

ARCHAEOLOGY AT BENNETT FARM:
THE LIFE STYLE OF A
SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY MIDDLEING PLANTER
IN YORK COUNTY, VIRGINIA

A Thesis

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents, Nicholas and MaryAnn Lucchetti, whose unselfish support has made possible this work and my career in archaeology. I also wish to dedicate this thesis to Ivor Noel Hume and William M. Kelso for the encouragement, guidance, and opportunities they have provided throughout the years.

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ABSTRACT

Middling planters constituted a large percentage of the population of seventeenth-century Virginia; however, their life style is difficult to determine for several reasons. There are no extant seventeenth-century houses of middling planters in Virginia and the surviving documents contain information predominately on the more affluent, great planters. Additionally, there are few archaeological excavations of tightly documented, seventeenth-century middling planter sites to provide data on the kinds of houses middling planters lived in and what objects, or material culture, they possessed.

The Bennett Farm archaeological site in York County, Virginia, represents a unique opportunity to look at the architecture, material culture and historical records of a middling planter family from c.1648 - 1702. Since the York County court records were not destroyed, the social and economic position that identifies the Bennett Farm inhabitants as middling planters can be determined by using various measures of status and wealth from surviving documents.

This study endeavors to examine the life style of the middling planter family at Bennett Farm based on the architectural evidence and artifacts uncovered during the excavation of the site. This information is then compared to similar data from other middling planter sites and great planter sites. The results suggest that middling planters lived above the subsistence level and that their basic needs were adequately met. In sharp contrast to the great planters, middling planter houses and material culture contained few amenities.

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CHAPTER I
SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY VIRGINIA

Today, if someone interested in life in seventeenth-century Virginia set out on an expedition to visit all the surviving buildings of that century, their trip would be brief. After viewing the 1639 church tower at Jamestown, the traveler need only take a fifteen minute ferry ride south across the James River to see Arthur Allen's 1665 brick house at Bacon's Castle in Surry County and the 1680 St. Lukes Church in Isle of Wight County to complete the pilgrimage. Despite the undocumented claims made for a handful of other houses and churches, these are the only undisputed above-ground remains of the first century of settlement in Virginia.

Perhaps the lack of visual anchors for this period is the reason that until the 1970's, life in seventeenth-century Virginia, other than at Jamestown and among the first families, received little scholarly attention. Compared to the eighteenth-century with its abundance of shrines at the colonial towns of Williamsburg and Yorktown, as well as the numerous plantation mansions and patriot homes, the seventeenth century is virtually invisible. Particularly veiled is the large group of colonists classified as small to

middling planters. Middling planters were the equivalent of English yeomen; freemen or freed servants who owned small farms and lived above the level of subsistence, but were not as well off as the gentry. Although they comprised a substantial portion of the population in seventeenth-century Virginia, the scanty material remains of middling planters make them difficult to fathom and caused the great planters to overshadow them.

Some endeavors to illuminate the obscure lives of the middling planter class have used surviving documents; however, they are hampered by a host of severe handicaps that plague colonial Virginia records. Many of the Tidewater counties, where the bulk of seventeenth-century settlement took place, sent their county records to Richmond during the Civil War where they were subsequently burned. Written documents which survive are biased toward the upper class. The average colonist in seventeenth-century Virginia could not read or write, and consequently as a group these people left little written evidence aside from occasional court records. Literate members of colonial society overlooked their lesser neighbors. Witness Robert Beverley's early eighteenth-century observations regarding the houses of "Gentlemen" while ignoring the homes of the less affluent people who made up the bulk of the population (Beverley 1705:289-290). Thus, the great planter group, despite being a numerical minority, is the best known since they dominated colonial life and left a

disproportional presence in the surviving records.

If the existing seventeenth-century records are so skewed toward the planter elite, are there alternative ways to study the life styles of the rest of the population? Following anthropologists and archaeologists who have long used objects as an alternative type of evidence in their efforts to learn about prehistory, scholars of the seventeenth-century Chesapeake followed suit, and turned to material culture as recorded in documents, especially probate inventories. Material culture, the things, objects, or artifacts used by humans, be it the crude pebble tools of our African ape-like ancestors or the luxurious silver tea services of colonial aristocrats or even the refuse of modern man have a story to tell about the people who produced and used them.

Contemporary social history studies of colonial Chesapeake settlement using objects as evidence for interpreting the past have made attempts to reconstruct and explain the life styles of individuals and groups of many levels of society. Earlier historical research of objects and people was generally confined to the elite class or prominent individuals. Recent work has produced a broader comparative analysis of various wealth groups. Kevin Kelly (1972) compiled an overview of the material culture of seventeenth-century Surry County planters and James Horn (1984) compared the possessions of various wealth groups from tightly defined geographic areas in England and Maryland. Menard, Carr, and

Walsh (1983) sought a finer resolution by focusing on the consumption pattern of a single small planter. Walsh (1983) has also looked at the material possessions of urban versus rural dwellers. The most notable archaeological study of material differences between two sites of documented social and economic differences was done by Alain Outlaw, Beverly Bogley, and Merry Outlaw (1979) in which they compared quantified ceramic assemblages from the site of an elite planter to that from a tenant or servants' site.

The social historical approach to examining the past by means of material culture is not without pitfalls. Virtually all of the studies have relied on evidence gleaned from probate inventories, with their widely acknowledged problems (Carr and Walsh 1980, Grim 1977, Main 1974, and Menard, Harris, and Carr 1974). Further, historical archaeologists have for some time noted that excavations have produced many kinds of objects, indeed entire groups of objects, which rarely if ever are found in probate inventories. Malcolm Watkins (1975) has aptly stated how severe this problem is, particularly concerning ceramics. Additionally, comparative studies suffer from the lack of well-established, seventeenth-century material culture beacons or reference points for various wealth groups across colonial society.

Relying solely on probate inventories to reconstruct the material culture of Chesapeake colonists has resulted in some misleading interpretations. For example, both Walsh (1983)

and Horn (1984) have examined standards of living and used the presence of selected objects such as chamber pots and lighting equipment as amenities attesting to a more comfortable household. The absence of these objects in the written record may be misleading, for it is not uncommon for archaeologists to find pieces of chamber pots and candlesticks on sites. The archaeological specimens, however, are usually made from cheap coarseware ceramic materials rather than expensive pewter or silver. Although all but ignored by estate appraisers, a ceramic chamberpot or candlestick nevertheless provides just as much physical comfort as its metal counterpart. It may be that ceramics had so little value that they were lumped into common inventory catchall labels like "parcel" and "lumber" (Watkins 1975:275-276).

Conversely, archaeological assemblages are not without their limitations; furniture and clothing leave little enduring remains in the ground. A glaring example of the deficiency of archaeological evidence is bedding, which apparently was one of the most valuable possessions in the seventeenth century. Feather beds from that period were frequently appraised in inventories as having the same value as cows, a situation substantiated by an alleged statement of Governor Berkeley that if people "had not tobacco they had cows and featherbeds sufficient to discharge their levies" (Morgan 1975:225).

Another perspective from which to view social and

economic differences is through architecture. Robert Beverley (1705:289) observed in his 1705 book, The History and Present State of Virginia, that "There are two fine Publick Buildings in this Country, which are the most Magnificent of any in America: One of which is the College before spoken of, and the other the Capitol or State-House, ... The Private Buildings are of late very much improved; several Gentlemen there, having built themselves large Brick Houses of many rooms on a Floor, and several stories high, ..." He described the nature of buildings in colonial Virginia in just seven paragraphs; nevertheless, his brief comments anticipated issues which nearly three centuries later have become major topics in the study life in seventeenth-century Virginia.

Beverley noted the difference between "Publick" and "Private" buildings; a distinction modern architectural historians refer to as formal and vernacular architecture, respectively. Formal architecture refers to buildings constructed by full-time carpenters according to plans created by professional architects. In contrast, vernacular structures generally were not designed or built by professionally trained carpenters, but by the occupant or someone within the community using time-honored plans and techniques (Deetz 1977:93). Virtually all seventeenth-century Virginia houses were vernacular structures.

Archaeologist James Deetz, among others, has explained that the difference between formal or academic architecture

and vernacular architecture is not merely an aesthetic judgment or a cataloguing device, but more importantly, it reflects cultural differences (Deetz 1977:92-93). Vernacular buildings, because they are constructed according to traditional beliefs, are typical of a folk society. Other characteristics of folk societies were identified by Robert Redfield (1960) in his seminal anthropological research on peasant culture in which he defined folk societies or little communities using the criteria of distinctiveness, smallness, homogeneity, and self-sufficiency. Seventeenth-century Virginia can arguably be described as a folk society with one important exception. It was not self-sufficient. The colony's economy was based on tobacco, as a cash crop that was marketed internationally. Income was used to import all sorts of manufactured goods vital to a colonist's survival and continuing productive capability.

Redfield compared the little community to an ecological system closely dependant upon the land and climate (Redfield 1960:20-21), a situation analogous to seventeenth-century Virginia. He also acknowledged the significance of houses as the focal point from which to understand the culture of a little community (Redfield 1960:19). The American house is also a crucial part of the studies of cultural geographer Wilbur Zelinsky. He too believes that houses are not only a significant expression of the needs and ideals of a society, but they can also be used to define regional cultural areas

and to explain the spatial characteristics of cultural change (Zelinsky 1973:88-94). Unfortunately, surviving houses dating to the seventeenth century are rare in the Chesapeake; indeed, there are likely less than six in Maryland and Virginia combined (Carson et al. 1981:135).

The vanished houses of the middling planter are of course amenable to archaeological investigation, yet here one encounters financial hurdles. Organizations which have historically funded archaeological projects are loathe to support excavations on sites unrelated to the families of the Virginia aristocracy. Thus, students interested in the houses of seventeenth-century Virginia folk society are faced with limited sources of information; a handful of counties whose records are intact and an abundant number of archaeological sites which are disappearing from the landscape in ever-increasing numbers.

Therefore the issue is, since middling planters in seventeenth-century Virginia left archaeological sites, but few written records and no houses to tell their story, how well do the excavations of such sites accurately reflect the life style of middling planters? There are some related questions: do inventory analyses or excavation assemblages represent the total material culture of an household? How large are the differences in life styles between middling and great planters and can the differences be gauged in terms of architecture and/or material culture? Are there persistent

patterns in the inventories or the archaeological record which consistently ignore certain groups of artifacts?

The Bennett Farm archaeological site in York County, Virginia (Figure 1), offers an opportunity to look at these problems. York County is one of the few Tidewater Virginia counties whose colonial court records were not burned during the Civil War. Consequently there is much documentary information, including a probate inventory, to confirm that Bennett Farm was the site of a seventeenth-century middling planter. The records provide tight control about who lived at Bennett Farm, when they lived there, and to what social and economic class they belonged. In addition, a major excavation of the site produced a collection of artifacts and plans of structures used at Bennett Farm. Accordingly, the Bennett Farm site offers a rare opportunity to compare the archaeological, architectural and documentary evidence of a seventeenth-century middling planter.

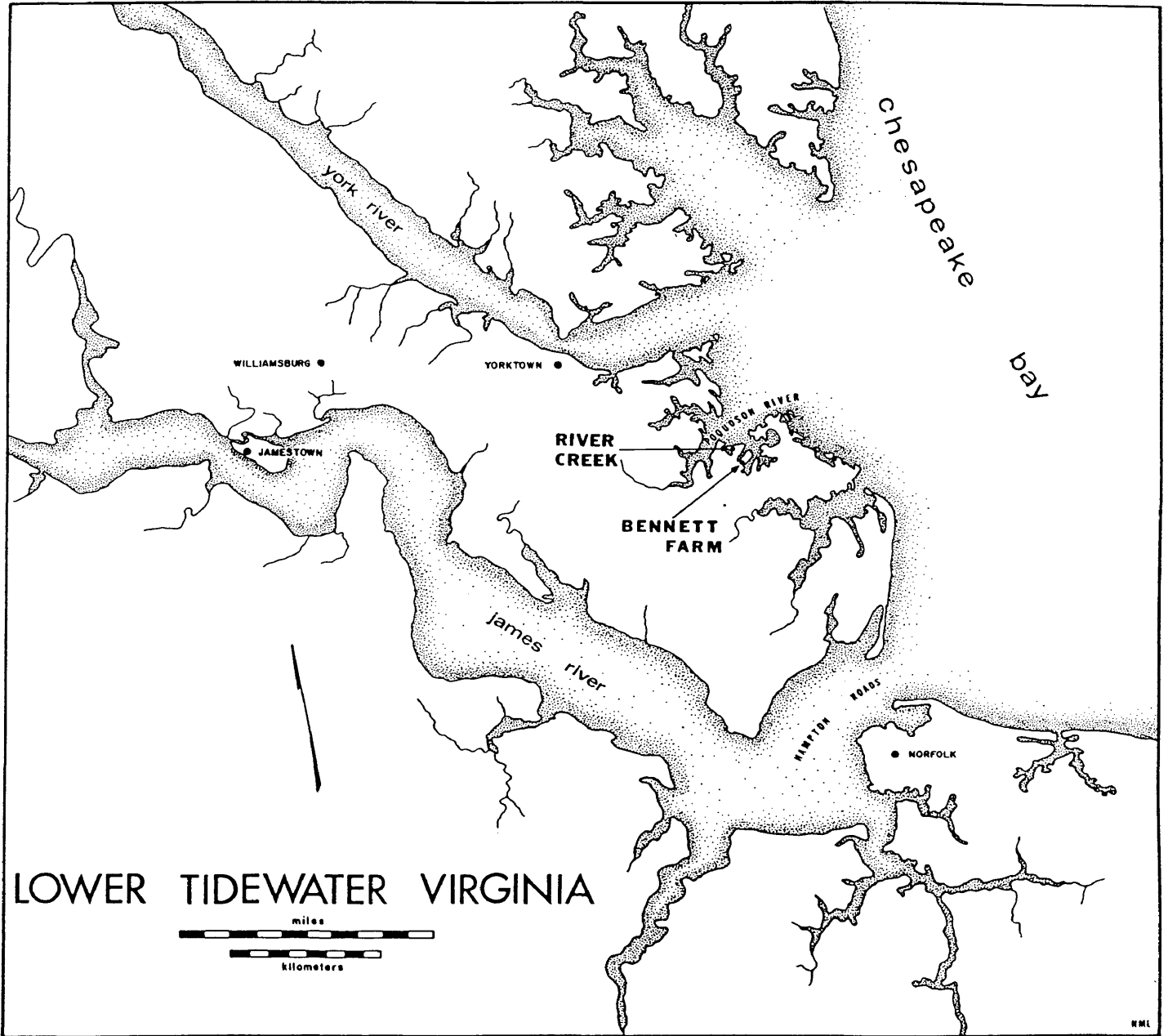


Figure 1. Regional map showing the location of Bennett Farm.

CHAPTER II
LAND, PEOPLE, and STATUS

Land

Captain John Smith was among the first Englishmen to visit the Poquoson area during an exploratory voyage in 1608 up the "Pamaunkee"(York) River on the way to the Indian village of Pamaunkee. On the way, Smith encountered the Chiskiack Indians, a tribe of the Powhatan Chiefdom, whose principal village was located just upriver from present day Yorktown (Stith 1747:53). Subsequently, the name Chiskiack was used during the early seventeenth century to refer to the south side of the York River.

The importance of controlling the York River was recognized shortly after the founding of Jamestown, as evidenced by a 1611 letter from Governor Sir Thomas Dale to the Earl of Salisbury recommending the establishment of a fortified settlement at Chiskiack (Tyler 1914:73). Apart from wishful thinking, no further action was taken toward settling the Chiskiack territory until the 1620's.

As a consequence of the 1622 Uprising by the Powhatan Chiefdom in which more than 350 settlers were killed (Noel

Hume 1979:764), numerous retaliatory raids against the Indians eventually drove them out of the peninsula between the James and York rivers. The elimination of the threat of Indian conflict, in combination with the completion in 1633 of a palisade that extended from Martin's Hundred on the James River to Chiskiack, opened up the south bank of the York for European settlement. The palisade provided protection from the Indians and offered the additional incentive of helping to clear the area of wolves, allowing cattle to roam freely (Morgan 1975:136-7).

With the encouragement of Governor Sir John Harvey and an increasing population (Morgan 1975:136), settlement expanded along the Pamaunkee River, renamed the Charles River. The governor and the council offered special incentives in 1630 to colonists to move into the frontier area. Fifty acres of land was granted to anyone who would settle on the Charles River in that year and 25 acres for anyone in the following year (Tyler 1920:232-3).

Several prominent individuals were among the first to take advantage of this opportunity, including Sir John Harvey, Captain John West, Captain John Utie, and Captain Nicolas Martiau. They all had land patents in the highly desirable vicinity of present day Yorktown, where the deep channel ran close to the shore at the narrowest part of the York River, bestowing the site with great strategic and commercial potential. By the end of 1632, the south side of the Charles

River was divided into two plantations, Chiskiack and York, each with its own representative to the House of Burgesses (McIlwaine 1915:xii). In 1635, Charles River County, which eight years later was renamed York County, became one of the original eight counties that comprised the Virginia colony (Hening I:22, 240).

Meanwhile, a second focus of settlement took place in Charles River County, beginning in 1631 in the "New Pocoson" and peaking in the mid-1630's. Of the eight regions listed in the census of 1634, the "Plantations of Kiskyake, Yorke & the new Pocoson" had a population of 510, the third lowest out of a total population of 4,914 (Neill 1886:114-5). Unlike the choice Yorktown environs which appear to have been reserved for the rich and powerful, the low-lying "New Pocoson" became the province of the less affluent and attracted in many instances freed servants from other settlements. In search of opportunities to improve their condition, former servants like Samuel Bennett, Christopher Calthrope, and William Worlidge, left "Elizabeth Cittye" (Jester and Hiden 1964:52,58,63) -- one of the earliest established Virginia communities located about 10 miles from the Poquoson River in present day Hampton -- to patent along the "New Pocoson." Thus, the Bennett ✓ patent is an example of a family moving out of servitude and, along with other newly freed servants, settling recently opened frontier land deemed second rate by the more prosperous contemporaries.

People

Among the spate of patents for land along the New Poquoson River in the mid-1630's was a grant made to Joane Bennett, widow, in 1636 for 450 acres (Figure 2). She received the grant for paying for the transportation of herself and eight others (Nugent 1974:39). Samuel and Joane Bennett, along with two children, were known to have been living in Elizabeth City as early as 1623 (Jester and Hiden 1964:63). The patent was reissued in 1639 to Hannah Bennett, daughter and heir of Samuel Bennett (Nugent 1974:116).

Hannah married Abraham Turner in 1644 (YCDOW 3:159). They may have stayed with Augustine Warner, who lived on a 450 acre tract immediately north of the Bennett patent, for in 1646 Abraham Turner made an oral last will and testament in the Warner's house where he lay ill (YCDOW 2:417). Actual occupation of the Bennett patent may not have occurred until the mid-1640's.

By May of 1648, Hannah had remarried Humphrey Tompkins (YCDOW 3:360). They had nine children, three of whom did not survive infancy. Humphrey appears to have been a successful planter who was frequently charged with various minor governmental responsibilities. In 1657, he was executor of Roger Lewis' will and given custody of his children (YCDOW 1:238). Later he was an inquest juror in a suicide investigation (YCDOW 3:67). Humphrey was appointed surveyor of

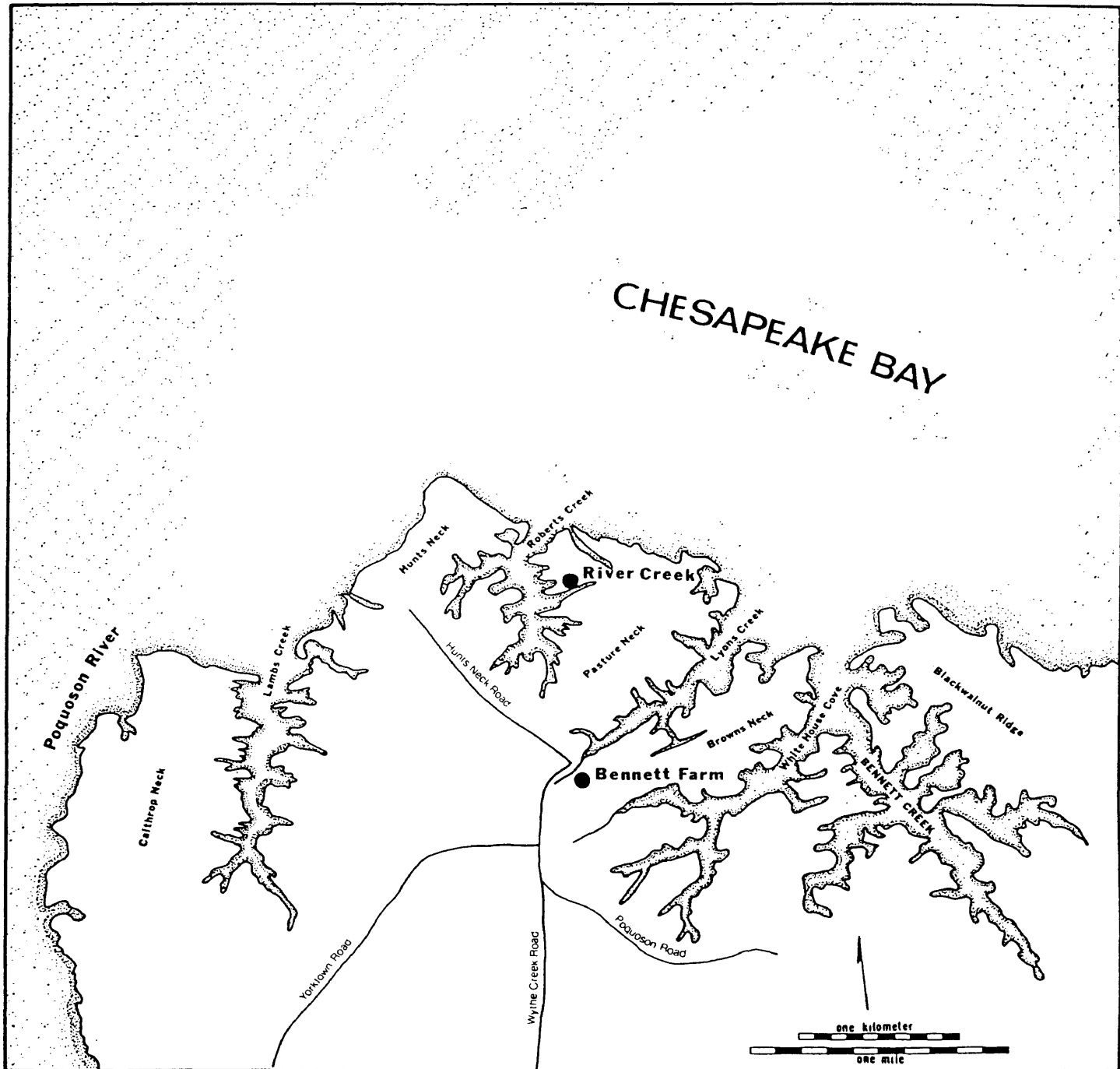


Figure 2. Location of Bennett Farm along the Poquoson River.

highways and church paths of New Poquoson in 1662 (YCDOW 3:167). Six times he was appointed as an appraiser of estates. Humphrey Tompkins died in September of 1673 (Charles Parish 1915:250).

With Hannah Tompkins embarking upon a third marriage in 1674, the estate devolved, as described in her deed of gift, to her eldest son Samuel (YCDOW 5:65). His career was not unlike his father's, although Samuel seemingly encountered difficulties later in his life. Upon attaining his majority in 1681, Samuel married widow Elizabeth Clark who bore him two children (YCDOW 6:302). Samuel was appointed constable for the lower precincts of Poquoson in 1683 (YCDOW 6:512) only to be replaced three years later, foreshadowing his troubles to come.

Following Elizabeth Tompkins' death in 1688, Samuel married Sarah Trevillion who inherited 200 acres from her brother (YCDOW 9:74). Samuel promptly sold the property for two slaves, which the records indicate were the only laborers Samuel ever owned. From 1697 to 1702, Samuel was named as defendant in three different debt suits, one case resulting in the attachment of his estate (YCDOW 10:360, 11:141, 12:5). Further, Samuel was again appointed constable in 1699, only to petition the court seventeen months later to be relieved of his duties (YCDOW 11:171,541). Samuel Tompkins died in 1702 leaving eight children and an estate appraised at little more than 30 pounds sterling (YCDOW 12:109).

In sum, the occupation of Bennett Farm apparently began in the mid-1640's, likely with the marriage of Hannah Bennett to Humphrey Tompkins who, according to the York County records, was a small planter. The Tompkins' had only one servant and Humphrey's only office was surveyor of highways in Poquoson. When he died in 1673, the estate passed to his eldest son Samuel. Although Samuel was twice appointed constable, he seems to have had economic difficulties throughout his life. Apparently the Tompkins family moved to a new site following Humphrey's death in 1702.

Status

Warren M. Billings (1975:104-115) has described the structure of seventeenth-century Virginia society as consisting of essentially two groups, servants or bound labor, comprising as much as 50% of the population, and planters. The planter group can be divided further into ranks based on wealth and social status; the small planter, the middling planter, and the great planter. With this framework in mind, how precisely can the households of Humphrey and Samuel Tompkins be fit into the social and economic spectrum of seventeenth-century York County?

A preliminary insight can be gained from their life histories. Neither Humphrey or Samuel, save for the brief procurement of 200 acres through marriage, which was quickly

sold, expanded their landholdings beyond the original 450 acre patent granted to Humphrey's mother-in-law, Joane Bennett. Additionally, both were appointed to local public posts, Humphrey as surveyor of highways and Samuel as constable. Billings (1975:108) states that these traits, a modest-sized farm and minor office holding, were indicative of the middling planter.

Other, more precise measures of wealth can be drawn from the documentary record. Probate inventories specify the number of laborers, number and kind of livestock, and estate value. Generally, the estate values described in probate inventories were restricted to movable or personal property while real estate and improvements -- dwellings, outbuildings, fields, and gardens -- were not appraised (Grim 1977:106). The size of landholdings, which were preserved through land records, is another wealth indicator. The economy was based on tobacco cultivation. The ability to produce large amounts of tobacco and thus obtain increased wealth depended upon the amount of land and labor a planter possessed. The value of household goods and livestock acquired by planters also reflects degrees of wealth. In his comprehensive decade-by-decade study of York County in the seventeenth century, Ronald Grim (1977) quantified these measures from probate inventories and land records to learn the size, number, and value of landholdings, value of total estates, and number and value of laborers and livestock. Therefore, it is possible to compare

the values for these categories from the Tompkins' estate (Figure 3) against the rest of the probated decedents of York County to determine the Tompkins' position in the community.

The original Bennett land patent of 450 acres was one of 113 made in York County during the decade of the 1630's. Seventy-six patents or 67% of the total were for less than 400 acres, while 75 patents or 75% of the total were for less than 500 acres (Grim 1977:74). There is no evidence that Humphrey Tompkins made additional land purchases, while Samuel quickly disposed of the 200 acres belonging to his second wife. Further, the Tompkins' estate was diminished by some unknown transaction; the 1704 quit rent list for York County credits Sarah Tompkins as owning only 250 acres. At this time, 70% of all York County landholders owned 300 acres or less (Grim 1977:76).

In 1673, Humphrey Tompkins' only known laborer, a servant named Dorothy, died (Charles Parish 1915:213). During this decade, 41 inventories were recorded and 23 decedents owned labor. The average number of laborers (both servants and slaves) was 4.1 per labor owner. In the 1690's when Samuel Tompkins obtained two slaves, 25 of the 63 probated decedents were labor owners with an average of seven laborers per owner. No laborers are listed in Samuel's inventory, either his slaves died or were sold before 1702. During the first five years of the eighteenth century, 25 of 55 inventories contained laborers with an average of 5.8 laborers per labor

Inventory and Appraisement of the Estate of Samuel Tompkins

one old feather bed & Bolster and Rugg and Blanket and pair of Sheets	2	09	00
one old feather bed & Bolster and Rugg and blanket and pair of Sheets and pillow and bed Cord	3	15	00
one old feather bed & old furniture	1	12	00
one old Couch feather bed & old furniture	1	11	00
one old father bed and old Rugg	1	05	00
78 lbs of pewter at 8p per pound	2	12	00
2 doz & halfe of Spoons	1	04	00
A parcell of Chests and Boxes	1	06	00
and old table & forms and other wooden Stooles all old	1	00	00
one Brass Mortar & Pestle 2 Brass candlesticks & Some other Brass	0	13	00
two Gunns and case of Pistolls & holsters and sword	12	00	00
A parcell old Iron and box Iron and heaters	1	01	08
one Razor and pair of horse flems and pair of Spectacles	0	02	06
a parcell of Sifters	0	02	00
two Sadles and bridle	0	12	00
Wareing cloaths	2	18	00
A parcell of bottles & two small looking glasses & baskets earthen cups	0	05	00
one hat and pocket booke	0	09	00
Tackling for two Cart horses	0	12	00
Two Iron Potts Two Spits & Some old Iron and frying pan	1	07	06
A parcell of old Tubs and trays and pails	1	15	06
A parcell of Sider Caske & Grindstone	2	03	06
two drawing knives Some old Iron one bag	0	09	06
and old Cart & wheels & one plank	0	05	00
and old table cloath & six Napkins	0	03	06
And old Sadle horse about Eight years old			
And old Cart horse about Fourteen years old			
And Cow about Ten years old			
And Cow about Eight years old			
And Heiffer about Two years old			
Three Steers about Three years old			
Two Steers about Two years old			
And Bull about Three years old			
Four Calves and Six Sheep			

March 24 1702

Figure 3. Transcription of Samuel Tompkins' probate inventory.

owner (Grim 1977:119).

Samuel Tompkins' 1702 probate inventory enumerates his livestock as 13 cattle, two horses, and no hogs. These numbers can be compared to the averages per inventory of 16.7, 3.2, and 10.8, respectively, during the years 1700-1704 when 37 of 44 inventories contained livestock (Grim 1977:124). Finally, Samuel's estate value of L30-13-2, a total that does not include livestock which was listed in his inventory but not appraised, falls well below the mean for this period, which was L121 for 44 inventories (Grim 1977:113). The difference is more pronounced if the value of Tompkins' "two Gunns and case of Pistolls & holsters and sword" worth L12 is subtracted from his estate total.

It is enlightening to look at the most prominent planter in the New Poquoson region during the mid-seventeenth century to better understand the position of the Tompkins family. Not far from the Bennett patent was the estate of Captain Christopher Calthorpe, who originally received 1,000 acres in 1631 (Nugent 1974:39). Calthorpe, a Burgess for York County throughout the 1640's and 1650's (YCDOW 2:298, 3:96), was promoted to Major and then Colonel in the militia (YCDOW 1:94,180), and finally was appointed a Justice of the Peace during the 1650's (YCDOW 1:94). He moved out of Poquoson shortly before his death in 1662.

Calthorpe's 1662 probate inventory survives (YCDOW 3:180) as does an estate division (YCDOW 4:238) made in 1667 after

the death of his wife Ann. The estate division, which apportioned Ann Calthorpe's livestock and goods among her four children, reveals a more complete representation than the probate inventory of the material culture of the Calthorpe's household. The appraisers who compiled the probate inventory evaluated the Calthorpe estate as it was presented to them by Ann Calthorpe. She seems to have shown them only part of the estate and, since Christopher Calthorpe was wealthy with little debt, the appraisers apparently were not concerned with recording all the livestock and household goods. In contrast, the estate division was a distribution of all of the movable estate to the heirs.

The Calthorpe house was an unassuming structure that consisted of an outer room, a chamber, and a shed; nonetheless, it contained an impressive quantity of expensive goods. The Calthorpe's affluence is exemplified by their pewter collection and furniture which included:

PEWTER-13 dishes, four plates, 12 spoons, two tankards, two flagons, two chamberpots, one salt, and one candlestick

FURNITURE-three chests, one cedar chest, three trunks, and six leathern chairs

Other testaments to Calthorpe's great planter status during the 1660's are his nine servants and livestock holdings of 67 cattle and two mares. The estate was also owed an undetermined amount of "Rents of Land for the future" and

"Tobaccoe due from the Tennants for sowes." The documentary record, then, shows several major differences between the Calthorpe plantation and the Tompkins farmstead, particularly in number of servants, number of livestock, and household objects. Although the Calthorpe house does not seem to be extraordinary, it is impossible to tell -- since it has never been excavated -- how large or architecturally sophisticated it was.

In many cases; however, architectural evidence revealed through archaeological excavation can be helpful in ascertaining the relative wealth and status of the occupants of the site. The Tompkins' house was a small post-in-the-ground structure with a wood-and-clay chimney and a dirt floor. The farmstead had only one major outbuilding and no fences, while the two wells, one unlined and the second constructed with a well ring of barrels placed one on top of the other, further reflect the modest means of the Tompkins' when compared with the structures of the more prominent planters.

CHAPTER III

ARCHAEOLOGY

Bennett Farm lies in a formerly cultivated field on a finger of land at the head of Lyons Creek near the confluence of the York and Poquoson rivers in York County, Virginia. Historically, this area was referred to as the "New Pocoson" and comprised part of Charles River Parish when York County was established in 1634.

The existence of the site was unknown to archaeologists of the Virginia Research Center for Archaeology, an arm of the state's Historic Landmarks Commission, until 1978 when a local historian/collector reported its impending destruction by a proposed residential development. The artifacts of the informant's surface collection dated to the seventeenth century, while cursory research revealed that the land had been the property of the Bennett and Tompkins families.

The presence of extensive surviving records influenced the decision to proceed with a rescue excavation of the site. Limited time and funds necessitated removing the plowzone -- the uppermost layer which has been plowed for hundreds of years and thus thoroughly intermixed any cultural layers that may have existed -- with a Gradall, a machine with a

telescoping arm and smooth-edge bucket that can carefully scrape inches of soil. Although the plowzone was mechanically stripped from the site, potential information on plowzone artifacts was not entirely lost. Fortunately, the informant had consistently surface collected the site for over 15 years, accumulating in the process 25 shopping bags of artifacts recovered from the plowzone.

Among his treasures were numerous fragments of fire-cracked rocks, small lumps of naturally occurring bog iron, and minuscule pieces of artifacts -- in other words, he was a meticulous collector who picked up every bit from the surface of the site. His effort resulted in a sizable sample of plowzone material which could be employed in artifact calculations. For example, a broken stoneware jug tossed into the Tompkins' yard and represented by a solitary plowzone sherd was just as much a part of the Tompkins' possessions as a whole glass wine bottle discarded into a well or refuse pit ^{which} and survives complete.

Beginning at the apparent center of the surface scatter of cobbles, oyster shell, and artifacts the Gradall removed the plowzone -- which averaged 12" in thickness -- from an area approximately 100' x 200', revealing three post-in-the-ground structures, two wells, and 12 refuse pits (Figure 4). A field crew of five people, plus occasional volunteers and students, excavated the site over a period of approximately 10 weeks.

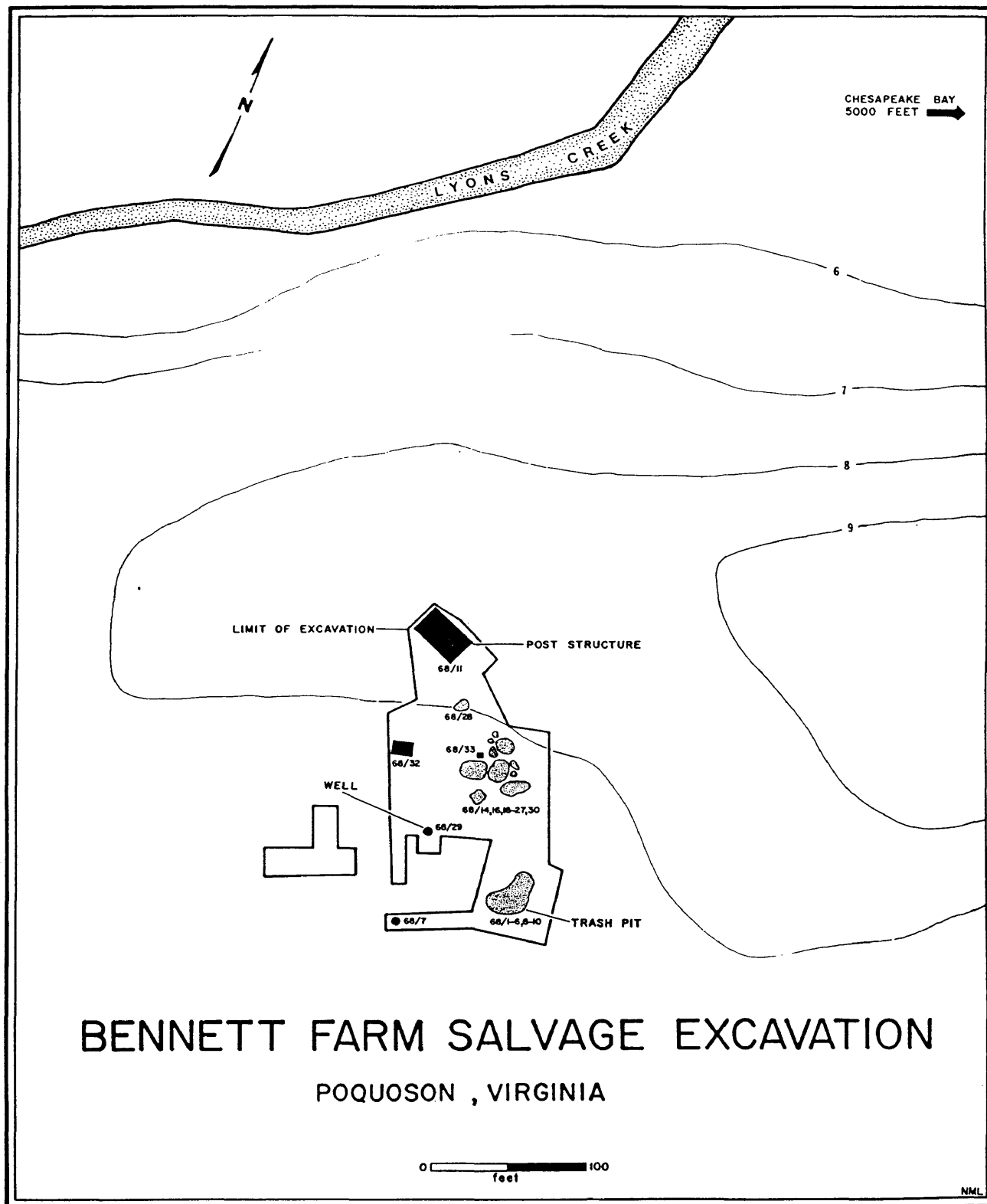


Figure 4. Plan of archaeological features at Bennett Farm.

Structures

Structure 1(68/11)

This building represents the remains of the principal dwelling on the site (Figure 5). It originally consisted of a 20' square cell formed from two bays with posts spaced at 10' intervals (measured from center postmold to center postmold). The only artifacts found in any of the postholes were occasional nail fragments. There was no surviving evidence of a fireplace; however, a door in the southeast corner is indicated by a small intermediate posthole. The presence of a posthole for a door frame further implies that there were no sills between the posts. Without sills capable of supporting floor boards, Structure 1 presumably had a dirt floor.

Later a 14.5' addition containing an 7.5' bay and a 7' bay was constructed on the east end of the dwelling. Although the four postholes of the addition did not have any artifacts indicating a later construction date, the diminished post spacing as well as the fact that the postmolds do not align with those of the 20' square cell imply the addition is a second period of construction. The bottom postmold elevations for both the original structure and the addition are consistent with the tie-beam pair method of construction. The east end of the addition had a 9" by 12" postmold located on line and in the center of the gable. Unfortunately, this

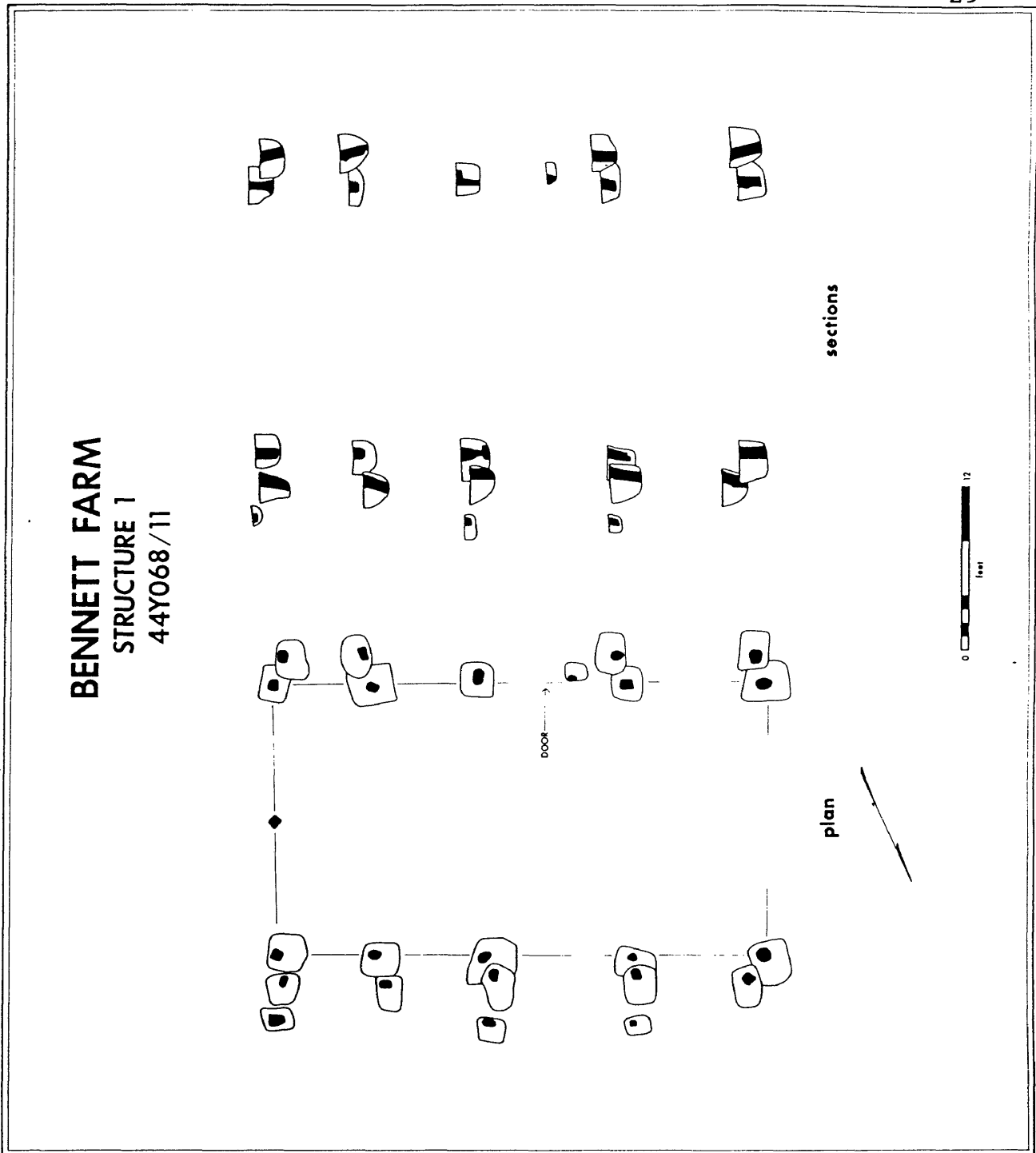


Figure 5. Posthole plan and sections for Structure 1.

feature was vandalized during the excavation so no other information is available. However, its position suggests that it belonged to the dwelling and may be associated with a wood-and-clay chimney, an interpretation that is strengthened by the similar posthole pattern of the only outbuilding found at the site. ✓

Besides the addition, Structure 1 had yet another series of postholes, but their positioning was most unusual. Nine of the 10 postholes of the dwelling each had another posthole cutting through it from the outside. Although the second set of postholes was reminiscent of the post repair pattern commonly seen on many hole-set post buildings, closer inspection of the postmolds in the holes suggested that they could not possibly represent standard repair technology. In order to replace a failing post, the replacement post must be positioned to fit under the plate or tie-beam of the structure, and therefore the postmolds must all be roughly along the same line. The apparent repair postmolds of Structure 1, however, were 2'-3' outside the original postmold. The function of this second set of postholes was revealed when they were sectioned to show postmolds that angled in towards the building; thus, rather than replacing the original posts of Structure 1, the second set of posts acted as struts or buttresses propping up the building. ←

Artifacts provide further hints about the dwelling's appearance. One of the buttress postholes and many of the

refuse pits contained quantities of daub, including some samples with wattle or small branch molds. Bits of plaster were found in the refuse pit nearest to the dwelling, which was also the earliest pit on the site. While the dwelling certainly seems to have been insulated with clay daub and perhaps plastered, the matter of windows is confusing. Many pits and smaller archaeological features contained fragments of window glass, but the excavation did not recover a single piece of turned lead, an essential component of casement windows. It is possible to argue that the lead was recycled for some other purpose, however, the chance seems remote that all of the casement lead disappeared from the site. A more plausible explanation is that the glass was set into wooden frames which provided light, but could not be opened like casement windows.

Structure 2(68/32)

Located approximately 58' from Structure 1, Structure 2 was the only outbuilding found at Bennett Farm. It measured 14.5' by 14.5' with side-wall posts at intervals of 7.0' and 7.5' (Figure 6). The spacing is identical to that of posts in the addition of Structure 1. The similarity to the dwelling continues as Structure 2 has a small postmold, 12" by 12", centered along the east gable as does Structure 1. Unlike Structure 1, bottom postmold elevations suggest that Structure 2 was built by standard assembly, that is the side wall posts

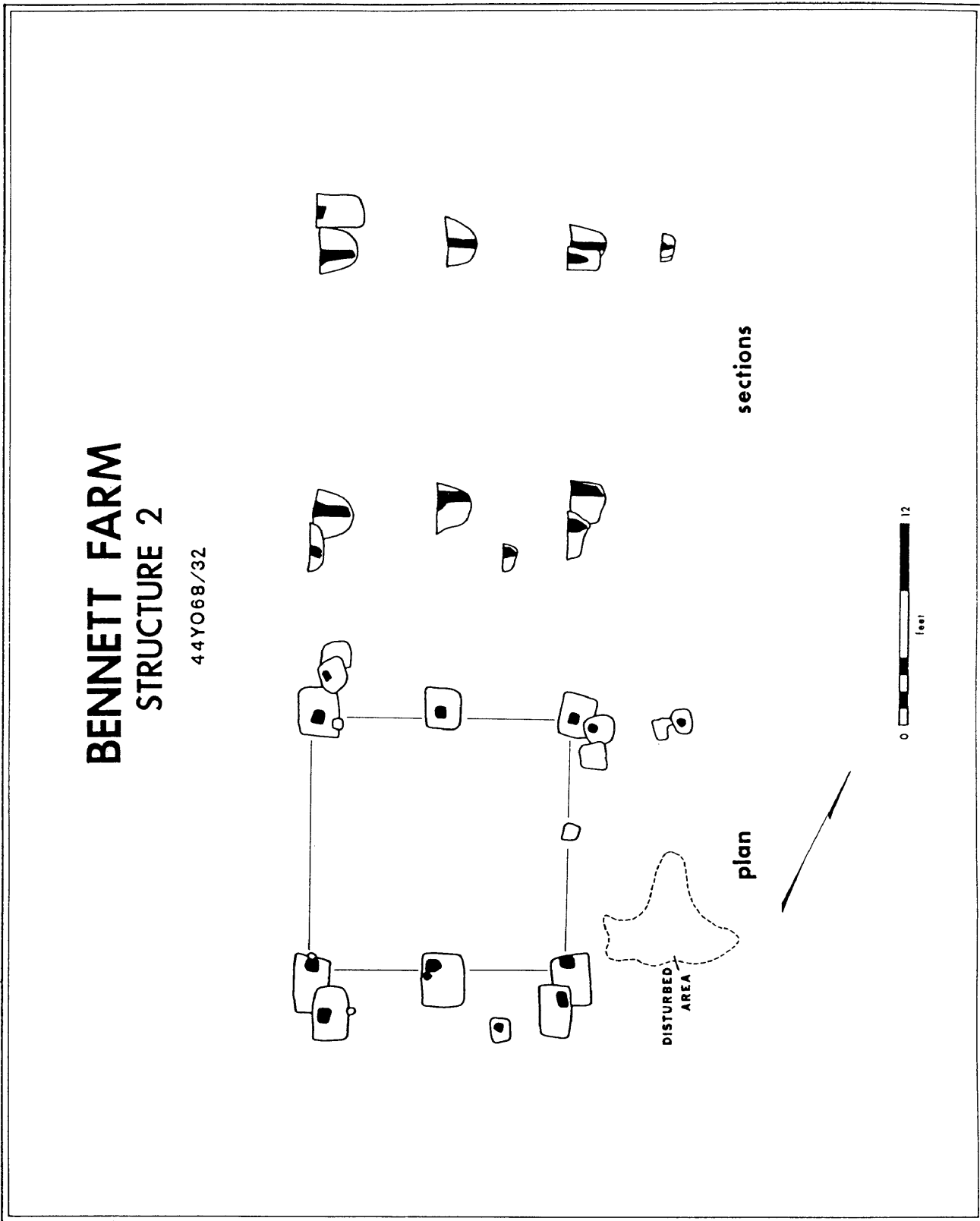


Figure 6. Posthole plan and sections for Structure 2.

and plates were preassembled and erected as a unit rather than raising three sets of posts connected by tie-beams. Here again, apparent repair holes are oddly positioned. They are 2'-3' to the outside of the line of original postmolds, and neither of the center posts of the side walls has a repair hole. Sections of the repair postholes show that one of the postmolds appears to be slanted towards the structure, but the other three seem to be vertical. An alternative explanation is that the apparent repair postholes are, in fact, the principal posts for a four-post building that replaced a six-post building. However, if this is true, the building would be a parallelogram with a 2' difference in the side walls and a 4' difference in the gable walls. A third possibility is that the repair holes along the southern wall, one of which contains the sloping postmold, are indeed buttresses while the later postholes along the northern wall serve unidentified purpose. At another excavated seventeenth-century site not far from Bennett Farm, the dwelling clearly has buttress postholes on only one side of the building (Virginia Department of Historic Resources 1979).

If the center gable postmold in Structure 2 reflects the presence of a wood-and-clay chimney, it is possible that building was a kitchen. While no pits or root cellars with artifactual clues to its function were associated with Structure 2, three of the second period postholes contained burned bone suggesting cooking.

Structure 3 (68/23)

A small four-post structure was found in the vicinity of the refuse pits, nearly 35' west of Structure 2. Although crudely built, the sides measured 3'7", 3'10", 4'2", and 4'7". The postmolds and holes showed very clearly in the ground. The structure apparently burned as all four postmolds contained a large amount of black wood ash as well as bits of daub that presumably covered the walls. There were no artifacts in the postmolds or postholes; consequently, it was not possible to date precisely either the construction or destruction of Structure 3. However it must have been built prior to the filling of the nearby refuse pits. If Structure 3 had been erected after trash had been discarded into the pits, artifacts surely would have been mixed into the postholes. The diminutive size and proximity to refuse pits implies that Structure 3 may have served as a "hen house."

Wells

Well 1

Forty feet south of Structure 2 was a roundish feature 8' in diameter whose surface appearance suggested a back-filled well. However its form and contents proved to be most unusual (Figure 7). Unlike most wells which are intentionally filled with refuse that creates strata rich in artifacts and organic material, Well 1 predominately contained sandy layers that

BENNETT FARM

WELL 2

4 4Y068 / 7

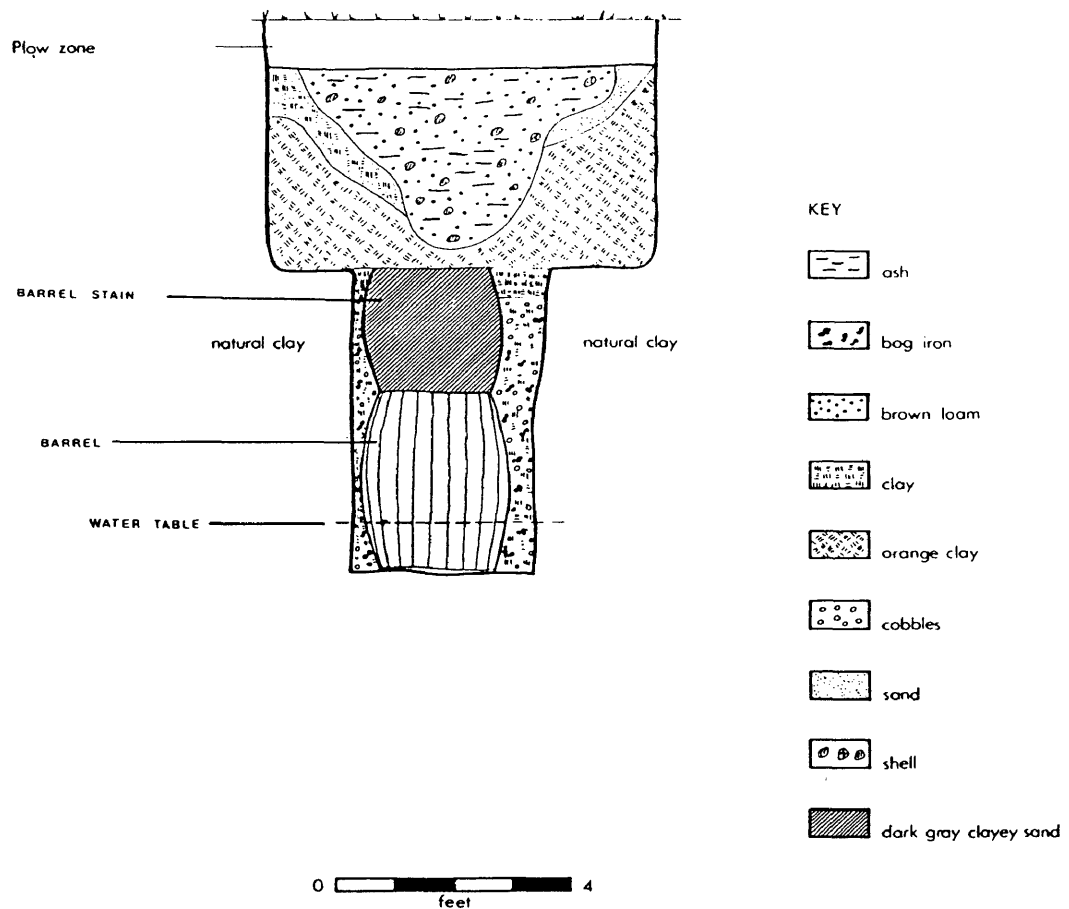


Figure 7. Profile of Stratigraphy of Well 1.2

were devoid of artifacts. Even the two uppermost layers of loam and clay had only a few pieces of bone. The only other artifact found in the well was a section of a ladder that was preserved in the moist bottom layer nearly 8' below the subsoil surface. The section was situated in a vertical position as if the ladder deteriorated in situ.

The profile of the well hole further indicated that this was not an ordinary well. Well walls normally are immune to collapse because they are supported by the well lining (bricks, barrels). When a well is abandoned, it is quickly filled, thus preventing the walls from dropping away. Instead of a fairly uniform well shaft with intact vertical sides, Well 1 had walls that were severely eroded, resembling an irregular funnel. This suggests that the well was probably unlined and therefore subject to erosion. There were no brick fragments in the fill that might have come from a lining. Nor could it have been lined with barrels, since none was found in the lowest level where wood was preserved. The sandy fill in Well 1 is typical of erosion-deposited material. Thus, it seems that the first water source at Bennett Farm was simply an open hole in the ground.

Well 2

The second, and later, well at Bennett Farm was located some 160' from the dwelling and 115' from Structure 2. The distances between Well 2 and the two buildings are unusually

long; generally colonial wells were located more conveniently ✓
to the kitchen and/or main house. The excavation showed that
the well, which initially appeared as a 4'9" circular patch of
dark brown loam with oyster shell and wood ash, had straight
sides down and leveled off at a depth of 3'9" (Figure 8).

At this point, the bottom contained two smaller
concentric rings of fill, a 2' wide circle of dark grey clayey
sand within a band of orange clay. Removing a one-half
section of the concentric rings soil stain revealed that the
dark grey clayey sand had a profile of a barrel and, as
continued digging proved, sat directly on top of a perfectly
preserved barrel. The bottom of the intact barrel marked the ✓
bottom of the well, exactly 10' below modern grade (BMG). The
moisture from the water table, at 9'2" BMG, preserved the
lowest barrel while the one above filled in and totally
deteriorated from alternate dampness and drying as the water
table rose and dropped depending on the amount of rainfall.

The soil from the outside of the decayed and intact
barrels represented builder's fill, which is the earth
deposited back at the time of construction into the space
between the outside of the barrels and shaft excavated to
contain barrel lining. The few artifacts recovered from the ✓
builder's fill indicate only that Well 2 was dug sometime
after c.1680.

Originally, the well likely had a continuous barrel
lining to the surface; the top barrels completely vanished

BENNETT FARM
WELL 1
44Y068/29

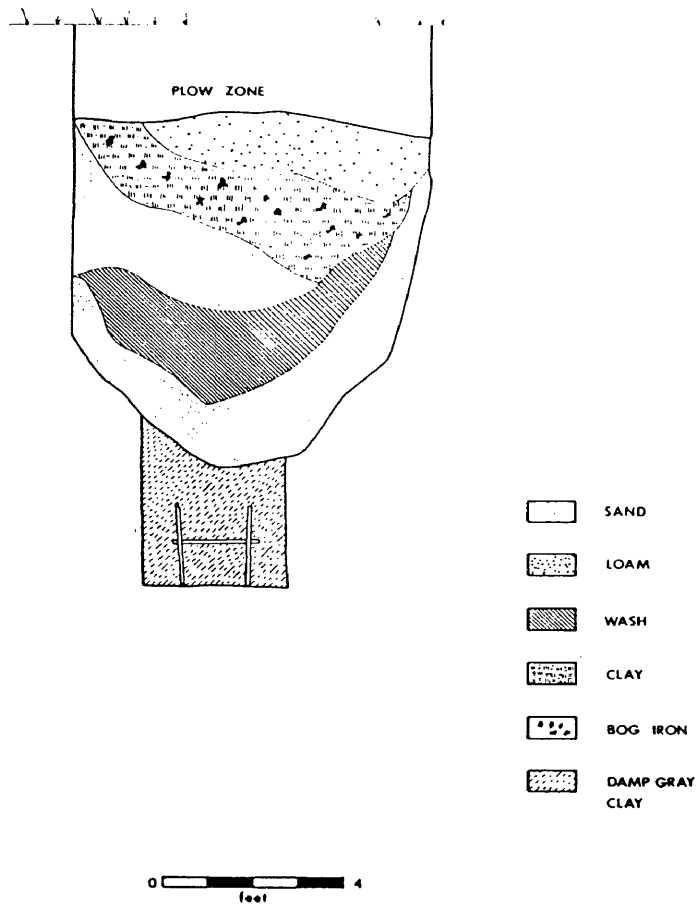


Figure 8. Profile of stratigraphy of Well 1

although the position of the uppermost layer of ash, shell, and refuse suggests that this rich fill had been deposited into a space that may have contained a barrel. The artifacts, sherds of Staffordshire slipware, Rhenish stoneware, and plain delftware, found in this layer imply that the well was abandoned and filled in during the period 1680-1710, while a date of 1701 was derived from the average of the stem hole diameters, using the Binford formula (Noel Hume 1972:299), of the 44 white ball clay tobacco pipe stems recovered from the strata overlying the barrel stain.

Refuse pits

There is a meaningful pattern to the lay-out of the refuse pits at Bennett Farm (see Figure 3). A single pit, 68/28, lay 30' south of the main house and 30' northwest of Structure 2. About 30' south from pit 68/28 and 50' west of Structure 2 was a cluster of large and small pits. Finally, another single large pit, with several adjoining small pits, was found 50' south of the central cluster. The sequence of the refuse pits, extending in a line south of the main house, corresponded to the dates when they were filled with trash; 68/28 was filled first c.1650, 68/1-6,8-10 was filled last after 1696, while the pits in between were filled during the intervening years.

When first uncovered, each of the major refuse pits

appeared as a single large feature filled with dark soil. Upon removing the top layer from the pits, it was discovered that each contained variously sized smaller holes ranging from 2'-6' in diameter (Figure 9), suggesting that these were not treeholes, but were dug, perhaps to obtain clay for daub. The vast majority of the artifacts recovered during the excavation came from the refuse pits. Those pits that were abundant in artifacts also had large quantities of oyster shell and animal bone indicating the domestic nature of the trash, undoubtedly coming from either Structure 1 and/or Structure 2. Other pits yielded few artifacts and likewise little shell and bone. The pits were excavated by hand and the soil was selectively sifted through 1/4" wire screen when small bones were present. The following is a brief description of the seven largest refuse pits.

Pit 68/28

Nearly 12' long and 10' across, this pit was 2'8" deep at the widest end. On top of the sandy layers that were rain-washed into the bottom of the pit were four layers rich in ash, whole oyster shell, bone and artifacts. The ash was pink, orange, and grey, and may be discarded hearth ash. The artifacts were also household in nature including plaster, daub, egg shells, 22 brass straight pins, parts of a stock lock, glass case bottles, over 179 wrought iron nails and personal items such as a brass watch key, an aiglet (the metal

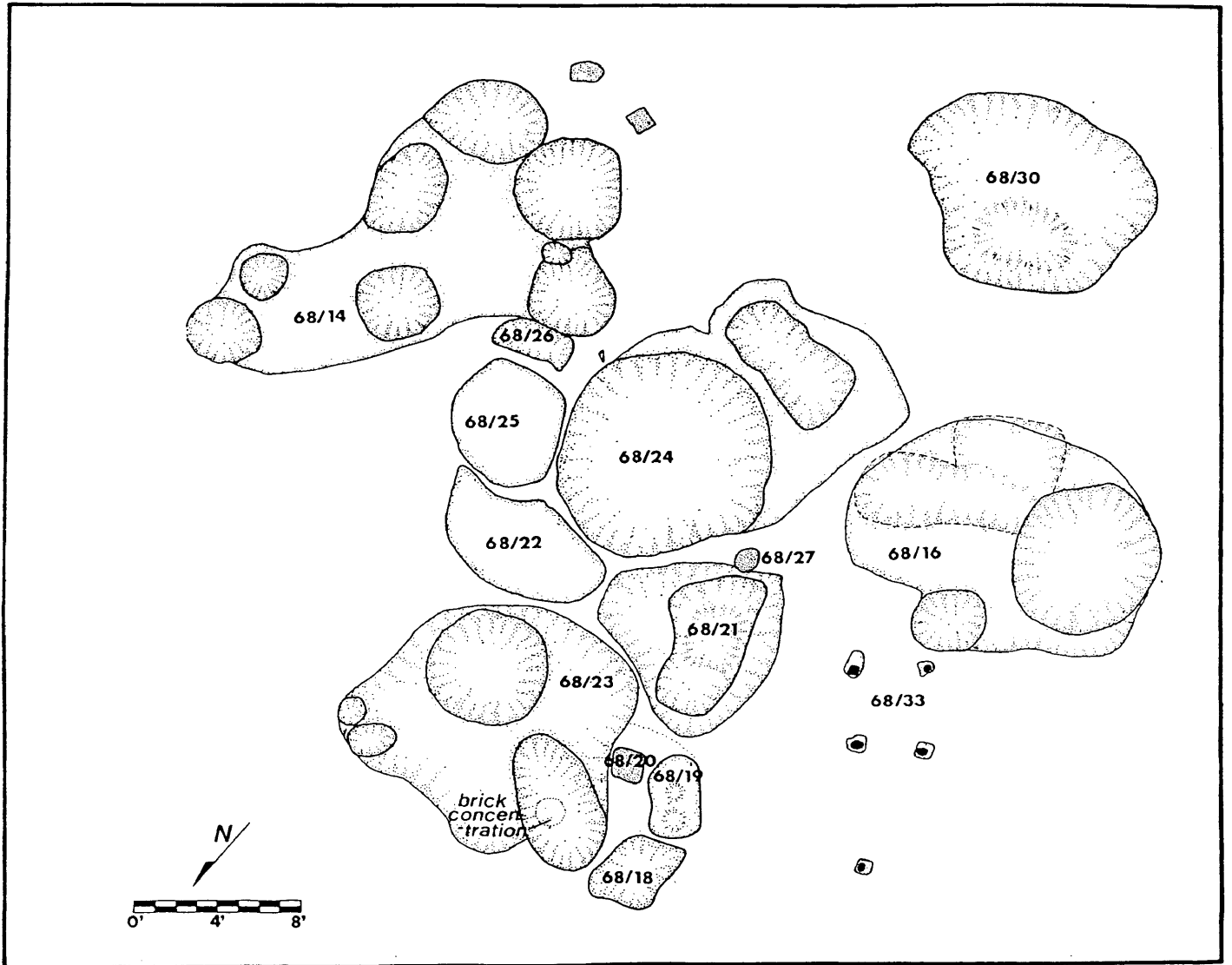


Figure 9. Plan of cluster of refuse pits.

tag at the end of a lace or cord), and a curtain ring. There were 87 white ball clay tobacco pipe stems fragments in the pit, but surprisingly few ceramics. Only 12 sherds were found in the entire pit. The artifacts dated to the period 1640-1660, while the tobacco pipe stem date was 1653.

Pit 68/23

The northernmost pit in the central cluster, this feature had maximum dimensions of 12' by 14'6". The 2'4" of fill was apparently a natural accumulation of three layers since the soil was essentially devoid of ash and had no oyster shell and little animal bone. The entire pit contained only three white ball clay tobacco pipe stems, three ceramic sherds, one wine bottle neck, and a few metal objects although two of the iron items were pistol barrels. The paucity of artifacts makes dating difficult, but the wine bottle glass neck and two tobacco pipe bowls suggest a tentative deposition date of 1680's.

Pit 68/16

This sizable pit, the westernmost of the two large middle pits in the central cluster, was 15' by 12' and 2'3" deep. Consisting of three depressions beneath the topmost layer, it was a principal repository of domestic trash, especially the upper layer of brown loam, black wood ash, and whole oyster shells. In addition to the 24 pounds of animal bone, which

was the second largest amount in any single layer from any of the pits, this layer was rich with ceramics containing 80 sherds from at least 12 different vessels. Five of the vessels were Morgan Jones coarseware, a Virginia pottery in Westmoreland County that operated for only a single year in 1677 and thus provides excellent dating material (Kelso and Chappell 1974). Unlike Pit 68/28, many tools were discarded in this pit, an axe blade, a piece of a saw blade, part of a scythe blade, six weeding hoes and fragments of two others.

The dating evidence is somewhat perplexing. The artifacts generally can be attributed to the period 1650-1680, although the Morgan Jones ceramics indicate the pit was filled after 1677. However, the 90 white ball clay tobacco pipe stems collected from Pit 69/16 yielded an average date of 1658.

Pit 68/24

Immediately east of 68/16 was a 17' by 12' pit made up of two depressions that extended 1'6" below subsoil. The top layer was brown loam, black wood ashes, and daub bits. The pit was rich in artifacts, but contained only a small quantity of shell and bone. Ceramics were plentiful as 111 sherds representing a minimum of 10 vessels were found. Among the other household artifacts in the pit were 21 white ball clay tobacco pipe stems, fragments of a glass case bottle and a wine bottle, an iron spit rack, two iron pot hooks, and a

brass candlestick. The pit revealed an unusually large number of agricultural tools, four weeding hoes, two grubbing hoes, and a shovel nosing. The comparatively small number of pipe stem fragments supplied a mean date of 1660. This date fits with the 1650-1680 date range for the 10 tobacco pipe bowls found in the pit, but the presence of 13 Morgan Jones sherds infers the seemingly irrefutable date of post-1677.

Pit 68/14

This feature, 22' long and 10' wide, was located off the southeast corner of Pit 68/24. It was comprised of seven smaller pits covered with a brown loam that was devoid of ash and shell. Aside from seven white ball clay tobacco pipe stem fragments and 19 sherds from at least five vessels, the artifacts were distinctly of a non-household nature. Discarded into the pit were a brass cow bell, three iron harness buckles, an iron forming chisel, an iron boat hook, part of a grubbing hoe, two weeding hoes, and an iron plowshare. The plowshare is an important find since it is the only seventeenth-century plowshare ever found in Virginia. Once again the lack of datable artifacts presents problems. However, the 16 Morgan Jones sherds from the pit indicate the pit was filled post-1677.

Pit 68/30

The southernmost of the large pits in the central

cluster, the 11' by 10' feature was filled with many whole oyster shells, the largest quantity of animal bone from any feature on the site, as well as an abundance of artifacts. Household objects included 22 sherds from 10 different vessels, 10 brass straight pins, a brass curtain ring, 87 wrought iron nails, two iron knife blades, parts from three hinges and a lock, glass from case and wine bottles, a brass tinker's dam. The only certain non-household artifacts from the pit were two grubbing hoes. Tobacco pipe bowls and ceramics cover a date range from 1650-1670, while the 57 white ball clay tobacco pipe stem fragments have a Binford formula date of 1666. This is difficult to reconcile with the five sherds of the post-1677 Morgan Jones ceramics.

Pit 68/8

This refuse area was composed of one large pit, nearly 17' in diameter on the surface that contracted into an 8' diameter depression that was 2'10" deep, with seven smaller pits or holes cutting or next to the main pit. All the pits had similar fill. The upper strata were heavily laden with artifacts, whole oyster shell, animal bone, black ash, and white/pink ash overlying sandy rain-wash layers in the bottom of the pits. It seems reasonable to suppose that all the pits were filled at the same time.

The artifacts were predominately household materials. Over 160 sherds from numerous vessels were found along with

486 white ball clay pipe stem fragments. Other objects were typically domestic -- case and wine bottle glass, straight pins, nails, daub, window glass, cauldron fragments, iron knife blades, brass spoon handles, a brass strainer, a brass scissors candle snuffer, and more. The few examples of non-household artifacts included four hoes, three saddle trees, parts of a saw, and a cannon ball.

Tobacco pipe bowl shapes, manufacturers' marks on pipe bowls and stems, and ceramics dated this deposit to 1680-1700 while the large sample of pipe stems produced a Binford formula date of 1678. It is particularly illuminating to compare the artifact assemblage date range and the tobacco pipe stem date to that on a coin found in Pit 68/8, a William III copper halfpenny minted in 1696. This appears to be an exaggerated instance of the tendency of tobacco pipe stems to yield dates, at least at Bennett Farm, toward the early end of date ranges derived from ceramics, wine bottle shapes, tobacco pipe bowl shapes, and tobacco pipe manufacturers' marks.

The dating discrepancies of the refuse pits may also be attributed to the presence of Morgan Jones pottery. Although the one kiln site in Westmoreland County is tightly dated (Kelso and Chappell 1974:53), it may be misleading since Morgan Jones ceramics have shown up in large quantities on seventeenth-century archaeological sites in Maryland and on almost every seventeenth-century site excavated in tidewater Virginia. It seems highly unlikely that one small kiln

working for only one year could have produced such large quantities of ceramics and sold them all over the Chesapeake. It may be that the single kiln was operating for more than one year, perhaps before 1677, or there are other as yet undiscovered kilns that were manufacturing ceramics identical to those at the Morgan Jones kiln site. This scenario is not untenable since Morgan Jones is documented to have been making pottery in Westmoreland County at least as early as 1669 (Kelso and Chappell 1974:53).

Faunal Remains

The study of faunal remains at Bennett Farm was limited to the animal bones recovered from the refuse pits. Although screens were employed in the excavation of the refuse pits only when quantities of small bones were encountered, the ability of the experienced field crew to recognize and retrieve faunal remains is confirmed by the total of 11,308 bones collected during the excavation of the refuse pits. Further, they were bones of all sizes and shapes, including such tiny objects as fish scales and crab claws. The remains were separated into two groups for identification and quantification; Pit 68/28 was studied separately from the rest of the refuse pits that were consolidated into a single unit of analysis.

Pit 68/28

The 1,237 identifiable bones from Pit 68/28 represent a minimum of 113 individual animals from 15 different species (Figure 10). Cattle, swine, and three species of fish supplied the preponderance of meat, over 3,000 pounds for nearly 93% of the total, while the rest of the animals provided only slightly more than 225 pounds of meat. Based on percentages of pounds of meat, cattle ranked first with 41%, fish second with 30%, and swine third with 22%. Seasonal animals like the blue crab and fish such as sheepshead, red drum, and black drum are evidence that the pit was filled during the spring and summer.

Miller (1980:12-13) has suggested that the environmental conditions and fishing habits of the inhabitants of Bennett Farm are responsible for preponderance of sheepshead, red drum, and black drum and the complete absence of any other species readily available in the Chesapeake Bay. The sheepshead, red drum, and black drum occupy the same habitat. They require water with high salinity and they are almost exclusively bottom-feeders, preferring to feed on oyster beds. Bottom fishing for these large animals was an activity utilizing specialized equipment. Many inventories list "sheepshead lines" and "drum hooks." While the Samuel Tompkins' inventory did not contain any such items, a large iron fish hook, four cm. in width, was found in Pit 28/28.

PIT 44Y068/28

Species		MNI	Pounds, meat	%
Cattle	<u>Bos taurus</u>	4	1350	41.49
Swine	<u>Sus scrofa</u>	7	700	21.51
Deer	<u>Odocoileus virginianus</u>	2	200	6.14
Raccoon	<u>Procyon lotor</u>	1	15	.46
Opossum	<u>Didelphis marsupialis</u>	1	8	.24
Gray Fox	<u>Urocyon cinereoargenteus</u>	1	-	-
Chicken	<u>Gallus gallus</u>	1	2.5	.07
Goose	<u>Chen sp.</u>	1	6	.18
Duck	<u>Anser sp.</u>	1	2	.06
Brant	<u>Branta bernicla</u>	1	3	.09
Box Turtle	<u>Terrapene carolinia</u>	1	.25	.00
Blue Crab	<u>Callinectes sapidus</u>	2	.4	.01
Black Drum	<u>Pogonias cromis</u>	5	125	3.84
Red Drum	<u>Sciaenops ocellata</u>	18	324	9.95
Sheepshead	<u>Archosargus probatoceph.</u>	69	517.5	15.90

Figure 10. Analysis of faunal remains from Pit 68/28.

All other Refuse Pits

While cattle, swine, and fish continued to be the primary sources of meat, the percentages changed drastically in these features that post-date Pit 68/28. The 1,693 identifiable bones in this later assemblage are the remains of 99 individuals from 23 different species (Figure 11). The 13 cattle, 19 swine, and 42 fish yielded 7,260 pounds of meat out of a total of 7,761 pounds or 94%, which is virtually identical to the percentage in Pit 68/28. However, while the meat from swine remained consistent, beef increased by 23% from 41% to 64%. Fish decreased by the same increment from 30% to 7%. The analysis documented the introduction of sheep/goats to the livestock holdings sometime after c.1660 and disclosed a peculiar occurrence about the contents of Pit 68/16. It contained a significantly larger proportion of fish bones than any of the later pits -- nearly 40% more -- as well as the remains of four different species of turtles.

Additionally, the faunal remains furnished insights into husbandry and butchery practices at Bennett Farm. Since none of the bones from any of the refuse pits had saw marks, the animals must have been butchered with an axe or cleaver. Almost 75% of the cattle were at least four years old when they were slaughtered. The differences in the slaughtering ages of swine was much less pronounced; slightly over 20% during their first year, about 33% during the second year, 33% during the third year, and 13% in the fourth or later year.

REFUSE PITS 44Y068/6,8,16,& 30

Species		MNI	Pounds, meat	%
Cattle	<u>Bos taurus</u>	13	4950	63.77
Swine	<u>Sus scrofa</u>	19	1750	22.54
Sheep/Goat	<u>Ovis aries/Capra hirca</u>	5	155	1.99
Deer	<u>Odocoileus virginianus</u>	2	200	2.57
Horse	<u>Equis caballus</u>	1	-	-
Raccoon	<u>Procyon lotor</u>	2	30	.38
Opossum	<u>Didelphis marsupialis</u>	1	8	.10
Gray Squirrel	<u>Sciuris carolinensis</u>	1	.8	.01
Red Fox	<u>Vulpes fulva</u>	1	-	-
Cat	<u>Felis domesticus</u>	1	-	-
Chicken	<u>Gallus gallus</u>	3	7.5	.09
Goose	<u>Chen sp.</u>	1	6	.09
Mallard	<u>Anas platyrhynchos</u>	1	2	.02
Turkey	<u>Branta bernicla</u>	1	7.5	.09
Box Turtle	<u>Terrapene carolinia</u>	1	.25	.00
Dmndbk Turtle	<u>Malaclemys terrapin</u>	1	.6	.00
Cooter Turtle	<u>Pseudemys sp.</u>	1	3	.03
Atl Loggerhd	<u>Caretta caretta</u>	1	80	1.03
Blue Crab	<u>Callinectes sapidus</u>	1	.2	.00
Blackfish	<u>Globicephala macrorhyncha</u>	1	-	-
Black Drum	<u>Pogonias cromis</u>	9	225	2.89
Red Drum	<u>Sciaenops ocellata</u>	9	162	2.08
Sheepshead	<u>Archosargus probatoceph.</u>	23	172.5	2.22

Figure 11. Analysis of faunal remains from later pits.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Excavation of an archaeological site can produce thousands of artifacts. Only by grouping them into meaningful categories, however, can they tell us about the people who used them. The eight groups used in the following analysis -- food consumption, food preparation and storage, agricultural equipment, non-agricultural tools, furniture and household activities, clothing and accessories, beds and bedding, and arms and horse gear -- have been effectively employed in many previous studies of Chesapeake material culture from archaeological sites. A significant advantage of this particular classification is that it can be applied to the items listed in a probate inventory as easily as it can to an archaeological assemblage. Therefore, it is possible to use these eight groups to construct an experiment in material culture and compare the artifacts recovered from the excavation of Bennett Farm to the items listed in Samuel Tompkins' 1702 probate inventory.

Before examining the two forms of material culture at Bennett Farm, consideration of the time element represented by the excavation and by the probate inventory is essential. The

Samuel Tompkins' probate inventory is a material culture scorecard of his household at a single moment in time. The site excavation, on the other hand, is a collection of objects that were acquired and discarded over a time span of 50 years or more. Logically, they should have a larger and more diverse assortment of items. However, both the inventory and the archaeological deposits belonged to a family, according to the available documentary evidence, that was of the middling planter rank of society.

Artifacts

Food Consumption

The only implements related to food consumption listed in the inventory are two and one-half dozen spoons and "baskets earthen cups". In contrast, the excavation produced a large and varied assemblage of items used in eating and drinking. Two latten spoon handles, nine iron knife blades, and two bone cutlery handles were unearthed. Ceramic flatwares present in the Tompkins' household consisted of six delFTWARE plates and two Staffordshire slipware dishes. Six Staffordshire cups, one Challis coarse earthenware cup, six Rhenish stoneware jugs, and one Rhenish stoneware tankard composed an assortment of drinking vessels. Other vessels found were two slipware posset pots, two coarse earthenware bowls, two porringers of Staffordshire Mottled Glaze and one of Challis, and one wine

glass.

Food Preparation and Storage

The appraisers of Samuel Tompkins' estate recorded several articles used in food preparation and food storage. Two iron pots, two iron spits, and an iron frying pan were used for cooking; a parcel of tubs, trays and pails and a brass mortar and pestle aided in preparation, while a "parcell of bottles" and a "parcell of Sider caske" provided storage facilities.

Archaeological remains of metallic food preparation objects consisted of one iron cauldron, one iron kettle, one iron pot hook, one iron spit rack, three iron skillet handles, and one iron vessel or utensil handle. Ceramic food preparation objects were limited to four Morgan Jones' pans, one Challis pan, a Morgan Jones' bowl, and a Colonoware bowl. Archaeological storage finds were five glass wine bottles, ten case bottles, four Rhenish stoneware bottles, two Bellarmine bottles, and two Morgan Jones' jugs. Additionally there were thirteen jars - nine manufactured by an unidentified Virginia potter, two Morgan Jones coarseware, one Merida coarseware, and one English stoneware.

Agricultural Equipment

Inventory references to objects associated with agricultural activities were confined solely to an old cart

and wheels and tackling for two cart horses. Excavation, on the other hand, yielded two shovel or spade nosings, one scythe blade, one plowshare, and an extraordinary total of twenty-six hoes.

Non-Agricultural Tools

The only non-agricultural tools listed in the probate inventory were two drawing knives and a grindstone. Tools excavated from the site included a carpenter's claw, mortising axe, felling axe, forming chisel, pit saw blade, boat hook, and a fish hook.

Furniture and Household Activities

Among the furniture contained in the inventory were a parcel of chests and boxes, wooden stools, table and formes while the furnishings consisted of two brass candlesticks, two small looking glasses, a table cloth, six napkins, a razor, and spectacles.

Archaeological evidence of furniture was scant, comprising only one iron box handle and two brass upholstery tacks. Artifacts of household activities were more plentiful -- a fragment of mirror glass, a brass candlestick, a brass scissor snuffer, a brass thimble, an iron clasp knife, 78 brass straight pins, two lead bale seals (objects associated with bundles of cloth), one brass watch key, four delftware ointment pots, one glass phial, one iron jew's harp, and a

brass toy pistol barrel.

Clothing and Accessories

The inventory listed a hat, pocket book, and "wareing cloths" which may have been kept neat by the box iron and heaters that were also listed. Remnants of garments found archaeologically were a brass aiglet (a tapered metal tag used to keep the end of a cord or lace from unraveling), a white glass cufflink or button, a glass bead, a brass chain, and two brass strap buckles.

Beds and Bedding

At the time of Samuel Tompkins' death, appraisers recorded four feather beds and an old couch feather bed. Of these, one was accompanied by a bolster, rug, blanket, and pair of sheets; a second was outfitted with the same accoutrements along with a pillow and bed cord; two other "old" beds were appropriately covered with "old furniture;" the remaining bed had only an old rug to make it more accommodating. This category was represented archaeologically solely by three brass curtain rings.

Arms and Horse Gear

According to the inventory, Samuel Tompkins owned "two guns and case of Pistolls & holsters and sword" as well as two saddles and a bridle. Discarded weaponry consisted of three

iron pistol barrels, one musket barrel, one matchlock, and one cannon ball. Archaeological examples of horse equipment were limited to eight saddle trees, six iron strap buckles, and two brass harness decorations.

Artifact Summary

This exercise points out some of the glaring discrepancies between the documentary and archaeological records at Bennett Farm. There seems to be a general underrepresentation by the probate inventory for most of the categories of objects. Once again ceramics, which constituted a major part of the total archaeological material culture, was essentially unrecorded in the Samuel Tompkins' probate inventory; 68 ceramic vessels were recovered from the excavation compared with the "earthen cups" listed in the inventory. Additionally, several of these ceramic pieces -- specifically plates, individual drinking vessels, and posset pots -- would be characterized as amenities as defined by the Horn and Walsh studies. A second conspicuous difference between the written and excavated evidence is the large number of tools found in the ground, indicating the farmstead was better equipped than the probate inventory suggested. Conversely, there was little archaeological evidence for furniture, bedding, and clothing, all important elements of everyday life.

York County estates comparable to Samuel Tompkins' also exhibit a near absence of ceramics and tools (Appendix A). An inventory made sometime between 1702 and 1706 for Samuell Johnson had a total estate value of just over L34 that included livestock, but no laborers (YCDOW 11:524-525). The sole reference to ceramics was "a parcell of Earthen Ware" in a wide-ranging entry that also contained glass bottles and sheep shears. Four iron wedges were the only objects that could be considered tools. Similarly, an inventory of the estate of John Mathews, dated 1702 and appraised with livestock and no laborers at nearly L36, contained a "parcell of Earthen Ware" and three weeding hoes (YCDOW 12:11-12). Like the Tompkins' inventory, both the Johnson and Mathews' inventories had detailed descriptions of beds and bedding.

To more fully interpret both sources of evidence, one would like to know more about the useful life of the objects found in the ground and in the inventory. Further conclusions depend upon information about the number of people who used the objects and for how long. Perhaps large numbers of people used a small number of items over many years. Possibly similar numbers of people were well equipped for only a few years. Guesses of this sort demonstrate how important fuller information can be to a meaningful reading of the evidence.

Faunal Analysis

Perhaps the most intriguing revelation regarding livestock at Bennett Farm is that the probate inventory does not list any hogs in the estate, while the archaeological record indicates unquestionably that swine were present in quantities throughout the life of the site. One possible explanation is that the hogs were allowed to roam freely, consequently they were unavailable for appraisal and not included in the inventory.

Architecture

Archaeology is the only source of specific information of the number and forms of buildings at Bennett Farm. The excavation uncovered evidence that the main dwelling, Structure 1, originally was a 20' square, one-room house which was later transformed by an addition into a standard hall-parlor house. A generic outbuilding was the only other major structure at the site. The central living area seems to have been extremely sparse; there were no indications that fencelines connected buildings or enclosed the yard and/or garden.

Although there are no records that describe the structures at Bennett Farm, a review of seventeenth-century architecture in York County may help explain the significance

of the buildings found during the excavation of the site. Because building contracts, descriptions, drawings, and paintings are exceedingly scarce, probate inventories are one of the better documentary sources of information about seventeenth-century houses. Most of the inventories of this period are not room-by-room descriptions because most houses had only one room. This condition is critical to understanding life in seventeenth-century Virginia. The deceased householder owned so little that he conducted all his life's activities in only one or two rooms. Many probate inventories of low value seem to belong to this category. Illustrative of these less affluent inhabitants of York County are two inventories, one from 1672 for a house that consisted solely of a "Lodging Room" (YCDOW 5:30) and another from 1676 that distinguishes between an "Inner Room" and a "Kitchen" (YCDOW 6:277). Both estates rank among the poorest in the county.

Of special value are the probate inventories with room-by-room designations. They provide such architectural details as the name, function, and contents of each room and/or dependency. Although there are relatively few room-by-room inventories, they offer a loose framework of architectural information from which one can generalize about the number and types of buildings constructed by planters of various social and economic levels.

Of the 247 surviving York County inventories from 1647-

1705, there are 27 room-by-room probate inventories. The first date marks the year of the earliest surviving room-by-room inventory. The later date was arbitrarily selected. However, other scholars have used it because most inventories before 1705 reflect seventeenth-century patterns of ownership of goods. After that date changes are more clearly seen. In a two room house the main living area -- where cooking, eating, and a variety of daily activities were carried out -- was known as the "hall" or sometimes as the "outer room" in seventeenth-century houses. The room reserved as sleeping quarters was called the "parlor," "inner room," or occasionally the "chamber."

The hall appears in 24 inventories while the parlor is identified in 25 inventories. The absence of a specific reference to the hall or parlor can be attributed to several factors. Carelessness on the part of the appraisers certainly must be considered. For example in several inventories rooms labeled as "room over the parlor" are listed even though there is no accompanying entry for a parlor (YCDOW 4:191-192). In some instances, an unusual name was given to a room which was functionally equivalent to the hall or parlor. One such inventory described a house that contained seven rooms. Although no parlor was mentioned, one of the rooms was probably a separate sleeping space. A "Beare Room" containing much bedroom furniture was in all likelihood the parlor (YCDOW 4:191-192).

<Kitchens are the third most frequently listed room or dependency. Although sometimes it is not possible to discern whether the kitchen is a separate building, kitchens occur in 22 of the probate inventories. Four of the inventories without kitchens belonged to poorer planters, indicating that cooking was done in a multi-purpose room in the house. The remaining inventory that did not have a kitchen apparently may have been an oversight by the appraisers since many kitchen objects were listed in the inventory. Inventories of the kitchens of several of wealthier planters ^{show that they} were probably used as sleeping quarters for servants or slaves. Two kitchens had second floors containing bed furniture (YCDOW 8:362-363), while a third had "flock beds" (YCDOW 6:600) and a fourth had "servant's bedding" (DOW 4:203) within the kitchen proper.

After the numerous kitchens, stores are a distant fourth in the frequency of room types. They are recorded in only nine of the 27 inventories. Like kitchens, stores were either a small, separate building or a room off the main house. They were used for storage rather than the modern connotation of shop. Also, it appears that there were two kinds of stores; the most prevalent was a facility for storing small numbers of large, bulky objects like casks, barrels, chests, bushels, tubs, hides, and saws. The second type of store was associated with wealthy planters who doubled as merchants. Their stores functioned as warehouses. They were filled with

an assortment of cloth and clothing, shoes, buttons, and numerous imported agricultural and cooking implements which they obtained from European ships and would in turn exchange with their lesser neighbors for tobacco.

Seven inventories contained milkhouses, which like stores, were generally associated with more substantial households. Milkhouses, or dairies, were constructed to promote a cool environment for the manufacture of cream, butter, and cheese. Further, the presence of milk pans and a churn in a "buttery" suggests that dairying activities had superseded or were incorporated with the original function of a buttery, which was the storage of beverages and liquors. The name derives from "butts" or casks and not from butter.

Only two butteries were recorded in the inventories. Their contents suggest they no longer served as facilities for producing dairy products or storing liquids, but were general storage rooms containing lumber, casks, and lead shot among other items (YCDOW 3:154). Nevertheless, an important point to note is that even though the use of the two butteries had changed from their original function, they were still referred to as butteries. The nomenclature may indicate that there is something unique about their construction, a difference of form rather than function that distinguished them from other kinds of outbuildings. Documentary evidence offers little help in resolving this question. Archaeological information suggests one possibility: that butteries were buildings that

had sunken floors covered with brick or tile (Kelso 1984:77-78).

Two other kinds of storage rooms were listed in the York ✓
County inventories. There were six entries for sheds and five ✓
for cellars. Both were used to store a variety of household
goods, though occasionally a bedstead, bolster, and blanket
can be found in a shed, implying that it was not simply a
small roof attached to a house but an enclosed addition. Some
of the wealthiest estates had highly specialized rooms or
outbuildings such as a balcony, a study, a springhouse, a hen ✓
house, a tobacco house, two porches, and three closets.

Several quite elaborate houses appear in the county's
late seventeenth century inventories. In 1689, Mr. Rowland
Jones left a two-storey, 11 room house which included a
balcony, study, and five chambers (YCDOW 8:363-363). Two ✓
years later, the inventory of Mrs. Elizabeth Diggs details a
well-appointed dwelling consisting of 12 rooms, two of which
had the sophisticated appellations of "the yellow room" and
"the red room". Since no second storey ~~listed~~ was listed and
only garrets were mentioned, Mrs. Diggs' home must have been
a sprawling affair. Finally, in 1694, the heirs of Nathaniel ✓
Bacon, Esq., received a house of at least nine rooms that had
four separate bedrooms, one of which was used only by Madam
Bacon (YCDOW 10:274-277). These three examples underscore a
trend toward more rooms noticeable in the room-by-room probate
inventories of houses of the last quarter of the seventeenth

century. Eleven room-by-room inventories between the years 1676-1705 have an average of 8.3 rooms per inventory. For the period 1647-1675, there are 16 room-by-room inventories with an average of 5.3 rooms per inventory.

The presence of single-room dwellings belonging to poorer residents of York County supports the archaeological findings at Bennett Farm which suggest that the principal structure at the site was originally a 20' square cell. The only outbuilding at Bennett Farm, Structure 2, may have been a kitchen since kitchens were the most frequently listed outbuilding in the room-by-room probate inventories.

CHAPTER V
THE MIDDLEING SORT

Bennett Farm and Utopia

Two other archaeological sites serve as useful comparisons to Bennett Farm, the Utopia site and the Pettus site both at Kingsmill in James City County. Excavated by William M. Kelso (1984:72-76), then Senior Historical Archaeologist with the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, Utopia dates to the period c.1660-1710 and was definitely part of the landholdings of Col. Thomas Pettus who was known to have been a great planter. Although documentary evidence pertaining to Utopia is meager, a 1692 Pettus inventory refers to "chattle at Utopia" (Kelso 1984:212), implying that Utopia was inhabited by tenants or servants of Col. Pettus. The Pettus site was the home plantation of Col. Pettus and represents one of the most thoroughly investigated great planter sites in seventeenth-century Virginia.

The Utopia site consisted of a single dwelling, 18' by 29', with wood-and-clay chimneys, glazed windows, and a half-basement lined with brick. There was also a 10' by 18' outbuilding, a well, a fenced garden with associated ditch and

pit. The buildings compare favorably, architecturally and numerically, with those at Bennett Farm. The obvious disparity between the two sites -- the Utopia dwelling having a brick-lined basement -- may be an environmental rather than a wealth/status difference since the extremely low land elevation of the Poquoson area makes cellars and basements impractical.

A ceramic analysis of the two sites shows further similarities. The total minimum number of ceramic vessels accumulated during the approximately 40-year existence of Utopia is 60 (Figure 12) and from the roughly 54-year occupation of Bennett Farm is 68 (Figure 13). These are relatively close figures especially when considered against the total minimum number of ceramic vessels from the site of a great planter (see page 77). Both sites also contain few specialized vessels, no porcelain, and no matched sets. Locally-made pottery and Colonoware (which is believed to have been made by slaves and possibly Native Americans), the two least expensive kinds of pottery, comprise the major percentage of the ceramic assemblage at each site; 33 of 60 vessels (55%) at Utopia and 25 of 68 vessels (38%) at Bennett Farm. The predominance of Colonoware at Utopia may be due to its greater availability to the Utopia residents. Col. Pettus was a slave owner. The Tompkins at Bennett Farm may have had less access to Colonoware and greater access to Morgan Jones products. ^P Faunal analysis also disclosed a parallel

BENNETT FARM CERAMIC ANALYSIS

Rhenish Stoneware

6 jugs
1 tankard
4 bottles
2 Bellarmine bottles

Staffordshire Mottled Glaze

2 porringers

Delftware

4 drug jars
4 ointment pots
6 plates

Staffordshire Iron Glazed

1 tea bowl

Staffordshire Slipware

4 large cups
2 small cups
2 dishes
2 posset pots

Buckley

1 pan or jar

Colonoware

1 bowl

English Brown Stoneware

1 storage jar

Merida

1 storage jar

Morgan Jones

2 jars
2 jugs
4 pans
1 straight-sided bowl

Challis

1 porringer
1 bowl
1 cup
1 pipkin
1 pan

Other Local

1 bowl
9 jars

Figure 12. Minimum number vessels from Bennett Farm.

UTOPIA CERAMIC ANALYSIS

Rhenish Stoneware

2 Bellarmine bottles
1 footed vessel

Other Local

1 pan
4 mugs
4 storage jars
2 unknown

Delftware

4 drug jars
2 bowls
5 plates
3 mugs
1 posset pot
1 vessel lid

Staffordshire Slipware

2 cups
1 bowl

Colonoware

7 jars
5 bowls
4 pots, trileg
1 jug
1 porringer

Iberian

1 storage jar, olive

Challis

2 mugs
1 pan
1 plate

North Devon Gravel-Tempered

2 pans
1 storage jar

Staffordshire Coarseware

1 butter pot

Figure 13. Minimum number of vessels from Utopia.

between Bennett Farm and Utopia. Henry Miller (1978) observed a major difference in the slaughter age of swine at the Utopia and Pettus sites. He attributed the variation to the ability of a great planter to control his swine stock by keeping the animals in pens and monitoring their growth, while the Utopia hogs were allowed^{to} roam freely and were taken at random. Swine slaughter patterns at Bennett Farm closely resembled those at Utopia (Figure 14), suggesting that middling planters, or their equivalents, did not have sufficient resources of time and/or labor to husband their swine.

Middling Planters versus Great Planters

Another way to look at the life style of a middling planter is to compare the artifact assemblages and architectural information from probable middling planter archaeological sites to those of great planters from the same period and from the same region. In addition to Bennett Farm and Utopia, one other suspected middling planter site, the Richard Trotter site in Poquoson, has been excavated. Four seventeenth-century great planter sites from the same region as the three middling planter sites, lower tidewater Virginia, have been extensively excavated. They are the Boldrop site in Newport News, Causey's Care in Charles City County, the Pettus site in James City County, and the Augustine Warner site in Poquoson. A brief historical and archaeological summary for



Figure 14. Slaughter ages of swine at Pettus, Utopia, Bennett Farm (after Henry Miller, 1978, 1980).

each site precedes discussion of certain artifact groups and architectural characteristics of the sites.

Trotter

Richard Trotter, born c.1644, inherited a tract in the 1650's that was originally patented by Augustine Warner. Archaeological evidence suggests that the Trotter house was constructed c.1665. Trotter seemingly led the life of a small successful planter. The only office he ever held was that of surveyor of highways for the lower precinct of Poquoson. Further, the number of laborers he owned throughout his lifetime is well documented and comparing his labor force to other York County labor owners during the 1670's and 1680's places Trotter slightly above the average. He died in 1699, and his wife followed him one year later. They had no heirs and the site appears to have been abandoned at this time.

The Trotter site was stripped of plowzone and revealed a post-in-the-ground dwelling, one outbuilding, a well, and two refuse pits. In addition to disposing of trash in pits, Trotter cast refuse along the slope of the adjacent creek and only a small sample of this material was collected. Trotter's presence at the site was confirmed by the discovery of an "IW" wine bottle seal that belonged to James Williams whose widow Anne became Trotter's wife (VDHR 1979).

Boldrop*what land?*

Samuel Stephens acquired this land from William Clayborne in 1631. Stephens was the son of Richard Stephens, a member of the House of Burgesses, and Elizabeth Piercey Stephens, the daughter of the Abraham Piercey, the Cape Merchant and one of the most powerful men in Virginia. A 1636 patent suggests that Elizabeth Piercey Stephens controlled 500 acres at Boldrop as a dower right. Two years later she married Sir John Harvey, former Governor of Virginia. Elizabeth Piercey Stephens Harvey died in 1652, and her property reverted to her son Samuel Stephens.

The plowzone at Boldrop was mechanically stripped from the site to reveal a semisubterranean house, one large post-in-the-ground building, two smaller post-in-the-ground buildings (one of which was partitioned), a well, a 20' long ditch, and three shallow pits. The bulk of the artifacts from the site were recovered from the 16' deep well. The shallow pits, ditch, and semisubterranean house contributed the remainder of the assemblage with some finds coming from postholes (VDHR 1986).

It is believed that at least one building was located on an adjacent lot and not available to investigation. A fragment of glass bearing the signature of "Eliza Harvie" was found in the well, supporting the hypothesis that this site was a Harvey property from c.1636-1652.

Causey's Care

This site was the home of Walter Aston who represented the Charles City area in the House of Burgesses in the late 1620's and early 1630's. He became a Justice of the Peace and a Lieutenant Colonel in the militia. A 1634 patent refers to Lt. Col. Aston as a "Gentleman." Aston died in 1656 at the age of 49, and his widow married Edward Hill of neighboring Shirley Plantation. Walter Aston II died ten years later, a date which appears to coincide with the demise of Causey's Care.

The Causey's Care site was mechanically stripped of plowzone uncovering a vast complex of buildings. A 12' x 20' brick-lined cellar was attached to a 20' x 40' post-in-the-ground building believed to be the principal dwelling. The cellar was rich in artifacts as were two root cellars and three shallow pits. A 12' x 16' unlined cellar also produced many artifacts. Some of the outbuildings at the site were a barn, a dairy/buttery, metal-working sheds, and a singularly unique grain drying kiln. No well was found, though there was some indication that a spring may have been the source of water. Evidence of occupation at the site by the Aston family was bolstered by two locally-made pipe bowls with the initials "WA" inscribed on the bowl (VDHR 1984).

Pettus

Thomas Pettus I, the twelfth son of a wealthy English

merchant family, came to Virginia in 1641 and soon acquired several influential political positions. He served as justice at the Quarter Courts, Colonel in the militia, and for nearly 20 years was a member of the Governor's Council -- perhaps the most powerful office a planter could attain. Col. Pettus died in 1669. His son, Thomas Pettus II, held the estate until his death in 1691 which seems to mark the end of occupation at the Pettus Site.

Stripped of plowzone, the site consisted of a main house and five outbuildings that were all post-in-the-ground structures. An addition to the main house had a half-cellar filled with refuse. One large trash pit, a well, a buttery, a smokehouse, a kitchen, and a quarter were found in the yard behind the main house. "TP" wine bottle seals found at the site confirm the presence of the Pettus family. The entire site was found and excavated (Kelso 1984:76-80).

Warner

Augustine Warner, described as a Gentleman in a 1635 patent, settled in York County for only a short time. However, before he left for Gloucester County sometime between 1652-1656, he became a Justice of the Peace and a Colonel in the militia.

The Warner site was comprised of a main house, a well, one outbuilding, and a trashpit. This site is located immediately along the bank of a creek. A large quantity of

artifacts from the site was discarded along the creek rather than in trash pits. Because the refuse area along the creek was not excavated, the artifact assemblage is incomplete. The site is included in this study for the presence/absence of certain items rather than for quantification. The site has been identified to Warner by tracing land titles in the York County records (VDHR 1979).

Artifacts

The significance of ceramics on seventeenth-century archaeological sites continues to be a subject of conjecture. With the exception of certain pottery types like porcelain, or forms such as punch bowls, ceramics generally have very little value in the seventeenth century. This perception is seemingly substantiated by the virtually complete absence of ceramics in probate inventories. Yet, as archaeological excavations have shown, ceramics make up a large percentage of the material culture of planters of every economic and social stripe; therefore, ceramics must be an essential component of household equipment. Even the crudest type of pottery -- locally-made coarseware and Colonoware -- fulfilled a need of sufficient importance to support the existence of itinerant potters (Straube 1985, Fleet 1915:10,17). The significance of ceramics as evidence reflecting past human behavior has been reinforced by archaeological studies that have linked changes

in seventeenth-century Virginia social structure to changes in ceramic assemblages (Neiman 1980, Pogue 1990).

The universality and inexpensiveness of the vast majority of ceramic types may explain why there is little, if any, meaningful disparity exhibited in the types of ceramics acquired by different wealth groups. Summarized below are the quantities of the four major ceramic types found at each of the sites previously discussed:

	MNI*	Stone ware	Delft ware	Slip ware	Coarse/Colono ware
<u>Middling:</u>					
Utopia	60	5%	25%	5%	55%
Bennett Fm	68	20%	21%	15%	38%
Trotter	36	36%	22%	14%	28%
<u>Great:</u>					
Warner	?	?	?	?	?
Boldrop	?	?	?	?	?
Causey's Cr	?	?	?	?	?
Pettus	348	15%	32%	3%	50%

*minimum number of individual vessels

The obvious difference between the middling planters and Pettus is the striking contrast between the total number of vessels. Otherwise, the only trend these figures show is that the contents of the ceramic assemblages of middling planters and great planters consisted of the same kinds of pottery in

similar proportions. In fact, these figures may dispel some impressionistic ideas about wealth groups. For example, some may be surprised by the large percentage of coarse earthenware and colonoware vessels at Pettus.

If MNI percentages of ceramic types do not show any distinctions between middling and great planters, perhaps a more fine-grained analysis is necessary. The following are more specific categories of ceramics:

	Sets	Por	NISlip	Chargers	Special*
<u>Middling:</u>					
Utopia	N	N	N	N	1-2
Bennett Fm	N	N	N	N	1-2
Trotter	N	N	N	N	2+
<u>Great:</u>					
Warner	N	N	Y	Y	2+
Boldrop	N	Y	Y	Y	many
Causey's Cr	Y	Y	Y	Y	many
Pettus	Y	Y	Y	Y	many

*Specialized objects include salts, punch bowls, and posset pots

Por = porcelain, NISlip = North Italian slipware

This analysis shows clear distinctions between wealth groups. The characteristic that defines all of the above ceramic categories is that they are all ^{not - unnecessary!} non-utilitarian. A settler could easily survive without possessing any of these

ceramic items listed above. The presence of these items may be a function of conspicuous consumption in the seventeenth century.

There appear to be other non-ceramic artifact groups, which also could be classified as amenities, that are diagnostic of great planters. The following comparison shows a sharp differentiation between middling and great planters:

	Wine glasses	Buttons	Fireplace Equip.
<u>Middling:</u>			
Utopia	N	N	N
Bennett Fm	N	N	N
Trotter	N	N	N
<u>Great:</u>			
Warner	N	N	Y
Boldrop	Y	Y	Y
Causey's Cr	Y	Y	Y
Pettus	Y	Y	Y

This, of course, is a very simplistic comparison of sites, but it does suggest refinements for future analysis. An alternative method would be to compare sites or groups by forms such as plates, bowls, platters, cups, etc.

Architecture

Another way to look at differences between wealth groups is to examine architecture. The following reveals several characteristics of housing that distinguish the seventeenth-century elite from their lesser neighbors:

	House*	addition*	glazed [?]	brick	outbldgs(*)
<u>Middling:</u>					
Utopia	522	81	Y	Y	1(180)
Bennett Fm	690		Y	N	1(225)
Trotter	610	80	N	N	1(240)
<u>Great:</u>					
Warner	756		Y	N	1(240)
Boldrop	800		Y	Y	3(705)
Causey's Cr	800	240	Y	Y	6(1495)
Pettus	900	704	Y	Y	5(1252)

*square feet

Clearly there is a trend for the elite to have larger houses with some masonry (brick chimneys, brick-lined cellars, brick-paved floors) that is matched not only by an increasing number of outbuildings, but outbuildings for very specialized functions. The Bennett Farm and Trotter outbuildings appear to be general-purpose structures unlike the smokehouse and buttery at Pettus; the grain-drying kiln, dairy, and metal-

working sheds at Causey's Care; or the partitioned outbuilding at Boldrop.

Conclusions

The Bennett Farm site is one of the very few excavated sites which can be shown through historical records and comparative archaeological evidence to belong to a class of seventeenth-century Virginia society identified as middling ✓ planters. In the case of middling planters, much of their material life cannot be found in the written record. Archaeology is not only the primary source of seventeenth-century architectural information for middling planters, but it also seems to provide a more complete picture of their material culture. Although considerable documentary evidence and archaeological information tell about the people who lived at Bennett Farm, neither source of knowledge alone is entirely satisfactory. Accordingly, what kind of life style can be postulated for seventeenth-century middling planters using both the written records and archaeological data from Bennett Farm?

The dwelling at Bennett Farm was a typical seventeenth-century post-in-the ground house with a two-room, hall-parlor plan. The 20' by 34.5' living space is not that much smaller ✓ thanⁿ the core houses of some of the great planters; for example, the core houses at Causey's Care and Boldrop were

only 20' by 40'. The Bennett Farm house had a wood-and-clay ✓ chimney or smoke hood as did the houses at all the sites mentioned in this study, except for Pettus. During the last quarter of the seventeenth century, four to five feather beds ("bed" was the seventeenth-century term for mattress) were laid directly on the dirt floor of the Tompkins' dwelling and likely the outbuilding as well. The presence of just one outbuilding is consistent with the archaeological evidence uncovered at middling planter sites. The York County room-by-room probate inventories suggest that these outbuildings may have been kitchens that doubled as sleeping quarters for servants.

The diet at Bennett Farm, as manifested by faunal remains, was not unlike the diet of the great planters. The evidence from the Bennett Farm refuse pits indicates that after an initial heavy use of wild food, especially fish, during the first years of the site, cattle and swine became the principal food source just as they did for the great planters. Once established, a middling planter apparently did not rely on wild game to supplement his diet. Perhaps hunting and fishing was deemed improvident by a planter to whom time and labor were precious.

As with most of the colonists, tobacco cultivation was the basis of life for a middling planter. The great emphasis on tobacco production is emphasized by large number of hoes found at Bennett Farm, though some of them also could have

been used in gardens. The presence of a plowshare on the site is surprising since it is suited for the cultivation of grains rather than tobacco. This implies that a middling planter lived well enough to experiment with his economic framework.

Furniture was ^{at} a premium, and there was little of it in the Tompkins' household. Wooden stools and benches were the only seating furniture; there were no chairs. Surplus income seems to have been devoted to beds and bed fittings. The Tompkins' and other middling planters had the means and desire to acquire a few pewter eating and drinking vessels (YCDOW 5:65) and individual ceramic table items such as ~~the~~ plates, dishes, cups, and mugs.

Although the Tompkins and all middling planters were not self-sufficient and participated in an international economic system, they were part of a traditional, precapitalistic life style based on agriculture and animal husbandry in which well-being was achieved by ~~physical~~ physical labor (Braudel 1967:xi-xiv). The Bennett Farm site is marked by a complete lack of extravagance -- wells were lined with barrels or not at all, swine were unpenned, and when the house needed repair, it was propped up instead of replacing rotted posts. This study shows that, despite the hardships of life during the first 100 years of settlement in Virginia, the basic needs of seventeenth-century middling planters were adequately met.

APPENDIX A

Transcription of the probate inventories
of John Mathews and Samull Johnson

Inventory and Appraisement of John Mathews June 24 1702

one old Small feather bed halfe worne 3 old Blankets one pillo one old Rugg and BedStead	4	10	0
to one Small feather bed halfe worne 3 old blankets one old Ruff one old bolster 2 little Pillows and one Small bedstead	3	10	0
One old flock bed & Pillow 2 old Blankets an old Rugg and an old BedStead	1	0	0
to a parcell of Coopers Tools	0	15	0
to one Iron pestle and 2 Cutting knives Irons	0	5	0
to a parcell of old Iron	0	5	0
to 2 Small Ropes & a Rope Coller	0	1	0
A Small old Bread Tray 5 old Piggons 5 old Platters & [??] old Meal Sift[ers?]		[illeg]	
2 old Chests one Small one	1	0	0
an Old Cubbard and Couch an old table & Frame	1	5	0
22 pounds of Wooll	0	11	0
3 Iron pots and a Small on a Small old kittle	1	10	0
a pair of hand Irons	0	16	0
to 35 pounds of old Pewter	1	9	0
2 Small Spits an old pair of pottracks 2 Iron hoocks an old dripin pan an old Iron Ladle an old grying pan an old Brass Skimmer	0	15	0
3 Weeding hows	0	4	6
to a parcell of Earthen Ware	0	1	6
a Small Morter and pestell	0	2	6
to 2 baggs	0	3	0
2 Small barrows 2 poore Young Sowes and Eleven Small Shoates	2	12	0
an old Mare and Colt	3	10	0
	24	15	6
a Small Ewe	0	5	0
2 Cows & two Calves	4	15	0
1 three Year old Steare	1	8	0
1 two Year old Steare	1	0	0
1 two Year old Bull	1	0	0
1 Yearling	0	15	0
49 pounds of Dryed Meate	0	16	4
2 Ells 1/2 of Ozenbrigs	0	2	6
3 Yds 3/4 of Dyed Linen	0	3	8
12 Yds 1/2 of Blew Linen	0	8	4
5 Ells of Broad Canvas	0	5	10
4 Ells of Brown Linen	0	3	4
1/2 pound of Brown Thred	0	1	0
	11	3	2
	24	15	6
	35	18	8

An Account...of the Estate of Samull Johnson

Imps three Cowes and Calves at fifty Shillings			
Each Cow and Calfe	7	10	0
One Large Brindell Hifer	2	0	0
One Red and White at	1	10	0
One Young Bull at	0	15	0
Tow Mares at	3	0	0
One new Feather Bed and one bolster tickin and one halfe Worn Red Rugg and one paier of Bed Blankets	3	10	0
One Fether Bedd Bolster and Rugg and a pr of Blankets and tow Fether Pillowes at	3	5	0
Tow old Flock Beds and ould Blanket and three ould Cattail Pillowes at	1	2	0
One hhd and the Syder in it	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	23	12	0
Brought over	23	12	0
Three Iron Potts and Pothooks one Frying Pan and Gridirion and one Bradd Skillit at	1	15	0
Ten Pound of Pewter at	0	7	6
One Pewter Bason and four Pewter Plates and tow Pewter Porringers at	0	11	2
One Pewter Chamber Pot one Pewter Tankard and One Douzen of Pewter spoones and a old puter Tankrd	0	8	0
One Iron Candlestick and one Tin Candlestick and two Tin Pans and one Tin Tankard	0	2	6
A parcell of Earthen Ware and Glass Bottles and a paier of Sheep Shears	0	4	6
A parcell of Wooden Ware and tow Hare Sifters	0	15	0
Three Guns	2	0	0
One old Sadle and Sadle Tree	0	9	0
A parcell of old Iron and four Iron Wedges	0	12	0
Two old spinning Wheels and one pair of Wool Cards and one pair of too Cards	0	4	0
And Six Ells 1/2 of Dowlas	0	13	0
And three Baggs	0	3	0
Three Chests	0	16	0
Tow Rasers and a Hone and a Looking Glass	0	5	0
One Barro To Sows To Sow Shotts	1	11	0
A small Iron Pestill and Brush	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>9</u>
	34	11	5

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