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Art, Mystery, and Occupation: Building Culture in Eighteenth-Century Williamsburg, Virginia

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Art, Mystery, and Occupation:
Building Culture in Eighteenth-Century Williamsburg, Virginia

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Nuevo, CA

Bachelor of Arts, History and Theatre, University of Southern California, 2007

A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the College of William and Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts

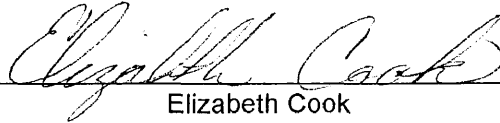
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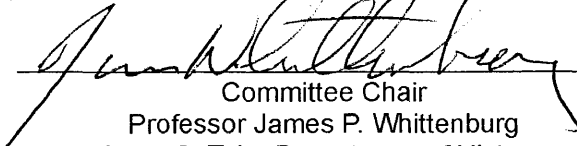
This Thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts



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ABSTRACT PAGE

Individuals shape the worlds in which they live. By altering landscapes, building structures, and arranging possessions, men and women impose order on their surroundings. To date, much of the scholarly work in the field of material culture has focused on consumption. Though this work has furnished valuable insights into why people purchase particular objects and how they then use those objects, much of it has neglected to address the role of production processes. To buy or use goods, the goods must first come into existence, and frequently do so at the hands of producers external to the consumption process. Within the context of colonial British North America, the relationship between producer, consumer, and object takes on additional attributes. Many of the goods consumed in the British colonies were imported goods, made by a distant and unknown producer. When the terms of the producer-consumer-object relationship are altered to reflect local production processes, a new picture emerges.

Of all the goods consumed in eighteenth-century Virginia, only one kind had to be produced in the local market: buildings. Examining the production process of architecture offers the opportunity to explore social dynamics, interpersonal relationships, commercial networks, construction techniques, craft practices, professional competition, building culture, and material life. The points at which these different areas of research connect complicate the prevailing understanding of material culture in the eighteenth century. Far more is at stake than refinement or gentility. For a craftsman, achieving, proving, and maintaining his competence through the continual demonstration of his skill was integral to his survival. Engaging the production process alters the place of buildings in the historical landscape, making both the physical and the metaphysical spaces more complex and more contested. Understanding buildings not only as sites of display and consumption, but also as sites of mastery and competence, allows historians to better apprehend the process of producing buildings and of producing culture.

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For my father, Steven Cook,
who gave me my first hammer
and taught me how to do all sorts of
useful things around the house.

Acknowledgments

In the course of conceiving and completing this project, I have incurred a number of debts, both academic and personal, which I can only begin to repay here.

Dr. James P. Whittenburg offered invaluable insights and directions as I attempted to reconstruct the ephemeral practices which created long-lasting structures. He has also calmed countless fears, answered countless questions, and has given me countless hours of his time, for all of which I am profoundly grateful.

Dr. Susan Kern and Dr. Frederick Corney also played integral parts in the producing this thesis. Both encouraged me to think critically about architecture, material culture, and building practice, and to couch somewhat esoteric material in accessible ways. They helped me to refine my research and my writing techniques in immeasurable ways.

Without the support of the Department of Architectural and Archaeological Research at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, this project would not have been possible. Kelly Ladd-Kostro set me down this path and kindly offered access to the Wray collection, as well as indispensable advice on how to work with material objects and many calming words. Similar thanks belongs to Andrew C. Edwards, who encouraged me throughout this project and the process of learning how to see sites from the subsoil up. Lucie Vinciguerra graciously provided me with the necessary maps and drawings, as well as moral support when I needed it most.

My fellow graduate students have also offered invaluable support throughout this project. They have listened when I've complained, offered advice when I've been stuck, and commiserated when I've spent far too long staring at microfilm. Whether they are near or far, I could not have done this without them.

A number of people outside the academic sphere deserve my thanks as well. Kevin Drummond, Lizbeth Nguyen, Christopher Wiedel, and Josiah Wagener often listened as I verbally worked out problems I'd encountered, and only rarely let their eyes glaze over in the process.

Last, but far from least, my family has supported me through all of my endeavors. Their support, advice, encouragement, and occasional reality checks have kept me continually working on it.

CARPENTRY [of *Carpentum, L.*, a Car or Cart] is the Art of cutting, framing, and joining large Pieces of Wood for the Uses of Building; it is one of the Arts which is subservient to Architecture and is divided into 2 Branches, *viz.* House *Carpentry* and Ship *Carpentry*...¹

Builder's Dictionary

On one hand, buildings exist as stand-alone artifacts, and on the other, they are artifacts that express the deep meanings, aspirations, and social order of a culture. Like the building culture that produces them, they are at the same time autonomous and interdependent with the culture at large.²

The Culture of Building

A plantation house. A log cabin. A cabinetmaker's shop. A tobacco barn.

Each of these buildings evokes a distinct image, accompanied by equally distinct characteristics of the cultures in which those buildings operated: cotton and slaves; pioneers and the frontier; furniture and fashion; agriculture and commerce. Each building reflects to viewers, past and present, not only the material realities of everyday life, but also how people designed, occupied, and viewed their spaces and those of others. Their presence altered the landscape, sometimes civilizing it, sometimes refining it, sometimes commandeering it. They bound together communities through shared architectural language and gave physical form to the burgeoning Euro-American cultures of the eighteenth century.³

The often invisible foundations of this architectural community were the men who

1 *The Builder's Dictionary: Or, Gentleman and Architect's Companion. Explaining Not Only the Terms of Art in All the Several Parts of Architecture, but Also Containing the Theory and Practice of the Various Branches Thereof* (London: A. Bettesworth and C. Hitch [etc.], 1734), s.v. "Carpentry."

2 Howard Davis, *The Culture of Building* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 93.

3 Bernard L. Herman, *Town House: Architecture and Material Life in the Early American City, 1780-1830* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 262.

created it. By acknowledging the presence and the skills of colonial craftsmen, we alter the previously established picture of material culture. No longer based on solely on acquisition, it can now incorporate the entire process of manufacture and consumption, from the raw goods to the finished product, from workshop to home. When considering material culture in this all-inclusive way, we look beyond purchasing power and refinement as the primary measure of an object, to see the skill and ingenuity of the craftsman who created it.

Taking this production perspective gives rise to new questions about the buildings that created early American landscapes: who built them, free carpenters or enslaved ones; what skill levels and training were necessary to demonstrate competence; what differences did work in urban and in rural areas demand; were multiple skill sets required to compete in an industry where the materials were inexpensive and the labor costly; how did they find employment; and, what personal or economic benefits might be got from practicing their trade in a workmanlike manner?

Though they could be asked of any trade, these questions lend themselves particularly well to the building trades. No other craftsman might be able to boast of so direct an influence on the landscape through the skilled practice of his trade than those he transformed raw wood into finished buildings. The need for their skills was ubiquitous, and those skills were practiced in a variety of conditions. Slave carpenters might meet a plantation's needs, supplemented by hired free labor when necessary. In rural areas, people would have to do for themselves, and needed skills at least adequate to providing shelter to their family, animals, and crops. In urban areas, men with these skills were

hired by those with the resources to do so. Everyone needed a building, and therefore everyone needed access to someone with the skills to build one.

Several innovative and influential studies have examined the development of a shared sense of community through architecture. In *Town House*, Bernard Herman explored the entire spectrum of urban buildings, from inns and taverns to widow's rooms and artisan's shops. In them, he found not only regional architectural styles, but also the subtle changes in mentality and behavior that allow individuals to develop identities that fit within the established community expectations and to materially live within those expectations, while still exhibiting a sense of self. Robert Blair St. George observed that “the power of place in everyday life suggests that local geography, conceived as a matrix of memory sites fusing conflict and accord, loss and renewal, may be a more powerful principle in the lives of ordinary people than mere chronology” as he studied the poetics of implication in colonial New England. Among many of the other changes that reflected a growing sense of personal and cultural refinement, Richard Bushman found that enough people had social and financial access to changes in housing, including decorative features, such as sash windows, and new special-purpose rooms, like the parlor and the stair passage, that these changes helped to reorder the relationship of houses and social class. New housing forms made it difficult for anyone who aspired to social leadership to live in one of the modest houses that constituted a majority of the country's housing stock.⁴

4 Bernard L. Herman, *Town House*, 261-266; Robert Blair St. George, *Conversing by Signs: Poetics of Implication in Colonial New England Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 7; Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Knopf, 1992), 114, 116. Other examples of scholarship include: Edward Chappell, “Acculturation in the Shenandoah

Missing from the scholarship on the social culture surrounding these buildings is the study of the building culture that produced them, the coordinated system of knowledge, rules, procedures, and habits that surround the building process in a given place and time. Such information has appeared in other works. Cary Carson's, et al, "Impermanent Architecture," Willie Graham's, et al. "Adaptation and Innovation," and Willie Graham's "Preindustrial Framing in the Chesapeake" traces the structure changes in wood-framed building construction. Catherine Bishir provided an in-depth analysis of the contractual language employed between clients and carpenters in an attempt to understand the thought processes that gave rise to buildings. Bennie Brown examined the prevalence of architectural books in colonial Virginia, and found that, as Virginia society stabilized, more architecture books appeared in the libraries of both the gentry and craftsmen, indicating an interest in both parties in function and fashion.⁵

Valley: Rhenish Houses of the Massanutten Settlement," *Proceedings, American Philosophical Society*, 124 (1980). Reprint in Dell Upton and John Vlach eds., *Common Places* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 27-57; Gregg D. Kimball, "African-Virginians and the Vernacular Building Tradition in Richmond City, 1790-1860," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture IV*. ed. by Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991), 121-129; Dell Upton, "Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 17 (1982): 95-119. Reprint in Dell Upton and John Vlach eds., *Common Places* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986,) 315-335; Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, VA., by University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Lorena Walsh and Lois Green Carr, "Changing Lifestyles and Consumer Behavior in the Colonial Chesapeake" in Cary Carson et al., *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville: Published for the United States Capitol Historical Society by the University Press of Virginia, 1994), 59-166; Edward Chappell, "Housing a Nation: The Transformation of Living Standards in Early America" in Cary Carson et al., *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville: Published for the United States Capitol Historical Society by the University Press of Virginia, 1994), 167-232.

- 5 Davis, *The Culture of Building*, 5; Carson, Cary, Norman F. Barka, William M. Kelso, Garry Wheeler Stone, and Dell Upton, "Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 16, no. 2/3 (Summer-Autumn 1981): 135-196; Willie Graham, Carter L. Hudgins, Carl R. Lounsbury, Fraser D. Neiman, and James P. Whittenburg, "Adaptation and Innovation: Archaeological and Architectural Perspectives on the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake," *WMQ*, 3rd Ser. Vol. LXIV, No. 3 (July 2007): 451-522; Willie Graham, "Preindustrial Framing in the Chesapeake," in *Constructing Image, Identity, and Place: Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, IX*, eds. Alison K. Hoagland and Kenneth A. Breisch (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003), 179-196.; Catherine Bishir, "Good and Sufficient Language for Building," in *Perspectives in Vernacular*

These works treat individual aspects of the building culture, but few have attempted any comprehensive study of it. Catherine Bishir's, et al, *Builders and Architects in North Carolina*, and J. Ritchie Garrison's *Two Carpenters* alone offer an in-depth treatment of the building cultures in eighteenth-century North Carolina and late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Massachusetts, respectively. Bishir, et al, trace the evolution of building culture in North Carolina from its settlement to the modern day, relying on a narrative that engages construction technology; the relationship between builder and client; the handling of design, money, materials, and labor; and the tension over control and status within the building process. By examining builders and building culture as a whole, they supplant theoretical and teleological approaches with one that focuses on the “personal sagas of hundred of individuals laboring at thousands of building sites.” Garrison uses a similar approach, though he focuses on only two individuals. Relying on the account books left by Calvin and George Stearns, father and son carpenters, Garrison explores the processes by which the landscapes and buildings of Northfield Massachusetts came into being, and reveals much about the working life of these men, their families, and their community.⁶

Unlike much of the scholarship which focuses on the built environment, these books engage the craftsmen and the production process. Whereas much scholarly work on material culture concentrates heavily on either the forward process of material

Architecture, IV ed. by Thomas Carter and Bernard Herman (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 44-52; Bennie Brown, “The Ownership of Architecture Books in Colonial Virginia,” in Kenneth Hafertepe and James F. O’Gorman, *American Architects and Their Books to 1848* (Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 29-30.

⁶ Catherine W Bishir et al. *Architects and Builders in North Carolina: A History of the Practice of Building* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 1, 6; J. Ritchie Garrison, *Two Carpenters: Architecture and Building in Early New England, 1799-1859* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006), xvii.

acquisition (the ability to acquire and consume increasingly specialized, high quality or expensive goods) or the correlation of acquisition and personal or societal refinement, Bishir and Garrison engage the producer, the product, and the consumer. By examining the entire process of production and consumption, our perspective of how the buildings functioned in the social landscape changes. The skills used to construct the buildings are no longer practiced anonymously, but rather become performances of competence, demonstrations of a craftsman's mastery of his trade and his ability to conform to and adapt the existing constructs in which he works.

Williamsburg, Virginia, presents an interesting opportunity to explore the world of eighteenth-century building culture. Evidence remains of over 150 carpenters, builders, and bricklayers who plied their trade in and around the city during that time.

Archaeological evidence of lumberyards and workshops provide material proof of past activities, often not visible in the documentary record. Furthermore, the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation's commitment to living history has fostered an environment which in both the academic study and the practical aspects of the building trades have been nurtured. Both have sought to recapture the everyday knowledge of the trades, the information so commonplace that it did not need to be written down or specialized to a particular shop or master. Whenever possible, this knowledge has been reconstructed by the men and women in the modern day shops, and helps to fill out our knowledge of eighteenth-century building culture in Virginia.

For all the benefits this location offers, it also presents limitations. Because

Williamsburg was one of the few urban locations within a decidedly agrarian society, the men active in buildings trades cannot represent a cross-section of all men who followed those occupations in colonial Virginia. While the craftsmen active in Williamsburg at any time included itinerant craftsmen, slaves, and shop masters, these were all men who were paid to use their skills by clients with resources available to do so and, presumably, without skill sets of their own in this area. Missing from this are those who possessed some degree of building skills, but never received payment for it. Farmers, shopkeepers, and tradesmen in rural areas may have been as equally skilled as their urban counterparts, but without account books or receipts, there is little way to trace directly their role in the building culture other than by the structures they raised.

The presence of enslaved craftsmen complicates the picture as well. As difficult as it can be to trace shop masters, tracing the activities and skill levels of enslaved craftsmen is doubly hard. Only when they possessed specific skills do they seem to appear in the historic record. Archaeological evidence supplements this to some degree, but their relative invisibility makes their role in the building culture difficult to discern, except in a few specific instances. What skills they had, how they were treated, what, if any, autonomy they had to exercise their skills as they saw fit remains largely a mystery.

Despite these limitations, this thesis nevertheless explores the building culture of Williamsburg, Virginia in the eighteenth century. The first chapter offers an overview of how the building trades were established as institutions in colonial Virginia, how they functioned in society, and what demands the building culture made on these trades and the men who practiced them. The second chapter examines how a selection of the

craftsmen active in these trades carried out their craft in the eighteenth century. It establishes the identities, social positions, and skill levels of a selection of craftsmen in the woodworking trades before examining how they established their client bases. The third chapter explores how these craftsmen built their client bases and what work they undertook. Finally, the fourth chapter examines the spheres in which these men performed their trades, and analyzes both the worksite and the work undertaken as performative elements.⁷

To understand a plantation house, a log cabin, a cabinetmaker's shop, and a tobacco barn, we have to look not only at the purposes which the final product served, but also at the process by which it was produced, and at the culture of building which shaped and informed that process.

7 Through this work, the terms “craftsman” and “carpenter” are used interchangeably. “Tradesman” or “artisan” might be equally well applied, as the definitions of the terms overlap a great deal, each meaning “a man who practices a handicraft,” “an artificer in wood,” “one who is skilled in and practices the industrial arts,” and “a worker in a skilled trade,” respectively. However, the modern connotations of the latter two tend to bring to mind images of retailers or merchants, men involved in an economic trade, rather than an industrial one, or of practitioners working in highly specialized media. To avoid overcomplicating the narrative, the men who appear in this analysis are called craftsmen and carpenters. *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. “craftsman,” “carpenter,” “tradesman,” and “artisan.”

Chapter One: Mastering the Trade

In 1563, Parliament enacted the Statute of Artificers, a comprehensive body of laws relating to employment and wages in the Elizabethan State. Together with limiting workers' movements, setting wage rates, and controlling employment conditions, the statute formalized the apprentice system for several trades, including carpentry and joinery. Apprentices were to be bound, “after the custom and order of the city of London, for seven years at least, so as the term and years...do not expire...” before the apprentice reached age twenty-four. These young men were to “be taught and instituted in these occupations only and in none other,” and no “person other than such as now do lawfully exercise any art, mystery or manual occupation” could “set up, occupy, use or exercise any craft, mystery or occupation...except he shall have been brought up therein seven years at the least as an apprentice in manner and form above said.”¹ Though much of the statute set new regulations in place for the burgeoning work force of Elizabethan England, those relating to training apprentices and maintaining separate trades only restated medieval guild policies in updated terms.

The earliest immigrants to the Chesapeake had little need to import such statutes. Of the first 105 settlers at Jamestown, only four were carpenters, two were bricklayers and one was a mason. Their skills were likely supplemented by the twelve laborers who also undertook the journey. Though no additional craftsmen came with the 1608 and

¹ Kate Aughterson, ed., *English Renaissance : Anthology of Sources and Documents*, (London, UK: Routledge, 1998), 167-175; Donald Woodward, “The Background to the Statute of Artificers: The Genesis of Labour Policy, 1558-63,” *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Feb., 1980), pp. 32-44 .

1609 voyages, thirty-one laborers joined the colony, as did thirteen undifferentiated artisans. At first glance, this number seems insufficient for building an English colony in the New World. Traditional fully-framed English architecture required a great deal of expertise to properly cut and align the complex joints. With so few skilled carpenters, their skills would be taxed as they attempted to erect the “Storehouse and Other Rooms of Publick and necessary Use” in addition to private houses according to English building standards. Fortunately, the materials available and the requirements for survival in an unfamiliar land created a building culture unique to English North America.²

Puncheon buildings, the first generation of buildings in the Chesapeake, required only the most basic carpentry skills. Individual posts were driven into the ground, then covered over with boards or mud and thatch. As settlements took root and populations stabilized, colonists became more sure of their futures, and more willing to invest in their housing, gradually replacing puncheons with hole-set framed buildings. Laid out in regular bays formed by paired posts with their bases set directly into holes in the ground, and then enclosed with sawn boards, these structures offered greater protection and longevity to their inhabitants, though they could require a greater amount of woodworking skill. If they included sills, the primary support posts and sills had to be fitted with mortise and tenon joints to give these interrupted sills a place to rest. This required a fair degree of precision attainable through careful planning, considerable skills, and prefabricating and pre-assembling the parts. As these buildings began

2 Philip L. Barbour, ed., *The Jamestown Voyages Under the First Charter, 1606-1609: Documents Relating to the Foundation of Jamestown and the History of the Jamestown Colony up to the Departure of Captain John Smith, Last President of the Council in Virginia Under the First Charter, Early in October 1609*, (London: published for the Hakluyt Society by Cambridge University Press, 1969), 383, xxv-xxviii, 53.

appearing on the landscape in the 1620s, official concerns about crafts and skills appeared in the public arena. In 1621, instructions to Governor Francis Wyatt in Virginia dictated that he “put prentices to trades, and not them forsake their trades for planting tobacco, or any such useless commodity.” Ten years later, the Assembly thought fit to publish the Statute of Artificers.³

Life in Virginia, with its rapid population growth creating a demand for housing and the colonists' dedication to agriculture over trades limiting the number men who took up tools, made the Statute impractical to enforce, and so a substantially altered apprenticeship system took root in Virginia. In order to perpetuate the ready supply of woodworkers to meet the demands of an ever-growing population, apprenticeships commonly ended when the apprentice reached majority, twenty-one for men and eighteen for women, as compared to twenty-four for both sexes under the English system. The term of the apprenticeship varied as well. Typically, an apprenticeship in one of the woodworking trades lasted from four to five years. They could take as little as one year, however, and by no means had to end at age twenty-one. In May 1752, Hugh Campbell, age eighteen, bound himself for a period of seven years to John Richardson, a carpenter and joiner in Yorktown. The practice of indenturing orphans or children removed from unsuitable parents could substantially increase the term as well, as the child would be bound till his majority, regardless of his age on entering the apprenticeship.⁴

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- 3 Cary Carson, et al, “Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 16, no. 2/3 (Summer-Autumn 1981): 148-150; Willie Graham, et al, “Adaptation and Innovation: Archaeological and Architectural Perspectives on the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Series, vol. LXIV, no. 3 (July 2007), pp. 451-522; “Instructions to Governor Wyatt,” (24 July 1621), *Hening's Statutes at Large*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1969), Vol. 1, 114; Act XXX, (21 February 1632), *Hening's Statutes at Large* (1969), 167.
- 4 Harold B. Gill, Jr., “Apprentices” in James M. Gaynor, ed, *Eighteenth-Century Woodworking Tools*, (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1997) 153-154; Raymond R. Townsend,

Without formal trade organizations to regulate the processes by which masters trained their apprentices, no set procedures determined an apprentice's training. Starting with the simplest tasks, he then worked through progressively more difficult ones. For the woodworking trades, this probably meant that the young man started by learning how to saw and plane planks, then how to hew timbers, how to cut joints, and how to frame a house or assemble joinery. Part of the apprentice's technical education may have included learning how to manufacture some of his own tools. Making squares, bevels, gauges, and tool handles allowed an apprentice to practice his skills, in addition to providing him with a ready supply of tools not widely commercially available. A North Carolina wheelwright and joiner formalized this in one indenture, promising to assist his apprentice "in making the working Tools belonging to the said Trades." Some masters extended went so far as to promise their apprentices their own set of tools on the completion of their apprenticeship. James Morris of Williamsburg "oblige[d] himself at the Expiration of the aforesaid time to pay to [Thomas Ravenscroft, his apprentice] five pounds sterling or a New Sett of Carpenter Tools of that Value..." Morris, however, reneged on his promise, and Ravenscroft brought a lawsuit against him.⁵

Apprenticeship in Colonial Virginia, (Research Report Series: Williamsburg, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1960) 7. Harold B. Gill, *Apprentices of Virginia, 1623-1800*, (Salt Lake City: Ancestry, 1989). In writing on the building trades in eighteenth-century North Carolina, Catherine Bisher found similar practices, with youths generally serving two to four year terms, orphans and bastards serving until their majority, and no organizations present to regulate training. Catherine Bisher, "A Proper Good Nice and Workmanlike Manner: A Century of Traditional Building Practice, 1330-1830," in Bisher, et al, *Architects and Builders in North Carolina: A History of the Practice of Building* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 93-97. For statutes on apprenticeship terms and binding out orphans, see the following in *Hening's Statutes at Large* (1969): Act V (1 February 1633), Vol. 1, 208; Act XXVII (5 October 1646), Vol. 1, 336-337; Act VII (24 September 1672), Vol. 2, 298; Chapter XXXIII, Article XIV (10 April 1705), Vol. 3, 375; Chapter VII, Article XI (1 February 1727), Vol. 4, 212; Chapter IV, Article I (10 August 1736), Vol. 4, 482; Chapter IV, Article X (22 October 1748) Vol. 5, 452; Chapter XVI, Article XXIV (22 October 1748) Vol. 5, 558; Chapter XVIII, Article VII (22 October 1748) Vol. 6, 32; Chapter VII, Article XXVII (27 November 1753), Vol. 6, 368; and Chapter XXVII, Article IV (10 November 1767) Vol. 8, 376.

⁵ Apprenticeship indenture of Thomas Cathey Braty, July 30, 1777, Rowan County, N.C., Court of Pleas

When he finished his technical education, the apprentice traditionally moved on to become a journeyman. A man in this intermediate stage did not own his own shop, but rather moved from one job to the next, accumulating experience and capital as he completed work for other masters. In more densely populated areas, a journeyman might make a living in this manner for a year or two before settling down to run a shop of his own. This proved difficult in the more sparsely populated southern colonies, however. The absence of skilled labor meant that as soon as an apprentice finished his training, he could go into business for himself, so long as he had the skills and connections to take on projects alone. With some property to his name, he could also take on apprentices of his own, though he might only be a year or two out of his own training. While this quick road to economic independence had obvious benefits for the individual craftsman, it created difficulties for master craftsmen seeking skilled labor for large projects. Advertisements for journeymen in the *Virginia Gazette* indicate ample opportunities for journeymen should they choose to work for someone else: five or six journeyman joiners could find employment for twelve or eighteenth months if they applied to F. Jaram in Williamsburg or to Thomas Jaram at Shirley Hundred; a journeyman carpenter “that [understood] his business perfectly and [came] well recommended” would meet with “good encouragement” from William Marrow in Newcastle. Maurice Evington seemed to have the worst of the situation, advertising that four or five journeymen carpenters and

and Quarters, microfilm, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C. Quoted in Jan K. Gilliam, “He wants a Sett of Tools:’ The Acquisition and Ownership of Tools in Virginia” and Harold B. Gill, Jr., “Apprentices” in James M. Gaynor, ed, *Eighteenth-Century Woodworking Tools*, (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1997), 61, 160. The two authors disagree on the prevalence of this practice. Gilliam sees it as potentially commonplace, while Gill cites this incident as an aberration; *Thomas Ravenscroft v. James Morris*, York County Records, Orders and Wills (13) 211, Library of Virginia.

house joiners would meet with the best encouragement their merit deserved. Six months later, he advertised again, this time for five or six such tradesmen.⁶

Chesapeake architecture contributed to the problem as well. As the population stabilized and the agricultural economy diversified in the second half of the seventeenth century, colonists began to invest in a future meant to last generations instead of ten or twenty years. A new architectural form emerged at this time, the Virginia house. With its origins in the timber-frame traditions of southwestern England, this form united simple, economical joinery with the structural qualities of riven clapboards. The Virginia house used tie beams that extended beyond the wall lines and supported the principal rafters entirely independent of the principal support posts. Because the wall frames no longer had to support the roof frame, carpenters did not have to know the complicated joints necessary when plates, beams, and rafters all came together on each post. This condensed the structure to its most basic requirements, creating a stout structure that could be laid out with a degree of regularity to easily receive siding such as clapboards. As the decades turned, carpenters and joiners continued to refine the form. Support posts no longer sat directly in the ground, resting instead on hole-set blocks. Four to eight foot posts, sunk half-way down in the ground, supported sills that rested across their tops.

⁶ Garrison, *The Two Carpenters*, 2; Bishir 97; *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie) 16 June 1775; *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon) 21 November 1771; *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie) 29 March 1776; and, *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter) 21 September 1776. For absence of skilled labor, see: Carl Bridenbaugh, *The Colonial Craftsman*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1950); Cary Carson, et al, "Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies," *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 16 No. 2/3 (Summer-Autumn 1981) 135-196; Willie Graham, et al, "Adaptation and Innovation: Archaeological and Architectural Perspectives on the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Series, Vol. LXIV No. 3 (July 2007), pp. 451-522; and Carl Lounsbury, "The Plague of Building: Construction Practices on the Frontier, 1650-1730" and Catherine Bishir, "A Proper Good Nice and Workmanlike Manner: A Century of Traditional Building Practice, 1330-1830," in Bishir, et al, *Architects and Builders in North Carolina: A History of the Practice of Building* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

This not only raised the structural timbers off the ground, thus preventing them from decaying, but also necessitated the installation of flooring, giving the structure a more finished appearance. Only the blocks came into contact with the ground, and they could easily be dug out and replaced should they rot. Eventually, longer lasting masonry foundations replaced these blocks.⁷

Beginning around 1700 and gaining popularity rapidly in the 1720s, clients sought to hide the framing of their houses, plastering over it to create flush wall surfaces that could be painted, papered, or paneled. This aesthetic movement changed how the frame bore its load. Large structural members decreased in size, as studs grew slightly to allow for the creation of a flush finished surface. Eventually, the size of both standardized at about four inches. Loads rested on entire walls of framed timbers with load-bearing studs joined by mortise-and-tenons, instead of bays framed from primary support posts, superficial studs, and sills joined with lap joints. This, in turn, allowed a more streamlined production process to develop. Tenons could be precut for posts and studs at regular intervals, regardless of window or interior wall placement. Should a stud happen to land where a window would go, the mortise would be left empty, and a new one cut for the repositioned stud.⁸

To produce these new frames, the carpenter had to know only a few basic skills:

7 Carson, "Impermanent Architecture," 153, 158; Graham "Adaptation and Innovation," 466. Tie beam: the principal transverse framing member connecting the front and rear wall plates. Primarily part of the roof structure, the tie beam served as the lowest member of a truss in which the feet of the principal rafters were framed, restraining them from outward thrust against the wall. The invention of false plates, boards or scantling resting on top of the ends of joists or tie beams beyond the wall line, gave the roof framing additional support. Carl Lounsbury, ed., *An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture and Landscape*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994) 136, 373.

8 Willie Graham, "Preindustrial Framing in the Chesapeake," in Alison K. Hoagland and Kenneth A. Breisch, eds., *Constructing Image, Identity, and Place: Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, IX*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003) 189-191.

how to cut lap joints, how to form mortise-and-tenon joints, how to either saw lumber to the required specifications or where to buy it, how to frame rafters, and how to raise the structure. A journeyman gained many, if not all, of these skills during his apprenticeship term, and the rest could come through practice. So long as a journeyman could demonstrate his mastery of the skills needed to complete these structures, he would find employment, either on his own or in another's shop. Even if he left the tidewater area and looked to the frontier to establish himself, his skills transferred to other construction forms and a demand for well built houses would never leave him penniless. Given the seeming security he could achieve, there was little incentive for a journeyman in eighteenth-century Virginia to tramp around the country trying to gain new skills: the Virginia house frame was ubiquitous, and he already knew how to build it.

Enslaved craftsmen filled the gap left by free journeymen. For master carpenters, slaves solved two problems: the costliness of labor and the rapid turnover of man power. Occasionally trained as a formal apprentice in the master's shop, slave craftsmen had all the skills that their white counterparts did, and sometimes were allowed to practice additional trades on the side. Unlike itinerant journeymen who proved difficult to find or who might be under-skilled, the shop's master already knew his slaves' skill levels and had them at hand to take on projects. During slow times, he could hire them out to other members of the community, being housed and fed at the expense of the hirer, and supplementing his own income with all or part of their wages. James Wray, Jr., a merchant, allowed London, a skilled and enslaved glazier, to hire himself out. Thomas Jefferson paid five shillings and six pence to "London for mendg. Window" on April 21,

1772, and thirty shillings on January 26, 1780 for the same services. Humphrey Harwood, Williamsburg builder and brickmaker, often hired slaves to supplement his own labor force. While he charged Dr. William Pasteur for the work of Jack, Moses, and Phil, he credited Mrs. Rachal Briant with the eleven days work of her man Pompey.⁹

Locked into their positions, the social mobility and economic success their journeymen counterparts might enjoy from masterful performances of skill was denied to these enslaved craftsmen. Still, performing their work well created benefits for them. Mastering complex skill sets increased the slave's use and value to his master, possibly leading to more individual responsibility in the shop and from there more autonomy in completing projects. After proving himself reliable, the slave carpenter might be allowed to hire himself out, again practicing his craft with relative autonomy from his shop master. If he remained within the shop's hierarchy, he might work in the shop or even on a project site without direct supervision of the master carpenters. Though his performances of mastery would not earn him social independence, they could bring him some work-related autonomy.

Though enslaved craftsmen solved some problems, they caused others. The slaves' access to tools opened two possible roads to rebellion. The tools could be turned into weapons or used to fashion weapons, both of which posed distinct threats to the well-

9 Leonard Stavisky, "The Origins of Negro Craftsmanship in Colonial America" *The Journal of Negro History* 32, no. 4 (October 1947): 417-429; Bridenbaugh, *The Colonial Craftsman*, 11-16; Account with Dr. William Pasteur, 30 September 1778, Humphrey Harwood Account Book, Manuscript Collections, Rockefeller Special Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; Account with Rachel Briant, 19 April and 10 July 1783, Humphrey Harwood Account Book, Manuscript Collections, Rockefeller Special Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; Thomas Jefferson, James A. Bear, Jr. and Lucia C. Stanton, eds., *Jefferson's Memorandum Books: Accounts, with Legal Records and Miscellany, 1767-1826*, The papers of Thomas Jefferson, second series (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 288, 491.

being of the shop master. In 1752, Dick, a slave who understood “Shoe-making, Carpenters Work, and Sawing,” “entered the Dwelling House of his said Master, and grievously wound[ed] him with a Broad-Ax, In the left Shoulder and Arm, with an Intent to murder his said Master,” before fleeing from justice. Though the master's life was not seriously endangered, Dick's actions still resulted in Governor Dinwiddie issuing a hue and cry.

Slaves followed the second road to rebellion when they literally took to the road and carried tools off as they ran away. Reports of carpenters, coopers, and sawyers making off with the tools of their trades and attempting to pass as freemen riddle the *Virginia Gazette*. A “Carpenter, Sawyer, Shoemaker, and Cooper,” Will ran away from his master in Lancaster County carrying with him a lopping ax, which would allow him to manipulate raw lumber into usable components. Curry Tuxent “by trade a carpenter and cooper” took “carpenters and coopers tools, by which he [expected] to pass as a freeman” when he deserted Captain John Williams of Northumberland County. While this might slow the works in progress, at least it did not pose a physical threat. Once away, these craftsmen had the skills and the tools to establish themselves as independent workers, able finally to demonstrate their mastery for their own benefit.¹⁰

Though race dictated how far in the trades systems enslaved carpenters could rise, no system or trade organization regulated the status of “master” for white men. A combination of three elements conferred this distinction on free white practicing

¹⁰ Stavisky, “The Origins of Negro Craftsmanship in America,” 423; *Virginia Gazette* (Hunter) 21 August 1752; *Virginia Gazette* (Hunter) 15 September 1752; Neither Joseph Moxon in his *Mechanick Exercises, or the Doctrine of Handy-Works*, (London: 1683) nor Henry C. Mercer in *Ancient Carpenters Tools* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1960) include information on lopping axes. However, it seems likely that this was similar to the axes designed for preparing surfaces (Moxon 81-88); *Virginia Gazette* (Parks) 28 April to 5 May 1738; *Virginia Gazette* (Rind) 4 August 1768.

craftsmen: deference, knowledge, and property ownership. The first two facilitated socio-economic interactions, while the last served as a material embodiment of both his skill and his success. As such, property ownership demonstrated to existing and potential clients his competence as a craftsman.

These men occupied a complicated place within the social network. As producers, they had to create products that would satisfy the demands of their consumers.

Depending on the economic geography of the area, those clients might also be his social superiors. The builder then had to satisfy two interests with the same exchange. He had to please his client, and adhere to the deferential structures on which the social hierarchy rested.¹¹

To fulfill his obligations as producer, the craftsman had to have both practical and aesthetic knowledge. While the first came through the daily application of his skills, both could be bolstered through additional reading. Bennie Brown has demonstrated that practical guides and design texts comprised portions of several libraries belonging to both craftsmen and clients. Gentlemen owned both sorts of texts, as did the carpenters and joiners whom they commissioned. This created the opportunity to clearly communicate an architectural vision, as well as providing a means by which to judge the work done. Architectural guides offered concrete examples of what could be done and what the client might desire, even if its exact replication lay beyond the skills of the

¹¹ Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, VA., by University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 131-135; see also: Richard R. Beeman, "Deference, Republicanism, and the Emergence of Popular Politics in Eighteenth-Century America" in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., vol. 49, no. 3 (July 1992): 401-430; John B. Kirby, "Early American Politics – The Search for Ideology: An Historiographical Analysis and Critique of the Concept of 'Deference'," in *The Journal of Politics* 32, no. 4 (November 1970): 808-838; Arthur M. Schlesinger, "The Aristocracy in Colonial America" in *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 3rd ser., vol. 74 (1962): 3-21, especially pp. 19-20.

carpenter. Conversely, such texts, when in the carpenter's possession, could be used as a sort of catalogue of options available to the client. Practical guides functioned similarly, offering carpenters a reference when attempting new feats and providing clients a means by which to evaluate the quality of the craftsman's work beyond aesthetic enjoyment.¹²

Though Brown successfully established the existence of a wide variety of the architectural books in a wide variety of personal libraries, he focuses heavily on highly successful practitioners and on the gentry. An examination of the middling ranks of carpenters practicing in Williamsburg in the eighteenth century turns up far less conclusive evidence. Of those carpenter's estates with extant probates, a number include books, but never offer anything more specific than "2 books of Architecture & 1 Do. Surveying." However, books sold through the *Virginia Gazette* office offer a selection of what these men might have owned. On sale through the various proprietors, one could purchase books on surveying, such as Samuel Wyld's *Practical Surveyor* which included instructions on how to measure standing timber and the drawing of buildings in perspective; on carpentry, including *Carpenter's Companion* and Abraham Swan's *Designs in Carpentry*; and, for those inclined to study architecture, Palladio's *Four Books of Architecture* and John Stuart's *Critical Observations on the Buildings and Improvements of London*. Any of these titles could have been supplemented by ones ordered directly from England. Whether the books came through a local retailer or from a private order, owning these books gave craftsmen access to reference points should they be called upon to undertake unfamiliar work, whether it be in where it build the structure

12 Bennie Brown, "The Ownership of Architecture Books in Colonial Virginia," in Kenneth Hafertepe and James F. O'Gorman, *American Architects and Their Books to 1848* (Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 17-33.

or in its architectural details.¹³

Owning property distinguished the journeyman from the master. Movable property, including household goods and professional tools, allowed craftsmen to construct personal and professional identities and mediated the interactions with clients. Vital to practicing his trade, a carpenter's personal collection of hand tools marked his place in both his profession and his community. Journeymen possessed tools of their own, but their highly mobile lifestyle often precluded them from accruing extensive collections. During their tenure with a particular master, they had access to that shop's tools, often a more extensive collection which might include more specialized tools. For the master carpenter, his hand tools signified two things. To his customers, their presence represented the carpenter's ability to undertake a commission; the ability to complete the job in a skilled and workmanlike manner. In a sense, they served as his resume, indicating that his work for previous clients had been sufficiently satisfactory to earn him income. Consistently satisfying his clients allowed the carpenter to accrue wealth, which in turn allowed him to procure more tools and more laborers, thus expanding his business. To the craftsman himself, tools empowered their owner to create an identity based on the practice of his trade. They allowed him to practice his craft and earn a living, but they also represented his personal knowledge and life experiences. The tools

13 Bennie Brown "Architectural Books in Colonial Virginia" 20; Inventory of the Estate of Richard King, York County Records, Orders and Wills (16) 588, Library of Virginia; John Edgar Molnar, *Publication and Retail Book Advertisements in the Virginia Gazette, 1736-1780* (1978, 1978), 247-248, 255-256, 412, 596, 778; The surveying titles include Archibald Patoun's *A Complete Treatise of Practical Navigation*,... John Love's *Geodaesia, or the Art of Surveying and Measuring of Land...*, S. Gale's *The Complete Surveyor*, and Samuel Wyld's *The Practical Surveyor, or the Art of Land-Measuring Made Easy...*; practical carpentry guides included *Carpenter and Cabinet Maker's Best Companion*, *Carpenter's Companion*, *Joiner and Cabinet Maker's Pocket Director*, and Abraham Swan's *Designs in Carpentry*; architecture titles included *Harmonic Architecture*, Andrea Palladio's *Four Books of Palladio's Architecture*, William Salmon's *Palladio Londinensis, or the London art of Building*, and James Stuart's *Critical Observations on the Buildings and Improvement of London*.

became tangible extensions of non-tangible skills, markers for what he could do.¹⁴

Just as tools connected a carpenter to his trade, landownership connected him to his surrounding community. Purchasing real property gave the craftsman a long-term physical presence, which connoted an on-going interest in the general welfare of the populace and a responsibility to his clients. Unlike a journeyman who might move from one shop or job site to another, owning real property tied a master to one location. This allowed him to establish a customer base of returning clients as he became a known and familiar part of the town's infrastructure. Because he was known and rooted to that location, however, he had to be consistent in the products he delivered. Should a carpenter working in a small city such as Williamsburg displease his customers too frequently, he risked alienating them. This could not only destroy his customer base, but might also negatively impact his social standing. In a place such as Williamsburg with a permanent population ranging between 885 and 1,880, of whom half or more may have been enslaved and built on a system of social hierarchy, maintaining or enhancing one's social standing depended equally on skills and customer service.¹⁵

Owning tools, homes, products, materials, and land imparted to the master craftsman a “competence” - a mastery of the craft that allowed the carpenter to secure his economic independence through the practice of his trade. A vague term even in the eighteenth century, competence entailed amassing the necessities of life, particularly in regard to a mechanic's income. Beyond the needs of the every day, the craftsman had to

14 It is always possible that craftsmen owned tools which they did not know how to use, or neglected to use in favor of other tools. Nevertheless, the presence of such tools would indicate a level of competence to their clients, even if this was a false impression.

15 Cathy Hellier and Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, *A Population Profile of Williamsburg in 1748*, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library research report series; RR-139, 1987, 2.

muster enough resources to usher his children into appropriate trades and to maintain the household once he ceased working. Though it encompassed a wide array of standards of living, “competence” contained “a notion of 'manly' independence as the head of a thriving family, an independence that could only be gained by successfully practicing his craft.”¹⁶

16 Catherine Bishir, “Good and Sufficient Language for Building,” in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, IV* ed. by Thomas Carter and Bernard Herman (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 98; J. Ritchie Garrison, *Two Carpenters: Architecture and Building in Early New England, 1799-1859* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006), 2; Donna J Rilling, *Making Houses, Crafting Capitalism: Builders in Philadelphia, 1790-1850*, Early American studies; (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 15.

Chapter Two: Living Off the Trade

In 1747, the second largest household in Williamsburg, numbering thirty-five, belonged to James Wray, a carpenter. At fifty-four persons, the largest was that of John Blair, merchant, Councillor, and occasional Acting Lieutenant Governor. Lieutenant Governor Sir William Gooch's household ranked third, including thirty-two people. How did a carpenter come to have a household which rivaled that of President of the Governor's Council and the Governor himself? Certainly he had risen socially. A grand juror in November 1737, a petit juror in 1739, 1743, and 1747, he joined the Bruton Parish vestry in 1744, and became churchwarden of the Parish in 1745. On December 2, 1748, members of the Council appointed Wray as a justice of the peace for York County. Over half of the men who served on petit juries in the eighteenth century were active in the building trades, and the majority of men serving as grand jurors were craftsmen. In these capacities, Wray was just one among a number of his peers. His appointment as justice of the peace, however, set him apart. Only about seven percent of the justices in York County practiced crafts or provided services. In fulfilling the obligations of this post, Wray demonstrated just how far he had risen.¹

Economic growth seems the most likely catalyst for this social mobility. Though

¹ Cathy Hellier and Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, *A Population Profile of Williamsburg in 1748*, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library research report series; RR-139, 1987, 2; *Dictionary of Virginia Biography* s.v. "John Blair"; York County Orders, Wills, and Inventories (18) 395, 21 November 1737; *ibid.*, pp. 509-510; York County Orders and Wills (19) 210-211, 15 August 1743; *ibid.*, pp. 494-495, 16 February 1746/7; John C. McCabe, "Sketches of Bruton Parish, Williamsburg, Virginia," *American Church and Ecclesiastical Review*, 8 (1856), p. 614; York County Orders and Wills (19) 379, 15 July 1745; H. R. McIlwaine, et al., eds., *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*, 6 vols., (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1927-1966), V:275; all York County Records from Jameson Harwood, "Frome my Yard: Archaeological Excavations at the James Wray site, Williamsburg, Virginia," (Unpublished Research Report, Williamsburg, Virginia), 47; Linda H. Rowe, "Urban Officeholders in York County" in *Urbanization in the Tidewater South. Part II, The Growth and Development of Williamsburg and Yorktown* (Final Report to the National Endowment for the Humanities, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 199-).

he began working in Williamsburg by at least 1731, James Wray only achieved full economic independence in 1736, when he purchased the lots on the southeast corner of the block bounded by Scotland, Henry, Prince George, and Boundary Streets, from David Menetree, a bricklayer, and developed the land into a full service lumberyard and woodworking shop. To the community, this landownership constituted a competence for Wray. The majority of the land available in Williamsburg had already been developed during its thirty-odd year existence. Most craftsmen could afford to rent living and work space, but not to purchase. Owning land in town distinguished Wray as a craftsman who had gained financial success and independence through the practice of his trade, and could afford to create a landscape that would continually reinforce both his craft mastery and his financial independence, as he and his workmen demonstrated their skills on the site.²

Owning space allowed Wray to display the diverse talents of his workforce. Traditionally, carpentry and joinery remained separate professions, as the practitioners dealt with wood in very different ways. A carpenter practiced transforming timber into building materials and the framing and enclosing of structures. Joiners specialized in fitting together panelling of other woodwork made of small pieces such as doors, windows, and mantels. By its nature, joinery required a larger number of molding and carving tools such as planes and chisels than the average carpenter needed. However,

² Wray may have rented these properties prior to purchasing them in 1736. His accounts with Col. Thomas Jones and Henry Wetherburn list charges for “15 foot of plank from my yard” (14 November 1733) and “17 foot of plank from my yard” (8 May 1735), respectively. The variety of other lumber listed in the accounts may have been purchased ready cut from another supplier if they did not come from Wray's workshop as well. Account of Colonel Thomas Jones with James Wray, Jones Family Papers, [c. 1731-1735], Photocopy Manuscripts Collection, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg.

with skilled labor a relative scarcity in eighteenth century Virginia, enterprising men often found themselves practicing both trades, and sometimes others as well, such as glaziery, painting, or coffin building.³

Part of Wray's success was built on his ability to undertake a wide range of commissions for his clients, many of which involved mastering skills particular to a certain task. Work done for Colonel Thomas Jones, a local merchant, included a variety interior work, such as constructing a case of pigeon holes, mending dishes, mending a table, and building a trundle bed. Wray and his workmen also worked on the exterior of Jones' property, building a porch, setting old glass panes in new leads, building doors, and painting. They performed a similar variety of tasks for Wetherburn, including framing a garden fence, cutting 4500 shingles, framing a stable door, building a shed, and painting eighty yards of wall space inside the house, as well as painting the entire front of the house. Other accounts kept with Wray prove less informative about what he and his men could accomplish. Carter Burwell, grandson of Robert "King" Carter and owner of Carter's Grove, also kept an account with Wray, though he recorded nothing more than paying for "work done for me." Artifacts recovered during the excavation of Wray's property confirm the number of activities taking place in this shop. The standard selection of hammers, chisels, saw blades, gouges, files, folding rules, plane blades, and nails relate to the woodworking trades that took place there. Fragments of window glass, hundreds of window leads, and wooden window molding prove that glaziery took place on site. Supplemental activities, such as coffin building, cobbling, and painting, were

³ Carl Lounsbury, Vanessa Elizabeth Patrick, and Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, *An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture and Landscape* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 61, 194-195.

represented by recovered coffin tacks, shoe leather, shoe nails, and concentrated deposits of Spanish brown and white pigment.⁴

This variety of skilled performances impressed the community sufficiently that officials entrusted Wray with progressively larger public projects. In January 1737, York County's justices of the peace asked Wray to settle a difference between ordinary keeper John Parker and carpenter Thomas Hedges, and to “measure the plank & Scantling mentioned in the said Thomas Hedges's Acct.” A far more prestigious appointment came in 1742, when Wray, cabinetmaker Richard Booker, and Richard Taliaferro were ordered to go “to the Capitol Landing bridge lately built by Arthur Dickeson and view it,” as well as “report of their opinion to the next Ct. Whether the same be well done or not and what the sd. Dickeson deserveth to have for building the same.” Wray received his most prestigious appointment on October 10, 1749, when members of the Council decided that,

having taken under their Consideration the ruinous Condition of the Governor's House, thought proper that it shou'd be surveyed by some skillful Persons, and an Estimate made by them of the Charge of putting it in good Repair, and were pleased to appoint Mr. James Wray and Mr. Richard Taliaferro for that Purpose, and ordered the Clerk to give Notice to them thereof, and desire that they would forthwith carefully view and inspect the said House, and make a Report as soon as possibly they could of the Expence which they sho'd judge the Reparation might amount to.

Unfortunately, Wray died late in 1749 and so never did enjoy the opportunities his performance and mastery had won him.⁵

4 Account of Colonel Thomas Jones with James Wray, Jones Family Papers, [c. 1731-1735], Photocopy Manuscripts Collection, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg; and, Carter Burwell ledger, 1738-1756 and James Bray ledger 1736-1746 in the Burwell Papers, [1736-1786], Microform Manuscripts Collection, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg; and, Jameson Harwood, “Frome my Yard: Archaeological Excavations at the James Wray site, Williamsburg, Virginia,” (Unpublished Research Report, Williamsburg, Virginia), 69.

5 York County Orders, Wills, and Inventories (18) 333, 17 January 1736/7.; York County Orders and

Eventually, these performances fulfilled their intended purpose: to secure and enhance Wray's economic independence. Masterful social performances of technical skill drew clients and commissions to his shop, bringing with them significant amounts of cash, which Wray translated to material performances of gentility. Fifty-five ounces of assorted silver, a silver ladle, and a silver watch, are listed in his estate inventory, along with porcelain cups, saucers, and plates, and, that most significant piece of furniture, a tea table. These goods functioned as display pieces, meant to showcase one's wealth and gentility through the possession of luxury goods. Wray's greatest performance of mastery actually took him away from his work yard. In 1745, he purchased Lot 232 on Block 30. Known as "Green Hill," a large house already stood on the property, ready for the Wray family, their wards, and assorted domestic slaves. In separating his residence from his work yard, Wray gave his penultimate performance of mastery. He had practiced his trade so competently and in such a workmanlike manner that he had accrued enough wealth to allow him to live separate from his work spaces and his workers. Though still a craftsman, he could now aspire to be a gentleman.⁶

Few craftsman in Williamsburg achieved quite the same level of success as did

Wills (19) 119, 16 August 1742.; H. R. McIlwaine et al, eds. *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*, 6vols. (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1927-1966) V:301; all cited from Jameson Harwood, "Frome my Yard: Archaeological Excavations at the James Wray site, Williamsburg, Virginia," (Unpublished Research Report, Williamsburg, Virginia).

6 "Inventory of Estate of James Wray 1750 March 18," Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/View/index.cfm?doc=Probates\PB00340.xml>; York County Deeds and Bonds (5) 134 - 135, dated 16 May 1745 and recorded 20 May 1745. For a full treatment of rising consumerism and social display through luxury goods, see Richard Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992); Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert, eds., *Of Consuming Interests: the Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994); Bernard Herman, "The Embedded Landscapes of the Charleston Single House, 1780-1820," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 7 (1997): 41-57; and Ann Smart Martin, "Buying Into the Word of Goods: Eighteenth-Century Consumerism and the Retail Trade from London to the Virginia Frontier," (PhD. Diss, The College of Williams and Mary, 1993).

James Wray. Richard King, active in Williamsburg between 1716 and 1727, came the close, owning six lots with dwellings on them and with an estate valued at £206.3.1 ³/₄. He held no public office, but did associate with several of the leading men of the community. He erected buildings and made repairs for Colonel Thomas Jones, and held accounts with William Byrd, for whom he boarded a man; William Keith, a tailor; Richard Packe for gaming and billiards; and Joanna Archer and John Blair for merchandise, among numerous others. It seems he kept his accounts in the clear as well, as William Keith served as one of the witnesses to his will. Moreover, Colonel Jones acted as executor of his estate.⁷

These social connections might have been passed along to Wray on King's death. That Wray was socially established by 1731 is evident. In his first public service to appraise the estate of William Broadribb that year, he served with Samuel Cobbs, William Prentis, Sr., and Joseph Davenport, all prominent residents in the city, implying some social equivalence between the men. Davenport witnessed Richard King's will in 1727, indicating a social relationship between the two. As James Wray's origins remain unclear, it is plausible that he worked for King as a journeyman or hired labor, and, given the various shared social connections among the two men, assumed both status as a master craftsman and King's client base after his death.⁸

7 Mary A Stephenson, *Green Hill, Lots 319-328 North of Duke of Gloucester Street ...* (Research Report, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1958), 1-4; Richard King Accounts (with William Byrd 28 December 1728; Thomas Crease 4 July 1728; William Keith 24 December 1728; Richard Packe 3 April 1728; Joanna Archer 15 February 1728; John Blair 15 January 1728) in the Jones Family Papers, Microform Collection, Rockefeller Special Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Richard King was active in Williamsburg from 1713 (when charges were brought against him for contempt of court) until his death in 1727. In his will, he identifies family in England, implying that he was an immigrant to Virginia. Much of the information regarding his life in Williamsburg is contained in the Jones Family papers and was presented above.

8 Jameson Harwood, "From my Yard: Archaeological Excavations at the James Wray site, Williamsburg, Virginia," (Unpublished Research Report, Williamsburg, Virginia), 46.

Whatever the possible connections between Wray and King, the latter seems to have given up his chosen career prior to his death in 1727. The majority of King's movable property consisted of household furnishings, comprising approximately 22% of the total estate, some £45.5.7 ½. By comparison, goods relating to his trade appear rarely. “2 books of Architecture & 1 Do. Surveying” were valued at ten shillings, and a “parcel of Carpenters & Joyners tools” at £4.10. At £5, these tools of the trade account for only 2% of the total estate. Furthermore, only three slaves were listed in the estate's inventory: “1 Negro Woman & Child” valued at £37.10 and “an old Negro man” valued at £7.⁹

King may have retired from his chosen calling because he had achieved a position in life of both comfort and standing. He not only had connections to several leading citizens, but also had acquired several of the material signs of gentility. Among the other items of property enumerated were three tea tables, one card table, six china cups, five china saucers, a slop bowl, a silver watch, thirteen silver spoons, a pair of silver candlesticks, and a silver girdle buckle. King's estate compared well to others of similar wealth. Approximately half of the twenty-two estates valued between £95 and £225 pounds between 1723 and 1732 owned silver goods and all of them owned tea wares. Though the presence of such goods does not necessarily mean that the owners knew how to use them genteelly, it does indicate a measure of financial stability. In King's case, a stability which came through competence.¹⁰

9 Inventory of the Estate of Richard King, York County Records, Orders and Wills (16) 588, Library of Virginia.

10 Inventory of the Estate of Richard King, York County Records, Orders and Wills (16) 588, Library of Virginia; Cary Carson et al., *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville: Published for the United States Capitol Historical Society by the University Press of Virginia, 1994), 100; Richard L Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New

Not all carpenters were so successful in attaining a genteel life. Thomas Whitby died with an estate valued at £233.2.5 in 1711. Though this a higher amount, no indication remains of him owning any real property. As a renter, he would not have the same social prominence which either King or Wray attained. He did own some expensive pieces, such as a silver tobacco box, two gold rings, a silver tankard, and a pair silver shoe buckles. However, all but the shoe buckles bear the ignominious description of “old.” The great majority of his movable property apparently warranted the same or similar descriptors. He had fifty-seven pounds “old pewter” and forty-three of “very old [pewter],” “a parcell old Tin Ware,” “three old trunks,” “1 old Saw,” and “1 old rotten Table” among his other goods. The poor quality of Whitby's goods may imply a certain disregard for refinement. As almost every object bears an unfavorable adjective, it seems that they were used for years and seldom replaced or were purchased second-hand. Though Whitby's estate at first seems impoverished, he certainly did not lack career opportunities.¹¹

During the six years (1705-1711) in which Whitby is known to be active, Williamsburg was still in its initial stages of development. Lots were still readily available for purchase, and the law required owners to build on their property within twenty-four months of purchase. Though initial demand for the lots was slow, it increased throughout the first decade of the century, creating no lack of opportunities for carpenters to ply their trade in the developing town. In addition to whatever private

York: Knopf, 1992), 184-185.

¹¹ An Inventory of Mr. Thomas Whitby, deced., York County Records, Orders and Wills (14), 163-4, Library of Virginia. Whitby was active in the area from at least 1703 (when Daniel Pegram signed an apprenticeship indenture with him) until his death in 1711. Little else about his life is know. Biographical information from the Williamsburg Area Residents Files, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

contracts he held, Whitby worked for the colony as well. In 1705, he submitted three petitions to the House of Burgesses: the first asking for “an Allowance for Putting on and Taking off The prifoners Irons & other Services;” the second “praying That he May be paid after the Rate of Fifty pounds per *Annum* for Three Months & Seventeen Days which he was to have by Agreement with The committee Appointed to Overfee the Building The Capitol;” and the third requesting “Allowance for his Attendance to hoyft the fflag this and the Laft Affembly and Generall Court.” Though burgesses only approved his petition for payment following intervention from Governor Francis Nicholson, Whitby's business seemed stable, if not growing over the next few years. In July 1711, just five months before he died, Whitby took on a new apprentice, Owen Morris. Despite his household full of “old” goods, Whitby was financially secure enough to undertake the care and maintenance of another person.¹²

He may also have been looking to expand his business in the future by taking on and training an additional laborer. At the time of his death, his work force may have been as small as three individuals: himself, “One Negro Man named Jeffrey” valued at £26, a sum which implies a man fully capable of manual labor, and Owen Morris, the apprentice. Whitby's “Library of Books,” valued at £1 may have contained some basic

12 For the development of Williamsburg, see: Cathy Hellier, “The Character and Direction of Urban Expansion in Williamsburg” in *Urbanization in the Tidewater South. Part II, The Growth and Development of Williamsburg and Yorktown* (Final Report to the National Endowment for the Humanities, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 199-) and “The Development of Williamsburg as the Capital of Colonial Virginia” in John William Reys, *Tidewater Towns: City Planning in Colonial Virginia and Maryland* (Williamsburg, Va., Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; distributed by the University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1972); Indenture between Owen Morris and Thomas Whitby, York County Records, Orders and Wills (14), 112, Library of Virginia; H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia*, 13 vols., (Richmond: The Colonial Press, E. Waddey Co, 1913), IV:94, 119-121. The annuity Whitby requested payment on seems to be an inordinately large sum. It seems most plausible that he had been promised an annual salary of £50 and petitioned to be paid the proportion of that whole earned during the three months and seventeen days he work, which would be approximately £14.10.

building manuals, but the low valuation indicates an absence of any design manuals. His assemblage of tools included “a parcell old Carpenters Tools & a parcell of Trifles” and another “parcel old Carpenters Tools,” valued at £0.12.6 and £4 respectively. In apprenticing Morris, Whitby likely anticipated benefiting from an additional set of hands. The value of the tools he owned totaled only £4.12.6, well below the “Carpenters tools to the Value of Six pounds” that he had promised to Morris at the end of his indenture.¹³

By contrast, cabinetmaker John Drewry's estate included only tools and clothing, valued at £227.15. Little else remains to illuminate Drewry's life, but the limited variety of his movable property suggests that he, too, was a craftsman trying to build his business. His lack of property implies that Drewry was likely a journeyman, traveling to gain experience, or a young master, traveling as he sought out the best place to establish a shop of his own. The latter seems more likely, as the bulk of Drewry's estate value lay not in his tools, but in his clothing: 1 suit of Scarlet Cloth (£55), 1 B. Coat (£20), 2 pr black breeches (£15), 3 pair of White do. (£9), 4 shirts (£30), 1 hat (£5), and 1 sword (£15), among other sundry clothing, for a total of £163.15, approximately 59% of the estate's value. By comparison, the highest valued tools included 12 pair of hollows and rounds (£18), 1 chest (£9), 9 Quarter Rounds & Ogees (£5), a spring and cornish plane (£5), and 4 saws (£8). The tools totaled £114, or 41% of the estate's value. Whatever money he earned previously, Drewry invested it in practical items, either tools by which to practice his trade, or clothing which could be both worn and resold or bartered if needed. Furthermore, if value can be taken as an index of quality, Drewry invested in

¹³ An Inventory of Mr. Thomas Whitby, deced., York County Records, Orders and Wills (14), 163-4, Library of Virginia; Indenture between Owen Morris and Thomas Whitby, York County Records, Orders and Wills (14), 112, Library of Virginia.

clothing that gave him the appearance of a gentleman. Dressed in scarlet or black, with a choice of four waistcoats, and a sword at his hip, Drewry visually aligned himself with the gentry, the most prestigious client base available, and the one whose patronage could most quickly increase his own fortunes. Unfortunately, the success of this self-marketing tactic remains a mystery, as Drewry spent only a year in Williamsburg before his death in 1779.¹⁴

Of the carpenters for whom estate inventories survive, Thomas Cobbs seems to have had the most balanced estate. His professional belongings included “a parcel shoemakers Tools,” “Carpenters & Coopers Tools,” two augurs, grindstones, a workbench, a whip saw, a crosscut saw, a tenant saw, four axes, and a turning lathe, with a total value of £15.8.6, approximately 4.7% of the estates value. However, he also owned four slaves, three of whom were male: Jack (£60), Charles (£50), and Pompey (£5). The high values of Jack and Charles suggest that they were skilled workmen, and Cobb's profession implies that they, too, practiced carpentry. Pompey's value indicates that he was either a child or unskilled. In either case, it seems likely that he was the son of Cobb's fourth slave, Mary, and may have been in training for these crafts. The variety of tools in Cobb's estate allowed for his slaves to be practicing several tasks at once: shoemaking, turning, coopering, and tool sharpening. Cobb may have run a small scale shop of his own, taking on whatever jobs he could to grow his business and his social position.¹⁵

14 Appraisal of the Estate of John Drewry, York County Records, Wills and Inventories (22), 431-432, Library of Virginia.

15 Thomas Cobb Inventory and Appraisal, York County Records, Wills and Inventories (22), 245-246, Library of Virginia. Thomas Cobb was active in the Williamsburg area between 1745 and 1774. Little else is known about his life, from Williamsburg Resident Files, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

A variety of agricultural implements indicates that Cobb either diversified his means of earning a living or had only recently taken up the woodworking trades. Unlike the other inventories, his includes five scythe blades, a parcel old iron, six reap hooks, two powder horns, a canoe, two pairs of oyster tongs, plows and harrows, seven fishing poles, part of a seine, and cider casks. Though Cobb may have supplied some of the local population with agricultural tools, the volume of such implements makes it unlikely. Rather, he probably ran only a small scale shop, investing the majority of his time, energy, and wealth in other enterprises, such as agriculture and fishing. This allowed Cobb a greater degree of independence, as he was not entirely dependent on client satisfaction for his income. Whatever services he offered to the community, any fluctuations in demand or fashion could be mitigated by his other activities.¹⁶

Individually, these craftsmen create a greatly varied picture. Some achieved enormous wealth and privilege, while others lived more simply and did not keep their own shops. In aggregate, however, the differences among the individuals fade. Assuming low inflation across the eighteenth century, and borrowing Lorena Walsh and Lois Green Carr's wealth groupings (£0-49; £50-94; £95-225; £226-490; £490+), all of the carpenters led comfortable, if not luxurious lives. None had an estate valued below £200. Removing James Wray as an outlier, a carpenter's estate averaged £259, well within the upper wealth brackets. The majority of Wray's estate, valued at £1093.4.7 ½, resided in slaves, which constituted £650 of the total value. Taking only the remainder, approximately £443, puts Wray into the same wealth bracket.¹⁷

¹⁶ Thomas Cobb Inventory and Appraisal, York County Records, Wills and Inventories (22), 245-246, Library of Virginia.

¹⁷ James Wray's estate value represents an outlier, as it was so high to include it would skew the statistics.

A better comparison can be reached by comparing Walsh and Carr's mean numbers of furnishings in York County. Divided by both decade and wealth bracket, their findings chart a rise in the number of chairs, tables, beds, bedsteads, desks and case furniture (described as chests of drawers, cupboards, presses, and safes). Placing each carpenter into the appropriate decade and wealth bracket permits a more concrete comparison in the standards of living between the general population of York County and the carpenters. John Drewry cannot be accurately compared, as he owned no furniture. The remaining carpenters, however, generally owned more of items of furniture as others in their wealth group. (See Table 1)

In Wray's case, the size of his household accounts for the abundance of furniture in his estate. Whitby, despite his seemingly poor standard of living, owned more than an average number of all the furnishings but desks, implying a slightly higher standard of living than might have been expected. King's estate offers a more striking example, as it included thirty-seven chairs, ten tables, five beds, and six bedsteads. This correlates with Walsh and Carr's observation that, in the developing Chesapeake, an increasing standard of living meant being more comfortable, rather than having more distinction. Having one's own bed meant more than having fine bed linens. Cobb owned fewer than the expected number of chairs, tables, and beds, though a higher number of bedsteads. This at first seems to contradict the established pattern, as Cobb's estate had a higher value of all except Wray's, but he owned fewer of the goods that would distinguish him in the community. However, the majority of the estate's value lay in the slaves Cobb possessed, valued at £120. The rest of the estate was split between a variety of professions. Having

no dedicated profession, Cobb had no need to demonstrate a distinct competence in any of them, and, by extension, had no need to accumulate material markers of social position or refinement as did Whitby, King, or Wray.¹⁸

Owning and using these markers created connection between the carpenters and their clients, the understanding and manipulation of which was necessary to build a client base. These craftsmen lived in a socially stratified world. Understanding the rules under which both personal and professional relationships functioned assured the carpenters a place in that world. As craftsmen who earned a living with their hands, these men occupied a secondary or tertiary strata, often below their clients. While they did not have to “grub for subsistence,” they still had to subordinate “considerations of honor and dignity to calculations of interest,” particularly their business interests. Demonstrating their competency of craftsmen necessarily meant that they could not demonstrate the “liberality” traditionally associated with gentlemen. In its place, they had to demonstrate skill levels and business acumen great enough to ensure their financial independence.¹⁹

18 Lorena Walsh and Lois Green Carr, “Changing Lifestyles and Consumer Behavior in the Colonial Chesapeake” in Cary Carson et al., *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville: Published for the United States Capitol Historical Society by the University Press of Virginia, 1994), 63, 140-142. Though King's totals are all substantively higher than those of his counterparts, but this amount of furnishings was necessary since he had taken in boarders.

19 Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, VA., by University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 131-135; see also: Richard R. Beeman, “Deference, Republicanism, and the Emergence of Popular Politics in Eighteenth-Century America” in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., vol. 49, no. 3 (July 1992): 401-430; John B. Kirby, “Early American Politics – The Search for Ideology: An Historiographical Analysis and Critique of the Concept of ‘Deference’,” in *The Journal of Politics* 32, no. 4 (November 1970): 808-838; Arthur M. Schlesinger, “The Aristocracy in Colonial America” in *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 3rd ser., vol. 74 (1962): 3-21, especially pp. 19-20.

Chapter Three: Practicing the Trade

Building a client base entailed more than demonstrating behaviors consistent with one's social and professional position. A culture of deference directed social relationships. In this culture, each participant was fully aware of his social standing and the levels of respect due both to him and from him to others. The yeoman farmer was properly deferential to the local gentry in consideration of the credit they might extend him in the future. In turn, the gentry recognized the need for the local yeomanry's support when he next stood for office, and so was willing to extend the said credit or to acknowledge the yeoman's contributions to the local community. On a broader level, that same gentlemen might organize a social occasion such as a horse race or a cockfight as a show of appreciation for the community's support.¹

Historians have characterized these reciprocal interactions as patron-client relationships. Both sides could act as patron or client depending on what the circumstances required. Given the power differential, however, the gentleman usually played the patron, the giver of financial or other support to local individuals and institutions, who functioned as dependent clients. Craftsmen functioned similarly in their social roles. However, this dynamic was complicated by the economic relationship between the craftsman and the client. This inverted the social relationship, making the socially inferior individual the provider of goods and services to his socially superior client. The social inequalities of the exchange (patron/client) countered the economic reciprocity of it (cash for goods). Therefore, the craftsman had play multiple roles within

¹ Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, VA., by University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 88-114, 131-135.

the same exchange: as a master craftsman, he demonstrated his skills in his craft; as an economic player, he demonstrated his financial independence; as an entrepreneur, he had to sell his product; as a business man, he had to satisfy his clients; as a social entity, he deferred to his betters.²

Each of these roles had to be played simultaneously during each of the interactions between the the craftsman and his client. At stake were both the carpenter's competency and his social positioning. Any flaws in performing one could lead to a loss of the other, while superior performances in one could enhance the other. A satisfied client, particularly a gentleman, might refer others of his social circle to the carpenter's shop, building his business. Given the overlap between the highest echelons of colonial Virginia's society and government, that satisfaction could also bring contract work from the colony. Performing well on these jobs could garner the carpenter even more recognition, furthering his business with additional contracts. Additionally, associating with these gentlemen as representatives of the state could create some familiarity between craftsman and client that could eventually lead to a more social relationship. These opportunities for social mobility were predicated on the carpenter's successful performance of multiple roles within a series of producer-consumer interactions.

This complexities of these roles and relationships appear in the Burgesses' interactions with the carpenters to whom they granted contracts. In October 1705, the House of Burgesses passed an act for building a house for the governor of the colony, appointing Henry Cary “an overseer to inspect, oversee, and provide for the building

² Richard R. Beeman, “Deference, Republicanism, and the Emergence of Popular Politics in Eighteenth-Century America” in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., vol. 49, no. 3 (July 1992), 410.

aforesaid, with full power to begin, carry on, and finish the same, according to the directions of this act,” for which he was to be “paid and allowed for the time of [his] respective service and attendance in the employment and trust aforesaid, after the rate of one hundred pounds a year.” Should Cary be unable to finish the task, any other builder entrusted with the task would earn the same compensation. However, the burgesses required Cary, and any other overseer, to

enter into bond with one surety, of five hundred pounds sterling to our sovereign lady the queen...that he will not imbezile or convert to his own use any part of the money or materials put unto his hands for carrying on the building aforesaid, but that according to the best of his skill and understanding and the trust reposed in him he will faithfully lay out all such monys in and about the uses and services for which he receives it and also that he will lay an account of his disbursments from time to time, before the governor and councill, and before the assembly at their meeting.

Five years later, when the Assembly passed *An act for finishing a House for the Governor of this Colony and Dominion*, they also renewed both Cary's salary and the required bond.³

Requiring the bond marked both the social conscientiousness and the practicality of the serving burgesses. The 1705 act allocated £3,000 and the 1710 act allocated an additional £2,195. Both were substantial amounts and their misappropriation would have been an embarrassment to both the colony and the burgesses, as well as detrimental to the welfare of the colony as a whole. Any temptation on Cary's part to “imbezile” was likely to be mitigated by the impending sacrifice of £500, enough to ruin a man. By requiring a bond, the burgesses protected the colony's investment in the project, as well as their own

³ *Hening's Statutes at Large*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1969), Vol. 3, 287 (October 1705), Vol. 3, 485-485 (October 1710). Cary was a Virginia native, born about 1650 and died in 1720. A builder and contractor, he was given the charges of building the new capitol at Williamsburg, the governor's house, and the restoration of the College of William and Mary after the fire of 1705. Biographical information from *Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography* s.v. “Cary, Henry.”

reputations as learned men of sound judgement, qualities which every true gentleman was to have. By the same token, this forced Cary to conduct himself in a workmanlike manner, showcasing his skills as a master craftsman and his integrity as a businessman.⁴

The burgesses' conscientiousness on the part of the colony did not extend to the workmen employed for its benefit. One month after the assembly passed the second bill allocating money to the building of the governor's house, Henry Cary submitted a petition showing:

That your Petitioner was appointed by Act of Assembly Overseer of the building the Governor's House ...by the same Act a Sallary of one hundred pounds per Annum was Setled upon your Petitioner until he Should be discharged from the Said Service Pursuant whereunto your Petitioner did begin and enter upon the Said building...Considering himself under an Obligation to the Assembly to take Care of the Same until he was discharged and also considering that unless he was to be allow'd his full Sallary of one hundred pounds per Anum it would be very much to his prejudice to continue there and neglect his own Affairs, apply'd himself to the Honorable Mr. President for his directions therein...your Petitioner could not obtain any Order or discharge about the promises from the President further than that [he could not] appoint any other person than those whom the Law had [illegible] & appointed for that purpose whereupon your Petitioner took upon himself to be under a necessity of continuing to look after the Said building ...he did [break] up Housekeeping as his own Plantation and remove his wife and other of his Domestiks to the Said work or building, all which was very prejudicall to your Petitioner and will [illegible] much to hs ruin if he be not allowed his full Sallary for the full time he hath attended that Service.

After years of service to the colony in building the governor's house, Cary had yet to be paid. His sense of obligation had even led him so far as to neglect his own affairs in favor of completing the seemingly lucrative state contract he had received. As venerable as this appointment was, it nevertheless taxed Cary's competence. He performed

⁴ *Hening's Statutes at Large*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1969), Vol. 3, 287 (October 1705).

satisfactorily as a craftsman, but due to the burgesses was in danger of losing his financial independence unless his salary was paid.⁵

This situation suggests bureaucratic lethargy and governmental parsimony. Both are reasons for the delay, but this situation may represent a deeper disparity in the world views of the burgesses and the craftsmen they engaged. As gentlemen, the burgesses enjoyed liberality in life: freedom from material necessity and grubbing for subsistence; freedom from the servile subjection; freedom from the subordination of honor and dignity to calculations of interest, and the elevation of the mind through the liberal arts. These qualities created a disposition to undertake important responsibilities in the community at large, such as filling a civil office without salary. This freedom from material necessity was a pre-requisite for filling such high offices, as a general fear that paying politicians would open the way to their corruption. The continual neglect of salaries correlates with the burgesses' own self-perception of *gratis* civil service.⁶

This notion hid a much deeper irony inherent in the relationship between the burgesses and the contractors. If a gentleman lost his financial independence, he perforce lost his liberality. Similarly, if a craftsman lost his independence, he also lost his competence. While the hierarchical fall would be less for the craftsman, it would nevertheless be a serious blow to his social and professional standings. For those with the sometimes dubious fortune to win state contracts, the salary associated with that contract was integral to maintaining both the independence and the competence. The

5 Petition: Henry Cary to the General Assembly of Virginia re payment for work at Governor's Palace, 24 November 1710, Photocopied Manuscript Collection, Rockefeller Special Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

6 Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, VA., by University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 131, 196.

burgesses' reluctance to fulfill their pecuniary obligations shows a disregard for the financial well-being of the colony's contractors, even as they paid meticulous attention to their own finances.

Moreover, this seems to have been a dominant attitude in the earliest years of the eighteenth century. Cary petitioned on April 27, 1704 for "Allowance for his Extraordinary Services in Overseeing the Building of the Capitol." The next day he was ordered to "lay before the House the amounts of the Disposition of the money payd him for the building of the Capitol &c together with the proceedings of ye Committee appointed to inspect and oversee the said Building." Six years later he would petition again for his salary. On December 1, 1710, the assembly paid Cary "the Sume of Three hundred Eighty five pounds Twelve Shillings and Eleven pence *sterling* out of the public Monys."⁷

In those same years, Thomas Whitby petitioned for "allowance for his care & diligence in building the Capitol." Apparently receiving no answer, he petitioned the governor himself, Francis Nicholson, who sent his approval to the assembly:

"I herewith Send you a petition presented me by *Thomas Whitby* Carpenter praying that his Sallery may be paid for The Time he was Discharged Last Winter by order of my Self and her Majestys hon[orable] Council when that order was made wee were not Apprised That he was still under any other Engagement Then The rest of ye workmen but I find That he is Still engaged by an agreement made with The committee Till The whole work is finished So That he Could not undertake any other Work & Therefore I Think it is Reasonable That he should be Allowed his Sallery for his being Discharged proceeded only a Mistake Which had it been known he would have been Employed in Some Work That might have Countervailed what he now Demands."

⁷ H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia*, 13 vols., (Richmond: The Colonial Press, E. Waddey Co, 1913), IV:51, 58, 281-282, 284.

It was accordingly resolved that Whitby be paid according to his petition.⁸

Bridget Minitree may not have been as fortunate. In 1712, she petitioned “to be Allowed for Smiths work done for the Country's use by the Said Deceased [David Minitree, her husband] in his life time.” The claim was referred to the Committee of Claims to report their opinion of the matter to the House, but no record remains of whether she received the payment.⁹

This string of delayed payments, issued only at the insistence of the contractor, implies an on-going paradox: the burgesses viewed the chosen contractors as socially equitable men performing works for the benefit of the colony. The social similarity (serving the colony) overshadowed the different economic circumstances between the two: the burgesses served the colony because they had the liberality to do so, but the craftsmen did so to gain or solidify the financial independence in order to obtain that liberality. Functioning as social creatures, the burgesses emphasized the honor of serving the colony, an honor of which men like Cary were exceedingly aware, and the liberality that it implied, overlooking the economic necessities of payment because they received none for their services. Only with official reminders through the appropriate channels did they separate the honor from the economics.¹⁰

8 H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia*, 13 vols., (Richmond: The Colonial Press, E. Waddey Co, 1913), IV:51, 119.

9 H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia*, 13 vols., (Richmond: The Colonial Press, E. Waddey Co, 1913), V: 18.

10 H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia*, 13 vols., (Richmond: The Colonial Press, E. Waddey Co, 1913), IV:51, 119, 120; H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia*, 13 vols., (Richmond: The Colonial Press, E. Waddey Co, 1913), IV: 51, 275-6, 284, 289. By contrast, Benjamin Powell, working in the other end of the century was more fortunate. Commissioned to construct the Public Hospital between 1770 and 1773, he received multiple payments during that period: on 26 January 1771 for £250, on 24 December 1771 for £400, on 15 June 1773 for £200, on 15 September 1773 for £592.12.11 $\frac{3}{4}$, on 22 December 1773 for £143.17.3 $\frac{1}{4}$, and 28 June 1775 for the balance of the account, £130.12.0 $\frac{1}{2}$. The regularity and transparency of the payments indicates that the burgesses had become more comfortable with and knowledgeable about public

The size of the project, and the novelty of the undertaking, may also have contributed to the sluggish payments. The investment of such substantial sums mandated careful handling, as did the collective inexperience of the assembly in managing or overseeing a large scale project. With such concerns in mind, the burgesses may have felt that extra attention was necessary to ensure that everything was handled properly. By contrast, Benjamin Powell's accounts of the 1760s and 1770s had much shorter turnaround times. On May 13, 1765, Powell submitted an account "for repairing the Publick Gaol." It was read during that session; the house resolved to pay him £388.13.8 ½ for his work; and Mr. Attorney carried it up to the Council for their concurrence, which gave their assent by June 1. Similarly, on December 14, 1769, Powell's claim for "Repairs to the Capitols was presented to the House, and read" before being "referred to the Consideration of the Committee of Public Claims." Within six days, the committee resolved to pay him £79.11.11 and the same day the Council agreed with the resolve. Though relatively large sums, neither were as great as what Cary had at his disposal. Furthermore, Powell undertook repairs in both cases, rather than full building contracts. A new structure could go awry in countless ways, but repairs could easily be corrected if done poorly. If his earlier repairs correlate with the ones on account in 1773 and 1774, he was providing basic maintenance services including hanging closet doors, painting, glazing windows, removing bookcases, and putting in new seats. While his work would

building projects. Unlike Cary, Powell was not required to submit his accounts to the House of Burgesses for approval, but instead submitted them to the Directors of the Public Hospital. This intervening step puts even more distance between the politicians and the project, further indicating a comfort level with how the project was carried out. They no longer needed to be directly involved. Treasurer's Office Records (Virginia) Cash Books, 15 January 1777-6 April 1782, Library of Virginia cited in Patricia Ann Gibbs, Linda H Rowe, and Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, *The Public Hospital, 1766-1885: (Eastern State Hospital)* (Research Report Series, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1974), 337.

certainly have been judged by the burgesses through the course of their daily interactions with those same doors, windows, and seats, the nature of the tasks did not confer the same sense of honor or obligation. However, performing well in these small tasks may have been fundamental in securing Powell's bid to build the Public Hospital. That contract certainly carried both social and professional implications. Not only did Powell have the honor of working for the colony, but after its completion, he is referred to as a “gentleman” rather than by any occupation.¹¹

Given the multi-faceted nature of interpersonal relationships in eighteenth-century Virginia, state contracts likely sprung from various personal client-craftsman relationships. Demonstrating one's skills on an individual, task-based basis could lead to the opportunity to demonstrate those same skills to the colony at large. However, a craftsman's competence included more than his individual skill level. He also had to be mindful of the existing building culture in which he worked. By the last decades of the century, building craftsmen were beginning to organize themselves and to formalize that building culture. The Carpenter's Society of Boston published *The Carpenters Rules of Work in the Town of Boston* in 1774 and a revised edition with additions in 1795. The Carpenters Society of Baltimore published a similar edition in 1795, the carpenters of

11 H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia*, 13 vols., (Richmond: The Colonial Press, E. Wadley Co, 1913), X: 337, 364; H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia*, 13 vols., (Richmond: The Colonial Press, E. Wadley Co, 1913), XI: 339, 349, 351; Account: “Country” [Virginia] with Ben[jamin] Powell, Williamsburg builder, for repairs at Capitol and Prison, 2 October 1773, Photocopied Manuscript Collection, Rockefeller Special Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; Account: “Country” [Virginia] with Ben[jamin] Powell for work at Capitol and Prison in Williamsburg, 24 May 1774, Photocopied Manuscript Collection, Rockefeller Special Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; Account: “Country” [Virginia] with Benjamin Powell, Williamsburg contractor, for work at Capitol, Prison, and Office, 2 November 1774, Photocopied Manuscript Collection, Rockefeller Special Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Providence, Rhode Island in 1796, and those in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania in 1799.¹²

These rules of work focus primarily on setting prices for piece work, such as framing buildings, making sashes, shingling roofs, and constructing doors, with prices calculated at the rate of five shillings per day. Both the Carpenter's Society of Boston and that of Providence justified their prices with precedent. The Boston carpenters wrote that “there [was] very little alteration in the Prices of these RULES from those of 1774; but very great additions of Work. – The Price of Work is calculated at the rate of *Five Shillings* per day, which is the same price the other was calculated at.” The Providence Committee found “upon examination that the former Rules, began in the year 1750 and continued down to the present date, were calculated upon a scale of five shillings per day; and [made] the following calculations upon the same principles.” The United Society of Carpenters and Joiners of the Towns of Lansingburgh and Troy went one step further, organizing a society for the government of themselves and the benefit of their employers. In addition to setting prices, the society included bylaws designed to protect both craftsmen and clients. In Article VI they set out that:

“If any individual member of this society shall designedly endeavor to counteract or undermine any other member in his agreement for any job of work wherein he is already engaged or about engaging, either by reducing his character as a workman or in respect to his morals, or shall by fly hints or insinuations lessen him in the esteem of others...or offer to work at a cheaper rate than his brother member...shall pay the sum of fifteen pounds into the hands of the president...”

12 *The Carpenters Rules of Work, in the Town of Boston*, (Boston: Printed by Mills and Hicks, in School-Street, 1774); *The Carpenters' Rules of Work, in the Town of Boston*, (Boston: Printed for William P. Blake, at the Boston Bookstore, no. 59, Cornhill., 1795); *Rules for House Carpenters' Work in the Town of Providence*. (Providence, 1796); Chambersburg (Pa.). Carpenters, *A Bill of Rates of Carpenter and House-Joiner Work: Settled and Agreed on, by the Subscribers, Chambersburg, April 13th, 1790, to Which Is Affixed, an Appendix by Other Subscribers, Chambersburg, December 1799*. (Chambersburg: Printed by Robert Harper, 1799); Carpenters' Society of Baltimore, *Additional Rules, &c.* (Baltimore, Md.: s.n., 1795).

As populations grew, the unorganized nature of labor gave way to craftsmen's societies designed to formally professionalize growing industries facing growing demand.¹³

No such formal organization took place in Virginia in the eighteenth century. The more astute client might consult a book like *The Builder's Dictionary: or, Gentleman and Architect's Companion*, which included not only explanations of architectural features, but also necessary geometry and recommended prices, if he feared he was being overcharged. John Carter wrote to his brother Charles, both of whom were in the midst of creating their own plantation houses, that “If the Builder's Dictionary is at all to the purpose of your charge to the painter it makes Against you, Since in cases Supposed the oyl & colours are found by the Workmen, and how much so ever You may rely on the Authority of this ... Author...” Even without wide access to published prices, a pricing and wage system came to prevail in Virginia.¹⁴

The variety of piece work by which the carpenters maintained their livelihoods, coupled with the fragmentary nature of the surviving records, allows for only limited comparisons to be made. James Wray built two coffins for Thomas Jones in 1734. Philip Moody built one for John Prentis' estate in 1775 and Matthew Moody for Henry Tazewell in 1788. Wray's “coffen for Nurse & one for child” cost Jones eighteen shillings, and

13 *The Carpenters' Rules of Work, in the Town of Boston*, (Boston: Printed for William P. Blake, at the Boston Bookstore, no. 59, Cornhill., 1795), 1; *Rules for House Carpenters' Work in the Town of Providence*. (Providence, 1796), 1; United Society of House-Carpenters and Joiners of the Towns of Lansingburgh and Troy, *Lansingburgh, 19th June, 1790. Rules and Regulations, Formed by the United Society of House-Carpenters and Joiners of the Towns of Lansingburgh and Troy, for the Good Government of Themselves, and the Benefit of Their Employers* (Lansingburgh, N.Y.: Printed by Babcock & Hickok, 1790), 1.

14 John Carter to Charles Carter, 26 August 1739, Plumner-Carter Letterbook, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, cited in Bennie Brown, “The Ownership of Architecture Books in Colonial Virginia,” in Kenneth Hafertepe and James F. O’Gorman, *American Architects and Their Books to 1848* (Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 19

Philip Moody's "coffin for a negroe child" cost seven shillings six pence. If the children's coffins cost the same to produce, the adult coffin which Wray produced cost ten shillings six pence. Matthew Moody's, by contrast, cost £1.8. The increased price may be to do increased materials cost, or to post-war inflation. Similarly, while John Giles of Suffolk paid carpenters Meades and Driver fifteen shillings for a six panel door, or two shillings six pence per panel in 1773. Costs for materials and labor for items such as doors seemed to remain fairly steady throughout the end of the eighteenth century, when Joseph Prentis paid Thomas Sands and William Pigget £8.2 for eleven doors with fifty-four panels, each panel costing three shillings per panel, in 1798. Prices for making gates were fairly uniform as well. Philip Moody charged John Prentis seven shillings six pence for each of the three gates he produced in 1775 and Benjamin Powell charged the same for the gate he made for colony in 1774. In 1798, though, Matthew Moody charged Henry Tazewell only seven shillings for a gate in 1798. By contrast, the cost of new pales, the split or sawn pieces of wood vertically set in the ground or nailed to a horizontal rail supported to form a fence, varied widely. Matthew Moody charged between two shillings six pence and seven shillings six pence per "panel pailing," while Philip Moody charged seven shillings six pence, Sands and Pigget charged two shillings six pence for "4 pannels pailing joining the addition" or seven and one-half pence per panel, and Wray charged £3.4 for "framing & setting up 32 paniolls of paileing round the Garden, " with each panel valued at two shillings. These variations in price were likely due to differences in materials, workmanship, and dimension which different types of fencing require.¹⁵

¹⁵ Account: "Country" [Virginia] with Benjamin Powell, Williamsburg contractor, for work at Capitol, Prison, and Office, 2 November 1774, Photocopied Manuscript Collection, Rockefeller Special Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.; Account of Henry Tazewell with Matthew Moody for carpentry work, July 1787-January 1788, Photocopied Manuscript Collection, Rockefeller Special

Despite the variation in piece work prices, a fairly consistent daily wage became established in the eighteenth century. Generally, master craftsmen and the most skilled laborers received three shillings a day, journeymen and less skilled laborers were paid two shillings six pence per day, and the least skilled workers got one shilling six pence per day. During the building of Carter's Grove, Carter Burwell conscientiously recorded weekly payments to the craftsmen he employed and captured as innate professional hierarchy at the same time. Richard Bayliss, whom Burwell brought over from England specifically to work on the plantation house was consistently paid three shillings a day for his work. Much of that amount went to his account with Burwell for the cost of Bayliss' passage to Virginia. Richard Munday earned only two shillings six pence for the first six months he worked for Burwell. After that, he earned three shillings per day, probably indicating an increase in pay following a probationary period for Burwell. James Powel and Edward Hansford also consistently received three shillings a day for their labors, paid weekly. Several times throughout the building process, however, Burwell noted accounts drawn against these men "By work done to this time according to Mr. Bayliss' particular account." Whether these men worked as subcontractors under Bayliss' direction or whether Burwell figured his accounts based Bayliss' books is unclear. In either situation, however, Bayliss clearly reigned as the most important carpenter on the site. At the

Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; Receipted account of [the estate of] John Prentis with Phil[ip] Moody for carpentry work, 13 May 1775-8 January 1778, Photocopied Manuscript Collection, Rockefeller Special Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; Account of Colonel Thomas Jones with James Wray, 30 June 1731-8 May 1735, Photocopied Manuscript Collection, Rockefeller Special Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; Receipted account of John Giles with Meades and Driver for building a house in Suffolk, [Virginia], March 1773, Photocopied Manuscript Collection, Rockefeller Special Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; Account of Joseph Prentis with Tho[ma]s Sands and W[illia]m Pigget for carpentry, 30 June 1798, Photocopied Manuscript Collection, Rockefeller Special Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; Carl Lounsbury, ed., *An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture and Landscape*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994) 255.

opposite end of the spectrum was Henry Creighton who never earned more than one shilling six pence a day.¹⁶

These wage rates correspond fairly well over time for white craftsmen. However, how well the wages correlate to skill levels for non-white carpenters remains questionable. While they had equitable skills to their white counterparts, those skills may not have always been valued correspondingly. Little evidence exists in which slaves are explicitly identified and their skills given individual values. While building his house in Falmouth, Virginia, William Allason recorded several payments to individual workmen. On October 17, 1769, he paid cash to “Roger a Negroe for 2 days work at 2/6 in River.” Three days later, “Molatoe Man Moses” received sundries “for 2 days work in [the River]” for five shillings. March 6, 1772, he paid “John Walker & Negro Harry” for two days work at making steps for 2/6 each day. The previous year, these two had earned £4 for working to frame the house. Each account indicates that these men had substantial skill sets, and the values of those skills were recognized and recorded appropriately. Moreover, Allason recognized that there were white men on the job site with fewer skills than Roger, Moses, or Harry. James Morgan, Charles Audley, and William Barlow all worked between seven and ten days in August 1770, and none were paid more than one shilling six pence for their time.¹⁷

16 Mary A Stephenson, *Carter's Grove Plantation; a History*, (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1964), 24; Carter Burwell ledger, 1738-1756, in the Burwell Papers, Manuscript Collection, Rockefeller Special Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Little, if anything, else is known about these four craftsmen outside the time they spent laboring at Carter's Grove, from Williamsburg Area Residents Files, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

17 William Allason was a Scottish-born merchant who arrived in Virginia in 1756-1757. He first served the Scottish firm of Baird and Walker as a supercargo, before establishing his own retail and wholesale operation in Falmouth, VA. His holdings eventually grew to include a branch store in Frederick County, real property in Falmouth and New Edinburgh, plantations in Fauquier, Culpeper, Dunmore, and Frederick counties, and twenty-eight slaves. William Allason's Accounts, Building and House, Lot 71, Falmouth, VA, 6 March 1772, Photocopied Manuscript Collections, Rockefeller Special Collections,

James Wray's accounts with Thomas Jones offer a more detailed picture of how free and enslaved craftsmen worked together on a single job site. In late September of 1733, Wray and his slaves did some work for Henry Wetherburn at his tavern. In addition to charges for sash frames and planks, Wray charged Wetherburn for the labor:

To one days work my self & Thomas at 3/ & 7 Days work Daniel at 2/6 & 7 days Matt at 1/6 About putting in a window frame & mending the feather edge plank & work done in the Kitchen & repairing the stable inside and outside and other jobbs	£1.14.00
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In January of the following year, Wray added to Wetherburn's account:

To 2 ½ days work Thomas and Daniel at 2/6 about a new gable end to the stable and mending the floors in the shades and stalls	£0.12.6
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The prices charged for the slaves' labor indicate their skills as carpenters. Wray valued Thomas' work in 1733 as highly as his own, implying that the slave had attained skills comparable to that of his master. Daniel likely possessed similar skills, given that Wray valued his labor just below or at the same level as Thomas'. The difference may have been Thomas' ability to work with windows. Of the tasks listed in the first account, putting in a window frame could be completed in a single day. Wray does not specify what sort of window frame is installed, though frames for both casement windows and sash windows presented difficulties. Casement windows hinged or pivoted on one side to open and shut, and usually had wooden or iron frames containing panes of glass set in lead. The leaded panes could be set in place before the frame was installed and individual

Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; biographical information from David D. Plater "Building the North Wales Mill of William Allason" in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 85, no. 1 (January 1977): 45.

panes could be replaced once the window was in place. To put in a casement frame, a craftsman had to work around glass panes and calculate the placement carefully to allow the hinge full rotation. Sash windows, which began to replace casement windows on a large scale in the 1730s, presented difficulties of their own. Panes were set in a wooden or metal frame that slid vertically or horizontally, rather than pivoting. The best windows of this kind had lead counterweights embedded in the frame to keep the window open, though most were propped open with pins or sticks. If Wray and Thomas installed the frame for such a window that day, they had to ensure the sashes aligned and could move freely and might have had to install the counterweight system as well. The latter required a wood wheel which rotated on an iron or brass pin, set into the top of the window casing, with a rope connecting to the lower sash at one end and counterbalanced by a weight at the other. This system required a great deal more work, and a great deal more skill to manufacture and assemble the components.¹⁸

Despite any differences in skill sets, Thomas and Daniel both possessed enough knowledge of their trade to work without direct supervision. Once finished with the window, Wray apparently departed the site with Thomas and left Daniel and Matt alone to work. The charges for Matt's labor indicates that he may not have had the same skill levels of the others. If he was new to the trade, either a young man serving an apprenticeship or an adult recently acquired and just learning, this experience may have served as practical experience meant to help him develop his skills and learn how to make specific repairs. How Daniel completed his work takes on new implications in this

¹⁸ Account of Colonel Thomas Jones with James Wray, Jones Family Papers, [c. 1731-1735], Photocopy Manuscripts Collection, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg; Lounsbury, *An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture and Landscape*, 63, 295-296, 316.

case. To be entrusted with training another carpenter implies that Daniel had mastered the craft, and possessed a sufficient breadth and depth of craft knowledge that he could train Matt to be a competent carpenter. While the work they finished over those seven days reflected on Wray's skills in training his workmen, it also reflected heavily on Daniel. Being the senior craftsman on site, the responsibility of completing the work in a timely and masterful manner fell to him. Additionally, whatever work Matt did reflected not only his own skills, but also Daniel's ability to instruct and to supervise him. For Daniel, demonstrating his mastery of skills brought additional responsibilities, that in turn presented him with opportunities to distinguish himself from his fellow carpenters through semi-autonomous performances of mastery.

The highly developed skillsets indicated by the value of their labor allowed Thomas and Daniel to function somewhat independently in a social system that denied them independence. They could move between Wray's shop and the client's site without supervision. Their work fulfilled the standards Wray set for himself, and so did not need his on-site approval. In acquiring their skills, refining them, and performing them in a workmanlike manner, Thomas and Daniel demonstrated not only their mastery of their craft, but also their knowledge of and ability to conform to the community's expectations of how such work should be done. This earned them a degree of autonomy and authority that they might never have found anywhere else, but could exercise on the worksite.¹⁹

¹⁹ Wray's estate inventory, dated 1750, corroborates the values placed on Thomas' and Matt's labor. Thomas appears as "Tom," valued at £30, and Matt was valued at £15. With little increase in value over the seventeen year gap between working at Wetherburn's and Wray's death, it seems that Matt either still did not possess a wide array of skills or that he had become disabled at some point and could no longer complete a full day's work. Thomas' value in 1750 was not the highest, but indicates nevertheless that he did possess strong skills. Little is known given higher values. They may have had other, more refined skills than Thomas. Alternatively, Thomas might have been one of the older slaves on the site, and so given a lower value than those younger than he, but possessing similar skills. Daniel does not

appear in the 1750 inventory. He may have been one of the four deaths in the Wray household during the 1747-1748 smallpox epidemic. "Inventory of Estate of James Wray 1750 March 18," Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/View/index.cfm?doc=Probates\PB00340.xml>; "A true State of the Small Febr. 22d 1747/8," 22 February 1748, Virginia Miscellaneous Manuscripts, Box 1 (1606-1772), Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

Chapter Four: Performing the Trade

The Work Yard

The property James Wray owned in Williamsburg served a double function. Practically, the yard allowed Wray and his slaves to practice their trade. However, it also operated as a performance space, in which they could demonstrate their skills. The property's location relative to the town facilitated these performances of mastery. Sitting on the western edge of Williamsburg, the lots sat one block north of Duke of Gloucester Street, and two blocks west of the Palace Green. This location provided easy access to potential clients, particularly the elite men who gravitated toward and settled around the Governor's Palace. On the other side, he offered the College of William and Mary a convenient source of labor. Close to Jamestown and Richmond Roads, suppliers could also approach the property easily. Raw lumber coming down either road could be hauled in without having to navigate the entire town. With access to elite potential clients and ready supply routes, the lots accommodated the easy movement of both raw and finished goods to and from the work space (Figure 1).¹

When archaeologists excavated these lots in 2002 and 2003, they uncovered the remains of several features related to Wray's business, including a work shop, a saw pit, and a work shelter, among others. The uncovered features of the Wray period landscape allow the reconstruction of an economic landscape meant not only to produce goods, but also to display the process of production. Wray presumably arranged his structures in a manner that would allow for the most efficient use of space and completion of work, as

¹ William & Mary College Papers Folder 282 (loose pages from early manuscript book of revenue and expenditures, 1739-1743) quoted in Goodwin, ed., "William and Mary College Historical Notes," 161.

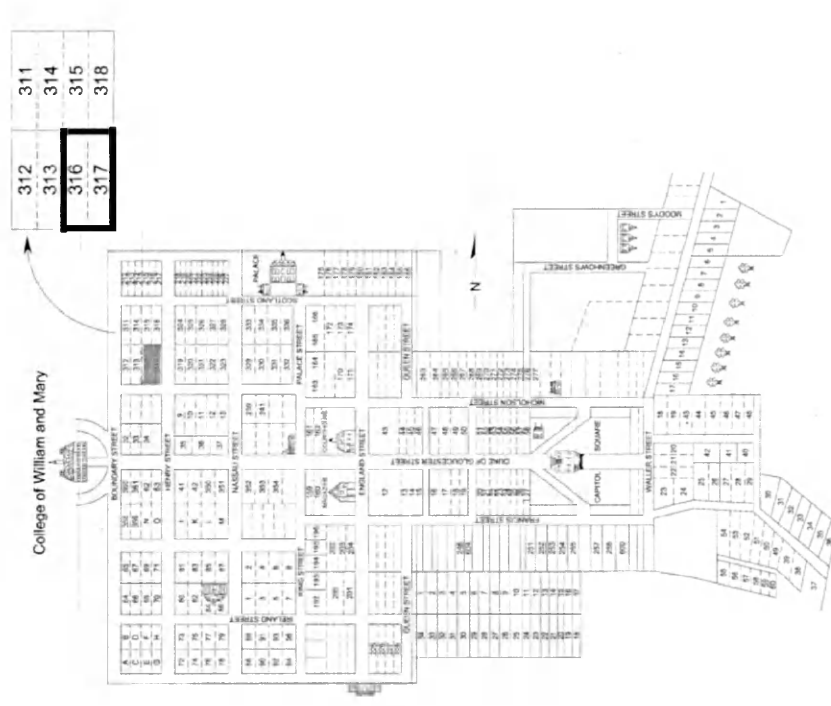


Figure 1
Map of the Wray property in Williamsburg,
Courtesy Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Dept. of Architectural and Archaeological Research

well the most efficient supervision of his workforce.

This economic landscape he created functioned separately from the domestic one, and the two occupied distinct spaces on the property. The identified domestic spaces of house, kitchen, and outbuildings sat in the southeastern quarter of the two lots. The polished and polite home space had the most prominent position, centered on the southern property line and directly accessible from Prince George Street, with the outbuildings extending behind it and to the east. These spaces displayed Wray's attainments through his skilled performances of mastery, and provided a refined counterpart to the noise and chaos of the work yard that filled the back of the property (Figures 2, 3, and 4).

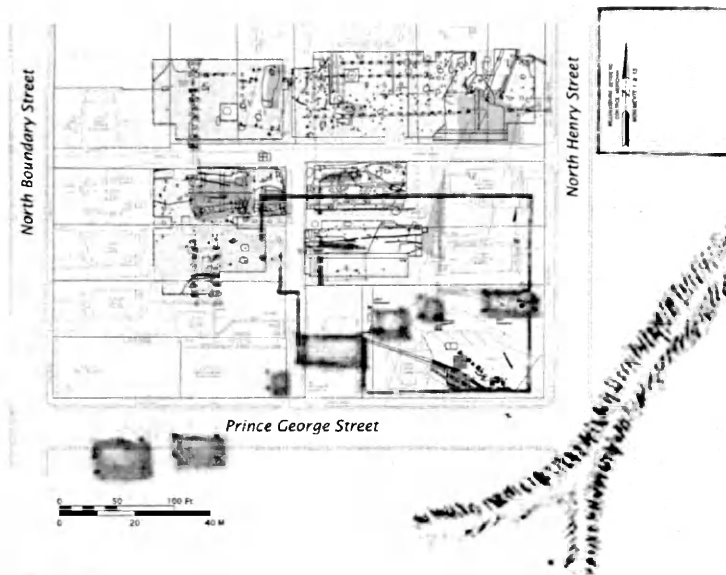


Figure 2

Detail of the Wray Site

Includes Wray and Menetree period archaeological features and unexcavated domestic structures as seen on the Frenchman's Map (1782), overlaid on a modern block map.

Courtesy Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Dept. of Architectural and Archaeological Research

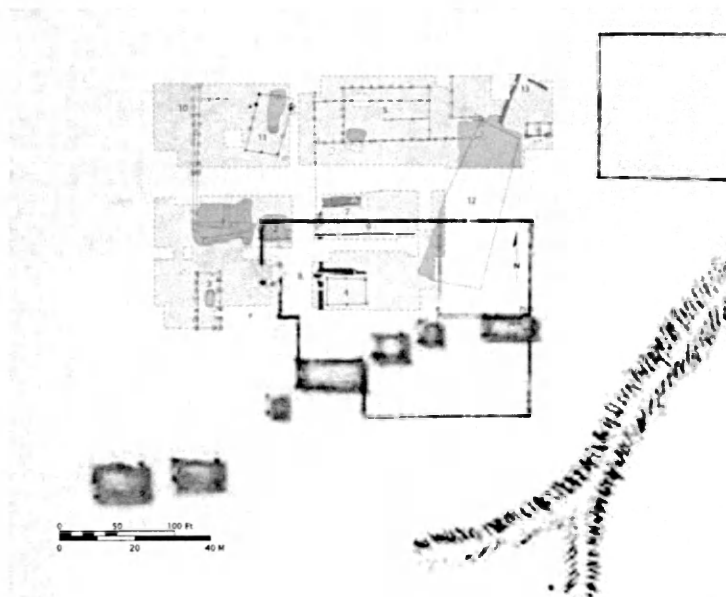


Figure 3

Archaeological Features of the Wray and Menetree Periods with Overlay of the Frenchman's Map (1782) showing the orientation of the work space and the domestic space

Courtesy Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Dept. of Architectural and Archaeological Research

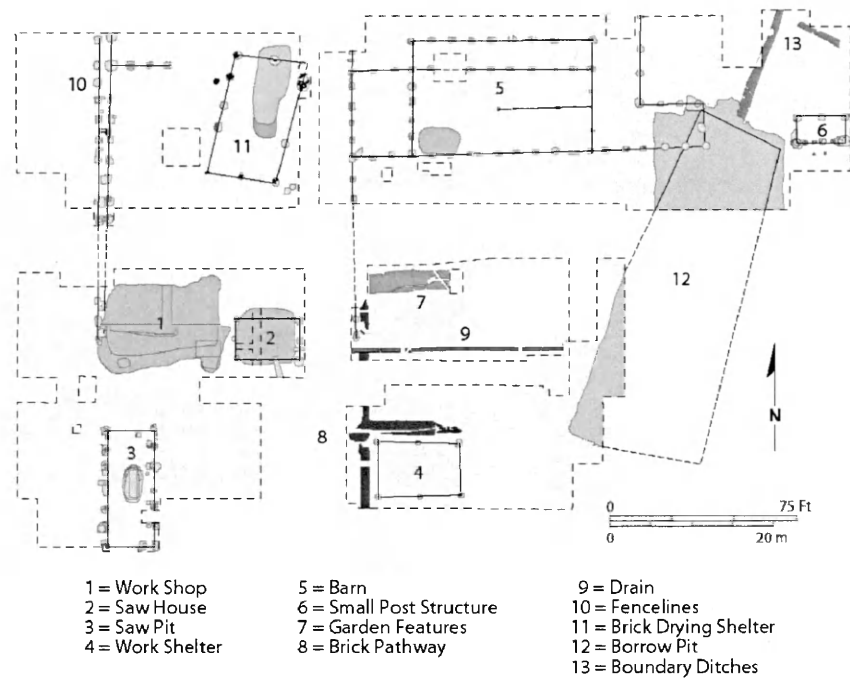


Figure 4
Archaeological Features of the Wray and Menetree Periods
 Courtesy Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Dept. of Architectural and Archaeological Research

The performances of mastery that took place in the work yard operated on multiple levels. As a master of slaves, Wray had to maintain his authority, and likely did so by directly supervising his slaves. He performed the role of the owner-master, just as they performed the roles of the subservients. As a master of his craft, Wray had to continually demonstrate his competence to his patrons. This entailed not only maintaining a high quality in his own work, but also comparable quality in the work produced by the men in his employ, whether slave or free. In addition to playing their roles as dutiful servants, his enslaved craftsmen also had to demonstrate their own competence. These performances shaped the internal dynamics of the site, as well as how it related to the community. Though no evidence remains that clients visited such

work yards, it is not beyond the realms of the plausible. If they did, the client became privy to these performances and could judge the efficacy of them for himself. This might lead him to repeat his patronage of Wray. Even excluding all possibility of guests in the work yard, the nature of the space lent itself to performance. Much of the work was done under sheds outdoors, well within view of the passing public who could judge for themselves the quality of the craftsmen's performance.

The key player in these performances was undoubtedly Wray himself, and so an exploration of the site through his eyes yields a feasible reconstruction of the work yard as a series of performance spaces, all built around the double performance of master/slave and craftsman. From the house, he could take a brick path (Feature 8) from the rear of the house through the space that divided domestic from industrial and into the work landscape. Being paved with waster bricks left over from David Menetree's occupation of the site, the path served a functional purpose rather than an ornamental one, and indicates that foot traffic moved through and around this central area. This path may also have served as a sign of Wray's resourcefulness. The presence of thousands of waster bricks from the previous occupant's kiln made recycling practical, and may have signaled an awareness of minimizing costs. Such ingenuity echoed his competence as a craftsman in his ability to adapt to the materials available and yet still create a serviceable product.

Following this path took Wray straight along the north/south axis of the site. To his right he saw a work shelter, twenty-four by thirty-two feet (Feature 4). The brick path allowed him to move along both horizontal and vertical axes around this building, allowing him to observe the activities or materials in that space closely, enabling him to

supervise his enslaved craftsmen and their product appropriately. The absence of smaller support posts between the large structural ones indicates that the building had no enclosing walls. Standing open to view, the space served both functional and performative purposes. Sawn planks could have been stored here, stacked in such a way that air could flow between the boards and allow them to dry. A shelter without walls allowed for maximum airflow between the boards and allowed clients or visitors to see the raw materials from which their commission would be formed, while it allowed Wray to monitor the condition of the same.²

From his vantage point next to this shelter, Wray could see across the lot to the saw pit (Feature 3). Though the pit itself, sunk four feet into the ground, would not be visible, the skills being demonstrated there certainly were. Unlike temporary saw pits dug on construction sites, a twenty by fifty foot post-in-ground shelter covered this one, providing the sawyers protection from rain and preventing the timber from swelling and pinching the saw while being cut. With no evidence of sills, this structure probably lacked side walls, and allowed Wray and passers-by to witness the work in progress there. Additionally, because the carpenters did not have to navigate walls, this space might have been primarily used for treating large timbers. The sight of several men, going about their work with heavy timbers in a competent way, put on an undoubted display of mastery.³

Continuing north along the path, Wray next encountered a saw house (Feature 2).

A six-post building measuring sixteen by twenty-four feet, with a cellar nearly the same

2 Jameson Harwood, "Frome my Yard: Archaeological Excavations at the James Wray site, Williamsburg, Virginia," (Research Report, Williamsburg, Virginia) 70.

3 Jameson Harwood, "Frome my Yard: Archaeological Excavations at the James Wray site, Williamsburg, Virginia," (Research Report, Williamsburg, Virginia) 70.

proportions, this structure might have been enclosed to fully protect the sawyers from the elements. Sitting directly east of the workshop, this workspace may have been used for sawing planks, or other finer sawing jobs. Large pieces of lumber could be brought into the building, treated, and the smaller planks removed immediately to the workshop for finishing. This space's location and possible partial enclosure limited Wray's ability to view the space. Restricted access to a performance space may have been borne of the structural realities of the building. Even so, it conferred on the craftsmen who worked in that space some autonomy, since they could not be continually supervised.⁴

The saw pit and the saw house formed the centerpiece of Wray's economic endeavor. Without the ability to manipulate trees into board lumber, Wray could not support the diverse crafts he oversaw. These structures allowed him to purchase timber, and then use it as needed for a variety of projects. The placement of these structures, to the east and the south of the workshop facilitated easy movement of sawn wood into those work spaces. Not only did Wray have the convenience of producing timbers and planks as he needed them, but he had the ability to do custom work on site with these pits, allowing a greater range of products for his customers. Protected sawing areas allowed Wray to handle large scale projects and continue working on long-term commission in a variety of weather, while multiple spaces implied that he could control and organize his work force to accomplish the tasks at hand. The physical display of such spaces reinforced his skill mastery and his mastery over his workmen.

Wray's workshop on the west side of the site was the core of his business and his

⁴ Jameson Harwood, "Frome my Yard: Archaeological Excavations at the James Wray site, Williamsburg, Virginia," (Research Report, Williamsburg, Virginia), 70.

work yard (Feature 1). Twenty-four feet by forty-five feet, the structure stood with the long sides facing north and south, allowing optimal light for working. Artifacts recovered from this space hint at the work taking place in that space. A jeweler's hacksaw for finer work, chisels for cutting large joints, and several plane blades indicate the different scales of work undertaken and chisels, files, saws, buckles, knife blades, plane blades, nuts and bolts, gouges, and hammers illustrate the variety of work that could be done in this space. A number of Wray's slaves worked in this particular building, completing everything from specialized finishing work to simpler rough work, showcasing the entire array of services Wray could offer under one roof. In this one building, three levels of performing mastery played out. Wray could showcase his own work, the enslaved carpenters' could demonstrate theirs, and, in ordering those highly skilled performance in this workspace, Wray could show his command of his workforce. Access to this space was the most limited, as it sat behind the saw pit on the western edge of the property. The most masterful performances played out behind closed doors, protecting the most secret skills of the trade from prying eyes, adding an element of mystery to the final product, and allowing the skilled craftsmen who worked in that space a greater degree of autonomy than was offered to their fellows.⁵

At the north end of the yard were a small garden feature (Feature 7) and a large post-in-ground structure that measured forty-eighty by ninety-six feet that probably housed the five horses and the cart listed in Wray's inventory, in addition to tools that were not in use. As a non-craft-based space, this sat removed from the working spaces.

5 Scott Landis, "In Search of the Colonial Woodworking Shop," in James M. Gaynor, ed., *Eighteenth Century Woodworking Tools: Papers Presented at a Tool Symposium May 19-22, 1994*, (Williamsburg: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1997) 177; and Harwood, "From My Yard.," 69; ("Wray Tools: 31AD," unpublished data)

Limiting viewable space to that which could facilitate performances allowed Wray to master and arrange his landscape in the ways most beneficial to him, focusing attention on those aspects that allowed he and his craftsmen to showcase their skills.⁶

The final feature on the site shaped the development of the entire property. David Menetree, a brick maker and the previous owner of the site, took clay for his bricks from the property, firing and drying the bricks on site as well. Near the beginning of his development of the property, Wray used the abandoned waster bricks not only for the footpath, but also to fill in Menetree's borrow pit. Though the in-filling had enough stability to support one corner of the barn, Wray did not extensively develop the filled area, probably due to the large size of the pit, measuring approximately 140 feet long and 43 feet wide. So much back-filling may not have had the stability to support post-in-ground buildings or those with masonry foundations. The area therefore remained open. Stretching along much of the eastern side of the property, this space meant that the rest of the site had to be oriented north/south, as building on an east/west axis would be difficult because of the positioning of the borrow pit. This feature limited access to the site, requiring entrance from Prince George Street on the south, rather than from Henry Street to the east.

Given the difficulty of access from the east, vehicle traffic entered the site from the south, paralleling the brick path. The placement of the work shelter, saw house, saw pit, and workshop formed a courtyard, creating an area in which to unload raw goods and move them directly to the saw house or pit for treatment or load finished goods from the

⁶ Jameson Harwood, "Frome my Yard: Archaeological Excavations at the James Wray site, Williamsburg, Virginia," (Research Report, Williamsburg, Virginia), 71; and, "Inventory of Estate of James Wray 1750 March 18," Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/View/index.cfm?doc=Probates\PB00340.xml>

work shelter or workshop. Wray's own cart could also be pulled from the barn or stable south, past the saw house, and into this courtyard for loading materials. Those coming to the site as suppliers or workers entered the site along the same route. Playing supplier to Wray's consumer, such individuals likely saw the work spaces as performance spaces that centered on the materials, rather than the skills used, as this economic landscape for them meant demonstrating a masterful knowledge of their goods and to keep Wray as a client.

In arranging the work yard as he did, Wray sought to ensure that he could maintain his mastery over his slaves and the qualitative mastery of his craft. Both were essential to attracting and retaining clients, building a steady business, and securing his financial independence. In order to do so, Wray and his men had to find work outside their yard.

The Public Space

The pieces manufactured in Wray's work yard were put to use throughout the city. Thomas Jones' household found sad uses for at least two of the coffins built there. Wray also built a case of pidgon holes, mended five dishes, mended a sash frame for the coach, as well as painted it and a chair, and built a beehouse for the Jones family. Wray had to function as more than just a manufacturer, though. He also had to demonstrate his competence on public work sites. Performing small jobs on-site allowed craftsmen to showcase their skills and mastery not only to their client, as they could within the privacy of their own workspaces, but also to the general public. Working on a site visible to the general public, such as a government building or a tavern by which would pass a great

deal of foot traffic, transformed the work site from a building to a living advertisement of the the craftsman's skills and an active exhibition of both his skills and those of the men he employed or owned. Just as a modern contractor puts his sign in the front yard of his worksite to advertise to the potential clients passing by, so to did Wray and his contemporaries view the worksite as a marketing tool.

Of the various working relationships Wray likely had in the community, evidence of only one remains. Between the years 1732 and 1735, Colonel Thomas Jones, owner of the Raleigh Tavern, kept both personal and business accounts with Wray. At the Raleigh, Wray and his men performed a variety of large and small jobs. They installed windows, repaired the stables, painted the “whole front of the house” as well as eighty yards of wall space inside the house, installed twenty-four feet and seventy-one panes of new glass, repaired fourteen feet of old glass and leads, and put a new gable end on the stables. The majority of this work was done on the exterior of the building. This turned the work from a private contract into a public performance. Much as with his work yard, any person passing by could see the work being done and evaluate it. Moreover, since some of the work was done in the April and October, months during which court sessions were held and Williamsburg's populations could balloon from its resident population of approximately eight hundred to between five thousand and six thousand, Wray could put his competence on display for an impressively large audience, composed of a cross-section of society, any of whom might be in need of his services. Working in the presence of so many, particularly so many gentlemen, allowed Wray to display his competence, and that of his workers, to a potential clientèle without having to pay for the

advertisement.⁷

Working at a tavern was a lucrative enterprise for a craftsman. As the place where individuals and groups gathered to eat and drink, talk, sing, argue, conduct business, play games, attend balls or lectures or while away the hours, taverns functioned as a physical space for public sociability. The variety of entertainments attracted a large clientele, one that could easily be parlayed into a carpenter's clientele. A site as active and distinguished as the Raleigh Tavern, conferred upon Wray a similar degree of prestige. His work assisted in the creation of a physical environment of taste and sociability. The tavern's reputation, in turn, would give Wray's team a social cachet through their association with it. The act of performing work and the seeing of that performance created a concrete connection between the workmen, the space, and the audience, a connection that could be resurrected whenever necessary or convenient for the active parties. The viewer could reference his memory of the workmanlike manner of the craftsman, as well as the physical evidence of the work itself. The craftsman could do the same, referencing the same evidence and other's viewings of the workmanlike manner as

7 The charges which remain are separated into two sections, one attributed to Jones and the other to Henry Wetherburn, keeper of the Raleigh in Jones' stead. That these accounts, both kept in the Jones papers, indicate that, while Wray charged Wetherburn for the work, the account belonged to Jones. There is some confusion regarding when Henry Wetherburn left the Raleigh Tavern to open his own establishment across Duke of Gloucester Street. Account of Colonel Thomas Jones with James Wray, Jones Family Papers, [c. 1731-1735], Photocopy Manuscripts Collection, Rockefeller Special Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Thomas Jones served in a variety of consequential roles during his life: alderman, burgess, planter, militia colonel, along with his commercial ventures. Despite his vast holdings and public life, Jones frequently found himself in financial difficulties, mortgaging or selling many of his properties, and dying with very little. Biographical information from Mary A Stephenson, *Cocke-Jones Lots, Block 31* (Research Report Series, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1961). Account of Colonel Thomas Jones with James Wray, Jones Family Papers, [c. 1731-1735], Photocopy Manuscripts Collection, Rockefeller Special Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; Cathy Hellier and Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, *A Population Profile of Williamsburg in 1748*, (Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library research report series; RR-139, 1987), 2; "Journal of a French Traveller in the Colonies, 1765, I" *The American Historical Review* 26, no. 4 (July 1921), 742. Though these numbers are probably too high, they nonetheless illustrate the exponential growth Williamsburg underwent during Public Times.

proof of his competent performance. The shared memory of this work and space creating a site in which craftsman and client, master and customer could identify skill level and begin negotiating their complex relationship.⁸

An association between a well-known physical space such as the Raleigh and a craftsman's shop also served to differentiate one craftsmen from his fellow competitors. Much of a craftsman's income came from the various small repair jobs he undertook during the year. He might have the good fortune to win a contract to build a new house, but only one or two such opportunities might arise. Having a connection to an established business, and especially one with a well-respected reputation, could be parlayed into securing the larger contracts. Performing well on a public site, such as the Raleigh, not only cemented personal connections between craftsmen and clients, between men like Wray and men like Jones and Wetherburn, but also created a space in which the work performed stood as physical evidence of those connections, and substantiated the craftsmen's claims of competence and client satisfaction. Both would be tested when the work in public space generated private contracts for the carpenter.⁹

The Private Contract

Securing a private contract conferred on the craftsman a great deal of importance.

8 Sharon V. Salinger, *Taverns and Drinking in Early America* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 7. For more on tavern culture, see: Patricia Ann Gibbs, "Taverns in Tidewater Virginia, 1700-1774," (PhD. Diss, The College of Williams and Mary, 1968); Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, VA., by University of north Carolina Press, 1982), 94-98; Louis B. Wright, *The Cultural Life of the American Colonies, 1607-1763*, 1st ed. (New York, Harper [1957: Harper, 1957); and, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, *A Study of Taverns of Virginia in the Eighteenth-Century: With Special Emphasis on Taverns of Williamsburg* (Research Report Series, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 19--).

9 (Carl Lounsbury, pers. comm.)

On a smaller site, a master craftsman such as James Wray could function as the primary authority, the craftsman whom the client trusted to possess the skills “enabled him to apply lessons of experience and example to the job.” He displayed his competence by completing the contract in his most workmanlike manner. However, involvement in a larger project, such as a building a country seat, brought with it a different set of demands. The audience was smaller, often only the single patron, while the competition was more intense. Though the craftsman had successfully secured the contract, he now had to compete on site with the others whom had secured involvement in the same project.¹⁰

Carter Burwell began the building project that would culminate in the creation of Carter's Grove modestly. He placed two advertisements in the *Virginia Gazette*, one for oyster shells and the other for bricklayers. When the house, with its two stories below a hipped roof, fine brick work and elegantly paneled interiors, was finished five years later, it included the work of at least thirteen craftsmen. Others undoubtedly worked participated in the project, though they did not rank so high within either social or professional hierarchies to merit mention in Burwell's ledgers. Though responsible for different aspects of the construction, working on the same site entailed a degree of competition among these men, each vying to ensure that their particular skills were recognized in the context of the whole.¹¹

10 Catherine Bishir, “Good and Sufficient Language for Building,” in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, IV* ed. by Thomas Carter and Bernard Herman (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 46.

11 *Virginia Gazette* 7 February 1751 and 29 August 1751; The Burwell ledger includes the following craftsmen: David Minetree, James Wray, William Robinson, John Pegram, John Wheatley, Edward Hansford, Richard Munday, James Taylor, Ricard Bayliss, Robert Orchard, James Powel, Henry Creighton, James Wood, in Carter Burwell ledger, 1738-1756, in the Burwell Papers, Manuscript Collection, Rockefeller Special Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. For additional

Of the men employed in the building of Carter's Grove, relatively little is known. David Minetree, of Williamsburg, supplied the bricks for £115, earning an additional £25 for such pleasing results on the conclusion of the contract. Edward Hansford received £36 for sawing, Thomas Wheatley made £21 for work done in his shop, and James Wray was paid for painting. These were local craftsmen who likely had some experience working together and who could may have reached an equitable arrangement for sharing a work site. However, into this mix of slaves, masters, and journeymen, Carter Burwell introduced Richard Bayliss. Commissioned to do the interior joining and finish work, Bayliss came over from England with his family in 1752, at Burwell's expense. He paid Captain Matthew Johnson of the *Pretty Sally* £23.13.9 for the passage. Burwell also reimbursed other of Bayliss' expenses, including purchasing tools from York (£2.16.7 ½) and tools from an Edward Boswell (£16.11), and a variety of notes drawn to Mr. Prentis. No other craftsmen appears to have received such generous treatment.¹²

In this environment, the craftsmen not only had to demonstrate their competence for the duration of their time on the project, but they also had to do so in direct competition with the other craftsmen on the site. Both posed challenges. The physical

information on Carter's Grove's architecture see: George Harrison Burwell, *Sketch of Carter Burwell (1716-1756)* (Millwood, Va.: Burwell, 1961); Bruce Roberts and Elizabeth Kedash, *Plantation Homes of the James River* (Chapel Hill: University of north Carolina Press, 1990); Mary A Stephenson, *Carter's Grove Plantation; a History*, (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1964); Thomas Tileston Waterman, *The Dwellings of Colonial America* (Chapel Hill: University of north Carolina Press, 1950); Thomas Tileston Waterman, *The Mansions of Virginia, 1706-1776* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1945); and, Mark R Wenger and Kevin Burke, *Carter's Grove: The Story of a Virginia Plantation* (Williamsburg, Va.: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1994).

12 Burwell Papers, Microform Collection, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation cited in Mary A Stephenson, *Carter's Grove Plantation; a History*, (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1964), 40, 272 and, Thomas Tileston Waterman, *The Mansions of Virginia, 1706-1776* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1945), 183; Carter Burwell ledger, 1738-1756, in the Burwell Papers, Manuscript Collection, Rockefeller Special Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; Nothing is known of Bayliss' prior to his immigration to Virginia.

construction of Carter's Grove began in 1750 and officially concluded in 1755. Several of the craftsmen were involved in the project for at least two of those five years. Richard Munday worked 412 days between 1753 and 1755, and Edward Hansford worked 375 days during the same time. Between 1754 and 1755 James Powell worked 160 days and James Taylor worked 156 days. These men may have been under Bayliss' supervision, in which case they had to demonstrate their competence to Burwell and to Bayliss. To maintain their status on the site, they had to impress both the site's owner and their direct supervisor. Even if these men did work independently on the site, they still had to prove themselves daily in the context of the work site. In either situation, it seems that at least Richard Munday proved his skills on the site. After six months working for Burwell, Munday received a raise, earning three shillings a day for his labors, up from his previous wage of two shillings six pence.¹³

Whatever their personal relationships, the men who built Carter's Grove did so in conditions which necessitated cooperation and engendered competition. Performing their competence was key in both situations. Each had to match the quality of the others' work, so as to produce a coherent dwelling and to maintain their position on the site. From Burwell's perspective, competition led to a more resourceful, more creative, more industrious workforce. For the craftsmen, competition spurred them to perform to the greatest of their abilities.

¹³ Carter Burwell ledger, 1738-1756, in the Burwell Papers, Manuscript Collection, Rockefeller Special Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; Mary A Stephenson, *Carter's Grove Plantation; a History*, (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1964), 43.

Conclusion

A building is more than a brick or wood structure. It is more than a house or a tavern, more than an edifice occupying a landscape, more than a maze of social barriers or a mystifying social geography. These views come primarily from a consumer perspective, studying these spaces as zones of social or economic interaction, but frequently taking for granted the existence of the building itself. Few question how the plantation house, the log cabin, the cabinetmakers' shop, or the tobacco barn came to be.

One reason for the sparseness of scholarship on building culture is the lack of evidence that remains. Some structures survive and have been studied, and scholars and modern craftsmen have recaptured and revived many historical building practices. Beyond this physical evidence, some documentary evidence exists, but, like any common activity, it includes relatively little detail. Both the craftsmen and their clients knew the building culture in which they lived and work. Such commonly shared knowledge with easily accessible reference points did not need to be recorded. To recapture even a significant portion of a building culture, particularly in the American South with its widely dispersed populations, requires a much broader horizon. Reconstructing a detailed account of an area's building culture requires investigating an entire county, colony, or region, just as Catherine Bishir and her co-authors did in North Carolina. Only with this broad scope can one hope to find enough physical, artifactual, or documentary evidence to develop a full understanding of how buildings were produced, understood, and consumed.

Even on a much more limited scale, such as Williamsburg in the eighteenth

century, enough fragments of evidence survive to recover the some of the building culture, allowing a more detailed understanding of the buildings not as sites of display and consumption, but as sites of mastery and competence. Engaging the production process alters the place of buildings in the historical landscape, making both the physical and the metaphysical spaces more complex and more contested.

Nevertheless, more remains to be done. Integral to any and all of these performances were the tools which allowed the craftsman to do his work. Whether as gifts, payment, or legal award, hand tools were the first step in acquiring and demonstrating one's competence. Throughout this piece, they have been an underlying and unifying theme. Everywhere the tools appear, but they receive only infrequent treatment, usually in catalogues or by enthusiasts rediscovering old techniques or by collectors. The fundamental role they played in the shaping of everything, from the grandest landscapes to the smallest finishes has been largely neglected by scholars. Even more so has been their role as identity markers for the men who lived by them. Hand tools became an extension of the craftsman's physical body, a mediator between flesh and wood, that allowed the craftsman to exert his mastery over the materials, shaping them to his will. Whether purchased from a local smith, imported from England or made in one's own shop, hand tools formed the basis of any craft-based profession, and possessing them was integral to a craftsman's competence.

The relationship between buildings and people has to be navigated from both directions, coming and going, produced and consumed. Only by engaging both sides of this relationship can we apprehend both the building culture and the process of building

culture.

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