

Slave Housing in Stafford County: A Survey

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A total of 21 structures were investigated as part of the survey, carried out in 2014-15, found on 13 properties distributed across the breadth of Stafford County. The buildings likely range in date from the late 18th century to circa 1860, and reflect both the wide array of activities and duties performed by the county's enslaved black residents, and suggest the range of circumstances in which these people lived and labored. They include several buildings that were once part of extensive plantations owned by members of the county elite, as well as those related to wealthy merchants living in the port town of Falmouth. Also included are quarters associated with some of the more modest holdings where the overwhelming majority of the enslaved were employed, and a small sample of the more industrial activities that took on greater significance over time. Seven of the structures either are likely to have served as quarters for the enslaved, or may have been used in that capacity but whose function is at present inconclusive. These structures will be described in more detail below, and their significance will be assessed within the context of the history of slavery in Stafford County and with reference to the current body of evidence pertaining to slave housing in the state of Virginia.

Slave Housing in Context

Considering the 200-year history of slave holding in the area, and its pervasive presence throughout every aspect of life in Stafford, it is no surprise that literally thousands of places associated with slavery have been lost to time, indifference, and later construction. The properties that have been investigated, therefore, represent neither a valid sampling of the variety of the places associated with the lives of the enslaved, nor provide the opportunity to draw new insights by considering those resources alone. But by adding other types of evidence that relate to Stafford County in particular – such as the federal census data – and to the architecture of slave life across the commonwealth and beyond, it is possible to provide the context to more fully interpret these findings.

The trajectory of the role of slavery in the economy and society of Stafford County over a span of two centuries largely mirrored the situation throughout the Tidewater region of Virginia. By the mid-18th century Virginia had been transformed from a society with slaves to a slave society (Kulikoff 1986:3-14). The percentage of the enslaved in the Virginia population rose steadily from 6.9% in 1680 to 43.9% in 1750; but by 1790 the percentage had dropped to 39.2%. The decline was largely a consequence of the growing practice of Virginia masters to sell excess laborers to supply the needs of the expanding plantations of the Deep South, and the parallel decision of many Tidewater planters to relocate westward. That trend only increased over the next decades. The slave population in Virginia increased 41% between 1790 and 1860, and it remained the largest slave-holding state in the Union (n=490,865), but the percentage of the enslaved in the overall population had declined to 30.7%. In contrast, the numbers of the enslaved in the western states of Kentucky, Missouri, and Tennessee between them increased 40-fold, and the population in the eight Deep South states increased by 16-times during this period. As a result, Virginia's share of the total slave population in the U.S. dropped from 42% in 1790 to 12% by 1860 (Kolchin 1993:95-96, 240-242).

Similar trends are evident for the enslaved population of Stafford County as revealed in the federal censuses of 1790-1860 (Sanford 2015). In 1790 the percentage of slaves in the Stafford population (42.4%) was slightly higher than for the state as a whole, reflecting the continued concentration of slaves in the Tidewater Region, even as slavery was undergoing rapid expansion in the western parts of the state. Over the next 70 years the number of slaves in the county decreased, along with its percentage of the total population; from a high of 4368 and 45.9% in 1820 to 3314 and 38.7% in 1860. The population trends in Stafford generally parallel the situation throughout Tidewater, again due to the relocation of many planter families to the west, especially to the piedmont region of Virginia and to the newly-opened territories (later states) of Kentucky and Tennessee. A crucial factor contributing to this migration was the declining fertility of soils in the face of decades of tobacco cultivation and the corresponding fall in profits from the crop. In response to these developments many planters switched from growing labor-intensive tobacco to grains, primarily wheat, as their cash crop, which brought with it a much reduced requirement for the number of field workers (Kulikoff 1986:157-161; Hofstra 1999:10-12).

Even with the relative decline in the fortunes of the tobacco economy, Stafford County remained steadfastly agricultural in orientation, with the great majority of inhabitants living and working on farms and plantations, ranging from dozens to hundreds of acres in extent. And white landowners continued their commitment to slavery: of the 1,022 property owners in the county in 1860, 60% of them (n=617) owned slaves. In comparison with the enormous holdings found in other parts of Virginia and the South, none of the plantations in Stafford County were truly large. In 1860 only four Stafford residents possessed as many as 50 slaves, which together represented less than 0.1% of the total population. In contrast, holdings of that size accounted for 11.8% of slaves in the Upper South and 29.6% of slaves in the Deep South states. In Stafford, masters with 16 or more slaves comprised the statistically significant upper stratum, with those 47 individuals making up 7.6% of the total, and their slaves representing 38% of the enslaved population. Within that category, nine masters owned more than 40 slaves, together accounting for 13% of the county total, and it was these owners and their plantations that had an out-sized impact on both the white and black communities. The wealth and status of the owners meant that they were significant players in the social and political affairs of the county. Their slaves on the other hand formed a relatively cohesive group that was more conducive to family development and the maintenance of cultural traditions, and could serve as a source of support for the black community in the face of the arduous work and frequently cruel treatment that they were forced to endure (Morgan 1998:512-519).

The town of Falmouth emerged as an important commercial center beginning in the mid-18th century, with numerous grain mills established there to process the burgeoning crops of wheat from the surrounding farms and plantations. With its location at the falls of the Rappahannock, it was well positioned for milling, as well as a point of transshipment for goods and produce both entering and leaving the port. Substantial warehouses were erected to house the goods of the prominent merchants who set up business there. The Rappahannock Forge (Hunter's Ironworks) was established nearby, ca. 1770, to take advantage of the natural trade connections. All of these enterprises depended on bound labor for their success, and Falmouth therefore became a locus for the county's enslaved population (Schools 2012:12-23).

The percentage of slave owners in 1860 (60%) represented a significant increase from previous decades, when Stafford's slave population had been controlled by roughly 45% to 50% of landowners. The shift reflects two related developments: the reduction in the number and significance of the largest plantations, where a correspondingly large force of labor had been required, and the increase in the numbers of masters who owned fewer than five slaves to work their smaller land holdings. In 1860 the mean number of slaves per owner was 5.3 (down from roughly eight per owner previously), but 71% of owners (n=439) held between one and five slaves, representing 25.5% of the total population, while 41.5% owned just a single individual. Both of these totals represent significant increases from earlier years. At the other end of the spectrum were the 47 masters who owned as many as 16 individuals, with a high of 59. While the stark division between the large landholders who owned dozens of slaves and the majority of small farmers who owned just a few had existed for decades, by 1860 the proportion of small-scale slave owners had increased dramatically, while the holdings of the great planters had fallen significantly.

Farms and plantations in Virginia almost universally included a variety of outbuildings in addition to the main house, often arranged in descending order in terms of value and appearance, to support the variety of tasks that were required. Needless to say, these duties were primarily allotted to slaves. The description by an Italian visitor in 1786 provides an evocative image of just such a scene: "The master's house is ... on a good site, either on a hillside or a spacious plain and all around are the little dwellings of the overseer and the slaves, and likewise the kitchens and the barns, so that the whole complex looks like a small village" (Castiglioli in Welles 1993:21). Thus, not only the quarters designed to house the workers, but also the various structures associated with their labor, both on the plantations and in town, qualify as representing significant resources relating to the world of the enslaved.

The census of 1860 was the first (and only) attempt on the part of the federal government to enumerate the "houses" that masters provided for their bound laborers, and the results demonstrate just how few of those buildings survive (Appendix A). The seven structures in this sample that may have served in that capacity equate to roughly 1.4% of the 499 slave houses listed in the county for that year alone. It should be noted that at properties where the number of slaves was small, there may not have been any structures that were specifically intended to serve as quarters. In those cases, slaves likely slept in available spaces in other outbuildings and even in and around the main house. The data from neighboring counties indicates that the percentage of holdings where no slave houses were listed was less than 5%. Therefore the result that 390 owners (63.21%) in Stafford in 1860 are listed as having no slave houses, even though they together owned 865 individuals, is unusually high. This suggests that for unknown reasons the census taker employed a different standard in identifying slave houses in Stafford. For example, he may only have counted structures that were used solely for housing slaves, excluding the many others where slaves occupied a portion of a building, such as a kitchen, laundry, office, stable, etc. Therefore, the number of structures where slaves lived in 1860 was undoubtedly much higher than the 499 houses listed in the census.

The Buildings

The seven dwellings reflect both the similarities and some of the diversity in the character, quality, and comfort of living conditions that characterized this type of structure. Quarters for the enslaved exhibited a wide range in terms of their dimensions, the number of rooms, construction materials, and the level of finish and degree of architectural design, yet they also shared many commonalities. Of particular consequence in contributing to the character of slave houses was the size and family make-up of the enslaved community, along with the role of the occupants and the location of the structures in relation to the household of the master. The construction methods and materials used in erecting quarters varied over time and space, but wooden structures – either log or frame – as a rule were more popular than masonry in the eastern part of Virginia, except in special circumstances such as urban areas or at elite plantations. By the late 18th century substantial barracks-like structures, to accommodate large numbers of usually unrelated individuals, had been replaced by smaller dwellings, almost always consisting of one or two main rooms, better suited to accommodate families. This development was due to an unusual feature of slavery in the Chesapeake, where the black population increased naturally (births outpacing deaths), and the family structure took on increasing significance (Morgan 1998:512-517). With the potential for masters to profit financially from every child born into slavery, it was in their self-interest to facilitate births and to provide a relatively healthful environment, and this is reflected in an extensive literature promoting efficient and cost-effective methods for housing and treating slaves, which appeared in farming journals across the South (Breedon 1980).

At larger plantations and farms a rough hierarchy often existed in terms of the quality of housing. The domiciles of workers living near the master's residence were generally better constructed and outfitted with certain amenities that were unknown to the great majority of slaves living in more distant locations, where they served as laborers in the fields (Chappell 2013:156-178). All seven of the Stafford County slave houses fit the general category of home quarters, as each is located within easy sight of the main house, and six of the seven are relatively well built, substantial structures: two of brick and four frame, each likely accommodating either two separate living spaces or one domestic space and another function. Four of these buildings are located within the homelot surrounding the main house on a plantation or farm; two others were associated with the residence of a wealthy individual who was primarily involved in mercantile activities, and are located within the port town of Falmouth. At least three of the six were used for multiple purposes, with quarters likely sharing the building with a kitchen (and in one instance probably also a laundry). The seventh structure is built of logs, with one room on the first floor and an unheated garret above. As part of a more modest domestic complex on a mid-sized farm, it also was erected within sight of the main house, and may be the only survivor from what had been a group of three similar buildings. As such it is a particularly rare survivor of what had been the most prevalent type of slave house that was found in the region.

None of these structures existed in a vacuum, of course, but only a few other outbuildings were found associated with the buildings in our sample. The exceptions are two of the largest former plantations in the county: Carlton, built by John Short ca. 1785, and Sherwood Forest, erected by Henry Fitzhugh ca. 1843. Along with the quarter/kitchen, a smoke house (meat house) and a dairy survive at Carlton; at Sherwood Forest a smoke house survives along with the duplex slave

quarter and the combined kitchen, laundry, and quarter. At the Dunbar property, in Falmouth, a dairy is located just a few feet from the combined kitchen-quarter; in this instance the main house does not survive. Other properties with more than one surviving structure, but no quarters, are Poplar Grove, with a kitchen and spring house, Springfield, with a kitchen and smoke house, and Walnut Hill, with a spring house and blacksmith shop. Other resources include both single-cell and duplex quarters, log houses that at present cannot be related to occupation by slaves but which offer important comparative evidence, and a mill and the site of an iron works.

Sherwood Forest:

Sherwood Forest was one of the largest plantations in Stafford County. The property descended from the Ball and Washington families until it was purchased by Joseph Downman in 1791, then was acquired through marriage by Henry Fitzhugh in 1837. Beginning in the 17th century the Fitzhugh's were one of the most prominent families on the Northern Neck, and Henry had the resources to improve the holding, including building a new house and associated structures (ca. 1843). In 1860 Fitzhugh was one of the largest slaveholders in the county, with his real estate valued at \$40,000 and his personal estate at \$60,000 (Stanton 2007; U.S. Federal Census 1860:28-29). His 50 slaves were divided between 21 males (aged 38 to 1) and 29 females (49 to 1); 14 children were aged 12 or under. With seven slave houses, the average number of occupants per house would have been slightly more than seven, somewhat higher than the norm, but the presence of at least two duplex quarters would have mitigated the crowding.

The two slave buildings at the Sherwood Forest plantation provide some insight into the spatial arrangement and the hierarchy of functions and of building forms and materials found at such elite sites. The brick building that almost certainly served as a kitchen and laundry, with two rooms above for quarters, was purposely relegated to the fringes of the "polite" space surrounding the main house, but near enough to perform its primary role in supporting the planter's household. The choice to build in brick to match the main house, and the symmetrical façade and generous size, reflects the relative prominence of the structure, distant but fully visible from the main dwelling. The frame duplex is positioned on axis with the other buildings, but it is located several hundred feet farther away and is largely obscured from view. While a well-built frame structure, it clearly occupied a lesser place within the hierarchy of the built environment. The frame smokehouse was clearly a carefully considered part of the complex, again as typically was the case positioned at some remove but easily accessible from the kitchen.

The Sherwood Forest kitchen-laundry-quarter is a substantial brick building, four-bays in form and 1½-stories high, roughly 32' by 16' in dimension, with interior end chimneys and a slate-covered side-gable roof featuring a corbelled cornice. The symmetrical façade includes two doorways, closely set on either side of the interior medial wall, each flanked by a double-sash window. The rear elevation is similar, with two centrally positioned doorways and flanking windows, but the western entry is shifted slightly to accommodate the off-centered stairway positioned in the west room that provides access to the garret. The first-floor rooms are nearly equal in size, separated by the brick wall, but the placement of the stairway in the west room constricts that space; a large fireplace is centered on each end wall. The layout of the garret is identical, but with fireplaces of a more domestic scale centered on the end walls. Two horizontal windows in the façade (currently hinged to tilt inward) provide light to the living spaces. The

garret had been divided by a wood partition, which was removed during recent repairs made to the roof structure. The masonry and carpentry techniques used, along with nail types and historical evidence, make it likely that this structure dates to the 1840s. Serving both as a kitchen and probable laundry downstairs, and domestic spaces for slaves in the half-story above, it exemplifies the more architecturally ambitious, multiple-use structures that functioned both as work place and domestic space for slaves that were a feature regularly found on elite plantations.

The Sherwood Forest duplex slave quarters is a well-built one-story, side-gable-roofed, timber-frame building, approximately 30' by 16' in dimension, supported on a continuous stone foundation. The symmetrical façade faces west, with doorways positioned towards the corners of the building, flanking two windows. Another window is located in the south end wall, and one window is centered in each gable. The building is laid out with two nearly equal-sized first-floor rooms, divided by a partition of horizontal boards, which originally were heated by fireplaces that shared the central chimney. A ladder stair was located in a corner of each room to provide access to the unheated garret, which also is divided by a board partition into two roughly equal-sized spaces. The gaps between the studs and the siding and the interior horizontal sheathing boards were infilled with clay nogging, another feature indicating a higher level of concern for the well-being of the occupants. The first floor interior surfaces (wall boards, ceiling joists, underside of attic flooring) have been whitewashed, a common practice in quarters of every level of distinction. The rafters and the partition in the garret are whitewashed as well, and, although unheated, it is doubtless that the garret also was used as a domestic space.

The smoke house at Sherwood Forest is likely contemporary with the two slave quarters, and is a 12'2" by 12'2" frame structure on a brick foundation, with a pyramidal roof and a door centered on the façade. In size and in form this meat house is comparable to the two others identified in this survey, and fits the pattern of buildings of this type found on the Northern Neck and elsewhere in the state (Welles 1993:15-16, Olmert 2009:76-79). As is typical with smoke houses, the wall studs are set relatively close together at 18 inches, as a security measure, and the open roof frame was built to accommodate hanging meat to smoke over an open fire. The fire pit does not survive, but otherwise the building is well preserved.



Figure 1. Sherwood Forest kitchen-laundry-quarter, south elevation (2015).

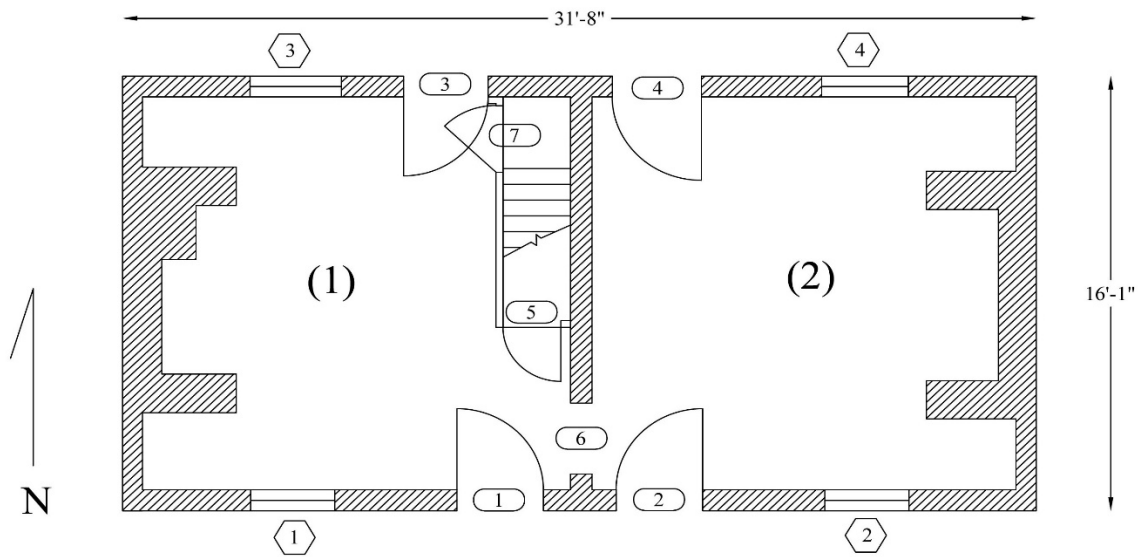


Figure 2. Sherwood Forest kitchen-laundry-quarter, first floor plan.

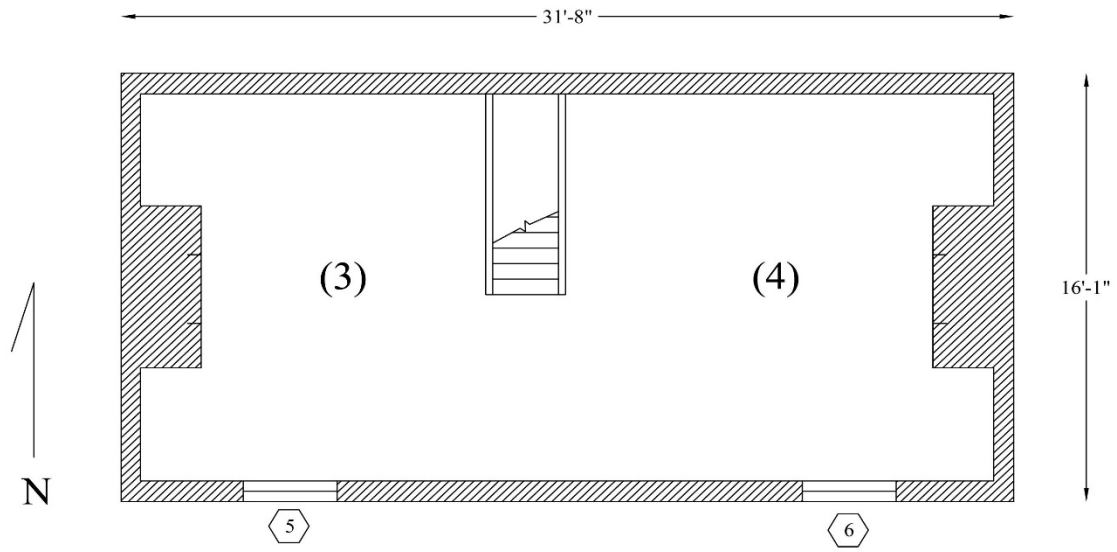


Figure 3. Sherwood Forest kitchen-laundry-quarter, second floor plan (without partition).



Figure 4. Sherwood Forest duplex, west elevation (2015).

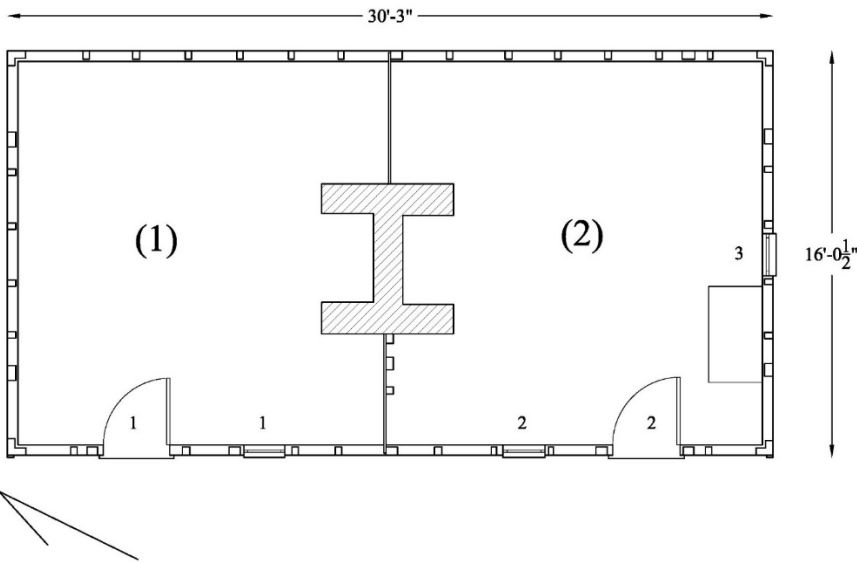


Figure 5. Sherwood Forest duplex, Period 1 first floor plan.

Carlton:

The Carlton property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, with the main house, dated to circa 1785, meeting the criterion for architectural significance. According to the National Register form (NRHP: Carlton 1971), the house was built by John Short, a prosperous merchant and landowner. After Short's death in 1794 the property passed on in his family until it was sold in 1837. In 1860 the owner, John O'bannon, owned 20 slaves and was listed as having three slave houses (U.S. Federal Census 1860:3). Three outbuildings survive, although much altered: a substantial frame structure (32'6" by 16'5") referred to as the kitchen, but which is likely to have served as a quarter for slaves, either exclusively or in addition to the cooking function; a frame smoke house (12'5" by 12'4"); and a brick dairy (12'1" by 12'1"). The outbuildings are arranged with the dairy and smoke house flanking the quarter, with the ensemble on axis with the main house.

Proximity to the main house and its relationship to the other outbuildings likely serves as the primary justification for the large frame building having served as a kitchen. The two first-floor rooms are slightly unequal in size – 223sf and 233sf -- with a steep ladder staircase rising from the smaller room to the unheated attic above; both fireplace openings are substantial at 5'3" in width, but not unusually so for domestic use. Therefore, it is possible that the building served either as a duplex quarter, or as a combination of domestic and kitchen functions. In the latter case the kitchen probably would have been located in the slightly larger space, but many of the duplexes that have been documented have rooms that are unequal in dimension (Table 2), and there is no doubt that in those instances both spaces were intended for domestic use. The structure is one-story, supported on a brick foundation, with doorways centered in each bay and a corresponding window on the rear wall. A window is located adjacent to each doorway, but they

likely relate to later renovations; the position of the rear windows may well be original, but the current 6/6 sash are replacements. The central stone chimney serves two stone fireplaces positioned back to back spanning the medial wall dividing the building into two spaces.

Neither of the two nearly square structures flanking the quarter on the south are heated, and their ascribed functions as a dairy (milk house) and smoke house match well with their overall character. Once again, without an opportunity to investigate the interiors little more may be said about them at this time. The lack of a source of running water is the crucial distinction for the designation as a dairy rather than a spring house (Olmert 2009:93-98).



Figure 6. Carlton duplex, south elevation (2015).

Belmont:

The first documentary reference to Belmont consists of a notice that appeared in the December 17, 1823, issue of the Fredericksburg *Virginia Herald* newspaper, advertising the sale of a “large and well-finished dwelling house, and every necessary outhouse, all in good repair.” Any early land records pertaining to the property were destroyed during the Civil War, so all that is known is that Belmont had been owned by Susannah Knox, until her death served as the catalyst for the sale in 1823. Joseph B. Ficklen, a prominent local businessman, purchased the tract and made it his home, expanding the existing house in the 1840s to meet the needs of his growing family. The character of the original portion of the cottage, and the types of nails and other details of construction, suggest that this outbuilding was erected at that time. Although Ficklen acquired additional land adjacent to the original tract, Belmont was never a significant agricultural

enterprise, and the cottage is likely to have accommodated enslaved servants for the Ficklen household in the main house, located just a few hundred yards distant (Byrd 2012:5-6).

Ficklen's enterprises included operating merchant mills located nearby in the community of Falmouth, and he appears to have been an extremely successful businessman. In 1860 his real estate was valued at \$100,000 and his personal estate at \$300,000. Some of Ficklen's wealth was in the form of the 27 enslaved individuals listed in the 1860 federal census U.S. Federal Census 1860:1). The majority of these people seem likely to have worked in Ficklen's mills, while others presumably operated the Belmont farm and served his household. Seven slave houses are enumerated in the census, on average accommodating just less than four individuals. The breakdown of sexes and ages suggests that several families were included, with 12 children listed ranging in age from 1 to 11 years.

The Belmont caretaker's cottage is a highly evolved timber frame structure that at its core incorporates a building that is believed to have functioned originally as a quarter for enslaved workers, likely house servants, on the Belmont property. The earlier one-story, side-gable-roofed, four-bay duplex cabin, is supported on a stone foundation, measuring roughly 34' by 16'. The symmetrical façade faced the Belmont house approximately 400 yards to the south, with doorways for each of the roughly equal-sized downstairs rooms, and two regularly spaced double-sash windows in between. Ladder stairs positioned in the front corners of the rooms led to the unheated garret spaces above, which mirrored the ground floor layout; a small window was likely positioned in each gable. A central chimney stack served the fireplaces positioned back to back on the first floor on either side of the medial partition.

The building continued for many years to be used as housing for Belmont workers, which necessitated a number of changes over time. It has been raised by one-half story, outfitted with two-bay shed dormers on the front and back, expanded with a first-floor shed addition along the rear, and further augmented with open porches attached to each end wall. The fenestration of the façade has been altered by replacing the western doorway with a window; a doorway was inserted in the partition, and both ladder stairs were removed, with the one to the east replaced with a more gracious winder staircase (Byrd 2012).



Figure 7. Belmont duplex (caretaker's cottage), south elevation (2015).

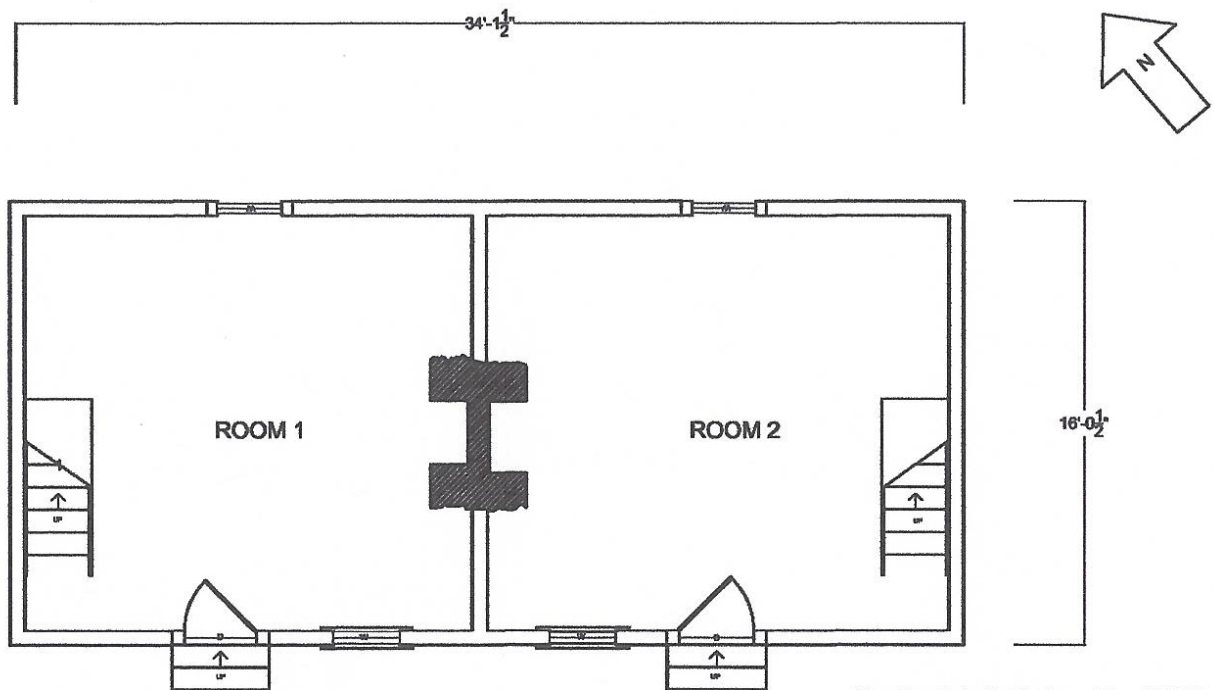


Figure 8. Belmont duplex, Period 1 first floor plan.

Dunbar:

Robert Dunbar was a merchant and a substantial property owner who made his home in the town of Falmouth, not far from Joseph Ficklen's residence at Belmont. In 1790 Dunbar purchased several houses and properties from Daniel Triplett, and he lived for many decades at Lot #21, currently bounded on the south by Carter Street (Dunbar Papers). According to the 1810 federal census, Dunbar oversaw a substantial household of 20 and owned 38 slaves (U.S. Federal Census 1810:127). Upon his demise in 1831, Dunbar's heirs remained in the family home until Anna Dunbar's death in 1878. In 1860 Anna Dunbar owned four slaves, an adult man and woman and two children, aged 3 and 6, and was credited with having one slave house (U.S. Federal Census 1860:3). The main residence is believed to have been destroyed around the turn of the last century, but a substantial framed structure survives that was located nearby, which likely served as a combined kitchen and slave quarter.

The structure in question is a substantial one-story, side-gable roofed, frame dwelling, 32'6" by 16'6" in dimension, supported on a stone foundation, with exterior brick end chimneys. At more than nine feet (9'3") in width the base of the east chimney is unusually large, suggesting that it serviced a correspondingly expansive fireplace of the type usually found in kitchens of the period. Reference to a photograph taken ca. 1925-1929 indicates that the structure has been altered somewhat from its original façade, which formerly had a doorway and a window centered in each bay. All of the walls are currently covered with stucco, a practice that was often undertaken to obscure the evidence of significant alterations made to a façade. Three dormers are shown on the south-facing slope of the roof in the 1920s image and they exist today, but they may have been additions. A smaller, one-story, side-gable-roofed frame building is positioned a few feet to the east, and its approximately square footprint and lack of a chimney suggests that it may have functioned as a dairy.

The two first-floor rooms differ substantially in size (255 vs. 195sf), with the one containing the large fireplace almost two feet longer than the other. This difference supports the interpretation that the larger room served as the kitchen, with the second space a separate quarter. A centrally located enclosed staircase now allows access to both attic rooms, which although unheated could well have served as living spaces.



Figure 9. Dunbar kitchen-quarter and dairy, south elevation (2015).



Figure 10. Dunbar kitchen-quarter and dairy, south elevation (Frances B. Johnston, 1925-1929).

Phillips:

The Phillips duplex is a four-bay, 1½-story, brick structure (approximately 32' by 18' in dimension) with a side-gable, standing seam sheet metal roof, and a central brick chimney. The symmetrical facade has two doorways located near the corners, flanking two double-sash windows; a window is centered on each of the end walls; two gabled dormers have been added to the south face of the roof. All of the first-floor openings for windows and doors appear as original, with flat brick headers laid in stretcher bond supported by the substantial beaded wood frames. The two first-floor rooms are roughly equal in size, each heated by a fireplace, oriented back to back and sharing the central chimney mass; the garret rooms are heated as well in the same manner. An enclosed staircase rises from the NW corner of the west room to the chamber above. The east garret room is currently accessed via an exterior stairway rising from the SE corner to a landing and a doorway centered on the south end wall, but this is likely an addition. Two regularly spaced windows in the façade provide light to the garret rooms; a fifth window is positioned in the south gable.

The building has undergone significant modifications, especially on the interior: installing wall paneling and dry wall partitions for two bathrooms, replacing joists for the upper story, cutting doorways to connect the two ground floor rooms as well as the two garret spaces, and inserting a stairway in the western downstairs room. Dimensional lumber with circular saw marks and wire nails characterize these alterations. On the exterior, the current hip-roofed porch on the facade is a replacement for an earlier porch with a slightly different roofline; a former window opening has been converted into a doorway to allow exterior access to the garret. The rake board and other trim are ornamented in a Victorian style that echoes the main house. Based on the 5:1 common bond brickwork (on the north and east walls) alone, the building's original construction could date to ca. 1830 to 1850. But the south and west walls are laid in running (all stretcher) bond, which would have been an unusual practice before the Civil War.

The 5:1 common bond suggests a mid-19th-century construction date, but the running bond façade and west end wall is highly unusual in this context. In addition, transoms located above the two original exterior doorways also is remarkable, not only for a slave building but for any outbuilding dating before the Civil War. A photograph in the possession of the owner, Virginia Grogan, shows the house with the entire roof frame missing. The image is roughly dated to the decades following the Civil War. At least one structure is included in the picture that may depict the brick outbuilding, but the only detail that is visible is a chimney stack. Given that the main house was largely rebuilt some time during the last quarter of the 19th century, it is possible that the outbuilding, with its unusual brick work and transoms, also may have been erected or substantially rebuilt during this period. Therefore, it may reflect the continued utility of duplex-type structures to house free servants in the decades following manumission.



Figure 11. Phillips duplex, west elevation (2015).



Figure 12. Phillips duplex, south elevation (2015).

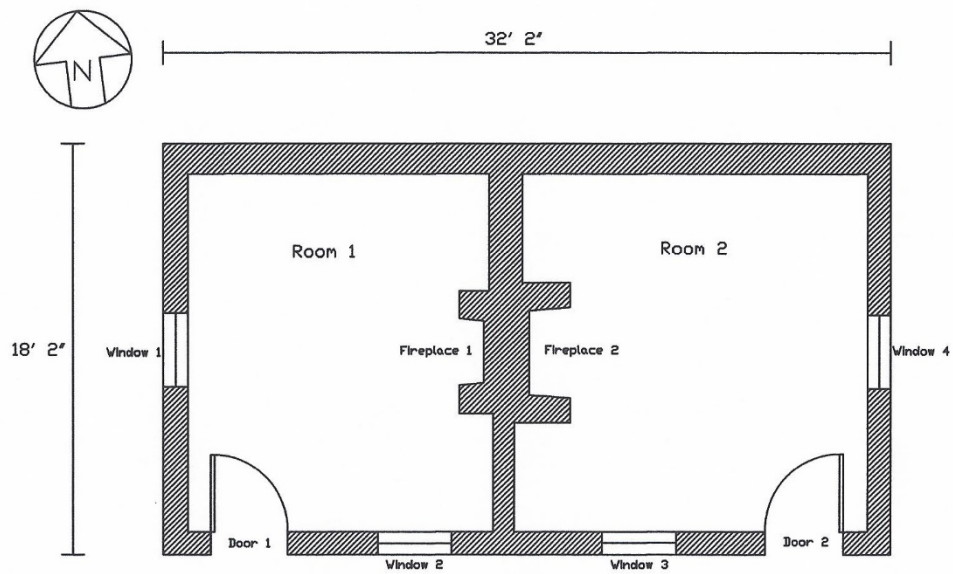


Figure 13. Phillips duplex Period 1 first floor plan.

Sanford-Burgess:

The Sanford family operated a substantial farm in central Stafford County from at least the 1820s until after the Civil War. Lawrence Sanford is listed in the 1820 federal census as owning 20 slaves (U.S. Federal Census 1820); by 1850 the number had fallen to 13 (U.S. Federal Census 1850). Sanford died in 1858 and the property continued in his family, with his widow, Apphia Sanford, listed as owning nine slaves and three slave houses in 1860 (U.S. Federal Census 1860 Census). After Apphia's death in 1864 the property was sold out of the family (Douglas W. Sanford, personal communication, 2015).

The Sanford-Burgess slave building is a 1½-story, single-celled, gable-roofed log cabin, supported by a dry-laid stone foundation, measuring approximately 14' by 12'. In the 20th century the log structure was converted into a workshop, with a frame shed supported by earthfast posts added along the north wall. Other alterations included covering both the original, low-pitched gable roof and the shed in standing seam metal, which obscures the former brick flue opening at the peak of the west gable. Three sides of the building exhibit remnants of circular-sawn board siding that is contemporary with the shed; the exposed logs on the north wall covered by the shed are whitewashed. Elements reflecting the farm shop function survive on the interior, including low counters arranged along the south and west walls.

The current exterior doorway is located at the SE corner of the east end wall and is likely an addition. The opening connecting the one-room cabin to the shed almost certainly served as the original means of egress, with the façade therefore facing the Sanford (later Burgess) dwelling. There is no indication of a fireplace, but a 7-inch-diameter hole in the ceiling correlates with a brick structure that served as a flue, raised on a wooden platform centered on the west gable wall in the garret; the chimney/flue that presumably pierced the roof is not extant. Access to the garret was provided by an open staircase positioned along the east wall, rising from the NE corner and with an enclosed storage space below. One window is positioned in each of the south and west walls and in the east gable. The first floor ceiling is relatively low, measuring 5 ft.10¾ in. from the floor to the bottom of the ceiling joists. Both the downstairs room and the garret space have whitewashed interior surfaces.



Figure 14. Sanford-Burgess cabin, south elevation (2015).



Figure 15. Sanford-Burgess cabin, detail of log corner notches (2015).

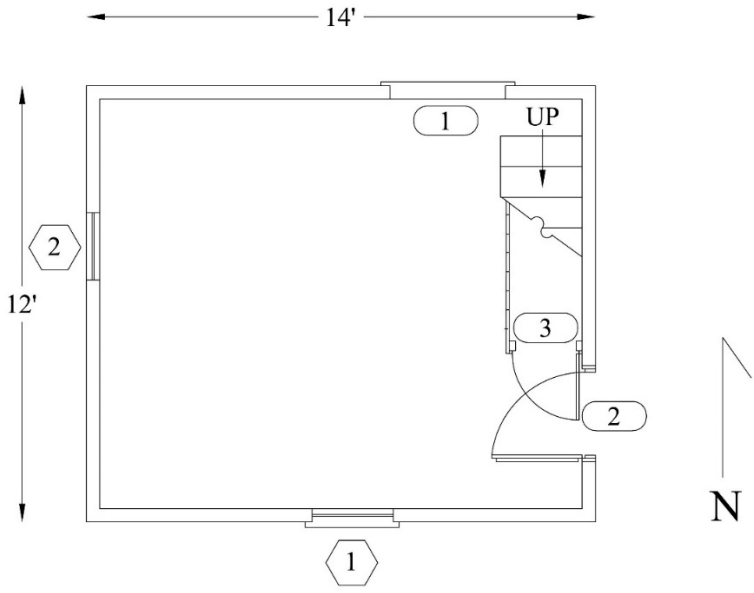


Figure 16. Sanford-Burgess cabin, floor plan (without shed addition).

Interpretation and Recommendations

The characteristics of the Stafford County quarters correlate well with the larger pattern of rural slave housing in 19th century Virginia. With the decline of large barracks-like quarters that were common in the earlier periods, smaller structures composed of one or two heated ground floor rooms became the norm, to accommodate individual familial groups. These spaces were typically one-story and less than 300 sq. ft. in dimension (although they often included access to an unheated space under the eaves), with a side-gable roof, heated by an end fireplace. In the case of two-room cabins (duplexes), heat could have been provided by end chimneys or by a central chimney stack that served fireplaces in both sides of the building. The generally small size of the buildings and their construction types are reflected in the data from the valuations of slave quarters made in St. Mary's County, in Southern Maryland, from 1780-1841; the modal building sizes were just 16' by 14' and 16' by 12', and logs were by far the most common construction material used, with no brick or stone quarters recorded (Marks 1979:49-51, 53).

Table 1. St. Mary's County, Maryland, Building Valuations, Slave Quarters (Marks 1979)

Period	Modal Dimension	Number	Brick	Log	Frame
1780-89	16' by 12'	20	0%	100%	0%
1790-99	24' by 16'	10	0%	66%	33%
1800-09	16' by 12'	35	0%	40%	46%
1810-19	16' by 16'	7	--	--	--
1820-29	16' by 14'	19	0%	84%	16%
1830-41	16' by 14'	42	0%	100%	0%

In terms of room sizes, the Stafford County buildings reflect the general theme of one or two principal spaces well under 300sf in expanse. The sizes of the rooms found in all six of the duplexes and kitchen-quarters compare favorably with the range of sizes at 29 duplex quarters that were documented as part of a survey of Virginia slave buildings, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, which was carried out in 2007-2009 (Sanford and Pogue 2009). The room sizes at the Belmont cottage and the Phillips duplex place them in the upper range (Tables 2 and 3). At 146sf the Sanford cabin is smaller than any of the eight single-cell cabins that were documented in the NEH survey (ranging from 173sf-336sf).

Table 2. Stafford County Quarters: Useable Space (First Floor).

Building Name	Room 1	Room 2	Total
Belmont Duplex	258sf	255sf	513sf
Carlton Kitchen/Quarter	232	232	464
Dunbar Kitchen/Quarter	255	195	450
Phillips Duplex (brick)	240	233	473
Sanford-Burgess Cabin (log)	146	--	146
Sherwood Forest Duplex	226	217	443
Sherwood Forest Kitchen/Laundry/Quarter (brick)	223	217	440

Table 3. NEH Sample (Sanford and Pogue 2009) Duplex Quarters: Useable Space (First Floor).

Building Name	Room 1	Room 2	Total	Dendro Date
Clover Hill (stone)	110sf	107sf	217sf	
Hartland (log)	156	120	276	
Arcola I (stone)	181	110	291	1813
Ben Lomond (stone)	162	140	302	1834
Green Level Farm (brick)	170	162	332	
Arcola II (stone)	171	165	336	1845
Berry Plain	179	181	360	
Prestwould	185	211	396	1790/1840
Logan Farm	205	209	414	1837
Bacon's Castle	210	213	423	1829/1848
Tuckahoe D	214	213	427	
Pruden	170	260	430	
Sherwood Forest	217	227	444	1846
Howard's Neck C (log)	223	223	446	
Howard's Neck B (log)	222	225	447	
Santee (brick)	225	227	452	
Tuckahoe A	221	241	462	
Tuckahoe B	218	252	470	
Spring Hill I	233	240	473	1858
Wilton	237	237	474	
Spring Hill II	234	240	474	
Ivy Cliff	247	259	506	
Four Square	315	298	613	1789/1830
Presquisle I (brick)	323	323	646	
Presquisle II (brick)	318	328	646	

Of the literally thousands of slave quarters that were in existence in the American South by the time of the Civil War, a relatively tiny percentage survives. Small, often hastily built and poorly maintained, and distributed in groups inconveniently strewn across the landscape, field quarters in particular have been lost in prodigious numbers as the previously essential function they

served was eliminated. As in St. Mary's County, the evidence indicates that by the early 19th century log quarters had become the most prevalent type of housing, especially for field hands, in eastern Virginia. But of the 391 buildings in Virginia that are recorded as likely slave quarters, 180 are frame, 89 are brick, 44 are stone, and only 68 are log. Across the Potomac the situation is similar; of the 156 structures listed as slave quarters in the Maryland Inventory of Historic Places, 66 are stone, 25 brick, 35 frame, and only 30 log (Sanford and Pogue 2009).

The quarters that survive tend to be the larger and better-built examples that had been reserved for those living and working at the plantation core, many of whom performed duties as servants in the main house or as craftsmen. With a total of seven, the current assemblage of Stafford County slave houses reflects this general preservation bias for substantial duplex quarters and multiple-use spaces, built either of masonry or frame. Aside from the log Sanford-Burgess cabin, which is notable both for its small size and log construction, the Stafford buildings are well built and relatively spacious. Although not representative of the range of slave housing that would have been found in Stafford County, they make up a significant collection and warrant additional investigation and documentation.

There are numerous potential avenues for additional research in relation to slave housing in the county. First would be to redouble efforts to locate and document any additional structures; at least one other structure that is likely a duplex quarter is located in Falmouth that was not investigated as part of this study. Compiling additional archival information related to the buildings that already have been identified has the potential to enrich our interpretation of the structures and the lives of their occupants by providing important information on specific individuals and families that inhabited the spaces over time, both in slavery days and later. As several of the structures have been altered significantly, more intensive physical investigation of those buildings is likely to yield more and better refined evidence, and thus would allow for their more comprehensive and detailed documentation. The total number of slave houses in Virginia that have been recorded in detail remains small – fewer than 50 – and the opportunity to record more buildings declines each year, as these structures continue to be lost and/or modified beyond recognition.



Figure 17. “Old Cabin on Fall Run, Scott’s Hill,” Falmouth (Frances B. Johnston, 1925-1929); a rare depiction of a largely unaltered duplex quarter; this structure survives.

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