Residents petitioned the colonial government to have the collector's office for the Rappahannock district transferred to Urbanna, "by far the most proper & Convenient place for them, for not to insist upon the natural advantage of the place & the Act of the legislature Establishing of a Town" (Calendar of State Papers 1875: 212). Claiming that a stop at Robert Carter's Queenstown was inconvenient and time-consuming, the petitioners suggested Urbanna as an ideal alternative for customs collection. Relocation would also prevent this part of the county from being abandoned "by encouraging people to settle in a Town, who would take from the Planters the produce of their Husbandry, and encourage them in other branches of it, besides making Tobacco, which in the present situation of affairs, we have great reason to apprehend may much decline in its value." The petitioners were successful.

A strong mercantile community coexisted with the

customs operation and the tobacco industry. The networks of these merchants originated in Urbanna and spread out through the county. Great planters distributing goods on a consignment basis included Wormeley (also an early lot owner in Gloucestertown), Matthew Kemp and several other leading county figures. Merchants also came to Urbanna, drawing away a large share of the consignment trade by acting as storekeepers. Their influence is discussed by the Rutmans (1984).

Trade through the customs house and its associated activities, bolstered by the presence of the merchant community, gave residents the basis for turning the site into a successful place of enterprise in the 18th century. Eventually, however, the customs house was removed from the town with negative effects on the settlement. A visitor noted this change in 1793:

Urbanna was formerly a place of some trade and importance; for as the customhouse for the Rappahannock was there, the vessels were obliged to clear at that port. But the customhouse being removed to Port Royal, it is now a deserted village and as the land in the neighborhood is engrossed by a few great proprietors there are only three or four store-- or shipkeepers in the town...I believe there are not above a dozen houses in the town.

(Reps 1972:79)

Despite this decline in fortune and the transition which occurred as a result, Urbanna continued to exist though the community obviously suffered from the change. It is clear

that the economic strength of this town, and that of the others mentioned already, was critical to their duration; additionally, the presence of public institutions contributed to their stability and gave them a viable role within the community they served.

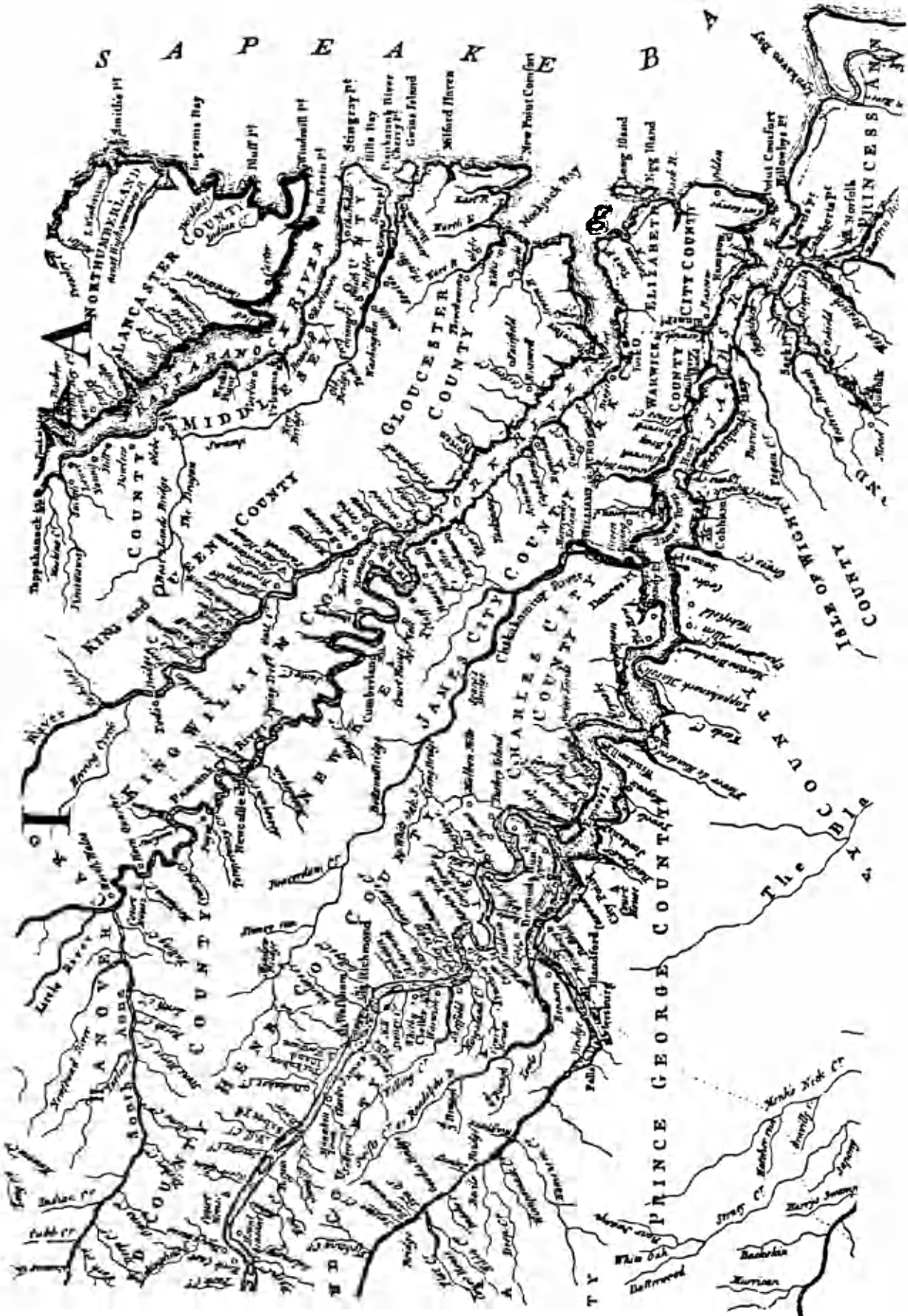
The purchasers, soon finding the said town would not answer the purpose for which it was intended, it being a remote part of the county, and very inconvenient for trade, many of them neglected to improve their lots, others who had built on them removed out of the said town, and many of the lots still remain unsold, and the said town, as such, is now entirely useless to the publick or the said county.

General Assembly, 1776
on the town of Patesfield
(Reps 1972: 89)

Population distribution was of primary importance to the economic and social success of these settlements. Rivers were the focal points of shipping and communication during the 17th and 18th centuries. The location of towns on the major rivers was crucial in this capacity; economic competition and demographic conditions were factors within each drainage. Yet counties were often too large, particularly as new land opened for settlement, or populations too small or too widespread for their designated river towns to be functional for activities requiring centralization (see Figure 8). This undoubtedly affected the future of certain settlements, tipping the scales against the town of West Point, for example, which, though strategically located

Figure 8: Population Distribution

- A. A New Map of Virginia and Maryland for the Earl of Orkney. John Senex, 1719. Original in Virginia State Library.
- B. Jefferson-Fry Map of Virginia and Maryland, 1775. Original in Virginia State Library.



S A P E A K B A

LANCASTER COUNTY

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

KING AND QUEEN COUNTY

GREEN COUNTY

GLoucester COUNTY

WARWICK COUNTY

ELIZABETH CITY COUNTY

JAMES CITY COUNTY

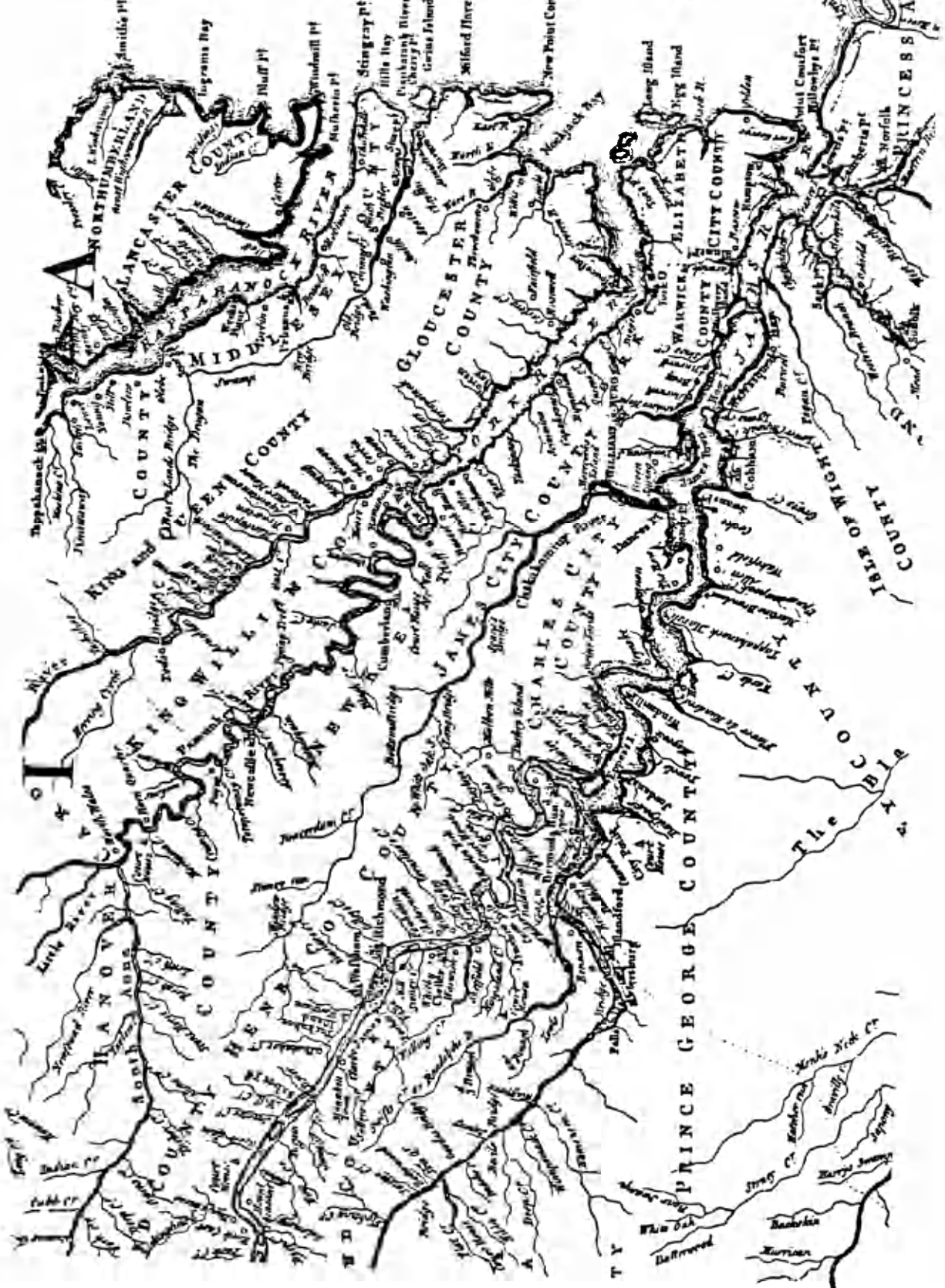
CHARLES COUNTY

PRINCE GEORGE COUNTY

The BIBLE

PRINCESS ANNE

TIDE OF WORTHINGTON



at the confluence of the Pamunkey and Mattaponi Rivers and accessible by ferries on either shore, was designated to serve three immense counties spreading out far to the west. Similar problems existed with Nansemond, Patesfield and Cobham which were not central to their counties as the interior regions were developed and which had, as towns on the southside of the James River, a smaller percentage of population to land area.

Cobham was the second site for the Surry County port, designated in 1691 after Smith's Fort seemingly failed its purpose in 1680. No lots were sold in the 17th century at either site; this is most likely the reason Cobham was omitted from the town legislation in 1705. The courthouse was located centrally at Wareneck, upriver on Gray's Creek, in the 1650s. Smith's Fort was approximately four miles inland on Gray's Creek. Cobham was at the mouth of the creek, along the James River. By the time Cobham was named as an official town site, the interior of Surry was beckoning to freeholders attracted by the low price and availability of land (see Kelly, "'In Dispers'd Country Plantations': Settlement Patterns in 17th Century Surry County, Virginia" in Tate and Ammerman 1979). Although Cobham is reputed to have housed a tavern and a few wharves and though it could still be found on the map in 1826, its role for Surry County was clearly hindered by the settlement characteristics of the county and by the lack of public

institutions at the site. As settlement moved inland, Cobham served a useful purpose only for those located along the water and on the areas immediately adjacent to them.

Table 3 examines the demographic conditions within the Virginia Tidewater in 1699. The areas of greatest population density were those with the most successful towns. The James River, with 40% of Virginia's colonists, saw the establishment of 6 of 9 designated sites in some manner, though two of these existed for a short time only; the York River, with 26%, had 2 of 3 sites well established; the Rappahannock had two strong towns and a third short-lived settlement; the Potomac and the Eastern Shore each had but one. This rate of success in town development largely corresponds to the areas of oldest occupation. The James River was the first area of settlement, with movement spreading up to the York River and to the Eastern Shore by the 1630s, across the lower York River and into the lower Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers in the 1650s, and occupying the upper York and Rappahannock together with the rest of the Northern Neck in the 1670s.

The spread of colonists into all areas of the Tidewater varied in density; land surrounding the waterways was taken up first, inland areas only after the waterfront was occupied. The demarcation of plantation sites on August Hermann's 1670 map of Virginia and Maryland shows a clear preference for areas with access to the Chesapeake

Table 3: Population Distribution 1699^a

| JAMES RIVER REGION | POPULATION | |
|----------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| | FREQUENCY | PERCENT |
| Henrico | 2,222 | 4% |
| Charles City | 3,899 | 7% |
| James City | 2,760 | 5% |
| Surry | 2,014 | 3% |
| Warwick | 1,362 | 2% |
| Isle of Wight | 2,766 | 5% |
| Elizabeth City | 1,188 | 2% |
| Nansemond | 2,571 | 4% |
| Lower Norfolk ^b | 4,227 | 7% |
| Total James River | 23,009 | 40% |
| YORK RIVER REGION | | |
| York | 1,909 | 3% |
| Gloucester | 5,730 | 10% |
| New Kent | 7,478 | 13% |
| Total York River | 15,117 | 26% |
| RAPPAHANNOCK RIVER REGION | | |
| Rappahannock | 5,142 | 9% |
| Middlesex | 1,541 | 3% |
| Lancaster | 2,093 | 4% |
| Total Rappahannock | 8,776 | 15% |
| POTOMAC RIVER REGION | | |
| Northumberland | 2,019 | 3% |
| Westmoreland | 2,541 | 4% |
| Stafford | 1,860 | 3% |
| Total Potomac River | 6,420 | 11% |
| EASTERN SHORE | | |
| Northampton | 2,050 | 4% |
| Accomack | 2,668 | 5% |
| Total Eastern Shore | 4,718 | 8% |
| | <u>58,040</u> | <u>100%</u> |

^a Based on population tables in American Slavery, American Freedom by Edmund S. Morgan (1975: 412-414). These estimates are drawn from county and colony records.

^b See Figure 1 for subdivisions of counties in 1705.

waterways. Of 2588 plantations on the map, 5% were located on the bay, 45% on a river, and 50% on creeks. A survey of recorded 17th century archaeological sites by Smolek and Clark provides the following figures to confirm this pattern: of 187 sites in Virginia, only .6% were located one mile or more distant from water; 12.6% were located between 2001' and one mile; 14.3% between 1001'-2000'; 21.4% between 500'-1000'; and 46.7% between 500' and the water's edge. Only 4.4% were in unknown locations (Smolek and Clark 1982: 10).

Density was further affected by the presence of an Indian population along the outer fringes of settlement, the remnants of the once powerful Powhatan Confederacy and tribes from Maryland and Carolina. The threat of conflict with native Virginians, a regular presence during the entire colonization effort, continued to exist even after the massacre of 1644. This war concluded with a treaty in which the Indians gave up all claim to their lands now held by the English. They were confined to areas west of the fall line, above the York River and below the James River. A string of forts was erected to act as a barrier between the two cultures, but continued expansion and encroachment by the colonists led to frequent altercation. Governor William Berkeley's defensive strategy in a war with the Susquehanna Indians between 1675-1677 led to an eruption of violence by frustrated colonists in Bacon's Rebellion. During this

conflict and the remaining quarter of the 17th century, the Indian population was all but eliminated from the Tidewater area, existing only on a reservation on the upper York River or inhabiting lands beyond the frontier. At the edge of colonial settlement, whites and aboriginals lived in a tense status quo: Southside beyond Nansemond, Isle of Wight, and Surry Counties and to the west of Henrico.

Thus, the peninsulas between the four major rivers absorbed the English settlers more quickly than inland regions beyond which there were no waterways connected to the Chesapeake and only wilderness. The counties north of the James River were more rapidly populated than Southside which opened up into swampland and North Carolina territory, and which also hosted several native tribes. Southside James River towns made up 2 of the 3 immediate failures in that drainage and one further failure while contributing only 1 of the 6 towns that met with any positive results (though Norfolk is on the south side of the James, its location at the mouth of the river where it meets the Chesapeake Bay made its position unique, so it is not placed with other Southside towns in this study). The counties of York and Gloucester, located between two major rivers and both early areas of settlement, were more populous than New Kent which was wilderness to the west and an area of late development.

There is some correlation between successful towns and

the river drainage with the greatest amount of tobacco production and the greatest profit from tobacco export. Hugh Jones noted in his travels that the land between the York and the James was the area "seeming most nicely adapted for sweet-scented, or the finest tobacco, for 'tis observed that the goodness decreaseth the farther you go to the northward of one, and the southward of the other" (Jones 1724: 72). The rates for tobacco production in 1689 show the James River to have led in actual production; however, other counties that produced less of the weed brought in greater earnings by growing a higher quality of tobacco. The York River led in revenues in 1689, followed by the James, the Rappahannock, the Potomac, and the Eastern Shore. Between 1704-1711, the York River was again in the forefront, followed by the Rappahannock, the James, the Potomac, and finally the Eastern Shore (Morgan 1975: 417) (see Table 4).

Tobacco production in each drainage was also contingent upon population attributes and the size and availability of land tracts in the region. Land grants in the form of headrights consumed great areas of the Tidewater during the 17th century as the major vehicle for land distribution. The headright system began in 1617 under the Virginia Company and was continued by the British Crown after the dissolution of the Company in 1624. A grant of fifty acres was assigned to anyone who either paid for his own transport

Table 4: Tobacco Production for Tidewater Virginia^a

A. Number of Hogsheads Exported

| | 1674-1676 | | 1687 | | 1689-1699 | |
|---------------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| James River | 21,520 | 30.8% | 13,444 | 37.5% | 19,827 | 35.3% |
| York River | 20,305 | 29.1% | 8,719 | 24.3% | 16,190 | 28.8% |
| Rappahannock | 13,230 | 19.0% | 7,189 | 20.0% | 13,542 | 24.1% |
| Potomac River | 10,715 | 15.3% | 5,037 | 14.0% | 4,523 | 8.0% |
| Eastern Shore | 4,041 | 5.8% | 1,495 | 4.2% | 2,116 | 5.8% |
| | <u>69,811</u> | | <u>35,884</u> | | <u>56,198</u> | |

B. Revenue From Tobacco Duties^b

| | 1689 | | 1704-1711 | |
|---------------|----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| York River | £ 1,154 | 31.7% | £ 9,359 | 39.8% |
| James River | £ 1,136 | 31.3% | £ 4,905 | 20.9% |
| Rappahannock | £ 747 | 20.6% | £ 5,600 | 23.8% |
| Potomac River | £ 458 | 12.6% | £ 3,216 | 13.7% |
| Eastern Shore | £ 138 | 3.8% | £ 436 | 1.8% |
| | <u>£ 3,633</u> | | <u>£ 23,516</u> | |

^a Based on Tables 5 and 6 in Morgan (1975: 415, 417). These figures were drawn from extant records of post 1662 collection of duties for the export of tobacco. See also Hening (1823, I: 491, 523; II: 130-132).

^b Duties were set at two shillings per hogshead, 15 pence per ton and 6 pence per immigrant.

to the colony or paid for another's transport. As availability decreased and prices increased, the large landholders became landlords. Immigrants and newly freed servants were forced to move to the edge of settlement and the untamed wilderness or else to rent land or hire out their services to their previous owners. This produced demographic variance between river drainages and between counties. The earliest settled regions, characterized by more landlords and tenants, contrasted with outer tracts which still held opportunities for land ownership. There were more tithables among the general population in the former areas, i.e. more servants and slaves to help plant, tend, and process tobacco. Conversely, there were fewer tithables per household in poorer and less established tracts; these represented common planters, often new freedmen, supporting themselves without paid or bound labor. This had a direct effect on production and wealth (For a further discussion of population distribution and the significance of tithables and households, see Morgan 1975: 218-230; 410-420).

The combination of economic, physical, social and demographic features within counties and river drainages determined the varied success of these twenty legislated port towns. Each was different in its strengths and weaknesses. Williamsburg, though not one of the designated port towns, was a contemporary and as such provides us with

a useful example of a successful town. This product of colonial decree exhibited many desirable qualities, making it a vital and bustling area of social, political and economic activity until the legislature was removed in the late 18th century. Located on a ridge, Williamsburg was placed at the head of two

great creeks one running into the James and the other into the York River, which are navigable for sloops, within a mile of the town; at the head of which creeks are good landings (Capital Landing on Queen's Creek and Princess Anne Port on College Creek or College Landing) and lots laid out, and dwelling houses and warehouses built; so that this town is most conveniently situated, in the middle of the lower part of Virginia, commanding two noble rivers, not above four miles from either, and is much more commodious and healthful, than if built upon a river.

(Jones 1724: 66)

Williamsburg's location was excellent for a seat of government and for a center of commercial and social activity. As the site of a courthouse, a church, and the capital of the colony, the town quickly grew into a major entity of great importance and standing, drawing in merchants and craftsmen, legislators and travelers.

Ideal conditions for town development, then, might be described in the following manner: the site to be centrally located in a populous area, suitable in location for a port and for a healthful settlement, the seat of one or more public or economic institutions to give additional substance to the activity at the port, with its residents to be of wealth and to be from a wealthy, productive tobacco-growing

region. These features would not necessarily provide the town with a guaranteed future and the strength to endure the rigors and demands which derived from the quality of life in 17th and 18th century Tidewater Virginia as it revolved around a tobacco economy. Yet the overriding strength of a public or economic institution might be enough to sustain a community in the absence of other favorable qualities. An examination of Gloucestertown's background, in light of these selective factors, helps to illuminate the forces behind its establishment and restricted development.

CHAPTER III
GLOUCESTERTOWN

We came to Gloucestertown upon York River...

John Fontaine, 1716
(Alexander 1972: 122)

Gloucestertown was an anomaly, simply because in light of the selective factors outlined earlier, there were far more disadvantages to raising a town here than advantages encouraging growth of the newly legislated settlement. In sifting through Gloucestertown's contextual background, other motivations and selective factors seem to have been at work. These are drawn from numerous historical texts and are discussed further on.

Gloucestertown, which was not central to its parish or to the county, had neither church nor courthouse. Both were established years earlier in more convenient locations. The county, formed in 1651, was divided into four parishes prior to the town acts and each parish had its own church in the 17th and 18th centuries. Abingdon Parish, of which Gloucestertown was a part, built its church and glebe house at a site approximately six miles from the town sometime after its formation in 1654. A permanent courthouse complex built in 1766 was placed twelve miles north of Gloucestertown at the 18th century site of Botetourt Town and the

present site of Gloucester. Centrally located and accessible by water, this same site probably housed the courthouse structure used in the 17th and early 18th century as well (Mason 1946: 71; Alexander 1972: 122). In fact, the court-ordered location of Gloucestertown, while excellent for a port, was less than ideal for a county seat. Even though the port was intended to serve the most populous county in Virginia, with an estimated 5,834 residents in 1703 (Beverley 1705: 253), the county was too large, the population spread too great, and Gloucestertown too far south. The uppermost parish of Kingston was eventually broken off to form Mathews County and given its own administration in 1791.

Two other factors might have aided Gloucestertown in its infancy but did not. When Jamestown was burned in 1676 during Bacon's Rebellion, Gloucester Point was considered as a possible site for the new statehouse, presenting an opportunity for the site to assume an official government function. Unfortunately, the idea was rejected. Fort James was constructed on the Point in 1667 because of its strategic importance; however, although its earthen walls and wooden platforms were maintained throughout the colonial period, it was small and of little overall importance to Gloucestertown. In this case, the presence of the military did little to generate life-giving activities for the town. That Gloucestertown was never the seat for any public

institution of significance was undoubtedly a major reason for its eventual demise.

The principal attribute in Gloucestertown's favor was the port itself and its economic attractions. The town was well sited for a port, offering a sheltered anchorage on one of the main navigational routes in the Tidewater area. Its close proximity to the mouth of the York River and the Chesapeake Bay should have been an enticement to merchants and incoming vessels. Indeed, the quick purchase of the lots surrounding Gloucestertown's cove by 1707 indicates confidence in the town's future as a colonial port. Lot 69 was apparently set aside for use as a town wharf in anticipation of a healthy trade at the port (McCartney and Hazzard 1980).

The site had other natural features favorable to marketing activity. The narrow passage created by Tindall's Point served as a funnel for goods transported along the shipping route to destinations further upriver during the 17th and 18th centuries. Located at the confluence of several trade networks, Gloucestertown was a point of access to the most populous and one of the wealthiest counties in Virginia. The Point was linked to the rest of the county by a "Great Road" which extended into the interior (Alexander 1972: 122) and to Yorktown and points south by a ferry. The road was used frequently by travelers such as John Fontaine who in 1716 was traversing the colony for the first time.

Operating throughout Gloucestertown's existence, the ferry served a major role in colonial transportation by connecting the peninsulas of the Tidewater. Accommodations for travelers were available with at least one ordinary situated here during the 17th and 18th centuries (Mason 1948: 135; Alexander 1972: 82). A foundation excavated by the VRCA in 1980 is believed to have been one such enterprise, containing some 600 pipe stem fragments in the excavated area (McCartney and Hazzard 1980: continuation sheet #2).

Tindall's Point, as it was known in the early 17th century, was selected as a site for a tobacco inspection warehouse in February 1632/33 by the Executive Council. One of five stores appointed for the review, testing, and repackaging of tobacco by inspectors (Hening 1823, I: 204), this warehouse generated regular economic activity as it operated periodically throughout the 17th century. A warehouse was established here following the 1713 "Act for Preventing Frauds in Tobacco Payments and for the Better Improving of the Staple of Tobacco", functioning until the legislation was repealed in 1717, and reestablished between 1730 and 1780 as a result of similar legislation (McCartney and Hazzard 1980: continuation sheet #5). The presence of this facility brought to the Point, and to the town built upon it, economic interaction in the form of handling, purchasing, and loading of tobacco and exchange of credit, goods and services. Firms such as John Norton and Sons

brought St.Croix rum, sugar, tea and other goods here, "To be sold, at public Vendue at the Battery in Gloucester County" (Mason 1937: 400).

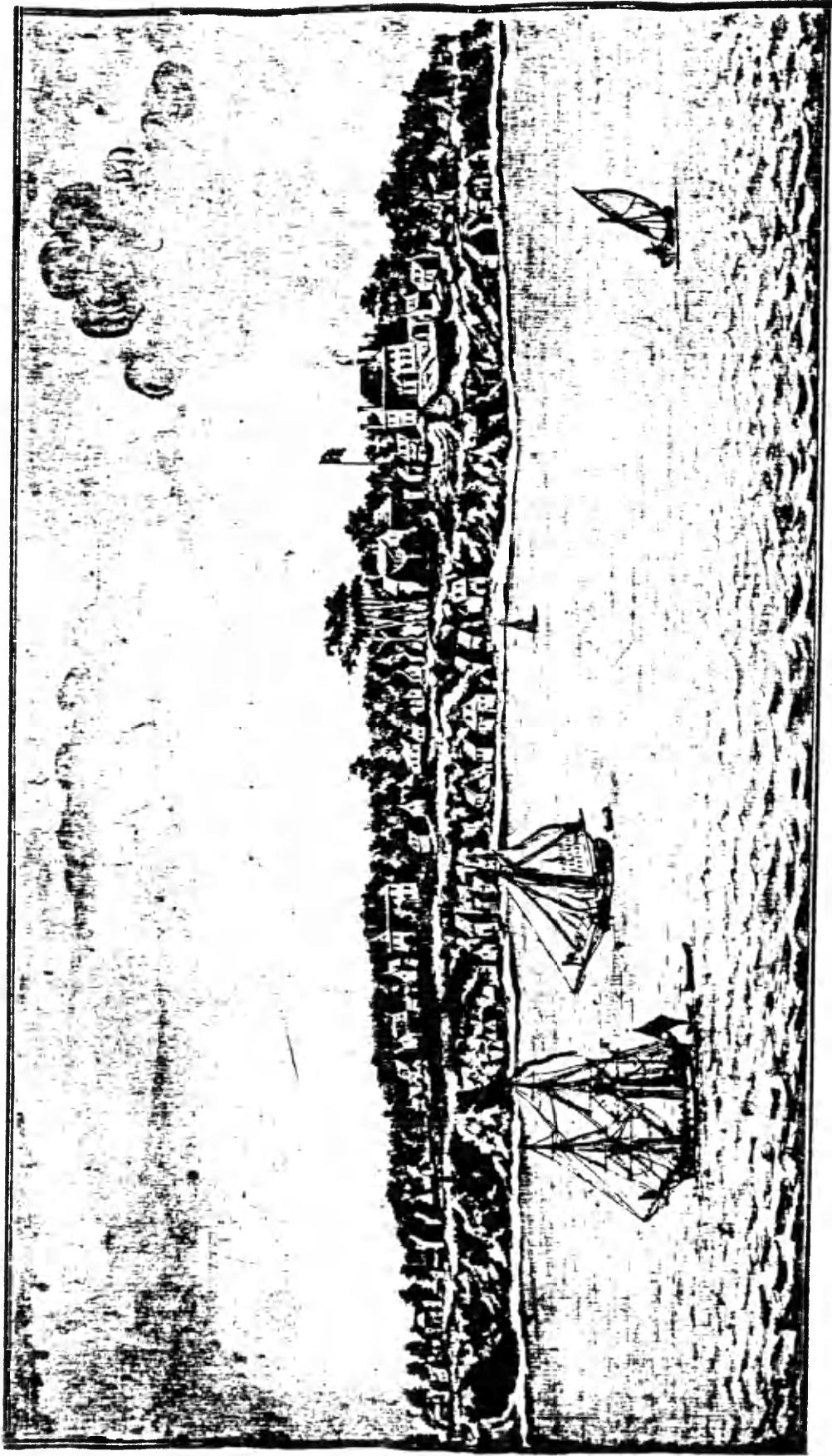
"For the Encouragement of Trade and Manufacture..."

Hening's Statutes at
Large, 1680
(Hening 1823, II: 471-78)

The Town legislators hoped to establish permanent towns with inhabitants practicing diverse crafts and trades. Yorktown was one such settlement that successfully met the expectations of the 17th century legislators (Figure 9). The presence of a church, courthouse, and customs house for the York River District seems to have provided a strong base for economic development in Yorktown through the concentration of people in a central location and the regularity of economic activity and social interaction. Shipping required warehouses, public facilities, and certain industries to support it. This activity encouraged, in turn, the continued residence of craftsmen and specialists. Yorktown, with the highest number of lot purchasers among all the legislated port towns, housed 150 residents by 1700 (Bergstrom and Kelly 1680), the majority of whom practiced urban and shipping oriented trades rather than the more traditionally rural based crafts.

On the lower level of this town were warehouses, wharves, accommodations for mariners, and all manner of

Figure 9: View of Yorktown, 1754 by John Gauntlett.
Courtesy of the Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia.



stores and sheds for tradesmen and artisans; on the bluff lay the more 'gentile' section of the town, a residential area and site of the public buildings. This upper level clearly reflected the prosperity and the growing sophistication brought by the success of the lower town. The buildings constructed here displayed the wealth and status of merchants and landowners, even the prosperity of artisans attracted to the town by the blossoming trade and the town's growing role as an economic and social center. The courthouse and church were symbols as well, representing order and a political, religious and social hierarchy present in the colony.

Advertisements in the Virginia Gazette and features revealed in archaeological excavations show the formidable planning behind the construction of many domestic structures and complexes here: brick mansions complete with kitchens, stables, smokehouses, dairies, separate servant quarters and laundry facilities (Mason 1937: 37-38, 117; Hatch 1973, 1974; Barka 1978). The designs and materials used for the church and the courthouse, being of fashionable type and finest quality --marl for the church and brick for the courthouse-- reflected changing attitudes, a desire for permanence and commitment to the future, and perhaps a wish to construct and perpetuate closer ties to England. A 1742 visitor was greatly impressed:

You perceive a great Air of Oppulence amongst the Inhabitants, who have some of them built them-

selves Houses, equal in Magnificence to many of our superb ones at St. James; as those of Mr. Lightfoot, Nelson, Etc. Almost every considerable Man keeps an Equipage. The Taverns are many here, and much frequented, and an unbounded Licentiousness seems to taint the Morals of the young Gentlemen of this Place. The Court-House is the only considerable publick Building, and is no unhandsome structure...The most considerable Houses are of Brick and some handsome ones of Wood, all built in the modern Taste.

(Reps 1972: 87)

John Norton commented more bluntly on this change, on this striving to be an urban center like Williamsburg or an English city, denying any appearance of being a backwater. Such an attitude, airs of greatness perhaps, were much in evidence by the 18th century, "There being [now] a very material difference in a Quack & one who practices as Physician in general to so popular a Town as York" (Mason 1937: 178).

Wm the Son of Will^m Bull Morrimer & Mary his Wife was born May 29th about 9 in the morning being Whit Sunday in ye Town of Gloucester upon York River.

Abingdon Parish Register, 1736

Mary Sanders of Gloster Town's Daughter
Baptiz'd Nov 22.

Abingdon Parish Register, 1744
(Lee 1892: 91, 115)

If Yorktown followed the ideal expectations of the town legislators, Gloucestertown did not --atleast, not exactly. What developed here was quite different. Despite the

economic and physical attractions, only a modest trade was cultivated; the services and the volume of trade found directly across the river at Yorktown were never equalled in Gloucestertown. The Gloucestertown lot owners were primarily planters and merchants. There is little evidence, archaeologically or documentarily, that any artisans were attracted to the town. Kiln furniture found in a trash pit suggests a potter, perhaps a cousin to William Roger's operation in Yorktown (McCartney and Hazzard 1980: continuation sheet #1). There is documentary and archaeological evidence for at least one ordinary operating on the Point during the 17th and 18th century (Mason 1948: 135; Alexander 1972: 82; McCartney and Hazzard 1980: continuation sheet #2). A windmill depicted in John Gauntlett's watercolor is known to have operated on the Point in 1754 (see Figure 2). A reference in the Abingdon Parish Register notes the death of "Swann a Taylor" in 1731; the notice of his demise was "Sent to Town" (the proper authorities were notified in Williamsburg) by a clergyman (Lee 1892: 66). Doctor William Kemp is known to have based his practice in town (Lee 1892: 66). The presence of slaves in the town is well documented in the Abingdon Parish Register; undoubtedly, some of them were craftsmen and skilled at certain labors one might expect to find in a town but pursued by independent individuals instead. Beyond this, there is little to suggest industry independent of

port activities; the town came to rely heavily upon activities pursuant to tobacco inspection. By contrast, Yorktown was a self-supporting community.

Yorktown was important to Gloucestertown's development. Because of their proximity, the social and economic activity in Yorktown reinforced activity in the port across the river (Figure 10). Records from both counties show that business transactions were a regular occurrence between residents of both towns and counties. For example, John Thruston, a mid 18th century Gloucestertown resident and merchant, initiated an association with John Norton and Sons of Yorktown on several occasions for business 'adventures' (Mason 1937). The accounts of planter-merchant Jonathan Newell, dated 1677, detail the extent of this man's Yorktown-based business network through several counties, including Gloucester County (Billings 1975: 198-204).

The activities of the York County Court were also important for Gloucestertown and Gloucester County residents; it is clear from York Deeds and Orders that, even as Gloucestertown was established, merchants and planters would travel to Yorktown to resolve legal matters and to finalize business affairs. In 1747, John Perrin of Gloucestertown, merchant, gave half of his ships to his son; this deed was recorded in York County (Mason 1948: 121). John Lewis of Gloucestertown sold a lot near Yorktown to William Buckner of Yorktown in 1711 for the future

Figure 10: Gloucestertown and Yorktown
During the Revolution

- A. Carte de la Baie de Chesapeake, 1778. Original in Virginia State Library.
- B. Plan of Investment of York and Gloucester by Major Sebastian Bauman, 1782. From Rand McNally Atlas of the American Revolution.

CARTE DE LA BAIE DE CHESAPEAKE

de la Partie navigable des Rivières, James, York, Patowmack,
Patuxen, Patapsco, North - East, Choptank et Pokomack .

REDIGÉE POUR LE SERVICE DES VAISSAUX DU ROI ,

au Dépôt Général des Cartes, Plans et Journaux de la Marine,

Par Ordre de M. DE SARTINE,

Conseiller d'Etat, Ministre et Secrétaire d'Etat au Département de la Marine,

d'après des Plans Anglois .

et particulièrement ceux d'Antoine Smith, Pilote de S.^{te} Marie,

1778.

N. B. Les Brasses indiquées sont en Mesure
d'Angleterre. La Brasse Angloise est
égale à 3 Pieds 7 p. 6 1/2 Mesure de France.

Les Divisions de l'Echelle de Latitude
donnent les Milles Marins et servent
d'Echelle pour le Plan.

OBSERVA

Sur la Riviere de Patowmack, par un

En remontant la Patowmack, je me suis astreint à suivre, aussi exactement
qu'il m'a été possible, la Ligne ponctuée qui indique, sur cette Carte, la
Route à tenir; j'ai vérifié les profondeurs de l'Eau, et je les ai trouvées ab-
solument conformes à celles qui sont indiquées par les Chiffres placés sur
cette Ligne. En descendant la Riviere, j'ai pareillement sondé pour
m'assurer du Brassage, et j'ai marqué sur le Plan, le nombre des Bras-
ses que j'ai trouvées, dans les Endroits où la Carte ne les avoit pas indi-
quées. J'ai vérifié les différentes Routes à suivre, que j'ai marquées sur
ce Plan, par l'indication des airs de Vent, et j'ai estimé les distances
d'une Pointe à une autre, de la maniere suivante.

Les Marées de la Riviere de Patowmack ne sont pas très fortes, mais après
sible ou ne l'est pas du tout. La Mer ne monte que pendant quatre ou cinq L.
de la partie du Sud. Dans les Marées ordinaires, l'Eau s'élève d'environ quatre
On a observé que, par un temps modéré, le Vent de Nord vous favorise po
et que le Vent de Sud, vous favorise de même pour toutes celles que vous deve

L'Officier à qui nous devons
cette Carte, les a Rédigés sur le
N. B. Les Lignes doub
pour passer d'une R

INSTRUCTION

Sur entrer dans la Riviere James et y Naviguer.

Pointe de Comfort est presque entièrement couverte de Bois, mais il y
a endroits où il ne croît point d'Arbres, ce qui forme deux ouvertures, et
à cette langue de Terre, l'apparence de deux Îles. On doit, en entrant,
entrer sur un Moulin à vent qu'on découvre par dessous l'ouverture du
plus au Nord. Cette marque vous mènera par le travers du Bas fond de
de Willoughby, à trouver Sept à Huit Brasses d'Eau. Si vous dou-
tette Pointe, ne l'approchez pas de plus près qu'on ne vous l'indique
lors vous pourrez porter au Nord, en travers du Chenal ou vous trouvez
atorze et quinze Brasses, et faire cette route jusqu'à ce que vous
plus que dix Brasses du côté du Banc de

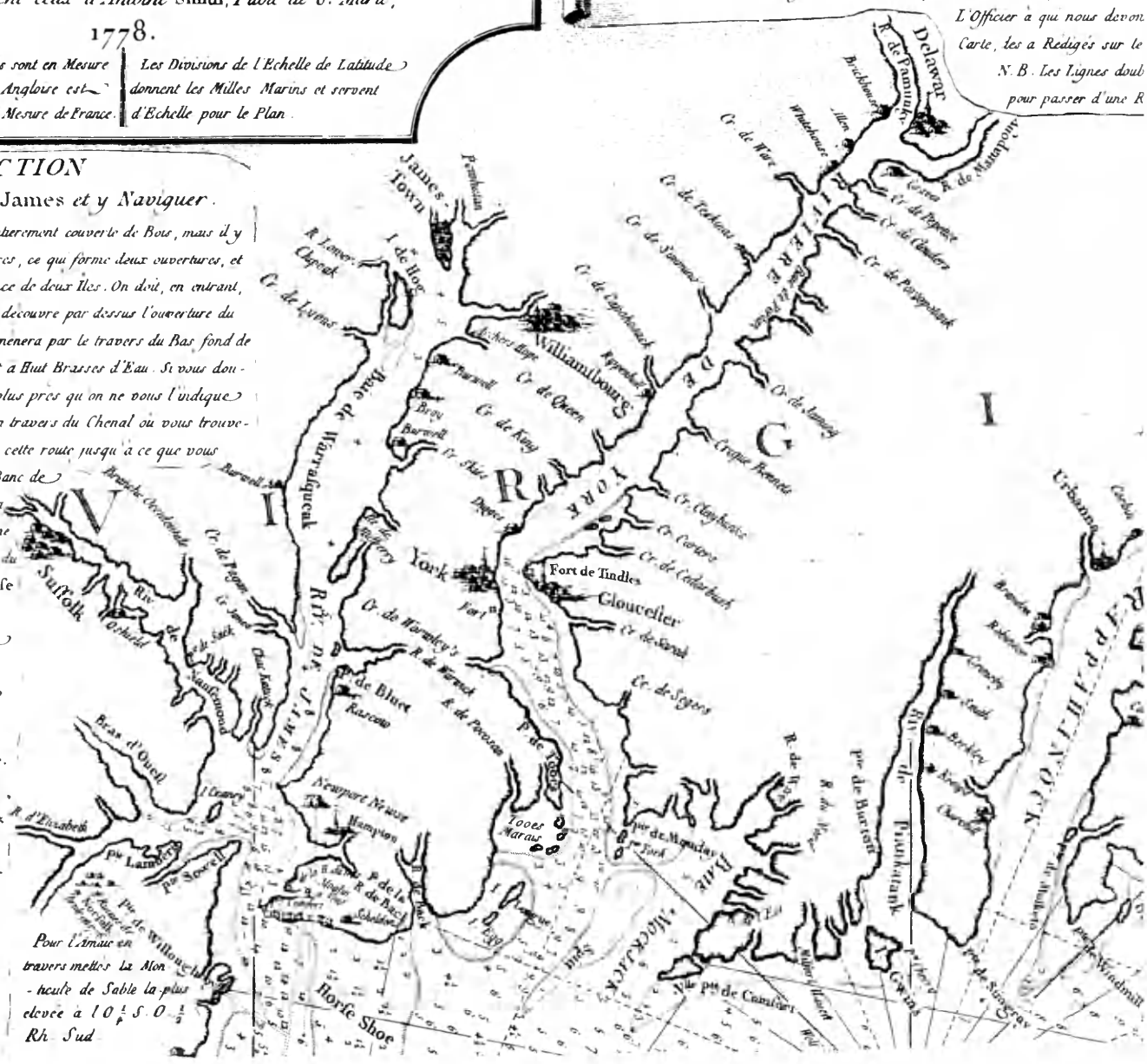
Shoe Le Moulin à vent se trouvera
orme, mais vous appercevrez en même
par le milieu de la même ouverture du
une grande Maison, Newport-Neufe
e vous la voyez sur la Carte
orfe-Shoe est très escarpé, et la
est très Porte

ant, en sortant de la Riviere de
porte sur ce Banc

asser le Banc de Horfe-Shoe.

Pointe de Willoughby, sont des
ux ou Monticules de Sable, mettez
Occidentale de ces Monticules, au
est 1/4 Sud 1/2 Rhumb Sud, et Cou-
au Nord-Est. Ou bien, mettez
plus haute de ces Monticules
la seule qui soit aussi élevée
me des Arbres, et gouvernez
En vous dirigeant sur l'une ou
ces Marques, vous traverserez

Pour l'Ancre en
travers mettez la Mon-
ticule de Sable la plus
élevée à 10 1/2 S. O
Rh Sud



construction of a windmill (Mason 1948: 117). This sale was recorded in York County; it also shows again the frequent ties between York and Gloucester County residents. Other York County records note that Lewis' son sold Yorktown lot no.28 to a York County mariner in 1732, indicating to us, too, that this association between towns was over a continuous and lengthy span of time (Mason 1948: 119).

Other links between these ports are evident. Enterprising gentlemen often held lots in both town, including Dr. William Kemp, Mr. John Dunbar, and William Buckner, gentleman and trustee for Yorktown (Mason 1948: 116). James Terry, lot owner with William Gordon, purchased one of thirty-five lots sold early on at West Point. As this lot was also purchased with two associates, it is likely that Terry was a merchant, banking on the success of the new port towns. The tobacco inspection operations of Yorktown and Gloucestertown were tied together officially. Each town received mutual benefit from these cross-river networks and associations.

This closeness also worked against Gloucestertown's independent development in several ways: Yorktown and another associate, Gloucester Court House, were both strong competitors economically and socially. Yorktown had the centralizing institutions described earlier, making it a natural site for congregation. Additionally, the customs house gave the town an edge in the shipping industry.

Gloucester Court House, already a significant landmark in 1716 when John Fontaine wrote of it (Alexander 1972: 122), drew business away from the port. The papers of John Norton and Sons show the courthouse was a frequent site for public auctions, for marketing goods and slaves, for buying tobacco on consignment (Mason 1937). As pointed out earlier, this firm, a leading member of the mercantile community, was based in Yorktown, hinting again that the stronger economic base and the more viable foundation for such an enterprise could be found across the river from Gloucestertown. And, of course, the meetings of the county court in Gloucester gave a regularity to economic and social interaction not possible in Gloucestertown.

So in one sense, these contemporaries of Gloucestertown greatly assisted its growth and development by bringing to it and reinforcing in it a more regular trade and more frequent social interaction. One usually passed through Gloucestertown on the way to Gloucester Court if travelling from the south and vice versa; if journeying to Yorktown from Gloucester Court, one might take the road that led to Gloucestertown. At the same time, the broader economic and public foundation at these sites naturally detracted from Gloucestertown's role, leaving it a second-best.

The significance of this 'weakness' is readily apparent. Had the port legislation not been rescinded, Gloucestertown might have grown to equal Yorktown's size or

to match Gloucester Court's trade. Without its official status, the various economic incentives for new residents, or the centralizing public and economic institutions found at Yorktown and Gloucester Court, the sole basis for recurring, government sponsored activity in Gloucestertown-- independent of its competitors-- was tobacco inspection. While this part of tobacco processing was important and did lead to some outgrowth of other activity, this was insufficient to establish a solid core of urban dwellers and to support an artisan class, particularly with the irregularities of the tobacco trade.

Since its introduction to Virginia in 1612 by John Rolfe, tobacco had enjoyed an unsteady, rollercoaster-like existence. Its earliest producers found a large market and high prices in England and many built their fortunes upon its cultivation. Quick expansion and neglect of other crops produced a glut, lowered prices, and depressed the market by the 1640s. This became symptomatic of the tobacco trade; chronic overproduction created a 'boom and bust' cycle. Dissatisfaction with low prices and the tobacco inspection act was plentiful and often violent; in 1715 "one of Mr. Buckners Storehouses" was burnt. The alarm of public officials was recorded in the Calendar of State Papers (1875: 181) for "They further signifie their evil Intention to the law, by running away with their Tob^o to buyers." Such action, of course, rarely alleviated the problem.

The tobacco economy made an independent livelihood difficult for specialists except in those rare areas with sufficient resources to support them. Yorktown had a sufficient base, having reached a 'threshold' economically and demographically (Bergstrom and Kelly 1980; 1984) (further discussion of this follows on pages 72-74). Variability in tobacco production and in the economic success of planters and merchants directly affected the need for artisans. Demand for their trades diminished with depressions, a constant companion in the late 17th and 18th centuries when these towns were forming.

If you could possibly procure me a Bricklayer or Carpenter or both, it would do me a great kindness, & save me a great deal of money in my present building. If you send in any tradesmen be sure [to] send in their tools with them.

William Fitzhugh, 1681
(Davis 1963: 92)

Self-sufficiency was another impediment to urban craftsmen, a concept and a goal deeply ingrained in the plantation mentality. Years of irregularity in tobacco cultivation and in the tobacco market, years of isolation in unbroken, seemingly inhospitable environments, in settlements dispersed across great areas were to breed this need for independence. William Fitzhugh represents an extreme end of the spectrum of self-sufficiency. Fitzhugh arrived

in Stafford County in 1673. He described his vast wealth and holdings in a letter that year which included 1000 acres of land (Fitzhugh also claimed 23,000 acres in other counties), 29 slaves among his several plantations or quarters, livestock, a house "furnished with all accommodations for a comfortable & gentile living" in its thirteen rooms, a dairy and kitchen, four cellars, a dovecote, stables, a barn and henhouse, an orchard of 2500 apple trees, a garden of 100 feet square, and a grist mill (Davis 1963: 175-176). Fitzhugh's plantation was an entire community in itself-- a network of self-sufficiency.

Such provisioning caused another great landowner, William Byrd, to remark in a 1726 letter, "I live in a kind of Independence on everyone but Providence" (VMHB 1924, XXXII: 27). That such an attitude was widespread and not confined to the wealthiest of plantations is indicated by the Reverend Jones' observation that similar organization prevailed among all planters, "affording the owner the provisions of a little market" (1724: 73-74).

Self-sufficiency applied to skilled labor, as well. This is apparent in the wills and papers of various planters and even in the most mundane business transactions to be found in the Gloucester County records. Trained indentured servants and skilled laborers were sent for from England and purchased by plantation owners to provide them with necessary sources of craftsmanship. William Nelson of

Yorktown asked John Norton in 1766 to procure and send to Virginia a tailor to be indentured to Nelson for four years (Mason 1937: 17). Fitzhugh requested a bricklayer and carpenter to help him with his building projects in 1681, shoemakers for his new tan house in 1692, and others as his needs dictated (Davis 1963: 92, 308). Slaves with specific abilities were passed along as bequests to family members in order to keep their skills in hand. Lewis Burwell willed several carpenters to his children in 1710 (Mason 1948: 43).

Newly freed indentured servants might "work day-labour, or else rent a small plantation for a trifle almost; or else turn overseers, if they are expert, industrious, or careful, or follow their trade, if they have been brought up to any; especially smiths, carpenters, taylors, sawyers, coopers, bricklayers, etc." (Jones 1724: 57-58). The Reverend Jones' confident assessment of the labor situation is admirable but his perceptions did not take into account the dependence of such an existence upon the need for such services. When servants were freed, they were able to sell their skills but rarely could these men separate their existence from the plantations. Most likely they farmed a small plot, either rented or owned, and could ply their trade only as demand dictated. Owners of water and grist mills often sold their services to the county at large, but these operations quite frequently belonged to large landowners such as Fitzhugh, Edmund Berkeley, and John Mann, and were only part of a

larger plantation complex rather than independent pursuits. Artisans did reside within the county, unquestionably; a sample of professions can be drawn from the Gloucester County records, including weaver, shipwright, carpenter, ship's carpenter, wheelwright, inn keeper, and millwright (Mason 1948: 118-135). The Petsworth Parish Vestry Book makes reference to many others: joiner, glazier, ironworker, bricklayer, carpenter, cooper, shipwright, weaver (Chamberlayne 1933). It seems likely, however, that the majority of these craftsmen were servants; the records show, too, that these trades were found among the plantations but not in Gloucestertown.

A combination, then, of planter self-sufficiency and the 'boom and bust' tobacco market directly affected the demand, or more truly the lack of demand, for an independent and urban artisan class in Gloucester County and much of Virginia. Carville Earle noted these same constraints in his study of Londontown, a product of similar town legislation in Maryland (Earle 1975). For a period of approximately forty years, merchants and a smaller number of specialists such as carpenter, cooper, shipwright, tailor, doctor, inn keeper and blacksmith, clustered in Londontown, especially during prosperous times within the tobacco trade. With the termination of its tobacco inspection warehouse in 1747, the onset of another depression, and changes in shipping routes, these specialists slowly abandoned Londontown.

Residence of craftsmen in urban centers such as Londontown fluctuated with the cycles of the tobacco industry. Markets dwindled with depressions; with this decrease in demand for services came a decrease in the number of town residents. A class of artisans living off the plantation could not be supported in such an unstable climate for any length of time without a strong economic foundation.

While this may explain only in part the variability in town development, it must certainly be a key to the developmental differences between Londontown, Yorktown, Gloucestertown, and any other Tidewater settlement. The profiles of these towns are assuredly marked by contrasts. Londontown, site of a church, courthouse, and several ordinaries, achieved some success in recruiting urban residents until its tobacco-tied future and shallow economic base collapsed in depression and in shifting social and economic conditions. Against this picture, there is Gloucestertown with its moderate but regular economic activity, also tied to tobacco; its small community, with a limited economic base and rural background, apparently lacked artisans among its members. Gloucestertown's future faded with diversification in the late 1700s and with the end of the tobacco inspection warehouse in the 1780s.

Londontown and Gloucestertown were both settlements of modest size and success with specific demographic

characteristics due to one very significant factor: the economic base of these settlements, the wellspring of their future and ultimate failure, was inextricably linked to tobacco. This was not always enough to draw a truly urban artisan class to the site, as in Gloucestertown. Difficulty in establishing a solid resident artisan class seems to be linked to a serious depression between 1680 and 1710, the crucial years of town formation, and to further depressed conditions after 1750. When the connection to tobacco was broken, the economic foundation in each town was not strong enough or deep enough to shore up an independent artisan class. With this severing of ties, the urban assemblage melted back into the rural landscape.

We load as fast as we can Stow Away the Tobacco. I left the Ship the Day before yesterday on my way down to Gloster Court at which time She had on board & along side 300 hhds....

Moses Robertson to John Norton
September 6, 1771
(Mason 1937: 182)

By contrast, finally, there is Yorktown; its development was similar to other towns, yet this port differed markedly from its contemporaries. Bergstrom and Kelly found that one reason Yorktown succeeded where other towns failed lay in the expansion of the town's economic function beyond the limited service industries of tobacco cultivation and inspection to the shipping industry (1980;

1984). This was possible because a 'threshold' was reached; conditions within the county were ripe for urban settlement. Demographic stability, high population density, optimal utilization of land and labor as seen in the number of acres tilled per laborer and in the number of tithables within the general population, and high levels of wealth in the county made greater economic development viable. These conditions produced an economic base strong enough to support an independent artisan class.

A difference in orientation and direction --rural versus urban-- is evident between Gloucestertown and Yorktown. Initial lot owners were of a rural background in Yorktown, as were the lot owners in Gloucestertown. Bergstrom and Kelly feel these purchasers were being 'civic minded' but were not truly committed to an urban future; their interest was limited and resulted in the forfeiture of many lots from lack of development. The second wave of lot owners was urban oriented; their commitment to Yorktown broadened the economic base of the town and brought less traditional and less rural crafts to the area, such as that of a cabinet maker who opened shop in Yorktown in 1769 (Mason 1937: 105). These crafts and trades, particularly the operation of taverns, developed and expanded in conjunction with the shipping industry as it flourished in Yorktown. Sailors required lodging, ships required maintenance and repair, goods required storage areas. This

activity encouraged, in turn, further crafts and secondary support activities. Add to this the obvious pull exerted by the presence of the church and the courthouse and it is evident that such depth turned Yorktown into a self-supporting community.

A further example of the importance of economic depth to the stimulation of urban settlement is provided by Nancy Baker's study of Annapolis, Maryland (1982: 61-71). Annapolis' early period was characterized by a few basic industries tied to shipping, specifically ship building and lodging. At the end of the 17th century, Annapolis assumed a political function, serving as capital to the Maryland colony. In response to an increasing bureaucratic presence, other industries were drawn into Annapolis. Growing urban residence encouraged the appearance of merchants and craftsmen from other support industries. This broadening of the business community coincided with an increase in shipping, a rise in the import market, and expansion in ship building. New residents included ropemakers, shipwright, sailmakers, staymakers, carvers, goldsmiths, butchers, barbers, cabinet makers, curriers, pewterers, hatters, printers and stonemasons. Expansion in each area fueled and reinforced growth in other industries present in Annapolis.

The qualities and fluctuations of the tobacco market made the support of any resident artisan class founded upon its operations too difficult in the long and the short run.

Expansion beyond a limited product and its required processes of cultivation and marketing was critical to the survival of Tidewater towns. While a broad economic base was not the sole determinant for success, clearly it made the difference for towns with other centralizing, activity-attracting features such as a church or courthouse. A broad base made towns such as Hampton, Norfolk, Urbanna and Yorktown the most successful and prosperous of the legislated port towns while other settlements such as Cobham, Bermuda Hundred and Queenstown, despite their public and economic institutions, were limited by the success of tobacco.

We set sail and came as far as Yorktown and landed at Gloucester and there we supped and lay that night. This town is of one side of York River and Yorktown on the other side opposite to it.

John Fontaine, 1715
(Alexander 1972: 82)

Yorktown and Gloucestertown developed in very similar counties demographically and economically, being areas of early settlement and rich tobacco producers; yet there were some very significant differences. There is little reason to suppose that the difference could be found in the physical qualities of the ports; it is not likely that Yorktown's wharves were more sheltered or better placed than Gloucestertown's which were snug inside a cove. The answer lies quite clearly in the types of facilities set around the

wharves and on the bank of the river. Yorktown had a church, courthouse, customs house, and an impressive array of warehouses and stores and lodgings. Gloucestertown had none of the former and only a few of the other establishments. The economic base of Yorktown could expand far beyond that of Gloucestertown which was tied to the cyclical depressions of the tobacco market. Gloucestertown did not have the necessary economic foundation for supporting an artisan class. Thus, the in-town services of Yorktown were dispersed throughout Gloucester County. Carpenters, brickmakers, weavers and millwrights could be found more often on plantations with other such specialists.

As outlined here and in earlier chapters, Gloucestertown had very few positive factors to spur its development. Weighed against any favorable attributes were a number of severe deficiencies: no church, no courthouse, placement in a non-central location, and a limited economic base which made the attraction of a resident artisan class unlikely. Given such constraints, Gloucestertown was unlikely to have been successfully established, let alone developed to any extent. Yet Gloucestertown was settled for nearly a century and we are faced with a contradiction unless we find another source for its strength and another reason for the commitment of Gloucester County residents to the town.

The presence of some other factor or motivation unconnected with the town legislation and its stated goal is

apparent. The following section seeks to draw this motivation from Gloucestertown's rich historical background. Based on an ethnographic analysis of the town residents for cultural categories, structures and values, it is felt that a community existed in Gloucestertown, a strong corporation which was responsible for Gloucestertown's continued participation within the Tidewater's network of burgeoning towns, and which gave strength and meaning to the town's existence. Indeed, it was an extension of a community already defined by plantation society, by Virginians of a certain social and economic class, with certain values and aims. The presence of a community among town residents seems to have given its members a source of motivation and further sustenance for maintaining their urban existence despite adverse economic and social conditions. And perhaps the guiding values at the heart of the community were not wholly unconnected with the aims of the town legislators after all, that of establishing a 'more regular settlement' with its promised amenities of English town life.

CHAPTER IV
THE COMMUNITY

Item two young horses to my good friends
Majr Lawrence Smith & Majr Robert
Beverley whom I entrust to be a guide to
my dear wife.

Will of Edward Dobson, 1677
Abingdon Parish
(Mason 1948: 52)

Your Friend & Kinsman Nat. Burwell.

Letter to John Norton, 1768
Gloucester County
(Mason 1937: 61)

Thomas Bender, in Community and Social Change in America (1982), defines community as "a limited number of people in a somewhat restricted social space or network held together by shared understanding and a sense of obligation" (p.7). The community is based on and reinforced by common interests and values, shared experience, and a feeling of mutuality. It provides emotional satisfaction and economic support to its members through the social network it creates.

The structures of community life shape the behavioral patterns of members, providing a system of shared meanings to direct and sustain. These structures alter from one community to the next, based on the needs and resources of the members, to service a variety of wants and essential

requirements of daily living. The internal structure of a community guides association and alliance, the exchange and sharing of resources, the values for judging behavior and new associations, the attribution of status, and the definition of community norms.

Associational categories provide the basis for social interaction, group formation and social positioning in Clachan on the Isle of Lewis (Mewett 1982). Through kinship, neighborhood, and church, relationships are simplified and classified into appropriate contexts of behavior. Kinship provides a sense of belonging; through it, behavioral traits and position are ascribed to an individual. Kinship also forms the basis of a reciprocal network of obligation. The neighborhood provides a social context for exchange and mutual aid on a broader level. The church presents standards by which daily life can be judged, creating common ground for association.

The community is the most basic unit of organization among humans next to affinal and consanguineous ties. Kinship clearly plays an important role in the structure of many communities. David Schneider has found kinship to act as a system of symbols, devices of meaning which guide behavior and association (1972). In Elmdon, England community structure is based on kin networks and provides the model for class and status identification (Strathern 1982). Using these networks, members are able to

differentiate between individuals or to unify the village in contacts with outsiders.

Community often performs an economic role. Anthony Cohen finds that the social organization of Whalsay, Shetland, which forms the structural basis of that community, changed while masked by historical traditions and values (Cohen 1982). This organization once served real economic needs, helping in the distribution of limited resources; with a change in Whalsay's economic strategy, these associational categories have become symbolic idioms only. The economic role of the community seems to be cross-cultural. Family coalitions served as networks of economic importance in 17th century Cape Cod, Massachusetts by keeping land and economic resources in the family through marriage and inheritance (Yentsch 1975). These alliances were redefined with changing needs in the 18th century.

Normative definition and regulation are functions of community. John Demos finds in studying witchcraft in 17th century New England communities that the interactive nature of the community and its ongoing dialogue can lead to conflict over social values (1982). The accusations and trials of suspected witches served to enforce the shared morals and values of community members. Because certain individuals did not conform to prevailing social standards set by these New England communities, the response of the community members, in defense of their values, was to

conduct a series of proceedings against the deviants in the form of a trial for witchcraft. In this manner, witchcraft served to define and sustain the ties of the community. Their values provided the basis for conflict and resolution which, in turn, reaffirmed and reinforced them, defining what was unacceptable behavior. Emotional involvement with the trials acted to unify, sustain, even strengthen the bonds of these communities.

These various studies show the flexibility of community structures to fit the needs of those being served, from directing association and exchange to ascribing status and defining behavior. Stephen Innes' examination of 17th century Springfield, Massachusetts shows how the lack of 'community' caused a reorganization of structures in that settlement (1983). The role of the Pynchon family in developing and financing the town and its activities supplanted the traditional role of the community. By controlling large areas of land and subsidizing all industries, the Pynchons projected themselves into the roles of mediators and providers. They served as the political link to the rest of the colony. As providers, the Pynchons imported and employed laborers for a variety of tasks, and made available land for rent, commercial goods for purchase and consumption, and credit and financing for various undertakings.

The uncertainty of tenancy, economic success and

employment made life a constant struggle for Springfield residents. Dependency on the Pynchon family and organization displaced the characteristically sustaining bonds of the community; these socio-economic conditions led to the formation of a materialistic, self-serving orientation among Springfield residents. Individual needs took precedence; these were satisfied through the strengthening of the patron-client relationship, to the neglect of neighborly relations. This is reflected in the numerous accounts of criminal and civil court proceedings. Clearly, the lack of community ties leaves a void which may be filled in other ways, but which may also be less satisfying or desirable perhaps.

Interestingly, all the studies mentioned above are of communities placed in actual physical locations, specifically in towns and villages. Historical studies of the community in New England have shown the nature of social interaction in New England towns and the importance of the community in shaping behavioral patterns. The community is not dependent on locality, however; rather, the town is just one of several forms in which the community exists. For the 17th and 18th centuries in New England, the town did provide the main context for community life. In 17th century Virginia, this was not the case because of the absence of towns.

The social networks described by Bender existed between

residents of a plantation and between Virginians of a common social and economic status in the 17th century. Knowing that community was not necessarily linked to towns, we should be aware of its changing form as it shifted from plantation to town. This transition did not take place immediately, nor did this new form of social organization replace or even dominate the preexisting community networks among and within the plantations. Not until the late 17th and the early 18th centuries do towns become a regular feature in the Tidewater area. The community becomes very significant, then, in the study of settlement patterns and in understanding why Virginians lived as they did. This shift from a rural to an urban setting did take place; a community did exist in Gloucestertown, where residents shared similar backgrounds, interests, values, and social rank, and were associated through business, family and friendship. Understanding the social context of their lives helps us to interpret the material remains of Gloucestertown because it provides possible reasons for the behavioral patterns which created these remains and which are reflected in their deposition.

The place consists of some 30 houses
which belong generally to wealthy people
who have great plantations in the county.

Johann Ewald on
Gloucestertown, 1781
(Ewald 1979: 321)

The 1707 plat of Gloucestertown, drawn by Miles Cary, lists the first purchasers, numbering 58, of town lots between the first and second town acts (1680 and 1691) (see Figure 11). Searching through historical documents shows the presence of networks and alliances among many of these men, and shared characteristics in terms of their residence patterns, political and religious aspirations, and family and business ties: common ground in their views of society and daily living.

David Alexander, resident of Petsworth Parish in Gloucester County until his death in 1720, possessed many of these characteristics in his historical profile. Alexander was a large and wealthy land owner in a tobacco-rich area, holding 1050 acres in Petsworth Parish in 1704/5 (Smith 1957: 86). "Capt. Alexanders quarter in the Neck" was a frequent reference, a landmark, in the surveying of precincts as recorded in the Vestry Book for Petsworth Parish (Chamberlayne 1933: 30), reflecting Alexander's important role within the parish and his status within the county at large. Alexander was a man of responsibility as a justice of the peace between 1714 and 1720 (Mason 1946: 121), a captain of the militia (Chamberlayne 1933: 129-130), and within Petsworth Parish where he took the Anglican Oath of Allegiance in 1699, a vestryman from 1699-1715 and churchwarden between 1701-1702 (Chamberlayne 1933: 32-152). The vestry records show also that Dr. Alexander worked in

Figure 11: List of Initial Gloucestertown Investors
Courtesy of the Filson Club, Kentucky.

| | | | |
|----|--------------------|----|--------------------|
| 1 | Thomas Groves | 34 | Ralph Wormley |
| 2 | Robert Clarke | 35 | John Williams |
| 3 | Benjamin Read | 36 | Chillem White |
| 4 | Richard Lee | 37 | Phillip Hays |
| 5 | James Hanson | 38 | Mr. Carter |
| 6 | W. Smith | 39 | Doc Green |
| 7 | Madame Warner | 40 | Blank |
| 8 | Phillip Cooper | 41 | John Stokes |
| 9 | Mr. Baytop | 42 | John Errington |
| 10 | Edmund Berkeley | 43 | William Thornth |
| 11 | John Mizer | 44 | Henry Waring |
| 12 | Edmund Fortens | 45 | Benjamin Glem |
| 13 | Major Burwell | 46 | Edward Crossfield |
| 14 | John Smith | 47 | James Holt |
| 15 | John Mann | 48 | Mr. Dunbar |
| 16 | Robert Britton | 49 | Lawrence Orritt |
| 17 | Henry Pale | 50 | Richard Hubbard |
| 18 | Doc. Crimes | 51 | John Stubbs |
| 19 | Robert Bryan | 52 | John Puckner |
| 20 | Robert Crough | 53 | Robert Carter |
| 21 | Samuel Aldred | 54 | Thomas Darwell jr. |
| 22 | William Herby | 55 | John Dolson |
| 23 | Richard Dism | 56 | Jos. Mumford |
| 24 | Peter Beverly | 57 | Thomas Hole |
| 25 | James Cardle | 58 | Edward Lakell |
| 26 | Mr. Francis Willis | 59 | Robert Thompson |
| 27 | David Alexander | 60 | Col. Whitinge |
| 28 | John Puckner | 61 | Humphrey Nichols |
| 29 | John Todd | 62 | Abraham Bradley |
| 30 | John Green | | |
| 31 | Lawrence Smith | | |
| 32 | John Parister | | |
| 33 | Thomas Scott | | |

the service of the parish "Effecting a Cure" and in giving "physick and attendance" (Chamberlayne 1933: 32-86). Other parish duties included keeping bastard children in 1704 and 1718, processioning tobacco in one of the precincts, and helping the sick and the poor (Chamberlayne 1933: 83, 141). Alexander assumed a regular position of responsibility and leadership within Petsworth Parish and Gloucester County; his sons continued to meet his responsibilities and take on their own after his death, with John aiding in the maintenance of parish residents and David Jr. serving as a county justice, vestryman and churchwarden, and as a militia officer.

Alexander is not typical, perhaps, of all the lot owners but many traits identified with his lifestyle are to be found among his associates in the purchase of town lots. Not all lot owners can be located in the documentary record, but many of them are immediately visible and provide us with interesting details about their lives. These gentlemen had a notable impact on other members in the community and in the colony as well.

Edmund Berkeley, another major land holder, purchased lot no.10 located directly on the Gloucestertown cove where it merges with the York River. The Quit Rent Roll identifies only 750 acres in Middlesex County belonging to Berkeley in 1704/5 (p.87), but his will of 1718 shows an additional 4000+ acres in King William County, a tract in

King and Queen County, and a tract in Petsworth Parish, Gloucester County. These parcels were divided among his sons at his death (Mason 1948: 46). The purchase of one of the best waterfront lots in Gloucestertown, combined with his outside land holdings, identifies him as an investor; in this case, his interest in the town's future as a port is shown.

Although not apparent from the Quit Rent Roll, Berkeley also resided in Abingdon Parish for some time; the births of his four children are recorded in the parish register between 1704 and 1711 (Lee 1892: 28-36). His residence here is attributable to familial ties which linked Berkeley to Abingdon Parish through John and Mary Mann of Timberneck. Mary Mann nee Kemp was Berkeley's mother; after the death of Edmund Berkeley Sr., she was remarried to John Mann (Mason 1948: 40). Mann died between 1693 and 1695; he left to his 'son-in-law' £50 sterling and half of his land which would include at least 300 acres in Abingdon Parish for Berkeley (Mason 1948: 40).

Berkeley may have resided at Timberneck, the Mann homestead, during these years; as guardian for his half sister Mary's children by Matthew Page and trustee of the property they were to receive, he may have lived at the plantation. Berkeley was charged with the care of the cattle, horses, mares, sheep, hogs, working tools, slaves and household necessities which accompanied £2000 sterling

held in trust and Timberneck. Mann Page was to receive the plantation when he reached his majority (Mason 1848: 41). Perhaps Berkeley lived on his own lot in Gloucestertown, one of the largest as well as the best sited lots in the port, or perhaps on the lot which was still held in John Mann's name in 1707. Whatever the case, he was quite clearly a resident of Abingdon Parish in the early 18th century before moving on to Middlesex County in 1714.

Berkeley was a man of wealth and status. There are other indications of this beyond his land holding status which show that Berkeley was an important and respected resident of the colony. As a member of the Governor's Council in 1713 (Mason 1946: 120), a role of obvious social and political standing, and as an officer of the militia, Berkeley was frequently accorded the title of esquire. He is said to have owned a library of 103 books (Wright 1940: 147), a rare commodity among most Virginians in a predominantly oral culture. A deed records the sale of four slaves by Benjamin Clements, another Gloucestertown lot owner, to Berkeley in 1714/15 (Mason 1948: 45); it is likely that he owned more. Many of his purchases were paid for in pounds sterling, including that for 25 head of "black Cattell, hogs & other things", purchased from Robert Peyton for £145 in 1714 (Mason 1948: 45). Further status came from his associations; Berkeley was well connected to other leading families within the county and the colony, including

the Manns and Kemps, the Burwells (his wife, Lucy, was the daughter of Major Lewis Burwell, a Gloucestertown lot owner), the Pages and the Rings.

The Mumford family arrived in Gloucester County by the 1670s and members still lived in the county by the late 18th century, thus exhibiting one trait of Gloucestertown lot owners: continuity of residence within the county. Joseph's father, Edward, patented 80 acres on Tindall's Point in 1679 (Mason 1946: 56). As a resident of Abingdon Parish, the births of his children were recorded in the parish register (Lee 1892: 8-12). Edward Mumford's associates, indicated by his 1679 patent, included the Fleets and Todds who were among the earliest Gloucester Point residents. Elizabeth Bannister, widow, was the mother of lot owner John Bannister; she sold a piece of property to Mumford. Other associates, neighbors in fact, included John Bannister, as heir to his father's property on the Point, and Richard Booker, another landowner on the Point and a 1707 lot owner.

Edward Mumford's son, Joseph, built his place in the county as heir to Edward. During the time he spent in Abingdon Parish, Mumford accumulated property and status as a slaveholder, as an appraiser for the court, and as a man due the title of 'Mr'. Mumford was an appraiser for Robert Mynne's estate in 1719; Mynne's daughter was Sarah Thruston who would be the wife of Gloucestertown merchant John Thruston in the 1740s. Other participants in this court-

sponsored event were Edward Booker, son of 1707 lot owner Richard Booker, and James Holt, yet another lot holder. Mumford's son was born in Abingdon Parish in 1719; Thomas married Sarah Booker, granddaughter of Richard Booker. Though on the lower end of the economic and social scale, Mumford still acquired standing within the community as a servant of the court, as a long time resident, and through his family associations.

James Ransome is another representative of many qualities possessed by the early Gloucestertown lot owners. His father settled in the 1650s along North River (Mason 1946: 61). Having committed his future to residence in Gloucester County, Peter Ransome built a sizeable estate of 1100 acres which he left for his two sons at his death (Mason 1946: 61). James Ransome's share formed the basis for the political and economic status he enjoyed. Holder of 1400 acres in Kingston Parish in his own right by 1704/5, Ransome also managed the estate of his niece Elizabeth, consisting of 500 acres on the North River, hogs, two mares, and a plantation (Mason 1948: 121). Ransome was a respected individual in his community, on the county and the colony level; he thus earned the title of esquire to indicate his status. Ransome was a member of the House of Burgesses between 1692 and 1706, and a county justice from 1702 to 1706 (Mason 1946: 121); he held a high rank in the militia as a colonel; and between 1679 and 1706 he served Kingston

Parish as vestryman and churchwarden (Chamberlayne 1929). Such was his standing in the parish that Ransome built a family pew in 1691.

A last profile of a Gloucestertown lot owner is provided by Colonel Henry Whiting. The Whiting family had a lengthy association with Gloucester County. The colonel's father, Major Henry Whiting, is known to have settled here by the 1680s when his joint patents with John Buckner appear for the Elmington-Exchange Tract, multiple purchases of land in excess of one thousand acres (Mason 1946: 14). Whiting's descendants are traced in Gloucester County and Gloucestertown through parish registers, court records, and the 1770/1782 tax lists (see Figure 12).

The family tree for the Whitings shows the colonel and his descendants to be well connected with leading county families and with men associated through Gloucestertown. Colonel Whiting was married to the daughter of lot owner Peter Beverley. His brother Francis married a Perrin (the Perrins were 1707 lot owners); another brother Thomas married into the Kemp family (also related to the Manns and Berkeleys, early lot owners, and to William Kemp, 1707 lot owner). Later generations married into the Cooke, Perrin and Beverley families several times, as well as to a Burwell and a Hubbard, descendants of lot owners, and to the Thruston family, the patriarch of that family being John Thruston, Gloucestertown merchant.

Figure 12: The Whiting Family Tree^a

^a Underline indicates families associated with Gloucestertown.

Colonel Whiting had a strong political background as well. His father was a burgess, councillor and court member, militia officer, sheriff and deputy escheator. Among his descendants were 4 sheriffs, 2 burgesses, 5 justices, and 7 militia officers in the 18th century, indicating a continuing tradition of political involvement and acquired social prestige as a result. Tied into this attribution of status was Whiting's position as a major land owner with 800 acres in Ware Parish. His son Thomas held 1410 acres, slaves, and two lots in Gloucestertown in 1770 when the tax list was drawn up (Mason 1946: 104).

Stepping back from these personal profiles, the characteristics displayed by these men appear to belong to many other Gloucestertown lot owners in terms of land holdings, residency, economic and social status, business and political interests, education, family associations, and prominence within the community. Table 5 charts the land holdings and other known characteristics and attributes of the pre-1707 lot owners, showing clear and definite patterns among these men and shared characteristics between them.

All but four purchasers were known residents of Gloucester County at some time during the late 17th or 18th centuries (93%). There is no information thus far on three of these men, but the fourth most likely was a member of a long established Gloucester County family, the Todds, who purchased land on Gloucester Point as early as the 1650s.

Table 5: Socio-Economic Characteristics
of pre-1707 Gloucestertown Lot Purchasers

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Residence</u> ^a | <u>Holdings</u> | <u>Offices/Property/Titles</u> |
|--------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|
| Aldred, Samuel | Kingston P. | 350ac. | |
| Alexander, D physician | Petsworth | 1050ac. | vestryman, churchwarden, militia officer, justice |
| Bannister, John | Abingdon* (Kingston | 2750ac. 650ac.) | customs officer/ slaves/ addressed as 'Mr.' |
| Bates, Henry | Abingdon* (Ware | unknown 200ac.) | addressed as "Mr." |
| Baytop ^b | Gl. County | unknown | addressed as 'Mr.' |
| Berkeley, Edmund | Abingdon* (Middlesex Co (Pets. P. | unknown 750ac) unknown) | Councillor, militia/ slaves, books, livestock, +4500ac. elsewhere/ esq. |
| Beverley, Peter | Petsworth (Ware (Kingston | unknown 800ac.) 230ac.) | Burgess, clerk; surveyor; Councillor; parish clerk; county clerk; militia; treasurer, auditor of colony; escheator |
| Boswell, Thomas | Abingdon | 1100ac. | |
| Bradley, Abraham | Abingdon* | 211ac. | |
| Bristow, R. merchant | Ware (Kingston | 2050ac. 900ac.) | Burgess, militia officer/ esquire |
| Bryan, Robert | Abingdon* | 400ac. | addressed as 'Mr.' |
| Buckner, J. planter/ merchant | Petsworth (Ware | 300ac. +2000ac.) | Burgess, clerk of court, vestryman, parish clerk/ addressed as 'Mr.' |
| <u>Burwell</u> , Lewis | Abingdon* (other | 3300ac. +23000ac.) | Councillor, court, militia/ slaves/ gent. |
| Carter, Robert | Petsworth (other by 1732 | 1102ac. +300000ac.) | Councillor, Burgess, militia, justice, vestry- man, churchwarden, trustee customs collector/slaves/ esquire, 'Mr.' |
| Caudle, James | Abingdon* | unknown | |
| Clements, B. planter/ merchant | Abingdon* (Pets.P. (King Wm Co | 500ac. 400ac.) 600ac.) | slaves/ title of 'Mr.' |
| Cooke ^c | Petsworth | 350ac. | surveyor/ mill/ 'Mr.' |
| Cooper, P. | Ware | 200ac. | |

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Residence</u> | <u>Holdings</u> | <u>Offices/Property/Titles</u> |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------|--|
| Crafield, Edward | unknown | unknown | |
| Crimes, W. planter/ physician | Petsworth | 400ac. | churchwarden, vestryman/ gentleman, 'Mr.' |
| Dixon, Richard | Abingdon* (York Co.) | 200ac. 450ac.) | slaves/ title of 'Mr.' |
| Dobson, Edward | Abingdon* | 400ac. | |
| Dunbar ^d gunner or ferryman | Abingdon* | unknown | title of 'Mr.' |
| Erbrough, Robert | Abingdon* | 100ac. | house |
| Errington, John | unknown | unknown | |
| Graves, Thomas | Abingdon* | 280ac. | title of 'Mr.' |
| Green, T. physician | Petsworth | unknown | churchwarden, vestryman/ title of 'Mr.' |
| Gwyn, John | Kingston | 1100ac. | justice, militia officer/ title of 'Mr.' |
| Holt, James | Abingdon* | unknown | slaves, servants/ 'Mr.' |
| Hubbard, Richard | Petsworth | 100ac. | parish processioneer/ title of 'Mr.' |
| Kerby, William | unknown | unknown | |
| Lassell, Edward | Kingston (Ware) | 230ac. 200ac.?) | |
| Lee, Richard | Petsworth | 1140ac. | Councillor, court, customs collector, militia/ gent., esquire mill, slaves/ gent. |
| <u>Mann</u> , John | Abingdon | 600ac. | |
| May, Philip | Petsworth | unknown | clerk of Petsworth Parish |
| Mixen, John | Abingdon* | 400ac. | |
| Mumford, Joseph | Abingdon* | 80ac. | appraiser/ slaves/ 'Mr.' |
| Nichols, Humphrey | Abingdon* | unknown | |
| Poole, Thomas | Ware (Eliz.City) | 600ac. 1200ac.?) | |
| <u>Porteus</u> , E. merchant/planter | Petsworth | 500ac. | vestryman, churchwarden/ gentleman, 'Mr.' |

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Residence</u> | <u>Holdings</u> | <u>Offices/Property/Titles</u> |
|--------------------------|--|---|--|
| Ransome, James | Kingston | 1400ac. | justice, Burgess, militia, vestryman, churchwarden/ gentleman |
| Reade, Benjamin | Petsworth (Kingston (York County | unknown 550ac.) unknown) | gentleman lot in Yorktown |
| Scott, Thomas | Petsworth (other | unknown unknown) | parish proccessioner |
| <u>Smith</u> , John | Abingdon* (Pets.P. | 200ac. 1300ac.) | Burgess, Councillor, court, justice, sheriff, surveyor, militia, tob. inspector/ slaves/esquire |
| Smith, Lawrence | Abingdon | +2000ac. | Burgess, surveyor, militia/ slaves/ Mr. |
| Starke, Robert | Abingdon (York Co. | 100ac. 250ac.) | |
| Stoakes, John | Abingdon* | 300ac. | title of 'Mr.' |
| Stubbs, John | Abingdon* (Pets.P. | 300ac. 300ac.) | proccessioner, surveyor/ slaves/ title of 'Mr.' |
| Thornton, William | Petsworth (Rappahannock | 525ac. 2000ac.) | vestryman/ title of 'Mr.' |
| Thurston, Robert | Petsworth | 50ac. | militia officer/ gent. |
| Todd, John | Abingdon? | unknown | |
| Waring, Henry | Kingston | 152ac. | vestryman, militia/ title of 'Mr.' |
| Warner, Madam Mildred | Abingdon (York Co. | unknown 29ac.) | wife of Burgess, militia officer, council, court |
| White, Chillion | Abingdon* (King Wm Co. | 100ac. 300ac.) | |
| Whiting, Henry | Ware | 800ac. | justice, sheriff, escheator, militia |
| Williams, John | Abingdon* (York Co. (Kingston (King & Queen | unknown 100ac.) 50ac.) 410ac.) | |
| Willis, Francis | Ware | 3000ac. | Burgess, militia/ esquire |
| Wormeley, Ralph | Petsworth (Middlesex Co. | 400ac. 5200ac.) | Burgess, Councillor, secretary of state, customs collector, justice, militia/ esquire |

*indicates listing in the Abingdon Parish Register.
_____ indicates 1707 lot owner.

- a residence listed by parish unless otherwise designated.
- b possibly Thomas Bacop listed in the Quit Rent Roll, 1704/5 for 200 acres in Ware Parish; Baytops were residing in Ware Parish later.
- c presumed to be Thomas Cooke of Petsworth Parish
- d Gawen Dunbar or Richard Dunbar

The families of 23 lot owners are known to have been inhabitants of Gloucester County since it was first opened to settlement in the 1640s through the 1660s (39.7%). The Lees, Ransomes, Burwells, Graves, and Bannisters were among the first to settle here; Burwell and Lee forebearers perhaps even before the massacre of 1644. The first member of the Graves family in Virginia arrived at Jamestown in 1608. His son, the father of the lot owner, patented 295 acres in Gloucester County in 1657, including 55 acres on Timberneck Creek where he chose to settle (near Tindall's Point) (Mason 1946: 33). James Ransome's father, Peter, settled on North River in the 1650s. The patents of John Bannister's father, who appears in the historical record by the 1650s, show many associations with early Gloucestertown lot owners even at this early date. The arrival of 13 others can be traced to the 1670s (22.4%), 10 to the 1680s (17.2%), and 5 to the 1690s (8.6%). There is nothing to indicate the time at which the remaining 7 arrived (12.1%). At least 36 lot owners, then, lived in Gloucester County before the first town act (62.1%) (Table 6).

The descendants of at least 30 lot owners, over half of the group, are known to have still made their homes in Gloucester County during the 18th century (51.7%). The offspring of many lot owners appear in the Gloucester County tax lists for 1770 and 1782. Thomas Bates of Ware Parish made claim to one free male, two slaves, two horses, and

Table 6: Residence Patterns of
pre-1707 Gloucestertown Lot Purchasers^a

| <u>Earliest Recorded Presence in Gloucester County</u> <u>1660s or</u> <u>earlier</u> | <u>1670s</u> | <u>1680s</u> | <u>1690s</u> | <u>unknown</u> |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| Bannister | Bryan | Bates* | Alexander* | Aldred |
| Beverley* | Berkeley* | Boswell | Green* | Baytop* |
| Buckner* | Carter | Bradley* | Nichols | Caudle |
| Burwell* | Cooper | Clements | Reade* | Crafield |
| Bristow | Crimes | Dixon* | Waring | Errington |
| Cooke* | Dunbar* | Lassell | 5 8.6% | Kerby |
| Dobson* | Erbrough | Mixen | | Starke |
| Holt* | May* | Porteus* | | 7 12.1% |
| Hubbard* | Mumford* | Thurston* | | |
| Lee | Poole | White | | |
| Graves* | Stubbs* | 10 17.2% | | |
| Gwyn | Whiting* | | | |
| Mann* | Williams | | | |
| Ransome* | 13 22.4% | | | |
| Scott* | | | | |
| Smith, J.* | | | | |
| Smith, L.* | | | | |
| Stoakes* | | | | |
| Thornton* | | | | |
| Todd | | | | |
| Warner | | | | |
| Willis* | | | | |
| Wormeley | | | | |
| 23 39.7% | | | | |

^a Based on appearances in county records and land patents; family arrivals may predate these figures which represent the first known appearance in the documentary record.

* Continued residence of family in Gloucester County is indicated.

twelve cattle, for which he paid tax (Mason 1946: 90). Thomas Baytop owned 220 1/3 acres, the services of 1 free male, 10 slaves, 2 horses, and 13 cattle; he was also trustee of 1800 acres in Ware Parish along with John Dixon, a descendant of lot owner Richard Dixon (Mason 1946: 77). James Baytop Jr. held a 439 acre estate in 1770 and a 332 acre tract in 1782 along with 1 free male, 11 slaves, 3 horses, 11 cattle and 2 'wheels' in Petsworth Parish (Mason 1946: 97). Others named in the tax lists include Edmund Berkeley, the son or grandson of the lot owner, and Thomas Whiting, who held two lots in Gloucestertown at that time. The tax lists also hint at a greater prosperity for these families. The presence of many other families continuing to reside in Gloucester County is detected through their continued role in politics and county administration, through entries in the Abingdon Parish Register, the Petsworth Parish Vestry Book, and assorted Gloucester County records.

This set of figures indicates, then, a long residence within Gloucester County by most of the owners, from ten years and on, and continued long residence by their families in the 18th century. They had strong ties to county interests and were contributors to the county's development as a wealthy, tobacco-rich area. As such, they were very likely to show an interest in the laying out, planning, and settlement of the new town on Gloucester Point, perhaps as 'civic minded' individuals as in Yorktown and perhaps as

investors in the town's future.

The chief residence of 28 lot owners (48.3%) was Abingdon Parish, in which Gloucestertown was located. Petsworth Parish was home to 17 owners (29.3%). Five came from Ware Parish (8.6%) and four came from Kingston Parish (6.9%). The residence of four lot owners is unknown (6.9%). Clearly, the majority of the lot owners were drawn from Abingdon and Petsworth, the parishes closest to Gloucestertown and most closely associated with the York River, an important point of access for those with shipping and mercantile interests.

The land holdings of these fifty-eight men are of interest in determining their character and standing. This information was drawn from the Quit Rent Roll of 1704/5 and various county records (Lee 1892; Mason 1946, 1948; Smith 1957). A fee of two shillings per 100 acres was collected sporadically after 1639 on all lands granted in the colony by patent (Beverley 1705: 249). The resulting Quit Rent Rolls listed every or nearly every land owner by county and by acreage. The only extant list is, happily, for 1704/5, giving us information on nearly all 1707 lot owners and many of the early lot owners as well. Using the rolls and other sources, the holdings of all but eleven lot owners may be charted and thus compared.

In their analysis of Middlesex County residents between 1650 and 1750, the Rutmans divided the planter class into

three groups based on the size of their holdings: small planters averaged 179.9 acres, those in the middle range averaged 297.7 acres, and the planters at the high end of the scale averaged 828.5 acres (Rutman and Rutman 1984: 154-157). Billings also separated the planter class into three groups, with the small planter averaging 50-200 acres in the late 17th century (Billings 1975: 108-110). Billings noted that of the 375 men he classified as great planters and members of the ruling elite between 1660 and 1676, their average holdings were 4200 acres. Morgan figured the average holdings of the Virginia landowner to be 417 acres in 1704, based on the Quit Rent Roll (Morgan 1975: 431-342). This is somewhat higher than the Rutmans' estimate, but the latter is for a one hundred year period and Morgan does also indicate that the average holdings decreased to 336 acres in 1750. The figures would obviously vary from county to county. These different estimates serve to provide a range with which to work.

There is a range of wealth represented among the Gloucestertown lot owners. At the top, we find Robert Carter who owned 1100 acres in Petsworth Parish in 1704/5 and some 300,000 acres, primarily in the Northern Neck, 1000 negroes, and £10,000 at his death (Wright 1940). At the other end of the spectrum is Robert Thurston who is known only to have held a 50 acre tract. To analyze this expanse of economic wellbeing, an examination of the lot owners'

land holdings is made. For the purposes of this study, it is more useful perhaps to combine the estimates of Morgan, Billings, and the Rutmans and divide the planters into four classes to allow the most recovery of data: small planters falling between 50-200 acres, the middle range from 201-599 acres, large planters from 600-999 acres, and great planters above 1000 acres. Using this categorization, a clear separation into two groups appears, a clear polarization or alignment of planters among the Gloucestertown lot owners into middle planters and great planters (Table 7).

There are only seven men owning 50-200 acres of land alone (12.1%). Seventeen of the lot owners are in the middle range of 201-599 acres (29.3%). Three fall into the next category, 600-999 acres (5.2%). The largest group, represented by eighteen lot owners, held estates over 1000 acres, members of Billings' ruling elite (31.0%). Mildred Warner, though known from a deed to have held a single plot of land totaling 29 acres as a widow (Mason 1948: 117), was the wife of Colonel Augustine Warner whose estate was also above 1000 acres (1.7%). The holdings of twelve lot owners are as yet unknown (20.7%), but based on other background information, two might fall into the third class of large planters while the others would more likely be middle to small planters.

The majority of the lot owners seem to be drawn from the middle or great planter classes, then. As this chart is

Table 7: Land Holding Status
of pre-1707 Gloucestertown Lot Purchasers

| <u>Acreage</u> <u>50-200</u> | <u>201-599</u> | <u>600-999</u> | <u>1000-up</u> | <u>unknown</u> |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Bates | Aldred | Dixon | Alexander | Baytop |
| Cooper | Bradley | Mann | Bannister | Todd |
| Erbrough | Bryan | <u>Whiting</u> | Berkeley | (601-999) * |
| Hubbard | Cooke | 3 5.2% | Beverley | Caudle |
| Mumford | Crimes | | Boswell | Crafield |
| Thurston | Dobson | | Bristow | Dunbar |
| <u>Waring</u> | Graves | | Buckner | Errington |
| 7 12.1% | Lassell | | Burwell | Green |
| | Mixen | | Carter | Holt |
| | Poole | | Clements | Kerby |
| | Porteus | | Gwyn | May |
| | Reade | | Lee | Nichols |
| | Starke | | Ransome | Scott |
| | Stoakes | | Smith, J. | (50-599) * |
| | Stubbs | | Smith, L. | 12 20.7% |
| | White | | Thornton Sr. | |
| | <u>Williams</u> | | Willis | |
| | 17 29.3% | | <u>Wormeley</u> | |
| | | | 18 31.0% | |
| | | | <u>Madam Warner</u> | |
| | | | 1 1.7% | |

* suggested holdings based on background information.

based only on known planter holdings, it is likely that several of these gentlemen would be moved up the scale if all their holdings were discovered; land sales indicate that Mann and Whiting could both easily be moved into the great planter class. The average holdings of the 45 men with known parcels of land in Gloucester County, totaling 38,700 acres, is 860 acres, a very high standard.

The Quit Rent Roll of 1704/5 can be used to break the holdings down on a parish level for some of the men (Table 8). In Abingdon Parish, three of the seven parish residents with estates over 1000 acres owned lots in Gloucestertown before 1707. Their holdings comprised 28% of the parish lands, 8050 of 28,426 acres. Major Burwell was the second largest land owner in Gloucester County at the time of the Quit Rent Roll. Interestingly, two of the remaining four with estates of 1000 acres or more held lots in 1707. Their holdings of 1000 and 2000 acres, when combined with the pre-1707 lot owners, represent 39% of the land in Abingdon Parish. Two gentlemen not included in the Quit Rent Roll as earlier residents of the parish also held estates of 1100 and at least 2000 acres.

In Petsworth Parish in 1705, there were 9 estates over 1000 acres in size; four of their owners held lots in Gloucestertown. Their combined holdings added up to 11.2% of the 41,132 acres in Petsworth Parish. Six estates exceeded 1000 acres in Ware Parish as listed in the Quit

Table 8: Major Land Holders by Parish Among
pre-1707 Gloucestertown Lot Purchasers^a

Parish

Abingdon:

| | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------|---------------------|
| 1704/5 | Bannister | 2750 | | |
| Quit Rent | Smith, J. | 2000 | | |
| Roll | Burwell | <u>3300</u> | | |
| | | 8050 | acres | 28% of parish lands |

| | | | | |
|---------|-----------|-------------|-------|--|
| Land | Boswell | 1100 | | |
| Patents | Smith, L. | <u>2000</u> | | |
| | | 3100 | acres | |

Petsworth:

| | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------|-----------------------|
| 1704/5 | Alexander | 1050 | | |
| Quit Rent | Carter | 1102 | | |
| Roll | Lee | 1140 | | |
| | Smith, J. | <u>1300</u> | | |
| | | 4592 | acres | 11.2% of parish lands |

Ware:

| | | | | |
|-----------|---------|-------------|-------|---------------------|
| 1704/5 | Bristow | 2050 | | |
| Quit Rent | Willis | <u>3000</u> | | |
| Roll | | 5050 | acres | 16% of parish lands |

| | | | | |
|---------|---------|-------|-------|--|
| Land | Buckner | +2000 | acres | |
| Patents | | | | |

Kingston:

| | | | | |
|-----------|---------|-------------|-------|----------------------|
| 1704/5 | Gwyn | 1100 | | |
| Quit Rent | Ransome | <u>1400</u> | | |
| Roll | | 2500 | acres | 5.3% of parish lands |

Gloucester County:

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1704/5 holdings | total=147,698 acres |
| 11 estates | total= 20,192 acres |

13.7% of county lands

^a Taken from 1704/5 Quit Rent Roll (Smith 1957).

Rent Roll; two of these belonged to lot owners and represented 16% of Ware's 31,603 acres. John Buckner, deceased by the time of the 1704/5 listing, also held over 2000 acres in Ware as part of the Elmington-Exchange Tract patented with Major Henry Whiting, father of the lot owner. And in Kingston Parish, of 9 estates comprised of over 1000 acres, two belonged to lot owners, representing 5.3% of the total 46,537 acres in the parish. All together, these eleven gentlemen found in the 1704/5 Quit Rent Roll held 13.7% of the land in Gloucester County in 1705: 20,192 acres out of 147,698 acres in total.

Ben a Male Negro belonging to Mr Holts
Estate.

Abingdon Parish Register, 1741
(Lee 1892: 101)

There are other indicators of wealth among the lot owners. John Bannister inherited a plantation and house that his father leased out during his lifetime (Mason 1946: 5). Benjamin Reade and John Williams owned large tracts of land which were selected as sites for the 50 acre port towns of York and Gloucester Counties. For this, they received 1000 li. sweet scented or Oranoco, the best grade of tobacco (Mason 1948: 113). Reade also owned a lot in Yorktown.

Among the wills that survive there are bequests of a monetary nature in many, a significant occurrence as the majority of Virginians conducted their transactions with

tobacco as the form of currency; British currency was rare and for a time prohibited in the colony. John Mann willed £500 sterling to his stepson Edmund Berkeley; his wife Mary left jewelry to a loved one at her death (Mason 1948: 40-41). Berkeley himself frequently paid for land purchases in pounds sterling and willed to his daughters "all money in Great Britain, Virginia and elsewhere" (Mason 1948:46).

Slaves were introduced into Gloucester County on a large scale in the 1690s. Eleven lot owners were known to have been slave holders. One owner, James Holt, had a servant girl who gave birth to a daughter in 1687, recorded in the Abingdon Parish Register (Lee 1892: 11); the baby would most likely have been brought up in Holt's service or bound to another. There are most likely other lot owners who had access to bound labor though this is not immediately apparent in the historical record.

The names of leading families in Gloucester County and the colony at large appear among the lot owners. Within the county the names of Baytop, Buckner, Cooke, Graves, Mann, Porteus, Stubbs, Todd and Whiting stand out. Members of the upper elite in the colony included Berkeley, Beverley, Lee, Burwell, Carter, Smith, Warner and Wormeley. These gentlemen were addressed with terms of respect such as esquire, gentleman, or 'Mr". There are 37 among the lot owners with such titles who held positions of prominence within the community. Even on the parish level, men such as Alexander,

Buckner, Porteus, and Thornton provided parish members with role models and as such were treated with deference. It is clear that there was an unbreakable link between social structure, political authority and economic status.

The split in land holdings among the lot owners discussed earlier is reflected in the political and social arena. The planters with estates over 1000 acres were the same men holding major political offices and belonging to leading families, Billings' ruling elite, in fact. Land was clearly the key to upward social mobility and political stature in a society whose economic foundation, wealth, and entire orientation were based on a land-consuming tobacco industry. The gentlemen in the middle planter class held positions that were important on the county and parish level but were less meaningful in the colony-wide political and social hierarchy.

The Rutmans found that certain classes of planter society each held a specific range of offices in the county and in the colony (1984). The small planters in Middlesex County were associated with the jobs of juror, appraiser, proccessioner, patroller, and tobacco counter, all positions of a very local nature. Positions claimed most often by middle planters were vestryman, reader, clerk, levy collector, auditor, viewer of tobacco, and low ranking officer in the militia --jobs increasingly high on the political ladder, gaining importance on the county level.

The large or great planters distinguished themselves as tobacco warehouse officers, clerks of court, vestrymen and churchwardens, justices, colonels in the militia, sheriffs, burgesses, king's attorneys, and members of the Executive Council and General Court (Rutman and Rutman 1984: 145-157). These were the uppermost positions open to gentlemen on each level of administration.

Twenty-nine lot owners (50%) held some office or position of prominence in Gloucester County or in the colony at a variety of different levels. Twenty-two different offices have been identified thus far. Some of these office holders came from a background of strong political involvement or began a tradition of political responsibility continued by their descendants (Tables 9 and 10).

For example, the fathers of two lot owners (Whiting and Lee) were burgesses while the descendants of six lot owners were to serve as burgesses for their own generation (Whiting, Burwell, Buckner, Willis and the two Smiths). One father and two sons were councillors (Major Henry Whiting, Lewis Burwell Jr. and John Smith). The father of Richard Lee was secretary of the colony, member of the court and council, a burgess, and attorney general for the colony. The father of Colonel Henry Whiting was a burgess, councillor, colony treasurer, member of the court, a militia officer, and justice of the peace.

Some lot owners devoted much of their lives to their

Table 9: Political Roles of pre-1707
Gloucestertown Lot Purchasers

| <u>Colony Office</u> | <u>No. of Lot Owners Holding Office</u> |
|---------------------------|---|
| House of Burgesses | 11 |
| Speaker of the House | 2 |
| Clerk of the House | 1 |
| Governor's Council | 8 |
| President of the Council | 1 |
| Member of the Court | 8 |
| Customs Officer | 4 |
| Treasurer | 2 |
| Secretary | 2 |
| Surveyor General | 1 |
| Auditor General | 1 |
| Deputy Escheator | 2 |
| <u>County Office</u> | |
| Justice of the Peace | 7 |
| County Sheriff | 2 |
| Militia Officer | 17 |
| Clerk of Court | 2 |
| Tobacco Inspector | 1 |
| County Surveyor | 3 |
| Appraiser of Estates | 2 |
| <u>Parish Offices</u> | |
| Vestryman | 9 |
| Churchwarden | 8 |
| Tobacco Proccessioner | 6 |
| Parish Clerk | 3 |
| Surveyor of Highways | 3 |

Table 10: Political Activity Among Descendants
of pre-1707 Gloucestertown Residents^a

A. Families: Level of Involvement

| <u>Colony</u> | <u>County</u> | <u>Parish</u> |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Buckner | Alexander | Alexander |
| Burwell | Baytop | Buckner |
| Porteus | Buckner | Green |
| Smith, J. | Burwell | Hubbard |
| Smith, L. | Cooke | Porteus |
| Whiting | Dixon | Ransome |
| Willis | Hubbard | Stubbs |
| | Porteus | Thurston |
| | Reade | Thornton |
| | Stubbs | |
| | Whiting | |
| | Willis | |

B. Positions: Number of Offices Held by Descendants

| <u>Colony</u> | <u>County</u> | <u>Parish</u> |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Burgess 9 | Justice 18 | Vestryman 10 |
| Council 2 | Sheriff 10 | Churchwarden 6 |
| Court 2 | Militia 13 | Processioner 7 |
| | Town Trustee 3 | Surveyor Hwys 2 |
| | Tob Inspector 1 | |

^a Known positions represented here; there are likely to be more, particularly among those who may have migrated from Gloucester County.

political careers. Robert Carter's political involvement spanned some 55 years. In addition to being a burgess, councillor, treasurer, naval officer, county justice, and militia officer, Carter also served as proprietary agent for the Northern Neck on behalf of the Fairfax family, a position which he leased in 1726 for £450 per year in return for collection of the quit rents (Wright 1940). The husband of Madam Mildred Warner, Augustine (who predeceased his wife), was a member of the House of Burgesses, council and court during his politically active years. Warner was known as a leader of Virginians in the late 17th century; his importance within the political hierarchy is indicated by Warner's position as a co-signer of a letter, dated 1673, to the King defending the role of Governor Berkeley in the colony (Billings 1975: 262).

On the colony level, ten Gloucestertown lot owners served as members of the House of Burgesses and eight as members of the Governor's Council and General Court (including Colonel Warner). The House of Burgesses and the Council, which together formed the General Assembly, served the colony as the legislative and executive bodies governing the region. The Burgesses were elected by the counties they were to represent; thus, these individuals by needs must have been prominent, respected men within the county.

The council members, usually twelve to sixteen in number, were appointed by the governor with approval of the

Crown; these were usually lifetime positions and while not salaried, placed many other lucrative and influential offices within their reach, especially that of customs collector. These appointments served as a vehicle for the distribution of patronage and favors as well. The court met twice annually to hear criminal and civil cases, holding jurisdiction over matters concerning 'life and limb'. As shapers of policy, as political benefactors, and as the final stage for appeals in legal matters, members of the court wielded much power and influence over Virginians.

Gloucestertown lot owners occupied other positions uppermost in Virginia society; among these are two who served as colony treasurers, one auditor general, one surveyor general (charged with the appointment of surveyors in each county), two speakers for the House of Burgesses, one clerk of the House of Burgesses, four naval officers or customs collectors, and two deputy escheators who were directed to administer lands which reverted to the Crown and for which there were no heirs to claim title. All but one of the lot owners who operated in this political sphere were great planters, in the pattern found by the Rutmans (Table 11); the exception, Colonel Henry Whiting, held a minimum of 800 acres. His father, Major Henry Whiting, did have an estate in excess of 1000 acres and served as a member of Virginia's council, court, and House of Burgesses. As stated earlier, Colonel Whiting seems to more truly belong

Table 11: Distribution of Office Holders
By Economic Class

| <u>Colony</u> | <u>Planter Class</u> | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| | <u>small</u> | <u>middle</u> | <u>large</u> | <u>great</u> | |
| Burgess | | | | 11 | |
| Council | | | | 8 | |
| Court | | | | 8 | |
| Customs Officer | | | | 4 | |
| Secretary | | | | 2 | |
| Treasurer | | | | 2 | |
| Surveyor | | | | 1 | |
| Auditor | | | | 1 | |
| Escheator | | | 1 | 1 | |
| | | | 1 | 38 | = 39 |
| | | | (3%) | (97%) | |
| <u>County</u> | | | | | |
| Justice | | | 1 | 6 | |
| Clerk of Court | | | | 2 | |
| Sheriff | | | 1 | 1 | |
| Militia Officer | 2 | | 1 | 14 | |
| Surveyor | | 1 | | 2 | |
| Tobacco Inspector | | | | 1 | |
| Appraiser | 2 | | | | |
| | 4 | 1 | 3 | 26 | = 34 |
| | (12%) | (3%) | (9%) | (76%) | |
| <u>Parish</u> | | | | | |
| Vestryman | 1 [1] | 2 | | 5 | |
| Churchwarden | [1] | 2 | | 5 | |
| Surveyor of Hwys | | 2 | | 1 | |
| Processioner | 1 [2] | 1 | | 2 | |
| Clerk | [1] | | | 2 | |
| | 2 [5] | 7 | | 15 | = 29 |
| | (7%) | (24%) | | (52%) | |
| | | [17%] | | | |
| <u>Total</u> | 6 [5] | 8 | 4 | 15 | = 102 |
| | (6%) [5%] | (8%) | (4%) | (77%) | |

[] indicates suggested class of lot owners whose specific holdings are unknown.

in the great planter class.

Positions on the county level were more accessible to less prominent individuals as well as to the elite of Virginia society. Twenty-one lot owners were involved in county administration, nearly all of them within Gloucester County; Robert Carter, Richard Lee, and Ralph Wormeley are known to have migrated out of the county and thus held some of their county positions in Lancaster, Westmoreland, and Middlesex Counties, respectively.

There were seven county justices among the lot owners; additionally, the father of one owner and eighteen sons or grandsons of lot owners served as justices, indicating a continuity in leadership on the county level as well (Table 10). Two lot owners served as clerks for the Gloucester County Court, charged with the maintenance of complete records for all court proceedings. Although there were only two sheriffs among the early lot owners, ten sons, grandsons, or great grandsons acted as sheriffs in future years.

These positions which revolved around the administration of county affairs were elemental to the formation of social structures and influential in the placement of individuals within the social, economic and political hierarchy that was present in the colony. The men occupying this step in the ladder had substantial powers to direct, persuade and guide other residents on a basic, local level; they had great and compelling power and authority, truly,

over the ordinary members of Virginian society.

The county court was composed of eight justices after 1661/62 ; these men were the "most able, honest and judicious persons" (Hening 1823, II: 69-71). They were appointed by the governor and, as such, the position served as a stepping stone to greater things. The justices were increasingly responsible for the appointment of local officials. They also had access to economic and political connections and alliances gained through court day activities.

The court was responsible for the administering and the protection of some very basic components and structures within Virginia society: land, labor, property, and social behavior. County courts handled all litigation, all suits, all depositions, all civil matters except those concerning 'life or member' which were passed on to the General Court. A day was annually set aside for the care of orphans and their estates (Beverley 1705: 259-260). At their monthly meetings, justices arbitrated property disputes and property distribution, especially the probation of wills. They witnessed the indenture of labor and services, the charge and payment of debts. Finally, court members regulated the social behavior of county residents, punishing offenders of the existing social codes, testifying to the good or bad character of a person, enhancing or harming the reputation of individuals through this accountability. Men with such

authority and responsibility must have indeed been prominent members and a cogent force within the community to hold such power and sway, to exert such influence.

Not only justices possessed and had access to such honors and influence. The sheriff occupied another top position within the county. Appointed by the governor, the sheriff policed the county; he acted as an officer in the court room directing the proceedings, impaneling juries, directing the laying of evidence; he was responsible for the collection of taxes; the sheriff also organized and supervised the election of burgesses within the county (Beverley 1705: 257).

Men of noteworthy background also served the county in other ways. There were seventeen militia officers ranking from captain to colonel among the Gloucestertown lot owners, and thirteen officers among their descendants in the 18th century. One lot owner served as tobacco inspector; the descendant of another owner acted in this capacity in 1772. Three worked as surveyors for Gloucester County; such appointments were made by the surveyor general, based on skill and knowledge, but also on connections within the Virginia establishment. Two lot owners are known to have served Gloucester County as appraisers of estates for the court.

These men were drawn from a somewhat broader range of economic wealth and social standing, though still dominated

by major land holders (Table 11). 76% of the positions at this level were still occupied by members of the great planter class. There is a filtering-down process in evidence, however: 3 large planters (9%) held county offices; 1 middle planter served as a surveyor (3%); and 4 small planters (12%) acted on behalf of the county. Perhaps these latter individuals represent planters with rising personal fortunes, transplanted colonists or newly freed men beginning to carve a niche for themselves in Virginia society. The two militia officers from the small planter class are likely candidates as both were captains, perhaps just beginning to make their ascent within the socio-political hierarchy.

Even at the parish level, a man could assume a role of leadership, offering him a chance to serve as a role model and to acquire standing in the eyes of the community. The extant vestry books for Gloucester County, specifically those for Kingston and Petsworth Parish, provide an access point from which to view this level of activity. The vestry books identify three lot owners who held the office of parish clerk (Table 9), six as tobacco processioners, and three surveyors, or overseers, of highways.

The uppermost positions in the parish were vestryman and churchwarden. There were nine lot owners serving as vestrymen and seven as churchwardens as recorded in the Petsworth and Kingston Parish Vestry Books; without

registers from Abingdon and Ware, we cannot determine if any other lot owners served in this manner but it seems likely. Twelve vestrymen were drawn from each parish; at first chosen by parishioners, the vestrymen eventually selected their own replacements, allowing for self-perpetuation and influence on this level. Vestrymen could use this process to ensure the continuity of certain religious and social structures, and certain moral attitudes. If county courts were responsible for social accountability, then the parish vestry was responsible for moral accountability. The vestry, led by the churchwardens, attended to the physical and spiritual needs of the parish. The Petsworth Parish Vestry Book shows the nature of this involvement and the constant affirmation of moral structures and values within the community.

to Docto^r Crymes on acco^{tt} for Severall
poore & impotent pSons.

Petsworth Parish
Vestry Book, 1690
(Chamberlayne 1933: 29)

Thirteen, perhaps even fourteen, of the fifty-eight men listed as pre-1707 lot owners were members of Petsworth Parish; the identification of a John Smith in several entries has not been confirmed as being the lot owner, John Smith. Their activities were chronicled in the Petsworth Parish Vestry Book, allowing a detailed look at their thoughts and actions. This register reveals that they were

contemporaries and associates, sharing common interests in operating and maintaining the parish and its residents (Table 12). Twelve of the thirteen identified in the parish held an office. Eight of the families continued to reside in the parish and maintained a high level of involvement with parish affairs. Two lot owner descendants made a late appearance in Petsworth in the 1740s, Baytop and White, while a 1740s purchaser, John Thruston, became a member for a short time.

The maintenance of the parish church and glebe was a regular concern. The vestry records list many debits to parish accounts for such operating expenses and for the upkeep of facilities: to "Mr Jno Buckner & Sam^{ll} Sallis for paling the Church Yard", to "Mr Thornton Jr for repairing the old church", to "Thos Scott for lime for ye Gleb...[and] for a Tubb", to "Col Lewis (father of the 1707 lot owner) for a lock for the Church door", to Mr. Rbt Porteus for casements for church windows" (Chamberlayne 1933).

Operating costs were offset by the collection of fines, levies and donations. Captain Robert Thurston (not to be confused with the Thrustons of Gloucestertown in the 1740s and 1750s) left a dispensation for the poor in 1698, the only entry regarding this lot owner (1933: 54). Gifts were received from Major Robert Beverley, father of the lot owner, for £5.00.00; from Mr. John Buckner for £3.00.00; and from Mr. William Crimes for £00.10.00 in 1678 (1933: 9).

Table 12: Petsworth Parish Associations

| <u>Lot Purchaser</u> | <u>Length of Parish Activity by Owner</u> | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 1677 | 1680 | 1690 | 1695 | 1700 | 1705 | 1710 |
| Buckner | [REDACTED] | | | | | | |
| Thornton Sr. | [REDACTED] | | | | | | |
| Thornton Jr. | [REDACTED] | | | | | | |
| Hubbard Sr. | [REDACTED] | | | | | | |
| Hubbard Jr. | [REDACTED] | | | | | | |
| Carter | [REDACTED] | | | | | | |
| Crimes | [REDACTED] | | | | | | |
| Beverley, Robt. | [REDACTED] | | | | | | |
| Beverley, Peter | [REDACTED] | | | | | | |
| May | [REDACTED] | | | | | | |
| Porteus, Edward | [REDACTED] | | | | | | |
| Porteus, Robt. | [REDACTED] | | | | | | |
| Green Sr. | [REDACTED] | | | | | | |
| Green Jr. | [REDACTED] | | | | | | |
| Alexander | [REDACTED] | | | | | | |
| Thurston, Robt. | [REDACTED] | | | | | | |
| Stubbs | [REDACTED] | | | | | | |
| Scott | [REDACTED] | | | | | | |

Fines were extracted from several lot owners including Mr. Carter "for his womans fine 500li tobacco", and also Mr. Porteus and Dr. Crimes in 1684 (1933: 25).

These sources of income, whether paid in currency or tobacco, would also be used to pay the three physicians working in the service of Petsworth Parish: Drs. Alexander, Crimes and Green. Alexander received 1500 li. tobacco and cask for curing Samuel Mastin of distemper, one of many cases which he was asked to attend. Besides care of the sick, the parish looked after the interests of the orphaned, the poor, and the illegitimate offspring of parish residents, particularly those of servants. Among the lot owners who were members of Petsworth Parish, William Crimes took charge of three bastard children during his involvement with the parish; Mr. Porteus was paid 900 li. tobacco for maintaining a bastard child for one year in 1683; Robert Carter and William Thornton Jr., David Alexander, his wife and two sons also took responsibility for several of these social outcasts (1933: 7-156).

The interests of the vestry, represented by these men, were consistent over time. They sought as role models and leaders to define and maintain social and moral attitudes within the parish. They evinced a strong interest in the physical as well as spiritual welfare of the parishioners, an interest that was sustained over several decades by the lot owners and their descendants. Their role within the

parish increased their own standing within the community, yet they were sincerely concerned with the direction of the lives of these people. Their actions gave order and structure, through the care of the sick and the poor, through remonstrating misbehavior and punishing deviants. Many of these parishioners had no means of regulating aspects of daily life otherwise. With control of this sphere of influence, these gentlemen shaped the most basic values and characteristics of parishioners.

This level of administration allowed the greatest participation by county residents of all means. Table 10 shows that nearly half of the positions were still filled by members of the great planter class. But the table also reveals that the largest presence of the small and middle planters occurs at this level; 48% of the remaining offices held in the parish were occupied by men of these two classes. This helped to bind the lot owners together; in spite of the disparate economic classes represented here, their association through parish responsibilities gave them common interests and goals.

The preceding tables and concurrent discussion of this last section show the common thread of political and social authority among the Gloucestertown lot owners on a variety of different levels: colony, county, and parish. Common interests are apparent in their obvious desire to have

influence over others, to shape the conditions which organized and defined the lives of others. A connection has been drawn between these men through the length and location of their residence in Gloucester County. Additionally, it has been shown that these lot owners were often of similar economic means. Other parallels may be drawn through their associations in business and family matters.

As business associates, these gentlemen often conducted their affairs jointly. Several owners cooperated in business 'adventures'. Peter Beverley and Major Burwell were joint attorneys for one man's interests, as were Beverley and John Buckner for another man --Gloucestertown lot owner Robert Bristow, a British merchant who returned to England in the 1680s (Mason 1948: 104,124). The father of Colonel Henry Whiting and John Buckner together patented thousands of acres forming the Elmington-Exchange Tract (Mason 1946: 14).

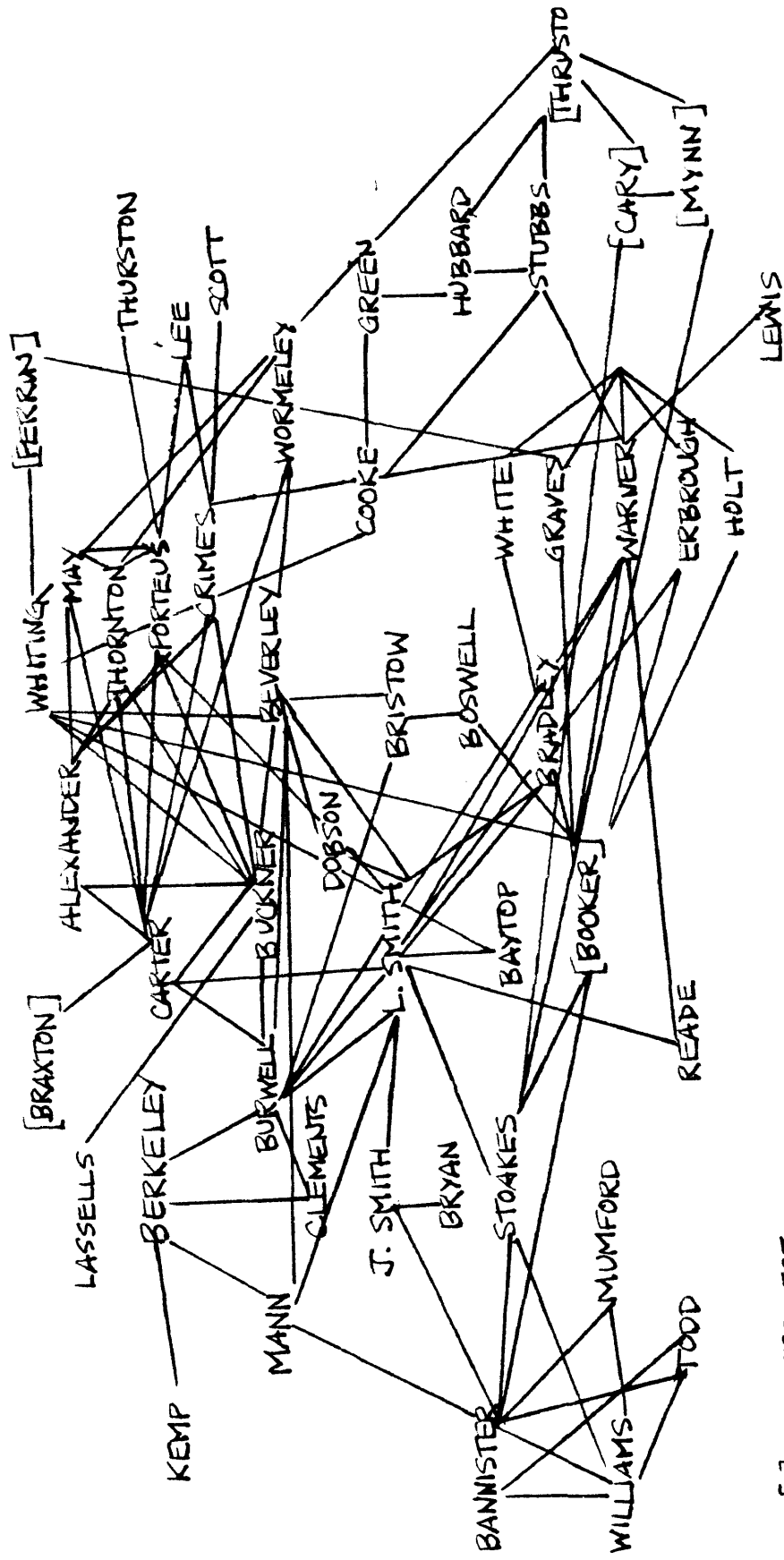
Business associations between the lot owners were numerous. John Bannister witnessed a land sale of 100 acres in Abingdon Parish by John Stoakes in 1699 (1948: 114). The Quit Rent Roll of 1704/5 indicates that John Smith held 400 acres in trust for the son of Robert Bryan, deceased (1946: 87). Edward Lassell was indebted to William Fitzhugh for £ 4.10.00 in 1686/7; his bill was reassigned to John Buckner for collection (Davis 1963: 212). In 1714, John Stubbs purchased 300 acres of escheated land located in Petsworth

Parish. Needed to complete the transaction were the services of John Lewis, a 1707 lot owner and escheator, and Thomas Cooke as surveyor; all three were known residents of Petsworth Parish (Mason 1946: 71).

There were often triangles of association connecting the lot owners, economic transactions linking them together (Figure 13). Edmund Berkeley purchased slaves from Benjamin Clements in 1714; Clements then served as a witness for transactions between Berkeley and other associates (1948: 45). Robert Carter and Lawrence Smith witnessed the appointment of an attorney for Edward Porteus and a fellow merchant in 1689 (1948: 129). Robert Thurston and Philip May served as witnesses to a land sale by Williams Crimes in 1689, that of a 500 acre tract on the Rappahannock sold for "15500 li. Tobo & Caske" (1948: 97); all three were members of Petsworth parish and their activities were frequently noted in the vestry book.

These associations were often cross-generational, establishing firm connections between these families. In 1687 Ralph Wormeley acted as witness to the last will of his friend Robert Beverley, father of the lot owner (1948: 108). Robert Beverley and Lawrence Smith each received a horse from a close mutual friend, Edward Dobson, father of yet another lot owner (1948: 52). They also witnessed the will of Thomas Graves Sr. and the division of his property between Jeffery and Thomas, the lot owner (1946: 33). James

Figure 13: Family Networks and Associations Among
Gloucestertown Lot Purchasers



[] INDICATES 1707 LOT OWNER OR LATER RESIDENT

Holt, Joseph Mumford and Edward Booker, son of the 1707 lot owner, witnessed the appraisal of Robert Mynne's estate in 1719 (1948: 52). Years earlier, Mynne had served as witness, along with John Bannister, to the sale of land by John and Mary Stoakes (1948: 14). Mynne was the father-in-law of John Thruston, the mid-century Gloucestertown resident; the relationship between the Stoakes, Mynnes and Thrustons continued through the 1760s. Altogether, the lives of 29 Gloucestertown lot owners and their families are connected through such associations during the 17th and 18th centuries and primarily during the years of the town acts.

Gloucestertown lot owners were associated through land ownership, by the presence of what one might call "neighbors". This is quite clear in the many land patents recorded in the Gloucester County records and is particularly prominent among residents of Abingdon and Petsworth Parishes. A 1200 acre patent for Lawrence Smith, dated 1691, recorded the following boundaries and property owners as a means of identification:

near head [of Severn River] adjoining Coll. Augustine Warner, Vallentyne Layne, Thomas Graves, Abraham Broadley to the dwelling house of Wm Graves, to Mr Thomas Graves dec'ed, Gillion White, the house of Robert Earbrough, Jeremie Hoult (father of the lot owner), down Timberneck Creek swamp to line of Mr. Peter's dec'ed to the head of Mr Richard Bookers land (1707 lot owner) along Mr John Moggsons line and land of Major Lewis Burwell on two sides and crossing the church path & to the Severne swamp.

(Mason 1946: 68-69)

Eight of the thirteen landowners cited here were Gloucestertown lot owners. Warner, Bradley, Graves and Burwell were mentioned in other patents for Smith. Other "neighborly" associations: Bannister, Mumford, Booker, Cooper (father of the lot owner), Williams, John Smith and the Todd family in Abingdon Parish near Tindall's Point (Mason 1946: 5, 48, 68; 1948: 94); Bristow and Boswell in Ware Parish (1946: 11); Buckner and Whiting in Ware Parish (1946: 14); Cooke, Thornton, Porteus, Wormeley and the Greens in Petsworth Parish (1946: 21, 59, 74); Lee, Crimes and the father of Thomas Scott on the Poropotank River in Petsworth Parish (1946: 86); Boswell and Booker on Timberneck Creek in Abingdon Parish (1946: 11); Burwell and Clements in Abingdon Parish (1946: 18). As identified thus far, 27 lot owners were connected to other lot owners in this manner-- nearly 47%.

Foreign interests linked several lot owners. Not surprisingly, colonists often maintained close ties to England, even into the second and third generations of settlers. The Gloucestertown lot owners were no exception. Many still had relatives living in England. They frequently sent their children to England for schooling, in the care of family members or business associates, or were themselves the product of an English education. The first college was built in Williamsburg in 1693, so those lot owners with an education must have, by necessity, been raised in England for a time or tutored by an English-trained master. Carter

and Wormeley are examples of this. Many lot owners built direct commercial ties with English merchants as a means of marketing their own product and ensuring the acquisition of goods they needed in return. Beverley and Buckner were attorneys for English merchant John Burge in 1707 (1948: 104). Beverley and Burwell had ties to Robert Bristow, mentioned earlier. In 1689, two Virginia merchants, Edward Porteus and Dudley Digges, then of Warwick County and eventually a Yorktown lot owner, acted as attorneys for Jeffery and John Jeffereys of London, also merchants (1948: 129). Property in England still bound some colonists to this country overseas. Lawrence Smith, for example, passed on to his grandson 10 houses in Brewhouse Yard, Middlesex (1948: 119). Berkeley wrote of money and property in Great Britain in his will dated 1718 (1948: 46).

Many of these lot owners were well educated, despite the lack of formal institutions of learning before 1693. This was significant in a predominantly oral culture; by having the ability to read, by having access to another plane of existence, these men were placed on a level above most Virginians. References point to such an educational background for several lot owners. Berkeley, Carter, Lee and Wormeley are known to have owned extensive libraries (Wright 1940). John Buckner reputedly brought the first printing press to Virginia (Smith 1959: 120). Certainly many of the lot owners --merchants, political administrators, and

members of the gentry-- were also educated. There were clerks of courts and parishes among the lot owners, and respected burgesses and councillors. It is likely that they had some formal training. This cannot be calculated without further investigation, but it is probable that at least half of the lot owners had some education.

Friendships between lot owners were many, undoubtedly fed by the close political contact, by the fraternizing which took place concurrently with their roles in parish and county administration, by common interests built when engaged in this employment, and by contact as neighboring planters. Most Gloucestertown lot owners were well advanced in the social hierarchy present in Virginia. This was indicated by their economic status and the percentage of lot owners with titles of respect, reflecting their social status (64%). Thus, many were social equals, providing a further basis for the establishment of close ties and networks of association.

In the will of John Mann, dated 1695, a provision was made for John Williams concerning "maintenance in Dyett and Apparrell and a House for his use during his life" (Mason 1948: 40). The connections which inspired this gift are unknown, but they were obviously of a deep, abiding nature to offer such commitment and comfort to another. Mann seems to have been capable of great friendship and loyalty. He also served as godfather to Ann Booker, daughter of his

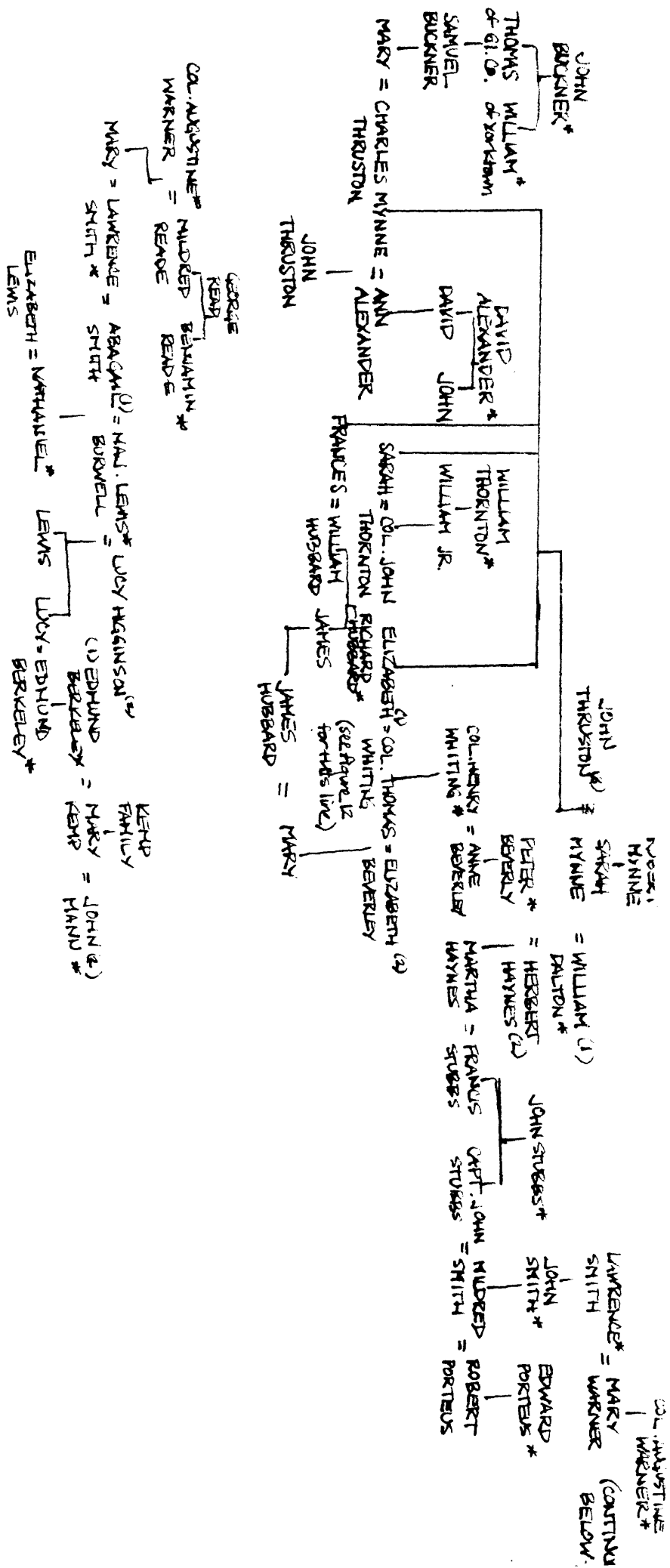
friend Richard Booker (1707 lot owner). Booker witnessed the will and was to serve as executor for Mann as well (Mason 1948: 40).

As members of leading families within the county and the colony, Gloucestertown lot owners were often linked by marriage to their peers. Members included Alexander, Baytop, Cooke, Mann, Buckner, Porteus, Read, Graves, Stubbs, Smith, Bristow, Willis, Thornton, and Todd on the county level; Beverley, Burwell, Carter, Berkeley, Wormeley, Lee, Whiting, and Warner were of families prominent within the colony. Figure 14 shows the many marital connections between Gloucestertown lot owners. These ties occurred over several generations in some families.

Great friendship was possible among these men, for these affinal ties engendered close and deep associations. Edmund Berkeley named "three well beloved friends" as executors to his will; this included Nathaniel Burwell, 1707 lot owner and his brother-in-law. Berkeley had married Burwell's sister Lucy; she was quite clearly the link that inspired such strong feelings between these two Gloucester-town affiliates (Mason 1948: 46). The families of 15 early lot owners were connected by marriage during their lifetime or during the next few generations, often repeated several times (Figure 14).

There are many connections and similarities between the early Gloucestertown lot owners as discussed in this

Figure 14: Inter-Family Marital Associations



section, common ground and common interests which seemingly weave their lives into a community structure. They do not form a homogeneous group, perhaps, yet there are similarities within and bonds between each planter class.

Over half the owners were prominent men within the community. They were treated with respect and deference as suggested by the titles they were given. Their prominence was due to several factors: length of residence and commitment to the parish and to Gloucester County; their economic status as middle and great planters, as major landholders; the extent of their political involvement in the colony and interest in county and parish administration; and their connection with leading families within Virginia society and Gloucester County in particular. Through these associations and roles, the Gloucestertown lot owners show themselves to have been men of responsibility and given to leadership, interested in directing the lives of others in their community and in the colony. Within this group there are various levels of commitment and involvement as well as of social and economic status, but most of the lot owners were men of note within each level. We also find men at all levels connected to other lot owners by friendship, by business associations and political interests. There are ties of kinship between many of them.

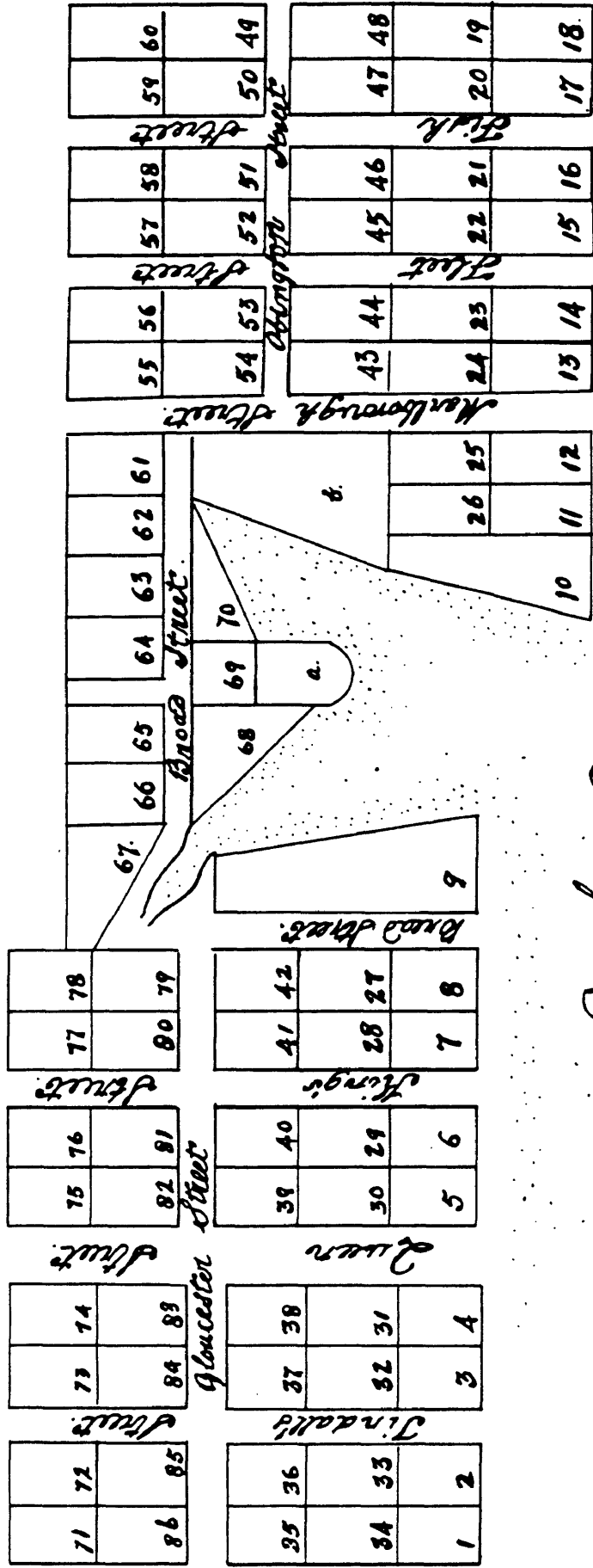
I John Perrin of Gloucester County for the natural Love and Affection which I bear to my son John Perrin Junior do give one Moiety of half part of every sea vessel which I am now possessed of and 22 Negroes.

12 Dec. 1747
(Mason 1948: 121)

The traits which characterized this group of early lot owners were also in evidence among the 1707 lot owners, differing perhaps only in strength; these features were more strongly defined and together formed a more homogeneous group. In 1707 the lots were again bought primarily by planters and merchants, though this time with a more even distribution between the two groups. An analysis of those owners (see Figure 15 and Table 13) reveals that community ties and the affluence of the lot owners seem to have been especially significant in Gloucestertown's development. As with the earlier lot owners, several factors were examined to establish the presence of community ties and the existence of social networks. The sample of residents includes 21 of 22 lot owners listed on the 1707 plat. The last owner, Rebecca Rhydes, was omitted due to a lack of information in the historical record.

It is very difficult to trace most women through the records of 17th and 18th century Virginia as they were usually relegated to a minor role in most affairs which surfaced in the county records. They do appear occasionally

Figure 15: 1707 Plat of Gloucestertown, Redrawn



York River

| Owner | Lots | Owner | Lots |
|---------------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Richard Bath | 68, 70 | Dr. William Kemp | 41 |
| Mr. D. Beddors | 75, 76, 81, 82 | John Lewis | 61, 62, 63, 64 |
| Richard Booker | no number | John Mann | 15 |
| (with Mrs. Roydes) | | Richard March | 49, 50 |
| G. Braxton | 73, 74 | J. Martin | 85 |
| William Buckner | 16 | Thomas Perrin | 17, 20, 51, 52 |
| *Maj. Lewis Burwell | 13, 71 | John Perrin | 21, 22 |
| Nathaniel Burwell | 23, 24, 28, 29, 86 | Edward Porteus | 12 |
| William Dalton | 8, 9, 27, 78, 79, 80 | J. Skelton | 65, 66, 67 |
| John Dunbar | 47, 48 | John Smith | 14 |
| William Gordon | 65, 66 | James Terry | 35, 36 |

Table 13: Socio-Economic Characteristics of
1707 Gloucestertown Lot Owners

A. Residence and Known Property Holdings

| <u>Merchants</u> <u>Name</u> | <u>Residence</u> | <u>Town</u> <u>Lots</u> | <u>Glouc.</u> <u>County</u> | <u>York</u> <u>County</u> | <u>Other</u> <u>Holdings</u> |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Richard Bath | Abingdon P.* | 2 | | | |
| Mr. D. Beddors | Abingdon P.* | 4 | | | slaves |
| William Buckner* | York Co. | 1 | | 4 lots windmill 302ac. | 1500ac. slaves |
| William Dalton | Abingdon P.* | 6 | 177ac. | | |
| John Dunbar | Abingdon P.* | 2 | | 1 lot | |
| William Gordon ^a | Middlesex Co* | 2 | | 2 lots 150ac. | 1824ac. slaves |
| Richard March | Abingdon P.* | 2 | 180ac. | | |
| J. Martin | Abingdon P.* | 1 | 200ac. | 1 lot | unknown |
| Edward Porteus* | Petsworth P. | 1 | +500ac. | | |
| J. Skelton ^b | Gloucester Co* | 3 | | | |
| James Terry | Abingdon P.* | 2 | | | 400ac. 1 lot |
| *planting interests | *named in parish register | | | | |

| <u>Planters</u> <u>Name</u> | <u>Residence</u> | <u>Town</u> <u>Lots</u> | <u>Glouc.</u> <u>County</u> | <u>York</u> <u>County</u> | <u>Other</u> <u>Holdings</u> |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Richard Booker* | Abingdon P.* | 1 | 1000ac. | 200ac. | +500ac. slaves |
| G. Braxton* | King & Queen | 2 | | | 2825ac. (slaves) |
| * Maj. Burwell | Abingdon P.* | 2 | 3300ac. mill | | 2650ac. slaves |
| Nath. Burwell* | Abingdon P.* | 5 | +600ac. | 300ac. | slaves |
| Dr. William Kemp | Abingdon P.* | 1 | 75ac. | 1 lot | slaves |
| John Lewis* | Abingdon P.* | 4 | 2000ac. mill | 300ac. | +10000ac. slaves |
| * John Mann | Abingdon P. | 1 | 600ac. | | mill slaves |
| Thomas Perrin | Abingdon P.* | 4 | unknown | | |
| John Perrin* | Abingdon P.* | 2 | unknown | | slaves ships |
| John Smith* | Abingdon P.* | 1 | 3300ac. | 1 lot | slaves |
| *mercantile interests | *named in parish register | | | | |

B. Social Standing, Identified Community/County Offices

| <u>Merchants</u> <u>Name</u> | <u>Titles</u> | <u>Offices and Commissions</u> |
|---------------------------------|---------------|---|
| Richard Bath | | |
| Mr. Beddors | Mr. | |
| William Buckner | gent. | deputy surveyor, customs collector, Yorktown trustee |
| William Dalton | gent. | militia officer, Capt. |
| John Dunbar | Mr. | |
| William Gordon | Mr. | |
| Richard March | | |
| J. Martin | | militia officer, Capt. |
| Edward Porteus | gent. | churchwarden, vestryman |
| J. Skelton | Mr. | |
| James Terry | | |
| | | |
| <u>Planters</u> <u>Name</u> | <u>Titles</u> | <u>Offices and Commissions</u> |
| Richard Booker | gent. | justice; militia officer, Capt. |
| G. Braxton | gent. | Governor's Council, president |
| Maj. Burwell | gent. | Governor's Council; militia officer, Major |
| Nath. Burwell | gent. | Burgess, justice, Gloucestertown trustee; militia officer, Major |
| Dr. William Kemp | gent. | |
| John Lewis | esquire | Governor's Council, president; surveyor; militia officer, Major |
| John Mann | gent. | |
| John Perrin | Mr. | militia officer, Capt. |
| Thomas Perrin | gent. | justice |
| John Smith | esquire | Governor's Council; Burgess; justice; tobacco inspector; surveyor; sheriff; militia officer, Col. |

^a William Gordon: several generations involved in tracing Gloucestertown's development. First William Gordon of Middlesex County, d.1693, may have been original Yorktown lot buyer. Second Wm Gordon of Middlesex, d.1720, merchant, purchased Gloucestertown and Yorktown lots. Third Wm Gordon resided in Abingdon Parish where the birth of his child was recorded in 1723.

^b Confusion is evident in the documents between Shelton, Skelton, and Skilton; 1681 reference to Wm Shelton (Skelton) as owner of 150 acres, 1680 registry of his son's birth in Abingdon Parish. Petsworth reference spells name as Skilton.

in the wills of their husbands, in marriage contracts involving an exchange of property, sometimes in the books registering the birth of their children though with less frequency than their husbands, and occasionally in litigation which most often involved their punishment or the settlement of injury towards them. Usually only the widowed, the wealthy, or the disobedient were addressed in county records; most other women were invisible on a documentary level.

In the case of Madam Mildred Warner, lot owner prior to 1707, we could only judge her on the accomplishments of her husband and by a single reference to her ownership of a small parcel of land. It is virtually impossible to fathom the character or background of Rebecca Rhyodes as well. Rhyodes was possibly the relict of Richard Booker with whom she is listed as having shared a lot in 1707. Booker's father-in-law was John Leake, an early resident and innkeeper on the Point. Leake is known to have had a daughter Rebecca (York County Deeds, Orders, and Wills 1672-76, XXXVIII). It is likely that Rebecca Booker remarried after the death of her husband and continued to hold title to the lot during her lifetime as his relict. However, since this is not proven and nothing more is known of her, Madam Rhyodes has been left out of the analysis for the time being.

Common interests and values were apparent among the

other lot owners in several ways as seen in Table 13. A similar degree of wealth among the town's land owners is indicated by the size of land holdings, by the frequency of plantation ownership, and by the value of personal estates. The lot owners fall into an occupational category of either planter or merchant, 10 being of the first and 11 of the latter group. One lot owner is designated as a planter because of his land holdings; he was also a practicing physician. The very even distribution between mercantile and planter interests has implications when examining the holdings of the lot owners, for while some men might seem to be small planters, they actually had other property to diminish the apparent disparity in wealth (Table 14).

Eleven owners were members of the great planter class. Nine lot owners are known to have held one thousand or more acres of land and were among the largest land holders in their area; while the exact acreage belonging to the Perrin brothers is unknown, other background information indicated that they too belong to this group. Four of these large estates were located in Abingdon Parish; their owners -- Major Burwell and John Smith (both of these gentlemen were early lot owners as well), John Lewis and Richard Booker-- were part of a group of seven men whose combined holdings comprised over half the total acreage in the parish (Mason 1646: 84-88). Burwell, Smith and Lewis held sizeable estates in other parishes and counties as well.

Table 14: Land Holding Status of
1707 Gloucestertown Lot Owners

A. Land Holding Class/Lot Purchases^a

| <u>Acres</u> | | | | | <u>unknown</u> | |
|---------------|--|----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|-----|
| <u>50-200</u> | | <u>201-599</u> | <u>600-999</u> | <u>1000/over</u> | | |
| Dalton 6 | | Terry 2/3 | Mann 1 | Booker 1 | Bath | 2 |
| Kemp 1/2 | | | | Braxton 2 | Beddors | 4 |
| March 2 | | | | Buckner 1/5 | Dunbar | 2/3 |
| Martin 1/2 | | | | Burwell, L. 2 | Perrin, J. | 2 |
| | | | | Burwell, N. 5 | Perrin, T. | 4 |
| | | | | Gordon 2/4 | Skelton | 3 |
| | | | | Lewis 4 | | |
| | | | | Porteus 1 | | |
| | | | | Smith 1/2 | | |

^a Figures after each name are number of Gloucestertown lots followed by total number of lots owned in all port towns if greater than number purchased in Gloucestertown.

In addition to possessing large tracts of land throughout the county, many of these great planters held concentrations of lots in Gloucestertown. John Perrin owned two contiguous lots and Thomas Perrin purchased four, including two waterfront lots adjacent to each other and two interior lots. William Gordon's two lots at the top of the cove were shared with James Skelton, presumably a merchant like Gordon; a lot in Yorktown complimented his commercial interests and Gordon many have been a lot subscriber in Urbanna, too. Four contiguous lots belonging to John Lewis comprised an entire block across the top of the cove. Major Lewis Burwell retained ownership of lot no.13 from the earlier town acts and invested in a second lot in 1707. Located in the southwest corner of Gloucestertown, this second lot is in the area where a windmill operated in 1754 (Figure 2), as shown in John Gauntlett's watercolor. Burwell operated a mill on Carter's Creek just upriver from Gloucestertown; perhaps he also ran a second operation within Gloucestertown. His son, Nathaniel, took advantage of his father's investments by purchasing five lots and thus consolidating their interests within the town. One lot was adjacent to that in the southwest corner, and two were adjacent to his father's waterfront lot. This gave the Burwells control over a substantial portion of Gloucestertown. Braxton owned two lots in the port. William Buckner invested in four lots in Yorktown in addition to one in

Gloucestertown, located on the water. The others held one lot each, but it is interesting to note that the lots of Edward Porteus and John Smith, both waterfront property, were retained and therefore developed between the first and third town acts. This is significant, given the high rate of lot forfeiture in Gloucestertown from lack of development by pre-1707 purchasers. Smith owned a second lot in Yorktown as well.

Five lot owners are known to have held estates ranging in size from 75 to 600 acres. By previous definition, four of these could be termed small planters with holdings between 50 and 200 acres and one as a middle planter owning between 201 and 599 acres. However, it is clear that these gentlemen had other interests and means, primarily of a mercantile nature. The number of lots held in Gloucestertown is summarized in Table 14; this is a sign of economic strength in itself, acting as a counter-balance to the large estates of planters. Additionally, there are seven lot owners who purchased lots in other towns. Interestingly enough, these other lots were all in York River towns: Yorktown and West Point.

James Terry, a 'middle planter', owned two lots in Gloucestertown and also one in West Point, just upriver from Gloucestertown. This latter investment was undertaken jointly with two others, Daniel Miles and Thomas Terry, a brother perhaps. William Dalton, merchant and resident of

Gloucestertown for over 25 years, owned six lots, by far the largest investment in the port. Lot no.9 was one of the three largest lots available and occupied the better part of the south shore of the cove. Three of Dalton's lots had access to the cove from a small finger of water off the southwest portion. Two were located immediately across the street from lot no.9. Richard March owned two lots in Gloucestertown and possibly 180 acres in Kingston Parish. John Martin owned one lot in Gloucestertown and one in Yorktown, giving him points of access to two counties. Dr. Kemp based his practice as a physician in Gloucestertown; he most likely earned his living as a doctor although he owned 75 acres in Gloucester County and a lot in Yorktown as well.

The only member of the large planter class was John Mann; as stated earlier, this pre-1707 lot owner could have easily been placed in the great planter class. This is a moot point, however, because Mann had been dead over ten years by 1707 though the waterfront lot was still held in his name. It seems likely that his heir, Edmund Berkeley, who is known to have been living in Abingdon Parish at the time, retained the lot as well as the one Berkeley himself purchased prior to 1707. It can be argued that Berkeley retained ownership of both lots despite his omission from the 1707 plat; as prime pieces of real estate --both waterfront lots, one of which was among the three largest in Gloucestertown and as such occupied half the northern shore

of the cove-- it is hard to believe that these lots would not have been resold in 1707 if Berkeley had forfeited ownership.

The holdings of four lot owners are unknown; no land records other than for town lots were found. Even if they held only a small parcel of land, the concentration of lots belonging to these men had the potential to make them wealthy merchants. Richard Bath held two waterfront lots at the top of the cove. Mr. Beddors owned four lots comprising an entire block in Gloucestertown. John Dunbar possessed two lots in Gloucestertown and one in Yorktown; one of the Gloucestertown lots was purchased before 1707 by Mr. Dunbar, presumably Gawen Dunbar, his father. James Skelton owned three lots, two of which he shared with William Gordon; these were located at the head of the cove.

Apparent disparities in wealth, then, were seemingly balanced by ownership of potentially valuable town lots, as we have seen, and also by ownership of mills, slaves, ships and wharves, and goods destined for resale. Porteus was a successful Gloucester County merchant for twenty years; since he kept his lot in Gloucestertown over much of that time, he most likely developed the property, building a warehouse and perhaps a store for his goods. If he and the other merchants of Gloucestertown were as successful as William Gordon, it is clear that they would indeed be well stocked with merchandise. Owner of "William Gordon's Co."

in 1707, his will and inventory of his estate mentioned approximately 500 separate items including pewter plates and spoons, earthenware vessels, cloth and accoutrements for clothing, tools, liquors such as madeira and brandy, eye glasses and flower pots (Rutman and Rutman 1984; see Middlesex Orders 1705-1710: 117; Wills 1713-1734: 347-350). The accounts from his store filled six volumes between 1708 and 1720.

There are other noteworthy possessions among the lot owners. Lewis, Buckner, Burwell, and Mann each owned mills, important operations within any county, providing a much needed service for other planters. Mills were clearly unique and as such were landmarks; this is evident from the references to "Col. Lewis Mill swamp" and "Buckner's mill" in property identification and surveying, drawing attention to them as significant features in the colonial landscape. William Buckner left the foundation for a large family business at his death: a windmill, a landing and warehouses, at least five town lots distributed between Yorktown and Gloucestertown, slaves and a small estate in York County as well as 1500 acres in Essex County (Calendar of State Papers 1875: 185; Mason 1948: 117; Tyler's Quarterly I: 279). John Perrin, in 1747, deeded one moiety of all his ships to his son "out of love and deep affection". The number of vessels deeded is unclear, but Perrin was a successful entrepreneur and probably owned several (Mason 1948: 121).

Slave holding, in particular, was a sign of affluence, indicating that the owner could afford to invest on a long term basis in replacing indentured servants with slaves. Introduced on a small scale in the first half of the 17th century, the sale of slaves increased greatly in the 1690s; at that time, the purchase of slaves was first recorded with regularity in Gloucester County papers. The Abingdon Parish Register is particularly helpful in identifying owners by noting the birth and death of slaves belonging to Abingdon Parish residents. Nine lot owners are known to have purchased slave labor; two more are suspected of being slaves owners, and there are very likely more among the rest of the lot owners. Certain men stand out: Dr. Kemp was listed in the register six times as owner of slaves giving birth in the parish; four each were recorded for Nathaniel Burwell, John Lewis, and John Smith (Lee 1892). John Perrin gave 22 negroes to his son in 1747 (Mason 1948: 121). Lewis Burwell bequeathed several slaves to his children; these workers and their skills were specifically addressed in his will, thereby marking the importance and rarity of bound slave laborers and the need to keep their talents in the family (Mason 1948: 43). The purchase of slave labor entailed some risk and was costly; if the slave died early on, then a lifetime's work was lost. That certain of these lot owners not only purchased a significant number of slaves but also owned slaves who were already bearing children and

providing them with new sources of labor is very striking indeed.

The personal wealth of lot owners was leveled out by such acquisitions, pulling them together into a single economic class. Common interests further link these two groups of merchants and planters. The apparent use of land as a form of investment was an activity in which most lot owners were engaged. This included both patenting large tracts of land for tobacco production and for subletting outside of Gloucester County and the purchase of town lots in Gloucestertown and elsewhere. All the lot owners could be identified as 'speculators' by an assortment of purchases and transactions. There were nine with holdings outside of Gloucester County, while six planters with no known holdings outside of the county could be termed investors by their purchase of town lots. The eight gentlemen who arrived at Gloucester Point as a result of the 1705 town act must for obvious reasons be considered speculators.

There are several planters among the lot owners who possessed mercantile interests and vice versa. This is apparent from the above mentioned investments in land and town property. Other evidence is found in the descriptions of their activities. This includes planters acting as attorneys on behalf of English connections, usually merchants. "M^r Richard Booker of Gloucester County in Virginia, gent [as a] trusty freind" performed the duties of

"true and lawfull Attorney [for] Samuel Edwards of London, Mariner" (Mason 1948: 112). John Lewis was appointed attorney for a Bristol merchant and Edward Porteus was similarly connected to merchants John and Jeffery Jeffereys of London (Mason 1948: 120, 129). John Smith, as a great planter and member of the Virginia gentry, had large tracts of tobacco-producing land both inside and outside Gloucester County; his activity as tobacco inspector at the Gloucester Point warehouse involved him with the mercantile operations within the port. John Perrin cultivated many acres of his land in the county but also owned many vessels to transport merchandise and produce; perhaps he was a mariner as well. George Braxton exemplified the upper levels of Virginia society as a politically active and economically wealthy man; with all his holdings in King and Queen County, he still evinced an interest in commercial trade by his purchase of a lot in Gloucestertown.

Many lot owners were business associates. Buckner, as trustee for the portland of Yorktown, had much contact with other lot owners who purchased land across the river from Gloucestertown, including William Kemp and John Dunbar. Smith and Lewis conducted several land transactions with Buckner as well (Mason 1948: 117). Nathaniel Burwell, as Gloucestertown trustee, also had dealings with the lot owners in a similar manner. And as residents of a very small port town, they could not help but be involved in

business ventures and commercial transactions together.

One might place most of these men within the same economic class with mutual economic interests, then, because of the nature of their holdings and their associations. They were of similar economic means and although not necessarily social equals in all cases, a social/economic equation holds to a large degree. Despite the difference in occupations, men of both groups were prominent, well educated and respected men in the county and in their community. Most owners could be classified as members of the gentry; 17 of these men (81%) were addressed with the titles of 'gentleman', 'esquire', or 'Mr'. They were "person[s] of good reputation and knowledge" (Calendar of State Papers 1875: 96).

A further indication of this is apparent in the variety of political and parish offices held by these men, merchants and planters: four served as justices of the peace; at least one acted as vestryman and churchwarden; two were members of the House of Burgesses; four were members of the Governor's Council and General Court --including two presidents of the Council; eight were militia officers; one obtained the coveted position of customs collector; one acted as county sheriff; two served as town trustees --including one for Yorktown; one was tobacco inspector at the Point; two were surveyors for the county and one lot owner, as deputy surveyor general, surveyed the legislated port town of

Marlborough in Stafford County.

At least twelve owners (57%) are known to have held some position within the parish, county or on a colony-wide basis. The importance of these roles and the influence and standing given by them has already been discussed. Six gentlemen took a political interest on the colony level. Ten participated in county affairs, some in addition to their work for the colony. One and possibly two or more were involved at the parish level. Skelton was the builder of the new church for Petsworth Parish at Poplar Springs between 1720 and 1723; he was paid £1190 for his services on this occasion and it is possible that he was more greatly involved in daily parish affairs than the records reveal (Chamberlayne 1933: 156-166).

This prominence, stemming from this level of involvement and commitment, made itself visible in different ways. Outward signs of this were the formal address used as a sign of deference and respect. The very use of these titles in written records marks the special place of these men within Virginia society. Visual tribute appears in the form of a special pew reserved for William Buckner in Bruton Parish Church. Identification of their homes --"Porteus Quarter", for example-- or of the men themselves brought with it an association of ideas and values, marking them as important public figures in Virginia society and in the cultural landscape of the Tidewater.

Other signs of this are less obvious, perhaps, but still had public meaning for others. Lewis Burwell made provisions for his godson William's schooling at the College of William and Mary "for his good education in divinity, Law or Physick" until he was twenty-one years of age; during this time he was to be "kept in apparel, diet and lodgings ...becoming a Gent's son" (Mason 1948: 43). Again, such marking in the documentary record highlights the value of formal training and its rarity among ordinary Virginians. Philanthropic concerns repaid the tribute and respect given, in a sense, and also encouraged further esteem. Burwell left money and land to the College and to the poor if no heirs were left to make claim (Mason 1948: 43). John Mann made similar provisions in case no heirs survived him (Mason 1948: 40). Edward Porteus took responsibility for raising illegitimate children in Petsworth Parish, in addition to whatever other help he might be called upon to give as a churchwarden or vestryman (Chamberlayne 1933: 23).

At least thirteen (62%) of the lot owners gained further standing as members of leading families in Virginia and Gloucester County: Buckner (in both York and Gloucester County), Porteus, the Perrins, Kemp, Mann, Booker and Gordon (Middlesex and Gloucester County) were prominent on a county level; the Burwells, Braxton, Lewis, and Smith held a higher status within the colony. This association had two results for the lot owners: namely, as long standing members of the

county, the relationships between them were formulated over an equally long period of time, and secondly, during this long association, marital alliances were frequently contracted.

In terms of residence, eighteen lot owners (86%) lived in Gloucester County. Of the other three lot owners, one lived directly across the river in Yorktown, one lived in King and Queen County upriver from Gloucestertown, and one lived in Middlesex County, just to the north of Gloucester County. This latter gentleman, William Gordon, eventually developed strong ties to Abingdon Parish, such that his son was living in Gloucestertown by 1723 when the birth of his child was recorded in the parish register (Lee 1892: 56). Other members of his family resided in Gloucester County at an earlier date. Of the eighteen residents in Gloucester County, sixteen of these (89%) lived in Abingdon Parish, one lived in Petsworth Parish, and one possibly in Petsworth Parish as well. 76% of all lot owners lived in Abingdon Parish, then; the remaining 24% came from elsewhere in Gloucester County or from other York River areas. Clearly, even among those of other counties, the lot owners came from areas closely tied to the York River and therefore would benefit from the location of a port in Gloucestertown, particularly the merchants. Also, being from the local area, their associations had a great deal of time to develop and flourish.

The length of lot owner association with Gloucester County varies somewhat, but many were early residents of the county and many continued to live here through much of the 18th century (see Table 15). The families of fourteen lot owners were present in the county before 1700 (67%); only seven seem to have arrived with the town act of 1705 (33%). As long term residents of the county, the majority of lot owners had several decades to establish friendships and to form alliances, while those families continuing to reside in the area were able to maintain and further develop these associations.

Intermarriage between the leading families was frequent as a result of the lengthy bonds to Gloucester County; thus, many lot owners were tied together by marriage in this manner (see Table 16). These inter-family associations provide very strong evidence for emotional bonds and family networks linking the lot owners, key ingredients in the formation of community bonds. Direct marital ties to other lot owners are found for nine men (42.9%); another eleven (52.4%) are tied to early Gloucestertown lot owners. The total number of gentlemen with family alliances to 1707 and pre-1707 lot owners is twelve (57%). Alliances were constructed for economic and social purposes, to protect or enhance family holdings and to solidify and define the family's social position.

There are other relationships between lot owners

Table 15: Residence Patterns of 1707
Gloucestertown Lot Owners

A. Arrival of 1707 Lot Owners and Families in Gloucester County

| <u>1680 Town Act</u> <u>Or Earlier</u> | | <u>Pre-1691 Act</u> | <u>Post-1705 Act</u> |
|---|-------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Booker | 1672* | Gordon 1690 | Bath |
| Buckner | 1677 | | Beddors |
| Burwell, L. | 1648 | | Braxton |
| Burwell, N. | 1648 | | Dalton |
| Dunbar | 1677 | | March |
| Kemp | 1649 | | Martin |
| Lewis | 1653 | | Terry |
| Mann | 1661 | | |
| Perrin, J. | 1651 | | |
| Perrin, T. | 1651 | | |
| Porteus | 1680 | | |
| Skelton | 1680 | | |
| Smith | 1662 | | |

*Dates represent earliest known recorded association of owner or family with Gloucester County.

B. Continued Residence of Lot Owners and Families in Gloucester County

| <u>18th Century</u> | <u>Unknown</u> | <u>Direct Line</u> <u>Died Out</u> | <u>No Long Term</u> <u>Association</u> |
|---------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Bath 1770* | Beddors 1715 | Dalton 1733 | Braxton |
| Booker 1790 | Skelton 1723 | Mann 1695 | |
| Buckner 1795 | | | |
| Burwell 1776+ | | | |
| Dunbar 1734+ | | | |
| Gordon 1766 | | | |
| Kemp 1736+ | | | |
| Lewis 1738+ | | | |
| March 1760 | | | |
| Martin 1722+ | | | |
| Perrin 1782 | | | |
| Porteus 1763 | | | |
| Smith 1737+ | | | |
| Terry 1734 | | | |

*Dates represent latest recorded date associating owner or family with Gloucester County; where residence is known to have continued past this date but no specific references are known, a plus sign is indicated.

Table 16: Family Networks Among
Gloucestertown Lot Owners

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Kinsman</u> | <u>Marital Ties to 1707 and pre-1707 Lot Owners</u> | |
|-------------|------------------------|---|--|
| Booker, R. | | Mumford | second generation marriage |
| Braxton, G. | | Carter | (father-in-law) |
| Burwell, L. | N. Burwell (son) | Berkeley | (son-in-law) |
| | | Carter | second generation marriage |
| | | Whiting | fourth generation marriage |
| Burwell, N. | L. Burwell (father) | Berkeley | (brother-in-law) |
| | | Carter | (father-in-law) |
| | | Whiting | third generation marriage |
| Dunbar, J. | G. Dunbar (father) | | |
| Kemp, Dr. | | Mann | unclear; link is through Mary Kemp, his wife |
| Mann, J. | | Kemp | same as above |
| Lewis, J. | J. Smith (cousin) | Warner | grandson of Col. Augustine and Madam Mildred Warner |
| Perrin, J. | T. Perrin (brother) | Whiting | third generation marriage |
| Perrin, T. | J. Perrin | Whiting | second generation marriage* |
| Porteus, E. | | Smith | second generation marriage |
| Smith, J. | J. Lewis (cousin) | Warner | grandson of Col. Augustine and Madam Mildred Warner |
| | | Stubbs | second generation marriage |

indicative of deep friendship. This is visible in court records, specifically in legacies to friends, in friends acting as guardians for loved ones, and in their appearance as witnesses to business transactions, to wills, and other family matters. John Mann was the godfather of Richard Booker's child (Mason 1948: 40); Booker was the executor of Mann's will in 1695. Ties between the two families continued into later generations. Booker's son and Dr. Kemp returned the affection they felt for a mutual friend, Robert Mynne, by serving as guardians for his daughter Sarah. She married lot owner William Dalton ten years later, and after Dalton's death married two other Gloucestertown merchants. When John Smith sold a piece of property to William Buckner, the son of Edward Porteus witnessed the transaction; Robert Porteus was married to Smith's daughter.

John Thruston of the Co. of Gloc. and
John Norton of the County of York for
£20 sold that Lot or half acre of Land
in Yorktown which is known by the Num-
ber 63.

31st March, 1761
(Mason 1948: 123)

John Thruston of Town and County
Gloucester Merchant to Martha Haynes an
Infand Daughter of Herbert Haynes late
of this same place Merchant dec'd by
Sarah...£10 sterl. every year.

18 August, 1746
(Mason 1948:121)

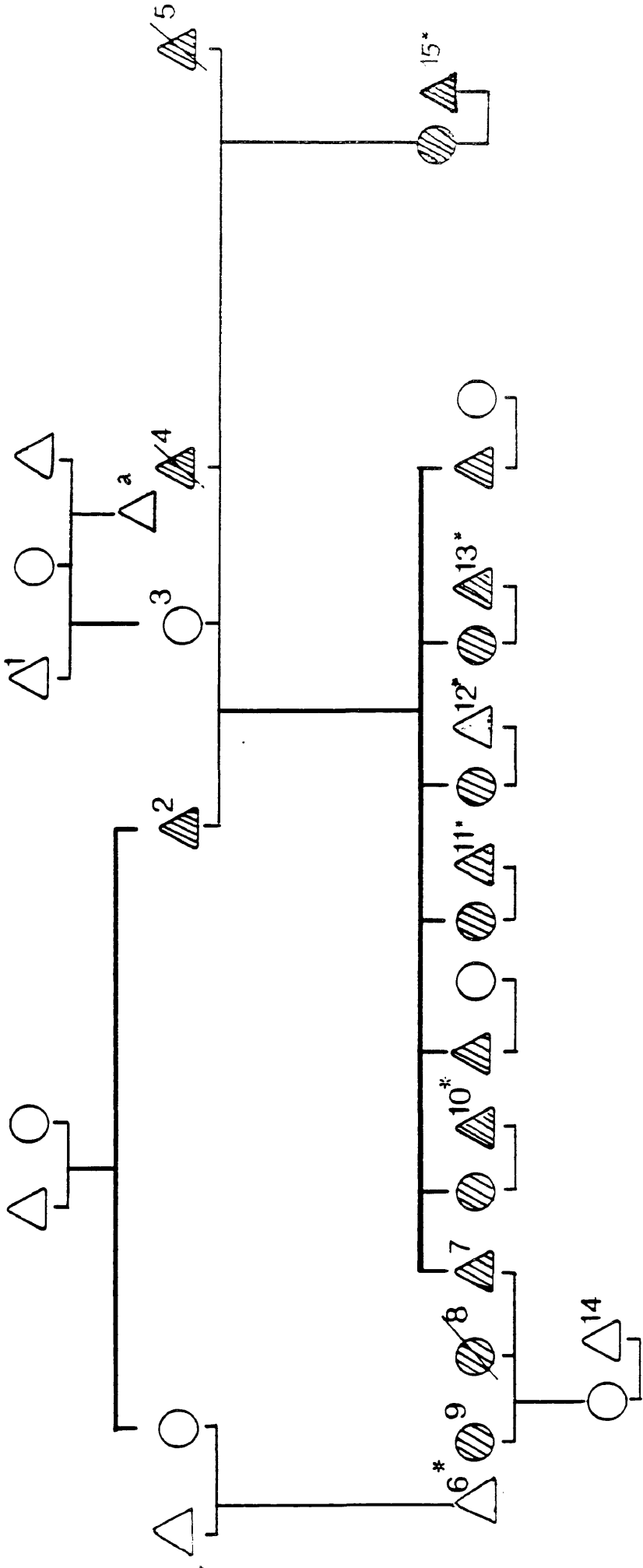
An illustration of the social networks present in


Gloucestertown is found in the associations of Colonel John Thruston, a Gloucestertown merchant in the mid 18th century (Figure 16). The Thruston family marriages epitomize the inter-family alliances which were characteristic of Gloucestertown lot owners. The source or foundation of these alliances lay in the interaction of community members in Gloucester County, people bound together and defined by certain economic, social, and political ties. These networks served to strengthen the bonds between community members.

In "Understanding 17th and 18th Century Colonial Families: An Experiment in Historical Ethnography" (1975), Ann Yentsch notes the presence of inter-family coalitions and extended family networks on Cape Cod during the 17th century. Alliances were constructed for economic and social reasons, primarily to keep land and economic resources in the family and to solidify and define social position. Marriage to first cousins and other relatives was frequent. Inheritance also functioned to keep property in the family and prevent its passage to a widow's new husband.

Similar patterns and attitudes towards marriage and inheritance are to be found in Virginia during the late 17th and 18th centuries. However, while the aims of the families were the same, these alliances were based less on first cousin marriages (except in the uppermost families in the colony) and were built instead upon the structure of the

Figure 16: Associations of Colonel John Thruston



 Shaded units denote lot owners of Gloucestertown and/or their descendants

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Robert Mynne | 9 Ann Alexander |
| 2 Col. John Thruston | 10 Col. John Thornton* |
| 3 Sarah Mynne | 11 Col. Thomas Whiting* |
| 4 William Dalton | 12 Hugh Walker* |
| 5 Herbert Haynes | 13 William Hubbard* |
| 6 Moses Robertson* | 14 George Flowerdew Norton |
| 7 Charles Mynne Thruston | 15 Francis Stubbs* |
| 8 Mary Buckner | a Edmund Cary* |

* Denotes business ties (personal and economic) with Thruston.

community of which they were a part. Inter-family alliances were created through marriage to individuals of identical social and economic standing, often of the same occupational background. Among the Thrustons, these alliances served to strengthen their economic status and to confirm their positions in society as prominent members of the county. Such networks created a sense of mutual obligation and interests, and provided emotional satisfaction to members through the extension of family. Consider the fact that Sarah Mynne lost her father as an infant and two husbands as an adult. Her mother, too, was married three times. The frequency of death in 17th and 18th century Virginia made the extended family network, both newly created and long established, an important source of emotional support and strength.

Thruston's origins were in Virginia, probably Norfolk; the family association with Virginia dates back to 1663 with the arrival of his grandfather Edward and his great uncle Malachi, both prominent individuals in Norfolk County. Malachi Thruston was a lot owner in Norfolk during its early stages of development. These early members of the Thruston family were merchants, an interest preserved among future generations through marriage and upbringing. Edward married the daughter of merchant Thomas Loveing of Martin's Hundred; his son Edward, father of John and resident of Norfolk Town, was also a merchant. John Thruston's siblings contracted

marriages with other members of the trade: Cornelius Calvert of Norfolk Town and early lot owner there, and Mr. Robertson, whose son, Moses, served as ship's master for the firm of John Norton and Sons, with whom Thruston had many dealings. Robertson was the ward of Thruston and was sent to be apprenticed in 1748 to Richard Baker, commander of the "Duke of Marlborough", to learn the "Art, Mystery, Trade or Occupation of a Mariner" (Mason 1948: 56).

John Thruston became a successful merchant in Gloucestertown, accruing a large personal estate in his lifetime which he carefully preserved through marital alliances and through the disposition of his estate. Thruston married into a wealthy Gloucester County family; his union with Sarah Mynne, an only child, brought the Mynne family lands in Virginia and England. As relict of two Gloucestertown merchants, including William Dalton, Sarah also brought into her marriage Dalton's many lots in the town and the rest of his estate. Thruston was skillful in enterprise; he apprenticed many youths, joined in business adventures with sound firms such as John Norton and Sons in both Virginia and England, profited as landlord in Virginia and England (one English family owed "rent on [the] farm they now live on" totaling £787.13.10; Thruston allowed them to remain "unmolested" if they agreed to pay an annual rent of £85; Mason 1948: 56), and successfully invested in real estate in many locations including Yorktown.

The role Thruston created for himself and his family was as a politically active, well educated and responsible man in the community. Thruston ensured the proper training of his sons: the Reverend and Colonel Charles Mynne Thruston was educated at William and Mary before taking his orders for the ministry in England and then serving Petsworth Parish (Brown 1964); John Thruston's will left provisions for his younger sons, Robert and John, to be educated in "Divinity, Law, Physick, or Trade" (Mason 1948: 59). Thruston was also politically involved with county affairs as a justice of the peace. This tradition was continued by his descendants who married into other families of a strong political background and participated actively in other county roles.

Thruston enhanced his family's social and economic position first by marrying the daughter of a prominent local family and relict of two wealthy merchants; secondly, he contracted marriages for his children between members of the leading families in the community, thus furthering and reinforcing the Thruston family's social standing. This allowed the exchange and the sharing of economic resources between people of similar interests.

Seven of John and Sarah's children reached their majority and married; all but two of the spouses can be linked with long-time Gloucester County residents of similar social standing. His sons-in-law included Col. Thomas

Whiting, a wealthy planter, burgess and justice; Col. John Thornton of Gloucester County; and Dr. and Col. William Hubbard. His daughters-in-law were Mary Buckner, daughter of Col. Samuel Buckner, justice, burgess, vestryman and churchwarden, and Ann Alexander, daughter of Col. David Alexander, vestryman, churchwarden and justice of the peace. A marriage was arranged for his stepdaughter, Martha Haynes, to Francis Stubbs, a Gloucester County tobacco inspector. With the exception of Walker, all these individuals were descendants of original Gloucestertown lot owners, whose qualities and character have already been established. These families had been associates for some time.

The establishment of a network between families is evident after these marriages (Fisher 1984). These gentlemen frequently offered their services to witness business transactions, marriage contracts, wills and other family matters; they also participated in business ventures together. The cooperation and exchange of help fostered good will between family members. This association also extended to other relatives such as Edward Cary, Sarah's half-brother, and the husband of Martha Haynes, Sarah's daughter. A cementing of ties between business associates is also apparent; Thruston's partner in several ventures, John Norton, exchanged favors with his colleague in "Norton, Thruston & Co." and also worked with Thruston to arrange the marriage of his grandson George Flowerdew Norton to

Thruston's granddaughter. Frequent association between these families and the other clans is apparent. These relationships reinforced the social networks in Gloucester County and the social standing of the Thrustons.

Thruston's will, dated 1763, passed on a sizeable estate to his children; this included three plantations, money, slaves, livestock, town lots, and other pieces of personal property (Mason 1948: 58). He guarded the family's economic resources in his life by arranging suitable marriages for his children; in death, he still controlled the settlement of the estate, directing its division among family members. His lands were passed on to his sons while the daughters received money, slaves or personal property. He made provisions for his wife Sarah in the nature of furniture, a place of residence, livestock, and money, for as long as she remained his widow, thereby arranging to keep the bulk of his property in the family.

What becomes evident for colonial Virginia and specifically for this Gloucestertown family is the importance of the community in constructing family alliances and the importance of strengthening family economic and social positions through marriage and inheritance. Beginning with Colonel John Thruston and continuing with his descendants, it is clear that an effort was made to keep property and land in the family and prevent its fragmentation through the widow. John Thruston also contracted

marriages for his children with members of the community of which he was a part. This was not limited to neighbors in Gloucestertown, but also included Gloucester County families and a few residents of Yorktown and Williamsburg who were men of similar economic means and interests and also of similar social standing. Through these alliances, economic and social ties, cooperation and exchange might be improved.

Escheat Land. Lately owned by William Smith, dec'd. Two lots in Gloucester Town, one N on Gloucester Street W on the great gully No.79. One E on King Street and N of Gloucester St. no.80. John Lewis Escheator. For the sum of 2 pounds of Tobacco.

Purchase of John Pratt, 1719
(Mason 1946: 59)

The conclusion to be drawn from this data is that men such as Thruston, the Burwells, Smith and others shared a common social and economic status as wealthy planters and merchants. They were members of a community, sharing common values, goals, and emotional ties, and interacting as members of a social network. These characteristics were more strongly defined here than among the early lot owners; as such, they formed a homogeneous grouping of men.

The information from this ethnographic analysis highlights the strength of the community among these men; this sense of community was constructed over several decades, building even among the early lot owners. It makes sense, then, to move one step further and recognize the

transition to life in Gloucestertown as an extension of community; the values, networks, and organization of this planter-merchant upper class in Virginia society were brought with the owners to Gloucestertown.

These facts have interesting implications for understanding Gloucestertown's limited but successful development despite the constraints of economic and social conditions, described earlier. Community strength seems to have been the force overriding the economic and social disadvantages of settlement at Gloucestertown, motivating residents and acting to extend the life of the town. Given the economic conditions of tobacco production, we must define if possible the means for successful town development and the reasons behind its establishment and continued existence.

Consider, then, the results of the first and second town acts and the location and status of those owners in 1707. Only six continued to hold ownership of their lots at that date. The remainder disassociated themselves from Gloucestertown and the investment it represented. What happened to these owners to cause the divestiture of so many lots?

Many reasons are apparent. First, a certain proportion of the lot owners died during the nearly thirty year period between the first and the third town acts. Twenty were deceased by the third surge in town development within the

colony (34.5%), Included in this group are John Mann, Edward Porteus and Mr. Dunbar who predeceased the third act yet retained ownership of the lots through that time; their lots were maintained by them and by family heirs after their death. The status of three owners is questionable (5.2%); because of confusion in the available records, it is difficult to distinguish between generations and thus we are uncertain if we are dealing with father or son. It is likely that they were the elder member of the family and were deceased by 1707. The status of another five (8.6%) is unknown; they drop from sight in the historical record and are presumed to be dead, based on their absence from the Quit Rent Roll of 1704/5 and from records post-dating this document.

Among the living, we find several who moved outside of Gloucester County before the third town act. One lot owner, Robert Bristow, returned to his home in England during the 1680s (1.7%). Two lot owners migrated to another county as their interests turned from Gloucester County (3.45%). Another two lot purchasers are suspected of shifting their residence and their activities to York County (3.45%). The remainder, twenty-five gentlemen (43.1%), were apparently still living in Gloucester County in the same parish they had occupied at the time of their lot purchases (Table 17).

Over half of the original Gloucestertown investors were dead or had moved out of the county by 1707, then. Why did

Table 17: Status of Early Lot Owners in 1707

| Continued Residence in Gloucester Co. | Deceased | Unknown:* Absence in Records | Generations Confused: Unknown* | Outmigration |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Alexander Pets. | Aldred | Baytop | Thornton | Bristow |
| Bannister Ab.P. | Bates | Crafield | Williams | (England) |
| Berkeley Ab.P. | Boswell | Errington | Willis | Carter |
| Beverley Pets. | Bradley | Kerby | 3 | (Lanc. Co.) |
| Burwell Ab.P. | Bryan | <u>Todd</u> | (5.2%) | Lee |
| Caudle Ab.P. | Buckner | 5 | | (Westmoreland) |
| Clements Ab.P. | Dunbar | (8.6%) | | Dixon |
| Cooke Pets. | Green | | | (York Co.) |
| Cooper Ware | Holt | | | Starke |
| Crimes Pets. | Lassell | | | <u>(York Co.)</u> |
| Dobson Ab.P. | Mann | | | 5 |
| Erbrough Ab.P. | May | | | (8.6%) |
| Graves Ab.P. | Nichols | | | |
| Gwyn King. | Porteus | | | |
| Hubbard Pets. | Ransome | | | |
| Mixen Ab.P. | Smith, L. | | | |
| Mumford Ab.P. | Thurston | | | |
| Poole Ware | Waring | | | |
| Reade Pets. | Warner | | | |
| Scott Pets. | <u>Wormeley</u> | | | |
| Smith, J. Ab.P. | 20 | | | |
| Stoakes Ab.P. | (34.5%) | | | |
| Stubbs Pets. | | | | |
| White Ab.P. | | | | |
| <u>Whiting</u> Ware | | | | |
| 25 | | | | |
| (43.1%) | | | | |

*Presumed dead from non-appearance in records or because references most likely name succeeding generation.

these twenty-five men who remained in the area fail to retain ownership of their lots? One might expect there would be a rate of success corresponding to the economic means and social prominence of the lot owners; while this holds true to some degree, there are other factors at work --influences which determined the status of these lots in 1707, for only six lots remained the property of their original owners when the 1707 plat was drawn by Miles Cary.

Many were committed to activities or to residence in other centers of social or economic interaction. This is particularly evident among the residents of Petsworth Parish, of whom nearly all were deeply involved in the direction of parish affairs; their interests were directed at another focal point within their rural county existence, the parish church. Others served the colony as burgesses, councillors and administrators; they were drawn to Williamsburg as the center of political activity in Virginia. These men were clearly committed to a different sphere of activity.

For the rest, it is conceivable that they were forced out of their investment by the cyclical troubles of the tobacco industry (Table 18). Consider the economic means of the early lot owners in comparison to the 1707 purchasers. The second group was more clearly defined, more tightly woven into a single body of wealthy planters and merchants. The earliest lot owners were of a more diverse economic

Table 18: Factors in Lot Divestiture Prior to 1707

A. Interests and Activities of Early Lot Owners in 1707
(From Column 1 in Table 18)

| <u>Outside Parish Commitment</u> | <u>Outside Political Commitment</u> | <u>Interest In Other Counties</u> | <u>Continued Ownership</u> | <u>Continued Residence in Abingdon P.</u> |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Petsworth: | | | | |
| Alexander | Beverley | Dixon | Berkeley | Bannister |
| Cooke | Whiting | (York) | Burwell | Caudle |
| Crimes | <u>(Bannister)</u> | Starke | <u>Smith</u> | Clements |
| Hubbard | 2 | (York) | 3 | Dobson |
| Reade | | (Reade) | | Erbrough |
| Scott | | <u>(York)</u> | | Graves |
| Stubbs | | 2 | | Mixen |
| Ware: | | | | |
| Cooper | | | | Mumford |
| Poole | | | | Stoakes |
| Kingston: | | | | |
| <u>Gwyn</u> | | | | <u>White</u> |
| 10 | | | | 10 |

B. Economic Status of Early Lot Owners Who Forfeited Lots
But Continued to Reside in Abingdon Parish in 1707
(From Column 5 above).

| <u>Planter Class</u> | <u>Small</u> | <u>Middle</u> | <u>Large</u> | <u>Great</u> | <u>Unknown</u> |
|----------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Erbrough | | Dobson | | Bannister | <u>Caudle</u> |
| Mumford | | Graves | | <u>Clements</u> | 1 |
| 2 | | Mixen | | 2 | |
| | | Stoakes | | | |
| | | <u>White</u> | | | |
| | | 5 | | | |

background; a wider range of wealth was apparent. More owners had less capital to fund and back their investment in a new port town. As planters, they were more dependent on the tobacco market and therefore highly susceptible to depressions in the market. Those who gave up ownership but continued to reside in Abingdon Parish were mostly small and middle planters (Table 18). These gentlemen were subject to the constraints of the economic and social context for the period.

The years between the first town acts were a time of severe depression in the tobacco trade; this would undercut the means of many planters and also create an air of uncertainty and doubt in the future of towns. The repeal of the town acts undoubtedly dampened the enthusiasm of many. There were no public institutions at the future site of the town and none in the planning; only the tobacco inspection warehouse, the ferry and a tavern operated regularly. The economic climate made the in-town services of artisans and craftsmen difficult to support. These conditions undoubtedly upset the future development of lots by the early purchasers and led to the forfeiture or divestiture of 90% of the original 60 lots. This is not to say that these conditions had changed at the time of the third town act, but the economic and social background of the 1707 lot owners in some way compensated for this and left them less susceptible to the economic whims of the tobacco trade.

The reasons for divestiture are varied, then; doubt in the town's future as an investment, insufficient means to develop the lot, interest in other areas of the county or the colony at large that drew the attention of the owners to other activities, and the end of the life cycle for some of the purchasers. Of the six gentlemen who retained their lots --Lewis Burwell, Edward Porteus, John Mann, Edmund Berkeley, John Smith and Mr. Dunbar-- only the last gentleman was not among the great planters in the county. However, Dunbar's very means of existence was located on Gloucester Point: Fort James, where he served as a gunner, and the ferry, which he is believed to have operated for a time. None of these purchasers was as likely to be as greatly affected by the tobacco market and the lack of artisans and potential lessors of property in the town; as men of independent means or as men of great property and wealth, they were able to invest in the town despite existing economic conditions.

The 1707 lot owners were also freer from the constraints of the tobacco trade. They were all of great economic means, even though the distribution of land was uneven. The presence of some land-poor merchants among the lot owners created this phenomenon; however, their personal holdings of town lots, merchandise, slaves, and other items compensated for this imbalance. In fact, this diversity in holdings probably contributed to Gloucestertown's develop-

ment after 1707; there were fewer lot owners with a strictly rural orientation, more planters with mercantile interests, and more merchants with an acute interest in the successful development of the port of Gloucestertown. Their wealth would permit them to subsidize industry in the new town, operations such as the pottery suggested by the discovery of kiln furniture within Gloucestertown's archaeological remains (McCartney and Hazzard 1980). There was depth to their economic wealth. These men had control of the credit line for most other residents of the county; the leading planters, as discussed earlier, purchased tobacco from smaller producers and goods on consignment, while merchants acted as storekeepers and also accepted tobacco for the payment of debts. The merchants were not directly dependent on tobacco production and plantation life for their economic means. The planters were also free from some of the pressures of tobacco production, having reached a stage of independent wealth. These lot purchasers had all reached the economic threshold for personal wealth as described by Bergstrom and Kelly (1980, 1984).

The pattern in development is somewhat similar to that in Annapolis, Maryland. Prior to 1702, in the early stages of development, many wealthy planters and merchants bought the lots as an investment, but disposed of them quickly in their uncertainty about the future. Eventually ownership was concentrated in the hands of a few resident merchants,

planters and bureaucrats working in the capital city. Residency became based on tenancy and leaseholds. These men bought entire blocks of town lots, as did many of the 1707 lot owners in Gloucestertown; in this way, the artisan class established residency through the rental of property (Baker n.d.).

A port town would attract merchants first and foremost; it would also encourage the interest of planters with diversified activities and mercantile connections. They were attracted to the market and trading center it was supposed to become, by the lure of profits through property rental, and perhaps by the presence of the ferry and the ease of travel from there to Williamsburg, the center of social, political and economic activity in the colony. In Annapolis, residence centered on the shipping industry at first; eventually, the combination of increased population and increased services spurred the growth of the import trade and drew in merchants, planters and support industries. Concurrently, as the site of a key public institution, Annapolis hosted a growing bureaucracy; this became central to the organization of the town and the activities sponsored within. Base activities were self-reinforcing, encouraging residence which increased industry and activity, which in turn stimulated greater population growth.

Consider, then, the lack of facilities at the port of Gloucestertown, the economic conditions of the period, and

the difficulty of life independent of the plantation for all but the most wealthy. In Gloucestertown, no artisan class took up residence here. There were no bureaucrats; the flow of their lives was directed to centers of political activity such as Williamsburg, Yorktown, and Gloucester Court. What took the place of these key economic facilities and public institutions in Gloucestertown?

It is somewhat surprising, in this light, that planters, even those with diversified interests, were attracted to Gloucestertown. Perhaps they were being civic-minded in their intentions, in the manner of Bergstrom and Kelly, when they were purchasing the lots; but these actions extend beyond such patriotic concerns, because these 1707 investors stayed in Gloucestertown and developed it successfully into a small but bustling port, despite all the unfavorable conditions. These men needed some motivation to build this site into a viable port when there were so few encouraging features to balance out the disadvantages. Perhaps the community of which they were part was responsible for giving that motivation to those men.

The Lotts and Streets first Laid out
were thus Distinguished....

1707 Gloucestertown Plat

If a town, or a series of towns, is developed where none has previously existed, then it is because it should or will provide something for the members of the society that

does not currently exist. Since town lots were sold and some were continuously occupied, indicating at least a temporary success, then the town must have provided something beneficial to the residents and users of the town facilities. What did Gloucestertown provide that was different or better than that which was obtainable in a dispersed settlement pattern?

The functional prerequisites for the maintenance of a society (Aberle, Cohen, Davis, Levy and Sutton 1958) were already in operation here prior to passage of the town legislation. The colonists were able to maintain themselves physically and economically. They were guided by certain social structures which allocated goods and resources, determined the roles they were to follow, and directed and governed their behavior. What seems to have occurred with the establishment of these towns was a change in structural arrangements to fill a need previously unsatisfied or to better serve a portion of the population.

Given that the access to rivers made town lots unnecessary as long as a plantation-based economy was dominant, the holding of lots may have been a status symbol and town development a function of the community, that is, the extension into an urban setting of this community of upper class Virginians which already existed among the plantations. This was possible through the restructuring of that plantation society.

In Yorktown, this restructuring appeared in the form of economic reorganization, moving the activities of residents away from tobacco cultivation to more diverse industries. The port served a similar economic function in Gloucestertown, encouraging diversification and increasing personal wealth. But in Gloucestertown, the existing structural arrangements were readjusted by the lot owners to better serve and broaden their social interests. The social role of Gloucestertown was to serve as an extension of the community, the basis of which was already formed on the plantations in the county. This town became the focus of county existence for men drawn primarily from Abingdon Parish and from the commercial networks associated with the York River. In its community role, Gloucestertown provided psychological support and served to regulate socialization, behavior, and the roles of the purchasers in relation to other members of Tidewater society.

The lot owners had the economic means to undertake such an investment. They had common goals and values as well as common economic interests binding them together. Through this unity in purpose and background, the lot owners set about reorganizing the structural arrangements directing their lives and further defining their own role within this structural outline. Together they orchestrated a structural transformation of the fabric of daily life.

Gloucestertown was constructed as a vehicle to improve

their interests, both economic and social. Economically, the purchasers could not only increase their wealth through port activities such as tobacco inspection, commercial exchange and customs collection, but they would also be provided with access to a new material culture lately arrived in Virginia. Socially, Gloucestertown served as a stage, if you will, for the display of wealth and status, and for public viewing of the performance of their roles in Virginia society. In this sense, town life served as an extension of their role within the community.

The economic role for Gloucestertown as a vehicle for increasing personal wealth is seen in the large number of lots purchased by many lot owners --often entire blocks or stretches of waterfront property. The purchases of the Burwells and William Dalton exemplify this type of investment. The lot owners may have aimed at control of town land for the purpose of leasing to newcomers. It has been shown already that an artisan class never truly developed here in town and that many lots were still vacant in 1707; thus, it is certain that the lot owners did not benefit greatly if this was their intention. But even so, other opportunities were present for the construction and operation of mills, warehouses, and stores. And they did have the funds and property needed to subsidize industries such as the pottery operation or a tavern. The beginnings of a small mercantile 'empire' could be established here.

Such strengthening of commercial ties also lessened their dependence upon the cultivation of tobacco. The generation of port activities could only work to their benefit.

Port activity also gave the lot owners direct access to trade goods, to items just now making their way into Virginia material culture. It is apparent that the late 17th and early 18th century was a time of transformation in Virginia. A decline in mortality, an increase in life span, the emergence of a native-born generation of Virginians and a growing sense of commitment to life in the colony is evident. Concurrent with this air of permanence and stability --political, social and mortal-- was a new developing interest in the acquisition of material goods aimed at the improvement of life and increased comfort.

The development of a consumer culture has been discussed by the Carsons (1976), Carter Hudgins (1982, 1984) and others. The improvement in living standards during the late 17th and early 18th centuries can be traced in the inventories of period estates. Such documents show the shift from the early 17th century when a freeholder might own "One gunne unfixt, one new howe, twoe old Howes an old axe, one old bagg, one old blankett one old pillow, one old shirt, one pre of old shoes & stockings, halfe a bushell of Corn sixe quts of beanes, and an old neck Cloth" (York County Deeds, Orders, and Wills II, 1645-1649: 295) and little to ease his lifestyle, to a period at the turn of the

century when some planters could afford to invest more regularly in luxury items such as furniture, a feather bed, pewter tableware, slaves and books. A new material culture preference emerges at this time.

The evolution of bedding provides an especially good example of this trend. From the most meager blanket to a bed of straw, colonists always had a place to sleep albeit uncomfortable perhaps. By the end of the 17th century, however, an increasing number were showing concern about the type of bedding they used; a shift is apparent in the decline of 'blanketts' and 'rugs' as the only type of sleeping accoutrements and an increase in the quality of bedding to 'palletts', 'baggs' and 'hammocks', flock mattresses (course cotton and wool tufts for the filling) and even feather beds. A further step in comfort was the ownership of a bedstead to go with the mattress. In moving beyond a mere functional need, colonists began to acquire such frivolities as bolsters, pillow biers, canopies, and curtains and valence (Fisher 1982).

It is evident that the building of Gloucestertown coincided with a period for the accrual of wealth and material goods; undoubtedly, the lot purchasers, as members of a high socio-economic class, would be among the first to enjoy such improvements in the standard of living. As residents in a port town, they would have direct access to the rising flow of material goods into the colony.

The redirection of this flow of consumer goods through the port towns placed the in-town merchants and planters in a role of increased importance. They served as links in the trade networks, often replacing the larger planter who operated in the rural setting of the county as a purveyor of goods to smaller producers. The role of these men as suppliers also placed them a notch above the planters whose tobacco they purchased. Not only did their presence in a port town give the lot owners direct access to such goods as they arrived in the colony; their connections and interests also gave them control and influence in the importation of these goods. They were often responsible for bringing in new goods to the colony, thus influencing the choices of the consumer.

The emergence of Gloucestertown in the rural landscape served another purpose for the lot owners and residents; beyond the extension and improvement of their economic interests, the gathering of community members helped to define and strengthen the social structures guiding their daily lives. The aims of the lot owners were first, to display their standing and their role in the community and in the society at large, and secondly, to further define and enhance that position in relation to others. These aims were mutually reinforcing.

The role of the lot owners in their community and in Virginia society has already been defined. These gentlemen

were political leaders and administrators serving the parish, county, or colony. They were members of long-standing, politically active and socially prominent families. As well educated and respected individuals, they were regarded with some deference. As wealthy merchants and planters, they controlled avenues of credit and purchase. Their active role within the community and county and their pursuit of increased socio-economic standing indicated not only their affinity for leading and guiding the lives of others, but also their concern for their own 'appearance' and their visibility in the colonial landscape.

This wealth and status could be displayed for public viewing in a setting such as that provided by Gloucester-town. The purchase and exhibition of new material goods had symbolic meaning for members of Virginia society, highlighting their prominence in the community and accompanying values associated with that standing, while further reinforcing their position and status. It seems likely that there were underlying meanings for material culture in Gloucestertown. The selection of fashionable glassware or a new ceramics pattern, the construction of a new home of brick or of other fine building materials, the purchase of slaves -- all of these actions led to the association of their owners with a high socio-economic status, and also with particular values and organizing structures. The attribution of status, in turn, reinforced

and solidified their social positions in Tidewater society.

In his doctoral dissertation (1984), Carter Hudgins argues that "Material goods are acquired in systematic, culturally meaningful ways so that individuals can, consciously and unconsciously, measure, compare, and classify a neighbor's possessions with their own and gain a clear sense of whether that household's links to their own are fragile and unconnected or knit with the knot of collateral concern" (1984: chapter one, p.33). Material culture is considered for its symbolic value at sites such as Corotoman, estate of the early Gloucestertown lot owner, Robert Carter. In Gloucestertown, there was almost certainly a symbolic language in the houses constructed, in the use of space, in the purchase and display of material goods. These structures and items reflecting the new interest in material culture had a symbolic purpose, for use in categorization and ranking of individuals.

Lot ownership might be viewed as a deliberate step taken by those of a higher status to solidify their social position and to reduce the threat from the social and economic mobility which characterized the 17th century. In altering and defining the structure and organization of planter society, these men were in essence clamping down on social mobility.

Consider the diverse social and economic background of Virginia colonists from the earliest days of settlement.

Many were gentlemen, often younger sons of English gentry, but an overwhelming number were laborers, yeoman farmers and skilled craftsmen. Up to 50% of the population was comprised of indentured servants before 1700. One study shows that over 70% of the immigrants to Maryland between 1634 and 1681 came as servants (see "Immigration and Opportunity: The Freedman in Early Colonial Maryland" by Carr and Menard, chapter seven in Tate and Ammerman 1979).

The accessibility of land in Virginia was great in the earliest stages of settlement. For those who could not afford transportation costs to the colony and thereby gain title to a 50 acre headright, there were other alternatives. Most came over as indentured servants with the expectation that upon completion of their term (usually four to seven years), they could become land owners. These expectations were usually met in the first half of the 17th century, but as land patents consumed greater and greater areas of the Tidewater, these freedmen found it increasingly difficult to become land owners. Frustration in the decline of opportunities vented itself in conflicts such as Bacon's Rebellion.

At the same time, a new generation of native-born Virginians arose to dominate the social and political scene. Members of families who consolidated their holdings into great estates, this latest group of Virginians (represented by such men as Nathaniel Burwell and John Smith) felt

stronger ties to the region than ever before. This new feeling manifested itself in an effort to solidify their socio-economic standing and to separate themselves from other members of Tidewater society.

The development of towns such as Gloucestertown seems to have assisted in social stratification and the more complete division of Virginia society into classes. The involvement of lot owners in town investment and development aided the tightening of class structure, and the increase of distance between members. Social gain was to be had from lot ownership because only those of a certain socio-economic background could afford to invest and maintain a life in town, independent of the plantation, during the initial surge in town development. Lot ownership, through its exclusivity, brought recognition and prominence; it confirmed their material and social prosperity.

By encapsulating their existence within the confines of Gloucestertown, these men conveyed their own position within Tidewater society and, in doing so, guided and shaped the behavior of others. Interaction in this town was similar to the inter-plantation associations present at court day or a church gathering (Isaac 1982; Breen 1983). If material goods had a symbolic language of expression, then so too did the actions and behavioral patterns of participants in town life. Daily life was 'displayed' for public viewing in this central location, in the manner of consumer goods and

material wealth. The town served as a centerpiece or backdrop for the acting out of social organization.

In his dissertation, Hudgins attempts to define the symbolic grammar and symbolic behavior of the early 18th century in Virginia (1984). He borrows certain concepts from anthropology to use in an analysis of archaeological and historical data for their symbolic content. Hudgins feels that all colonists shared "images, linguistic codes, expressive gestures, and social customs" (1984: 5). His presentation of data is very supportive of this argument. Such symbolic grammar is in evidence in Gloucestertown as well. The structures of community life shaped the behavioral patterns of members, providing a system of shared public meanings to direct and sustain.

As Hudgins points out, etiquette and public ritual ordered political and social events; they served as vehicles for the guidance of behavior and associations. Certain qualities were associated with political and social responsibilities. The tobacco inspector, for instance, represented in Gloucestertown by John Smith, was to be of good reputation and trustworthy; he was also by necessity an educated person. These qualities were of great enough concern to be remarked upon in the Proposal for Improving Tobacco, dated 1705 (Calendar of State Papers 1875: 96-98). The same is true for other positions --sheriff, customs collector, justice; by example, these lot owners as office

holders provided values for judging proper behavior. As a result, the behavioral roles of others were shaped by these examples. Public punishment served a similar function, defining improper behavior. All of these actions and associations functioned for normative regulation.

The pattern of association here acted as a guide for the formation of alliances and networks among other members of society, directing social positioning as in the town of Clachan (Mewett 1982). The definition of these lot owners as prominent, affluent leaders of Virginia society and politics helped to define the roles and standing of others through contrast. Such definition provided a means to organize and classify several different aspects of behavior. Role differentiation was provided on a symbolic level.

Another role of the community is to provide emotional support to its members. This is, perhaps, one of the most significant roles attributed to Gloucestertown. Earlier, in defining community, it was stated that community structure is based on a restricted social space or network, on feelings of mutuality, and on the needs and resources of the members. These networks cause a feeling of reciprocal obligation through kinship and association, illustrated very strongly by the close of a letter from Nathaniel Burwell to John Norton, dated 1768, signed "Your Friend and Kinsman" (Mason 1937: 61). Such remarks symbolize the emotional support provided by such networks, as well as the exchange

and sharing of resources. Gloucestertown served as a backdrop for the use of these networks and for their expansion; as an example, we have the Thruston marriages into the community.

The emotional support provided by the community in its new location extends beyond this, however. Part of Gloucestertown's development was the creation of a "more regular settlement" with the amenities of English town life remembered, to serve the social, economic and psychological needs not filled by structures based on a dispersed plantation settlement pattern. The isolation of colonists in communally-barren settlements during the 17th century created a severe deficiency and weakness in social institutions and structures. William Fitzhugh commented on this need for a richer public life, feeling deeply the "want of spiritual help & comforts" (Davis 1963: 15). Communal interaction supported by town life was needed to break the isolation of settlement. Gloucestertown provided the necessary focal point for such interaction, serving public needs as a realm for communication, economic and social exchange, and implicit needs described earlier such as social stratification, role differentiation, and normative regulation.

In a discussion of the emergence of 'creole' or native-born Virginians in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, Carole Shamas relates the disparaging comments flying

between English-born and native-born colonists who were competing for dominance of the political and social hierarchy: "In their report on the colony to the Board of Trade in 1697, Henry Hartwell, James Blair, and Edward Chilton (English-born gentlemen) blamed the lack of towns on the native majority in the House of Burgesses, whom they believed had never seen one and, therefore, could not imagine the advantages of urban development" (Tate and Ammerman 1979: 287; see chapter entitled "English-Born and Creole Elites in Turn-of-the-Century Virginia"). This belittlement of the intelligence and efforts of the colonists is present in the comments of the Reverend Hugh Jones in 1724, as well.

The English immigrants and visitors clearly felt the locals to be backward ignoramuses. The efforts to construct towns after the passage of legislation (despite opposition from English merchants) and the construction of a community at Gloucestertown show them just as clearly to be wrong and certainly undiplomatic. The transfer of community structure to Gloucestertown shows the wishes of the lot owners to demonstrate their commitment to the colony and to show their new-found feelings of stability and permanence. Jim Deetz identifies this period in which town development occurred as one of re-Anglicanization, a rekindling of ties with England commencing in the first quarter of the 18th century (1977: 38-39),. If the native-born Virginians leading the push for

town development had never seen a town (which is unlikely given their opportunities for education in England and their commercial associations), they still sought the same qualities associated with English town life: community structure, exchange and kin networks, vehicles for commercial exchange and public interaction, and emotional support (see Clark and Slack 1976; Clark 1981; Corfield 1982 for a discussion of English towns). These qualities were among the original aims of the town legislators. Gloucestertown was to serve in the manner of English towns, as a backdrop for economic and social interaction in a cultural center.

It is apparent that this transformation occurred at other port towns, most noticeably in Yorktown, the settlement across the river from Gloucestertown. Here it seems to have developed concurrently with economic restructuring and economic growth. The "airs" and "opulence" recorded by visitors to the town testify to the role of Yorktown as a social and economic center, aided by the presence of the courthouse, the customs house and the church. The development of a "gentile" as opposed to a commercial area of town is significant; the buildings reflect the success, the prosperity and the confidence of the residents in Yorktown.

Undoubtedly a sense of community developed in Yorktown too; Gloucestertown is unique, however, in that from the

beginning it was based predominantly on the extension of a community already present in the county and along the river, not on the presence of economic or public institutions. The community in Gloucestertown became a focal point of county existence for many. Gloucestertown was still rural in its orientation (perhaps this is part of the reason for the ease in which it slipped back into the rural landscape) and became a cultural support center, a basis for community interaction, rather than a self-supporting economic center in the manner of Yorktown. Residents were eventually drawn away from Gloucestertown to more concentrated and vital centers of activity and communal affairs, like Gloucester Court House; despite the disadvantages of settlement here, however, this community atmosphere was strong enough to sustain Gloucestertown through the 18th century and into the 19th century before it was absorbed into the countryside which surrounded it.

Community was clearly an aspect in the development of Gloucestertown and other legislated settlements, a strong force in their organization and maintenance. The transfer of structures and roles to town life improved the social and economic interests of the lot owners, provided regulatory values for daily life, defined classes and appropriate roles, and provided emotional support through the sense of community created in a center of public interaction. Is this visible archaeologically? The symbolic meanings

present in Gloucestertown's material remains must be considered as a part of archaeological interpretation at the site, in view of this community context. The social context has a definite significance for interpretation and for the study of urban development in the Chesapeake; this is outlined in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATION

Oct. 13 --York, A LOT pleasantly situated in this town where on is a dwelling-house fifty two feet long and 24 feet wide, with 3 rooms below and 6 above, a fine dry cellar, with two brick partitions, a good storehouse, kitchen, stable, dairy, smoak house, &c, all entirely new, and furnished in the best manner. Any person inclinable to purchase, may know the terms by applying to Mr. John H. Norton, or the subscriber,

Edward Cary, 1768
Virginia Gazette
(Mason 1937: 37-38)

The conclusions drawn from this study of the context in which Gloucestertown developed need to be examined now for their relevance to the archaeological record and its interpretation. The historical and cultural background outlined in this paper would have affected the type of activities undertaken in Gloucestertown and the type of household or economic class of residents frequenting this port. This influence would be visible archaeologically in the forms of buildings, in the use of space, and in the material culture associated with specific lifestyles. The interpretation of Gloucestertown's remains is particularly significant given the quantity and condition of archaeological deposits here; the work of the VRCA has shown the

remnants of the town to be well preserved and quantifiably significant (McCartney and Hazzard 1980; Lucchetti 1982; Hazzard and McCartney 1986; Hazzard n.d.).

The aim of any archaeological investigation should be directed toward the discovery Gloucestertown's importance for colonists as one of the legislated ports. Consider the lack of attention Gloucestertown drew from John Fontaine in 1716 and the pessimistic outlook of Hugh Jones in 1724; the accounts of contemporary travelers have indicated the small size of Gloucestertown. What is needed is an indication of Gloucestertown's significance in the colonial landscape, regardless of 'size'. Verification of the size of facilities, the extent of activities, and the extent of the port's role in supporting residence in Gloucestertown is needed. Despite its smallness, Gloucestertown served an important role as a point of access to several major trade networks, as a market for at least part of the surrounding county, and as a site for the tobacco inspection warehouse.

Another objective should be the recovery of data regarding actual manifestations of the needs and values -- the intentions-- of the town planners and developers in constructing Gloucestertown. The town plans shown in the 1707 plat outwardly reflect the intentions of the trustees; the town site gave maximum access to the York River to best serve the future activities of the port. Undoubtedly there was some compliance with the town legislation, despite its

brief existence; immediate provisions required construction of a dwelling or warehouse within three to four months to prevent forfeiture. Construction requirements were also given in regards to size, to be twenty feet square. The intentions of lot owners and planners are also reflected, implicitly and explicitly, in spatial organization and the allotment of areas for public and commercial use.

Finally, since action is social discourse and material goods bear a symbolic level of meaning, the remains of Gloucestertown should be analyzed with this symbolic context in mind. In this way, an appreciation for the presence of community in Gloucestertown can be maintained.

For Laying out Gloucester Town beginning
at a Stone on the high ground & Running
down the River....

1707 Gloucestertown Plat

As the site of a tobacco inspection warehouse and as a designated port of the colony, Gloucestertown housed facilities for "the better secureing of all tobaccos, goods, wares, and merchantdises" and for the "buying and selling of all manner of goods, wares, and merchantdises" (Hening 1823, III: 55, 60). Ideally, all goods, slaves and servants would be funneled through the port during the years in which the legislation was in effect. This flow of goods required warehouses for storage and inspection, and wharves for loading and unloading. The size of operations was

undoubtedly tempered by the revocation of the town acts, since that action redirected shipping routes to some extent; however, Gloucestertown still served as a point of access to the customs house in Yorktown for goods coming in and out of Gloucester County. Also, the inspection warehouse continued to operate throughout most of the 17th and 18th centuries, generating many forms of activity.

The tobacco inspection warehouse assumed the greatest importance of all economic activity in the port because of the continued dependence on tobacco production for Virginia's economy. Established first in 1632/33 by the Executive Council, this structure was the sphere of much interaction, economic and social, throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. The site selected for this facility was to the east or northeast of the Gloucestertown cove on the land of John Williams, early Gloucestertown lot owner. Its location on the water was vital for continuing the process of shipping and marketing tobacco after its inspection. In 1760, a claim was made to the colonial government for reimbursement of the costs to construct a new wharf at the warehouse (Hazzard and McCartney 1986: 10); this example also shows, too, the natural generation of support industries from tobacco inspection, which in this case created a need for carpentry and skilled craftsmen to build and maintain facilities.

Presuming the site of the warehouse could be located

(this important archaeological site may have been destroyed already by construction undertaken by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science), a suggested approach to interpretation would be to determine the extent of activity there through the quantity and nature of depositions around the structure, and to then compare the resulting data with that from other activity areas in the town. Did the tobacco inspection warehouse and its processes dominate the town economically as tobacco dominated the Virginia economy? Or are the deposits secondary in importance to those of other commercial enterprises? The 1754 watercolor shows little development on this eastern half of Gloucestertown where the warehouse was situated (see Figure 2). It would be interesting to determine the truth of this, particularly since the warehouse should have been a major center of social and economic interaction in Gloucestertown.

As a link in a network for the distribution of commercial goods, it is possible to analyze the origin of material remains in Gloucestertown to determine the extent of trade route, the presence of any local manufactures, such as pottery from William Roger's operation in Yorktown or from our own mysterious potter, and the extent of communication and commercial ties to other colonies in America. Is an increasing reliance on local and American goods traceable as the American Revolution nears or do lot owners seem to have extolled the virtues of imports? There may be an obvious

increase in the number of English wares when the lot owners and other Virginians rekindle ties with the parent country. Is there a stigma attached to local goods --an appreciation of their worth on a symbolic level rather than a functional level? Are imports diverse or does Gloucestertown, and the surrounding area, seem to be isolated from the mainstream? Norfolk and Hampton shared a vigorous trade with the West Indies; evidence of this trade network may be found at Gloucestertown. Is the size of trade here proportional to the town's status? What is the extent of mercantile connections to other regions in North America? John Fontaine's comment on the "significant" trade with Pennsylvania is of interest; many sherds of a redware from Pennsylvania, perhaps Philadelphia, have been recovered in VRCA excavations (personal communication, Merry Outlaw) and in subsurface testing of a house lot by the author. Thus far, it seems that the bulk of material goods are imports, primarily from England, with a smattering of locally made redwares and other goods of colonial extraction.

The use of waterfront property is of interest. In Yorktown, two sections of the town were developed to accommodate commercial and social interests. The river's edge and the area below the cliffs served as the commercial sector; this area was heavily developed with warehouses, wharves, stores, and inns for some of the looser elements of society. It seems unlikely that such a division was present

in Gloucestertown because of the town's small size; the information available on lot ownership seems to indicate, too, that only the Burwells, Dalton and Thomas Perrin held distinct groupings of lots which might be separated into residential sites in the interior and commercial areas along the waterfront. Such distinctiveness in land use could be recovered archaeologically, telling us whether Gloucestertown was commercially oriented or more residential, more a part of the rural county landscape. It seems that while their interests were diversified or largely mercantile, these lot owners were still a part of Gloucester County and still indelibly linked to a rural tobacco culture.

How closely were the provisions of the town acts followed during their brief existence? Legislation provided for weekly town markets and an annual town fair to serve as a vehicle for economic exchange. It may be possible to identify an area within Gloucestertown that was set aside for such activity. As indicated earlier, it appears that lot 69 was reserved for public use as a wharf; this lot is actually composed of two seemingly distinct sections, with the upper part labelled no.69 and the lower with no designation at all. Perhaps this served as a public area for town markets. It would be interesting to know the level of importance attributed to the presence of an actual, physical location for such functions. A large trash pit was discovered in lot no.69 by the VRCA, from which were pulled

quantities of glassware, stoneware, earthenware and other ceramic types, iron tools, clothing items, oyster and brick, and kiln furniture, of which all but the kiln furniture were typical contents of colonial trash pits. McCartney has suggested the possibility of this feature serving as the town dump (McCartney and Hazzard 1980). If lot no.69 was indeed a public area, then the remnants of activity there are very significant for revealing common interests and attitudes.

Another provision of the town legislation was a corporate monopoly on the operation of taverns, with none to be located within ten miles of the town except at the site of a courthouse or ferry (Hening 1823, III: 404). The recovery of 600 pipestem fragments and other data from the builder's trench have identified this 18th century structure as operating from approximately 1730 until the late 18th century. Documentary references indicate the presence of other taverns on the Point dating back to the last quarter of the 17th century. There was clearly a need for such overnight accommodations because of the town's location at a crossroads for different transportation routes and trade networks.

The lack of a strong economic base, constructed on industry related to tobacco cultivation, left Gloucestertown with few encouragements and little support for a resident artisan class. In terms of the archaeological record, this

would be confirmed or disproved by the absence of tools and other remains of crafts and industries separate from port activity. Secondary support activities did grow here; the lodging of travelers is one such trade. Other industries may be identified.

The location of a mill depicted in Gauntlett's watercolor of 1754 might be uncovered. The mill operation has several points of interest: the nature and the extent of its operations, daily work routines, duration, possible employment of a full-time miller to run the operation, and association with any domestic structure.

The discovery of kiln furniture indicates the presence of a potter in Gloucestertown. A lack of reference in the documentary record is disappointing but hardly surprising, given the near total absence of references to the Yorktown potter, who operated illegally in the town for nearly 25 years. Further excavations might locate the source of the kiln furniture and tell us more about its connection with the operation of William Rogers in Yorktown, the extent of its production, and the market for items of local manufacture to supplement imported goods.

Other structures were a regular presence in Gloucestertown. The fort at Gloucester Point was serviceable for most of the colonial period. Built in 1667 to defend the colony and to protect shipping from the Dutch, Fort James was regularly fortified, allowed to decline, and rebuilt. A

palisade line uncovered on the bluff by the VRCA in 1982 may have been a protective wall of the fort (Hazzard and McCartney 1986: 16). There should be evidence of this cycle of disrepair and maintenance, visible, perhaps, from changes in building materials, in levels of occupation, and in alterations of the fort's structure and size. There may be symbolic alterations, too. Fort James was never built to protect the colonists from Indian attack like the palisade at Jamestown; instead, it was designed to command the narrows of the York River so to protect the area from enemies of the Crown and from pirates. There may be underlying variations in the emphasis on defense as enemies changed and as shipping interests expanded. The fort was revamped for the American Revolution and the Civil War; extensive fortifications from both wars remind us of the depth of Gloucestertown's archaeological deposits. The relationship between Fort James, in its many states, and the town which surrounded it should also be examined.

The ferry, operating from the mid to late 17th century into the 18th and 18th centuries, conveyed travelers and county residents to and from Yorktown. This feature is not likely to be recovered, eroded from the banks of the York River. The "Great Road", which extended from the tip of the Point into the interior of Gloucester County, was also a primary mode of transportation. Frequent reference to this path as the "Great Road" marks its importance to colonists.

The rare presence of a road to ease the discomforts of travel was noteworthy, indeed. It seems likely that town residents and merchants would have appreciated its significance in the landscape and the economic and social opportunities presented by its route here. Perhaps this road was incorporated into the town plan and into eventual construction. It would be of interest to know if this thoroughfare crossed the top of Gloucestertown or passed through the middle; with streets on either side, this road would act as a sort of 'main street' as it continued through the town to the ferry.

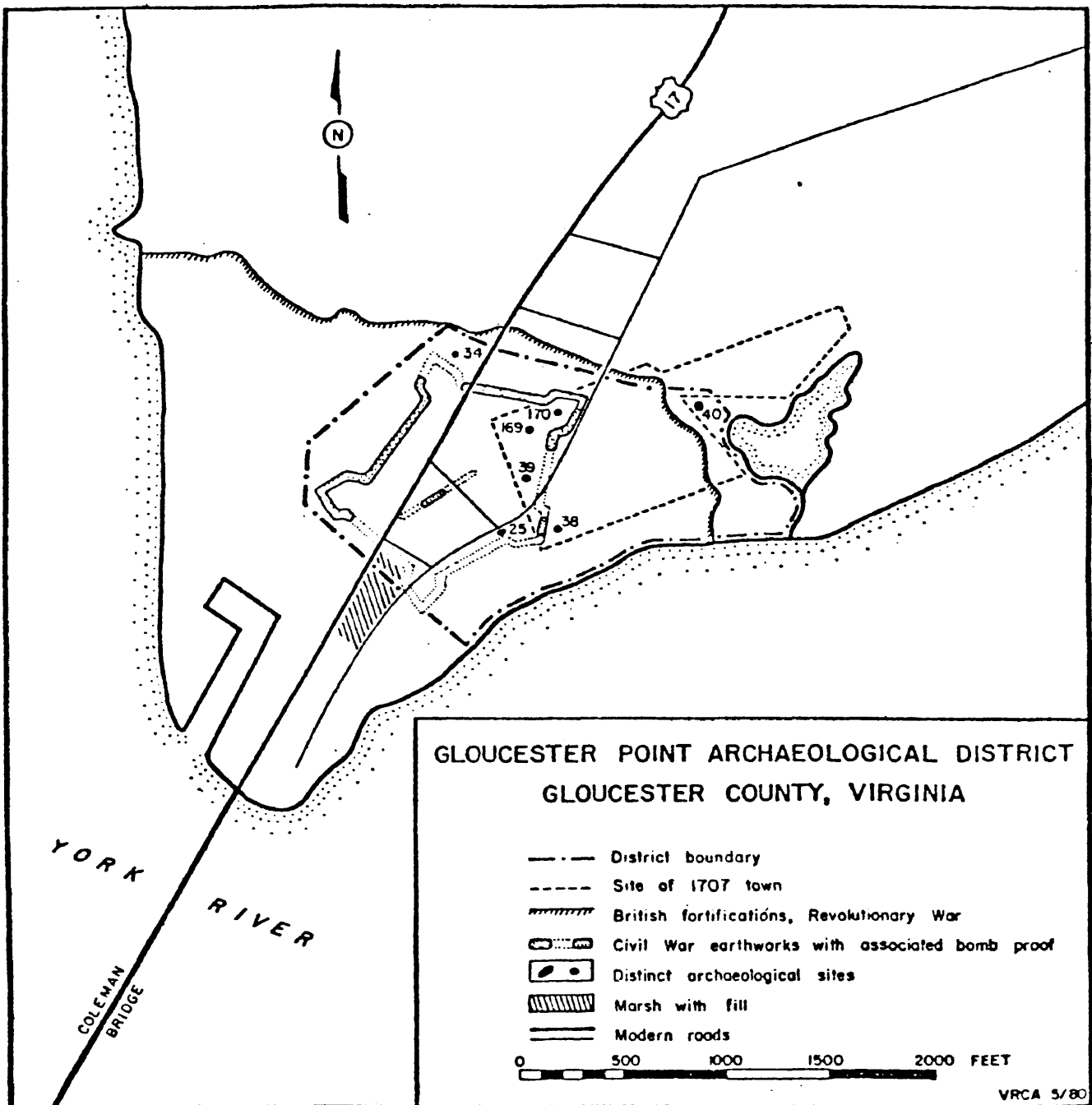
The location of the Great Road was not given in the 1707 town plat, so the resolution of this matter awaits further archaeological excavation or documentary revelation. However, other streets were outlined on the plat and have been seen archaeologically too. This may be evidence of the intentions of the town trustees to create a "more regular settlement". The plat for Gloucestertown clearly marks nine streets cross-sectioning the town, of regular width (two poles or thirty-three feet). Excavations by the VRCA have uncovered the route of Tyndall Street, running approximately on an east-west orientation, the southernmost street in the town. Two parallel fence lines, 33 feet distant and bordered by four 17th century brick foundations, identified this feature (Hazzard and McCartney 1986: 18). It seems that the town planners had certain concepts of regularity

and order which they transferred to their plans for the development of the town.

Excavations, prompted by the impending construction of drain fields on the town site by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, have uncovered more evidence of this desire for regular town life based, perhaps, on images of English villages and towns. Nearly 100 features were found (Figure 17): cellars and foundations, a well, post holes and fence lines, ditches for drainage and trash pits (Hazzard and McCartney 1986: 16). The likelihood of formal gardens within these fenced lots is strong; John Thruston mentioned the gardens planted on his Gloucestertown lots in his 1763 will (Mason 1948: 58). "Out houses and appurtenances" will also be found within Gloucestertown's confines, such as those mentioned by Thruston's will and in an advertisement from the Virginia Gazette for a residential complex in Yorktown with dairy, smoke house, kitchen and stables (Mason 1937: 37-38). Spatial organization within each lot will tell much about the attitudes and cultural patterns of the owners. A demonstration of social prominence and economic wellbeing might take form in an orderly arrangement of outhouses and gardens.

If you at your own charge should build an ordinary Virginia house, it will be some charge & no profit, & at the expiration of your tenants time, the plantation will not be in better order, than the way before proposed...But should not advise to

Figure 17: Gloucester Point Archaeological District.
 Virginia Research Center for Archaeology.



build either a great, or English framed house, for labour is so intolerably dear, & workmen so idle & negligent that the building of a good house, to you there will seem insupportable.

William Fitzhugh, 1686/7
Letter to Nicholas Hayward
(Davis 1963: 202-203)

Within the 18th century, cultural divisions arose from the divergence to Georgian or Renaissance cultural patterns from traditional culture with its medieval roots. This divergence is a major focus of Carter Hudgins' dissertation (1984); to understand these changes, he examines several aspects of behavior and material culture associated with the elite and non-elite, both in terms of their distinctiveness and their shared qualities. This new material culture, as part of this change in cultural patterns, was enjoyed by members of a high socio-economic class; their background was still tied to more traditional values and attitudes and so this is still present, interacting with the newly assumed behavioral patterns of Georgian structures and categories. The same is not true for most Virginians; they were still deeply rooted in traditional expressions of the Virginia planter's culture, while the cost of such an investment was prohibitive. Hudgins argues that previously there was little to separate planters socially other than their claims to status and prominence; an investment in the trappings of wealth and perceived social prominence did create the desired separation between groups, marking them as members of distinct classes.

A look back into the historical record shows that Gloucestertown's residents were all wealthy planters and merchants in 1707, Virginia's most able, most eligible, and most likely men to participate in these changes. If lot ownership is considered as a status symbol, it does seem possible, then, that ownership and the display of material culture and social roles within the urban setting were designed to achieve the same separation; perhaps this alteration in cultural patterns and attitudes towards material culture was a part of the social restructuring of the community that took place here in Gloucestertown.

Because of these conditions, or attitudes, there is likely to be a visible difference in the archaeological assemblages associated with a rural plantation lifestyle and with a new urban existence. Alterations between assemblages may be superficial, indicating the retention of a rural plantation culture, or they may be more substantive, indicating a significant change in orientation to an urban lifestyle. Differences may be economic in origin or merely a natural consequence of close contact with trade networks. It seems likely that Gloucestertown will bear evidence of both cultural patterns. However, if the acquisition of new material goods is linked with the restructuring of Virginia society in the 17th and 18th centuries, and I believe it is, then variations in the archaeological record hold greater significance. Differences in material culture will be based

primarily on the need of residents to be distinct, not just a result of trade associations in the town.

I lend to my dutiful wife Sarah Thruston six of my Household slaves such as she shall chose, my Dwelling house with the out Houses Gardens and appurtenances therein being or there to belonging...lent during her widowhood...

I give unto my said wife Sarah my chaise, horses & Horned Cattle in Town...

I give to my said son Charles Mynne Thruston [another] tract or Parcell of Land...on condition that he or they give to his brother John Thruston...his right and title to all lots and houses in Gloucester Town (formerly William Daltons) which I hold in right of my wife...

I give to my son John Thruston (after his Mother's death or marriage) all my lots & houses with appurtenances in the Town of Gloster....

Will of John Thruston
Gloucester Co., 1763
(Mason 1948: 58)

Unfortunately, there is little information on lot owners after 1707. The activities of John Thruston are well documented and show him to be of the same socio-economic class and a member of the same community although he was a resident some thirty years after the last town act. The 1770/1782 tax lists also reveal the names of a few owners still participating in town life, including Thruston's wife and son; descendants of lot owners Berkeley, Baytop, Whiting, Bates, Dixon and Perrin; and also atleast two others unassociated with Gloucestertown's beginnings (Mason 1946: 103). The first two groups share the same background and socio-economic characteristics as their predecessors in

1707. The names of only a few are known in addition to these because of extensive documentary loss, but it is likely that more information can be found with further research. It would be interesting to know if this trend in social patterning continues among later Gloucestertown residents; Johann Ewald's observation of Gloucestertown residents in 1781 would seem to indicate that this is so (1979: 321). This may be visible archaeologically. In any case, it is clear that even if they were not of common background and interests, their town existence was built upon the efforts of the community present here in 1707.

Since Gloucestertown's 1707 occupants were indeed among the wealthy and prosperous, their status would be reflected below the ground. Virginia experienced a change in the type of building construction used during the very late 17th and early 18th centuries, shifting from impermanent earthfast structures to more substantial and durable forms (Carson et al, 1981). The typical 'Virginia House', mentioned in William Fitzhugh's letter, was a 1 to 1 1/2 story framed dwelling, of two rooms, chimneys of wood or mud, and a communal atmosphere. Temporary in nature, the riven clapboards were unpainted and the foundation subject to rot (Billings 1972: 290). Hudgins often refers to tar paper as a building material. These houses were described by a traveler as "wretched...the worst I ever saw, the meanest cottages in England being everyway equal [to] the best in

Virginia" (1984: chapter 1, p.34). A product of economics and tobacco cultivation, and of the brevity of life here, the Virginia house was not built with permanence in mind. At the end of the 17th century, however, changes in mortality and changes in 'mentalité' contributed to a growing stability and increased commitment to the colony; this generated an interest in more permanent dwellings. With a change to more durable building materials came an alteration in spatial organization --a decrease in the communal atmosphere and an introduction to the concept of privacy-- and also to the furnishings within.

This change should be perceptible in Gloucestertown. Robert Beverley, in describing this transformation, noted the presence of large brick homes with many rooms, glass windows, rich furniture, clay tiles or slate upon the roof tops to replace shingles, outhouses, fences, gardens (Beverley 1705: 289-290; see Figure 18). The will of John Thruston, dated 1763, gives us the only documentary description of domestic structures in Gloucestertown. Thruston left to his wife Sarah the use of a town house complete with gardens, outhouses, and appurtenances for as long as she remained unmarried (Mason 1948: 58). Among his possessions requiring shelter were a chaise, horses, and cattle. Descriptions of residential areas in Yorktown give us further impressions about Gloucestertown's appearance: imposing brick structures and fashionable wooden houses,

Figure 18: Robert Beverley, Description of
Virginia Material Culture

The Private Bldgs are of late very much improved; several Gent. there, having built themselves large Brick Houses of many Rooms on a Floor, and several Stories high, as also some Stone-Houses: but they don't covet to make them lofty, having extent enough of Ground to build upon; and now and then they are visited by high Winds, which wou'd incommode a towring Fabrick. They always contrive to have large Rooms, that they may be cool in Summer. Of late they have made their Stories much higher than formerly and their Windows large, and sasht with Cristal Glass; and within they adorn their Apartments with rich furniture.

All their Drudgeries of Cookery, Washing, Diaries, Etc. are perform'd in Offices detachd from the Dwelling-Houses which by this means are kept more cool and Sweet.

Their common covering for Dwelling-Houses is Shingle, which is an oblong Square of Cypress or Pine-Wood; but they cover their Tob. houses with thin Clapboard; and tho' they have slate enough in some particular parts of the Country, and as strong Clay as can be desired for making of Tile, yet they have very few tiles Houses; neither has anyone yet thought it worth his while, to dig up the Slate, which will hardly make use of, til the Carriage there becomes cheaper, and more common.

accompanied by a variety of separate service structures.

The type of construction suggested here has not been ruled out by excavations thus far. The VRCA has identified over a dozen foundations dating to the 18th century (Figures 19, 20), only two of which were of post construction and the remainder of brick. A site designated 44G139 contains a 22' x 36' foundation with an English basement and a bulkhead entrance with wooden steps. It seems to be located in an area corresponding to lots 71 and 86 which were owned by the Burwells; the quality of artifactual remains tends to support this, indicating that the owner was of a high socio-economic status (McCartney and Hazzard 1980). Unglazed roofing tile was discovered at a site dating to the second quarter of the 18th century. Other indications of durable, comfortable, and fashionable homes include window glass, shell and lime mortar, plaster, turned lead, a delft chimney tile (Figure 21), a shutter latch, hinges, and brass door handles or knobs (Figure 22) (Hazzard n.d.).

This seems to confirm the suggestion that Gloucestertown owners had an interest in displaying such attitudes of permanence and commitment while making a statement about their socio-economic status. The owners were not necessarily universal in the degree to which they accepted this change in material culture. Assemblages should be compared for socio-economic differences between structures with brick foundations and those of posthole

Figure 19: 18th Century Foundation Remains.
Site GL139 excavated by the Virginia
Research Center for Archaeology , March 1983.



Figure 20: Brick Remains of Gloucestertown Structure.
Excavated by the VRCA in October 1982.
(Photo by David K. Hazzard).

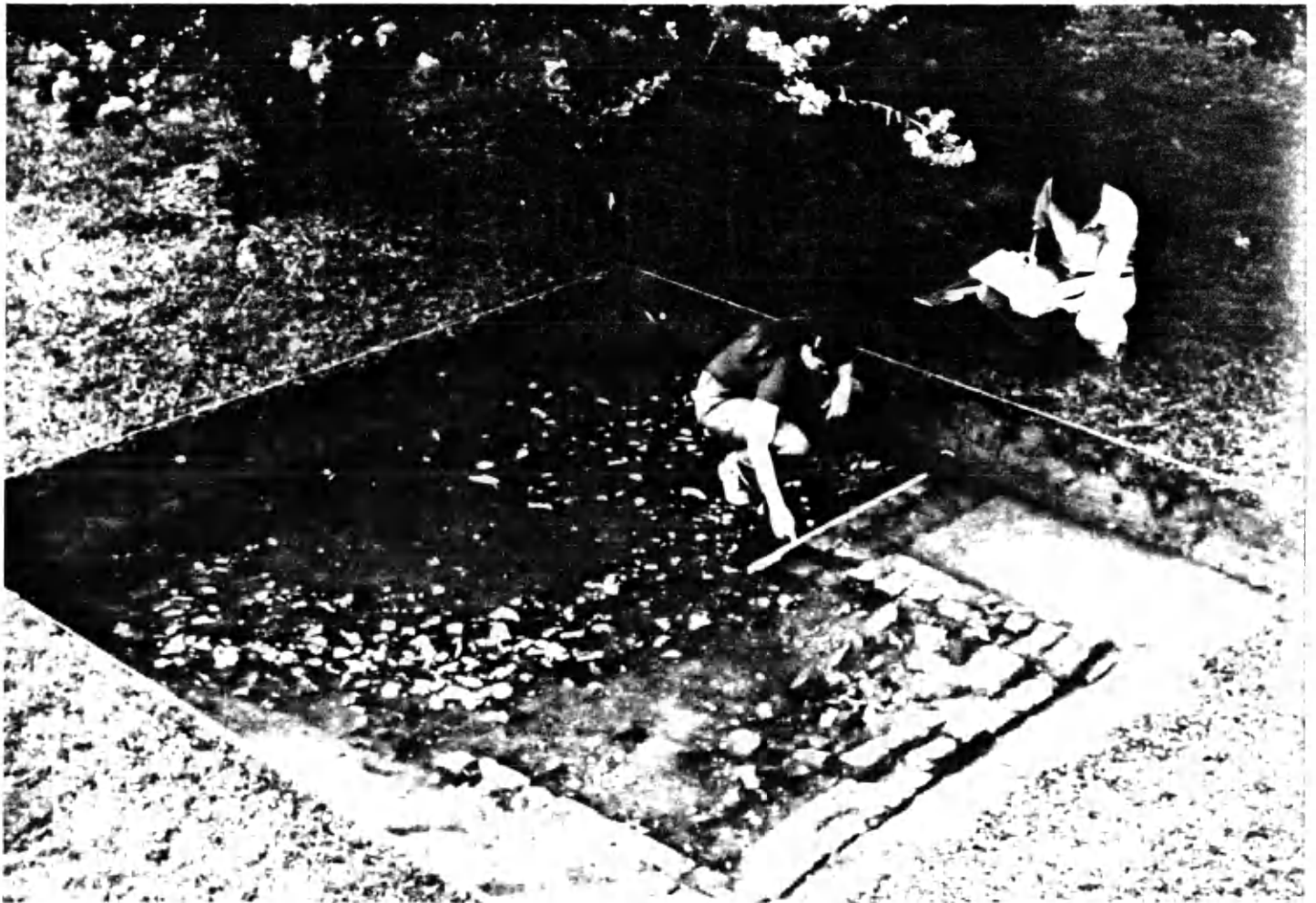


Figure 21: Delft Chimney Tile, the Hunters.
From GL197, excavated in 1983 by the VRCA.
(Photo by David K. Hazzard)



Figure 22: Brass Door Knobs from Gloucestertown Dwelling. Excavated by VRCA, November 1982. (Photo by David K. Hazzard).



construction, for example.

These town houses were used to display a new consumer orientation among these Virginians. Evidence of a new material culture thus far confirms that residents belonged to a high position in Virginia society, socially and economically, with the recovery of tea bowls and tea pots, fine oriental porcelain, creamware cups (a nearly complete set), one sweet meat tray, and two tureens, all very specialized and highly ornamental forms of material culture (Hazzard n.d.). How very different these forms are from wooden trenchers and "an old pott", in ideological and symbolic content. The extent of Gloucestertown's trade connections is glimpsed in the variety of English ceramics and other types beyond redwares and slipwares of the 17th century: cobalt decorated Rhenish stoneware, brown stoneware, Wedgwood green, blue shell-edged whiteware, white saltglaze stoneware, creamware, hand painted pearlware and porcelain, Staffordshire iron glaze, Buckley coarsewares, delft (Figure 23), Jackfield, Whieldonware, combed slipware, and regionally, Pennsylvania redwares and local Yorktown (perhaps even Gloucestertown) earthenwares (Hazzard n.d.).

Lot owners were concerned with their entertainment and their comfort, seen in the presence of pipe bowls (Figure 24) and stems, wine bottles (Figure 25), wine glasses and tumblers, even two wine cork retainers. Buttons, thimbles,

Figure 23: Delftware Plate Base from GL177.
Excavated in 1981 by the VRCA.
(Photo by David K. Hazzard).



Figure 24: 18th Century Pipe Bowl from House Lot.
From test excavations by the author, 1984.
(Photo by Karen Fisher)

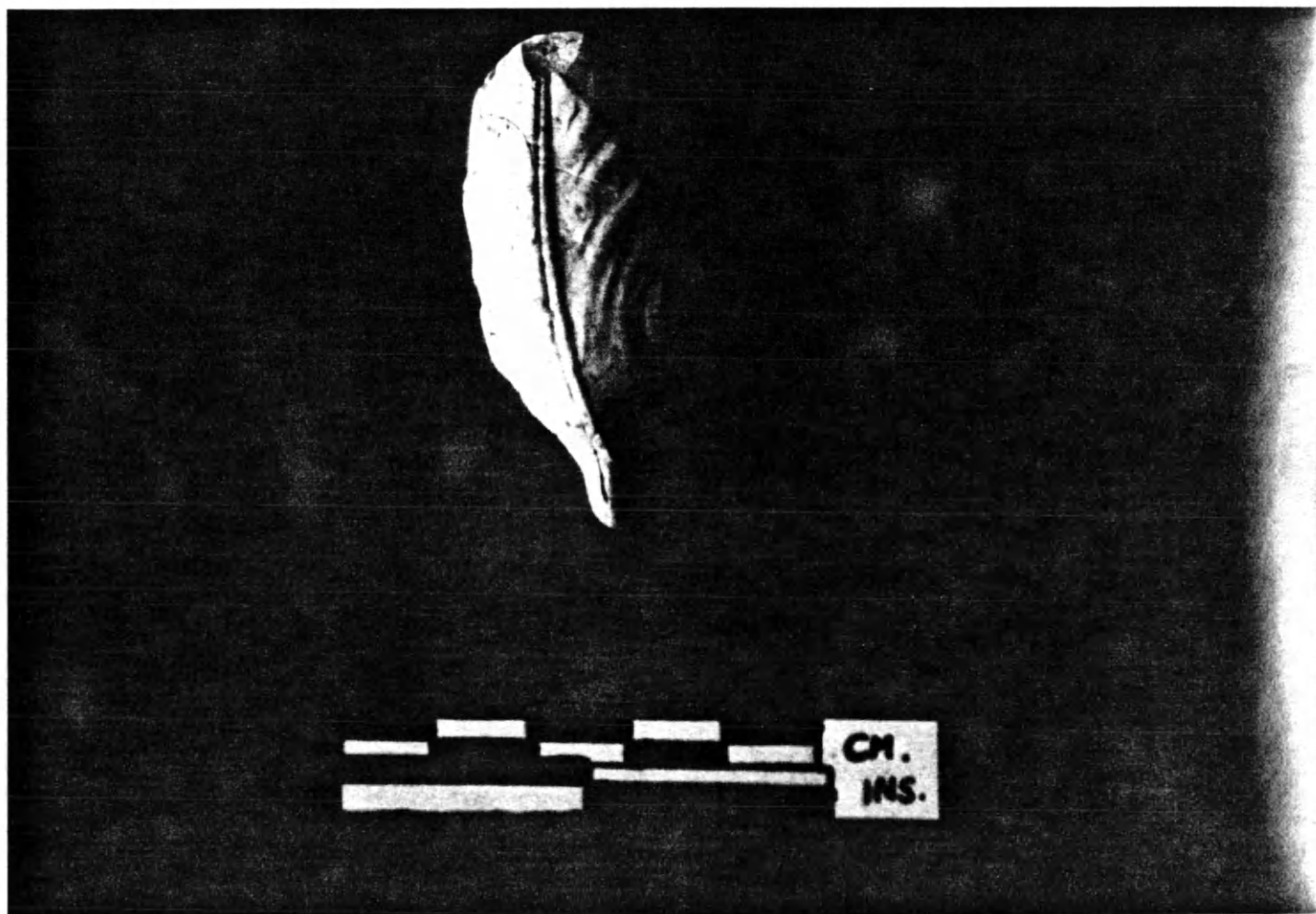


Figure 25: Intact Wine Bottle and Wine Glass
Recovered During VRCA Excavations, 1983.
(Photo by David K. Hazzard).



a pair of scissors, pins and buckles were identified archaeologically; perhaps there is a corresponding increase in the number of sets of clothing Virginians owned. Four brass upholstery tacks indicate the presence of furniture, presumably more elaborate than trunks and bedding. More archaeological definition of these characteristics is needed (Hazzard n.d.). Also of interest are a bone fan blade and a book clasp (Figure 26); not only do these attest to the high socio-economic status of their owners, but also to the presence of two unusual or rare pursuits for traditional 17th century planter culture: entertainment and education.

The addition of 'luxury items' to Virginia material culture should be examined closely. In the move from a paucity of furniture to the introduction of comfort-giving pieces, and the introduction of new ceramics and other material goods, consumption habits change drastically. Behavioral patterns which may be visible archaeologically are the length of use, and disposal and wear patterns --such qualities indicated an adherence to fashion and to social trends.

Many qualities and characteristics are symbolized in objects of material culture found in Gloucestertown. The evolution of 'taste' is certainly a new social directive; this new material culture preference had no counterpart during the 17th century. Access to trade networks and goods provided the planter or merchant with the opportunity to

Figure 26: Brass Book Clasp Uncovered at GL170
in 1981 by the VRCA. (Photo by David K. Hazzard).



choose, to exercise good or bad judgement in the selection of items. Other values and categories are present in the material remains at Gloucestertown: education and a host of other qualities associated with this, such as respect, are found in the book clasp; the concept of privacy is found in spatial organization within the household; orderliness and the regularity of town life are seen in a uniform street grid and in the formal gardens and fences; the concepts of entertainment and socialization are present in the fan blade and the variety of specialized ceramics; and social status is present in all of these.

How do these assemblages compare to those of English town dwellers? Do these purchasing shifts align the lot owners more closely with fashionable, urban trends? What images are recreated and how does this compare to the plantation assemblage? Is there a distinct urban lifestyle? Do trade goods and new objects appear in towns more quickly than among the members of the same socio-economic class who lived on a plantation?

Overall developmental patterns should be visible archaeologically. Major areas of concern should be the definition of Gloucestertown's dependence on economic activity generated by the port facilities and the tobacco inspection warehouse; the force of the tobacco economy on the settlement --does the town's strength parallel the fortunes of the tobacco market or is it independent;

variations in the strength or decline of town residence, particularly in relation to the town acts and the constraints of the historical, political and economic climate from the American Revolution which led Gloucestertown into a decline.

It is important that the social and historical context of Gloucestertown's establishment be kept in mind for archaeological interpretation. It is clear that the restructuring of the community from a rural to an urban setting is closely linked to the need of a certain class of planters and merchants to set themselves apart from others. To do this, they used the urban landscape to display their wealth, their status, and their role in society, through a new material culture and new building techniques. This deliberate application of behavior and material goods to define their place in Virginia society had the effect of reinforcing those very aims. Their actions and intentions pervade the archaeological record, because action is social discourse and material culture reflects the thoughts and values of their owners. The strength of the community is responsible for the development of Gloucestertown inspite of the many social and economic disadvantages to doing so; if others created an urban existence in this town later on, it was done so based on the efforts of the original owners to establish a more regular settlement.

And for the encouragement of all: every such person and persons whatsoever as will build a dwelling house and a ware house there upon....

Hening 1823, II: 473

CONCLUSION

It has been the purpose of this thesis to outline the cultural and historical context, and the quality of life, in 17th and 18th century Virginia in order to understand Gloucestertown's role in the colonial landscape. The constraints which have been discussed here and the broader shift in settlement pattern from plantation to town were part of the town's development. Changing structural organization to fit an urban setting coincided with and was inextricably linked to changing cultural attitudes and behavioral patterns. The community was the source for these alterations in structure, providing the means and the reasons for this transformation. These altered values and structures were expressed in the urban setting of Gloucestertown through a display of behavior, values, and social roles, implicitly and explicitly, in action and in material culture. These forms of expression were directly translated into the archaeological record and must be considered as part of archaeological interpretation. A contextual

approach helps us to interpret the evidence of past societies in a more complete manner.

If the community was important to Gloucestertown's establishment, so, too, was town development as a function of British colonial policy. Town development was a key element of broader social and economic changes occurring in Chesapeake society. Thus, an examination of Gloucestertown's establishment has been made within the broader framework of all the legislated port towns. The development or failure of each site was unique, yet there are patterns linking these entities: a combination of social, physical, economic and demographic factors which interacted in various ways at each site. This study of context moves research away from a site-specific orientation to focus on larger patterns and changes. Perhaps a model of Tidewater urbanization can be developed for the 17th and 18th centuries. Testing and theory building may ultimately lead to a better understanding of the changes occurring in settlement patterns and structural arrangements within this time frame.

Of more immediate concern is the development of a research design for Gloucestertown which is appropriate to its size, to the quality and quantity of its remains, and to its preservation needs. Gloucestertown must be studied as a whole; as a community of interacting members, there is much common ground and common meaning to discover. Hopefully this paper will direct the attention of archaeologists to

the underlying behavior and values present in Gloucestertown's artifactual remains through the reconstruction of context.

Having participated in several salvage excavations at Gloucestertown and having conducted subsurface testing of a house lot, I have seen the wealth of material remains and the richness of Gloucestertown's deposits which have until recently remained largely undisturbed (Figure 27). These glimpses of Gloucestertown's past have truly caught my imagination; I am fascinated by the brick foundations, the green bottles found still intact, by fragments of combed slipware, by a complete pipe bowl. One has only to see such things as a lead bullet from the Civil War found next to a colonial trash pit and a piece of aboriginal pottery from nearby to recognize the continuous role Gloucestertown has assumed in history.

I have tried to understand the motivations and values of these people, and if I have not fully succeeded, at least I feel that I have begun to know them; the Gloucestertown lot owners seem very real to me. Perhaps it is for this reason that I am filled with a quiet eeriness in contemplating the lives of the early 17th century settlers and with quickening excitement thinking of Gloucestertown's own settlement. If Gloucestertown merged back into the rural landscape, this site is still a commanding presence in my mind and for others who are concerned with Gloucestertown's

Figure 27: Evidence of Gloucestertown's Material Remains.
January 1983. (Photo by David K. Hazzard).



preservation. This sense of reality causes me to feel strongly, too, about the failed efforts to nominate Gloucestertown to the National Register of Historic Places. Disappointment, dismay, and hope --they are motivating, indeed. These links to the past must surely be preserved.

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