Interim Report: The Archaeology of Rich Neck Plantation

VDHR File Number 97-1411-F

Leslie McFaden, Philip Levy, David Muraca, and Jennifer Jones

with contributions by
Dr. Douglas Owsley, D. Hunt, and Emily Williams

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Marley R. Brown III
Principal Investigator

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Chapter 1.
Introduction

This manuscript is presented as an interim report on the archaeological investigation of Rich Neck Plantation (state site 44WB52), in Williamsburg, Virginia. Chapter 1 provides a project background and a brief physical description, including the environs of the site and a list of those responsible for the excavation. Chapter 2 recounts the history of the property. Chapter 3 describes the excavation strategy and summarizes the results from 1993 through 1998. Chapters 4 and 5 present interpretations of the Rich Neck site based on fieldwork results to date. These interpretations are preliminary in nature, and future excavations will not only add to, but may alter, our understanding of this seventeenth-century plantation. Included in this section are detailed accounts of a grave excavation and Dr. Doug Owsley’s interpretation of the skeletal remains. Appendix 1 gives Dr. Owsley’s full report, and Appendix 2 describes how the remains were lifted.

Project Background

In 1988, the plantation known as “Rich Neck” was first identified during construction of the nearby Yorkshire housing development. Archaeologists surveying that neighborhood were given permission to survey a portion of the adjacent woods where they found evidence of a seventeenth-century site (Figure 1). This site was reinvestigated four years later when McCale Development Corporation formulated plans to develop those woods as part of the Holly Hills residential development. At the request of McCale, in cooperation with John E. Matthews and Associates, Inc., Colonial Williamsburg’s Department of Archaeological Research (DAR) conducted aPhase II investigation of the area late in winter 1992. Testing revealed several artifact concentrations, and also uncovered part of a brick foundation. That brickwork later proved to be one of a number of structures found on the seventeenth-century Rich Neck Plantation. A large-scale excavation of Rich Neck began in June 1993, with Colonial Williamsburg Foundation’s Department of Archaeological Research summer field school.

Recognizing the scale and importance of the site, the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, McCale Development Corporation, and the City of Williamsburg agreed to sponsor efforts to excavate the site, originally using a summer field school from the College of William & Mary. Excavation was originally conceived as a salvage operation that would last only ten weeks. Midway through the summer it became apparent that the completion of the excavation within that time frame was impossible given the size and complexity of the site. McCale adjusted the lot lines so that the site’s major features could be encompassed within two lots. The City and Colonial Williamsburg each purchased a lot, agreeing to sell them when the excavation was completed.

With a new schedule, the DAR used the remainder of the summer to investigate features outside of the purchased lots, and a field crew continued this work afterward for an additional eight weeks. From 1994 through 1998 field schools continued to be held at the site for ten weeks each summer. In 1998, Colonial Williamsburg sold its lot to a party interested in preserving the site permanently. The City still owns its parcel.

Excavations at the site also discovered an eighteenth-century slave quarter that was part of a later Ludwell plantation, located 100 feet north of the seventeenth-century complex. This quarter excavated in 1994 and 1995 by Dr. Maria Franklin and Anna Agbe-Davies. Results are given elsewhere (Franklin 1997; Agbe-Davies 1999).

The Director of the Department of Archaeological Research, Marley R. Brown III, served as
principal investigator for the entire Rich Neck project. Staff Archaeologist David Muraca formulated the overall research design for the excavation and was responsible for its implementation. Various staff members have overseen the field school excavations over the years. They are:

1993 – David Muraca, Amy Kowalski, and Leslie McFaden
1994 – David Muraca and Fred Smith
1995 – David Muraca, Rob Galgano, Paul Moyer and Phil Levy
1996 – Phil Levy and David Muraca
1997 – Phil Levy, John Coombs, and David Muraca
1998 – Phil Levy, John Coombs, and David Muraca

Jennifer Jones, Leslie McFaden, Paul Moyer, and Phil Levy contributed to the history section. Laboratory Technicians Susan Wiard and Lisa Fischer cataloged the finds and oversaw all artifact processing.

Physical Description

The Rich Neck site is located in the city of Williamsburg, Virginia. Designated as state site number 44WB52, Rich Neck lies geographically in the Atlantic Coastal Plain. In Virginia, this region is known as the Tidewater area, and forms a wide border along the eastern end of the state. Here the topography is fairly level and low-lying, and rivers and major creeks are generally navigable. The James River, which runs just two and a half miles south of Rich Neck, is navigable from the sea as far west as Richmond. College Creek is a tributary of the James that is located three-quarters of a mile due south of Rich Neck. In the seventeenth century, before silt runoff from decades of farming closed the channel, College Creek was a viable thoroughfare for merchant ships.

The site is situated east of Jamestown Road, in the “Phase I” section of the Holly Hills development behind Walsingham Academy. The site consists of a broad terrace bordered on the west, east,
and south by steep ravines that drain into seasonal tributaries of College Creek. One of these ravines lies about 100 feet east of the site. Excavation revealed that the ravine originally branched, and both arms extended closer to the site area during the colonial era before completely silting in. Presently, only a small spring is located just east of the site. Elevation of the terrace is some seventy feet above mean sea level.
Chapter 2.
History of Seventeenth-Century Rich Neck

A number of sources provided historical data concerning the Rich Neck tract and the plantation site itself. Land patents recorded in Volume I of Nell Nugent’s *Cavaliers and Pioneers* (1977) were of primary importance. Secondary sources that were useful for the documents cited were the *William and Mary Quarterly* (WMQ), and the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (VMHB).

Setting: Middle Plantation

During the seventeenth century, Rich Neck was on the western edge of the community of Middle Plantation. That community was later selected as the home of the eighteenth-century capital of Virginia, and was renamed Williamsburg. At the time of Rich Neck’s occupation during the second, third, and fourth quarters of the seventeenth century, Jamestown (or “James Cittie”) some five miles to the southwest, was the seat of government. Although settlement in the colony spread throughout the Tidewater from Lower Norfolk to the Northern Neck, it was restricted to east of the Fall Line.

Middle Plantation began to be settled during the 1630s, when the government ordered a palisade to be built that would span the peninsula between the James and York rivers. The Palisade of 1634 demarcated the line between Indian- and English-controlled land. It joined the James River on the east side of Archer’s Hope Creek (now called College Creek). Early settlers obtained large tracts of land, giving the community a dispersed, patchwork appearance. At first, plantations clustered around the mouth of the creek and eventually expanded inward. A 1642 map shows several structures, one of which may be 44WB52. Archaeological survey of this area has identified four seventeenth-century sites.

![Figure 3. Location of Middle Plantation (adapted from conjectural drawing by Martha McCartney).](image-url)
Middle Plantation started out in the hands of a few individuals, including George Menefie, Secretary Richard Kemp, John Utey, Humphrey Higgenson, Charles Leach, and Richard Pipeley, all of who owned large tracts of land. The settlement grew as patents were issued for tracts between 50 and 200 acres during the second half of the century. By 1676, Middle Plantation was considered to be the center of the colony. Situated on the west fringe of this community, Rich Neck was one of the early sprawling tracts.

**Rich Neck**

Rich Neck served as a country plantation for some of the most prominent and powerful individuals in seventeenth-century Virginia. Occupied from the mid-1630s until around the end of the century, the plantation was convenient to the colonial capital at Jamestown. After the site was abandoned the property remained in the hands of the politically and socially influential Ludwell family throughout the eighteenth century. By the nineteenth century much of the acreage from the original tract had been divided and sold, and the portion bearing the original name of Rich Neck became a 600-acre family farm.

**Menefie Ownership 1635-1636**

The first person to patent the Rich Neck tract, George Menefie, arrived in Virginia in 1622 aboard the *Samuell* and soon established himself as a merchant and a member of the Council of State (Nugent 1979). The 1624 muster for the colony listed Menefie as having two servants and two houses, one of which was at Jamestown (Nugent 1979). Menefie served as a Burgess for James City County in 1629, and by the time he patented Rich Neck in 1635 he was a member of the Governor’s Council, an office he held until his death. A wealthy merchant, he was also an agent for Englishmen who held estates in Virginia. On July 2, 1635 he patented 1200 acres in James City County:

*Being a neck of land commonly called the Rich Neck, bounded on the W. with a br. Of Archers Hope Cr. Which parts this from the barren Neck on E. with main br. Of sd. Cr. to the head, thence w on a direct line to the head of sd. br. (Nugent 1979).*

Menefie obtained the Rich Neck patent by paying passage for 24 immigrants, including an East Indian and a Turk (Nugent 1979).

Besides being one of the richest men of his day, Menefie was one of the most important political figures in pre-Restoration Virginia. Menefie was not afraid to use his political power, as witnessed by his participation in the ouster of Governor John Harvey (Billings 1975).

Menefie does not appear to have lived at Rich Neck (though at least one local scholar suspects that he may have). In 1639, Menefie paid the transportation of 60 individuals to Virginia, in turn receiving 3000 acres on the north side of the York River. Like other members of the Council, Menefie kept a house in Jamestown for use when that body was in session. A second home, a plantation called Littleton, was located near Jamestown. At least one source refers to an elaborate garden on Menefie’s property:

*A few hours sail from Blunt Point and near Jamestown, was the next most attractive place owned by an enterprising merchant, George Menefie. His large garden contained the fruits of Holland, and the roses of Provence, and his orchard was planted with apple, pear, and cherry trees, and here the peach was cultivated for the first time in North American. Around the house were rosemary, thyme, and marjoram, favorites of that age (Neill 1886:112).*

Such an elaborate garden suggests that Menefie was a prosperous man with a stake in society who intended his sojourn in North America to be more than a brief visit. Most historians agree that this garden was planted at Littleton (Wright 1940). By the time of his death in 1646 Menefie had moved his residence to Buckland, an 8000-acre plantation in Charles City County.
Menefie owned Rich Neck for less than a year. He sold it on February 23, 1636 to Richard Kemp, a contemporary on the Council and Governor Harvey's Secretary of State (Nugent 1979). Kemp formally patented the land two years later, adding an additional 100 acres for transporting two persons to the colony, “Tonie & Gereene, Negroes” (Nugent 1979:105). A land plat drawn in 1642 shows the tract and several structures close to College Creek.

Kemp re-patented his 1200-acre estate in 1643. In that deed, he consolidated the Rich Neck tract, a new 2192-acre tract, and 940 acres in previous patents into a contiguous 4332-acre tract situated on either side of College Creek. By that same deed Kemp sold 600 acres of Rich Neck to Thomas Hill (which Hill patented in 1645), and 50 acres to Captain Francis Pott (Nugent 1979:143, 159-160). Hill's acreage adjoined the Palisade and thus was on the east side of College Creek. Several years earlier, in 1638, Kemp had purchased from Menefie an 840-acre tract called the Meadows that was near Rich Neck on College Creek. At the same time, Kemp was granted 50 acres for his own passage and 800 acres for the passage of 16 more persons, including eleven blacks (Nugent 1979:104).

Richard Kemp was the first owner to live at Rich Neck. In his will he described himself as Richard Kemp of Rich Neck. Excavation of the site unearthed a wine bottle seal embossed with the initials “RK.” Given the short period of occupation of the site and the limited numbers of individuals who owned this tract, the initials certainly are those of Richard Kemp.

One of Kemp’s requests was for his body to be buried in his orchard (VMHB 1894(2):174). He doubtlessly raised tobacco on some portion of the tract, and the ravine-cut woods adjacent to College Creek probably sheltered swine and cattle. According to an inscribed stone slab marking the grave of Thomas Ludwell, a later owner of the property, his wish to be buried on the property was granted. The slab was moved to Bruton Parish churchyard sometime before 1891 for safekeeping. It reads (Anonymous 1911):

Under this Marble lieth the Body of THOMAS LUDWELL Esqr Secretary of Virginia, who was born at Bruton in the County of SOMERSET in the Kingdom of ENGLAND, and departed this life in the Year 1678 And near this place lye the Bodies of RICHARD KEMP, esqr, his Predecessor in ye Secretaries Office and Sr THOMAS LUNSFORD KT in Memory of whom the Marble is placed by the Order of Philip Ludwell esqr Nephew of the said THOMAS LUDWELL In the year 1727.

By the time of his death, Kemp had married the former Elizabeth Wormeley. The two had a daughter, Elizabeth, who was dead by the time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Menefie</td>
<td>1635-1636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Kemp</td>
<td>1636-1650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Kemp Lunsford</td>
<td>1650-1665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Lunsford</td>
<td>1650-1653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Ludwell</td>
<td>1665-c.1700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip Ludwell</td>
<td>1665-c.1700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kemp’s will was proved in 1656, six years after his death. Naming his wife as executrix, in his will he directed that she sell the plantation and move back to England (VMHB 1894(2):175).

Shortly after creating his will in 1650, Kemp died. Several land patents in 1650 and 1651 refer to Kemp as deceased (Nugent 1979).

**Lunsford Ownership 1650-1653**

Elizabeth Wormeley Kemp ignored the wishes of her deceased husband, stayed in Virginia and remarried, taking Sir Thomas Lunsford as her next husband. Lunsford was a colorful Royalist émigré who arrived in Virginia shortly after the execution of Charles I. In 1650 he patented a 3432-acre plantation on the Rappahannock River called Portobago (Nugent 1979). His second wife joined him but died soon after her arrival in the colony (WMQ (2)(3):197). Remarriages were swift and frequent in seventeenth-century Virginia, where a high mortality rate joined with the idea that marriage was an efficient way to either build or strengthen political and economic alliances. Both their spouses having recently died, and being social peers, Lunsford and Elizabeth married. Because Lunsford had been knighted, his new wife acquired the title of Lady.

Thomas Lunsford was probably dead by 1653. Beginning with that year, Thomas Lunsford is no longer mentioned in land patents, while references to Lady Elizabeth Lunsford appeared frequently until 1662 (Nugent 1979:229, 253, 282, 288). A land deed dated July 13, 1653 refers to a transaction in which Lady Elizabeth Lunsford granted 1800 acres in Northumberland County to William Withbye (Nugent 1979:229). Had her husband been alive, he also would have been named on the deed (probably to the exclusion of Elizabeth), for any property she had title to would have become his upon their marriage. Furthermore, in 1653, the grandmother of Lunsford’s daughters by his second marriage was appointed their guardian, indicating that Sir Thomas was dead (VMHB 1909(17):32).

Lady Elizabeth held her own among the landed gentry of the day. That Governor William Berkely and Council member Ludlow stood as witnesses for “Dame Elizabeth” in land deals testifies to her connections (Nugent 1979:229). After Lunsford’s death, she conducted land transactions without benefit of a husband before marrying Major-General Robert Smith (Nugent 1979:229, 288). Smith also held extensive tracts in Northumberland and Middlesex Counties, and was a high-ranking participant in county government (Nugent 1979: 228, 235). In 1675, he accompanied Thomas Ludwell and Colonel Francis Morgan to England as an agent of the colony.

Evidence indicates that Elizabeth and Thomas Lunsford lived at Rich Neck. The inscription of the marble slab quoted above states that Lunsford was buried near the other owners of Rich Neck. It is logical to assume that he was living on the property at the time of his death. Finally in 1665, Elizabeth carried out the wishes of her first husband, selling Rich Neck to Thomas Ludwell.

**Ludwell Period 1665-ca.1700**

Thomas Ludwell, a member of the Council, was born in Somerset County, England in 1628. He arrived in Virginia in 1646 as a headright of his cousin Sir William Berkeley (Nugent 1979:165). Governor Berkeley was also from Bruton, Somerset and this connection almost certainly led to Ludwell’s appointment to Secretary of State for the colony. By 1648 he had already patented a tract of land in James City County and was termed a “Gentleman” (Nugent 1979:429). He became Secretary in 1660, five years before acquiring Rich Neck. In 1663, he claimed land in Henrico county by paying the passage of a number of immigrants, including his younger brother Philip and two persons of African origin (Nugent 1979:429).

Like Kemp and Menefie before them, the Ludwells became among the most prominent and powerful men in the colony. But Thomas and Philip were different from the men who earlier owned the plantation. They were part of a group of men who would dominate the colony in the second half of the century. This second group of leading men, immigrants who arrived from England in the 1650s
and 1660s, would make up a self-conscious ruling class. They would amass enormous tracts of land, build larger, more substantial homes, and dominate the politics of Virginia through the increasingly powerful Council of State. Their sons would take positions in the Council as if by hereditary right. Thomas and Philip Ludwell fit this pattern of emerging colonial aristocracy well. The Ludwell brothers were in turn arguably the most powerful men in the colony short of the governor, and Philip appeared at times to even rival the chief executive in influence over the General Assembly. Philip’s son would carry on his government service into the next generation.

As Secretary, Thomas Ludwell was second only to Berkeley in prestige and power. His office entitled him to lucrative fees. He collected payment in tobacco for issuing land patents, marriage licenses, and for every other official document that was within the domain of his office (Morgan 1975). Like his predecessor Richard Kemp, Ludwell’s position as Secretary enabled him to sit on the Council, an office that entitled him to additional fees (Morgan 1975). In addition to his Rich Neck land, Ludwell patented several other tracts of land, the bulk of which were in New Kent and Westmoreland Counties. Like other prominent men of his time, Ludwell appears to have been a land speculator, engrossing huge tracts of land in the frontier areas of Virginia for the use of future Ludwells or to sell for profit. He purchased 1432 acres in Westmoreland County in 1670 and added 2994 acres to his holding in Henrico in 1671. His largest acquisition was made in New Kent County in 1673, when, with two partners, he patented 20,000 acres of land (Nugent 1977:84, 92, 130, 132).

Thomas Ludwell’s younger brother Philip was also born in Bruton, Somerset. He arrived in Virginia in 1660. With a cousin as Governor and an older brother as Secretary of State, it was not long before Philip began to acquire offices and prestige in the new colony. He was soon distinguished by the military title of Colonel – an indication that he was a military leader and chief planter. In 1667, he further secured his position in Virginia by marrying Lucy Bernard, a wealthy widow and mistress of Fairfield in Gloucester County. A 1671 document makes reference to Capt. Ludwell’s overseer in Gloucester County (Billings 1975:203). In 1674/75 Philip was appointed to the Council, and by 1676/7 he was a Deputy Secretary of State. After his brother died in 1678 he became the Secretary of State for the colony (Kukla 1981:89, 91).
Chapter 3.  
Excavation Strategies

The excavation strategies at Rich Neck varied season-by-season based on the extent of threat. First, a salvage excavation was implemented on portions of the site not protected from development. This included the part of the site threatened by road construction and areas south and east of the protected portions of the site, where development was imminent. When the salvage dig was completed, attention turned to the protected portion of the site.

The salvage excavation of the road area resulted in the greatest loss of plowzone data. The development schedule called for the construction of a road through the site. Because there was no time for careful archaeological removal of the plowzone, the road area was logged, and the plowzone stripped off by a Droit-40. This area was then shovel shaved, and all features were mapped, photographed, and excavated.

Figure 4. Excavation areas.
The excavation of the rest of the site was approached in a more controlled fashion. A grid established during the 1992 testing phase of the project was used and expanded. Oriented 50° east of magnetic north, the grid divided the site into one-meter squares. A datum was established at 500N, 500E. All locations in this text are in reference to grid north.

Except for the road area and three excavation units started before the agreement to preserve the site was in place, the plowzone was systematically excavated to maximize data retrieval. Each summer a portion of the site was selected for excavation. Once selected, 25% of the area’s plowzone was systematically excavated using one-meter squares. All artifacts except brick and mortar bits were collected. Using this data, the plowzone over areas containing either large numbers of artifacts or important features was completely excavated using one-meter squares. In areas containing moderate concentrations of artifacts and less important features an additional 50% of the plowzone was also excavated in one-meter units. In areas containing few artifacts and no features an additional 25% of the plowzone was excavated in one-meter squares. All plowzone units were screened through ¼ inch mesh. Once the plowzone was removed the newly exposed features and subsoil were trowel-cleaned and plan mapped. Features were then half excavated, profile drawings made, soil samples taken, and then the remaining half was excavated. Both color slide and black and white prints were taken of most features. Overall photographs were taken at the end of each summer.

Artifact finds were given a preliminary examination in the field before being sent into the DAR laboratory, where they were washed, numbered, identified, and cataloged using a standard descriptive typology for both historic and prehistoric materials. Separate artifact analyses were undertaken as academic projects by a number of individuals, with the resultant data incorporated into the overall site interpretation. All materials and documentation are stored at Colonial Williamsburg’s Department of Archaeological Research.

Results

The Rich Neck site is defined by several structures and associated features that are contained within a relatively small area. At its largest, the complex measures no more than 100 square meters, or 1076 square feet. The western edge of the road cut defines the west side, and a bounding ditch serves as the east border. Intensive testing and remote sensing identified no features east of this ditch except an underground brick kiln used to fire bricks for the site’s two main structures. While the surrounding acreage certainly must have been under cultivation, or in use as pasture or orchard during the time period of occupation, the site complex as defined by the archaeological record was a tightly contained unit.

Stratigraphy

Stratigraphy varied over the site. Beneath a thin mat of decaying leaves and other vegetation, a dark grayish-brown (Munsell color 10YR3/3) loam extended 4 inches below the ground surface. This layer contained artifacts ranging in date from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. Most of the twentieth century artifacts represented mid-century logging activities and included such items as axe heads and discarded oil cans. The next 4-8 inches consisted of a brown to dark brown (10YR4/3)
sandy loam characterized by an increase in artifacts and brick bits. Most artifacts in this layer dated to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Underneath, a dark yellowish brown (10YR4/4) sandy loam extended 3 inches. This layer was present over most of the site and was more compacted than the overlying soil layers. Large brick concentrations appeared in this layer particularly around the site’s two main structures. Artifacts from this layer were almost exclusively seventeenth century. Sterile subsoil was a pale brown (10YR6/3) sandy clay. In the northeast corner of the site, a filled-in ravine added several stratigraphic layers to the sequence. Stratigraphy on the southern end of the site was also more complicated as plowed layers built up in depth in some places to almost a meter deep. Plowing and erosion seem to have altered the terrace by flattening the highest points and filling in any low spots.

Though plowing has effectively destroyed the stratigraphic integrity, it had minimal impact on the archaeological remains that penetrated subsoil. Most of the damage to the structural foundations occurred during the removal of the bricks for use in constructing among other things a chimney at a nearby eighteenth-century slave quarter.

Soils at the site were also a factor contributing to the overall favorable condition of the artifacts. Most soils in Virginia are highly acidic, hastening the breakdown of organic and metallic artifacts. Calcium carbonates that counteract these acids is produced by decaying mollusc shells. At Rich Neck, decayed shell is present in the soil in the form of marl, generated by underlying geologic shell beds commonly called the Yorktown Formation. Later oyster and clam shells discarded by native and Euro-American populations added to the neutralizing effect of the marl. These factors created an environment that slowed the decomposition of bone and metal to a remarkable degree. Pewter was found in a state of preservation almost unparalleled on Virginia sites.
Chapter 4.
Results

Structures

Excavation at Rich Neck has revealed seven different structures dating to different parts of the seventeenth century. Following is a description of these buildings. All compass directions refer to grid north, except where noted. Although the metric system was used in the field, English measurements are given in this text as they more closely approximate those by which the plantation layout was conceived and executed.

Structure A

Structure A is the dwelling house used by Richard and Elizabeth Kemp, Thomas and Elizabeth Lunsford, and lastly Thomas and Philip Ludwell. An intact brick foundation and three hearths define it. Oriented east-west along its long axis, the front of the structure faces south. The house began as a single-pile hall and parlor with a central fireplace. Built around 1640 by Richard Kemp, the house measured 35 feet long × 20 feet wide with a central fireplace. It was later enlarged at least three times starting sometime around 1665, with two end chimneys replacing its interior hearth.

Brick foundations two and a half courses wide demarcate the initial building phase of Structure A. The width of this foundation and the large quantity of brick found in the plowzone indicate that the structure was executed entirely in brick. The builder’s trench was excavated, revealing one to two courses of surviving brick. Excavation uncovered an H-shaped chimney foundation, with one hearth facing east and one facing west, thus dividing the interior space into two heated rooms. The fireplace is off-center; the westernmost room measured approximately 16 × 14.5 feet from interior wall to interior wall, and the eastern room was roughly 16 × 10 feet. Rather than lining up along the centerline or axis of the house, the fireplace abutted the back (north) wall so that the chimney stack would have risen behind the gabled peak of the roof. This shift towards the back wall created extra room on the other side of the fireplace. That is, there would have been perhaps 6 feet of space between the fireplace and the south wall of the house. The front door would have been placed in the south wall to coincide with that space and walls on the east and west would have closed it off. The side of the fireplace formed the back wall of this entry room, called a lobby entrance. Doorways would have pierced its east and west walls to lead into the two rooms of the house. Structure A’s lobby was 6.5 feet deep (north-south) and perhaps 6 feet wide. Structure A could have been either one and a half or two stories tall. A stairway connecting the downstairs and upstairs could have been located in the lobby or in one of the downstairs rooms.

Excavation revealed an addition that ran across the length of the building. The foundation for this addition is one-and-a-half brick courses wide and it abuts the north wall of the original foundation. Portions of the north and west walls of the addition were robbed out after the house was abandoned, leaving only a robbers trench. This rear addition was 10 feet deep and increased the over-
all dimension of the house to 35 × 30 feet. The addition was divided into two rooms. Excavation of a surviving portion of the builder’s trench for the east room (9.5 × 12.5 feet) revealed a foundation seven courses (about 18 inches) deep, suggesting the superstructure of this room was made entirely of brick. The robber’s trench for the addition’s west room (9.5 × 20 feet) was shallower suggesting the walls for this room were wood framed.

Exterior end chimney foundations were found on the east and west walls of the main house section. These foundations are 2 courses wide, with the hearths measuring 13 feet long × 2.5 feet deep and abutting the original portion of the house. Like the interior fireplace, they are offset behind the peak of the roof, one brick course shy of being flush with the back wall. The builder’s trench for the chimneys is relatively shallow, measuring 9 inches deep and cutting the builder’s trench for the original house. The end chimneys appear to date to the 1665 remodeling of the house, replacing the central chimney. Tin-enameled fireplace tiles were found surrounding the east chimney. The tiles were part of a set depicting children playing games that included archery and golf. They were manufactured in the 1660s, which coincides with the construction date of the end chimneys and the addition. In front of the east hearth was a large, deep root cellar.

Another room was later added off the northwest corner of the rear addition. This 1.5 course wide foundation measured 10 × 12 feet. This room contained a full cellar featuring a brick floor. This room post-dates both the additions and the end chimneys. Heated indirectly, this room may have served as the secretary’s office. The interior of the brick walls was covered in plaster.

The entire structure was re-roofed with earthenware pan tiles at the time of the first renovation. Held in place with mortar, thousands of tile fragments were found clustered around the dwelling.

**Structure B**

In its day Structure B was a large brick outbuilding opposing the plantation’s residence, Structure A. Like Structure A, additions augmented the size and capacity of the building’s original plan. Evidence indicates that the entire building was brick and that it served the plantation as its kitchen, servants quarters, and storage facility.

Excavations revealed the complete outline of Structure B’s rectangular foundation plan measuring 36 feet (east to west) × 24 feet (north to south). The building was divided into three components—a roughly square center room measuring 24 feet N-S × 20 feet E-W. This room was flanked on the east and west by matching rectangular additions (subsequently identified as, and hereafter referred to as cellar additions). These both measure 13 (east to west) × 24 feet (north to south) and were filled with destruction refuse associated with the demolition of the building. The bricks of the additions are well fired and laid in a brick-and-a-half English bond. The foundations of the two additions are complete rectangles. Only the north and south walls of the center room (subsequently identified as the original structure) have been robbed down to the bottom dry courses. In some places two courses still survive. The bricks of the original walls are less well fired than those in the additions and the footers themselves are laid four and five brick bats across. About eighteen rows of the center room’s dry course are missing on the north wall, while two rows are missing on the south wall. A shallow 2-inch-deep postmold (context number 68AQ-302) is in the gap of the south wall’s footers. These gaps appear to be damage from nineteenth-century plowing and not indications of structural features.
A fairly uniform builders’ trench surrounds the foundations of both cellar additions. In several units the robbers’ trenches obscure traces of the original building trenches. But the surviving trenches average 8 inches in width. Builders’ trenches were also found inside the center room along the wall of the west cellar, the east cellar’s building trench being lost to brick robbing. The center room’s north and south walls exhibited no such features. The west addition cellar’s west wall exhibited a major exception to the uniformity of these builders’ trenches. A deep-subsoil clay-filled repair trench covers the builders’ trench of the west addition’s west wall. This singular feature averaged 21 inches in width. Excavation revealed that this flat-bottomed clay filled trench was 15 inches deep. This clay fill covered a builders’ trench of 5 inches width which matched the size, color, and artifact content of the foundations other builders’ trenches. The placement of this clay suggests an attempt to perhaps prevent leaking through the addition’s subterranean wall.

The center room appeared to be the earliest of Structure B’s three components. Key elements of the room’s construction date it at the site’s earliest phase of habitation. The foundation’s bricks strongly resemble those of Structure A’s earliest components and its four-brick-bat-across dry-course footers are also the same as seen on Structure A. The dry courses of only the room’s north and south walls remain, with the east and west walls having been replaced by the internal walls of the cellar additions. This suggests that the subterranean courses of the cellar additions were under-dug and built beneath the center room’s existing east and west wall. This technique, which would have destroyed the footers of the center room’s east and west walls during the construction of the cellar additions, appears to be the same used in constructing Structure A’s cellar addition. A two-brick-long extension of the west cellar’s south wall (beyond the addition’s rectangular plan) may be an indication of a construction-induced collapse in the foundation of the center room.

The west wall’s C-shaped hearth remains are of the same construction as the rest of the center room. Only the north and south spurs remain, as the original rear wall was lost in the construction of the west cellar addition. The size of this hearth, especially in comparison with Structure A’s four smaller hearths, strongly suggests that Structure B was built as a separate kitchen. The array of nearby large and small pits suggest that the structure continued in this function after the construction of the cellar additions.

The west addition’s west wall clay repair trench is of singular interest. Its regular shape, deep-subsoil-clay fill, and lack of artifacts suggest that the fill itself was the purpose of the feature, rather than being the deposition from a repair episode. Furthermore, the uniform nature of the brick courses covered by the clay fill offer no evidence of brick repairs or external plastering. One possible explanation for this feature is that the clay was intended as a weatherproofing or leak protection for the cellar addition. This may be a clue that some specific care demanding activity, such as dairying, took place in the addition’s subterranean spaces.

**Hearth and Root Cellar Excavations**

The center room contains a brick hearth along its west wall and an expansive root cellar directly in front of the hearth. The room also contains several small posthole-like features—two overlapping features cutting the north side of the large root cellar and three postholes extending laterally along the north wall’s inside. Excavations inside this center room focused on only those features associated with the cellar as well as the hearth and root cellar themselves.

A large root cellar sits squarely in front of the center room’s substantial brick hearth. The western edge of this cellar is covered by the burned clay remains of the hearth’s use area but the cellar’s other edges were mapped. The cellar’s fill was bisected on a north-south axis and the eastern half was excavated. The clay fill was of a uniform type to the flat bottom of the feature containing light charcoal inclusions. The half excavated was 6 feet 10 inches long × 2 feet 8 inches deep.
Cellar Addition Excavations

Excavations of the cellar additions removed all of the debris in both cellars. The cellars’ fills were divided into quadrants and removed in 25% portions. Excavators also collected a 50 cm × 50 cm column sample in each of the cellars for analysis.

The rubble in the east cellar divided into five overall layers with some small variation and occasional distinct pockets overall. Although the depth of individual layers varied somewhat between quadrants, the fill’s overall depth was 44 inches. The top layers consisted of a combination of sandy loam soils and small brick, mortar, and pantile rubble. These layers ranged in depth from 3 to 15 inches. These layers covered brick and mortar rubble layers that ranged from 6 to 17 inches in depth. Layers consisted primarily of clean pantiles, bricks and mortar followed ranging in depth from 6 to 12 inches. In the northwest quadrant excavators uncovered a large concentration of oyster shell which was collected and returned to the lab.

Final layers of brick fragments and mortar followed and ranged in depth from 8 to 38 inches. Beneath these were shallow layers (ranging from ¼ to 2 inches in depth) of moist organic soils in each quadrant with the exception of the northwest quadrant where 43 inches of clean rubble yielded to the bottom of the cellar. These organic layers contained large amounts of window glass and sat on the tile flooring that covered most of the cellar’s floor. The moistness of these last layers may be largely due to the tiles’ inability to absorb descending rain water.

Tiles extended across the entire floor of the east cellar. These were laid from wall to wall with closer courses of half tiles filling out the pattern. But this pattern was disrupted on the cellar’s north side. Tiles extended to a one-brick-thick line of bevelled bricks set in the floor and sitting ¼ inch higher than the tile level and 4 feet south of the north wall. These bricks measured 9 inches in width and extended 5.5 feet from the east wall into the center of the cellar. A single line of bricks laid end-to-end extended to the north wall from the end of the bevelled bricks. These bricks appeared to form the base of the walls that blocked in the cellar’s northeastern corner to form a room measuring 48 × 62 inches. This room was only partially tiled and much of it was covered with the same rubble found in the cellar fill’s lowest debris level. Its tiles were laid in an north-south pattern contrasting with the east-west orientation of the rest of the tiles and its north wall showed evidence of plastering.

An area measuring 6 × 5 feet in the northwestern corner of the cellar showed no evidence of having been tiled and its subsoil surface sat level with the surface of the floor tiles. This area’s subsoil showed evidence of bricks pressed into its surface.

The fill in the west cellar strongly resembled that in the east cellar in both content and stratigraphy. Small-rubble filled layers, measured between 6 and 7 inches, yielded onto brick and mortar layers which were between 23 and 28 inches deep. Layers filled with pantile remains and brick fragments followed and measured between 16 and 32 inches deep. Layers containing less rubble followed which measured between 32 and 40 inches thick. These last layers sat on the tile floor.

This floor was also divided into three rooms, the largest of which was tiled with glazed floor tiles as in the east cellar. But unlike the east cellar the west cellar’s tiles did not employ closer courses to allow a wall-to-wall tiled floor. Destruction debris and organic soil filled the gap between the tiles and the wall along the cellar’s east wall. On the west side a partially robbed line of bricks (context number 68AS-364), laid side-to-side spanned the 12 inches between the tiles’ ¼-tile closer courses and the bottom of the wall. Areas of destruction soils covered the spaces seemingly left open by the robbed bricks.

Cellar Addition Conclusions

Both of Structure B’s cellar additions were constructed as single subterranean units built alongside the then-still-standing center room kitchen. The cellars’ destruction fill with its high numbers of bricks, brick bats and pantiles offer ample evidence
that the structure was built of brick and that a pantile roof covered it at the end of the structure’s use period. These features’ comparatively low artifact counts, lack of mortared-together bricks, and lack of scorching also suggest that the structure was intentionally disassembled at a time after the structure was in day-to-day use. Furthermore, the orderly episodic quality of the destruction fill, and the lack of trash or soil accumulation strata within the rubble, suggest that the structure’s destruction occurred over a short period of time thus limiting the opportunity for the accumulation of sediments both natural and cultural. Tightly datable artifacts such as wine bottles located within all strata of the fill place the destruction between 1680 and 1710. Window cames recovered in the lowest layers contained dates in the late 1680s.

The untiled area in the cellars appears to be a landing for a staircase. The level of the subsoil matching the height of the tiles indicates that no tiles were ever set in this area while a small 4 x 6 inch hole in the tiles south of the untiled landing may be where a staircase’s knewell post stood.

**Structure C**

Structure C was a post-in-ground building located west of Structure B. Like Structures A and B, it was oriented on an east-west axis. Eight postholes delineate the 20 foot wide x 36 foot long structure. Two additional postholes, slightly smaller in size, indicated that there was also a shed attached to the east end that measured 12 x 20 feet. With the shed attachment, the building had an overall dimension of 20 x 48 feet. Excavation revealed no hearth remains associated with the building, but traces of a hearth might easily have been eradicated by plowing or grading. The building did not necessarily employ a brick hearth foundation. Open hearths served by wood and clay smoke hoods were common in the seventeenth century, even on wealthy plantation complexes.

The postholes that made up Structure C were spaced 8 feet apart on a side, and generally measured 32 x 40 inches across. Posthole depths averaged 12 inches, but this reflects removal by grading of about 4 inches of subsoil. Posthole fill was silty clay that in most cases produced little more than a nail. One exception was a posthole that contained fragments of table glass, window glass, and wine bottle glass, as well as a large quantity of architectural debris including tile, nail, and brick fragments. That this and one other posthole contained paving and roofing tile fragments suggest that Structure C was built after the renovation of Structures A and B, sometime around 1680.

All of the postholes had postmolds or post removal holes. Postmolds were square to rectangular in plan, measuring 10 to 12 inches across, and extending the full depth of the posthole. At least three postholes had post removal holes rather than postmolds. Removal holes were rectangular or slightly rounded in plan, were similar in size to postmolds, and also extended to the depth of the postholes. In contrast to the postmolds, the removal holes were characterized by a sloping wall profile and were filled with roofing and paving tile fragments. Those posts were probably rocked and pulled out of their holes with a minimum of digging. The broken tiles that fell into the removal holes suggest that this building was dismantled concurrently with Structures A and B, when debris from those two buildings was scattered across the site area.

Two slot trenches were associated with Structure C. These were shallow, linear features measuring 8 inches deep and 8 to 12 inches wide. They were dug to support a pale fence. The first trench found extended from the south side of Structure C at a 90° angle and was about 18 feet long. Four
paving tile fragments were retrieved from this feature. A second slot trench adjoined the first at a 90° angle and ran for at least 22 feet eastward. Logging or brush removal operations that preceded grading had disturbed the area east of this point, and no further traces of the trench were found. The fence line may have turned back towards the building at this point, or possibly continued further before turning. These trenches represent a pale fence that enclosed a square or rectangular area on the south side of Structure C. Three sides of that square were formed by the fence, with the wall of the building serving as the fourth side of the enclosure. The fence probably protected a vegetable garden.

Structure C was interpreted as a slave quarter. Its size, physical situation in the midst of the plantation complex, and the fact that artifacts were found in association with the building all indicate a dwelling rather than an agricultural support building. Archaeological excavations of barns of the seventeenth-century Tidewater area show that these structures typically were located away from domestic complexes, off in fields, or by themselves. Designed to store agricultural implements, fodder, or even crops, barns were situated close to the activities they supported, such as cultivation and animal husbandry. Few if any artifacts are associated with such support buildings. In contrast, artifacts were found in association with Structure C, both in the postholes, molds and in the overlying plowzone. Field testing of the plowzone during 1992 produced domestic debris including wine bottle glass, tin-enameled earthenware, and coarsewares. Finally, the archaeological record shows that seventeenth-century dwellings often had garden enclosures on the protected side of the buildings, as does Structure C.

**Structure D**

Structure D is a post-in-ground building located directly west of Structure C. It is square in plan, measuring 16 × 16 feet, and is represented by four corner postholes and two gable support postholes. The gable supports were placed in the center of the east and west walls, showing that those were

the gable ends of the building, and therefore that the structure was oriented east-west along the ridge axis. The presence of gable posts indicates either interrupted sill construction or ground-to-plate construction; the latter method is more likely given the small dimensions of the gable supports, and it indicates that Structure D had an earthen floor. The building might have employed an open hearth, with either a wood and clay smoke hood or simply an opening in the roof providing ventilation. It might have also been unheated.

This structure lay along the west edge of the road cut, with its northeast posthole in the graded road area. Topsoil overlying the remainder of the structure was removed by shovel and screened. No hearth remains were found, but plowing may have eradicated any such evidence. Structure D was completely excavated, with the four corner posts measuring roughly 27 × 31 inches with postmolds about 8.5 inches square. Depths measured about 2 feet below grade. The gable posts were smaller measuring about 1 foot square and extending only 2 inches below grade. Excavation of the holes unearthed only one fragment of coarseware; the fact that the postholes were largely devoid of artifacts suggests minimum activity in this area prior to construction.

All other artifacts from this structure were recovered from the postmolds. Among them was a roofing tile fragment, but it did not appear the posts were removed from their mooring as was the case with Structure C. Nevertheless, its proximity to, and alignment with, Structure C and the rest of the plantation complex indicates that this building dates from the Ludwell period of owner-
ship. The building may have served as a dwelling for slaves or as a service/storage building.

**Structures E and F**

Excavators located two overlapping post-built structures in the area to the southwest of Structure B. This area had been examined in 1994 as part of the examination of the major fence that marked the west side of the plantation’s enclosure. Excavators also uncovered and removed roughly 9 meters of this palisade (context 68AT-53) extending between units 525N/506N and 516N/503E.

Two overlapping post buildings—one four-post (Structure E) and one six-post (Structure F)—centered on, and cut, the remains of a slot trench. Only the posts of the structures’ northeast corners made contact with each other. The stratigraphic relationship between these postholes indicated that Structure E predated the Structure F.

**Structure E**

Structure E was made up of the following features.

- Posthole 68AT-406 measured 20 × 24 inches and 12 inches deep with a flat bottom.
- Posthole 68AT-400 measured 25 × 20 inches and had a flat bottom at 12 inches.
- Posthole 68AT-114 measured 28 × 20 inches and was flat-bottomed at 8 inches.
- Posthole 68AT-364 measured 32 × 22 inches and was 12 inches deep with a flat bottom.

A complex of shallow slot trenches cut and overlapped the structure’s northeastern posthole—(68AT-364). Two of these trenches cut respectively the east and west sides of the posthole. A third trench cut both of the other slot trenches as well as posthole 68AT-364 by curving over these features.

**Structure F**

Structure F was made up of the following features:

- Posthole 68AT-163 measured 32 x 26 inches and was 8 inches deep.

- Posthole 68AT-169 measured 25 x 34 inches and was 11 inches deep.
- Posthole 68AT-169 the visible portions of this posthole measured 12 x 13 inches, but its location beneath an uncut tree prohibited its excavation.
- Posthole 68AT-211 measured 27 x 29 inches and was 14 inches deep.
- Posthole 68AT-352 measured 26 x 33 inches and was 12 inches deep.
- Postholes 68AT-163 and 68AT-211 cut slot trench 68AT-53 which is a southward continuation of the major western boundary fence line excavated in 1994.

**Relationship**

The stratigraphic relationships of the features in this area indicated that the site’s original layout saw a palisade fence line running southward to an undetermined point. This fence was gone by the time Structure E went up. Similarly, Structure F replaced Structure E and occupied the same space. Both of these structures are in line with the remains of Structures C and D. But no feature evidence offers a solid chronological tie between these two new buildings and those excavated in 1993.

At some point after the disappearance of Structure F the use of the space was reconceptualized and at least three slot trenches cut the remains of Structure’s E northeastern posthole. The presence of a curved portion of one slot trench...
(68AT-366) suggests that the area the post buildings once covered was on the opposite side of the area the latest fences intended to enclose.

**Structure G**

One of the more unusual architectural discoveries was the uncovering of a seven-post structure located south of Structure B and southeast of Structures E and F. This structure, Structure G, sat on the same orientation as the site’s other structures and was also aligned with the pre-addition west wall of Structure B. Three features of Structure G are marked as noteworthy. The first was its location near, but not aligned with, the site’s four other identified post structures. Structure G appeared to be on its own in a low-use part of the site. The second was the fact that it was composed of an uneven number of posts. The third was that the postholes had been dug to markedly different depths at the time of the building’s construction. Thorough examination of the surrounding area revealed no other features in the structure’s immediate area and excluded the possibility that these differing features were not in fact related.

The three deepest postholes constituted Structure G’s east wall. Each of these three postholes contained identifiable molds and two of these (68AV-75 and 68AV-255) were cut by a slot trench. That this slot trench cuts two of Structure G’s postholes indicates that the structure was no longer standing at the time of the fence’s raising, sometime around 1665.

Posthole 68AV-75 was Structure G’s northeastern corner and measured 28 × 24 inches and had a flat-based-U bottom at a depth of 22 inches. Postmold 68AV-192 became visible after the removal of the cutting portion of slot trench 68AV-74 and continued to the bottom of the feature. The next posthole to the south was 68AV-255 which measured 26 × 23 inches and showed a flat-based-U bottom at 28 inches deep. Postmold 68AV-257 sat in the center of the posthole and was visible throughout the excavation of the feature. Posthole 68AV-189 represented Structure G’s southeastern corner. This posthole measured 35 × 26 inches and excavators found its flat-based-U bottom at 18 inches below the subsoil level. These three features were the deepest of the seven and possessed the most pronounced postmolds.

Postholes 68AV-251 and 68AV-270 sat in line to the west of postholes 68AV-75 and 68AV-189. The northernmost (68AV-251) measured 23 × 22 inches. It had a flat-based-U bottom found at 13 inches deep. The southernmost posthole (68AV-270) measured 25 × 28 inches. Excavators located a flat-based-U bottom at 13 inches. This posthole also contained a postmold (68AV-288) measuring 7 inches square and being 13 inches deep. The shallowest of the seven postholes were the two that constituted Structure G’s west wall. Posthole 68AV-215 measured 30 × 32 inches with a flat-U bottom at a depth of 6 inches. Posthole 68AV-217 measured 24 inches square and had a U-shaped bottom at 6 inches in depth.

Structure G appears to date to the Kemp period of occupation. The lack of artifacts found in its holes, and the number of features that cut the same postholes, supports this contention. Its unusual construction style suggests that this structure was a lean-to. The eastern line of holes represents the tallest portion of the structure, with the western line representing the lowest portion. This structure was clearly not used as a dwelling and probably served some agricultural function.

**Trash Midden**

South of Structure B, excavators encountered a concentration of artifacts and ecofacts that was in-
terpreted as a midden. The west end of the midden was excavated in a block unit measuring 6 meters north-south × 4 meters east-west; the block was excavated in one-meter squares. Three stratigraphic layers made up this feature. Layer 1 was plowed soils that sealed the deposit. Layer 2 contained a dense concentration of oyster shells and shell fragments and measured 3 to 4 inches thick. Layer 3 was a light brown soil layer containing shell and bone fragments. Subsoil underlay Layer 2 and, where present, Layer 3. Artifacts were present in all three layers, as was faunal material. Nails and nail fragments comprised a large percentage (37 to 40%) of the artifacts recovered from each stratum.

All three layers contained both domestic and architectural debris that included tin-enameled earthenware, coarse earthenware, imported pipe fragments, paving and roofing tile fragments, brick, and nails. Layer 1 also produced German and English stoneware and domestic pipe fragments. The mean date calculated for the imported pipestems found in the layer was 1659. The latest artifact type recovered was Fulham stoneware, with a TPQ of 1684. Layer 2 was composed largely of oyster shell, and contained only about half the number of artifacts found in the layers above and below. In addition to the domestic and architectural artifacts previously listed, Chinese export porcelain and case bottle glass were recovered. Layer 3 also contained Chinese export porcelain and case bottle glass, in addition to German and English stoneware, domestic pipe fragments, an upholstery tack, and a lead window came. The latest artifact recovered from Layer 3 was Fulham, with a TPQ of 1684.

Surrounding the shell concentrations was a layer of dark brown soil that underlay the plowzone. Among the artifacts recovered from this layer were imported pipestems and bowls (three datable to 1650-1680). The layer was replete with artifacts, including a number of Bellarmine Frechen stoneware jugs.

**Fences and Bounding Ditch**

Evidence of two types of fences were found at Rich Neck. Linear associations of postholes and molds represented post and rail fences, while slot trenches revealed the presence of pale fences. The slot trenches were shallow linear features measuring generally 6 to 8 inches in depth and 6 to 10 inches in width. Five of the slot trenches had rectangular or circular features associated with them. Each of those latter features adjoined one side of the trench, slightly cutting it and extending deeper than the trench. No molds were apparent in the features and they appear to be support posts for the pale fence.

A bounding ditch defines the eastern and southern borders of the site. Test units placed beyond or east of the ditch provided relatively few artifacts, indicating that plantation activities were confined primarily to the site area west and north.
Several large sections of the ditch were exposed. Typically the ditch measured 3 feet wide and 1.5 to 3 feet in depth. At least one area had been redug, presumably after the original channel collapsed or silted in. Two depositional layers filled the ditch. A light brown silty loam comprised the lower 12 inches of fill. A yellowish brown sandy loam filled the top, with few artifacts other than fragments of brick, mortar, plaster and roofing and floor tile.

No other features appear to be associated with the ditch, reducing the probability that it was part of a defensive network. Instead the ditch seems to have worked in conjunction with a slot fence, located west of the brick structures, which together formed a ring around the site’s main activity area. The function of this complex may have simply been used to keep livestock out, or as a vestige of defensive fortification that offered the feeling of protection without actually providing it.

Pond

A large oval-shaped feature measuring over 50 feet wide was encountered just north of Structure A. This feature started out as a clay quarry pit, dug to extract clay in order to make bricks. Instead of filling this pit, as was the custom, the owners of Rich Neck decided to let the pit fill with water and serve as a pond. The clay pit was excavated up to 3 feet into the subsoil clay.

Over time the pond filled in. Layers of almost sterile silt made up the lower layers of this feature. At the south end of the feature, the silt was sealed by a layer of brick rubble used to reduce the size of the pond to accommodate the expansion of the dwelling house in this direction. An artifact-rich dark brown loam sealed the brick and silt layers. A thick yellow clay layer was next, followed by another artifact rich layer. In all the feature was almost 5 feet deep. Artifact seriation indicates that this feature was created in the 1640s and survived until the 1680s. Thousands of artifacts were recovered from the sampling of this feature.

The Human Burial

The burial at Rich Neck (context 68AT-453) was located in the northeast quadrant of the site, situated between two post-in-the-ground structures. Just to the south was a small quarter thought to house slaves. Less than five feet to the north was a larger quarter, also suspected of accommodating slaves. Using the site grid the northeast corner of the grave was located at 522N/500E.
Excavation Methods

The plowzone above the burial was removed in one-meter squares. This soil was removed by shovel and screened through ¼-inch wire mesh. The grave shaft first appeared at the interface of the plowzone and subsoil. This feature was drawn in plan, photographed and carefully excavated using hand-trowels and dental picks when necessary. The grave fill was screened through one eighth-inch wire mesh. Soil chemistry samples and pH readings were taken from the upper grave fill (which had a pH value of 6.6). Several additional drawings were made documenting organic stains that were almost all that remained of these human remains. All fragments of bones were consolidated in situ with 10% solution of Paraloid B72 in a 1 to 1 solution of acetone and ethanol. The long bones were pedestaled and removed in plaster jackets (see Appendix 2). Grave fill around the head was removed in a block for later excavation in the conservation lab. This excavation revealed several deteriorated sections of skull and fourteen whole or partial teeth. Dr. Douglas Owsley and D. Hunt of the Smithsonian Institution examined the remains in situ and later again in the laboratory.

Grave Orientation

The burial was oriented roughly east-west, with the head at the west end (25° south of west). The grave shaft was rectangular in shape and measured 65 × 28 inches. The shaft had vertical sides and a flat bottom. A gray body stain appeared at 10 inches depth. Overall depth measured approximately 14 inches below plowzone.

Grave Fill

Two layers of grave fill were identified. The upper layer was a mixture of clay loam (Munsell color 10YR 5/6) with sandy clay loam mottling (10YR6/4). This layer measured 10 inches deep and completely sealed the lower fill. The lower fill was similar to the upper fill except for an increase in mottling and the presence of a gray body stain (10YR4/4).

Grave Goods

Artifacts found in the grave fill included one nail that was found at the interface of the grave and subsoil. This nail was not a coffin nail.

Human Remains

The bones were oriented roughly east-west with the head at the west end. A distinct gray body stain appeared at a depth of 10 inches. Some small fragments of spongy bone were found in the stain. The body appeared supine, extended, with its feet together, elbows at its side, and with its hands on its lower abdomen. No evidence of a coffin or a shroud survived. The remains were of an individual with a small frame; measurement in situ from the top of the head to the bottom of the feet was approximately 56 inches. The remains measured 18 inches wide from elbow to elbow.

Interpretation

In his report on his examination of the remains (Appendix 1), Dr. Douglas Owsley argues that this individual was approximately 10-12 years old and was possibly female. Several characteristics from the recovered teeth suggest that this individual had a probable African ancestry. The location of the grave and the lack of a coffin or shroud support this interpretation. The positioning of the grave suggests it was dug while the three surrounding structures (Structures C, E, and F) were occupied, sometime between 1665 and 1690. Documents show that during this time period the plantation master owned a number of slaves.
Chapter 5.
Interpretations and Conclusions

The excavations undertaken at Rich Neck have revealed an archaeological site of remarkable scope, integrity, and importance. The site encompasses seven known structures, two extensive refuse areas, and hundreds of landscape features. Rich Neck represents a plantation complex rather than a single dwelling, with the houses and artifacts of owners and servants intact. Rich Neck was built and occupied in the 1640s and survived until almost the end of the century. With no subsequent occupation or disturbance other than plowing, the site is something of a time capsule. Plowing has mixed the layers that cover the site and slightly truncated some features, but few features appear destroyed. By excavating the site in one-meter squares, data from both the features and the layers combined by plowing has been retrieved. Add an extensive historical dataset about Rich Neck’s owners and the Rich Neck dig provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to understand life in seventeenth-century Virginia.

Rich Neck can be divided into four phases of development based on artifact analysis, stratigraphic relationships, and historical events. Richard Kemp oversaw Phase I, which is defined by the construction of the core sections of Structures A and B, along with the earthfast Structure G, sometime in the 1640s. Phase II denotes the first expansion of Structure A along with the construction of the end chimneys, the tripling in size of Structure B, along with the construction of Structure E. This renovation seems to have taken place ca. 1665 when the Ludwell brothers arrived at Rich Neck. Structure G probably does not survive into this period. Phase III contains additions, replacements, and new construction. Occurring around 1680, this phase witnessed the addition of the last room on Structure A and the replacement of Structure E with Structure F. It was during this phase that Structures C and D were built. Phase IV, dating to sometime after 1684, witnessed the continued use of Structures A, B, C, and D, but not Structure F. The site appears abandoned sometime around 1700.

Phase I. Kemp/Lunsford

Phase I denotes the earliest occupation of the site, during the 1640s. Richard Kemp owned the property, and he built the dwelling house and the brick outbuilding during the early 1640s. Kemp belonged to the uppermost strata of Virginia colonial society and he certainly had the means to establish an elaborate plantation seat. His new residence was situated midway between the creek and the road that

Figure 16. Rich Neck Plantation, Phase I (1640s).
connected Middle Plantation to Jamestown. Structure A at this point was a four or more room dwelling with a central chimney.

Several features can be associated with this period. A brick kiln and several clay borrow pits were dug at this time. One of these clay pits became a pond that survived for most of the century. A bounding ditch that surrounds the site on two sides was also created at this time. This ditch tied into a pale fence that marked the west boundary of the site. Several other fencelines were also found that demarcated the space between the dwelling and the kitchen. The lack of artifacts in this area suggests it was a least formal area, but it may have really been a garden.

Structure G was also constructed at this time. Its unusual characteristics suggest it was an agricultural shed. While the postholes that made up the east side intruded subsoil well over one foot, postholes on the west side cut subsoil only a couple of inches. This atypical configuration indicates this building was some sort of lean-to, with the east side much taller than the west side.

Phase II. Thomas Ludwell

In 1665, Thomas Ludwell acquired Rich Neck from Elizabeth Kemp Lunsford Smith. He and his brother Philip renovated Kemp’s dwelling by replacing the central hearth in favor of two end hearths. The east fireplace was decorated with delft tiles, featuring hand-painted sporting figures. A two-room addition was attached to the rear of the structure, and the roof made of ceramic pan tiles was placed over the entire structure. Other architectural details included glass windows and glazed tile floors.

The Ludwells also renovated Kemp’s support structure, expanding it to nearly three times its original size. Each wing had a full cellar subdivided into three rooms. In each cellar the largest room had a glazed tile floor, as did a smaller room used as a dairy. The room that contained the stairs that connected the addition’s first floor to the cellar had dirt floors. Also covered with pan roofing tiles, this structure housed a very large hearth, a baking oven, and two root cellars situated in front of the hearth.

Figure 17. Rich Neck Plantation, Phase II (circa 1665).
that were replaced a couple of times as they failed. This multifunctional structure was used to store and process agricultural products, prepare the plantation meals, and to house servants. Structure E was built during this phase, probably serving as a slave quarter.

By this time the area between the house and the kitchen appears to have been turned into a formal garden. Features in this area include furrows, and planting holes. While no discernible patterns have been found, the area continued to be kept free of refuse.

**Phase III. Thomas Ludwell**

Three additional buildings were added to the complex sometime around 1680. The larger of these post-in-the-ground structures measured $20 \times 36$ feet with a 12-foot shed on the southern end. An enclosed vegetable garden area was located on the eastern side. This structure appears to have been a dwelling for Ludwell slaves. A smaller post structure was located just west of the post dwelling. This $16 \times 16$ foot single-room structure probably served as a slave dwelling. East of the large quarter, Structure F replaced Structure E. This two-bay-six-post dwelling measured $20 \times 17$ feet.
Phase IV. Philip Ludwell

Sometime after 1684 Structure F was torn down and the bounding ditch was filled in. A slot fence replaced the ditch. Around 1700 the entire complex was abandoned and the remaining post-in-ground structures torn down. The brick structures probably stood as ruins for some time. Bricks were robbed from the site from the eighteenth century into the twentieth. The area was eventually plowed and later became part of a forest that was occasionally logged.
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Appendix 1.
Description of the Rich Neck Burial
by Dr. Douglas Owsley and D. Hunt, May 17-18, 1999

RICHNECK-COLW-68AT453

This poorly preserved skeleton was examined in situ in the field and in the laboratory, before and after the dentition was removed from the matrix. The remains are in extremely poor condition. Shadow outlines of the cranium, mandible, the diaphyses of the left and right humeri, the distal diaphysis of the right radius or ulna, a small segment of the diaphysis of the left radius or ulna, and the diaphyses of the left and right femora and tibiae were outlined in the soil. In the field, the distal epiphysis of the left tibia also appeared to be present, but not fused to the diaphysis.

The long bones were pedestaled and removed in plaster jackets. Although the general outlines of these elements was preserved, only residual bone is present. The line of union for the greater trochanter epiphysis of the left femur is identifiable and was open. The length of the left femur diaphysis is a little longer than 280 mm, based on a measurement of the preserved outline of bone. The approximate medio-lateral diameter at the midshaft was 26 mm.

The third molar crowns appears to have developmental stage ¾ complete, which indicates an approximate age of 10 to 12 years. The crowns are comparatively small in size, indicating sex as possibly female. The occlusal surfaces of the molars are crenelated and show a gradient of increasing size posteriorly. These features suggest probable African ancestry.

Dentition

Fourteen partial and complete enamel crowns were recovered. The mandibular first and second premolars and second and third molars, the maxillary first premolars and first molars, a left second molar and a probable deciduous right second molar are present. The roots are not preserved. The crowns show almost no wear with only trace polishing of the second mandibular molars and blunting of the left maxillary first molar.

The mandibular first molars do not appear to have been recovered. In situ examination indicated noticeable absence of the left mandibular first molar marked by a space between the second premolar and second molar. The occlusal surface of the maxillary left first molar has a stage 2 cavity and a small pit cavity. Both maxillary first molars are poorly formed with a pronounced hypoplastic line located near the occlusal surface. The presence of defective enamel would predispose these teeth to carious destruction, and may explain the early loss of the mandibular first molars.

The maxillary and mandibular first premolars similarly have a marked hypoplastic line near the occlusal surface. These grooves indicate disrupted enamel formation, probably as a result of childhood illness at the time the first premolars and molars were forming.
Appendix 2.
Block Lift of Human Remains
by Emily Williams

Introduction

A skeleton was uncovered during the excavation of the Rich Neck site in Williamsburg. It was agreed with the excavators that the remains should be lifted, since the remains are quite significant and there was inadequate time or facilities during the excavation to excavate material with the care and detail required. The archaeologist has suggested that the remains may be of a juvenile (about 12 years of age) but desired an opportunity to examine the bones further in the laboratory.

When the bones were initially exposed during the excavation, the archaeological conservator was called out to give advice on how to proceed. The bones were consolidated in situ, as they were exposed with a 10% solution of Paraloid B72 in acetone and ethanol, as they were in an extremely fragile state. This enabled the surviving bones to be fully exposed during the excavation. The aim of this project was to lift the human remains, so that they could be more closely examined in the laboratory.

Deciding the Lifting Method

When considering which lifting technique to use, several factors were taken into account:

- Speed was of the essence as the lift occurred in the first week in December and therefore only a couple of daylight hours were available to complete the project. The lift had to fit into a tight excavation schedule.
- The method had to be quick for the security of the objects. The bones were found in a grave, which lay adjacent to a road within a housing estate, and so exposing the bones increased their vulnerability to vandalism. The lift had to be completed in one session.
- The method required had to be relatively simple and straightforward. Although the site of the lift was quite near the conservation laboratory, about three miles from the laboratory, all the equipment had to be brought out to the site, as there was no running water.
- The lifting of these human remains would require a three-dimensional support because the remains of the bones were three-dimensional. This block lift involved lifting with a mechanical support, as the object in question was a very fragile human skeleton. For a fragile object to be kept in position while being transported to the laboratory, it and any surrounding soil has to be totally immobilized, as any movement of the soil will put undue stress and pressure on the objects which could result in breakage. To achieve immobilization, a rigid support framework was placed over and around the bone and the bone could be stored in this rigid framework for safe transportation.
- The arrangement of the bones was not as important a consideration, as the bones were disarticulated; this made the decision about which method to use much easier, as the bones could be lifted individually.

To achieve total immobilization the horizontal and vertical boundaries of the bones were first established. This was carried out by the excavator in the course of exposing the bones, but it was expanded in the course of the lift by the excavator. The skull was lifted separately to enable the plaster bandages to be wrapped around the circumference of the skull completely.
Release Agent/Barrier Layers

Two different types of supports can be used in lifting: non-adhesive, mechanically removable supports and adhesive, solvent removable supports. In the first case a good release agent is necessary, otherwise the support will become attached to the object. A non-adhesive release agent was used in this lift and clingfilm (clear plastic food wrap) was used. Clingfilm provides a good barrier layer to plaster and also wax. A very small layer of soil was left around the object, one of the easiest and most readily available release agents. The soil was used as a release agent under the bones.

Lifting Technique

Shallow lifting techniques involving capping the object with a support and lifting it out of the ground has the advantage of causing minimum disturbance to the surrounding archaeological features. The basis of this method is that the support adheres to the object and when the support is lifted, so is the object. It is therefore imperative that this method is used on fragmented objects which have been consolidated, so that all the fragments are joined together.

The bones were then undercut using several different methods; the smallest bones were undercut using fishing line wire held taut in both hands and a metal sheet was placed underneath the bone while it was being undercut with the fishing line. However, for the larger bones the fishing line was not strong enough to cut through the soil and so copper wire was used to undercut the bone and once again a metal sheet was placed beneath to support the bone and the soil. For the largest bones the wires were not strong enough to undercut the bones and so a palette knife was used in place of the copper wire to release the bone from its context and a metal sheet placed underneath for support. The bones were turned upside down, resting on their support bandage by holding the bones and the metal plate and turning them upside down to reveal the soil. The bones were then placed in plastic containers and brought to the conservation laboratory, where they were stored, wrapped in clingfilm to retain the moisture in the soil, until a decision was reached about the fate of these bones.

The final part of the project was to bring the bones back to the laboratory to be photographed and to examine the bones in detail. A bone specialist from the Smithsonian Institution, Dr. Douglas Owsley, examined the bones. By examining the remaining teeth, it was possible to both age the individual as well as assign ethnicity. The bones appear to belong to a juvenile (about 16 years of age) of African-American descent. This identification was based on the stage of eruption of the teeth and the complicated cusp pattern, which is particular to African-Americans.

Storage

The bones were kept in their plaster casts, which provided adequate mechanical support. They were wrapped in clingfilm to keep the soil together. The bones are to be used in research by Dr. Douglas Owsley.
**Materials Used**

- 2 large tupperware containers to hold the remains
- 2 boxes of plaster bandages, both 2 inches wide by 3 yards long and 4 inches wide by 5 yards long
- basin of water to wet the bandages
- copper wire
- filament wire
- cling film
- cameras, both black and white and color slide (daylight film)
- metal sheets of various sizes

Alternatives for lifting the bones would have included:

- Dry supports-cloth/gauze bandages and aluminum foil. However, these would not provide adequate support for the fragile bone.
- Plaster of Paris used separately would have been too heavy for the fragile bones.
- Waxes. Used separately they would have required heat to be applied molten to the object, as would wax bandages and waxed paper towels. These were messy and could have impregnated the bone.
- Polyurethane foam. More suitable as an expandable internal support for lifting stuck artifacts such as hollow containers.
- Plastic solutions.
- Freeze lifting. This would have been unsuitable for fragile organic material. The advantage of freeze lifting is that the block can be fitted completely and further investigated or excavated in the lab. As the bones were disarticulated, this method seemed excessive. To lift the whole grave would also have required several people, more than the three people on site. Finally, the lifting of the whole grave was not deemed necessary as there were no other features in the grave.

**Ethics of Lifting Human Remains**

Human remains are unique in that they have both cultural and scientific values, which are often at odds with each other. Within archaeology and biological anthropology there is a tendency to disregard the cultural importance as the data inherent in human remains becomes paramount. Once this data in the form of measurements and chemical analysis are extracted from the bone, the skeletal remains may retain little scientific importance, and in the past have been kept in very poor storage conditions. While the recovery of data inherent in human remains is of primary concern to the archaeologist, the retention and care of the physical bone should be no less important. The balance between the cultural and scientific values should be of primary concern to the conservator when working with such material on site.

The initial step in the treatment of human remains is the question of whether the bones should be lifted or not. One of the main reasons for lifting human remains is to obtain valuable scientific evidence. It was decided by the archaeologist that this skeleton should be lifted so that it could be examined in greater detail in a laboratory, under optimum conditions. The remains could not be properly examined in the field, for several reasons: the vulnerable location of the remains, the fact that there were few hours of daylight to work with and time restrictions. The survival of such human remains is very unusual in this area and so it was decided in conjunction with the archaeological conservator that the remains should be lifted in order to study them more closely.

The method of removal must consider the optimum method to retain and care for the bones. Passive or non-intervention conservation methods are the preferred treatment strategy, as this would not jeopardize the physical characteristics of the bone. However consolidation was necessary to facilitate the excavation and subsequent handling of the remains. Consolidants are usually selected for strength and visual properties as Paraloid B72 in acetone and ethanol was used. Although a
consolidant was added, non-intervention must be viewed partially as a response to the realization that reversibility is a realistic option. Once a polymer has been applied to porous material such as bone, it is impossible to remove more than a small proportion of it. The alternative would have been for the bone to crumble on lifting, and therefore the application of a consolidant was necessary.

Once the remains have been lifted and examined, proper storage must be a priority. The use of acid-free tissue, appropriate storage cabinets and environmental controls are the basic requirements for the treatment of human remains. The human remains in this blocklift are stored in their rigid plaster bandage molds and are therefore structurally safe.
## Appendix 3. Master Context List

| 2 | Kiln-Related | 68AC-503, 68AC-596, 68AK-40, 68AK-53, 68AK-54, 68AK-56 |
Appendix 3 (cont’d).

Master Context List


11 18th C. Trash Pit 68AC-120

12 18th C. Fenceline 68AS-21


16 Structure A Root Cellar 68AC-859

17 Structure B Root Cellar 68AQ-438, 68AQ-494, 68AQ-506

18 Quarry Pit 68AC-657, 68AC-409, 68AC-410


## Appendix 3 (cont’d).
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