Slate Pencils?: Education of Free and Enslaved African American Children at the Bray School, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1760-1774

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ABSTRACT

There is a dearth of literature on the archaeology of childhood. Historical archaeology, by its unique nature as a discipline, can use a combination of written documents, the archaeological record, and oral histories to interpret past lives. Historical documents and correspondence of *The Associates of the Late Reverend Dr. Thomas Bray* attest to the establishment of The Bray School, a school created for free and enslaved African American children in eighteenth-century Williamsburg, Virginia. Appointed schoolmistress Mrs. Ann Wager played a significant role in what the children were being taught. An abundance of slate pencil fragments found on the Bray School site and oral histories contradict what is found in the written record.

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Introduction

> "Yet in some cases there is a disturbing contradiction between what is excavated and what is written down" (Deetz 1996, 18).

Oral histories together with written documents and the archaeological record can assist historical archaeologists to interpret what happened in the past. Written records are frequently about an infinitely small percentage of the population and were written from the viewpoint of that segment of the population, leaving out the balance of the people who contributed to society. Historical archaeology is a unique discipline that can look at the material culture that this silent majority possessed and attempt to untangle the complexity of what is found where, to whom it belonged, and what its use or meaning might have had to the owner or owners. Everyday items, like slate pencil fragments found at the Bray School site, suggest that writing was being taught. These small but significant finds held by the free and enslaved black children of the Bray School in Williamsburg, Virginia were a critical part of their education. The children passed on their literacy and their knowledge thereby contributing to their families, community, and future generations of African Americans.

It is through "The unique approach offered by historical archaeology, where documents, artifacts, and the context of the site comprise the material for study…" (Triggs 2005, 195) that the archaeology of childhood can continue to be pursued. Even though they are an essential part of every culture in the world, children are one of the marginalized groups that are repeatedly overlooked in archaeology. Few have investigated the archaeology of childhood (Baxter 2005). Children are contributors to their society in some way and yet they often remain silent in the archaeological record. Evidence of children can help demonstrate not only their presence, but also the active

roles they played and how they participated in their society.

Probably since the chartering of the College of William and Mary in 1693 and its establishment as the capital of Virginia in 1699, Williamsburg has been considered a "unique" and 'an unusual place" (Belvin 1981, xi, 20; 2002, 2). Set in the context of a slave society in the largest of the American colonies in the eighteenth century, the Bray School was established by the philanthropic efforts of *The Associates of the Late Reverend Dr. Thomas Bray*. They appointed a diligent schoolmistress, Mrs. Ann Wager who had experience tutoring children of elite families in Williamsburg. At the Bray School, she educated free and enslaved African American children not far from the educational, religious, and political institutions of a biracial society. Mrs. Wager was the one and only schoolmistress for fourteen years and an instrumental person in the lives of free and enslaved blacks with daily instruction and activities at the school.

The main focus of education for these young scholars was learning about Christianity, reading the Bible, and being catechized in the Anglican faith. They were instructed in deportment and etiquette, and the girls were also taught how to sew. On Sundays, the Bray School children were questioned about their catechism (Bly 2011). Questions and answers needed to be taught and learned in order to perform well for the clergy, congregation, and visitors to the school. Books sent from London for the school were usually religious in nature, such as psalters, testaments, and Bibles. Books sent by the Associates were "fifty copies of a 'Child's First Book', an ABC Primer, forty copies of Henry Dixon's *The English Instructor* (1728), a colonial spelling book, and twenty copies of the *Book of Common Prayer* that contained the church's catechism" (Bly 2011, 435). Some books were available for sale like etiquette books, dictionaries, and horn

books by local merchants. Lessons in social etiquette for the children were outlined such as "…no lying, cursing, swearing, stealing, and profaning the Sabbath" (Bly 2011, 440).

In addition to children receiving their education from schools, "…families, communities and churches…" are children's educators (Monaghan 2005, 2). As part of their upbringing, African American children had to acquire the necessary social skills to become members in the slave society in which they lived. Their first educators were their families. The family, the microcosm of society, was the place where values and long-standing practices were learned, reinforced by the community and church, and passed on to the next generation.

Evidence of learning and passing on knowledge is found in historical documents such as correspondence, slave registers, and student rosters. Among the written documents are three lists of Bray School attendees submitted by Robert Carter Nicholas, trustee of the Bray School to John Waring, secretary of the Associates of London (Van Horne 1985). Journals and diaries are another way of getting a glimpse into past lives. Even though they were mainly written by white men, the entries of William Byrd II, Philip Vickers Fithian, and John Harrower provide insight into eighteenth-century childhood and education (Byrd 1972; Fithian 1957; Harrower and Riley 1963). The *Virginia Gazette* printed advertisements that show evidence of an access to goods available for purchase at the time of the Bray School. This local newspaper also ran ads for runaway slaves submitted by owners, who frequently indicated an enslaved person's intellect and skills acquired such as reading, writing, and mathematics (Costa and the Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia 2005).

The written documents associated with the Bray School and the timeframe are

complemented by the archaeological excavation of the Bray School site, an eighteenth-century urban site in the Chesapeake. Among oyster shells and animal bones, other items of material culture were found such as ceramics, clay tobacco pipes, and slate pencil fragments. Ceramics such as creamware, first manufactured in England in 1762, provide a date within the time period of the Bray School (Noël Hume 2001). Items like clay marbles, jacks, and dolls were most likely toys for children, but dating of these toys is critical to verify the timeframe. Artifacts associated with sewing like pins, bone buttons, and thimbles imply that sewing was taking place on the site. Samplers which are alphabets, numbers, and sayings embroidered on cloth are made of organic materials, therefore fabric and thread would presumably not have been preserved in the ground. Tools related to writing in the form of a portion of a slate tablet as well as slate pencil fragments indicate that writing in some manner was taking place.

In addition to the documents and what is found in the ground, the oral histories of members of First Baptist Church of Williamsburg attest to the passing on of knowledge from one generation to the next. According to Colonial Williamsburg historian Linda Rowe, First Baptist Church is the oldest church in the United States established for blacks by blacks (St. John Erickson 2015). From the time of the Bray School, literacy and education were evident and important among African Americans (Jones 2007, 2016). By interviewing contemporary African American families whose ancestors were enslaved and recording their oral histories, archaeologists provide a way for disenfranchised people to tell their story. Oral history interviews are another opportunity for archaeologists to engage with the community, gaining valuable insight into past lives, and preserving family histories.

From my point of view as an educator and historical archaeologist, I look at written documents, the archaeological record, and the oral histories as the lines of evidence from the Bray School site. With the backdrop of the colonial capital of Virginia and the College of William and Mary at a significant time in the history of the colonies, I argue that education empowered the free and enslaved black children of the Bray School, that these children contributed as active members of society through daily practice, and that the passing on of their knowledge had a ripple effect on their generation and future generations of African Americans and ordinary items, like slate pencils, found at the Bray School site infer what was being taught.

Chapter 1: Archaeology of Childhood

Children exist in every culture in the world. They are each culture's future and are contributors to family and society. Children are frequently overlooked and remain voiceless. A culture defines childhood in biological terms, within its cultural construct in its time and place in history. Cultural knowledge that children acquire in their childhood is passed on to the next generation. Bioarchaeologist Mary E. Lewis posits "No matter what period we are examining, childhood is more than a biological age, but a series of social and cultural events that make up a child's life" (Lewis 2007, 4). Terms used for the stages of childhood vary by culture which makes a discussion of childhood difficult. Children may be defined as "non-adults" and within this term are gradations of age and what children are called such as infant, child, or adolescent. Where one age category begins and ends is determined differently by those who study children. In *The Bioarchaeology of Children*, Lewis breaks down the age groups as infants, ages 1–4, ages 5–9, and ages 10–19. In one chart infants are considered from birth to a year old, non-adults are less than or equal to age 17, and a child is 1–14 and 6 months, an adolescent 14 years and 6 months to 17, and an adult is more than 17 years of age. Bioarchaeology is challenged by the lack of standardization and inconsistencies in age terminology and categorization for children as well as the use of the pejorative term, "sub-adult" (Lewis 2007, 2). Since there is no standardized classification of what a child is, bioarchaeologists as well as others who study children and childhood grapple with the discrepancies of their definitions.

Bioarchaeology and zooarchaeology are ways of determining diet, nutrition, health, and environmental stressors in children through the analyses of bones, teeth, floral

and faunal remains (Blakey 1998; La Roche and Blakey 1997; Lewis 2007). Analysis of human bones can also attest to the kind of work an individual did (Beaudry and Bescherer Metheny 2015, 22). Bones can provide valuable information about children's health. Bones will also show evidence of repetitive actions, how children perhaps used certain muscles repeatedly to perform specific tasks in the procurement or preparation of food thereby eliciting their contributions to the society they lived in.

Childhood may not only be dependent on biological age, but children's achievements distinguished by rites of passage. Teacher and trainer, Geoffrey Vitale, affirms "…the whole notion of childhood and youth may differ according to the epoch and the location" (Vitale 2014, 1). The meaning of childhood is both temporal and spatial. Biological age and rite of passage are ways that Vitale differentiates childhood, a child, adolescent, and youth, versus an adult (Vitale 2014, 1). He divides age in the way that Europeans and the Romans designated it: pueritia (boyhood) ended at 16, juventus (youth) from 16–46, and senex (senior) from that point on it also included adulescentia (adolescence) from 15–30 or so (Vitale 2014, 2). There is also the emotional aspect of children. No longer to be considered miniature adults, it was not until 1875 that the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was established (Vitale 2014, 233). Forming this society specifically, and for the first time, for children as a distinct social group marks the differentiation between adults and children. Remarkably, "the first child protective agency in the world" (The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children 2016) has been in existence for 140 years.

Childhood is a stage in life that differs in time and space and since it is a cultural construct, it depends on the society in which a child lives. Childhood within the same

culture and society perhaps has different determinations on what constitutes a child depending on social or economic status, gender, race, or ethnicity. Each of these categories is intertwined with one another and therefore adds to the complexity of understanding childhood.

The stage of childhood for African American children in the eighteenth century was different from the kind of childhood that white children had. Children in a slave society were taught what their roles as adults would look like. Blacks were considered chattel property and from time to time slaveholders gave an enslaved person to their children as a gift to celebrate their wedding (Volo and Volo 2001, 68). Often enslaved children were also written in a bequest in a will (Kern 2010, 110). Most likely enslaved and white children found it difficult to understand how and why their relationship changed as each child grew older. Sometimes enslaved children had to entertain children not much younger than themselves or had to fetch their toys or hats for them. Often enslaved playmates were nearby or present at lessons when white children were tutored and had to take the physical punishment for the white children's misbehavior (Lewis 2013, 17).

Childhood can also be viewed in terms of legal age. The age of maturity was twenty-five for men and women in Holland. Children were considered *wezen*, people by the Dutch. The fact that the Dutch colonial legal system, unlike the codified system of English colonial laws, perceived a child in seventeenth-century New Amsterdam as a person, children were held to the same protection and consequences as the adults in society. If a crime were committed, children were allowed to testify and were also bound to the same standards as adults. The magistrate had the final say in the courtroom and a

child's sentence might seem harsh in today's world. Children as active participants could solicit the help of an adult to start court proceedings and also used other means such as verbal or non-verbal resistance to protect themselves (Adin 2007, 92, 95–6, 100).

As Jane Eva Baxter suggests, "an archaeology of childhood [has] two critical concepts: socialization and gender" (Baxter 2005, 2). She states there are three essential themes: "understanding children through their relationships, addressing childhood as a cultural construct, and recognizing children as cultural actors" (Baxter 2005, 15). How adults and society view childhood may be different from what children associate as part of being a child. Children learn their roles, activities, and behaviors in their family relationships, a dynamic process, as well as through material culture.

Deetz and others have said "material culture… is not culture but its product" (Deetz 1996, 35). Children and adults contribute to the making of material culture. Material culture that is associated with children is one way of finding evidence of childhood in the archaeological record, however, child-specific material remains are often difficult to determine. Miniatures might have belonged to adults, been part of funerary practices, and sometimes used by children. Tools may have been used by children as well as adults depending on a child's physical size, strength, and capability. A thimble's size, according to Beaudry was dependent on the "…intended user as well as to the thimble's intended use" (Beaudry 2006, 105). Thimbles were made and sized to grow with children as they learned to sew. A thimble could also be part of a collection, show no signs of use, and simply sit on a shelf. Other thimbles may reveal the results of many hours of a needle's poking and prodding. Children have been contributors to the archaeological record and active participants along with other members of society. What children

touched, where they went, how they viewed the world and the relationships they forged may be seen through an archaeologist's lens crediting them with being "more than smaller versions of adults" (Wilkie 2000b, 100) and not to "reduce children to passive, inert automatons" (Sofaer Derevenski 2000, 11), or "passive appendages to women" (Lillehammer 2000, 17). Although some archaeologists have endeavored to find children as contributors to the archaeological record in recent decades, there is a paucity of literature about the archaeology of childhood (Battle-Baptiste 2011; Baxter, 2005, 2008; Davies 2005; Kamp 2001; King 1995, 2005; Lewis 2007; Lillehammer 1989, 2000; Sobel 1993; Sofaer Derevenski 2000; Voss 2006; Wilkie 2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2003, 2010). Especially if children are not apparent in the written record, the archaeology of childhood at past, present, and future sites, clearly deserves further consideration.

In this section that follows, I will discuss how enslaved and free black children learned the necessary social skills to become members of the society in which they lived using the written accounts and archaeological record to address childhood within the context of an eighteenth-century urban archaeological site in the Chesapeake region of Virginia, the Bray School site, a school for free and enslaved African American children from 1760–1765 in Williamsburg, Virginia. A continual part of contemporary life, they are not always easy to find in written or archaeological records, yet, children of varying ages and stages of life were a part of the past.

Chapter 2: Creation of the Bray School

In eighteenth-century colonial Virginia, public schools were non-existent. Families who could afford it hired a tutor to teach their children (Vinovskis 1987, 25). Poor white or free and enslaved black children lacked educational opportunities. By the second half of the eighteenth century, education for some children changed. Perhaps as a response to the Glorious Revolution in England (1688), humanitarian organizations like the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (1699), the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (1701), and *The Associates of the Late Reverend Dr. Thomas Bray* (1723–4; 1729–30) were established to convert and educate blacks in the American colonies (Meyers 2010, 372; Tate 1994, 68; Van Horne 1985, 1). Sharing the same vision of creating schools for blacks in the American colonies, a bequest from Abel Tassin, Sieur D'Allone of Holland, was made to Dr. Thomas Bray (The Episcopal Church 2016; Van Horne 1985, 3–4; Woodson 1915, 36–7). Along with Bray's idea for schools, he sent religious books like sermons, testaments, catechisms, psalters, and Bibles for parochial libraries, missionaries, and catechists in England and the American colonies (Van Horne 1985, 16–7, 86–89). According to historian John Van Horne, Bray sent books to American clergymen and laymen to convert blacks to Christianity (Van Horne 1985, 24–5).

As an Anglican colony where there was no separation of church and state, Christianizing meant not only maintaining but increasing power of the Anglican Church in Virginia. Additionally, the influence of the Enlightenment toward humankind of the late seventeenth-century writings of philosophers like John Locke and the religious evangelical movement known as the Great Awakening of protestants like the

Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists proved a social climate ready for altruistic efforts of men like the Reverend Dr. Thomas Bray of England (1658–1730). Bray, a philanthropist, wished for free and enslaved blacks to learn how to read, to become Christians, and thereby to save themselves from eternal damnation. He was a commissary of the Bishops of London in Maryland (1695) and a close friend of The Reverend James Blair, commissary of Virginia (1689) and first president of the College of William and Mary (1693–1743) (Meyers 2012, 2013).

The Reverend Dr. Thomas Bray died in 1730 never knowing the real success or impact of the Bray Schools. It was not until the mid-eighteenth century, *The Associates of the Late Reverend Dr. Thomas Bray* of London started to create schools for free and enslaved black children in the American colonies. Reverend John Waring, secretary of *The Associates of the Late Reverend Dr. Thomas Bray*, and the Associates were charged to carry out Bray's wishes. Waring wrote to their newly appointed trustee Benjamin Franklin, "…might Not the black Children born in the Providence [Province in Van Horne] be taught to read & instructed …?[in the Principles of Christian Morality... in Van Horne]" (Bly 2011, 432; Van Horne 1985, 122). Uncertain about the outcome of undertaking this kind of venture in a slave society, Franklin took a year of fact-finding, consulting with clerical leaders as to the benefits of a charity school for free and enslaved blacks. He also sought advice from William Sturgeon, a minister and experienced catechism teacher who had already been catechizing Philadelphia's blacks in this colonial city (Van Horne 1985, 124, 349; Woodson 1915, 36–7). In order to insure its success, Franklin requested that William Sturgeon be named the director of the Philadelphia school and that a schoolmistress be appointed with no more than 40 students in the school

(Van Horne 1985, 125–6). Further advice about instruction came from Benjamin Franklin specifying the hiring of a schoolmistress instead of a schoolmaster to "…teach both Boys & Girls to read, & the Girls to knit, sew, & mark" (Van Horne 1985, 126). The subject matter to be taught was further outlined and expanded by the Associates, "the Boys to read, the Girls to read, sew, knit, and mark; and to attend at Church with them every Wednesday and Friday; and that all her [the schoolmistress] Endeavours are to be directed towards making them Christians"(Bly 2011, 434). In addition to "Reading and Christianity," Franklin suggested the children could be "taught some useful Things" (Bly 2011, 434; Van Horne 1985, 125) which continues to remain open to much interpretation today.

The first Bray School opened in Philadelphia in November 1758 with a schoolmistress in charge of 30 free and enslaved black children. Benjamin Franklin's wife Deborah relayed her opinions to her husband in a letter dated August 9, 1759 about the progress she witnessed of the young scholars at church services; she remarked about the children's good behavior and responses to their catechism questions (Monaghan 2005, 259; Van Horne 1985, 137). Mrs. Franklin must have thought the education worthwhile and useful when she wrote: "It gave me a great deal of Pleasure, and I shall send Othello [an enslaved child in the Franklin household] to the School" (Van Horne 1985, 137). In a letter to Waring, Franklin, too, "…conceiv'd a higher Opinion of the natural Capacities of the black Race…Their apprehension seems as quick, their Memory as strong, and their Docility in every Respect equal to that of white children" (Van Horne 1985, 203–4).

With the success of the school, the Associates asked Benjamin Franklin about

other possible locations for charity schools. (Bly 2011, 434–5). Benjamin Franklin, the associate on this side of the Atlantic most likely to suggest feasible locations for additional Bray schools in the colonies, might have been more qualified to understand the slave society than the Associates in London. Besides the recently established school in Philadelphia, Franklin advocated Bray schools in "…New York, Williamsburgh in Virginia, & Newport in Rhode Island…" (Bly 2011, 435; Meyers 2010, 380; Van Horne 1985, 144).

As early as 1740, the Reverend William Dawson, second president of The College of William and Mary from 1743–52, taught a class during Lent which consisted of white indentured servants, Indians, and blacks. He was dedicated to the religious education of Indian and black children. In 1756, Franklin came to Williamsburg on official post office business and was awarded the first honorary degree from the College of William and Mary. Someone affiliated with the College, possibly Dawson or members of the faculty would have spoken to Franklin regarding the College's dedication to Christianizing "heathens," Indian children at the Brafferton School and free and enslaved blacks from parish schools. Less than two years after the opening of the Bray School in Philadelphia, the Associates considered establishing a Bray School in Williamsburg and Franklin hoped for the successful realization of the school, like its predecessor in Philadelphia (Bly 2011, 434–5). As the first recipient of an honorary degree from The College of William & Mary in 1756, Franklin also believed his strong attachment to the College and connections with prominent men in Williamsburg would be an asset to its overall accomplishments. Franklin's affiliations with the postmaster and printer of Williamsburg's *Virginia Gazette*, William Hunter, and the rector of Bruton Parish

Church, Reverend Thomas Dawson who was also President of The College of William and Mary, and after Dawson's death, the treasurer of Virginia, Robert Carter Nicholas and the rector Reverend William Yates, as trustees, would continue to guarantee the school's success. Certainly, Benjamin Franklin would have wished for a paralleled success to the Philadelphia Bray School in another capital city.

There were other favorable circumstances already in place that would assure a positive outcome for the school. Language was previously considered an impediment to proselytizing Native Americans and Africans. By 1750, nearly half the population of Virginia was made up of blacks. They were born in Virginia and grew up learning English and the customs of the colony therefore language and culture would presumably not have been a deterrent to learning or becoming Christians. Not only were blacks already attending Bruton Parish Church regularly, but about 980 had been baptized in the Anglican Church (Bogger 2006, 10; Tate 1994, 73–4). It is noteworthy that blacks continued to be baptized as Christians because in 1667, the General Assembly in Virginia passed a statute that no longer gave freedom to the enslaved through baptism: "doth not alter the condition of the person as to his bondage or ffreedome." (Tate 1994, 7; Virginia, Shepherd, and Hening 1970, 260). Another promising feature of the initial and arguably continued success of the school was the appointment of a renowned tutor in Williamsburg, Mrs. Ann Wager as the schoolmistress for the Bray School. The prime location of the school, the Dudley Digges house, was in the heart of Williamsburg where enslaved black children lived close by and within walking distance of the homes of the elite who lived in town as well as the tavern keepers on Duke of Gloucester Street. Upon Franklin's recommendation, the Bray School, a charity school in Williamsburg, opened

on Michaelmas day,[the feast of St. Michael and all Angels, September 29, also associated with the autumn harvest] (The Editors of the Encylopaedia Britannica 2016) September 21, 1760, and, the newly appointed schoolmistress, Ann Wager, greeted 24 free and enslaved black children that first day (Meyers 2010, 391; Van Horne 1985, 153).

Little is known about Ann Wager's life before she started teaching at the Bray School in Williamsburg. She was born by 1716 and educated by her father, Mrs. Wager's mother did not look favorably on educating her daughter since she reasoned it was "not 'proper' for a young woman to learn or support herself" (MacLean 2008; The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation n.d.). Married to William Wager who died by 1748, Ann came to realize the value and importance of her education to support their two children. Their son William had reached the age of maturity by the time of the settling of his father's estate. By 1756, William Wager Jr. represented Elizabeth City County in The House of Burgesses, and was justice of the peace in the same county by 1760. Ann became a widow and settled her husband's estate in 1750. Their daughter, Mary who was younger, later married a carpenter and joiner in Williamsburg, Matthew Watts Hatton. Fortunately Ann was educated, "literate and cultured," (MacLean 2008; The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation n.d.), and able to support herself and her daughter as a tutor. Ann Wager was the governess for the Carter Burwell children at Carter's Grove and likely lived on the plantation. It is also possible she tutored other children in Williamsburg, and in 1760, she was appointed schoolmistress for the Bray School, the charity school in Williamsburg and remained in this position until her death on August 20, 1774 (Brennan 2016, MacLean 2008; Bly 2011; The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation 2015).

It appeared customary for tutors in the eighteenth century to live with the family

they instructed as did Philip Vickers Fithian who taught the children of Robert Carter at Nomini Hall (cousin to Robert Carter Nicholas) (Fithian 1957). Fithian left a rich account of his daily activities in his correspondence and journal. In the first few months as tutor to the Carter children, Fithian revealed his fondness of them in a letter to his friend Laura dated December 21, 1773, "…a Family of lovely Children to instruct – You would envy me if I was able to tell you how kind, obedient, & beautiful the children are which I teach!" (Fithian 1957, 36). The children ranged in age from five to seventeen and were the sons, daughters and a nephew of the Carter's. The boys were taught writing and arithmetic, while the girls were instructed in writing and English. The younger children received lessons in spelling and reading, and all were catechized. Some even had dancing and music lessons with other teachers. (Fithian 1957, 6, 20–2, 26). Fithian ate with the family daily, and during his stay, he recorded a variety of food and drink, i.e. "Coffee… Beef & Greens… roast-Pig… boil'd Rock-fish… Figs… Water-melon…Corn… Perch, & Crabs… Sheeps-Head and Trout… Pomegranates…chestnuts" (Fithian 1957, 32, 90, 150, 157, 169, 171, 194, 204). As for his life as a tutor for an elite family, he remarked: "I have to myself in the Evening, a neat Chamber, a large Fire, Books, & Candle & my Liberty, either to continue in the school room, in my own Room or to sit over at the Great House with Mr. and Mrs. Carter" (Fithian 1957, 31–2). In addition to his salary and private room, he had "…Use of an elegant Library of Books; A Horse to ride; & a Servant to Wait" (Fithian 1957, 6). On March 2, 1774, a Wednesday, Fithian further demonstrated his fondness for the children as he penned "I gave my little family a Holiday…" (Fithian 1957, 69). Fithian earned their respect and had a rapport with his students because of his dedication and diligence.

In a lengthy letter to his replacement John Peck dated August 12, 1774, Fithian advised "The education of children requires constant unremitting attention" (Fithian 1957, 165). After Fithian completed his year as their tutor, prior to leaving, he regaled the children with presents (Fithian 1957, 206). When he returned home, he wrote letters to the Carter children which suggested an attachment, affection, and genuine concern not only for their education, but also their health, during a stressful and tumultuous time of the American Revolution. His correspondence sent to each child was testimony to his strong emotional ties to living with a family and tutoring the children for a year (Fithian 1957, 215–7). Fithian's journal entries and letters provide a fascinating glimpse into the life of a tutor for an elite family in the eighteenth-century Chesapeake. Even though Ann Wager did not leave a diary recording her years with the elite Carter Burwell family, Mrs. Wager might have had similar experiences and attachments to the Carter Burwell children she tutored. Additionally, she might have developed emotional ties with the free and enslaved black children whom she taught and were in her care for several years at the Bray School. Getting to know the children and their capabilities, as a teacher she would have wanted to bring out the best in her students and teach them the skills that would make their lives both in the present and the future easier to manage in a slave society. Skills such as reading, writing, and sewing would help the children's future endeavors, even though enslaved, living in a city like Williamsburg with elite residents and visitors who might have required these skills. Mrs. Wager's experience living in a slave society made her aware of the many services performed in an elite family household and taught the children accordingly.

It is interesting to note that Mrs. Wager might have tutored other families since

court records indicated that she received money from both the estates of Edward Champion Travis and George Wells, "perhaps for teaching their children" (MacLean 2008). Her upstanding reputation in the community, her caring ways and teaching methodology not surprisingly placed her in a position of being the first, and the only, appointed schoolmistress for the first school for free and enslaved black children in Williamsburg. Although most likely familiar with plantation life at the time of the Bray School, she lived in a unique urban setting. The rented house, possibly belonging to Dudley Digges, served a dual purpose as Mrs. Wager's home and the Bray School from 1760–65.

The Bray School was curiously not located on Duke of Gloucester Street or the Palace Green, the main streets of Williamsburg (Ackermann 2009, 39). The side streets commonly were the backdrop of the main street façade, whose people and activities were not in plain sight, that of "service, slave, and correctional buildings" (Ackermann 2009, 39). Even though the school was located behind the scenes at the corner of Prince George Street and North Boundary Street, the Bray school was remarkably in close proximity to the Wren building, site of the College of William and Mary, the Governor's Palace, and the Capitol building, the heart of the colonial capital at an interesting time when there was talk of both slavery and freedom. (*see Figure 1*).

It is important to note that Ann Wager tutored elite white children in Williamsburg who went on to further their education at boarding schools or institutions of higher learning either at home or abroad. As an educator, she would have been familiar with norms associated with lessons and pedagogy. Like Fithian, she had to continually

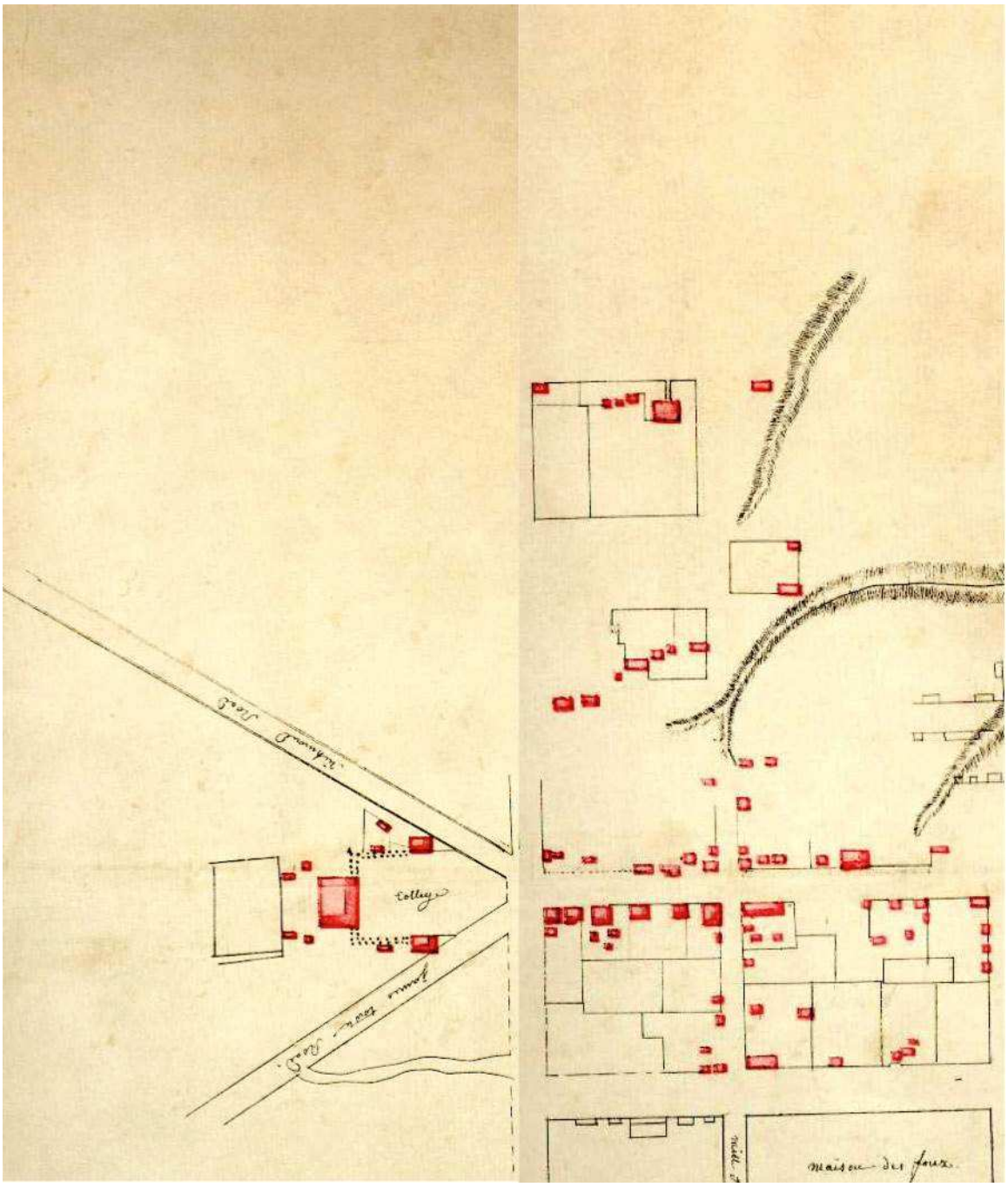

Figure 1. 1782 Frenchman's map of Williamsburg, Virginia. Courtesy Swem Special Collections.

assess where the children were in their studies, the progress they were making, and also to challenge their intellect. Clearly, Nomini Hall had a library full of books at Fithian's disposal for teaching and his own quest for knowledge. In contrast, at the Bray School, Mrs. Wager would be required to rework her teaching to the books supplied by the Associates, perhaps supplemented by books she owned or might have acquired in her teaching career. Arguably as a well-known teacher in the community, she might have had access to books from the College's campus, the Brafferton, an Indian school (1723–76) established from the bequest of Robert Boyle from England or from the College itself. Due to the austere budget of the Bray School, the schoolmistress had to adapt to the books that were readily available and manage to instruct the students even if there were a shortage of supplies. Her capability to adapt instruction with meager supplies speaks volumes to her expertise in the field. If she managed to supplement the supplies from the Bray School, it is a testimony to her resourcefulness as a teacher. Recognized for her competent teaching in the area, "…she was in high Repute for her Care & Method of teaching" (Van Horne 1985, 276). Mrs. Wager was in good standing in the community in order to be recommended as schoolmistress of the Bray School and well-known men like Benjamin Franklin presumably hoped that with Mrs. Wager in place, the school would be a success.

Teaching children of the elite was considered not only more prestigious but it was also more profitable since Mrs. Wager's Bray School salary was "… much less than is paid for Schooling in this City to other Mistresses" (Van Horne 1985, 276). Living conditions for Mrs. Wager likely changed greatly when she moved from a plantation setting to urban living. The house rented by the Associates for Mrs. Wager was not large

and it was normal for the time period for thirty-four children to fit into a small space. Unlike living the life of a tutor on a plantation, as a teacher in town, she presumably did not have the help of enslaved people. She probably had more autonomy. With that independence came having to do more for herself; being a widow in a house meant getting up early to stoke the fire, make her bed, and prepare her own meals. Ann Wager was probably a constant figure in each child's life attending the Bray School in such a rapidly changing social, economic, and political climate at that time. Getting to know the children and their siblings and possibly extended families over the course of a few years might also suggest a growing sentiment for the children she taught.

When Williamsburg was chosen for a Bray School, the community was fortunate to have an experienced schoolmistress with whom they felt confident and comfortable to be charged with the education of free and enslaved black children. As headmistress of the Bray School, Mrs. Wager was instructed to teach Christianity to children aged 3–10. She would have been accustomed to teaching children of varying ages and abilities from her time spent tutoring the Carter Burwell family and conceivably other families in Williamsburg as well as her own. The school day started at 6:00 a.m. in the summer months, and 7:00 a.m. in the winter months. Despite a paltry salary earned over her 14-year tenure, Ann Wager personally educated over 400 free and enslaved African American children (Van Horne 1985, 153,188,190; Bly 2001, 437, note 23). Books were sent from England for the young scholars, some religious and some secular in nature, like Reverend Thomas Bacon's *Two Sermons, Preached to a Congregation of Black Slaves*, ABC primers, spelling books, and the *Book of Common Prayer* (As stated by Bly 2011, 435, note 18). The curriculum was the same for boys and girls, religious instruction,

reading, catechism, the Bible, and deportment. Girls were also taught needlework, a very practical skill. In addition she was in charge of taking the children to Bruton Parish Church on Sundays and, accompanied by their teacher, the children attended weekly services. Mrs. Wager must have provided Robert Carter Nicholas with a list of students in 1762, 1765, and 1769 because on three separate occasions Nicholas sent the lists to John Waring (Van Horne 1985, 188, 241–2, 277–8). There were no known individual written progress reports on the Bray scholars. The schoolmistress as well as the students' progress was measured during random and announced visitations to the school, undoubtedly in public (i.e. walks to and from school as well as Bruton Parish Church), and at weekly church services. Judged not only on proper behavior, good manners, and neat appearance, scholars were expected to know their prayers and responses to catechism questions, all a reflection on the efficacy of their teacher and their aptitude for learning. As a testimony to their ability to learn, the children would have known how to act appropriately when a visitor entered the "classroom," or when seen in public venues. At Bruton Parish Church, the congregation and ministers would have witnessed directly the scholars' knowledge of the catechism as well as their behavior in church. More than likely, these social skills were learned at home and at school and were reinforced in each setting. A letter from William Hunter to Reverend John Waring on February 16, 1761, confirmed not only the growth of the Bray School scholars in Williamsburg, "Their Progress and Improvement in so Short a Time, has greatly exceeded my Expectation" but the ability for the schoolmistress to manage and care for the twenty-four scholars "… by the Care and good Conduct of the Mistress" (Van Horne 1985, 153). Mrs. Ann Wager served as schoolmistress for fourteen years from 1760 until her death in 1774. It does not

appear that a suitable replacement was sought, perhaps due to the political stress between America and Britain, the school would no longer have been financially supported. With the passing of their well-known teacher, the first school for free and enslaved black children was closed (Bly 2011, Kostro 2012, Meyers 2010, Monaghan 2005, Norman 2012, Van Horne 1985). Although education for the free and enslaved African American children was no longer available in the formal setting of the Bray School, children continued to learn.

Chapter 3: Education

Education takes place in and outside the home, informally and formally. It is with these venues in mind, that education will be discussed. Children's first experiences and learning begin in the home with the smallest unit of society, the family. "Home is where the *habitus* is" (Baneva, n.d.). Home is the place where children learn social skills from their families, the microcosm of society, about how their world is ordered. Sociologist, anthropologist, and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu (1977) expanded the notion of *habitus* in practice theory in which every day non-discursive activities are learned and performed unconsciously or without knowing why they developed initially. Anthropological archaeologist Laurie A. Wilkie demonstrates how Bourdieu's *habitus* can be found in what children experience and learn at home, "… individuals learn how to act as women, men, children, adults, mothers, fathers, husbands and wives" (Wilkie 2000a, 134) and how individuals actively participate in quotidian life and thereby reinforce or reinvent the structure that cause those socialized ways of learning about oneself. Children's experiences, learned in their respective households, are what they use to navigate in, and negotiate through the social fields or structures outside the boundaries of the home. Structure and agency are relational and one does not exist without the other. (Bourdieu 1970, 1977, 1993). Their actions create and reproduce, but can also reshape the social structure. Children further act out their roles as various members of the family and society through their play as practice. Children reenact processions like mothers and fathers, wives and husbands in special life occasions such as marriages, christenings, and funerals. As Wilkie avers, "Children are exposed to gender ideologies, ethnic traditions, standards of living, and kinship and neighborly obligations within their homes" (Wilkie

2000a, 134). Each family has its own view of the world and children initially learn socialization skills in their home.

Everyday activities and special occasions can be seen carried out by children imitating the adults in their lives. Looking at the approximately two hundred and fifty children in eighty representations in Pieter Brueghel's painting *Children's Games* (Hindman 1981), even though they are scenes from the sixteenth century, they reflect many games and ceremonies still practiced today. Religious rites such as christenings, marriages, and funerals were extraordinary occasions (Carson 1965, 4, 5). Each of these life events had an impact on children regardless of their families' status in society. Children frequently reenacted these rituals with their playmates thereby reinforcing these ceremonies and their future roles. (*see Figure 2*).

According to historian and filmmaker Daniel Blake Smith, children became the "centerpiece of family attention and affection" (Smith 1980, 286) for elite members of the eighteenth-century Chesapeake. Gifts commemorated celebrations of childbirth, which is still a practice in many contemporary societies. Childhood in the colonial South is manifest by children who are more independent and playful than those of the previous century. (Smith 1980, 32–3, 50).

Grandparents were new in children's lives as life expectancy increased and became important influences on their childhood in the eighteenth century. Many followed the principles of John Locke whose child-rearing practices encouraged "… self-sufficiency and strength…" (Smith 1980, 46) through indulgence tied to a lifelong sense of duty to parents. Children were encouraged to play and were a source of entertainment for parents and relatives. Yet parents raised sons and daughters differently. Even though

Figure 2. Pieter Brueghel the Elder's painting *Children's Games*. Courtesy of Artstor.

fathers were affectionate toward all their children, there was evidence of disparity in education for them in their fathers' wills. Fathers provided for sons' education which included subjects to study, whereas their daughters' plan for education was omitted. Two-thirds of boys were literate compared to half the girls. Boys could roam freely on the plantation, yet girls were under the supervision of their mothers and women of the family and remained close to home. Another factor that contributed to a more independent childhood were the many relatives who visited them as well as the children's opportunity to stay with kin away from home often for extended periods of time. Sometimes girls had the chance to study reading, writing, and mathematics with the notion that these were skills that would ultimately help them manage a household (Smith 1980, 45, 49, 53, 59–60, 62–3).

Illness knew no bounds and was a common occurrence in families. Seventeenth-century Maryland and Virginia seemed prone to "…extraordinary threats to the health of children and adults…" (Marten 2007, 2). Regardless of a person's status in society, death swept away children and parents alike. According to historians Darren Rutman and Anita Rutman, for children in the seventeenth and beginning of eighteenth-century Chesapeake, "Parental death was a part of the fabric of life" (Rutman and Rutman 1979, 153). Often children were not yet independent and due to the high mortality rate of one or both parents, options for children involved remarriage of the surviving parent or apprenticeship for the children. Wills frequently named older siblings to care for and not neglect the education of their younger brothers and sisters. Additionally, wills set forth guidelines for guardians in order to protect children's inheritances. Aptly labelled "… the father's 'now-wife" (Rutman and Rutman 1979, 167) was one of the likely candidates to

be an essential but perhaps transitory part of children's lives. Godparents, friends, and other members of the community were also probable caretakers for orphaned children. (Rutman and Rutman 1979, 155, 161–3, 165, 167). For adults and children, they had to "[get] on with the business of everyday life" (Smith 1987, 27). Extended family and fictive kin were important relationships to foster to protect one's children and plan for the inevitable since "… impermanence was an expectation if not always a reality" (Ulrich 1991a, 149). Life expectancy would not increase until the eighteenth century in colonial Virginia. With increasing life expectancy, more children survived with grandparents as well as parents living to enjoy their grandchildren.

Child-rearing and education in the eighteenth century came from the tenets of John Locke. The Lockean style of "permissive child-rearing," Smith affirms, "encouraged the development of self-confidence and assertiveness" (Smith 1980, 118). For most young men and women in the eighteenth century, having these qualities meant the ability to choose a marriage partner and profession, aspects of their lives formerly decided by their parents. Firmly instilled in women, there were two goals in life, that of mother and that of wife. Smith attributes the change from the seventeenth-century view of childhood to larger families due to decreased infant and child mortality rates, increased life expectancies, and longer-lasting marriages in the eighteenth century. As families were no longer faced with survival alone, they could enjoy their time with this nuclear family. Parents looked forward to their children's passage from childhood to adulthood, made smoother by a strong network of relatives. At last, they could dream of their children's futures (Smith 1980, 118,106, 54–5, 17–21) and hope for a better life for their children.

Although childhood was now seen "…as a unique and worthy stage of life" (Wentworth 1984, 32), children were being raised for their future roles in a new republican society and were "…the lowest position in the elite family" (Wentworth 1984, 14). A girl's education consisted of sewing, spinning, cooking, and cleaning to prepare them to be housewives. A boy learned to read, write, and manage a farm. Children's activities centered on learning skills and instilling gendered roles (Calvert 1992, 81; Gilliam 2016). Parents' responsibilities would end when their offspring became adults and had their inheritance. Children, on the other hand, were forever obligated to their parents; a son's sense of duty provided economic assistance while a daughter's was to become a caregiver (Wentworth 1984, 10, 15).

In *A History of the Wife*, historian Marilyn Yalom illustrates the expectations of wives throughout history. Understanding the history of the wife and husband as well as marriage provides a look at children's roles in past and present societies. The concept of deputy-husband in seventeenth-century New England, allowed for the flexibility of a wife's role which was to carry on the husband's business affairs in his absence from home. (Ulrich 1991a, 36; Yalom 2001, 154). Children continued to learn what their future roles in life would be. They learned their engendered roles through daily activities as well as play (Gilliam 2016). Economics, politics, and society have influenced the institution of marriage, now seen as an equality of both partners in contemporary American society (Yalom 2001, 400).

Diaries are written records that provide a captivating glance into the selected writings of the author. A rare find from the eighteenth century, a woman's diary such as Martha Ballard's memorializes a trusted midwife who records her role as wife, mother,

and midwife and exposes the balancing of her private and public life. As historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich indicates in Ballard's diary, the workday for men and women differ and the old adage about a woman's work never being done is evident. Women had to do or oversee the laundry, cooking, and cleaning, inevitable housework that never seemed to end. Daily, Martha's time was spent filled with accomplishments and disappointments as well as the necessary courage to deal with life or death at a moment's notice. Her day consisted of a full schedule as "…a dutiful and productive housewife…and her career as a midwife…" (Ulrich 1991b, 220) while raising and teaching two daughters, Dolly and Sally the daily household chores and the textile business as well as tending to her patients regardless of the hour or distance. Even though the land was not legally hers, Martha claimed ownership of her garden. It was an orderly space where she grew plants for nourishment and medicinal purposes and wrote about this plot of land in her diary, perhaps a way for her to create a semblance of order amid a very hectic and harried life. Gardening was a practice that imbued this colorful space with meaning and enabled Martha to slow down and attach herself to a small parcel of land giving her possession in a time and place when ownership for women was not allowed (Ulrich 1991b, 220–1, 329, 343).

In Ulrich's *Good Wife*, she demonstrates how a woman's pocket, both personal and practical was an accessory of a woman's apparel that could be made of homespun showing signs of wear and repair or a beautifully embroidered adornment. As Ulrich explains, a pocket was tied around the waist yet concealed and accompanied its wearer in and around the house, in the yard, and out on public streets. "It reflected the status as well as the skills of its owner. Whether it contained cellar keys or a paper of pins, a packet of

seeds or a baby's bib, a hank of yarn or a Testament, it characterized the social complexity as well as the demanding diversity of women's work. " (Ulrich 1991a, 34) and its contents revealed much about the woman.

In the seventeenth century, according to archaeologist, Lorena Walsh, "few parents lived long enough to see their offspring married" (Walsh 1979, 134). In the eighteenth century, laws specified who could marry. Whites were permitted to marry cousins. African Americans had little songs they taught their children which expressed a marital taboo such as marrying a cousin (Gutman 1975, 88). A marriage in Virginia was not recognized as legal unless performed in the Anglican Church since there was no separation of church and state. Ceremonies that took place in other churches were not considered valid in the eyes of the law and were not legal contracts. Enslaved people were not permitted to marry (Ingram 2016). Fithian's journal entry about the exclusion of marriage in colonial Virginia for the enslaved seemed to surprise him; "At supper from the conversation I learned that the slaves in this Colony never are married, their Lords thinking them improper Subjects for so valuable an Institution! –" (Fithian 1957, 59). Sometimes jumping the broom was sanctioned by plantation owners, yet this would not have constituted a legal contract between a man and a woman. "Legal marriage … was "highly valued in all social classes…" (Gutman 1976, 426) and enslaved men and women taught their children this value and passed it on to the next generation. His research shows how slaves registered their marriages as soon as permissible after emancipation. Freedom also gave the newly emancipated the right to legally form a contract, a marriage. "Registering a marriage was a conscious decision," (Gutman 1976, 428) with exorbitant fees attached at a time when little cash was available. To ensure the

validity of their marriage documents in a newly entered free society, sometimes fees were paid multiple times by the same couple. Even illiteracy did not preclude the knowledge that legal marriage was important to legitimize children and family, familial relationships the enslaved already had in place in their community.

What follows in the next paragraphs is Herbert G. Gutman's approach to naming practices from his pioneering work, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom 1750–1925*. According to Gutman, a new culture, an African American culture emerged. This historian breathed life into black families when he created genealogical trees from plantation slave birth registers in the South. A list of names gave birth to a lineage linking mothers and fathers with their children. Parents, grandparents, and extended kin served as role models for these black families and their descendants; their daily life consisted of double-headed households and long marriages, practices they retained from their native countries. He notes how kinship ties extended beyond the biological families and how these bonds were learned in childhood.

While Africans were enslaved in the New World, their value system was not trapped in their homeland. Often forbidden to express their beliefs freely, they endeavored to preserve them. By redesigning their values, enslaved blacks managed to practice these values in slave communities, teach their young, and pass their beliefs on to the next generation. Making a compelling case for the birth of this new culture, Gutman demonstrated how Africans became African Americans. Familial and kinship ties developed, marital rules and common mores were learned early in childhood and continued with each generation (Gutman 1977, 102, 185–190).

Naming practices are evident among free blacks like the Ashby children in

Williamsburg. Mary Ashby was indentured to Shields tavern in Williamsburg. She was white and her children were mulattos. She had two sons, Matthew and John. Both sons had to serve their indenture until they were 31 years old. Her son Matthew Ashby and Ann Ashby, an enslaved woman, named their second son John after Matthew's brother, their daughter Mary after her grandmother, Matthew's mother, and the youngest son, who died after his father was born, was also named Matthew after his father (Holmes 2016). John and Mary Ashby were students at the Bray School. For these children and all children for that matter, names were a daily reminder of who they were, who they belonged to, and where they came from. Families like the Ashby family held on to long-standing naming practices, a practice they learned in childhood and remained with them as adults.

Similarly, on Wednesday, July 13, 1774, Philip Vickers Fithian entered in his journal about a list he prepared for a 94-year old enslaved African (American) living on the Carter plantation. As the tutor for the elite Carter family in Virginia at Nomini Hall, Fithian wrote down the names and ages of all of Dadda Gumby and his Woman's children. The oldest enslaved couple at the estate bestowed a "…Torrent of Expressions of Gratitude…" (Fithian 1957, 140) on the teacher for his kind act. By making a written record of each family member's name and age, Fithian, either knowingly or unintentionally, put together a family tree thereby immortalizing an enslaved family's heritage.

History and practice demonstrate that Africans brought their values and culture from their homeland as Colonel Lafayette Jones Jr. opines "…Africans brought to this country had a deep sense of family and communal responsibility. They brought with them

African languages, religious beliefs, styles of worship, and above all, their culture" (Jones 2007, 4). Everyday life skills learned in Africa such as food procurement, cooking, house-building, canoe-making, blacksmithing, and woodworking as well as basketry, making herbal medicines, and pottery manufacture were passed down from generation to generation (Ferguson 1992, 61). Children's exposure and experience with foodways begins at home. Food is a vital aspect of every human life and is a cultural construct. As Beaudry and Bescherer Metheny postulate "What, how, and with whom we eat are among the most fundamental ways that humans define themselves as social beings and members of a specific group" (Beaudry and Bescherer Metheny 2015, 109). What people in a society eat and drink depends on the availability of food and their choice of the foods consumed conveys who they are in the society they belong to. Foodways can be defined as the procurement, distribution, preparation, preservation, consumption and discard of food (Anderson 1971, xi; Goody 1982, 37). Helping in the processing of food is one way children might have assisted their families. As part of this social and economic unit, they could have learned skills to help make them independent. Children of differing ages and sizes might have helped plant, tend, gather, prepare, and consume fruits and vegetables such as "… peas, corn, cherries, peaches, beans, pumpkin, and watermelon" (McWilliams 2005, 117). Fithian noted on a walk in and through the gardens on May 29, 1774 "There is great plenty of Strawberries, some Cherries, Goose berries &c." (Fithian 1957, 110). The tutor also witnessed enslaved African Americans "… in several parts of the plantation they are digging up their small Lots of ground allow'd by their Master for Potatoes, peas &c; (Fithian 1957, 96). Faunal remains indicate that African Americans "caught and ate squirrels, opossum, turkey, deer, turtles, cats, ducks, geese, chickens,

partridges, and all manner of fish" (McWilliams 2005, 116) and therefore may have had "… some power over what they ate…" (McWilliams 2005, 117). Paleoenvironmental remains show evidence of plant and animal life (Beaudry and Bescherer Metheny 2015, 226). Children likely contributed by this daily practice of procuring fruits, vegetables, meat, and fish. Similarly, children, like adults, could have been empowered over their diet. Food may have meant a social network for the enslaved (Edwards-Ingram 2014) to "acquire, grow, barter, hunt and prepare foods" (Beaudry and Bescherer Metheny 2015, 135) as Maria Franklin posits. Often recipes were shared in conversation and passed down from one generation to the next (Eden 2006, 44).

Skills that historical archaeologist Leland Ferguson deemed "essential to daily life" (Ferguson 2005, 31) involved the everyday practices and activities that became the learned behaviors that would become part of who the families and kinships were, safeguarding that each succeeding generation would preserve the values their ancestors held. In addition to their culture from the homeland, they incorporated "… other cultural information necessary for survival as a member of a particular social group" (Baxter 2005, 3) and taught their children.

Knowledge of new cultural information was indispensable for free and enslaved, black or white, adults and children. Privacy was a new concept that began to take shape and manners and etiquette were changing. Those at home were responsible for proper instruction of these new social norms. Until the end of the seventeenth century, Philip Ariès avers that because of the "density of social life…" (Ariès 1962, 398) and the relationships that people had with one another, i.e. masters and servants, there was little or no privacy and "This sociability had for a long time hindered the formation of the

concept of the family, because of the lack of privacy" (Ariès 1962, 398). Ariès comments on the change in the layout of the interior of the home which is similar to James Deetz's Georgianization model. A central passage house allowed for privacy, a detachment of the family from the outside world, and also from each other, "… the individualization of living space" (Deetz 1996, 162). Deetz further addresses the privacy issue when he opines, "Eighteenth-century concepts of privacy were quite different from those that came later, and it was not at all uncommon for people in inns to sleep three to a bed with two or three beds crammed into a room" (Deetz 1995, 111–2). "Sharing" of space, furnishings, and eating utensils did not foster the notion of privacy (Ulrich 1991a, 94). Focus on the individual was the difference in the changing etiquette and housing arrangements that allowed for parents and their offspring to be a family unit and live within a home that provided them with a sense of a family, perhaps more shielded from outsiders. Where "…servants, clients, and friends…" (Ariès 1962, 400) previously had direct access to the family's daily activities, they were now physically closed off by walls and doors. Reworking the interior of the house made it possible for a family to detach itself from others who normally were part of their life. By shutting out the rest of the world, a family's private life was protected and also separated from its public life.

In the eighteenth century, like the structuring of the Georgian house, more emphasis was placed on the individual. Ariès affirms that nicknames for children were another way for parents to express an intimacy and closeness of family and distinguish children in an endearing and unique way only to be used by immediate family members (Ariès 1962, 400; Smith 1980, 42). "Health and education" (Ariès 1962, 402) would also be a parent's concern, as it is today. Additionally, equality among all the children would

take root, including education for the girls (Ariès 1962, 413). Society became focused on the individual and children received a special place in the family beginning in the home.

This emphasis on the individual was evidenced in life events such as births, christenings, marriages, and deaths, some of the occasions that took place and were recorded in family histories. In his diary, William Byrd II (1674-1744) of Westover, Virginia, an elite planter, gave an interesting glimpse of family events along with everyday activities during his life in the early eighteenth century. He noted his son's birth in an entry on September 6, the christening on September 28 just a few weeks later, and the death of his son on June 3, 1710. As a father, he wrote meticulously about his children's illnesses and concern for their well-being (Byrd 1972, 37, 40, 80).

Historian John F. Walzer discusses the conflicting theme in the notion of childhood in eighteenth-century America and the changing worldview of the West with emphasis on the individual. With that concept of the individual came independence and the dichotomy of independence versus dependence in the life of a child within the family. Parents are caught between having their children and the desire to be with them and at times wanting "to be rid of them" (Walzer 1974, 357). He notes the eighteenth-century duty of a child instilled by the parent and society, father's playing with their offspring, writing to them, and parental anxiety over sickness and grief at the death of children. Not unlike twenty-first century Americans, was the parent's "definite interest in what those children were up to, and above all, in what they would become" (Walzer 1974, 358). Historian Daniel Blake Smith echoes this change in the colonial family in the South from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century that was characterized by "… men, women and children with plans and expectations for themselves and their families" (Smith 1987, 27).

Children's earliest educators have been and continue to be the family which consists of parents, siblings, and close or fictive kin. According to philosopher John Locke in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) written at the turn of the seventeenth century, "…education of the child, and by implication continuing self-improvement, was the duty of every individual" (Walker, n.d.). Locke influenced parents and formal education in the eighteenth century with his methods like repeated practice, learning by example, playing with educational toys, learning the abc's through play, reading stories such as Aesop's Fables with pictures and Reynard the Fox, a story with a lesson about flattery and trust, and writing. Some of his methods are still used today. According to Locke, part of children's education concerns matters of Christianity, learning the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments as well as their catechism. He took a firm position about reading the Bible and favored only learning to read particular stories from the Bible notably ones that children would find easier to comprehend such as David and Goliath. Vitale refers to Locke on education in *Second Treatise on Government* (1689) in which "…he also stressed human rights, contending amongst other things that it is up to the parents to educate their children and to help them become rational adults" (Vitale 2014, 140–1). Building on Vitale's work on Locke,

> The theory, if not the practice of modern education was put into place during this period (the eighteenth century), in Britain and America, thanks partly to John Locke, who successfully affected attitudes toward children countering religious prejudices and persuading educators that children were not predestined to damnation; that education and life experience had a greater effect on their characters than did innate original sin. (Vitale 2014, 141–2).

Locke's concept of the mind being a tabula rasa was fundamental to education. His works were translated into numerous languages which influenced thinking in America and Europe. The widespread teachings of Locke helped lay the groundwork for formal

education since "… by the middle of the eighteenth century, many U.S. cities had already determined that children should be able to start school at the early age of five or six" (Vitale 2014, 142).

Education for children in eighteenth-century colonial Virginia was not compulsory like it is today. Since public education did not exist, parents who wanted to educate their children paid for it privately. First-hand accounts like those in Fithian's journal confirm the instruction that tutors provided children in wealthy families and the progress children were making. A recent Princeton graduate, Fithian's first teaching experience took him far from home. As he himself was becoming familiar with the culture and ways of life in Virginia, he must have been aware that his reputation hinged on the Carter children's improvement not only in subject matter, but exhibiting appropriate behavior as well.

Another tutor, John Harrower, had a short-lived teaching career as evidenced in the journal and letters he wrote. A merchant from Scotland, he made the difficult decision to leave his wife and children behind to come to Virginia as an indentured servant for a term of four years. In 1773, Harrower had no idea he would become the schoolmaster for a wealthy planter's children in Fredericksburg. The Daingerfield family was related to Martha Washington and was insistent that he adapt his speech when teaching since they wanted the children to be instructed with an English not Scottish accent. His skills as a clerk and bookkeeper would come in handy as he was charged to teach the three sons of the Daingerfield family to "read, write and figure" (Harrower 1963, 42, 54). Although his journal is missing pages, he bought a spelling book and an Arithmetick. On July 12, 1774, however, he sold the spelling book. Noteworthy is the

absence of his everyday accustomed tea drinking from the family diet for political reasons and Harrower starts his day with coffee. In his journal, he relates the progress of boy's and girl's reading and writing skills. With Colonel William Daingerfield's assistance, not only did Harrower tutor the Daingerfield children, but also boys and girls of other planters. He also instructed Thomas Brooks, a carpenter (Harrower 1963, 59–60). Presumably his greatest teaching challenge might have been John Edge, a deaf mute, who was about 14 years old. In a letter to his wife Ann on December 6, 1774, Harrower wrote of John's progress "he can write mostly for any thing he wants and understands the value of every figure, and can work single addition a little." (Harrower 1963, 72). He also taught blacks catechism and read to them (Harrower 1963, 48). In addition to the money he received for tutoring children, he frequently received gifts from the parents. A glimpse into Harrower's journal tells not only what was served (strawberries, cherries, lamb, pig, duck, fish, walnuts, turnips, plumbs) and foraged in the woods (grapes), but also the fruits of Harrower's own miniature plantation "Water melons, Mush-melons, cucumbers, pumpkins, gourds, Spanish pitatoes, and cotton" (Harrower 1963, 44–8, 56, 112, 117, 126, 150, 152, 160). In his letters home, he affectionately referred to his "Dr. [dear] Infants," inquired about "…what my Dr. Boys and Girls are doing," and "my sweet Infants." (Harrower 1963, 58, 72, 76, 108). In his new role as a tutor, Harrower was genuinely concerned about his own children's deportment and education back home, that they "… be obedient… and mind their books" (Harrower 1963, 109). Sadly he never reunited with his family and died in 1777.

Building on historian Edmund S. Morgan's work *Virginians at Home*, it was customary for prominent white planter families to enlist the services of a tutor to instruct

their children. In addition to reading, writing, and arithmetic, boys were believed to have the aptitude for "…Latin, Greek, accounting, and the law" (Morgan 1952, 17). Girls were considered capable of reading, writing, and arithmetic as well as "… the social graces and domestic skills of a housewife" (Morgan 1952, 17). Few daughters would have had the privilege of obtaining the kind of education comparable to their male counterparts. Itinerant teachers were employed to instruct both girls and boys in dance and music lessons. Some sons were sent to boarding schools while others went overseas to live in the care of close friends or relatives and attend school in England (Morgan 1952, 18, 23). Wills that were left by the elite attest to the disparity of children's education within families. Arrangements for sons' schooling were clearly spelled out in their fathers' wills, routinely leaving daughters without any provision for an education. Indeed, it was usually not deemed necessary for girls to be raised to be independent or capable of supporting themselves. Girls were expected to marry and be cared for by their spouses. Although elite plantation owners represented roughly two percent of the population, the gendered roles ascribed to boys and girls were held by most of colonial society.

Instruction often focused on eventual roles for children as they became adults. For boys from elite families, their prospective position was to manage a plantation, handling people and business affairs both on and off the plantation whereas girls were presumed to become wives and mothers. Women's roles entailed running and maintaining the household. Visitations were a major social component in eighteenth-century society, therefore women were required to provide accommodations for visitors, expected and unexpected guests as well as be knowledgeable about the preparation of meals and the latest etiquette in entertaining. Likewise, it was up to the housewife to see that family life

ran smoothly while overseeing tasks of the enslaved workers like those who cooked, cleaned, and cared for the children. If someone on the plantation became sick, illness knew no boundaries. Whether white or black, free or enslaved, the duty of the mistress of the plantation was to be familiar with remedies and how to nurse someone back to good health (Morgan 1952, 42, 43; Volo and Volo 216). In colonial Virginia, gendered roles were defined early in childhood and young children learned these roles at home with their families or were taught as an apprentice in a trade. In 1804, the General Assembly made it unlawful to teach reading, writing, or arithmetic to a black or mulatto orphan, but up until then, it was the responsibility of the master or mistress to educate an apprentice (Virginia, Shepherd, and Hening 1970, 124).

When the Bray School began in 1760, although Mrs. Wager was considered a reputable teacher in the community, there is no record of her teaching methodology. Conceivably a teaching method that the schoolmistress might have developed and used after her years of teaching experience, was one that Christopher Dock, a Mennonite teacher in Pennsylvania in the eighteenth century used. The teacher would elicit help from other children as teachers by having them model pronunciation or read for other students (Monaghan 2005, 210). Dock also attests to "… slates that children employed for their writing practice" (Monaghan 2005, 208). Use of spelling books for students to copy to form their letters and phrases were specifically constructed to make use of nearly every letter of the alphabet and within two decades the spelling book became "an indispensable text" (Monaghan 2005, 213). *The American Instructor* was another convenient teaching aid that Franklin printed in 1748 which included spelling and the three Rs, reading, writing, and arithmetic as well as marking linens and preserving fruit.

(Monaghan 2005, 215). Whether Mrs. Wager used any or all of these books or techniques in her teaching career is not known. The fact that newspapers were ubiquitous in the mid-eighteenth century not only helped the cause of the American Revolution, but literacy as well. (Monaghan 2005, 235–6). Locally printed newspapers added to the flurry of British imports of the consumer revolution of the eighteenth century which made not only books but other household goods available and affordable to the rich, middling, and poor. (Monaghan 2005, 238).

Teaching methods were and continue to be one of the many factors that affect students' learning. The consistency of a reputable and experienced schoolmistress, supplies such as books, slate pencils, and slates, willing and capable students, small successes, how to cope with failures, an unthreatening atmosphere, regular attendance, and incentives to learn contributed to the success of the charity school. Knowledge was a way to change a life and consequently, many lives. School was under constant scrutiny from the outside, authorities from London desiring positive results for their investment, so visible progress was vital to the school's continued existence. Knowledge was shared with others who wanted to learn but might not have had the advantage of attending the Bray School. Knowledge was measured by observable and tangible achievements. Bray School scholars recited the alphabet, responded to catechism questions, recognized letters and words, and duplicated verbally, by reading or writing. In order to stitch a sampler, it meant knowing how to stitch (work a needle), count (the number of threads and the spaces for stitches), form numbers and their correct sequence, form letters of the alphabet and their proper sequence, and to write or stitch one's name, the day, month, and year of the sampler.

For a portion of the school day, children might have spent time outdoors. The house was small and the children numbered up to thirty-four. In a dwelling this size with children of differing ages and sizes, it is critical to think about some of the recreation and learning activities that might have taken place outside the confines of the house. Especially on a cloudy day, lighting would most likely have been better outdoors for reading, sewing, and writing on slates. Daily the house and kitchen needed a ready supply of firewood, and perhaps smaller children helped by gathering twigs while those more physically able assisted by bringing in logs. Arguably children might have helped carry water since a well was uncovered on the north side of Brown Hall. Due to safety reasons, time, and funding only a portion of the well and its artifacts were uncovered. Outdoor play, games, and learning activities might have been encouraged as part of the daily routine. Often children take objects not intended for play and use their imagination, manipulate, and transform objects into playthings (Chudacoff 2007, 33). Children might have touched and played with organic materials like sticks, pebbles, and leaves found in the yard, but it is difficult to ascertain child's play if they survived the archaeological record. Play is an important part of learning by doing, at times fun, creative and imaginable, and in other instances, re-fashioned playthings do not amount to anything and are tossed aside. Games in the eighteenth century used items such as dice and marbles and were used by adults and children (Carson 1965, 31, 39).

In seventeenth-century Virginia, religious education for everyone, white or black, free or enslaved, took place in the official church of the colony, the Anglican Church, with baptism as a means of freedom for blacks until 1667 when freedom was no longer accessible through baptism. The church was a physical and symbolic structure for the

organized religion of the colony yet enslaved and free blacks were active, not passive practitioners of their religious beliefs. Many enslaved and free blacks continued to attend church or be baptized, while incorporating music through song to learn and practice the teachings of the Bible. African American spirituals were "religious folksongs" (African American Spirituals 2016) in which the enslaved expressed their sorrows, codified and circulated messages, and retold bible stories. Singing was a way to teach the passages from the Bible, to reinforce what was being taught, and to commit these teachings to memory. It was how the enslaved and free blacks combined the music of their homeland with Christian teachings and transformed them in their own way, looking at their lives in the context of a slave society. As they gathered to worship, singing was at the heart of their coming together. Initially music was fundamental to incorporating the religion from Bruton Parish Church into their lives. Later, music was essential to the special clandestine meetings that took place in brush arbors, the beginnings of the twenty-first century First Baptist Church, in order for blacks to be able to worship as they pleased. Call and response chants were sung across the fields by enslaved blacks while they labored day after day. When put to music, melodious words were committed to memory and retained into adulthood. Songs were also a form of communication in which the enslaved and free blacks put their music into daily practice. Black adults as well as children incorporated these verbal exchanges into their everyday lives. Singing repeatedly empowered the enslaved to help release the stresses of a stressful life, of being held against their will as chattel property. Through daily practice, spirituals provided a means to instill hope, signal safe havens, and pave roads to freedom (Jordan 2016). In contrast to the teachings of Bruton Parish Church, the Church of England, in 1776,

African American leaders such as Moses as well as Gowan Pamphlet, possibly a former Bray School scholar, helped establish the first black church in Williamsburg, today known as First Baptist Church (Ingram 2016). For the children who attended the Bray School, religious education was essential to the curriculum which consisted of reading, especially learning to read the Bible, being catechized, saying prayers before and after meals, learning the Lord's Prayer, and attending Bruton Parish Church.

Another integral part of the curriculum, sewing, was taught to free and enslaved African American girls at the Bray School in Williamsburg, Virginia. A useful skill in the eighteenth-century household, sewing was a basic necessity since tears needed to be mended, buttons replaced, and linens marked with the owner's initials. Children as young as five or six could mark with a cross stitch, a rudimentary skill learned at home or by a schoolmistress. Girls would have to know the alphabet and numbers since both were used to mark and identify linens. In addition to letters and numbers, an embroidered sampler frequently included a virtuous saying about such qualities as goodness or obedience (Peck 2003). Samplers were a handy reference to stitch a monogram for the project at hand. Sewing not only demonstrated a young woman's patience and determination for the mastery of stitches, but also portrayed her as a hardworking, virtuous person. A gendered skill like sewing reinforced society's role for girls since this skillful art was a tangible way to assess certain qualities like diligence and virtue deemed necessary for women to possess for their future roles as wives and mothers.

Building on Mary Beaudry's (2006) work *Findings: The Material Culture of Needlework and Sewing*, sewing was an important skill acquired by girls and women in eighteenth-century America, one that could be practiced alone or in a group. Thimbles

came in varying sizes to accommodate the size of young girls' fingers. In addition to brass, there were also expensive models made of silver or gold, suitable for personalization or engraving. According to Beaudry, there were incremental sizes for children so that as a child grew, a new size thimble would be available to fit her finger (Beaudry 2006, 98, 105–6). Artifacts associated with sewing such as a thimble, pins and buttons made of bone or metal were unearthed at the site but further analysis is necessary to date them. Besides the written accounts that state that sewing was to be taught, these objects are part of the archaeological record that provide evidence that sewing, a useful skill, was indeed taught at the Bray School.

One of the ways a woman was judged in eighteenth-century colonial America was by her handiwork. Samplers would show evidence of knowing the alphabet and the ability to form the letters by embroidering them with a needle and thread. The quality of the piece was visible in her needlework. Not only useful for the gendered role of potential housewife, sewing was also a practical skill that would be beneficial to a future employer. Sewing artifacts found at the Bray School site suggest how adults reinforced what girls were required to learn to prepare them for their future roles in life. In the daily life of eighteenth-century colonial society, sewing was important to prepare girls for their future roles in life as wives and mothers, and possibly enslaved domestics.

Virginia samplers were generally embroidered with "silk embroidery threads on a natural color linen fabric" (Ivey 1997, 81). Typical of the time period, band samplers were characterized by "horizontal bands of geometric patterns, flowers, vines, alphabets, and verses, nearly all of them worked in reversible stitches" (Ivey 1997, 15). Even though reversible stitches seemed to have phased out in other regions of America, they prevailed

in Virginia. Young girls were ordinarily taught marking cross stitches which were more labor intensive, but the result was a very "neat, mirror-image" (Ivey 1997, 31) on the reverse (Ivey 1997, 28–9). Looking at eighteenth-century samplers as part of material culture, they reflected the role of women in society, which epitomized the "successful housekeeper," "obedient wife," and "virtuous mother" who was obliged to live up to colonial society's "high moral expectations" (Ivey 1997, 6–7). Samplers "reinforce[d] home and family life" for girls and women (Ivey 1997, 4). Stitches and verses crisscrossed a relentless tale. Needlework was a persistent visual reminder of a woman's station in life and the skills believed indispensable for her success. An image stitched in time, these embroidered charts revealed the needleworker's name and age as well as talent. On occasion, the maker cross-stitched her residence and acknowledged her teacher in her work. Samplers in the nineteenth century documented a family's history with births, marriages, and deaths. Even though no samplers were found at the Bray School site in the summer field schools, lack of evidence does not mean that samplers were never created by the girls who attended the school or that they were not given lessons in how to mark. Additionally, knowledge learned could not be taken away. Marking was an important skill to the mistress of the house because it was a way of keeping track of the household linens "to ensure items sent out to be laundered or mended were returned to their proper owner" (Ivey 1997, 29). While Ivey avers that there are no samplers stitched by African American girls, it is worth mentioning that several decades after the closing of the Bray School, Ivey notes an entry that appeared in a Norfolk, Virginia newspaper attesting to the quality and diversity of needlework of Nancy, a runaway slave girl aged 17 or 18, "… a good sempstress, can knit, and understands the marking very well by a

sampler...” (Ivey 1997, 65). Curiously, the ad describes Nancy by her sewing skills and her talent with a needle. Accustomed to teaching children of a range of ages, Mrs. Wager knew the dexterity involved not only for skills such as sewing but also for other skills such as writing.

Writing might take on many forms and be learned in a variety of settings. Children who received a few years of formal education often taught themselves. Historian and educator E. Jennifer Monaghan remarks that Benjamin Franklin had about four years of interrupted formal schooling which “… gave him the tools to teach himself” (Monaghan 2005, 197; Franklin 2007, 222). As a result of Franklin’s enthusiasm for learning, he taught himself more things (Monaghan 2005, 197). Clearly, Monaghan illustrates the insistence of enslaved, black child Phillis Wheatley from Massachusetts “… on learning to write” who according to John Wheatley, (her owner who later manumitted her), “Her own Curiosity… led her to it” (Monaghan 2005, 245). On March 6, 1774, Fithian includes a sample of her poetry in his journal (Fithian 1957, 73). He also comments on the writing progress of the boys and girls in the Carter family (Fithian 1957, 127–8). My most recent personal writing experience as an educator attests to a child’s quest for knowledge. Upon my six-year old granddaughter’s request, I showed her several letters of the alphabet in cursive, a form of writing no longer taught in many schools. I guided her through some letters both verbally and by modelling the formation of the letters. I wrote out a sample alphabet in upper and lower case letters and left them with her. She has taught herself to write the entire alphabet in cursive. Although some children might not have achieved the same notoriety that Franklin did, presumably free or enslaved black children might also have acquired a passion for learning and done the

same thing after their attendance at the Bray School.

Historian Kenneth A. Lockridge's work with signatures on wills and deeds from colonial New England, generates a broader and interesting question about education and, that is, how making a mark versus signing a name on documents relate to a person's ability to read, write, and create a signature (Lockridge 1974, 16, 109,127). He discusses women's development of fine motor skills because of the types of work they had to do within the house. Work that entailed dexterity with a variety of needles for sewing, embroidering, mending, and knitting would develop the coordination necessary for writing a signature. With that in mind, Lockridge implies that women may have had an advantage over men in terms of being able to create their signatures. According to Colonial Williamsburg Foundation researcher, Mary A. Stephenson, in *Notes on the Negro School in Williamsburg, 1760-1774*, the Bray School, "had as its purpose to instruct Negro children in Williamsburg in the doctrines of the Episcopal Church and to teach them to spell, read, and write" (Stephenson 1991, 1). Writing poetry, copying letters, or forming signatures are all forms of the written word.

As ink pots empowered post-slavery blacks in Barbados (Devlin 2008), slate pencil fragments empowered eighteenth-century blacks in Williamsburg, Virginia. Since part of a tutor's repertoire was to teach writing to his or her students, it is more than likely that this aspect of teaching was carried out by Mrs. Wager in the Bray School. A result of the children's learning to write might well have been the sharing of this knowledge with others in their family and their community.

Written documents of the Associates and Benjamin Franklin set the course for the curriculum to be taught. Among the remarkable archaeological finds at the Bray School

site were slate pencil fragments, economical writing tools associated with adults and children in eighteenth-century colonial Virginia. Fithian's journal entry confirmed the use of slates in the school room at Nomini Hall, "Bob, & Harry had skulk'd behind the writing-Table with their Slates on their Knees…(Fithian 1957, 134). Slate pencils in a school setting can be "child-specific" (Ellis 2001 in Davies 2005, 65) artifacts as Davies suggests of the work on the archaeology of childhood by Adrienne Ellis. The multitude of slate pencils and the location of these pencil fragments found on the Bray School site in Williamsburg infer that they were used by free and enslaved African American children during their education at the school. As an educational device, slates and slate pencils were inexpensive and as historical archaeologist Peter Davies affirms, "Slates also had the advantage over paper and ink of being erasable and reusable" (Davies 2005, 67). Slates could easily be wiped clean with a small rag, thus making their use for writing letters, words, or numbers inexpensive compared to more costly and expendable pen and paper. Fragments unearthed at the site may also indicate that children went outdoors when they were assigned the task of sharpening these writing implements on bricks or other similar surfaces (Elkins 1998). In addition to a preponderance of slate pencil fragments, a piece of slate from a slate tablet was also excavated. Since the school operated on a paltry budget, it was sensible for Mrs. Wager to use goods like slate pencils imported from England and slates were a practical alternative to the more expensive paper, pen, and ink.

As an experienced tutor, Mrs. Wager would have had first-hand knowledge regarding the fine motor skills necessary for using pen and ink compared to slate pencils. Although the schoolmistress left no individual progress reports for the free and enslaved

African American students who attended the Bray School, clearly progress was being made as written in the compelling words of Reverend William Yates and Robert Carter Nicholas in a correspondence to Reverend John Waring in London, "…we were pretty much pleased with the Scholars' Performances, as they rather exceeded our Expectations"(Van Horne 1985, 184). Slates and slate pencils did not leave behind the indelible words penned by the educated elite in the eighteenth century. Not merely implements for writing, slate pencils were small, but significant tools, a means to freedom and imbued with meaning. Slate pencil fragments suggest letters once written and then erased by the small hands of free and enslaved African American scholars that etched them.

During the time of the Bray School, there were children attending school sent by the distinct households they lived in. Enslaved children from diverse Virginia households attended the Bray School. It was not only the well-to-do who sent their enslaved children, but also working people of varying professions ranging from midwives to tavern keepers. Among them were Peyton Randolph, Speaker of the House of Burgesses, Peyton's brother, John Randolph, attorney general, and Robert (King) Carter's grandson, Robert Carter Nicholas, treasurer of Virginia and trustee of the Bray School. The College of William and Mary sent enslaved London, Shrophire, Aggy, Mary, Young, and others. Jane Vobe, owner of the King's Arms Tavern in Williamsburg, sent Sal, Jack, and possibly Gown who might have been Gowan Pamphlet an enslaved black preacher who helped establish the First Baptist Church for African Americans in America. (Bly 2011, 447–50; Rouse 1973, 8–9; The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2011). It was not uncommon for variations in spelling at this time since spelling did not become

standardized until after the close of the Bray School. It would have been feasible to have spelled Gowan leaving out the "a" but still retaining the correct pronunciation of the name. Often the spelling of names and words had several variations by the same person. Gowan Pamphlet's deed of manumission was filed by David Miller dated September 25, 1793 in York County and the enslaved preacher was granted his freedom.

Enslaved black children like Fanny, Isaac, and Clara were sent by their owner John Blair, president of the College of William and Mary (Oast 2000, 186–8; Van Horne 241, 278). Free blacks who attended the school listed on Robert Carter Nicholas's 1762 roster were Mary Ann, Mary Jones, and Elisha Jones. Catharine Blaikely (1695–1771), a midwife and boardinghouse keeper in Williamsburg, had enslaved children who went to the Bray School that appear in Robert Carter Nicholas's records of 1767 and 1769. Christiana Campbell, tavern keeper, also sent some of her enslaved children to the Bray School (Bly 2011, 449–50; Richter 2013; The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation 2011). Saddler and harness maker, Alexander Craig sent five-year old enslaved child Aberdeen whose name appears on the list provided by Robert Carter Nicholas of Bray School attendee's 1762 list. Dennis who was enslaved and waited on tutor Philip Vickers Fithian lived with the Robert Carter family in Williamsburg from 1761–1772 until they moved to Westmoreland County, Virginia. Dennis was baptized in 1761, appears on Robert Carter Nicholas's list in 1769, and while at Nomini Hall was to receive instruction from Fithian. Fithian noted what Dennis already learned in an entry in his journal. Anthony Hay, cabinet maker and keeper of the Raleigh Tavern records show enslaved who were baptized and also some who attended the Bray School. (Richter 2013; The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation 2011). Free black children like Harry, John, and Mary Ashby

attended the Bray School and likely taught their younger brother, Matthew. (Holmes 2016). Depending on the family, some children only attended for a year while others remained in school for several years. Of the arguably 300 free and enslaved children living in Williamsburg at the time of the Bray school, the proportion of children who attended was relatively low. Prominent families, artisans, and tavern keepers sent enslaved blacks to the charity school.

Even though a limited number of free and enslaved black children were permitted to attend the Bray School from 1760–1774, conceivably free and enslaved black families realized that the written word and education were ways to improve one's station in life. As historian and archaeologist Susan Kern remarks, children usually "followed in their parents' professions, and slaves who earned rewards for being smart and obedient trained their children to be likewise" (Kern 2010, 112). Showing signs of intelligence and being well-trained might have helped to ensure a domestic position in the slave owner's household. Formal schooling provided a unique opportunity for their children to receive an education in skills that could only help them as they grew into adults in an ever-changing world. The children's efforts might have been supported and encouraged and their parents and other members of the community might have also learned from these little scholars.

Although only a few students were admitted to the school, in a letter from Nicholas to Waring, Nicholas addressed the issues of attendance at the school as it appeared that children were either kept at home to work or did not attend school for a length of time to be advantageous for them, often to "… have taken them Home again so soon as they began to read, but before they had received any real Benefit or it could be

supposed that they were made acquainted with the Principles of Christianity" (Van Horne 1985, 186). As a remedy to encourage stricter attendance and therefore be more beneficial in proselytizing the students, Nicholas wrote a set of regulations for plantation owners who sent their enslaved children to school to follow. Among his recommendations was an obligation that the planters commit to the children's attendance at the school for a minimum of three consecutive years prior to enrollment and to provide clean clothing for them, possibly a uniform, "… by which they might be distinguished…" and he also stipulated that the schoolmistress could only admit scholars "…approved by the Trustees" (Van Horne 1985, 190). Nicholas outlined in further detail the hours of the school, specified lessons such as "to teach them to read the Bible," and accompanying the children to church on Sundays (Van Horne 1985, 190–1). The uniforms are not mentioned in any further correspondence or other written documents, therefore it is difficult to determine if school uniforms ever caught on or a uniform code of dress was ever enforced.

During the time of the Bray School, enslaved African Americans were achieving literacy. Descriptions in advertisements for runaway slaves in the *Virginia Gazette* indicated varying degrees of mastery of their education. "John Wilson…He can read, write, and cipher very well". (*VA Gazette* December 13, 1770). Adam… "and can read and write" (*VA Gazette* April 26, 1770). Ben … "as he can read tolerably well" (*VA Gazette* March 22, 1770). Isaac Bee… "He can read, but I do not know that he can write; however, he may easily get some One to forge a Pass for him" (*VA Gazette* September 8, 1774). The local newspaper provided the reader with the standard physical, personality, and educational traits of fugitive slaves. Owners were generally aware of an enslaved

person's level of instruction and competencies because ads in the *Virginia Gazette* also included literacy as an individual's distinguishing characteristic. Besides ads in the *Virginia Gazette* about runaway slaves' literacy, there were announcements about the books in print that came from London Books such as "Dictionaries, Spelling Books, Horn Books, Psalters, Bibles, Testaments, and a variety of pretty books for children" (*VA Gazette* July 7,1768). "Small books for children" were available for sale at the Printing Office in Williamsburg per an ad in 1757 (*VA Gazette* April 22, 1757). Some of these books are similar to those that were sent by the Associates and would have been used in teaching reading, spelling, and the alphabet to children, not only the elite, but also free and enslaved African American children at the Bray School.

There were no laws in Virginia that prohibited the teaching of reading or writing to free or enslaved African Americans in the eighteenth century during the time of the Bray School (Miley 2014). From the time of the school's opening, until its closing at the death of its lifelong schoolmistress Mrs. Ann Wager, free and enslaved African American children could attend once "… approved by the Trustees" (Bly 2011, 440). The College, taverns, and homes of renowned families were within walking distance of the school making it convenient for the Bray School children to receive their education. In regards to the literacy of African Americans, as Bly affirms "…reading held the promise of writing and writing the opportunity for freedom" (Bly 2011, 446–7) and writing implements were among the artifacts unearthed at the Bray School site.

Chapter 4: The Bray School Archaeological Site

The Bray School site, located within Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Block 23, was located at the southeast corner of Prince George Street and North Boundary Street, today's Brown Hall, a dormitory for the College. Excavation began on May 29, 2012 as a collaborative effort between Colonial Williamsburg and the College of William and Mary (*see Figure 3*). Field schools were conducted for three consecutive summers, 2012–14 with two sessions per summer, under the direction of principal investigators Dr. Neil Norman, archaeologist and associate professor of anthropology at the College and Mark Kostro, archaeologist at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and Ph.D. candidate at the College. I participated in three of the six summer session field schools from 2012–14.

There are possibly the remnants of two foundations under present-day Brown Hall, that of an earlier eighteenth-century 1716 dwelling and one from the latter part of the eighteenth century, 1760, presently at 524 Prince George Street. Where Brown Hall is located today is believed to be the original site of the Dudley Digges House since research from Chancellor Professor of English Terry L. Meyers indicates it belonged to the Williamsburg Dudley Digges who was an uncle to the famous patriot of the same name (Meyers 2012). The Yorktown Dudley Digges had constructed a very similar colonial house on Main Street in Yorktown, Virginia ca. 1760. According to Meyers, the Dudley Digges house now located at 524 Prince George Street will undergo paint analysis in 2016 (Meyers 2016).

The Bray School is an eighteenth-century urban archaeological site in the Chesapeake where from 1760–65, it was the school for free and enslaved

Figure 3. First Summer Session 2012, excavation, south side of Brown Hall. Courtesy The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

black children (Hart 2008). In 1765, its original location changed because it was deemed "untenantable," and possibly moved a couple miles out on Capitol Landing Road. The school might have relocated several times on Capitol Landing Road in the course of nine years from 1765–1774 (Meyers 2016). To date it is unknown where those locations were. In 1926, the Prince George Street/Dudley Digges house located at 107 North Boundary Street (Brown Hall's present location), was moved further down the street to 524 Prince George Street. Also known as the ROTC building, it belongs to the College and is used by its military science and leadership department (*see Figure 4*). In 1930, with funds donated by Mrs. Edward Brown, a residence hall was built for Methodist women attending the College of William and Mary. In 1939, the College purchased the building since the Great Depression precluded mortgage payments and there were not enough students to live in the dormitory (Meyers 2004).

From an archaeological standpoint, the 1930 construction disturbed the stratigraphy around the site, but from 1760–65, the Bray School likely stood where Brown Hall stands today. Excavation to the north and south of the house was plowzone which means that the plowzone contains archaeological remains from several centuries mixed together. Utility trenches and sewer lines were also invasive and contribute to the disturbance of the soil. Test shovel pits 50 centimeters square were dug every five meters on the north side of Brown Hall (facing Prince George Street) and the south side (garden to the rear of Brown Hall) (Kostro 2014). Stratigraphic layers were used to excavate the site. Digging in layers kept to the integrity of the layer and the provenience of artifacts and features. Items were bagged by layer. Layers consisted of topsoil, clay, plowzone, and subsoil. Layers were dug until subsoil was reached with no further evidence of

Figure 4. Dudley Digges house/ROTC building located at 524 Prince George Street. Photo by author.

artifacts. Shovels and trowels were used as well as scoops and small spoons. One-quarter inch mesh screens were used to sift through the matrix and collect the artifacts. Depending on the fragility and size, some small finds were labelled and placed in separate smaller plastic bags within the context bags. Flotation analyses were done. Features such as hearths and postholes were drawn in plan and photographed. Remnants of a dairy and a kitchen were found on the south side of Brown Hall which date to the time of the Bray School (*see Figure 5*). In the eighteenth century, it was customary to build outbuildings such as dairies and kitchens behind the structure of the main house. Presumably, any surviving remnants of the foundation of the Bray School house footprint would be under modern Brown Hall (*see Figure 6*). As of this writing, cataloguing of the three summer seasons of digging is still ongoing.

The focus of the archaeological assemblage is on the four Blocks in the south yard of Brown Hall of the site (*see Figure 7*). Blocks A, B, C, and D were Plowzone. Each block was divided into 50 centimeter squares. Block A consisted of units 00–133–160 totaling 28 units, Block B consisted of units 00–122–130, totaling 9 units, Block C consisted of units 00–161–166 with 6 units, and Block D consisted of units 00–222–241, totaling 20 units.

Clay pipe fragments associated with tobacco smoking were found in all four blocks. Even though they were commodities that were easily breakable, they were easily replaced and smokers did so frequently as inexpensive pipes were readily available. Maintaining the integrity of the archaeological assemblage, clay tobacco pipes were found which date to the time of the Bray School site. In the laboratory, after washing,

Figure 5. Kitchen hearth (background) and dairy (foreground) behind Brown Hall. Courtesy The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Figure 6. Brown Hall, dormitory of the College of William and Mary. Photo by author.

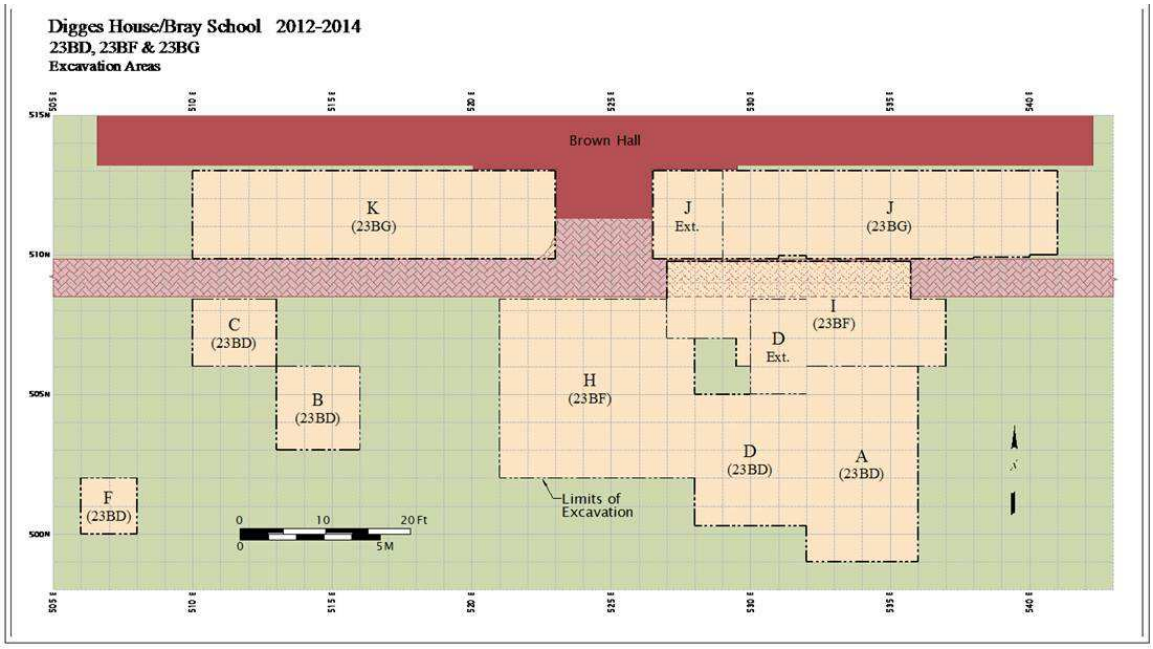

Figure 7. Excavation areas of the Bray School site, south side. Courtesy The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

pipe stem bore diameters were measured using drills ranging in size from 4/64”–9/64” according to archaeologist J.C. Harrington’s chart for pipe stem dating which indicate a correlation between bore hole diameters and age of pipe stems on clay tobacco pipes manufactured in England. (Deetz 1996, 27–9; Noël Hume 1969, 297–9). Typically there can be an overlap of bore hole diameters as people transition from the old pipes to the newer models. In Block A, of 31 pipe stem bores, 35 percent measured 4/64” and 65 percent, 5/64.” In Block B, of 19 pipe stem bores, 10 percent measured 4/64,” 74 percent, 5/64,” and 16 percent, 6/64.” In Block C, of 13 pipe stem bores, 31 percent measured 4/64,” and 69 percent, 5/64.” In Block D, of 52 pipe stems measured, 17 percent measured 4/64,” 33 percent, 5/64.” The majority of the imported pipe stems were 5/64” or 4/64” which signify date ranges from 1720–1750 and 1750–1800 respectively. The average of these dates fall within the range of the Bray School.

Faunal and floral assemblages do not seem to suggest that the children ate on the site. What the assemblages do show is what was being eaten in the Chesapeake region at the time. Molluscs such as oysters are the best indicators of seasonality. The incremental growth visible on oyster shells can provide pertinent information about the environment and climate changes (Davis 1995, 83–7). Even though difficult to find archaeologically, there might have been an informal garden and children might have been taught about growing and tending vegetables, flowers or herbs for seasoning and medicinal purposes (Beaudry and Bescherer Metheny 2015, 4). There might have been fruit trees on the property as well. Fruits that were grown and eaten in colonial Williamsburg and are extant in the twenty-first century are strawberries, blueberries, cherries, mulberries, figs, peaches, apples, lemons, pomegranates, and watermelon. Herbs such as parsley, sage,

rosemary, thyme, and mint were grown and seasoned food in colonial times. Not far from the Bray School site, herbs similar to those cultivated in eighteenth century Williamsburg can be observed today in an herb garden adjacent to Bruton Parish Church.

Ceramic fragments found also help to date the Bray School since ceramics imported from England like creamware whose manufacture date is 1762 (Noël Hume 1969, 125) fall within the timeframe of the school's occupation of the site. Ceramics that pertain to food offer a glimpse into meals consumed. Since they survive well in the archaeological record, traces of organic substances can be found on ceramic fragments which give insight into food consumption. Unfortunately, "… extraction of material for analysis from the vessel or pottery sherd is destructive" (Beaudry and Bescherer Metheny 2015, 117). Additionally, ceramics might have been used teaching etiquette to children of the Bray School. Further analysis of toys like clay marbles and jacks might also date to the time of the school. Toys found that date to later centuries indicate that children may have occupied the site after the time of the school. It is interesting to attempt to interpret who the owners of these artifacts were. Especially in terms of the Bray School, determining who owned the clay tobacco pipes is challenging. It cannot be assumed that Mrs. Wager or some of the school children did not use them for smoking, but they might have been used for another activity. Pieter Brueghel's painting from the sixteenth century depicts children blowing bubbles with clay pipes. As Wilkie has suggested in looking for evidence of children in the material culture found on archaeological sites, artifacts like clay tobacco pipes might have found another use by children such as blowing bubbles on laundry days (Wilkie 2003, 107–8).

Other items found on the site were sewing implements such as copper alloy

thimbles, straight pins, bone and metal buttons. Further study of these artifacts related to sewing must be considered in order to corroborate them with the written record and date them to the time of the Bray School. A sampler, an individual embroidery project, would also show evidence of sewing at the Bray School. There were no samplers that survived the Bray School, according to Kimberly Smith Ivey, Curator of Textiles and Historic Interiors at Colonial Williamsburg (Ivey 1997, 65). Moreover, no samplers were found in the three summers of excavation, or for that matter, contemporary cloth. Many factors contribute to the lack of a sampler's survival. Cloth and thread are organic substances therefore they do not preserve well unless contained in an anaerobic environment. Deterioration of cloth and fibers accelerate with exposure to fluctuations of temperature, heat, cold, sunlight, water, humidity, moisture, animal, or human intervention. After the Bray School closed, generations of Virginia homes and records suffered many fires, losing precious stories about the past through the loss of priceless written documents and artifacts. Clearly, what would have survived would have been the knowledge acquired, the alphabet, the numbers, the sewing skills, and presumably the passing on of this knowledge to future generations.

Slate Tablet and Pencils at the Bray School

Material culture related to writing are evidenced by the piece of slate tablet and quantity of slate pencils found at the Bray School site which suggests use by a group larger than the average household or business. The fact that 45 slate pencil fragments were found on this site is remarkable. Also astonishing is the fact that 25 percent of the slate pencil fragments found in all of the excavated sites in Colonial Williamsburg were found at the Bray School site (Mark Kostro, personal communication, January 27, 2016).

One-quarter of the slate pencil fragments found at the Bray School site is telling. The high concentration of slate pencils can be seen on the map (*see Figure 8*).

To add some perspective to the extent of excavation in the area, archaeologist Meredith Poole provides the following background about archaeology in Colonial Williamsburg which had its beginnings in the late 1920s. Although the approach to excavation and archaeology has changed throughout the years, it is ongoing. Cross-trenching was the method used to uncover building foundations in its initial phase to reconstruct the town of Williamsburg dating back to the eighteenth century (1928–58). The second phase (1958–1982) involved archaeology by excavating in stratigraphic layers and focusing not only on buildings, but artifacts, followed by a comparative approach (1982–2008) incorporating technology. Today, public archaeology is combined with advanced technology as well as community engagement. Throughout 88 years of excavation, 300 buildings were reconstructed according to architectural evidence in addition to the 88 original eighteenth-century buildings. Approximately 15–20 percent of the 301 acres of Colonial Williamsburg has been excavated in less than a century and is ongoing (Poole 2014) compared to the excavation of the site of Pompeii which consists of about 163 acres and has been excavated for 250 years (Italia.it. n.d.; Owens n.d.; Soprintendenza Pompei n.d.). A web-based archive known as the eWilliamsburg project demonstrates the abundance of historical, architectural, and archaeological research done in Williamsburg (The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation 2015).

In addition to the archaeological evidence, written documents confirm the establishment and running of the school. Similar to the work of archaeologist Sean

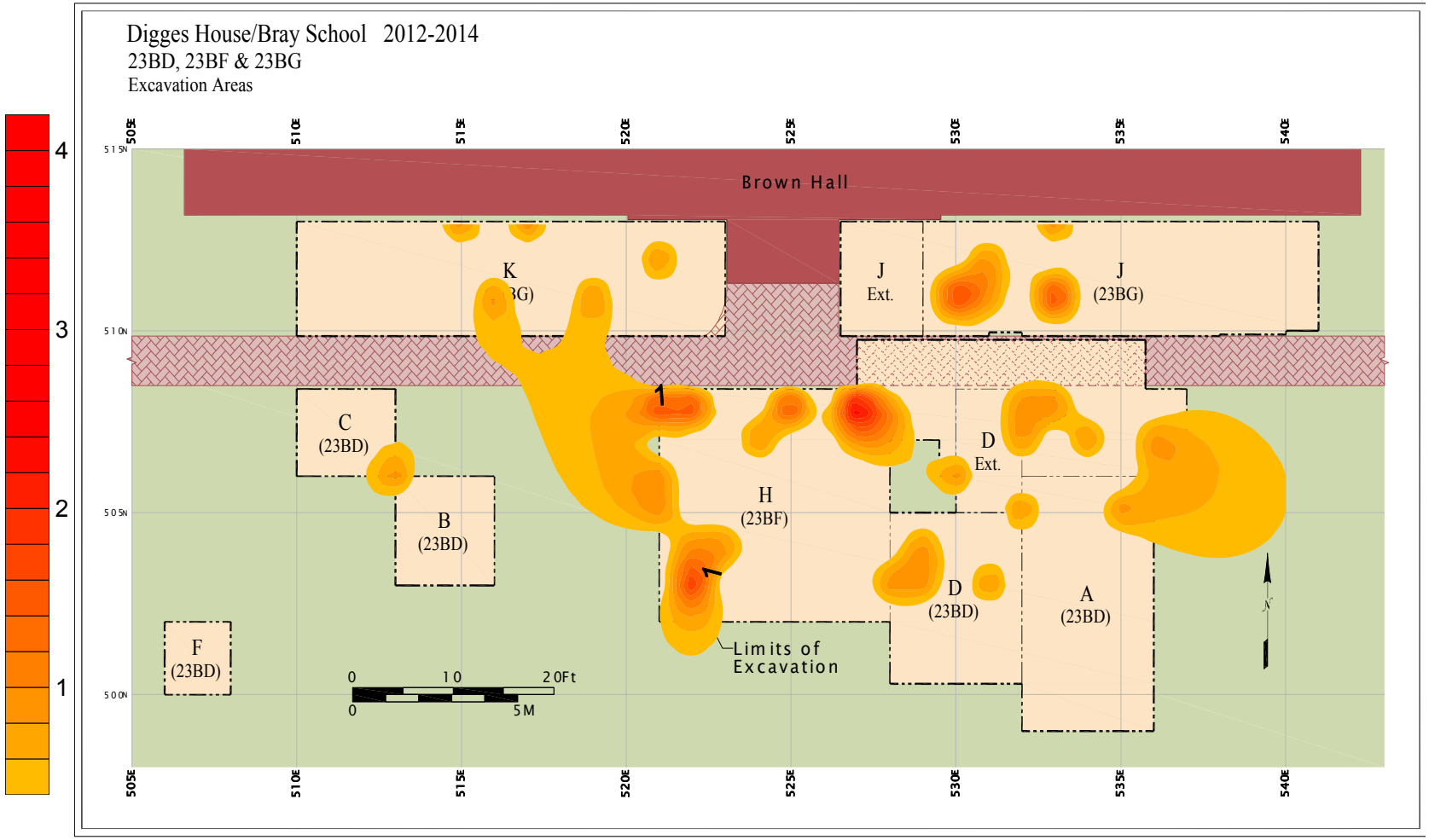

Figure 8. Slate pencil fragment concentration at the Bray School site. (Courtesy The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation).

Devlin with ink pot fragments found at the Ridge site at St. Nicholas Abbey in Barbados, slate pencil fragments "On a simple functional level, they represent the act of writing… [which] in turn implies literacy, which would have had practical benefits for the individual(s) and possibly for their extended networks of relationships" (Devlin 2008, 52). Here is a sample of the slate pencil fragments and the piece of slate tablet uncovered at the Bray School site. (*see Figures 9 and 10*).

While working on the site, there were daily possibilities to talk with the public about the Bray School as artifacts and features were being uncovered. It was an opportunity to share knowledge about the written documents available and the archaeological record as the excavation continued. As part of The Lemon Project: A Journey of Reconciliation, the College's initiative to not only acknowledge but further investigate its role in slavery, the Bray School dig is one of the ways the College can inquire about its relationship with African Americans in the past. Anthropologists and archaeologists have worked with descendant communities (Blakey 1998; Gallivan in McLain 2013; Moretti-Langholtz in McLain 2013; Wilkie 2003). Furthermore, it is essential to share what is learned about the Bray School with the public, to foster interest, and encourage questions (Mark Kostro, personal communication, January 27, 2016). Some oral histories of African Americans have been preserved by Colonel Lafayette Jones, Jr. including the oral tradition passed down by his great-great-grandfather about life in Williamsburg. A very fascinating and personally rewarding component of my research on the Bray School involved conducting oral history interviews with African American families living in Williamsburg who are members of First Baptist Church. Another way to engage with the community, I have listened to their family histories,

Figure 9. Slate pencil fragments from the Bray School site. Courtesy The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Figure 10. Slate tablet fragment from the Bray School site. Courtesy The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

transcribed the history of their families that until now, through oral tradition, have been passed down from generation to generation.

Chapter 5: Oral Histories

Oral histories are another way to confirm what is found in the written record or to delve deeper to interpret the past. In *My Great, Great, Grandfather's Journey To An Island of Freedom*, Colonel Lafayette Jones Jr. retells his grandfather's oral history about free and enslaved blacks in Williamsburg, "… some of the children who had attended the Bray School were able to read and write and were referred to by many as 'The first black teachers in Virginia'(Jones 2007, 28). Oral histories complement the archaeological evidence of slate pencils found at the Bray School site. Referring to Bray School scholars, Jones clearly substantiates the passing on of literacy, "This is especially true of the Ashby and Jones children who taught members of their families to read, write, and cipher (do math)" (Jones 2007, 28).

Generally, the notion of children teaching other children or blacks teaching other blacks was not without precedent. Despite the code of 1740 in South Carolina which prohibited teaching reading and writing to blacks, the Reverend Alexander Garden of Charleston made a request to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts "… for the instruction of Negroes whereby two Negro boys were to be purchased and trained as teachers…" (As stated in Van Horne 1985, 95, note 3). The school opened in Charleston in 1743 and continued for twenty years until 1764 (Glenn 2011, 25; Klingberg 1941, 101, 121; Van Horne 1985, 95). To paraphrase Garden, religious instruction for whites usually meant parents teaching their children. For blacks, he remarked how children would teach their parents and that the young would teach the old (Alexander Garden to [Philip Bearcroft], South Carolina, May 6, 1740, in S.P.G. MSS. (L.C. Trans.), B7, Pt.II, p. 235 ff. in Klingberg 1941, 106). Perhaps as a growing

sentiment in a slave society, Garden believed that blacks should receive instruction and that "Parents and Grand Parents Husbands, Wives, Brothers, Sisters, and other Relatives would be daily Teaching and learning of one another" (Garden to Bearcroft in Klingberg 1941, 107, note 15).

Outside the home, children also passed on their knowledge when they assisted teachers in the school setting. Monaghan quotes from white Congregationalist minister, Reverend John Barnard's (1681–1770) autobiography, who at less than age 6, "his schoolmistress made him 'a sort of usher' and appointed him to teach children who were older as well as younger than he, 'in which time I had read my Bible through thrice' (Monaghan 2005, 43). It is conceivable that Mrs. Wager assigned scholars who already mastered a lesson to those who were younger or struggling to catch on to a particular concept. She might have employed this teaching and learning methodology in her classroom at the Bray School to facilitate learning with a large and diverse group of youngsters with different capabilities.

Some children who attended the Bray School later lived in Hot Water Tract, a settlement in James City County for free blacks, known today as Freedom Park (Jones 2007, 27). Jones professes that, according to his grandfather, "the free blacks believed that 'Where opportunities did not exist, education would open the doors' (Jones 2007, 28). Indeed, Bray School children had a rare opportunity to receive an education outside the home. It was through their learning as children, and through their everyday activities at home and at school, that they made meaningful contributions to their families, the community, and society as a whole.

To add to the diversity of the written documents about the Bray School and the

archaeological finds from the Bray School site, I interviewed six members of the First Baptist Church of Williamsburg, Virginia and recorded their family history. I attribute my interviewing technique to the works of renowned historian, author, journalist, and broadcaster, Studs Terkel (Terkel 1974, 1984, 1995). In my conversation with Alvene P. Conyers and her sister Beverly P. Hundley, I learned about their family, an African American family, who have lived in Williamsburg for over 150 years and have strong attachments to the First Baptist Church and the community. Starting with their enslaved great-grandmother Sarah Cary's life on the Hankins farm (today known as Anderson's Corner), as they relayed their family history, they discussed long-standing values and practices. The value placed on education was unmistakable. Furthering one's education was not an option. It was an expectation. Even today, education begins with the formation of the *habitus*, acquiring socialization skills beginning at home and formal education in schools.

Many family members participated in the church as church clerks. John Cary, their great-grandfather, was church clerk for over a decade in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Other family members including their grandfather, granduncle, and brother also served as church clerks. Recently, Ms. Conyers completed twenty-five years as church clerk. In an exhibit at the First Baptist Church, I had the privilege of looking at minutes from a church meeting written and signed by their great-grandfather, John Cary, dated 1886. He actively listened to and transcribed the church minutes. Record keeping was a practice from the beginning of the church, a practice that continues today which attests to the literacy of African Americans dating back to the eighteenth century. (Conyers, Alvene P. and Hundley, Beverly P. Interview by Valerie Scura Trovato. Audio

recording. Williamsburg, February 12, 2016).

The two sisters reflected on their childhood and the child-rearing practices as well as educational practices that took place while growing up in Williamsburg during the civil rights movement in the 1960s. As part of the children's *habitus*, morals and proper behavior were learned at home. Emphasis on pride in work, a strong work ethic, and independence were also practiced and part of growing into adulthood. What was learned at home, however was not left behind. The socialization that took place in the home, was practiced and continued in the community, at church, and at school. They incorporated the experiences learned in their household into their own when they grew up. These children of a 1960s Williamsburg reflected on the raising of children as a collaboration of their families, First Baptist Church members, people in their community, and teachers at school.

Music was another way that the Cary family participated at First Baptist Church. Alice Cary-Patterson (1923-2015), mother of Alvene P. Conyers and Beverly P. Hundley was a pianist and the director of the youth choir. Her musical talent provided another venue for children to be involved in their church. Assembling for choir practice or performance on Sundays offered children a time and place to congregate and a way of expressing their beliefs. Additionally music in church was a venue to reinforce what youngsters learned at home with the teachings of the church.

Clerkship and music are common threads with the church members. A member of the Randall family, Ann Randall Parker sang in the gospel choir at church and her brother is a saxophonist who still performs locally. Daughter of James Randall, formerly a church clerk at First Baptist Church, Ms. Randall Parker held the position of church clerk as

well. Now a trustee of the church, her extended family is spread out along the east coast and as far away as California, but immediate family is close with intense bonds. In her living room, Ms. Randall Parker introduced me to her family; lined up like soldiers, each framed photo was strategically placed across a wall to wall stretch of a fireplace mantle so that every person could be seen, prominently displayed and talked about, clearly the focal point of her life. As a lifelong member of the church, as Ms. Randall Parker affirmed, First Baptist is her church and will continue to be until her death (Parker, Theresa Ann Randall. Interview by Valerie Scura Trovato. Audio recording. Williamsburg, February 25, 2016).

Ruth Crump Askew and Lillie Crump Carter are the daughters of Preston Crump Jr. and Betty Cary Crump and are longtime members of First Baptist Church. Their great-grandparents, Thomas and Harriet Crump were business owners who operated a hotel on Botetourt Street, the only hotel available for blacks at the time (Edwards-Ingram 2011; Heard 2016; Hopson 2016). Their father and other family members worked at the hotel learning the numerous and varied tasks to run a successful business. Their ties with First Baptist Church go back to their childhood when they attended First Baptist Church located on Nassau Street and Francis Street with their grandmother and were later baptized into the church.

Although interviewed separately, they emphasized the importance of family, neighbors, the church, and the school's involvement in raising a child. The two sisters recalled family recipes of their mother's hot rolls, their father's love of gardening and growing and selling fresh vegetables, and family meals on special occasions still celebrated today. First Baptist Church and Bruton Heights School provided a place for

youth activities such as watching movies since blacks were not allowed to attend the local movie theatre. They remembered blacks and whites playing together, baseball, hopscotch, jumping rope, and hide and seek, yet blacks did not attend the same school as whites and could not play on school grounds. While walking to and from school, the children would wave to one another, but were reminded daily of the separation of the races as they went past Matthew Whaley, the white school in order to get to Bruton Heights, the black school. Lillie Crump Carter said she loved school and could not wait to arrive home and share what she learned with her family.

Family outings to the beach, the train station, or an ice cream as well as family and church picnics, choir, and bible school were part of their family life in the community. Ruth Crump Askew was allowed to take the train to New York to stay with her aunt in the summer at age seven. Behavior that was learned at home was reinforced at other places children would be, the neighborhood, church activities, and school (Askew, Ruth Crump. Interview by Valerie Scura Trovato. Audio recording. Williamsburg, March 4, 2016; Carter, Lillie Crump. Interview by Valerie Scura Trovato. Audio recording. Williamsburg, March 11, 2016).

Mr. Robert Arnold Braxton is a member and a trustee of First Baptist Church who grew up in Williamsburg, left in 1956, and returned in 2003, 2004. His great-grandfather was Robert Ellis Braxton, a Chief Deacon of the church. Mr. Robert Henry Braxton, his grandfather was a deacon and a trustee and for whom the court on which he lives today is named, Braxton Court, a street near First Baptist Church. As far as education, his grandfather, father, and he, himself went to Hampton Institute. On his mother's side of the family, his great-grandfather, James Apostles Fields was in the first graduating class

at Hampton Institute and also taught at First Baptist Church. Mr. Braxton's mother went to Hampton Institute as well (Braxton, Robert Arnold. Interview by Valerie Scura Trovato. Audio recording. Williamsburg, March 15, 2016).

For each of the families, ties to First Baptist Church are fervent by their attachment and long years of service either as church deacons, trustees, or clerks, with the music ministry, or special events such as the Church's 240th anniversary in 2016. Let Freedom Ring! (First Baptist Church and Colonial Williamsburg 2016) is a collaborative venture between First Baptist Church and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and has been an extensive commitment of time and energy from its inception. Oral histories were an important component of community engagement with the African American community.

The richness of oral history complements historical documents and the archaeological record and gives voice to the voiceless "… in theory, almost every person who lived in America left behind some trace of their passing" (Deetz 1996, 212). Interviewing African American families, specifically members of the First Baptist Church of Williamsburg, has been a way of collaborating with and giving back to the community. I made audio recordings of our conversations in order for their families to listen to their narratives, transcribed the narratives so that their words were written down for posterity, and included their photographs if they wished. Oral histories offer a unique opportunity for historical archaeologists to interact with the community. By talking about the past and the importance of their family's values, long-standing practices, and education, individual family members can help inform the archaeologist about past lives and provide a long-awaited legacy to pass on to future generations.

Conclusion

Historical archaeology provides an exceptional opportunity to interpret what is unearthed from the ground and can confirm or question what has been written in historical documents. As an educator and archaeologist, I have argued that free and enslaved black children who attended the Bray School in Williamsburg, Virginia were empowered by the education they received and were contributors to not only their families and community, but to future generations of African Americans.

Books, journals, diaries, newspapers, and other historical documents as well as oral histories show evidence that the small finds such as slate pencil fragments can suggest that writing took place at the Bray School in Williamsburg. The Bray School was set in the context of a capital city that was thriving economically, socially, and politically. Indeed, the school was in session during a stimulating climate in the American colonies where talk of equality and freedom as well as slavery and emancipation were openly discussed, read, and written about. Advertisements in the *Virginia Gazette* for runaway slaves confirmed the literacy of African Americans. Journals and diaries attested to what contemporary tutors were teaching in Virginia. Newspapers and pamphlets were easily accessible and affordable. Religious books were provided by many philanthropic organizations and churches.

For fourteen years, Mrs. Ann Wager taught young, free and enslaved African American children. Her livelihood began as a tutor to children of elite white planters and then as a schoolmistress to the free and enslaved African American children of the Bray School. Her proximity to the inner workings of the city, living on the backstreets, conceivably placed her in an extraordinary position where she had daily opportunities to

develop a unique, intricate system of relationships with all who passed by. Her devotion to the teaching profession demonstrated that she realized the value of her own education and was not only quite capable but willing to pass her knowledge on to others.

Small but significant finds, like slate pencils, would level the playing field for blacks and whites in eighteenth-century Williamsburg, through writing, the quintessence of literacy. The archaeological evidence of slate pencil fragments and a slate tablet fragment on the Bray School site sharply contradicts the "unwritten" restriction of writing that others suggest (Monaghan 2005; Meyers 2015; Van Horne in Meyers 2015). The physical remains of a piece of slate tablet and the prevalence of slate pencil fragments on the site, compared to other excavated sites in Williamsburg, strongly infer that these children were writing in some capacity at the school. Intentional or not, approximately 300–400 young African American children were given a glimmer of hope through Mrs. Wager's teaching. These youngsters and their families probably did not realize the degree to which their education would change their lives and the lives they touched. A slate pencil transformed lives exponentially.

For Bray School scholars, it is probable that their families, friends, and community knew that literacy was the most important skill separating them from elite white planters. Historian and lawyer, Heather Andrea Williams responds to her poignant question, "But why was literacy so sought after and so forbidden?" (Williams 2005, 22) with whites afraid of the enslaved becoming "unmanageable" through literacy whereas African Americans sought "the very information and power that whites strove to withhold from them" (Williams 2005, 22). Although perhaps not realized at the time, the opportunity to attend the Bray School and receive an education empowered these children

to contribute to their society by sharing their knowledge with others. Their education continued in myriad ways to spread and to have an impact on the future of all African Americans they touched generation after generation.

It was not until the nineteenth century that statutes in Virginia concerning the prohibition of literacy resembled those already passed in colonies like South Carolina and Georgia, long before they became states. Either lack of literacy or concealment of literacy meant "gathering information through eavesdropping…" (Williams 2005, 9) in which enslaved African Americans needed good listening skills and the capacity to commit what they heard to memory. Laws were enacted to prohibit learning to read and write yet it did not mean that learning stopped. The legal system did not preclude learning to read and write. Even though conditions would have been more fearsome and difficult to conduct instruction because it was against the law, perseverance to learn would have triumphed over the law. Although emancipation in America did not take place until more than a century after the establishment of the Bray school, generations of African Americans would continue to share the knowledge first passed on by the young free and enslaved African Americans, the "first black teachers" as told in oral histories, who attended the Bray School.

The oral history interviews with members of First Baptist Church demonstrate that home, church, and school were connected and that people worked together to reinforce what was learned at home to raise children in the black community. For some of the interviewees who grew up in a 1960s Williamsburg, members of the congregation of First Baptist Church as well as the teachers at Bruton Heights School were more like family to them. Parishioners and educators took an interest in the children of their

community and provided religious, educational, and social opportunities when black children were excluded from places in Williamsburg.

The abundance of slate pencil fragments, unique to the site of the Bray School, strongly suggest the free and enslaved black children were taught to write. Archaeologists, historians, and interpreters suggest that writing took place at the Bray School (Brennan 2016; Holmes 2016; Richter 2013; Kern, Kostro, Norman, Rowe, in Meyers 2015). These well-preserved fragments found in the backyard show how archaeology can contradict what was thought to have taken place inside the Bray School. Although there is no documentation to substantiate that writing was part of the curriculum, the archaeology of slate pencil fragments and a piece of slate tablet along with evidence of blacks' ability to read and write in the eighteenth century infer that writing was a skill that was not only acquired, but taught to others.

Reading and Christianity were the primary objectives in the curriculum that *The Associates of the Late Reverend Dr. Thomas Bray* envisioned for the impressionable minds of the Bray School scholars. Surviving written accounts of books, bibles, and baptisms validate free and enslaved children learning to read and becoming Christians. Appropriate behavior like etiquette, deportment, and some useful things were added to the list of important goals for these young, free and enslaved scholars.

African Americans gathered and worshipped long before the establishment of a Baptist church for African Americans distinct from Bruton Parish, the Anglican Church. They met with their enslaved leader, Moses near Green Spring and then at Raccoon Chase before Mr. Robert F. Coles provided his carriage house as their meeting place (Bogger 2006, 12; Ingram 2016). Merely two years after Mrs. Wager's death, the

founding of the First Baptist Church of Williamsburg for African Americans in 1776 (note 2016 marks their 240th anniversary) is significant (Bogger 2006, 10). Members demonstrated tremendous courage when they worshipped openly in 1776 (First Baptist Church 2016).With the leadership of Gowan Pamphlet, probably a Bray School scholar, the ability for African Americans to worship freely was extraordinary even at a time when the Anglican Church lost its power throughout the colonies. I have argued that the free and enslaved black children who attended the Bray school were undoubtedly active, not passive members of their society in eighteenth-century colonial Virginia. Children are not usually apparent in written historical documents, yet together with the material culture found, their influence can be seen through everyday activities and everyday things.

Feasibly adults also used slate pencil fragments and the slate tablet fragment found at the site of the Bray School. There might have been a family living on the site prior to and possibly after the time that the Bray School stood on the site from 1760–65. Yet the fact still remains, the Bray School was located in Block 23 and the prevalence of these slate pencil fragments and other artifacts such as clay tobacco pipes and ceramics fit into the time of occupation of the Bray School, everyday items of material culture were unearthed at a time when African American children were allowed to learn to write.

Contrary to what Monaghan states, "Before the American Revolution, writing had already been banned in Virginia and Georgia; after the war similar legislation would be passed in other southern states," (Monaghan 2005, 301) writing was not prohibited in Virginia until 1804 for black and mulatto orphans by the General Assembly (Virginia,

Shepherd, and Hening 1970, 124) which subsequently passed the Revised Code of 1819 which decreed:

> That all meetings or assemblages of slave, or free negroes or mulattoes, mixing and associating with such slaves at any meeting-house or houses &c., in the night; or at any SCHOOL OR SCHOOLS for teaching them READING OR WRITING, either in the day or night, under whatsoever pretext, shall be deemed and considered an UNLAWFUL ASSEMBLY…" (Goodell 2005, 321).

Therefore, at the time of the Bray School, 1760–1774, as historian Linda Rowe confirms, there were no written laws in Virginia preventing the teaching of writing to free or enslaved black children. Likewise, there is no documentation from *The Associates of the Late Reverend Dr. Thomas Bray* which state that writing was banned from the curriculum (Meyers 2015).

As Monaghan posits "Embroidering a sampler was clearly the apex of the sewing curriculum… " (Monaghan 2005, 260). Building on the work of Bly, it is possible that Mrs. Wager might have used samplers in the girls' embroidery lessons and "… that some slave girls who attended the Bray schools probably acquired rudimentary skills in forming letters in addition to learning how to read." (As stated by Bly 2011, 434, note 13). Bly connects their stitchery to writing "as embroidering represented a form of penmanship, it seems likely that some of the female scholars learned to write and read" (As stated by Bly 2011, 434, note 15). Writing can take on many forms. Writing remains "the hallmark of the free" (Monaghan 2005, 8). African American children who attended the Bray School were empowered and their education was like a stone dropped in a body of water; it had a ripple effect that went beyond what anyone could have ever imagined.

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