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***Advice Among Masters: The Ideal in Slave Management in the Old South.* Greenwood Press, Westport, CT: 1980.**

Chapter 8: Housing (Virginia)

“Virginia Husbandry. Observations Made Thereon by the Editor of the American Farmer on an Excursion in that State during the Last Summer,” *American Farmer* 2 (March 16, 1821): 401-404.

Their habitations are very comfortable, and they scarcely know any restraint in the consumption of fuel, although it is often purchased at the rate of from \$50 to 480 per acre (the wood leased) from land but moderately timbered. For the sake of economy I have adopted the use of the Dutch stove. My negro houses being constructed of hewn logs are very warm and comfortable, each of which is furnished with one of these stoves, notwithstanding the consumption of fuel is very great and expensive, particularly in the item of hauling which is constant and laborious throughout the season of winter, but there is nevertheless a considerable saving in this mode compared with the wide, deep chimneys which generally prevail.

“Management of Slaves, &c.,” *Farmers’ Register* 5 (May 1837): 32-33.

Hewed log cabins with white oak sills, 16 feet by 18 , make very comfortable houses. The roof should be framed. The old fashioned cabins, with log roofs and slabs not nailed but merely confined by logs, almost invariably leak and keep the cabin floor always wet, which, I have no doubt, is one origin of the catarrhal affections which terminate in what is called “negro consumption.” But these cabins are going fast out of use. It is highly important that dirt-floors should be raised a foot higher than the surrounding surface of the earth, and well rammed, to keep them dry. The hewed log cabins with hewed sills will out last three sets of cabin roofed houses.

William H. Harrison, “Stoves for Negroes’ Dwellings,” *Farmer’s Register* 8 (April 30, 1840): 212-213.

One of the greatest obstacle to the improvement of our farms in this part of Virginia is the time and labor necessary to collect fuel for ourselves and slaves. This, on almost every large farm, occupies, during the winter months, nearly all the force and all the teams of the estate. Thus we have, comparatively, no time for the accumulation of the means of manure, or the distribution of it when made. I will suggest a plan that will secure to our slaves as much comfort as at present, and at the same time save their masters the endless vexation of always cutting and hauling wood. It is simply to substitute stoves in place of the eight-foot fireplaces, which consume a log at a firing. From accurate experiments during the last five years, I have found that a stove would consume, in a given time, but one-tenth the wood of a common fire-place, whilst the

general warmth and comfort of the room was four times as great. Thus the total gain was as one-tenth to four. But to my plan.

Let a 40 by 20 house be put up; the basement frame or brick (I would prefer the latter), 10 feet pitch. Divide this by cross partitions, so as to leave the centre or stove room 16 by 20. The end rooms will of course be 12 by 20. Divide these again, so as to make each two dormitories 12 by 10. Thus the ground floor will consist of four lodging rooms, two on each side of the stove room. In the centre of this middle apartment or stove room, have a cheap cast iron stove, with a pipe sufficiently long to extend through the roof of the house in a vertical position. Such a stove and pipe can be bought and fixed for \$12, or at the most \$15. The garret might also be divided, if desired, into four or five sleeping rooms. I would have all the rooms properly ventilated by windows at proper distances. I annex a diagram to illustrate my views.

Such a building would cost but a trifle in comparison with the saving it would effect. The stove room would accommodate comfortably 32 persons, and the four lodging rooms on the first floor and the four garret rooms would easily lodge this number. To accommodate this number of slaves upon the present plan with fire would require eight fire places; but I have shown that each fire place will consume at the minimum 10 times as much fuel as a stove. Hence the total gain in fuel will be as 80 to 1. Or 1 load of wood will upon this plan keep 32 slaves as comfortable, and for as long a time, as 80 loads upon our present system. I need not point out to him who groans under the unceasing toil of providing fuel for his slaves the great benefit of diminishing his labor eighty fold; nor need I advert to the humanity of an arrangement which would secure to every slave, however old and decrepit, comfort and warmth at all times.

St. George Cocke, "Plantation Management.—Police," *De Bow's Review* 14 (February 1853): 177-178.

8th. Comfortable and ample quarters will be provided for the negroes. Each family will have a separate room with fireplace, to be furnished with beds, bedsteads, and blankets according to the size of the family; each room will, also, be furnished with a table, chairs, or benches, and chest for the clothes, a few tin plates and cans, a small iron pot for cooking, &c.

R.W.N.N. "Negro Cabins," *Southern Planter* 16 (April 1856): 121-122.

The ends aimed at in building negro cabins should be: First, the health and comfort of the occupants; Secondly, the convenience of nursing, surveillance, discipline, and the supply of wood and water; and Thirdly, economy of construction.

Of course, the convenience of locality must be judged of by the builder. I only propose to consider the subject in its economic and healthful aspects, and to this end recommend that negro cabins should be built of plank, have large glass windows and

good chimneys, should be elevated at least two feet above ground, and never placed within less than 75 or 100 yards of each other. When inch plank is not worth above \$1.25 per hundred feet, I consider the plank house cheaper than either log or masonry. At this price the cost of plank for a house 16 feet square will not exceed \$15, for which sum I would not furnish, hew, haul and put up logs to build a house of the same size. The planking is put on up and down, and I use a double course of planking instead of narrow strips, this I find makes a very comfortable cabin both for summer and winter. If the builder chooses to incur a slight additional expense and should dress the outer course and give it a coat of paint, this, with a projective eave and some cheap ornamental cornice, makes a very pretty house and obviates the necessity for sticking the negro cabin out of sight of the mansion.

The floors of negro cabins should be of plank rather than dirt, and should be dressed and jointed but not nailed down, that every plank might be taken up occasionally and cleansed of any filth that may have settled upon them. Lime and other disinfecting agents should be freely used. Negroes should be well supplied with light. The "prefer darkness to light," and unless watched will exclude the light entirely from their houses.

Their houses should be provided with large glass windows, and when a pane is broken they should be made to replace it rather than fill its place with old rags. Light and air are necessary to the proper making of blood; and negro women and children, who spend so much time within doors, should be compelled to enjoy both of these elements.

Glass windows enable the negro to do much work "in doors," and are surely more convenient than a lightwood knot in enabling the physician or nurse, in case of sickness, to examine the patient or minister to his wants. I think a doctor has just cause of complaint when forced to burn a negro's eyebrows off with a pine torch before he can get a sight of his tongue at mid-day.

Negro houses should be provided with chimneys that don't smoke. Air-tight stoves are liable to give negroes cold from the extremes of temperature they produce and are objectionable in that they give no light. The Franklin stove is well adapted to negro cabins ... Any thing is better than a smoking chimney. On many of our Virginia farms, I doubt not there is lamp-black enough accumulated in the breathing tubes of the negroes during the night to black the master's boots in the morning.

Cabins should not be placed at a less distance than from 75 to 100 yards from each other, for the reason that it is highly probable that infectious diseases, such as scarlet and typhoid fever, measles, whooping cough, and even small pox may not be communicated at that distance.