

Chapter 2

SLAVE QUARTERS: A FRACTION OF THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

So much of the architectural history of plantations is written from the point of view of the main house, the so-called Big House, and my objective was to move beyond the Big House out into the domain where slaves lived and worked and to give credit where credit is long overdue. Who made the plantation? What made the plantation work? Where did the wealth come from? What was life like for those people behind the Big House? The presence of African-Americans, who were the majority of the occupants of these sites, has almost been fully erased.⁷¹

John Michael Vlach

The foregoing statement by John Michael Vlach in 1996 was in response to criticisms of his Library of Congress exhibit on slavery. The exhibit elicited dissent from several African-American employees who found some of the depictions of slaves to be offensive. Ironically, John Michael Vlach is a leading exponent for increased recognition of African-Americans' contributions to our nation's history. He advocates that achieving the educational goal depends upon expanding the list of resources tangibly associated with African-American history. In short, the larger plantation landscapes and *all* of their buildings are the settings in and by which slaves carved out their own lives and their own ways of resisting the enslavement. The actual slave "quarter"⁷² had its own cultural

⁷¹ John Michael Vlach, "Picturing Slavery," Interview by Charlayne Hunter-Gault, February 5, 1996, Online News Hour, 1999, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/race_relations/picturing_2-5.html.

⁷² The term "quarter" is customarily used for identifying a place or structure in which slaves were housed. It is often written as a plural, even when referring to a single place rather than multiple structures or a group of accommodations. "Barracks" has similar usage. Except where the context requires otherwise, this thesis treats these terms as singular nouns, even at the cost of sometimes sounding grammatically incongruous.

landscape in the building's immediate surroundings but also went well beyond the building to include the woods and the fields and the slave's private, emotional landscape that "extended to other quarters and plantations by means of unofficial ties with friends, relatives, spouses, and lovers."⁷³ In the words of the slavery scholar Alan Kulikoff, "slaves formed neighborhoods, black landscapes that combined elements of the white landscape and of the quarters in a way that was peculiar to them and that existed outside the official articulated processional landscape of the great planter and his lesser neighbors."⁷⁴

In antebellum Baltimore County, the African-American slave's experience was particularly unusual because the county had a sizable free black population and because freedom rested such a short distance away, across the county's northern border into Pennsylvania. Both of these elements enhanced opportunities for escape to freedom and created a distinctive African-American cultural landscape. The quarters, although highly significant as rare surviving resources, are only a fraction of this immeasurable larger and intricate antebellum African-American cultural landscape.

The first section of this chapter presents a chronological overview of the housing for slaves – slave quarters – in the Chesapeake Tidewater region. The second section provides capsule descriptions of the county's fifteen locations with extant quarters dating from the late-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century. These quarters comprise a physical presence, representing the lives of slaves who worked in mills, at hazardous iron forges and lime kilns, as house servants, and in many other capacities that were crucial to the county's development and economic growth.

Chesapeake Slave Quarters

Slave quarters generally were not evident in the Chesapeake region until the beginning of the eighteenth century. Before then, settlers were primarily concerned about survival, so housing was a relatively low priority. Moreover, a fluid social and racial structure prevailed in the Chesapeake region in the early and mid seventeenth century. Slaves, indentured servants, and planters worked and lived hand-in-hand, in close proximity, before the region's more-stratified socio-economic system evolved in the late 1600s.

Seventeenth century Virginia slaves were either quartered in their owners' houses or slept in the lofts of nearby kitchens, sheds, and barns, rather than in buildings

⁷³ Dell Upton, "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia." In *Material Life in America, 1600-1860*, ed. Robert St. George, 357-370 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998): 367.

⁷⁴ Allan Kulikoff, "The Origins of Afro-American Society in Tidewater Maryland and Virginia, 1700-1790," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 35, no.2 (1978):24.

designated as slave residences.”⁷⁵ Maryland slave housing displayed similar characteristics. In southern Maryland only a few slaves lived in separate slave quarters in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, largely because most slaves were dispersed on farms with only a few slaves each.⁷⁶ Likewise, in Queen Anne's County on the east side of the bay, detailed research indicates that slaves typically lived in barn lofts, in outbuildings, or in the attics, basements, and storage rooms of the main house. By the mid-eighteenth century, however, separate buildings were identified in tax lists as “Negro Quarters,” or “Negro dwellings.”⁷⁷

Baltimore County slaves were probably housed in a similar fashion as other Tidewater slaves, but no firm conclusions can be made because little research has been conducted here. Charles G. Steffen's study of Baltimore County's wealthiest landowners between 1660 and 1776 is the only known research providing information on slave residences during that period. Steffen found that, in the 9 of the 181 estate inventories where the assessor specifically identified slave residences, sixty percent of the 169 total slaves inventoried lived at or near the plantation house, with the others housed at outlying quarters.⁷⁸ These statistics indicate that some of the county's wealthiest residents quartered "field" slaves close to the fields where they labored, a situation that would probably have necessitated an overseer.

Unfortunately, the remains of seventeenth and early-eighteenth century Chesapeake slave quarters are not easy to locate, as described below:

It has been very difficult for archaeologists to determine where plantation slaves resided. Few buildings survive from slave quarters, particularly for the eighteenth century, and documentation is very sparse. Placement of quarters can sometimes be deduced from the location of the slaveholder's house and the type of labor in which slaves were employed. Some of the first quarters excavated in Virginia were discovered accidentally during the course of general archaeological surveys. Subsequent excavations on documented slave quarters in Virginia have revealed commonalties in

⁷⁵ John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 154.

⁷⁶ George W. McDaniel, *Hearth & Home*, 43.

⁷⁷ Cheryl Hayes, "Cultural Space and Family Living Patterns in Domestic Architecture, Queen Anne's County, Maryland, 1750-1776" (M.A. thesis, Georgetown University, 1974). In George McDaniel, *Hearth and Home*, 43.

⁷⁸ George G. Steffen, *Gentlemen to Townsmen*, 52.

spatial, architectural, and artifact data, allowing archaeologists to conclude that structures excavated earlier had once served as slave quarters.⁷⁹

Archaeological research, however, is expensive and labor-intensive, and therefore remains an underused research tool. Additionally, archaeological research on slavery suffers from a delayed start. Archaeologists began to research post-European contact sites in the young American nation in the 1930s.⁸⁰ However, the first excavation of an African-American slave quarters site in the United States did not occur until 1968.⁸¹ In the 1970s, the philosophy of studying plantation architecture shifted away from a focus on the planters to a broad range of issues ranging from slavery in the context of everyday plantation life, the sociology of plantation culture, and the cultural by-products of the interactions between the African-Americans and the European Americans.⁸² By the 1980s, archaeologists were excavating slave quarters at the homesites of leading Americans, as described below:

During the early 1980s, attention turned to documented slave quarters, beginning at Monticello and Mount Vernon. The amplitude of the documentary record for these plantations enabled buildings positively identified with African-American housing to be pinpointed and tightly dated. Other excavated sites believed to contain slave components cluster primarily in the tidewater. These sites, which defy easy characterization, yield evidence of slave living spaces inside kitchen dependencies or rural plantations, and groups of quarters.⁸³

Quarters from the late eighteenth century and later have been more extensively documented, and several quarters from this period are still standing. Dell Upton's studies on late eighteenth century quarters found that:

Slave quarters were parts of two intersecting landscapes. They fit into a white landscape centered on the main house in one way and into a black landscape centered on the quarters in another.... Quarters for slave houses were often close to the main house on large plantations, and they were carefully ordered in rows or "streets." If they were visible from the

⁷⁹ Patricia Samford, "The Archaeology of African-American Slavery and Material Culture," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 53, no. 1, (January 1996): 89.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁸¹ Charles H. Fairbanks, "The Kingsley Slave Cabins in Duval County, Florida, 1968," *The Conference on Historic Site Archaeology Papers*, 1972, 7 (1974), 62-93.

⁸² Charles E. Orser, Jr., "Toward a Theory of Power for Historical Archaeology: Plantations and Space." In *The Recovery of Meaning: Historical Archaeology in the Eastern United States*, eds. Mark P. Leon and Parker B. Potter, Jr., 313-343 (Washington, D.C.: Eliot Werner Publications, Percheron Press, 1988)

⁸³ Patricia Samford, "The Archaeology of African-American Slavery," 91-92.

house, they were arranged on the site and treated on their exteriors with an eye to the visual effect from the main house. Other planters hid them from eye, and in those cases they were usually sited and arranged.⁸⁴

Studies also indicate that slave housing for field hands was different from domestic slave housing. These outlying quarters for field hands are significant resources that may yield evidence of how the lives of the field slaves compared with the lives of the skilled artisans and domestics who typically lived closer to the main house.⁸⁵

The physical nature of slave housing in the Chesapeake region changed over time, and the period when a quarter was constructed was an important factor in whether there might have been West African influences in the building's design and detailing. The design of the building was also affected by its geographic place within the slaveholding South, as described by George McDaniel:

The patterns of slave importation and colonial settlement, the type of colonial economy, and the resultant composition of the colonial population strongly affected the character of African cultural survivals. This can be demonstrated by comparing the situation of Africans arriving in Maryland with that of Africans arriving further south.... African customs in these low-country areas were replenished from one generation to another, unlike in Maryland, where slave importation was halted by law in the 1780s.⁸⁶

George McDaniel's research indicates the unlikelihood that Africans were able to replicate their traditional house types in southern Maryland for several other reasons. Maryland-born slaves comprised the majority of slaves as early as 1730, slaves in Maryland were more thinly distributed across smaller estates, and slaves in Maryland confronted colder winters than in the deep South. However, George McDaniel noted that more archaeological excavations are needed before conclusive determinations can be made on this issue.⁸⁷

Chesapeake area slave quarters generally had the same appearance and dimensions as the housing for poorer whites. In 1835 Frederick Law Olmsted wrote that in Virginia, "A good many old plantations are to be seen; generally standing in a grove of white oaks upon some hill-top. Most of them are constructed of wood, of two stories,

⁸⁴ Dell Upton, "White and Black Landscapes," 361.

⁸⁵ Patricia Samford, "The Archaeology of African-American Slavery," 92.

⁸⁶ George W. McDaniel, *Hearth and Home*, 34.

⁸⁷ Russell R. Menard, "Maryland Slave Population, 1658-1730: A Demographic Profile of Blacks in Four Counties," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 32, no. 1 (January 1975): 29-54. In George W. McDaniel, *Hearth and Home*, 38-39.

painted white, and have perhaps a dozen rude-looking little log cabins scattered around them, for the slaves.”⁸⁸ George McDaniel's surveys in southern Maryland indicate that:

In general, the overall design, floor plan, and size of slave houses were rather similar to those of the houses of the rural poor, even of small landowners. These dwellings were also one story in height, with a gable roof, a chimney exterior to one gable end, a central doorway, and a floor plan of one or two rooms (two rooms for a single family being larger than that provided for most slaves).⁸⁹

In southern Maryland the homes of the wealthy residents often had complex floor plans and were built of brick or frame. The homes of landowning middle class were predominantly frame but smaller than those of the wealthy and more uniform in size. In contrast, the majority of houses of the free whites and black tenants were log and typically 16' by 16,' or 16' by 14'.⁹⁰

A quick survey of the "Negro" quarters or houses identified as such in Baltimore County's 1798 Federal Direct Tax List indicates the range of sizes. James Gittings' had a 25' by 20' log "Negro House." John Foster's had two 14' by 20' log houses for "Negros," and a third measuring 12' by 12.' George Harryman's log house for "Negroes" was 14' by 16.' Mary Nicholson's log house for "Negroes" measured 15' by 18,' and John Orrick's log house for Negros was 20' by 24.'

The conditions of the quarters varied as much as the size. Frederick Douglas remembered his grandparents' quarters on the Eastern Shore of Maryland as a “log cabin that resembled the cabins in the western states built by the first settlers, except that it was smaller, less commodious, and less substantial. It was built of wood, clay and straw.”⁹¹ James Watkins, a fugitive slave who fled from a Baltimore County estate in 1844, recalled that once he became a young adult:

I was now employed in the general work of the farm, lodged with the other slaves, clothed in rags, sleeping sometimes under a tree, and sometimes in lodging provided for use – a kind of shed, where male and

⁸⁸ Frederick Law Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom: A Traveler's Observations on Cotton and Slavery in the American Slave States*, ed. Arthur Schlesinger (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), 31.

⁸⁹ George W. McDaniel, *From Hearth and Home*, 61.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁹¹ Frederick Douglas, *My Bondage My Freedom* (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 37, quoted in George W. McDaniel, *From Hearth and Home*, 51.

female slaves were huddled in together for the night, without any bed but a sloping kind of platform inclining to the fire.⁹²

In this respect, the surviving examples of slave quarters drastically misrepresent the housing conditions for most Tidewater slaves, a condition described as follows:

Again, the surviving structures are misleading. The houses at Tuckhoes were upgraded in the nineteenth century and are now well finished framed buildings with glazed windows, plastered interiors, and painted interiors. Other eighteenth century slave houses were built of brick. Most, though, were less well constructed. From the third quarter of the eighteenth century, log was the dominant material for the houses of a large proportion of Virginia's slaves.⁹³

Since so much of the slave housing stock was so crudely constructed, most has disappeared from above ground. Archaeologists have used the presence of root cellars to identify and research slave quarter sites. Root cellars have also been used to identify larger slave houses which served as barracks.⁹⁴ McDaniel's research indicated that nineteenth-century southern Maryland slave quarters were rarely barracks or dormitories.⁹⁵ Baltimore County retains some above-ground remains of one alleged slave "barracks." This structure and the county's other extant slave quarters are described in the next section of this chapter to illustrate of some of the many untold stories attached to these sites.

Baltimore County Slave Quarters

◆ The prominent **Hayfields** farm, with its impressive farmstead complex (BA 00094, Figures 2, 11), perhaps more than any other Baltimore County site embodies the pro-slavery Southern sentiments that flourished in the county until the Civil War, and arguably after the Civil War as well. The Hayfields estate, needless to say, has never been documented primarily as a slave site, yet the surviving slave quarters stand as some of the most distinctive slavery structures in the state.

Colonel Nicholas Merryman Bosley started this farm and livestock ranch on 560 acres in central Baltimore County where bluegrass thrives naturally on the area's Hagerstown and Manor loam soils. Nicholas was the son of Elijah Bosley, who

⁹² James Watkins, *Narrative of the Life of James Watkins*.

⁹³ Dell Upton, "White and Black Landscapes," 359.

⁹⁴ William M. Kelso, *Kingsmill Plantations, 1619-1800: Archaeology of Country Life in Colonial Virginia* (San Diego: Academic Press, Inc., 1984), cited in Patricia Samford, "The Archaeology of African-American Slavery," 95.

⁹⁵ George W. McDaniel, *Hearth and Home*, 7.

according to the 1798 Federal Direct Tax List, owned twenty three slaves, and rented land to four tenant farmers who owned another thirteen slaves. The 1823 County Tax List shows Nicholas with fourteen slaves. These slaves would have probably tended the cattle, and aided in the cultivation of wheat and other crops such as timothy hay.⁹⁶

Nicholas bequeathed his farm to a close relative named John Merryman, who remained at Hayfields until his death in 1881. John Merryman was openly a Confederate sympathizer during the Civil War, and his name rose to national attention – and a place in American constitutional history – from actions he took as the commander of a local militia cavalry unit. Merryman was arrested for burning railroad bridges in the county, although his actions were in part motivated by personal as well as philosophical opposition to the return of the Northern troops: "G-d-m them, we'll stop them from coming down here and stealing our slaves."⁹⁷ Seized from Hayfields, without a warrant, by Federal soldiers at 2:00 a.m. on May 25, 1861, Merryman promptly sought, and was denied, release from his incarceration at Fort McHenry. In an immediately, and still, famous opinion – *Ex parte Merryman* (17 F. Cas. 144) – Chief Justice, and fellow Marylander, Roger Brooke Taney challenged President Lincoln's purported suspension of the Constitutionally-guaranteed right to a writ of *habeus corpus*. Lincoln essentially ignored Taney's argument, although Merryman was released after posting bail in July, and the belatedly-filed charges against him ultimately were dropped without prosecution. Merryman's appointment as the state treasurer and his service in the General Assembly after the war attest to the strong lingering Southern sentiments within the county's electorate and political system.⁹⁸

Two sets of buildings were constructed on the farm, and both sets reportedly were built with slave labor. The cottage, smoke house, ice house, and servant quarters all are primarily constructed in local fieldstone. The main dwelling house, slave house, wagon shed, granary, sheep fold, lower horse barn and wagon shed, small stable and coach shed, and a spring house are built with Cockeysville white marble, quarried on the farm.⁹⁹

This strikingly well-built masonry farmstead complex drew the attention of architects compiling the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in the 1930s as a classic example representative of a mid-Atlantic farmstead with the outbuildings

⁹⁶ Nicholas Bosley Merryman, "Hayfields History," *History Trails* (Baltimore County Historical Society) 19, no. 2 (Winter 1984-1985): 5-7.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

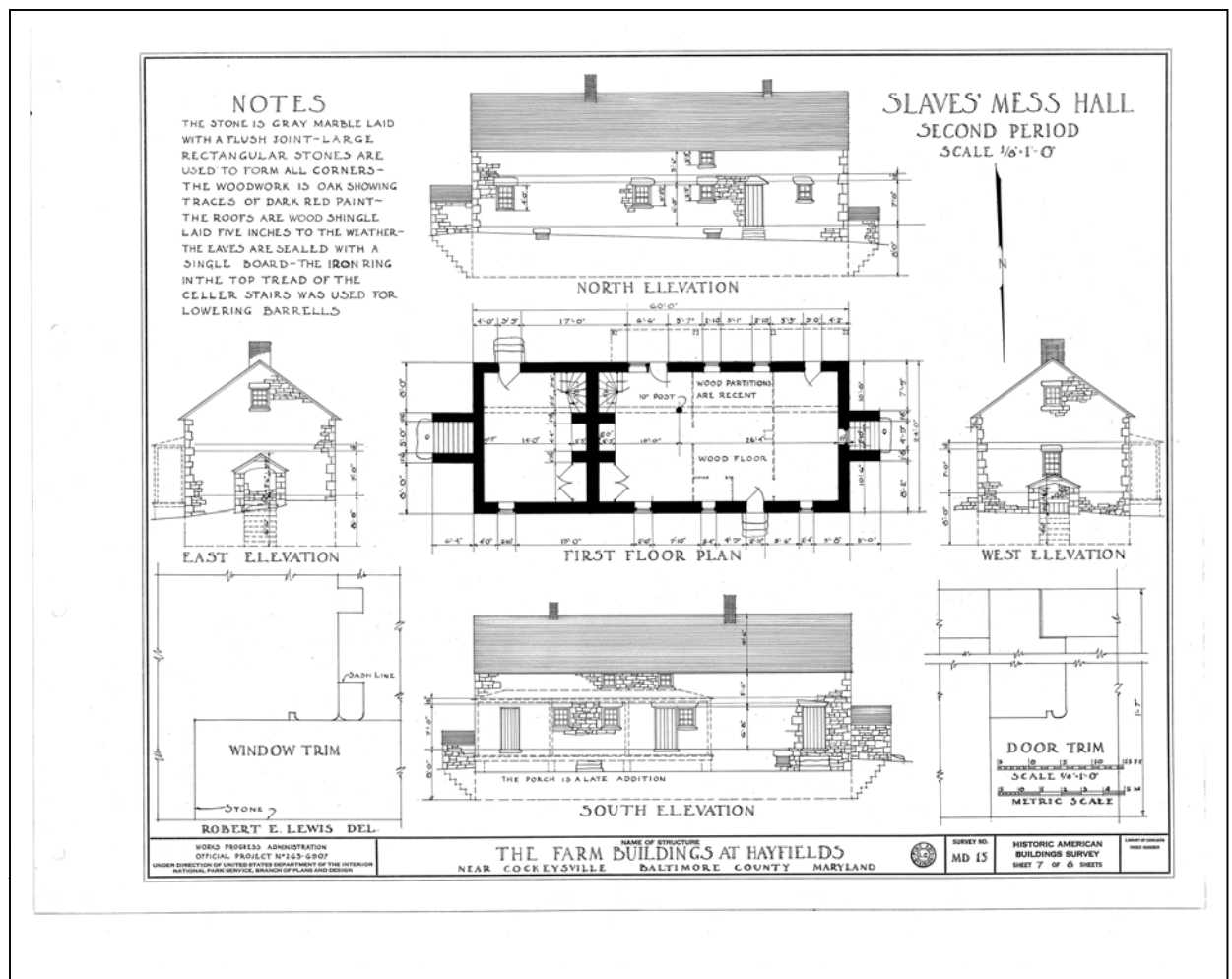
⁹⁸ Neil A. Brooks and Eric G. Rockel, *A History of Baltimore County*, 240-241.

⁹⁹ Nicholas Bosley Merryman, "Hayfields History," 5.

bracketed between the house and barn.¹⁰⁰ Of particular interest for this study is the slave house (Figure 2), which Vlach describes as follows:

This so-called slaves' mess hall was probably built in the 1830s, when Nicholas Bosley employed as many as fifteen slaves to help him run his stock and grazing farm. This building, like many of Bosley's other outbuildings, was a substantial stone masonry structure measuring twenty-four by sixty feet. The room and loft at the west end of the building, probably used as a slave residence, was completely separated from the adjacent dining room. This long room, well lighted by seven windows, was equipped with a fireplace in which the meals were cooked. Because there was a full cellar with eight feet headroom beneath the mess hall and sizable loft above, the structure also functioned as the plantation's storehouse.¹⁰¹

Figure 2: "Slaves' Mess Hall, Hayfields Estate



¹⁰¹ Ibid., 143-144.

This impressive building stands as the only known example of its type in Baltimore County, and possibly in Maryland. Ignoring this remarkable heritage of the building's mute testimony to slavery, a private developer in the early 1990s turned the Hayfields farm into a golf course and the slave mess hall/quarter is now a golf pro-shop.

Figure 3: Risteau-Shanklin Limekilns



Source: John W. McGrain, 2003

◆ The **Merrick Log House** (BA 02771, Figure 4) stands at the end of a row of three large stone lime kilns which are bunkered into the side of a hill in the center of a valley once known as "Limekiln Bottom." The lime kilns are shown in Figure 3 and the house is shown in Figure 4. The log and frame house possibly was used by workers who tended these kilns twenty-four hours a day, stoking the fires, loading the limestone into the top of the kiln, and bagging the lime to be hauled across the valley to Baltimore and Delta Railroad for shipping to farms and businesses. Demand for lime increased dramatically in the early 1800s after it was widely recognized as a soil restorative. Slave labor had been used in iron production since the early settlement period, but it remains

Figure 4: Merrick Log House



Source: E.H.T. Tracerics, 2002

unknown how much slave labor and free black labor may have been used for lime production. The jobs were treacherous and back-breaking. The fumes at the top of the kilns were lethal. On February 26, 1856, the *Baltimore County Advocate* newspaper reported that one "Negro, Henry Butler," was killed when he fell into a kiln several miles away from this site at the large lime kilns in the village of Texas.¹⁰²

¹⁰² *Baltimore County Advocate*, February 26, 1856.

The Risteau family owned the Merrick log house and the kilns through the mid-nineteenth century. The Risteau family had been slaveowners from the time they arrived in the county until the end of slavery in Maryland in 1864.¹⁰³ In 1860, Thomas Risteau owned the kilns, surrounding farmlands, and twenty slaves.¹⁰⁴ This statistic placed Risteau among the top thirteen largest slaveholders in the county in 1860.¹⁰⁵

Amazingly, some ledgers from the 1860s kiln operations survive in the family's possession. Unfortunately, these ledgers have not yet been studied closely in conjunction with other records to determine how much the slaves may have been involved with the kiln operations. Archaeological excavations at the site may yield more clues about this house that is described as follows (and is shown in Figure 4):

The Merrick Log House is a substantial squared-log structure of two stories with a frame and clapboard wing and a small one-story room.... No two-story log houses were shown in the 1798 tax list for any of the owners of Lime Kiln Bottom property. The log portion has a massive stone chimney, suggesting a house dependent on fireplace heating, while the two-story frame wing has a slender brick inside-end chimney suggesting the mid-century method of heating by stoves. There are no tax records specific enough to suggest a date for this house. Log houses were built into the 1860s as a county newspaper advertisement demonstrated....¹⁰⁶

◆ The **Prospect Hill Slave Quarters** building (BA 00138, Figures 5, 12) is unique in this list as part of what appears to be a failed farming operation in Long Green Valley in the late eighteenth century. Thomas Ringold was a wealthy man born into a prosperous merchant family from across Chesapeake Bay in Chesterstown. In 1796, Thomas moved to a 258-acre site in Baltimore County, built a Federal-style brick house, and took up farming as an occupation.¹⁰⁷ It is unclear whether Thomas focused on wheat cultivation or whether he foolishly remained loyal to tobacco. Thomas brought with him some of the family's slaves. One of the slaves, Mary Hamer, was later manumitted at the

¹⁰³ Harry Wright Newman, "The Risteau Family of Baltimore County." Typescript genealogy, compiled for Mrs. Elizabeth Mitchel Schmick, December 1979. Copy filed in Jenifer Collection at Baltimore County Office of Planning.

¹⁰⁴ U.S. Census Maryland, 1860. Washington: National Archives, Microfilm Publications, Microcopy 653, Roll 484, Maryland, Baltimore County, Schedule 2 (accessed on CD-ROM disk published by Heritage Quest, 2001).

¹⁰⁵ Neil A. Brooks and Eric G. Rockel, *A History of Baltimore County*, 236.

¹⁰⁶ John W. McGrain, "Merrick Log House" (Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form, No. BA 02771, January, 1982).

¹⁰⁷ John W. McGrain, "Prospect Hill" (Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form, No. BA 00138, May 1979).

Figure 5: Prospect Hill Slave Quarters



Source: John W. McGrain, 2004

age of thirty, either by the Ringolds or a subsequent owner.¹⁰⁸ Mary may have resided in the “1 Negro house or Kitchen, old and out of repair, 32' by 20,' frame,” itemized in the 1798 Tax List.

The quarters were not the only part of the farm in disrepair and disarray. According to an English traveler passing through the county at the end of the eighteenth century, Prospect Hill's "land was very poor, and everything in an unfinished state."¹⁰⁹ Mary Hamer may or may not have remained a part of this estate when all Thomas's holdings were sold at auction in 1812 to pay his debts after his family members declared him legally insane.¹¹⁰

John Hunter purchased the estate in 1812 and also farmed using slave labor. John Hunter is listed as the owner of fifteen slaves in Election District 2 of the 1823 County Tax List. His son, Thomas Hunter, inherited the farm and is listed as the owner of five

¹⁰⁸ *The Sun* (Baltimore, MD), June 28, 1875

¹⁰⁹ Richard Parkinson, *A Tour in America in 1798, 1799, and 1800* (London, 1805),1: 70.

¹¹⁰ John W. McGrain, "Prospect Hill."

slaves in the 1850 U.S. Census Slave Schedule. Later that year, Thomas Hunter sold the property to Moses Miller, a Mennonite from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.¹¹¹ The stone slave quarters lie northeast of the main house. The quarters feature an immense fireplace with a large wooden lintel over the hearth.¹¹²

◆ **Littlecote** (BA 00286, Figure 12) is a primitive, circa 1800, one-and-a-half story random-rubble stone house with circa 1930 wings. Littlecote was an accessory building on James Carroll, Jr.'s thousand-acre "Summerfield" estate. This building has been called both a slave quarter and an overseer's house, and it could have been used for both purposes.¹¹³ The 1850 U.S. Census shows James Carroll, Jr. with sixteen slaves.

◆ **Chilham House** (BA 00251, Figure 12) is a late eighteenth-century stone house located in the vicinity of the confluence of the Big and Little Gunpowder Falls streams near the colonial port town of Joppa. The Chilham house may stand as the only remaining slave quarter in the county's earliest settled region, and the only slave quarter on the east side of the county. This part of Baltimore County was dominated by iron production in the eighteenth century, and fugitive slave advertisements from the nearby iron furnaces abound.¹¹⁴

Several sets of owners of the house claim that Ananias Divers used the house as a slave quarters.¹¹⁵ Ananias Divers owned nine slaves, 349 acres of land, and an assortment of log and stone dwellings and outbuildings in 1798. The tax list itemized a one-story, 16' by 18' stone kitchen and a log quarter house measuring 15' by 20,' but did not itemize any specific "Negro" quarters for the nine slaves. It is quite possible that the stone kitchen was long ago incorporated into the current stone dwelling and that some slaves slept in the kitchen loft.

Benjamin Buck owned this property in 1816 after he married into the Divers family.¹¹⁶ According to the 1823 County Tax List for Election District 4, he owned tracts called "Swanson Plumers Choice", "Divers Island," "Onions Inheritance," and

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ A. McDonald and A. Didden, "Littlecote" (Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form, No. BA 00286, May 24, 2001).

¹¹⁴ Lathan A. Windley, *Runaway Slaves: A Documentary History from the 1730s to 1790*, 4 Vols. (Westport Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983).

¹¹⁵ L.V. Trieschmann, J.J. Bunting, and A.L. McDonald, "Chilham House" (Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form, No. BA 00251, May 5, 2003).

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

"Confiscated Land," as well as eight slaves. By 1850, Robert Taylor owned the Chilham house and surrounding property to which he added a large Italianate house on the crest of the hill that overlooked the Gunpowder River and, after 1885, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The slave schedule for the U.S. Census in 1850 indicates that Robert Taylor owned two slaves. Ironically, his son, B.F. Taylor, served in the Union Army as a colonel in the Second Maryland Regiment.¹¹⁷

◆ **Mt. Welcome Retreat Slave Quarters** (BA 00009, Figures 6,13) is the only known surviving slave quarters associated with a stone quarry operation. In February, 1778, Samuel Wright Walters purchased property in the Patapsco Valley region from Nicholas Peddicourt at the substantial price of 1,539 pounds. Alexander Walters inherited the property in 1787 and built a house, suitable for the owner of the Waltersville Quarry, which comprised the first three bays of the current stone house called Mt. Welcome Retreat.¹¹⁸ By 1823, Alexander had amassed additional wealth as the owner of ten slaves. By 1850, the property was in the hands of Lemuel Offutt who owned seventeen slaves. These slaves probably were housed in the slave quarters described as follows:

The circa 1800 slave quarters are located to the southeast side of the house.... Only the two gable end walls and a portion of the façade (northwest elevation) are intact.... The two-bay wide, single-pile structure is one and one-half stories in height. The building features a random rubble granite foundation and structural system with ashlar granite quoins.... One door opening with a paneled door and one window opening with missing sash pierce the northwest elevation. Both openings have wood surrounds and granite lug lintel.... The east and west elevations are both marked by two window openings with wood surrounds flanking the interior end chimneys.... Due to the condition of the structure, interior wall placement could not be determined, although it appeared to have consisted of two rooms.... Both hearths feature large granite lintels and the east hearth retains an historic forged iron crane.¹¹⁹

In 2001, the owner was contemplating rebuilding the quarters into an office or studio. The current status of the ruin is unknown.

◆ It is possible that the **Beachmont Farm** slave quarters (BA 00530, Figure 12) could be the county's oldest quarters, dating to James Gittings' settlement of the seventeenth-century tract called "Hills Forest." Little documentation has been completed on the quarters or the history of the property. The 1773 County Tax List indicates that

¹¹⁷ J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Baltimore City and County*, 922.

¹¹⁸ L. V. Trieschmann, A.L. McDonald, and R.J. Weidlich, "Mt. Welcome Retreat" (Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form, No. BA 00009, October 16, 2000)

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

James Gittings, Esq. lived in the Gunpowder Upper Hundred with nine taxable adult males in his household or on his property, an overseer named Laurence Kraft, thirteen

Figure 6: "Mt. Welcome Retreat" Slave Quarters



Source: E.H.T. Tracerics, Inc., 2000

male slaves, and six female slaves.¹²⁰ The 1798 Tax List shows three men named James Gittings. James Gittings, Sr., Esq., was the owner of approximately 2,000 acres, 50 slaves, and a 25' by 20' log "Negro" house. His son James Gittings, Jr. is listed with five slaves. Another James (of Thomas) Gittings had seven slaves. The 1823 County Tax List shows a James Gittings with thirty-one slaves. The 1850 Census Slave Schedule shows a James Gittings with seven slaves, and James Gittings' heirs with twenty-three slaves. This site is in northeastern Baltimore County, close to the Gunpowder River and the old port of Joppa. It is likely that the many slaves inhabiting this farm in the eighteenth century were used to cultivate tobacco that would have been shipped from Joppa.

¹²⁰ Henry C. Peden, *Inhabitants of Baltimore County, 1793-1774* (Westminster, MD: Family Line Publications, 1989), 63.

◆ The former **Worthington** slave "barracks" (BA 03042, Figure 13) is currently a pile of decaying, hand-hewn timbers lying between two massive stone chimneys. Among county historians, the Worthington name is almost synonymous with slavery. Two sets of Worthingtons settled Baltimore County, and both sets, collectively, owned hundreds of slaves. The descendants of Samuel Worthington settled the area now included in the Worthington Valley National Register Historic District, which lies in the northwest central region of the county, east of Glyndon. The descendants of Thomas Worthington settled close to the Patapsco River in the southwestern region of the county, near the village of Granite.

Thomas Worthington was one of the county's top landowners and slaveholders, rivaled only by Charles Ridgely of Hampton. The 1798 Federal Tax List shows Thomas as the owner of approximately 5,100 acres and fifty-two slaves. The 1798 list also indicates that Thomas Worthington's lands were used for tobacco farming since his tenants are assessed with three tobacco houses or barns. Little is known, however, about how and where the fifty-two slaves lived and worked. The assessor in 1798 did not distinguish "Negro" quarters from other quarters among the forty-two total buildings itemized between Thomas and six tenants on his vast property.

Thomas Worthington's sons, Rezin Hammond, and Noah, and another relative named John Worthington, all inherited or purchased portions of Thomas's estate at his death.¹²¹ Rezin gained ownership of the lands that contain the barracks, and Rezin (also spelled Reason in some records), is shown with "Sewell's Hope" and thirty-three slaves in the 1823 County Tax List. The same tax list shows Noah Worthington as owner of part of Thomas Worthington's estate and twenty-three slaves, and John Worthington, Sr., with thirty-five slaves and "Griffith's Adventure" (BA 00011). John Worthington, Sr., was not Thomas' son, but he evidently was close to the family since he and his descendants are buried in the family cemetery on Old Court Road.¹²² According to the 1823 County Tax List, the only other resident in the same election district with more slaves than these Worthingtons was a man named William Patterson who owned fifty slaves.

The 1850 Census Slave Schedule shows Rezin Worthington owning thirty-one slaves, Noah owning thirty-seven slaves, and John owning thirteen slaves. Rezin's obituary in the *Maryland Journal*, June 28, 1884, stated that his estate included between two and three thousand acres of land and that he "was a great advocate of just and equitable government for people, and though a decided Democrat was never a partisan bigot."¹²³

¹²¹ K. Baynard and J. Riggle, "Worthington Estate" (Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form, No. BA 03042, September 20, 2002)

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ *Maryland Journal*, June 28, 1884.

Today, in the center of Rezin Worthington's nineteenth-century landholdings is a complex of buildings, including a deteriorated Queen Anne dwelling, a slave cemetery, one of the two known Worthington cemeteries, a log outbuilding, and the ruinous remains of what is called the "slave barracks." The barracks was constructed in log with massive stone chimneys at each end, and measured approximately 35' by 20'.

◆ **Pot Spring** slave quarters (BA 00070, Figure 12) rests at the base of the hill below the stately Pot Spring Mansion. The latter sits high on the hill facing south towards the nearby Hampton Mansion in Towson. The hill retains stone walls and steps that apparently are remnants of the stepped garden which once graced the front lawn of this elegant Federal-style mansion. Ironically, the stone slave house that remains at the bottom of this hill was once a series of buildings called "stone row" that were combined, in 1935 during the Colonial Revival movement, into one long narrow house.¹²⁴

According to the 1798 Federal Direct Tax List, David McMackin (or McMechen) owned a two-story stone house, which evidently forms the rear portion of the current stone mansion, and 778 acres of land, but no slaves. David's brother, William McMechen is listed in the 1823 County Tax List as the owner of the house and thirteen slaves. The April 28, 1835 *Baltimore American* advertises the estate for sale, including the "rough cast' house built on an elevation which commands a view of the whole farm along with "the stock consisting of Slaves, Horses, Cows, Oxen, the farming utensils...."¹²⁵ By 1850 the house was owned by Alexander Tyson, who does not appear as a slave-owner in the 1850 U.S. Census slave schedule. Because the slaves at the Pot Spring estate were only three miles from the Hampton Mansion they would probably have formed family and friends from among the 350 slaves owned by the Ridgely family.

◆ **The Martin Fugate Slave Quarters** (BA 00617, Figures 7, 12) is currently a pile of stone and rubble, but since the structure had been so little altered and the site apparently remains undisturbed, this site may be one of the county's more significant potential archaeological resources. The house was once a one-story stone building with a high basement. It measured 18' by 24,' the exact dimensions of Martin and Elizabeth Fugate's house in 1798. Although tiny by today's standards, as a stone house it would have been a respectable estate dwelling at the end of the eighteenth century when the majority of the county's residents were living in primitively-constructed one-story log buildings. The documentation for the My Lady's Manor National Register Historic District states that the house was sold to the Sparks family in 1810.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ John W. McGrain, "Pot Spring" (Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form, No. BA 00070, May, 2003).

¹²⁵ *Baltimore American*, April 28, 1835.

¹²⁶ Dr. Robert M. N. Crosby, "My Lady's Manor" (National Register Historic District Nomination Form, January, 1975).

Figure 7: Martin Fugate Slave Quarters



Source: John W. McGrain, 1995

◆ **Hampton Mansion** (BA 00103, Figures 8,12) has surviving above-ground slave quarters (Figure 8), and is also likely to have the remains or sites of early quarters on the lands surrounding the main house. Hampton was built between 1783 and 1790 by Captain Charles Ridgely. The Baltimore County Historian, John McGrain, wrote that, "Although Hampton resembled a tidewater tobacco planter's dreamhouse, it was actually built with the proceeds of a fortune founded on iron making...."¹²⁷ Charles Carnan Ridgely, the builder's nephew, obtained title to the house and the more than 1,500 acres of Ridgely lands when his uncle died in 1790, six months after completing the mansion. The 1798 Federal Tax List shows Charles Carnan Ridgely of Hampton at this site with ninety-two slaves and one 22' by 32' Negro house, as well as eight other Negro houses, some of frame and log and others of stone.

These Ridgelys used many of their slaves in iron production. Iron furnaces were similar in design and appearance to the lime kilns shown in Figure 3. Most furnaces were used for melting raw iron ore to produce bars of pig iron that could be shaped or molded in other forges. Pig iron was made by burning charcoal, oyster shells, and ore, the latter being a soft brown bog ore or limonite. The county abounded with scattered ore deposits,

¹²⁷ John W. McGrain, "Hampton" (Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form, No. BA 00103, April, 1977).

mounds of oyster shells from centuries of Indian habitation along the bay, and forests that, once cut, would not only provide charcoal, but also additional open farmland.¹²⁸

Iron production, like lime production, was a hellish occupation. John McGrain characterized conditions as follows:

Life at a furnace must have seemed like a sentence to hell, especially when the flames flickered against the night sky and the fires needed tending around the clock, a year or more running. The slaves and convicts had little to look forward to except a regimen of involuntary sobriety and celibacy, marooned in a frontier society.... The trackless wilderness to the west may have offered room for escape but probable starvation as well for the inexperienced European or African.¹²⁹

Charles Carnan Ridgely died in 1829 and his will freed as many of his 339-350 slaves as laws would allow. Charles' son, John Ridgely, inherited Hampton and in time replenished the slaveholdings with seventy-seven slaves who were not freed until the dissolution of slavery by Maryland law in 1864.¹³⁰ These slaves maintained Hampton in 1856 as described below:

Hampton in our own vicinage, is a model for architects. Constructed in the last century, its turrets, towers, spires, and steeples, flout the skies in gay magnificence. Standing on a proud eminence, it rivets the beholder in speechless admiration ere he enters its wide domain, with cultivated fields, sloping gardens, acres of wild flowers, hot houses, filled with all that horticulture can charm into blossom, lemon and orange groves, grafted fruits, clusters of luscious grapes- it seems indeed, fairyland...¹³¹

There are three slave quarters within the remaining estate, now administered as the Hampton National Historic Site. The two stone quarters were constructed between 1845 and 1860 (see Figure 8), and the log slave quarters described below was built between 1835 and 1860:

This log slave quarters ... consists of five rooms including cellar with dirt floor; the second floor is a loft with a ladder to climb up. There is a stone fireplace in the cellar with a wrought iron crane and iron brackets for cooking.... There is a

¹²⁸ John W. McGrain, *From Pig Iron to Cotton Duck: A History of Manufacturing Villages in Baltimore County, Vol. 1* (Towson, MD: Baltimore County Public Library, 1985), 8-15.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

¹³⁰ R. Kent Lancaster, "Chattel Slavery at Hampton/Northampton, Baltimore County."

¹³¹ *Baltimore County Advocate*, November 8, 1856.

crawl space under one room. Interior log walls, daubing, underside of upper flooring, stair stringers, and plastered fireplace walls were always whitewashed....¹³²

◆ **Fort Garrison** (BA 00033, Figures 9,13) is a small stone building that is reputedly the fort authorized by the governor of Maryland in 1693 for defense against Indians. It is a little known fact, however, that this building is equally significant, if not moreso, as a slave quarters that yielded archaeological evidence of "Africanisms," i.e.,

Figure 8: Hampton Slave Quarters



Source: Library of Congress, E.H. Pickering, Photographer, 1930s

elements of a West African culture that survived within American slavery. The 1798 Federal Tax List shows Robert North Carnan as the owner of this "stone Negro Quarter, one story 48' by 18,'" as well as the tract "Risteau's Garrison," the nearby Fort Garrison farmhouse (BA 00034), and twenty-two slaves. The 1823 County Tax List shows Robert Carnan as the owner of twenty-four slaves.

¹³² Jenny Masur and Kent Lancaster, "Interpreting Slavery at Hampton NHS," *Cultural Resource Management* 20, no. 2 (1997): 10.

The site was excavated in 1964 in hopes that that the ground might yield artifacts related to the building's use as a fort. It wasn't until 1985, however, that the apparently inconclusive results from the work two decades earlier were re-examined and produced the most startling conclusion in Baltimore County slavery history. Johns Hopkins University's Eric Klingelhofer examined the artifacts from the 1964 excavations. His

Figure 9: Fort Garrison



Source: Baltimore County Public Library, no date

findings, quoted below, attest to the latent importance of these buildings and sites as historical records of a largely-unwritten part of the nation's past:

At the Garrison Plantation, slave archaeology revealed three distinctive elements of material culture that are absent in the European and colonial traditions. Moreover, the three elements appear on other Tidewater slave sites.... There was a ready access to a skill generally long abandoned in European-lithic industry [,] by which items of European manufacture were refashioned to serve different functions for Black needs. There appeared, too, traces of an artistic mode that is not part of the White world....¹³³

¹³³ Eric Klingelhofer, "Aspects of Early Afro-American Material Culture: Artifacts from the Slave Quarters at Garrison Plantation, Maryland," *Historical Archaeology* 21, no. 2 (1987): 112-119.

◆ **Kenilworth** (BA 00184, Figure 11) slave quarters may be the only remaining quarters associated with the county's late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century mills. The elegant Kenilworth house is an eight-bay, two-story brick home with some Federal-style details. It was built by a self-made man named Charles Jessop. Behind the brick house stands the two-story stone building known as the slave quarters. Charles Jessop's life epitomized the social mobility that was sometime afforded to county residents who were able to find a niche in the booming grain market as the region became the wheat-belt of the world for almost a century. Charles Jessop, born in 1759, was a massive figure of a man who began his career at age sixteen as an apprentice to a millwright. Jessop later became an ironmaster under General Charles Ridgely (owner of the Hampton estate), a miller, a road supervisor, a millwright, a Revolutionary War soldier, and an early Methodist convert who was involved in the construction of the first Jessop Methodist Episcopal Church in 1811.¹³⁴

Charles Jessop's socio-economic rise was partly the result of his exploitation of African-American slave labor. The 1798 Federal Tax List identifies Charles Jessop as the owner of 121 acres of land in the Patapsco Lower Hundred, with one free "Mulatto" man named Aquila as a tenant, as well as four slaves. Charles Jessop appears as the "Occupant" of General Charles Ridgely's former lands in the Middle River Lower Hundred in the same tax list. He later established his residence in the central region of the county at "Vauxhall," (a site now beneath the waters of the Loch Raven Reservoir) when he became owner of both Shipley Mill and Beaver Dam Mill.¹³⁵

Charles bequeathed Kenilworth to his son George at his death in 1828, and his son appears as the owner on the J.C. Sidney 1850 Map. George Jessop's ledgers survive, disclosing that he wrote, in June, 1823, "Mr. Green was carding his wool, with one bundle slated for the Negros' cloth."¹³⁶ The 1850 Census Slave Schedule shows George Jessop as the owner of seven slaves.

◆ **Belmont** (BA 00169, Figure 11) is a brick and stone house built by Charles Worthington in the first quarter of the nineteenth century on the tract called "Welsh's Cradle." Charles' father, Samuel Worthington, was patriarch of the Worthingtons who settled the area now known as Worthington Valley. Many of Samuel's children also settled in this fertile valley that is described in greater detail in Chapter III. At some unknown time, the north wing of the main house was extended to the east with a hyphen to attach to the slave quarters, which is a one-and-one-half story brick structure on a high

¹³⁴ John W. McGrain, "Kenilworth," (Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form, No. BA 00184, November, 1996).

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Robert Barnes and John McGrain, "Prose from a Farm Ledger," *History Trails* (Baltimore County Historical Society) 11, no. 1 (Autumn 1976): 1.

stone foundation.¹³⁷ The quarters would probably have been occupied by some of the nineteen slaves owned by Charles Worthington in 1823, some of whom may have survived through Edward Worthington's reign at the estate up at least until 1850. This site, like Young Jacob's Choice, is particularly intriguing as the departure point of a brave man, Jim Bell, who successfully escaped slave bondage by the Worthington family.¹³⁸

◆ As noted in the Introduction, the **Greenspring Slave Quarters** (BA 00045, Figure 10) form part of the Greenspring estate owned by the Moale family in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. The main estate house grew from a primitive, circa 1760s one-story core into the current two-story, vernacular style farmhouse. There is little architectural documentation on the surviving slave quarters featured in Figure 10. The Moale family remained slaveholders well after the decline of the tobacco economy in Baltimore County, forming part of the county's society of the "persistent practitioners" of slavery, a phenomenon explored in the next chapter.

Figure 10: "Greenspring" Slave Quarters



Source: John W. McGrain, 1980

¹³⁷ Catherine Black and James T. Wollon, Jr. AIA, "Belmont" (in Worthington Valley National Register Historic District Nomination, January 1, 1976).

¹³⁸ William Still, *Underground Railroad: A Record of Facts, Authentic Narratives, Letter, etc* (Philadelphia: Porter & Coales, Publishers, 1872.), 438.