Pay for Labor: Socioeconomic Transitions of freedpeople and the Archaeology of African American Life, 1863-1930

Shannon Sheila Mahoney

College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

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PAY FOR LABOR:
Socioeconomic Transitions of Freedpeople and the Archaeology of African American Life,
1863-1930

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Anthropology
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

By
Shannon Sheila Mahoney
2004
APPROVAL SHEET

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

Master of Arts

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Approved by the Committee, April 2004

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Dr. Grey Gundaker
DEDICATION

For Mom, the Mahoney family, Dayna Tinsley and Autumn Barrett.
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ABSTRACT

The lives of African Americans in the agricultural South after Emancipation is often treated as a uniform experience. The families of African American farmers from 1865-1930 were the linking generations between those of slavery, emancipation and the Civil Rights Movement. During this time, economic and social relationships were undergoing a constant dialectic for freedpeople working as wage laborers and sharecroppers. Using two contracts in Virginia as a case study reveals that freedpeople lived through a wide range of experiences even within the oppressive system of sharecropping and tenancy. By comparing two contracts created in Virginia on January 1st, 1870 regional, work and social differences become apparent. Archaeology has the potential to reveal differences in family and community life in terms of material culture, housing, and health by applying these results to African American postbellum sites.
PAY FOR LABOR:
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the Archaeology of African American Life,
1863-1930
Chapter I: Introduction

In the United States in 1863, after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed and as the Civil War was ending, formerly enslaved individuals and families entered an uncertain future marked by both hopeful anticipation and resentment. In 1866, an example of rising hopes appears in the words of James Alvord, the Freedman's Bureau's Superintendent of Education, who made his optimism for the future clear:

Slavery prevented all forecasting of thought, and, in general, every possibility of improvement. Now, however, a change has come. There are, indeed, those who are too degraded perhaps ever to be recovered. Their minds are childish and dark. But pay for labor (Alvord's emphasis) puts even these to thinking of the value of things. The wants and opportunities of freedom show the worth of money, and what can be done with it (Alvord 1866a, 23).

By 1935, however, W.E.B Du Bois had witnessed the outcome of Reconstruction and made the following critique of the transition from slavery to tenancy in the South:

It must be remembered and never forgotten that the civil war in the South which overthrew Reconstruction was a determined effort to reduce black labor as nearly as possible to a condition of unlimited exploitation and build a new class of capitalists on this foundation. The wage of the Negro worker, despite the war amendments, was to be reduced to the level of bare subsistence by taxation, peonage, caste, and every method of discrimination (Du Bois 1992 (1935):670).

Archaeologists interpreting the lives of African Americans in the South after the Civil War must confront both the hopes for and the realities of
Reconstruction and the profound effects both had on the lives of former slaves. Freedpeople\(^1\) were navigating through the collective national memory of slavery, the current realities of racism and their own desires for the future. Then there is the matter of the archaeological sites themselves which, as archaeologists state, are plagued by ephemeral deposits, destructive post-deposition processes, and public lack of general interest. Yet this time period cannot simply be ignored for its difficulty of interpretation. Focusing on the subtle distinctions between wage labor, sharecropping and tenancy through documents allows one to more fully understand the artifacts that freedpeople have left behind: material culture that is a reflection of both social and economic influences. Addressing these issues through socio-economic theoretical points of view allows one to create an interpretation that honors the past and informs the present.

Currently, the archaeology of African American life largely concentrates on the period of enslavement, while the postbellum era has remained largely unexplored. Singleton, a pioneer in African American archaeology, describes a “gray area” that leads to identification problems between contexts of enslavement or freedom, both beset by poverty dating “roughly between 1850 and 1880 – a 30-year period that includes the last 13 years of slavery and the first 17 years of freedom, a time when plantations survived but plantation life and labor were transformed” (1985:291-292). Although this is a very finite period to isolate

\(^1\) In this research paper, I will refer former slaves freed through emancipation as “freedpeople”, rather than the traditionally used ‘freedmen’ for several reasons. Most explicitly, it is beneficial to think of the freedpeople as men, women and children inclusively. In Kerr-Ritchie’s Freedpeople in the Tobacco South: Virginia 1860-1900 the author uses the term “freedpeople” in order to include the concept of “a social relationship to former masters with transitory, contractual and ideological components” (1999:6).
archaeologically, she also emphasizes that "(t)he archaeological study of the ‘transition’ could be equally significant to slave and tenant farmer archaeology" (1985:304).

After 1880, African Americans were still dealing with the residual effects of enslavement. The hundred years following the end of the Civil War provide a unique opportunity to look at developments in African American culture apart from conditions of enslavement and preceding the Civil Rights movement. "Freedom" provided little support and comfort for African Americans who were subject to systematic racial, economic and legal inequalities. Have archaeologists, and perhaps the nation, come to terms more with the conditions of enslavement than the circumstances that surround the Civil War and emancipation?

For researchers studying the postbellum period, the fact that African Americans began to enter the realm of documentation more extensively than during enslavement makes it a particularly significant period. In part, this change was due to financial record keeping and the contractual arrangements necessary for a paid labor force. Freedpeople's work options were severely restricted in agriculture and offered little more choice in urban environments. After Emancipation in Virginia, former slaves, who began participating in the agricultural system through jobs as wage hands, sharecroppers or tenants, also participated in several types of economy: a cash system, a credit system, an internal trade or bartering system (Brown and Cooper 1990) and qualified self-sufficiency (Holland 1990). Cash and credit systems tend to be recorded in
contracts and account books while internal trade systems and self-sufficiency can be more readily examined through oral accounts and archaeology. The ability to investigate the economic lives of freedpeople through historical documents can also allow us to explore their social lives through archaeology.

Postbellum years were a time of critical transition for the African American community, who had to gain acceptance for their humanity themselves in a society that had, at least legally, treated them as tradable objects not five years before. The abolition of slavery did not remove the social construct that rationalized its presence in the first place; racism was still institutionalized in a society built on agriculture. Even James Alvord, author of the introductory quote, describes some freedpeople as “childish” and “degraded.”

Freedpeople were part of an exploitative economic system sustained and upheld by institutions that rendered their social and economic lives intricately intertwined. This relationship is made apparent by two 1870 work contracts between freedpeople and landholders in Virginia (Appendices A and B). A Geertzian methodological approach facilitates a detailed examination of overt as well as subtle distinctions in word choices, categorizations, and tone in these two contracts. Descriptions of material culture in the form of rations, rentals, sales and trade are also visible in the documentary record and are valuable as archaeological data. Economic anthropological theory allows archaeologists to make the links between the material culture of the sharecropper or tenant and the social relations they had with the landlord as well as others on the property.
Chapter II: Historical Background

The conditions surrounding the Emancipation Proclamation and Reconstruction in the United States were the result of a long and difficult Civil War. “It was in an atmosphere of slavery that the weapons for waging the Civil War were sharpened. It was the question of slavery that sundered the sections and forced them to settle the question by a bloody war” (Franklin 1967:270). Once the war was over, however, it was time to settle the question of how to incorporate freed slaves into a new labor system.

President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, essentially ending the social and economic life of the South as it had previously been known and beginning the process of Reconstruction. It was not until two years later, in 1865, that the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands (commonly known as the Freedman's Bureau) was created by Congress and placed under the auspices of the War Department. The Bureau was intended to help ease the transition of freedpeople throughout the South from enslavement to freedom. W.E.B. Du Bois, who refers to their tasks as the “Twelve labors of Hercules” included these among the Bureau’s goals:

- General survey of conditions and needs in every state and locality;
- Relieve immediate hunger and distress;
- Appoint state commissioners and bureau officials;
- Put laborers to work at a regular wage;
- Transport laborers, teachers and officials;
• Furnish land for the peasants;
• Open schools;
• Pay bounties to black soldiers and their families;
• Establish hospitals and guard health;
• Administer justice between man and former master;
• Answer continuous and persistent criticism (North and South, black and white); and
• Find funds to pay for the aforementioned services.


As the Freedman’s Bureau worked on these broader matters of national interest including poverty, racism and land ownership, others sought input into more private affairs of freedom. A pamphlet issued by the American Tract Society in New York in 1864 illustrates the delicate balance for freedpeople between living in poverty and maintaining an appearance of freedom through material culture. The pamphlet contains “advice to freedmen” urging them not to spend unwisely by purchasing “expensive clothes or rich food” (Brinckerhoff 1980 (1864): 9), while it also acknowledges the effect of material goods on the outsider:

Now, when a stranger approaches your house, let him notice a pretty gardenspot, with flowers and vegetables, all well kept. When he enters, let his eye be cheered by seeing how nice everything looks, how well swept the floor is, how the tin things shine. Let him notice a few books, with marks of study or reading upon them....As he glances around, it would be pleasant if he could see a little picture here and there hanging upon the wall, or a flower-pot with a pretty pink or rose blooming in it, showing that you have a liking for such things. He would say “Well, this looks like freedom. I think you must be quite a happy family” (Waterbury 1980(1864): 26).

The Freedman’s Bureau and the American Tract Society were well aware that the battle against slavery included not only a physical war, but also a fight against the mental constructs that condoned it. In an 1854 address, Frederick
Douglass refuted any biological, cultural or religious rationalizations for enslavement and denial of inalienable rights arising from the fact that the "negro was not considered a man." He stated in this speech: "By making the enslaved a character fit only for slavery, (slaveholders) excuse themselves for refusing to make the slave a freeman" (Douglass 1950 (1854)). Even after Emancipation, Douglass fought to keep the history and memory of the meaning of the Civil War alive. History, he argued, "was a primary source of identity, meaning, and motivation" (Blight 2000: 17) and "Emancipation Day...ought to be a national celebration in which all blacks – the low and the mighty – could claim a new and secure social identity" (Blight 2000: 15).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<td>1863</td>
<td>Emancipation Proclamation signed by President Lincoln setting all slaves in the Confederacy free.</td>
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<td>1865</td>
<td>Thirteenth amendment to the Constitution abolishes slavery.</td>
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<td>1865</td>
<td>Congress establishes the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (Freedman’s Bureau).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Fourteenth amendment to the Constitution grants citizenship to all those born or naturalized in the United States.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>Freedman’s Bureau closes down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>Fifteenth amendment to the Constitution upholding the voting rights of African Americans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Freedman’s Bank closed and left African American depositors penniless.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>Civil Rights Act gave President power to, among other things, “put down conspiracies aimed at intimidating voters.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>The government program of Reconstruction ends – troops withdraw from the South.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>The Supreme Court outlaws the Civil Rights act of 1875.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td><em>Plessy v. Ferguson</em> before the Supreme Court upholds segregation and the 'separate but equal' doctrine.</td>
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For African American farmers in the South, the latter half of nineteenth century was rife with social, economic and legal battles (Table 1). Reconstruction, hypothetically, provided an “opening” for African Americans to transform their social and economic relations from a system of enslavement to a pay for labor system. For those who had been on a plantation, the decision to stay or leave rested on social, economic, and political factors. “Although their timing varied, most rural blacks ultimately chose to leave the farms and plantations of their former owners. These places were constant reminders that they had no freedom of mobility” (Jenkins 2002:83). While some decided to stay to retain the support they had in their social networks, others were not able to leave the plantation so readily due to family obligations, old age, illness, and/or debt.

For those freedpeople who made the decision to leave the plantation, the choice offered a chance for a different environment for their family. In 1865, a freedman who had moved to Ohio, wrote to the former slaveholder who had requested his return to Tennessee. The freedman, Jourdon Anderson, replied:

I am doing tolerably well here; I get $25 a month, with victuals and clothing; have a comfortable home for Mandy (the folks here call her Mrs. Anderson), and the children, Milly, Jane and Grundy, go to school and are learning well; the teacher says Grundy has a head for a preacher. They go to Sunday-School, and Mandy and me
attend church regularly. We are kindly treated…” (Gienapp 2001:381).

He continues “...and we have concluded to test your sincerity by asking you to send us our wages for the time we served you” (Gienapp 2001:381). He promptly calculates his thirty-two years of service and his wife’s service of twenty years, adding interest and doctor bills arriving at a total of $11,680 and instructs Colonel Anderson to send the money by Adams Express. “If you fail to pay us for faithful labors in the past we can have little faith in your promises for the future” (Gienapp 2001:381). Given the absence of a response, we can assume that Colonel Anderson did not pay the instructed amount.

James Alvord also promoted the use of written contracts with African Americans to try to assure proper working conditions on their behalf and as a method to prevent conditions of enslavement under the guise of tenancy. Du Bois explains that “(i)n the eyes of a nation dedicated to profitable industry, as well as in the eyes of bureau officials, the first major problem was to set the Negroes to work under a wage contract” (1992 (1935):225). The contracts promoted by the Freedmen’s Bureau were ideally seen as documents that would “serve as the bridge between slavery and a free and peaceful society, where labor and capital would live in harmony and prosperity and animosity between the races would dissolve once the two acknowledged their mutual interests” (Cohen-Lack 1992:75). From wage hands to sharecroppers and tenants renting property, the contracts were supposed to guarantee that “freed men and women would become free wage workers with the same rights, privileges, and opportunities that any propertyless worker in the North had” (Cohen-Lack
In 1870, Alvord clearly felt that Reconstruction was working and that there appeared to be a pattern of increasing purchasing power among African Americans: “I have found the following history of the Freedmen’s labor: The first year they worked for bare subsistence; second year they bought stock – mules, implements, &c.; third year many rented lands; and now, the fourth year, large numbers are prepared to buy” (Alvord 1870:19). This idealistic perception, however, was not the reality for most African Americans living in Virginia.

Labor contracts did document the variety of working relationships that African Americans had after Emancipation, but they were not nearly so ideal as Alvord’s picture of economic progress. The credit system and debt often kept sharecroppers tied to the land and written contracts kept some wage hands in situations they would rather have left. Today, these legal contracts serve as a record of the relationships between freedpeople and landowners. Taking into account the wide range of diversity in supervision, working relationships and access to financial resources, archaeologists should be able to see a variety in material remains at tenancy and wage hand sites as well as a unifying theme for African American freedpeople exercising their economic rights. Regardless of where freedpeople ended up during and after Emancipation, slavery was still a contextual history for both whites and blacks, and it was a social context that no one could escape.
Racism

“It is always difficult to stop war, and doubly difficult to stop a civil war. Inevitably, when men have long been trained to violence and murder, the habit projects itself into civil life after peace, and there is crime and disorder and social upheaval...But in the case of civil war, where the contending parties must rest face to face after peace, there can be no quick and perfect peace” (Du Bois 1992 (1935):670).

After Emancipation, African Americans could not climb the socio-economic ladder unimpeded as racism permeated nearly every aspect of their lives. The Ku Klux Klan, organized in 1866, promoted white supremacy and disrupted meetings of freedpeople’s organizations as well as African American political and social gatherings (Gutman 1989:503). Margaret Newbold Thorpe, a self-proclaimed “Yankee” school teacher, was sent down to Fort Magruder, near Yorktown, Virginia, by the “Friend’s Freedmen’s Association” of Philadelphia to teach newly freed African Americans in 1866. She reflected on her time there in her memoirs written some years later:

Nearly all the night scholars were grown men and women, some so old that their bowed heads were covered with white hair – one man with daughter and granddaughter lived three miles from the school house, and has seldom missed their six miles walk – After the Ku Klux came into our neighborhood, this old man always came armed with sword and gun, both so large, clumsy and rusty, we concluded they were relics of the Revolution. The weapons would be carefully placed in the corner of the room, the Primer taken from the pocket and the poor old worn white head bent over its pages as he patiently spelled the words over and over, and his triumph when he mastered one was most touching, often he would say ‘Isn’t this a most blessed privelege (sic)? Many a time I have been whipped for being found with a book. For I always wanted to learn to read.’ (Thorpe 1907(1881): 13)
As the freedman reminisced on the days when he was subject to whippings as a slave, the sword and gun that rest nearby served as forms of protection against beatings, death and terrorization in his life under “freedom”. Even when the immediate physical threats associated with slavery were gone, additional forms of menace took their place.

Newly emancipated slaves not only had to fear organized groups such as the KKK, but also institutionalized racism and legalized segregation (Table 1). Freedom did not ensure equality; and although the Emancipation Proclamation had been signed, social attitudes did not change so readily. African Americans experienced racism at stores, in court and through interactions with white landowners and law enforcement.

Politics

The political forum provided a desperately needed opportunity for African Americans to make their voice heard collectively. In 1868, Alvord remarks that the attention of the African American population was temporarily diverted from school issues as interest in the “public affairs” of Reconstruction were stoked. “The funds also which they possessed, and which had previously been spent for their children, became invested in the political canvass” (Alvord 1868b: 1). While he laments this temporary shift in attention, he claims that the participation in political affairs serves a greater good due to the fact that participating in debates and staying abreast of political events are another form of education. “The
freedmen themselves have gained an advanced standing, socially and politically, with increasing self-respect and confidence that a vastly improved condition is within their reach" (Alvord 1867: 1).

In 1869, Congress approved the fifteenth amendment giving African Americans the right to vote (Gutman 1989). In southern Virginia the Skipwiths, a family of plantation landholders discussed more thoroughly in Chapter IV, clipped and kept a newspaper article copy of the 15th amendment now found in the same folder as the 1873 Skipwith contract for the African American “labourers” on the Prestwould Plantation. It is safe to say that the importance of such a decree was not lost on the Skipwiths. It is difficult to say what political position the plantation owners had on such matters since there were no accompanying notes. However, they now knew that the “labourers” working for them, and making anywhere from $8 - $12 a month at this point, now had the right to vote.  

In Virginia, freedpeople from different occupational backgrounds were involved in politics. Medford, the author of an article concerning the Freedpeople of Virginia’s lower peninsula, notes: “The degree of economic independence that blacks enjoyed as a result of the lower peninsula’s economy spilled over into the political sphere. The variety of employment options limited the extent to which whites could coerce deference from blacks or keep them away from the polls.“ (Medford 1992:581).

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2 For a discussion of pay rates during this time period, see the “Pay” section of Chapter 5, page 43.
Education

The Freedman's Bureau most often dealt with those freedpeople who sought their help and those who were in the vicinity of a Bureau office. Alvord's semi-annual reports made it apparent that he felt the participation of African Americans in the economy was key to incorporating them into the political and social aspects of the community as well. He reiterated several times in his reports that the freedpeople were seeking education for their children and would spend nearly half of their money for their child's education because "[p]roductive industry is now furnishing them with means for paying tuition...." (Alvord 1869: 1).

The continued education of the freedpeople seemed to have an effect on other members of society: "As one marked result of this advance, their right to a higher status is already being conceded even at the south. Not a few there are asserting for them an equal capacity; more are advocating continued instruction, and civil rights are being yielded to these freedmen ..." (Alvord 1866a:20).

Health

Bioarchaeology and biological anthropology have demonstrated the ways in which genetics, culture and socio-economic status affect the skeleton through diet, illness, injury and occupational stress. Archaeological populations also allow researchers to study determine mortality rates on a local, regional or national level. Cedar Grove, a cemetery for freedpeople in Arkansas, was relocated after a riverbank began to erode one edge of the cemetery. Bioarchaeologist Jerome
Rose’s assessment of the archaeological population at the Cedar Grove cemetery led to the following conclusion:

Although considerable controversy exists, the vast majority of evidence supports the contention that the quality of Black life under slavery was substandard at best. On the whole the southern slave diet was nutritionally inadequate, while slave morbidity and mortality rates far exceeded those of contemporary Whites. The estimation of the quality of Black life during Reconstruction is equivocal and probably improved in some places and declined in others. The quality of Black life after Reconstruction is not well known because of deficiencies in the historical data, but the evidence available suggests a rapid deterioration. In fact, the demographic data point to a possible biological crisis for the Black population at the turn of the century. The largest gap in our knowledge of Black life during this period is for rural southern Blacks, a gap which Cedar Grove data can help to fill (Rose 1985:153).

The report describes the harsh reality that the living population had endured. The results of the osteological assessments indicated “high frequencies of anemia, rickets, scurvy, and protein malnutrition” (Rose 1985:154). The remains also showed several indicators of physical stressors resulting from agricultural work including osteoarthritis in hands and feet, spinal osteophytosis and Schmorl’s nodes (Rose 1985:154), the latter two reflecting the effects of heavy lifting on the back.

Although each site provides valuable data, land formation processes and urban development continue to expose African American cemeteries and put them at risk. While being rescued from these situations, these individuals provide valuable information and undeniable proof for the harshness of life for African Americans in the rural South and the difficulties of agricultural life.
Summary

Encompassing these aspects (racism, politics, health and education) into the interpretation for archaeological sites does not even begin to cover the complexities of their lives. Freedpeople were undergoing a “possible biological crisis” (Rose 1985:153) at the same time they were fighting for political representation, enrolling their children in schools and enduring institutionalized racism. Archaeology illustrates how these national, regional and local issues can affect an individual, a family and a community in their daily lives.
Chapter III: Archaeological Background

As mentioned previously, the archaeology of African American life has largely focused on the period of enslavement. Singleton and Bograd’s 1995 bibliography on The Archaeology of the African Diaspora in the Americas primarily contains resources relating to the archaeology of “plantation life.” Although articles have been more common, a handful of in-depth books have been written on the archaeology of freedpeople’s lives (Orser 1988, Wilkie 2000). Those who have begun to look at the agricultural history of African Americans through examining tenancy and sharecropping have also called upon archaeologists to continue in this endeavor and to develop new approaches. Orser ends his 1988 book concerning The Material Basis of the Postbellum Plantation by stating plainly that “[t]he search for understanding the material basis of the postbellum plantation and the social relations engendered by the basic differences between the landlord and tenants must continue” (1988:249).

Yet, even after Orser’s appeal, the interest in Post-Emancipation sites has not been pursued with much enthusiasm with a few notable exceptions (Wilkie 2000, McDavid 1997). While Civil War battlefields and encampments are commemorated and archaeological findings seem to be eagerly awaited by the public, postbellum life appears to attract little attention from either party. Archaeologists, when faced with “ephemeral deposits” and the remnants of
foundations tend to feel restricted about the interpretations they can make about the lives of freedpeople. This situation, unfortunately, has led archaeologists down the path that was first encountered in the archaeology of "plantation life," rendering the lives of freedpeople static and uniform.

Figure 1: Descriptive Title: "Possum am Sweet" Richmond, VA 1898 Property of Valentine Museum/Richmond History Center (VCU Libraries: 2002)

House foundations have been a central focus of interpretation on postbellum agricultural sites due to the fact that archaeologists claim that stone or brick foundations are the only substantial portions of the site remaining.
Unfortunately, foundations do not provide a sound basis for interpretation of freedpeople's lives. Housing for sharecroppers, tenants or wage hands ranged from former slave quarters (Brown and Cooper 1990) to houses constructed by the landowner (Rosengarten 1974: 102), by former tenants or the tenants themselves. Another complicating factor is the itinerant lifestyle of most tenants, meaning that any given family would have occupied several different houses in a lifetime. Although the foundations allow archaeologists to determine living conditions, they rarely reflect the identity of the inhabitant(s).

In the case of some tenants who were spaced out over the plantation landscape to allow close access to the land they were sharecropping, the landowner would build the house. In the oral history of “Nate Shaw” (pseudonym), a sharecropper in Alabama, he describes his house in the following way:

Mr. Curtis soon got the house done. Just a old plantation style house, built for colored folks, no special care took of how it was built. But it'd keep you out the rain, it'd keep you out the cold; just a old common-built house, board cabin....Whenever a white man built a house for a colored man he just run it up right quick like a box. No seal in that house; just box it up with lumber, didn't never box it up with a tin roof. They'd put doors to the house and sometimes they'd stick a glass window in it, but mostly a wood window. Didn't put you behind no painted wood and glass, just built a house for you to move in then go to work” (Rosengarten 1974:102)

While the study of individual house foundations as an indicator of a family’s lifestyle did not provide adequate enlightenment, a spatial analysis of the landscape offers insights into differences between housing for wage hands and sharecroppers or tenants.
At the Levi Jordan Plantation, the archaeologists had the opportunity to examine artifact deposits left “over a forty two year time span that encompass(ed) both slavery and early tenancy” (Brown and Cooper 1990:9). At Levi Jordan, the wage hands lived in the same housing structure that they had lived in as slaves, which sat approximately 400 feet to the north of the plantation house. Wage laborers usually lived in close proximity to one another as well as to the landowner. The fact that the “freed” wage hands lived in the same repressive atmosphere and were subject to the same supervision as they had had while they were enslaved undoubtedly had a profound psychological impact. This effect is reflected in the archaeological interpretation of the site which suggests that “a great deal of continuity existed within the community over these time periods” (Brown and Cooper 1990:11).

The change to tenancy and/or sharecropping, as Orser (1988) points out, created an alteration in the landscape. Orser indicates that there are two very distinct spatial organizations of buildings between sites occupied by sharecroppers and tenants.

The spatial organization symbolized the tenant's position vis-à-vis the landlord and reflected his relative lack of personal choice in labor matters. A major difference existed in the tenant-renter settlement form in that barns, sheds, and outbuildings were placed near the renter's home. When a tenant became a full renter, owning his own work animals and tools, his part of the plantation theoretically began to appear as a distinct little farm (Orser 1988:92).
The landholder divided the plantation into plots of land and erected houses for sharecroppers or tenants to occupy. The sharecroppers were closer to their respective crops but were farther from the plantation house. These arrangements, in turn, affected the social lives of the community and family network. The frequency with which a family might see their neighbors or the landowner was, to some extent, dictated by the landscape and the working relationship with those involved.

The William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research (WMCAR) addressed some of these issues in 1995 during a Phase III investigation for a Virginia Department of Transportation project in Radford, Virginia. The site represented the occupation from 1903-1930 of Mr. Ferris Wyms, an African American tenant farmer on a parcel of land owned by the Ingleses, a white family. The authors of the report mention that tenant farmer sites from the late 18th and early 19th century are rarely excavated, and this site provided an intriguing and unique historical deposit. Their research goals for the project were to “produce structural and artifactual data pertinent to late nineteenth-/ early twentieth-century African American tenant farmers who were making the social and economic transitions from agrarian to industrial-based lifestyles” (Peterson et al 1995:1).

Documentary research establishes a long economic history between Mr. Wyms and the Ingles family. The authors state that there is a high likelihood that Mr. Wyms was born into slavery on the Ingles plantation, a situation that would imply a long-standing working and social relationship with the Ingles family.
Based on research, it appeared that Mr. Wyms was probably providing for his family through farming while making money by doing other forms of labor for the landholders. The authors draw this conclusion from the remains of financial documents: "When he died in 1933, Ferris Wyms was worth over $10,000 in cash....J. Lewis Ingles ultimately served as the executor of Wym's estate" (Peterson et al 1995:25).

Aspects of the social relationship between the Wyms and Ingles families were passed down through family history. “From oral accounts, we know that the Ingles family felt closely bonded with Mr. Wyms. A number of his photographs from the family photograph album attest to this relationship, as do various anecdotes that have been passed on to the present generation (Peterson et al 1995: 96). Descendants of the Ingles family also noted that “[W]yms was known in the Ingles family for his unique perspective on life and his sense of humor” (Peterson et al 1995:28-29). As Mr. Wyms aged and was most likely unable to do much heavy labor, he was still employed by the Ingles family to take the carriage on errands. Clearly, the families were linked just as closely socially as they were economically.

While the documentation provided a sound basis on which to interpret the material culture excavated from the site, the archaeologists point out that spatial organization is an indicator of the socio-economic relations between the Ingles family and the Wymses:

Evidence indicates that at least some of the Wymses’ household activities were more closely linked with the Ingles house. For example, one informant indicated that Mr. Wyms had a garden plot
in the river floodplain in the area referred to as Draper's Meadow (Jeffries 1994). If so, this might explain the lack of an enclosed kitchen garden near the cabin. It may also explain the lack of a tool shed, as it might have been easier to keep gardening tools closer to the garden. Given the close relationship between Mr. Wyms and the Ingles household, it does not seem implausible to suggest that he may have used shed space at Ingleside” (Peterson et al 1995:53).

The presence of a plow blade and hoe stored at the Wyms home substantiates the fact that the Wyms family did work in agriculture, but also suggests that he probably owned these items. This distinction, the authors state, is an important one because documentary resources state that renters owned their own tools, whereas wage laborers and sharecroppers did not; and ownership determined whether the tools were stored with either the landlord or with the renter. “However, from the archaeological remains we can tentatively conclude that Mr. Wyms was a cash or share renter” (Peterson et al 1995: 74) as opposed to working as a wage hand.

What archaeological evidence is recorded during this period when freedpeople were trying to move away from the “uncivilized” classification that had been a rationalization for their slavery? Their participation in consumerism led to the purchase of leisure items and other items that would be relevant to family roles, such as toys, beauty products, and store bought clothing. There is a consistent dialectic between the social and the economic realms during this period in freedpeople’s lives that are involved in the negotiation of identity.

After Emancipation, as historians and cultural anthropologists have pointed out, dress played an important role in identity negotiation. “For many
blacks, particularly women, clothing took on a larger social significance during the Reconstruction period. Black women, even those who had never attended school, gave up their old plain and drab dresses and wore more colorful and stylish garments” (Jones 1985:69). This change was an important one not only for the female head of household but also for the rest of the family as well. “When a freedman walked alongside his well-dressed wife, both partners dramatized the legitimacy of their relationship and his role as family provider” (Jones 1985: 69).

In his oral history, “Nate Shaw” consistently acknowledged that he bought good quality, high-priced materials including plows, a stove, rubber tire buggy, mule bridles, shoes for his children, a bible and a sewing machine for his wife. As a treat for his family he would take home cheese and sardines (Rosengarten 1977: 176), while in their garden, they grew “okra…collards, tomatoes, red cabbages, hard-headed cabbages, squash, beans, turnips, sweet potatoes, ice potatoes, onions, radishes, cucumbers…apples, peaches, plums, watermelons, cantaloupes (and) muskmelons” (Rosegarten 1977: 190). Mr. Shaw was also very particular about the quality of his purchases and specifies where and from whom he bought his goods (Rosengarten 1977: 170-171).

Adams and Smith (1985) conducted a useful study of the relationship between documentation and archaeological evidence on a tenant plantation site in Mississippi. Using the store ledgers from 1870 to 1880, the authors compared the materials bought to the artifacts found at the homes of the tenants essentially creating an inventory of the materials purchased and rationed, and used this information in conjunction with the material record. An interpretation of
postbellum sites can benefit from a focus on the social interactions and relationships within the economic system. The social and economic roles are an ongoing dialectic, constantly undergoing change in determination of social identity. As Brown and Cooper (1990) point out, tenants also had an “internal economy” of trading and bartering. The goods that families produced on their own with personal gardens and crops as well as food supplied through hunting and fishing (Orser 1988:172) also provided another source of access to resources.

Regardless of the requirement in the contract, Orser acknowledges that the women doing laundry work at Millwood Plantation were bringing cash into the tenant families. “While the men of the tenant families made their living raising cotton, many of their wives provided supplemental income by doing the laundry of neighboring white families. For between twenty-five cents and one dollar, tenant farm wives would walk from Millwood to Calhoun Falls, a distance as great as four and a half miles…” (Orser 1988:173). The money was far from being merely “supplemental”; the women were supplying a cash income for the family as opposed to the family solely relying on a credit system with Calhoun. They were also expanding social networks with other families beyond the plantation.

An assessment of artifacts at the Wyms site corroborated documentary data indicating that the family was not at a severe poverty level. “The presence of luxury and non-essential items such as ceramics manufactured in Great Britain, a clock, a variety of glass tableware, bicycles, and other toys point toward some degree of financial security. This security may be explained, in part, by the
industry and frugality of the Wyms family and by the stable and decent relationship with the landowning Ingles family” (Peterson et al 1995:63). “This relationship may well have afforded the Wyms household with opportunities for economic advancement that were not open to other tenant farmers” (Peterson et al 1995: 96) and may have been an important factor in Wyms’ decision to stay on the land or leave.

Archaeologists studying tenancy sites are quick to point out that the archaeological deposits are ephemeral due to transience and poverty (Adams and Smith 1980) and obscured by plowing (Trinkley 1983). Regardless of how short a time span people occupy any habitation site material remains are left behind. A focus on the artifact deposits, however, switches the focus of the interpretation to the inhabitants of the house and their lifestyle. “Thus, from the viewpoint of the actual material remains, historical archaeologists working on plantation sites have an ideal opportunity to investigate a slave or tenant community employing a very different data set than that used in traditional history. This data set has the potential to be derived from the past activities of the people who lived within the behavioral system under investigation” (Brown and Cooper 1990:8).

Archaeologists restricted to an economic point of view often argue that the specific materials found make no substantive difference to analysis of sites within the same social class (Stine 1990). They also claim that the lack of a substantial change in economic position between enslavement and freedom resulted in similar material culture patterns for African American farmers. The argument also
exists that the difference between a tenant assemblage and a wage hand assemblage is negligible if they both live in poverty. Rather than being a restriction, however, the fluid dynamic of a tenancy lifestyle can be used toward the advantage of interpretation in order to discuss a tenant community or a generalized tenant lifestyle for that particular plantation. One of the key issues that needs to be addressed in the archaeology of African American life during this period is the simultaneous occurrence of low socio-economic status and poor health while African Americans continued to participate in the national trend of increased consumerism through the purchase of processed foods and ready-made clothing.

In *Creating Freedom* Laurie Wilkie states: “The dynamics of the particular social context in which an individual lives limits expression. Importantly, the specific economic and political power structure in which a person lives further serves to shape their identity” (Wilkie 2000:4). There is an exciting potential for incorporation of this approach to freedpeople’s socio-economic relations into archaeological site interpretation.
Chapter IV: Case Studies: Background

For comparative purposes, I examined two very different contracts, both drawn up in Virginia on January 1, 1870, between African American workers and European American landlords. Both contracts, written by the white landholders or their designee, give the readers an indication of the social and economic relationships the landlords established with their tenants or wage hands as well as the material culture that surrounds each contract. The contracts also illustrate the subtle distinctions between the two types of relationships that are most often lumped together as “agricultural work.” While the plantation contracts provide information about work and work relationships, they do not give us a full picture of lived experience. Beyond labor, each worker had a family and a social network of friends, and each was earning money and making purchases off the boundaries of the plantation.

When one looks at these documents with a critical eye, it is obvious that they are neither unbiased nor free from error. Brown and Cooper, while assessing the “structural continuity in an African-American slave and tenant community” (1990) also point out that many of the historical documents pertaining to tenant life were from an “outsider” perspective (i.e., that of a census taker, traveler etc.). While the account book entries and contracts discussed here can be considered part of the tenancy and plantation systems, they certainly do
not represent the worker's point of view. Even though the contracts contain the inherent bias of reflecting the thought process of the landholder only and not the freedpeople, they have the benefit of being documents that are generated during the farming process.

In fact, contracts can enforce and illustrate the blatant racist and elitist tendencies of most landholders. Although the Freedman’s Bureau made a sincere effort to ensure that contracts were fair, contract disputes often came through their doors. J. W. Alvord states that some of the contracts drawn up by plantation owners were deliberately designed to be misunderstood. “In many places, last autumn, laborers were turned off without pay, or any portion of the crops, and in other cases four or five dollars a month were given, or even only food and clothing. The plan of these oppressors was evidently to keep the Negro in a condition of perpetual poverty and dependence” (Alvord 1866a: 24). Given the potential for manipulation of contract terms it is important to understand the background of the landholders.
Colfelt-Lovid Contract

Charles Colfelt, a miller and merchant in Winchester City, Frederick County, northern Virginia (see Figure 1) during the Reconstruction era, kept several account books in order to track his exchanges with other businesses, relatives, and members of the local community including freedpeople. The account books also served as personal journals, with scattered notes on the weather and the Christian religion, including listings of Ember Days\(^3\) for the year. According to the 1870 census, Charles Colfelt from Pennsylvania, age 59, was described as a white male farmer with $8,400 in real estate and $600 in personal estate. The rest of the household consisted of Nancy Colfelt, 52; Mary Colfelt, 16; and Francis Colfelt, 13 who were, presumably, his wife, daughter and son. The census records note that the Colfelt family was from Pennsylvania; and since

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\(^3\) Defined by Encyclopedia Brittanica as a Roman Catholic and Anglican Church time of fasting and prayer. (2002).
they were from the North, one might infer that the family had significant exposure
to the abolition movement and moved to Virginia during Reconstruction to take
advantage of business opportunities. Drafts of contracts with freedmen and
entries in the account books verify that Colfelt must have owned quite a bit of
land due to the fact that he was renting out space in the rear of his house as a
blacksmith shop to various freedmen as well as renting land for sharecropping to
at least one other freed family.

In one of his many account books, Colfelt (1889) drafted a contract with
David Lovid4 arranging for Lovid to sharecrop on his land as well as rent a house
on the property (see Appendix A). Information for David Lovid is sparse, except
that he had a few credit transactions and hauled wood for Colfelt at Colfelt's store
in 1869, the year before his contract began (Colfelt 1871). These first interactions
paved the way for a more fully involved contract between them the next year. In
the drafted contract, David Lovid is simply referred to as the 2nd party. The
contract leaves us with no indication of the 2nd party's ethnicity; however, in the
rest of the account book, David Lovid is listed as a “colored yeoman”5 (Colfelt
1889) in the 1869 transactions. The contract also lists the details of a
sharecropping agreement: “The field by the House the orchard plowed and in

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4 In the transcribed contract, the 2nd party is referred to as David Livid. I do believe this is the
same person as David Lovid, with an 1869 listing as “colored youman” since both are noted as
having a young son, Frederick. This seems to simply be a misspelling of names that so often
occurs in account books. For the sake of continuity, I will simply refer to the gentleman as David
Lovid.

5 Although yeoman is spelled several different ways, the OED spelling is used here unless a
primary document contains a different spelling in quotes. Definition II.4.a. of yeoman in the Oxford
English Dictionary is listed as “A Man holding a small landed estate; a freeholder under the rank
of a gentleman; hence vaguely, a commoner or countryman of respectable standing, esp. one
Corn 1869 and part in grass is to be put out in Corn and part of the far field is to go in Corn. Charles Colfelt the 1st party is to get two thirds + David Livid the 2nd party to get one third..." (Colfelt 1889:1)

These records provide us with interesting insight into the relationships that Charles Colfelt had with the freedpeople he encountered on a daily basis. Although the major transactions in the account book are between adult men, we are able to see in some of the listings, for example, that David Livid had a son Frederick (see Appendix A). In his account book, Colfelt also had several interactions with Andrew Slater, another freedman, as well as his wife and daughter who both briefly did housework for Charles Colfelt during 1871 and 1872 (see Table 4), earning credit at the “store.” Mrs. Slater, referred to by her married title in the accounts book, had a couple of small transactions listed under her name with no additional title. All family members pitched in to help contribute to the families’ resources. Since Colfelt’s records make it is clear that he is a miller and grower of wheat, the working day might have looked similar to Figure 3, which shows women and men working side by side in the wheat fields approximately thirty years later in Tidewater Virginia.
Skipwith-Laborers Contract

Skipwith's Prestwould Plantation, is located in Clarkesville, Virginia, a town in the southern part of Virginia (see Figure 1). In accordance with several other plantations in the region, economic stability of the antebellum Prestwould Plantation, in existence since the eighteenth century, relied heavily on enslaved labor for growing tobacco followed by cotton. Enslaved people were also used to complete construction of the mansion at Prestwould in 1794 (Elliot 1972). Among the numerous documents generated by the Plantation is the Skipwith-Laborers
contract, which records an agreement between the plantation owner, Fulwar Skipwith, and his former slaves who were working as wage hands in 1870 (Appendix B).

A study for chronological changes between an 1873 contract and one drafted in 1870 indicates that the language does not change at all, although this may be attributed to a contract template. Laborers are initially referred to as “Freed Negro People” in both contracts, and at least five of the same people appear in the 1873 document. By 1873, overall monthly pay had increased nearly $2 per person per month.
Chapter V: Analysis and Interpretation

Virginia’s location at the northern frontier of the south, bordering Pennsylvania and Washington D.C., serves as an appropriate place to study contracts and working relationships between African Americans and European Americans. The varied working conditions for freedpeople working as wage hands or sharecroppers are quite apparent in these contracts, which prove to be as distinctive as the difference in regional landscapes. These work contracts can indicate not only what material goods surrounded African American workers, but they also carry hints, sometimes overt and sometimes subtle, about what their social relationship may have been with their landlord or boss. In these work situations, the economic relationship and the social relationship with other members of the plantation are closely linked. In an attempt to explain the agricultural post-war crisis, Kerr-Ritchie describes it as “…the transformation of older social relations wrought by emancipation. Many former slaveholders attempted to master this transformation through the resurrection of older ideas of strict labor control and management. Other rural employers attempted to embrace the changes for the better” (1999:93). These approaches are readily seen at the Skipwith Plantation and Colfelt Mill, respectively.

It is important to look at the contracts critically and recognize that cultural practices varied significantly on both sides of the transaction. Keesing and
Strathern explain: “....we [Westerners] need to realize that we ourselves live in a curious world where social relations are largely cast in economic terms: the terms of property and the marketplace. In a society ordered primarily on kinship lines, litigation may be ‘over’ things such as land; but it is characteristically ‘about’ social relationships” (1998:297). As freedpeople were taking landlords and bosses to court, the real dispute may have been over the way they were being treated in the relationship rather than the terms of the contract.

Economic anthropologist Stuart Plattner points out that in order to work on a credit / debit system such as the type that Charles Colfelt had with the freedpeople in his account book, there has to be an existing social relationship, which insures that the transaction will be completed honestly. The exchanges as represented in the account book are what Plattner refers to as personalized transactions, described in the following manner:

Personalized transactions are between people who have a relationship that endures past the exchange; they are embedded in networks of social relations....The most important attribute of long-run exchanges is that they tend to be personalized, meaning that knowledge of the other's personality, family, history, church, and so on is relevant to the trust one has that the exchange will be satisfactorily completed (Plattner 1989: 210 –211).

A neo-Marxian anthropological approach, which places equal emphasis on social and economic relationships in order to explain the functioning of societies, is well suited to an appreciation of the association between private account books and public relationships.

For researchers, these contracts contain information on both the material culture and the socio-economic relationships inherent in sharecropping/tenancy
and wage hand life. To rely solely on the descriptions of the artifacts in each contract would mean ignoring the larger portion of each document; and in order to interpret these texts properly, one should look at them as ethnographic works. In turn, this method enhances interpretations of the material assemblages at farming sites. A Geertzian methodology (1973) of reading this text through “thick description” can be useful to look microscopically at the rapport between the landholder and his tenants. Clifford Geertz states succinctly:

Behavior must be attended to, and with some exactness, because it is through the flow of behavior – or, more precisely, social action – that cultural forms find articulation. They find it as well, of course, in various sorts of artifacts, and various states of consciousness; but these draw their meaning from the role they play in an ongoing pattern of life, not from any intrinsic relationships they bear to one another (1973:17).

While drawing up the contracts, the landholders embedded social cues that were appropriate not only to that time period but also to the working relationship. These were not merely specific to the two contracts discussed here; they also reflect wide concepts and beliefs of American culture, particularly in the South, during this time.

**Terms of Address**

Terms of address play an important role in determining social manners and hierarchy between individuals. Since Colfelt made note of titles in his account book if a client was a Reverend, a German, or a businessman from out of town, these obviously served as useful reference points for his transactions. Table 3 is a list of names, dates and titles from Colfelt’s account books recording
each entry he made with African Americans who came into his store. From the period of 1867 – 1878, there is a distinctive change in notation among the names of African American people with whom he has social and economic transactions. This difference may represent a change in attitude toward the freedmen in the decade after Emancipation as the working relationships between the landholder and the freedpeople are changing.

In Colfelt's account books the same names appear repeatedly, indicating that he had consistent customer exchanges. Particularly noteworthy are the exchanges that he had with several of the freedpeople working for him. One of the account books lists debits and credits for the years between 1871 and 1881. At the beginning of the book he lists, for example, Andrew Slater's name followed by the title “freedman” (see Tables 2 and 3). Charles Colfelt's use of “freedman” drops off after 1872 and he adopts the term “colored youman”. Lee Brown, who was a consistent client of the Colfelt store, is listed in the account book as “colored” in 1869 and “freedman” in 1871 and 1872. By the end of this nine-year span in 1878, Brown was simply listed by his name with no subsequent title. Due to the fact that there appears to be no change in handwriting, we can attribute the change primarily to Charles Colfelt himself; and the fact that these changes appear repeatedly within the very same generation should be an adequate reflection of how Colfelt referred to those with whom he came in contact. These titles indicate that Colfelt was no longer envisioning African Americans as freed slaves but as functioning members of the economy, albeit “colored.”
The word “freedman” is charged with meaning. Not only was it most closely associated with the Freedman’s Bureau, but it also identified a specific group of people that it was designed to aid, specifically those enslaved African Americans who had been freed upon the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. The designation of “freedmen” not only frames the race and class of an individual but also contains the undeniable association with enslavement. As long as a person was referred to as a “freedman,” he or she was still living under the shadow of slavery. In 1873, Colfelt consistently switches away from using “freedman” to using the term “colored youman” or “colored Blacksmith.” These terms indicate more recognition for the labor that the freedpeople were providing. The change does not coincide with the termination of the Freedman’s Bureau in 1868, nor do the handwriting or the names of clients in the account books change. This change appears to be a conscious one on the part of Charles Colfelt and may be interpreted in light of an observation made by Cohen-Lack. In her assessment of emancipation and the free labor system in Texas, Cohen-Lack discusses the presence of the many “northerners” who took up the opportunity to open up business in the South: “…northerners who participated in the creation of a free labor system in Texas considered themselves to be the advance guard of freedom; none fully comprehended the freedmen’s standpoint nor the depths of the freedmen’s antagonism to the form that freedom was taking” (1992:97).
While Colfelt may have begun to identify his workers by their occupation, he did not forget to include the fact that they were not white. A distinct differentiation remains forever present, for even when some are not listed as "youman," they are listed as "colored"; this description tends to occur in the shorter entries, where many of the words are abbreviated (see Table 3). Colfelt also rented out a stone house and space for a blacksmithing shop to African Americans and primarily referred to three freedmen (Riley Yates, William Foley and William Pollard) by their occupation as blacksmiths (Table 3). It is from such a change that we can infer that the freedpeople’s growing economic stature within their occupation began to overshadow their pre-Emancipation status.

During the same year, 1870, on the Skipwith Plantation, the term "freedman" was never used in the contract. Instead, the preferred phrase for the wage hands was "Freed Negro People," a strong indication of Skipwith’s relationship with his laborers. Colfelt, on the other hand, never used the word "Negro" in his account book, preferring the word "colored" instead. Unlike the terms "freedpeople" or "freedmen," the collective title of "freed Negro people" explicitly emphasizes that they are African American; and for the rest of the text they are merely referred to as "laborers."
Behavior

Deferential behavior – As has been indicated, the system of Negro-white relations in Old City not only affects the dogmas of the society but also exerts a vigorous control over much of the behavior of the individuals. The most striking form of what may be called 'caste behavior' is deference, the respectful yielding exhibited by the Negroes in their contacts with whites. According to the dogma, and to a large extent actually, the behavior of both Negroes and white people must be such as to indicate that the two are socially distinct and that the Negro is subordinate. (Davis 1941:22)

Maintaining deferential behavior in the South was a high priority for landholders. Whites in the South undoubtedly expected certain standards of behavior after the Civil War. While Colfelt makes no overt references to how David Lovid should interact with him, he does specify that the tools should be kept up and that Lovid should see to it “that the crops never suffers for want of work” (Appendix A). Skipwith, on the other hand, specifies exactly what type of behavior - “obedient and respectful” - he expects from the wage hands as well as laboring “faithfully and diligently” (Appendix B). The contract also obliges the laborers to purchase at least one-third of their meal allowance through the Skipwith family.

For his in-depth study of Millwood plantation in South Carolina, Orser (1988) describes contracts to bring to life the work relationship that John Calhoun established with freedmen, most of whom had been enslaved by Calhoun before Emancipation. Orser describes the contract in the following way:

While at work, all the freedmen agreed to be ‘directed,’ and any refusal of duty could be punished by the tenant’s dismissal, his expulsion from the plantation, and the loss of his share, regardless
of the time of year or the progress of the crop. Calhoun agreed to treat the freedmen kindly only insofar as they agreed to be 'industrious and attentive to their duties,' prompt to obey 'all proper orders,' and 'respectful in their conduct to their employers' (1988:140).

The selected quotes that Orser provides from the 1867 contract between Calhoun and the freedpeople laborers, clarifies that the contract serves to keep workers deferential; putting them under contract to be "respectful" and "industrious and attentive." These are not only work contracts, but in essence, also social contracts that bind people to certain behaviors on the job.

Pay

While the Freedman's Bureau could do little to enforce a minimum wage for freedpeople in agricultural jobs, they did suggest a monthly wage of $10-12 per month for adult men and $8 for women" (Jones 1985:54). According to Colfelt's 1871 account books (Table 4), he was paying Andrew Slater, a freedman, $15 a month, well above the pay recommended by the Bureau. Skipwith, on the other hand, paid just one of his workers, Daniel, the minimum amount of $10 and all others received well below the Bureau's suggested amounts although food rations were included (Appendix B). By comparison, farm labors in New York in 1874 are listed as making $1.50 a day for a 66-hour week – resulting in approximately $39 a month (Derks 1999).
Family

The Freedman's Bureau also provided official recognition of marriage and family structure, which was highly sought after by African Americans during the post-bellum period. "Blacks struggled to weld kin and work relations into a single unit of economic and social welfare so that women could be wives and mothers first and laundresses and cotton pickers second" (Jones 1985: 46). The fact that Colfelt referred to Andrew Slater's wife as Mrs. Slater (Table 4) indicates that he recognized the sanctity of their marriage by using her married title and last name; this attitude was undoubtedly a rare one in the South during this period. A 1941 study on caste and class in Deep South points out that "...the white must never use such titles of respect to the Negro but should address him by his first name or as 'Boy'" (Davis 1941:22). Undoubtedly, such distinctions were important for freed families and this point was made clear by Jourdan Anderson's response to Colonel Anderson (Chapter II, Page 9) in which he was quick to point out that their acquaintances in Ohio called his wife "Mrs. Anderson."

Table 4 demonstrates that Colfelt had several cash transactions with Andrew Slater's wife as well as having her and their daughter do housekeeping work for him. Colfelt's contract with David Lovid stipulates that Lovid's son, Frederick, is to help with the harvest but also allows for Lovid to find a hand to replace Frederick if for some reason he cannot work. These terms could be, to some extent, an acknowledgement on Colfelt's part that Lovid might not want his son to work or that his son might be attending school.
The Skipwith-Laborers contract (Appendix B) is markedly different in its approach to family life. Although there are several references to the “family” and the “head of the family” as well as the recognition of Abby as Andrew Slaughter's wife, there are other indications that the family is not honored. Within the text of the contract, Agreement Five states that “an advance in pregnancy” is seen as equivalent to “a diminuation of value as a labourer” and includes “a reduction of wages.” A decrease in pay just as a family is about to have another child would have a destructive effect on the family’s health as well as their economic status.

**Food**

There are the obvious connections that one can make between contracts and material culture when contracts indicate what items are to be purchased and where and how laborers are to be paid. Orser points out that, on the Millwood Plantation, a contract between Calhoun and the laborers stipulates that they must buy all their goods at Calhoun's commissary (1988:141). As previously mentioned, the Skipwith-Laborers contract shows that the food rations are primarily controlled by the landowner, providing for pork, bacon, beef, lard or molasses, a patch of ground to garden, a hog (chosen by the landowner), and the obligation that the head of family is “to purchase from said Skipwith at existing neighborhood rates.....one third of the quarterly of meal” (Appendix B). The Lovid-Colfelt contract (Appendix A) makes no conditions for purchases through Colfelt, however, according to account books we know that Lovid did
patronize the store from time to time. There are no food rations set up through Colfelt suggesting that Lovid, as a sharecropper, had more autonomy over what he and his family ate.

Summary

The direct comparison between the Colfelt and Skipwith contracts illustrates that the social and working situations for sharecropper David Lovid and the Prestwould Plantation wage laborers were quite different. Their differences lay in not only types of labor and pay but also regional distinctions in the state of Virginia. The Skipwith wage laborers maintained close proximity to the landowners in slavery and freedom, received rationed food, and were legally contracted to behave deferentially. David Lovid, while he was renting a house for his son and himself and growing crops, was still an exploited sharecropper who had to give up one-third to two-thirds of his crop to Charles Colfelt (Appendix A). Lovid had more control over his family, his food choices and the use of his tools. These documents demonstrate a few of the issues that freedpeople had to consider after being emancipated. The decision to move or stay held many implications, including respect for the family union, reliance upon the surrounding community for emotional and economic support, the type and amount of pay for labor, and restrictions on behavior as well as the existing relationship with and spatial distance from the landholder.
Chapter VI: Toward an Archaeology of Freedpeople

The fact that archaeology is a field within anthropology is sometimes forgotten. For archaeologists, contracts can exist not only as validation for an interpretation or background research for an excavation but also as ethnographic resources and physical artifacts. These documents were a form of communication between landholders and their tenants or wage hands; and through artifacts we can understand how they were answering back to the landholder. Thomas Wheaton describes this approach perfectly in his succinct summary of the Brown and Cooper article: “Simply trying to determine the function of an artifact within a presumably unambiguous context is often difficult...meaning is the product of the social context for which it was originally intended” (Wheaton 2002:30). A deeper understanding of the socioeconomic relationships of freedpeople in the postbellum south leads to richer interpretations of the often materially sparse, archaeological sites.

During this period, freedpeople were riding a legal rollercoaster, from experiencing emancipation, citizenship and voting to being declared “separate but equal” (Table 1). The social realm for farm laborers in the South barely changed while laws were changing. While they were undoubtedly aware of the legislation they must have felt like it was making very little difference at home.
Their participation in the economy allowed them to fully express their identities as farmer or blacksmith, father or mother, student and landowners rather than being classified as simply “slaves” as well as changing their social networks. It was not merely the act of emancipation that freed enslaved people. Freedom also meant the ability to spend earned money at their discretion. Documentation shows that, after Emancipation, money was spent on education, churches, land and plenty of material goods. Their economic freedom allowed them to identify themselves more through how they spent. In turn, this also changed how other members of society viewed the former slaves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sharecropping / Tenancy</th>
<th>Wage Hands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
<td>Living close to the main house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spaced out across the plantation to allow close proximity to fields</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools</strong></td>
<td>Tools owned by landholder and taken out on a daily basis. No evidence of tools or tool maintenance near the residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renting or Purchased and kept in storage close to the sharecropper / or renter's home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food</strong></td>
<td>Relied primarily on rations from landholder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growing for self, purchasing from landholder store.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So often, the archaeological sites of freedpeople are solely considered within an agricultural context (Table 2). It is crucial to remember that African American tenant farmers, sharecroppers and laborers played roles in several communities: the African American, plantation, local immediate, and voting
communities, and the list could continue. The individuals or the families could dictate how their commodities were passed through each of their communities. With this information, we can build upon the distinctions and similarities between living and working as a wage hand or sharecropper during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and hopefully expand upon the Archaeological Record Table.

By reflecting on what makes this time period unique and intriguing, we can begin to use these aspects to aid in interpretation. Socially speaking, the time that immediately followed slavery and immediately preceded the Great Migration was a period for African Americans of renegotiation for economic and social status. By the 1930s, with the onset of mechanization and industrialization and the continuing migration of African Americans northward to urban centers, tenancy and sharecropping as a way of life became less prominent. Social and economic conditions in the rural south also played a large role in African American migration northward in the early twentieth century (Orser 1988:78).

Kerr-Ritchie illustrates the response to post-Reconstruction Virginia:

During the late nineteenth century many Virginians began to leave the Old Dominion... The freedpeople made up a large part of this exodus... During the 1890s the black populace in the state increased by only 25,284 (4 percent), while the white populace increased by 172,733 (15 percent). At the same time approximately sixty counties registered losses in their numbers of black inhabitants. The primary explanation for these limited demographic gains was out-migration. It had been estimated that 74,000 blacks (11.5 percent) emigrated from Virginia during the 1890s. This constituted the highest emigration rate of all the southern states. The following decade witnessed only a slight drop, to 59,000 black emigrants (9 percent), and Virginia ranked second behind Southern Carolina, which had 87,000 emigrants. Thus a record 133,000
blacks left Virginia within the short span of twenty years (Kerr-Ritchie 1999:233-234).

Undoubtedly, these conditions also played a role in much smaller events of day-to-day life, including movements between plantations in the same town and acquisition of materials in the same locale. Some found their way out of a contract system altogether, whether they bought and ran their own land (McDonald et al 1992) or became itinerant workers living in “seasonal work camps” (Singleton 1985).

Issues surrounding sharecropping and tenancy did not simply disappear after the Civil Rights movement. For the African American community, the call for reparations is not based solely on the injustice of slavery but also on the unfair treatment of freedpeople following emancipation. Millions of dollars in savings were lost when the Freedman’s Savings Bank closed down in 1874 due to improprieties (Du Bois 1992 (1935):600). Many sharecroppers and tenants began their lives as freedpeople in debt and stayed in debt to landholders for their entire lives through an exploitative system. The social and economic system was perpetuated through purchase of land from black farmers at unfair prices with no option to decline the offer. The National Black Farmers Association is currently bringing attention to discriminatory lending practices by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Black farmers are in peril, losing their farms at an alarming rate. Within 90 years, their numbers have fallen from nearly 1 million to about 18,000, according to USDA officials. Through those years, black farmers complained that they were routinely denied federal loans provided to white farmers, even after weather-related
disasters destroyed their crops. As a result, they sank deep into debt (Fears 2003:A25)

With these systems presently being perpetuated in the twenty-first century, it is crucial to reexamine the period of Emancipation and Reconstruction and ask ourselves as a nation, and as archaeologists, whether or not these issues have been resolved.
Chapter VII: Conclusion

“Even at the north, many are discovering that the Negro has endowments which they themselves had never believed in; that he is not merely to be a productive laborer, but an enlightened and valuable citizen…” (Alvord, 1866b, 21).

Presently, the archaeology of African American life in the rural South after Emancipation does not reflect the greater, more complex issues at hand in the lives of freedpeople and in the nation. Interpretations tend to treat the experiences of sharecroppers, tenants, and wage-hands throughout the South as fairly uniform and static, self-contained entities unaffected by the outside world. Even this thesis is a cursory examination within the southern agricultural system and could expand to include the investigation of freedpeople in urban situations. Understanding the day-to-day lived experiences of African Americans during this time period can lead to enriched and fulfilling interpretations of sharecropping and tenancy life. Examining these differences in documentation can lead us to seeing them archaeologically.

Using documents in conjunction with material culture and landscape studies can help distinguish the subtleties of postbellum agricultural life. Changing socio-economic relations of freedpeople are readily expressed in documents such as account books, annual reports, bank accounts and journals.
Emancipation by no means earned the former slaves equality; however, it gave them the opportunity to express themselves in the education and political realms. As Kerr-Ritchie notes, "...emancipation had made a profound difference, and (that) it was the actions of the freedpeople themselves which were directly responsible" (1999:93).

Reconstruction is an important part of not only African American history, but also American history. Certainly the lives of African Americans during the latter part of the nineteenth century has a lot to do with the Civil War, the outcome of the Civil War and the future of the country. In 1935 Du Bois wrote:

> How the facts of American History have in the last half century been falsified because the nation was ashamed. The South was ashamed because it fought to perpetuate human slavery. The North was ashamed because it had to call in the black men to save the Union, abolish slavery and establish democracy. (1992 (1935): 711)

Perhaps the history of emancipation, rather than being falsified out of shame is now being ignored out of shame. Options for formerly enslaved people in the South with primarily agricultural experience were few and farm between after Emancipation. Freedpeople entered lives of subsistence living that belied the intended effect of Reconstruction, resulting in claims that times during enslavement were much easier than life in freedom. Addressing these issues archaeologically and presenting the story of the ignored rural African Americans in the South allows us to develop a dialogue about the nation's history. Most importantly, perhaps, is telling the story of a forgotten sixty-five years and a generation of people who lived through both enslavement and freedom.
Table 3

List of dates, names and titles of African American exchanges with Charles Colfelt

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>Col'd man</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1871)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>William</td>
<td>Col'd man</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1871)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Brown, Lee</td>
<td>col</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1871)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Lovid, David</td>
<td>Col'd youman</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1871)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Lovid, Frederick</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1871)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Foley, William</td>
<td>col. Blacksmith</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1871)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Gordon, Samuel</td>
<td>freedman</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Magill, Charles</td>
<td>freedman</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Pollard, William</td>
<td>freedman Blacksmith</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1871)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Slater, Andrew</td>
<td>freedman</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Slater, Andrew</td>
<td>col</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>freedman</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>Eliza</td>
<td>col</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>Brown, Lee</td>
<td>freedman</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>Anderson, Peter</td>
<td>col freeman</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>Armstead, Frederick</td>
<td>freedman</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Gordon, Samuel</td>
<td>freedman</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>Pollard, William</td>
<td>Blacksmith</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>Robbison, Ellis</td>
<td>co. freedman</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>Slater, Andrew</td>
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<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1873</td>
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<td>col. Blacksmith</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
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<td>1873</td>
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<td>col. youman blacksmith</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Williams</td>
<td>col</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Broudest, Penn</td>
<td>col</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Brown, Lee</td>
<td>col. youman</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Edwards, Washington</td>
<td>col. youman</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Fletcher, George</td>
<td>col. Boy</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Howard, Walker</td>
<td>col. youman</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Jones, Mort</td>
<td>col</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Robbison, Grimes</td>
<td>col. youman</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

continued on next page
List of dates, names and titles of African American exchanges with Charles Colfelt (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>Armstead, Frederick</td>
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<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>Brown, Lee</td>
<td>col</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>Brown, Lee</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>Robbison, Grimes</td>
<td>col. youman</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>Robbison, Edward</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>Broudest, Penn</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>Brown, Lee</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>Lewis, Brim</td>
<td>collard youman</td>
<td>(Colfelt 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 7</td>
<td>To cash enclosed to wife</td>
<td>50c</td>
<td>Oct 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Tobacco from Bakers</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>Nov. 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Cash at Steels Store</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Tuesday Dec. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Parir Envelope</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>Monday 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Cash to po tobacco</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>Thursday 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>Cash &quot;&quot; do</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Cash in ful</td>
<td>12.74</td>
<td>“ 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>To cash</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>“ 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 22</td>
<td>Cash order to S + P</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>“30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 2</td>
<td>Snouffer + Peery</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1872 Janr 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Cash to buy Corn Meal</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>12 Gallons Apple butter (apple butter not salted)</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872 Janr 6</td>
<td>To 1 Pair ½ hose cash</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Type</td>
</tr>
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<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Febry 1</td>
<td>To 1 ½ days lost time</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cash in full</td>
<td>12.75</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To leash to buy flour</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10 towel 5c</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Saml Gordon board crossed out</td>
<td></td>
<td>March 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Order to Mr. Grove</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>March 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>To leash</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$8.19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2</td>
<td>To 1 Shoat</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Cash to purchase bacon</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Cash Lee Brown</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>April 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 1</td>
<td>Cash in ful</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$13.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A

Lovid – Colfelt Contract

Memorment made between Charles Colfelt of the first party part + David Livid of the 2nd party.

To (wit?) the 1st party agrees to furnish the 2nd party the one end of the stone building at the Bridge and fix it up to fit to live in and the lot of ground which the 2nd part had in Potatoes + Cabbage goes with the Room free of rent provided the 2nd party fulfills the following contract in every particular and if not fully complied with then the 2nd party has rent to pay for the House at the rate of four dollars including Horses to haul the fire wood, the 1st party on his part is to furnish David Livid, the 2nd party Horses and farming implements with the exceptance of a thrashing machine the 2nd party has that to furnish, the first party is to feed the horses at all times or find feed to feed them in such quantities as he the first party may think will be sufficient and keep the implements in order the 2nd party is to furnish all the labour required on the farm at all times and to see that the crops never suffers for want of work

He the 2nd party is also to be board the hands, the 1st party having nothing to say furnishing labor or boarding hands

The field by the House the orchard plowed and in Corn 1869 and part in grass is to be put out in Corn and part of the far field is to go in Corn. Charles Colfelt the 1st party is to get two thirds + David Livid the 2nd party to get one third the 2nd party is to (cl...) 4 to 6 acres of new ground for Corn to haul the stones along the stone (....) fence and also for corner stones along the work land to the Dan as far as there may be nails to make fence with and the 2nd party is to grab out the bushes on the aforesaid new grounds. David Livid the 2nd party to have two thirds + the first party one third of the Corn.

Part of the back field is to go in Oats the 1st party is to furnish the seed and to receive two thirds and the 2nd party one third and the Oats to be delivered after threshed wherever the 1st party may prefer one acre to be put into Potatoes the seed to be furnished by the 1st party + the 2nd party is to see that all the loose Rock is hauled off of the fields he cultivates. The Orchard is to be entirely under the Control of the 1st party and the Apple trees that the 2nd party (trims?) the 2nd party is to have the one third of the Apples and if the 2nd party picks the
fall apples he is to receive the one 1/3rd of them and the 1st party the 2/3rd s also if the 2nd party picks the apples that the 1st party may direct for Cider and the 2nd party is to get the 1/3 of the 1st party 2/3rd of the cider the 2 fields are to be put out in wheat the part of the far fields the corn to be cut up and seeded. The corn fodder of the Corn, which the 2nd party is to cut up and receive the 1/3 of + the 1st party 2/3rd and the 2nd party is to haul the 1st party share of fodder wherever he may prefer the 1st party is to find the seed wheat – and the 2nd party to do all the labour and to put C. Colfelt’s the 1st party share of two thirds any (....) within 6 miles of home that the 1st party may designate the 2nd party is to feed the stock at all times and to haul out all the fodder manure + straw and rails (?) not previously hauled and to build the closing fence the farm is to be farmed in a farmer like manner. D. Lovid is to haul all the wood the 1st party may wish for the year 1870 the time this lease is to run – the 2nd party is to have the Team to haul his own wood, the aforesaid David Lovid binds himself to devote his whole time to the farm and should any work (out?) strictly belonging to the work of the farm to be required by the aforesaid C. Colfelt then he is to pay at the rate of $15 a month. D. Lovid is to bourd himself.

David Lovid is to see that the gear and everything is put under his charge is to be well taken care of and and (sic) returned at the end of the year 1870. David Lovid is at all times to Consult with the aforesaid C. Colfelt about the work of the farm, the Crops are to be put out in good time and to be gathered as soon as (....) David Lovid is to haul such manures as the said C. Colfelt may direct and make into Compost and put it on the Corn at planting. If the Corn that may be raised and the C. Colfelt wants to sell his share shelled than the Dvd Lovid is to shell it and haul the C. Colfelt’s share where he may direct to market no further than Winchester and the Dvd Colfelt is to find one hand to assist the share the Corn. David Lovid promises to help said Colfelt to cut his wheat next harvest and also to find his son Frederick to help harvest – either Cradle or take up after reaps or find a good hand in the place of Frederick to bind but not Cradle + Charles Colfelt reserves one horse for his own use and two of them on Sabbath days but will not stop work in throng (?) time if he can avoid it and D. Lovid is not to work the two (....) Horse unless he cannot do without them. This lease is to begin 1st January 1870 and to end 1st January 1871. MsV Ad39 – (Colfelt 1889)
Terms of a contract of hire made and entered into this 1st day of January 1870 by Fulwar Skipwith of Mecklenburg Co. Virginia with the Negro Freed People whose signatures are affixed to said contract and thereby engaged to labour on the said Skipwith's Prestwould Plantation in the aforesaid county and state.

1st. The said contract to remain in (......) for one years from the aforementioned date, the labourers receiving this hire quarterly, but the said Skipwith to be allowed to retain n his hands, a month 'o hire until his final settlement January 1st 1871 which month 'o hire, the labourer is to lose in case of dismissal for well proven violation of the clauses of said contract and any labourer in case of his or her leaving voluntarily during the period for which this contract is entered into, to lose in addition to said month 'o hire all other (......).

2nd. Every labourer to receive the hire affixed to his or her name in the appended list ten pounds of Pork or Bacon is their equivalent in Beef, Lard or Molasses and six pecks of meat per month if a man, eighty pounds of Pork or Bacon or their equivalent if a boy or a girl. The quantity of meat being the same for all classes besides house(soom?) and the usual patch of ground for a gardener.

3rd. Each family of two or more to be allowed to raise a hog, which hog, however, it is agreed shall be forfeited to the said Skipwith in case of its owner appropriating anything belonging to the said Skipwith for its support.

4th. Each head of family to be obliged to purchase from said Skipwith at existing neighborhood rates, for each member of his or her family over three years of age, one third of the quarterly of meal allowed by the said Skipwith to each labourer employed by him.

5th. In case of advance in pregnancy or any cause occasioning a diminution of value as a labourer, a reduction of wages to be made, but whenever such change is made, the labourer to be allowed to leave is so disposed, the said Skipwith paying the said labourer all (......) up to the time of his or her leaving.
6th. Every labourer to labor faithfully and diligently as any description of work, the said Skipwith shall direct – either personally or by his agents and to be at all times obedient and respectful in his or her behavior to the said Skipwith is there placed in authority by him and in case of a failure to comply with either of the above conditioned to be subject to dismissal by the said Skipwith is in his absence by his agents.

7th The Labourer to be primarily responsible to the said Skipwith, for all tools + other property entrusted exclusively to the said Labourers care when such loss cannot be proven to have resulted from no want of care on the part of said Labourer.

8th Each Labourer to be at the place appointed for the beginning of the days Labour at the time customary on the said Skipwith 'o Plantation, and in case of a failure to do so, a quarter of a days hire to be dedicated from his or her wages.

9th A variable deduction to be made for all time loss – by the said Labourers and all provisions furnished furnished for said time to be charged at reasonable rates.

10th It is moreover agreed between the said Skipwith and the Labourer whose signatures are affixed to the contract, that in case of dismissal of any Labourer, said Labourer is to forfeit all claim to whatever may be growing upon the land allowed him or her as a garden patch for the benefit of such Labourers as remain throughout the period, for which this contract is entered into and in case of a refusal to remain after two weeks dismissal, shall be charged by the said Skipwith one ($1.00/100) dollar for each day he remained upon the said Skipwith premises over and above said two weeks, which amount is to be deducted from any money due him by the said Skipwith.

Daniel $10 per month
Marcia $4 “
Tom $2 “
Hannah $4 “
Osbourne $6 “
Phil $6 “
Jacob $4 “
Cain $5 “

Achilles $7 per month
Conway $6 ½ “
Douglas $6 ½ “
Nelson $6 ½ “
Patsy $9 “
Minerva $4 “
Byron $7 ½ “
Ransom $5 “

Nicholas $6 ½ per month
In testimony of the true intent + meaning of this agreement the parties (........) affix their hands this day and date above written.

Daniel  his X mark Banks                              Fulwar Skipwith
Conway his x mark Mayne                          Douglas his x mark Dears
Cain his x mark Fuller                             Hannah his x mark Slaughter
Osbourne his x mark Mayne                          Nelson his x mark Scott
Phil his x mark Windard                             Byron his x mark Barwell

We the undersigned whose not being pursuant when the above contract was signed by these signatures precede ours agree to be bound by all the conditions of the above contract the said Fulwar Skipwith also ... binding himself to pay each of us the ...per month affixed to his or her name.

John  his x mark Skipwith $ 6.50 per month         Fulwar Skipwith
Gilbert his x mark Coles  $ 6.50 per month           Hal  his x mark Skipwith $ 6.50 per
month
Louisa  his x mark Slaughter  $4 per month           Richard his x mark Pettus $ 6.50 per
month
Anderson his x mark Slaughter J.  $ 6.50 per month   Adrian his x mark Rouse $ 6.50 per
month
And for Abby, his wife $5 per month.

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VITA

Shannon Sheila Mahoney

Shannon Sheila Mahoney was born in Hayward, California on the 25th of October, 1973. While working to obtain her B.A. in Anthropology from the University of Santa Cruz in 1995, she earned an A.S. in Archaeology from Cabrillo College in nearby Aptos, CA and earned an Archaeological Technician Certification in 1996. After graduation, Shannon began working as an archaeological technician in the Cultural Resources Management field and had the opportunity to work on a wide range of sites in California. From January 1997 to March 1999, she took a brief hiatus from archaeology to serve as a Peace Corps Water and Sanitation Volunteer in Côte d'Ivoire. Upon returning to the United States, she continued working in archaeology for the next two years until she applied for graduate school. Shannon entered the Historical Archaeology graduate program at the College of William and Mary in August of 2001. She is also a graduate research associate at The Institute for Historical Biology.