

## **INFORMATION TO USERS**

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

**The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.** Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

**Bell & Howell Information and Learning  
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA  
800-521-0600**

**UMI<sup>®</sup>**



POWER RUNS IN MANY CHANNELS: SUBFLOOR PITS AND WEST AFRICAN-  
BASED SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS IN COLONIAL VIRGINIA

by

Patricia Merle Samford

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the  
Department of Anthropology

Chapel Hill

2000

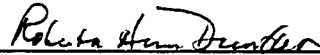
Approved by



Advisor: Professor Vincas Steponaitis



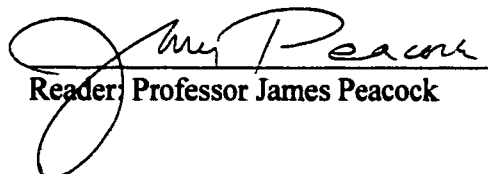
Reader: Professor Carole Crumley



Reader: Professor Roberta Dunbar



Reader: Professor Glenn Hinson



Reader: Professor James Peacock

UMI Number: 9968667

UMI<sup>®</sup>

---

UMI Microform 9968667

Copyright 2000 by Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company.

All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against  
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

---

Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company  
300 North Zeeb Road  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

**©2000**  
**Patricia M. Samford**  
**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED**

## ABSTRACT

**PATRICIA MERLE SAMFORD: Power Runs in Many Channels: Subfloor Pits and West African-Based Spiritual Traditions in Colonial Virginia**  
(Under the direction of Vincas P. Steponaitis.)

Enslaved Africans and their descendants comprised a significant portion of the colonial Virginia's population. Many enslaved people of African descent lived on rural slave quarters, adjacent to the agricultural fields in which they labored. Since the 1970s, archaeologists working in the American South have been excavating the material remains of these slave quarters and learning about slave life.

A common characteristic of Virginia slave quarters is the presence of subfloor pits dug into the soil underneath the houses. The functions of these pits has long been a matter of debate among archaeologists, with their use as storage places for personal belongings or root vegetables forming the most common explanation. Contextual and ethnohistoric data suggest that some of these pits may have served in a spiritual fashion as West African-style shrines. This dissertation examines physical characteristics and artifact assemblages from subfloor pits in Virginia to determine subfloor pit functions. The date range of this sample spans the late seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries. I examined the shape, location, surface area and depth of 103 subfloor pits in order to determine if patterns existed that would allow the formation of hypotheses about pit function. Based on the results of this systematic analysis, I examined the artifact assemblages of subfloor pits from five slave quarters outside of Williamsburg, Virginia. Analysis showed evidence that these pits were used in several ways: for food storage, as personal storage spaces, and as West African-style shrines. The connections between Igbo cultural practices and Virginia archaeological evidence is explored.

**Dedicated with love to the memories of  
my mother Alice Bailey Samford  
and  
my friend Thomas Henry Hargrove**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the assistance of many individuals. Committee members first and foremost can make all the difference in whether writing a dissertation is a lesson in torture, or an enriching experience. I would state unequivocally that my experience was the latter, thanks in large part to my great committee. My chair, Vin Steponaitis, always found time in his busy schedule to offer counsel and a sympathetic ear. Thanks are also in order to Carole Crumley, Robert Ann Dunbar, Glenn Hinson, and James Peacock.

Many colleagues had a role in seeing this project through to its completion. Since much of my analysis focused on previously excavated archaeological sites, various institutions in Virginia made their collections available to me. I was made to feel particularly welcome at the James River Institute for Archaeology in Jamestown, Virginia, where the Utopia Quarter collections are curated. Diane Masters, Fiona Bessey, Sherrie Beavers, Tara Winters, Matt Laird, Dave Givens, Brad McDonald, and Rudy the dog made my frequent trips to JRIA not only smooth sailing, but fun too. My particular thanks go to Garrett Fesler, also at JRIA, who unselfishly shared data from his own dissertation research, and was a great sounding board for what he must have thought were some pretty far-out ideas. At Virginia Commonwealth University, I gathered data on several seventeenth- and nineteenth-century sites that were used in the statistical analysis of pit change over time. At VCU, I would like to thank Dan Mouer, Robin Ryder, and Taft Kiser.

The Kingsmill Quarter collections are stored at the Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks, in Richmond. I would like to thank Elisabeth Acuff, Keith Egloff, and Catherine Slusser for their assistance in working with these collections. The Department of Archaeological Research at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation curates the Carter's Grove Quarter assemblage. My thanks to Gregory Brown, Marley R. Brown III, William Pittman, and Kelly Ladd. Cary Carson, Jay Gaynor, and Martha Katz-Hyman, also at Colonial Williamsburg, assisted me. At Monticello, Fraser Neiman, Director of Archaeology, was kind enough to arrange housing at the Center for Jefferson Studies during my stay. Monticello's Archaeological Lab Manager Leslie McFaden, and Archaeological Field Manager John Metz provided invaluable assistance with the Monticello artifacts and field notes.

Working with collections located a state away from Chapel Hill meant that I needed homes away from home while I was on the road. Many people opened their homes to me and for those kindnesses, I am eternally grateful. Not only did I have a place to sleep, but was able to enjoy the company of good friends as well. Kara and John Metz hosted me while I worked in Richmond, as did Reverend Morgan and Nancy Smart. My sister, Nancy Durham, and my niece Alana and nephew Matthew put up with me on numerous occasions, cheerfully accepting



a tired relative at the end of a long day. Ann, Carl, and Kate Martin kept a bedroom with my name on it in Williamsburg. They also made sure to invite other friends over during my visits, so I was able to keep up with old friends during my research trips. During the time that I worked on this project, I was also privileged to share in my goddaughter Kate's early years – a joy that I will cherish always.

Fellow students and colleagues in the Anthropology Department and the Research Laboratories of Archaeology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill kept me going in many ways throughout this project. Tom Maher and Steve Davis were always there to answer computer questions, and took the time to make sure I understood enough to do it on my own the next time. Brenda Moore at the RLA and Suphronia Cheek in the Anthropology Department facilitated all those important necessities that graduate students sometimes overlook– like making sure I was registered and on the payroll! Mintcy Maxham and Sara Bon-Harper unraveled the mysteries of Excel on numerous occasions. Leslie Bartlett, Jane Eastman, Julie Flowerday, Alison Greene, Tom Hargrove, Joe Herbert, Annie Holm, Carla Jones, Elizabeth Jones, Diane Levy, Trish McGuire, Tim Mooney, Chris Rodning, Jennie Smith, Martha Temkin, Amber Vanderwarker, Greg Wilson, and Alicia Wise behaved in the way good friends do – they listened, held my hand, and provided a stern dose of reality when I really needed it. Thanks to all. I am honored to have worked with each and every one of my Chapel Hill colleagues.

Numerous other individuals also deserve recognition and thanks here. Kim Kelley-Wagner prepared several of the illustrations. Henry Drewal and Bolaji Campbell of the University of Wisconsin at Madison gave freely of their expertise about West African art and spirituality. Other scholars also served as sounding boards at various points during this project. My thanks go to Sarah Adams of Yale University, Eli Bontor of Appalachian State University, Herbert Cole, Reverend Eze Ndubisi, Dr. Richard Henderson, Loretta Lautzenhiser of Coastal Carolina Research, Dr. Chika Okeke of University of South Florida at Tampa, Sally Peterson at the North Carolina Museum of History, and Robert Farris Thompson at Yale University. Kay P. Williams, Administrator at Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens, and my fellow staff there were very supportive during the last few months of the dissertation process.

Funding from several sources assisted in the completion of this project. A Sigma Xi Grant provided funding that allowed me to travel to several collections, and a Mooney Award paid for the ethnobotanical analysis. A fellowship from the J. Paul Getty Foundation allowed me to present some of the findings from this dissertation at the World Archaeology Congress in Capetown, South Africa.

Last, but not least, my extended family has been understanding and supportive during this long process. They have given me their love and support, never questioning why this task I set upon myself was so important to me.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables .....	xii
List of Figures.....	xiii
Prologue .....	xvi
Chapters	
I. Introduction .....	1
A. African American Archaeology.....	5
B. The Present Study .....	15
1. Who Was Using Subfloor Pits?.....	17
2. The Construction of Subfloor Pits.....	25
C. Slaves in Virginia .....	30
D. Enslaved Communities in Tidewater Virginia .....	38
E. Methodology.....	39
F. Organization of Dissertation.....	41
II. Regional Context .....	45
A. The Plantations .....	51
B. Demography of Virginia Slavery .....	53
C. The Igbo.....	58
1. Social and Political Structure .....	58
2. Spiritual Beliefs.....	62
3. West African Trade and Igbo Culture .....	63
4. The Igbo in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries .....	65
D. Summary.....	68
III. Historical and Archaeological Overview of the Study Sites .....	70
A. Utopia Quarter Period II (44JC32), ca. 1700-1725 .....	71

1.	Archaeological Evidence at the Site.....	74
a.	Structure 1 .....	76
b.	Structure 10 .....	78
c.	Structure 20 .....	85
d.	Service Building.....	88
2.	Archaeological Analysis of Subfloor Pits .....	88
3.	Summary .....	90
B.	Utopia Quarter Period III (44JC32), ca. 1725-1750.....	91
1.	Archaeological Evidence at the Site.....	93
a.	Structure 40 .....	94
b.	Structure 50 .....	94
c.	Structures 70 and 107.....	99
2.	Archaeological Analysis of Subfloor Pits .....	99
3.	Summary .....	101
C.	Utopia Quarter Period IV (44JC787), ca. 1750-1780.....	103
1.	Archaeological Evidence at the Site.....	106
a.	Structure 140 .....	106
b.	Structures 150 and 160.....	111
2.	Archaeological Analysis of Subfloor Pits .....	111
3.	Summary .....	113
D.	Kingsmill Quarter (44JC39), ca. 1750-1780 .....	114
1.	Archaeological Evidence at the Site.....	117
a.	Structure One .....	119
b.	Structure Two.....	121
2.	Archaeological Analysis of Subfloor Pits .....	121
3.	Summary .....	128
E.	Carter's Grove Quarter (44JC110), ca.1780-1800 .....	129
1.	Archaeological Evidence at the Site.....	131
a.	Group House .....	134
b.	Duplex.....	134
c.	Foreman's House .....	137

2.	Archaeological Analysis of Subfloor Pits .....	137
3.	Summary .....	140
F	Summary.....	140
IV.	Subfloor Pits—Preliminary Analysis and Proposed Functions .....	143
A.	Analytical Testing of Physical Variables .....	143
B.	Subfloor Pit Functions.....	150
1.	Clay Borrow Pits .....	150
2.	Root Cellars.....	152
a.	Virginia Slave Foodways .....	156
b.	Would Virginia Subfloor Pits Served Effectively as Root Cellars?.....	157
c.	Hearth Front Pits—Storage for Sweet Potatoes? .....	162
3.	Hidey Holes or Storage .....	164
4.	Shrines.....	167
a.	Subfloor Pits as Shrines .....	173
C.	Analysis of Size and Completeness of Pit Assemblage Artifacts .....	178
D.	Summary.....	186
V.	Results of Archaeological Analysis.....	188
A.	Root Cellars .....	189
1.	Results of Paleobotanical Analysis at Utopia Quarter .....	189
a.	Feature 36.....	190
b.	Feature 53.....	192
B.	Subfloor Pits as Hidey Holes or Personal Storage .....	196
1.	Utopia Period III, ca. 1750-1780.....	196
a.	Feature 45.....	196
2.	Carter’s Grove Quarter, ca. 1780-1800.....	198
a.	Feature CG643 .....	198
b.	Features CG715 and CG716 .....	200
3.	Kingsmill Quarter, ca. 1750-1780.....	202
a.	Feature KM363 .....	202
C.	Subfloor Pits as Shrines.....	206
1.	Utopia Period II, ca. 1700-1725 .....	207

a. Feature 9.....	207
2. Utopia Period III, ca. 1725-1750.....	207
a. Feature 44.....	207
3. Utopia Period IV, ca. 1750-1800.....	212
a. Feature 10.....	212
b. Feature 8.....	214
D. Possible Shrines.....	214
1. Utopia Period III, ca. 1725-1750.....	214
a. Feature 39A.....	214
2. Utopia Period IV, ca. 1750-1780.....	216
a. Feature 29.....	216
3. Kingsmill Quarter, ca. 1750-1800.....	219
a. KM362.....	219
b. KM378.....	224
E. Objects of Spiritual Significance.....	225
F. Conclusions.....	232
VI. Intersite Comparisons.....	235
A. Architecture and Demographics.....	235
B. Subfloor Pits.....	239
C. Material Life.....	243
1. Ceramics.....	245
2. Diet.....	254
3. Tools.....	257
4. Personal Items.....	261
D. Summary.....	262
VII. Discussion.....	264
A. Enslavement and Subfloor Pits.....	264
B. African Traditions—Pits as Shrines.....	269
C. African American Christianity.....	277
D. Conclusions.....	283
VIII. Epilogue.....	286

IX. Appendices.....287  
    Appendix A. Slave Sites and Probable Slave Sites in Virginia and Maryland.....287  
    Appendix B Repositories of Study Site Archaeological Collections .....289  
    Appendix C. Pollen and Phytolith Analysis at the Utopia Site .....290  
    Appendix D. Ceramics from Study Sites.....306  
X. Bibliography.....313

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1	Total Number of Subfloor Pits on Virginia Sites.....	20
Table 1.2	Number of Subfloor Pits in African American Structures.....	20
Table 1.3	Archaeological Sites Analyzed .....	40
Table 3.1	Utopia Quarter Period II Subfloor Pits Descriptive Details.....	89
Table 3.2	Utopia Quarter Period III Subfloor Pits Descriptive Details .....	100
Table 3.3.	Frances Thacker Bray’s Dowry Slaves, 1745 .....	105
Table 3.4	Utopia Quarter Period IV Subfloor Pits Descriptive Details .....	112
Table 3.5	Kingsmill Quarter Subfloor Pits Descriptive Details.....	123
Table 3.6	Carter’s Grove Quarter Subfloor Pits Descriptive Details .....	139
Table 3.7	Summary Data on Subfloor Pits from Study Sites .....	142
Table 4.1	Categories of Analysis and Codes for Feature Variables .....	144
Table 4.2	Repair Status of Subfloor Pits by Location.....	145
Table 4.3	Percentages of Pit Shapes by Location .....	146
Table 4.4	Descriptive Statistics for Subfloor Pit Surface Area by Location .....	46
Table 4.5	Descriptive Statistics for Subfloor Pit Depth by Location.....	49
Table 4.6	Plant Taxa Recovered from Selected Virginia Sites .....	58
Table 4.7	Size of Artifacts from Non-Hearth Pits.....	181
Table 4.8	Size of Artifacts from Hearth–Front Pits .....	182
Table 4.9	Completeness of Non-Hearth Pit Artifacts by Layer.....	183
Table 4.10	Subfloor Pits Containing Possible Caches.....	185
Table 5.1.	Pollen Remains from Features 36J and 36L .....	191
Table 5.2.	Pollen Remains from Feature 53X.....	193
Table 6.1	Dimensions of Virginia Slave Quarters .....	239
Table 6.2	Artifact Type Percentages by Study Site .....	244
Table 6.3	Vessel Forms Assigned to Vessel Function Categories .....	246
Table 6.4	Ceramic Types Assigned to Ceramic Categories .....	247
Table 6.5	Plant Food Remains from Study Sites .....	257
Table 6.6	Tools from the Study Sites.....	258

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1	Costumed interpreters in enclosed yard at Carter’s Grove Quarter .....	4
Figure 1.2	Colonoware handled cup and bowl from Virginia .....	12
Figure 1.3	Virginia-made colonoware tobacco pipes.....	13
Figure 1.4	The Old Plantation .....	16
Figure 1.5	Subfloor pits in Structure 1 at Kingsmill Quarter.....	18
Figure 1.6	Number of subfloor pits on Virginia Sites.....	21
Figure 1.7	Quantities of subfloor pits per building in slave structures .....	22
Figure 2.1	Map of Tidewater Virginia .....	46
Figure 2.2	James/York peninsula showing Utopia, Kingsmill and Carter’s Grove ....	52
Figure 2.3	The coast of West Africa .....	56
Figure 3.1	Utopia Period II (44JC32) archaeological remains.....	75
Figure 3.2	Utopia Period II Structure 1 archaeological remains.....	77
Figure 3.3	Utopia Period II Structure 10 archaeological remains .....	79
Figure 3.4	Phase I of Utopia Period II Feature 36.....	81
Figure 3.5	Late nineteenth-century log house with propped chimney .....	84
Figure 3.6	Utopia Period II Structure 20 archaeological remains .....	86
Figure 3.7	Plan and profile of Feature 21 .....	87
Figure 3.8	Utopia Quarter Period III archaeological remains .....	92
Figure 3.9	Utopia Period III Structure 40 archaeological remains .....	95
Figure 3.10	Utopia Period III Structure 50 archaeological remains.....	96
Figure 3.11	Phase maps of Subfloor Pits in Structure 50.....	98
Figure 3.12	Profile of Feature 53, showing erosional undercutting.....	102
Figure 3.13	Utopia Quarter Period IV (44JC787) archaeological remains .....	104
Figure 3.14	Women working in agricultural field with overseer .....	107
Figure 3.15	Utopia Period IV Structure 140 archaeological remains .....	109
Figure 3.16	Phase maps of subfloor pits in Structure 140.....	110
Figure 3.17	Detail of the Desandrouins Map .....	116
Figure 3.18	Kingsmill Quarter archaeological remains .....	118



Figure 3.19	Kingsmill Quarter Structure One archaeological remains .....	120
Figure 3.20	Kingsmill Quarter Structure Two archaeological remains .....	122
Figure 3.21	Locations of Phase One subfloor pits in Structure One .....	124
Figure 3.22	Carter's Grove Plantation (44JC110) .....	130
Figure 3.23	Carter's Grove Quarter (44JC110) archaeological remains.....	133
Figure 3.24	Carter's Grove Quarter Group House archaeological remains .....	135
Figure 3.25	Carter's Grove Quarter Duplex archaeological remains.....	136
Figure 3.26	Reconstructed quarter building at Carter's Grove .....	138
Figure 4.1	Subfloor pit surface area by location .....	147
Figure 4.2	Subfloor pit depth by location.....	148
Figure 4.3	Mud chinking at the Carter's Grove reconstructed duplex .....	151
Figure 4.4	Stick and mud chimney on early twentieth-century house .....	153
Figure 4.5	Shrine grouping from Igbo-Isiah .....	171
Figure 4.6	Hearth front subfloor pit artifact sizes .....	179
Figure 4.7	Non-hearth front subfloor pit artifact sizes .....	180
Figure 5.1	Pollen from Utopia Quarter .....	195
Figure 5.2	Plan and profile of Carter's Grove Quarter Feature CG643 .....	199
Figure 5.3	Plan and profile of Carter's Grove Features CG715 and CG716 .....	201
Figure 5.4	Plan and profile of Kingsmill Quarter Feature KM363 .....	203
Figure 5.5	Excavation of Kingsmill Quarter Feature KM363.....	204
Figure 5.6	Plan and profile of Utopia Quarter Feature 44.....	209
Figure 5.7	Plan and profile of Utopia Quarter Feature 10.....	213
Figure 5.8	Plan and profile of Utopia Quarter Feature 8.....	215
Figure 5.9	Plan and profile of Utopia Quarter Feature 29.....	217
Figure 5.10	Plan and profile of Utopia Quarter Feature 9.....	218
Figure 5.11	Shrine objects arranged on the floor of Eden House Feature 3.....	221
Figure 5.12	Wine bottles with seal of planter Lewis Burwell.....	223
Figure 5.13	Fossilized shark's tooth from Utopia Quarter Feature 3 .....	226
Figure 5.14	Carved bone container from Utopia Quarter Feature 3.....	227

Figure 5.15	Carved designs on pewter spoon handles .....	230
Figure 5.16	Pierced <i>Glycymeris</i> shell from Utopia Quarter .....	233
Figure 6.1	Woman sewing in front of a hearth.....	242
Figure 6.2	Ceramic functions at the study sites.....	248
Figure 6.3	Ceramic types at study sites.....	249

## PROLOGUE

The woman named Ebo knelt in the southeastern corner of the darkened cabin. She had long waited for this moment, but now the time was here. She carefully maneuvered the cork from the mouth of the brandy bottle on the floor beside her. It had taken months to save the money needed to purchase this brandy. The few eggs her scrawny chickens had managed to lay could have gone to feed her two daughters, but had instead been sold to Mistress Bray for small change. Before she could purchase the brandy, there had been even harder work, coming home dead tired from the tobacco fields to sew by the light of the fire, stitching a Sunday apron for Daniel to give to his future wife. In exchange, he had been able to procure for her the seven fossil scallop shells that he removed from the river embankment on one of his boat trips carrying loads of lumber upriver for Master Bray.

She brought the bottle to her lips, carefully took in a mouthful and held it there a moment before leaning over and spitting the brandy into the rectangular hole she had cut through the earthen floor of the cabin. Although the hole was in shadow, she knew what rested on the slight mound of earth built up on the bottom of the hole. There, in addition to the seven shells representing water and Idemili, the female deity of water, she had arranged the bones of cows – sacred to the Igbo people of her homeland, and the white clay tobacco pipes representing an offering to Idemili. She took another mouth of brandy, leaned over and spit into the hole again. This action she would repeat for six more nights. The seven shells and the seven nights of prayers and offerings were critical, since seven was the number of continuity and cyclical movements of life for her ancestors. After the seven days, she would carefully fill the hole, sealing the shell, pipes, and bones so that no one could disturb these sacred items. And at the end of that time, if Idemili looked favorably upon her actions, she would grant Ebo's request that her

husband, now residing on another plantation, would be allowed to come and live with her here at Deb's Quarter.

Finishing her prayer, Ebo glanced at her two small children, Patience and Sukey, asleep on the pallet near the fire that barely kept the April evening's chill at bay. She got slowly to her feet and, with a tired sigh, moved toward her own blankets, for dawn and another day's work would come early.

## Chapter I.

### INTRODUCTION

"The slave's history - like all human history - was made not only by what was done to them but also by what they did for themselves." (Berlin 1998:2).

Prior to 1863, enslaved African Americans performed much of the manual labor that powered the American South. Millions of Africans and subsequent generations of their descendants toiled in the tobacco, cotton, and rice fields of the South, while others were employed in various skilled trades and industries. Despite their crucial roles in the economy, the lives of slaves, in many respects, are shadowy and inaccessible. Because many, if not most, members of the enslaved population were kept from learning to write, their thoughts and emotions come to us only indirectly. A few slaves were allowed opportunities to tell their stories; some of them were relayed in the context of nineteenth-century abolitionist-backed autobiographies. Other former slaves had to wait over half a century before Depression-era WPA workers undertook an extensive program of interviews with elderly African Americans.<sup>1</sup> Because only a handful of the millions of enslaved African Americans were able to put their stories on paper, the narratives of the rest have to be gleaned from other sources.

These sources of information are varied, and surprisingly, quite abundant. Recent analyses of slave trade records provide information on where specific African cultural groups were concentrated on plantations (Chambers 1996a; Walsh 1998). The enslaved appear in

---

<sup>1</sup> Transcripts of slave narratives can be found in *The American Slave* volumes, edited by George Rawick (1972-1979), and *Weevils in the Wheat*, edited by Charles Perdue et al. (1976). For works dealing with the use of oral sources, as well as their potential biases, see Jack Goody *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral* (1987), Jan Vansina *Oral Tradition as History* (1985), John Blassingame "Using the Testimony of Ex-Slaves: Approaches and Problems" in *Journal of Southern History* 41(4):473-492 (1975), and Margaret Willson "Oral History Interviews: Some History and Practical Suggestions" in Wiedman (1986).

court records throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, although they were not allowed to testify against whites or free blacks (Watson 1983:28). Plantation accounts penned by slaveholders record seemingly mundane entries: slave names and ages, work assignments, punishments meted, and rations apportioned. Hidden behind the often spidery and faded ink strokes are the rich textures of individual and community life. In the hands of a skilled historian, these plantation account books can be used to weave compelling stories.

Over the last several decades, a wealth of works produced by historians working in the Annales School tradition have used various types of documentary evidence to address subjects related to slave culture. These topics have included the development of families and communities (Gutman 1976), African influences on attitudes towards time, work, identity, and spirituality (Gomez 1998; Sobel 1979, 1989), the roles of women (Brown 1996; Fox-Genovese 1988), resistance (Genovese 1974; Mullin 1972; Sidbury 1997), and culture (Levine 1977; Mintz and Price 1992). These histories and others like them treat enslaved African Americans as individuals who were active players in the scope of their own lives. They are portrayed as people who, while enmeshed within a system of enslavement, were not passive recipients of their marginalized positions. These studies show instead that slaves formed their own communities and families, resisted ill treatment and overwork, and reacted in individual and creative ways to improve their lives.

Human actions occur within specific historical contexts, with each individual's choices about life constrained to varying degrees by circumstances at a number of scales (Trigger 1991). These circumstances include environmental settings, and economic, political, and social conditions at local, regional, and national levels, as well as personal factors such as gender, cultural background, age, and religion. In the case of most African Americans, these constraints also included the power differentials that accompanied being on "the short end of the stick" in a slave society. Despite these restrictions, however, even enslaved individuals possessed some degrees of choice about how they structured their lives. Critical in these individual and plantation community choices were African traditions, as Africans and their descendants drew upon memories and shared knowledge.

Recent historical scholarship has focused on how groups of enslaved peoples, both Africans and their descendants, formed distinct cultures on the plantations of the South. The

increasing sophistication of these studies is due, in large part, to the adoption of a regional approach to slave life, as scholars came to understand that slavery in the North American colonies was not a monolithic institution. Over time, these studies have become more refined, particularly in their handling of the presence and transformations of African traditions (Chambers 1996a), and how regional agricultural economics, labor management, and plantation demography affected daily and seasonal work patterns (Berlin 1998; Morgan 1998).

Over the last several decades, archaeology has also come to the forefront as a means for studying the African American past. At the grouped dwellings known as quarters, the bonds of family and community were strengthened and reinforced as children were born and grew, as men and women fell in and out of love, and as the sick and elderly were nursed. Most slave quarters, not built to withstand the test of time, have long since fallen to the ground or otherwise been destroyed. These quarters are visible now only to archaeologists, who carefully record and excavate the soil stains and brick walls, and preserve the thousands of artifacts revealed by their digging.

Just as historians make it possible for the words written by long-dead individuals to come to life, so too a skillful archaeologist can coax silent artifacts to speak. Patterned soil stains and rows of masonry delineate houses, gardens, yards, and the larger landscapes within which the enslaved lived and worked. Firepits and scatters of artifacts found in an enclosed yard between two houses indicate a gathering place for work and socializing (Figure 1.1). There, a woman could tend her garden while talking with other men and women engaged in the daily activities that made up the substance of community life—cooking, child care, crafting items for personal use or sale, and simply relaxing. Fragmented dishes, bones, and other debris aid archaeologists in recounting stories about life in the quarters during the hours following the completion of planter-assigned tasks. These short spaces of time, free of planter obligations, were surely the most important hours of the day for the quarter's occupants. The fragmented animal bone and the hunting and fishing implements found in household refuse reveal the strategies used by the enslaved in their struggles to provide adequate sustenance for themselves and their families. Other items, such as beads and cowrie shells, speak both of the desire for adornment and individualization of dress, as well as of



**Figure 1.1** Costumed interpreters working and talking in an enclosed yard at the reconstructed Carter's Grove Quarter.



African-based spiritual traditions of protection and healing. These archaeological discoveries, and many more like them, help scholars paint a vivid picture of slave life. While not the direct voices of enslaved African Americans, these sherds and soil stains nevertheless reach out from the past. Used in combination with ethnohistoric, ethnographic, and documentary sources, archaeological findings are a vital component of the African American past, a way to shed light on the shadowy figures of the past.

This study uses the archaeological findings from five quarters on three plantations in eighteenth-century Virginia to examine how life changed for the residents there over time. A large component of this work will be examining the transformation of West African spiritual traditions on these plantations. The analysis is grounded in contextual archaeology, made popular by British archaeologist Ian Hodder in the 1980s. Archaeological study of enslaved African Americans predates this decade, however, and thus to understand what contextual archaeology has to contribute to African American archaeology, we must begin our story in the early 1970s.

### **African American Archaeology**

“Climates of thought and the interests of particular groups strongly affect the questions which archaeologists bring to their material.” (Shennan 1989:1).

Over the last thirty years, increased interest in exploring cultural diversity has sparked extensive research in African American history, material culture, folklore, religion, and archaeology. African American archaeological research has been profoundly influenced by past academic climates, and is at its heart grounded in response to the claims of earlier scholars such as Ulrich Phillips (1918, 1929) and Franklin Frazier (1939) that slavery had stripped away all traces of African culture. Anthropologist Melville Herskovits countered these claims in 1941 with *The Myth of the Negro Past*, a volume that outlined his perspectives on African survivals in African American culture. Herskovits's work, while burdened with overly simplistic notions about the processes of acculturation, argued convincingly that some African cultural traditions survived the journey across the Atlantic

and were there transformed into different, but still recognizably African-based, practices. Its publication opened the door for a flood of later works that have explored African influences on basketry, ironworking, and other material culture (Vlach 1978), cooking (Moore 1989), music (Spencer 1993), dance (Hazzard-Gordon 1990), and literature (Gates 1988).

Herskovits's work was also often used as a focal point for archaeologists doing early work on African American sites, as archaeologists searched for material evidence of African survivals. More recent archaeological research has been influenced by theories concerning creolization (Mintz and Price 1992; Mauer 1993), ethnicity (Askins 1988; Brown and Cooper 1990; Ferguson 1992), and identity (McCarthy 1997).

Sites of the African diaspora—the places in the New World where peoples from Africa or their descendants lived and worked—are being excavated steadily, whether it be free black communities in New York (Askins 1988) and Nova Scotia (Niven 1998), or enslaved communities in the Caribbean (Armstrong 1985). A detailed discussion of all such work accomplished to date would form a book-length treatise. The reader is encouraged to consult a recently completed comprehensive critical analysis and bibliography of African American archaeology (Singleton and Bograd 1995) for more detail. In the following pages, I instead provide a general overview of the last three decades of African American slave archaeology in the mainland United States, to provide a context for my research.<sup>2</sup>

The first excavation of an African American slave quarter occurred in Florida in 1968 (Fairbanks 1974), but it was not until the late 1970s, as the concerns of anthropology and social history converged, that broad-ranging issues began to be addressed by archaeologists. These issues involved the context of everyday plantation life, relationships between planters and slaves, processes of culture change, and the presence of West African cultural or ethnic markers within the archaeological record (Deetz 1993). Interest has focused on large-scale nineteenth-century cotton and rice plantations in the Gulf Coastal Lowlands and on plantations with smaller slaveholdings in the South Atlantic Lowlands, primarily in the

---

<sup>2</sup> A smaller, but no less significant, body of work has explored the lives of free persons of African descent. This research has focused primarily on single homes or communities in the northern states (Baker 1980; Bridges and Salwen 1980; Deetz 1977; Geismar 1982; Niven 1998; Schuyler 1974).

Chesapeake regions of Virginia.<sup>3</sup> The analysis of African American life was included as part of the research design in the Gulf Lowlands projects. Subsequent excavations were planned as examinations of labor systems on large plantations (Orser 1988), comparing the material lives of planter with enslaved labor (Otto 1984), and establishing patterns of artifacts to identify slave sites (Moore 1981; Singleton 1980; Wheaton et al. 1983). The earliest work in the South Atlantic Lowlands, specifically in Virginia, was rather more serendipitous. Ivor Noel Hume's 1960-1961 excavation at a slave dwelling at Tutter's Neck (44JC45) focused on the Anglo-American occupants of the property (Noel Hume 1966). A decade later, William Kelso's discovery of the Carter's Grove Plantation Quarters (44JC110) arose as part of an overall survey of the Carter's Grove property (Kelso and Frank 1972). Since that time, numerous sites of enslaved African Americans have been explored, with many of the sites excavated in Virginia. Although spread geographically over the entire state, these sites have been concentrated in the Tidewater region. Most of these Tidewater excavations have been eighteenth-century quarters on large plantations.<sup>4</sup>

Early archaeological studies focused on questions concerning the quality of daily life for the enslaved. These studies examined housing, foodways, and material culture, comparing assemblages created by enslaved households with similar assemblages from sites whose occupants were not of African descent (Crader 1984, 1990; Heath 1991; Otto 1984). Other researchers analyzed change over time within and between slave sites, focusing on housing (McKee 1992), material life (Sanford 1994), and food (Franklin 1997). Recent studies combine archaeological and documentary evidence to study the internal economies of slave households within the plantation system, and the consumer choices made by enslaved individuals (Heath 1997; Martin 1997). The development of regional studies and research that shows change within slavery across time has replaced earlier studies that depicted

---

<sup>3</sup> *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* (edited by Wilson and Ferris, 1989:534) defines the South Atlantic Lowlands as encompassing the Tidewater regions of Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and most of South Carolina. The Gulf Coastal Lowlands include most of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and some of Missouri and Florida. The Piedmont and Mountain regions of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama, as well as West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee are included in the region known as the Upland South.

<sup>4</sup> Examples include Carter's Grove Quarter (44JC110), the Utopia Quarter (44JC32, 44JC787), Kingsmill Quarter (44JC39), and Rich Neck Quarter (44WB52).

slavery as a monolithic institution. These studies show conclusively that there were countless local and regional variations, affected by the different staple crops, work patterns, economic and political circumstances, labor management practices, the demographics of the enslaved population, climate, technology, and a myriad of other factors.

Archaeologists working on African American sites, much like their colleagues working in other areas of archaeology, have taken two major approaches to analyzing and explaining their data. The first approach seeks patterns of artifacts that identify slave sites. The second centers on the search for objects with physical or behavioral links to West Africa. These approaches were born of competing schools of archaeological explanation that struggled for dominance in the 1980s (Cowgill 1993; Trigger 1991).

The pattern-recognition approach relies on tabulating artifacts into functional categories (South 1977). By sorting artifacts into such categories (for example, pottery, glass, and cooking implements compose the kitchen-related group of artifacts) archaeologists expected to find ranges of object frequencies that could be used to reveal the function of a site and possibly its occupants' cultural identity. Since the locations of many African American sites are undocumented, some archaeologists saw artifact patterning as a way to help identify the locations of slave quarter sites. In addition to locating sites, they felt pattern recognition could provide clues about the texture of daily slave life. Proponents argued that "the fundamental utility of patterns or pattern recognition . . . lies in their ability to indicate underlying cultural processes" (Moore 1985).

Pattern recognition is grounded in processual archaeology, which seeks to explain human behavior through universal laws as empirically established (Binford 1962). Processual archaeologists view culture as a system of functionally interrelated components and use data to test hypotheses about human behavior and the ways cultures maintain harmony with physical and social environments. Pattern-recognition studies were used in the 1970s and early 1980s by archaeologists working on slave sites in Georgia and South Carolina. The focus of research concerned living conditions of slaves as revealed by relative amounts of artifacts that had been characterized functionally. It was generally believed that slave sites would exhibit high percentages of architectural artifacts relative to other categories of personal and household items. The results of pattern recognition studies on slave sites show

that these sites exhibit widely varying patterns (Moore 1981; Singleton 1980; Wheaton et al. 1983). Such discrepancies could be caused by any number of factors affecting the materials recovered on a site, such as methods of house construction and destruction, regional differences in plantation economies and slave demographics, and archaeological data recovery methods.

Using artifact frequencies to identify and interpret sites is a complex task. It is obvious that archaeologists cannot expect to formulate a single artifact pattern that can be used as a standard identifier for slave sites. The variations apparent across sites, rather than being problematic, are perhaps the most valuable result of pattern recognition studies. These differences induce further study, allowing archaeologists complex understandings of archaeological data.

While pattern recognition studies focus on identifying sites on the basis of particular characteristics, they generally do not attempt to relate patterns of use in any specific way that addresses the African backgrounds of enslaved peoples. The second approach archaeologists have used focuses on African cultural traditions and the formation of distinct African American cultures through processes of creolization and syncretism. It originated in anthropological concern to recover cultural meanings, as decipherable particularly from components of the material world (Hodder 1986). Humans are seen as individuals with different expectations and experiences, each negotiating social rules and influencing social structure. Social structure is produced and reproduced through the arrangement of the material world, which people use to define themselves and others. Material culture, actively and meaningfully produced, is viewed as a text whose meanings can be read within the context of the human societies in which objects functioned.

In the mid-1980s, research moved in this direction, informed by anthropological theory and the work of social historians, folklorists, material culturists, and linguists. These disciplines noted the existence of African cultural traditions in African American culture, particularly in religion, music, dance, vocabulary, and folklore (Blassingame 1972; Moore 1981; Robinson 1990). West African influences are still visible in such forms of material culture as basketry, wood carving, and quilting (Vlach 1978). Seeking African-based "Africanisms" (Wheaton et al. 1983), archaeologists have explored several avenues, mostly

centering on the presence of artifacts believed to have been brought directly from Africa or showing characteristics that can be traced to modern or pre-colonial African cultures.

At first, archaeologists simply looked for objects brought from West Africa by the slaves themselves. Although few Africans were able to transport personal effects, some objects of adornment found on slave sites, including glass trade beads (Stine et al. 1996; Yentsch 1994), cowrie shells (Pearce 1993; Thompson 1983), and other jewelry (Kelso 1986; Parker and Hernigle 1990; Singleton 1991), showed strong links to West Africa, and many of these items probably originated there. Small items such as these, worn on the body or in the hair, would have been among the most likely possessions to come through the Middle Passage<sup>5</sup> to North America. In an early twentieth-century interview, a former South Carolina slave stated that the African practice of wearing coins served as protection against ill health (Puckett 1926:362). While currency of African origin have not been found on North American slave sites, sites associated with African Americans in Virginia and North Carolina have yielded Spanish, Dutch, Chinese, and United States coins and metal amulets drilled with small holes (Kelso 1986; Samford 1996a; Smith 1976; Steen 1995; Young 1995).

Such individual items, while manifesting cultural continuities, provide little or no information about the people who owned them. To remedy this condition, recent work, rather than focusing solely on artifacts, has been concerned with integrating behavior with material culture. The aim is not to trace direct unaltered transference of objects from Africa but to discover how African cultural traditions were modified by slaves' experience of the new environments, different social groups, and altered power structures. Emphasis is placed on interplay and exchange between the cultural backgrounds of enslaved people and plantation owners. Exchange was not unidirectional, as had been believed by early twentieth-century historians; enslaved blacks and free whites participated instead in a symbiotic relationship that produced new and distinct cultures forged from elements of each (Thompson 1983). Archaeologists have begun to ask how slaves used and thought about

---

<sup>5</sup> The term Middle Passage is a term that was used by ship's captains to describe the middle leg of the triangular voyage taken by slaving vessels. The first leg of the journey went from the port of origin in England or Europe to Africa to purchase Africans to be enslaved. The middle passage carried the enslaved to their port of debarkation in the New World, and the final portion of the voyage took the ship back to its port of origin.

material objects, how uses and meanings changed with time and circumstances, and what roles physical items played in the formation of African American culture.

Slave artisans throughout the South made fine furniture, iron products, shoes, clothing, and more for planters, but less is known about items made by slaves for their own use. The one likely exception found to date is colonoware, an unglazed, hand-built (i.e., coiled) pottery common in small quantities on almost all colonial Virginia slave sites and predominating on such sites in South Carolina and Georgia. Colonoware's range of distribution is "from Maryland to Georgia and west into Tennessee" (Deetz 1993:83). It is generally accepted that African Americans both made and used the colonowares recovered in the latter colonies (Joseph 1993; Wheaton et al. 1983), but the Virginia case is much less clear (Binford 1965; Noel Hume 1962; Mouer et al. 1999). There, this coarse earthenware shares decorative and construction attributes with Native American and African pottery, and its forms resemble those shapes common to European as well as African and Native American cultures (Figure 1.2). To date, documentary and archaeological evidence suggests that both Native Americans and African Americans made this pottery during the eighteenth century (Ferguson 1992). Whoever made it, its presence on African American sites indicates that African Americans were using the pottery. Incised markings made on the bottoms of some colonoware prior to firing, as well as their recovery from rivers and streams, suggest that some of these pots were used in African-based spiritual practices (Ferguson 1992).

Locally-made Chesapeake tobacco pipes, often found on seventeenth-century Virginia sites, may have also been produced by slaves (Deetz 1993; Emerson 1988). The incised and punched designs on these unglazed earthenware pipes resemble West African motifs (Figure 1.3). Nonetheless, this attribution, like that of the pottery, is open to debate because the pipes may have been made by Native Americans and sold to African Americans and whites alike (Mouer et al. 1999).

Just as the incised colonoware bowls are believed to have religious meanings, all over the South objects of spiritual significance with West or Central African antecedents have been emerging from beneath archaeologists' trowels. These have included single objects,

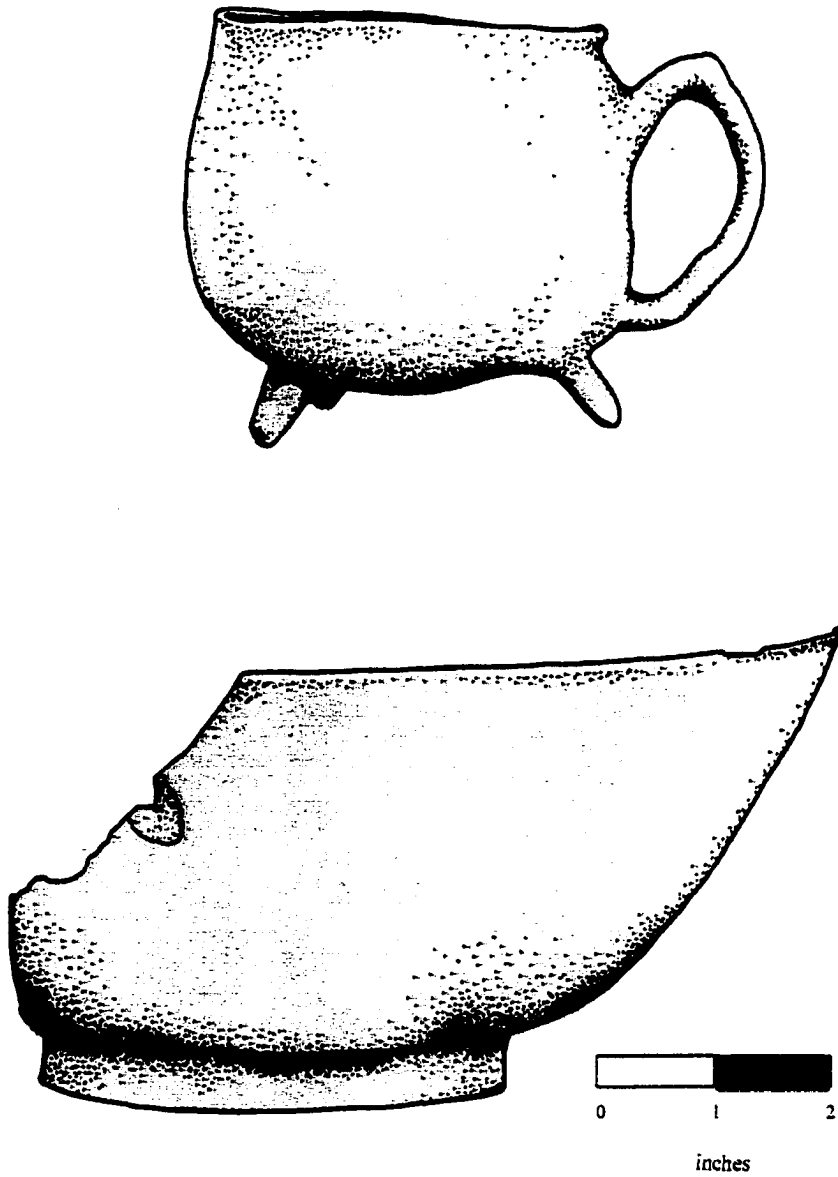
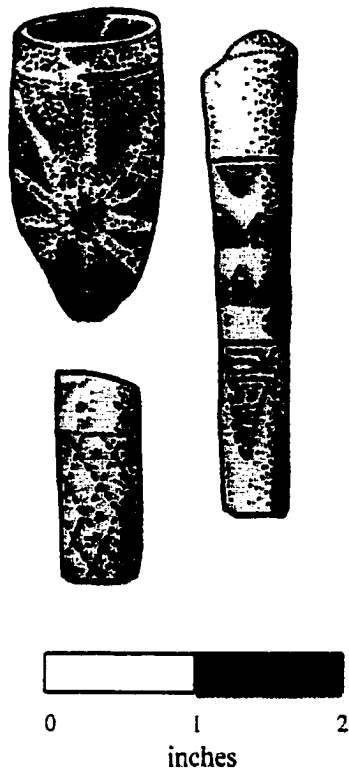


Figure 1.2 Colonoware handled cup and bowl from Virginia.





**Figure 1.3** Virginia-made colonoware tobacco pipes.

such as glass beads (Stine et al. 1996; Yentsch 1994), *figas*<sup>6</sup> (Smith 1976), and pierced coins (Young 1994) worn as charms, protective devices, and adornment. Other objects, such as cowrie shells, which had various uses and meanings in African cultures, could have been used as divination tools (Kelso 1986; Pearce 1993; Yentsch 1994). Also found have been grouped arrangements of items believed to have been conjurer's kits (Brown and Cooper 1990). Two caches of objects have been recovered from Annapolis, Maryland (Adams 1993; Logan et al. 1992) and similar items have been recovered from slave quarters in Kentucky (Young 1996) and Louisiana (Wilkie 1995).

Over the last several decades, historians have addressed issues of slave demographics and community (Gutman 1976; Nash 1974), acculturation (Mintz and Price 1992; Sobel 1987), resistance (Genovese 1974), master-slave relationships, and the economics of slavery (Thornton 1992). For all these topics, archaeology can help guide and refine the questions historians ask of their data (Sanford 1994; Singleton 1991). For example, excavations at Jordan Plantation and other places where objects of West African spiritual significance have been found add new dimensions to studies of slave resistance, spurring interest in the roles West African-based spiritual practices played in the lives of the enslaved and in their resistance to bondage. Archaeological findings combine with the rich ethnographic literature on West African cultures and African American folklore to indicate that covert forms of resistance may have been more common than previously assumed. Archaeology can show how West African cultural traditions were maintained or altered as slaves redefined themselves and their cultures in the New World. Objects symbolic of status and power in West Africa allow the examination of the structure of the slave community and the ways in which slaves could enrich their lives with articles of deep spiritual and cultural significance. On a less symbolic level, excavations reveal the material life of slaves--their housing, personal possessions, tools, and food--providing information pertinent to plantation management and social, political and economic changes in the plantation system. The study of garbage shows how slaves were able to improve the quality of their diets through activities such as hunting and fishing.

---

<sup>6</sup> These stamped brass or copper alloy amulets, shaped like clenched fists, are similar to charms used by peoples of African descent in Latin America.

Recent research has begun to focus on specifics of life within enslaved communities on individual plantations and within regional contexts. The reconstruction of households and how these immediate and extended family groups coped with the management of household resources has been the subject of studies by Heath (1997) and Franklin (1997). Other work has focused on the use of space within and around the quarters (Fesler 1997a), and on management strategies used by the enslaved to minimize personal and economic risk (Young 1995). Still other studies have examined gender roles within plantation communities (Samford 1998), and relationships between men and women at the quarters (Fesler 1998). By shifting attention away from slavery as a monolithic institution to focusing on a regional approach, archaeologists have been able to draw substantial conclusions about how regional environmental, economic, social, and political factors, as well as the African backgrounds of the enslaved, shaped the institution of slavery in various parts of the South (Figure 1.4).

### **The Present Study**

The fictional account in the prologue of Ebo and her shrine was created using a combination of documentary records, archaeology, and ethnohistorical sources from both Virginia and West Africa. The setting is on the Utopia Quarter at Kingsmill Plantation, just outside Williamsburg, Virginia. We know from an agreement between widowed Utopia owner Frances Bray and her father-in-law in 1745 that an adult woman named Ebo lived at Utopia. Her name indicated her Igbo cultural origins, although her age and the length of time she had been in Virginia will probably never be known. The shell-covered shrine, discussed in detail in Chapter 5, was discovered by archaeologists working at Utopia in the early 1990s. Examining the shrine contents in conjunction with information on Igbo spiritual practices from art (Cole and Aniakor 1984), literature (Achebe 1987), ethnographies (Parrinder 1954; Talbot 1969 [1926]), and modern informants (Eze Ndubuisi 1999, personal communication) suggested that the shrine was built to honor Idemili, a female deity associated with water. By combining information from various sources, it becomes possible to reveal stories about the past that would otherwise go untold. Such an interdisciplinary approach is used here to tell stories about African American life in eighteenth-century Virginia.



**Figure 1.4** The Old Plantation (courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation).

In this study, I examine one particular type of feature that commonly occurs on African American quarter sites in Virginia. These features were flat-bottomed pits, cut into the soil under the floors of the houses. Generally rectangular, but sometimes square or circular, these pits were scattered across the floors of slave houses during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, occurring singly or in groups. The 1,150 square foot floor space of the Kingsmill Quarter, for example, contained 20 pits cutting through the clay within the building's footprint (Figure 1.5). Other structures with multiple subfloor pits have been found at Carter's Grove Plantation, the Utopia Quarter, and Rich Neck Plantation. Although additional sites are currently being excavated, almost 200 subfloor pits have been excavated on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century African American slave sites in Virginia (Samford 1996a).

#### *Who Was Using Subfloor Pits?*

The strategy of using subterranean storage has risen independently in many cultures across the world and through time (DeBoer 1988; Hays 1985; Reynolds 1977). All three of the main cultural groups that populated colonial Virginia used underground storage facilities at some point in their pasts. Storage pits are frequently found on pre-European contact Native American sites throughout the eastern United States (DeBoer 1988; Stewart 1977), although they do not appear to have been used by Tidewater Native Americans during the contact period (Mouer 1993:147). The excavation of a mid-nineteenth-century Cherokee cabin in western North Carolina revealed a subfloor pit virtually identical to examples found on eighteenth-century Virginia slave sites and ethnohistoric sources suggest such pits were common in Cherokee cabins (Riggs 1997).<sup>7</sup> The Igbo, one of the West African cultures whose members were brought to Virginia in large numbers, are documented as using underground pits in the nineteenth century to store personal belongings (Yentsch 1991). Storage pits have been found in Iron Age Britain (Fowler 1983; Reynolds 1977).

---

<sup>7</sup> Some Cherokee are documented as having been slaveholders in the nineteenth century (Perdue 1979). It is interesting to speculate that the use of rectangular, flat-bottomed subfloor pits on nineteenth-century Cherokee sites may have been a practice that the Cherokee adopted from African Americans.



**Figure 1.5** Excavated subfloor pits in Structure One at Kingsmill Quarter.

Subfloor pits have been found on sites in Virginia dating as early as the second quarter of the seventeenth century.<sup>8</sup> While there has been a tendency among archaeologists to equate the appearance of these features with African American occupants, various scholars have cautioned against assigning such blanket ethnic affiliations (Kimmel 1993; Sanford 1991). They advise researchers to consider instead a range of documentary sources and archaeological attributes before concluding that a site's occupants were African American. Subfloor pits were by no means restricted to structures where people of African descent lived, since archaeological and documentary evidence indicates that such features were also used by white colonists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Linebaugh 1994:11; Mouer 1991, 1993; Pogue 1990).

Despite these caveats, however, compiling data on subterranean pits found on Virginia sites do show significant differences between slave and non-slave structures. For starters, the vast majority of the recorded subterranean pits appear within the footprints of eighteenth-century structures that quartered African Americans. Table 1.1 and Figure 1.6 depicts data on 68 excavated structures that contained subfloor pits, listing the known or probable ethnic background of occupants. Although the earliest excavated subfloor pit, found in one of two twin structures believed to have housed Africans (Mouer 1993:150), dates to a period well before the formal institution of slavery in the colony, small numbers of Africans were employed there at that time as indentured labor. Subfloor pits appear sporadically in seventeenth-century structures and only become a regular feature on sites at the end of the century, a date coinciding with the increased importation of Africans into the Virginia colony.

A recent analysis of 33 Virginia sites<sup>9</sup> compared numbers of subfloor pits in 54 structures (Fesler 1997b). The structures were divided into three categories: buildings from documented quarters, structures that were highly likely to have housed enslaved African Americans, and dwellings either known to have been occupied by white tenants or whose

---

<sup>8</sup> The earliest known Virginia structure with a subfloor pit was found at the settlement known as Jordan's Journey (44PG302). Two structures (Structures 17 and 18) at one end of the palisaded settlement and occupied between 1620 and 1635, are believed to have been housing for indentured Africans (Mouer 1993).

<sup>9</sup> This number includes one site, the King's Reach site, from the Maryland Chesapeake.

occupants were unknown. The results of this analysis showed that subfloor pits were more commonly associated with slave than non-slave households, and that the presence of multiple subfloor pits in a structure were “strongly associated with slave households” (Fesler 1997b:39). Table 1.2 and Figure 1.7 illustrate numbers of subfloor pits per building for 59 known and probable slave structures, using the dataset from Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1.** Total Numbers of Subfloor Pits on Virginia Sites\*

Period	Known Slave Structures		Probable Slave Structures		Non-Slave or Unknown Structures	
	# Pits	# Structures	# Pits	# Structures	# Pits	# Structures
1 (1620-1635)	N/A**	N/A	1	2	0	0
2 (1680-1700)	N/A**	N/A	19	2	1	1
3 (1700-1720)	19	3	10	6	3	3
4 (1720-1760)	15	2	34	10	4	2
5 (1760-1780)	50	6	33	5	1	1
6 (1780-1800)	22	8	6	3	1	1
7 (1800-1830)	1	1	5	5	1	1
8 (1830-1860)	0	3	1	3	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>

\*Sites and data used in this table available in Appendix A. Sites were assigned to the date ranges having the closest fit. Sites were assigned as “probable slave” based on what was known about the property owner, size of landholdings and labor force, and known location of main plantation house.

\*\*No known excavated quarters from these periods.

**Table 1.2.** Number of Subfloor Pits in African American Structures

Period	Structures with No Subfloor Pits	Structures with 1 Subfloor Pit	Structures with 2-3 Subfloor Pits	Structures with >3 Subfloor Pits
1 (1620-1635)	1	1	0	0
2 (1680-1700)	0	0	1	1
3 (1700-1720)	1	3	2	3
4 (1720-1760)	0	2	4	6
5 (1760-1780)	0	3	1	7*
6 (1780-1800)	1	5	4	1
7 (1800-1830)	2	3	1	0
8 (1830-1860)	5	1	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>18</b>

\*Three structures with dates spanning the period 1740-1780 were included in this category. This table includes kitchens on urban and rural sites, such as the Brush-Everard Kitchen in Williamsburg, Virginia.



Figure 1.6 Numbers of subfloor pits on Virginia sites.

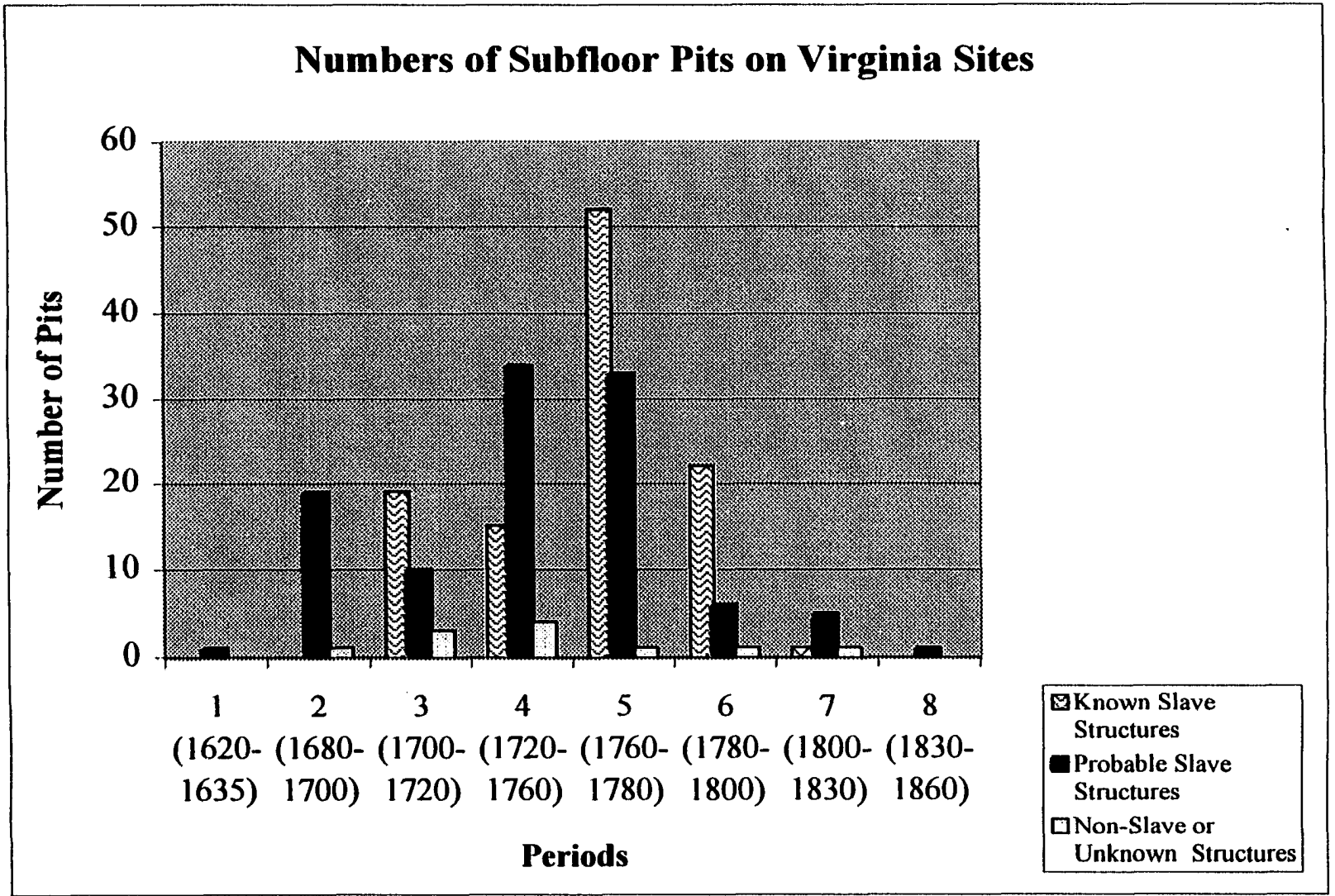
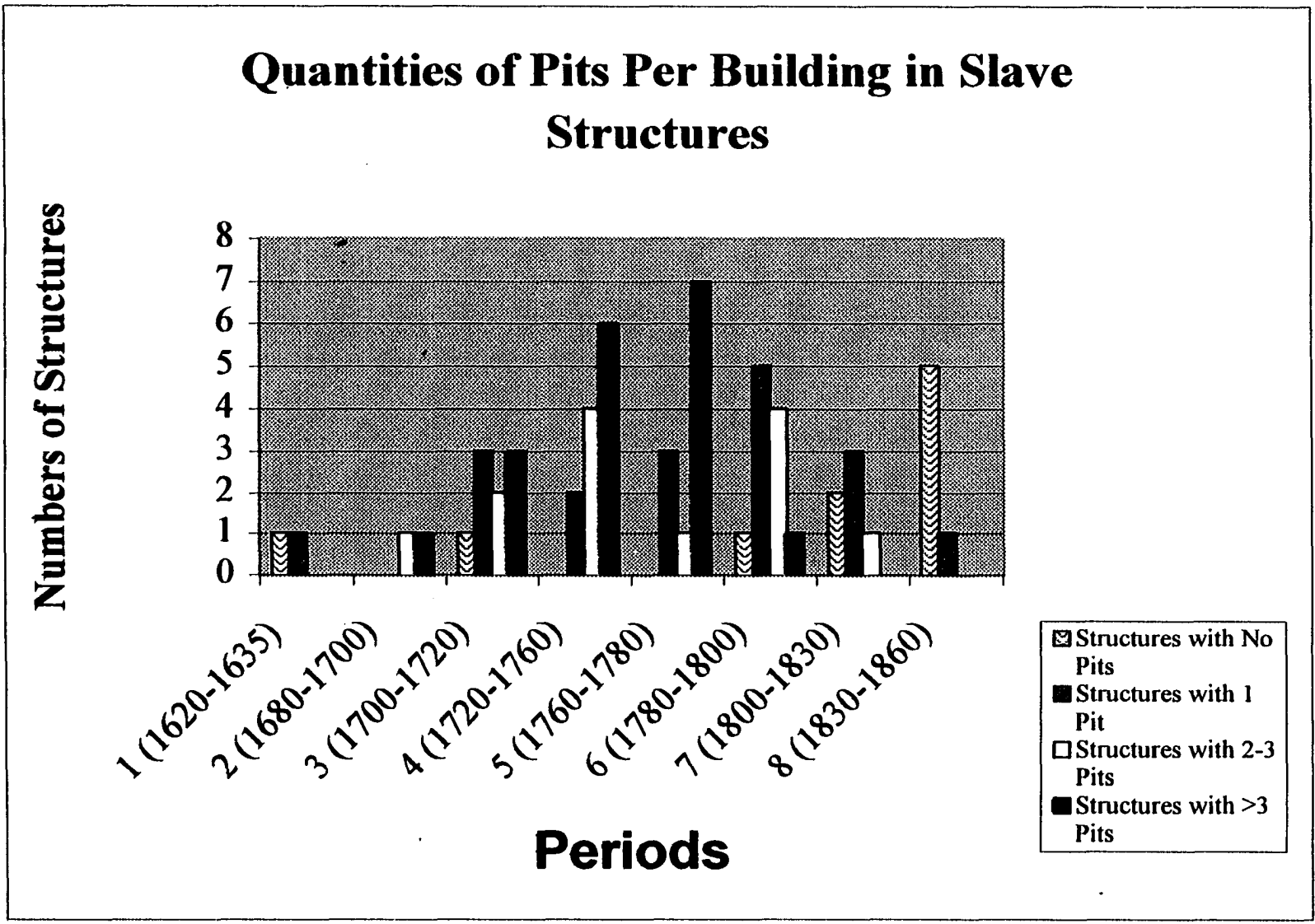


Figure 1.7 Quantities of subfloor pits per building in slave structures.



Subterranean pits found archaeologically in the homes of White colonists were different in several respects than examples found on slave dwellings. Most pits in White homes were larger and more substantially constructed than African American pits. In addition to larger dimensions (6 ft. or more in length and width), they were generally deeper, and had been constructed with some type of floor. These features, called “butteries” in the seventeenth century, were used to store dairy products, beer, and wine (Mouer 1993:149).

Interestingly, the increased appearance of pits on sites coincides with the rapid expansion of the Virginia slave trade at the beginning of the eighteenth century. In the first half of the seventeenth century, small numbers of Africans labored as indentured servants alongside similarly employed English peoples in the Chesapeake. Some of these Africans were able to work out their periods of indenture and set up small plantations of their own.<sup>10</sup> After 1660, a combination of factors, including the increased demand for tobacco and decreasing numbers of English indentured servants arriving in the colony, led to increasing restrictions and laws that eroded the freedom of Africans. Virginia colonists came to realize that enslaving Africans answered their need for a stable labor force that did not need replacement every seven years. The importation of labor directly from Africa, rather than through the West Indies, began in the 1680s (Donnan 1935:6; Kulikoff 1986:320), the same period subfloor pits begin to regularly appear on Virginia sites (Table 1.1).

Numbers of Africans brought into the Virginia Chesapeake skyrocketed during the opening years of the eighteenth century. The black population in Virginia increased from 2% of the total population in 1660 to slightly over 13% by 1700 (Blackburn 1997:269). Most of this increase came about through the direct importation of Africans. Between 1700 and 1740, 49,000 of the 54,000 blacks brought to Maryland and Virginia were African (Kulikoff 1986:320). Proportionally, Africans comprised more than 90% of the Chesapeake slave population between 1727 and 1740 (Kulikoff 1986:320). The cultural impact of such a massive influx of individuals on the already-established black population can only be

---

<sup>10</sup> Works on this subject include Joseph D. Deal III “Race and Class in Colonial Virginia: Indians, Englishmen, and Africans on the Eastern Shore During the Seventeenth Century” (Ph.D. diss., University of Rochester, 1981), T. H. Breen and Stephen Innes “*Myne Owne Ground*”: *Race and Freedom on Virginia's Eastern Shore, 1640-1676* (New York 1980), and James Brewer, “Negro Property Holders in Seventeenth-Century Virginia” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, XII (1955), 575-580.

imagined.

The regular appearance of subfloor pits on post-1680 Virginia sites, combined with the tremendous numbers of Africans arriving in the Virginia colony, suggests that the use of these features was tied to the presence of Africans there. Were these features one of the cultural traditions brought from one or more of the various parts of Africa from which the enslaved were arriving? Since only one nineteenth-century reference to similar features in Africa has been located (Yentsch 1991), can one assume that the creation of these pits arose largely in response to the conditions of slavery, rather than arriving as an intact African tradition?

Interestingly, these pits have not been found on the quarters of enslaved persons in South Carolina, Georgia, or Florida. Although some archaeologists offer ecological explanations for the absence of subfloor pits in these states, examining the history of United States expansion during the early national period suggests another interpretation. At the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, some Virginia planters began moving west and south, in search of new agricultural lands along the frontier. Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, and Mississippi were all destinations for these settlers, as well as for slaves who traveled overland to work these new plantations. Archaeological excavations of slave quarters in these states have revealed subfloor pits, suggesting that enslaved Virginians carried this cultural practice with them to these new areas (Wilkie 1995; Young 1995). Additionally, excavations in areas of North Carolina settled by planters and slaves from Virginia have revealed presumed quarters with multiple subfloor pits (Adams 1998; Lautzenheiser et al. 1998). Chambers (1996a) has suggested that the initial creation and use of subfloor pits was related to the ethnic heritage and food preferences of the enslaved in Virginia, linking Igbos in Virginia and their preference for yams. Thus, it becomes possible to formulate an explanation for the geographic range of these pits based not on external ecological factors, but on a combination of culture, demographics, and environmental factors. This connection will be discussed in more detail in following sections.

Other evidence suggests that African Americans may have continued using subfloor pits even after they were no longer enslaved. Some of the enslaved African Americans who fought with the British troops during the Revolutionary War were granted their freedom and

resettled in Nova Scotia (Johnson et al. 1998:196). Intriguingly, a recently excavated late eighteenth-century Black Loyalist site in Nova Scotia contained a subfloor pit (Niven 1998). Although the North American origin of these Loyalists is unclear, it is very likely that formerly enslaved Virginians may have brought this cultural practice with them to Nova Scotia.

### *The Construction of Subfloor Pits*

The previous pages demonstrated the association of subfloor pits with African American sites. What are these features like physically? First, all have been found within the footprints or confines of buildings, although in some cases the impermanence of the structural footings left no trace of foundation walls. Buildings with shallow brick or wooden ground-sill construction would leave no archaeological traces on many sites whose upper layers had been disturbed by plowing. In these instances, the locations and limits of the structures were often determined by locations of subfloor pits. These pits were cut into down into the underlying subsoil, a sandy clay that provided reasonably stable pit walls. A small number of the pit floors at the Utopia, Carter's Grove, and Kingsmill Quarters had patches of burned or fired clay subsoil. These scorched areas may be evidence of smoldering wood coals placed in the bottoms of newly-dug pits to dry out the walls and floors (Reynolds 1977). One of the pits at Monticello contained a possible fired clay lining.<sup>11</sup>

Constructing most subfloor pits required nothing besides a shovel and a willingness to dig a hole, although a small percentage contained wooden or brick floors, or evidence that boards had been nailed or fastened to the sides of the pits. In several instances (at Carter's Grove, Utopia, and Monticello, for example), prefabricated boxes were placed within holes that had been dug slightly larger than the box dimensions, and then soil filled in around the exterior of the boxes. The use of wooden boxes, linings, and floors would have helped in keeping the contents of the pit clean and dry, and may have hindered rodent intrusions. Boards nailed against the pit walls or boxes would have also served to stabilize the sidewalls

---

<sup>11</sup> This feature was the northeastern pit in the building designated Monticello Negro Quarter (ER984).

and prevent them from collapsing. In structures with raised wooden floors, these boards may have also extended between the top of the cellar and the floor of the house above to form a protective skirt or enclosure. A few pits showed evidence of wooden partitions or dividers that may have served to separate different foodstuffs, or create individual storage spaces.

While boards and other building materials may have prolonged the use span of a pit or more fully protected its contents, these items were far from necessary. In pit construction, slaves used what materials were available to them. The relative absence of paved or board floors or linings in these pits suggests that the enslaved generally had little access to such materials, or perhaps chose to use them in other ways, such as the fashioning of furniture or other household goods.

Exactly how access was gained to these pits has been a matter of debate. Analysis of subfloor pit placements, combined with flooring evidence in standing eighteenth-century structures, suggests that some quarters contained wooden floors.<sup>12</sup> The regular spacing of these features in structures containing multiple pits strongly suggests that pits were positioned between floor joists (May and Deetz 1997). Such an arrangement would have allowed easier access to pit contents and may have been similar to the hearth-front pit at the standing nineteenth-century Brems Recess quarter in Fluvanna County, Virginia (Kelso 1984). There, the floorboards over the pit had been fashioned into a hinged trap door. In other quarters, however, the more random placement of the pits suggests that those buildings contained earthen floors. In structures with soil floors, the pits would have been covered with hewn boards or some other type of covering that could be lifted away for access into the below ground space. The presence of ledges in some subfloor pits provides evidence for the use of such boards, perhaps set flush with the soil floor.<sup>13</sup> Other boards could have simply been laid across the open holes to cover them.

The earthen ledges found in some examples raises questions about the structural

---

<sup>12</sup> Quarter buildings whose subfloor pit placement suggests the presence of wooden floors were Kingsmill Quarter (44JC39), the Main Structure at Utopia II (44JC787), and the group house at Carter's Grove Plantation. Earthen floors were indicated at Structures 1, 10, and 20 at Utopia I (44JC32).

<sup>13</sup> Since many of the sites analyzed here had been plowed at some point after the structures had disappeared, the top foot or so of the subfloor pits had been truncated. This plowing is perhaps why so few pits retain any evidence of ledges to support boards.

stability of pits, particularly in buildings with earthen floors. Although most pits had been dug down into the firm subsoil clay, foot traffic across the boards covering the pits would have almost surely led to the eventual collapse of the feature walls. Since some of the structures contained multiple pits cutting through the soil floor, it would have been difficult for its occupants to avoid using floor spaces over the holes. It is possible that some of these pits could have been protected from foot traffic by covering them with tables, or in the case of pits along walls, with built-in beds or seating. In 1727, Robert Carter ordered that the cabins for enslaved individuals at his Rappahannock River plantation be constructed so “that their beds may lye a foot and a half from ye ground” (cited in Walsh 1997:90). Not only would such beds have kept the building’s inhabitants off of the cold and damp ground, they would have also permitted an underlying pit to be created in a location both hidden and out of the way of foot traffic.

Although round and square subfloor pits have been documented on Virginia sites, the majority (85% of the 100 features examined in this study) were oblong.<sup>14</sup> This shape would have been best suited to placement in structures with wooden floors, where one pit dimension would have been constrained by the spacing between floor joists. In structures with earthen floors, it would have also been simpler to construct simple board coverings to fit into earthen ledges on pits with straight corners. Crafting close fitting covers for other shapes, particularly round, would have been considerably more difficult. The use of round pits may have cultural significance for one or more of the African cultures whose members were enslaved in Virginia.

While pits cut into the soil beneath houses with wooden floors would have been protected from damage caused by rain, erosion, and foot traffic, groundwater rising into the pits could have caused the collapse of pit walls. Detailed analysis of subfloor pits in the Rich Neck Quarter, located on the outskirts of eighteenth-century Williamsburg, revealed extensive evidence of pit maintenance and repair (Franklin 1997). Over the forty-year occupation span of this dwelling, pits became smaller and shallower, as residents presumably learned from previous structural failures that large, deep pits were more subject to collapse.

---

<sup>14</sup> This shape encompassed both rectangular and oval pits. It is likely that oval pits were rectangular whose corners eroded.

New pits were dug into and through older, filled pits that had been damaged by groundwater, rodent burrows, and other factors. Statistical analysis described later in the chapter tested this hypothesis on additional Virginia sites.

The use of interior subfloor pits appears to have virtually vanished by the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century. There are a few notable exceptions: at Magnolia Grange in Chesterfield County, a subfloor pit was found under the floor of a house occupied in the 1920s by African American healer Rhodie Goode (Mouer 1992). Similar pits, located in the yards outside of houses, have been found on late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century sites in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina (McDaniel 1982; Ryder 1991a, 1991b; Stine 1989; Westamacott 1992; Wheaton et al.1990). Generally larger than earlier subfloor examples, these exterior pits were probably used as root cellars and for storing live plants over the winter. Reasons interior subterranean pits presumably fell out of use in the nineteenth century are outlined in Chapter 7.

Archaeologists have offered several explanations for these subfloor pits, including their serving as root cellars for the preservation of fruits and vegetables, as “hidey holes” for stolen or valuable goods, and as personal storage units (Franklin 1997; Kelso 1984; Neiman 1997). All of these explanations are plausible, and in many cases probably correct. But some of these pits had characteristics that made me suspect they may have also been used in other ways. When found as archaeological features, the subfloor pits were obviously no longer pits, but filled holes that appeared as darker soil stains against the undisturbed subsoil clay. After falling out of service, they were filled, presumably by the occupants of the house, with garbage.

A cursory perusal of artifacts from a number of the pits suggests that most of the debris could be characterized as secondary refuse; those small bits and fragments of household garbage swept up from yards or fireplace cleanings. But some of the pits seemed to contain quite a number of serviceable items, such as bottles, tools, and pottery. If the material life of the enslaved was as impoverished as eighteenth-century accounts suggest, then why were enslaved people discarding such items? In reading about the African cultures that were transported to Virginia, the overarching importance of spirituality kept appearing again and again. I began to suspect that some of these features may have been serving a



spiritual function as shrines. If this hypothesis was indeed correct, the items resting on the floors of the pits were most likely shrine objects left there intentionally by the individual or family who created the shrine.

Other questions intrigued me as well. Why were there so many of these features found on African American sites?<sup>15</sup> While underground pits are present on some Native American or Anglo-American sites from the same period (DeBoer 1988; Carter 1965; Fowler 1983; Reynolds 1977; Stewart 1977), they are much more numerous on sites associated with the enslaved. While the need for storage in slave quarters is feasible, the homes of colonial period yeoman farmers of European descent were often just as small and cramped as quarters, but subfloor pits are less typical in these structures. When they do appear on these sites, they are generally larger, rectangular, more substantially constructed, and located close to hearths (Fesler 1997b; Mouer 1991). In some of the slave quarters, however, pits literally covered most of the floor space. What was going on at these sites? Did each enslaved individual or family maintain his or her own pit? Were the numbers of pits tied in with the demographics of the enslaved population, both regionally and on individual plantations? Could changes be seen over time in numbers of pits and in the objects they contained? To me, these features seemed to be a response to enslavement – whether their creation stemmed from a need for food preservation, a desire for private space, a perceived spiritual need, or some other yet unknown factor. So, by trying to understand why enslaved African Americans were digging and maintaining these pits beneath their houses, I came to understand more about the context of slavery in eighteenth-century Virginia.

In this study, I examine the subfloor pits from a number of Virginia sites. Because the slave population of Virginia's eighteenth-century plantations consisted of Africans, as well as first and second generation African Americans, it is critical to consider the African heritages of the enslaved when studying their lives. Thus, I use an interdisciplinary approach that combines archaeological, historical, ethnographic, and ethnohistoric evidence from both

---

<sup>15</sup> Some of these quarters analyzed in this study are located in counties (such as James City County) whose official records were burned during the Civil War. Contemporary maps, collections of personal papers, letters, and diaries, as well as reconstructed deed evidence point with relative certainty to these sites serving as quarters for enslaved field laborers. Documented slave housing, such as Monticello's Mulberry Row quarters, also contain subfloor pits.

Virginia and West Africa, the area from which many of Virginia's slaves were taken. In their encounters with white colonists, the enslaved brought with them cultural traditions and practices very different from those of their oppressors. What were these encounters like? How did these different beliefs collide (or not) in the Virginia colony, particularly given the power differential that characterized these encounters?

### **Slaves in Virginia**

"I was a stranger in a strange land; and it was no wonder, perhaps, that a dreadful loneliness and homesickness came over me." Veney (1889:38).

Earlier historical research posited that the random patterns of slave trade placed Africans from many different cultural groups together on plantations, a demographic factor that would have led to the rapid abandonment of African cultural practices (Kulikoff 1986; Mintz and Price 1992). Presumably, the new creolized African American cultures that formed on plantations of the south were more American than African, as individuals from diverse African cultures would have found little to unite them other than their common plight. These works overlooked two important factors: the presence of broad-based cultural similarities within some of the regions of Africa tapped during the transatlantic slave trade (Thornton 1992), and evidence that patterns of slave trade and purchasing tended to concentrate individuals from the same cultural groups in specific areas of the North American colonies (Chambers 1996a, 1996b; Curtin 1969; Klein 1978; Walsh 1997). It is critical to combat what Chambers (1996a:9) has called "historical amnesia"—the idea that Africans abandoned all known by them after stepping onto foreign shores.

This study focuses in particular on the culture, history and traditions of one group of West Africans, the Igbo of southeastern Nigeria. Research has shown that the Igbo, a people from the Niger River area, were concentrated in the eighteenth century in the lower tidewater of Virginia (Chambers 1996a; Curtin 1969; Walsh 1998), the region examined in this dissertation. Igbo cultural traditions will be viewed within a larger West African context to isolate practices that could have been reproduced and transformed in Virginia. Work by numerous scholars (Drewal 1988; Thompson 1983, 1993a) shows that Africans in other parts

of the Diaspora did not abandon African beliefs, so the suggestion that this erasure happened in Virginia is implausible and offensive.

Chambers has posited that the enslaved in colonial and early national Virginia formed an “Igboized” culture, particularly in the interior tidewater and piedmont counties along the James, York, and Rappahannock Rivers (Chambers 1996a:401). He also argues that their numbers and concentrations were so great that they even “Igboized” individuals from other African cultural groups who had been enslaved. Igbos were by no means the only African cultural groups present in the Virginia tidewater; at different periods Senegambians, Ibibios and other West African peoples were also brought to Virginia. The cultural traditions of these groups will also be addressed, although in somewhat less detail. I focus not on the “survivals” of Herskovits (1941), but examine instead how Igbo in Virginia interacted both with fellow Igbos and with members of other cultural groups there to refashion familiar actions to help them in the new, often intolerable, situations in which they found themselves. What social, ideological, and material resources did Igbos and others enslaved in Virginia draw upon in creating new lives for themselves?

While traditional written histories are sparse for West African cultures, a number of other sources are available for archaeologists and other scholars. An ethnohistorical approach that draws upon history, archaeology, oral traditions, and ethnology can address anthropological questions about cultural meaning and change across time (Handler and Lange 1978; Herskovits 1941; Krech 1991). For example, A. F. C. Ryder has used European travelers’ descriptions combined with West African oral traditions to show European relations with the state of Benin (Ryder 1969). Through careful employment of a wide variety of sources and with attention to the types of bias to which each are susceptible, a researcher can tease out inconsistencies and formulate a more comprehensive picture of the culture.

Because many West African cultures, particularly those in the southern forest regions, did not develop written languages until recent times, one of the primary sources that nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars have used in writing West African histories is oral tradition (Isichei 1976; Osae et al. 1973). The rich oral traditions of West African cultures recount the creations of the universe, the origins of particular peoples, the founding

of kingdoms, and the stories of gods and goddesses. Taking the form of stories, songs, proverbs, and ceremonies and often transmitted by elders, these traditions are used to explain and perpetuate elements of West African culture (Davidson 1977). Although some may appear to be fantastic recountings of imaginary events, careful analysis suggests that many of these traditions do represent actual occurrences. For example, the legend of Oduduwa and his seven sons seems to be a simplified rendition of a chain of events that led to the formation of the Yoruba kingdom (Osae et al. 1973). Other traditions within Igbo culture seem to explain and validate social relationships (Isichei 1976).

While some researchers have questioned the validity of oral traditions, others have insisted that written histories have no more solid claims to validity than oral histories (Goody 1987; Horton 1972; Vansina 1961; Willson 1986).<sup>16</sup> In fact, at least one researcher has suggested that scholars be cautious about letting written accounts of events take precedence over oral versions, since the written word, which somehow becomes more endowed with truth, is just as susceptible to bias and error (Goody 1987). For past West African cultures, the written records that do exist were largely the product of outsiders travelling in the area. West Africa's long history of contact with other cultures has left a number of such sources. The first known written descriptions of West Africa date from the eighth century A.D.; prior to the establishment of direct trade with Europe in the fifteenth century, most of these sources were Arabic (Connah 1990; Davidson 1977; Osae et al. 1973). Descriptions from the period of the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, on the other hand, were primarily European (Connah 1990). When using these sources, it is imperative to keep the limitations and biases of the authors in mind. Because the document represents an outsider's perspective, varying degrees of cultural understanding are evident. It is thus crucial to know about the author, why the document was written, and the length of his or her experience or exposure to the culture. Entire segments of the culture may not be represented; for example women, children, or the economically deprived are often invisible in these types of documents. Additionally, aspects of the culture which are more private or less accessible to the casual

---

<sup>16</sup>Jan Vansina, (1961:158-159) argues that oral traditions are good for understanding cosmological concepts, but less reliable for recovering actual events. Robin Horton (1972) takes this same position. Taking the opposite position are Jack Goody (1987) and Margaret Willson (1986).

observer, such as spiritual beliefs or healing practices, may not be divulged. The same cautions must be used when working with ethnographic studies, where we must consider that the passage of time that has occurred between the period under study and the ethnographic fieldwork will have caused differences within the culture that have to be taken into account.

One of the difficulties encountered by Western historians studying West Africa is placing certain events recounted in oral traditions within a time frame. Traditional Western concepts, such as linear time or the use of certain standards of "civilization" as a categorizing tool may have no meaning in West African worldviews and therefore are not valid for the study of West African history. Since this study is deeply embedded in both the West African and the European-based world, scholars need to have an understanding of both.

What cultural resources did the enslaved draw upon for guidance and what creative responses fueled their actions in the New World? Slavery should not be viewed as a system of personal domination that stripped the enslaved of the coping mechanisms so crucial for survival (Patterson 1982). Far from erasing such survival strategies, enslavement called forth creative, but traditionally-based, solutions to the problems slaves encountered. Being African, their frame of reference was African, and they interpreted their new worlds based on what they knew from their traditional cultures. In the Caribbean, for example, the enslaved typically associated with others of their own ethnicity, "re-grouping" to cope with the stress of enslavement (Schuler 1979). In order for this strategy to succeed, it often meant that sub-ethnic differences had to be collapsed and pan-ethnic cultures created (Chambers 1996a). The Igbo of West Africa, for example, were a stateless society during the period of the Atlantic slave trade, with village level political and social organization. Because of this local-level organization, a great deal of cultural diversity existed among the different villages and regions inhabited by the Igbo. Despite these differences, however, overarching similarities provided a sense of cohesiveness and common identity among the different areas. Explorer W. B. Baikie wrote in the 1850s "In I'gbo each person hails...from the particular district where he was born, but when away from home all are I'gbos" (Baikie 1966 [1856]:307).

How did change occur within enslaved individuals and communities?<sup>17</sup> Which aspects of life were most likely to bring about reworking and transformation of traditional West African elements and which were more likely to bring about disappearance altogether? How did a West African heritage function for the enslaved in response to individual needs for personal freedom and identity in the face of restrictions that imposed limits in these areas? Given the importance of kinship in West Africa and among enslaved African American communities, did a West African-based spiritual tradition, that of ancestor veneration, survive, albeit transformed, in the Virginia Chesapeake? If so, what purposes did it serve? What can archaeology reveal about how African Americans struggled to resolve cultural differences and form community bonds and a collective identity on plantations in the South?

These questions are best addressed working within the theoretical frameworks of ethnicity (McGuire 1982; Upton 1996), creolization (Edwards-Ingram and Brown 1998; Ferguson 1992; Mouer 1993), and the processes of change that occur when different cultures come into contact. These frameworks are used in combination with material culture studies that address how the meanings and uses of material culture are transformed and re-contextualized by individuals and social groups, particularly under new circumstances (Beaudry et al. 1991; Miller 1987). Creolization studies arose out of linguistic analysis, with models of culture change paralleling the development of pidgin languages when two or more languages groups came into sustained contact. Out of necessity, different groups developed a shared cultural language based on some sort of shared grammar (Braithwaite 1971; Joyner 1984; Mintz and Price 1992).

Creolization models in African American archaeology focus on how Africans remade themselves through creative adaptation with culture as a social construction. In the case of this study, the enslaved understood “their new world using the cultural vocabularies they brought from their old world” (Sidbury 1997:48). A creolization model is a good vehicle for studying such change, because it recognizes “the contribution of pre-existing cultural traditions to entirely new cultural formations” (Edwards-Ingram and Brown 1998:2).

---

<sup>17</sup> Of course, contact between peoples of African descent and those of British descent sparked change and exchange between both groups. Several recent works have addressed this topic (Gundaker 1993; Mintz 1974; Mintz and Price 1992; Sidbury 1997; Sobel 1987). Since this study deals with the enslaved community, I will focus primarily on changes there, rather than the multi-directional changes that occurred.

While Mintz and Price presupposed that slave trade had randomized placement of slaves in the New World, recent research (Thornton 1992, for example) has shown that this was not the case. Ways of thinking about creolization processes must therefore be altered to take into account slave trade demographics. Chambers argues for a process of historical creolization (1996a:397) where a *bricolage* (Levi-Strauss 1966) of mixing and matching old and new ways formed an Igboized regional tradition. In Virginia, “loosely constituted groups of Africans drew on shared ancestral resources to adapt to slavery and create a distinctly regional common tradition informed...by Igboness” (Chambers 1996a:9). Historical creolization is non-random and developmental, with an initial stage of simplification—selective borrowing between groups and leveling within groups—followed by later elaboration, reinterpretation, or even extinction of some cultural practices (Chambers 1996a:411).

The processes of creolization as outlined above are, of course, simplified. Viewing creolization and culture change processes within a unilineal fashion, one of seeing successive generations of Africans and African Americans as moving farther and farther away from their descendant culture, is unproductive. More fruitful is an approach that examines contextual information, viewing creolization as a more erratic process. Various levels of creolized beliefs and practices, as well as incorporation of both European and African-based components were surely all part of the plantation experience. Movement could “reverse” itself, as illustrated by John McCarthy’s work at a nineteenth-century African American cemetery in Philadelphia. There some burials showed a revitalization of African-based spiritual practices he linked to growing racism, economic stress, and the in-migration of African Americans from the South (McCarthy 1997).

This research is also grounded in recent scholarship on identity. One recent definition lists the primary characteristics of self as including a sense of agency or control over personal actions or destiny, self awareness, and a sense of differentiation from others (Blasi and Loevinger 1991:150). While personal identities are complex, multifaceted and non-static (De Vos 1995), background and place of origin play a large role in defining how an individual characterizes his or her self and uses these elements to negotiate daily life (Barth 1969; McGuire 1982; Shennan 1989; Sidbury 1997; Thomas 1996). Cultural and ethnic identities

can also be “crafted” or rekindled for a variety of purposes (Ray 1998).

Any discussion of slavery would be incomplete without references to power. In a recent analysis of the use of creolization theory in African American archaeology, Edwards-Ingram and Brown (1998) stress the importance of considering not only the strength of the cultural backgrounds of the groups in contact, but also their power and economic differentials. Anthony Giddens (1979:88) has defined power in terms of an individual's capability to intervene in a set of events in order to affect their outcome in some intended fashion. Whites exercised power over enslaved people of African descent. Power, however, is rarely absolute, and at some basic level, all individuals possess some degree of control over their lives. In this study, a heterogeneous concept that views power as "multifaceted and not reducible to a single source or structure" is assumed for slaves in the American South (Bowles and Gintis 1986:23). Ferguson's study (1992) of slave-produced colonoware pottery combined a creolization model with analyses of slave power to show the different ways this pottery was used by enslaved peoples.

It is also important to approach analysis at a number of scales (Marquardt and Crumley 1987), since the experiences of individual slaves will be different in terms of the situations that confronted them and the choices each individual made in dealing with them. An individual's decisions would have been affected by his or her cultural background, age, gender, and position within the plantation infrastructure and slave community, for example. At the same time, however, each individual's situation as an enslaved person is more alike than it is different, providing a larger, overarching scale of analysis of life under the bonds of slavery. Regional differences—in staple agriculture, slave demographics, and interaction with people from different cultural backgrounds—also have to be taken into account.

In speaking of the history and culture of his fellow Latin Americans, author Gabriel Garcia Marquez noted, "The interpretation of our reality through patterns not our own serves only to make us ever more unknown, ever less free, ever more solitary" (Marquez 1982:3). Marquez was referring, of course, to studies endeavoring to understand Latin American history from a Western perspective. Likewise, scholars examining the lives of North America's enslaved peoples without reference to the African cultures from which they were (quite literally) taken, pursue a similarly flawed approach. Steven Feierman (1993) has



examined this problem in detail. Unlike the articles of clothing they were often forced to shed aboard the America-bound slaving vessels, Africans did not abandon their cultural heritages during the Middle Passage. Ideas about spirituality, gender roles, and identity, for example, came with them aboard these ships, taking root in the New World just as surely as did the cultural traditions arriving with the English settlers. Although a number of factors, most notably the imbalances of power between enslaved Africans and white settlers, prevented the enslaved from replicating African cultures on this side of the Atlantic, they did recreate and transform distinctly African cultural practices on the plantations of the American South. Spirituality would have figured prominently in these transformed practices. According to John Mbiti (1969:15), for an African "and for the larger community of which he is part, to live is to be caught up in a religious drama."

Archaeologists interested in ethnic identity are faced with the task of teasing out how the material remains found on sites are expressions of such identities (Beaudry et al.1991; Hodder 1986, 1987; McCarthy 1997). An interpretive analysis, by which the symbolic meanings of artifacts are recovered through careful analysis of historical and cultural contexts, is used here. To show how objects found in subfloor pits were symbols of ethnic and spiritual identity requires an approach that views material culture within the context of Igbo spiritual practices. Understanding the meanings of certain objects in Igbo and other West African cultures whose members were present in colonial Virginia is crucial for determining how objects were used in ways that maintained and transformed ethnic identities there.<sup>18</sup> In this research I infer the symbolic meanings of artifact assemblages by examining them contextually, both within a system of colonialism and power and within the historical context of pre-colonial to post-colonial Igboland. While recognizing that Igbo culture has undergone enormous changes over the centuries, evidence exists for the existence of long-term continuities in core beliefs visible archaeologically in ritual iconography (Ray 1987). Although there are certain risks in drawing analogies between the present and the past (for a good discussion of this topic in relation to African American archaeology, see Brian Thomas

---

<sup>18</sup> Particularly important is information on which objects typically are found in association with one another, and whether particular colors, materials, shapes, or designs are significant. According to one source, the actual object itself is sometime less important than the material from which it is made (Campbell, personal communication, September 1998).

1995), careful reading and comparison of multiple sources can surmount some of these problems.

### **Enslaved Communities in Tidewater Virginia**

For this study, I focus on five slave quarters from three eighteenth-century plantations in the Williamsburg area: Utopia Quarters Periods II - IV, Kingsmill Quarter, and Carter's Grove Quarter. I have chosen to study these three plantations in detail for several reasons. Perhaps the most compelling is that they were connected through descent and marriage of their white owners. Because of these connections, the enslaved communities on these three properties also shared kinship ties. A recent study by Lorena Walsh (1997) uses historical records from these plantations to recreate a multi-generation history of the enslaved communities there. Since most of the excavated structures were only occupied for 20 to 30 years, household level analysis was possible. Additionally, taken together as a group, the three quartering sites were occupied throughout the span of the eighteenth century, a period when slavery became institutionalized and expanded throughout the state. Looking across the span of a century provides an opportunity to examine change across time on interconnected plantations. The eighteenth century was also a period when the tobacco economy that predominated in Virginia during the seventeenth century and was responsible for the rise of a gentry class became less stable due to depressed prices and soil exhaustion (Breen 1985; Kulikoff 1986; Menard 1980). A new agricultural economy based on the production of wheat and corn arose towards the middle of the eighteenth century, bringing with it different labor requirements.

The five interconnected sites are used to create a regional context for slavery in eighteenth-century tidewater Virginia. This regional view is then compared with data from slave sites in other regions in Virginia and neighboring North Carolina. Expanding the scales of analysis spatially helps reveal broad understandings of cultural and social dynamics.

## Methodology

With almost 200 African American subfloor pits excavated in Virginia alone, it was not feasible to conduct a detailed analysis of all these features. Instead, I chose two levels of analysis. First, I conducted statistical analyses of size, shape, placement within structures, and other physical characteristics on a sample of 103 subfloor pits from quarters at three Virginia plantations. Detailed analysis of pit soil strata and artifacts from these features allowed me to select a smaller number of pits to analyze functionally. I chose these quarters because I felt they represented the range and scope of the Virginia sites where such features are present. They also allow me to study change over time within a multi-generational group of enslaved Virginians who were linked by kinship.<sup>19</sup> Among them, these three plantations span the breadth of the eighteenth century, and extend slightly into the nineteenth century. As a comparison to these three related sites, I chose to analyze physical characteristics of 51 subfloor pits from nine additional sites (Table 1.3). These sites expanded the temporal and regional scale of the study and brought the total number of subfloor pits analyzed from all sites to 154.<sup>20</sup>

While I was interested primarily in analyzing subfloor pits, I also needed to place the data from these features within the overall contexts of the sites upon which they appeared. These contexts were provided by various published and unpublished references, including site reports, status reports, conference papers, journal articles and personal communication with principal investigators. Primary sources, such as notes, maps, and artifact inventories were also a key element in creating the contextual information within which to frame my interpretations. Appendix B lists these sources and their repositories.

A more detailed analysis was conducted on the subfloor pits themselves. Careful study of notes, maps, and photographs of the pits helped me create a sequence for the construction, maintenance, repair, redigging, and abandonment of the features within specific structures. These notes also provided valuable information on pit location, size, depth, and

---

<sup>19</sup> Most slaveholders in the Virginia Chesapeake during the eighteenth century owned fewer than 20 slaves (Kulikoff 1986:330-331). Thus, the plantations used in this study were considered larger plantations with sizable slave holdings.

shape, as well as construction techniques. Using this data, I could chart change through time in any of these factors.

**Table 1.3. Archaeological Sites Analyzed**

Site Number	Name	Dates	Location	# Structures	# Subfloor Pits
44PG302	Jordans Journey	1620-1635	Tidewater Virginia	2	1
44JC32	Utopia Period II	1700-1725	Tidewater Virginia	3	18
44JC32	Utopia Period III	1725-1750	Tidewater Virginia	2	20
31BR52	Eden House	1720-1750	Tidewater NC	1	5
44HE677	Curles Neck	1740-1775	Tidewater Virginia	1	2
44JC787	Utopia Period IV	1750-1780	Tidewater Virginia	3	24
44JC39	Kingsmill Quarter	1760-1781	Tidewater Virginia	2	26
44AB89	Monticello	1770-1820	Piedmont Virginia	4	4
44JC110	Carter's Grove	1780-c. 1800	Tidewater Virginia	3	16
44PW80	Monroe	1790-1869	Piedmont Virginia	3	1
44JC298	Unnamed	1680-1720	Tidewater Virginia	3	19
44WB52	Richneck	1740-1780	Tidewater Virginia	1	15
CWF29F	Brush-Everard	early 19th c.	Tidewater Virginia	1	1
44CF	Magnolia Grange	1800-1830	Piedmont Virginia	1	3

In addition to gathering information on the specific physical characteristics of each pit, I also conducted a detailed analysis of the artifacts contained within the backfill of features from the three plantations. Artifact inventories already existed for most of the sites and I used these lists, in conjunction with examining the artifacts themselves, to help me create a more detailed database. In addition to the attributes generally provided by these inventories (such as artifact type, material, technological and decorative data), I also added a number of variables I believed important in determining the function of the subfloor pits. These variables included artifact size and relative completeness, vessel form and body component of ceramic and glass objects, color, modifications, and, in the case of ceramics in particular, any information on design or decorative elements. Analysis of ceramic and glass mends and crossmends aided in determining relationships between different soil layers within individual features and between different pits.

A number of attributes were noted for each artifact. These attributes included provenience information, type of artifact, the material from which it was made, decorative

and manufacturing data, and color. Vessel type and diameter, and the portion of the vessel represented were noted for ceramic and glass artifacts. Data was also collected on artifact size, the physical condition of the artifact (burned, melted, heavily corroded), what percent of the artifact was present, the frequency of occurrence, and whether the artifact had been modified in any way.

In order to assist in determining the nature of the fill within the features, I recorded information on the relative size of each object. This task was accomplished by measuring the artifacts largest linear dimension. By recording size information, I hope to determine whether the fill layers within the features represented primary or secondary deposition, and thus be able to separate objects associated with the primary function of the pits versus those thrown in after its abandonment. In conjunction with the physical size of each artifact, I also recorded data on its relative completeness, expressed as a percentage of the complete object. These percentages were based on a visual assessment of the object itself and my previous experience with the size and appearance of complete objects. These assessments are not scientifically accurate to the percentage and were never intended to be; they are merely an estimate for analysis purposes. No number smaller than 10% was assigned, even if the artifact was felt to represent less than 10% of the complete item.

Also recorded were any modifications to artifacts that suggested they had been used in ways other than originally intended. Examples would include bottle glass flaked to make cutting implements, worked animal bone, or piercing or notching on coins or buttons. Also noted was any evidence of incising or etching on artifacts that might suggest their use as objects of personal adornment or spiritual significance. Data was entered in an Excel spreadsheet to facilitate sorting and analysis.

### **Organization of Dissertation**

In the following chapters, I detail the results of subfloor pits analysis on a number of sites in Virginia. In doing so, I have several goals. The first goal is to determine how African Americans used subfloor pits, and whether these pits can be viewed as a specific response to enslavement. Larger goals include using archaeological remains to illuminate

other aspects of slave life, such as the formation of slave identities, changes within the enslaved community, and the material and symbolic aspects of creolization processes.

In Chapter 2, I review the physical setting and history of the Virginia Chesapeake, the region chosen for study. The breadth of historical and archaeological research done over the last several decades makes this one of the best-studied regions in the American South. Using these works, it is possible to construct a detailed context within which to frame this study. Analysis of plantation records and other eighteenth-century documents show how the increasingly equitable ratios of female to male slaves allowed the formation of family groups around the mid-eighteenth century (Kulikoff 1986), while other studies contrasted English and African work patterns, and concepts of time and space (Sobel 1987). Other important works have been prepared on the effects of the Great Awakenings on the religious experiences of the enslaved and their acceptance of Christianity (Alho 1976; Raboteau 1978; Sobel 1979). The recent completion of a study of the enslaved communities at the interconnected plantations chosen for detailed analysis (Walsh 1997) added a dimension to my study that would have been difficult to replicate in other regions. Numerous archaeological excavations specified the physical and material conditions under which enslaved Virginians lived (Fesler 1997a, 1997b; Franklin 1997; Kelso 1984, 1986). Having access to a detailed regional context crafted from multiple sources provides a firm base upon which to ground this work.

Because some of my work focuses on how West African cultural traditions were maintained and transformed in the Virginia Chesapeake, Chapter 2 also includes a section on the demographics of slavery in Virginia. This discussion provides information on the parts of Africa from which the enslaved originated, the periods of heaviest immigration, slave purchasing patterns, and how slaves were dispersed on Virginia's plantations. Without knowledge of the cultural practices of the specific groups enslaved in Virginia, it would be impossible to trace if and how the enslaved were transforming African-based practices in this colony.

In Chapter 3, I provide a historical and archaeological overview of the five study sites. The sites, Utopia Periods II - IV, Kingsmill, and Carter's Grove Quarters, are examined chronologically. Using documentary evidence, I create a context for each

plantation, including what is known about their enslaved populations, their work and their social environments. Archaeological and historical data provide this contextual background, and set the stage for the discussions of subfloor pit functions in the following chapters.

In Chapter 4, I examine Virginia subfloor pits in detail—the physical appearance of these features, under what conditions they occur, and what explanations archaeologists have offered for their functions. The results of quantitative analysis on physical characteristics are examined first, followed by in-depth discussions of presumed pit functions based on documentary and previous archaeological evidence. Using the results of this analysis, several hypotheses are offered for pit function, based on location within structures and other physical characteristics. Chapter 5 details the results of testing these hypotheses on data from the study sites.

In Chapter 6, I briefly examine the physical evidence from the five sites, looking at change across time in architecture, material goods, and diet. Data from other slave sites are contrasted with the results of analysis at the Utopia, Kingsmill, and Carter's Grove quarters. At sites dating to the first half of the eighteenth century, there was a much greater chance that individuals enslaved there were Africans, rather than persons of African descent born in the American colonies. In the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, well after the end of direct importation, the numbers of first generation Africans would have been significantly reduced. As contact with individuals with direct memories of Africa and its traditions decreased, is this increasing "distance" from Africa visible archaeologically?

Chapter 7 attempts to draw some conclusions about how these features functioned within the larger context of plantation slavery. Critical to these conclusions are acts of resistance, concepts of personal and ethnic identity, how the enslaved envisioned their relationship to their African pasts, and the development of African American Christianity. It will address why these pit features disappeared from slave houses and why they were no longer needed.

In the words of historian Ira Berlin (1998:3), "understanding that a person was a slave is not the end of the story but the beginning, for the slaves' history was derived from experiences that differed from place to place and time to time and not from some unchanging transhistorical verity." This story about to unfold looks at a particular region within Virginia,

providing a time depth of five generations. Its intent is not to tell the story of all enslaved people of African descent in the Americas, but to provide some degree of understanding about how a particular group of people negotiated the circumstances of their lives.

Archaeology reveals the material circumstances of slaves' lives, which in turn opens the door to illuminating other aspects of life: spirituality, symbolic meanings assigned to material goods, social life, individual and group agency, and acts of resistance and accommodation. The time for telling these stories is long overdue.



## Chapter II.

### REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Virginia plantations that are the focus of this study were located on a small peninsula stretching between the James and York Rivers, two tributaries emptying into the Chesapeake Bay (Figure 2.1). By the late eighteenth century, this Tidewater peninsula was characterized by dispersed plantations and farmsteads set among agricultural fields, pasture, and forests of pine and hardwood spread over a flat to gently rolling terrain.<sup>1</sup> Towns and clustered settlements were scarce. Jamestown, the colony's first capital, had largely disappeared, and the holdings of two large plantations comprised most of Jamestown Island (McCartney 1997:172). Williamsburg, located eight miles upriver in the center of the peninsula, had replaced Jamestown as the capital in 1699, only to be displaced itself some 80 years later by Richmond. The only other settlement of any size on the peninsula was the small river port at Yorktown.

By this time, the landscape, still largely rural, had been fashioned by the forces of almost two centuries of colonization. But at the beginning of the seventeenth century, when the first English settlers arrived looking for gold and the other enormous stores of wealth said to be there for the taking, they found a forested wilderness bisected by numerous broad creeks that flowed into wetlands and large rivers. These rivers were to serve, just as they had for the Native Americans who had inhabited these shores for thousands of years, as the colonists' primary transportation routes over the next century. While the English failed to find the mineral wealth they had come seeking, they did discover gold of another sort, in the color of cured tobacco. This crop, the regional environment, and the political, social, and

---

<sup>1</sup> The James/York Peninsula falls within that broader region that encompasses those parts of Virginia and Maryland whose rivers drain into the Chesapeake Bay. This area, known as the Chesapeake, includes two topographical regions in Virginia: the Tidewater and the more western-lying Piedmont.

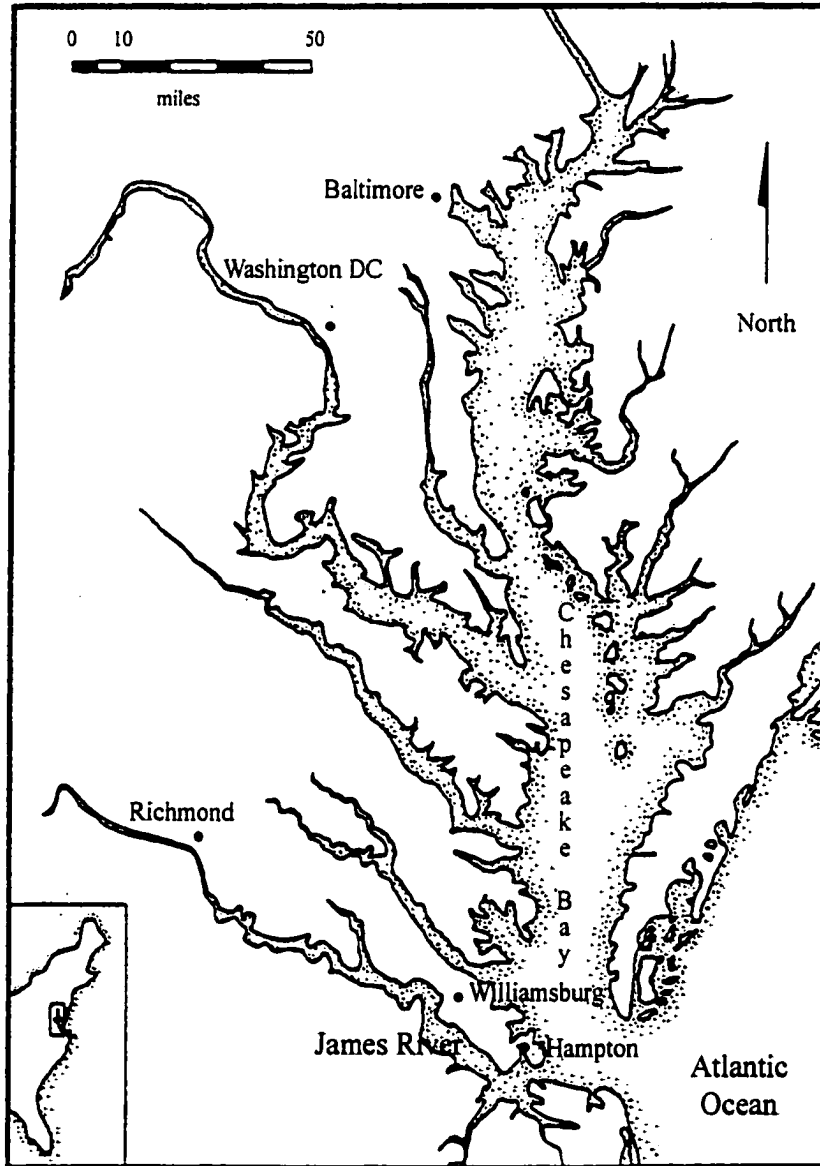


Figure 2.1 Map of Tidewater Virginia.

economic ambitions of the English colonists and the Royal Crown were all to intersect in shaping the development of the Chesapeake throughout the colonial period.

Agriculture was the primary shaping factor in the early Virginia Chesapeake, and within that agricultural framework, tobacco was king. The English demand for tobacco was considerable, even from the first years of settlement, and Virginia's climate, with its hot summers and temperate winters, was particularly suited for the cultivation of this crop (Morgan 1998:33). Colonists rushed to establish tobacco plantations, even delaying the construction of durable homes in order to acquire as much land and labor as possible (Carson et al. 1981). Since tobacco rapidly depleted soil fertility, the space demands of this crop, combined with the field rotation methods employed by Virginia farmers, required that large tracts of land be held in reserve for future tobacco fields (Walsh 1993:173, Morgan 1998:33). After three years of successive plantings, fields needed to be left fallow for around twenty years before they were ready for another rotation of tobacco. Since each adult male could work between two and three acres of tobacco a year, it was necessary to allow twenty acres of agricultural land for every laborer (Kulikoff 1986:47; Morgan 1998:42). The acreage allotted for tobacco was tied to the heavy demand for the crop in England and Europe, and even during periods of depressed prices in the middle half of the seventeenth century, planters were able to clear profits (Kulikoff 1986:5, Walsh 1993:181). By the late 1670s, Chesapeake planters exported an annual average of more than 20 million pounds of tobacco (Menard 1980).

The need for agricultural land led to a dispersed rural settlement pattern in the Virginia Chesapeake. Plantations were distributed along the rivers and creeks, where the most fertile land was located. Since planters could sell their tobacco to English ships directly from their own plantation wharves, there was no real need for large commercial centers in the colony. Thus, few towns developed, even when a series of town acts meant to stimulate centralization of the tobacco trade and manufacturing, were enacted during the early eighteenth century (Grim 1977; Reys 1972; Riley 1950). Many other business and legal transactions were conducted at courthouses, taverns, and churches located at rural crossroads. While Williamsburg and Yorktown prospered as service centers where goods could be exchanged, information obtained, and services rendered, they never even remotely

approached the size of cities and towns in neighboring colonies, such as Charleston and New York (Samford 1996b).

In addition to shaping the physical form of settlement, tobacco also molded the labor needs of the colony. In the beginning decades of settlement and continuing throughout most of the seventeenth century, indentured labor from England supplied the need for agricultural laborers. Through the headrights system, a prospective colonist or a settler already in Virginia could underwrite the cost of transporting individuals to the Virginia colony. For every person brought over, the underwriter would be granted 50 acres of land. If these individuals had also been bonded as indentured servants, the underwriter would, in addition, gain from four to seven years of labor from each (McCartney 1997:44).

In the early years of settlement, an indenture generally worked out to be a good deal for the bondsperson. A young man arriving as an indentured servant stood a good chance, once his servitude was completed, of purchasing land and becoming self-sufficient, perhaps even wealthy. A steady supply of indentured females insured marriage partners for these men. But as economic conditions improved in England, and opportunities for bonded labor to create good lives for themselves in Virginia were reduced as quantities of open land diminished, the numbers incoming decreased sharply (Horn 1979). Colonists were left with labor shortages they were desperate to fill. Unlike wheat, corn, and some of the other crops that predominated in Virginia's later colonial period, tobacco production was very labor intensive, requiring work every month of the year. The tasks began in late December or early January with the clearing and preparation of fields and the planting of seedbeds, and continued throughout the late fall and early winter, when the cured leaves were packed into hogsheads for shipment abroad (Breen 1985; Morgan 1998). Native Americans had proven to be unsatisfactory workers and had never comprised a large part of the labor force in Virginia (Morgan 1975). Increasingly, therefore the colonists turned to African labor to supply their needs, with the colony evolving from what Berlin (1998) calls a "society with slaves" to a "slave society".

The first Africans arrived in Virginia in 1619 aboard a Dutch trading vessel. Numbers of Africans, who were at first considered indentured labor, remained small throughout much of the seventeenth century, supplementing the white indentured labor force. Evidence suggests a high level of interaction, both work-related and social, between black and white

indentured laborers (Carr and Walsh 1988). As English indentured labor supplies diminished, the importation of Africans increased, with slave imports tending to coincide with tobacco market booms (Galenson 1981; Walsh 1993:170).

Coupled with the increasing importation of Africans came ever-tightening restrictions on their freedom. By the early eighteenth century, laws had been passed guaranteeing that planters had the right to hold Africans and their descendants in slavery (Walsh 1997:25). By 1700, the black population of Virginia and Maryland had increased to just over 13%, up from 2% in 1660 (Blackburn 1997:269). The largest numbers of slaves arrived between the 1720s and 1740s, and by the mid-century, at least half the householders in the Tidewater owned slaves (Kulikoff 1986:6). Slave families began to form and by the middle of the century, larger Chesapeake planters no longer needed to purchase extra hands due to natural increase (Walsh 1993:170). Enslaved Africans and African Americans comprised between 50 to 59% of the total population on James City and York Counties in 1750 (Morgan 1998:98). While proportions held steady in York County, the percentage of slaves had risen to over 60% in James City County by 1775, where it stayed for the remainder of the century (Morgan 1998:99).

In the eighteenth century, the Virginia agricultural base underwent a series of changes that reflected a combination of environmental, demographic, and economic factors. Since long settlement in the region meant there was little new land available for acquisition, settlement had begun to the west, in the Piedmont (Kulikoff 1986). Additionally, the previous century of tobacco farming had reduced the soil fertility, and even letting fields lie fallow for several decades did not restore the land to former crop production levels. Consequently, planters were forced to work larger amounts of land to produce the tobacco yields of the previous century. This factor, combined with fluctuating tobacco prices at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries, led most planters to diversify their agricultural base. Although Chesapeake planters continued to grow tobacco throughout the remainder of the eighteenth century, they never again relied solely upon this crop.

Beginning in the 1720s and 1730s, many Virginia planters alternated between monocropping tobacco and the planting of corn, wheat, and other grains. Since grain prices declined more slowly than tobacco during periods of economic depression, these crops could

be used to weather difficult years, and there was a ready market for them in Europe and the West Indies (Kulikoff 1986:100). Since the soils in the James/York peninsula were generally too acidic for wheat, planters there had to rely on corn and other grains (Walsh 1993:181). Tobacco continued to be grown, and an increase in tobacco prices between the 1740s and the American Revolution brought about prosperous conditions for many Chesapeake planters, especially those individuals with larger estates (Kulikoff 1986:118). They used this wealth to construct fine homes, add to their labor forces, and improve their landholdings. These larger planters in particular benefited from the demand and higher prices for corn and wheat brought about by crop failures in Europe in the 1760s and 1770s (Klingaman 1969).

The Revolutionary War brought about hardships for many planters, as their external markets were cut off by the hostilities. By the 1790s, Chesapeake planters had abandoned tobacco production and made the switch to grains, cotton, and livestock (Walsh 1993:191). A combination of factors, including wars in Europe and depleted soils, contributed to the long-term economic decline that the Chesapeake entered by the 1820s (Walsh 1993:198).

In the eighteenth century, the Virginia Tidewater was characterized primarily by landowners farming small tracts with the assistance of small numbers of enslaved individuals (Walsh 1997:14). Such small farms were able to survive because tobacco could be successfully farmed in small units and required little initial outlay of equipment or labor (Kulikoff 1986:23; Morgan 1998:36). Despite the numbers of small landholders, the Virginia economy, politics, and society were under the control of a minority—the gentry landholders. Virginia society had gone from a relatively egalitarian society in the early seventeenth century to an increasingly hierarchical one beginning late in the same century (Kulikoff 1986:4; McCartney 1997:88). The dominance of the egalitarian system had been supported by the steady supply of indentured labor, and with its disappearance and the reliance on African labor, the stage was set for a new gentry class to develop (Kulikoff 1986:37). These wealthy planters, descendants of some of the region's early settlers who prospered and gained political power, inherited land and labor wealth. At the turn of the eighteenth century, two-thirds of the land was owned by the wealthiest five percent of the population (Blackburn 1997:359). The elevated positions of the gentry allowed them to purchase additional labor and make improvements to their properties, as well as garner political power of their own (Kulikoff 1986). It is on several of these elite planters that this

study will focus. This study looks at quarters on three larger James/York peninsula plantations whose free and enslaved communities were connected across time and space.

### **The Plantations**

The histories of the land and people of Carter's Grove, Kingsmill, and Utopia plantations are complex and intertwined, including consolidations of both real estate and human properties. Initial settlement of the lands along the north shore of the James River south of Williamsburg, where these plantations were later seated, was by early seventeenth-century English colonists. Carter's Grove Plantation had originally been the site of Martin's Hundred, one of the settlements destroyed during the Native American uprising of 1622 (Noel Hume 1991). The quarters at Utopia and Kingsmill were located on lands that later came to be known more generally as Kingsmill Plantation, as earlier, smaller plantations were consolidated by the Bray and Burwell families. Initially, however, settlement of the lands located in a slight bend in the James River southeast of Williamsburg's future location, had been in small landholdings by tenants and yeoman farmers. By the 1640s, several of these small farms had been joined into one of two plantations (Figure 2.2). Humphrey Higginson owned the land that would be the future location of Kingsmill Quarter, and Utopia was the property of Colonel Thomas Pettus (Kelso 1984:35). It was during the Pettus family ownership of the property that the first known buildings were constructed at Utopia.

At the turn of the eighteenth century, the Bray family purchased the Utopia lands, thus setting in motion the sequence of events that was to so intricately connect the properties studied here. Utopia remained in the Bray family until almost mid-century. After James Bray III's death in 1744, his widow Frances Thacker Bray remarried the following year, to neighbor Lewis Burwell IV (Walsh 1997:43). Burwell already owned Higginson's former tract, located directly west of Utopia at Kingsmill. The marriage consolidated the two tracts into what became known as Kingsmill Plantation. Twenty-nine of Bray's enslaved laborers were also part of the wedding dowry (Walsh 1997:43), thus merging two groups of African Americans that are the focus of part of this study. The Burwell family continued to own the Kingsmill tract for the duration of the period encompassed by this study. Only a few years following the Burwell and Bray marriage, Lewis Burwell's nephew, Carter Burwell

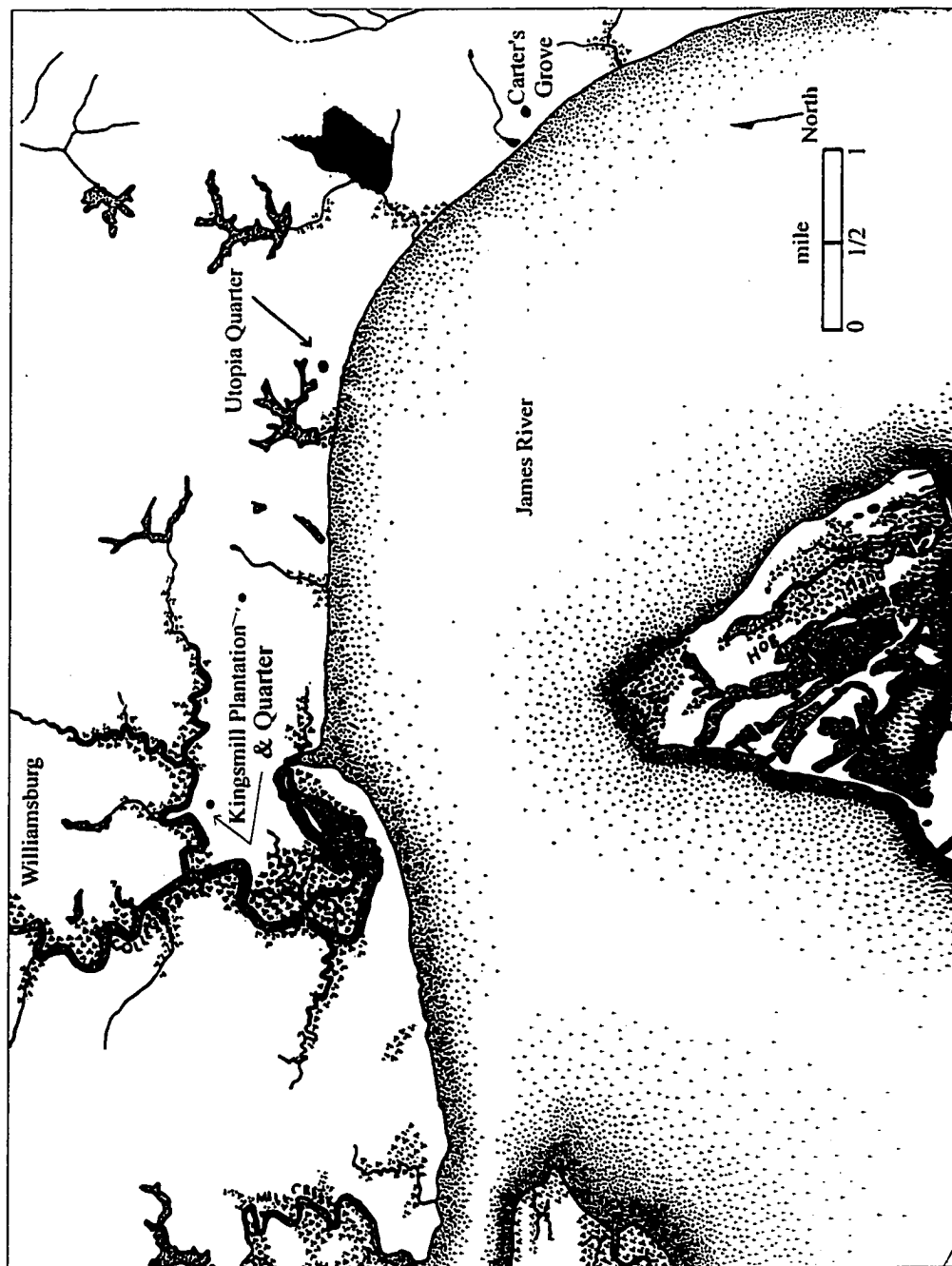


Figure 2.2 Area of James/York peninsula showing locations of Utopia, Kingsmill, and Carter's Grove Quarters.



constructed a large mansion at Carter's Grove Plantation, located several miles down river. The late eighteenth-century quarter on this plantation is also analyzed.

The quarter communities studied here span the breadth of the eighteenth century, a period that encompasses both the large influxes of Africans in the first part of the century, and the later decline of the external slave trade into Virginia. At Utopia, three distinct communities, separated both temporally and spatially, provide a glimpse at one plantation through almost a full century. A group of three houses dated to the first decades of the century, while two additional structures were occupied between circa 1725 and 1750. The most recent quarter, with one definite and two possible buildings, dated between 1750 and 1780. This latest group, known as Utopia II, can be contrasted with two contemporaneous quarter buildings at Kingsmill Quarter (circa 1750-1780) and three houses at Carter's Grove Plantation (1770-1800). On each of these plantations, the enslaved lived in communities separated from the main plantation house, in circumstances where they were allowed some flexibility in creating lives for themselves outside the gaze of the planter.

### **Demography of Virginia Slavery**

In order to understand the development of African American culture in the Virginia Chesapeake, it is critical to determine the African origins of its enslaved population, as well as the regional contexts of slavery. In Virginia, the first Africans arrived in 1619 and their numbers expanded slowly throughout most of the century. Importation increased at the end of the century, rose steadily until the mid-eighteenth century, then fell as native-born Afro-Virginians began to predominate and as the tobacco market fell (Breen 1985:125; Kulikoff 1977; Walsh 1993; Westbury 1981:82). Most Africans were purchased either singly or in small groups, even by gentry planters (Walsh 1997). During the eighteenth century, more than half of the enslaved on Virginia's middle and lower peninsulas lived on quarters of fewer than 20 slaves (Morgan 1998:41). Although some individuals were housed in outbuildings constructed for other purposes, the enslaved predominantly lived in settlements or compounds adjacent to agricultural fields called "quarters." Isaac Weld, travelling through the Northern Neck of Virginia in the 1790s wrote that quarters were "usually situated one or two hundred yards from the dwelling house, which gives the appearance of a village

to the residence of every planter in Virginia” (Weld 1799:84). Here, the enslaved formed families and communities, composed at first of individuals from various West and Central African cultures. Before the Virginia colony's legal importation of Africans ended in 1778, American-born blacks began to comprise the bulk of the enslaved population (Kulikoff 1986; Westbury 1981).

Various West and Central African cultures came together on Virginia's plantations; a number of excellent studies on the slave trade (e.g. Anstey 1975; Curtin 1969; Donnan 1935; Klein 1978; Manning 1990; Westbury 1981) enabled researchers to draw broad conclusions about the cultural backgrounds of Africans enslaved there. Large-scale export patterns out of West Africa, as discussed by Curtin (1969) and Manning (1990), seemed to correspond with analysis of known importation into Virginia (Westbury 1981, 1985), as well as dispersal onto specific plantations (Walsh 1997). Because it was known which African regions were traded with most heavily at different periods, generalities could be made about the cultural identities of the enslaved in Virginia. With the recent amassing and publication of large quantities of trade data in the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute Dataset of Slave Voyages, it is now possible to further substantiate former conclusions about concentrations of ethnic groups within specific regions of the American South.<sup>2</sup>

Westbury's research (1981, 1985) divided the Virginia slave trade into several periods spanning the last quarter of the seventeenth century through the third quarter of the eighteenth century. Similarly, the demographic profile of the Africans enslaved in Virginia can be divided into major groups, linked largely to time of importation. Place of export was tied with slave prices and population decline in various parts of Africa (Manning 1990:94), as well as economic conditions in Virginia (Chambers 1996a). Between 1670 and 1698, the first period defined by Westbury, approximately 1,300 Africans arrived in Virginia, largely through trade with the English Royal African Company (Westbury 1985:229-230). During the latter half of the seventeenth century, the Africans brought to Virginia were gathered through trading along the entire length of the West African coast (Walsh 1997). A second, smaller trade between the Virginia colony and the West Indies was also in place (Westbury 1981:24).

---

<sup>2</sup> A conference entitled “Transatlantic Slaving and the African Diaspora: Using the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute Dataset of Slaving Voyages” was held in Williamsburg, Virginia in September 1998.

As importation rose in the first two decades of the eighteenth century, there came into being an almost exclusive direct trade between Africa and Virginia. Between 1727 and 1769, 91% of the enslaved entering Virginia were brought directly from Africa (Westbury 1985). During the late seventeenth century and first two decades of the next, many of these slave ships arrived in Virginia from Senegambian ports (Manning 1990:49; Walsh 1997:55). Members of the Mandingo culture would have been included among the enslaved taken from this area (Figure 2.3). The decreasing population in Senegambia, the Gold Coast, and the Bight of Benin led to a decrease in exports from these areas and a subsequent rise in trade in the Bight of Biafra (Manning 1990:94). In the first half of the eighteenth century, trading focused in this area around the Niger Delta (Manning 1990; Walsh 1997). The greatest influx of Africans into Virginia occurred in the second to fourth decades of the eighteenth century, with approximately 17,000 individuals arriving in the 1730s alone (Westbury 1985:234). The largest numbers of Africans disembarked at ports on the York and Lower James Rivers (Westbury 1981:71). Nearly 50% of all African slaves arriving at Port York during two periods of heavy importation in the early eighteenth century were from the Nigerian tribes of the Igbo, Ibibio, Efkins, and Mokos (Anstey 1975; Curtin 1969). Despite the dominance of trade from the Bight of Biafra, slaves from other areas also made their way into Virginia: Mande and Western Bantu in the 1730s and 1740s, and Angola and Akan in the 1760s (Chambers 1996a:284; Rawley 1981). Slavers also tapped Benin, and Sierra Leone for slaves destined for Virginia ports (Curtin 1969:128-130; Donnan 1935:183-185; Manning 1990:69; Walsh 1997).<sup>3</sup>

A combination of factors interacted to affect the demographic composition of Virginia plantation quarters during the eighteenth century. The slave trade in Virginia, like that in other places, was intricately tied to the political, social, and economic conditions of the larger Atlantic world (Berlin 1996; Thornton 1992). Slaving ships plying the North American coast during the eighteenth century included vessels of the Royal African Company and of independent traders based in London, Liverpool, and Bristol (Walsh 1998). In Virginia, slaving vessels traveled up the Chesapeake Bay and rivers, docking at towns and even individual plantations, auctioning their human cargo as they went (Chambers 1996a).

---

<sup>3</sup>Manning (1990) includes Angola, Senegambia, the Bights of Benin and Biafra, the Gold Coast, Upper Guinea, and Loango in his discussion of the West African slave trade, a designation that I follow in this paper.

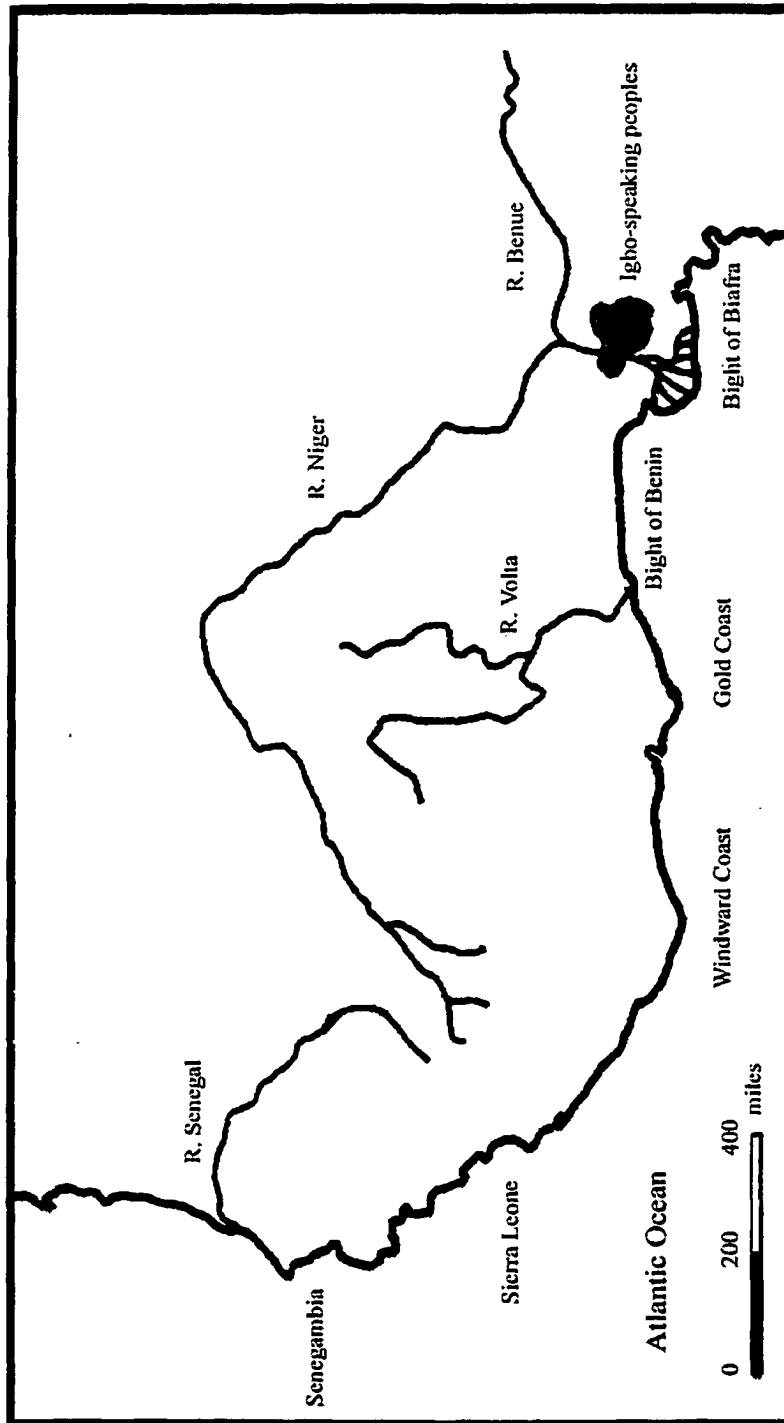


Figure 2.3 The coast of West Africa.

Because even the largest Virginia planters were often cash poor, they were forced to pay for slaves using a system of deferred remittance. The Royal African Company, with its well-established system of trading along the west coast of Africa, only offered short-term credit on slave purchases, terms most Virginia planters could not meet (Chambers 1996a:215). While planters in South Carolina and the Caribbean were purchasing slaves from the Royal African Company, Virginia planters did little trade with them in the eighteenth century. Bristol merchants, on the other hand, consigned slaves to wealthy Virginia planters, who sold them locally on terms of six to twelve months' credit, payable in tobacco (Chambers 1996a:216).

Beginning in the 1710s and 1720s, Bristol merchants replaced London merchants as the primary players in the Virginia slave trade (Chambers 1996a:219). Between 1698 and 1769, Bristol merchants shipped approximately 33,000 slaves, gathered primarily in the Bight of Biafra, to Virginia (Chambers 1996a:12; 1996b:6). Because importation from this area around the mouth of the Niger River was disproportionately high, it warrants special mention. Approximately 40% of the enslaved brought to Virginia between 1710 and 1760 were from this tiny region (Gomez 1998:115), with members of the area's Igbo culture numerically dominant in the Virginia trade in the period between 1710 and the 1740s (Chambers 1996a:11).<sup>4</sup> Conservative estimates place the entry of at least 25,000 Igbo into the Virginia colony between 1698 and 1778 (Chambers 1996a:282). Although some American colonies, such as South Carolina, avoided purchasing Igbos, Virginians did not to share this bias<sup>5</sup>, accepting Igbos and fellow Biafrans in large numbers (Rawley 1981:334-335).

The quality of the documentary records makes it possible to determine the approximate demographic compositions of enslaved communities within regions such as the Virginia Tidewater, and even to formulate conclusions about variation within regions. For example, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the trading activities with Liverpool merchants concentrated people of Senegambian origin in the Northern Neck of Virginia, along the Rappahannock and Potomac (Chambers 1996a:286). Bristol merchants

---

<sup>4</sup> Chambers (1996a:247-248) notes "In the crucial first three decades (1704-1730), shipping records show that the proportion of Igbo in Virginia's import-trade approached 60 percent. Between 1704 and 1745, moreover, Virginia planters imported three times as many Igbo as they did any other African ethnic group."

<sup>5</sup> South Carolina, which received around 46% of the African trade to North America in the eighteenth century, imported only 2 to 5% of the enslaved from the Bight of Biafra (Gomez 1998:116).

trading along the York River brought Igbo and later Angolans into the upper reaches of the Tidewater and central Virginia (Chambers 1996a:286-287).

It is likely that members of at least several African cultures were represented at any one time on individual plantations, since many of the enslaved were purchased singly or in small groups (Walsh 1993:171). Lorena Walsh's study of the enslaved population at Carter's Grove plantation outside Williamsburg revealed that people from three or more different West African cultural and linguistic regions (Senegambia, Igbo, and Sierra Leone) were present there during the second quarter of the eighteenth century (Walsh 1997). At Utopia quarter near Williamsburg, some of the enslaved during the first half of the eighteenth century also appeared to have been Igbo (British Museum n.d.). In some instances, names of the enslaved recorded in wills, probate inventories and plantation accounts allow cultural backgrounds to be assigned to individual slaves. For example, Virginia planter Robert Carter (1663-1732) listed two men described as "Ebo" (Igbo) as foremen and Lewis Burwell III purchased a Mandingo man named Jumper in 1736 (Walsh 1997:86, 116).

Because of the concentrations of peoples of Igbo descent there, Chambers has posited that the enslaved in colonial and early national Virginia formed an "Igboized" culture, particularly in the interior tidewater and piedmont counties along the James, York, and Rappahannock Rivers (Chambers 1996a:401). What social, ideological, and material resources did Igbos enslaved in Virginia draw upon in creating new lives for themselves? To answer these questions, an understanding of Igbo culture is essential. The following section draws upon historical, archaeological, oral, and ethnographic sources to create a general portrayal of Igbo society in the eighteenth century. Although not a monolithic culture, many of the traditional patterns of social and political organization still characterize Igbo society today.

## **The Igbo**

### *Social and Political Structure*

In pre-colonial West Africa, the Igbo formed a stateless society characterized by small-scale social units with limited and localized concentrations of authority (Horton 1972). At the time of their first contact with Europeans, they inhabited the savanna woodlands and

rainforest of the Guinea coast around the Niger River (Figure 2.3). Linguistic analysis and oral tradition suggest that the Igbo arose as a separate ethnic group 4,000 to 6,000 years ago in the region of the Niger-Benue confluence, and over time spread southward from there (Afigbo 1980:311; Oguagha 1984:197). Various dates, ranging from as early as 500 B.C. to as late as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries have been postulated for this southward expansion (Afigbo 1980:315; Osae et al. 1973:138). Many of the estimates are based on oral traditions, knowledge of neighboring cultures, and the rise of religious traditions; however, positive dating may have to wait until archaeological research is undertaken. This migration has been attributed to population pressures and the effects of centuries of agriculture, as soil exhaustion forced people to move in search of fertile land. Exploration led some of the Igbo southward across the savanna and into the rainforest east of the Niger River. A study of modern-day Igbo settlement patterns indicates that Igbo villages are generally on upland areas of well-drained, easily farmed soil, away from watercourses and clayey soils (Karmon 1966). In addition to the agricultural advantages these upland areas offered for cultivation, they were also more easily defensible than riverain settlements (Isichei 1976:5). Igbo economy was based in yam agriculture, supplemented by fishing and hunting (Oguagha and Okpoko 1984). Although some cow and goat were raised, the prevalence of tsetsefly in the rainforest limited the scale at which livestock could be kept (Cookey 1980:339). Specialized craft industries, including iron working, wood carving, and textile production were important, with the role of ironworking particularly well developed in areas with rich iron ore deposits (Afigbo 1980:318; Isichei 1976:29-31; Oguagha 1984).

Each village was generally composed of familial descent lines or lineages, with village leadership falling to the head of the senior lineage (Cookey 1980:336-337). Authority was by no means absolute; all lineage heads participated in making village decisions. Highly democratic, this small-scale system allowed a great deal of individual freedom to its members and the opportunity to advance by achievement (Davidson 1977:117). Since precolonial Igboland operated under a dual-sex political system, authority was dispersed among a variety of men and women's organizations (Amadiume 1997; Okonjo 1976:47). Women in precolonial Igbo society were not marginalized (Amadiume 1987, 1997; Paulme 1963), indeed they joined to form powerful organized groups that settled marriage disputes and took charge of death rituals (Achebe 1994:110; Isichei 1978; Oramasionwu 1994:37).

They imposed fines on defaulting lineage members, and were responsible for keeping the market and springs clean (Oramasionwu 1994:36).

The highest form of political organization among the Igbo was the clan, comprised of a group of villages deriving their identity from shared ancestors (Forde and Jones 1950). In times of joint need or common trouble, clans came to one another's assistance (Osae et al. 1973:139). With a social structure composed of a number of villages and clans, it is unlikely that the Igbo conceived of themselves as a single group in precolonial times. Nevertheless, common origins as evident in language, spiritual beliefs, subsistence, and sociopolitical organization validate the legitimacy of discussing the Igbo as a group (Isichei 1976:20). Despite the high population densities of some areas, most groups of the Igbo never developed cities or nation states until recent times, preferring to live instead in small villages (Afigbo 1980; Connah 1990:138). The development of their small-scale social and political organization was due, in large part, to a combination of their agricultural subsistence and the forest environment in which they lived. Since the scale at which land could be administered in the rain forest was limited, village settlements with descent-based political structures became the most effective unit of Igbo socio-political organization. With little reliance on centralized government, the Igbo political organization required no kings or emperors.<sup>6</sup> Instead, a segmentary political system based on family and extended family units linked by the spirits of deceased ancestors was in place (Davidson 1977:115-116). Both men and women constructed ancestor shrines and consistently consulted ancestors for guidance and support (Equiano 1987:15; Henderson 1972:169; McCall 1995:260). A family was comprised of a man, his wife or wives, unmarried sons and daughters, and married sons and their families. In Igboland, the household was a matri-centric unit consisting of a woman and her children (Achebe 1994; Amadiume 1987, 1997), living with one or more other household units in a male-headed compound surrounded by an earthen wall (Oramasionwu 1994:28).

---

<sup>6</sup> Despite this small-scale structure, social and political differentiation did occur in Igbo societies. The burial chamber of a richly appointed individual and his sacrificed attendants excavated at Igbo Richard provided ample evidence of the existence of social stratification, perhaps as early as the ninth century A.D (Shaw 1970, 1977). The dating of this site is in dispute, since radiocarbon samples from this site have yielded dates from both the ninth and the fifteenth centuries A.D. See Shaw (1978:118) and Cookey (1980:331) for a discussion of this site and the problems with dating.



In addition to the lineage and kinship-based governmental system, the Igbo also used age sets, a system of dividing village residents into groups based on age. Each age set had its own set of rights and duties within the community (Davidson 1977:115). Another political institution, that of title taking (*ndinze or ndi ozo*), allowed prosperous men and women to purchase titles, thereby gaining prestige and redistributing wealth around the village (Isichei 1976; Okonjo 1976:54). Title-taking societies, along with age sets and secret societies, served to exercise control (Isichei 1976:22; Oguagha 1984:202;). In some Igbo societies, there were parallel political organizations for men and women (Amadiume 1987).

The primary economic activity was farming, and both men and women played critical roles in agriculture. While a clear sexual division of labor existed, men and women's roles were seen as complementary. Yam and cocoyam were the two most important crops produced by the Igbo. Yams were viewed as male and men controlled all aspects of producing and distributing this ritually important crop (Afigbo 1981:124; Amadiume 1987:29, 35). Women, on the other hand, were in charge of producing the "female" crops that formed the primary dietary staples, such as cocoyam, cassava, and plantain, as well as all other vegetables grown (Anyanwu 1976). Women's work was critical for the maintenance of the family, and they derived power and distinction from successfully controlling and managing these crops (Amadiume 1987:30), as well as from raising and selling livestock, dogs, and domestic fowl (Achebe 1994:14; P. Uchendu 1980). According to Olaudah Equiano, an Igbo enslaved in eighteenth-century Virginia, women also produced cloth, pottery, and tobacco pipes (Equiano 1987:14-15). Since pottery was used both for household and ritual purposes, it formed an important female-controlled industry (Afigbo 1981:172; Anyanwu 1976:51).

Although women were in charge of the subsistence economy, men traditionally owned and allocated the property upon which these crops were grown. Men's work included clearing bush and constructing house compounds, which were named after the men who cleared the land and established the space as a homestead (McCall 1995:259).<sup>7</sup> Men held a monopoly over ritual knowledge, craft specialization (such as blacksmithing) and external relations (Amadiume 1987:30). Men made baskets, trapped animals, crafted items of iron and wood, and tapped palm trees for wine production (Anyanwu 1976:139).

---

<sup>7</sup> For the importance of names in Igbo culture, see Aniakor (1996).

### *Spiritual Beliefs*

As in most of West Africa, spirituality permeates every aspect of Igbo life, making it impossible to separate spiritual beliefs, social organization, and political authority. Religion not only provides explanations for the origins of the world and the humans inhabiting it, but also supplies social power for making and enforcing laws (Oramaisonwu 1994; Quarcoopome 1987). The beliefs of today reflect those of the past, passed down through stories, proverbs, ceremonies, prayers, and other mnemonic devices (Davidson 1977:163).

The Igbo believe in one supreme god (*Chukwu*) with dominion over the living, as well as a pantheon of less powerful deities (*Mmuo*), spirit forces (*Alusi*) and ancestors. *Chukwu*, the creator of all things, is also the designer of human destinies. Upon conception, each individual is granted a decreed-upon destiny entrusted to the personal spiritual guardian (*chi*) that oversees his or her life (Metuh 1985). Although one's destiny is largely predetermined from birth, appropriate actions taken by an individual in their lifetime, including constant petitioning and veneration of ancestors and moral behavior, can change one's destiny in a favorable fashion. Conversely, ignoring the spiritual forces and taking inappropriate actions can negatively alter one's destiny. Thus, the living are locked in a continuous cycle of birth, life, death, and rebirth, with their actions on earth determining their fate there and in the afterworld (Fiawoo 1976). In Igbo religion, the ultimate goal of every individual is to join his or her ancestors after death, and enjoy the veneration of descendants, before eventually being reincarnated back to the land of the living (Madubuike 1974:12; Metuh 1985:106).

Igbo spiritual beliefs, like its political system, were non-centralized, with power shared among different descent lines held together by religious rituals (Davidson 1977). Oracles or diviners communicate the wishes of the deities, as well as control the supernatural through sacrifices and explain mystical events (Isichei 1976:24-25; Metuh 1985). Archaeological findings indicate the presence of individuals who were authorized as mediators between the deities and humans as early as the ninth century A.D (Shaw 1970,

1977).<sup>8</sup> In current Igbo society, the individual holding this office has the power to pardon criminals, settle disputes, and petition deities for fertility (Cookey 1980:332).

In the central areas of Igboland, a religious-political organization known as *Nri* held sway in certain parts of Igboland from the thirteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

Representatives of *eze Nri* traveled around Igboland to perform rituals that were connected with material and agricultural concerns. They began to be replaced in late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries by new religion based on Chukwu, the supreme god, and on oracles. This new sub-group called the Aro became important players in the Atlantic slave trade (Chambers 1996a:147-148).

### *West African Trade and Igbo Culture*

Centuries before their unfortunate contact with European slave trading, the Igbo had been involved in the exchange of commercial goods within the larger context of West African trading. Trade occurred mostly through bartering, with agricultural surplus and manufactured goods exchanged for necessities such as salt and iron ore, and for luxury items (Davidson 1977:158; Oguagha 1984:195). The continued expansion of trade in West Africa through time, with its market for luxury items, helped to sustain and expand social stratification in West African cultures.

Prior to contact with the world across the Sahara Desert, an extensive trading network existed within West Africa, particularly between the forest and the savanna (Connah 1990:119). Relationships developed through the trade of agricultural products between these two regions fostered specialization and economic interdependence for each area, thus laying the groundwork for emergent social and political stratification (Shaw 1984). Regional trade developed within Igbo-occupied lands by the ninth century A.D. due to a combination of agriculture shortages in the northern regions and the demand for iron ore and lead deposits, which were differentially distributed across West Africa (Afigbo 1980:323; Shaw 1970). It has been suggested that the later rapid growth of West African commerce with North Africa was facilitated by the prior presence of extensive trading networks across this region (Connah 1990:119).

---

<sup>8</sup> A burial chamber excavated by Thurstan Shaw at Igbo-Ukwu and dating as early as the 9th century A.D., is believed to be the earliest known evidence of the Eze Nri, a quasi-divine ruler still important in Igbo culture. For a discussion of this site, see Shaw (1970, 1977); and Isichei (1976:10).

By the end of the first millennium, trans-Saharan trade had been established (Connah 1990:146). West African gold, ivory, kola nuts, and slaves were exchanged for cowries, beads, silks, knives, alcohol, tobacco, horses, books, copper, and mirrors (Connah 1990:147; Davidson 1977:153). A string of commercial centers developed along North Africa's caravan routes in Ghana, and other market towns sprang up along the Niger (Davidson 1977). By 1600, there was an extensive local and long distance trade throughout West Africa.

A series of wars and imperial rivalries in North Africa disrupted trade between West and North Africa in the late sixteenth century (Davidson 1977:199). By the close of these impediments to the trans-Saharan trade, West Africa had firmly established direct trade relations with Europe. Prior to that time, maritime technology had not been sufficiently advanced to allow coastal trading. With improvements in ship design, however, the Portuguese were finally able to reach the mouth of the Niger in 1471, setting in motion an important and tragic period in West African history (Osae et al. 1973:156). The French, Dutch, and English shortly followed the Portuguese, all hoping to profit from the rich resources of West Africa.

The Europeans, at first interested in trading guns for gold, soon refocused their attention on the market for slaves to provide agricultural labor for New World plantations (Austen 1987). By the second quarter of the seventeenth century, a regular system of slave trading had been established, and as this coastal trade expanded, the trans-Saharan trade declined (Davidson 1977:210, 212). Coastal West African cultures, in cooperation with European traders, would acquire slaves from the hinterlands to the north through combinations of peaceful trade and raiding (Alagoa 1972). Although devastating to the social and political structures of the cultures heavily raided for slaves, the Atlantic slave trade was a factor in the emergence of some West African states and city-states, including Bonny, Nembe, Benin, Oyo, and Dahomey (Alagoa 1972:269; Osae et al. 1973:169). The slave trade transformed the delta city-states from fishing communities into centers of redistribution for European goods, slaves, and agricultural products (Alagoa 1972:291). The slave trade also dramatically changed relationships between West African cultures, moving in many cases from a mutually beneficial commercial exchange of natural commodities to one of political

imbalance, as groups raided one another for slaves (Oguagha 1984:190-191).<sup>9</sup> In addition to the immense devastation caused by the outflow of humans, trade with Europe also disrupted traditional economic and trade patterns within West Africa. For example, the availability of salt from English traders in the eighteenth century caused the abandonment of salt-making in some West African city-states, leaving a opening in the economy which was filled by expanding trade relations with Europe (Alagoa 1972:295). It was the trans-Atlantic slave trade, however, that had one of the greatest impacts on Igbo culture in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries.

### *The Igbo in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*

The Atlantic slave trade reached its peak during the eighteenth century, and continued in importance during the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century (Austen 1987:86). By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the five primary Igbo groups—who shared common cultural elements but had regional differences—inhabited the geographical areas that they now occupy (Cookey 1980:336). The economy at that time, as today, was based in agriculture, with some craft specialization occurring. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries some groups of Igbo were being invaded by Benin, which sought to control trade routes within Igboland and exacting tributes (Oguagha 1984:187).

Contact with neighboring peoples, particularly Benin and Igala after the fourteenth century, caused some minor changes in Igbo culture, such as in language, material culture, and title-taking systems (Afigbo 1980:319; Oguagha 1984:258). For example, a few Igbo states developed political systems ruled by kings (Henderson 1972; Isichei 1976). Although archaeological excavations have shown that the Igbo were involved in trading with outside regions from an early period, agriculture continued to form their primary economic base. After centuries of farming the shallow soils of the tropical forests, however, land exhaustion forced the Igbo to take a more active role in trading (Dumett 1980:293). This commerce was primarily in the Atlantic slave trade.

Also during this time, the effects of the trans-Saharan and (slightly later) trans-Atlantic trades brought about the growth of Igbo states (Isichei 1976:51). A number of new

---

<sup>9</sup>Oguagha (1984:190-191) provides evidence of this shift in his discussion of changing Igbo-Igala relationships during the years preceding and during the Atlantic slave trade.

states were established on the Niger, particularly in the lower reaches of the river where there was greater access to European traders. Some of these states rose to positions of great power and wealth during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as the slave trade accelerated (Isichei 1976:55-56). Individuals with established wealth could afford to provide the large canoes and weapons needed to conduct slave raids into the hinterlands (Alagoa 1972:295-196). Groups of slaves from the interior were brought to the trading settlements, such as Bonny, Elim, and Kalabari established at the Niger delta, where the West African backers traded directly with the Europeans. The slave trade allowed a greater accumulation of wealth to these kings, enhancing their power and furthering the growth of these delta states.

The number of Igbo peoples leaving West Africa as slaves was fairly small in the sixteenth century, but increased throughout the seventeenth century, rising to a peak in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Chambers 1996a; Isichei 1976). The Aro, a group of Igbo living on the Niger delta who served as middlemen facilitated the slave trade in Igboland (Cookey 1980:340). The Aro began their trading network around the mid-seventeenth century, establishing settlements in the Igbo hinterland (Alagoa 1972:299; Cookey 1980). Because of their association with the Aro-Chukwu oracle, they were afforded protection and allowed to freely procure slaves for the Atlantic trade by the Igbo.

The experiences of most Igbo individuals arriving on Virginia shores at the beginning of the eighteenth century followed a pattern that was repeated innumerable times over the next several decades as large numbers of Africans were brought to the Chesapeake. If an individual had survived the excruciating physical and mental conditions of a three-month passage over the Atlantic, the next indignity that waited was the actual sale. During this period in the Virginia Chesapeake, most of the sales took place on board the slaver's ships, which were moored in the rivers or docked at a plantation wharf. Robert "King" Carter's description of one such sale that took place in 1727 provides modern readers with an idea of how these sales proceeded (see Mullin 1972:14-15). For a three-week period in May, Carter spent his afternoons on board the slaving vessel that was anchored in the river at his plantation. Area planters in the market for new laborers would board the ship and conduct negotiations with Carter and the captain of the ship. Carter received a ten percent commission on each sale, with his contractual obligation being to cover the debts not paid on

the sales he supervised (Robert "King" Carter Diary, 1722-1727, May 19, 1727- Alderman Library, University of Virginia).

The typical individual to be sold would have most likely been an adult male, since Chesapeake planters were importing twice as many men than women during the last years of the seventeenth century and opening decades of the following one. He would have been purchased either singly or with one other individual, and since newly arrived slaves were generally placed at the most menial tasks, transported to an outlying field quarter (Berlin 1998:113; Morgan 1998:78). Since most of the slave trade into Virginia occurred in the late spring and summer, the individual would have immediately been sent to work in tending and harvesting crops (Mullin 1972:15).

Wealthy planters, like those men who owned the plantations studied here, kept enslaved individuals with special skills (cooking, blacksmithing, gardening, weaving or spinning, carpentry) quartered near or adjacent to the main plantation house. These skilled laborers were almost never newly arrived Africans, but individuals who had been in Virginia for some years and could speak English. The enslaved communities on outlying quarters, such as the ones analyzed in the following chapters, were comprised primarily of agricultural workers. The daily and monthly schedules of these individuals revolved around the needs of the crop; in this instance, primarily tobacco and various grains. An individual arriving on an early eighteenth-century outlying quarter would have seen a motley collection of timber framed or log buildings adjacent to agricultural fields, usually located on some small piece of land not suitable for planting. Most outlying quarters on large Virginia plantations housed twenty to thirty individuals, so the number of buildings would have been small, generally no more than two or three dwellings, some provision gardens and poultry enclosures, and perhaps a corn crib.<sup>10</sup> Because the keeping of hogs and cattle by the enslaved for their own use or profit had been outlawed in 1692 (Berlin 1998:119), any larger livestock present at the quarter was tended by the enslaved for the planter.

The other residents at the quarter would have been predominantly men, and like Olaudah Equiano some thirty some years later, the early eighteenth-century individual may not have been able to communicate with any of his fellow residents. He would have shared a

---

<sup>10</sup>The number of enslaved individuals on quarters could vary widely, however—on Robert Carter's plantations in the 1780s, one quarter had 37 slaves and two additional quarters had only three slaves each (cited in Mullin 1972:48).

barracks-style dwelling with the other males at the quarter, perhaps claiming a small floor space of his own for a bedroll and blanket. Like his fellow residents, he would have been apportioned small amounts of salt meat and cornmeal weekly. He was expected to work at planter-assigned tasks between five and a half to six days weekly, as well as some evenings. If he managed to live through his first year in Virginia (25% did not), he might be able to choose a partner and have children, especially as Chesapeake planters increased their purchases of African women as the century progressed. By the 1730s and 1740s, many of the enslaved were able to create stable family relationships, and native-born individuals began to predominate. This situation fostered the formation of kin networks, and the establishment of communities on quarters. Studies of the Chesapeake have shown that it was on the large plantations, such as those properties that form the focus of this study, that local slave communities and community-based identities formed in the first half of the eighteenth century (Kulikoff 1984; Lee 1986; Sidbury 1997).

### **Summary**

The preceding scenario sets the stage for the analysis to follow. Political, social, and economic circumstances in Virginia and the larger Atlantic world combined to affect the contexts of slavery on Virginia's Tidewater plantations. At the larger scale, the marginality of Bristol merchants in the overall African slave trade, coupled with the finances of Virginia planters, concentrated people of Igbo origin in the Tidewater. Some physical similarities between Virginia and Igboland may have eased somewhat the adjustment of these individuals to their new, but unwelcome, homes. Similarities in the rural setting, in the types and cycles of agricultural work, in foods and animals encountered, and in some climatic factors probably facilitated the formation of Igbo-style or "Igboized" communities on Virginia quarters (Chambers 1996a). Additionally, fairly early in the eighteenth century, Virginia planters began to include almost equal numbers of women in their slave purchases, enabling men and women to form meaningful relationships and families on the quarters (Chambers 1996a:224; Kulikoff 1986). Kinship would have been an important organizing principle for these communities, given the importance of family and kinship in the African societies whose members were enslaved in Virginia. Multi-generational groups of extended families



residing in quarter compounds bore basic similarities to Igbo kin-based societies and villages in West Africa. The freedom to practice and adapt African traditions was less controlled on some plantations than others--Edward Kimber, visiting the Maryland colony in 1745, noted African polygynous marital practices there (Kimber 1998:327).

While in no way denying the horrors of a colonial system whose success depended upon the enslavement of others as laborers, evidence suggests that the enslaved in Virginia were able to rise above the degradations to forge meaningful lives for themselves. The continuity across multiple generations and interconnectedness of the labor forces on these three Virginia plantations make them an ideal setting for examining responses to enslavement, and how they may have changed over time. In this study, the vehicle for examining responses and strategies will be subfloor pits: why they were created, how they were used, and how use may have changed during the course of the eighteenth century. The following chapter examines the study sites in detail, focusing on the historical evidence and archaeological remains found there.

### **Chapter III.**

#### **HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL OVERVIEW OF STUDY SITES**

In this study, I examine plantation slavery within a regional context, focusing on quarters from three eighteenth-century plantations in the Williamsburg area: Utopia Quarter, Kingsmill Quarter, and Carter's Grove Quarter. I chose these properties for detailed analysis primarily because of the intergenerational continuity among the three plantations. Using documentary evidence, I create a context for each plantation, peopling the quarters as accurately as possible with known data on the individuals enslaved there. Discussion of the sites is arranged chronologically. Interwoven with the historical information are results of the archaeological excavations on each of the quarters, setting the stage for discussion of subfloor pit functions at these sites in the following chapters.

While the Kingsmill Quarter and Carter's Grove Quarter were single component sites occupied for spans of twenty to thirty years, the Utopia Quarter requires further explanation. This site contained four temporal components, stretching from the beginning of the fourth quarter of the seventeenth century to about 1780.<sup>1</sup> The Virginia Research Center for Archaeology excavated the earliest component (ca. 1670-1710), not considered here, in 1973 and 1974. The archaeological remains of this component included the sub-surface traces of a cellared earthfast house and outbuilding, a well, and a fenced garden (Kelso 1984). These structures probably housed indentured labor and perhaps several enslaved Africans working for planter Thomas Pettus (Fesler 1997a).

The remaining three components, comprising sites 44JC32 and 44JC787, were excavated in the mid-1990s by the James River Institute for Archaeology. Archaeological and documentary evidence suggest that structural remains on each of

---

<sup>1</sup>The earliest three components have been given the Virginia state site designation 44JC32, while the latest component is numbered 44JC787.

these components represented quarters for enslaved Africans and African Americans (JRI 1995). Each component spanned a 20 to 30 year period, and the construction of each quarter appeared to correspond with changes in plantation ownership. In addition, each new property owner ordered the construction of new slave quarters a slight distance away from the old housing soon after acquiring the plantation (Walsh 1997: 94). It is believed that residents of the earlier quarters simply moved into the new buildings, a circumstance that provided community continuity between the different temporal components. This continuity, coupled with the spatial separation of the three groups of buildings, greatly simplified archaeological analysis and made it possible for archaeologists to draw conclusions about change within a single enslaved community across three generations. Each of the three periods is considered separately below. The discussion of the earliest of the periods contains general information about the two sites, as well as descriptions of the physical settings and archaeological research.

#### **Utopia Quarter Period II (44JC32), ca. 1700-1725**

The Utopia site, excavated in advance of residential and golf course construction at the Kingsmill on the James resort, was the former location of a rural quarter eight miles southeast of Williamsburg. The physical setting of the quarters at Utopia was typical of many larger Tidewater Virginia plantations. The buildings were located along the edge of a high bluff overlooking the James River to the south. Directly to the east, a shallow ravine ran inland from the river, and at some distance away to the west, a larger ravine today forming Wareham's Pond bisected the land. The forested margins of these ravines were home for deer, rabbit, opossum, and other small game that were hunted and trapped by the enslaved. The proximity of the river and marshy areas along its periphery also provided access to a variety of plants and animals that were exploited by the quarter residents. Nearby, probably on the higher ground to the north, were the agricultural fields where the enslaved labored. During the later periods of occupation at Utopia (Periods III and IV), the newer quarters were constructed to the north, most likely on the former location of agricultural fields whose soil fertility had been depleted by tobacco.

During each of the three periods, the buildings were part of the plantation's outlying quarters—slave housing not adjacent to the main farm complex, but located near distant agricultural fields or other work areas owned by the planter. The increased distance from the main plantation house granted the enslaved greater degrees of autonomy than individuals living and working within sight of the planter and his family.

What specific information is known about the enslaved community at Utopia? Unfortunately, the court records for James City County were destroyed during the Civil War, but information contained in private papers allows a partial reconstruction of the enslaved community at Utopia.<sup>2</sup> During the two earliest slave components (Periods II and III), the property was owned by the Bray family and most of the enslaved had been acquired from West Africa (Fesler 1997a), forming a multi-cultural mix of individuals. During the final period of occupation (c. 1750-1780), the property was in the hands of the Burwell family, and by that time, most of the enslaved residing there had been born in Virginia. In the following pages, the historical documentation and general archaeological analysis of each period is considered chronologically.

The first documented resident owner of the Utopia property was planter Colonel Thomas Pettus, who acquired this land as early as the third quarter of the seventeenth century (Stephenson 1963). The land remained in the family for the remainder of the century, passing to his son Thomas Pettus II around 1669 (Kelso 1984:36). After the death of the younger Pettus in 1691, James Bray II (d. 1725) married Pettus' widow, Mourning Glenn Pettus, thus acquiring ownership of the approximately 1,200 acre tract that contained Littleton Plantation and Utopia around 1700 (Stephenson 1963; McClure 1977; Walsh 1997). Like many large planters of the period, Bray was a man of considerable political power, holding a seat in the House of Burgesses, and was a justice for James City County (McClure 1977:11).

By 1723, at the end of Period II, Bray's enslaved labor force consisted of approximately 75 individuals on eight quarters (Fesler 1998). These individuals lived and worked at various Bray farms in James City and King William Counties (Stephenson 1963). Of these slaves, eleven men, ten to thirteen women, and four children were

---

<sup>2</sup> Several probate records, wills, and an account book contained within the Burwell Papers (Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library) were the main documents used in this reconstruction.

divided between three of the James City County locations: Utopia Quarter, Tutter's Neck, and the main plantation at Littletown (Kelso 1984:39). The enslaved individuals who first resided at the Utopia Quarter were probably African-born individuals that had been purchased by the Bray family beginning in the 1690s (Walsh 1997:94). Furthermore, James II's 1725 will and probate inventory showed that enslaved individuals headed two of the James City County quarters. The quarter at Utopia was almost certainly either the female-headed Debb's Quarter, or Jacko's Quarter (Walsh 1997:94; Fesler 1997a).

Although documents reveal that Bray employed approximately 28 enslaved individuals in three James City locations in 1723, they do not disclose how they were distributed among these places. There were three dwellings at Utopia and two each at Littletown and Tutter's Neck (Noel Hume 1966, Kelso 1984). Dividing the laborers evenly places between eight and ten people at each quarter.<sup>3</sup> Since Tutter's Neck, with two buildings, was not acquired by the Bray family until 1717, late in Period II, it is likely that well over half of Bray's James City County enslaved workforce would have resided at Utopia for most of the first two decades of the century. Distributing individuals evenly among the buildings would place approximately 18 individuals at Utopia prior to the acquisition of Tutter's Neck.<sup>4</sup>

Although statistics on slave importation patterns in the first quarter of the eighteenth century show that planters purchased more men than women, Bray's labor force contained equal proportions of adult men and women by the end of Period II. While nothing is known about the ages of any of these individuals, or how long they had been in Virginia, it is likely that most were African-born. By the time the site was abandoned around the middle of the third decade of the century, some of the Bray slaves may have been in Virginia for close to thirty years, more than enough time to form families. Given the equitable male-female ratios, it is possible that long-term relationships had formed between enslaved individuals during Period II, and the presence of children certainly hints at this possibility. It is unrealistic, however, particularly for

---

<sup>3</sup> Quarters on Bray's Chickahominy properties had 5 to 13 enslaved individuals (McClure 1977:48).

<sup>4</sup> This conclusion assumes that Bray had a comparable number of enslaved laborers during the entire span of Period II, a fact which is unknown at the current time.

this early period, to assume that all of Brays' James City County slaves were living in family groups. At this time, at least some unrelated individuals were residing together at the Utopia site.

### *Archaeological Evidence at the Site*

Three timber-framed structures that served as homes to the enslaved laborers, and a small service building were constructed on the site around the time Bray married into the property at the turn of the eighteenth century (Figure 3.1). These structures were occupied for the next two decades, before being replaced by another complex of buildings located 200 feet to the north. During Period 2, the three quarter dwellings were arranged in a U-shape around a central courtyard, a plan reminiscent of West African house compounds (Fesler 1997a). Many of the daily activities that occurred at the site, such as cooking, socializing, and creating handcrafted items, probably occurred in this outdoor space. A small fenced enclosure ran between Structures 10 and 20 and may have encircled a garden or poultry pen. The inventory of Bray's estate showed that cows and pigs, and in some cases sheep and horses, were kept at the slave quarters (Bray 1725). These animals, tended by the enslaved, would have supplied meat and dairy products for the planter, as well as the quarter residents.

Also standing at this time was the cellared house from Period I, used as an overseer's dwelling (Fesler 1997a). Seated on a small rise south of the quarter courtyard and partially surrounded by a fence, this substantially built structure was close enough to the quarters to serve as a constant reminder of planter surveillance. During the first half of the eighteenth century, the enslaved buried their dead in a cemetery south of the overseer's house, on the bluff's edge overlooking the river. During the 1990s excavations, the James River Institute excavated 25 burials of enslaved adults and children. The arrangement of the burials suggested that the deceased were buried in family groups (JRIA 1995).

Characteristic of many archaeologically excavated slave houses from the eighteenth century, none of the three Utopia dwellings had wooden floors or glazed windows. Each structure was heated with a single chimney probably constructed of sticks and mud, as attested by the fragments of daub or fired clay found in the fill of

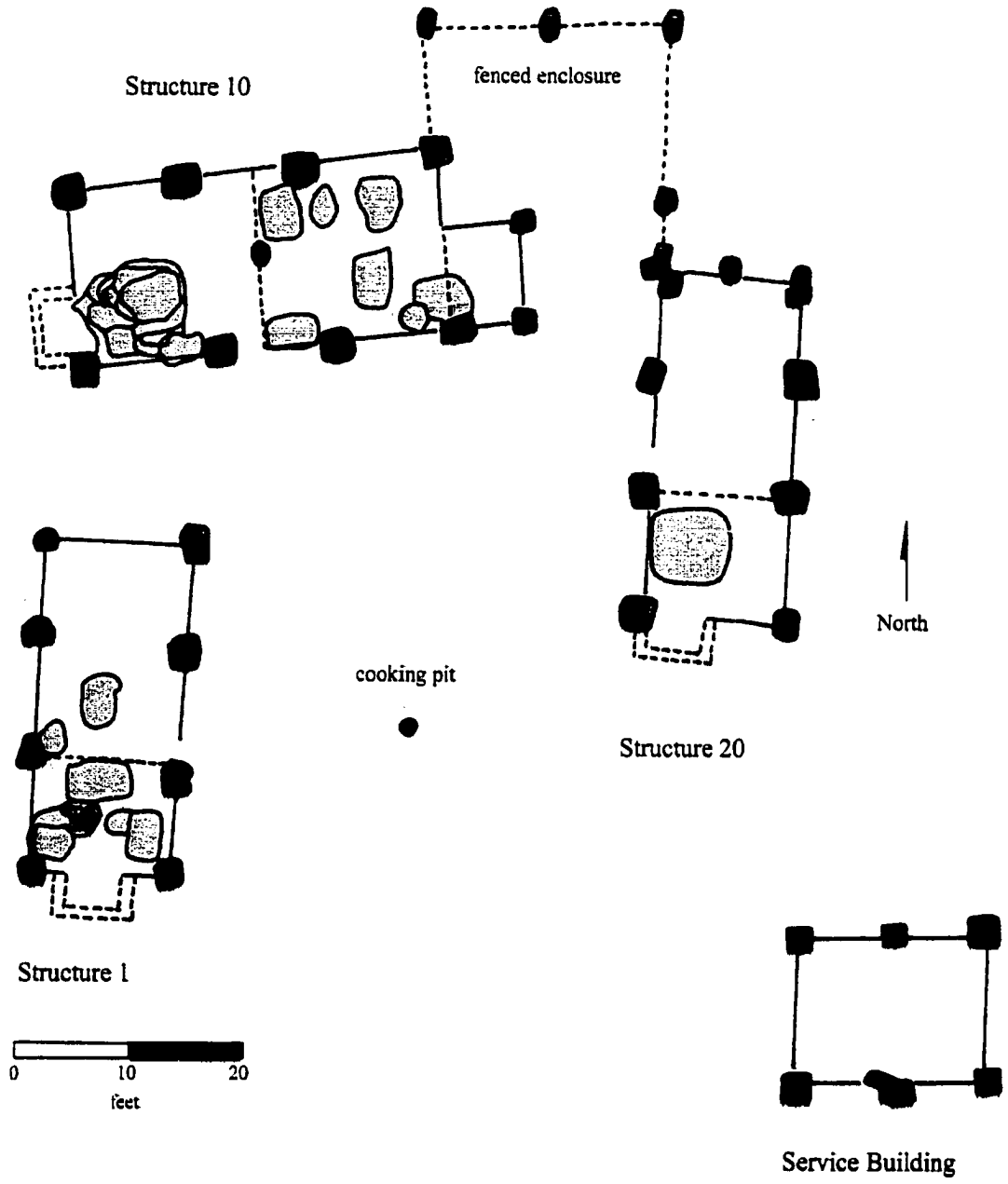


Figure 3.1 Utopia Period II (44JC32) archaeological remains, ca. 1700-1725.

numerous subfloor pits (Fesler 1997a). All of the two-roomed dwellings opened out into the common courtyard, in the center of which was a cooking pit. Multiple subfloor pits cut through the soil floors of two of the quarters. Discussion of each structure follows.

### Structure 1

Structure 1, located on the western side of the U-shaped complex of dwellings, measured 12 ft. by 28 ft. (Figure 3.2). It was a timber-framed building constructed around eight earth-set posts. A chimney stood at the southern end of the structure, heating a room that probably measured 9 by 12 ft. The larger, unheated room to the north measured 19 by 12 ft. No tightly datable artifacts were recovered from the construction-related posthole fills of any of the Period II structures, making it difficult to date the buildings with precision. Most of the artifacts from the posthole fills were Woodland pottery sherds and flaked stone—debris from earlier settlement of the area by Native Americans. A few English manufactured items were also found in the posthole fills; these items were presumably trash from the nearby seventeenth-century (Period 1) occupation of the area. Additionally, none of the destruction-related postmold fills contained any closely datable ceramics or glass.<sup>5</sup>

There were two single cut subfloor pits (Features 5 and 6) located in the structure, as well as a hearth-front complex (Features 2, 3, 4 & 30) consisting of four separate pits. These subfloor pits fell into two distinct phases of construction and use, with Feature 30 being the earliest pit (Phase I). After this feature had been filled, Features 2, 4, and 3 were constructed (Phase II). In the absence of intersecting features, it was difficult to determine where Features 5 and 6 fit into the two phases of pit construction. Artifact types and frequencies for these two features, however, suggest they were both filled during Phase I.

During Phase II, a pit stood in the front of the hearth, as well as one in each corner adjacent to the hearth. These features formed a U-shaped configuration along the front

---

<sup>5</sup> Dates for this period were assigned based on several factors. The history of the property strongly suggests that quarter construction was associated with acquisition of the land by James Bray II at the turn of the eighteenth century. Also, the presence of white salt glazed stoneware in the fill of one of the Period II subfloor pits, an English ceramic that began production in 1720 (Barka 1973), suggest that the buildings were abandoned after this type of ceramic began manufacture. The minimal quantities of white salt glazed stoneware suggest the site was abandoned soon after the introduction of this ware.



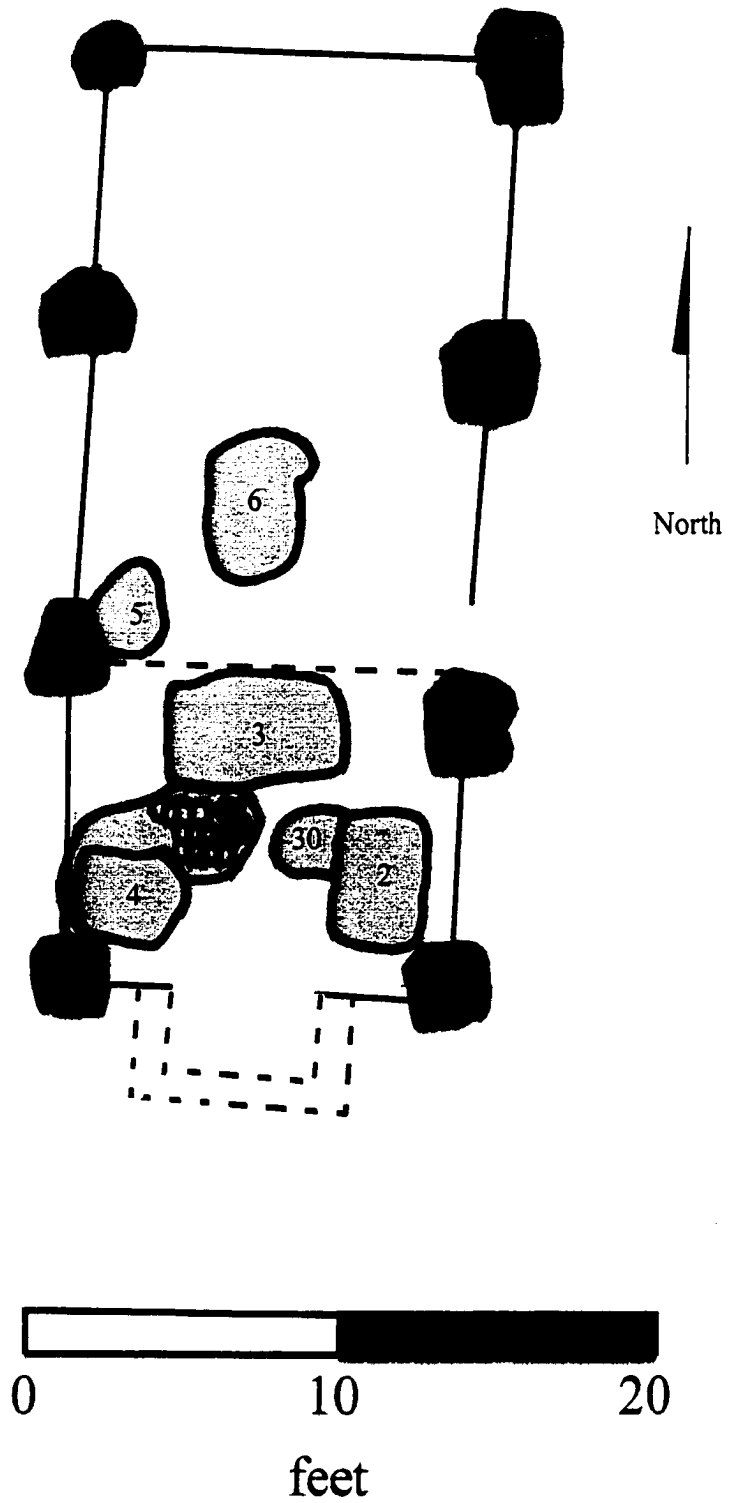


Figure 3.2 Utopia Period II Structure 1 archaeological remains.

and sides of the hearth and a paved area extending from the hearth front. A dry-laid pad of 22 bricks (Feature 13) extended out from the hearth, running along southern edge of Feature 3 and the northern edge of Feature 4. This brick surface (measuring approximately 3 by 2 ft.) may have been used as an extension of the hearth work area, although the brick showed no evidence of intensive burning. Pots could have been set over piles of hot embers raked out onto its surface, creating an additional cooking surface. A combination of regular construction and thin paving bricks were used in creating the surface. While most of the brick were unbroken, some examples contained traces of mortar that suggested they had been salvaged from elsewhere, probably Utopia Cottage, for reuse. The remnants of a similar brick work area were present along the western edge of Feature 2, sealing the backfilled Feature 30.<sup>6</sup>

The single layers of soil contained substantial quantities of complete and fragmented brick. These debris indicate that they had been filled rapidly sometime after the structure was no longer occupied. It is likely that the paving and construction bricks in the features' fills were originally part of the brick work surface in front of the structure's hearth.

### Structure 10

Slightly larger than Structure 1, Structure 10 measured 15 by 32 ft. and was located at the base of the U-shaped configuration of buildings. Like Structure 1, it was a timber-framed building set around eight major earth-set posts (Figure 3.3). A central post in the structure indicated that it had been divided into two rooms, each measuring 16 by 15 ft. A chimney on the southwestern corner of the structure heated the western room; the eastern room was unheated. Two postholes delineated a small (6 by 8.5 ft.) addition off the southeastern corner of building. This space was probably a private sleeping area used by one enslaved individual.

As with Structure 1, very few artifacts, mainly prehistoric lithics and pottery, were found in the construction and destruction fill of the structural posts. Ten subfloor

---

<sup>6</sup> The archaeologist in charge of this project feels these areas of brick paving were two separate but contemporaneous brick pads (Garrett Fesler, personal communication, 2-99), but it is possible they formed one larger (approximately 6 x 5 ft.) work surface that ran the entire width of the hearth.

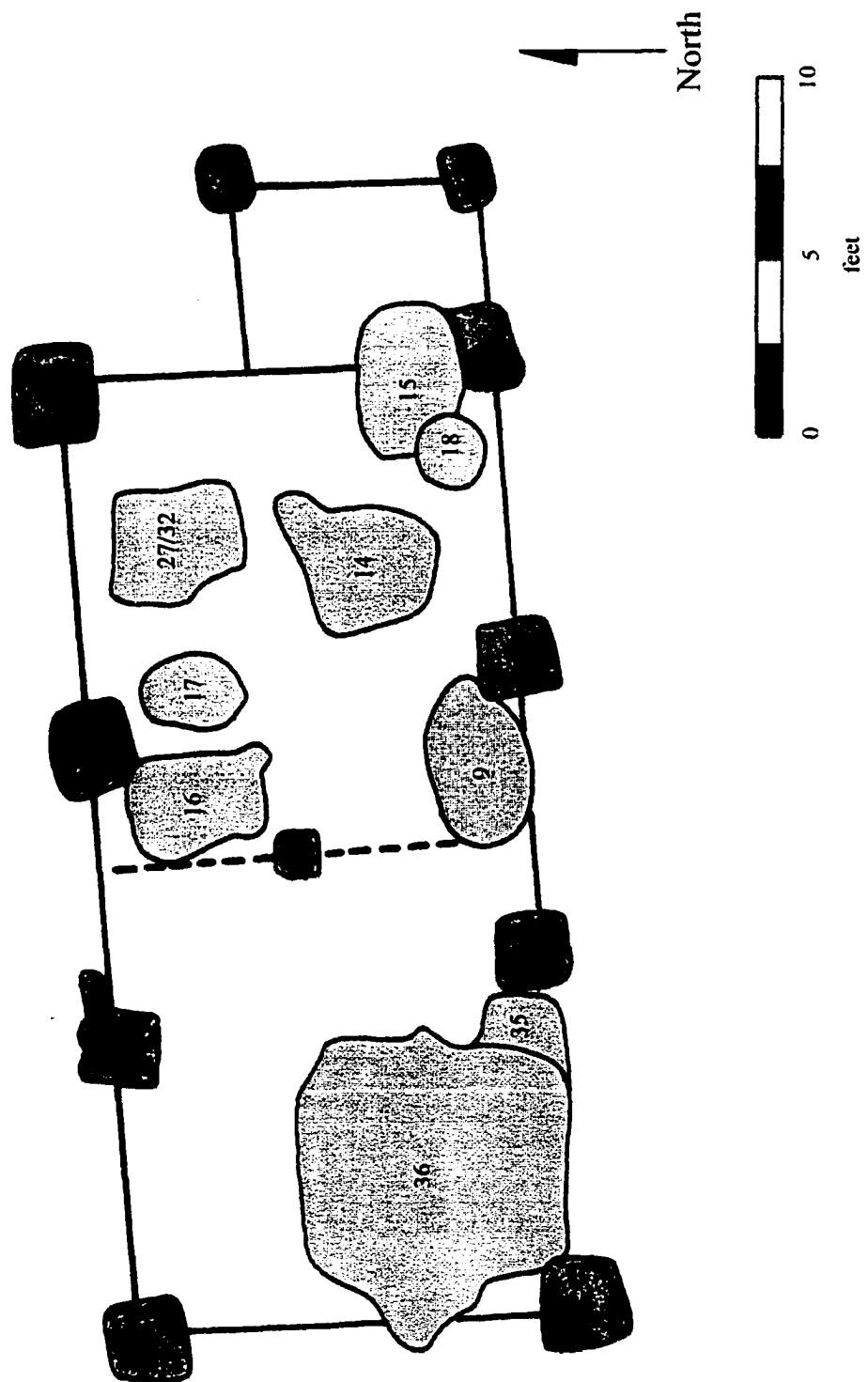


Figure 3.3 Utopia Period II Structure 10 archaeological remains.

pits cut the earthen floor of Structure 10. One of these pits (Feature 36) was located in front of the hearth at the west end of the building and had a complex cutting and filling sequence, with numerous zones of fill and large quantities of artifacts. During the last phase of construction in Feature 36, a 4.5 ft. square wooden box had been placed inside a hole dug slightly larger to accommodate the box. This feature was the only pit from Period II that used such permanent construction techniques. The other pits were scattered across the floor of the building, with eight located in the unheated eastern room, and one in the western room along the south wall near the hearth. One pit, Feature 15, may have been associated with the small southeastern addition.

Feature 36, the hearth front pit in Structure 10, was the most substantial subterranean pit from Period II. It contained at least two periods of construction and repair, with the latest period of construction destroying all but the bottom few inches of the earliest pit (Feature 36T/Y). This initial 3.5 by 2.2 ft. pit was oriented with its long axis facing the hearth (Figure 3.4). The two soil layers present at the bottom of this 2.2 ft. deep feature contained very few artifacts (totalling 41): fragmented nails, small bone, charcoal, fish scale, and a pipestem. The bottom loam layer (36Y) was sealed by a .2ft. layer of crushed fossil shell known as marl (36T). Marl was often used for walkway construction in colonial Virginia because of its good drainage qualities. It is possible that the marl was laid in the bottom of this pit to provide flooring that would remain relatively dry and non-muddy when groundwater caused moisture problems.

For an unknown reason, and probably while Feature 36T/Y was still an open pit, the Utopia residents dug a new and larger, but shallower pit through the original feature, destroying all but the lower .4 ft. of the feature. After digging a hole measuring 6 by 6 ft., they lowered a 4.5 ft. square wooden box with a hinged top into it.<sup>7</sup> Soil was then packed into the open area between the edge of the hole and the outer edges of the box (36 H, I, M), thus securing it firmly in place. This builder's trench contained substantial quantities of household debris, including complete tobacco pipebowls, colonoware sherds, shell fragments, straight pins, broken cutlery, bottle glass, animal bone, and nails, suggesting that the quarter residents deposited garbage into the trench in an effort to fill it

---

<sup>7</sup>The box had been left in place after the abandonment of the pit, as evidenced by the position within the feature of wood fragments, nails, and a strap hinge.

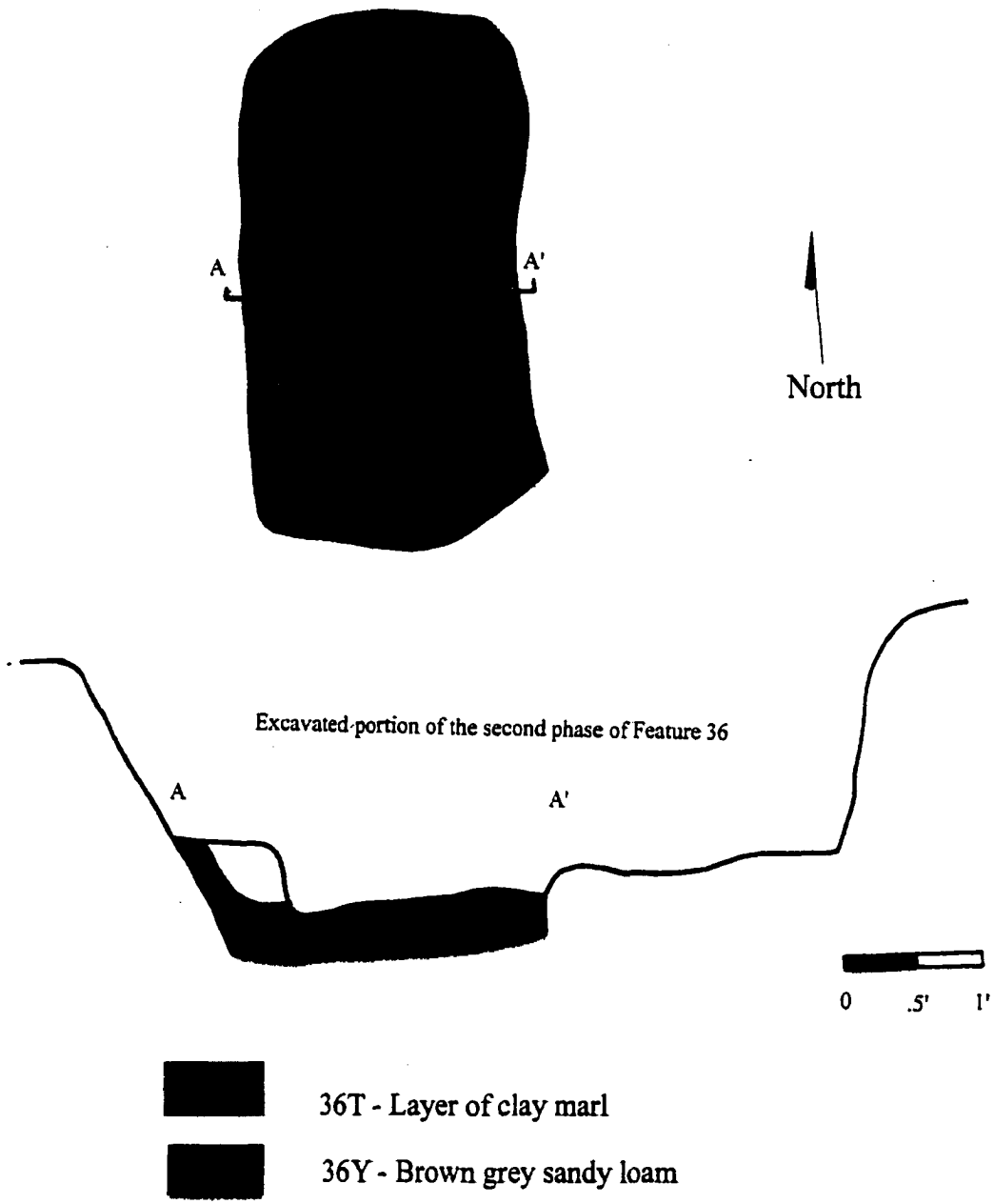


Figure 3.4 Phase I of Utopia Period II Feature 36.

quickly. Unfortunately, the builder's trench assemblage contained no tightly datable artifacts that allowed the calculation of a construction date.

A partially crushed padlock, a plate from a stock lock, a diamond-shaped iron keyhole, and a partial iron key, all recovered from the soil filling the box provide convincing evidence that the box was locked to protect its contents from theft. What does archaeological evidence suggest about the primary function of this pit? Was the box locked to prevent the theft of food supplies or personal possessions while the quarter inhabitants were working in the fields? It appeared some soil (36J and L) accumulated during the use span of the wooden box, perhaps containing clues to the pit's original function. The types of artifacts from these two soil layers were little different than most of the other layers assemblages, but 81% of the artifacts (1168 of 1438) were animal bone, clam and oyster shell, fish scale, and eggshell. Most of these food remains were small (under 1.5"), but very few were burned, suggesting that debris from food preparation activities around the hearth sifted down through cracks in the box lid into the pit rather than the pit being a dumping place for fireplace ash. Other artifacts from these two layers included small pieces of clay tobacco pipes, and a clay bead. Items recovered from the floor layers can be combined with the feature's stratigraphic history to offer some suggestions for its original function and its later history.

During the time that Feature 36 was in use, a bricked surface similar to the one in Structure 1 fronted the area between the hearth and the pit. At some point during the occupation of Structure 10, a portion of this brick pad and underlying soil collapsed into the western side of the subterranean pit (36P, R, S). While this collapse may have merely been associated with the repeated stress of foot traffic around the fireplace and over the pit, other evidence suggests a more dramatic sequence of events.

The presence of daub or fired clay in the floor layers (36J/L) indicated that Structure 10, like the other buildings at the quarter, was heated with a stick and mud chimney. Archaeological evidence on other Virginia sites has demonstrated that these chimneys sometimes caught fire, as stray sparks ignited wooden chimney components whose clay coating had dried and fallen away (Kelso 1997). As a burning chimney put the entire structure and its inhabitants at risk, it had become common, at least by the later nineteenth century, to construct these chimneys so that they leaned away from the house

(Figure 3.5). Sticks or poles were often propped against the chimney exterior to help hold it upright. In event of a chimney fire, residents kicked away the supporting stick and pushed the flaming chimney away from the house. Because Feature 36 had been converted from a subfloor pit to a firepit after the collapse of the hearth facing, I believe that fire destroyed the chimney of Structure 10. I suspect that during attempts to extinguish the fire or topple the chimney, the combined weight of people congregated around the hearth-front broke through the top of the wooden box and also caused the collapse of the bricked work surface and underlying soil along the pit edge. Portions of two broken strap hinges and an andiron finial found in the soil layers sealing the floor of the box (36J/L) support this interpretation. Another portion of a hinge and the nails holding it in place along the inside edge of the box remained resting in its original position, where it was found by archaeologists over two hundred years later.

After the collapse, the inhabitants abandoned Feature 36, not even attempting, it appears, to recover the contents of the pit, since the collapsed clay and brick remained in place at the time of excavation. They began to fill the hole rapidly with household debris (36E, F, G, K) and some of these zones (36G and K), appear to have been tipped into the open feature by individuals standing along its northern edge. The mixture of large and small fragmented items suggest a combination of household debris (oyster shell and bones from meals, a turtle shell, a broken table knife) and soil gathered from around the property was used to fill the box after the hearth damage.

Since events associated with the collapse of the hearth front left the structure without a functional fireplace, the enslaved dug a firepit (approximate measurements 4.5 ft. north-south and .4 ft. deep) into the fill of the pit. A layer of fire-reddened and charred soil (36D) formed the base of this firepit, which itself was filled with layers of wood ash and charcoal (36B, C). The ashy zones contained fewer than 200 artifacts, including burned clam and oyster shell, nails, bone, and a few pottery and glass fragments. After the firepit went out of use, the remaining hole was capped sometime after 1720 with a dark brown loam containing food and household garbage.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> The *terminus post quem* for the filling of this pit was based on a sherd of coarse earthenware made by William Rogers, the "Poor Potter" of Yorktown, Virginia, who produced pottery from 1720 to 1745 (Barka 1973).



**Figure 3.5** Late nineteenth-century photograph of unidentified log house with propped chimney.



## Structure 20

Following in the pattern of the other two structures, Structure 20 was also built with eight earth set posts, with 27 by 12 ft. dimensions. Unlike Structures 1 and 10, however, Structure 20 contained only one subfloor pit (Figure 3.6). This 7.5 by 4.5 ft. rectangular pit was located in front of the hearth at the south end of the building. Several layers of organic soil, some containing concentrations of charcoal and ash, filled this feature.

Feature 21 appeared to have been maintained in its original form without repair throughout the lifetime of the building. While its use and filling history were not as complex as that of Feature 36, Feature 21 contained more zones of fill than most of the other Period II pits (Figure 3.7). A layer of crushed fossil shell (21J), similar to that zone present in the earliest pit in Feature 36 sealed the clay floor in the western half of the feature. This marl was overlain by a layer of brown loam (21H), which extended across the entire bottom of the pit. The composition and extent of these two layers indicated that they were formed when the feature was in use. A thin band of wood ash (21G) containing small fragments of burned bone and shell probably represented sweepings from the hearth. A thick layer of dark brown loamy soil (21C) had been deposited into the feature to fill it, capped with slightly later tips of soil (21A, B). The edges of the feature showed extensive evidence of erosion, suggesting that the overlying structure had been removed while the pit stood open.

It is possible, given the presence in Structure 20 of only one pit, a hearth-front example, this building may not have functioned as a dwelling. The larger quantities of specialized kitchen equipment in Feature 21 upheld this conclusion. A pewter plate, a copper skimmer, three spoons, a knife, and the only table glass found during the period were all recovered from the fill of Feature 21. Additionally, the site's only iron pot hook, used for suspending cooking pots over the hearth fire, was also found in Feature 21. These artifacts may indicate that Structure 20 was serving as a food preparation and storage area. Interestingly, it is the structure closest to a building believed to have been a corncrib or meathouse. Given the absence of subfloor pits in other parts of Structure 20, it is possible this building did not serve as a dwelling, but rather as a storage and support building for the entire quarter.

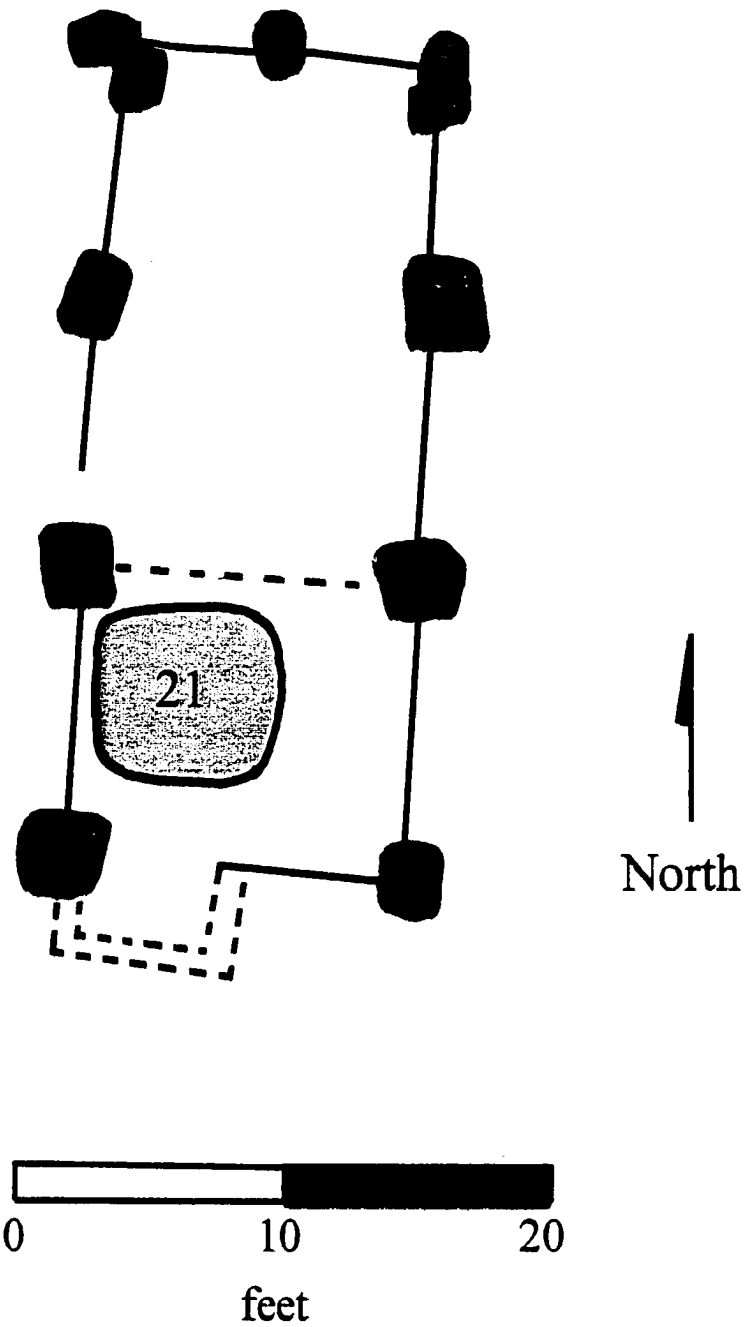


Figure 3.6 Utopia Period II Structure 20 Archaeological Remains.

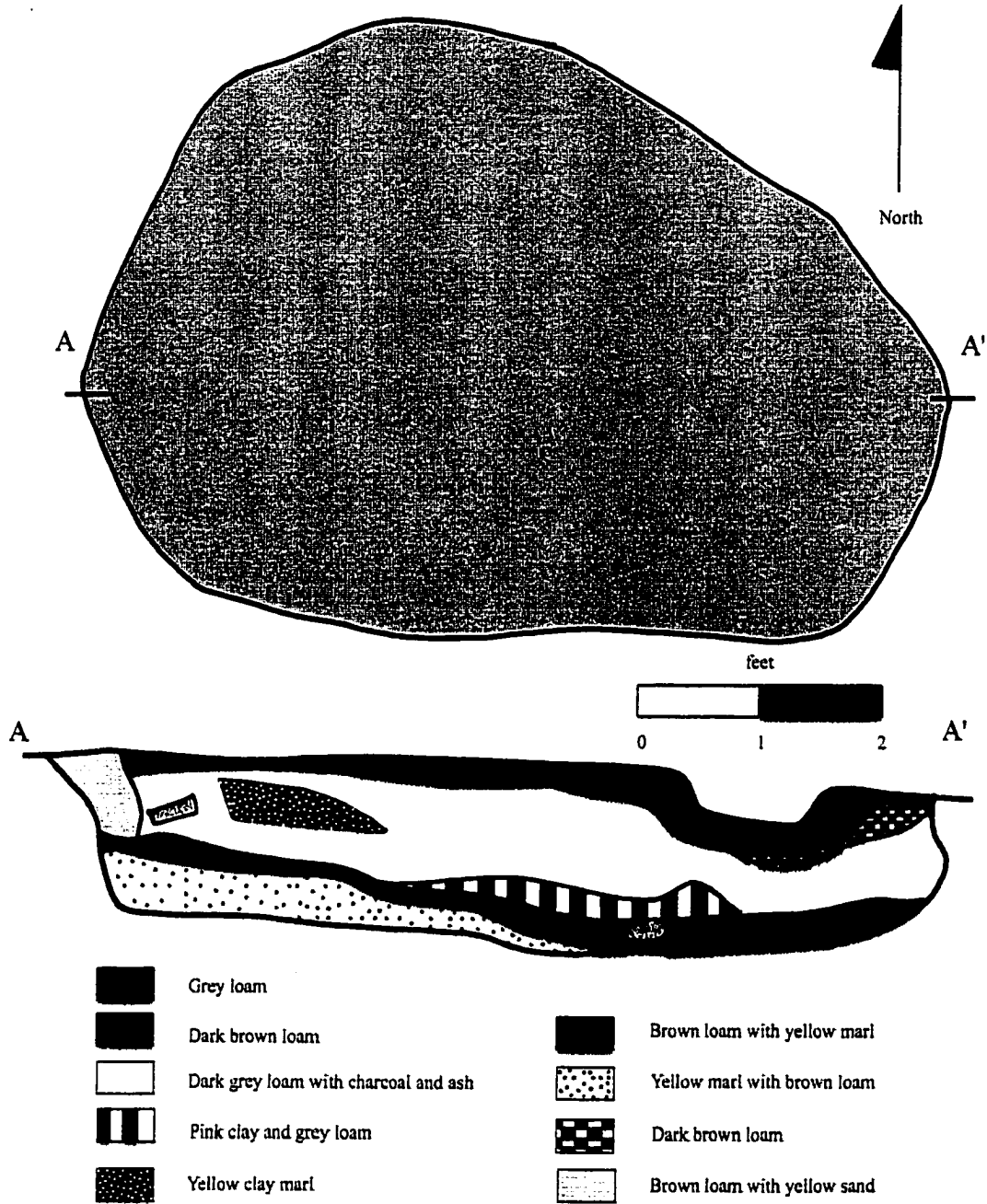


Figure 3.7 Plan and profile of Utopia Period II Feature 21.

### Service Building

A fourth earthfast building was located south and slightly east of Structure 20. This small (15 by 10 ft.) structure contained six structural posts, with numerous repairs to the middle post along the building's southern façade. It is possible that these repairs mark the location of the building's door, in which case it faced the overseer's house. Given documentary evidence about the types of structures typically found at quarters, it is possible that the building served as a corncrib or meat house. Locating the door of a food storage building where it was easily visible from the overseer's house would have greatly hindered attempts by the enslaved to liberate extra food rations. Locking the building would have also deterred theft. Virginia planter Joseph Ball cautioned his plantation steward "Tell ye overseers to keep the keys of the folk's [slaves] cornhouse or else they will sell it, and starve" (Ball Letterbook, Ball to Chinn, February 18, 1744).

### *Archaeological Analysis of Subfloor Pits*

Examining the subfloor pits from Period II showed that there appeared to be two predominant forms taken by the features: hearth-front complexes with multiple episodes of cutting and filling, and single use pits, generally located in building corners or the middle of floors (Table 3.1). In Structure 1, the hearth was centrally located along the southern end of the building, with three separate but contemporaneous pits (Features 2, 3, 4) dug in a U-shaped formation along the edges of the hearth face forming a hearth-front complex. The two largest pits, Features 21 and 36, had been placed in front of the hearths in Structures 10 and 20. While the hearth front pits in Structures 10 and 20 contained traces of a marl layer deposited to create easily drained flooring, there was no evidence of marl floor layers in the Structure 1 subfloor pits. While most of the non-hearth pits from Period II ranged around one foot in depth (with the exception of two features that were .25 ft. deep), the hearth-front pits were slightly deeper on average, ranging between .9 ft. and 2.2 ft.

The stratigraphy of the Period II pits revealed that most of them had been filled rapidly, usually with a single deposit of soil.<sup>9</sup> This dark brown sandy loam contained a mixture of highly fragmented domestic and architectural artifacts distributed evenly throughout the layer. Several features (Features 2 and 4) contained smaller, slightly later tips of soil (2A, 4A) deposited in depressions caused by settling of the initial fill.

**Table 3.1** Utopia Quarter Period II Subfloor Pits Descriptive Details

Structure	Feature	Position	Phase	Shape	Cuts or Repairs	Dimensions & Depth (in feet)	Total Artifacts	Artifacts per Cubic Foot	
1	F 30	Hearth	I	Rect.	Multiple	2.75 x 2.5 x 1.0	138	20	
	F 5	Corner	I	Oval	Single	1.1 x 2.9 x 0.7	51	22.9	
	F 6	Other	I	Rect.	Single	2.75 x 4.2 x 0.8	24	2.6	
	F 2	Hearth	II	Rect.	Multiple	4.3 x 4.7 x 1.1	968	43.5	
	F 3	Hearth	II	Rect.	Multiple	6.25 x 4.0 x 0.9	1011	44.9	
	F 4	Hearth	II	Rect.	Multiple	4.0 x 4.0 x 1.3	366	34.9	
10	F 15	Corner	I	Rect.	Single	4.5 x 3.5 x 1.0	137	8.73	
	F 17	Other	I	Rect.	Single	2.25 x 3.5 x 0.9	117	16.7	
	F 27	Corner	I	Rect.	Multiple	2.25 x 2.0 x 0.25	95	84.1	
	F 35	Other	I	Rect.	Multiple	2.1 x 4.8 x 0.3	40	13.3	
	F 36T/Y	Hearth	I	Rect.	Multiple	3.5 x 2.2 x 2.25	41	13.6	
	F 9	Other	II	Oval	Single	4.5 x 2.9 x 0.9	539	46.1	
	F 14	Other	II	Rect.	Single	3.75 x 5.25 x 1.0	922	46.8	
	F 16	Corner	II	Rect.	Single	3.0 x 4.75 x 0.9	148	5.2	
	F 18	Corner	II	Oval	Single	2.25 x 2.25 x 0.25	269	206.9	
	F 32	Corner	II	Rect.	Multiple	4.0 x 2.5 x 0.25	48	48	
	F 36	Hearth	II	Rect.	Multiple	4.5 x 4.5 x 1.75	4650	131.4	
	20	F 21	Hearth	I, II	Rect.	Multiple	7 x 4.5 x 1.25	4930	103.8

In Structures 1 and 10, two phases of construction were evident among the subfloor pits. These two phases have been designated Phase I and Phase II (Table 3.1). There did not appear to be any change in where the enslaved located pits during these two periods. While most of the non-hearth Phase II pits were single cut features, there were several instances where new pits cut through earlier features.

Features 5, 6, and 30, the earliest pits in Structure 1, and Features 15, 27, and 36T/Y in Structure 10, appeared to have been abandoned and filled within a short time of

<sup>9</sup> Although Features 4 and 30 were mapped and excavated as containing several zones of fill, these soil layers were virtually identical, with the same soil composition and inclusions and only slight gradations in soil color. These similarities suggest that they were filled in one episode with soil from the same source.

the buildings' initial occupation. Based on similar ratios and types of artifacts, it also appeared that Features 17 and 35 were also filled during Phase I. In general, these earlier features not only contained fewer artifacts per cubic foot of fill than did the later features (Table 3.1), but, with the exception of iron nails, they also contained very few artifacts of European manufacture. Some of the artifacts from these early pits were types that were more typically found on seventeenth century sites, such as case bottle glass fragments and locally-made tobacco pipes. The early dating and generally small sizes (under .75") of these items suggests that many of the manufactured objects in the pits were originally present in sheet midden from the earlier Utopia Cottage period (1670-1700). These objects, along with the even earlier Native American artifacts, were contained within the soil used to fill these first phase pits.

### *Summary*

Two of the postholes at the northern end of Structure 20 had been replaced, but otherwise the buildings seem to have stood without repair throughout their period of occupation. Archaeological and documentary evidence from the Virginia tidewater indicates that earthfast structures generally needed major repair or replacement within twenty or so years (Carson et al. 1981). The virtual absence of such evidence on the Period II structures suggests that they were not occupied much over two decades, a span in accordance with the dates supplied by documentary and artifact evidence. One of the subfloor pits contained a small fragment of white salt glazed stoneware, a type of ceramic that began production in 1720. The presence of this sherd placed the filling date of this feature, and thus the abandonment of this quarter, as sometime after this year. There is good evidence that by the end of Period II, however, the quarter buildings were in poor condition, as shown by damage to the hearth in Structure 10, with the subsequent use as a heat source of an open fire pit in the building. The poor condition of the buildings, coupled with the change in property ownership at the death of James Bray II may have occasioned the construction of a new set of quarters in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. The four buildings comprising this quarter have been designated as Utopia I, Period III.

### **Utopia Quarter Period III (44JC32), ca. 1725-1750**

After the death of James Bray II in 1725, grandson James Bray III (born by 1715-1744) acquired the Littletown home farm, the Utopia property, and all the enslaved people on these properties (Kelso 1984:39). Since Bray III was still a minor at the time of his grandfather's death, the property remained under the control of his father Thomas Bray and James Bray II's widow until the young man came of age. Bray III begins to appear in legal actions in county court records in 1736, so it is likely he became 21 in that year. He resided at Littletown Plantation and controlled operations on his properties until his own death in the fall of 1744.

During Period III (ca. 1725-1750), two earthfast houses and several other outbuildings were constructed 200 ft. north of the earlier quarter. A trash pit and a series of postholes that denoted the former location of a fence line comprised the remainder of the archaeological remains excavated on the property (Figure 3.8). This quarter is believed to have been home to a mixture of individuals recently arrived from Africa, other African-born individuals who had been enslaved in Virginia for several decades, and children born in Virginia to African parents (Walsh 1997:197). The Bray family probably continued to purchase slaves directly from Africa through the 1730s (Walsh 1997:94). An overseer supervised the work of the slaves at Utopia during this period (McClure 1977:42).

These individuals raised tobacco, corn, and possibly wheat, produced butter, as well as tended livestock for the Brays (McClure 1977:44). Bray ledgers show cattle at Utopia. Bray's slaves most likely raised large numbers of sheep, pigs, and cattle that were sold as meat. Much of the slaves' work went into raising products that Bray sold on the market, but some of the crops, particularly the corn, came back to them as provisions. Other work for the enslaved included brickmaking—in the early 1740s, Bray sold over 82,000 brick, and in the 1970s archaeologists recorded the former location of a kiln on the Littletown/Utopia tract (McClure 1977:91). Bray also sold wood that the enslaved cut from the property (McClure 1977:93).

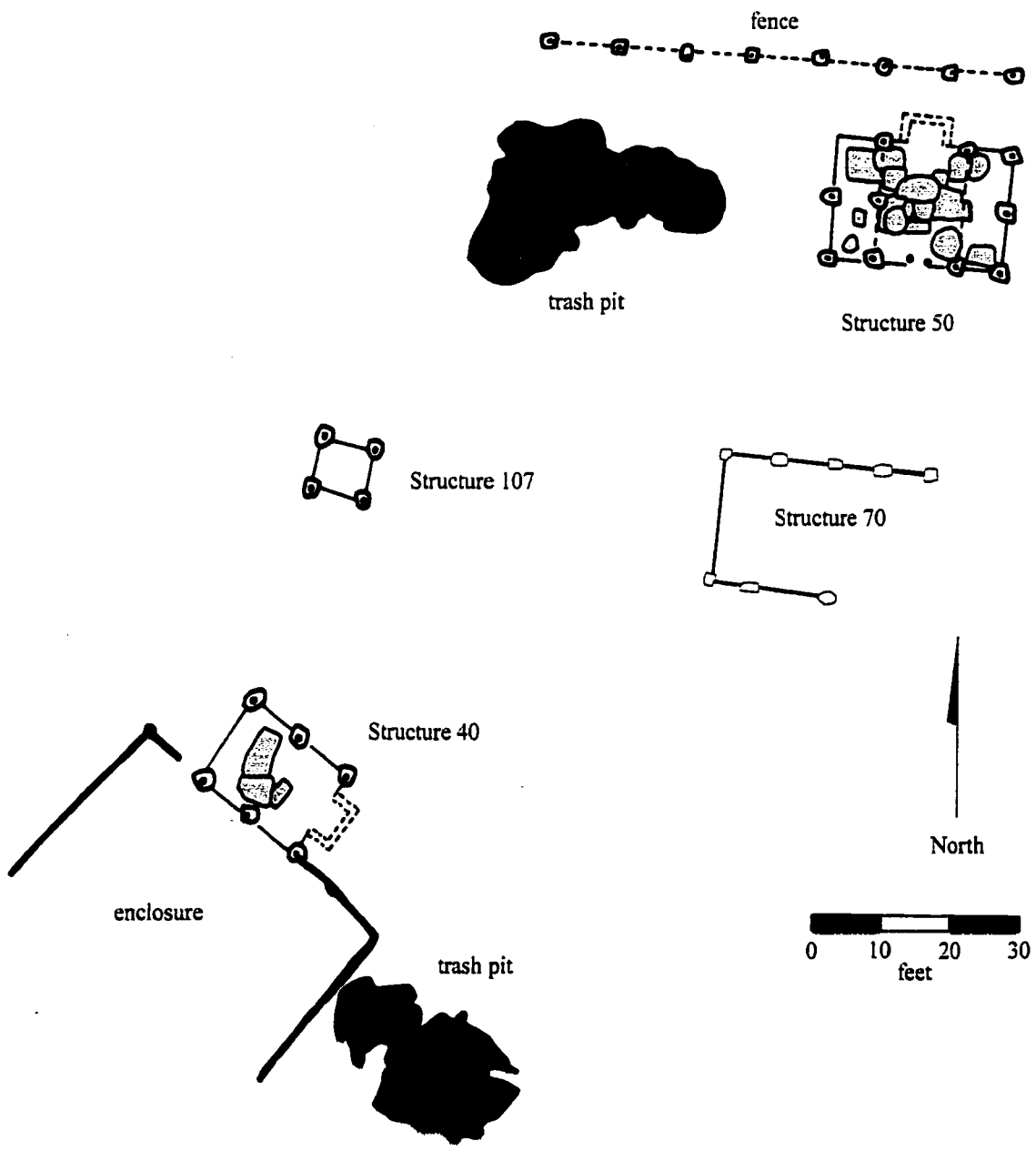


Figure 3.8 Utopia Period III (44JC32) archaeological remains, ca.1725 - 1750.



### *Archaeological Evidence at the Site*

Four earthfast structures stood on a small rise north of the Period II quarter. Two of the buildings, designated Structures 40 and 50, functioned as dwellings for enslaved laborers. A small square service structure and a long building interpreted as a barn comprised the other structures on the site. A 36 by 40 ft. fenced enclosure extended off the south end of Structure 40, perhaps serving as a livestock pen. Another fence, of post and rail construction and indeterminate function, ran along the northern border of the quarter. Large trash midden areas (Features 61 and 62) were associated with each of the dwellings. The artifacts recovered from these trash pits were characteristic of primary refuse: large fragments of ceramics and glass that were reconstructable into identifiable vessels. The ceramics from the trash pits were primarily coarse earthenwares and stonewares made in England, Germany, and Virginia. With the absence of a well on the site, it is likely that the enslaved used a nearby freshwater spring as their source of water for drinking, cooking, and for washing clothes and themselves. Archaeological evidence also pointed to the use of rain barrels at the site.

One category of manufactured item was ceramics, which provide archaeologists with tools for dating site occupation. Ceramics from this quarter included a mixture of foreign and locally-produced wares, primarily in inexpensive coarse earthenwares and stonewares. They generally dated to the first half of the eighteenth century, although most of the pottery fragments were from types whose production span ranged over many decades, and were thus not tightly dateable. There were some exceptions, however, and these ceramics provide a date range for this site that falls in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. A polychrome painted tin enamelled earthenware plate with a peacock design was manufactured in England between 1725 and 1740 (Noel Hume 1969:11). The dating of this plate is consistent with the 1720-1745 operation span of the "Poor Potter" of Yorktown (Barka 1973), whose wares were one of the more commonly found ceramics on the site. Other ceramic types with dating implications for the site included white salt glaze stoneware, a thin-bodied ceramic available after 1720 (Noel Hume 1969:114). One of the Westerwald stoneware fragments was molded with a GR medallion, dating its production between 1714 and 1760, the date span of the reigns of British monarchs George I and II (Noel Hume 1969:282).

### Structure 40

Along the southern edge of the Period III site stood a 12 by 16 ft. earthfast structure. Six structural posts formed the footprint of this one room building, and three subfloor pits cut the interior floor (Figure 3.9). While the location of the hearth was not immediately apparent from the placement of the pits, it probably stood along one of the narrow ends of the building (shown here on the east). Very few artifacts were present in the construction-related fill of the buildings posts, but a fragment of locally-produced Yorktown coarse earthenware provided a date of after 1720 for the building's construction (Barka 1973).

Unfortunately, earlier looting of this portion of the site had severely compromised the integrity of the subfloor pit assemblages in Structure 40. For this reason, analysis was not undertaken of these pit assemblages. While it was impossible to ascertain the original shapes and dimensions of the three subfloor pits, it appeared that they were constructed in the center of the building as rectangular features.

### Structure 50

A second dwelling stood at the northern limits of the site. This 24 by 15.5 ft. earthfast structure contained eleven postholes arranged in such a manner as to suggest a three room building (Figure 3.10). A central room measuring 12 by 15.5 ft. and entered through a door along the southern wall was flanked by two narrow (6 by 15.5 ft.) unheated rooms. Seventeen subterranean pits cut through the soil floor of the building, with eleven of these pits forming a large hearth-front complex at the north end of the building. The eastern room contained two subfloor pits, and three pits cut through the floor of the western room. Earlier looting evidence in Structure 40 had not occurred at Structure 50, so analysis of all 17 pit assemblages was possible.

The hearth-front complex in Structure 50 was perhaps the most complicated sequencing of pits excavated to date on a Virginia site. Although it was difficult to determine with certainty, there appeared to have been five phases of pit construction,

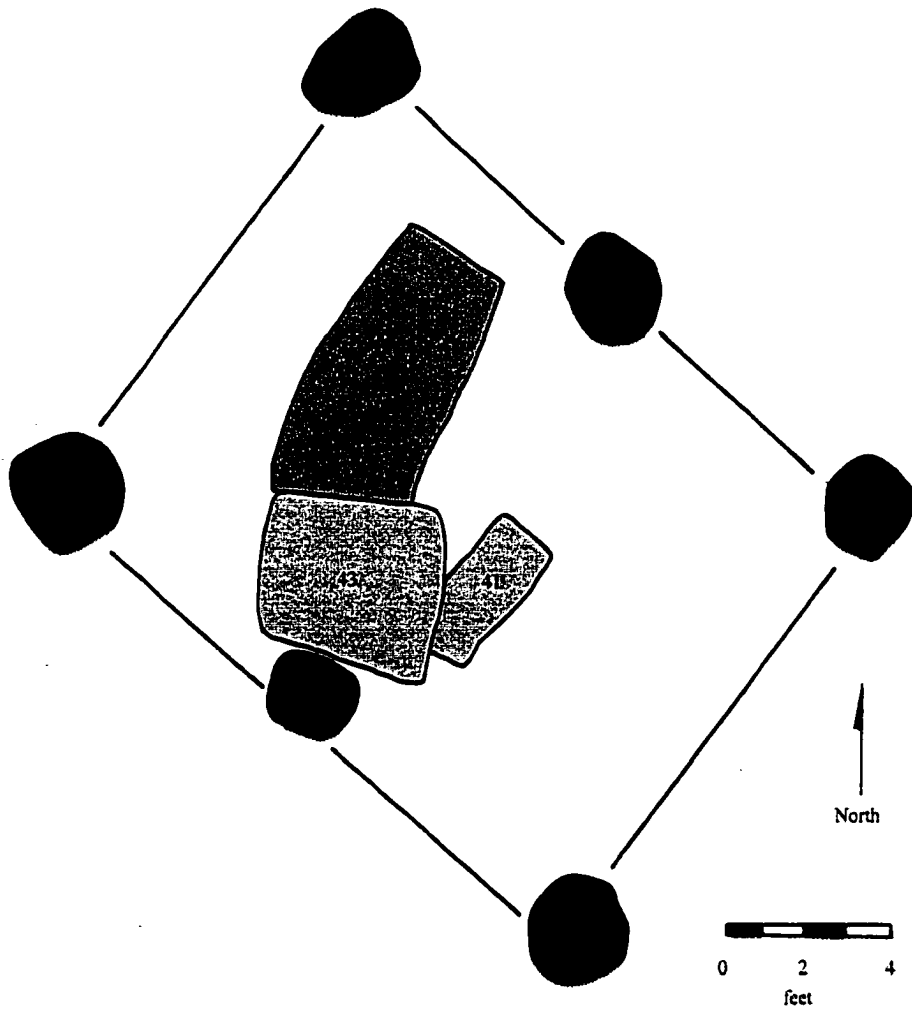


Figure 3.9 Utopia Period III Structure 40 archaeological remains.

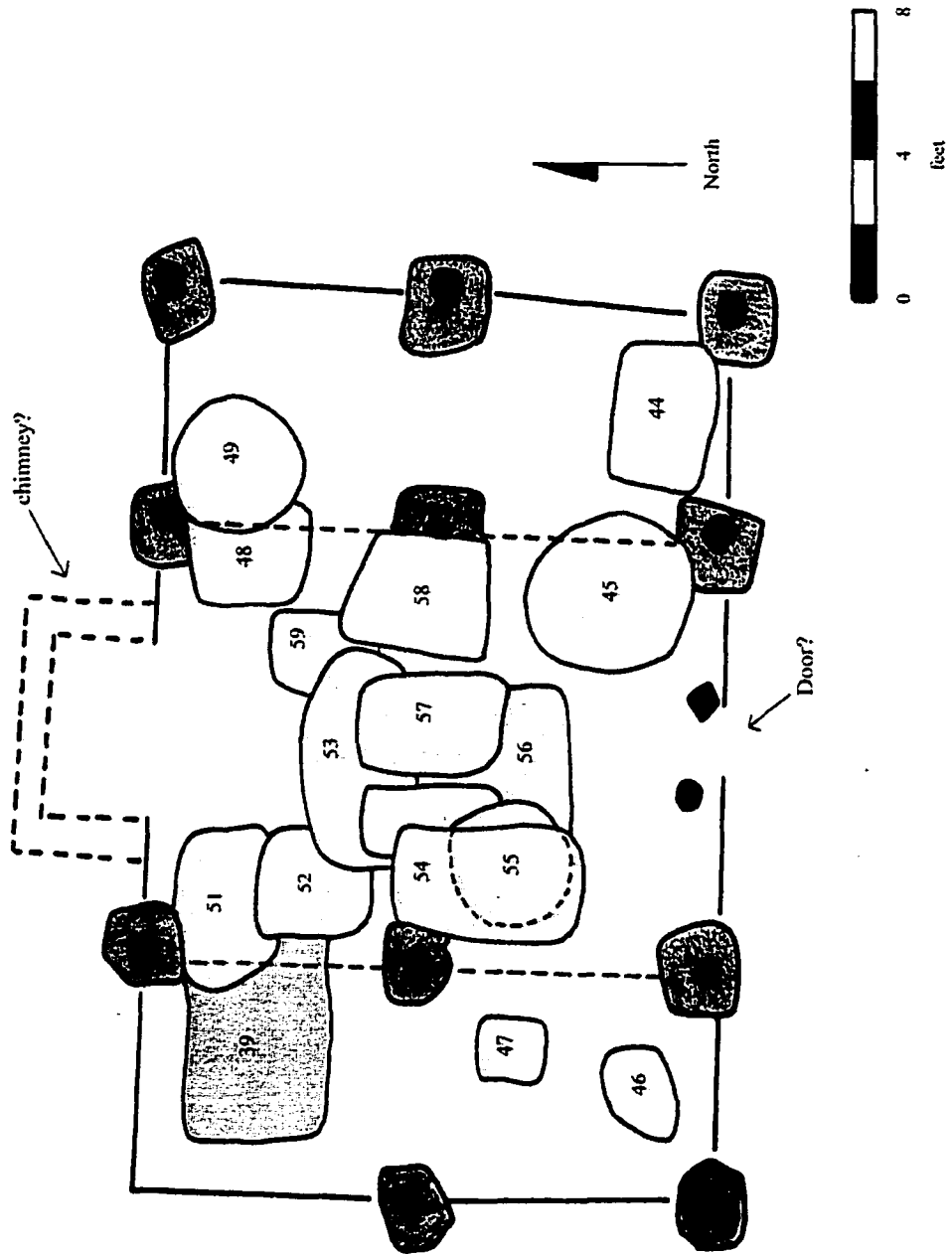


Figure 3.10 Utopia Period III Structure 50 archaeological remains.

with eleven separate pits in the immediate hearth vicinity (Figure 3.11 and Table 3.2).<sup>10</sup> In all but the final two stages, a pit with its long axis aligned with the front of the hearth was present (Features 56 and 53), as well as either one or two pits located adjacent to the sides of the hearth (Features 48, 51, 52). During the fourth phase of pit construction, three pits stood in front of the hearth (Features 54, 57, 58), although their short axes were aligned with the hearth and they cut through one of the earlier pits (F53). At some point, most of one of these pits (Feature 58) was filled, with two shallow narrow trench-like (1 ft. wide) pits extending along the east and west lengths of the feature.

The residents of the structure encountered problems with maintaining their hearth-front pits in good repair throughout the building tenure. Early in the occupation of Structure 50, one of the residents dug a rectangular pit (Feature 39) in the northeast corner of the western unheated room. The eastern wall of this feature abutted the partition wall between the central and western room. Another subterranean pit, Feature 51 was constructed on the opposite side of the partition wall, adjacent to the hearth. At some point while the two features were in use, the undisturbed clay subsoil between the two pits collapsed, possibly from the weight of the overlying partition wall. After this collapse, the residents of the building filled Feature 51 completely, with some of the ashy fill (51C) dumped into Feature 51 spilling under the partition wall into Feature 39. A Danish silver coin, stamped with the year of its manufacture, 1729, provided a date after which the wall collapse occurred. After Feature 51 had been completely filled, a new pit (Feature 52) was dug to take its place, cutting through the southern edges of the filled Feature 51. Feature 39 was also filled, and a new, smaller pit (Feature 39A) was created in the same location, using the original western, northern, and southern walls, but creating a new eastern wall some 0.5 ft. west of the original feature limits.

During the second phase of pit construction, a square pit (Feature 48) was cut into the undisturbed soil at the eastern edge of the hearth. This feature abutted the wall separating the main room of the structure from the small eastern room, and cut through the fill of an earlier pit, Feature 49. To prevent the more loosely packed fill of Feature 49

---

<sup>10</sup> Since the presence of Yorktown earthenware and stoneware provided a filling date of post 1720 (Barka 1973) for all but one of the features (Feature 51), ceramics were not useful in determining dating differences between the various pits. Determination of each pit's construction phase was therefore based on stratigraphic evidence.

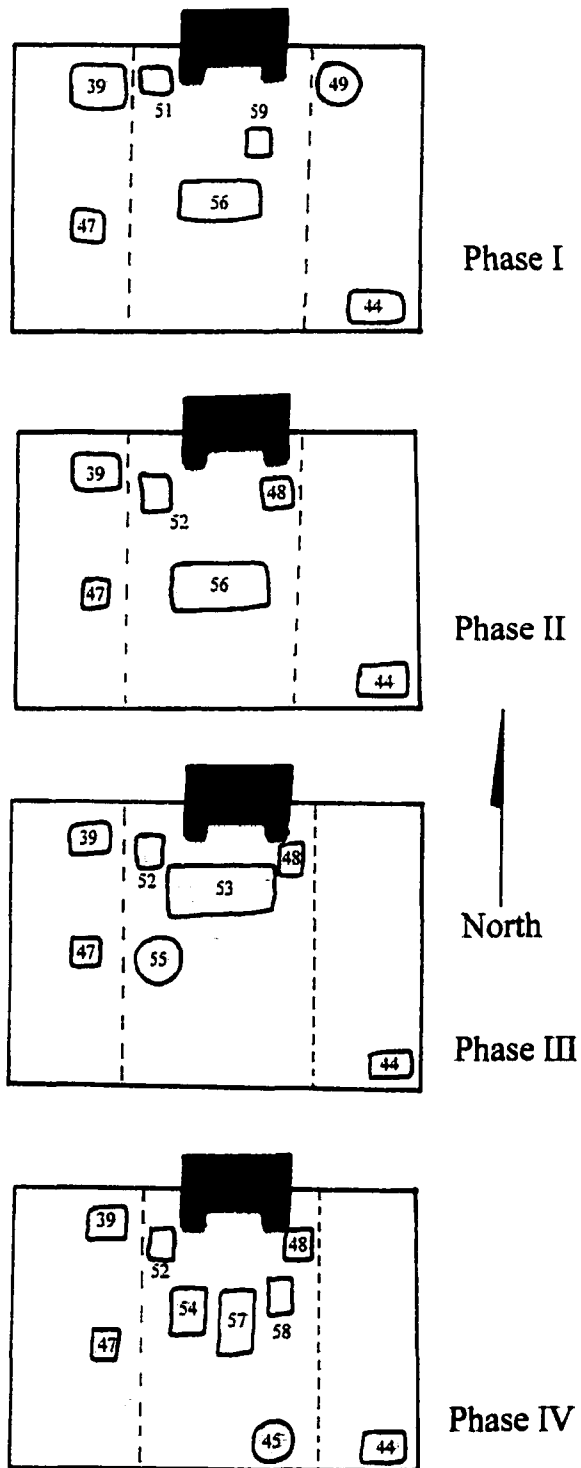


Figure 3.11 Phase maps of subfloor pits in Structure 50 (not to scale).

from collapsing into Feature 48, the enslaved packed a layer of yellow clay against the eastern side wall of the feature.

There were six non-hearth subterranean pits in Structure 50, and they varied in size and shape (Table 3.2). Several of the non-hearth features (Features 46, 47, 49) were very shallow (under .5 ft.), and filled with a single deposit of brown sandy loam containing few artifacts. The small size and fragmentary nature of the artifacts from these features indicated that they had been filled with secondary refuse, probably early in the occupation of the building. Features 44 and 45 contained several zones of fill, and Feature 39, in the northwest corner of the building, had been partially filled and reconstructed as a smaller pit after the collapse of one of its walls.

### Structures 70 and 107

Two service buildings were also present on the site during Period III. A large (29.5 x 18 ft.) earthfast building (Structure 70), containing no evidence of a hearth and no subfloor pits, was located south of Structure 50. This structure is believed to have functioned as a barn. A small building (7.5 by 7.5 ft.) with four postholes stood to the north of Structure 40. The function of this structure was not apparent from archaeological data, but it is likely that it served as a corncrib or meathouse.

### *Archaeological Analysis of Subfloor Pits*

As in Utopia Period II, the hearth front pits continued to predominate. During this period, it was evident that the inhabitants were still experimenting and making some modifications in pit construction, particularly when dealing with the complicated hearth-front complex. Perhaps remembering the earlier hearth-front pit collapse in Structure 10, the residents of Structure 50 chose to place their first hearth-front pit (Feature 56) some six feet away from the hearth, well back from the busiest foot traffic area. Later, during Phase III, a pit of similar size and alignment (Feature 53) was placed much closer to the hearth, at a distance of less than two feet. It is unknown whether damage to the earlier feature or some other reason caused its abandonment.

**Table 3.2 Utopia Quarter Period III Subfloor Pits Descriptive Details**

Structure	Feature	Phase	Position	Shape	Cuts or Repairs	Dimensions & Depth (In feet)	Total # Artifacts	Artifacts per Cubic Ft.
40	F41	?	?	Rect.		?	?	?
	F42	?	?	Rect.		?	?	?
	F43	?	?	Rect.		?	?	?
50	F51	I	Hearth	Square	Multiple	3.25 x 3 x 2	392	20.1
	F56	I, II	Hearth	Rect.	Multiple	4 x 1.8 x .5	8	2.2
	F48	II	Hearth	Square	Multiple	2.8 x 3.2 x 1	214	17.5
	F52	II	Hearth	Square	Multiple	3 x 3 x ?	79	Indet.
	F53	III	Hearth	Rect.	Multiple	5.5 x 3 x 2.75	1140	51.6
	F55	III	Hearth	Round?	Multiple	3.3 x 3.3 x ?	Indet.	Indet.
	F54	IV	Hearth	Rect.	Multiple	4.8 x 2.7 x ?	56	Indet.
	F57	IV	Hearth	Rect.	Multiple	6 x 2.5 x 1.75	854	32.5
	F58A/E*	IV	Hearth	Square?	Multiple	3.75 x 3.5 x 1.3	274	16.7
	F58A/D*	V	Hearth	Rect.	Multiple	1.5 x 3.75 x .5	70	25.0
	F58A/B*	V	Hearth	Rect.	Multiple	1 x 3.75 x .5	46	24.2
	F39B		Corner	Rect.	Multiple	4.3 x 4.0 x 1.4	345	14.3
	F39A		Corner	Rect	Multiple	4.3 x 3.75 x 1.0	205	12.7
	F44		Corner	Rect	Single	3.8 x 2.7 x 1.1	99	8.8
	F45		Corner	round	Single	3.5 x 4.3 x 2.75	401	9.7
	F46		Corner	oval	Single	2.5 x 1.8 x .4	13	7.2
F47		Other	Rect	Single	1.6 x 2 x .3	0	0	
F49		Corner	round	Multiple	3.5 x 3.5 x .5	10	1.6	

\*Artifacts from Layer A left out of artifact totals from these three pits.

NDA = no date available.

Later, during Phase IV, the orientation of the hearth-front pits was changed, as the residents dug three pits with their short axes facing the hearth (Features 54, 57, 58). By the time these three pits were constructed, large areas of the floor around the hearth had been disturbed by earlier pit construction. Most of the non-hearth subfloor pits appeared to be shallow, and filled rapidly with one deposit of secondary refuse. Pits whose use span had been cut short by the collapse of a wall were filled with a combination of household refuse and secondary debris probably swept up from the yard of the quarter.

In several cases, the residents attempted to strengthen pit walls when they cut through earlier back-filled pits. Feature 48 cut the earlier Feature 49, and in the area where the two features overlapped a sheathing of clay (48G) had been built up against the fill of Feature 49 to form the eastern wall of Feature 48. This same type of action was taken when a thick (1.25 to 1.5 ft.) clay layer (53B) was used to finish filling Feature 53 prior to the construction of Features 57 and 58, which cut the earlier pit.



While undisturbed subsoil clay provided the sturdiest walls for features, it was obvious that this factor was not the only consideration when the enslaved constructed pits. For example, after the wall collapse between Features 39 and 51, a new pit could have been located along the west wall in the same room, or Features 46 and 47 could have been enlarged. Instead, the inhabitants chose to reconstruct the pits in their original locations.

The residents of the quarter were also experimenting with pit depth during their occupation of Structure 50. The earliest hearth front pit (Feature 56) was only .5 ft. deep, but was replaced by Feature 53, which extended to a depth of 2.75 ft. Damage from groundwater rising into this pit was evident, however, as erosional undercutting around the perimeter of the feature's base (Figure 3.12). In the fourth period, the hearth-front pits were dug to depths ranging between 1.5 and 1.75 ft., presumably out of groundwater range, but still considerably deeper than the earliest pit.

### *Summary*

The arrangement of space at the quarter during this period was more organic than in the earlier generation, and spaces between structures were used for daily activities as well as for the dumping of garbage. In addition to the smaller daily humiliations of bondage, Utopia residents also faced the ever-present possibility of being separated from their immediate community. The language of James Bray II's will entailed the property left to James Bray III, meaning that the lands and the enslaved on these properties could not be sold, but only passed along to male heirs. Thus, while most of Bray's enslaved at Utopia were not really in danger of being sold, it was at Bray's discretion to move laborers among these widely distributed plantations, separating families and friends. Even the entailment restrictions did not prevent Bray from attempting to circumvent the language and intent of the law. Facing action from impatient creditors around 1740, Bray III planned to have the county sheriff seize some of his older, less productive slaves to help pay his debts until he was advised by a lawyer that such a scheme was illegal (cited in Walsh 1997:310). To help alleviate his debts, Bray diversified the activities of his home plantation in the 1740s, expanding into brickmaking; selling meat, wood, and

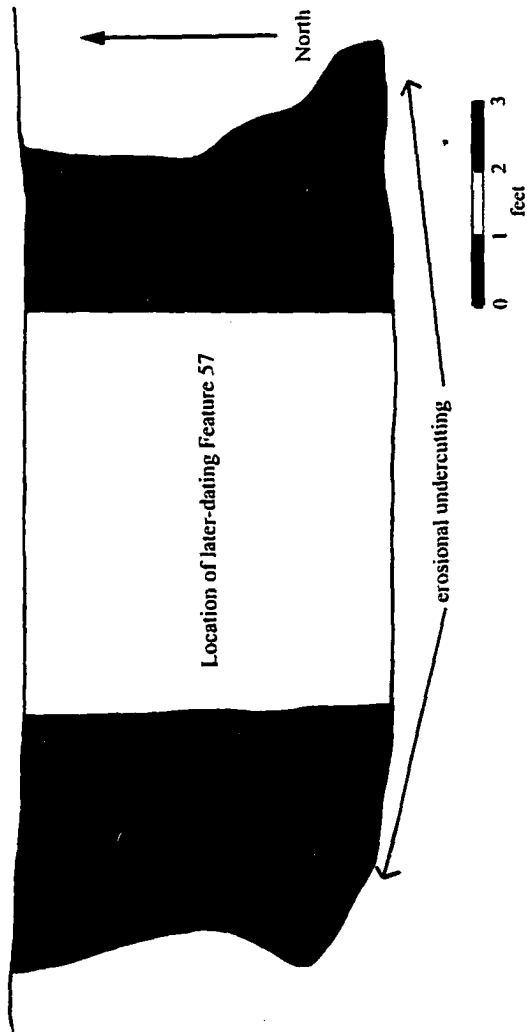


Figure 3.12 Profile of Feature 53, showing erosional undercutting.

finished lumber; and producing cider and brandy. He also hired out some of his enslaved laborers for periods of six months to a year (McClure 1977:49).

Upon the death of James Bray III in 1744, his executors sold all of his moveable property at public sale, leaving only his lands and slaves unsold. After his death, the enslaved from Utopia came under the ownership of the Burwell family during the final phase of occupation at the Utopia site, a period spanning the third quarter of the eighteenth century. During this period, the quarter was part of a much larger estate known as Kingsmill Plantation. The following sections will analyze the final period at Utopia quarter and a contemporary Burwell quarter known as Kingsmill Quarter. The chapter will conclude with a look at the late eighteenth-century quarter at Carter's Grove Plantation.

#### **Utopia Period IV (44JC787), ca. 1750 to 1780**

Around the beginning of the third quarter of the eighteenth century, the lands encompassing the Utopia Quarter came under the ownership of Lewis Burwell IV. With his marriage to Frances Thacker Bray, widow of James Bray III, Burwell consolidated tracts of land along the James River east of Williamsburg into a large estate known as Kingsmill Plantation. Originally settled in the seventeenth century by various families, these lands became what was ultimately part of a 2,800 acre plantation by the 1770s (James City County, 1768-1769:11). Several generations of the Burwell family had owned Kingsmill lands during the eighteenth century, where they raised tobacco and various grains (McCartney 1997).

A fourth Utopia quarter component (44JC787), dated ca. 1750 to 1780, was located approximately 600 ft. north of the Period III Utopia complex (Figure 3.13). This site was probably constructed soon after Lewis Burwell IV came into possession of Utopia through his 1745 marriage to James Bray III's widow. There are indications within the documentary records that Jonathan Green, the overseer employed by James Bray III, remained with the Utopia property after it passed to Burwell (McClure 1977:42).

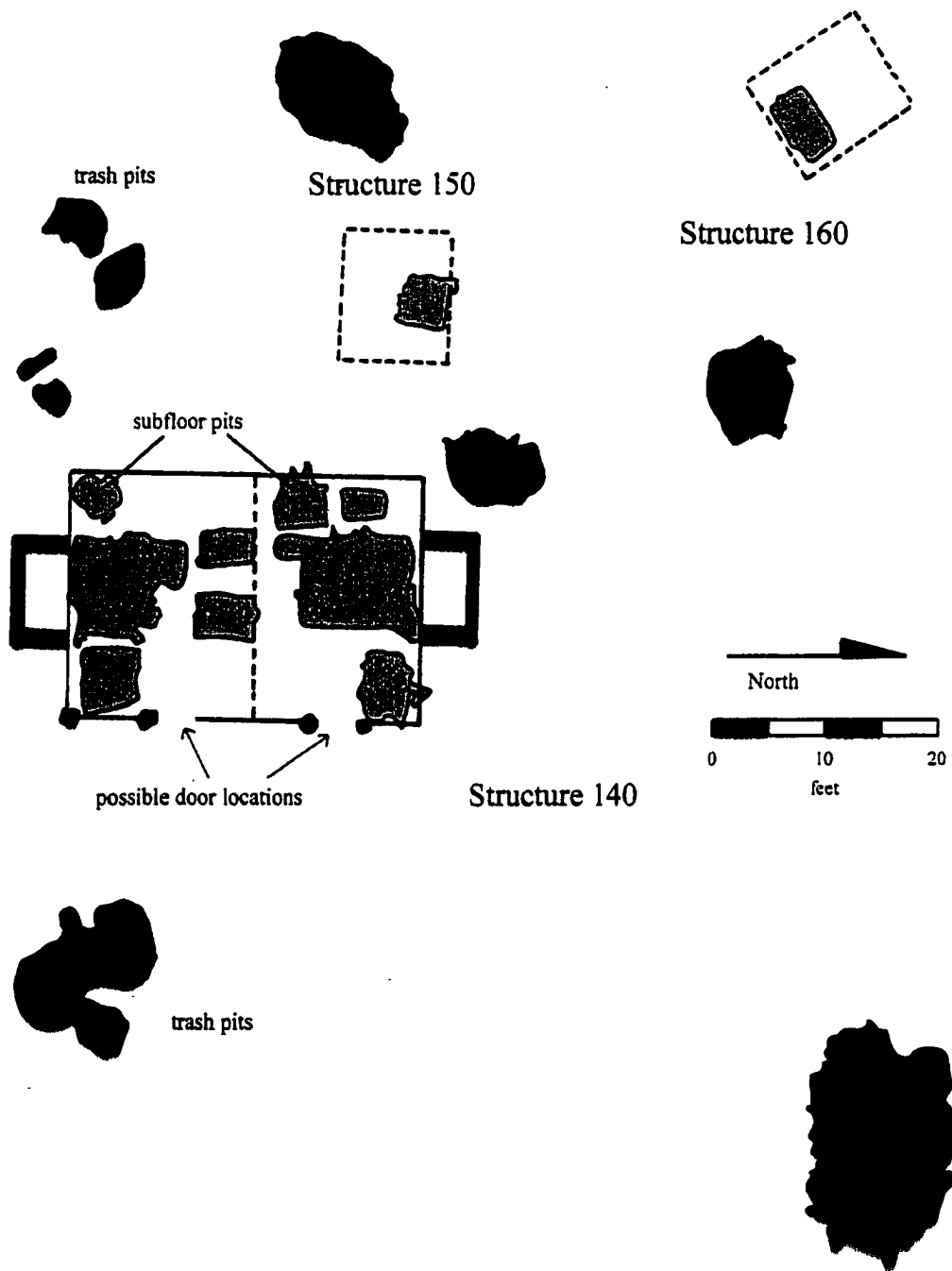


Figure 3.13 Utopia Period IV (44JC787) archaeological remains, ca. 1750-1780

More documentation exists for the Utopia enslaved during this final period than in earlier periods. After the death of James Bray III, his widow was granted the Utopia property and twenty-nine Bray slaves in lieu of her dower rights (British Museum). This agreement separated Utopia from the Littletown property. At this time, a list divided into men, women, and children was prepared of the dowry slaves (Table 3.3). Most of this group consisted of African-born individuals who had arrived in the mid 1730s (Walsh 1997:43). The demographics of Bray's dowry slaves were probably consistent with the Virginia slave population as a whole, where "recent arrivals from Africa comprised 37.8% of the black population between 1719-29, 10% in 1740-49 and less than 5% by the 1750s" (Barden 1993:69). Twenty-seven of the enslaved were from the Utopia Quarter, and two other women given to Frances Bray were part of a group of eight individuals recently purchased by her father-in-law, Thomas Bray.

**Table 3.3** Frances Thacker Bray's Dowry Slaves, 1745

Men	Women	Older Children	Younger Children
Martin	Nanny	Great Lewis	Nanny (child of Nanny)
Daniel	Phillis	Joe Boy	Little Sam
Dick	Juno	Sarah	Doll's [Moll's?] son Jupiter
Austin	Beck	Milla	Mars
Charles	Ebo	Austin	Patience
York	Moll		Sukey
Ned	Mulatta Pat		
Cesar	Deaf Lucy*		
Boy	Ester*		

\*Deaf Lucy and Ester were also given to Frances Bray by her father-in-law as part of a group of eight recently purchased individuals. It is believed that they went to live at Utopia with the other individuals on this list (Walsh n.d.).

This list is interesting because it allows some generalizations to be made about the Utopia community. The name of one woman (Ebo) indicated her Igbo origins, while another woman, Mulatta Pat, was obviously the child of a white father and enslaved mother. Mother's names were listed for some of the children, meaning that these adolescents lived with one or more parents at the quarter. Nanny and Jupiter's mothers were at Utopia, and it is possible that Joe Boy and Austin, two older children, had one or

more parents there as well. Ratios of men to women were equitable, even before the arrival of Deaf Lucy and Ester.

By the end of this final period at the site, the majority of the resident adults had been in Virginia for a number of years. Unlike recent arrivals from Africa, they probably spoke English relatively well. As suggested by the evidence above, many probably had a good chance to marry and establish families. Like the earlier residents before them, the residents at this quarter raised tobacco and grains.

As in earlier periods, women and children over the age of 12 or 13 (Figure 3.14) would have been working in the agricultural fields alongside men (Mullin 1972:48). A 1768 lottery advertisement by Virginia planter Bernard Moore included a list of his enslaved laborers, listing “Lucy, a young wench, who works exceeding well both in the house and field” and Daphne, “a very good hand at the hoe” (Virginia Gazette 1768b). Women born and raised among the Igbo culture would have been no strangers to agricultural work. In the eighteenth century, Igbo women helped men till the land and plant the crops (Gates 1987:14), and this practice continues in the present.

#### *Archaeological Evidence at the Site*

One framed ground-sill structure with a dirt floor, measuring roughly 22 x 32 ft, and a number of clay borrow pits later reused as trash pits were found at this site, which appeared to have been a quartering area for the enslaved or possibly a plantation overseer (Fesler 1997a). Two additional smaller structures were likely also present at the site. The evidence of these buildings consisted of two isolated subfloor pits (Features 4 and 19) that had probably been covered with ground-sill structures. These pits, well removed from the main structure, may be evidence of small, single family homes at the site.

#### Structure 140

The true dimensions of the largest dwelling at the site could not be determined, since the structure's probable ground-sill foundation did not leave any archaeological traces. The presumed 22 x 32 ft. dimensions and alignment of the structure were calculated by examining the locations of the subfloor pits that formed the only subsurface indication that a building had stood there. Two large, multi-phase subfloor pit complexes



**Figure 3.14 Women working in an agricultural field in the presence of an overseer.  
Watercolor by Benjamin Latrobe.**

most likely denoted the locations of gable end chimneys, suggesting that this building functioned as a duplex for two families (Figure 3.15). Four small nonstructural postholes located along the southern facade of the structure probably indicated the locations of doors into each of the two rooms.

There appeared to have been three and four phases of repair and re-digging, respectively, in the hearth-front complexes in the west and east rooms of Structure 140 (Figure 3.16). In the earliest two phases in the eastern room, the rectangular pits (Feature 6C, 6B) were positioned with their short ends facing the hearth, with smaller pits (6R, 6L/M/N) placed behind the hearth pits. It was not until the latest period in Structure 140 that the U-shaped configuration of pits more typical of the earliest phases of construction at Utopia Periods II and III was constructed (Features 6P/Q, 30, and 31).

In the western room, two pits (Feature 11D/E and Feature 40) were dug in front of the hearth during the first years of occupation. The long axis of Feature 11D/E fronted the hearth, but the pit was located over 6 ft. back from the front of the fireplace, placed there perhaps to provide a stable work area directly in front of the hearth. Feature 40 was located slightly to the south side of the hearth front, perhaps for the same reasons. In the next phase, Feature 41 enlarged upon Feature 40, creating a larger, but shallower, pit in almost the same location. The short axis of Feature 11/12 cut the long western edge of Feature 11D/E, bringing the new pit closer the hearth, but still leaving some uncut floor space in front of the fire. In the third phase, a larger pit (Feature 12A-W) was located directly in front of the hearth, with a smaller pit located east of the former locations of Features 40 and 41 (Feature 12D/E/M/N). A brick rubble concentration on western end of the Feature 12 complex suggested that a bricked work area had been constructed there.

In addition to the hearth-front complexes, which each contained at least three phases of pit construction nine non-hearth subfloor pits were present in the building. There were five pits in the east room and four in the west room. Pits stood in each of the building's corners, and the western room also contained two pits located along the partition wall between the two rooms. The eastern room also contained a multi-layered pit (Feature 5) whose depth (3.9 ft.) and sloping side walls were atypical of other subfloor pits on Virginia sites.



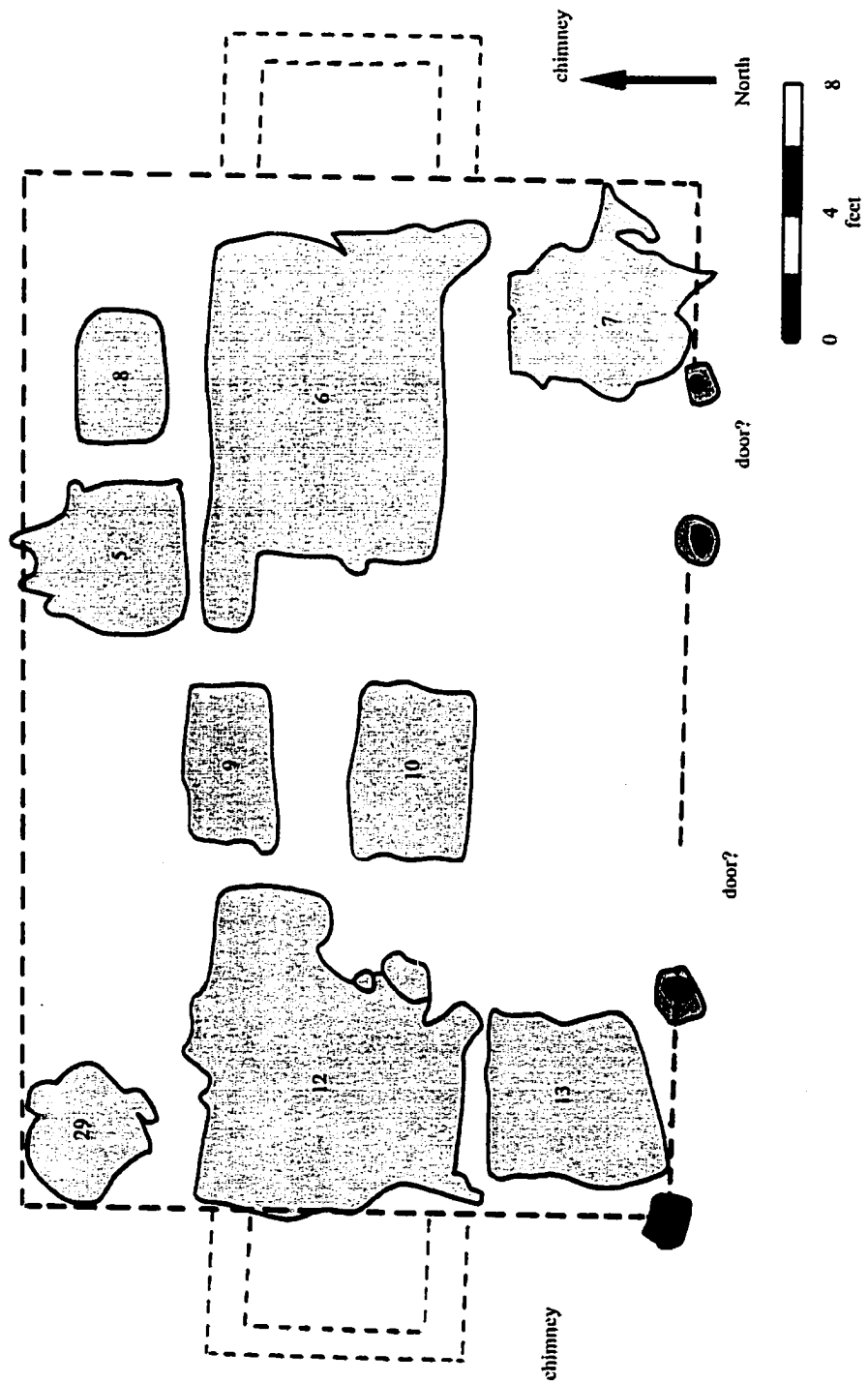


Figure 3.15 Utopia Period IV Structure 140 archaeological remains.

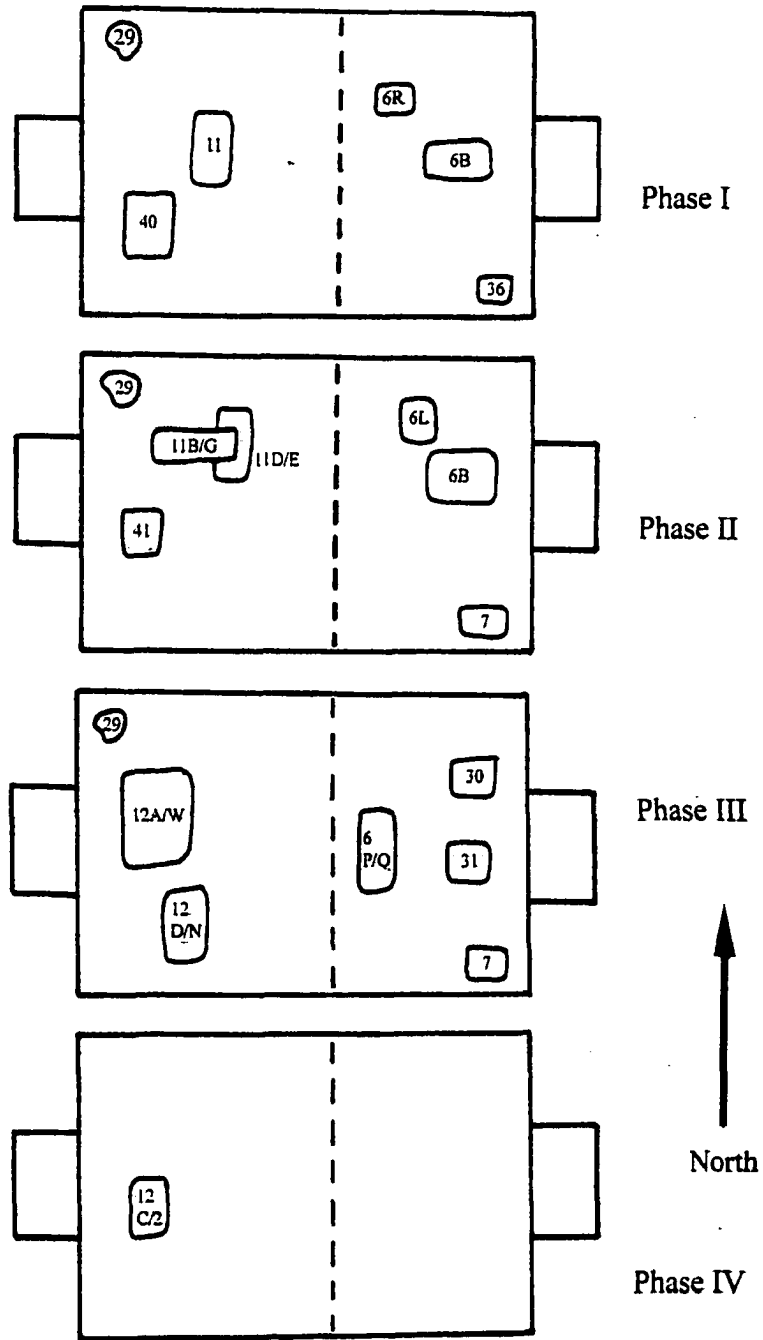


Figure 3.16 Phase maps of subfloor pits in Structure 140 (not to scale).

### Structures 150 and 160

The dimensions of the two additional structures on the site (the presence of each indicated only by the single subfloor pit that marked each of their locations) were unknown. Given the documentary evidence of families at the site, however, it can be surmised that the two small structures were single family dwellings or small buildings for a single individual. At the Cancer Quarter on the Carter family Nomony Hall Plantation, one of the single quarters documented in 1789 measured just eight by twelve feet (cited in Barden 1993:440). Thus, it is possible that Structures 150 and 160 were very small and may have been used by only one or two persons. A similar single subfloor pit believed to denote the location of a small structure was also present at the Carter's Grove quarter, discussed later in this chapter.

The high frequencies of architectural artifacts from the upper zones of fill suggest that the pits were filled when the overlying structure was destroyed. The artifacts from two subfloor pits located north of Structure 140 provided some clues about the appearance of the two overlying structures. Fired clay or daub and charred wood indicated that the structures had stick and mud chimneys, and the presence of numerous (88) brick fragments in Feature 19 suggests that a paved work area had been constructed adjacent to the hearth in Structure 160. Numerous small fragments of sheet iron may have been the disintegrated remnants of the stock lock whose lock bolt was found in the pit associated with Structure 150, suggesting that the cabin could be secured. A fragment of creamware, an English refined earthenware first manufactured in 1762 (Noel Hume 1969:125), provided a *terminus post quem* for the filling of the feature, although most of the ceramics consisted of coarse earthenwares and stonewares produced in Yorktown between 1720 and 1745.

### *Archaeological Analysis of Subfloor Pits*

Twenty-four subfloor pits were present at the site, with twenty-two of these features cutting through the soil floor of Structure 140 (Table 3.4). Thirteen of these twenty-two pits were part of hearth-front complexes located at the north and south ends of the structure. Pits were also located in each of the building's corners, and three pits had been cut into the floor along the partition wall. Structures 150 and 160 were each

characterized by one subfloor pit. As was evident in the earlier periods at Utopia, there had been sustained efforts during this period to keep the hearth-front pits functional. Pits in other locations were generally constructed, used, and then refilled without attempts at repair. Only one corner feature, Feature 7/36 had two, or possibly three, periods of cutting and repair.

**Table 3.4** Utopia Quarter Period IV Subfloor Pit Descriptive Details

Structure	Feature	Phase	Location	Shape	Cut or Repair	Dimensions & Depth (in ft.)	Number of Artifacts	Artifacts per Cubic Ft.
140	East Room							
	F6C/E/F/J/K	I	Hearth	Rect.	Multiple	3 x 6.4 x 2	336	8.75
	F6B/H/G	II	Hearth	Rect.	Multiple	7.2 x 4.4 x 1.45	137	3.0
	F6L/M/N	II	Hearth	Rect.	Multiple	2.5 x 3.8 x 1.75	311	18.7
	F6P/Q	III	Hearth	Rect.	Multiple	3.2 x 3.9 x 2	94	3.77
	F30E/F	III	Hearth	Rect.	Multiple	3.8 x 4.2 x 2.2	255	31.95***
	F31	III	Hearth	Rect.	Multiple	2.1 x 3.9 x 1.9		24.74
	F30A-D	IV	Hearth	Rect.	Multiple	3.1 x 6.4 x 1.7	745	22.09
	F6R	I	Other	Rect.	Multiple	1.4 x 2.75 x .9	0	0
	F36	I	Corner	Rect.	Multiple	3 x 2 x 1.6	123	12.8
	F7	II	Corner	Rect.	Single	4 x 2.8 x 1.75	203	10.36
	F8	?	Corner	Rect.	Multiple	3.75 x 2.5 x .6	231	41.2
	F5	?	Other	Rect.	Single	3.5 x 4.5 x 3.9	573	9.33
	West Room							
	F11D/E	I	Hearth	Rect.	Multiple	3.8 x 2.3 x 1.0	79	27.2***
	F40	I	Hearth	Square	Multiple	2.1 x 2.5 x 2.3	154	12.7
	F41A	II	Hearth	Square?		3.9 x 4.2 x 1.0	277	16.9
	F11/12*	II	Hearth	Rect.	Multiple	4.9 x 2.9 x 1.8	571	22.3
	F12A/W**	III	Hearth	Rect.?	Multiple	4.25 x 4.5 x 2.0	790	20.7
	F12D/E/M/N	III	Hearth	Rect.	Multiple	2.5 x 2.3 x 2.4	380	27.5
	F9	?	Other	Rect.	Single	4.6 x 2.5 x 1.6	376	20.43
	F10	?	Other	Rect.	Multiple	4.5 x 2.9 x 1.0	387	29.66
	F13	?	Corner	Square	Multiple	5 x 5 x 1.5	437	11.65
	F29	?	Corner	Oval	Multiple	2.4 x 4 x 1	70	7.29
150	F4	I	Hearth?	Square	Single	4 x 4 x ?	206	?
160	F19	I	Hearth?	Rect.	Single	6 x 3.8 x ?	322	?

\*Context numbers for Feature 11/12 are 11A/B/C/F/H & 12C/F/G/J/K.

\*\*Context numbers for Feature 12 are 12A/B/V/W/P/Q/S/T/U.

\*\*\*Calculations based on cubic feet of feature fill remaining at the time of excavation, not total original feature cubic footage.

Evident was the continuing practice by the enslaved of relocating new pits in such a way that they fronted on the hearth, but cut through the fill of earlier pits as little as possible. In the instance of Features 30 and 31, both pits cut through earlier phases of Feature 6, and even incorporated some of this feature's original pit boundaries as walls.

Feature 31 incorporated the south wall of Feature 6C as its southern boundary, providing a stable clay wall along this edge. The northern limit of the feature cut through Feature 6C, and the enslaved placed boards along the face of this wall to prevent the less compacted, softer fill of the earlier feature from collapsing into the new pit. Feature 30E/F incorporated the northern limit of Feature 6B as its northern wall and was abandoned after the collapse of the south wall of the feature. A new shallower pit, with smaller north-south dimensions, was created in the same location as Feature 30E/F, adding a fourth phase of pit construction in the east room. Feature 30A-D showed no evidence of a board lining along its less stable wall south wall.

The latest constructed hearth pit in the western room (Feature 12A/W) appeared to have been in use up until the time Structure 140 was abandoned. The soil layer overlying the clay feature floor (12T) contained large quantities of architectural hardware, including stock lock bolts, pieces of at least two iron strap door hinges, nails, and a pothook, suggestive of activities associated with quarter abandonment and the destruction of the building. Examining the stratigraphy and assemblages suggests that a large quantity of household debris was dumped into the feature, which then sat open to the weather before subsequent tips of debris (12P,Q) were tossed into the open hole. The absence of artifacts from the uppermost zones of fill (12U,V, W) suggest that these zones accumulated well after human activity had ceased at the site.

With one exception, the non-hearth features were single-cut, one use pits, and it was accordingly difficult to assign them to temporal phases within the structure's lifespan. Ceramics, glass, and other artifacts provided some dating clues, and provide some information on when a pit fell out of use.

### *Summary*

The Utopia quarter was probably abandoned when Frances Bray Burwell died in 1784, an event that prompted the return of her dower slaves to the Bray family (Walsh 1997:198). At this point, another property owned by Frances Burwell's husband Lewis Burwell IV, is considered. Located less than two miles west of Utopia, Kingsmill Plantation and its attendant quarter, had been part of the Burwell family holdings for several generations.

### **Kingsmill Quarter (44JC39), ca. 1750-1780**

Lewis Burwell III inherited the land at Kingsmill in 1710, while still a young boy. He took control of the land upon coming of age in 1719 and built the impressive mansion at the site sometime between 1725 and 1735 (Kelso 1984:44, Walsh 1997:42). The plantation house, which stood on a bluff some 700 yards from the James River, was a Georgian style two story eight room brick structure, with two flanking brick dependencies (*Virginia Gazette* 1781). Enslaved individuals performing domestic chores lived and worked in these dependencies. Excavation revealed a formal parterre on the front, or land, side of the house, and an immense terraced garden leading down towards the river on the other side (Kelso 1984). Lewis Burwell III died in 1744, and passed the property to his son, Lewis Burwell IV, who had come of age by 1743 (Wells 1976:22). The son considerably increased the landholdings when he married Frances Bray in 1745 (Walsh 1997:43). Through this marriage, he consolidated the Littletown and Utopia tracts with his Kingsmill landholdings (McCartney 1997:170). In addition to owning and expanding his large estate, he also held a number of political and military offices, including a stint as member of the Virginia General Assembly (Wells 1976:23).

Documents show that Lewis Burwell IV was producing tobacco at Kingsmill during the third quarter of the eighteenth century, as well as some grain crops, such as oats. That he was also ordering foodstuffs from his Carter's Grove neighbor and cousin Carter Burwell during the 1760s and 1770s may indicate that his plantation was not self sufficient (Kelso 1984:46). Lewis IV may have chosen to invest his money and labor in the production of one or two staple crops, a move that was less than wise in these prewar years, since he was heavily in debt by the time of his death in 1784.

At Kingsmill, Burwell had stopped importing laborers from Africa by the early 1740s, and most of the Africans enslaved on his plantation quarters had arrived in the 1720s and 1730s (Walsh 1997:52). While lists of Lewis Burwell IV's enslaved laborers are not known to exist, other sources provide hints about his enslaved labor force. James City County Tax Lists for 1768 showed that Lewis Burwell IV paid taxes on 65 tithes, 1502 acres of land, and one chariot (James City County ). The following year, the number of tithables was reduced to 62. Most likely, these tithables represent the number

of enslaved laborers on his James City County properties. Newspaper advertisements from the 1760s and 1770s list slaves that had run away from his plantations. Kingsmill Joe, born around 1743, ran back towards Kingsmill in 1778 after having been sold to another planter in New Hanover County (Walsh 1997:150). Other slaves sent west in the late 1760s and 1770s also ran, presumably trying to get back to family members living on the Kingsmill property (Walsh 1997:213).

Like the preceding Utopia component, Kingsmill Quarter (44JC39), dating to the second half of the eighteenth century, was an outlying quarter associated with Kingsmill Plantation. The site itself was located at a distance of one-quarter mile from the Burwell brick mansion house, along the ridge road on the south side of a small creek. The site is depicted as containing four buildings on the Desandrouins Map of 1781 (Figure 3.17). Other quarters located nearby on Burwell's Kingsmill Plantation included North Quarter, Littletown Quarter, and Hampton Key. The enslaved that lived in the two dwellings excavated at Kingsmill Quarter were field workers, performing agricultural tasks associated with raising tobacco and grains.

Documents suggest that this site was a slave quarter associated with Kingsmill Plantation. Little (if anything) is known about the enslaved individuals who lived at this quarter, but mid- to late eighteenth-century tax records for the plantation show large numbers of slaves and only one or two white laborers (Goodwin 1958). Property owners at the time this site was in use included Lewis Burwell IV, Lewis Burwell V, and Henry Martin. All of these men had substantial numbers of enslaved African Americans working on their property during their years of tenure.<sup>11</sup>

Archaeological data from the Kingsmill Quarter excavation suggests that occupation of the site ceased around the time Henry Martin purchased the property in 1783, perhaps as early as 1781, when Lewis Burwell V removed himself and his slaves to the western part of the state. Martin began repair on the main plantation house at once, and it is possible that he salvaged brick and other architectural material from the quarter for repairs to the main house and other buildings damaged in the Revolutionary War. It is also possible that the quarter buildings were demolished right after Martin died in 1786

---

<sup>11</sup> Lewis Burwell V had 65 enslaved people in 1782, and there were two white servants and 33 African Americans on Martin's estate in 1785 (Kelso 1976:17).

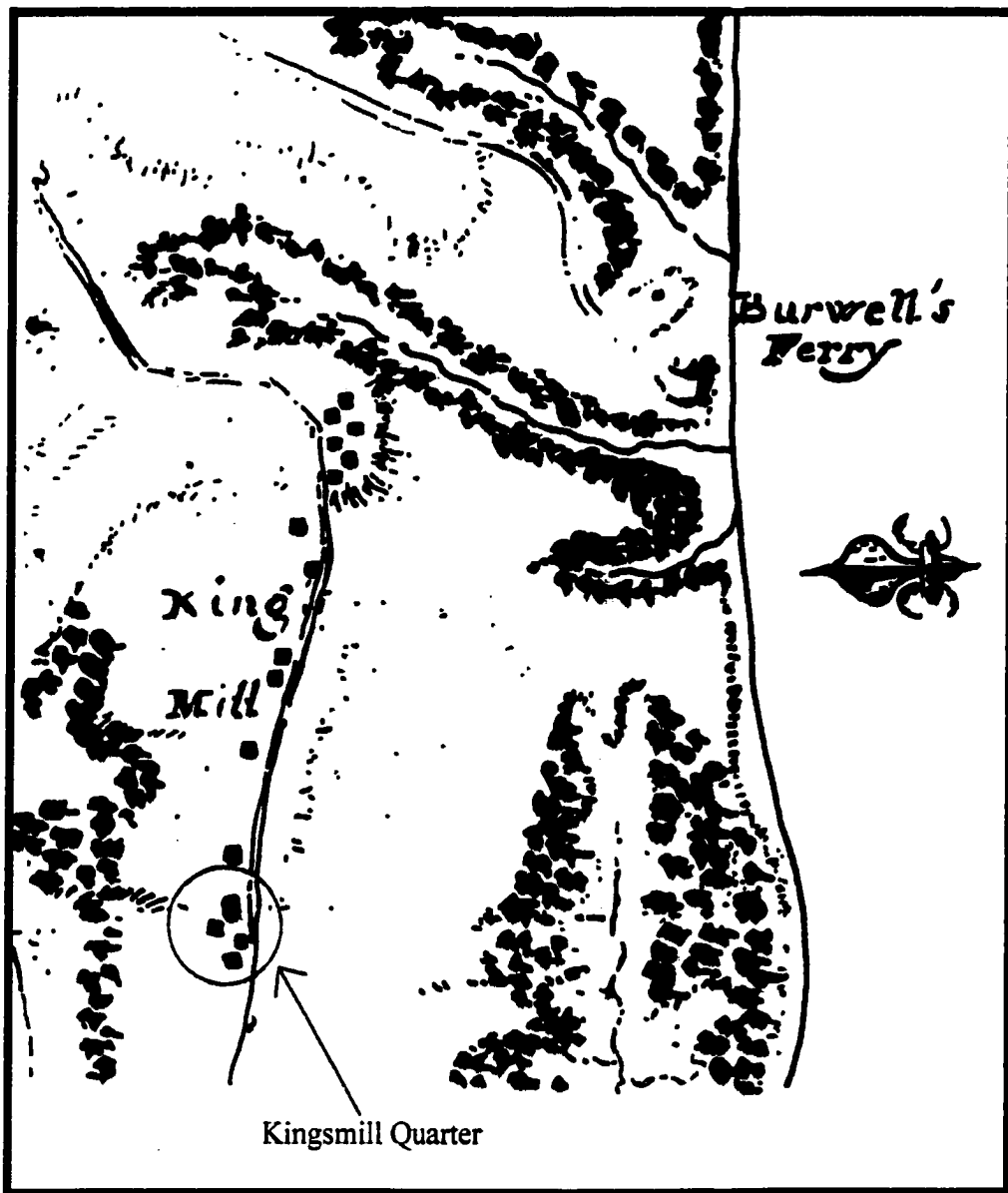


Figure 3.17 Detail of the Desandrouins map showing location of Kingsmill Quarter.



and the property came under the ownership of Henry Tazewell (McCartney 1997:259). Martin's 1786 will indicated that all of his slaves and livestock were to be sold at his death (Ferrell 1996). Regardless, the site had been abandoned well before the beginning of the nineteenth century and its location forgotten until the latter part of the twentieth century.

In 1969, the Anheuser-Busch Corporation announced their decision to construct a multi-million dollar brewery, amusement park, planned community, and golf course on lands that included the former Kingsmill plantations (McCartney 1997:452). Three years later, Busch agreed to sponsor a five-year archaeological study of the plantation lands, and the Kingsmill Quarter site (44JC39) was excavated as part of this larger project. The Virginia Research Center for Archaeology conducted the fieldwork in 1974 under the direction of Senior Archaeologist William Kelso. Artifacts recovered from the site indicate that occupation spanned most of the second half of the eighteenth century, with the buildings excavated there falling out of use in the 1780s. British military buttons worn by the Queen's Rangers found in the fill of one of the subfloor pits provided further proof that the buildings stood until after the April 1781 British invasion.

#### *Archaeological Evidence at the Site*

Although four structures were shown on the late eighteenth-century Desandrouins map, there were only three structures defined during archaeological excavation at the site (Figure 3.18). These structures had been built on the former location of two seventeenth-century structures called Kingsmill Tenement. The eighteenth-century buildings were designated as Kingsmill Quarter.

Two of the buildings had been used as quartering structures for the enslaved community working on this part of the plantation. A third structure was denoted by four postholes in a square configuration, once forming a small (9 by 9 ft.) unheated outbuilding such as a meathouse, or granary. A large irregular depression with a drainage ditch running into it was located just west of the smaller of the two houses. This depression would have contained water at least part of the year, and may have been used for watering livestock. It was also used as a place for dumping trash during the years the site was occupied. A pool of stagnant, trash-filled water would have created smelly and

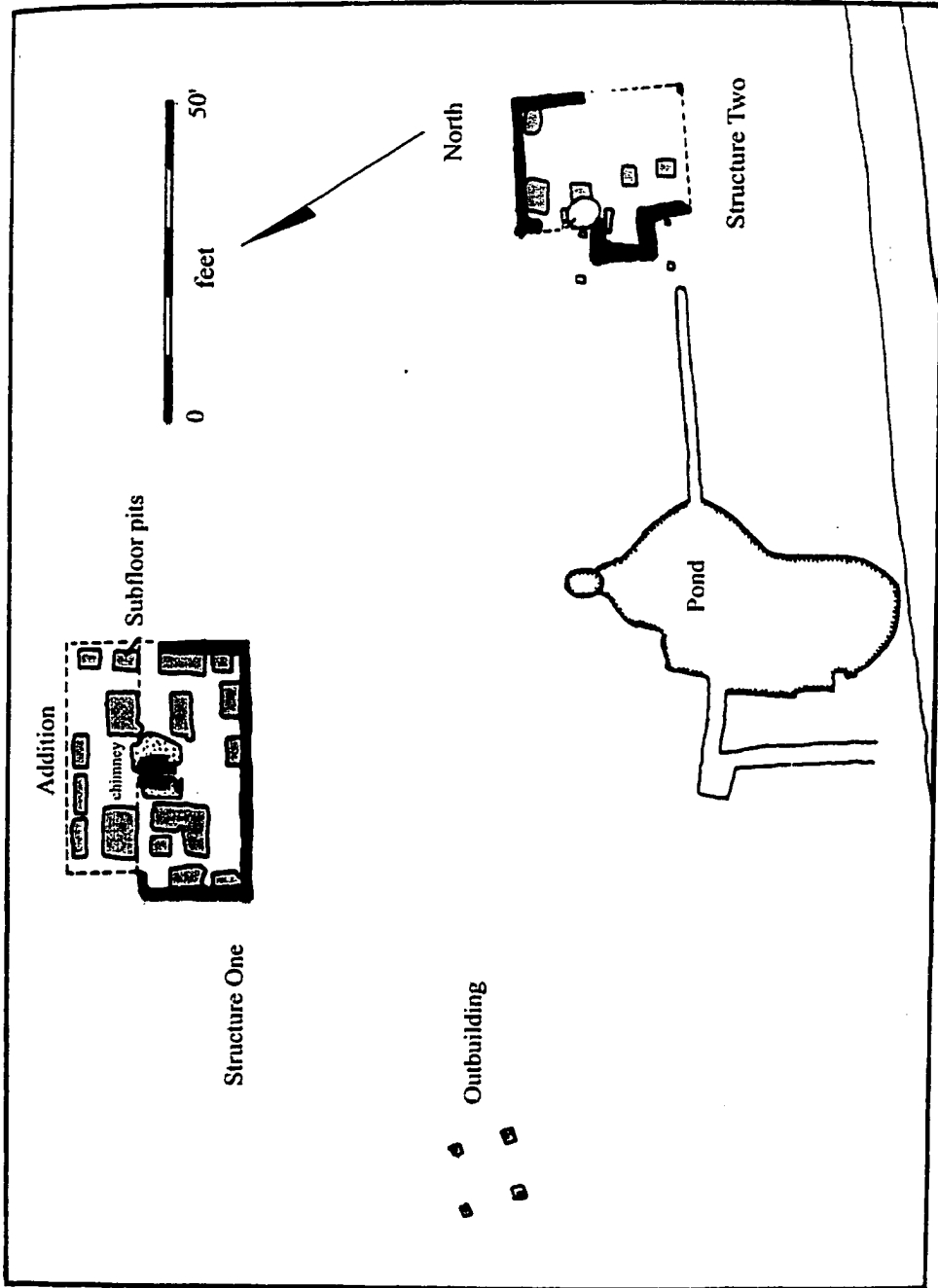


Figure 3.18 Kingsmill Quarter archaeological remains.

unhealthy conditions around the quarter, and it is doubtful that the residents drank the water from this small pond. Although no well was found during the excavation, there was a spring located nearby that would have provided water for drinking, cooking, and bathing (Kelso 1984).

### Structure One

Structure One was a 40 ft. x 18 ft. building with a 12 ft. shed or lean-to addition off its north side (Figure 3.19). Although its above-ground appearance is only speculative, the width and depth of the foundation wall suggests that it had been a 1 ½ story frame structure with a continuous brick foundation. The foundation wall that had been robbed of brick after the building no longer stood, presumably for reuse elsewhere. This building had contained an interior H-shaped brick chimney centered along the long wall between the shed extension and the main portion of the structure. Since the brick for the hearth and chimney had also been salvaged, the location of the fireplaces, along the interior northern wall of the structure, was apparent only as an unburned H-shaped configuration surrounded by burned clay (Kelso 1984:120).

Only the main portion of the structure (40 x 18 ft. portion) showed evidence of a brick foundation. There was no remaining evidence of a structural footing for the northern addition, suggesting that this portion of the building rested on very shallow brick or ground-sill foundations. Only the nine subfloor pits contained within its footprint indicated the presence and dimensions of the addition. Based on the building's footprint, it had likely contained two rooms (each 20 by 18 ft.) on the first floor in the main part of the structure, and one or two rooms in the northern addition. The configuration of the chimney and hearth, with a fireplace in each of the two rooms, suggests that the structure was used a duplex for two families or groups of enslaved African Americans. Additional individuals could have been housed in the addition, that may have received some ambient heat from the chimney stack along the room's south wall.

Twenty subfloor pits were found in the Structure One. In the main part of the building were 11 subfloor pits, including one L-shaped pit that may have been

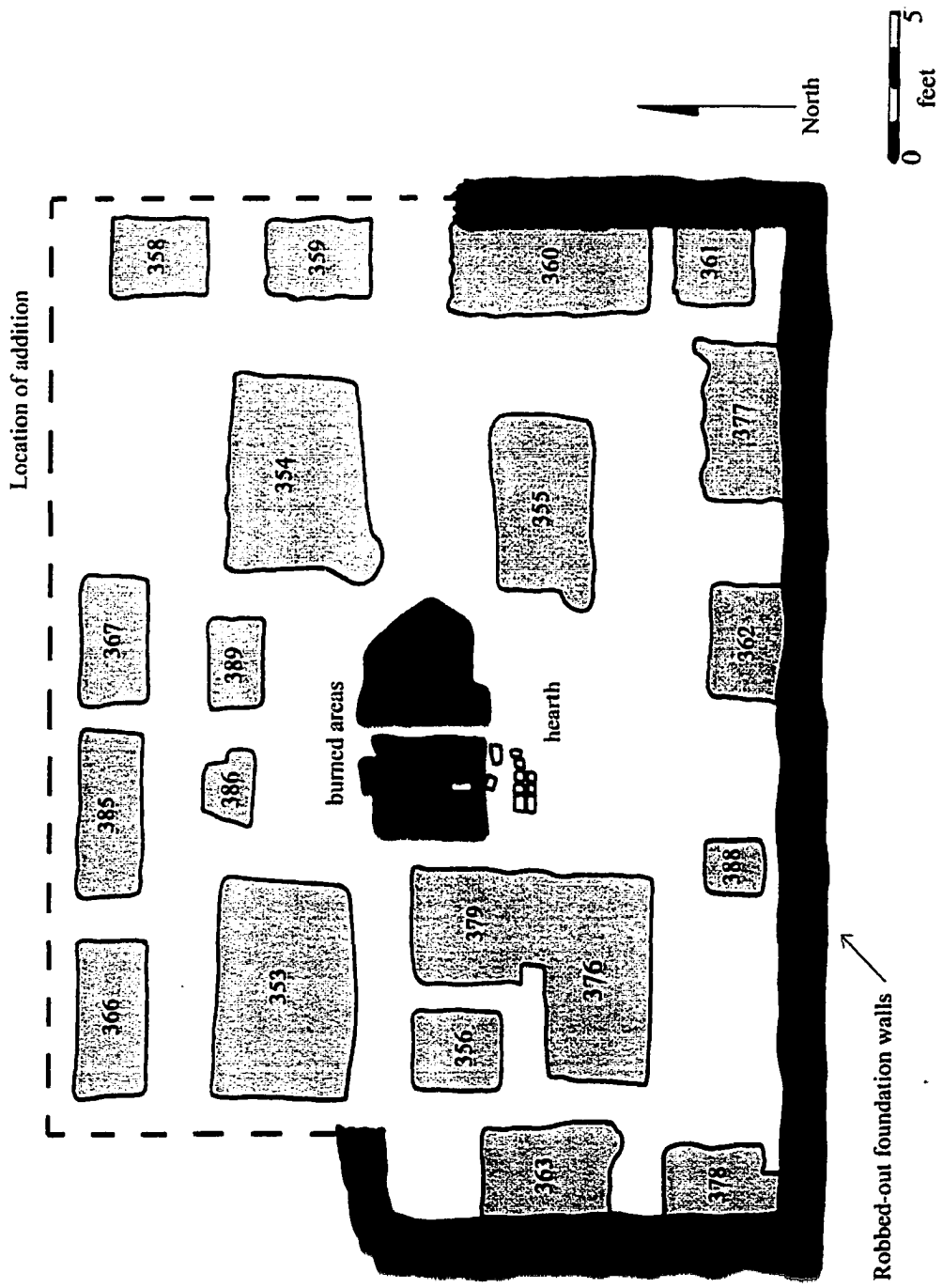


Figure 3.19 Kingsmill Quarter Structure One archaeological remains.

constructed in two stages (and has been counted as two features).<sup>12</sup> The northern addition contained nine subfloor pits. As a group, the pits shared similarities—although two of the pits were square, the remaining features were rectangular. Most of the pits were arranged with their long axes along the walls of the structure in a manner suggesting that their builders tried to impact as little useable floor space as possible. Each room had a pit in front of the hearth.

Five pits contained evidence of wooden side and/or partition walls, and floors. One of the pits contained a brick floor set on top of a layer of earlier fill and an original soil floor, but otherwise, there was no other evidence of intentionally constructed pit floors. Three of the pits had fired clay patches in their subsoil floors, suggesting that burning coals had been used to dry out the pit walls and floors.

### Structure Two

A second smaller building (Structure Two) had been a one-story 28 by 20 ft. frame structure on a brick foundation (Kelso 1984:122). It had contained a large (8 by 9 ft.) exterior end chimney and six pits cut through the clay subsoil within the building's footprint (Figure 3.20). Ceramic crossmends between the pits suggests contemporaneous filling of these features. The brick that had comprised this building's 1 ½ course wide foundation had also been salvaged for another use.

### *Archaeological Analysis of Subfloor Pits*

The 1976 interim report on the 1974 field season (Kelso 1976) suggests that the sub-floor pits can be divided into two categories, a conclusion that was confirmed by my analysis. This differentiation is critical here because it is highly probable that 14 of the subfloor pits contained artifacts not related to the slave occupation of the site (Table 3.5). The significance of this finding will be explained in upcoming pages. The other 6 features (KM358, KM362, KM363, KM367, KM378, KM385)<sup>13</sup>, containing no

---

<sup>12</sup> The placement of pit KM355 in the eastern room of the building suggests that the southern rectangular portion of KM379 may have been constructed first, mirroring KM355 and later expanded to the north.

<sup>13</sup> These pits were also assigned the designations Pits A-G during excavation.

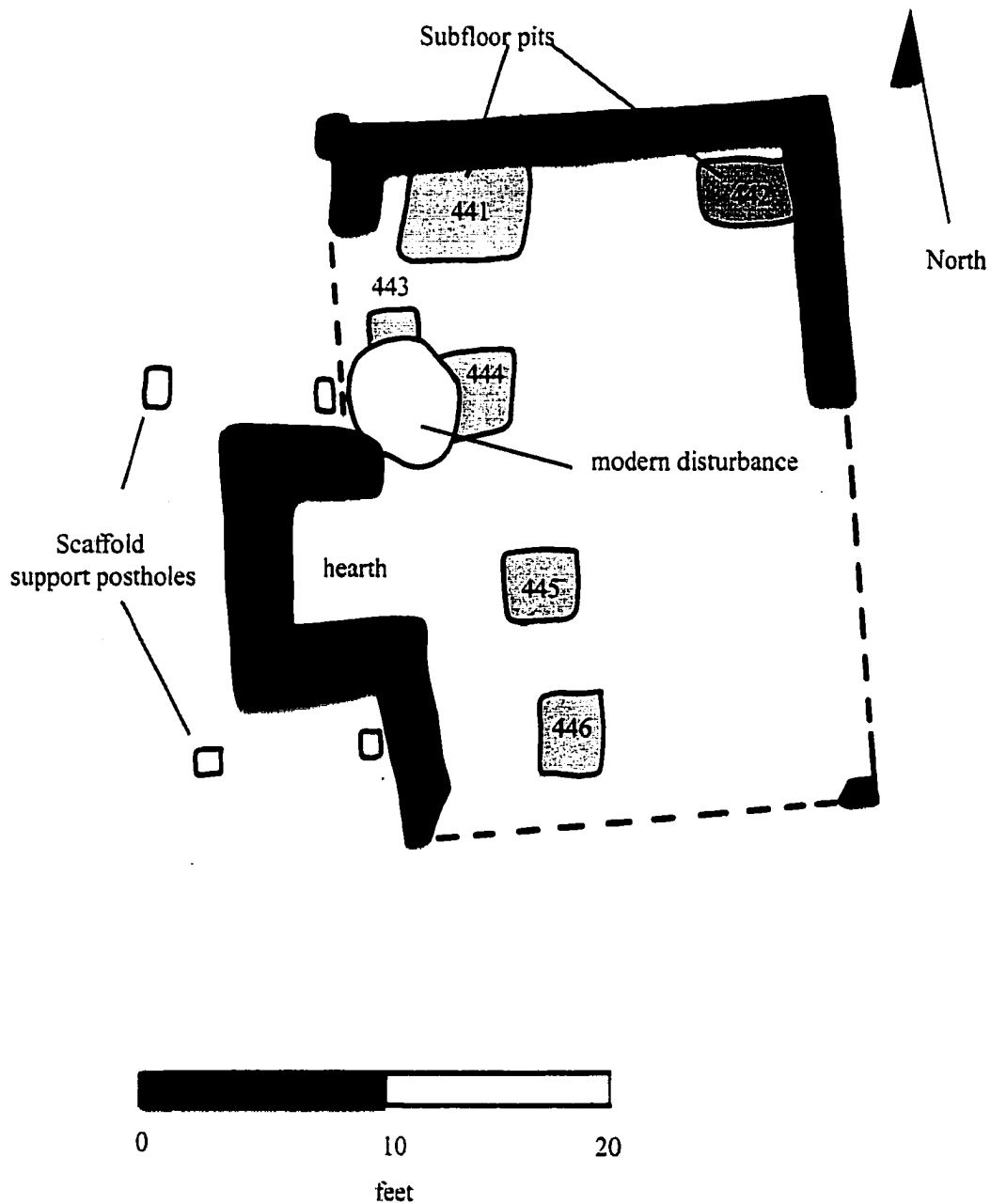


Figure 3.20 Kingsmill Quarter Structure Two archaeological remains.

crossmending ceramics or glass, appeared to have been filled earlier than the other pits in this building, circa 1760 based on wine bottle shape (Figure 3.21). The presence of one fragment of creamware, a ceramic type that began production in 1762 seems to confirm this general date. The earlier pits ranged around the walls of the structure, while all of the pits that were in the center of the floor dated to a later phase. These pits have been given the designation of Phase 1.

**Table 3.5 Kingsmill Quarter Subfloor Pit Descriptive Details**

Structure	Feature	Phase	Location	Shape	Cut or Repair	Dimensions & Depth (in ft.)	Number of Artifacts	Artifacts per Cubic Ft.
1	KM358	I	Corner	Rect.	Single	3 x 3.2 x 2.8	131	4.9
	KM362	I	Other	Rect.	Single	4.8 x 3.1 x 2.1	292	9.4
	KM363	I	Other	Rect.	Single	3.5 x 4.8 x 2.1	668	18.9
	KM367	I	Other	Rect.	Single	4.7 x 2.9 x 2.3	249	7.9
	KM378	I	Corner	Rect.	Single	2.5 x 4.8 x 3	176	4.9
	KM385	I	Other	Rect.	Single	6.5 x 2.4 x 2.7	18	0.4
	KM353	II	Other	Rect.	Single	7.8 x 5.9 x 3.4	321	2.0
	KM354	II	Other	Rect.	Single	7.1 x 5 x 3.1	3214	29.2
	KM355	II	Hearth	Rect.	Single	7.8 x 3.9 x 3.6	1634	15.0
	KM356	II	Other	Rect.	Single	3.5 x 3.1 x 3.8	1261	30.6
	KM359	II	Other	Rect.	Single	4.3 x 2.9 x 2.1	602	23.0
	KM360	II	Other	Rect.	Single	6 x 3.7 x 3.1	224	3.3
	KM361	II	Corner	Rect.	Single	2.9 x 4.4 x 2.7	120	3.5
	KM366	II	Corner	Rect.	Single	6 x 2.7 x 2	134	4.1
	KM377	II	Other	Rect.	Single	4.4 x 4.9 x 3.25	157	2.2
	KM379	II	Hearth	Rect.	Multiple	3.6 x 6.1 x 2.1	1772	38.4
	KM376	II	Hearth	Rect.	Multiple	5.8 x 3.8 x 2.5	Indet.	Indet.
	KM386	II	Other	Rect.	Single	2.5 x 2.9 x .8	Indet.	Indet.
	KM389	II	Other	Rect.	Single	3.3 x 2.0 x 2	109	8.3
	2	KM441	II	Corner	Rect.	Single	5.5 x 4 x 1.5	87
KM442		II	Corner	Oval	Single	3 x 4.6 x 1.1	166	10.5
KM443		II	Other	Rect.	Single	2.2 x ? x ?	17	Indet.
KM444		II	Other	Rect.	Single	3.7 x 2.9 x .5	34	6.4
KM445		II	Hearth	Rect.	Single	2.5 x 2.9 x .6	7	1.6
KM446		II	Other	Square	Single	3 x 3.1 x ?	Indet.	Indet.

The remaining pits (KM353-356, KM 359-361, KM366, KM377, KM379, KM386, KM388-389)<sup>14</sup> appear to have all been filled simultaneously with trash from the

<sup>14</sup> These features were originally designated Pits H-R.

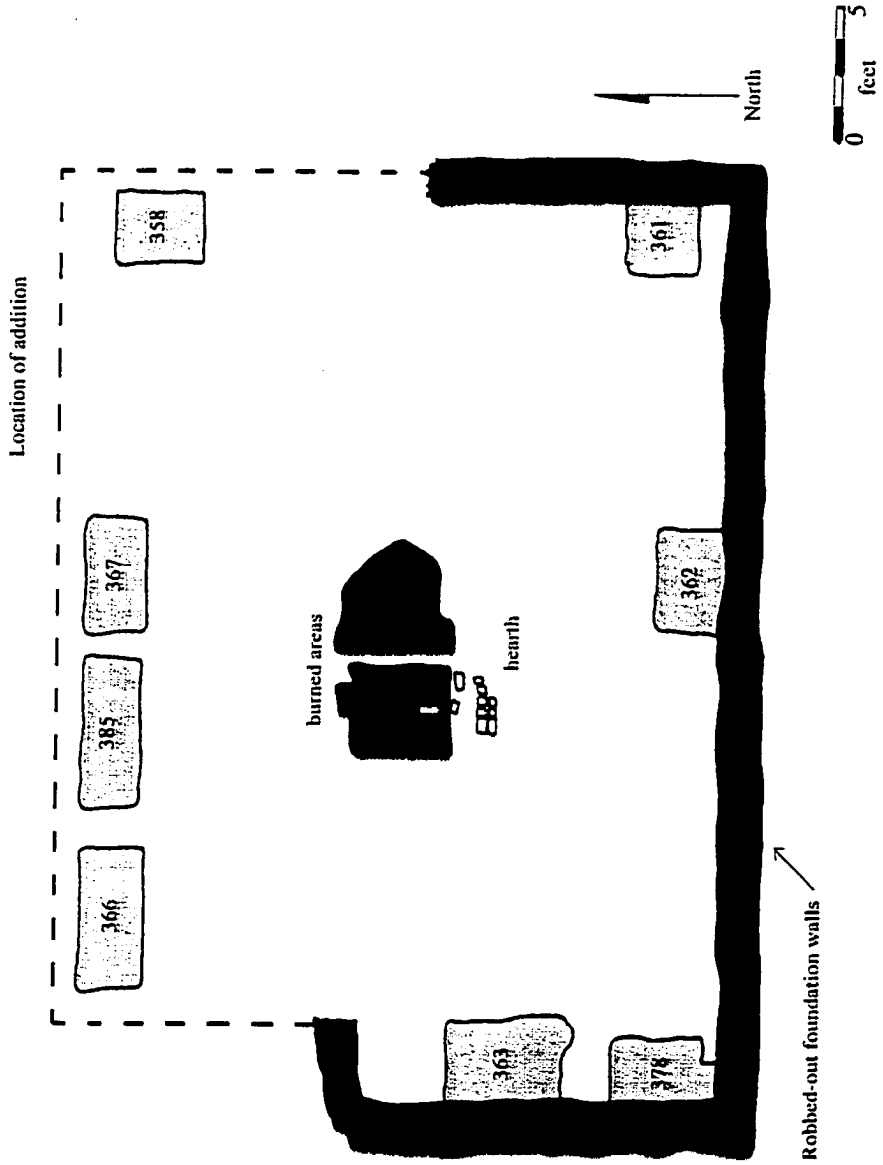


Figure 3.21 Locations of Phase I subfloor pits in Structure One.



same source. There were numerous crossmending ceramics and glass, both within the layers of the individual features and between these pits. A pewter military button discarded after 1781 and 23 Virginia halfpennies found in these pits suggest a very late eighteenth-century filling date for these features.<sup>15</sup> The upper zones of the later group of pits contained large quantities of brick rubble and mortar, suggesting that these features were filled when the overlying building was destroyed or taken down.<sup>16</sup> Each pit contained similar layers of fill, also supporting the conclusion they were all filled at the same time. Crossmends between the upper destruction zones and the layers of domestic refuse sealed beneath them are evidence of the rapid filling of these 14 pits.

Further evidence that the pits were filled after the site was no longer occupied came from the faunal remains in the later phase pits. Several of these features contained large portions of articulated animal skeletons, suggesting that at least some flesh had still adhered to the bones when discarded. It is quite unlikely that anyone would have occupied the building while recently-butchered carcasses rotted in trash pits located under the floorboards (Kelso 1984:120). These features have been given the designation Phase 2.

Rebecca Ferrell analyzed a sample of the site's faunal material in 1996 and concluded that the bones were atypical of samples from other Virginia slave sites (Ferrell 1996). The high proportion of domestic mammals, particularly cow, relative to wild species, the absence of fish, and the large size of the bone led her to conclude that the assemblage was created by some other activity, possibly during a military occupation of the site. The implications of this hypothesis and what my analysis suggests are detailed in upcoming pages.

A number of factors combine to suggest that the debris contained within the Phase 2 pits was not discarded by the Kingsmill Plantation enslaved community. In 1781, Lewis Burwell V left the plantation for the western part of Virginia, taking his enslaved labor force with him. That same year, British soldiers invaded the property and set up an encampment there. While officers would have taken over the main house, enlisted men

---

<sup>15</sup> A copper panic in 1789 devalued all copper coins, and the large numbers of these 1773 halfpennies (issued in Virginia in 1775) suggests that they were discarded after they were no longer of much value (Kelso 1976:13). The Royal Provincial military button was of a type worn by British troops who arrived at Burwell's Landing on April 19, 1781.

probably sheltered in stables, kitchens, quarters, and other dependencies. It is likely, then, that these two quarter buildings would have temporarily housed soldiers during the Revolutionary War. The property apparently sustained damage at the hands of both American and British troops, with Burwell seeking financial restitution from the American government after the close of the war. Historical documents thus suggest that enslaved individuals were not the last occupants at the quarter.

The artifacts from the Phase 2 pits also suggest that the enslaved did not discard the debris found in them. When compared with the earlier pits, overall quantities of objects skyrocketed. The combined assemblages of the six Phase 1 pits in Structure One contained 1,540 artifacts. Three of the Phase 2 pits alone each had higher artifact totals and the 14 pits combined contained 10,935 artifacts. The average number of artifacts per pit for Phase 2 was 781, a 300 percent increase over the average 257 artifacts per pit in Phase 1.

The variety and quality of the artifacts also changed significantly—whereas in the earlier Phases, coarse earthenware and stoneware vessels predominated in the ceramic assemblage (63%), in the later phase the assemblage was comprised overwhelmingly of table and teawares in expensive Chinese porcelains and fashionable cream-colored earthenwares. Only 75 ceramic fragments, from a minimum total of 16 vessels, were recovered from the Phase 1 pits, while a minimum of 96 vessels was present in the Phase 2 subfloor pits—a substantial increase both in numbers and variety of ceramics represented. The vessels from these pits were types more typical of a planter's home than of a slave quarter.

Along with the expensive and fashionable ceramics in Phase 2 were a variety of other objects less typical of the Phase 1 features. For example, leaded crystal wine glasses, other glass drinking vessels, and cutlery were many times more common in the Phase 2 assemblage. Lead musket balls, gunflints, and other military gear, including uniform buttons, were present in Phase 2. Horse-related gear, such as curry combs, saddle-trees, bits, and other harness fittings, again befitting a military presence, were also common.

---

<sup>16</sup> Brick and mortar were neither saved nor weighed before being discarded.

Based on the preceding evidence, I concur with Ferrell (1996) that the artifacts found in the Phase 2 features were discarded there either in connection with the British occupation of the property during the Revolutionary War, or with the clean up of the property after the War. It is possible that enlisted men plundered and looted the main plantation house for objects to use during their stay on the property, and the artifacts were used at the quarter and discarded by the soldiers. Conversely, the artifacts may have been discarded during Henry Martin's 1783 renovation of the main house. Brick were salvaged from the dismantled quarter, possibly to use in repairs at the main house. Wagons loaded with debris from the main house may have been carted down to the former quarter to be discarded, with the wagon returning with loads of salvaged brick and other architectural materials. Certainly, the objects contained within the fill of these pits were of a much higher quality than the items from the earlier-filled features. While these pits were most likely created by the enslaved, the objects found in the pits were almost certainly tossed there as a result of activity that largely had nothing to do with the enslaved community. For these reasons, artifacts from the 14 Phase 2 subfloor pits in Structure 1 were not analyzed in any greater detail for clues about how the enslaved used these pits. The soil strata and artifacts contained within all 6 of the Structure 2 subfloor pits indicated that their filling was contemporaneous with that of the Phase 2 features in Structure 1. Thus, they were also not analyzed in any further detail.

Since the features were almost certainly created during the slave occupation of the structure, however, they were included in the later sections of the analysis that examined patterns in pit size, placement, and construction methods. Comparing the Phase 1 and Phase 2 subfloor pits in Structure One revealed that the earlier pits were more consistent in size and depth than the later pits (Table 3.5). The earlier features ranged from 8 to 15.8 square feet, and varied between 2 and 3 feet in depth below the base of the plowzone. The Phase 2 pits ranged from 7 to 45 square feet and from less than a foot to almost 4 feet deep. This variation between the two periods may indicate that the original pits were all dug at one time, when the building was first occupied or constructed. The later pits, with their varied dimensions and depths, appear to have been created piecemeal, perhaps as needed in the later years of the building's occupation. The placement of the original pits was systematic, ranged along the exterior walls of the

structure, perhaps to be away from foot traffic, while later pit placement was more varied. Some of these pits were also dug against the exterior side walls, while others were placed in the main structure, against the partition wall that divided it from the northern room. Still other pits were in the center of the room, adjacent to the hearths. None of the later pits intruded upon the earlier features, suggesting that some of the original pits were still open, or at least visible when the later pits were created. Four of the Phase 2 pits (KM353, 354, 360, 379) contained traces of wooden walls, floors, and partitions.

### *Summary*

Due to financial difficulties and unfavorable political leanings, Lewis Burwell IV moved to Mecklenburg County, in the Piedmont region of the Virginia, in 1775, and his son Lewis Burwell V assumed operation of Kingsmill Plantation (Kelso 1984:46). Unlike Carter's Grove Plantation discussed in the following chapter, Kingsmill Plantation fared poorly during the American Revolution. The British, docking at the adjacent Burwell's Ferry Landing in 1781, invaded the plantation. Lewis Burwell V earned the contempt of his neighbors by selling supplies to British troops (McCartney 1997:195). Disrespect towards Burwell appears to have extended to the American troops as well, since after the war, Burwell sought government restitution for damages the Virginia troops caused to his property (McCartney 1997:236). The land passed out of the Burwell family in 1781 and was purchased by Henry Martin in 1783 (Wells 1976:2). A series of short-term owners followed and the mansion was eventually destroyed by fire in 1844.

Difficult times for Virginia planters meant difficult times for the enslaved as well. Documented instances of Burwell slave runaways were common in the 1760s and 1770s, as he sold individuals to other planters, or moved them to other Burwell plantations in the Piedmont region. By the end of the third quarter of the eighteenth century, the enslaved at Kingsmill Plantation had lived in a fairly stable community for some time—one where most of the individuals under the age of 30 to 35 had been born in Virginia and lived at Kingsmill for most, if not all, of their lives. Fearful of being separated from their families and friends, many of Burwell's slaves ran away, either to avoid being sent west, or to return to the Tidewater after having been removed from Kingsmill. One man, who went by the names Johnny and Jack Ash, obtained an extra set of clothing before he ran

in 1768 (Virginia Gazette 1768a). Leaving his own clothes behind on the riverbank, he perhaps hoped to trick Burwell into thinking he had committed suicide by drowning.

The final plantation quarter to be considered is associated with Carter's Grove Plantation. Like most of the properties previously detailed here, Carter's Grove was owned by the Burwell family. This quarter provides an opportunity to analyze slave life at the end of the eighteenth century.

### **Carter's Grove Quarter (44JC110), ca. 1780-1800**

During the last quarter of the eighteenth century, approximately 10 to 15 working adults, their children, and perhaps several older individuals, lived in a quarter located within sight of the Carter's Grove mansion, at the edge of a wooded ravine (Figure 3.22). These workers were responsible for the cultivation of around 125 acres near the plantation house, making these dwellings the home quarter for Carter's Grove. Although the documentary record does not allow us to place specific individuals on this quarter, Walsh's multi-generational history of the Burwell family slaves provides enough clues to allow a reasonable estimate of the quarter population (Walsh 1997).

Like the other previously discussed plantations, a member of the Burwell family owned Carter's Grove. Constructed in the 1750s by Carter Burwell, nephew of Lewis Burwell III of Kingsmill Plantation, the Carter's Grove mansion mirrored his uncle's earlier house in its brick construction, flanking outbuildings, and extensive terraced gardens. As on most other Chesapeake plantations, tobacco, corn, and wheat were the primary crops produced at Carter's Grove, with sales of livestock and meat providing additional sources of revenue. In addition to his Carter's Grove property, Carter Burwell owned five other nearby farms and a mill (Walsh 1997:119).

The quarter at Carter's Grove dates to the last quarter of the eighteenth century, a period when the plantation was under the ownership of Carter Burwell's son, Nathaniel II. Burwell inherited the farm upon reaching his majority in 1771, obtaining the estate that had been managed by an executor since his father's death in 1756 (McCartney 1997; Walsh 1997). The younger Burwell implemented changes at the home plantation throughout his tenure as owner, adjustments that reflected the changing economic and

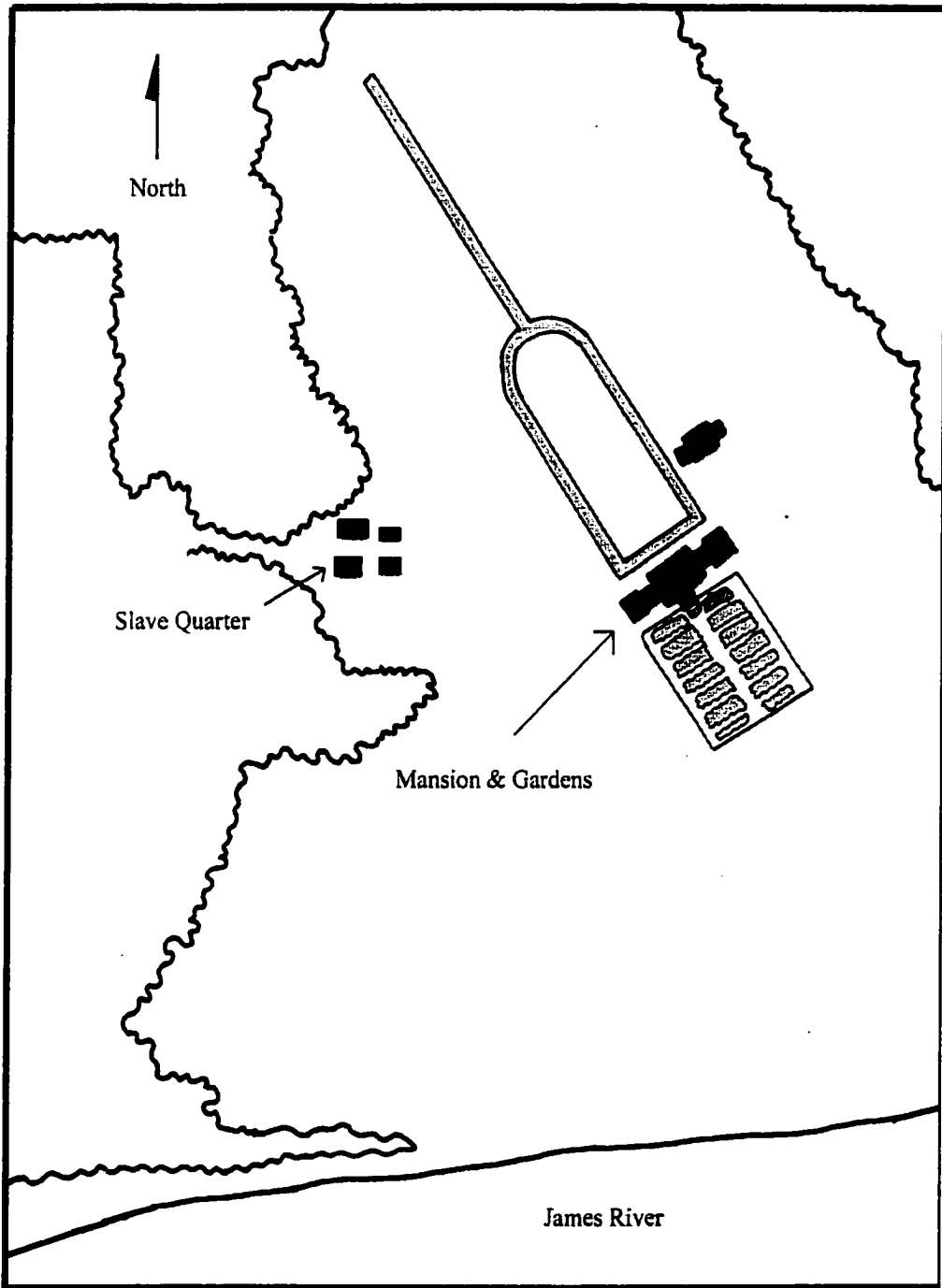


Figure 3.22 Carter's Grove Plantation (44JC110).

political climate. In the face of mounting tensions and trade problems with England just prior to the Revolutionary War, Burwell stopped growing tobacco at Carter's Grove, continuing its production in smaller quantities at some of his other plantations (Walsh 1997:125-6). Accounts show that Burwell diversified his plantation activities during the war, turning the work towards the production of goods and supplies needed to get the plantation through the period of shortages brought about by the hostilities. The agricultural activities of the enslaved at Carter's Grove became more diversified, as production was expanded to include wheat, oats, barley, peas and hay that could be used to feed the inhabitants of the plantation and its outlying farms, or sold locally (Walsh 1997:125). Other enslaved individuals were skilled in various trades such as carpentry, coopering, weaving, and milling.

Given the scope of the plantation's activities during the tenure of Nathaniel Burwell, what kinds of generalities can be made about the persons who lived at his home quarter? Tax lists for the years 1783 through 1786 show that there were 69 slaves at Carter's Grove (Walsh 1997:131); of this number, 26 were children. These individuals included older men and women who were no longer able to perform agricultural labor, fieldworkers, domestics, carpenters, and gardeners. Some of these people lived in the mansion's kitchen, stables and other outbuildings; others were most likely quartered adjacent to agricultural fields located some distance from the house. Approximately a quarter of the enslaved at Carter's Grove lived at the home quarter excavated by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, which now owns and manages the plantation.

#### *Archaeological Evidence at the Site*

The quarter sat on a marginal piece of land, surrounded on three sides by a wooded ravine containing a small stream. Shielded by woods to the south, the quarters would have been invisible from the river, and visitors arriving at the mansion along the carriage road would have found it difficult to see them as well. While the red brick mansion, ascending two stories above the rise upon which it was built, was certainly visible to the quarter inhabitants, it would have been more difficult for anyone inside the main house to see the low, weathered wooden cabins tucked away in a crescent of forest.

While the mansion at Carter's Grove weathered the passing years and numerous occupants, the home quarters were more ephemeral, having almost surely vanished by the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century. They were rediscovered in 1970 during an archaeological reconnaissance of the Carter's Grove property. Archaeologists hired by Colonial Williamsburg, traversing a plowed field northwest of the house, noticed scatters of mid- to late eighteenth-century ceramics, tobacco pipes, and other artifacts littering the ground surface (Kelso and Frank 1972). Subsequent removal of the plowzone at the site revealed ditches, fencelines, and a series of subfloor pits that appeared to denote the former locations of three structures (Figure 3.23).<sup>17</sup> No traces of below-ground foundations, structural postholes, or chimneys were found, suggesting that these buildings were either of ground sill log or frame construction with earthen floors, or sat on very shallow brick foundations that had been completely plowed away in the intervening years.<sup>18</sup> The large quantities of nails found in the subfloor pits' destruction zone suggest the buildings were probably of frame, rather than log, construction. Small quantities of window glass indicate that at least some of the windows were glazed, although most were probably protected with wooden shutters. Hearth construction techniques were equally difficult to determine for the three buildings, since plowing would have easily destroyed traces of both brick and stick and mud chimneys. One of the features (CG714) appeared to have been a hole dug as a source of clay (Kelso and Frank 1972:42), possibly for chinking between the log walls of a dwelling, or in the construction and repair of a stick and mud chimney. Two other similar features (CG701 and 700) were either borrow pits or tree holes.

Archaeological testing in the woods southwest of the quarter buildings revealed the remains of a probable well constructed for the use of the quarter inhabitants, and there was also a freshwater spring located in the ravine to the north. Testing in a small finger or

---

<sup>17</sup> When this site was first excavated in 1970, the subfloor pits were interpreted as pits for tanning animal hides (Kelso and Frank 1972). Since this report was completed, the appearance of similar pits in conjunction with visible structural remains and documented quarters has brought about a re-evaluation of these features as subfloor pits.

<sup>18</sup> The uppermost fill zones of the subfloor pits contained highly fragmented brick bits, but no description of the overlying plowzone was found to determine whether the overburden contained enough brick to suggest that brick chimneys, hearths, and structural foundations existed for these buildings.



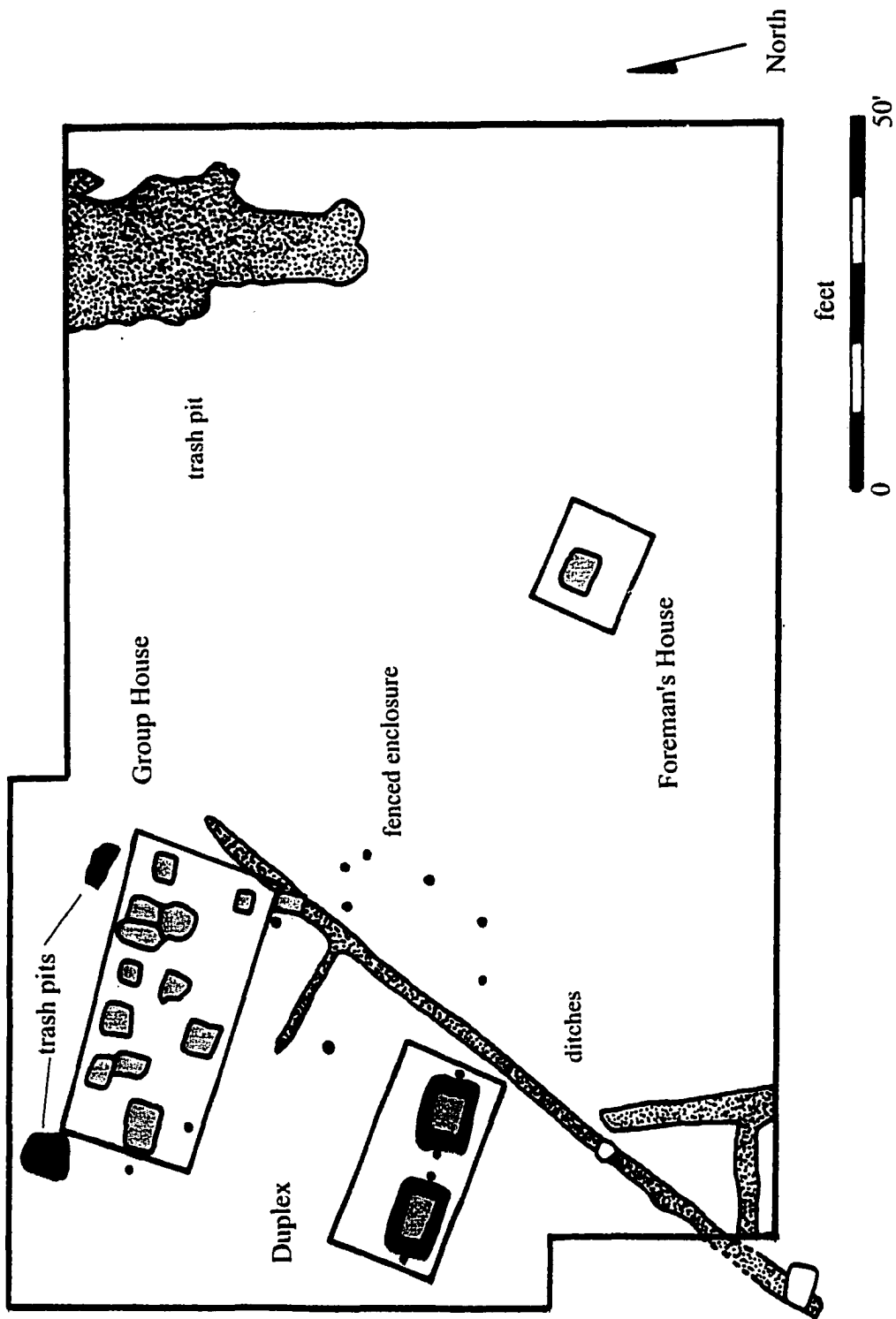


Figure 3.23 Carter's Grove Quarter (44JC110) archaeological remains, ca. 1780-1800.

extension of the ravine east of the quarters showed where the enslaved were discarding their household garbage. Fragments of a North American stoneware jug recovered from the trash deposit mended with fragments of the same vessel found in one of the pits in the larger dwelling.

Despite the slender nature of the structural evidence, it appears that the excavated portions of the quarter consisted of three dwellings.<sup>19</sup> Two of these structures were located adjacent to one another, and the number and spatial alignments of their subfloor pits suggested some generalities about these buildings.

### Group House

The northernmost concentration of pits indicated that a building whose dimensions were at least 42 by 20 ft. had rested over the twelve pits (Figure 3.24). The dense scattering of pits over the entire probable footprint of the building, combined with evidence from other excavations, suggests that stick and mud chimneys stood at either or both ends of the building<sup>20</sup>. A final subfloor pit (CG704) appeared to have been located outside the presumed footprint of the building, probably in a small lean-to addition.

### Duplex

Located 30 ft. southwest of the barracks-style house were two identical subfloor pits. These 9 by 6 ft. pits, each containing traces of a 6.5 by 4.5 ft. wooden box, were rather more substantially constructed than the features in the barracks. The structure believed to have rested over these two features has been interpreted as a 30 by 12 ft. two-room duplex, built to house one family in each of its 15 by 12 ft. rooms (Figure 3.25).

A fenced enclosure at the eastern end of the duplex, as evidenced by small stake holes, helped form a small courtyard between the two structures. Encircling a garden or

---

<sup>19</sup> During the construction of a walkway leading from the Carter's Grove Reception Center to the mansion house in 1984, additional archaeological testing revealed a rectangular feature south of the currently reconstructed slave quarter (DAR 1984). This feature, oriented along the same direction as the quarter's pits, appeared to be another subfloor pit, strongly suggesting that the limits of the quarter were not fully defined during the 1970 excavation.

<sup>20</sup> The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation has reconstructed this building with a centrally-located brick chimney.

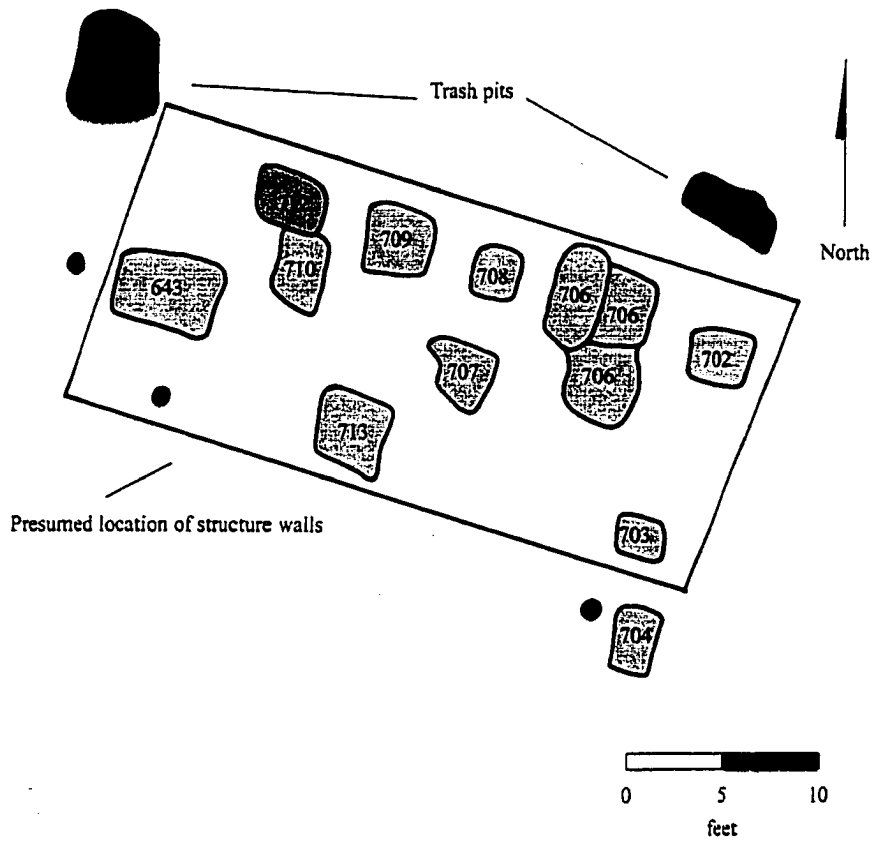


Figure 3.24 Carter's Grove Quarter Group House archaeological remains.

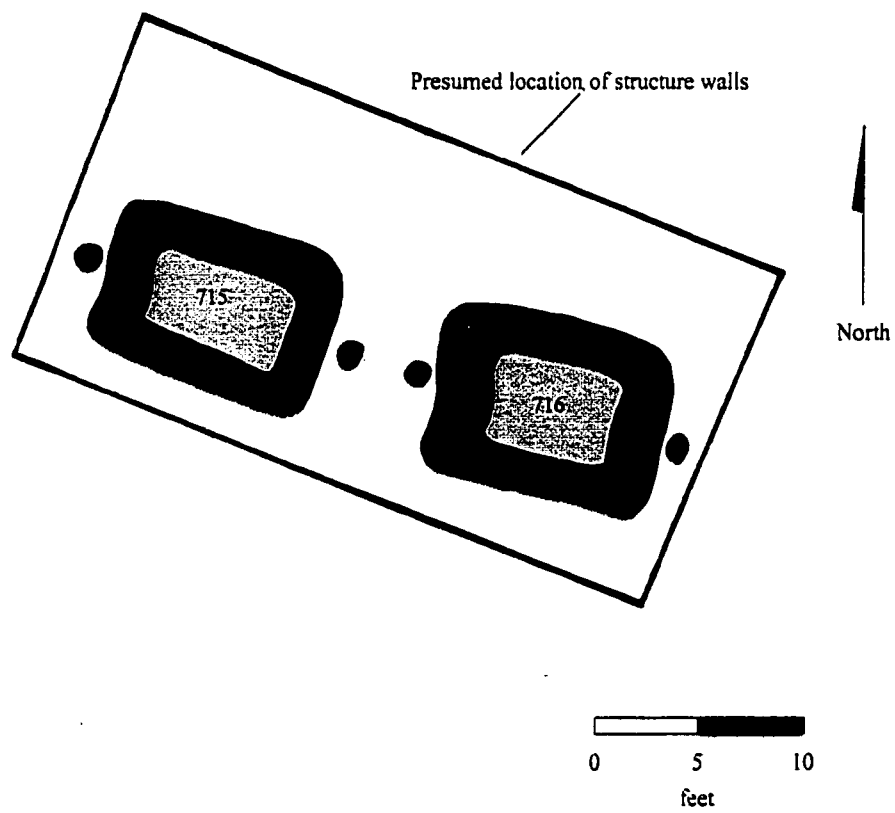


Figure 3.25 Carter's Grove Quarter Duplex archaeological remains.

forming a poultry pen, this enclosure was probably constructed of upright posts interwoven with slender branches, forming a visual barrier between the plantation house and the quarter yard (Figure 3.26). It was probably here that the inhabitants of the quarters passed a majority of their non-work hours. Given what is known about the appearance of quarters from colonial period documents and standing nineteenth-century slave dwellings, the cabins at the quarter would have been dark, smoky, and cramped; spaces that were surely less inviting than an open courtyard during all but the dreariest days.

### Foreman's House

A lone subfloor pit was located 55 ft. southeast of the duplex pits. This single pit has been interpreted as having been associated with a small, single dwelling. As with the other pits, there was no other structural evidence of the building that had once stood over this feature, but it was situated along the same compass axis as the other pits at the site. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation has reconstructed a 12 by 15 ft. structure over the former location of the subfloor pit, interpreting this building as a dwelling for the quarter's enslaved foreman and his family.

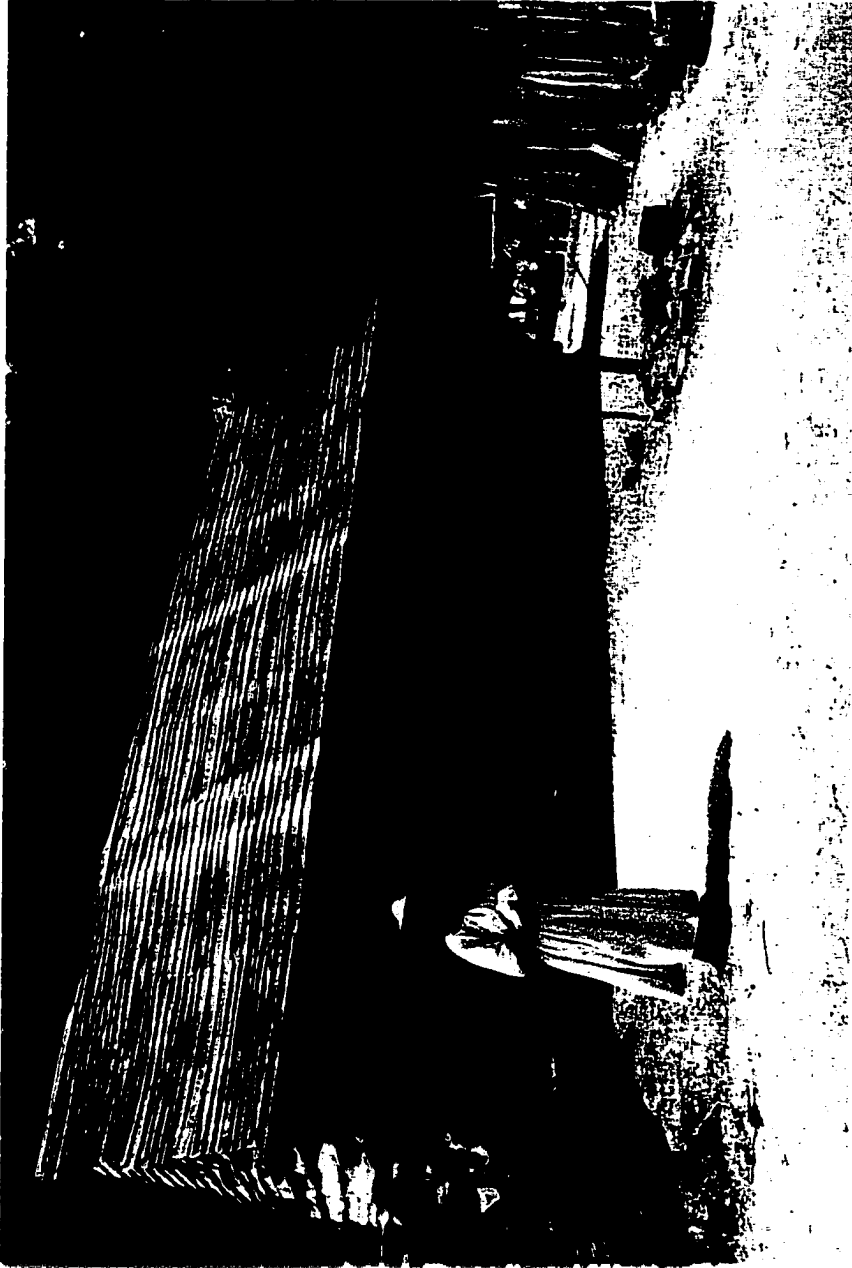
### *Archaeological Analysis of Subfloor Pits*

Analysis of the subfloor pit fills and artifacts from all three structures revealed that all but several of the pits had been filled at the same time, presumably when the overlying structures were destroyed. The composition of the uppermost fill in these pits was the same, a dark brown loam mixed with wood ash and brick bits, indicating that the features had been filled with material from the same source (Table 3.6).

There was little evidence of the digging and re-digging of pits that was apparent at many of the other earlier sites.<sup>21</sup> The possible exception was a L-shaped pit that may have been constructed in two phases in the western half of the building. Perhaps by the time that the Carter's Grove quarter was built, the enslaved had learned ways to construct pits

---

<sup>21</sup> However, there were several instances where pits cut into one another (CG706 complex and CG710/712). CG710 appeared to cut CG712, an earlier, previously backfilled pit. CG 706 was somewhat more complex. It was difficult to determine from the excavation record whether this feature had originally been two or three subfloor pits constructed and filled sequentially.



**Figure 3.26** Reconstructed quarter building at Carter's Grove plantation. Photograph by Thomas Hargrove.

of sizes and depths that were not prone to water damage. The two deepest pits at the site, associated with the duplex, contained pre-fabricated wooden boxes. This construction method would have prevented the collapse of pit walls, a problem that had plagued earlier sites.

**Table 3.6** Carter's Grove Quarter Subfloor Pit Descriptive Details

Structure	Feature	Phase	Location	Shape	Cut or Repair	Dimensions & Depth (in ft.)	Number of Artifacts	Artifacts per Cubic Ft.
Group House	CG643	II	Other	Rect.	Single	6.2 x 4.1 x 1.75	466	10.5
	CG702	II	Corner	Rect.	Single	3.7 x 3 x ?	51	Indet.
	CG703	II	Corner	Square	Single	3 x 3 x .75	38	5.6
	CG704	II	Other	Rect.	Single	2 x 4 x 1	126	15.8
	CG706A/D	I?	Hearth	Rect.	Multiple	5.4 x 6 x ?	424	Indet.
	CG706B/C	II?	Hearth	Rect.	Multiple	3.6 x 4.8 x ?	51	Indet.
	CG707	II	Hearth	Rect.	Single	3 x 3 x 3.3	6	0.2
	CG708	II	Other	Square	Single	2.7 x 2.7 x .33	38	15.8
	CG709	II	Corner	Rect.	Single	5 x 4 x ?	59	Indet.
	CG710	I	Hearth	Rect.	Single	3 x 4 x ?	47	Indet.
	CG712	II	Other	Rect.	Single	4 x 3 x 1.1	29	2.2
	CG713	II	Corner	Square	Single	4.5 x 4 x ?	255	Indet.
	Duplex	CG715	II	Hearth	Rect.	Single	6.5 x 4.5 x 3.5	455
CG716		II	Hearth	Rect.	Single	6.5 x 4.5 x 3.25	311	3.3
Foreman's House	CG721	II	Hearth?	Rect.	Single	5.5 x 4.25 x 2.7	67	1.1

Painted pearlwares provided a *terminus post quem* date of 1775 as the earliest year that the filling could have taken place (Miller 1987), with production ranges of the ceramic assemblage as a group suggesting a peak range of occupation between 1780 and 1800 (Pepper 1988). These dates correspond well with the documentation of the plantation's post-war history. The quarters were most likely abandoned when Nathaniel Burwell II removed most of the laborers from Carter's Grove in 1796/97. The scatters of nails, window glass, brick bits, and mortar in the top layers of the pits suggests that the

buildings were dismantled, with salvageable materials taken away for reuse, probably at another Burwell quarter.

### *Summary*

Although the construction date for the quarter is unknown, they were most likely built when Nathaniel Burwell II took control of the property in 1771. Analysis of the artifacts and fill of the pits suggests that they were all filled at the same time, when the quarter was destroyed at the end of the eighteenth century, an event most likely connected with the forced removal of the inhabitants. By this time the buildings would have been almost thirty years old and in shoddy condition. Documentary evidence shows that some planters believed that periodic replacement of slave housing was beneficial to health and sanitation. North Carolina planter Thomas Cameron, for example, felt that the unhealthy conditions in the quarters could only be remedied by replacing the cabins every five to seven years (Anderson 1985:107). The quantities of ceramics, bottle glass, tobacco pipes, and other secondary debris that were swept into the pits after the overlying buildings were destroyed suggest that the Carter's Grove Quarter was no exception.

Burwell seems to have hunkered down for the war, and survived with remarkably little hardship to his family or his bondspeople (Walsh 1997:128). After the resumption of trade with the English after the war, Nathaniel Burwell returned to the production of tobacco. He continued this production into the early nineteenth century, although focusing more and more of his time and energies on his plantations in the Virginia Piedmont. In late 1796 or early the following year, Burwell removed nearly all of the agricultural workers from Carter's Grove, sending them west to his property in Frederick County (Walsh 1997:217).

### **Summary**

The archaeological findings from these sites provide a good opportunity to chart change through time in subfloor pit construction and use, as well as providing a venue for examining the material conditions of rural slave life in eighteenth-century Virginia. Several attributes make these sites appropriate for this type of analysis. Each site was



occupied for roughly 20 to 30 years, a period corresponding with a single generation of enslaved individuals. Because land transactions and marriages between the Burwell and Bray families brought continuity between the various plantations, there was a corresponding, although less exact, continuity within the slave communities residing there. Considered together, the sites span the entire eighteenth century—a period of great change within the Virginia economy and slave demographics.

At each site, archaeological excavations revealed a group of buildings that served as slaving housing. Each of the quarters was comparable in size, composition, and location within its respective plantation. Each site had been home to a community of male and female slaves. The documented presence of young children at Utopia Quarter suggested the presence of family groups. Results of research on eighteenth-century Virginia plantations indicate it highly probable that families were present at each quarter studied here. The location of these quarters at some distance from the main plantation house and adjacent to arable land suggested that most of the residents were involved in agricultural labor.

While building construction techniques varied between the sites, subfloor pits were present at each location. These sites provided a sample of 103 subfloor pits, with each site containing roughly equivalent numbers of pits (15-26). Based on historical documentation, archaeological field notes, and preliminary artifact analysis, I determined that the artifact contents of 23 of these pits were not appropriate for further analysis. For example, 3 features from Utopia Period III had been virtually destroyed by looters some years prior to the archaeological investigation. At Kingsmill Quarter, artifact analysis and the documented history of the site strongly suggested that the soil and artifacts filling 20 of the subfloor pits were a product of the British army occupation of the site in 1781. Thus, only the assemblages from 6 earlier filled subfloor pits were analyzed fully at this site. Thus, of these 103 features, detailed artifact analysis was undertaken on 81 pits (Table 3.7).

While the artifact assemblages from these 23 features were not analyzed to determine pit function, the pits were not without analytical value. Because slaves originally constructed the pits, these features were considered appropriate for inclusion in analysis of pit size, depth, location, shape, and construction techniques. For example, it

became apparent during this descriptive analysis that there were noticeable differences between hearth front pits and pits in other locations. Hearth pits appeared to have been maintained through repair and re-cutting to a greater degree than pits in other locations. In the next chapter, quantitative analysis will be used to further explore this difference, as well as other variables, to determine if additional variances exist between hearth and non-hearth pits. Chapter 5 describes the results of detailed analysis of subfloor pits in light of these assumptions.

**Table 3.7** Summary Data on Subfloor Pits from Study Sites

Site	Total Subfloor Pits	Total Subfloor Pits Analyzed in Detail
Utopia Period II	18	18
Utopia Period III	20	17
Utopia Period IV	24	24
Kingsmill Quarter	26	6
Carter's Grove Quarter	15	16
Total	103	81

## **Chapter IV.**

### **SUBFLOOR PITS—PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS AND PROPOSED FUNCTIONS**

What can size, depth, shape, level of repair, and the placement of pit features within the buildings excavated at Utopia, Kingsmill, and Carter's Grove reveal about how they were being used? Were there any visible patterns in these physical characteristics to suggest functional differences in various subsets of the data? For example, in the previous chapter detailing archaeological findings on these five sites, there appeared to be location-based differences in level of pit repair. Most notably, hearth-front pits showed more evidence of maintenance through repair and re-cutting than pits in corners or along walls. Does quantitative analysis support this observation? Analysis of the Utopia, Kingsmill, and Carter's Grove pits detailed in the following pages shows that pit location and level of repair were indeed strongly correlated. Additional tests suggest other differences based on pit location as well.

Over the last three decades, archaeologists have offered various explanations for subfloor pit use—daub pits, root cellars, personal storage spaces, and shrines—and I will examine in turn the documentary, ethnohistoric, and archaeological evidence for each explanation. The physical patterns revealed earlier in the chapter are then examined with regard to these proposed functions. Using all lines of evidence, I then propose functions for these pits based on their location within a structure. Hypotheses are presented for testing these proposed functions, with the result of testing at the study sites following in Chapter 5.

#### **Analytical Testing of Physical Variables**

In the following section, 103 subfloor pits from the Utopia, Kingsmill, and Carter's Grove quarters have been analyzed in order to draw some general conclusions about the

physical characteristics of these features. I collected data on a number of variables, including pit dimensions, depth, shape, and volume.<sup>1</sup> Pit placement within the structure<sup>2</sup>, dating, the presence of multiple versus single pits within buildings, and whether each feature showed any signs of repair or reconstruction (characterized as multiple filling and cutting episodes) were also noted. A series of analytical tests were run to ascertain if there were correlations between different physical variables.

All of the structures contained at least one pit in front of each hearth during the lifespan of the building. Because a visual overview of the study sites suggested high levels of repair for hearth-front pits, I first examined whether pit location within a room was correlated with repair or rebuilding. Pit locations were divided into three categories—hearth, corner, and other—and pit repair status was assigned to one of two categories—single and multiple cuts. Table 4.1 defines these location and repair categories.

**Table 4.1. Categories of Analysis and Codes for Feature Variables**

Location	Shape	Cuts/Repair Status
C = pit located in corner of structure or corner of a room within a multi-room structure	Oblong = length > width  Square = length = width	S = single cut, a feature with a single period of use and filling. No later features have been cut through its fill
H = in front of hearth or adjacent to hearth opening		
O = Other, i.e. in center of floor or along wall	Round	M = Multiple cuts, includes pits that have been filled and recut, creating new pits of different dimensions, depths, or spatial alignments. Each pit within a complex is counted separately

<sup>1</sup> In some instances, data were not available for all analysis categories. For example, multiple cutting and repair episodes destroyed some evidence of pit dimensions, in some cases preventing the calculation of square footage and volume. In other cases, the absence of structural footings for buildings prevented determination of pit location within buildings.

<sup>2</sup> Pit location within structures could not be assigned based on a simple quadrangle plan, since hearth locations varied from structure to structure. Since hearth-front locations were hypothesized to be an important factor in determining function, this designation became a critical factor.

Examining percentages of repaired versus non-repaired pits by location (Table 4.2) shows a strong correlation between a pit's location and its repair status. Almost 80% of the hearth-front pits had been repaired. These pits were much more likely to be repaired than features that had been constructed in a corner, along a wall, or in the middle of the room. If the incidence of repair and rebuilding are an indication of the value placed on a particular location by a structure's occupants, these results suggest hearth fronts were highly valued positions for pits. While only a third of the sample's corner pits showed evidence of repair, they were still three times more likely to be repaired or rebuilt than pits along walls or in the center of the floor. This finding suggests that slaves viewed corner pit locations as preferable to these other positions.

**Table 4.2.** Repair Status of Subfloor Pits by Location

Cut/Repair Status	Pit Location		
	Hearth Pits n = 43	Corner Pits n = 27	Other Pits n = 29
Single	20.9%	66.7%	89.7%
Multiple	79.1%	33.3%	10.3%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Since pit locations showed patterned differences in repair status, is there similar patterning in other physical variables? Pits varied in shape, surface area, and depth. Three pit shapes—oblong, square, and round—were recorded (see Table 4.1 for definitions), as well as surface area and depth.

Oblong pits, encompassing rectangular and oval shapes, accounted for 85% of the features. Several factors may account for the predominance of this shape. Pit shapes may simply mirror the shapes of the buildings within which they were constructed or may have been predisposed by the rectangular arrangement of floor joists in structures containing wooden floors. The only strong evidence for wooden floored structures, however, was at the Kingsmill Quarter. While floor types in the Carter's Grove Quarter structures were less clear, the archaeological evidence at Utopia suggests that these structures contained earthen floors. Digging pits to fit between floor joists would not therefore have been a consideration at the Utopia buildings. It is also possible that oblong shapes had cultural significance for some enslaved African Americans and thus would have been chosen more frequently.

Even given the overwhelmingly high percentage of oblong pits, however, there appeared to be some shape variation by location (Table 4.3). Pits located along walls or in the center of rooms were oblong in 93% of the cases. Square pits were more common in front of hearths or in corners. Round pits were slightly more likely to be found in corners than in front of hearths or in other locations. These variances might have significance for devising further research strategies.

**Table 4.3. Percentages of Pit Shapes by Location**

Shape	Location		
	Corner N = 27	Hearth N = 44	Other N = 29
Oblong	81.5%	81.8%	93.1%
Round	7.4%	2.3%	0
Square	11.1%	15.9%	6.9%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Were hearth-front pits deeper or larger than pits in other locations? Tables 4.4 and 4.5 list the descriptive statistics for these categories, while Figures 4.1 and 4.2 depict box plots of these same variables. Considered together, these figures reveal several interesting patterns. Hearth and corner pits were more restricted in their depth and size ranges than pits whose location was designated "Other".

**Table 4.4. Descriptive Statistics for Subfloor Pit Surface Area by Location**

Location	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	Sample Size
Corner Surface Area	3.2	25	17.7	12	26
Hearth Surface Area	3.75	32.4	15.5	15	43
Other Surface Area	3.2	46	14.7	12.5	27

Corner pits showed the least variation for both variables. With a mean depth of 1.2 ft., they averaged half a foot shallower than features in either of the other locations. Corner pits clustered at the lower end of the depth range (Figure 4.1). They showed the smallest range of variation in surface area, with half of the features clustering between 9.4 and 16.1 sq. ft.

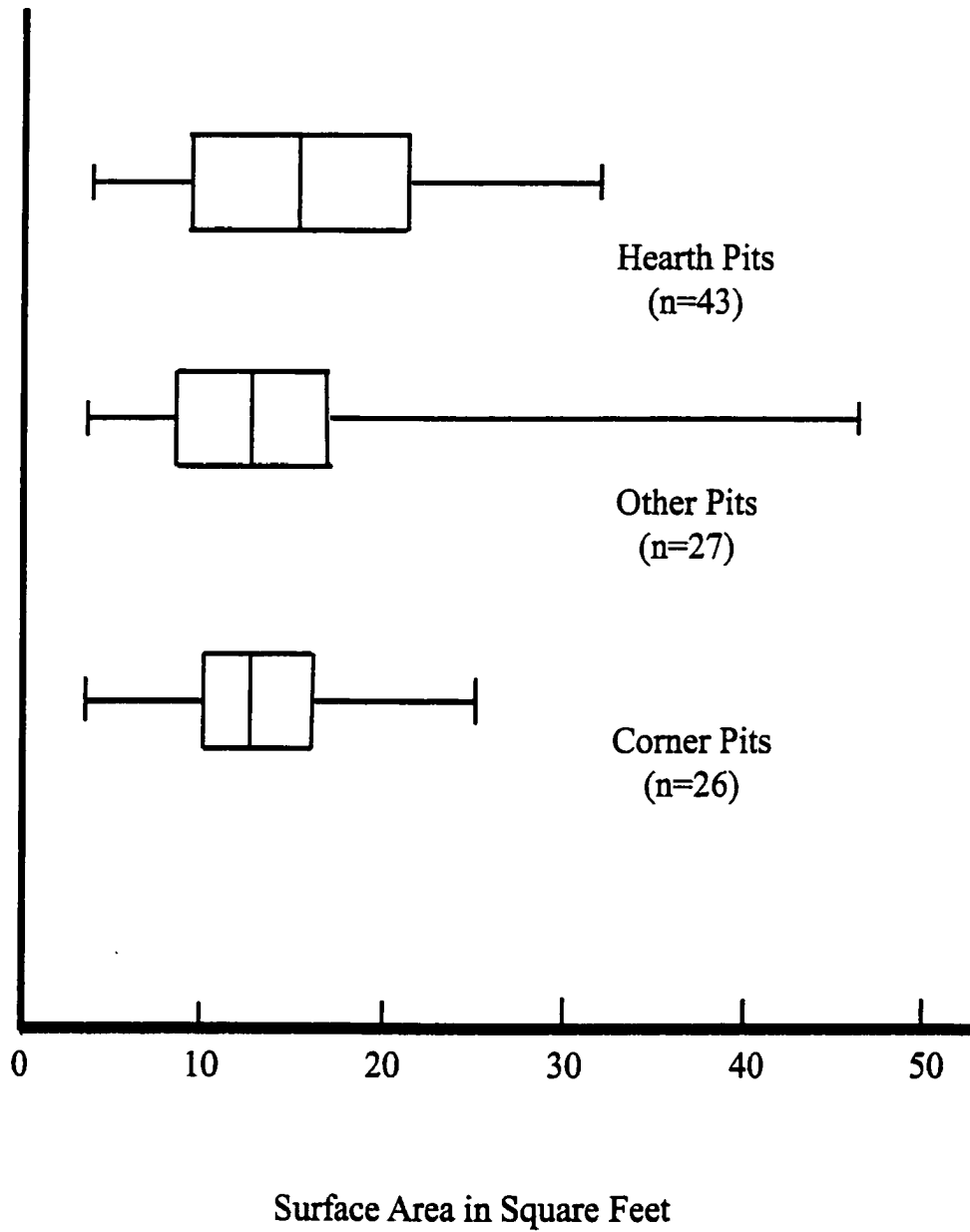


Figure 4.1 Subfloor pit surface area by location.

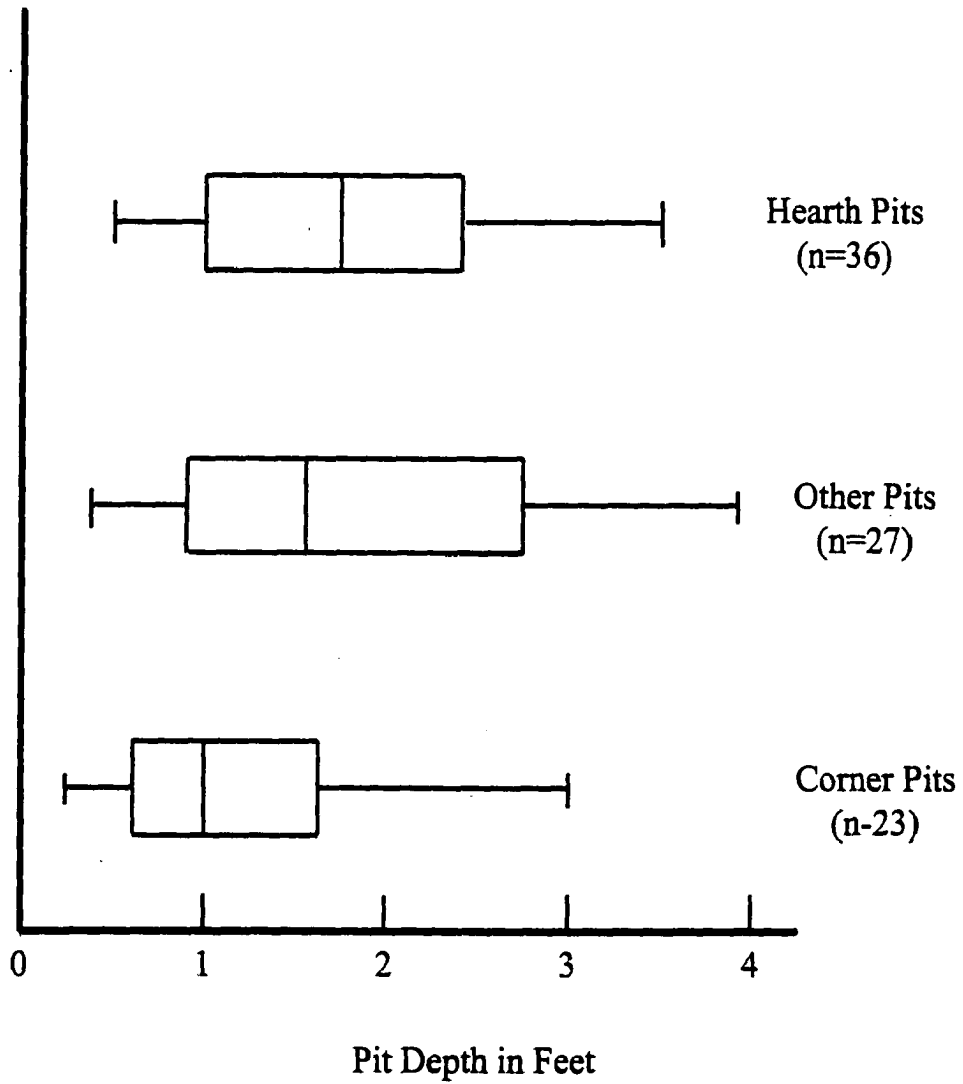


Figure 4.2 Subfloor pit depth by location.



**Table 4.5. Descriptive Statistics for Subfloor Pit Depth by Location**

Location	Minimum (ft.)	Maximum (ft.)	Mean (ft.)	Median (ft.)	Sample Size
Corner Depth	.25	3.0	1.2	1.0	23
Hearth Depth	0.5	3.6	1.8	1.8	36
Other Depth	0.3	3.9	1.7	1.6	27

At an average depth of 1.8 ft., hearth-front pits were nominally deeper than pits designated "Other" (mean = 1.7 ft.). Half of the hearth-front pits ranged between 9 and 20 sq. ft. in surface area, a larger spread than displayed by pits in the other two categories. Similarly, they ranged between .3 ft. and 3.9 ft. in depth, with half of the features extending between .9 ft. and 2.7 ft. deep. Pits along the wall and in the middle of rooms displayed the largest overall range of variation in depth and size. While half of these features fell within the fairly limited surface area range of 8 to 16.8 sq. ft., they showed the largest overall spread of surface area—from 3.2 to 46 sq. ft.

The restricted area and depth ranges of corner and hearth-front pits are significant. These results suggest they served specialized functions that required a specific range of surface area or depth. Pits falling in the "Other" category may have been used for a greater variety of purposes, thus not requiring specific sizes or depths.

To summarize, differences revealed in the physical characteristics of subfloor pits appeared to be linked to their location within a room. Hearth-front features were the deepest pits on average and usually showed evidence of repair or rebuilding. Corner pits were the shallowest, had the smallest range of variation in surface area and the largest diversity of pit shapes. In most instances, corner pits showed no evidence of repair. Pits whose location was designated "Other" showed the largest range of variation in surface area and depth and were almost never repaired. These results suggest that pit location was perhaps related to pit function within the household. In the following sections, I examine in detail evidence for subfloor pit functions that have been proposed by archaeologists and other scholars. Using this evidence in conjunction with the patterns in physical evidence shown above, I propose hypotheses on the function of pits in each location.

## Subfloor Pit Functions

“One of the most remarkable features of folklore is its adaptability and endurance. Man does not give up the results of his creative acts easily. Instead, he is inclined to change either their form or substance, adapting them into new needs and stresses.” Abrahams (1968).

Although subfloor pits in Virginia were likely to be associated with slave dwellings, the question remains as to how they were used by the quarter inhabitants. Schroedl (1980) has argued convincingly that the original functions of subterranean pits on Native American sites are generally obscured by their later functions. A pit may have gone through a complex use life, from being originally dug as a clay source, to serving as a storage pit, and then ending its use span as a convenient disposal place for garbage. Subfloor pits on Virginia quarters generally ended up in the same fashion, filled with refuse swept from around the quarter yards or debris from the demolition of the overlying structure. Prior to these rather ignominious endings, however, how did the African Americans, who went to the trouble to create these features, use them?

### *Clay Borrow Pits*

Subfloor pits may have originally been dug as sources of clay for chinking log walls and chimneys, or for filling hearths (Kimmel 1993). Log construction was a common building technique for slave houses in Virginia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, although more typically found in upland, rather than tidewater areas (Herman 1984). Clay would have been a readily available and cost-free material for chinking the interstices between logs, providing some degree of protection from drafts and wind-driven precipitation (Figure 4.3). A mid nineteenth-century description of log slave housing in Virginia stated that “the chinks between the logs or boards are filled, entirely or partly, with moss or clay; the chimneys are formed of small sticks and covered with mud” (Sears 1847:488). Other quotes suggest the materials required frequent replenishing, as noted by a former Georgia slave: “Slaves lived in log cabins what had red mud daubed in the cracks ‘twixt them, after a few rains made them shrink, that us could lay in bed and see the stars through the big holes” (Killion and Waller 1973:55).



**Figure 4.3** Mud chinking in the chimney at the Carter's Grove Quarter reconstructed duplex. Photograph by Thomas Hargrove.

Stick and mud chimneys were also common features on one and two room houses as late as the early twentieth century (Figure 4.4), and constructing and maintaining these chimneys would have required substantial amounts of clay. Historical documentation supports the interpretation of these pits as sources for clay. An 1850 issue of the *Southern Cultivator* informed planters that “Many persons, in building negro houses, in order to get clay convenient for filling the hearth and for mortar, dig a hole under the floor” (cited in Breeden 1980:121). Kimmel (1993) suggests that holes dug for extracting clay were later reshaped for use as subfloor pits.

The explanation that at least some subfloor pits were originally dug as clay pits is plausible, particularly in light of the construction methods used in African American dwellings. But, as Schroedl (1980) pointed out, it will almost certainly be impossible to prove this explanation, since refashioning clay pits into subfloor storage would have obscured any evidence of their original function. Additionally, this explanation does not hold for all cases; for example, the Kingsmill Quarter Structure One, with 20 subfloor pits, was a framed structure containing an interior brick chimney. There would have been no need for daub pits at this structure.

### *Root Cellars*

One of the most often cited functions for subfloor pits is that of root cellar (Franklin 1997; Kelso 1984). The term “root cellar” evokes memories of rows of canned vegetables and bushel baskets of earth-scented potatoes and turnips stacked in a dim corner of grandmother’s cellar. Root cellars are generally defined as underground pits created for the storage of root vegetables, such as potatoes, carrots, turnips, and other produce. In recent terminology, root cellar, or perhaps its use as a verb “root cellaring,” has come to encompass a variety of food storage methods. These techniques can include subterranean pits dug into the side of hills, small rooms set aside in unheated basements or attics, and earth-covered mounds of straw and potatoes built at the edges of gardens. Whatever their design or placement, however, to be effective root cellars have to meet conditions that allow for the successful storage of food.

The use of subterranean food storage is a cross-cultural phenomenon with a long past. Included in the cultures using food storage pits are several of the groups who populated the



**Figure 4.4** Stick and mud chimney on unidentified early twentieth-century house.

American Southeast just prior to and during the colonial period. Do documentary sources and previous archaeological excavations suggest that below-ground food storage occurred in the Virginia colonies? A number of seventeenth- through nineteenth-century sources, including garden manuals and personal reminiscences, suggest the use of such storage. Stewart (1977), Hays (1985) and DeBoer (1988) discuss Native American use of storage pits in eastern North America. A post-English contact reference came from Robert Beverley, who wrote about Native American crops in his 1705 publication *The History and Present State of Virginia*. In his discussion of potatoes, he wrote that

they are so tender, that it is very difficult to preserve them in the Winter; for the least Frost coming at them, rots and destroys them; and therefore People bury em under Ground, near the Fire-Hearth, all the Winter, until the Time comes, that their Seedings are to be set. (Beverley 1947 [1705]:145).

Historical English references to root cellars are given in Reynolds (1977) and Fowler (1983). Gardening manuals written in Great Britain and in the American colonies advocated storing vegetables underground (Miller 1733; Worlidge 1675). Most of these volumes refer, however, to subterranean trenches dug in the garden, similar to examples discussed by two eighteenth-century Virginia gardeners, John Randolph (1924) and Joseph Prentis (Webb-Prentis Papers n.d.). Harvested vegetables were placed in trenches and covered with horse dung, followed by either sawdust or straw. Prentis's specific advice for over-wintering cauliflower read

dig a trench eighteen Inches Wide and of a sufficient depth, put in Rotten Dung, then lay your Plants with their Heads to the Sun. Cover them with Mould up to their Leaves. Add to this a coat of Saw Dust—When apprehensive of Frost, cover them with Straw (Webb-Prentis Papers, n.d.).

A slightly later manual written by John Nicholson (1820) recommended a form of turnip storage that combined these same insulating principles with a structure. He advocated digging a turnip storage cellar underneath a building constructed for storing hay.

There are three known references to interior subfloor pits used as root cellars in homes in the American South. Interestingly, enslaved African Americans penned these

references. Frederick Douglass remembered such a feature in an 1830s Maryland context:

The old cabin, with...its clay floor downstairs, and its dirt chimney...and that most curious piece of workmanship dug in front of the fireplace, beneath which grandmammy placed the sweet potatoes to keep them from the frost, was MY HOME (Douglass 1855: 34).

Additionally, as a young child in Virginia in the years directly preceding Emancipation, Booker T. Washington lived with his mother in the plantation kitchen. He remembered that

there was no wooden floor in our cabin, the naked earth being used as a floor. In the centre of the earthen floor there was a large, deep opening covered with boards, which was used as a place to store sweet potatoes during the winter (Washington 1965 [1901]:2).

William Henry Singleton, enslaved near New Bern, in eastern North Carolina, spent three years in the early 1850s hiding in a root cellar underneath the floor of his mother's house. He explained that "it was not exactly a cellar, but a hole dug to keep potatoes and things out of the way" (Singleton 1999:39).

One of Thomas Jefferson's African American gardeners apparently used subfloor pits as temporary storage for foodstuffs purloined from Jefferson's garden. The white plantation gardener complained that

the very moment your back is turned from the place Nace takes every thing out of the garden and carries them to his cabin and burys them in the ground and says they are for the use of the house... The people tells me that he makes market of them (quoted in Heath 1994:40).

How plausible is the root cellar explanation for subfloor pit construction on African American sites? In the following pages, three types of evidence are considered to answer this question. The ethnohistoric and archaeological evidence of slave diet and food production is considered in greater depth to determine the range of foods eaten by slaves. This evidence is followed by a discussion of whether subterranean pits would

have been an effective form of food storage. Lastly, paleobotanical evidence of plants from pits on other Virginia sites is considered.

### Virginia Slave Foodways

The quote about Jefferson's gardener demonstrates that this enslaved individual was using the subfloor pit as an area for short-term food storage, albeit of stolen goods meant for resale. The other quotes about underground food storage were specifically about the long-term storage of sweet potatoes. Was underground storage particularly suited to sweet potatoes? What other types of foods were commonly found in slave diets and were they suited to similar storage conditions? Research suggests that the enslaved were acquiring their plant foods in several primary ways: through planter provisioning, by cultivation of small garden patches at the quarters, through gathering wild foods, and through trade or purchase at markets or country stores (Heath 1997; Martin 1997; Moore 1989). What were the foods in each of these instances and was long-term storage in a root cellar an appropriate method of preserving them?

The variety of foods provisioned to the enslaved by Virginia planters was actually quite limited and appeared to consist mainly of cornmeal and small quantities of meat. Fairly typical was Thomas Jefferson's weekly provisioning for each adult slave at Monticello: a peck of cornmeal, a pound of beef or pork, a gill of molasses, and four salt herring (Kelso 1986:32). Other planters only provided meat on special occasions or during slaughtering times. Individuals on Joseph Ball's plantation were provided with meat when ill and older animals were sometimes killed and distributed to the enslaved (Ball Letterbook). Sometimes planters provisioned vegetables, including sweet potatoes, peas, pumpkins, and turnips (Hilliard 1972:60). Corn, described by naturalist Mark Catesby as "the properest food for Negro slaves," was a provisioning mainstay in Virginia (as cited in Moore 1989:72; Walsh 1997:101). Quantities of provisioned cornmeal varied; one planter provided one peck (14 pounds) of corn weekly for adult laborers working a full share, while all others received one-quarter peck (Carter Account Book 1791). This grain could be cooked in a number of ways, although cornbread, hominy, and mush were undoubtedly the most common means of preparation (Hilliard 1972).

Plantation account books and travelers' journals tell us that people enslaved in Virginia had personal gardens. In 1774, Philip Fithian noted the enslaved "digging up their small Lots of



ground ... for Potatoes, peas &c.” and Jefferson wrote of the enslaved at Monticello growing sweet potatoes (Fithian 1943:128). Isaac Weld, travelling through the Northern Neck of Virginia in the 1790s, also remarked on the gardens and poultry yards found adjoining the quarters (Weld 1799:85). Archaeological excavations around quarters where the enslaved lived have also provided spatial and ethnobotanical evidence of those gardens. The mid-eighteenth-century component of the Utopia Quarter (44JC32) included a ditch feature that suggested the presence of a similar enclosure and the charred seeds from plants that may have been grown there: beans and corn, as well as peach pits and walnut shells (Fesler, personal communication, 1997). Hugh Jones wrote in 1724, that Virginia slaves ate pork, Indian corn, white and red (sweet) potatoes, as well as “roots and pulse [peas and beans]” (Jones 1724 [1956]:78).

At the late eighteenth-century quarter at Carter’s Grove Plantation, there were traces of small fenced enclosures adjacent to the houses, where chickens were kept or gardens planted (Samford 1996a). At Williamsburg’s Rich Neck quarter, ethnobotanical analysis provided indirect evidence of gardens at the quarter (Franklin 1997). Sixteen different types of charred seeds, including cowpeas, squash, lima beans, and melons were found in the household refuse filling the sub-floor pits in the quarter (Mrozowski and Driscoll 1997). These species are all plants that could have easily been grown in small gardens. Monticello’s Mulberry Row assemblages included seeds from melon, beans, peach, and chestnut. Other Virginia excavations have yielded evidence of wheat, sunflower, pumpkin, persimmon, watermelon, beans, peaches, cherry, huckleberry, corn, and peas (Parker and Hernigle 1990; Pogue and White 1991; Raymer 1996). Wild plant components of slave diets were generally small, but traces of walnuts, grapes, blackberries and hickory nuts have been found (Table 4.6).

### Would Virginia Subfloor Pits Have Served Effectively as Root Cellars?

The diversity of plant species represented archaeologically on slave sites and in the documents contradicts the notion that slave diets were as restricted and monotonous as previously believed, but were these plants the types that could be successfully stored in subterranean pits? A small body of modern literature (Bacon 1991; Bubel and Bubel 1979; Morgan 1996; Z. Thomas 1995) on the construction and maintenance of root cellars was invaluable in this regard. Given their recommendations, does physical evidence from the pits themselves suggest that these features were used for food storage?

**Table 4.6. Plant Taxa Recovered from Selected Virginia Sites\***

Common Name	Botanical Name	Sites				
		Rich Neck	Poplar Forest	Mulberry Row	Mount Vernon	Portici
<b>Vegetables</b>						
Cowpeas	<i>Vigna sinensis</i>	X				
Bean	<i>Vigna</i> sp.	X				
Lima Bean	<i>Phaseolus limensis</i>	X			X	
Bean	<i>Phaseolus</i> ss.		X	X		
Squash	<i>Cucurbita pepo</i>	X				
Peas					X	
<b>Grains</b>						
Barley	<i>Zea mays</i>	X				
Corn	<i>Zea mays</i>		X		X	
Millet	<i>Setaria italica</i>		X			
Rye	<i>Secale</i> sp.	X				
Wheat	<i>Triticum</i> sp.	X	X			
<b>Fruit</b>						
Blackberry/ Raspberry	<i>Rubus</i> sp.	X	X			
Cherry	<i>Prunus</i> sp.	X	X		X	
Huckleberry	<i>Gaylussacia</i> sp.		X			
Grape	<i>Vitis</i> sp.		X			
Melon		X		X		
Peach	<i>Prunus persica</i>		X	X	X	X
Persimmon	<i>Diospyrus virginiana</i>		X			
<b>Nut/Ornamental</b>						
Acorn	<i>Quercus</i> sp.	X				
Black Walnut	<i>Juglans nigra</i>	X	X		X	
Chestnut				X		
Hickory	<i>Carya</i> sp.		X			
Peanut	<i>Arachis</i>	X	X			
Pecan					X	
<b>Bedding Material</b>						
Bedstraw	<i>Galium</i> sp.	X	X			
Sedge	<i>Carex</i> sp.	X				
<b>Other</b>						
Honey Locust	<i>Gleditsia tricanthos</i>	X				
Sunflower	<i>Helianthus</i> sp.		X			
<b>Edible Weeds</b>						
Goosefoot	<i>Chenopodium</i> sp.		X			
Pokeweed	<i>Phytolacca americana</i>		X			
Smartweed	<i>Polygonum</i> sp.		X			

\*Plant evidence from charred seeds. Citations for Rich Neck are Mrozowski and Driscoll (1997), Raymer (1996) for Poplar Forest, Pogue and White (1991) for Mount Vernon, artifact inventories on file at Monticello for Mulberry Row, and Parker and Hernigle (1990) for Portici.

Temperature and humidity ranges are the most critical variables in determining the success of a root cellar. The figures cited in the upcoming paragraphs are optimal temperature and humidity ranges based on modern root cellaring manuals and not evidence of actual vernacular practice. These figures are used in conjunction with the storage requirements of different vegetables in order to make hypotheses about food storage in eighteenth-century Virginia. Because of the necessity of storing food, even cellars that did not reach these high standards would have served better than not having them at all.

Cold temperatures decrease the rates of metabolism in the fruits and vegetables, slowing decomposition, while high humidity prevents shriveling of the stored food (Bubel and Bubel 1979; Z. Thomas 1995:4). A humidity level ranging between 60% and 75% must be maintained (Bacon 1991:57). Higher levels of moisture cause condensation to form on the cellar walls and the produce, promoting spoilage. Elevated temperatures, coupled with high humidity rates encourage the growth of mold and fungus. Humidity levels can be manipulated in a number of ways: setting pans of water inside the cellars or packing vegetables in moist sawdust or peat moss can raise the humidity in a dry cellar (Bacon 1991:58; Bubel and Bubel 1979; Morgan 1996). A bare earth floor and gaps in the boards that form the walls and ceilings of some cellars can also assist in maintaining proper humidity levels (Bacon 1991:58; Bubel and Bubel 1979:138).

Temperature ranges for root cellars are also very specific; in order to preserve food successfully, a temperature range of 32-40° F must be maintained (Bacon 1991:57). Proper placement and construction methods can help assure that temperature levels remain constant. Placing the cellar out of direct sunlight is critical, and one way to achieve this condition is by building the cellar on the north side of a hill. Additionally, the deeper the hole excavated, the more stable the temperature will be. A cellar set at a depth of ten feet usually provides complete temperature stability (Bubel and Bubel 1979).

Different varieties of vegetables require slightly different combinations of temperature and humidity for successful storage. For example, white potatoes, turnips, beets, parsnips, radishes, collards, and leeks stay fresh longer under cold (32-40° F) and very moist (90-95% humidity) conditions (Bubel and Bubel 1979:138). Apples, pears, cabbages and cauliflowers prefer slightly less humidity, while pumpkins, sweet potatoes, green tomatoes and winter squash

like relatively dry (60-70% humidity) and warm (50-60° F) conditions (Bubel and Bubel 1979:4; Z. Thomas 1995:44).

To be successful, the interiors of root cellars need to maintain very restricted ranges of temperature and humidity. Optimally, the vegetables to be stored should be harvested during a cold spell, with initial packing of the pit occurring after nighttime temperatures are consistently cold (Bubel and Bubel 1979:37). Although controlled experiments that monitor temperature and humidity levels in subfloor pits have yet to be done, the experiences of modern gardeners suggest that the southeastern states may not be the best geographical locale for underground food storage (Bubel and Bubel 1979). Studies of climate in colonial Virginia suggest solid parallels between current and eighteenth-century temperature and precipitation levels (Linebaugh 1994). Given this finding, it is unlikely that optimal storage conditions could have been met with a subterranean pit. The temperature range in Virginia is erratic, particularly in the early winter. With highs topping the 60°F range and lows sometimes falling into the single digits, it would be difficult to maintain the limited range of temperatures necessary for a truly successful food storage area. Since none of the cellars found on enslaved sites extended beyond a depth of 3.9 ft., it is unlikely that temperature stability could have been maintained.<sup>3</sup>

Other variables affect the success of a root cellar. Fruits and vegetables give off gases that are conducive to sprouting or spoiling, so gas levels need to be kept low through the use of vents and other means to assure adequate ventilation (Bubel and Bubel 1979:151; Morgan 1996:1). Keeping temperatures below 45° F will discourage the release of ethylene gas. Virginia subfloor pits show no evidence of any venting systems, but it is possible that boards covering the pit openings would have provided adequate spaces for ventilation. Since light encourages sprouting (which deprives vegetables of vitamins), an important factor is keeping light from entering the cellar, achieved by situating the cellar in a shaded location, and through adequate doors and coverings (Bacon 1991:58; Bubel and Bubel 1979). Virginia pits were located under structures, which would have kept them out of direct sunlight.

Just as critical as the proper planning and construction of a cellar is the way that fruits and vegetables are stored. Only vegetables in perfect or near perfect condition should be placed in the cellar, since bruised vegetables encourage spoilage (Bacon 1991:59). Vegetables should

---

<sup>3</sup> Even with adding a 1.5 ft. plowzone to this depth, the pits would have extended no more than 5.5' below ground surface, still far short of a depth that would maintain a stable temperature within the pit.

be packed in moss, sawdust, wood shavings, or damp sand, and checked regularly for signs of spoilage (Bacon 1991:4; Bubel and Bubel 1979:151). One source recommends laying a 2-3" base of dry sand in the bottom of the cellar, on top of which the vegetables are placed. The vegetable layer should be no more than one foot thick, and should be followed with a layer of sand, then leaves and finished off with more soil (Bubel and Bubel 1979:127-128). Some Virginia subfloor pits contain layers of sand that could have been used as packing material, but the limited amounts of paleobotanical analysis conducted on subfloor pit deposits thus far showed no evidence of organic packing materials.<sup>4</sup>

The limited documentary evidence available from early nineteenth-century Virginia suggests that sweet potatoes were the primary food stored in hearth-front pits. To be stored successfully, sweet potatoes require conditions with higher temperatures and less humidity than most vegetables. Current literature on root cellar construction suggests that a depth of ten feet is required for the complete temperature stability needed for optimal storage conditions, a depth that pits on Virginia sites do not even begin to approach. If, however, radiant heat rather than temperature stability was needed to protect stored food from frost damage, then a hearth-front location should be a "prime" or favored spot. A hearth-front pit, which may have received some of the ambient heat from the fire, would have been more suited for sweet potato storage than other vegetables such as white potatoes, turnips, or apples, which require cooler temperatures and more humidity. Quantitative analysis in the first sections of this chapter revealed that hearth-front pits were on average half a foot deeper than corner pits and marginally (.1 ft.) deeper than pits along walls or in the middle of the room. Perhaps the greater pit depths are related to the storage requirements of the produce. The need for adequate storage space might be a consideration, or the depth may be temperature-related.

What was obvious, however, was the continued need for food storage throughout the life of quarter buildings. Like the slipshod structures that stood over them, subfloor pits had a relatively short use span, as rising groundwater, burrowing rodents, and collapsed walls made it necessary for residents to replace pits frequently. If the hearth front was an optimal location for sweet potato storage, as suggested by documents, then slaves would need to

---

<sup>4</sup> A single seed from bedstraw was found on a living floor surface at the Poplar Forest Quarter outside of Lynchburg, Virginia (Raymer 1996). Historically, this plant had medicinal uses, as well as use as a bedding material. Discovery of such a seed in a subfloor pit context would suggest its use as a plant packing material.

rebuild pits in the same location throughout the time they occupied overlying structure. The evidence from the Utopia Quarters supports this hypothesis. In Structure 50, occupied between 1725 and 1750, archaeologists found five phases of pit construction, with eleven separate pits in the immediate hearth vicinity.

The sweet potato connection is interesting in light of the numbers of slaves of Igbo descent in Virginia. Chambers (1996a) argues that the use of subfloor pits in Virginia is an adaptation that can be tied to the prevalence of people of Igbo descent in Virginia. Yams (*Dioscorea rotundata*), the main staple crop in Igboland, are very similar to the American sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*).<sup>5</sup> The sweet potato is a good source of vitamins, particularly vitamin A, and other nutrients (Rombauer and Becker 1975:324) and it was adopted in Virginia and other parts of the upper South as a dietary staple by the enslaved. Subfloor pits are not found in other parts of the South where different African groups were present and sweet potatoes did not form an important part of the diet.<sup>6</sup> Other foods requiring storage conditions similar to sweet potatoes are pumpkins, winter squash, and green tomatoes. While there is documentary evidence of planters provisioning pumpkins to the enslaved (Hilliard 1972), it contains no indication the enslaved were eating winter squash or tomatoes.

#### Hearth-front Pits—Storage for Sweet Potatoes?

Based on converging lines of evidence—slave diet, food storage requirements, and slave trade demographics—combined with evidence of repairs on hearth pits, I believe that hearth-front pits were used as food storage for sweet potatoes. Does the existing body of archaeological data support this hypothesis? Archaeologists have developed a range of procedures that test for the presence of food remains in archaeological deposits. Seeds, corn kernels, and nuts can be preserved through burning or charring, and flotation of soil samples

---

<sup>5</sup> In Igboland, yams are boiled and then pounded into a stiff, doughy consistency (*foofoo*). Small balls of *foofoo* were eaten with vegetables and meat (Chambers 1996:118-119). Olaudah Equiano (1987:15) wrote of eighteenth-century Igbo foodways: “Bullocks, goats, and poultry, supply the greatest part of their food...The flesh is usually stewed in a pan; to make it savory we sometime use also pepper, and other spices...Our vegetables are mostly plaintains, eadas, yams, beans, and Indian corn”.

<sup>6</sup> The enslaved in the Carolina low country relied on rice and corn as their dietary staples (Morgan 1998:135).

can recover these visible remains.<sup>7</sup> Pollen grains, traces of starches and microscopic silica particles called phytoliths also survive in the soil under many conditions and can be retrieved through specialized recovery techniques (Bryant and Holloway 1983; Dimbleby 1985; Piperno 1988; Rovner 1983). Since phytoliths, starches, and pollen are each preserved under different soil conditions, analysis of each type of evidence will provide greater information on plant variety within a site.

Is there physical evidence of food storage in any of the subfloor pits excavated in Virginia? Table 4.6 provided a list of plant remains recovered on selected African American quarters in Virginia. While some of these remains were recovered from subfloor pits, most of this fill was secondary refuse unrelated to the primary function of the feature. Thus, it is problematic to conclude a food storage function based on this plant evidence. The recovered seeds were charred, indicating their disposal was connected with cooking or discard into the hearth fires, rather than storage. If food storage occurred in subfloor pits, however, pollen, phytoliths and starches from foods stored there should be present in soil layers created through storage activities, such as sand used to layer vegetables or fruits, or in organic layers created by the decomposition of stored produce or plant packing materials.

My analysis of hearth-front pits in Chapter 5 will focus on soil strata resting directly above pit floors. Before filling these pits with household garbage, slaves would have removed any useable food, leaving the pit emptied of its contents. Only spoiled food and packing materials would have remained in the bottom of the feature. These bottom layers are thus believed to be the most likely locations for recovering any plant remains associated with the use of these features as root cellars.

Tests performed in determining whether hearth-front pits served as root cellars included the identification of pollen, phytoliths, and starches in the soil strata. No seed analysis was performed, since seeds are generally only preserved under circumstances that do not relate to food storage. How were pits chosen for paleobotanical analysis? Since two of the study sites were excavated before the systematic retrieval of soil samples became common, pits from these

---

<sup>7</sup> Since only charred seeds generally survive in the archaeological record, the presence of charred seeds would be evidence of the use, but not the storage of pumpkins at the site. Potatoes, which are propagated from eyes located on the tuber itself, do not have seeds. Phytolith and possibly pollen analysis are more likely vehicles for determining the storage of fruits, vegetables, and grains in subfloor pits. These forms of plant remains would be deposited in the surrounding soil matrix as individual fruits or vegetables rotted.

sites could not be included.<sup>8</sup> Fortunately, however, all of the soil removed from the subfloor pits at the three Utopia Quarter periods was retained and was thus available for paleobotanical analysis. To determine which features were chosen for analysis, field notes documenting the excavation of hearth-front pits were carefully examined. Features containing thin bands of organic soil or sand along the floors of the pits were chosen as the features most likely to contain paleobotanical evidence of food storage. The soil strata tested included these lower layers, which may have been packing materials or strata created by the decomposition of plant material in the feature.

Three soil samples from two hearth-front pits at the Utopia Quarter were analyzed for these microfloral remains and that data will be presented in the following chapter.

### *Hidey Holes or Storage*

One of the few known references to slaves and subfloor pits presented earlier showed a slave gardener at Monticello hiding produce in a subfloor pit. This quote about Jefferson's gardener illustrates one strategy of slave resistance to planter control. Warren DeBoer, in his analysis of underground storage pits among eastern woodland Native Americans, concluded that this type of storage often appeared as a form of "resistance to new and potentially oppressive sociopolitical orders" (DeBoer 1988). Theft of food, alcohol, poultry, livestock, clothing, household supplies, and the like was an ever-present problem for planters, as the enslaved took supplies for their own use or to sell (Mullin 1972). Documentary and archaeological evidence from the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century South suggests that subfloor pits did sometimes serve as a place to conceal stolen goods (Kelso 1984; Perdue 1976:116;). For example, ex-slave Charles Grandy related in an early twentieth-century interview how he would hide stolen chickens under a trap door cut through the floor of the house. At Kingsmill Plantation in Virginia, one root cellar yielded several unbroken wine bottles bearing the seal of planter Carter Burwell, suggesting perhaps a hidden illicit acquisition.

Subfloor pits were not always a secret from slaveholders, however. Thomas Jefferson knew of Nace's subfloor pit and what he kept there. Virginia planter Landon Carter wrote in 1770: "This morning we had a complaint about a butter pot's being taken from the dairy

---

<sup>8</sup> There were no soil samples available from the Carter's Grove Quarter or the Kingsmill sites.



door. . . . I sent Billy Beale to search all their [i.e. slaves'] holes and boxes; and in their loft it was found, but both of them solemnly denying they knew anything of it" (Carter 1965:495). This quote suggests a variety of places where the enslaved stored or hid goods – second story lofts, either completely or partially floored, were used for storage as well as additional sleeping space. Boxes probably referred to wooden chests or trunks used either by individuals or families. Such was clearly the case in 1754, when Josiah Ball sent Aron, his enslaved personal assistant, to live on his Virginia plantation. Arriving with Aron and holding his personal belongings were an eighty-gallon barrel, a small chest, and a box. Ball took special care to instruct the plantation manager that Aron was allowed to have these containers in his new cabin (Ball Letterbook). Another eighteenth-century example, this one from Maryland, involving a description of slave goods stored in a wooden chest has been described by Sprinkle (1991). In addition to storage, such containers could have also served as seating or tables.

Landon Carter's use of the term "holes" almost certainly refers to subfloor pits. In structures with continuous brick foundations or built around earthfast posts, these pits would have been invisible from outside the structure. Slave houses may have been raised off the ground using wooden, brick, or stone piers in early nineteenth-century Virginia in part to discourage the use of subfloor pits (McKee 1992). Not only would access into the pits have been made more difficult by the raised floors, but the holes would have also been visible from the building's exterior.

Nineteenth-century ethnohistoric evidence from the Igbo culture indicates a tradition of storing valuables under the floors of houses (Yentsch 1991). During a visit to Bonny, the imperial Igbo capital, sea captain Hugh Crow described a form of storage used by the people there. In his 1830 account, he wrote that "most of the hard articles such as lead and iron bars, chests of beads, and marcelas (a kind of coin), they bury under the floors of their houses. Much valuable property is secreted in that way" (Crow 1830 [1970]:251). An architectural survey of traditional Igbo architecture done in the 1950s and 1960s showed that the storage of valuables had largely been consigned to small, strong wooden chests placed in inaccessible storerooms (Dmochowski 1990:27).

How can the use of these pits for personal storage or as hiding places be determined archaeologically? Evidence of storage would be provided by the presence of stowed items

remaining in the bottoms of the pit. These items could include any objects commonly found on quarter sites, such as pottery, bottles, agricultural tools, cutlery, button and buckles. The likelihood of finding such goods abandoned in storage units is highly improbable, however. If they were considered valuable enough to store, their owners surely would have removed these items when a quarter was moved or abandoned. Exceptions might occur under unusual circumstances, such as if the overlying structure had been destroyed by fire. If residents had no time to remove belongings before the building was consumed by flame, these objects would remain to be retrieved by archaeologists centuries later.

Thus, the very nature of using a subfloor pit for personal storage of household goods or clothing hinders the ability of archaeologists to definitively assign this function in most instances. It should be possible, however, to detect those uncommon instances where stored goods remained intact in pits. During careful excavations, it is often possible for archaeologists to identify groups of objects left *in-situ*. These items, in this case resting on the floors of features, comprise evidence of what archaeologists term *de facto* deposition. *De facto* refuse consists of “the tools, facilities, structures, and other cultural materials that, although still usable (or reusable), are left behind when an activity area is abandoned” (Schiffer 1987:89).

Archaeologists attempting to find evidence of storage would need to look for assemblages that contained complete or useable items resting on or near the floors of the pits. On some of the study sites, the quality of the field notes prevented determining the presence of these caches from notes alone. An analytical tool using artifact size and completeness to locate *de facto* deposits within the pits was thus devised. Before going into further explanation of this analysis, however, it is necessary to consider the final proposed use for subfloor pits as West African-based shrines. Since isolating shrines also involved pinpointing caches of objects, the analytical tool was also critical in these instances.

The final hypothesized function for subfloor pits has its basis in the Igbo and other cultures whose members were enslaved in the Virginia colony. This explanation is derived from strongly-held spiritual beliefs and practices that slaves transformed into altered, but still recognizably African, forms.

## *Shrines*

“Our daughters are headed for a World they call *New*. And we, their ancestor mothers, are alive in their blood. They are not alone, the ones who cross over. They take us along” – Sandra Jackson-Opoku (1997:2).

The men, women, and children arriving in the Virginia colony in the eighteenth century had been uprooted from, but not deprived of, their birthright cultures. Beliefs about individual worth, the importance of kinship, family, gender and age-related roles, and spirituality traveled with them across the Atlantic and helped Africans forge new lives for themselves under the new and trying circumstances in which they found themselves. Particularly critical in guiding their actions would have been spiritual beliefs, especially sacred beliefs that fostered kinship ties.

Based on a combination of archaeological evidence and scholarship on West African spirituality, I believe that some of the subfloor pits found in Virginia slave quarters functioned as West African-based personal and ancestor shrines. Some of the pits contained unbroken or nearly complete items, such as bottles, ceramic vessels, and agricultural tools, resting on their floors. Why would these items have been left behind? At a time when even wealthy planters reused bottles, surely individuals with more limited access to consumer goods would not have left these still functional objects there by accident. Is it not possible that the objects found on the floors of some pits were actually ritual objects left intentionally by the persons who placed them there as shrine goods?

Shrines are important household components in many West African societies, where they serve as places where the living negotiate daily with the spirits of the deceased ancestors for guidance and benevolence (Ndubuike 1994:75; Offiong 1991:11; Parrinder 1954:24; Uchendu 1976:283). Ancestor veneration is one of the ways West Africans used ritual performance to gain control over aspects of their lives. In the following pages, I briefly discuss the importance of such shrines in West African, and more specifically Igbo, cultures. Ethnographic, archaeological, and historical sources were consulted for information on how these shrines were used and what types of material objects would be included in them. This information was then used to formulate questions for testing whether subfloor pits were used as shrines in Virginia. The results of this testing and analysis are provided in Chapter 5, and

the implications of these results for slave culture and identity in Virginia are discussed in Chapter 7.

This study defines religion as a cultural institution of beliefs and practices that allows groups and individuals to understand and contend with life's experiences and uncertainties. Religion encompasses emotional, expressive, cognitive, and symbolic dimensions, and generally involves interaction between humans and supernatural entities. In order to examine how specific African spiritual traditions were transformed on Virginia's plantations, it was necessary to determine the religious beliefs of the cultures whose members were enslaved there. Given the prevalence of Igbo-descent peoples in Virginia, I focused on Igbo spiritual traditions, but embedded them within a larger corpus of spiritual beliefs common to West Africa as a whole. Because of these overarching similarities, I argue that enslaved individuals from many West African cultures could have developed spiritual practices that were recognizable to other West Africans.

Scholars of West African traditional religions assert that the key to understanding West African world view lies in spiritual beliefs, which provide their followers structured approaches to balanced, purposeful, and successful living (Oramaisonwu 1994:56; Quarcoopome 1987:10). Many West Africans and their descendants enslaved in Virginia brought with them these rich traditions of spiritual beliefs, which shared enough basic elements to allow the formation of beliefs and practices that were recognizably African (Mintz and Price 1992:9, 45; Parrinder 1954:11; Quarcoopome 1987). These elements included belief in a sovereign creator and ruler of the universe, belief in divinities and ancestors who acted as intermediaries between humans and God, and reliance on practices of magic and medicine to influence events and people (Quarcoopome 1987:12, 40-43).

West Africans generally view religion as an instrument for facing the anxieties and uncertainties of life and as a means to attain important goals (Offiong 1991:18; Uchendu 1976:188). West African cultures also share a holistic world view, in which there is no distinct separation between the sacred and the secular or the world of the living and that of the dead. Emphasis is placed on the unity and interrelationships among all aspects of the world. European concepts that stress individualism and self-sufficiency are alien in West African philosophy; each person's identity is instead linked intrinsically with that of the community, and in the social and historical contexts within which he or she and the

community are embedded. Deceased ancestors are believed to play a critical and active role in the lives of those on earth and in the ongoing life of the community.

Belief in ancestors, as well as other spirit forces and deities, is particularly prevalent among small-scale stateless African societies, where political and social controls are descent-based (Ray 1976:140). The Igbo and Ibibio, among the groups enslaved in Virginia, were stateless societies during the period of the Atlantic slave trade. In such societies, ancestors remain one of the most powerful spiritual forces, generally acting as intermediaries balancing relations between the living and the higher deities (Fiawoo 1976:263; Ndubuike 1994:75; Offiong 1991:11; Parrinder 1954:24; Ray 1976:140; Uchendu 1976:284). Olaudah Equiano's narrative of eighteenth-century Igbo life attests to the importance of ancestor spirits: "those spirits ... such as their dear friends and relations, they believe always attend them, and guard them from the bad spirits, or their foes" (Equiano 1987:19). Equiano, when first taken aboard the slaving vessel, believed that his English captors were *mo ndjo*, or evil spirits who meant him great harm (Equiano 1987:33).

Ancestral blessings can help assure individual health and achievements, as well as community well-being and agricultural plenty (Bockie 1993:18). Although honoring the spirits of the founding fathers, the living are not passive recipients of their benevolence or wrath; instead, they are actively engaged in strategic negotiations to enhance their own well-being. In cultures where ancestors are honored, continual contact is maintained through the construction of shrines and activities centered on these sacred places (McCall 1995; Offiong 1991:8; Thompson 1993a, 1993b). Shrines—places where people can commemorate or commune with ancestral spirits and deities—include a vast repertoire of living and non-living articles, such as sacred medicine packets, trees, waterfalls, and bonfires.

Shrines can be subsumed under a more general category of Igbo spiritual items and practices (*ju-ju*) consisting of medicines<sup>9</sup> or spiritual powers used for petitioning the spirits (*a-juju*). These practices also include the creation of personal ritual objects like *ikenga*, *ofo*, and community shrines like *mbari*. There are public forms of *juju*, largely associated with male power, as well as private acts connected with an individual's personal cult. *Juju* objects are imbued with sacred power (Chambers 1996:99).

---

<sup>9</sup> Medicine (*ogwu*) can be defined as "useful things charged with powers which man can exploit" (Arinze 1970:21).

Shrines are critical as visible and tangible places upon which to place a gift made to an invisible and intangible deity (Awolalu 1979:117; Nubuike 1994:108; Onwuejeogwu 1981:39). Ancestor-honoring activities include offering food and animals and pouring libations of palm wine or other liquids on the ground to ease communication with the founding fathers (Bockie 1993:19; Leonard 1906:434; Okehie-Offoha 1996:64; Parrinder 1954:57; Quarcoopome 1987:85-86). Eighteenth-century Igbo “always before eating...put some small portions of the meat, and pour some of the drink, on the ground for them” (Equiano 1987:19). This practice continued into the twentieth century, with Major Arthur Leonard, a colonial administrator, observing:

It is customary, as a mark of esteem, gratitude, and fear to their ancestors, but especially to the protector and daily giver of food, to offer up a short prayer or petition, in addition to a certain amount of food and libations of water or liquor, in accordance with what they may happen to be drinking at the time (Leonard 1906:434).

The breaking of kola nuts and the drinking of wine are prerequisite for any critical conversation between the living and the ancestors (Chika Okeke, personal communication 1998). Prayers are offered to the ancestors every morning, with a sacrifice made every four days<sup>10</sup> (Metuh 1985:155). Uchendu (1965:102) states that no elaborate sacrifices are made to the ancestors—just portions of food eaten in the home, and some wine and water were considered sufficient. Neglect of a shrine would have negative consequences on an individual’s life (Campbell, personal communication, 1998).

Modern-day shrines and archaeological findings suggest which objects were spiritually significant in Igbo culture. Archaeological examples of spiritual objects recovered from a ninth-century A.D. burial vault included iron tools, copper and bronze jewelry, pottery, beads, waterworn pebbles, shell, and ferruginous stone (Onwuejeogwu 1981:57; Shaw 1978). Excavations at Igbo-Isiah revealed a complete shrine group dated around a thousand years ago (Figure 4.5). The objects on this shrine had been arranged on a low rectangular platform or on the ground, probably enclosed or covered with a light structure (Shaw 1970:236). The shrines goods, which included earthenware pottery, bowls, pots, and

---

<sup>10</sup> There are four days in an Igbo week.

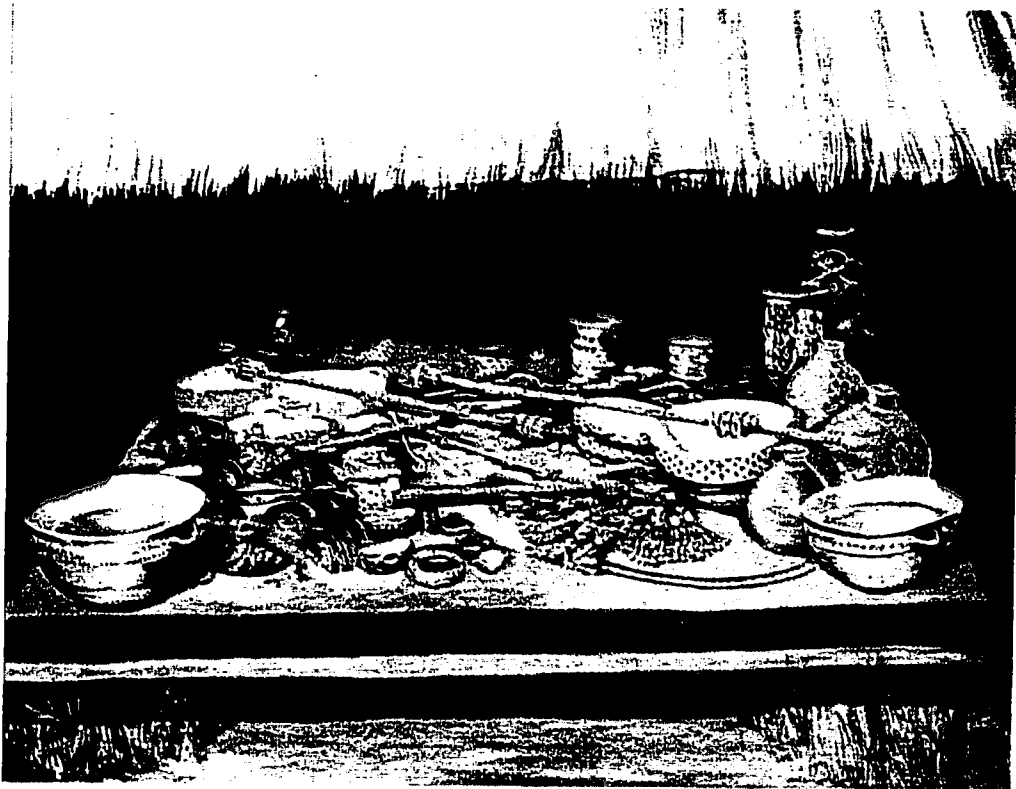


Figure 4.5 Artist's reconstruction of a shrine grouping from Igbo-Isiah. From Shaw 1977.

shells cast in bronze, beads, and iron knives, had been left untouched by vandals, perhaps because they were too powerful and dangerous to risk the consequences of theft (Shaw 1970:264). This example and another shrine at Igbo Richard are important because they provide not only time depth to the study of Igbo shrines, but are evidence for the arrangement of goods on shrines, as well as what objects were considered important. Similarly decorated bronze items were recovered from a fifteenth-century archaeological context, demonstrating continuity of iconographic motifs over the centuries (Hartle 1967).

Some of the items included on shrines were accorded great value in later periods. In 1700, an English merchant wrote that iron and copper bars were the preferred commodity at Old and New Calabar and at Bonny (in Chambers 1996a:275). Visitors to New Calabar in 1699 noted that residents there used idols and ritual objects called *juju* to which they offered sacrifices (Barbot 1699:462). These objects were located both in their homes and on public view along the streets. Visitors in the 1840s noted that many of the outdoor sacred objects had offerings of water and food placed near them, as well as European plates, bottles, cowrie shells and copper or iron ingots called *manillas* (Allen 1848:242). In the 1850s, a missionary noted sacred objects assembled along a roadway by a woman (Taylor 1859 [1968]:338-339). These items included a flat calabash containing an earthenware pot and a sacred wooden stick called an *ofò*, a round calabash with an earthenware pot decorated with pebbles and white clay, a long stone marked with chalk, and a pottery vessel containing feathers, pebbles, eggshells, soil, and other items.

Ethnographers working among the Igbo at the turn of the century noted that rounded pebbles, earthenware pots, cones of chalk or kaolin, and pieces of wood were commonly used as sacred objects (Talbot 1969 [1926]:20-21). Colonial administrators writing about the Igbo and Ibibio in early twentieth-century Nigeria (Talbot 1969 [1926]:20-21, 1967:10) and current ethnographies (McCall 1995:260; Ndubuike 1994:4) stress the importance of pottery: its placement on shrines, use in rituals, and burial in graves. Modern-day Igbo ancestral shrine goods include carved wooden figures, metal or wooden dumbbell shaped objects called *okponsi*, and hollow vessels containing various objects, such as chalk, pierced coins, and kola nuts (Onwuejeogwu 1981:50). Metuh's (1985:14) list of items kept as part of the ancestral shrine (*Irummo*) in the reception hut (*Obi*) of each household closely parallels the



previous one. These objects include wooden ritual objects called *ikenga* (a personal spirit), and *ofo* (symbol of an individual's *chi*), as well as food offerings on a wooden platter.

### Subfloor Pits as Shrines

Since I believe that subfloor pits most likely served a multitude of functions, with functions possibly suggested by physical characteristics of the features, it may also be possible to predict which features might have served as shrines. Slightly problematic was resolving the question of whether pit items were used as shrine goods or simply represented items stored in the cellar for daily purposes. I make the assumption that complete and useable objects would not have been forgotten or intentionally discarded by the enslaved. Very few descriptions of the interiors of slave houses are known, but those examples document the sparseness of material possessions. A visitor to a late eighteenth-century quarter at Mount Vernon described its rudimentary furnishings as such:

We entered one of the huts of the Blacks ... They are more miserable than the most miserable of the cottages of our peasants. The husband and wife sleep on a mean pallet, the children on the ground; a very bad fireplace, [and] some utensils for cooking (Niemcewicz 1965:100).

Given the historical evidence about the meager material conditions of eighteenth-century slave life in Virginia, it seems unlikely that complete bottles, ceramic dishes, scissors, agricultural tools, and the like would be left behind when quarters were moved or torn down. A more likely explanation is that these items were shrine goods, sacred to an individual or family.

How do I recognize these spiritual expressions on Virginia archaeological sites? To increase the likelihood of recognizing material expressions of slave spirituality, this research was grounded in the interpretation of contextual meanings (Beaudry et al. 1991; Hodder 1986, 1987; Marcus and Fischer 1986). Adherents of this approach believe it possible to make relevant cultural connections across time and space using contextual analysis. I created a contextual framework within which to analyze Virginia archaeological and historical data using ethnohistoric, archaeological, and ethnographic data from Igboland. Particularly important were data on Igbo shrines and the range of religious practices associated with their

use. Archaeologists of necessity deal with material culture; in this research I infer the symbolic meanings of artifact assemblages by examining them contextually, both within a system of colonialism and power, but also from within the historical context of pre-colonial to post-colonial Igboland. While Igbo culture has undergone enormous changes over the centuries, there is evidence of long-term continuities in core beliefs visible archaeologically in ritual iconography (Ray 1987).

This approach has been used the most successfully by archaeologists studying the spiritual traditions of enslaved peoples. In the late 1980s, archaeologists digging within a structure of a former slave quarter at Jordan Plantation in Texas discovered a group of artifacts left in one corner of the building after its occupants had been abruptly evicted and kept from returning to collect their belongings (Brown and Cooper 1990). Unremarkable as single objects, the seashells, beads, doll parts, chalk, bird skulls, bottles, and bases of cast iron cooking pots gain significance when analyzed contextually as related items from a slave quarter. Ethnographic and historical evidence shows that these artifacts, virtually identical to those used by modern-day Yoruba diviners for healing and other rituals, were components in a West African-style conjurer's kit (Brown and Cooper 1990; Thompson 1983).

The Jordan Plantation discovery is important in several respects. There, in an abandoned quarter, were the tangible expressions of a West African spiritual tradition, surviving under the harsh conditions of bound labor. While archaeologists and other scholars have written of the difficulty in recovering ideas and beliefs from material remains, this discovery demonstrates that objects, viewed contextually, can shed light on those intangible aspects of culture. These objects had been used in culturally significant actions.

Like the storage area function proposed in the previous section, using subfloor pits as shrines would have also involved creating pit caches. In these cases, items in the caches would be of a spiritual, rather than a functional, nature. This study assumes that pit caches are either stored or shrine goods and that they constitute *de facto* deposits.

In the next stages of research, I was faced with a two-stage process of analysis. First, I needed to identify and isolate caches within subfloor pits, particularly when caches were not recognized and noted in the field. Once caches were isolated, how then was I to separate spiritual from non-spiritual caches? In the following pages, I first examine how the presence of caches was determined. Utopia, Kingsmill and Carter's Grove Quarters pit artifacts were

analyzed, and the presence of caches in these features noted. These determinations were made using a combination of pit assemblage artifact size and completeness, coupled with close examination of excavation field notes.<sup>11</sup> After the caches are isolated, only detailed analysis of the objects in context allowed the separation from one another of spiritual and non-spiritual caches.

To construct ways to test for the presence of shrine or stored goods I operated with the following assumptions:

First, I suspect that most of the subfloor pits were filled when the overlying structures were moved to another location or destroyed. Thus, the pits were most likely filled with debris largely unrelated to the feature function. Architectural debris from a building's destruction, such as nails and brick fragments, can be considered primary refuse; that is, debris that was deposited at the location of its use (Schiffer 1987:18). Other soil layers containing fragmented debris from daily life, such as pottery and food bone, were probably created by the deposition of organic matter and trash swept up from the yards or floors of the quarters. This discard of debris in a place away from the place of use defines it as secondary, or casual, refuse (Kirkby & Kirkby 1976; McPherron 1967; Schiffer 1987; Wise 1976). If these assumptions are indeed accurate, then the original functions of most of the pits will be obscured because they were emptied out before last being used as places for the disposal of secondary household refuse.

As stated in the previous section, shrine objects or stored goods could probably best be characterized as what Schiffer defines *de facto* refuse. To recap, this type of deposition consists of useable materials "left behind when an activity area is abandoned" (Schiffer 1987:89). Archaeologists have demonstrated that artifacts display distinct size differences in accordance with the type of deposit with which they are associated (Schiffer 1983:679) and the human and natural processes that have affected them since their deposition (McPherron 1967; Schiffer 1987). Secondary refuse, such as yard scatter, has generally been trampled

---

<sup>11</sup> The quality of the field notes from the Utopia projects was consistently high. Numerous maps and photographs and descriptive field notes allowed me to isolate caches in several instances. The assessment of these artifacts as caches was also double-checked using the quantitative analysis performed on the other subfloor pit assemblages. At Carter's Grove Quarter, the field notes were completely missing. An overall site plan with several pit profiles existed, and the stratigraphy of the other pits was reconstructed using information on the soil strata included on the artifact bag labels. The Kingsmill Quarter site notes were marginally better than the Carter's Grove site notes, but did not allow me to easily make determinations of caches.

and broken into smaller fragments than objects that have been discarded directly into a trash pit. Based on the assumptions made in the previous paragraph, I believed that the artifacts from most of the pits' soil strata would be characterized by attributes that marked them as secondary fill. These attributes include: a) small, highly fragmented pieces of pottery and glass; b) small percentages of mending ceramic and glass fragments within and between subfloor pits; and c) small percentages of reconstructable ceramic and glass vessels. Of course, the final size of trampled yard refuse glass and ceramics will be affected by any number of factors beyond the scope of analysis in this study. Thicker-bodied earthenwares and stonewares are less likely to be broken than thin-bodied delicate pottery, such as porcelain or white salt glazed stonewares. In general, however, I hypothesize that deposits of secondary refuse will measure less than 1.5" in diameter and be less than 10 percent complete. To test whether pit artifacts displayed attributes typical of secondary refuse, I examined several factors: the overall size of several types of easily breakable artifacts (ceramics, earthenware tobacco pipes, glass, bone, and shell) from each assemblage, and the presence of mendable ceramic and glass fragments.

Furthermore, I assumed that items left as shrine goods or as evidence of storage would look substantially different from items discarded as secondary refuse. I believed that cached goods were more likely to be complete or virtually complete objects and that they would be found either resting directly on the floors of the pits, or within layers directly overlying pit floors. I hypothesized that the soil layers directly above the pit floors were more likely to contain larger and more complete objects associated with the primary use of the pit, rather than trash discarded as secondary refuse.<sup>12</sup> For the purposes of this study, any item that was greater than 75% intact was defined as a complete object. If artifacts were distributed randomly throughout a pit, then it is probable that upper soil layers and floor layers will contain the same proportions of complete versus incomplete objects. Concentrations of complete objects should delineate *de facto* deposited caches that can provide clues to pit function.

Thus, to determine the processes affecting the deposition of pit fill, I examined artifact assemblages from the subfloor pits in several ways. Artifacts were examined within

---

<sup>12</sup> Some of these overlying layers may be fill containing secondary refuse that was thrown on top of shrine groupings; in some cases, the actual shrine objects would be incorporated into the secondary refuse layer (which would have surrounded and encompassed the shrine goods).

distinct soil strata and overall dimensions of each artifact were used to assign each item to a size category based on .75 inch intervals. Data were also recorded on the relative completeness of each object (for more detail, see Chapter One, Methods).

All pits were examined and compared as a group and those examples with the highest percentages of complete items were considered as containing *de facto* deposits. They then underwent additional analysis to determine if the cached items were spiritual in nature. In order to make this determination, an interpretive analysis, by which the symbolic meanings of artifacts are recovered through careful analysis of historical and cultural contexts, was used here. To show how objects found in subfloor pits were shrine groupings required an approach that views material culture within the context of West African spiritual practices. Examining the various forms of evidence for shrine goods highlighted several key points.

First, it is clear that Igbo peoples, after initial contact with Europeans, incorporated European manufactured items into their corpus of shrine goods. This evidence is important for this study in several ways. The functional objects of daily Virginia life, used in plantation and household work and recreation, may have already acquired spiritual connotations for Igbo peoples and other Africans long before they arrived in Virginia, and would thus have been easily incorporated into spiritual practices there. Tobacco pipes and trade goods such as hoes and mirrors are good examples. The enslaved could also be expected to introduce additional formerly non-spiritual items into service as sacred objects (Orser 1994). Given this fact, how then does one distinguish the non-spiritual, manufactured uses of these objects, such as bottles and iron tools, from any spiritual significance they might have acquired? This question becomes particularly important when trying to distinguish spiritual caches from items that had merely been stored or hidden in a subfloor pit.

While ethnohistoric and documentary evidence suggests a basic corpus of shrine goods (bottles, iron tools, copper items, pottery, wooden objects, polished stones, chalk, etc.), there are degrees of individual freedom in the assemblages of objects. Thus, it was not possible to define a set formula for the defining shrines and shrine goods. A successful approach for defining shrines archaeologically will need to take into consideration the flexibility and individuality that characterizes spiritual expression.

A few strategies aid in this approach. One facet of the approach is examining artifact materials. It has been suggested that the materials from which shrine goods were made are

often a more critical consideration than the form taken by the object (Bolaji Campbell, personal communication, 1998). For example, since iron is intricately linked to the Yoruba deity Ogun (Thompson 1993a), nails, horseshoes, axes, or other iron objects could and have been used to honor that deity. Iron and blacksmithing are also important in Igbo culture. Also important will be the physical relationship of objects to one another, artifact color patterns, and the presence of themes or similarities within the artifact assemblages.

#### *Analysis of Size and Completeness of Pit Assemblage Artifacts*

The first task was to attempt to define fill types for these features to learn whether primary or secondary fill was typical. Initially, the subfloor pits were separated into hearth and non-hearth pits, since pit location is presumably linked to original function. Data was then compiled on the size of selected categories of individual artifacts. These categories included easily breakable items such as ceramics, glass, and tobacco pipes, because it was felt these items would be the most appropriate for determining the presence of secondary refuse, characterized by small, highly fractured objects. The objects were grouped by overall size, using 1.5" diameter intervals as units of measurement. Percentages of each measurement category per pit were determined and are shown in table (Tables 4.7 and 4.8) and in graph form (Figures 4.6 and 4.7).

These graphs and tables vividly demonstrate that the overwhelming majority of the artifacts in both hearth and non-hearth pits were under 1.5" in diameter, and most artifacts measured less than 3.0". In no instance did any of the pits contain more than 5% of its artifacts as measuring over 4.5" in the categories analyzed. This finding suggests that subfloor pits contained predominantly secondary refuse. While it had been anticipated that artifact size analysis would be successful at revealing instances where individual pits contained higher than average percentages of large (>4.5" diameter) objects, indicating the probable location of *de facto* caches, this analysis proved largely ineffective. Only in several instances did significantly higher percentages (>10%) of objects measuring over 4.5" in diameter appear: Utopia Feature 44 with 23% and Kingsmill Quarter Feature KM362 with 18.1%. In each case, further analysis did reveal *de facto* caches and these features are discussed in Chapter 5. Interestingly, none of the hearth-front pits, believed to have functioned as root storage areas, contained significantly high percentages of larger artifacts.

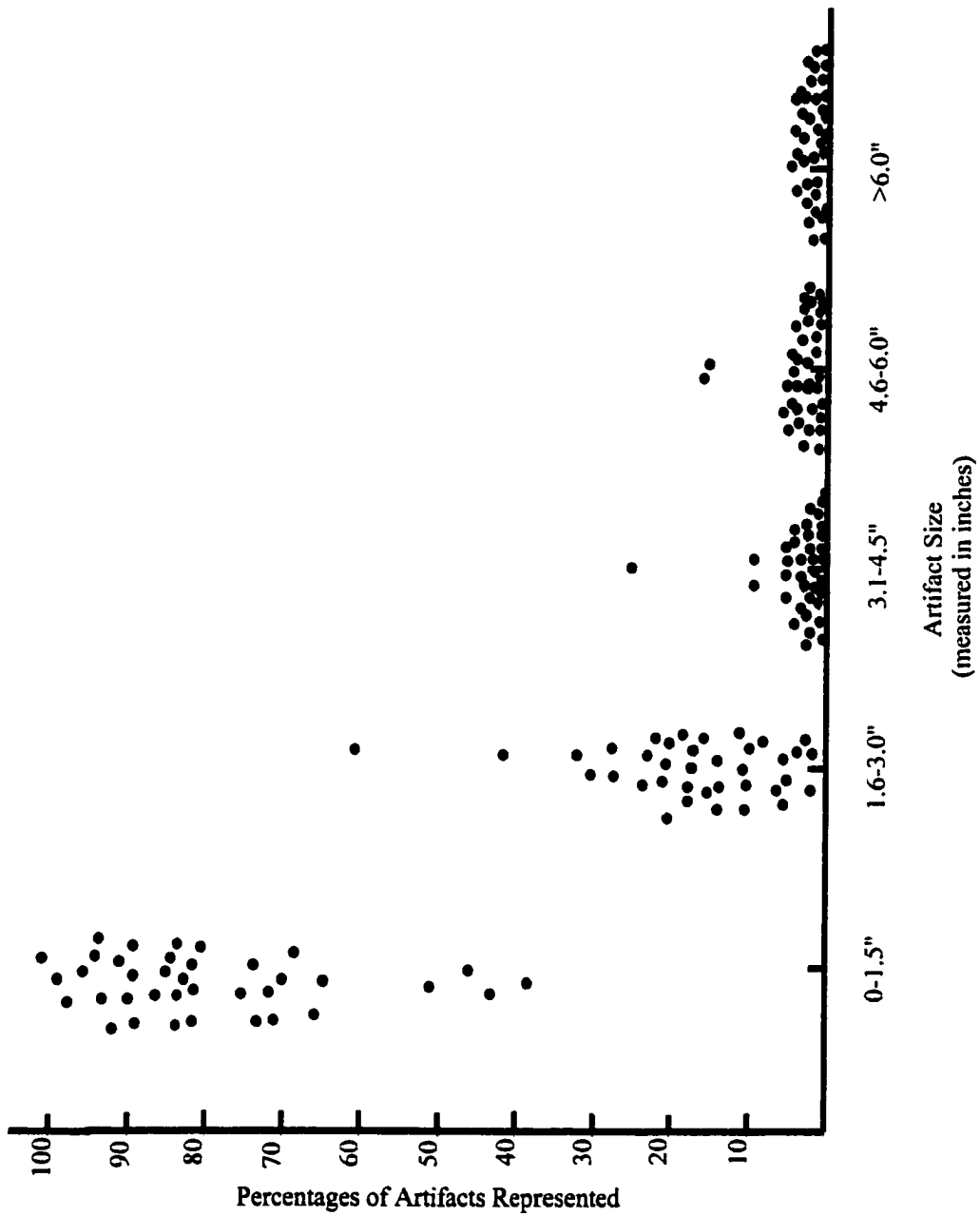


Figure 4.6 Hearth front subfloor pit artifact sizes. Figures based on sample size of 37.

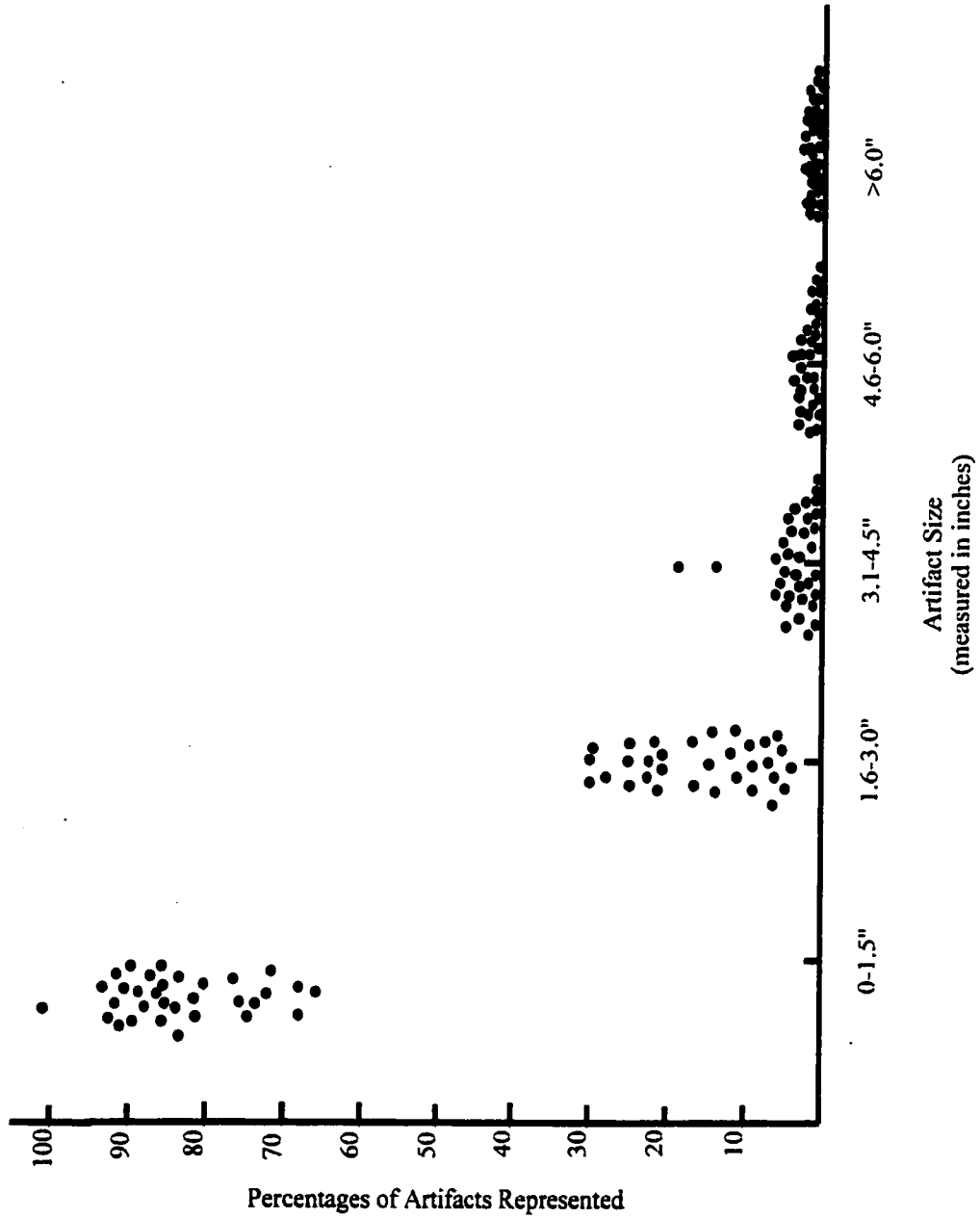


Figure 4.7 Non-hearth front subfloor pit artifact sizes. Figures based on sample size of 32.



Based on the failure of the size analysis to provide useable results, the decision was made to add additional artifact categories to analysis of the completeness of pit artifacts. Hearth-front pits were excluded from this phase of analysis because the size results had shown no potential caches. The decision was made to include all metal artifacts (with the exception of nails) because metal items, particularly iron objects, have special significance on Igbo and other West African shrines.

**Table 4.7. Size of Artifacts from Non-Hearth Pits**

SITE	Feature #	0-1.5"	1.6-3.0"	3.1-4.5"	4.6-6.0"	>6.0"	Total Artifacts
Utopia II	Feature 9	83.9	14.5	1.6	0	0	311
Utopia II	Feature 14	93.3	6.1	0.5	0	0	345
Utopia II	Feature 15	87.0	13.0	0	0	0	54
Utopia II	Feature 16	66.6	21.4	9.5	0	2.3	42
Utopia II	Feature 17	94.3	5.7	0	0	0	53
Utopia II	Feature 18	98.6	1.4	0	0	0	74
Utopia II	Feature 27	72.7	27.3	0	0	0	11
Utopia II	Feature 32	50.0	25.0	25	0	0	4
Utopia II	Feature 35	77.8	16.7	5.5	0	0	18
Utopia III	Feature 39A	80.2	18.1	0.9	0.9	0	111
Utopia III	Feature 39B	89.5	5.5	4.6	0.4	0	219
Utopia III	Feature 44	66.7	10.4	0	16.7	6.3	48
Utopia III	Feature 45	80.4	14.8	2.2	1.3	1.3	230
Utopia III	Feature 46	66.6	33.3	0	0	0	3
Utopia III	Feature 49	100.0	0	0	0	0	3
Utopia IV	Feature 7	88.6	11.4	0	0	0	35
Utopia IV	Feature 8	93.0	4.6	0	2.3	0	43
Utopia IV	Feature 5	79.2	16.0	0.8	4	0	125
Utopia IV	Feature 9	96.6	3.4	0	0	0	89
Utopia IV	Feature 10	77.8	18.5	3.7	0	0	54
Utopia IV	Feature 13	82.1	11.2	5.2	1.5	0	134
Utopia IV	Feature 29	80.0	20.0	0	0	0	5
Carters Grove	CG714	93.3	6.7	0	0	0	15
Carters Grove	CG704	63.6	31.8	0	4.5	0	22
Carters Grove	CG703	90.0	10.0	0	0	0	20
Carters Grove	CG712	66.6	33.3	0	0	0	15
Carters Grove	CG643	70.4	27.9	1.3	0.4	0	240
Carters Grove	CG708	88.9	11.1	0	0	0	9
Carters Grove	CG713	77.8	13.0	3.7	0	5.5	54
Carters Grove	CG701	83.3	16.7	0	0	0	6
Carters Grove	CG700	82.3	17.7	0	0	0	62
Kingsmill	KM362	44.4	29.4	8.1	15.6	2.5	160
Kingsmill	KM363	61.9	31.0	4.7	2.4	0	297
Kingsmill	KM358	91.7	8.3	0	0	0	48
Kingsmill	KM367	70.1	22.9	6.3	0	0	48
Kingsmill	KM385	37.5	62.5	0	0	0	8
Kingsmill	KM378	46.7	43.3	5.5	2.2	2.2	90

**Table 4.8. Size of Artifacts from Hearth Pits**

SITE	Feature #	0-1.5"	1.6-3.0"	3.1-4.5"	4.6-6.0"	>6.0"	Total Artifacts
Utopia II	Feature 4	92.2	5.9	1.3	0.6	0	153
Utopia II	Feature 30	94.9	4.3	0.8	0	0	116
Utopia II	Feature 2	91	7.8	1.2	0	0	603
Utopia II	Feature 30	81.1	15.7	2.6	0	0	730
Utopia II	Feature 36	90.9	7.9	1.1	0.1	0	3466
Utopia II	Feature 21	80.6	16.4	2.6	0.3	0	2306
Utopia IV	Feature 6C/E/F/J/K	77.8	18.5	3.7	0	0	81
Utopia IV	Feature 6B/G/H	65.4	30.8	7.8	0	0	26
Utopia IV	Feature 6L/M/N	62.2	26.7	11.1	0	0	45
Utopia IV	Feature 6P/Q	85	15	0	0	0	20
Utopia IV	Feature 30E/F	70.7	12.2	19.5	0	0	41
Utopia IV	Feature 31	66.3	30.5	2.1	1	0	95
Utopia IV	Feature 30A/D	78.6	19.1	1.5	0.75	0	131
Utopia IV	Feature 11D/E	85.7	14.3	0	0	0	7
Utopia IV	Feature 40	71.4	22.9	5.7	0	0	35
Utopia IV	Feature 41	83.6	13.7	2.7	0	0	73
Utopia IV	Feature 12D/E/M/N	73	23	2	2	0	148
Utopia IV	Feature 11/12**	82.6	15.2	2.2	0	0	92
UtopiaIII	Feature 51	86.2	10.3	1.5	0	0	262
UtopiaIII	Feature 56	100	0	0	0	0	2
UtopiaIII	Feature 48	87.2	12.2	0.7	0	0	148
UtopiaIII	Feature 52	92.3	7.7	0	0	0	39
UtopiaIII	Feature 53	91.5	6.5	1.7	0.3	0	893
UtopiaIII	Feature 57	84.8	13.6	1.4	0.2	0	572
UtopiaIII	Feature 58A/E	91.5	7	1.4	0	0	71
UtopiaIII	Feature 58A/D	93.5	3	3	0	0	33
UtopiaIII	Feature 58A/B	87.5	12.5	0	0	0	32
Carters Grove	CG715	64.9	30.3	1.6	3.2	0	185
Carters Grove	CG716	79.1	19.4	1.5	0	0	129
Carters Grove	CG721	66.7	25	8.3	0	0	24
Carters Grove	CG707	100	0	0	0	0	3
Carters Grove	CG710	83.9	9.7	3.2	0	3.2	31
Carters Grove	CG706	69.3	27.3	2.8	0.5	0	212

Table 4.9 shows the completeness of artifacts by layer from non-hearth pits. What becomes immediately apparent when examining this table is that the majority of the artifacts in all pits are less than 25% complete. This result reinforces the size analysis conclusion that secondary refuse predominantly filled these pits. Furthermore, very few artifacts fell into the 26 – 75% range; if they were not highly fragmented, they were likely to be complete. While the table shows some pits containing very high percentages of complete objects, this data is misleading in some cases. If there were less than 20 quantified artifacts per layer, these

**Table 4.9. Completeness of Selected Categories of Non-Hearth Pit Artifacts by Layer**

Site	Feature	Layer	0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	>75%	Total
Carter's Grove	CG643	CG643A	78.4	4.1	9.6	7.8	218
Carter's Grove	CG643	CG643B	68.3	14.3	1.6	15.9	63
Carter's Grove	CG700	CG700A	100	0	0	0	31
Carter's Grove	CG700	CG700B	96.8	0	3.2	0	31
Carter's Grove	CG700	CG700C	100	0	0	0	2
Carter's Grove	CG701	CG701A	100	0	0	0	1
Carter's Grove	CG701	CG701B	85.7	0	14.3	0	7
Carter's Grove	CG702	CG702A	40	20	12	28	25
Carter's Grove	CG703	CG703A	91	0	0	9	22
Carter's Grove	CG704	CG704A	64.5	19.3	0	16.1	31
Carter's Grove	CG706	CG706A	85.9	6	0.5	7.1	184
Carter's Grove	CG706	CG706B	87.5	5	0	7.5	40
Carter's Grove	CG706	CG706C	51	0	0	50	4
Carter's Grove	CG707	CG707A	75	25	0	0	4
Carter's Grove	CG708	CG708A	100	0	0	0	9
Carter's Grove	CG709	CG709A	79.2	1.9	7.5	11.3	53
Carter's Grove	CG710	CG710A	71.1	21	0	7.9	38
Carter's Grove	CG712	CG712A	100	0	0	0	15
Carter's Grove	CG713	CG713A	94.1	5.9	0	0	34
Carter's Grove	CG713	CG713B	62.5	12.5	0	25	8
Carter's Grove	CG713	CG713C	60	20	0	20	10
Carter's Grove	CG713	CG713D	75	0	0	25	4
Carter's Grove	CG713	CG713E	100	0	0	0	1
Carter's Grove	CG714	CG714A	100	0	0	0	3
Carter's Grove	CG714	CG714C	100	0	0	0	12
Carter's Grove	CG715	CG715A	90.9	4.9	0.8	3.3	121
Carter's Grove	CG715	CG715B	87.5	0	0	12.5	8
Carter's Grove	CG715	CG715C	87.5	2.1	4.2	6.3	48
Carter's Grove	CG715	CG715D	60.7	10.7	0	28.6	28
Carter's Grove	CG716	CG716A	95.8	0.8	0.8	2.5	120
Carter's Grove	CG716	CG716E	92.8	0	7.1	0	14
Carter's Grove	CG721	CG721A	0	0	0	0	0
Carter's Grove	CG721	CG721B	87.5	0	0	12.5	8
Carter's Grove	CG721	CG721C	61.9	9.5	0	28.6	21
Kingsmill	KM358	KM358A	100	0	0	0	38
Kingsmill	KM358	KM358C	100	0	0	0	12
Kingsmill	KM362	KM362A	68.7	12.5	0	18.8	16
Kingsmill	KM362	KM362B	92.1	0	0	7.9	38
Kingsmill	KM362	KM362C	73.7	5.3	0	21	38
Kingsmill	KM363	KM363A	92.1	1.1	0	9	89
Kingsmill	KM363	KM363B	56.3	3.2	8.6	34.3	373
Kingsmill	KM363	KM363C	100	0	0	0	2
Kingsmill	KM367	KM367A	100	0	0	0	4
Kingsmill	KM367	KM367B	95	0	0	0	20
Kingsmill	KM367	KM367C		0	0		58
Kingsmill	KM378	KM378A	76.6	8.5	0	14.9	94
Kingsmill	KM378	KM378B					
Kingsmill	KM385	KM385A	0	0	0	0	0

Site	Feature	Layer	0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	>75%	Total
Kingsmill	KM385	KM385B	70	0	0	30	10
Utopia II	UT14	UT14A	67.4	2.3	0	30.2	43
Utopia II	UT14	UT14B	92	0	0	8	50
Utopia II	UT14	UT14C	75	0	0	25	4
Utopia II	UT14	UT14D	77.8	0	0	22.2	9
Utopia II	UT14	UT14E	50	0	0	50	4
Utopia II	UT15	UT15A	55.2	3.4	0	41.4	29
Utopia II	UT15	UT15top	91.7	0	0	8.3	12
Utopia II	UT16	UT16A	55.2	3.4	3.4	37.9	29
Utopia II	UT16	UT16B	0	0	0	100	1
Utopia II	UT16	UT16top	92.9	0	0	7.1	14
Utopia II	UT17	UT17A	54.5	0	0	45.4	11
Utopia II	UT17	UT17B	57.1	0	0	42.9	7
Utopia II	UT17	UT17C	67	0	0	33.3	3
Utopia II	UT18	UT18A	66.7	0	0	33.3	27
Utopia II	UT18A	UT18Atop	60	4	0	36	24
Utopia II	UT27	UT27A	33.3	17	0	50	6
Utopia II	UT27	UT27B	40	20	20	20	5
Utopia II	UT32	UT32A	42.9	0	0	57.1	7
Utopia II	UT9	UT9A	78.2	5.1	0	16.7	78
Utopia II	UT9	UT9B	25	0	0	75	4
Utopia II	UT9	UT9C	100	0	0	0	1
Utopia II	UT35	UT35A	54.5	9.1	0	36.4	11
Utopia III	UT39A	UT39A	77.4	3.8	0	18.9	53
Utopia III	UT39B	UT39B	54.8	19	2.4	23.8	42
Utopia III	UT44	UT44A	62.5			35.4	48
Utopia III	UT44	UT44B	66.6	0	0	33.3	3
Utopia III	UT45	UT45A	84.9	0	0	15.1	106
Utopia III	UT45	UT45B	91	0.9	0	9.1	111
Utopia III	UT45	UT45D	57.1	14.3	0	28.6	7
Utopia III	UT45	UT45E	0	0	0	100	1
Utopia III	UT46	UT46A	60	0	0	40	5
Utopia III	UT47	Ut47	0	0	0	0	0
Utopia IV	UT F10	UT10A	91.5	0	0	8.6	266
Utopia IV	UT F9	UT9A	97	0	0.1	2.9	236
Utopia IV	UT F9	UT9B	0	0	0		63
Utopia IV	UT13	UT13A	74.8	6.1	2.3	16.8	131
Utopia IV	UT13	UT13aNW cor.	90.9	0	0	9.1	11
Utopia IV	UT13	UT13aSE cor.	64.3	0	0	35.7	28
Utopia IV	UT13	UT13bSE cor.	50	0	50	0	2
Utopia IV	UT17	UT17A	80	5	0	15	20
Utopia IV	UT17	UT17B	0	0	0	100	2
Utopia IV	UT17	UT17C	60	0	0	40	5
Utopia IV	UT17	UT17D	100	0	0	0	1
Utopia IV	UT17	UT17E	42.9	0	14.2	42.9	14
Utopia IV	UT29	UT29A	44.4	0	0	55.6	9
Utopia IV	UT29	UT29B	0	0	0	100	1
Utopia IV	UT8	UT8A	75	4.5	0	20.5	44
Utopia IV	UT8	UT8pan	77.8	0	11.1	11.1	9

results were not considered significant for determining the presence of caches. For analytical purposes, any soil layers that contained over 15% complete artifacts were deemed worthy of further analysis.

Twenty features met these criteria (Table 4.10) and of these features, six examples showed definite evidence of artifact caches. These six features (Utopia Features 9 and 44, Kingsmill Features KM362 and KM363, and Carter's Grove Features CG643 and CG715) are discussed in Chapter 5. In several instances, such as Utopia Feature 8, contextual information in the field notes and maps led to further analysis of these features, despite the lower than designated percentages of complete objects. These features were also analyzed more thoroughly and are discussed in the next chapter.

**Table 4.10.** Subfloor Pits Containing Possible Caches

Site	Feature/ Layer	0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	>75%	Total # Artifacts
Utopia II	UT15A	55.2	3.4	0	41.4	29
Utopia II	UT16A	55.2	3.4	3.4	37.9	29
Utopia II	UT18A	60	4	0	36	24
Utopia IV	UT13A	64.3	0	0	35.7	28
Utopia III	UT44A	62.5	0	0	35.4	48
Kingsmill	KM363B	56.3	3.2	8.6	34.3	373
Utopia II	UT18A	66.7	0	0	33.3	27
Utopia II	UT14A	67.4	2.3	0	30.2	43
Carter's Grove	CG721C	61.9	9.5	0	28.6	21
Carter's Grove	CG715D	60.7	10.7	0	28.6	28
Carter's Grove	CG702A	40	20	12	28	25
Utopia III	UT39B	54.8	19	2.4	23.8	42
Kingsmill	KM362C	73.7	5.3	0	21	38
Utopia IV	UT8A	75	4.5	0	20.5	44
Utopia III	UT39A	77.4	3.8	0	18.9	53
Utopia IV	UT13A	74.8	6.1	2.3	16.8	131
Utopia 11	UT9A	78.2	5.1	0	16.7	78
Carter's Grove	CG704A	64.5	19.3	0	16.1	31
Carter's Grove	CG643B	68.3	14.3	1.6	15.9	63
Utopia III	UT45A	84.9	0	0	15.1	106

## Summary

While the presence of subfloor pits such as the examples found on Chesapeake sites was not necessarily derived from African tradition, their documented use among the nineteenth-century Igbo indicates that they were among the cultural repertoire of at least one of the groups enslaved in Virginia. Their use in Igboland for household storage would in no way preclude their use by slaves in other fashions, including traditionally-based African spiritual practices. Neiman (1997) has argued that subfloor pits proliferated on African American sites because they were a “good trick” or strategy that worked for individuals and their families. His position does indeed appear to be accurate, since the sheer proliferation of these features on eighteenth-century sites indicates that they were successful for the purposes for which they were constructed.

The analytical evidence of artifact size was deemed largely inappropriate for isolating caches, although it did demonstrate that pits were filled largely with secondary refuse. Completeness analysis showed that 20 pits appeared to contain *de facto* deposits, or caches, probably associated with the original use of the feature. In the next chapter these features will be analyzed individually, in light of the functions and hypotheses discussed in this chapter. The archaeological data will be combined with ethnohistoric and documentary evidence to determine original pit function

To summarize, the assumptions stated in this chapter were that hearth front pits served as root cellars for food storage, and most likely of sweet potatoes. Pollen and phytolith testing of soil layers deposited during the use of the pit will be key in making this determination. Pits found in other parts of the structure, such as in corners, along walls, and in the center of floors are believed to have been used as personal storage spaces or as West African style shrines. Based on ethnohistoric and ethnographic evidence from West Africa, I postulate that corner pits will be more likely to contain shrines than pits located along walls or in the middle of rooms. In addition, of the three round pits found at these sites, two were found in room corners. It is possible that a round shape had a spiritual significance for the culture of origin of the slaves that made them. It is possible that pits used as storage would have wooden or other types of floors or liners, since they would help keep items stored

within dry and clean. Shrines on the other hand, would not be lined with wood or other material, since contact with the sacred earth would be important.

The next chapter details the results of detailed artifact analysis on 16 subfloor pits from the Utopia, Kingsmill and Carter's Grove Quarters sites whose functions could be determined.

## **Chapter V.**

### **RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**

In the previous chapter, I hypothesized that pit location and function were related, setting forth several primary assumptions for further testing. First, I hypothesized that slaves used hearth-front pits as root cellars. Soil samples from several hearth-front pits were analyzed for plant remains indicative of a food storage function.

In addition, I assumed that pits constructed in other locations functioned either as personal storage containers or as West African-based shrines. Based on ethnohistoric and ethnographic data, I suggested that pits in corners of structures or rooms were more likely to be shrines than pits along walls or in the center of floors. I hypothesized that shrine or personal storage functions could be assigned to individual pits through a two-step process. First, I determined the presence of what appeared to be deliberately placed caches of useable objects in the pits. I isolated these presumed caches by analyzing levels of artifact completeness from the Utopia, Kingsmill and Carter's Grove Quarters subfloor pits and by careful study of field notes, maps, and photographs. Features with higher than average percentages of complete artifacts or where excavators noted unusual groupings of objects were considered as potentially containing caches. This analysis showed 25 pits that warranted more detailed artifact analysis. Using information on West African shrine groupings and spiritual objects, I analyzed the subfloor pit artifacts contextually to determine if they represented spiritual caches or simply household items left in storage.

In the following pages, 14 pits containing what are believed to be cached goods are analyzed. Nine pits showed evidence that they were used as shrines and five contained evidence of personal storage. Some of the features (11 total) that earlier analysis had isolated as containing high percentages of complete artifacts failed to show



clear-cut evidence of an original pit function. Challenges encountered in assigning cache functions during analysis, with some explanation of how these challenges could be surmounted in future excavation, will follow at the end of this chapter.

### **Root Cellars**

In the previous chapter, I hypothesized that hearth-front pits served as food storage areas for sweet potatoes. I proposed testing the lower or bottommost soil layers in these pits for plant remains to seek evidence of food storage. In the following pages, I examine the results of paleobotanical analysis of two hearth-front pits from the Utopia Quarter. To provide a comparison to the pollen and phytolith results from these hearth-front pits, analysis was also completed on soil samples from two additional Utopia Quarter subfloor pits (Features 9 and 44). These corner pits, which analysis later demonstrated had been used in spiritual fashions, contained different paleobotanical profiles than the hearth-front pits. Brief summaries of the paleobotanical analysis for these two corner pits follow, with more detailed discussion of how these results relate to their spiritual functions provided in the section on shrines.

As stated in the previous chapter, soil samples had not been retained from the 1970s excavations at Kingsmill Quarter and Carter's Grove Quarter. For this reason, paleobotanical testing was of necessity limited to the Utopia Quarter sites.

#### *Results of Paleobotanical Analysis at Utopia Quarter*

Analysis was performed on three soil samples from two hearth-front subfloor pits at Utopia Quarter. One of these pits (Feature 36) was from the earliest occupation at the Utopia Quarter, dating to the first quarter of the eighteenth century. The other pit (Feature 53) had been constructed in a structure built and used during the second quarter of the century. The results of this testing are summarized and discussed below (Cumming and Moutoux 1999), with a complete descriptive paleobotanical report appearing in Appendix C.

During the Utopia excavations, archaeologists systematically collected soil samples from each subfloor pit, taking care to gather soil intended for paleobotanical analysis from protected locations within the feature. Collecting soil located under sizeable brick, metal, or

ceramic artifacts helps prevent contamination of the sample from later-dating pollen carried down through groundwater.

PaleoResearch of Golden, Colorado performed the pollen and phytolith analysis for this study. Pollen preservation ranged from good to poor in the Utopia Quarter samples. In each sample, pollen was removed from the soil through a chemical extraction process, with grains counted and identified, where possible, to family, genus and species level. During identification, 100 to 200 pollen grains from each sample were counted and identified. Phytoliths, extracted from the surrounding soil matrices using a flotation procedure, were also identified under magnification.

### Feature 36

Feature 36, located in Structure 10, was a hearth-front subfloor pit complex with at least two periods of construction and repair. Paleobotanical analysis was performed on two soil layers deposited during the last pit phase. These layers were chosen for analysis based on what stratigraphic analysis revealed about the feature's history.

Analysis of the fill and artifacts showed that this pit contained a 4.5 ft. square pre-fabricated wooden box with a hinged and locked top. Towards the end of the site occupation, probably in the 1720s, the top of the box collapsed down into the pit and the feature was subsequently abandoned. Hinges, a lock, and a metal keyhole surround were all found resting in the bottom of the feature, atop a thin layer of brown sandy loam that accumulated during the use of the pit. Since no attempt was made by the enslaved to recover any of the box hardware after the damage, it is likely that no other items were removed from the pit. Other than items that appeared to have been associated with the box collapse, there were no complete items or groups of items on or in the soil layers at the bottom of the box. Since there was no indication of either storage of personal items or of a shrine grouping in the floor levels of this feature, it is most likely that this pit served as a root cellar. Traces of fruits, vegetables, or plant packing materials in the soil layers below the collapsed box top should confirm this conclusion.

Two soil samples (Feature 36J and 36L) found deposited on the pit floor were analyzed for plant remains (Figure 3.4). These soil layers appeared to have accumulated during the use of the wooden box and were believed to be the layers most likely to contain

evidence of food storage. Layer 36J was a 0.2 ft. thick brown sandy loam with charcoal inclusions and a slight mottling of yellow and orange sandy clay. Layer 36J sealed a light brown sandy loam (36L) with moderate orange clay mottling. This 0.3 ft. thick layer was the bottom, or earliest deposited, strata within the wooden box. Pollen analysis was performed on Layer 36J, while Layer 36L underwent phytolith analysis.

Testing these two layers revealed some interesting results (Table 5.1). Although showing the least evidence (of any of the Utopia features) of wind-dispersed pollen from nearby trees and weedy plants, Layer 36J contained aggregates of grass pollen (*Poaceae* family). No other subfloor pit analyzed from the site showed a larger concentration of grass pollen. The presence of aggregates, or clumps of a single type of pollen, often indicate that portions of a plant were deposited into the archaeological setting (Cummings and Moutoux

**Table 5.1.** Pollen Remains from Feature 36J and 36L

Common Name	Botanical Name
<b>Trees</b>	
Alder	<i>Alnus</i>
Hickory, Pecan	<i>Carya</i>
Chestnut	<i>Castanea</i>
Oak	<i>Quercus</i>
Pine	<i>Pinus</i>
Poplar	<i>Populus</i>
<b>Weedy Plants</b>	
Ragweed, Cocklebur	<i>Low-spine Asteraceae</i>
Aster, Rabbitbrush, snakeweed, sunflower, etc.	<i>High spine Asteraceae</i>
Pigweed, amaranth	<i>Cheno-Am</i>
<b>Other</b>	
Grasses	<i>Poaceae</i>
Cereal Grains	<i>Cerealialia</i>
Poison Ivy	<i>Toxicodendron</i>
Grape/New Jersey Tea	<i>Vitis/Ceanothus</i>

1999). Of particular interest were the food remains from the samples. Pollen from the Cerealia family, representing an unidentified grain, was present, as was grape (*vitis*) pollen.<sup>1</sup> Starch granules, some of a form common in sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*) tubers and corn (*zea mays*) were also identified during analysis.<sup>2</sup> Phytolith analysis of Layer 36L showed elevated levels of festucoid forms. These results suggest that the plant remains in the pit were grasses and that cereal grains, whose phytoliths display an elongated form, were not present in substantial quantities in the bottom of the pit. The results indicate the presence of cool season grasses, a finding that would be consistent with autumn storage.

Taken together, these results suggest that sweet potatoes or corn were stored in the pit, with grasses used as a lining or packing material for the food. Cornmeal was generally a planter-provisioned food in colonial Virginia. Having access to a regular supply of cornmeal makes it less likely that slaves chose to use their limited personal garden space growing corn, and or used their even more limited underground space storing it. Documents from eighteenth-century Virginia often indicate that above-ground structures called cribs were located at slave quarters for the long-term storage of communal corn. While the presence of a crib and the provisioning of corn products would not preclude the storage of corn or cornmeal underground, it does make it less likely that the subfloor pits would have been used in this fashion.

### Feature 53

Feature 53 was a rectangular hearth-front pit located in Structure 50, occupied during the second quarter of the eighteenth century (Figure 3.12). It represented one phase in a five phase series of pits that cut and re-cut the soil in front of the hearth.<sup>3</sup> One soil layer (Feature 53X), a medium brown organic loam with moderate charcoal flecking, was analyzed for pollen, phytoliths, and starches (Table 5.2). This 0.6 ft. thick stratum rested on

---

<sup>1</sup> Cummings and Moutoux (1999) also give an alternate identification to the *vitis* pollen from Features 36 and 44. It may also be *Ceanothus*, commonly known as New Jersey tea. Leaves from this ornamental shrub were used as a substitute for tea during the American Revolution.

<sup>2</sup> Positive identification of these two plants was not possible due to the condition of the pollen.

<sup>3</sup> This hearth-front complex also contains Features 52, 54, 57, and 58.

the floor of the pit, and like the corresponding strata in Feature 36, was felt to be the most likely candidate to contain evidence of food storage.

The results of this testing provided somewhat less conclusive evidence of food storage than analysis indicated for Feature 36. The sample contained high levels of pollen from oak and pine trees, with smaller quantities of alder, hickory or pecan, beech, and elm. These arboreal pollens, along with the pollen from weedy plants such as ragweed and pigweed, were most likely deposited as wind-borne pollen. Elevated levels of grass pollen again suggested that vegetables stored in the pit may have been wrapped or cushioned with grass. Starch granules recovered from this feature showed characteristics indicating the presence of cereal grains like wheat, barley or rye, while forms typical of sweet potatoes and corn were absent.

**Table 5.2. Pollen Remains from Feature 53X**

Common Name	Botanical Name
<b>Trees</b>	
Alder	<i>Alnus</i>
Hickory, Pecan	<i>Carya</i>
Beech	<i>Fagus</i>
Oak	<i>Quercus</i>
Pine	<i>Pinus</i>
Elm	<i>Ulmus</i>
<b>Weedy Plants</b>	
Ragweed, Cocklebur	<i>Low-spine Asteraceae</i>
Aster, Rabbitbrush, snakeweed, sunflower, etc.	<i>High spine Asteraceae</i>
Pigweed, amaranth	<i>Cheno-Am</i>
<b>Other</b>	
Grasses	<i>Poaceae</i>
Cereal Grains	<i>Cerealia</i>
Knotweed/Smartweed Family	<i>Polygonaceae</i>
Grape/New Jersey Tea	<i>Vitis/Ceanothus</i>

The expense of specialized pollen and phytolith identification precluded the analysis of any additional samples from hearth-front pits at the Utopia Quarter. Analysis was performed on soil samples from two non-hearth pits, however, in order to provide a basis of comparison with the hearth-front features. While the results of pollen and phytolith testing on the hearth-front pits were less conclusive of food storage than anticipated, differences in the paleobotanical profiles of hearth and non-hearth pits supports the conclusion that pits near the fireplace had been used for food storage.

Figure 5.1 depicts the types and quantities of pollen identified from the four Utopia Quarter pits analyzed for this study. The graph shows that while each of the pits contains moderate quantities of pollen from trees and weedy species that are indicative of the local environment rather than of the original function of the feature, there are some distinct differences between hearth and non-hearth pits. These differences appear to be related to the original functions of the features. Starch granules and evidence of cereal grains are absent from the two corner pits, but are present in small quantities in each of the hearth-front pits. Additionally, levels of grass (*Poaceae*) pollen are noticeably higher in the hearth-front pits (36 and 53), perhaps indicating grass used as a lining or packing material for stored food. Pollen grains from grapes (*vitis*) or a grape product such as wine or raisins were present in small quantities in each of the hearth-front pits, but in elevated quantities in one of the corner pits (Feature 44). This unusual result is discussed in detail in an upcoming section.

Because the availability of soil samples from the study sites was limited, additional samples from subfloor pits at two tidewater North Carolina sites were also examined.<sup>4</sup> The Eden House site (31BR52) contained an earthfast structure believed to have been slave housing between circa 1720 and the mid-1740s (Lautzenheiser et al. 1998). The structure contained a total of five subfloor pits; one centrally located in the main room in front of the hearth, while the other four were in a small addition to the north. Feature 3, one of the subfloor pits in the addition, had been filled in the 1740s. Like the Utopia features, the Eden House soil analysis predominantly yielded data on the vegetation of the surrounding area (Cummings and Moutoux 1997). Pollen and phytolith analysis provided evidence of alder (*Alnus*), pine (*Pinus*), oak (*Querus*), hickory and pecan (*Carya*) trees, as well as grasses and

---

<sup>4</sup> There were no soil samples saved from Kingsmill Quarter or Carter's Grove Quarter.

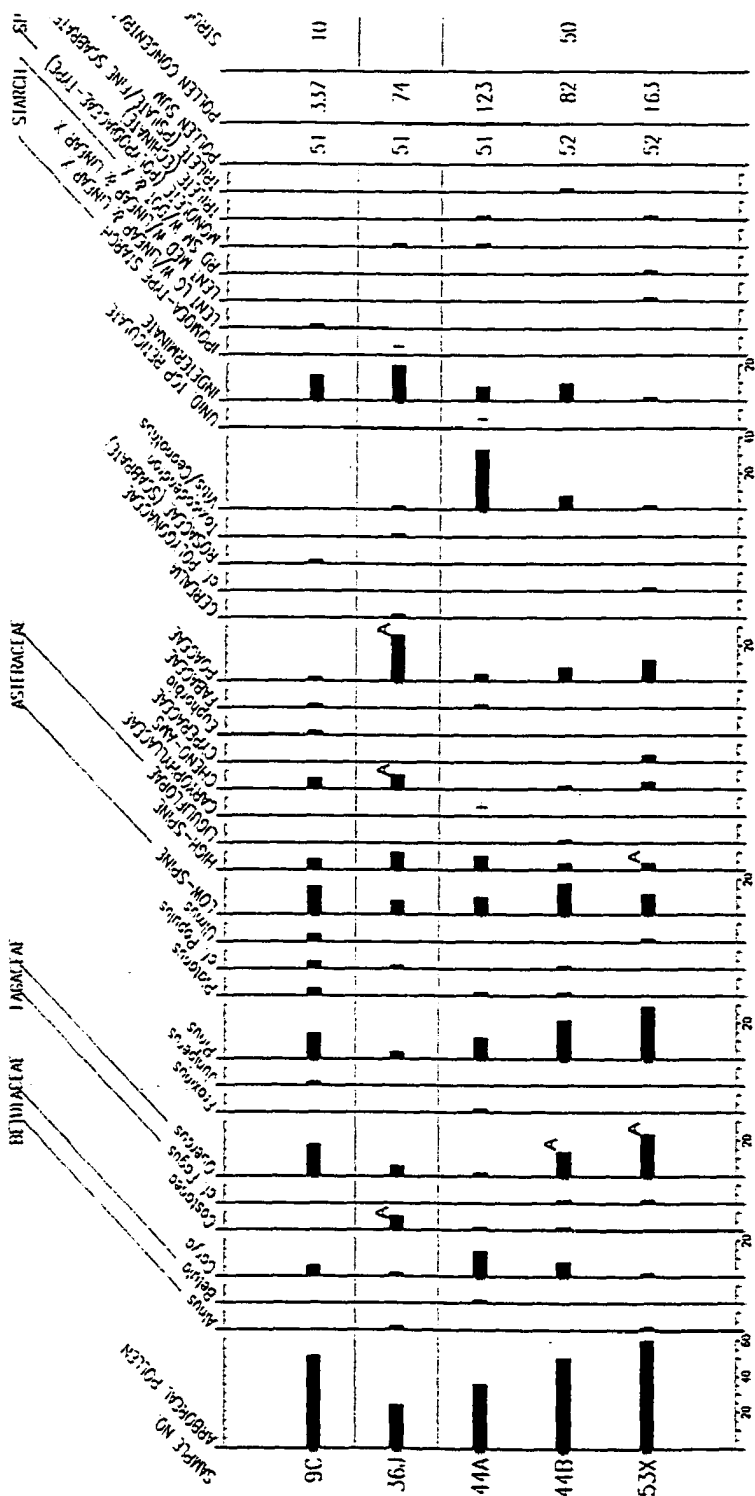


Figure 5.1 Pollen from Utopia Quarter. From Cummings & Moutoux 1999.

weedy plants. Only two types of food-related pollen were found in the feature. Small quantities of pollen from corn (*Zea mays*) and from the *Liliaceae* family, whose members includes onions, garlic, chives and asparagus, were present. Unfortunately, the *Liliaceae* pollen was too poorly preserved to determine with any greater precision which plant types were actually represented in this feature.

The Riegelwood site (31CB110), located along the Lower Cape Fear River, contained a small eighteenth-century structure interpreted as a seasonal home for enslaved turpentine workers (Adams 1998). Analysis of the soil from the subfloor pits in this structure revealed primarily arboreal pollen, as well as small quantities of corn.

Based on the results from the study sites and the comparative examples, I would argue strongly for additional pollen testing of subfloor pit strata at future excavations. Of particular interest for gathering more data to support the root cellar interpretation of hearth-front pits would be to test strata believed to have accumulated during the use span of the feature. Testing of secondary deposits associated with trash disposal at the site would provide evidence of the quarter residents' diet, but not whether the pit had originally been used as a root cellar. The identification at Utopia Quarter of starch granules with a form characteristic of sweet potatoes is promising. Better pollen preservation at future sites may lead to a positive identification of sweet potato storage.

### **Subfloor Pits as Hidey Holes and Personal Storage**

Five subfloor pits contained caches of items that appeared to have been personal goods either stored or hidden underground. These pits were notable in their lack of similarity in shape, location, or content. The features are discussed in chronological order.

#### *Utopia Period III, 1750-1780*

##### **Feature 45**

Feature 45 was a round pit located in the southwest corner of the heated room in Structure 50 at the 1725-1750 occupation at Utopia. This feature was atypical in several respects. In addition to its unusual shape, at a depth of 2.75 ft., it was much deeper than the



average subfloor pit, and contained a slightly rounded bottom. Before the collapse of the west wall of the feature into the pit and its subsequent filling with a mixture of primary and secondary refuse, a layer of black-grey ashy sand (45D) had accumulated on the pit floor. Only a few artifacts (20 total) were found in this zone.

While some of the smaller artifacts in 45D, such as the broken glass bead, nails, bottle glass, brick, and animal bone, may have fallen into pit through openings in the boards covering the feature, the complete broad hoe blade found there is more problematic. Why was this hoe blade left in the pit? While one of the residents possibly stored the hoe there after fieldwork, several factors argue against this conclusion. A hoe would have been used frequently during almost all phases of the agricultural cycle, for breaking ground in the spring and chopping weeds and loosening the soil throughout the growing season. During such periods of heavy use, it would have been simpler to prop the hoe in a corner at the end of the day, or balance it between exposed rafter beams rather than taking the trouble to move boards and lower it into the pit.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the hoe blade would have rusted if stored underground for lengthy periods, requiring additional care. Another explanation may be feasible. Virginia slave owners documented numerous kinds of resistance from their unfreed laborers, including destruction and loss of tools (Mullin 1972). This hoe blade may have been conveniently “lost” by placing it in the pit, perhaps gaining an individual a short but welcome break from tedious and strenuous agricultural work.

After the collapse of the western side of the pit (the side adjacent to the structure’s door), the pit was filled rapidly with household garbage. Two wine bottles whose shapes dated their manufacture to the 1730s (Noel Hume 1969:65), unbroken animal bones, oyster shell, and mendable ceramic fragments were recovered from these layers. Other broken household items and tools included a possible fireplace tool, a box handle, a scythe ring, a short section of iron chain, and tobacco pipes.

---

<sup>5</sup> Handles on hoes would have been about four feet in length. Assuming twelve to eighteen inches from the top of this 2.75 ft. deep feature was lost to plowing, it is possible that a complete hoe could have been stored in this pit.

### *Carter's Grove Quarter, ca. 1780-1800*

Unfortunately, the original functions of most Carter's Grove quarter subfloor pits were impossible to determine. No soil samples remained with which to conduct paleobotanical analysis, so their use as food storage pits could not be determined. There were no other seeds, charred or otherwise, recovered in the pit fills. Most of the features contained only a post-destruction zone of fill, indicating they had been emptied of their original contents prior to being filled with secondary debris. The two pits in the duplex (CG715 and CG716) and one in the barracks structure (CG643), however, appeared to contain a few items associated with their original functions as storage pits.

#### Feature CG643

This feature was located at the western end of the barracks-style structure, and contained 466 artifacts within its two levels of fill (Figure 5.2). The uppermost zone of fill was the brown loam destruction-related fill with numerous nails and window glass fragments. Sealed by the destruction fill was Level B, consisting of a mottled brown loam with wood ash. The complete absence of architectural artifacts such as window glass and nails in Level B is compelling evidence that the two zones were created through different depositional processes. While fewer than 1% of the items from the destruction-related zone were complete objects, 16% of the artifacts from the lower zone were complete. These figures suggest that the lower zone formed during the lifespan of the building and that some of the objects in this zone were placed there deliberately.

The complete items from the bottom zone included an early seventeenth-century kaolin pipebowl, a two-tined fork, an iron shoe buckle, an undecorated copper alloy button, a set of sleeve links, a straight pin, a gunflint, and a quartzite flake. The circa 1620-1660 pipebowl was most likely a found and curated item from the earlier Martin's Hundred settlement located between the quarter and the river. Three other pieces of cutlery were also present: another fork and a table knife that were missing handles (presumably these handles were made of wood that did not survive archaeologically), and a pewter spoon that had been broken into two pieces. The base and partial body of an American salt glazed stoneware mug (approximately 40% of the vessel) did not appear to be functional as a drinking utensil, but could have been used to hold other small personal items. If examined as a group, these

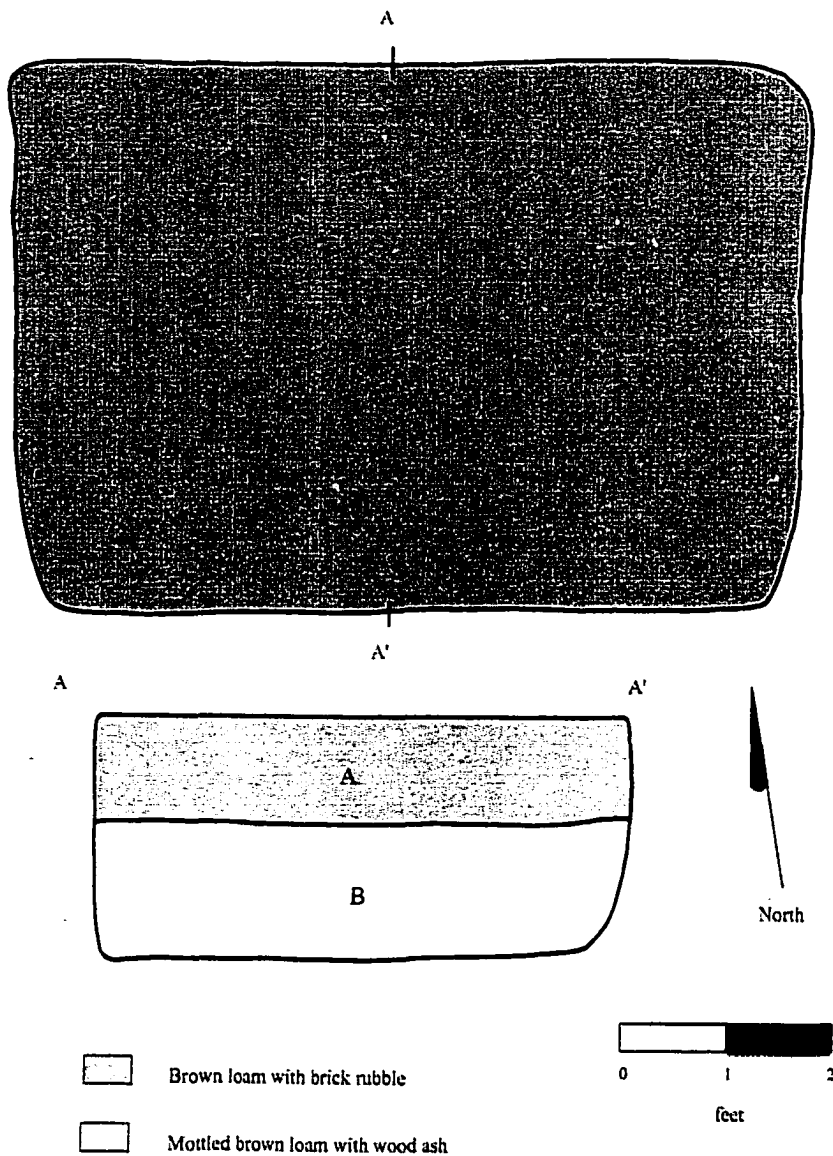


Figure 5.2 Plan and profile of Carter's Grove Quarter Feature CG643.

items look strikingly like personal gear: clothing items, dining equipment, the gunflint for hunting or making sparks to start a fire, and the flake used for cutting or scraping.

Some of the complete items from Zone A correspond with items from the lower zone. A shoe buckle matching the example found in the lower zone of soil and similar buttons in various sizes were also included in the zone. Two complete pewter spoons and fragments from four others were also present. While it cannot be known with certainty, it is possible that some of these items were found at the base of Zone A, having been resting on the soil level that accumulated during the lifetime of the building. If this conclusion is correct, then it would appear that items of clothing, including a pair of shoes, a jacket or some similar item with buttons, cutlery, and other personal items were left abandoned on the floor of the pit. By the late eighteenth century, most enslaved individuals owned a second set of clothing, usually reserved for Sunday use (Walsh 1997:191). The nature of the clothing remains – the shoe buckles, the copper alloy buttons, and the sleeve links inlaid with opaque blue colored glass – suggest that these items were not from a set of work clothes.

#### Features CG715 and 716

A number of items rested directly on the floorboards of the prefabricated wooden boxes, in a dark organic loam probably generated by the decay of the wooden floors (Figure 5.3). In CG715, these items included a complete iron padlock, a key, a scythe, a gridiron handle, 60% of a wine bottle, and an iron saddle tree. The padlock and key suggested that the contents of the wooden box had been locked away from prying hands and eyes. If, as the evidence seems to suggest, a saddle had been stored in this box, the residents of the house would have been wise to protect it from theft and probable resale. While the larger tools appear to have been deliberately placed on the floor of the pit for storage, other items, such as the small fragments of ceramics, faunal bone, tobacco pipes, and bottle glass, probably fell in through the floorboards during the life of the building. An iron broad hoe and nine wrought iron spikes were stored on the floor of the pit on the opposite side of the duplex (CG716).

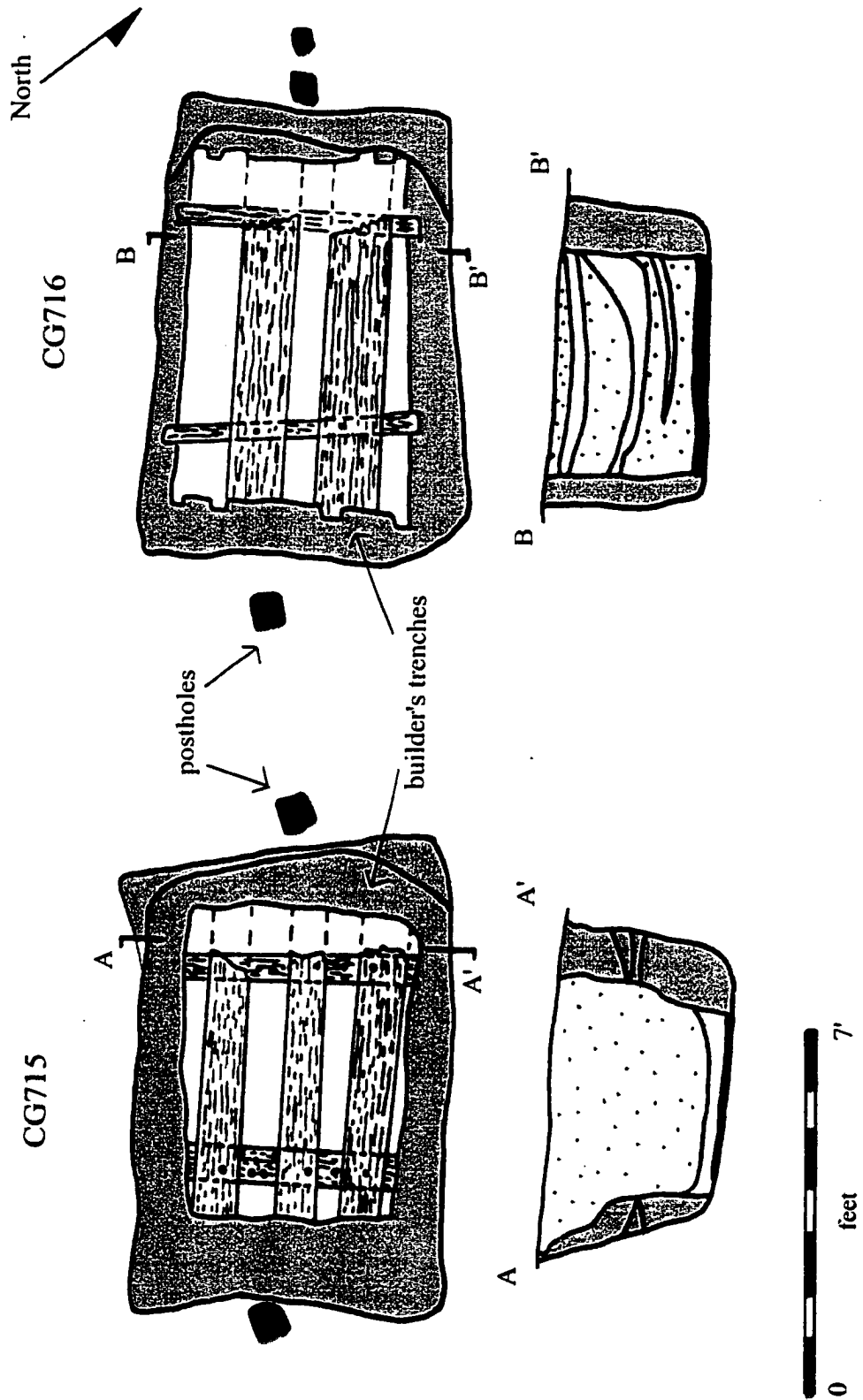


Figure 5.3 Plan and profile of Carter's Grove Quarter Features CG715 and CG716.

KM363

KM363 was a rectangular pit located along the exterior wall of the western room in the quarter (Figure 5.4). The feature contained a total of eleven unbroken wine bottles, two unbroken half bottles, an unbroken Pyrmont water bottle, and another six bottles that were over 80% complete. Although no map was prepared showing the location of the bottles prior to their removal from the feature, excavation photographs show they were contained within the last few inches of fill above the floor of the feature (Figure 5.5). The shapes of most of the bottles date their manufacture to the 1730s, although one of the bottles was made around the end of the first decade of the century. At the time of excavation, the bottles were lying on their sides along the floor of the feature, and some of the others appear to have been broken in place, perhaps by other debris and soil being tossed in on top of them. The placements suggest these bottles had been stored on the floor of the pit.

Numerous explanations are possible for the presence of so many bottles in this feature. It is possible, although not likely, that this quantity of wine or brandy was stored at one time in the pit. Store and plantation records show that enslaved individuals were allowed to purchase small quantities of alcoholic beverages on some plantations. Slaves typically purchased pints and half pints from Phillip Moore's Mount Tizrah Plantation store in early nineteenth-century North Carolina (Moore Papers), although it is unknown whether amounts were restricted by some agreement Moore had with surrounding planters, or if cost of the alcohol was a limiting factor for the enslaved. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that such large quantities would have been stored there at one time, unless the individual using the pit was running a small business selling alcohol to residents at the quarter and neighboring plantations.

Since bottles were hand-blown, and thus expensive to produce, they were recycled, often for years. Bottles could be returned for refilling, or exchanged for a small sum of money. In 1810, an enslaved man named Joe received a small sum of money for returning "1 black Bottle" to Phillip Moore (Moore Papers). It is unlikely that the complete bottles from this feature had been discarded by the enslaved.

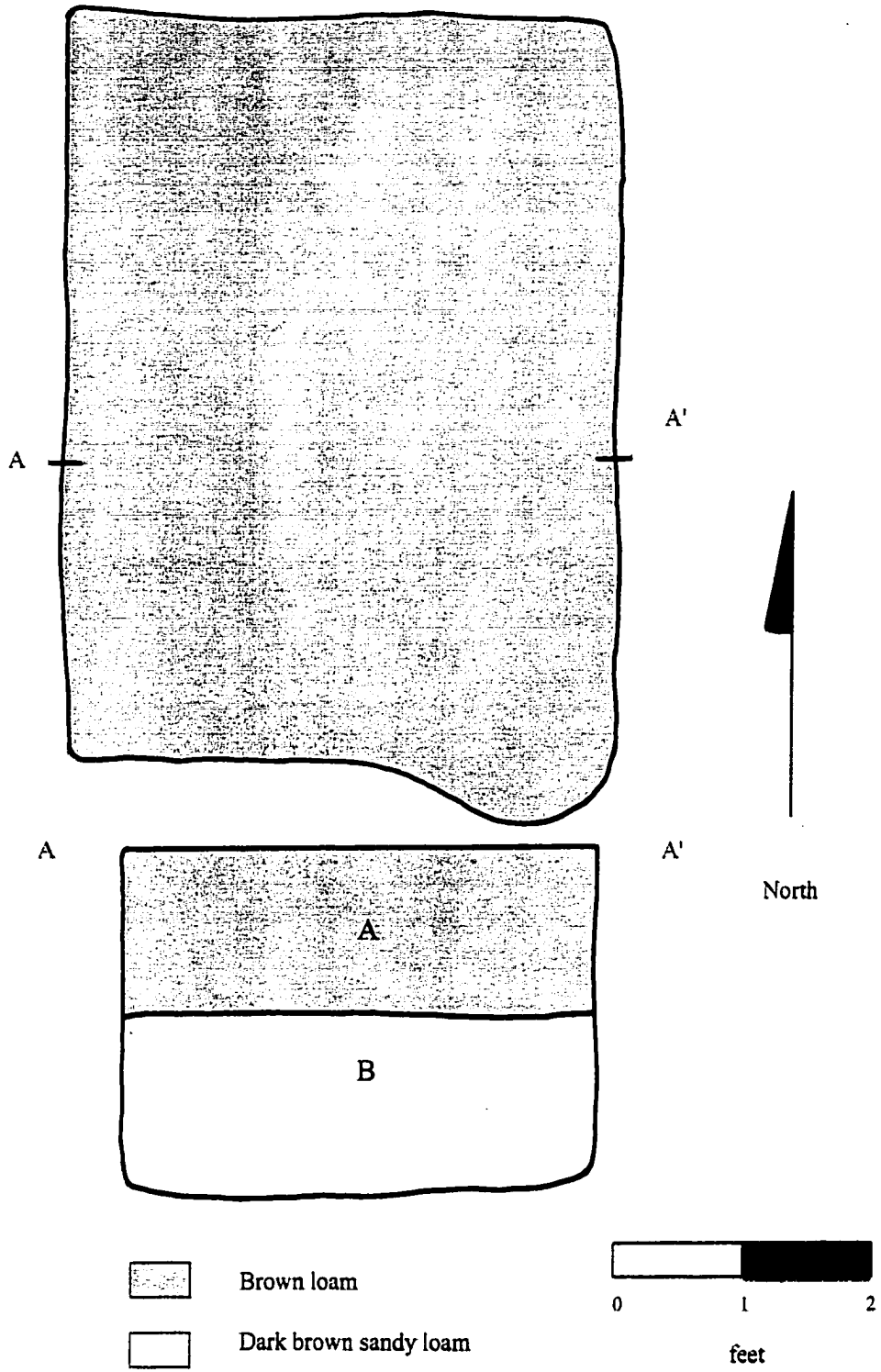


Figure 5.4 Plan and profile of Kingsmill Quarter Feature KM363.



**Figure 5.5** Excavation of Kingsmill Quarter Feature KM363 showing some of the complete bottles from the feature.



The bottles, even if they originally contained alcohol, were probably reused for other liquids. One of the bottles had originally contained imported German Pymont mineral water. Such bottles commonly appear in contexts dating between 1720 and 1770 (Noel Hume 1969:61). It is possible that the person with access to this pit was an individual of some power and authority at the quarter, such as a conjurer, midwife, or healer.<sup>6</sup> Bottles would have been needed for the preparation and storage of herbal remedies, such as liquid tonics. Other home remedies, with less scientific basis, may have also used. A practice exists in modern-day eastern North Carolina among some older members of the African American community, of catching and storing the first rain that falls in the month of May (Dorothy Redford, personal communication 1994). This water, used as a bath for the eyes, is said to prevent eye infections.

Another explanation for the bottles has a spiritual meaning. While bottles are certainly common components of West African shrines, it is less their presence than their sheer numbers from this feature that suggest it may have once functioned in a spiritual fashion. Other complete objects recovered from the same soil stratum included a colorless leaded glass bottle stopper, four complete kaolin pipebowls, a flat lead disc, a jaw harp, a broad hoe, the handle of a coarse stoneware pipkin, a shaving brush, and a clothing buckle. A fragment of ochre, a stone pigment, may have been used much as the Igbo use chalk for ornamenting the body for decorative or spiritual reasons. In the absence of a feature map showing the physical proximity of these objects to one another, it is difficult to state with assurance that these objects had spiritual significance or if this feature functioned as a shrine.

The variation in shape, location, and contents of the subfloor pits characterized as storage spaces is not surprising. While root cellars might have narrowly defined size, shape, location, and depth requirements that affected their success as food storage units, personal storage pits could be as individual as the persons creating them. The same factor holds true for the final presumed use for subfloor pits—that of shrine.

---

<sup>6</sup> Recent work in nineteenth-century Louisiana revealed evidence of changing consumer choices made by African American females as patent medicines became more widely available (Wilkie 1996).

## **Subfloor Pits as Shrines**

As suggested in the analysis of the Kingsmill Quarter pit discussed in the previous section, it was not always easy to assign a specific meaning to an artifact cache. The complete bottles in the Kingsmill pit may have simply represented a collection of bottles waiting to be recycled for cash; they may have been part of a healer's medicines; or they might have formed the core of a shrine grouping. A large part of the challenge rested in the fact that regular household objects were often used in a spiritual fashion in West Africa. As detailed in Chapter IV, precolonial Igbo shrine objects included iron tools, iron and copper bars, bronze and copper jewelry, pottery, beads, waterworn pebbles, shell, and ferruginous stone (Chambers 1996a:275, Onwuejeogwu 1981:57; Shaw 1978).

As discussed previously, the materials component of shrine goods is often more critical than the form of the spiritual object. The close links between iron and the Yoruba deity Ogun (Thompson 1993a) make nails, axes, and other iron objects potential items for honoring that deity. Iron and blacksmithing are also important in Igbo culture. While documentary and archaeological evidence suggests a basis corpus of West African shrine goods (bottles, iron tools, copper items, pottery, wooden objects, polished stones, chalk, etc.), there was individual freedom in creating shrines. To be successful at defining shrines archaeologically, this flexibility will need to be taken into consideration.

Given this challenge, it was often difficult to assign a spiritual function to a subfloor pit with certainty. Even so, four instances were found at the study sites where contextual evidence strongly supported the interpretation that the pits served a spiritual function. These four examples (Features 8, 9, 10, and 44) were all from the occupations at Utopia and they are described and analyzed in the following pages. All incorporate English and European produced goods also found in non-spiritual contexts on slave sites. This discussion is followed by descriptions of five other possible shrines. In these examples, a spiritual attribution is less certain, although the artifacts support these interpretations.

## *Utopia Quarter Period II, ca. 1700-1725*

### Feature 9

Only one of the features (Feature 9) from the earliest Utopia quarter contained an artifact cache that suggested it had been used for as a shrine. Feature 9 was located in the southwestern corner of the eastern room and contained one major zone of fill, the dark brown sandy loam that had been used to fill most of the structure's pits. This zone had been excavated in 2 centimeter levels, with artifacts from the north and south halves of the feature separated, thus making it possible to recreate the locations of excavated objects with some accuracy. A thin lense of brown loam mottled with orange clay rested on the clay floor of the feature, and placed on the surface of this layer were several objects that may have comprised a shrine grouping. In the northeast corner of the pit (Zone 9A11, directly above the floor zone) was a narrow iron agricultural hoe. The significance of iron in many West African cultures has been previously discussed. Located slightly to the south and towards the center of the feature was an early eighteenth-century wine bottle. The neck and upper shoulders of this bottle had been broken away, but the body of the bottle was still intact. Inside the bottle were fragments of bone and eggshell, perhaps placed there as food offerings. Eggs, which symbolize fertility, are used in various sacrificial ways in current Igbo culture and the inclusion of an egg pendant among the Igbo-Ukwu assemblage symbolizes their importance in the past as well (Cole and Aniakor 1984, Shaw 1970). A paving brick, a waterworn black cobblestone, a two inch section of kaolin pipestem, and the fragmented mandible of a raccoon were also in close proximity to the bottle and hoe. The iron object in combination with the container, bones, and large stones, form a grouping similar to shrine goods.

## *Utopia Period III, ca. 1725-1750*

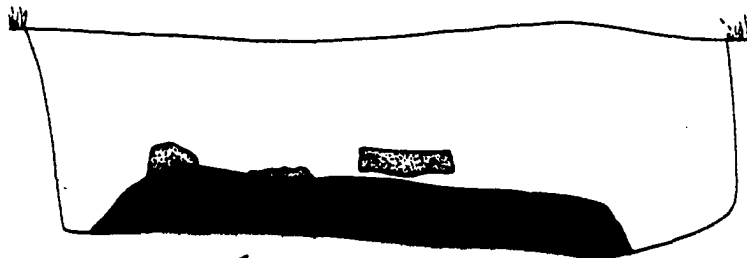
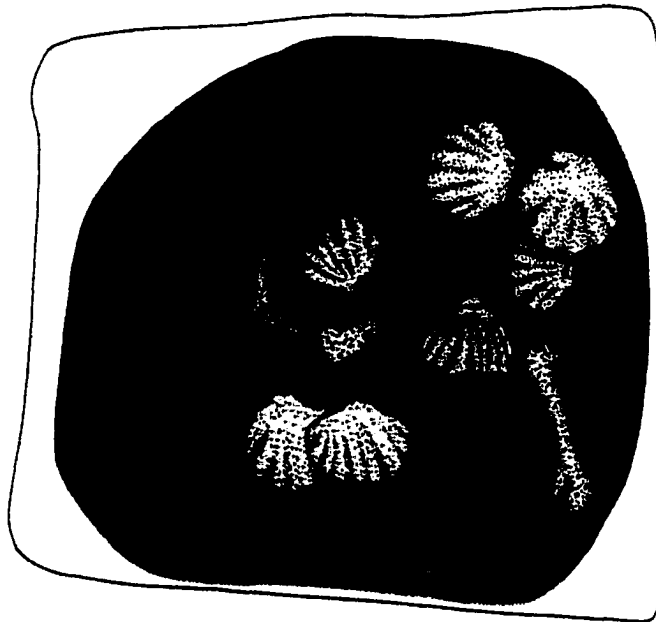
### Feature 44

Feature 44, a 4-ft. by 3-ft. rectangular pit with straight side walls and a flat bottom, was located in the southeastern corner of Structure 50 and dated to the second quarter of the eighteenth century. Excavation revealed that a .4 ft. thick rounded platform

of soil had been built up in the center of the feature's clay floor (Figure 5.6). Level B, the earthen platform, contained only six artifacts, including a brick fragment, two pipestems, a fragmentary wrought iron nail, a piece of daub, and a green and red glass bead. The small number of artifacts, as well as the fragmentary nature, small size (all under 1.5" diameter), and diversity of the assemblage, suggests these objects were not used in a spiritual fashion. Arranged on the platform's surface were seven complete fossil scallop shells, three large cow bones, two kaolin tobacco pipebowls, and one pipestem. A layer of organic brown sand had been deposited on top of the artifact-covered platform, completely filling the pit.

The placement of the shell and bone on the platform is reminiscent of elevated earthen platforms on early twentieth-century Igbo shrines, as well as Mande ancestral shrines of the upper Niger Delta (Jones 1931; Thompson 1993a:117). The composition of the assemblage as well bears striking resemblance to objects associated with Igbo spiritual traditions. Water, symbolized by the feature's fossil shells (ranging from 5.5 to 7" in diameter), is where the souls of the dead find temporary abodes while awaiting reincarnation and is considered sacred to the Igbo (Oramasionwu 1994:123-124). Fossil scallops like the ones from the Utopia pit are common finds on the beaches of the James and York Rivers that border the study area, where they have eroded from a 3.5 million-year-old deposit known as the Yorktown formation. The nearest fossil deposit to the Utopia Quarter is located five miles away (Walsh 1997:200), however, meaning that the enslaved went to some considerable trouble to obtain these shells.

The other objects placed on the platform were significant as well. Olaudah Equiano, an Igbo enslaved in eighteenth-century Virginia, noted in his autobiography that pipes and tobacco were placed in the graves of departed Igbo spiritual leaders (Equiano 1987). The animal bones, a pelvis, humerus, and femur from at least two different cows, were also significant. Bulls were considered a sacred animal by at least some groups of precolonial Igbo. Grazilhier, an associate of James Barbot, noted in 1699 that "they worship bulls...and it is not less than death to kill them" (Barbot 1699:462). Ifesieh includes cows, as well as rams, sheep, and goats among the animals held sacred today by the Igbo (Ifesieh 1986:68). Two of the bones contained butchering marks: the humerus contained a cut mark, and the femur (from a juvenile) had a chop mark.



↑  
Earthen platform topped with shell,  
bone and tobacco pipes

Figure 5.6 Plan and profile of Utopia Quarter Feature 44.

The artifacts on the platform's surface were largely unbroken, and two of the bones (the pelvis and femur) appeared to have been arranged to encircle the top of one of the shells. Additionally, all of the artifacts on the platform surface were white. Sacrifices to *Onishe*, an Igbo river spirit, are always white (Isichei 1978:182). Among the Igbo, as well as many other West African cultures, white is a sacred color, associated with the spirit world and symbolizing purity, moral ideals, and the Supreme Being (Awolalu 1979:4; Metuh 1985:113; Cole and Aniakor 1984:216). White stones were used in West African ancestor shrines, and such stones and white ceramic fragments have been found associated with similar archaeological assemblages in Maryland (Saraceni 1996:21; Talbot 1967:128), as well as in subfloor pits in the Virginia Tidewater. The number of objects may also be significant. There were seven scallop shells on the platform—this number occurs often in Igbo rituals, indicating continuity and the cyclical movement of life, ever-changing but repetitive and rhythmic (Cole and Aniakor 1984:18).

The assemblage's parallels with past and present Igbo and other West African shrines are noteworthy. Perhaps the most compelling evidence that this feature served as a shrine came from pollen analysis of soil samples. The overwhelming majority of the sample was comprised of pollen from native or cultivated grapes (Cummings and Moutoux 1999). Although pollen analysis cannot distinguish between the mere presence of grapes or a processed grape product like wine, grape pollen has been recovered from baked goods containing raisins (Dimpleby 1985:140), suggesting that pollen survived on the skins of grapes. Thus, it would be reasonable for pollen to survive in wine, whose manufacturing process includes the crushing of whole grapes. The large quantity of grape pollen from Feature 44 suggests that the Igbo practice of pouring libations of wine onto shrines as offerings continued in Virginia. While common in West African cultures, this practice has also been documented in the colonial southeast. Bristoe, an enslaved man living in Johnston County, North Carolina, was brought to trial as a conjurer in 1779. One of his alleged wrongdoings consisted of pouring brandy into a hole in the earth as part of a ritual undertaken on behalf of another enslaved man (cited in Crow et al. 1992:21). The desired outcome of the ritual was for the planter to purchase the enslaved man's wife, thus enabling the couple to live together on the same plantation. The court case against Bristoe contained evidence of other African-based practices. A detailed

discussion of this court case and its implications for the enduring strength of such beliefs is provided in Chapter VII.

Plantation and store account books for later in the eighteenth century record alcoholic beverages as one of the most common slave purchases (Martin 1997, Samford 1998). While there is little doubt that the enslaved were using alcohol for medicinal and recreational purposes, the presence of grape pollen in this feature suggests that it was also serving in a spiritual capacity. Elevated levels of hickory/pecan (*carya*) pollen in the soil layer sealing the platform suggests that the pit was filled in the spring, when these trees were pollinating (Scott-Cummings and Moutoux 1999). It is unclear whether the shrine was created, commemorated, and filled within a short period, or whether the pit remained open for a longer period.

This feature is quite spiritually sophisticated when compared with the shrine from Utopia's Period II and others discussed in upcoming pages. It is less likely that this feature represents a personal or ancestral shrine, but instead commemorates a specific tutelary deity (*alusi*). The considerable effort that went into the creation of this shrine: digging the pit, constructing the earthen platform, and gathering very specific shrine materials, some from a great distance, all indicate that this pit was a special shrine, perhaps created for a particular purpose. Deities associated with water, such as Idemili, were particularly vital in Igbo culture, and each had their own priest and cult objects (Cole and Aniakor 1984). The combination of white and water-related objects arranged on the earthen mound suggests that this pit may have contained a shrine that venerated Idemili, one of the Igbo water spirits. Idemili, the daughter of the Almighty God, came to earth in a pillar of water that rose from the sacred lake (Achebe 1987:93). As Igbo peoples spread throughout modern-day Nigeria and into the Diaspora, well away from the sacred waters, they continued to create shrines to Idemili. According to Igbo novelist Chinua Achebe (1987:94-95), these shrines were often simple and relatively plain, consisting of a stream, or a mound of earth, a stone, or an earthen bowl with seven pieces of chalk. Only women can make requests of Idemili (Achebe 1987).

Shrines to Idemili are located near water, although generally out of doors. This shrine was located in the corner of the structure closest to the James River, the largest body of water in the area, and visible from the building. The mound of soil upon which

the shells rested perhaps represented the pillar of water “fusing earth to heaven at the navel of the black lake” (Achebe 1987:94), with the seven shells mirroring the seven chalk sticks in Achebe’s novel, *Anthills of the Savannah*. While it may not have been possible for the enslaved to recreate detailed spiritual configurations in Virginia, the presence of this shrine shows that sophisticated spiritual knowledge was possessed and used by at least one individual in colonial Virginia.

*Utopia Quarter Period IV, ca. 1750-1780*

Feature 10

Feature 10 contained a single layer of grey brown sandy loam, extending throughout the 1.0 ft. depth of this feature. At a depth of approximately .25 ft., a concentration of complete iron and copper objects appeared, and the objects as well as their arrangement in relation to one another is reminiscent of Igbo shrine groupings (Figure 5.7). Iron tools, including two scythes, one crossed over an adze, and the other over an iron hitch, were present in the northeastern quadrant of the feature. An iron padlock and key were present in the southeastern quadrant. A brass candlestick and cufflinks lay in the southwestern quadrant, and a bone handled knife, clay marble, and a hook and file of iron were found in the northwestern portion of the feature.

Because of the placement of these objects near the top of the pit, the interpretation of these artifacts as a shrine grouping is potentially problematic, given earlier assumptions that shrine goods would be located near the bottom of the features. Interestingly, however, of the fifteen complete objects measuring over one inch in diameter, eleven were found at one vertical level within the feature. Additionally, the marble and cufflinks, both small items, were also found at this level, about .25 ft. below the feature’s surface. Chances of this concentration of complete items occurring randomly are virtually nonexistent. Also interesting is the segregation of the objects by material in the various compass quadrants of the feature: the two copper alloy objects were placed in the southwestern quadrant, items containing natural materials (bone and clay) were adjacent to one another, and most of the iron objects were present in the eastern half of the feature. The material composition of shrine goods is just as critical as



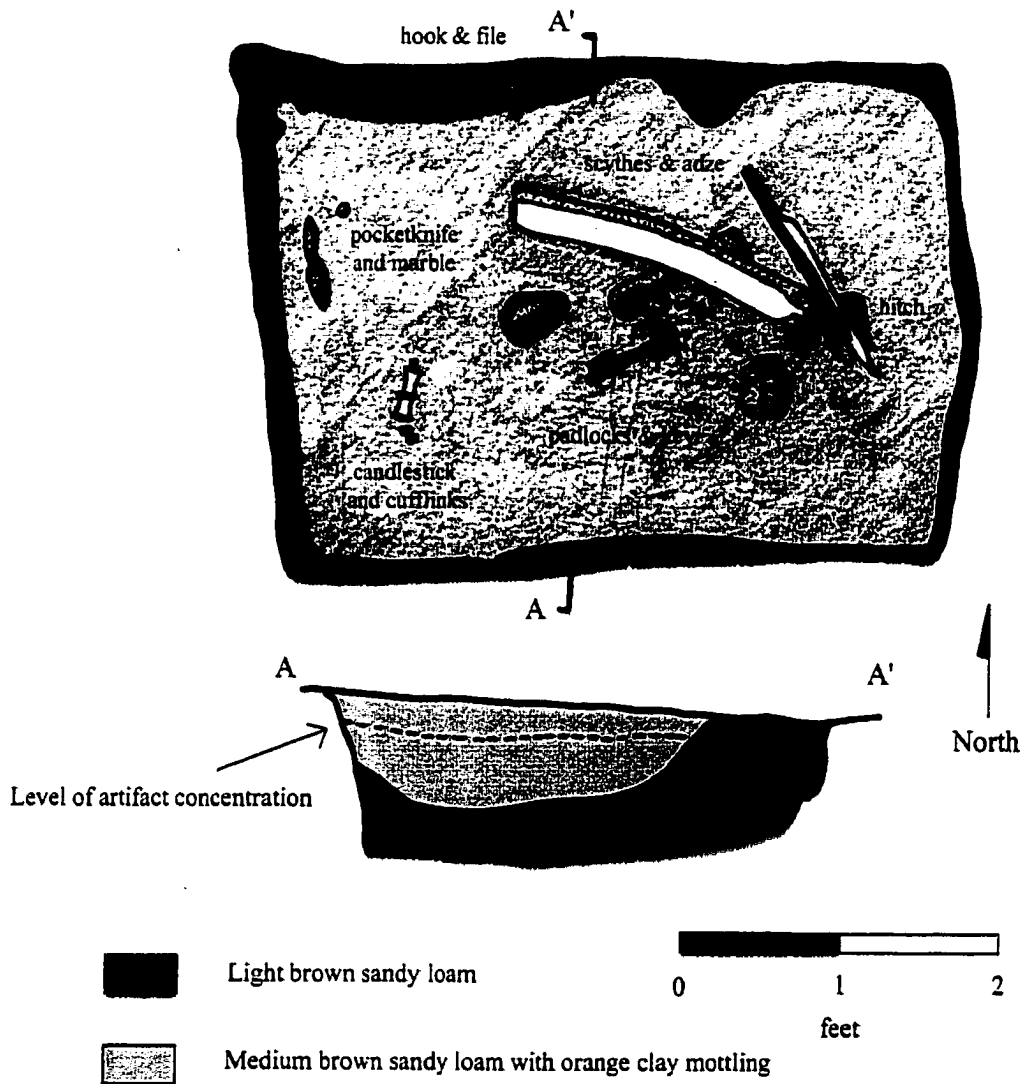


Figure 5.7 Plan and profile of Utopia Quarter Feature 10.

the forms and functions of the objects themselves (B. Campbell, personal communication, 1998), so the segregation of the objects by materials is potentially significant. Any explanation of why the shrine objects would have been located so close to the surface of the feature is speculative, but perhaps partially filling the pit before situating the shrine goods was an integral component of the spiritual activities.

### Feature 8

Feature 8 was a rectangular pit located in the northeast corner of Structure 140. Contained within the only level of fill was a 12" diameter copper frying pan, sitting in the eastern half of the feature. This pan contained a complete French wine bottle whose shape dated its manufacture to the early 1760s. Also contained within the pan were fragments of animal bone, one of only two cowrie shells found at the site, wood, and three white clay tobacco pipe fragments. The configuration of a group of objects inside a shallow pan is similar to Igbo ancestral and divination shrines (Figure 5.8). The spiritual importance of tobacco-related items and their role as Igbo grave goods has been addressed. The animal bone and the bottle, which may have contained wine or some other alcoholic beverage, were probably set within the pan as a food offering. Cowrie shells were used as currency in some parts of Igboland and are used currently as divination tools in many parts of West Africa. The presence of wood is also intriguing. Unfortunately, wood preserves poorly underground in Virginia's temperate climate, but it is intriguing to speculate that the wood fragments may have once been part of a carved figure or some similar ritual object.

## **Possible Shrines**

*Utopia Period III, ca. 1725-1750*

### Feature 39A

Feature 39A was located in the northwest corner of Structure 50. Some of the artifacts recovered from the earliest zone of fill in Feature 39 may hint at the feature's original use. A cowrie, modified with its rounded top removed in a way consistent with this

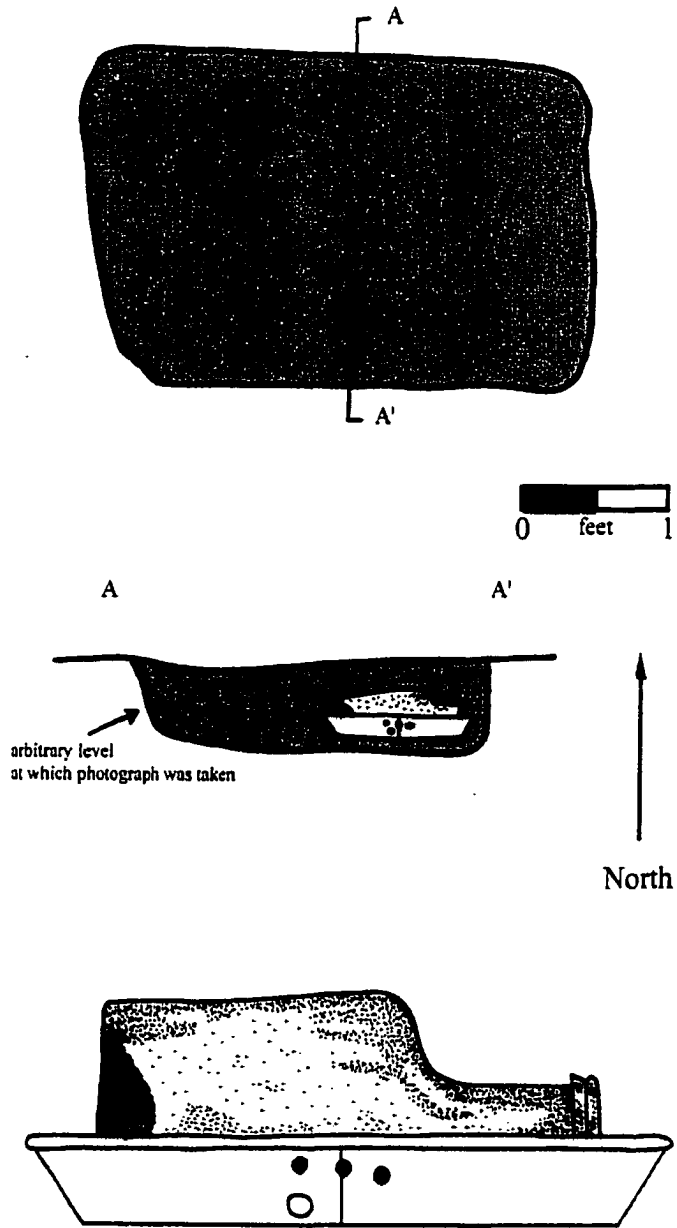


Figure 5.8 Plan and profile of Utopia Quarter Feature 8. Copper pan and complete bottle from the feature shown at bottom.

type of shell's use as divination tools in West Africa, was found in this layer. Also present was a complete tobacco pipebowl, five complete oyster shells, and almost fifty fragments of fossilized scallop shells, reminiscent of the earlier-discussed Feature 44 with the display of scallops. It is uncertain whether these items were ever part of a shrine grouping, but the composition of the assemblage suggests a spiritual function for the artifacts.

#### *Utopia Quarter Period IV, ca. 1750-1780*

##### Feature 29

Feature 29 contained a platform of tan sand (29B) sealing the clay pit floor along the northern edge of the pit, reminiscent of Feature 44 at Utopia Period III (Figure 5.9). Although artifacts from the overlying brown sandy loam (29A) were not mapped in place, several of the objects from this zone were similar to shrine goods. These artifacts included an iron hoe, a 1729 Spanish silver coin, a hinge, an elongated smoothed stone, and two iron spikes. The soil of the platform contained another polished stone, a rectangular sharpening stone.

##### Feature 9

Another subfloor pit, located along the partition wall in the western room, contained characteristics that suggested that it may have served a spiritual function. Feature 9 had a small mound of brick and broken brick bats built up on the clay floor in the northwestern corner of the feature floor, and a single tapered brick used in well construction located in the feature's northeastern half (Figure 5.10). Mounded objects frequently form the main components of shrines in West African cultures: for the Yoruba, a mound of iron signifies Ogun, and Lobi ancestral shrines are pillars of earth (Thompson 1993a:114, 150). Sealing both areas of brick was a single layer of brown sandy loam. The general assemblage of artifacts from this feature was typical, but there were artifacts with possible spiritual significance, including a piece of fossil coral emblematic of water, a mirror fragment, worked flint, and two knives. Since the locations of these objects and other artifacts were not noted, it is impossible to conclude they had a spiritual function.

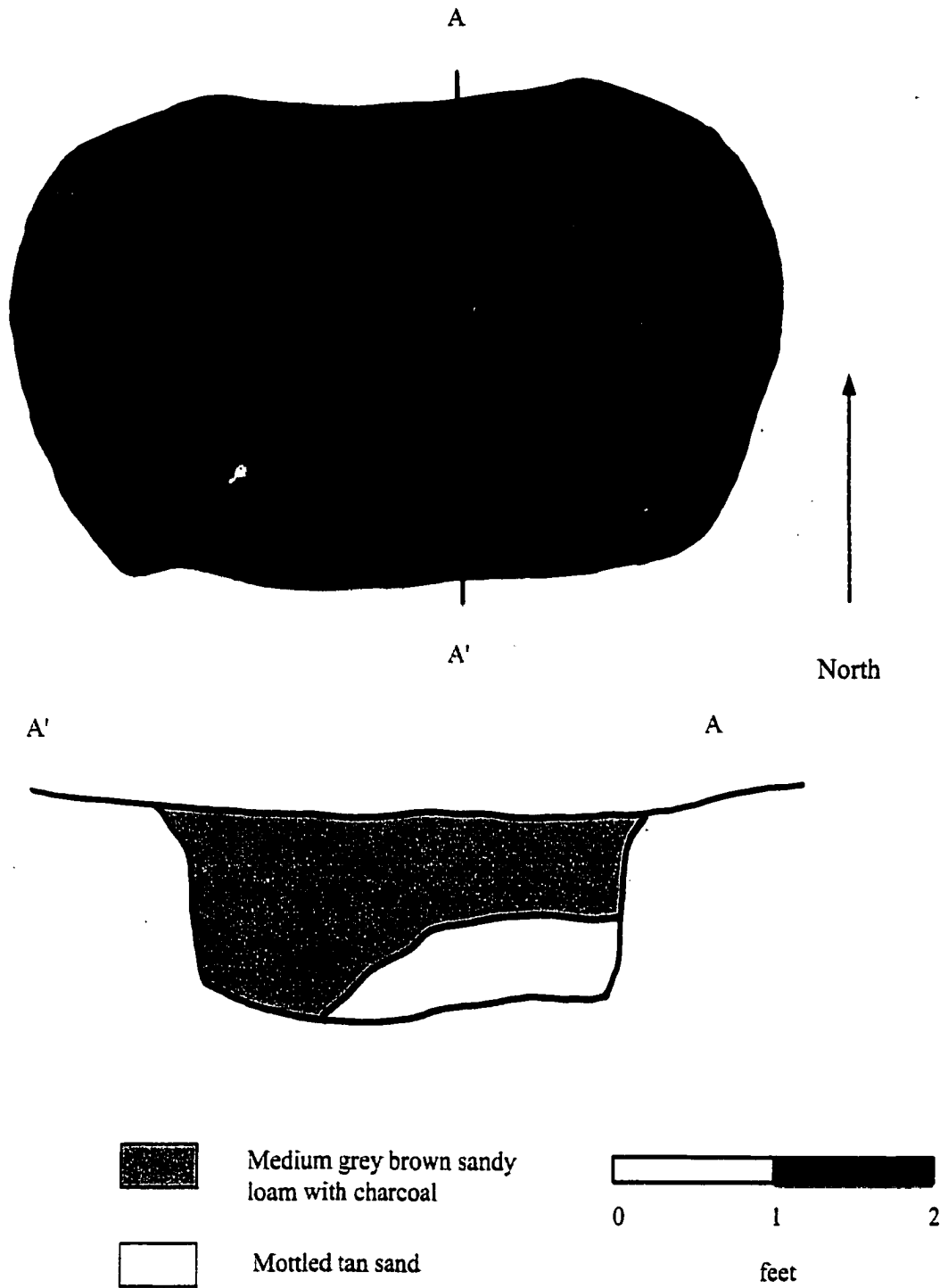


Figure 5.9 Plan and profile of Utopia Quarter Feature 29.

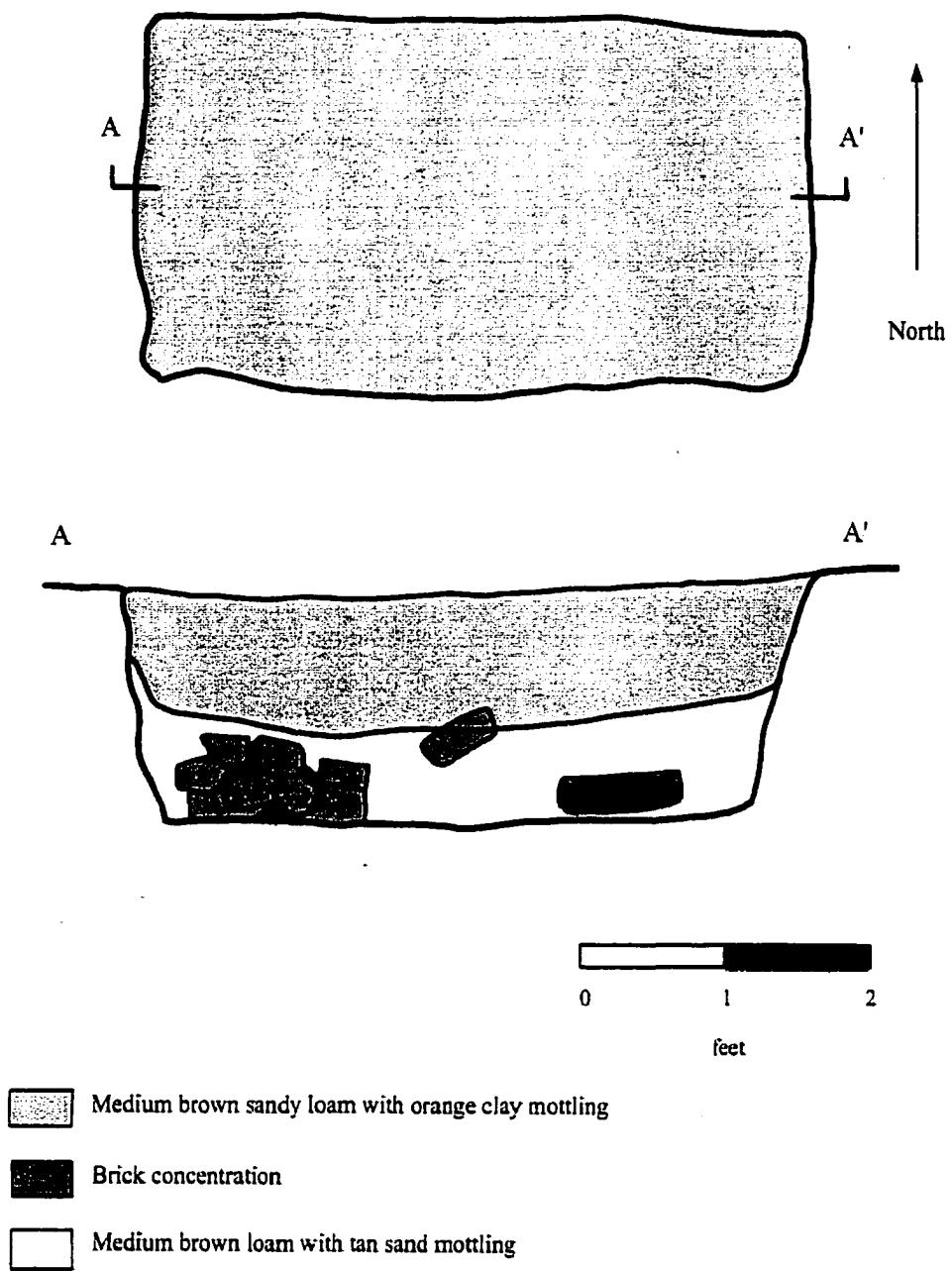


Figure 5.10 Plan and profile of Utopia Quarter Feature 9, showing mound of brick.

KM362

KM362 was located along the southern wall in the main portion of Structure One, probably adjacent to an exterior door and next to the interior partition wall between the structure's two rooms. This pit contained 292 artifacts in three soil zones. The uppermost fill contained brick rubble in a loamy matrix, with 69 artifacts, including a broken snuff or blacking bottle, a bone handled folding knife, and a bone backed button. Zone B, the middle layer, was a dark brown sandy loam containing an iron hoe, an iron bit, wrought nails, and ceramics. The small size and incompleteness of the artifacts from both of these fill layers suggest they were secondary refuse.

The floor level of the fill (Zone C), a dark brown loam mixed with orange sand, contained 116 objects, among them a collection of complete items. These unbroken items included a saw and a chisel, four complete and one partial tobacco pipe bowls, three complete wine bottles, some large fragments of faunal bone, a finished block of white marble, a copper alloy cooking pot handle, a seventeenth-century faceted pipestem, and several nails. Although the locations of all the artifacts were not noted, photographs taken during excavation show that the bottles were found on or very near the subsoil floor of the pit, which extended to a depth of 2.6 ft. below the base of the plowzone. The locations of the other items within the layer were not noted. All of the pipebowls, two of which had no attached portion of stem remaining, were molded with the Hanoverian coat of arms containing a lion and unicorn standing on either side of a coat of arms. One of the complete pipebowls also contained a molded floral motif.

The artifacts in the floor level of this feature bear a strong resemblance to a group of objects found in a mid-eighteenth-century subfloor pit in North Carolina. This pit was located at the Eden House site (31BR52) west of Edenton, North Carolina. The North Carolina tidewater, originally settled by Virginians, was also a tobacco-producing region with many similarities to Virginia's economic and social history. At this plantation, originally settled around 1660, excavators uncovered an earthfast structure that appeared to have been the original manor house before the construction of a more substantial dwelling (Lautzenheiser et al. 1998). The structure and its shed addition measured 24 by 16 feet and

most likely was housing for the enslaved during the 1720s and 1730s, when Gabriel Johnston, Governor of the North Carolina colony owned the property. Four subfloor pits cut the soil under the floor of the shed addition. One of these pits, Feature 3, contained an array of objects arranged on the flat floor (Figure 5.11). A pair of iron scissors and a kaolin pipe with four inches of intact stem were placed on either side of two complete wine bottles resting in the northeastern portion of the pit, forming an X-shaped configuration. In the southwest corner were two iron axe heads, crossed one over another, also in an X-shape. In the center of the pit was a complete colorless leaded glass decanter, and resting near it two additional complete wine bottles. The shapes of the wine bottles and a leaded-crystal wineglass engraved with the date 1733 establish that the pit was filled after that date.

The types of artifacts and their placements on the floor of the pit are significant and suggestive of West-African shrines. The wine bottle grouping was placed in the northeastern portion of the feature, paralleling findings from a number of other slave-related sites in Virginia and Maryland (Saraceni 1996:21). Although the significance of the northeastern placement of many groups of spiritual objects is unknown, it may be related to the northeastern quadrant of the Bakongo cosmogram,<sup>7</sup> which corresponds with birth and life (Thompson 1983:108-116). In fact, most of the artifacts from the lower soil level were encountered in the northeast portion of the feature.

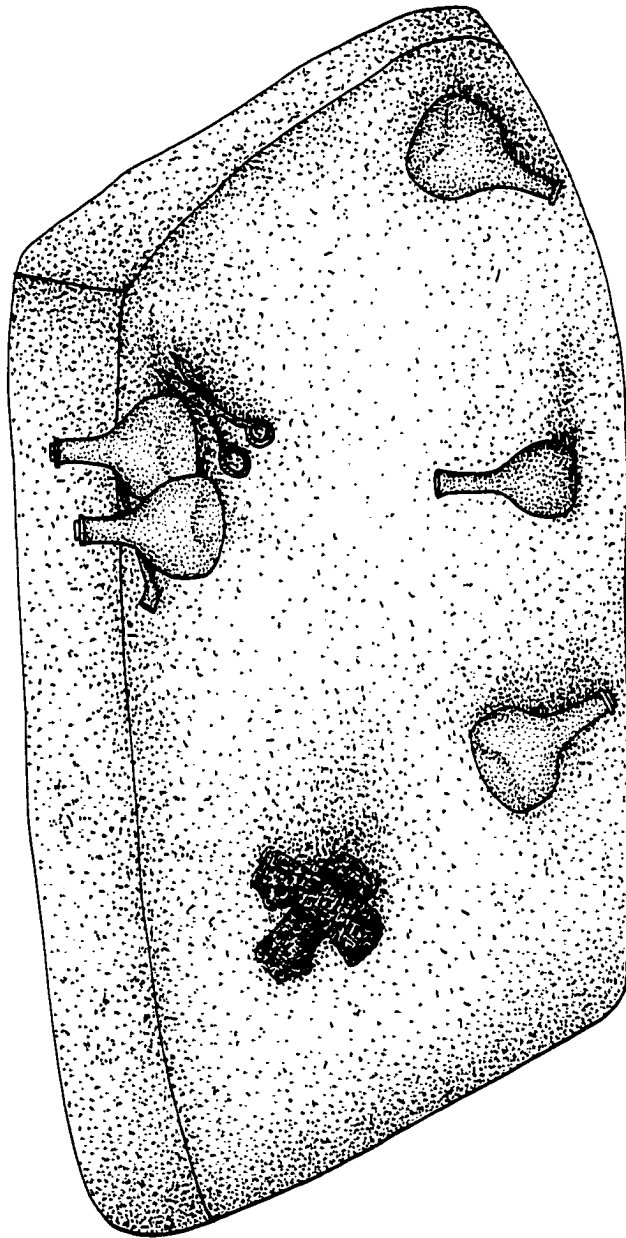
Not only are the placements of the artifact groups significant, but also the types of artifacts that constituted them. Olaudah Equiano, an Igbo enslaved in Virginia, noted in his autobiography that pipes and tobacco were placed in the graves of departed spiritual leaders (Equiano 1987). Ancestors are given libations of palm wine or other spirits daily, and the grouping of the pipe with the wine bottles links two types of artifacts with significance for ancestor veneration. The axe heads and scissors, with their cutting edges, could signify the protective powers of iron (Thompson 1993a).

Other items recovered from the pit with spiritual significance in West African cultures include six chalk fragments. In the Igbo creation myth, chalk is the core material from which both the earth and humans are formed (Oramasionwu 1994:103). The Igbo

---

<sup>7</sup> A cosmogram is a visual representation of the worldview of the peoples of the Kongo. It consists of a cross enclosed within a circle, with the top half of the circle representing the world of the living, and the bottom half is the world of the dead (Thompson 1993a:53).





**Figure 5.11** Shrine objects arranged on the floor of Eden House Feature 3.

heap pulverized chalk on ancestral shrines and also use it to decorate their bodies during sacred ceremonies (Achebe 1994, Oramasionwu 1994:269). At Onitsha in 1858, Reverend John C. Taylor noted a celebration where participants had painted their faces with red ochre and white clay (Taylor 1859 [1968]:283-284). Other artifacts from the Eden House pit include a flowerpot base whose round shape and pierced central hole are reminiscent of a Bakongo cosmogram and of pierced bone disks recovered from the Annapolis, Maryland cache (Adams 1993).

The North Carolina pit and the Kingsmill example share some significant similarities. Both pits contain complete wine bottles and pipebowls, as well as iron objects with sharpened cutting edges. Similar items are used on shrines in West and Central Africa. Unfortunately, it was impossible to determine from the field notes whether the artifacts in the bottom zone of the Kingsmill Quarter feature were grouped on the feature floor in a fashion similar to the North Carolina pit. Thus, although these items could very easily have served as a shrine grouping, this conclusion cannot be reached with any certainty.

Even if they did not serve as a shrine grouping, the artifacts from KM362 appeared to be a cache of objects that can be used to draw alternative conclusions about the individual who used this pit. The woodworking tools suggest that a craftsman with access to this type of tool placed these objects in the feature. Two of the three wine bottles contained glass seals stamped with the initials of planter Lewis Burwell (Figure 5.12). The shape of these bottles dates their manufacture as sometime in the 1750s. The other bottle was half-size and its manufacture dated to the second decade of the eighteenth century. Perhaps if this individual was a favored craftsman, he or she may have had greater access to alcoholic beverages than other individuals in the dwelling. Lewis Burwell IV may have provided these bottles of wine from his own private stock, perhaps as payment for a job well done. It has also been suggested that these bottles came to be in the subfloor pit through an act of theft or liberation from the Burwell wine cellar (Kelso 1984:190).



**Figure 5.12** Wine bottles with seal of planter Lewis Burwell. Bottles found in Kingsmill Quarter Feature KM362.

### KM378

Pit KM378 was a rectangular pit located in the southwest corner of the structure. A burned or fired clay patch in the feature floor indicated that a small fire or hot coals had been placed there to dry the walls of the pit. The two layers of fill in the feature were very different, indicating two completely different sources for the fill. The uppermost layer (KM378A) contained a mixed fill that consisted predominantly of yellow clay with some brick and mortar rubble. Fragmented wine bottle glass, pipestems, and wrought nails comprised 95% of the artifacts from this zone. The field notes suggest that this uppermost zone was very similar in appearance to the destruction fill characteristic of the later dating Period Two features.

The lower zone of fill, resting on the clay floor of the feature, was a brown sandy loam with some wood ash. The artifacts from this earlier level were more varied in nature, and more complete than items from Level A. The complete objects from Zone B were a Lewis Burwell sealed wine bottle similar to the two examples found in KM362, a molded pipebowl, a bone comb, nineteen straight pins, a wood gouge, and a hewing or scraping tool. Unusual objects included an upholstery tack and a partial furniture eschuteon plate. Unlike Zone A, this layer contained no architectural artifacts, and the only bottle glass was the complete bottle. Fragmentary objects included a pewter spoon bowl and spoon handle (neither artifact was available for analysis), a tin enamel earthenware drug jar, two mending fragments of a tumbler base, as well as rim fragments of a tumbler.

As with KM362, the absence of photographs or plan maps makes interpreting the pit as a shrine problematic. Certainly, the prevalence of complete items, particularly of highly breakable items like bottles, bone combs, and pipebowls, suggests that these objects were intentionally placed in the pit. Particularly relevant is the absence of any fragmentary glass and pipestems in this level of fill. Taken as a group, these objects again bear similarity to West African shrine groups, but could just as easily have been stored personal possessions.

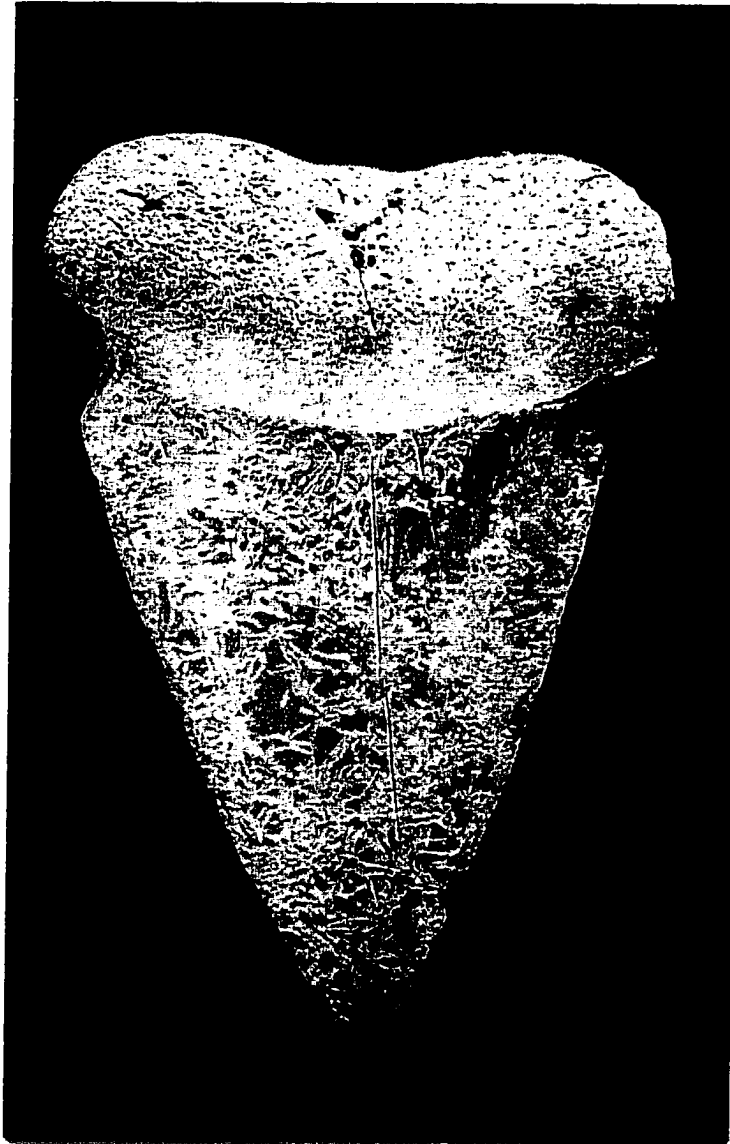
## Objects with Spiritual Significance

Archaeological findings in Virginia and other parts of the American South also confirm that the enslaved were continuing to practice at least some African-based spiritual beliefs, including the use of protective charms and medicine bundles (Young 1996; Franklin 1997). Caches of objects discovered in slave living quarters and bearing strong resemblance to Central African *minkisi* also suggest evidence of a more fully-developed aggregate of spiritual beliefs and practices than previously believed (Logan et al. 1992; Brown 1990).

Analysis of artifacts from the Virginia pits yielded not only evidence of shrines, but other objects of potential spiritual significance. These objects, sometimes crafted in whole by the enslaved, and sometimes modified manufactured goods, displayed iconographic motifs that had spiritual significance for the Igbo and other West African cultures.

While Feature 3, one of the hearth-front pits in Structure One at Utopia Period II, showed no evidence of having served sacred functions, it is interesting for other reasons. Although the floor level of the feature had contained very few artifacts, the primary fill zone of Feature 3 contained almost a thousand objects. Many of the animal bone from Feature 3 were in large, relatively complete and identifiable pieces, suggesting that the pit had been used as a place to discard trash, probably after the structure was no longer occupied. In addition to the animal bone, fossil shell, and iron nails that comprised the largest numbers of artifacts, many other items were present in the fill. Surprising was the number of personal artifacts, which included a homemade shell bead, 26 glass seed beads, a silver bracelet link, a piece of inexpensive copper alloy jewelry, an iron buckle, and a pewter button. Other personal items included a pair of scissors, a fossilized shark's tooth (Figure 5.13), mirror glass, a spoon handle, and a carved bone implement.

The carved bone item was the most interesting artifact found in the feature (Figure 5.14). Crafted from a hollow limb bone of a medium-sized mammal such as a deer or sheep, it tapered slightly along its 2 7/8 inch length, with a diameter of 7/16 inch at its smaller end. The larger (9/16") end had been plugged with a small carved disk of bone



**Figure 5.13** Fossilized shark's tooth from Utopia Quarter Feature 3.

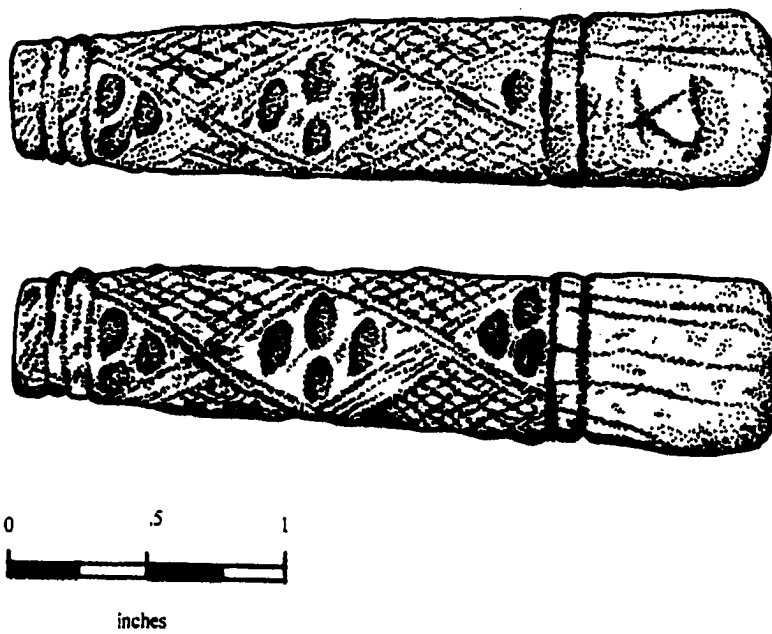


Figure 5.14 Carved bone container from Utopia Quarter Feature 3. Redrawn from Walsh 1997.

inscribed with a carved “X”. Elaborate carvings decorated the entire surface of the bone, with a series of geometric, crosshatched patterns.

While this object has been interpreted as a bone handle for a knife or some other piece of cutlery, this interpretation is suspect. If the object had served as a handle for a knife or fork, traces of iron would have been present on the narrow end opening, where the metal implement had been inserted into the handle. Additionally, cutlery handles were typically constructed from a solid slab of bone split lengthwise (Noel Hume 1969). The flat iron tang of the knife or fork was then placed between these two pieces of bone, which were then riveted together, securing the iron portion of the cutlery in place. The hollow interior of the Feature 3 implement would not have provided a secure fit for a cutlery tang. I suspect the bone object was created to serve another function—possibly as a needle case or even for a sacred function, like holding ritual medicines. Since one end of the bone was plugged (there was no evidence of a closure at the opposite end), it was probably created to serve as a container of some kind. The smaller end could have been stopped with a cork, or a plug of fabric or leather.

The carvings on the item, while certainly decorative, also have sacred meanings in Igbo culture. The pattern of alternating plain and crosshatched diamonds and triangles is similar to the Igbo “eyes of God” motif (Eze Ndubuisi, personal communication, 1999). Alternating zones of decorated and undecorated space is a style of surface treatment particularly common on objects from Igbo-Ukwu and seen continuing in Igbo art today (Cole and Aniakor 1984). The numbers of elongated ovals carved into the plain diamonds may also be significant. One of the triangles contains one oval, three triangles have three, and the two diamonds each contain 4 ovals. Numbers have important sacred meanings within Igbo culture: one is the symbol for *Chukwu*, the Supreme Creator, three symbolizes the *chi*, which provides an individual with the power to affect change in one’s life, and four is the number of completeness, symbolizing *Chukwu*’s home (Eze Ndubuisi, personal communication, 1999). What appears to be a boat is carved along one side of the object’s base. This design could either symbolize the boat that brought the enslaved to Virginia, or a vessel to return them to the homeland. Another oval, carved over the boat symbol, again refers to *Chukwu*, perhaps indicating a desire that appeals to the spiritual world would bring about a return trip, either in this life, or in the afterlife.



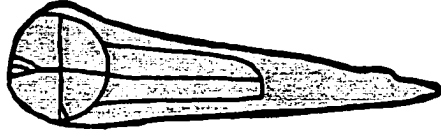
With the potential sacred nature of the carved bone object, perhaps other artifacts from Feature 3 bear closer analysis. An undecorated bone implement, otherwise similar in size and shape to the decorated bone, was also present in the feature. Natural objects with potential spiritual significance in Igboland were also present: half of the shell of a tortoise, four complete fossil bivalve shells, a fossilized shark's tooth, and several smoothed stones, one red and the other white. Igbo consider tortoises to be the wisest of all creatures, and this species is especially sacred to diviners. Tortoise shells are used to hold certain divination tools, and sometimes they are made into percussion instruments for calling the spirit of divination (Cole and Aniakor 1984:73). Waterworn stones are often included with shrines, and may have functioned as divination seeds. Certainly, many of the objects from Feature 3 could be considered luxury items, particularly given the meager character of artifacts from most of the other Period II features. The locations of individual artifacts from the feature were not recorded, so it was not possible to determine if any of the complete or more unusual objects were found in association with one another.

In addition to the undisturbed shrine in Feature 44, several additional pits from Utopia Period III contained objects that suggested they may have once served sacred purposes. Features 39 and 42 each contained a single cowrie shell. Both examples had their top surface cut away, a modification typical for cowries used in divination. With the convex surface thus removed, the cowrie would have an equal chance of landing on either of its sides when tossed onto the ground during divination. By reading the patterns created when the shells were cast, a diviner could counsel his client (Cole and Aniakor 1984:73).

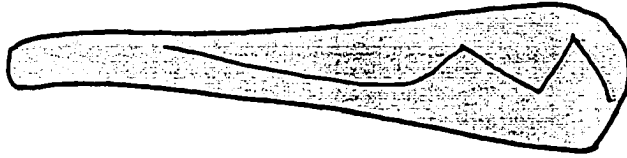
Particularly interesting are a group of thirty cast pewter spoon handles from the mid- to late eighteenth-century context at the Kingsmill Quarter (Figure 5.15). Ethnohistoric and ethnographic evidence suggests the spoon handles from Kingsmill and several other Virginia sites were used as divination tools.<sup>8</sup> Most of these objects were found in the fill of subfloor pits in the quarter. The handles had been deliberately broken away from the spoon bowls, and in some instances, the broken end had been smoothed or

---

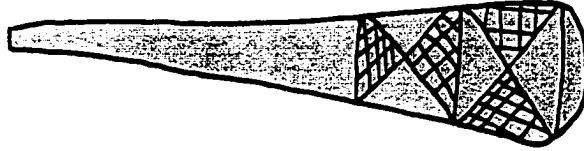
<sup>8</sup> Although it would be reasonable to argue that these spoons were used for eating, and simply discarded after having broken, several factors argue against this conclusion. Proportions of handles to bowls was very pronounced (4 to 1), suggesting that the handles were the portion of interest. Additionally, some of the handles showed signs of purposeful breaking; i.e., the handles had been twisted repeatedly to weaken the metal at its thinnest point where it joined the bowl. The broken ends of some of the other handles had been rounded or sharpened, perhaps to smooth away the jagged metal edges.



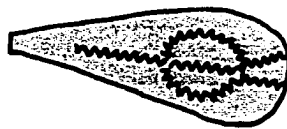
Kingsmill Quarter 377A-10



Kingsmill Quarter 350B-83

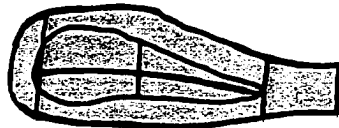


Kingsmill Quarter 154-2



Kingsmill Quarter 404A-87

Spoon handles are  
not shown to scale



Kingsmill Quarter 353B-27

Figure 5.15 Sample of carved designs on pewter spoon handles from Kingsmill Quarter.

shaped into a point. Sixty percent of the handles had been decorated with engraving that postdated the original manufacturing process. Most of the decorated spoons had been incised with linear zigzag patterns produced by a leather working pinking tool.<sup>9</sup> Other examples of the spoon handles were etched with straight lines that could have been produced with any sharp implement, including knives, awls, or heavy needles.

Furthermore, the engraved motifs on the Virginia spoon handles bear strong resemblance to several types of Igbo decorative motifs. The use of running lines of V-shaped decorative elements has precedent among cast bronze bells and other Igbo ritual objects<sup>10</sup> (Neaher 1976; Shaw 1970), some dating back as far as the tenth century. Several of the Kingsmill handles have decorative elements very similar to a personal ritual object called an *ofò* in museum collections, with the engraved element of this handle mirroring the shape and decoration of a bronze *ofò* collected by art historian Roy Sieber (Bentor 1988). Other handles have designs that closely resemble Igbo body cicatrization motifs. These patterns are also found carved onto other wooden personal ritual objects called *ikenga* and other display figures. Body scarification serves multiple functions for the Igbo—they can be symbols of rank, clan, tribe, social or marital status, and sometimes are even done for medicinal or protective reasons (Adepegba 1976; Cole and Aniakor 1984).

Additionally, other items from some of the subfloor pits appeared to have been components of divination kits. Igbo divination kits included statue representations of deities, earthenware pottery, divination seeds, bones, pebbles, *ofò*, tortoise shells and animal skulls (Arinze 1970:65). Possible divination items included the pierced pig metatarsals from the Eden House site and Rich Neck Quarter, fossilized sharks' teeth, and turtle shells.

Other artifacts from Utopia features suggest they may have served a spiritual function. One pit (Feature 42) in Structure 40 contained a soil zone (42C) with a number of potentially sacred objects: a fossilized whale vertebrae, a cowrie shell, and a number of

---

<sup>9</sup> My thanks to Jay Gaynor, Curator of Metals at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation for his assistance in describing various ways these marks could have been made.

<sup>10</sup> The bronze objects Neaher studied were ethnographic and archaeological items, largely of indeterminate date.

complete fossil scallops (*pectin*) and pierced *Glycymeris* shell (Figure 5.16). Additionally, the bowl of a kaolin tobacco pipe from Feature 41 had been cut or incised with a cross-hatched pattern similar to the design from the bone implement from Period II, whether for identification or sacred purposes is unknown. The juxtaposition of the dark and light triangles, also seen on one of the Kingsmill spoon handles, recalls the dualist cosmology so critical to Igbo culture (Cole and Aniakor 1984). Contemporary Igbo carvers still favor geometrical motifs and often use parallel lines or cross-hatching to add visual interest (Cole and Aniakor 1984).

While owning such objects would contribute to an individual's sense of self and well-being, the real power was in their creation (Cole and Aniakor 1984; Nooter 1993). Woodcarving is the favored Igbo medium in which to craft spiritual objects (Cole and Aniakor 1984:1). Because wood does not survive well archaeologically, the presence of some important categories of spiritual items, such as carved wooden ritual objects called *ikenga* or *okposi*, would be lost. Wood fragments found in Feature 8's copper pan at Utopia may have been remnants of similar objects. The poor preservation of wood obscures the degree to which it played a role in the spiritual lives of Virginia's enslaved. The carved bone implement from Utopia's Structure One, however, establishes that the carving tradition lived on in eighteenth-century Virginia.

### Conclusions

As seen in the previous analyses, the quality of the field notes and the availability of soil samples make an enormous difference in the ability of later research to determine original pit function. In the case of hearth-front pits, the only means of determining whether food storage actually occurred in them is through analysis of microfloral remains. The sample used in this study, although small, suggests that food storage did occur in these features, but additional samples need to be studied to create a larger database. These results should be compared with similar analysis on non-hearth pits to either further strengthen or undermine the argument that primarily hearth-front pits were used for food storage.

Ethnoarchaeology provides another avenue of research to determine if subfloor pits made effective root cellars (Neiman et al. 1998). Various types of vegetables and fruit could



Figure 5.16 Pierced *Glycymeris* shell from Utopia Quarter.

be stored in subfloor pits at a site where such features had been built, such as at the reconstructed quarter at Carter's Grove. The condition of the food could be monitored over the course of the winter, with temperature and humidity levels gauged using modern equipment. In this fashion, it could be resolved whether ambient heat from fires effected pits located in fronts of hearths. The effects of underground storage on different types of foods could also be determined.

In the case of caches of *de facto* artifacts, denoting personal storage or spiritual areas, it was generally much more difficult to identify and isolate caches when the locations of artifacts were not noted during the actual excavation. In this study, the strongest arguments for spiritual functions could be made when extensive mapping or photography of the feature and its objects had occurred during fieldwork. In the case of shrines as well, soil analysis strengthened the spiritual interpretation in one case. Because there was a high degree of crossover between spiritual objects and items used in everyday life, it is only through viewing objects in relation to one another that insight will be gained into their functions and meanings.

The value of this recommendation has been clearly proven at archaeological excavations in Texas and Maryland. At the Levi Jordan Plantation in Brazoria, Texas, a divination kit had been buried in the corners of the postbellum house (Brown and Cooper 1990). In Annapolis, Maryland, careful excavation in a kitchen occupied in the late nineteenth century by an African American female revealed a series of objects placed under the room's brick floor (Wheeler 2000). The physical configurations of these objects, as well as the types of objects themselves revealed that they had been used in the practice of Hoodoo, a postbellum belief in manipulating the spirit world to affect the living. It will only be through careful excavation, with sensitivity to and knowledge of African American spiritual beliefs, that additional spiritual caches, such as the examples in Texas, Maryland, and at the study sites, will be recovered.

## **Chapter VI.**

### **INTERSITE COMPARISONS**

In this chapter, I compare the five study sites to one another within the larger context of Virginia slave archaeology. By examining what archaeology reveals about changing patterns in architecture, quarter layout, material life, work, and diet, I form a picture of Virginia slave life in the eighteenth-century Tidewater.

#### **Architecture and Demographics**

All five sites, similar in function and placement at their respective plantations, were quarters that housed slaves whose primary responsibilities were agricultural work and tending livestock. Over the course of the century, changes could be charted in construction methods, building sizes and arrangement on the landscape that provided clues to quarter demographics. The tradition of earthfast construction, a vernacular building form common in seventeenth-century Tidewater Virginia and Maryland, was still in evidence prior to 1750. All of the structures at the two earliest Utopia Quarters were timber-framed buildings constructed around earth-set posts. Earthen floors, unglazed wooden-shuttered windows, and stick and mud chimneys characterized these buildings. Hearth-front subfloor pits were created and maintained over the lifespan of the building, while pits in other parts of the structures appeared to come and go throughout the occupation.

By the last occupation at Utopia, beginning around mid-century, earthfast buildings had given way to log or timber-framed structures set on shallow ground sills. Leaving no archaeological traces of foundation walls or supports, placement and estimated dimensions of these structures had to be based solely on the patterns of subfloor pits cut through their

earthen floors. This same form of construction, also with stick and mud chimneys, was evident at the late eighteenth-century Carter's Grove Quarter, as well as other contemporary slave houses in the Williamsburg area (Franklin 1997, Samford 1991). Reasons for this change in construction methods are unknown, but may be related to the agricultural needs of the plantations. Since they were constructed without below-grade support posts, these buildings may have been easier to relocate adjacent to new agricultural fields as crops depleted soil fertility.

The only permanent architecture at any of the five sites was at Kingsmill Quarter. Its two timber framed structures had been constructed on continuous brick foundations. Unlike the other quarters, they contained wooden floors and brick chimneys. These examples, with rather atypical construction for eighteenth-century slave quarters, may have begun their lives as a planter's or overseer's home and kitchen and were later converted to slave housing.

Aside from the trend at these sites towards a less permanent form of construction as the eighteenth century progressed, architectural evidence suggests slaves' roles in shaping their built environment and in demographics at the quarters. In the absence of good documentary evidence on the enslaved communities at these sites, it is impossible to say with certainty how the residents were distributed about the quarter or how they used these buildings. The structures themselves offer some clues, however. At Utopia's Period II occupation, only one room in each two-room building was heated, typical of an early English hall and parlor floor plan (Carson et al. 1981). This evidence suggests that all the residents of any given structure had access to both rooms. If this conclusion is correct, then it is possible that the enslaved were using each of the two rooms differently. The floor plans of Structure 50 at Utopia Period III, with its heated central room and small flanking unheated spaces and of the unheated addition at Kingsmill Quarter suggested general living and working areas versus sleeping and storage spaces within the building. It is possible that groups of unrelated individuals or extended families lived in these structures, for example, with sleeping areas separated by gender or by small groupings within a family. This situation contrasts with the later two-room/two hearth duplexes at Utopia and Carter's Grove, where a family group presumably inhabited each room.



The limited square footage of one of the Utopia Period III structures (Structure 40) compared with the other buildings from Utopia may indicate that it served as a single-family dwelling. Research suggests that some family formation had begun to occur on plantation quarters prior to mid-century (Kulikoff 1986). At Carter's Grove and Utopia Period IV, the presence of several single, isolated subfloor pits suggested small, probably single-family structures had stood over them. Structures at Carter's Grove and Utopia showed subfloor pits located off the sides of ends of the houses, providing evidence of small additions, probably added as private spaces for individuals.

There has long been debate over whether slaves had input in the design of quarter structures and communities (Fesler 1997a, Sobel 1987). The U-shaped building arrangement at the earliest Utopia quarter was similar to West African house compounds of that period. The central courtyard located there and a similar area at Carter's Grove were surely important gathering spots for residents to cook, socialize, and rest. Similar to many West African societies, it appeared that numerous activities took place outside the quarters, with structures used primarily for sleeping and storage. The physical arrangement of the quarters at the later Utopia occupations and Carter's Grove were more organic, with buildings scattered at various alignments on the landscape.

While the spatial arrangements of some quarters were suggestive of African American influence, slaves may have also been instrumental in choosing the construction techniques that went into the building of their homes. The overall dimensions, post and beam construction, roof framing, and earthen floors typical of eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Virginia slave quarters were also common to many West African societies (Vlach 1978, Sobel 1987). John Vlach has postulated the existence of distinctly different African American and Anglo-American mental templates for dwelling dimensions. Slave houses, built and inhabited by African Americans, generally fit a West African template based on twelve-foot units. Since slaves participated in all phases of house construction, they may have been able to create living spaces that conformed to familiar and desirable conceptions of physical space. In addition to influencing quarter arrangements and housing construction, slaves in some instances may have also had some voice in where their homes were located. In one example from eighteenth-century Virginia, a slave recounted his pleasure at being able

not only to construct his home on the site of his choice, but of being able to put in a garden and a chicken pen (Sobel 1987:111).

While most of the buildings appeared to have been constructed and used as housing, archaeological and documentary evidence shows other types of buildings such as corncribs and barns at quarters. The large quantities of faunal bone from Structure 20 at Utopia Period II suggest this structure may have served as a communal kitchen. Livestock enclosures and garden spaces were typical and the Kingsmill yard appeared to have contained a small pond, probably for watering livestock. Slaves at all of the study sites relied on freshwater springs rather than wells as their source for water. Large trash pits filled with animal bone, shellfish, and other debris stood close enough to the houses at each site to create unpleasant odors for the quarter residents on a warm day, as well as inviting unwanted rodents and other wildlife into the immediate area. Analysis of pollen samples from the subfloor pits provided evidence of the weedy plants in the vicinity of the quarter—plants typical of the fringe areas around agricultural fields and woods.

Table 6.1 provides data on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century slave quarters excavated in Virginia over the last three decades. While work in Virginia has focused on slave sites from the former century, archaeologists are beginning to excavate nineteenth-century sites. These sites appear to have been influenced by the plantation reform movement of the early decades of the century that advocated healthier living conditions as well as stricter discipline for slaves (McKee 1992). Quarters excavated at Shirley, Portici, and Willcox plantations and at the Polly Valentine house in Williamsburg reflect planters' growing concern with sanitation, particularly in the construction of housing (Edwards 1990, Leavitt 1984, Parker and Hernigle 1990). Buildings were raised off the ground on pier supports to allow a healthy flow of air beneath their wooden floors. Rooms were shielded against the cold by glass-paned windows; substantial chimneys of brick or stone provided heat. Although reformers advocated keeping yards clean and clear, the Virginia sites and those at Somerset Place in North Carolina show either that the masters did not enforce such practice or that slaves successfully resisted it: the ground beneath the quarters and surrounding yards were found to be strewn with layers of sheet midden consisting of broken pottery, glass, animal bone, and other debris (Steen 1995).

**Table 6.1. Dimensions of Virginia Slave Quarters**

Site	Foundation Type	Structure Dimensions	Date
Jordan's Journey	earthfast	?	1620-1635
Utopia Period II			
Structure 1	earthfast	12 x 28	1700-1725
Structure 10	earthfast	15 x 32	1700-1725
Structure 20	earthfast	12 x 27	1700-1725
Tutter's Neck	brick	25 x 16	1730-1740s
Utopia III			
Structure 40	earthfast	12 x 16	1725-1750
Structure 50	earthfast	15.5 x 24	1725-1750
Bray Quarter	earthfast	12 x 12	1740-1781
Littletown 1	earthfast	12 x 16	1750-1781
Littletown 2	earthfast	15 x 15	1775-1800
Utopia Period IV			
Structure 140	ground sill	22 x 32	1750-1780
Structure 150	ground sill	?	1750-1780
Structure 160	ground sill	?	1750-1780
Hampton Key	earthfast	28 x 24	1750-1781
Kingsmill Quarter			
Structure 1	brick	40 x 18	1750-1780
Structure 2	brick	28 x 20	1750-1780
North Quarter	brick	25 x 16	1775-1781
Rich Neck Quarter	ground sill	?	1775-1815
Carter's Grove			
Group House	ground sill	20 x 42	1780-1800
Duplex	ground sill	?	1780-1800
Foreman's House	ground sill	?	1780-1800
Monticello - Mulberry Row			
Quarter O	stone	20 x 12	1770-1800
Quarter R	stone	12 x 14	1793-1809
Quarter S	stone	12 x 14	1793-1820
Quarter T	stone	12 x 14	1793-1810
Willcox	brick pier		1840s
Shirley	brick pier	20 x 40	1843-1865
Valentine	brick pier	15 x 25	1840-1865
Portici Plantation			
Pohoke Quarter	stone pier	12 x 12	1820-1863
Cellar Quarter	cellar room	12 x 14	1820-1863

Sources: Kingsmill (North Quarter, Kingsmill Quarter, and Littletown Quarter): Kelso (1984); Carter's Grove: Kelso (1972); Monticello: Sanford (1991); Rich Neck: Franklin (1997); Portici: Parker and Hernigle (1990) Valentine: Samford (1999); Shirley: Leavitt, (1984); and Willcox: McKee (1988).

### Subfloor Pits

Clear-cut functions for most of the subfloor pits were difficult to determine, because they were predominantly filled with secondary refuse; i.e. garbage and soil not associated

with the original use of the features. Pits whose use span had been cut short by the collapse of a wall were filled with a combination of household refuse and secondary debris probably swept up from the yard of the quarter. Later phase pits in the quarters generally contained higher percentages of architectural artifacts, such as nails and other building hardware. These figures suggest that pits constructed during the later phases were filled at the time of or after the overlying building was destroyed or removed.

During the first half of the century, the inhabitants were still experimenting and making some modifications in pit construction, particularly on hearth-front pits. The complex in Structure 50 at Utopia Period III provides an illustrative example. Perhaps remembering the earlier hearth-front pit collapse in Structure 10, the residents of Structure 50 chose to place their first hearth-front pit (Feature 56) some six feet away from the hearth, well back from the busiest foot traffic area. Later in the lifespan of the building, a pit of similar size and alignment (Feature 53) was placed much closer to the hearth, at a distance of less than two feet. It is unknown whether damage to the earlier feature or some other reason caused its abandonment. If gaining effects of radiant heat from the fire for food preservation was indeed a consideration in locating hearth-front pits, it is possible that Feature 56 was simply located at too great a distance from the hearth to be beneficial.

Later, during the last phase of pit construction, orientation of the hearth-front pits was changed, as the residents dug three pits with their short axes facing the hearth (Features 54, 57, 58). By the time these three pits were constructed, large areas of the floor around the hearth had been disturbed by earlier pit construction. This fourth phase of construction apparently represented an attempt by the structure's residents to access the warmer areas in front of the hearth, while at the same time locating the pits where they cut through the greatest area of undisturbed soils that would provide the sturdiest pit walls.

In several cases, the residents at the sites attempted to strengthen pit walls when they cut through earlier back-filled pits. For example, where the two features overlapped at Utopia Period III, a sheathing of clay (48G) had been built up against the fill of the earlier Feature 49 to form the eastern wall of the later built Feature 48. A similar action was taken at the same site when a thick (1.25 to 1.5 ft.) clay layer was used to finish filling Feature 53 prior to the construction of Features 57 and 58, which cut the earlier pit.

While undisturbed subsoil clay provided the sturdiest walls for features, it was obvious that this factor was not the only consideration when the enslaved constructed pits. For example, after a wall collapse between two features at Utopia Period III, pits were reconstructed in the same location. It would have been easier to relocate a new pit along the west wall in the same room, or simply to enlarge the old pit. Reconstruction in the original location suggests that placement was viewed as important – whether for sacred reasons, or because these areas were viewed as “belonging” to a certain individual.

The residents of the quarters were also experimenting with pit depth, particularly for the hearth-front pits. The earliest hearth front pit in Structure 50 at Utopia III (Feature 56) was only .5 ft. deep, but was replaced by Feature 53, which extended to a depth of 2.75 ft. Damage from groundwater rising into this pit was evident, however, as erosional undercutting around the perimeter of the feature’s base. In the fourth period, the hearth-front pits were dug to depths ranging between 1.5 and 1.75 ft., presumably out of groundwater range, but still considerably deeper than the earliest pit.

The level of repair and reconstruction on hearth-front pits suggested that hearth fronts were viewed a prime locations for pits and also that pits located there were difficult to maintain in good repair. Difficulties in maintenance may be accounted for by several factors. First, the hearth would be one of the areas with the highest level of foot traffic in the house, as people warmed themselves at the fire, prepared meals in inclement weather, or used its light for sewing or other tasks (Figure 6.1). Activity around and over the pit covering may have accelerated the collapse of the clay walls. If the hearth-front pits were more likely to be used for food storage than pits in other locations, frequent access into the pits for adding or removing food may have also put more stress on the feature walls. The walls and floors of food storage pits would have also been more prone to damage from tunneling creatures, such as rats or moles, in search of a meal. Finally, radiant heat from the hearths may have also dried and baked the clay side walls, causing soil to shear away from the pit walls. At Carter’s Grove and Kingsmill, hearth-front complexes of repaired and recut pits were absent. It is possible that the wooden floor at Kingsmill prevented damage to the pits, or perhaps the decades of trial and error in hearth-front pit construction had been successful.



**Figure 6.1** Woman sewing in front of a hearth.

Despite the apparent difficulties and extra work involved in maintaining hearth front pits in good repair, it is evident by the continuing use and upkeep of these pits that this location was viewed as important by the enslaved. What this location potentially offered that other spots did not was access to the ambient heat from the hearth. Given the nineteenth-century documentary evidence discussed earlier and the optimal storage conditions for sweet potatoes and pumpkins, and the results from limited paleobotanical evidence, it is probable that these pits served primarily as food storage areas.

### **Material Life**

Aside from helping to determine pit function and fill types, what do the artifacts from the sites reveal about life at these quarters during the eighteenth century? Generally, the limited range of the artifacts recovered from these features suggests a meager material life for the enslaved throughout the century, with some increase in quantities and varieties of material goods over time. Appendix D lists by category quantities and percentages of artifacts recovered from the subfloor pits by structure at each of the five sites. A summary table of this data by site is provided in Table 6.2. This increase coincides with the expansion of consumerism in colonial American society overall (Walsh 1992) and may be linked to the increasing availability of goods for consumers in general. In the following pages, I provide an overview of material life at each of the sites, followed by a more detailed comparison of several specific categories of material remains: ceramics, dietary evidence, tools, and personal items. Throughout, I examine more broadly slave access to and acquisition of material goods.

The earliest occupation at Utopia contained the most limited range of artifacts, with most of the finds related to food or architecture. In addition, it is very likely that some of the artifacts that found their way into the subfloor pits were actually debris associated with earlier occupations at that location, thus limiting the range of objects used by the enslaved even further. For example, locally-produced earthenware tobacco pipes and case bottle glass more typical of the seventeenth century, window glass, and a lead strip used to hold casement window panes were probably from the earlier Anglo-American occupation. The flaked stone

lithics were most likely incidental refuse from an even earlier Native American occupation, deposited as secondary refuse. Some of these Native American artifacts could also represent found objects reused by the Utopia inhabitants.

**Table 6.2.** Artifact Type Percentages by Study Site

Artifact Type	Utopia II	Utopia III	Utopia IV	Kingsmill	Carter's Grove
Coarse earthenwares	0.4	1.8	1.9	1	3.2
Coarse stonewares	0.2	0.6	0.7	0.3	2.5
Tin enamel earthenware	0.2	1.4	1.9	2.1	2.3
Refined earthen and stonewares	0.1	0.2	1.4	1.4	11.8
Chinese porcelain	0	0.1	0.4	0.2	1.4
Personal	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.9
Clothing items	0.1	0.3	1.1	1.5	1.6
Agricultural tools	0.1	0	0.1	0.5	0.1
Woodworking Tools	0.1	0	0.2	0.5	0
Other Tools	0	0	0	0	0.1
Sewing implements	0.1	0.9	0.5	2.1	0.3
Animal bone, fish scale	45	46.1	18.9	4	15.4
Oyster and clam shell, crab claws	7.3	4.7	6.9	0	0
Cutlery	0.2	0.2	1.3	1.3	1
Tobacco pipes	5.4	1.7	7.2	14.9	7.1
Wine bottle /container glass	0	6.5	6.1	27.3	14.5
Pharmaceutical glass	0	0.1	0.7	0.7	1.6
Nails/Spikes	26.6	19.2	37.7	33.6	31.3
Architectural hardware/window glass	0.2	0.3	0.7	1.8	1.9
Table glass	0	0	0.4	1	0.4
Jewelry	0.1	0.2	0	0.3	0
Prehistoric artifacts	1.9	2.1	2.9	0.4	0
Fossil shell	5.4	5.8	0.9	0	0.2
Eggshell	2.1	3.1	0	0	0
Gun or Food-procurement	0	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1
Ethnobotanical remains	0.1	2.1	0	0	0
Kitchen-related	0	0	0.2	0.1	0
Horse-related	0	0	0	0.1	0.4
Other	0.8	0.3	3.9	0.8	0.9
Indeterminate	1.8	1.6	2.9	3.4	0.9
<b>Total %</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>99.9</b>	<b>99.6</b>	<b>99.8</b>	<b>99.9</b>
<b>Total number of artifacts</b>	<b>13,376</b>	<b>6,054</b>	<b>2,743</b>	<b>1,493</b>	<b>2,483</b>



Food bone and shell comprised almost half and nails made up approximately one quarter of the recovered artifacts from Utopia Period II. Artifacts from the early slave occupation at Utopia show the incorporation of European-produced goods into the daily lives of its residents, even during the earliest periods of increased slave importation. These items were scarce, however, and other objects such as carved wooden bowls, gourds, and other implements not preserved archaeologically were made by slaves to supplement the manufactured goods. Quantities of non-food and non-architectural items were minimal, with clay tobacco pipes comprising the largest percentages of personal goods recovered. The next two generations at Utopia had greater access to manufactured items than did their predecessors. The substantial increase in material possessions during the last Utopia occupation may be related to the property changing ownership from the Bray to the Burwell family in 1745, at the beginning of Period IV.

The pattern at Utopia of increased quantities of material goods over time did not hold for the two other plantations. The assemblage at Carter's Grove was very small, totalling only 2,530 artifacts for all of the pits. The artifact assemblage contained a variety of domestic debris, including animal bone, bottle glass, ceramics, buttons and buckles from clothing, agricultural tools, and personal items. Some of the ceramics found there suggest the residents had some access to discards from the Burwell mansion. Kingsmill Quarter showed similar results.<sup>1</sup>

### *Ceramics*

Ceramic artifacts have long been favored by archaeologists as analytical tools. On colonial American sites, they are easily and tightly datable, making them valuable for dating various site components (Noel Hume 1969). Ceramics' country of origin can be used to shed light on transatlantic and intra-continental trade networks (Miller 1984). Decorative aspects of ceramics inform archaeologists about consumer choices and larger design trends (Samford 1997), while vessel forms help archaeologists draw conclusions about dietary practices and social customs on sites (Beaudry et al. 1983, Yentsch 1990).

---

<sup>1</sup> The lower quantities of artifacts can be partially accounted for by the discard of oyster shell and the decision not to screen soil at Carter's Grove and Kingsmill Quarter.

At the study sites, ceramics are analyzed for what they reveal about slave foodways and about how the enslaved were acquiring material goods. In this study, analysis was performed at the ceramic vessel, rather than at the individual sherd level. A ceramic vessel or object was determined to be one or more fragments that represented what had most likely been a single entity. Minimum numbers of vessels were determined using either rims or bases (whichever was in greater abundance) as the initial count, with distinctive vessels added subjectively based on unique decoration or technological attributes. Although formal minimum vessel counts were not undertaken at the study sites, estimated vessel counts were made based on analysis of the subfloor pits and trash deposits. While these estimates are probably somewhat low, they provide a good idea of ceramic types and vessel forms used by the quarters' residents, as well as comparative material. Estimated vessel counts are provided in Appendix D. Vessel forms were based on examples shown in Beaudry et al. (1983) and Yentsch (1990).<sup>2</sup> A functional classification of the ceramics was taken, with these categories defined in Table 6.3. These categories are adapted from Yentsch (1990), who originally used them to show changing foodways during the eighteenth century.

**Table 6.3. Vessel Forms Assigned to Vessel Function Categories**

Vessel Function	Vessel Types
Food Preparation/Storage	Butterpot, milkpan, milk bowl, baking pan, ceramic bottle, oil jar, pipkin, colander, bowl, storage jar, storage jug
Food Consumption/Distribution	Plate, porringer, soup plate, serving bowl, charger, dish, salt, tureen, sauceboat, footed dish
Traditional Beverage Consumption/Distribution	Tankard, drinking pot, syllabub pot
New Beverage Consumption/Distribution	Chocolate, coffee or teapot, milk pitcher, teabowl, saucer, can, punch bowl, sugar dish
Health/Hygiene	Chamberpot, drug jar, drug pot, basin

Ceramics were also classified and grouped based on their body fabric and glaze into coarse and refined earthenwares and stonewares, tin enamel earthenwares, colonoware, and

<sup>2</sup> When vessel form could not be determined, designations such as "flatware" (indicating a vessel was a flat form such as a plate) or "hollowware" (vessel forms such as bowls or cups) were assigned when obvious. If a vessel form could not be assigned to one of these categories, it was labeled "indeterminate."

porcelain. Table 6.4 lists specific ceramic types from the study sites and the categories to which they were assigned.

Although highly fragmented, it was possible to assign vessel forms to most of the ceramic sherds from Utopia Periods II and III. A minimum of 18 ceramic vessels was recovered from Period II and 37 from Period III (Appendix D). Charting vessel counts shows that ceramic type distributions were very similar for the two periods, but there were differences in vessel functions (Figures 6.2 and 6.3).<sup>3</sup> The vessels present included locally produced as well as English and European wares. Many of the vessels were of inexpensive coarse earthenware and stoneware with high percentages of food storage or preparation forms, such as milk pans, storage jars, and jugs. These vessels may have been used along with wooden bowls, gourds, buckets, bags, or barrels for storing food rations, such as cornmeal and salted meat.

**Table 6.4.** Ceramic Types Assigned to Ceramic Categories

Ceramic Category	Ceramic Types
Coarse Earthenware	Yorktown-type earthenware, Buckley, black glazed redware, Pennsylvania earthenwares, North Devon coarse earthenwares, Iberian coarse earthenware, coarse agateware
Coarse Stoneware	Yorktown-type stoneware, Westerwald stoneware, Fulham stoneware, English brown stoneware, American stoneware
Refined Earthenware	Creamware, pearlware, Jackfield, North Midlands slipped earthenware, refined agateware, Staffordshire mottled earthenware
Refined Stoneware	White salt glaze stoneware, Nottingham stoneware, Staffordshire stoneware
Porcelain	Chinese porcelain, English porcelain

Other vessels would have been more appropriate for holding food during meals. These vessels during Period II included a tin enamel earthenware teabowl, plate, and punchbowl. At the next Utopia occupation, these vessels were present in a wider variety: a refined white salt glazed stoneware teabowl, saucer, and larger bowl, a North Midlands slipped earthenware cup, coarse stoneware tankards, and a Chinese porcelain plates may have

<sup>3</sup> Data tables available in Appendix D.

Figure 6.2 Ceramic functions at the study sites.

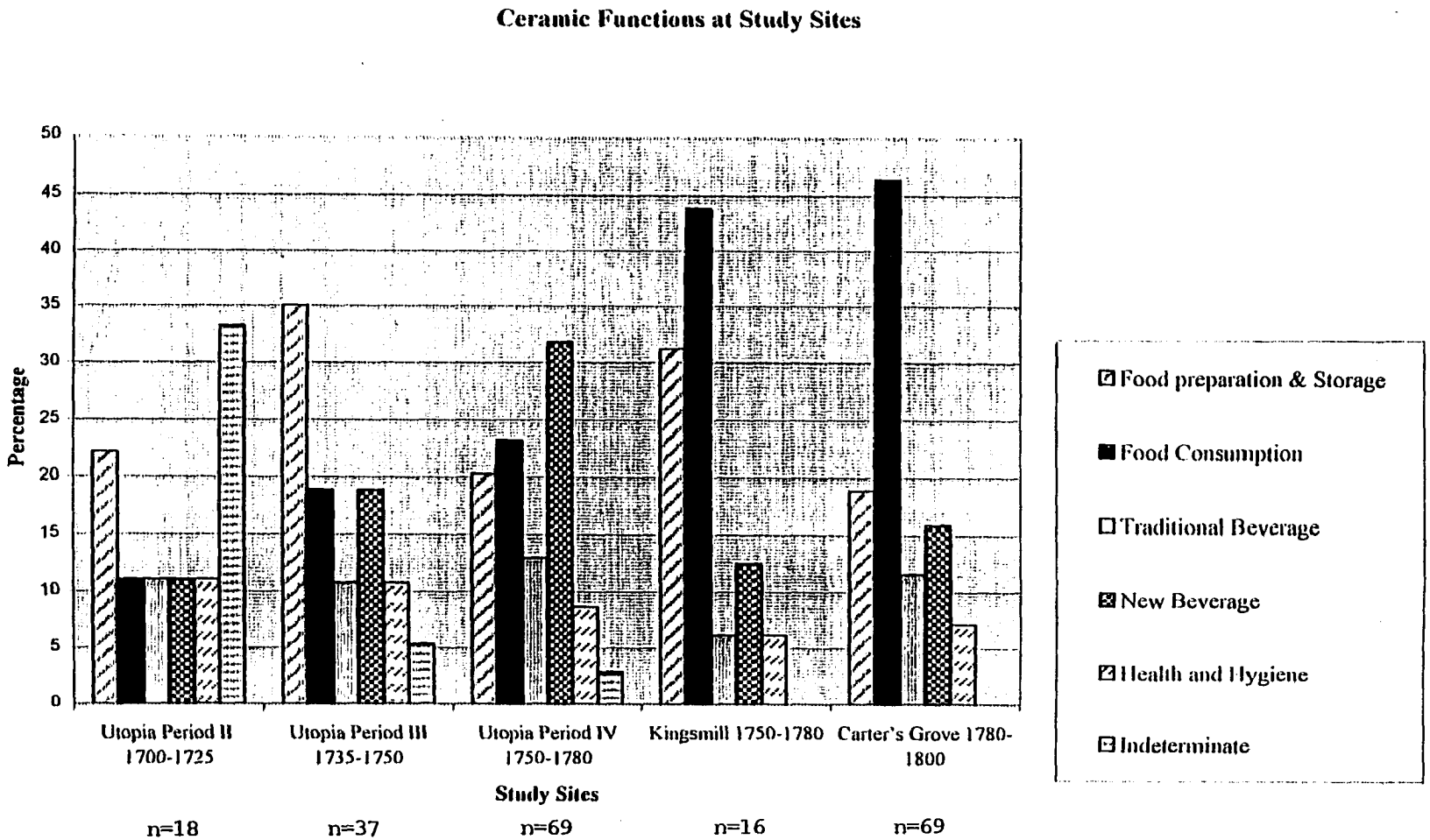
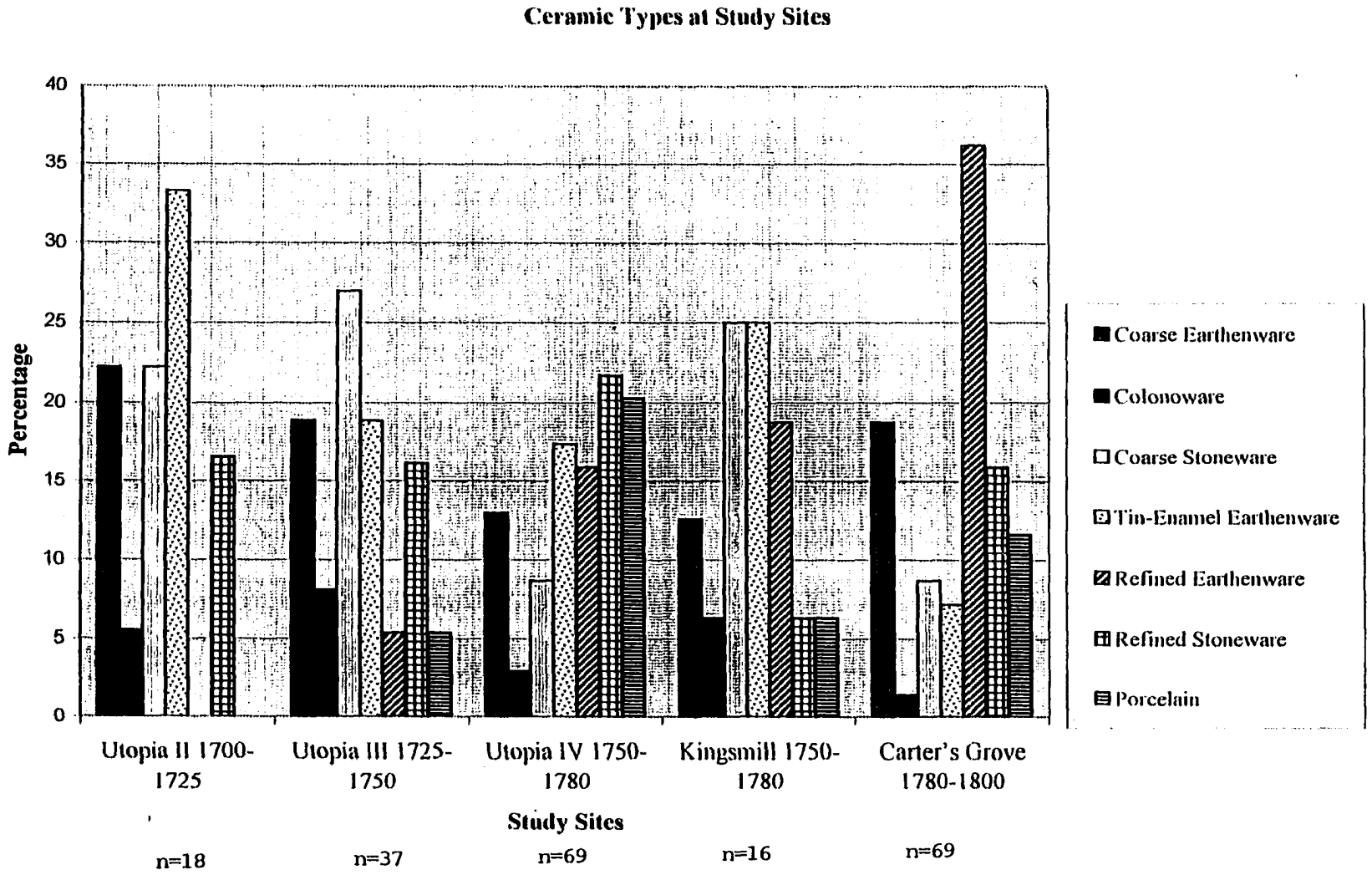


Figure 6.3 Ceramic types at the study sites.



been used to hold prepared food. Refined earthenware, a popular material for tablewares in the second half of the century, were not widely available before 1750, thus accounting for their virtual absence from the earlier assemblages.

Since many of the European ceramics from the 1700-1750 Utopia components were larger vessels manufactured for the storage of food or the processing of milk products, the enslaved supplemented these vessels with other forms in locally produced colonoware. Colonoware is an unglazed, low-fired earthenware believed by some archaeologists to have been crafted by the enslaved (Ferguson 1992). Given later ethnohistoric evidence, it is quite likely that slaves used some of these vessels as cooking pots to prepare stews or mushes, and others as bowls for food preparation and consumption (Ferguson 1992). During the earliest period at Utopia, colonoware fragments comprised 41 percent of the total assemblage of ceramics, decreasing to 13 percent in Period III.<sup>4</sup> Percentages of colonoware fragments decreased through time at the sites, a factor linked perhaps to the increased availability and lower cost of English and European ceramics later in the century.

The final period at Utopia yielded an enormous variety of ceramics when compared with the two earlier occupations, with a minimum of 69 ceramic vessels discarded at the quarter (Appendix D). Unlike the earlier periods, expensive wares such as enamelled white salt glaze stonewares, overglaze Chinese porcelain, and a highly fired refined earthenware called Jackfield were common in the assemblage.

Later period vessel forms were also quite different from earlier assemblages, including thin-bodied, elaborately decorated teabowls and saucers, with an increasing emphasis on vessels traditionally associated with eating and drinking, such as plates, cups, and small bowls. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, tea drinking had helped create a market for Chinese porcelain, particularly among the wealthy (Mudge 1962). The presence of Chinese porcelain, albeit in small quantities, was surprising, given the expensive nature of this ceramic, particularly during the first half of the eighteenth century. Porcelain vessels during the last occupation at Utopia included teabowls and saucers traditionally used for

---

<sup>4</sup> Given the high numbers of colonoware sherds, there was probably more than one colonoware vessel represented in Period II. The less fragmented nature of the ceramics from Period III allowed three distinct vessels to be identified, thus elevating the count beyond that of Period II.

servicing tea, as well as plates, mugs, and punchbowls. Many of the expensive ceramics from this period, especially the overglaze painted Chinese porcelains, may have originally been part of the Bray and Burwell family tablewares. As they fell out of fashion or as too many vessels in a tea set were broken, the pottery may have been passed along to members of the enslaved community. The mismatched nature of the porcelains at the site lends weight to this conclusion, as does the presence of matching ceramic patterns in plantation house trash pits (Walsh 1992). The enslaved may have also obtained some of their ceramics piecemeal along with their purchases of other material possessions at local stores or through bartering.

Comparing the three occupations at Utopia showed that overall numbers of ceramic vessels increased, despite the presumed stability in the quarter population during the different periods. The increased use of ceramics may have been related to the expansion of the ceramic industry in England and Europe during the eighteenth century and thus the increasing availability of ceramics overall in colonial society. Percentages of refined earthenware, stoneware, and porcelain vessel forms manufactured for dining and for partaking of expensive, fashionable beverages increased dramatically in the final period of occupation at Utopia. Although the cost of tea had declined by the end of the eighteenth century, making it available to people in a wider range of economic levels, it is unlikely that these vessels were used for serving tea at the quarter. Teabowls and saucers could have been used to hold semi-liquid mushes and stews at mealtime, used in ways that fit with the needs of life at the quarter. As Lorena Walsh points out (1992), the possession of material amenities such as Chinese porcelain teabowls did not make life any less difficult or the work less arduous for the enslaved at these plantations.

Although the Utopia quarters assemblages show increasing quantities and variability of goods, examining the Kingsmill and Carter's Grove artifacts shows that a wider range of material possessions available as the eighteenth century progressed did not translate into a uniform material existence for Tidewater slaves. Planter wealth and treatment of bondspeople, as well as slave access to consumer goods and the means with which to obtain them, also factored into the material life of the enslaved. The Kingsmill Quarter, contemporaneous with Utopia Period IV, contained a limited number and range of artifacts. Only 75 ceramic fragments, from a minimum total of 16 vessels, were recovered from the

Period One pits at Kingsmill (Appendix D). Coarse earthenware and stoneware vessels predominated in the ceramic assemblage (56%). The pipkin and the colonoware were probably used as cooking vessels, while the other coarseware bowls and butterpots may have been used in the preparation and storage of food.

Analysis of subfloor pit artifacts shows that fragments from a minimum total of 69 ceramic vessels were found at Carter's Grove (Appendix D). While the Carter's Grove quarter had one of the smallest overall artifact assemblages of any of the study sites, it had the largest minimum ceramic vessel count. Unlike the other late eighteenth-century quarter at Kingsmill, the pits at Carter's Grove showed a variety of ceramic types and functions. Almost half (46%) of the ceramic vessels were forms originally manufactured for use at the table in serving and eating food, while another 16% were teabowls, saucers, and teapots traditionally used in the elite practice of serving hot tea. Similar to the results from Utopia Period IV, the use of these vessels was probably adapted to African American cuisine, based on a diet of stews and semi-liquid foods. Fragments of cast iron cauldrons or cooking pots, standard planter-provisioned items, were recovered at all of the sites, pointing to this type of diet. Seventy-three percent of the table and teaware vessels were hollow forms, concurring with findings from other slave sites, where the same cooking practices have been conjectured (Otto 1984, Yentsch 1994).

Although the increase in other vessel types masked it, numbers of vessels associated with health and hygiene (drug or salve jars and chamberpots) steadily increased over the course of the eighteenth century. Interestingly, chamberpots, an amenity not expected at a slave quarter, were present in the assemblages at Carter's Grove and in both of the later Utopia assemblages.

What other conclusions can be drawn from the variety of ceramic types and vessel forms recovered from the pits? First, several factors suggest that the enslaved communities at these sites were acquiring their ceramics in a number of ways. The large range of ceramic types and unmatched vessels implies that the enslaved were acquiring ceramics in a piecemeal fashion, perhaps through acquisitions of cracked, chipped or out-of-fashion vessels from the planters' mansions. Several of the vessels from Carter's Grove would have been quite old by the time they found their way into the ground at the end of the eighteenth



century, including an undecorated white salt glazed stoneware soup plate produced around mid-century. This vessel bore heavy scratches and stains that spoke of long periods of use at the quarter (Samford 1996). Other vessels also showed evidence of prolonged use, including a creamware soup plate and a punchbowl that were also heavily stained and scratched.

Some ceramic items may have been obtained through barter or direct purchase at local stores. While it was once believed that slaves had little participation in the market economy, recent research has shown otherwise. Extrapolating from documents that record the economic activities of the enslaved community suggests that this participation took a variety of forms. Analysis of plantation account books by Ann Smart Martin and Barbara Heath demonstrate numerous instances of the enslaved bartering and selling foodstuffs and handcrafted items to planters (Martin 1997, Heath 1997). For example, slave women were involved in gardening and the keeping of poultry, or at least the distribution of their products. These products were used both as provisions for feeding families and as items to barter or sell for other services or products. Tutor Philip Fithian's journal provides a first-hand glimpse into the bartering system that kept goods and services flowing in the internal economy of one Virginia plantation. In mid-July of 1774, 94-year-old Gumbey and his wife asked Fithian to write out a list of their children. At the time, the enslaved man urged Fithian to stop by his home for "Eggs, Apples [or] Potatoes" in return for his efforts (Fithian 1943:185). Three weeks passed without a visit from Fithian, and the couple, anxious to settle their side of the deal, finally sent him a watermelon from their garden.

Just as enslaved individuals were selling or bartering within the Virginia plantation economy, they were also participating in the market economy. Here, as well, research by Heath (1997) and Martin (1997) has demonstrated that enslaved men and women were a common presence in the local Virginia markets. African American women were selling the products of their off-time labors – primarily eggs, chickens, and vegetables, although beer and prepared foods were also sold (Martin 1997). While the markets, with their hubbubs of noise, odors, and barnyard animals, were places where women felt comfortable, perhaps venturing into the more formalized world of stores was not. Ann Martin's work with the John Hook store slave account has shown that most accounts were held with men (Martin 1997). Some of the men's purchases, such as sewing accessories, fabric, and ribbons,

suggest indirectly that they were bought for women. It is unknown, however, whether these were gifts or if enslaved women requested that their male relatives or friends purchase them in their stead.

### *Diet*

Both direct and indirect forms of evidence were used to study slave diet at the sites. Physical remains from plants and animals were combined with indirect evidence of diet provided by artifacts used in the acquisition and preparation of food. Soil stains delineating traces of garden and animal enclosures, as well as documentary evidence from wills and inventories helps complete the available picture of slave diet at the five sites.

Despite the sources listed above, the data presented here has serious limitations. At the time of this study, detailed faunal analysis had not been completed at any of the study sites. Partial, unquantified lists of species represented were the most complete data available. Data recovery policies standard in the 1970s prevented comparison of the Carter's Grove and Kingsmill evidence with Utopia dietary data. Because soil was not screened at Kingsmill and Carter's Grove, for example, most small plant and faunal materials, including seeds, fish bone and scale, crab claws and eggshell went unrecovered. Additionally, no shells were retained from these same sites. These two decisions deflate the importance of shellfish and fish in the diet of the sites' residents. No seed, pollen, starch, or phytolith analyses were undertaken at either Kingsmill or Carter's Grove Quarters. Despite these limitations, what do the data reveal?

The quarter inhabitants in Period II at Utopia were relying heavily on wild food, with the forest, rivers, and marshes around the quarter providing varied resources. The pit assemblages contained oyster and clam shell, crab shell, bones and scales from gar, carp, and catfish, several species of turtle, passenger pigeon, and wild mammals such as squirrel, raccoon, and woodchuck. A fish hook, lead shot, and two gunflints provided evidence of hunting and fishing tools used by the Utopia inhabitants. Domestic species included cow, pig, and sheep, as well as poultry. The recovery of these domesticated species coincides with

the livestock listed at Jacko's Quarter in James Bray's 1725 inventory.<sup>5</sup> Meat from some of the domestic animals would have been planter provisioned, but the poultry was probably raised by the enslaved for meat as well as eggs.

Well over half of the artifacts recovered from the Utopia Period II subfloor pits was animal bone. The largest concentration of bone was in the only subfloor pit – Feature 21 – located in Structure 20. While there was evidence of a firepit in the courtyard between the buildings, this structure may have served as a kitchen or communal building at the quarter. In addition to the large numbers of bone and shell, cooking equipment found at the site was clustered in this pit. A pothook used in open hearth cooking, a pewter plate, some cutlery, and a copper alloy skimmer were both found in this subfloor pit.

While faunal bone also comprised a large component of the assemblages from the later two periods at Utopia, identification of these assemblages has not yet been completed. It is likely that a mixture of domestic mammals, supplemented with wild game, is present in the assemblages. Clam, oyster, fish scale, turtle, crab and eggshell were all common elements in this period. At Utopia Period III, lead shot, lead fishing weights and a snaphaunce lock from an eighteenth-century musket hint at subsistence activities. A complete identification and analysis of the faunal bone from Utopia will be able to answer questions about the importance of various species in the diet of the slaves there, as well as how meat was being prepared.

Although two studies have been completed on faunal remains from Kingsmill Quarter (McKee 1985, Ferrell 1996), both of these studies have focused on deposits created during the British army occupation of the site. Faunal bones from the 1970 Carter's Grove excavation could not be accounted for at the time of reanalysis<sup>6</sup>, but further testing of the ravine trash deposit in the early 1990s provided some data on the diet of the quarter's inhabitants (Bowen 1993). Most of the bones were from cattle, but sheep/goat, pig and raccoon were also present. Despite this limited range of fauna, the cow and pig body

---

<sup>5</sup> The Period II Utopia site is believed to have been either Debb's or Jacko's Quarter, both listed in James Bray II's inventory.

<sup>6</sup> The bone recovered from the 1991 excavation was in very poor condition as a result of highly acidic soil. It is possible that the bone removed from the subfloor pits in 1970 had not survived.

elements present showed that the slaves had access to meatier cuts, as well as what are generally considered the “poorer”, less meaty portions such as heads or feet. A fishhook, oyster shell, a gun lock spring and a gunflint found in the pits and ravine suggest that the enslaved hunted, fished, and gathered food from the nearby river, marshes, and forests.

The small, fragmentary nature of the bones recovered on slave sites suggests that meat was usually used in soups or stews. One-pot meals combining meat, vegetables, and broth had the advantage of stretching meat portions and, because they could be left simmering over a fire, took less work than roasted meat dishes. Furthermore, West African cuisine is heavily reliant on stewed and other semi-liquid foods, so that cultural as well as economic explanations are relevant (Moore 1989).

Oftentimes, food preparation ceramics on colonial period sites include vessels associated with dairying and the manufacture of butter and cheese. Milk products, however, have never comprised a significant component of West African or African American cuisine. While slaves were allowed to raise chickens and other fowl, they were not allowed to keep large domestic mammals like cows, pigs, and sheep at the quarters. Thus, their access to milk and other dairy products would have been limited, if not by choice, then by the inclination of the planter. Thus, milkpans, butterpots and other vessels typically associated with dairying were probably used for other purposes, such as food storage or preparation.

Analysis of seeds, pollen, and phytoliths recovered during excavations at the first two occupations at Utopia provided virtually identical plant evidence (Table 6.5).<sup>7</sup> Charred seeds and nuts recovered from soil screening during fieldwork included corn, beans, walnuts, peaches, and a berry whose condition was so poor that it could not be identified to a species. While pollen from trees and weedy plants was common, a few food species, including grapes and legumes, were present. The grape pollen could represent the fruit, raisins, or wine. The slaves may have used dandelion/chicory and pigweed/amaranth, typically considered weedy plants today, as food. Phytoliths from cereal grains and starch granules from cereal grains and sweet potatoes were also recovered.

---

<sup>7</sup>No pollen, phytolith, or starch analyses were completed for Utopia IV.

Coupling the archaeological evidence recovered at these site assemblages with documentary and archaeological evidence from colonial Virginia shows that slave diet changed very little over the course of the eighteenth century (Moore 1989). Planters provisioned some meat, which the slaves supplemented with game and fish. Meat was prepared in stews, along with corn and other vegetables grown in the quarter gardens. Cornmeal, provisioned by planters, was an important dietary staple.

Table 6.5 Plant Food Remains from Study Sites

Plant Remains	Botanical Name	Utopia II	Utopia III	Utopia IV
<b>Charred Seeds</b>				
Bean	Vigna sps.	xx	xx	
Berry, Unidentified	--		xx	
Corn	Zea mays	xx		
Nut (walnut?)	Juglans?	xx	xx	
Peach	Prunus persica	xx	xx	xx
Unidentified	--			xx
<b>Pollen</b>				
Pigweed/ Amaranth	Chenopodium sps.	xx	Xx	
Sunflower	Helianthus sps.	xx		
Dandelion, Chicory	Liguliflorae	xx	xx	
Grape	Vitis	Xx	Xx	
Legume	Fabaceae	xx		
<b>Phytoliths</b>				
Cereal Grains	--	xx	xx	
<b>Starch</b>				
Cereal Grains	--	xx	xx	
Sweet Potato	Ipomoea batatas	xx		

### Tools

The tools from the five study sites demonstrate the range of activities in which slaves were employed on eighteenth century plantations (Table 6.6). As expected, agricultural tools predominated, with the assemblages showing evidence of the century's changing agricultural economy.

Tobacco, which formed the economic base of the Virginia colony during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, was raised on each of the plantations studied here. Although timing the planting and cutting of tobacco to insure a good harvest required close attention to weather and soil conditions, only a simple tool kit was necessary for raising this

**Table 6.6. Tools from the Study Sites**

Tools	Utopia II	Utopia III	Utopia IV	Kingsmill	Carter's Grove
<b>Agricultural Tools</b>					
Broad Hoe	1	2	13	3	1
Narrow Hoe	1		3	2	
Scythe Blade		1	2	2	2
Sickle			1	1	
<b>Woodworking Tools</b>					
Axe				1	
Felling Axe			1		
Hatchet		1			
Chisel	2			1	
Socket Chisel			1		
Mortise Chisel			1		
Gouge				1	
Gimlet			3		
Pliers			1		
Ruler	2				
Hammer	1				
Lath Hammer		1	1		
File	3		1		2
Triangular File	1		4		
Half Round File			1	1	
Adze			1		
Saw Blade			1	2	
Lathe			1		
<b>Other Tools</b>					
Spade Blade			2		
Mason's Trowel					1
Hewer/Ship Scraper				1	
<b>Sewing Tools</b>					
Scissors	1		7		1
Thimble	1	1	4		
Box iron insert			1		

crop. Narrow hoes were used to break up soil and create hills for transplanting the seedlings in spring. Slaves plying broad hoes kept the area around the plants free of weeds during the growing season (Breen 1985:48, Tatum 1800). Not surprisingly, hoes were present at all of the study sites and reflect the cultivation of tobacco as well as other crops like corn and wheat. Tobacco lost its economic stronghold as the eighteenth century progressed, but never completely ceased production, with each individual planter making decisions about the scale

at which to produce this crop. Although Nathaniel Burwell stopped raising tobacco at Carter's Grove before the Revolution, Lewis Burwell IV of Kingsmill continued to grow this crop throughout the war (Wells 1976).

Due to fluctuating tobacco prices and declining soil fertility, Virginia planters began to diversify their agricultural production in the 1720s and 1730s. This strategy of raising corn, wheat and other grains in addition to tobacco helped distribute the economic risks associated with monocropping. When Lewis Burwell IV put the Kingsmill property up for sale in 1781, he described the land as "very good for all kinds of grain" (*Virginia Gazette*, February 17, 1781). At Carter's Grove, some of the enslaved were involved in raising wheat, oats, barley, and hay after the Revolutionary War. Tools used for grain production began to appear in the second quarter of the eighteenth century at Utopia, reflecting the increasing importance of wheat and other cereal grains throughout the century. These tools included scythes and sickles used to cut the ripe grain, as well as sharpening stones for honing knives and other cutting implements.

While agricultural tasks formed the core of slaves' daily activities at these outlying quarters, the excavated tools also indicate both skilled and unskilled woodworking tasks occurring there. Axes and hatchets used for felling and trimming trees serve as evidence of non-agricultural chores assigned slaves during winter months – cutting firewood and building fences, tobacco barns, corn cribs, and other plantation structures. Saws and hammers were used to fashion timber into a variety of products. Utopia owner James Bray III sold unfinished timber, as well as planking, clapboards, fence rails, barrels, and other finished wood products; all were produced by enslaved laborers working on this plantation (Kelso 1984:40).

At Utopia, ample evidence of skilled wood craftsmen existed. Several of the pits (Features 21 and 36) from Period II contained items that provide insight into these skilled woodworking abilities. A copper alloy ruler, the hinge for a wooden folding ruler, several woodworking chisels, and a hammer suggest that a skilled carpenter lived there. The rulers indicate an individual possessing a familiarity with the British counting system and possibly the ability to perform at least simple mathematical calculations. The presence of numerous woodworking tools from all the occupations at Utopia, particularly types used in the more

skilled tasks of shaping and finishing wood products, may indicate a tradition of cross-generational training at the quarter.

Several less standard tools found at the quarters expand the range of tasks beyond agricultural and woodworking activities. A mason's trowel from Carter's Grove indicated someone trained in the trade of bricklaying. At Utopia, a ship scraper pointed to the importance of riverine travel in the eighteenth century and the significant navigational roles assumed by slaves. Other critical chores performed by slaves, such as tending livestock, left no archaeological trace.

While agricultural fieldwork would have fallen to both men and women, some tasks appear to have been gender based. Slave women were generally assigned responsibility for the construction and repair of clothing on the plantation. Relative to other tools, there were minimal quantities of sewing equipment recovered at the sites. This sewing equipment was basic; scissors, thimbles, and straight pins were typical. The relative scarcity of sewing implements is not surprising, however. Most of the planter-provisioned slave clothing was probably produced in buildings located near the plantation house, where the mistress or a skilled slave seamstress could oversee the cutting and piecing of fabric. Since this large-scale production would occur away from the quarter, most of the sewing equipment would remain in these work areas. Doubtless, however, slaves repaired their own clothing at their homes, and most likely also crafted new garments made from purchased fabric.

Other tools and equipment recovered on the sites were used in running a household. The presence of flaked English flint fragments in many of the pits suggests that the enslaved were making and using flint tools, perhaps primarily as cutting implements. Flint would have also been used as a stone for striking sparks to kindle fires. Fragments of cast iron pots, a standard planter-provisioned item, were present and also used by the enslaved for cooking, as well as for heating water to wash clothing and people. Several folding knives that could have been used in daily chores around the home and field were also included at several of the sites.



### *Personal Items*

The most prevalent items of personal use at the study sites were kaolin tobacco pipes. As a crop, tobacco was not only important for export, but was a popular product in Virginia as well, with its use crosscutting all segments of society. Tobacco pipes were inexpensive, easily acquired, and in some instances were even supplied to slaves by the planter from his old pipes. In the first half of the eighteenth century, these low-fired earthenware pipes were manufactured with stems over a foot in length (Noel Hume 1969:296). Fragile as well as awkward to carry, kaolin pipes broke easily. Damaged pipes that retained short lengths of stem were still functional and passed along to the enslaved, who grew patches of tobacco at the quarters for their own use and for sale. In 1755, Joseph Ball sent to his nephew a number of items from England, including “the foul pipes to be distributed among my Negroes as you think fit” (Ball Letterbook July 18, 1755). Several features contained complete pipebowls with short lengths of stem that might suggest this practice was also occurring at the sites. Enslaved men and women both smoked tobacco and numerous sources indicate it was a substance of spiritual significance among some West African cultures, where it was often buried with the dead to speed their journey to the afterlife (Atkins 1970 [1735], Crow 1970 [1835], Equiano 1987). This practice is also seen archaeologically in the American South and in the Caribbean (Handler 1997). Three of the adults buried in the Utopia cemetery had tobacco pipes placed under the arms of the deceased (Kelso 1984, Fesler 1998b). In addition, several of the subfloor pit shrines contained intact tobacco pipes.

Some items of personal adornment, primarily beads, were found in the pits. At Utopia Period II, these beads included locally-produced shell and clay beads, imported European glass beads, and a polished ebony example that may have been brought from Africa. The body of a young child buried in the cemetery at Utopia wore a necklace of faceted amethyst glass beads. Varied historical accounts document African women taken into enslavement wearing beads around their necks and waists (Michel 1702; Stedman 1796). Beads, long associated with African Americans by archaeologists (Stine et al. 1996), are believed to have functioned in several ways for enslaved women. Not only were they objects of adornment, but they may have also reinforced African cultural identities (Yentsch 1994).

The production of homemade shell and clay beads at Utopia and Carter's Grove illustrates the importance of beads to the enslaved.

Other items may have also been used for adornment. Numerous buttons, with several containing paste "jewels," were also found in the pits. Buttons could have been used as clothing fasteners or as ornaments. Also notable at the Utopia sites was the presence of fossilized *Glycymeris* shells with naturally occurring worm holes near the shell hinge. These items could have been sewn to clothing as ornamentation, or worn on cords around the neck as jewelry.

Other personal items from Period II included handcrafted clay marbles—one marble had been incised with an X, perhaps as a mark of ownership—and mirror glass, bone combs, jaw harps, and violin hardware, and several coins. Perhaps the most curious personal items from the sites were clock components: a clock winder and pewter key were found at Carter's Grove (CG715B). A toy pewter pocket watch was also found in one of the pits at the late eighteenth-century Utopia quarter. It has been suggested that watches and clocks conferred power on those individuals who owned and understood them (Smith 1997), although this power was generally that of the watch-owning planter over the enslaved.

### Summary

Although a comprehensive comparative analysis of eighteenth-century Virginia slave sites has yet to be undertaken, a fuller picture of the physical conditions of life for Virginia's slaves has emerged through this study and others undertaken in recent years. Housing, as expected, was rudimentary. The small size of most quarters, traces of fenced enclosures, and the spatial groupings of structures denote communal spaces for socializing and cooking, indicating that a substantial portion of free time was spent outside. Like the homes of many middling planters of English descent, quarters generally had dirt floors, and the absence of window glass on most eighteenth-century sites suggests that keeping out cold drafts and insects was virtually impossible. Quarter size ranged from 144 to 704 square feet. While small by modern standards, the majority of colonial Virginian middling plantation owners fared little better in terms of space. A survey taken in Halifax County in 1785 revealed that over seventy-

five percent of the settlers surveyed were living in one-room homes of less than 320 square feet (Nicholls n.d.).

From evidence on the study sites, it is apparent that the material world of the enslaved, not surprisingly, consisted predominantly of English and European goods. Whether supplied as provisioned or handed down goods by the planter, or acquired by the enslaved through barter or purchase, these goods often bore little similarity to everyday objects from their native cultures. While many of the enslaved in eighteenth-century Virginia had been born here, periods of heavy slave importation during this period brought substantial quantities of newly-arrived Africans to the plantations. Nevertheless, the enslaved incorporated these new goods into their lives at the quarters, no doubt sometimes using them in ways that had little to do with their intended function. Teabowls crafted and painted in China to hold a fashionable beverage served with elaborate rituals were used instead to hold a hastily eaten meal of cornmeal mush, dipped out with fingers or rough pewter spoons. Scissors that cut fabric to craft a ballgown for the plantation mistress could also be pressed into service as a shrine object whose blades had the power to cut the pain of childbirth or the sharp words of the foreman.

Into this world of manufactured goods, the slaves also introduced locally produced items, such as colonoware pottery, that filled residents' needs. Many of these items, particularly those fashioned of wood or other plant materials, no longer survive. Some of these items would have been strictly functional, such as furniture, while others would have also been expressions of artistic and spiritual creativity. At the study sites, archaeologists were fortunate enough to recover several objects of apparent spiritual function, such as the carved bone container from Utopia and the decorated spoon handles from Kingsmill.

Archaeological study of the detritus of daily life can provide a perspective on African American life generally absent in the documents—the perspective of the enslaved themselves, visible through the structural footings of homes, the broken ceramic bowls from which they ate their food, and the objects that gave spiritual meaning to their lives. In the final chapter, I will examine the disappearance of subfloor pits and how this factor fits into the larger picture of African American spirituality in the postcolonial era.

## **Chapter VII.**

### **DISCUSSION**

**“In an age of political infidelity, of mean passions, and petty thoughts, I would have impressed upon the rising race not to despair, but to seek in a right understanding of the history of their country....it is the past along that can explain the present...” Benjamin Disraeli (1845).**

#### **Discussion – Enslavement and Subfloor Pits**

Although Africans had been in Virginia for several generations by the end of the seventeenth century, subfloor pits only begin to appear with regularity at this time. If, as it appears likely, pit use began as a response to enslavement, Virginia slave trade demography can be used to explain this pattern. Numbers of Africans remained limited throughout the seventeenth century, and contact with white laborers and planters was frequent. Recent studies have suggested that Africans in seventeenth-century Virginia formed a more creolized society than the masses of Africans who worked in her fields during the first half of the following century (Berlin 1996, 1998). Only when Africans began to be brought into Virginia in large numbers did subfloor pits become common.

In the preceding chapters, I have examined archaeological evidence for five enslaved communities on three eighteenth-century Tidewater Virginia plantations. In all cases, these communities were linked to one another through family ties and, in the case of the three phases of occupation at the Utopia sites, probably formed successive generations of the same community. This analysis made it possible to look at changes over the course of the eighteenth century in material conditions of life and in subfloor pit patterning in a fashion that controlled for physical location and community continuity.

Analysis in Chapter IV showed a correlation between subfloor pit placement and levels of repair. Adding pit data from additional sites in Virginia provided further evidence of this pattern (Table 6.1). While pits appeared in all locations within structures throughout the eighteenth century, hearth-front locations appeared to be particularly important, comprising around half the pits in any given period. Pits were constructed and maintained in this location throughout the lifespan of individual structures; if a structure contained only one pit, it was usually located in front of the hearth. Hearth-front pits were oblong or, less often, square. It was only in other parts of the building that the few examples of round or other shape pits were found. In fact, a “standard” pit shape became established within the first several decades of heavy slave importation. During Period 2 (1680-1720), there was an equal distribution of oblong and round subfloor pits, each comprising 44%. By Period 3, oblong pits predominated, with square and oval pits present, but in much smaller proportions. Round pits virtually disappeared. It appears that newly-arrived Africans at the end of the seventeenth century and early eighteenth century were experimenting with different pit shapes, settling very quickly on a oblong (usually rectangular) shape. Never again would round pits even begin to approach the numbers found during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Part of this narrowing of shape options may have been functional. A rectangular pit may have been better suited for a hearth-front feature’s intended use. Oriented properly, this shape would have taken advantage of the greatest frontage on the hearth, thus providing the most access to ambient heat and less humidity. Both conditions were favorable for the storage of sweet potatoes, a common component of the Virginia slave diet.

There was also evidence of extensive repair and re-digging of pits in most of the structures in the expanded sample (Table 7.1). Analysis showed more evidence of repair and re-digging of hearth-front pits than features positioned along building walls or in corners. While there appeared to be no standard rules followed for the sequencing of hearth-front pit construction and repair, an interesting trend emerged from looking at the phases of pit construction at the study sites. When newer hearth-front pits were cut through filled older pits, the orientation of the newer pits was often changed, with shorter

dimensions of the pits rotated ninety degrees. In this fashion, hearth frontage would still be a consideration, but with the new pits cutting through as little of the older pit fill as possible. When newer pits cut older pits, there was often evidence that clay facings or wood were used to stabilize loose fill and reinforce pit walls. Figure 3.11 illustrated the life cycles of a complex of pits at Utopia III, providing a good example of the extensive work needed to keep some of these pits in working repair. Because there was generational continuity between the sites, changes in pit patterning through time ostensibly revealed what the quarter residents learned through trial and error and from one another about successful methods of sub-floor pit construction.

**Table 7.1. Chronological Analysis of Subfloor Pit Details**

Pit Details	Period													
	Period 1 pre1680		Period 2 1680- 1700		Period 3 1700-1720		Period 4 1720-1760		Period 5 1760- 1780		Period 6 1780-1800		Period 7 1800-1830	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Location</b>														
Hearth	1	100	8	50	7	30	14	45	28	47	7	39	2	67
Corner			3	19	11	48	10	32	10	17	4	22	1	33
Other			5	31	5	22	7	23	21	36	7	39	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>16</b>		<b>23</b>		<b>31</b>		<b>59</b>		<b>18</b>		<b>3</b>	
<b>Shape</b>														
Oblong	1	100	7	44	21	96	22	74	47	79	15	78	1	
Square			2	12			4	13	9	15	4	22		
Round			7	44	1	4	4	13	2	3				
Irregular			0						1	2				
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>16</b>		<b>23</b>		<b>33</b>		<b>59</b>		<b>18</b>		<b>3</b>	
<b>Cut/ Repair</b>														
Single	1	100	6	37	12	52	15	48	39	66	17	89	2	
Cut														
Multiple			10	63	11	48	16	52	29	34	2	11	1	
Cut														
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>16</b>		<b>23</b>		<b>31</b>		<b>54</b>		<b>19</b>		<b>3</b>	

See Table 1.3 for sites represented in this table.

The one site analyzed in this study that did not show evidence of extensive pit cutting and repair was at Kingsmill Quarter. The main structure at this site, while

containing one of the highest numbers of pits (20), also had the lowest incidence of pit recutting. The primary difference between this structure and other quarters analyzed was the presence of a suspended wooden floor in the building. This finding suggests two conclusions: that it was easier for the enslaved to effectively use more space under a wooden floor for pit construction, and that there was less damage from the collapse of pit walls with wooden floors.

The extra work needed to maintain the hearth-front pits in soil-floored structures may have been a function of greater foot traffic around and over these features. It may also reflect a more frequent need for accessing the contents of these pits, and thus the added stress on the top and walls of the pits as boards were moved away from the openings. This conclusion fits well with the ethnohistoric evidence of hearth-front root cellars and the storage requirements of sweet potatoes, a food familiar to and probably preferred by enslaved people of Igbo descent. There was more evidence of standard shapes and sizes with hearth-front pits, suggesting a specific use with “communal” implications, as opposed to individually created pits in other locations. I suspect that the hearth was perceived as a communal space within a quarter building, and that pits located there served communal functions, such as food storage.

One of this study’s hypotheses was that hearth-front pits had been used by the enslaved for food storage and that soil analysis would provide botanical evidence to support this conclusion. Unfortunately, the results of this testing have remained disappointingly inconclusive so far. Four features from the first and second quarters of the eighteenth century at Utopia were studied, with two hearth front pits analyzed. In both pits, soil samples were taken from strata that had accumulated at the bottom of the floors during the features’ use. Neither hearth-front pit showed conclusive evidence of food storage. With the exception of grape pollen and starches and phytoliths from cereal grains, all microscopic remains provided evidence of the surrounding natural environment, rather than of feature use. Seeds recovered from these features were charred, reflecting evidence of food preparation and/or discard, rather than storage.

Archaeological evidence of the storage of personal items would not be present if structures had been moved or abandoned, because personal goods would be removed

prior to the quarter's abandonment. If, however, fire or disaster destroyed a building, we might expect to find personal objects still in the bottom of pits if residents had no chance to rescue them. Analysis on artifact size and completeness provides clues as to how and why the pits were filled. There was a low ratio of artifacts to cubic feet of fill when pits were filled while the building was still occupied. In general, it appeared that pits were emptied of original contents before being filled. The enslaved were filling pits in still-occupied structures with relatively clean and garbage-free fill, perhaps because they did have to continue to live in the buildings. The use as fill of organic materials such as kitchen or household waste would have had several disadvantages for quarter residents: the foul smell as they decayed and the need to refill pits as organic matter decomposed and settled. These factors may have contributed to the use by the enslaved of clean soil as fill. It appeared that they were gathering up soil containing sheet midden from the yard or nearby. The presence of earlier artifacts in these fill layers, such as the seventeenth-century artifacts at Utopia Period II upholds this conclusion. Since the fill soils were generally sandy loams without much subsoil clay, it doesn't appear that the enslaved were digging deeply to obtain their fill. Most pits were filled rapidly with one deposit of soil containing secondary refuse. A smaller number of pits appear to have been filled with soil dug from the construction of new adjacent subfloor pits.

Pits whose use span had been cut short by the collapse of a wall or some other damage were generally filled with a combination of primary and secondary refuse. The primary fill was characterized by organic soil strata containing unbroken large quantities of animal bone, complete oyster shell, and large fragments of ceramic and glass, suggesting these layers were the product of dumping daily quarter garbage. These strata were generally mixed with layers of cleaner, less organic fill containing highly fragmented secondary debris. The mixed fill typical of these damaged pits suggests the enslaved needed to fill them rapidly so they could be replaced with another pit. Since later pits often appeared adjacent to or even cutting earlier pits, filling the damaged pits may have provided more structural stability for the new features. Any debris that was handy, including generally shunned smelly household garbage and tips of hearth ash, as well as loads of secondary yard fill were called into service.



One of the goals of this study was to determine how these pits were used by the enslaved. Hypotheses detailed in Chapter Four included the enslaved using the pits as sources for clay chinking, as food storage, as personal storage units, and as sacred spaces. Since the pits could have been used as a clay source and then modified for use as underground storage, it is impossible to state with certainty whether they functioned in this capacity. As shown earlier, evidence of food storage was indicated, but additional testing is needed to continue to expand the database. In some of the cases outlined in the previous two chapters, it did appear that some pits were used for the storage of personal items, although evidence for storage was, not surprisingly, limited. There was also evidence that some pits were used as African-based sacred spaces. In light of these findings, the idea of sacred spaces is explored more fully in the following section.

#### **African Traditions—Pits as Shrines**

*Nku di na mba na-eghere mba nri* – the type of firewood that is native to a village is the one that cooks the food of the people who live there (i.e. a person will deal with his problems in the way he understands best). Igbo quote from. Igwe (1986:75).

As shown in preceding chapters, some of the subfloor pits were used in African-based spiritual practices. Archaeological evidence of similar spiritual practices has not been found on seventeenth-century sites. Material traces of these practices may simply have not survived archaeologically. Additionally, seventeenth-century African laborers may have actively shunned their traditional spiritual practices for any number of reasons. Berlin (1998:33) has suggested that there was a greater tendency for seventeenth-century Africans in the colonies to adopt English ways without feeling they were capitulating to a greater power. Also, while seventeenth-century living and working conditions were presumably poor for black and white laborers alike, slavery had not yet been institutionalized before the end of the century and acts of resistance may have been less typical than they were later. With the huge influx of Africans at end of the century and beginning of next, however, and their increasing mental and physical separation from whites, it is not surprising that African-based traditions began to occur archaeologically.

Planters and others in the New World on occasion noted practices within their enslaved labor communities that scholars today can trace as having African origins. Travelers recorded African polygynous marital practices among the eighteenth-century Maryland enslaved community (Kimber 1956:327). Music and dance were other practices that had African roots. An early eighteenth-century Virginia-made drum now in the collection of the British Museum is similar in design to Akan instruments (Sobel 1987:29). Andrew Burnaby, a visitor to Virginia in 1759 and 1760, wrote that the enslaved danced “without any method or regularity” (1960 [1775]:26). To the Western eye, the arhythmic movements of the enslaved appeared odd and perhaps even distasteful, but carried deep spiritual meaning for the dancers and African American spectators.

How does the archaeological evidence of these shrines fit with what is known about enslaved Virginians and their African forebears? The past experiences of the individuals newly enslaved in eighteenth-century Virginia were West African, and in many cases, Igbo. While self awareness, a sense of agency and differentiation from others comprise crucial elements of an Igbo sense of self, it is important to recognize critical differences between western and Igbo definitions of identity. For an Igbo, a sense of identity and personal achievement are communally based (Njoku 1990) and linked with what Chambers (1996:336) calls “honorance”--ideas about proper righteous behavior that include respecting elders, protecting the weak, taking care of one's own, and dignified conduct. Igbo men strive to achieve personal honor and wealth within their communities, enabling them to support multiple wives and children, and take community titles. Due to the flexibility of traditional Igbo culture, an individual, can rise through hard work from a low status within the community to a position of great honor and esteem (Madubuike 1974). An individual's achievements, however, are intricately bound to those of the community, both living and dead.

Why would Igbo enslaved in Virginia view individual and family-based spiritual practices as an effective means of resistance? The answer to this question lies in the very fabric of Igbo beliefs about the nature of the universe, and how identity and individuality correspond with ancestor veneration. Religion can be viewed “as the relationship between man and the transcendent as it is manifest in the world of his own experience” (Metuh

1985:xi). The veneration of ancestors and deities and other rituals are expressions of the living's relationship with the transcendent. The Igbo believe in one supreme god (*Chukwu*) with dominion over the living, as well as a pantheon of less powerful deities (*Mmuo*), spirit forces (*Alusi*) and ancestors. *Chukwu*, the creator of all things, is also the designer of human destinies. Upon conception, each individual is granted a decreed-upon destiny entrusted to the personal spiritual guardian (*chi*) that oversees his or her life (Metuh 1985). Although one's destiny is largely predetermined from birth, appropriate actions taken by an individual in their lifetime, including constant petitioning and veneration of ancestors and moral behavior, can change one's fate in a favorable fashion. Conversely, ignoring the spiritual forces and taking inappropriate actions can negatively alter one's destiny.

Thus, the living are locked in a continuous cycle of birth, life, death, and rebirth, with their actions on earth determining their fate here and in the afterworld. In Igbo religion, the ultimate goal of every individual is to join his or her ancestors after death, and enjoy the veneration of descendants, before eventually being reincarnated back to the land of the living (Madubuike 1974:12; Metuh 1985:106). Joining the ancestors after death was viewed by the enslaved as their only means of returning to Africa. Jamaican planter Matthew Lewis noted in the first decades of the nineteenth century that his Igbo slaves were "extremely superstitious, and very much afraid of ghosts" (Lewis 1834:98). Ghosts were spirits having a powerful influence on the lives of the living. He wrote about his Igbo slaves that "nothing is more firmly impressed upon the mind of the African, than that after death they shall go back to Africa, and pass an eternity in reveling and feasting with their ancestors" (Lewis 1834:344-345). If one did not honor the ancestors and *chi* with the proper respect and actions, he would not be rewarded in death by becoming an ancestor. So, it became doubly important in Virginia to honor the ancestors and personal spirits, not only to effect positive change in their lives on earth, but also to insure a return to the homeland. Honoring activities included the construction and maintenance of shrines, as well as masquerades, music, dances, and the creation of art objects. The Igbo make shrines honoring various deities or personal spirits, and these

sacred spaces can be constructed for a number of reasons and take many forms. They include family ancestral shrines, shrines to specific deities, and personal shrines.

It is hardly surprising therefore that the enslaved in Virginia continued to construct shrines for petitioning ancestors and deities, or as representations of personal identity. Since historical sources did not suggest that elaborate West African political and social structures survived in Virginia, I suspected that shrines there would have been limited to sacred spaces with family or personal connotations. Ancestors receive more attention than Supreme Being or deities in daily worship (Metuh 1985:106). In the following pages, I explore in-depth the West African (particularly Igbo) ethnohistoric and ethnographic record with a view towards pits used as shrines.

Placement of a shrine below ground might seem like an odd choice for a sacred space until one considers this location within the context of both Igbo traditional religion and Virginia slavery. Igbo ancestral and personal shrines are located in a private part of the home, away from the prying eyes of strangers. In other parts of West Africa and throughout the African Diaspora, household shrines are often placed in a private locations, such as in the backs of closets or are disguised as laundry bins (Thompson 1993a:61). In the often-cramped space of a quarter, a hole cut into the earth under the house may have been the most private place within the building.<sup>1</sup> Ethnohistorical evidence from the nineteenth century indicates that the Igbo used underground storage pits (Yentsch 1991), so the use of such pits had a cultural precedent.

Additionally, the underground location would have been dark. In some parts of Igboland, family shrines are constructed in small mud and thatch structures that are kept locked and dark (Starkweather 1968).<sup>2</sup> So, too, the subfloor pits found on Virginia sites were sheltered from unwanted attention, both from the planter and from other members of

---

<sup>1</sup> Privacy does not equate to secrecy, however. The contrast between an earthen floor and a board covered hole would have made these pits noticeable to cabin visitors, even if the planks were covered with sand. Subfloor pits were a common enough feature of slave housing and there is ample evidence that white planters knew about them. The knowledge of a shrine's presence was not a secret, but having improper eyes looking upon it did present a problem.

<sup>2</sup> Some Igbo shrines are not built in darkened locations. G. I. Jones photographed numerous shrines in the 1930s. Some of these shrines were located along road sides. Family shrines, however, tend to be in dark, private places.

the enslaved community.

Moreover, in his discussion of sacred places of the Yoruba, another West African culture whose members were enslaved, although largely in other parts of the American South, J. Omosade Awolalu (1979:117) reveals,

whatever form a sacred place takes, what is most important is the belief that such a place constitutes a break in the homogeneity of space; this break is symbolised by an opening by which passage from one cosmic region to another is made possible (from heaven to earth and vice versa; from earth to the underworld).

It is possible that some Virginia subfloor pits represented the break between the heaven and the earth, the regions of the living and the dead. Only very rarely in African religions were the dead believed to reside in the sky; instead they were thought to live on or in the earth (Sobel 1987:174). The Ibibio and the Bakongo of the present day pour libations onto the ground to call upon and venerate the ancestors (Bockie 1993:19, Offiong 1991:39). Today, Igbo in the Ohafia region of Nigeria pour palm wine into small holes cut into earthen floors of their homes, sending this libation directly into the mouths of their ancestors (Lieber 1971:30; McCall 1995). These actions recall the earlier-discussed evidence of brandy or wine poured onto the shell-covered shrine (Feature 44) from Utopia. In the novel *Things Fall Apart*, the noted Igbo novelist Chinua Achebe (1994) discusses a ritual in which the spirits of the ancestors let their presence be known. During the ritual, "Evil Forest ... thrust the pointed end of his rattling staff into the earth. And it began to shake and rattle, like something agitating with a metallic life" (Achebe 1994:89).

Perhaps more important than the hole in the earth representing a break is its connection with the deity *Ala*. Also known as *Ani*, Mother Earth or Earth Goddess, *Ala* keeps in close communication with the spirits of the departed Igbo ancestors (Achebe 1994; Ndubuike 1994). Her role entails "harbouring the ancestors, nourishing and sustaining the living and through a demonstrated regenerative power, the Earth Goddess demands order, purity and balance" (Oramasionwu 1994:ii). Igbo elders will caution children "*Toonti n'ani*" (listen to the earth), for it is there that the wisdom of the departed

ancestors resides (Oramasionwu 1994:155). Another Igbo proverb states *Ogba oso anaghi agba ghara ihu ala*. Translated literally, this proverb states that “wherever you run, there is nowhere you don’t touch the ground,” meaning that the ancestors and the sacred ground [Ala] know whatever you do (Ogbalu 1965:118). The earth is one of the most important sacred places in Igbo traditional religion, serving as the “sacred seat of all sacred things” (Ifesieh 1986:59). By creating shrines that were cut into the earth, enslaved African Americans further strengthened the connection between themselves, their ancestors, and *Ala*. Small balls of earth or mud also represent *chi*, or each individual’s deceased ancestor reborn in the living, in special Igbo worship services (Isichei 1978:183). To the Ibibio as well, the earth (*Isong*) is sacred and protective charms are buried in earthenware pots in compounds to prevent harm to the family (Offiong 1991:5, 46-47).

The Igbo also have shrines that consist of earthenware pots buried in the ground, including charmed ceramic vessels called “god basins” (Chambers 1996a:99). These sacred spaces include shrines that women construct by embedding pottery vessels in the hearths of the women’s houses (McCall 1995). Archaeological findings in several slave work areas in Virginia and Maryland appear to have been a derivation of a female personal shrine (Samford 1996). Archaeological excavation at the Brush-Everard House in Williamsburg, for example, revealed an eighteenth-century tin-enameled earthenware drug jar buried in a hole cut through the clay floor of the kitchen (Frank 1967). While originally interpreted as evidence of a child’s prank, it is more likely that this feature represented physical evidence of actions with far more serious intent. The cylindrical pot rested at the bottom of a twelve inch deep narrow hole, a hole that was scarcely larger than the circumference of the pot itself. The care with which the hole had been dug and the placement of the jar sound not like the actions of a child, but of an adult acting purposively. Igbo women place yams in their female pottery shrines (*ududu*) and sprinkle them with wine to honor ancestresses (McCall 1995:260). The excavation notes unfortunately did not state whether there were any objects contained within the drug jar, although there were other artifacts recovered from the feature. Additionally, a coarse earthenware bowl was found buried in a work area used by slaves at Oxon Hill Manor in

Maryland (McCarthy 1994). It is quite likely that these two vessels were used as women's personal shrines, particularly since they were found in work areas associated with female activities.

Z. R. Dmochowski's mid-twentieth-century survey of traditional Igbo architecture reveals some interesting parallels between subfloor pits in Virginia and Igbo houses (Dmochowski 1990; Moughtin 1988). Clay is an essential component in constructing traditional buildings, with many structures built with mud walls, or mud covering a stick framework. Much of the furniture inside the homes, including platform beds and seating, is also built of clay, as are altars and shrines. Dmochowski recorded the home of Chief Akumwafor Ogbua, where the altar was placed in a rectangular recess or niche in the house wall (Moughtin 1988:72). In other structures, he recorded shrines and altars which had been constructed from platforms of baked or hardened clay with low dried clay walls built around the edges of the shrine, creating in essence a pit cut into the soil platform. Shrine objects were placed within the confines of the pit (Dmochowski 1990:175; 205). The physical parallels between these shrines and Virginia subfloor pits, both appearing as recessed areas of clay, are remarkable. Interestingly, none of the sub-floor pits containing shrines showed any evidence of having been lined with wood, or having a surfaced floor. This absence of lining may be related to the sacredness of the earth, or *Ala*. Analysis also showed that the shape most of the cellars was rectangular. Since Igbo architecture is based on a rectangular model, it is interesting to speculate that the shapes of the subfloor pits may have been dictated, perhaps at a subconscious level.

The sacred and powerful nature of shrine and other ritual objects accounts for the reason why archaeologists find them intact in sub-floor pits. In 1699, a European visitor to Andony (later Opobo) noted of attitudes towards sacred objects: "They are so superstitiously bigotted, that any person whatever, who offers to touch any of those things with his hand, is sure to be severely punished, and in danger of his life" (Barbot 1699:462). This attitude of respect towards the sacred objects of other individuals or families continues today among the Yoruba and Igbo (Campbell 1998, personal communication). Thurstan Shaw hypothesized that the shrine goods from Igbo-Ukwu

were left intact, despite their great monetary value, because they were sacred (Shaw 1970).

Fear and respect extended to grave goods, which were placed on top of the grave rather than inside with the body of the deceased. Reverend Robert Nassau noted of the interior tribes of West Africa:

A noticeable fact about these gifts to the spirits is that, however great a thief a man may be, he will not steal from a grave. The coveted mirror will lie there and waste in the rain, and the valuable garment will flap itself to rags in the wind, but human hands will not touch them. Sometimes the temptation to steal is removed, by the donor fracturing the article before it is laid on the grave (Nassau 1904:232).

These same types of behaviors can also be seen in the decoration of African American graves in parts of the American South. Although the practice has decreased drastically during the course of the century, it was once quite common to see objects last used by the deceased, bottles, clocks, pottery, and other items blanketing the grave surface (Vlach 1978). Similar to Nassau's description, the glass or pottery vessels sometimes have the bottoms broken to render them useless, but otherwise appear complete.

Some of the items included on shrines were accorded great value in later periods. In 1700, an English merchant wrote that iron and copper bars were the preferred commodity at Old and New Calabar and at Bonny (in Chambers 1996a:275). Visitors to New Calabar in 1699 noted that residents there used idols and ritual objects called *juju* to which they offered sacrifices (Barbot 1699:462). These objects were located both in their homes and on public view along the streets. Visitors in the 1840s noted that many of the outdoor sacred objects had offerings of water and food placed near them, as well as European plates, bottles, cowrie shells and copper or iron ingots called *manillas* (Allen 1848:242).

Margaret Drewal, in her study of Yoruba ritual, gives examples of World War II gas masks being used as Yoruba spirit masks, and plastic dolls being used as spiritual objects (1992:20). This behavior was also present in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. European trade goods were incorporated into the traditional repertoire of



spiritual goods in West Africa, and this behavior continued in Virginia. Many of the objects prevalent on the floors of the pit shrines are similar (materially and functionally) to goods the British traders used as payment for slaves in West Africa. Successful traders knew that different goods were preferred on different parts of the slave coast, and loaded their cargo holds accordingly. While crystals, carnelian beads, and cutlasses were favored in some places, a 1721 trader noted the preference for “Copper and Iron Bars at Callabar,” and added that “Arms, Gun-powder, Tallow, Old Sheets, Cottons...and English Spirits are everywhere called for” (in Donnan 1935:274). Brass pans were favored along the Upper Guinea (Chambers 1996a:272).

### **African American Christianity**

While nicely tied with African ethnohistoric and ethnographic evidence, do the interpretation of some of these features as shrines also fit with historical data on slaves and Christianity? Prior to the turn of the nineteenth century, very few slaves in Virginia converted to Christianity (Frey 1991, 1993; Sobel 1987). What is known about the spiritual life of Virginia’s enslaved peoples during earlier periods? Documents, largely official correspondence between the Church of England and Virginia clergy, are filled with references to the difficulties of inducing enslaved peoples to accept Christ as their savior (Sobel 1979, Raboteau 1978). While the clergy worried that they were falling down on their appointed jobs, planters seemed to take little notice of their slaves’ spiritual lives, as long as work was getting accomplished and there was no feared threat of a slave uprising. It was not until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with the rise of the Methodist and Baptist faiths in Virginia, that enslaved peoples began to convert to Christianity (Sobel 1979, 1987).

Interestingly, there is some evidence dating earlier in the century for conversion at the sites studied here. In 1749, four children from the Bray plantation (which contained the Utopia Quarter) were baptised at Bruton Parish Church, as were additional children from Kingsmill and Carter’s Grove (Walsh 1997:158). Using these baptisms as proof that African-based spiritual traditions had no place at these plantations would be a faulty

assumption, however. First, as Walsh points out, attending Anglican church services was one of the few times the enslaved could meet openly with slaves from other plantations. These occasions were opportunities to see friends and family members, and exchange information and goods. Thus, it would be in the best interest of the enslaved to appear at least outwardly devout on these occasions.

Additionally, it is hardly surprising that the enslaved people on these plantations appeared to be “working” the system—allowing members of the community to be baptised into the Christian faith, while actively practicing African-based spiritual traditions. One of the defining characteristics of Igbo spirituality is creativity—including the ability to freely incorporate practices and beliefs from other spiritual traditions. There is ample evidence that many of the Igbo in Nigeria incorporated Christianity into their traditional spiritual beliefs. For example, men today practicing the traditional Igbo blessing of the kola nut will sometimes end their prayer with the phrase “in Jesus’ name, Amen.”<sup>3</sup> Rather than seeing Christianity as an antithesis to their beliefs, these practitioners of Igbo traditional religion are open to multiple sources of power. This same flexibility appeared to characterize the enslaved, particularly after the Great Awakenings.

Given the overarching importance of religion in the lives of members of the African cultures from which Virginia’s enslaved population was drawn, it would be virtually impossible to believe that spiritual practices ceased for over a century. Indeed evidence suggests that the enslaved were drawing upon beliefs brought with them across the Atlantic to comfort and sustain them. Like Bishop Thomas Secker, who wrote in 1740 that the enslaved were reluctant to abandon their “heathenish rites” (quoted in Raboteau 1995:3), the clergy lamented to their superiors that the enslaved preferred instead to practice their own traditional religions. Other whites commented on practices whose origins were clearly African. Hugh Jones remarked of the enslaved in eighteenth-century Virginia: “Africans...obstinately persist in their own barbarous ways” (Jones 1956:71). Dr. Edward Warren, remembering his visits to North Carolina’s Somerset Plantation in

---

<sup>3</sup> I would like to thank Sarah Adams of Yale University for providing me with this example.

the second quarter of the nineteenth century, remarked upon older "Guinea negroes" brought from Africa who "habitually indulged in an infinitude of cabalistic rites and ceremonies, in which the gizzards of chickens, the livers of dogs, the heads of snakes, and the tails of lizards played a mysterious but very conspicuous part" (cited in Crow et. al. 1992:19). Warren's interest, as that of many whites who bothered to comment on the spiritual practices of the enslaved, seemed purely academic, even if overlaid with varying degrees of derision or superiority. These practices were rarely viewed as a threat to Christianity or planter authority.

Interestingly, the several instances I was able to find where African-based religious practices were punished were those of slaves using spiritual means to intervene in plantation affairs. In one of these instances, Bristoe, an enslaved man living in Johnston County, North Carolina, was brought to trial as a conjurer in 1779. One of his alleged wrongdoings consisted of pouring brandy into a hole in the earth as part of a ritual designed to make a planter purchase another slave's wife (Johnston County Court Records). Bristoe's action of offering libations to the ancestors to petition their assistance in joining a family had clear African precedent.

Other actions prescribed by Bristoe also had West African, or more specifically, Igbo precedent. He smeared mud from the brandy-soaked hole around the ankle of his client, a practice that may be related to Igbo body painting done for spiritual or medicinal purposes (Cole and Aniakor 1984:39). Additionally, his client Tom was given a root to chew, an action reminiscent of the Igbo practices of chewing and spitting out kola nuts during morning prayers. This action forms part of the prayers of blessings for an Igbo man and his family (Metuh 1985:50). Historical precedent for chewing and spitting roots and other plant materials by the Igbo extends at least as far back as the nineteenth century, since a Christian minister's 1878 description of morning prayers included a chewing stick (Metuh 1985:50). In the American South, chewing roots became part of a process aimed at protecting an individual or insuring a desired event. George White, a Virginia ex-slave born in 1847, noted in an interview:

If you want a job wid a certain person, dere is a root dat you can chew an' den you go to de person, spit around dem, an' you will get the job, or dis

root will work if you want somepin else. Dere's a root for ev'y disease...  
(Perdue 1976 et al.:310).

A second eighteenth-century case of conjuring in Johnston County, North Carolina revealed additional evidence of transformed Igbo practices (Johnston County Court Records). In a complicated case full of witnesses, evidence mounted for a whole web of conjuring actions occurring within the area's enslaved community. In this instance, two enslaved men, Harry and Cuff, traveled to visit an "ober Negro" in an adjoining county to obtain some "truck"<sup>4</sup> with the intention of making the planter good to the slaves. *Obea* (also spelled *obia*) is an Igbo noun meaning diviner, doctor, or sorcerer (Chambers 1996a). This word was apparently transformed in North Carolina to encompass both the individual with the spiritual powers and the objects prescribed by them. The truck used in Johnston County appeared to have been plant material and in one instance brought out in this trial, truck was placed on or under the doorstep of the planter, where the planter walking over the material would bring about the desired effect. Marrinda Jane Singleton, who was born a slave in North Carolina in 1840, and raised in Virginia, described a similar belief:

They believed that herbs or roots of certain types where the victim would walk over 'em, he would become deathly ill soon after and perhaps die of the spell if it was not removed (Perdue 1976 et al.:267-268).

These conjuring cases were not restricted to North Carolina – a visitor to Virginia's Northern Neck in the 1820s wrote of numerous examples of slave conjurers (Chambers 1996a:378).

Only when the spirituality of the slaves threatened to interfere with white authority and control was it viewed with suspicion. It is doubtful whether the white planters and court officials seriously believed that Bristoe's actions would have accomplished the desired result. Perhaps Bristoe was used instead as an example to

---

<sup>4</sup> The *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* defines "truck" as "miscellaneous articles of little worth; odds and ends" and "trash or rubbish."

intimidate slaves who might otherwise have been tempted to purchase his services to obtain results with far more malevolent intent.

As evident from the previous discussion, the enslaved were continuing to practice Igbo-based beliefs on Virginia plantations. How did Virginia planters react to these African-style spiritual customs? Here the evidence is both sparse and sporadic. Documents suggest that these practices were certainly no real secret to the planters, although detailed knowledge about the meanings and intents behind them was probably not the case. Landon Carter's famous 1770 description about searching the holes and boxes of the slaves for the missing butterpot shows quite clearly that the presence of subfloor pits in slave houses was knowledge that planters shared (Carter 1965:495). After all, underground pits used for the storage of foodstuffs was a tradition within British culture as well (Reynolds 1977, Fowler 1983). What was probably not apparent to Carter was that some of these pits were serving spiritual functions for his enslaved laborers. Part of the hidden power behind these shrines was that the sacred objects within them were items the planter would see as mere utilitarian goods.

The Virginia subfloor pits have so far failed to yield any positive evidence of creolized spiritual beliefs or practices that combine or transform Christian and African traditions. What this creolization would look like materially, I'm not sure -- perhaps the presence of traditional Christian symbols like crosses included in with assemblages of Igbo-type shrine goods, suggesting that a combination of Christian and West African spirits were being called upon for guidance. Absence in the archaeological record is certainly not proof that such creolized beliefs and practices were absent in Virginia. Non-archaeological creolized spiritual expressions, such as the ring shout found in Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, and other parts of the American South (Sobel 1979, Stuckey 1987) and lyrics of some spirituals, are evidence of these processes at work. The performance patterns—improvisation and conversational structures, for example—of African American spirituals provide even stronger evidence of this creolization. Antebellum black preachers were often referred to as of "Royal African blood", suggesting that the Christian ministers still retained some aspects of traditional African authority (Sobel 1979:235). John Canoe (jonkonnu), a well-documented music and

masquerade performance that occurred in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century North Carolina and parts of Virginia, is another example of a creolized tradition (Fenn 1988). This celebration was a blend of an Igbo masquerade performed during the New Yam festival (*njokku*) and Christian beliefs about Christmas (Chambers 1996a).

Conversion to Christianity among African Americans followed no unilineal pattern on the quarters, and there was no distinct moment when we could say that Christianity became the religion of the quarters. It was a process best characterized by movement and flux as different individuals fashioned their own belief systems. Movement was also not towards a simple uniform blending of Christian and African components to form a homogenized creole culture (Edwards-Ingram and Brown 1998). On the same North Carolina plantation where the Africans were witnessed offering sacrifices, another white visitor attended the chapel built by planter Josiah Collins for the enslaved laborers. Edmund Ruffin recounted in 1839 that while there were only around one hundred in attendance at the church on the day he attended services, sometimes the chapel was filled to its two hundred person capacity (Ruffin 1839). Most of the individuals in attendance, he noted, were women. Ruffin's comments suggest gendered differences in church attendance, if not in belief systems. There were surely differences between "saltwater" Africans – those born in Africa, and the succeeding generations of enslaved African Americans on the same plantations. Various levels of creolized beliefs, as well as incorporation of both Christian and African components into the same belief system were surely all part of the plantation experience. Movement could "reverse" itself, as illustrated by John McCarthy's work at a nineteenth-century African American cemetery in Philadelphia. There some burials showed a revitalization of African-based spiritual practices he linked to growing racism, economic stress, and the in-migration of African Americans from the South (McCarthy 1997).

Christianity had difficulty taking hold among the Igbo in Virginia until it was presented in forms that were more akin to traditional Igbo beliefs about the cosmos and spirituality. In Virginia, this shift came about largely during the Second Great Awakening of the early nineteenth century. There, the more expressive worship styles of

the Baptists and Methodists felt more familiar to peoples of West African heritage than the formalized services of the Anglican Church (Sobel 1987).

### **Conclusions**

The Igbo proverb “Ike di na awaja na awaja” – translated as “power runs in many channels”—is an appropriate adage for viewing archaeological evidence of slave spirituality in colonial Virginia. This proverb gives voice to the idea that even the smallest creature can sometimes destroy a larger, more powerful predator. Despite the unequal balance of power confronting the enslaved on Virginia’s plantations, there was a cultural precedent that allowed enslaved Igbos and their descendants in Virginia the knowledge that they were not completely powerless in the face of the stronger forces confronting them. Archaeological analysis of the enslaved on the three plantations studied here suggests that Africans and African Americans were constructing and maintaining new identities based in traditions that reinforced the importance of family and household. The creation of shrines to petition ancestors for beneficence, and the use of objects that appear to have functioned as personal protection and ritual items, indicate that the enslaved were choosing sources of spiritual strength and power that operated at individual and family levels.

Some scholars have suggested that the social disruption of enslavement and the severing of kinship ties would have prevented ancestor-related beliefs and practices from surviving in the American colonies (Raboteau 1978:83; Sobel 1979). If we view ancestor beliefs as intricately tied to personal identity, however, a different view holds that “the process of ethnic identity creation only comes to have its power in a situation in which pre-existing forms of identity creation and maintenance—kinship, for example—are being destroyed” (Shennan 1989:16). Ethnographic work with modern Igbo peoples also suggests that the social upheavals of war, migration, and slavery can actually prompt the creation of new founding fathers, who later attain ancestor status (McCall 1995). McCall argues that it is too simplistic to envision ancestors as a phenomenon based on unilineal descent; instead, the community plays an important role in the development and

understanding of ancestors. It is just these types of communities, initially of unrelated individuals sharing a common fate and later families, that formed on Virginia plantations. If, at first, ancestors were functioning as manifestations of ethnic identity for enslaved Africans, they could have easily been later incorporated into the spiritual beliefs of slave quarter community and family life.

Clearly, however, there are no simple answers or criteria that can be applied to archaeological data for assessing spiritual beliefs of persons long dead. As I discovered when conducting this research, expressions of spiritual beliefs are highly personal and that only by painstakingly contextualizing analysis conducted at a micro-scale was I able to isolate what appear to be shrine groupings. Even working within individual plantations, as witnessed by the very different shrine groupings at the sites, there will not be any hard and fast criteria that can be applied to the archaeological data.

Further complicating matters is the necessity, in the face of the scarcity of earlier data, of relying heavily on information from colonial and post-colonial Igbo culture. Igbo culture has certainly not stood still over the last few centuries, and has undergone a colonial period of its own during the nineteenth century. One certainly cannot expect to find direct parallels between eighteenth-century Virginia and the Igbo culture of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Regional differences within Igbo culture need to be taken into account, and complications arise at the Virginia end as well. Although it appears that concentrations of Igbo were present on Virginia's James/York peninsula, they were certainly not the only Africans enslaved there. Individuals from a number of different West and Central African cultures came together on Virginia's plantations, and formed physical and spiritual communities with beliefs and practices that drew upon each. Contact with Native Americans and people of English or European descent must also be considered.

Despite these caveats, the picture looks promising for continued gains in our knowledge about the enslaved on the plantations of Virginia. Surely regional and even intra-regional patterns within Virginia slavery will become apparent as research continues. With the recent completion of the W. E. B. DuBois slave trade database, there promise to be further advances in our knowledge about where specific cultural groups



were clustered on plantations of the American South. As this information becomes available, archaeologists can tailor their research questions and strategies to more adequately target specific African cultures. Fitting the research questions to the data has implications far beyond the analysis of spiritual practices, with applicability for the study of, among other topics, personal and community space, foodways, and gender relations.

The recent discovery in coastal North Carolina of an eighteenth-century shrine group very similar to the Kingsmill example also raises the question of how traditions spread throughout the south as the enslaved were moved within the American colonies (Lautzenheiser et. al 1998). Because North Carolina lacked good harbors, many of the individuals enslaved there in the eighteenth century were brought overland from Virginia and South Carolina. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, migrations to the west and south also dispersed large numbers of Virginia slaves across the American South (Walsh 1997). Excavations in Tennessee, Kentucky, and other states have found subfloor pits in slave dwellings, as well as evidence of charms and medicine bundles (Wilkie 1995; Young 1996). Perhaps analysis of the contents of these subfloor pits will also yield evidence of shrine groupings.

At this intersection of archaeology, history, anthropology, religious studies, and art history, the vitality of African cultures becomes evident. Working at individual and household scales, the enslaved coped with the concerns of daily life under enslavement, using a combination of spiritual beliefs and plain hard work to effect change. Most likely these concerns centered primarily around personal and family matters—having enough food to feed their children, the recovery of a loved one from an illness or injury, or even that the hens continue to lay eggs that could be exchanged for cash or some other needed item at the local market. While in no way diminishing the horrors of a colonial system that affected the lives of millions of individuals, research shows that the enslaved drew upon the traditions of their forebears to effect positive change in their lives.

## **Epilogue**

In the prologue, an enslaved woman named Ebo created and honored a shrine that paid homage to her Igbo ancestry. Her purpose in creating this shrine was simple enough—to unite her husband and children under one roof. Things taken for granted today—the freedom to choose where and with whom one will live—were generally not possible for enslaved African Americans, however. Ebo’s strategy of creating and honoring a shrine to an Igbo deity was based in centuries’ old spiritual traditions.

How much of this prologue is fiction and how much is factual? Documents from the Utopia plantation tell us there was an Ebo—she lived on the plantation in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. But that faded name inked long ago on a sheet of rag paper is the only certain evidence we have of her. We don’t know if Ebo was the person who created the shell-covered shrine discovered over 200 years later by archaeologists. We don’t even know if she had a husband or children and we may never know the answers to these questions.

What we do know is that someone living at the Utopia Quarter worked hard to dig a rectangular hole through the clay house floor. We know the shell and other objects found on that platform of soil were placed there with purpose. Tradition tells us that this purpose was spiritual in nature, with its basis in long-standing West African beliefs. The objects placed on the platform were chosen with care and the creation of this feature was not arbitrary, but an important and significant act. Will we ever know the answers to all of our questions about this feature and the others like it on these sites? Probably not. But through careful excavation and recording, and attention to ethnohistoric and ethnographic sources, we can begin to approach closer approximations of the past.

## APPENDIX A

### SLAVE SITES AND PROBABLE SLAVE SITES IN VIRGINIA AND MARYLAND

Site Name	Site Number	Structure #	Beg Date Structure (approx)	End Date Structure (approx)	No. of Pits	Occupant
<b>Slave Sites – Known and Probable</b>						
Jordans Journey	44PG302	Structure 17	1620	1635	1	probable slave
Jordans Journey	44PG302	Structure 18	1620	1635	1	probable slave
Kingsmill Tenement	44JC39	Structure 5	1680	1700	3	slave
44JC298	44JC298	Structure 104	1680	1700	16	probable slave
Bray Kitchen	44JC34	Structure 1	1700	1720	2	probable slave
Bray Kitchen	44JC34	Structure 2	1700	1720	0	probable slave
44JC298	44JC298	Structure 103a	1700	1720	1	probable slave
44JC298	44JC298	Structure 103b	1700	1720	2	probable slave
Utopia Period II	44JC32	Structure 1	1700	1720	6	known slave
Utopia Period II	44JC32	Structure 10	1700	1720	12	known slave
Utopia Period II	44JC32	Structure 20	1700	1720	1	known slave
Clifts Plantation	44WM	Quarter	1700	1720	1	servant or slave
44CC297	44CC297	Structure	1700	1720	1	tenant
Jordans Journey	44PG302	Structure 15	1700	1740	4	probable slave
Flowerdew Christine	44"PG98	Structure 35	1720	1750	4	probable slave
Harbor View		Structure 27	1720	1760	1	probable slave
Geo. Washington Birthplace		Structure 11	1720	1760	1	probable slave
Newport News Farm Park		Structure 1	1720	1760	8	probable slave
Tutters Neck	44JC45	Kitchen	1720	1760	4	probable slave
Littletown Quarter	44JC35	Structure 1	1720	1760	2	probable slave
Littletown Quarter	44JC35	Structure 2	1720	1760	4	probable slave
44SK147	44SK147	Structure 1	1720	1760	3	probable slave
44SK147	44SK147	Structure 2	1720	1760	2	probable slave
Utopia Period III	44JC32	Structure 40	1720	1760	3	known slave
Utopia Period III	44JC32	Structure 50	1720	1760	12	known slave
Eden House	31BR52	Structure 2	1700	1750	5	probable slave
Rich Neck	44WB52	Quarter	1740	1780	15	known slave
Bray	44JC34	Quarter	1740	1780	4	probable slave
Curles Neck	44HE677	Field Quarter	1740	1775	4	known slave
Kingsmill Quarter	44JC39	Building 1	1750	1780	22	known slave
Kingsmill Quarter	44JC39	Building 2	1760	1780	6	known slave
Utopia Period IV	44JC787	Structure 140	1750	1780	22	probable slave
Utopia Period IV	44JC787	Structure 150	1750	1780	1	probable slave
Utopia Period IV	44JC787	Structure 160	1750	1780	1	probable slave
Hampton Key	44JC44	Structure	1760	1780	5	probable slave
Mount Vernon	44FX762/40	House/Families	1760	1792	1	known slave
Monticello	44AB89	Negro Quarter	1770		4	known slave
Rich Neck	44WB52	Structure B	1775	1815	3	probable slave
Carters Grove	44JC110	Group House	1780	1800	13	known slave
Carters Grove	44JC110	Duplex	1780	1800	2	known slave

Carters Grove	44JC110	Foreman House	1780	1800	1 known slave
Pope Site		Structure 2	1780	1800	1 known slave
North Quarter	44JC52	Structure	1780	1800	3 probable slave
Piney Grove	44JC643	Structure 1	c. 1800	1820	1 probable slave
Piney Grove	44JC643	Structure 5	1830	1840	0 possible slave
Monticello	44AB89	Building O	1780	1800	2 known slave
Monticello	44AB89	Building R	1780	1800	1 known slave
Monticello	44AB89	Building S	1780	1800	1 known slave
Monticello	44AB89	Building T	1780	1800	1 known slave
Magnolia Grange	44CH	Structure 1A	1780	1800	0 probable slave
Brush-Everard	CWF29F	Kitchen	1800	1820	1 known slave
Magnolia Grange	44CH	Structure 1B	1800	1830	3 probable slave
Monroe Farm	44PW80	Structure 7	1800	1830	1 probable slave
Gilliam Farm Kitchen	44G317	Kitchen	1800	1830	0 probable slave
Pohoke		Structure 1	1830	1860	1 probable slave
Monroe Farm	44PW80	Structure 8	1830	1860	0 probable slave
Monroe Farm	44PW80	Structure 9	1830	1860	0 probable slave
Valentine House	CWF 29F	House	1830	1860	0 known slave
Wilcox House	44PGI 14	House	1830	1860	0 known slave
Shirley Plantation		House A	1840	1860	0 known slave
<b>Non-Slave or Unknown Sites</b>					
Utopia Cottage	44JC32		1680	1700	1 Tenant, then overseer?
King's Reach		Quarter	1700	1720	1 Indentured Servants?
Clift's Plantation		Quarter	1700	1720	1 Servant or Slave
44CC297	44CC297		1700	1720	1 Tenant
44JC369	44JC369	Structure	1720	1760	1 unknown
44JC546	44JC546		1720	1760	3 Unknown
Pohoke Site		Structure 2	1760	1780	1 Tenant?
Pope Site		Structure 1	1780	1800	1 Possible overseer
Stewart Watkins		House	1800	1830	1 tenant

## **APPENDIX B**

### **REPOSITORIES OF STUDY SITE ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS**

1. **Carter's Grove Quarter – Department of Archaeological Research, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.**
2. **Utopia Quarter—James River Institute for Archaeology, Williamsburg, Virginia.**
3. **Kingsmill Plantation Quarter—Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks, Richmond, Virginia.**

## APPENDIX C

### POLLEN AND PHYTOLITH ANALYSIS AT THE UTOPIA SITE

By Linda Scott Cummings with assistance from Thomas E. Moutoux  
Paleo Research Laboratories, Denver, Colorado

Combined pollen and phytolith analyses were undertaken on five samples from the Utopia I Site (44JC32). This domestic site for enslaved African Americans exhibited two periods of occupation between approximately 1700 and 1750. Documentary evidence is strong that the components, separated spatially, were occupied by successive generations of enslaved peoples on the same plantation.

### METHODS

#### Pollen

A chemical extraction technique based on flotation is the standard preparation technique used in this laboratory for the removal of the pollen from the large volume of sand, silt, and clay with which they are mixed. This particular process was developed for extraction of pollen from soils where preservation has been less than ideal and pollen density is low.

Hydrochloric acid (10%) was used to remove calcium carbonates present in the soil, after which the samples were screened through 150 micron mesh. The samples were rinsed until neutral by adding water, letting the samples stand for 2 hours, then pouring off the supernatant. A small quantity of sodium hexametaphosphate was added to each sample once it reached neutrality, then the beaker was again filled with water and allowed to stand for 2 hours. The samples were again rinsed until neutral, filling the beakers only with water. This step was added to remove clay prior to heavy liquid separation. At this time the samples are dried then pulverized. Zinc bromide (density 2.1) was used for the flotation process. The samples were mixed with zinc bromide and centrifuged at 1500 rpm for 10 minutes to separate organic from inorganic remains. The supernatant containing pollen and organic remains is decanted and diluted. Zinc bromide is again added to the inorganic fraction to repeat the separation process. After rinsing the pollen-rich organic fraction obtained by this separation, all samples received a short (20 minute) treatment in hot hydrofluoric acid to remove any remaining inorganic particles. The samples were then acetolated for 3 minutes to remove extraneous organic matter.

A light microscope was used to count the pollen to a total of 100 to 200 pollen grains at a magnification of 400-600x. Pollen preservation in these samples varied from good to poor. Comparative reference material collected at the Intermountain Herbarium at Utah State University and the University of Colorado Herbarium was used to identify the pollen to the family, genus, and species level, where possible.

Pollen aggregates were recorded during identification of the pollen. Aggregates are clumps of a single type of pollen, and may be interpreted to represent pollen dispersal over short distances, or the introduction of portions of the plant represented into an archaeological

setting. Aggregates were included in the pollen counts as single grains, as is customary. The presence of aggregates is noted by an "A" next to the pollen frequency on the pollen diagram. A plus (+) on the pollen diagram indicates that the pollen type was observed outside the regular count while scanning the remainder of the microscope slide.

Indeterminate pollen includes pollen grains that are folded, mutilated, and otherwise distorted beyond recognition. These grains are included in the total pollen count, as they are part of the pollen record.

### **Phytoliths**

Extraction of phytoliths from these sediments also was based on heavy liquid floatation. Approximately 50 ml of sediment was added to 50 ml of sodium hexametaphosphate (0.1 molar solution) to suspend the clays. The sample was then sieved through 150 micron mesh. The sample was allowed to settle for two hours, then the supernatant was poured off, which contained clay. This settling time allowed the phytoliths to settle to the base of the beaker. The samples were mixed with water, allowed to settle for two hours, and the supernatant discarded several times, until the supernatant was clear. Liquid bleach was added to the sample and allowed to sit overnight to destroy the organic fraction in the sample. Rinses were continued to remove the bleach, then the remaining clays. The last two times the sample is allowed to settle the time is reduced to one hour. This procedure removes most of the clays. Once most of the clays were removed, the silt and sand size fraction was dried. The dried silts and sands were then mixed with zinc bromide (density 2.3) and centrifuged to separate the phytoliths, which will float, from the other silica, which will not. Phytoliths, in the broader sense, may include opal phytoliths and calcium oxalate crystals. Calcium oxalate crystals are formed by many woods and some foods and are separated, rather than destroyed, using this extraction technique, since it employs no acids. If calcium carbonates are present, use of glacial acetic may be employed to dissolve the calcium carbonates without destroying any calcium oxalates present. Any remaining clay is floated with the phytoliths, and is further removed by mixing with sodium pyrophosphate and distilled water. The samples are then rinsed with distilled water, then alcohols to remove the water. After several alcohol rinses, the samples are mounted in Cinnamaldehyde for counting with a light microscope at a magnification of 500x.

## **ETHNOBOTANICAL REVIEW**

Historic records provide information concerning use of plants by people living in the last few centuries. Some of this information is drawn from accounts documenting Native American uses of plants, while other accounts document Anglo plant use. Ethnographic sources outside the study area have been consulted to permit a more exhaustive review of potential uses for each plant.

## Edible Plants

### Carya (Hickory, Pecan)

Most species of Carya (hickory, pecan) are found in the southeastern United States, with some species reaching parts of the Midwest. The pecan is extensively cultivated in Southern states, while mockernut hickory (C. tomentosa) and shagbark hickory (C. ovata) are the most common commercially grown hickory nuts. Pecans and sweet hickory nuts may be eaten fresh or roasted, and are used in baking like walnuts. The sap also can be used to make a syrup. Carya nuts are high in fat and are vulnerable to rancidity. For this reason, commercial nuts are usually roasted or deep fried (Hedrick 1972:149-150; McGee 1984:264, 271; Peterson 1977:190).

### Ceanothus (New Jersey Tea, Redroot, Wild-lilac)

Ceanothus (New Jersey tea, redroot, or wild-lilac) is a shrub that might have been planted as an ornamental. In addition, the leaves were considered one of best substitutes for tea during the American Revolution (Fernald 1950:993).

### Cerealia (Wheat and other Cereal Grains)

Cereal grains include such diverse grains as wheat, rye, barley, and oats. Triticum (wheat) was one of the first cultivated plants, and it was the most important cereal in ancient Mediterranean civilizations. Today, there are over 30,000 varieties of wheat, and it is the most widely-cultivated plant in the world. Early wheat was parched, ground, and made into a gruel. It also was fermented to make a type of beer. The Spanish brought wheat to Mexico in 1529, where it spread as an agricultural crop among the native peoples. Wheat grows best in cool weather, so crops could be grown in winter during the traditionally scarce time of year. Wheat is used for making bread because wheat's storage proteins form a complex called gluten when they are ground up and mixed with water. Gluten makes the dough stick together and gives it the ability to retain gases, resulting in the ability to make raised bread. The three types of modern wheat most commonly grown are based on hardness of the kernel which is a measure of protein content. Durum semolina is the hardest and is used to make pasta products. Hard flour contains little free starch and is used for bread. Soft flour has a high starch content and weak gluten and is used for pastries, biscuits, cookies, and cakes (Heiser 1990:63-74; McGee 1984:234, 285-285). Barley (Hordeum vulgare) was one of the first plants domesticated in the Near East. In addition to being a valuable food for both humans and animals, barley is important in making malt for brewing and distilling. Rye (Secale cereale) and oats (Avena sativa) are more recent domesticates. Rye usually is mixed with wheat to make bread, since it has too little gluten to make a good bread alone. Oats are highly nutritional, containing 15-16 percent protein and approximately 8 percent oils. Oats have been a popular breakfast cereal and also an important animal feed, particularly for horses (Heiser 1990:106-108).



### **Ipomoea batatas Sweet potato**

Ipomoea batatas (sweet potato) was introduced from tropical South and Central America. Numerous varieties were being cultivated prior to discovery of the New World by Columbus. Prior to 1650 sweet potatoes were being grown in Virginia. Plantations of sweet potatoes around Indian villages were noted in the South in 1773 by Bartram (Hedrick 1972:315-316). Sweet potatoes are cooked in a variety of ways including being "boiled, roasted, mashed, stewed, ground into flour, preserved, or in sweet tarts" (Toussaint-Samat 1992:65).

### **Vitis (Grape)**

Vitis (grape) is a native of Asia Minor and North America that has been cultivated for wine and table grapes. The Egyptians are believed to have first cultivated grapes 6000 years ago. The majority of wines and table grapes are made from varieties of the European Vitis vinifera. American jelly, grape juice, and northeastern wines are made from Concord grapes, a variety of the American Vitis labrusca (McGee 1984:187). Many other species of Vitis are native to the United States and produce edible fruit which can be purple, blue, black, or amber. Wild grapes are often too tart to be eaten raw, but are used in jams, jellies, and juices (Angell 1981:156). Generally, wild grapes need more sweetening than cultivated grapes and contain plenty of pectin before fully ripe (Peterson 1977:198). Young grape leaves can be cooked as greens or used to wrap meat for baking. Internally and externally, leaves were used to cure snake bites and disorders of the internal organs. "In various parts of the world, including the West in pioneer times, grape leaves soaked in water were used as a poultice for wounds" (Kirk 1975:263). Wild grapes are found throughout the Southwest and Northeast United States growing in thickets and edges of woods (Medsger 1966:53-59).

### **Weedy Plants**

Muenschler (1987:3) describes weeds as "those plants that grow where they are not wanted. Whether a plant of a given species is considered a weed depends not only on its characteristics and habitats, but also on its relative position with references to other plants and man." Weeds often are able to thrive in diverse and adverse circumstances. They are commonly found in disturbed or in places undesirable to other plants. Many weed species produce enormous quantities of seeds, and these seeds often are dispersed widely. Other weed species are capable of reproducing vegetatively. These factors combine to produce a plant that is very successful in competition with other plant species. The word "weed" is assigned here to those plants that most likely represent native and/or introduced vegetation that were considered to be weedy.

### **Low-spine Asteraceae (Includes Ambrosia (ragweed))**

Low-spine Asteraceae includes Ambrosia (ragweed), Iva (sumpweed), and Xanthium (cocklebur). Of these plants, Ambrosia is the most likely in this setting. Ragweed (also wild tansy, hog-weed, bitterweed, mayweed, hay-fever weed, and blackweed) is an annual that grows in cultivated fields, old meadows, pastures, waste places, and gardens. Ragweed pollen is responsible for many cases of fall hayfever (Muenscher 1987:423-425).

### **High-spine Asteraceae (Includes sunflower, asters, etc.)**

Helianthus (sunflower) is the only North American native to become a significant world crop. Sunflowers were cultivated by native peoples in the American Southwest long before Europeans arrived. The sunflower was introduced to Europe as a decorative plant in 1509, and large crops were being grown in France and Bavaria in the 1700s for vegetable oil. Large crops are now cultivated in many parts of the world to provide oil, stock feed, and seeds that are roasted and eaten. The whole seed also can be roasted and used as a substitute for coffee (Hedrick 1972:298). Sunflower "seeds" are actually complete fruits and contain 47% fat, 24% protein, and 20% carbohydrates. Seeds from wild sunflower plants are smaller than those from cultivated plants, but they are just as good and can be prepared in the same ways. Wild sunflowers are widely distributed in dry open ground, waste places, fields, and prairies (Kirk 1975:135; Peterson 1977:88). Many other members of this pollen group are either native plants, cultivated plants, or may be viewed as weedy plants.

### **Liguliflorae (Dandelion, Chicory, etc.)**

Members of the Liguliflorae or Chicory tribe of Asteraceae include such plants as dandelion, chicory, prickly lettuce. These plants may be weedy annuals, biennials, or perennials and grow in a variety of disturbed ground. Lactuca (prickly lettuce, milk thistle) also includes the cultivated lettuce. Most species within the Liguliflorae are weedy, herbaceous plants found in a variety of habitats, some of which include cultivated fields, meadows, waste places, old fields, pastures, gardens, and lawns (Muenscher 1987:422, 480-484).

### **Caryophyllaceae (Pink family)**

Members of the Caryophyllaceae (pink) family include plants that grow in waste places, grasslands, lawns, rich woods, damp thickets, meadows, on shaded rocky slopes, and along shores and wet places. Many members of this family are common ornamental plants. Dianthus (pinks, Sweet William, and carnations) were introduced from Europe. These flowers may escape cultivation and grow as weeds, but they are specifically planted and cultivated for their flowers. Other members such as Stellaria (chickweed) and Silene (catchfly, campion) are common weeds in cosmopolitan areas (Fernald 1950:622-624; Hickey and King 1981:72).

### **Cheno-ams (Pigweed and Amaranth)**

Amaranthus (tumbleweed, pigweed, and redroot) often grow in fields and waste places. These annuals produce large quantities of seed that spread readily. Chenopodium (lambsquarters, goosefoot) is a common annual weed in gardens, cultivated fields, and waste

places. Seeds are produced in abundance. Some of the Chenopodium may be difficult to pull because of strong roots, but may be hoed off below the ground surface (Muenscher 1987:183-196). Some species of Amaranthus may be planted as flowers because of their colorful heads.

### **Cyperaceae (Sedge family)**

Members of the Cyperaceae (sedge) family are perennial or annual, grass-like herbs of wet places, although some are adapted to drier habitats. Carex is a sedge that persists as a weed in grasslands and on recently drained areas. It does not persist under cultivation (Muenscher 1987). Cyperus rotundus (nut-grass) is a perennial sedge that is often noted to be a troublesome weed. It frequently grows in cultivated ground and along bottomlands. Cyperus esculentus (yellow nut-grass) also may be a troublesome weed in cultivated ground and also grows in sandy soil. Cyperus strigosus is perennial and grows in meadows, damp thickets, bogs, and marshes, as well as along wet shores (Fernald 1950:244-245). Eleocharis (spikerush) has mainly leafless stems and seed clusters arising in a clump from a matted rootstalk. Spikerushes are found growing in marshes and along shores, and E. palustris is a common weed of rice fields. The tuber of E. tuberosa (water-chestnut) is universally used as food. It is in greatest demand and largely cultivated all over China (Hedrick 1972:251-252; Muenscher 1980:46-47; Reid 1987:55). Scirpus (bulrush, threesquares) are annual or perennial sedges common in the eastern United States. Bulrushes have cylindrical, bullwhip-like stems, while threesquares have triangular stalks. Scirpus plants may be found in woods, thickets, meadows, pastures, ricefields, ditches, swamps, bogs, marshes, and in other low, wet places (Britton and Brown, Volume 1 1970:326; Martin 1972:31; Muenscher 1987:151).

### **Euphorbia (Spurge)**

Euphorbia (spurge) plants are typically considered to be common, poisonous weedy plants. They occur as annual or perennial herbs, and many species have an acrid milky sap that will irritate the skin and eye and mouth membranes. Although most species are considered bothersome weeds, some species have been used in a variety of ways. Spurge has been used to treat snakebites, asthma, and bronchial congestion. The juice of E. marginata (snow-on-the-mountain) has been used in Texas to brand cattle, and other species, such as E. pulcherrima (poinsettia), are grown as ornamentals. Euphorbia is found throughout the United States along roadsides, and in fields, meadows, pastures, waste places, gardens and yards (Kirk 1975:32; Muenscher 1987:298-305; Niering and Olmstead 1979).

### **Fabaceae (Legume family)**

Fabaceae (legume family) is a large family of about 600 genera and 12,000 species, including trees, shrubs, herbs, water plants, xerophytes, and climbers. It is the third largest family of flowering plants and the second most important family to human diet. A general characteristic of this family is the presence of bacteria in the roots of many plants which enable the plant to take up more atmospheric nitrogen. This practice helps enrich the soil, and many species are valuable as crops on poor soils (Hickey and King 1981:196).

## Poaceae (Grass family)

Poaceae (grass family) is one of the most widely distributed families in the world. Grasses are annual or perennial herbs with fibrous roots, sometimes woody stems, forming loose to dense tufts or mats. The grass family is probably of greater economic importance than any other family. The grass family provides food for man, fodder for domestic animals, and thatching. Grasses also are used in lawns and other turfed areas, grown for ornament in gardens, and dried for floral decorations. Grasses are found in a variety of habitats, sometimes becoming troublesome weeds (Hickey and King 1981:436-437). Eleusine indica (goosegrass) is a widespread annual grass in the eastern United States that was introduced from Asia. It is a common urban weed found in grasslands, gardens, lawns, vacant lots, cultivated areas, and waste places (Martin 1972:19; Muenscher 1987:129). Panicum (witch or Panic grass) is an annual grass that can be a few inches to several feet tall, and is most commonly found in cultivated fields, pastures, roadsides and waste places (Martin 1972; Muenscher 1987).

## Polygonaceae (Buckwheat family)

Polygonaceae includes Polygonum (knotweed and smartweed) as the primary genus. The pollen identified in this study probably falls within this genus, but was too deteriorated for a confident identification. These plants contain an acrid juice that causes smarting. Most species are annuals, but a few species are perennials. The peppery leaves of certain species may be eaten raw in salads or cooked like spinach. Polygonum can become troublesome weeds, but are important foods for song birds, gamebirds, and waterfowl. Polygonum species are partial to moist soils in pastures and cultivated fields, along ditches, and on trampled ground about yards, paths, roadsides and waste places (Kirk 1975:56; Martin 1972:40-42; Muenscher 1987).

## DISCUSSION

The Utopia I Site (44JC32) is located on a high bluff overlooking the James River. Two temporal components date to 1700 to 1720 and 1720 to 1750. The early component is represented by three earthfast or timber-framed structures, while the later component is marked by two earthfast buildings. All five samples represent sub-floor pits found inside the buildings' footprints. At least one structure from each time period is represented (Table 1), with two samples representing the early period and three from the later occupation.

Sample 9C represents a small, sub-floor pit in Structure 10, which was occupied during the Early Period. This sample displayed a relatively large quantity of arboreal (tree) pollen, including Carya, Quercus, Juniperus, Pinus, Platanus, probable Populus, and Ulmus. This record indicates that a mixture of trees growing along the James River and in the uplands is represented. Carya, Quercus, and Pinus appear to be the most common trees. Carya pollen may represent either hickory or pecan, indicating that either hickory or pecan nuts were available locally. Recovery of this pollen indicates only that the trees grew in the vicinity of the site, not that the nuts were collected or stored. Other pollen includes Low-spine and High-spine

Asteraceae, Cheno-am, Euphorbia, Fabaceae, Poaceae, Rosaceae, and indeterminate. These pollen probably represent plants growing in the vicinity of the structure. Of these, the Asteraceae, Cheno-am, Euphorbia and Fabaceae represent plants with weedy habits. In addition, some of the High-spine Asteraceae pollen group represents cultivated flowers, which also might be represented here. The Rosaceae pollen does not represent cultivated roses, but rather another member of this family. A single type of starch typical of those produced by Triticum (wheat), Hordeum (barley), and Secale cereale (rye) was noted. This starch represents presence and use of one of these cereal grains. The phytolith record from this pit was dominated by bilobate phytoliths, which represent tall, warm season grasses. In addition, festucoid phytoliths were noted, including elongate dendritic forms, which are typical of those produced by cereal grasses. A single Cyperaceae phytolith is present, indicating the presence of sedges in the local vegetation. Recovery of sponge spicules indicate the presence of water or moisture in the pit or the presence of sediments that originated in the floodplain of the James River.

Samples 36J and 36L1 represent a rectangular subfloor pit located in front of one of the fireplaces in the two room structure. This feature was filled with multiple layers of fill. The pollen and phytolith samples were collected from the lowest two levels of fill within a 4.5' x 4.5' wooden box that had been lowered into the pit. Analysis was conducted to identify whether or not this box functioned for storing root vegetables. Layer 36L was a mixture of sandy loam, mottled orange clay, and sparse charcoal. Layer 36J, which sealed the lower layer, was described as a medium brown sandy loam with charcoal inclusions, which began at a depth of 2.5 ft. below modern grade. The pollen sample collected from layer 36J was removed from a protected area beneath a brick fragment. This sample contained the largest quantity of Poaceae pollen noted in any of the samples. Relatively few arboreal pollen types were observed, particularly Quercus and Pinus, which were abundant in other samples. Arboreal pollen recovered in this sample includes Alnus, Carya, Castanea, Quercus, Pinus, and probable Populus, documenting the presence of these trees during the early occupation. Recovery of both Low-spine and High-spine Asteraceae pollen might represent local weedy plants, with the possibility that some of the High-spine Asteraceae pollen might represent ornamental plants such as sunflower. Cheno-am pollen was moderately abundant, as it was in sample 9C, also from the early period. Cheno-ams probably represent local weedy plants. In addition to a large quantity of Poaceae, pollen, Cerealia pollen was observed in this sample, suggesting the presence of grains in this structure and possibly within the pit. A single grain of Toxicodendron pollen indicates local presence of poison ivy/poison oak. A small quantity of Vitis/Ceanothus pollen was noted in this sample. This particular pollen was in a good state of preservation and appears to represent Vitis. No starch granules were observed on the pollen slide. The elevated Poaceae pollen frequency might represent use of grasses to line the pit to protect foods stored in it. The presence of Cerealia pollen might represent storing grains in the pit. Three starch granules were recovered during a cross-polar scan of the microscope slide for this sample. Forms recovered included an angular, a subangular, and a circular to subcircular shape. Angular forms are much more common in sweet potato tubers and Zea mays (corn) than they are in other cereal grains such as wheat or barley. Therefore, the starch record points to probable storage of sweet potatoes in this pit. Recovery of a small quantity of Vitis pollen from this pit suggests the presence of grapes or more probably raisins or perhaps spilled wine. This

sample displayed a very large quantity of small charcoal particles, suggesting the presence of ash in this layer. Recovery of ash indicates that the pollen and other debris in the pit could have entered the pit as a result of nearby activities not directly associated with use of the pit.

The phytolith record from sample 36L1 was similar to others from this site with the exception that more festucoid forms and fewer elongates were recorded. No dendritic elongates were observed, which are expected if there a significant quantity of cereal grains were stored in this feature. However, since this sample was collected from a different level than pollen sample 36J, it is possible that two different events are represented. The elevated festucoid short cell quantity is consistent with an elevated Poaceae pollen frequency, since cool season grasses are among those that are expected to be collected for use in lining pits. The phytolith record supports the interpretation that this pit might have been lined with grasses. Diatoms and sponge spicules might have traveled into the pit on the grasses.

Structure 50, occupied during the Middle Period, contained a mounded "platform" in the center of the subsoil floor of a flat-bottomed subfloor pit (Feature 44B). A dozen large, fossil scallop shells and some large faunal bones, and a tobacco pipe were recovered from the top of the platform. Level A (sample 44A) appears to be a secondary refuse layer thrown in on top of the mound. Feature 53 represents a small, sub-floor pit in Structure 50.

Sample 44A, representing secondary refuse, is distinguished from other samples by its large quantity of Vitis/Ceanothus pollen. Vitis/Ceanothus pollen probably represents cultivated or native grapes. While this pollen could not be distinguished with certainty under the microscope, grape is the more probable cultural interpretation. This sample contained a much larger quantity of Vitis/Ceanothus pollen than did sample 44B, indicating the likelihood that not only were grapes present in the structure, but that they were part or perhaps the majority of the refuse that composed this secondary deposition. Pollen analysis does not distinguish between the presence of grapes and various methods of processing, including into wine. The alternative that New Jersey tea is represented is a possibility, since the leaves of this shrub were made into tea. If this were the case, discard of these remains could have introduced a large quantity of pollen into the refuse deposit. The large quantity of Vitis/Ceanothus pollen recovered from this pit affected the frequencies of other pollen types, depressing them in relation to the frequencies recovered in other samples. Trees represented in this sample include Betula, Carya, Castanea, Quercus, Fraxinus, Pinus and Platanus. The fact that the Carya pollen frequency was elevated suggests that the remains in this pit might have accumulated when hickory/pecan trees were pollinating (spring) or that other items were collected at this time and were discarded as part of the refuse. Weedy plants represented by pollen in this sample include Low-spine and high-spine Asteraceae, and Fabaceae. Recovery of a small quantity of Caryophyllaceae pollen might represent either a weedy plant or cultivated flower. No starch granules were present in this sample.

Sample 44B, representing the underlying platform, contains a large frequency of arboreal pollen that included Carya, Castanea, probable Fagus, Quercus, Pinus, Platanus, and probable Populus. The tree population during accumulation of this part of the record appears very similar to that noted during the Early period in sample 9C and Carya, Quercus, and Pinus

appear to be the most abundant. Low-spine and High-spine Asteraceae, Liguliflorae, and Cheno-am pollen represents plants that might have been weedy growing in the vicinity of this structure. The Poaceae pollen frequency was moderate, indicating the presence of grasses. All of this portion of the pollen record appears to represent normal accumulation of "background pollen rain". Vitis/Ceanothus pollen was present on top of the platform in a smaller quantity than was noted in the overlying secondary refuse deposit. The pollen might be present here through economic activity or use of grapes on the platform, or through vertical pollen translocation through the sediments after the refuse had been deposited on top of the platform. No starch granules were noted in this sample. No evidence of possible ceremonial use of plants on the platform was noted, other than Vitis/Ceanothus.

The phytolith record from Feature 44 did not exhibit as much variety as was noted in the pollen record. Bilobate phytoliths were moderately abundant, and festucoid phytoliths were less numerous. A few dendritic elongate phytoliths indicate the presence of bran from cultivated cereals in the structure and possibly in the pit. Recovery of a single silica skeleton is also representative of bran from cereals. Cyperaceae phytoliths indicate the presence of sedges. Other than the indication of cereals, no cultural activity appears to be represented in the phytolith record.

Feature 53, representing another small, sub-floor pit in Structure 50, exhibited relatively large quantities of Quercus and Pinus pollen, representing regional trees, and small quantities of Alnus, Carya, probable Fagus, and Ulmus. Low-spine and High-spine Asteraceae, Cheno-am, Cyperaceae, and probable Polygonaceae, represent groups of plants that include weedy species. Poaceae pollen is elevated in this sample, indicating that grasses may have been more abundant or that grasses were used, perhaps to line the feature. A small quantity of Vitis/Ceanothus pollen indicates the presence of grapes in this structure and possible presence in the pit. Two starch granules were noted in this sample. The lenticular form is typical of starches produced by wheat, rye, and barley, indicating the presence of a cereal.

The phytolith record from this feature yielded no evidence of cereals, as elongate dendritic forms and silica skeletons are absent from the sample. The phytolith record is very similar to that observed in other samples from this site, indicating that the sediment from the pit contained phytoliths deposited by grasses growing in that sediment at the time it was the ground surface.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Combined pollen and phytolith analysis of small, sub-floor pits from three structures representing the Early and Middle Period occupations at the Utopia I Site (44JC32) contain records of local and regional vegetation, as well as economic activity inside the structures. The pollen record indicates that Carya (hickory/pecan) trees were available and that the occupants of both periods might have had access to the nuts. Other trees growing in the vicinity of the structures and/or along the James River would have contributed as part of the local vegetation,

but probably not as food sources. These included alder, birch, chestnut, beech, oak, ash, juniper, pine, sycamore, cottonwood, and elm. Although there is evidence of pollen that represent groups of plants that include weedy plants, they are not particularly abundant in these samples. They include Low-spine Asteraceae (ragweed-type), High-spine Asteraceae (sunflower group), Liguliflorae (dandelion-type), Caryophyllaceae (pink family), Chenopods (goosefoot family and pigweed), Cyperaceae (sedges including the weedy nut grass), Euphorbia (spurge), Fabaceae (legumes), Poaceae (grasses), and probably Polygonaceae (buckwheat family). The Fabaceae pollen was not typical of edible members of this family. Rosaceae

pollen probably represents a local shrub, but excludes the possibility of cultivated roses being represented.

Recovery of Vitis/Ceanothus pollen in the samples from Structure 50 (Features 44 and 53) indicates that grapes or grape products (or possibly New Jersey tea) were being used in this structure. The elevated Vitis/Ceanothus pollen frequency recovered from the refuse deposit indicates that remains of grapes or grape products (or possibly New Jersey tea leaves) were discarded, and might have been the primary plant remain contained in the refuse. Recovery of this pollen from the underlying platform sample might represent vertical translocation of the grape pollen, presence as a result of processing grapes, or perhaps, ceremonial use of grapes or wine on the platform. Phytoliths indicate that cereal grains were present in Features 9C, 44A, and 44B. In addition, starch granules confirm the presence of cereals in Feature 9C and add their presence in Feature 53X. Recovery of Vitis/Ceanothus pollen from sample 36J indicates that grapes, raisins, or perhaps wine was stored in this pit or these remains were present in the fill. Recovery of Cerealia pollen indicates that cereal grains also might have been stored in this pit or discarded in the fill. The elevated Poaceae pollen frequency, along with an elevated festucoid short cell frequency in the phytolith record, is consistent with lining the pit with grasses. Recovery of three starch granules typical of those found in sweet potato tubers and less typical of starches produced by cereal grains (other than Zea mays) indicates that sweet potato might have been stored in this pit.

There are no significant differences in the archaeobotanic record for the two occupations. Vitis/Ceanothus was observed in samples from both time periods, as was evidence of the presence of cereal grains, which was recorded in all structures sampled.



TABLE 1  
PROVENIENCE DATA FOR SAMPLES FROM SITE 44JC32

Feature No.	Feature No.	Provenience/ Description	Time Period	Analysis
9C	9	Fill from small sub-floor pit within footprint of earthfast structure	Early Period 1700-1720	Pollen Phytolith
36J	36	Fill from the bottom of a subfloor pit dug into the clay sediment in front of a fireplace in a mid-185h century slave quarter	Early Period	Pollen Phytolith
36L1	36	Fill from the bottom of a subfloor pit dug into the clay sediment in front of a fireplace in a mid-18th century slave quarter	Early Period	Pollen Phytolith
44A	44	Secondary refuse deposit on top of the platform in a small sub-floor pit within footprint of earthfast structure	Middle Period 1720-1750	Pollen Phytolith
44B	44	Platform sample at the base of a small sub-floor pit within footprint of earthfast structure	Middle Period 1720-1750	Pollen Phytolith
53X	53	Fill from small sub-floor pit within footprint of earthfast structure	Middle Period 1720-1750	Pollen Phytolith

TABLE 2  
POLLEN TYPES OBSERVED IN SAMPLES FROM UTOPIA I (44JC32)

Scientific Name	Common Name
<b>ARBOREAL POLLEN:</b>	
<u>Alnus</u>	Alder
<u>Betula</u>	Birch
<u>Carya</u>	Hickory, Pecan
<u>Castanea</u>	Chestnut
Fagaceae:	Beech family
<u>Fagus</u>	Beech
<u>Quercus</u>	Oak
<u>Fraxinus</u>	Ash
<u>Juniperus</u>	Juniper
<u>Pinus</u>	Pine
<u>Platanus</u>	Sycamore
<u>Populus</u>	Poplar
<u>Ulmus</u>	Elm
<b>NON-ARBOREAL POLLEN:</b>	
Asteraceae:	Sunflower family
Low-spine	Includes ragweed, cocklebur, etc.
High-spine	Includes aster, rabbitbrush, snakeweed, sunflower, etc.
Liguliflorae	Includes dandelion and chicory
Caryophyllaceae	Pink family
Cheno-am	Includes amaranth and pigweed family
Cyperaceae	Sedge family
<u>Euphorbia</u>	Spurge
Fabaceae	Bean or Legume family
Poaceae	Grass family

TABLE 2 (Continued)

Scientific Name	Common Name
Cerealialia	Cereal grains such as wheat, barley, etc.
Polygonaceae	Knotweed/smartweed family
Rosaceae	Rose family
<u>Toxicodendron</u>	Poison ivy/poison oak
<u>Vitis/Ceanothus</u>	Grape/New Jersey tea
Indeterminate	
SPORES:	
Monolete	Fern
Trilete	Fern

## REFERENCES CITED

Angell, Madeline

1981 A Field Guide to Berries and Berrylike Fruits. The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., New York.

Britton, Nathaniel Lord and Hon. Addison Brown

1970 An Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada. In Three Volumes. Dover Publications, Inc., New York.

Fernald, M. L.

1950 Gray's Manual of Botany. Eighth Edition. American Book Company, New York.

Hedrick, U.P., editor

1972 Sturtevant's Edible Plants of the World. Dover Publications, Inc., New York.

Heiser, Charles B., Jr.

1990 Seed to Civilization: The Story of Food. Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Hickey, Michael and Clive J. King

1981 100 Families of Flowering Plants. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Kirk, Donald R.

1975 Wild Edible Plants of Western North America. Naturegraph Publishers, Happy Camp, California.

Martin, Alexander C.

1972 Weeds. Golden Press, Western Publishing Company, Inc., New York.

McGee, Harold

1984 On Food and Cooking. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

Medsker, Oliver Perry

1966 Edible Wild Plants. MacMillan Publishing Company, Inc., Racine, Wisconsin.

Muenschler, Walter Conrad

1987 Weeds, Second Edition. Comstock, Ithaca.

Peterson, Lee A.

1977 Edible Wild Plants. Collier Books, New York.

Reid, George K.

1987 Pond Life. A Guide to Common Plants and Animals of North American Ponds and Lakes. Golden Press, New York.

Toussaint-Samat, Maguelonne

1992 History of Food. Basil Blackwell. English translation by Anthea Bell.

## APPENDIX D

### CERAMICS FROM STUDY SITES

**Table D-1.** Ceramic Fragments from Utopia Period II Structures 1, 10, and 20.

Ceramic Type	Vessel and Number of Fragments									Total
	Drug Jar	Flat-ware	Hollow	Indeterminate	Ointment Pot	Plate	Punch-bowl	Tankard	Tea-bowl	
British brown stoneware			4	5				8		17
Buckley			4							4
Coarse earthenware indeterminate			1	3						4
Colonware			31	16						47
Frechen stoneware			1							1
Nottingham stoneware				2						2
Pennsylvania coarse earthenware			1							1
Staffordshire stoneware			1							1
Stoneware, indeterminate			1							1
Tin enamel earthenware	1	1	3	21	1	1	2		1	31
Westerwald stoneware			1					1		2
White salt glaze stoneware			1							1
Yorktown coarse earthenware				2						2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>114</b>

**Table D-2. Estimated Minimum Ceramic Vessel Count for Utopia Period II**

<b>Number of Vessels</b>	<b>Vessel Description</b>
1	British brown stoneware tankard
1	Buckley coarse earthenware hollow vessel
1	coarse earthenware hollow vessel
1	colonoware hollow vessel
1	Frechen stoneware hollow vessel
1	Nottingham stoneware hollow vessel
1	Pennsylvania coarse earthenware hollow vessel
1	Staffordshire stoneware hollow vessel
1	indeterminate stoneware hollow vessel
1	tin enamel earthenware drug jar
1	tin enamel earthenware plate
1	tin enamel earthenware hollow indeterminate vessel
1	tin enamel earthenware punchbowl
1	tin enamel earthenware ointment pot
1	tin enamel earthenware teabowl
1	Westerwald stoneware tankard
1	white salt glaze stoneware hollow vessel
1	Yorktown coarse earthenware indeterminate vessel
18	Total

**Table D-3. Ceramic Fragments From Utopia Period III Structures 40 and 50 Subfloor Pits.**  
**VESSEL FORMS & NUMBER OF FRAGMENTS**

ARTIFACT TYPE	bellarmine	bowl	chamberpot	cup	drug jar	hollow	indeterminate	milkpan	mug	ointment pot	plate	saucer	storage jar	tankard	Grand Total
British brown stoneware						5	2							1	8
brown stoneware													4	3	7
Chinese porcelain								1			1				2
coarse earthenware, unidentified							3								3
colonoware			1			20	12								33
Fulham stoneware						2									2
German stoneware	1														1
North Devon gravel tempered earthenware						3		6							9
North Midlands slipped earthenware				7		1	1								9
Pennsylvania coarseware								2							2
tin enamel earthenware		1	1		2	26	43			4	7				84
Westerwald stoneware			1			4			3					1	9
white salt glaze stoneware						3						1		1	5
Yorktown earthenware		1				17	36	2					2		58
Yorktown stoneware						6	4						6		16
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>248</b>



**Table D-4. Total Estimated Ceramic Vessel Count From Utopia Period III**

<b>Number of Vessels</b>	<b>Vessel Description</b>
1	British brown stoneware tankard
1	British brown stoneware storage jar
1	Brown stoneware storage jar
1	Buckley milkpan
1	Chinese porcelain plate, painted blue and white
1	Chinese porcelain bowl, painted blue and white
1	colonoware hollow vessel, indeterminate form, thick everted rim
1	colonoware hollow vessel, indeterminate form, thin everted rim
1	colonoware bowl with fluted rim
1	Fulham stoneware hollow vessel, indeterminate form
1	German stoneware bellarmine
1	North Devon gravel tempered earthenware milkpan
1	North Midlands slipped earthenware cup
1	North Midlands slipped earthenware, reverse slip indeterminate vessel form
1	Nottingham stoneware indeterminate
1	Pennsylvania coarseware vessel, indeterminate form
1	Iberian earthenware olive oil jar
1	Tin enamel earthenware plate, painted polychrome
1	Tin enamel earthenware bowl
1	Tin enamel earthenware chamberpot
1	Tin enamel earthenware drug jar
1	Tin enamel earthenware ointment pot
1	Tin enamel earthenware tea bowl, painted blue and white
1	Tin enamel earthenware tea bowl, undecorated
1	Westerwald stoneware chamberpot
1	Westerwald stoneware mug or tankard
1	Westerwald stoneware jug
1	White salt glazed stoneware tankard
1	White salt glazed stoneware saucer
1	White salt glaze stoneware tea bowl
1	White salt glaze stoneware bowl
1	White salt glazed stoneware, slip dipped, indeterminate vessel
1	Yorktown coarse earthenware bowl
1	Yorktown coarse earthenware milkpan
1	Yorktown coarse earthenware storage jar
1	Yorktown stoneware storage jar
1	Yorktown stoneware tankard
37	TOTAL

**Table D-5. Estimated Minimum Ceramic Vessel Count for Utopia Period IV.**

Number of Vessels and Description	Number of Vessels and Description
1 Agaware bowl	1 Staffordshire mottled teabowl
1 Agaware teabowl	1 Staffordshire mottled mug
1 Black glazed redware hollow	1 Tin-enameled earthenware chamberpot
1 Buckley coarse earthenware storage jar	1 Tin-enameled earthenware teabowl
1 Buckley coarse earthenware milk pan	1 Tin-enameled earthenware undecorated ointment pot
2 Chinese porcelain painted overglaze hollow	1 Tin-enameled earthenware painted blue/white ointment pot
1 Chinese porcelain painted overglaze mug	1 Tin-enameled earthenware painted blue/white bowl
1 Chinese porcelain painted overglaze bowl	3 Tin-enameled earthenware painted blue/white plates
1 Chinese porcelain painted overglaze plate	1 Tin-enameled earthenware painted blue/white saucer
1 Chinese porcelain painted overglaze teabowl	1 Tin-enameled earthenware painted polychrome basin
1 Chinese porcelain painted overglaze saucer	1 Tin-enameled earthenware painted polychrome plate
1 Chinese porcelain painted underglaze bowl	1 Tin-enameled earthenware painted polychrome hollow
2 Chinese porcelain painted underglaze plates	2 Westerwald stoneware mugs
2 Chinese porcelain painted underglaze teabowls	1 Westerwald stoneware chamberpot
1 Chinese porcelain painted underglaze saucer	1 Westerwald stoneware jug
1 Chinese porcelain painted underglaze punchbowl	1 Whieldon clouded earthenware teabowl
2 Colonaware bowls	1 White salt glazed stoneware mug
1 Creamware mug	1 White salt glazed stoneware bowl
1 Creamware feather edge plate	1 White salt glazed stoneware plate
1 English brown stoneware storage jar	1 White salt glazed stoneware teabowl
1 English brown stoneware bottle	1 White salt glazed stoneware teapot
1 English brown stoneware jug	1 White salt glazed stoneware scratch blue bowl
1 Jackfield teapot	1 White salt glazed stoneware, dipped mug
1 North Devon gravel-tempered coarse earthenware milk pan	1 White salt glazed stoneware overglaze enamelled teabowl with yellow daisies
1 North Midlands dotted mug	1 White salt glazed stoneware scratch blue teabowl
1 North Midlands reverse slip bowl	1 Yorktown coarse earthenware milkpan
1 North Midlands trailed/combed cup	1 Yorktown stoneware storage jar
1 North Midlands trailed/combed chamberpot	1 Yorktown stoneware mug
1 Nottingham stoneware hollow	1 Yorktown coarse earthenware bowl
1 Pennsylvania coarse earthenware iron glazed milk pan	1 American brown stoneware indeterminate
1 Pennsylvania slipped earthenware plate	1 Pennsylvania slipped earthenware hollow
	<b>69 TOTAL</b>

**Table D-6. Ceramic Vessels from Kingsmill Quarter**

Number of Vessels	Vessel Descriptions
1	Colonoware bowl
1	Coarse earthenware jug
1	Coarse stoneware bowl
1	Yorktown butterpot
1	Coarse stoneware pipkin
1	Fulham stoneware hollow
1	North Midlands earthenware mug
1	North Midlands earthenware cup
1	Tin-enamel earthenware bowl
1	Tin-enamel earthenware drug jar
1	Tin-enamel earthenware plate
1	Tin-enamel earthenware punchbowl
1	Creamware plate
1	Westerwald stoneware tankard
1	White salt glaze stoneware bowl
1	Chinese porcelain saucer
16	Total

**Table D-7. Minimum Ceramic and Glass Vessel Count from Carter's Grove Subfloor Pits**

Number of Vessels	Type	Vessel	Number of Vessels	Type	Vessel
1	American stoneware	mug	1	Iberian earthenware	oil jar
1	black glazed redware	bowl	3	North Midlands	cup
1	black glazed redware	chamberpot	1	North Midlands	plate/dish
1	Buckley	milkpan	1	Nottingham stoneware	mug
1	Chinese porcelain	bowl	1	pearlware	hollow vessel
2	Chinese porcelain	plate	1	pearlware	punchbowl
1	Chinese porcelain	punchbowl	1	pearlware	saucer
2	Chinese porcelain	saucer	1	pearlware	teabowl
2	Chinese porcelain	teabowl	1	Pennsylvania coarse earthenware	hollow vessel
1	Coarse agateware	shallow dish	1	red bodied coarse earthenware	hollow vessel
1	coarse earthenware	bowl	1	red bodied earthenware	plate
1	coarse earthenware	jug	1	red bodied slipped earthenware	bowl
1	colonoware	hollow vessel	1	refined redware	hollow vessel
1	colored glass	case bottle	1	Staffordshire mottled earthenware	bowl
1	colored glass	pharmaceutical bottle	1	Staffordshire stoneware	hollow vessel
4	colored glass	wine bottle	1	Table glass	stemmed glass
1	creamware	bowl	1	tin enamelled earthenware	dish/platter
1	creamware	chamberpot	1	tin enamelled earthenware	drug jar
1	creamware	creamer	1	tin enamelled earthenware	mug
1	creamware	dish/platter	1	tin enamelled earthenware	plate
2	creamware	hollow vessel	1	tin enamelled earthenware	punchbowl
1	creamware	mug	1	Westerwald stoneware	chamberpot
2	creamware	plate	1	Westerwald stoneware	mug
1	creamware	punchbowl	1	Westerwald stoneware	tankard
1	creamware	saucer	1	white salt glaze stoneware	bowl
1	creamware	soup plate	1	white salt glaze stoneware	chamberpot
1	creamware	tankard	3	white salt glaze stoneware	mug/tankard
1	creamware	teabowl	1	white salt glaze stoneware	plate
1	creamware	teapot	1	white salt glaze stoneware	salt
1	English coarse earthenware	hollow vessel	1	white salt glaze stoneware	soup plate
1	Fulham stoneware	jar	1	white salt glaze stoneware	teabowl
1	Fulham stoneware	mug	1	whiteware	indeterminate
1	Yorktown-type	milkpan	78	TOTAL	

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abrahams, Roger D.

- 1968 Trickster, the Outrageous Hero. In *Our Living Traditions: An Introduction to American Folklore*, edited by Tristram Potter Coffin, pp. 170--178. Basic Books, London.

Achebe, Chinua

- 1987 *Anthills of the Savannah*. Anchor Press, New York.

- 1994 *Things Fall Apart*. Reprinted. Anchor Books, New York. Originally published 1959, Astor-Honor, New York.

Adams, Eric

- 1993 Religion and Freedom: Artifacts Indicate that African Culture Persisted Even in Slavery. *OMNI Magazine* November: 8.

Adams, Natalie

- 1998 *Archaeological Investigations at the Neale Plantation (31Cb110), Columbus County, North Carolina*. New South Technical Report 530. Copies available from the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology, Raleigh.

Adepegba, Cornelius O.

- 1976 A Survey of Nigerian Body Markings and Their Relationship to Other Nigerian Arts. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Fine Arts Department, Indiana University, Bloomington.

Afigbo, Adiele F.

- 1980 Prolegomena to the Study of the Culture History of the Igbo-Speaking Peoples of Nigeria. In *West African Culture Dynamics: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives*, edited by B. K. Swartz and Raymond Dumett, pp. 305--325. Mouton Publishers, New York.

- 1981 *Ropes of Sand: Studies in Igbo History and Culture*. University of Nigeria Press, Nsukka.

Alagoa, E. J.

- 1972 The Niger Delta States and Their Neighbours, 1600-1800. In *History of West Africa, Volume I*, edited by J. F. A. Ajayi and Michael Crowder, pp. 269-303. Columbia University Press, New York.

Alho, Olli

1976 *The Religion of the Slaves: A Study of the Religious Tradition and Behaviour of Plantation Slaves in the United States 1830-1865*. FF Communications, Volume XCII, Number 217. Academia Scientarium Fennica, Helsinki.

Allen, Captain William

1848 *A Narrative of the Expedition Sent by Her Majesty's Government to the River Niger in 1841, Vol. I*. Richard Bentley, London.

Amadiume, Ifi

1987 *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*. Zed Books, London.

1965 *Reinventing Africa: Matriarchy, Religion and Culture*. Zed Books, London.

Anderson, Jean

1985 *Piedmont Plantation: The Bennehan-Cameron Family and Lands in North Carolina*. The Historic Preservation Society of Durham, Durham, North Carolina.

Anijielo, Chukwu Anthony

1984 *Theological Investigations in Fear of Mystical Forces with Special Reference to the Igbos*. Leverkusen-Opladen and Bonn, Germany.

Anstey, Roger

1975 *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition 1760-1810*. Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey.

Anyanwu, Starling E. N.

1976 *The Igbo Family Life and Cultural Change*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Marburg, Marburg.

Appiah, Kwame A.

1992 *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*. Oxford University Press, New York.

Arinze, Francis A.

1970 *Sacrifice in Ibo Religion*. Ibadan University Press, Ibadan.

Armstrong, Douglas

1985 *An Afro-Jamaican Slave Settlement: Archaeological Investigations at Drax Hall*. In *The Archaeology of Slavery and Plantation Life*, edited by Theresa A. Singleton, pp. 261-287. Academic Press, New York.

Aronson, Lisa

1983 *Nigerian Art and Communication*. Catalogue of an exhibit held at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, Michigan.

Askins, William V.

1988 *Sandy Ground: Historical Archaeology of Class and Ethnicity in a Nineteenth-Century Community on Staten Island*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, City University of New York, New York.

Atkins, J.

1970 [1735] *A Voyage to Guinea, Brazil, and the West Indies*. London. 1970 reprint.

Austen, Ralph

1987 *African Economic History: Internal Development and External Dependency*. James Currey, London.

Awolalu, J. Omosade

1979 *West African Traditional Religion*. Onibonjo Press & Book Industries, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Bacon, Richard M.

1991 *The Forgotten Arts: Yesterday's Techniques Adapted to Today's Materials*. Yankee Books, Camden, Maine.

Baikie, William B.

1966 [1856] *Narrative of an Exploring Voyage up the Rivers Kwora and Binue, Commonly Known as the Niger and Tsadda, in 1854*. John Murray, London. 1966 reprint, Frank Cass, London.

Baker, Vernon G.

1980 *Archaeological Visibility of Afro-American Culture: An Example from Black Lucy's Garden, Andover, Massachusetts*. In *Archaeological Perspectives on Ethnicity in America*, edited by Robert L. Schuyler, pp. 29-37. Baywood, Farmingdale, New York.

Ball, Josiah

Letter to Josiah Chinn from Josiah Ball, dated April 23, 1754. Ball Letterbook on file at Colonial Williamsburg Research Library, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.

Barbot, James

1732 [1699] *An Abstract of a Voyage to New Calabar River, or Rio Real, in the Year 1699*. In *A Collection of Voyages and Travels*, compiled by Awnshawn and John Churchill. John Walthoe, London, 1732.

Barrien, John Randolph

1993 "Flushed with Notions of Freedom": The Growth and Emancipation of a Virginia Slave Community, 1732-1812. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, Duke University, Durham.

Barka, Norman F.

1973 The Kiln and Ceramics of the Poor Potter of Yorktown: A Preliminary Report. In *Ceramics in America*, edited by Ian M. G. Quimby, pp. 291--318. University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Barth, Fredrik

1969 *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. Little, Brown and Company, Boston.

Basden, George Thomas

1921 *Among the Ibos of Nigeria: An Account of the Curious and Interesting Habits, Customs, and Beliefs of a Little Known African People*. J. B. Lippincott, Philadelphia.

Beaudry, Mary C., Janet Long, Henry M. Miller, Fraser D. Neiman, and Garry W. Stone

1983 A Vessel Typology for Early Chesapeake Ceramics: The Potomac Typological System. *Historical Archaeology* 17(1):18--43.

Beaudry, Mary C., Lauren Cook, and Stephen Mrozowski

1991 Artifacts and Active Voices: Material Culture as Social Discourse. In *The Archaeology of Inequality*, edited by R. H. McGuire and R. Paynter, pp. 150--191. Basil Blackwell, Oxford

Bentor, Eli

1988 Life as Artistic Process: Igbo Ikenga and Ofo. *African Arts* 21(2): 66--71, 94.

Berlin, Ira

1980 Time, Space and the Evolution of Afro-American Society on British Mainland North America. *American Historical Review* 85:44--78.

1996 From Creole to African: Atlantic Creoles and the Origins of African-American Society in Mainland North America. *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3d series LIII(2):251--288.

1998 *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*. Belknap Press, Cambridge, MA.

Beverley, Robert

1947[1705] *The History and Present State of Virginia*. 1947 reprint, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.



Binford, Lewis R.

1962 Archaeology as Anthropology. *American Antiquity* 28:217--225.

1965 Colonial Period Ceramics of the Nottoway and Weanock Indians of Southeastern Virginia. *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia* 19:78--87.

Blackburn, Robin

1997 *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern 1492-1800*. Verso, New York.

Blasi, Augusto and Janet Loevinger

1991 Development of the Self as Subject. In *The Self: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, edited by Jaine Strauss and George R. Goethals, pp. 150--167. Springer-Verlag, New York.

Blassingame, John

1972 *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South*. Oxford University Press, New York.

1975 Using the Testimony of Ex-Slaves: Approaches and Problems. *Journal of Southern History* 41(4):473--492.

Bockie, Simon

1993 *Death and the Invisible Powers: The World of Kongo Belief*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

Bowen, Joanne

1994 Report on Carter's Grove Slave Quarters Faunal Remains. Unpublished manuscript on file, Department of Archaeological Research, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.

Bowles, Samuel and Herbert Gintis

1986 *Democracy and Capitalism: Property, Community and the Contradictions of Modern Social Thought*. Basic Books, New York.

Braithwaite, Edward K.

1971 *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820*. Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Bray

1725 James Bray II Will. Unpublished manuscript on file, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.

Breeden, James O. (editor)

1980 *Advice Among Masters: The Ideal in Slave Management in the Old South*. Greenwood Press, Westport, CT.

Breen, Timothy H.

1985 *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

Bridges, Sarah T. and Salwen, Bert.

1980 Weeksville: The Archaeology of a Black Urban Community. In *Archaeological Perspectives on Ethnicity in America*, edited by Robert Schuyler, pp. 38-47. Baywood, Farmingdale, New York.

British Museum

Chancery Suit, Lewis and Frances Burwell versus Philip and Elizabeth Johnson. British Museum Additional Manuscripts, 36, 218, ff. 138-43 (microfilm 284 ViCW).

Brown, Kathleen M.

1996 *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia*. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.

Brown, Kenneth and Doreen C. Cooper

1990 Structural Continuity in an African-American Slave and Tenant Community. *Historical Archaeology* 24(4):7--19.

Bryant, Vaughn M. Jr. and Richard G. Holloway

1983 The Role of Palynology in Archaeology. In *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory, Volume 6*, edited by Michael Schiffer, pp.191-224. Academic Press, New York.

Bubel, Mike and Nancy Bubel

1979 *Root Cellaring: The Simple No-Processing Way to Store Fruits and Vegetables*. Rodale Press, Emmaus, PA.

Burnaby, Andrew

1960 [1775] *Travels Through the Middle Settlements in North America in the years 1759 and 1760 with Observations Upon the State of the Colonies*. 1960 reprint, Great Seal Books, Ithaca.

Burwell, Letitia M.

1895 *A Girl's Life in Virginia Before the War*. F. A. Stokes Company, New York.

Campbell, Bolaji

1998 Personal communication, September 15, 1998.

Carr, Lois Green and Lorena Walsh

1988 Economic Diversification and Labor Organization in the Chesapeake. In *Work and Labor in Early America*, edited by Stephen Innes, pp.144--188. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.

Carson, Cary, Norman F. Barka, William Kelso, Garry W. Stone, and Dell Upton

1981 Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies. *Winterthur Portfolio* 16(2/3):135--196.

Carter, Landon

1965 *The Diary of Col. Landon Carter of Sabine Hall, 1752-1778*, edited by Jack P. Greene, University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Carter, Robert

Robert Carter Account Books 1773-1774, 1785-1792. On file at the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

Robert "King" Carter Diary, 1722-1727. Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Chambers, Douglas Brent

1996a 'He Gwine Sing He Country': Africans, Afro-Virginians, and the Development of Slave Culture in Virginia, 1690-1810. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

1996b Eboe, Kongo, Mandingo: African Ethnic Groups and the Development of Regional Slave Societies in Mainland North America, 1700-1820. Paper presented at the International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World, 1500-1800, Harvard University, Cambridge.

Cohen, Arthur D.

1997 Palynological Analysis of 6 Samples from Site #31-CB-110, 18th-Century House Site, Columbus County, NC. Manuscript on file, New South Associates, West Columbia, South Carolina.

Cole, Herbert M. and Chike C. Aniakor

1984 *Igbo Arts: Community and Cosmos*. Museum of Cultural History, University of California, Los Angeles.

Cookey, S. J. S.

1980 An Ethnohistorical Reconstruction of Traditional Igbo Society. In *West African Cultural Dynamics: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives*, edited by B. K. Swartz, Jr. and Raymond Dummett, pp. 327-347. Mouton Publishers, New York.

Cooper, Brenda

1998 *Magical Realism in West African Fiction: Seeing With a Third Eye*. Routledge, New York.

Connah, Graham

1990 *African Civilizations: Precolonial Cities and States in Tropical Africa: An Archaeological Perspective*. Cambridge University Press, New York.

Cowgill, George

1993 Beyond Criticizing New Archeology. *American Anthropologist* 95(3):551--573.

Crader, Diana C.

1984 The Zooarchaeology of the Storehouse and the Dry Well at Monticello. *American Antiquity* 49:542--558.

1990 Slave Diet at Monticello. *American Antiquity* 55:690--717.

Crow, Hugh (edited by the Executors)

1970 [1830] *Memoirs of the Late Captain Hugh Crow of Liverpool Comprising a Narrative of His Life Together with Descriptive Sketches of the Western Coast of Africa, Particularly of Bonny*. G. and J. Robinson, Liverpool. 1970 facsimile ed., Frank Cass and Co, Ltd.

Crow, Jeffrey, Paul D. Escott, and Flora J. Hatley

1992 *A History of African Americans in North Carolina*. North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Raleigh.

Cummings, Linda Scott and Thomas E. Moutoux

1997 Pollen, Starch, and Phytolith Analysis for a Root Cellar at the Eden House Site (31BR52), North Carolina. Paleo Research Labs Technical Report 97-36. Manuscript on file, Coastal Carolina Research, Tarboro, North Carolina.

1999 Pollen and Phytolith Analysis at the Utopia I Site, 44JC32, Virginia. Paleo Research Labs Technical Report 98-20. Manuscript on file, Research Laboratories of Archaeology, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Curtin, Philip

1969 *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison.

Davidson, Basil

1977 *A History of West Africa 1000-1800*. Longman, London.

1980 *The West African Slave Trade*. Little, Brown and Company, Boston.

- DeBoer, Warren  
 1988 Subterranean Storage and the Organization of Surplus: The View from Eastern North America. *Southeastern Archaeology* 7(1):1--20.
- De Vos, G. A.  
 1995 Ethnic Pluralism: Conflict and Accommodation. In *Ethnic Identity: Creation, Conflict, and Accommodation*, edited by L. Romanucci-Ross and G. A. De Vos, pp. 15-47. AltaMira Press, London.
- Deetz, James  
 1977 *In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life*. Anchor Press, New York.
- 1993 *Flowerdew Hundred: The Archaeology of a Virginia Plantation, 1619-1864*. University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville.
- Dimbleby, Geoffrey W.  
 1985 *The Palynology of Archaeological Sites*. Academic Press, New York.
- Disraeli, Benjamin  
 1845 *Sybil, or, Tthe Two Nations*. Carey and Hart, Philadelphia.
- Dmochowski, Z. R.  
 1990 *An Introduction to Nigerian Traditional Architecture, Volume Three. South-Eastern Nigeria: The Igbo-speaking Areas*. Ethnographica, London.
- Donnan, Elizabeth (compiler)  
 1935 *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America, IV, The Border Colonies and the Southern Colonies*. Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, D.C.
- Dopamu, P. A.  
 1991 Towards Understanding African Traditional Religion. In *Readings in African Traditional Religion: Structure, Meaning, Relevance, Future*, edited by E. M. Uka, pp. 19-37. Peter Lang, New York.
- Douglass, Frederick  
 1855 *My Bondage and My Freedom*. Miller, Orton and Mulligan, New York.
- Drewal, John Henry  
 1988 Mermaids, Mirrors, and Snake Charmers: Igbo Mami Wata Shrines. *African Arts* 21(2): 38--45, 96.
- Drewal, Margaret  
 1992 *Yoruba Ritual: Performance, Play, Agency*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

Du Bois, W. E. B.

1989 *The Souls of Black Folk*. A. C. McClung & Company, New York, 1903, Reprinted by Penguin Books, New York, 1989.

Dumett, Raymond

1980 Research Trends in West African History. In *West African Cultural Dynamics: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives*, edited by B. K. Swartz and Raymond Dumett, pp. 279-304. Mouton Publishers, New York.

Edwards, Ywone

1990 Master-Slave Relations: A Williamsburg Perspective. Unpublished master's thesis, Department of Anthropology, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg.

Edwards-Ingram, Ywone D. and Marley R. Brown III

1998 Worlds Made Together? Critical Reflections on the Use of the Creolization Model in Historical Archaeology. Paper presented at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology, Atlanta.

Elkins, Stanley M.

1976 *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life*. Originally published 1959. Reprinted. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Emerson, Matthew

1994 Decorated Clay Tobacco Pipes from the Chesapeake: An African Connection. In *Historical Archaeology of the Chesapeake*, edited by Paul Shackel and Barbara Little, pp. 35-49. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D. C.

Equiano, Olaudah

1987 The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African. In *The Classic Slave Narratives*, edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., pp. 1-182. Penguin Books, New York.

Fairbanks, Charles H.

1974 The Kingsley Slave Cabins in Duval County, Florida, 1968. *The Conference on Historic Site Archaeology Papers 1972*. 7:62--93.

Feierman, Steven

1965 African Histories and the Dissolution of World History. In *Africa and the Disciplines: the Contributions of Research in Africa to the Social Sciences and Humanities*, edited by Robert H. Bates, V. Y. Mudimbe, and Jean O'Barr, pp. 167-212. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

- Fenn, Elizabeth A.  
 1988 "A Perfect Equality Seemed to Reign": Slave Society and Jonkonnu. *North Carolina Historical Review* LXV (April):127-153.
- Ferguson, Leland.  
 1992 *Uncommon Ground: Archaeology and Early African America, 1650-1800*. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D. C.
- Ferrell, Rebecca J.  
 1996 The Kingsmill Quarter: A Discussion of Cultural Patterns and Criteria in the Zooarchaeological Record. Unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Anthropology, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.
- Fesler, Garrett.  
 1997a Landscapes of Control and Autonomy: The Spatial Contestation of the Utopia Slave Quarter. Manuscript on file, Department of Anthropology, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.  
 1997b A Quantitative Study of Architectural Changes in Slave Housing in the Piedmont and Chesapeake Regions of Virginia. Manuscript on file, Department of Anthropology, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.  
 1998a Relations Between Enslaved Women and Men at an Early 18th-Century Virginia Quatering Site. Paper presented at the 31st Annual Meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology, Atlanta.  
 1998b Back to Utopia: An Interim Report on Renewed Archaeological Excavations at the Utopia Quarter, Field Seasons 1993-1996. Manuscript on file, James River Institute for Archaeology, Williamsburg, Virginia.
- Fiawoo, D. K.  
 1976 Characteristic Features of Ewe Ancestor Worship. In *Ancestors*, edited by W. H. Newell, pp. 263-281. Mouton Publishers, Paris.
- Fithian, Philip Vickers  
 1968 *Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian 1773-1774: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion*, edited with an introduction by Hunter D. Farish. Reprinted. Dominion Books, Charlottesville.
- Ford, Daryll and G. I. Jones  
 1950 *The Ibo and Ibibio-Speaking Peoples of South-Eastern Nigeria*. International African Institute, London.
- Fowler, J. P.  
 1983 *The Farming of Prehistoric Britain*. Cambridge University Press, New York.

Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth

1988 *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South*. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.

Frank, Neil

1967 Brush-Everard House Kitchen and Surrounding Area, Block 29, Area E, Colonial Lots 164 and 165: Report on 1967 Archaeological Excavations. Manuscript on file, Foundation Library, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.

Franklin, Maria

1997 *Out of Site, Out of Mind: The Archaeology of an Enslaved Virginia Household, ca. 1740-1778*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley.

Frazier, E. Franklin

1939 *The Negro Family in the United States*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Frey, Sylvia R.

1991 *Water from the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.

1993 *Shaking the Dry Bones: The Dialectic of Conversion*. In *Black and White: Cultural Interaction in the Antebellum South*, edited by Ted Ownby, pp. 23--44. University Press of Mississippi, Jackson.

Galenson, David

1981 *White Servitude and the Growth of Black Slavery in Colonial America*. *Journal of Economic History* 41:39--49.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr.

1987 *The Classic Slave Narratives*. Penguin Books, New York.

1988 *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism*. Oxford University Press, New York.

Geismar, Joan H.

1982 *The Archaeology of Social Disintegration in Skunk Hollow: A Nineteenth-Century Rural Black Community*. Academic Press, New York.

Genovese, Eugene D.

1974 *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*. Vintage Books, New York.

Giddens, Anthony

1979 *Central Problems in Social Theory*. University of California Press, Berkeley.



Gomez, Michael Angelo

1998 *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South*. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.

Goody, Jack

1987 *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Goodwin, Mary

1958 Kingsmill Plantation, James City County, VA. Manuscript on file, Foundation Library, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.

Grim, Ronald

1977 *The Absence of Towns in Seventeenth-Century Virginia: The Emergence of Town Centers in York County*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, University of Maryland, College Park.

Gundaker, Grey

1993 Tradition and Innovation in African-American Yards. *African Arts* April:58--71.

Gutman, Herbert

1976 *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925*. Vintage Books, New York.

Handler, Jerome S.

1997 An African-type Healer/Diviner and His Grave Goods: A Burial from a Plantation Slave Cemetery in Barbadoes, West Indies. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 1(2):91-130.

Handler, Jerome S. and Frederick W. Lange

1978 *Plantation Slavery in Barbadoes: An Archaeological and Historical Investigation*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Hartle, Donald

1967 Archaeology in Eastern Nigeria. *Nigeria Magazine* 93:136--137.

Hays, Christopher Tinsley

1985 Form and Function in Prehistoric Food Storage Pits of Middle Tennessee. Unpublished Master's Thesis in Anthropology, State University of New York, Binghamton.

Hazzard-Gordon, Katrina

1990 *Jookin': The Rise of Social Dance Formations in African-American Culture*. Temple University Press, Philadelphia.

Heath, Barbara

1991 Artisan Housing at Monticello: The Stewart/Watkins Site. *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia* 46(1):10--16.

1994 An Interim Report on the 1993 Excavations: The Quarter Site at Poplar Forest, Forest, Virginia. Manuscript on file, Corporation for Jefferson's Poplar Forest, Forest, Virginia.

1997 Archaeological and Documentary Evidence of Slaves as Consumers. Paper presented at the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology, Corpus Christi.

Henderson, Richard N.

1972 *The King in Every Man: Evolutionary Trends in Onitsha Ibo Society and Culture*. Yale University Press, New Haven.

Herman, Bernard L.

1984 Slave Quarters in Virginia: The Persona Behind Historic Artifacts. In *The Scope of Historical Archaeology: Essays in Honor of John L. Cotter*, edited by David G. Orr and Daniel G. Crozier, pp.253-283. Temple University Laboratory of Anthropology, Philadelphia.

Herskovits, Melville J.

1941 *The Myth of the Negro Past*. Harper Brothers, New York.

1958 Anthropology and Africa: A Wider Perspective. *Africa* 29 (3):225--238.

Hilliard, Sam Bowers

1972 *Hog Meat and Hoecake: Food Supply in the Old South, 1840-1860*. Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale.

Hodder, Ian

1986 *Reading the Past: Current Approaches to Interpretation in Archaeology*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

1987 *The Archaeology of Contextual Meanings*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Horn, James

1979 Servant Emigration to the Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century. In *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century: Essays on Anglo-American Society and Politics*, edited by T. W. Tate and D. L. Ammerman, pp. 51-95. W. W. Norton and Company, New York.

Horton, Robin

1965 A Note on Recent Finds of Brasswork in the Niger Delta. *Odu* 2(1):76--91.

- 1972 Stateless Societies in the History of West Africa. In *History of West Africa, Volume I*, edited by J. F. A. Ajayi and Michael Crowder, pp. 78-119. Columbia University Press, New York.
- Idowu, E. Bolaji  
1973 *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York.
- Ifesieh, Emmanuel I.  
1986 Ritual Symbolism in Igbo Traditional Religion. *Africana Marburgensia* 9(1):50--82.
- 1988 Prayer in Igbo Religion: Some Traditional Methods (A Case Study). In *Religion and African Culture 1. Inculturation—A Nigerian Perspective*, edited by Elochukwu W. Uzukwu, pp. 73-91. Spiritan Publications, Printed by SNAAP Press, Ltd., Enugu, Nigeria.
- Igwe, G. E.  
1986 *Onye Turu Ikoro Waa Ya Eze*. University Press, Limited, Ibadan.
- Ilogu, Reverend E.  
1964 Ofo: A Religious and Political Symbol in Igboland. *Nigeria Magazine* 82:234--235.
- Ingraham, Joseph H.  
1860 *The Sunny South: or, The Southerner at Home*. G. G. Evans, Philadelphia.
- Isichei, Elizabeth  
1976 *A History of the Igbo People*. St. Martin's Press, New York.
- 1978 *Igbo Worlds: An Anthology of Oral Histories and Historical Descriptions*. Institute for the Study of Human Issues, Philadelphia.
- Jackson-Opoku, Sandra  
1997 *The River Where Blood is Born*. One World Ballantine Books, New York.
- James City County  
James City County Tax Lists, 1768-1769. Manuscript on file, Virginia State Library, Richmond.
- Taxables for Lewis Burwell IV. James City County Tax Lists, 1768-1769. Manuscript 1768:11. Manuscript on file, Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia.
- James River Institute for Archaeology, Inc. (JRIA)  
1995 *Archaeological Excavations at the Utopia Quarter: An 18th-Century Slave Complex at Kingsmill on the James*. Duplicated brochure produced by the James River Institute for Archaeology, Inc., Williamsburg, Virginia.

Johnson, Charles, Patricia Smith, and the WGBH Research Team

1998 *Africans in America: America's Journey Through Slavery*. Harcourt, Brace, and Company, New York.

Johnston County Court Records

Court proceedings contained in Johnston County Court Records, Johnston County Miscellaneous Records, C. R. 056.928.3, Folder entitled "Special Court for Negro Trials." Manuscript on file, Division of Archives and History, Department of Cultural Resources, Raleigh.

Jones, G. I.

1931 Photograph entitled "Portable Household Shrine." In the *G. I. Jones Photographic Archive of Southeastern Nigerian Art and Culture*. Available at <http://www.siu.edu/~anthro/mccall/jones/igbo/ika16.jpg>.

Jones, Hugh

1956 [1724] *The Present State of Virginia from Whence is Inferred a Short View of Maryland and North Carolina*. London. 1956 reprint, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.

Joyner, Charles

1984 *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community*. University of Illinois Press, Urbana.

Karmon, Yehuda

1966 *A Geography of Settlement in Eastern Nigeria*. Magnes Press, Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

Kelso, William M.

1976 An Interim Report. Historical Archaeology at Kingsmill: The 1974 Season. Manuscript on file at Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks, Richmond, Virginia.

1977 Historical Archaeology at Kingsmill, The 1975 Season. Manuscript on file at Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks, Richmond, Virginia.

1984 *Kingsmill Plantations, 1619-1800: Archaeology of Country Life in Colonial Virginia*. Academic Press, New York.

1986 Mulberry Row: Slave Life at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello. *Archaeology* 39(5):28--35.

1997 *Archaeology at Monticello*. Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation Monograph Series, Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, Charlottesville.

- Kelso, William M. and R. Neil Frank  
 1972 A Report on Exploratory Excavations at Carter's Grove Plantation, James City County, Virginia (June 1970-September 1971). Manuscript on file, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.
- Killion, Ronald G. and Charles T. Waller (compilers)  
 1972 *A Treasury of Georgia Folk-lore*. Cherokee Publishing, Atlanta.
- Kimber, Edward  
 1998 *Itinerant Observations in America*, edited by Kevin J. Hayes. University of Delaware Press, Newark.
- Kimmel, Richard  
 1993 Notes on the Use of Sub-Floor Pits as Root Cellars and Places of Concealment. *African American Archaeology*. 7:11--12.
- Kirkby, A. and M. J. Kirkby  
 1976 Geomorphic Processes and the Surface Survey of Archaeological Sites in Semi-Arid Areas. In *Geoarchaeology: Earth Science and the Past*, edited by D. A. Davidson and M. L. Shackley, pp. 229-253. Duckworth Press, London.
- Klein, Herbert S.  
 1978 *The Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- Klingaman, David C.  
 1969 The Significance of Grain in the Development of the Tobacco Colonies. *Journal of Economic History* XXIX:268--275.
- Krech, Shepard  
 1991 The State of Ethnohistory. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 20:345--375.
- Kulikoff, A.  
 1977 A "Prolifick" People: Black Population Growth in the Chesapeake Colonies 1700-1790. *Southern Studies* XVI:394--409.
- 1986 *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake 1680-1800*. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.
- Lautzenheiser, Loretta, Patricia M. Samford, Jaquelin Drane Nash, Mary Ann Holm, and Thomas Hargrove  
 1998 "I Was Moved of the Lord to Go to Carolina." *Data Recovery at Eden House Site 31BR52 Bertie County, North Carolina*. Coastal Carolina Research. Submitted to the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Copies available from the Office of State Archaeology, Raleigh.

Leavitt, Genevieve

1984 Slaves and Tenant Farmers at Shirley. In *The Archaeology of Shirley Plantation*, edited by Theodore Reinhart, pp. 156-188. University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Le Cheminant, Richard

1981 Clay Tobacco Pipes from London and the South East. In *The Archaeology of the Clay Tobacco Pipe VI: Pipes and Kilns in the London Region*, edited by Peter Davey, pp. 127-172. BAR British Series 97, Oxford.

Lee, Jean B.

1986 The Problem of Slave Community in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake. *William and Mary Quarterly* 3<sup>rd</sup> series 43:333--361.

Leonard, Major Arthur G.

1898 Notes of a Journey to Bende. *Journal of the Manchester Geographical Society* 14:190--207.

1906 *The Lower Niger and Its Tribes*. Macmillan, London.

Levi-Strauss, Claude

1966 *The Savage Mind*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Levine, Lawrence

1977 *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Lewis, Matthew

1834 *Journal of A West India Proprietor, Kept During a Residence in the Island of Jamaica*. John Murray, London.

Lieber, J. W.

1971 *Ibo Village Communities*. Human Ecology and Education Series, Volume I: East Central State. Occasional Publication Number 12, Institute of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Linebaugh, Donald W.

1994 "All the Annoyances and Inconveniences of the Country": Environmental Factors in the Development of Outbuildings in the Colonial Chesapeake. *Winterthur Portfolio* 29(1):1--18.

Logan, G. C., T. W. Boder, and L. D. Jones

1992 *1991 Archaeological Excavations at the Charles Carroll House in Annapolis, Maryland*. University of Maryland, College Park.

McCall, J. C.

1995 Rethinking Ancestors in Africa. *Africa* 65(2):256--270.

McCarthy, John

1994 Personal communication.

1997 Material Culture and the Performance of Sociocultural Identity: Community, Ethnicity, and Agency in the Burial Practices at the First African Baptist Church Cemeteries, Philadelphia, 1810-1841. In *American Material Culture: The Shape of the Field*, edited by Ann Smart Martin and J. Ritchie Garrison, pp. 359-379. Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

McCartney, Martha

1997 *James City County: Keystone of the Commonwealth*. Donning Company Publishers, Virginia Beach.

McClure, James P.

1977 Littletown Plantation, 1700-1745. Unpublished Master's Thesis, Department of History, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg.

McDaniel, George

1982 *Hearth and Home: Preserving a People's Culture*. Temple University Press, Philadelphia.

McGuire, Randall H.

1982 Ethnicity in Historical Archaeology. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 1:159--178.

McKee, Larry W.

1985 Delineating Ethnicity from the Garbage of Early Virginians: Faunal Remains from the Kingsmill Plantation Slave Quarter. *American Archaeology* 6(1):31--39.

1988 Plantation Food Supply in Nineteenth-Century Tidewater Virginia. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley.

1992 The Ideals and Realities Behind the Design and Use of 19th-Century Virginia Slave Cabins. In *The Art and Mystery of Historical Archaeology: Essays in Honor of Jim Deetz*, edited by Anne Yentsch and Mary C. Beaudry, pp. 195--213. CRC Press, Boca Raton, Florida.

McPherron, Alan

1967 *The Juntanen Site and the Late Woodland Prehistory of the Upper Great Lakes Area*. Anthropological Papers No. 30. Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Madubuike, Ihechukwu

1974 *Structure and Meaning in Igbo Names*. Department of Black Studies, State University of New York, Buffalo.

Manning, Patrick

1990 *Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental, and African Slave Trades*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Marcus, George and Michael Fischer

1986 *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Marquardt, William H. and Carole L. Crumley

1987 Theoretical Issues in the Analysis of Spatial Patterning. In *Regional Dynamics: Burgundian Landscapes in Historical Perspective*, edited by Carole L. Crumley and William H. Marquardt, pp. 1-18. Academic Press, New York.

Marquez, Gabriel Garcia

1982 The Solitude of Latin America. Nobel Prize Lecture, 8 December 1982. Available at <http://www.rpg.net/quail/libyrinth/gabo/gabo.nobel.html>.

Martin, Ann Smart.

1997 Complex Commodities: The Enslaved as Producers and Consumers in Eighteenth-Century Virginia. Paper presented at the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture Annual Conference, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

May, Jamie and Eric Deetz

1997 Architectural Determinates in Root Cellar Placement. Paper presented at the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology, Corpus Christi.

Mbiti, John S.

1969 *African Religions and Philosophy*. Heinemann, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Menard, Russell

1980 The Tobacco Industry in the Chesapeake Colonies, 1617-1730: An Interpretation. *Research in Economic History* V: 109-177.

Metuh, Emefie Ikenga

1985 *African Religions in Western Conceptual Schemes: The Problem of Interpretation (Studies in Igbo Religion)*. Pastoral Institute, Bodija, Ibadan, Nigeria.

1986 Igbo Religious Symbols of Personal Achievement. *Africana Margurgonsia* 9(1):37--49.



- 1988 The Nature of African Theism: Analysis of Two Nigerian Models. In *Religions and African Culture 1. Inculturation—A Nigerian Perspective*, edited by Elochuckwu E. Usukwu, pp. 60-72. Spiritan Publications, Enugu, Nigeria.
- Michel, Francis Louis  
 1702 Report of the Journey of Francis Louis Michel from Berne, Switzerland, to Virginia, October 2, 1701-December 1, 1702. Translated and edited by William J. Hinke. *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 34 (1916):1-43, 113-141, 275-188.
- Miller, Daniel  
 1987 *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*. Basil Blackwell, New York.
- Miller, George  
 1984 George M. Coates, Potter Merchant of Philadelphia, 1817-1831. *Winterthur Portfolio* 19(1):37-50.
- 1987 Origins of Josiah Wedgwood's Pearlware. *Northeast Historical Archaeology* 16:80-92.
- Miller, Phillip  
 1733 *The Gardeners Dictionary: Containing the Methods of Cultivating and Improving the Kitchen, Fruit, and Flower Gardens, as Also the Physick Garden, Wilderness, Conservatory, and Vineyard. Volumes 1-3*. Printed for the author and sold by C. Rivington, London.
- Mintz, Sidney  
 1974 *Caribbean Transformations*. Aldine Publishing, Chicago.
- Mintz, Sidney and Richard Price  
 1992 *The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective*. Beacon Press, Boston.
- Moore, Sue Mullins  
 1981 An Antebellum Barrier Island Plantation: In Search of an Archaeological Pattern. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Florida, Gainesville.
- 1985 Social and Economic Status on the Coastal Plantation: An Archaeological Perspective. In *The Archaeology of Slavery and Plantation Life*, edited by Theresa Singleton, pp. 141-160. Academic Press, New York.
- Moore, Stacy G.  
 1989 "Established and Well Cultivated": Afro-American Foodways in Early Virginia. *Virginia Cavalcade* 39(2):70--83.

**Moore Papers**

Stephen Moore Papers. 2205 Series 4.1, Volume 16. Manuscript on file, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

**Morgan, Edmund**

1975 *American Slavery, American Freedom : The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia*. Norton, New York.

**Morgan, Phillip**

1998 *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry*. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.

**Morgan, Ray**

1996 Vegetable Storage in Root Cellars and Basements in Alaska. Alaska Cooperative Extension, University of Alaska Fairbanks. Available at <http://www.uaf.edu/coop-ext/publications/freepubs/HGA-00331.html>. Reprinted in May 1996.

**Mouer, L. Daniel**

1991 "Root Cellars" Revisited. *African American Archaeology* 5:5--6.

1992 *Magnolia Grange: Archaeology of the Courthouse Plantation*. Virginia Commonwealth University Archaeological Research Center, Richmond. Submitted to the Chesterfield County Historical Society, Chesterfield, Virginia. Copies available from the Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks, Richmond.

1993 Chesapeake Creoles: The Creation of Folk Culture in Colonial Virginia. In *The Archaeology of 17th-Century Virginia*, edited by Theodore R. Reinhart and Dennis J. Pogue, pp. 105-166. The Dietz Press, Richmond, Virginia.

Mouer, L. Daniel, Mary Ellen N. Hodges, Stephen Potter, Susan L. Henry, Ivor Noel Hume, Dennis J. Pogue, Martha McCartney, and Thomas E. Davidson

1999 "Colono" Pottery, Chesapeake Pipes, and Uncritical Assumptions. In *"I, Too, Am America": Archaeological Studies of African American Life*, edited by Theresa Singleton. University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville.

**Moughtin, J. C.**

1988 *The Work of Z. R. Dmochowski: Nigerian Traditional Architecture*. Ethnographica, London.

**Mrozowski, Stephen A. and Leslie H. Driscoll**

1997 *Seeds of Learning: An Archaeobotanical Analysis of the Rich Neck Plantation Slave Quarter, Williamsburg, Virginia*. Manuscript on file, Department of Archaeological Research, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.

Mudge, Jean

1962 *Chinese Export Porcelain for the American Trade, 1765-1835*. University of Delaware Press, Newark.

Mullin, Gerald W.

1972 *Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia*. Oxford University Press, New York.

Nash, Gary

1974 *Red, White, and Black: The People of Early America*. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

Nassau, Rev. Robert Hamill

1904 *Fetichism in West Africa*. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

Ndubuike, D. I. I.

1994 *Rituals of Identity: Examining the Cultural Context of the Art of the African Native with Implications for Multi-Cultural and Cross-Cultural Discipline-Based Art Education*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Education, University of Houston, Houston.

Ndubuisi, Reverend Eze

1999 personal communication.

Neaher, Nancy C.

1976 *Bronzes of Southern Nigeria and Igbo Metalsmithing Traditions*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Art, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

Neiman, Fraser

1997 *Sub-Floor Pits and Slavery in Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century Virginia*. Paper presented at the 30th Annual Meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology, Corpus Christi.

Neiman, Fraser D., Patricia Samford and Ywone Edwards-Ingram

1998 *An Experimental Investigation of the Performance Characteristics of Sub-Floor Pits: Temperature and Humidity*. Unpublished draft proposal.

Nicholls, Michael C.

1989 *Building the Virginia Southside: A Note on Architecture and Society in the Eighteenth Century*. Manuscript on file, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.

Nicholson, John

1820 *The Farmer's Assistant*. Benjamin Warner, Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Niemcewicz, Julian U.

1965 *Under Their Vine and Fig Tree: Travels Through America in 1797-1799, 1805 with some Further Account of Life in New Jersey*. Translated and edited by Metchie J. E. Budka. Grassmann Publishing, Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Niven, Laird

1998 The Birchtown Archaeology Project, Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia Museum of Archaeology Page. <http://www.ednet.ns.ca/educ/museum/arch/sites/birch>.

Njaka, E. N.

1974 *Igbo Political Culture*. Northwestern University Press, Evanston.

Njoku, John E. Eberegbulam

1990 *The Igbo of Nigeria: Ancient Rites, Changes and Survival*. African Studies Vol. 14. Edwin Mellen Press, Lampeter Wales.

Noel Hume, Ivor

1962 An Indian Ware of the Colonial Period. *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia* 17(1):2--14.

1966 *Excavations at Tutter's Neck in James City County, Virginia, 1960-61*. Contributions from the Museum of History and Technology, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.

1969 *A Guide to Artifacts of Colonial America*. Alfred P. Knopf, New York.

1991 *Martin's Hundred*. University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Nooter, Mary H.

1993 *Secrecy: African Art that Conceals and Reveals*. Museum for African Art, New York.

Offiong, D. A.

1991 *Witchcraft, Sorcery, Magic and Social Order Among the Ibibio of Nigeria*. Fourth Dimension Publishing, Enugu, Nigeria.

Ogbalu, F. C.

1965 *Ilu Igbo (The Book of Igbo Proverbs)*. University Publishing Company, Nigeria.

Oguagha, Philip A.

1984 Historical and Traditional Evidence. In *History and Ethnoarchaeology in Eastern Nigeria: A Study of Igbo-Igala Relations with Special Reference to the Anambra Valley*, edited by Philip A. Oguagha and Alex. I. Ojpoko. Cambridge Monographs in African Archaeology 7, BAR International Series 195, Cambridge.

Oguagha, Philip A. and Okpoko, A. I.

1984 *History and Ethnoarchaeology in Eastern Nigeria: A Study of Igbo-Igala Relations with Special Reference to the Anambra Valley*. Cambridge Monographs in African Archaeology 7, B.A.R. International Series 195. Cambridge.

Ojike, Mazi Mbonu

1946 *My Africa*. The John Day Company, New York.

Okehie-Offoha, Marcellina U.

1996 The Igbo. In *Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Nigeria*, edited by Marcellina U. Okehie-Offoha and Matthew N.O. Sadiku. Africa World Press, Trenton, N.J.

Okeke, Chika

1998 Personal communication.

Okonjo, Kamene

1976 The Dual-Sex Political System in Operation: Igbo Women and Community Politics in Midwestern Nigeria. In *Women in Africa: Studies in Social and Economic Change*, edited by Nancy J. Hafkin and Edna G. Bay, pp. 45-58. Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Onwuejeogwu, M. Angulu

1981 *An Igbo Civilization: Nri Kingdom and Hegemony*. Ethnographica Ltd., London.

Oramasionwu, E. U.

1994 The Enduring Power of Igbo Traditional Religion. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Orser, Charles

1988 The Archaeological Analysis of Plantation Society: Replacing Status and Caste with Economics and Power. *American Antiquity* 53:735-751.

1994 The Archaeology of African-American Slave Religion in the Antebellum South. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 4(1): 33--45.

Osae, T. A., S. N. Nwabara and A. T. O. Odunsi

1973 *A Short History of West Africa A.D. 1000 to the Present*. Hill and Wang, New York.

Otto, John Solomon.

1984 *Cannon's Point Plantation, 1794-1860: Living Conditions and Status Patterns in the Old South*. Academic Press, New York.

Parker, Kathleen, and Jacqueline L. Hernigle

1990 *Portici: Portrait of a Middling Plantation in Piedmont Virginia*. Occasional Report No. 3, Regional Archaeological Program. National Park Service, Washington, D. C.

- Parrinder, Geoffrey.  
1954 *African Traditional Religion*. Hutchinson House, London.
- Patten, Drake  
1992 Mankala and Minkisi: Possible Evidence of African-American Folk Beliefs and Practices. *African American Archaeology* 6:5--7.
- Patterson, Orlando  
1982 *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- Paulme, Denise, editor  
1963 *Women of Tropical Africa*. University of California Press, Berkeley
- Pearce, Laurie  
1993 To Whom Do They Belong?: Cowrie Shells in Historical Archaeology. *African-American Archaeology* 9:1--3.
- Pepper, S. Kathleen  
1988 Status of Carter's Grove Slave Quarter Artifact Inventory. Unpublished memo dated April 5, 1988 on file, Department of Archaeological Research, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.
- Perdue, Charles L., Thomas E. Barden, and Robert K. Phillips (compilers)  
1976 *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves*. University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville.
- Perdue, Theda  
1979 Cherokee Planters: The Development of Plantation Slavery Before Removal. In *The Cherokee Indian Nation: A Troubled History*, edited by Duane H. King, pp. 110-128. University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville.
- Phillips, Ulrich  
1918 *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Régime*. D. Appleton and Company, New York.
- 1929 *Life and Labor in the Old South*. Little, Brown and Company, New York.
- Piperno, Dolores R.  
1988 *Phytolith Analysis: An Archaeological and Geological Perspective*. Academic Press, New York.

- Pogue, Dennis J.  
 1990 *King's Reach and 17th-Century Plantation Life*. Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum, Studies in Archaeology 1. Maryland Historical and Cultural Publications, Annapolis.
- Pogue, Dennis J. and Esther C. White  
 1991 Summary Report on the "House for Families" Slave Quarter Site (44Fx762/40-47), Mount Vernon Plantation, Mount Vernon, Virginia. *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia* 46(4):189--206.
- Puckett, Newbell Niles  
 1926 *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro*. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.
- Quarcoopome, T. N. O.  
 1987 *West African Traditional Religion*. African Universities Press, Ibadan, Nigeria.
- Raboteau, Albert J.  
 1978 *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*. Oxford University Press, New York.
- 1995 African-Americans, Exodus, and the American Israel. In *African-American Christianity: Essays in History*, edited by Paul E. Johnson. pp. 1--17. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Randolph, John, Jr.  
 1924 *A Treatise on Gardening by a Citizen of Virginia*. Edited by M. F. Warner. Reprinted from *The American Garden of John Gardiner and David Hepburn*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Appeals Press, Richmond.
- Rawick, George P.  
 1965 *From Sundown to Sunup: The Making of the Black Community*. Greenwood, Westport, CT.
- Rawick, George P. (editor)  
 1978 *The American Slave : A Composite Autobiography : Supplement, Series 1*. Greenwood, Westport, Connecticut.
- 1979 *The American Slave : A Composite Autobiography*. 41 volumes. Greenwood, Westport, Connecticut.
- Rawley, James A.  
 1981 *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A History*. W. W. Norton, New York.

Ray, B. C.

1976 *African Religions: Symbol, Ritual, and Community*. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

Ray, Celeste

1998 Scottish Heritage Southern Style. *Southern Cultures* 4(2): 28-45.

Ray, Keith

1987 Material Metaphor, Social Interaction, and Historical Reconstructions: Exploring Patterns of Associations and Symbolism in the Igbo-Ukwu Corpus. In *The Archaeology of Contextual Meanings*, edited by Ian Hodder, pp. 66-77. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Raymer, Leslie

1996 Macroplant Remains from the Jefferson's Poplar Forest Slave Quarter: A Study of African American Subsistence Practices. Manuscript on file, Jefferson's Poplar Forest, Forest, Virginia.

Redford, Dorothy

1994 Personal communication.

Reps, John

1972 *Tidewater Towns in Colonial Virginia*. University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Reynolds, Peter

1977 Experimental Iron Age Storage Pits: An Interim Report. *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 40:118--131.

Riggs, Brett

1997 The Christie Cabin Site: Historical and Archaeological Evidence of the Life and Times of a Cherokee Metis Household (1835-1838). In *May We All Remember Well: A Journal of the History and Culture of Western North Carolina*, edited by Robert Brunk, pp. 228-248. Robert Brunk Auction Services Inc., Asheville, North Carolina.

Riley, Edward

1950 The Town Acts of Colonial Virginia. *Journal of Southern History* 16:306--323.

Robinson, Beverly

1990 Africanisms and the Study of Folklore. In *Africanisms in American Culture*, edited by Joseph E. Holloway, pp. 211-224. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana.

Rombauer, Irma S. and Marion R. Becker

1975 *Joy of Cooking*. Reprinted. Bobbs-Merrill Company, New York. Originally published 1931, A.C. Clayton, St. Louis.



Rovner, Irwin

1983 Plant Opal Phytolith Analysis: Major Advances in Archaeobotanical Research. In *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory Volume 6*, edited by Michael Schiffer, pp. 225-266. Academic Press, New York.

Ruffin, Edmund

1839 *Farmer's Register* 7. E. Ruffin, Richmond, Virginia.

Rutman, Darrett B., Charles Wetherell, and Anita Rutman

1980 Rhythms of Life: Black and White Seasonality in the Early Chesapeake. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 11(1):29-53.

Ryder, A. F. C.

1969 *Benin and the Europeans, 1485-1897*. Humanities Press, London.

Ryder, Robin

1991a Free African-American Archaeology: Interpreting an Antebellum Farmstead. Unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Anthropology, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg.

1991b "...an equal portion...": Archaeology of Susan Gilliam, a Free Mulatto in Virginia, 1838-1917. Paper presented at the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology, Richmond.

Samford, Patricia M.

1991 Archaeological Investigations of a Probable Slave Quarter at Rich Neck Plantation. Manuscript on file, Department of Archaeological Research, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg.

1996a The Archaeology of African-American Slavery and Material Culture. *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, LIII (1): 87-114.

1996b The Archaeology Of Virginia's Urban Areas. In *Proceedings of the Eighteenth Century Symposium of the Council of Virginia Archaeologists*, edited by Theodore Reinhart, pp. 65-86. University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville.

1997 Response to a Market: Establishing a Dating Chronology for Printed English Earthenwares. *Historical Archaeology*, Volume 31(2):1-30.

1998 Engendering Enslaved Communities on Virginia's Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Plantations. Paper presented at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology, Atlanta.

1999 *Archaeological Investigations at the Brush-Everard Site Williamsburg, Virginia*. Colonial Williamsburg Research Publications. Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.

Sanford, Douglas

1991 Middle Range Theory and Plantation Archaeology: An Analysis of Domestic Slavery at Monticello, Albemarle County, Virginia, ca. 1770-1830. *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia* 46:20-30.

1994 The Archaeology of Plantation Slavery in Piedmont Virginia: Context and Process. In *Historical Archaeology of the Chesapeake*, edited by Paul Shackel and Barbara J. Little, pp. 115-130. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C.

Saraceni, J. E.

1996 Secret Religion of Slaves. *Archaeology* 49(6):21.

Schiffer, Michael B.

1983 Toward the Identification of Formation Processes. *American Antiquity* 48(4):675-706.

1987 *Formation Processes of the Archaeological Record*. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.

Schroedl, Gerald F.

1980 Structures and Village Patterns at the Historic Cherokee Towns of Chota and Tanasee. Paper presented at the 37th Annual Southeastern Archaeological Conference, New Orleans.

Schuler, Monica

1979 Afro-American Slave Culture. *Historical Reflections* 6(1):121--155.

Schuyler, Robert.

1974 Sandy Ground: Archaeological Sampling in a Black Community in Metropolitan New York. *Conference on Historic Site Archaeology Papers 1972* 7:13--52.

Sears, Robert

1847 Description of the State of Virginia. *The New Pictorial Family Magazine* IV:445--492.

Shaw, Thurstan

1970 *Igbo-Ukwu: An Account of Archaeological Discoveries in Eastern Nigeria*. Faber and Faber, London.

1977 *Unearthing Igbo-Ukwu: Archaeological Discoveries in Eastern Nigeria*. Oxford University Press, Ibadan.

1978 *Nigeria: Its Archaeology and Early History*. Thames and Hudson, London.

1984 Archaeological Evidence and Effects of Food-Producing in Nigeria. In *From Hunters to Farmers: The Causes and Consequences of Food Production in Africa*, edited by J. Desmond Clark and Steven A. Brandt, pp. 152-157. University of California Press, Los Angeles.

Shennan, Stephen

1989 Introduction: Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity. In *Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity*, edited by Stephen Shennan, pp. 1-32. Unwin Hyman, London.

Sidbury, James

1997 *Ploughshares into Swords: Race, Rebellion, and Identity in Gabriel's Virginia, 1730-1810*. Cambridge University Press, New York.

Singleton, Theresa A.

1980 The Archaeology of Afro-American Slavery in Coastal Georgia: A Regional Perception of Slave Household and Community Patterns. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Florida, Gainesville.

1991 The Archaeology of Slave Life. In *Before Freedom Came: African American Life in the Antebellum South*, edited by Edward D. C. Campbell III with Kym S. Rice, pp. 155-175. University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Singleton, Theresa A. and Mark D. Bograd

1995 *The Archaeology of the African Diaspora in the Americas*. Guides to the Archaeological Literature of the Immigrant Experience in America, Society for Historical Archaeology. Braun-Brumfield, Ann Arbor.

Singleton, William Henry

1999 *Recollections of My Slavery Days*. Introduction and Annotations by Katherine Mellen Charron and David S. Cecelski. Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Raleigh.

Smith Mark M.

1997 *Mastered by the Clock: Time, Slavery, and Freedom in the American South*. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.

Smith, Samuel D.

1976 *An Archaeological and Historical Assessment of the First Hermitage*. Tennessee Division of Archaeology, Nashville.

Sobel, Mechal

1979 *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith*. Greenwood Press, Westport, CT.

1987 *The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth-Century Virginia*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.

South, Stanley

1977 *Method and Theory in Historical Archeology*. Academic Press, New York.

Spencer, Jon Michael

1993 *Blues and Evil*. University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville.

Sprinkle, John H. Jr.

1991 Charles Cox's Mill Chest: A Documentary Example of Slave Material Culture. *African-American Archaeology* 3:3.

Starkweather

1968 *Traditional Igbo Art: 1966. An Exhibition of Wood Sculpture Carved in 1965-66 from the Frank Starkweather Collection, August 15-October 27, 1968*. Museum of Art, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Stedman, John G.

1796 [1992] Stedman's Surinam: Life in an Eighteenth Century Slave Society. Abridged, modernized edition of *Narrative of a Five Years Expedition Against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam*, edited by Richard and Sally Price. John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

Steen, Carl

1995 *The Somerset Place Restoration Excavations 1994*. Diachronic Research Inc., Columbia, S.C. Submitted to the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources Division of Archives and History, Historic Sites Section, Raleigh. Copies available from Historic Sites Section, Raleigh, N.C.

Stephenson, Mary

1963 A Record of the Bray Family, 1658-ca. 1800. Manuscript on file, Foundation Library, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.

Stewart, Marilyn

1977 Pits in the Northeast: A Typological Analysis. *Current Perspectives in Northeastern Archaeology: Essays in Honor of William A. Ritchie: Researches and Transactions* 17(1):149--164.

Stine, Linda France

1989 *Raised Up in Hard Times: Factors Affecting Material Culture on Upland Piedmont Farmsteads Circa 1900-1940*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Stine, Linda France, Melanie A. Cabak and Mark D. Groover

1996 Blue Beads as African-American Cultural Symbols. *Historical Archaeology* 30(3):49-75.

Stuckey, Sterling

1987 *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America*. Oxford University Press, New York.

Talbot, Percy A.

1969 *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria Volume II*. Reprinted. Frank Cass, London. Originally published 1926, Oxford University Press, London.

1967 *Life in Southern Nigeria: The Magic, Beliefs, and Customs of the Ibibio Tribe*. Barnes & Noble, New York.

Tatum, William

1800 *Essay of the Culture and Commerce of Tobacco*. London.

Taylor, Rev. John C.

1968 [1859] Journal of the Rev. J. C. Taylor at Onitsha. In *The Gospel on the Banks of the Niger-Journals and Notices of the Native Missionaries accompanying the Niger Expedition of 1857-1859*. Reverend Samuel Crowther and John C. Taylor. pp. 241-383. Church Missionary House, London. 1968 reprint by Dawsons of Pall Mall, London.

Thomas, Brian W.

1995 Source Criticism and the Interpretation of African-American Sites. *Southeastern Archaeology* 14(2):149--157.

1998 Power and Community: The Archaeology of Slavery at the Hermitage Plantation. *American Antiquity* 63(4):531--551.

Thomas, Julian

1996 *Time, Culture and Identity: An Interpretive Archaeology*. Routledge, New York.

Thomas, Zach

1995 Simple Root Cellars. *Country Journal* 22 (July/August):43-48.

Thompson, Robert Farris

1983 *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy*. Vintage Books, New York.

1989 The Song that Named the Land: The Visionary Presence of African-American Art. In *Black Art, Ancestral Legacy: The African Impulse in African-American Art*. Dallas Museum of Art. Harry Abrams, New York.

1993a *Face of the Gods: Art and Altars of Africa and the African Americas*. Museum for African Art, New York.

1993b Divine Countenance: Art and Altars of the Black Atlantic World. Preface in *Divine Inspiration: From Benin to Bahia*. Phyllis Galembo, pp. 1--17. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.

Thornton, John

1984 The Development of an African Catholic Church in the Kingdom of Kongo, 1491-1750. *Journal of African History* 25:147--167.

1992 *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Trigger, Bruce

1991 Constraint and Freedom - A New Synthesis for Archeological Explanation. *American Anthropologist* 95(3):551--569.

Uchendu, Patrick K.

1980 The Changing Cultural Role of Igbo Women in Nigeria 1914-1975. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, School of Education, New York University, New York.

Uchendu, Victor C.

1965 *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York.

1976 Ancestorcide! Are African Ancestors Dead? In *Ancestors*, edited by William E. Newell, pp. 283--296. Mouton Publishers, Paris.

1980 *Dependency and Underdevelopment in West Africa*. Brill, Leiden.

Upton, Dell

1996 Ethnicity, Authenticity, and Invented Traditions. *Historical Archaeology* 30(2):1--7.

Vansina, Jan

1961 *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*. Aldine, London.

1985 *Oral Tradition as History*. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison.

Velleman, Paul F. and David C. Hoaglin

1981 *Applications, Basics, and Computing of Exploratory Data Analysis*. Duxbury Press, Boston.

Veney, Bethany

1889 *The Narrative of Bethany Veney: A Slave Woman*. Press of George Ellis, Boston.

*Virginia Gazette*

1768a Runaway advertisement. *Virginia Gazette* 11 February. Williamsburg.

1768b Advertisement of Bernard Moore. *Virginia Gazette*. (Purdie and Dixon, editors). 1 December. Williamsburg

1781 Advertisement for sale of Kingsmill Plantation. *Virginia Gazette*. (Dixon and Nicholson, editors). 17 February. Williamsburg.

Vlach, John Michael

1978 *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts*. Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland.

Walker, Iain C.

1966 TD Pipes—A Preliminary Study. *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia* 20(4):86--102).

Walsh, Lorena

1992 Fettered Consumers: Slaves and the Anglo-American "Consumer Revolution". Paper presented at the Economic History Association.

1993 Slave Life, Slave Society, and Tobacco Production in the Tidewater Chesapeake, 1620-1820. In *Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the Americas*, edited by Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan, pp. 170-199. University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville.

1997 *From Calabar to Carter's Grove: The History of a Tidewater Virginia African-American Slave Community*. University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville.

1998 Ethnicity Among Africans in North America. Paper presented at the "Conference on Transatlantic Slaving and the African Diaspora: Using the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute Dataset of Slaving Voyages," Williamsburg, Virginia.

1995 Documentary Material for Slaves at Utopia. Manuscript on file, James River Institute for Archaeology, Inc. Williamsburg, Virginia.

- Washington, Booker T.  
1965 *Up From Slavery*. Reprinted. The Americanist Library, Boston. Originally published 1901, Doubleday, New York.
- Watson, Alan D.  
1983 North Carolina Slave Courts, 1715-1785. *North Carolina Historical Review* LX(1):24--36.
- Webb-Prentis Papers.  
n.d. Webb-Prentis Papers. Manuscript on file, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville.
- Weld, Isaac Jr.  
1799 *Travels Through the State of North America, and the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, During the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797*. John Stockdale, London.
- Wells, Ann Camille  
1976 Kingsmill Plantation: A Cultural Analysis. Unpublished Master's thesis, School of Architecture, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.
- Westamacott, Richard  
1992 *African-American Gardens and Yards in the Rural South*. University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville.
- Westbury, Susan A.  
1981 Colonial Virginia and the Atlantic Slave Trade. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.  
  
1985 Slaves of Colonial Virginia: Where They Came From. *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd Series XLII(2):228--237.
- Wheaton, Thomas R. Jr.; Friedlander, Amy, and Garrow, Patrick H.  
1983 *Yaughan and Curriboo Plantations: Studies in Afro-American Archaeology*. Soil Systems, Inc. Copies available from Archaeological Services Branch, National Park Service, Atlanta, Georgia.
- Wheeler, Linda  
2000 Common Objects Are an Uncommon Find: Extensive Collection of African American Hoodoo Artifacts Uncovered in Annapolis. *Washington Post*. 16 February. Washington, D. C.
- Wilkie, Laurie  
1995 Magic and Empowerment on the Plantation: An Archaeological Consideration of African-American Worldview. *Southeastern Archaeology* 14 (2): 136--148.



- 1996 Medicinal Teas and Patent Medicines: African-American Women's Consumer Choices and Ethnomedical Traditions at a Louisiana Plantation. *Southeastern Archaeology* 15(2):119--131.
- Willis, Liz  
1989 Uli Painting and the Igbo World View. *Africa Arts* 23:62--67.
- Willson, Margaret  
1986 Oral History Interviews: Some History and Practical Suggestions. In *Ethnohistory: A Researcher's Guide*. Studies in Third World Societies #35, edited by Dennis Wiedman, pp. 253--274. College of William and Mary, Williamsburg.
- Wilson, Charles Reagan and William Ferris, editors  
1989 *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.
- Wise, Cara  
1976 Date and Status in Eighteenth Century Delaware: An Archaeologist's View. *Transactions of the Delaware Academy of Science 1974 and 1975*. Delaware Academy of Science, Newark, Delaware.
- Worldidge, John  
1675 *Systema Agriculturae*. J. C. by T. Firing, London.
- Yentsch, Anne E.  
1990 Minimum Vessel Lists as Evidence of Change in Folk and Courtly Traditions of Food Use. *Historical Archaeology* 24(3):24--53.  
  
1991 A Note on a 19th-Century Description of Below-Ground "Storage Cellars" Among the Ibo. *African-American Archaeology* 4:3--4.  
  
1994 *A Chesapeake Family and Their Slaves: A Study in Historical Archaeology*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Young, Amy L.  
1995 Risk and Material Conditions of African American Slaves at Locust Grove: An Archaeological Perspective. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.  
  
1996 Archaeological Evidence of African-Style Ritual and Healing Practices in the Upland South. *Tennessee Anthropologist* XXI(2):139--155.