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The Urban/Rural Dichotomy of Status Consumption: Tidewater Virginia, 1815

Ann Morgan Smart
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THE URBAN/RURAL DICHOTOMY OF STATUS CONSUMPTION:
TIDEWATER VIRGINIA, 1815

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the American Studies Program
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

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

by
Ann Morgan Smart
1986
This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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Approved, May 1986

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This study examines the ownership of luxury goods in both urban and rural areas in 1815. It tests the proposition that similarities in lifestyles of varying economic groups indicates a relatively equal society, while a clear elite demarcated with a distinct assemblage of goods suggests clear social strata. It also questions whether an "urban lifestyle" was in force in all Virginia urban places, regardless of population size, economic prosperity, or location.

Such a test is possible using Virginia personal property tax lists for urban and rural areas in 1815. In that year the need to raise funds for military defense against the British prompted the taxing of a whole new range of household goods. While not all of the objects taxed in that year were considered luxuries, most represented high-style or top-of-the-line choices. The ownership of these goods by taxpayers of different economic means can precisely track badges of class distinction through economic levels. In addition, a comparison of the presence or absence of these goods in cities, smaller towns and rural places can gauge the pervasiveness of an urban/rural dichotomy.

This study focuses on the local town center of Williamsburg and neighboring York County in 1815. Despite its small size and relatively minor economic importance, distinct contrasts between Williamsburg and its rural neighbor emerged. While the middle classes in town participated to a large degree in consumption of the high-style household goods, the same patterns were not found in the county. While the households of varying economic groups in Williamsburg were remarkably similar, high status goods were not a part of daily life except for the very wealthy in York County society. If egalitarianism was based on material well-being and similarities in the lives of varying economic classes, then urban areas were egalitarian, and rural areas were not.

Material culture clearly reflected the nature of economic equality in these two places. Wealth, like goods, was dispersed throughout the strata of Williamsburg, but was concentrated in York County. A study of the traditional measures of wealth, land and housing, similarly revealed distinct differences in rural and urban areas.
THE URBAN/RURAL DICHOTOMY OF STATUS CONSUMPTION:
TIDEWATER VIRGINIA, 1815
INTRODUCTION

Somewhere between 1787 and 1828 the groundwork was laid for the election of Andrew Jackson and the period labeled the "Age of the Common Man." One historian has stated that "after 1815, not only in politics, but in all spheres of American life, egalitarianism challenged elitism and, in most spheres and places, egalitarianism won."\(^1\) Regardless of the accuracy of this interpretation, it raises the question of how egalitarianism was expressed. If "the Common Man" challenged elitism in all "spheres of life," material culture -- houses, furniture, and dress -- should reflect those changes, and possessions should appear increasingly similar from the top to the bottom of society. This thesis tests that proposition by examining some of the possessions of the taxpayers in Williamsburg, Virginia and nearby rural and urban areas in 1815 and 1820.

Social strata have existed in every advanced society, but America in the Federal period was considered in some ways unique. America had no hereditary aristocracy and although there was a wide range of relative wealth, the disparity between rich and poor was not so great as in Europe. Social distinctions, therefore, fell within a somewhat more limited range.\(^2\) Foreign travelers were anxious to report this new social order. While the strata were fully demarcated, the bases for class formation were
relatively intangible. Thus, observers differed in their opinions about the criterion of class structure; to one it was based on occupations, to another, a type of material goods that symbolized wealth and social status. Observers saw all of these parts of a whole that no one completely described. However dynamic, multi-dimensional, and variable, the character of social class was built on the vague criterion of the "way people live." 

"The way people live" at the top of the social hierarchy has traditionally included luxury goods of some form as traditional demarcators of class structure, for luxury represents not only "rarity and vanity but also social success, fascination, the dream that one day becomes reality for the poor." While the process of luxury consumption itself was unchanging, what did change in the second half of the eighteenth century was the nature of that consumption and the broad base of the population that was able to enjoy it. The removal of traditional measures of status enjoyed by the landed aristocracy of Europe necessitated a new, more portable system to express one's social status, and genteel manners and fashionable goods increasingly became the means of class identification. According to some foreign observers, this relaxation of traditional standards was especially true in urban places; city populations were "divided by wealth" and "drawn together by luxury." Although a new willingness to buy
non-essential items was not completely absent in rural areas, the use of fashionable goods and refined behaviors to express class membership was more pervasive in an urban context.7

Even as the overall importance of these high-style goods was increasing, greater availability and new prosperity placed them within the reach of a greater proportion of the population than ever before. The "mania for luxury"8 spread through all classes, and the late eighteenth-century elite complained that consumer goods and expensive living were "confounding every Distinction between Rich and Poor."9 As class lines were weakening, these badges of class distinction began to spread down through the middling classes.

By examining this process in the era preceding Jackson's election, the foundation for relative egalitarianism can be tested. If luxury goods were spread through different economic levels, then the material worlds of various social classes were similar. If "the way they lived" was not unique to certain groups, society was relatively equal. Conversely, if luxuries were limited to one group, then they suggest clear social strata and an unequal society.

When was the groundwork laid for Jacksonian democracy? Is there evidence for a challenge to elitism? How can the words of travelers, both foreign and native, be interpreted?
when each person was describing a scene colored by his own perceptions, purposes, and experiences? In addition, how pervasive were rural and urban distinctions? Was it only in the large cities that people exhibited uniquely urban behavior, or did residents of smaller towns behave similarly?

Between 1787 and 1828, contemporary observers report that urban and rural areas were indeed different. These commentators complained that a man's worth was only measured by his wealth in the cities, and his wealth was expressed through luxury consumption. Rochefoucault—Liancourt claimed that "what is justly called society does not exist" in Philadelphia in 1797, but only the "vanity of wealth." He grumbled that the rich man "loves to shew the stranger his splendid furniture, his fine English glass, and exquisite china." But after he has impressed his audience and the stranger has "once viewed the parade...he is dismissed for some other newcomer who has not yet seen the magnificence of the house nor tasted the old madiera." The smaller cities of Virginia were similarly criticized for status display and fashionable behavior. An essay in the Norfolk Gazette in 1815 satirized "City Life" when the country cousin could not function in the absurd urban social behavior at teatime, and another in 1814 lampooned the fashion-conscious with tales of a city made of bandboxes where fashion ruled. This "metropolitan influence" was sensed by rural society, and a
petition from the citizens of Augusta County in 1822 called for the removal of the state capital from Richmond because the increase of luxury and wealth there necessitated the increase in the salaries of state officers.¹³

It was in the cities that particular social customs and entertaining produced an "urban lifestyle." Dinners, tea parties, balls and plays were "dissipations [that] belong only to the towns, and particularly to large cities" reported one observer in 1797.¹⁴ Even the 800 residents of Yorktown in that year spent their time "dining together, drinking punch and playing billiards."¹⁵ These activities required a range of supporting objects, such as sets of fine tablewares, card tables, silver, and mahogany sideboards. Ownership of these goods allowed social participation, just as their absence prohibited it. Separate spaces for dining, receiving guests, and private household activities provided a special environment for goods to be displayed and used.

Rural society in this time period was reported to be markedly different. Henry Fearon reported in 1817 that "farmers do not live extravagantly" and the wealthiest lived "in sufficient affluence and is possessed of comfort."¹⁶ James Paulding, traveling from the Warm Springs at Bath, Virginia, came upon a "stately 2-story house" where the table was loaded with a "mighty supper" and the furniture, "though carelessly arranged, was decent and comfortable enough."¹⁷ Rural hospitality was expressed quite
differently than urban largesse. While in Richmond, Benjamin Latrobe enjoyed the status display of "beef, mutton, ducks, geese, and turkies, a bed and a dish of tea," but Paulding found only "bread, meat, and vegetables, not forgetting the bacon" in the country.

Francis Grey's pilgrimage to Monticello led him to rural southern Maryland, where he found marked contradictions between his landlord's wealth and his material possessions. Walking with his host about his plantation, he found "low huts" of his sixty negroes and four barns, one containing an elegant carriage. Grey was puzzled:

Our landlord's whole establishment bore evidences of the possession of wealth, yet he was surrounded by all the wants of poverty. The contrast between his elegant carriage and his comfortless house was particularly striking. His parlour was half finished, and an adjoining closet was filled with a heap of handsome mahogany furniture.

The urban world was ordered and precise; people, objects, and space were interrelated in a cohesive and predictable way. The rural world was not. "Undifferentiated spaces and jumbled functions" persisted in rural households. While to a middle-class urban resident "a
bed in the dining room isn't nice," compartmentalization of daily life had not occurred in a traditional rural household.21 People and things were similarly unordered. "Mixtures of wealth and poverty, studied elegance and negligence" confused travelers in rural society.22 There was no precise organic relationship between a man and his material world.

These pre-Jacksonian accounts point out a dichotomy in rural and urban existence, carefully stressing the unique nature of consumptive display in urban areas. Social class membership in the cities was determined by wealth. As material objects were the symbols of riches, consumptive display and entertaining had become the means of defining and augmenting one's social status. Differences in household goods among class groups were primarily measured by value or type, and thus the upper and middle classes were not separated by a distinct way of life so much as by relatively minor distinctions in their possessions.

Rural society was somehow different. While some wealthy rural households lived a life of elegance, others did not. Life for most of the population in the country was still hard and their households plain. If egalitarianism is based on material well-being and similarities in the lives of varying economic classes, then urban areas were egalitarian, and rural areas were not.
Did the way of life in cities typify American society? If rural areas were different, was the intellectual and cultural importance of urbanism beginning to be felt? By the early nineteenth century, an image of prosperous cities, towns and villages rising and taming the vast new wilderness of the Louisiana Purchase was replacing the Jeffersonian analogy of the "mobs of great cities" as "sores on the human body." While only 7.3 percent of the population of the United States lived in urban areas in 1810, the cities were increasingly becoming the focal point of American culture.

By the 1830's, whether it was Boston, New York, Philadelphia or the new frontier city of Cincinnati, to European travelers the lifestyle of the city was the established American way of life. The urban life they reported, however, was relatively egalitarian. Their description suggests that class lines were not clearly expressed by ownership of status goods. Thomas Hamilton, an Englishman traveling in the 1830's, described at length the drawing rooms of New York and surmised that "furniture in the United States is apparently not one of those articles in which wealth takes pride in displaying its superiority. Everything is comfortable but everything is plain." He found "no buhl tables, nor or-molu clocks, nor gigantic mirrors, nor cabinets of Japan, nor draperies of silk or velvet." He concluded "in short, the appearance of an American mansion is decidedly republican. No want remains unsupplied, while'
nothing is done for the gratification of a taste for expensive luxury."26

Others seconded Hamilton's observations, finding "a certain reserve"27 and an abstinence from "excessive indulgence," although "it was more a matter of taste of principle than of necessity."28 The differences in the material goods of the rich and middle classes were subtle. Chevalier reported in 1835 that "here the condition of the richest merchant and that of the mechanic ... are not essentially different, the difference is merely in degree and not in kind." He explained that quality of goods separated social classes in urban areas, not their presence or absence.

All have similar houses; built on a similar plan; only one has a front five or six feet wider and is one or two stories higher; the arrangement of the rooms and the furniture are the same. All have carpets from the cellar to the garret, all sleep in large high post bedsteads; only the carpets of one are coarse and those of the other are fine, the bedstead of the rich is of mahogany and that of the mechanic is cherry or walnut.29

Yet, as others were careful to point out, while material manifestations were subtle, social distinctions
were undiminished. Describing Boston, Marryat found that "in no city are there so many cliques and sets in society, who keep apart from each other" but it was "often very difficult to ascertain the grounds for their distinctions. One family will live at Number 1, and another at Number 2 on the same street, both have similar establishments, both keep their carriages" yet one will tell you the other is "not of the right sort."30

Based on the observations of travelers in urban areas in both the Federal and Jacksonian years, the lives of members of different social classes were not "essentially different." Although social strata were in place, differences between all but the impoverished were subtle and were measured by the quality and quantity of goods. Although foreign observers did not leave so richly detailed a record of rural areas, outlines of a dichotomy between rural and urban life have begun to emerge.

If one could evaluate their commentary and fill in the missing detail of rural life, questions about social structure raised by the historical debate over Jacksonian democracy could begin to be answered. A systematic and unbiased test of material culture during the years immediately preceding the election of Jackson comparing rural and urban contexts would indicate whether social changes had occurred which fostered political ones.
Such a test is possible using Virginia personal property tax lists from 1815. In that year the need to raise funds for military defense against the British prompted the taxing of a whole new range of household goods. While not all of these items were considered to be luxuries, most represented high-style or top-of-the-line choices. The ownership of these goods by taxpayers of different means can precisely track badges of class distinction throughout many economic levels. While certain problems remain, such as the underrepresentation of women and the exclusion of enslaved blacks, a "moment in time" is recorded for the majority of property holders. Because all of the taxpayers were represented, a study of consumption of this significant segment of the population is possible.

This study focuses on one region, Tidewater Virginia, in 1815. Bringing these larger issues to the local level enables a test of relative egalitarianism through the distribution of luxury goods in populations of both a small town and its rural context. In the opening decades of the nineteenth century, Tidewater Virginia was no longer stimulated by a healthy mercantile or agricultural economy. The center of population had moved to the Piedmont and Fall Line, and former entrepots of trade, shipping and politics had been surpassed by new centers to the west. But although Williamsburg was no longer the capital of Virginia, it continued to function as a local town center for York and
James City Counties and for all the surrounding rural areas it provided an "urban" life.

Chapter One describes the economic base, urban functions and character of Williamsburg in 1815 and details the frequency of taxable luxury goods among its taxpayers. When the study was broadened to include all incorporated cities in Virginia and selected rural areas, a real dichotomy emerged in the overall quantity of these goods between all urban places and rural populations. Regardless of population size, economic base, and location, urban residents in Virginia simply had more luxury goods than rural ones. The specific study of those items directly related to the social functions of an urban lifestyle only heightened this dichotomy.

Chapter Two traces the distribution of these luxury goods, along with land, housing and overall wealth, throughout economic classes within Williamsburg and neighboring rural York County society. Despite its small size and relatively minor state-wide economic importance, distinct contrasts between Williamsburg and its rural neighbor emerged. The material world of Williamsburg residents was different from that of people living in the rural area. While the middle classes in town participated to a large degree in consumption of the high-style consumer goods, the same patterns were not visible in the county. Consumption of "top-of-the-line" material goods was not a
part of daily life except for the very wealthy in rural society, and even this select group could not match their peers in the urban population. Material culture clearly reflected the nature of economic equality. Wealth, like goods, was dispersed throughout the social strata in Williamsburg and concentrated in York County. The patterns of land and housing among the populations of Williamsburg and York County were also markedly different. Examination of all these forms of wealth only heightened the rural/urban dichotomy in early nineteenth century Tidewater, Virginia and presented two quite different scenes of relative egalitarianism.
Notes for the Introduction


8. Bayard, p. 130.


10. Edward Pessen strongly argues that each traveler's account must be evaluated on the basis of the author's background and purpose. See *Jacksonian America: Society,*


12. Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger June 21, 1815 (112., no. 25) and January 26, 1814 (30, no. 3053).


19. [Paulding], Volume 1, p. 64.


22. Bayard, p. 35.


28. Cooper, p. 159.


The delineation of urban places in early nineteenth-century Virginia is difficult. While census records use population size as a criterion for the hierarchy of urban places, this definition is not valid for much of the South. For instance, Ernst and Merrens have strongly demonstrated that eighteenth-century economic activity in the South was not always indicated by population or house counts. They emphasized that lower order places such as towns, or even Scottish stores, carried out many of the traditional urban roles. These urban functions include storage, distribution, and communication, usually carried out for a population outside of these places proper.

Jefferson claimed that there were merely "villages or hamlets" in Virginia in 1787, and only twenty-four local centers could meet that vague definition in that year. However, while less than two percent of the state's population were living in urban places in 1790, that number had doubled by 1810. While certainly there were no places in Virginia comparable to New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, or Boston, five cites had emerged by 1810 to serve as the major urban centers of Virginia, with several dozen smaller towns.
functioning in local economies. Four of these five cities were located at the Fall Line, accessible to both sea-borne commerce and the back-country trade.

Among these Richmond was the tenth largest city in the country in 1820, with a population of over 12,000. It had emerged as the state's governmental and mercantile center, and the groundwork was laid for extensive growth in agricultural and iron production. Alexandria controlled the Piedmont trade and channeled the produce of the Shenandoah Valley. Fredericksburg had grown after the mid-eighteenth century to be an important shipping point and mercantile town, but experienced a slight decline as much of its trade was diverted to Alexandria and Richmond. Petersburg, although smaller than the other major towns, controlled the commerce of the central Piedmont of Virginia and northern North Carolina, and was "growing into a place of importance."5

In the Tidewater only Norfolk could be described as a city. Despite being burned in the Revolution, it quickly recovered and prospered from the export of corn and wheat and, with Baltimore, exported most of the produce of the Tidewater. It ranked thirteenth in the country in population size in 1820, with 8,500 residents.

Several smaller towns emerged in the Shenandoah Valley as population shifted westward, serving as centers for the importation and exportation of goods and products from the
Virginia back-country. These included Staunton and Winchester, "where upwards of thirty well-stocked stores" had been opened by 1797, sending "to Alexandria the whole produce of the upper country."6

This study will compare urban functions and lifestyle in Williamsburg in 1815 with these places.7 Van Beck Hall has estimated that eleven other Virginia towns were more "urban" than Williamsburg in 1810 based on newspapers, postal service, and number of houses.8 However, an alternative method for measuring urbanism will be utilized here, using the personal property tax list in 1815. If differences in the ownership of the types of equipment necessary for defined urban social behavior are seen between all types of urban places and the countryside, then an "urban lifestyle" can be said to be in force even among smaller towns (Figure 1). If a large number of merchants and professionals are found in a population that may have served the surrounding area, then at least one urban function is being carried out. The degree to which these patterns of urban lifestyle and urban function are found in small local town centers can then be compared to those found in Virginia's larger urban centers. This will test the premise that small population size does not negate "urbanism" in pre-industrial Virginia. It will be shown that even if Williamsburg was "now a poor place compared to its former splendor"9 it remained an important local urban center.
Figure 1. Based on "A Map of the Internal Improvements of Virginia," Augustus Crozet, 1835.
Like much of the Tidewater region of Virginia, Williamsburg and York County witnessed depressed economic conditions from the immediate post-Revolutionary years until about 1840. Further opening of western territories, the lack of available land for second- and third-generation residents, the decreasing productivity of Tidewater soils, fluctuating prices for agricultural products, and the movement of major mercantile activity to the Fall Line and Piedmont towns all combined to foster outward migration.

At the end of the eighteenth century, the attraction of western lands was a common subject among Williamsburg residents. Dr. Phillip Barrault wrote St. George Tucker in 1796 that a friend "threatens to march a colony from Williamsburg to Kentucky," adding that "the fellow is hair-brain'd on the subject and I believe will cheat me of my senses, too, by his Rhapsodies of that County."¹⁰ In 1812 Susan Bowdain mourned "I fear we shall lose these old friends now altogether, as they appear determined to remove to Fincastle, the other side of the Blue Ridge."¹¹

The stream of migration to Kentucky was also on the mind of John Randolph when he complained that eastern Virginia had become deserted. Deer and turkey, he reported, "are nowhere so plentiful in Kentucky as near Williamsburg."¹² Soon observers began to note with alarm this movement of Virginians to the expanding territories of
western Virginia, Kentucky, and beyond, as evidenced by "our naked streets and untenanted houses." The de-population of the Tidewater as residents moved west, and to some extent south, is echoed in the census records. Population on the Peninsula entered a downward spiral in the decades immediately following the Revolution. York County's total population was in severe decline in the early nineteenth century, bottoming out in 1830, with a 27 per cent decline from 1790. If only the white population is considered, an even more decisive loss is recorded: in the 30 years from 1790 to 1820 a 35 per cent drop occurred in the number of white residents (Figure 2).

This marked rural population loss was also intrinsically tied to changes in the agricultural base of the local economy. What had once been the center of the finest and most valuable tobacco production in the colonial era had become relegated to a minor role in the agricultural production of the state. Even though scholars have perhaps overestimated the importance of soil depletion as a historical factor in agricultural history, the fact remains that after a century of tobacco production, crop yields were decreasing. Some twenty years later Edmund Ruffin would recall that "the general conditions of agriculture in the counties of York and James City were [in the 1820's] among the lowest in Virginia." According to Ruffin, at that time much of the soil in this area, with the exception of the
Population Decline & Stabilization:  
York County  
1790-1860

Figure 2. York County Population Trends,  
1790 - 1860.
rich river lands, was poor and exhausted, and the profits from crop production was low. Even land with plenty of marl and within a few miles of ship navigation could be bought for one dollar an acre while three dollars an acre was considered a good price.16

While tobacco continued to be raised, especially the more expensive "sweet-scented" along the river basins, it was no longer the predominant cash crop by the turn of the century.17 Instead, cultivation of wheat and corn accelerated. The French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars opened up vast new markets for American agriculture, and wheat production grew in earnest. Richmond grew to be one of the largest flour manufacturing centers in the country, yet could not keep up with the flood of Virginia wheat encouraged by higher prices.18 The export of grain and flour from Norfolk grew exponentially even as that of tobacco dwindled.

Unfortunately the boom of wheat cultivation quickly collapsed with the resumption of peace with and in Europe. Prices plummeted, the Hessian fly ravaged, and once again "distress spread almost universally throughout Virginia in 1819 and 1820."19 The poor quality of Tidewater wheat was partially due to the unsuitability of much of Tidewater for its cultivation, but farmers of the area stubbornly persisted with its planting in inadequate soils into the 1820s.20
Just as agricultural depression of the second decade of
the nineteenth century was devastating to Tidewater resi­
dents, so were state and national fiscal conditions. The
fall of the first Bank of the United States in 1811 had left
much of the nation's financial business in the hands of
state banks which produced a bewildering array of paper
money. As most of these state banks did not hold adequate
specie to cover their notes, these moneys circulated at
discount with fluctuating values. War-time difficulties
precipitated a near crisis in the nation's fiscal matters,
and most state banks suspended specie payments in 1814, an
action that provoked sharp inflation. One economic
historian, George Rogers Taylor, has estimated that if price
movements for the whole nineteenth century were charted, no
price level would equal that of January 1, 1815. Indeed,
the decline from that point in the next six years repre­
sented a wholesale drop in price level of nearly 50 per­
cent.

The effect of such fiscal chaos on the local level was
clearly reported by Williamsburg residents. Phillip Barrault
wrote in 1815 that Virginia bank stock rose 10 per cent of
the market in four days, and was expected to reach par, as
"all public money is becoming precious." In March of 1815
Robert Saunders wrote of inflation in Williamsburg where
"every day added to the price of necessaries until it was
next to prohibitive to use them" and blamed the "influence
of Speculation." He gleefully added that "some of our trading folks here scorched their fingers - thank God!"\textsuperscript{24}

Little more than a year later fiscal conditions had worsened; even though the number of banks in Virginia had tripled,\textsuperscript{25} bank money was even more scarce, the payment of debts had become nearly impossible and public confidence had fallen. Phillip Barrault reported from Norfolk to his Williamsburg friend, and now landlord, St. George Tucker:

I don't think of paying you any Rent this year -- nor do I expect it comes much into the minds of your other Tenants to do so. We have come to a general understanding in this Town to give out paying Debts. Except as far as slipping from one to another Bank tokens that issue from Tinkers and Tailors. If that sort will suit you -- Why you may take a little of it -- but 'fore God, Mr. Landlord, Bank Money is quite out of the question.\textsuperscript{26}

State and national mercantile and fiscal policy related to the War of 1812 were major factors in the depressed economy of the second decade of the nineteenth century. The economy of Williamsburg was crippled by both state and national fiscal chaos and the agricultural depression in its hinterland. These conditions, however, were national in scope and although they aid in the understanding of Will-
iamsburg in 1815, they cannot explain the sharp decline in
the importance of the Tidewater and especially Williamsburg
from the colonial era. Although exacerbated by early
nineteenth-century conditions, the roots of economic
problems lay firmly in the third quarter of the eighteenth
century.

Paramount among these causes was again the shift of
population westward. James O'Mara's study of urban system
development in eighteenth-century Tidewater Virginia
discusses at great length the role of both Williamsburg and
Yorktown as urban places. In the 1730's Williamsburg was
undoubtedly the leading urban center in Virginia, followed
by Fredericksburg, Yorktown and Norfolk. During the 1750's
however, even as Williamsburg continued as the most impor­
tant urban place, others were growing more quickly in
importance. In this period, Yorktown had the highest growth
rate in the colony. Already by 1770 both Williamsburg and
Yorktown were being eclipsed by growing urban centers of the
James River and Rappahanock River basins, and between 1750
and 1775 the dominance of Williamsburg and Yorktown had
virtually ended. When Yorktown residents asserted to
Rochefoucauld-Liancourt in 1797 that 40 years earlier it had
"been the emporium of all Virginia," there was some truth to
the matter.27 Its decline, as well as Williamsburg's, was
directly related to westward expansion, and the growth of
other urban places and market centers with larger and more productive hinterlands.

One measure of this change was the percentage of tobacco shipped from Port York; more tobacco was exported there in the first quarter of the eighteenth century than the three other ports combined. Yet by the end of the colonial era only one port exported fewer hogsheads of tobacco per year than this once busy shipping entrepot. The bulk of activity moved to Port Lower James and Port Upper James.28 Where Yorktown once "supplied with European commodities all the shops and stores of the most distant towns," by 1797 its "commerce had dwindled to nothing." Norfolk and Baltimore had usurped its regional shipping role, and one traveler noted that "its inhabitants are, of course, destitute of employment."29

Thus, the decline of Williamsburg and Yorktown was in part attributable to marketing activity and growth in other areas. Although it was inevitable, the process was undeniably hastened by the removal of the state capital to Richmond in 1780. This had a profound impact on the regional economy and Johann Schoepf reported that "the inhabitants of this town and all lower Virginia desire greatly that the seat of government be brought back thither."30 Rouchefoucault-Liancourt commented that "the removal had reduced Williamsburg to a village. Every person who was connected with government has followed the
legislature to Richmond, and the number of inhabitants is annually decreasing at Williamsburg as it is at Yorktown."\textsuperscript{31}

Not only did those connected with government move on, but so did those concerned with trade. A visitor to Williamsburg in 1783 noted that "the merchants of the county round about were accustomed formerly to assemble there every year, to advice about commercial affairs and matters in the furtherance of trade. This also has come to an end."\textsuperscript{32} James Soltow's classic study of the economy of Williamsburg similarly reports that it was the gathering of merchants at quarterly court sessions to transact business and mobilize information about crops and prices that made Williamsburg the central market of the province.\textsuperscript{33} Even though these gathered merchants and lawmakers did not always directly add to the town population, provision of goods and services to all those related to trade and government provided employment for a number of Williamsburg residents. These functions, too, decreased after the removal of the capital.

It is somewhat difficult to measure this exodus of population from Williamsburg. Until the official count of 1782, residence figures were estimates. An early Virginia historian, Lyon G. Tyler, placed the resident Williamsburg population at 2,000 in 1779 and stated that the population dwindled about a third in 16 years.\textsuperscript{34} However, the enumeration of heads of households in 1782 records 1424 Williamsburg residents, of which 722 were white and 702 black,
living in 184 households.\textsuperscript{35} A contemporary traveler placed the population in 1797 at "12 or 1300 souls, of whom above one half are negro slaves."\textsuperscript{36}

What is clear, however, is that Williamsburg did not suffer any more rapid a depopulation than did surrounding York or James City Counties in the early decades of the post-Revolutionary era. The total population in 1820 was just over 1300 residents, nearly the same as that in 1790, with a 20\% decrease in white males and a corresponding 19\% increase in slaves. However, James City County suffered a 35\% depopulation of white males between 1790 and 1820 and another 32\% loss of slaves.\textsuperscript{37}

Yet, travelers and others in this era frequently remarked that Williamsburg was decaying and lifeless, that "everything in Williamsburg appears dull, forsaken and melancholy--no trade, no amusements, but the infamous one of gambling--no industry."\textsuperscript{38} An even more critical observer, but one certainly following the same themes, wrote in 1816 that Williamsburg had "very little to recommend it to a stranger, except the memory of its ancient importance," and found that "there is neither business without, nor amusement within, but all is just as lifeless as the very Goddess of Dullness could wish. -- Indeed, if it wasn't for the College, and the Court, and the Lunatics, I don't know what would become of it.\textsuperscript{39}
But a "shadow of itself," Williamsburg could no longer claim the status of Virginia's major urban center. Yet as a village or town center it performed many services and provided employment "and a comfortable livelihood...for a few mechanicks, such as blacksmiths, chair makers, wheelwrights, sadlers and harness makers, boot and shoemakers, and tailors".40 Seventeen retail licenses were taxed in 1815, and a professor in 1827 claimed that "there is not article whatever in the world which could not be found in it."41

By the middle of the third decade of the nineteenth century more detail is available. Joseph Martin, in his New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia, noted signs of growth such as a new Markethouse and additions to the Lunatic Hospital. He also documented sixteen stores, a manufactory and four merchant mills in the area, with three tanyards, and a saddler's shop. The economy was certainly not stagnant for there were "a number of mechanics, who are generally employed," nine attorneys and five regular physicians, and Martin added that many of the residents were wealthy.42

Thus, even though Williamsburg's role as a mercantile and political center was sharply diminished, Williamsburg remained a local town center and county seat serving the needs of James City and York Counties. James Paulding observed the function of county seats in 1816 and described
the processes affecting towns as population and transportation patterns changed.

County seats...depend in a great degree on the expenditures of those who are brought there by law business, and the employment given to the tradesmen of different kinds, by a circle of the surrounding country, of which each town forms a sort of center. As new towns are founded in various places, this circle of course diminishes; and as new roads are made, or obstructions to the rivers removed, the little trade they enjoy is carried very often in another direction.43

What Paulding described is the relationship between an urban place and its hinterland. By definition, urban places provide goods and services to hinterlands and hinterlands utilize the goods and services, often providing the commodities for which urban functions develop. This sphere of influence was recognized and made explicit in the choices made for new store locations.

One way to test the relative urban function of Williamsburg and the other "urban" places in Virginia is through a study of the professional and mercantile activity serving both their own population and their hinterlands, as described by Paulding. Comparing Williamsburg to other
Virginia urban places, both major and minor, as well as selected rural areas, reveals its continued high comparative ranking in the number of professionals and merchants per capita\textsuperscript{44} (Figures 3 and 4).

Indeed, on an average per taxpayer basis, Williamsburg showed a higher ratio of merchants of "foreign growth and manufacture," attorneys, physicians, and apothecaries than any other of the sampled areas, rural or urban. These occupations reflect one aspect of the urban function. Yet, the difference between Williamsburg and the other areas is slight to the next group, cities, where a wider range of occupations were carried out. Traditionally, the larger towns or cities are considered higher order places in an urban hierarchy and generally carried out multiple urban functions, while smaller urban areas often were limited to specific symbolic or functional roles. Multiple urban functions, or the delineation of higher and lower order urban places is not possible by examining only one part of the whole. Thus, although Williamsburg ranked high in one functional urban role, that of mercantile and professional services, this data does not allow for more systemic analysis.

However, O'Mara has recently documented a long-term trend in the eighteenth century "where initially functions
Figure 3. Professional Activities by Rural and Urban Areas, 1815. Proportions based on number of merchants, attorneys, apothecaries, and physicians taxed in 1815 and number of taxpayers for each jurisdiction.
Figure 4. Professional Activities by City or County, 1815. Proportions based on number of merchants, attorneys, apothecaries, and physicians taxed in 1815 and number of taxpayers for each jurisdiction.
were concentrated in a few places, but as the century advanced, functions diffused in greater and greater numbers throughout the [urban] system.45 Thus by 1815, despite growth of major urban areas such as Richmond, lower order towns were similarly expanding their role in the provision of goods and services, and acting as portals in the transfer of produce and goods to the larger urban areas. The demise of the factor system and rise of proprietary stores were similarly important to the growth of these smaller towns. This comparison indicates that the functions measured by these taxed occupations, representing mercantile, legal, judicial and medical services, were a vital part of regional economies. As Paulding observed, county seats, or local town centers, did depend "in a degree" on those brought to town for these reasons.

Although the more major urban centers of Norfolk, Richmond, Petersburg and Fredericksburg were the primary centers for mercantile activity, Williamsburg ranked fifth among all the individual cities and counties in the number of merchants per taxpayer.46 In addition, it ranked second in the overall ranking of the combined number of professionals. For its population size, Williamsburg had a surprisingly high number of persons engaged in the selling of goods, settling of cases, and healing of bodies. This indicates either a particularly consumptive, litigious, and
unhealthy society, or else a wide circle of influence in the local area.

The evidence for this local functional influence is reinforced in the comparison of rural areas with cities and towns. The town centers had nearly ten times the number of these occupations based on population size than the rural areas. Yet, more importantly, more of these professionals were found in rural areas far from a city or town than in those in close proximity to one. Undoubtedly these latter two groups fell within the "circle of the surrounding country" described by Paulding, and took advantage of these services at their local centers.

Thus, Williamsburg had adapted and continued to serve important "urban" functions for the local population of York and James City County, and Williamsburg still had an important place in comparison to other cities and towns in the state. While it did not carry out all the traditional urban functions, especially the gathering, warehousing and grading of agricultural commodities from local areas, it did function in the retailing of imported goods, the administering of justice, and the serving of medical needs for the local area.47

While Williamsburg obviously was an active, functioning town center, its physical appearance did not seem to be an accurate indicator of its importance. Not only did its surface gave little clue to its activity, disrepair of
public buildings and private homes only added to a perception of economic insignificance. For instance, a traveler in 1824 commented that "some of the houses are fallen down, and the whole village bears the marks of poverty." The poor physical appearance of Williamsburg was a constant theme in post-Revolutionary and early-nineteenth century traveler's accounts.

These dismal pronouncements finally provoked a response from one Williamsburg resident. St. George Tucker was one of the pre-eminent citizens of post-Revolutionary Williamsburg and his published reply to the criticism of Jedidah Morse in 1795 agreed that although "not a few private houses have tumbled down and others are daily crumbling into ruins" there were, however, "many very comfortable houses left, which having undergone repairs contribute to the scene, and there are still neat gardens and pleasant situations." He continued by describing "some genteel families which form a very agreeable society" explaining that "their number is considerably greater than a traveler, passing through the place, would suppose." He concluded that indeed, if Williamsburg claimed the "ranks and honors of a metropolitan city" the traveler may have been disappointed. But to Tucker "few villages can boast a more pleasant situation, more respectable in habitants, or a more agreeable and friendly society."
The observations of William Taylor Barry, who traveled to Williamsburg from Lunenburg County in 1804 to begin his education at the College of William and Mary, provide further telling glimpses into the perceptions elicited by Williamsburg. He too began with commentary on the decayed physical condition of the town, "where the ravages of the rude hand of time meet the eye in every quarter" but a series of letters to his brother at home revealed his later discoveries about a society of parties and balls below the physical surface. Barry later reported he was "pretty well pleased with the society of Williamsburg, it is very agreeable. . . The people are familiar in their intercourse and free and open in their communications." He also found them to be "remarkable for their hospitality" and attributed this hospitality to a "kind of family pride, of which the citizens of this place, particularly the old people, are pretty full. They wish (and it is quite natural they should) to keep up the name of the place" and conceded "I never was in any place where I could pass my time more agreeably." 51

The convivial Williamsburg society described by Jane Charlton on February 5, 1809 echoed the words of Barry. In a letter to her friend Sarah Watts, she reported, "Here we have a card party or a dance almost every evening, indeed I never knew this place as gay as it has been for some time
past," and complained of staying up so late socializing that her eyes stung.52

Correspondence of residents indicates a genuine affection for the "poor old Town." Phillip Barrault wrote to St. George Tucker, "We are now without a want -- but yourself -- You may believe me -- our Village is a very decent, sweet and clean sort of place...."53 To Letia Carter Tucker, Williamsburg residents were "dear souls of the moss-grown city"54 and a new professor in 1827 would marvel that the town "is a museum of natural history in which we meet every afternoon to dispute about the presidential election and about the quality of Irish potatoes."55 The historian Leon Tyler summed up life for Williamsburg residents in the early nineteenth century, noting "they lived comfortably and well but without any great elegance or luxury. They had neat gardens and a good market."56

Over and over in these descriptions of Williamsburg in this period, similar themes emerge. Thus far the picture is of a simple, neat town, albeit in some disrepair, whose inhabitants participated in urban social behavior, but displayed "vestiges of departed grandeur,"57 a kind of decayed splendour of old and now impoverished Virginians, who had "something peculiarly courteous and engaging in their manners . . . the air of the old court."58

It is possible to test this portrait of life in Williamsburg through a quantified study of the distribution'
of luxury goods. If the interpretation that Williamsburg residents lived "without great elegance or luxury" is correct, this should be in marked contrast to residents of Richmond and other large urban places for whom an "urban lifestyle" was described by contemporaries. Likewise, marked differences should occur between rural and urban society.

This comparison of consumption patterns in 1815 of Williamsburg to other cities and counties in the state indicates a high incidence of quite expensive and status-laden household goods in this supposedly simple little town. Based on the categories of goods taxed on the 1815 personal property tax list, Williamsburg emerged in nearly every category as equaling or ranking just below the growing and prosperous urban places of Richmond, Norfolk, and Petersburg. In some cases, it placed even higher in a comparison of certain categories of goods.

The categories of items selected for taxation in 1815 reflected a conscious choice on the part of the legislators to raise revenue, their assumption being that Virginians owned enough of these items and the tax rate was sufficient to provide the necessary funds for the state treasury. While the General Assembly did not consider these items to be "articles of mere luxury," they certainly represent high-style choices for entertaining and decorating one's home. In addition, taxation was not generally placed on
generic categories of goods, but specific types of those goods. Thus, it is possible to trace more or less expensive functional alternatives within a population.

Sixty-six individual household items were taxed in 1815, with the tax rates based on the item's size, material, and value (Table 1). Thus mahogany chests of drawers were taxed quite differently than chests of drawers of "other wood." But mahogany beds were taxed and beds of other woods were not. Cut glass cups were taxed, but not those of porcelain. The salient point was often not the form or function but the material, decoration, or style.

When Ferdinand Bayard visited the fashionable spas in Bath, Virginia in 1791 he reported a five o'clock tea party where "the strictest formality" was observed. He carefully described the equipage of the social event, not just by name, but by type of material. According to Bayard, a "mahogany table is brought in" and "vessels of silver" contain the coffee and the hot water. Yet he did not describe the clothing, the conversation, or any other details. To him, the important facts to report were that the finest, and most expensive, wood was used in cabinetry, as well as the finest vessels for the making of tea.

By the late eighteenth century "mahogany had eclipsed walnut as the most prestigious wood for those who could afford it." This prestige is reflected in its cost and likewise in its taxation. The ownership of a bedstead had
TABLE 1

VIRGINIA SCHEDULE OF TAXES 1815:
CATEGORIES OF HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND TAX RATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Tax Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two-wheeled carriages, less than $100</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than $100</td>
<td>.67 + 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phaeton and stage waggon, less than $200</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over $200</td>
<td>3.33 + 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other carriages, greater than $200</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>greater than $300</td>
<td>5.33 + 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clock without a case, works of wood</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with a case</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clock without a case, works of metal</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clock, valued between $50 and $100</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than $100</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau, secretary or bookcase, mahogany</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of other wood</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest of drawers, mahogany</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of other wood</td>
<td>.12 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celeret or sideboard, with doors or drawers, valued at $100 or more</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under that value</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wardrobe or cloaths-press, mahogany</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other wood</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining-table, mahogany</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sideboard without drawers or doors, card or tea tables, mahogany</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed Stead, mahogany</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settee or sopha, mahogany</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bamboo or cane</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rush bottom with gold or silver leaf</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all other, gold or silver leaf</td>
<td>.12 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair; mahogany, bamboo or cane</td>
<td>.06 1/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rush, straw, or flag bottom, gold or silver leaf</td>
<td>.06 1/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gold or silver leaf</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SCHEDULE OF GOODS, 1815  
(CONT.)

| Item                                                                 | Price  
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------
| Carpet, $20 to $50 (not manufactured by family)                      | .25    
| $50 to $100                                                          | 1.00   
| $100                                                                 | 2.50   
| Curtains, calico, marseille, or dimity (not manufactured in the family) | .10    
| Worsted, silk, or satin                                              | .75    
| Venetian blinds                                                      | .25    
| Portrait in oil                                                      | .25    
| crayon                                                               | .12 1/2 
| Picture, print, or engraving, with frame larger than 12 inches in breadth | .15    
| enclosed in a gilt frame                                            | .10    
| Mirror or looking glass, of or above 5 feet                         | 5.00   
| 4 to 5 feet                                                          | 3.00   
| 3 to 4 feet                                                          | 2.00   
| 2 to 3 feet                                                          | 1.00   
| 1 to 2 feet, gilt frame                                             | .50    
| Piano-forte, harpsichord, organ or harp, under $300                 | 2.00   
| over $300                                                            | 5.00   
| Silver, gilt, or pinchbeck watch                                     | .50    
| Gold watch, single-cased                                             | 1.00   
| double cased                                                         | 1.50   
| Silver urn or coffee pot                                             | .50    
| Silver teapot                                                        | .30    
| Plated urn, coffee, or tea pot                                       | .10    
| Silver or cut glass candlestick, lamp, chandelier, epergne, or girandole | .50    
| Plated candlestick                                                   | .05    
| Cut glass decanter, pitcher, bowl, goblet, wash bason, stand or slaver | .05    
| Silver pitcher, tankard, cup or salver, or waiter                   | .10    |
status connotation in 1815, although not nearly the import
that it had in the seventeenth century, but a mahogany
bedstead was a second and stronger level of statement.
Michael Chevalier recorded his impressions in 1835 on the
subtle differences between the several class groups in urban
settings, and he too, carefully noted that mahogany was the
refined choice: "the bedstead of the rich is of mahogany and
that of the mechanic is cherry or walnut."

Bureaus, secretaries, bookcases, chests of drawers,
wardrobes, and clothespresses were the only furniture items
that were taxed regardless of material. Their tax rates,
however, reflect the difference in their value; mahogany
forms had double the tax rate as the same form of "other
wood." In addition, an analysis of the differences in the
patterns of ownership between the two categories of material
reveals striking differences in urban and rural contexts
(Figure 5 and Appendix 2, Table 18).

These mahogany furnishings were far more prevalent in
urban areas, on the average six times as common as in rural
ones and three times that of the town centers. Although
Williamsburg again ranked high in comparison, the mean value
of this mahogany case furniture among its population was
still fifty percent less than the averages of Norfolk,
Richmond, Petersburg, and Fredericksburg.

However, when similar ratios are examined for these
same items constructed of woods other than mahogany, the
Figure 5. Case Furniture, by Wood Type, 1815. Proportions based on the number of bureaus, secretaries, bookcases, and chest of drawers taxed within each population.
urban areas drop below all others. The town centers of Winchester and Staunton had an average of four times the number of bureaus, secretaries, bookcases, chests of drawers, wardrobes and clothes presses made of native woods than the more urban areas. This perhaps may partially be attributed to the regional preference of the Shenandoah Valley cabinetmakers, but cannot explain a higher ranking for rural areas throughout the state. Again, the important point for ownership of these objects in urban areas was its material, mahogany. In other areas, the extra cost of mahogany may have either been prohibitive or its value as status marker less important.

The intriguing point about the patterns found in Williamsburg was that not only did the population own a large number of mahogany case pieces but also case pieces of local woods. Williamsburg ranked higher than even Winchester and Staunton in the per taxpayer average of non-mahogany case pieces, but similarly ranked just below the urban areas in the ownership of mahogany ones. This may reflect addition to, not substitution for, higher valued woods, perhaps a factor of local production. Production of "cabinet ware" valued at $2000 in James City County was reported in the census of 1810, and may have influenced regional patterning.

If ownership of mahogany furniture as roughly measured here was a characteristic of urban places, Williamsburg fit
that criterion. Similarly, the nightly card parties and dances that Jane Charlton reported in Williamsburg reflected another part of the urban lifestyle. To Rochefoucauld-Liancourt "great dinners, numerous tea parties...balls and plays" were standard social forms of urban society and "it is generally understood that these kinds of dissipation belong only to the towns, and particularly to large cities."64

Certain social customs dictated a certain assemblage of goods, and without these props the performance was prohibited, or at best limited. One such activity was entertaining through lavish meals, reported by Benjamin Latrobe in 1797. He wrote that "in Richmond, as in other towns of Virginia, every one who meets you wishes to treat you hospitably, invites you to dinner, and asks half his friends to meet you." 65

Mahogany tables and sideboards, mahogany, rush-bottomed or gilded chairs, and various items of silver, cut glass, and silver plate, such as coffee pots, teapots, urns, cups, pitchers, tankards, goblets, waiters, and candlesticks were all taxed in 1815. Each represented a portion of that constellation of goods utilized, at least partly, in a formal dining or tea party function. "The Dinner Party," painted by Henry Sargent in 1820 depicts in nearly photographic detail a high-style dinner party during the dessert course at Number 10 Tontine Crescent in Boston (Figure 6). Here can be seen not only the fashionable dining room
furnishings but the accoutrements of silver ewers, candlesticks, and trays as well as cut glass decanters that clearly spoke of their owner's wealth and breeding.

When these taxed dining-related items are measured for each of the sample places, distinct differences are found between Williamsburg, urban places, town centers and rural areas. The inhabitants of Norfolk, Richmond, Petersburg and Fredericksburg owned an average of four times as many of these dining-related goods as their neighbors in smaller towns or counties. Mahogany sideboards seem to be particularly unique to urban living, for while one in three urbanites had such an article, only one in fourteen was taxed for it in town centers, and one in twenty in rural areas (Figure 7 and Appendix 2, Table 19).

Yet, on the average, a Williamsburg taxpayer owned an equal number of silver and cut glass items as his more urban counterpart, and 43 per cent more mahogany tables and chairs. His overall mean value of these goods related to status social dining was 5 times higher than residents of other town centers, and 15 per cent greater than that of even the urban areas.

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Figure 6 (following page)

Henry Sargent, "The Dinner Party" c. 1820. Oil on canvas. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts
Figure 7. Dining-related Goods, Rural and Urban. Proportions based on number of taxable items in 1815 and number of taxpayers for each jurisdiction.
Similar patterns emerge in other categories. Pictures, paintings, and mirrors were certainly a reflection of disposable wealth as they carried out no necessary function in daily life but to improve the domestic environment. By the end of the Federal period an undecorated wall in houses of the wealthy was unusual. Even in the homes of the less affluent, pictures were becoming increasingly a part of everyday existence. The status of the owner of the home depicted in "The County Wedding" in 1819 can be surmised by the multi-purpose room portrayed and the uncovered floors. Yet mirrors in gilt frames and pictures over the mantel formalize the parlor function (Figure 8).

When Williamsburg consumption of these decorative items is compared to other populations in Virginia, it emerges again as distinct from rural areas and town centers. When only those paying personal property tax are considered, a Williamsburg resident owned a mean of seven pictures, portraits or mirrors while a rural resident owned but one. The taxpaying population in the local town centers of Winchester or Staunton were charged for half the number of

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Figure 8 (following page)

decorative items as Williamsburg when population adjustments are made. Again, too, Williamsburg exceeded the cities of Richmond, Norfolk, Petersburg, and Fredericksburg in the gross average of these goods per taxpayer (Figure 9 and Appendix 2, Table 20).

The nature of the personal property tax list in 1815 enables specific cost comparison between these places. Many of the taxable items were subdivided into categories based on their value, enabling the study of more or less expensive choices. For example, Williamsburg residents ranked just above the other town centers and below the urban areas in the overall ownership of carpets valued greater than $20.00. Yet of these carpets, the percentage of quite expensive ones, those valued at over $100, was twice as high as that of urban areas, ten times as high as other town centers, and forty times the number in rural areas. Similar patterns emerged in the ownership of watches. A large number of watches were taxed, but of these a good number were double-cased gold watches, again the most expensive category (Appendix 2 Table 21).

These comparisons have demonstrated that Williamsburg's residents had a large number of many types of high-style goods for their population size. Their overall consumption patterns did place them far above the more rural areas in the ownership of most of these categories of consumer goods, and generally above the state's town centers to the west.
Decorative Items:
By City or County

Figure 9. Decorative items, 1815. Proportion based on the number of taxed pictures, portraits, and mirrors in each jurisdiction.
While Williamsburg seems quite similar to these towns in the measurement of urban functions, they diverge in a comparison of these household items. In addition, Williamsburg residents compare favorably to urban residents in the ownership of some of the most socially sensitive artifacts.

How many of these goods were merely retained from Williamsburg's more prosperous days before the Revolution, representing "decayed splendor," is not known. Some may have been purchased early in the life cycle of older residents, or been passed down through once more prosperous families. However, it seems unlikely that such a high level of ownership of these goods is merely reflective of pre-Revolutionary patterning, removed at least 33 years.

Of course, these measurements cannot tell us the real picture about the class structure of urban or rural society, and the importance of particular goods to particular levels of society. The poor may have owned very few of these goods and the upper classes a great many. Gross averages hide such distinctions. However, it should be noted that Williamsburg ranked just below Richmond, Norfolk, and Petersburg in even the overall totals of some goods, despite the fact that these cities had four to eight times Williamsburg's population.

A closer examination of the overall distribution of wealth in Williamsburg and neighboring York County will enable the delineation of economic classes and the tracking
be possible to determine if a few very wealthy taxpayers owned a disproportionately large number of these goods, producing large averages, or if the consumption of these items was a part of daily life for the middling sorts as well. If these items are indeed confined to the very uppermost level, they may be performing as true status demarcators. Conversely, if they are found in the homes of the middling sorts as well, social emulation may be indicated, with this group investing in goods beyond their actual means. If there are minimal differences between varying classes, perhaps the material egalitarianism described by Jacksonian era travelers is correct.

In the next chapter Williamsburg and York County will be intensively examined to explain just how these goods fit in with the standard measures of wealth, such as land, housing and other personal property. Who owned these goods and how widespread they were in the population will aid in the understanding of the role of luxury consumption in the class structure of rural and urban contexts. In addition, a study of housing values will construct the walls around the objects and permit a comparison of "external" display through one's house and "internal" display through luxury goods.

It has been shown that despite surface appearances Williamsburg did indeed exhibit many characteristics of a more urban area. Functionally, it performed many profes-
sional services for the region, as well as providing goods and services. Socially, it exhibited the characteristics of an urban lifestyle in the performance of social activities. Finally, its ownership of certain categories of high status goods reflects a conscious attempt to obtain or maintain the goods necessary to carry out these rituals in a fashion commensurate with an urban lifestyle. A comparison to its rural neighbor of York will only heighten the evidence of these characteristics.
NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE


4. Donald B. Dodd and Wynelle S. Dodd, Historical Statistics of the South, 1790-1970 (University, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1973) p. 58. In censuses prior to 1950 the basic criterion for urban residence was population size. The urban population comprised all persons living in incorporated places of 2,500 inhabitants or more or specific smaller areas that were classified as urban under special rules. p. 79.


7. No personal property tax list is extant for the City of Alexandria in 1815.


15. See, for example, Avery Odelle Craven, Soil Exhaustion as a Factor in the Agricultural History of Virginia and Maryland, 1606-1860 (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1965).


25. Rogers, p. 324.
26. Phillip Barrault to St. George Tucker, September 17, 1816.
27. Rochefoucault-Liancourt, p. 22.
30. Schoepf, pp. 80-81.
32. Schoepf, p. 81.
34. Lyon G. Tyler, Williamsburg, The Old Colonial Capital (Richmond, Va.: Whittet and Shepperson, 1907), p. 86.
40. Carson, p. 78.
41. Carson, p. 102.
43. Paulding, pp. 77-78.
44. Sample rural counties were chosen originally based on their location, but are not necessarily geographical or functional cross-sections. Henrico, Spotsylvania, and Fairfax all lay in the fast-growing Piedmont surrounding Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Alexandria and are broadly...
categorized as "rural with city." York and James City County are both rural counties surrounding Williamsburg (rural with town). York was chosen for more extensive rural/urban comparison in the next section. Surry and Westmoreland counties represent more rural areas. Surry lay across the James River from James City County, on the Southside, while Westmoreland was located on the rich soils of the Northern Neck on the Potomac River.

45. O'Mara, p. 290.

46. Williamsburg ranked behind Fredericksburg, Petersburg, Norfolk, and Winchester. The Richmond tax returns were damaged and no listing of merchants was included.

47. Jeanne E. Whitney has studied the residency of customers at the Anderson-Low store in Williamsburg in the 1780's. She discovered that although almost half of the purchasers were from Williamsburg, another third were from the local counties of York and James City, and fifteen percent lived in outlying counties in the region. Jeanne E. Whitney, "Clues to a Community: Transactions at the Anderson-Low Store, 1784-1785," (MA Thesis, Department of History, College of William and Mary, 1983).


49. Carson, pp. 85-86.


52. Jane Charlton to Sarah Watts, February 5, 1809, Typewritten, Sarah Watts Collection, Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.


55. Carson, p. 102.

56. Tyler, p. 88.

57. Barry, p. 110.
58. Carson, p. 98.


60. Some tax enumerations use the term "common wood."


63. Chevalier, p. 289.


66. Mayhew and Myers, p. 88.
CHAPTER 2

THE DISTRIBUTION OF PROPERTY
IN WILLIAMSBURG AND YORK COUNTY, 1815.

The material worlds of Williamsburg and York County residents were remarkably different in 1815. None of the goods taxed that year were found in the large majority of households in York County, and many high-status and expensive goods, such as silver or mahogany case furniture, were owned by barely one in fifty taxpayers. Only in the very top group of wealth holders did consumption patterns come to approximate those of the average Williamsburg resident, and even members of that elite group fell below their richest urban counterparts at the apex of town life.

In Williamsburg the range and quantity of taxed personal property indicate a society for which luxury goods and amenities for household comfort and decoration were far more common. In fact, on a per taxpayer basis, the differences between the town center of Williamsburg and its rural counterpart were striking. When population size is adjusted, Williamsburg residents owned from two to twenty-three times the number of these household furnishings.

Chapter 1 has demonstrated that marked differences occurred between all urban and rural areas in the numbers of luxury goods found within a population. Were these
differences caused by a disproportionate elegance displayed by the urban elite, or were lifestyles basically analogous in varying economic groups within Williamsburg and York County society? Was being poor the same, no matter where one lived? Did "the way one lived" match the overall distribution of economic resources? If so, was Williamsburg or York County egalitarian? How did investment in capital, such as land or slaves, differ between the urban and rural populations? Were there patterns in housing that reflected consumptive display in Williamsburg?

First, the relationship between goods and overall wealth will be examined in both Williamsburg and York County. This will be followed by a close look at what type of consumer goods were prevalent in both rural and urban societies, allowing for a testing of the prevalence of "urban lifestyle" in Williamsburg. Second, the overall distribution of wealth will be used as a means of interpreting this information, understanding the very important differences between the two populations, and evaluating economic egalitarianism. The distribution of land and its relationship to overall wealth and consumption patterns further identify investment patterns in both areas, as well as place consumption patterns within the framework of traditional measures of wealth. Finally, one's housing status and house value will be discussed in relationship to
overall wealth. This will then be related to consumer goods and "exterior" or "interior" status statements.

The personal property tax returns in 1815 and the land tax records of 1815 and 1820 provide several key pieces of information regarding the ownership of various categories of property. An individual's luxury goods enumerated on the personal property tax in 1815 allows study of household level consumption. Evidence of the ownership of slaves, land, and livestock (found on the 1815 lists) and housing (recorded in 1820) are the measures of real wealth necessary to evaluate these household possessions in terms of an overall framework of capital investment and wealth. In addition, the tax amounts paid by an individual enables the ranking of one man's property against another. For instance, taxes paid for both real and personal property were combined in this study as a gross measure of wealth. Similarly each man's luxury household goods can be summarized by considering their payment of taxes as proxies. The comparison of consumption of many different types of luxury items is thus possible as well as a comparison to other forms of property and overall wealth.

An examination of the distribution of wealth of a society cannot explain its patterns of consumption. No matter how widely or equitably wealth is distributed, the need to consume is elastic and variable. Some will "sit on leather or cotton, with a comfortable balance at one's
banker's book" while others will "lounge on damask and tread on carpets of Persia, puzzling [their] brains about the budget,"¹ yet the rank order of social hierarchy is still based on the way one lives.²

Quantification of the distribution of wealth can, however, provide several keys to understanding lifestyles. By delineating analytical groups, the total population can be broken down into smaller meaningful units. Thus, economic groups were established as crude proxies for economic classes and these were used as benchmarks for the study of class participation in consumption or property-holding. A contemporary observer noted that the "mania for luxury has reached such an extent that the wife of the labouring man wishes to vie in dress with the wife of a merchant."³ While this study cannot determine which individual taxpayer was a merchant and which a labouring man, it can look at a group whose property suggests a merchant or a laborer, and see if the desire to participate in upper class behavior by the laborer's wife was likely being fulfilled. Examining the distribution of wealth can similarly gauge the overall ability to consume, for, as advised in 1835, to "enlarge your fortunes" is to "extend your power over the material world."⁴

As with any quantitative documentary study, limitations were created by the types and format of information provided on the documents themselves, and even more were created by'
an inability to "know all" about the men and women who formed these societies. For a further discussion of the characteristics and limitations of the study population and the background of the tax list in 1815 see Appendix A.

The Distribution of Luxury Goods

Luxury...can take on many guises, depending on the period, the country, or the civilization. What does not change, by contrast, is the unending social drama of which luxury is both the prize and the theme.5

Fernand Braudel 1979

The tax rates for household items that were enumerated in 1815 were based on the item's size, material, and value6 (see Table 1). With the general assumption that the more taxes paid on these household goods, the greater the number and/or value owned, it is possible to compare the consumption of these goods to other forms of property and overall wealth. In this study, the term consumption merely describes the use or ownership of goods and does not suggest how they were obtained, either by purchase, gift, or inheritance.

The relationship between these goods and other forms of wealth was quite different in Williamsburg and York County. More specifically, the correlation of the amount of taxes paid on these items to total payment of land and personal
property taxes was strong in Williamsburg and weak in York County. A correlation, in this case Pearson's $r$, is simply a measure of association between two variables and the ability to predict one using the other. The correlation coefficient ranges from -1 to +1; when its value lies near -1 or +1, the variables are strongly correlated. Conversely, when the correlation coefficient is closer to 0, there is not a clear linear association between the two variables being measured. In addition, a measure of significance of this correlation coefficient estimates the chances that if a random sample were drawn, the results would be the same. Thus the smaller this number, the greater the confidence one can place in the correlation.7

There was a strong correlation between overall wealth and the ownership of luxury goods in Williamsburg, i.e. one was a good predictor for the other. As other forms of wealth increased, investment in these consumer goods increased apace. However, in York County, although there was the expected relationship between the two variables, its correlation was much weaker. As wealth in the form of land, slaves, or livestock increased, there was not always a correlating increase in wealth in the form of these household goods (Table 2).

Four economic groups of taxpayers based on their ownership of land and personal property were determined. These groups were based on the statistical characteristics
### TABLE 2

**CORRELATION OF PERSONAL PROPERTY, REAL ESTATE, AND HOUSING WITH OVERALL WEALTH BY ECONOMIC GROUPS**

Pearson Correlation Coefficient $r$ / Probability $\rho$

#### WILLIAMSBURG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LAND PERSONAL PROPERTY</th>
<th>GOODS</th>
<th>HOUSE # OF ACRES</th>
<th># OF LOTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>0.4312</td>
<td>0.9650</td>
<td>0.9578</td>
<td>0.3385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLASSES</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOWER</td>
<td>0.5209</td>
<td>0.3208</td>
<td>0.5546</td>
<td>0.1813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLASS</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.0005</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.0535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOWER</td>
<td>-0.2771</td>
<td>0.6068</td>
<td>0.5002</td>
<td>0.1040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDDLE</td>
<td>0.0514</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.0002</td>
<td>0.4721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPPER</td>
<td>0.1327</td>
<td>0.5633</td>
<td>0.5145</td>
<td>-0.0462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDDLE</td>
<td>0.4615</td>
<td>0.0006</td>
<td>0.0022</td>
<td>0.7985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPPER</td>
<td>0.0172</td>
<td>0.9436</td>
<td>0.9119</td>
<td>-0.2105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLASS</td>
<td>0.9267</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.2557</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### YORK COUNTY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LAND PERSONAL PROPERTY</th>
<th>GOODS</th>
<th>HOUSE # OF ACRES</th>
<th># OF LOTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>0.8854</td>
<td>0.9105</td>
<td>0.6739</td>
<td>0.5707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLASSES</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOTTOM</td>
<td>0.5233</td>
<td>0.0722</td>
<td>0.2113</td>
<td>0.1512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLASS</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.1460</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.0022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOWER</td>
<td>0.2120</td>
<td>0.2963</td>
<td>0.1261</td>
<td>0.0419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDDLE</td>
<td>0.0291</td>
<td>0.0020</td>
<td>0.1978</td>
<td>0.6700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPPER</td>
<td>0.1365</td>
<td>0.6805</td>
<td>0.3395</td>
<td>0.1890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDDLE</td>
<td>0.1404</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.0002</td>
<td>0.0404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPPER</td>
<td>0.8811</td>
<td>0.8784</td>
<td>0.5005</td>
<td>0.4745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLASS</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.0014</td>
<td>0.0026</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Based on tax amount paid)
of the distribution of these combined tax values throughout the individual populations of York County and Williamsburg. Those individuals whose tax values fell below the median of values formed one group, between the median and the mean another, those above the mean and below one standard deviation above the mean created a third. The final category was those persons whose tax values placed them above the mean plus one standard deviation, a group of wealthy elite. In quite crude terms, these can be conceptualized as "bottom", "lower middle", "upper middle" and "upper" groups of wealth holders. Although "classes" is not appropriate in the sense of ideological or sociopolitical terms, it is used here is to rank all the members of a society in a kind of superordinate or subordinate hierarchy. Thus, the type of ranking used here is economic and it should not be considered as "value-laden". Some general characteristics of each of these analytic groups are summarized in Tables 3 and 4.

Through all economic levels of Williamsburg society the relationship between the ownership of these luxury goods and all categories of wealth remained remarkably stable. As wealth increased, so did consumption of luxury goods. Yet the lower or middle classes of York society did not increase their consumption of luxury goods at a rate commensurate with overall wealth holding patterns (see Table 2). Even among those that owned the most land and slaves in rural
TABLE 4
WILLIAMSBURG WEALTH CATEGORIES:
BASED ON PAYMENT OF LAND AND PERSONAL PROPERTY TAXES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ALL WILLIAMSBURG</th>
<th>GROUP 1</th>
<th>GROUP 2</th>
<th>GROUP 3</th>
<th>GROUP 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># CASES</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% OF POPULATION</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>14.40</td>
<td>713.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLAVES</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>7.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HORSES</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATTLE</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOTS</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOUSE VALUE</td>
<td>284.25</td>
<td>63.73</td>
<td>333.00</td>
<td>603.79</td>
<td>676.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL TAXES PAID</td>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>9.44</td>
<td>24.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAXES PAID ON GOODS</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td>18.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% OWNING LAND</td>
<td>52.20</td>
<td>36.44</td>
<td>58.00</td>
<td>75.76</td>
<td>70.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% OWNING HOUSE</td>
<td>33.77</td>
<td>21.05</td>
<td>70.00</td>
<td>60.60</td>
<td>41.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


TABLE 5
YORK COUNTY WEALTH CATEGORIES:
BASED ON PAYMENT OF LAND AND PERSONAL PROPERTY TAXES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ALL YORK COUNTY</th>
<th>GROUP 1</th>
<th>GROUP 2</th>
<th>GROUP 3</th>
<th>GROUP 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># OF CASES</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% OF POPULATION</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>60.83\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>15.84</td>
<td>17.63</td>
<td>5.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLAVES</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>14.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HORSES</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>5.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATTLE</td>
<td>6.58</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>6.40</td>
<td>12.94</td>
<td>33.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACRES</td>
<td>206.21</td>
<td>20.71</td>
<td>85.34</td>
<td>181.86</td>
<td>172.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOUSE VALUE</td>
<td>37.32</td>
<td>9.43</td>
<td>29.06</td>
<td>74.24</td>
<td>244.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL TAXES PAID</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>8.04</td>
<td>32.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAXES PAID ON GOODS</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% OWNING LAND</td>
<td>45.59</td>
<td>31.94</td>
<td>56.66</td>
<td>70.40</td>
<td>81.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% OWNING HOUSE</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>15.09</td>
<td>33.05</td>
<td>52.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a} This abnormally large group is partially accounted for by the large number of zero values. Some seven percent of the tax enumerations had no taxes charged against them. In addition, the free black "head tax" was factored out as it did not represent a form of wealth but merely marked one's presence in the county. Many free blacks were thus also reduced to zero for this variable.
society, almost half were in the bottom tier in the ownership of goods. Acquiring status goods was important to all classes in Williamsburg, but only to the most wealthy in York County, and even then in only part of that group. Thus, the mean tax amount paid by even the wealthiest in York County was not that different from the overall average in the city.

This difference in the relationship between overall wealth and household consumption was, of course, reflected in the number and values of the objects themselves found in rural and urban households. Two men, both average in their respective societies, illustrate this point well. In 1815, Thomas Phillips lived on his 62 acres in York County in 1815. He and his wife were about middle aged, with two daughters and two sons. He owned a horse and three cows, and worked the land himself with his family. Little can be said about his dwelling, but he owned one chest of drawers, constructed of local wood, for the storage of clothing or other personal possessions. There were no imported carpets on the floor or store-bought curtains at the window. The sun ordered his daily rhythms, for he had no clock to judge time. He may have owned a hand mirror or small framed pictures or silhouettes, but overall his household was plain, with few amenities to decorate and certainly no objects to impress his neighbors.
Benjamin White lived in Williamsburg in that same year. Although little is known about his situation or family, like Thomas Phillips he too owned land. Three of his four lots of land were undeveloped, but he owned a house valued at $400, and a cow for milk for his family. Like Phillips, a chest of drawers constructed of local wood was in his house. But White's material world was quite different than that of Phillips. While he did not have all the accoutrements of high-status dining, he had a fine mahogany table to dine with guests. Three large pictures and one in a stylish gilt frame adorned his walls. He even could pull his silver watch from his pocket and tell the time of day, when to leave work or to meet a friend.

These two cases can only begin to suggest the differences between rural and urban life in 1815. Figure 10 graphically demonstrates these gross differences between Williamsburg and York County in household furnishings. These disparities can also be seen throughout all levels of wealth holding. The poorest group paid thirteen times the taxes on these goods than did their peers in York County. Although this extreme difference decreases slightly as the economic scale is moved upward, the top group in Williamsburg still paid 3.7 times the taxes on household goods as the corresponding York group. While some of the wealthiest York County residents, such as Garvin Corbin, were certainly equal to their urban counterparts, a great many of the
Consumption of Luxury Goods

Williamsburg and York County

Figure 10. Select Household Goods, Per Taxpayer: Williamsburg and York County, 1815.
wealthiest York County residents did not really own an equivalent quantity of these goods as their urban counterparts. While wealthy planters were the archetypical Virginia gentlemen in the eighteenth century with all the mythical elements of hospitality and elegance, either poor agricultural conditions and the depressed economy in the early nineteenth century prevented a continued high-style existence, or their urban neighbors had simply outpaced them in their consumptive display. Perhaps, however, there had always been only a small visible rural elite living among and overshadowing a majority who lived in relative hardship.

Not only were quantities of these taxed goods much larger in the town center, but a greater proportion of the population participated in their consumption. While 63 percent of the taxpayers in Williamsburg owned at least one of these household items, the proportion fell to only one-quarter in York County. The large majority of rural population, the poor and middle classes, lived in a world quite different that their urban neighbors. For instance, in Williamsburg, more than ten percent of the taxpaying population owned at least one of each of 17 different items. This was true only for chests of drawers of native wood in York County. In addition, unlike the rural area more than a quarter of the Williamsburg population possessed certain items, such as mahogany dining tables, and chests of drawers, regardless of wood type (Table 5).
TABLE 5

HOUSEHOLD GOODS OWNED BY MORE THAN TEN PERCENT
OF THE POPULATION, 1815

PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION
OWNING AT LEAST ONE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOUSEHOLD ITEM</th>
<th>Williamsburg</th>
<th>York County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mahogany dining tables</td>
<td>33.77</td>
<td>7.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest of drawers, common wood</td>
<td>28.07</td>
<td>13.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest of drawers, mahogany</td>
<td>23.68</td>
<td>4.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture, print, or engraving with frame larger than 12&quot;</td>
<td>18.42</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahogany bedstead</td>
<td>17.54</td>
<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver, gilt, or pinchbeck watch</td>
<td>16.23</td>
<td>6.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirror or looking glass, 2 to 3 feet</td>
<td>13.60</td>
<td>4.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahogany sideboard (^a)</td>
<td>13.16</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair, mahogany, bamboo, or cane</td>
<td>13.16</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture, print, or engraving, enclosed in a gilt frame</td>
<td>12.28</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut glass decanter, pitcher, bowl, goblet, wash basin, stand, salver</td>
<td>11.84</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau, secretary or bookcase, common wood</td>
<td>11.40</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plated urn, coffee, tea pot, candlestick</td>
<td>10.97</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wardrobe or cloaths-press, common wood</td>
<td>10.53</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver urn, coffee pot, teapot, pitcher, tankard, cup, salver, waiter (^b)</td>
<td>10.52</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano-forte, harpsichord, organ, harp</td>
<td>10.09</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) No distinction made for type or value of sideboard.

\(^b\) Combined silver categories.
General categories of goods were established to better track the movement of goods throughout the population. Each household owning at least one of these items in each category was scored. These categories were: mahogany furniture; mahogany case furniture; case furniture of other wood; silver, cut glass, and plated table/serving wares; decorative items; time-keeping devices; chairs and sofas for seating; carriages; and the whole constellation of goods relating to dining including mahogany dining tables, chairs, sideboards, and tablewares (Table 6). Although grouping in these categories does aid in a functional approach to understanding their consumption, it does not, of course, measure the multiple listings for one household.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY OF HOUSEHOLD ITEM</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION OWNING AT LEAST ONE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Williamsburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All mahogany furniture</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All dining-related</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case furniture, of common wood</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decoration</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case furniture, mahogany</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table/Serving wares</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carriages</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seating furniture</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As simpler forms such as dining tables or bedsteads were only taxed if they were mahogany, it is impossible to measure these more basic items in pine, cherry, walnut or other local woods. However, it can be said that while
mahogany furniture predominated in the urban households of Williamsburg, case furniture in common woods was the most prevalent in York County. On the other hand, case furniture in these materials was also popular in Williamsburg, and mahogany was also present in York County. Perhaps mahogany furniture was not as indicative of urban status as the overall urban/rural study suggested in the previous chapter, or perhaps the difference was in specific forms within each category.

Both groups valued storage of clothing, books or personal items and a specified space to pay bills or write letters. However, while a third of the Williamsburg taxpayers could participate in high-style dining on mahogany tables, with matching accessories and furnishings, only ten percent could in York County.

On an even broader scale, many more of the items taxed in 1815 were included in the furnishing of a correct dining room than those grouped above. For instance, one modern scholar has established "predictable attributes" for a room used only for dining in the first half of the nineteenth century. These included a sideboard and often a cellaret, a dining table and chairs, one or more looking glasses, portraits, polished fireplace equipment and sometimes a clock, all of which are seen in Henry Sargent's stylish dining room in Philadelphia.9 (Figure 6). Williamsburg residents had far more of most of these items than their
York County counterparts. However, "The Dining Room of Dr. Whitstable..." (Figure 11) depicts clearly the more basic equipment found in a less high-style dining room.

When the populations of York County and Williamsburg are broken down into the four groups based on wealth holding, the participation in consumption of specific items becomes even more pronounced (Table 7). As expected, goods increase as wealth increases, but their consumption pervaded farther down the economic scale in the urban than the rural area, and with greater percentages of each class participating. For instance, in Williamsburg even among those below the average in overall wealth a substantial range of items was owned by more than one-quarter of the taxpayers. Only a small number in this group, however, owned carriages and expensive chairs, and even fewer could serve their guests from fine tablewares. Neither could a quarter of the upper middle class group do so but they could drive a carriage about town or seat their guests on fancy types of chairs.

Figure 11 (following page)

Joseph Russell (1795-1860). "The Dining Room of Dr. Whitstable as it was in the Winter, 1814-1815, Breakfast Time." 1849-1854. Watercolor, 7 1/16 "x 9 1/2". Courtesy, the Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Mass.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOODS CATEGORY</th>
<th>WILLIAMSBURG</th>
<th>York County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Mahogany</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining-Related</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case furniture-Other Wood</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorative Items</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-keeping</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case furniture-Mahogany</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablewares</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carriages</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seating Furniture</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The vast majority of the wealthy group in Williamsburg society could, however, participate in a wide range of activities. Mahogany furniture was almost universal in these households. Nearly all decorated their homes with large pictures or those in gilded frames. A large number had at least some part of the material complement of high-style dining, and most of these had plated, silver or cut glass table/serving wares. One third, however, did not choose to own a carriage or the types of chairs that were taxed that year.

In York County, the material world was much different. Only those above average in wealth really could begin to behave as their urban counterparts, as measured by the presence or absence of taxed goods. Even in the wealthiest York County households, the majority did not participate in the consumption of these items. While about half of the elite had mahogany furnishings of some type, a part of the necessary equipage of formal dining, and walls decorated with large pictures, portraits, and mirrors, only about a third had fine tablewares or mahogany case furniture. Two-thirds rode a horse or took a wagon into town.

It seems that the goods most restricted to the upper class were silver, cut glass, and plated silver table or serving wares, riding carriages, and mahogany, cane bottomed, or gold- or silver-decorated chairs. This was true in both the rural and urban populations.
Cut glass decanters, bowls, goblets, candlesticks, and a chandelier were found in Williamsburg households. As indicated from merchants' records in the second half of the eighteenth century, cut glass was expensive, perhaps twice the cost of flint glass, and not overly common. Its popularity, however, can be easily after the perfection of the technology for pressed glass in the 1820's. These cheaper imitations were then eagerly consumed and became standard in many households. Silver pitchers, coffee pots, tea pots, tankards, cups and waiters were found in Williamsburg, and were traditional symbols of status display. Plated silver coffee pots, tea pots, and urns were also represented, but their cost was about half of that for silver forms.

Twice as many Williamsburg residents in the top group had carriages than their rural counterparts. According to one contemporary source, the ownership of carriages was actually the symbolic divider of classes in Philadelphia. In that large city, the first class was composed of those who owned carriages, followed by "merchants, lawyers and attorneys who have no carriages and doctors who make their calls on foot," and the third class was the "people who
follow the mechanical arts." The ownership of carriages was substantively limited to the upper middle and upper class in both Williamsburg and York County.

Not all the characteristics of the chairs that were taxed were clear on the tax enumerations, and it seems that the three categories were mixed on the lists of various jurisdictions. In Williamsburg, however, those listed were uniformly noted as either mahogany, cane-bottomed, or Windsor chairs ornamented with gold or silver leaf. It can only be surmised that other Windsor chairs were not taxed, and thus explain the low proportions. Henry Fearon provided some quite exacting prices for varying types of chairs in New York in 1818, enabling the establishment of a price ratio based on the lowest price quoted of "plain wooden chairs" and each of the other types. "Curled maple chairs with rush seats" were double the price, "curled maple chairs with cane seats" cost three times as much, and the price of "most handsomely finished" chairs were nearly six and a half times that of plain chairs. The types of chairs that were taxed were thus quite expensive choices compared with other equally functional types.
Summary

While wealth and consumption were intricately linked in both York County and Williamsburg, only in Williamsburg was it true for all levels of wealth holdings. These goods were more of a part of daily life for more people in the urban context. In York County, a significant portion of the population did not participate in the consumption of these top-of-the-scale goods, including those in the wealthiest group. Patterns seen in that top group in York County approximate upper middle class urban levels.

In addition, the choice of certain functional categories of goods can be traced throughout the population. While decorative items and furniture of common wood extended far down the wealth scale, carriages, fine tablewares and some kinds of chairs did not. At the apex of Williamsburg society, the material objects were clearly in place for correct social behavior and an "interior" view of a high-status lifestyle.
The Distribution of Total Wealth

Wealth, like suffrage, must be considerably distributed to sustain a democractic Republic, and hence, whatever draws a considerable proportion of either into a few hands will destroy it.14

John Taylor
Caroline County
1814

One of the most prominent of the impressions reported by foreign travelers in America in the 1830's was aggressive egalitarianism. But many noted that although there was general well-being among the people, there seemed to also be a constant and restless striving for more. Alexis de Tocqueville eloquently summarized this when he wrote that "among democratic nations, men easily attain a certain equality of conditions, but they can never attain as much as they desire."15 At the root of this was not a mere love of egalitarianism, but an overwhelming passion for money, "because a man's wealth is the measure of his capacity and of his consideration among his fellow citizens"16. Indeed, Thomas Hamilton complained of attending a party where every introduction was prefaced by his host with an account of the man's fortune, a habit which Hamilton found to be so distasteful that he wrote sarcastically, "had I been presented to so many bags of dollars, instead of their
possessors, the ceremony would have been quite as inter­
esting, and perhaps less troublesome."17

It was not only foreign travelers, however, that noted that wealth was the measure of individual worth. In a satirical essay in the Norfolk Gazette in 1814, a "dream" was reported in which the writer visited a fantastical "empire of fashion." Here he was ridiculed and shunned by the inhabitants until he pulled out a wad of money upon which "I was welcomed into the circle of fashion with great cordiality and offers of service."18

Coupled with this was a constant yearning for material goods. The "love of well-being has become the predominant taste of the nation," reported Tocqueville.19 However, general well-being is measured by identification with a class structure, peace of mind was insured if "an individual should possess as large a portion of goods as others with whom he is accustomed to class himself; and it is extremely gratifying to possess something more than others."20 Yet, Jacksonian observers also reported that there were not great disparities in lifestyle between social classes. According to one foreign observer, "Americans are too prudent a people to invest in objects of mere taste, that which in the more vulgar shape of cotton or tobacco would tend to the replenishing of their pockets."21 Did material culture reflect the accumulation of wealth?
A study of the distribution of the wealth of a society ties both of these themes together. If wealth was the standard for individual status, it also was only relative to the society in which one functioned. In addition, social emulation through consumption of goods can only be measured when a class is defined, in this case justifiably based on wealth. A distribution of wealth cannot explain consumption. It can, however, account for an economic ability to consume and describe overall contexts within which that consumption functioned.

The best proxy available for an individual's total wealth in the study of tax records from 1815 is a combination of the taxes he paid on real estate and on personal property. This combined tax was strongly related with the payment of personal property taxes in both York and Williamsburg. Generally as the amount of combined taxes increased, so did the personal property taxes (see Table 2). However, only in York did this hold true for land taxes, as well. Land ownership did not play as vital a role in Williamsburg in overall wealth as in York, a point that will be reinforced later.

One way to look at the way wealth is distributed throughout the population is to see if the distribution curve for the payment of taxes is normal and tightly clustered. If this were the case the standard deviation would be low, approximately two thirds of the cases would
fall between the mean and one standard deviation, and approximately 95 percent between the mean and two standard deviations. For instance, in both areas the standard deviation is large, and 86.4 percent in Williamsburg and 94.0 percent in York County lie between the mean and one standard deviation, with the remainder falling outside this breakpoint. This implies the influence of a few abnormally large cases. In York County, for instance, Garvin L. Corbin and Benjamin Waller paid over $100.00 in taxes in a county where the average was only about $4.00. These two were disproportionately wealthy even within the top one percent of the population; here Benjamin Waller's taxes were still four times that paid by the bottom member of this group, Scervant Jones. In Williamsburg, however, the largest taxpayer only paid $44.66, and only a few dollars separated the wealthiest from one another.

A "traditional" distribution of wealth was determined based on population percentiles to be used as a means of comparison with other published studies. This is an attempt to place York and Williamsburg in a larger framework of expectations about rural or urban wealth holding. A number of studies of colonial and mid nineteenth-century America have utilized the simple methodology of wealth percentiles to assess the relative concentration or dispersion of wealth in a population. Overall the population is broken down into groups and their percentage of the total wealth calculated. In an absolutely equal system, each group, in
this case each decile, would own a corresponding amount of the wealth.

Such a distribution, however, should not occur in any economically unrestrained society in which wealth accumulation is an important facet of life. Jackson Turner Main has provided a rule of thumb in describing the proportion of wealth owned by the top ten percent. With his assurance, "generalizing without fear, anything under forty percent may be considered equal, anything over 50 percent, unequal and over 60 percent—which became usual during the nineteenth century—highly concentrated."24

General trends from these studies seem to indicate a relatively equal society in the early eighteenth century, without a wide gap between the rich and poor.25 By the Revolution the top decile of the nation's population entitled to own wealth owned on average about half of the wealth, the top two percent about one quarter, and the quite elite upper one percent still holding fifteen percent of the available economic resources.26 The trend continued towards concentration in the nineteenth century as industrialization and agricultural diversification continued until over seventy percent of the wealth would lie in the hands of the upper decile by 1860.27 This concentration is exacerbated in metropolitan areas in all time periods.28

Despite the emphasis in published studies on the colonial era and to a lesser extent in later periods,
several of these studies carry over or begin with populations from the early nineteenth century. Table 8 compares this data with a similar treatment of York County and Williamsburg percentages. In addition, certain other estimations have been made. Robert Gallman has extrapolated from census returns that 69 percent of the wealth was owned by the top 10 percent of the wealth holders nationwide in 1810. William Seiner has determined that the distribution of wealth in Fredericksburg, Virginia was quite stable at the top of the scale around the turn of the century with just over half of the wealth owned by the top 12 percent of taxpayers between 1790 and 1810.

Although at first there does not seem to be any overall consistency in this comparison, given the contexts of each population the results are not surprising. Boston was a large metropolitan city, and exhibited characteristics of a highly urbanized area with a large number of poor and a wealthy apex of merchants. Chester County, Pennsylvania was a prosperous rural area, close enough to Philadelphia to provide provisions for the urban market. In addition other studies have suggested that a large majority of all Pennsylvania farmers were neither rich nor poor.
### TABLE 8

**GENERAL DISTRIBUTIONS OF WEALTH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of taxpayers</th>
<th>Percentage of wealth held</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boston(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom 30%</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Middle 30%</td>
<td>4.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Middle 30%</td>
<td>30.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper 10%</td>
<td>64.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gini Index(^c)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schutz Coefficient</td>
<td>.6276</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Taxable wealth among taxpayers, not adjusted for property-less. Alan Kulikoff, "The Progress of Inequality in Revolutionary Boston." William and Mary Quarterly 3rd Series, Volume 28 (1971) no. 3, p. 381.


\(^c\) See endnote 32 for a discussion of these two measures of inequality.

York County, on the other hand, represented a region in an era of increasing inequality. The many factors affecting Tidewater Virginia in the early nineteenth century were discussed in the Chapter 1, and point to a region where the climax of wealth accumulation had passed. While the wealthy landowners were able to retain many of their large holdings, albeit somewhat diminished, there was a growth of the landless and those that had little property.\(^32\) Thus, the
upper ten percent owned almost sixty percent of the wealth, followed by a relatively strong next thirty percent. The bottom two groups were left with a much smaller "piece of the pie," i.e. about eight percent and less than one percent respectively. The very upper elite, as previously shown, held a quite disproportionate share of the resources within the county. The large number of York residents who lacked expensive household goods similarly had few other forms of wealth.

If Williamsburg is conceptualized as an urban area such as Boston, its distribution should be far more disproportionately skewed. Yet compared to Fredericksburg, also being eclipsed in importance by western expansion, not only did the top wealth holders enjoy a similar advantage, but as reflected in the Schutz coefficient, a similar overall distribution of wealth throughout the population. The top twelve percent in Fredericksburg held just over half of the wealth, while the same percentage in Williamsburg owned 48.7 percent. Both areas had a large number of merchants for their population size, but in this period neither enjoyed the advantages for commercial growth that earlier prosperity had predicted.

The Williamsburg data also aids in interpreting consumption patterns. It seems that those "middling classes" in Williamsburg that were neither very wealthy nor very poor, perhaps craftsman or artisans, held over half the wealth, an
almost perfect corresponding percentage to their sixty percent population size. This affluent middle group helps explain the participation in consumption well down the wealth holding scale in Williamsburg, at least in their ability to consume. In addition, the top one percent held a quite mild overall economic advantage in the city, holding 8.2 percent of the wealth, as compared to the same group in York County owning 19.8 percent. The uppermost group in York may have been relatively better off within its society than its urban counterpart, while the converse was true for the bottom rung of the ladder. This is reflected in consumption patterns for both groups.

While a distribution of wealth based on decile groups can provide important comparative information about the relative economic status of its components, a criticism is often made of these static and arbitrary breakpoints for the population. A better choice would be to establish certain groups within the population based on the actual statistical characteristics of the distribution, as described previously in terms of four groups roughly termed as "upper" "upper middle" "lower middle" and "bottom".

Analyzed in this way, important differences again are discernable between Williamsburg and York County. The greater economic position of the top group in York County is reinforced in comparison to the rest of the county, as this group owned seven times the number of slaves, five times the
number of horses and cattle, and over three times the number of acres of land than the average York resident. In addition, they paid eight times the combined taxes. In Williamsburg the corresponding group held only three times the number of slaves, cattle and horses, nearly the same number of lots as the mean for the city, and paid four times the combined taxes.

When the distribution of wealth is thus determined, the economic percentage of total wealth owned by the top group in York County is even clearer (Table 9). About six percent at the top owned forty-five percent of the taxable wealth, and over half of the measured goods in the county. Although in both areas there were a core of about three dozen wealthy men, the top rung in Williamsburg was a much larger proportion of the population, twice that of the rural elite. This group owned just over half of the wealth, and over sixty percent of the goods. However, it should be remembered that the proportion of goods in Williamsburg is also based on a much larger total. Despite the fact that the taxpaying population of Williamsburg was only one-third that of York County, that group paid three times the amount of taxes on top-of-the-line luxury goods, and the means were much higher. (See Tables 4 and 5 for mean tax amounts)

The distribution of combined property (wealth) and taxed luxury goods is graphically demonstrated by the use of the Lorenz curve. This is a plotting of the cumulative
TABLE 9
DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH AND GOODS
BY WEALTH GROUPS, 1815

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>% OF POPULATION</th>
<th>% OF WEALTH</th>
<th>% OF GOODS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bottom</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>9.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Middle</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>21.92</td>
<td>15.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Middle</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14.47</td>
<td>22.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13.60</td>
<td>53.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

York County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>% OF POPULATION</th>
<th>% OF WEALTH</th>
<th>% OF GOODS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bottom</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>60.84</td>
<td>9.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Middle</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>15.84</td>
<td>11.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Middle</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>17.63</td>
<td>34.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td>44.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

distribution of wealth against the cumulative distribution of population. In a perfectly equal distribution a diagonal line would traverse the graph. However, the shape of the curve displays the relative equality or inequality of the distribution. In Figure 12 the dark area beneath the diagonal represents the distribution and the shaded area the inequality. Represented this way, the differences in the distribution of combined property in Williamsburg and York County were marked, with a relatively egalitarian system in Williamsburg and an unequal one in York County. Luxury goods are even more inequitably distributed in York County, while the clear relationship between consumer goods and overall property holding is demonstrated.
Figure 12. Lorenz Curves for the Distribution of Wealth and Goods, Williamsburg and York County, 1815.
Land, Wealth, and Consumption

"What should we farmers be without that distinct possession of the soil?..."34

J. Hector St. John De Crevecoeur, 1782

"Cultivators of the soil are the most valuable citizens," wrote Jefferson to John Jay in 1785.35 The ideology of the small farmer had its roots in the ownership of land, while the mobs in great cities were most feared because they were propertyless and thus not tied to national interests. This polarization did not, of course, represent reality. Land was an important commodity in both rural and urban contexts, and there were as many landless in the rural economy of York County as in the town center.

However, the patterns of ownership of land, general wealth holding and consumption were quite different in the two areas. Land was a greater factor of overall wealth in York County than in Williamsburg. The dissimilarity between the two areas in the measurement of statistical correlation was actually greater for these two variables than any other pair studied (see Table 2). This seems to be reflective of several factors.

First, the ownership of lots and acres was not directly comparable in their importance to one's livelihood.
Increasing the number of lots owned could provide additional rental fees, but would probably not aid in the business of a merchant or lawyer. In Williamsburg, excess wealth was not always put into larger and larger expanses of land, in this case the purchase of additional lots. Some of that wealth was undoubtedly put into capital not measured on this tax list, such as bank notes, merchandise or land in other counties.

Secondly, the Williamsburg population generally owned more personal property, and this formed a greater proportion of the overall wealth as measured by the combined taxes. A great deal more of the excess wealth in Williamsburg was placed in consumer durables than their country cousins.

Finally, there was a wider range in land investment in York County, as seen in the disparity in the number of acres. A large number of men and women with only a few acres coexisted with a few men and women who owned large expanses of land.

There were few conclusive differences in the correlation of wealth and land ownership in the lower and middle classes of Williamsburg and York. The largest taxpayers in the rural and urban contexts, however, evidenced distinctly different patterns. Although the ownership of land corresponded well with overall payment of taxes in York County, the opposite was true in Williamsburg (Table 10). As the percentage owning land was similar, 82 percent for York and
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBGROUP OF POPULATION</th>
<th>PEARSON'S r/SIGNIFICANCE</th>
<th>WILLIAMSBURG</th>
<th>YORK COUNTY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>All population</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and wealth</td>
<td>.431/.0001</td>
<td>.885/.0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and goods</td>
<td>.185/.0050</td>
<td>.403/.0001</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Owning Land</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Land and wealth</td>
<td>.346/.0001</td>
<td>.432/.0001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land and goods</td>
<td>.967/.0001</td>
<td>.683/.0001</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Owning Both Land and Goods</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and wealth</td>
<td>.429/.0001</td>
<td>.460/.0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and goods</td>
<td>.595/.0001</td>
<td>.652/.0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bottom Land Class</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and wealth</td>
<td>-.112/.2362</td>
<td>n.a. c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and goods</td>
<td>-.109/.2473</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lower Middle Land Class</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and wealth</td>
<td>.205/.3253</td>
<td>.296/.0002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and goods</td>
<td>.144/.4922</td>
<td>.153/.0599</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upper Middle Land Class</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and wealth</td>
<td>.367/.0278</td>
<td>.465/.0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and goods</td>
<td>.299/.0762</td>
<td>.249/.0060</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upper Land Class</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and wealth</td>
<td>.313/.0224</td>
<td>.923/.0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and goods</td>
<td>.161/.2503</td>
<td>.373/.0327</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a* Pearson's r correlation for taxes paid on land and overall taxes paid.

*b* Pearson's r correlation for taxes paid on land and taxes paid on goods.

*c* Owned no land.
71 percent for Williamsburg, the difference must again be explained by the range of land ownership. In York, the mean number of acres for the upper group was 722 acres, three and a half times the county-wide average of 200 acres. However, in Williamsburg the average number of lots owned in this top group was little more than the average for the whole urban population.

Of course there were several landowners in Williamsburg who owned large quantities of real estate in the city. Samuel McCroskey owned 44 lots and Littleton Tazewell was taxed for 36, as well as acreage in James City County. More than ten lots were owned by eight percent of the landowners, and another 15 percent owned from five to ten lots. More than half the city population, however, owned only one or two lots.

Despite economic declines in York County, or perhaps because of them, the group of large landowners there had actually increased their relative position since the eighteenth century (Table 11). This was at the expense of the middling groups, who seemed to have lost ground in the generation after the Revolution. Almost 70 percent of the landowners lay below the mean landholding of 212 acres, partially due to the increase in the number of small farmers, owning less than a hundred acres of land, but also to the slight increase in much larger farms, which raised the mean value. These were continuations of century-long
TABLE 11
AVERAGE TIDEWATER FARM SIZE
1704 - 1815

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-99</th>
<th>100-199</th>
<th>200-299</th>
<th>300-399</th>
<th>400-499</th>
<th>500-599</th>
<th>1000+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1704a</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788a</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815b</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Data from 1704-1788 is from the Virginia Coastal Counties of Middlesex, Gloucester, Elizabeth City, Princess Anne, Accomac, and Northampton (Main 1954).

b Data for 1815 is from York County.

trends and accentuate the increasingly unequal distribution of wealth in the rural area.

Landowning patterns are distinctly influenced by population pressure and the cost of acquiring acreage. Land was inexpensive in the opening decades of the nineteenth century in the Tidewater agricultural areas. It was reported at the turn of the century that "while in every other part of America, the price of land has increased three and four fold, in these lower parts of Virginia it has received no augmentation during the last twenty years." The cost per acre at that time was said to range from six dollars for the majority of the acreage which was "indifferent" to twelve dollars for the better lands, located on the creeks.36 If this were true, then an acre of average land could be
purchased for the price of a large looking glass sold in the county that year.\textsuperscript{37}

Despite its relatively low price, about half of the population in York County or Williamsburg had not acquired land in 1815. Some may have had access to family land for agricultural efforts or housing, some resided in other places and merely owned personal property in the area, but most were very likely renting land. This suggests either an inability or lack of desire to attain land, the traditional measure of wealth, for a large number of rural and urban dwellers.

While owning land was certainly an indicator of economic resources, not owning land does not conversely indicate a lack of them, especially in the town center of Williamsburg. Peter Albert found that the majority of households in the urban areas of Richmond, Fredericksburg, Williamsburg and Norfolk in the first decade of the nineteenth century were tenants.\textsuperscript{38} As previously discussed, these persons were engaged in a number of mercantile, service, labor and professional jobs. Almost half owned a cow or horse and 61 percent owned at least one slave.

It is more difficult, however, to ascertain the role of these landless residents in rural society and economy. They may have been sons of property-holding age awaiting inheritance or had other access to land. Perhaps they were engaged in trade, in processing tobacco and snuff or
manufacturing shoes, soap, copper, or nails. Others were probably laborers or tenants. Jackson Turner Main estimated that of the 57 percent landless in the Tidewater in the 1780's, 31 percent were laborers, 11 percent had access to family land, and 15 percent were tenants. However, most of those in York County who did not own land were not unlike landowners in their personal property. For instance, the average number of cattle per landless resident was nearly six, close to the overall average. Likewise, the mean number of slaves was virtually equal to that for the whole population, at just about two per taxpayer. Their average tax on household goods, however, was only sixty percent of the county mean and less than half of that for landowners.

In addition to those that did not own land, another group owned land in York County or Williamsburg and resided elsewhere. It has been estimated that between 5 and 20 percent of the taxpayers in eighteenth-century Chester County, Pennsylvania were non-resident, with a tentative conclusion of 16.3 percent for one township in 1802. Looking at the problem a different way, this group of non-residents in York County in the first decade of the nineteenth century owned a full 37 percent of the acreage.

By 1815 the number and position of non-resident landowners had decreased from earlier estimates. This group was about 13 percent of the landowners in York County,
although only about five percent of the total population. Their landholdings averaged about 300 acres, and together they controlled about 17 percent of the acreage. A quarter of these non-residents also owned personal property in the area and may have maintained some kind of household.

Land and Luxury Goods

The relationship between one's investment in real estate and acquisition of material objects does not seem to have been clear. Ownership of land did not reflect the household goods and amenities that might be found in each household. In York County, just about a quarter of those owning land and a quarter of those not owning land owned at least one taxable item. In Williamsburg, however, a majority of both groups owned one of these items. Yet while only half of the city landowners were taxed for one of these household goods, over 75 percent of those who did not own land were so charged. The percentage of landowners not owning any of these goods might be influenced by those whose lands were in probate, but the general indication is that land ownership could not predict the ownership of these goods.

Even those owning the most land did not seem to be either different or predictable in their acquisition of these items. In York County, for example, sixty percent of those in the top group of landowning were in the bottom tier
in goods ownership. Similarly, 45 percent of the large landowners in Williamsburg fell to the bottom tier in the ownership of goods.

While large quantities of land did not necessarily imply the ownership of some form of these goods, the presence of a large quantity of goods did seem to predict large landholdings. The top tier in the ownership of goods was more likely to be in the top tier of landowning than vice versa. This trend was even stronger in Williamsburg. All in all, 97 percent of the top landowners were above the mean of goods ownership in Williamsburg, and 93 percent in York County.

Not owning land was indicated by an actual increased ownership of certain types of goods in Williamsburg. Time-keeping devices were owned by more than a third of the non-landowners, but only a quarter of the landowning were represented. These were mainly pinchbeck, silver, and gilt pocket watches, functioning as highly portable symbols outside of the household. Carrying out of business required a more precise sense of time, whatever one's position in that business. Although the differences were less dramatic, all mahogany furniture, and specifically bureaus, secretaries, and bookcases were similarly more often a part of households that did not own land. Conversely, decorative items, expensive tablewares, chairs, and carriages were more common in landowning households.
When all the dining-related categories are combined, almost a third of both groups participated by the ownership of at least one part. There were, however, slight differences in the ownership of different components. A greater percentage of landowners had mahogany sideboards and tablewares, while more in the landless group had mahogany dining tables. This may indicate that landowners had the wealth or desire to round out the full complement of dining accoutrements, while less of their non-landowning neighbors were able to participate in the high-status entertainment exemplified by the serving of brandy in decanters or tea in silver pots, or the display of all the silver one owns on the sideboard "so well-calculated for a spacious dining room."43

Yet it is clear that some part of the Williamsburg population chose to invest in material objects rather than land. While this may be partially explained by those that had other access to family property, for others, goods were obtained before or instead of making capital investment. If the acquisition of land was important to one's economic status but economically unfeasible or personally undesirable, perhaps goods were used to partially fill that void in declaring one's position. Conversely, traditional status demarcators such as land may have been more fully replaced by the new portable language of material objects in
Williamsburg. This would follow trends from the late eighteenth century.

In York County, whether or not one owned the land being farmed was reflected by material objects that bespoke a certain economic or social position. Only in timepieces did non-landowning residents outscore their landed counterparts, and even this difference was small. All other categories of goods were primarily found in the households of farmers who had accumulated enough capital to purchase land. The greatest differences between landowning and non-landowning York County residents were in the consumption of items related to status dining, such as plated, silver, and cut glass tablewares and mahogany sideboards and dining tables. The most status-sensitive material goods clearly adhered to the traditional status indicator in York County.

But was there any relationship between the amount of land owned and consumption patterns? Four groups were established based on the amount of land taxes paid. The bottom group in York was entirely landless, and the bottom group in Williamsburg contained a tiny percentage of the smallest landowners. Real differences existed along this scale of ranked landowners in their consumption and/or maintenance of these categories of goods (Table 12).

Few of these goods were found in the homes of the smallest landowners in Williamsburg. Of those taxed in 1815, however, the most common item in their homes was decorative,
TABLE 12
PARTICIPATION IN CONSUMPTION OF GOODS CATEGORIES
BY PERCENTAGE OF LAND GROUPS\textsuperscript{a}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOODS CATEGORY</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>BOTTOM GROUP</th>
<th>LOWER MIDDLE GROUP</th>
<th>UPPER MIDDLE GROUP</th>
<th>UPPER GROUP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Mahogany</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>50.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining-Related</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>50.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case furniture-Other Wood</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorative Items</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-keeping</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case furniture-Mahogany</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>35.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablewares</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carriages</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seating Furniture</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York County</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All mahogany</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining-related</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case furniture-Other wood</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorative items</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-keeping</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case furniture-Mahogany</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablewares</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carriages</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seating Furniture</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a}Groups based on amounts of land tax paid.
in the form of pictures, portraits, or mirrors. These represented inexpensive choices of amenities to decorate one's home, and were found in sixteen percent of these households. Both mahogany furniture and their functional equivalents in native woods were represented in twelve percent of these households, and time pieces and carriages were present in the same proportions.

However, it is only in the top group that the majority of categories are found in more than a third of the households. More than half had mahogany furniture, and dining-related components. Just under half had some form of case furniture, either of mahogany or of native woods. The percentage having expensive tablewares tripled from the preceding group, as did the percentage owning taxable chairs. While these goods extended well down the scale of landowning it was mainly in the top group that a greater range and better quality of goods emerged.

Some of the patterns were similarly found in rural York County. The lower middle group opted for the less expensive choices of decorative items and furniture of native woods, but not mahogany furniture. The upper middling group, however, chose mahogany furniture at four times the rate of the lower middle group. Case furniture of other woods, dining-related items, and carriages also increased dramatically. However, in this rural society, the difference between this group and the uppermost landowners was not as
pronounced as was in for Williamsburg. The percentage having at least one of varying categories increased only slightly from that below it, with the exception of expensive tablewares, chairs, and mahogany case furniture. Case furniture of native woods, however, actually became less common in this uppermost group.

Summary

The ownership of land in Williamsburg in 1815 was not a significant factor of overall wealth. While in York County the quantity of land increased significantly as overall property increased, Williamsburg residents did not put their wealth in larger expanses of land. The relationship between land and consumption was also different in the two areas. While landowners and non-landowners had remarkably similar material objects in the town, far greater differences separated their counterparts in the county. Finally, the top group in the ownership of land had a distinctly greater range and better quality of goods than those in the middle and lower groups in Williamsburg. In York County, however, the top group was similar in many ways to the upper middle group. While the number and range of items increased, there did not seem to be a significant increase in the number who chose to participate in consumption.
Housing, Wealth and Consumption

Be simple and severe in your exterior, but at home you may have the richest carpets, plate in abundance, the finest linens of Ireland and Saxony; externally your house will be the same model with all others of the town...44

Michael Chevalier, 1835

Studies of housing in the colonial period and the nineteenth century have generally been limited to qualitative discussions of the nature of specific buildings and their supporting structures, a general elucidation of the spread and nature of "types of houses," and more recently, a view of housing form as reflective of basic social changes. Yet few studies of the values of housing through the population based on tax lists or similar information have been carried out.45 While the values listed can give little exact information about the nature of enumerated buildings, they can provide general information on house ownership, form a means of evaluating one owner against another, and allow further measuring of wealth disposition. In addition, the study of these house values allows for an important glimpse at another means of expressing one's social and economic status.
According to Dell Upton, two stages of growth were seen in the number and type of dwellings built in southeastern Virginia during the post-Revolutionary period. A "Great Rebuilding" occurred in the wake of the war as new houses were built, renovated, or at least redecorated in the Federal style. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, area residents occupying post-in-the-ground structures were able to build their first "substantial" houses. However, as Edward Chappell has pointed out, most Southerners were still in small unfinished homes in 1800. Although housing improved for much of the population in the generations immediately after the Revolution there was still no quantum leap in size or type, and only modest improvements were made.

"Few houses are in a tolerable state of repair" was the observation of travelers in Virginia in this period. Francis Gray, a pilgrim to Monticello from New England was shocked at the quality of housing in Virginia, as he described his lodgings at Port Tobacco:

The house was unfinished and contained only one room which, even here, was considered habitable; in New England it would not have been thought a fit residence for a merino...
occasion when a building's poor exterior and interior finishing was contrasted by fine furniture, abundant food, and social ritual behind doors. That "mixture of wealth and poverty, of studied elegance and negligence" gave Ferdinand Bayard pause, and his description is thorough:

The exterior of that home presented a picture of poverty, it was falling into ruins. Old hats and old clothes took the place of window panes. At the sight of that house, I thought it was the dwelling of some [coarse] German woman...but we were agreeably surprised to find in that place of debilitated appearance, well brought up and elegantly dressed young ladies. We were served tea in beautiful china cups in a parlour floor of which was full of holes, and where daylight came in through cracks in the walls. The sugar-bowl, the cream pitcher, and everything was tastefully arranged on a round, and extremely clean, mahogany table.49

The house "not thought a fit residence for a merino" contained "no appearance of poverty," with one side of the main room occupied by a handsome desk.50 Rouchefoucault-Liancourt even characterized these contrasts as uniquely Virginian: "you find therefore, very frequently a table well served and covered with plate, in a room where half the
windows have been broken for ten years past and will probably remain for ten years longer.\textsuperscript{51}

Contemporary travelers were similarly critical of the "exterior" view of Williamsburg. "Decayed" exteriors, peeling paint and houses in disrepair were all recorded in these accounts. Unfortunately, travelers to the old colonial capitol left few references to the interiors of these structures, interiors that may have also evidenced "studied elegance and negligence." Nor did they leave clues about the persons who lived in these homes and whether the size and value of their houses was expected for their social or economic status. Yet certain evidence from tax lists and other documents seem to point to the idea that housing status was not a good signal of wealth in Williamsburg, nor was the value of one's house necessarily reflected in the consumer goods within the home.

If one believes that "buildings are the results and therefore the signs of what a community values and believes in,"\textsuperscript{52} then the overall economic decline of Williamsburg and York County in the early nineteenth century, as well as continuing rural and urban distinctions, should be reflected in their buildings. The local economy had not stagnated, but many of these structures may have been built in an earlier flush time, representing a different set of "community values," and more specifically, differing individual prosperities. In addition, as population had decreased,'
slightly, demand must have decreased, and houses must have fallen into disrepair. This was documented in late eighteenth-century Annapolis, Maryland after the removal of the nation's capital where builder's had houses left unfinished, others were vacant and abandoned, and thirty-nine had fallen into "bad repair." At least one high valued building in Williamsburg in 1815 was unoccupied, and another lost fully half of its $4000 evaluation for "decay or bad repair" as reported on Mutual Assurance Society plats.

In addition, the overall inequity in York County in the distribution of wealth may be seen in poor housing conditions. One contemporary observer noted that York County houses "uniformly exhibit a mean appearance and their inhabitants strong symptoms of poverty." However, quite valuable structures for the few elite would be expected, particularly those remaining from the prosperous tobacco days of the mid-eighteenth century.

**Housing and Wealth**

What can the values of houses taxed in Williamsburg and York County tell us about the relationship between overall wealth as measured by land and personal property and the specific nature of the house one purchased and/or occupied? The house values for York and Williamsburg were obtained from the 1820 land tax list, producing a possibility of
error based on migration or other changes in the five years after 1815. However, over eighty percent of those on the York County land tax in 1815 were included on the 1820 enumeration, and five percent of those missing cases were for exact acreage passed from a family member. Only a handful in Williamsburg in 1815 were not listed in 1820.

What is most difficult to understand was the low number of house owners in both York County and Williamsburg populations. Only a third of those taxpayers in Williamsburg were matched with houses on the 1820 list, and only 15 percent in York County. It is not known whether houses of insignificant value were included, but the minimum values listed were $110 in York County and $50 in Williamsburg.

The proportion of houseowners to non-houseowners varied though levels of wealth, reaching a peak of 70 percent in the upper middle group in Williamsburg, and declining to 42 percent in the upper echelon. In York County, as overall wealth increased, the proportions gradually improved, reaching a high of 53 percent in the top group.

The overall relationship between wealth and house values was more pronounced in York County than in the city of Williamsburg (see Table 2). While it seems that it may have been difficult to predict the wealth of Williamsburg residents from the value of housing they chose, this does not indicate a lack of concern for it. If buildings reflect community values, then the high value of housing reinforced
the urban character of Williamsburg. The average house value in Williamsburg was $841.69, four times that of York County, and while ninety percent of the York County houses were valued between $100 and $500, less than a third of those in the city fell within the same limits. On the other end of the scale, only two percent of York County's homes were worth more than a thousand dollars while 41 percent of those in Williamsburg surpassed that figure. Not only were the houses more valuable but on the average furnished with a better quality and greater quantity of household items.

When this urban population was grouped by their house values, there was no clear linear relationship between housing and overall wealth. Some wealthy residents and some poorer ones lived in similarly valued structures. Even the wealthiest Williamsburg residents lived in houses of varying costs. However, this discovery only reinforced similar findings for the ownership of land by this group. The Williamsburg elite, many of whom did own a wide range of material goods, did not own commensurate amounts of land and housing given their social position, and some owned none at all. This may suggest that overall the "interior" status of these wealthy elite was more important that their "exterior" status as demonstrated in their housing.

In the York County population, one's wealth was an important factor in the cost of the house in which one lived. If it is assumed that extremely low-valued houses
were not enumerated then the large number of poor in York County explains, in a sense, the large number who do not own houses. Generally as levels of wealth increased so do the values of one's house. However, when the population is broken down into smaller units based on house value, only in the top group, the wealthiest households in the county, was there a strong positive correlation between the value of housing and household goods. Even among only homeowners in York County there was still a significant relationship between one's house value, household wealth and overall wealth. Again, this was not true in Williamsburg (Table 13).

Despite the higher relative scale of living among the homeowners in Williamsburg, the lack of patterning in the ability to relate overall wealth to housing remained puzzling. Removal of possible skewing factors such as non-residence or probate was accomplished by only considering that group that owned both housing and some form of household goods. While the correlations improved for York County between housing, overall wealth, and goods, they continued to decrease with accompanying low confidence levels in Williamsburg.
TABLE 13
CORRELATION OF HOUSING WITH OVERALL WEALTH AND GOODS:
BY SUBGROUPS OF POPULATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBGROUP OF POPULATION</th>
<th>PEARSON'S r/SIGNIFICANCE</th>
<th>WILLIAMSBURG</th>
<th>YORK COUNTY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House and wealth</td>
<td>.338/.0001</td>
<td>.571/.0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House and goods</td>
<td>.191/.0039</td>
<td>.439/.0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owning House</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House and wealth</td>
<td>.355/.0016</td>
<td>.627/.0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House and goods</td>
<td>.250/.0001</td>
<td>.646/.0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owning Both House and Goods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House and wealth</td>
<td>.275/.0613</td>
<td>.711/.0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House and goods</td>
<td>.188/.2060</td>
<td>.828/.0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Middle House Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House and wealth</td>
<td>.369/.159</td>
<td>n.a. c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House and goods</td>
<td>.324/.2212</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Middle House Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House and wealth</td>
<td>.271/.188</td>
<td>.092/.553</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House and goods</td>
<td>.375/.065</td>
<td>.187/.373</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper House Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House and wealth</td>
<td>.064/.7107</td>
<td>.629/.0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House and goods</td>
<td>.092/.5940</td>
<td>.701/.0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Pearson's r correlation for taxes paid on house and overall taxes paid.
b Pearson's r correlation for taxes paid on house and taxes paid on goods.
c Owned no house.
Insurance plats and house histories of Williamsburg properties were examined to search for any conclusive cases of "missing" house owners in 1815. Only two additional persons could be more than tentatively assigned as house-owners, indicating a fair precision of the tax data. However, preliminary findings for the period in a study of Williamsburg settlement patterns may aid in the understanding of these unexpected statistics. Liddle and Styrna found that the decade between 1810 and 1820 was overall one of instability in lot ownership. Several portions of the city experienced turnovers in lot ownership and further lot sub-division.57

The argument for residential mobility is reinforced by the gains evidenced by individual property holders in Williamsburg between 1815 and 1820. Almost 10 percent of the taxpayers in Williamsburg that were landless in 1815 gained a lot and a house by 1820. In fact, when case by case study begins, it seems almost impossible to make any general inferences. Some examples below express this most clearly.

Two carpenters, John Bowden and Thomas Sands, both owned a lot and a house in Williamsburg in 1815. Neither owned any of the household goods taxed that year. Yet the first owned a house valued at $150.00 and the second at $1000.00. Mary Peachy began taking in boarders to help in the pinch after her husband's death,58 and Anna Byrd similarly operated a "Boarding House and House of Private
Yet Mary Peachy was living in a house owned by her father-in-law (and thus not taxed in her name) yet furnished with her large quantity of expensive goods, while Anna Byrd owned her $1000.00 building outright but had no high-status furnishings. In between lay Frances Timberlake, who kept a tavern after the death of her husband, owning both the $1000.00 building and a few household goods.

Renters were both rich and poor; craftsmen lived in small or large houses with modest furnishings. Chappell has found that eighteenth-century Williamsburg architecture was "socially charged," at least in the sense that an upwardly mobile contingent spent a great deal of their income on socially accepted houses and consumer goods, and thus their economic means did not match their architectural appearance. This could also be the case in the early nineteenth century.

The intensive study of eighteenth-century Williamsburg by historians has revealed that generally the class structure of residents of a given structure did not vary widely throughout the period. However, one example may provide some insight into the changes evidenced in the social status of residents of a particular structure as the nineteenth century progressed.

Tazewell Hall was surely one of the most impressive structures on the city landscape when it was built by John Randolph in the mid-eighteenth century (Figure 13) The
length of its facade (138.5 feet) was rivalled only by the Governor's Palace and was two and a half times that of the average Williamsburg dwelling house. In addition, its placement at the end of North England Street allowed an impressive vista-like approach. With "The Tory" Randolph's return to England in 1775 it passed into the hands of the Tazewell family, and finally to Littleton Tazewell. Tazewell was a lawyer and owned large amounts of land in both Williamsburg and James City County. Although quite wealthy, he did not own quite as many goods as his position and housing may have suggested, for he was not in the elite upper decile based on status goods in 1815. After his death in that year, the house was occupied by his widow and daughter. His new son-in-law in 1820 had to pay off the debts on his estate, before later moving his new family to Mecklenburg County. Although the family retained ownership for 19 years until its sale, their overseer resided there in 1823. This residence was insured against fire three times between 1815 and 1830, and each time its value decreased, moving from $4895.00 to $2340.00 to $1500.00. Archaeological investigation has indicated extensive renovation after the property was sold in 1835. By 1849

Figure 13. Tazewell Hall in the early twentieth century. (Photograph courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.)
Tazewell Hall was again "in perfect preservation." The life cycle of Tazewell Hall may have been exemplary of the widely-differing circumstances each building may represent in the course of a few generations in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Housing and Luxury Goods

If there was no general relationship between overall wealth and housing in Williamsburg, perhaps the association between wealth and economic position was found in the "interior status" of these homes. An inability to relate the value of housing to the value of household goods may have reflected a conscious choice to provide fashionably correct furnishings of the elite household before, or rather than, making the substantial and long-range investment in architecture. This would be suggested if a large number of those who owned the most wealth and most household goods did not consistently own high-valued houses. If they did not own houses at all, then perhaps rental of houses or living in family homes was an accepted pattern of behavior for the wealthy as well as the poorer sorts.

Conversely, if a large number of those who owned grander homes did not have the expected matching set of household furnishings or the predicted overall wealth, one would suspect declining fortunes, passing down of a family home to a less wealthy heir, or alternate uses of these
buildings. Perhaps, too, such a pattern would represent a conscious decision to "anticipate" future wealth in the form of architecture. Some houses may have been built with an eye to future prosperity, while the household material objects represent the current means of the occupants. Such was the pattern found by Bernard Herman, studying the house and material culture of wealthy merchant Thomas Mendenhall of Wilmington, Delaware.66

There was no significant correlation between the value of housing and household goods in Williamsburg, either for the whole population, only those who owned houses, or those that owned both houses and goods. (Table 13). In addition, just about two-thirds of houseowners and the same number of those that did not own houses participated in the ownership of at least one taxed household item.

In York County, once again the opposite was true. Not only was there a positive linear relation between the value of one's house and the value of one's goods, but the association was strengthened as the study population became more and more focused. In the rural population the percentage of houseowners who chose varying categories of high-status goods was uniformly double that of non-houseowners. In Williamsburg, almost equal percentages of houseowners and non-houseowners minimally participated in this high style consumption. Here the presence of absence of carriages or expensive tablewares was the most reliable predictor of
housing status. While a greater proportion of houseowners than non-houseowners had a wide range of goods — for example, a complement of decorative items, goods related to dining or fine case furniture — overall consumption patterns between some that owned homes and some residing in rented or family homes were not strikingly different.

Status consumption was more prevalent among the group of Williamsburg residents who did not own homes than among those that owned low-valued houses (Table 14). But, only among those that owned the most expensive houses was there a group whose lifestyle was genuinely elegant. Half of the Williamsburg houseowners bought or inherited mahogany furniture, decorated their homes with prints, portraits, or mirrors, could tell the time of day from their watch or clock, and had the necessary material assemblage for fine dining. Forty percent were able to store books or possessions in mahogany bureaus, chest of drawers and bookcases, or pay bills from their secretary or desk. The same number could take their carriage about town or away on business, or have a dinner party with enough chairs for guests and impress them with gleaming silver laid out on a mahogany sideboard.

Yet it was even more likely that these high-valued homes would not house the range and type of goods one might expect. Some of these houses were rented out or occupied by family members, and thus the taxes paid on household goods
### TABLE 14
PARTICIPATION IN CONSUMPTION OF GOODS CATEGORIES:
BY PERCENTAGE OF HOUSE GROUP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOODS CATEGORY</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>LOWER GROUP</th>
<th>UPPER GROUP</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BOTTOM</td>
<td>MIDDLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GROUP</td>
<td>GROUP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Mahogany</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining-Related</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case furniture-Other Wood</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorative Items</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-keeping</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case furniture-Mahogany</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablewares</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carriages</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seating Furniture</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>LOWER GROUP</th>
<th>UPPER GROUP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BOTTOM</td>
<td>MIDDLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GROUP</td>
<td>GROUP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All mahogany</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>n.a.(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining-related</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case furniture-Other Wood</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorative items</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-keeping</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case furniture-Mahogany</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablewares</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carriages</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seating furniture</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) The mean and median house values in York were 0 and thus no second group was created.
were recorded under different names. It is impossible to study the interiors of these homes. However, this group can be substantively factored out by only looking at those households that had both a house and some taxable goods in one name, with the assumption that houseowners occupied the house for which they were taxed. What was the relationship between housing and goods in this more focused population? Although 79 percent of the top group of houseowners were above the mean in the ownership of goods, almost half drop to the upper middle group. Another twenty percent fell below the mean, with eight percent of that total in the very group in terms of goods. While a large group of high-valued houseowners participated in status consumption, a significant proportion did not achieve quite the commensurate level, and another small group was below average. Although this slight movement up and down the scale should not be over-analyzed, its effect would be that in some cases the value of one's house was not commensurate with the goods within it, a case of architecture leading consumption. Whether this was "socially charged" architecture or "anticipating" wealth is debatable. After all, few houses were documented to have been built in this period, and the phenomena may more likely have been indicative of declining fortunes, or a family home passed down to a less wealthy heir.
Yet among the residents that were taxed for the most household goods, similar but less pronounced disassociations occur. Sixty-two percent are in the matching top group in housing, another 31 percent fell below to the upper middle group, and eight percent are below average in their housing. Here is a small group whose goods, or "interior" status, is not matched by their "exterior" view.

In York County a majority of those whose houses were the finest in the county could not behave as their Williamsburg counterparts in their daily lives. While a third had some form of mahogany furnishings in their homes, only a fifth could have a dinner party, and only ten percent could do so in a lavish style with expensive table and serving items. Even fewer could seat their guests on mahogany chairs.

Conversely, not all in the group that owned some of these goods had fully reached the level of consumption that their houses might have suggested. Only a quarter of these large houseowners were in the top group in the ownership of household goods, and another quarter were below average. On the other hand when a large quantity of goods were owned, levels of housing and consumption were nearly synonymous, as 90 percent were in the upper levels of both groups.

Summary
The value of one's house, or even owning one at all, did not seem to be related to one's overall wealth in the town center of Williamsburg. Although these houses were not "mean and wretched" as some were described in rural areas, these more expensive homes did not necessarily reflect the economic status of their inhabitants. In addition, the number of wealthy citizens with high-status goods who did not own houses implies a social acceptability for rental or living in family structures.

There was no measurable positive relationship between the value of one's house and the value of the goods within it in Williamsburg, nor did one's housing status dictate participation in consumption. This was not true, however, for York County. A homeowner was far more likely to have top-of-the-line goods, and an overall correlation existed between household value and household goods.

There is a portion of the population whose house values were greater than would be expected from the level of goods they owned. These residents may have been concerned with "exterior" image, purchased an expensive home in anticipation of future wealth, or inherited a structure without the commensurate means to maintain its "interior" status.

Another small group is seen whose housing value is not at the level that their household goods would predict. It is this group that would have surprised a critical traveler had he stepped inside. Unfortunately, although "decay and
disrepair" can affect housing value, we cannot know if Rouchefoucault-Liancourt's generalization about Virginia's "tables well served and covered with plate" amidst general disrepair of housing holds true.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER 2


3. Bayard, p. 130.


6. It is difficult to know how closely the tax rate adhered to an item's actual value. The study of prices of furnishings by decorative arts scholars is in its infancy. However, it can be noted that the largest tax rates were for pier mirrors (over five feet) and pianos, organs, etc. over $300. Looking glasses were advertised at $25 to $250 a pair in the Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger, July 11, 1816 (12, no. 146). Furniture prices are much more difficult to gauge, but bureaus are listed in a Hartford Price Book in 1792 ranging from $7.73 to $16.00, depending on finishing. For a discussion of furniture price books, see Charles Montgomery, American Furniture: The Federal Period, 1788-1825 (New York: Viking Press, 1966) and Patricia E. Kane "Design Books and Price Books for American Federal-Period Card Tables" in Benjamin A. Hewitt, et al., The Work of Many Hands: Card Tables in Federal America (New Haven: Yale University Museum, 1982), pp. 39-54.


8. The taxes paid by Phillips and White were near the median values of their respective rural or urban society.


10. Based on approximately 125 Virginia and Maryland merchants' invoices, bills of lading, and store inventories from 1741 to 1803.


31. Michel, p. 2.


33. The Schutz coefficient and the Gini index are measures of deviations from ideal distributions of wealth, and the Lorenz curve is a graphic representation of similar information. The Gini index is a measure of the area of inequality and the Schutz coefficient a precise calculation of either the area "of disadvantage" or "advantage." Seiner obtained a Gini index that ranged between .68 and .69 in the twenty years studied, and a Schutz coefficient between .52 and .60. This can be compared to a Gini index and Schutz coefficient in Williamsburg of .72 and .56, respectively. For a further discussion of these statistical measures of inequality, see Judith M. Tanur, et al. ed., Statistics: A Guide to the Unknown (San Francisco: Holden-Day, Inc, 1972), pp. 345-348.


38. Albert, p. 111.


41. Lemon and Nash, p. 9.

42. Albert, p. 92.


44. Chevalier, p. 272.

45. One notable exception is a study utilizing the Federal building tax of 1798 in Annapolis, Maryland. See Anne Yentsch and Larry McKee, "Footprints of 18th Century Annapolis, Maryland." Paper presented at the 1984 Annual Meetings of the Society for Historical Archaeology, Williamsburg, Virginia, January 6, 1984.


48. Gray, p.36.

49. Bayard, p. 35.

50. Gray, p. 36.

51. Rochefoucault-Liancourt, p. 117.


56. Upon closer examination of the tax lists in Williamsburg, a partial explanation was found. Some 32 enumerations on the land list for 1815 were actually charged to person's estates, and five were charged to non-residents. This group was then substantively removed by only looking at those that owned both a house and some expensive household goods.


59. Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser August 1, 1809 (22, No. 1687).

60. Chappell, n.p.


66. Herman, pp. 85-86.

67. The houses thus described lay along the road between Williamsburg and Richmond in 1797 (Rochefoucault-Liancourt, p. 30).
CONCLUSIONS

While wealth was clearly a factor in high-status consumption in both the town of Williamsburg and in its rural neighbor, the distribution of socially-sensitive goods through varying economic classes was quite different in these areas. In York County, top-of-the-line choices of consumer goods were not a part of the lives of the majority of residents. While some of the rural economic elite were able to participate in high-status behavior by their possession of the necessary material objects, most still could not match their peers in the urban population in correct social functions. In Williamsburg, economic distinctions expressed through a wide disparity in household material objects were not seen. The urban elite simply had a greater range and higher quality of luxuries and amenities than were found in other households.

However, certain types of goods were reflective of economic status in both rural and urban contexts. While timepieces and decorative items were found in various degrees in households of different economic levels, mahogany furniture and goods relating to stylish dining increased as economic position improved. Other items, such as silver and cut glass tablewares, carriages and more elaborately-styled
types of chairs were generally restricted to elite households.

The distribution of wealth mirrored that of personal goods in these two places. In York County, several dozen wealthy elite controlled the majority of the economic resources. A much greater percentage of the Williamsburg population formed the economic elite, and even the middle class enjoyed prosperity. The poorer sorts, however, were remarkably similar in both rural and urban areas in their disenfranchised economic position. Measured by both economic and material well-being within their populations, Williamsburg was a relatively egalitarian society, and York County was not.

Land was the traditional status indicator in York County. The households of those that owned land and those that did not were quite different. Ownership of material objects clearly increased in relation to one's landholding, although once a certain level had been reached, the range of goods did not markedly differ. Yet in the town, those with land were not overwhelmingly different in their ownership of material objects than those without land. For some Williamsburg residents, goods were purchased with available funds before, or rather than, land purchases. The status of those with capital invested in a large quantity of land, however, were clearly demarcated from others by a large quantity and wide range of material objects.
The quality of housing in Williamsburg, as reflected in the number of high-valued houses, was far better than that in the rural area. This suggests a society for which a correct environment for social behavior was important. Yet, the house which one occupied in Williamsburg was not always associated with one's wealth. Nor was there a consistent relationship between one's housing and the material objects found within. There was a group whose goods did not reach the level their housing suggested. These people may have chosen to make a long-range substantial investment in housing, postponing the acquisition of commensurate goods, or they may have inherited housing without the means to maintain their "interior" status. Another group had a wider range and higher quality of goods that would be expected from the "exterior" view of their housing. Perhaps they chose to acquire better status household goods rather than upgrading their housing, or perhaps housing was not as important a social indicator—a position clearly shown by the number of wealthy Williamsburg residents who rented houses.

Thus, one's housing status in Williamsburg was not as reflective of economic position as household consumption. Despite the general low quality of housing and the overall low quantity of goods, in York County economic position, material objects, and housing were related.
This study has reinforced the premise that material objects were accurate barometers of economic status. The inference of social and economic status from artifacts, particularly ceramics, has been a major theme in historical archaeology for over a decade. The use of archaeologically-retrieved ceramics as reflective of household status has been validated here. Although ceramics were not specifically taxed in 1815, general high-style dining-related objects were clearly linked to one's economic position, and people in varying economic classes consistently chose these types of objects to exhibit their wealth. Indeed, some of the most expensive tablewares were the most indicative of elite economic position.

However, broad generalizations are clearly not possible without an understanding of the way the whole society valued and used those objects. In urban contexts, socially-sensitive material objects were a part of the lives of much of the population. Thus, a high-status object does not necessarily imply the highest economic rank. In rural areas, the presence of such an object does indeed suggest wealth. Conversely, however, the absence of these goods in the households of rural areas does not indicate that the people who lived there were not wealthy.

The "urban lifestyle" required an assemblage of objects that permitted or prohibited certain social activities. Urban areas, both large and small, were remarkably similar
in relation to these objects. The absence of these "dissipations" from rural areas created a real dichotomy in the lives of urban and rural residents. To those that could only judge a man's status by this universally accepted behavior and its supporting objects, the rural world seemed different and chaotic indeed.

Had elitism challenged egalitarianism in every sphere by 1815? Was the groundwork laid for Jacksonian democracy? If one bases relative egalitarianism on similarities in lifestyle and social behavior of various economic classes, then relative egalitarianism was already in force in Williamsburg. Differing economic classes were only separated by the quality and quantity of goods they owned, not by a wide chasm in daily household activities. The pervasiveness of the "urban lifestyle" in cities and towns was dissolving tangible class boundaries, leaving only subtle measures of class structure. This was the nature of egalitarianism reported by Jacksonian travelers.

In the rural world, rich and poor households were not the same. Some with access to economic resources filled their homes with luxuries and amenities, and had a genteel lifestyle to mediate the harshness of rural life. Most rural dwellers lived plainly, though, and could no more function in the world of the rural elite than could the bumbling "country cousin" in urban life. While these distinctions remained, relative egalitarianism for the
"Common Man" would be difficult. Less than a generation remained before the election of Andrew Jackson. Widespread changes would have to occur in only a few short years before elitism could ever be challenged in the countryside.
On August 24, 1814 the British sailed up the Chesapeake Bay and captured the capital city of Washington, burning the White House, the Capitol and other public buildings. Although the military significance of the raid was negligible, it undoubtedly impressed upon the lawmakers and people of Virginia the need for a serious defense. In December of that year, the Committee of Finance resolved "that it is expedient to raise by additional taxes a sum not exceeding two hundred thousand dollars, in aid of the present revenue of the commonwealth", citing in part, the need for the Military Contingent Fund of one million dollars.

The Committee gave lengthy cause for the enactment of additional taxes, explaining that "a just distribution of the public burthens over the whole commonwealth induced them to search for new subjects in preference to augmenting the contribution at present levied upon the old," and continued that it would have "confined the new taxes to articles of mere luxury did not the present circumstances of the country render a reliance for revenue, on such sources alone, both inadequate and precarious".¹
With little recorded amendment or debate, the act imposing taxes for the support of the state and federal government was passed in the House of Delegates on December 21, 1814. The vote was 127 for and 25 against. Ironically, the treaty of Ghent, ending the conflict with Britain, was signed just three days later.

The reporting of the passage of this bill by several Virginia newspapers clearly shows the relation between its adoption, the perceived defense needs of the state, and the personal patriotism of each taxpayer. The Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger published this announcement and commentary from the Richmond Enquirer on December 29:

We must call to mind that these taxes are imposed for the safety of the state; that the war is now avowedly carried on by the enemy, for the division of our territory, and the prostration of our rights of sovereignty at the feet of his king... that he has made it a point to bring the war upon us and to select us Virginians as the object of his vengeance; that in doing this, he has plundered the private property of the living, and disturbed the sacred ashes of the dead; that we must not stoop or knuckle to the invader; and that money will be necessary to effect our salvation. --HENCE THESE TAXES! ...²
Patriotism was also the theme when the Richmond *Virginia Argus* announced the new subjects of taxation on December 28. "Although it will undoubtedly bear oppressively on the community, we have no doubt but the people of Virginia will bear these new burthens with their characteristic patience and patriotism."³

Self-sacrifice was similarly the duty of every citizen, tying patriotism, the new taxes and non-consumption together, much as it was in the Revolutionary era. This connection was clear in the *Norfolk Gazette*:

To enable us to pay them with ease, we must be economical in our personal expenses; fly from debt; wear out our old clothes before we buy new ones; and spend less on ourselves, that we may spare more for our country.--It is thus only that we can prove ourselves worthy of the only republic on earth.⁴

The personal property tax for 1815 was far more extensive than the former levy on slaves, free blacks, livestock and carriages. More than 80 items were now subject to taxation. This included the previous categories, but a whole new host of goods was added, ranging from mahogany card tables to cut glass bowls to houses above a certain value (See Table 1). The tax on these personal household
items ranged from five cents on plated candlesticks to $5.00 for mirrors or looking glasses above five feet.

Certain professionals were also charged a significant fee, as much as $80.00 for some merchants. These included lawyers, clerks of court, retail and wholesale merchants, physicians, apothecaries, peddlers, and auctioneers. In addition, tobacco screws, prizes, and presses, mills, ferries, tanyards, forges and furnaces, coalpits, salt manufactories, public ice houses and auctions were taxed.

These state taxes were not inconsequential, with one York resident paying $71.42 in personal property taxes alone, and Mary Peachy of Williamsburg doubling her tax amount from 1814. Revisions in taxation at the Federal level also enlarged the range of goods subject to taxation, trying "the patience and purses of the people, when the United States taxes come to be added." While war-time exigencies precluded a general outcry, murmurs of discontent can be heard. For example, in a campaign speech by Thomas Griffin, running for the Congressional District for York in 1815, taxation had become a battle cry, for it was "multifarious, ruinous, and oppressive".

Not only were these taxes substantial, an economic affront, but the new type of taxable subjects required a significant break from earlier policies concerning collection of these revenues. For instance, a central place was designated for payment of Federal taxes on carriages in
1813. The items found on the 1815 personal property tax, however, were contained within the home itself, a traditional sanctuary from governmental action. This shift did not miss the notice of the Federalist editor of the Norfolk newspaper, who managed to insert a jab at Jefferson along with the publication of the tax list.

The Sage of Monticello...some time since in one of his speeches or communications to congress, remarked, "no citizen of these states sees the tax-gatherer coming to his house;"—This was true enough, so long as the policy of Washington was adhered to, but very different is now the case...7

He continued that "it may be useful to our readers to be ready with their list of taxable property, when the commissioner comes round".8 The above shows that indeed the ownership of these goods was determined by the tax collector entering the home of the taxpayer, although the actual enumeration may have been prepared by each individual.

Even given the knowledge of these conditions of collection, it is difficult to assess the accuracy of these tax returns. There was, however, a legislated attempt to enforce the tax laws. Included in the new legislation in the closing days of 1814 was the complaint that "a loose
practice prevails among the Commissioners of the Revenue for certain counties... to the serious injury of the public revenue", and requiring a new oath by the Commissioner of the Revenue be attached to the tax list returned to the state. That such phrasing was encoded in the law suggests an endemic problem, although it is not known whether the new oath would have provided a more accurate or complete return.

A test of several probate inventories returned in York County in 1815 indicates a fair level of agreement on the disposition of household goods between the two types of documents. One particularly good example, the estate of Bernard Elliott, is found Table 15. Considering the biases and flaws in the probate record itself, the tax lists seem to be reasonably accurate, even though such assessments may vary in other counties.

In certain ways, daily life and material culture in 1815 stands in an historical abyss. Despite the war of 1812 and the ensuing "Era of Good Feeling", no major theme has arisen to attract the attention of historians of material culture or social structure, nor was there a flood of foreign observers to record their impressions. Unlike the colonial era, the patterns of consumption of the first several decades of the nineteenth century stands untested in any systematic way by modern scholars. For example, recent studies have shown that in the initial years of settlement even decencies were rare and the preserve of the more
TABLE 15

A COMPARISON OF BERNARD ELLIOT'S PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT AND MATCHING GOODS IN PROBATE INVENTORY

Inventory:

1/2 dozen mahogany chairs
4 ? chairs
1 dining table
4 pictures
1 carpet
1 pine chest
horse cart and gear
5 horses
29 cattle
13 slaves

Dower portion:

3 slaves
2 yoke oxen
8 cows
1 grey mare
1 mahogany table
1 looking glass with gilt frame
1 corner cupboard, china and silver

Total Inventarioed Estate:

1 mirror
1 mahogany table
1 dining table
1 pine chest of drawers
10 ? mahogany chairs
4 pictures
1 carpet
1 horse cart
16 slaves
39 cattle (not incl. oxen)
6 horses

Tax assessment, 1815

1 mirror
2 mahogany dining tables
1 mahogany table
1 chest of drawers (not mahogany)
0 chairs
0 pictures
0 carpets
1 2-wheeled carriage less than $100 in value
11 slaves
39 cattle
6 horses
wealthy, and that by the third quarter of the eighteenth century desire for not only decencies but even luxuries became common among all classes. A beginning of consumption that we would recognize as modern has even been delineated by Lois Carr and Lorena Walsh in these later years. But these discussions have generally not continued into the post-Revolutionary era. This is a function both of the scope and quality of the records generally used, and the general social historical questions about colonial class structure.

The majority of these studies utilize probate inventories as the data for consumption patterns. While these records are rich with detail, the problems with under-representation and bias in the persons they represent are well documented, even among their proponents. While biases of life cycle and wealth are generally addressed in more sophisticated recent studies, accumulation of goods through a lifetime, disposition of goods through bequest or gift prior to inventory-taking, lumping of certain goods in generic categories, and omission of land ownership are more difficult hurdles.

This study utilizes the Virginia personal property tax list of 1815 to circumvent some of these difficulties in quantifying material culture. While the items that are recorded are far more circumscribed than those found in estate inventories and represent a class of objects that are
not reflective of the basic household necessities, a much more representative sample of the population "at risk" to own them is available. All economic levels beyond the most impoverished are represented, as are all age groups beyond maturity. In addition, a combination of the enumerations of the personal property and land tax lists is simple, allowing for a combination of a land, labor, livestock, housing and "top-of-the-line" household goods. While certain problems remain between the two records, such as the underrepresentation of women and the exclusion of enslaved blacks, a "moment in time" is recorded for many property holders.

Unfortunately, all forms of wealth are not measured by taxable property and quantification of tax lists is certainly an underrepresentation of the possibilities. For instance, Aubrey Land warns that the wealthiest men in the colonial Chesapeake functioned not only as planters but also as traders and creditors, and that it was not unusual for one-quarter to one-half of the assets to be in the form of debts owed the estate. The growth of state banks induced investment in cash money rather than real estate or personal property. York County and Williamsburg residents also invested in land in other counties and cities, none of which would be detected without extensive search. Underrepresentation by collectors of the revenue was endemic in the eighteenth century, prompting reforms in control and
rewards for information on evaders at both the state and Federal level. Another significant problem was the slow process through probate of real estate, where lands devised to widows for life rights remained on the tax books under the decedent's name for some years. Only a prosopographic approach could link the intricate ties of family occupancy and ownership, and prevent false readings from land and personal property tax listings.

Aggregate totals of household goods from the sample Virginia counties and cities were obtained from their personal property tax enumerations. Multiple tax districts were later combined and these totals were divided by the number of taxpayers. In some cases, totals were not available and counts were made. In addition, as detail varied and some categories were lumped, more aggregate analysis of several types of goods was made, and others excluded. The Richmond returns were mutilated and no merchants were listed. This data was entered on an AT & T PC 6300 and analyzed with Reflex, data base management software copyrighted by Borden, Inc.

Both the personal property tax and land tax lists for Williamsburg and York County were encoded for computer entry and were read into the IBM mainframe computer at the College of William and Mary. After merging from the matching lists, a universe of 228 taxpayers was established for the City of Williamsburg and 669 cases for York County. While the
Census of 1810 was consulted for difficulties of male name duplication, as well as tax lists from immediately preceding and following years, no attempt was made to aggregate family units. Housing values were obtained from the land tax lists of 1820. Statistical manipulation was accomplished through the use of SAS, a software system for data analysis developed by SAS Institute, Inc.

The population recorded on the tax enumerations for 1815 in Williamsburg and York County does not, of course, represent all those that lived in these places. The Federal census of 1820 records over 1300 persons in Williamsburg and 4500 in York County, slaves making up over half of the population in both York and Williamsburg. Although recent studies have shown the surprising participation in local economies of some slaves and their possession of household goods, none were legally eligible to hold property, and are most likely not on the tax list.

Free blacks, on the other hand, could and did own property. They were able to do so despite the barriers to economic equality increasingly being erected by the Virginia legislature. These restrictive laws make the ability of those free blacks living in the Tidewater to capitalize on the economic opportunities available to them all the more surprising. For instance, in 1815 some 81 free black males were recorded on the tax list, constituting some 12 percent of all those taxed. The majority of these were merely
recorded as paying the "head tax" of $2.50 charged black males between the ages of 16 and 45. However, eight of these free black men owned land with a mean holding of 71.5 acres, and their holdings ranged from 12 to 158 acres. Twenty-three slaves were owned by these free blacks, as well as 66 horses.

Women were also a part of this taxpaying group. In both York County and Williamsburg only ten percent of the taxpayers were women although women represented about half of the white population overall. In both areas, about 92 percent of the women listed on the census just five years later were not property holders.

Whenever quantitative research is attempted of this kind, the difficulty lies not only in interpreting the data correctly but also in making the best-suited presentation. Particular data must be provided for those who wish to analyze any results more closely and to enable comparison to other places and times. Yet, presenting too much data can lessen the impact of interpretation and deter the less hardy reader. I have tried in this study to take a "middle ground"; presenting certain information in the text, explaining certain key statistical measures used for analysis to the unfamiliar reader, and restricting statistical measures and methods to tables and notes as much as possible. In some cases, however, when several methods were used to analyze one question, certain subtleties emerged,
even though reinforcing a general conclusion. In those situations in particular, "the means" were just as important as the "ends", and were thus included in the text.
NOTES FOR APPENDIX 1


6. Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger February 11, 1815 (Volume XI, no. 60) p. 3.


9. The literature on the daily life and material culture of the colonial era has grown exponentially in the past ten years, and a conclusive list would include the works of social historians, archaeologists, economists and museum specialists. For an overarching essay of the state of the field and a synthesis of trends, see Cary Carson, "Chesapeake Themes in the History of Early American Material Life". Paper presented at the Third Hall of Records Conference on Maryland History, "Maryland, A Product of Two Worlds", St. Mary's City, Md, May 17-20, 1984.


11. Probate inventories from the post-Revolutionary years have been studied by Lorena Walsh for Talbot County, Maryland (no report available) and Sarah Shaver Hughes for Elizabeth City County, Virginia. ("Elizabeth City County, Virginia, 1782-1810: The Economic and Social Structure of a Tidewater County in the Early National Years." PhD Dissertation, Department of History, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.)


14. For instance, in 1814 the new tax law complained of "loose practices" among Commissioners of Revenue and required a sworn oath. (Acts of the Virginia Legislature, 1814). Revised Federal taxation on carriages in 1814 stipulated that if taxes were underrepresented or not paid, the collector of the Revenue could "on personal application or demand" require double the normal rate, the extra going to himself or an informant. Reported in the Virginia Argus, December 14, 1814 (22, no. 3147).

15. For a summary of the legislative restrictions on free blacks as well as an in-depth study of free black property holding, see Luther Porter Jackson, Free Negro Labor and Property Holding in Virginia 1830 - 1860. (New York: Atheneum, 1969).
APPENDIX 2

TABLES FOR STATEWIDE URBAN/RURAL CONSUMPTION
Table 16

Number of Taxpayers: By Sample Cities and Counties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City\County</th>
<th>Number of Taxpayers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PETERSBURG</td>
<td>634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HENRICO</td>
<td>611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILLIAMSBURG</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WINCHESTER</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YORK</td>
<td>499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAUNTON</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SURRY</td>
<td>799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAIRFAX</td>
<td>1235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORFOLK</td>
<td>921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RICHMOND</td>
<td>1386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAMES CITY</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPOTSYLVANIA</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WESTMORELAND</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FREDERICKSBURG</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 17

**SELECTED FURNITURE - BY WOOD TYPE:**
**AVERAGE PER TAXPAYER IN RURAL AND URBAN POPULATIONS**

*(BUREAUS, SECRETARIES, BOOKCASES, CHESTS OF DRAWERS, WARDROBES, AND CLOTHESPRESSES)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MAHOGANY</th>
<th>&quot;OTHER WOOD&quot;</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FREDERICKSBURG</td>
<td>0.843</td>
<td>0.263</td>
<td>1.106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORFOLK</td>
<td>0.977</td>
<td>0.165</td>
<td>1.142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PETERSBURG</td>
<td>1.192</td>
<td>0.096</td>
<td>1.289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RICHMOND</td>
<td>0.737</td>
<td>0.666</td>
<td>1.403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>0.937</td>
<td>0.298</td>
<td>1.235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RURAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SURRY</td>
<td>0.159</td>
<td>0.337</td>
<td>0.496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WESTMORELAND</td>
<td>0.176</td>
<td>0.088</td>
<td>0.264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>0.168</td>
<td>0.212</td>
<td>0.380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RURAL\CITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAIRFAX</td>
<td>0.172</td>
<td>0.388</td>
<td>0.560</td>
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<tr>
<td>HENRICO</td>
<td>0.249</td>
<td>0.231</td>
<td>0.480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPOTSVLANIA</td>
<td>0.114</td>
<td>0.337</td>
<td>0.450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>0.178</td>
<td>0.318</td>
<td>0.497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RURAL\TOWN</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAMES CITY</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td>0.515</td>
<td>0.539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YORK</td>
<td>0.110</td>
<td>0.307</td>
<td>0.417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>0.067</td>
<td>0.411</td>
<td>0.478</td>
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<td><strong>TOWN CENTER</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAUNTON</td>
<td>0.243</td>
<td>0.947</td>
<td>1.190</td>
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<tr>
<td>WINCHESTER</td>
<td>0.396</td>
<td>1.346</td>
<td>1.741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>0.319</td>
<td>1.147</td>
<td>1.466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WILLIAMSBURG</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILLIAMSBURG</td>
<td>0.695</td>
<td>1.024</td>
<td>1.719</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 18
DINING RELATED GOODS:
AVERAGE PER TAXPAYER IN RURAL AND URBAN POPULATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CUT GLASS</th>
<th>SILVER PLATE</th>
<th>ALL TAXED CHAIRS</th>
<th>ALL MAHOGANY TABLES</th>
<th>COMBINED DINING GOODS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FREDERICKSBURG</td>
<td>1.426</td>
<td>1.087</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>2.269</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORFOLK</td>
<td>1.912</td>
<td>2.454</td>
<td>0.170</td>
<td>2.889</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PETERSBURG</td>
<td>2.672</td>
<td>0.790</td>
<td>2.123</td>
<td>3.864</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RICHMOND</td>
<td>1.825</td>
<td>1.729</td>
<td>1.644</td>
<td>2.563</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>1.959</td>
<td>1.515</td>
<td>0.984</td>
<td>2.896</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RURAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SURRY</td>
<td>0.227</td>
<td>0.213</td>
<td>0.195</td>
<td>0.385</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>WESTMORELAND</td>
<td>0.185</td>
<td>0.272</td>
<td>0.375</td>
<td>0.341</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>0.196</td>
<td>0.242</td>
<td>0.285</td>
<td>0.363</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAIRFAX</td>
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<td>0.341</td>
<td>0.315</td>
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<tr>
<td>HENRICO</td>
<td>0.254</td>
<td>0.710</td>
<td>0.907</td>
<td>0.502</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPOTSYLVANIA</td>
<td>0.334</td>
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<td>0.000</td>
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<td>0.419</td>
<td>0.407</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAMES CITY</td>
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<tr>
<td>YORK</td>
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<td>0.184</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>0.162</td>
<td>0.308</td>
<td>0.127</td>
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<td>STAUNTON</td>
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<td>0.789</td>
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<tr>
<td>WINCHESTER</td>
<td>0.670</td>
<td>0.287</td>
<td>0.498</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>0.608</td>
<td>0.362</td>
<td>0.425</td>
<td>0.927</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILLIAMSBURG</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILLIAMSBURG</td>
<td>1.898</td>
<td>2.545</td>
<td>1.701</td>
<td>2.593</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 19

**DECORATIVE ITEMS:**
**AVERAGE PER TAXPAYER IN RURAL AND URBAN POPULATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PICTURES</th>
<th>PORTRAITS</th>
<th>MIRRORS</th>
<th>ALL DECORATIVE</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fredericksburg</td>
<td>1.199</td>
<td>0.179</td>
<td>0.244</td>
<td>1.622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>1.750</td>
<td>0.249</td>
<td>0.521</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petersburg</td>
<td>1.661</td>
<td>0.126</td>
<td>0.410</td>
<td>2.197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>1.111</td>
<td>0.230</td>
<td>0.591</td>
<td>1.932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>1.430</td>
<td>0.196</td>
<td>0.441</td>
<td>2.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RURAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surry</td>
<td>0.131</td>
<td>0.053</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td>0.239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westmoreland</td>
<td>0.513</td>
<td>0.046</td>
<td>0.123</td>
<td>0.682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>0.322</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.089</td>
<td>0.461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RURAL\CITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfax</td>
<td>0.138</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>0.113</td>
<td>0.294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henrico</td>
<td>0.383</td>
<td>0.126</td>
<td>0.108</td>
<td>0.617</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spotsylvania</td>
<td>0.455</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>0.134</td>
<td>0.649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>0.326</td>
<td>0.076</td>
<td>0.118</td>
<td>0.520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RURAL\TOWN</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James City</td>
<td>0.123</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.090</td>
<td>0.222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York</td>
<td>0.152</td>
<td>0.046</td>
<td>0.114</td>
<td>0.313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>0.138</td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>0.102</td>
<td>0.267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOWN CENTER</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staunton</td>
<td>1.093</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>0.174</td>
<td>1.377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winchester</td>
<td>1.199</td>
<td>0.336</td>
<td>0.255</td>
<td>1.791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>1.146</td>
<td>0.223</td>
<td>0.215</td>
<td>1.584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WILLIAMSBURG</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Williamsburg</td>
<td>1.928</td>
<td>0.413</td>
<td>0.473</td>
<td>2.814</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 20

CARPETS BY VALUE
AVERAGE PER TAXPAYER IN URBAN AND RURAL POPULATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CARPETS $20-50</th>
<th>CARPETS $50-100</th>
<th>CARPETS $100+</th>
<th>TOTAL CARPETS</th>
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<tr>
<td>CITY</td>
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<tr>
<td>FREDERICKSBURG</td>
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<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
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<td>0.172</td>
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<td>0.123</td>
<td>0.024</td>
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<tr>
<td>RICHMOND</td>
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<td>AVERAGE</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>WESTMORELAND</td>
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<td>0.000</td>
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<td>0.012</td>
<td>0.000</td>
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<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.002</td>
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</tr>
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<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.045</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.022</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.004</td>
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<tr>
<td>WILLIAMSBURG</td>
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<td>0.018</td>
<td>0.036</td>
<td>0.162</td>
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VITA

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