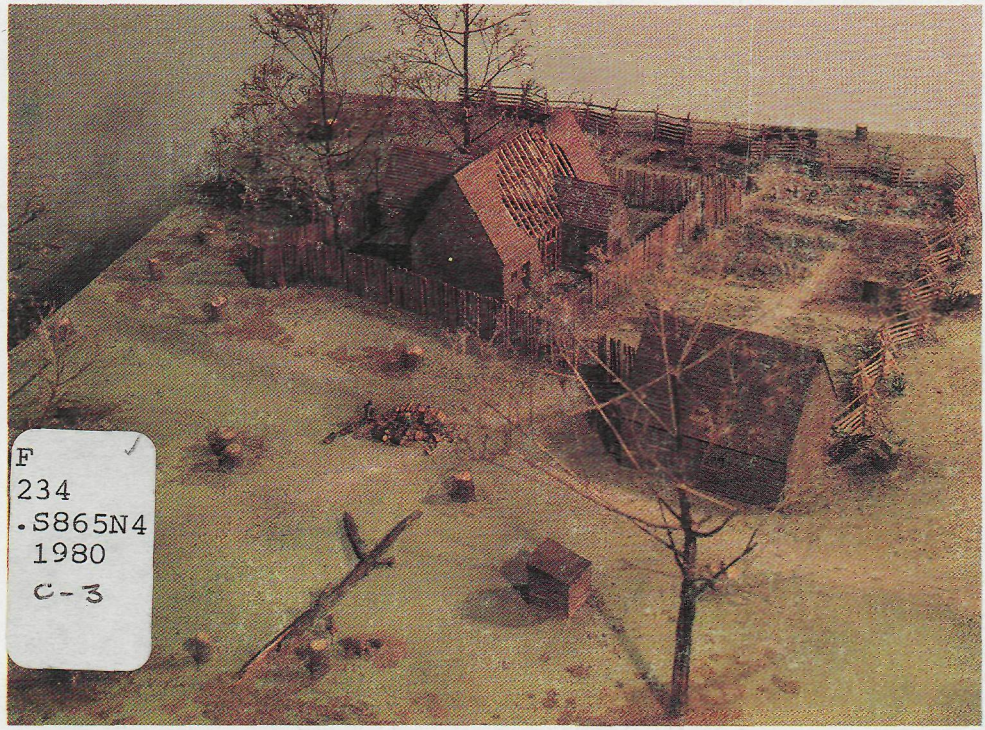
The "Manner House" Before Stratford

(Discovering The Clifts Plantation)



The "Manner House" Before Stratford

(Discovering The Clifts Plantation)

by Frazer D. Neiman
Alonzo T. Dill, editor

A Stratford Handbook
Stratford, Virginia
1980

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Colonial Williamsburg Foundation: Figure 34, Figure 36.

The Cover

The Clifts Plantation as it appeared circa *1675.* Model by Edward Plumstead.

Contents

Foreword

This small book tells a fascinating story of men and women whose names we may never know. More than three hundred years ago they came to the land on which Stratford now stands, and began a struggle to build a home in a strange new world.

Scattered beneath the 1600 acres of the plantation owned by the Robert E. Lee Memorial Association Inc. ties a treasure of information about the past. From the beginning of Stratford's restoration, it has been the hope of the Directors to conduct a thorough archaeological investigation of this hidden history. In Bicentennial 1976 the Lilly Endowment, Inc. of Indianapolis, Indiana generously provided a three-year grant for archaeological study, and a long-cherished aspiration became a reality.

Under the guidance of Dr. William M. Kelso, Commissioner of Archaeology at the Virginia Research Center for Archaeology, Mr. Fraser Neiman was named head of the project. Mr. Neiman, assisted by Miss Janet Long and Miss Elizabeth Barber, first surveyed the entire plantation, testing for the archaeological remains of past human activity. At the end of the first season's work, it seemed more productive to mount a full-scale excavation in a section of Mill Field. A dwelling complex there had long been indicated by artifacts turned up by the plow and by previous test excavations undertaken by Mr. J. Paul Hudson of the National Park Service.

During two very hot summers, Mr. Neiman and a group of a dozen young archaeologists laboriously removed the soil from an area of approximately one acre and set about deciphering the mysterious calligraphy of the subsoil. The seventeenth century came to life before their eyes as house, barn, servants' quarters, smokehouses and fence lines revealed themselves.

Thousands of artifacts were found and identified. These varied remnants of a vanished life made it possible for the archaeologists to date the period of habitation from 1670 to 1730, and to document the growth of the plantation as its occupants adapted to the new environment. Much was learned about the evolution of domestic architecture in the Chesapeake region from changes in the original house and its outbuildings. This book recounts the absorbing tale of a life long lost, a life that would have remained beyond recall in the earth were it not for the remarkable science of archaeology.

To the Lilly Endowment, Inc. we express our abiding gratitude for making possible this awakening of the past. To Dr. Kelso, to the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission and its Research Center for Archaeology go our warmest thanks for sharing their knowledge, experience and time. Our own Director for Indiana, Mrs. Samuel Reid Sutphin, deserves special credit for having been our liaison with the Lilly Endowment. Mrs. John Kean, our Director for New Jersey, whose interest in archaeology is as

lively as her philanthropy is large, has enabled us to present the findings of the entire project to our visitors in this book. The exhibition at Stratford highlighting the results of the excavation and the beautiful model of the house and its surroundings are her gifts.

The largest share of appreciation must go to Fraser Neiman and his assistant, Janet Long, who labored with unflagging dedication for three years. Let us hope that this first archaeological undertaking is not the last in which such a splendid team will work to enrich the heritage of Stratford.

The Directors of the Robert E. Lee
Memorial Association Incorporated

Introduction

Stratford Hall, located in Westmoreland County, Virginia, was built about 1730 by Thomas Lee, scion of a family which has produced some of the most illustrious individuals in our nation's history. It stands today as one of the most famous mansions of the Colonial period. In contrast, The Clifts Plantation, located a little more than half a mile from the Lees' great brick house, was, until recent archaeological excavations uncovered it, known only to the farmers who for the last two hundred and fifty years have plowed the field in which The Clifts once stood. Famous men and stirring events passed The Clifts by. Yet despite its historical obscurity, The Clifts' archaeological remains have provided unique evidence of how the people who lived and died there organized their lives and their day-to-day transactions with one another and the world around them.

Englishmen in seventeenth-century Virginia found themselves faced with circumstances very different from the ones they had left behind on the other side of the Atlantic. By 1730, when The Clifts was abandoned and Stratford Hall constructed, decades of coping with new and changing environmental, economic and social conditions separated them from their roots. Gradually, aspects of their culture became distinctively Virginian, and at the same time many facets of their social experience assumed a recognizably modern form. These processes did not take place overnight, nor did they end when The Clifts ceased to exist. However, the sixty-year occupation saw marked alterations in the lifeways of its inhabitants and men and women throughout the Chesapeake region.

Many of these changes affected the kinds of artifacts with which people chose to live, and left their imprint in the archaeological record. Archaeological research will therefore help us understand the nature of historical change in the early Chesapeake.

The following pages offer a selective account of the excavation of The Clifts Plantation, along with some of the conclusions to which they have led concerning the way life was lived there three centuries ago. However, several chapters in the story remain to be written. The cornfield in which The Clifts once stood has yielded a mountain of archaeological information. The task of digesting and making systematic sense of it continues.

Many people have contributed to the success of the project to date. I am indebted to the Directors of the Robert E. Lee Memorial Association, Inc. especially Mrs. Leslie Cheek, Jr., Mrs. William Hunter de Butts, and Mrs. Landon Carter Wellford, for their encouragement and support. Admiral Thomas E. Bass III, Executive Director, and his staff have provided help and kindnesses too numerous to mention. I am also grateful to the Virginia Research Center for Archaeology, the Governor's Advisory Committee, and former Commissioner of Archaeology Dr. William M. Kelso for their guidance and timely assistance.

I have benefited immensely from discussions with my colleagues, among them Cary Carson, Henry Miller, Garry Stone, and most of all Dell Upton. Dr. J. Lawrence Angel of the Smithsonian Institution graciously provided the analysis of the human skeletal material. My greatest debt is to Miss Janet E. Long whose expertise and uncommon good sense as Laboratory Supervisor made much of what has been accomplished possible. Finally, I wish to thank Mr. Alonzo T. Dill, historian, for editing an earlier version of this manuscript to an acceptable length and for his many useful suggestions.

The Popes, the Lees and the Site

The Early Years

English settlement in Virginia's Northern Neck, the peninsular wedge of land between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers, dates from the 1640's (Fig. 1). Immigrants came from Maryland, England and previously settled areas of Virginia to raise cattle, pigs, corn and above all tobacco. Laborers arrived to help cultivate that labor-intensive staple for export, and build a new society in what seemed a wilderness. Most of them were indentured servants, men and women who had bound themselves to four or more years of hard work in exchange for passage to the New World, and whose services were in turn sold to the highest-bidding planter by the ship captain who had imported them.

FIGURE 1

FIGURE 2

As the influx of settlers spread, no fewer than four counties were set up between 1648 and 1656. In Westmoreland, established in 1653, land was patented at a remarkable rate. By 1660 all the tracts on navigable water had been taken up, many of them by a few individuals.

Among those large landowners was Nathaniel Pope. Pope first arrived in the Chesapeake in 1637 as an unlettered yeoman, settling in St. Mary's City on Maryland's Western Shore. Within a decade he was styling himself "gentleman". In 1647 Pope left Maryland and moved across the Potomac to Mattox Creek in what was to become Westmoreland County. Here he continued to prosper as a merchant-planter and acquired the honors of Militia Colonel and Justice of the Peace. At his death in 1660, he owned more than 4,100 acres of land. Pope's rise from rags to riches was not atypical. The early Chesapeake was a good poor man's country.

The first of Pope's patents, dated 1651, was for 1050 acres lying behind a series of high bluffs along the Potomac's south shore. Five years later he renewed and amended the patent with the addition of 500 acres on the western edge of the original grant. This tract became the site of The Clifts plantation (Fig. 2).

Nathaniel Pope bequeathed the land to his eldest son Thomas, who became an

energetic entrepreneur in his own right. Soon after reaching his majority, Thomas left Virginia for Bristol, London's rival seaport, where he married into a family already involved in the English end of the Virginia trade. For his remaining twenty-three years he divided his time between Bristol and Westmoreland, making money on both ends of the tobacco trade. The county's court records refer to him both as "planter of Westmoreland" and "merchant of Bristol".

In 1664, Thomas renewed his father's patent to The Clifts and added roughly 850 acres to it on the west. By 1669 he had moved his Virginia base of operations from his father's Mattox Creek plantation upriver to his own land. He established residence on the western edge of this 2,400-acre tract, at the mouth of Pope's Creek. Soon afterward, The Clifts was set up on the eastern edge, probably as a tenant farm.

Settlement Logistics and the First Occupants

The reasons for settlements on opposite ends of the Pope tract were dictated by topography and trade. Because of the steepness of the Potomac's banks, the only accessible sites for river landings lay on the eastern and western extremities. The advantages of building near those sites were considerable. The arrangements for marketing tobacco in the early Chesapeake were decentralized. Every Autumn English ships cruised the major rivers which pierced the tobacco-growing Tidewater, stopping at intervals to exchange imported goods, such as cloth and tools, for the current crop of tobacco. Most planters dealt directly with the ship's captain or agent of an English merchant on board. There were few central places, run by local middlemen, at which tobacco from the surrounding area could be collected to await shipment. Since many planters found themselves responsible for getting their crops on a ship, proximity to a landing was very desirable. Like much else in the early Chesapeake, the system persisted because it required a minimum of organizational effort.

Another consideration affecting location of The Clifts was the need for a supply of fresh water. Because labor was scarce, planters tended to avoid the time-consuming process of digging a well where the water table was deep beneath the surface. Adjacent to the plateau on which The Clifts was located was a ravine, since silted up, that dipped down to a spring. The plantation was sited near that water source, and it was used throughout the occupation.

Due to an unfortunate fifteen-year gap in the Westmoreland County records, the identity of The Clifts' builders and proprietors for the first thirty-odd years of its existence is unknown. However, archaeological evidence suggests that, although tenants, they were considerably better off than the majority of their neighbors in the county. From the beginning there was a servants' quarter at The Clifts. In the Westmoreland County probate inventories for 1668-1677, such accomodations occur only in estates which employed the labor of six or more men and women. The owners of those estates fall roughly in the wealthiest twenty percent of the county's inventoried population.

The Sale to the Lees

Thomas Pope died in 1685. Of his heirs, only his son Nathaniel made a commitment, albeit short-lived, to life in Westmoreland. It appears that by 1709 he and his wife Elizabeth, daughter of a Westmoreland Justice of the Peace, had taken up residence at The Clifts. Like his father, Nathaniel seems to have followed a somewhat peripatetic career as both "mariner" and "planter".

Nathaniel and his co-heirs in England soon decided to sell The Clifts to young Thomas Lee, an ambitious member of another of Westmoreland's ruling families. In August 1718 Lee, then at the beginning of a career which would take him to the highest reaches of provincial politics, received the deed to the approximately 1,100 acres of The Clifts, including what was called in the document "the manner house erected on the second clift". Lee apparently had no intention of occupying the place immediately. Instead, he remained at Machodoc, his family seat several miles down river, until 1729 when his house was burned by transported felons angry over his conduct as Justice of the Peace. During this period The Clifts appears once again to have been occupied by tenants whose names excelled those of most Virginians.

Early in the next decade, Lee completed construction of the awesome brick mansion he called Stratford (Fig. 3). Possibly he moved into one dependency before the house was finished. At any rate, The Clifts tract had become the core of Lee's 6,000-acre Stratford plantation which was to prosper throughout most of the eighteenth century.

The old "manner house" and its outbuildings obstructed access from the elegant new mansion to the river landing, the outlet of the commercial world on which much of Lee's fortune was based. Lee demolished them about 1730. Thus The Clifts met its inglorious end, eluding history's selective memory of the colonial past. But below the ground's surface it awaited rediscovery nearly two and a half centuries later.

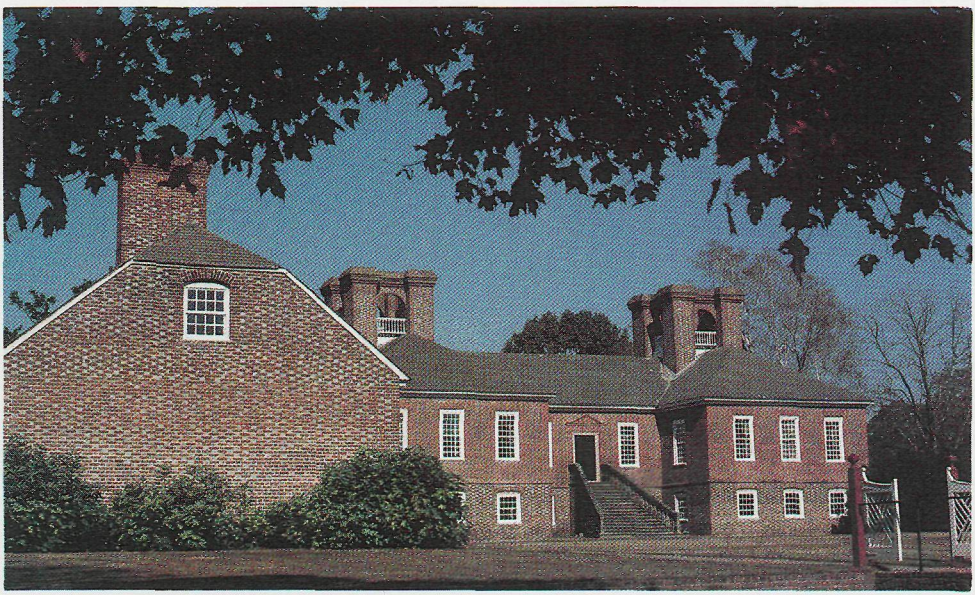


FIGURE 3

The Excavation

Digging in a Corn Field

Excavations at The Clifts site began in the summer of 1976. The site had been used over the years as crop land and the field was littered with bits of pottery, clay pipes, bottle glass, and other evidence of human habitation. To the casual observer, this scatter of artifacts looked random, but in reality it was composed of distinct and patterned concentrations which were of considerable archaeological importance. The most interesting of these concentrations (or middens) were the result of the rather casual attitudes toward garbage disposal which prevailed during the Colonial period. Planters at all social levels simply dumped most of their refuse, including the contents of chamber pots, straight out the doors of their houses. As a result, layers of trash gradually built up on the surface adjacent to the buildings in which the refuse originated and sometimes underneath, if the building had a leaky floor.

When the site was eventually abandoned and later put to agricultural use, plowing jumbled those layers together, creating from them and the surrounding top soil a single, homogeneous "plow zone" to the depth of a plowshare, roughly 8 to 10 inches below the surface. While the layers in the middens were destroyed, the horizontal position of the artifacts originally deposited in them was not significantly altered. The middens were therefore archaeological gold mines. They contained valuable clues about the functions of the buildings with which they were associated, their architectural plans and even the uses to which rooms within them were put.

In order to salvage this information, it was first necessary to grid the plow zone off into ten-foot square excavation units so that the location of the finds could be precisely recorded. Next, to insure that comparable samples of artifacts were recovered from every square for later plotting, the plow zone from each was removed by hand and screened through quarter-inch mesh.

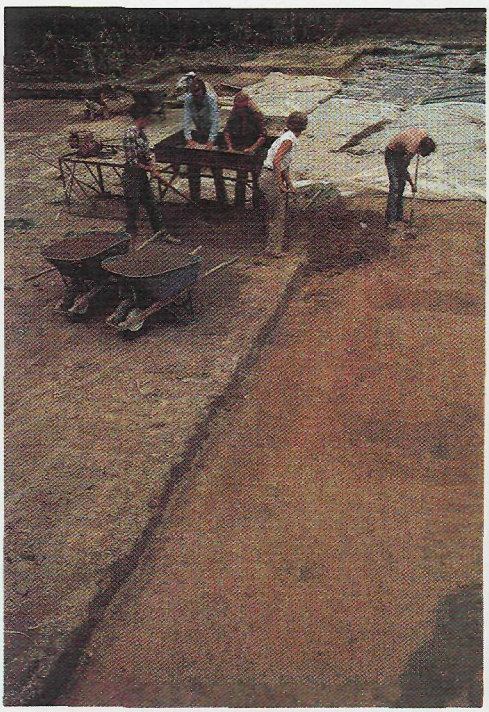


FIGURE 4

As the ten-foot squares of plow zone made their way through the sifter, the remains of The Clifts were gradually revealed (Fig. 4). Careful cleaning of the surface of the subsoil just beneath the plow zone brought to light the outlines of holes (postholes, ditches, cellars and pits) which had been dug and filled in centuries ago by the site's occupants. These features could be distinguished after patient scrutiny because the fill deposited in them by human hands differed in both color and texture from the surrounding, undisturbed clay subsoil. All the features were mapped in plan and section and which artifacts came from each one recorded. The site was figuratively lifted out of the ground and put on

paper where it could be studied.

Dating Since one of the principal goals of the excavation was to study change over the years, the formulation of a site chronology began with the fieldwork and progressed hand-in-hand with it. The relative age of features and the deposition of the artifacts in them could be determined by observing their stratigraphic relationships. Absolute dates were a little more tricky to come by. Here the pits, which had originally been dug to obtain clay for chimney repairs and later filled in with refuse from the middens, played an important role. These trash pits were rich in datable artifacts. Ceramics were particularly useful. The earliest pits were filled with the lead-glazed earthenware of a local potter named Morgan Jones (Fig. 5). The Westmoreland County records document the fact that Jones was operating a kiln in the county as early as 1669 and continued to produce his wares over much of the following decade. The 1669 date thus provided a reasonable *terminus post quem* for the initial occupation of The Clifts. Similar arguments could be constructed with other sorts of ceramics. For example, slip-dipped, white saltglaze stone ware was first manufactured in England about 1715, and made its first appearance in the Westmoreland probate inventories in the middle of the next decade. Thus the major pits which contained this ware probably were filled no earlier than about 1720, while the ones without it were probably no later. When this sort of reasoning was extended to other ceramic types, and the result further refined with the knowledge of spatial relationships between features, the great majority of the features at The Clifts could be confidently dated within five years one way or the other.

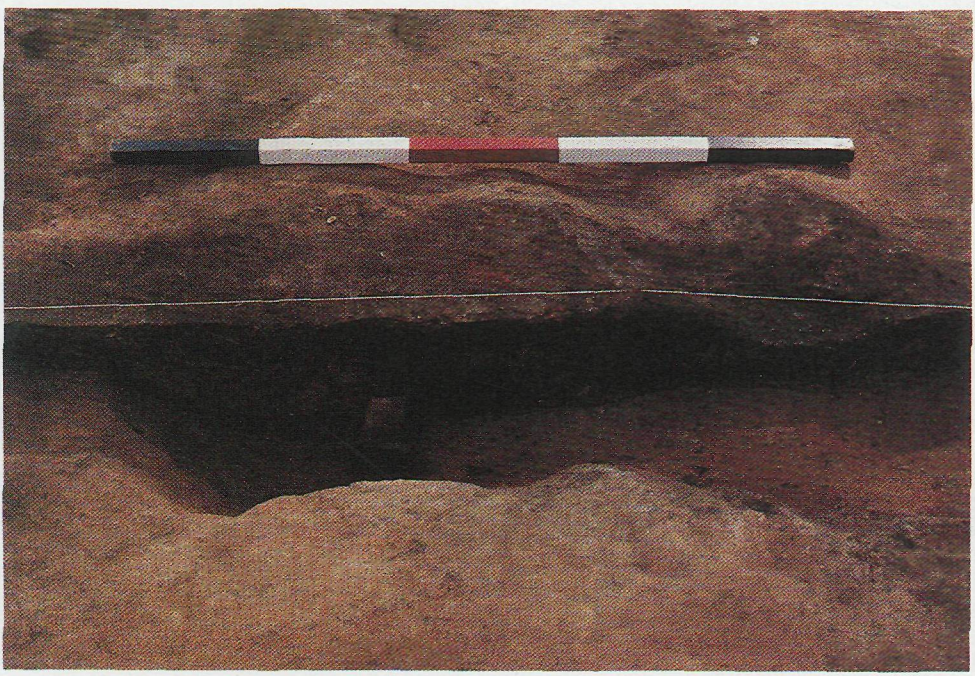
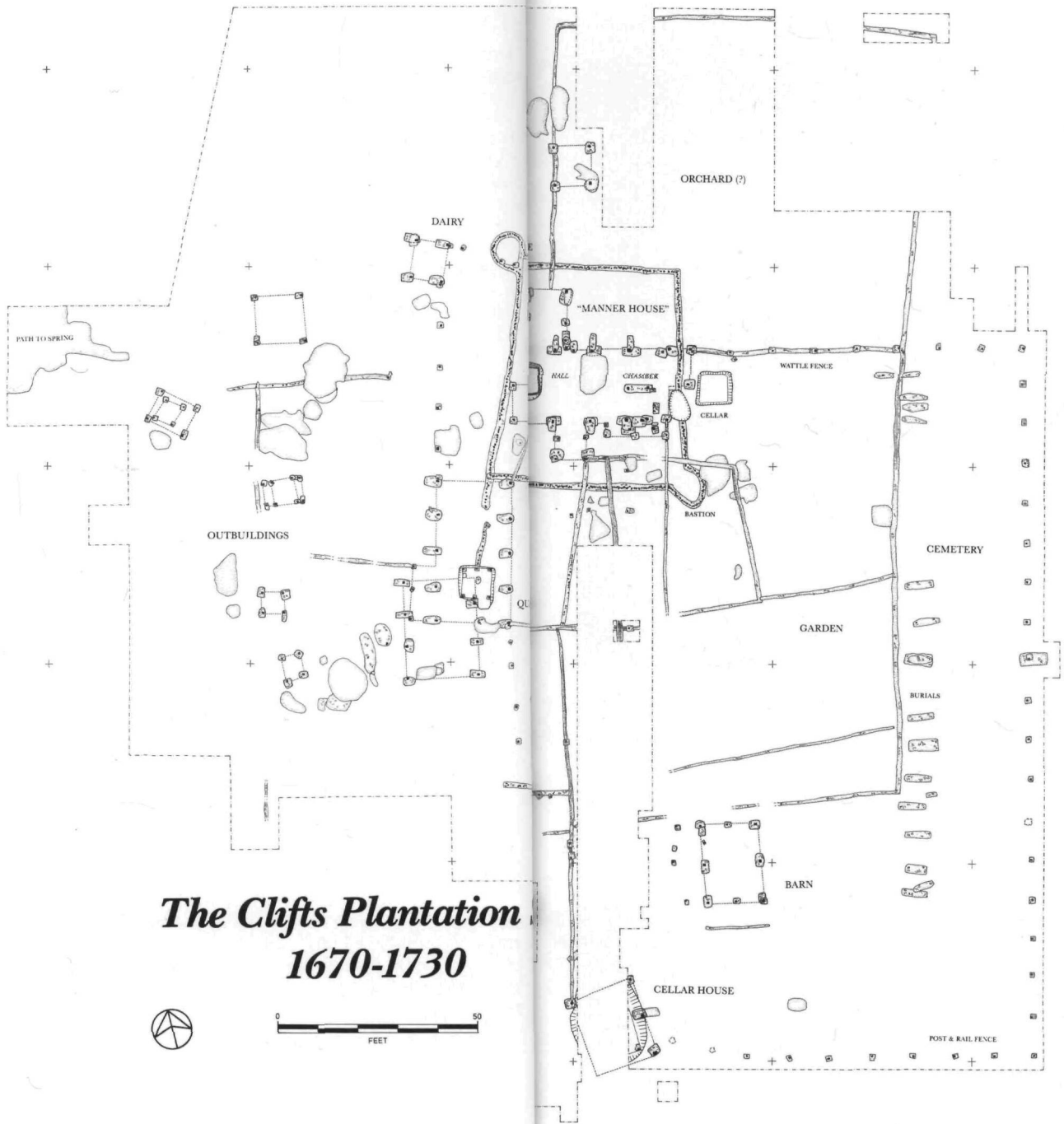


FIGURE 5

The Site Revealed After two lengthy field seasons, the entire layout of The Clifts was laid bare, its archaeological remains recorded and excavated and their chronological relationships puzzled out (Figs. 6 and 7). The major elements of the site plan as it had evolved over the sixty-year occupation were:

- The complex pattern of intersecting postholes which was all that remained of the "manner house".
- A wooden palisade with bastions on opposite corners, surrounding the main dwelling and related to the Indian troubles which preceded Bacon's Rebellion in 1676.
- Two additional dwellings just south of the "manner house", one partially superimposed on the other, both quarters for servants and/or slaves.
- Two fenced garden enclosures to the east of the "manner house", dating to successive periods in the early eighteenth century.
- A dairy framed around four posts, dating to the early eighteenth century.
- Eight additional four-post outbuildings arrayed in an arc around the western side of the site, six of them smoke houses successively burned and replaced during the occupation.
- A small barn and a "cellar house" both of early eighteenth-century date.
- A series of trash pits dug periodically throughout the occupation to obtain clay and later filled with refuse.
- Eighteen long-forgotten grave shafts, sixteen of them containing skeletal remains.

Identification and dating of the remains of The Clifts were only beginning. The most interesting yet difficult task was to suggest how the changing physical fabric of the plantation served the changing needs of its occupants and why those needs changed in the first place. A more detailed look at the evolution of The Clifts site plan serves as a starting place.



The Clifts Plantation
1670-1730

FIGURE 6

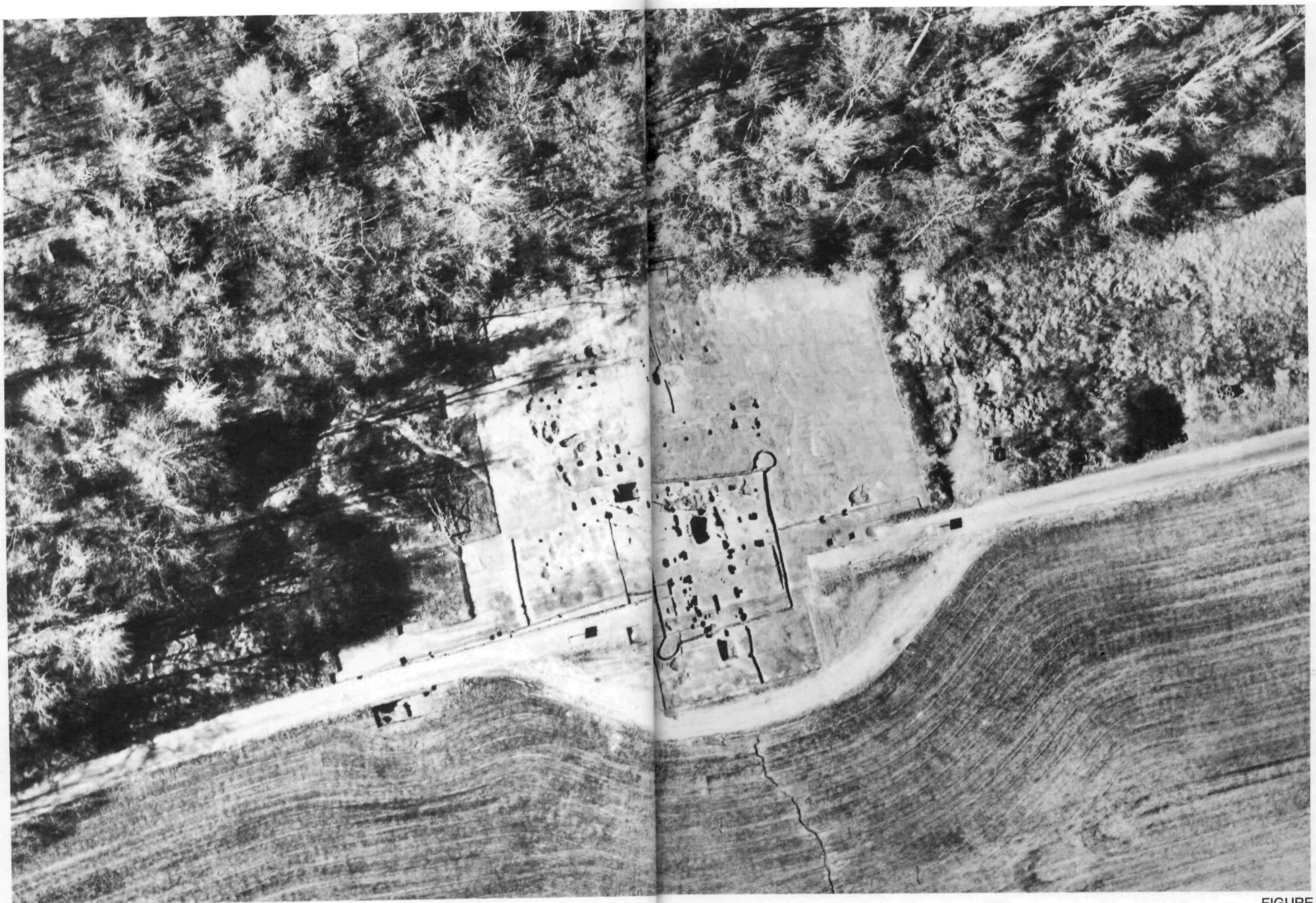


FIGURE 7

The Site Plan in Time

The "Manner House" and Early Quarter

Although large and commodious by early Chesapeake standards, the principal dwelling at The Clifts was from today's perspective a rather modest structure (Fig. 8). Built *circa* 1670, it was a single-story frame house. Although subsequently altered and enlarged, its three-room core measured 18.5 by 41 feet.

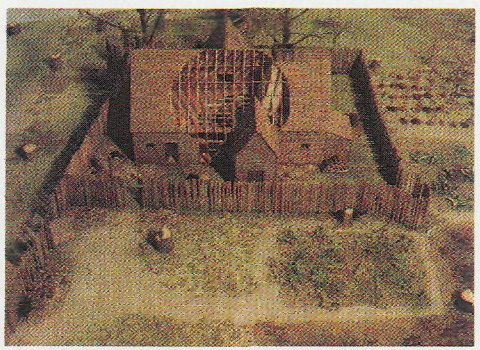


FIGURE 8

In lieu of masonry foundation carrying a sill, the side walls were framed around vertical wooden posts, set at ten-foot intervals and seated in large, flat-bottomed post holes dug to a depth of about three feet below grade (Figs. 9 and 10). The walls and roof were probably covered with split clapboards, fastened with nails and coated with a thin tar to provide a degree of weather-proofing. At least part of the interior was finished with plaster in which oyster shells were used for lime, as befitted the houses of better-off settlers.

A central hearth heated the two principal rooms of the core: the hall on the west and the chamber on the east (Fig. 11). The hearth was made of locally occuring ferricrete (bog iron) rubble laid in clay to form a low platform on which the fire burned. A timber-framed canopy of wattle

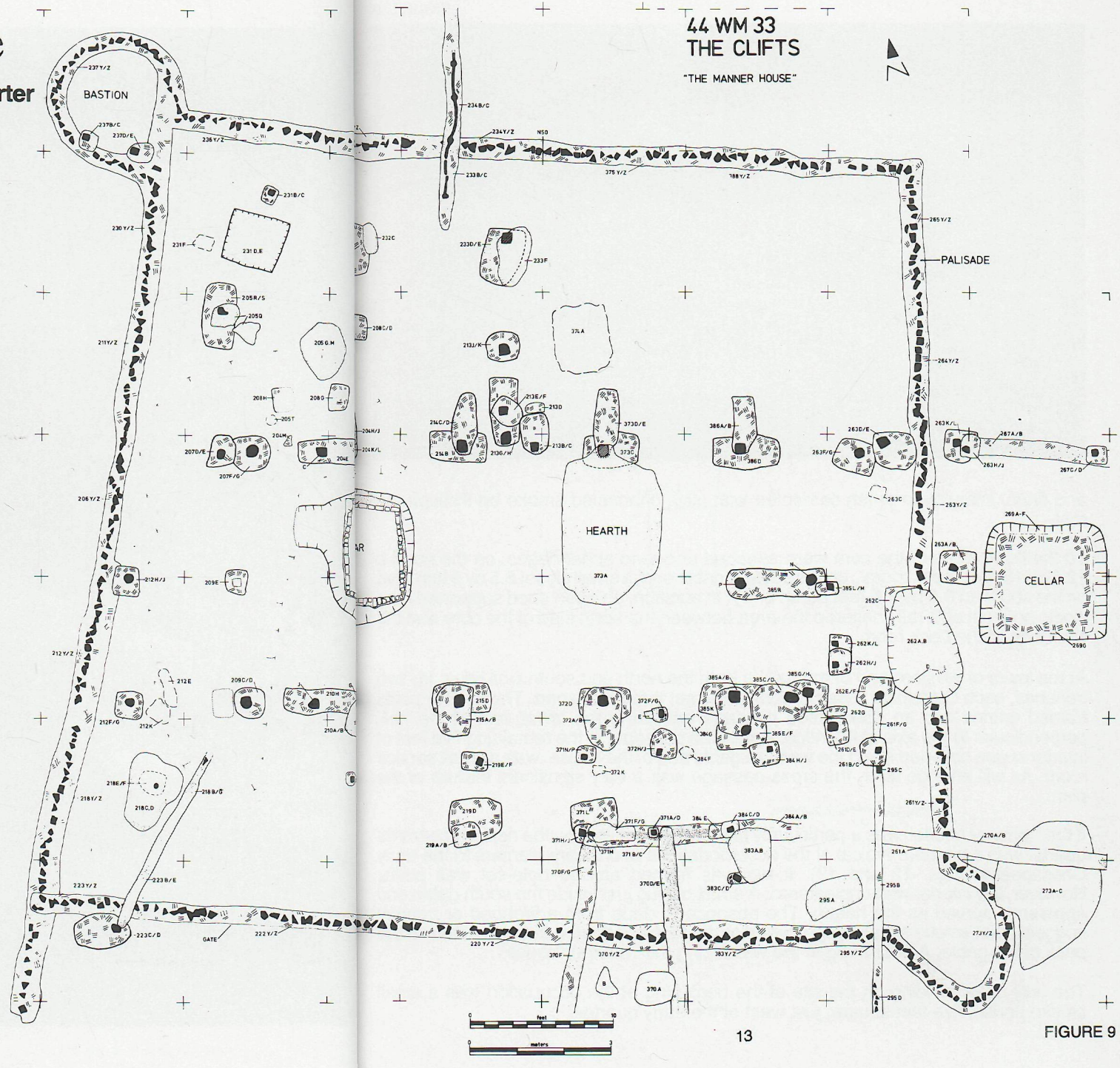


FIGURE 9

FIGURE 10

and daub, interwoven brush cemented with clay, channeled smoke up through the roof.

To the three sides of the core were attached enclosed appendages: on the north a 12.5 by 15-feet "back room", on the eastern gable end, a small closet 8.5 by 5 feet, and on the south an 8.5 by 9.5-feet porch entry. In addition, an open shed supported by a single hole-set split rail sheltered the area between the north side of the core and the west side of the back room.

At the lower or western end of the hall, in both the north and south wall lines, lay two trenches, each containing a pair of door posts set three feet apart. These door posts framed entries into an open cross passage traversing the lower end of the hall, perpendicular to the axis of the ridge. Below the passage, in the remaining five feet of interior space between it and the western gable end of the house, was a small service room. As will emerge later, the cross passage was a very significant feature of the plan.

If the "manner house" was a particularly fine building for its day, the near-by servants' quarter was a bit more typical of the accomodations of ordinary planters in the early Chesapeake (Figs. 12 and 13). It too was framed around hole-set wall posts. However, the interior was unplastered. A small pit dug just inside the south gable end apparently served as the hearth. The absence of daub from a firehood or canopy suggests that smoke simply rose upward to the roof and floated through a hole in the peak of the gable. A door hung in the wall facing the "manner house".

The only other building on the site at the beginning of the occupation was a small smoke house, five-feet square, just west of the early quarter.

The Clifts Plantation

1670-1685

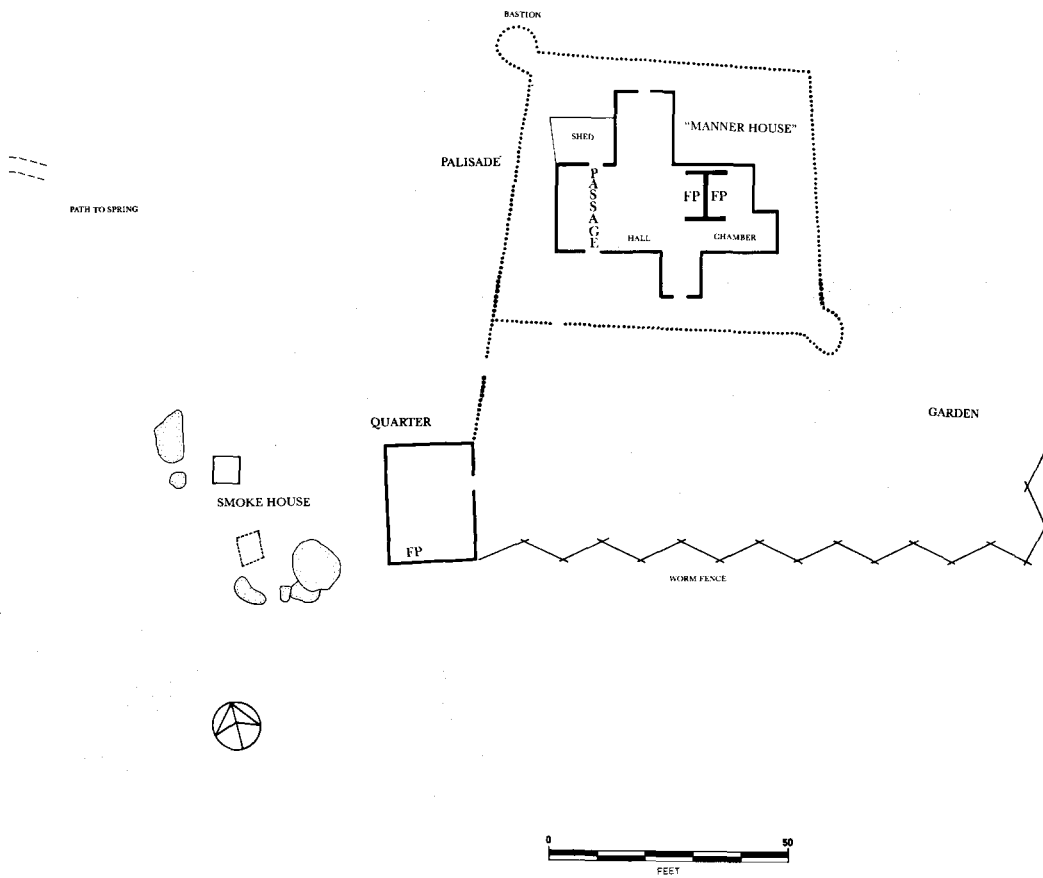


FIGURE 11

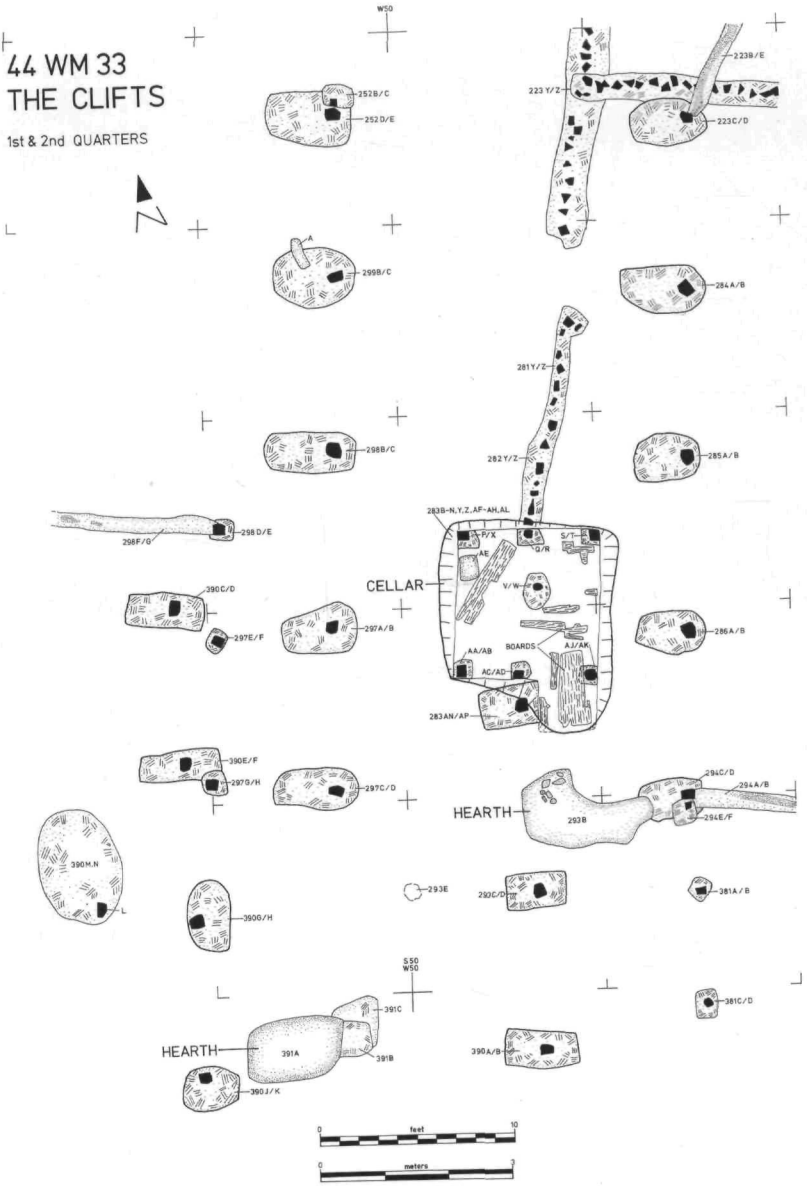

44 WM 33
THE CLIFTS
1st & 2nd QUARTERS
N
W50
252B/C
252D/E
223Y/Z
223B/E
223C/D
299B/C
284A/B
281Y/Z
298B/C
282Y/Z
285A/B
298F/G
298D/E
283B-N,Y,Z,AF-AH,AL
S/T
Q/R
AE
CELLAR
V/W
390C/D
297E/F
297A/B
AA/AB
BOARDS
AJ/AK
286A/B
AC/AD
283AN/AP
390E/F
297G/H
297C/D
294C/D
294A/B
HEARTH
293B
294E/F
390M,N
390G/H
293E
293C/D
381A/B
S50
W50
391C
381C/D
HEARTH
391A
391B
390A/B
390J/K
0
feet
10
0
meters
3

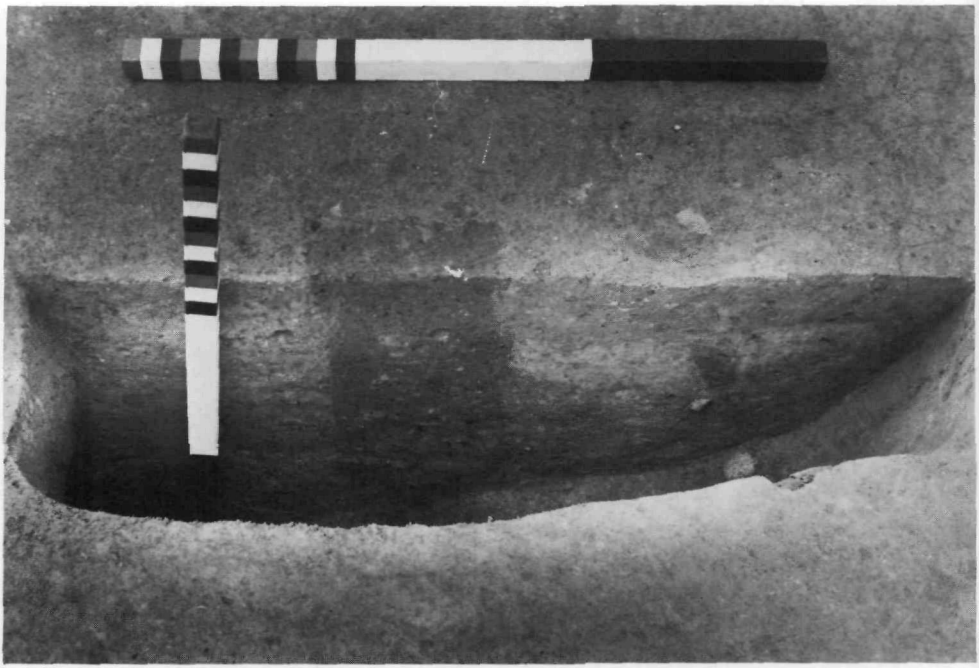
FIGURE 12

FIGURE 13

Post-in-the-Ground Construction

Clearly the sort of technology employed in the construction of the "manner house" and the early quarter (and indeed all the buildings eventually erected at the Clifts) differed from that with which we are familiar in the eighteenth-century houses that survive in Virginia and Maryland today. The principal difference lay in the fact that the houses at the Clifts were framed around wall posts set into holes dug in the ground, while the wall posts of extant eighteenth-century frame houses were morticed into sills lying on brick foundations (Fig. 14). The past decade of archaeological work on early Chesapeake sites has demonstrated that post-in-the-ground houses were built by planters at all social levels during the seventeenth century. Houses of brick or with brick foundations were rare outside of Jamestown, Virginia's seventeenth-century

FIGURE 14



capital, where governors and Assemblies had tried mightily and unsuccessfully to encourage and popularize it. The pervasiveness of post-in-the-ground houses throughout the Chesapeake social hierarchy (along with the voraciousness of termites) is underscored by the fact that only two seventeenth-century houses are still standing in Virginia today, while hundreds survive in New England.

The driving force behind post-in-the-ground construction was economic. Brickmaking was a time-consuming and laborious process. Holeset posts not only made brick foundations unnecessary, but more importantly the lack of sills meant that there were fewer timbers to dress and fewer joints to cut. It also meant that tolerances required to cut, position and frame the other skeletal members could be minimal. Wall posts, for example, did not have to be perfectly vertical or precisely in line since only their tops had to be joined to another member (a plate or tie beam).

These economies appealed to planters because labor was in short supply, a result of the availability of land, the effort required on a frontier to build a society from scratch, and the labor-intensive character of tobacco agriculture. As William Fitzhugh pointed out to an English friend in 1687, building a house in Virginia was roughly three times more costly in time and money than it was in London. When he advised his friend, who was contemplating building in Virginia, to erect not an "English framed house", but rather an "ordinary Virginia House", he was recommending the economies of framing which post-in-the-ground construction offered. And for most of the seventeenth century, most wealthy planters were satisfied to live in "ordinary" houses.

The Palisade Not long after The Clifts was established, a palisade, roughly rectangular in plan and measuring 55 by 60 feet, was thrown up around the "manner house", Two small, circular bastions on opposite corners were intended to provide unobstructed lines of fire down each of the side walls (Fig. 15). The palisade was built of split rails, possibly cannibalized from a worm fence, which were set upright and side by side in a ditch.

While it is tempting to see this modest fortification as a kind of seventeenth-century Fort Apache, the matter is not that simple. The palisade at The Clifts needs to be understood in its historical context.

After the 1644 Indian revolt, in which Virginia tribes made a final and of course unsuccessful attempt to rid their land of invading Englishmen, Virginia's provincial officials, under the leadership of Governor William Berkeley, tried to limit further conflict by containing white settlement. As the pressure for new land increased, the policy ran into trouble since many colonists saw in it the construction of their own social and economic opportunity. They wondered why the local Indians were guaranteed land while they were without it.

In this restive atmosphere, it was not long before violence broke out. In 1675 a group of Doeg Indians from Maryland, disturbed by the refusal of Northumberland County

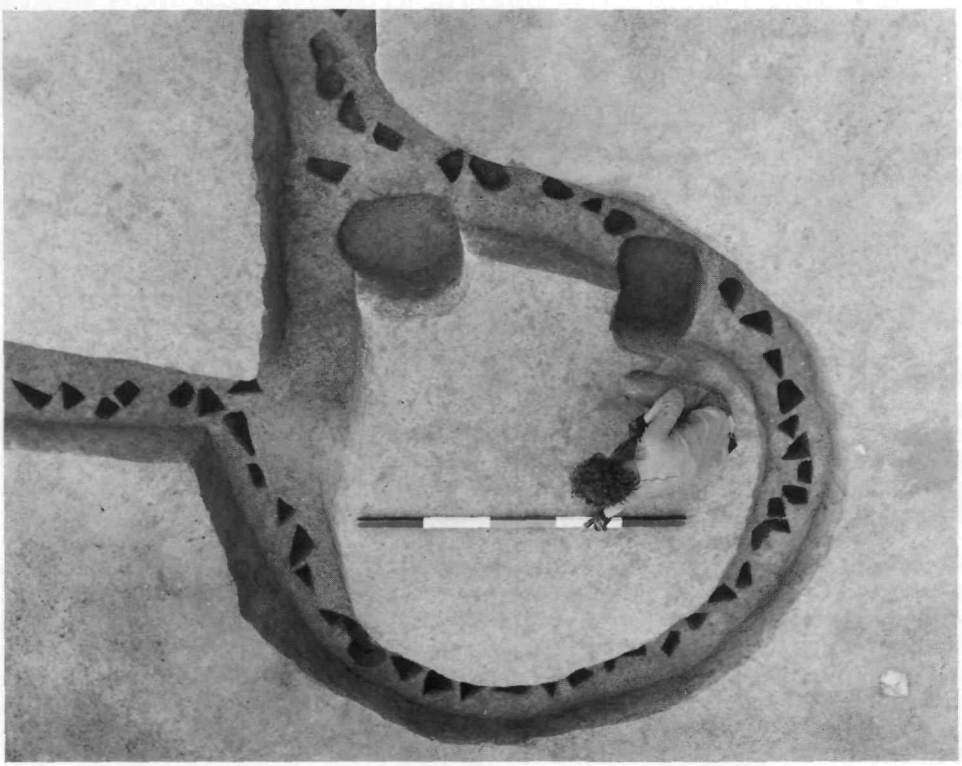


FIGURE 15

merchant Thomas Mathew to pay them for trade goods, ignited the fuse by running off with some of Mathew's hogs. A series of bloody reprisals, initiated by the English, culminated with the murder in Maryland of five chiefs of the Susquehannocks who previously had nothing to do with the quarrel. The Susquehannocks retaliated in a series of raids along the fall line between the Potomac and Rappahannock in which thirty-six whites were killed. Rumors swept the colony of conspiracies between local and "foreign" Indians aimed at the extermination of the English. At this juncture, a motley crew of whites under the leadership of Nathaniel Bacon began slaughtering Indians in southern Virginia under the pretext that Governor Berkeley had refused frontier settlers protection from them.

The Indian troubles were merely the precipitant of Bacon's Rebellion. The hunger for Indian land and the resentment of the power and privilege wielded by the emerging county and provincial elites, whose members were often of humble social origin, lay behind much of the discontent. Yet it was the wave of paranoia which swept the colony and especially the Northern Neck in 1675 that men remembered. Years later Thomas Mathew, the merchant (and Bacon partisan) whose hogs had helped start it all, recalled:

> In these frightful times, the most exposed small families withdrew into our houses of better numbers which we fortified with palisades. . . . No man stirred out of door unarm'd, . . . yet (what was remarkable) I never heard of any houses burnt, tho abundance was forsaken, nor even of any corn or tobacco cut up, or any other injury done besides the murders [by the Susquehannocks] except the killing of a few cattle and swine.

The palisade at The Clifts was erected in response to "these frightful times". And as Mathew's account and the somewhat flimsy construction of the fortification itself suggest, the only purpose which it did or could serve was a psychological one. Not surprisingly, it was torn down soon after it was built, probably at the conclusion of the Indian scare. It was apparently more trouble than it was worth.

Early Fencing If the palisade was of marginal utility, other sorts of fences were from the beginning and remained an integral part of The Clifts. These fences served to separate the domestic complex from the surrounding landscape and to partition it into smaller, useful areas. They were essential to the operation of the plantation. Early planters opted to fence out their domestic animals—cows and pigs—and fence in their food crops. Again the reasons were primarily economic. It took less effort to fence the domestic complex and the food crops grown on it and allow livestock to forage in the woods than it did to fence a pasture large enough for animals to graze all year round or to grow fodder for them.

Planters tended to think in terms of two sorts of areas around their dwellings. William Fitzhugh, for example, in a letter to an English friend describing his home plantation, distinguished between "a garden a hundred foot square, well pailed in, and a yard wherein is most of the foresaid necessary houses palisadoed in with locust puncheons." At The Clifts, the yard, site of a variety of domestic activities, was on the western side of the main dwelling, along with the "necessary houses" (outbuildings) and spring. The garden—a kitchen garden for food crops and not boxwood—and possibly an orchard lay on the east.

Worm fences were apparently used for the first yard and garden enclosures at The Clifts. Made of split rails stacked on one another zigzag fashion and laid on the ground, they left no direct archaeological trace. However, the gate in the puncheon fence which ran between the early quarter and southwest corner of the palisade betrays their presence (Figs. 8 and 11).

A Chesapeake invention, worm fences served the needs of early planters well. They could be put together quickly and just as quickly dismantled as circumstances dictated, a real boon for Englishmen groping for satisfactory ways of arranging space in a new environment. Building them required only a wedge and maul, a strong back and prodigious amounts of wood readily available from Virginia's virgin forests. Worm fences were used at The Clifts to the exclusion of other varieties until the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The Clifts Plantation

1685-1705

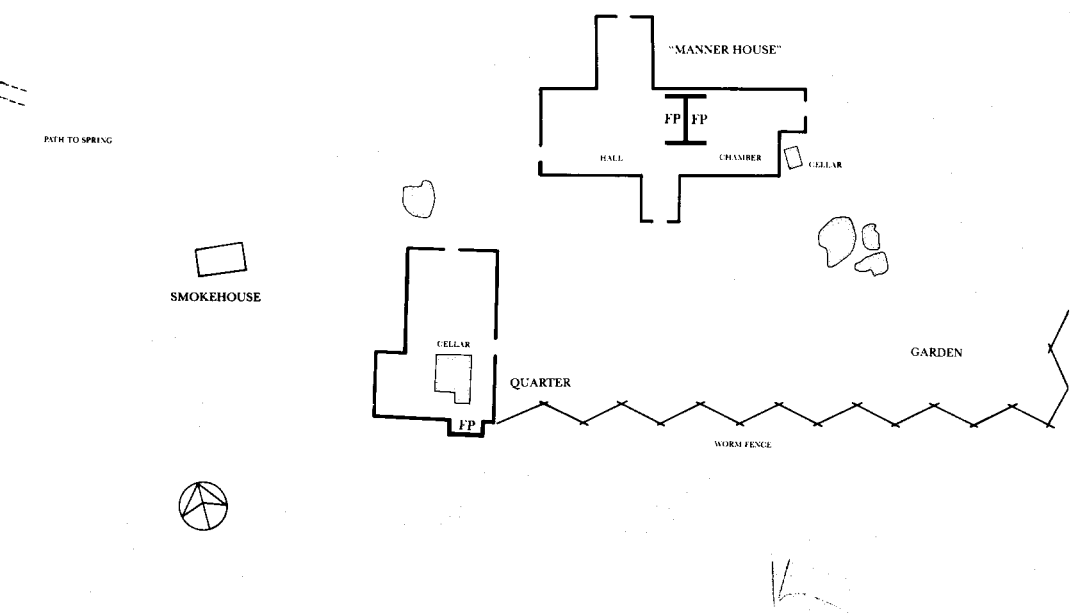


FIGURE 16

A New Quarter As the seventeenth century drew to a close, several important changes were made in the fabric of The Clifts (Fig. 16). About 1690 the early servants' quarter was replaced by a slightly larger and more elaborate structure. This second quarter was a two-cell building 19 by 36 feet, framed around hole-set posts placed at nine-foot intervals along the side walls (Figs. 12 and 13).

Instead of a roof aperture for smoke, it had an exterior chimney on its western gable end, framed in wood and covered with clay-plastered lath. The hearth was rubble laid in clay, like that in the "manner house". The interior of the new quarter was not plastered.

At the same time appeared the earliest two cellars on the site, facilities that would lighten demand for storage on the main dwelling and assure a less monotonous year-round diet for at least some of the plantation's occupants.

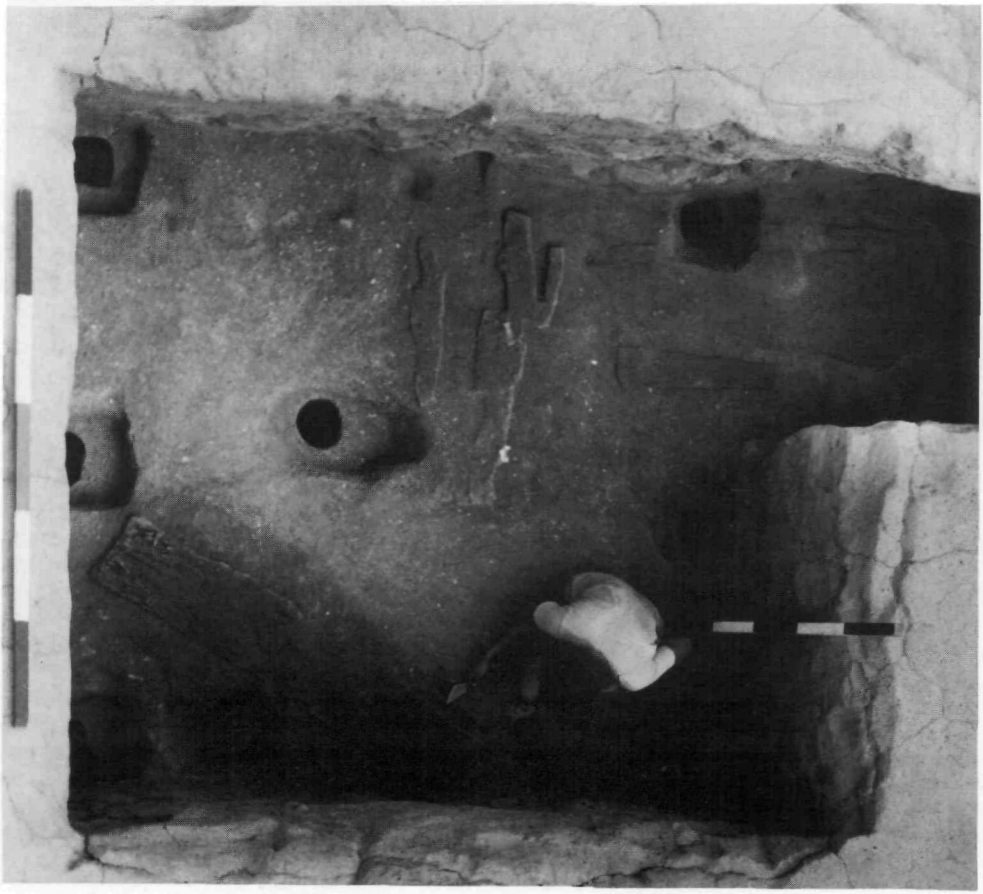


FIGURE 17

The larger of the two lay beneath the heated room of the quarter, just in front of the hearth (Fig. 17). Roughly 7.5 feet square and five feet deep, it was lined with boards wedged behind vertical posts set in each corner. A single post in the center helped support a plank covering. The location near the hearth was by design, for as Robert Beverly observed in 1705 Virginians buried their potatoes "under ground, near the fire-hearth" to protect them from frost.

The second cellar was considerably smaller. It was really just a pit, dug in the garden just east of the main dwelling, into which a wooden box 3 by 4 feet in plan and 2.5 feet deep was inserted.

Later Storage Facilities and Subsistence The early eighteenth century witnessed the installation of even more extensive storage facilities (Fig. 18). By about 1710, the small root pit just east of the "manner house" had been replaced by a larger one, roughly seven feet square and a foot deeper than its predecessor, and several feet to the east of it. Its walls were not lined, and the floor was simply packed clay.

About the same time, a larger cellar, 15 by 10 by 5.5 feet, was dug 140 feet south of the main dwelling. It had a wooden lining, similar to that found in the quarter's cellar, and a post-built, single-story structure over it. This "cellar house" was not the first outbuilding on the site to offer above-ground storage space. A post-built barn, measuring 14.5 by 20 feet and located some thirty feet to the northeast had apparently served a similar purpose since at least 1705 (Fig. 19). Open sheds tacked onto the side of the barn suggest that it served as a processing center for crops as well. After roughly 1710, the processing and storage of dairy products took place in an 8 by 10 foot dairy erected 30 feet northwest of the "manner house".

The construction of all these facilities involved expenditures of labor which the occupants of the plantation were increasingly willing to make as labor became more available and the subsistence problems of initial settlement were solved. They offered space for a variety of activities which had previously only been available in the "manner house", the quarter or their lofts. Their construction meant that the "manner house" was becoming less the center of farm work on the plantation and more of a private residence, an important social development which will be taken up in more detail later.

The cellars also offered more practical advantages. They allowed planters to broaden the variety of food crops consumed throughout the year to include root vegetables, which unlike corn required special preservative measures if they were to be stored long after harvest. As John Worlidge pointed out in his *Systema Agricultura* (1681), carrots, turnips and parsnips among other foods "laid up in your cellar or such like places on heaps . . . will keep throughout the winter."

The Clifts Plantation
1705-1720

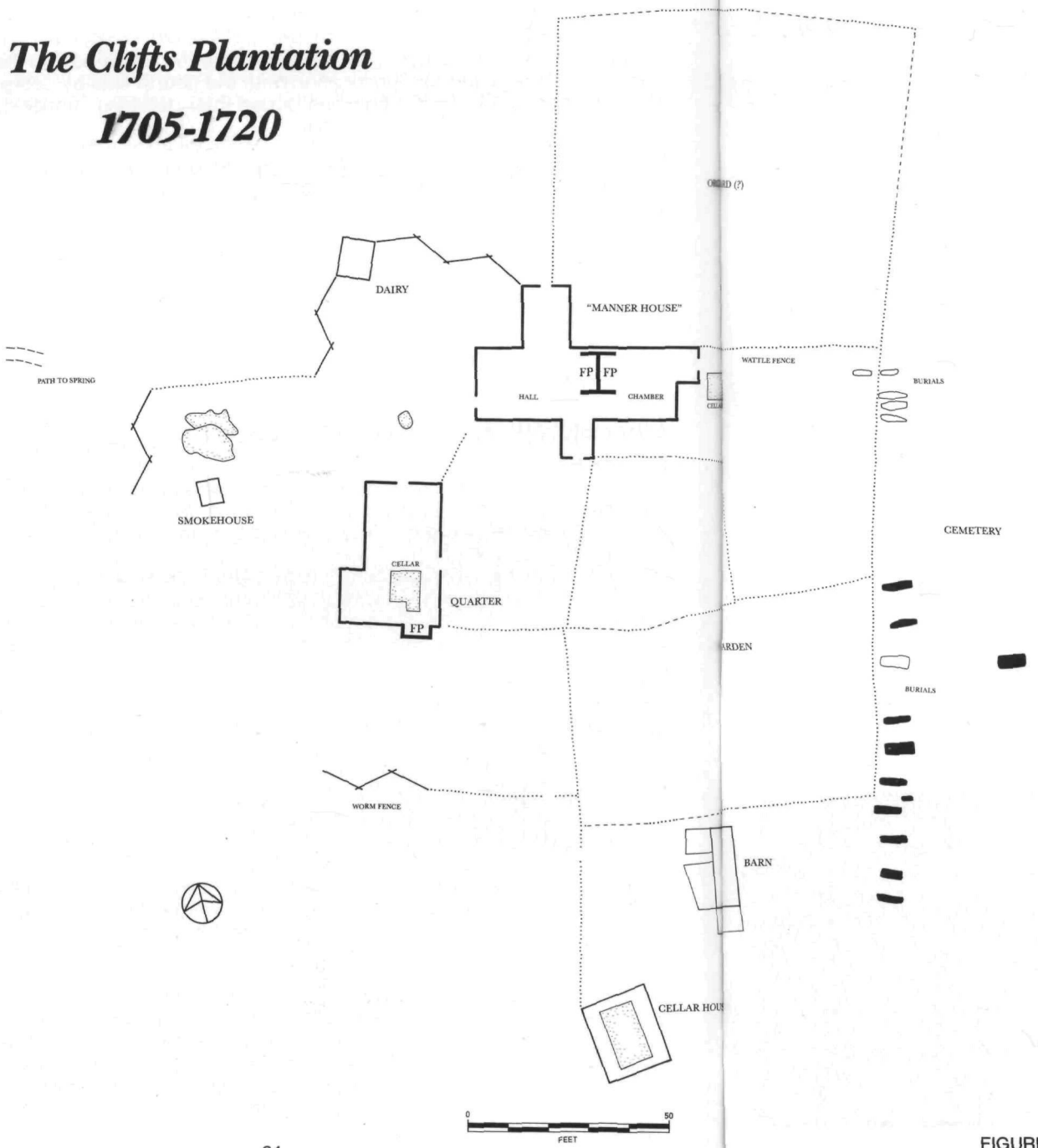
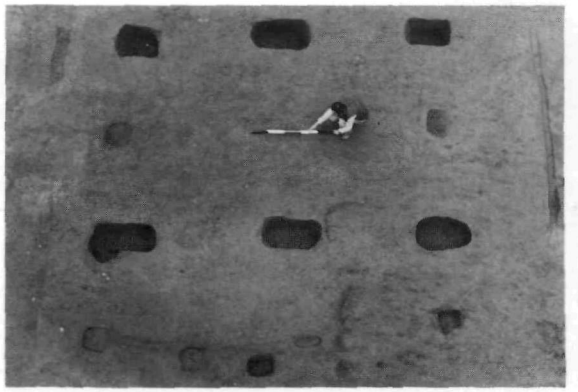


FIGURE 18

FIGURE 19



Cellars also enabled planters to enjoy the fruits of their orchards more regularly, although in somewhat altered form. Toward the end of the seventeenth century, a traveler in the Chesapeake noted that "fruit is for the most part pressed and makes good cider", but he deplored the fact that "the largest portion becomes soured and spoiled through their ignorance and negligence, either from not putting it into good casks or from not taking proper care of the liquor afterwards." *Cool cellar storage helped to* solve the second of these problems. Westmoreland's probate inventories indicate that cellars, most of them containing casks and butts, began to appear in the county as a whole about the same time they did at The Clifts.

More Elaborate Fencing About 1705 the original worm fence around the garden at The Clifts was replaced by an extensive system of ditch-set fencing in which two sorts of uprights were employed: wattle, or woven brush, and puncheons, thin split rails and poles set closely together (Fig. 18). Although subsequently altered and repaired, the original ditch-set fences enclosed a garden area 200 by 85 feet and divided it into four irregular plots, the largest of which may have served as an orchard. The yard on the opposite side of

the "manner house" was now enclosed with a combination of ditch-set and worm fencing.

As the woodlands surrounding The Clifts were cut back and the garden area exposed, wattle and puncheon fences provided crops protection from wind damage, especially in thunderstorms, an effect that was enhanced by fencing smaller areas within the garden enclosure. Wattle and puncheon fences were also more effective than worm fences in keeping small vermin out of the garden.

By roughly 1720, the ditch-set fences had fallen into disrepair and a secondary forest growth around the plantation had restored a natural wind-break. The wattle and puncheon fences were replaced by a post-and-rail garden fence (Fig. 20). The separately fenced plots gave way to a single 100 by 180 foot enclosure (Fig. 21). With its posts on ten-foot centers and regularly spaced horizontal rails, perhaps fenced with vertical boards, the new fence must have appealed to the Georgian taste for order then dawning in Virginia.

The last decade of the occupation saw several other additions to the plantation layout. These included the installation of a small brick-lined cellar beneath the hall of the "manner house", the only piece of brick construction on the entire site. A shallow three-foot square pit, presumably a privy, was dug just north of the hall. In addition two small outbuildings, about the size of the dairy but of unknown function, were erected on the northern edge of the site, along with the last and largest in the series of six smoke houses (Fig. 21).

FIGURE 20

The Clifts Plantation

1720-1730

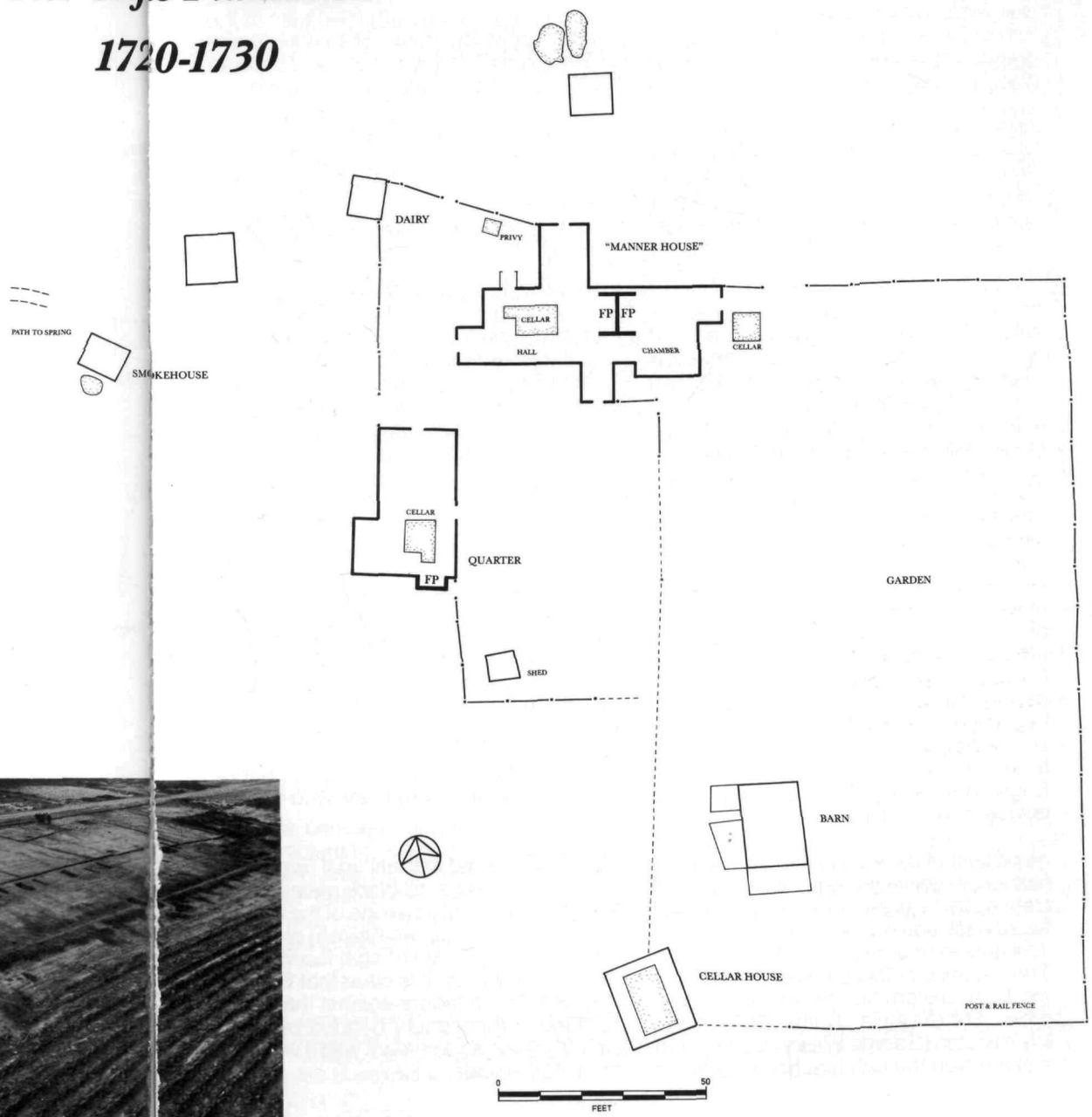


FIGURE 21

The Plantation Cemetery Some of the most tantalizing evidence concerning life at The Clifts comes from the plantation's cemetery, located along the eastern edge of the garden (Figs. 18 and 20). Because of the size of Virginia parishes and long distances to the nearest church, plantation burial grounds were common. The cemetery at The Clifts was probably the place of burial of most if not all of the individuals who died on the plantation during its occupation.

There were seventeen burials in all. One of them failed to yield any skeletal remains, probably because it was the grave of an infant whose soft bones had entirely decayed. An eighteenth grave shaft apparently had never received its intended occupant, having been abandoned when it was discovered that it overlapped an earlier interment. This and a second similar miscalculation suggest that some of the graves were never marked.

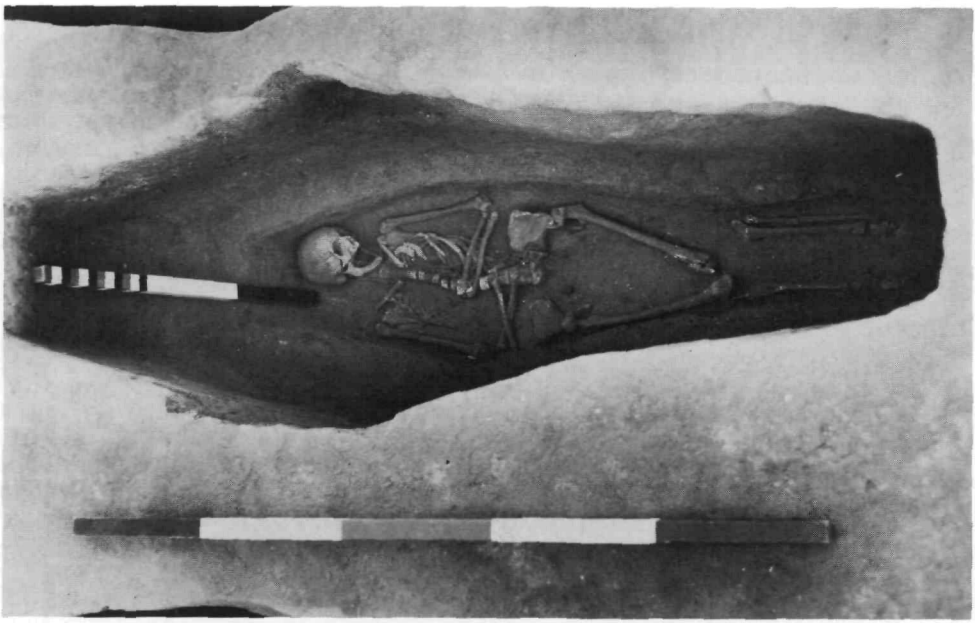
The burials occurred in two spatially segregated clusters: a planter-family group to the north and a laborer group to the south. The north group contained five burials, all whites. Three of them, two children and an adult woman, date to the first half of the occupation. The children shared several skeletal traits and may have been siblings. They and the woman (their mother?) were presumably members of the family who farmed The Clifts during the first thirty-odd years of its existence. The two other individuals in the north group were adult males, presumably sharing some sort of familial tie, who died during the last decade or so of the occupation.

The south group was comprised of a single white, ten blacks, and the presumed infant. The white was an adult male (indentured servant) buried sometime after *circa* 1690. Most and probably all of the black burials post-date *circa* 1705.

Until that time, the tobacco-growing labor force at The Clifts seems to have been comprised almost wholly of white indentured servants who, with one exception, left the plantation when their terms of service were up to die and be buried elsewhere. With the dawn of the eighteenth century, the proprietors of The Clifts and wealthy planters throughout the Chesapeake were turning from white to black labor. Their slaves, of course, remained on the plantation for life and were buried there. Almost from the beginning, the Chesapeake economy was based on unfree labor since wage labor was scarce and costly and profit margins on tobacco low. To a large extent, the switch from indentured whites to enslaved blacks was a result of a decline in the number of Englishmen willing to leave home and a rise in the availability of Africans who had no choice in the matter.

All sixteen of the individuals buried at The Clifts were interred in traditional European fashion, in coffin and shroud (Fig. 22). However three persons, all black males, wore clothing to the grave, possibly a retention of African custom. All save one of the burials faced east, again in accordance with European (and in some cases African) practice. The one anomalous burial, that of a black male about forty years of age, faced west. The meaning of this backward interment is obscure. However, it is clear that English mortuary custom did reserve such special treatment for offenders against the moral order. For example, in the 1660's a Westmoreland coroner's jury headed by John Washington (George Washington's great grandfather) buried a servant with a wooden stake driven through him because he had committed suicide.

FIGURE 22



The average age of death for the four white and nine black adults was an appalling thirty-two years. None showed any signs of having met violent deaths, and the only potentially deadly pathology evident was a single advanced case of syphillis. Rather the major cause of early death at The Clifts and throughout the Chesapeake was disease. Although dysentery played a role, the principal culprit seems to have been malarial fever, a debilitating disease endemic to the Tidewater which in concert with other maladies was often deadly, and to which recent immigrants were especially susceptible. Mortality in early Virginia and Maryland was far higher than in New England, a situation which, together with unbalanced sex ratios, retarded the emergence of a predominantly native-born population in the Chesapeake until the early eighteenth century and contributed to social instability.

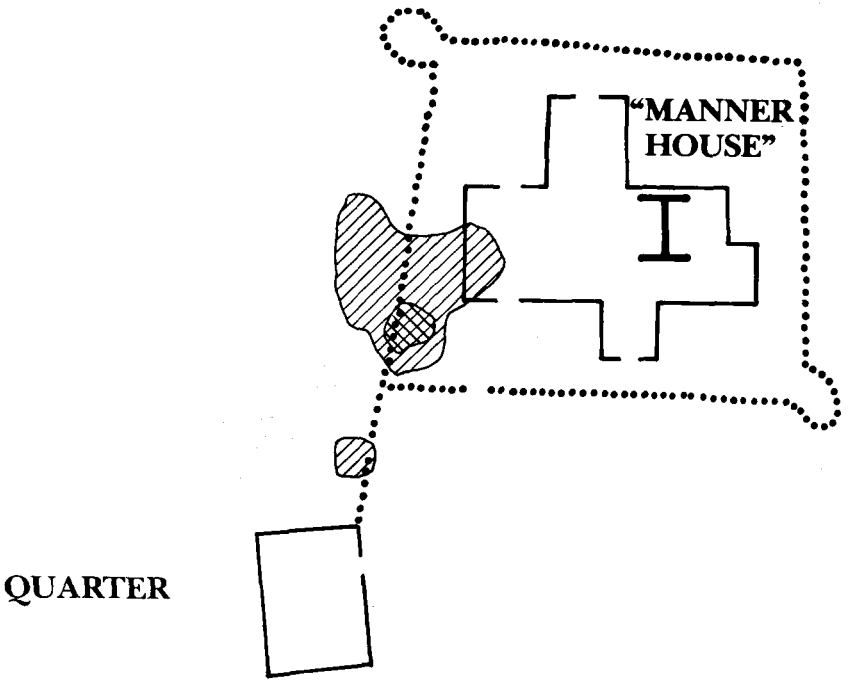
In the cemetery population the incidence of tooth decay was also strikingly high, a characteristic result of a diet consisting largely of carbohydrates, with little or no meat. Growth-arrest lines on tooth enamel of six individuals appear to be the product of similar deficiencies. As John Lawson pointed out in 1709, corn was the dietary mainstay; but he drew erroneous conclusions about its real effects, effects all too evident in the skeletons from The Clifts:

> Christian servants in Virginia and Maryland . . . that have been forced to live wholly upon it [corn] do manifestly prove that it is the most nourishing grain for man to subsist upon, without any other victuals. And this assertion is made good by the negroe slaves, who in many places eat nothing but this Indian corn and salt.

From Farm House to Residence

The Early Use of Architectural Space

So far the discussion of The Clifts' layout has been limited to technology, plans and their relation to environmental and economic circumstances. However, the partitioning of living space also needs to be considered in its changing social context. Here the evidence comes not only from the plans of the domestic buildings themselves, but also from the spatial distribution of pottery and clay pipestem fragments found in the middens around them. These humble but eloquent artifacts tell how space was actually used.



Distribution of 8/64" and 9/64" Pipe Stems

FIGURE 23

It will be recalled that the "manner house" of about 1670 consisted of a large hall and a small chamber separated from one another by a central hearth. At the western end of the hall was the cross passage, running northward to an open shed and southward to an uncovered exit in the direction of the servants' quarter. Below the passage lay a small service room. The enclosed porch on the south side appears to have been another entry not related to service activities.

The location of tobacco pipestem concentrations helps to fill out this picture. They are a measure of human activity, both in work and relaxation, while their stem-hole diameters, which decreased with the passing years, allow the archaeologist to determine the period during which a concentration of stem fragments with a given bore diameter was most likely deposited.

The high concentration of early pipestems (those with 8 and $^{9}/_{64}$ inch bore diameters) beneath the small service room below the cross passage indicates that it did not have a tight floor, a fact that accords well with its lowly function as a work area and not a living space (Fig. 23). More importantly, the association of far greater quantities of early smoking debris with the "manner house" than with the first quarter argues that the main dwelling was a much more frequently used center of social activity. In contrast, its artifact associations and plan indicate that the early quarter was for the most part a poorly heated and infrequently used sleeping and storage space.

The early "manner house" seems to have been a center of work as well. The open shed on its northern side offered a sheltered working area in bad weather. An adjacent concentration of early dairy-related ceramic fragments suggests that the main dwelling was often the site of this activity too. Given the size of the firepit in the quarter, the hearth in the hall must have served as the plantation's kitchen fireplace. Taken together, the data point to the conclusion that the "manner house" and the hall within it were both a common center of social life and base of plantation operations, where most of The Clifts' residents, the planter's family and servants alike, spent much of their indoor time.

There was however some provision for the spatial segregation of the two groups. The entry into the porch and the small lobby beyond it, created by the side of the hearth, provided direct access to the chamber for family members, untrammeled by the bustle of the common room. The heated chamber probably served not only as a sleeping area but as a family withdrawing room as well, although its use in the latter regard was necessarily limited by its diminutive size. At least some of the plantation's laborers slept in the quarter and not the "manner house". Nevertheless, in the 1670's, the planter, his family and servants were sharing important facets of their lives with one another in the same spaces.

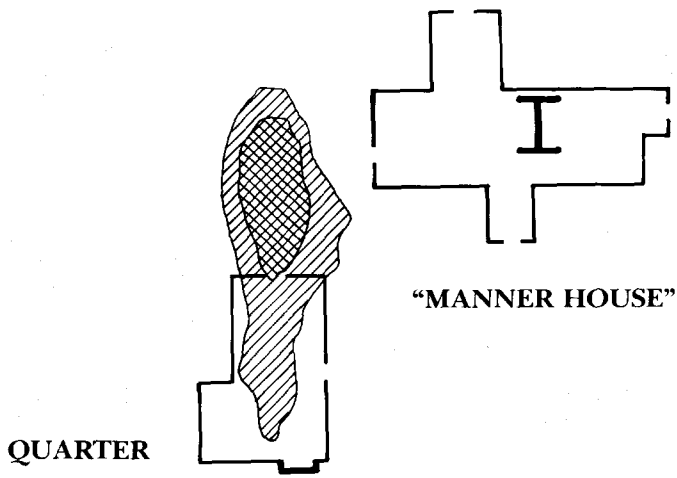
The Cross Passage: A Key Feature Disappears

The cross passage was a key feature of the plan of the "manner house" during the first twenty years of the occupation. The only reason for its presence was the approval of convenient access for servants to the shared hall as an integral part of the operation of an agricultural household. Several recent excavations and the

reevaluation of earlier archaeological research show that it was a widely employed architectural form in the seventeenth-century Chesapeake, as it was in late medieval England.

If the cross-passage plan was acceptable to many early planters at the highest social levels, it did not remain so for long. At The Clifts, the pattern of spatial usage which the plan entailed began to change at the close of the seventeenth century. The spatial distribution of $^{7}/_{64}$ inch bore diameter pipestems, most of which were discarded in the late 1680's and the 1690's, points to the trend (Fig. 24). The near absence of accumulation of these pipestems immediately adjacent to the doors of the cross passage and beneath the service room, along with stratigraphic evidence, indicates that around 1690 the doors to the passage were blocked, and that the newly floored space once occupied by the service room was incorporated into the hall. At the same time the new servants' quarter was acquiring a respectable pipestem midden of its own, suggesting that its occupants were spending more time in the quarter and less in the "manner house". The pipestem distributions which date to the early eighteenth century show that this pattern was maintained and in fact grew more pronounced in the last three decades of the occupation (Fig. 25).

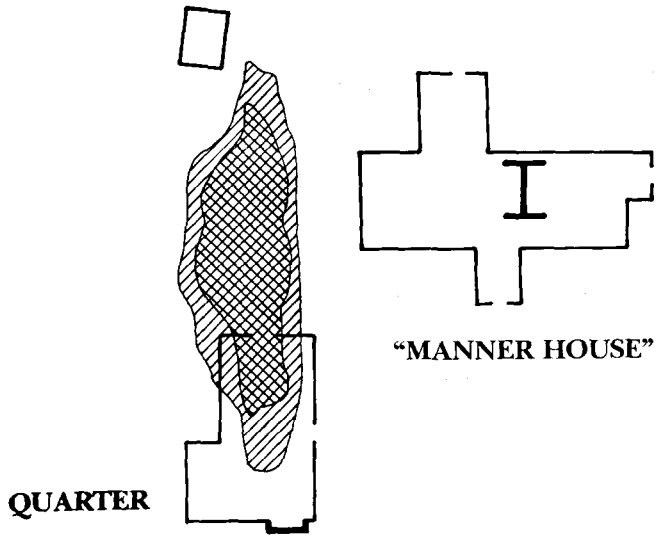
Additional evidence for change in the use of architectural space is provided by the rather different spatial distributions of two sorts of ceramics, each reflecting the loca-



Distribution of $^{7}/_{64}$" Pipe Stems

FIGURE 24

FIGURE 25

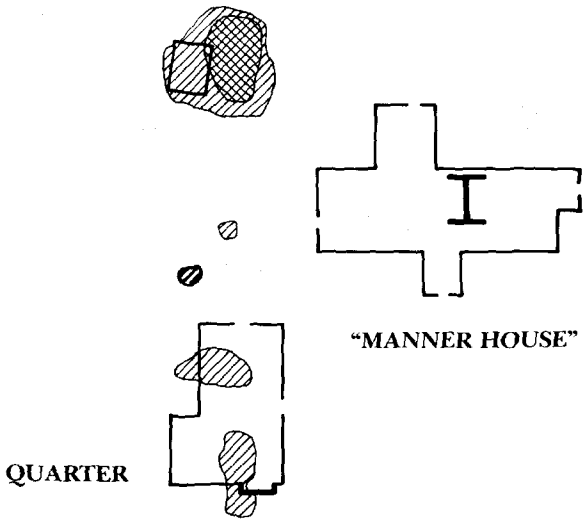


Distribution of $^{6}/_{64}$" Pipe Stems

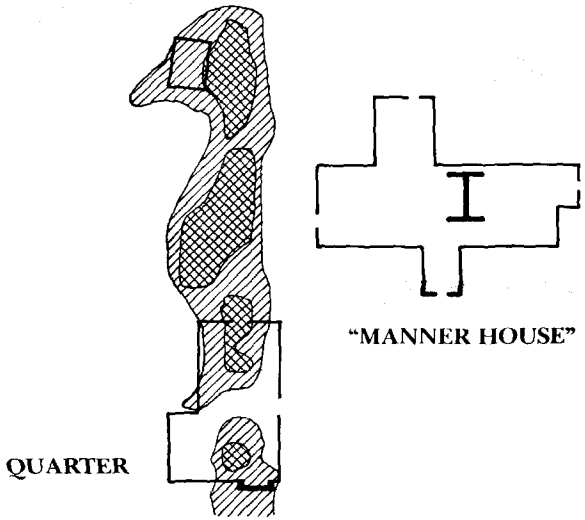
tion of different kinds of activities in a rough-and-ready way. For the most part, coarse wares come in shapes used in dairying and cooking, while vessels used in dining and drinking occur predominantly in fine wares. Since the great majority of sherds considered here are from vessels that were used and broken during the second half of the occupation (that is after *circa* 1705), their distribution reflects activity location during that later period.

The high concentration of coarse ceramics associated with the 8 by 10 foot outbuilding erected *circa* 1710 just northwest of the "manner house" is the basis for the conclusion that it was a dairy (Fig. 26). Fine-ceramic sherds occur here in significant numbers as well, a situation to be expected since the probate inventories indicate that serving and dining vessels, in addition to butter pots and milk pans, were commonly stored in dairies during the period (Fig. 27). The concentrations of both fine and coarse ceramics found within and around the quarter suggest that food preparation and consumption went on there, allowing the quarter, with its substantial fireplace and storage cellar, to double as a kitchen as well as a separate living area. In contrast, the dearth of coarse ceramics adjacent to the hall in the "manner house" is striking. Apparently by the early eighteenth century, messy chores like dairying and cooking had been moved out of the dwelling, along with the people who performed them.

FIGURE 26



Distribution of Coarse Ceramics



Distribution of Fine Ceramics

FIGURE 27

The Architecture of Privacy

A complementary development dating to about 1690 was the addition of a ten-foot bay to the chamber, nearly doubling its size (Fig. 16). Thirty years later, a shed addition 4 by 16 feet was erected along its southern side (Fig. 21). The chamber's role as a private sleeping/withdrawing room was assuming greater importance. Its enlargement meant that more of the life of the family and its circle of social intimates could be kept consistently out of the hall. The hall was apparently given over to dining (which was becoming increasingly formalized) and to necessary dealings with outsiders.

The Westmoreland room-by-room inventories bear out the trend to toward familial privacy in the county as a whole. Beds appear in the halls of nearly half the houses so inventoried in the seventeenth century, while none appear in that location in the first three decades of the eighteenth century. These changes are all the more striking when it is remembered that concurrent shifts in the arrangement and use of space were limiting the frequency with which social inferiors had to enter the house.

By the end of the occupation, porch entries protected the doors in both the eastern and western gable ends of the "manner house." (Figs. 21) In addition, there was by then a similar, if smaller and less substantial, enclosure guarding a door opened in the northern wall in the hall about 1720 to provide direct access to the newly dug privy pit in the backyard. Again, synchronous developments are to be found in the inventories. A porch appears on only one house inventoried room by room in the seventeenth century, and it belonged to a gentleman who died in 1698. Yet nearly half the houses so inventoried between 1700 and 1730 had one. Porches provided planters with an area inside the house, but at the same time separate from any of its living spaces, in which persons who were not family members could be dealt with at arm's length.

Planters and Their Laborers

By the end of the occupation, the "manner house" had ceased to be a farmhouse in the traditional sense, that is a base of both domestic and agricultural life. Instead it had become a residence whose interior arrangements were contrived to control access by outsiders and interaction with them. Of the several factors which underlay this alteration, two seem especially important.

By the 1680's, as a result of a drop in the birth rate and improved economic conditions in England, Chesapeake planters were no longer able to rely on the middling ranks of Englishmen as their main source of labor. They turned to other recruits: poor Englishmen, Irishmen and Africans. The termination in 1698 of the Royal Africa Company's monopoly on the slave trade for the first time gave planters access to large numbers of slaves brought to the colonies in chains directly from Africa.

As we have seen, blacks were not an important part of the labor force at The Clifts until *circa* 1705. Yet the important shift in the use of architectural space, signaled by the blocking of the cross passage and erection of the new quarter/kitchen occurred about 1690. Changes in the nature of the white labor force were apparently responsible for this timing. And it is probably no coincidence that the county inventories from this period show the increasingly frequent appearance of servants with Irish names.

Secondly, if most seventeenth-century planters had begun their Chesapeake careers with quite ordinary stations in life, similar to those of their laborers, with the passage of time, the memories of that shared past faded and eventually disappeared. From this perspective, it is perhaps significant that the architectural changes considered so far began at The Clift roughly a generation after the plantation was settled. As a result of these shifts, one at the top of society and the other at the bottom, the common experience of the hall gave way to the segregation of "manner house" and quarter.

Eating, Drinking and Status

The Role of Pewter

If architecture has a social dimension, so do the vessels used in the consumption of food and drink. Early Chesapeake planters ate and drank from vessels made from a wide variety of materials, including wood, pewter and pottery. However, the archaeologist does not find the remains of wooden vessels, which rot in the ground, or pewter vessels which could be "recycled" and therefore were seldom thrown away. On the other hand, ceramics are especially ubiquitous on archaeological sites. Pots broke often and the fragments were immediately discarded. But it turns out, perhaps to the archaeologist's chagrin, that in the seventeenth century many of even the wealthiest planters possessed very limited collections of ceramics. The inventory of Captain John Lee, Thomas Lee's uncle, who died in 1674, shows that he owned many pewter vessels but few ceramic ones, plain or fancy.

Pewter dishes, plates and/or saucers were standard dining equipment during the seventeenth century (Figure 28). Nathaniel Pope, who died in 1660, left nine saucers, twelve plates, and thirty-six dishes, all of pewter. At the opposite end of the economic scale, one George Rosier, who died in 1657, possessed three pewter plates and as many saucers. In England, as early as 1587, William Harrison commented on the ownership of pewter by "inferior artificers and many farmers", who had recently replaced their wooden flatwares with metal ones.

The great majority of Chesapeake planters had enough pewter eating vessels to suggest that they were seldom if ever shared at the table. However, if pewter eating vessels were common and abundant, pewter drinking vessels were not. For example, Nathaniel Pope boasted only four pewter drinking pots. The inevitable conclusion is that, unless drinking vessels in other materials were present in a planter's household, they were being shared on social occasions.

FIGURE 28

A Revolution in Drinking Habits

Given the dearth of pewter drinking vessels in the households of Westmoreland planters, it is noteworthy that the most dramatic change recorded in the ceramic fragments at The Clifts was the proliferation of drinking vessels in the second half of the occupation. In 1705-1720 the number of drinking vessels tripled over what it had been during the 1670-1685 and 1685-1705 periods. And in 1720-1730 it tripled again to an impressive seventy-four. The coarse earthenware cups made by local potter Morgan Jones from the first period and the Staffordshire slipware cups of the second gave way to an avalanche of mugs (Figs. 29 and 30), first in English brown stoneware and Rhenish blue-gray stoneware and finally in English white saltglaze stoneware (Figs. 31 and 32).

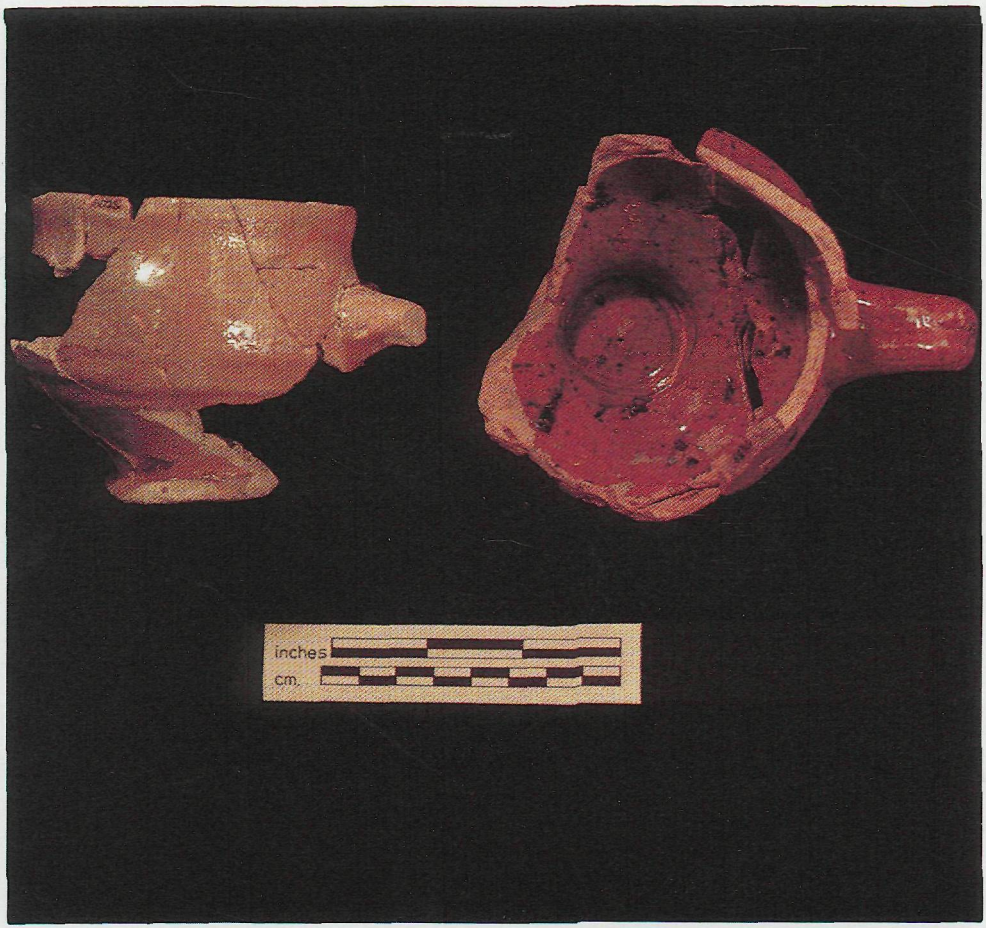


FIGURE 29

FIGURE 30

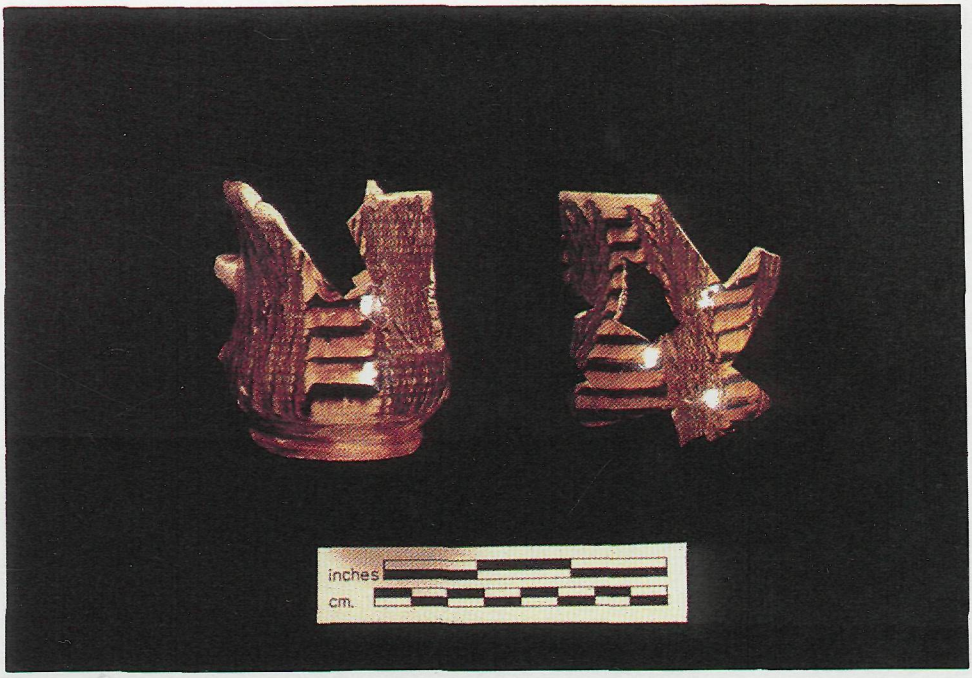


FIGURE 31

Apparently until about 1705 at The Clifts, drinking vessles were being shared at least on social occasions by the master, his family and visitors. But the pattern changed quickly, with sharing progressively confined to smaller circles of social intimacy until it disappeared entirely in the last decade of the occupation.

The second half of the occupation also saw the appearance of vessels specifically intended for social occasions. Fragments of three English delft punch bowls and several wine glasses crop up in the findings from the 1705-1720 period. In the last decade, the number of punch bowls roughly tripled, and wine glasses continued to be used and broken along side them. The enjoyment of punch, with a bowl at center table and a glass for each person around it, allowed a controlled conviviality without the mutual physical contact implicit in shared drinking vessels (Figs. 33 and 34).

Tea drinking, represented by seven delft tea cups and ten saucers from the 1720-1730 period, served the occupants of the "manner house" in a similar fashion. The quantity of special-purpose vessels involved in the preparation and consumption of the modish beverage betrays the new interest in formality (Figs. 35 and 36).

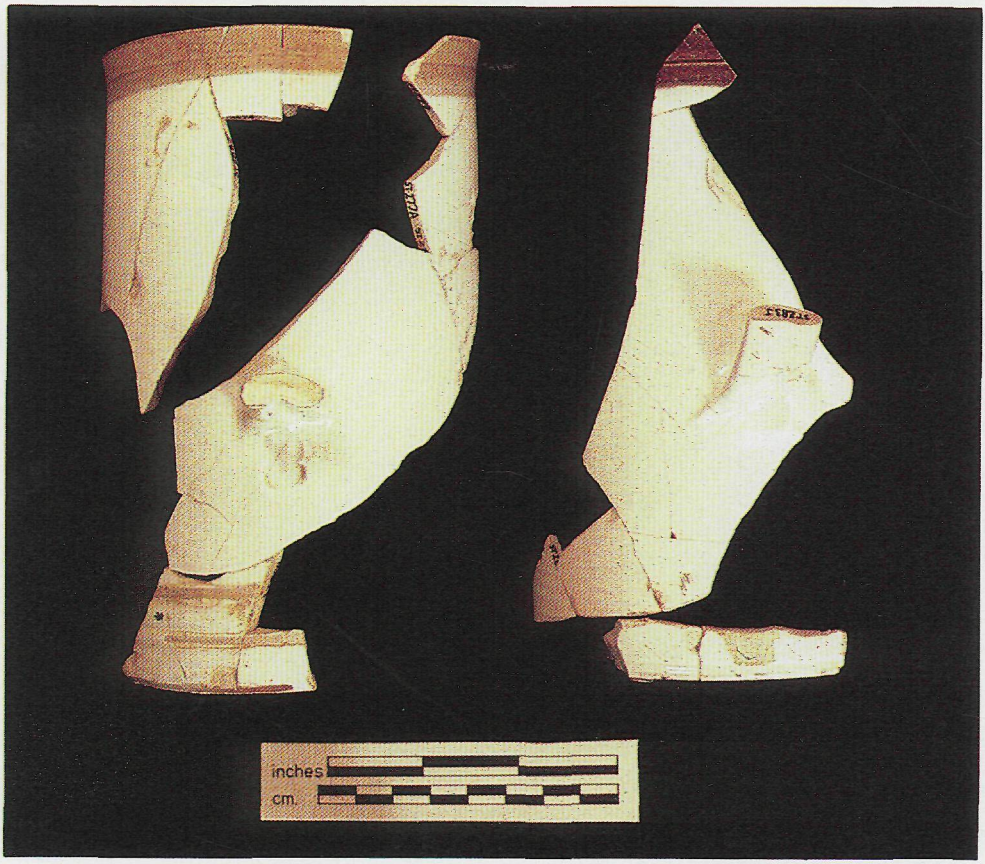


FIGURE 32

FIGURE 33

FIGURE 34

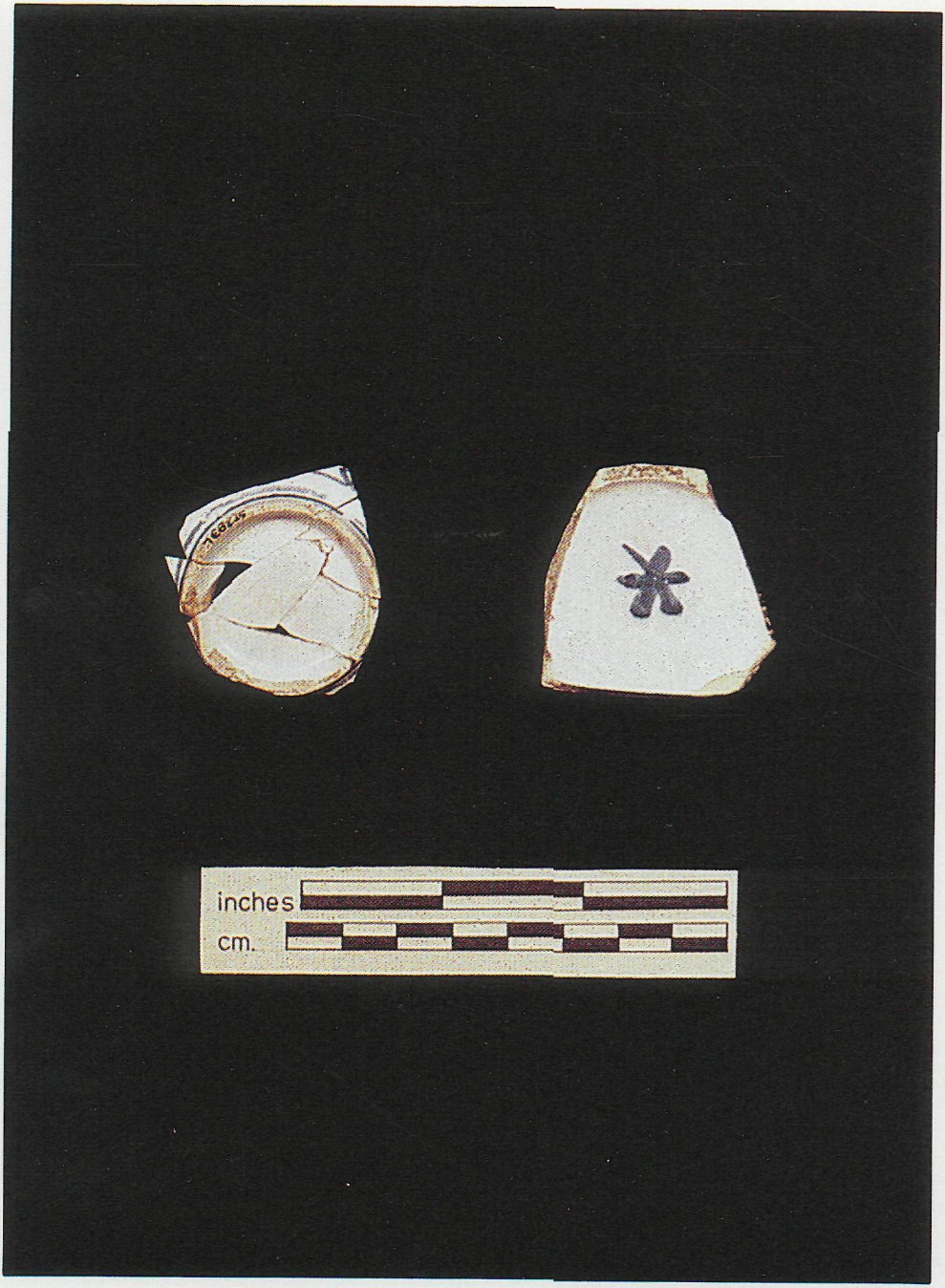


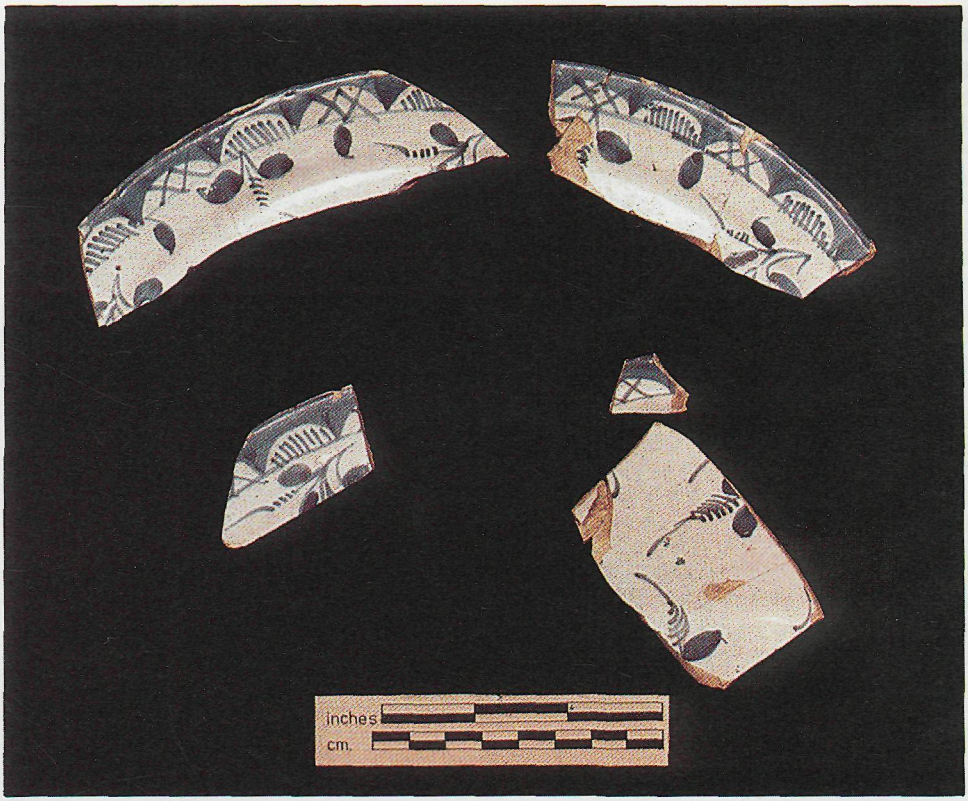
FIGURE 35

FIGURE 36

Changing Patterns in Dining In the first half of the occupation, The Clifts' inhabitants, like their contemporaries ate for the most part from pewter flatwares, supplimenting these with a few ceramic vessels. Between 1670 and 1685 the findings show a single North Devon sgraffito dish and two white delft plates. Around 1685-1705 appear three plates, one in delft and two in majolica, and an equal number of sgraffito dishes. However the number of delft dining vessels from the next period (seven plates, four basins and three dishes) indicates that by 1705-1720 the plantation's proprietors could set a table entirely in that ware, in contrast to the motley collection of pewter and ceramics which were apparently in use earlier (Fig. 37). By 1720-1730 the dinner table could be set with delft plates and

FIGURE 37

FIGURE 38



basins in the same pattern (Fig. 38). In addition, the proportions of dishes to plates from the second half of the occupation, and especially from the 1720-1730 period, betray a practical recognition of the distinction between serving and individual consumption vessels (dishes and plates respectively). This distinction, which judging from the inventories was not generally observed in the seventeenth century, lent greater formality to dining in much the same way that the punch bowl and its accompanying wine glasses imparted a new kind of order to social drinking.

The increase in the number of ceramic vessels during the course of the occupation of The Clifts was astonishing; from thirty-four in the 1670-1685 period, to thirty-seven in 1685-1705, to seventy-eight in 1705-1720, to one hundred ninety-nine in 1720-1730. The probate inventories indicate that it was paralleled in the county at large. It was no coincidence that the forms involved, those which showed the most persistent increases at The Clifts, were those related to eating and drinking. In contrast dairy-related vessels remained ubiquitous throughout the occupation. The changes outlined above tended to provide an increasingly tight physical structure to social exchange between planters when either beverage or food consumption accompanied it. They worked in much the same way as the new architectural arrangements outlined above helped planters order their dealings with their servants and slaves, and indeed with free men as well.

Symbols of Status Objects of silver and large numbers of pewter plates and/or dishes found in the households of many seventeenth-century Chesapeake gentlemen signalled their owners' rank in the social hierarchy. With the dawn of the eighteenth century, wealthy planters continued to own both. However for the first time, the majority of them, including the proprietors of The Clifts, began to invest in social markers of another sort. The old symbols were somehow no longer adequate.

Among these new symbols were certain kinds of ceramics and table glass. Unlike pewter and silver these were not especially valuable in themselves. This was certainly true of delft, a cheap European imitation of Chinese porcelain listed by inventory-takers as "bastard China".It was the ware behind much of the dramatic increase in the number of ceramic vessels at The Clifts. But even real Chinese porcelain was less costly than traditional pewter.

While pewter plates had served to mark and legitimize the position of persons within society, ceramic and glass baubles set their owners off as members of a group within it, as individuals whose primary social identification was with that group and not with society as a whole. For the early eighteenth-century gentry, delft dinner sets and punch bowls served among other possessions to distinguish "them" from "us".

In Virginia this kind of change went all but unnoticed by contemporaries, and the passing of older social forms which it signaled went unremarked. However when it overtook the more tradition-bound areas of rural England in the early nineteenth century, one observer recorded his impression.

In 1825 William Cobbett attended the auction of a farm and its furnishings in Surrey. What he found there would not have been out of place in Virginia a century earlier:

> One end of this plain and substantial house had been moulded into a *"parlour"*, and there was the mahogany table, and the fine chairs, and the fine glass and all as bare-faced upstart as any stock jobber in the kingdom can boast of. And there were the decanters, the glasses, the "dinner set" of crockery ware, and all just in the true stock jobber style. And I dare say it has been *'Squire* Charington and *Miss* Charington; and not just plain Master Charington, and his son Hodge and his daughter Betty Charington, all of whom this accursed system has transmuted into a species of mock gentlefolk. . . .
>
> This 'Squire Charington's father used I dare say to sit at the head of the oak table along with his men, say grace to them, and cut up the meat and the pudding. He might take a cup of strong beer to himself, when they had none; but that was pretty nearly all the difference in the manner of their living. So that *all* lived well. But the 'Squire has many *wine glasses* and *wine decanters* and a *"dinner set"* and a *"breakfast set"* and *"desert knives"*, and these evidently imply carryings on and a consumption which must of necessity have greatly robbed the great oak table if it had remained fully tenanted. That oak table could not share in the work of the decanters and the dinner set.

The "work of the decanters and the dinner set" in the early eighteenth-century Chesapeake seems to have been the result of several factors. Among them was the maturation of colonial society. Three-quarters of Chesapeake immigrants arrived as indentured servants, most of them recruited from the "middling ranks" of England. Some prospered and others did not, but their common origins and opportunity for advancement allowed the fortunate and not-so-fortunate to feel a certain amount of social solidarity. With the emmergence of a native-born elite and the restriction of upward social mobility, this shared background began to disappear. Its disappearance was hastened by the entry of many wealthy planters into large-scale mercantile dealings with their neighbors, a move which introduced the conflicting interests of the market to the local level.

As Cobbett's observation suggests, the changes heralded by the decanters and the dinner set were not unique to the Chesapeake. They occured throughout the Atlantic community, at different times in different places.

As commerce and the world economy expanded during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, people living in relatively simple and self-contained communities were drawn into increasingly frequent and often divisive political and economic contacts with others. The shared assumptions which had previously given order to social experience began to fall apart in the face of the resulting greater complexity. People increasingly looked to objects, from houses to pots, to order their relations with one another and communicate their increasingly unique perceptions of self and group membership.

Two Worlds: An Epilogue

Thomas Lee was heir to all the changes which have been monitored in the archaeological record at The Clifts. They leap to the eye in the mansion which he built about 1730 and in the mansions which his peers erected in Virginia in the second quarter of the eighteenth century (Figs. 39 and 40). Through the teachings of The Clifts, one can better understand the relegation of farm activities to outbuildings, the confinement of chores like cooking to the dependencies, the location of slave quarters at a distance, the dedication of Stratford's central hall, unheated yet the most highly decorated room in the house, to social usage as a reception area for visitors (Fig. 41). The actual living areas of the house were separated from visitors not only by this affecting room but passages leading off it on either side. Indeed the most public living rooms at Stratford were less accessible than the most private one at The Clifts. Finally, at Stratford the lavish and ornamental use of brick in both the mansion and its dependencies proclaimed the owner's social eminence and offered a sharp contrast to an earlier day when the dwellings of the Lees and their neighbors were of wood.

The Clifts in the 1670's and Stratford in the 1730's were the products of two quite different societies. Today The Clifts resides in a world we have lost. But Stratford is still very much with us. By trying to understand how one was transformed into the other, we can hope to understand something more about Stratford and about ourselves.

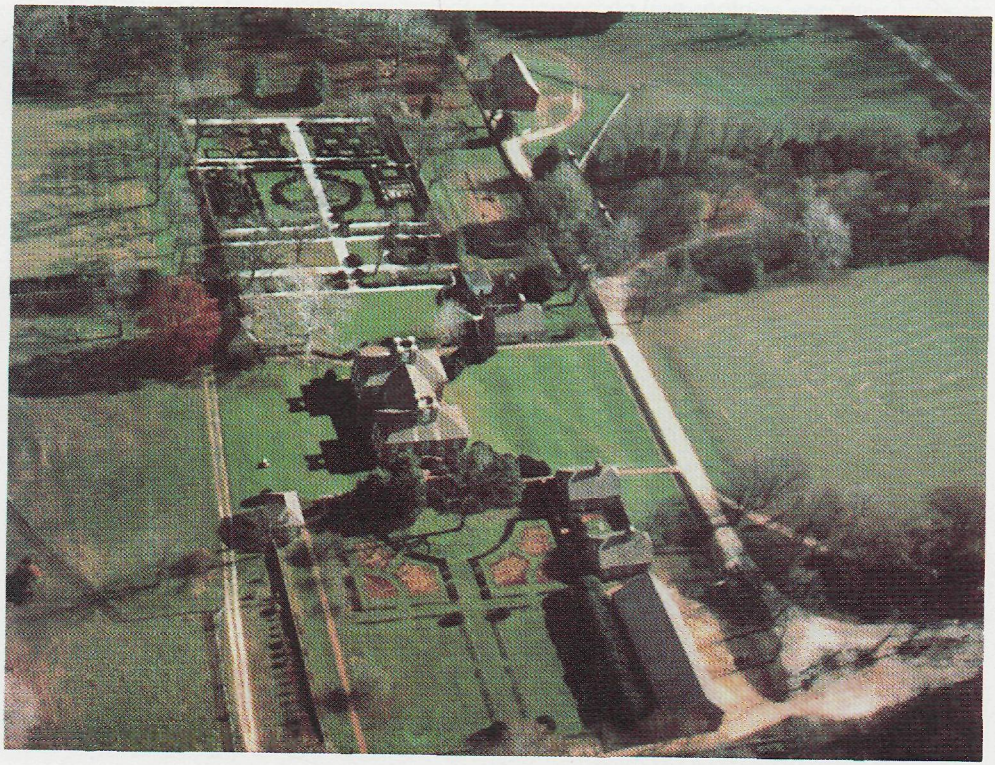
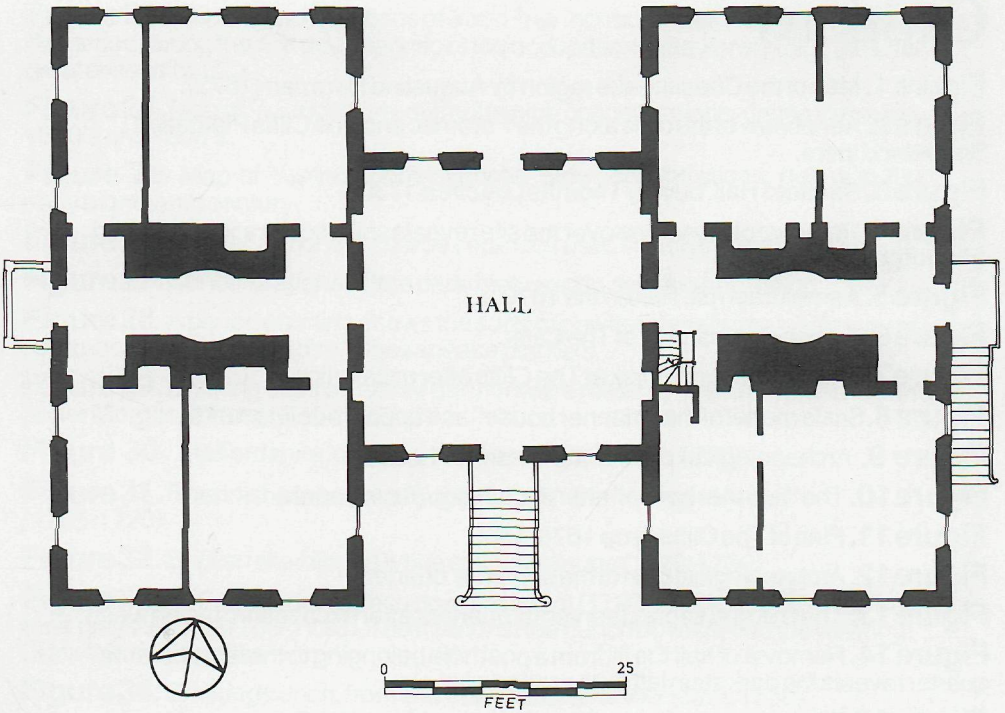


FIGURE 39

FIGURE 40



Floorplan of Stratford Hall

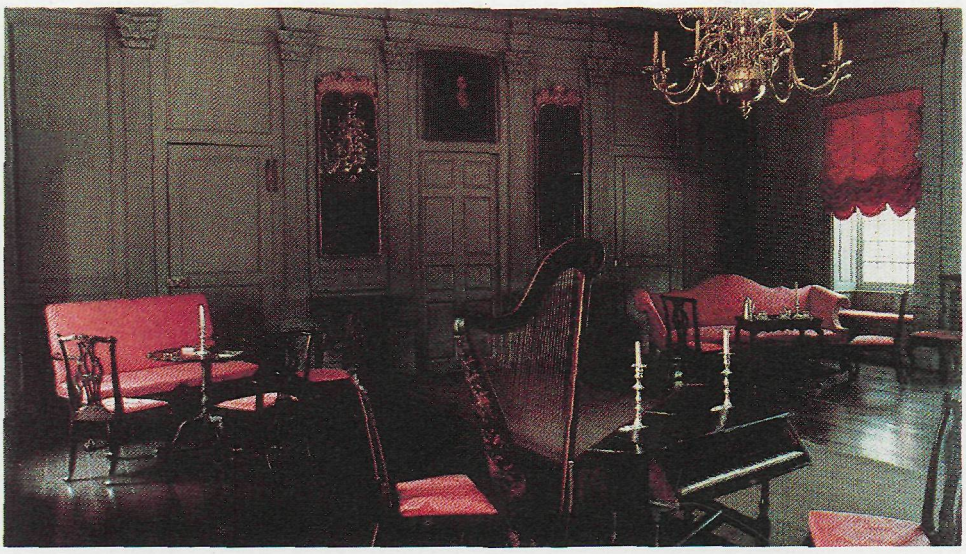


FIGURE 41

Captions

Figure 1. Map of the Chesapeake region by Augustine Herrman (1673).

Figure 2. Aerial view of the cliffs along the Potomac and The Clifts Plantation Site behind them.

Figure 3. Stratford Hall, built by Thomas Lee *circa* 1730.

Figure 4. Removal of plow zone over the site reveals soil discolorations marking a line of post holes.

Figure 5. A small trash pit, filled in the 1670's.

Figure 6. Archaeological plan of The Clifts.

Figure 7. The domestic complex at The Clifts after excavation.

Figure 8. Scale model of the "manner house" as it appeared *circa* 1675.

Figure 9. Archaeological plan of the "manner house".

Figure 10. The "manner house" after excavation (facing north).

Figure 11. Plan of The Clifts *circa* 1670-1685.

Figure 12. Archaeological plan of the servants' quarters.

Figure 13. The first and second servants' quarters after excavation (facing west).

Figure 14. Removal of half the fill from a post hole belonging to the first servants' quarter reveals the dark stain left by the rotted post.

Figure 15. The bastion on the northwest corner of the palisade.

Figure 16. Plan of The Clifts *circa* 1685-1705.

Figure 17. The cellar beneath the heated room of the second servants' quarter after excavation.

Figure 18. Plan of The Clifts *circa* 1705-1720.

Figure 19. The Barn after excavation.

Figure 20. The ditch-set (1705-1720) and post-and-rail (1720-1730) garden enclosures to the east of the "manner house" (facing northwest).

Figure 21. Plan of The Clifts *circa* 1720-1730.

Figure 22. A white female buried during the first half of the occupation. One of the oldest individuals in the cemetery, she died in her late thirties, having long before lost all her teeth.

Figure 23. Map of concentrations of 9 and $^{8}/_{64}$-inch bore-diameter pipestems, discarded during the first decade or so of the occupation. Heavier shading denotes greater density.

Figure 24. Map of $^{7}/_{64}$-inch bore-diameter pipe concentrations, dating to the late 1680's and 1690's.

Figure 25. Map of $^{6}/_{64}$-inch bore-diameter pipe concentrations, dating to the early eighteenth century.

Figure 26. Concentrations of coarse ceramics used in dairying and cooking.

Figure 27. Concentrations of fine ceramics used in drinking and dining.

Figure 28. A period painting shows the sorts of pewter vessels (mainly flatwares) common in the households of Chesapeake planters.

Figure 29. Drinking cups of coarse earthenware made by Westmoreland-County potter Morgan Jones (1670-1685).

Figure 30. Staffordshire combed slipware cups (1685-1705).

Figure 31. Rhennish stoneware mug with "AR" (Anna Regina) mark (1705-1720).

Figure 32. English slip-dipped white saltglaze mugs (1720-1730).

Figure 33. An English delft punch bowl fragment (1720-1730) and "Silesian"-type wine glass stems (1705-1720). The interior of the punch bowl carried the warning: Drink fair, don't swear.

Figure 34. Drinking punch, from *The Musical Entertainer* (circa 1739).

Figure 35. Bases of English delft tea cups (1720-1730).

Figure 36. Drinking tea, from an English painting (*circa* 1730).

Figure 37. An English delft fluted dish (top) and plates (1705-1720).

Figure 38. Fragments from a matched set of English delft plates and basins (1720-1730).

Figure 39. Stratford Hall.

Figure 40. Plan of the upper floor, Stratford.

Figure 41. Interior of the hall, Stratford.