International Journal of Historical Archaeology
https://doi.org/10.1007/s10761-019-00506-x

# Enslaved Household Variability and Plantation Life and Labor in Colonial Virginia

Maria Franklin[1]

Published online: 06 July 2019


## Abstract

A comparative analysis of artifacts recovered from three plantation quarter sites in Tidewater Virginia indicates that enslaved households varied with respect to their labor patterns and household economies. An approach which positions these households within the broader context of slavery illuminates how different labor demands on a smaller, urban versus large rural plantations resulted in household variability. Moreover, a gendered analysis of labor reveals how enslaved women's work challenges the universality of the private/public dichotomy.

**Keywords** Household variability · Virginia slavery · Household archaeology · Gender

## Introduction

During the third quarter of the eighteenth century, a small group of enslaved Virginians resided on a plantation in what was then the colonial capital and urban hub of Williamsburg. Tasked with raising crops for the man who owned them, John Coke, their enslavement and work as field hands placed them in the same category as the majority of creoles and Africans then living in the colony. Living and working on a middling plantation of 200 acres is one of the major factors that set them apart. By way of explanation, most enslaved Virginians were owned by, and labored for, a minority of men who possessed multiple plantations covering thousands of acres of arable land. These wealthy and politically-influential slaveowners, who counted the likes of Thomas Jefferson among their rank, owned dozens of enslaved adults and children. Although Coke possessed wealth, his status as a craftsman and tavern owner, and his enslavement of nine individuals, did not suffice in placing him within the top 1% of the tidewater's planter elite who owned 1,000 acres (404 ha) of land or more (Walsh 2010: 17).

✉ Maria Franklin
mfranklin@austin.utexas.edu

[1] Department of Anthropology, University of Texas, 2201 Speedway Avenue, Austin, TX 78712, USA

Smaller holdings (those with 20 or less enslaved individuals), like Coke's, were more numerous than the grand plantation estates of the elite where the vast majority of enslaved Virginians resided and worked.

Walsh (2010: 20–21) estimates that "Most of the slaveowners by the mid-eighteenth century between Williamsburg and Yorktown were small to middling white householders with land and slaves, and about a dozen were gentry planters." Still, far more archaeological research across Virginia has focused on plantations associated with the latter. Excavations over the years at Monticello, Rich Neck, Shadwell, Montpelier, Mount Vernon, Kingsmill, Utopia, Poplar Forest, Carter's Grove, and so on, have made significant contributions to the scholarship on Virginia slavery. More broadly, the archaeology of plantation slavery has led to new knowledge on enslaved lifeways through studies of foodways, cosmologies and rituals, consumerism, landscapes and the built environment (Agbe-Davies 2017; Bates et al. 2016; Fennell 2011; Funari and Orser 2014; Heath 1999a, Heath 2004; Heath and Bennett 2000; Singleton 1985). While archaeologists have legitimately expressed concern that this focus on slavery has led to a skewed perspective of the African American past (Franklin and McKee 2004: 3; Leone et al. 2005: 577, 590; Orser 1998: 65) there are questions that remain unanswered. For captive blacks and Africans, slavery was not a monolithic experience. Differences in agricultural economies, regions, time periods, and with respect to age, gender, occupation, and whether one was African- versus native-born meant that individuals had varied experiences with the institution of slavery. Thus, we have reached a point not where we have exhausted what can be learned from more archaeological research, but where our questions need to be focused in new directions.

Coke's plantation was both an urban and middling one, and occupied by a single household. As such, it stood in contrast to the sprawling network of much larger home and satellite plantations spread across the rural landscape where multiple enslaved families formed close-knit communities. What might the evidence from this site reveal about the heterogeneity of slavery? The purpose here is to complicate our understanding of enslaved lifeways by taking a closer, comparative look at enslaved households, their social relations and practices, and to consider the question of difference (Fesler 2004a; Galle 2004; Heath 2004; Reeves 2015; Young 2004). Rather than assume that there is an ideal type of enslaved household composed of field hands who occupied quarters away from the slaveowner's residence, I propose that there is evidence of household variability. That is, enslaved men and women formed households that were not uniform with respect to tasks, the scheduling of their time, and very likely the gendered division of labor. This finding is suggested by a comparative analysis of artifacts recovered from Coke's plantation with those of two contemporaneous sites, Rich Neck and Utopia IV.

In situating this research within household archaeology, I begin with a discussion of the literature relevant to this study and outline my concerns. Since the households that are the subject of this research were largely composed of kin-related members, I then discuss the history of enslaved family formation in colonial Virginia using Rich Neck as one prime example. The ability to form families, and by extension, kin-related households, constituted a major social transformation among enslaved Virginians. The presence of children strengthened their resolve to push for more autonomy and their communities within the quarters became the staging ground for the rich cultural and social life documented by scholars. I subsequently discuss the excavations conducted at

Coke's plantation by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (CWF) and the history related to the site. I summarize the evidence for social organization at all three sites: Coke's plantation, the Rich Neck quarter, and the Utopia IV quarter (Fig. 1). Although the sites were all located in the Williamsburg area and formerly occupied by people who labored in the field, dissimilarities between the artifact assemblages indicate that household-related practices varied. Coke's plantation, in particular, stood out, suggesting that labor practices – both within the home and for Coke – at this site differed from those associated with large plantation quarters. My interpretation as to why relies on viewing the household not as a separate and autonomous social group, but as one situated within plantation society, especially with respect to slaveowners' labor demands. As other scholars have shown, institutionalized slavery prevented people held captive from maintaining a bounded "domestic" life. The public and private worlds of enslaved households were inextricably intertwined.

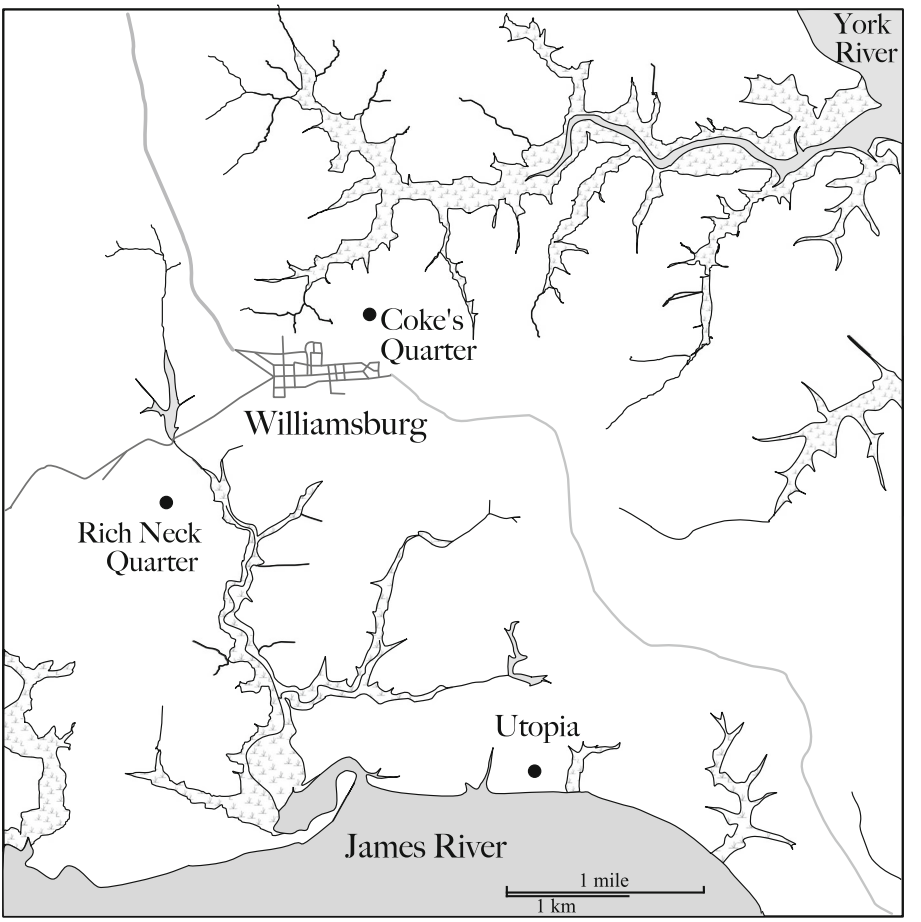


**Fig. 1** Locations of excavated quarters at Coke's (44WB90), Utopia, and Rich Neck plantations, Williamsburg, Virginia

## Household Archaeology

Since what constitutes a household is historically contingent, there is no singular definition that applies across time and space (Beaudry 2004: 255; Brandon and Barile 2004; Douglass and Gonlin 2012; Pluckhahn 2010) despite our best efforts to devise one (Netting et al. 1984; Wilk and Ashmore 1988). Scholars generally agree, however, that households should not be conflated with kinship ties and while they are connected to a locale and rooted to a place, their members are not necessarily co-resident (Beaudry 2015; Goldstein 2008; Souvatzi 2008: 11; Yanagisako 1979). Households are socially organized to carry out a range of activities and their members "share a sense of belonging to some group and set of goals" (Chesson 2012: 50). What these activities consist of varies across households, yet a review of the literature indicates that the most common ones are production, consumption, distribution (both pooling and the exchange of resources), reproduction, including socialization, and the transmission of property, rights, and roles over generations (Wilk and Rathje 1982: 627; see also Allison 1999: 8; Barile and Brandon 2004; Carballo 2011; Chesson 2012: 50; Douglass and Gonlin 2012; Foster and Parker 2012; Handler and Wallman 2014; Nash 2009; Netting et al. 1984; Pluckhahn 2010: 4; Prossor et al. 2012; Robin 2003; Souvatzi 2008; Tringham 2015). Yet, reducing households to what they do problematically assumes that a household is a homogenous social group that works seamlessly in tasks aimed toward self-sufficiency. If we instead conceive of households as an "ethnographic phenomenon embodying people, who live as distinct social units, and the relationships among and between such groups" (Foster and Parker 2012: 5), we begin to appreciate the linkages between identity, social relations, and the meanings tied to household actions. The implications with respect to this study is that by thinking of "households as made up of people, or at least types of people" (Hendon 2004: 274), questions concerning difference and power can take center stage, shifting our focus to the internal differentiation of households and the relationship between the household and broader society.

In the remainder of this section I discuss three topics that are germane to my research on Coke's plantation. The first is social relations within households, where previous studies question the assumption of household members as homogenous and uniformly cooperative, sharing the same goals and ideologies. The second topic concerns household variability, that is, the differences across households within a community or society. A contextual approach where households are viewed as embedded in broader social and economic relations, and comparative research on households, can both shed light on household variability. Finally, feminist archaeologists have made significant inroads in challenging the universality of "separate spheres," where women's roles are circumscribed to the private, domestic domain while men are naturalized as public actors (Spencer-Wood 2004). Their research has demonstrated that the private and public spheres are often blurred since women's economic and social roles within the home have had public implications (Moore 1988). Moreover, women assumed extra-household roles even in societies that normalized an adherence to the private/female and public/male dichotomy. I close with how I am defining the household for the purposes of this study.

Conceptualizing and interpreting households as internally diverse and different from one another, and addressing the interrelationships between households and broader

society are key issues in social and feminist archaeologies (Beaudry 2015; Brumfiel and Robin 2008; Chesson 2012; De Lucia 2010; Goldstein 2008; Hendon 2004; Moore 1988; Rotman 2015; Souvatzi 2008; Spencer-Wood 2004; Tringham 2015). Within households, lines of difference between its members means that "households are not necessarily harmonious units acting as unified decision-making entities; rather they are often domains of disagreement and inequality whose members may work independently, negotiate issues of production and consumption, or command/coerce/exploit the labor of some household members for the benefit of others" (Costin 2016: 121). Feminist scholars have illustrated, for example, how a gendered analysis of domestic labor that denaturalizes women's housework reveals that the home is a locus of gendered and classed "struggle" (Hartmann 1981). Historical archaeologists have likewise discovered that households are often internally contentious. Kruczek-Aaron's (2002) study of the nineteenth-century New York homesite of the Smith family unveiled that this household was an "arena of struggle" on two levels: between Gerrit Smith and his wife and daughter, Ann and Elizabeth, respectively, and between the Smith women and their live-in servants. Probing the letters written by Elizabeth to her mother revealed exasperations over the intractability of their domestics who simply could not, or would not, provide their dinner guests with the appropriate formal service expected of them. Reasoning that the success of these social functions reflected on their status among their peers, Ann and Elizabeth were caught between a rock and a hard place. They found themselves having to constantly supervise their working-class servants, yet relied upon their labor and understood that these women could leave their service at any time for better posts elsewhere. Thus, the tense class relations between the women of the household consisted of negotiation and compromise rather than complete dominance and subordination. Conflict also characterized the gender relations between Smith family members at times. Despite his wealth, Gerrit Smith's reformist politics idealized frugality and put him at odds with Ann and Elizabeth who had contrasting ideas as to how best to represent the family's public face. Kruczek-Aaron's (2002: 179) interpretation of the expensive transfer-printed ceramics recovered from the site point to Ann and Elizabeth's prerogatives for "extravagant consumption and display" when entertaining guests despite Gerrit's objections. Kruczek-Aaron (2002: 183) concludes by observing that "acknowledging that a household is made up of many individuals who have divergent goals and interests prevents us from generalizing about how the material culture was used by members of that household." Households formed within the context of slavery, where captive blacks and slaveowning-whites were in regular contact, were inevitably characterized by conflict (Barile 2004; King 1996). The intimacy of the kitchen, for instance, served as an arena of discord between enslavers and the skilled women who cooked for them (Deetz 2017: 45–6). For antebellum Arkansas, Stewart-Abernathy (2004) reinterprets "detached" kitchens relying less on the functional and practical reasons (smells, fire) for separating kitchens from the residence and instead emphasizes the roles of power and difference in their location. That is, slaveowners built kitchens, a domain of enslaved women's labor, separately from their homesteads to symbolize and materialize "the subservient position of those slave women, and the denigration of women's work in general" (Stewart-Abernathy 2004: 73). Urban plantation landscapes represented the contradictions inherent in slavery, where slaveowners

required their enslaved cooks to be close at hand for surveillance and control yet they also attempted to create distance from those they considered inferior.

The emphasis on difference has also led to a rise in studies of household variability. Households do not exist in isolation, but are part of broader spheres of social relations and political and economic processes (Fogle et al. 2015; Brumfiel 1991; Groover 2005; Hirth 2013; Kahn 2016; Mullins 1999; Robin 2003; Wood 2009). Approaching households as embedded in wider relations of power can illuminate differences between households within a society. That is, "an expectation of uniformity of households is illusory" (Souvatzi 2008: 11) since households even within the same community often vary with respect to status, access to resources, ritual practices, and in their economic activities (Blackmore 2011; Carballo 2009; Hendon 2004; Hirth 2013; Kahn 2016; Prentiss et al. 2012; Reeves 2015; Robin 2003; Springate and Raes 2013; Walker 2008). In her study of a post-emancipation African American community, Barnes (2011) discovered that households mobilized around blackness within the context of white racism yet simultaneously differentiated themselves along class lines through landownership. She points to the heterogeneity of power and status among African Americans where landowners were able to control what crops their tenants raised. With respect to the "spatial and practical activities" that served to engender a collective black identity, Barnes (2011: 693) notes further that, "the same activities also made clear class differences between those who could call upon a significant amount of extra-household labor and those who could not."

Archaeologists investigating plantation sites have also considered household variability, most often by comparing/contrasting those composed of domestics or skilled laborers versus field hands. These studies parallel ones by historians who observed that this occupational division deeply influenced what enslaved individuals experienced both daily and over their lifetimes (Beckles 1996; Blassingame 1979: 155; Genovese 1976: 331; Morgan 1998: 346–358; Stevenson 1996: 173–174). To varying degrees, historical archaeologists have found that differences in access to resources (especially food and clothes), higher quality of lodgings, and the privilege of residing with family members were likely contingent upon an individual's place within the slaveowners' occupational hierarchy (Crader 1990; Deetz 2017: 45; Kelso 1986; Kern 2010: 77–83, 101; Pogue 2005; Reeves 2015; Wilkie 2000: 123–133). For example, the household of Gracy Buckley, an enslaved seamstress owned by Andrew Jackson, possessed more non-provisioned goods than were recovered at the sites occupied by other enslaved men and women (Galle 2004). These included such items as toys, goods associated with medical care, tobacco pipes, and items related to adornment and appearance. Thus, Buckley's relatively privileged position within Jackson's hierarchy had real material and social consequences that influenced enslaved household variability at the Hermitage. Galle (2004: 67) states that, "Specialized occupations gave certain slaves access to money and goods and, when allied with similarly successful or valued individuals either through marriage or kinship, resulted in households with potentially more economic success than other households." Yet Galle (2004: 67) is also careful to note that despite occupational differences and disparities in access to resources, relations between members of the enslaved community were not "antagonistic" (see also Battle 2004). Young (2004) reaches a similar conclusion based on her study of enslaved women who worked as domestics on Kentucky plantations. These women capitalized on their position by negotiating with their slaveowners for various privileges: elevating

their households' food security, better occupations for their children, and bargaining to keep them from being sold. Young (2004: 143) suggests that, "The same power may have been used to protect the entire slave community." This observation is buttressed by Young's analysis of ceramics from Locust Grove Plantation. Her results indicate that enslaved women were instrumental in cultivating community solidarity through gift giving. These studies reveal that enslaved household variability was at least partially contingent upon the position of enslaved individuals within the slaveowners' plantation hierarchy. Those with skills and domestics were also housed in closer proximity to the slaveowner's manse which in some cases facilitated their access to resources such as secondhand dishes and clothing and food from the kitchen (Pogue 2005; Reeves and Greer 2012).

Contextualizing households as operating within societies can help to problematize the private/public dichotomy typically used to characterize women's and men's labor, respectively (Conkey and Spector 1984; Rotman 2006; Spencer-Wood 1999; Voss 2008; Wurst 2003). Interpretations of evidence recovered from household-related sites that circumscribe "domestic" work to the confines of the home miss the point that the private and public domains are often entangled (Brumfiel 1991; Brumfiel and Robin 2008: 3; Robin 2003: 312). For instance, in addressing women's production, assumptions that their "private" labor was detached from the wider world leads to erroneous representations of women's work as static and ahistorical. Yet, scholars have shown that their household production and consumption practices, and reproductive roles, were enmeshed with the social, economic, and political dynamics occurring more widely (Brumfiel 1991; Christensen 2013; Middleton 2013; Spencer-Wood 2013).

Rotman's (2006) research on gender roles in Deerfield, Massachusetts, illustrates how and why an adherence to "rigidly binary gender systems" (Brumfiel and Robin 2008: 2) in interpreting the past is questionable. Although the author focuses on whites rather than African Americans, her critique of the public/male versus private/female binary is relevant for gendered analysis in general. Rotman (2006: 666) found that despite the prevailing gender ideologies surrounding the cult of domesticity during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries in the U.S., men's and women's roles and activities in Deerfield "defied simple categorization as either public or private." The cult of domesticity was a "white urban middle-class" ideology that "sanctioned the separation of public and private spheres, defined as masculine and feminine, respectively" (Rotman 2006: 666, Rotman 2015). As the agricultural economy declined and men increasingly migrated out of Deerfield, the women who remained and new arrivals to the community were able to capitalize on the void left behind in public and economic roles, roles traditionally held by males. Women's economic activities included craft production as part of the Arts and Crafts movement, and although women were unable to vote in state and national elections, Deerfield women had political influence at the local level. Rotman's (2006: 671) spatial analysis revealed that craft work took place both in public spaces and in homes which "were no longer only private domestic spaces but also loci of production and distribution in the public economic realm." Although the cult of domesticity still wielded influence, women's worldviews and actions were also shaped by domestic reform and equal-rights feminism. For example, their involvement in the temperance movement had both private and public implications as they encouraged sobriety and sought to diffuse domestic violence. Women's political interventions also spatially defied the public/private binary as they were "not only confined to private

households but carried out in the public arenas of churches, schools, and community centers" (Rotman 2006: 671). Rotman's research demonstrates the importance of contextualizing households within their societies to gender analyses where questioning the boundedness of separate spheres is essential. More specifically, Rotman's demonstration of how women's social and economic actions exceeded the domestic sphere mirrors my findings at Coke's plantation.

The concerns expressed in the preceding discussion helped to define my lines of inquiry and to frame my interpretations. The major question that this study addresses is that of enslaved household variability: how and why did households composed mainly of men and women who labored as field hands in tidewater Virginia differ? The existing literature largely addresses variability between domestics and skilled laborers versus field hands. I suggest that this labor dichotomy glosses over the differential experiences between households composed of men and women who worked in the fields. I compare the artifacts once used and discarded by enslaved households at three sites and consider the role of slaveowners' labor demands in shaping household-related practices. Thus, contextualizing these households as embedded in broader relations of power helped to delineate the evidence for household variability (Reeves 2015). In addition, the social organization at Coke's plantation versus Rich Neck and Utopia IV also differed: multiple households occupied the latter two sites. I suggest that the lack of inter-household relations and cooperation at Coke's might have had implications for the gendered division of labor at this site.

Based on the history of enslaved family formation for colonial Virginia that follows in the next section, I define the household for the purposes of this study as a co-resident social group constituted mainly of kin-related members. Enslaved household organization was largely related to residential patterns where families consisting of field hands typically lived under the same roof. It was also influenced by the common practice among slaveowners of keeping young children with their mothers until they reached the ages of 10 to 14 years old. While this pattern has been noted mainly for large plantations, the evidence shows that it applied at Coke's plantation, as well. These households were internally differentiated by gender and age, at a minimum, especially where children were present. Previous studies indicate that enslaved households primarily engaged in raising children and production activities, especially those related to foodways. Inter-household cooperation, however, was commonplace on large plantations and served to alleviate workloads and to strengthen social relations. The patriarchal norms that governed plantation society (Fox-Genovese 1988) but that also exuded influence within enslaved communities nurtured but did not overdetermine a gendered division of labor. Historians have observed that enslaved women, in particular, were burdened with both field work that differed little from that of their male counterparts, and with domestic tasks like food preparation and childcare (Dunaway 2003: 163–176). The practice of "abroad marriage," where spouses lived on different plantations, intensified women's domestic responsibilities since the children resided with them. Yet, the results of this research, and the lessons learned from feminist archaeology, bring into question the rigidity of this gendered binary. Might there have been a more flexible arrangement of household-related tasks that is context-specific? Moreover, how were women's production activities at home implicated in the public arena of enslaved labor?

## The Formation of Enslaved Families, Household Organization, and Plantation Labor

The emergence of enslaved families that also socially organized as households took place during the eighteenth century, following the shift from a reliance on indentured servants to enslaved Africans for planting tobacco. Recent scholarship reveals that this latter transformation began in small starts by the mid-seventeenth century, mainly fueled by politically influential slaveowners, and that the process was complex and uneven, rather than rapid and wholesale (Coombs 2011). By century's end, however, the Chesapeake's tobacco economy depended heavily on captive Africans, most of whom were males (Berlin 1998). With high mortality rates due to overwork, trauma and disease, and with two enslaved males for every female, slaveowners continued to rely on the forced migration of Africans to meet their labor demands. Yet, the early decades of the eighteenth century witnessed the beginnings of significant changes in the composition of the enslaved population, as slaveowners set their sights on the potential for profits garnered from the natural reproduction of their labor force. At the same time, those enslaved endeavored to form social institutions that would help ease the burden of slavery. Men and women chose spouses, although their unions were never legally sanctioned, raised children, and created a community life through which they sought self-determination. In this section, I discuss the phenomena that led to the emergence of enslaved families and how they organized as households. This discussion serves to historically contextualize the research on Coke's plantation, and the case studies chosen for comparative analysis: Utopia IV and Rich Neck.

The natural increase of the enslaved population generally began in the early eighteenth century (Morgan and Nicholls 1989: 221–222). Some of the critical factors that led to the emergence of enslaved families were a higher density of enslaved Africans, a balanced sex ratio, and greater numbers of those who labored on plantations in groups of 20 or more where men and women had more opportunities to find spouses (Kulikoff 1978, 1986: 358–359). Thus, it was the planter elite, especially the ones who inherited their wealth and slaveholdings, who were among the first to profit from the natural reproduction of those they enslaved (Kulikoff 1986: 363; Morgan and Nicholls 1989: 221–222; Walsh 2010: 432–445). As Philip Morgan observes (1998: 507), "in general, then, the evidence points to the advantages of large plantations over small ones in terms of slave family formation."

Women, whether by imposition or choice, were central to the formation of families, and by extension, the growth of the enslaved population (White 1999: 68–69). Morgan (2004: 83) summarizes it succinctly: "Black women's bodies became the vessels in which slaveowners manifested their hopes for the future; they were, in effect, conduits of stability and wealth to the white community" (see also Parent 2003: 232). As the native-born population grew in size, the women among them also began bearing children at a younger age than their native African mothers. Although infant mortality remained high, the higher birthrates among younger women, along with keeping children with their mothers, increased the likelihood that at least some of their children would survive to adulthood (Walsh 1997: 116). As a result, by the 1750s, the majority of the Chesapeake's enslaved population were creoles, meaning native-born (Walsh 2010: 403). Enslaved families on large plantations were not only relatively stable, but prior to the Revolution had achieved generational depth, with Afro-Virginian

grandparents and great-grandparents present (Kulikoff 1978: 249). Within each quarter (defined herein as the residential area of enslaved laborers), people were usually related by blood or marriage, and immediate family members often lived together (Kulikoff 1986: 364; Walsh 1997: 49–50). Moreover, the proliferation of enslaved families led to extended kin networks, both within and across plantations.

Scholars reckon that, in general, enslaved families were flexible in organization and included nuclear and extended families (Gutman 1976; Malone 1992). Wealthy Virginia planters usually quartered a dozen or so adult field hands on each of their plantations along with their young children. Among them lived the elderly, individuals of advanced age who could no longer work full-time in the fields. Within these social arenas, household composition was based, for the most part, on both kinship ties and residency patterns. The common practice of abroad marriages, in particular, meant that many families consisted of women living with children, while their husbands and fathers resided on neighboring plantations (Stevenson 1996: 177). For example, 66% of the married individuals living at Washington's Mount Vernon in 1799 were in abroad marriages (Stevenson 1996: 178).

With regard to residency patterns specific to the Chesapeake, families and unrelated individuals shared living space in "sizable structures" for most of the eighteenth century. By the last quarter of the century, however, families preferred, and were assigned to, separate dwellings (Neiman 2008: 178). Based on his research of Jefferson's Monticello, Neiman (2008: 180–185) hypothesizes that the ability of enslaved field hands to realize more autonomy in choosing who they resided with coincided with a shift from tobacco monoculture to crop diversification. Gang labor and sequential tasks were associated with tobacco planting, which eased supervision of the work performed. However, crop diversification relied on smaller groups of laborers, involved a far more diverse range of tasks, and required more skilled laborers. Skilled plowmen, smiths to make and repair plows, the raising and care of draft animals to pull the plows, and making the wagons for carting grain, manure, and fodder were activities associated with crop diversification (Neiman 2008: 181). The costs of assigning overseers to supervise all of these diverse tasks, which took place simultaneously and across a plantation's landscape, would have been prohibitive. As a result, Jefferson instead used positive incentives to ensure his enslaved laborers' productivity. This included "marginal increases in the ability of slaves to control who they lived with and, in the case of field laborers, greater distance from and less-frequent supervision by an overseer" (Neiman 2008: 185). Although Neiman (2008: 183) cautions that the evidence for Monticello does not necessarily apply to the Chesapeake more broadly, his conclusions are well founded.

While Neiman's (2008) analysis of 46 slave quarters provides us with a general pattern of enslaved residential trends for the Chesapeake, the shift toward co-resident kin-based groups likely occurred earlier on large holdings where members of the same families were present for more than one generation. Research on the community that occupied Rich Neck plantation on the outskirts of Williamsburg (Fig. 1) is a case in point. The site's assemblage is one of two chosen for comparative analysis, and as such, the social make-up of this large quarter helps to demonstrate some of the demographic contrasts with small to middling plantations, including Coke's.

During the third quarter of the eighteenth century, Rich Neck was one of a number of satellite, or outlying, plantations owned by Phillip Ludwell III (b. 1727, d. 1767).

When the land was surveyed in 1770, it consisted of 3865 acres (Franklin 2004: 29). Ludwells had owned the plantation since the 1660s, and it initially served as the family's homestead until their move to Greenspring Plantation circa 1700 (Muraca et al. 2003). It appears that their field hands stayed behind as evidenced by the remains of two dwellings excavated by the CWF in the 1990s. The earliest (68AP) dates to circa 1700 to1740 (Agbe-Davies 1999). The second dwelling (68AL), a two-room duplex with a central hearth, was inhabited by two households from circa 1740 to 1773 (Franklin 2004).

Using Ludwell III's probate inventories, it was possible to determine the estimated age of each site occupant and household composition for Rich Neck during the period when the duplex was occupied. When Ludwell passed away in 1767, he owned 235 enslaved individuals, of whom 21 resided at Rich Neck: ten men, five women, three boys, and three girls. As many as five individuals (four men and one woman) were either of advanced age or infirm, and unable to work full-time in the fields. The remaining adults were anywhere between the ages of 18 and 50 (Franklin 2004: 25–28, 211–214). With more adult men than women of child-bearing age, and with the presence of very young children and the elderly, this community was almost certainly home to a mix of nuclear and extended families, while some of the men likely had families residing elsewhere. Given that three successive generations of the Ludwells, beginning in the seventeenth century, inherited both Rich Neck and its resident field hands, and that the site was continuously occupied for over seven decades, its inhabitants were able to form multiple kin-related households with generational depth. Some of the older men and women were undoubtedly born in Africa and witnessed the transformation to a majority creole population in the tidewater.

The rise of enslaved families at Rich Neck was not unique among large Virginia plantations, as a similar trajectory took place at Carter's Grove (Walsh 1997), Shadwell (Kern 2010: 121–126), Monticello (Neiman 2008), and Utopia (Fesler 2004b), for instance. The latter site's history is also relevant given its inclusion in this study. Utopia was once part of the 1280-acre Littletown/Utopia plantation located along the James River (Fig. 1). As with Rich Neck, Utopia witnessed a relatively long period of habitation by enslaved field hands who occupied the site beginning in the 1670s when the plantation was owned by Thomas Pettus (Fesler 2004b: 6). As ownership of Littletown/Utopia changed over time, four sequential groups of enslaved laborers resided at the Utopia quarter until the 1770s. The James River Institute archaeologists who excavated the site designated these occupations chronologically from early to late as Utopia I–IV. In 1745, Lewis Burwell IV acquired a portion of the original tract that included Utopia upon his marriage to the previous owner's widow. At the time, Burwell was already a wealthy planter and resided nearby on his 1500-acre Kingsmill Plantation (Kelso 1984). By the 1760s, Burwell owned about 100 enslaved Virginians (Fesler 2004b: 135) and, like Philip Ludwell III, he hired a succession of overseers to supervise his holdings. During the most recent occupation of the site, Utopia IV, Fesler (2004b: 126) noted that 27 individuals, related through kinship and marriage, were present. As with Rich Neck, this plantation was home to "simple and extended family units" by 1750 (Fesler 2004a, 2004b: 340–41). It is the evidence for this most recent site phase, Utopia IV, that is considered in this research.

Walsh's (1997: 143) study of 14 mid-eighteenth century estate plantations in York County revealed a similar trend of enslaved family formation as that witnessed at Utopia and Rich Neck. As families transitioned to living in their own dwellings, moreover, household-related practices became more family-oriented, although not exclusively. Given the kinship ties between families residing on the same quarter, cooperation with both domestic and plantation-related chores was common.

White's (1999) research on the "female slave network" is especially relevant here. Facing the uncertainties of life in bondage where families were often split up, where women in abroad marriages were left to raise children with absent fathers, and burdened by the challenge of managing agricultural and domestic work, enslaved women formed networks of mutual support to assist one another (Jones 1985: 29–31). White (1999: 122) states that, "female slave domestic work sealed the bonds of womanhood that were forged in the fields and other work places." They came together to spin, sew, cook, and do laundry, and cared for one another when sick. Women also gathered during their leisure time, developing friendships and fictive kinship ties. Establishing relationships of trust gave enslaved mothers some peace of mind as they struggled with the possibilities of being separated from their children, and worried over who would look after them should this occur (White 1999: 127–128; Young 2004). Importantly, White (1999: 123–124) notes that one of the crucial factors that helped to enable the strong bonds and cooperative nature between women was their close proximity to one another: "residential arrangements further reinforced the bonds forged during work, social, and religious activities. The women of the slave quarters lived within a stone's throw of one another."

If large plantations were characterized by multiple families living in close proximity, where "female slave networks" formed and kin relations fueled inter-household dependency, how did enslaved Virginians on smaller holdings fare in comparison? Morgan (1998: 498–511) studied eighteenth-century enslaved family formation on small (15 or less enslaved individuals per quarter) and large plantations in the Chesapeake. Regarding the former, he found that single-parent families, mainly mothers with children, and solitaires (mostly males) were the norm based on evidence from seven small Virginia estates (circa 1744–75; see also Kulikoff 1986; Stevenson 1996: 177). Family instability, largely as the result of break-ups due to inheritance or the sale of family members, was also more common for those enslaved on small Chesapeake plantations (Morgan 1998: 512). Thus, while enslaved individuals who lived on small plantations may have had kin folk, their family members were more often than not living on other quarters (Kulikoff 1986: 359). Moreover, the kinds of residential-based social networks that existed on large plantations, like those maintained between families and among enslaved women, were largely absent. The possible implications of this lack of a cooperative network of households for household practices at Coke's plantation is considered in my interpretations.

In discerning household variability, the issue of regimented labor on small versus large plantations took on prominence. Since enslaved households were involved in

production both within and beyond their homes, scheduling tasks was one of the defining features of their daily lives. What were the dissimilarities, and how did they lead to household variability? Field hands on large plantations were mainly reserved for agricultural work since wealthy planters also owned skilled laborers and full-time domestics who were at their disposal for other chores. Most field hands resided on farm quarters away from the home plantation. Such was the case at both Rich Neck and Utopia. During the time period in question, wealthy planters shifted from tobacco monoculture to crop diversification, planting wheat and/or corn (depending on the region) in addition to tobacco. This helped to stave off losses due to fluctuations in the tobacco market, and often brought profits by meeting the growing demand for exported grains (Walsh 2010: 410–411). Since plowing increased grain output (Walsh 2010: 412), enslaved Virginians were further tasked with both raising more oxen and horses as draft animals and growing and collecting the fodder to feed them (Morgan 1998: 170–173; Neiman 2008). As the discussion of Neiman's (2008) research above indicates, for enslaved field hands, the result was a substantial increase in agricultural and other plantation-related work. The previous schedule that kept tobacco gangs busy (Morgan 1998: 191) intensified and lengthened with crop diversification, where "increased levels of exploitation" meant that work was continuous throughout the calendar year (Walsh 2010: 622). In addition, the sexual division of labor became more pronounced with crop diversification, as more enslaved men moved into semi-skilled and skilled positions leaving women to perform unskilled agricultural work. Most small planters lacked the resources to shift to crop diversification beyond raising grains for home consumption (Walsh 2010: 544–545). Thus, the field hands who occupied these farms, rather than taking on more specialized roles, were expected to take on a more diverse set of tasks.

Walsh's (2010: 448–459) analysis of the profit margins and management of five middling plantations (300 acres [121 ha] in size) in York County, Virginia, sheds some light on the workloads of the enslaved field hands who occupied them. The four to eight enslaved adults on each estate were responsible for a greater range of tasks than their counterparts on large plantations:

> Where there were only a few hands to plow the land, look after the livestock, run the dairy, shear the sheep, spin yarn, gather fodder, catch fish, make cider, plant a vegetable garden, sow and harvest wheat, beans and peas, tend corn, make casks, and keep fences and buildings in repair, few of the enslaved could tend a full crop of tobacco (Walsh 2010: 458).

Scheduling the tasks required of slaveowners with those of their own households would have been a monumental challenge, especially on small to middling farms where help from neighboring households was absent. Such was the case at Coke's plantation where the evidence indicates that the site was occupied by a sole household. Moreover, their work for John Coke complicates what it meant to be a "field hand" on a smaller, urban plantation. The archaeological and historical evidence for the site points to a diverse set of tasks that required this household's members to move between town and farm, taking on work that included planting with other chores associated with Coke's businesses, especially his tavern operation. The contrasts in enslaved lifeways between small and large plantations discussed above underscore some of the key factors – inter-

household social relations (or lack thereof for smaller holdings) and differences in labor patterns – that led to variability between enslaved households.

## The History and Archaeology of Coke's Plantation

John Coke's plantation (44WB90) was once located on what is now the CWF's Visitor Center complex (Fig. 2). Due to planned renovations of the Visitor Center, CWF archaeologists conducted Phase I and II surveys of site 44WB90 in 1996 (Franklin 2017). The artifacts recovered dated primarily to the eighteenth century, and along with the site's location, tied the site to a 200-acre (81 ha) tract of land purchased by the governor's council sometime between 1769 and 1773 to enlarge the park lands of the Governor's Palace. Thus, the site was given the name "Palace Lands." Subsequent archival and archaeological research, however, revealed that prior to this event the site was inhabited from circa 1747 to 1769 by enslaved Virginians who belonged to John Coke. Since the artifacts and features related to this eighteenth-century occupation pre-date the sale of the land to the governor's council, the site is referred to in this article as Coke's plantation.

A native of Derbyshire, England, John Coke immigrated to Virginia in 1724 and set up trade as a silver and goldsmith. He and his wife, Sarah Hoge, had three sons: Samuel, Robey (or Robie), and one who died in infancy. Coke owned a house and outbuildings on five contiguous lots (CWF Block 27, colonial lots 279 to 282, and 361)

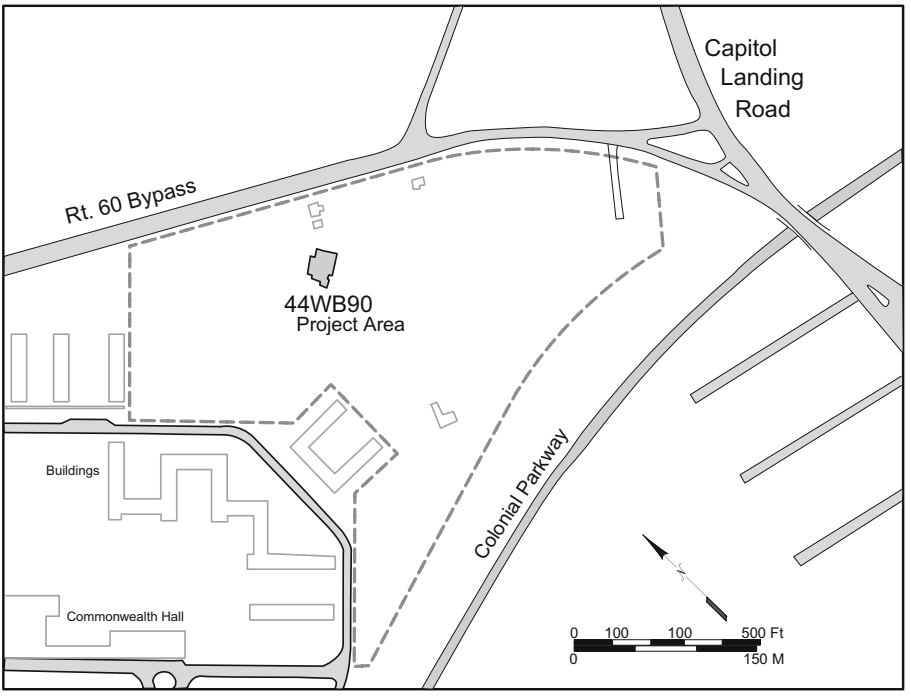


**Fig. 2** Coke's plantation (also known as the Palace Lands site) project area at the CWF's Visitor Center, Williamsburg, Virginia

on Nicholson Street and adjacent to the Public Gaol. It is at this location where the Cokes also operated a tavern. The Cokes' former residence, now known as the Coke-Garrett House, still stands in the Historic Area of the CWF. By 1747, Coke purchased his 200-acre (81 ha) plantation from a bricklayer by the name of John Baskerville (Fig. 3; Franklin 2017). Figure 3 of Williamsburg in 1782 shows the location and boundary of Coke's land; the farm quarter was situated close to Capitol Landing Road. As the map shows, this road led directly from the quarter to Coke's home and tavern.

Coke was a man of means by the time of his death in 1767, the year his will was probated. Although he was a tradesman, Coke's prosperity is evident in the amount of movable wealth he possessed. In their research on the standard of living in the colonial Chesapeake, Carr and Walsh (1988) analyzed probate inventories for four Chesapeake counties, including York, that dated between the mid-seventeenth century and 1777. Since John Coke's probate was filed in York County, Carr and Walsh's (1988:138, 142) evaluation of wealth is a reliable indication of his standing relative to his peers. They reckoned that those considered rich owned more than 225 of movable wealth

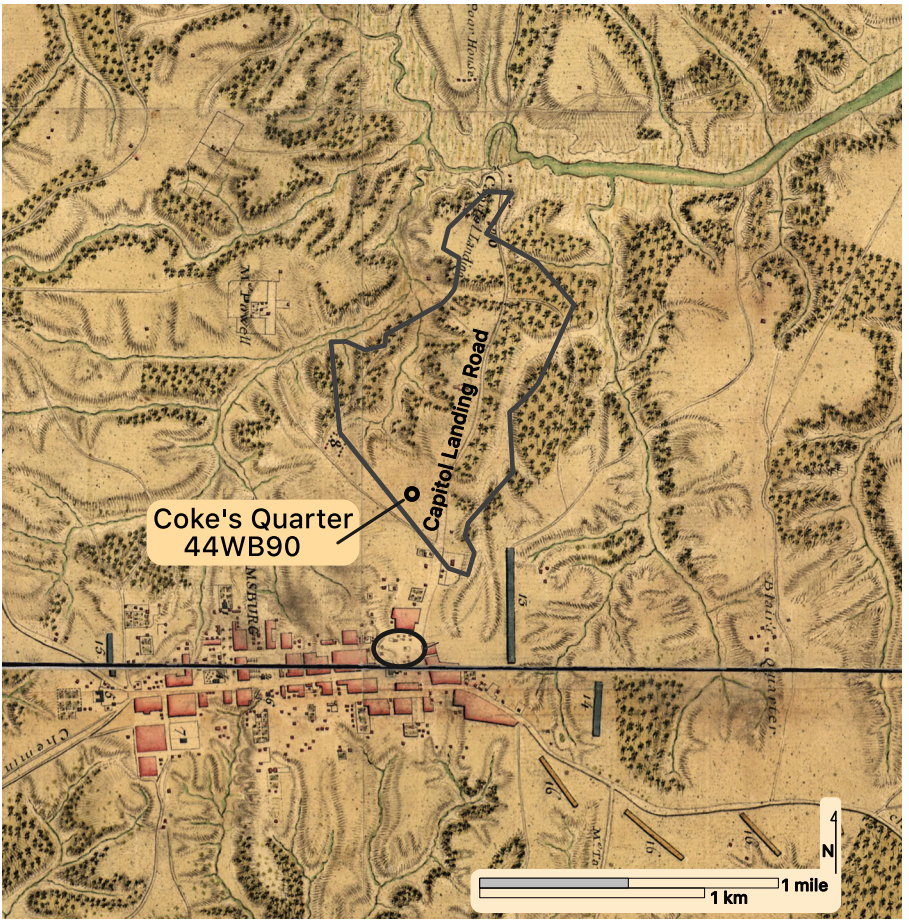


**Fig. 3** Locations of John Coke's plantation and quarter (including property boundary), and Coke's town properties. The base map is Jean Nicolas Desandrouins' 1782 map of Williamsburg and its environs

across the study period, with enslaved blacks and livestock accounting for the bulk of this property. Moreover, individuals worth more than 490 were in the top 5–10% of the wealthholders (Carr and Walsh 1988: 138). Coke's estate, not including his plantation or town property, was worth just over £772 (Coke 1768), an amount that clearly put him above the majority of his peers in terms of wealth.

Coke's 1768 probate inventory lists the following enslaved individuals and their value in this order: Tom (£40), Squire (£40), Debdford (£55), James (£55), Phill (£55), Lucy (£40), Alice (£10), Sylvia (£50), and Judith (£25). As mentioned previously, most enslaved Virginians (80%) were native-born by the 1750s (Neiman 2008: 180; Walsh 2010: 403) which suggests that these individuals were born in the colony. Tom is the only one who was described further as "1 Negro man." Those listed after him (Squire, Debdford, James, and Phill) were also probably adult males. The list of females begins with Lucy, who was also likely an adult by 1768 based on her value. Alice's placement on the list in between two adult females (Lucy and Sylvia) indicates that she may have been elderly given her relatively low value of £10. It is possible, however, that Alice was a child. I speculate that Judith was probably young, having not yet reached her child-bearing years given her value of £25. Coke's ownership of nine enslaved blacks at the time of his passing was atypical for Williamsburg. Although five-sixths of the families in town owned enslaved blacks, the majority owned one or two individuals (Tate 1965: 55). Nicholls (1990) estimates that in 1782, only one-quarter of Williamsburg's households owned seven or more. Rather than simply underscoring Coke's wealth, these numbers indicate that he needed enslaved labor for other than domestic service, the work performed by most of the town's enslaved population.

Soon after Coke's death, his wife and son, Samuel, put the plantation and a number of enslaved individuals up for auction. Their ad ran on January 12, 1769, in the Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon 1769: 4):

> To be SOLD by public auction, on Thursday the 2d of FEBRUARY next, at the late dwelling-house of JOHN COKE, deceased, in Williamsburg, ALL his HOUSEHOLD & KITCHEN FURNITURE, several valuable SLAVES, with the stocks of CATTLE, HORSES, and SHEEP; also a quantity of CORN and FODDER. At the same time will be sold, or rented, a plantation lying on both sides of the road to the Capitol landing, containing upwards of 200 acres; it is exceeding good land, and in order for cropping.

Once the governor's council purchased the tract it became part of what was known at the time as the Palace "park." The last two royal governors, Botetourt and Dunmore, used the park for pasturage, raising crops, and for fuel (Gibbs 1980). In the years following the Revolution, the Palace lands tract was vested, deeded and willed a number of times. A second occupation took place in the site's vicinity during the late eighteenth century, and this was followed by one or more settlements near the site starting in the mid-nineteenth century. Although a chain of title has been traced from 1704 to 1904, it appears that the land was leased to tenants, who remain anonymous, during these most recent site occupations.

## Excavation Results

Data recovery at the site of Coke's plantation took place during the summers of 1998 and 1999. Despite two prior intensive surveys of the site area, archaeologists identified the remains of only one dwelling. Excavations focused on the remains of this structure and related landscape features, which included a series of former ditches and fence lines (Fig. 4). Whether the dwelling was already there when Coke bought the land or was built anew to house his enslaved field hands is unknown. There were ceramics recovered from the site that were produced prior to 1747 (e.g., delftwares, white salt-glazed stonewares), but these all have production dates that overlap with or exceed the site's occupation span as determined by the deed of ownership. Moreover, the feature TPQs, based mainly on the ceramics, supports the circa 1747 to 1769 occupation (Franklin 2017).

Features related to the house included a rectangular subfloor pit, a possible root cellar (Feature 1; Fig. 5), that measured roughly 1.75 $m^2$ and 76.5 cm in depth below grade. All that remained of the dwelling was a mortared brick chimney foundation (Feature 2; Fig. 5). Based on this scant evidence, the house was likely a log structure that sat on the ground. It may have been initially constructed as a one-room dwelling with a brick end chimney. If so, a second room was later added followed by the subfloor pit. The single pit suggests that the house was built to accommodate a family (Fesler 2004b; Neiman 2008). The house was somewhat anomalous when compared to contemporaneous dwellings for enslaved Virginians which typically had multiple subfloor pits and a mud-and-stick chimney.

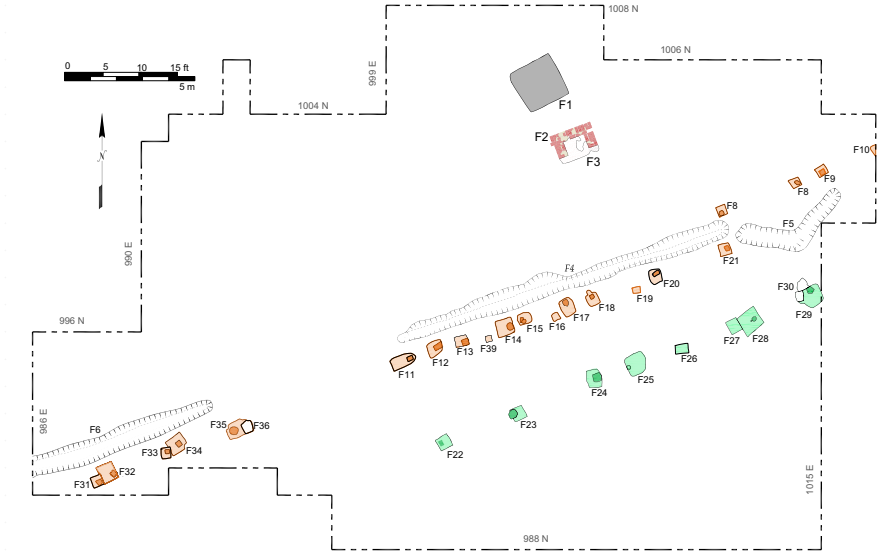


**Fig. 4** Post-excavation site plan of Coke's quarter with dwelling-related features (F1, F2, F3), fencelines, and ditches

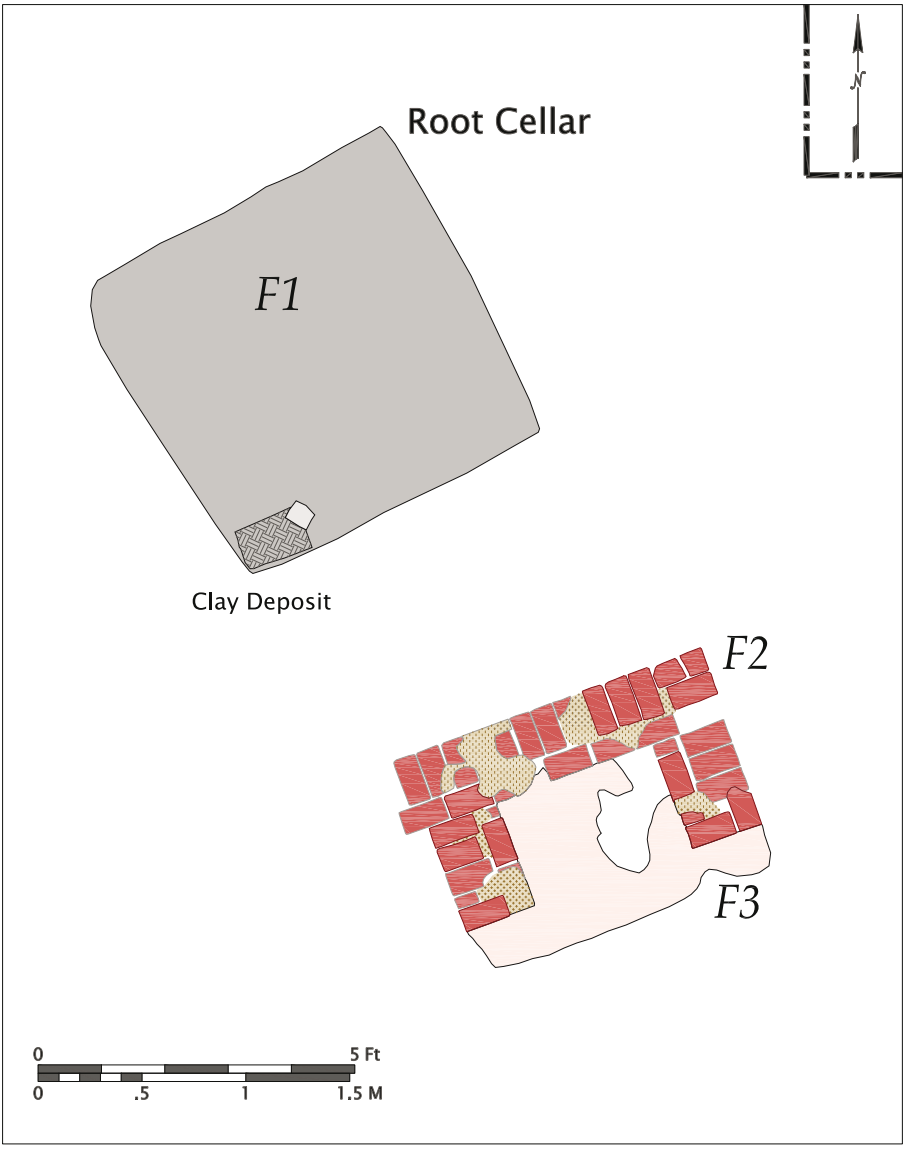


**Fig. 5** Plan of subfloor pit (F1) and brick hearth and chimney (F2 and F3) associated with dwelling at Coke's quarter

The feature TPQs indicate that the plantation's post-and-rail fences, followed by ditches, were constructed by the occupants of the house (Franklin 2017). The fences may have been used to corral Coke's livestock, although the boundaries of the fencelines, which would help to indicate an enclosure for animals, were never identified. The ditches were added along one fenceline to prevent rainwater from prematurely rotting the wooden fence posts. Replacement of fence posts also occurred during the operation of Coke's plantation. Although enslaved Virginians commonly kept subsistence gardens (Heath 1999a; Heath and Bennett 2000), there was no feature evidence of

one here. The flotation samples collected have yet to be processed, but likely contain the remains of garden species. The site's residents raised turkey and chickens, or may have acquired them in town via barter or purchase. They clearly capitalized on their close proximity to woodlands and nearby Queen's Creek since raccoon, opossum, turtle, and a range of freshwater fish (including striped bass, catfish, and white perch) were also among the faunal remains (DAACS 2018a).

### Social Organization at Coke's Plantation

The evidence, including the single dwelling with a sole subfloor pit suggests that Coke's plantation housed a co-resident family, that is, one who resided under the same roof. Coke owned both males and females by the time of his death, and although it is unknown which of them lived at the site, the artifacts (DAACS 2018a) indicate that a woman and her female child were present at some point. Among the assemblage are doll fragments and two child-sized thimbles, presumably used by a young girl learning to sew. Since enslaved women were mainly responsible for raising their children, the girl's mother was almost certainly living with her. The mother's possessions included sewing implements, a possible earring fragment, and portions of a fan recovered from the site. As mentioned previously, enslaved households consisting of women with their children were not uncommon in colonial Virginia, but the evidence of firearms and metal buttons more often used for men's clothing suggest that at least one adult male lived at the site (Fesler 2004b: 378–384; Galle 2010; Heath 1999b). Since single men tended to be quartered together, this individual was more than likely related to the mother and daughter. Whether he was the spouse and father, or another child that reached adulthood on the plantation, is unknown.

Since co-resident families on small plantations in Virginia were less commonplace (Fesler 2004b: 95), the presence of one at Coke's, given its modest size, was not the norm. This household's members also experienced a different working life from their counterparts laboring in the fields of large plantations. They were similarly tasked with planting (most likely tobacco) and caring for livestock. Yet, the evidence presented below suggests that those quartered at Coke's also rotated their time between the plantation and town to work. Again, Coke was a goldsmith, and owned rental property and a tavern in Williamsburg. His various business interests coupled with maintaining a genteel home life with live-in domestics undoubtedly left little downtime for any of the men and women he enslaved. Moreover, Coke also probably hired them out, a common practice, or permitted individuals to hire themselves out (Tate 1965). The ways in which these labor demands influenced household-related practices, and led to household variability, are discussed in the next section.

## Coke's Plantation, Rich Neck, and Utopia IV

This research was made possible by the Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery, or DAACS, since the data for all three sites are part of this archive. My major goal is to consider household variability among enslaved field hands, those who were among the majority of Afro-Virginians, by comparing artifacts recovered from Coke's, a small to middling operation, with those from large plantations. Of the 11 additional

Virginia sites archived in DAACS, Rich Neck and Utopia IV were selected for several reasons: (1) both were large plantations owned by elite and wealthy slaveowners, (2) these sites are the only other ones besides Coke's that are located within the Williamsburg area (Fig. 1), and (3) both sites were occupied by enslaved field hands during the same time period as Coke's plantation. There were important distinctions, however, between these small and large holdings. Enslaved householders at Utopia IV and Rich Neck had comparable social organization within their quarters (more than one household resided at each) and, as will be discussed, labor patterns that differed from those of the occupants at Coke's.

Given the long occupation spans of Rich Neck and Utopia, I selected artifacts only from feature contexts associated with the third quarter of the eighteenth century, the period during which Coke's plantation was inhabited (1747–69). For Rich Neck, this included subfloor pits within structure 68AL, a duplex, which dates from 1740 to 1773. Structure 68AL was the only dwelling identified at the site for this time period. Utopia IV's occupation is represented by three dwellings, including a duplex (Structure 140) that dates from 1745 to 1775. For the purposes of this study, the artifacts recovered solely from Structure 140's subfloor pits (Feature Group 1 in DAACS) are considered here.

The quarters of both plantations were home to over 20 enslaved men, women, and children who resided in multiple dwellings during the third quarter of the eighteenth century. It is unknown how many individuals resided in the duplexes at each site. However, based on the history of enslaved family formation discussed above and the archaeological and archival research (Fesler 2004a, Fesler 2004b; Franklin 2004), each duplex housed two families that were also socially organized as households. As such, the duplexes represent a sample of the households that were present during the time period in question. These households were once part of a larger social network of kin-related households with generational depth present among them. In contrast, a single household was quartered at Coke's. Although it is unknown how many individuals resided there, the evidence indicates a minimum of three people: an adult woman with her female child (at least for a portion of this household's life cycle), and an adult male. The remainder of Coke's enslaved labor force most likely lived in town.

I argue that the results of the comparative analysis indicate that the day-to-day experiences of the household that occupied Coke's plantation differed from their counterparts at Rich Neck and Utopia IV, and these experiences and behaviors left clear archaeological correlates. One reason for this, as mentioned earlier, is that the network of kin-related households that typified larger quarter communities was absent at Coke's. Thus, there were no other households present at the farm that could be relied on for sharing tasks. Another factor that shaped household variability was that of extra-domestic labor. While their main chores at Coke's undoubtedly consisted of raising crops and livestock, the adults of this household also worked in town. While traveling into town presented opportunities to participate in Williamsburg's marketplace and to socialize with their peers, it likely made it difficult to manage their time. Balancing their commitments to carve out a home life, especially with a child to raise, with the demands imposed by Coke presented conflicts for this household that they resolved by organizing household-related practices differently, especially food production.

Since the social and the material worlds are mutually constituting, assemblages associated with enslaved households usually represent a suite of practices, including

foodways, sewing, healthcare, and raising children that underscore their domestic responsibilities and attempts to maintain a viable home life. Moreover, artifacts typically categorized as "leisure" or "personal," such as toys, gaming pieces, and musical instruments, allude to play and socializing. These activities take on added significance when viewed within the context of slavery. As enslaved households struggled to secure and maintain some semblance of autonomy within their living spaces, their routine tasks and social relations served as the main vehicles through which this was accomplished. Slaveowners were primarily concerned that their labor demands were being met; enslaved field hands, especially those with families, had to balance those demands with their own commitments and desires. While paternalistic, profit-driven slaveowners looked favorably on efforts by enslaved women and men to feed and clothe themselves, and care for their children, these were hard-won privileges, not rights, and enslaved people's efforts to determine their own way of life often conflicted with slaveowners' authority and attempts to control them. Thus, artifacts that represent household-related practices and social relations are also evidence of the daily politics waged by the enslaved to negotiate some level of self-determination.

## An Overview of the Artifact Assemblages

In situating this research within a social archaeology of households, and in considering the heterogeneity of enslaved lifeways between middling and large plantations, I mainly focus on the question of household variability across the three study sites. Does the archaeological evidence speak to a plurality of experiences for the vast majority of enslaved Africans and creoles who worked as field hands? Conflict and difference figure largely here, both at the level of the household, and in terms of how households are embedded in broader relations of power. For enslaved households, the oppressive labor demands of slaveowners required householders to strategize in balancing these demands with their domestic chores and parenting responsibilities. The results of the analysis indicate that the work required for Coke was dissimilar to that of field hands who occupied large plantations. As a result, their household economy varied, demonstrating both how entangled the private and public spheres of enslaved life were, and that a diversity of experiences existed between smaller to large holdings. Since this study is based on a sample of three sites, further comparable research is needed to verify these findings. Finally, if the householders at Coke's plantation managed, at minimum, to feed and clothe themselves, raise a child, and keep a roof over their heads without a network of neighboring households at their quarter to rely on for cooperative work, how was this accomplished? Those quartered at Coke's were not totally isolated, given their mobility to and from town. Moreover, they were undoubtedly well-acquainted with, at least, the other enslaved men and women who belonged to Coke. Yet again, it was the close proximity of multiple kin-related households that enabled the creation of support networks on large plantations. These households could rely on one another consistently, could pitch in to assist with chores at a moment's notice, and could more easily share resources. While the archaeological evidence is not as forthcoming in addressing the question of how the household at Coke's managed without an ever-present network of others at the quarter, it does suggest that the gendered norms for the

division of household labor may have been contested and negotiated as these householders managed their domestic and extra-domestic work.

In what follows, I provide an overview of the artifact assemblages and what they reveal about the kinds of household-related practices and plantation tasks that took place at the sites. While households at all three sites discarded artifacts that sort into the same broad categories, there are key differences between the assemblages in terms of frequencies and artifact types within the major groups. A contingency analysis of the artifacts serves to strengthen the observation that the assemblage associated with the household at Coke's is different from those of Rich Neck's and Utopia IV's. A more in-depth comparison of the ceramics, in particular, suggests that the householders at Coke's, in contrast to their counterparts at Rich Neck and Utopia IV, worked both at the farm and in town. The dissimilar labor demands led to household economies that also varied, as evidenced by the artifacts. The implications for the household at Coke's, in terms of the gendered division of labor and how this household dealt with the conflicts likely generated in scheduling their chores concludes this discussion.

## Everyday Lifeways Represented by the Artifacts

All three sites yielded artifacts typically recovered from Virginia quarters where households composed of families resided and worked (DAACS 2018a, 2018b, 2018c). I excluded architectural remains, horse hardware, and miscellaneous and unidentified finds for the purposes of this analysis. With regard to the ceramics, those identified by specific form and, more generally, as unidentifiable teaware, utilitarian or tableware were retained for analysis. What remained of the assemblages were items used for a suite of tasks, and tobacco pipes, which I sorted roughly into broad groups (Table 1; Fig. 6). The material culture associated with food and beverage, along with tobacco pipes, make up the majority of finds. Smoking tobacco was a common pastime in colonial Virginia, and the discarded pipe fragments present one example of how enslaved men and women were consumers of a crop they were tasked with raising.

Wine and case bottles and the assortment of eating utensils, dishes, and glass tableware together constitute large proportions of the artifacts for each site. Household production, distribution and consumption revolved daily around foodways. Although slaveowners provided rations, enslaved field hands raised the corn, pork, and beef that composed much of what was doled out. Moreover, evidence for the use of firearms, in the form of gunflints and lead shot (Arms Group, Table 1), and the remains of wild animal and fish species from each site (DAACS 2018a, 2018b, 2018c) attest to the roles of hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering as part of each household's economy. At Rich Neck there was evidence for raising garden vegetables and collecting wild nuts and berries (Mrozowski et al. 2008), household practices that were likely undertaken at Coke's and Utopia IV, as well (Heath and Bennett 2000). Enslaved women were then tasked with transforming game, produce, and rations into meals, whether for their own families or for groups of field hands (Franklin 2001). Each site yielded table utensils, plates and bowls for individual place settings. Despite these broad similarities in foodways-related artifacts, however, there are differences discussed below indicating that the household at Coke's also relied on meals prepared and consumed away from home.

**Table 1** Major artifact groups

| | Coke | | Utopia IV (Str 140) | | Rich Neck (68AL) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Artifact Group | *N* | % of Total | *N* | % of Total | *N* | % of Total |
| Arms | | | | | | |
| Gunflint | 1 | | 0 | | 12 | |
| Lead bullet | 4 | | 0 | | 1 | |
| Lead shot | 5 | | 4 | | 37 | |
| Subtotal | 10 | 0.6% | 4 | 0.2% | 50 | 2.3% |
| Clothing and Adornment | | | | | | |
| Bead | 23 | | 53 | | 76 | |
| Buckle | 8 | | 6 | | 3 | |
| Button | 60 | | 64 | | 73 | |
| Jewelry | 10 | | 1 | | 2 | |
| Other clothing fastener | 1 | | 1 | | 6 | |
| Subtotal | 102 | 5.7% | 125 | 7.2% | 160 | 7.4% |
| Foodways | | | | | | |
| Ceramics | 447 | | 227 | | 273 | |
| Glass tableware | 61 | | 46 | | 27 | |
| Metal food preparation | 0 | | 13 | | 2 | |
| Table utensil | 24 | | 50 | | 62 | |
| Subtotal | 532 | 29.7% | 336 | 19.4% | 364 | 16.7% |
| Medicinal and Hygiene | | | | | | |
| Chamber pot | 2 | | 2 | | 1 | |
| Drug jar/salve pot | 3 | | 21 | | 11 | |
| Pharmaceutical bottle | 114 | | 153 | | 55 | |
| Mirror | 3 | | 7 | | 6 | |
| Other | 2 | | 1 | | 0 | |
| Subtotal | 124 | 6.9% | 184 | 10.6% | 73 | 3.4% |
| Sewing | | | | | | |
| Needle | 2 | | 0 | | 0 | |
| Scissors | 2 | | 6 | | 1 | |
| Straight pin | 254 | | 55 | | 259 | |
| Thimble | 4 | | 5 | | 1 | |
| Subtotal | 262 | 14.6% | 66 | 3.8% | 261 | 12.0% |
| Tobacco Pipe | | | | | | |
| Subtotal | 104 | 5.8% | 609 | 35.1% | 777 | 35.7% |
| Tool | | | | | | |
| Subtotal | 4 | 0.2% | 31 | 1.8% | 16 | 0.7% |
| Wine and Case Bottles | | | | | | |
| Subtotal | 651 | 36.4% | 381 | 21.9% | 474 | 21.8% |
| Grand Total | 1789 | 100.0% | 1736 | 100.0% | 2175 | 100.0% |

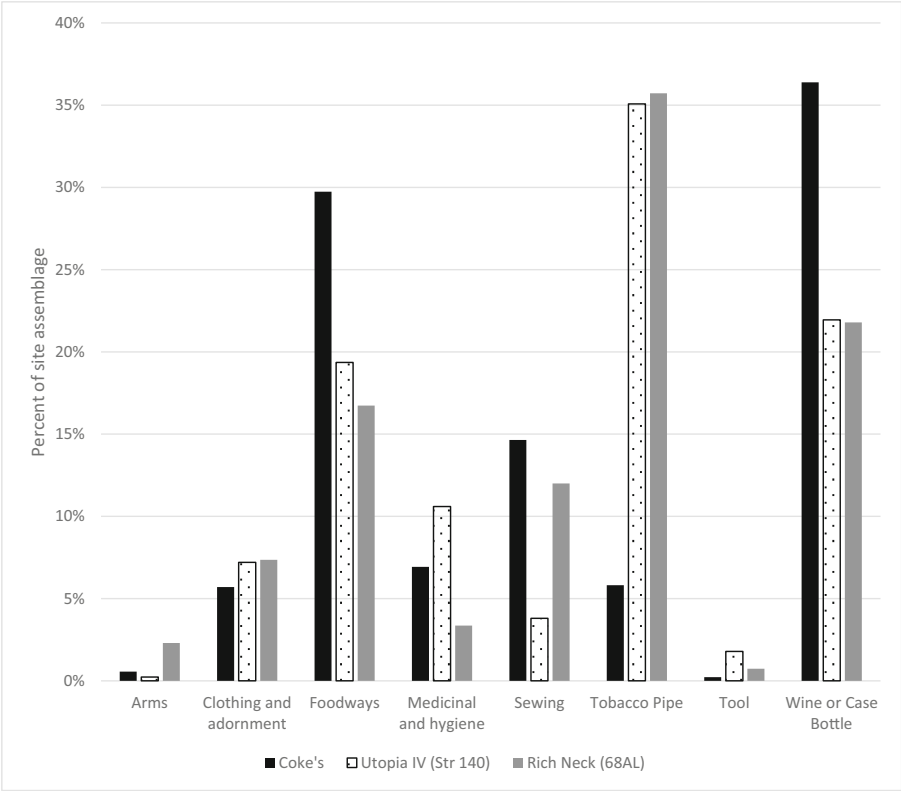


**Fig. 6** Relative frequencies of artifacts by major group for Coke's plantation, Rich Neck (68AL) and Utopia IV (Structure 140)

Other activities included sewing as evidenced by the implements used for mending and making clothes, and the clothing fasteners (Sewing Artifact Group and Clothing and Adornment Artifact Group in Table 1). Field hands received clothing provisions usually once or twice a year which undoubtedly needed frequent repairs and patching. The simple wood and bone buttons recovered from the sites were probably attached to provisioned clothing, which was usually made from rough homespun or Osnaburg, an imported, coarse linen textile. Most of the buttons from each site, however, are copper alloy. Often exhibiting molded designs, these fancier and more costly buttons – along with other kinds of metal buttons – were mainly used as fasteners for men's clothing (Galle 2010; Heath 1999b). Along with the beads, jewelry, and ornamental buckles variously represented in the assemblages, the button assemblages indicate that enslaved men and women were purchasing items for dress and adornment. Buttons, ribbons, and sleeve links, in addition to hats, ready-made garments, and textiles, were among the most popular consumer items among enslaved Virginians (Heath 1999a: 53, Heath 2004; Martin 2008). Thus, artifacts from the Sewing and Clothing and Adornment Groups implicate a number of overlapping household practices: production and consumption related to participation in the local market economy, and sewing for mending and producing clothes. The sewing-related artifacts are considered further below as evidence for gendered domestic and extra-domestic labor at Coke's.

Artifacts associated with medical care and hygiene are also present across all three sites. Most of these consist of ceramic drug jars and salve pots, and glass pharmaceutical bottles. These vessels once contained medicines likely prepared by apothecaries in Williamsburg. Virginia slaveowners were known to hire physicians to treat the injured or ill among their enslaved, or purchased drugs to dispense themselves (Kern 2010: 90–94; Morgan 1998: 321–325; Walsh 1997: 176–180). However, enslaved Africans and African Americans, in general, often preferred home-made remedies and incorporated the healing and protective powers of African-based rituals into their medical practices (Fennell 2007; Ferguson 1992; Fox-Genovese 1988: 169–171; Leone and Fry 1999; Morgan 1998: 624–629; Samford 2004; Wilkie 1996). Enslaved Virginians were well-versed in the use of plants in preventing and curing illnesses (Edwards-Ingram 2001; Mrozowski et al. 2008), and "slave doctors" were commonly relied on in the Chesapeake (Morgan 1998: 627; Parent 2003: 231–232).

Other artifacts recovered from the three sites that capture a sense of how enslaved Virginians attempted to redefine their quarters as homes, as spaces where their social relations and their identities as something other than "slave" or "field hand" could be nurtured are the toys and jaw harps. Although not represented in Table 1 and excluded from the analysis, jaw harps were found at Rich Neck ($n = 1$) and Utopia IV ($n = 2$), while toys were recovered from all three sites. At Coke's, these include eight marbles and two porcelain doll fragments. Toys from Utopia IV are represented by 15 marbles and an unidentified pewter toy, while seven marbles and a portion of a toy creamware saucer were discovered at Rich Neck. Given the performative nature of making music, dancing, and story-telling, most of what is known regarding black expressive culture during slavery is documented in archival sources and oral histories, including the ex-slave narratives (Joyner 1984; Levine 1977; Perdue et al. 1976). Within the context of music and dancing, courtships were initiated, social ties were strengthened through shared enjoyment, and African-based culture was reproduced (Camp 2004: 68–76; Morgan 1998: 580–591; Perdue et al. 1976: 106, 212). Entertainment and play brought people together in ways that elevated morale and deepened relationships. The marbles found at all three sites suggest group play through friendly competition, while the doll parts from Coke's plantation underscore a commitment to parenting and the gender socialization of a young girl (Wilkie 2000: 149).

In sum, the assemblages from the three study sites are composed of artifacts commonly recovered from plantation quarter sites. Yet, viewing these assemblages as purely "domestic," and enslaved household life as autonomous and circumscribed to the quarter, masks the relationship between households and the broader society within which they lived. Most of their daylight hours were spent laboring under the oppressive yoke of slavery, and their household economies were influenced by slaveowners' provisions. Specifically, if extra-domestic labor varied between these plantations, by extension, one would expect the material culture to vary, as well. Coke's plantation was an urban one, situated in close proximity to his home and various business enterprises, including a tavern, goldsmithing trade, and rental properties (Fig. 3). Its location by a major thoroughfare, Capitol Landing Road, eased mobility between the quarter and town. The archaeological evidence indicates that in addition to working on his plantation, Coke's field hands labored in his tavern, and this had implications for both their material world and household relations and practices.

## Household Variability and the Working Lives of Enslaved Virginians

In this section, I present the evidence, mainly focusing on ceramics and tools, for varied extra-domestic labor at the three sites. Based on the results of the comparative analysis, including contingency analyses of the three assemblages, I propose that the household at Coke's labored both at his plantation and his tavern, while those who lived at Rich Neck and Utopia IV were involved in crop diversification and largely circumscribed to the plantation for work.

The ceramics from Coke's differ in two important respects from those recovered from Rich Neck and Utopia IV. When categorized by tea or coffee, tableware, or utilitarian (food preparation and storage), those used for tea and coffee service and consumption constitute the largest category of ceramics from Coke's (Table 2). While tea bowls and saucers are commonly recovered from quarter sites in Virginia, tablewares typically predominate ceramic assemblages, as they do for Rich Neck and Utopia IV (Table 2). The second difference is the greater variety of vessel forms comprising tablewares and tea and coffee wares for Coke's. I compared the ceramic vessels from feature contexts for Rich Neck and Coke's plantation. Since DAACS only inventories sherd-level data, I used the MNV results following crossmending conducted by CWF staff (Franklin 2004, 2017). This data was not available for Utopia IV. Despite the fact that analysts crossmended only a sample of the ceramics (from three features) recovered from Coke's, in contrast to all of the ceramics for Rich Neck, the Coke assemblage still exhibited a higher diversity of vessel forms. There are more types of vessel forms for table and beverage service for Coke's (Table 3). The householders at Coke's very likely obtained a number of their ceramic vessels while working at his tavern, whether as hand-me-downs and/or through pilfering. This was not unprecedented. Archaeologists who excavated the eighteenth-century Southall's Quarter also concluded that the pudding pans, tureen, sauceboat and other specialized vessels recovered from the site were likely dishes first used at James Southall's Williamsburg tavern that then made their way into the dwellings of those he enslaved (Pullins et al. 2003: 171–173).

Williamsburg had a number of taverns during the eighteenth century that offered food, lodging, entertainment, and stabling for guests' horses (Department of Research 1990). Tavern and ordinary operators, including the well-known ones such as Henry Wetherburn, Christianna Campbell, and Mathew Moody, all owned enslaved men and women who worked at cleaning, cooking, serving meals and drink, and caring for horses (Leviner 1995: 99–100; Tate 1965). Coke, with nine enslaved individuals, undoubtedly did the same, requiring one or more of his field hands to work at the

**Table 2** Ceramics by category

| | Coke's | | Utopia IV (Str 140) | | Rich Neck (68AL) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Category | *N* | % | *N* | % | *N* | % |
| Tableware | 174 | 38.9 | 122 | 53.7 | 127 | 46.5 |
| Tea and Coffee Service | 186 | 41.6 | 63 | 27.8 | 98 | 35.9 |
| Utilitarian | 87 | 19.5 | 42 | 18.5 | 48 | 17.6 |
| Totals | 447 | 100.0 | 227 | 100.0 | 273 | 100.0 |

**Table 3** Ceramics by vessel form based on MNV analysis

| | Coke's Plantation | Rich Neck (68AL) |
|---|---|---|
| Bowl | x | x |
| Coffee pot | x | x |
| Creamer | x | |
| Cup | x | |
| Mug/can | x | x |
| Plate | x | x |
| Platter | x | |
| Porringer | x | |
| Punch bowl | x | x |
| Saucer | x | x |
| Slop bowl | x | |
| Sugar bowl | x | |
| Tea bowl | x | x |
| Tea pot | x | x |

Excludes one vessel, CW Object No. 663-68AL, identified as a possible platter/dish

tavern either as needed or on a routine basis. He appears to have started his tavern sometime after 1755 upon purchasing two additional properties in town (Department of Research 1990: 25–26). Coke's probate inventory (Coke 1768) demonstrates that his tavern was well-equipped to ensure that his guests had adequate lodging and meals. The decedent owned multiple bedsteads, dozens of bed linens and table cloths, a wide variety of cooking implements, and a high number and diverse range of table utensils, tablewares, and tea and coffee wares (both metal and ceramic). Among the dishes and utensils listed in the probate are 22 knives, 48 forks, 18 pewter dishes, seven dozen pewter plates, four "china" bowls, 23 "china" saucers, 21 cups, eight chocolate cups, seven tea pots, two slop bowls, ten "white stone" dishes, 12 "stone" plates, six "delph" dishes, six plates, and 31 custard cups. Rather than toss out chipped and worn ceramics, or those no longer deemed fashionable, Coke probably gave these to the few individuals he owned who maintained a separate homestead. Turning back to the ceramic assemblage from Coke's quarter, it more closely resembles those associated with taverns excavated in Williamsburg than it does those related to plantation quarters.

Tavern sites usually have a relatively higher number of vessels for beverage service and consumption (Bragdon 1981; Metz et al. 1998: 114–115). These include mugs, tankards, cups, punch bowls, and tea and coffee vessels. In order to compare the MNV results with those for Williamsburg's Shield's Tavern (Late Period 1738–51; Brown et al. 1990: 98–99), I recategorized the ceramics by beverage service (including tea and coffee vessels, punch bowls, mugs/cans) versus tablewares and utilitarian vessels. I also included the MNV data related to Rich Neck. The Coke assemblage is more comparable to that of the tavern assemblage (Table 4). A contingency table analysis was used to determine if the representation of tableware, utilitarian vessels, and artifacts associated with beverage service were all relatively similar among the three sites. The results show that the proportions of artifacts at

Rich Neck were significantly different from Coke's and Shield's Tavern. At Coke's and Shield's Tavern, 51% of the vessels were associated with beverage service, while at Rich Neck that percentage was about 32%. The contingency analysis confirmed that the differences were statistically significant ($X^2 = 11.84$, DF = 2, $N = 409$, $p = .003$). Beverage-related artifacts accounted for this significant outcome. With vessels for beverage service and consumption taken out of the comparison, the proportions of tablewares and utilitarian vessels were not significantly different. In addition, the higher percentage of wine and case bottles for Coke's plantation relative to Rich Neck and Utopia IV (Table 1; Fig. 7) also lends support to the interpretation that these householders were forced to schedule their time and labor between tavern and farm.

The artifact assemblages differed in other notable ways. Figure 7 presents the contingency analysis of all three assemblages, comparing the quantities of artifacts at each site by their predicted values, and expressing the deviation in standardized residuals. For Coke's, along with wine and case bottles, there are more sewing implements than one would expect given the frequencies at the other sites. On the other hand, there are fewer tools represented at Coke's (Table 5 also see Table 1). Looking specifically at tools, a contingency table analysis shows that the number of tools at Coke's was significantly lower than what one would expect given the numbers of tools at the other two sites ($X^2 = 22.37$, DF = 2, $N = 6507$, $p = .0001$). This suggests that at Rich Neck and Utopia IV, enslaved households were laboring under crop diversification while John Coke, like other small to middling planters, likely continued to mainly raise tobacco.

The diverse set of tasks and greater mobility related to the work performed by the household at Coke's complicate our understanding of "field hand." Those residing on small to middling plantations, especially urban ones, likely had working lives that differed from their counterparts on large, rural quarters. The latter's daily routine mainly kept them on the plantation, especially with crop diversification. By the mid-eighteenth century, the wealthiest planters were maximizing profits by raising wheat and/or corn, along with tobacco. As a result, enslaved field hands were forced to work more in the fields during the course of the year than with tobacco monoculture. In addition to the increased workload that extended across the calendar year, the relative frequencies of tools represented by each assemblage suggests that field hands at Rich Neck and Utopia IV were responsible for plantation work beyond planting (see Table 1; Fig. 7). Slaveowners provisioned tools, and rough carpentry was one of the ancillary tasks that took place on plantations (Kern 2010: 137). Only four tools were recovered

**Table 4** Ceramic MNVs by activity

| | Coke's | | Shield's Tavern (Late Period 1738–1751) | | Rich Neck (68AL) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Category | *N* | % | *N* | % | *N* | % |
| Beverage Service | 40 | 47.6 | 111 | 53.1 | 38 | 32.7 |
| Tableware | 33 | 39.3 | 67 | 32.1 | 56 | 48.3 |
| Utilitarian | 11 | 13.1 | 31 | 14.8 | 22 | 19.0 |
| Totals | 84 | 100.0 | 209 | 100.0 | 116 | 100.0 |

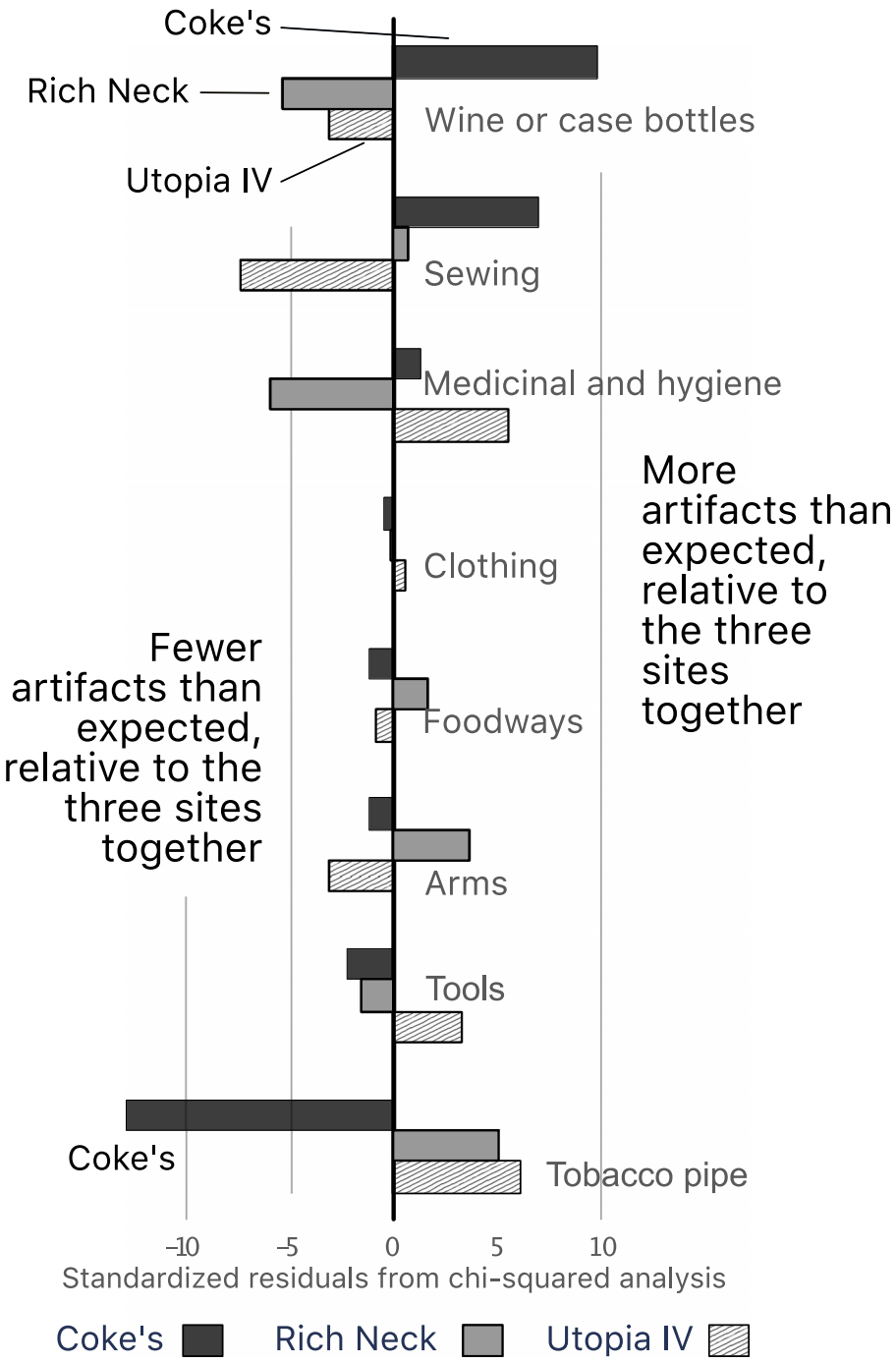


**Fig. 7** Based on the contingency analysis, this figure compares the archaeological quantities of artifacts at each site with their predicted values, expressing the deviation in standardized residuals. Bars on the right side of the center line are cases where there are more than the predicted numbers of artifacts, as with the overrepresentation of wine and case bottles at Coke's plantation shown in the upper right. The underrepresentation of sewing artifacts at Utopia IV may be seen on the left site of the chart

from Coke's (see Table 5): a whetstone, one unidentified tool, a rake, and a drawknife. Of these, only the latter, used for shaping wood, hints that work for Coke on his plantation might have involved more than laboring in the fields. In contrast, among the tools recovered from Rich Neck and Utopia IV (see Table 5) are those used primarily for carpentry, including an adze, auger, chisel, gimlet, saw, files, and hammers. This indicates that a more diverse set of tasks beyond planting but related to the plantations' tasks and upkeep, were carried out at both sites. This point is relevant in underscoring the differences in labor routines between the plantations. It suggests that at Rich Neck and Utopia IV, field hands mainly worked on site at their respective plantations. In contrast, those residing at Coke's were involved in fewer ancillary tasks related to agriculture. This difference was likely due to the practice of crop diversification at Rich Neck and Utopia IV, which, as discussed previously, required more diverse sets of tasks at the plantations and more skilled laborers as evidenced by the tools for carpentry. These would be needed for making and repairing wagons, for example, to transport manure, fodder, and grains (Neiman 2008). In contrast, Coke, with a much smaller labor force, may have continued to focus on tobacco planting. Coke or one of his sons very likely supervised the work at the plantation, a relatively easier task with tobacco planting than with crop diversification. Moreover, if the householders at Coke's were required to work in town, as is argued here, crop diversification, with all of its attendant year-round tasks, would have impeded their ability to move to and from town on a regular basis.

What the evidence suggests is that variability in activities did exist between these enslaved households and that it is clearly reflected in the archaeological record of the three sites. The goods that made their way from tavern to home and that were eventually discarded by the householders at Coke's also underscore the extent to which their worlds – private and public, commercial and domestic – were interwoven. The disparities between the tobacco pipe frequencies between the sites (see Table 1; Fig. 7) also hints at greater mobility among the householders at Coke's. The underrepresentation of pipes at Coke's plantation is possibly the result of this household's members smoking away from home and in town, where broken pipes were discarded in and around Coke's tavern. Turning now to the household itself, what does the

**Table 5** Tool Artifact Group by Related Activity and Form

| | | Coke's | | Utopia IV (Str 140) | | Rich Neck (68AL) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Related Activity | Tool Form | *N* | % | *N* | % | *N* | % |
| Agriculture and Gardening | Hoe, Rake, Scythe | 1 | 25.0 | 10 | 32.3 | 4 | 25.0 |
| Woodworking, Construction, Land Clearance | Adze, Auger, Axe, Chisel, File, Gimlet, Hammer, Drawknife, Saw, Wedge | 1 | 25.0 | 12 | 38.7 | 8 | 50.0 |
| Blade Sharpener | Whetstone | 1 | 25.0 | 4 | 12.9 | 3 | 18.8 |
| Unid Tool or Tool Fragment | Ferrule, UID Tool | 1 | 25.0 | 5 | 16.1 | 1 | 6.2 |
| | Total | 4 | 100.0 | 31 | 100.0 | 16 | 100.0 |

archaeological evidence suggest about household-related practices and the social organization of labor? Within the home, the gendered division of household labor may have fueled conflict between adult members of the household that was alleviated by partially relying on food prepared at the tavern, and sharing household-related tasks that troubled gendered norms. Moreover, the evidence for sewing at Coke's demonstrates how an enslaved woman's labor was implicated in both domestic and extra-domestic labor.

## Contesting the Private/Public Dichotomy: A Woman's Labor at Coke's Plantation

Black women's labor is often characterized as a "double burden." Under slavery and following emancipation, their gender did not exclude them from full-time agricultural work. Following work in the fields, black women arrived home and undertook what historian Stephanie Camp (2004:32–33) refers to as the "second shift": cooking, cleaning, sewing, and caring for children. Camp notes that although enslaved men also contributed to their households by hunting, gathering firewood, and so on, it was women who were central to childrearing and the household economy (see also Fox-Genovese 1988: 177; Genovese 1976: 331; Stevenson 1996: 180). As discussed above, it was common practice in Virginia for children to reside with their mothers. Although the elderly and older children of both sexes were known to assist with childcare, it was mainly the mutual support network of enslaved women characteristic of large plantations that provided a safety net for raising children (Stevenson 1996: 175–176; Young 2004). Collins (2009) refers to this practice as "other-mothering," where black women during slavery and after stepped in to nurture and care for children who were not their own. This same network ensured that there were others "within a stone's throw of one another" (White 1999: 123–124) who could help with the mundane tasks of cooking meals and laundry. In the absence of these kinds of social arrangements at Coke's plantation, how did this household fare? More specifically, what were the implications for the woman who resided there in terms of her contributions to her household?

One way in which household members likely mitigated the daily tasks associated with foodways was to take meals at Coke's tavern. Food production still took place at home as evidenced by the faunal remains recovered from the site. All three sites yielded milk pans, one of the few vessel types represented and used primarily for food preparation. Yet, there are no metal pots for cooking meals represented in the Coke assemblage. A metal pot is one of the few items that planters regularly provisioned to quarters, and they played an important role in preparing the one-pot meals referred to in the literature (Franklin 2001). There are two (one iron and one copper alloy) pots for Rich Neck, while at Utopia IV, fragments of two copper alloy pans, four iron pots, a pot lid, and six pot hooks were found within feature fill associated with Structure 140. Relying on meals prepared at the tavern to feed one or more household members would have dampened some of the pressure for the woman residing at Coke's to engage in daily cooking, a task usually associated with enslaved females. Yet the evidence suggests that in other ways, her domestic responsibilities weren't altogether lessened, just varied from her counterparts on large plantations. In particular, sewing may have occupied more of her time.

African American women's skills in sewing and textile work dating back to slavery is well-documented (Dunaway 2003: 170–176; Fry 2002; Fox-Genovese 1988: 176–185; Galle 2004; Wahlman 1993). In Virginia, enslaved women worked as seamstresses, spinners and weavers (Kulikoff 1986: 399–401, 405; Morgan 1998: 205; Tate 1965: 34–35), and in urban Williamsburg, textile work was one of the few skills mentioned when enslaved women were advertised for sale (Nicholls 1990: 44, 46). Nearing 15% of the total assemblage, the sewing implements from Coke's include needles (the only ones recovered from all three sites), straight pins, scissors, and thimbles. At Coke's, the sewing-related artifacts constitute a higher relative frequency than those for Rich Neck and Utopia IV (see Table 1) and are statistically over-represented at this site (see Fig.7). This is especially telling since all of the feature fill from Rich Neck underwent flotation (Franklin 2004) which undoubtedly resulted in a higher recovery rate of small finds (especially straight pins) than for the other two sites. I suggest that the woman residing at Coke's quarter invested more of her time as a seamstress, and that this was largely due to the expectations of appearance imposed on enslaved men and women who worked in Williamsburg's taverns and ordinaries. The rough clothing that Coke probably rationed for field work once or twice annually (Morgan 1998: 125–133) would not have sufficed for tavern work. Historian Thad Tate cites period examples of customers' observations and expectations of the enslaved Virginians who labored in Williamsburg's public houses. He states (1965: 55):

> There are particularly favorable comments on the fact that waiters and cooks in the inns 'were dressed neatly and cleanly.' To require that 'the Negroes at the Better public houses must not wait on you unless in Clean shirts and drawers & feet washed—' more than met, however, the minimum demands of the eighteenth century in matters of cleanliness and dress.

One Williamsburg inn guest, possibly of the Raleigh Tavern, had a similar observation of the enslaved people he encountered (Department of Research 1990: 25–26; Tate 1965: 37):

> In our hotel we had a very good though dear entertainment, Negro cooks, women waiters, and chambermaids made their courtesies with a great deal of native grace and simple elegance and were dressed neatly and cleanly. They yet recall and speak with evident delight of the politeness and gallantry of the French officers.

Tavern and inn keepers courting paying customers would have been attentive to the dress and demeanor of the enslaved men and women who were a highly visible presence at their establishments. In addition to the elevated need to ensure that clothing was "neat" and mended properly, it had to be clean. Thus, the routine household practices of sewing and laundering at Coke's were intertwined with their enslaved labor. Sewing for pleasure while embellishing a garment with fancy ribbons for a dance or other special occasion (Camp 2002; Heath 1999b; Thomas and Thomas 2004) alternated with mending clothes to make certain that one was presentable in town while laboring for Coke.

For the woman who resided at Coke's plantation, her role as a seamstress and the related material culture that made up her sewing kit not only speaks to household and extra-household production, but it also reveals her role in parenting. Among the four thimbles from the site, two are diminutive, child-sized thimbles (Fig. 8). Children learned household tasks, as with plantation-related ones, socially: through verbal instruction, supervision and trial-and-error, and by shadowing their elders as they went about their work. It was within these arenas of interaction that adults socialized children to assume gendered identities. Since children were more often than not kept with their mothers during slavery, it was very likely the mother's child who taught her daughter to sew. One can imagine this mother teaching her daughter needlework, squeezing in lessons between the other pulls on her time. Seeing to it that her child had the skills needed to mend and make clothing for herself, and eventually, her own household, was surely coupled with her anxieties around training her daughter to eventually be able to assume the same tasks for whoever ended up owning her. Thus, sewing was imbued with complex, even contradictory, meanings and feelings for her. In practice, it was both a medium for gendered identity formation and a means through which the mother-daughter relationship was nurtured and performed. It is a good example of how household practice, identity, and social relations were intertwined at Coke's plantation.

Returning to the concept of black women's "double burden," it is important not to naturalize the gendered division of labor (Ghisleni et al. 2016). The household at Coke's was internally diverse, with a minimum of a woman, man, and at least partly during this household's lifecycle, a young girl. While ties of kinship would have helped to promote cooperation and to develop trust and interdependency between household members, were their burdens equally shared? If the gendered norms of plantation and domestic labor prevailed at Coke's, the mother, in particular, would have been hard-pressed to meet every expectation. The greater mobility of at least one adult splitting

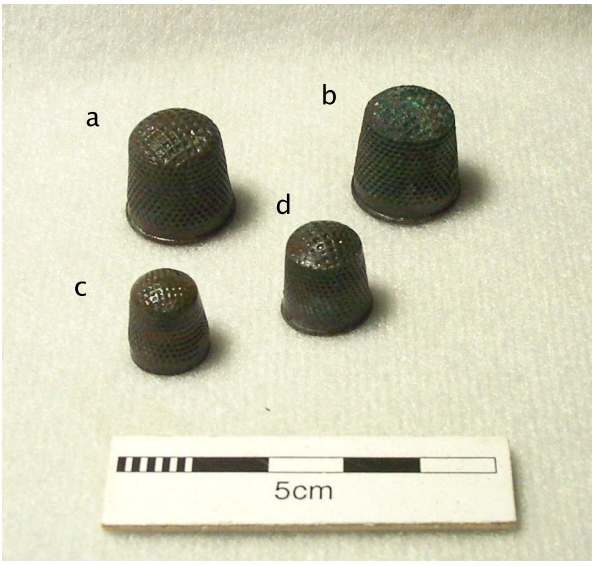


**Fig. 8** Copper alloy thimbles recovered from Coke's quarter: two are child-sized (a, b), and two are adult-sized (c, d)

their time between town and quarter would have compounded the difficulties of scheduling work at home. Yet they managed to maintain a household economy that suggests a level of attainment beyond self-sufficiency, where these householders were participants in Williamsburg's marketplace. As Beaudry (2015) maintains, households are flexible in organization and practice which is why household variability should be expected. Part of this household's strategy was to incorporate food and beverage from Coke's tavern as part of their household economy, where they also acquired dishes, and probably their glass tablewares, from time to time. I tentatively suggest that the adults of this household negotiated chores at home in order to minimize conflict: they shared tasks, including childcare. While this arrangement might appear to be unique, it was probably widespread among the sole enslaved households that occupied small to middling plantations.

## Concluding Remarks

Research began at Coke's plantation with the hopes that the site might reveal evidence that complicated our understanding of the lives of enslaved Virginians. Of the 12 Virginia plantation-related sites archived in DAACS, Coke's plantation is unique. It was a relatively small and urban holding occupied by a sole enslaved household, one whose members were enslaved by a man of means but who was by no means among the slave-owning elite. Rather than assume that an ideal type of household composed of people who labored in the fields once existed, I conducted a comparative analysis of artifacts recovered from three sites in order to delineate household variability. How might the everyday experiences of enslaved households differed? Addressing this question required conceptualizing households as embedded within institutionalized slavery and to consider not only how diverse forms of labor but also their scheduling influenced enslaved household economies and practices.

Based on the recovered artifacts alone, the site did not conform to the patterns seen in the quarters of enslaved households that resided on much larger plantations. The site's urban context also illuminated the ways in which the household at Coke's domestic economy was intertwined with the economic life of urban Williamsburg. The historical records suggest details about how the activities within and around taverns may have articulated with the enslaved household economy at this plantation. Moreover, the range of economic activities required at Coke's demanded a much broader and more generalized set of skills from its workers, as a relatively small number of enslaved adults had to do everything from planting, husbandry, felling trees, and working in Coke's tavern on the one hand to childcare, food preparation, and other household-related tasks on the other.

Thus, on small to middling plantations the sources of conflict between enslaved and enslaver were different from those on large rural plantations geared fully toward agricultural work and husbandry, where individuals with specialized skills like carpentry became more commonplace by the second half of the eighteenth century. At plantations like Rich Neck and Utopia, the axis of conflict was between work time and personal and family time. Yet the ability to rely on inter-household cooperation helped to alleviate both plantation and household labor. For enslaved women with children, in particular, their ability to rely on their female social networks for sharing

childcare and daily household-related tasks would have been a tremendous source of support. On smaller plantations, and especially urban ones, the conflict involved balancing plantation tasks and work in town with just as great a range of personal and familial priorities. The absence of neighboring households that might have enabled multitasking resulted in a different household economy at Coke's and very likely required a more flexible organization of household tasks. Taking meals in town and acquiring ceramic and glass tablewares from Coke's tavern were both incorporated into this household's economy. Moreover, sewing as a productive activity was implicated in both household and extra-household related labor. In these instances, bringing gender into focus served not only to dehomogenize the household, but revealed how the working life of the mother residing at Coke's blurred the boundaries between the private and public spheres (Rotman 2006). In general, given the intrusive nature of slavery, the distinctions between a 'domestic' and public world does not hold up. Slavery's dependence on the reproduction of an enslaved labor force, slaveowners' provisioning systems, imposed settlement patterns, and the attempts to surveil and control enslaved peoples' lives problematizes such a demarcation.

Conceptualizing households as made up of 'different kinds of people' (Hendon 2004), and as dynamic and flexible in their orientation, goals, and practices (Beaudry 2015) led to accounting for potential gendered conflict between household members, and introduced household variability into the equation. The decisions and strategies that were part of everyday life for adults at Coke's made for different kinds of negotiation within their household and to meet the labor demands imposed by John Coke than those employed by their counterparts on large plantations. The varying forms of social and economic relations that characterized what the enslaved households at each of the plantations experienced are a reminder that households are always politicized and embedded in wider relations of power (Hendon 1996).

**Acknowledgments** I am lucky and appreciative to have the support of friends who are also outstanding colleagues; Anna Agbe-Davies, Nedra Lee, and Sam Wilson each provided constructive feedback on different versions of this paper. Sam also generously lent his expertise in statistical analysis for this paper. Anna and I worked together on the excavations of Rich Neck and Coke's plantation so I especially valued her insights and suggestions which were always on mark. Thank you to Marley Brown for his leadership and support as the former Director of Archaeology at the CWF. His vision of expanding African American archaeology is what made this research possible. My appreciation goes to Heather Harvey and Lucie Vinciguerra who created the original figures for the Rich Neck and Coke's plantation technical reports, and to Sam who revised them for this article. Mark Kostro, Andy Edwards, and Hans Schwarz at the CWF assisted in getting the technical report for Coke's/Palace Lands to the finish line, without which this article would still be a work in progress. At Jefferson's Monticello, my gratitude goes to Jillian Galle for her swift and helpful responses to my questions regarding DAACS. Thank you to the International Journal of Historical Archaeology editorial staff and Chuck Orser for granting me the opportunity to publish with them. Finally, I'm indebted to the peer reviewers for their insightful comments and suggestions. The article's arguments were strengthened as a result of their efforts. All remaining errors are my own.

## Compliance with Ethical Standards

**Conflict of Interest** The author declares that they have no conflict of interest.

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