

Virginia Slave Housing Data Base

Building Name: Clifton Farm kitchen-quarter
Evidence Type: Extant
Historical Site Name: Clifton Farm (Blackwell family)
City or Vicinity: Warrenton
County: Fauquier
State: Virginia

Investigators: Doug Sanford (8/18/16); Doug Sanford & Dennis Pogue (9/9/16, 11/4/16)
Institutions: University of Mary Washington; University of Maryland
Project Start: 8/8/16; 9/9/16 **Project End:** 11/4/16

Additional Investigators: Michael Worthington
Institutions: Oxford Tree-Ring Laboratory
Project Start: 10/7/15 **Project End:** 10/7/15

Summary Description:

The Clifton Farm kitchen/quarter is a 1½-story, two bay log structure, supported on a rubble stone foundation, with a moderately pitched side-gabled, asphalt-shingled roof and a substantial end chimney composed of a stone base and brick upper stack. The hewn logs are joined with V-notches at the corners; the exposed logs are chinked with stones and an occasional brick bat and chunk of concrete, daubed in many locations with a Portland-based mortar. The roughly 20x16' building has one heated room on each level – a cook room below and a domestic space above – and a full cellar. The winder stairway rises from the SE corner and runs along the south wall to an enclosed landing. The cabin, which has been dendro-dated to 1820, faces the 19th-century Blackwell farm house, which is located roughly 10 feet to the east.

The building is positioned running lengthwise north-south to conform to the sloping ground surface. The stone foundation for the east-facing façade is only a few inches high; the foundations on the north and south slope significantly to the west, where the foundation is exposed to a height of more than 4'. At present the access to the unfinished, dirt-floored cellar is via a stone-walled bulkhead entrance in the south wall, positioned close to the west end of the foundation. The original access to the cellar likely was on the west, where a portion of the foundation (roughly 3'10" wide) appears to have been infilled. This former opening is located below the current window on the west elevation, which was converted from a doorway at an unknown date. Given the elevation of the floor level, a stair and landing must have been positioned adjacent to the doorway, which would likely have covered the entry to the cellar.

The first floor is divided between the main room and a storage space (later converted into a toilet) by a studded vertical board partition (which is an original feature). A board partition in the garret also separates the main room from the stair and landing. A doorway is positioned at the foot of the stairs and doorways are roughly centered in each

of the two partitions. The current exterior doorway in the façade was balanced originally by a doorway in the west wall, which has been reduced to accommodate the current 2/6 wood sash window. The doorway and the opening for the window on the east elevation appear to be original (pegs are visible joining the door and window frames to the logs); the window opening in the south wall also appears to be original.

The main first floor room (roughly 15'10" by 13'10" in dimension) was devoted to cooking, with a substantial stone fireplace (9' wide) centered on the north wall, and a correspondingly wide stone hearth. The original fireplace opening was roughly 6' wide, but was reduced by infilling the west half of the opening with stone; two generations of thimbles to receive pipes from wood stoves penetrate the front of the fireplace above the infilled portion. The sash sawn joists and boards for the floor above always have been exposed and the surfaces are darkened by soot/creosote. The walls and the fireplace in the main room are painted/limewashed white. The current narrow-width wood floor boards in the kitchen and storage room are laid running north-south and overlie the original floor, which ran east-west.

The roughly 5'6"-wide room along the south wall served for storage (likely a pantry), in support of the kitchen function, and is lighted by the window roughly centered in the long wall. The partition was an original feature, as the sash sawn studs framing the wall are mortised into the log joist below and the ceiling joist above, at an interval of roughly 1'8" on center. The partition originally extended all the way to the east wall, as indicated by the presence of mortises in the joist with cut off tenons; removing the studs allowed for installing a doorway located adjacent to the east exterior wall, at the foot of the winder staircase. The wood boards which make up the stair carriage and steps, and the east end of the partition wall, are circular sawn. Therefore, while the storage room below the stairs appears to have been an original feature, it has been altered somewhat, and the current staircase is a later addition. The two western ceiling joists were cut off and headed to accommodate the stair well.

The precise location of the original stairway so far has not been determined. The garret flooring is original, and battens are attached to the bottoms of the boards to cover the seams; the battens are notched into the ceiling joists. This feature was presumably intended to tighten the floor to keep smoke and fumes from penetrating the domestic space in the garret. There are no areas where the battens or the floor boards have been cut and patched, indicating that the original stairway must have been located in the general location of the current version. As the joists originally carried through the current stair opening and were spaced at roughly 2', to match the others, nothing more substantial than a steep ladder could have been fitted into the space. The sash window in the south garret lighting the landing likely was added when the new stair was installed, as the frame is unusually narrow (1'6") to fit between the gable wall studs.

The garret room is heated by a stone fireplace (roughly 5'-wide) centered on the north wall, with a corresponding stone hearth. What appears to be an early wood shelf is installed above the fireplace at the height of the knee wall; the shelf is supported by two elongated wood brackets. Two window openings (currently covered with metal screen)

flank the fireplace, which also appear to be original. The log knee walls have been painted/lime washed; the gables and ceiling were covered with lath and plastered. The lathes that are visible where the plaster has fallen away are riven; the rafters are sash sawn. The nails used to attach the lathes to the rafters are machine-headed cut nails of a type that could have been available when the cabin was erected in 1820.

The question remains whether the garret was originally finished to the current degree. The partition is composed of sash sawn boards with machine-headed cut nails, and could have been in place as early as 1820. The current staircase is composed of circular sawn boards, and other physical evidence confirms that it was a later addition. While there is little doubt that the original access to the garret was in the same general location, it appears that the only means could have been by way of a steep and narrow ladder, which seems odd if the garret was as highly finished as it now appears. On the other hand, the substantial fireplace and tight flooring indicates that the garret was always meant to serve as domestic space.

The unfinished cellar encompasses the entire footprint of the building, with a space of 5'8" from the level of the dirt floor to the bottoms of the log joists. The original access to the space was likely roughly centered on the west wall; a 3'10" portion of the dry-laid stone wall appears to have been infilled.

References:

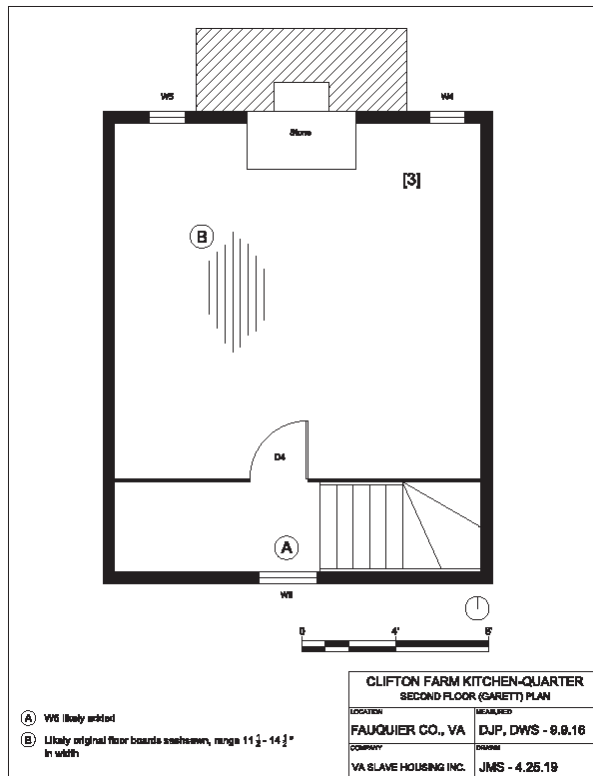
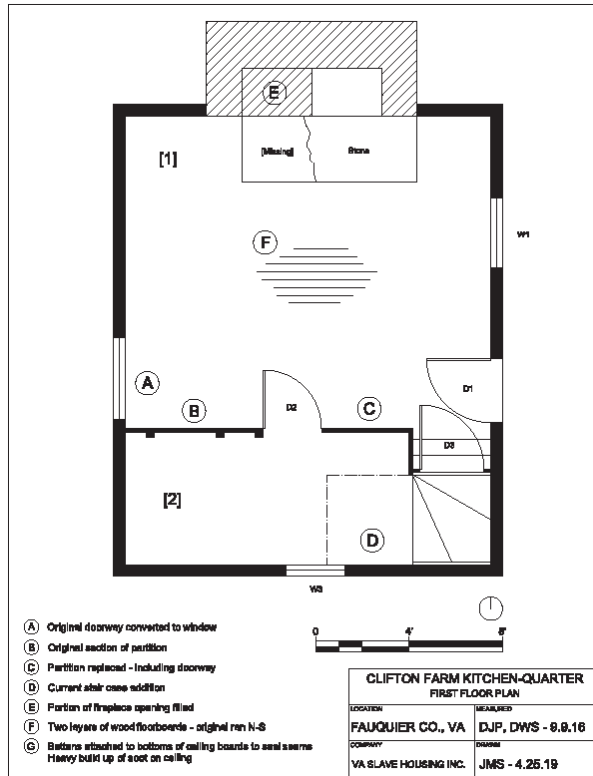
Michael J. Worthington and Jane I. Seiter, *The Tree-Ring Dating of the Clifton Log Kitchen, Warrenton, Virginia*. Oxford Tree-Ring Laboratory: November 2016.

Jay D. Edwards and Tom Wells, *Historic Louisiana Nails: Aids to the Dating of Old Buildings*. Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge: 1993.

Principal Construction Type: Log

One and One-Half Story

Footprint:



Number of Rooms: 2 down, 1 up

Dimensions: (1) kitchen: 15'10" by 13'10" by 7'6" (bottom of floor boards)

(2) storeroom: 11'9" by 5'

(3) upstairs quarters: 16'9" by 15'6" by 8'7"

Doors: 4

	Room 1 (1)	Room 2 (2)	Stairs (3)
Type:	Board & batten; with vertical shiplap boards; chamfered battens	Board & batten (similar construction to Door 1)	Board & batten (similar to Doors 1, 2)
Dimensions:	2.9.0 (W) x 5.9.1 (H); 1 inch thick	2.6.1 (W) x 5.10.2 (H); 1 inch thick	2.6.0 (W) x 5.4.2 (H); 0.75 inches thick
Hardware:	Modern butterfly hinge; note earlier H-hinge on door, & later butterfly hinge	Current: butterfly hinge w/modern screws; note earlier H-hinges & hasp	3 knuckle, large H-hinges w/modern screws; note earlier H-hinge on inside surface
Swing:	In	Out (into Room 1)	Out (into Room 1)
Replacement:	Possibly reused; door surround on interior with circular sawn boards, wire nails	Later insertion; likely reused and inverted	Later insertion; likely reused and inverted

Room 3 (4)

Type:	Board & batten; similar to Doors 1,2, & 3; no bead; w/machine-cut nails
Dimensions:	2.7.2 (W) x 5.8.3 (H); 0.75 inches thick
Hardware:	3 knuckle butterfly hinges w/modern screws; note earlier H-hinges
Swing:	In (into Room 3)
Replacement:	Likely repaired

Windows: 6

	East wall (1)	West wall (2)	Storeroom (3)
Type:	Sash missing; formerly single hung	Double hung sash, 2/6	Double hung sash, 6/6
Dimensions:	2.3.2 (W) x 3.10.1 (H)	2.4.2 (W) x 3.9.0 (H)	2.4.1 (W) x 3.8.0 (H)
Hardware:	N/A	None	None
Shuttered/Slide/Swing:	Original opening; replacement framing w/circular sawn boards, wire nails	Yes; same as Window 1; note evidence for opening originally as a door	Original opening; jambs let into log above

	N. gable end (4) E. side	N. gable end (5) W. side	S. gable end (6)
Type:	Unknown, removed	Unknown, removed	Unknown, removed
Dimensions:	1.7.0 (W) x 2.1.0 (H)	1.9.0 (W) x 2.1.0 (H); replacement framing for screening	1.8.1 (W) x 3.10.2 (H)
Hardware:	N/A	N/A	N/A
Shuttered/Slide/Swing:	Note evidence for earlier framing; machine-cut nails	Inserted frame b/n wall studs (some evidence for earlier framing)	Sash removed; later replaced w/swinging casement; replacement framing

EXTERIOR

Foundation:

Continuous Masonry: Stone - Rubble

Thickness: 10-12 inches

Height: At ground level at NE corner; 6 inches high at SE corner; from 2.8.0 high at NW corner to 4.0.0 high at SW corner (due to ground slope)

Bond: Irregular coursing

Mortar Type: Sand – Clay (“mud”) with limestone fragments

Joint: Irregular, flush.

Repaired: Yes, often with Portland cement

Shed/Porch: No

Roof:

Roof Form: Gable

Roof Covering: Asphalt shingles (wood shingles earlier)

Roof Framing:

Exposed: No (only visible through holes in ceiling plaster)

Form: Common Rafters (note modern dimensional timbers as sistered repair/replacements, for asphalt shingle roofing)

Rafter Dimensions:

Collar Ties: Not visible

Building Height: at NE corner

Ground to Soffit: 11.1.0

Ground to Roof: 11.10.0

Ground to estimated Top of Chimney: 25 ft.; 14.10.2 to top of stone portion of chimney

Walls:

Log:

Dimensions: 9½ inches to 11 inches high; 5-6 inches wide

Finish: Flat Sides – Hewn, with Round tops, bottoms, in places with bark

Notching: V

Chinking: Composite – stones, mud, some brick bats, concrete

Chimney(s):

Chimney (1): at north gable end

Material: Stone (base, lower stack); Brick (upper stack)

Location: Exterior end

Height: Approx. 25 ft. to top of brick stack (partly collapsed)

INTERIOR

Wall Framing: Exposed Log

Wall Finish: Chinking – Whitewash

Fireplace (1): End [Room 1, kitchen; partially enclosed with 2 stove thimbles added to west side]

Fireplace Material: Stone

Fireplace Overall Dimensions: 9.0.0 (east-west; outside-to-outside)

Fireplace Opening Dimensions: 5.10.0 (wide, east-west) x 4.2.0 (high) x 2.2.0 (deep); current fireplace (partially enclosed): 2.8.0 (wide) x 4.2.0 (high) x 2.2.0

(deep)

Hearth Material: Stone

Hearth Dimensions: 3.4.0 (north-south) x 9.0.0 (east-west)

Fireplace (2): End [Room 3, north gable end]

Fireplace Material: Stone

Fireplace Overall Dimensions: 4.11.0 (east-west); flush with wall surface

Fireplace Opening Dimensions: 2.7.0 (W) x 2.4.0 (H) x 1.4.0 (D)

Hearth Material: Stone

Hearth Dimensions: 2.1.2 (north-south) x 4.8.0 (east-west)

Stairs: Yes (SE corner)

Type: Enclosed – Winder

Stairwell Dimensions: 7'2" by 4'

Number of Treads: 2 steps to triangular landing (first winder); then 2 more winders; then 5 steps; and, then up to 2nd floor level.

Stair Tread Dimensions: 3.5.0 (L) x 10-11.75 in. (W) x 6-7.5 in. (H)

Subfloor Pit: No

Floor: Wood

Floorboards Dimension: On first floor; replacement boards measure 2.5 inches wide, running east-west; on top of original boards, running north-south
On 2nd story: original boards, measure 11.5 to 14.25 inches wide

Dating:

Dendrochronology Date: felling date of 1819/1820 (Worthington and Seiter 2016)

Other Date: Original fabric with hewn logs, sash sawn timbers and early machine-headed cut nails correlate with 1820 date. Lathing nails for upstairs room machine-headed cut nails, post-1815.

Dating Evidence:

Saw Marks: Sash sawn on original material, with hewn logs and riven lathe

Nails: Machine-headed cut nails; Type 6, after ca. 1815

Comments:

The building is neither square nor plumb; therefore, both the overall and room dimensions above represent the norms. At different locations the main room dimensions are: 15.5.1, 15.9.3, and 15.10 E-W; 13.4.2 and 13.10 N-S; the garret room: 15.9 and 15.10.4 E-W; 15.6.1 and 15.85 N-S. The four exterior walls measure: 20.2.4 E; 16.8 N; 19.11 W; 16.0.4 S.

The overall condition of the building is fair to good; but there are several areas of concern that should be addressed immediately: the lower two logs on the E wall are deteriorated beyond repair; the NE corner of the log crib on the first floor has deflected and is unstable; the supports for the fire place hearth on the first floor have failed and half of the stones are absent; two floor joists in the cellar are not properly supported; the upper chimney stack has severely deteriorated, including extensive cracks and lost bricks; the daub throughout is incompatible Portland based mortar and should be selectively removed and replaced with a high lime-based mixture; the foundation along the east wall is deteriorated and should be repaired.

The building underwent significant repairs in 2017.