Slavery in Rockbridge

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In the pre-civil war South slavery was the rule, Rockbridge County was no exception to this rule. In this paper I would like to look at Slavery in Rockbridge in general (how many there were and what they did) then I am going to catch the mood of the black-white relations in this area during the slave era. In order to do this we must also examine some of the black codes that were in use in Virginia.

Rockbridge was a poor County in which the majority of people did not own slaves. This area was settled by a large number of Scotch and Irish people who thought slavery was wrong. Those who had slaves did not have many. This area was not suited for large plantations that you found in the deeper South (and even other parts of Virginia). The Rockbridge Historical Society reported that in 1780 most of the larger farms employed slave labor. However the number used was quite small, seven slave were quite enough for the large farms in this area.

The role of slaves in Rockbridge was mostly that of house servant and field worker. The field workers worked in tobacco or hemp fields. The house servants were maids, doormen, babysitters and cooks. Some slaves were used in mills and iron works but this was not too common. It was rumored that in this area slaves were raised with the intent of sale in mind.

In my research I talked with three local citizens about their knowledge on slavery specifically on the subject of breeding.
A Mr. Deaver of Deaver's Market was the first person I conferred with on this subject. He told me that farmers bred slaves to make extra money in this area. He said that this knowledge came to him by way of mouth, no particular source. One example he gave me was of a man who had only a frame house and a small patch of land but he owned twenty-seven slaves. This is of course too many for his own need.

Mr. Deaver suggested that I talk with a Mr. Stevens who lived out on Route Sixty near the turn off for Our High Hollows project. Mr. Deaver said that his house was the site of an old plantation which used slaves. Mr. Stevens said that when he moved in he had heard this was true. He looked into it a little and found that their indeed were slaves on his farm. He also heard about the breeding tale but that he had not come across any evidence of it. From the way he talked I believe he thought their might have been some breeding done out there.

The first two people I talked to both thought that breeding had taken place in this area (Mr. Deaver thought it was more common than Mr. Stevens did). The third person I talked with was a Mrs. Herring of Herring Reality. When asked if there was any type of breeding done in this area she said that my mentioning it was the first she had heard of it. She said that most of her information came from her husband. He had purchased an old plantation in the area. She said that he became interested in its background and found out that it was manned by a modest number of slaves. The main point she kept asserting was that this was
a small rural area that was fairly poor. It contained few slaves in comparison with the rest of Virginia.

The state passed numerous laws at different times to keep slavery under restrictions. Their were laws that dealt with the emancipation of slaves. Laws put limits on the rights of free Negroes. Their were even laws that regulated the treatment of fugitive slaves. In one case a runaway slave brought charges of cruelty against a sheriff who had captured him. The sheriff was convicted and fined Four Hundred dollars.

Importation of slaves from outside the United States was not allowed and interstate trade into Virginia was restricted. These two points make it seem that breeding in this area might have been a profitable business.

There was one law that was broken right here in Rockbridge. This law stated that no free Negro could own a slave. A black man who worked for Thomas Jefferson at Jefferson's Natural Bridge property did purchase a slave. A one Patrick Henry bought a black woman from a Lexington man. He later married this woman. He then proclaimed her free. He did this in an article in the local paper. Jefferson or a friend of his no doubtfully articulated this message for Henry.

Other laws stated that a slave could only be set free if his master was willing to pay for his departure from the state within six months of his release. This law had effects on the treatment slaves recived. This can be seen later when we look at some of the wills that made provisions for this law. Eventually slaves could only be released for deeds of bravery or good to
to be judged by the Governor and his Council.

There were also laws which governed the mobility of slaves. Any white person could stop a black and ask to see his papers. Their were special officers who's job it was to check on blacks to see if they had the proper authorization to be out. The blacks called these men "Patter-Oll"\(^1\) which was a slur on the word patrol. It was not uncommon for blacks to venture from their homes at night and play a sort of game of hide and seek with the patrol. A song often sung on the plantation mentions this "Run, nigger, run! the patterol will catch you; Run, nigger, run its almost day."\(^2\)

The relationship between whites and blacks seemed to be a good one at least three monuments in town would lead you to believe so. The white people of town erected a granite monument which says "A TRIBUTE BY THE WHITE FRIENDS OF ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY IN GRATEFUL REMEMBERANCE OF THE FAITHFULNESS AND LOYALTY OF THE OLD SERVANTS OF THE PAST. THEY LOVED THEIR OWNERS AND WERE TRUSTED BY THEM."

Two other monuments depicting good racial relations can be found in the Lexington Cemetery. One is a large stone put up in memory of a loyal slave by the family he use to serve. The inscription states that the slave was loved and trusted by three generations of the same family. It is unusual to find blacks buried in this cemetery. The other monument was erected by a slave in honor of his former owner.\(^3\)
Besides the three monuments the Will Book in the County Court House can be used as a good indicator on the nature of slavery in this area. I went through a Will Book that was for the period of 1809 to 1874. This seemed to confirm what Mrs. Herring related to me. Most of the wills did not contain slaves. This probably means that even fewer of the whole population owned slaves because it would be a good bet to say that some of the poorer whites were unable to afford to have wills made out. Since they were poor they most likely did not own slaves. For those who owned slaves the average holdings were less than five.

I took a sampling of the wills and found that one in every four wills contained provisions for granting freedom to one or all of the slaves that person owned. The masters had taken many steps to insure their slaves well being after their deaths. The executor of the will was usually appointed to look over the slaves. If for some reason the slaves could not be freed the executor was usually instructed to hire them out to people they wanted to work for then to use their earnings in their best interests.

Wills were investigated by an unknown source which I came across in the Rare Book Room of the library. This source consisted of an old typed up report on the relationships masters and slaves. The persons working down their could not identify the author and advised me to use just "Anonymous." It was written by some whites who called themselves the "Younger
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Ethno-Archeology
in
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Introduction

Ethnoarchaeology is a combined archaeological, ethno-
logical, ethnographic and historical study. For each exca-
vated site there seems to be at least one informant who has
lived or has had contact with people who have lived during
the study period. When combined with the sparse historical
data there is provided three different viewpoints: ethnographic,
archaological and historical. Ethnoarchaeology is very impor-
tant as William H. Adams of Washington State University author
of Silcott, Washington: Enthoarchaeology of a Rural American
Community stated "Small farming communities were an important
part of American culture, yet they have been neglected by
archaeologists and historians." 1

Since most communities in the 1800's were small analysis
of cultural materials--the artifacts--reveals several interpretive problems. As Mr. R. A. Gould, of Experimental Archeology
states "If generalizations or specific techniques are derived
from the study of a single group they may not be applicable,
across the board, to the entire range of relevant extant peoples,
they cannot serve as a safe framework for the interpretations
of past cultures, objects and events." 2 A wide range, a cross-
cultural approach provides a necessary and desirable stepping
stone from the single present-day society to the broad and
varied past.

Artifact interpretation also seems to be a problem.
Artifact interpretation doesn't contradict the ethnographic
model, but it is not very supportive of the model either. As Adams states, "In many respects the ethnographic and archaeological models are separate, yet overlapping views of the same thing." For example, while we know ethnographically that a large amount of things were made at home, most of the archaeological material came from long distances. Archaeological evidence seems to point out that nationally distributed products were more popular, whereas regionally and locally made goods are poorly represented in the hollows.

Ethnoarchaeology as a word or concept, has very much been defined. But in my report ethnoarchaeology will be defined as a group of people (ranging from family to community) through a combination of historical, archaeological and ethnographic methodologies. Ethnoarchaeology is related to many methodologies, ethnohistory, historical archaeology, living archaeology and ethnographic analogy, but these methodologies are also distinguished from ethnoarchaeology. As Adams reported, "Ethnoarchaeology employs a continuous model by utilizing the direct historical approach."

Even when excavating a walled village, archaeologists have to contend with the problems of both the physical and social boundaries of their study. If their study is to have any meaning it has to be delineated in both time and space, for otherwise the results can't be compared with other research.

The boundary can be defined in many different ways. Geographical areas such as the site and the locality are the
easiest to use. The site is generally a unit of settlement within a locality, whereas the locality is a larger settlement unit, similar in a conceptual sense to the area a community might occupy.

Locating Sites through Informants

While dealing with archaeological sites in rural areas it is very important to have living informants. With the limitations of archaeological data, several important sites might never have been excavated for several important reasons: 1) the site might not have been found, 2) if we have found them we would not have known their significance, 3) if we had excavated them we would have likely misinterpreted the results.

Informants are extremely important when dealing with sites. Although informants can usually remember the general vicinity of a site, they are usually around fifty to a hundred feet off. The specific location of most sites is usually left to the archaeologist. A good example of this is the Carr Site in which we excavated. The diary and Mrs. Teaford put the Carr site in these hollows and they were both right. Informants have a tendency to remember what was once there in great detail, but many times they could not place where things were exactly.

The Locality

Just as the informants provided the cognitive boundaries of a site the informants also provided the cognitive boundaries of the community. As Murdock cited, the community has been
defined as "the maximal group of persons who normally reside in face-to-face association." The people in Rockbridge County hollows were community oriented, and, while not in daily face-to-face contact, the people certainly interacted within a definite area. As stated elsewhere the borders can be delineated on the basis of interaction spheres, that is, on the frequency and depth of interpersonal relationships between neighbors. Those borders were defined sharply, both socially and geographically.

Archaeology and the Community

When studying the community through archaeology, first you must excavate a number of sites, not just one site. Since a broader perspective of the people themselves, to find their broader social framework, is being looked at, excavation of a single site and knowledge about the site and the people who occupied it, isn't as important. As William H. Adams stated, "The broader the archaeological data base is, the broader the inferences that can be made from it." With only an individual site, inferences based on it are limited to similar sites, similar kinds of sites, and other sites with the same kind of cultural framework. A culturally meaningful sample is what we need to make probability statements, and sets of inferences that are true within the known data. The known archaeological premises are probably true, but not all premises about the community are knowable through the archaeology. A large exploratory to determine individual sites is best to
seldom has been defined and there are specific goals, methodological structures, or widely accepted techniques of analysis." In order to understand what ethnoarchaeology is we must first examine a number of similar yet distinct approaches. William H. Adams stated, "Ethnoarchaeology is a hybrid of several different scholarly approaches; as a hybrid it appears to have tremendous vigor and research potential, but as a hybrid certain theoretical and methodological problems must be reconciled." Ethnoarchaeology as a hybrid, can be considered a synergistic approach.

**Synergistic Approaches**

Synergistic approaches is a combining of similar methods at the same time to study a particular data set. The data gathered through this method is greater than the knowledge gained by each procedure separately. A synergistic approach generates more knowledge about a given data set than could be learned by using separately its various components methodologies to seek that knowledge.

In the synergistic approach, knowledge is seen as an infinite set of messages. Each message is coded, but it can also be unidentified in its transmission. The task is to identify the message and then to decode it. The messages are decided by checking the redundancy within the message. Jacob Bronowski wrote that "redundancy gives the code a structure or skeleton, which resists the distortion of its individual symbols." Redundancy is needed to see the messages' hidden
structure. Data repetition makes the chances increase of seeing the entire message clearly.

This is the true purpose of the analytical method in science: to shift our gaze from the thing or event to its structure. We understand a process, we explain it, when we lay bare in it a structure which is like one we have met elsewhere.\(^1\)

A message contributes to the understanding of knowledge through its scarcity: immensity and ingenuity contribute very little if the message becomes incomprehensible. The best way to study a particular phenomenon is to view it like a sphere, from many perspectives, in an effort to articulate the whole. The sphere of knowledge can't be viewed as a whole, but it can be viewed and understood from its component parts. In order to study the unique, the component parts of a message, similar messages are needed, so that those redundant enough to repeat information without the noise.

Ethnohistory, the synersistic approach is generated by applying both ethnographic and historical methods to a particular set of data. Charles Hudson defined ethnohistory as, "the application of historical method to the kinds of cultures and societies that social anthropologists study in their framework."\(^1\) Ethnohistory conversely, could be considered to be defined as the application of ethnographic methods to the kinds of data that historians study, in other words, the diachronic study of culture. However, some historical
and ethnographic data can't be approached through ethnohistory, simply because the data produced by each approach might be too divergent from the other approach. When this happens little comparative data exists and little feedback can be generated. Although ethnographic data in many cases can be considered to be part of the historical record, it however remains unique and incomparable. With the emergence of ethnohistory, Julian Steward advocated, the emergence of ethnohistory is, "from the archaeologists' viewpoints re-emergence of the direct historical approach." The historian's viewpoint of ethnohistory is a result directly attributable to historians broadening their approach to history. The historians broadening the scope and meaning of history, and their shift from the traditional study of military, political and constitutional history, resulted in the study of historical archaeology. But as David L. Clarke says, "Once again it is possible to claim that historical evidence is more complete than the best archaeological evidence, but both have inherent bases and their information is intersecting and different, not merely better or worse."

Historical Archaeology

Historical archaeology is a combination of historical and archaeological methods. To perfect the field of historical archaeology requires either a team approach between the archaeologist and the historian or an archaeologist with
knowledge of both anthropological and historical methodologies. As William H. Adams says, "Historical archaeology has been defined by practice rather than by theoretical or philosophical parameters. Historical archaeology is the conjunction of historical and archaeological methodologies in the study of culture; it should not be limited to any geographical, temporal, or cultural area." However on the theoretical level, a greater interaction of all historical archaeologists would greatly improve the field of historical archaeology.

Living Archaeology

Living archaeology has a definite meaning and the key to it is in the observation of a culture in terms of how it would be represented in the archaeological record. With ethnographers either unwilling to provide material culture data or ignorant of archaeological needs to be unable to provide the needed data. As this was happening archaeologists began to study living communities as if they were archaeological sites. In the basic sense living archaeology is an archaeologically oriented ethnography. However R. A. Gould defined living archaeology, "the actual effort by an archaeologist or ethnographer to do field work in living human societies." Gould regards living archaeology to be distinct from the broader aspects of ethnoarchaeology. The research labeled as ethnoarchaeology is better remembered as living archaeology or as ethnographic analogy but all three are quite similar.
The general comparative approach is a derivative of the discontinuous model. The discontinuous model is a greater risk creating a faulty analogy. The term ethnoarchaeology should be applied only to the study of continuous models, of which the data derived from application of the direct historical approach.

There are three kinds of continuous models all of which were proposed by R. A. Gould concept:

1.) Continuous cultural model
2.) Continuous community model
3.) Continuous individual model

The cultural model is the broadest of the three models. The cultural model is the model for an entire culture. This unit, however, can be broken down into small units, by area and region. In the community model the ethnographic data is more restrictive to either members of that community or lineal descendants of people who lived in that community. The most restrictive of the three is the individual model. As William H. Adams says, "This means in ethnoarchaeology that the informants were not only members of the community being studied but also that they have direct information about the site being excavated." The continuous individual model is the least used because of the difficulty of finding an informant, but this model provides the greatest amount of feedback between the archaeological and ethnographic data—it also provides the most reliable explanation.
Notes


6 Adams, William H., p. 27.


11 Bronowski, Jacob, p. 429.


15 Adams, William H., p. 132.

17 Oswalt, Wendell H., P. C.


23 Adams, William H., p. 137.

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