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**An Archaeological and Spatial Exploration
of Yard Use at the Oval Site, Stratford Hall
Plantation:
A Mid-18th-century Mixed-Use Site on the
Northern Neck of Virginia**

Delaney Resweber

University of Mary Washington Department of Historic Preservation

Advised by Dr. Lauren McMillan

2020-2021

Abstract

The Oval Site (44WM80) is located on the grounds of Stratford Hall Plantation in Westmoreland County, Virginia and was excavated by the Department of and Center for Historic Preservation at Mary Washington College/the University of Mary Washington between 2001-2014. The Oval Site was one component of a larger eighteenth-century plantation and is comprised of four structures. These buildings are currently interpreted as an overseer's house, a barn, a kitchen, and an unidentified building. The kitchen had also served as a quarter for the enslaved Africans and/or African Americans that worked on this site. Using methods developed in landscape archaeology studies, I will be examining the relationship between these buildings and by extension the relationship the inhabitants had with one another through an analysis of refuse disposal patterns, as shown through artifact distribution analyses. This research can aid in highlighting and expanding the narrative of historically excluded and/or underrepresented groups in studies focused on 18th century Virginia.

Acknowledgements

This project was a huge undertaking, especially during the pandemic, and I would not have been able to complete without the constant support and aide from my advisor Dr. Lauren McMillan and my friends and family. I would like to thank Stratford Hall and the Robert E. Lee Memorial Association for letting me use the artifacts and data from the Oval Site. Thank you as well to the 2018 University of Mary Washington Archaeological Field School for washing and cataloging some of the test units in my sample, without their help I would have been spending a lot more time in the archaeology lab processing my sample. I would also like to thank Dr. Keith Mellinger and the College of Arts and Sciences for providing me an undergraduate research grant for my 2019 research at the Oval Site. Thank you to Dr. Andrew Wilkins for creating the original geospatial files for the Oval Site that I used in my project to create maps of my study area.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Most buildings that survive and retain some of their historical integrity from the 18th century in Virginia are those of wealthier individuals (Wilkins 2009:1). Document-based research on historical sites, especially sites that predate the 19th century, are often limited to documents created by and focused on, the lives of wealthy, white landowners. In a plantation context, the documentation concerning enslaved people is limited. When documents are available, they are typically written by and for wealthy white planters and their peers. This creates a bias, and rarely identifies or grants agency to the enslaved people they mention.

Archaeological investigations on enslaved dwellings can give more agency to these individuals and reveal information about them that is not present in the historical record. Studies on enslaved sites grant archaeologists the ability to interpret these sites, and the lives of the people who worked and lived on these plantations, through the use of material culture and landscape studies.

Named after the 1930s landscaping feature nearby (Neiman 1976:20), the Oval Site (44WM80) is an historical archaeological site, located on the grounds of Stratford Hall Plantation in Westmoreland County, Virginia (Figure 1.1; Figure 1.2). This site has a mid-18th century occupation and was located about 800 feet from Stratford Hall Plantation's "Great House". The Mary Washington College (later the University of Mary Washington)

field school excavated this site in the summers between 2001 and 2014 under the direction of Dr.

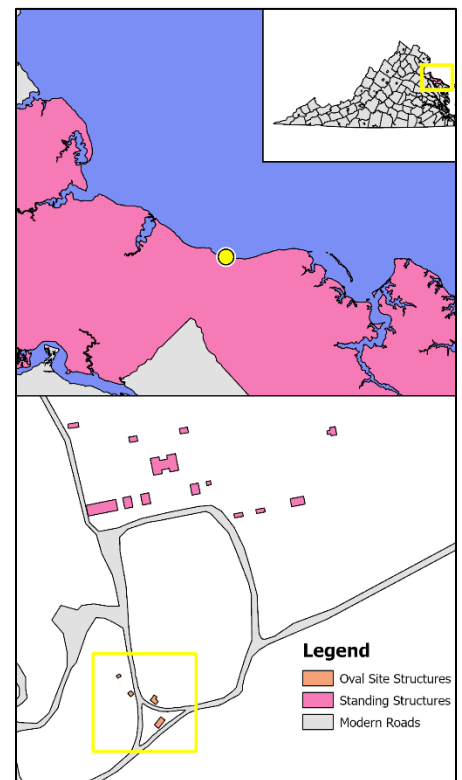


Figure 1.3: the location of the Oval Site, map created by the author using shapefiles from VGIN and Andrew Wilkins

Douglas Sanford (Wilkins 2014:28). This field school expanded upon a 1975 archaeological survey of Stratford Hall Plantation conducted by Dr. Fraser Neiman and the Virginia Research Center for Archaeology in consultation with the Robert E. Lee Memorial Association (RELMA; Neiman 1976:20).

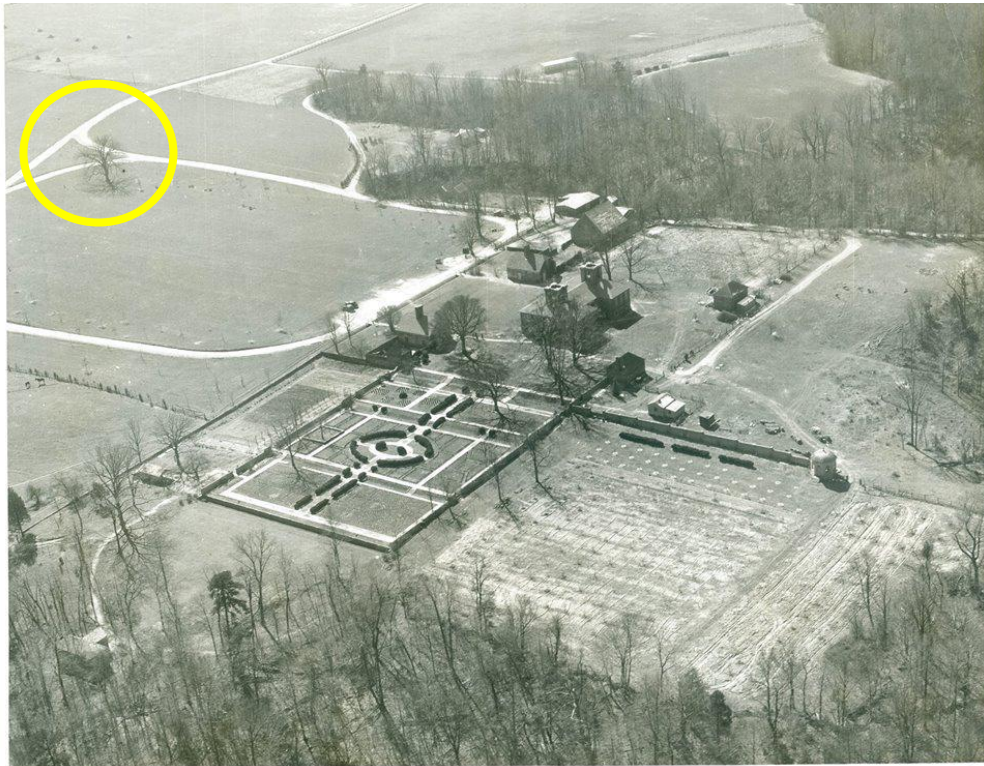


Figure 1.4: Aerial image facing of Stratford Hall facing southwest from 1936. The Oval Site is circled in yellow, Courtesy of the [Robert E. Lee Memorial Association](#)

At present, this site does not appear in any known historical records and no extant structures exist today, archaeological evidence indicates the presence of four structures at this site (Wilkins 2009:1). The term “structure,” will be utilized throughout this thesis to be consistent with previous studies on this site; however, a more accurate term for these features would “building”. These structures have been interpreted as follows: an overseer’s house

(Structure 1), a tobacco house or barn (Structure 2), a kitchen that also operated as enslaved housing (Structure 3), and a mixed-use outbuilding (Structure 4; Figure 1.3; Wilkins 2017:207;

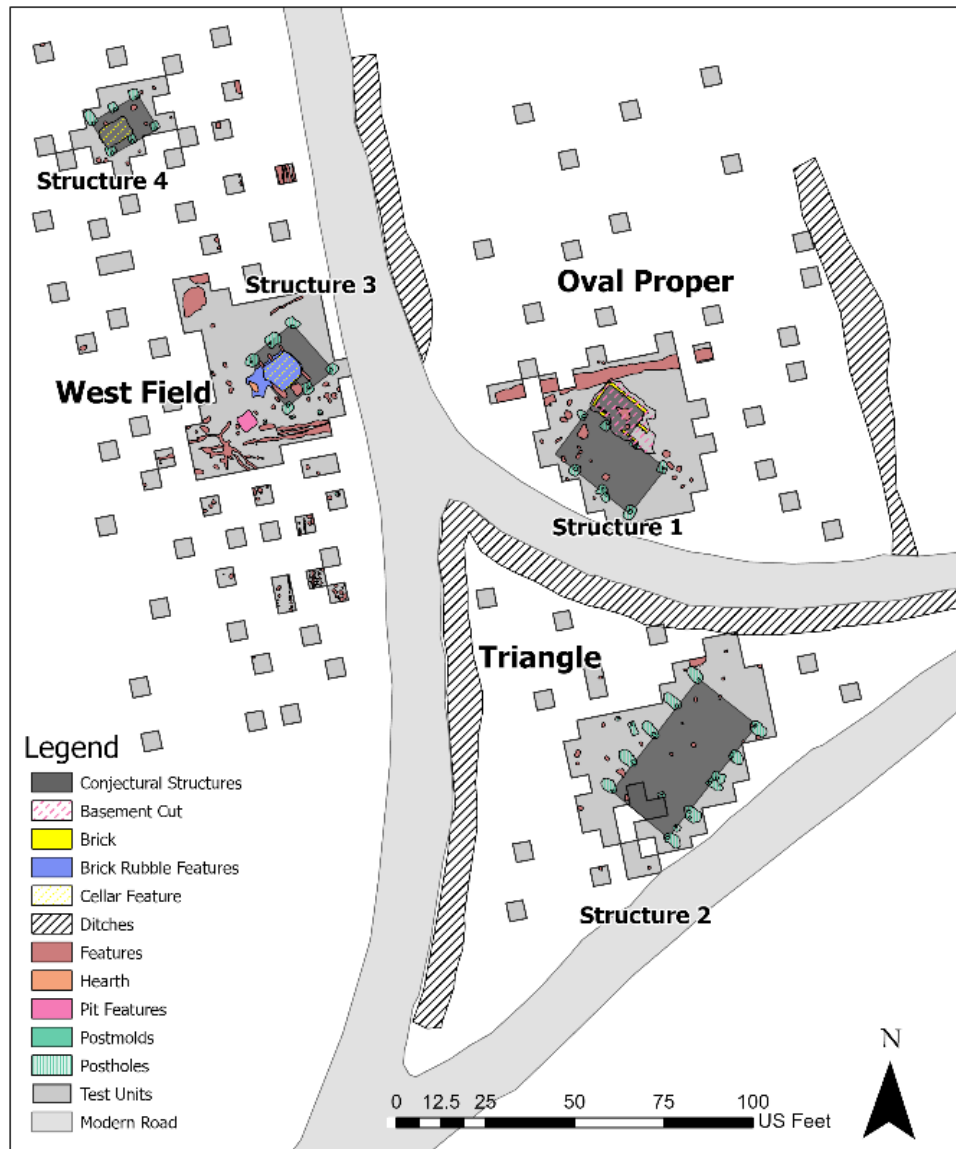


Figure 1.5: The Oval Site Plan, displaying the locations of the structures at this site, map created by Andrew Wilkins

Resweber 2018).

Structure 1, a 16 x 20 ft earthfast structure with a 8 x 14 ft brick basement addition on the northeast side of structure, is interpreted as an overseer's house (Wilkins 2017:208). The interpretation of this structure as an overseer's house is based off of a large variety of ceramic

ware types concentrated here, as well as the placement of this structure on the landscape (Wilkins 2017:209,396). The interpretation of this structure as an overseer's house is also supported by the size of building, being larger than the other domestic structure, and the presence of a brick basement. Structure 2, a 20 x 40 ft earthfast structure is interpreted as barn, likely also used as a tobacco house as well as several other functions. Given its larger size, the presence of large post hole features, the lack of domestic artifacts associated with it, and overall low density of artifacts, it is likely this structure was a barn (Wilkins 2017:209,567). Structure 3, a 16 x 16 ft earthfast structure, is interpreted as a kitchen and enslaved housing. The artifact assemblage and the presence of a hearth feature, as well as a large 9 x 9 ft subfloor pit at the west end of structure, supports this interpretation (Wilkins 2017:207-209).

The final structure, Structure 4, is a 15 x 11 ft earthfast structure. The function and use of Structure 4 is believed to be mixed-use. Wilkins hypothesizes that it was briefly utilized as slave housing (Wilkins 2017:207, 279). No hearth feature was identified in the structure, which would be indicative of more permanent housing but, the presence of a sub floor pit, a feature typically associated with enslaved dwellings, supports a possible residential use of this structure. It could be possible that this building had multiple uses throughout its lifespan, serving as a storage building or a work shop (Wilkins 2017:279; Resweber 2019a).

The relationship that the occupants of this site had with each other and their environment can be examined utilizing concepts derived from landscape archaeology and African Diaspora archaeology studies. How the inhabitants of this site perceived and experienced the space around the structures at the Oval Site is illustrative of the complex sociocultural relationships that occurred within 18th-century plantations.

This concept of space has often been applied to the study of plantation sites (Wilkins 2017:41). The environment can be manipulated and adapted to construct different meanings and promote or reject particular ideals. An intentional disposal of refuse in between two structures holds a multitude of meanings. This separation could have been done to re-establish social hierarchies, to indicate a lack of a relationship between the inhabitants of either structure, or place an emphasis on the higher social standing of one group over the other. It can also exert more control on visitors and residents, creating pathways controls movement at the site. This forces everyone to use the same paths and pass by the same buildings, allowing for the site to be better monitored. While being a tool to exert control, the separation of space can also be used as an expression of agency and independence. This separation of space can allow the inhabitants privacy and control over their own space.

Likewise, the absence of a separation between two structures can also hold multiple meanings. It can be an expression of social hierarchy, and controlling the space to allow for better observation and monitoring, as well as emphasizing the power of the planter over the occupants and nature (Upton 1990; Vlach 1990:8; Wilkins 2017:50). A cleared space allows for free movement and interaction between structures, implying a consistent relationship. This free movement creates a shared space that can be utilized for various communal activities including socialization and domestic chores (Vlach 1990:15; Heath and Bennett 2000:38; Fesler 2010:31).

The relationship between these buildings, and by an extension, the inhabitants of these buildings had with each other and their landscape, will be examined in this thesis through the use of methods developed in landscape archaeology studies. In conjunction with landscape archaeology, this thesis will use concepts derived from African Diaspora archaeology. Given the lack of documentary accounts of enslaved people, artifacts are sometimes the only remaining

accounts of these people. Exploring the lives of enslaved people through artifacts can give agency to these people and expose the complexities of the development of cultural identity and relationships.

Some landscape features, such as swept yards, are ascribed as markers of African culture and an African presence at a site (Heath and Bennett 2000; Samford:1996). These markers are often the subject of debate amongst African Diaspora scholars and this thesis hopes to better understand the impact and influence of environmental and societal factors on the presence of these markers (Heath and Breen 2009; Wilkins 2017). This thesis expands on previous studies that question whether or not these features are an expression cultural identity or a response to the landscape and/or social class.

The research conducted in this thesis can be applied to historic preservation more broadly as well. A better understanding of how people interacted with their environment and each other can aid in museum interpretations and architectural studies, especially since most of this research focuses on groups of individuals that have in the past, and present, been underrepresented in historical research and interpretations. This research is also helpful in a more bureaucratic sense, understanding yard space usage can allow historic preservationists to better define the boundaries of a site during Section 106 processes of the Historic Preservation Act of 1966 or Section 4f processes of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966.

Spatial analysis utilizing GIS as well as temporal artifact analysis using ceramic and pipe stem data will be used in this study to best understand the use of space at the Oval Site. I will be expanding upon my 2019 research, as well as previous studies conducted by Wilkins (2009, 2017), Ramey (2014), and Crowder (2018, 2021). This project is the first to systematically catalog a large sample of artifacts across the site, a total of 78 test units were included in this sample, accounting for 51% of the test units in the study area (Figure 1.4).

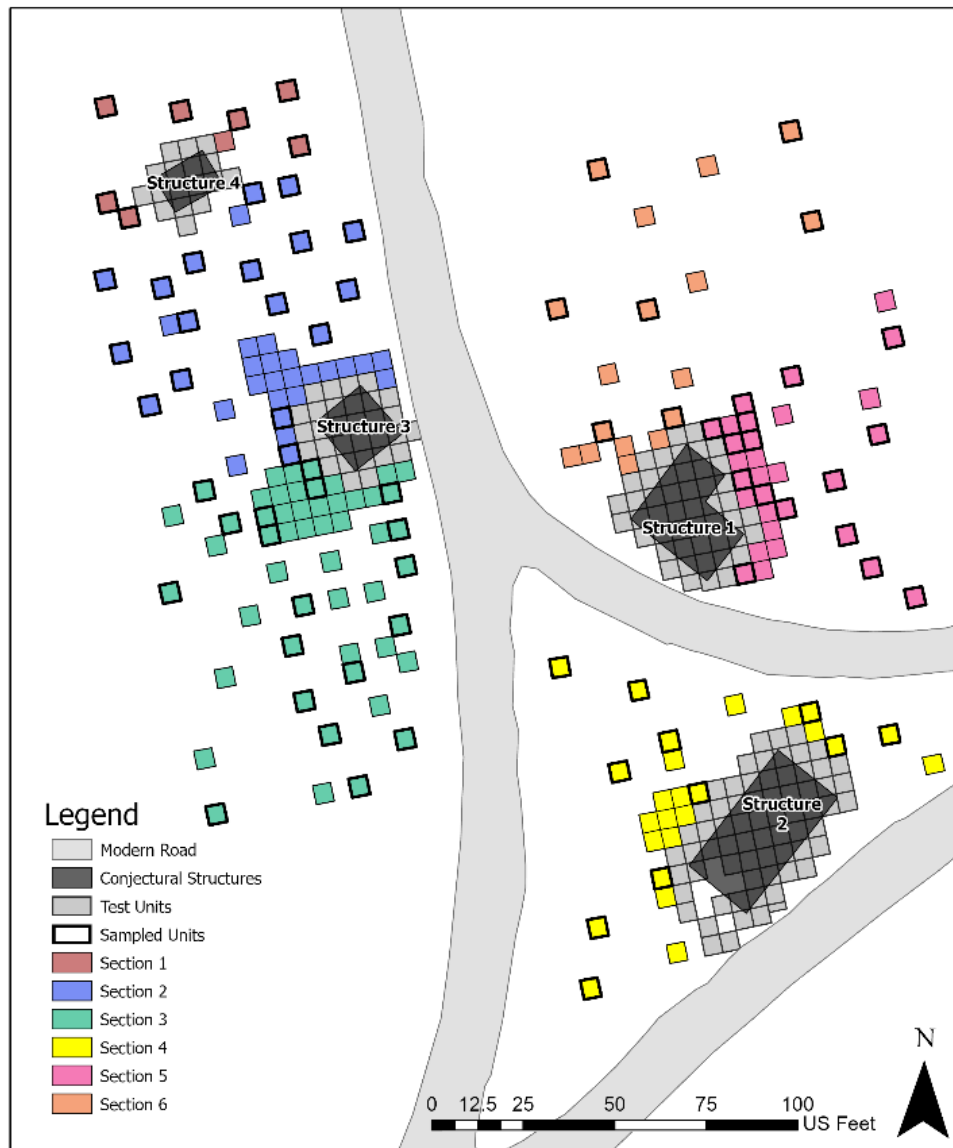


Figure 1.6: Site Plan Map, indicating the test unit samples for this study, map created by author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

Chapter 2: Historical Context

Chesapeake Tobacco and Slavery

Located between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers, the ravines and uplands of the northern neck peninsula supported a wide variety of flora and was a great location for agricultural practices (Weldon 2014:32). In the 17th century and 18th century, Virginia relied on a monoculture of tobacco. It was not until the latter half of the 18th century did plantations shift to grain and a more diversified approach to agriculture (Ramey 2016:33; Weldon 2014:58; Wilkins 2017:385).

This shift from tobacco to a more diversified crop yield, with an emphasis on grain crops, arose from an increased demand for a reliable food source due to crop failures in Europe, a crash in tobacco prices, and the depleting toll growing tobacco had on the soil. Several different mills



Figure 2.7: "Cultivating Tobacco, Virginia, 1798", by Benjamin Henry Latrobe, image courtesy of slaveryimages.org

began to appear in Westmoreland County, dedicated to converting grains to flour, and by the 1770s, 600,000 bushels of wheat were exported from Virginia each year (Weldon 2014:58).

The shift to enslaved labor has often been viewed as a consequence of Nathaniel Bacon's Rebellion in 1676, as well as the legalization of chattel bondage in the 1660s, and the Virginia Slave Code of 1705 (Berlin 1998:109). While these factors may have some influence on the presence of enslaved labor, the earlier reliance on indentured servitude over enslaved African labor was actually the product of a limited ability to obtain access to enslaved labor (Coombs 2011:348).

When given the opportunity, wealthy planters would purchase as many enslaved people as they could, even before Bacon's Rebellion (Coombs 2011:347). Greater access to enslaved labor in Virginia came in the 1660s, after King Charles II granted exclusive rights to trade in Africa to the Company of Royal Adventurers in 1660. Now with a monopoly on African trade, the Company of Royal Adventurers pledged to supply "the English Plantations in America" with a "constant supply of Negro-Servants" in 1662 (Coombs 2011:348).

In addition, the late 17th-century and early 18th-century enslavement of Africans was largely done by the gentry of the colony. Enslaved people were not sold at auction, as they would be in later years or as they were in the Caribbean. The gentry of the colony had headrights over the imported slave, and in turn, they could choose who could purchase enslaved people. By the end of the 17th century, more than 75% of the descendants of elites had enslaved people listed in the surviving inventories. In comparison, less than 10% of nonelite planters recorded enslaved people in their inventories (Coombs 2011:353-354). There were also regional variations to the

access of enslaved labor, leading some areas to have different rates of change from indentured servitude to a predominately enslaved labor force. Counties in the northern regions, which includes Westmoreland County, did not catch up to their James River counterparts until the 1730s (Coombs 2011:360).

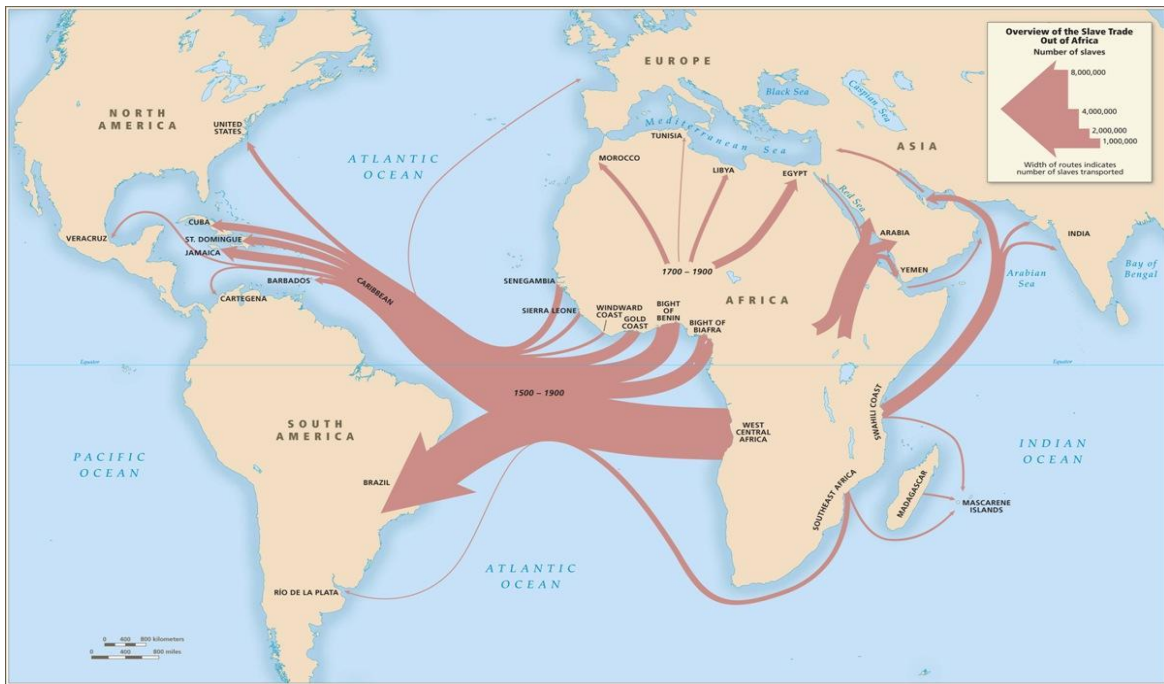


Figure 8.2: Overview of the Slave Trade Out of Africa 1500-1900, courtesy of slavevoyages.org

Like Coomb’s assertion that the emergence of enslaved labor was not the result of a shift from indentured servitude following Bacon’s Rebellion, but due to greater market access to enslaved people, the coastal African origins of enslaved people were also reliant on market availability (Walsh 2001). Early scholarship claims that the ethnic identity of enslaved Virginians was largely randomized mixings and there were no distinct patterns associated with them (Berlin 1998) however, recent scholarship reveals that this was not the case. Walsh utilizes historical records to investigate regional differences in the African origins of enslaved people in Virginia (Walsh 2001). She found that Virginia and Maryland were serviced by different

shippers who imported slaves from different ports. This led to regions in Virginia having varying distributions of accessibility to enslaved people from specific regions of Africa. Notably, in the James River region and lower Chesapeake, most of the enslaved people purchased came from the Bight of Biafra (Figure 2.2; Figure 2.3; Walsh 2001:144-145). In the lower Potomac, where Stratford Hall is located, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the imported slaves came from the Senegambia region. Also of note, most Northern Neck planters purchased enslaved people from Maryland, instead of Virginia (Walsh 2001:147-148).

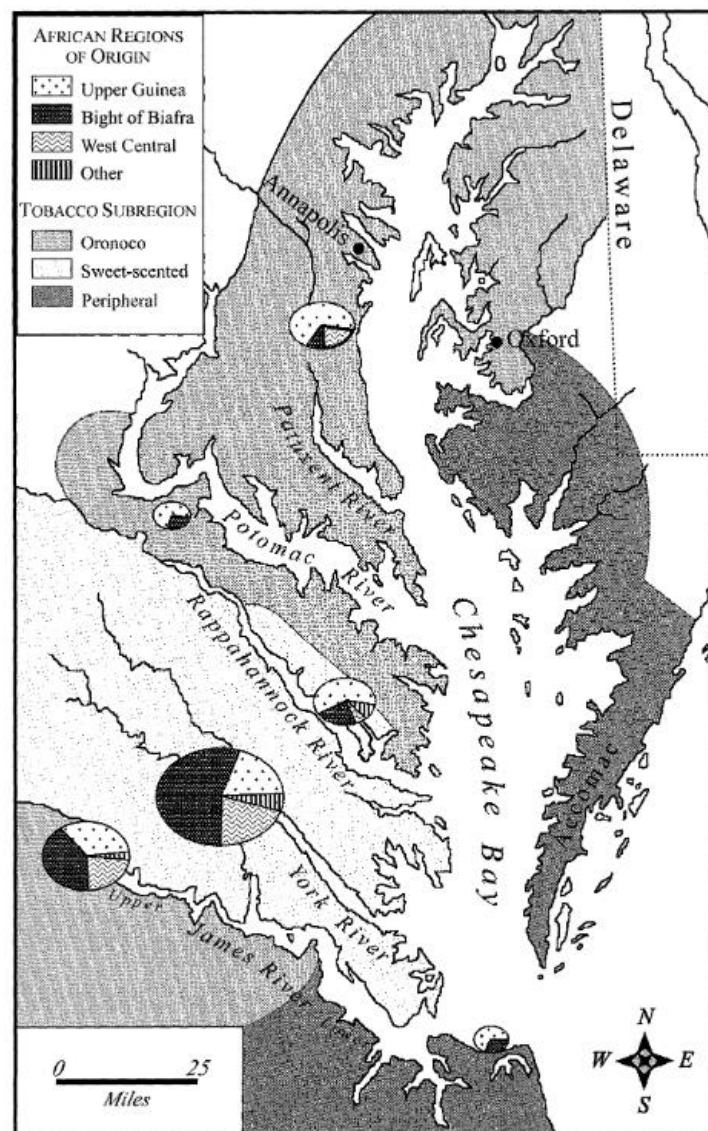


Figure 2.9: Coastal Origins of Africans Imported to the Chesapeake Between 1698 and 1774, map created by Gayle Henion and Rebecca Wrenn (Walsh 2001:170)

By the 1730s, an average of 2,000 enslaved Africans arrived in Virginia a year, and in some counties enslaved Africans consisted of 40% of the population (Berlin 1998:111). This population of forced immigrants had a high mortality rate: of the new populace that arrived each year, a quarter would be dead by the end of the year (Berlin 1998).

Documentary evidence of enslaved people is limited, and usually what is available lists the name, age, sex, and occasionally the occupational skill of an enslaved person (Calhoun 1992; Walsh 2001:139; Wilkins 2009:68). Oppression came in many forms to the enslaved Africans. Many plantation owners would have a “paternalistic” view on those who they enslaved. Africans and African Americans were stereotyped as dim-witted and unintelligent. In 1727, Robert “King” Carter, one of the wealthiest planters in Virginia, explained to his overseer that new enslaved people would be renamed and only referred to by their new names. These names were typically either English diminutives or “classical appellations”. Enslaved people were not given an identity of a full name. A woman would not be called ‘Abigail Johnson’, for instance, but instead would be only given the diminutive ‘Abby.’ This practice was occurring at Stratford Hall, some of the enslaved people from the 1782 inventory were named the following: Boatswain, Harry, Frank, Caesar, and Titus (Berlin 1998:112; Calhoun 1992:13). In addition, some enslaved people faced a language barrier upon arriving at the plantation. Not only were most of them not familiar with English, in some cases their fellow enslaved people may have come from differing regions in Africa and would not share a common language (Berlin 1998:119; Walsh 2001:144).

Despite the oppression enslaved Africans endured, they were able to put up some resistance to their situation. Resistance took many forms, sometimes in an outward and easily recognizable fashion, such as uprisings and running away. It could also be performed in a more

passive fashion, such as intentionally ‘breaking’ tools, secretly going by their original names, and continuing cultural practices (Calhoun 1992:2; Fesler 2010:43-45; Samford 1996; Wilkins 2017:136-137).

Even yards spaces could be used as a form of resistance (Fesler 2010:43-45; Samford 1996:113). Enslaved people were usually able to control the space around their homes. These served multiple functions outside of subsistence production. Here, enslaved people could manipulate and alter the environment to express their own identity and utilize the space as an area of economic production as well as socialization (Heath and Bennett 2000:42-45; Wilkins 2017:56, 419-421). The foods that enslaved people chose to grow, and eventually prepare, were reflections of their own cultural identity and a developing creole African American identity. The presence of West African plants, such as black eyes peas and black beans, in gardens reflect a desire to continue West African foodways in the New World. The food produced in the yard, be it from the garden or an animal pin, allows enslaved people some economic autonomy (Crowder 2018; Crowder 2021; Heath and Bennett 2000). It was not uncommon for enslaved people to barter or sell the food they produced. This allowed them some economic independence to purchase additional clothing, ceramics, or even different types of food. Finally this space could serve as a site for socialization and community building (Fesler 2010:33; Heath and Bennett 2000:48; Wilkins 2017:416). The modification of this yard area by enslaved people to fit the needs of its inhabitants is a rejection of the supposed total control a planter had on the landscape of a plantation. This manipulation of the land allowed for enslaved Africans to reclaim some agency over their lives and mediate the conditions of slavery.

Stratford Hall Plantation

In 1651, a merchant named Nathaniel Pope established a patent of 1,050 acres that included parts of the modern-day Stratford Hall Plantation. He renewed this patent in 1656 and created Clifts Plantation (44WM33). This land would remain in his hands until his death, where it would be subsequently purchased by Thomas Lee in 1718. Lee was a man of the gentry class who served in the House of Burgess, and Council, as well as President, Commander-in-Chief, and Governor of the Virginia Colony (Figure 2.4; Calhoun 1992; Crowder 2021:5; Wilkins 2017; Weldon 2014:66).



Figure 2.10: Portrait of Thomas Lee, courtesy of [Stratford Hall Facebook](#)

Notable features added to the landscape during Thomas Lee's tenure as the owner of the property include a mill road and the construction of a brick, two-story, Georgian style mansion (Figure 2.5). Construction of this mansion began in 1730 and was most likely completed by 1738 (Figure 2.6; Calhoun 1992). When the property was first purchased in 1718, the land totaled to 1,443 acres; by 1732 Lee purchased an additional 2,400 acres of adjacent property.



Figure 2.11: Photo of the "Great House" courtesy of [Stratford Hall Facebook](#)

In 1750, Thomas Lee passed away and his oldest son, Philip Ludwell Lee, inherited the plantation (Ramey 2016). Philip Ludwell Lee expanded the plantation to include an additional 6,000 acres of land (Weldon 2014:71). Under Philip Ludwell Lee's guidance, the plantation underwent several changes in order to transform it into the image of a "modern and elegant estate fit for upper-class gentry" (Calhoun 1996). These changes include alterations to the "Great House" as well as the addition of a tobacco inspection warehouse, a grist mill, and a landing (Figure 2.7; Weldon 2014:72). There is also evidence of Stratford Hall Plantation engaging in a diversification of their agricultural practices, such as a 1776 advertisement from the Virginia Gazette that discusses Philip Ludwell Lee's horse husbandry enterprises (Weldon 2014:76).

It is likely, with this change of ownership, that the Oval Site was included among the many alterations that occurred during this period and was abandoned and destroyed in the last half of the 18th century. Ramey proposes that this site was abandoned as a result of a change in ownership and the restructuring of the plantation following changes in Stratford Hall's primary

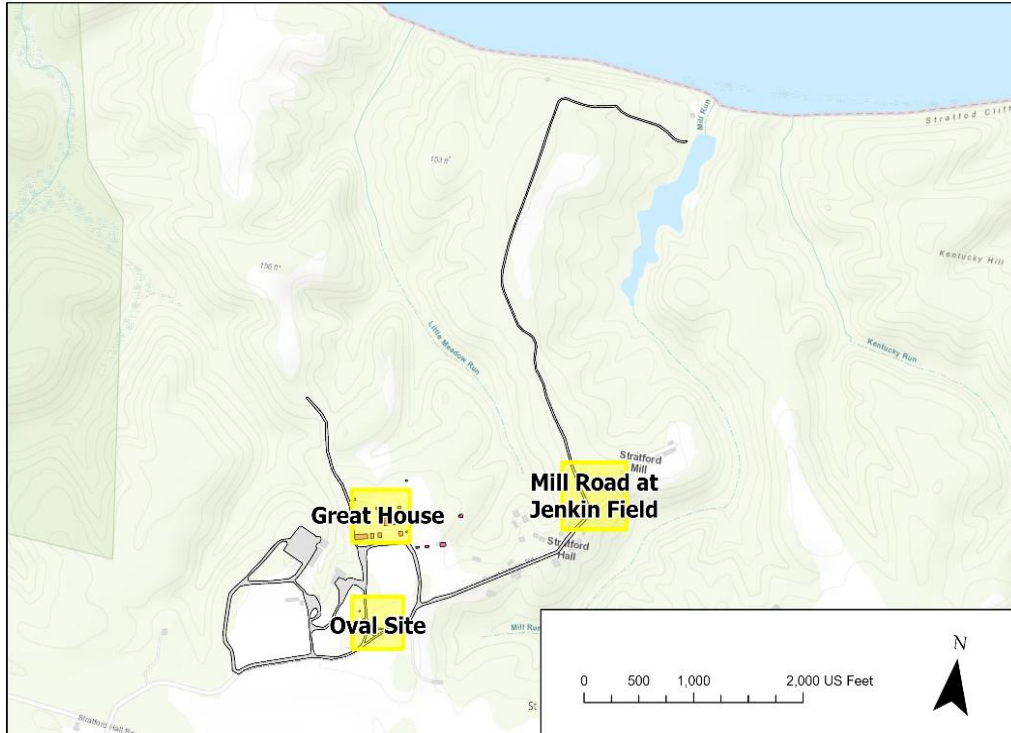


Figure 2.12: Map of Thomas Lee Era Features at Stratford Hall, map created by author

crop, going from tobacco to wheat (Ramey 2016:33; Wilkins 2017:20). This hypothesis is supported by regional changes in tobacco farming which were occurring within Virginia during the mid-18th century. After Philip Ludwell Lee’s death his daughter, Matilda Lee and her husband Richard “Light Horse” Harry Lee inherited the plantation (Ramey 2016:16). Stratford Hall would remain with the Lee family until the 19th century, where it would be owned by various families before eventually being purchased by the Robert E. Lee Memorial Association in 1929 (Ramey 2016:17).

There are currently no known historical records regarding the Oval Site, nor are there any historical records that reveal the identities of the enslaved people who lived at this site. There are only five documents that discuss enslaved people that lived and worked at Stratford Hall Plantation. These include two inventories (1758, 1799) and three estate lists (1782, 1786, 1789). The information provided by these documents is limited, with the 1782 document providing the

most amount of information on the enslaved people living at Stratford Hall. This document provides information on names, ages, value, and occupations of 137 enslaved people (Calhoun 1992:6; Wilkins 2009:68). These detail records appear years after the Oval Site was most likely abandoned (Calhoun 1992:6). The enslaved people that lived at the Oval Site were most likely one of the earlier generations of enslaved Africans and African Americans at Stratford Hall. While the identities of the overseers that occupied the Oval Site is unknown, records reference at least 15 hired overseers who worked on the plantation between 1738 and 1783. The historical documentation for these men continues with 29 surviving records on wills, deeds, probates, payments, taxes, and store purchases (Wilkins 2017:29).

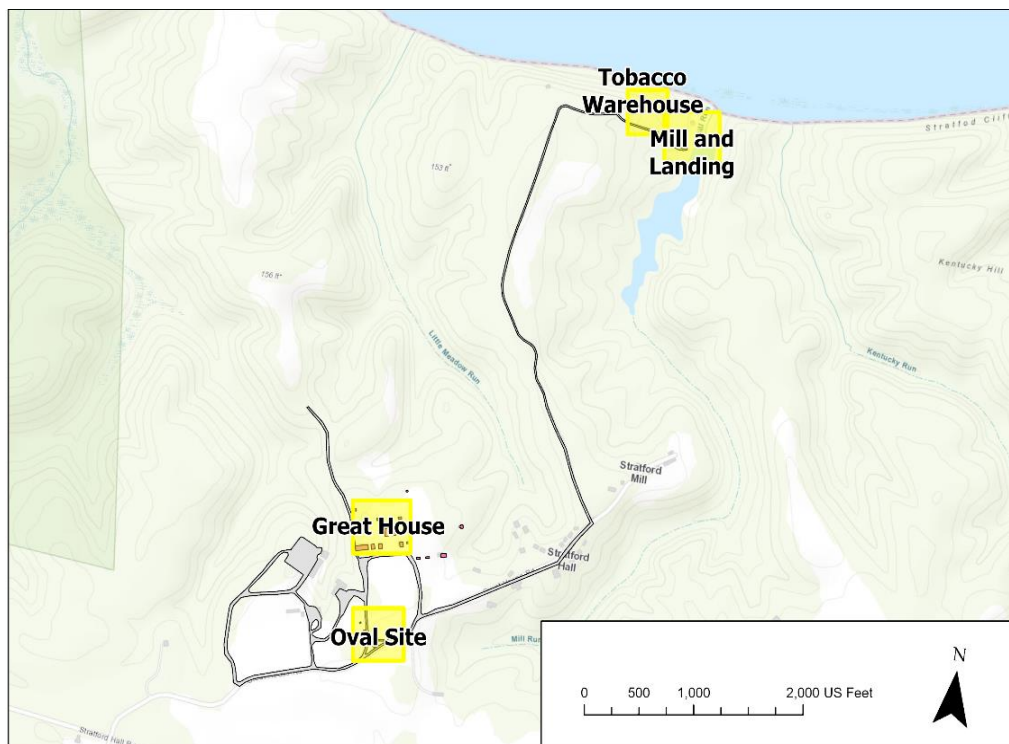


Figure 2.13: Map of Philip Ludwell Lee Era features at Stratford Hall, map created by author

Chapter 3: Previous Research

This site was first identified by Fraser Neiman and the Virginia Research Center for Archaeology in consultation with the Robert E. Lee Memorial Association (RELMA), in a 1975 archaeological survey of Stratford Hall Plantation (Neiman 1976:1). The goal of the survey was to identify prehistoric and historic archaeological sites on the 1500 acre core tract of the plantation grounds owned by RELMA (Neiman 1976:1). As there was no historical documentation that existed for the site at the time, this site was identified systematically in three phases through surface inspection (1a), shovel test pit (1b), and test unit excavations (2) (Neiman 1976:20). This early survey identified two structures: a frame house with a brick foundation, that would be later interpreted as an overseer's house (Structure 1), and a "service structure" that would later be interpreted as the kitchen (Structure 3; Neiman 1976: 21).

It was not until the turn of the century that the Oval Site would be excavated again. The Mary Washington College (later the University of Mary Washington) field school excavated this site in the summers between 2001 and 2014 under the direction of Dr. Douglas Sanford (Sanford 2012; Wilkins 2014). At these field schools, 41 shovel test pits were systematically excavated followed by 333 test units. Following these excavations, two other structures were identified: a barn or tobacco house (Structure 2) and a post-in-ground structure that served multiple purposes (Structure 4).

The involvement of the University of Mary Washington field school at the Oval Site has led to the site being the subject of several intensive studies done by alumni over the years. One doctoral dissertation and three master's theses have utilized this site in their research. The first was done by Andrew Wilkins, who completed a master's thesis (2009) and continued his

research with a doctoral dissertation (2017) using the site, and both Robin Ramey (2016) and Alexandra Crowder (2018) completed their own masters' theses on the Oval Site as well. In addition, several journal articles (Crowder 2021, Sanford 1999), conference papers (Resweber 2019, Sanford and Wilkins 2015), and internal documents (Sanford 2012) provide further insight into the Oval Site. These studies utilize various research techniques, technologies, and focuses that have been instrumental in aiding in the further expansion of the interpretative of the Oval Site examined in this paper. Particularly, the historical research conducted and compiled by these authors on Stratford Hall Plantation have helped in providing a historical background and context to the Oval Site when my own research abilities were limited due to Covid-19 precautions.

For his 2009 master's thesis, Andrew Wilkins used an X-ray fluorescence (XRF) analyzer to analyze soil samples taken from plow zone contexts (Wilkins 2009). The chemical composition of soil can be affected by human activity; anthrosols, or soils that have been modified by human activity, have been a valuable tool in studying both historic and prehistoric archaeological sites. The chemical composition of these soils can reveal the location and presence of particular human activities on a site. A few of the activities that Wilkins addressed, using the levels of phosphorous present at the Oval Site, include cooking, waste disposal, and gardening. Phosphorous is the most commonly studied chemical in soil analysis, this is due to its longevity in soils and because the soil chemistry is derived from agricultural soil studies. This chemical is associated with plant and human life and can reveal the locations of various activities occurring on a site. Areas of high phosphorous density could be the site of food processing, butchering, animal pens, and privies. While areas of low phosphorous density may reveal the location of building entrances, pathways, and workshops.

For his thesis, Wilkins primarily collected soil samples from the “West Field” which is where Structures 3 and 4 are located and the “Triangle Area” where Structure 2 is located. In this analysis, Wilkins determined that Structure 2 was used as a barn, with a work yard to the northeast of the structure. The west field most likely is associated with domestic contexts based off of Wilkin’s soil samples.

For his dissertation, Wilkins took a broader look at various overseer sites throughout Virginia to observe the intersections of race and class associated with those sites (Wilkins 2017:21). He examined five archaeological sites within Virginia: the Oval Site (44WM80), Accotink Quarter (44FX0223), Wingo’s Quarter (44BE0298), Stable Quarter (44OR0249), and Site 17 (44AB0473). Of this, four of these sites are associated with enslaved African American contexts and three are associated with white overseers in the mid-18th century and early 19th century.

Wilkins processed 46 test units from the Oval Site and collected the artifact count information from the field notes for 61 test units (Wilkins 2017:210). He also expanded his XRF tests to include more of the Oval Site. Through this research, along with data collected from similar sites, Wilkins discussed the complex nature of race and class on plantation settings in 18th century Virginia. He examines how the shifts in agricultural practices, such as the change from tobacco to grain, could shape the landscape and placement of dwellings. The process of tobacco based agriculture required large groups of centralized activity whereas grain agriculture allowed for smaller task groups that could be dispersed throughout the plantation. As a result, Wilkins noted that this led to later sites (which relied less on a monoculture of tobacco) to either concentrate their enslaved populations together, for easier observation and control, or disperse these enslaved populations throughout the plantation to allow for more efficiency in their tasks.

Likewise, the distance of the dwellings of the overseers and the dwellings of the enslaved people they supervised increased as the populations on the plantation dispersed. Wilkins expanded upon previous studies of the layout of these quartering sites. The placement of outbuildings and enslaved dwellings to the overseer's house was intentional, this alignment allows for increased surveillance and reinforced the power dynamics of the plantation. He also compared and examined yard space usage at these sites, including the placement of animal pens, gardens, areas of food preparation, and refuse disposal. He found that sites more isolated from the "Great House" had an increase likelihood to have a delineated space for refuse disposal and clean spaces within the 'inner yard' and a less maintained 'outer yard'. The yards of sites closer to the "Great House" had less defined clean spaces and the 'inner yard' was relatively active while the 'outer yard' was less active.

In Robin Ramey's thesis, she discussed the curational crisis at Stratford Hall and the history of archaeology on the plantation. She estimates the Oval Site collection to be 121,000 artifacts (Ramey 2016:62). To process the whole collection, she predicted it will take 2,500-3,000 hours (Ramey 2016:62). For her thesis she standardized the processing procedures for Stratford Hall and identified the location of each box in the collection. She also calculated the Mean Ceramic Date (MCD) of the two subfloor pits in Structures 3 and 4.

For her thesis, Alexandra Crowder completed a macrobotanical analysis to understand food consumption patterns at the Oval Site. She looked at the remains of plants (seeds and charcoal) found archaeologically to examine what type of food was being consumed at different parts of the site. She took 136 samples from the basement of the overseer's house (Structure 1) and the cellar of the kitchen quarter (Structure 3; Crowder 2018:49). In her analysis she noticed a difference in food consumption between the overseer's house and the kitchen quarter. She

concluded that the enslaved people at the site ate provisioned food and that there is evidence of creolization occurring there (Crowder 2018:79). This is illustrated by the presence of native plants, which the enslaved Africans would not have been familiar with. In order to know how to consume these plants or use these plants for medicinal purposes, they would need to learn from native groups. These interactions with Native Americans, whether that came from earlier interactions of an enslaved populace who has been in the New World for a while or from interactions at Stratford Hall would lead to a creolization of African, European, and Native American foodways. West African botanical materials were also found at the Oval Site, implies a continued movement of African foodways and the development of a creole African American culture. The presence of these materials also implies a preference for these plants and an symbol of autonomy over their own consumption.

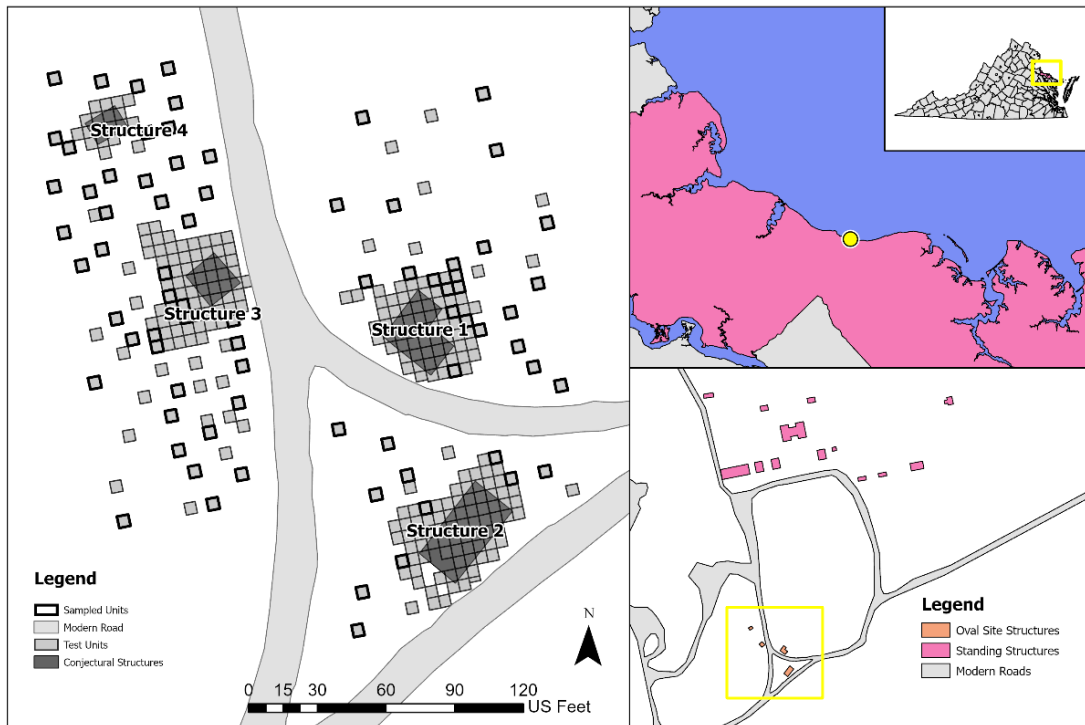


Figure 3.14: Site Map and Site Context, created by the author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

As an undergraduate research project in the Fall of 2018 and the Spring of 2019, I processed 36 test units (Figure 3.1) in the “west field” between and around the kitchen quarter (Structure 3) and the unidentified structure (Structure 4; Resweber 2019a:2). The purpose of my research was to determine the function of Structure 4 and to examine the relationship between the two structures. Once I finished collecting my data from the processed units, I created distribution maps for different artifact categories that aided in my interpretation of the west field.

In my research, the unidentified structure (Structure 4) lacked artifacts typically associated with domestic quarters, such as ceramics and bottle glass. I determined that it was unlikely for Structure 4 to have been an domestic space and I proposed that it could be an outbuilding housing architectural material used for the construction of the Stratford Hall mansion (Resweber 2019:12); a hypothesis first formed by Sanford (per comm. with McMillan 2018) and Wilkins (per comm. with McMillan 2018) during the excavation of this structure in 2013 and 2014.

In addition to archaeological testing and research at this site, other studies involving different disciplines have been conducted at Stratford Hall Plantation. Amongst these is a cultural landscape study by the University of Georgia (2012) and a master’s thesis by Daniel Weldon that focuses on the vernacular landscape and tobacco culture (2014).

The University of Georgia’s study combined research done by the Stratford Hall staff, the Jaeger Company, and the UGA Cultural Landscape Laboratory on the disparate cultural landscape at Stratford Hall to create an inventory of known cultural landscape features. This study defined various landscape characteristics including archaeological sites, buildings, structures, building arrangement, land use, vegetation, and other features present at Stratford Hall, as well as evaluating the integrity of said features (University of Georgia 2012:15).

The master's thesis completed by Daniel Weldon uses Stratford Hall to view how tobacco culture developed in the Northern Neck of Virginia and to explore various methods of interpreting tobacco culture at Stratford Hall. In this thesis he combined archaeological research, historical research, and landscape studies to best understand the arrangement of the plantation. To best interpret this understanding of the cultural landscape at Stratford Hall, he proposes several varying interpretation methods, both traditional and modern (Weldon 2014). These include: a creation of an overall theme focused on tobacco culture at Stratford Hall, an expansion of the biographies discussed at Stratford Hall to include enslaved workers, overseers, and the merchant class, nontraditional interpretation methods including preservation and archaeology laboratories with props, and augmented reality.

In addition to the Oval Site, a late 18th century quartering site has also been excavated at Stratford Hall Plantation. Known as ST116, this site was first identified by Fraser Neiman in 1975 and later was excavated by the Mary Washington College field school, under the supervision of Dr. Douglas Sanford, from 1998 to 2000. ST116 consists of one, small earthfast structure that is believed to have housed enslaved people, the artifact assemblage indicates that this site was occupied ca. 1785 to 1820. In comparison to the Oval Site, ST116 is a lot smaller, only consisting of one structure. It also lacks any subfloor pit features and had no historical documentary evidence related to it (Sanford 1999a).

Chapter 4: Theory

Landscape Archaeology

Landscape archaeology has increasingly been used as a valuable tool to study historical and prehistorical archaeology. It considers both the social and physical relationship of the different components of a site, as well as both the modified and unmodified environment. The “landscape” is defined by James Deetz as the setting where actions are performed over an extensive area (Deetz 1990:3). These actions can be applied to various studies within archaeology.

Early landscape archaeology found its roots in the study of landscape architecture. Studies at Jamestown and Williamsburg in the 1930s emphasized architecture and treated architecture and archaeology as separate entities (Heath and Gary 2012:23). The excavation of the Shadwell Property, the birthplace of Thomas Jefferson, by Roland Robbins in 1954 marked a shift in landscape studies to be more inclusive to archaeology. Robbins used systematic testing and artifact distribution to determine the location of structures at the site (Heath and Gary 2012:26). While still emphasizing and focusing on the memorialization of planters or famous inhabitants, this study was an important step in using the landscape in conjunction with artifact assemblages to interpret sites.

By the 1960s and 1970s, archaeologists began to adopt these practices of including more landscapes in their interpretations. More large scale surveys and investigations led to the creation of the subfield of landscape archaeology (Heath and Gary 2012:28). These early inclusions focused on how the environment may be a deterministic factor in how landscapes are formed and laid out. Later on, culture would be included in these studies, emphasizing the nonmaterial aspects of culture, such as power relations and social structure. These studies focused on how

social relationships can impact how a landscape are formed and spaces are interpreted and created (Seibert 2006:xv; Wilkins 2017:41). This later emphasis of the more social and human impact of site formation asserts that humans are not passive objects in their space. They are agents of their own volition who can manipulate the environment to reflect and affect cultural change and development. In addition, the landscape is not simply a reflection of social performances but an “active medium” for communication of various social meanings and messages (Wilkins 2017:41-45). Today, a multivocal approach to landscapes that stresses agency and context in conjunction with ecological approaches is used to best study and understand the intersection of culture and the environment (Heath and Gary 2012:37-38).

Dell Upton discusses how the landscape can perpetuate the social relationship between various sectors of society. The placement of enslaved housing and outbuildings in relationship to the “Great House,” or to an overseer’s house, is indicative of the intended structure and dynamic between the people who interacted within this plantation environment (Upton 1990; Heath and Lee 2010:1354). The layout of these quartering sites reveals negotiations of control over space by enslaved inhabitants, the overseers, and planters. When given the opportunity to construct and place their dwellings where they would like, enslaved people would often place their structures in a seemingly disorganized and nonlinear fashion. Often the subject of ridicule by the white overseers and planters they worked for as being ‘sloppy’ or ‘lazy’. The Muddy Hole Farm site at Mount Vernon had a black overseer supervising the enslaved populace. In comparison to sites with white overseers, the arrangement of these buildings were ‘randomly’ placed on the edge of a clearing. Vlach explains that African Americans developed the land to follow and meander with the natural world.

In most sites with a white overseer, or in closer proximity to the “Great House,” these dwellings would be placed in neat rows or linearly. This allowed for greater surveillance, and was symbolic of the power the white overseer or planter had over the environment and natural world. Primary accounts from the late 18th century and 19th century describe many of these configurations as almost town like. The design and layout of a plantation was an expression of the planter’s tastes, values, and attributes (Vlach 1990).

The Georgian architectural style that dominated the latter half of the 18th century emphasized rigid order and uniformity. Several thresholds were placed throughout the plantation to control who could access different components of the plantation and how they access them. These usually took the form of gates, drives, forecourts, steps, terraces, porches, and passageways. At Stratford Hall Plantation a low wall stretches in front of the “Great House,” this prevents guests from approaching the house on horseback, forcing them to walk up the steps and therefore humbled them (Wilkins 2017; Vlach 1990).

Initial speculation may assume that the white planter dominated the landscape and controlled every aspect of the lives of the other social classes on the plantation; however, this is not true. Historical and archaeological evidence indicates that the black inhabitants of a plantation had some form of control over their spaces (Crowder 2018; Wilkins 2017; Vlach 1990). Some spaces, including work and residential sites were seen as black spaces in the 18th century. Caroline Merrick, the daughter of a planter in Louisiana, recalls being driven out of the kitchen by the enslaved cook. At nearby Nomini Hall, Philip Fithian mentioned that the stables were often used by the black enslaved people of Nomini Hall as a private space for entertainment (Vlach 1990:15).

Enslaved Africans and African Americans had some control over their dwellings as well. When visiting a southern plantation, Frederick Law Olmstead mentions that the enslaved people kept their homes and possessions “under lock and key.” This asserted their right to personal space and property (Vlach 1990:15).

The land around many enslaved dwellings was often provisioned to enslaved Africans to do as they pleased with it. This land would often be used for gardens, animal pens, food preparation, household chores, and recreation (Heath and Bennett 2000). This allowed enslaved people to produce additional food. In the Chesapeake region, enslaved people often provisioned rations; but, these rations were not enough to subsist on so additional food had to be grown to supplement their diet (Crowder 2018; 2021). In addition to consumption, enslaved people could sell or barter the food they grew to purchase clothing, ceramics, or even their own freedom (Heath 2004, Martin 2008, Galle 2010, Breen 2013, Lee 2016).

The type of plants grown in the garden can also be indicative of the control the enslaved inhabitants had over their own spaces. The presence of botanical remains of native African plants reveal a continuation, adaptation, or creolization of traditional African foodway practices carried over from the Middle Passage to Virginia (Crowder 2018; Crowder 2021). These enslaved people had some control over what they ate, prepared for other enslaved people and the overseer to eat, and what they sold.

Many archaeologists agree that considering the landscape and area, beyond the known features, is important; this allows for a better understanding of how space has been modified and utilized by the inhabitants of a site. Increasingly so, with the implementation of geomorphology, chemical analysis, macrobotanical analysis, microbotanical, and geographic information systems (GIS) to analyze and study these spaces, landscape archaeology has been expanding and

becoming an important component in site interpretation (Crowder 2018; Heath and Gary 2012:38-40; Wilkins 2009; Wilkins 2017).

African Diaspora Archaeology

In the past 50 years, the study of archaeology sites associated with African Americans have increased exponentially in conjunction with the field of African Diaspora studies (Franklin et al 2020; Samford 1996). The term “African Diaspora” instead of “African American” was an intentional one as it implies a global reach that extends past the borders and experiences of the modern United States (Franklin et al 2020:755). Gaining popularity since the 1980s, African Diaspora Archaeology has been extensively discussed and written about by many scholars (Samford 1996:88). Early energy and research focused on 18th century enslaved contexts; but in the past decade, there has been a shift towards researching post-emancipation life at African American sites (Singleton 2010; Heath and Gary 2012; Franklin et al 2020:755).

Many attempts have been made to define artifacts or features as materials of a presumed African ethnic identity and the socioeconomic position of being enslaved. These artifacts are seen to have originated in Africa, enable the continuation of African beliefs, or embody African or African American modes of behaviors. These artifacts fall under a term coined as “Africanisms” (Heath and Breen 2009:2; Samford 1996:101; Samford 2007; Sanford 1996:134). Africanisms are typically defined from historical evidence and ethnographic practices of present day African communities. There is validity in a desire to typify these features or artifacts as being associated with African and African American sites in order to better identify sites. As many of these sites are not recorded in historic documentation and no longer exist (Heath and Breen 2009:1). However, there have been some concerns over the accuracy of those assessments.

Many of the features and artifacts defined as proof of an African or African American presence at a site can also be found in that of other identity groups. Earthfast buildings have been seen as a defining characteristic of an enslaved presence in the 18th century; but earthfast buildings were utilized by both white and black colonists. They are not exclusive to enslaved sites and may not necessarily be indicative of an African or African American site (Heath and Breen 2009:2). Materially, the assemblages of enslaved African Americans were not very different than that of poor whites either. Colonware, which is a locally-made ceramic ware, is also usually used as an identifier of an African or African American presence, but has been found in ‘multicultural spaces’ (Breen 2001; Heath and Breen 2009:7). In the example Heath and Breen give, the cellar fill of a white planter in Fairfax, Virginia, had colonware sherds in it. These colonware sherds could have been deposited by the enslaved people that lived on the property, but it also opens the possibility that these ceramics were used by the white inhabitants as well. Recent research in the Rappahannock River Valley has illustrated a strong connection between colonware and Native Virginian sites in the 18th and 19th centuries (King).

In addition, Africanisms have been criticized for generalizing African culture. Enslaved Africans in the Chesapeake came from a vast variety of cultures and communities in Africa, each with their own practices and beliefs (Walsh 2001). Ascribing broad ethnic association to an artifact can imply that the African ethnic identity is homogenous and without unique cultural characteristics.

Anna Agbes-Davies discusses applying “pragmatism” to African Diaspora scholarship (Agbes-Davies 2017:9). While ethnic traditions can be applied to features or artifacts, it is important to keep in mind practicality and common sense. Perhaps environmental or social

factors beyond tradition could be an explanation for why some of these “Africanisms” appear on the landscape or within these assemblages.

The importance of environmental and social factors can be seen architecturally in Jamaica. In his work covering architecture in the Caribbean and black identity, Louis Nelson argues that constraints derived from the physical landscape and racial landscape influenced the construction of housing free blacks in Jamaica (Nelson 2011:182). Straying from African tradition, black Jamaicans in the 19th century utilized an English technological tradition of box framing. This method allowed for homes to be portable; a practical necessity considering many free blacks in Jamaica owned their home but not the land on which it stood (Figure 4.1; Nelson 2011:184). The choice to utilize this technique of construction over traditional African practices illustrates how ethnic association of a site does not fully determine what artifacts or features may be present at this site.



Figure 4.15: Photo of a Board House in Jamaica taken by Louis Nelson, 2008 (Nelson 2011:181)

Regional and temporal differences should also be taken into consideration. Heath and Breen expanded on this in their study that compared the presence of sub-floor pits (small interior pits) in the Tidewater and Piedmont regions of Virginia (Figure 4.2), as well their presence on 18th century and 19th century sites. Sub-floor pits are a feature usually regarded as an Africanism, and equated with sites associated with Africans and African Americans. Heath and Breen explain that sub-floor pits are so often equated to enslaved housing that the absence of these pits is often utilized as an argument against an enslaved occupation of a site (Heath and Breen 2009:2). The Digital Archeological Archive of Comparative Slavery (DAACS) was used to create a sample of 98 sites from both the Tidewater and Piedmont region (Heath and Breen 2009:4). The results of their study revealed that Tidewater sites were more likely to have sub-floor pits than their Piedmont counterparts, and 18th century sites were also more likely to have sub-floor pits than the later 19th century sites (Heath and Breen 2009). Many traits that archaeologists interpret as



Figure 4.16: Photograph of Structure 3 at the Oval Site, note the subfloor pit feature that has been quartered in the center, photograph taken by Andrew Wilkins in 2014

Africanisms may simply be an expression of regional or temporal necessities or cultural differences.

This study will combine landscape archaeology and African Diaspora archaeology to study the concept of swept yards. Considered an Africanism, swept yards have been documented at several sites associated with enslaved inhabitants. The act of sweeping the yard was an intentional performance as these yards functioned as an extension of the home. Many enslaved dwellings were not large. Enslaved people often lived in single or multi-family dwellings that typically measured 8 x 13 ft to 6 x 20 ft or they lived in barrack style quarters (Sanford 1996:137; Kelso 1984). The lack of space in these dwellings led to an increase need to utilize external spaces.

Residents would utilize this cleared space around the home in a variety of ways. Small livestock rearing, such as chickens, pigs, or goats and vegetable gardens have been commonly associated with these features. This allowed residents to have supplemental subsistence farming to produce their own food for consumption, barter, or even sale. Other household chores, such as cooking, were also performed in this yard space. This space was very much communal, and created a place for residents to socialize with each other and their neighbors (Fesler 2010:33; Heath and Bennett 2000:38).

Along with the practical and functional uses of swept yards, some archaeologists argue that they have spiritual associations as well. Amongst the Bakongo of Central Africa, the act of sweeping a yard cleansed it of “undesirable spirits” denied entry into the village of the dead which then linger in villages of the living instead (Heath and Bennett 2000:43).

African swept yards have been documented in accounts on West Africa in the 18th century and the nineteenth century in the form of courtyards. These accounts primarily come from what is today Gambia, Senegal, Mali, and Nigeria. While the forms of these yards varied by region, some broad patterns did emerge. Most of these swept yards consisted of several buildings enclosed by a fence. The function of these yards were similar to those found in swept yard sites in Virginia, with the exception being that these yards were also utilized as a site to bury their dead (Heath and Bennett 2000:39).

It is believed that this practice of swept yards was diffused from the African continent to the new world as a practice continued by enslaved Africans. The presence of these swept yards has been heavily documented in the Caribbean, especially in Barbados and Jamaica. These yards look similar to the ones found in West Africa; buildings would be arranged in a disorderly fashion, with fruit trees interspersed throughout. A major difference between their West African counterparts is that the materials and methods of constructions were adapted for their environment (Fesler 2010:33; Heath and Breen 2000:41). Anthropologist Sidney Mintz has conducted many mid-20th century ethnographic studies focused on understanding swept yards in the Caribbean. He explains that “together, house and yard form a nucleus within the culture that expresses itself, is perpetuated, changed, and reintegrated” (Mintz 1974:231-233). Nelson also discusses swept yards in Jamaica. In Jamaica they performed similar roles of being an extension of the home, where a majority of daily life occurred due to limited space within the board homes (Nelson 2011:186).

In the American South, enslaved Africans were usually allotted land to garden and raise small livestock to supplement their diet (Sanford 1996:138; Heath and Breen 2009:41). In the contemporary south, the act of sweeping the yard is still being practiced. Notably, this practice is

done by contemporary rural whites as well. It is possible that this practice was disseminated to the white populace through creolization (Fesler 2010:33). Heath and Breen (2009) explore multiple oral history accounts from former enslaved people discussing swept yards. Many of these accounts describe the yard as being a place used for relaxation and for children to play. Chores, such as quilting, were also performed in the yard (Heath and Bennett:2000:42). It appears that the yards utilized by 19th century enslaved people performed similar functions and roles to those of West Africa and the Caribbean.

Swept yards themselves were rarely mentioned in historical documents (Fesler 2010:32; Heath and Bennett 2000:39). Whether this is because the yards of enslaved people resembled that of their free white and black counterparts and were thus not worth mentioning, because they did not occur in a high enough frequency and were not common enough in Virginia, or because there are not a lot of records detailing enslaved life, is not known. What little historical documentation we do have of this phenomena comes from Robert “King” Carter in a diary entry he wrote in 1725. He explains that he had a “quarrel” with the hired housekeeper, Ms. Young, about the “wenches cleaning their doors and paths” in reference to the enslaved people living in the dwellings he had inspected earlier that day (Fesler 2010:32).

Archaeologically, these swept yards come in the form of an elongated, crescent shaped artifact distribution (Figure 4.3). Fesler (2010) discusses a swept yard uncovered at the Utopia (44JC0032), an 18th-century site located outside of Williamsburg, Virginia. In its third phase of occupation (1730-1750), a crescent shaped distribution of artifacts was noticed in between the two enslaved dwellings with no feature as a source of this artifact clustering. Fesler believes this is an intentional dispersion of artifacts that occurred through regular and repeated sweeping of that space between the two dwellings (Figure 4.3; Fesler 2010). Evidence of a potential swept

yard was also uncovered at Site 8 at Monticello in Charlottesville, Virginia. This swept yard was characterized by the regular removal of refuse between two structures. The presence of large sub-floor pit features adds to the interpretation that the two houses at this engaged in shared economic and social interactions (DAACS 2006). If a swept yard was present at the Oval Site, it would have a similar distribution of artifacts and be a clear and noticeable feature on the landscape.

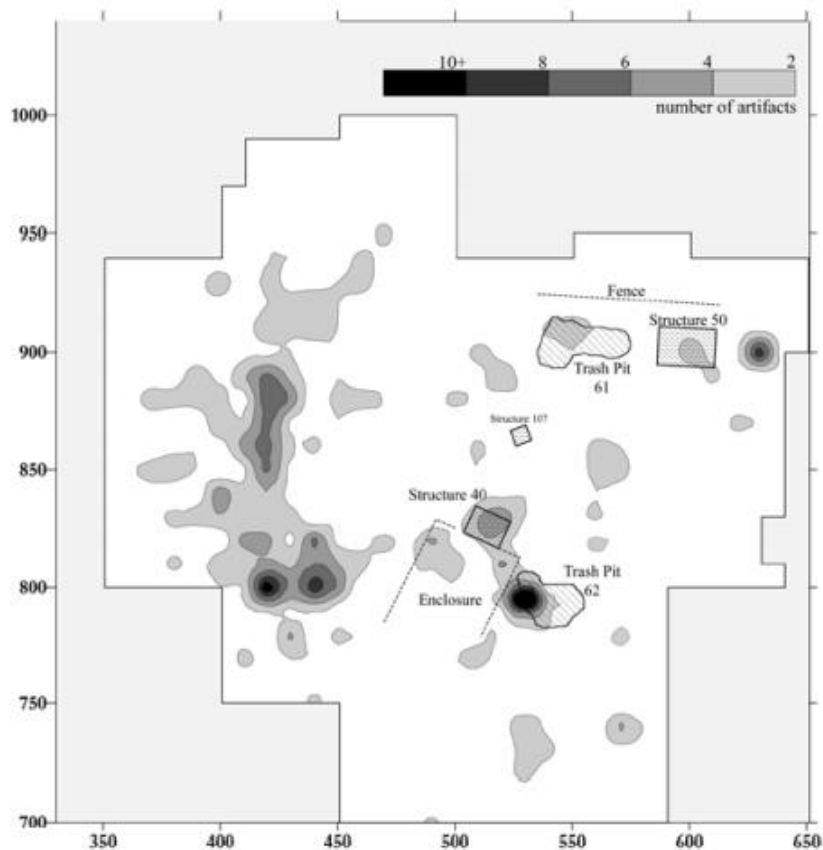


Figure 4.17: Crescent Shaped Artifact Distribution at the Utopia Quarter, map created by Garrett Fesler, 2008 (Fesler 2010:40)

Chapter 5: Methodology

A total of 333 test units and 41 shovel test pits were excavated at the Oval Site by the University of Mary Washington field school. My sample studies the artifacts from 78, or 51%, of the 151 test units in the study area. The sample for this study was determined through the use of a stratified random sampling, in order to best analyze yard space usage, the test units directly adjacent to the location of the structures were excluded from my study. In addition, only the

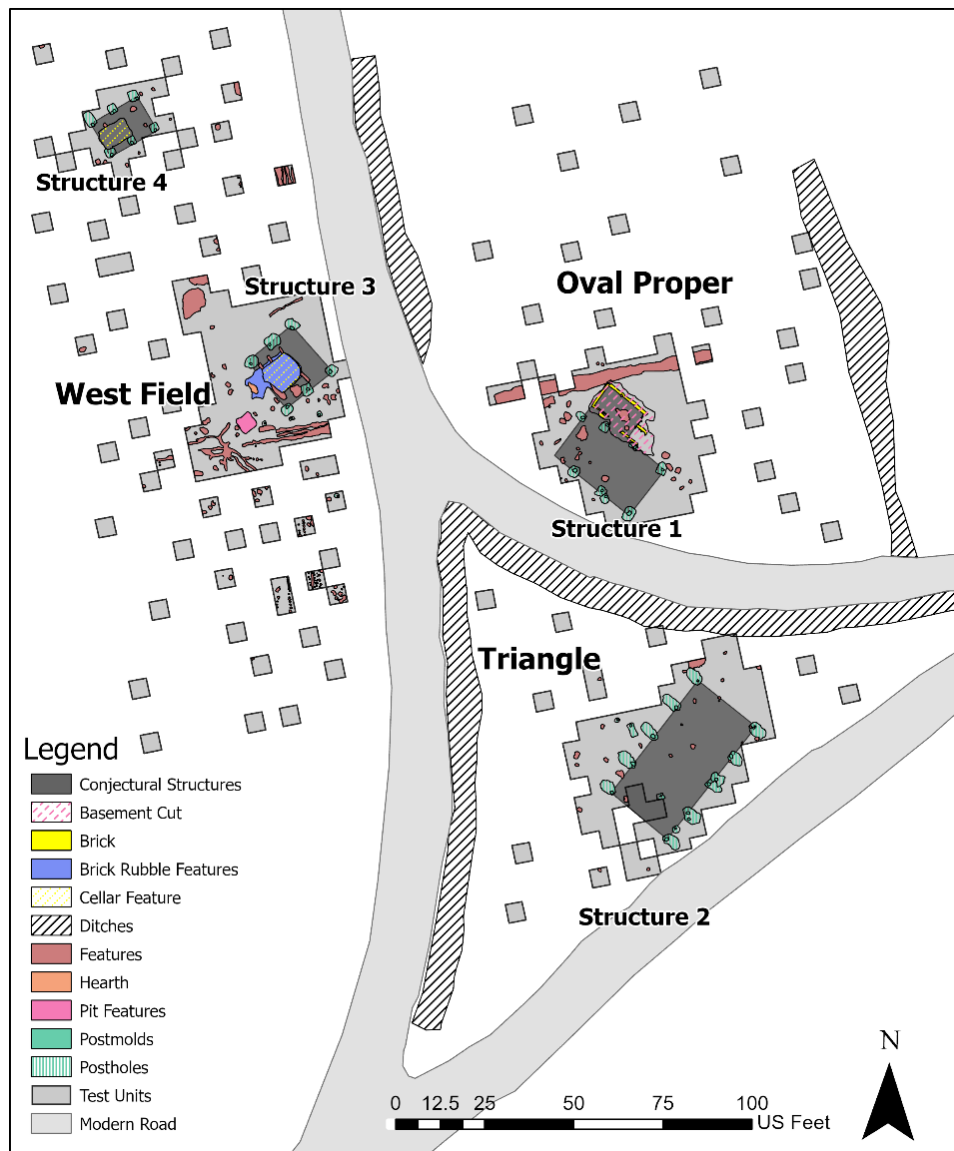


Figure 5.18: Site Map with features created by author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

plow zone contexts of the test units from my sample were catalogued. Plow zone studies have been proven to be useful in archaeological interpretation. King expresses that, while the vertical stratigraphy or placement of an artifact is destroyed by the plow, the horizontal placement is not. Due to the horizontal placement being retained after plowing, sites that were impacted by the plowzone can be still interpreted spatially (Heath and Gary 2012:33; King and Miller 1987).

Previous studies divide the Oval Site into three different sections, the “West Field,” the “Triangle,” and the “Oval Proper” (Figure 5.1; Ramey 2016:23). For this study the site was divided into six different subsections, in order to best understand different aspects of the landscape around each of the structures and how the structures on the site interact with one another. The use of the term “structure” will be used throughout this study to remain consistent with past studies of the Oval Site. Sections 1, 2, and 3, make up the “West Field” portion of the site, this is where the kitchen/enslaved housing (Structure 3) and mixed used outbuilding (Structure 4) were located. Section 1 is the area north of Structure 4, Section 2 is the area between Structures 3 and 4, and finally, Section 3 is the area to the south of Structure 3. The “Triangle,” which is where the barn or tobacco house is located (Structure 2), is where Section 4 is located. Finally, the “Oval Proper,” where the overseer’s house (Structure 1) has been identified, consists of Section 5, to the east of the overseer’s house, and Section 6, which is to the north of Structure 1 (Figure 5.2).

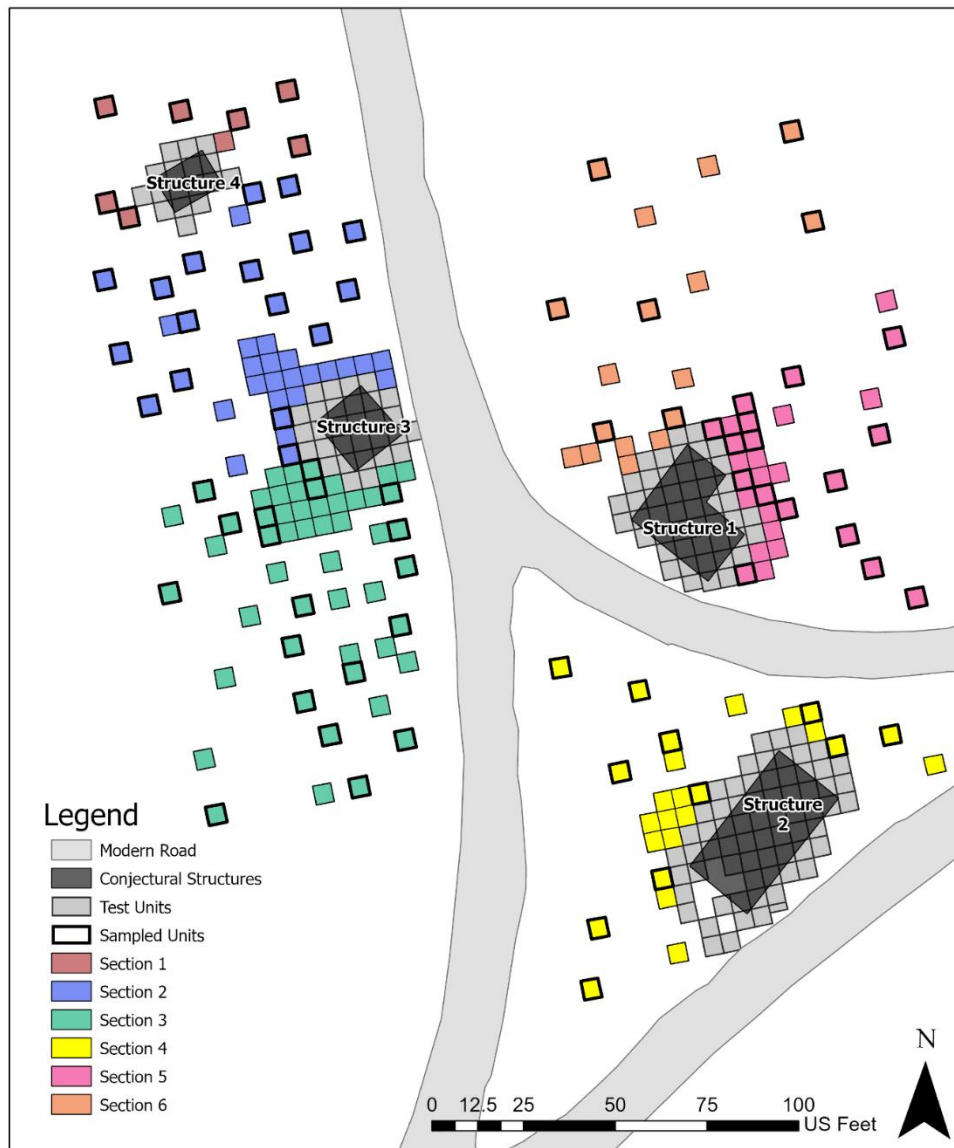


Figure 5.19: The different sections used in the 2021 study, created by author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

A total of 78 test units were included in the sample. Of this, 30 test units were from the 2018 sample catalogued by the 2018 University of Mary Washington field school and myself, the other 48 test units were catalogued in the Fall of 2021. These 78 test units make up 51% of the total test units in the study area. Below (Chart 5.1) is a breakdown of how the stratified sample was determined. Since this study includes data from the 2018 study, the sample does

have a slight skew to Section 1 and Section 2. The data from the previous studies by Wilkins, Ramey, and Crowder were excluded from this sample, as they utilized a different database and transfer of the data would have been difficult, and typologies, classifications, and other fields would differ from the database I utilized in my project.

Section Number	Total Number of Test Units in the Section	Percentage of the Study Area	Number of Test Units Included in the Sample
1	8	5%	7
2	36	24%	15
3	38	25%	15
4	22	15%	11
5	31	21%	16
6	16	10%	7
Total:	151		78

Chart 5.1: Breakdown of Stratified Sample

In order to prepare the artifacts for analysis, the collection had to be processed. This took the form of washing, drying, cataloging, and re-bagging the artifacts from the sample. From August to November of Fall 2020, I processed 17,569 artifacts. Due to Covid-19 procedures, I could not have any external assistance in this process.

The first part of the process was washing. I used a dry brushing technique with a tooth brush on bone, iron, brick, and other artifacts typically dry brushed, while I used a tooth brush and water to wet wash ceramics, pipes, and other artifacts typically wet washed. Once washed, artifacts were dried on the drying rack for at least 48 hours, at which point they were then rebagged and catalogued.

For this project, I utilized a Microsoft Access database created by Daphne Ahalt. The Stratford Hall Collection Microsoft Access Database was created by Ahalt in 2018 for the

University of Mary Washington field school. This cataloging system was created with specific entries to make it easily convertible and compatible to Stratford Hall's PastPerfect database; once this collection is finished, all data will be given to Stratford Hall. Standard cataloging procedures were followed. Information captured included: artifact type, form, decorations, size, and weight. Artifacts were identified and dated using the digital database on the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory (MAC Lab) website, Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery (DAACS), Ivor Noel Hume's colonial artifact guide, and the reference collection of artifacts within the University of Mary Washington's archaeology lab (DAACS 2020; Hume 1970; MAC Lab 2020)

To aid in the investigation of this site, the data catalogued into the Microsoft Access database was exported into a Microsoft Excel sheet where it was utilized for dating analysis of the site. I utilized various ceramic dating methods to the date the site, including the Stanley South's method of mean ceramic dating (South 1971; Sutton and Arkush 2019:156) and a ceramic intersection (Sutton and Arkush 2019:156). Included the ceramic analysis of the site, imported, white ball clay, tobacco pipes were also dated. In order to these pipes I used the Binford linear formula (Binford 1962), the Hanson linear formula (Hanson 1971), and the Highton and Deagan logarithmic formula for pipe stem dating (Heighton and Deagan 1972; McMillan 2016:18). A Harrington (Harrington 1954) histogram of pipe bore diameters was applied to the sample. In addition to dating the full site, these techniques were also applied to the six subsections of the site in order to reveal differences between each section of the site.

I also utilized ArcGIS Pro to interpret the sample. I created "distribution maps" for various artifacts. These distribution maps were created utilizing the spline interpolation tool and masked to fit the study area. The spline interpolation tool was utilized over a kriging or IDW

interpolation tools because it is the one primarily used by the archaeology lab at the University of Mary Washington (Resweber 2019b). The kriging method is the least effective of these interpolation tools because less consideration is given to individual point values; however, the IDW method yields similar results to the spline and could be utilized in future studies. A mask around each section of the study area was done to prevent the spline from estimating artifact values in the test units associated with the structures and spaces that are not included in the study. Not masking your study area could skew the results of the spline (Resweber 2019b). Distribution maps display the densities of where certain artifacts are located, and estimate the area around the test units to create a “hot/cold” map of artifacts. Notably, polygons cannot be splined, so I created points in the center of each test unit that had the artifact data of that test unit to spline. The following categories were included in my study: total artifact count, brick weight, masonry weight, window glass, bulged edge glass, green wine bottle glass, refined earthenware, coarse earthenware, stoneware, porcelain, bone, nails, and iron weight.

Chapter 6: Analysis

The full sample analyzed includes the data from all six sections of my study area (Figure 6.1). The Oval Site is approximately 44,441 square feet in total area. This area includes all four structures identified in the previous studies as well as 151 test units. Of these, 78 test units, or 51% of the excavated area, were included in the full sample.

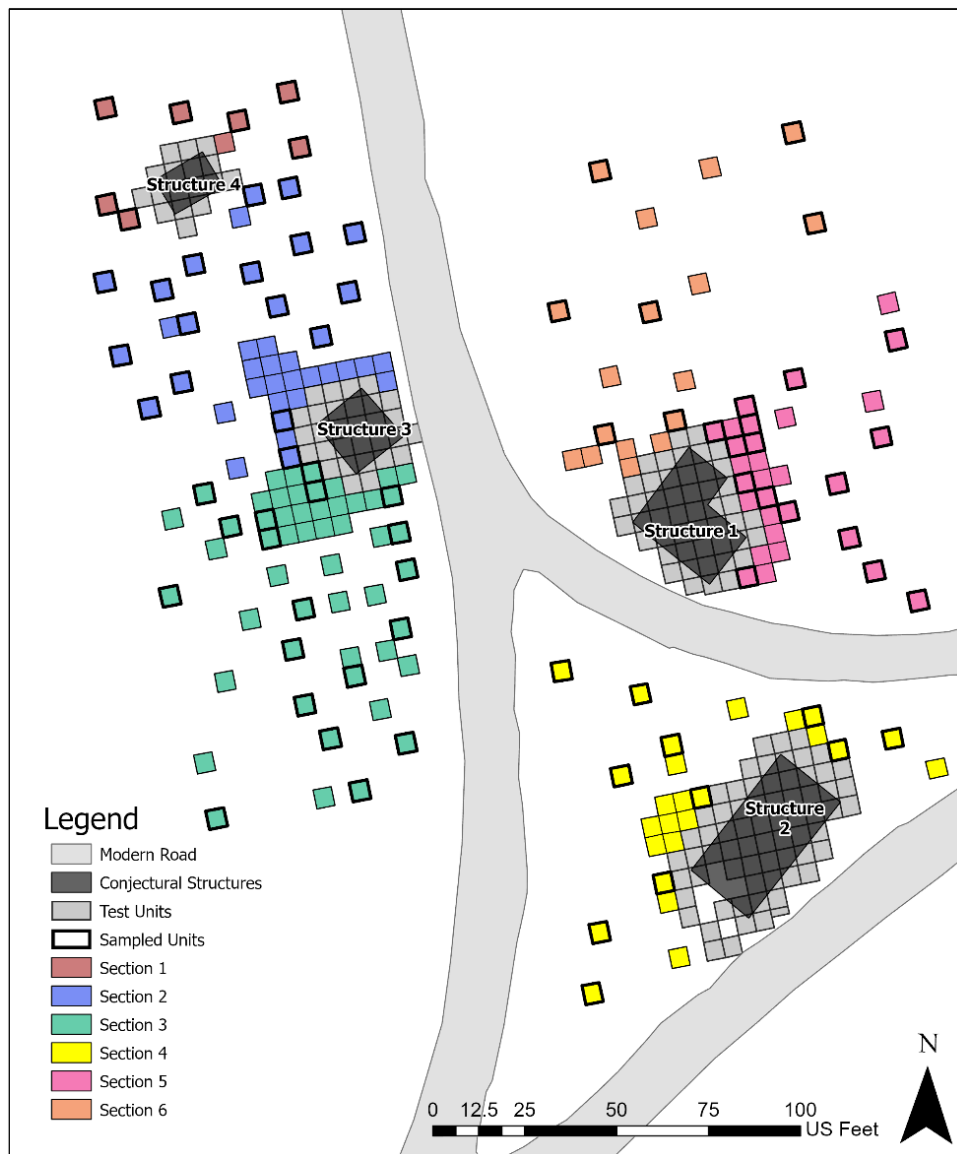


Figure 6.20: Study Area for the 2020-2021 Study, map created by the author using shapefiles from Andrew Wilkins

Section	Sample Unit Count	Artifact Count	% of Sample
Section 1	7	1,998	10%
Section 2	15	5,957	29%
Section 3	15	4,612	23%
Section 4	11	2,492	12%
Section 5	16	4,409	22%
Section 6	7	1,022	5%
Full Sample	78	23,413	

Table 6.1: Breakdown of Artifact Count of Test Units included in the sample by Section

A total of 23,421 artifacts were included in this study (Table 6.1). Many of these artifacts are concentrated to the south of Structure 3 (Figure 6.2). Notably the areas to the northeast of Structure 1, and to the southeast of Structure 4, have relatively high artifact density. Areas of low artifact density include the area directly east of Structure 1, to the southwest of Structure 2, to the southwest of Structure 3, and the northern portion of Section 6.

To better analyze this site, analysis has been divided into the following categories based off of artifact type: ceramics, tobacco pipes, window glass, and other artifacts. The ceramics category focuses on different ceramic distribution, ceramic function, unique ceramic wares, and ceramic dating techniques that were applied to this sample. The tobacco pipe category discusses tobacco pipe distribution and the dating methods applied to the tobacco pipe assemblage. The window glass category focuses on distribution and different interpretations for the window glass fragments found at the Oval Site. Finally, the other artifact category includes a discussion of the following artifacts: green wine bottle glass, nails, oyster shell, bones, and brick. These artifacts were placed in one category because the discussion surrounding these artifacts was more limited compared to the other categories.



Figure 6.21: Total Artifact Distribution at the Oval Site, map created by the author using shapefiles from Andrew Wilkins

Ceramics

In total, 1,021 ceramic sherds were catalogued from the full sample. The following (Table 6.2) is a list of the ceramics identified, the count of these ceramics, and the percentage of the total ceramic sample they occupy.

Ware	Count	Percentage
American Stoneware	9	0.87%
Black Basalt	2	0.19%
British Brown	97	9.34%
Buckley	68	6.54%
Colonware	10	0.96%
Creamware	60	5.77%
Ironstone	1	0.10%
Jackfield	2	0.19%
Manganese Mottled	47	4.52%
North Devon, Gravel Temper	75	7.22%
North Devon, Sgraffito	2	0.19%
Nottingham	2	0.19%
Pearlware	44	4.23%
Philadelphia Slipware	3	0.29%
Porcelain	23	2.21%
Redware	148	14.24%
Slip Dipped White Salt Glaze	3	0.29%
Staffordshire Iron Glazed	8	0.77%
Staffordshire Slipware	19	1.83%
Tin Glaze	271	26.08%
Unidentified Refined Earthenware	8	0.77%
Unidentified Stoneware	10	0.96%
Unknown	17	1.64%
Westerwald	30	2.89%
Whieldon Tortoiseshell	5	0.48%
White Salt Glaze	69	6.64%
Whiteware	5	0.48%
Yellow Ware	1	0.10%

Table 6.2: Ceramic Ware types identified at the Oval Site

Most of this ceramic distribution is concentrated to the south of the kitchen (Figure 6.3). But there are also significant spots of higher density to the northwest of the barn and the southeast of the overseer's house. The higher density of ceramics in these areas is not unusual, as the activities that occurred in and around those two structures would have required and utilized more ceramics than the mixed use building and the barn. This is because these buildings were domestic and activities involving ceramics, such as food preparation, food storage, food consumption, and as a decorative display were more likely to occur here.



Figure 6.22: Ceramic Distribution at the Oval Site, map created by the author using shapefiles from Andrew Wilkins

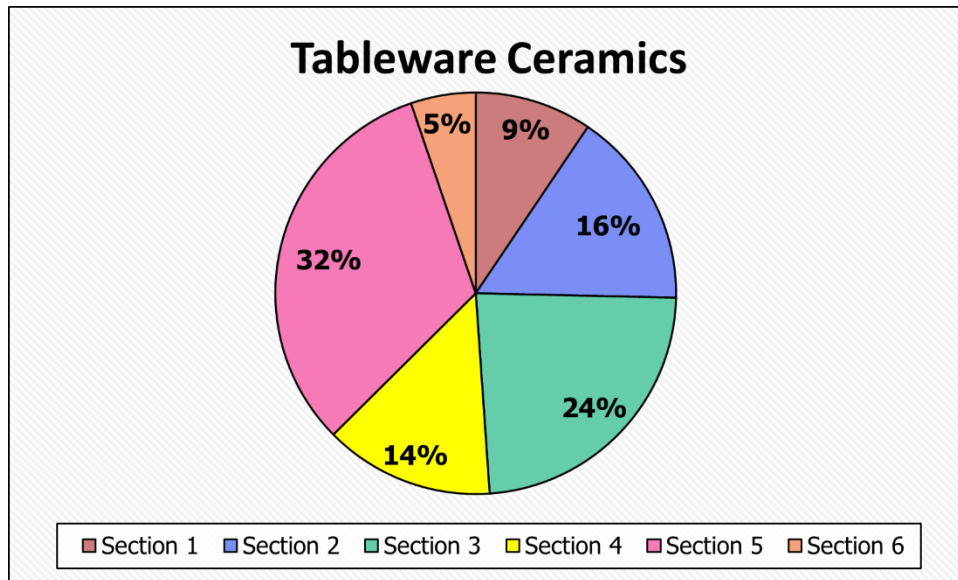


Figure 6.23: Breakdown of Tableware Ceramics in Each Section

Ceramics are often categorized by functionality. For this study, these functionalities were defined as “Tableware” and “Utilitarian”. Tableware ceramics make up 34% (n=342) of the total sample. Tableware ceramics were meant to be displayed, or viewed while serving and consuming food, and are designed with a focus on aesthetics. While tableware ceramics were found in all six sections of the Oval Site (Figure 6.4), they were most heavily concentrated in Section 3, between the kitchen and barn, and Section 5 (Figure 6.5), to the east of the overseer’s house. Creamware (n=60), Tin Glaze (n=278), and White Salt Glaze (n=69) dominated this sample. In Section 3, there is a cluster of tableware ceramics just south of Structure 4. In between Sections 3 and Section 4, there is a notable clear path between two high densities of tableware ceramics to the west and east of Structure 3. There are also high densities of tableware ceramics found at the southern portion of Section 3, the eastern portion of Section 4, the southeastern portion of Section 5, and centrally in Section 6.



Figure 6.24: Distribution of Tableware Ceramics at the Oval Site, map created by the author, using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

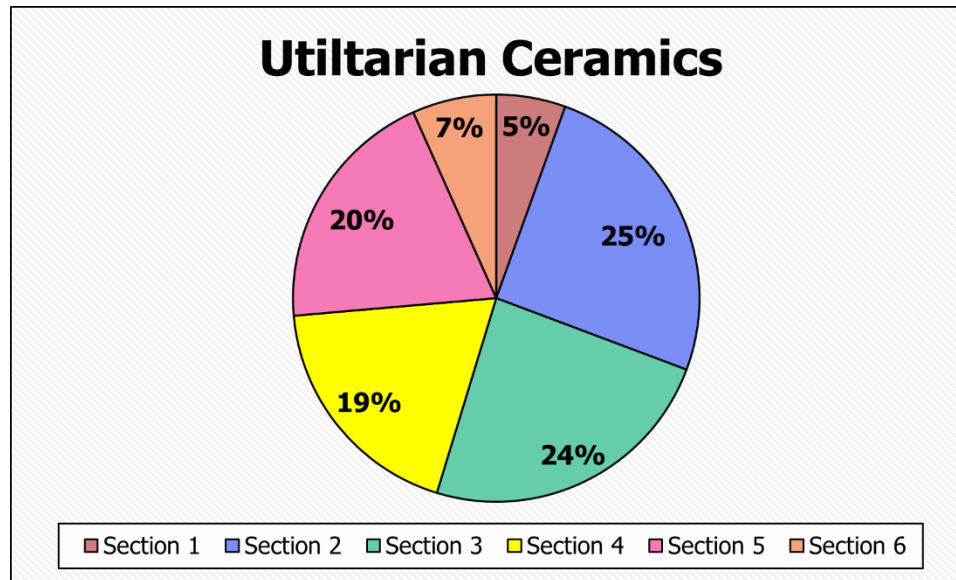


Figure 25.6: Breakdown of Utilitarian Ceramics at the Oval Site

Utilitarian ceramics, which make up 66% of the total sample, were used for storage, food preparation, and other more practical purposes. These vessels were designed with function over beauty in mind. More than half of the utilitarian ceramics were found in Sections 3 and 4, the area around the kitchen (Figure 6.6). Since this is the location where most food preparation and kitchen-related activities took place, the large amount of utilitarian ceramics found here is expected. Additionally, both Section 4 and Section 5 also have a large amount of utilitarian ceramics, making up about 39% of the sample. Most of the utilitarian ceramics found at the Oval Site were classified as British Brown Stoneware (n=98), Buckley (n=68), and North Devon Gravel Temper (n=73). The distribution of these sherds has less of a variance in artifact density when compared to the tablewares. They exist primarily to the south of the kitchen, to the west of the barn, and to the north of the overseer's house (Figure 6.7). Overall, this map is highly reflective of the total ceramic distribution map, likely because these ceramics make up a large portion of the total ceramics.



Figure 6.26: Distribution of Utilitarian Ceramics at the Oval Site, map created by the author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

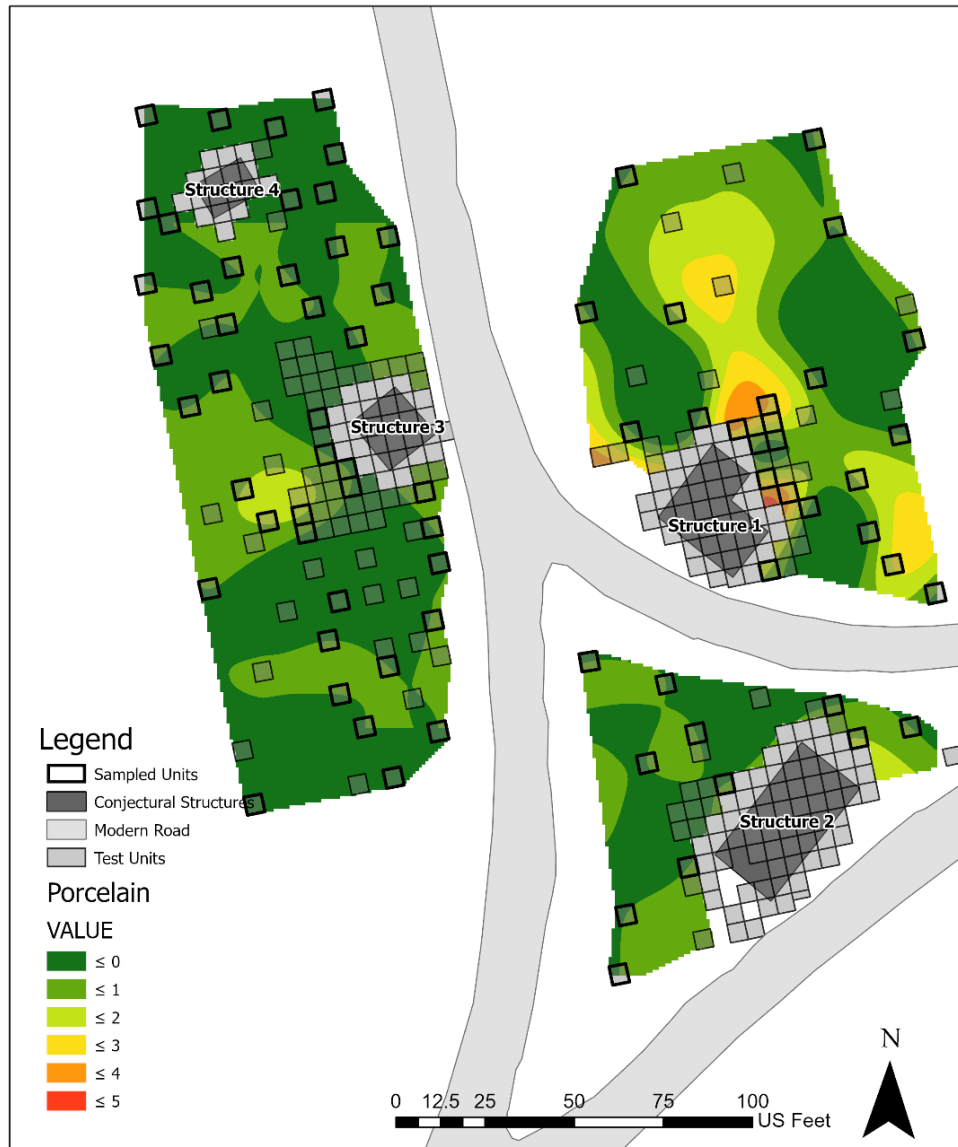


Figure 6.27: Distribution of Porcelain at the Oval Site, map created by the author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

Porcelain (n=23) distribution only reaches a high level of concentration in Sections 5 and 6, around the overseer's house (Figure 6.8). This is expected. Due to the expensive nature of porcelain ceramics, they are not commonly found in assemblages of less affluent individuals (Noël Hume 1970:257). Of all the inhabitants of the Oval Site, the overseer and his family were the most likely to have owned this type of ceramic.

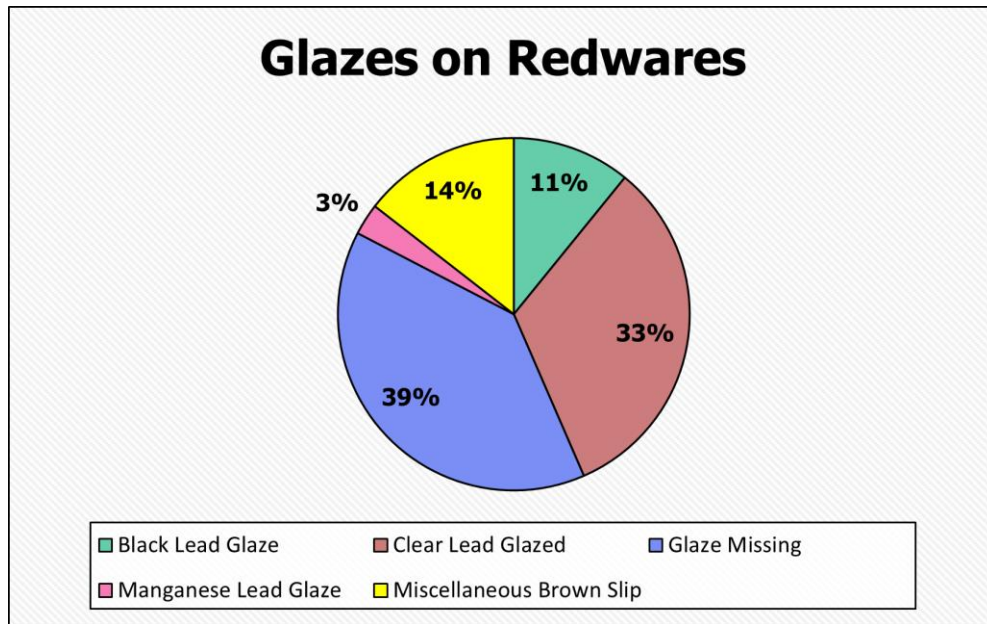


Figure 6.28: Different Glazes found on the Redware Sample

Another unique notable ceramic type is red earthenware (commonly called “redwares”; n=154). These ceramics were typically domestically made and are common on many 18th - century archaeological sites (Steen 1999:63). Most of the redware ceramics found at the Oval Site were thick and utilitarian in nature. In comparison to imported wares, redwares were relatively inexpensive and were often used as everyday items for cooking or as tablewares for those who could not afford refined earthenwares, refined stonewares, and porcelain (Gibble 2005:33). About 38% of the redwares (n=54) lacked any glaze (Figure 6.9). Clear lead glazed redwares (n=45) made up most of the glazed ceramics. One subtype of redware was further identified as Philadelphia slipware (n=3) and was able to be dated (1750-1820). Philadelphia slipware is an early American pottery type that was produced in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Alexandria (Magid and Means 2003). The distribution of redware closely resembles the distribution of the total ceramic count (Figure 6.10).

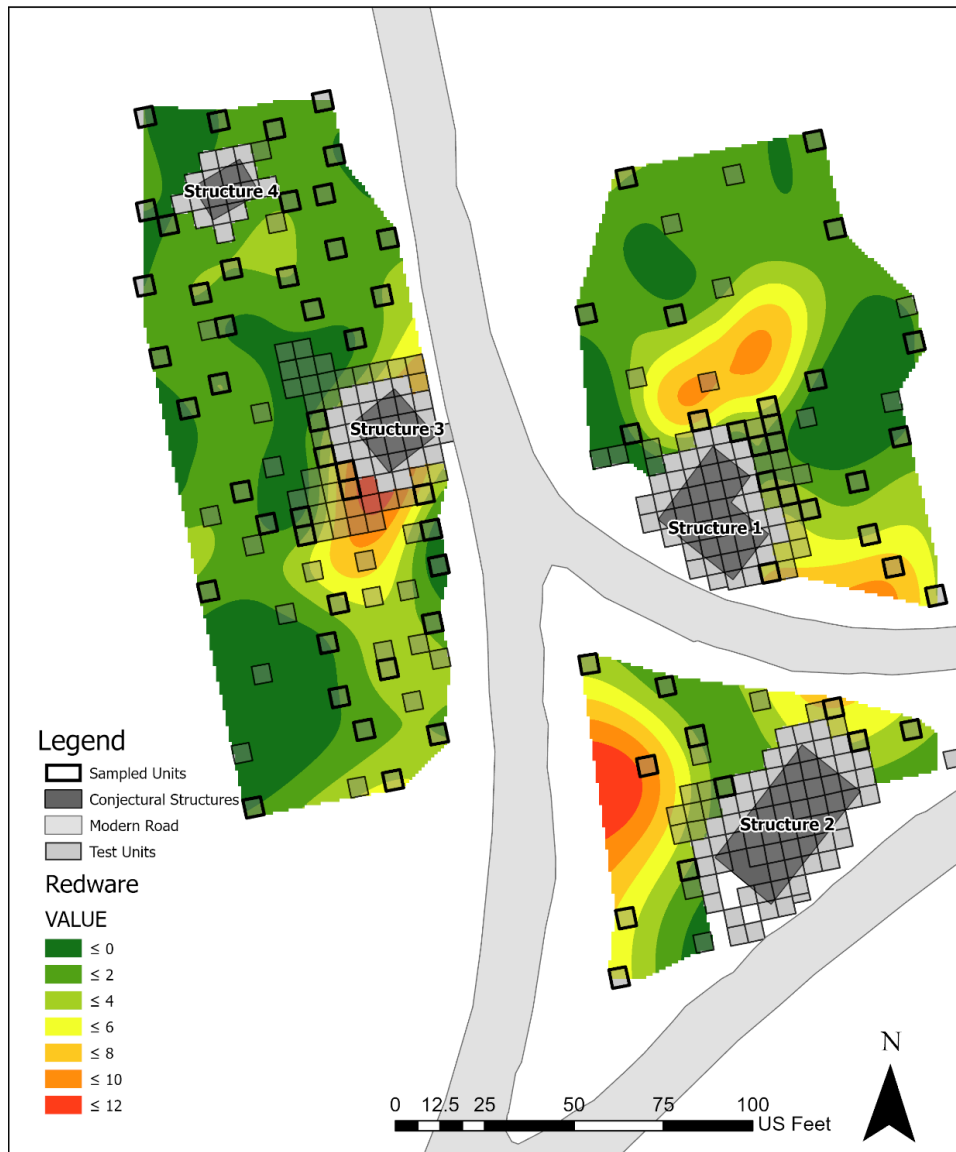


Figure 6.29: Distribution of Redware at the Oval Site, map created by the author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

Various ceramic dating techniques were applied to both the full sample and each individual section. One of the methods utilized was Stanley South's method of mean ceramic dating (MCD; South 1972). Mean ceramic dating is a ceramic dating technique often applied in historical archaeology. Since the sixteenth century, European pottery manufacturers have kept records of ceramic production, allowing archaeologists to know the life span of ceramic wares

and to be able to find the mean occupation date of a site based off the presence of these wares by calculating a weighted average of the dates of manufacture of the ceramics and the total number of each ware type (Sutton and Arkush 2019:160).

Due to the variant nature of ceramic production and popularity, some types of ceramics have larger life spans than others, some even lasting centuries. In order to prevent this from skewing the MCD, three MCDs were calculated. The first MCD included all the datable ceramic artifacts (n=863), the second MCD excluded any ceramics that had a manufacturing range of over 150 years (n=499), and the third MCD excluded any ceramics that had a manufacturing range of over 100 years (n=378). The breakdown of the MCD for the full sample as well as each section is listed below (Table 6.3).

Sections	All Datable Ceramics	Without 150+	Without 100+
1	1762	1767	1770
2	1745	1757	1764
3	1732	1747	1751
4	1716	1736	1737
5	1722	1745	1750
6	1733	1746	1752
Full Sample	1732	1749	1754

Table 6.3: Breakdown of the MCD for each Section and the Full Sample

For the interpretation of this study, the MCD that excludes ceramics with a range of over 150+ years was chosen. This was chosen because it excluded tin glaze, which made up 27% of the sample, but skewed the MCD as this type of ware was manufactured for a very long time and has too large of a range (1600-1800) for appropriate dating. In addition, the North Devon Sgraffito and North Devon Gravel Free were excluded from the MCD as they were likely remnants of a 17th-century site that predated the Oval Site.

In addition to a MCD, a ceramic intersection (Figure 6.11) was completed for the site. The ceramic intersection provides the time period in which all the artifacts could be present at

the site. This dating method provides us a date range of when the site could have been occupied based on the manufacturing range overlap of the different ceramic ware types. The intersection for the full sample is skewed from the presence of white slip dipped salt glaze (1720-1775), as it is likely that the Oval Site had a mid-century occupation and was abandoned by the 1770s.

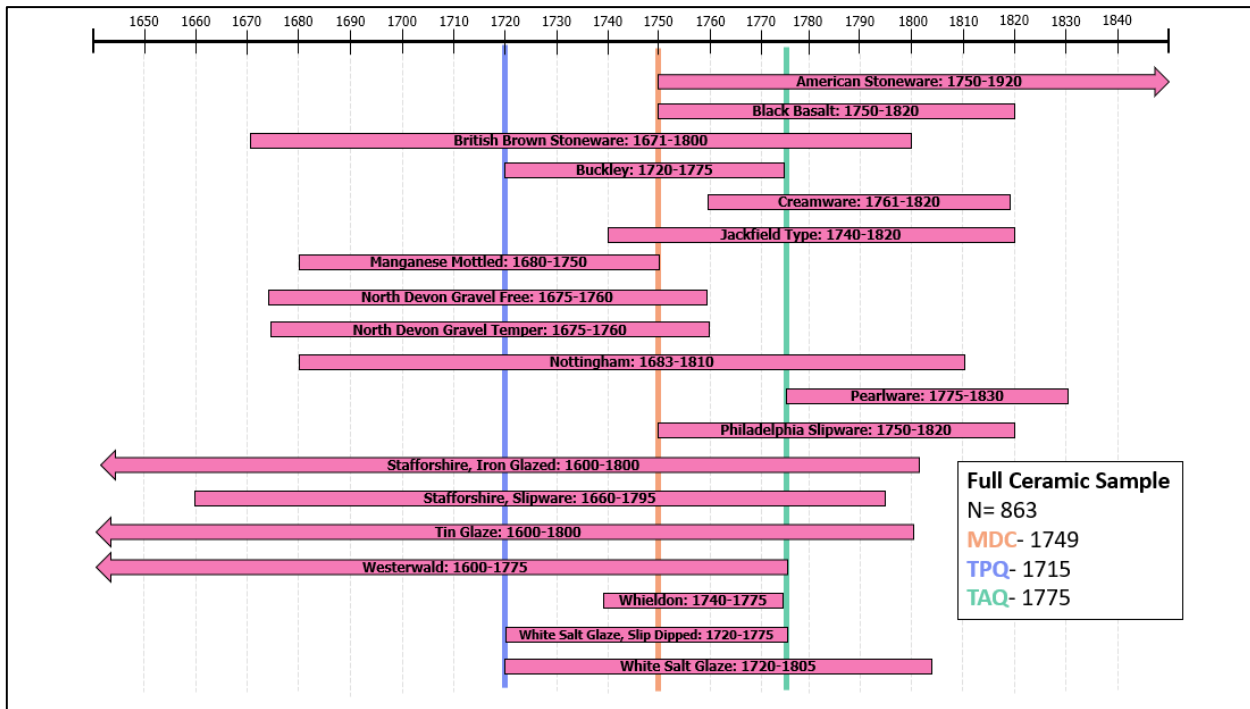


Figure 6.30: Ceramic Intersection of the Full Sample

Tobacco Pipes

Most of the tobacco pipes recovered from the Oval Site were imported white ball clay pipes (n=497), but colonoware pipes (n=4) and Chesapeake pipes (n=2) make up part of the sample as well. The pipes predominately come from the West Field in Sections 2 and 3, and in Section 5, near the Overseer's house (Figure 6.12); in the areas around the two primary-domestic structures. Notably, the colonoware pipes and the Chesapeake pipes were only found in Sections 2 and 3, where the kitchen/enslaved housing is located. Colonoware pipes are more commonly associated with enslaved people and are locally made pipes (source).

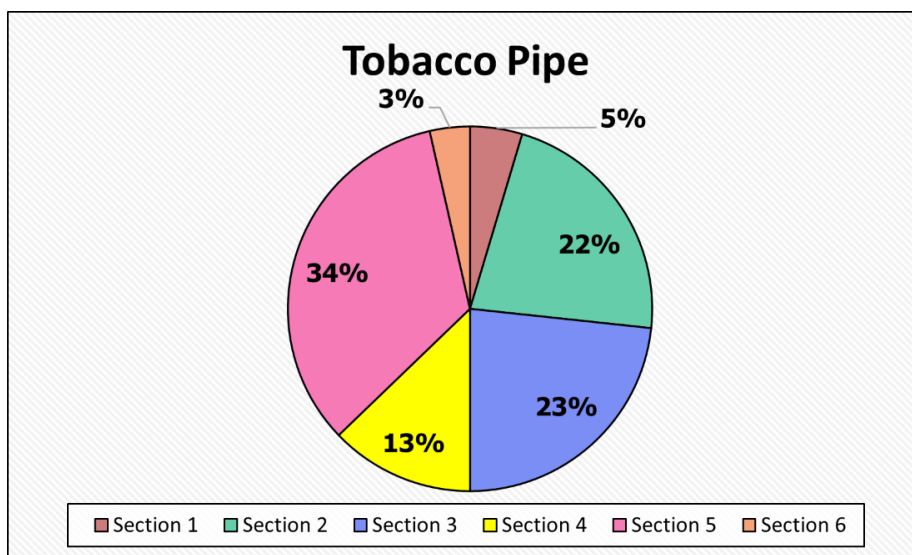


Figure 6.31: Breakdown of Tobacco Pipe presence in each section

The area directly north of the kitchen/enslaved housing also had the highest density of tobacco pipes (Figure 6.13). Another area of heavier pipe density is the southern portion of Section 3 and the northeastern portion of Section 4. Given the location of the kitchen and barn respectively, this is likely the site of outdoor activities where the occupants would gather. Interestingly, neither Section 5 nor Section 6, where the overseer's house is located, had a high density of tobacco pipes. These artifacts are often referred to as the “cigarette butts” of the 18th

century due to their fragility and affordability, making them a common feature at historical archaeology sites (Noël Hume 1970:296).

White ball clay pipes were usually imported from England; over time, the bore diameter of these pipes would get smaller and smaller to accommodate a longer pipe stem (Noël Hume 1970:296). This allows archaeologists to be able to date pipe stem assemblages utilizing bore diameter measurements. Pipe stem dating takes the count of the different bore diameters a part of the assemblage and applies a formula to it in order to get a mean date of occupation for your site.

Three different methods of pipe stem dating were applied to the sample of measurable pipe stem fragments (n= 202). These methods include: the Binford linear formula (Binford 1962), the Hanson linear formula (Hanson 1971), and the Heighton and Deagan logarithmic formula (Hanson and Deagan 1972) for pipe stem dating, as well as a Harrington Histogram (Table 6.5; Harrington 1954; McMillan 2016:18). Due to the sample size of each section being too small, pipe stem dating was only applied to the full sample.

Method	Date
Binford	1745
Hanson	1739
H&D	1747

Table 6.5: Results of the Pipe Stem Dating

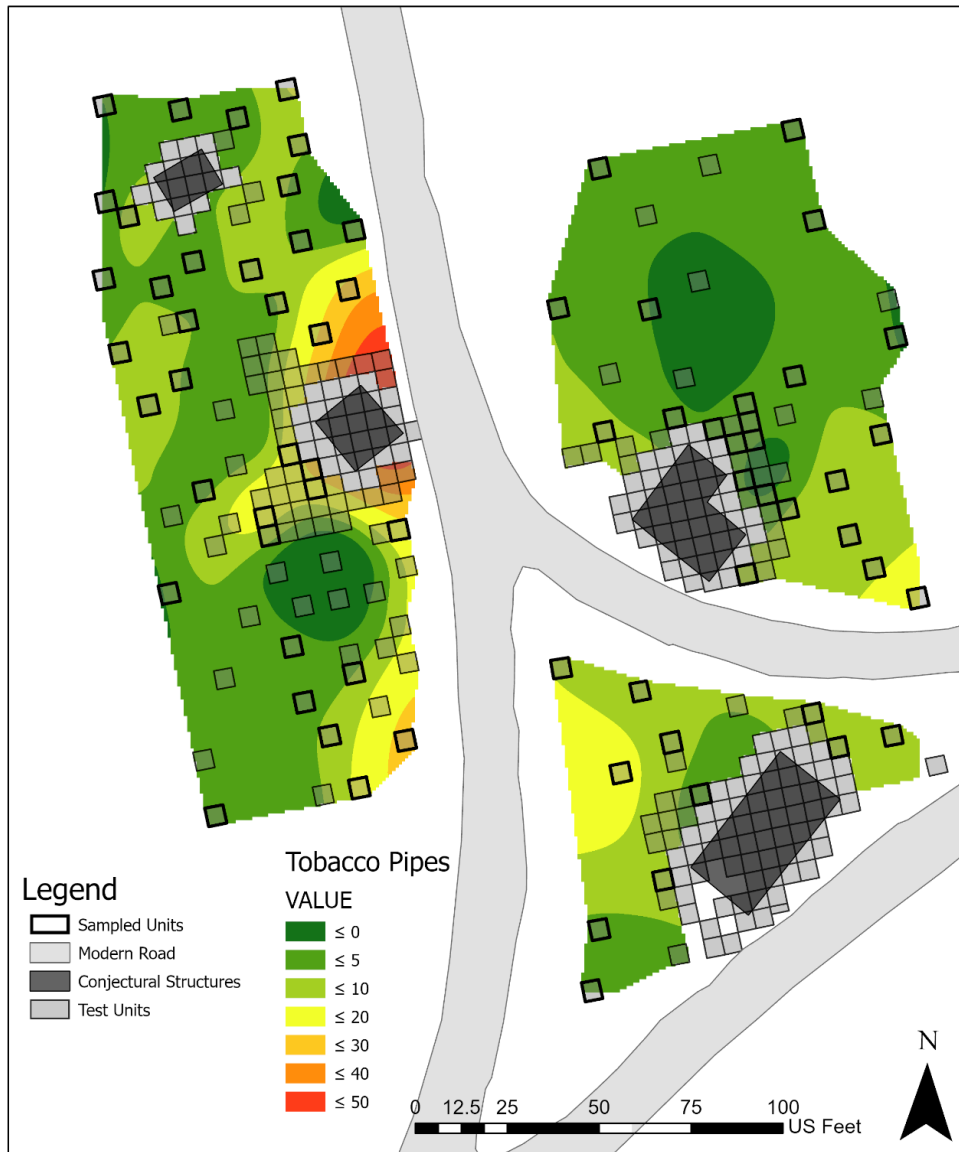


Figure 6.32: Distribution of tobacco pipes at the Oval Site, created by the author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

The dates provided by these formulas are consistent with the ceramic dating applied to the site. The Harrington Histogram (Figure 6.14 and Figure 6.15) also reflect a similar time frame for the site. The percentage of pipes with a diameter of 4/64 and a diameter of 5/64 places

this assemblage between the periods of 1710-1750 and 1750-1800 of the Harrington Histogram (McMillan 2016:20).

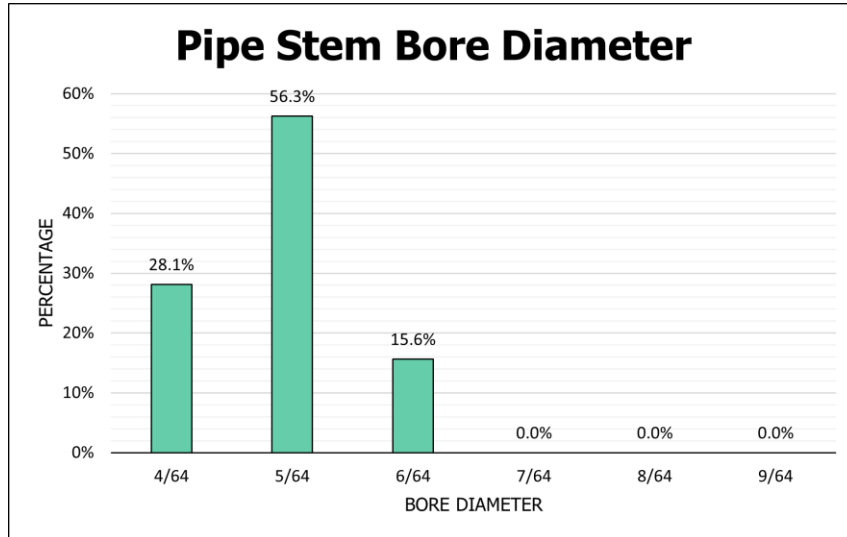


Figure 6.14: Histogram of Pipe Stem Bore Diameter

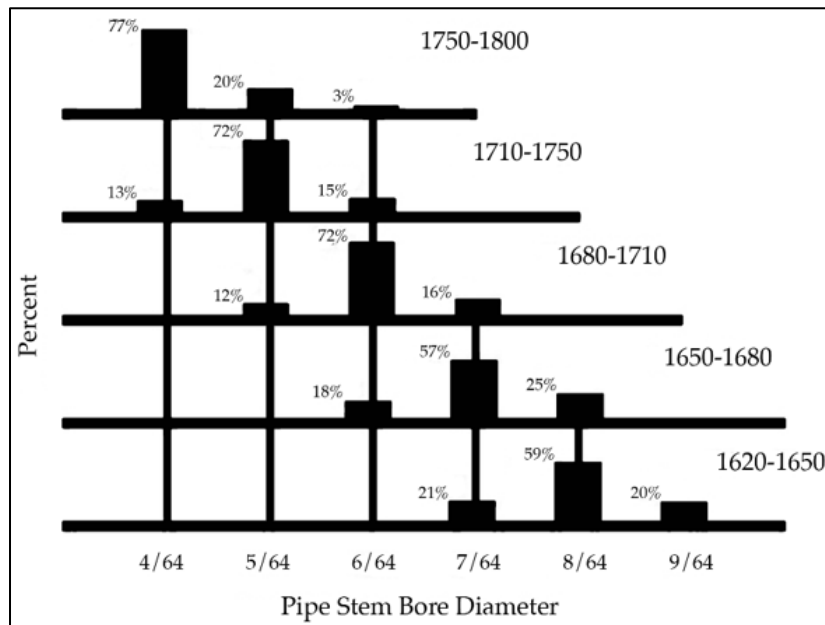


Figure 6.15: Harrington Histogram, provided by Lauren McMillan

Window Glass

The Oval Site had large distributions of other artifact types as well. The largest of this is flat aqua glass fragments (n= 6,627), which makes up 28.3% of the assemblage. These fragments have been tentatively identified as window glass. They are flat with a range of 0.9-2.8 mm in thickness with mean thickness of 1.5 mm (Figure 6.16 and Figure 6.17). About 6% of these pieces of window glass also have a bulged edge (n=382). While this collection of artifacts has the same aqua color, patination, and relative thickness of 18th century glass, the manufacturing technique is not consistent with 18th century windows.

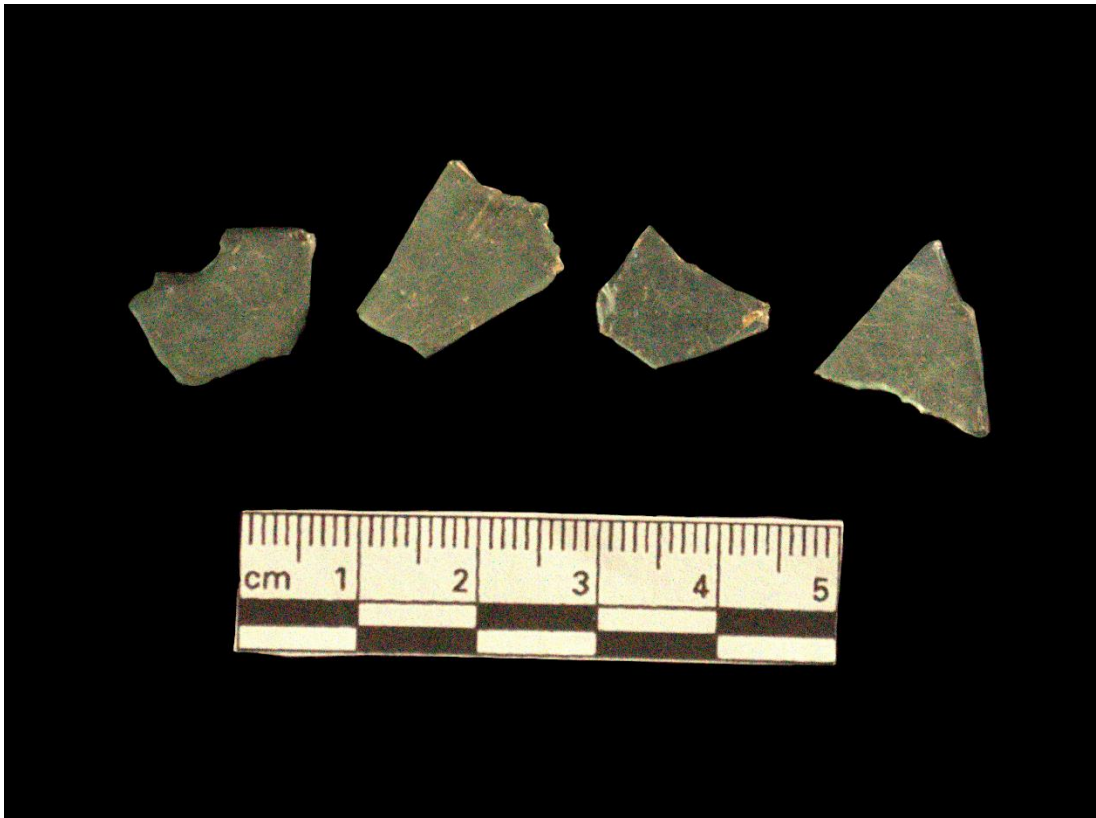


Figure 6.16: Flat Aqua Window Glass Fragments found at the Oval Site



Figure 6.17: Bulged Edge Glass Fragment found at the Oval Site

Traditional 18th century window production utilized either a cylinder glass or crown glass production method (Wilson 1976:150). In the cylinder glass production method, glass was blown into a cylindrical shape, then flattened in a flattening oven with a wooden block. In the 18th century, these pieces of glass were relatively small, about eight to ten inches in diameter by about 24 to 30 inches long (Wilson 1976:150). Often times these pieces of glass would have undulations and other imperfections; they were not perfectly flat (Wilson 1976:151).

The other production method, crown glass, was considered the better quality of the two. This method involved blowing a large bubble of glass and cracking it off the blowpipe. The crack would leave a hole which would then be enlarged with a paddle until a flat disc or “crown” was created. The area left where the blowpipe worked the glass was often called the “bullseye”

(Wilson 1976:151). No “bulleyes” were found at the Oval Site.

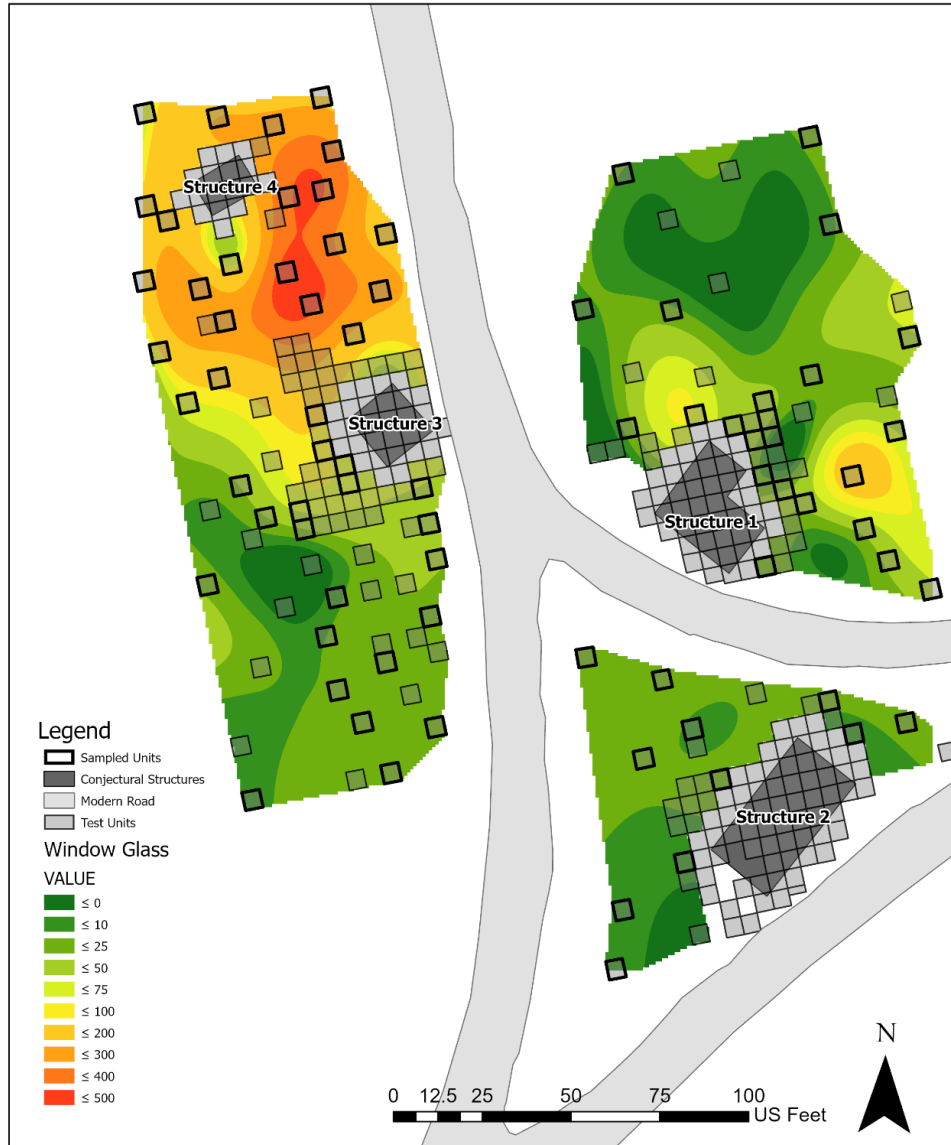


Figure 6.18: Distribution of window glass at the Oval Site, map created by the author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

The distribution of the window glass is concentrated in Section 2, the area between Structure 3 and Structure 4 (Figure 6.18). It is likely that the presence of these glass fragments is related to the activities occurring in and around Structure 4. To a lesser extent, window glass has also been found in Section 5, likely in association with the overseer’s house. The flat glass

fragments with bulged edges have a similar distribution to the flat window glass (Figure 6.19). The large quantity of glass at this site is unique, it is more glass than what is commonly expected from a building with glazed windows.



Figure 6.19: Distribution of Bulged Glass Pieces at the Oval Site, map created by the author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

Other Artifacts

Green Wine Bottle Glass was also found in abundance at this site (n=2,979). These bottles were thick, green, and globular in complete form (Noël Hume 1970:62). Despite the

name, green “wine” bottles did not store exclusively wine. They were used to ship, store, mature, and serve a variety of liquids, including other alcoholic beverages, vinegar, castor oil, and spa waters (Jones 1986:17). Unlike how many wine bottles are treated today, these bottles were not single use. Owners of a bottle could use them to receive refills, and it was not uncommon for bottles to be reused and repurposed.



Figure 6.20: Distribution of Green Wine Bottle Glass at the Oval Site, map created by the author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

The highest density of this artifact occurred just south of the kitchen in Section 3 (Figure 6.20). Other high densities of this artifact can also be found around the Overseer's house in Sections 5 and 6. Both of these buildings are domestic in nature and considering the use of wine bottles in food related activities, it makes sense that high distributions would be located in close proximity to the kitchen. It was also likely that the overseer used wine bottles to entertain guests.

Iron nails were also found at the Oval Site. While most of these nails (n=1,236) were not complete, manufacturing types were identified for 479 nails using standard typologies (n=479). This assemblage consisted of predominately hand wrought nails (n=464; Figure 6.21). Nails were a valuable commodity in colonial Virginia and, before the American Revolution, many colonists were reliant on nails imported from England (Nelson 1968:2). These nails were produced by placing the shaft of a nail on a heading tool, where it was then hit with a hammer to form the head of the nail. As this was done by hand, these nails were often irregular and imperfect in form, and look distinctly different from their machine made counterparts. Machine cut nails (Figure 6.22) only make up a small portion of the nails found at the Oval Site (n=12) and they were all found in Sections 5 and 6. Considering machine cut nails were not produced until the late 18th century into the early 19th century (Nelson 1968:8), it is possible that these nails were deposited after the site was abandoned.

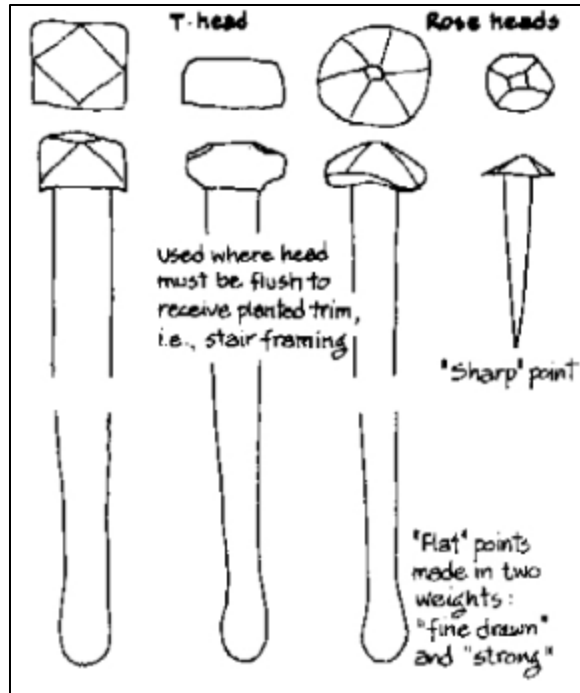


Figure 6.21: Typical Hand Wrought Nail Forms, illustration from NPS Leaflet 48 (Lee 1968)

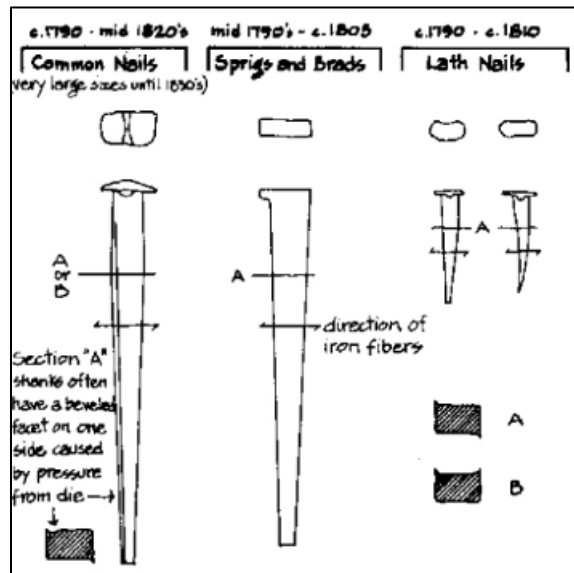


Figure 6.22: Early machine made nails had hand wrought heads, illustration from NPS Leaflet 48 (Lee 1968)



Figure 6.23: Distribution of nails at the Oval Site, map created by the author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

Nails were largely distributed in Section 3, Section 4, Section 5, and parts of Section 6 (Figure 6.23). These nails were likely involved in the construction of the kitchen, overseer's house, and tobacco barn.

About 2.11 pounds, or 957 grams, of oyster shell fragments (n=600) were found at the Oval Site. As it is located in the tidewater region with easy access to the Potomac River, finding oyster shell at the Oval Site is not unusual. At colonial sites, oyster shells were often used for consumption, mortar production, and gardening fertilizer. What is unusual about the oyster shell at the Oval Site, is it's distribution within the site. Barely any oyster shell consistency (shell or shells) was found near the kitchen, most of the oyster shell was found to the northeast of the overseer's house (Figure 6.24).

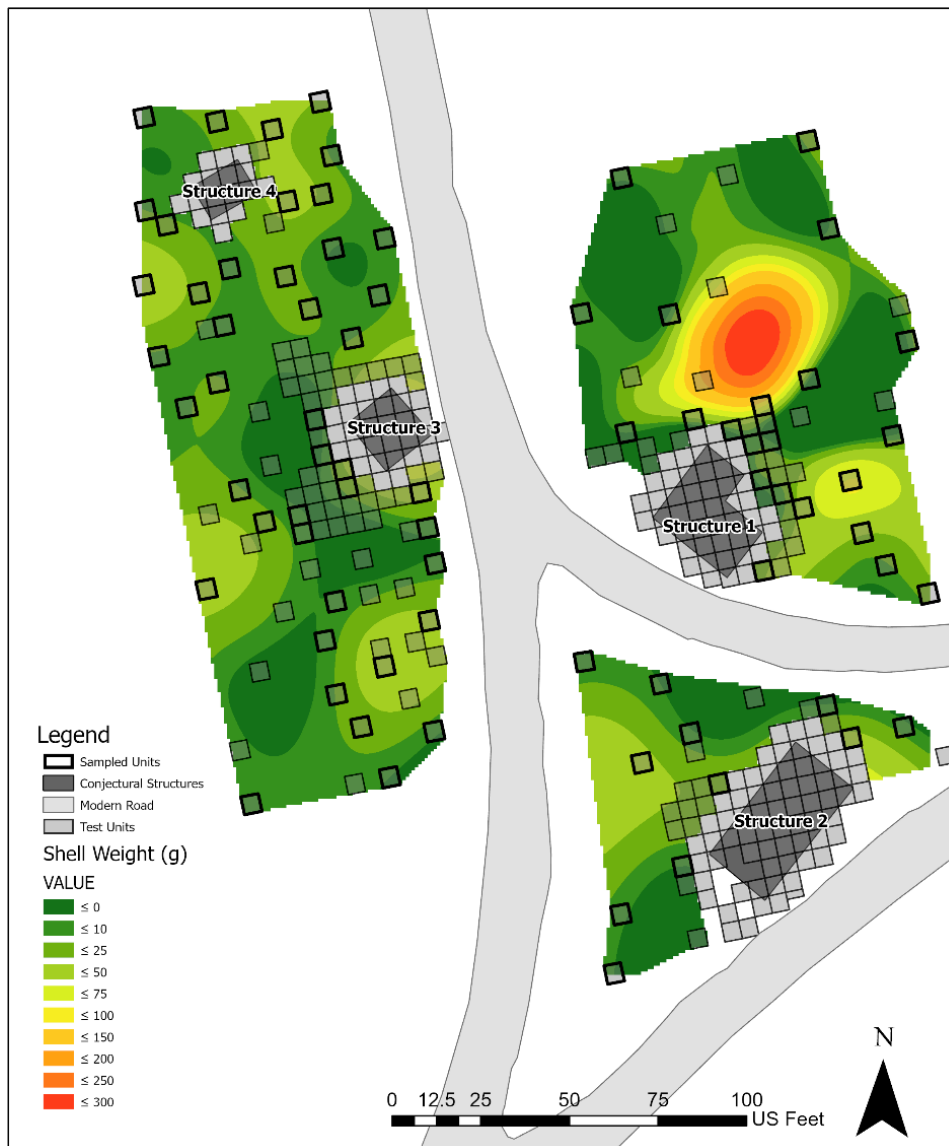


Figure 6.24: Distribution of Oyster Shell at the Oval Site, map created by the author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

Few bones (n=154) were found at the Oval Site. What was found predominately existed to the south of the kitchen, likely remnants from activities that occurred within the kitchen (Figure 6.25). Bone was often utilized as fertilizer for colonial gardens and is found where the suspected garden is located and where a general refuse midden is located.

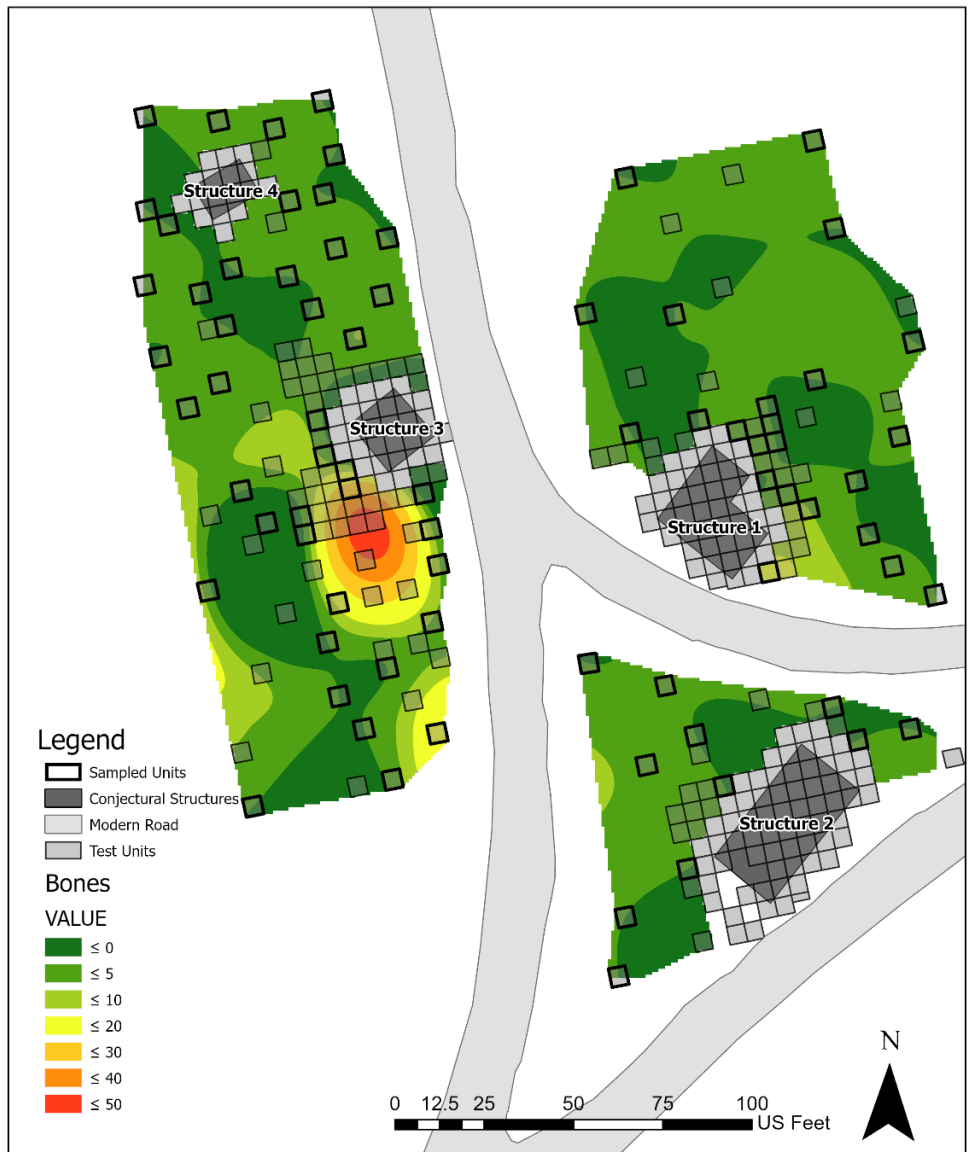


Figure 6.25: Distribution of bone at the Oval Site, map created by the author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

Finally, 124.8 pounds, or 56,608 grams, of brick were excavated at the Oval Site from the plowzone. Brick is usually made locally due to the easy availability of brick-making materials (McKee 1973:41) and there is evidence of local brick production at Stratford Hall. It is likely that the brick created at Stratford Hall were handmade through the use of brick molds (McKee 1973, University of Georgia 2014).



Figure 6.26: Distribution of brick at the Oval Site, map created by the author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

The distribution of brick at the Oval Site is largely concentrated around the kitchen and the overseer's house (Figure 6.26). This makes sense as the overseer's house had a brick basement and the kitchen had a possible brick hearth. One thing of note is that there does not appear to be any bricks found at Structure 4, because this structure was an earthfast building and did not use any bricks in its construction. While bricks were a fashionable material to build with, most homes of brick construction tended to be "finer" and most buildings in colonial America were of wood construction (McKee 1973).

Chapter 7: Interpretation

The goal of this thesis is to look at yard space usage at the Oval Site and how the inhabitants of the site interacted with each other and their landscape. Space usage can be represented through spatial distribution maps of artifact density. Areas with high artifact density were likely areas of intentional deposition and separation. While areas of low density were likely pathways or yards deliberately left clear of waste and artifacts. Utilizing these distribution maps,

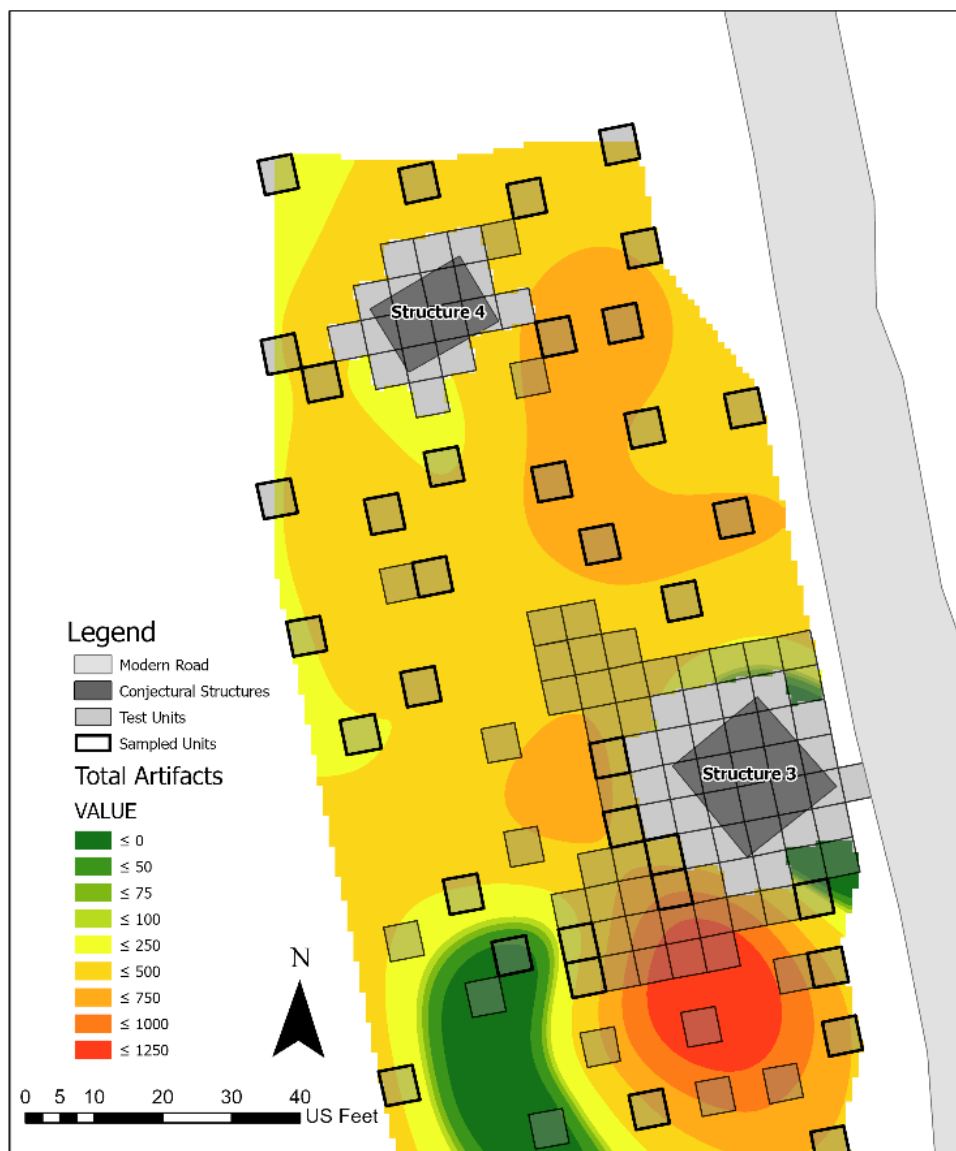


Figure 7.1: Total Artifact Distribution in Sections 1 and 2, revealing a lack of open space between Structures 3 and 4. Map created by the author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

a possible site of intentional separation was located between Structures 3 and 4 due to the high density of artifacts located here. While two possible pathways, one along the western edge of Section 1, and one connection Sections 3 and 4, as well as a possible swept yard to the west of

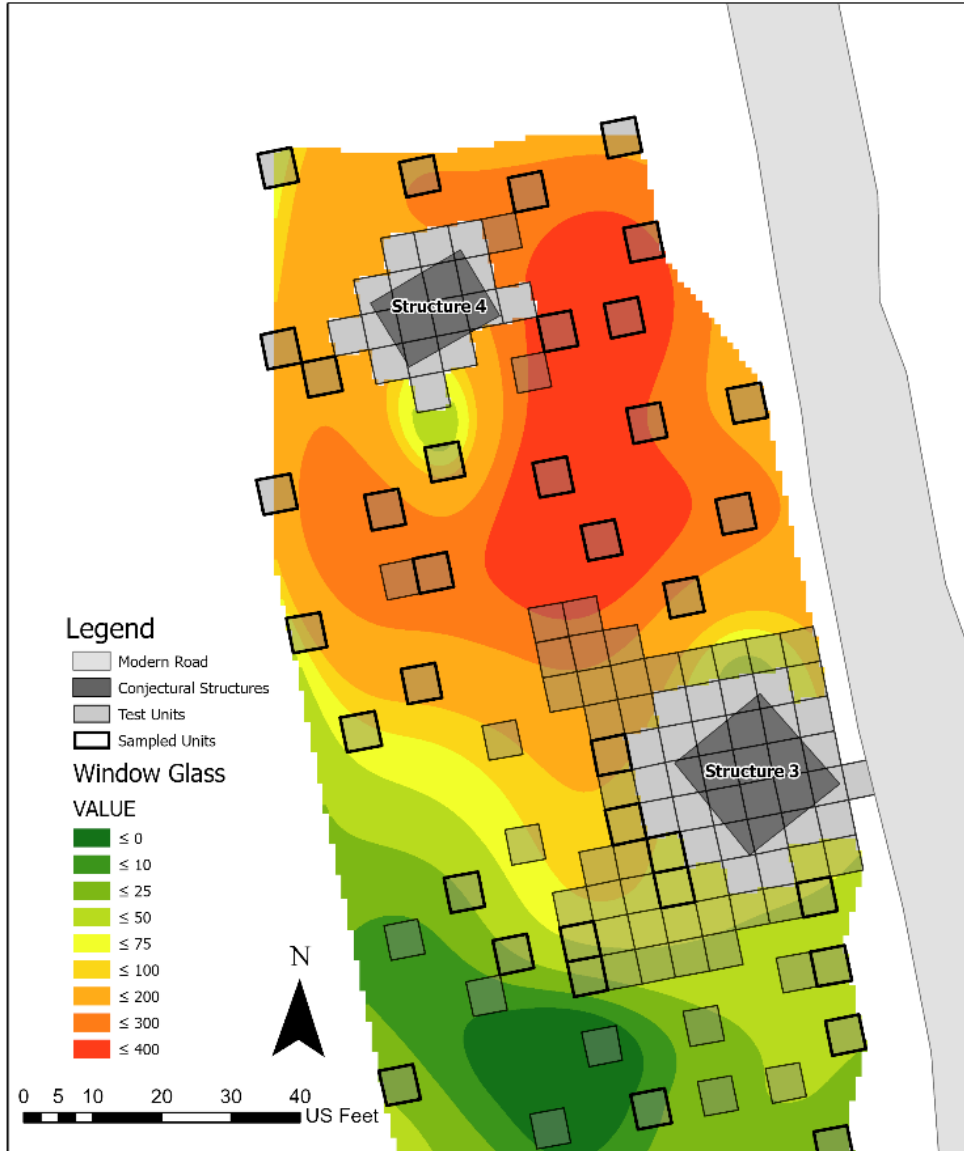


Figure 7.2: Window Glass Distribution in Sections 1 and 2, indicating a possible association with Structure 4. Map created by the author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

the Overseer’s house are revealed by a low density of artifacts. These artifact density distribution maps also support a hypothesis of a fifth structure between Structures 2 and 3 and a garden to the south of Structure 3.

Intentional Separation

At the Oval Site there appears to be at least one area of intentional separation between two structures (Figure 7.1 and Figure 7.2). Based off this evidence, it is likely that Structure 3 and Structure 4 did not share a communal space nor did they interact regularly to justify a clear path connecting the structures. It could also be possible that these buildings served different functions that would not justify a purposeful path being created. This area of high artifact density is largely derived from the presence of the aqua glass fragments (Figure 7.3).



Figure 7.33: Possible Window Glass Fragments found at the Oval Site, photo taken by the author

As expressed in the analysis chapter, the identification of these glass fragments is still being debated. A few interpretations have been made, including the earlier window glass theory and a bell jar theory proposed by Andrew Wilkins (2017). The glass fragments are consistent to the same aqua color, patination, and relative thickness of 18th century window glass; but, the glass fragments found at the Oval Site are not likely to be window glass as they resemble neither cylinder nor crown window glass production methods. In addition, Structure 4 is not a permanent domestic structure that may have had glass windows. In my 2019 undergraduate research project, I proposed that this structure could have served as temporary storage for the construction of the “Great House,” but, the distance from the mansion should be considered, 800 feet is a distance to



Figure 7.34: Print Displaying Garden Tools, the Bell Jar (no. 26) is displayed in the bottom left corner. From "Le Jardinier Fleuriste" by Le Sieur Liger d'Auxerre, printed in 1787 (Glass 2016)

carry architectural materials and if there was temporary storage it probably appeared closer to the construction site.

It is possible that these glass fragments are a form of bell jars or cloches (Figure 7.4). These jars are shaped like bells and functioned in a similar fashion to greenhouses by asserting climate control on the plants they covered (Glass 2016). Wilkins states that the glass fragments from the Oval Site could possibly resemble a particular bell jar form that are flat panes of glass fitted into metal casements (Wilkins 2017:252). However, if these panes of glass were fitted like a window into small casements, this still does not provide an explanation for the bulged edges.

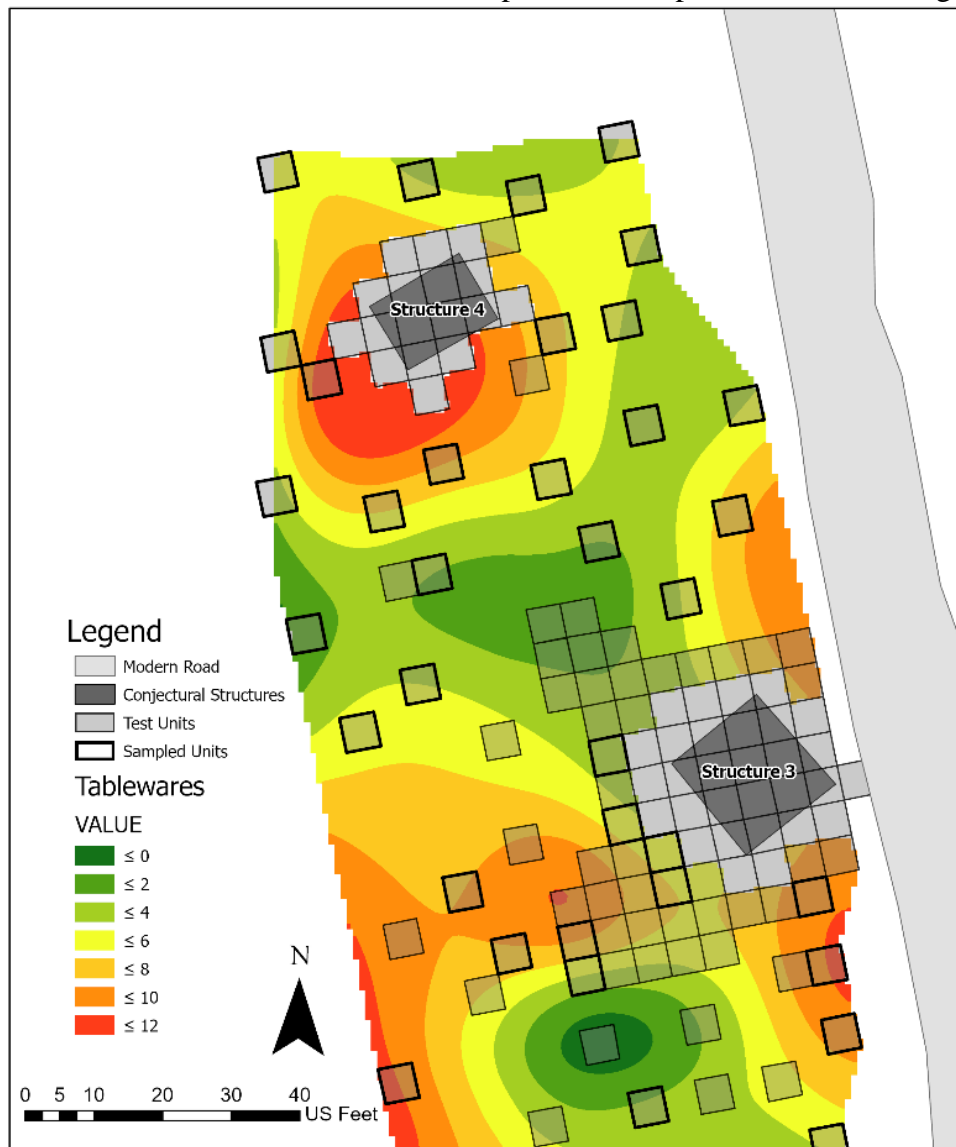


Figure 7.35: Tableware Ceramics Around Structure 4, map created by the author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

While the identity of these glass fragments remain a mystery, one thing is clear: they are related to activities that occurred in or around Structure 4. The distribution of these glass fragments are focused in Section 1 and Section 2. Structure 4 most likely served multiple distinct functions, including temporary housing and general storage. While there is no evidence of a heat source, tableware ceramics have been identified around Structure 4, indicating some residential use (Figure 7.5). It could be possible that this structure stored materials shipped to the northern

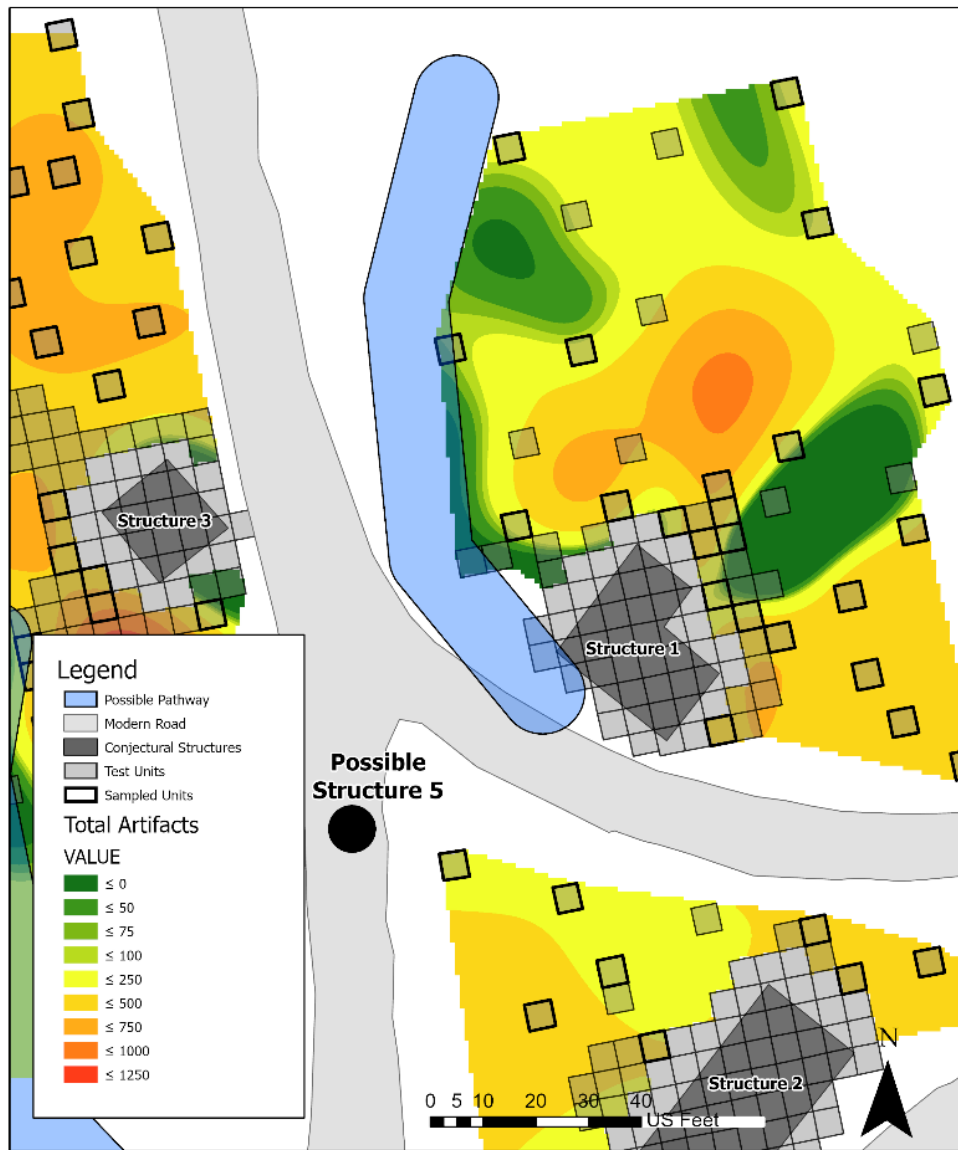


Figure 7.36: Total Artifact Distribution around Structure 1, showing the possible location of a pathway to the west. Map created by the author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

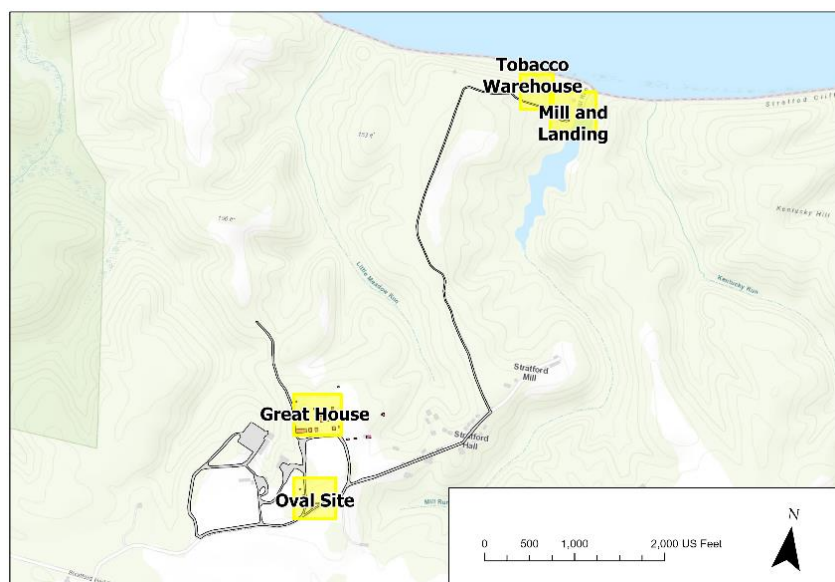


Figure 7.37: Layout of the Plantation during Philip Ludwell Lee's ownership of the Plantation (1750-1775), Map created by author

neck using the dock located on the premise of Stratford Hall Plantation; but, much like the quandary with Structure 4's proximity to the mansion, the dock is about a mile away from the Oval Site. It may not have been logical to bring transported goods that far from the docks, unless this was an intentional act in order for the overseer, and eventually, the Lee Family, to a greater ability to keep an eye on the goods and control who has access to those goods or the docks.

Possible Pathways

A possible pathway, following alongside the overseer's house to the west, reinforced the control the overseer exerted on the landscape and peoples of the Oval Site (Figure 7.6). To the north of this path would have been the mansion, and to the east, the dock (Figure 7.7). Whoever passed through the Oval Site would have used this path, and by extension, would have passed by the overseer's house. This allowed the overseer greater control over who had access to the different components of the plantation. Ensuring the area alongside this portion of the house was clear also allows the overseer to have a greater ability to monitor this space and the operations at the plantation. Due to the location of the modern road it is impossible to fully interpret the

relationship the overseer's house and the path alongside it, may have had with the other structures at the Oval Site.

A pathway located along the southwestern portion of the site connects the kitchen/enslaved housing to the tobacco house, and possibly a fifth structure (Figure 7.8; Figure 7.9; Figure 7.10; Figure 7.11). This pathway is represented on the distribution maps by an area of low artifact density that is elongated and flows southwardly towards the barn where it possibly

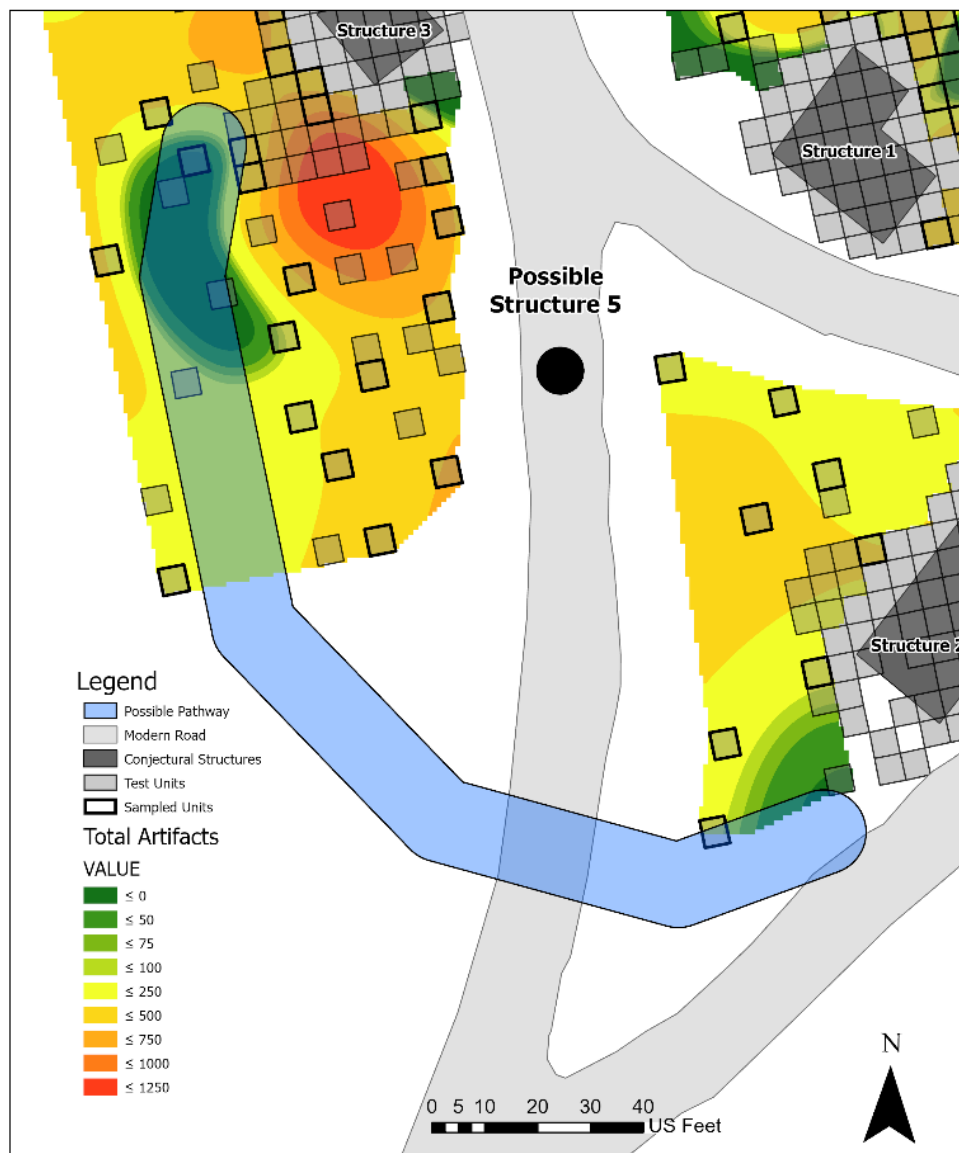


Figure 7.8: Total Artifact Distribution Revealing a Possible Pathway, map created by author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

connected to the historical “Great House Road”, that parallels alongside the site to the south. This was an 18th century road that ran to the mill and farm road to the “Great House” (Wilkins 2014). This pathway was interpreted as curved due to the location of the garden and the refuse midden to the south of the kitchen.

Fifth Structure

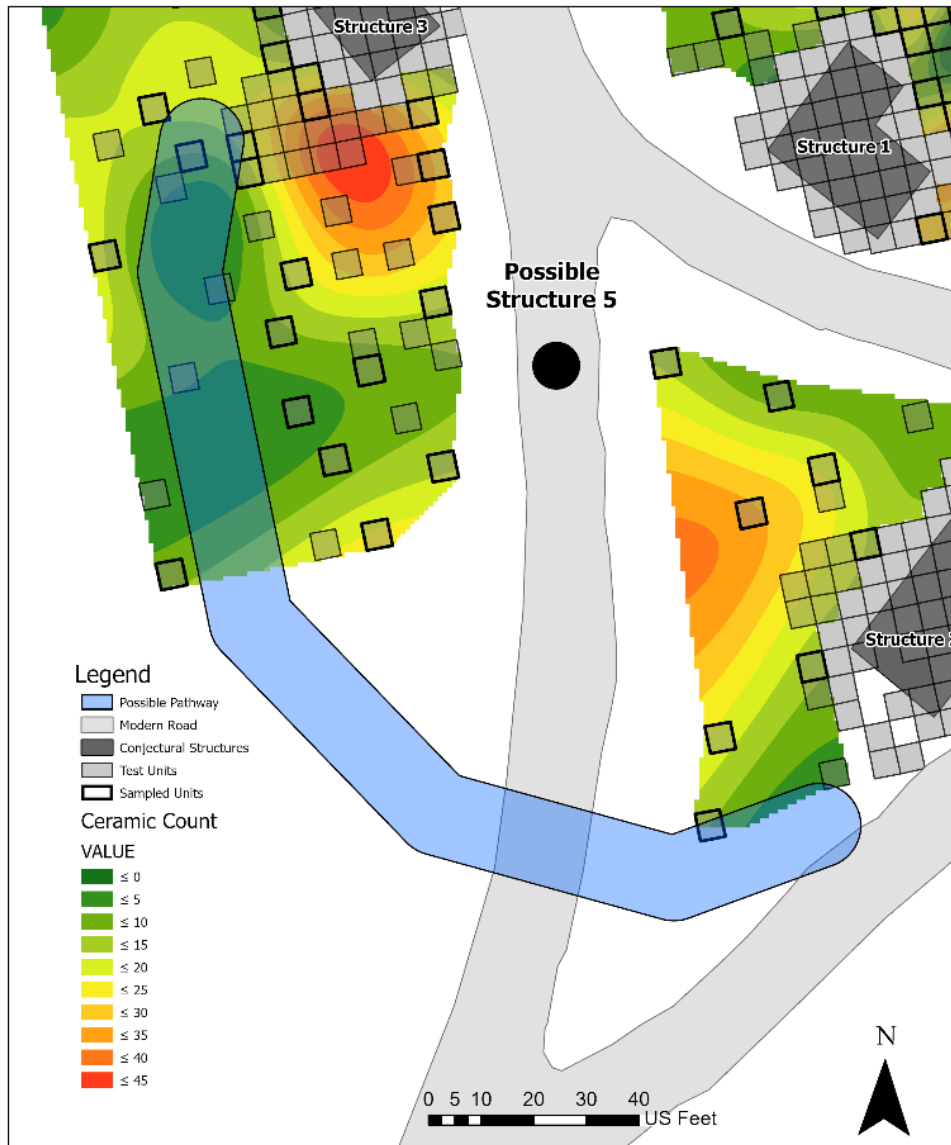


Figure 7.9: Ceramic Distribution Revealing a Possible Pathway, map created by author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

The hypothesis of a possible fifth structure at the Oval Site is not a new one. In the 2014 Stratford Hall Plantation excavation summary, Wilkins mentions the possibility a structure to the

south of site and some shovel test pits were conducted in an effort to discover this structure that same summer (Wilkins 2014:13). While a fifth structure was not uncovered in the field, the artifact distribution maps from this study as well as the STP distribution maps from my 2018 study strengthens this hypothesis (Figure 7.12).

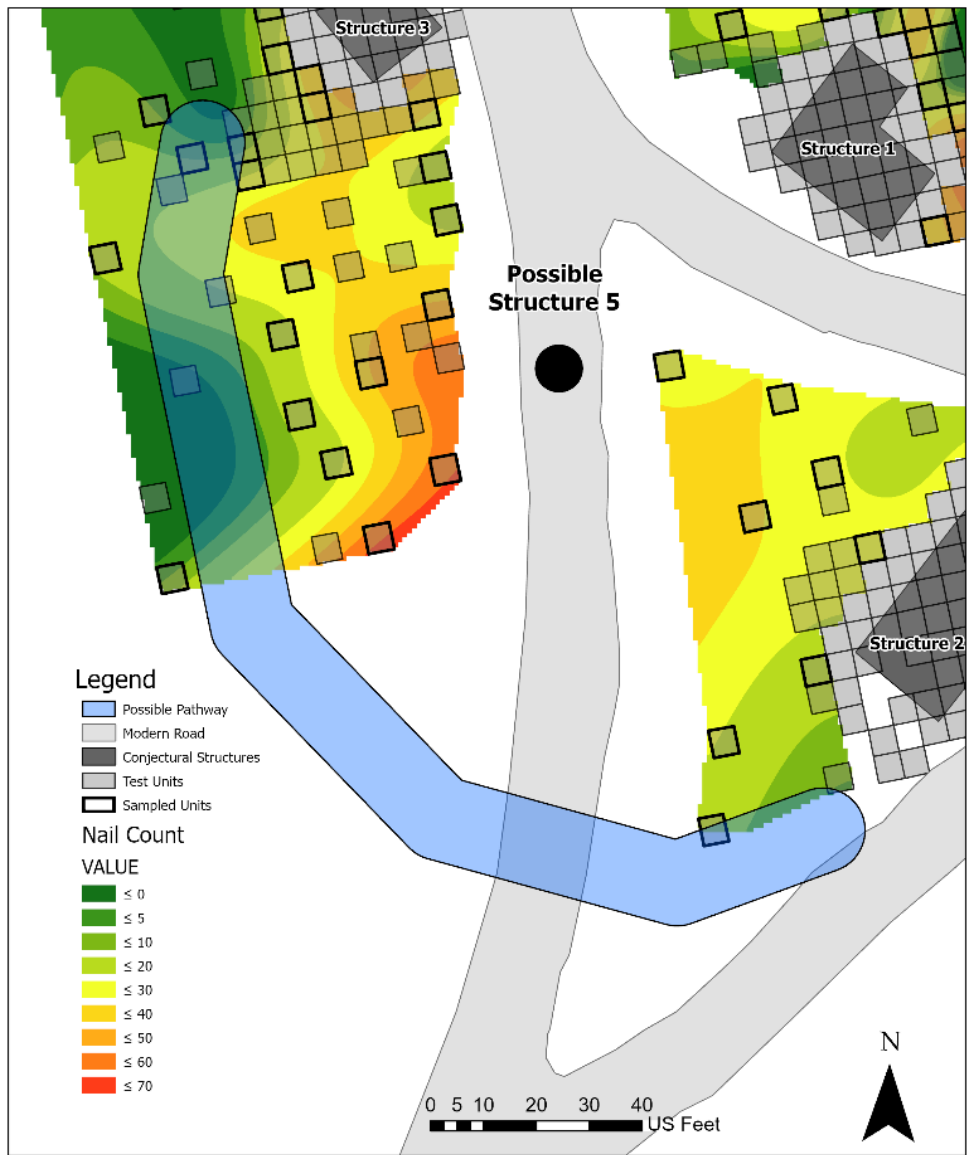


Figure 7.10: Nail Artifact Distribution Revealing a Possible Pathway, map created by author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

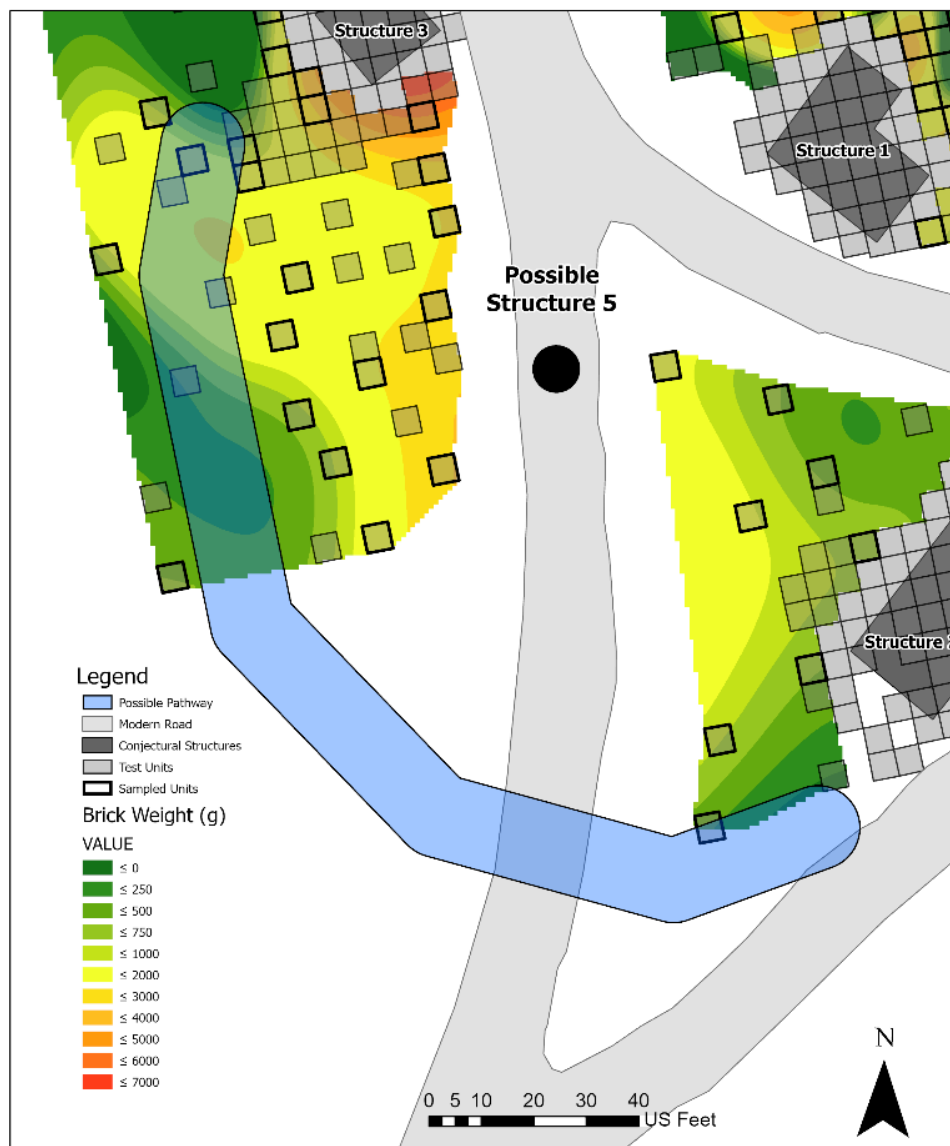


Figure 7.11: Brick Weight Distribution Revealing a Possible Pathway, map created by author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

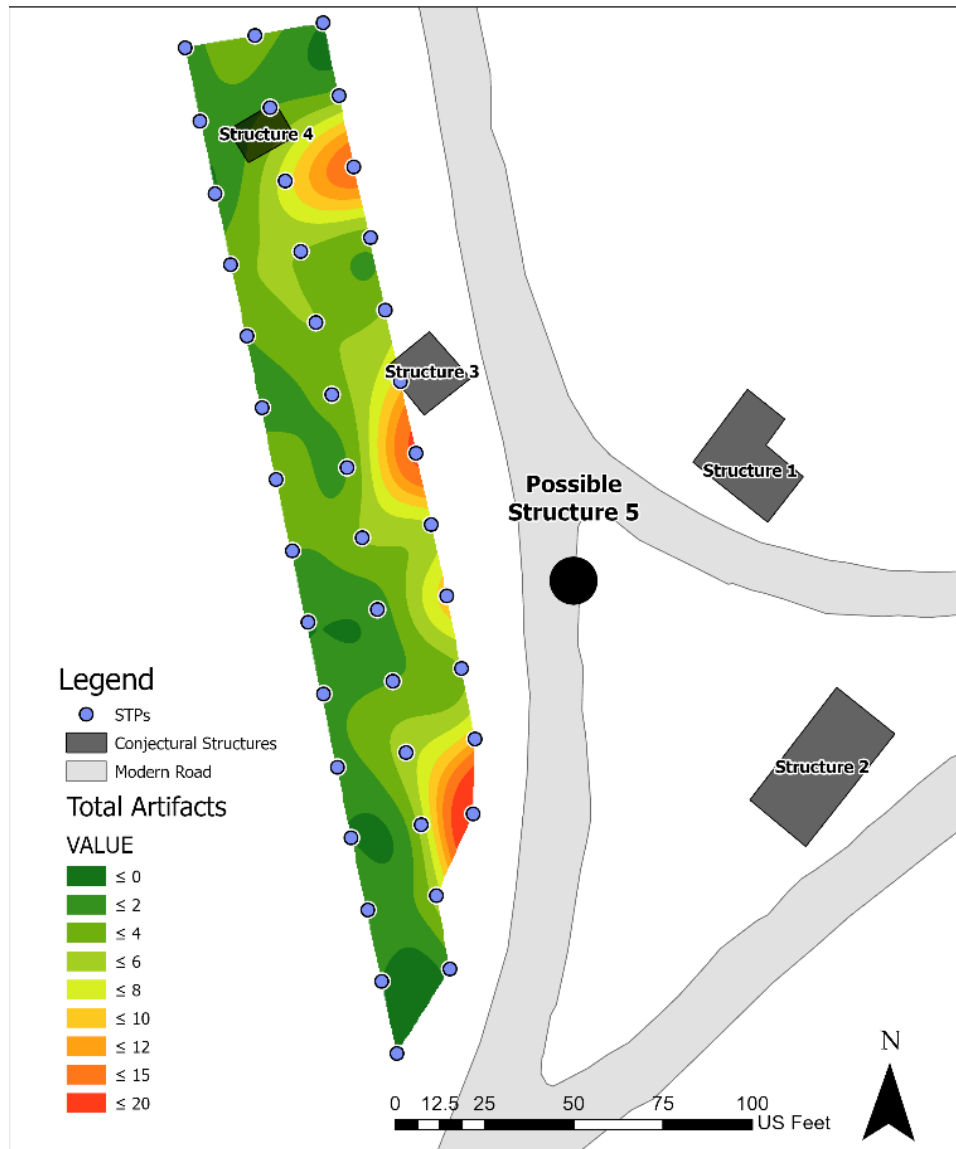


Figure 7.12: Total Artifact STP Distribution, map created by author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

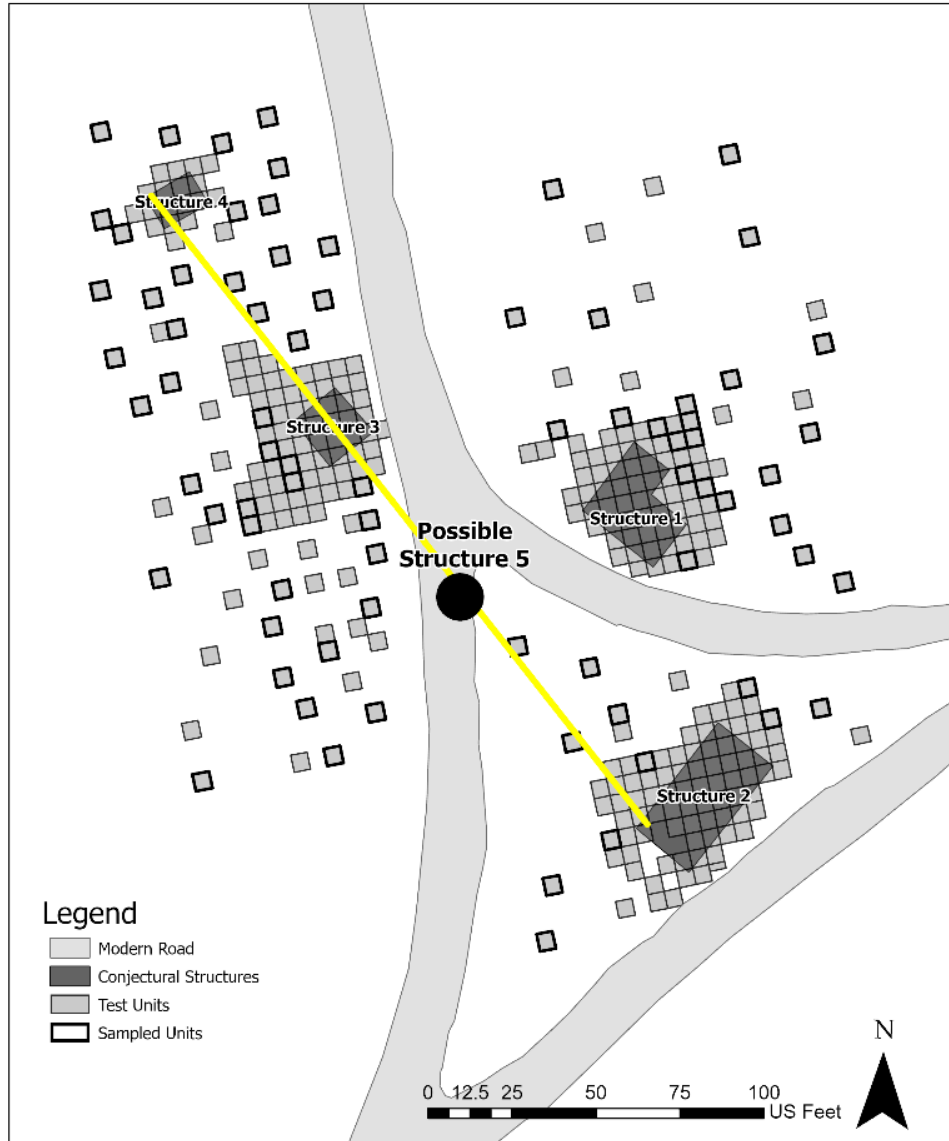


Figure 7.13: Possible Location of Fifth Structure and Linear Layout of the Oval Site

The artifact distributions for the south of Section 3 and the north of Section 4 is pulled towards each other in an almost circular fashion. The distribution of total artifacts from the shovel test pits catalogued in my 2018 study extends further south than the test units and supports this argument (Figure 7.13). What this possible fifth structure was utilized as is

unknown, the presence of nails and brick indicate that if this structure did exist it was not earthfast, or if it was, it has some masonry components.

The layout of the Oval Site strengthens the argument of the placement of this possible fifth structure. This structure would have been located between the kitchen and tobacco house, placing all the structures in a linear fashion which allows the overseer's house to have a full view of the site. With Structure 1 being offset of this line of buildings by approximately 30 feet, a central clearing is created with Structures 2, 3, and 4 all facing this space (Wilkins 2017:249). This layout allowed the overseer greater surveillance and ability to exert his power over the inhabitants of the site as well as greater control over who can access the different components of the plantation (Figure 7.13; Upton 1990; Wilkins 2017:249).

Garden

North of this hypothetical fifth structure and directly south of the kitchen is a garden (Figure 7.14). Many scholars believe that the garden serves both a utilitarian function of subsistence farming, economic production, and health benefits and a social function, as an expression of identity and resistance (Wilkins 2017:419). Initially identified as a potential garden area due to the presence of planting hole features, the chemical analysis and macrobotanical analysis of the site by both Wilkins and Crowder support this interpretation. This garden area had significant levels of phosphorous (P), a chemical usually associated with organic materials, potassium (K), a chemical usually associated with plant matter or ash, and calcium (Ca), a chemical associated with domestic refuse, usually from bone or oyster shell (Figure 7.14; Figure 7.15; Figure 7.16; Wilkins 2017:269-272). The distribution of bone from my study correlates with the distribution of calcium from Wilkins' study (Figure 7.17). The use of bone and other organic refuse in gardens as fertilizer was a common occurrence in the 18th century.

The study of macrobotanical remains at archaeology sites reveal foodways of the occupants of a site. Gardening can also reflect and illuminate the complex relationships of enslaved people with other members of the plantation and the environment. Wilkins explains that the garden space could be appropriated by enslaved people (Wilkins 2017:420). Here, enslaved people could grow food for consumption or sale. This exertion of control of this space granted these enslaved people some autonomy.

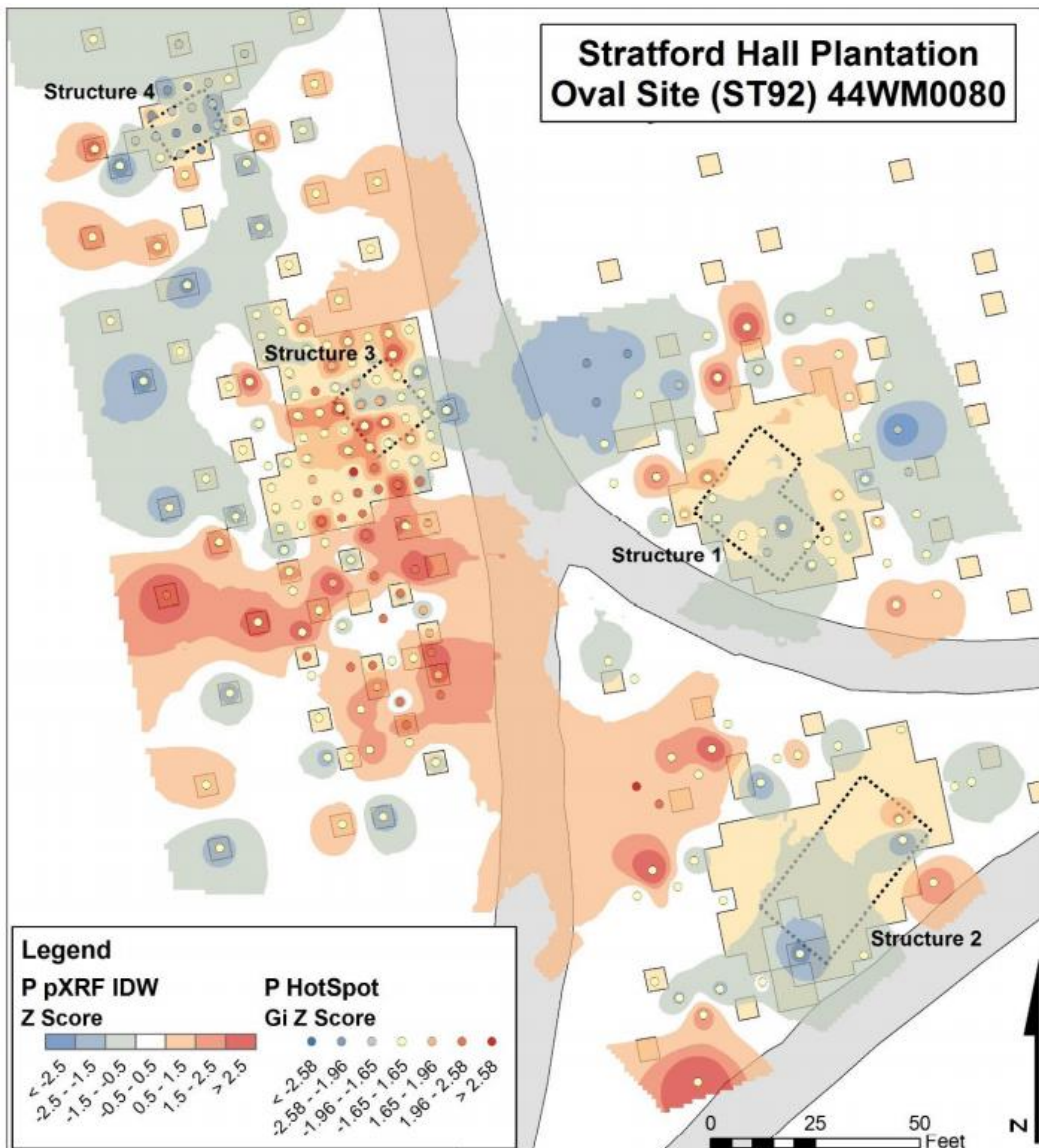


Figure 7.14: Distribution of Phosphorous (P) at the Oval Site, map created by Andrew Wilkins (Wilkins 2017:270)

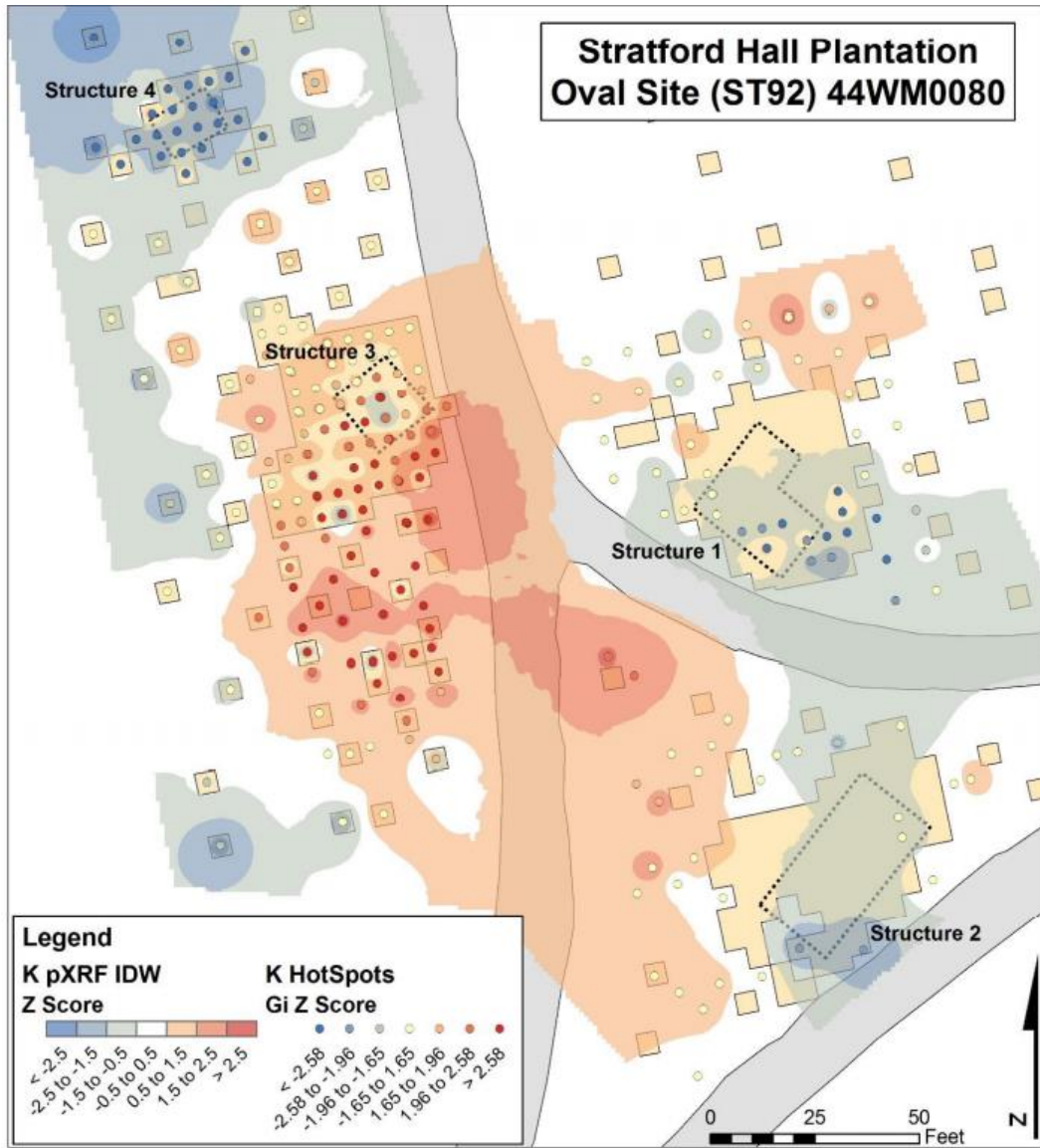


Figure 7.15: Distribution of Potassium (K) at the Oval Site, map created by Andrew Wilkins (Wilkins 2017:271)

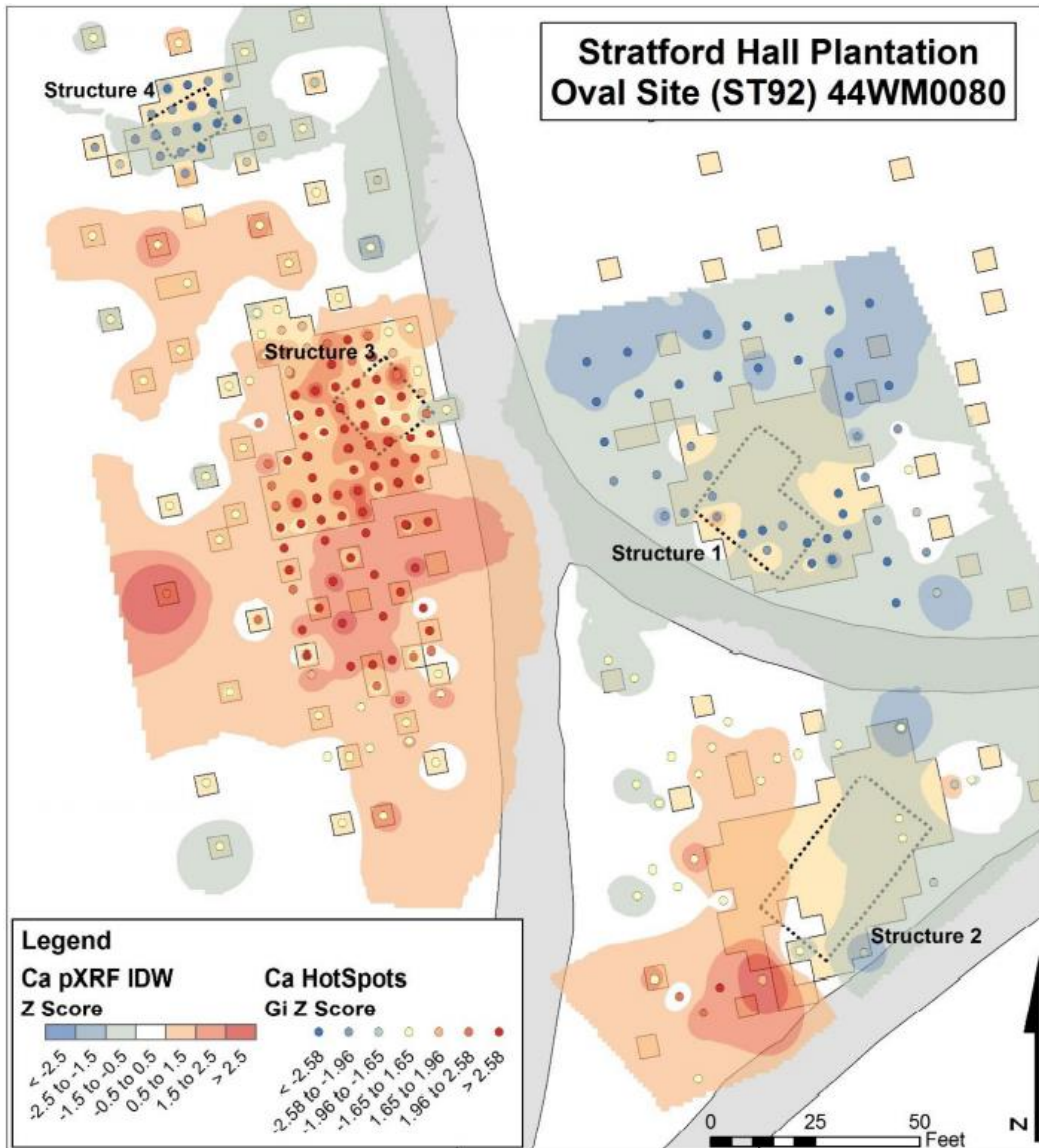


Figure 7.16: Distribution of Calcium (Ca) at the Oval Site, map created by Andrew Wilkins (Wilkins 2017:273)

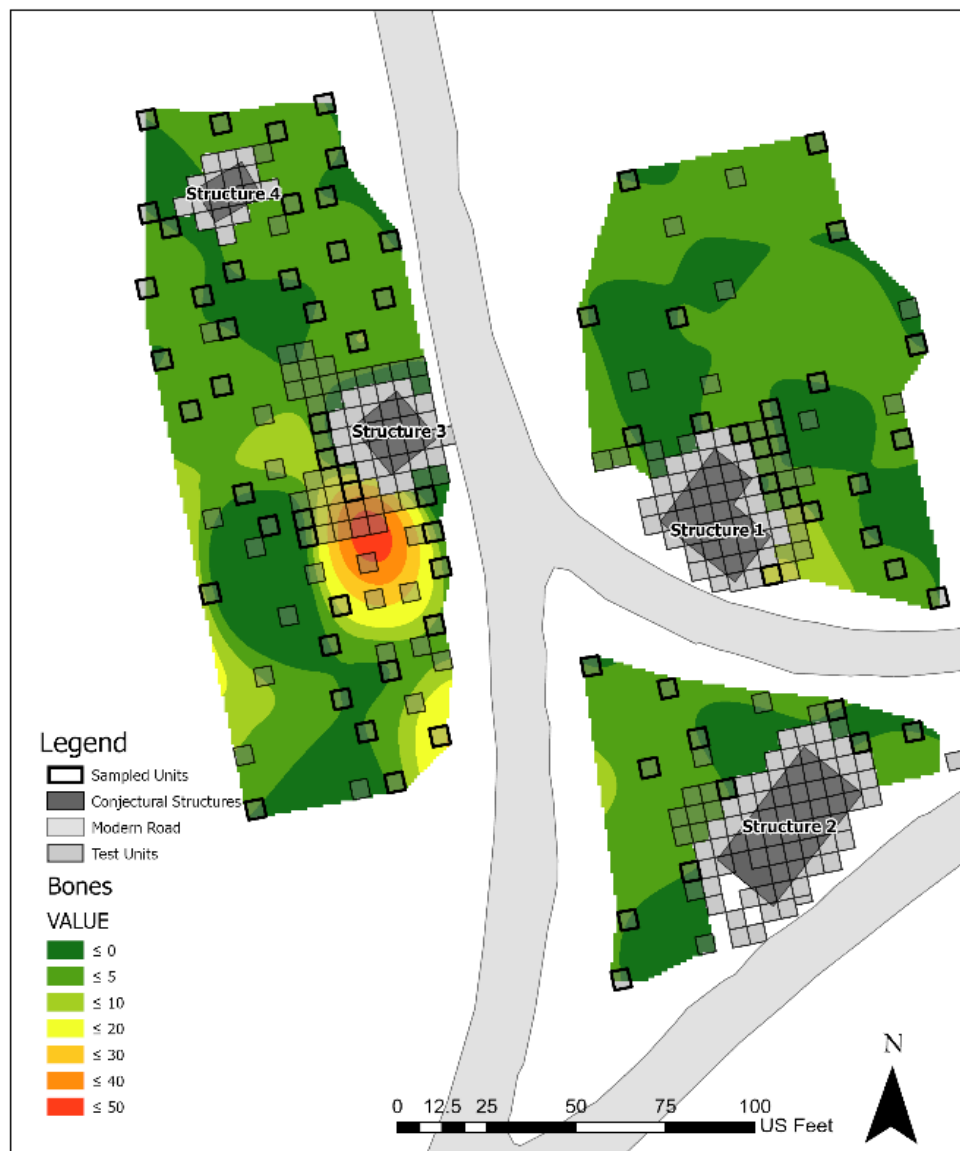


Figure 7.17: Distribution of Bone at the Oval Site, map created by the author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

Crowder's research on the macrobotanical remains at the Oval Site reveals a continuation of African foodways as well as the creolization of these foodways. Black eyed peas, other cowpeas, and black beans, are botanicals from West Africa. They were found at the Oval Site, in both the garden and near the overseer's house. The presence of these botanicals around the kitchen, that also served as enslaved housing, indicates a continuation or adaptation of traditional West African foodways and the development of a creole African American culture. The presence of these botanicals near the overseer's house reveals that the overseer and his family did not exclusively eat food reflective of their European origins. This is likely because food produced in the kitchen was also fed to the overseer, and the enslaved cook prepared a meal utilizing African native plants; but this also reveals resistance and identity expression. The enslaved cook could control what meals they prepared and fed to the populace of the Oval Site (Crowder 2018; Crowder 2021).

In addition to botanical remains of West African origin, botanical remains of native Virginian origin were also found. The enslaved people of the Oval Site were likely unfamiliar with the cultivation and food preparation of native Virginian plants. Their presence indicates a creolization of Native Virginian and African food practices. The enslaved people at the Oval Site had to learn how to prepare these plants from Native Virginians. Whether this be from the local native population, enslaved Native Virginians, or from enslaved people who have lived in the region prior to arriving at Stratford Hall and learned these foodways previously through cultural dissemination (Crowder 2018; Crowder 2021).

Wilkins' analysis of the Oval Site also reveals the location of potential ash tipping and middens (Figure 7.18). He describes the central space between the Overseer's house and the

kitchen as an “inner yard”, where refuse disposal and daily activities occur. The further away from this central space is an “active outer yard”, where the garden space is located. Finally, the barn and Structure 4 make up the peripheral space where specialized activities and isolated work areas occurred (Wilkins 2017:408).

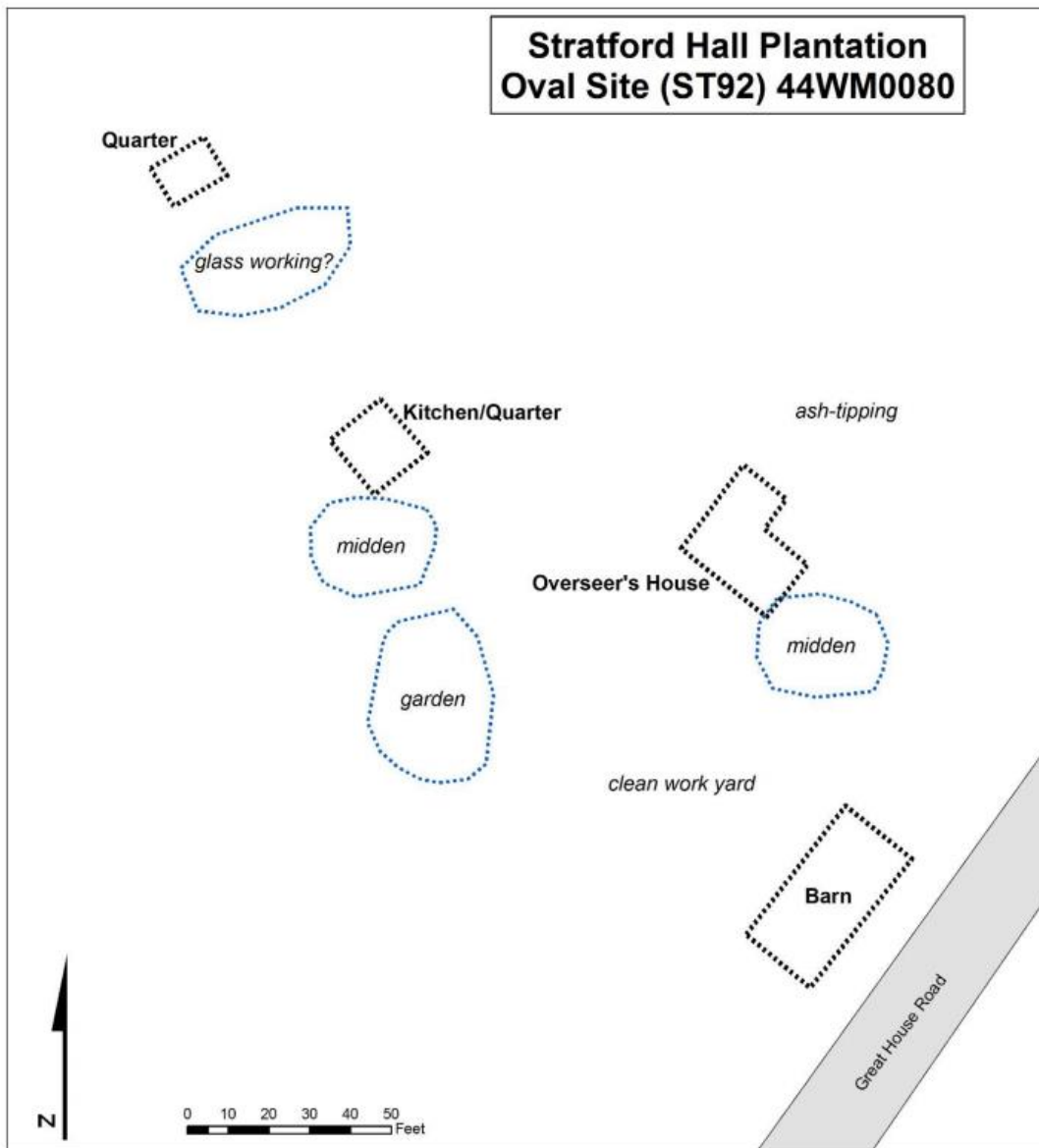


Figure 7.18: Wilkins Interpretation of Yard Space Usage at the Oval Site, map created by Andrew Wilkins (Wilkins 2017:407)

Swept Yards

I initially hypothesized that a swept yard would be present to the south and southwest of Structure 3. This is due to the likely presence of enslaved Africans and African Americans in this structure that functioned as a kitchen. This initial hypothesis was not supported with the distribution of artifacts at the Oval Site. Swept yards are found archaeologically due to the repeated sweeping of the yard creating crescent-shaped artifact distribution on the very edges of the yard. Neither the areas to the south and southwest of Structure 3 nor any other location at this site has evidence for a swept yard.

The lack of evidence of swept yards at this site, and the possible identification of a swept yard near the overseer's house brings into question whether or not to emphasize the presence of artifacts or features typically deemed to be "Africanisms" at archaeological sites of enslaved Africans and African Americans. Amongst African Diaspora archaeologists, there has been some debate over ascribing ethnic associations to artifacts (Agbes-Davies 2017; Heath and Breen 2009; Wilkins 2017). Applying a pragmatic approach to swept yards, it could be possible that this feature is a response to the physical and social landscape.

Perhaps the reason why we see swept yards at sites associated with enslaved Africans and African Americans is not because it is derived from a desire to continue traditional African yard practices, but out of a need to have additional space outside the home to conduct household activities. Enslaved housing had limited space for performing household activities and socialization. The exterior yard around the dwelling allowed for additional space to perform these activities. It is only logical that the inhabitants would use that space as well. This decision to use this space could be derived from a socioeconomic circumstance rather than through ethnic association.

This is further supported by poor whites also using the practice of swept yards. While no explicit documentative mention of these features being associated with poor whites in the 18th century has been discovered, contemporary whites in the rural south engage in this activity (Fesler 2010:33). The lack of overall explicit reference to these swept yard phenomena in the 18th century could be proof that it was performed by whites as well. Conceivably the reason why swept yards are hardly mentioned is because it was not a unique activity only performed by enslaved Africans and African Americans. Applying logic, it would make sense for poor whites, who lived similar material lives to enslaved people, to use their yard as an extension of their home. It could also be possible that creolization had a role in whites using yard space in similar manners of enslaved Africans and African Americans.

Regional and temporal differences should also be accounted for when discussing the frequency of particular features or artifacts at archaeology sites. Studies have already displayed that some features vary in frequency by region and could be more popularly associated with particular periods of time such as Heath and Bennett's research on subfloor pits in Virginia (2009). It could be possible that swept yards were more popular in certain regions or time periods. The reason for this variation could be related to different rates of cultural dispersion, demographics of a particular region or period, and the differing circumstances of a developing social landscape. If swept yards are largely derived from ethnic association, it could be possible that swept yards more commonly occurred with people associated with the Bight of Biafra, who mostly resided in the lower Chesapeake region of Virginia, where Fesler's study on swept yards occurred (Fesler 2010 and Walsh 2001). Traditionally, many archaeologists believed that the ethnic heritage of enslaved populations in Virginia were largely mixed, and that there were no regions highly concentrated with individuals from a particular region. Through the use of

historical records, Walsh has found evidence that Virginia plantations were not as diverse and mixed as originally thought. Where enslaved Africans forcibly migrated from Africa came from was dependent on a region's market availability. Wealthier regions in Virginia, like those around the James River, largely came from the Bight of Biafra. In comparison, many planters in the northern neck of Virginia purchased slaves from ports in Maryland and the enslaved people from Virginia ports came from the Upper Guinea region (Walsh 2001). Given the difference in regions, it could be possible that this is an expression of ethnic identity of people from the Bight of Biafra and not enslaved Africans in general.

Another interpretation for the lack of swept yards at the Oval Site could be due to the proximity of the "Great House" and the overseer's house to enslaved housing. As stated earlier, the Oval Site is approximately 800 feet southwest of the "Great House". This close proximity could have been perceived and experienced by the enslaved Africans working at the Oval Site as a force restrictive to what they were allowed to do with their space. Historical evidence indicates that swept yards were not well received by many enslavers and it could be possible that the Lee family did not want to see the swept yards in close proximity to their mansion (Fesler 2010). The "Great House" at Stratford Hall is a Georgian style mansion that follows the rules of uniformity and symmetry, commonly applied to this architectural style (McAllister 1984). The other site associated with enslaved people at Stratford Hall is located to the northeast of the Oval Site, has no known swept yards (DAACS). In order to maintain aesthetic appearances, these swept yards may not have been allowed to exist so close to the mansion, in clear violation of Georgian principles. The Lee family were amongst the Virginia elite, and the presence of a tobacco inspection station and dock made visitors a common aspect on the plantation. How could the planter express his prowess and elite status if his plantation did not look orderly and up to date

on the latest trends from England? Thus it could be a possibility that the inhabitants of the Oval Site were prevented from sweeping their yards because of this.

Potential Interpretations

Based off of the artifact distribution maps at the Oval Site, the identification of the three possible pathways has the most support. The lack of artifacts creates a clear linear space following the overseer's house to the west, another possible linear path extending from the southeastern side of the overseer's house, and a clear curved path connecting the tobacco house and the kitchen. These pathways reveal how the inhabitants of the Oval Site interacted with their landscape. With a pathway following the western side of Structure 1, the overseer could exert better control and surveillance over who had access to the plantation and the inhabitants of the Oval Site. In addition, the pathway extending from the building at the southeast allows the overseer's house to be a node to different parts of the plantation. The possible path connecting the tobacco house and kitchen could also extend to the 18th century road just south of the Oval Site, allowing for easy mobility and access between the three locales. This path is likely curved, due to the presence of the garden and refuse midden to the south of the kitchen. Notably, a lack of a path between Structures 3 and 4 gives additional insight on the relationship that building had with the rest of the site. Could this separation have been intentional, or was it a product of the lack of regular activity occurring there? It could be possible that this building served multiple functions such as temporary housing and storage. The relationship this building had with the overseer's house is unknown, due to the proximity of the modern road.

The artifact distribution between the kitchen and the tobacco house supports the hypothesis of a fifth structure. It appears that there is a high density of artifacts in that area between the two structures, where the modern road exists today. This hypothesis is also

supported by the placement of the buildings. The presence of this building follows the linear formation the other buildings at the site take, facing the overseer's house.

Chapter 8: Conclusions and Further Direction

Conclusions

The fields of landscape archaeology and African Diaspora archaeology are continually developing as new research methods and theoretical concepts are explored. This study's interpretation of the Oval Site expands and supports previous research on yard usage completed at the site by Douglas Sanford, Andrew Wilkins, Robin Ramey, and Alexandra Crowder.

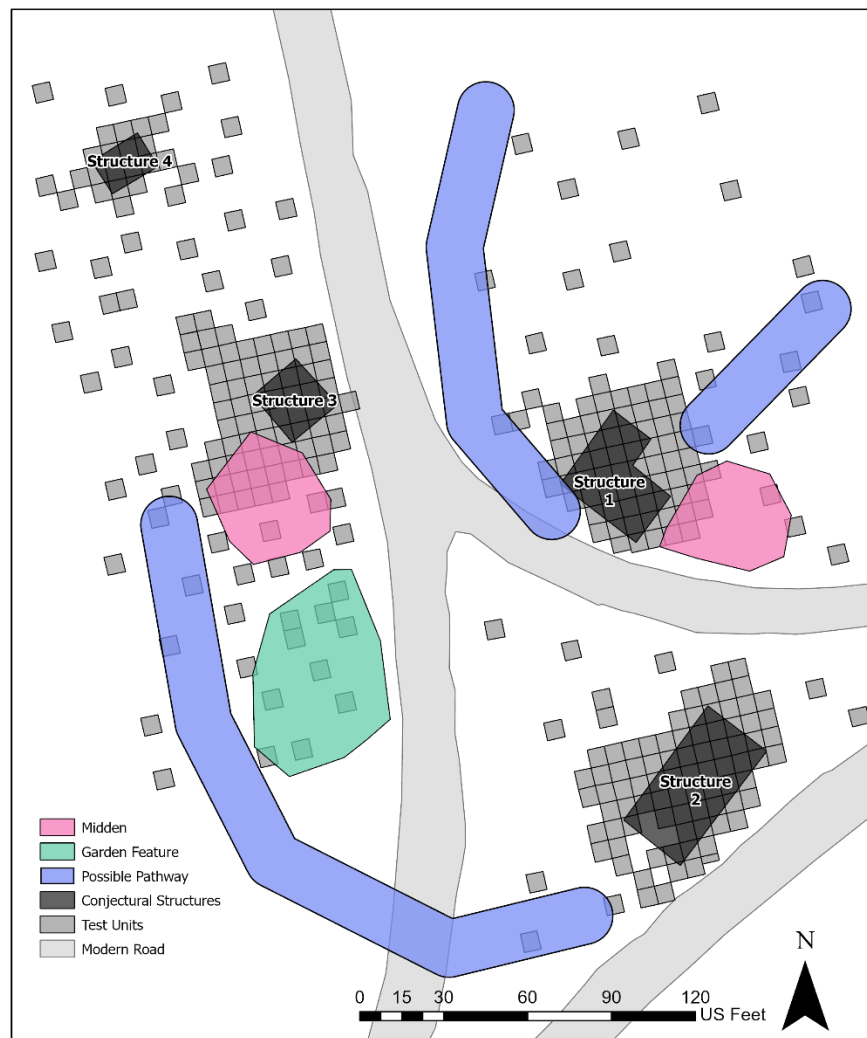


Figure 8.38: Possible Yard Space Interpretations at the Oval Site, map created by the author using shapefiles created by Andrew Wilkins

This study has helped support and expand upon conclusions regarding yard use that was developed in previous studies at the Oval Site. Possible intentional separation in the space between the unidentified outbuilding and the kitchen as well as possibly between those structures and the Overseer's house may be present at the site. There is also a possible pathway located west of the Overseer's house and another pathway to the south of the kitchen (Figure 8.1).

While there is no strong evidence of swept yards identified at this site, a potential swept yard to the west of the overseer's house encourages debate on whether artifacts or features typically associated with Africanisms may not be present as a byproduct of tradition but as a response to the environment and class status. This space would have been a white space and the presence of a swept yard may not have been an expression of ethnic and cultural identity, but a desire to have more functional space outside the home. While interpretation at the Oval Site is still being developed, particularly for the functionality of Structure 4, this study has provided some insight to the relationship the inhabitants of the Oval Site may have had with one another and their landscape.

The information this thesis provides is also helpful to preservation in general. Expanding our understanding of yard space usage and the cultural landscape can aid in better interpretations of places that may no longer exist or have morphed vastly over the centuries. This is particularly crucial to spaces occupied by marginalized groups or lower class people as their spaces are the least likely to be preserved. As we begin to reinterpret our landscapes to be more inclusive of all the communities of the past, attention to how individuals utilized their spaces can deepen our understanding of the people of the past.

Furthermore, an understanding of the cultural landscape can help with defining site size and analyzing both archaeological and above ground sites and writing mitigation documents and

conducting surveys both Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and Section 4f of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 processes. This can allow for a better stewardship of our historic resources to the public.

Future Directions

The topic of “Africanisms” and swept yards can continued to be deeply explored. Recent studies are beginning to question whether or not these features are markers of ethnic identity, socioeconomic identity, environmental responses, or a combination of the three. It is likely that none of those factors are the absolute answer. Human nature is complex and the landscape is an ever evolving and highly contested space. Reasons to modify land into a swept yard could vary across regions. Some individuals may have chosen to extend their house with yard simply due to a desire to have more space. While other individuals utilize it as a way to express and continue traditional practices. For the occupants of a site with a swept yard, there are a multitude of benefits that were likely considered when engaging in this activity. These questions encourage further investigations on the complexities of cultural formation, site development, and identity expression.

Further research utilizing a comparative analysis of various sites, including that of rural enslaved contexts, poor white contexts, and free black contexts should be considered. The presence of these features on sites associated with other identities could be indicative of other motivations to engage in this activity. In addition, it could be representative of creolization and development of cultural identity that is influenced by several different factors. This potential research questions if there is any correlation of the frequency of swept yards with race or with class? Will sites inhabited by enslaved Africans be more likely to have swept yards than that of free blacks? What about sites with poor whites? This research could be difficult to collect and

interpret. In comparison to studied 18th century sites of African enslavement, there is little research discussing 18th century sites of free blacks and poor whites. This could be due in part to misidentification of sites. Materially, these three groups are likely to be similar and typically in the presence of an “Africanism” a site is ascribed the identification of an enslaved site.

Another research topic to consider is a comparative analysis that views temporal or regional differences of the presence of swept yards throughout Virginia. Similar to Heath and Breen’s (2009) study of sub-floor pits, where they discovered that the presence of sub-floor pits increase in likelihood in the Tidewater region and at 18th century sites, a study could explore any potential patterns of distribution that swept yards may have. To expand on this further, could the predominate ethnic makeup of a group of enslaved people also have an effect on this? As Walsh (2001) discusses, the African origins of enslaved people in Virginia varied based off of region. Some regions were more likely to have people from Senegambia, while others the Bight of Biafra. Temporal shifts and changes in societal treatment of enslaved people could also be taken into consideration with that sort of analysis. Could higher densities of swept yards in a particular era be indicative of an increased retention or dispersion of cultural activities? Could a change in the likelihood of these features being found in association with an 18th century or 19th century site illuminate changes in relationships between planters and those they enslaved?

Comparative studies have the ability to be very helpful in understanding various aspects of our culture and niche complexities of cultural expression and development. Large scale comparative analysis often requires a large of variety of data that may be readily accessible or known. As stated earlier, sites have a risk of being misidentified, and their inclusion as a particular element in the study may not be an accurate one. Archaeology also has a large

curational problem; many sites cannot be studied because their materials have yet to be processed and catalogued (Ramey 2014). In addition, it may be difficult to find enough sites to include in a study that focuses on particular aspects of a site. There simply may not be enough known sites with that feature in that region or from that time.

The Oval Site can still provide additional information, only a little over half of the sample area has been catalogued, completing the processing of these artifacts may reveal additional information that was not present in this study's sample. Furthermore, the test units processed for this project were only plow zone test units away from the structures. While Wilkins, Ramey, and Crowder all studied artifacts from the cellar of this site, this study does not consider artifact distributions within those structures as it focused on the landscape around those structures. Completion of cataloging site allows for more accurate data that can support or expand upon previous research on thematic questions or the interpretation of this site based off of current GIS data, chemical analysis, and botanical analysis.

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