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White Ethnogenesis and Gradual Capitalism: Perspectives from Colonial Archaeological Sites in the Chesapeake

ABSTRACT The piecemeal development of capitalist socioeconomic systems in the colonial Chesapeake was deeply intertwined with projects of white ethnogenesis. Crafting a sense of "groupness" along lines perceived as racial required free "whites" to remain economically and socially interdependent. A variety of strategies and material forms—including reciprocal exchanges, hall-parlor house plans, and earthfast construction—facilitated this cohesion. Such integrative tactics coexisted in colonists' behavioral repertoires with more "capitalistic" strategies that prioritized private profit over social obligation. Colonists' deployment of diverse social strategies reflects a complex calculus assessing the benefits of economic autonomy against the benefits of ethnic ("white") solidarity. These dynamics can be illustrated through an 18th-century archaeological site at Flowerdew Hundred in the Chesapeake. [Keywords: ethnogenesis, capitalism, race, colonial sites]

THE EMERGENCE OF CAPITALIST social, economic, and cultural systems has aptly been characterized as the most pervasive global change of the last half millennium (Little 1994). Although the broad strokes of its global development are fairly well understood, less apparent are the means by which this multifaceted transformation emerged "on the ground," or how and why the character, sequence, and pace of capitalism's appearance differed among localities (Wallerstein 2004:x). By taking a "jeweler's eye view of large-scale causal processes specific to capitalism as they operate in particular contexts" (Leone and Potter 1998:116), historical archaeology permits glimpses of its emergence as varied and dependent on local circumstance. Region-specific analyses expose modern conditions as products of human ingenuity, bringing "back into focus places and time periods in which entrenched categories were still in flux and contested, crystallizing around an organizing common sense that had not yet covered its tracks" (Leone 1999:9).

Traces of capitalist systems "under construction" appear in patterns of material culture, land use, and social interaction in the Chesapeake region of Virginia during the 17th and 18th centuries. For purposes of the current analysis, *capitalism* can be understood as a set of socioeconomic strategies that prioritize private profit, individual autonomy in investment decisions (Harris 1999:164), and the creation of wealth (Wallerstein 2004:23–24). In the Chesapeake such strategies coexisted with other socioeconomic tactics that placed greater emphasis on the integration of individuals and families into communities. Most colonial planters eschewed communal forms of land tenure familiar from England, for example. Their commitment to private property reflects a preference for economic detachment from the community, and their focus on soil-depleting but potentially lucrative crops reveals an interest in profit maximization. Simultaneously, however, colonial Chesapeake planters remained integrated socially and economically through reciprocal exchanges. Their favored house types—expedient and wooden—required owners to call regularly on local craftsmen, and the open floor plans they chose facilitated visiting that often involved the exchange of goods. These practices reflect socioeconomic tactics that existed with, yet differed in key ways from, private profit-driven models of decision making.

Why did Chesapeake colonists not extend the capitalistic models they employed in some domains to a wider range of decisions about material culture, economic resources, and social interaction? Although individuals' use of diverse strategies was, and is, doubtless common in

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communities throughout the world, the complexity of Virginia planters' socioeconomic tactics is significant for the light it sheds on processes of white ethnogenesis. I suggest that the emergence of capitalist socioeconomic systems in the Chesapeake region was piecemeal: For many residents, developing a sense of ethnic identity as "white"—in part through cultivating connections to others understood to be of European descent—was more desirable than thoroughly extricating themselves from socioeconomic obligations to one another. The projects of establishing race as a primary social fact and of establishing "the white race" as profoundly different from others depended on a sense of white cohesiveness. This solidarity, in turn, relied on integrative systems of exchange among Euro-Virginians. Thus, in the colonial Chesapeake, the development of racial identities slowed the development of capitalism as local expressions of international transformations.

In this study, I consider the articulations between capitalism and ethnicity in the Chesapeake beginning with an explanation of the term *white ethnogenesis* as it applies to the 17th-century social landscape. I then consider and compare characteristics of capitalism with other socioeconomic strategies in England and Anglo-Virginia. Domains in which a partial development of capitalist orientations appear in the Chesapeake include settlement patterns, socioeconomic exchange, and domestic architecture. An early-18th-century archaeological site at Flowerdew Hundred illustrates these trends and their relationships with the development of racism. As the site's handmade ceramics suggest, it was in the context of regular interethnic contact that landowners used material culture, especially domestic architecture, to forge a sense of sameness among "whites" and a sense of difference from "people of color."

WHITENESS

The terms *whiteness* and *white ethnicity* refer to the means through which people of diverse social statuses, from varied points of origin, crafted both a sense of "groupness" (Jenkins 1997:11) among themselves and of distinctness from people they considered to be of African or Native American descent. Researchers have often applied the term *ethnogenesis* to processes of social definition among subalterns positioning themselves "within and against a general history of domination" (Hill 1996:1). White ethnogenesis in colonial Anglo-America—the creation of "whiteness" as an ethnic identity and privileged social category—has received less scholarly attention. The frequent conceptualization of African Americans and others as "racial" but of European Americans as "normative" (Hartigan 1997:501) or as "just human" has rendered "whiteness" an unmarked category (Hill 2004), at least from the perspective of many white people (Frankenberg 2001). As Toni Morrison once observed of a Hemingway character, "Eddy is white, and we know he is because nobody says so" (1993:72). In the work of Hemingway and many other U.S. writers, race is usually only marked for nonwhite characters.

The view of whites as being "nonraced" infiltrates much modern anthropological scholarship, including that within historical archaeology (Orser 1998). In this discipline "to say that one is interested in race has come to mean that one is interested in any racial imagery other than that of white people" (Dyer 2003:301), especially that of African Americans (Paynter 2001:125). Prominent studies of white ethnicity are tellingly set in Massachusetts (Paynter 2001) and Appalachia (Horning 1999), areas beyond the pale of slavery's heartland. Although enslavement existed to a limited extent in these regions, the construction of white ethnicity within plantation systems such as those of the Chesapeake has gone largely unexamined (Mullins 1999:189). The ways in which whiteness emerged there generally "worms out of critique" (Hill 2004:7). By denying analytical attention to white ethnogenesis, archaeologists are complicit in making whiteness invisible and seemingly natural (Jones 1997:1–13). Ignoring "white ethnicity," archaeologists help "to redouble its hegemony by naturalizing it" (Roediger 2002:327).

Whiteness is not the absence of race; white is a color, and its emergence as a social phenomenon merits consideration (Dyer 2003:306). The " 'white race'—supra-class unity of European-Americans in opposition to African-Americans" almost certainly did not exist in 17th-century Anglo America (Allen 1994:162; cf. Sobel 1987). Ethnic identities are socially negotiated rather than objectively established, and in the early colonial Chesapeake such identities had not yet been reified (Franklin and Fesler 1999). Individuals of African, Native North American, and European heritage interacted in any number of ways (Sobel 1987). In the 17th-century Chesapeake, "blacks and whites drank, caroused, and fornicated together"; in addition, interracial marriages continued to occur into the 1660s (Berkin 2003:13; Morgan 1975:327). Early on, some African Virginians successfully pressed their legal claims for freedom, becoming well-to-do planters (Berlin 1996:276–279) with indentured European servants working their lands (Berkin 2003:13). In this era, no equivalence existed between ethnic identity and bondage.

In the Chesapeake, as elsewhere, the forging of ethnic identities "on the ground" comprised two transactions: (1) internal definition, creating a sense of cohesion or "whiteness"; and (2) external differentiation, generating a belief in difference from others (Jenkins 1997). Whereas a mid-17th-century observer might have perceived a hypothetical crowd as containing gentlemen immigrants from London, merchants from Glasgow, Virginia-born gentry planters, indentured servant "girls" from Bristol, and peripatetic Irish laborers, an observer in the 18th century might see "white" people, only later making discriminations based on class, occupation, or other social factors (cf. Fredrickson 2002:53). This change in thinking required not only the establishment of distinction between European Virginians and African or Native Americans ("white" vs. "nonwhite") but also the manufacture of a sense of coherence among the

diverse members of this new category of "whites" (Kulikoff 1986:44).

Acts of "othering"—fostering a conviction of "white" people's distinctness from "colored" others—depended, in part, on legal changes enacted over the course of several generations (Epperson 1999:160–172; Smedley 1993). The first use of the term *white* to refer to people appeared in a 1691 miscegenation law, which forbade any "English or other white man or woman being free" to marry "any negroe, mulatto, or Indian man or woman bond or free" (Epperson 1999:160). As they began recognizing "whites" as a distinct and superior social group, legislators instituted increasingly stringent codes that restricted the rights of nonwhites but enhanced those of whites of all economic levels (Morgan 1975:311–312). Late-17th-century laws sought to prevent "that abominable mixture and spurious issue which hereafter may encrease in this dominion, as well by negroes, mulattoes, and Indians intermarrying with English, or other white women, as by their unlawfull accompanying with one another" (Morgan 1975:334–335). The distinction was between legally "intermarrying" and unlawfully "accompanying with one another" (the latter phrase referring to extramarital relations and reproduction). Lawmakers sought to prevent association both within and outside of wedlock. The 1705 code of Virginia decreed that no white servant should be stripped to be beaten and that blacks could no longer testify against whites (Sobel 1987:45). In 1723, the Virginia Assembly issued a law providing that "no free negro, mulatto, or indian whatsoever, shall have any vote at the election of burgesses, or any other election whatsoever," an edict that the governor hoped would "fix a perpetual Brand upon Free Negros & Mulattos" (Allen 1994:240–241). Such measures encouraged Virginians of every ethnicity to distinguish habitually between "whites" and all others (Morgan 1975:329).

Material culture also appears to have played diverse, fundamental roles in processes of racial definition. As analyses below suggest, changes in manor houses' floor plans and in the location of laborers' quarters underscored social differences between bondspeople and planters (cf. Epperson 1999:160–172). Simultaneously, the small wooden houses planters usually opted to build facilitated intimacy in visiting among peers, enmeshed house owners in local networks of maintenance and exchange, and downplayed differences in wealth among European Americans. These measures likely fostered a sense of white similarity or "groupness."

Cultivating an ethnic social cohesiveness was almost certainly desirable because many Chesapeake planters were economically reliant on enslaved African Americans. Depending on the particular time and place, enslaved people composed between 24 and 58 percent of the 18th-century Virginia population (Greene and Harrington 1932: 137–143). In some locales, "white" Virginians were in the minority (Greene and Harrington 1932:156). Although large-scale uprisings were rare, "Many slave owners certainly believed such rebellion to be a constant possibility" and were aware that to hold a person in bondage was to possess the "agent of one's own demise" (Hall 2000:40). Although African Americans were present in other North American colonies, they often composed a small proportion of the population. Estimates put the 18th-century enslaved population in Massachusetts, for example, at only one to two percent (Greene and Harrington 1932:12–19; cf. Brown and Trager 2000:113; Paynter 2001). Thus, demographic ratios and the slave-dependent economy of the colonial Chesapeake likely encouraged white planters to view solidarity among themselves as desirable.

Euro-Virginians' selective deployment of capitalist strategies in social and economic decisions makes sense in this light. By sacrificing some forms of autonomy, they gained ethnic solidarity. I now discuss what I mean by *capitalism* and how it differed from more socioeconomically integrative strategies. I also hope to illuminate the relationship between "capitalism" and "racism" as these new concepts developed in the colonial Chesapeake.

CAPITALISTIC AND INTEGRATIVE STRATEGIES

In early modern England, custom and law acknowledged communal obligation in the production of food. In this economy, the growing and milling of grain

> were principally social rather than economic activities. . . . The farmer who grew it . . . did not really own the corn; he attended it during its passage from the field to the market. He could not store it in order to wait for a more propitious moment of sale; he could not move it to a distant market. . . . Rather, he must load up his carts with his grain, proceed to the nearest market, and offer his year's harvest to his traditional customers. Similarly, the miller and the baker were constrained to push the grain processing along in an orderly fashion to its final form as a loaf of bread selling at a price set by the local assize court. [Appleby 1978:27]

During the 17th century, changes were accelerating in England and its colonies. In the Chesapeake, social expectations entailed in food production waned as agriculture became defined primarily as an economic activity driven by individual acquisitiveness. Robert "King" Carter, one of colonial Virginia's wealthiest planters, revealed the importance of individual profit when he suggested that he would have "lived at a very little purpose if I cannot get as much for my tobacco as other men" (Hudgins 1990:68). English immigrants to Virginia were often "drawn by a commitment to their own advancement and a belief that land, labor, and tobacco opened the way to wealth" (Billings et al. 1986:53).

In this respect, Chesapeake planters' cultural orientations can be characterized as capitalistic. Definitions of *capitalism* are famous for their variability, with much debate about the distinctive features of capitalism and about whether an economy dependent on the labor of enslaved people, rather than wage laborers, can aptly be characterized as "capitalistic" (e.g., D. Bell 2002:129; Marx 1990: 151–152; Robinson 2004; Sanderson 1995:138–139). In this

debate, Immanuel Wallerstein's position on capitalism is useful both because of the centrality it grants to the profit motive—a point on which most thinkers agree—and because of its applicability to the colonial societies under discussion. Following Wallerstein (2004:23–24), *capitalism* is here understood as a set of socioeconomic strategies, or "cultures of livelihood-making" (Herzfeld 2001:113), that sublimate social obligation to individual autonomy and the pursuit of private profit (cf. Marx 1990:254). In this light, capitalism and slavery are compatible. The "capitalist world-economy is built on the endless accumulation of capital. One of the prime mechanisms that makes this possible is the commodification of everything"—including human beings as "labor" (Wallerstein 1988:5; cf. Sanderson 1995:140). Agents employing capitalistic socioeconomic strategies generally act to increase private profit rather than to acknowledge social obligations (Glassie 2000:28–29; Johnson 1996:7–10). Because exchanging goods and labor informally within community networks can compromise efficiency and profit, individuals often withdraw from webs of economic interdependence (Larkin 1988:1–61).

In some ways, Chesapeake colonists exhibited capitalist strategies, as in the example of planters like "King" Carter. These freeholders used their property for personal rather than for the community's benefit. On closer inspection, however, other aspects of colonial Chesapeake planters' behavior appear to have been informed by alternate sets of values, as they used a variety of reciprocal means to remain interconnected socially and economically. The coexistence of these strategies emerges clearly in patterns of land use and exchange.

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS IN LATE MEDIEVAL ENGLAND AND COLONIAL ANGLO VIRGINIA

Coming from a variety of backgrounds and regions, English immigrants to the Chesapeake were familiar with a range of settlement patterns including hamlets, single farmsteads, and nucleated villages with surrounding open fields (Hoskins 1955). Nucleated villages containing between 12 and 50 households were especially common. Residents of these nucleated villages vested land management in members of the village and adhered to interhousehold decisions, "which governed rotations, the limits on the numbers of animals, and the times of planting and fencing of grazing land" (Dyer 1997:144). Even in places where nucleated villages did not prevail, a degree of collectivity generally remained in the sharing of pastures and regulations of grazing (Dyer 1997:146).

Expectations of communal activity were changing during England's colonization of Virginia in the 17th century. Many people were "improving" agricultural land by ditching, draining, irrigating, and, above all, enclosing it. From a legal perspective, enclosure entailed the end to common land rights; in practice, it involved fencing and hedging tracts for private use; and economically, it signaled a family's intention to conduct its activities independent of the community's influence (Appleby 1978:58). Whatever views particular people held about the injustice or even sinfulness of enclosure, "All were agreed that private farming yielded more than farming in common" (Appleby 1978:60). Facilitating the accumulation of private wealth, enclosure disentangled individuals from webs of community obligation (Glassie 2000:105; Johnson 1993:165–170). The "persistent consciousness of a common fate faded" when separate farms were established and decisions about land use passed from members of a village to members of a family (Appleby 1978:59).

The institution of separate farms took hold early and firmly in the colonial Chesapeake. Despite economic incentives, few towns emerged in Virginia and settlements remained "much more diffuse than in New England" or England (Walsh 1988:202; cf. Horn 1994:139). Planters scattered widely to claim the maximum amount of land on which to grow tobacco, the region's soil-depleting cash crop, and often located their homes in the center of their properties to ease "a planter's daily movement back and forth across his several tobacco fields" (Kelly 1979:202). Separate farms maximized agricultural efficiency and profitability for individual householders.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EXCHANGE IN THE CHESAPEAKE

If capitalistic ideals informed colonial landowners' preference for separate farms, the logic supporting other customs—visiting neighbors and employing earthfast building methods—appears to have emanated from other strategies that integrated families in community networks. Colonial Chesapeake planters were famous for the amount of time they spent in one another's houses (Isaac 1982:70–72). A 17th-century visitor to the region claimed, "People spend most of their time visiting each other.... When a man has fifty acres of ground, two men-servants, a maid and some cattle, neither he nor his wife do anything but visit among their neighbors" (Walsh 1988:233). In the 18th century, George Washington likewise recalled that "for twenty years his family never once dined alone" (Talpalar 1960:229). Visiting involved the exchange of time, goods, and labor: "Neighboring families relied heavily on each other for aid in their work, for borrowing back and forth when supplies ran low or the proper tools were lacking, and simply for conversation or sharing important personal and family events" (Walsh 1988:206). These exchanges obligated freeholders to each other in ways seemingly at odds with the desire for distance expressed by their decision to farm independently.

The coexistence of independent and integrative strategies appears clearly in domestic architecture. Archaeological investigation of colonial sites in the Chesapeake has shown the near universality of earthfast architecture (Carson et al. 1981; Deetz 1993; Deetz 2001). In earthfast or post-in-the-ground structures, builders placed main structural posts directly into the soil rather than onto

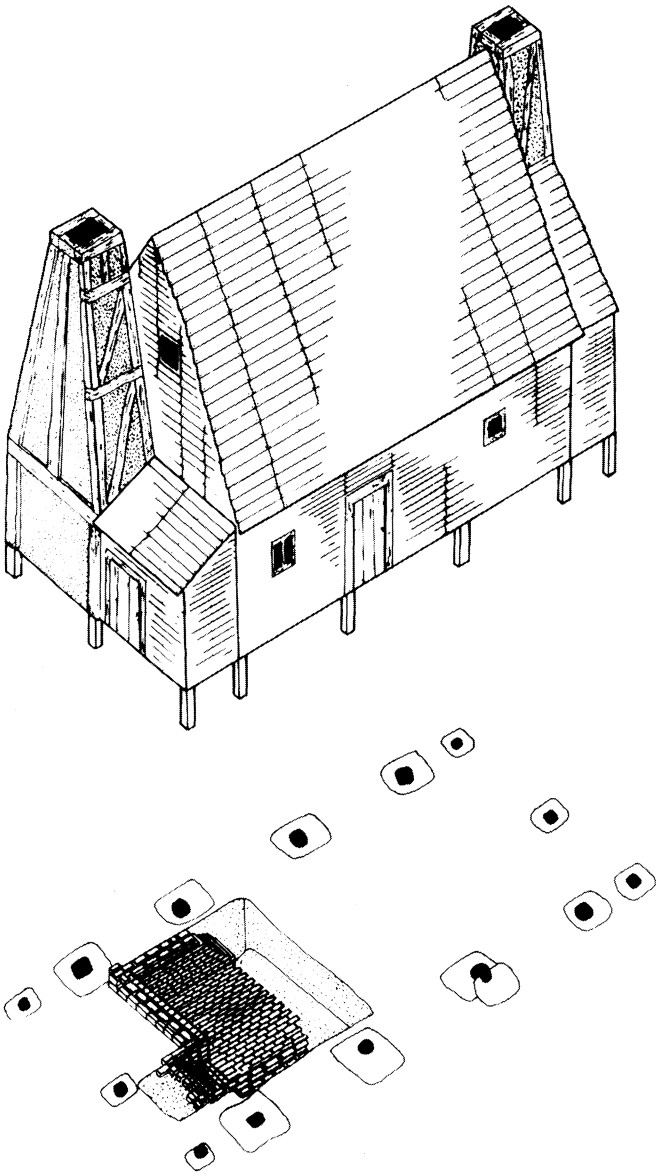

FIGURE 1. Earthfast house (Kelso 1984:75). Reprinted with permission.

foundations (see Figure 1). In the Chesapeake the wooden character of these buildings extended from the frame to the covering: most colonial houses had wooden clapboards, shingles, and chimneys (Wells 1993).

Earthfast architecture, a "quick and dirty technique" of raising a house, reduced initial construction costs (Upton 1998:152), but even prosperous planters often built, occupied, and maintained such houses (Kelso 1984:76; Neiman 1986:299–300). The utility of earthfast architecture for people of diverse means makes sense from a capitalist perspective, because reducing housing costs facilitated investment in more directly profitable enterprises. Specifically, in the colonial Chesapeake, these enterprises centered on the cultivation of tobacco (Carson et al. 1981).

Earthfast dwellings required frequent maintenance, however, because in the humid Chesapeake hole-set posts would rot in roughly a decade (Billings et al. 1986:127). House repair generally fell to local planters who were also part-time craftsmen (Kelly 1979:203). Even large slaveholders often looked to free craftsmen for building construction and upkeep (Russo 1988:414–427). In this need for recurrent maintenance, earthfast architecture obligated householders to others (St. George 1983). Many researchers infer that architectural features such as wooden posts were "'designed to fail' for social reasons": to generate contexts for exchange (St. George 1983:6; cf. Deetz 1996:147–149; Shackel 1998). The temporal and spatial associations of earthfast housing with complex, multifaceted social relationships suggest that this architecture is an archaeologically visible manifestation of a social construct in which mutual dependence and interaction were givens. Planters apparently built these houses, in part, because relying on other free people to help maintain them was not only feasible but also desirable.

Earthfast housing therefore exhibits the influence of diverse socioeconomic strategies. In permitting resources to be diverted from housing to agricultural production, it expresses a commitment to profit, just as the establishment of separate farms suggests the value of economic autonomy. However, earthfast architecture, as well as the custom of visiting neighbors, implies the existence of exchange and involvement among free community members.

THE USE OF DOMESTIC SPACE

Other salient trends in colonial Virginia architecture also suggest the coexistence of integrative and capitalistic orientations. A preferred house plan, the hall-parlor dwelling, occupied a position both temporally and socially between through-passage and central-passage houses. The earlier through-passage house integrated the resident family, laborers, and visitors. The later central-passage house sequestered the family from laborers and visitors alike. The hall-parlor form was intermediate in its incorporation of visitors but its distancing of laborers from the resident family.

In early modern England and the early colonial Chesapeake, multiroom houses often had through-passage plans. Archaeologically documented examples in Virginia include the circa-1675 manor house at the Clifts Plantation in Westmoreland County (Neiman 1986:297) and the early-17th-century "stone foundation house" at Flowerdew Hundred in Prince George County (Carson et al. 1981:182). In England, through-passage houses were "everywhere the commonest form in houses of more than one cell. In most of the country it was universal" (Mercer 1975:50).

The through passage was a corridor running perpendicular to the dwelling's long axis, with doorways opening onto both facades of the house (see Figure 2). This passage communicated on one side with the hall and on the other with a service space, often a pantry (Mercer 1975:231). In these houses, the hall and through passage worked centripetally, drawing laborers, visitors, and householders together (Johnson 1993:56). Through passages provided the primary and sometimes exclusive access to a dwelling. Hands returning from the fields or emerging from the

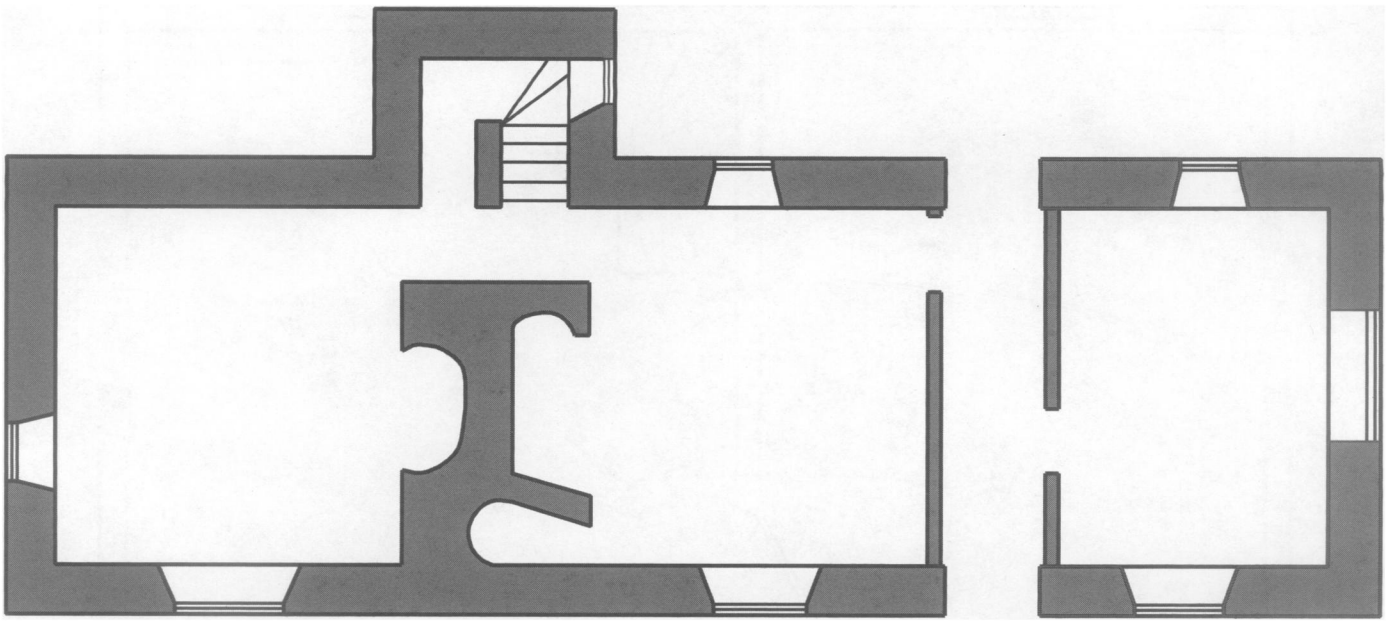

FIGURE 2. Through-passage house (after Mercer 1975:52). From left to right, the rooms are a parlor, hall, through passage, and service space. Drawing by Derek Wheeler.

pantry, the householder exiting on an errand, and neighbors paying a visit all entered the house and made their ways to the hall via the through passage. The hall constituted a place where "all the household gathered and where many and multifarious activities went on" (Mercer 1975:19). Typically, family members could only reach the parlor by passing through this common area. This arrangement

> was of little consequence whilst old relationships lingered, that is, while many of the workers employed were themselves of much the same status as the owner, were farmers, sons waiting to take over their fathers' lands, and likely to marry their masters' daughters. [Mercer 1975:61]

Through-passage houses supported the density and intimacy of relationships among members of a householder's family and laborers in early modern England.

During the 17th century, the through passage was losing popularity in England and its Chesapeake colonies. In England, functions long housed in pantries off the through passage were increasingly relegated to outshuts, rooms attached to the rear of houses. By the 18th century, servants often occupied separate "cottages" (Mercer 1975:70–74). Manor houses now exhibited centrifugal tendencies, with laborers working and sleeping in spaces distinct from those of the householder's families (Johnson 1993:119). This architectural transformation reflects "the long process of the exclusion of farmhands from the family's life" (Upton 1982:50). Housing responded to and helped form a world in which the two bore a diminishing sense of social connection (Neiman 1993:253).

The separation of family and labor materialized in the colonial Chesapeake as hall-parlor houses within plantation contexts that contained separate laborers' dwellings along with outbuildings such as barns and detached kitchens. Among the great majority of the colonial Chesapeake population, one- and two-room houses were nearly universal (Herman 1997:18–37; Upton 1983:268–269). A structure with two unequally sized principal rooms, the hall-parlor dwelling (see Figure 3) was so regionally common that many contemporaries referred to it as a "Virginia house" (Upton 1986:318). The larger room was the hall: a multipurpose living space generally square in plan, heated by a fireplace, and communicating with the exterior (Glassie 1975:120–122). The parlor was a smaller, less heavily trafficked room. It was usually rectangular in plan and often communicated only with the hall, an arrangement making it a more private space (Deetz 1996:152–164).

Because hall-parlor dwellings were so small, activities requisite to maintaining the household were suffused throughout a miscellany of outbuildings (Wells 1993). In the Chesapeake, hall-parlor houses functioned as parts of dispersed architectural landscapes that included laborers' quarters, barns, and detached kitchens. A late-17th-century visitor described planters' architectural customs:

> Whatever their rank, and I know not why, they build only two rooms with some closets on the ground floor . . . but they build several like this, according to their means. They build also a separate kitchen, a separate house for the Christian slaves, one for the Negro slaves, and several to dry the tobacco. [Epperson 2001:55]

Hall-parlor houses and the proliferation of plantation outbuildings were key features in a project of social redefinition. Although some early-17th-century Chesapeake planters had housed laborers in buildings separate from the main dwelling (Mouer et al. 1999:108), many others had lived with their servants (Neiman 1993:254–261;

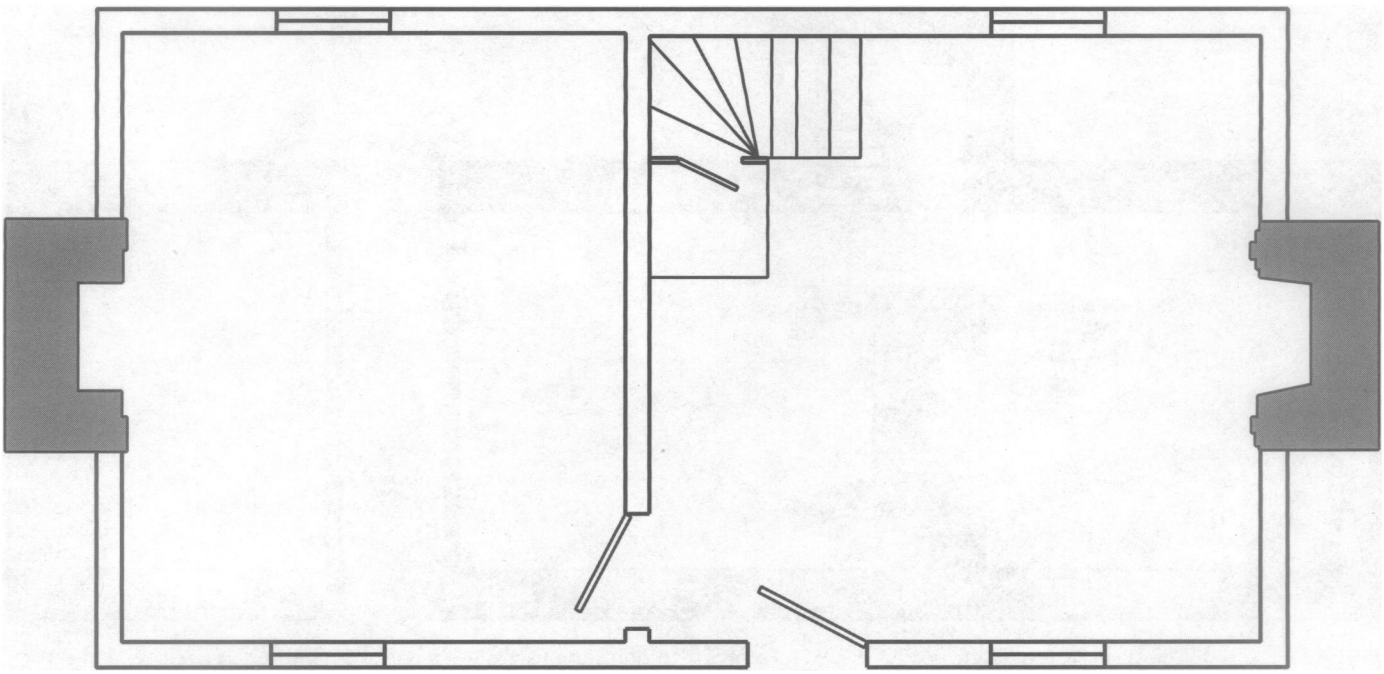

FIGURE 3. Hall-parlor house (after Glassie 1975:77). The parlor is on the left; the hall is on the right. Drawing by Derek Wheeler.

Upton 1982:47–48). By claiming hall-parlor manor houses as private domains and assigning laborers—white "Christian" or "Negro" slaves—to separate spaces, planters made an "audacious assertion of a new relationship" (Upton 1982:53). In an act of social extrication, landowners physically distanced themselves from those who worked their plantations (Deetz 1996:147–152). This architectural development reflects a move toward the commodification of human beings and the reification of laborers as "labor."

Even as hall-parlor manor houses served to create distance between householders and workers, the dwellings nevertheless maintained an open floor plan easily accessible to visitors. In the Chesapeake, beginning in the last quarter of the 17th century, entry was usually directly into a hall rather than a lobby or baffle entry, as was common in New England (Cummings 1979:6–7). Climatic differences between the two regions make sense with this architectural variation: lobby entries in northerly New England insulated the hall, and open forms in Virginia facilitated the circulation of cooling air. These environmental differences can easily be overstated, however, and overly simplified (Baron 1992:77–78). Colonial observers variously commented on the heat of Massachusetts and the chill of Virginia, considering the summers of Massachusetts deadly and "extreme cold" of the Chesapeake winter unhealthy (Kupperman 1984:223–235). New England winters and Chesapeake summers are insufficient in themselves to account for architectural differences between the two region's predominant dwelling plans.

Social considerations also influenced colonial Chesapeake property holders' decisions to build easily accessible hall-parlor houses as part of diffuse architectural ensembles. These dwellings minimized the presence of workers in the hall but maximized the ease of entry for peers (cf. Glassie 1975; Mercer 1975:59). Along with separate laborer's quarters, hall-parlor houses constituted mechanisms both of integration and alienation: promoting interaction among peers but encouraging distance between owners and laborers.

Architectural forms allowing householders greater privacy from visitors existed in the Anglo-American architectural repertoire, not only in the form of the lobby entry but also in the central-passage house. A central passage was a corridor running perpendicular to the long axis of a house (see Figure 4). It included the dwelling's front door, but rather than separating a hall from service rooms as the through passage had, the central passage divided two living spaces (Glassie 1975; Upton 1986:317). The central passage provided householders a significant amount of privacy (Brunskill 1981:43). It permitted access to the parlor without recourse to the hall and acted as a buffer between the entry and the living spaces on either side (Pogue 2001). Architectural historians infer that the central passage helped "to declare and maintain the social boundaries that separated the planter from his neighbors" (Wenger 1986:139). If the abandonment of the through passage and movement of laborers to separate buildings indicated growing distance between house owners and workers, the adoption of central passages suggests an increasing social distance among peers.

During the 18th century, central-passage houses existed in England and its colonies (Chappell and Richter 1997), but hall-parlor houses remained popular in Virginia (A. Bell 2002). Their resilience seems largely attributable to their utility in integrating householders into wider networks of

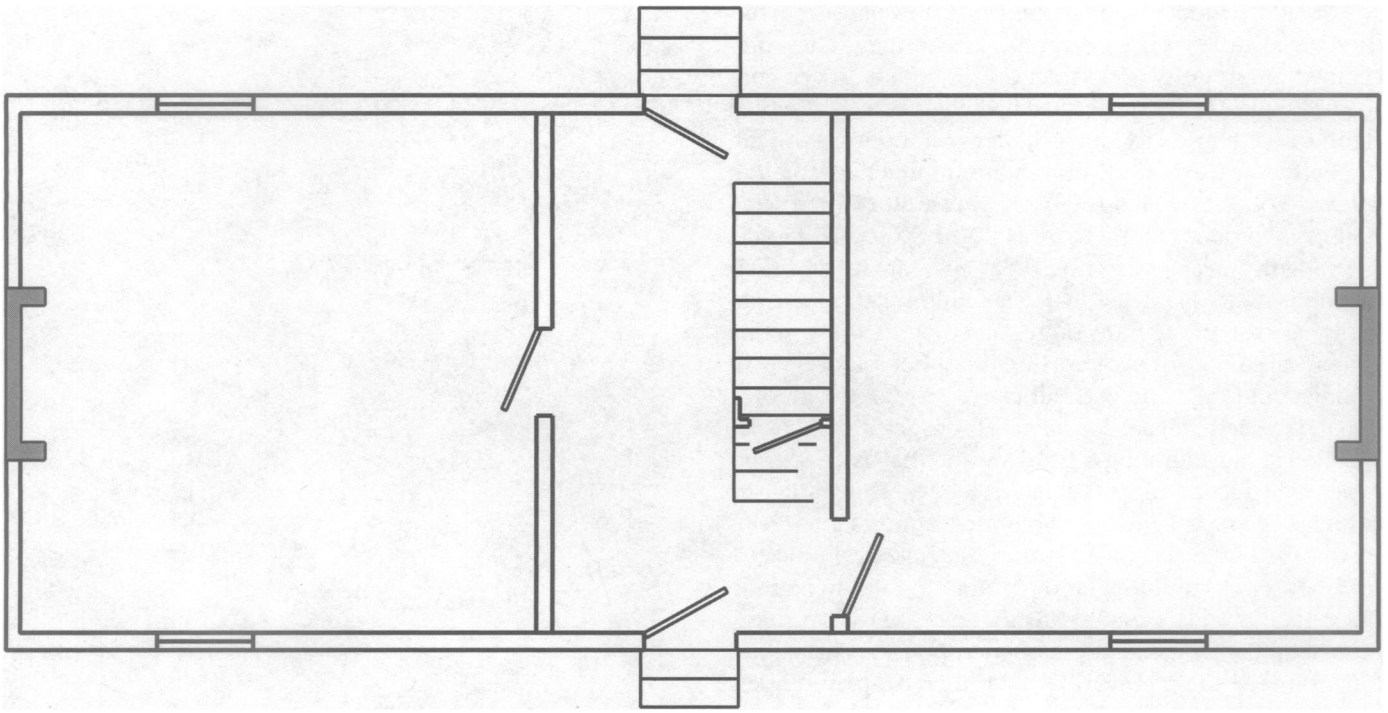

FIGURE 4. Central-passage house (after Glassie 1975:99). Drawing by Derek Wheeler.

associations through visiting. When more private options existed, continuing to build and occupy hall-parlor houses can be interpreted as an effort to maintain social ties. Hall-parlor houses—like earthfast construction, separate farms, diffuse plantation landscapes, and customs of visiting—depict colonial Chesapeake landowners as drawing, in part, on capitalistic socioeconomic strategies and, in part, on more socially integrative modes of interaction.

ARCHITECTURE AND ETHNOGENESIS

This pastiche of strategies gains coherence when considered in the context of contemporaneous processes of ethnogenesis. Plantation architecture apparently had great utility in helping to craft a sense of sameness among European Americans and of difference from "others." The virtually ubiquitous hall-parlor dwellings, set within ensembles of outbuildings, reduced laborers' presence in the manor house—a distancing that enforced perceptions of distinction between householders and workers (Epperson 1999:56). Domestic segregation that had begun in England with the decline of the through-passage plan served, in Virginia, to bolster perceptions of racial difference (Upton 1982:54; cf. Wallerstein 1988). In addition to displacing laborers, especially enslaved people of color, from manor houses, planters also regularly assigned them to quarters visually similar and spatially proximal to agricultural outbuildings. This move conflated the labor and residences of enslaved people with barns and sheds that housed livestock, crops, and tools. The association encouraged a view of African Americans and other nonwhites as literally and socially occupying a "territory between man and animal" (Morrison 1993:71). In this and other ways, processes of racial definition transpired in large measure at the household level (cf. Wilkie 2001:111). The transfer of laborers from manor house to quarters, repeated continuously across the Chesapeake, made the point in both a personal and a political way that people of African and Native American descent were to be conceptualized as fundamentally different from Euro-Americans: nonwhites as less than human and whites as simply human (cf. Fusco 1993:37).

In addition to promoting a sense of ethnic difference, domestic architecture also likely worked to encourage an impression of similarity among European Americans. Many well-to-do colonial Virginians could have built houses on foundations with little need for regular maintenance. Their opting for earthfast architecture, however, enabled them to remain in exchange networks with local artisan–planters; they "had" to call on these free neighbors to maintain their earthfast dwellings (St. George 1983). The institution of visiting among Chesapeake planter families also fostered a sense of "groupness." Time spent at each other's houses constituted a form of gift exchange, and "a gift that does nothing to enhance solidarity is a contradiction" (Douglas 1990:vii). Visiting represented a significant investment of energy, the return on which was the formation and strengthening of coalitions among white Virginians. Euro-Virginians' favoring of hall-parlor plans facilitated this process of social integration. In Massachusetts, hall-parlor dwellings generally contained lobby-entries that compartmentalized callers; Chesapeake hall-parlor houses, however, regularly lacked such barriers, and visitors moved directly into the hall—the "heart and hub of the house" (Deetz 1996; Mercer 1975:59).

Small, earthfast wooden houses likely had even further social utility for Chesapeake landowners: They proclaimed group unity and sameness through a lack of conspicuous display. Historical archaeologists have devoted significant attention to conspicuous consumption—the culturally defined excessive, visible, nonproductive expenditure of resources (Veblen 1994). They have often interpreted houses incorporating brick, or exhibiting a stylish façade, as residents' means of setting themselves apart from their neighbors (e.g., Markell 1994). This interpretation sits uneasily against the architectural landscape of the colonial Chesapeake's one- or two-room earthfast houses, often with wooden chimneys and without plaster or glazed windows. Usually the first order of conspicuous consumption is avoiding "vulgar surroundings, [and] mean (that is to say, inexpensive) habitations" (Veblen 1994:24). Houses in the colonial Chesapeake likely functioned not as status items in competitive displays but rather as "collective objects": material forms exhibiting and maintaining ties to a group (Riggins 1994:111). Despite real differences in wealth, many Euro-Virginians built modest wooden houses. This choice foregrounded their similarities and, thereby, played a key part in creating a sense of likeness among their occupants (Bell 2000:565–566).

Domestic architecture, thus, aided in creating and stabilizing a social structure under construction in early Anglo Virginia (cf. Douglas and Isherwood 1979:59). Houses can be understood as an arena in which Euro-Virginians demonstrated that, for them, race trumped class: that all "white" people were at least somewhat alike and different altogether from "blacks" and "others." In the colonial Chesapeake, small wooden dwellings composed an important part of the "armature of domination" (Wolf 2001:357).

The various strands in this reading of Virginia's social past come together at and are effectively illustrated by an early-18th-century archaeological site at Flowerdew Hundred, in Prince George County. This Chesapeake site exhibits salient characteristics of colonial Virginia architecture and social patterning, including the complex suite of capitalistic and integrative strategies that many planters used. Artifacts the site yielded, particularly handmade ceramics, also suggest the multiethnic social milieu in which planters appear to have weighed the benefits of economic autonomy against the benefits of white solidarity.

FLOWERDEW HUNDRED

Flowerdew Hundred, a 1,000-acre plantation on the James River in Prince George County, Virginia (see Figure 5), contains dozens of sites that range in date from the Archaic through the 20th century (Deetz 1993). The domestic site of interest here, 44PG98 Feature 35 (see Figure 6), consisted of post holes and post molds, two cellar holes, and the remains of a hearth (Deetz 1993:106–107; Franklin and Bell 1995). Analysis of artifacts excavated from these contexts (Bell 2003) confirms that the site saw its most intensive occupation during the first half of the 18th century (Deetz 1993:108).

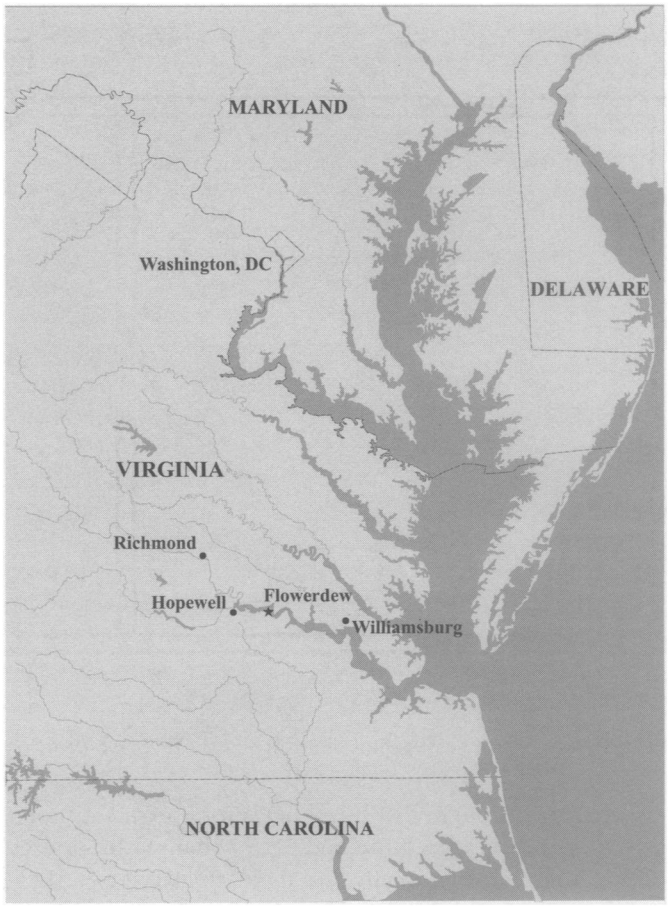

FIGURE 5. Location of Flowerdew Hundred. Map by Derek Wheeler.

The structure was a 30-by-16-foot earthfast building with eight main structural posts on ten-foot centers. The dwelling's long axis ran east–west, its eastern gable end facing the James River. Two posts immediately outside the eastern end of the building's southern wall suggested an entry. A pair of posts on the western end of the building marked a bulkhead entrance to a wood-lined cellar. On the east, a smaller cellar abutted a brick hearth base and wooden chimney. Planking must have covered these cellar holes that, given their size, would have spanned much of the space on the dwelling's principal floor. For this reason, and because the western cellar itself had a wooden floor that survived archaeologically, the entire dwelling likely had a wooden floor. Excavators also found interior wall plaster and leads from casement windows (Deetz 1993:108–109).

The dwelling's architectural flourishes—its interior plaster, bricked hearth, wooden floor, and glazed windows—mark it as above average in the context of the early-18th-century Chesapeake (Horn 1994:302). Although the great majority of houses in the region were one- or two-room earthfast structures with wooden chimneys like Feature 35, most dwellings had dirt rather than wooden

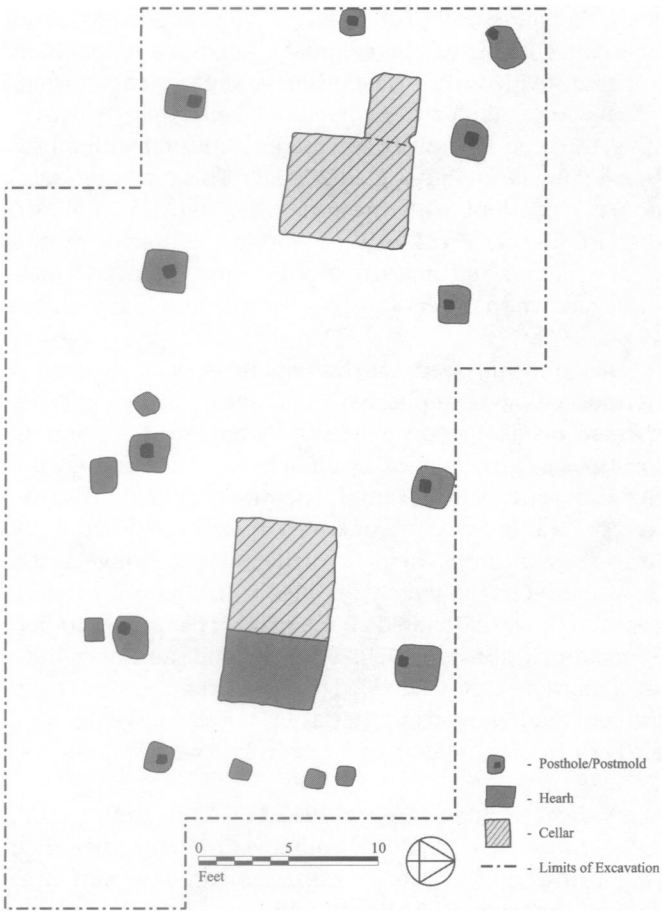

FIGURE 6. Plan of 44PG98, Feature 35 at Flowerdew Hundred. Drawing by Derek Wheeler.

floors, wooden shutters or oiled paper rather than glazed windows, and plasterless interior walls (Neiman 1986:297; Wells 1993:5). Its refinements indicate that, at least at some point in its use life, this dwelling was a manor house and not laborers' quarters.

Documentary sources identify the property's owners as members of the interrelated Limbrey and Wilkins families (Gregory and McClenny n.d.:1–4) and indicate that this dwelling was the seat of a 350-acre plantation (Deetz 1993:102), a holding of medium size in the early-18th-century Chesapeake (Carson et al. 1981:170). The Limbreys and Wilkinses occupied economic positions below the gentry but above many free Virginians, and certainly above thousands of bound laborers in the Chesapeake. Because the Feature 35 dwelling was the center of a separate farm, its owners could independently make decisions about land use. Documents also indicate that their property was part of a patchwork of parcels owned by members of an extended kin network (Beaudry n.d.). At Flowerdew, much of the "ownership history is a complex web of family relationships, and the majority of the property transfers followed kinship lines" (Deetz 1993:60).

Both negative and positive evidence indicate that the Feature 35 dwelling had a hall-parlor plan. Its archaeological footprint is inconsistent with characteristics of a through-passage dwelling. None of the main options for chimney placement in a through-passage house position it on an exterior wall, the location of the chimney in the Feature 35 house. Neither does this house exhibit characteristics of central-passage or lobby-entry structures. Its doorway was on the eastern end of the southern façade, meaning that the door could not have opened into a central passage bisecting rooms on either side. Likewise the door did not abut a centrally positioned chimney, as would be the case with a lobby-entry house. The asymmetricality of Feature 35's plan supports the inference that it was a hall-parlor house. The eastern end containing the exterior doorway and hearth was the hall, whereas the western room was a more private parlor.

The two-room plan and small size of the Feature 35 manor house imply that many of the functions needed to maintain the household took place in a variety of outbuildings. The area around Feature 35 is littered with the remains of other architectural and ancillary features. Some of these features postdate the earthfast dwelling, and others are contemporary with it (Deetz 1993:104–106). These include a 2.5-foot-square pit located approximately 35 feet northwest of the earthfast dwelling and filled during the third quarter of the 18th century (Bell 1994). Although archaeological testing of this area was too limited to confirm the pit's function, its size and contents—including straight pins, buttons, marbles, and ceramics—are typical of subfloor pits found in laborers' houses throughout the Chesapeake (Kelso 1984). Feature 35 undoubtedly resembled the vast majority of its contemporaries and successors by comprising part of an ensemble of plantation buildings.

This site illustrates early-18th-century Chesapeake patterns in additional ways, demonstrating the complexity of socioeconomic strategies its owners employed. First, architectural amenities such as plaster and wood flooring reveal that its residents were well-to-do but nevertheless chose to build an expedient earthfast dwelling. On the one hand, this decision reflects an interest in profit maximization seemingly consistent with capitalistic orientations, as reducing the initial outlay for house construction permitted investment in income-generating ventures. On the other hand, this architecture reveals a communal orientation in its need for regular maintenance, usually provided by free craftsmen–planters (Carr 1988:350–351). Second, the settlement pattern at Flowerdew Hundred reveals the influence of both capitalistic and communal ideals. The owners' decision to establish a separate farm suggests leanings toward familial separateness; yet, at the same time, they were integrated through kinship ties to households throughout the local area. Finally, the hall-parlor plan of Feature 35 eased visitors' entry to the dwelling and, thus, facilitated family members' connections with their social peers, but it also reduced the presence of laborers in the manor house.

This at least is the narrative that analysis of domestic architecture and settlement patterns suggests. Other

artifacts recovered at Feature 35, however, complicate this interpretation. Specifically, handmade ceramics suggest a greater degree of contact between house owners and laborers, and among people of different ethnicities, than the planters' hall-parlor house indicates. The presence of these ceramics in a manor house reveals that the hall parlor in the colonial Chesapeake was to some extent an expression of desire rather than a reflection of accomplished reality (Mullins 1999).

ETHNIC IDENTITIES AND MATERIAL CULTURE

Fill from the cellars at Feature 35 yielded a total of 288 ceramic sherds, including English and German types such as tin-glazed earthenware, Westerwald, and Staffordshire slipware (Bell 2003). Most sherds, however (n = 197 or 68 percent), were low-fired, unglazed, handmade earthenwares (see Figure 7). Many exhibit treatments such as cord marking and net impressions consistent with local Native American ceramic traditions (Egloff and Potter 1982). Other sherds have characteristics such as everted rims and burnishing that would lead many scholars to characterize them as *colonoware*: a hand-built, "low-fired, unglazed, smooth-surfaced earthenware with quasi-European vessel forms," and with features such as flat bases and handles (Henry 1992:1).

Much research has focused on identifying the ethnicity of colonoware's makers and users. Ivor Noël Hume (1962:4–5) initially surmised that colonoware "was manufactured by local Indians who were exposed to European influences" for use by enslaved Africans. Innumerable archaeologists have since joined the discussion about colonoware. Some favor the hypothesis that Native Americans were colonoware's primary producers (Henry 1992; Mouer et al. 1999; cf. Ferguson 1992). Others assert that the ware's creators were more likely African Americans (Deetz 1993; cf. Emerson 1999; Singleton 1999:10). Still other researchers maintain that conceptualizing the colonial Chesapeake population as being divided into three ethnic compartments misrepresents the complexity of its social landscape (Epperson 1999:160) and spuriously "segments a culturally plural society" (Singleton and Bograd 2000:8). This last interpretation is consistent with the understanding, noted above, that in the early colonial Chesapeake ethnic identities were nebulous and that the social status of African Americans relative to others was largely "indeterminate" (Allen 1994:178).

Relationships between Native and African Americans were often so complicated that some contemporaries claimed no distinction existed between the two. Hoping to dispossess the Pamunkey Indians of their land during the 19th century, for example, petitioners argued that the territory was reserved for American Indians but occupied by African Americans: "The claim of the Indian no longer exists . . . his blood has so largely mingled with that of the negro race as to have obliterated all the striking features of Indian extraction" (Johnston 1970:276–277). The Pamunkey Indians' counterclaim acknowledged "that there was a Negro element among them but they assert[ed] that all of the tribe are persons of more than one-half Indian blood" (Johnston 1970:277).

Several scholars (Henry 1992:151–156; Mouer et al. 1999:85–86) have identified colonoware sherds unearthed in a 19th-century trash pit on Pamunkey Reservation as compelling evidence that Native Americans created the pottery. However, the apparently complex heritage of many Pamunkey Indians suggests that we should view the pottery as having deeply interethnic roots. Colonoware represents "a process of interaction" (Singleton and Bograd 2000:6), a "synergistic development" emerging from the interaction of African, Anglo, and Native Americans (Joseph 2002:220). The wares point to connections among people of different

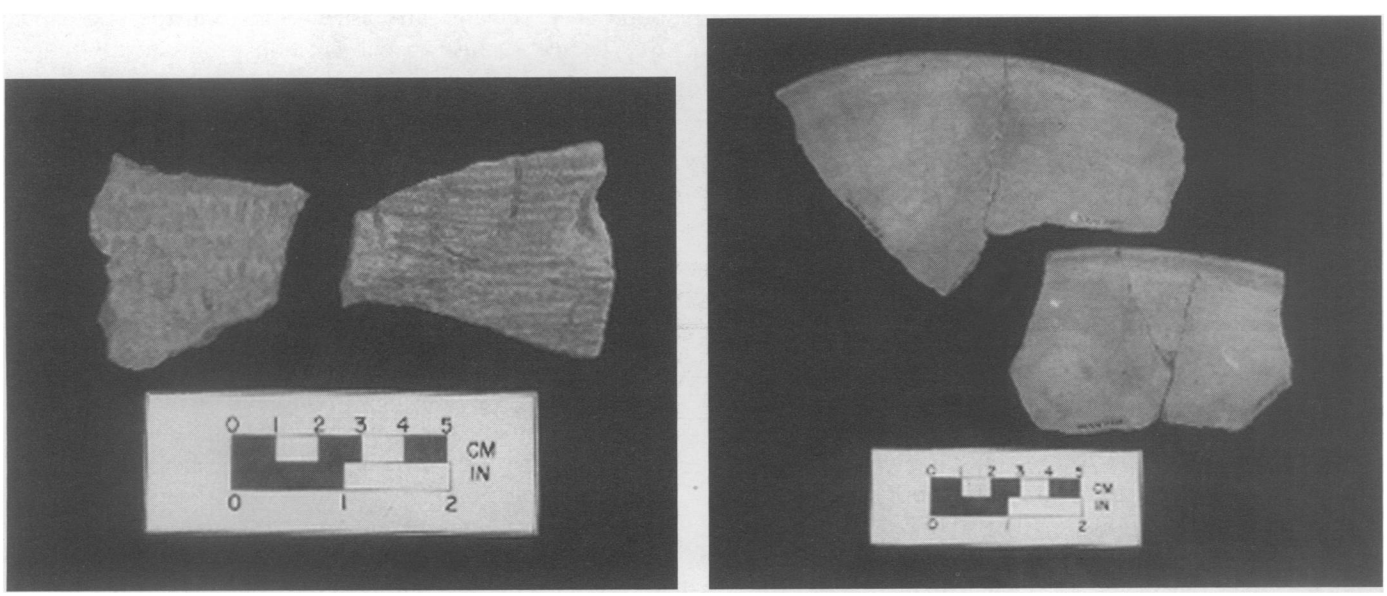

FIGURE 7. Colonoware sherds from 44PG98 Feature 35. Photographs by the author.

backgrounds and provide "testaments to cultural hybridity" (Paynter 2001:132).

Indications of multiethnic interaction at Flowerdew's Feature 35 are particularly significant in light of the architectural choices its owners made. Although the hall-parlor floor plan can be interpreted as a reflection of distance between house residents and their laborers, the ceramics suggest continuing interaction among people holding varied social and ethnic identities. The choice of a hall-parlor dwelling is particularly "audacious" (Upton 1982), as it implies a separation of property owners and laborers that ceramics reveal to be a fabrication, more of a desired arrangement than a reality (cf. Mullins 1999:28). The combination of colonoware ceramics and a hall-parlor house documents a project of social redefinition—a social context in which racial categories now entrenched lacked coherence and consensus (Leone 1999:9). The Flowerdew site shows perception of racial distinction as being "in contest rather than 'there,' and becoming rather than complete" (Wobst 2000:47).

CONCLUSION

Judging from the material traces of colonial enterprise in the Chesapeake, Anglo-Americans possessed knowledge of a variety of socioeconomic strategies and deployed them in discriminating and complex ways. Most landowners who were socially defined as "white" preferred separate farms and focused their resources on potentially profitable tobacco crops, patterns consistent with capitalistic values of private acquisition. Their extrication from the community, however, was only partial. Planters worked through reciprocal visiting, building high-maintenance houses, and occupying dwellings that eased entry to remain socially integrated with other "white" people. This coalition building was key to forging a sense of "groupness" among whites and of difference from African and Native Americans. Thus, the formation of racism slowed the development of capitalism in the colonial Chesapeake.

Planters' awareness of nonwhite others was central to the conceptualization of "white people" as an ethnic reality. Forms of material culture that Euro-Virginians used in this project, including hall-parlor houses, inherently acknowledged the presence of African and Native Americans. In a metaphorical sense, planters' houses are like retaining walls: forms best understood by appreciating the forces to which they were constructed in opposition (cf. Hall 2000:19–20). Although working within the field of U.S. literature, Toni Morrison's observations about race are also pertinent to architecture within the slave society of the colonial Chesapeake:

> Even, and especially, when American texts are not "about" Africanist presences or characters or narrative or idiom, the shadow hovers in implication, in sign, in line of demarcation. [1993:46–47]

Even—and, perhaps, especially—when colonial Chesapeake material culture was owned, used, and—in the case of houses—occupied by white people, it remains in a sense "about" African Americans. In this society of slavery, "All public discourse refers to black people, if only through omission" (Morrison 1993:65).

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NOTE

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