

1992

# We entered the aforesaid lands and viewed the same : plantation development in Queen Anne's County, Maryland, 1708-1798

Jennie LaMonte Johnson  
*Lehigh University*

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**AUTHOR:**

**Johnson, Jennie LaMonte**

**TITLE:**

**"We Entered the Aforesaid  
Lands and Viewed the  
Same": Plantation  
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1708-1798**

**DATE: October 11, 1992**

"We entered the aforesaid lands and viewed the same":

Plantation Development  
in Queen Anne's County, Maryland,  
1708-1798

by

Jennie LaMonte Johnson

A Thesis

Presented to the Graduate Committee

of Lehigh University

in Candidacy for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the

Department of History

Lehigh University

1992

Certificate of Approval

This thesis is accepted and approved in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts.

9/28/92  
Date

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Professor Christine M. Daniels  
Thesis Advisor

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Professor Stephen Cutcliffe  
Department of History

## Acknowledgements

I am deeply indebted to Christine Daniels for her thoughtful guidance and patient encouragement (not only with regard to my thesis) from the moment I arrived at Lehigh, to Lois Green Carr, without whose assistance I would never have been able to do the project, and to Paul Clemens, Russell Menard, Orlando Ridout V, and Lucy Simler, for their kindness, comments, and suggestions. I am also thankful for the enthusiasm with which my family has undertaken this adventure across time and distance.

## Table of Contents

Abstract	Page 1
"And find thereon" Plantation Development, 1708-1798	Page 2
"To view the Said plantations" Case Studies, QA Plantations	Page 38
Mean Income of QA Plantations	Page 56
Dwellings on QA Plantations	Page 57
Domestic Outbuildings on QA Plantations	Page 58
Agricultural Outbuildings on QA Plantations	Page 59
Industrial Outbuildings on QA Plantations	Page 60
Vita	Page 66

## Abstract

Plantation development and evolution in eighteenth century Queen Anne's County, Maryland, reflected choices planters made in shaping their environment. They responded within an Anglo-American cultural context to challenges posed by the natural environment and their economic market constraints. As the eighteenth century progressed, poorer, middling and prosperous planters all created increasingly comfortable and culturally articulated environments. But while all income groups benefitted from a more developed staple economy and more readily accessible consumer goods, wealthier planters reaped more gains than their less wealthy neighbors. By the final decades of the century, small and large planters lived in strikingly different environments.

Through the valuations done for the Maryland Orphan's Court between 1708 and 1798, I have traced plantation elaboration with regard to planters' wealth and economic change. This study is not a panoramic sweep over a wide vista, but rather a detailed local study that emphasizes change over time in a specific area and on specific plantations. Evidence indicates that Queen Anne's County planters sought to make their home and work environments ever more complex, ever more function specific, and ever more English.

"And find thereon":

Plantation Development, 1708-1798

Chapter 1

Plantation development and evolution in eighteenth century Queen Anne's County, Maryland, reflected choices planters made in shaping their environment. They responded within an Anglo-American cultural context, to challenges posed by the natural environment and their economic market constraints. As the eighteenth century progressed, poorer, middling and prosperous planters all created increasingly comfortable and culturally articulated environments. But while all income groups benefitted from a more developed staple economy and more readily accessible consumer goods, wealthier planters reaped more gains than their less wealthy neighbors. By the final decades of the century, small and large planters lived in strikingly different environments.

Historians have written about the landscape and housing of eighteenth century planters in recent years. Cary Carson, William Cronon, Carville Earle and Ronald Hoffman, Rhys Isaac, Gloria Main, Daniel Blake Smith, Mechal Sobel, John Stilgoe, and Laurel Thatcher Ulrich have all rendered insightful visions of the eighteenth



century environment.<sup>1</sup> Each has contributed to an understanding of this environment, some through careful readings of letters and diaries, others through exhaustive analysis of probate inventories, and still others with investigations of commerce and ecology. Not only have they used different sources, they have taken different approaches. Some have painted broad panoramas; others have sketched miniatures of moments of social and cultural transition. This essay will discuss plantation development with specific information about planters' behavior in a particular place over ninety years.

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<sup>1</sup>Cary Carson, "The 'Virginia House' in Maryland," Maryland Historical Magazine 69 (1974), 185-196, Cary Carson, et al., "The Impermanent Architecture in Southern American Colonies," Winterthur Portfolio 16 (1989), 135-196, William Cronon, Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), Carville Earle and Richard Hoffman, "Staple Crops and Urban Development in the Eighteenth-Century South," Perspectives in American History (1976), 7-78, Rhys Isaac, The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790 (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1988), Gloria Main, Tobacco Colony: Life in Early Maryland, 1650-1720, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), Daniel Blake Smith, Inside the Great House: Planter Life in Eighteenth Century Chesapeake Society (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), Mechal Sobel, The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth Century Virginia (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), John Stilgoe, The Common Landscape in America, 1580-1845 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), and Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983) and A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990).

Through the valuations done for the Maryland Orphan's Court between 1708 and 1798, I have traced plantation elaboration with regard to planters' wealth and economic change. This study is not a panoramic sweep over a wide vista, but rather a detailed local study that emphasizes change over time in a specific area and on specific plantations. Evidence indicates that Queen Anne's County planters sought to make their home and work environments ever more complex, ever more function specific, and ever more English.

Records concerning landed orphans in eighteenth century Maryland have afforded historians a window through which to examine the world in which these records were written. One such set is a series of valuations, or appraisal surveys, done of orphans' estates in Queen Anne's County on the Eastern Shore. These documents reveal details of construction, organization, and investment on plantations during the period in which the economy of the region became grain based rather than tobacco based.

The valuations done for the Orphans' Court also tell a story about class and wealth distinction in eighteenth century Maryland. Few decedents who left their heirs real property were poor men. Most were middling and rich planters. Some were planter-merchants or planter-millers. Others hired, owned, or were themselves

craftsmen who supplemented planting with artisanal activity.

The complexity of a plantation's architectural development is directly related to the complexity of a planter's social and economic endeavors. Eighteenth century planters built environments that can tell us about the decisions they made with regard to their daily life, to a local exchange economy, to intercolonial and international markets, and about the role a planter played in each of these contexts.

Jacob Price has argued that the staple crop a region produced was a significant determinant in town formation (as a locus of entrepreneurial activity).<sup>2</sup> Carville Earle and Ronald Hoffman have suggested that the organization of a larger landscape in the Chesapeake, of a shoreline dotted with small towns, was also influenced by planters' crop mix. They posit that the linkages associated with different crops, employment demands imposed by commodity processing and the attendant market opportunities, and methods and organization of transportation were equally important in town formation.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Jacob Price, "Economic Function and the Growth of American Port Towns in the Eighteenth Century," *Perspectives in American History* 8 (1974), 173.

<sup>3</sup>Carville Earle and Richard Hoffman, "Staple Crops and Urban Development in the Eighteenth-Century South," *Perspectives in American History* (1976), 7-9.

On a smaller scale--within the confines of the plantation itself--the mix of staple crops guided planters in shaping their environment. In order to be able to cultivate particular crops, a planter needed to accommodate the processing of that crop on his own land or to purchase it as a service on a nearby plantation. The plantations described in the Queen Anne's County valuations illustrate individual planters' responses to agricultural demands and market opportunities.

Economic and agricultural considerations were not the only factors which influenced planters in shaping their environments. Architectural theorist Christian Norberg-Schulz has written about less tangible aspects of men's manipulation of the environment. He refers to two psychological functions that he calls "orientation" and "identification." According to Norberg-Schulz, men need to "orient" themselves in an environment, "to gain an existential foothold." They need to know where they are and how to use their surroundings. "Identification" has deeper cultural implications. When people identify with a place, they are "able to concretize the world in buildings and things." Norberg-Schulz concludes that "To belong to a place means to have an existential foothold, in a concrete everyday sense."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Christian Norberg-Schulz, Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture (London: Academy Editions, 1980), 19-23.

The plantation buildings in Queen Anne's County are manifestations of planters' ability to concretize their world. Each dwelling, be it the "sorry" log house of a poor plantation or the "good two story" frame house with glass windows on a more prosperous one, each milk house, brick or log, each barn, orchard, or shop speaks of a man's relationship with his world. Each plantation tells of a planter's response to the opportunities and challenges he faced and the way in which he dwelt in his world, how he created his unique foothold--in a concrete everyday sense.

The valuations prepared for the Orphans' Court of Queen Anne's County between 1708 and 1798 comprise the data for this study. Maryland law began addressing the status of orphans in 1654, when the assembly passed a law concerning accountability of guardians.<sup>5</sup> A child whose father had died was considered an orphan, even if his mother was still living. A mother could act as guardian for an orphan. She could not, however, serve in this capacity for an orphan's property unless she could post the sureties--the bonds--required by the county court.

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<sup>5</sup>Information regarding the evolution of the Maryland Orphans' Court and the legal status of orphans is to be found in Lois Green Carr, "The Development of the Maryland Orphans' Court, 1654-1715," Law, Society and Politics in Early Maryland, ed. Aubrey C. Land, Lois Green Carr, and Edward C. Papenfuse (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 41-62. This brief outline is based on Carr's article.

There is evidence that courts began, in the 1690s, to monitor the management of orphans' plantations, at least to insure that soil exhaustion and depletion of timber did not ruin a plantation.<sup>6</sup>

A law outlining the procedures for valuation of plantations was passed by the provincial assembly in 1688. It was not apparently enforced with any regularity until a supplementary act was passed in 1702 that required compliance and set penalties for those who did not. These documents contain descriptions of real property under the care of an orphan's guardian. The valuations documented the care afforded the orphans' estates by their guardians and were a means by which the Court could determine whether or not the minors' estates were being properly husbanded. In addition to a detailed description of the condition, quality, and number of improvements to a plantation, appraisers made a determination of a plantation's capacity to produce annual income: "we order the guardian to leave in good repair and to pay unto the said orphan when he arrives to the age of 21 years 700 pounds of tobacco per annum clear of his Lordship's quit rents." Guardians were compensated for their management with a commission based on the income of the plantation, so a guardian had an interest in the upkeep and productivity of a plantation.

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<sup>6</sup>Carr, "Orphans' Court," 46.

When an orphan reached majority, the guardian turned over the "accrued income" as well as the plantation to the orphan.

The valuations reflect the condition, quality, and productivity of the plantations in question. Some plantations were deemed capable of producing a handsome annual profit for the orphan. The income of other plantations, however, was sufficient only to cover the expenses of education and maintenance of the orphan. Some estates were incapable of meeting even this standard and required repairs before an income was possible.

The richness of these documents is exciting. Unfortunately, relatively few extended sets of valuations survive. The information they contained ceased to be pertinent after an orphan reached majority, and they were customarily discarded. Because these records were only temporarily useful, record keeping was haphazard. Each County Clerk decided where and how to keep these records. In Queen Anne's County, Clerks recorded orphan's estate valuations in the county Land Records and in the Guardian Bonds and Indentures.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Valuations are found throughout county Land Records and Guardian Bonds and Valuations, volumes located at the Maryland Hall of Records. The St. Mary's City Commission (SMCC) has also made typescripts of these documents, which were generously provided to me by Lois Green Carr. They are SMCC # 18-0001 through 18-0290.

The data set for this study includes valuations representing 241 decedents, 472 plantation descriptions, and 594 tracts of land. All valuations include the name of the orphan or orphans who owned the plantation(s), the names of the two men who did the survey (the appraisers), and the date of the survey. In some cases, more than one valuation of a plantation has survived. In others, an individual decedent might have owned two or more plantations, each of which might include more than one tract. The valuations, therefore, yield clues to the ways in which two or more plantations owned by one planter might have been shaped to complement each other.<sup>8</sup>

The eighteenth century was a period of demographic and economic expansion in the Chesapeake. By 1708, the first year for which Queen Anne's valuations survive, white immigration, which began in 1631 with the English settlement of Kent Island and continued apace through the 1680s, had declined. The sex ratio, clearly uneven throughout the seventeenth century, had become more balanced, and the white population in the region had

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<sup>8</sup>Not all decedents have been identified. I have, however, used the orphan's last name and date of the valuation in trying to determine the identity of the decedent in county and provincial indexes of probate inventories. In cases where I was unable to identify a decedent, I grouped the plantation(s) of a given minor under the designation "LASTNAME; (ORPH)."



changed from one in which single men predominated to one of native born families.<sup>9</sup>

Between 1710 and 1760, the white population of Maryland grew from around 35,000 to about 110,000, an annual increase of approximately 2.3 per cent.<sup>10</sup> The population in Queen Anne's grew at an even greater rate, from around 3,000 in 1700, to around 15,000 by 1760, and annual increase of approximately 2.7 per cent. The population remained relatively stable throughout the rest of the eighteenth century.<sup>11</sup>

The growth of the creole population was accompanied by economic expansion. Following the War of the Spanish Succession in 1713, the tobacco trade experienced a long term revitalization in which production and income

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<sup>9</sup>Paul G. E. Clemens, *The Atlantic Economy and Colonial Maryland's Eastern Shore: From Tobacco to Grain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 213-214, and Russell R. Menard, "Immigrants and Their Increase: The Process of Population Growth in Early Colonial Maryland," in *Law, Society and Politics in Early Maryland*, ed. Aubrey C. Land, Lois Green Carr, and Edward C. Papenfuse (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 97.

<sup>10</sup>Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 178-179, and Menard, "Immigrants and Their Increase," 121.

<sup>11</sup>Orlando Ridout V, "Re-Editing the Past: A Comparison of Surviving Documentary and Physical Evidence," paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, New Haven, Ct, 22 April 1982, 2.

increased and economic activities diversified.<sup>12</sup> Local exchange of crafts and commodity products and inter-colonial trade, particularly the grain trade, played increasingly important roles in the economy of Maryland's Eastern Shore planters.<sup>13</sup>

The valuations of orphans' estates reflected economic, agricultural, and demographic changes that occurred over the course of the century. Income fluctuated, building types changed, and dwelling houses varied. All are documented in the valuations.

When making an appraisal, the surveyors evaluated the resources of a plantation and determined, given their

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<sup>12</sup>Clemens, *From Tobacco to Grain*, 112; Russell R. Menard, "The Tobacco Industry in the Chesapeake Colonies, 1617-1730: An Interpretation," *Research in Economic History* 5 (1980), 109, and Jacob M. Price, "The Economic Growth of the Chesapeake and the European Market, 1697-1775," *Journal of Economic History* 24 (1964), 496-511.

<sup>13</sup>Carr, Russo and Daniels date the beginning of this diversification to the late seventeenth century, Clemens sets it later, in the 1760s. This question will be further examined in my discussion (below) of outbuildings on plantations. Lois Green Carr, "Diversification in the Colonial Chesapeake: Somerset County, Maryland, in Comparative Perspective," and Jean B. Russo, "Self-Sufficiency and Local Exchange: Free Craftsmen in the Rural Chesapeake Economy," in *Colonial Chesapeake Society*, ed. Lois Green Carr, Philip D. Morgan, and Jean B. Russo (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), Clemens, *From Tobacco to Grain*, chapter 6; Christine M. Daniels, "Alternative Workers in a Slave Economy: Kent County, Maryland, 1675-1810" (Ph.D. diss., The Johns Hopkins University, 1990), 3-151. For a thorough discussion of the expansion of the colonial economy in the eighteenth century see John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985, 1991), 51-70.

knowledge of markets and management of resources, the annual income they thought a plantation would produce. Although the standards by which they reached this judgement are not spelled out, the frequency with which certain individuals' names appeared as surveyors indicates that some men had developed a recognized skill or expertise in this task. Their evaluations were respected, for they were enforced by the Orphan's Court.

In tracking the development of plantations, it is useful to trace the income generated by plantations within the context of economic expansion and change. I shall then examine plantation improvements within this structure, focusing first on the landscape, then housing, domestic outbuildings, agricultural outbuildings, and industrial outbuildings. After building a pattern of plantation development, I shall place selected Queen Anne's County plantations within the frame.

The mean income of plantations in Queen Anne's County fluctuated with the expansion and contraction of the colonial economy (Figure 1). In general, planters' incomes increased as they relied more heavily on wheat as a cash crop.<sup>14</sup> Income declined modestly between the

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<sup>14</sup>All values have been deflated to 1700-1709 L Maryland currency using a deflator developed by Lois Green Carr, P.M.G. Harris, and Lorena S. Walsh, July 1988, revision. This index was generously given to me by Lois Green Carr. When given in pounds of tobacco, values were converted to Maryland currency using the commodity price series developed by Paul G.E. Clemens for Talbot

first and fourth decades of the century. From the mid-1740s to the mid-1760s, income increased rapidly by 3-4 per cent per annum, then leveled off. This pattern was similar to that of wheat producing areas in Pennsylvania, while tobacco producing regions of the Chesapeake did not experience a like period of sluggishness. Between 1785 and 1798, the mean income for plantations in Queen Anne's County rose astronomically, reflecting as yet unexplored and unexplained changes in the region's economy.<sup>15</sup>

Planters in Queen Anne's County changed their crop mix very slowly, gradually coming to depend less and less

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County. I chose Talbot County because the frequency of building types on Queen Anne's County plantations would indicate an evolution of crop mix similar to that posited by Clemens for Talbot. Tobacco prices after 1771 are based on no more than three observations. I converted those values between 1779-1783 rendered in pounds of tobacco by the surveyors to Maryland currency based on Queen Anne's County inventory observations. Values for each five year group are assigned to the middle year in the group; for example, the values for 1716-1720 are indicated by the mean value at 1718. For periodization of economic growth and expansion see McCusker and Menard, Economy of British America, 60.

<sup>15</sup>I am unable to explain this jump in income for all plantations, those of the less affluent as well as those of prosperous planters. One extremely high valuation in 1790 (L108) skews the curve somewhat, but does not account for the increase in income overall. The general conditions in the post-Revolutionary economy would lead one to expect a slight decline in income for most planters. The deflator I used was developed using information from Queen Anne's inventories in part, and should have adjusted for inflation in the data set. I have consulted with Russell Menard and Lois Green Carr about this phenomenon; both have suggested that further research on the region's economy is necessary to explain this change.

on tobacco, and more and more on grains. After 1740 most plantations had corn houses. Granaries, used to store wheat, began to appear in valuations after 1765.<sup>16</sup> With the emergence of grains as important local products, the mean income values of most plantations rose. At the same time, there was a dramatic drop in the presence of tobacco houses on Queen Anne's County plantations, an indication that the area's economy had moved away from dependence on tobacco into more diversified activities.

In the first three quarters of the century, plantations with "no improvements" were judged to be incapable of producing income and were assigned "no value." By the fourth quarter of the century, however, they were judged capable of producing a small income, a fact which indicates that population pressures were severe enough that land alone was worth something.<sup>17</sup>

As planters' incomes increased, they diversified the agricultural processing activities and outbuildings on their home plantations. The home plantations of planters with incomes in excess of L60 after 1765 had, on average, nine buildings (a dwelling house, four domestic outbuildings, three agricultural outbuildings, and one

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<sup>16</sup>This would indicate that in terms of crop mix, Queen Anne's resembled Talbot County, to the south, more than Kent County, to the north.

<sup>17</sup>See, for example, *Queen Anne's County Guardian Bonds and Valuations*, SC, f. 93.

shop or mill). By contrast, tenant plantations owned by the same planters had an average of only two buildings, usually a dwelling house and either a domestic or agricultural outbuilding; none had shops or mills. These large planters (I think they are not to be termed "great" planters--none had the wealth or status of a John Tayloe or an Edward Lloyd, for example)<sup>18</sup> represented between three and five per cent of the sample population throughout the eighteenth century.<sup>19</sup> This evidence confirms previous scholarly assertions that prosperous plantations diversified their agricultural activities to supply services to a local market; small planters did not do so in order to practice subsistence agriculture.<sup>20</sup>

The economy on the Eastern Shore became less complex after the Revolution,<sup>21</sup> but as might be expected, changes in diversity of building types reflected this

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<sup>18</sup>Richard Dunn, "A Tale of Two Plantations: Slave Life at Mesopotamia in Jamaica and Mount Airy in Virginia, 1799-1828," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 34 (1977), 32-65, and Jean B. Russo, "A Model Planter: Edward Lloyd of Maryland, 1770-1796," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 49 (1992), 62-88.

<sup>19</sup>They comprised three percent of the sample from 1708-1735 and controlled 26 per cent of the income. During the middle of the eighteenth century, they comprised five per cent of the sample and commanded 19 per cent of income. In the later decades of the century, during periods of high inflation, the top five per cent of the sample controlled 24 per cent of income in the County.

<sup>20</sup>Carr, "Diversification in the Colonial Chesapeake."

<sup>21</sup>Daniels, "Alternative Workers," chap.3.

simplification slowly. Planters continued to use the shops they had built for some years, and only gradually replaced them with services available in emergent Baltimore.

By the third quarter of the century, the landscape in Queen Anne's County had begun to look more cultivated and less natural. About half the land had been cleared; in many valuations made during the last quarter of the century, appraisers indicated that the land was completely cleared, while in others guardians were cautioned to clear no more. Valuations throughout the first three quarters of the century frequently included complex provisions for draining swamps as well, another prerequisite for taming the marshy, low-lying land on the Eastern Shore.<sup>22</sup>

Valuations indicate that eighteenth century plantation development followed a predictable pattern. The most common first step in subduing the land was clearing and fencing acreage. Plantations with no other improvements had split rail fencing snaking across the landscape, enclosing and dividing fields from orchards and neighbor's holding from neighbor's holding.

After planters had cleared and fenced acreage, they usually planted an orchard. Before 1735, almost half of

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<sup>22</sup>See, for example, *Queen Anne's County Deeds*, RT B, f. 399, or *Queen Anne's County Guardian Bonds and Valuations*, SC, f. 143.

all plantations had orchards; three-quarters had orchards thereafter. Virtually all orchards contained apple trees, while some included peach, pear, plum, quince, or English walnut trees as well.

The next most common improvement made after the major landscape elements of fence, field, and orchard was a dwelling house. Houses in eighteenth century Queen Anne's County were made of one of three materials; frame, log or brick. Frame housing was more prevalent in higher income groups because it was more desirable than log housing. It required less timber than log construction, and therefore could be considerably larger than a log house. Frame construction also afforded more flexibility in its floor plan, and permitted freer fenestration and door placement. The space within a frame house could be more easily shaped, and rooms could be lighter and better proportioned than those in log homes, as frame houses could have higher ceilings and more windows than log houses. Frame construction demanded a higher technical proficiency, however, than log construction. Labor costs, therefore, were significant factors in the decision to build a frame house in the labor-dear economy of the eighteenth century Chesapeake. Brick construction was even more expensive and technically demanding. Skilled masons and bricklayers were relatively rare in Queen Anne's County, so both the materials and labor



necessary to build a brick home were extraordinarily expensive.<sup>23</sup> Both the brick and frame homes built in Queen Anne's County used English construction techniques, although each eventually evolved into a local variant of English construction. Log construction, in contrast, was a New World variation of a Scandinavian construction type. Wealthier residents' willingness to invest more capital in "English" houses suggests a cultural desire to emulate the English landscape.<sup>24</sup>

Even planters in the poorest income group enjoyed some basic form of housing on their own land (See Table 1). In the early decades of the century, these small planters lived in two-room log or frame houses which

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<sup>23</sup>Today, standard bricks are approximately four by eight by two inches. Although eighteenth century bricks were not made to this standard, this information can provide a rough measure of the number of bricks that might be necessary to build a house. Walls of a house such as Thomas Marsh's (d. 1716) forty by twenty feet, brick, one story house might require as many as 13000 bricks. The addition of a full cellar might add another 6500. 19500 bricks at 8s./1000 would cost a planter L7.5s (deflated). Bricklayer Luke Breze contracted with Col. James Hollyday, of Queen Anne's County, at 8s/1000 bricks to build Readbourne in 1733. Thomas Hollyday, "Readbourne Manor Revisited: Gleanings from an Eighteenth Century Journal," Maryland Historical Magazine 85 (1990), 46.

<sup>24</sup>For a description of the same impulse in other colonies, see Greene, Pursuits of Happiness, the Chesapeake, 93, the Lower South, 147, the British West Indies, 164, and Ireland, 120-121, and Richard Waterhouse, "Development of an Elite Culture in the Colonial American South: A Study of Charles Town, 1670-1770," Australian Journal of Politics and History 28 (1982), 391-404.

averaged 363 square feet. Maurice Woolahand, for example, who died in 1729, had lived in a new house, twenty by eighteen feet, with plank floors, an unusual improvement. Middling planters at this time did even better--some were able to afford brick homes as large as forty by twenty feet. The average middling planter's house was a four-room, 550 square foot dwelling. Unfortunately, the valuations of large planters' plantations for the period before 1735 do not contain any specific information on the size or quality of their homes.

By the middle of the century, the Eastern Shore's increasing prosperity meant that planters could build larger and more elaborate homes. Even the poorer planters had larger two-room houses (409 square feet), on average, than had their counterparts earlier in the century. Most of these houses were still constructed of frame or log, but eleven per cent of these planters managed to build a brick house. Middling planters at this time were also able to build larger houses than they had earlier. The size of their houses increased to a mean of 670 square feet (again, two rooms larger than the small planters' houses), while the homes of large planters averaged 760 square feet. About two-thirds of middling planters' homes were frame rather than log,

while a full third of the large planters' houses were brick.

As incomes continued to rise after 1765, the size of poor planters' dwelling houses increased again--they averaged 435 square feet and included three rooms instead of two (although most poorer planters continued to build in frame or log). Neither middling nor wealthy planters' houses reflected a like increase in size. Large planters did, however, have a greater diversity of domestic outbuildings than did middling planters. They did not enlarge their homes to accommodate increased processing or housewifery functions; they moved these functions instead to specific domestic outbuildings.

After the dwelling house was in place, poorer and more prosperous plantations began to diverge. The plantations of middling and wealthy planters exhibited a greater range and diversity of buildings than did those of poorer planters.

Many middling and prosperous plantations in Queen Anne's County included secondary dwelling houses. A secondary dwelling could have stood on a plantation for one of three reasons: the planter may have built a larger or better house for himself and his family, leaving an older, free-standing dwelling on his plantation; tenant holdings or slave quarters may not specifically have been described as such in the

valuations; or dependent households, either for grown children or overseers, may have been present on the plantation. Architectural evidence indicates that the first explanation is unlikely; planters often incorporated older houses into new structures.<sup>25</sup> The consistency of the Queen Anne's appraisers renders the second explanation unlikely as well. Appraisers usually took care specifically to describe tenant settlements and slave quarters as such--the number of appraisers was not large, and it is logical that they would apply the same terms to the same building types on different plantations. Secondary dwellings, therefore, probably represented the presence of a dependent household on a plantation.

Before 1735, only 19 per cent of all detailed plantation appraisals included a secondary dwelling house. The low incidence of secondary houses--and dependent households--is consistent with our knowledge of early eighteenth century Chesapeake society. Opportunities for acquiring a tenancy were still relatively available in the first decades of the century; grown children could buy land or lease a tenancy elsewhere. Very few plantations, moreover, had large

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<sup>25</sup>Cary Carson, "The 'Virginia House' in Maryland," Maryland Historical Magazine 69 (1974), 187, 193.

work forces which would have required the services of an overseer.

Valuations from the middle decades of the eighteenth century reflected a marked increase in the incidence of secondary dwellings. Almost 40 per cent of small planters, 45 per cent of middling planters, and over 55 per cent of large planters had a secondary dwelling on their plantation. Eastern Shore plantations' increased demand for labor during this period may explain part of this increase. An increase in tobacco production as well as increases in the volume of production of grains and meat for export in the West Indian trade, in the manufacture of housewifery products for local exchange, and in slave ownership all point to increased labor demands on plantations. Grown children, hired men, or overseer, and their families were all potential sources of supplementary labor that was necessary to increase a plantation's output. The rising population and increasing pressure on available land may also explain part of this increase, as grown children found it more expensive to acquire land or a tenancy.

The number of secondary dwellings on less prosperous plantations declined somewhat after 1766--only a third of the plantations in the two lower wealth groups included a secondary dwelling. The expansion of the economy slowed

after 1760,<sup>26</sup> and planters had less need for the additional labor represented by a dependent household. The largest planters, however, continued to own and maintain secondary dwellings. Some may have been overseer' homes, while others were doubtless tenancies-- complete plantations developed around a secondary dwelling house.

There were very few slave quarters on Queen Anne's County plantations. Planters on the upper Eastern Shore never had the large slave holdings of planters in tidewater Virginia or the lower South. Slave ownership in Talbot County, south of Queen Anne's, increased beginning in the mid-1730s then declined, along with the region's economy, after 1760.<sup>27</sup> The incidence of slave quarters in sample of valuations suggests that the same pattern was true for Queen Anne's County. While slave quarters were never common, they peaked in the appraisals made during the middle decades of the century and declined thereafter. Only one plantation appraised before 1735 had a slave quarter. This quarter was recorded on Thomas Marsh's plantation in 1730.<sup>28</sup> Marsh

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<sup>26</sup>McCusker and Menard, Economy of British America, 60.

<sup>27</sup>Jean B. Russo, "Self-sufficiency and Local Exchange, Free Craftsmen in the Rural Chesapeake Economy," Colonial Chesapeake Society, 407.

<sup>28</sup>See Queen Anne's County Deeds, RT No. A, f. 16.

owned three full working plantations and may have been one of the first planters in the area to reap the full benefit of his land with a large slave work force. He owned no mills, shops, or other buildings that indicate craft operations, and needed field hands to produce his tobacco and grains. Slave quarters were more widespread between 1736 and 1765, but they were by no means common. Only one small planter had a slave quarter, while approximately twenty per cent of middling and large planters did. After 1765, however, only nine per cent of appraised plantations included quarters.

In addition to residential buildings, middling and large plantations included domestic, agricultural, and industrial or craft outbuildings. The evolution in domestic outbuildings was closely related to changes in life-style and local exchange in the eighteenth century; they proliferated during the second period of the study, as women's work and housewifery became more important in the region. Changes in agricultural outbuildings can be linked with changes in the regional crop mix and husbandry. The proliferation of domestic and agricultural building types on a plantation was related to income as well; the higher a planter's income, the more likely his plantation was to include additional outbuildings. Only large and prosperous plantations included industrial or craft outbuildings, and only

during the last quarter of the century. A wealthy planter might build a grist or saw mill, a tannery, a loom house, a shoemaker's or smith's shop in response to perceived opportunities for craft diversification in the local economy. (See Tables 2, 3 and 4.)

The earliest valuations describe only a few small or middling plantations with domestic outbuildings. Just over a third had kitchens, and less than a fifth had milk houses. Most family labor was concentrated on farm-building, subsistence farming and production of staples for export; there was little functional need for domestic outbuildings.

The incidence of kitchens varied with time and income, becoming more common as the century wore on and incomes rose. Kitchens were places where women or girls cooked, processed, and stored food; a separate kitchen could remove heat and cooking odors from a dwelling house. Kitchens were usually small log or frame buildings with brick chimneys (most dwelling houses, in contrast, appraised before mid-century did not have brick chimneys). Between 1736 and 1766, the proportion of small planters who built kitchens doubled. Almost 60 per cent of middling planters had kitchens. Before 1765, appraisals for large plantations do not generally mention kitchens, but the description of outbuildings in many of these valuations is quite thin, and this may be a skewed



picture. The sample of large plantations appraised after 1766, in which more than 90 per cent of plantations included kitchens, may be more accurate. In contrast, only 11 per cent of these planters' tenants enjoyed the luxury of a separate kitchen.<sup>29</sup>

Only one-fifth of all plantations included milkhouses, a proportion which varied little across time or income group. A milkhouse provided storage space for milk, milk pans, churns, cheese molds and other equipment, as well as work space for dairying tasks. Dairying was not commonplace on eighteenth century Chesapeake plantations, and planters often refrained from a significant investment in dairying equipment until there were enough female workers to make such an investment worthwhile.<sup>30</sup> Female members of small households could also produce butter and perhaps cheese on a small scale in their dwelling house, which further diminished the need for a dedicated structure.

Other buildings associated with food preparation included bake ovens and meat/smoke houses. Bake ovens

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<sup>29</sup>Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "Changing Lifestyles and Consumer Behavior in the Colonial Chesapeake," (unpublished paper presented at the Washington Seminar on Early American History, 11 March 1987), 7-16. Lois Green Carr was kind enough to share this paper with me.

<sup>30</sup>Carole Shammas, "Black Women's Work and the Evolution of Plantation Society in Virginia," *Labor History* 26 (1985): 13, 16.

were a luxury; middling and wealthy planters were much more likely to possess bake ovens than were poorer planters. Between 1736 and 1765, twice as many middling planters as small planters built ovens, and large planters built ovens at an even greater rate. Appraisers described bake ovens on more than twenty per cent of prosperous plantations. Separate ovens, however, virtually disappeared from middling and large plantations after 1766, as separate kitchens became more common.

Early eighteenth century planters in Queen Anne's County did not build separate meat houses, where meat might be smoked or otherwise cured. Estate appraisers first described a separate meat house on a plantation in 1736; by 1765, 34 per cent of plantations included meat houses. The development of both the local and the export market for meat products occasioned this change. By the second quarter of the century, planters relied primarily on the meat from these cattle and hogs rather than on wild meat for their diet, a change which may have encouraged greater meat processing.<sup>31</sup> After 1735, Chesapeake planters began to export smoked, salted and pickled meat to the West Indies; and their need for space in which to store this meat increased. Because meat preparation was considered part of a housewife's duties,

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<sup>31</sup>Henry M. Miller, "An Archaeological Perspective on the Evolution of Diet in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1620-1745," in *Colonial Chesapeake Society*, 191.

these small (10' square) brick and log structures usually stood in a plantation's cluster of domestic buildings. Women, therefore, produced more preserved meat as an export commodity as well as for local exchange and home consumption as the century wore on, and had an increasing need for a separate site for the storage and preparation of meats.

Hen houses and gardens also fell under women's purview. Virtually no plantations had hen houses before 1735. Hen houses were usually made of logs and were quite small, most commonly 6' square. They provided a place to keep fowl safe from predators at night and space for nests in which hens could roost. In the early eighteenth century, planters and their families were still engaged in farm building, and poultry raised for household consumption survived without the special accommodation afforded by a hen house--"dunghill fowl" simply made their own nests and, with luck, avoided predators. Even after 1735, virtually no small planters had hen houses, a lack which reflected the unfinished nature of many of these farms. A third of all middling and large plantations, however, included them. The incidence of poultry houses on these plantations, however, declined after 1765, when alternative sources of poultry may have become available. Many free black (and some poor white) women on the Eastern Shore marketed

poultry, and the free black population burgeoned after 1760. The wives of wealthy planters may no longer have needed to keep a hen house.<sup>32</sup>

Kitchen or vegetable gardens were almost certainly underreported in the valuations. The condition or disposition of crops in the 'field were rarely mentioned by the surveyors, and gardens probably fell into this pattern as well. Although gardens were only infrequently mentioned, those the appraisers described were large, 100 or 150 feet square, paled enclosures. Occasionally the garden enclosure included a small house for storage of garden produce. Planters paled their gardens for much the same reason they built hen houses, to protect their industry. Any number of wild animals, including deer, rabbits, and raccoons, were commonplace on the Eastern Shore, and a plantation garden offered a veritable cornucopia of delights for their consumption. Pales--logs placed side by side vertically in the ground--were a much better barrier against nocturnal foragers than a fence. Small animals went under or through fences, while deer went over them. The higher, more solid pale was a more effective solution, and merited the greater investment of timber it represented.

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<sup>32</sup>Carole Shammas, "Black Women's Work," 16, Daniels, "Alternative Workers," chap. 11.

No planters in early eighteenth century Queen Anne's County had stables. Horses could be accommodated in multi-use buildings on the plantation or allowed to roam in a pasture. By 1735, stables began to appear as part of the cluster of outbuildings on plantations. They remained, however, an unusual building, one of the last a planter built, and as such are closely correlated with income. Less than five per cent of small planters had stables before 1765. These men had neither the horses to require nor the extra capital to build a stable. Middling and large planters were more often in a position to build a stable. Four times as many middling planters as small planters had stables, and five times as many large planters did. This divergence was further exaggerated in the late eighteenth century, when seven per cent of small planters had stables and sixty-four per cent of large planters did. Stables ranged in size from 12'x 8' on a small plantation producing less than L5 annually, to 30'x 18' on a property producing over L120.<sup>33</sup>

A few middling and wealthy planters also owned cart or chaise houses after 1765. A planter stored his conveyance, be it a fine carriage or a work cart, and its associated tack in a chaise house. Carriages were

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<sup>33</sup>Queen Anne's County Guardian Bonds and Valuations, SC, f. 145.

conspicuous consumption items; Carr and Walsh have suggested that "[c]onspicuous consumption of the kind described by Thorstein Veblen was beginning to appear" in middling households by the 1760s.<sup>34</sup> Work carts, of course, hauled commodities rather than carrying people. Planters who grew grain needed access to carts to transport their produce. While small and middling planters hired transportation from their neighbors or merchants, a greater proportion of large planters owned their own carts for hauling. The appearance of buildings to house these vehicles in the 1760s is consistent both with the evidence of conspicuous consumption Carr and Walsh have derived from probate inventories, and with the transition to grain that Clemens posits. Appraisers described only one plantation with a chaise house before 1765.<sup>35</sup> After that date, well-to-do middling and wealthy planters built chaise houses with some frequency. While less than five per cent of small and lower middling planters (who represented the bottom six-tenths of the sample) had a chaise house, almost a fifth of the upper middling planters and over a quarter of large planters had chaise houses on their home plantations.

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<sup>34</sup>Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "Changing Life-Styles and Consumer Behavior," 8.

<sup>35</sup>See *Queen Anne's County Deeds*, RT No. H, f. 40.

While diverse domestic outbuildings suggest rising incomes, increasing success in farm building and the growing importance of women's work, the West Indian market, and conspicuous consumption in plantation life, agricultural outbuildings reveal the outlines of the decline of tobacco and the rising importance of grains in the local economy. The incidence of tobacco houses and granaries in the valuations is clearly related to the crop mix of the area. A planter cultivating tobacco needed a tobacco house in which to dry and cure the weed. Tobacco houses were large, (usually 20' x 30') frame buildings. Their roofs were solid to protect the crop from rain, but their walls had adjustable openings, so the planter could control circulation of the air around drying tobacco leaves.

Tobacco was the primary staple in Queen Anne's County during the early eighteenth century. Clemens has argued that tobacco cultivation on the Eastern Shore grew through about 1760 and declined thereafter.<sup>36</sup> This assertion is consistent with the incidence of tobacco houses on the appraised plantations. Before 1735, nearly three-quarters of small planters had "tobo houses"; over half of middling planters did. The early valuations of large planters do not describe agricultural outbuildings. The incidence of tobacco houses peaked in the middle

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<sup>36</sup>Clemens, *From Tobacco to Grain*, 170-174.

decades of the century. Fifty-six per cent of both small and large planters had tobacco houses; 72 per cent of middling planters had them. After 1765, however, the frequency of tobacco houses in valuations for all income groups declined. After the Revolution, the incidence of tobacco houses plummeted on Eastern Shore plantations. By the final quarter of the eighteenth century, the tobacco houses that remained usually were described by appraisers as "sorry" or "old," as planters evidently simply let them decay and fall in ruins.

After 1735, planters, especially wealthy planters, began to cultivate wheat as a staple crop, and to participate in the grain trade with southern Europe and the West Indies. Initially, they continued to grow tobacco as well as wheat and only slowly was the primary staple--tobacco--supplanted by the new one--wheat. By 1765, wealthy planters in Queen Anne's stored wheat (and other small grains as well) in granaries after it was harvested and threshed and before it was ground. The earliest granaries were not free-standing dedicated buildings; grain was stored above the stables. The fact that appraisers called certain storage areas above stables "granaries" and not others indicates that a granary had specific characteristics that distinguished it from simple storage. A granary had to be dry and airtight. If small grains got wet and remained wet, they



mildewed, molded, and fermented. Fermented wheat was worthless for anything other than fodder for animals.

Wealthy planters led the way into wheat cultivation; no small planters had granaries during the eighteenth century, while only ten per cent of lower middling planters did. On the other hand, almost a quarter of upper middling planters possessed them, as did more than a third of large planters.

An expansion of corn cultivation preceded planters' movement into wheat.<sup>37</sup> Chesapeake planters had raised corn for their own consumption since the earliest years of settlement; the presence of corn houses in the earliest valuations confirm its importance as a subsistence crop. Corn houses protected corn, still on the cob, from the vagaries of the weather. Unlike wheat, however, corn benefitted from air circulation. Corn cribs were usually framed structures raised above the ground which permitted air flow to dry the corn. Between 1708 and 1735, almost a fifth of small plantations and over a quarter of middling plantations included corn houses. After 1735, however, wealthy planters began to raise corn for the West Indian market as well as for home consumption,<sup>38</sup> and the incidence of corn houses, especially on large plantations, rose. Between 1766 and

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<sup>37</sup>Clemens, *From Tobacco to Grain*, 172, 174.

<sup>38</sup>Clemens, *From Tobacco to Grain*, 174, 175.

1798, 27 per cent of small planters, 54 per cent of lower middling planters, 71 per cent of upper middling planters, and 73 per cent of large planters had corn houses on their home plantations.

Industrial and craft buildings were a rarity on eighteenth century plantations in Queen Anne's County, particularly before 1735. These buildings included grist and saw mills, wheelwrights', shoemakers' and smith's shops, loom houses, tanyards, cider presses and stills. Each of these buildings was a rarity until after 1735; when they did appear, they were virtually always the property of wealthy planters. Millers and artisans working in these mills and shops did not produce goods in order to render a plantation self-sufficient, but participated extensively in the local economy.<sup>39</sup> They also produced goods, notably flour and timber in plantation water mills, for the West Indian trade. Water mills represented a greater capital investment than any of the other industrial or craft buildings; only wealthy planters owned such mills, which became more common after the rise of wheat cultivation and planters' increased participation in the West Indian trade. Before 1735, only one valuation mentions a grist mill; after 1765, nine of the prosperous plantations--more than a third of

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<sup>39</sup>Carr and Walsh, "Changing Life-Styles," 33, and Russo, "Self-sufficiency and Local Exchange," 402, 423.

the sample of wealthy estates--included grist mills.<sup>40</sup>

Other craft outbuildings began to appear frequently only after 1765, when the local economy had diversified sufficiently to support the labors of various artisans.

The landscape of eighteenth century Queen Anne's County reflected choices that planters made, according to their means, in plantation development. Although all planters lived in similar plantations in the early decades of the century, by the 1780s small and large planters lived in increasingly differentiated environments within an Anglo-American cultural context.

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<sup>40</sup>Daniels, "Alternative Workers," 115-118.

"And to view the Said Plantations"

Chapter 2

The Queen Anne's County appraisals, used in conjunction with probate inventories and extant architectural evidence, make it possible to examine a few plantations in more detail as they changed over the course of the century. Mount Mill, for example, the plantation seat of the Seth family, was appraised five times between 1740 and 1780.<sup>41</sup>

Planters had to be landholders to be included in the valuation sample. Although many men had the opportunity to reach this status in the middle of the seventeenth century, by 1700 opportunities for upward mobility had declined.<sup>42</sup> In the eighteenth century, planters who bequeathed real property to minor heirs were better off

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<sup>41</sup>Mount Mill was appraised in 1740, 1743, 1775, 1779, and 1780 (*Queen Anne's County Deeds*, RT No. B, f. 389, RT No. C, f. 21 and *Queen Anne's County Guardian Bonds and Valuations*, SC, f. 103, 104, 105). Probate inventories are also extant for two Seths who lived at Mount Mill (Charles Seth, d. 1740, and Jacob Seth, d. 1773) as well as architectural documentation for the house in which they lived. While architectural documentation is not available for other appraised plantations, I have used architectural information for comparable plantations from the files of the Maryland Trust.

<sup>42</sup>Russell R. Menard, "From Servant to Freeholder: Status, Mobility, and Property Accumulation in Seventeenth Century Maryland," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 30 (1973): 57 -63.

than many of their neighbors. Of the 83 planters in the valuation sample for whom I have at least partial probate inventories, few were poor in terms of movable property. Virtually all had movable estates in excess of L50; many had estates far more valuable.<sup>43</sup>

Probate inventories, when coupled with estate evaluations, can tell us a great deal about the way in which planters used their living spaces. Appraisers prepared inventories by walking through a plantation house and outbuildings shortly after a planter's death and listing all the moveable goods therein, generally in the order in which they saw them. Inventories, therefore, can enable an historian (with just a little imagination) to place specific goods into rooms, and to draw conclusions about activities that took place in those rooms.

Before 1735, valuations were generally silent regarding details of improvements and landscape. We can only speculate as to the buildings that might have housed certain tasks. We know that fences enclosed fields, that most planters had a dwelling house, and that the staple crop dictated the presence of a tobacco house of some sort.

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<sup>43</sup>All prices in this thesis are rendered in pounds current of Maryland (deflated). I am grateful to Lois Carr, Lorena Walsh and P.M.G. Harris for sharing their deflation index with me, and to Russell Menard for assisting me in my analysis of post-Revolutionary prices.

Later valuations are more forthcoming with information about improvements, and afford us a glimpse of the evolution of eighteenth century plantations. They reveal an overall maturation and growing complexity of plantations after 1735, particularly those of the large planters. The living spaces planters shaped manifested the elaboration of and increasing differentiation within Chesapeake society. A typical prosperous plantation evolved from a clearing with a few fields, a house and an all-purpose outbuilding to a fully tamed landscape with more than one house and several outbuildings, most with specific functions. A typical tenant farmer, on the other hand, continued to live on a simple plantation with a house and an outbuilding, even in the final decade of the century.

A tour of Queen Anne's County plantations will illustrate the changing lifestyles of poorer and more prosperous planters as the century progressed. We will begin at the plantation of James Morgan (d. 1724). In 1732 the appraisers thought Morgan's plantation should bring his son James an annual income of 1000 pounds of tobacco (L3.19s), an income somewhat lower than the median income for the study period (L4.10s).<sup>44</sup> James Morgan, Sr.'s movable estate, however, was valued at

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<sup>44</sup>*Queen Anne's County Deeds*, RT No. A, f. 166.

L76.6s, well above the median estate posited by Carr and Walsh.<sup>45</sup> An evaluation of Morgan's real property with regard to his goods and chattel yields insight into the way in which he ran his plantation.

Morgan's plantations was among the poorer estates appraised, and was relatively simple. It included the basics of a tobacco plantation: two large tobacco houses (each 40 feet long and 20 feet wide), fencing, an apple orchard, and housing. Morgan's plantation included two buildings the appraisers termed "houses", but only one was called a "dwelling house 25 feet long and 15 feet wide." The other was an "old log house 20 feet long and 15 feet wide," which may have functioned as a workroom and storage area. He owned a "cyder mill" and casks-- some full of cider--a wool spinning wheel, and a "parcell of shoemakers tools." He also owned a few consumer goods to make his family's life more comfortable, but they were neither numerous nor grand. Morgan's chairs were "old," and although he owned two silver spoons, he had no books. Nor did he own slave or servant men to help him with the tobacco crop; instead, Morgan had only an "old Negroe

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<sup>45</sup>*Maryland Provincial Records, Registry of Wills, Liber 10, f. 285. Carr and Walsh, "Inventories and the Analysis of Wealth," 87.*

Woman" who may have worked either in his fields or his household.<sup>46</sup>

On a typical day we might have found Morgan and his son working in the tobacco fields, making rails for fencing, or clearing new land. If it were spring, they might have been shearing sheep, if autumn, putting up tobacco, if winter, making shoes. His wife, slave, and daughters would have spent their days tending a garden and processing produce, gathering fruit for cider, spinning wool for cloth or for local exchange, or cooking in one of the "iron potts" Morgan owned.

Not surprisingly, Morgan's house has not survived to the present. A house of similar size and age in Queen Anne's County, however, is still extant. This house is Shepherd's Fortune, situated near the western boundary of the county near Hambleton's Creek. Shepherd's Fortune can help illustrate the ways in which Morgan and his family inhabited their environment.

Shepherd's Fortune was a frame, one and a half story dwelling with a steeply pitched roof. It included two rooms on the first floor, and two sleeping chambers

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<sup>46</sup>According to Carole Shammass, "Two-thirds of those with estates between L51 and L200 had a woman slave and most out of that group had three or more." She is referring to the Chesapeake as a whole. Eastern Shore planters had smaller slave holdings than did their counterparts in Virginia and on Maryland's Western Shore. Household service was usually limited to either young girls or very old women. Shammass, "Black Women's Work," 9 and 15.



above.<sup>47</sup> The interior of the first floor was paneled, and stairs ascended to the sleeping chambers. The house had a brick cellar and a brick chimney flush with the end of the house--that is, it was not attached to the exterior wall, but rather was enclosed in the plan of the house.

Morgan's wife would have cooked in the room with the fireplace, where the family kept and used tables, chairs, and cooking utensils. The good and the old feather beds and the "old looking glass" were in the second ground-floor room. Each chamber upstairs also had a bedstead, chests, and trunks, while one held the household spinning wheel. Casks of cider, vegetables, and cured meat were stored in the cellar.

The plantations of Charles Seth (d.1737) represent a significantly different type of estate.<sup>48</sup> Valued at an income of L14.5s in 1740 (more than three times as high as the mean), the estate included two plantations and a water mill. The primary plantation was Seth's dwelling plantation, Mount Mill; the second was leased to a tenant, Thomas Johning. Each plantation appeared in the valuation as an independent residential unit, with a

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<sup>47</sup>"Shepherd's Fortune," *Inventory Form for State Historic Sites Survey*, QA-22, Maryland Historical Trust (1980).

<sup>48</sup>*Queen Anne's County Deeds*, RT No. B, f. 389, RT No. C, f. 21.

primary dwelling house. Seth's home plantation was far more elaborate than that of his tenant, which had only the most basic of improvements: an old house, a small kitchen, a good fence, and an old log corn house. Seth's home plantation was also more fully developed than that of James Morgan; its improvements included a second dwelling house, a meat house, a brick oven, a brick milk house, an orchard, a frame barn in "reasonable repair," an "old log corn house," "one old hen house," and two tobacco houses, both "very much out of repair." Mount Mill was an elaborate estate for the 1740s; its annual income was the second highest in the sample until 1754. It was also the first sample plantation to include numerous and varied buildings.<sup>49</sup>

At his death in 1737, Seth owned a very large estate of movables, valued at L457.19s.<sup>50</sup> Although he was wealthy, Seth did not own many conspicuous amenities--no silver plate, fine china, or pictures. Among his goods were "a parcell old books", "a parcel of Earthen Ware",

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<sup>49</sup>The highest valuation for an estate until 1787 was for the estate of William Sweatnam (*Queen Anne's County Deeds*, IK No. A, f. 257), who owned three plantations and a water mill. His plantations were valued at L2.9s, his mill at L39.4s. Unfortunately, the valuation of his property does not contain any descriptions of improvements. Seth's plantations were valued at L8.16s altogether, his mill at L5.10s.

<sup>50</sup>*Maryland Provincial Records, Registry of Wills*, Liber 24, f. 18.

"2 wooden spoons 2 ladles", "a parcel knives and forks old", six feather beds, two tables, chairs, a few trunks, a "small chest of drawers", and a sideboard. Rather than consumer goods, Seth elected to put much of his wealth into working assets. He had spinning wheels for linen and wool, wedges for wood-working, ten bushels of salt for preserving meat, twelve hoes of various widths, "2 new cart wheels 1 old cart body," and "2 old plows and harness." He also owned one woman servant and eleven slaves.<sup>51</sup>

Seth's house, three miles east of Queenstown on a tributary of the Wye River, was in keeping with the character revealed in the investment pattern of his movable goods: it was nothing extravagant, but was well built and of high quality. The house at Mount Mill was L-shaped; the main part of the house was "30 feet in length and 17 feet wide with a stack of brick chimneys in the middle in good repair"; the wing was "25 feet in length and 15 feet wide in middling repair."<sup>52</sup> The main

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<sup>51</sup>This was an extremely large holding of slaves for Queen Anne's County in 1737. The 1733 tax list in Talbot County indicated that about half of the 400 householders owned slaves. Of this group, over 80% had fewer than five slaves, making Seth's nine slaves quite substantial. Clemens, *From Tobacco to Grain*, 148. Seth's inventory did not include crops of any sort. It was taken in September, before the season's harvest.

<sup>52</sup>The house described in the valuation is probably the house on Mount Mill documented by the Maryland Historical Trust. Swepson Earle dated the house to 1792, but architectural elements (such as brick bond patterns)

section was made of brick, was one and a half stories high, included a hall-and-parlor configuration,<sup>53</sup> and had a full brick cellar. Its interior walls were panel and plaster, and stairs connected the hall and the upper level, which was divided into two sleeping chambers. An attic was above the upper chambers.<sup>54</sup> A frame addition abutted the south end of the main section of the house; this addition had been remodeled into a kitchen by 1775.

If we had visited Mount Mill in September, shortly after Seth's death, the household would have been engaged in a variety of tasks. The slaves would have been cutting tobacco, putting the crop in the old tobacco houses to dry, and planting wheat to be harvested the following summer.<sup>55</sup> Seth's wife, Elizabeth, their daughter, Susanna, and the woman servant might have been combing and spinning flax, spinning wool carded after the spring shearing, tending the last of the season's garden, gathering vegetables to store in the cellar, and

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indicate that the house is "considerably older."  
*Inventory Form, QA-122.*

<sup>53</sup>A house with a hall-and-parlor configuration had two rooms on the first floor, one was a "hall" in which the family carried out many daily activities and tasks. The parlor was a more formal space, although it too could be used for sleeping.

<sup>54</sup>The curb plate of the roof is supported by the second floor ceiling joists, indicating that the upstairs was built as finished space. *Inventory Form, QA-122.*

<sup>55</sup>Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (New York: Norton & Co., 1982), 22-25.

preparing food for the day's meals. The household's female activity centered in the addition to the main house, where wool cards and spinning wheels stood near the many cooking tools Seth owned. Their work would also have taken Mrs. Seth, her daughter and servant to several of the dependencies clustered near their home: the meat house, where they dressed and stored meat for both household consumption and export;<sup>56</sup> the milk house, where they made and stored butter and cheese; and the bake oven, which the Seths would have shared with neighboring households.<sup>57</sup> The poultry in the hen house was also Elizabeth Seth's responsibility.

At night the various members of the household retired as befit their respective conditions. Family members would have slept in one of the numerous featherbeds in the house--two beds were on the first floor, the other four upstairs. The slaves probably slept in the large "old dwelling house...very much out of repair," and cooked their own meals in one of the "old iron potts" at the fireplace in this house.

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<sup>56</sup>Seth had ten bushels of salt in his inventory. This quantity is indicative of use in a volume that far exceeds a single household's demands. Seth was probably exporting meat in the West Indian trade.

<sup>57</sup>Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 85.

Seth's cart, in which he carried his grain to market, shared the new barn with several horses and two sets of plow and harness. A large herd of cattle and hogs wandered the fallow fields and woods surrounding the plantation.

Seth's plantation also included a mill. The appraisers' description of the mill house was succinct: "We have also viewed one old water mill which house is 20 feet square and very old and out of repair - both house and gear." Despite its age and condition, the mill was still a very valuable improvement; the appraisers believed it could generate 1000 pounds of tobacco, or L5.10s worth of income annually. They gave the guardian permission to take "timber upon any part of said minor's land for repairing said mill."<sup>58</sup>

Both middling and wealthy planters benefitted from the Eastern Shore's rapid economic expansion during the third quarter of the eighteenth century, but the wealth differentiation illustrated by the Morgan and Seth plantations in the 1730s and 1740s had increased by the 1770s. The plantations of both middling and wealthy planters had become more elaborate and complex, but those of wealthy planters had improved more dramatically. If we were to visit a middling planter's home in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, then revisit Mount

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<sup>58</sup>Queen Anne's County Deeds, RT No. B, f. 389.

Mill between 1775 and 1780, this increasing differentiation would be immediately apparent.

In 1782, Christopher Cox's plantation, Lowe's Arcadia, produced an annual income of L13.5s.<sup>59</sup> Cox, a planter who had abandoned tobacco for wheat cultivation, was a moderately successful man by late eighteenth century standards. He lived in a one and a half story "framed well finished dwelling house 36 feet long and 18 feet wide, with brick chimneys, planked floors above and below with 4 glass windows above and as many below, in good repair." The planked floors above and below, the glass windows and other finishes of the house indicate that Cox had money to spend on amenities, and that his home was in many ways more elaborate and more comfortable than that of John Morgan. His plantation outbuildings included a kitchen, a meat house, a barn, stables, and a granary--by 1780, this constituted roughly half the number of buildings found on a wealthy planter's plantation. His plantation's soil was good, its fencing sound. The appraisers cautioned his son's guardians "that no part of the said land ought to be cleared except the swamps that are in the plantation, and what shall be found absolutely necessary for repairing the houses and

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<sup>59</sup>*Queen Anne's County Guardian Bonds and Valuations*, SC, f. 43.

fences and for firewood," indicating that the fields surrounding his home were well-cleared.

The Cox household would have used these buildings in much the same way the Seth family had used similar buildings forty years earlier. The women of the household would have spent their time in domestic and housewifery tasks in the house, kitchen, garden and meat house. The men of the household would have worked in the fields, tended the wheat and corn, repaired fencing, and managed the horses and cattle.

By 1780, Jacob Seth's household lived more elaborately at Mount Mill than had his father Charles's. The complex of plantation outbuildings had grown substantially, and the Seth family now participated enthusiastically in a culture of conspicuous consumption. The lands at Mount Mill were still devoted to both tobacco and grain production, and fostered Jacob Seth's varied business interests as well.

When Jacob Seth died in 1775, leaving his estate to his son Thomas Johning Seth, the brick hall-and-parlor house still stood at Mount Mill. The frame addition was now a kitchen, and both were in "good repair." The barn that had been new in 1740 was, by 1775, old and in "bad repair," but the grist mill continued in "good repair," and provided substantial income for the plantation. Altogether, young Seth's holdings were valued at L70.18s,



well above the L4.8s median in the sample.<sup>60</sup> The agricultural outbuildings and fencing on the Seth plantations, however, had deteriorated under the care of Philemon Downes, the "now husband" of Thomas Johning Seth's mother. In 1779, James Seth replaced Downes as Thomas Seth's guardian, and there was a marked improvement in the condition of the property.<sup>61</sup>

Seth began to rebuild and repair the plantation's outbuildings. He built "one log stable 20 feet by 16 - one ~~corn~~ house sawed logs 18 feet by 16 - one framed carriage house 16 feet by 10 these three are in good repair." He repaired and maintained the meat house, oven, and hen houses, but allowed the tobacco house and prize shed to continue their decay.

The mill was still in good order. The appraisers found "one old grist mill with a house about 30 feet square two story high by the walls in middling repair with one pair of old cullen stones running with old double gears." When they returned the following year, the appraisers discovered that Seth had added a "tumbling dam the dirt work good."

Although the tobacco houses on Mount Mill had decayed, those on Green Spring, another tract owned by

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<sup>60</sup>Queen Anne's County Guardian Bonds and Valuations, SC, f. 104.

<sup>61</sup>Queen Anne's County Guardian Bonds and Valuations, SC, f. 103 and 105.

the orphan, were in good repair. Seth also repaired and maintained a schoolhouse at Green Spring--it may have been the same building first described as a school on the tract in 1719. The appraisers gave James Seth's guardianship high marks. They found the plantation and grist mill capable of earning "7500 pounds of merchantable tobacco in cask clear of all necessary repairs orphan's maintenance and education which last we think ought to be liberal." They did however, give James Seth instructions regarding repairs "to be made immediately the entry and kitchen to be filled in with brick or mortar and lathed the same to be new covered the old tobacco house to be new filled and covered."

Seth found it possible to build and repair a series of elaborate outbuildings on his plantation with the income he derived from his work as a miller. The mill also provided additional income that Jacob Seth had used to furnish his home with fine "extras."

In 1773, Jacob Seth's movables were valued at L1069.4s, a very substantial estate.<sup>62</sup> His house was full of fine things--china, jewelry, wine glasses, books, tea services, plate, two watches, silver clasps, several featherbeds, and looking glasses. He owned an expensive chaise and harness as well as three carts, corn and

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<sup>62</sup>*Queen Anne's County Registry of Wills, Probate Inventories*, AB, 1, f. 52 and 170.

tobacco harrows, plows, scythes and cradles. He bred valuable horses and cattle, and employed sixteen slaves on his plantations.<sup>63</sup>

In 1740, Mount Mill had had a parlor and a hall (kitchen) on the first floor and two bed chambers on the second, a brick cellar, a brick chimney and a frame shed adjacent to the main house. By 1775, the shed had been made into a kitchen and both first floor rooms had become public spaces. In the parlor, Seth kept mahogany and walnut tables, windsor chairs, rush bottom chairs, and two desks, one cherry and one walnut. It was in these rooms that Seth entertained his guests, had tea, conducted business, and took meals with his family. The new frame kitchen had become a large work area; an old table, a baby's cradle and pillow, and cooking equipment were in Seth's wife Mary's domain.

The furniture upstairs included four featherbeds, two in each sleeping chamber, an abundance of linens, such as the "fine white cotton counterpane, country make," pictures, warming pans, blankets, and trunks in which the Seth family stored their linens, blankets, and wearing apparel. Mary Seth also worked near the fireplace in one of these rooms. She kept her quilting frame, wool cards, woolen wheel, and "old loom" upstairs.

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<sup>63</sup>This was a large slave holding for the area.

Seth also had a large herd of cattle. In his father's day, cattle had run free in the woods; Jacob Seth's creatures were sheltered in the barn, with carts and harrows, and turned out to graze on fenced fallow fields at Mount Mill. He raised sheep for the wool that his wife turned into cloth, and he bred fine horses; his stud was valued at more than L15. His meat house contained 396 pounds of bacon and 135 pounds of lard, and his tobacco houses 6233 pounds of tobacco.

By 1780, Jacob Seth's plantation (including James Seth's improvements) had become the seat of a well-to-do miller and planter who could afford to enjoy some luxuries and leisure. The variety of domestic buildings on his home plantation, from a large brick house, to stables, chaise house, and bake oven indicate that he was able to invest in amenities as well as "working" buildings such as the meat house, barn, corn house, and tobacco houses. Few planters were as affluent as Jacob Seth; he was one of only eleven men in the sample who had estates worth more than L60 in late eighteenth century Queen Anne's County. His highly complex plantation, with its many special purpose buildings, is an example of the type of plantation which eighteenth century planters aspired to own. It had a fine house, good fields under cultivation, separate buildings to house different plantation functions, and a mill.

The Seths, and other Chesapeake planters, had managed over 150 years, to subdue the landscape and to shape their environment through the efforts of succeeding generations of family, servants, and slaves. They created living spaces, plantations, that even an English visitor might acknowledge as an expression of both a developing economy and an increasingly elaborate culture. They had succeeded in their efforts to "concretize the world in buildings and things," and to build "home."

Figure 1  
 Mean Income of QA Plantations, 1708-1798

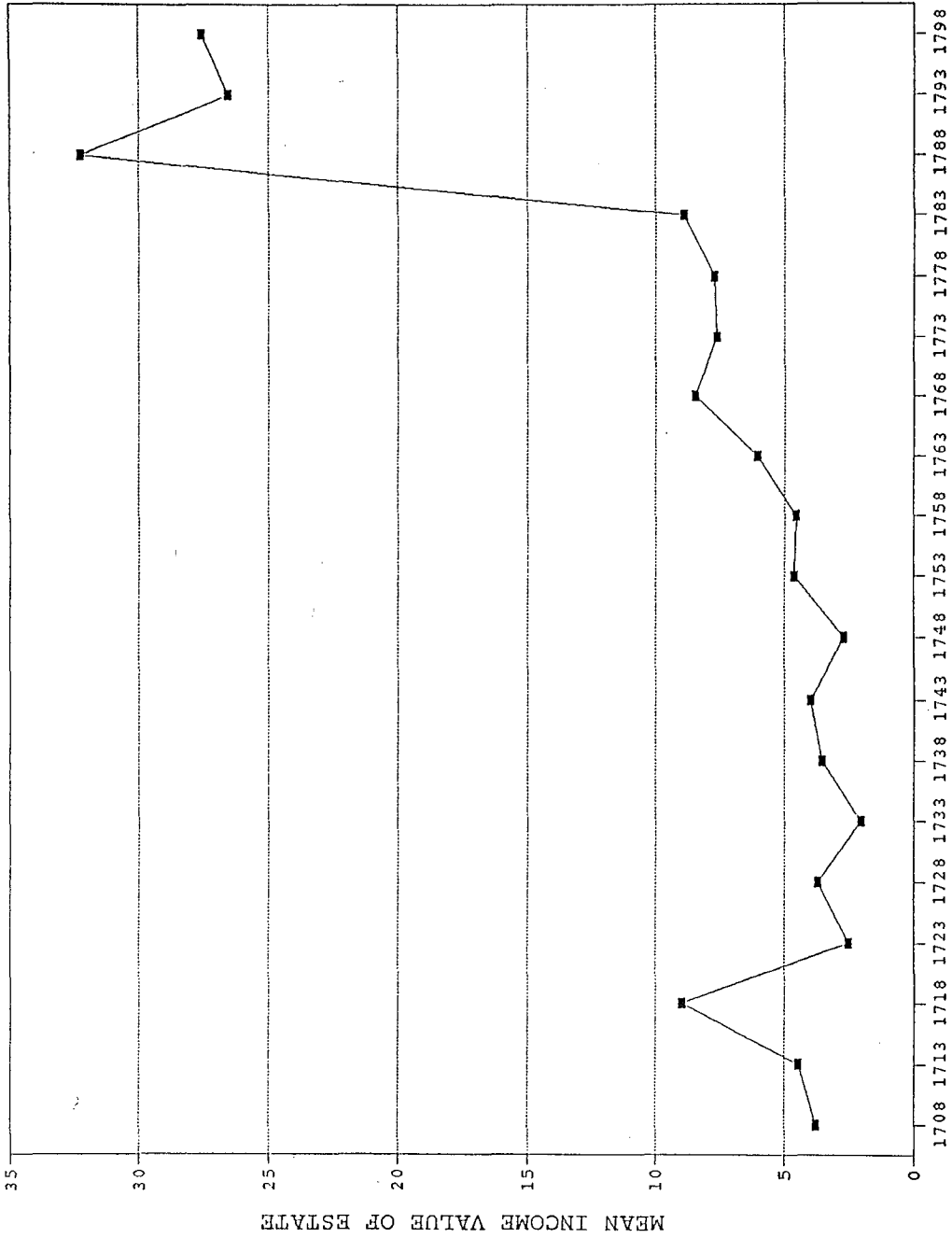


Table 1  
Dwellings on QA Plantations, 1708-1798

NWHSE.WQ1

1708-1735

INCOME GROUP	#	%	#	FREQ	MEAN	MAT'L (if specified)			#	FREQ	#	FREQ
						PLNT	GRP	PRM DWL				
X<4.9	30	71%	24	80%	362.50		44%		56%	7	23%	
5<X<14.9	11	26%	9	82%	550.00		100%			1	9%	1
15<X	1	2%		0%								9%

1736-1765

INCOME GROUP	#	%	#	FREQ	MEAN	MAT'L (if specified)			#	FREQ	#	FREQ
						PLNT	GRP	PRM DWL				
X<4.9	72	65%	63	88%	409.40		45%	11%	45%	27	38%	1
5<X<14.9	29	26%	27	93%	670.60		67%	11%	22%	13	45%	6
15<X	9	8%	8	89%	759.50		22%	33%	44%	5	56%	2

1766-1798

INCOME GROUP	#	%	#	FREQ	MEAN	MAT'L (if specified)			#	FREQ	#	FREQ
						PLNT	GRP	PRM DWL				
X<4.9	75	27%	72	96%	434.20		47%	7%	47%	28	37%	1
5<X<14.9	96	35%	92	96%	604.50		63%	12%	25%	31	32%	10
15<X<59.9	86	31%	85	99%	608.60		70%	7%	22%	27	31%	13
60<X ALL	20	7%	20	100%	633.30		50%	13%	38%	6	30%	
60<X RES	11	4%	11	100%	649.50		50%	17%	33%	4	36%	
60<X TEN	9	3%	9	100%	410.80		50%		50%	2	22%	

JLaMJ

EMTL SQFT  
MRTL SCDDWL  
LMTL SLVQTR

Table 2  
Domestic Outbuildings on QA Plantations, 1708-1798

NWDOM.WQ1

1708-1735

INCOME GROUP	#	%	#	FREQ	#	FREQ	#	FREQ	#	FREQ	#	FREQ	#	FREQ	#	FREQ	#	FREQ		
	PLNT	GRP	KIT	IN GRP	MT HSE	IN GRP	MLK HSE	IN GRP	OVN	IN GRP	STBL	IN GRP	PLT	IN GRP	GRDN	IN GRP	CART	IN GRP	OUT	IN GRP
X<4.9	30	71%	2	7%			6	20%	1	3%			2	7%						
5<X<14.9	11	26%	4	36%			2	18%											1	9%
15<X	1	2%																		

1736-1765

INCOME GROUP	#	%	#	FREQ	#	FREQ	#	FREQ	#	FREQ	#	FREQ	#	FREQ	#	FREQ	#	FREQ		
	PLNT	GRP	KIT	IN GRP	MT HSE	IN GRP	MLK HSE	IN GRP	OVN	IN GRP	STBL	IN GRP	PLT	IN GRP	GRDN	IN GRP	CART	IN GRP	OUT	IN GRP
X<4.9	72	65%	10	14%	5	7%	13	18%	4	6%	3	4%	4	6%					7	10%
5<X<14.9	29	26%	17	59%	7	24%	11	38%	4	14%	5	17%	11	38%			1	3%		
15<X	9	8%	2	22%	1	11%	1	11%	2	22%	2	22%	3	33%	3	33%			3	33%

1766-1798

INCOME GROUP	#	%	#	FREQ	#	FREQ	#	FREQ	#	FREQ	#	FREQ	#	FREQ	#	FREQ	#	FREQ		
	PLNT	GRP	KIT	IN GRP	MT HSE	IN GRP	MLK HSE	IN GRP	OVN	IN GRP	STBL	IN GRP	PLT	IN GRP	GRDN	IN GRP	CART	IN GRP	OUT	IN GRP
X<4.9	75	27%	11	15%	9	12%	7	9%	3	4%	5	7%	6	8%	4	5%	2	3%	13	17%
5<X<14.9	98	35%	40	42%	34	35%	19	20%	8	6%	18	19%	12	13%	12	13%	5	5%	18	17%
15<X<59.9	86	31%	42	49%	41	48%	17	20%	6	7%	20	23%	14	16%	12	14%	15	17%	33	38%
60<X ALL	20	7%	11	55%	11	55%	2	10%			7	35%	3	15%	2	10%	3	15%	8	40%
60<X RES	11	4%	10	91%	10	91%	2	18%			7	64%	3	27%	2	18%	3	27%	5	45%
60<X TEN	9	3%	1	11%	1	11%													3	33%



Table 3  
Agricultural Outbuildings on QA Plantations, 1708-1798

NWAG.W01

1708-1735

INCOME GROUP	# PLNT	% GRP	# TOB	FREQ IN GRP	# GD FNC	FREQ IN GRP	# BD FNC	FREQ IN GRP	# BARN	FREQ IN GRP	# GRN	FREQ IN GRP	# CRN	FREQ IN GRP	# ORCH	FREQ IN GRP	# OUT	FREQ IN GRP
X<4.9	30	71%	22	73%	9	30%	9	30%					5	17%	15	50%		
5<X<14.9	11	26%	8	55%	8	73%			1	9%			3	27%	5	45%		
15<X	1	2%																

1736-1765

INCOME GROUP	# PLNT	% GRP	# TOB	FREQ IN GRP	# GD FNC	FREQ IN GRP	# BD FNC	FREQ IN GRP	# BARN	FREQ IN GRP	# GRN	FREQ IN GRP	# CRN	FREQ IN GRP	# ORCH	FREQ IN GRP	# OUT	FREQ IN GRP
X<4.9	72	65%	40	56%	32	44%	19	28%	3	4%	1	1%	30	42%	55	76%	5	7%
5<X<14.9	29	26%	21	72%	16	55%	8	28%	8	21%			19	66%	21	72%	8	21%
15<X	9	8%	5	56%	5	58%	3	33%	1	11%			14	156%	7	78%	4	44%

1766-1798

INCOME GROUP	# PLNT	% GRP	# TOB	FREQ IN GRP	# GD FNC	FREQ IN GRP	# BD FNC	FREQ IN GRP	# BARN	FREQ IN GRP	# GRN	FREQ IN GRP	# CRN	FREQ IN GRP	# ORCH	FREQ IN GRP	# OUT	FREQ IN GRP
X<4.9	75	27%	16	21%	25	33%	33	44%	4	5%			20	27%	58	77%	4	5%
5<X<14.9	96	35%	43	45%	58	60%	18	17%	8	8%	10	10%	52	54%	78	81%	18	19%
15<X<59.9	86	31%	25	29%	59	69%	13	15%	31	36%	19	22%	61	71%	78	91%	15	17%
60<X ALL	20	7%	3	15%	8	40%	4	20%	3	15%	4	20%	9	45%	13	65%	2	10%
60<X RES	11	4%	1	9%	5	45%	1	9%	3	27%	4	36%	8	73%	8	73%	2	18%
60<X TEN	9	3%	2	22%	3	33%	3	33%					1	11%	5	56%		

NWIND.WQ1

1708-1735

INCOME GROUP	# PLNT	% GRP	# MILL	FREQ IN GRP	# SAW	FREQ IN GRP	# SMTH	FREQ IN GRP	# SHP	FREQ IN GRP	# OTR	FREQ IN GRP
X<4.9	30	71%										
5<X<14.9	11	26%										
15<X	1	2%	1	100%							1	100%

1736-1765

INCOME GROUP	# PLNT	% GRP	# MILL	FREQ IN GRP	# SAW	FREQ IN GRP	# SMTH	FREQ IN GRP	# SHP	FREQ IN GRP	# OTR	FREQ IN GRP
X<4.9	72	65%										
5<X<14.9	29	26%	2	7%			1	3%	2	7%	2	7%
15<X	9	8%					1	11%				

1766-1798

INCOME GROUP	# PLNT	% GRP	# MILL	FREQ IN GRP	# SAW	FREQ IN GRP	# SMTH	FREQ IN GRP	# SHP	FREQ IN GRP	# OTR	FREQ IN GRP
X<4.9	75	27%	3	4%					5	7%	3	4%
5<X<14.9	96	35%					1	1%	4	4%	3	3%
15<X<59.9	86	31%	2	2%			4	5%	7	8%	8	9%
60<X ALL	20	7%	4	20%	3	15%			1	5%	1	5%
60<X RES	11	4%	4	36%	3	27%			1	9%		
60<X TEN	9	3%									1	11%

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## Appendix

I have broken the data set into discrete time periods and wealth groups to study plantation development in Queen Anne's County over time. I chose to set the upper limit of the lowest income group at L5 (constant value). This figure is very near that of the median income in the sample. Carr and Walsh have used a similar rule to establish the upper limit of the lowest estate group in their work in seventeenth and eighteenth century Chesapeake probate inventories. The second and third break points in income (L15 and L60) are set at the levels at which plantation differentiation was magnified in the data set. The time periods were also suggested by the data. Plantation elaboration (as evidenced by the average number of buildings on a plantation) had three distinct phases: that prior to 1735, 1735-1765, and after 1765.

Jennie LaMonte Johnson

Born: 23 September 1960, Portsmouth, Ohio

Father: Edward Shannon LaMonte

Mother: Ruth Bradbury LaMonte

M.A. History, Lehigh University, 1992

A.B. Art History, Wellesley College, 1985

Westover School, 1978



**END OF**

**TITLE**

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