The diasporic world of the Great Dismal Swamp, 1630 -1860

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The Diasporic World of the Great Dismal Swamp, 1630-1860

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

Department of Anthropology

The College of William and Mary
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This Dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Approved by the Committee, May 2008

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The Great Dismal Swamp of North Carolina and Virginia stood as a remote landscape in the heart of the Tidewater throughout the historical period. Between ca. 1630 and 1860, thousands of Diasporans took advantage of the remoteness of the swamp in various ways and formed a variety of communities. Within these Diasporic communities were Native Americans, maroons, and enslaved canal company workers who joined or formed communities based on individual and specific reasons for choosing to permanently inhabit the swamp. Diasporic communities emerged on islands in the swamp and the relative locations of these landforms had significant impacts on what kinds of communities would form and persist on each landform. As a result of the florescence of these Diasporic communities, a dynamic political-economic world developed and was sustained in the swamp. This Diasporic world is very poorly understood and recognized in traditional historical discussions and narratives. This exposition utilizes a political-economic landscape perspective that emphasizes community structuration, exile, and alienation in order to interpret the archaeological and historical record at several sites that were explored and partially excavated by the author through the Great Dismal Swamp Landscape Study (2003-2006). Using research models developed for this project, it will be demonstrated that communities maintained differing levels or degrees of connectedness to the world outside the swamp throughout the ca. 230 years prior to the Civil War. Each type of community left behind unique archaeological signatures that provide much insight into community structuration, exchange systems, subsistence systems, and daily life. It will also be shown that archaeological materials and information can provide knowledge about how exile and alienation were a dialectical aspect of the pre-Civil War political economy of the swamp. Through this comparative historical archaeological study and its political-economic landscape perspective, we will gain new and unique insights into the Diasporic world of the Great Dismal Swamp.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE GREAT DISMAL SWAMP LANDSCAPE STUDY

In this chapter, I provide a concise overview of the project and the analysis presented in this exposition and a summary discussion of the general research motivations, objectives, and questions that upon which this exposition is centered. The general research framework of the project is discussed as a means of introducing the outlines and trajectories of the history that will be discussed throughout the text and some of the issues I faced in starting the project. I also present a general history of this project and my research background to demonstrate that it follows from my interests over the past decade of work in the field. Finally, I briefly discuss the background of archaeological fieldwork done for this project as well as the very limited previous fieldwork done by others.

Dissertation Summary

Using the Great Dismal Swamp of Virginia and North Carolina (Dismal Swamp; Dismal) as an archaeological case study, this exposition explores the historical political-economic interdependencies between resistant, exilic communities and marginalized remote landscapes. During the colonial and early Republican eras (1607-1860), the Great Dismal Swamp was a naturally difficult landscape to develop. As the Tidewater landscape transformed around the Great Dismal Swamp, it became
marginalized, alienated, and remote. At the same time, globalizing processes (e.g., colonialism, chattel slavery, and capitalism) relying centrally on labor and land resulted in and promulgated Diasporas throughout this long period, dramatically transforming all aspects of life in the Tidewater in the process. Resistant and defiant communities of landless and exploited Diasporans took advantage of the marginalized Dismal Swamp landscape for settlement, work, and permanent escape from perilous conditions. Through this perspective, we will gain insight into a swamp-wide community-based political economy as well as the interconnectedness of that system in the swamp and the transforming world outside of it.

To understand this complex of historical processes, the study presents documentary and archaeological evidence that demonstrates that three different types of exilic communities emerged in the Great Dismal Swamp among the disenfranchised Native Americans\(^1\), maroons, and enslaved canal company laborers who inhabited the morass between 1607 and 1860. The emergence of each type of community depended on the relative location of inhabitable islands throughout the vast swamp landscape, and, there are distinctive archaeological signatures that have been discerned for each community. Such archaeological materials and information provide insights into resistant community structuration and labor, trade and subsistence systems. These aspects of community in turn reflected differing social means of resisting and defying the alienating world outside of the swamp by empowering residents and granting them more control over their lives and labor. The Diasporic world that fluoresced in the Great Dismal Swamp existed in a landscape

\(^1\) I use the term “disenfranchised” in the sense that generally Native Americans were deprived of their rights to their traditional lands, to maintain their traditional political-economic and cultural systems, and to be accorded unwavering diplomatic respect and consideration by colonial nations.
that was most certainly marginalized by the developing world. In this exposition, though, it will be shown that the Great Dismal Swamp was the center of political-economic and social world of great relevance and empowerment for potentially thousands of people.

Anthropological Research Motivations and Objectives: A Brief Summary

The title of this exposition refers to "a Diasporic world in the Great Dismal Swamp". This was not meant to be glib, flippant, or catchy. Rather, it is an appropriate description, however general, of what appears to have existed in that spatially immense swamp before the Civil War (see Bogger 1981; Cohen 2001; Leaming 1979; Martin 2004; Wolf 2002). Thousands of people lived in the morass over a long duration and, marginalized as these people were vis-à-vis the outside world, they created a world within the swamp. Communities formed, exchange systems developed, subsistence patterns reflected daily life and requirements, heavy migrations in and out of the swamp occurred regularly, and later in the period, the outside world penetrated the remote swamp and in the process brought more Diasporans into its domain. It was a dialectical social complex and transformative political economy that developed in the swamp—a world, in short, that had multiple meanings to insiders and outsiders as well as complex political-economic interdependencies with the world outside. Thus, there are potentially many good reasons that could motivate research in the swamp depending, of course, on the
particular desires and interests of a given researcher. In the following, I would like to present my overlapping and interrelated motivations for doing this research.

Research Motivations

The first motivation behind the Great Dismal Swamp Landscape Study (GDSLS) is that I am absolutely inspired by groups of marginalized people who overcome the social, psychological, and political-economic obstacles and transgressions inherent to living in the often brutal and exploitative world of capitalism and its articulating systems. Daily acts of resistance and defiance, willful transplantation to new regions and areas, and even working within the system to somehow make one’s life a bit more bearable, all speak to me of human will and self-empowerment that are aspects of human praxis having real social and cultural impacts in a chronically alienating system. The Diasporic history of the Great Dismal Swamp is politicized and potent. We need to understand what occurred in the swamp among the various groups of exiles who lived in the morass not only for the sake of understanding more about real historical human conditions but also as a means, perhaps, of developing models for willful social action in the present iniquitous world. Explorations of these people through historical archaeology will allow me to help bring the Diasporans of the swamp back into focus in contemporary discourses. This is a most significant motivation behind this work.

Second, the social history of the swamp represents a most significant aspect of Diasporic history in the now-United States that is virtually unknown to modern
audiences and students of all walks of life (e.g., academic, public, and government). Thousands of people, who were indeed directly and negatively impacted by colonialism and slavery, led lives of great relevance within the swamp for potentially hundreds of years while generating their own historically unique social and economic systems. These historical processes and people absolutely must be understood and that understanding must be brought to bear in contemporary discussions of human conditions in modern world.

Maroons were a central constituency among the thousands of people who inhabited the swamp and the third motivation in the research centers on understanding their history through archaeological work. Historical marronage was a most radical and nearly global aspect of the resistance of the enslaved to the slavery system. And while scholars from many fields, including historical archaeology, have admirably and cogently explored marronage throughout the world (Aptheker 1996; Genovese 1979; Kerns 1983; Orser 1996; Mintz and Price 1992; R. Price 2002; S. Price 1984; Weik 2002), it is my view that archaeological research in the US has been quite limited and in some ways misguided. We know so little about maroons in the US, in part owing to an extreme dearth in documentation, that historical archaeological research has the potential to be indispensable in developing a much more refined and sophisticated understanding than currently exists of the roles and impacts of marronage in US history (Weik 1997; see also Sayers 2004). Indeed, at present US archaeologists have generally failed to, 1.) Recognize that marronage occurred in an amazing variety of contexts in North America, 2.) Develop artifact variation and landscape models for those various contexts as a means of developing certainty about
the nature of sites (e.g., marronage-related or not marronage related), and, 3.) Use anthropological and archaeological perspectives on materials from relevant sites to further our understanding of the nature of marronage in a multi-scalar fashion and its historical significance (Sayers, no date).

These three motivations sustained my enthusiasm over nearly four years of historical archaeological research. But, in order to develop a thorough understanding of the marginalized groups, the political-economic and social histories, and the maroon systems of the Dismal, specific research objectives, questions and concepts had to be formulated and research models had to be developed. In the following, I will briefly discuss these aspects of the project.

Research Objectives

The first objective was to locate archaeological sites in the Great Dismal Swamp (the Refuge) that represent Diasporic community settlements and perform intensive excavations at those sites. The second research objective was to use all available information, including excavated materials, in order to develop an understanding of Diasporic life in the swamp. The political-economic and social aspects of Diasporic swamp life include, but are not entirely limited to, the following: variations in community structure, exchange systems, and subsistence systems; political-economic and social connections of the swamp world to the world outside the swamp; the significance of landscapes in the political economy of the swamp; the degree of durability and permanence of Diasporic communities; and, the impacts of
alienation and exile on the potentially varied community formations that existed in
the swamp.

The third objective is to generate enough data to determine if community site
location and artifact assemblage variation models that were developed for the GDSLS
were indeed productive. These models suggest that several modes of Diasporic
community formation emerged in the Great Dismal Swamp and that each mode
would have resulted in its own specific range of landscape and material culture
patterns. The models developed for the GDSLS have the potential to be relevant to
future work in the swamp as well as archaeological explorations of other remote
landscapes. Equally significant, models that prove to be productive can be used by the
US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service, as stewards of the
Refuge, in order to implement site conservation, preservation, and public
interpretation agendas. There is virtually no knowledge of archaeological resources
in the Refuge and such tested models potentially are of great importance for the
preservation of sites.

In order to meet these objectives, a suite of research questions was developed,
largely prior to doing fieldwork. These questions center on several key
anthropological concepts that should reflect actual political-economic formations and
processes among Diasporic groups that lived permanently in the swamp.
Research Questions

I have approached the data and information that I have gathered in the field and from documents with a few general questions, or really question complexes, in mind. The first complex consists of questions regarding communities in the Dismal, including: What forms did communities take? What kinds of structuration and internal systems did they have? How did different communities interact?

The second question complex has to do with landscape and material culture. Some questions in this area include: What kinds of cultural landscapes were developed? How might these landscapes reflect community structure? What kinds of influence did landscapes have on the political-economic systems of the swamp? Also, a series of questions are asked regarding and relating to what kinds of material culture were used in the swamp and how material culture impacted daily life and the political economy.

The third complex of questions focuses on the political-economic impact of canal construction throughout the swamp, the exploitation of lumber, and the influx of enslaved workers due to canal company investments and projects. In what ways was the Dismal Swamp landscape impacted by canal company activities? As communities of exploited laborers formed because of entrepreneurial and corporate efforts at swamp resource exploitation, did laborer communities affect Diasporic political-economic systems that were already present? How did the influx of outside world materials and people along the canals impact the Diasporic political economy of the swamp?
These question complexes can lead us into broader theoretical issues that pertain to certain aspects of the historical political economy of colonialism and capitalist slavery. If the questions raised above can be answered, we will then be in a position to explore several more dynamic, theoretical issues of great pertinence to understanding historical Diasporas through a political-economic perspective.

Central Theoretical Conceptual Framework

Because I agree with the Marxian view that alienation has incredible power and fundamental dialectical influences in the modern historical world political economy (Marx 1988; Meszaros 1971; Ollman 1971), alienation is a central concept in this analysis. Also, I view all residents of Great Dismal Swamp prior to the Civil War as Diasporans and exiles, the latter concept inspired largely by works of Edward Said (1990). It is my argument that, by fusing the notions of Diaspora and exile, a powerful theoretical construct is possible that, not coincidentally, shifts our focus to the alienating and estranging impact of forced dispersal from traditional or imagined homes, communities, and ties to land. I see the historical developments that involved Dismal Swamp communities, landscapes and material culture, and corporate exploitation of resources as being dialectically related to globalizing processes of capitalist development, exile and Diaspora that are in turn threaded together by alienation that erupted from a variety of materially-grounded political-economic and psychosocial sources. In addressing project research questions, I will make connections between community, landscape and swamp exploitation and more
intangible processes associated with alienation and estrangement under human exile. But much research had to be done in order to be in a position to begin addressing such issues and in the following several pages, I will discuss the origins and background of this project.

The Great Dismal Swamp Landscape Study

The Great Dismal Swamp Landscape Study began in the early fall of 2001 when it was suggested to me by Marley Brown that I consider doing my dissertation work on the maroons of the Great Dismal Swamp (Figure 1). Excited at this prospect, I did some very expedient research in order to gauge the general history in the swamp and found no shortage of compelling commentary on how central that landscape was in African-American defiance of the tyrannies of slavery (Aptheker 1939, Frey 1991, Morgan 1998; Wolf 2002). It was clear that, in fact, the Dismal was home to the largest population of maroons, potentially numbering in the thousands, in North America prior to the Civil War (Bogger 1982). Knowing this fact, Elaine Nichols (1988) had performed a small-scale archaeological project at a site that was once in the Dismal Swamp. As one of the first maroon site archaeology efforts in the US Nichols’ project was a pioneering effort. In short, enough commentary and research had been previously done to warrant committing to a more intensive documentary research effort that would lead to an archaeological project.

Through documentary research, I became certain that, along with maroons, enslaved African-American canal company laborers were a significant group in the
swamp who clearly contributed to its political economy after the 1760s. In fact, it was apparent that the history of marronage after the late 1700s was thoroughly interrelated with the rise of capitalist exploitation of the swamp and the attendant exploitation of enslaved labor.

Figure 1  Modern Map Showing the Current Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge and North Carolina State Park (in grey), the Location of Project Research (adapted from Kirby 1995).

Many travelogues, as well as other primary sources, give great detail into the lives of enslaved canal company laborers. It was clear that any research project that focused on the Diasporic history of the swamp could not attend simply to maroons. Rather, both groups by their very different social definitions—free and not free—suggested a
dialectical political economy that had to be framed as such (discussed in detail in Chapter 3).

It was also noted that prior to the advent of canal proprietorship of the swamp and the presence in the swamp of enslaved workers who followed, maroons were not the only residents of the swamp. Rather, faint whispers and vague mentions in the documentary record, along with some common historical sense, suggested that disenfranchised Native Americans lived in the swamp as well, say after around 1630 and up through the fluorescence of the chattel system in the 1680-1700. However, if maroons were mentioned irregularly in the documentary record, that same record was comparatively silent regarding Native American historical settlement in the swamp (discussed in detail in Chapter 3). It seemed very likely that Native Americans would have chosen to live in the swamp but it was most unclear to what extent they would have done so (in terms of numbers of people) and where they might have chosen to live. In fact, there is also a glaring paucity of information and analyses of Native American precontact history in the immediate swamp environs. Very little extensive archaeological work has been done regarding the precontact exploitation of the swamp and the groups who lived therein and nearby. Most work has relied on field surface collections and a few short cultural resource management projects to acquire any sense of that history (Dennis Blanton, personal communication, 2003). In any event, with reference to historic Native American use of the swamp, we know that maroons often fled to live with indigenous groups in a variety of contexts in the hemisphere including North America (see Price 1996a; Mulroy 1993; Weik 1997) and it would be most plausible that such maroon/Native American interactions and
co-dwelling occurred in the Great Dismal (archaeological aspects of the project are discussed in Chapter 4).

So, in starting with a great interest in the maroons of the Great Dismal Swamp, it became clear that no study could simply focus on only them. Rather, a long period of time (ca. 1630-1865) had to be considered in which maroons, disenfranchised Native Americans, and enslaved canal company laborers (along with, it should be mentioned, small numbers of European-descended indentured servant, criminals, and outcasts of various sorts) had very compelling and extremely varied reasons to inhabit the swamp and to form communities (see Sayers 2006a; Sayers et al. 2007).

These issues inherent to a comparative study of Diasporic use of the swamp and its palpable connections with slavery, capitalism, and landscape development seemed to follow from my previous research. In the Midwest, I had done work on a nineteenth century farmstead and focused my analytical attention on issues relating to the transition to agrarian capitalism (Sayers 2003). I had examined the characteristics of the expanding capitalist mode of production in agrarian contexts, the rise of certain ideologies among farmers (e.g., progressivism), the use or exploitation of non-familial labor, and the commercialization of landscapes during that period of transformation. Ultimately, I saw how alienation emerged in that specific type of context (i.e., a family farm becoming more capitalist) and, in complicity with commercialized nucleated domestic landscape, helped prevent true capitalist labor relations (i.e., wage labor) from developing at the farm. I had also, in conjunction with that kind of analysis, performed a comparative study of farmsteads in the region.
that ultimately demonstrated that very similar approaches to farmstead layout and construction had occurred at most farms during the mid-nineteenth century (Sayers and Nassaney 1999). While an archaeological and landscape analysis of the Dismal Swamp Diasporan political economy would obviously be in many ways more difficult and would push research perspectives in different directions than those examined at a 19th century Midwest farmstead, the examination of macroscalar and microscalar issues through archaeology and landscape information, the theoretical focuses (e.g., alienation and political-economic transitions) and methods that I used in the analysis, and the development of predictive landscape models seemed to intuitively apply to the context of the Great Dismal Swamp.

At around the same time as my farmstead work, I had worked on a study of the Underground Railroad and the runaways who stayed in small to moderate Midwest towns rather than heading to Canada. A purely documentary study, the emphasis in that research was on the quality of life African-American fugitives found in Midwest towns, the development of communities among African-Americans, and their contributions to the histories of towns in general. But, one of my ultimate goals was to demonstrate that many African-Americans did not head to Canada via the Underground Railroad (UGRR). Rather, they stayed throughout the North in small towns, agrarian areas, and urban areas. More significantly, I argued that scholars and historians must begin to see the Underground Railroad as a political-economic resistance and defiance process of mass migration and transplantation that impacted many different contexts (Sayers 1999, 2004). In short, the UGRR was, in fact, a
significant aspect of marronage—it was a form of marronage—in the US. Prior to my work, this marronage perspective of the UGRR had seldom been advocated.

The other major issue I confronted in that research was how political and racialized the UGRR had become while being interpreted and understood in academic, public, and governmental discourses. Thus, not only did the historical issues surrounding fugitivism from slavery clearly relate to the social history of the Great Dismal Swamp. It was also true that government agencies, academics, and members of the public had their understandings of the social history of the Great Dismal Swamp and the discourses generated on that topic also had to be understood. So, the idea of comparatively studying the Diasporans of the Great Dismal Swamp within a complex of overlapping, and often contradictory, discourses seemed to relate to many issues of which I had already developed a sound understanding. At the same time, it was clear that the research would push me in new directions in terms of method, historical analysis, and theoretical perspective. In short, it seemed a perfect opportunity to further develop pre-existing interests while at the same time expand into new fields of analytical interest while contributing another informed voice within the cacophony of swamp discourses.

Pre-field documentary research had to be done to get a sense of what was knowable about the Diasporans of the swamp and to contextualize that swamp history in the regional and global contexts of slavery, marronage, defiance, and landscape development. There was a need to explore historical and archaeological literature regarding related groups more broadly, including resistance and defiance studies. I felt that, combined, these research efforts would not only verify what seemed a
foregone conclusion—that Diasporan sites could be explored archaeologically in the Great Dismal Swamp—but would help to develop several scales of research models that would make that fieldwork successful (see Sayers et al. 2007).

Archaeological Field Work

As has been mentioned, in 1988 Elaine Nichols performed a brief fieldwork project under her graduate advisor, Leland Ferguson. Her research centered on the Great Dismal Swamp, particularly maroons, and she located an island—Culpepper Island—that at one time was within the very heart of the Great Dismal Swamp (located just east of the Dismal Swamp Canal). The island was quite significant insofar as historical records seem to indicate that maroons inhabited that specific landform, and, most accounts of maroons in the Dismal Swamp suggest that this is the exact type of landform that they inhabited. Also, the location of the island in the erstwhile interior of the swamp was quite compelling. During a short period in the field (3 days), Nichols was able to perform surface collection and excavate eight test units (50X50 cm) a few areas of Culpepper Island. Indeed, Nichols and her crew did recover numerous artifacts that seemed to date to the late 18th and early 19th century but they did not find any intact cultural features from that period. In all, it was a beautiful and reasonable project that represented a pioneering moment in North American maroon archeology. Elaine Nichols deserves much credit.

Unfortunately, Nichols’ results were not conclusive although she was convinced that she had recovered maroon-related artifacts. And, perhaps she did find
some materials that were used by maroons mixed with others relating to later occupations. But without cultural features in which to contextualize materials, with the drastic disturbances by decades of plowing, and given the probability that the island was used during the 19th century for manufacturing pursuits (Wolf 2002), we are, unfortunately, left with very little information to use in understanding marronage in the Great Dismal. But, Nichols' work did point to the need for more intensive excavations and for finding landforms that had not been so disturbed by later occupations.

In determining what the landscape of focus would be for the GDSLS, it was clear that potential sites had to be as free of wholesale disturbances as was possible. This ruled out much of the former swampland mostly under the plow now or, even if currently wooded, plowed at one time or another. The most obvious possibility for locating intact sites was performing survey in the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge (GDR, Refuge), a ca. 190 square mile United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) property in Virginia and North Carolina. It was clear that the bulk of the current Refuge had been corporately owned since the pre-Civil War period by a continuous chain of logging and lumbering corporations. On the surface, this seemed to bode well for finding intact deposits if islands and other potential sites were to be found within it. True, logging can be a rather disruptive process to subsurface soils and cultural deposits but it was likely not be anywhere nearly as destructive as plowing and related activities or modern development.

After initial contacts with USFWS personnel, it was apparent that no extensive archaeological work had ever been performed in the Refuge itself. Review
of Department of Historic Resources documentation of sites as well as (later) communications with the equivalent department in North Carolina verified that fact. In short, there was no solid and clear record of the types and locations of cultural resources in the Refuge and the USFWS was in need of site location models as well as some tangible sense of what was out in the GDR. Thus, part of the GDSLS agenda became the development of predictive models for sites in the swamp, firmly rooted in the central research questions of the project centered on Diasporan exchange relations (see Chapter 4), as way to help them begin to protect and conserve the cultural resources under their charge.

The development of site location models and artifact distribution/assemblage models first began with maroon sites (Sayers 2002). Eventually, I incorporated predictive ideas in the model regarding enslaved canal laborer settlements and disenfranchised Native Americans (Sayers 2006a,b; Sayers, Burke, and Henry 2007). Ultimately, this complex model of Diasporan site location and composition covered the 1630-1865 period (discussed in Chapter 4).

Chapter Overview

Following the project overview presented in the present chapter, in Chapter 2 I will develop the project framework based on a complex of theoretical and conceptual issues, some of which have already been briefly mentioned. I explore theoretical and conceptual issues centering on “community”, “landscape”, “extractivist exploitation and transportation” and several other research foci. I also
explore in more detail exile and alienation and make initial connections between all of these concepts. It is the hope that a solid framework is presented but it must also be mentioned that discussion of theoretical issues is not entirely limited to this chapter. Rather, more subtle or nuanced aspects of several key concepts are introduced throughout the exposition in order to make analysis as clear as possible as specific data and information are brought into the narrative.

Archaeological field models were absolutely central to this research and are the focus of Chapter 3. They also represent arguably the most significant component of this research because they were developed, tested, and demonstrated to productively predict and describe significant aspects of Diasporic community structure and systems. I provide detail on the site location and artifact distribution models that I developed from documentary sources for the potential Diasporic community formations in the swamp. The overall model is quite compelling and provides an important reference point for all subsequent discussion of research finds and analysis.

Chapter 4 is a discussion of the information that was gleaned from the documentary history of the Great Dismal. In this chapter, I discuss the relevant documentation of Diasporic communities that is a crucial guide and adjunct to archaeological analysis. It is demonstrated that there is ample evidence that Diasporans did in fact inhabit the swamp and some aspects of the political economies and lifeways of various swamp dwellers are recoverable from that record.

In Chapter 5, I begin with a brief discussion of the archaeological results that will be requisite in addressing the main research issues of this project. This
discussion will take the reader to select sites that I worked at that are most critical for this analysis (not all work that I did is discussed in this chapter) and demonstrate that the models developed for this project are quite productive in predicting landscape and material culture patterns among community formations in the swamp. I then provide a relatively lengthy interpretation of the archaeological materials and documentary record discussed up to that point. This interpretation makes strong connections between the fields of information (e.g., archaeological and documentary data) and the key concepts, allowing for discussions on exchange systems among communities, changes in community size over time, daily practices among communities, and the material culture that was used within communities. I end the interpretation sections with an examination of the ways that the historical phenomenon of alienation was insinuated into the very fabric of certain communities and avoided or largely eliminated in other kinds of communities. It will be shown how the degree to which alienation played a role in exilic daily life in the swamp was in part a reflection of kinds of systems of community production and consumption that emerged.

Finally, in Chapter 6 I review the findings and interpretations that are presented throughout this exposition and conclude with discussions of the potential significance of this research and other possible interpretive approaches that could be taken in a study of exilic life in the Dismal Swamp.

In all, I hope that this represents a solid initial study and examination of the Diasporic world that emerged in the Great Dismal between ca. 1630 and 1860. But, the final analysis was made possible only through a novel amalgam of approaches and theoretical underpinnings that provided a basis of locating and interpreting an
archaeological record that is quite uncommon and unique. At the same time, certain
issues and methods were not used for a variety of reasons, mostly relating to project
constraints and researcher interests. I will briefly discuss these aspects of the project
in the following.

GDSLS Novel Approaches and Methods

At the conceptual framework level, this project represents a somewhat novel
approach to the study of North American Diasporan community formations,
landscapes, resistance, and material culture. While exile as a concept has been a
relatively hot topic for the past decade in certain circles in anthropology, geography
and literary criticism—often inspired by Edward Said’s work (e.g., 1990)—very few
in archaeological studies and American history have applied it directly to Diasporans
(examples include, Bender 2001; Malkki 1997). Furthermore, it is surprising that
alienation, as a relatively sophisticated aspect of Marx’s analysis of capitalism, is also
woefully understudied in most fields outside philosophy and works that directly
comment on Marx’s writings. True, there was a surge of interest in alienation in the
1950s and 1960s (Aptheker 1965; see John 1976) but that seems to have faded in
more recent decades, again, save for a few philosophically and Marx-oriented
researchers and thinkers (e.g., Singer 1980). But, in anthropology and historiography
very little work has ever been done that focused in any appreciable way on alienation.
While most would acknowledge the ties between capitalism and alienation or
estrangement within the social sciences and historical studies, it seems to generally be

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relegated to or sort of scenery position, an afterthought, a concept to be mentioned *en passant*. It is as though critical scholars see it as part of the air of capitalism and a generally “given” and unchallenging aspect of that system.

With no desire to be critical per se, I must confess I am a bit confused as to why this is the case; I find alienation to be one of the more fantastic and fascinating aspects of the human individual and social condition in the modern world. It is everywhere, it changes in its manifestations, and it has the potential to explain much about the human social and political-economic condition, in accordance with Marx’s view. And, as I and only a few others have demonstrated in archaeological studies (Fitts 1996; Sayers 2003), alienation is not only discernible in the archaeological record it is quite influential in how human political-economic and social relations transform over time. In any case, the introduction of a research framework for Diasporan histories in North American that coheres around the concept of alienation is somewhat novel. While alienation we be discussed in more detail in the following chapters, at present, I would like to turn my attention to the archaeological aspects of the GDSLS and briefly discuss the unique circumstances of the field work as well as the innovative and novel methodologies, novel concepts, and original research models that were developed.

Initially, the landscape area for archaeological research had to be chosen and it was decided that the current Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge was optimal insofar as it was reasonably clear that the current swamp: had seen little to no plowing in the past; had the potential for areas of dry ground to be present; and, contained several reasonably well documented antebellum canals. Having chosen the
general location of research, which is currently a vast standing swamp, flexible methods and new models for research had to be considered and developed for this project in order to meet objectives. This was the case for a variety of reasons.

First, no sustained archaeological work has ever been performed at any sites in the present-day GDR and no extensive research to my knowledge has ever been performed in areas of former swampland, specifically any with historical sites in focus. Second, very little archaeological work has ever been done in the US at sites of the types I was expecting to find in the swamp. Maroon community sites within the slavery system in the US have never been intensively excavated to my knowledge. Excavations at Fort Mosé in Florida are not really an exception (Deagan and Landers 1999; Deagan and McMahon 1995) insofar as scholars agree that Fort Mosé is not technically a maroon site (Singleton 1995; Weik 2002), and, Weik’s (2002) solid and informative work at Piklikaka in Florida did not involve intensive excavations and the discovery of substantial cultural features (Sayers n.d.). While these projects have been very significant on many levels and the researchers themselves have provided very key insights into the Diasporic histories they explored, I ultimately was not able to confidently develop landscape and artifact signature models for the Dismal based on any previous archaeological work. While literature reviews might lead one believe otherwise (Leone et al 2005), maroon archaeology has supplied us with very little in the way of excavated materials, cultural features, landscape models, and other excavated information from well-explored contexts. Also, no sustained work has ever been performed at enslaved canal laborer sites in general and swamps have been not well studied in terms of the archaeological evidence of early historical Native
American occupations. So, I did not have a surplus of previous research to build upon and had to develop original models for site location and artifact assemblages I was expecting in the swamp that were based on documentary records, scholarly research on swamp dwelling exiles in Dismal Swamp and other areas of the southern US, and of course common sense. So, the general research project in itself represents an innovative approach—interdisciplinary in reach with archaeological excavation as central—to understanding the exilic world in the Dismal and, more generally, to understanding exile in these general kinds of historical and landscape circumstances. Also, within the project itself, the models for site location and artifact distribution patterns were also innovative to fit the research context.

Regarding the models developed for this project, I would like to introduce early in this exposition and justify the use of some new concepts throughout the project. In developing a predictive model for site types expected in the Dismal Swamp, I have used the term *mode of communitization* to describe the variation in community formations and structurations that I discerned, with varying degrees of clarity, from the documentary record (Sayers *et al* 2007). This was necessary because this landscape context is quite vast and its exilic inhabitants so diverse in their backgrounds, we really are potentially dealing with several different kinds of communities that formed there. Also, the phrase reverberates with the political-economic approach that this project ultimately has taken (e.g., mode of production) and, as a consequence, evokes the dialectical and dynamic nature of the communities and their relationships with one another.
Also, I have used a few variations on the concept of exile. One is counterexile (also, counterexilic and modes of counterexile), through which I refer to the resistant exilic communities that formed in the swamp as well as individual, states of being, attitudes and tactics. So, for example, maroons were counterexiles—that is they were defying and trying to eliminate, in part, the grip that the exilic position had over their lives by permanently removing themselves from that system (Sayers 2006c). This is justified in part because it helps to draw out some of the impacts of exile. I have also coined the terms *intraliminal marronage* and *extraliminal marronage* (2004, 2006a, n.d.) and have used them to help frame this project at the macroscale. Intraliminal marronage refers to marronage that occurred within the bounds of the slavery system at any time. Extraliminal marronage, then, refers to marronage outside the bounds of the slavery system. Ultimately, this primary distinction within marronage has helped me to understand the variations and similarities in forms of marronage as well as the varying contexts in which it occurred (Sayers n.d.).

Lastly, there were some developments worthy of mention in regards to the field methods used by the GDSLS. Hurricane Isabel ran through the Tidewater and ravaged the GDR in the fall of 2003, some 2 weeks before I started survey for the project. As a result of the tempest, thousands of trees were knocked down in the GDR making my job of surveying all the more difficult in an already difficult environment. However, the fallen trees exposed intact soils as trees fell over and their roots pushed up, often at 90 angles from the intact ground surface. Because of the vast amount of exposed soils that was available through tree-falls, in aggregate, they quickly became part of our survey strategy; we systematically visually surveyed
every tree fall at all sites, and even excavated into some vertical walls. We called the vertical walls of roots and soils, as well as the resulting holes in the ground, Tree Root Masses (TRMs) and as far as I know this technique represents a unique method of surveying. Given that we located more than 120 acres of high dry ground—potential sites of interest—in the GDR, total shovel test coverage was not feasible. TRM survey quickly developed as an invaluable, and highly productive, method of collecting artifacts and recording stratigraphic information.

Also, we used two forms of remote sensing at one site in the GDR in order to determine the locations of features and other areas of interest. While remote sensing is by no means novel, remote sensing has rarely been performed in environments like the GDR. Also, the methods used have rarely been used at undisturbed sites where old dune or beach sand comprises the bulk of the sedimentation (Lynch 2005).

Finally, the nature of one particular site that was extensively investigated for this project required the use of a sophisticated dating technique that has never (again, as far as I know) been used at historical sites (generally, perhaps, because there is not often a need to get dates from sources other than artifacts). The artifact regime at the site in question was very limited in terms of temporally diagnostic artifacts from the historical period. While an extreme dearth of outside world, mass-produced material was expected at interior sites (e.g., settlements where some swamp maroons lived), it was not anticipated that there would be a virtual absence of tightly diagnostic materials. Thus, I had to search for alternative dating methods during fieldwork. Because the precision of the C-14 dating method drops to nearly nil for the historical period, that method of dating was used only as a secondary technique. The primary
dating technique that we used is Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) that, in short, dates the sand of cultural features. This was necessary because of the aforementioned lack of tightly diagnostic historic artifacts and because there are few dating methods applicable to recent depositional episodes. Because we were already using the method for several features at one site, we opted to test one sample from a different site in a probable precontact feature. Ultimately, OSL dating method was used to gain temporal information at both precontact and postcontact site through the GDSLS.

Overall, the GDSLS has been innovative on several levels, ranging from the theoretical to the methodological. While there is some satisfaction to be had from being innovative for its own sake, the specific aspects of the research project—the lack of solid documentary history, the lack of previous work of its kind, the unique historical archaeological signatures, the remoteness of the landscape that was surveyed, and many others—required methodological flexibility and novel efforts at gathering as much information as was possible. But more importantly, I have bothered the reader with this listing of innovations so that they at least understand why at certain places I had to do things a bit differently.

As was mentioned, there are some issues and methods that have not been addressed or, at least, contribute little to the overall exposition and analysis. I wish to discuss these unexplored issues at the outset because I fear the reader may wonder all along why certain discussions are missing or limited in their scope.

The main lacuna is that there is no information presented that derived from descendant interviews. It was an initial goal of this project to interview people who
had identificatory connections to the swamp by virtue of their forebears having worked or lived there during the antebellum era. Throughout the research period much effort was devoted to trying to locate and talk with descendents. I visited churches in the hopes of finding parishioners who had such connections; many newspaper articles appeared that not only discussed my interests but also provided readers with my contact information; I attended various ceremonies and events in the hopes of meeting people who would talk with me about their histories; and, I gave many public presentations of my work hoping, again, to draw interested parties into discussion. Ultimately, I had limited but promising success in locating people willing to discuss their histories and understandings of the swamp. I was able to make initial contacts with members of the Nansemond Tribe who are historically associated with the Dismal and conduct a few preliminary interviews. I also met with a person who lives in Skeetertown, a settlement on the edges of the Dismal whose residents come from many ethnic backgrounds and many are ultimately associated with Joe Skeeter who worked in the swamp in the antebellum era. I was also able to interview a member of the Grandy family, a large group of descendents of Moses Grandy who also worked in the swamp before the Civil War.

At the time of this writing, the interviews are not processed and final, formal permissions to use information from those interviews have not been secured from the interviewees. At the outset of each interview, each individual was made aware that I, or others in the future, might quote or summarize their discussions and that transcripts of the interview might be archived in state or institutional repositories. I was given verbal permission in each case to conduct the interview, record information, and use
that information for public presentations, publications, and archiving. However, I am not comfortable citing or quoting their words until I provide each person a written summary of what I recorded for their final approval. This last part of the interview process has not been done at present but it will be done in the near future. So, while finding and interviewing descendents was a significant aspect of the project, none of the information will be used in this dissertation.

A second significant issue that is not explored in the forthcoming analysis centers on ethnicity in the archaeological record. In historical archaeology today, issues surrounding “ethnic markers” and “Africanisms” in material culture and landscapes have much currency (Ferguson 1992; Orser 2007:119; Perry and Paynter 1999:300). It is a contentious subject and, as far as I can tell, the contention gets us nowhere. I agree with Perry and Paynter (1999:304): “Searching for objects of African origin quickly leads to the complex field of colonial relations in which objects rarely take on simple one-to-one relations with social groups [i.e., simply mark ethnic identities within a group]. Europeans, Africans and African-Americans, and Native Americans used most kinds of material culture, though quite often in strikingly different ways. It is these multivalencies that, as much as Africanisms, Europeanisms, or Nativisms, mark the color line. Our challenge is to understand these multivalent objects.” Of course, the same holds true for non-colonial and post-colonial contexts. We only need to look around our world today to see that people of many ethnic and racial backgrounds co-opt, borrow, independently develop, and synthesize symbolic codes, behaviors, and approaches to the production and embellishment of material culture and space. Complicated processes associated with
material culture multivalency clearly occurred in the past which suggests, to me at any rate, that attempting to find ethnic and racial identities of people in archaeological materials would be, at best very difficult, and at worst futile. Nonetheless, I recognize the potential significance of such analyses and I do not wish to discount work in this area. Rather, I simply wish to pursue other equally significant aspects of Diasporic history at the present stage of analysis. I am aware that there are many who might see this as somewhat blasphemous but I must be comfortable with that.

As will be seen, I understand the Diasporic communities of the Great Dismal to have been comprised of people from a variety of backgrounds throughout the centuries under study, and, I presume that processes like cultural retention, or, ethnogenesis and creolization did occur in the swamp world. However, I believe that focusing analytical attention on presenting and arguing that ethnic and/or racial markers are evident in the materials recovered from the Dismal would, in effect, distract our attention from other issues of interest here (in part because it is so needlessly a contentious subject) that center on understanding how landscapes and material culture used by Diasporans in the Great Dismal Swamp fit into the structures and political economies of communities. The model of community formation that I developed reflects this approach quite explicitly rather than reflecting an approach that seeks to determine the ethnic and racial make-up of communities and how archaeological materials reflect those backgrounds within communities. I will follow Perry and Paynter’s (1999) suggestion to try to determine what material culture and landscapes meant within the communities and within the swamp more generally but I am going to approach such issues from a political-economic existential perspective.
Future analyses by the author, despite the inherent difficulties, may explore ethnicity in the swamp archaeological record, but I wish to establish here other key aspects of the political-economic existential histories of the swamp analytically prior to exploring those kinds of issues.

I will be presenting an argument about the concept of exile and its applicability in understanding the Diasporic histories of the swamp. I must acknowledge here that later on in the exposition it might seem a natural step, after presenting the implications of exile on the existential and identificatory lives of swamp dwellers, to then expect ethnic markers in the archaeological record as people grappled with memorialized worlds and imagined communities (as will be discussed). But, I see it differently. If anything, I am looking for “exile” markers in the material culture and landscapes that seem to reflect the swamp dwellers’ understandings and negotiations of the conditions of exile. While materials may or may not reflect swamp dwellers’ ethnic and identificatory attachments with homelands and personal pasts (ethnic identity markers may indeed be seen by some in the archaeological materials and features presented in the following chapters), I am presently interested in how material culture may have been important in mediating and defying the conditions of exile and alienation; it seems to me that looking for ethnic markers as a means of establishing the conditions of exile would be unnecessary as well as an indirect approach to the matter. It is my hope that the reader will maintain an interest in my interpretation of the Diasporic world of the swamp that does not rely to any great degree on discussion and analysis of ethnic and/or racial markers.
In the following several chapters, my understanding and interpretation of the historical archaeological record of the Great Dismal Swamp is presented. It is not my intent at all to provide the best, the optimal, or a “gold standard” interpretation of this history. Rather, I am providing an overall interpretation that is based on my interests, politicized and analytical, that I can only hope that the reader will find engaging, informative, and compelling. While there will be clearly many significant issues that are not directly engaged in this exposition (e.g., gender, racialization, ethnicity, creolization, class, etc.), I am hopeful that readers will recognize that I have placed emphases where I have out of a desire to explore what I consider to be equally significant issues in Diasporic histories of North America. There was an entire Diasporic world that emerged in the Dismal and this project represents only the most miniscule of glimpses into the lives that were lived in that world. It is, I hope, a solid start that will allow my future work to expand into some of the above kinds of theoretical areas that are also quite significant, and, might compel others to do research in the morass so that our collective understanding of these Diasporic histories expands and flourishes.
CHAPTER II

KEY IDEAS REGARDING THE DIASPORAN WORLD IN THE GREAT DISMAL SWAMP

This chapter lays out the key theoretical ideas on which the Great Dismal Swamp Landscape Study is based. It brings together several concepts that are integrated through a general Marxian perspective on the modern globalizing political economy, referred to throughout as capitalism and the capitalist mode of production. First, I explore three conceptual complexes that are directly relevant to interpreting the political-economic histories of the Great Dismal Swamp: 1.) community and social structure 2.) landscape and material culture, and 3.) resource exploitation, extractivism and transportation. The discussion of these concepts and historical processes then turns to the significance of Diasporas, exile, and alienation within capitalism and capitalistic slavery. Through the elaboration of these overlapping concepts and conceptual complexes, the basic elements of the GDSLS research framework will be made clear. In short, then, this chapter provides the fundamental elements of the theoretical framework that has guided GDSLS interpretations and research models. While each key concept is discussed generally through academic literature reviews, the following is geared towards comprehending the Diasporan world in the Great Dismal Swamp.
Community

Based on documentary accounts and informed extrapolation, it can be reasonably suggested that communities of varying forms and structures, sizes, and constituencies emerged in the Great Dismal Swamp as a result of 250 years of diasporan occupation. We can further infer that if communities emerged, many if not all of them would have been centralized in physical space in settlements, the built environments in which community formations are made manifest on the landscape (as will be discussed in more detail below). If true, the unique characteristics of the swamp environment and landscape, which include its location within the ever-developing Tidewater, the overall remoteness of the swamp within that developing region, its sheer vastness, and the potentially limited inhabitable land within it (e.g., high ground) would have helped to set the conditions for equally unique Diasporan community formations.

In the broader anthropological, historiographic and archaeological literature, community (and closely related concepts) is variously conceptualized, formulated, described, and analyzed. As a concept, a scale of analysis, and frame of reference that is regularly used many assumptions and ambiguities often attend its use in historical and anthropological research (Blassingame 1975; Carroll 1999; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Paynter 2000; Spencer-Wood 2006; Tarlow 2002). Traditionally, community is understood at some level to be the a structured social formation although what supports and determines the structure can be varied; kinship systems; labor relations, divisions of labor and shared class position; traditional territories; shared histories;
shared ideational systems and ideologies; and internal authority hierarchies are a few of the potential lynchpins or primary aspects of community structure (Deb 2004:19-20; Fisher 2000:12-16; Hollsteiner 1967; Marcus and Fischer 1986; 77-110; Wolf 1967). However, in the past few decades, more traditionally studied forms and aspects of community, like structural variations between communities across space or varying functions of intracommunity components, have given way to new ways of envisioning communities and what is significant about them research (Bayart 2001:320; Lefebvre 1991; Merrifield 2002; Plant 1974; Roseberry 1989:146-147; Scott 1985; Taussig 1980; Wallerstein 1993:152-164).

Generally, community is presumed to have a relatively clear connection to space; there is, most often, a spatial limitation, and extent, to a given community; communities are real world phenomena that are finite in extension and bounded (Marcus and Fischer 1986:77-110). A farming community was located at place X or a maritime community was located at place Y, even if the boundaries and constituencies were flexible over time (i.e., the spatial aspect changed or transformed). But recent scholarship has also tested this direct spatial assumption through the notion of imagined or imaginary communities (Bisharet 1997; Ching 2001:286-287; Roseberry 1989). Imagined communities are directly connected with and dialectically related to the fragmenting and dislocating tendencies of modern capitalism. Migration, diasporas, shifting boundaries, and social displacement occur as people move through shifting boundaries and places of the modern world while retaining memories, idealized visions, and other psychological and identificatory
attachments with homelands and erstwhile communities. In their discussion of
imagined communities of the present, Gupta and Ferguson (1997:39) suggest that

The irony of these times is that as actual places and localities become ever
more blurred and indeterminate, ideas of culturally and ethnically distinct
spaces become perhaps even more salient. It is here that it becomes most
visible how imagined communities come to be attached to imagined places, as
displaced peoples cluster around remembered or imagined homelands, places,
or communities in a world that seems increasingly to deny such firm territorial
anchors in their actuality (emphasis in original).

Not touched upon so far, at least explicitly, is that a political economic
perspective on community has the potential to provide a view of social formations
that has great interpretive power in understanding the diasporan history of the great
Dismal Swamp. Emphasizing the contradictory, transformative, globally and locally
interdependent, and iniquitous aspects of social and economic histories, political
economy perspectives tend to avoid isolationist and reifying views of cultural and
economic systems that may be under study; as Marcus and Fischer (1986:78) suggest,
social systems are always in flux and political-economic perspectives help to insure
that such historical dynamism is captured in analysis.

For Marx, community was a rather significant aspect of the study of human
history as well as the human condition under pre- or non- capitalist societies and our
capitalist one (Hobsbawm 1989). In fact, community is a consistent reference point
for Marx in his studies of historical political-economic formations and capitalism
(Marx1984a, 1984b; 1989:67-120; 1992). While his views of community are not
always clear, Marx seems to have held that the modern capitalist mode of production
has destroyed an ideal community of some ancient and primordial past and replaced it
with a supremely inferior range of social formations (particularly, Marx 1989).

According to Plant (1974:19):

Marx [saw] the problem of the fragmentation of society [the dis-integration of the original community] and of the personality as part and parcel of industrial capitalism which replaced the communal virtues of co-operation and fraternity[sic] with those of conflict and competition. Capitalism is seen as an isolating and separating process that stripped off the historically grown layers of custom and social membership and replaced these benign features of social life competition and the cash nexus.

More specifically, with the rise of capitalism and its divisions of labor, the private ownership of property, and fragmentation of society into classes, true community is undermined (Axelos 1976). In a mode of production where labor is divided (classes) and property becomes private, communities as social units fraction, creating individuals—atomistically perceived individuals and self-focused people—in the process. For Marx, the historic creation of the Individual within a political economy based on private property, cash exchange, and surplus production was a singular signpost of systemic alienation and estrangement (Marx 1988). According to Marx (1988:81), “Every self-estrangement of man from himself and from nature appears in the relation in which he places himself and nature to men other than and differentiated from himself...through estranged labor man not only engenders his relationship to the object and to the act of production as to powers that are alien and hostile to him; he also engenders the relationship in which other men stand to his production and to his product, and the relationship in which he stands to other these other men.” Laborers become alienated from nature, land, the products of their labor and each other through the nurturance of individualism and the establishment of the primacy of individual production, labor, and consumption (John 1976; Meszaros 1971). In this system,
individuals live in competitive interdependence with those in their class, and more peripherally, usually, with people in other classes. So, class is not, in this case a particularly similar substitute for the more ideal community where competition was more or less nonexistent and people worked in organic synchrony within the structure of their community. Under capitalism, people now relate, not as a unity that coheres out of a direct dependence on nature (as in many pre-capitalist formations) but as an aggregate defined by their degrees of access to and control of the means of production (Marx 1989).

Under class relations, individuals can nurture some elements of the communal or community spirit. However, the division of labor that creates classes also compels the emergence of specialization, and any rudimentary or emergent spirit of interdependence that exists among all members of a class is then further fractionated toward individuality and particular interests. As a result of this range of dialectical and complex processes, social enclaves, or communities, form that may appear to members as being exclusive and natural social formations but in reality mask the competitive isolation of individuals. Again, these processes clearly underscore the significance of alienation as both a causative and resulting force in the day-to-day political-economic world of capitalism.

Communities that form under capitalism, no matter what form they take, have to be viewed as part of historical capitalism. Thus, the dialectic interdependencies between communities and other scales of the capitalist system have to be acknowledged to avoid isolationist understandings of community dynamics. Equally significant, real and/or imagined "alternative" communities can emerge indirectly or
directly from defiance, counterhegemonic, and resistance actions among those who share similar material, historical, and social conditions under capitalism and its articulating systems (Roseberry 1989:223-231). In such resistance, autonomous or counterhegemonic communities, residents are often compelled by mutual understandings of idealized histories, kin, and homelands that will possess varying degrees of idealization—imagined communities of a kind—and reflect the alienating conditions of the world that is being defied. As will be seen, this general understanding of communities will have some value in understanding the Diasporan political economy of the Great Dismal Swamp.

The Power of Historical Landscapes and Spatialities

Landscape, as part of spatial and geographic approaches more broadly, is a nearly ubiquitous area and frame of study in most of the social sciences (Appadurai 2001; Harvey 2001; Nugent 2002) as well as other fields, such as literary criticism (Murray 1991) history (e.g., Foucault’s [1977:195-228], analysis of the spatialities and architectural and landscape impacts of Panopticon surveillance in prisons) and philosophy (Lefebvre 1991). Indeed, a hallmark of the rise of spatial and landscape studies in the past quarter century is that the usually complex and nuanced understandings of a legion of scholars from many, many specialties cross-fertilize and inform one another. For their part, anthropologists and archaeologists have contributed much to the study of space and landscape in the modern world. In the following, as with our previous section on community, a general discussion of
landscape and space will be given followed by an exploration of the political economy of space. However, reference will be made to community, now that it has been discussed, and will further crystallize the more specific resonations that landscape approaches have to studies of the social histories of the Great Dismal Swamp.

In recent decades, space and landscape have taken a primary importance in anthropology. Rather than being presumed, generally explored, and discussed in a background tone, space and landscape are often now seen as social artifacts in themselves; space is as much a dynamic part of society and culture as are people, trade goods, social systems, kin ties, warfare, and the many other facets of social systems that have always been of interest in the field. As Penelope Harvey (2001:197) writes, to round out the general point:

The aim of all these [recent anthropology of landscape] studies has been to show that habitual Western understandings of landscape are limited by that central paradigm of Western philosophy which insists on a categorical polarization of nature and culture such that agency resides with human beings while the natural world is passively acted upon. This approach renders humanity external to the landscape. Thus we tend to discuss the relationship between human beings and landscape in terms of human capacity to view, survey and map the territories in which they live, imposing meanings on particular landforms or determining land use through the activities done t or on the land. In this extreme culturalist view, human agency imposes meanings on a landscape from the outside.

So, there is a trend towards jettisoning the static, reified and categorized notions of space and landscape as formed through old Western paradigms that ultimately put people on the landscape as actors are on the stage (Aziz 2001:121). Anthropologists are demonstrating how space and landscape are not only created by humans, but are essentially active participants, sometimes even hegemonically so, in
political-economic, ideological, and social aspects of most contexts. Thus the literature is replete with provocative views of space such as, "contested landscapes" (Bender 2001), "Landscapes of Memory" (Farmer 1992), "Landscapes of Resistance" (Casella 2001), "Spaces of Hope" (Harvey 2000) "Fragmented Globalities (Trouillot 2003), and "Cross-Border Spatialities" (Sassen 2001) to name a few. But what characterizes much landscape thinking in anthropology are emphases on: movement through space (e.g., migration, diaspora, exile, commodity flows, etc); dialectical fluidity between the social world and meanings of landscape; the roles of landscapes in processes of violence, resistance, and social chaos; marginalized places; memory, memorialization, and identity in/on landscapes and space; and, boundary development, establishment, and dissolution at several scales (see contributors to, Bender 2001; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Jain 2004; Nugent 2002).

In historical archaeology, anthropologically minded practitioners are following similar trends as observed in anthropology more broadly although, perhaps, with a tilt toward materialist interpretations given the nature of the sources of information used by the field (e.g., material culture). As a kind of lineal descendent from earlier spatial studies in archaeology (Clarke 1977, 1979; Hodder and Orton 1976; Taylor 1983; Willey 1953), landscape studies in archaeology are rather prominent in the field at present and without doubt much important work has been done (e.g., Ashmore 2002; Kelso and Most 1990; Leone 1984; Yamin and Metheny 1997). Most landscape archaeologists would agree that landscape and space are comprised not only simply the built environment and the locations where cultural processes occur but also recursive and dialectically active constituents of the human
social condition. Also, of great significance is that the complex scaling of landscape and space are readily recognized in archaeology as researchers struggle with ways to capture the "global and the local" in their interpretations and analysis (Johnson 1996, 1999; Orser 1996; Paynter 1982). It is often a tacit assumption that landscape and spatialities coexist with and help create and perpetuate most aspects of the social and economic world, including systemic inequalities and power relations, resistance, surveillance and discipline, economic processes, individual actions and memories, and ideological milieux (e.g., racism, Georgian Order, etc.) (Delle 1999; Edwards and Brown 1996; Epperson 1999; Leone 2005; Leone et al. 1999; Nassaney et al. 2001; Orser 1988; O’Sullivan 2001). In recent landscape research, there has been an opening up to more nuanced and evocative perspectives on landscape and space, parallel with those observed above in anthropology more broadly. Again, fluidity, movement and motion, fragmented identities and sense of being, contradiction, and other postpositivist and phenomenological interests have begun to emerge as significant aspects of landscape understandings (Hall 2001; Tilley 1993). For this project, and to which I will presently turn, the most directly relevant research and concepts center on the political economies of historical space and landscape under the capitalist order.

Political Economy of Landscape and Space

In the historical globalizing system, landscapes were absolutely critical aspects of historical political-economic and social processes. At multiple scales,
landscapes were historically exploited, created, transformed, and privatized or owned under the modern system and were a primary means through which human behavior and thought were structured and guided (Delle 1998; McGuire 1991; Paynter 1982). Capitalism and its interdependent and articulating modes of production, like slavery, exist across space and landscape, in the process creating and recreating themselves (Roseberry 2002). Constructed as they are, landscapes are the political-economically reformulated natural geographies that manifest capitalist and related conditions (Johnson 1996; Leone 1984, 2005; Roseberry 2002; Sayers 2003a,b). Following Lefebvre (1991), space, and thus landscape, are produced and are key aspects of capitalist production and meaning systems; and much like any other entities and phenomena that emerge, persist, and transform within capitalism and related systems, landscapes have the potential to be of great importance in contradictory dialectical processes (see also, Epperson 1999; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Merrifield 2002:89; Nugent 2002).

One of the basic and fundamental aspects of the relationship between capitalism, space, and landscape is that land becomes private property, typically interpretable as part of the means of production, through which the division of labor in society is made practicable. According to Axelos (1976:67), "the division of labor and private property go hand and hand. If the division of the city and the country was the first major form of the division of labor, the first major form of private ownership was landed property". For Marx, the emergence of a fundamental division of labor exists dialectically with the division of all land into many lands, that is from the natural state to privately owned and controlled fragments of that whole land. It is
through this process that geographic space becomes fragmented, as individuals, groups, and the state come to own—possess—areas of land within the system and the land itself can become at one and the same time a commodity, an instrument of labor, and a means of production. Of course, importantly, only a minority among the population own landed property while most end up working on that land, labor thus divided according to ownership and the form of production pursued by individual landowners. It is within this basic but crucial set of historical processes that landscapes develop and emerge. Landscapes are regularly central aspects of the dialectical and contradictory tendencies that drive processes under the capitalist mode of production and its interdependent modes of production (Delle 1999; Roseberry 2002).

The spaces of capitalism and articulating modes of production become key aspects of political economy. Within rural and agrarian areas, much of the food supply and other resources for the system are produced to supply non-agrarian areas. Meanwhile, industrial production—at the large scale—occurs typically within urban or suburban contexts and capital flows toward, and accumulates in, urban and other non-agrarian but developed areas. But, how can industry produce the historically realized field of commodities, many of which cannot be made from materials produced in agrarian contexts or urban environments? It is here that we must recognize another aspect of the capitalist landscape, the extractive sectors. These are the areas, historically quite varied, where the raw materials for production of commodities and wealth are exploited and brought into the realm of final commodity production (often an urban process but by no means always so; see Harvey 2001).
While the more simple urban/agrarian landscape dichotomy is present in nascent capitalism (because of its origins in the preceding Feudal mode of production), the imperative of capitalism—capital accumulation—quickly drives its growth, intensification and expansion (Mandel 1968:95-131; Marx 1989:125-126). Thus, historically the expansion of capitalism across space led to a far more complex fragmentation and division of land and thus of labor. Indeed, for the urban/agrarian landscape dialectic to exist exploitable resources had to be obtained; for mature industrial capitalism to emerge, vast areas of new land had to be subsumed within the system (even if peripheral) in order to extract the raw materials of commodity production. Furthermore, transportation systems had to be constructed across the landscape to link the refining and consumption areas with the extractivist and raw production sectors (see Harvey 2001). Once established, even in nascent form (e.g., towns), urban production areas then act as magnets for later capital, productive means, and markets. This leads in many contexts to exponential concentrations of accumulated capital helping to foster the growth of those urban nodes. And as should be clear, transportation systems connect refining centers and direct extractivist sectors (Harvey 2001; Marx 1967a:145-155).

Extractivism under historical capitalism and its articulating modes of production first calls to mind historical expansion and the exploitation of raw materials and resources in now-peripheral and colonized areas (Fisher 2000; Luxemburg 1968; Wallerstein 1993:9). Thus, the raw materials extracted in peripheral areas were transported back to semi-peripheral and core areas of the capitalist mode of production for refinement and final production of finished
commodities. Through the same process, goods were introduced into peripheral extractivist zones as those new markets for commodities developed (see Harvey 2001:237-266). Within the “maelstrom of extractivism” (after Fisher 200:151-173), of course, indigenous people were often forced to do the labor and rudimentary refinements while their control over land and resources was weakened or eliminated; the creation of peripheral extractivist zones and the subsuming of indigenous modes of production caused irreparable transformation of all aspects of life among the natives of colonized areas (Stern 1981; Taussig 1980:199-203; Wolf 1982:310-353).

Extractivist processes are ongoing in the capitalist mode of production and are not simply limited to peripheral areas of the system or to colonial or imperialist processes alone. Rather, extractive processes continued to persist in core and developed areas depending on the type of resource in question. For example, some mines might have lasted for a few years (Sayers 2001) while others might have lasted indefinitely; forests were replanted and harvesting occurred in regular cycles; and, ocean and lake plants and animals were perpetually “harvested” until areas were burned out or environments were degraded to the point of being no longer life sustaining. But, the overall issue here is that extractivist areas can be located within the developed areas of urban, suburban, and agrarian regions and impact the political economy as well as social significances of those landscapes.

Of some significance for this study is the fact that within the otherwise well-developed areas of capitalism—areas well within the more chaotic and unevenly developing edges of the system—certain pockets and nodes of land and geographic space are recalcitrant to the efficient exploitation of their resources given the
technologies available, the systems of transportation that have been established, and the means of labor available to would-be exploiters. With the transformation of simple geography into the landscapes of capitalism, these areas of land that prove difficult for exploitation and extractivist efforts emerge as remote landscapes. As the Great Dismal Swamp is suggested to represent this process, in the following this process will be described in more detail.

The Formation and Roles of Remote Landscapes

The "edges" or boundaries of the expanding colonialist system were historically unevenly developed, established, and defined at any given time as a result of several potential factors, including indigenous resistance to encroachment, natural obstacles that prevented expansion in some areas, warfare, and generally varying flows of capital, equipment, and labor (see Harvey 2000, pp. 73-94; Roseberry 2002). David Harvey (2000:377) provides a nice clear statement on the matter:

[T]he globe has never been an even playing-field upon which capital accumulation could play out its destiny. It was, and continues to be, and intensely variegated surface, ecologically, politically, socially, and culturally differentiated. Flows of capital found some terrains easier to occupy than others in different phases of development. And, in the encounter with the capitalist world market, some social formations adapted to aggressively insert themselves into capitalistic forms of market exchange while others did not, for a wide range of reasons and with consummately important effects.

Interestingly, there were also sectors of areas within the developed and intensifying system—land already claimed and settled under the capitalist order—that could not be exploited, also for a variety of reasons that could relate to the recalcitrance of a given area, the lack of a market for the potential resources of an area, lack of local
settlement and investment, and needs for more cost-effective technologies. Regardless of the causes, though, these landscapes emerged as spatially and culturally remote and economically useless areas from the capitalist perspective (e.g., swamp and wetland areas, mountainous regions, etc.). These areas, which would have lasted as such as long as the preventative conditions persisted, can be seen as lacunae in the productive landscape. In short, the fractionary logic of expansionist capitalism, combined with uneven distributions of technological resources, transportations systems, and labor, created spatial nodes of remoteness that stood in increasingly stark contrast with developed spaces within its domain (from Sayers et al. 2007).

Thus, we see that while the trichotomy between urban, extractivist and agrarian development points to a key aspect of landscape development under capitalism, it does not take into account specific areas that emerged as undeveloped or underdeveloped landscapes within the system. These landscapes, while often seeming to be remote "remnants" of what once was, are in reality redefined by the people living under the modern capitalistic system as these landscapes stand in contrast to developed places. In other words, remote landscapes do not stand apart or in isolation from developed landscapes but are interpreted, ascribed economic and ideational meanings, and stand in developed areas as cultural landscapes that for all practical purposes are marginal and liminal. Thus, swamps, mountains, marshes, deserts and other kinds of natural landscapes that withstood the initial developmental efforts of capitalistic landowners, become landscapes of the natural, the unknown, wastelands, and later, places to save from the encroachments of capitalism (e.g., national parks, nature conservancies, etc.). But more typically, remote landscapes
eventually succumb to the exploitation of capitalists as new technologies, more capital, and larger labor forces become available to transform landscapes into economically exploitable and profitable private properties.

What is rather interesting from all this is the fact that these isolated, fragmented, undeveloped landscapes become one kind of landscape haven for outcasts, rebels, and alternative community formations (other kinds of landscapes, like cities, can also become such havens). As the developing world around remote landscapes invests them with meanings (e.g., spaces to fear) and marginalizes them—such as the old forests of England and the crannoghs of Ireland—outcasts capitalize on these kinds of cultural interpretations of remoteness and find some safety and means of subsistence through them (O'Sullivan 2001). Alternative settlements and uses of remote landscapes are just as much a part of the development of the general capitalist system as any other type or form of community, resource exploitation system, and relational system to land.

In general, then we are pointing to a general and heuristically understood landscape development pattern where agrarian, extractivist, urban, and non-developed remote landscapes all emerge within the spatial world of the modern historical global political economy. In each case the political economy of land use, landscape development, labor exploitation, and social formation varied extensively. However, certain landscapes could not be developed and these remote undeveloped landscapes often provided dissidents, alienated and exploited people, and resistant communities with the means of living alternative lives within the spatial limits of the modern political economy at a given point in time. In the remainder of this chapter, we will
explore a few key concepts that will help us to strongly situate and interpret the social history of the Great Dismal Swamp.

Diaspora, Exile and Alienation

Any research that centers on historical capitalism must recognize the fact that an incredible amount of the labor was expended in its development. Most of these laborers were people who were forced to leave their traditional homelands, either by force or by economic and social necessity, and work within the constraints imposed by the expanding CMP. Such groups of course include (but are not limited to) Africans and people of African descent, indigenous Americans who were pushed off of traditional lands, and Europeans who were forced at some level to leave there homelands. In other words, diasporas were central, not peripheral, to the expansion of the CMP (various studies, while not specifically making this point of the centrality of diasporas, provide the historical information necessary to make that assertion; see, for example, Pagden 1982; Sider 1987; Wolf 1982).

Diasporas “are created when people either leave their original homelands voluntarily, or are forced out by circumstances they do not control” (Tolbert 2001, p.viii). By this definition, diaspora is a broad concept that could and does include many, many groups of people over the past several millennia. Within the modern historical era, the general eviction of indigenous Americans from their land—economically, physically, and culturally—through colonial and capitalist expansion can be construed as a diaspora(s). And the kidnapping and forced and coerced
transplantation of Africans from their traditional lands and countries for captive enslavement were main elements of the African Diaspora. But, the simple recognition of forced human dispersals only takes historical analysis to a certain limited point.

It is the understanding here that the concept of exile can be melded with the concept of diaspora to help generate a more sophisticated and potentially analytically useful construct by highlighting the psychosocial impacts of diasporas and the influence of alienation on diasporan praxis (Sayers 2006a,b; Sayers et al. 2007). For Edward Said, exile is not only a material and political economic process or phenomenon but it also has existential and identificatory connotations. It is true that there are individual and political exiles but for Said equally significant exilic groups generally fostered or fomented by the state or other social groups (Sayers 2006a). It is a decidedly crucial aspect of the formation of cultural and individual identities within such groups as well as group or individual notions of place in the world and one’s relation to it.

Due to the often-irrevocable transformations of people’s personal and memorial connections with space, place, kin and culture, the exilic condition results in consistent experiential ambiguities. It is a state of uprootedness, as exiles are relocated to alien social and physical worlds and they become to varying degrees disconnected with their onetime familiar places and communities (Dawson and Johnson 2001). According to Said,

Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted. And while it is true that literature and history contain heroic, romantic, glorious, even
triumphant episodes in an exile’s life, these are no more than efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement. The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever. (Said 1990:357).

The exilic condition is a compulsory alienation and estrangement, as exiles must try to negotiate the bewildering contours of a world thrust upon them while at the same time trying to identify with a personal and perhaps collective past that is quite removed in space and time. But people’s identity, senses of self, and senses of being can transcend and persist despite the vagaries of experience, including exile (Boyarin and Boyarin 1995:314-317). Thus exile does not at all totally negate and recreate those aspects of selves. Pre-exilic senses of self, being and place in the world are maintained and even actively cultivated (Bender 2001). But exile would likely attenuate senses of self and being, fragment identities and set the stage for the formation of novel-synthetic group and individual identities, cultural systems and ideological ties (e.g., hybridization and creolization).

To repeat, the Western Hemisphere, bears the historical imprint of African and indigenous exile. Africans were enslaved and in the process were most cruelly and terroristically removed from the places, people, and landscapes of their nativity and rootedness. Even after initial exilic dispersals from east to west, later generations of African descendants were not saved from the impacts of exile. Genealogical, identificatory, and cultural connections to Africa had to be memorialized and retained through indirect but significant means (e.g., memories, traditions, customs). More directly, those of African descent born in the western hemisphere were constantly transplanted from the places of their birth, tearing families apart and severely
impacting the connections enslaved people made to local spaces, places and people (Frazier 2001, pp.3-22; Kulikoff 1992). Similarly, Native Americans were forced from their former community spaces and their binds to place were often irrevocably transformed and permutated. In these general conditions, tribes and other social groups re-formed and warfare among indigenous groups was common due to the abrupt mixing of people from various backgrounds, colonial exploitation, and struggles over land.

As a final point regarding exile, we can look to Sartre (1974, p.35) who suggests that, “…the individual interiorizes his social determinations: he [or she] interiorizes the relations of production, the family of his [or her] childhood, the historical past, the contemporary institutions…” Individuals then praxeologically “re-exteriorize” interiorized experiences and action, as filtered and interpreted through the person’s identificatory framework, which become social action or activity (Sartre 1974, p.35). As exile is by our understanding an interiorized alienating and impinging psychosocial condition that would impact the fundamental existential bearings of individuals, the re-exteriorized praxis of exiles could appear as resistance, defiance and postures of counter-exile. Resistance and defiance are thus a tangible social and political phenomena that can erupt out of diasporan exile, a most noted form of alienation under historical capitalism. But this dovetailing of the notion of exile and alienation must be explored more fully.

Marx, no doubt, is most often associated with the general concept of alienation (Schmitt 1994:1), although numerous other philosophers, writers, and scholars, such as Sartre (1956; 1974), and Heidegger (1962) have also developed their
own understandings of the concept (in Sartre’s case, he explored alienation in direct
dialogue with Marx; see Lawler 1976; in general, see Churchich 1990:25-51;
Pappenheim 1959). Following a number of scholars, alienation, rather than being
generally flawed conception in the early Marx (see Israel 1971; Mills 1956:220-238,
for example), is a fundamental construct in Marx’s mature framework of the
existential conditions that emerge in humans in the modern capitalistic system (John
1976; Meszaros 1971; Singer 1980; Schwalbe 1986). According to Ollman
(1973:131), “The theory of alienation is the intellectual construct in which Marx
displays the devastating effect of capitalist production on human beings, on their
physical and mental states and on the social processes of which they are a part”. In
fact, it would well nigh be impossible to adequately understand the full significance
of Marx’s analysis of the capitalist mode of production if one ignores or downplays
the significance of the concept of alienation as he describes, defines, and positions it
within his analysis. Singer (1980:34) suggests this primacy of alienation in Marx’s
thinking, specifically regarding historical understanding of the capitalist mode of
production (and other modes of production, such as the feudal mode):

...Marx’s theory of history is a vision of human beings in a state of alienation.
Human beings cannot be free if they are subject to forces that determine their
thoughts, their ideas, their very nature as human beings. The materialist
conception of history tells us that human beings are totally subject to forces
they do not understand and cannot control. Moreover, the materialist
conception of history tells us that these forces are not supernatural tyrants, for
ever above and beyond human control, but the productive powers of human
beings themselves. Human productive powers, instead of serving human
beings, appear to them as alien and hostile forces. The description of this state
of alienation is the materialist conception of history.
As Meszaros says, to make the point in a laconic manner, alienation is "the basic idea of the Marxian system (1971:93, emphasis in original).

For Marx, alienation and estrangement were twin aspects of the dialectical relation of human beings to CMP industry or productive activity, and, the natural environment that the CMP exploits. In other words, alienation emerges amidst a constant triadic dialectic between human beings/elves, their productive activity and products (division of labor, commodity production, commodities, etc.) and the natural environment (Meszaros 1971:103-104).

For Marx, alienation results from the products of people's activities being taken away from them through contingent social relations of production (Marx 1988:69-84). According to Schwalbe (1986:11), "In Marx’s view, labor is alienated when the social relations of production deny control over the means and ends of production to those whose labor actually transforms the material world.” As a wage-laborer in the capitalist mode of production the person becomes “that most wretched of commodities” (Marx 1988:69), and the creative and psychosocial ties that direct producers have with the product of their labor are cleaved. Again, workers receive their wages for making commodities and the possessing class appropriates the creations.

So, labor-power becomes a commodity. According to Marx (1935:20-21, emphasis in original), "What [wage-laborers] really sell is their labor-power. This labor-power the capitalist buys for a day, week, a month, etc. And having bought it, he uses it by making the laborer work during a stipulated period of time. Labor-power is, therefore, as much a commodity as sugar, neither more nor less, only they measure
the former by the clock, the latter by the scales....laborers exchange their own commodity for their employers’ commodity, labor-power for money…” This fundamental aspect of capitalistic political economies is then responsible for the fact that the products of labor-power as commodities produced for wages or similar remunerations are not owned or controlled by laborers but rather by employers or capitalists. This leaves the worker in a hostile state toward the labor process and its products (i.e., the commodities they produce; Marx 1988:79-80). Workers develop a mystified consciousness of this process and do not perceive the social nature of production and products of labor. Labor and product become fetishized, taking on false appearances of independent existence (e.g., independent of the social embeddedness of all aspects of production) and the laborer remains mystified (Axelos 1976). It is critical to understand that for Marx labor, ideally, is how human beings are fully human, maintaining identities, sense of historical significance, and creative abilities. Under capitalism, that key connection between producer and product is eliminated (Marx 1935, especially The Relation of Wage-Labor to Capital, pp. 37-42) and the resulting alienation from labor, the workplace, the economic and social systems in which one is located, and the self is fundamentally existentially debilitating (John 1976; Meszaros 1970).

The primary triadic locus of the perpetuation of alienation discussed above means that alienation is a systemic phenomenon. Alienation is not without its variations and secondary causes (the state, ideologies, religion) but these sources of alienation are generative through the dialectical distancing of the individual from nature, productive activities and products, and society and self. In treading where
Marx did not go, we can also add that race-based (McGary 1994:132-146) and misogyny-based ideologies (Moody 1994:57-70), and, social relations, namely oppressor/oppressed relations, also help create alienation through multiple oppressions. In this case,

Here emerges a...profound sense of alienation...a deep cleavage in one’s very self; the hostility of the dominant opinions and dominant groups in the society becomes one’s own and thus one’s own self becomes loathsome or defective or insignificant to oneself....one is deprived of a profound and important ability; to take part in defining who one is....an alien identity is imposed from the outside (Schmitt 1994:5-6).

There are thus shades of W.E.B. DuBois’ (1990:8) famous discussion of “Double Consciousness”, specifically pertaining in this case to African-Americans:

...the Negro is...born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world-a world with no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, the sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness-an American, a Negro; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

For Dubois, African Americans are alienated from themselves—their true selves—because of the historically rooted racism and multiple political-economic and social oppressions into which they are born.

By seeing a connection between alienation and political economy and oppressive systemic power relationships, we also are poised to avoid the trap of seeing alienation as a sort of universal, unchanging, psychological constant in the human condition (Bernstein 1971). In my general formulation, alienation, while perhaps being present consistently in the modern historical political economy, is subject to transformation as a contingent manifestation of a systemic proclivity
towards human fragmentation on several levels. Furthermore, alienation can be manifested uniquely through vagaries of identity formation processes and power relations in localized historical social and labor systems.

If exilic diasporas were responsible for, ultimately, much of the labor and labor-power expended in the expansion and intensification of the modern capitalist system, then we might consider how important past labor systems would have been to exiles. In many cases, exiles were forced into entirely different, and likely more exploitative, labor systems than they knew prior to exile, their identities as laborers redefined, even invented, under exile, and, the products of their labor and means of production taken from them or denied them. In other cases, exiles were born in alienating and exploitative labor systems (later generations of enslaved African-Americans), where their status as laborers was critical to their social status and identity and they were often forcibly exiled (e.g., sold) to new locales because of the material conditions of enslavement. Thus, along with the other impacts of exile discussed above, a key aspect of the exilic condition may be that it totally immerses people into alien and alienating labor systems, lives of estrangement, and exploitative conditions. And here, we can see where exilic alienation is relevant to a Marxian conception of historical alienation and where we might be able to expand on the existential impacts of exile through a Marxian framework. If exile is intimately connected with labor systems, then, it is likely also connected with alienation that is grounded in historical material conditions as discussed by Marx.

In this chapter I have discussed in some detail the key concepts and ideas that have provided the interpretive framework for the GDSLS. I explored how
communities form and to an extent what ideological and political-economic roles they can have under capitalism. I also examined the political-economic importance of landscapes and geographic spaces, highlighting the significance of remote landscapes in historical processes of landscape development. The political economy of resource extractivist and transportation systems under capitalism and its related systems was also examined. It was suggested that there are discernible connections between those concepts or historical processes and Diaspora, exile, and alienation. I suggested that the latter three concepts are intimately and dialectically connected with the emergence of modern exploitative divisions of labor, the global processes of the mobilization of labor, and the privatization of property. Each of these concepts and the political-economic perspective that ties them together will be seen to have significance in the remaining analysis and interpretation. Archaeological data, interpreted in combination with documentary information through this political-economic perspective, will provide us with novel insights into several significant aspects of the Diasporic political economy of the Pre-Civil War Great Dismal Swamp, including, for example, the kinds of structurated communities that emerged, the intercommunity material culture exchange and consumption systems that developed, and the ways that cultural landscapes were created and reflected community structuration.
CHAPTER III

SCALING THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL-ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE GREAT DISMAL SWAMP

In this chapter, I will present a discussion of multiple scales of historical political-economic processes that are directly significant in our understanding the very local history of the Diasporan world of the Great Dismal Swamp. Thus, colonialist expansion throughout the Western Hemisphere and the Tidewater region is discussed with a focus on the impacts of those processes, including exile, on Native American tribes and political economies. I then discuss the rise of chattel slavery, again from a hemispheric perspective, with focuses on the impacts of exile and the relation of Diasporic exile to defiance and resistance practices among the enslaved. Thus, marronage is discussed in detail, as are other forms of resistance. I then move to a local perspective and focus on the social and political-economic history of the Dismal. I explore the extant documentary record on outside world economic encroachments into the swamp as well as the record for Diasporans in the swamp. While this is not the only chapter in which documentary information is discussed, it presents the main sources that we have on the social groups that inhabited the swamp.
Historical Colonialist and Capitalist Trajectories in the Chesapeake and Tidewater

Any framework that centers on historical capitalism must underscore the fact that people who left their traditional homelands, either by force or by economic and social necessity, collectively performed an incredible amount of labor that was fundamental to the system. These people transplanted to work within the expansionist and intensifying system and settled in unfamiliar lands. As was indicated earlier, such exilic groups of course included (but were not limited to) Africans and people of African descent as well as indigenous Americans who were pushed off of traditional lands.

Colonial Expansion, 1630-1680

In the case of the Americas, early in the period of capitalist expansion, aside from Europeans, indigenous Americans were forced to labor in conditions of slavery or other similar forms of coerced labor (Nash 1982:64-65; Wolf 1982:129-157). As Pagden discusses (1992:27-56), initially the Spanish and Portuguese crowns had their share of reservations regarding the enslavement of indigenous Americans throughout the colonies, largely rooted in the politics and proprieties of enslaving people who could be construed as vassals and thus, at some level, citizens of empire. However, it was not long before the arguments of Aristotle, St. Augustine and Aquinas among others were marshaled in order to justify the enslavement of indigenous Americans based on their perceived cultural, physical, and rational deficiencies; they were
Aquinas' "animated instruments of service" (quoted in Pagden 1992:47) and barbarians whose natural Aristotelian place in the God's earthly realm was as laborers. Thus it was that, armed with religious and learned ideologies of the natural condition of types of humans and with no shortage of ulterior fuel coming from the capitalist expansionist juggernaut, Europeans attempted to subjugate indigenous Americans through well known exploitative and brutal labor regimes (Jennings 1976; Nash 1982; Wolf 1982).

In North America, the pattern of enslavement and military usurpation of indigenous lands followed where the Spaniards went (the Portuguese did not extend their empire into North America). The settlement region of the Spaniards included Florida, the coastal areas of the Gulf of America, and then most of the entire West as far north as southern Manitoba, the Dakotas, and southern Oregon (see Wolf 1982:129-157). The Spanish did not, however, manage to acquire a firm foothold in the Atlantic coastal area north of Florida and west to roughly the Mississippi. Rather, in this vast area, colonial encroachment and usurpation was initiated and enacted much later (after ca. 1607) by the Dutch, French and English. The colonial projects set in motion by these empires took on a different character than the Spanish and, initially, saw only relatively small groups of colonials. As a result of several factors (Nash 1982:47-48), in eastern North America, particularly the Chesapeake, early colonial enslavement of indigenous Americans was not a central part of the political economy but the ideological justification of viewing indigenous Americans as inferior, barbaric peoples certainly predominated shortly after the settlement of Jamestown in 1607 (Nash 1982). As a result, colonial imperatives of land
acquisition, tobacco growing, and fur trading guided settlers to adopt indigenous land
usurpation strategies and practices that were quite successful. After around 1622 in
the Chesapeake, “...[Native American] tribes became the subject not of assimilative
policies [as with Spanish and Portuguese colonization] but apartheid plans which
called for separation or removal. In almost perfect reversal of Spanish Indian policy,
the English in Virginia after 1622 worked to keep the two cultures apart” (Nash

Native American Exilic Diasporas and Defiance

Despite the differences in colonial policies regarding indigenous claims to
land and civil rights, there can be no doubt that the long centuries of warfare,
enslavement, apartheid, land acquisition, and a host of other processes led to
indigenous diasporas throughout the hemisphere. In the Chesapeake and Mid­
Atlantic more broadly, indigenous diasporas forever altered traditional cultural and
political-economic systems. Culturally differentiated groups were transformed and
traditional lifeways strained during this long process and new or novel social
formations, tribes, and communities emerged. Inherent to this process was the
vacillation of land ownership or occupation as refugee diasporans were pushed into
territories previously occupied by other indigenous tribes or into areas that no groups
had previously found suitable for inhabitation. And, in the process of colonization
that sparked indigenous diasporas, European colonists instigated a distinct but equally
brutal Diaspora that centered on the involuntary transplantation millions of Africans into the Western Hemisphere to labor and live on the newly seized lands.

The Rise and Intensification of Chattel Slavery, 1680-1860

During the period of the chattel slave trade in the western hemisphere, between 10 and 20 million individuals were exiled to the Americas and this figure does not include descendants (Inikori and Engerman 1992:5-6; Tolbert 2001:vi). African Diasporic exile was a result of the demand for constant labor throughout the hemisphere (Austen and Smith 1992; Genovese 1974). As geographic expansion occurred (discussed above), Africans were forcibly uprooted from homelands and immersed in alien new worlds in which they struggled to negotiate the perils, racism and terrors of chattel captivity.

Slavery was a complex system of production within the expanding capitalist mode of production in which African and African-descended laborers were the direct producers of commodities that were consumed locally, nationally, and internationally (Inikori and Engerman 1992; Mintz 1985). Throughout this process and across the vast landscape of chattel slavery, enslaved laborers experienced a variety of working conditions depending on location and time-period (see Carr and Walsh 1988; Turner 1995). For example, in the American South it has been estimated that most enslaved African-Americans worked on small farms, while large gang-labor systems occurred generally on the plantations of the wealthier elite classes (and more often in the Deep South; Morgan 1988,1998). Also, a small but significant number of enslaved
African-Americans worked in industrial settings in towns and urban areas (Singleton 1999; Wade 1964).

The level and intensity of exploitation that enslaved individuals experienced also seems to have been in part related to the commodity form that they produced or helped to produce (Kulikoff 1977). For example, sugar production was the most grueling and exploitative production system, according to some scholars (McDonald 1993; Mintz 1985). This was a result of several factors, including, highly abusive gang labor systems, highly organized and efficient production methods, and the extreme southern locations (e.g., the Caribbean and Louisiana) of most sugar-producing plantations.

The differences in the broader political economy of the slave system led to varying demographic densities of enslaved laborers throughout the western hemisphere. Thus, the majority of enslaved Africans were forcibly transplanted to the Caribbean, Central and Southern America (94%) while a small number (6%) were brought to the colonies and later states of North America (Fogel and Engerman 1974:14); the period of the greatest level of transplantation to the western hemisphere was between 1701 and 1810 (Fogel and Engerman 1974:16). Within the North American slavery region, there was significant demographic variation as well. Prior to around 1790, most enslaved Africans were brought to Maryland and Virginia (ca. 2/3s of all transplanted individuals), but, with a dramatic rise in international demands for cotton, after that time till the Civil War, Virginia and Maryland sold some 835,000 enslaved individuals to locations in the Deep South and to the West where cotton could be cultivated far more successfully (Fogel and Engerman 1974:44-47).
Also, a significant factor in this major demographic exodus from the Chesapeake was an intensification in the development of transportation systems throughout the South, most notably in the forms of railroads and steamships that allowed access to remote and viable acreage for commercial exploitation (Fogel and Engerman 1974:44; see also Morgan 1998 for a general discussion of such trends in the slave system of the Chesapeake).

As a final point regarding general aspects of the slave system within the expanding capitalist mode of production and its articulating slavery mode of production, it is relatively well established that enslaved Africans used resistance practices to establish contracts and gain cash rewards or what could be construed as wages (Frey 1995; Turner 1995:1-30; Walsh 1995; Wood 1995). In another way, the static image of the chattel worker is undermined to some degree by an understanding that “chattel” status was negotiable to a limit, and that some laborers can be interpreted as occupying an analytical space somewhere “between slave labor and free labor” (Bolland 1995:123-147). In these cases, enslaved (owned) laborers found local conditions in which their labor-power as a commodity was purchased by entrepreneurs and capitalists. Thus, while the general contours of the slavery system predictably indicate that slave labor was the predominant productive force, there were variations on that general standard in which enslaved people found themselves working as wage-laborers or quasi-wage-laborers (e.g., scenarios in which an enslaved worker was paid cash or credit for work beyond a set minimum level of production of a given product or commodity).
African Exilic Diasporas and Defiance

One of the main emphases in historiography and historical archaeology throughout the last several decades has been African-American resistant reactions, actions, and cultural developments during the slavery era (Aptheker 1939; Bogger 1982; Breen and Innes 1980; Frey 1991; Genovese 1979; Morgan 1998; Mullins 1972; Orser 2001; Singleton 1999). And while there may be a tendency in academia to romanticize the vast array of resistances to slavery, there can be no doubt that daily recalcitrance was a significant factor in the shaping of the histories of the slavery system as well as coeval wage-labor systems. The effect of academic research on the broad and complex topic of resistance among enslaved African-Americans has been to demonstrate its universality within the slavery system (Blakey and LaRoche 1997; Genovese 1974, 1979; Mullin 1972; Perry and Blakey 1999).

Permanent maroon colonies were present, in various forms, everywhere in the Western Hemisphere where slavery systems were present (e.g., Agorsah 1994; Aptheker 1939; Frey 1991; Genovese 1974; Grant 2002; Hall 1992; Morgan 1998; Price 1979, 1983; Sayers 1999, 2005; Schweninger 2002; Weik 1997, 2004). While most reasonably documented maroon colonies and states (i.e., Palmares, Brazil; Kent 1979) existed in the circum-Caribbean, it is quite apparent that maroon colonies were not rare in the United States. Numerous Southern states in which slavery thrived were home to maroon colonies although slaveholding authorities zealously attacked many such resistance settlements via military reprisals (Hall 1992; Morgan 1998). In any case, according to Aptheker (1939) at least fifty colonies existed in the US
throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the Carolinas, Georgia, Louisiana, Alabama, Florida, and of course Virginia. Most colonies of maroons within the slavery system of the US developed in swamps, bayous, backwaters, and in other remote locations, as was the case with the incredibly vast bayous and swamps surrounding New Orleans that were heavily populated by maroons throughout the 18th and 19th centuries (Hall 1992). Large communities also developed in swamps along the Savannah River in South Carolina (Frey 1991). Finally, large communities developed in Alabama (Aptheker 1939). All of these colonies were eventually attacked and forcibly disbanded through military efforts (see Aptheker 1939; Hall 1992; Morgan 1998).

Resistance was a necessary and chronic aspect of enslavement and that fugitivism, or *marronage* (*marronage*), was a very significant avenue of overt resistance throughout the Western Hemisphere (see Price 1979; Weik 1997, 2004). However, *marronage* did take two major forms (Sayers 2004). First, there was extralimital marronage, the flight to locales outside the slavery system to areas in non-slavery systems. For example, the flight of thousands of enslaved persons to Spanish Florida prior the 1820s when slavery was adopted in the region (Giddings 1858), the flight of African-Americans to areas and regions that were still occupied by Native Americans (see Johnston 1970:269-292), and transplantation to non-slavery states and Canada (i.e., the Underground Railroad Blockson 1984) would fall in this general category.

The second form, intralimital marronage, was flight to remote locales within slavery systems (Sayers 2004). This form of marronage was commonplace and
involved untold numbers of African-Americans (Aptheker 1939; Weik 1997). This type of *marronage* took many forms and the most common was likely short-term marooning (*petit marronage*; Price 1979) to woods, swamps, and mountains by individuals and small groups who eventually returned to the plantations, farms, and houses from which they fled (see Mullins 1972). From this form of marooning we can slide to the other end of the continuum where permanent flight (*grand marronage*; Price 1979), while less common among those who stayed within the slavery system, was also a persistent resistant response to enslavement (Hall 1992).

Archaeologists have done remarkable work at maroon sites throughout the world over the past few decades but overall it would seem that much more work needs to be done in general. Palmares has been admirably explored and interpreted by archaeologists throughout the past decade (Allen 2001; Funari 1999, 2007; Orser 1996; Orser and Funari 2001). Kofi Agorsah has done much groundbreaking work in his explorations of maroon settlements and sites in Jamaica, including Old Accompong Town, the Seaman's Valley Site, and Nanny Town (Agorsah 1994, 2007). Norton and Espenshade (2007) have begun work in locating sites at Maroon Ridge on St. Croix and developing models to assist in site discovery. Most maroon-related archaeology that has been done in the US has occurred in Florida, at sites such as Fort Mosé (that while not a maroon site technically, is historically related to marronage in the colony; Deagan and McMahon 1995; Deagan and Landers 1999) and Pilaklikaha (Weik 2002, 2004, 2007). Such archaeology has been quite significant and has provided many insights in cultural contacts and ethnogenesis that documents may have not allowed for. Beyond Florida, very little work at maroon
sites has been done in the US (as can be seen from the literature reviews provided in, Weik 1997; Leone, et al 2005). Elaine Nichols' (1988) pioneering work at a site formerly in the Great Dismal Swamp has already been mentioned as have essays previously published for this project. If we include Underground Railroad studies in our group of maroon projects in archaeology, then we also must recognize the interesting and informative work of Armstrong and Wurst (2003) at an escape tunnel in which they recorded carved faces in the clay walls, likely done by maroons during their use of the tunnel. Also, Campbell and Nassaney's (2002) work at Ramptown in southwest Michigan also provided material evidence of extralimital marronage, according to my model, and basic community dynamics.

All of these studies have in common a most fundamental agreement that marronage represents a dramatic form of resistance to slavery, that it was a central historical process of the African Diaspora, and that archaeological methods and materials must be used to better understand the global process of resistance that was so generally under-recorded in historical documents. I follow these perspectives and acknowledge that this previous work laid the groundwork for many aspects of my thinking. But what is sorely missing from archaeological work is the recognition that marronage occurred in a great variety of contexts and that archaeological landscape and artifact variation models are a significant means of using archaeological perspectives to expand our knowledge of the variety and similarities of marronage across the globe and its political-economic significance in modern history (see Sayers n.d., under review, for elaboration on these ideas). This study, based in part on
locating sites that can be associated with Tidewater marronage, does develop such models and demonstrates their potential utility for other researchers along such lines.

When maroon communities proper are conceptually aligned with less dramatic, but equally important, forms of marronage (e.g., petit marronage), as well as the itinerant processes of the Underground Railroad (see Buckmaster 1993[1941]), the vision of the African American past transforms rather starkly (see Sayers 2005). We can begin to see temporary and permanent marronage throughout the states or the slavery system as being processually and systemically interdependent with the small and large African-American communities that developed within non-slave labor systems of the Northern, Midwestern, and several Western states. These processes were systemically related to the African-American communities that developed within Canada as a result of flight from the US and/or forced relocation, such as was the case with the maroon colony of Nova Scotia (Grant 2002). The vision, then, is of a complex and dialectical system of resistance that impacted the already transforming political economies of North America in the antebellum era (Sayers 1999, 2003a). An anthropological perspective forces the researcher to recognize the obvious multiscalar significance of these communities and individuals in the macro-processes of enslaved resistance in general and, ultimately, in African-American cultural development at local and regional scales (e.g., Price 1983; Sayers 2005).
Micro-Scalar Historical Trajectories in the Great Dismal Swamp Region

The Great Dismal Swamp is located in the Tidewater, in southeastern Virginia and northeastern North Carolina. The Suffolk Scarp, a Pleistocene Atlantic shoreline, bounds the swamp to the west. To the east, the Fentress Rise, which is comprised of glacial and marine sediments, supplies a natural barrier. Both the Suffolk Scarp and the Fentress Rise are north-to-south running barriers. The Great Dismal Swamp extends north to a point about 11 km south of the James River/Chesapeake Bay confluence and it extends south to within 22 km of Albemarle Sound (Whitehead and Oaks 1979:25). It has been suggested, based on geological and palynological data, that the original extent of the swamp within these natural boundaries was ca. 2,000 square miles (Shaler 1890:318), by ca. 1800 it was reduced to half that size (Olmsted 1996), and by the 1920s-30s it had been reduced to ca. 700 square miles (Oaks and Whitehead 1979:3-4). Currently, the swamp is comprised of around 190 square miles, not all of which is part of the National Wildlife Refuge.

In the heart of the Great Dismal Swamp is Lake Drummond, a shallow lake (generally 6 feet) that is 2.7 miles long (n-s) and 2.3 miles wide (e-w) located in Virginia approximately 5 miles east of the Suffolk Scarp. While the natural origins of the lake are a matter of some debate (see Whitehead and Oaks 1979), there is no doubt that it is a highly significant water formation that has impacted the general water flow in the swamp as well as erosional processes.
Resource Exploitation and Extractivist Efforts in the Great Dismal Swamp

The Dismal Swamp was approximately 2000 square miles in size prior to Contact and was not developed to any great degree until the 18th Century (Shaler 1890:318). After 1765, the swamp was progressively developed and drained (by 1900 it was ca. 1000-1500 square miles in size and 190 square miles in size at present; see Oaks and Whitehead 1979:2-3). Mercantilist and capitalist efforts to gain profits from this recalcitrant landscape and the cultivation of drained swampland by farmers over that span help explain that steady shrinkage.

William Byrd II headed the survey that established the colonial boundary between Virginia and North Carolina in 1728 and saw the Dismal Swamp as a landscape that amazing productive possibilities (Byrd 1927, 1929; Royster 1999). He envisioned wholesale draining of the swamp that would in turn provide lumber, shingles, and a sellable, cleared land to investors. While Byrd’s plan for development of the Swamp would eventually be somewhat realized, little development happened during his lifetime (Brown 1967).

It was not until later in the eighteenth century that speculating mercantilists took great interest in the potential of the Swamp for the uses suggested by Byrd (see Royster 1999). The *Adventurers to Drain the Great Dismal Swamp*, the first corporate effort at canal construction and was under the charge of George Washington, sought to make the Dismal Swamp a navigable waterway, mainly for timber extractive (Royster 1999); as a result Washington’s Ditch was constructed starting ca. 1763. By 1788, the Dismal Swamp Canal Company (DSCC) formed. It was the advent of this company that in a sense saw, finally, the financially well-
backed effort to realize William Byrd's suggestions of potential production from the swamp (Arnold 1969; Brown 1967). Another main incentive for the DSCC, aside from producing and extracting commodities from the swamp, was to connect central and eastern Virginia markets with southern producers and consumers as well as international markets through the creation of navigable waterways through the area (Blow 1807; DSCCR 1815-1865; Kirby 1995). This allowed American merchants and producers to avoid the hostile Atlantic coastal waters in their commercial exchanges as pirates and British warships posed serious threats.

The 1805 completion of the Dismal Swamp Canal through what was the center of the swamp at the time, perhaps more so than the other period canals, opened up the swamp to extensive commercialization and demonstrated to the investing world the promise of exploiting the morass (Wolf 2002:56-57). By the first quarter of the nineteenth century, several canal companies were formed as the Great Dismal Swamp was parceled out to these competing interests (Wolf 2002). The company that seems to have left the most documentation was the Dismal Swamp Canal Company (see Wolf 2002). However, the large Lebanon Company (see Stewart 1979), as well as many smaller concerns carved up the landscape of the Great Dismal for profit (see Wolf 2002:51). Extensive landscape modification, exploitation, and use proceeded through the nineteenth century. Drainage did open up land for agricultural pursuits as the swamp dwindled in size and arable land resulted from the process that was sold to small-landholders in more typical parcels (Olmsted 1996).

Dismal Swamp Canal Company (DSCC) records (Dismal Swamp Canal Company Papers, Collection A, B, C, D) and other collections allow for somewhat
more detailed insights into the programs and politics of the canal construction and commodity production in the swamp. Documents suggest that the company was essentially an investment group made up of numerous gentlemen subscribers and investors, no doubt from the higher echelons. Documents from the DSCC in 1791 and 1796 (Dismal Swamp Canal Company [DSCC], Collection A:2, 3-4), around the time that construction of the main Dismal Swamp Canal began, suggest that nearly two hundred individuals subscribed through share purchasing. It seems that this general format to corporate ownership obtained throughout the pre-Civil War period. For example, in a letter from the Tabb family (Letter, Adam Foster to Cynthia, 1847), it is noted that one family member is, “...one of the thirty gentlemen who own that part of the Dismal Swamp (about 30,000 [acres]) lying in Virginia. It is under the care of the agent and furnishes every year large quantities of cypress and cedar shingles; the annual dividend is about 10 or 12 per cent.”

Records indicate that as canals, such as Jericho Ditch, were opened and maintained, corporate aspirations of making the location a viable place of continued production and transportation were realized to a significant degree. For example, various reports in the 1830s and 1840s from the superintendent of work at the Swamp indicate that work was going well albeit always somewhat lagging as vagaries of weather and circumstance prevented schedules from being kept (see annual reports, DSCC Collection C, D). During these years, business was also significant enough to produce yearly reports of the commodities that were being transported, and thus tolled, through the canals (see also Kearney 1817). Although the process was problematic, the fact that representatives of the Company were also able to secure
loans from various banks and government groups to continue canal construction also
suggests a level of productivity and utility that satisfied investors (DSCC, Collection
B, C, D). By the end of the antebellum era, several canals were completed—such as
the Dismal Swamp Canal, Jericho Ditch, Cross Canal, Washington Ditch, and Feeder
Canal—and mercantile traffic was quite strong (DSCC Collection; Kearney 1817;

The canals were arteries of commercial boat traffic from the moment they
were excavated. Not only were goods and people transported through the canals as
part of the intracoastal waterway, but wood products from the swamp itself were
hauled out of the swamp to markets in Norfolk and North Carolina. Numerous
sources attest to the economic significance of the canal system. Cargo manifests from
various vessels that plied the canal waters from the Port of Suffolk indicate some of
the range of materials and provide a somewhat more personal glimpse into the goings
on along canals. George Dameron was the master of the sloop Ann which he took
through the canals on 29 January, 1814. He carried with him “a parcel of hay and
fodder”, “twenty barrels of tar”, “one bunch of fishing poles” and a barrel of ale
(Dameron, Manifest of Cargo, 1814). On 5 February 1814, Joseph Marvel of Indian
River and master of the schooner Polly and Nancy took 25 loads of firewood and a
“keg of tobacco” through the swamp (Marvel, Manifest of Cargo, 1814). The
Suffolkian William Sheldon, master of the sloop Rising Sun, carried with him 500
bushels of corn along with 30,000 “two feet” shingles as well as a few passengers and
their baggage on 14 March 1814 (Shelton, Manifest of Cargo, 1814). The schooner
Delight, piloted by one America Rogers who was also from Suffolk, carried 600
bushels of com and a “barrel of musk rat skins” on 16 April 1814 (Rogers, Manifest of Cargo, 1814). Now these vessels traveled through the swamp in a relatively short period of time and certainly do not represent all the boats that came through. In fact, Major James Kearney would report that during the few weeks it was open for navigation, the Dismal Swamp Canal alone saw over a million staves and six and a half million shingles shipped (Kearney 1817; see also Brown 1967:43); as he suggests (Kearney 1817:12) that these came from “the south and east of Lake Drummond” it would suggest that this reports only those wood products coming from DSCC landholdings. Kearney also reports that in that apparently short period of time, “16,703 bushels of Indian com, 2313 bushels of rice, 2133 hogshead of tobacco, 27622 barrels of fish, 3575 barrels of tar, 329 casks of turpentine spirits, 2475 bales of cotton, 119 barrels of black lead, 327 tons of iron, 181 tons of lead, and powder and shot” came through the toll booths along the Dismal Swamp Canal” (Kearney 1817:12).

On 2 January 1849, the Suffolk Intelligencer contained the following statement about the mercantile activities in the swamp: “There are a number of fine vessels of from 30 to 200 tons, belonging to our enterprising merchants, constantly plying between this place and Norfolk...loaded w[ith] the produce of the surrounding country viz: staves, naval stores, shingles, corn, peas, and a large amount of pine wood.” (Suffolk Intelligencer, 1849:1). Much of this traffic was, no doubt, related to the swamp and the travel afforded by its canals. Dismal Swamp Canal Company Records certainly support the idea that much commerce went through the swamp and centered on the products of the swamp once they were made truly operational (see
Table 1). In the annual inventories of tolled goods (e.g., tolls paid on goods at toll stations along the various canals), we see the variety of wood products, most of these likely coming from the swamp itself: mast timber, planks, pipe and barrel staves, and a variety of shingle types just for example. Also, much alcohol came through as well as foodstuffs and building materials (e.g., nails). It is clear that the canals operated for some 60-70 years, in a continuous process of expansion within the swamp as more canals and ditches were excavated, and were integral to regional, national, and international economies (see Brown 1967; Royster 1999). In fact, by the Civil War some 50 miles of canals had been excavated and utilized since Washington’s Ditch was first cut in the 1760s (Sayers, Burke and Henry 2007).

These canals represent a clearly unimaginable amount of work done by people (with the help of the occasional machine) in the most trying of circumstances. First there was the initial excavation of the main artery of a canal. This involved the removal of prodigious amounts of water saturated soil, sand, clay and muck done generally in standing water; canals were anywhere from 12 to 32 feet wide and 4-7 feet deep (see DSCC Collection, Collection C, Report to Public Works, 1819; Kearney 1819:7-9). Furthermore, canals were constantly in need of dredging, reconstruction, and widening as natural flow of water and organics built up and commercial activities increased. The soils that were excavated from the canal corridors proper were mounded up parallel to the canals and this also would have posed substantial difficulties for workers who had to heave heavy soils and muck well above their heads.
Table 1
Select Inventory of Tolled Goods Entering and Exiting the Dismal Swamp, 1842*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inward Flowing Commodities (quantity, type, toll per, tolls received)</th>
<th>Lumber (quantity, type, toll per, tolls received)</th>
<th>Outward Flowing Commodities (quantity, type, toll per, tolls received)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3,932 Bales, Cotton @ 20 cents</td>
<td>12,664 Cubic ft, Mast Timber @ 1 ¼ cents</td>
<td>54 Quarter Casks, Wine @ 28 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$786</td>
<td>$190</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17,768 Barrels, naval stores @ 6 ½ cents</td>
<td>382,850 Barrel Staves @ 75 cents</td>
<td>575 barrels, Sugar @ 50 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,110</td>
<td>$287</td>
<td>$68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>473 Barrels, Spirits Turpentine @ 12 ½ cents</td>
<td>3,484,480 Long Shingles @ 70 cents</td>
<td>1,284 bags, Coffee @ 8 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$59</td>
<td>$2,439</td>
<td>$103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,600 Cwt., Bacon @ 3 cents</td>
<td>2,386,960 Two ft. Shingles @ 37 cents</td>
<td>917 boxes, Hats and Shoes @ 12 ½ cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$48</td>
<td>$883</td>
<td>$115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>635 Kegs, Lard @ 3 cents</td>
<td>23,710,630 Building Shingles @ 15 cents</td>
<td>1,239 boxes, Soap and Candles @ 2 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$19</td>
<td>$3,557</td>
<td>$25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>228,851 Bushels, Corn @ ¾ cents</td>
<td>237,680 Cooper’s Staves @ 70 cents</td>
<td>923 Kegs, Nails @ 4 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,716</td>
<td>$166</td>
<td>$8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19,997 bushels, Peas @ 1 cent</td>
<td>39,330 Fence Rails @ 2 cents</td>
<td>60,998 bushels, Salt @ 1 cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200</td>
<td>$79</td>
<td>$610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,212 bushels, Potatoes @ ¾ cents</td>
<td>4,865 cords, Wood @ 12 ½ cents</td>
<td>77 tons, Iron @ 70 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$114</td>
<td>$608</td>
<td>$54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Adapted from DSSC Collection A, “Tolls of the Dismal Swamp Canal and Road and of the Northwest Canal for...1842” [see Sayers 2006:20])

But also significant is the fact that the canals, especially the longer ones such as the Dismal Swamp Canal and Jericho Ditch, were laid on courses that did not run over
flat land but rather land that sloped south and eastward. This necessitated the construction of substantial sequences of locks along canal courses and these were made of specially hewn lumber or imported shaped limestone; these were also in constant need of maintenance. Finally, there were the buildings that had to be constructed for toll and lock keepers, draw bridges, wharfs, and roads that were also significant to canal functioning and maintenance (see Brown 1967; DSCC Collection, various documents; Kearney 1817).

The following abbreviated list will demonstrate the considerable labor and energy put into the canal system. This list from, summarized and paraphrased from a document from 7 January 1828 (DSCC, Estimate of Costs for Three Canals, 1828), represents the work projected as necessary to be done simply to complete the construction of three canals; in other words, it represents only a small portion of the work expended overall to construct and maintain the canals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dismal Swamp Canal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64,000 yards of excavation</td>
<td>$21,100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8700 yards of embankment</td>
<td>$1,392.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Stone Wastes</td>
<td>$3,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Draw Bridges</td>
<td>$3,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road from Deep Creek to South</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outfall Lock</td>
<td>$6,400.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebuilding Northwest Lock</td>
<td>$6,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 House for Lockkeeper and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 for Tollgatherer</td>
<td>$2,400.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8000 ft of juniper for wharfing</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West Canal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111,000 yards of excavation</td>
<td>$17,760.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Locks</td>
<td>$19,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Stone Wastes</td>
<td>$2,250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Drawbridge</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Feeder Ditch
21,000 Yards of Excavation  $6,300.00
1 Lock  $4,000.00

Clearly, as the above represents just the smallest of portions of work necessary to finish a few canals, the overall canal system of the pre-Civil War era represents one of the most significant landscape modification efforts undertaken during the era. Houses, locks, wharfs, bridges, roads, and canals had to be built and maintained to keep this system at work and worth the clearly considerable investment of capital.

It is significant to note that a lively and unique political-economic and social world emerged around the canals, shipping, and swamp activities that were assumed once canals penetrated the interior, which it should be kept in mind was perhaps 1500 square miles in size after 1820 or so. Towns formed around canal corridors, particularly the Dismal Swamp Canal but also in some other areas of the swamp. Also, preexisting towns near the swamp (e.g., Suffolk, Edenton, South Mills, Norfolk, Elizabeth City, etc.), often at the origins and termini of canals, also began catering to increased traffic and swamp characters. Companies not only employed thousands of people over the decades but there were also the skiff-working people, such as the captains noted above, who spent much of their time traveling the swamps, going from one merchant or port after another (Brown 1967: 87-105). In the first quarter of the 19th century, tourists also began entering the swamp through the canal network, as did adventurers and other similar characters (Brown 1967:57-60).

Hotels were constructed to profit from the increased traffic along the canals; perhaps the most infamous was the “Lake Drummond Hotel”, later “the Halfway House” which long “maintained a colorful, if somewhat shady existence” (Brown 1967:59). Part of its charm was that it was built directly over the Virginia-North Carolina state line allowing people of all sorts to take advantage of loopholes in laws as well as the reach of the law; for example, “fugitives from justice in Virginia
reposed as contentedly in the North Carolina end of the building as did North Carolina fugitives on the Virginia side (Brown 1967:59). Also, eloping couples used the North Carolina side of the hotel to their advantage because of that state’s less stringent marriage laws. The Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald of 8 October 1830 advertised the auction of this hotel in such a way as capture its charm and significance to the swamp world:

This establishment (being situated on the N.C.-VA line, one half of the building in each state), is in a superior degree, calculated to render facilities for matrimonial and duelistical engagements and should the purchaser become a magistrate, the facilities would be much increased though rather detrimental in the latter. Indeed it is a stand fully applicable for all the purposes of life, as eating, drinking, sleeping, marrying, dueling, &c. &c. in all its varieties.

Hotels and camps with similar kinds of reputations were built in other areas of the swamp, most notably around Lake Drummond in the interior where traffic was heavy as skiffs, adventurers, and artists came to and from Suffolk via the Jericho Ditch (Arnold 1969; Pugh and Williams 1964).

In general, it can be said that the construction of canals and drainage features throughout the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century did indeed reflect a general process, initiated by capitalists and other investors, of landscape reconfiguration. In part, these economically motivated landscape modifications were efforts aimed at controlling the natural cycles and tendencies of the Dismal Swamp and thus reflected the broad-scale cultural and economic processes inherent in to capitalist system that promote the efficient organization of space, control nature, and reconfigure landscapes in order to make them understandable, economically viable, and “civilized” (Harvey 1984; Lefebvre 1991; Hall 2001). That this canal system proved to be a significant feature of the Virginia, North Carolina, and regional political economies may be underscored by the fact that it was the locus of much armed struggle as each side sought to control its commerce for varying reasons during
the Civil War (Brown 1967; Henry Dixon Papers n.d., n.p). Not surprisingly, a
dynamic and far-reaching social and political-economic world emerged with the
development of the canal system, which in part helped make the Great Dismal
Swamp part of broader national and international dialogues of the era.

However, the ca. 100-year effort to control and reconfigure the natural
landscapes of the Great Dismal Swamp prior to the Civil War was not entirely
successful and also represents less than half of the historic period use of the swamp.
Even though later companies had divided much of the Great Dismal Swamp into
private property holdings there remained numerous large areas of relatively
undeveloped and “natural” swampland that in a sense defied the logic of efficiency
and economic control (Cohen 2001; Sayers 2003c). In the remainder of this chapter,
attention will be turned to the world within the swamp proper—that is, while efforts
to profit from the swamp were significant, there was also a preceding and, later,
temporally parallel social and political-economic world within the swamp that
centered on people who lived within it. This was the world of exiles in the swamp.

Disenfranchised Native Americans and the Dismal

After Contact, the processes of colonialist capitalism had complex, often dire
impacts on Native Americans living in the Great Dismal Swamp region. These
groups, or members of these groups, chose to dwell in or near the swamp proper after
European expansion and usurpation of lands and traditional landscapes forced many
to seek landscapes that were not of great significance to the early colonialists. The
Dismal Swamp, being a murky place of seeming economic worthlessness to Euro-
Americans, satisfied this requirement (see Cohen 2001 on early attitudes about the
swamp). Thus, from ca. 1630 to 1700 Native Americans were likely the primary inhabitants of the swamp even though it cannot be said with any certainty what the size of the population was (although if Pre-Contact researchers are correct, the Post-Contact population was likely low).

This eclectic population, brought together spatially by the natural remote landscape of the Great Dismal Swamp, was similar to the maroons, or African-American runaways from slavery that would follow them in the eighteenth century in many ways. The political-economic pressures, coercions, and exploitation inherent to the processes of Euro-American colonization effectively pushed surviving Native Americans into non-colonized or peripheral areas, or, into remote locales within the expanding colonial mercantilist system (Bragdon 1996; Jennings 1975; Nash 1982). Large areas, such as the 2,000 square mile Dismal Swamp afforded many an opportunity to continue to live, subsist, and thrive within the colonial mercantile system. Of course, it was a geographically central area within colonial territory that afforded opportunities for Native American reprisals against Euro-American transgressions (Leaming 1979). As will be discussed below, this strongly mirrors the manner in which maroons utilized, and subsisted in, the Great Dismal Swamp and the ways the unique landscape allowed for continued, meaningful recalcitrance and resistance within a highly exploitative political-economic system.

Under early historic period colonialism in the Tidewater the new world order became rather violent, chaotic, and unsettling to many. In both Virginia and North Carolina, the grim regularity in which colonials exploited Native Americans finds a mirrored range of processes and events that centered on their defiance of the
conditions. Warfare and bellicose tactics by Native Americans were chronic as reprisals against European land seizure, enslavement practices, and removal practices; the Tuscorora War (1609) and the Powhatan Uprising (1622) are exemplars of this defiance.

As a counterexilic tactic, many Native Americans adapted to natural landscapes that were not of interest to colonials but had emerged as nodes of spatial remoteness within the boundaries of expansion (Sayers 2006a,c). These people were not necessarily immersed daily in the colonialist system but they had not been forced outside of the system either; they found marginally remote places within that system and persisted thereby. Out of defiance and desperation disenfranchised Native Americans, particularly Nansemond, Tuscorora, and Weapemac (see Leaming 1979; Phelps 1983), did settle to an unknown degree in the Great Dismal Swamp.

In theory, during the early historic period Native Americans may have chosen to dwell anywhere within the Dismal Swamp. Some probably intended to largely cut themselves off from the chaotic and repressive outside world and thus inhabited interior parts of the swamp that were, in the main, inaccessible to the outside world. However, historical and archaeological studies in both North Carolina and Virginia indicate that Contact and historical era Native Americans used and accessed European materials despite the exploitative and alienating practices of colonials (Mathis and Crow 1983; Ward and Davis 1999). Thus, it is expected that among Native Americans who chose to dwell in the Dismal Swamp some, if not most, would have maintained connections to external sources of goods and kept some level of communication with the outside world. This likely necessitated the occupation of the
fringes of the swamp—perhaps no more than a ½ mile into the morass—in order to keep the outside world selectively accessible.

According to Lichtenberger (1994, p.8), Nansemond villages in the Virginia Dismal Swamp region at Contact were comprised of 10 to 50 houses and other structures, such as community buildings, that “were round and made by planting wooden poles in the ground, then lashing them together and covering them with thatch or bark”. Several other types of features like drying racks and storage pits were often found within pallisaded village limits. While little research has been done at Contact/postcontact sites in the vicinity of the Great Dismal Swamp in North Carolina, researchers in other regions of that state have found very similar approaches to village layout and landscape use. For example, several village sites in North Carolina generally that dated from 1600 to 1710 were comprised of several round, small-post structures, many of which contained storage pits and occasionally burials within their walls; these villages were also pallisaded (Ward and Davis 1999, pp.229-276).

Those exiles that chose to occupy areas near the natural edges of the swamp used materials acquired from trade with the outside world (e.g., trade beads, glass containers, tools, munitions, etc.) as well as materials from the swamp (e.g., wood, lithics, hand-thrown ceramic). At settlements in the more remote interior, residents may have had less direct and consistent access to mass-produced materials from the outside world. Again, though, it must be stressed that documentary record does not provide any concrete evidence that interior-dwelling groups of Native Americans
flourished in the swamp in part leading scholars (Learning 1979) to suggest that most Native Americans during this time occupied the edges of the swamp.

There is evidence that Native Americans and African-Americans interacted during the middle 1/3 of the eighteenth century, and perhaps developed novel social formations within the swamp as they tried to survive for long periods of times (e.g., lifetimes, multigenerational periods; see Learning 1979). United Native American and African-American insurrections were recorded in Virginia during the era (Johnston 1970:273) and there is evidence for such movements originating with Dismal Swamp groups as late as 1719 (Learning 1979). This period in the swamp (ca. 1620-1720), perhaps more so than most, is very poorly understood because of the almost complete lack of documentary insights. In any case, Native Americans who developed subsistence and political-economic systems that centered on exploitation of the swamp during the 1630-to-1730 era did so in a general mode of resistance to continued Euro-American economic and social brutalities (Learning 1979).

African-American Maroons, 1680-1860

The Dismal Swamp was one of the few places in the United States where geographic conditions made it possible for a large colony of runaways to establish a permanent refuge. (Bogger 1982:2)

Many legends, folk-tales, and other such narratives indicate that the Dismal Swamp housed enough fugitives throughout the antebellum era to fix itself into the cultural psyche and local histories of the immediate region (Cohen 2001). Not surprisingly, primary sources give general insights into the maroons of the Great Dismal Swamp, most notably as related to insurrections and rebellions that they
enacted outside the swamp. However, little information ultimately exists about daily life for these people in traditional primary sources, such as newspapers, tax records, censuses, maps, and the like as such communities were likely unobserved or ignored by those who produced these documents (see Feder 1994).

Many historians, as exampled through Bogger’s quote above, have assessed the data available to them and have concluded that a sizable—likely the largest maroon community (or communities) in the United States—existed in the Dismal Swamp during the antebellum era. Herbert Aptheker (1939:168) has suggested:

The most noted of such [maroon] communities was that located in the Dismal Swamp between Virginia and North Carolina. It seems likely that about two thousand Negroes, fugitives, or the descendants of fugitives, lived in this area. They carried on a regular, if illegal, trade with white people living on the borders of the swamp. Such settlements may have been more numerous than available evidence would indicate....

Hugo Prosper Learning has presented the most detailed interpretation of the history of marronage at the Dismal Swamp (1979). He has argued that Dismal Swamp African-American fugitives, freemen, and Native-Americans (also some Euro-Americans) formed a more or less continuous cultural and social system that existed in perpetuity, as opposed to only being temporally sporadic and isolated, throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and antebellum nineteenth centuries. Learning suggests that these swamp residents developed a permanent system of exchange, production, and relations with the outside world and, in effect, represented a swamp-based political economy and cultural milieu. Maroons settled in dryer locales within the swamp, building small raised structures in close proximity to one another. Learning suggests that maroon communities had leaders and systems of protocol not unlike those observed in South American and Caribbean maroon communities, such as Palmares in Brazil (see Kent 1979). These leaders led raids on plantations,
marauded villages, and in general struck terror into the minds of local planters, gentry, and yeoman farmers.

Learning’s analysis is often provocative and enlightening. Unlike Genovese (1979) and Aptheker (1996), Learning marshals a comprehensive battery of swamp-related documents in making his overall arguments. His dissertation covers much historical ground but its central chapters focus specifically on the communities of the Great Dismal, which included maroons, Native Americans from North Carolina and Virginia tribes, and some people of European stock. He painstakingly provides details as to the known developments among maroons in the swamp, from the early 17th century, through the Revolution, and up to the Civil War. Learning follows documentary and secondary sources in order to present a rather dynamic vision of Diasporic life in the swamp.

Learning’s approach to interpretation is somewhat problematic for me. His discussions of documents, when restricted to what documents straightforwardly indicate, are most informative. However, Learning clearly connects the ultimately limited documentation through much interpretive faith. In other words, the documentary record that he uses is not always rich enough to be convincingly supportive of his interpretations. For example, Learning argues that he can construct a list of captains of Dismal Swamp maroons throughout the 18th century up to 1820 or so. He could find no name of any maroon military type figure between 1830 and 1840 that he could associate with maroons. However he did find the names of possible maroon leaders who had spiritual kinds of names (i.e., Father Gamby Gholar and Father Alick). So, because of this seeming titular shift he suggests a major social shift occurred after the 18th and early 19th century insurrections, like Gabriel's Rebellion and Nat Turner's Insurrection. As it is clear that maroons of the Dismal assisted in these insurrections, and that Nat Turner's signaled the failure of the insurrectionary movement in general, then the maroons drifted into a period of
reaction in which spirituality took the place of guerilla action; "war chiefs" and captains were replaced by spiritual figureheads (see Learning 385-393). While I do not know if he is incorrect, it seems that such a sweeping assessment of cultural and community change based on a gap in documentary records requires more faith than some may hope to have to give to understanding history. There are other examples of these sorts of interpretive leaps of faith throughout the book upon which major aspects of his arguments rest.

That being said, I am more than comfortable in using most of Learning’s sources and following his lead on some interpretations. For example, while we disagree on some details, Learning’s general model of community variation based on relative location of settlements (swamp interior, swamp outer interior, swamp edge, etc.) is reasonably developed and certainly contributed to the models presented later in this text. Ultimately, this exposition presents an interpretive perspective very different than the one Learning presents in his study. Thus, the main areas of reliance on Learning in this research include his sources and on his basic argument that permanent maroon communities formed in the swamp (though I do not follow his lead on interpreting the general cultural appearances and systems of those communities; see Learning 1979: 411-431).

Eugene Genovese also suggests, or agrees, that maroons used the Dismal Swamp as a settlement area. According to him, “The Dismal Swamp...provided runaways with a favorable location on which to build houses, plant crops, and raise pigs and fowl.” However, he suggests that the greatest period of marronage was during the eighteenth century while by the late antebellum period, “...the maroon problem in the area had shrunk to the status of a nuisance”. However, it is quite apparent from the limited documentation on maroons in the Dismal Swamp that, if anything, their numbers stayed the same, but likely increased, during the antebellum nineteenth century; almost all descriptions and accounts of maroons come from the
1800-1860 period (although Leaming suggests that African-American runaways began filtering into the Swamp in small numbers during the 1720-1760 era).

In considering primary documentary evidence of maroon use of the Dismal Swamp, one source that may be considered is the “Registration of Slaves to Work in the Great Dismal Swamp Gates County, North Carolina, 1847-1861” (Fouts 1995). In this document, over 400 laborers are listed in great detail as to their appearance, date of hire, owners or masters (i.e., indenturers), and place of origin. It is worth noting that this document only records the hired hands for one contracted company for work on one canal. As there were probably several canal company projects during this period (see Wolf 2002), the individuals described in this document represent only a portion of the enslaved and free African-Americans that were at work in the Swamp during this time.

The descriptions in the document are highly detailed and amazingly informative. For example, an entry from 2 March 1847 is as follows:

Nat the property of Frak [sic] Dukes of Nansemond County Virginia and hired the year by Jetho Riddick & Co. and by them registered as one of their hands in the Dismal Swamp. Nat is about fifty years old. Black rather Sharp features suken [sic] eyes tolerable teeth with one of the front teeth in the under part out, a small scar on the inner Corner of the upper eye lid of the right eye a scar on the and [sic] extremity [?]. Of the left Knee Stands without shoes, Five feet Eight and a half inches and weight [sic] One Hundred and Fifty Pounds.

Another example from 16 October 1852 shows the descriptions stayed roughly uniform in terms of information gained and considered important.

Isaiah, the property of Marmaduke Jones of Gates County [North Carolina], is hired the present year by Andrew Voight of said County, and registered as one of his hands employed in the Great Dismal Swamp. Isaiah, is about twenty four years of age, of dark Complexion, large cheek bones, thick lips and good teeth. He has a scar on his right elbow joint, a scar on the first joint of his great, right toe, a small scar on his left wrist, a scar on the middle finger of his left hand, and stands without shoes five feet three and a half inches high.
It is apparent that these individuals were thoroughly examined in consistent ways throughout the period covered by the *Registration* (see Olmsted 1996). Few other situations (e.g., registers of Free African Americans), including runaway advertisements, called for such detailed descriptions of enslaved individuals. Because of the threat of flight into the remote areas of the swamp one has to consider the probability that these individual descriptions were the means for having strong records of who was going into the swamp and what they looked like should they need to be recaptured after flight; one could look at these descriptions as the closest thing to a fingerprint that owners had at their disposal. Given that these enslaved and legally free African-Americans were destined for work in the Dismal Swamp, this uniquely detailed and legally proscribed record (Olmsted 1996) suggests strongly that legal authorities and owners of workers understood the looming potential of flight into the Dismal Swamp. The temptation was no doubt great for workers to flee once they were in the swamp at work so workers were described in detail and given papers (Olmsted 1996) so that fugitives might be recovered. For example, Dismal Swamp Canal Company records indicate that as early as June 23rd 1779, David Jamison had to be reimbursed for “carrying home a runaway Negro” (Dismal Swamp Company Papers, The Dismal Swamp Company in Account with David Jamison, 1784-1785). While it is not clear if “home” means a swamp company camp or a residence outside the swamp, the point remains that runaways fell under the purview of company activities or expenses and that the presence of runaways would have certainly magnified the perceived threat for companies.

In a very different document, the William Aitchison and James Parker Account Book (1763:51), a very rare and interesting entry on a maroon in the Dismal Swamp was penned. Both Aitchison and Parker were investors in the Dismal Swamp Canal Company (DSCCR 1802; Royster 1999) and were in a position to hear
accounts of fugitives into the swamp. Sometime between 1763 and 1805, likely
closer to the end of that range, one of these men wrote the following:

about 15 years ago/a Negroe man ran away from his/ Master & lived by
himself in the Desert [Great Dismal Swamp]/ about 13 years & came out 2
years ago/he rais’d Rice & other grain & made/ Chairs Tables &c. & musical
instruments (Aitchison and Parker 1763:51).

The entry is quite informative in particular because it actually describes the
maroon’s handicraft production. In another way, he likely maintained connections to
the outside world through trade and he subsisted off of agriculture. The other
possibility is that he joined with other maroons and became a specialist among them
of making such items, which then were traded and used by the community. In another
example of longer-term marooning, a woman and her two children were captured or
came out after seven years of living in the Dismal Swamp (Bogger 1982:2).

In writing his memoirs of his travels in America in the late 18th century,
Elkanah Watson provided some information regarding maroons in the Great Dismal
and in nearby swamps. In discussing his travels near the northern reaches of the
Dismal Watson (1856:36) wrote:

Proceeding from Suffolk to Edonton, North Carolina, we passed over a
spacious level road, through a pine forest, which, beginning in this district
quite extends across North Carolina. We traveled near the North border of the
great Dismal swamp, which, at this time, was infested by concealed royalists,
and runaway negroes, who could not be approached with safety. They often
attacked travelers, and had recently murdered a Mr. Williams.

His (Watson 1856:43) descriptions of an encounter with maroons in the North
Carolina swamps bears quoting:

We had been cautioned to be on our guard against the attacks of runaway
negroes, in the passage of swamps near Wingan Bay. As we entered the
second swamp, fourteen naked negroes armed with poles, presented
themselves in the attitude of hostility, across the road.
Watson's party proceeded to counter attack and the maroons dropped their poles and head into the woods. While it appears that this encounter did not happen in the Dismal Swamp proper, it points to the fact that maroons utilized swamps all along the seaboard in the Mid-Atlantic.

Newspapers supply much evidence that maroons of the Dismal were a chronic problem for the general populations of Virginia and North Carolina, whether as threats and as alluring alternatives to enslaved life. The *Virginia Gazette* ran an advertisement for John Washington, George Washington's brother and the overseer for canal laborers at the earliest canal in the Great Dismal (Washington's Ditch; see Royster 1999), that said that Tom ran away from him almost a year before the advertisement was published (Virginia Gazette June 20, 1768; cited in Wolf 2002:46) and it seems likely that he ran into the swamp. The same paper ran an advertisement in 1769 for John Mayo saying that another Tom ran into the Dismal Swamp (Virginia Gazette 1769; cited in Wolf 2002:46). The *Virginia Gazette* ran an advertisement in 1771 for Nathaniel Burwell wherein Jack and Venus both ran into the Dismal Swamp after working for John Washington for a couple of years (Virginia Gazette November 18, 1771; cited in Wolf 2002:46). Such types of advertisements ran into the 19th century. The *Southern Argus* (April 16, 1852) printed an advertisement for James Blunt about Bonaparte who had ran away the previous Christmas and was believed to be ensconced in the Dismal Swamp. Several other advertisements in papers in the 1830s and 1850s from North Carolina and Virginia ran similar advertisements that explicitly stated that runaways went to the Dismal Swamp or that they were suspected of heading that way (see Bogger 1982:2, 8). As Wolf (2002:47) suggests, these
advertisements do not definitively implicate the presence of maroon communities in the Dismal Swamp but they do underscore the significance of the swamp for enslaved African-Americans as at least a temporary respite (i.e., for engaging in *petit marronage*) and also suggest the idea of sustained communities is not outright dismissible.

Runaway advertisements are not the only source of information in newspapers. According to Aptheker (1939:171, citing the Raleigh Register 1 June 1802), reports of agitation and insubordination among the enslaved population around Elizabeth City, North Carolina attributed the widespread recalcitrance to “Tom Copper” a notorious maroon who had a camp in one of the swamps (i.e., the Dismal Swamp). Around two weeks later, the *Norfolk Herald* (June 15, 1802; cited in Bogger 1982:3) editor, “announced that he had received word that North Carolina fugitives had armed themselves and congregated in the [Dismal] swamp in large numbers near the Virginia line” (Bogger 1982:3). Bogger (1982:3) suggests that these announcements were related and it is apparent that the Dismal Swamp was the nexus for this rash of insurrectionary activity. In 1823, as Aptheker (1939) reports, a Norfolk Newspaper ran a detailed commentary on the current panic and fear that was running amok among residents of Norfolk County because of, “lurking assassins [of the Dismal Swamp], against whose full designs neither the power of the law, or vigilance, or personal strength and intrepidity, can avail. These desperadoes are runaway Negroes [sic]...their first object is to obtain a gun and ammunition, as well as to procure game for subsistence as to defend themselves from attack, or accomplish acts of vengeance”. Eventually a militia force was sent in to destroy the colony and
this group succeeded in capturing maroon leader Bob Ferebee who had found freedom in the swamp for 6 years till then. However, they did not succeed in capturing all the maroons (see Bogger 1982:3-4).

Obviously, the maroons of the Dismal Swamp were implicated in uprisings, insurgencies, and general mayhem outside the confines of the swamp. Of some interest are the editorials that were run in 1802 (cited above) insofar as this was the general period of Gabriel’s Rebellion and the related 1802 Easter Rebellion (Egerton 1994). The likelihood that maroons of the Great Dismal Swamp had some part in the various insurrections that occurred in 19th century Virginia has been convincingly argued by Leaming (1979) and the idea should be considered seriously. It is well known that Nat Turner had at least considered heading to the Great Dismal and more than likely had actually consciously planned on doing so. Reprinting an article from the Norfolk Herald of a few days previous, the National Gazette and Enquirer of September 3, 1831 (p.1) states that members of Nat Turner’s cohort who were still on the loose, “will be too anxious to bury themselves in the recesses of the Dismal Swamp, to give a moment’s well founded uneasiness to the inhabitants of the surrounding countryside. It is believed that their gang consisted principally of runaways, who had been for years collecting in the swamp, and who are supposed to have amounted to a formidable number.” Johnston (1970:38) makes a similar point in summarizing executive papers produced at that time: “It seems that he [Nat Turner] considered it possible to conquer the county of Southampton and with his followers take refuge in [the] Dismal Swamp where other Negroes [sic] had hidden and defied capture. Hidden with his followers in this retreat he expected that other
slaves would join him, and with increasing numbers he would gradually overcome the white people of the State”.

Regardless of the fact that Nat Turner did not actually make it to the Great Dismal Swamp, it is quite clear from period sources that people believed that Nat Turner intended on doing so and that fellow insurrectionists may have already been inhabiting the swamp and/or in fact fled to the swamp after it unfolded. This is made quite clear in a series of invaluable documents provided me by Edith Seilig, long a resident of Gates County, North Carolina and former historical society president (Edith Seilig obtained these documents from the North Carolina State Archives).

The documents relate to local militia who provided swamp-adjacent Gates County, North Carolina government with what amount to bills of expenses incurred while guarding the county against insurrectionary enslaved people; these extensive efforts included scouring the swamp for maroons in the aftermath of Nat Turner’s Insurrection. These documents are extremely informative on several levels and it is made clear in the documents that these swamp incursions and county patrols are a direct result of Nat Turner’s actions; for example, one document has the heading “Return a company of soldiers services rendered during the late insurrection 3 day [sic] in the dismal swamp August [1831]” (Seilig Insurrection Papers, John Barnes Return, 1831). It is clear from these records that the fear of an Insurrection during the few weeks surrounding Nat Turner’s Insurrection was rampant in Gates County. Other papers in this collection make it clear that dozens of local militia were sent into the swamp but it is not clear to what extent they penetrated its vastness. Most soldiers who were sent into the swamp between August 23rd and at least September
9th were under the command of either one Captain Smith or Captain Riddick. Dismal Swamp militia appear to have spent a few days at a time (3-5)—or at least that is the time that was billed to Gates County—which might indicate that they did not get to far into the swamp (Seilig Insurrection Papers 1831; e.g., Seilig Insurrection Papers, Nathan Smith Return, 1831:3; Seilig Insurrection Papers, J.H. Riddick for Hunters Mill Co Return, 1831).

As informative as these documents are, they do not indicate to any direct an marked extent the numbers of potential insurrectionaries that they had captured in the swamp (e.g., maroons) or whether they found any settlements on their multi-day trips. There are strong indicators, though, that they had success in general in finding people they thought were rebels. In one document, it is indicated that 10 men spent between 2 and 3 days standing “guard nightly at Sunsbury [North Carolina, at the very western edge of the Great Dismal in Gates County] whilst the negroes were [?] there under guard in time of the Insurrection in August 1831…” (Edith Seilig Insurrection Papers, Return of Unknown Colonel, 1831:2). A little less directly, in a listing of goods and services provided by merchants and, one presumes taverns or other types of eating establishments, there is an entry charged to Gates County by Joseph Riddick for “dinner for 10 men on guard” in September of 1831 (Edith Seilig Insurrection Papers, Miscellaneous Accounts, 1831:6). In August 28th, one Abraham Beeman of Gates County was listed as “furnishing soldiers when guarding against negroes….one hundred and eighty eight [188] meals victuals.....two gallons of brandy....and one barrell [sic] of Sider [sic]” (Edith Seilig, Insurrection Papers, Miscellaneous Accounts, 1831:12). When these entries are considered in light of the fact that very
large quantities of lead shot, buckshot and gunflints were used by all the militia as indicated in the accounts (Edith Seilig Insurrection Papers, Miscellaneous Accounts, 1831), it seems clear that the militia were successful in capturing potential insurrectionists. Furthermore, it is also clear that much effort was made in finding insurrectionists, most likely with an eye toward capturing Nat Turner (who remained at large until October 1831) and/or his cohort. What is ultimately not delineated for us in these documents is how many of the captured African-Americans were pulled from the swamp versus those in the rest of Gates County. One has to suspect that some were found in the swamp but it seems rather unlikely that the militia covered much of the swamp, which at the time was still perhaps 1600 square miles in size.

Some years after Nat Turner’s Insurrection and the related Tidewater panic, Porte Crayon (1856:452-453, real name Samuel Strother) drew what is perhaps the most famous image from the Dismal Swamp. This is the image of “Osman”, the maroon Crayon supposedly encountered on his trip back from Lake Drummond. Unfortunately, this chance encounter with Osman was at least advantageous to making an otherwise subdued story a lot more interesting to the general reader of the day and is generally suspicious. One wants to believe the story but it seems skepticism is in order. Apparently, Crayon wandered down one of the corduroy roads away from the central canal laborer camp and after about a mile decided to crawl into some swamp thicket and then just happened to come within “30 paces” of a larger than life maroon, dressed in tatters and carrying a shotgun. Osman stood just long enough to be visually examined by the intrepid author and then, without noticing the odd Euro-American on all fours (possibly in swamp water no less), left the area.
Crayon quickly drew a sketch after the encounter and then showed his drawing to the canal company workers he was traveling with after returning to camp.

They whispered with reverence the name "Osman" but ultimately denied having ever seen a person such as that.

Learning (1979) points out that "Osman" is an Islamic name and it does seem rather unlikely that Crayon would have invented that name for an entirely fictional maroon; rather, it seems that he would have chosen a more common name, such as Pompey, Sampson, or Cicero if he wanted to bestow a name of some strength on the character. While it is certainly possible that Crayon did actually run into Osman as he described, or perhaps through a less dramatic encounter, it seems more likely he
engaged in a conversation with the workers about maroons and they mentioned Osman as a maroon leader that they knew, or knew of. Crayon admits that he had been anxious to see one the “sable outlaws” (Crayon 1856:452) and so after hearing a story about Osman his creative imagination likely got the best of him and helped make a better story in any case. But, the fact that that an obscure Islamic name (obscure to a typical antebellum Euro-American at least) was used does suggest that an individual maroon with that name was known in the swamp and was described in conversations with Crayon.

In a letter written during the last few years of the Civil War by a Confederate soldier who saw action in 1864-1865 in the skirmishes around Norfolk and Suffolk, we see a very curious description of events:

On this raid to Suffolk [and] near Norfolk I spoke of I was with Col[onel] Dearing most of the time....We found the Yankees in the Dismal Swamp 26 miles from Norfolk and drove them for 15 miles or more. Col[onel] D[earing] charged them and captured several prisoners. ...We returned to within 30 miles of Weldon with a large amount of bacon and thought the trip was over, but, we were now ordered to Suffolk and had a fight with the negroes. Col[onel] D[earing] and myself instead of going to Suffolk made a second trip through the Dismal Swamp. We killed 75 negroes and lost 2 men killed and about 6 or 8 wounded. Captured sugar and coffee to make ourselves comfortable at night (William G. Luck, Letter, 1864-5).

While it is certainly possible that the writer is referring to an African American troop among the Northern Army, given that African-Americans had increasingly become active fighters in the Civil War by this time (most notably in Virginia for that matter; see, Cornish 1987:266), the context described in the letter does seem a bit odd. The fact that these soldiers found 75 African-Americans in the Great Dismal Swamp, and killed them, is alone of some interest. Based on several documentary sources, Leaming (1979) suggested that maroons assisted Northern armies during the Civil
War but it is not entirely clear how they did so. In the passage quoted above, it might be that a large groups of maroons used the Great Dismal as a place from which to engage the Confederates through guerilla warfare.

In general there are primary and secondary sources that indicate that maroons, in substantial numbers, did inhabit the Dismal Swamp between ca. 1720 and 1860. It is also apparent that reports of maroons grow more common into the nineteenth century, which coincides with the rise in population of canal company laborers and associated projects as well as a general regional growth in the number of enslaved individuals on farms, plantations, and in urban areas in both Virginia and North Carolina. While discussed in more detail in the following chapter, of great significance are the few descriptions of their settlements available in the documentary record.

**Enslaved African-American Canal Company Laborers**

In William Byrd’s initial assessment of costs associated with canal construction, between 20 and 25 enslaved laborers per annum were predicted as being necessary for what he thought would be an 8 year project (Byrd 1927). Actually, not only were they considered necessary one could argue that Byrd saw them as integral to the success of the project and indeed set forth a callous plan of bringing in male and females into the labor pool in order to insure propagation as there would no doubt be a noticeable (i.e., above normal) mortality rate among workers. Indeed, though not surprisingly, it seems that Byrd sought to simply install or extend the plantation labor
system into the proposed projects in the Swamp by establishing some semblance of a kin and community system among a small group of enslaved workers.

With the initial construction of the Washington Ditch (ca. 1767), companies used African-American labor to excavate canals, work the boats and barges, and lumber the stands of cedar on company lands. As a result, to some extent, laborers are observable through company records proper. But also, as visitors and other observers of the swamp recorded their thoughts and experiences in a variety of ways, workers for companies are discussed regularly in those kinds of sources as well. Ultimately, of all the exilic groups, in some ways canal company laborers are the best documented given that they occupied a strange place in the swamp world; to document producers, they were at once part of the natural swamp world but because they often dwelled or worked in the transformed/transforming landscapes (e.g., along canal corridors) laborers were also very visible to the intrusive outside world.

Prior to the 19th century, the documentation of laborers is relatively limited. Royster (1999:117) reports that in 1766, “John Washington kept the company's slaves busy at work felling trees and cutting shingles, for which George Washington found a buyer”. It was during this time as well that enslaved laborers excavated the canal that bears the Washington name. Again according to Royster (1999:147), by around 1767 “Under John Washington’s eye the company’s slaves dug a ditch to Lake Drummond, grew food crops, and cut shingles.” Royster suggests that after ten years of company work in the swamp they had around 50 enslaved laborers who performed a variety of tasks (Royster 1999:217). This trend continued through the remainder of the century. In one account from the 1790s (DSCC, Account with
Jamison, ca. 1790), debts owed Jamison by the company indicate that he hired several African Americans between 1773 and 1775, likely for lumbering or canal maintenance. In a document from 1785 (Letter from D.J. to W. Nelson Jr., 4 January 1785), there is a report of a discussion regarding “hiring at least ten strong hands for the year” who “would clear (to the Company) near one hundred pounds by the crop, by shingles…” etc. The writer further states that he “took the liberty although alone to advise Coller to hire what hands he thought really necessary to work the crop.”

While the efforts of the company during the 18th century were overall limited, they do represent the precursor efforts that led to the 19th century boom in canal companies and works that involved enslaved and free African-American labor.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, after Washington’s first canal construction effort, enslaved individuals were hired-out on a consistent basis and likely, as more canal projects emerged and investors became more adventurous in their proposals from the 1820s on, greater numbers of enslaved workers found themselves in the Dismal Swamp (see Wolf 2002; Fouts 1995). As early letters from people associated with the Dismal Swamp Canal Company indicate, labor was somewhat hard to obtain during the first decades of the nineteenth century. Richard Blow indicates in his letter of 29 May 1807 that his supervisor, Samuel Proctor, was having trouble finding enough labor to complete the tasks at hand. Another letter to Richard Blow from his son George also suggests that there were problems associated with the hiring of “negroes”.

However, by the 1820s a fairly sizable population of hired-out enslaved workers was present in the Swamp (Wolf 2002) although no specific population
numbers are available at present. Furthermore, company laborers were employed at jobs other than the construction of canals. In a letter from a supervisor named Talcott to Dismal Swamp Canal Company officials, dated 31 March 1827, he indicates that, "...a force gradually increased from 20 to 80 has been employed cutting and hewing timber...", as well as in canal excavation. About two weeks later Talcott, on 12 April 1827, indicates there were about ninety men working and that the overseer, "expects a large increase shortly". Canal company records also indicate that a few African-Americans were employed in tollbooths and gate keeping during this period (DSCCR 1815-1865; Wolf 2002).

This trend appears to have continued into the 1840s and up till the Civil War. The *Registration of Slaves*... mentioned above in the discussion of maroons indicates that enslaved workers of various ages, from 8 to 72 were brought into the swamp for work. Also, it should be noted that very few female names appear in the record indicating that for some reason they were not sought by the contractors or that they were not allowed to hire-out themselves to the Swamp companies. Thus, it would appear that William Byrd's suggestion of bringing both female and males was not followed in this instance, but, the age range is in line with his suggestion of bringing in young people to season them to the ways of swamp work. However, according to Cecelski (2003:110) women may have been part of other work forces or brought into the Swamp under different pretenses and thus not listed in the *Registration* or elsewhere. Frederick Law Olmsted (1996:114-116, 120) tells how he met laborers of the Dismal Swamp Canal Company. While much of what he reports is discussed
below, it is apparent from his travelogue that African-Americans were the majority of people that he saw during his trip through Dismal Swamp Canal Company land.

In his essay, Crayon discusses numerous African-American employees of the canal company, ranging from canal barge pushers, cart-boys, and guides to shingle makers and canal diggers. His portrayal of the hired workers of the Dismal Swamp Canal Company is interesting because he suggests that they actually made money for their efforts:

The Company owns a number of slaves, and hires others, who are employed in getting out the lumber in the shape of shingles, staves, etc. These hands are tasked, furnished with provisions at a fixed rate, and paid for all the work exceeding the required amount. Thus an expert and industrious workman may gain a considerable sum for himself in the course of the year (Crayon 1856:451).

As will be discussed, this quasi-wage labor system allowed for an early form of subcontracting by the hired-out workers whereby maroons gained access to money and provisions and laid the basis for the rise of a complex social system among the African-American residents of the Dismal Swamp.

Intra-Exilic Group Exchange and Labor Systems

The presence of maroons and canal company laborers throughout the period between 1760 and 1860 in the Great Dismal Swamp leads to compelling research questions regarding social systems, exchange relations, and shared belief systems, for example. Archaeological research has great potential to bring much heretofore unavailable information that is pertinent to exploring these sorts of historical and anthropological issues to the surface (Nichols 1988). However, the documentary record is not silent with regard to the social and political-economic dynamics that developed and persisted between these groups of African-Americans during this
period and offers a solid starting point for further research (see Sayers 2003b; Wolf 2002).

It is apparent from the documentary record that maroons were a significant, if illicit, labor factor in canal company timber production during the nineteenth century. In order to understand how the systems of maroon and canal laborer interaction operated, it must first be understood that canal laborers were paid for shingles after a certain quantity was produced (Crayon 1856; Olmsted 1996:114-115). As was stated above, they were hired out from their owners by canal companies and then sent into the camps of the swamp. For several months they produced shingles (when tasked with shingle production), and, according to Olmsted (1996:115), “it is only required of him that he shall have made, after a half a year has passed, such a quantity of shingles as shall be worth to his master so money as is paid to his owner for his services, and shall refund the value of the clothing and provisions he has required”. Upon producing the amount of shingles required, as Olmsted (1996:115) says, “[t]he slave lumberman...lives measurably as a free man; hunts, fishes, eats, drinks, smokes, and sleeps, plays and works, each when and as much as he pleases” (see also, Ruffin 1837:518). Crayon (1856:451) provides similar observations about canal company laborers, who were “tasked, furnished with provisions at a fixed rate, and paid for all work exceeding the required amount. Thus an expert and industrious workman may gain a considerable sum for himself in the course of the year.” Given this unique labor system, canal laborers had, no doubt, much latitude in producing their shingles on time. Maroons who assisted canal company laborers were apparently an instrumental element in that system. According to Crayon (1856:451), “The Swamp is said to be inhabited by a number of escaped slaves, who spend their lives, and even raise families, in its impenetrable fastness. These people live by woodcraft, external depredation, and more frequently, it is probable, by working for the task shingle-makers at reduced wages.” Crayon notes that shingle-makers, “return greater
quantities of work than could possibly have been produced by their own labor, and draw for two or three times the amount of provisions necessary for their own subsistence (Crayon 1856:451). For economic reasons, canal companies allowed this system to continue.

Olmsted offered a somewhat more vague statement about the symbiotic work regime among maroons and canal company laborers. He suggested that maroons “cannot obtain the means of supporting life without coming often either to the outskirts to steal from the plantations, or to the neighborhood of the camps of the lumbermen. They depend much on the charity or the wages given them by the latter with whom they work...frequently” (Olmsted 1996:121). Olmsted (1996:121) continues “[w]hen the shingle negroes employed them [maroons]...they made them get up logs for them, and would give them enough to eat, and some clothes, and perhaps two dollars a month in money.” A maroon who spent time in the Dismal in the 1850s and eventually made his way to Canada validates, to some extent, the descriptions given by other observers. The maroon said, “I boarded wit a man what giv me two dollars a month for de first one: arter dat I made shingles for myse’f’” (Redpath 1996:243). He offered testimony as to the significant numbers of maroons in the swamp doing similar jobs under similar conditions: “Dar are heaps ob folks in dar to work. Most on ‘em are fugitives, or else hirin’ dar time” (Redpath 1996:243).

The important testimony of the anonymous Canadian maroon published in Redpath’s account also elucidates a few social and political aspects of the canal labor dynamic. For instance, he speaks of a preacher, a maroon, called Fisher whose ministry brought workers and maroons to Lake Drummond: “[m]any has been the exhortations I have experienced, that resounded through the trees, and we would almost expect the judgment day was coming, there would be such loud vibrations, as the preacher called them; especially down by the lake [Lake Drummond]” (Redpath 1996:244; my translation of original vernacular). Religiosity, then, provided maroons
and enslaved canal company laborers with another means of developing and maintaining social and ideological bonds.

However, there is some evidence that not all relationships among maroons and canal workers were good and beneficial. Olmsted (1996:121) asserts that canal company laborers who owed maroons money for their shingle-production efforts would "betray them instead of paying them"; the canal company workers would inform slave catchers, a class that formed in the 1840s specifically for locating maroons in the Dismal (Olmsted 1996:121; see also Bogger 1982; this is also good evidence that maroon population numbers did not drop in the nineteenth century).

The Canadian maroon already quoted above said that,

Dar is families growed up in dat ar Dismal Swamp dat never seed a white man, an' would be skeered most to def to see one. Some runaways went dere wid dar wives, an' dar childers ar raised dar. We never had any trouble 'mong us boys; but I tell you pretty hard tings sometimes 'cur dat makes ye shiver all over, as if ye was frozed. De mater will offer a reward to some one in de swamp to ketch his runaway. So de colored folks got jist as much devil in dem as white folks; I sometimes tink de are jist as voracious arter money. Da 'tray de fugitives to dar masters. Sometimes de masters comes and shoots dem down dead on the spot....I saw wid my own eyes when dey shot Jacob.” (Redpath 1996:245)

He continues with the detailed story of six white men shooting Jacob in the back as he ran from them. He ends his story with the following summary: "Dreadful scenes, I tell ye, 'sperienced in de Dismal Swamp, sometimes when de masters comes dar. Dey shoot down runaways, and tink no more sendin' a ball t'rough dar hearts and sendin’ dar hearts into 'Ternity dan jist nothin’ at all.” (Redpath 1996:245).

Historical documents make it clear that exchanges of labor and goods and the development of cultural landscapes were critical in the maintenance of African-American lifeways and inter-population social dynamics in the Great Dismal Swamp. However, such records are generally silent about how these exchanges operated and why they were critical to African-American inhabitation in the swamp. These central
questions, then, relate to a significant problematic lacuna in the documentary record. Because localized systems of labor exchange, goods exchange, and landscape-use were key aspects of all large-scale historical socioeconomic processes (Orser 1996; Paynter 1982), understanding how and why these systems arose and were maintained in the Great Dismal Swamp will contribute to our knowledge of the Mid-Atlantic slavery system, economic history, and the rise of African-American social systems and resistance processes like marronage.

In sum, the use of the Dismal Swamp by Native Americans, capitalists, enslaved canal company laborers, and maroons is evident in the documentary record and accepted by historians. While capitalists succeeded in transforming parts of the Swamp into canals and accompanying corridors that would allow commercial concerns to transport their products along the southeast coast, enslaved laborers for the company assisted in those efforts and also lived in the confines of the Swamp. Maroon communities, which will be examined more closely in the following chapter, likely existed in the Swamp throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries although the intensity of occupation may be currently open to debate. That maroons should have adapted the Swamp to their needs should come as no surprise. Maroon communities developed throughout the Western Hemisphere and the use of the Dismal Swamp would almost be expected in a slavery system where innumerable forms of resistance were necessary aspects of the processes of human and human-labor exploitation.

In this chapter, I have focused specifically on the historical record at several scales that is germane to our knowing and understanding the Diasporan social and political-economic systems of the Great Dismal Swamp. It is clear that the hemisphere-wide processes of colonialism, chattel slavery, exile, resistance and capitalist development had local variations. We focused on how these processes affected the Great Dismal Swamp but implicit in the discussion of that local history
was the understanding that they were important parts of larger scale processes. But it was shown how potentially thousands of Diasporans, including Disenfranchised Native Americans, maroons, and enslaved canal company laborers inhabited the swamp throughout the 1630-1860-era and that the documents do hint at the fact that potentially complex social and exchange dynamics emerged during that time among these groups. It was suggested that the evidence supports the notion that varying Diasporan communities developed in the swamp and that these community formations are important to any understanding of the social and political-economic history of the swamp. Indeed, they form the basis for GDSLS archaeological research models as will be seen in the next chapter.
In this chapter, I elaborate almost exclusively on the predictive archaeological models that were developed for the GDSLS. The swamp is discussed as being a remote landscape in the increasingly developing Tidewater that proved attractive to Diasporans and developers alike. Careful study of the documentary record indicates that at least three different types of community formations emerged in the Great Dismal Swamp in varying historical circumstances. These modes of communitization, it is shown, were directly influenced by the landscape as different modes emerged in areas of the swamp that had unique qualities. The modes represent differing and contradictory community structurations in which inhabited land-use and utilized material culture varied. Thus, the expectation is that each mode of communitization will be archaeologically represented by relatively specific and contradictory landscape-use and archaeological signature patterns.

It is important to point out at the outset that this model of modes of communitization directly relates to the overall political-economic approach and perspective of this project. While I would not be comfortable positing that unique modes of production emerged in the swamp, I do think that the structuration of communities in the swamp (and elsewhere in the modern world) reflects directly and indirectly the means of production available to residents and their relations of
production. Community structuration emerges partially as a result of the systems of labor, the method and means of production of the materials and spaces used in daily life by thousands of exiles that chose or were forced to inhabit the swamp. These exiles, in aggregate, had a potentially vast range of specific and contradictory reasons and motivations for inhabiting the swamp. These motivations would have been central in the establishment and perpetuation of modes of communitization, community labor systems, and community methods of exploitation of means of production. And while modes of communitization reflect the material conditions of exilic and countercultural life in the swamp they also represent the social and psychosocial systems (e.g., kinship groups, status, rules of community conduct, and hierarchy systems) that were adopted and developed by swamp-dwellers. From a Marxian point of view, modes of communitization represent core dynamic and dialectical structurated aspects of the Diasporic swamp political economy that were intimately connected with material conditions of production, reproduction, and exchange of that world. In the following, I will explore in more detail each of the three distinct modes of communitization that appear to have emerged in the Dismal Swamp among exiles and demonstrate the contradictory nature of these modes (much of the following chapter is based on discussions found in Sayers et al. 2007).

The Great Dismal Swamp as a Remote Landscape

The Great Dismal Swamp was presented on early maps drawn by European colonialist cartographers (e.g., Cumberford 1657). The morass is located somewhat
near Jamestown (settled 1607) and very close to Roanoke Island (settled 1585-1587). On older maps, the swamp extended ca. 20-30 miles west of the Atlantic and was positioned on the peninsula flanked by the James River and the Albemarle Sound (the swamp covered, perhaps, 2,000 square miles; Shaler 1890). Colonial European settlements in Virginia (e.g., estates) that later became primary and secondary entrepots were located near the swamp, near present day Norfolk (ca. 1620s) and Suffolk (1630s-1640s). In northeastern North Carolina larger entrepots did not develop until later in the 17th century. William Byrd (1967, p.10), with Eurocentrism apparent, remarked that North Carolina was in a “deserted condition” even after 1663. But agriculturists did in fact settle the region around the Dismal Swamp in North Carolina in the 17th century. Combined, the Virginia and North Carolina region surrounding the swamp had clearly fractioned along town or entrepot and agrarian lines by the beginning of the 18th century. Regarding the Dismal Swamp specifically, colonials did not to any appreciable degree settle or exploit the morass for its resources. Even by 1728, William Byrd would indicate that sporadic exploitation of the swamp’s edges, for wood products and arable land, had occurred by that time (Norfolk was the market for the wood products; Byrd 1967, p. 36).

As an immensely large element of the Tidewater landscape, the Great Dismal Swamp appears to have been naturally recalcitrant and forbidding to colonials who might otherwise have attempted to exploit the swamp on larger scales. Rather, it seems that colonists generally left the swamp alone. Colonization and settlement most clearly impacted the landscape of the surrounding region while the Dismal emerged as a conspicuous and perhaps anachronistic element of the otherwise transformative
Tidewater landscape. We can thus understand that trichotomous landscape emerged in the Tidewater, consisting of remote landscapes that existed contemporaneously with entrepot and agrarian landscape elements. The Dismal Swamp, though, was a landscape that beckoned others within the colonialist and later chattel world of the Tidewater. To marginalized and disenfranchised people, the swamp was a most inhabitable landscape because it was so ignored by colonials for much of the historical era.

Inhabitable Land Formations

While it is clear that exiles used the swamp for a variety of reasons and through a range of compulsions, the question remains as to how they used the actual interior swamp landscape and how it was that they might have managed to survive out in the vast water-saturated morass. While one cannot discount creative approaches to living in the swamp, such as in trees and in stilt structures that were constructed over water, it is clear from a variety of sources that areas of naturally occurring high ground exist throughout the interior (former and current swamp interior). As is well known, these areas of high ground are the likely loci of historical exilic inhabitation in the swamp (Leaming 1979; Nichols 1988; Sayers 2006; Sayers et al. 2007). Modern satellite images (located after survey for this project occurred) show several “mesic islands” in the swamp while topographic maps also give clues as to island locations. Meanwhile, numerous documentary sources also suggest that exiles whether canal company laborers, maroons, or other swamp dwellers, lived on
raised areas or islands. For example, Porte Crayon’s image of “horse camp” suggests an island settlement along with the following description:

...we have arrived at Horse Camp [the laborer camp], and the barge is hauled up a rude wharf, piled high with fresh made shingles. From the landing a road, or causeway of logs, leads back into the swamp. A hundred paces brings us to Horse Camp, the headquarters of the shingle-makers of this district. A group of picturesque sheds afford accommodation for a number of men and mules....Although of the rudest character, there seemed to be every material for physical comfort in abundance. There was bacon, salt fish, meal, molasses, whisky, and sweet potatoes, besides plenty of fodder for the mules (Crayon 1856:451).

Regarding maroons, several descriptions of their dwellings in the Dismal Swamp exist in the documentary record and literature. J.F.D. Smyth (1784:239) wrote:

Run-away negroes have resided in these places for twelve, twenty, or thirty years and upwards, subsisting themselves in the swamp upon corn, hogs, and fowls that they raised on some of the spots not perpetually under water, nor subject to be flooded, as forty-nine parts out of fifty are; and on such spots they have erected habitations, and cleared small fields around them.

Johann David Schoepf wrote a similar description of a maroon occupation in his 1780s travels through the swamp.

...small spots are to be found here and there which are always dry, and these have often been used as places of safety by runaway slaves, who have lived for many years in the swamp, despite all the snares set for them by their masters....these negro fugitives lived in security and plenty, building themselves cabins, planting corn, raising hogs and fowls which they stole from their neighbors, and naturally the hunting was free where they were (Schoepf 1911).

Around seventy years later, in 1852, the Pennsylvania Freeman (quoted in Nichols 1988:92-93) published the following account of maroon inhabitations in the Great Dismal Swamp:
[The Dismal Swamp] is wet all year long except for many islands which raise only a little above high water marks. The maroons build huts, cultivate corn and sweet potatoes, and sometimes raise a large family....the articles which the negroes require are, for the most part, salted provisions, Indian corn, coarse clothes and tools.

Finally, Learning (1979) discusses a description of a maroon settlement in the Dismal Swamp (although the source of the description is a second hand account) in which residences were actually placed on stilts a few feet above the ground on natural rises in the swamp that allowed for the avoidance of periodic flooding as well as scavenging animals.

Thus, while it is certainly possible that exiles did inhabit structures raised over water or lived in structures on artificial rises in the swamp, it seems very likely that they used natural dry ground when it was safe and reasonable to do so. But equally important, images indicate that in a few instances, large islands (ca. 40 ac) and large clusters of islands (50 or more acres in aggregate) exist in the swamp that would have been conducive to larger scale settlement by exiles (see Sayers 2006). But it is clear that a variety of community formations emerged throughout the interior and over time as different people came to inhabit the swamp for historically varying reasons and as development slowly occurred (e.g., canal excavation, canal use and lumbering).

Modes of Communitization and Landscape Patterns

The exilic communities that formed in the Dismal reflect, in part, shared motivations among individual exiles for deciding to live permanently (or indefinitely) in that remote place (e.g., defiance, safety, disenfranchisement, land acquisition, etc.).
Among swamp exiles, they would have had often overlapping rationales and compulsions for dwelling in the swamp as well as potentially similar cultural and social backgrounds. It is a premise of this study that a range of modes of community formation and cohesion, or *modes of communitization*, developed that represent structurated social systems and sources of enforcement of codes of behavior. Exiles would have generally found communities of people with similar motivations for living in the swamp. In this regard, the Dismal Swamp landscape played a most significant role. The relative geographic locations of landforms in the swamp in part determined what kinds of community formations would emerge and be sustainable.

Figure 3  “Horse Camp”, the Only Known Drawing of a Great Dismal Swamp Laborer’s Settlement in the Antebellum Era (Crayon 1856:449).
For example, landforms in the interior of the swamp would have supported one mode of communitization while swamp edge islands would have supported another mode (discussed below). Also, of significance, the various modes of communitization would have been structurated, in part, by their relative degree of dependency on materials from the outside world as well as swamp materials. Ultimately, the model prediction is that each mode of communitization resulted in unique artifact and landscape signatures.

So, my study of the documentary record and secondary sources (Learning 1979; Martin 2004) suggests that at least three modes of communitization developed in the Great Dismal Swamp among exiles between 1630 and 1865 (Table 2). In what follows, each mode of communitization will be described and discussed in terms of its anticipated archaeological signatures.

**Semi-Independent Mode of Communitization (perimetrical)**

The Semi-Independent mode emerged among Diasporan Exiles who settled in areas at the natural perimeter of the swamp (also the perimeter of the outside world from an in-swamp perspective). By residing in perimetrical areas, they strategically positioned themselves for fluid access to worlds inside and outside of the swamp. It seems possible, if not probable, that this mode of communitization thrived on exchange networks that brought materials to the swamp interior while also bringing materials from the swamp to the outside world (Martin 2004). Because these communities were located at the swamp perimeters and they likely were loci of
exchange, it is anticipated that their populations were in flux and relatively dynamic as people joined them for variable durations of time.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Communitization</th>
<th>Location of Settlement Landscape</th>
<th>Affiliated Social Groups</th>
<th>General Dominant Landscape Elements</th>
<th>General Artifact Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Independent (pre-1770)</td>
<td>Perimeter, 0.5 miles or less inside swamp</td>
<td>Native Americans; Maroons</td>
<td>Circular small post structures; gardens; animal pens; palisades or berms; fire and storage pits</td>
<td>Generally equal distributions of mass-produced and swamp-produced materials; equal distributions of domestic and wild animal butchery remains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scission (post-1710)</td>
<td>Remote Interior, 0.5 miles or more inside swamp and away from canals (after 1763)</td>
<td>Maroons; Native Americans; Europeans</td>
<td>Rectilinear structures; gardens; animal pens; possible sub-group clustering; palisades or berms; fire and storage pits; overall complex feature signatures</td>
<td>Relative dominance of swamp-produced materials (lithics, hand-thrown ceramics, etc.) and re-used pre-contact materials with minimal quantities of mass-produced materials; overall low quantities of all materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Exploitation (post 1763)</td>
<td>Canal Adjacent (probably 0.25 miles or less from canal corridor)</td>
<td>Enslaved Canal Laborers; Free African-Americans; maroons; Europeans</td>
<td>Large rectilinear structures; fire pits; work areas; corduroy roads</td>
<td>Relative dominance of mass-produced materials with minimal reliance on swamp-produced materials; moderate quantities of materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It might be expected that Native Americans were predominant in these kinds of communities at least during the pre-1760 period. Also, some maroons (especially individuals and small kin groups) and fugitive or outcast Europeans (e.g., criminals) may have found such communities to be attractive. After 1760, with the rise of canal company operations and the general increase in population in the immediate region surrounding the swamp, the prevalence of this mode of communitization may have diminished. The swamp had, by that time, become a notorious haven for maroons and outcasts and so life at the edges of the swamp may have proven precarious because they were potentially easily accessible by those who might find them to be a nuisance or dangerous. With the post-1800 raids in the swamp for outlaws and the knowledge in the public that possible insurrectionaries lurked in the morass, perimetrical communities were likely jeopardized. Also, it was around the last 3 decades of the 18th century that canal companies began their exploitation of the swamp and the formation of communities associated with those efforts (discussed below) may have acted to siphon would-be perimetrical community members.

Regarding the archaeological ramifications of this mode of communitization, the perimeter can be considered to have been no more the 0.5 miles into the swamp from its natural edges. Early perimetrical archaeological patterns would likely be similar to contact-era (1607-1710, depending on the location) Native American patterns observed in the region. Small-post circular structures, with storage or burial pits within might be expected. Palisades and berms for defense or concealment could be evidenced around such settlements. Refuse pits and drying racks as well as activity areas like ceramic or stone tool production areas might be present. But,
dynamic population changes and shifts are expected in these kinds of communities and thus it is anticipated that variations from Contact-era landscapes would be visible at later (ca. 1700-1800) perimetrical sites (e.g., rectilinear forms of dwelling construction brought with maroons or fugitive Europeans).

As far as the artifact signatures at perimetrical sites might appear, we must focus on the fact that there would have been a regular acquisition of outside world goods (i.e. mass-produced items) as well as materials and goods that originated in the swamp. Tobacco pipes, glass vessels, tools, munitions, copper materials and other trade goods thus likely found their way into these communities. Alongside these kinds of artifacts, we might expect to see materials, such as handthrown ceramic and lithic tools, which were made in the swamp. Because perimetrical communities emerged on relatively easily accessible islands and landforms, it is probable that precontact Native Americans also used the same landforms regularly. Precontact materials, such as lithic tools and cores, would have been present in moderate to heavy quantities and available for perimetrical community reuse. Such materials may have also been actively mined for trade with interior swamp groups living on islands that did not have a heavy precontact presence (due to their interior locations) and thus fewer precontact materials available for reuse.

Scission Mode of Communitization (Interior)

The scission mode of communitization as a direct result of the historical processes that led exiles to seek landscapes that were safe and removed as much as
possible from the outside world. The label given to this mode of communitization reflects an emphasis on the fact that these communities (and the individuals who comprised them) intended to physically, socially, and economically distance themselves from that brutal exterior world as much as was possible. While it is certainly the case that these communities did maintain some degree of connectedness to the outside world (Leaming 1979; Martin 2004; Sayers 2006b) such connections were highly limited due to community structuration and the intent of creating consistent disconnect. In another way, this model emphasizes scissioning from the outside world was the basis for the community even if they ultimately had to rely on the outside world periodically or even regularly.

It can be reasonably postulated that some Native Americans in the colonial period did in fact remove to the interior of the swamp as a result of exilic processes. Land usurpation, indenture and even enslavement likely prompted some to choose the swamp interior rather than the exploitative life of the colonial world outside the swamp. But, given that perimetrical communities are expected to have emerged after Contact and that there is little evidence in the documentary record that colonials pursued runaways, criminals, and others who may have inhabited the swamp, we might expect pre-chattel slavery era scission communities to have been rare. For most, perimetrical semi-independent communities may have been suitable for their needs during the colonial era. Rare or not, scission communities can be assumed to have formed during the early historical era and continued into the chattel slavery era.

With the rise of the chattel slavery system and the African Diaspora, maroons became a core population among swamp occupants. It is during this era that a
dramatic increase in people who wished to remove themselves from the non-swamp world is expected. As with the other modes of communitization, the relative location of inhabitable landforms was critical to the emergence and maintenance of these kinds of communities. Deep interior islands within the marginalized Dismal Swamp landscape provided ideal means of keeping distance from the non-swamp world. It is expected that the structuration of these communities required a hierarchical system in which leaders and figureheads occupied positions of authority in order to enforce limitations on who could access a given community as well as who could leave and risk capture or betray community locations (Price [1996b, p. 18-20] makes this point about maroon communities generally). Equally significant, such leaders would have organized the occasional raids or guerilla attacks on the outside world that we know did occur (see Leaming 1979: 490; Martin 2004; Nichols 1988; Sayers 2006a) and leaders headed these efforts. These leaders would have been a central point of community enforcement of the strict codes of conduct that were necessary for community safety, surreptitiousness, and order (Martin 2004; Sayers 2006a). Researcher Jacqueline Martin recovered the writings of Caleb Winslow, a swamp area resident in the 19th century, who suggests that interior maroons “were a law unto themselves”, that they developed their own community government systems, and that they indeed had community regulations for safety (Martin 2004: 113-114). Maroons who approached such scission communities had to somehow clearly persuade communities (probably through leader decisions) that they intended on adhering to community rules and codes of conduct as well as join the community permanently. To build trust, new community members were probably not granted all the freedoms
that others who were trusted had in the community. Richard Price (1996b, pp.16-17) suggests that, “To assure the absolute loyalty of its members, each [maroon] community had to take strong measures to guard against desertion and the presence of spies. New members...posed a special threat to security.” Of some significance is the fact that ideologies and praxes of resistance within scission communities would have probably led to the eschewal of the material culture and trappings of the outside world. If scissioners were indeed attempting to remove themselves from the outside world as much as they could feasibly do, it follows that they would also have avoided the materials of that world (see Price 1996b, pp.5-10). Such areas of resistance in daily life would have been a very significant aspect in the structuration and perpetuation of the scission mode of communitization. Overall, such characteristic aspects of these communities would have imparted to them a decidedly militant cast and hue.

Scission communities are expected to have emerged in interior parts of the swamp (more than 0.75 miles or so into the swamp from natural edges and later canals). As a result, most of the historical swamp would be considered interior by this model and scission communities could have formed and persisted anywhere in the interior. While stilt structures over water were possible approaches to living in the swamp, it is certain that scission communities would have formed on dry ground in the swamp when possible. These communities may have, at times or even regularly been large in size (for safety and practical reasons, such having productive community work forces) and so we would expect all large islands and island clusters in the swamp to have been loci of scission settlement.
Archaeological signatures of scission communities would directly reflect the overall community structuration and general community spirit and ethos of resistance to the world outside of the swamp. If communities formed in the swamp that intended to cut themselves off from the outside world, then it seems most likely that they would have developed community-scale subsistence-level lifeways and generally self-reliant approaches to daily life. References like that found in Aitchison and Parker's (1763) ledger that describe maroons growing rice and other grains in the swamp and making musical instruments and furniture for trade might possibly reflect such community practices. Also, it is known that in swamp-dwelling maroon contexts elsewhere in North America, community-centered labor systems that centered on the growing of rice and other foodstuffs were common (Hall 1992). If scission communities actively avoided outside world materials then it follows that they would have been highly reliant on swamp-available resources, such as wood, swamp plants and animals, and older lithic and other materials left behind by precontact swamp occupants.

Regarding the archaeological record expected at interior sites, landscape signatures are expected to reflect the intentions of residence to permanently settle in the swamp and specific sites. Thus, architectural forms from the earliest scission communities may include traditional Native American (semi) circular post structures. In the later historical period (after ca. 1680 or so), as African-Americans began fleeing into the swamp in large numbers, we might expect rectilinear architectural forms given that many individuals would have become accustomed to or learned how to construct such structures on farms and plantations, and/or, followed traditions of
rectilinear house construction from African homelands (Deetz 1977; Ferguson 1992, pp. 55-59; Joseph 1989; Otto 1984; Sobel 1987). Structures may have been built across island landscapes in ways that reflect kinship groups and/or community status (e.g., leaders, long-time residents, and newcomers). For example, structures might appear in clusters in areas of islands that reflect membership in a kin group or people who had community statuses; nucleated clustering in maroon settlements appears to have occurred in Cuba for example (La Rosa Corzo 2003). Also, structures may have been built to reflect activities and these may appear in areas away from residences. Granaries are possible structures of this sort as are storage buildings.

Other elements of scission cultural landscapes include garden plots (Price 1996b:10). Dismal swamp documents and relevant literature indicate that we might expect family and/or community gardens (Smyth 1784; Hall 1992; Sayers 2006b). Activity and production areas, such as wood tool and stone tool, ceramic, and basket making areas are also possible given the general self-reliance mode of practice of such communities. Community social areas no doubt emerged, perhaps around fire pits or in agreed upon spaces across island landscapes (Ferguson 1992, pp. 57). And, breastworks and/or palisades were probably erected for defense and camouflage. With this predicted range of relatively intensive landscape uses, changes in community size (inflation and deflation) and social structuration would have contributed to a complicated palimpsest archaeological signature, a quality of the artifact signature predicted for scission communities.

Due to the scission eschewal of outside world materials, save perhaps basic needed items like munitions-related materials, artifact types that are common to
historical sites in North America are not expected in appreciable quantities (e.g., tobacco pipes, ceramic). While we can be certain that some mass produced materials outside of munitions would have come into the possession of scission settlements, the sporadic infrequency of such acquisitions over time would result in such materials being represented by small relative quantities within site assemblages. Also, such materials were probably curated and reused when possible, which would have also contributed to their limited presence in site assemblages.

Munitions-related materials will be represented in scission settlements, again, owing to the fact that there was most likely a heavy reliance on firearms for protection and hunting. That being said, munitions materials were probably quite significant and we might not expect much waste of these kinds of preciosities (see Price 1996a). Casual loss and discard of such items was not commonplace and, as archaeological signatures partially reflect such kinds of deposits, we do not anticipate a numerically extensive amount of such materials in overall site assemblages. Also, it should be added that scissioners might have made ad hoc defensive and subsistence items from the limited amounts of mass-produced materials that they did come to possess. For example, they may have made projectile points out of glass bottles and ceramics that broke during use.

The flipside of the limited reliance on outside world materials is that there would be clear evidence of reliance on swamp-available materials and food. Thus, we would expect lithic tools (and the residues of their production, like flakes, cores, and shatter), handthrown ceramic, and, if preserved, bones of swamp animals, wood tools and reed/grass basketry. As Price (1996b:8) posits, “[i]n many areas, maroons
used bow and arrows extensively as weapons, as well as homemade spears and Amerindian war clubs”, pebbles in lieu of leadshot (Price 1996b:8) and pottery in daily activities (Price 1996b, p. 12). It is critical as well to recognize that scission communities would have been constrained, to an extent by history. Most interior sites that they chose to inhabit in the swamp interior were likely not occupied heavily during the precontact era. As a result, not all interior islands would yield the amount of lithic materials from the precontact epoch that would have been necessary for continued use over decades and centuries. Thus, scissioners would have had to either find alternative materials for tools and other items, or, develop exchange systems with other swamp-dwelling exilic communities (e.g., semi-independent communities or other scission communities) to acquire lithic materials beyond what their own islands could provide. This expected set of patterns for the scission mode of communitization contrasts remarkably from the canal-adjacent labor exploitation mode of communitization that emerged later in the historical era.

**Labor Exploitation Mode of Communitization (Canal Corridor)**

After ca. 1763, a mode of communitization specific to corporate interests in swamp-resource exploitation emerged. Canal companies began the decades-long process of canal excavation and lumbering in the swamp and to do so they needed laborers. As a result, communities of laborers developed that were typically of substantial size (ca. 50-500 residents; Crayon 1856; Grandy 1843; Olmsted 1996). The documentary record indicates that such communities emerged along the
thoroughfares of the modern world in the swamp—the canals and their corridors. In fact, it seems clear that communities were situated very near canals, perhaps 50-100 meters on either side of a given waterway (Crayon 1856; Olmsted 1996).

As was shown in Chapter 3, labor exploitation communities were represented architecturally by wood structures of limited quality; in some case, standing trees were incorporated into the structures themselves as vertical posts. As with other exilic communities, rough-hewn swamp lumber was used in building construction and residential structures were generally built to sleep several people. Also, due to access to the materials of the modern world, certain kinds of architectural materials, such as nails, were used in construction as well (though probably not bricks generally). Other structures expected at such sites include storage structures and privies. Extant records do not indicate that camp kitchens or eating structures were present at these settlements. Work and activity areas are expected within the settlements, likely in close proximity to buildings, and may include tool repair areas, wood refining areas, and loading areas for wood products that were to be shipped out along the canals. Finally, fire pits are expected near residential structures as they were used for cooking, insect repelling, and warmth while sleeping (Grandy 2003). Corduroy roads (wood-plank trails) enveined the swamp and were the means of transporting wood products and lumber, as well as general travel, from interior areas to the labor exploitation settlements and the canals.

The artifact signatures at labor exploitation mode sites should consist of predominantly mass-produced outside world materials. Generally, such materials should be utilitarian in nature, like simple glass and ceramic vessels, tobacco pipes,
and simple clothing appurtenances. While it is expected that illicit trade systems did develop along the canals, expensive or luxury goods should be relatively rare at these sites; such materials, if they came into the possession of community members, would likely have been unnecessary and tradable to other participants in the illicit systems for more necessary and practical goods, like food, munitions, and tools. By the same token, artifacts representing items that were made or acquired from the swamp itself are expected to be relatively rare in assemblages, unlike scission and perimetrical assemblages. Such materials, if found within assemblages, may represent goods acquired from other swamp communities or materials gathered by labor exploitation community members for trade with interior scission groups or others.

Labor exploitation communities probably emerged during the earliest stages of canal construction and inhabited thereafter by woodcutters and other swamp-roaming workers as their permanent home in the swamp. The patterns at these sites are expected to be quite complicated and the archaeological signatures to be much more similar to typical historical sites (in terms of the kinds and perhaps even quantities of materials used). Again, the labor exploitation mode of communitization reflected the intentions of residents, which, unlike the scission groups, was not rooted in a mandate to limit contacts and connections with the outside world. Their occupation of islands in the swamp is also clearly related to historical circumstances centering on where canals were placed and whether islands were located within close proximity to those canals. Finally, it is not clear as to the spatial extent of these permanent settlements but we can be reasonably certain that they were not extremely limited in size. With potentially hundreds of workers living in such settlements at
certain points, we might expect archaeological evidence to point to rather extensive settlements, even if they were prone to population fluctuations over time.

Discussion of the Project Model

The above discussion has been an effort to provide a model of significant landscape and space use patterns associated with exiles and the Great Dismal Swamp in the historical period (ca. 1630-1860). The swamp maintained its marginally remote status and cultural/social meanings to the developed world outside the swamp throughout this period. It is true that after the late 18th century capitalistic and entrepreneurial efforts were made to exploit the swamp and that canals were successfully excavated and then used throughout its interior. Furthermore, it is also clear that throughout the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, efforts at exploiting the swamp and transforming it into agrarian landscapes were successful to a degree; some 80% of the original swamp was put under cultivation by the middle 20th century. But, the swamp also persisted throughout those years however transformed. Even more significant for this project, the years prior to the Civil War did not see nearly as much successful total transformation of the swamp landscape; rather, the swamp was selectively exploited but its environmental milieu largely remained intact. Thus, by the time of the Civil War, perhaps 1500 square miles of the swamp still remained, albeit with canals and heavy lumbering having impacted that landscape.

Exiles found this peculiar landscape situation to be conducive to their successful inhabitation of the swamp. Because of the natural occurrence of relatively
large areas of high ground within the swamp, varying types of communities formed depending on time and place within the swamp. In fact, it another set of critical aspects to differential community development is that the swamp landscape was so vast, varyingly exploited, and replete with islands and ridges in geologically random locations. Thus dry inhabitable ground could be found near the edges of the swamp, often near canals, and in interior areas of the swamp.

It is a major premise here that different modes of communitization emerged that reflected several key variables of the natural swamp environment, the specific time of occupation, and the range of exiles who were forced to or chose to dwell in the swamp on relatively permanent bases. But these modes of communitization were structured based on the intentions of settlers and residents, and the material conditions associated with their means of production and their relations of production and reproduction. Those who wished to access the products of the outside world, or to maintain physical and active connections to the outside, might inhabit certain areas of the swamp, likely the perimeters. Other communities that were comprised of those who wanted to remove themselves from the outside world and its conditions would have found interior locations quite suitable. Finally, communities that formed around company enterprises, such as canal excavation and lumbering, would have likely formed near the main arteries of company exploitation, the canals themselves. These often contradictory modes of communitization, in part determined by the relative locations of islands or other landforms, would have led to dialectically opposed approaches to landscape, material culture use, and social organization among exiles. Such differing approaches should be discernible in the archaeological record.
I have discussed in this chapter the critical aspects of the predictive archaeological site location and artifact signature models that were tested in the field through excavations. It was suggested that Diasporan communities formed on islands in the swamp and a key factor in determining what mode of communitization would form on a given island was the landform’s proximity to the natural edges of the swamp and later its proximity to canals. We are thus now in a position not to look for “maroon sites”, “canal company laborer settlement sites”, or “disenfranchised Native American sites”, but rather sites that were inhabited by people of potentially many backgrounds within the structurations of any of the anticipated modes of communitization: the scission interior mode, the semi-independent perimetrical mode, and the labor exploitation canal-adjacent mode. I think we can predict which islands, based on relative locations, would have been likely to be conducive to the rise of any of the modes and then explore the archaeological materials at those islands as a means of testing those ideas. In the next chapter, I will explore the results of archaeological survey and excavation that indicate that these modes of communitization did in fact exist in the swamp and that the archaeological signatures that can be discerned almost uniformly support the overall model.
CHAPTER V

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter begins with a very brief discussion of three seasons (2003-2006, 24 months of fieldwork in toto) of fieldwork performed by the author and volunteers in the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge located in Virginia and North Carolina (Figures 4-6). A general review of the methods and the archaeological findings will be provided while details about more specific aspects of those findings that are germane to this overall analysis will be provided later in the chapter (the details of all aspects of the project are available in Sayers 2006b, 2008).

After reviewing the general results of fieldwork, I will make the case that we have recovered strong evidence for the existence of the scission and labor exploitation modes while our evidence for semi-independent modes is rather limited because of an overall lack of information from the field. I will then shift to interpreting the record in terms of the project research questions that have previously been discussed.

It will be argued that there is evidence at one site, the Nameless site, for sustained scission community presence throughout the 17th and 18th centuries while there is scant evidence for such communities during the 19th century. This apparent temporal change will be explained with reference to the extractivist canal company-inaugurated processes that began at the turn of the 19th century. Several interpretations of the archaeological and documentary record will be discussed
centering on scission community structure, landscape use patterns, subsistence practices, and community self-reliance

Evidence for labor exploitation communities will be discussed with much reference to another site, the Cross Canal site. Through comparisons with the evidence from the scission settlement site, the dynamics of labor exploitation communities and their landscapes, circuits of material culture-use, and connections with the outside world will be made clear.

Finally, I will bring the discussion back to interpreting the roles of the landscape, alienation and exile in the political-economic processes discerned at each site and for each mode of communitization. It will be argued that alienation and exile are manifested in the archaeological record at the Cross Canal site. By contrast, the Nameless site and its scission communities show little evidence of alienation.

Archaeological Fieldwork, Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, 2003-2006

The results of the three years of surveying and excavating in the swamp demonstrated that there were numerous places within the swamp that large numbers of exiles, of whatever period and ethnic or social background, could have semi-permanently and/or permanently occupied. During the historical period, the swamp was an intermittent wetland where various environmental factors caused fluctuations in its water table.
Figure 4. A Lonely Two-Track Road Paralleling An Antebellum Canal, Jericho Ditch, Virginia, GDR (photo by author).

Figure 5. View of Typical Swamp (foreground), with Contrasting Mesic Island Rising out of Water (background), Near Jericho Ditch, Virginia, GDR, View West (Photo by author).
This intermittent quality of the swamp promoted the growth of a unique congested flora regime, where large cedar and cypress trees—so often associated with standing water swamps and wetlands—thrived alongside thick ground cover consisting of bushes, grasses, and immense stretches of thorns and thicket. It is very important to note that the congested swamp landscape made travel in(to) the swamp very difficult for those people who were not familiar with its terrain. But, for those that did learn
the arts of traveling and thriving in the thicket, water, and quicksand of the morass, a
diverse population of animals for hunting were present: deer, fish, bears, raccoons,
otters, innumerable species of birds, turtles, otters, snakes, wild boar, and possibly
larger predatory cats such as pumas or lynxes.

Amidst this congested and diverse landscape were many naturally occurring
islands formed in the swamp. To the far east of the swamp, close to the Atlantic
coast, a series of north to south running ridges stood in the swamp (they are no longer
in the swamp but that was the case in the historical era under study). On the western
edge of the swamp, within a half-mile of the Suffolk Scarp, many islands exist that
are geologically part of that formation. Finally, there are the many islands in the
interior of the swamp, perhaps remnants of ancient Atlantic shoreline or possibly
erstwhile hills that were slowly surrounded by the rising peat during the actual post-
glacial period formation of the Great Dismal. Interior and perimetrical islands are
often clustered. It is a premise of this study, based on several lines of evidence and
reasoning (e.g., documents) that such islands were extremely significant landforms
for exilic community formation and for human habitation prior to the historical
period.

Archaeological Survey and Excavation

The first season of survey began in October of 2003, only a few weeks after
Hurricane Isabel ravaged the Mid-Atlantic region, razing thousands of trees and
increasing the water levels of the Dismal in the process. Many parts of the 190
square mile GDR were surveyed to varying degrees in an effort to find islands or other areas of possible human use and inhabitation (see Sayers 2006a). One type of survey sector consisted of antebellum canal corridors while the second sector consisted of remote or interior areas away from antebellum canals and natural swamp edges. Sections of four antebellum canals were surveyed and included Washington Ditch (ca. 1765), Jericho Ditch (ca. 1818), Cross Canal (ca. 1822), and the Dismal Swamp Canal (ca. 1812). Several islands were found within canal corridors (300 meters on either side of a given canal). Remote interior survey was more difficult and satellite images, tree growth maps, informant information, topographic maps, and a bit of luck were all used to help guide survey in interior sectors of the GDR.

In both swamp sectors, islands that were found were surveyed through walkover inspection of ground surfaces and root masses (TRMs) of trees that had been toppled by Isabel. Small blocks of shovel test pits were also excavated on several of the islands that we visited. In combination, all methods of survey yielded solid evidence of precontact and postcontact use and settlement of swamp islands.

Six island sites were located during the first phase of this survey, including three sites in the Virginia portion and three sites in the North Carolina portion of the GDR. In Virginia, the three sites that were recorded are located in a cluster of islands near antebellum Jericho Ditch (the Jericho Ditch Mesic Island Complex; the sites are 44SK0506, 44SK0507, and 44SK0508). The three sites that were recorded in North Carolina include one island that was located along antebellum Cross Canal (31GA119) and two remote interior islands that are part of an apparent chain of mesic islands (31GA120—the Nameless site—and 31GA121). Meanwhile, Dismal Town,
the first settlement associated with George Washington’s canal construction project, was ground-truthed and verified as being an archaeological site (44SK0070). Finally, 2 isolated finds were recovered on other mesic islands. Thus, a total of seven sites were recorded and 2 isolated finds (on two more mesic islands) were recovered during survey (Table 3).

Table 3

GDR Sites and Their Possible Exilic Community Formations Based on Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Number</th>
<th>Site Location in Model Terms</th>
<th>Associated Canal</th>
<th>Possible Modes of Communitization at Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44SK0077</td>
<td>Perimetrical (pre-1765)</td>
<td>Washington Ditch</td>
<td>Semi-Independent (pre-1765) Labor Exploitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44SK0506</td>
<td>Perimetrical (pre-1805)</td>
<td>Jericho</td>
<td>Semi-Independent (pre-1805) Labor Exploitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44SK0507</td>
<td>Perimetrical (pre-1805)</td>
<td>Jericho</td>
<td>Semi-Independent (pre-1805) Labor Exploitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31GA119</td>
<td>Interior (pre-1810)</td>
<td>Cross</td>
<td>Scission (pre-1810) Labor Exploitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31GA120</td>
<td>Interior</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Scission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31GA121</td>
<td>Interior</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Scission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolate 1</td>
<td>Perimetrical (pre-1805)</td>
<td>Jericho</td>
<td>Semi-Independent (pre-1805) Labor Exploitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolate 2</td>
<td>Interior</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Scission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Table 3 shows, each island has the potential to yield information on one or more of the three modes of communitization predicted by GDSLS models. However, most sites did yield materials and/or evidence features that appeared to date to the period of interest for this study (ca. 1607-1860) and several of these were further explored through intensive excavations during seasons 2 and 3.

As a general rule, intensive excavations were initiated (during Seasons 2 and 3) in order to further explore promising locales at several sites that were discovered during survey. More specifically, numerous cultural features that were recorded during Season 1 survey appeared to represent historical exilic occupations on a variety of islands. Excavations were generally performed in blocks to expose known features and contextualize them horizontally as much as was possible. It was determined through survey that there is no wholesale disturbance (e.g., plowing) at any site in the GDR. It was also discerned through shovel test pits and intensive excavations that Stratum I (very dark brown loam, generally 10-14 cm thick at most islands and areas) and probably Stratum I/II (the natural transition lens, about 2-4 cm thick, appeared as brown sand) represent the historical era. Thus, intensive excavations did not as a general rule extend into Stratum II depths.

Intensive excavations were performed at the following sites during seasons two and three: 44SK0506 (VA), 44SK0508 (VA), 31GA119 (NC), and 31GA120 (NC). Cultural features were recorded at all sites that provide much insight into several aspects of at least two of the three modes of communitization predicted by project models. Also, an interesting, if quantitatively limited, array of materials were recovered in temporal and/or contextual association with these features.
Some features were fully or partially excavated (bisected) while others were exposed, recorded and left for future work. It is also clear from excavations that most features are quite ephemeral (although there are some exceptions) and the majority of features that were observed during excavations appeared to be architectural in nature. More importantly, most of the cultural features that will be discussed clearly originated in Stratum I (the historical-era stratum). Finally, geophysical survey was performed in one area at 31GA120 and Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) and C14 dating samples were collected at two sites during intensive excavations.

As will be seen in the following several sections of interpretation of archaeological evidence, intensive excavation proved quite successful in locating numerous historical cultural features and an array of materials that can be associated with exilic occupations at several sites. Through excavations, we are in a position to begin to address several of the research questions that were discussed in previous chapters. But prior to more nuanced interpretations of the historical archaeological record, I will turn to the evidence we have for the presence of the three modes of communitization that were postulated by project models. Once it has been established that differing modes existed in the swamp, we can begin to assess the evidence for implications for our broader research questions.
Multiple Lines of Evidence for Modes of Communitization

As has been argued in previous chapters, over the centuries that exiles fled to the Dismal, a variety of community structurations emerged. The various modes of communitization emerged on islands that were located at different areas of the swamp landscape; scission communities in interior areas, semi-independent communities at the edges of the swamp, and later labor exploitation communities along canals. Each mode of communitization had associated landscape use and artifact signature patterns. Unfortunately, the evidence we did recover for perimetrical communities is quite limited. Therefore, I will not go into any great detail about that evidence and simply suggest here that the evidence we do have suggests an exilic presence on islands at the edges of the swamp (see Sayers 2006b, Sayers 2008). Future work could provide certain evidence and further test GDSLS community models. That being said, we did collect much evidence regarding scission and labor exploitation modes of communitization that does merit further discussion here.

Interior Scission Community Archaeology

The three sites in North Carolina that were explored by the GDSLS are all candidates for being loci of scission community settlements. The Nameless site (31GA120) was the most explored archaeologically of the three sites mainly because it represents the most interior island of the three. In what follows, I will briefly
review only the relevant material culture and landscape features that were recorded at
the Nameless site in order to make the interpretation as clear as possible.

The Nameless site is one of several larger islands in a chain or group
(including 31GA121 about 600 meters to the west). Satellite images indicate that
there are four large islands that run roughly west to east and the Nameless site is the
third easternmost of the four and the most interior island that we visited. It also
appears that several small islands—perhaps one to five acres in size—surround the
chain of main large islands. As the site location model would suggest, this mesic
island complex represents a most promising area for exilic occupation, given that: all
of the islands are at least a mile into the interior; such a concentration of dry acreage
(ca. 60-80 acres in aggregate) represented by the island complex would provide a
potentially very large group of exiles much space to settle, subsist, and defend
themselves collectively; and because each island, save the last in the chain, could act
as a sort of buffer in the case of encroachments from the Suffolk Scarp to the west
(that is, people could island hop eastward into the interior in retreat or defense if the
need ever arose).

The landscape of the Nameless site is unique among the islands that were
visited for this project. The crest of the island is located in the southwest quarter of
the roughly oval shaped island while a series of 1-5-acre plateau-like areas radiate out
from the crest at decreasing elevations to the north, northeast, and east. Meanwhile,
throughout the central portion of the western 2/3s of the island is an east-west running
ravine or channel (5 ft deep and 20 feet at its widest) that provides drainage for that
part of the island. While the entire island, save the ravine perhaps, is inhabitable by
virtue of it being dry and sandy, the eastern and northern areas consist of plateaus that are perhaps only 1-1.5 feet above swamp level. Thus these low-elevation areas are more prone to dense underbrush and periodic flooding. No other island that we visited had a ravine or a plateaued landscape.

During the first season of archaeological survey, shovel test pits, and to a much lesser extent TRMs, indicated that there were features and materials present all over the island that might date to the 1600-1865 era. In fact, the results of survey at the Nameless sites were quite compelling insofar as the range and types of cultural features (island wide including postmolds, fire pits, and other pit features), a limited array of mass-produced materials, and a relative predominance of burnt clay and lithic materials from historical era strata accorded with our models for scission settlements. Intensive excavations focused in a relatively small area of the island where several interesting features and materials were located during the survey season.

During two seasons of intensive excavations, some 120 units were placed throughout a 1.5-acre plateau in the north central area of the island near the eastern terminus of the ravine (Figure 7). In this small area, five definite separate structures were recorded, all of which seemed to point to a historical occupation, given their relatively shallow depth, their rectilinear construction, and their similarity—as far as could be discerned—to known types of cabins at plantation quarters and elsewhere. In several instances, single postmolds or arcs of postmolds (small [5-10 cm diameter] to medium sized [11-15 cm diameter]) appeared in the same areas and units as rectilinear architectural features. These often appeared to represent a temporally
different use of the areas in question, likely prior to the construction of the more rectilinear structures. But because the postmolds appeared to originate in Stratum I, they represent different historical era landscape developments that helped create palimpsest feature patterns. Such complex feature patterns are another predicted aspect of the repeated or continuous presence scission community settlements. In the following, I will briefly describe each of the main architectural and landscape features at the site.

Figure 7. Map of the Excavation Block 1 and 2 Research Area, 31GA120, Nameless Site, North Carolina, GDR (map drawn for GDSLS by Graham Callaway).
Excavation Block 1

During the first season of survey, an arc of three postholes (5-6 cm diameter each) was recorded. Later, a block was excavated in order to expand horizontal visibility of the area. Excavation Block 1 revealed a complex of small (4-8 cm diameter) postmolds—84 such features in total—in the 9 square meter block (Figure 8). The complex appears to have originated in Stratum I as a diffuse feature soil lens was recorded at the base of Stratum I just before the features became apparent.

Figure 8. Excavation Block 1 Posthole Feature Complex, 31GA120, Nameless Site, North Carolina, GDR (map drawn for GDSLS by Graham Callaway).

A range of materials was recovered in association with this feature complex, including 2 dozen lithic flakes; a fragment of quartzite shatter; a piece of probable fire
cracked rock; and the base of a side-notched grey quartzite projectile point; and, many burnt clay nodules. Interestingly, a heavily corroding or leeching (white in appearance) lead shot was recovered in Unit 1, from between 5-8 cm bd, that exhibited the obvious marks (oblation) of having been fired. A probable gunflint fragment was also recovered in the block, as was a small animal bone that appears to have been cut with a knife or saw. Finally, a small possible iron nodule that exhibits heavy corrosion was also recovered. It should be noted that a piece of amorphous lead—indicating on-site smelting—was recovered in a small excavation unit a few meters north of, and at the same depth as, the feature complex.

The feature group seems to follow a slightly arcing pattern in plan and may represent a wall that was comprised of small posts, suggesting perhaps a more impermanent architectural form. However, no continuation of the feature was noted in small units excavated in the area north of this feature complex. Thus, the arc may be illusory and the wall may continue to the west. Alternatively, the small posts may have been part of a palisade or some similar camouflaging-defensive landscape feature. As palisades were anticipated for scission communities, such a possibility cannot be dismissed outright. Given the presence of several historical artifacts, it seems most certain that feature complex dates to the historical period.

While not enough of the feature complex was exposed to definitively ascertain its function, I suggest that it represents a structure. Small bits and pieces of bones, munitions, and reworked but damaged stone tools might be expected to have fallen within a structure and pushed through daily traffic and use to the sides or edges of the interior of the structure as well as in activity areas just outside the structure.
Exploratory units to the north, staggered at 5 and 7.5-meter intervals may have missed the remainder of the circular structure. If this is an accurate interpretation of the feature complex, the type of structure represented in Excavation Block 1 contrasts remarkably with several other architectural features recorded in the same general area of the Nameless site.

**Excavation Block 2**

Located approximately 25 meters northwest of Excavation Block 1, Excavation Block 2 was also established to explore several features noted during survey. Two large squared postholes were noted in two STPs, as were several artifacts at the lower depths of Stratum I and I/II (see Sayers 2005a:97). Intensive excavations in this area consisted of a 29 square-meter block in which two feature complexes were recorded, F79 and F81.

*Feature 79* In plan view, F79 appeared at the base of Stratum I-2 as a rather ambiguous feature of some size that was attended by several peripheral features (Figure 9). It appeared as a 0.5-1m wide dark swath that abruptly changed course in several places. These changes in orientation had the appearance of angularity, or rectilinearity, and the large squared postmolds found during survey were contained within F79 soil matrix. F79 soils yielded numerous burnt clay fragments, several lithic flakes, charcoal samples, and a fragment of possible highly corroded iron.
Also, one leadshot was recovered in the soils surrounding F79 but directly from the feature fill.

Figure 9. Feature 79 (Faint Dash Lines Through Central Areas of Feature), Arrows in Plan at Peripheral Features, Excavation Block 2, Base of Stratum I, 31GA120, Nameless Site, North Carolina, GDR (photo by author).

After scraping F.79 and other surrounding I/II soils, several features emerged that were rather intriguing insofar as they represent medium to large postmolds that existed outside F79 (that also contained the two postmolds found during survey). Plan observations indicated that three of these postmolds formed an arc pattern that appeared to go in a western direction quite independent of F79 proper. Thus, it was decided to extend EB 2 to the west to see if the arc of postmolds continued. While the arc of postmolds did not extend west, this abrupt end to the postmold sequence can be explained by the presence of Feature 81.
Feature 81  Feature 81 represents a very clear example of rectilinear post-in-ground structure (Figure 10). It was recorded in the western half of Excavation Block 2 and initially appeared as a very diffuse and ambiguous feature within Stratum I-2 (much like F79). At the base of Stratum I-2, F81 became reasonably clear, appearing as a grid-like and rectilinear architectural footprint. It was comprised of several partially exposed intersecting lines of feature soil, with the longest (5.33m long) running in a north-northeast direction in plan through several units; several west-northwest running linear stains ran perpendicular to the northerly extending linear stains (thus the grid-like appearance). While the entire structure was not exposed, a large area was opened up for recordation.

![Feature 81](image)

Figure 10. Feature 81, Excavation Block 2, Post-In-Ground Structure, Base of Stratum I, 31GA120, Nameless Site, North Carolina, GDR (photo by author).

Features 79 and 81 share similar orientations (north-northeast) but F79 is oriented 2-3 degrees closer to north. While F81 is most certainly an architectural footprint, the
function of F79 is much less clear (Figures 11 and 12). Its rectilinearity and its internal postmolds leave little doubt that it is indeed cultural in origin. But, its odd angles and turns do not immediately evoke an architectural footprint.

At the intersections of the linear feature stains, the feature matrix was quite wide relative to other areas of those lines. Within several intersections, large dark (black...
loam) oval, circular, and squared stains were visible suggestive of postholes, and thus the wider intersections are likely the result of holes being excavated to position posts.

Figure 12. Plan of Excavation Block 2 Showing Features 79 (fore) and 81 (back) with Numerous Other Features, View Southwest, Nameless Site, North Carolina, GDR (photo by author).

If true, generally speaking, posts were placed every 3-4 ft in constructing this structure. Also, postmolds were observed between intersecting feature soils (i.e., non-F81 soil) and may represent posts that were added later to the structure as older posts rotted out or were damaged.

Geophysical survey suggests that F79 is part of a much larger feature that is ultimately rectangular in shape and thus we may have exposed only a small and
decidedly odd section of that structure. Alternatively, F79 may represent a pen or fenced in area (hence the posts and the abrupt linear turns). While the slightly differing orientations of both features suggest that each was constructed at separate times, if these features represent scission community landscape developments we may not expect absolute precision in structure and landscape feature orientation. Thus, F79 could have been connected to F81 as an outbuilding or even possibly a porch. Laboratory-dating information indicates that Features 79 and 81 could date same time period. The OSL sample for F79 provided a date of AD 1737 +/- 50 (or AD 1687/1737/1787). Meanwhile, the OSL assay from F81 gave a somewhat earlier date of AD 1604 +/- 90 (or AD 1514/1604/1694). Interestingly, the C14 assay from F81 indicated that the sample was certainly historic, dating between 1640 and 1950 AD. Being reasonably certain that the C14 sample from F81 dates to a point after 1640, which does not contradict the upper margin of era for the OSL assay, we may then use the upper limit of the OSL assay as a guide for dating the feature (i.e., 1640-1694). Thus, F79 and F81 could conceivably date to the same time period (the late 1600s).

In all, the EB2 landscape feature complexes are rather compelling. Below, we will discuss some of the materials recovered from the features in more detail but simply as historically dated architectural features, they are significant. Because of their intriguing natures, exploratory excavations were placed across the remainder of the plateau and these yielded much more evidence of scission settlement in this area of the island.
**Feature 91 Complex**  A 4 x 1 meter block was placed just north of Excavation Block 2 toward the bottom of a slope near the eastern terminus of the island ravine. Within this block, a section of the footprint of another substantial structure was recorded in historic-period soils. In plan, F91 appears as an “L” shaped feature oriented along the long arm of the “L” in an east-northeast direction (Figures 13 and 14).

![Feature 91 Complex Diagram](map.png)

*Figure 13. Plan of F91 Complex at Base of Stratum I, North of EB2, On Slight Slope, Nameless Site, North Carolina, GDR (map drawn for GDSLS by Graham Callaway).*
The soils that comprised the L arm were removed and proved to be rather shallow (ca. 4cm) and yielded burnt clay and hardened sand. Importantly, excavations indicated that the feature fill was within a trench-like basin, however shallow.

After removing the darker F91 matrix, two postmold features were observed. Also, a very compacted/hardened soil underlay the F91 organic soil matrix, particularly in the eastern area of the longer section. Clearly, the placement of the structure related to the underlying compact soil, which was not observed outside of the F91 excavation area proper. The lack of charcoal apparent in the compact soil matrix suggested that it was not a result of the structure burning. Rather, the weight of the structure in the particular area or, possibly, pre-construction heating of the
ground for foundation strengthening may have been the cause of the compacting of the underlying soil.

Several smaller features were recorded in these units outside of F91 proper and all appear to be postmolds with one exception. Several of these features were apparent in plan at the exposure depth of F91, outside of the central “L” section of that feature. These features appeared as medium to large postmolds (between 15-22 cm in diameter), with three features aligned in a slight arc pattern in the area south of the L section (the arc would have thus been in the interior of the structure). While these posts were not dated, an OSL sample taken from F91 indicated a date of AD 1617 +/-55 (or AD 1562/1617/1672).

F91 appears to represent another rectilinear structure though constructed differently than F81. In the case of F91, we likely caught the entrance or door section of the wall, represented by the non-feature zone just outside the terminus of the short arm of the “L”. Small posts appear to have been placed in the shallow structural footprint trench. Meanwhile, several postmolds that most likely are not related to F91 are scattered in plan. Thus, this feature complex stands as a good example of a palimpsest signature area where repeated inhabitations in the same area impose on and crosscut one another.

*Feature 99 Complex*  A few meters north of F91 is a small rise that we dubbed the Grassy Knoll. Overall numerous features were recorded on this modest rise including the Feature 99 complex. This complex, observed in a 5 x 1 meter block (Units 61, 85, 98, 99, and 100), is comprised of Feature 99 proper and several adjacent features.
Though not exposed in its entirety, Feature 99 is located in the eastern end of the block, and represents pit of some kind. Approximately 25cm west of F99 proper was a narrow linear feature (F159) that contained two postmolds (F160 and F161) within its matrix. Features 159, 160, and 161 appeared within the matrix of F162 which was a large and amorphous stain that was present in much of the block. By appearance, these smaller distinct features were cut into the large F162.

The excavation of Unit 67 (located 3m north of the F99 block) exposed what appeared to be the same feature at 12cm bd. Excavation was halted in Unit 67 at that level. Soil core probing was performed to determine the extent of the F99 complex and it appears that the feature complex is 4 meters (e-w) by 7 meters (n-s) size; and between 6 and 16cm thick. The shape of the feature could not be determined (i.e., oval or rectangle) but its size is certainly impressive. Overall, the archaeological data seems to suggest that this is an architectural feature in which excavations caught central or internal areas of the structure.

F99 proper may represent a sub-floor pit and the linear feature with postmolds represents an internal queue of support posts. The southern profile of the entire trench indicated that the feature complex undulates dramatically, reaching very shallow depths (ca. 3-5cm) to more typical depths for the suspected historical age of the feature (ca. 8-14cm). Overall, combined with the plan at the base of excavation that demonstrated that large areas of Stratum II soils were present adjacent to F99 complex soils, this information calls to mind the appearance of F81 in EB2 proper. It will be recalled that in that case, the support posts are spaced at relatively even intervals and connected by long linear stains (likely representing horizontally laid
support beams) creating a grid-like feature pattern or footprint. In the spaces in between posts and related feature soils are Stratum II soils that seem to have had a slight mounded quality, perhaps representing where soils that were excavating in building the structure were thrown. This would have appeared as undulating feature/non-feature soils in profile (Figures 15-17). At present the F99 complex is considered to be most likely an architectural complex, given its projected size and appearance.

Figure 15. Feature 99, On Grassy Knoll, At Initial Exposure, Base of Stratum I, Nameless Site, North Carolina, GDR, View East (photo by author).
Figure 16. Feature 99 Complex at Full Exposure, Dotted Line around F99 Proper (probable Sub-floor Pit), Arrows Pointing to Queue of Postmolds, and Solid Lines in Rear Distinguish Stratum II Soils (light brown) and darker Feature Fill, View West, Grassy Knoll, Nameless Site, North Carolina, GDR (photo by author).

The OSL sample taken from F99 proper provided a date of AD 1769 +/-34 (or AD 1735/1769/1803). Given a dearth of associated mass produced materials associated with the feature, this assay may indicate that the scission ethos of minimizing reliance on the outside world exchanges continued into the later 18th century and possibly even the early 19th century.
Figure 17. South Profile of Feature 99 Complex, Showing Undulating Feature (arrows to darker soils) and Stratum II Zones (lighter soils), 31GA120, North Carolina, GDR, View South (photo by author).

*Feature 101* Also on the Grassy Knoll was the Feature 101 complex. It represents a definite architectural feature that appeared in Stratum I. It was exposed in a 6.5 square meter block and consisted of another large right angle or “L” shaped dark brown stain (Figure 18). As with Feature 91, the “L” probably represents an entrance to the structure. Also, several units exposed interior areas of the structure that appear remarkably like the interior of the F81 structure. Two large postmold stains were observed within what appear to be linear stains with natural Stratum II soils emerging in between those linear stains. Bisection profiles of the central “L” shaped element indicate that it too was set in a trench. Thus, the “L” shaped element was very similar in appearance to F91 in that is was clearly a trenched outer wall with smaller posts sunk into the excavated trough.
With a date of AD 1495 +/-80 (or AD 1415/1495/1575), the OSL sample was most likely taken from an area of disturbance or from soils that were not exposed long enough to sunlight when the initial structure was excavated. We are pretty certain that the feature dates to the historical era because it is very similar in style to others with secure historical dates, there were lead shots recovered from the feature (as will be discussed below), and it is rectilinear as expected of historical-era architecture. While the latest date provided by OSL approaches the contact era in the immediate region, it seems more likely that the structure dates to the 17th century at a minimum.

It should be clear that people settled the area north of EB2, including the Grassy Knoll, and that they erected rectilinear structures, often with generally similar styles. Also, numerous other features were observed on the slope near F91 as well as
on the Grassy Knoll, most of which likely relate in some way to the main features discussed. A similar pattern appears in the area west of Excavation Block 2 and a few of the features in that area are of particular interest to this discussion.

**Feature 111**  Feature 111, located a few meters west/southwest of Excavation Block 2, consisted of a dark stain that covered most of the plan of 2 x 1m unit, appearing at historical depths; only the SW corner showed Stratum I/II soils and the demarcation between both soils was quite clear (Figure 19). The feature cut across the excavation plan from the northwest to the southeast and almost certainly represents the outer wall of a building. This is most clear due to the fact that excavations exposed a 90-degree turn in the feature indicating that the interior corner of a structure was exposed. No other features were noted in plan. Of some interest is that soil probing indicated that the feature was a bit deeper (20-30 cm) than other architectural features observed at this site. Because it was determined that we exposed the interior of the structure, one unit was placed a few meters north of F111 in the hopes of exploring the interior of the structure a bit more thoroughly. Another linear feature, running north-south, was partially exposed western edge of that unit and may very well represent the interior of the western wall of the same structure.

The artifacts associated with F111 and the unit placed in the interior of the structure not surprisingly consisted of burnt clay and lithics. However, there was a heavy concentration of possible iron fragments that are severely corroded, as those examples found in the EB 2 mentioned above.
In F111, one of these does look remarkably like a nail while several others show seemingly thin strips or cores of iron surrounded by encrustation in profile. The OSL sample collected from this feature provided a date of AD 1712 ±61 (or AD 1651/1712/1773).
**Feature 112** Feature 112 was observed in Unit 38 (2 x 1m), located 5 meters west of F81 in EB2 and within 3-4 meters of Feature 111, and appeared as a dark brown loamy sand (at 8cm bd) that extended north-south in the unit, turning at a rounded right angle to the east in the upper half of the plan. Given the proximity of F112 to EB2 (5m west of EB2) and F111 it is possible that there is a relation between it and features found in those units. The feature, as observed, appears to be yet another structure interior although it is not clear whether it represents an outer wall or an interior post system as seen in F81 and F101. Through excavation, it is clear that F112 represents another trench feature, likely architectural based on similarities to other features at the site, although this one appears to have been dug to greater depths than usual (ca. 15-25 cm). Also, no postmolds were observed during excavation or at the base of excavation in the trench feature.

What stands out about this feature is that there was a concentration of probable severely corroded iron fragments as well several fragments of calcined bone. Of course, there was a high quantity of burnt clay and a light scatter of lithic materials associated with the feature as well. Thus, the artifact regime of this feature more closely resembles that of F111 than it does the materials found with F81 or F79. Thus, it may be that F112 and F111 represent the same overall feature, likely a large structure. If so, given the OSL assay for F111, we might expect this feature to date to the early 1700s.
In summary, intensive excavations in the areas discussed above yielded incredibly strong evidence for major inhabitation of the entire plateau. EB1 demonstrated that a probable circular, small-post structure was erected there during the historical era, while EB2 and its many exploratory units indicate that at a minimum six separate structures or significant landscape structures were erected in rectilinear fashion on this 1.75-acre plateau on an island in the interior of the swamp. Thus, we may have unearthed evidence of numerous scission community residences and landscape features that can clue us into the daily dynamics of community life. But, as a final discussion, I would like to briefly discuss the three depressions that skirt the edges of the excavation area and likely relate to the scission settlement.

*Surface Depressions* Three distinctive and nearly filled-in depressions or pits line the outer northern edge of the excavation area (see site map, Depressions 1, 2, and 3). These depressions are large and soil probing in Depression 2 indicated that it is about a meter deep at the center. Also, the base of Depression 2 was very compacted, comprised of hardened and oxidized sand and expedient excavations near and in Depression 2 yielded burnt clay nodules as well as lithic materials (Figure 20).

For a variety of circumstantial reasons (see Sayers 2008, in preparation), I have argued that these cultural features predate the Civil War and thus relate to the activities of exilic communities on this island. Because of the wide range of dates that we have for the adjacent architectural features, we can be reasonably certain that there is a temporal (and socio-economic) relation between the depressions and at least one of those structures.
As to what these features represent, there are three main possibilities. One is that they represent clay or sand borrow-pits for siding residential structures and other activities (again, we recovered burnt clay nodules in feature contexts). Second, they could represent pit housing; residents excavated the central area and raised a superstructure around it—as might be suggested by the burnt clay nodules that seemed somewhat concentrated around Depression 2. Third, they could represent water ponds where drinking water gathered after being filtered through the surrounding sands; the compacted sand at the base of at least one depression may represent the filtration of concentrated iron-rich water and/or where some sort of lining (e.g., wood or intentionally hardened sand) to impede water drainage was placed. Also, geophysical information and archaeological observations of the soils that have filled into Depression 2 do suggest that it does retain water quite well and
that there is a concentration of water at the base of the feature, just above the hardened oxidized base sands. But, regardless of which of these scenarios is accurate, the depressions may give us insights into community labor allocation and structuration, as will be discussed shortly.

**Scission Community Material Culture**

The material culture recovered that can be associated with the several cultural landscape features was remarkably uniform, and, different from typical historical era site signatures. Several lead shots, including a waster clump, were recovered in the excavation area, as was one small shard of clear glass debitage was recovered from the crest of the island (Figure 21 and 22). In fact all main feature complexes described above contained at least one leadshot, excepting Feature 99.

![Figure 21. Leadshot and Probable Gunflint Fragment Recovered in Excavation Block 1, 31GA120, North Carolina, GDR (photo by author).](image-url)
Figure 22. Glass Debitage Recovered on Island Crest in Shovel Test Pit, 31GA120, North Carolina, GDR, (photo by author).

Many of these were corroded and leaching which suggests that they had been in the ground for quite some time. Dozens of possible iron fragments were also recovered, most of which were concentrated in architectural features 111 and 38. At the same time, burnt clay and lithic materials were relatively abundant, dominant in the overall assemblage (the assemblage includes flakes, FCR, shatter, cores, tools of various sorts, and projectile points). Among the lithic materials, a few artifacts that were recovered from excavations are worthy of mention.

One lithic tool of interest was the modified Morrow Mountain Stemmed Type II point recovered from the F81 complex (Figure 23). This type of point dates to the Archaic period and several specimens were recovered at the Cross Canal Site in shovel tests at depths of 35-55cm below ground surface (in undisturbed soils). The
specimen recovered at the Nameless site, however, was recovered at a relatively shallower depth—8cm below datum—than would be expected and in the heart of Feature 81, a clearly historical structure. Furthermore, the artifact exhibits extensive modification on one side and represents an older projectile point that was reworked later for use as a scraper or blade. The fact that it was recovered at shallow depths amidst feature fill that dates to the historical era would suggest that the tool was modified for use by inhabitants of the structure or at least roughly contemporaneously with the inhabitation of the structure.

Another significant artifact was a Randolph Stemmed point that was recovered from the F91 complex (Figure 24). The relatively large point is crudely made from a most impractical and structurally dubious lightweight siltstone or sandstone. Of great interest is the fact that Coe (1964) and Perino (1974) date this type of point to 1700 (1725)-1800. That the parent material is such a poor kind of lithic for a projectile point either suggests a certain level of desperation for materials, or, a production of a tool for non-typical purposes (e.g., made during knap training, made out of boredom, made for children, etc.).

A few other partial or complete projectile points were also recovered at shallow depths and in association with some of the more prominent features at the site (e.g., a possible Corapeake point from Feature 79). Several utilized flakes were also recovered in excavations, as were several fragments of possible hammer stones and similar tools. Also, in association with architectural feature 101, a probable smoothing stone (quartzite) for arrow shafts or similarly narrow tools was recovered.
Figure 23. Reworked Morrow Mountain Point, The Reworked Edge on the Right Side, Diagnostic (un retouched) Edge on Left, From F81 Fill/Interior, Nameless Site, North Carolina, GDR (photo by author).

Figure 24. Randolph Stemmed Point, 1700-1800, Crudely Fashioned From Extremely Lightweight Lithic Material, From F91 Complex, Nameless Site, North Carolina, GDR (photo by author).
Finally, there is a clear preponderance of tertiary flakes when considering all Stratum 1 excavations at this site (see Sayers 2005).

Such a pattern would be expected from a community that regularly reworked and reused older tools and cores for use. Again, the reworked Morrow Mountain point certainly suggests such reuse systems as may one projectile point tip from Excavation Block 1, and, several of the utilized flakes. Unless we are prepared to accept the premise that a significant historical-era exchange system in lithic materials that brought materials into the swamp from the outside world existed, historical-era lithic tools, flakes, cores, and shatter likely represent the reuse of earlier deposited materials in general.

Faunal remains are minimally represented in the assemblage. Of some interest is a possible knife-cut bone fragment (from Excavation Block 1), implying either a knife or saw at the site, or, the acquisition of previously cut meat by island residents. Other bone fragments were concentrated in Feature 38 along with the possible iron-bearing concretions. But, ultimately, it is certain that faunal remains, like other organic materials, did not as a general rule preserve well in the sands of the Nameless site. Indeed, several faunal specimens, including the knife-cut fragment, appear discolored and thus likely subjected to exposure to heat or some kind of preserving agent.

If we now consider the excavated assemblage in toto, it is clear that the overall pattern follows predictions made by our scission community model. There is, among mass-produced materials, a dominance of lead shot and a limited amount of
Rather than mass-produced materials acquired directly or indirectly from the outside world, the predominant materials are lithics and burnt clay that were most likely obtained from within the swamp, at the site itself or from other communities within the swamp or at its edges. In general, the site assemblage—considering specifically materials from excavations and materials recovered from historical contexts across the island—is highly indicative of self-reliant and probably self-subsistent community structure.

Finally, a brief look at what was not included in the limited scission material culture regime. The most apparent example is the extreme dearth of ceramics. A few sherds were recovered across the island and in excavations. But, overall the historical ceramic component of the site assemblage is extremely limited, especially given the clear intensity of repeated occupation, and represents something of an unanticipated aspect of the artifact assemblage pattern. Given that clay was available to scissioners, the general site-wide paucity of handthrown ceramics is even more surprising. Yet, we have to presume that scissioners used vessels and containers, which points to the use of non-ceramic vessels for storing and eating. Most obviously, the archaeological record through extrapolation suggests the general use of perishable and organic

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1 While the possible iron fragments would actually represent the dominant category of mass-produced items recovered in excavations, we are at a loss to say exactly what materials they represent at present. Thus, they could represent munitions-related items (e.g., gun parts, etc.). But, even if they represent non-munitions kinds of materials (as one nail-shaped example from F.111 might suggest), their concentration in feature soils that likely date to the 18th century and may represent only one or two structures would suggest that later scissioners did access more outside world materials but that our model may hold for earlier communities. Or, alternatively, they may simply represent an aberrant occasion where a concentration of iron materials made it to the island and was used, judging by the context, for architectural purposes; for example, the community may have acquired a keg of nails and used them in construction and other related activities (e.g., house repairs). But, given the uncertainty at present as to what the iron concretions are, we must discuss what we do know and are most confident with.
materials for storage and food service (e.g., reed and wood containers, animal skins, etc.) in conjunction, perhaps, with occasional ceramic vessels. It is probable that such materials would not have been preserved at the Nameless site. We recovered no intact, preserved structural remains and very limited faunal materials and most of these latter materials that were collected appear to have been exposed to chemical transformation, like heating or burning.

As Table 4 indicates, we have several lines of temporal evidence that do, in aggregate, suggest historical origins for the main cultural features we have discussed as well as their associated artifact regimes. The overall landscape and artifact patterns observed and discerned at this site, especially when considered with temporal information, are quite suggestive in many ways and follows project models quite strongly. With a brief summary of the data presented, we will now turn to the political-economic implications of the archaeological record of the Nameless site.

Scission Community Formation, Landscape, and the Impacts of Swamp Extractivist Processes

The islands on which scission communities emerged represent opportunities for exiles to claim and, in some sense, control actual land within the boundaries of expanding and intensifying colonialist and capitalist systems. These exiles identified, at some level, the vast remote Dismal Swamp landscape as a marginalized landscape within which they could directly exploit land and its resources while eliminating the true stranglehold that the outside exilic world had over their lives. Whether it was
enslavement, indentured servitude, being forced off of traditional lands, and/or the strict penal systems that compelled individuals into the swamp, the swamp offered a relatively reasonable way out of those exploitative and dire conditions.

Table 4
Diagnostic Knowledge of Major Diasporan Feature Complexes at 31GA120

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>OSL</th>
<th>C14</th>
<th>Projectile Point</th>
<th>Lead Shot</th>
<th>Corroded Iron?</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>AD 1737 +/-50 {1687/1737/1787}</td>
<td>AD 330-450</td>
<td>Corapeake, possibly reused</td>
<td>Present, probably pre-1850</td>
<td>Present, Post 1600</td>
<td>Lithics in Stratum I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>AD 1604 +/-90 {1514/1604/1694}</td>
<td>AD 1720-1820</td>
<td>Morrow Mountain, Reworked</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Present, post-1600</td>
<td>Lithics in Stratum I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>AD 1617 +/-55 {1562/1617/1672}</td>
<td>AD 60-240</td>
<td>Randolph 1725-1800</td>
<td>Conical, 1850s or later</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Lithics in Stratum I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>AD 1769 +/-34 {1735/1769/1803}</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Lithics in Stratum I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>AD 1495 +/-80 {1415/1495/1575}</td>
<td>BC 200-30</td>
<td>Present, probably pre-1850</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Lithics in Stratum I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>AD 1712 +/-61 {1651/1712/1773}</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Abundant, Post 1600</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Lithics in Stratum I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EB1</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Partial Large Point tip, Poss. Reworked</td>
<td>Present, Probably pre-1850</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Possible Knife Cut Bone; Possible Gunflint Fragment; Lithics in Stratum I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More specifically, the landscape allowed for some measure of personal control over one’s labor, the products of one’s labor and the social and labor conditions under which one lived. For those exiles that chose to dwell within the swamp, the morass provided natural barricades to the outside world and thus safety within. In short, viewed from several angles, the unique Dismal Swamp landscape nurtured counterexilic scission communities, lifeways, and political economies.

As discussed in Chapter 3, some documents (e.g., Caleb Winslow, as cited in Martin 2004) and literature (e.g., Learning 1979) suggest that scission communities followed strict rules of community organization, had leaders who helped maintain that kind of quasi-militant structure, and maintained spatial and social distances from other communities in the swamp (at least after the rise of canal company swamp exploitation). It is also nearly certain that community self-reliance was firmly interdependent with systems of community subsistence. For example, studies of maroon groups elsewhere in the US shows that communities in deep interior areas of swamps, such as around New Orleans (Hall 1992), cultivated rice and other grains as a group, sharing the labor and produce of labor as a group. But beyond this bare outline, not much is known about interior scission communities in the Dismal. However, archaeological information does allow for us to expand on that limited understanding of community formations deep into the interior of the Great Dismal Swamp.
Interpreting the Archaeological Evidence for Scission Community Formations

Does the archaeological record support the contention that scission communities emerged in the interior of the swamp during the exilic period? The archaeological record, including certain artifacts and OSL assays, suggests that the area of focus at the Nameless site was occupied relatively consistently during the 17th and 18th centuries. It is certain that several different substantial structures were erected in the excavation area on the plateau. The archaeological signature also follows quite closely to anticipated patterns for scission communities. And finally, much of the evidence we do have comes from a relatively low-elevation area on the island and thus, in some ways, is not the optimal settlement location on the island (all else being equal, the crest would seem the all around optimal location for settling). Had only the occasional person occupied the island (and not a community) then we might, for example, simply expect individuals to opt for the high ground. But are there any similarities in the features or materials culture regimes that also suggest contemporaneity in island occupation by many people?

First, let us consider the rectilinear architectural features that were recorded. Features 91, 101 and possibly 81 share several construction traits, although our view is limited by a lack of total structure exposure in each case. In the case of F91, an “L” shaped section of a structure was recorded that was around 1 meter wide in both arms. In terms of its construction, it appears that the builders of the structure excavated a shallow trench and placed medium/small posts within it. Feature 101 also had a one-meter wide “L” shaped section of what appears to be an outer wall.
This structure also consisted of a shallow trench for the outer wall with medium/small posts positioned within it. In this case, however, excavations did expose a few square meters of the structure interior (unlike F91) and it had an appearance that was similar to the interior observed in F81 (linear feature zones with relatively wide support posts within those zones). What this might suggest is that, like F81, this structure had a raised floor represented by the interior support posts that were themselves supported by logs lain horizontally between each vertical support post. Due to lack of exposure, we cannot be certain that F91 followed the same interior plan as F101 and F81 but, given the striking similarity in outer wall construction, it would be quite surprising if it did not.

Thus, it seems that F91 and F101 share many affinities that suggest contemporaneous construction. F81 on the other hand is different enough in a main construction-method area—no outside wall trench was exposed—to indicate that it either is not contemporaneous with Feature 91 and 101, or, that it represents a structure with a different function or purpose; of course, both options may be true. But, it will be recalled that these three features, which do ultimately share characteristics between them, were given older OSL dates (16th-17th centuries) than the other three features that were assayed. Finally, all three features shared very similar artifact assemblages, consisting of lithics—including flakes, tools, shatter, and FCR—the burnt clay that was already mentioned, and a few lead shots. Not only do these signatures follow quite closely the predicted patterns of scission community material culture use, they also suggest contemporaneity, especially in conjunction with the other evidence presented thus far.
Feature 99, located several meters west of F101 on the Grassy Knoll, likely represents one structure. However, our certainty about that fact is lower in this instance than it is for other features at the site. As will be recalled, the F99 complex consists of a large trapezoidal pit feature (F99 proper) that defines the eastern edge of the complex while west of F99 proper is a series of features that likely present the interior of a structure: a narrow trench-like feature within which was 2-3 medium-size postmolds were recorded as well as a large zone of feature fill throughout the 5 x 1 meter excavation block. However, all that being said, we found no direct evidence of the larger posts observed in F81, just the queue of medium sized posts. But, the potential grid-spaced post pattern of F81 may have been observed indirectly through the presence of the undulating soils and the large squared area of Stratum II soils adjacent to feature soils. Interestingly, F99 yielded one of the more recent dates of the OSL assayed samples (1739 +/-34), which if it is a similar architectural style to F81 may suggest a later date for that structure (OSL assayed, 1604 +/-90).

Features 97 and 111, it will be recalled, were located just west and southwest of Excavation Block 2 (the F79/81 Complex), some 3-4 meters apart. In both cases, apparent interior areas of the corners of structures were exposed and in the case of F97, partially excavated. F111 was dated to the 18th century through OSL while no OSL sample was taken from F97. In the case of F111, the appearance of the outer wall was similar to F91 and F101; it consisted of a trench (as determined by soil probing) that was about 1 meter wide.

What seems to indicate a contemporaneity between Features 97 and 111 is, the artifact assemblages associated with each. Most specifically, the majority of the
possible heavily corroded iron fragments came from these features. Features 97 and 111 also both yielded a smattering of lithic materials but no tools or projectile points or any lead shots. But given the generally similar construction style apparent to both features, the shared material culture regime, and the concentration of concretized iron fragments in these features and to a lesser extent in the surrounding units, it seems reasonable to suggest contemporaneous use of the area by people inhabiting at least two structures in close proximity to one another. Given that F111 has been dated to the 18th century, this may represent a later settlement than that or those represented by Features 81, 91, and 101.

But, when all the features discussed thus far are considered, while the construction methods and perhaps structural styles seem to differ in significant ways, the general material signature does not vary to a great extent throughout the various contexts. Burnt clay and lithics dominate the assemblage while definite mass produced materials are very limited, mainly to lead shot. But, assuming the possible iron fragments are burnt clay, the signature of all features of all ages is really quite comparable which suggests that the scission groups throughout the centuries had similar requirements for material culture, reused older lithic and other precontact materials, and maintained a similar distance from the materials of the outside world. So, while architectural styles and construction methods may have varied over time, the material culture regime stayed somewhat more constant or consistent.

Overall, I think community-scale occupations of the Nameless site occurred at the Nameless site during the 1600s and 1700s. Furthermore, the artifact and cultural landscape data suggest differences as well as continuities in several facets over that
time; architectural styles may have changed but material culture regimes stayed remarkably similar for example. Thus, we cannot be certain if we have in fact found evidence of continued occupation for several generations at the site. But, we can be reasonably certain in suggesting that communities fluoresced repeatedly during the 17th and 18th centuries. But, we still have to try to determine way that scission communities operated and maintained themselves throughout the era.

Now that it is clear that there is evidence of community settlement at the Nameless site (as opposed to sporadic individual occupations), we can discuss in more detail what our various sources of information might indicate about the scission world in the Great Dismal Swamp. The next section will focus on what the historical archaeological record might suggest about scission exchange relations with the outside world and other Dismal Swamp communities, daily life in the swamp, and community structure.

**Exchange Relations**

Given that archaeological work has provided us with a glimpse into the sorts of material culture that were used within scission communities we are in a position to explore the kinds of exchange relations that emerged among scission groups. As was suggested, the documentary record indicates that maroons from the swamp did make raids on outside world farms and towns and we can allow that some of these recorded raids originated with scission communities. These raids are not numerous in the documentary record and we can suggest that scission groups were been responsible
for them, and for unrecorded or unreported raids, without undermining the overall view we have of the intentional distancing inherent with interior groups.

Lithic materials, that were likely acquired within the swamp, represent a significant part of the overall site assemblage at the Nameless site. The Randolph point discussed above dates to the timeframe postulated for scission community use of the island. Joffre Coe’s description of the typical context for the production of this type point is worth considering at length in this discussion. He suggested that (Coe 1964:49-50; see also Perino 1974):

The aboriginal cultures of the Piedmont [in North Carolina] disintegrated rapidly after A.D. 1700, and within a decade, as the gun replaced the bow and arrow, the craft of stone working declined. Between 1725 and 1800, however, there were still a large number of Indians in the Piedmont living in small destitute bands. As a result of their inability to continue to supply themselves with adequate guns and ammunition, they found it necessary to return to the bow and arrow for hunting and exhibition. While some of these people probably continued to manufacture traditional triangular points, at least one group achieved a different result, and this point type has been called the Randolph Stemmed. These points looked like crude miniature versions of the old Morrow Mountain II type. They had a roughly tapered stem and were narrow and thick. The chipping was exceedingly rough and crude, and most of the flakes were irregular and poorly controlled. In many instances, this produced a saw-toothed edge. The most interesting characteristic about these points, however, is that they almost always show that they had been made from old flakes or broken points of an earlier period.

During the 1725-1800 period, direct connections to outside world exchange systems would have been very limited and likely very unpredictable which would have been an ideal situation for the reintroduction of lithic technologies/styles and the ad hoc reworking and use of older materials and tools. Coe’s idea that Randolph Stemmed points were crude caricatures of Morrow Mountain points might actually reflect the unskilled reworking of old Morrow Mountain points that resulted in
finished tools that retained the general form of the older style but not the symmetry and finish. Also, Coe’s idea that they were made of old flakes and broken points is also interesting in light of the several tools, including complete and broken points, recovered from very shallow depths including the reworked Morrow Mountain point from the F81 area that could be considered to have a serrated edge. Coe’s discussion helps validate the idea that historic groups might mine, reuse, and rework/modify and old tools.

While one Randolph Stemmed point has been recovered, it is quite possible that other recovered tools (e.g. the reworked Morrow Mountain point) could be placed within this typological category. And, in light of the fact that Colonoware has been convincingly argued to have been made by African-Americans (Ferguson 1992) as well as Native Americans (Mouer et al. 1999), it would not be unwarranted to suggest that mixed Native American and African-American (or even predominantly African American maroon) communities were responsible for the production of the Randolph Stemmed point (and possibly other stone tools of that type or of general ad hoc natures) found at 31GA120.

The results of survey and excavation at the Nameless site indicate that there are very limited amounts of larger lithic materials on the island. In shovel test pits and TRMs, for example, only four projectile points and very few lithic fragments (e.g., groundstone tools, FCR, etc.) of larger size were recovered across the island; only one complete cobble or rock was recovered at all on the island below Stratum I/II (i.e., at depths corresponding to the precontact epoch) in all excavations to date. In fact, tertiary flakes were the predominant kinds of lithic artifacts recovered in
shovel test pits below Stratum I/II (precontact soils), a pattern similar to that observed for Stratum I and I/II discussed above. Thus, one can suggest that during the Precontact era, the Nameless site—being in the interior of the swamp and not of easy access—was not a consistent locus of intensive occupation but rather of short-term occupation or seasonal camping. This is also clearly indicated by the overall extremely limited amount of precontact ceramics recovered and cultural features observed at precontact depths. Rather, precontact people generally brought finished, or nearly finished lithic tools to the site and reworked them occasionally. It is also likely that few complete tools were deposited on the island overall as people used them off the island. In such a scenario, we might anticipate the occasional breaking and discard of a tool at site, or an unintended loss here and there, but not an excessive quantity of tools overall. Admittedly-limited excavations in precontact strata and TRM observations of precontact soils suggest this pattern, with only four projectile points, a few possible utilized flakes, and an occasional groundstone tool fragment having been recovered across the island.

If this interpretation of the precontact use of the island is accurate, then scission communities could not have recovered all of the lithics they needed from the island itself. Of course, they could have mined and recovered some lithic tools or even cobbles or cores. But to rely on lithic sources for daily activities, a scenario that is being suggested for scission groups at the Nameless site, they would have had to acquire materials from other sources in the swamp or outside it. We must consider the fact that other islands in the swamp—closer to its natural edges—yielded far more lithic materials during survey and excavation, specifically tools, full cobbles, large
flakes, cores, and larger pieces of fire cracked rock. Older lithics that were brought into the swamp during the precontact era are known to be readily available within the swamp.

I think we can make strong suggestions through this work as to intra-swamp exchange dynamics from the recovered materials. 31GA119 is located around three miles northwest of the Nameless site and about a mile from the western edge of the swamp. Not surprisingly, this site yielded the most archaeological materials of all sites we visited in the swamp, indicating a substantial precontact use of the island extending back at least to the Archaic. Lithics in particular are abundant at 31GA119, including tools, steatite vessels, flakes from all stages of reduction, and cores. Furthermore, the general range of types of lithics is greater than but includes those lithic types observed in the 31GA120 assemblage; comparable lithic types include quartz, quartzite, steatite, chert, and sandstone/siltstone.

If it is true that the quantity of lithics in historical contexts at the Nameless site is higher than might be expected, then they had to be acquired from sources beyond the island. I would suggest that 31GA119 given its large size and it high quantities of lithic cultural resources might have been another lithic source for the more southerly Nameless site communities. Accessing the materials from other swamp islands would ultimately be far less dangerous than trying to collect them through exchange or other means from the outside world. In short, it is most sensible that scission groups at the Nameless site would have first sought in-swamp sources of lithic materials. Thus, I suspect, based on admittedly incomplete evidence, that the North Carolina islands that we surveyed or know about through other sources, were
likely all occupied by scission groups (all islands, at a minimum were certainly likely
to be known by the scission groups at the Nameless site) and each island likely
provided groups with materials for community survival. I suggest that, prior to ca.
1820 when Cross Canal was excavated, 31GA119 was a prime source of lithic
materials for those at the Nameless site. In this scenario, scission groups that
occupied the Cross Canal site may have emerged as traders of such materials to more
interior groups (like the Nameless site) that occupied islands with far less lithic
resources.

Scission groups in the North Carolina swamp found that islands had different
resources. In the case of lithics, certain scission groups, as at the Nameless site, were
confronted by the fact that lithics do not naturally occur in the Great Dismal Swamp
and that precontact use of that island was limited. They found not nearly enough
lithic materials deposited during the precontact age to satisfy the basic requirements
of continuous self-subsistence. Thus, all scission groups that emerged at the
Nameless site would have generally had the same problem, whether in 1610 or 1800
and perhaps getting more extreme as time went on. As a remedy, scission groups at
the Nameless site produced items for trade with other scission groups through the
resources that they did have in abundance, namely plant and wood based items. Of
course, scission groups in all areas of the swamp had access to wood and plants to
make a variety of needed goods. But, if one scission group was willing to make those
kinds of items in surplus, and provide them by trade to other scission groups, then
each community would not have to make everything they needed, only certain kinds
of items. In this scenario, then, the scission communities at 31GA119 would have
had regular access to lithics from their island for trading and community use, and, other scission communities (e.g., at the Nameless site) might provide them with other goods made of natural swamp materials. When we consider this sort of scenario it helps us make better sense of the discussion of the maroon in the Aitchison and Parker (1763) account book (cited above). In that document, a maroon was said to have survived by making musical instruments, tables, and chairs as well as by growing grains. While I would not suggest that the maroon discussed in that document actually resided at the Nameless site, a similar mode of survival may be indicated. He lived by making certain items of material culture out of plants and wood, and, apparently exchanged them with unknown parties.

**Community Structure**

The architectural and landscape features in conjunction with the material culture at the Nameless site may allow us some insights, again however preliminary, into the way that scission communities were organized and maintained. The material evidence, in combination with the limited documentary information that has come down to us, does in fact suggest that there was a relatively strict hierarchy among scission groups. The documentary record does indicate that interior communities were organized around central leader figures and that there were quasi-militant and regulated qualities to community life.

One aspect of the archaeological record that may suggest the presence of scission figureheads is the consistency in the lack of outside world materials and the
prevalence of swamp-available materials. That signature indicates that communities did not acquire material goods regularly from the outside world, and, that they utilized in dramatically regular fashion materials that were readily available within the swamp. Given that we understand that communities did form on the island, the extreme paucity of material culture that is clearly from the outside world probably reflects a more strict or military community rule that minimized outside world contacts. Such an adhered-to rule had to be enforced within the communities and the most obvious means (that is also attested to in the documentary record) was through authority figures or authority groups. These individuals vested with community power to ensure the safety, through anonymity and perhaps assessing the reliability of potential newcomers to the group, would have had to limit the exchange contacts with the world outside.

In our discussion on whether we could be reasonably certain that scission communities did form at the Nameless site, it was suggested that the similarities between architectural features (e.g., styles) do appear to indicate that shared understandings of how to build structures among island residents. But I would now add that this shared understanding of house construction techniques might indicate that intra-community enclaves emerged that were spatially demarcated by more nucleated living areas across the island. This sort of settlement pattern emerged in Cuba among certain maroon groups there (La Rosa Corzo 2003) where kin-groups settled in clusters that were delineated by spatial distances and public or community spaces between nucleated groups. At the Nameless site, we saw that Features 91 and 101 were quite similar in appearance and were located in close proximity to one
another (20m or less). These facts alone might suggest that people related by kinship or community status (e.g., more recent arrivals) inhabited those structures. But what is perhaps most interesting is that F91 was constructed on a slope and may suggest that space was, at the time the structure was built at any rate, at a premium. But why was that specific space at a premium? There are a few possible answers most of which indicate that community status clustering—in its broadest sense—occurred at the site. The most general possibility is that there were so many people inhabiting the island at the time of the construction of F91 that they were forced to build their residence on a sloping part of the landscape. But even if true—and again, the archaeological record does generally support the idea that the island was heavily populated throughout the Pre-Civil War historical era—it does not mean, then, that other factors were not at work in determining community landscape organization.

One possible basis for organization is that a certain kin-group settled and perhaps expanded in the area and that keeping a more nucleated arrangement to that group’s domiciles and work areas necessitated inhabiting less ideal landscapes—namely the sloped area—within the EB2 area. Thus, one might anticipate that other areas of the island would yield similar evidence of nucleated multiple-structure spaces (interestingly, each plateau at the Nameless site has historical cultural features). The close proximity of F91 and F101, as well as the fact that the knoll on which F101 is located was clearly heavily used, if at different points in time, may indicate that people who wished to live closer to one another occupied the area.

Another possible explanation, that does not necessarily exclude the kin nucleating possibility, is that resident community status is represented in the
landscape and architectural arrangements, but in a different manner. Newer community members may have occupied more fringe areas of the island while longer-term members occupied central and optimal areas, such as the higher plateaus and crest. Of course, such arrangements would also be heavily impacted by decreases and increases in the numbers of community residents. But, at some point(s) it is likely that the community was large enough that residents did have to dwell in less than optimal areas and at these times newer members of the community may have used the EB 2 area. Of course, newer members may have come as kin-groups or quickly intermixed given their new statuses in the community. And, indeed, the construction of the structure (F91) on the slope just opposite the grassy knoll might point toward more familial relationships between the residents of each structure.

A third field of possible community reasons for the location of structures in the EB2 area relates to specialization within the community. The apparent intensity of occupation might relate to groups that were organized on the landscape because of their roles in the community vis-à-vis their specialties or assigned tasks. Although this does not specifically explain the similarities in architectural style, it does more broadly explain the nucleated pattern of settlement in the specific northern EB 1-2 and grassy knoll area. What is interesting in support, perhaps, of this scenario is that this same area is the only place on the island (as was discussed above) where the large depressions were observed. This might suggest that there was one specific resource in the area that was not obtainable elsewhere on the island or that the community demarcated the specific area for one task or effort. In this scenario, the clustering of structures makes sense in that certain members of the community were in charge of
certain tasks related to the depressions and they chose to build their residences immediately near the areas of work.

We can suggest that there was some sort of nucleation of structures in the EB1-2 and grassy knoll area that was more than likely due to kin and/or community status rules of landscape use and resource access. It is also possible that there were specializations within the broader self-subsistent community, where resources were acquired in the immediate area in question and that residents near the depressions did the community work involved in the "extractive" process. Overall, we can suggest that scission community structuration was rooted in: an overall self-subsistence ethos; a hierarchical organizational system that saw figureheads who helped enforce rules of behavior; and, task and labor specialization among community members, and/or kin or rank delineation across the island landscape.

The Impacts of Extractivist Processes

According to documents and narratives pertaining to canal companies, maroons were consistently brought into labor communities as unofficial workers (Crayon 1856; Olmsted 1996; Ruffin 1837). Importantly, maroons appear to have lived in close proximity to, or even within, canal company laborer settlements. Thus, after the inauguration of canal company extractivist efforts (post 1760s at the earliest), maroons were provided an alternative to permanent flight among interior scission communities: they could, as individuals and small groups, surreptitiously join canal company workforces, and, risk capture for to gain some rewards of swamp
living. These incentives included access to wages (likely in kind, not cash), company-supplied basic goods, like food, tobacco, and clothing. Ultimately, the advent of extractivist efforts to profit from the swamp would have the potential to dramatically alter the exilic political economy of the Dismal Swamp in at least three major areas.

First, with the corporate canal company profit drive, a new mode of communitization emerged that was based on the exploitation of labor for profit through extractivist efforts. We have called this the labor exploitation mode of communitization and it centered on the introduction of relatively permanent workforces in the swamp which labored at various tasks such as shingle making, canal excavation, etc. Second, maroons who fled to the Dismal could join labor exploitation communities instead of interior scission groups. Third, members of existing scission communities could leave and join with labor exploitation communities. Despite the fact that some incoming maroons would have still opted to join preexisting scission communities, the rise of extractivist efforts would likely have upset or transformed the population dynamic of the swamp. This would have perhaps been most clear in the drawing of more incoming maroons to canal labor exploitation settlements than to interior scission communities.

It is this dynamic, the drawing of incoming maroons to canal laborer settlements rather than to scission settlements, that may be the basis of the view common in the literature that maroons in the Dismal had shrunk to the "status of a nuisance" during the 19th century (Genovese 1979; see also, Leaming 1979; Wolf 2002). If such processes did occur in direct association with canal company
encroachments in the swamp, the net result would be that scission settlements dwindled in size, some perhaps went out of existence, and/or new amalgam communities were formed that were made up of members of several older established communities.

Do we have any evidence at the Nameless site that there were changes in population numbers, settlement patterns, and material culture regimes after the advent of the extractivist period (e.g., post-1790)? First and foremost is the interesting fact that none of the dates that we have gathered from OSL, C14, or even the material culture clearly indicate a 19th century occupation. In the case of OSL assays, none of the median dates fell within the extractivist period or era. Also, no artifact recovered from the excavations or survey at the Nameless site could be securely dated to the late 1770-1865 period, with the exception potentially of the Randolph Stemmed point, a type that Coe (1964) and Perino (1971) date to the 1700-1800 period. Overall, though, evidence suggests that people stopped building residences in the EB1-2 and grassy knoll area of the Nameless site by the end of the 18th century or the early 19th century.

Also, it may be relevant to make a point about the possible and projected exchange systems that emerged around lithic resource acquisition at the Nameless site. If the development of canals, such as Cross Canal, forced scission communities on islands near to or within canal corridors to move to other parts of the swamp and/or disband in some way, then, we would expect significant disruptions to the kinds of exchange systems that were postulated above. For example, if we are correct that scissioners at the Cross Canal site supplied scissioners at more interior locales
like the Nameless site with lithics (and were in return supplied with other materials), the dislocation of Cross Canal scissioners would have very much disrupted day to day life at the Nameless site. The supplies of lithics would have been cut off, if only for a period of time until other sources were found (e.g., new islands), and new material culture regimes would have had to have been sought (whether from the outside world, or more likely, through wood and plant materials). Furthermore, the impact on scission community structure and systems at interior islands may have been so great in such scenarios that the elimination of access to lithic resources may have contributed to the disbanding of communities. This kind of process may also have played a role in the increase of maroons at labor exploitation communities during the 19th century.

The general paucity of artifacts at the Nameless site that clearly date to the extractivist era is also quite interesting. With the emergence of the canal system associated with that era we might anticipate that the trade and transportation of outside world commodities along those canal corridors would ultimately impact the exchange relations between all exilic communities. Canals brought outside world goods into (through) the swamp and it could be expected that some of those goods would find their way to the more remote scission settlements. But, the limited quantity of post-1760 materials at the Nameless site, most confidently the case in the area of focus for excavation, seems to suggest that such materials were not acquired in great quantities by scission settlements. In another way, it seems that extensive and regular trade networks that included canal-related communities (e.g., labor exploitation communities) and scission communities did not emerge during the canal
period. And, if it is recalled that canal company workers proper seemed to not know much about interior groups (except for the fact they were present well into the 19th century), we can begin to consider the possibility that that interior scission groups did not develop consistent trade relations with labor exploitation communities. Consider the premise of the pre-extractivist ethos and community structure of scission groups that we have discerned through the archaeological investigation of the Nameless site. It stands to reason that scission groups would continue the anti-outside world stance that was the basis of that ethos and structure, even if outside world goods and agents did become more readily accessible during the canal company era. While it is true that labor exploitation communities were exilic communities, they were in fact outsiders to scission groups and agents of the world that they had fled from. Furthermore, it cannot be ignored that the documentary record indicates that canal company workers did regularly betray maroons working within the swamp. Thus, making oneself known to canal company communities, which would have been necessary in order to establish any consistent trade system with them, would have been a potentially risky act for scission community members.

By combining documentary and archaeological evidence, we can in fact infer several keys aspects of scission community structuration, organization, exchange systems, and connections with communities associated directly with the rise of extractivist efforts in the swamp. It seems certain that there are several areas of social structural and community connection between the intensity of occupation evidenced in the excavation areas at the Nameless site, the dates and functions of the central features, and the relatively unique artifact signature noted in the record. In the
following few sections, I will turn my attention to the Cross Canal site and the
materials recovered that relate to a laborer settlement at the crest of that island. It
should be quite apparent that a remarkable, if predicted, contrast exists at several
levels of analysis between scission communities and labor exploitation communities.

Labor Exploitation Mode of Communitization

During survey, we explored three sites that likely directly relate to
communities of laborers who formed largely due to extractivist efforts by canal
companies to accrue profit and wealth from the Great Dismal. Each site is located
within the corridors of pre-Civil War canals and the quality of evidence at each site
varies. Thus, for the most part, the discussion of the labor exploitation communities
will focus on the materials and information gathered at the site that was most
explored of the three, the Cross Canal Site (31GA119).

The Cross Canal site (31GA119) is located in North Carolina, a few miles
south of the state line and about 3 miles northwest of the Nameless site. It will also be
recalled that all areas of the island that were surveyed—and TRMs were extremely
abundant on this island—yielded an large relative quantity and temporal range of
materials (i.e., from the Archaic to the 20th century). Numerous projectile points,
lithic tools, large pieces of steatite vessels, ceramic sherds, and other materials were
recovered while several features were recorded in STPs and TRMs. In short, while
the crest would be anticipated to be an area of heavy use throughout the human past, it is also clear that much of the island was heavily used as well.²

Central Features

Of significance for this section of the discussion is the range of materials and the features that appear to date to the pre-Civil War extractivist period. Specifically, excavations unearthed the remnants of what is likely an undocumented laborer settlement located just south of the canal (10 meters) on the crest of this 40-acre mesic island. A large feature complex was unearthed and partially excavated after a small paint chip of a transferprinted vessel was recovered from a TRM and a large posthole was recorded in an STP, both within 5m or so of each other. Intensive excavations within the central feature complex yielded a relative wealth of historical artifacts, including nearly all the pieces of one diagnostic cobalt transferprint vessel (1820-1830[1840]), dozens of nails, several ad hoc iron tools, pieces of a Pamplin pipe bowl, a few gunflints, a probable wheelbarrow or cart wedge or pin, several glass shards, including diagnostic items (all datable to the 1800-1840 era), and many other items. Most of these were recovered in diffuse charcoal rich and nearly black feature just below the ground surface (Figures 25 and 26). When the artifact rich, dark diffuse feature fill was removed, a distinctive generally rectangular light grey pit feature (ca. .75m x 1m) was observed in the central portion of the excavation block and this was surrounded by a dark brown feature fill which in turn was surrounded by intact Stratum II soils at the edges of the excavation block (Figures 27 and 28). These

² Just to remind the reader, the Cross Canal island is the kind of lithic- and resource-rich interior swamp landscape that could have provided scission communities throughout the swamp with basic materials for daily survival and subsistence through exchange and other means, as discussed above.
features were partially excavated; the grey soil pit feature was bisected while the surrounding dark brown feature was removed in various sections throughout excavation.

The grey pit feature yielded some historical materials, including a few nails similar to those recovered from the diffuse black feature fill as well as the fragments of a brass ornament. This clearly antebellum feature was cut into an older probable precontact era pit feature that OSL assay suggest dates to 597 AD (+/- 162) and artifacts that were recovered from this lower feature deposit were generally limited to lithics and ceramics.

Figure 25. Map of Feature 1/4 Complex, Feature 1 Zone 1, Base of Stratum I-1 (root cap), Excavation Block 1, 31GA119, Cross Canal, North Carolina, GDR (map drawn for GDSLS by Graham Callaway).
Figure 26. Plan of Feature 1/4 Complex, Feature 1 Zone 1, Base of Stratum I-1 (root cap), Excavation Block 1, 31GA119, Cross Canal, North Carolina, GDR (photo by author).

Figure 27. Map of Feature 1/4 Complex, Zone 2 Squared Feature, Light Brown-Grey Soil, Excavation Block 1, 31GA119, North Carolina, GDR (map drawn for GDSLS by Graham Callaway).
From intact Stratum II soils that surround the central feature complex, a few small projectile points and several very thin ceramic sherds were recovered near several secondary features that were partially exposed in the plan of the excavation block. These artifacts, and possibly the features outside the main central feature complex, date to very Late Woodland at the earliest and quite possibly to the first centuries of the historical era. Given that the island is located at least a mile into the swamp, it is the likely that these later lithic and ceramic materials—and possibly the ancillary features—relate to scission communities that prospered on the island prior to the construction of the canal. Given the fact that excavations were performed on the crest of the island, it is of little surprise that such a concentration of materials and features from a variety of eras would be found.
The 19th century materials recovered and recorded on the crest of the Cross Canal site relate to a company laborer settlement. First, the diagnostic materials from the feature complex overlap quite well with the construction of Cross Canal (ca. 1815-1822; [1816, Cecelski 2003:47] Virginia Canal and Navigation Society 1988:39) and the subsequent few decades when lumbering activities are expected to have kept a demand for laborer communities. Second, much of Cross Canal was surveyed and no other islands were observed along the canal. Given that the canal company laborers who excavated the canal and those who lumbered for the company that owned the canal had to live somewhere, it was likely along the canal and thus at this island. Third, the archaeological materials themselves generally consist of items that might be expected to have been used within a labor exploitation community: cart-wheel wedges (workers hauled wood shingles in carts), nails, small medicine and alcohol flasks and medicine vials, tobacco-smoking appurtenances, knife blades, assorted ad hoc tools (e.g., recycled iron), etc., all could be expected to be present in such communities (Figures 29, 30, and 31). And, of course, the fact that the archaeological signature, overall, reflects the anticipated signature for Labor Exploitation communities is significant.

I infer that several features and related artifacts indeed do represent a portion of a settlement complex of laborers and others brought into excavate the canal and/or lumber the stands of cedar that were owned by the White Oak Spring Canal Company (Virginia Canal and Navigation Society 1988:39). But, intensive excavations on the crest of the island were ultimately far more limited than those performed at the Nameless site. Thus, we are not in a position to approach the exilic history at this site.
Figure 29. Large Sherd of Transferprint Cobalt Blue 9" Bowl, “Washington D.C., Capitol” Pattern, Manufactured in England, 1820-1830 (1840), From Shovel Test, 31GA119, North Carolina, GDR (photo by author).

Figure 30. Early 19th-century Leaded Glass Bottle Base (l) and Molded Flask Panel Shard (r) From Feature 1/4 Complex, 31GA119, North Carolina, GDR (photo by author).
in the same manner as we did at the Nameless site insofar as we did not develop a confident sense of the structures that were built by the community or any appreciable sense of the size of the community.

However, there exists a rich documentary record regarding laborer settlements and communities compared with that that exists for scission communities. While the documentary record for the labor community at this site is quite limited, we can attempt to come to a general understanding of some of the key issues centering on community formation and exilic life in the swamp at the site as we did through the Nameless site.
Labor Exploitation Community Formation, Landscape, and the Impacts of Extractivist Processes

It is certain that communities of laborers formed in the Great Dismal Swamp, generally under the auspices of canal company dominion. Most records seem to suggest that such was the case most often among the swamp roaming wood workers. However, given that canals took oftentimes many years to completely excavate, communities may have been initially comprised of canal workers. After a given canal was completed or nearly completed, woodworking laborers may have begun joining the communities. Moses Grandy (2003:169) mentioned that canal excavators "lodge in huts, or as they call them camps, made of shingles or boards". Eventually, one has to suspect, most laborers living along completed canals would have been timber gatherers, shingle getters, and other woodworking people along with a supervisor and perhaps a few with odd jobs. Indeed, Grandy may have been speaking of such a settlement of varied laborers. Thus, community formations would have been rather dynamic on several levels, including population increases and decreases that would constantly bring people into the group with varied backgrounds and specialties.

Speaking of 19th century shingle-making community (likely in the 1830-1850 period), a maroon who worked within the swamp surreptitiously among shingle workers described a basic dynamic or spirit:

Dreadfully accommodating in there [the swamp] to one another [in canal laborer camps]. They each like the advantage of the other one’s protection. You see they are united together individually with the same interest at stake. Never heard one speak disrespectfully to another one: all agree as if they had only one head and one heart, with a hundred legs and a hundred hands. They are more accommodating than any folks I had ever seen before or since. They
lend me their saws, so I might be spared to split my shingles; and then they
turn right about and accommodate damsels (Quoted in Redpath 1996:243; my
translation of abbreviated vernacular language used in original).

This description provides us with a clear sense of the basic social relations and
attitudes that may have structured most Labor Exploitation communities. Brought
together by similar compulsions and taking advantage of the safety found in group
coherence, residents valued one another as part of the whole group, worked together,
and showed respect to one another. Might this be a bit idealistic on the part of the
maroon informant? It would seem so. His later discussion of how canal workers
occasionally betrayed fugitives who were working amid the lumbering groups
suggests, at the very minimum, one could fall on the wrong side of people if one were
a maroon (Redpath 1996:245). But it does seem probable that communities generally
adhered to such general principles and kinds of relations, even if they fell short of the
ideal fairly regularly. Given that most accounts of laborers, of any kind, that worked
in the swamp for companies indicate that they worked in large groups, we would
ultimately expect community formations and dynamics to emerge. Olmsted
(1996:113) speaks of knowing a proprietor who “employed more than a hundred
hands in getting out shingles alone”. Moses Grandy (2003:170) mentions that gangs
of 500 to 700 persons were employed in cutting canals. Porte Crayon also mentions,
“a number of men” housed at “Horse Camp” along Jericho Ditch (Crayon 1856:451).
It seems very certain that large settlements did emerge along the antebellum canals of
the Dismal consisting of swamp workers and maroons who risked being caught for
the advantages of swamp work. While we have not located any documents, at
present, that describe a community of laborers settled along Cross Canal, we can be almost certain that one did emerge there.

Cross Canal was one of only two canals in North Carolina in the area west of the Dismal Swamp Canal; this is a sizable area within the 190 square miles that comprise the current GDR. The other antebellum canal, Riddick's Ditch, was cut in a north-south direction from the southern end of Lake Drummond and may have been extended all the way down to Cross Canal but this is by no means certain (Virginia Canal and Navigation Society 1988:32). All the wood products that were gathered in that area would have been rafted out of the swamp along canals and only Cross Canal extended several miles and connected with the Dismal Swamp Canal. Thus, we can be reasonably certain that the workers who labored south of the State Line for the Whitemarsh Company and any other concerns likely had their permanent camp(s) situated along Cross Canal.

This is an important point because we do have a list of workers who were hired-out in Gates County (the county in which the Cross Canal Site is located) between 1847 and 1861 (Registration of Slaves to Work in the Great Dismal Swamp, Gates County, North Carolina, 1847-1861 [Fouts 1995]). If Cross Canal was the main thoroughfare through the North Carolina section of the Great Dismal and if the Cross Canal Site was a main locus of worker settlement, then we can be reasonably sure that some or even most of the workers listed in that document lived at or spent some time on that island. This certainly adds a very human aspect to our knowledge of the history of that site. In the following I will list a few descriptions more or less at random from the docket that was written down at the county clerk's office in Gates
County of those souls who were hired out to work in the Cross Canal area of the swamp.

Isaac was owned by Allen Briggs and hired out to Andrew Voight in January of 1851 to work in the Dismal Swamp, presumably in Gates County. Isaac was 28 years old at the time, was “of dark complexion” and had been “slightly disfigured on the face by a burn” and also had a scar on his right hand middle finger. Isaac stood five feet ten inches high “without shoes” (Fouts 1995:62)

Turner was the property of Daniel Brinkley of Nansemond County Virginia and was hired on June 14 1852 by Abram Brinkley to be employed in Gates County portion of the Dismal Swamp. Turner was 18 years old, “of black complexion” and had a “wide mouth”. His lips were thick, had “large nostrils”, and a “tolerably low forehead. Already at his young age, Turner had “two scars on the off side of the knee joint of his left leg, several scars on his right leg, a scar on the back of his right hand”. Turner stood, without shoes, at five feet three and a half inches (Fouts 1995:84).

Peter was owned by James Goodman of Nansemond County, Virginia and was brought into Gates County, Dismal Swamp 1854. Peter was 45 years of age and of “copper color”, had a flat nose, and without shoes stood at five feet four and half inches in height. He had a scar on his right hand “which was caused by a burn when he was small”, “two small scars uppon (sic) his breast”, and his left wrist was “a little deformed” (Fouts 1995:102).

Henry was owned by John Cowper of Norfolk County, Virginia and was registered to work as a hand in Gates County, Dismal Swamp on November 1, 1855.
Henry was eleven years old at the time, had “a bright Complexion”, a scar on his right leg, and stood without shoes at 4 feet high (Fouts 1995:116).

Robert was 17 when they hired him out on August 31 1857 to work in Gates County, Dismal Swamp. He appeared “very black”, had “a small scar on his upper lip and one on the left knee pan just above the knee”, and had lost his little toe on his left foot. Robert stood at four feet 10 inches, without shoes (Fouts 1995:129).

The list could go on for workers who likely spent time along Cross Canal, many of who probably lived at the Cross Canal Site. In fact there are over 400 hired-out workers, and a few free African-Americans as well, listed in the document that spans the years 1847 to 1861. It is important to recognize that this document was created in the immediate wake of the new fugitive slave laws of 1847 that had been prompted by the heavy marronage into the Great Dismal and related swamps of the North Carolina coastal region. Thus, workers were assessed and described in county courts and the details provided so runaways might be found more easily than before (Martin 2004; Wolf 2002).

But the descriptions do provide saddening images of the people, of all ages including children, who were brought into the swamp to work in sub-normal conditions; normal conditions, of course, were also nothing to look forward to under the slavery regime as the scars that these people bore from life outside the swamp may attest. We can imagine the scene where each was brought before a Gates county clerk, stripped of their clothing including shoes, and looked over by cold eyes as owners and renters stood by to make sure everything was done properly. But, with
this document we do get a graphic sense of the appearance of people who may have inhabited the Cross Canal Site laborer settlement that we explored archaeologically.

By the time the workers list was begun in 1847, Cross Canal was already at least 25 years old and the island would have been the locus of worker inhabitation for about as long. Thus, the workers who came in the swamp to work later in the antebellum era would have found housing in a well-lived in and likely cleared area (if not the entire island then most certainly in the several acres nearest the canal); trees would have long been cut down, save perhaps for those around which structures were erected as was the case along Jericho Ditch, and the landscape thoroughly settled and worked over. There would have been domestic areas where workers were likely housed in groups and there also would have been work areas—equipment and vehicle maintenance areas perhaps—with carts, wood shingles, the occasional mule, and barrels lying around. Supervisors also were present and one must speculate and suggest that their housing might have been a bit better and spatially separated from the worker’s residence and work areas. For example, in several cases, canals were cut through islands or island clusters and supervisors and other higher ranking workmen may have settled on one side of the canal while the others were put in group housing on the other side of the canal on the same island. This may explain why Porte Crayon never mentions supervisors quarters in his visit to the Jericho Ditch camp but gives some detail as to the workers housing; the supervisor may have been located on the opposite side of the canal or on one of the many canal-adjacent islands. Also, amidst laborer communities there may have been a kind of company store where goods and materials were available for workers who were willing to deduct the
costs from their wages. Olmsted (1996:115) provides an account entry for an anonymous worker from an anonymous overseer’s ledger book as follows:

[company worker] to John Doe, Dr [debit]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 1</td>
<td>To clothing (outfit)</td>
<td>$5 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 10</td>
<td>To clothing, as per overseer’s account</td>
<td>2 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 1</td>
<td>To bacon and meal (outfit)</td>
<td>19 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>To stores drawn in swamp, as per overseer’s account</td>
<td>4 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>To half-yearly hire paid to his owner</td>
<td>50 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$81 00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Per Contra, Cr.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>By 10,000 shingles, as per overseers account, 10c</td>
<td>100 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Balance due Sambo</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The entry suggests that, much like company stores made more infamous in the industrial era, workers in the swamp were engaged in a system where the amount they were paid for their product was offset by the cost of routine goods and the cost to their owners of their own hire. But, clearly the clothes and basic goods used by workers were purchased in the swamp and these stores, which may have easily also doubled as the supervisors barracks, would have been present near canals (for easy access to goods) and thus likely in the settlements themselves. Olmsted seems to suggest this scenario when he states that, “each man [laborer] is furnished with a quantity of provisions and clothing, of which, as well as of all that he afterwards draws from the stock in the hands of the overseer, an exact account is kept” (Olmsted 1996:114). I might add that it is not surprising to see that goods provided by companies were rather pricey relative to earnings in the Great Dismal, if Olmsted’s account is to be trusted.
There would have also been tracks and corduroy roads crisscrossing the island and extending out into the surrounding morass. The islands, it must be remembered would have likely functioned as depots to which wood workers, shingle getters and others who harvested the swamp brought the results of the work for itemizing by supervisors or special hired workers (Crayon 1856). Then, the wood products, accounted for and organized for shipment and sale, would have been loaded on to one of the thousands of bateaux and skiffs that sailed up and down the canals yearly, most likely from a wharf at the island. Given the traffic along the canals, one also has to imagine that captains and hands often stopped over at the settlement for rest and perhaps to trade goods with workers and supervisors.

As a final point, companies also took advantage of the cleared areas of their swampland and did in fact grow foodstuffs in the swamp, namely rice. While there is no definite account in the literature of who worked the harvests, it seems safe to suggest that the hired workers did such work; whether this was done on a rotational basis or whether specific workers were brought in to work the rice fields rather than in the rest of the swamp is not clear. But, as was mentioned, near the island is a large rice field that legend does in fact attribute to George Washington. While I cannot be sure of that fact, I do suspect that the rice field was either begun or taken over by the Whitemarsh Company (around the time of the construction of Cross Canal) and enslaved workers brought in to grow and harvest the rice. Thus, there would have been many people working in the rice field, located just north of, and very visible from, the canal during the appropriate seasons. The products of the field were
probably taken out of the swamp by the same canal boats and may have also been used to feed the worker community.

In any case, the scenario we can build about the appearance of the laborer community settlement at the Cross Canal site can help us to better frame the archaeological materials and information that were recorded and discussed above. We recovered a limited quantity, but relatively wide range, of materials in the feature complex on the crest of the island.

Interpreting the Archaeological Evidence for Labor Exploitation Community Formations

The documentary record provides us with a general understanding of the structure and social systems that attended the formation of Labor Exploitation communities. But, we still are interested in knowing more about the exchange systems that emerged among these communities, and, in developing a stronger sense of the impact of extractivist processes on the swamp and among these communities that emerged as direct results of the extractivist system. We saw that a range of materials was recovered from a larger feature complex that consisted of a central semi-squared pit feature that was overlain by a lens of charcoal and artifact heavy soil. These two features certainly date to the 19th century and are likely related. Of the materials that are associated with and help date the feature, there is a relatively wide range of unsurprising and common materials: an iron wedge from a cart or wheelbarrow; wrought nails that date to the 18th or early 19th century as well as
machine cut nails that date to the 19th century; the fragments of at least one paneled Pamplin pipe bowl which dates from the 19th century; hundreds of small bone fragments probably from meals; oyster shells; and cast iron items, several of which look like ad hoc tools but may be rims to cast iron pots or containers (Bill Pittman, personal communication, 2006).

But I would like to at present focus on a few of the materials that seem to be somewhat anomalous in the context of an enslaved laborer settlement in the middle of a swamp. These include: the nearly complete cobalt transferprinted vessel from the 1820s-30s; the fragments of glass bottles, most of which represent a medicine bottle and a somewhat elaborate molded liquor flask; several portions of knives, one of which is a nearly complete table knife and a sharpening stone (whetstone); and two gunflints, one French and the other British and well-used in a pistol. Discussion of these materials will help us to interpret not only the feature but also the social context in which it was created.

The cobalt blue transferprinted bowl represents the only mass-produced ceramic that we recovered from any context on the island. The cobalt blue vessel stands out among the other materials recovered from the antebellum feature complex, and in the swamp generally, in its elegance, function, and expense. It is also quite likely that the bowl was once part of a set of dishes, as most transferprinted ceramics of this period were (Miller 1980); while the complete set could have feasibly been brought to the settlement, it seems much more likely, given that no other fragments were found in the feature complex or elsewhere, that only the one vessel found its way to this site in the swamp. While the residents had to eat their repasts in vessels,
the unique nature of this particular vessel and its relative high cost suggest that not everyone ate from expensive ironstone dishware.

The several fragments of glass bottles that were recovered from the feature complex represent at least three different vessels. One is an aqua blue lead glass medicine bottle, another is a small vial, and the third is a molded clear glass flask that also shows signs of heavy use on the rim. On one hand, the recovery of glass vessels is not altogether surprising in itself. But, as Olmsted informs us from his trip to the swamp in 1853 (1996:115), “no liquor is sold or served to the negroes in the swamp, and, as their first want when they come out of it is an excitement, most of their money goes to the grog shops”. In support of this, no company records gave even the slightest indication that alcohol was brought into the swamp by companies for workers or supervisors. However, only a few years later, Porte Crayon took his trip into the swamp and clearly did far more socializing with the workmen of the swamp than did Olmsted. Thus, he shared toddies with workers (Crayon 1856:448) and apparently sees whiskey in one of the “picturesque sheds” in which workers lived (Crayon 1856:451). So, while Olmsted likely interviewed company representatives and/or supervisors and heard the “party line” (and rather naively believes it, apparently), Crayon was allowed a more realistic glimpse into the daily lives of the men he had socialized with. So, in conjunction with Crayon’s testimony from direct observation, the fact that a glass whiskey flask was represented in the feature as well as a probable medicine bottle, which thus likely contained a good amount of alcohol, suggests that inebriants did make their way to laborer settlements. While the presence of alcohol at the laborer settlement may not be incongruous with
expectations derived from some documents, they do point to the fact that general rules prohibiting alcohol were not adhered to.

Knives or blades were a somewhat unexpected find, especially in such a concentrated manner. At least three different knives are represented and at least one of those was a sharp blade. Another was a relatively inexpensive table knife (Pittman, personal communication, 2006) while a few other fragments represent the broken midsections of an iron blade, likely sharp as well given its apparent V-shape profile. The presence of sharp knives, implements that could in theory be used as weapons, in an enslaved laborer camp that was likely not supervised by more than one or two overseers is potentially significant. Of course, knives could have been quite common in such camps and it is very easy to recognize the fact that swamp-roaming workers would have had to have sharp implements, whether they be axes, machetes, shovels, or knives. But, what is of interest is that so many were found in a concentrated manner within a feature at this site. Furthermore, the inexpensive table knife was found among them and when considered in conjunction with the other knives it may represent something other than its assumed function would attest. The presence of a whetstone most poignantly testifies to the fact that knives and other sharp implements were used and maintained perhaps even the knives found in association with it. What must be kept in mind is the fact that the occupation of this site occurred within the memory of Gabriel’s Rebellion and the Easter Rebellion (1800/1802) and quite possibly at the time of Nat Turner’s Insurrection (1831) who was thought to have planned on heading into the swamp. Furthermore, the swamp was scoured—likely along this canal and in this exact area—for maroons and Nat
Turner specifically during that insurrection. If the site dates as late as the 1840s-1860s, then the register of workers demonstrates the fear that planters and companies had of marronage and of having a swamp full of rebellious freemen. So, combined with the fact that it is always unwise to arm exploited subordinates from the point of view of those in power, we must be a bit puzzled by the presence of potentially lethal weapons amidst the debris of an enslaved laborer camp in the Dismal, a most notorious haven for criminals and maroons. And that holds for any time in the 19th century prior to the Civil War.

The presence of two gunflints (and a possible reused third gunflint) may suggest the same sort of issues as the knives do. But, several writers suggest that workers augmented their company rations with hunting and fishing (Olmsted 1996:115). The maroon that Redpath interviewed said that workers often fished at Lake Drummond (Redpath 1996:244) and they hunted wild hog but it is clear from his description that they did not use guns but rather ran them into heavy swamp and drowned them (Redpath 1996:244). In fact, other observers of labor camp life suggest that workers were very well provisioned by companies—or at least that they had ready access to pre-made food. Moses Grandy (2003:169) suggests that, "the food is more abundant that that of field slaves; indeed it is the best allowance in America: it consists of a peck of meal, and six pounds of pork per week" but the pork was not always of the best quality (see also Crayon 1856:451). So, it seems likely that workers did augment their rations or provisions but it is not entirely clear if they were allowed potentially dangerous kinds of implements to do so. But, interestingly,

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3 It will be recalled that documents indicate that the militia parties that scoured the swamp originated in Gates County, the county in which Cross Canal and the site are located.
one of the gunflints was heavily used in a pistol, not a rifle. Because pistols are not optimal hunting instruments, but rather better for self-protection or close range firing one has a hard time interpreting that find as having been acquired for hunting purposes. Thus, some of the seemingly odd or somewhat anomalous artifacts can be explained when considered in conjunction with the documentary record, such as the alcohol bottles and gunflints. However, the presence of the ironstone vessel, the knife blades, and perhaps the pistol gunflint are still somewhat unexplained. I will return to a discussion of these materials after considering the nature of the feature in which they were found in more detail.

There seem to be several possibilities as to the nature of the central 19th century feature at the Cross Canal site. One is that it represents a dumping area. Second is that it represents a privy in which materials were regularly thrown for an unknown duration of time. Third is that it represents the dwelling of laborers. Fourth is that it represents the dwelling of a supervisor which may have doubled as a kind of company store. Unfortunately excavations were not expansive enough to determine with certainty which of these scenarios is most probable. Now, at some level it is not entirely necessary to know exactly what structure or landscape feature this complex represents; questions could center on what do the materials represent insofar as the community is concerned. But I would like to make suggestions regarding which scenario I think is most likely and why prior to discussing the materials and feature in the slightly broader community context.

I do not think the feature represents a dumping area or midden. In the swamp, no matter what kind of community one is considering, materials would have had great
value unless in absolutely unserviceable condition. It seems clear that the ceramic vessel was broken in the immediate area quite possibly after deposition (well over 95% of the shards were located in 1-2 square foot area of the feature) and it is difficult to believe that an item such as that would be discarded before it was absolutely necessary. Also, much of the iron materials could have probably found ad hoc uses, including nails. Finally, the nearly complete knife was also no doubt quite usable when it was deposited and that also seems an unlikely scenario. From a different angle, the charcoal-rich feature was widely spread and does not call to mind a more contained pit where materials are concentrated. But, perhaps most importantly, the evidence suggests that a structure burnt in place given the high amount of charcoal mixed in with the assemblage and the fact that many of the nails that were recovered were not corroded suggesting exposure to extreme heat; indeed some of these nails are corroded on the head but not in the center of the stem suggesting only the part that was imbedded in the structural wood was exposed to high heat. Also, many of the nails were relatively straight suggesting that they had not been pulled from wood, which bends nails, but rather were deposited in wood or burnt wood as this case may be.

Might the feature represent a privy? Given that a 1 x 1.5m semi-squared and distinctive feature was one element in the feature complex—stratigraphically below much of the material in question—this possibility cannot be ruled out entirely. However, the depth was rather shallow for a privy that was to be used by potentially hundreds of people and comparatively few artifacts were recovered from the squared feature. Rather most materials were recovered from above it and spread out a few
meters around it in all directions except south (this fact, by the way, may suggest that a structure fell in on itself after it burned). Also, a similar logic applies as above. Some of the materials were perfectly useable and, while discard in the privy of anything was possible, I would suspect that in a swamp environment, casual discard of transfer printed bowls, usable gunflints, and useable knives would have not happened too often; and, unappealing as this sounds, if one had to discard such items for fear of discovery, I would think that they would bother to reacquire them at a safer time. Again, though, the privy hypothesis cannot be entirely discounted.

Before considering the last two scenarios, an important fact derived from the archaeological materials must be mentioned. While there is evidence that a structure burnt in place there is no evidence that non-architectural materials ever saw fire or excessive heat: none of the glass shards are melted; the ceramic vessel shows no signs of burning; aside from a knife blade tip and a handful of other cast iron items, the iron materials are moderately to severely corroded; the faunal remains are not calcined; and, the oyster shells do not indicate exposure to heat or flame. If a structure burnt in place while it was being actively used, and these materials were being stored above ground within the structure we would most certainly expect to see flame and heat damage to much of the assemblage. Rather, the artifacts suggest that they were already in the ground prior to the burning of the structure; indeed much of the ceramic vessel, and many other artifacts, were recovered below the upper charcoal- and artifact-rich lens but, also, clearly within feature matrix. So the evidence may suggest that some materials were intentionally buried within a structure prior to the time that the structure itself burned to the ground.
There is every possibility that the feature does in fact represent one small area of or within a laborers’ shack or residence. Because of the multi-component nature of the feature, it is more than likely that older feature soil has limited our ability to clearly discern the footprint of the structure. But, the evidence appears to point to the fact that some of the materials were buried prior the time the structure burnt down. As was suggested, much of the material could be reasonably expected to have flowed in the use-circuits of laborer communities. Some of the more anomalous finds also have possible interpretations that will be discussed shortly. One general fact that favors the interpretation that the feature does represent a laborer’s structure is simply that there were far more laborers within communities than there were supervisors; as Olmsted (1996:115), Grandy (2003), and several canal company documents (Richard Blow Ledger 1805) seem to suggest, there was only one Anglo supervisor for these communities and as Crayon (1856) noticed, African-Americans were often given more bureaucratic and accounting tasks under their supervisors. Thus, the odds favor the feature and materials representing specifically an enslaved laborer structure and attendant materials, less likely and African-American managerial worker, and least likely a company supervisor.

Yet, there are some circumstantial aspects to the feature that may suggest that despite the odds, the feature complex does represent a supervisor’s residence or a higher up middle manager. Some of the materials, namely the ceramic vessel, but perhaps also the molded whiskey flask and pistol flint, may indicate a person of a high status within the community—status in the sense of social position and access to materials. Also, the feature is located very close to the canal itself. This may suggest
that the person who inhabited the structure was someone who needed to be near the area where wood products were organized and tallied prior to their being loaded on the barges and bateaux of Cross Canal, which could be a supervisor or managerial workers. Third, the feature complex is located within the more optimal space of the island itself—the crest and near the canal—which may have been granted to people higher up in the community hierarchy. For the purposes of analysis, I will generally suggest that the feature represents a company worker’s residence but it should be kept in mind that this is by no means certain.

We are not in a position to determine with any certainty which of the alternatives is true regarding who was associated with the feature complex at Cross Canal. I think the arguments are generally sound in either case. But, we can still take one step back and posit a more detailed interpretation of the material and documentary record to come to an understanding that is of some significance to developing as clear a vision as possible of the Labor Exploitation mode of communitization. It must be remembered that excavations proceeded with a relatively simple objective in mind: to develop a sense of the material culture at a Labor Exploitation community site in order to gain an understanding of exchange relations and the impact of corporate efforts to develop the Great Dismal, and, to provide a comparison with more remote settlements (scission communities). While it is certainly of interest to discern who among a laborer-dominated community owned what or was responsible for landscape features, such concerns are ultimately secondary to those basic issues. In order to better understand the material record at the Cross Canal site, we must first quickly revisit some of the details provided by
eyewitness regarding the dynamics within labor communities that included both company workers proper and maroons.

The first pertinent aspect of canal company community life was that lumbermen most certainly had certain freedoms that many enslaved persons living in the outside world did not have. Olmsted (1996:115) suggests that, "no 'driving' at his work is attempted or needed. Nor force is used to overcome [indolence]. The overseer merely takes a daily account of the number of shingles each man adds to the general stock...". Porte Crayon's account in general demonstrates that company workers in general had a remarkable freedom of travel and possession (i.e., what they could have on their person) and that among the African-American workers of the swamp, there were managerial types of workers. Crayon's travelogue also makes no mention of his having observed any non-African-American supervisors despite the fact that he visited a permanent community. The swamp was vast and company holdings quite large. Lumbermen were sent throughout the holdings of whatever company they worked often for many days at a time (Ruffin 1837). Thus, workforces were divided across the landscape, when not at the central community settlement areas, which would have required the hiring of many supervisors to watch and discipline lumbermen on top of the cost of hiring out or purchasing laborers. It would seem that the incentive-based labor and payment system that companies developed proved more cost effective than continuous supervision through multiple supervisors.

A second key point is that canals were heavily trafficked. Merchants, pilots, and enslaved boatmen continuously traveled up and down canals taking shipments in,
out of, and through the swamp. With so much traffic, it is clear, as we discussed with a few examples in a previous chapter that many different kinds of commodities flowed through the swamp. Thus, the people in the swamp represented an extension of the outside world consumer market into the morass. In other words, Labor Exploitation communities did indeed consume food and goods from the outside world and it would make perfect sense that they did not limit themselves only to the materials that were provided by companies and the food they could get from the swamp itself. It is clear that boatmen and pilots did stop their vessels at laborer communities to get loads of wood products like shingle and deliver them to parts outside the swamp (Cecelski 2003; Crayon 1856; Grandy 2003). It is also most certain that the boatmen of the swamps, including African-American pilots, were a central aspect of the broader maritime trade system and they thus fostered connections to that system in which goods innumerable circulated (Cecelski 2003).

A third important point in interpreting the materials at the Cross Canal site is that maroons worked for lumbermen—in a kind of sub-contractor relationship—and were “paid” by those lumbermen and also fed although one cannot rule out direct payment by companies in certain instances. Crayon talks of lumbermen producing far more shingles than they could have possibly produced alone (also implying that no supervisors were present in the recesses of the swamp where workers cut trees) and drawing 2-3 times the provisions that were necessary for one person. “But the provisions are furnished, the work paid for, and no questions are asked, so that matter always remains in mystery” (Crayon 1856:451). In other words, the companies did not care how the goods were produced and who produced them given the capitalistic
profit motive. Redpath's (1996) interview with a former maroon of the Dismal also indicates that maroons worked for lumbermen. That maroon said that he "boarded with a man that gave me two dollars a month for the first one: after that I made shingles for myself. There are heaps of folks in there [the Dismal Swamp] to work. Most of them are fugitives or else hiring their time (Redpath 1996:243, my translation of vernacular). The maroons that worked alongside canal company workers proper were most surely part of the communities but their relative social statuses may have been different. Also, one does get the impression from the documentary record that maroons who worked for companies did not live in company settlements themselves but nearby. Olmsted's (1996:121) Joseph Church said that the maroons who worked with company laborers had huts in "'back places' hidden by bushes, and difficult of access. Olmsted (1996:121) also verifies that maroons worked among company laborers for provisions, clothing and payment. As certain as we can be about any aspect of the social history of the Great Dismal, maroons worked for canal companies, directly or indirectly, and were paid in some manner for their efforts.

Finally, employees proper would have seen the system of wage-payment as a means of building up funds necessary for buying their own freedom. Moses Grandy (2003) clearly had this in mind as he worked as a canal excavator and later a boatman, eventually purchasing his freedom after several attempts. Olmsted (1996:116) also recounts a story of a swamp worker buying his freedom. And it must be added that it would be nearly impossible to believe that enslaved people who were paid any amount of money would not, generally speaking, consider saving that money
to at least attempt to buy their freedom; swamp work represented a relatively rare opportunity for enslaved workers to possess money and save it.

So, to summarize the points above, lumbering in the swamp clearly provided workers with a loosening of constraints including a general lack of constant or even consistent supervision, the freedom to acquire money, and access to a trade and commercial circuit (e.g., the canals and shipments of goods on boats). Maroons also found their freedom in the swamp itself and found that they could get provisions, clothing and payment of some kind from workers proper. While maroons may have settled at the outskirts of canal company camps, they did comprise a consistent constituency among the communities that emerged along canals. These points have been made so that we can further consider the potential political-economic significances of many of the materials that we recovered. So our attention now will focus on how to interpret the materials from the Cross Canal site that most clearly represent canal community life and some of the aspects the exchange systems that developed around them.

Exchange Relations

The documentary record all but directly indicates that illicit trade systems developed among the various communities that emerged along canals and the tradesmen who traversed the canals on barges and bateaux that were constantly carrying merchandise and foodstuffs. With hundreds of enslaved but wage-paid African-Americans being overseen by supervisors (who it must be mentioned were
not themselves surveilled and watched by anyone on a regular basis) in a morass that was at the edges of the capitalist system can we really imagine there not being an extensive underground market for goods, services, and other commodities? With money entering the exchange circuits of the swamp people could accrue wealth and, with goods with market and use values being available on a regular basis people, could acquire valued materials for their own use or to exchange themselves. In short, we must look to the material record of all communities, including most obviously Labor Exploitation communities, and examine whether there are indications that such unofficial exchange systems were in operation.

It can be argued along several lines that the materials from the Cross Canal site represent a hoarding of materials. First, the evidence suggests that much of the assemblage was intentionally buried or at least kept very safely within a structure prior to the burning of that structure. Second, the relevant materials fall into several general categories that represent different activities within the routines of the modern world (domestic, industrial, subsistence, munitions, recreation, etc.). We might expect such a range of materials if goods were being kept for exchange or trade within the swamp among swamp dwellers and others who traveled the canals regularly (e.g., merchants). Third, the assemblage does contain many materials that could be considered to be of value and worthwhile to hoard: the expensive ceramic bowl; the munitions materials; knife blades or usable parts of them and a sharpening stone; bottle of alcohol and medicine; foodstuffs; and iron tools and materials. These aspects of the materials and the feature suggest that hoarding of did happen within a structure located in close proximity to Cross Canal.
Given what we have detailed about the communities, the membership of those communities, and the factors that played into making it very feasible that community members would have been free to engage in illicit exchanges, I would suggest that the hoarding of the materials does in fact represent the goods that had been acquired by an individual or small group through and for exchanges within the swamp. This would certainly help us to make sense of the odd materials as well as some of the more prosaic items. Rather than assert that companies provided expensive bowls, munitions and knives, oysters, and whiskey to workers or that workers would have bothered to try to bring some of these things into the swamp on their arrival, it seems much more realistic to see the hoard as a range of materials that were thought or known to have some sort of exchange value.

Of course, with such a premise granted, the possibilities as to what specific form the exchange relations and dynamics surrounding them took is nearly impossible to say with any measure of certainty. For example, supervisors may have actively traded with boatmen for items that could then be provided to workers as further incentives for working. Workers may have had, once they acquired goods further trade outlets in order to get things they truly needed, even money.

Alternatively, laborers may have acquired materials for exchanges among themselves or for the labor of the maroons who joined the communities but may not have had as strong a compulsion toward getting money. In fact, such exchanges may have been more common than the wage payment indicated in the documentary record (Crayon 1856; Olmsted 1996; Redpath 996). In the documented cases, maroons received money directly from canal company laborers for their assistance in cutting
shingles. However, the documentary record also suggests that it was not uncommon for company workers to be working to make money to buy their freedom. Thus, company-hired laborers may have had far more compelling motivations for accruing cash compared to most maroons. True, some maroons could have fled into the swamp to work for money to then purchase their freedom. However, that does seem to stretch credulity given that those maroons would in theory eventually have to go back to their owners and then give them money after having run away. Not a likely scenario for most instances. In other cases, maroons may have wanted to accrue some money for travel north. This is possible but the records also make it clear that maroons in the Dismal were not necessarily going into the morass as a layover until they moved on to northern regions and non-slavery systems. The maroons that did stay in the swamp more permanently, but along canals or in consistent connection with canal company efforts, were already “free” in the swamp and would have had less consistent motivation for money itself. They could have emerged as consumers of various goods and wares that they needed for survival in the swamp along canals. Such goods could indeed consist of knife blades, munitions, eating vessels, foodstuffs, ad hoc tools; the same sorts of materials that were recovered in the hoard at the Cross Canal site. In fact, supervisors could have also taken advantage of the maroon’s situation by providing various items for them in return for things of value in the outside world, like pelts, wood products, etc. Supervisors could, then, sell such items themselves either to boatmen who wanted to make extra money outside the swamp or directly to outside world merchants.
It seems then that the hoard of materials at the Cross Canal site can be best explained as representing materials that had value in the underground or illicit exchange networks that doubtless formed in the swamp. Actually, I would strongly suggest that the range of items, the concentrated location within a structure that burned down around them, and their presence on an island adjacent to the canal actually represents reasonably strong evidence for such markets given the social and political-economic conditions that we know existed along canals and within Labor Exploitation communities. The hoard consists of what amounts to an unusual array of items that can be explained reasonably within the context of the Labor Exploitation Mode of Communitization model, which did suggest that evidence for the acquisition of goods from illicit networks would be present at such sites (Sayers et al 2007). With that explanation presented, we will now turn to a discussion more generally the impacts of the extractivist processes. With scission communities, we were more interested in how such processes impacted those communities. In the case of Labor Exploitation communities, we are clearly dealing with social formations that emerged because of those processes. Thus, we will approach he issue somewhat differently.

The Impacts of Extractivist Processes

The record makes it certain that the Labor Exploitation mode of communitization was a necessary aspect of the extractivist era, having developed amidst the efforts to excavate the first canal and harvest the wood around it (Royster 1999). The slow infusion of capital into the swamp steadily brought in more and
more workers, who in turn excavated increasing volumes of soil and harvested increasing amounts of wood. The physical land of the swamp was owned by distant stakeholders and corporations, including the federal government after 1800 or so, which increased the reliance on supervisors, as opposed to the owners themselves, and the workers to get the work done in a profitable manner. While canal workers may have worked under a most brutal and deadly system, the lumber and shingle gatherers found a work regime that had its perquisites. This held true because of the peculiar nature of the landscape itself and the natural “layout” of its harvestable resources; not only could workers easily escape into the swamp from the canal groups but also the natural landscape itself required that workers split up, leave the central areas and the canals (where surveillance of many workers at a time could be done by a supervisor) and go off into remote areas of the swamp. Even if supervisors could go with lumber gangs to monitor them, the type of work that lumbermen did required total freedom of bodily motion/movement and the use of sharp implements. Thus, in remote areas, a supervisor would be faced with the improbable task of brutalizing workers to get work done while arming them with axes and other tools. While possible, it seems a most unlikely way to profitably and successfully run an extractivist effort in a swamp.

Rather it appears that companies, desperate for success and profit, wanted to keep workers who developed specific skill sets and make it somewhat appealing for them to insure their continued employment. Thus, the literature is replete with attestations to wages being given to hired-out workers as well as basic supplies and provender; even Moses Grandy who otherwise did not speak well of his time in the
Dismal mentions that the Dismal Swamp companies provided the best rations in the South (Grandy 2003:169). As is also clear, this system allowed hired-out workers the opportunity to earn money legally and potentially gain their freedom legally; those that did not wish to take the risks of marooning could work consistently in the swamp with the hope of buying freedom. Thus, the wage systems and potential for freedom were likely an important aspect of the swamp Labor Exploitation mode of communitization; in fact, it could be argued that they were key for community reproduction, as they drew new workers in and led them out of the swamp (after workers had saved enough money to buy freedom, for example).

Equally significant, the advent of the extractivist period most likely fomented a shift from marooning to interior areas of the swamp to marooning amidst canal company-oriented communities. Maroons after 1800 or so, found general anonymity and a world that was ultimately better for most in the swamp as they worked among the hundreds of workers that comprised canal company communities. Maroons were an accepted part of the company work gangs and we must recognize that canal companies would have had few qualms about having maroons contributing to their profit margins. For writers such as Olmsted and Crayon, the system was represented as somewhat mysterious and a sort of “just so” condition of swamp life. But this smacks of thinly veiled fibbing to outsiders. Maroons were known to companies and they could ultimately plead “plausible deniability” when pressed on the point of providing incentives to people for marooning. But the workers proper would have had every reason to bring maroons into their fold when we consider that they were getting wages for their work; maroons generally would not have needed money but
the work of maroons brought the freedom-seeking canal workers more money by increasing the output of the latter when he brought his weekly or daily product to the company shingle counters. Maroons for their part probably acquired materials that would be necessary for living in the swamp near canal company workers and possibly goods that they could in turn trade with others in and outside the swamp. It would have been a most complicated but beneficial system for those involved. Given that canal company operations persisted for nearly one hundred years, one can surmise that very flexible and consistent exchange networks emerged.

In some ways it would be a bit silly to speak of the impacts of the extractivist system on Labor Exploitation communities insofar as they were so central to those processes. Laborers for canal companies were indeed central purveyors of the extractivist system throughout the swamp and in that way stood in stark contrast to scission communities, perhaps even antagonistically so. Scission communities needed the remoteness of the swamp to persist for their safety and continued survival while labor exploitation communities existed for precisely the opposite reason. When we consider the evidence for the erosion of and disruption to scission groups during the extractivist period, we can consider the possibility that these differing communities may not have always had the most congenial of relationships if they had any at all.

The extractivist system that developed did have clear impacts on the individuals who worked in the swamp. It seems clear that canal excavators were subjected to very brutal and harsh labor regimes and that their safety was consistently at risk. But the woodcutters, shingle makers, boatmen and many others who worked
in the swamp did find a very different work regime than they were likely accustomed to. These were men and boys, and possibly women, who were pulled from farms and plantations where they had probably brutalized and surveilled in the more typical ways of the slavery system. Suddenly, these same people that were used to that system were working largely unsupervised in the swamp among fellow laborers and maroons. They found they had access to money, goods, and people that they otherwise would not have had access to and, perhaps most importantly for many, they had the opportunity to buy their freedom if they worked long enough and could withstand the swamp environment. Working in the labor communities may have been a most noted source of personal empowerment for some as they legally withdrew themselves from the standard conditions of enslavement in the outside world. The only conditions on the arrangement were that they had to work very hard and live for long periods of time in a remote swamp landscape that was only slowly being developed. In such conditions, the little things would have been very significant, like a nice bowl to eat from, a swig from a flask of whiskey, or hunting for something different to eat on a day off.

The 19th-century assemblage at Cross Canal suggests that Labor Exploitation communities likely became nodes of commodity accrual in the swamp through the development of undocumented exchange systems. Goods and food likely passed through or were consumed within Labor Exploitation communities as maroons consistently joined them and boatmen with varying needs and wants constantly passed through the swamp. It was suggested that the most likely scenario, or at least one aspect of a larger complex trade system, was that goods like those recovered at
the site were used as forms of "payment" to maroons who worked alongside canal company workers. Of course, supervisors and managers may have also engaged in such exchange systems. But, given that the majority of Labor Exploitation community members were laborers and maroon laborers, the materials likely represent the goods hoarded by a worker (although, as was suggested, there are arguments to be made the materials were hoarded by a supervisor or manager). But if true, this system of labor had direct impacts on the swamp political economy in general, most notably in changing the dynamics and population densities at scission settlements. As was suggested above, the development of Cross Canal probably displaced a scission community at the Cross Canal Site (we found limited but tantalizing evidence of scission use of the island during the historic period prior to the emergence of the canal), and, that displacement may have in turn had significant impacts on trade systems with more interior scission communities such as those at the Nameless site. Finally, the presence of labor exploitation mode of communitization at the Cross Canal Site most likely impacted the population densities of scission communities throughout the surrounding swamp area by acting as a draw to would-be scissioners as well as those that left existing scission communities due to dramatic changes or new opportunities afforded by canal life.

We can be reasonably certain that the rise of the extractivist era had major impacts on the laborers (of all backgrounds) who worked for canal companies as well as other community formations in the swamp. While our understanding of this process may be imperfect at present, I do think we have come along way in discerning some of the most likely ways that the extractivist system impacted their
exchange systems, the landscape, and the structures of community formations in the swamp. Labor exploitation communities were a central feature in the exploitation of resources in the swamp, and, the development of commodity production and transportation systems of local, regional, national and international economic significance (see Brown 1967; Royster 1999; Wolf 2002).

Thus far, this chapter has discussed and analyzed exilic modes of communitization, the archaeological signatures of each mode, the evidence that we recovered from a variety of sites, and possible interpretations of evidence, both documentary and archaeological. In general, the prefield models that were developed regarding the various kinds of community formations and their associated landscape and archaeological signatures were useful in interpreting the material culture regimes and landscape feature signatures recovered at the two main sites of focus (e.g., the Nameless and Cross Canal sites). Our evidence for scission settlements conforms quite closely to predictive models and the deviations or unexpected patterns and materials were reasonably explained by specific conditions at the sites. For example, the low quantities of ceramics at the Nameless site were readily explained by recognizing that the perishable materials could be used in making containers. But overall, the evidence, to my eyes, is compelling and quite informative about the way life was lived in the swamp among scission communities. Our evidence for Labor exploitation communities is also generally strong although represented by far less total excavation than at the scission settlement at the Nameless site. Nonetheless, it appears that evidence for Labor exploitation communities does indeed exist at the Cross Canal site. The materials recovered at Cross Canal clued us into several keys
aspects of life in that community, most specifically about exchange systems, the powerful impacts that such communities had on other Diasporans in the swamp, and the kinds of materials that were traded in the swamp during the extractivist era. Overall, the materials recovered from the site followed the expected pattern for labor exploitation modes of communitization and the few somewhat odd or anomalous finds were explainable in terms of a predicted aspect of canal company community life: illicit exchange systems that emerged along canals and were centered on manufactured commodities. Unfortunately, we did not unearth as much evidence as one might wish to discuss the spatial arrangements and layout of the canal-adjacent camps and settlements. But, we did recover enough materials to draw a very sharp contrast between the material culture regimes at labor exploitation communities and scission communities. That is an important aspect of the archaeological record and does much to help us get a grasp on the variety of lifeways and community activities that occurred in the swamp during the historic era.

In the next section of this chapter, I will bring the interpretive discussion back to two main issues, exile and alienation, discussed in Chapter 3. We will see how we can begin to see how alienation had significant impacts on these communities via exile and labor systems. I will examine individual artifacts more closely and try to bring together some of aspects of landscape and landscape use that are relevant to our understanding of alienation and exile in the swamp among Diasporan communities.
Alienation Within Exilic Communities

Now that we have presented the information from documentary and material records, as well as several interpretations on that information, I would like to explore the conception of alienation in some more detail. Thinking about alienation through a Marxian perspective, we see that it is a central aspect of the human condition but is most dramatically and dialectically imbedded in all aspects of human individual and social life under the capitalist mode of production (Ollman 1973:161). Alienation emerges in other modes of production and certainly within the many kinds of labor and political-economic relations that developed in all the stages of capitalist development (e.g., colonialism, mercantile capitalism, etc.) as well as in those systems of production, like slavery, that articulated with capitalism (implied in Ollman 1973:161; Torrance 1977:97-104). In this, it is important to understand a very basic distinction that Marx drew, the production for direct use as distinguished from production for exchange. At certain historical moments, a society or community produces materials, goods and other materials simply for their utility, in such aspects of living as eating and subsistence, working, domestic work and production, and art. The materials thus produced have social value insofar as they are useful and utilized within the community within which a producer lives or directly by the producer. As two scholars of Marx elaborate on direct exchange systems:

The primary characteristics of production for direct use are organizational. First, men are directly associated; that is, commercial principles do not intervene in the economic relations between men. Second, the products of production take a direct form as use-values for the community; that is, production is not separated from consumption or use by the processes of exchange. These characteristics mean that each man’s production and
consumption is consciously related to the community’s production and consumption, and that products do not find their way into use through being bartered or sold in a market. (Roberts and Stephenson 1983:2)

In the absence of other variables (such as ecological change), in theory, such direct production systems are self-sustaining and self-reliant. People produce goods and materials without any sort of economic intervention between production of materials and the consumption of those same materials.

Alienation, exploitation, and the emergence of labor organization systems that create gulfs between producer and consumer begin as soon as items are produced specifically for exchange. As Roberts and Stephenson (1983:xiv) suggest, “Marx grasped the organizational essence of capitalism and defined it as a system of exchange that creates a separation between the production of goods and their use—a separation that is the source of alienation, private property, and economic crisis”.

Thus, the classic contradiction between use-value and exchange-value, where the latter dominates the labor and commodity production systems associated with capitalism and related systems. “The contradiction between use-value and exchange value implies the alienation of man from the objects of his own labor. Use-values follow from man producing directly for himself, family, or his community; exchange values follow from man producing of for the impersonal market through which the specific products of a man’s work can serve other unknown) men as use-values only after being exchanged” (Roberts and Stephenson 1983:79).

It was the concept of alienation that, essentially, drove Marx’s analysis of capitalism and its historical development. Rather than being a result of his scientific analysis of the capitalist mode of production, Marx’s understanding and
conceptualization of alienation was the reason for systematically analyzing capitalism. According to Ollman (1973:131), “the theory of alienation is the intellectual construct in which Marx displays the devastating effect of capitalist production on human beings, on their physical and mental states and on the social processes of which they are a part...brought under the same rubric are the links between one man, his activity and products, his fellows, inanimate nature and the species”.

Marx’s view of human nature underlies his conceptualization of alienation and is ultimately too complex to review here (see John 1976: 128-195; Ollman 1973:75-127), but several general points will be made as the discussion of alienation proceeds. For Marx, alienation is generally that aspect of the human condition in which people, as individuals, are separated from the natural world, their social worlds, the products of their work—the results of their creativity and activity—and themselves. According to Ollman (1973:138), alienation, while generally nebulous and expansive in scope and manifestation, can be broadly considered to exist when “the whole [of the human condition] has been broken up into numerous parts whose interrelation in the whole can no longer be ascertained. This is the essence of alienation, whether the part under examination is man, his activity, his product or his ideas. The same separation and distortion is evident in each”. For Marx, this fragmentation of the human condition, including human’s relationship to their social and natural worlds, is essential in understanding capitalism and its related systems. More specifically, human beings by their nature are active, purposeful, and creative in their relations with and use of the materials of the natural world. In fact, Marx understood that
creative and purposeful work and activity were essential to the human condition. According to Ollman (1973:100), “It is activity which establishes man in all areas of his life”, following Marx who “calls productive activity ‘the life of the species’; it is man’s ‘life-activity’” (Ollman 1973:101). This important aspect of Marx’s view can be elaborated upon:

Productive activity is further related to the individual’s powers in establishing new possibilities, in extending the boundaries in nature, for their fulfillment. Work must occur in nature; it is only the external world ‘in which it is active, from which and by means of which it produces’....the world of objects as it exists at any one time constitutes the real limits for the realization of man’s powers. If this world were to remain unaltered, these powers would always achieve the same type and degree of fulfillment. It is only because reality undergoes constant transformation that we can speak of fulfillment in terms of ‘levels and ‘modes’. That our world does change is due, Marx says, to the activity of man which never ceases to change it (Ollman 1973:101).

But, under capitalism, creative purposeful labor is non-existent, for all practical purposes, because that system creates a certain kind of direct producer or laborer, one whose creative and purposeful activities are replaced by labor-power. Under capitalism, labor-power is a commodity that is sold to employers and labor-power produces commodities that are appropriated from the laborer. Economic, social and psychosocial schisms occur between the laborer and the appropriated commodities that s/he produces through their labor-power.

Ultimately, alienation was a chronic condition within the capitalist global economy, including its articulating systems like slavery. This brings us to an important point.

The labor and alienation dynamic would be historically different under chattel slavery systems than it would be under wage-labor systems. In slavery systems, the laborer, not just a worker’s labor-power, becomes a commodity. Nonetheless, several
keys aspects of alienating labor and production system would generally be present under chattel conditions. Not only is labor of the enslaved worker under slavery systems owned (as one aspect of the owned worker), the owners of the means of production appropriate the products of their labor. As Mary Turner (1995:33) suggests, “slaves were distinguished from other categories of labour by being persons whose labour was denied exchange value. They faced as workers, however, fundamentally the same problems as serfs, or wage workers; they were forced to spend their lives expending labour over and above what was necessary for their own subsistence”. Thus, a key ingredient—the appropriation of the products from the worker—was a predominant aspect of the slavery production and labor regime. It is not the point here to argue that slavery and wage-labor systems are the same, which they clearly are not (Genovese 1965; Mandel 1968b:537-538; Wallerstein 1993:202-221). Rather, if we keep in mind that alienation does exist in all modes of production (as was discussed above, alienation reaches its mature form under true capitalism), and that historical global capitalism dialectically articulated with the slavery modes of production, we can understand that material conditions existed within historical slavery modes that would give rise to alienation, even if it was historically contingent form of that phenomenon. Also, in terms of the discussion of the Great Dismal Swamp, it should also be kept in mind that most workers in the swamp existed in that context as paid workers (proto-proletarians [Bolland 1995] and/or contractual workers) despite their overall status (in life-long terms) as chattel in the world outside the swamp.
The modern global capitalistic system perpetuates several dimensions of alienation, making it a universal presence in all aspects of political economy and individual existences. Istvan Meszaros (1971:14) outlines the four main aspects of the Marxian alienation framework quite nicely, as follows:

(a) man is alienated from nature;
(b) he is alienated from himself (from his own activity)
(c) from his "species being" (from his being a member of the human species)
(d) man is alienated from man (from other men).

Called by Marx, "the estrangement of the thing", (a) above "expresses the relation of the worker to the product of his labor, which is, at the same time, according to Marx, his relation to the sensuous external world, to the objects of nature." (Meszaros 1971:14). In this aspect, humans see themselves as somehow separate from nature itself and the materials within nature that are external to humans. The sensuous world and its components appear to and are understood by the human as alien to herself or himself.

The second above, (b), is the "expression of labour’s relation to the act of production within the labour process, that is to say the worker’s relation to his own activity as alien activity which does not offer satisfaction to him in and by itself, but only by the act of selling it to someone else" (Meszaros 1971:14). This aspect is the key to understanding exploitation and commodity fetishism as workers sell their labor power to capitalists (or their labor productivity is owned outright by someone else), produce products through work, which should be a creative act and provide the direct producer with intimate connections to the objects of labor that he or she has appropriated from the natural world. Under alienating conditions, however, the
products of labor are appropriated by the capitalist or other who controls labor and the possible intimate connections—which for Marx are at once material and, essentially, existential and identificatory—between the direct producer and the objects of creation are never allowed to develop; this is essential to the emergence of commodities with exchange-value.

Marx is worth quoting at length here to capture the material and existential aspects of alienated labor:

What, then, constitutes the alienation of labor? First, the fact that labor is external to the worker, i.e., it does not belong to his essential being; that in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself. He is at home when he is not working, and when he is working he is not at home. His labor is therefore not voluntary, but coerced; it is forced labor. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely a means to satisfy needs external to it. Its alien character emerges clearly in the fact that as soon as no physical or other compulsion exists, labor is shunned like the plague. External labor, labor in which man alienates himself, is a labor of self-sacrifice, of mortification. Lastly, the external character of labor for the worker appears in the fact that it is not his own, but someone else’s, that it does not belong to him, that in it he belongs, not to himself, but to another. Just as in religion the spontaneous activity of the human imagination, of the human brain and the human heart, operates independently of the individual—that is, operates on him as an alien, divine, or diabolical activity—in the same way the worker’s activity is not his spontaneous activity. It belongs to another; it is the loss of his self (Marx 1988:74, emphases in original).

There can be little doubt that Marx understood alienation to have its roots in the material conditions of a mode of production. But, at the same time, he most clearly recognized that alienation directly impacted and was made manifest in the manners in which people interpreted their own self-awareness, power in the world, the meaning of life activities and creativity, and their senses of being in the world. Roberts and
Stephenson (1983:79, emphases added) underscore this when they suggest that, “the alienation of man from his own being follows from his alienation from the product of his labor and the work process. According to Marx, since man realizes himself in work, alienation from the products of his work and from productive activity results in alienation from his own being”. Human beings define themselves through their works, activities, and creations and when an economy emerges that makes those and all other areas of human thinking, sociality, and production foreign to oneself, the human potential cannot be fully achieved. Kostas Axelos (1976:123) agrees with this idea:

Marx’s central preoccupation is the being of man, his essence (Wesen), his true historical and social nature. Nevertheless, human being is manifested through making, and making results in having. In making, man alienates himself, and his true essence is revealed only negatively, in and by alienation; it remains itself beyond reach, since all history up until now is but the development of alienation. Thus man is such that he manifests himself in his social activity, but all this activity makes him a stranger to himself, to things, and to the world. Man’s being is therefore something never yet expressed in the fullness of its possibilities. Only in deciphering the history of this alienation can one grasp this species essence...

In (a) and (b) above, we see essentially the two areas in which alienation directly impacts the relation of humans to the natural world, in the systems in which labor is organized to produce commodities, and human’s relationships (e.g., material-physical, identificatory, and mental) with the objects that they produce. Ultimately, those who control labor power make the sensuous, natural world alien to humans through alienating labor systems that hinge on the appropriation of the objects of labor.
Regarding (c) above, this is the individual’s sense of the relationship with *humankind*, the essential nature of being human. We understand that it, “is related to the conception according to which the object of labour is the objectification of man’s species life, for man ‘duplicates himself not only, as in consciousness, intellectually, but also actively, in reality, and therefore he contemplates himself in a world that he has created’. Alienated labour, however, turns ‘Man’s species being, both nature and his spiritual species property, into a being alien to him, into a means to his individual existence. It estranges man’s own body from him, as it does external nature and his spiritual existence, his human being’” (Meszaros 1971:14-15). Humans naturally, in the absence of alienating conditions, would interpret themselves as being part of a collective or groups. They would not be as individuals among many but part of the whole of human kind. Mind/body dualism would not flourish and one’s body as such would likely not exist as such; separate bodies and individuals would in fact be understood as being part of the whole human complex.

Finally, in (d) above, Meszaros (1971:15) suggests that Marx accounts for the alienation of humans from other humans. According to Marx (1988:15), “what applies to man’s relation to his work, to the product of his labour and to himself, also holds of man’s relation to the other man, and the other man’s labour and object of labour. In fact, the proposition that man’s species nature is estranged from him means that one man is estranged from the other, as each of them is from man’s essential nature”.

In considering all four interdependent aspects of Marx’s concept of alienation we see the general fact of “man’s estrangement from nature and from himself on the
one hand, and the expressions of this process in the relationship of man-mankind and man and man on the other” (Meszaros 1971:15). It is alienation that is the contradictory and dialectical motor of modern history. Rather than modes of production in their entirety, or labor exploitation, or any of the other significant Marxian concepts and formulations, it is alienation across the complex spectrum of human conditions under capitalism that so fascinated and angered Marx that he undertook his lifelong analysis of historical capitalism.

But, what should be clear from the brief discussion of alienation is that it represents a significant aspect of the historical human condition and has definite and important implications for anthropological and archaeological analysis. Alienation is clearly a most central aspect of the production of commodities under capitalism and its articulating production and labor systems. Not only does material culture represent alienated labor and production it also represents alienated consumption, that is the market that helps feed the need for alienated labor and represents one major area where commodity fetishism constantly occurs. As Ollman (1973:147) suggests:

Articles of consumption...have power over their producers by virtue of the desires which they create. Marx understood how a product could precede the need that people feel for it, how it could actually create this need. ...What can we expect, therefore, where consumers have no say in the production of things which they consume? In this situation, the very character of man is at the mercy of his products, of what they make him want and become in order to get what he wants. These products are responsive to forces outside his control, serving purposes other than his own, generally the greed of some capitalist.

Archaeological materials do reflect these processes and phenomena under capitalism.

Of course, archaeological materials also represent the system of private property that reigns under capitalism. What is also of interest here is how the
privatization or fragmentation of land as property relates to alienation. According to Marx, "Private property is thus the product, the result, the necessary consequence, of alienated labor, of the external relation of the worker to nature and to himself. Private property thus results by analysis from the concept of alienated labor—i.e., of alienated man, of estranged labor, of estranged life, of estranged man" (Marx 1988:80-81). More dialectically, Marx (1988:81, emphases in original) asserts that it is "only at the very culmination of the development of private property does this, its secret, re-emerge, namely, that on the one hand it is the product of alienated labor, and that secondly it is the means by which labor alienates itself, the realization of this alienation".

Private property in itself implies a division of labor and, more to the point, is a necessary condition for the emergence of divisions of labor. As land and nature become privately controlled, owned, and exploited, social forms of labor attend those developments and are necessary for them to maintain through time. In summarizing Marx, Ollman (1973:161) says that, "Marx sees the division of labor arising in society as part of a complex which includes private property, exchange and class divisions so that to speak of an individual doing only one kind of work is already to assume a society where man's activity and its product are not his own." Now, to an extent we have to extrapolate to connect this notion of the interconnected nature of alienation, private property, and the division of labor to land itself. But, it seems clear that the fragmentation of land that we discussed in earlier chapters that attended the modern physical development of the landscape, with its undeveloped nodes of remoteness, relates quite directly to this aspect of capitalism.
We emphasized earlier that Marx did in fact view alienation as a political-economic phenomenon born of material conditions but ultimately significant because of the effects it has on human the human mental and identificatory faculties—senses of being, notions of self-worth and self-awareness, knowledge and understanding of the world around them, and the like. Around this idea, we can make solid connections between Marx's notion of alienation and our developing understanding of exile.

In exile we understand that people are forcibly uprooted from their homes, communities, and places of familiarity and transplanted to new alien places and social and economic milieux. For this study, we are interested only in the exilic processes associated with the historical era under the advent and rise of the global capitalist system. So, it will be recalled that a significant aspect of modern history is that people, by the tens of millions, moved from place to place, often worlds apart, as part of the overall drive in capitalism for the accrual of wealth by the elite which required unfathomable amounts of labor. Exile, while not the only form of this intense and continuous motion of labor, was one main forms of or process within that movement of laborers. But, as we have discussed, wealth requires a division of labor which, in turn, requires private property and continuing production-possession of private property; hence, in a broad stroke, the historical expansion of capitalism and its attendant rapacious occupation of "new" land. Land and resource acquisition processes fomented exile among those whose land came under the grip of the globalizing capitalist system and whose labor was needed to produce commodities and capital. This, of course, happened in numerous ways during expansion and
resulted in a complex history of enslavement, dislocation, and death of indigenous people throughout the world.

Exile connects quiet explicitly to alienation at several levels. Clearly the historically-specific causes of exile, be they closely related to labor or land acquisition, are rooted in the already existing alienating system global capitalist system. Historically, expansion and forced labor were early integral aspects of the logic and rhythm of capitalism and exile was thus a simple extension of those preexisting aspects. Those that were exiled were pushed into the alienating divisions of labor of capitalism and its articulating systems. Thus, exile resulted in the immersion of people into very alienating political economic relations. Estrangement can also be seen in the immediate transformation of people under exile from a non-commodity to a commodity or, in the case of an exile destined for the life of a wageworker whose labor, an essential part of one's being, was commodified. This more existential state of being had to contrast in most cases with what an exile was socially and economically prior to forced transplantation.

It was also suggested earlier that that exile can create an existential and identificatory rift between the remembered communities of the pre-exilic life and the lived alienating circumstances under exile. People were torn from homelands, places of kinship and community, and landscapes quite familiar. Under exilic conditions, there was often, then, a forced experiential cleaving of the past from the lived present, between what was and what is. Did this more personal and existential condition universally occur in the minds of every exile? The answer is no, or at least we cannot know with any certainty. It seems to me that it is a description of a general condition
of mind, self-awareness and identity that any given individual could fight against, abjure, repress, nurture, use as a means of resistance and defiance to exilic conditions, or to take any of a host of psychological and philosophical positions and attitudes. But, I do believe we can be sure that that exilic states of mind did exist and that they represent manifestations of the overarching tendency of capitalism to alienate those under its domain. Exile represents a specific yet expansive historically contingent process of alienation that led to a potentially vast range of states of alienated mind, historically speaking. But, I would suggest that these states of self-awareness and understandings of being-in-the-world among exiles would regularly relate to the constant antagonism between the memorialized past with its places of familiarity and the alienating and unfamiliar exilic world. At the very least, I do believe that the concept of exile does indeed apply to the Diasporic history of the Great Dismal Swamp and could, in theory, inform studies of similar groups elsewhere.

It would be good now to come back to the historical record that we have discussed throughout the past chapters and reflect on how alienation and related concepts may be were a significant aspect of the Diasporic history of the Great Dismal Swamp. I would like to explore the ways that alienation can further inform this analysis and help us to explain the political economy of exilic communities.

It was discussed how the Great Dismal Swamp emerged as a remote landscape within the ever intensifying transformation of the Tidewater. It is the idea here that remote landscapes were also specific forms of economically and culturally alienated landscapes that had been "separated" from surrounding developed and agrarian landscapes. So, to colonials, the Dismal Swamp, like other natural remote landscapes
eventually stood in stark contrast to the developed and productive landscapes that were under plow or the centers of settlement and mercantile traffic and commodity production. More importantly, we can posit that colonial views of the kinds of landscapes that were not easy to make productive and to control, because of the their natural impeding of such efforts or because of the native human inhabitants, were attached with many negative meanings. In his study of the modernization of the English landscape, Matthew Johnson talks about the British colonial view of “natural” landscapes in terms that could just as easily be applied to the Great Dismal Swamp.

The seventeenth century saw the opening of two areas in which the farmer came face to face with what was perceived by the colonist as savage, howling, chaotic, unenclosed wilderness: New England and Ireland. The Puritan colonists in seventeenth-century New England constructed their own narrative of settlement on the landscape they confronted on arrival. The colonists were, in their world-view, up against the natural state of land after the Fall, a land that was barren, desert, a wilderness. In fact New England’s ‘Desert Wilderness’ was a narrative constructed from the 1630s onwards by various writers in order to stress the godly labours of Puritans, whose settlement thus became an act of imposing godly order onto a howling, hideous, heathen and dismal desert (Johnson 1996:93).

It is clear from documents about the Great Dismal that such views of the swamp were prevalent among colonists as well. The swamp is often called the “desart” or “desert” in 18th and 19th century documents and it is also apparent that colonists considered it an eyesore on the landscape and a waste of space, literally. Our best example of colonial opinion and perspective on the swamp comes from William Byrd II had little good to say about the Dismal after his state-line surveyors passed through it in 1728:

Since the surveyors had enter'd the Dismal they had laid eyes on no living Creature; neither Bird nor Beast, Insect nor Reptile came in view. Doubtless, the eternal shade that broods over this mighty bog, and hinders the sun-beams
from blessing the Ground, makes it an uncomfortable Habitation for any thing that has life...the foul damp ascends without ceasing, corrupt the air, and render it unfit for Respiration. Not even a Turkey-Buzzard will venture to fly over it...(Byrd 1967:70).

Byrd derides the Dismal, not willing to go in it himself but having others go in his stead, for being a Desert and a “dirty place” (Byrd 1967:84). Byrd also suggests that, “The Exhalations that continually rise from this vast Body of mire and Nastiness infect the Air for many Miles around, and render it very unwelcome for the Bordering Inhabitants. It makes them liable to Agues, Pleurisies, and many other Distempers, that kill abundance of people, and make the rest no better than ghosts (Byrd 1967:84).

Aitchison and Parker (1763) also refer to the swamp as the “Desert” as do numerous other sources (Watson 1856); indeed, the name was so common, apparently, that a road that at present skirts the western edge of the swamp is called “Desert Road”.

But, despite it’s being a “desert” Byrd and others saw the potential for exploiting its resources and generally bringing the Dismal under control (Byrd 1912; 1964:84-85). Thus, we see that colonial entrepreneurial eyes were on the Dismal it is just that they did not have the means to exploit it until the late 18th century. In the meantime, it remained a chaotic, “no-mans land”, desert that caused a range of diseases because the sun never shined into its interior. It was an alien place to most colonials because, in part, it was not a productive part of the landscape. This suggests the interesting process where land, once it falls within the political-economic purview of capitalism, whatever nascent or full-blown form it takes in any time or place, is potentially alienated through several processes. On the one hand landscapes were created through the privatization of property and the division of labor, as would be the case with improved and productive land. But, as we saw in our previous
discussion processes are prevalent that alienate humans from nature. As was the case with the Dismal, “natural-state”, untamed, chaotic landscapes become estranged from the political-economic and social world because of their contrast with improved landscapes (although, developed land is also alienated but it takes on different meanings and forms). Furthermore, the fragmenting of the land through private property, in effect, creates the fragmented zones of remoteness so that, even if they are not owned or directly exploited, they are fractionated nonetheless.

So we are presented with the interesting historical situation where a landscape, whose boundaries and meanings to colonials were in part reflections of the general alienating circumstances of emergent capitalism and private property relations in the Tidewater, came to define a spatial and cultural sanctuary for alienated resistant exiles. In another way, an alienated remote landscape became a place of settlement for estranged workers and exiles fleeing the alienating colonial landscape and political economy. This stands as a fascinating example of spatial contradiction under capitalism, where the absence of productive transformation of land due to lack of productive capability (within the local means of production at any rate) leads to a general marginalization of this fraction of land and its alienation. Thus, in the one system at the local scale, under similar processes, people are alienated through exile and coercive labor regimes and compelled to take advantage of the marginal and alienated cultural character of remote landscapes to flee the conditions of alienation they face in the world outside that alien landscape. Alienated landscapes can become places where estranged resistant people flock to eliminate or transform alienating circumstances and conditions.
Such was the case prior to the advent of the extractivist era. By that time, the means of production was in place to begin the transformation of the swamp from a morass and mire to a generally productive, profitable, and economically useful landscape through the use of enslaved and free laborers. Thus, the alienation of the landscape took its most “mature” form as capitalistic entrepreneurs parceled the land into private holdings and began the process of commodification of its resources, monetarily backed as they were by the new American government and state. A laboring class was absolutely central and mandatory to these developments and it is also clear that some form of division of labor existed within the group as a whole; woodcutters, shingle getters, canal boatmen, canal excavators, etc. Thus, with the rise of the extractivist era, all of the basic political-economic essentials for alienation were present among the labor exploitation communities and those exiles must also be understood in light of alienating circumstances.

It will be recalled that Marx saw a major distinction, between the production of materials for exchange and the production of materials for direct use by the producers and their communities. What should be understood is these are idealistic concepts that likely do not have actual historical examples. Rather, capitalist systems are typically characterized by production for exchange while some communities historically, under capitalism or any other mode of production may generally follow a direct use pattern. But, we clearly have demonstrated that at least two of the exilic modes of communitization that emerged in the swamp were generally characterized by those two approaches to production. With the scission mode we saw that communities produced goods largely for their own direct use while possibly also
producing some goods for trade with other scission communities. As many scholars of the transition to capitalism in agrarian contexts argue, based on Marx, community and kinship systems of production and exchange do not signal capitalist penetration into the countryside and such systems often signal resistance to such encroachments (Kulikoff 1992; Post 1987; Sayers 2003). In the context of the Great Dismal Swamp, community-oriented trade of use-value items must be seen as being closer to direct use organization of production, or community-based production, than to capitalist market exchanges. Furthermore, we have no solid evidence that each scission group and settlement in the swamp represented separate communities; rather, one community could have easily been represented at several islands and thus trade between islands, as was suggested in our analysis, may not represent trades between distinct communities but rather among members of one community. The few mass-produced materials that we did recover from scission contexts may indicate some level of direct market exchange but even that is not entirely certain. Such materials may have been acquired through indirect means. So, even if scission groups were ultimately dependent on the outside world for certain classes of materials, they may not have engaged in any production specifically for market exchange. Furthermore, such materials could have been acquired through theft on raids to the surrounding countryside. But, anyway one wishes to assess the presence of commodities from the outside world at scission settlements, it is very clear that such materials did not comprise a numerically significant element of site assemblages. Thus, we can at least consider it likely that the low numbers of mass-produced materials reflect the fact that
scission groups developed a largely autonomous and utility-based system of production.

The point of all of this is to suggest that the scission mode of communitization represents a relatively non-alienating system of production where materials were made and acquired for direct use. The mode of communitization emerged as a result of the fact that people who wanted to permanently flee the alienating and exploiting outside world needed to structure their lives in such a way that threats to their continued existence were held to a minimum. But, whether an intentional part of the development of this mode or not, the ways to subsist, survive, and cohere socially in the swamp required the adoption of the productive systems that demanded no exchange connections with, and dramatic reliance on, the outside world. In so doing, scission groups developed a rather revolutionary mode of communitization that severely limited the degree to which alienation would become a central part of daily existence, labor systems, and the structures of their communities. But alienation was probably not eliminated entirely. These communities formed in relative isolation from the entire world that exiles knew and, at some level, they were still a part of that world. While they would have developed less estranged bonds with community members, they would have no doubt still felt a sense of being alienated from that outside world because they knew it was there, they had lived out there and because they had come from it. Furthermore, many would have had the exilic angst and alienation stemming from the fact that they had used self-imposed exile (i.e., permanent flight into the swamp) as a tactic to counter the conditions of the outside world that they knew due to forced exile. There would clearly be many differing
ways that exile, in its more psychosocial and existential senses, impacted and alienated scission community members. But, interestingly, the development of, and permanent membership in, scission communities may have represented efforts to recreate older remembered community structures and systems within the constraints imposed by the natural landscape and the specific makeup of a community. In other words, these communities may represent efforts to counter the alienating effects of forced memorialized pasts by recreating them in the present. Again, such exile-rooted motivations would not apply to all community members but perhaps to enough to be relevant.

The Labor Exploitation Mode of communitization stands in direct contradictory relation to the scission mode. As the name chosen for this mode indicates, communities of this type were formed for reasons centering on the creation of transportation routes (i.e., canals and ditches), resource exploitation, and commodity production (at least rough production). As far as the documents indicate, laborers were African-Americans, mostly enslaved and some were legally free. Among the enslaved majority, it appears that most of the woodcutters were hired out from farmers and planters in the region while the companies themselves owned some workers. So, while we can ultimately be reasonably certain that most workers were hired-out yet enslaved, an interesting mix of people could have in theory comprised any given community. We must also remember the fact that divisions of labor existed among the workers of the swamp and most likely within these communities.

Clearly, labor exploitation communities represent a form of production for exchange, as opposed to the scission direct-use production system, as the products of
their labor were not their own—at least when they were on company time, as it were. Workers were given the incentive of receiving payment after a certain level of production was achieved and, to this end, workers apparently hired-out, much like a sub-contractor, maroons who were not officially recognized by canal companies. As was suggested in the previous chapter, maroons may have received remuneration from the company workers but they also likely acquired goods in kind for the labor. Thus, at the fringes of a general exchange-value producing community, maroons helped in the overall production process but, interestingly may have been working for goods that had primarily use-values for their surviving in the swamp.

Now our attention shall turn, for the last section of this discussion of alienation to several comparative issues that arise from study of the materials and documentary record associated with the Nameless site and the Cross Canal site. At the outset, it must be mentioned that the evidence for temporally overlapping occupations by exilic communities at both sites is not as strong as one might hope. At the Cross Canal site, there is some evidence for a postcontact occupation by Diasporans based largely on ceramics and a few projectile points that were recovered at various locations on the island, including the larger block excavation area. Also, the close proximity of a large rice field may also relate to such an occupation. But the strongest evidence for exilic occupation is that which pertains to the early 19th century labor exploitation community that we have been discussing at length. Meanwhile, at the Nameless site, most of our evidence suggests, strictly speaking, that exilic occupation ended in the 18th century, the latter part of that century if we consider the more recent dates within the ranges provided by OSL assays. Otherwise, two post-
1850 lead shots were recovered that could conceivably date to the Pre-Civil War era but they could just as easily postdate the Civil War (while these artifacts are potentially quite interesting, they are of limited utility at present). While I have suggested that 19th century use of the site may be recovered in higher elevation areas at the site, again, strictly speaking, we do not know that with certainty.

Despite these facts, I think it is reasonable to: 1.) Assume that scission groups did persist into the 19th century, most likely at the Nameless site and the site just west of it where a 1775-1810 wine bottle shard was recovered; and 2.), to compare data from each site, even without presuming a scission presence in the 19th century, to develop some sense of how alienation and other material and social factors impacted the different community formations. While it should not be considered by most readers to be odd to compare settlements from different eras, it seems worth addressing any potential misgivings and also to remind the reader that we will be in fact generally discussing exilic communities that did not necessarily exist contemporaneously.

It should be clear by now that there were significant differences in historical assemblages that we are attributing to scission communities and labor exploitation communities. A simple general comparative look at both sites in itself is rewarding because of the stark contrast between historical groups that used primarily swamp-gathered materials and those that relied most extensively on outside world materials and sources for subsistence and daily living. While the models developed for the GDSLs predicted such stark contrasting assemblages for these types of communities,
the data confirms the predicted pattern and brings out the daily-lived worlds of these exiles that lived in the swamp much more than written ideas can.

It was suggested that scission communities were on several levels less intensively alienated and estranged in their daily lives than were those workers who lived in labor exploitation communities. This may seem counterintuitive in some ways. But, when we consider the material basis for alienation it does follow that the divisions of labor, the intent of production (i.e., direct use or exchange) and approaches to property within each community would have significant impacts on community residents. Also, the circuits of material culture in which they were immersed and the landscapes that they created would have had much significance for community systems and their reproduction. And, finally, the very structurations of communities—most of which were likely dialectically related to the ways that labor was performed and how materials were produced, acquired and consumed—may or may not in themselves be sources of alienation. For example, social hierarchies in any community likely varied and could, as social aspects of the division of labor, promote alienating relations between people, material culture and landscape, and the natural environment. But, to examine these kinds of historical issues, we must go back to the material record and examine it in more detail with the alienation framework as the guide. To this end, in the following and final part of this chapter, I will explore three aspects of the material record at the Nameless site and the Cross Canal site in a more comparative manner than has been thus far undertaken.
As we saw, at the Cross Canal site, someone within the 19th-century labor exploitation community possessed and hoarded a range of interesting, if common, materials. A relatively fine cobalt blue transferprinted bowl, a series of knives or usable parts of knife blades, gunflints, a few ad hoc tools, a molded whiskey flask, a few other bottles, and many other items were all found within a, roughly, 2m x 2m area—even then, the deposit was clearly on a slope and much of the material likely saw post-depositional movement down slope which indicates that the materials may have been deposited in an even smaller area. In any event, we presented an argument that the context indicates that the materials represent a collection of potentially valuable items that were located within one structure and quite possibly buried in that structure prior to the time that it burned down.

Bertell Ollman, as was quoted above, suggested that the goods that are produced for exchange have power over the direct producers and the consumers, how material culture creates needs, and the social distance and estrangement that exists between the consumer and the producer in the market-exchange systems of capitalism. In such systems, “the very character of man is at the mercy of his products, of what they make him want and become in order to get what he wants” (Ollman 1973:147, [full quote above, p. 232]). In the world of the swamp, specifically under the structural and material imperatives of the labor exploitation mode of communitization, workers consumed goods that were manufactured in the outside world, as well as some products made within the swamp no doubt, as part of
their remuneration. Also, as we suggested, they probably traded or purchased materials from merchants operating outside the company payment systems.

Obviously, when considering alienation in the context of Cross Canal, we can postulate a most elementary connection between the materials recovered and the alienation of labor and consumption. As is true of all historical sites, the materials that were consumed and deposited represent the alienated labor of someone other than the canal company community resident who acquired them. Recall that when capitalists, like those that owned the English ceramic company (Mellor, Venables, and Co) that produced the bowl we recovered, appropriate the products of labor of the direct producer they also alienate that labor and laborer. The same is true for those who consume the materials that are produced by alienated labor. Because the consumer is not the direct producer of such materials, the objects become fetishized and take on social lives and meanings of their own; the objects themselves become entities to possess and the consumer in the process of being convinced of the need or want of a commodity helps to perpetuate the demand for the alienated labor, divisions of labor, private property (means of production ownership and the possession of movable private property), and the masking of alienated labor within the whole process through fetishization. Ultimately, while such a view could take discussion in any number of directions, the main point is that I see this dynamic as the basis for the understanding that the mass-produced materials signal political-economic connectedness between labor exploitation communities (or any market-exchange based social formation for that matter) and the global economy; it is an absolutely
What is interesting regarding the Cross Canal hoard from the alienation perspective is that there is a hoard present. It is true that hoarding, in the broadest sense of the word, is evidenced in the archaeological record at sites of all ages and representing all modes of production and human social systems. But, in my view, hoarding within a capitalist context takes on historically contingent meaning and representational power. Under the Marxian view of alienation, people in exchange-based production (and consumption) systems are alienated from the objects of labor, their own labor, the sense of being a part of a species or humankind, and finally from other human beings specifically as individuals and social groups. And as a result, all aspects of capitalist society and production become increasingly privatized as property and, in related fashion, fragmented and individualized. Labor becomes a thing—a commodified aspect or activity of the human condition—to be sold, humans themselves (e.g., enslavement) are commodified, the products of labor become commodities, etc. One significant result is that things and commodified entities become things to be possessed as private property; humans under capitalism simply must have things to control power, to develop senses of self, and to help create and maintain social conditions and boundaries both property and personal. As Marx argued "private property has made us so stupid and partial that an object is ours only if we have it, if it exists for us as capital....hence all the physical and spiritual senses have been replaced by the simple alienation of them all, the sense of having" (cited in Axelos 1976:124).
In my view, the hoard of materials at the Cross Canal site represents a most clear example of the real manifestations of this kind of individualization, individual senses of ownership and possession, and the creation of social distances between community members; these processes may very well have felt to the community member as absolutely "natural" at the time but we can begin to see how they belie the material and psychosocial processes of estrangement. The materials, as has been argued, could have been hoarded for any number of reasons having to do with exchange and social status; it was reasoned that the oddity-of-presence of some of the materials and the odd confluence of a wide variety of categories of materials suggest a hoarding for black market or otherwise surreptitious exchange network but ultimately whatever the real reason for the hoarding we can see estrangement through context. The hoarding itself signals that a person felt entitled to those objects at some level and possessed and controlled them. The burial of much of the material further suggests a possession with intent to be the sole possessor and/or distributor of those materials; they were the person's private property which, one might add, would have been significant in a context in which the company otherwise owned the land, the products of labor, and the worker's labor power if not directly the workers themselves. In this context, we see an already alienated worker or supervisor coming to possess or own a range of materials and either secreting them in the ground or at least, spatially speaking, they end up clustering in one small architectural space through the worker's efforts to control and maintain ownership over those materials. In such a context, the materials were clearly fetishized as they, not the owner's labor proper nor direct-use motivations, became a central alien force or essential condition
in the social exchange system as well as in the mind of the worker. Because the evidence indicates that commodities were intentionally buried, it signals intra-community alienation of humans from one another. Through possession “rules” and ambitions, a worker came to accrue a surplus of materials and felt the need to keep them from others, again to control and own those commodities to the exclusion of others.

Finally, under most conceivable scenarios, the concentration of materials suggests individual identity attachment to the hoard as such; the nucleating concentration of materials can be seen as a mirror image of the individual on that landscape as they became extensions of his (most likely a male) self. The swamp worker, whose own products of labor were coeasily being appropriated by capitalists, in turn came to appropriate the objects made outside of the swamp by others’ labor; this represents a microscale example of the universal dialectical processes of alienation under capitalism.

But, at the Nameless site such patterns cannot be seen after rather extensive excavations and geophysical survey. We saw that very few outside materials were present but it was also the case that no obvious hoarding behavior was exhibited in the archaeological signature associated with several probable domestic structures at the site that date to the 17th and 18th centuries. Rather, overall there appeared to be generally even distribution of a limited range of materials, suggesting, in part, that all members of the community had access to that range of materials. Also, geophysical survey in the high density occupation era yielded no evidence of any concentrations of material that date to the pre-Civil War historical era while such concentrations
dating to the 1940-1960 period were recorded. This, as was suggested in the previous chapter, we can be reasonably certain that no significant concentrations of 17th-19th century materials, such as a hoard, are present in the excavation area.

We have argued that the material record suggests that a direct-use form of economy, or one closer to that ideal than anything else, was integral to the scission community or communities at the Nameless site. If so, we would not necessarily expect to see the types of consumption behaviors indicated in the material record at a scission site as we saw at the Cross Canal site. With direct-use economies, people make materials for themselves and the community and there is generally no great incentive for possession of large ranges of unique and/or exchange-valued materials. Even if such materials were acquired on occasion, as the material record seems to indicate, individual possession may not have been primary but rather community benefit was.

We did argue that scission groups were likely headed or guided by figureheads of one sort or another, in an effort to keep the community safe and intact. Thus, it is conceivable that such leaders controlled the distribution of valued rare materials, like leadshot. But, in this context, such social systems do not necessarily imply intensive alienating conditions—although, ultimately, any mass-produced outside world materials indicate a connection between scission communities and the alienating outside system. The community leader, in this case, acts as a stand in and control for community desire to access the materials necessary for survival and reproduction in the interior of the swamp. But, again, no evidence of such control of limited-access materials has been evidenced thus far through excavations and there is
no requirement, theoretically or otherwise, for a figurehead to have been vested with such a distribution mandate from the community.

In any event, the material record at the Nameless site indicates that lithic resources and perishable goods were heavily used relative to other forms of material culture. Lithic materials, it seems, were available to all community members, even those that dwelled in less than optimal areas of the island. It seems more than likely that perishable goods were also similarly distributed although, admittedly, we cannot say with absolute certainty. If the hoarding of alienating and fetishized materials—objects of labor, exchange, and consumption—at the Cross Canal site indicate intra-community alienation and individualization, then, perhaps the materials at the Nameless site suggest very different material and social conditions. With the evidence for relatively even distribution of materials, including leadshot, we may be seeing how the peculiar scission mode of communitization decreased the intensity of alienation among the community members and within the division of labor and other structurational elements.

Whether or not there were lithic specialists within the community or whether most people made expedient tools for themselves—and much evidence seems to suggest the latter in the dominance of light retouched tools and crudely made forms of tools—it is seems reasonable to conclude that lithics were available to most people of the community. This implies a very limited distancing between the producers/production and the consumption of the products, thus far less intensive estrangement from production. The producers no doubt used what they produced and others within a clearly developed and intensive community formation also used what
was produced (if quasi-specialization did occur). As a result, one sees no evidence for individual possession of basic or luxury materials.

We must believe that some form of community-oriented production did occur; such systems are common among maroon communities throughout the historical slavery system. Likely, rice was cultivated near the islands and wood and swamp materials had to be gathered. Hunting also had to be done, as did island-based tasks like cooking and goods production. While the evidence thus far does not allow us to define the specific ways that production occurred, and whether similar systems were present among all scission communities that formed at the site throughout the 17-19th centuries, we can very comfortably suggest that it did not involve a labor-focus on surplus production for exchange. Rather, production likely focused on acquiring and producing what was needed for the community and, as was suggested previously, possibly some surpluses to trade with other scission communities whose islands had differing resources. But, this exchange, if indeed it happened did not ultimately result in profits, extensive slavery or wage labor systems, privatization of property, or any other of the hallmarks of capitalistic and slavery production. Thus, estrangement was not a key aspect of the community-oriented, direct-use production and consumption systems of scission communities.

While the concept of alienation could be drawn out in analysis along several different threads, some of which will be mentioned in concluding statements below, I hope that the last several sections have presented a plausible argument that alienation, whether very intensive or minimally intensive, was a significant aspect of social history in the exilic communities of the Great Dismal Swamp. As exiles, Diasporans
in the swamp had no doubt experienced oppressive forms of alienation prior to settling in the swamp. However, estrangement was most certainly a daily experienced aspect, and a cultural or social aspect, of life in the labor camps of the swamp. Meanwhile, at scission settlements alienation would have been far less intensive as community-centered labor systems and subsistence-level production dominated the material conditions within those communities. A comparative examination of sites relating to both Labor Exploitation and Scission modes of communitization has demonstrated that the material culture regimes and landscape approaches each type of community took varied remarkably and directly mirrored these aspects of material existence.

In this chapter, I have, I think, adequately demonstrated that the models developed for the GDSLS were generally productive in terms of their predicting the historical presence of the scission and the labor exploitation modes of communitization. Because our evidence for the semi-independent mode is not conclusive, or even present in significant quantities for analysis, we cannot rule out the existence of that mode. Given the evidence gathered of two of the projected modes of communitization, I feel more confident that evidence of the semi-independent mode awaits the future researcher.

We were able to discern several aspects of each of the two modes of communitization for which there was ample evidence. With scission communities of the Nameless site, it seems clear that there was sustained use over a period of ca. 200 years and that many aspects of the archaeological record did not dramatically change over that long period. This is the case despite the fact that people of various
backgrounds likely comprised the communities over that span. It is clear that rectilinear structures were used throughout the period and that lithic materials, limited mass-produced materials, and most likely plant-based material culture predominated the material culture use-circuits of these communities. We were also able to argue that the archaeological signature does reflect a high degree of self-reliance vis à vis the communities. For example, tools were probably made and re-used for direct consumption, plant-available materials were used in landscape and housing construction, and the various lead-shots may indicate a reliance on hunting in the swamp. It is also certain that the swamp landscape itself, as a whole, played a considerable role in the perpetuation of the scission mode of communitization and the lifeways of residents. Finally, we suggested that the lack of definite presence of the scission mode at this site into the 19th century suggests that capitalistic extractivism and transportation development efforts by canal companies, which began in earnest after 1800 or so, had direct impacts on community size and possibly settlement location.

In the case of the labor exploitation mode, we used primarily evidence from the Cross Canal site to demonstrate that, essentially, a community structuration that was antithetical to the scission mode was present in the Diasporic world of the Great Dismal. There was clearly a heavy reliance on mass-produced outside world materials, which suggested that at least one person had hoarded materials within the community. This suggests strongly that individualism was part of the structuration of the community. We also suggested that the archaeological evidence supported the idea that illicit exchange systems emerged along the canals and that company laborers
would have taken part in them. Several of the artifacts that were recovered at the Cross Canal site may represent such market acquisitions. We also were able to show, through the presence and apparent structuration of this mode of communitization, the impacts of capitalistic extractivism and transportation development: the labor mode of communitization is a direct result of the advent of the extractivist era and played a most significant role in the success of capitalistic development in the swamp.

Finally, we took a more comparative approach to both the Nameless site and the Cross Canal site and discussed how alienation may or may not have played a role in the ways the communities operated and persisted. For the scission communities at the Nameless site, it was argued that the evidence suggests that alienation was a minor factor in the community, a surprising historical fact given that the communities existed within a capitalistic system in which alienation flourishes in many conditions. The evidence at the scission settlement suggests that the very structuration of the such communities, in conjunction with the spatial distance from the outside world, allowed for micro-economic systems to emerge (e.g., self-subsistence, community divisions of labor, direct materials production, etc.) that did not, by definition, lead to the development of an alienating milieu. In the outside world, the alienating and estranging conditions of exile would have been partly responsible for compelling scission community members into the swamp. Once there, though, the community structure helped dissipate and even eliminate many causes and vestiges of alienation.

Meanwhile, the opposite was found to be the case at the Cross Canal site. There, it was clear that the work regime was in itself a strong source of alienation as was the reliance on the outside world market for many basic items of daily worth and
status or symbolic value. The apparent individualism evidenced in the hoard of materials suggests in itself alienation of community members from each other. There were other sources of evidences for estrangement as well. But, it was made clear that this mode of communitization is a most significant aspect of Diasporic history in the swamp, even if it most closely resembles other known historical sites and archaeological signatures of the outside world. When both modes are compared, we see that the political economy of the Great Dismal was complicated and varied over the few centuries under study. Certainly, each mode of communitization appealed to people for a variety of reasons whether they chose to live in them or were in some ways forced to, as is most likely the case with the labor exploitation groups. However, even in the latter case, it is most certain that maroons willingly chose to work with those communities. In all, though, the political-economic complexity of the Diasporic swamp across space and through time cannot be doubted. We need now only more work to be done to understand that world in more detail and in a more nuanced manner.
In this exposition, I have endeavored to develop interpretations of the political-economic and social histories of the Diasporic world of the Great Dismal Swamp based on historical archaeological information and insights. The Great Dismal Swamp was a marginalized and remote landscape in the centuries that preceded the Civil War and as such emerged as a haven for dissident, disenfranchised, and dispossessed exiles from the Tidewater region and perhaps beyond. The morass was a significant element of the Tidewater landscape in Virginia and North Carolina and it should be no great surprise that it could provide land, resources, and space for resistant Diasporans, like maroons and disenfranchised Native Americans, who might opt to live within it as opposed to continuing to live in the familiar oppressive and alienating world beyond. Even when we consider the enslaved company workers who inhabited the swamp after 1763, we can see that the rules and systems of the outside world transformed dramatically, for most workers, as economically committed attempts were made to develop and exploit the morass. In short, like most of the alienated and remote landscapes of the otherwise modernizing and developing world, the marginalized Great Dismal Swamp was of great consequence to exiles. They exploited the culturally and political-economically alienated swamp landscape to counter the exilic and alienating social and economic conditions of the outside world.
Of course, while such dynamics are central to this history, they do not by any means tell us all we need to know. The documentary record makes it as certain as one might hope in these circumstances that Diasporans not only settled permanently in the Dismal but that quite possibly formed long term communities in so doing. We also know from the documentary record that people from a wide variety of backgrounds, be they maroons, Native Americans, or enslaved canal company laborers, lived in the swamp during those long centuries. It was a diverse world in the swamp and it is almost a certainty that communities did not form based solely on membership in one of those groups. Rather, the historical record suggests that maroons joined enslaved laborers in communities associated with canal company efforts to excavate canals and harvest the cedar and cypress of the swamp. We also have very limited but evocative clues from the documentary record that Native Americans and maroons also engaged in raids in the outside world together, suggesting that they too lived in mixed communities. No, we can be reasonably certain that communities did not form that were comprised only of maroons, or Native Americans or enslaved canal company laborers.

But if there were long term communities that arose, persisted, and perhaps even fell apart within the swamp, then we also must be prepared to acknowledge that daily living in all cases required the corollary emergence of subsistence practices, exchange systems, production and/or acquisition of daily used and required material culture, community identities, kinship and status systems, and of course cultural landscapes. But, we must note the many gaps in the historical record about these communities and their systems; no documentary record is thorough and such a maxim
never held as true as is it does for Diasporic histories of the Dismal, including the relatively well-recorded canal communities.

It is also true that archaeological research has the potential to provide a very different but equally powerful historical record. The Diasporic histories of the Great Dismal Swamp require this kind of research given the overall limited and fragmented nature of the documentary record. It has been the argument in this exposition that such a statement is well founded: the archaeological record has allowed us many significant insights and inferences about the swamp political economy and social systems during the exilic era. We now do have the opportunity to combine, compare, and contrast the documentary record—written mostly by outsiders to the goings on in the world of the swamp—with archaeological materials and landscapes left behind by various exilic communities that were present throughout the centuries of interest. Perhaps more important, we now also can interpret the material record of communities in the Dismal to extend our knowledge of their structurations, social systems, and subsistence practices. Considering how little we know about these kinds of Diasporic groups and communities in the New World in general, such insights into the political-economic dynamics of this significant landscape of the Tidewater would be most informative.

In this exposition, I presented several different aspects of the Great Dismal Swamp Landscape Study throughout several chapters. After providing a general project overview in Chapter 1, the theoretical framework for this project was laid out in some detail in Chapter 2. I argued that exile, diasporas, and labor exploitation throughout the colonialist and expansionist eras of capitalist world development were
absolutely fundamental aspects of political-economic history. It was postulated that
defiance and resistance processes, such as marronage, were almost nearly necessary
results of those exile and labor-related processes. We saw that remote landscapes
emerged in the processes of capitalistic development and that they in turn were the
kinds of landscapes that exiles, the alienated and estranged, and outcasts gravitated
towards to resist and defy the brutalities of the developing outside world.
Communities of such people were a predictable development in such landscapes
given the near universality of brutal and exploitative conditions in the outside world.
At the same time, remote landscapes were often temporary phenomena as capitalistic
entrepreneurs eventually developed extractive methods to profit from landscapes that
were naturally difficult to exploit on large scales.

In Chapter 3, I presented a narrative based on what we know from the
documentary record about the development of the swamp and its occupation by
Diasporic exiles. It was argued that disenfranchised Native Americans went into the
swamp after Contact but we are presently at a loss for any detailed understanding of
how many permanently fled to the swamp and for how long they did so. But their
presence there cannot be reasonably doubted. It was also shown that maroons
certainly fled permanently into the Dismal, likely in large numbers after 1680 or so
with smaller numbers going in earlier decades and many individuals choosing to live
in interior scission communities. With the advent of the extractivist era (ca. 1760-
1800), maroons probably increased in number but many chose to join canal company
work communities rather than join scission communities. Unknown numbers of these
canal company communities formed with enslaved workers as the central residents,
who in contradictory fashion were paid while they worked in the swamp. It is certain, though, that thousands of company laborers proper did reside in the swamp after 1763 or so. Overall, the documentary record provides substantial evidence of thousands of exiles living over long durations in the swamp during the antebellum historical period. Beyond swamp history, this chapter also framed that history in general regional and national processes such as colonialist development, the rise of chattel slavery systems, and hemisphere wide processes of defiance (e.g., marronage) to labor regime tyrannies. Thus, we did locate the exilic history of the swamp within a broader, macroscalar context.

In the fourth chapter, I presented the details of the community formation models that were developed for this project. Three modes of communitization were discussed that we discerned from the documentary record: The perimetrical semi-independent mode; the interior scission mode; and, the canal corridor labor exploitation mode. These modes centered on the kinds of community structurations that emerged in the swamp, based on the relative locations of inhabitable landscapes, like islands as well as the specific needs and intentions of exile swamp settlers. We also presented predicted artifact and landscape-use patterns for each mode of communitization centering on the anticipated connections each would have had with the outside world, the modes of subsistence and community labor they embraced, and the relative locations of actual communities. It was made clear that these models are intended as largely heuristic tools that helped guide fieldwork and on-site interpretations. The real exilic world of the swamp was more complicated than any models of community formation could allow and it was the hope that interpretation
would lay conceptual groundwork for later analysis the complex and dialectical reality of the swamp political economy.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I provided a short discussion of the methods and results of excavation. We argued that the two sites represented relict landscapes of two modes of communitization that were predicted by project models. We provided several levels of interpretation of the Scission and Labor Exploitation modes of communitization based on all sources of information at our disposal. We explored the implications of the dates of structures, the artifact regimes, and the documentary record for community landscape use, systems of exchange and production, and community size and continuity. We also explored how the archaeological records at the Nameless Site and the Cross Canal site had many implications for our understanding of the power and significance of alienation and exile in the Diasporic world of the Great Dismal Swamp. While much more could have been said about such intricate and complex concepts, I feel we presented an interesting and compelling argument that community structure had direct impacts on how alienation and exile affected community residents.

While I hope that compelling analytical ground was covered throughout these chapters, I am also aware that several issues and interpretative avenues were not addressed or taken. One family of issues relates to determining ethnicity, race and certain related social affiliations. I did not attempt to determine specifically who comprised the communities that were discussed. I did not, for example, take on the burden of trying to determine if maroons and maroons alone were responsible for the historical landscape and archaeological record at the Nameless site. While I am
comfortable in assuming that maroons were among the community members, and after 1700 or so numerically dominant among them, I think that trying to equate features or materials with specific backgrounds of people would be futile. Furthermore, it would be a somewhat disingenuous effort insofar as we can be reasonably sure that communities were comprised of mixed populations. This is most certainly true if we consider it possible that scission communities were long term and multigenerational, that would have also included disenfranchised Native Americans, people of mixed ancestry, and, quite possibly, European American criminals and outcasts.

In related fashion, as I mentioned in the first chapter, I have studiously avoided attaching ethnic and social ownership (and rarely ethnic influence for that matter) to the materials that were recovered at the sites explored in this study. I did not develop research questions based on ethnic markers in material culture or in landscape patterns and I did not interpret the materials and data from such angles either. While it may be of interest for some to try to ascribe a projectile point to an indigenous manufacturer, a sherd of Colonoware to Africans, African-Americans, or Native Americans, or, quartz crystals to African-Americans, I did not wish to make such kinds of issues foci of this analysis. I am aware that ethnicity and social identity can be represented in material culture but I do not feel, ultimately, that this research is at a stage where pursuing such issues could be done with confidence. I must be frank on that point. So, while I do not intend to disparage any one’s work on such matters at all, I am cognizant of the fact that there may be some who think that I should address these issues especially in this kind of archaeological context. Rather, I am far
more interested in how community structuration and exilic alienation are “imprinted” and recorded in the material record of Diasporic sites in the Great Dismal Swamp. It should be apparent that project models reflect this focus and that the research issues and perspectives also reflect this interest.

I am also mindful of the fact that different interpretive frameworks could have been developed and used for understanding the historical archaeological record of the Diasporic world of the swamp. For example, a perspective that favored race and ethnicity (e.g., Critical Race Theory) as a central analytical focus could have been utilized in drawing attention to the clear racialization of the swamp landscape itself vis à vis the outside world and how race and racism also help to structure, perpetuate, and ultimately transform the Diasporic swamp community system. Looked at from this kind of perspective, the historical archaeological record might indeed force one’s sharpest focus on issues relating to ethogenesis, creolization, and racialization in the social world of the Dismal (Epperson 1999; Funari 2007; Weik 2007). Not only might the recognition of ethnic markers, “Africanisms”, and the like in material culture be central to such an approach, but also field and research methods as well as landscape perspectives might also be very different than those used in this analysis. Such a perspective may have, for example, called into question the basic assumption that communities were comprised of people from mixed backgrounds. Rather, perhaps race beliefs were central to community formation, structure and composition, leading to different community formations based on racial identities and rules of inclusion and exclusion. Thus, to provide an extreme but possible scenario, communities may have formed that were in fact comprised solely of Native Americans, or Africans and
African-Americans, or European outcasts which would have led to a Diasporic and racialized inner swamp world and possibly alliances and conflicts between communities. Through this sort of perspective, the basic artifact and landscape signatures that were attributed to modes of communitization in this study might be viewed more as representative of differing modes of racialization, for example. Equally possible from such a perspective would be a view to determining whether nascent forms of ethnic and/or racial nationalism emerged among communities in the swamp. Ultimately, one can imagine race-centered interpretations that would see the record much differently than has been presented in this exposition.

Another example of how different perspectives might lead to different interpretations would be a gender-oriented approach where sites were excavated and interpreted with eyes fixed on discerning the nature of gender relationships in swamp exilic communities. The documentary record does indicate that both men and women lived permanently in the swamp and that children were born and raised there during the period of interest. Under such a perspective, we might not be as interested in how community structure related to subsistence, exchange, and degrees of market-connectedness as we would be in how gender relationships were integral to community structure and are visible in the relict landscapes and material culture of exilic swamp communities. Where men and women were present in communities, in

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1 While not necessarily a race-focused theorist, Kofi Agorsah [2007:33] makes this connection between marronage and nationalism: “Maroon societies or ‘runaways,’[sic] wherever they were, formed colonies of core communities that preserved their freedom and identity as the pioneers in freedom fighting, after escaping from bondage in the New World and becoming the symbol of a special type of nationalism...Recent studies demonstrate that the maroons, against the odds of colonialism and imperialism, with all its manifestations of exploitation and oppression, forged independent communities, new cultures, and identities and, out of diversity, developed solidarity against slavery, through processes which only later took place on a larger scale in many parts of the world.” Learning (1979) certainly uses such ideas in his analysis of the documentary record of the Diasporic Dismal Swamp.
relatively equal numbers, one might be interested in how marriage and similar
intimate social arrangements made themselves manifest across space and in material
culture use. In the absence of relatively equal numbers of both men and women (for
example, in labor exploitation communities), it might be of interest to discern how
gender roles were bent or otherwise transformed in the relatively tight confines of
community life. These are relatively apparent examples from a wide range of
research issues that could be addressed through a gender perspective.

Even from a Marxist perspective, there are many other possible interpretive
paths one could follow in examining the Diasporic political economy of the Great
Dismal Swamp. While I emphasized a Marx-informed conceptualization of
alienation, many Marxian scholars would likely not ultimately take such a focus.
Rather, we might see an emphasis on whether the different modes of communitization
reflect new or synthetic modes of production within the swamp. We also might
expect much more of an emphasis on how the Diasporic swamp political economy
impacted the regional or even larger scale political economy of the outside world.
Such an interest might try to come to some understanding of how such alternative
production systems helped define the contradictory global economy of the period and
led to large-scale transformations and processes (e.g., the American Revolution and
Civil War) across remote and developed landscapes. From such a view, it is likely
that the inner world of the swamp would be downplayed to an extent, with an interest
mainly in comparatively defining the modes of production in the swamp and how
they in turn related to and contradicted outside world production systems. Also, we
might expect a greater emphasis in some ways on the rise of the extractivist era in the
swamp (post-1760) and the dynamics among Diasporans after the outside world encroached on the swamp domain. It was during this time that much of the documentary record was generated and that record could be quite informative about the political-economic nuances and subtleties of that era in the swamp and how capitalistic entrepreneurial enterprises essentially overtook a Southern landscape. Thus, the pre-1760 historical era might be downplayed and focus placed on the natures of the contradictions between the capitalistic extractivist system and the self-reliant Diasporic systems of the era. The list could go on but, clearly, even within the realm of possible interests for a Marxian researcher there are several points of focus that could be adopted that were not necessarily emphasized in this analysis.

While I must acknowledge that there are many possible interpretive paths one could take in analyzing and envisioning the Diasporic histories of the Great Dismal Swamp, I also hope that the perspective that I chose to use and operationalize merits consideration. I do agree with the many scholars that alienation was a central (not a derivative) aspect of Marx’s theories on the globalizing capitalist economy and other modes of production. By this view, alienation is a most obvious but elusive aspect of the human condition in modern social and productive systems. But, at the same time alienation is not a universal, timeless, and nonnegotiable aspect of that condition. Rather, people can become aware of alienation in their lives and seek to eliminate its stranglehold (e.g., through resisting its causes and/or trying to develop new production systems within the world), and, the specific forms and character of alienation can change over time within a mode of production. I think that underscoring and exploring the impacts and history of alienation (in part through the
concept of exilic Diaspora) also provides us with some sense also of the history of landscape development, community emergence and propagation, defiance and resistance, the dynamics of racial marginalization, social systems centering on material culture use, and several other issues that were explored in this exposition. In another way, the focus on alienation advocated here did in fact provide a framework to understand significant implications of the historical archaeological record of exile and Diaspora in the Great Dismal Swamp. It is true that other perspectives may have allowed for other kinds of insights, called for different methods in the field itself, and required understanding history in alternative ways than have been done for this project. But, I hope that the landscape- and alienation- centered Marxian perspective used here has provided relevant interpretations for our developing collective understanding of the modern world and the Diasporic histories on which it has, in part, been built.

There are several potential contributions that this study has made to scholarship. I think that it has provided a way of understanding the complicated meanings and historical relationships between remote landscapes and defiance communities. While the conclusion that remote landscapes were used by the marginalized and disenfranchised in history is not by any means a novel or different contribution, the analytical means of reaching that conclusion in this study may represent a solid contribution. The focus on how remote landscapes emerged historically, the central roles of labor and an alienating outside world political economy in that process, the contradiction between the systemic alienation of landscapes and people, and, the emergence of communities that undermined the
impacts of exile and alienation in estranged landscapes contribute to our knowledge of the history and political-economic dynamics. Also, the concept of exile provides a means of thinking of the impacts of Diasporas on a human existential level while also being quite mindful of the material conditions of historical resistance and community formation. At the level of the overarching theoretical perspective, I hope that the one used in this study (or elements of it) will provide future researchers of Diasporic histories with an enriching and operational framework.

We have also provided an important case study for testing an overall model of marronage that I developed somewhat independent of this project (Sayers 2004, n.d.). I suggested that marronage took two central forms, intraliminal and extraliminal variations, throughout the historical chattel system in both hemispheres. Based on that general distinction, I predicted that marronage would take many different forms across many kinds of landscapes and that intraliminal forms would result in very different kinds of associated archaeological sites artifact signatures than those observed in most extraliminal contexts. This broad understanding of marronage then prompted the development of the landscape and artifact signature models specifically for the Great Dismal Swamp. Thus, both models are ultimately one overall model and the work here has supported several of the predictions and presuppositions of that model. In all, this seems a solid contribution to our general understanding of historical marronage and its manifestations across landscapes and in material culture signatures.

On a more tangible level, this project has provided archaeological data on a variety of exilic communities. As I have argued elsewhere (Sayers n.d.), this is a
contribution of some significance in a field where very little is known of the material record and landscapes of marronage and remote landscape dwelling people in general. Through reports on field methods, models, archaeological finds (Sayers 2006, 2008), as well as this interpretation-oriented exposition, I hope to have offered a reasonably thorough study. This would potentially be of help to other researchers trying to: determine the ways of locating similar kinds of sites at other remote landscapes; anticipate archaeological signatures and landscapes of similar Diasporic groups; and, the ways to interpret the social and political-economic histories of such sites.

I am hopeful that this study has presented a new vision of that Diasporic world that emerged in the Great Dismal Swamp after Contact and up to the Civil War. I see that world as a vastly complex one where exiles from myriad backgrounds came to the swamp for wide variety of reasons, some from choice and some out of coercion and force. With the exploitative world of the Tidewater at their heels, they came into the swamp and made every effort to create a new social order and world within the morass that was somehow better for them. Even enslaved canal company laborers found themselves as being a new kind of laborer in the swamp; in the swamp they were paid and had many advantages that they might not have had as chattel laborers in the outside world. Scissioners, who were likely accustomed to the materials and trappings of the outside world, chose to utilize a very different range of material culture in the swamp, probably out of resistance to everything the outside world had to offer and for safety’s sake. In short, this was a most complex political-economic and cultural world that emerged in the swamp and we are now in a much better position to begin to understand its significance and importance in the North American
and world history because we have first-hand glimpses into the actual materials and landscapes that exiles used during their lives as swamp dwellers.

While this work represents only a preliminary effort to locate and excavate exilic sites in the Great Dismal Swamp, I think we have a stronger understanding of the political economy and daily lives among the exilic Diasporans who, by the thousands, inhabited that immense landscape between 1630 and 1860. Theirs is a most compelling and resonant history that, in its way, reminds us that the manner in which we live our lives is most significant and impacting. The exiled and alienated found the systemic blind spots that granted remote landscapes, themselves a product of processes within the globalizing capitalist mode of production, much power in undermining the strangleholds of oppression and exploitation. Maroons, Disenfranchised Native Americans, and enslaved canal company laborers—exiles—created a Diasporic world in the Great Dismal Swamp and developing a thorough understanding of how they did so would be most instructive and empowering in the present. For the most part, history has largely forgotten or ignored that world the exiles made in the Great Dismal (apologies to Genovese, of course) because so many of these people went to live in a place that was largely beyond the purview of those that created documents and recorded the world in the pre-Civil War era. Archaeological efforts to catch glimpses of this world that emerged largely through the wills and perseverance of displaced people can, it seems, loosen the stranglehold that a dreadfully incomplete documentary record has had on our knowledge of this history. I do hope that this exposition is represents a solid step in this direction.
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