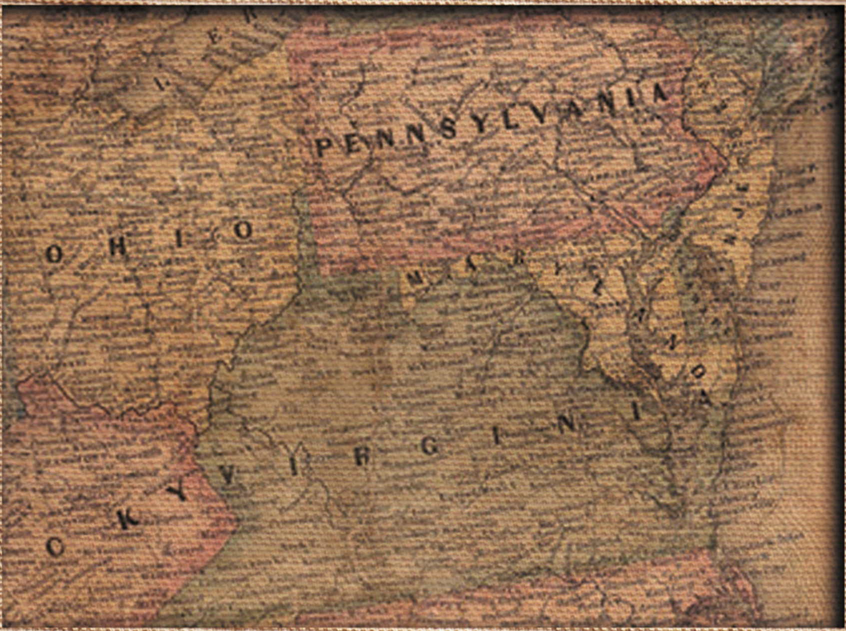

The Tobacco-Plantation South in the Early American Atlantic World

Steven Sarson

THE AMERICAS IN THE EARLY MODERN ATLANTIC WORLD

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For My Teachers

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Abbreviations

AH	*Agricultural History*
JAH	*Journal of American History*
JEH	*Journal of Economic History*
JSH	*Journal of Social History*
MHM	*Maryland Historical Magazine*
VMHB	*Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*
WMQ	*William and Mary Quarterly*

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This book has been an awful long time in the making and I have incurred many debts along the way. It began as a doctoral project at Johns Hopkins University back in 1990 and I was both cursed and blessed to have three dissertation advisors. Cursed because they kept moving about in their careers and so I had to keep begging for new ones, but blessed because they were, respectively, Jack P. Greene, Bill Freehling, and Ron Walters. I owe them all enormous gratitude, especially Ron and Jack, who saw the dissertation through to completion and have continued to give invaluable advice on publications and other career matters since. I am also grateful to Jack and to Amy Turner Bushnell for their encouragement and help in turning the dissertation into this book, and to Peter Onuf, the modern sage of Monticello, for advice at an early stage. It seems appropriate to dedicate the book of the thesis to my teachers, Bill, Jack, and Ron, and also all those at the University of East Anglia, where I did my first degree, especially John Ashworth, Richard Crockatt, Roger Thompson, and Howard Temperley, and indeed to the too-many-to-name going back to secondary and primary school.

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STEVEN SARSON

Introduction

The "chosen people": Agrarian Myths and Messier Realities

In his *View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution*, published in 1797, Reverend Jonathan Boucher recounted a sermon he was supposed to deliver to mark the 1774 opening of Charlotte Hall School at Port Tobacco in Charles County, Maryland. The Anglican cleric from nearby Prince George's County had intended to inform his audience that the first master of the new school should be a devout Anglican and should take an oath of loyalty to the crown. That master would in turn disavow classical writing, rhetoric, and oratory in case students accepted "the sentiments and principles of our great masters in the art, who were republicans." The preacher was worried that "as subjects, we are at least preposterously, if not dangerously, educated, when we are taught to prefer republicanism." For Boucher, furthermore, republicanism was a pernicious social as well as political doctrine. Its egalitarian implications not only threatened monarchy, but the entire social order. As the Great Chain of Being linked God to angels to monarchs to gentlemen and to others on down to servants and slaves, Boucher intended to remind his listeners that "according to the subordination of conditions (which, for the good of all, our Maker has established among mankind), some must toil and drudge for others." Local patriots, however, angered by the Intolerable Acts, were in no mood to hear such Tory oratory. Indeed, the inhabitants of St. Mary's County were, according to Nicholas Cresswell, an Englishman travelling through south-western Maryland at the time, "much exasperated at the proceedings of the Ministry and talk as if they were determined to dispute the matter with the sword." Cresswell meant the British Ministry, the men of Westminster. Yet locals were no more enamoured of that more local ministry, the men of the church; men like Boucher. As Boucher recounted, then, he had to postpone and ultimately cancel his appearance, "Owing to some embarrassments in Government."[1]

Boucher's experience seems to serve as a perfect vignette for historians who see the American Revolution as every bit a battle over "who shall rule at home" as it was over "home rule." Since at least the late seventeenth century, pastors like Boucher had presided over churches in which the foremost pews were reserved for gentlemen and ladies who would parade down the aisles in their fineries, performing their social superiority to inferiors already seated in the pews further back. These preachers had thereby and in other ways colluded with gentlemen vestrymen in making those churches institutional tools of gentry rule. They also used their pulpits to preach to the poor about the divinely ordained righteousness of the social order and of obedience and deference to those at the top of it: the gentry on a local level, and ultimately the king of Great Britain. That indeed is what Boucher intended to do on that day in Port Tobacco. In preventing Boucher from preaching, therefore, patriots appear to have been rejecting not only his loyalism but also his social traditionalism more generally. Many acts like these in localities across the colonies, some historians say, undermined a patriarchal colonial order and ushered into being a more egalitarian early republic. In Maryland and Virginia, some argue, popular pressure forced founders to declare independence. After that, it extracted concessions, including universal white manhood suffrage in Kentucky in 1792, in Maryland in 1801, and even in Virginia, where property restrictions remained, early national politicians were more sensitive to poorer people's needs than colonial ones had been. The Chesapeake states made their tax laws more progressive, Virginia courts declined to prosecute debtors during the revolutionary war, and the Maryland legislature allowed debtors to pay creditors in depreciated paper money from October 1777 to November 1780. Maryland's founding father Charles Carroll of Carrollton called this "tender law" the "price of revolution," explaining to his furious father, a quarter of whose fortune consisted of loans, that "no revolution can happen in a state without revolutions or mutations of private property."[2]

Such an interpretation of the American Revolution segues at least implicitly into a popular perception of the social character of the early republic, one indeed encapsulated by no less a figure than the principal author of the Declaration of Independence. In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, published in 1787, Thomas Jefferson famously wrote that "Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people, whose breast he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue. . . . Corruption of morals in the mass of cultivators is a phaenomenon of which no age nor nation has produced an example. It is the mark set on those, who not looking up to heaven, to their own soil and industry, as does the husbandman, for their subsistence, depend for it on the casualties and caprice of customers." What Jefferson was celebrating here of course were the independent farmers of his native Old Dominion. Far from being Boucherian drudges, they were "chosen" and they had "virtue" because they independently worked "their own soil," rather than toiling for landlords or wage payers. Producing their "own subsistence," they were also independent of markets and their capricious customers. These kinds of independence made these people incorruptible, and that for Jefferson was vital to a good society and a healthy polity. As he continued, "Dependence begets subservience and venality, suffocates the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the designs of ambition."[3]

What Jefferson and other agrarian-republican writers such as James Madison and John Taylor of Caroline have thereby left us with is a picture of an early national upper south dominated by these independent husbandmen, these yeoman farmers of legend. Jefferson and others knew of course that there were tobacco-planting slaveholders who were dependent on markets and on slaves, and there were slaves who were dependent on these masters. These writers duly attempted, in sometimes tortured ways, to critique, explain, and to some degree justify the existence of these phenomena, while hoping that another generation would carry the spirit of their revolutionary forebears forward and somehow in the future make them disappear. In a sense, they may even have tried themselves to make these inconvenient drudges invisible, writing their existences away in portraits of bucolic idylls, or at least obscuring them in the shadows of the truly archetypal early national rural citizen: the independent husbandman, the sturdy yeoman farmer. It is not surprising that this picture of the early republic has remained such a popular one for so long. As a founding myth, it is impeccable, consonant as it is with an image of America as a place where someone can gain property and therefore personal independence and therefore liberty, an image that predates Jefferson by at least two centuries and still survives him two centuries later. The problem with it, however, is that it is wrong.[4]

* * *

This book uses censuses, tax assessments, probate inventories, land and court records, and plantation letters to test the notions that the Revolution turned the tobacco-plantation south more egalitarian and transformed it into the yeoman republic described by Jefferson and others, building a picture of economy and society in the tobacco-plantation region from the bottom up, not from the heights of Monticello down. Doing so requires intensive and time-consuming archival research and therefore necessitates a case-study based approach. Much of the book is therefore about early national Prince George's County, Maryland, but I have also mined very valuable material from numerous historians of the colonial, revolutionary and early national Chesapeake, and of Kentucky and Tennessee, to try to corroborate my own findings and to build a more regional picture of the early national upper south in this book. More broadly, one of the great developments in early modern British and other European-American scholarship over the last few decades has been the rise of Atlantic approaches, and not only to the history of empires but to the histories of colonies and even of the smallest communities within them. This book attempts a similar approach, placing early national Prince George's County in particular, and the tobacco-plantation south in general, connected as they were to the tobacco trade as well as other forms of economic, social, cultural, and political interactions, in their full and proper cis-Atlantic contexts.[5]

Prince George's County was and is situated on Maryland's lower western shore, bordered by the Patuxent River to the east and the Potomac to the west. In the early national era it was one of four south-western Maryland counties whose economies were still predominantly based on tobacco agriculture, along with Cecil, Charles, and St. Mary's counties to the south. A long-term process of switching to wheat farming, in some places partial, in others quite complete, meant that tobacco cultivation and therefore slavery were in decline in much of Maryland and Virginia. Tobacco cultivation continued to thrive, however, on Maryland's lower western shore, on the James River, Southside, and in Piedmont Virginia, and was spreading into Kentucky and Tennessee too. Between 1790 and 1830, the proportion of enslaved people in the Maryland's population, for example, fell from nearly one-third to less than one-fourth. In Prince George's County in 1800, however, 12,291 enslaved people comprised 57.6 percent of the county's total population of 21,175. In 1820, 11,185 slaves constituted 55.3 percent of the total population of 20,216. This slight decline subsequently reversed itself. In 1830, 11,585 slaves comprised 56.6 percent of 20,474 Prince Georgians. Cecil, Charles, and St. Mary's counties had and retained similar proportions of slaves in their populations. The south-western corner of Maryland still therefore belonged to a tobacco-plantation complex that first developed in the tidewater Chesapeake in the seventeenth century and was expanding westwards into Kentucky and Tennessee in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[6]

Prince George's County is blessed with a rich collection of public and private records with which a historian can try to reconstruct its economy and society in some detail. The staple sources used here are the county Levy Court's annual tax assessments that reveal who owned land, built improvements, slaves, gold and silver plate, and "other" property, namely ready cash, livestock, stills, riding carriages, vessels over 20 tons, and, after 1813, some farm equipment and furniture.[7] Matching these records against the decennial census population schedules for 1800, 1810, and 1820 reveals how much and what kind of property individual household heads possessed at those moments in time. Levy courts did not record or tax people who owned less than $40 worth of assessable wealth, so an advantage of matching the tax records against censuses is that the process captures these poorer householders as well as wealthier taxable ones. One can also measure the social-economic mobility of individuals between these decennial intervals. The schedules of the Federal Direct Tax of 1798 provide further details of "land, lots, buildings, and wharves", including quantitative and qualitative information on barns, mills, and other economically productive improvements, while county land records, wills, and probate inventories detailing farm equipment, crops, and personal belongings, can flesh out details of property ownership in individual instances.

Further invaluable insights on economy, society, and life in general in Prince George's and its wider environs are available in the correspondences of Rosalie Calvert, the mistress of Riversdale plantation in the northwest of the county. As Margaret Law Callcott explains in her detailed introduction to the Calvert letters, Rosalie Stier was 16 years old when she fled with her aristocratic family from Napoleon's invasion of the low counties in 1794. The family arrived in Philadelphia that October and immediately established themselves within the starry social circle orbiting around George and Martha Washington. They socialized with and sought financial advice from Thomas Willing, President of the Bank of North America and of the original National Bank. Their family physician was Benjamin Rush. The Stiers were very likely tired when they landed in America, but they were clearly not among the "poor" and "huddled masses." Yet it was probably the expense of life in Philadelphia, and the fact that their European properties were under threat from "Boney," that motivated Rosalie's parents, Henri Joseph Stier and Mary Louise [Peeters] Stier to move to the less expensive climes of southern Maryland. In September 1795, the Stiers rented Strawberry Hill plantation on the Severn River, two miles inland from Annapolis. Two years later they rented and moved into the grand William Paca house in the state capital. In 1800, they arrived in Prince George's County, initially moving into Bostwick Mansion in Bladensburg, and then, in 1802, into the Riversdale mansion that Henri Stier had built for himself and his family.

Riversdale became the home plantation of Henri Stier's daughter and son-in-law, Rosalie and George Calvert. Rosalie Stier met George Calvert in 1797 and, on June 11, 1799, she married into one of America's oldest, wealthiest, and grandest families. George Calvert, born in 1768, was the son of Benedict Swingate Calvert (*c.* 1724–1788), the eldest, illegitimate, but recognized and well-provided-for son of Charles Calvert, the fifth Lord Baltimore and scion of the founders and proprietors of the colony of Maryland. The Calverts moved in the highest social circles not only of Prince George's County, and not only of Maryland, but of the whole United States. George Calvert's older sister, Eleanor, married John Parke Custis, step-son of George Washington, which meant that, once married, Rosalie's kin network as well as her preexisting social connections extended to Mount Vernon. George and Rosalie's eldest daughter, Caroline, befriended Maria Hester Monroe at a private school in Philadelphia, and the Calverts later became regular guests of James and Eliza Monroe at private and state occasions at the fifth President's White House.

In 1803, following Napoleon's general amnesty to émigrés, and indeed his personal assurances to Charles Jean Stier, Rosalie's brother, who had returned to Europe in 1802 to inspect the family's properties, the Stiers returned to Antwerp. Rosalie Calvert stayed behind and became a naturalized American citizen on April 16, 1806 and, notwithstanding her avowed intentions, never returned to her childhood home and never again saw her parents, her brother, or her sister, Isabelle van Havre. But between their departure in 1803 and her death in 1821, Rosalie wrote more than 230 letters to them, letters that tell us an enormous amount about economy, society, culture, and politics in this tobacco-plantation southern community.

Rosalie Calvert was not in all ways typical, whatever typical is, but her letters are nonetheless useful for the insights they provide about her, her family, the planter class, and all who came into contact with her. Though born abroad, Rosalie's years as a teenager and as a wife were spent in America, mostly in southern Maryland. Her ideas about and skills in plantation and labor management were honed, as was generally true of plantation mistresses, after taking over her own household. She was remarkably well assimilated into the southern planter class, experiencing none of the alienation from her new world felt by other born-outsiders such as Frances Kemble, or even the ambivalent feelings of a questioning insider such as Mary Chesnut. Rosalie Calvert's attitudes and actions actually bear out Elizabeth Fox-Genovese's argument that, while planter women's lives were shaped by gender, they generally acted first and foremost as members of a class and race. Rosalie Calvert was, as in Fox-Genovese's characterization of planter women, "elitist and racist." Certainly, therefore, one must regard Rosalie's writings with some circumspection, as is true with any historical source. Indeed, one often has to read between Rosalie's lines for unintended revelations about herself, other people, and her relationships to and with other people. With these provisos, though, her letters reveal much about these issues, as well as about the enormous condescension of prosperity.[8]

Besides Prince George's County, Maryland, the colonial, revolutionary, and early national Chesapeake region more generally has been blessed with economic and social historians whose labors I have ruthlessly exploited to try to make this book more regional in its approach than a study of one county could ever be. I therefore owe great debts to Willard Bliss, Aubrey Land, Jackson Turner Main, Gloria Main, Gregory Stiverson, Russell Menard, Lois Green Carr, Lorena Walsh, Jean Russos senior and junior, Jack P. Greene, Ed Papenfuse, Allan Kulikoff, Christine Daniels, Edmund Morgan, Ronald Hoffman, Sarah Shaver Hughes, Bayly Ellen Marks, Rhys Isaac, Woody Holton, Mike McDonnell, Steve Whitman, and Seth Rockman. I owe equally great debts to historians who have examined the spread of tobacco-plantation economy and society westwards to Kentucky and Tennessee, including Fredrika Teute, Lee Soltow, Elizabeth Perkins, Matt Ward, and Darren Reid. I hope I have done these historians justice, even if I have not always agreed with them or used their findings in ways that they would like.[9]

* * *

The book-proper begins with a "Prologue" that explores the composition, purposes, and actions of the county courts, in particular Prince George's Levy Court, which raised local taxes primarily to pay for the building and repair of the county's roads, bridges, and wharves. It shows that wealthy planters dominated the court benches and ran local affairs in what they called "the Interest of the County," which largely coincided with their own interests in an effective transport infrastructure that would allow them to get their tobacco and other goods to markets far and wide. The "Prologue" also relates how the building of a new county courthouse in 1800 significantly enhanced the authority of the courts, including the Orphans' Court and the judicial District Court as well as the Levy Court, and therefore of the men who peopled them.

Chapter 1 examines the fortunes of planters. Large planters with over 2,000 acres to their names held quantities of land that could sustain the labor of 50 or more pairs of hands, mostly enslaved ones. Smaller and middling planters with at least 800 but fewer than 2,000 acres could use between 20 and up to 49 laborers on their lands. (The reasons for categorizing landowners this way are explained in the Appendix.) These two groups of planters together were small in number, forming less than 5 percent of free Prince Georgian household heads in the early national era. Yet they held almost half the county's taxable wealth and were getting richer and richer as time went by, as indeed their forebears had been since the 1680s. Like their colonial predecessors, they acquired and maintained their fortunes through tobacco planting mixed with various supplemental agricultural, extra-agricultural, and nonagricultural enterprises, thereby maximizing profits with tobacco while minimizing risks by decreasing dependence on Atlantic commerce. American Independence enhanced wealthier tobacco planters' economic opportunities and wellbeing. The Revolution negated the Navigation Acts and ended the monopolies of the merchant houses of Glasgow and London. Early national Chesapeake planters were therefore free from the old consignment system and could seek out the markets that offered them the highest prices for their produce. On a more local level, they filled spaces previously occupied by Scottish factors, selling goods and lending money to their neighbors, and buying up poorer farmers' tobacco and other produce and then selling it on, often with major mark-ups. Changes in the workings of Atlantic commerce thus had important impacts on local economies and societies. Chapter 2 explores how gentility also enhanced these people's fortunes by providing an exclusive social milieu in which they met, exchanged information, and did deals with each other. This social exclusivity often, though of course by no means always, combined with a political conservatism that also served elitist ends. And it served the purpose too of perpetuating dynasties by helping to ensure as far as possible that sons and daughters only married the most suitable spouses.[10]

The third chapter looks at the region's remaining landowners. These people fall into three groups. Large yeomen with a minimum of 280 acres of land, but less than 800, could use more than 5 but not as many as 20 slaves (unless they rented extra land). These people's economic behavior was similar to that of planters. They predominantly engaged in tobacco agriculture with limited but significant diversification. Substantially less wealthy than planters, they were nevertheless generally prosperous. Small yeomen were those with at least the 40-acre minimum required for tobacco farming, but less than the 280 acres that could sustain the labor of more than 7 workers (such as a few family members and a couple of slaves). In contrast to the agrarian myth, these people formed a small minority of the population of the tobacco-plantation south. They constituted, for example, just less than 17 percent of free Prince Georgian household heads in 1800, falling to just under 11 percent by 1820. Even including all those with 40 to 800 acres, yeomen still encompassed less than a quarter of free household heads in 1800 and less than a fifth in 1820. Also in contrast to the agrarian myth, small yeomen planted tobacco and indeed seem to have been more dependent on tobacco markets than were large yeomen and planters. And a large majority of large and small yeomen held slaves. Some small yeomen prospered modestly, but many were quite poor and some struggled to make a living on poor or exhausted soil, and had their potential profits harvested by planters to whom they sold their produce cheaply to raise cash for routine expenses. Substantial numbers went bust and lost their land, and the group was declining in absolute size and as a proportion of the population in the early national era. This, again, was part of a long-term process, as smaller farmers had been declining as a proportion of the population since the 1680s, albeit one exacerbated by new economic circumstances arising from American Independence. Smallholders with fewer than 40 acres were another small minority of less than 5 percent of householders, and most were small scale artisans or otherwise self-employed in extra-agricultural or nonagricultural business. Their numbers increased in the early nineteenth century, and they seem on the whole to have prospered in a modest sort of way.

The two remaining chapters are about the landless majority. Historians of the colonial Chesapeake have shown that if there was an era of the yeoman farmer or small planter, it was over by the 1680s. Before then, the abundance and relative cheapness of land, the need for labor, and the relatively low supply of slaves, meant that quite a few indentured servants lucky enough to survive their terms were able to acquire land. From then on, however, economies of scale enjoyed by planters with large numbers of enslaved workers gave the wealthy significant advantages over smaller producers. The proportion of the population who owned land therefore declined from around 70 percent in the mid-seventeenth century to around 50 percent by the time of the American Revolution. That process continued and indeed accelerated after independence. By 1800, in older settled areas such as Prince George's County, Maryland, landowners constituted only a quarter of free household heads. By 1820, they formed only one-fifth. By 1820, furthermore, a majority of free Prince Georgians owned less than the $40 of taxable wealth that would have qualified them to pay the local levy. Landlessness was equally or almost as extensive in early national St. Mary's County, Maryland, in Elizabeth City County and other localities in Virginia, and even in Kentucky and Tennessee.

Chapter 4 examines tenant farmers and artisans. In the early settlement years in the tidewater Chesapeake, when planters needed to get land under cultivation, they offered tenants long-term leases, cheap rents, sometimes rent-free for a period, and were generous in terms of equity in improvements and land-usage rights. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, leaseholds were normally shorter, more expensive, required improvements as a form of rent, and contained far more prescriptions and proscriptions in land usage. Fewer early national tenants were therefore able to make the kinds of profits that had allowed their forebears to buy land, and the majority in the post-Revolutionary era remained landless throughout their lives. Tenancy was equally widespread and restrictive in neighboring counties, much of Virginia, and even in the recently settled tobacco-plantation west. Chapter 5 finds that indentured servants and wage workers, including overseers, tutors, and domestic servants, were similarly subjected to constricting contracts and work regimes, and to even more continuous oversight than tenants were.

With less to lose, enslaved people were better able to resist their masters than free workers were, although these chapters also find that many free people shared planters' possessive individualist ideology, however often or however much it worked against their material interests. One reason why is that at any one time most small yeomen held slaves, as did a fifth of the landless, including about a third of tenant farmers. Over time, more would have owned or else perhaps hired enslaved workers. The early national tobacco-plantation south was far more a slaveholding economy and society than it was a landowning one.

An "Epilogue" explores destitution and poor relief, including detailing a subsistence crisis in 1816–1817 caused by the accumulating hardships entailed by long years of trade embargo, nonintercourse, and war, followed by a drought and consequent grain crop failure that afflicted much of Maryland. In early 1817, the Prince George's County Levy Court justices authorized the distribution of $3,140 to 217 people they deemed to be "such objects of distress as to require immediate relief."[11] The "Epilogue" ends with a list of poor-relief recipients and their patrons, a textual counterpoint to the agrarian mythologizing of Thomas Jefferson and others. Among the recipients of poor relief were revolutionary war veterans, whose sacrifices for American Independence earned them welfare from a grateful state and nation, but evidently did not transform American society into one in which they could maintain their own personal independence into old age.

Statistics are essential to this book's analysis of economy and society in the tobacco-plantation south, but I am well aware that even the most number-loving readers can lose the will to live when confronted by page after page of dense and detailed numerical data. While statistical analysis is essential to and referred to throughout the book, I have therefore tried to keep numbers to a minimum in the main chapters and left as much as I can to an Appendix. There are, furthermore, statistical tables there for quick and easy reference. The Appendix also includes a discussion of methods of analysis used here, including an explanation of why I have divided the Prince Georgian population into large and smaller planters, large and small yeomen, smallholders, and various categories of landless people around whom the bulk of the book is organized.

Prologue

"The interest of the county": Prince George's County Levy Court and Local Politics, Economy, and Society

Building a New Court House

On April 26, 1799, the justices of the Levy Court of Prince George's County, Maryland, assembled in Upper Marlboro to consider an important matter. The Maryland Assembly had, in its previous session, authorized Prince George's Levy Court to raise $12,000 "on Assessible property...for the purpose of repairing the old or Building a New Court House at their discretion and for Building a Gaol." The justices decided on a new one. The clerk of court, John Read Magruder, Jr., noted that the gentlemen of the court,

> having examined the present Court House are unanimously of opinion that it would be a Waste of Money to expend [it] in repairs thereto and that therefore the Interest of the County would be best promoted by building a New House...[and] accordingly agree with William Lovering of the City of Washington[,] Architect, to draft a plan thereof, the dimensions not to exceed Two thousand five hundred and fifty square feet[,] who is to return the same with an Estimate of the Expense of Such a Building to this Court for their consideration on Thursday the Sixteenth of next Month.[1]

On May 16, 1799, William Lovering did produce plans, but not expenses, and so on June 11 the court instructed Mr. Magruder to "give notice to William Lovering that there will be a meeting on Saturday the twenty second of this month and it is requested that he then return to the Court an estimate of the expenses to Building a Court House on the Plan exhibited by the said Lovering to this Court."[2] In due course, on June 22, the court ordered the clerk to place advertisements in the *Georgetown Gazette* and *Baltimore Federal Gazette* for "three weeks successively that proposals will be received . . . until the 27th of next Month for Building a Court House at the Town of Upper Marlborough."[3] On August 3, the court recorded its contract with "Thomas Jones of the City of Washington for Building a Court House . . . for nine thousand Six hundred and fifty Dollars allowing the said Jones the Materials of the Old House. . . . the Work to be done under the Inspection and Direction of William Lovering . . . who is to receive for his Services four hundred Dollars."[4] Jones also had to post bond of $19,300 to guarantee the work, and his bond was secured by Thomas Webb and Joseph Coombes, wealthy Prince Georgians and some time justices of the county courts.[5] He must have done satisfactory work, though, for in April 1800 the court contracted with him to build "a public Jail at the Town of Upper Marlborough . . . for one thousand nine hundred and fifty Dollars" by April 1 the following year.[6]

To be sure, there was good reason to build a new courthouse in Prince George's County at that time. Indeed, it seems that the need was quite urgent, for, soon after plans to build one were first agreed, the court declared itself "of opinion that the Records of the County Court[,] the public Papers remaining in the Court House[,] from the ruinous State of the said House[,] are not safe." It therefore ordered that "the said Records [be] removed to a fit and proper place" and instructed the clerk to find one.[7] It is nevertheless clear that the justices of the Levy Court made the most of an opportunity to demonstrate and perhaps enhance the court's authority, and that of the District Court and Orphans' Court, and that of those who peopled them, with the visible symbols of a spanking new courthouse and jail. The importance of this motive is indicated by the fact that the justices did not delegate appointees to tender the work, as they did with more routine business, but instead oversaw the design and building work themselves. They employed an architect and builder from the federal city, just as that city was itself being built, and kept the architect on site to ensure that his designs came into being. And they held the builder to a hefty and well-secured bond. Ultimately, this brand new 2,500 square foot public building with its nearby jail must have been an impressive sight, dominating the little county's little capital. In 1800, Upper Marlboro comprised 49 ¾ lots of land and "a small house." Six and one-third of the lots were unimproved and at least six and one-half others were rented out. As we shall see, many of these lots contained artisan workshops. Costing $11,600, the two buildings were worth four-fifths of the $14,642.28 value of the rest of the taxable real property in the town in 1800.[8]

The Role of the Levy Court

The county courts were certainly powerful institutions, and not just symbolically. Between 1794 and 1798, the Maryland Assembly reformed the old court system throughout the state. In place of a unitary court system, it established separate judicial District Courts, Orphans Courts, and Levy Courts in every county.[9] On Monday April 6, 1795, the newly constituted Levy Court of Prince George's County sat for the first time in the old courthouse in Upper Marlboro. The first main piece of business its justices carried out was to "determine that the full sum of Three shillings and nine pence Limited by Law shall be Levied on every one hundred pounds of Assessable Property in the County to be applied towards streightning and amending the Public Roads in the County."[10] To this effect, a month later, the justices ordered "that the Clerk of Commissioners of the Tax make out and deliver to the Collector, when qualified, a List of Taxables agreeably to the Act of Assembly Entitled An Act relating to the Public Roads in the State."[11] That year, then, the court raised £1,606.14 ($4,288.39) to be applied "to the Roads" and allocated the money to the 17 separate districts within the county in portions ranging from £50 to £150 Maryland current money ($133.50 to $400).[12] The court designated these sums for routine maintenance work, and, to oversee that work, the justices appointed a Supervisor of the Roads for each district, and, by 1800, for each of 42 subdivisions of those districts.[13]

If more than routine work was required, though, local residents petitioned the court for additional appropriations. On May 5, 1795, for example, the court considered a petition "from Sundry Inhabitants of Mattapany, Washington, and Prince Frederick hundreds, stating that the Road which leads from Nottingham to Magruders Warehouse over the Head of a place called Spicers Creek is very bad and hilly as it now goeth, and may be much mended by building a new Road." The court dispatched three justices, Thomas Gantt, Rinaldo Johnson, and Benjamin Mackall, to survey the route for a new road and authorized them to contract with someone to build one. On the same day that the Justices considered the petition for the road from Nottingham to Magruder's Warehouse, they also "Ordered…that Messrs. Gabriel P. Vanhorn and Josiah Jones contract with some person or persons for Building a Bridge over the Piney Branch and keeping the same in repair five years."[14] Furthermore, on April 18, 1796, the Court "Ordered that Messrs. Turner Wootton and Henderson Magruder contract with some person or persons for Building and Keeping in repair five years a Wharf at Queen Anne" on the upper part of the Patuxent River, making for easier water transportation of goods produced and received by residents of the north-eastern corner of the county.[15]

The Levy Court's role in the economy, furthermore, went beyond the oversight and improvement of the county's transport infrastructure. The court also authorized and oversaw the building of warehouses for inspecting the quality and thereby ensuring the marketability of tobacco, the mainstay of the economy of early national south-western Maryland. On May 5, 1795, the Levy Court ordered Thomas Contee and Robert Bowie to purchase "a piece of Land not exceeding two Acres in the Town of Nottingham . . . and . . . Contract with some person or persons for the erection of [a] Warehouse thereon which is to be no larger than will contain Two hundred and fifty Hogsheads of Tobacco."[16] Indeed, the court not only thus provided facilities for the economic regulation of the county's agricultural staple, but also asserted authority over the tobacco inspection process. The Levy Court appointed and paid Tobacco Inspectors and then oversaw them by assigning its own members as officers "to see the Weights and Scales adjusted at the Several Warehouses" on designated days each year.[17]

The Levy Court's duties even went beyond the economic realm into that of law and order, its functions merging with those of the judicial District Court. It was the Levy Court that appointed and paid a Constable in every hundred, appointed grand and petit jurors of the District Court, and paid prosecution witnesses on a case-by-case basis.[18] On July 26, 1795, for example, the Levy Court authorized payment of 50 shillings to Hezekiah Young "for Ten days attendance as an evidence against [Nicholas] Blacklock." For being a witness in the same case, it paid Butler Edelen 40 shillings, Francis Clement Dyer, George Hardy, William Burgess, and Charles Maddox three pounds and 15 shillings each, and Charles Lansdale six pounds and 15 shillings.[19]

Yet the court ensured that it kept its expenditures under control. The court set limits, for example, on what it would pay for maintenance, repair, and building work undertaken under its authority. At first, the rates were 4 shillings per day for a laborer, and 3 shillings and 9 pence each for a single horse and harness (provided by the owner), or 22 shillings and 6 pence for a four-horse wagon and driver (also provided by the owner).[20] Although the court raised the maximum pay for a laborer to 5 shillings in 1798, its efforts to minimize expenditure on labor and equipment were clearly a strategy to get the most work done on the county's economic infrastructure for the lowest possible price.[21] Savings on labor, furthermore, allowed the Levy Court to compensate landowners handsomely when roads were built on their property. Indeed, the court seems to have spared no expense or effort in upholding the principle of private property rights. On June 9, 1795, for instance, the Justices ordered the county sheriff "to summon and return a Jury of twelve Good and Lawful Men . . . not interested in or related to the Parties to appear before Robert Bowie[,] one of the Justices of the Peace for Prince George's County[,] on Wednesday the first day of

July next" to examine "the Road laid out from Nottingham to Magruders Warehouse…to Inquire who is or are the Owner or Owners of the Land over which the said Road passes and what Damages such Owner or Owners will actually suffer from the passage of such Road over their Land."[22] No further record of what compensation was awarded survives, but nor do any complaints, so presumably things turned out satisfactorily for all parties concerned.

Sometimes, however, to be sure, the general commercial interests that the court represented came into conflict with the personal interests of particular individuals. In September 1798, for example, the court directed two of its Justices, Samuel Hepburn and John S. Brookes, to "contract with David Craufurd for as much Ground as will alter and Straighten the Road from Nottingham to Upper Marlborough through the said Craufurds Plantation."[23] Craufurd, however, was unhappy with this proposition, and in May 1799 the court made the following compromise with him:

> that the Order of the Levy Court of the twenty fourth of September last directing the Road through David Craufurds plantation, leading to Nottingham to be straightened be discharged and the old Road be continued. And it is further ordered that the said David Craufurd have Bridges erected over the Branches on the said Road, which he Shall oblige himself by Bond to Build in a Workman like manner, and keep in repair five years, and that the Collector [of the Taxes] pay the said David Craufurd on the order of Samuel Hepburn the Sum of one hundred and thirty three Dollars and thirty three cents being the Sum Levied last year for straightening the above road.[24]

David Craufurd seems to have possessed no sense that the public good should prevail over individual interests, or at least over his own individual interests, at least on this occasion. It is true, of course, that even the most civic-minded of people might have regarded a road cutting through their land as a considerable inconvenience, but Craufurd seems literally to have been unwilling to give any ground. In fact, he seems ultimately to have profited fairly well from the initiative to straighten the road, while the road itself was not actually straightened to the degree initially intended. And not only did Craufurd look out for number one, but the court seems to have looked out for one of its own. Craufurd was a wealthy man, a planter with 819 ¾ acres of land and 40 slaves, and owner of taxable wealth amounting to $5,262.14, according to the county tax assessments of 1800.[25] He had well-placed family connections too. Between April 18, 1796, and January 22, 1799, Nathaniel Craufurd sat almost constantly as a Justice of the Levy Court and thereafter was a Justice of the Orphans' Court.[26] And David Craufurd himself was an Associate Justice of the District Court continuously from 1790 through 1800.[27]

Membership of the Court

The Levy Court therefore suffered from a paradox inherent in possessive individualist ideology and behavior. That is, those who most enjoyed the benefits of the Court's activities in maintaining and improving the economic infrastructure of the county were not always willing to make the personal sacrifices necessary to support its work. David Craufurd was far from the only one. The court proceedings of May 5, 1795, for example, reported that "Richard Jones who was appointed Supervisor of the eleventh District having refused to Accept of the Appointment, not being a resident of the District, The Justices appoint Richard Hall in his stead."[28] For Richard Jones to have refused appointment as Supervisor of the Roads in a district in which he did not reside was perhaps understandable. On the other hand, Richard Hall also refused the position, and he did live in the 11th district, and so subsequently did his near-neighbor David Duvall. Jesse Duvall finally took the job.[29] Nor was the 11th District peculiarly cursed. On the same day that the court reported Richard Hall's repudiation, it noted John Hilliary's rejection of the post of road supervisor of the 9th District.[30] On June 6 of the following year, Edward Waters refused to be supervisor "of Patuxent fourth part Hundred," and the court offered the position to Richard Hall, who accepted it on this occasion. The same day, Joseph Cross of George turned down "Collington Hundred fourth part," and the court offered it to Barton Brashears instead. Indeed, by this time the clerk appears to have become adept at anticipating the reluctance of citizens to serve, noting that "The Justices having reason to believe that Thomas Waring who was appointed Supervisor of Western Branch upper part Hundred will not accept of the appointment, Thomas Pratt is appointed in his stead."[31] A year later, John Magruder seems to have become so accustomed to the problem that he began noting refusals more expeditiously. On June 12, 1797, he recorded that

> Austin Allin who was appointed supervisor of Collington upper part hundred, Lingan Boteler who was appointed supervisor of Western Branch middle part hundred and Charles Burgess who was appointed supervisor of Mount Calvert upper part Hundred having severally refused to act, The Justices appoint Josiah Ferguson . . . James Pumphrey . . . and Edward Willett.[32]

James Pumphrey and Edward Willett subsequently refused their nominations and the posts were eventually taken by Gabriel Pumphrey and John Osborn.[33]

There may have been any number of understandable reasons for these refusals to serve, and in and of themselves they do not necessarily prove the prevalence of a preference for private interest over public service.

But it is worth noting that supervisors of the road received an "allowance of…seven shillings and six pence p. day," amounting in 1795 to an annual salary ranging from £11.60 to £19.13.[34] Another county office under the patronage of the Levy Court, however, was that of Tobacco Inspector. Salaries for this office in 1795 ranged from £60 to £140.[35] The clerk reported no refusals by those appointed to this more lucrative post.

Despite these problems finding officers to carry out the court's business, there were enough men who were willing to serve to make the courts effective enough. The justices who assembled for the first meeting of the modernized Levy Court on April 6, 1795, were Robert Bowie, John Smith Brookes, Thomas Contee, Samuel Hepburn, Gabriel Peterson Vanhorn, and Turner Wootton, alongside John Read Magruder, Jr., the clerk. They were joined the next day by Thomas Boyd, Richard Brent, Richard Cramphin, Francis Clement Dyer, Rinaldo Johnson, and Richard Tasker Lowndes, and on April 21 by Osbourn Sprigg, Isaac Walker, and Notley Young. These men constituted most of the bench over the next several years, with newcomers joining only occasionally. Henderson Magruder and Nathaniel Craufurd made their first appearances on April 18, 1796, Peter Wood on April 9, 1798, and Francis Magruder on April 3, 1799.[36] The court therefore had a core of long-serving justices, with others taking only brief tenures. On January 21, 1800, Robert Bowie, Richard Cramphin, and Samuel Hepburn were still on the Levy Court bench, as they had been almost continuously for five years. Relatively recent recruit Francis Magruder continued to serve, and these four men were joined that day and on June 3 respectively by Thomas Bowie and Thomas Mundell. John Read Magruder, Jr., continued to serve as clerk. As the institutional memory of the Levy Court, Magruder's presence perhaps underscored continuities in practice as well as personnel.[37]

When listing these men as present in the Levy Court proceedings, Magruder described them as "Gentlemen" and "Gentlemen Justices". They certainly were men of means. Although Whitman Ridgeway and others have found that the diminished prestige of county courts made some wealthy men less willing to serve on them, early national court benches nevertheless remained dominated by the well-to-do. Robert Bowie owned 1,238 acres of land and 65 slaves in 1800, and with over $9,000 in total wealth, was among the wealthiest one percent of the county's 1,712 free household heads.[38] Richard Cramphin owned 1,049¾ acres of land and 18 slaves, Francis Magruder had 798¼ acres of land and 20 slaves, and Thomas Bowie owned 522½ acres and 21 slaves. All owned over £1,000, or $2,670, in taxable wealth. All but one of those serving in 1800 were among the county's wealthiest 10 percent of household heads.[39]

Even the ostensibly poorer Justices were hardly badly-off. Average wealth among the county's 1,712 heads of household in 1800 was

$709.39, but Samuel Hepburn had a total wealth of $2,025.20, although he owned no land. His 23 slaves, however, suggest that he was once a landowner, and his long service on the court might indicate that he was an older resident of the county and had probably already distributed some property among his children: a common enough practice, and records offer at least partial evidence that this happened in this instance.[40] Thomas Mundell was also apparently landless in 1800, but held 10 slaves and $1,547.61 in total wealth. He was on his way up in the world, however. In 1810, he would own 404 acres of land, 16 slaves, and $2,936.81 in total wealth.[41] Similarly, John Read Magruder, Jr. had 100 acres of land, 20 slaves, and $1,422.79 in total wealth in 1800, but was set to inherit his father's fortune, including 2,349 2/3 acres of land, 52 slaves, and $7,382.04 in total wealth.[42]

Of the 17 others who served at least once on the Levy Court after 1795, 10 were still living in Prince George's County in 1800 and we therefore have records of their property holdings. Rinaldo Johnson was the county's eighth richest household head with a total wealth of $11,822.24, including 1,727¾ acres of land and 65 slaves.[43] Osbourn Sprigg owned 1,054 2/3 acres of land and 37 slaves.[44] Six more were among the wealthiest 100 county residents: John Smith Brookes with 952 acres of land and 59 slaves; Nathaniel Craufurd, with 1,442½ acres and 32 slaves; Nicholas Young, with 1,174 acres and 34 slaves; Henderson Magruder, with 688 acres and 39 slaves; Thomas Contee, with 1,019 acres and 17 slaves; and Richard Tasker Lowndes, with 130 ½ acres, including a town lot in Bladensburg worth £250, or $667.50, and nine slaves. All owned well over £1,000 ($2,670) in total taxable wealth that year.[45]

Only two were not among the wealthiest 100 of Prince Georgians in 1800. Gabriel Peterson Vanhorn owned $1,659.54, including 194½ acres of land and 5 slaves, and Francis Clement Dyer owned $1,598.34, including 327¼ acres and 13 slaves.[46] They were, though, original members of the court and, like Samuel Hepburn, might have already passed property on to sons and daughters.[47] In any case, they were still among the wealthiest 200 out of 1,712 free household heads in the county. Finally, among those who served on the Levy Court during or after 1795, was Notley Young, who lived in Washington, D.C. by 1800. He still held $27,759.60 in taxable wealth in Prince George's County that year, including an immense 4,017¼ acres of land and an enormous holding of 232 slaves.[48] Though he lived in a part of the old county that had been donated to the federal capital, he was Prince George's largest property holder at the end of the eighteenth century.

Many of those who served on the new Levy Court had previously peopled the older court system and continued to serve in other branches of the new one, sometimes simultaneously. Robert Bowie, Thomas Boyd, John Smith Brookes, Samuel Hepburn, Rinaldo Johnson, and Richard

Tasker Lowndes, all Justices of the Levy Court in 1795, had been on the old district court since at least 1790. In fact, they constituted half the membership of that court through 1790 and over half of it at any one time, the others serving in one of the year's three sessions being David Craufurd, Fielder Bowie, Thomas Duckett, Erasmus Gantt, Thomas Gantt, and Thomas Marshall. Also, John Read Magruder, Sr. was clerk, an office which seems effectively to have been hereditary.[49] In addition, John Smith Brookes served almost continuously as one of three Justices of the Orphans' Court (which had always been semi-autonomous) from February 1792 through 1798, as did Robert Bowie from February 1792 through 1800. Both thus sat on two benches simultaneously for most of the late 1790s.[50] At various points they were joined by others who had also sat on the Levy Court bench: Turner Wootton in 1794; Rinaldo Johnson in 1795; and Nathaniel Craufurd in 1799.[51]

The "Interest of the County"

When these men did what they did, they believed they were acting in "the Interest of the County."[52] More accurately, though, they acted in the interests of the people of property in the county. By maintaining and improving the county's roads, bridges, and wharves, the Levy Court ensured that tobacco could be trucked effectively from farms and plantations to the various tobacco inspecting warehouses located around the landscape, and in turn from those warehouses to the Patuxent and Potomac rivers. Tobacco and other goods could then be shipped out into Chesapeake Bay and in turn the Atlantic Ocean and onwards to other states and other places in the Americas and in Europe. Similarly, all manner of items from other counties, states, and countries made their way to people's homes via the wharves, along the roads, and over the bridges of Prince George's County. In regulating the quality of tobacco, the Levy Court guaranteed the value of the county's agricultural staple by ensuring the confidence of its consumers. In assisting the judicial arm of county government to carry on its affairs, it helped uphold law and order in tobacco-plantation society. To do all this, they raised taxes. To raise taxes they kept and preserved records of property ownership. They thereby left us imperfect but still extremely useful records for measuring in some detail the distribution of wealth and economic opportunity in places like Prince George's County. The Appendix to this book contains a discussion of those imperfections and uses, and a detailed analysis of their contents and what we can learn from them. The chapters between here and there explore the fortunes and as far as possible the lives of people contained in those records.

Chapter 1

"The way to make a huge fortune": The Planters

To Serve or Not to Serve?

As one of the grandees of Prince George's County, Maryland, George Calvert was expected by his peers to perform public duties. He was duly offered offices, or the chance to run for them, and often more prestigious ones than most of his neighbors. He usually refused them, however. On July 16, 1805, John Read Magruder, Jr., the clerk of the county Levy Court, told a familiar enough story when he wrote that "George Calvert, who was appointed one of the Judges of the second Election District having refused to accept the appointment the Court appoint Hazel Beall in his place."[1] In 1816, Calvert seems to have considered possible public service, but his wife, Rosalie, actively discouraged him from accepting the nomination of his Federalist Party friends for the Governorship of Maryland on the grounds that he should not be distracted from business affairs by the pursuit or attainment of public office.[2]

George Calvert occasionally accepted Levy Court requests to help maintain and improve Prince George's County's transport facilities. His record of performance, however, was mixed. On July 18, 1810, the Court "authorized" the master of Riversdale plantation and his wealthy planter friend and neighbor, Richard Tasker Lowndes, "to contract with some Person or Persons for building a Stone Arch to a Bridge on the Stage Road between Bladensburg and the City of Washington in Rock Creek Hundred in a Sum not exceeding two hundred dollars." On the same day, the court requested Calvert and Richard Ross to arrange the "repairing a Bridge over the Paint Branch . . . in a sum not exceeding forty dollars."[3] In these instances, nothing seems to have gone wrong. Perhaps partnership with Lowndes, a county court stalwart, ensured that things got done. On July 25, 1809, however, the court asked Calvert and Thomas Bowie "to contract with some Person or Persons to repair the Bridge over the Eastern Branch at the South end of the Town of Bladensburgh" for $150 or less, and to arrange "the repairing of a Causeway and erecting two Bridges over the Eastern Branch adjoining the Town of Bladensburgh at the north end of the Town" for $100 or less. On these occasions the two men seem to have failed to do as they were asked, for the court repeated the requests on August 6, 1812. That same August day, the court also authorized Calvert and Lowndes to contract with someone to build "a bridge over the Eastern Branch at Bladensburgh near the late Mr [Benjamin] Lowndes Granary" for $150 or less.[4] There is, however, a unique entry in the Levy Court Proceedings made one year later. The court ordered Thomas Bowie "to ascertain the dimensions of the Bridge at Bladensburg lately built by Mr. Calvert and examine the Work carefully and that he report to this Court the size of the said bridge and his Judgment as to the execution of the Work and the value thereof."[5] No record of any such report survives, but the court clearly suspected that something was wrong. If the job was badly done, it might or might not have been George Calvert's fault. But the Levy Court never asked Mr. Calvert for any further favors.

George and Rosalie Calvert rarely sacrificed their personal interests for any greater public good. Like other planters, they benefitted materially from roads and bridges that eased access to the county's warehouses and wharves, where their tobacco would be inspected and stored before being loaded and taken down the Patuxent and Potomac rivers to Chesapeake Bay and then either up to Baltimore or down to the Atlantic Ocean and then to their markets overseas. But it seems that sometimes they felt that if someone else did the work of building and maintaining those roads and bridges for them, so much the better. When they did give way to the interest of others, though, they made themselves a deal out of it. When the Baltimore-Washington Turnpike was first proposed in 1807, for example, the Calverts opposed it running through their land, rather as David Craufurd had opposed another road in 1799. "Yesterday people came by here to survey and fix the right-of-way," as the mistress of Riversdale wrote with manifest irritation at what she apparently regarded as rank impertinence by the public authorities, "and they dared to mark it all through this property, passing very close to the stables. We will oppose this and it is only by force that they will obtain my consent. If they would make it on the other side of the Eastern Branch, it would be a great benefit for us, giving us an excellent road to Washington and Baltimore which would greatly diminish the distance."[6] Interestingly, while the benefits of her alternative plan would have accrued to others as well as the Calverts, Rosalie could only express them in terms of an individualistic "us," seemingly referring only to her own family. Nor did she express any concern about the inconvenience caused by the road running through someone else's land.

The Baltimore-Washington Turnpike eventually went through the Riversdale side of the Eastern Branch, but it clearly did so with the Calverts' say so. George was, handily enough, elected President of the Turnpike Company on March 12, 1813, evidently willing to take on quasi-public duties in an incorporated commercial company that had the power to affect his interests and offered him opportunities to make money.[7] George Calvert and his associates also got other friends and neighbors of theirs involved, and did so under the authority of the Prince George's Court Levy Court. As the clerk of the court noted, on February 25, 1815, "Upon the application of the President, Managers and Company of the Washington Baltimore Turnpike Road the Court appoint[s] Richard T. Lowndes, John Chew, Sr., and William Dudley Digges Commissioners under an Act of December Session 1813 chapter 77."[8] Calvert probably thereby ensured he was minimally inconvenienced by the road, but maximally enriched by it. Toll charges were 6¼ cents per 10 miles for a single horse and rider, 12½ cents for a one-horse chaise with two wheels, 25 cents for a two-horse coach with four wheels, and 37½ cents for a four-horse coach with four wheels. The Calverts and Rosalie's father, Henri Joseph Stier, owned a 15 percent share of the road. Rosalie Calvert expected eventually to make 10½ percent annual profits from the $10,000 she and her husband invested in it, and for the $5,000 she invested in it for her father, a tidy sum when loans and bank investments usually yielded 5 or 6 percent.[9] So, the price of the Calverts' acceptance of the road running through their land was a bit over $1,000 per year for her own family and another annual $750 for her father.

Planters' Wealth

The Calverts were members of a small elite of large planters whose landholdings were at least 2,000 acres in size, and thus large enough to support the labor of 50 slaves or more. Out of 1,712 free heads of household in Prince George's County in 1800, only 15 owned this much land. In 1810, 17 out of 1,620 heads of heads of household did so, and in 1820 the number was 12 out of 1,795. Large planters like George Calvert therefore represented just about 1 percent of all free household heads. Yet, as small as they were in number and as a proportion of the population, large planters owned almost 15 percent of taxable wealth held by resident household heads in 1800, nearly 20 percent in 1810, and just over 18 percent of it in 1820. They also owned just over a quarter of the land owned by resident householders in 1800 and 1810, and just under a quarter of it in 1820. Large planters collectively owned almost 55,000 acres of land in 1800, over 53,000 acres in 1810, and 45,000 acres in 1820, in line with their diminished numbers in the latter year.[10]

Even within the elite of large planters, there was a wide range in size of landholdings. Thomas Snowden was the county's largest landowner in 1800, with 9,568¼ acres, and next was Edward Henry Calvert, brother of George, with 8,591½ acres. Both owned considerably more than Samuel Snowden, who, with 5,703½ acres, was the third largest landowner. All others in the class of large planters owned less than 4,000 acres, including George Calvert, although, as we shall soon see, he went on by 1820 to become Prince George's largest landowner and richest man by far. I have not differentiated Edward Calvert or the Snowdens from other large planters, however, because the value of their landholdings was not much greater, if at all, than that of others with 2,000-plus acres. The taxable values of the land, including improvements, held by Thomas Snowden, Edward Henry Calvert, and Samuel Snowden amounted, respectively, to $10,218.97, $10,296.08, and $4,595.63.[11] The mean value of landholdings in the whole large planter class was $6,337.49. It seems, then, that larger proportions of the largest holdings lay in food crops, fallow, or forest, or were otherwise not exploited to the max. As we shall see in chapter 3, many large planters held land in reserve for one reason or another.

Smaller and middling planters, those with landholdings of at least 800 acres but under 2,000 acres and thus capable of employing 20–49 slaves as agricultural laborers, were also wealthy and shared the economic imperatives and behaviors of large planters. Indeed, if we look at their numbers and property holdings and then add the figures together for all planters large and small, we can see just how highly concentrated property ownership was in this older, long-settled corner of the tobacco-plantation south. Smaller and middling planters formed only another small minority of Prince Georgian free people. Numbering 54 in 1800, 43 in 1810, and 48 in 1820, they constituted 3.2 percent of free county householders in 1800 and 2.7 percent in both 1810 and 1820. Yet they owned 28.2 percent of taxable wealth in 1800, 24.1 percent in 1810, and 26.3 percent in 1820. They also altogether held nearly 63,000 acres of land in 1800, over 52,000 in 1810, and close to 57,000 in 1820. That is they held nearly 29 percent of county land in 1800 and 1820, and almost a quarter of it 1810. These figures mean that all planters, large, middling, and small, numbered 69 in 1800 and 60 in both 1810 and 1820, forming just about 4 percent of all free householders in 1800 and 1810, and 3.4 percent in 1820. Yet they held 43.1 percent of taxable wealth in 1800, 43.6 percent in 1810, and 44.5 percent in 1820. And in those years they collectively owned over 100,000 acres of land, or respectively 53.8 percent, 49.3 percent, and 50.7 percent of Prince Georgian land owned by resident household heads.

Not surprisingly, almost all planters were slaveholders. Of the 15 large planters of 1800, 14 held slaves. In 1810 and 1820 respectively, all 17 and all 12 large planters were slaveholders. The exception in 1800 was Samuel Snowden, a planter whose ideas about slavery were evidently affected by enlightened times. On February 4, 1780, Snowden set 35 of his slaves "Absolutely free from the date hereof" and another 36 younger ones "free that is the males when they arrive to the age of twenty one years old and the Females when they Arive to the age of Eighteen." There was apparently some ambiguity or legal doubt over this manumission, which Snowden took the trouble to sort out. On August 3, 1785, he recorded the manumission of the 26 younger slaves for a second time "for the more affectually securing unto the said Negroes their freedom."[12] However, although quite a few Chesapeake planters manumitted their slaves, not least George Washington of course, the large majority did not.

Prince Georgian large planters held an average of 59 slaves each in 1800 (or 63, discounting Samuel Snowden), 48 in 1810, and 76 in 1820, the fluctuations suggesting they rented and bought and sold enslaved people on a regular basis as part of economic management strategies. Most smaller and middling planters held slaves too: 52 of 54 in 1800; 38 of 43 in 1810; and 44 of 48 in 1820. They held an average of 38 slaves each in 1800 (39 counting only the owners), 33 in 1810 (37 counting owners only), and 31 in 1820 (or 34 among owners only). More significantly, planters held lower proportions of the county's enslaved people than they did other forms of property. In 1800, 1810, and 1820 respectively, they held 37.9 percent, 32.7 percent, and 36.6 percent of slaves, or around and just over a third of slaves compared to around or over half the land. This phenomenon reflects the fact that, contrary to Jeffersonian notions of the social-economic nature of the early national Upper South, ownership of slaves was more widespread and more equitable than ownership of land. As will be detailed in subsequent chapters, large majorities of yeomen farmers, small majorities of smallholders, and large minorities of nonlandowners were slaveholders.

Upward mobility into these groups seems usually to have been a result of inheritance rather than a function of an open economic system, as Allan Kulikoff found was the case in the eighteenth century. Downward mobility was infrequent, and when it did happen it seems usually to have been part of the process of perpetuating family fortunes. Among the seven large planters who survived to 1810, six remained large planters and one became a more modest planter. John Waring, the only downwardly mobile large planter, held 2,146 acres of land in 1800, plus 88 slaves and a total taxable wealth of $12,254.74. Even in 1810, he still held an impressive 1,681¾ acres, 57 slaves, and total wealth of $14,373.01 (local tax assessors increased the taxable value of real property significantly in 1801, thus inflating the overall taxable wealth of landowners—see the Appendix for further details).[13] What is most likely in this instance is that John Waring was passing on property to his children as they got married and struck out on their own. As Jean B. Lee, has shown, such premortal bequests were common practice in next-door Charles County.[14] Of the four who survived to 1820, three retained their large planter status through 1810 and 1820, while Francis Tolson, with 2,360½ acres in 1810, became a smaller planter with 1,676 acres in 1820. Like John Waring before him, then, he hardly became impoverished. In fact, with a total wealth of $14,499.80 including 29 slaves, in 1810, and $11,303.40, including 38 slaves, in 1820, Tolson remained among the richest 5 percent in terms of total wealth.[15]

Of 30 smaller and middling planters who survived to 1810, a majority of 18 retained planter status and five became large planters with over 2,000 acres of land. Downward mobility was high, with just under a quarter going down the scale, but, as with large planters, none of the falls was dramatic. All seven whose status declined moved down into the large yeoman class (with at least 280 acres but less than 800). Of the two who had become large planters by 1810 and survived to 1820, one fell back to the status of planter and one fell two steps to large yeoman status. One who had previously remained a planter had become a large planter by 1820, four more remained planters throughout the period, and another became a large yeoman.

Building the Calvert Family Fortune

The rising fortunes of planter families are most amply illustrated in the case of the Calverts of Riversdale in Prince George's County, Maryland. So are the means which these fortunes were made. The Calverts accumulated land and occasionally sold some on both a piecemeal basis and in sudden great swathes. They were, then, highly active realtors, always on the lookout for deals to improve their properties. The accumulations, furthermore, show how, over time, smaller farms were swallowed up into larger plantations, a process that first took hold in the Chesapeake in the 1680s and was continuing into the 1830s.[16]

George Calvert took responsibility for running his family's 2,000-acre Mount Albion plantation on the Patuxent River, near Queen Anne Town, when his father died in 1788. He finally took full possession when his mother, Elizabeth [Biscoe] Calvert, died a decade later.[17] The earliest available county property assessments date to 1793. In that year, 25-year-old Mr. Calvert was already clearly a very substantial planter, holding 61 slaves, and owning taxable personal wealth amounting to $4,914.14, in addition to the unknown value of Mount Albion real estate.[18] In 1798, the year before he married Rosalie Stier, the Federal

Direct Tax recorded that George Calvert owned several adjoining tracts in Horsepen and Patuxent Hundreds, comprising Swanson's Lot, Part of Coolspring Manor, Addition to Leaving, Griffith's Purchase, Part of Cuckolds Delight, No Name, Part of Gleanings, Part of Letchworth, and Part of Riley's Landing. These tracts had these names because they were all originally individual farms or parts of farms dating from the original settlement and before the formation of Prince George's County in 1696. They had, however, gradually been agglomerated into a single 1,045¼ acre plantation. Mount Albion was worth $8,016.75, according to the federal levy, which valued property closer to market values than did local tax assessments. Calvert also by then held 69 slaves, 37 of whom were taxable. In Rock Creek and Eastern Branch Hundreds, Calvert owned another 650 acres, worth $3,575, which he rented to tenants. In total, then, in 1798 Calvert held 1,895¼ acres of land. His property, including land, buildings, and slaves, was worth $12,941.75, according to the federal tax. Calvert's own Mount Albion residence, on Part of Coolspring Manor, was a one-story, 16-by-12 foot house, worth $150, with a 16-by-12 foot kitchen nearby. That was a modest abode for a man of such means, but the following year, when George married Rosalie, he improved the Mount Albion property by building a two-story, brick, federal-style mansion.[19]

By 1800, George Calvert had already augmented his properties over those he owned two years before, holding 3,325 acres, worth $7,255.46 according to the more conservative local assessments. In addition, he held 76 slaves, 12 ounces of plate, and "other" assessable property, so his total taxable wealth was $13,951.38. Average wealth among large planters in 1800 was $12,038.31, so George Calvert was already on his way to being Prince George's richest man. To put these figures in clearer perspective, average taxable wealth among all free household heads that year was $708.50. And to put that in clearer perspective still, 782 Prince Georgian household heads, over 45 percent, did not own any taxable property at all.[20]

By 1800, George Calvert had further consolidated his lands, selling the separate tract of Part of Leavings and buying up extra shares of Swanson's Lot and Buck Lodge, creating a more geographically contiguous plantation. He had also acquired a lot in the town of Bladensburg, although it was only worth $40.[21] In 1801, Calvert sold 400 acres, but because of the real estate assessment inflation of that year his remaining 2,925 acres had a valuation of $15,680.40 and his total wealth was assessed at $22,396.98.[22] In the next two years, small purchases of Part of Dunkiel, adjoining Mount Albion, and Part of Norway, adjoining Buck Lodge, further augmented and consolidated Calvert's lands to a total of 3,251 acres, worth $16,727.04.[23] These sorts of smallish increments added to Calvert's holdings substantially over the years, but a more immediately dramatic increase in his fortunes came with the acquisition of Riversdale in 1803. Three years earlier, George Calvert's father-in-law, Henri Joseph Stier, the rich refugee from Napoleonic Flanders who was then contemplating an indefinite stay in the United States, had purchased 729¼ acres of land in New Scotland, Oxen, and Bladensburg Hundreds to form the Riversdale plantation, plus six lots in Bladensburg, for £7,200. When the Stiers departed America after Napoleon's 1803 amnesty to émigrés, Riversdale became Rosalie Calvert's dowry and, although technically owned by her and entailed upon her children, the practice of coverture ensured it was nominally owned by George.[24] Once again, the history of Riversdale illustrates how from the initial settlement of Maryland, planters bought up small farms to consolidate their plantations. When it came into Stier-Calvert possession, Riversdale comprised the contiguous tracts of Part of Taylorsburgh, 32¼ acres, Part of Charles and Rebecca, 362¼ acres, Brother's Fifth Lot, 296 acres, and Tide Meadows &c, 37 acres. Totalling 728 acres, assessors evidently reassessed Riversdale at one-and-one-quarter-acres smaller than before.[25] The plantation was separated from Buck Lodge only by the property of a widowed small yeoman named Peggy Adams. For many years, as we shall see, Peggy Adams irritated the Calverts by refusing to sell out to them so they could consolidate their lands further still. They acquired her farm eventually, however, and thereby joined up the older Calvert plantation with the newer Stier one, but only in 1814 and only after the evidently feisty Madam Adams had died.[26]

In 1804, after leaving the United States, Henri Stier wrote a detailed valuation of his daughter's dowry. He noted that the original purchase of land for Riversdale cost \$20,105, and calculated that "Buildings and other improvements" were worth another \$15,638.32, that "Slaves left" were worth \$3,394, and he valued "Miscellaneous (furniture, cattle)" items at \$962.68. (These figures again show that local tax assessors undervalued property compared to market prices by some considerable distance, and that wealth figures given here understate the real extent of inequality.) Stier calculated, then, that the "plantation cost \$40,000, which, at 4 percent interest…will provide you an income of \$1,600 a year, to which I shall add \$400 to bring the annual dowry to \$2,000."[27] Rosalie Calvert wrote later of making even higher profits than this from her land.

By 1804, through the Riversdale acquisition and a few other deals, the Calverts' landholdings had increased to 3,932 acres. The total value of Calvert real property then amounted to \$22,945.79, according to local assessments. Personal property assessments for 1803–1805 are not extant, but by 1806 the Calverts had increased the value of theirs by about a third over that of 1802. By 1806, George Calvert held 57 slaves at Mount Albion and another 32 at Riversdale, 89 altogether. With 42 ounces of plate and "other" property, but no extra land purchases in the intervening two years, the Calverts' total taxable wealth in 1806 was $33,020.05.[28]

The next half-dozen years, years of embargo and nonintercourse, were fairly quiet ones for the Calverts in terms of property accumulation. In 1809, George sold 33¾ acres of Buck Lodge, but bought a different 37 acres of the same parcel of land in 1811.[29] In 1812, he added 200 acres to Part of Coolspring Manor. Also in that year, Calvert sold the Bladensburg property, but enhanced his other properties with an additional $1,108.05 in improvements.[30] The Calverts also added £30 worth of property to their "other" personal property holdings in 1807. Assessors did not record changes in quantities of property every year, though, and nor were planters assiduous in updating the Levy Court about their taxable acquisitions—a legal requirement that the Levy Court never seems to have enforced. The value of the Calverts' "other" property therefore remain exactly the same until 1812, and their plate remained, improbably, at 42 ounces until increasing by near 350 percent in 1813, and slaves remained, impossibly, at the same number within the same age categories until 1812, whereupon their numbers suddenly rose by 36 according to the 1813 assessments.[31] When the Levy Court began recording some assessments in dollars in 1813, assessors updated their records. The Calverts had made an augmentation to Mount Albion so that their lands totalled 4,253½ acres, which, including improvements, were worth $24,636.58. They then had 125 slaves, 144 ounces of plate, and over $5,000 worth of "other" property, and total taxable wealth of $37,402.08.[32] For comparison and perspective: the average wealth of Prince George's large planters in 1810 was $18,786.52, and for all free householders was $1,010.40, although 429 out of 1,620 household heads that year had no taxable property.

In 1814, the Calverts added substantially to their landholdings with the purchase of a 590-acre tract, Part of Partnership, in Collington and Western Branch Hundreds.[33] Thereafter, small augmentations to Buck Lodge and Mount Albion in the two subsequent years meant that in 1816 they owned 5,100½ acres, which, including improvements, were worth $32,069.96.[34] A slight readjustment to the valuations of the Rock Creek and Eastern Branch properties increased the same total of acres to a value of $32,539.16 in 1818, but the family's land remained at that acreage and value until Rosalie Calvert died in 1821.[35] By then, the family held 124 slaves (perhaps the Calverts actually reported the net loss of a slave as it would have diminished their tax burden), 196 ounces of plate, and total taxable wealth of $47,245.16.[36] By now the Calverts owned near double the average of large planters of $24,523.73, while the average for all householders had actually fallen on the 1810 figure by over $100 to $900.61. By then, 1,006 out of 1,795 household heads, a majority of 56 percent, did not own enough property to be taxed at all.

The Calverts' taxable wealth remained the same in 1822, but thereafter George Calvert both benefited from the Stier inheritance, which was supposed, in fact, to benefit his children, and seems to have redoubled his efforts to augment the family fortune. By 1823, he had added to his lands in Rock Creek and Eastern Branch Hundreds, and in 1825 acquired another two acres, plus six more lots in Bladensburg and a share of another, making for 5,522.6 acres of land, worth $36,546.04.[37] After remaining suspiciously constant, the number of slaves leapt by 51 to 175 in 1825 and the quantity of plate to 219 ounces, and total taxable wealth reached $53,762.04. It remained at that level until 1830, when the assessed value of "other" property was increased by a curiously trivial $4.[38] By 1831, however, Calvert had more than doubled his landholdings by his taking possession of much of the land of his brother.

For unknown reasons, Edward Henry Calvert had got into financial difficulty and was in debt to the tune of $17,000 by 1811. Interest costs and losses of tobacco and slaves to looting British soldiers during the War of 1812, meant that his debts rose to an enormous $84,800 by 1826. In 1813, he mortgaged 6,650 acres to George Calvert (a tract unintentionally ironically entitled His Lordship's Kindness). In 1826, as his brother's debts seemed to spiral out of control, George took possession of 600 acres of Part of Darnall's Lodge, and of 38 of his brother's slaves, in exchange for underwriting a promissory note for $4,000. The land was released the following year, but by 1831 George had gained 6,781¾ acres of his brother's land in Piscataway and Hynson Hundreds, although 883 acres of it was held as a bond in trust for Elizabeth Calvert, Edward Henry's widow, and her children.[39] The acquisition was worth $18,857.03 and, with the sale of a small tract adjoining Riversdale, meant that Calvert owned 12,779.9 acres of land, worth $54,791.61. Including personal property, George Calvert had $72,011.61 in taxable wealth by that year.[40] This was not, though, the most he ever owned. While in 1832 Calvert sold nearly 1,040 acres, he made more small acquisitions in subsequent years, so that in the mid-1830s, particularly after a huge inflation in the taxable value of land and slaves in 1833, he was at the height of his prosperity.[41] By 1835, two years before he died, and just before he began distributing some of his property among his children, Calvert owned 13,924¾ acres of land, worth $178,467.25, 173 slaves, 384 ounces of plate, and a pretty staggering total taxable wealth of $222,198.25.[42]

And the Calverts always owned property outside of Prince George's County, too, which of course did not appear in local tax assessments (another reason why figures given here understate inequality). There is no way of telling precisely how much property the Calverts owned besides that in Prince George's, but it was a lot. Rosalie's letters and George's last will and testament reveal that at various times between the early 1800s and mid-1830s, the Calverts owned 875 acres of land in Montgomery County, Maryland, Spurrier's Tavern and its 516 acres of land in Anne Arundel County, lots on Pennsylvania Avenue, 6th Street, and C Street, and a majority share in the National Hotel in Washington, DC, unknown quantities of land in Alexandria, Virginia, and investments and shares in various banks and other institutions (see later).

The Trouble with Tobacco

Like their colonial Chesapeake forebears, early national upper southern planters made their fortunes primarily through tobacco cultivation. An advantage they had over those forebears, though, was that the American Revolution had in effect nullified the Navigation Acts, leaving them free to market their tobacco where they wished and where they could get the highest prices. Thanks to the Revolution, then, early national planters were able to consolidate the already considerable economic and social dominance their prerevolutionary predecessors had enjoyed. Initially, Chesapeake planters reopened trade with those they knew, London and Glasgow merchants. Gradually, though, merchants in Richmond, Annapolis, and Baltimore began buying Virginia and Maryland tobacco and finding new markets through their long-held associations in grain trading in the West Indies and Europe, especially France during their monopoly but also Germany and the Netherlands. When the Annapolis trading company Wallace, Johnson, and Muir went belly-up in 1790, Baltimore merchants became the principal local buyers and sellers of Maryland tobacco. Planters indeed became quite bullish about how they might exploit their new options. In 1793, "the Planters and Farmers Friend" told the readers of the *Maryland Gazette* that they should abandon consignment to Europe altogether and sell tobacco locally.[43]

Richmond and Baltimore merchants, as well as Virginia and Maryland planters, also replaced local Scottish tobacco factors who had traded within the colonial Chesapeake, buying up tobacco and other goods from smaller farmers who could not store it or ship it directly themselves, and who needed ready cash for daily expenses. Indeed some planters became merchants. The Stone family of Charles County, Maryland, for example, took up much of their locality's trade. After spending much of the revolutionary era in Philadelphia, brothers Thomas and Walter Stone, and Michael Jenifer and John Hoskins used their connections there to build a business back home. They developed a "most advantageous Scheme" whereby Philadelphia merchants, as one of them wrote to Walter, "would supply you with Goods at Portobacco or Benedict where you might buy Tobacco & other Country produce very cheap." Trading under the name John H. Stone and Company, their store developed links stretching across St. Mary's County, overland to Philadelphia, over the

Potomac to Alexandria, up the Chesapeake to Annapolis and Baltimore, and overseas to London. They sold goods they imported at a 100 percent mark-up. The Stones also invested in the Potomac Company, chartered by the Maryland and Virginia legislatures in 1784 and 1785 to extend the navigable parts of the Potomac River for 175 miles north of Georgetown and to build a 20-mile road that would link the Ohio River and its vast hinterland to Chesapeake Bay. As Thomas Stone wrote, "If the scheme is properly executed, I have the most sanguine expectation that it will fully succeed to the Wishes of those who are anxious to promote the Wellfare of these States and to form a strong Chain of Connection between the Western and atlantic governments."[44]

But merchants were more attached to the Atlantic economy than planters, and most planters therefore avoided becoming excessively dependent on tobacco trade, an especially important consideration during times of political turbulence and war, of which, of course, there were plenty in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Fluctuating tobacco prices illustrate the danger. With the reopening of trade after the end of the War of Independence, the price per hundredweight of Common or Potomac tobacco was quite high at $5.39 in 1784. Postwar uncertainties and depression saw it slip to $4.37 the following year and $3.94 the year after that. After a rise to $4.09 in 1787, it then slipped steadily to a low of $2.59 in 1791, whereupon it rose slowly and then more rapidly to a high of $7.48 in 1799, then slumped again to $4.63 in 1800. Virginia exports fell from 72,000,000 pounds of tobacco to 34,000,000 between 1790 and 1796, with productivity declining by 40 percent in the piedmont and disappearing north of the James River. Usually, prices fell during war time and then shot up again when peace prevailed, but in the instance of the quasi-war with France the opposite happened, because of the peculiar uncertainties and instabilities of the Napoleonic era. Prices then remained fairly steady, with an upward trend to $5.50 per hundredweight in 1807, slipping to $5.12 the following year as relations with Britain deteriorated, and then sank to $3.80 in 1809 due to President Jefferson's embargo. As the War of 1812 began, the price of Potomac tobacco reached a rock-bottom of $2.10. As the end of the war neared, prices began rapidly to rise again, from $2.66 in 1813 to $4.65 in 1814 and $8.04 in 1815. When trade fully reopened in 1816, prices rose to $11.25, reached a peak of $13.33 in 1818, but then began to fall again, to $10.35 in 1819, falling more precipitously in the aftermath of the Panic of 1819, reaching as low as $2.66 in 1823. The price did not reach $4 again until 1832 and after that made a high of $5.25 in 1839 and a low of $1.94 in 1847. Higher quality Kites foot or Yellow tobacco was not quite as susceptible to dramatic downswings. It was as high as $13 a hundredweight in 1840, but was still $6.50 in 1809. It went to $29.75 per hundredweight in 1825, despite depression, but then mostly remained below $20 through the 1830s. As much as tobacco was fundamental to the profitability of upper southern plantation agriculture, then, diversification was essential to protect planters as far as possible from the price fluctuations inevitable in Atlantic trade, as well to avoid soil exhaustion.[45]

Planters therefore cultivated many kinds of food crops and livestock, employed workers in milling and other artisanal activities, invested in nonagricultural enterprises such as turnpikes, as the Calverts and others did in the Baltimore-Washington road, industrial enterprises such as iron works, dealt in government bonds and public and private bank stocks, and even engaged in double-dealing by using insider information when buying and selling such stocks. The overall aim was to maximize profit with minimum risk, as Trevor Burnard has shown was the case with Maryland's colonial elite. Rosalie Calvert's writings contain no self-conscious exposition of economic doctrine, perhaps because planter economic and social behavior were givens and in no need of explanation or justification. They do, however, contain many revealing references to general economic strategies and particular tactics. Rosalie's letter and the Calverts' and other planters' behavior clearly reflect a highly developed, hard-headed, materialistic, and individualistic entrepreneurialism.[46]

Planters' economic meticulousness is evident in the fact that Rosalie Calvert and her husband kept detailed daily accounts of their monetary comings and goings. Annoyingly, the books themselves do not survive, but Rosalie's comments about them do. Responding to her father's epistolary recommendations that she keep records of Riversdale's finances, she wrote in 1804 that,

> Finally, I have found a way to make my husband keep an [account] book—I began it myself! At the beginning he laughed at me for my awkwardness in doing it. Then he became impatient because I asked him every day how much he had spent. But at last he is going to do it himself, because he says I do it so badly that he will never be able to get away. Now every evening after supper we enter how much has been received or expended during the day.[47]

The impulse behind keeping an account book was illustrated in a letter a little over a year later, in which Rosalie initially expressed regret for not having kept up the earlier one, but then pointed out that the new one she had begun would "convince you that we manage our affairs not only with all possible economy but also with system, and that our method accords exactly with the plans you have often advised us to follow."[48] A few years later, to her father's query about whether Riversdale was producing the 4 percent returns that he predicted, she replied, "I have kept an exact account of everything I have received since my marriage, both in gifts and allowance.... I will send... a note of what Riversdale produced the past year, which I think you will see exceeds $1,600."[49] Her apparent pride here may be explained by the fact that Riversdale made more money than Henri Stier had predicted.

On the various Calvert properties fully enumerated in 1798, there were 15 barns, and the two for sheltering animals and two more for storing grain demonstrate a degree of agricultural diversification. The 11 devoted to the drying and curing of tobacco, however, demonstrate how dominant this staple cash crop nevertheless was. Despite the absence of surviving account books, there are clues as to how much tobacco the Calverts grew, how much income it generated, how significant that income was, and how the Calverts spent and reinvested their returns. At the end of the first season after the Stiers' departure, for example, Rosalie wrote,

> [o]ur affairs here are going pretty well now. My husband sold his last tobacco crop a few days ago for $10 for the best quality and $8 for the second quality. He had 51 hogsheads which will bring him more than $4,500, since most of it is of the best quality.... We will now have enough to live splendidly here, to improve our properties... and to buy some bank shares from time to time.[50]

Just before the harvest of 1805, she wrote, "we will make between 60 and 70 hogsheads, estimating 5 at Riversdale, 25 at the adjoining plantation [Buck Lodge], and the rest at Mount Albion."[51]

Unless one counts the barns above, there is no full, quantifiable evidence of the extent of the Calverts' diversifications in crop and animal husbandry, but it is clear there was some and that it was carefully considered and planned in light of the primary imperative to cultivate tobacco. That said, at times planters had to adapt quickly to unpredictable circumstances. Having commented to her father, in June 1803, for example, that her husband had just relocated slaves from Mount Albion "where it hasn't rained enough, to plant tobacco here," she went on to mention that the "corn looks beautiful and today [the hands] are busy cutting the rye. After that, they will cut the hay."[52] Less than two months later she told her father that the field tobacco "has succeeded very well" and that the tobacco "growing in the orchard also looks good, as does the corn.... [T]he oats and hay have not been as successful—in part, I think, because the pigs were in the fields so much during the spring. My husband had a large number of them slaughtered and [that has helped]." This kind of diversification among tobacco planters was common. In 1790, William Thomas Jr. of Delabrooke Manor in St. Mary's County produced 10,702 pounds of tobacco, 113 bushels of wheat, 190 barrels of corn, and had 67 sheep, 54 hogs, and 50 cows. Samuel Abell of Beaverdam Manor produced eight stacks of hay in 1801, and William

Somerville produced 10,000 pounds of it at Medley Neck and 11 bushels of clover at Mulberry Fields, mostly for animal fodder.[53]

The influence of the Atlantic economy on plantation management was apparent even in these early years of Rosalie's tenure as mistress of Riversdale, even before the onset of embargo, nonintercourse, and well before the War of 1812. After floods in 1804, which destroyed much of that year's crop, and the consequent contraction of European credit supply in 1805, the Calverts confined tobacco planting to their Mount Albion and Buck Lodge properties. Of Riversdale, Mrs. Calvert wrote, "in future we won't grow tobacco—only meadows, oats, clover, and enough maize for the consumption of negroes, horses, etc."[54] Indeed, the following year she noted that "[w]e don't grow any [tobacco] at Riversdale, but we made a nice crop of hay and 1200 bushels of oats last summer."[55] Rosalie described the continuing diversification of Riversdale and the carefully considered reasons for it to her father in June 1807:

> [n]ext year nearly all the plantation will be in meadowland, which is preferable to all other kinds of culture here for several reasons: our land's location and its susceptibility to flooding, the higher profits of hay as a crop, and certainly nothing gives so much embellishment [to the land]. We also found that by closing off part of the woods three years ago in a way that keeps the animals out, young trees spring up in abundance and replace the old, decaying ones fourfold. I hope the fir trees develop well and I'm delighted with the other tree seedlings, especially the larch which I have wanted for a long time.

The Calverts also contemplated diversifying one, but not both, of their other plantations. "My husband intends in the future," Rosalie wrote in a continuation of the above, "to give up growing tobacco at [Buck Lodge]. The terrain is unsuitable and the costs high in proportion to the profits. We have decided to continue [growing] it on the Patuxent [Mount Albion], and this year we have fine prospects, barring mishap, of making a very good crop at that plantation."[56] Diversification was therefore useful, but it had its limits, and tobacco proved a perennial staple, even, as we shall later, during the years of trade interruption through embargo, non-intercourse, and war from 1807 to 1815. By the early 1820s, the Calverts were cultivating tobacco at Riversdale once again, despite what Rosalie said earlier. In June 1820, describing to her father a "plain to the north of the house" that her husband had "sown in oats" some 17 years before, Rosalie explained that her husband had "replaced it as a meadow and for over ten years had good crops of hay, but as the grass there had begun to deteriorate, he has just had it cultivated in order to make a crop of tobacco there. He covered the entire area with manure and in October he will again seed it with grass."[57]

Riversdale was something of an agricultural showpiece long before Rosalie's son, Charles Benedict Calvert, founder of the University of Maryland, made it one after the death of her husband George in 1838. Rosalie seems to have taken an especially enthusiastic view of this form of display, judging by her ruminations on the high quality of livestock at Riversdale. Accepting her father's offer of some "very valuable" Spanish sheep in 1805, she wrote that "[a]t present we have the finest bull, the best donkey, and the finest male hog in the county, so if you could send us a male and some female sheep, our collection would be complete." But, as with Charles Benedict later, showcasing was not only about showing off. It was also about making improvements and increasing profits. The embargo raised local demand for wool, and southern planters bred and purchased large numbers of sheep during these and the war years. Rosalie Calvert's "very valuable" sheep were probably Merinos, known for having the softest wool, which were also popular in St. Mary's County and which were worth $20 per head, as opposed to $3 for common sheep.[58]

The Calverts, like other tobacco planters such as, most famously, Thomas Jefferson, also attempted to increase productivity through "scientific" experimentation in crop rotation and fertilization. George Calvert became a devotee of plaster of Paris. "My husband is more attached to it than ever—four years of experience reinforces his good opinion of it," Rosalie wrote her father in 1805. She added that "my husband discovered that for maize, putting on a small quantity (as you remember they did with a spoon) does more harm than good. The reason is that while the roots were young and short, they got nourishment from the plaster and the plant grew vigorously at first. However, this nourishment was used up before the grain was formed and thus [the plant] produced a lot of leaves but much less grain. Now we use it mainly on the clover."[59] She later responded to her father's worries that the Calverts were "spending too much on farming" by commenting that "we hold fast to scientific procedure and make our experiments only on small plots."[60]

The Calverts were not alone. Wealthy planters in St. Mary's County in 1807 formed a Board of Agriculture that was allied to the State Agricultural Society and they formed a St. Mary's County Agricultural Society as a local chapter of the Maryland Agricultural Society when that was constituted in 1819. In their articles of association, the St. Mary's men agreed to keep agricultural accounts, experiment with new crops and disseminate their findings, and subscribe to the *American Farmer.* They also had annual meetings with prizes awarded for the best crops and plowing contests for horses and oxen. Its records and therefore presumably its activities ended in 1821, but presumably some of those who had been involved continued their attempts at agricultural improvement individually. Athanatius Fenwick of St. Mary's County remained active in the state society until he died in 1824.[61]

Diversity in crop and animal husbandry is also apparent in George Calvert's probate inventory of early 1838. There was no tobacco recorded and, the inventory having been taken in February, the 1837 crop had probably been sold. In various barns and lofts, however, there were 116 barrels and 143 bushels of corn, worth $433.80, and oats, rye, hay, straw, and animal fodder, together worth $633.75. There were also 91 sheep, worth $378, 74 head of cattle, worth $1,304, 62 pigs, worth $150.50, and 25 horses, worth $1,595. An additional 3,138 pounds of bacon was worth $235.35.[62] These nonstaples were worth $4,730.40 in total, nowhere near as valuable as tobacco, but valuable enough to add significantly to the Calvert family fortune and to insulate the family from Atlantic political and economic storms.

The Calverts also engaged in extra-agricultural economic activity, something Rosalie Calvert not only commented on but was actually involved in, as were many wealthy southern women. In 1805, after explaining that the family "had just shipped 102 hogsheads of tobacco, the harvest of two years," she wrote that "I must not forget to tell you that I am also a dairymaid and make $7 a week from my butter at a quarter of a dollar a pound, over and above our own consumption."[63] She added in her next letter, "I am now making 25 pounds a week, and at the height of the season was making 40 pounds. It is quite renowned for its quality."[64] Within a short while success inflated her pride and ambition: "I made so much profit last year from my butter (which has a fine reputation) that I am going to have a nice little dairy built under the stairs of the north portico, vaulted like your wine cellar at the Mick." Bayly Marks found that most St. Mary's County planters had "milch cows" and made and sold butter too. The 1840 census for that county listed $10,225 worth of dairy products, and as cheese was usually purchased from outside the county, and as milk was too perishable to have around very long, most of this produce was probably butter.[65]

Whether the Calverts eventually built the dairy or not is unknown, but Rosalie was active in other areas too. "Another of my diversions," she wrote in 1805, in a passage that reveals yet another crop cultivated on Calvert soil, "is to make cloth for the negroes, which lasts twice as long as what we can buy and, everything considered, is much cheaper. For summer I also make cloth from cotton (which grows well here) for my servants. . . . Much of the manipulation is done by some little girls who in the future will become good maids for Caroline and [Marie] Louise."[66] Small-scale cotton textile production was still occurring at Riversdale four years later, when Rosalie told her father, "I, too, am a manufacturer—all the women in my house are dressed in pretty cloth made right here. All told, it costs me about three shillings a yard for one-yard width."[67]

Riversdale also contained a sawmill, and indeed the Calverts invested much effort and money in different kinds of milling. In February 1812, George leased a mill and race near Bladensburg to Thomas Ewell for $500 per year plus $5 daily for exclusive use of mill-race water during the dry season. He also leased a Bladensburg plot in 1820 to Thomas Ferrall for only $6 per annum, although the lease required Ferrall to build a granary or store on the site, adding a substantial improvement to the family's property portfolio.[68] The Calverts were never as successful in the milling business as they hoped to be, however. They intended, for example, to build what they believed would be a highly profitable commercial grist mill at Riversdale. Spotting a gap in the market in 1803, or at least a chance to give an economic rival a run for her money, Rosalie Calvert wrote that they aimed to build one as "Mrs. Diggs' [Digges's] mill has three times more business than it can do."[69] Soon thereafter the Calverts came close to building one. "A very capable Baltimore mill builder was here some time ago," Mrs. Calvert told her father, "to look over the land, see what type of mill would be best, and now he is busy drawing up plans." At the same time, again demonstrating considerable savvy, she enumerated the expenses and potential profits of this putative enterprise:

> It will cost between $3,000 and $4,000, and will yield 20 percent, possibly 25, by leasing it out. Subtracting 3 percent for the cost of repairs would leave 17 percent [return], quite apart from the plaster of paris, which we would supply to be processed—it is more and more in use and its toll would return a great deal. Another big benefit would be not having to produce any Indian corn at all—just contracting with the miller to deliver so much meal for the negroes. A second benefit is that half the cost of the mill has already been expended in the dam and race, which have to be maintained without yielding the return they should.[70]

The Calverts did not ultimately build this grist mill, although their intentions endured. "Every day," Rosalie fretted in 1812, "I regret that we have still not been able to build a mill." As she reiterated, "[t]here is none in the neighborhood except for Digges' which earns $1,000 a year, and the mill and everything are not worth $5,000. Besides, it is in such bad condition that it often breaks down completely. I am sure that a mill which cost $10,000 would earn a 15 percent return, not to mention the benefit of manure produced by the animals one would fatten here."[71] As late as 1820 Rosalie was saying of her husband that "this year he is going to build a large mill," but George seems to have been too preoccupied with local land speculation and the cultivation of tobacco and other crops to have done so.[72] That said, in earlier years it was uncertainties caused by international affairs that prevented capital investment on this large a scale. In 1810, for example, the Calverts rented an acre of land near Spa Spring "to build a tannery," which they intended to rent out. This plan was, however, "thwarted by the Emperor of the French."[73]

Another form of Calvert wealth not included in county assessments but frequently mentioned in letters was investments in nonagricultural enterprise. These activities also give further insights into the Calverts' capitalistic propensities. Rosalie Calvert invested a great deal of her father's money, for example, in bank stocks and government bonds. There is no account of the exact amount, but, as Margaret Law Callcott calculates, Henri Stier appeared to be receiving and reinvesting about $25,000 every six months, which, at an average rate of 6 percent interest, indicates an enormous principal of about $800,000.[74] Although seeking advice from expert sources such as Thomas McEwen, who was Stier's agent in Philadelphia, Gabriel Duvall, Comptroller of the Maryland state Treasury, and Albert Gallatin, the United States Treasury Secretary, Rosalie Calvert took pride in her own skills and offered a great deal of advice to her father, especially when times arrived for reinvestment of principals when investments reached maturity. She also acted on behalf of her brother, Charles Jean Stier, and brother-in-law, Charles van Havre, husband of Rosalie's sister, Isabelle, although there is no way of estimating how extensive their investments were. There is also no overall record of, nor any way of reconstructing, precisely how much George and Rosalie invested in their own behalf in stocks and bonds. Nevertheless, it is clear that their investments were large. It is also clear that Rosalie made such investments with a great deal of forethought and skill, although insider information also helped.

Considering further capital investments in 1805, Rosalie Calvert felt that her own family should invest in stocks and her father in land because diversity was a key to success and security. "As for buying land," she explained to her father, "I admit that it is a more secure investment and my system would be to have a certain proportion, but we already have so much and no stocks. I think it is better to use our savings to buy [stocks] now, [but] for you, with already a lot in the banks, perhaps it would be advantageous to buy some land."[75] A few months later she expressed her gratitude for $1,500 Henri Stier had sent for her children. In explaining what she intended to do with it, she demonstrated again her willingness to diversify capital investment, but not to take great risks. "I am going to invest it in stock of [the Bank of] the United States," she wrote, "I don't like the private banks—even though they pay more interest, I don't think they are as safe."[76]

This perception was heightened by the difficulties engendered by embargo and the insecurities created by possible war in Europe. "There is no danger to the public bonds," Rosalie wrote in 1807, "but there is fear that the banks will suffer greatly. I think you would have done well to have sold your Alexandria and Baltimore [bank] shares long ago."[77] During the War of 1812, however, her confidence in government credit sank, as she was "quite apprehensive that [bonds] will become worthless" in the event of revolution or civil war in America.[78] So, as she explained in 1814, she limited investment of her own and her European family's capital to land and to "the public highways," which "are considered the safest investments, although they don't yield as much interest."[79] The year before, practising what she preached, Mrs. Calvert invested an unspecified quantity of her father's money in the Frederick Road, and, as we saw at the top of the chapter, she put $5,000 more of his money into "100 shares" in the Baltimore-Washington Turnpike in 1813. The Calverts also invested $10,000 of their own in the Turnpike, which was incorporated by the Maryland Assembly in 1812, and capitalized at $100,000 with shares at $50 each. The Calverts and Stiers together owned 15 percent of it.[80] When her father wrote of his disappointment in not having realized anything on his investment in the road up to 1816, she retorted with cautious confidence. "When the road is completed," she said, "it will pay 10½ percent which the law authorizes, and payment will begin this winter, I hope."[81] That was in fact 3–4 percent more than investments in stocks and bonds usually made.

No doubt, Rosalie Calvert's confidence in this enterprise had much to do with her husband's appointment by the Maryland Assembly as one of 12 supervisors of the road, and his subsequent election as President of the Turnpike Company by a stockholders' meeting in Baltimore.[82] He was also, as Mrs. Calvert wrote to her father in 1810, "director of the Bank of Washington, which takes a day every week, [and] director of a manufacturing company in Georgetown."[83] Unfortunately, she made no further references to the Georgetown manufacturing enterprise. The Bank of Washington, however, gained a high profile in her letters, which are of all the greater interest because they reveal the sometimes unscrupulous means the Calverts used to maximize profits and minimize risk in investments and indeed in disinvestments. In 1811, when reinvesting her own and her father's capital after Congress's refusal to recharter the Bank of the United States, in which the Calverts and Stiers had invested, Rosalie Calvert explained to Henri Stier that

> [s]everal things made me buy in the Bank of Washington. This bank is better managed and has a number of advantages over the others, such as [receiving] the government's deposits. Being one of the directors, my husband can know precisely what degree of confidence it merits, [and] even if the other banks fail, I think this one could sustain itself. Another advantage is that in case of a general upheaval in this country, with [this bank] being so nearby and with the certificates in my name, I could convert them more easily if it became necessary. So you now have $30,000 there and all payments made, that is to say, at $10 a share.[84]

The advantage secured by George Calvert's insider knowledge proved to be huge. In 1817, Rosalie increased her father's stake in the Bank of Washington, explaining,

> [y]ou will be surprised to hear that I have sold $24,600 worth of 6 Pcts. to pay for your [Bank of] Washington shares, but here is the explanation.

> I had always kept these shares uncompleted because I foresaw that this stock would increase in value. Being a director of this bank, my husband knew that there was a surplus of $80,000, which was to be divided among the shareholders this summer. [This] caused me to complete payment on [the shares] last November 1st when they were only $10—after which they went to $20 a share. You will receive [dividends of] five percent on May 1st, June 1st, August 1st, and November 1st, and there will still be a $20,000 surplus in the bank (but this is just between us).

That this activity may have been seen as unethical by others is suggested by Mrs. Calvert's recommendation of secrecy. At the very least, secrecy would have ensured exclusive control of economically advantageous information. In any case, for themselves, neither Rosalie not George Calvert seem to have had any ethical aversion to or misgivings about using insider information. Indeed, she seems to have been proud of her accomplishments in doing so. "Since the $24,600 had only been producing six percent and this way you would make twenty percent," she proclaimed triumphantly, "I trust that you will approve of my speculation."[85]

It was privileged knowledge also that prompted the timing of Rosalie Calvert's converting her father's Bank of Washington stock back into government bonds in 1819. "Since this stock is presently selling at from nine to ten percent above par," she told her father, "it seemed advantageous to sell it." She did not mention who the losers were in these transactions, but it is clear that she was perfectly willing to sell stock that she knew was going to fall in value. She also knew to be careful, given her special position. "I would have sold more," she explained, "but it had to be done secretly and in small amounts because, with my husband a director of this bank, the value would have fallen considerably if we had offered all your stock for sale."[86] Rosalie also had no scruples about benefitting by buying stocks from the desperately impecunious. "You will note," she wrote her father in 1810, "that I now have 2,000 shares of Washington Bank stock for you. I don't think there will be any more available at par for the present. All the shares I bought were from people who had the sheriff at their heels."[87]

The Profits of Tobacco

Planters like the Calverts therefore diversified their economic activities widely, and yet, as the editor of the Calvert letters, Margaret Law Callcott, observes, George's personal and social identity was that of a tobacco planter.[88] Indeed, even while wheat cultivation spread throughout much of Maryland and large parts of Virginia, tobacco remained popular on Maryland's lower western shore and did so for sound economic reasons. One reason was that it was difficult, although not impossible, to switch slaves from cultivating a highly labor-intensive crop like tobacco and profitably employ them in something else. Responding in 1804 to her father's question about why her husband did not make the developments in horticulture and forestry he had recommended, Rosalie explained that George insisted that "a tobacco planter doesn't have time to attend to the details of a farm because his workers are always and without respite busy [with that crop]. . . . The work necessary to grow tobacco employs the negroes every day of the year." As Joseph Mobberly wrote of his time in St. Mary's County, planters had to grow tobacco because "their slaves must have employment—hence they must cultivate extensive fields which are much too large for their stock to manure—but their people must not only be employed, they must also be supported—hence the necessity of the corn & tobacco systems." He also noted in his journal, rather ruefully, and perhaps not wholly accurately, "I know that corn & tobacco ruin our land, but as long as we hold slaves, we must make those crops."[89]

More important, however, tobacco simply remained enormously profitable in this and other regions of the tobacco plantation south. The Calverts did not even cease tobacco production when international trade came to a standstill after 1807 and until 1815, even though they could not market that tobacco during those years. Edward Henry Calvert suffered during these difficult times, as we saw, eventually losing much of his land to his brother. Even the other Calverts came close to catastrophe, as the reverberations of cannon-fire at the Battle of Bladensburg rattled the windows of their Riversdale mansion on the afternoon of August 24, 1814. Yet George and Rosalie turned out better off after the Treaty of Ghent than they had been before Jefferson's embargo kicked in. In 1806, they possessed 3,932 acres of land and 89 slaves. In 1815, they held 4,945½ acres of land and 125 slaves. They had not even sacrificed luxury commodity acquisition if their holdings of plate are anything to go by: in 1806 they held 42 ounces; in 1815, 144 ounces.[90] Crucially, they were able to keep cultivating tobacco throughout this time. Despite the loss of a primary tobacco market, they could subsist comfortably and had ample barn space to store harvests as they piled up over the years. Smaller farmers, on the other hand, could not, as they did not have the storage space, or could not afford to rent space in county warehouses, and who in any case needed cash for their daily needs. People like the Calverts therefore bought up poorer farmers' tobacco as well as continuing to grow their own. When the war ended and trade resumed, and indeed boomed after several years of European nicotine privation, the Calverts were able to make a killing.[91]

To be sure, before they reaped the eventual benefits of the reopening of trade, the Calverts found trade disruption and war worrying and irksome for various reasons. Rosalie Calvert was a Federalist and an Anglophile, and on these two related political grounds vehemently opposed the embargo, nonintercourse, and the War of 1812. But her objections were also based on a fear of the possible economic and social consequences of these policies. In 1807, ruminating on the problems caused by the threat of war in Europe, she wrote, "[i]f things continue, a huge number of people, especially merchants, are going to be ruined, and we probably won't be able to send our tobacco to London anymore."[92] The following year she complained that the "effects of the embargo here are quite ruinous. If it continues much longer, all the merchants will fail. The farmers and planters can't sell their commodities—nobody pays and everything is expensive."[93] On a personal note, she also bemoaned that "[o]ur tobacco crop looks very promising this year, but that is small consolation when it is predicted that there won't be any market."[94] In March 1812, as war with Britain looked ever more likely, Rosalie Calvert showed signs of being disheartened. "We still have all of our tobacco [on hand]," she glumly told her father, "and yours too. I see little hope of ever selling it at a tolerable price." The Calverts did not give up even at this time, however, if for no other reason than "there is nothing we can substitute for its culture that even approaches it." They decreased tobacco cultivation, but only to a limited extent, for, as Mrs. Calvert explained in 1812 in regard to Buck Lodge, "we haven't grown tobacco for a long time and are working towards putting it entirely into meadowland for pasturing the cattle. However, this requires time and doesn't produce revenue right away."[95]

In February 1814, looking back over five years of trade disruption and almost two years of war, Rosalie Calvert wrote grimly to her brother, Charles Jean Stier, "[y]ou ask me if my husband continues to make improvements in farming and I in my gardens, etc. It is with much regret that we have abandoned all work of that description for the last two years, which will not surprise you when you consider that we have the tobacco harvest of several years in store, and that since this abominable war with England everything is double and triple the price, so that we must exercise the most scrupulous economy."[96] And yet by this time she was showing signs of hope of better fortunes to come. As she told her father a little over a month later, "[w]e have continued to grow [tobacco] each year in the hope of being able to sell it. It is the same with the 100 hogsheads bought for you [which are] in storage and [which] I hope will soon bring us a good price. At present [tobacco] is being sold at $5 and $7, and I have no doubt that it will go higher."[97]

As is clear from the above, the Calverts were not only able to continue growing tobacco, but were also buying it up from others in the hope of profiting later. They were able to do so because of the money made through their other activities and because of savings they made. Rosalie renewed her efforts, for example, in clothing slaves from the family plantations' own resources. They could also do reasonably well from the food crops and animals they cultivated both for self-sufficiency and profit. Indeed, the Calverts engaged in extra speculations in farm animals as well as tobacco. As Mrs. Calvert recounted in 1809, "[t]hese last two years, we have made a nice profit by buying some lean young steers in the spring at $11 to $14 each and selling them in the fall for $22 and $30 apiece. Similarly, we bought sheep for $3 and sold them for $5, sometimes $7."[98] She was not too well satisfied, however, for, as she wrote in August 1810, "[w]e grow some grain, and we also make a small profit from the sale of pigs and cattle.... But all this together only defrays the expenses of of farming, tools, overseers' salaries, etc. Our tobacco was net income."[99] The situation was similar downriver in St. Mary's County. English traveler and agricultural writer Charles Varlo made a similar point after visiting Edmund Plowden's Bushwood plantation on the Wicomico River, in the 1780s. Plowden, Varlo wrote, "farms his own estate, being about fifteen hundred acres, as good land as most in the county; he keeps thirty negroes, men, women, and children, and though he always lives in the country on his own estate, at as little expense as possible, yet he told me he had enough to do make all ends meet; that the negroes eat up his produce, though he generally makes about thirty hogsheads of tobacco yearly, besides raising great quantities of India corn and other crops, but these were all destroyed in his own family; he had never anything to sell but tobacco." Bayly Marks calculated that to feed all of St. Mary's livestock in 1840 would have required 94 percent of the county's corn crop and that 17,320 hogs would have eaten 75 percent of the potato crop.[100]

Yet the Calverts were able to continue cultivating tobacco precisely because they could meet plantation expenses through profits from food crops and animal husbandry. As Rosalie wrote in August 1810, "[i]t is unfortunate that tobacco doesn't bring much of a price these days. We are harvesting one hundred [hogsheads] now and this will increase annually as the negroes increase. Last year we had a superb harvest of all kinds at Mount Albion: 90 [hogsheads] of tobacco... besides enough wheat, pigs, beef, etc. to defray all expenses of the plantation, salary of two overseers, etc."[101] In 1807, as soon as trade disruptions began, Henri Stier counselled abandonment of the crop, but his daughter disagreed. "I believe you are mistaken," she wrote, "in advising us to stop growing it. This is a commodity which cannot be dispensed with; its consumption will not diminish and its culture is fact. We could not undertake any other crop with the same profits."[102] Not only did the Calverts continue growing it, but they continued an apparently long-running practice of speculating in that grown by others. As Rosalie wrote in 1808, "At present the way to make a huge fortune, easily and without risk, is through buying tobacco. It can be bought for $4 and $3—even for $2.50 a hundred for ready cash. Our last, which we sent to Murdoch, brought an average of $12 a hundred net, after all expenses, etc. were paid. There hasn't been a year [recently] when you could fail to make a good speculation by buying tobacco from the small farmers at the beginning of the season."[103]

Thus, in late August 1810, Rosalie enumerated the Calvert stockpile as "more than 100 [hogsheads] of tobacco a year now... three hundred in storage, with 100 more in the barns waiting to be packed."[104] That same year she even took to speculating in tobacco on her father's behalf, although the risks of doing so became clear four years later after pillaging by British forces after the so-called Bladensburg Races when defeated American soldiers scattered. "Of the 100 hogsheads that I bought for you in 1810," Rosalie told her father in 1815, "seven were in one of the warehouses which the British partially looted; they took five and left two." Even this was not so terrible, though. As she optimistically informed her father, "I hope the price we can get for the remainder will compensate you for this loss. I am most anxious to sell yours as well as some of our accumulated crops, but at this point there is no stable price for anything. Everything is in a state of constant fluctuation."[105]

The Calverts did not have to wait much longer, however, before reaping their reward. They were able to export their crops at the war's end, and, with the advantage of having their own factor in Europe, they could have their tobacco stored abroad awaiting the best possible price. Rosalie wrote to her father in November 1815,

> [t]he ship carrying this letter has 104 [hogsheads] of your tobacco on board. . . . They ought to bring a very good price, being for the most part of a superior quality and even [having] some [barrels] of yellow tobacco among them. . . .
>
> There is another ship which will sail in a month with more than 70 barrels of ours on board, [and] still another leaving this week from the Patuxent to England with 410 barrels. That will make nearly 500—the yield of our harvest for seven years.[106]

Things were really looking up by March 1816. "I have learned that the *General Lingan*, carrying your 104 barrels [of tobacco]," Mrs. Calvert told her father, "reached Holland at a time when the price was very high. I do hope this made you a good profit." She also mentioned that the Calverts' own 410 hogsheads had arrived aboard the *Oscar* in Rotterdam. At this point, however, 3,000 miles of Atlantic Ocean became a problem of a different kind. "My husband had written to Mr. Murdoch," she wrote of the family's factor, "quite explicitly not to be in a rush to sell since there is very little tobacco on hand here and the price would certainly continue to rise. However, [Murdoch] sold it right away for 10½ stuyvers, and a fortnight later the price went up to 11½, which with the 20 percent higher exchange resulted in a $10,000 loss on this cargo."[107] They did not actually make a loss. What Mrs. Calvert meant here was in fact that the Calverts made $10,000 less profit than they might otherwise have. This misfortune evidently played on Mrs. Calvert's mind over subsequent weeks, especially when she learned that the tobacco had been resold again at an even higher price. On April 8, she wrote her brother that

> [o]ur shipment of 410 barrels on the *Oscar* turned out badly . . . because of Murdoch's stupidity. Despite the fact that my husband had written him in November that he wouldn't draw anything on him before spring and that since there wasn't any tobacco left here, it would greatly increase in value, [Murdoch] persisted in thinking the opposite and sold the cargo before the ship had even arrived in Rotterdam. Two days later this same cargo sold for a profit of $10,000 to a second party, and since then to a third for $20,000—all, moreover, without even seeing the tobacco! If Murdoch had followed our instructions, which were *explicit*, we would have had $20,000 more, since two-thirds of the cargo belonged to us—which he caused us to lose by his timidity and obstinacy.[108]

Rosalie Calvert's anger is understandable. Nevertheless, the Calverts still made a gross profit of around $85,000 for the 410 hogsheads they sold in Europe that year.[109] They also did well out of the others, which they did not ultimately export but sold on the home market where they could trade at their own discretion. As Rosalie wrote to her father in March 1816, "[w]e have sold 39 hogsheads here at $13 and $15 [a hundredweight], including five of yours which were stored in the warehouse; the sixth is still here and will be sold with the rest of ours if we can get $20 for it before May. If not, we will ship it all to Amsterdam."[110] It is not known whether they sold the remainder at such a good price, although Mrs. Calvert seemed confident enough of being able to do so. As she told her brother in April, "[w]e just turned down $16 [a hundredweight] for our last year's crop (which is not even completely packed), and I am sure we will easily obtain $20."[111] Certainly, the Calverts did better out of their speculations than those who were so much in need during the years of privation that they had to sell to planters at knockdown prices. They also did better than some of their wealthy neighbors and kin. "Many people, Edward Calvert included," Rosalie told her father in October, "lost some of their negroes, and some lost all of theirs, plus their tobacco, grain, etc. without being able to recover anything."[112] We have seen already, though, that one Calvert's loss was very much another Calvert's gain.

The Calverts' and other planters' possessive individualism and their propensity to gain at the expense of others was also manifest in their relations with slaves, overseers, other laborers, tenants, and yeomen farmers. Before exploring these economic and social relationships, however, it is worth turning to another, related, aspect of upper-class social action: the material and behavioral gentility cultivated by the Calverts and others in order to identity and define themselves as a class and to set themselves apart as members of a social elite.

Chapter 2

"One must differentiate oneself a little": Planter Gentility, Economy, Dynasty, and Politics

Social Performance at Riversdale

In 1816, the English traveler, writer, and diplomat David Baile Warden wrote in his *Chorographical and Statistical Description of the District of Columbia* that,

> The establishment of George Calvert, Esq. attracts attention. His mansion, consisting of two stories, seventy feet in length, and thirty-six in breadth, is admirably adapted to the American climate. On each side there is a large portico, which shelters from the sun, rain, or snow. The hall is ornamented with lemon-trees, geraniums, polianthusses [*sic*], heliotropes, and other plants, which in the summer evenings, invite the hummingbirds to taste of their sweetness; and afterwards struggling to escape, they fly incessantly backwards and forwards near the cieling [*sic*], until from fatigue they perch on a stick or rod, when they are easily taken by the hand.[1]

Riversdale was in fact larger than Warden described, as his estimation of its floor space included the central section only and did not include the mansion's east and west wings. Although Riversdale's mistress, Rosalie Calvert, liked to boast that her mansion was built "in the European style," with its central segment, wings, and frontal portico, Riversdale was in fact very much a southern plantation big house. Estimated in Rosalie's dowry to be worth $15,638.32 in 1804, it advertised its owners' wealth. Constructed from at least 170,000 bricks, it was a monument to solidity and permanence, an effect that must have been very apparent to the majority of people living in small, wooden, and sometimes ramshackle houses and cabins. Built on a rise, Riversdale also commanded its surroundings and symbolized its owners' authority over the land and neighborhood. The gardens around it advertised the Calverts' genteel tastes, and demonstrated that they had the wherewithal to indulge their fancies while others had to labor for a living.[2]

Rosalie Calvert enjoying luxuriating in these circumstances, and did so in just the manner described by David Baile Warden. In 1813, for example, she wrote to her father, Henri Joseph Stier, of "four superb [lemon trees] which in winter we place in the four corners of the salon, where they make a lovely effect" and which "produced 87 large lemons" "As I write you," she continued, "I can see the hyacinths from my window—they are quite beautiful this year. I haven't been able to enjoy the tulips because the deer come and eat them every night. We have eleven of these beautiful animals, so tame that they come all around the house and when we walk in the woods they allow us to come very close to them." Rosalie was not so sentimental as to allow the deer to eat too many of Riversdale's resources, however, concluding that they "do a lot of damage to the young fruit trees, and I am afraid we shall have to kill all of them this fall."[3]

Mrs. Calvert put a lot of thought and effort into the elaborately detailed beautification of her home. In 1806, for instance, she sent her father "a list of the silver items I most want," comprising "2 pairs of candlesticks; 2 pairs of candlesticks having 3 branches if possible, or else 2; 6 salt cellars; 1 vinegar caddy; 4 butter and sauce boats; 4 wine 'coolers' like the ones placed at the four corners of the table with a bottle of wine inside; 1 bread basket; 2 small cabarets, 9 inches long, 7 inches wide, or approximately; 1 large cabaret, 34 inches long, 36 inches wide, or approximately; 2 soup toureens [*sic*][.]"[4] Such requests were often only for a few items, but long lists were not uncommon. A decade later, Rosalie requested various goods that "I cannot easily get here," namely,

> One half dozen bottles of anisette liqueur and 1/2 dozen of curaçao. One small cask of anchovies. Two d[itt]o of herrings from Holland. A small quantity of Carmine color and an assortment of brushes for painting. Some seeds of brussels sprouts. Do of the kind of carrot found in Antwerp in Flemish sugar carrots. Do of scorzonera. 15 aunces of lace of the width here attached. 16 do of the smallest [width lace] or the next smallest for children's bonnets in four different pieces and designs. 8 ostrich feathers. Two muslin bonnets for me like those worn at home in the morning or *en demi parure*. Two embroidered handkerchiefs, do, do. 30 aunces of muslin trim embroidered in the way we trim dresses, handkerchiefs, etc. 7 brass saucepans with covers, of the measure attached or nearly so. 6 or 8 dozen of champagne wine, if a very good quality can be had. One cask of red wine (of the kind we call "claret" here), if a good quality can be had. All that which is sold here is bad and often sour.[5]

The inventory of Calvert possessions taken after George's death in 1838 included household items worth in total $4,372.56 ½. Among them were 78 wine glasses, 23 cut-glass tumblers, 14 cut-glass dishes, a china dinner set of 157 pieces, a chandelier, and 372 ounces of silver. Equally handsome possessions outdoors included an "Open Carriage & harness," a "Chariot with harness for 4 horses," and four other carriage horses. This equipage was worth a thousand dollars, and no doubt created an impressive spectacle as the Calverts traveled the roads and crossed the bridges of Prince George's County.[6]

As Pierre Bourdieu has shown, class formation did not end with the generation and ownership of productive capital. It is also about building social capital, about education, taste, and about the demonstration or performance of distinction.[7] David Baile Warden's admiring words are a perfect illustration of the effects of distinction on others. Warden further observed that in "the saloon [which the Calverts called the hall] there are some fine paintings particularly Noah's Ark by Jan Velvet Brueghel, the Judgment of Paris, and the portrait of Rubens, by this great master, of whom Mrs. Calvert is a relation."[8] The Calverts in fact had custody of 63 of Henri Stier's paintings for 13 years from 1803, as it was too risky to ship them to Europe during the Napoleonic wars. As well as works by Breughel and Peter Paul Rubens, who was indeed Rosalie's ancestor on the Stier side of her family, there were others by Anthony van Dyke, Rembrandt, and Titian.[9] For transportation after the Treaty of Ghent, Rosalie insured the artworks for $20,000, although she noted that this "seems to me much less than their actual value."[10]

The Calverts' custodianship of the Stier collection created a great impression among the social elite of the eastern seaboard. Contemporary American artists Charles Bird King, Rembrandt Peale, Thomas Sully, and John Trumbull persuaded the Calverts to hold an exhibition of artwork at Riversdale in 1816, offering in return their expertise in packing the paintings for trans-Atlantic transportation afterwards. After the event, Mary Bagot, wife of the British minister to Washington, wrote that "[e]verybody flocked to see them[,] a collection of pictures almost unheard of in the United States." Sarah Gales Seaton, wife of the editor of the Washington *National Intelligencer*, reported that visitors were "transported with admiration" by "some of the finest paintings ever in America." Rembrandt Peale later recalled that "for two weeks [Calvert's] mansion at Bladensburgh [*sic*] was the hospitable rendezvous of numerous visitors of taste and education."[11]

Planters and Gentility

The Calverts became the richest family in early nineteenth-century Prince George's County, Maryland, and were the most spectacularly successful in showing off how splendidly wealthy and tasteful they were. But they were far from alone. Indeed, such behavior only works in a consensual and emulative context in which others admire what you do, or are at least impressed by it in some way, sometimes perhaps intimidated by it, and in which others, at least those of the same class, strive to do the same.

Reverend Clement Brooke, a Prince George's County planter and preacher, enjoyed his luxuries too. He could easily afford them as, in 1800, he owned 1,045.2 acres of land and 55 slaves, and with $8,695.50 in taxable wealth, he was the county's nineteenth wealthiest head of household that year.[12] He lived in a wooden house rather than a brick one, but it was a framed building, 50-by-30 foot in size, and thus much larger than the homes of yeomen, tenants, and slaves, and it had a piazza "on each side." Near the house, as well as various working buildings and slave cabins, was a 16-by-12 foot carriage house, so Brooke could travel around the county and beyond in comfort and style.[13] His January 1801 inventory recorded his personal wealth as being worth a total of $14,405.54. Most of this estate was in the form of productive capital, including 58 enslaved people, harvested crops, and livestock. But $712.57-worth of Brooke's personal wealth comprised household items, many of them tokens of gentility. Clothes and a library were respectively worth $100 and $200, and there were 56 items of gold and silver, including dinnerware, jewelry, and sartorial adornments such as cuff links, altogether worth $109.75 (£41.16). There were also scores of other items of comfort such as mahogany, cherry, and walnut furniture, "6 feather Beds," and "13 Rose Blankets."[14]

A little to the south, the richer residents of Charles County had similar regards for refinement. In 1788, William Hanson described his own 12-room St. Thomas Manor with very evident pride. "The situation is high, dry, and healthy," he wrote, "the prospect delightful, having a fine view of the Patowmack river, Virginia, Port-Tobacco creek, and the neighbourhood all around." It was a "seat" that had "every advantage to make life delightful and happy," but it was also, he did not fail to add, "capable of producing any commodity suited to the climate." Not far away was the Lee mansion. Grandly named Blenheim, it featured, according to Jean Lee, "red Flemish bond brick, stained glass windows, marble and slate flooring, and a cupola." The family could also stand behind an iron railing on the roof and survey the countryside with their telescope.[15]

Down in St. Mary's County, at the furthest extremity of south-western Maryland, Edmund Plowden lived in a fine Federal mansion called, with an aristocratic flourish, Bushwood Manor. Set in 1,200 acres, it was a 56-by-30 foot two-story brick dwelling with Fanlight windows. It also had 16-by-20 foot brick wings linked to the main house by 10-foot passages. The path to the house was ornamented with 40 cherry trees. There were also six slave quarters, three of them "old" and "very bad," a blacksmith's shop, a machine house, a barn, a granary, a corn house with stables, another stable, a smoke house, turkey and poultry houses, a pigeon house, two dairies, and a carriage house. The big house was, furthermore, according to the federal assessors of 1798, "pleasantly situated on the Wicomico River in view of the Potomac." The much grander Mulberry Fields was a large brick Georgian "mansion" with eight rooms and a double passage. It had a separate large brick kitchen, a brick weaving house, and brick quarters for 80 to 100 slaves and an overseer's house with a kitchen, a blacksmith's shop, as well as agricultural buildings, including "very large" granaries and corn houses, a 300-foot cow house, a poultry house, and a meat house. Showing a bit more useful finery, it also had a dairy, a milk house, and an ice house, stables for 30 horses, and 2 coach houses. In 1814, it was considered a sufficiently des-res to be advertised in the *National Intelligencer*, which described it as "on an eminence about a mile from the river, commanding a prospect at once the most beautiful and extensive on the Potomac. The grounds around the house are enclosed with a garden, and handsomely embellished by gravel walks and ornamental trees." Like Riversdale in Prince George's, then, the mansion at Mulberry Fields tastefully but nonetheless flashily advertised its owners' wealth, power, and authority to the people of, visitors to, and in this case river-traveling passersby of St. Mary's County. Similarly, and with the same usage of the language of command, William Roache's house was advertised in the *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser* of April 7, 1789, as "seated on an Eminence where it commands a beautiful prospect of the Bay and a Part of Potowmack River." Joseph Mobberly's journal records his enchantment at St. Inigoes plantation in 1820, where "the house stands on a convenient point of land, and commands a fine view, of St. Mary's River, the Potomack, & and extensive range of hills on the Virginian shore. St. Mary's River washes the garden bank on the south." Its Jesuit founders, he noted, "were English gentlemen [who] . . . took the extraordinary pains to import from England, all their shrubs, fruit trees and garden seeds, and it is said, that they always kept their garden in a very flourishing state."[16]

Some smaller landowners acquired some genteel goods as well, though noticeably less so in terms of quantity and quality. When Reuben Craig died in 1806, he had 200 acres of land and 19 slaves in St. Clement's Hundred, St. Mary's County. He probably employed some of those slaves in occupations other than farming and was probably not properly classifiable as a small yeoman. Indeed his inventory of personal estate amounted to $5,146. That included a five-bedroom house with five beds, which must have been fairly fancy as they were worth a total of $200. He had, according to Bayly Marks, "a chest of drawers, two small tables, 24 chairs, two dining tables, a sofa, a desk, a secretary desk, and various smaller items. He owned a clock, two mirrors, blue edged china for 24,

[and] table silver worth $28. His windows were curtained, his floors carpeted." He also had a library worth $69 and clothing to the value of $100. To put that in perspective, more than a third of St. Mary's inventories placed no value on the clothing of the deceased, and the majority died with clothing worth less than $20. Only 4 percent owned clothing worth more than $50.[17]

We can gain a sense of how genteel goods were distributed among different groups of landowners and nonlandowners by looking at quantities and values of gold and silver plate in county tax assessments. Table 2.1 shows that the 15 large planters of Prince George's County, Maryland, in 1800 held near 2,000 ounces of gold and silver plate, just over 18 percent of that owned by resident household heads. The 54 smaller and middling planters collectively held over twice that amount and very near 40 percent of the plate, so that planters as a whole, 69 household heads out of a total of 1,712, held almost 60 percent of the plate. By 1810, the amount of plate owned by both groups had declined significantly to just over 1,000 and just under 2,500 ounces respectively, down to 14 percent and 32 percent of the plate. By 1820, large planters held almost exactly the same quantities and proportions of plate as they had possessed in 1800, and, considering there were three fewer of them, the average quantity held rose from 131 ounces to 164.6. The share owned by smaller and middling planters had also risen again by 1820, though at just over 3,000 ounces and 30 percent of the quantity of plate, not to the levels held in 1800.

What appears to have happened is that, even while the distribution of land, slaves, and wealth in general grew more and more unequal, the exception to the rule was in more luxurious items of property. The quantity of plate owned by large yeomen, owners of 280 acres and up to 800 acres of land, grew from 1,857 ½ ounces in 1800 to just shy of 2,000 in 1810 and to over 3,600 ounces in 1820. Just as significant is the growth in large yeomen's average holding from 15 ounces to nearly 26 ounces. The amount held by small yeomen (with 40 to 280 acres of land) rose dramatically from just over 1,000 ounces to close to 1,500, although it then fell even more dramatically to less than 650 ounces. Small yeomen's average holdings rose from 10 ounces to 18½ ounces, but then fell to 6 ounces by 1820. We shall see in later chapters that, due to the structure of the Atlantic tobacco trade, smaller yeomen suffered economic disadvantages that were very much magnified during the War of 1812. The total held by smallholders (landowners with less than the 40-acre minimum for a tobacco farm), on the other hand, rose significantly from 240 ounces in 1800 to 446 ounces in 1820, although there was a dip to 168 ounces in 1810. The amount of plate owned by the landless fell from over 1,300 ounces in 1800 to just over 700 ounces in 1810. This, along with other trends detailed in the statistical Appendix, suggest that it was the better off among the landless who were migrating to Kentucky. Accordingly, average holdings dropped by half an ounce from 1.2 to 0.7 ounces. Westward migration from south-west Maryland tailed off after 1810, and the amount of plate owned by the landless stayed fairly constant, at just over 800 ounces in 1820, or 0.6 ounces each on average. What these figures suggest, then, is that a Chesapeake consumer revolution that began in the 1720s was to some extent still improving many ordinary people's standards of living almost a century later. While people like the Calverts and the Brookes lived with luxuries far beyond those affordable to the many, some among the many were nevertheless increasingly enjoying consumer goods of some considerable value. Or at least that was still the case with large yeomen and smallholders. As we shall see confirmed in later chapters, however, economic well-being and standards of living were generally declining among small yeomen and among the landless in the early nineteenth century.

That the richest enjoyed far more luxury and gentility than others, but that some among the less well-off were enjoying more and luxury and gentility, is even more evident when one examines the distribution of gold and silver plate according to percentage groups of property owners. In 1800, the wealthiest 1 percent, just 17 heads of household, owned 2,782.7 ounces of plate, or 25.9 percent of plate owned by resident household heads (compared to 18.1 percent of total property). The wealthiest 5 percent together owned 7,618 ½ ounces, or 70.9 percent of the plate. The next 5 percent owned another 2,090.1 ounces, or 19.5 percent of the plate, so that the wealthiest 10 percent held 90.4 percent of the plate. The next 10 percent held 793.1 ounces of plate, or 7.4 percent. The third and fourth 10-percentiles held only 112.1 ounces, or 1 percent, and 122 ounces, or 1.1 percent, respectively. Two individuals in the fifth 10 percentile altogether held a paltry 3.5 ounces, and none among the poorest half of Prince Georgian householders owned any taxable plate at all.

In 1810, the wealthiest 5 percent of householders owned 4,760.3 ounces of plate, down almost 3,000 ounces on 1800, and down from a 71 percent share to fractionally under 60 percent. The next 5 percent held 2,082½ ounces, almost exactly the same as in 1800, but a 26.2 percent share, more than 5 percent higher than in 1800. The second 10 percent owned 666¾ ounces, over 100 ounces less in 1810 than in 1800, but 8.4 percent of the plate, a whole percentage share up. The third richest 10 percent in 1810 owned 331 ounces, almost triple what they held in 1800, and a rise in the share from 1 percent to 4.2 percent. The amount owned by the fourth 10 percent, however, fell a little to 93.8 ounces, with their share remaining at 1.2 percent. Three members of the 162 in the fifth 10 percentile owned 6 ounces, and 1 man in the bottom 50 percent owned some. James Crouch held no land or slaves, just $78 (£30) in other property and 2½ ounces of plate, worth $2.78 (£1 and 2 shillings).[18]

Figures for 1820 show some of the same trends continuing, but also paint a more ambiguous picture. The quantity of plate owned by the richest 5 percent, 90 household heads out of 1,795, rose to 6,983 ounces and their share to 64.7 percent, both up on 1810, but both down on 1800. The next 5 percent held 2,147 ½ ounces, 19.9 percent, slightly down on 1810, but virtually the same as 1800. The second 10 percent held 1,107 ounces, 10 ¼ percent, over 400 ounces and almost 2 percent up on 1810, and all up on 1800. The third 10 percent held 464 ounces, or 4.3 percent, 133 ounces more than the 331 of 1810, but a rising share of only one-tenth of 1 percent. The fourth 10 percent owned 79 ounces, nearly 15 fewer than 10 years earlier, and a share that dropped from just over 1 percent in 1800 and 1810 to just under three-quarters of 1 percent in 1820.

Significantly, there was no fifth 10 percentile group in 1820, as by that year the proportion of household heads who were too poor to pay tax had risen to 56 percent. Of the remaining 4 percent outside of the wealthiest 40 percent, there were 5 owners who collectively held 17½ ounces of gold and silver plate. These were, first, Ann H. Jackson, with two ounces, who, with $112.00 of taxable "other" property, had a total taxable wealth of $114. Robert Norton owned four ounces of plate and $109 in "other" property, William Davis, eight ounces and $100 in "other" property, and Jason Fairall, two ounces and $100 in "other" property. There was also Mary Ann Waters, with 1½ ounces of plate, who owned no "other" property, but did hold a young slave aged under 8 years and an older slave, either a man over 45 years or a woman over 36, the 2 of them valued at $56. These people were not rich, but it is remarkable that after the hardships caused by almost a decade of embargo, nonintercourse and war from 1807 to 1816, some among the poor still owned items of gold or silver plate.[19]

A final point worth noting: the quantity of plate is one thing, but the quality of it and therefore the actual market value is another. In 1800, tax assessors generally valued plate at 42 cents per ounce (4 shillings and 2 pence) and made adjustments occasionally to take account of plate of significantly higher or lower quality. In 1820, they made things even easier for themselves by adopting a flat rate of a dollar an ounce, entirely irrespective of quality. In 1810, however, for some unknown reason, assessors were much more assiduous and measured quality as well. It is clear from the results that the wealthiest had refined goods of considerably higher value than anyone else. That year, the wealthiest 5 percent owned 4,760.3 ounces of plate, worth $11,102.69. That is, just less than 60 percent of the plate, but just more than 75 percent of its value. For all other groups that year, their shares of the value of plate were lower than their shares of ounces. If the same was true in 1800 and 1820, and there is good reason to suppose it was and no reason to suppose otherwise, then in those years the richest were being undertaxed.[20]

Economies of Gentility

On occasion, the imperatives behind gentility conflicted with imperatives of thrift. Despite building Riversdale and thus contributing to the opulence of Rosalie Calvert's lifestyle, Henri Stier sometimes embarrassed and perhaps even annoyed his daughter by rebuking her for luxuriant excesses. In a letter of 1805, she agreed with him "that people here are much less thrifty than in Europe," but, inserting a well-placed piece of flattery, attributed the problem "to that class [of people] who have no capital, who live on their labor (often on their knavery), or to those who made a quick fortune.... But the class of really wealthy people and those who had [well-to-do] parents live with more moderation and prudence."[21] Other times, however, she mounted robust defences of luxurious living that give us interesting insights on planters' rationales for refinement.

Rosalie Calvert occasionally defended refinement on purely aesthetic grounds. "You say one is less merry in luxurious apartments," she challenged her father in January 1807, "but I think just the contrary. A beautifully decorated salon, filled with well dressed people and musicians performing, enlivens me and makes me happier."[22] More often, though, she justified gentility on hard-headed economic grounds. She concluded one such defence in March 1807 by noting that "the greatest industry unaccompanied by thrift is ruinous, whereas a system of economy, well maintained, is infallible." But the letter makes clear that her "system of economy" included luxury as a component, explaining her preference for household items in solid silver over silver plate on the grounds that plate's "price generally is high compared to the same thing in [solid] silver, and then when the fashion changes or it is damaged in some way, you lose the entire value whereas silver always retains its value." Furthermore, perhaps as Henri Stier thought when he took his collection of Renaissance masters with him while fleeing to America from Napoleonic Europe, "[i]n this day and time when everything is so unsettled...it seems desirable to have a certain amount in silver" as movable assets.[23]

In some instances, investing money in expensive beautification led to long-term economies. "My husband," Rosalie told her father in 1817, "is very busy at present making improvements, such as building a brick barn on the [Buck Lodge] plantation adjoining Riversdale [and] another at Oatland,...two houses for the negroes [at Oatland] and one for the overseer, all of brick."[24] These brick buildings added to the appearance of wealth, solidity, and permanence that characterized the Calverts' properties. Also, the fact that some of the Calverts' slaves lived in better housing than many poorer free white people probably did not go unnoticed as a sign of their masters' social distinction. Furthermore, brick buildings increased real estate values, protected crops, animals, and people from the elements, cutting waste and diminishing illness, and were more durable than wooden structures, providing long-term maintenance economies. The plantation's other improvements also combined economic utility with status assertion. As Rosalie Calvert wrote her brother, Charles Jean Stier, in 1808, a "lake just finished, which looks like a large river on the southern side, gives a very beautiful effect and furnishes us at the same time with fish and ice for our ice-house."[25] One lake was later deemed one too few. Rosalie informed her brother in 1819 that "this summer we plan to make a lake to the south of the house."[26]

Mostly, however, Mrs. Calvert defended munificence as a means of allowing her family to socialize with those of the same class, often with direct material benefits. "You must take into account when making a comparison between our expenditures and yours," she responded to a fatherly rebuke of 1805, "that we are obliged to receive more people, which is very costly. We have to have more household goods, more bedding, etc.—things you already had. . . . Each of our dinner parties costs over $20 on average."[27] The economic benefits of investment in entertainment were sometimes immediately obvious. Ironically, it was to her father's question in 1808 whether she could "become acquainted with [Albert] Galatin [Gallatin] and if it would be advantageous to be on close terms with some members of the Treasury" that she responded "[n]othing is easier. Our situation, rank, and connections here make it quite convenient, and as soon as it could be of the least use to you, I will do it with pleasure."[28] Indeed, George and Rosalie sought advice in social settings from US Treasury Secretary Gallatin about government bond issues at least three times, once through the mediation of their friend Gabriel Duvall, Comptroller General of the Maryland Treasury.[29] On another occasion Rosalie wrote her father of having spoken on these matters to other "high government officials."[30] Over the years the Calverts hosted many dinner parties, and Albert Gallatin and Gabriel Duvall were far from their only guests who thereby became friends in high places. In 1819, for example, Rosalie reported to her sister on a Riversdale dinner party of January 9 "for twenty people," including the French and Prussian ministers and their wives. The Bagots would have attended too, but were mourning the death of Queen Charlotte and attended on other occasions anyway. In between times, of course, there was also the famous Riversdale art exhibition of the spring of 1816.[31]

Henri Stier could no doubt remember that his wealth and privileged background gave him and his family access to American society's highest echelons when they arrived as refugees in October 1794. Their social circle in Philadelphia included George and Martha Washington, Benjamin Rush, and Thomas Willing, president of the Bank of North America and the first National Bank. In short, they mixed in the very highest circles from the off. When they moved to Maryland in September 1785, they signalled their taste and high status by renting Strawberry Hill plantation, near Annapolis, and then the William Paca House in the state capital. In 1800, when the Stiers finally settled in Prince George's County, they first resided in Bostwick Mansion in Bladensburg, and then moved into Riversdale, Henri Stier's own creation, two years later. One of the reasons the family moved across the Patuxent River was that on June 11, 1799, Rosalie Stier married 31-year-old George Calvert, grandson of Charles Calvert, the fifth Lord Baltimore and the fourth and last-but-one of the noble proprietors of colonial Maryland. George's older sister, Eleanor, married John Parke Custis, the step-son of George Washington, so the Stiers and Calverts became connected to Mount Vernon by kinship as well as by their earlier friendship.[32]

The Calverts had a busy social life during the first years of Rosalie's time as mistress of Riversdale, and conspicuous consumption was an important part of it. As Rosalie wrote to her mother in November 1803, "[l]ast week I went to Mrs. Law's to enjoy the horse-races, which lasted for five days and were splendid, with a great number of carriages. I went to a ball where there were 120 women and as many men. Every day we either received company at home, or we went out from morning till evening."[33] She wrote her brother around the same time that "three or four times a week" she and Mrs. Law "ride together and several 'Cavaliers' accompany us.... Besides our beaux, we both have a servant in livery à *l'Anglaise* who follows us. I have a very fine equipage now with four beautiful brown horses."[34] To her parents two weeks later she disclosed further beautification of the carriage, including closing "the front with two [pieces of] glass," placing "cushions up against the Venetian shutters," and making "a *passe* in the English style." She also had "it painted purple", undoubtedly aware of the regal symbolism of the color.[35] This socializing was not just about having fun. Rosalie Calvert knew it was about seeing and being seen, and being seen to be superior. And even at this early stage, she was a more than ordinary member of the local upper class, concluding in her letter to her mother of November 1803, that "I had the satisfaction of seeing my husband's family superior to all others in every respect."[36]

What the Calverts enjoyed most, however, was visiting Washington, as they did frequently in the early years of their marriage. After 1805, a growing family, trade restrictions, and condescending disdain for Presidents Jefferson and Madison, and especially of Dolly Madison, caused the Calverts to visit Washington less. But the end of the war and the arrival of the Calverts' friends, James and Eliza Monroe, in the White House, brought them back to the center of capital high society. The Calverts enjoyed a special relationship with the fifth First Family dating from their eldest daughter Caroline's friendship with Maria

Hester Monroe, James and Eliza's youngest daughter, at private boarding school in Philadelphia. The parents got along well. As early as 1817, requesting clothes from her sister for attending "our court," as Rosalie interestingly styled 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, she boasted that "I am on very good terms with Mrs. Monroe."[37] She even felt qualified to comment on the respective qualities of presidential families. To her sister she described Eliza Monroe as "a charming woman, much superior to the last President's wife. She is from one of the better families and received an excellent education. She spent several years in France and England when Mr. Monroe was an Ambassador. Her oldest daughter, who is married, was educated in Paris and couldn't be nicer. The younge[st] was at school with Caroline [and] returned home last month. She was [at Riversdale] yesterday to see Caroline."[38]

Rosalie described the "social scene in Washington" in the Monroe years as "quite sparkling."[39] In 1819, she wrote of attending "each week a large dinner on Monday evenings and a reception on Saturday evenings" hosted by the French and English ministers, who proffered "an open invitation for the season to people of the first class." She described these occasions as "really quite pleasant," but was less enamored of the additional "two or three grand balls where a really splendid cold supper is served, but where the guests, being more numerous, are a mixed lot." In the same letter she further noted that "Our three Secretaries—of State, War, and the Treasury—also give dinners and two or three large dancing parties, beside some tea parties where we do not dance."[40]

The Calverts visited the Monroe White House on many occasions. In April 1818, Rosalie told her sister that "[w]e have been [to the White House] three times and have been extremely well received—the President singled us out with special courtesy each time."[41] A year later she wrote of a presidentially hosted "public ball every fortnight and an assembly at the President's House every fortnight." She disliked the popular overtones of the former, but wrote of the latter that "[p]eople go at 8 and leave at 10 o'clock; they entertain themselves by promenading from one room to another and conversing with their acquaintances. All the ambassadors and their families are obliged to go, as are all the military and public officials, etc. There are always a good many foreigners in Washington during the session of Congress, which makes society here very pleasant and diversified."[42] On "an extremely splendid state dinner at the President's House" for the diplomatic corps in 1819, Rosalie was rapturous and, for once, apparently awed and maybe even a little bit humbled by her surroundings and by the experience:

> I have never seen anything as splendid as the table—a superb gilt plateau in the centre with gilt baskets filled with artificial flowers. All the serving dishes were solid silver; the dessert spoons and forks and knives were

> silver-gilt. The plates were fine French porcelain. The guests were thirty in number—all the [foreign] Ministers with their wives and their secretaries. My husband and I and General and Mrs. Mason were the only ones from here—all the other guests were European. . . . I was seated at the table between the English Minister, Mr. Bagot, and the Russian Minister, Mr. D'Ashkof [Dashkov]. It was a great honor for us to be included in such distinguished company, and both Mrs. Monroe and the President received us with the most flattering kindness.[43]

Inclusion, Exclusion

Genteel socialization was about exclusion as well as access. Inclusion in and exclusion from the highest social circles depended on family background, honor, property, and occupation. These criteria were of equal importance in that they were all essential. Also, in practice, these qualities were inseparable from each other, as character related to background, honor, and business sense, which in turn related to wealth. Determining who belonged and who did not, and who belonged in inner circles and who belonged in outer ones, was difficult, but it was deemed very important. The Calverts necessarily engaged, therefore, in a constant process of careful discrimination between peers, would-be peers, and those who never would be peers. They were most especially choosy over their children's suitors, as that affected the family dynasty.

Family and social background and connections were as important to inclusion and exclusion as anything else. Rosalie Calvert could be casually but nonetheless brutally callous about such matters. Writing to her sister about nearby Bladensburg "society" in 1816, for example, she mentioned that "Mr. Stoddert's house has been bought by a man from Baltimore who is quite insignificant and whom we do not count among our neighbors."[44] The man, who Mrs. Calvert never deigned to name, was called William Knight. In April 1815, Mr. Knight purchased a 47 ½ acre "parcel of Land commonly called 'Rope Walk Pasture' . . . lying south of the main road leading through Bladensburgh towards Annapolis" and three lots in Bladensburg from the late Benjamin Stoddert's executors. The purchase price, $5,347.94, shows he had considerable wealth. Local tax assessors did not record his ownership of Rope Walk Pasture, which he perhaps sold quickly, but they valued the Bladensburg lots at $3,466.67, so that Knight held the second most valuable property in the town.[45] Yet the Calverts disregarded him, the term "insignificant" implying that his family background and his social connections were insufficiently distinguished for them to want to know him. That Rosalie Calvert did not count William Knight among her "neighbors," despite his presence in her locality, indicates that, for her and perhaps her kind, neighborhood was not necessarily a geographical construct, a local community in all its social heterogeneity. Like the word "society," as that word was used by Rosalie Calvert and indeed more widely in elite vernacular, "neighbors" signified a select coterie of those deemed significant and therefore included.

Some people were significant enough to inhabit the Calverts' outer social circles, but issues of character and honor barred them from access to the innermost ones. The character issue arose with Alexandre Joseph, Vicomte Goupy de Quabeck and Dutch minister to the United States. He was undoubtedly a significant figure in the Washington area, and indeed he attended "three or four" Riversdale parties. His presence apparently alarmed the Stiers, however, who worried that he might try to court young Caroline Calvert, and possibly even attempt her to seduce her mother. Rosalie assured them in 1819 that she had not previously known about the minister's reputed philandering, and that "we certainly will not invite him here any more." She added that "I expect we err rather in the other direction of being too haughty, and you can rest assured that no man who is not highly thought of and also from a good family will succeed with Caroline."[46]

Sexual decorum was important, but so were other finer points of protocol. "Mrs. Ben Lowndes came to see me the other day," Rosalie wrote her sister in 1803, "and apologized for not coming sooner. I received her imperiously. I will never forgive them for having vexed Papa and Mama so, and I don't want to have relations with them. They are so jealous of our equipage, our mode of living which surpasses theirs, etc. etc."[47] How the Lowndes vexed the Stiers is unknown, but it seems that while the Calverts strove to inspire jealousy among social peers, any expression of envy by them was nevertheless considered to be an unforgivable *faux pas*.

Character was also contingent on family honor, although it could be redeemed by individuals in certain instances. George and Rosalie Calvert's third-born and second surviving daughter, Rosalie Eugenia (Eugénie), entered the Virginia gentry in 1830 by marrying Charles Henry Carter. George disapproved, though, in part because of a scandal erupting at the time around Carter's uncle, Henry Lee II, who had had an affair with a sister-in-law to whom he was guardian and from whom furthermore he embezzled. George evidently reconciled himself to the union, however, for in 1832 he granted Charles and Eugénie use of Mount Albion plantation, at first under the trusteeship of Charles's cousin, "Robert E. Lee of Arlington." The couple took possession in their own right a year later and inherited the property when George Calvert died in 1838, suggesting that Charles had managed to distance himself from his uncle's dishonor via his own better behavior.[48]

Another problem for George Calvert with Charles Henry Carter was the younger man's place in his own family's pecking order. Carter was among the youngest of 21 children of Bernard Carter of Shirley plantation, Virginia, and was not therefore likely to receive what George regarded as a sufficiently substantial inheritance. Although George obviously eventually got over the problem in this case, the matter of money in relation to marriageability was a recurring one. It first came up before any of the Calvert children came of age. In the summer of 1815, Louise van Havre, daughter of Isabelle, Rosalie's sister, had just become a debutante. As Rosalie wrote to Isabelle that August, "General Scott just left for Europe." This might have been an exciting prospect, as Winfield Scott was much celebrated at the time for his role in the hard-fought Battle of Lundy's Lane, near Niagara Falls, on July 25, 1814. Wounded at that encounter and out of action, Scott was en route to Europe to study military matters. Notwithstanding his celebrity, however, he would not get a look-in with Louise. "If I had been acquainted with him," Rosalie Calvert continued to her sister, "I would have given him some letters for you so he could place laurels at Louise's feet, but unfortunately he doesn't have a cent."[49]

The Marriage Market

Winfield Scott's purported pennilessness illustrates how much more important this and other matters became when it came to marriage and thereby perpetuating dynastic fortunes. Rosalie Calvert ensured that her own eldest daughter, Caroline, entered the marriage market in the most spectacular possible style. She maximized the potential of the presidential connection by announcing Caroline's "entry into society" at a White House reception on New Year's Day, 1818, reporting to her sister that the First Lady "received us very graciously."[50] Caroline Calvert's debutante career was probably the happiest time of her mother's life, but finding a decent husband was also a serious and highly competitive business, given the dynastic implications. Of Caroline's school-friend, cousin, and marriage-market rival, Rosalie wrote, "I think Miss [Frances Parke] Lewis doesn't like it that her cousin is so much better dressed than she, and she, unfortunately, has the worst possible taste and dresses very badly. She does not, however, have my good fortune in having a sister and niece who take such an interest in my daughter's success and who go to so much trouble to make her stand out by the taste and elegance of her apparel."[51] To her father in 1819, with a measure of moderation, she wrote that Caroline's "gowns have been the most beautiful in Washington, except for those of Mrs. Bagot and Mrs. Monroe's daughter."[52] With her sister, however, she was much less measured. Less than two weeks later she wrote to Isabelle van Havre that "Mrs. Monroe, her daughters, and four or five other Washington women receive their clothes from Paris, but they are not in as good taste as ours."[53]

While watching Caroline's rivals hawkishly enough, though, Rosalie Calvert kept the keenest of eyes on Caroline's suitors. So did Rosalie's father, no matter how far away he was. In November 1817, just a few weeks before Caroline Calvert came out at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Henri Stier advised his daughter that doctors, lawyers, and civil servants belonged to "sad professions" because they "leave widows without resources." Merchants were acceptable provided that "the man has capital, energy, and deportment." The best kind of marriage partner, though, was a planter, as "his widow can continue the management" of a plantation in the event of her husband's death. Even then, however, precautions were required lest the husband be financially inept or profligate. Mrs. Calvert concurred "entirely . . . that public employees are undesirable [as prospective husbands] since [their employment] is so precarious."[54]

A few months later, in April 1818, Rosalie wrote her sister a progress report on her daughter's prospects to that point. She explained that Caroline "doesn't lack for dancing partners, but she has no avowed suitor up to now. The Congress this year was very well composed—there were some young members who were quite nice, although none with a large fortune."[55] Two years later, Caroline was pursued by no less a figure than Anthony St. John Baker, English consul general in Washington. Rosalie observed that he "receives $10,000 a year from his government and is very sensible and thrifty." But, and there was indeed a but, "his position can be taken away from him. I do not want any man for my son-in-law who is dependent on a position or on the favor of ministers or others in high place."[56] As with public servants, so it was with lawyers and merchants. In 1819, Rosalie told her father that "Caroline has had no offers which we wished to accept. [There was] a lawyer, but unless such a person possesses superior talents, that is not too promising a position. [Another], a merchant, although apparently wealthy, [presents] an uncertain prospect."[57]

Even with planters, suitability depended on ability to maintain a fortune, and thus upon business sense and character. One of Caroline's first rejections was Benjamin Ogle III, whose indubitably impressive lineage included both grandfathers and a paternal great-grandfather who had been governors of Maryland. Mrs. Calvert wrote in early 1818 that "Young Ogle . . . has come here three times recently. I think that if he received any encouragement, he would become Caroline's suitor, but that would not suit me because his father has only his plantation and nine daughters, not one of whom is married yet, and two other sons." Also, Rosalie continued, "[i]t is too bad because he is a handsome young man, although not very bright, but well-mannered, of excellent character, and from one of the best families in Maryland on both sides—something not easy to find here." Her instincts proved better than she could have known, however, for Ogle committed suicide in 1839, after various personal and financial failures.[58]

William Henry Tayloe proved to be another reject, despite his famous family name and parentage in the form of John Tayloe III and Ann "Nancy" Ogle of Richmond County, Virginia. The former was one of Virginia's richest planters and businessmen, a soldier and a state senator, and a close friend of George Washington. The latter was the daughter of former Maryland governor Benjamin Ogle and aunt of the aforementioned Benjamin Ogle III. Rosalie alerted her father to the Tayloe courtship in March 1819, noting that the suitor "seems pleasant and industrious. His father has brought him up to be a planter and will give him a good start even though there are eleven other children."[59] Henri Stier was alarmed, however, because he expected that, through primogeniture, 11 of the children, William Henry included, would lose out. "The father's character leads me to think he will sacrifice his other children to benefit his eldest son, *milord Anglais*," he warned, "and [Caroline's] suitor is merely the third. Has he the ambition of the father? Is your daughter wise enough not to be dazzled by the glitter? Consider all of this well, and above all be sure about the young man's firm establishment now—don't gamble on the future."[60] Rosalie responded reassuringly that "there are few people as frugal" as the father, "and his wife is positively stingy. He has not been preoccupied with horse racing for some years now. They have handsome equipages and cut a fine figure in society, but they manage all this with the greatest thrift." She also observed that the married sons had received plantations and the daughters had been endowed with allowances. Yet it all came to nought. As Rosalie wrote, with an amazing tone of haughtiness bearing in mind the eminence of the Tayloes, and a perhaps equally amazing absence of irony, "[t]his is a rather long story of a family, which wants very much to be allied to ours, but I do not foresee that taking place. The father is a man who thinks very highly of himself, and I am afraid that several of his children take after him."[61]

Eventually, in June 1823, Caroline Calvert married Thomas Willing Morris, a Philadelphia lawyer whose great-uncle was Thomas Willing, early America's preeminent banker who had been a Stier family friend as far back as 1794. Rosalie had died on March 21, 1821, but would probably have agreed with her husband's assessment of the union. George approved the marriage, and declared himself to his brother-in-law, Charles Jean Stier, pleased with Morris's "good connections" and "respectable standing at the bar," but he also noted that he was less happy with his "little property."[62] He gave his eldest son a much harder time, however, going as far as threatening George Henry with disinheritance for marrying Elizabeth Stuart, daughter of Dr. James Stuart of Baltimore. The Stuarts were old family friends and George's sister, Elizabeth, had married Dr. Charles Stuart, brother of James, in 1780, so the problem was money and career, not family or honor. George eventually consented, perhaps because his eldest son ultimately pursued a literary career in Newport, Rhode Island, and was thus not going to be a drain on the family's agricultural fortune in Prince George's County, Maryland. Charles Benedict Calvert, the second son, became master of Riversdale, and married Charlotte Augusta Norris of Baltimore in 1839, a year after his father died.[63]

Intermarriage within economic elites, which had been common in the Chesapeake since the great planter dynasties emerged at the end of the seventeenth century, helped further bond those elites together as a class. Bayly Marks found the same thing happening in St. Mary's County, Maryland, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Colonel George Plater was the son of Maryland governor George Plater, who was the third wealthiest man in St. Mary's at the end of the eighteenth century. Plater junior married Elizabeth Somerville, daughter of William, the second richest man in the county, and he later married Elizabeth Hebb, daughter of Vernon, who was eighth wealthiest. The Platers even liked to keep it in the family. Governor George's daughter, Elizabeth Ann married her first cousin, John Rousby Plater, Jr., son of the governor's brother. The Plater-Somerville-Hebb kin network encompassed 15 households. The Briscoes, the Keys, and the Sothorons were also among the wealthiest people in St. Mary's, and their kin network included 13 households. Furthermore, Governor Plater, while not going the whole hog for primogeniture, nevertheless took measures in his will to ensure that the family name survived him as one of the principal ones in the locality. He bequeathed his home plantation of Sotterly to his eldest son, other and less land in St. Mary's to his second son, land in Montgomery County to the third, and dowries of $3,000 to each of two daughters. Unfortunately, the young George gambled much of his fortune away after he turned 21 in 1819.[64]

Dynasty

Finding suitable husbands and wives for their children mattered so much because the futures of family fortunes were at stake. George and Rosalie Calvert put a great deal of thought and invested a lot of money in their children's futures, even when they were at young ages. On April 1, 1809, Caroline was 8 years old, George Henry was 6, Rosalie Eugénie was 2½, and Charles Benedict was a 7-month-old baby. Another daughter, Marie-Louise, had died one week earlier, aged just 4. After that tragedy, perhaps enhanced hopes for the futures of the others were on their mother's mind when she wrote the following to her father on the first of April:

> [y]ou tell me in your letter that you have no doubt we are now well-to-do and able to begin making acquisitions of property for our children. Perhaps, dear Father, when I answer you "No," you will accuse me of lack of economy, even of extravagance—but I am too honest to tell you "Yes," when this is not the case. We certainly would not spend our income on living expenses solely, and don't forget that every year since our marriage we have increased our capital. We have acquired almost 1,000 acres of land. . . . Last year we built a mill at Mount Albion. Since our stay here, we have paid very large amounts annually to finish the house and now the grounds, to establish the cattle, etc. . . . The land we have acquired is for our children; similarly our negroes have increased by a third.

A property adjoining us here . . . is a purchase we have wanted to make for a long time. . . . I think it could be had for ten pounds an acre, cash, and is it not, dear Father, for the benefit of our children?[65]

As well as regarding all their property enhancements as investments for their children, including, presumably, stocks and bonds, although these were a much more fluid form of property and thus perhaps not worth enumerating as putative inheritances, the Calverts made particular investments specifically for their children. In the summer of 1805, for example, Rosalie informed her father that "[w]e just bought some annuities for our three children in a new establishment called a 'tontine,' which seems advantageous. A lot of people are taking them out on young negro children. They only begin to pay interest in [. . .] years and they make a division [of the principal] among the survivors at the end of a number of years."[66] The Calverts felt it was important, however, to leave their children the most secure form of property of all: land. In 1816, Rosalie explained to her father that she was thinking of leaving the family's Spurrier's Tavern property, 505 acres in Anne Arundel County, to which would later be added another 11 acres, and a thriving business at that time, as

> a handsome marriage portion for one of our children. The Patuxent property [Mount Albion] will provide for two, the Oatland for another, the Montgomery County for the fifth, and Riversdale I plan to leave to Henry since he bears your name. And when we have built a fine mill [at Riversdale] which brings in a regular income, we can detach the adjoining farm to provide for the seventh [child]. If some of [the children] show particular talents for being lawyers or [members of] some other profession, this will be so much the better.[67]

The Calverts were careful also to protect their children's properties from spouses and creditors. As Rosalie wrote of her eldest daughter, Caroline, in November 1817, a few weeks after her emergence as a debutante, "[f]or her dowry we are presently thinking about giving her what is called here 'real property,' which is to say, lands or houses[,] over which a husband has no power and which one can even entail over the liens . . . "[68] It is clear, then, that the Calverts were preoccupied with perpetuating dynastic prosperity, and they did so with some success, but also with considerable disagreement and difficulty.

In 1835, George Calvert turned 67-years-old and began to settle his children's inheritances. He might have retained all his property all his life, except for a complication caused by the wishes of his European relatives, including his late wife. Indeed, he maintained possession until he died of almost all the property he held in his own right and could leave at his own discretion. The Stiers opposed the impoverishing of daughters and younger sons through primogeniture, or "*milord Anglais,*" as they called it, and Henri Stier's Will stipulated equitable distribution of Stier property among all of Rosalie's living children. Rosalie herself had wished to see her daughters marry well, but also wanted for each of them an equal share of all inheritances. George felt it was enough for them to marry well and receive smaller inheritances. In the end, there seems to have been some sort of somewhat muddled compromise.

The total Belgian inheritance received by George Calvert on behalf of his children comprised $241,000 worth of stocks, bonds, cash, and land, including Riversdale. George cashed in his father-in-law's stocks and bought land, which he kept and used as his own, justifying these actions to his brother-in-law, Charles Jean Stier, on the grounds that by so doing he was enhancing the children's inheritance.[69] One wonders what Charles thought, however, or what Rosalie would have thought for that matter, of George's sale of a 19-acre strip of land of Riversdale so that the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company could build a railroad through it, albeit for an undoubtedly handy $11,000.[70] For the most part, though, his daughters received their rightful shares in the Stier properties, and they were sizeable. Caroline inherited Spurrier's Tavern and its 516 acres in Anne Arundel County. Second surviving daughter Rosalie Eugénie got 42 slaves and Goodwood plantation, comprising 728 acres of what was previously called Mount Albion. Julia received Oatland, 595 acres, and another 42 slaves.

As far as he could, however, George Calvert distributed family property among his heirs inequitably. The land Mr. Calvert owned in his own right consisted of almost 9,305½ acres in Prince George's County, worth $84,119.50 (including Riversdale which he held for life). He also held 875 acres in Montgomery County, lots on Pennsylvania Avenue, 6th Street, and C Street, and a majority share in the National Hotel in Washington, DC In personal property he still held, at his death, 38 slaves, worth $8,850, and $7,779 in plate and "other" property, making a total of $100,748.50, according to county tax assessments. The fortune, of course, was in reality much bigger because of under-assessment and non-assessment of certain types of property. His inventory, taken on February 17, 1838, recorded 43 slaves, worth $14,507, and $10,205.45½ in other personal property.[71] All of this property, except Riversdale, some slaves, and property to cover debts owed, George Calvert left to his two surviving sons, Charles Benedict and George Henry.[72] Riversdale was divided equally among the five surviving children, as per the will of their European grandfather, although Charles Benedict bought out his four siblings. Grossly undervaluing the property at a total of $20,416.65, the later founder of the University of Maryland underpaid his brother and sisters, giving the four of them just $4,083 each.[73] Evidently, Charles Benedict Calvert inherited from his father not only a huge amount of property, but also a propensity for profiting at the expense of his siblings.

Western Gentility

Eastern gentility was initially subverted by migration and environmental conditions in the tobacco west, but the rich soon subdued the landscape and shaped society more to their liking. As Elizabeth Perkins has shown, frontier Kentucky was no place for gentility or deference toward those who could afford it, and men and indeed women achieved status through attributes related to protection and survival: courage, strength, marksmanship, and so on. Even in the early days, though, some attempted to keep up appearances. Charles Vancouver hired ten men to help build a station at the forks of the Big Sandy River, arriving there in February 1789. One of his men, John Hanks, later recalled that Vancouver "would have himself dressed, and his hair powdered, at the fort, every Sunday morning regularly, as prim as in a court, and there was nobody there but us men." That may have been unusual, but by the late eighteenth century the eastern gentry had begun to replicate the Chesapeake status system in the western Virginia counties and, from 1792, the new state. First, the emerging elite of Kentucky actively encouraged eastern counterparts to join them and thereby consolidate their numbers and strength. Thus, Caleb Wallace wrote to John Breckinridge, saying, in reference to anticipated statehood, "I wish you for a Neighbour, and I wish you to bear a part in the Government which it is expected will shortly be established here." Breckinridge did not make it there in time to be one of Kentucky's founding fathers, but when his cousin, Benjamin Howard, heard that Breckinridge was due to arrive the following year, he wrote of his relief: "as I can assure you t'will not only be to your own Interest but will be an Acquisition to our political Body for there is the greatest Dearth of Abilities here I ever saw for the number of people when put to the Test." Breckinridge could therefore be confident of easing his way immediately into Kentucky's highest social and political echelons. As his Aunt Howard wrote, "I verely believe you are as much longed and wished for as any person that ever intended coming to this Country . . . tell . . . polly . . . she shall be a Governors Lady in a very short time."[74]

When Breckinridge moved to Kentucky in 1793 he already owned 3,200 acres in his home Fayette County and another 17,900 acres elsewhere in Kentucky. He was also already connected by kin to some of the richest people there. He and his brothers and sister, William, James, Preston, and Elizabeth, and his half-brothers, Alexander and Robert, were grandchildren of Colonel William Preston, lieutenant of Botetort County when it was formed in 1769 and Fincastle County when it was formed in 1772, and highly influential in the settlement of Kentucky. He was also therefore connected by kinship descended from Preston to the Browns, Floyds, Harts, Howards, Lewises, Shelbys, and Smiths. And Preston was a protégé of James Patton, the first high sheriff of Augusta County, founded in 1745 and covering western Virginia and almost all lands west of the Blue Ridge where the Council of Virginia had granted him, John Buchanan, Charles Campbell, and Thomas Walker some 120,000 acres. The Patton kin network also included Prestons, Bullitts, McDowells, Roanes, Todds, Triggs, and Wallaces. As Fredrika Teute put it, "The Preston connection was like an interlocking directorate controlling corporate Kentucky."[75]

The likes of the Breckinridges moved to Kentucky by river, avoiding the hardships and dangers from Indians incumbent on traveling overland. They also traveled in style, with all their belongings and a retinue of servants. When they arrived in Lexington they were met "with a Carivan of horse as an escort." Before that, John Breckinridge had sent 20 slaves to be hired out and to acclimatize themselves, and employed tenants to break and settle his new lands. As he put it, he wanted to "get my Lands soon improved, & made to look a little less like a Wilderness" before he got there. Breckinridge was certainly haughty about subsequent arrivals. He later complained that someone who bought land adjoining his was "not a desirable neighbour" and that he had "as much difficulty in finding an agreeable Neighbourhood in this Country as any other convenience or satisfaction."[76] He also rented a property in Lexington when he first arrived, further to ensure avoiding having to endure even for the shortest time what he deemed to be a demeaning rustic existence.

Some people made major material sacrifices to live a refined lifestyle in Kentucky. As one migrating young attorney wrote, "I can pass my time as agreeably in Kentucky as any where, but it is not a place to make money, and that is the one thing necessary for me." Nevertheless, he noted, "I never would, for the sake of money, bury myself in a rude or uncivilized part of the country." On the other hand, Alexander Spotswood of Fredericksburg planned to move to Kentucky in the early 1800s, but was not prepared to give much up. He wrote to Colonel Thomas Hart in Lexington to enquire about "Some of the Luxuries of Life I cannot do without," including tea, sugar, and wine. He was moving "for the Benefit of my Sons," who indeed moved further out to the Green River lands in Henderson and Barren Counties "to put our Sons in the way of accumulating." The grand old man settled himself, his wife and daughter, and 26 slaves, however, on 500 acres near Lexington. He added that "it is not my intention to mix with the people at large, but to be content with the Company of my acquaintances already made—and their Connections." Similarly, when David Meade moved from Williamsburg he wrote that "The absence of my friends and former acquaintances is an irredeemable evil which I was to expect when I migrated from Virginia— . . . I feel severely the loss of the pleasures which I have enjoyed in the social intercourse with them." He hoped therefore that families "of genteel manners" would also move to Kentucky to "render our situation as agreeable & happy as we can reasonably expect." Nevertheless, he said, "the society of Lexington (which is about nine miles from our residence) is very good—and we have some valuable neighbours and Country acquaintance." Indeed, Meade and family stayed in Lexington for a while in order to acculturate. As he explained, "the sojournment in Lexington was inevitable" as "it had always been my intention to fix our females for a few weeks in as large a society as possible to divert their thoughts as much as I could from the objects which they had left behind in Virginia." And, as he continued, " . . . our daughter Sally indeed was very unhappy for the first few days and to such a degree as to apprehend that her brain would be turned." But "the vapor soon exhaled and after a Ball or two—many Tea parties, and much flirtation—her Ladyship soon became as zealous a Lexingtonian as any in it."[77]

Lexington was not the only place in Kentucky that was colonized by the genteel. Paris, for example, had a reputation for refinement. David Meade once "Breakfasted at Paris," and described the Bourbon County capital as "a very increasing Village—the best built of any I have seen in my travels." Sophia Baylor even made reference in a letter to Mrs. Bodley to "The Gay circles of Paris." When Kentucky Senator John Brown was away in Washington in the early 1800s, his wife Margaretta attended "assemblies" of the "stylish" in Frankfort. She was not always happy, however, about everyone in attendance. She wrote rather cattily of one occasion: "Mr. Pearson (the tavern keeper) was there also. He is probably looking out for another wife." More generally, she snootily observed, "this *equality*, my Love, is a mighty *pretty* thing upon *paper*, and a very *useful* one, in the common intercourses of life, but does not suit a regular Assembly quite so well," though she then remembered that her husband had given her "a serious lecture, for some of my Aristocratic notions."[78]

Even when they moved out into the countryside, wealthier migrants kept up appearances as best they could. David Meade called his new estate "Chaumiere des Prairies," with a fancy touch of French pretension mixed with false modesty, as chaumiere means thatched cottage. He described the house as "an elegant kind of Chaumiere for I will not dignify my collection of rooms with a name of higher Class amongst buildings." Yet the rambling log-and-frame house with a grand entrance and rooms either side, with its marble slabs and other grandiosities, would have stood out among the two-floor farmhouses and log cabins of his neighbors. And Meade knew it too, noting that it was "adverse to the prevailing stile of log houses in these parts—& my fancy is approved but by few," adding "there are those who are pleased with my plan—and they are of a character, to do me & my house more credit by a favorable judgment—than the approbation of nine-tenths of Fayette County."[79]

The Politics of Gentility

All of the above is inherently political. Gentility meant inclusion and exclusion from certain social circles, which in turn kept "society" select and which ensured that some and not others had opportunities to be where beneficial deals were done, where financially sound advice was given and received, and where the wells of good will were watered so that deals might be done and advice given and received. These are, of course, some of the ways in which social-economic elites form, prosper, and perpetuate themselves. The dynastic imperative drives the perpetuation of inequality from one generation to another, whether the protagonists thought of it that way or not. The Calverts were also more explicitly political in more obvious ways. Despite their friendship with the Monroes, the Calverts were thoroughgoing Federalists. And while not all planters were Federalists and not all Federalists were necessarily elitists, the Calverts' politics certainly were elitist. In fact, their social behavior and their politics were very intimately interrelated.

George and Rosalie were deeply hostile to Thomas Jefferson and James Madison because embargo, nonintercourse, and war were inimical to their economic interests and because of their Federalist Francophobia and Anglophilia. But they also held the third and fourth presidents in contempt for what they thought of as Jefferson's and Madison's low aesthetic and social sensibilities. Rosalie wrote her sister in 1806 that "Jefferson sounded out if he might come to see [Riversdale], having heard that it was in the Chinese style, which is as far fetched as calling it Egyptian."[80] She may never have known that "Tommy Jeff," as she sometimes called him, was a skilled architect, or else she overlooked the fact. Either way, in failing to acknowledge his education or simply assuming his ignorance, she betrayed a profound kind of arrogance, considering that the target of her high-handedness had written the Declaration of Independence, had been minister to France, secretary of state, vice-president, and was then in his second term as president of the United States. As far as is known, Jefferson never visited Riversdale, which may have been his own choice, but it no doubt suited Mrs. Calvert.

The Calverts generally stayed away from the federal city during Jefferson's and Madison's terms, partly because of harder times caused by embargo, nonintercourse, and war, but also because Washington's social life became too plebeian for their liking. Commenting on their absence from the capital social scene in 1806, Rosalie wrote, "I don't think I am missing very much. The society of Washington and Georgetown is wretched—all the people employed there are Democrats and of low origin."[81] Rosalie thought the subsequent years were even worse. Recalling the Madisons' White House soirées in 1818, she wrote her sister that "[d]uring Mrs. Madison's reign everybody went, even the shoemakers and their wives, but things are better managed now and one meets the best of society there."[82] Jeffersonian and Madisonian Washington thereby offended the Calverts' beliefs in political and social order. The connections between the two sensibilities are clear in Rosalie's comments on the impending arrival of Anthony Merry, British minister in Washington from 1803 to 1806, and his family. "They plan on living in the most splendid style," she told her mother, "which will not be at all agreeable to Mr. Jefferson and his Democratic party who want to introduce a system of equality and economy, thinking by that means to please the populace—in whom they are beginning to find themselves disappointed. . . . The Democrats are beginning to lose ground among the people in our county. My brother-in-law, Edward Calvert, has been elected a member of the [Maryland General] Assembly."[83]

Mrs. Calvert's faith in Federalist electoral prospects grew during the next year. "The democratic spirit seems to be weakening in this country," she told her father in 1804, "especially among the people of the countryside. My husband has converted almost all the Democrats of Bladensburg, where he is extremely well-liked."[84] Her optimism lasted until Madison was elected president in 1808. Rosalie Calvert's hitherto poor punditry may have derived from lack of information, receipt of misinformation, naïve projections of the local success of Edward Henry Calvert onto the national political scene, or quite possibly wishful thinking. Most likely, though, her projections were based on a deeply ingrained ideological presumption that democracy was ultimately unworkable. "If the spirit of democracy persists," she wrote her father in 1810, "our government will not be able to maintain itself. It is impossible to predict how much time there is before this happens, but a change, probably accompanied by some convulsions, seems to me certain."[85] She did not fear insurrection significantly more than other Federalists, however, despite her formative experiences as a Napoleonic émigré. At one point, she seems to have believed that an American *coup d'état* would not comprise a revolt from below but an imposition of more refined and elitist form of government from above. "Believe me," she wrote her sister, Isabelle van Havre, in 1811, "republics are hell for people of wealth. We are completely weary of it here, and (just between us) they say it won't last for long. I too think a new monarchy—or rather a newly fabricated monarchy—and an overnight nobility a sorry affair, but everything must have a beginning."[86]

That was 1811, and Rosalie Calvert's pessimism was greatest after years of interrupted trade and on the brink of American entry into the European wars. At other times she was not unduly disturbed by her prospects in the democratic-republican or even a Democratic-Republican United States. Her political happiness was conditioned by two crucial factors reflecting the priorities of social-economic elites: the opportunity to pursue wealth unencumbered by excessive taxes or other burdens, and the ability to enjoy the deference of ordinary people, or at least the appearance of it, or at least not to have to fear rebellion by those people. "I believe myself—and it is the opinion of many—," Rosalie wrote her sister a few years before in 1805,

> that the present ascendancy of the democratic spirit is a genuine good fortune for the country. It certainly has not caused any of the disorders which were feared. The multitude here is peaceful—never insolent. If the change of governmental officials had not taken place in 1801, we might have gone on gradually to an aristocratic government instead of Federal. Now [the Federalist] party is beginning to get the upper hand again and is being more prudent. The taxes we pay are nothing. One wagon sent to Washington pays all those on Riversdale.[87]

While Virginia continued to hold to property qualifications for voting and office holding, Maryland acceded to universal white manhood suffrage in 1801, secret ballots in 1803, and abolished property qualifications for office holding in 1809. Kentucky's 1792 constitution conceded the vote to all white men from the off, and these developments had resulted in no significant disruption of the economic or social order in any of these places. In fact, they were the price of retaining that order.[88] Democracy did, however, in Rosalie Calvert's view, make genteel assertions of social order all the more imperative than in undemocratic Europe. As she wrote her father in 1807, "it is not the same here as at home—[here] one must differentiate oneself a little from the mob in order to be respected by them."[89] Those assertions may or may not have been as effective as she thought, and may have had different effects from what she thought. She wrote her father the year before that "Mr. Calvert has become completely European, they give him all sorts of names, such as 'My Lord' and 'Aristocrat.'"[90] She seemed satisfied that these sobriquets were respectful rather than satirical. If she thought they might have been the latter, though, she probably did not care. What most likely mattered most to her was that people saw her husband, mockingly or not, as one of local society's richest and most powerful men.

Chapter 3

"I don't stand to the will": Yeomen Farmers and Smallholders

The Magruders of Anchovy Hills

In the late 1790s, an aging couple named George and Sarah Magruder tended the 231-acre farm they had owned for many years in a place called Anchovy Hills in Prince George's County, Maryland. The property was worth $462, according to the Federal Direct Tax of 1798, and contained "two framed dwelling houses," a 28-by-22 foot "tobacco house," a "meat house" and "log lumber house," both of unspecified dimensions. On November 22, 1799, however, "weake in body but of sound mind," Mr. Magruder made his last will and testament. He passed away that winter and on February 18, 1800, Mrs. Magruder met with her daughter and son-in-law, Mary and Leonard Kidwell, at the county courthouse in Upper Marlboro to check her husband's probate inventory, hear his testament, and execute his will. Or, at least, that was the plan.

According to George's inventory, the Magruders' personal estate amounted to $651.13-worth of goods in total (probate officers recorded inventories at estimated auction values). Their property included "One Negro Man London," "One Negro Woman Saly," and "One Negro Boy Horatio," respectively worth $150, $100, and $80. Most of the rest of the estate comprised $120 in the forms of 17 pigs, 7 head of cattle, 5 sheep, 3 horses, and 2 beehives, plus agricultural produce to the value of $42.75, including "Spun Cotton and Cotton in Seed" and unspecified quantities of meat and corn. The tobacco crop had probably already been sold. Another $38.75 comprised implements such as "Six Old Hoes," "2 pair Sheep Shears," a loom and accessories, a "Linen Wheel" and its accessories, and numerous other smaller bits and pieces for use around the house and farm. The remaining $119.63 was in household items, the bulk of which comprised three beds, bedsteads, and accompanying furniture, worth $50, plus chairs, tables, and a plentiful collection of wooden, earthen, and pewter kitchenware. Among their possessions was "1 old Looking Glass," worth 25 cents, which they presumably used to keep up appearances. Literate people, the Magruders also owned two desks, one of them "old," worth $7 and $1, and an unspecified number of "Old Books," worth a dollar.[1]

With their fair-sized farm and their outbuildings, with four slaves to work in their land with them, with plenty of farm equipment, and in possession of an abundance of household comforts, including reading and writing materials, albeit some of them old and evidently modest in quality, the Magruders seem to have been almost perfect incarnations of Thomas Jefferson's and others' idea of the independent, sturdy yeoman farmers of the early American republic. Except that they cultivated tobacco and so were not free from markets and the interdependencies that trade entailed, but were in fact very much attached to the Atlantic economy. And that they very much implicated in the enslavement of others that was integral to the inter-dependencies inherent in the economy and society of the early national tobacco-plantation south. And except that the federal assessors of 1798 observed that the Magruders' tobacco barn was a place where "the old couple retire in bad weather[,] their dwelling house being neither wind tight nor water tight." And except that, after his death, creditors sold $448.35 of George Magruder's personal estate at public auction to cover his debts.[2]

And yet, albeit in very different ways, both of the Magruders exhibited the "manly independence" that supposedly characterized yeoman farmers. In his last will and testament, George directed that 100 acres of his land would go to Nathaniel Jones Magruder, to set up his only son with a decent-sized farm. The remaining 131 acres would go to Mary and Leonard Kidwell for as long as they lived, and then to George's grandson by Nathaniel, George Alexander Magruder, presumably to perpetuate the Magruder lineage in the local yeomanry. The older George's personal property would be divided equally between son Nathaniel and daughter Mary, after all debts were cleared. For his soon-to-be widow, Sarah Magruder, George provided that Mary "Seed a maintenance to her Mother" and that Nathaniel "See to the maintenance of his Mother." Yet, when the family of the recently deceased George Magruder met together in Upper Marlboro on that February Tuesday in 1800, there was a problem. Under his words, his widow wrote her own: "I hereby Certifie that I do not Stand to George Magruder's Will nor has nothing to Say to it and has Chose Leonard Kidwell to Administr on the Estate in my behalf & am your &c Sarah Magruder". Five days later she added, with repeated determination, that "I wood wish to be understood I Don't Stand to the Will but fly to my third part."[3]

Sarah Magruder had an inalienable entitlement to that "third part," her widow's common-law "dower" right to one-third of the property she and her husband had owned (it would have been half had there been no children). A husband could still try to devise all of his property on others besides his wife, as George Magruder attempted to do, but Sarah Magruder could have claimed her dower as a matter of course in any case. Yet she actually did more than fly to her third part. She also claimed, and gained, most of her husband's "dead man's portion"—the two thirds of their property that he was legally entitled to disburse as he pleased. She had been a *feme covert* during her marriage, apparently accepting the legal concept of "unity of person" and the practical corollary that any property she brought to her marriage became her husband's, though how willingly she did so we cannot say. In widowhood, however, she was clearly determined to exercise as much economic and personal independence as possible, claiming all the property that her husband had possessed as entirely her own.[4]

Intentionally or otherwise, Sarah Magruder's defiant statement—"I Don't Stand to the Will"—had at least two meanings. On the most basic and clearly intended level, she defied her husband's last will and testament. More than that, though, she defied the will of a society, or at least a dominant sector of that society, that would have denied her, as a woman, independent economic and social status (a widow's third was supposed to allow her to continue live in the manner to which she was accustomed, though it often provided less than that). Certainly, contemporaries thought of the yeoman farmer or husbandman as a male status. There were no feminine nouns for the clearly masculine-sounding "yeoman" or "husbandman". Revolutionary and republican rhetoric and writing regarded the personal autonomy that property guaranteed as a masculine status, as "manly" independence.

In subverting some of the gendered conventions of her place and time, Sarah Magruder also defies some modern historiographical notions. She fails to conform, for example, to Elizabeth Fox-Genovese's characterizations of southern women as largely accepting a paternalistic social order that relegated them to subordinate status, especially in matters of property ownership. To be sure, historians such as Fox-Genovese have demonstrated conclusively the enormity of southern patriarchalism as it had evolved by the end of the eighteenth century, as has Allan Kulikoff for the Chesapeake in particular. So Sarah Magruder's stand may represent an individual rebellion against this development. In this, though, she was by no means alone. Jean B. Lee found that between 1740 and 1784, one-fifth of Charles County widows renounced their husbands' wills, one of them writing that it was "Justly my Right" to do so. It seems then that the development of patriarchy was far from complete by the turn of the nineteenth century, indicating that women's status was in a complex and contradictory state of flux and contestation in the Chesapeake at this time. Indeed, as Kirsten Wood has pointed out, early United States gender conventions were polarized between cultural norms that emphasized widows' helplessness, and legal and economic realities that often acknowledged or promoted their agency and even independence, even before Maryland's Married Women's Property Act that abolished coverture in 1843. Certainly, Sarah Magruder believed herself to be entitled to possess property beyond her mere dower right. In this respect, perhaps her statement—"I Don't Stand to the Will"—had a further meaning, signifying the determined autonomy of the small property owner, man or woman, even and perhaps especially in adverse circumstances.[5]

It is not clear whether Sarah Magruder pursued her case against her husband's will privately or whether she had to take her case to court. Given the legal and cultural primacy of men's property rights, and given that she entrusted her son-in-law as her administrator, it seems most likely that the eventual settlement was agreed within the family. Certainly, Leonard Kidwell was more attentive to Sarah Magruder's wishes and interests than some sons-in-law were.[6] Whatever the case, the property remained in the names of "George Magruders heirs" in county tax records through 1803, but the lists of 1804 through 1807 recorded Sarah Magruder as outright owner of 192½ acres of Part of Anchovy Hills, two slaves (the other three were apparently untaxed), and $80.10 in "other" personal property. The rest of the farm by then belonged to George Kidwell, Leonard's brother. The 1808 assessments show that Sarah Magruder's share of the old farm fell to 128¼ acres and George Kidwell's grew to 102. This development may have resulted from an agreement made after George Magruder's death, or it may have been that time was catching up with Sarah Magruder. The following year, someone named Isaac Smith owned her part of Anchovy Hills, and her personal property appeared under the title "Sarah Magruders heirs."[7]

Sarah Magruder's inventory of August 1809 contained $407.29 in personal property, including eight pigs, five head of cattle, and two horses, altogether worth $94, corn worth $15, and a "Small parcell of Tobacco," worth $6. Her agricultural implements were worth $17.25, and the rest of her nonhuman property consisted entirely of household items to the value of $30.04, some of them clearly the same articles she and her husband had owned together. By then, Mrs. Magruder had made provision to free her slaves, perhaps having decided to apply to others the principles she had struggled for on her own behalf. What remained of her estate was "1 Negro Man named Lonnen to Serve 18 Months," "1 Woman named Saba to Serve 7 Years," and Roy Hanson, Naney, and

Priscilla, all to be freed when they reached 31 years of age. In sum, then, the Magruders, both of them equally, were small-scale-landed farmers and slaveholders, market-oriented producers, although they perhaps grew much of their food, and they were modest consumers of basic household goods. They were better off than many county residents, therefore, and yet their house was unfit for habitation in bad weather, some of their possessions were old and broken, and debts forced Sarah Magruder to let go of some property in widowhood in order to hold on to the rest.[8]

Large Yeomen, Small Yeomen, and Smallholders

As we will see, the Magruders were fairly typical small yeoman farmers, but small yeomen farmers like the Magruders formed a minority of the free population of Prince George's County, Maryland, and other parts of the tobacco-plantation south in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Using the classifications outlined in the introduction to this book and explored in more detail in the Appendix, in 1800 in Prince George's County, there were 123 large yeomen with at least 280 acres of land but less than 800. These acreages could maintain the labor of between eight and 19 people, and most of those people, especially at the higher end, were enslaved. There were 287 small yeomen with at least 40 acres but less than 280, into which category the Magruders fell. These people's land could sustain between one laboring person and seven, which might, and did in the case of the Magruders, include a couple of free family members and up to five slaves. And there were 45 smallholders with fewer than 40 acres of land.

The line of division here between smallholders and yeomen makes clear sense, as 40 acres was normally the minimum required for a viable tobacco farm employing at least one full-time worker. Indeed, as shown below, many smallholders seem to have been artisans or otherwise working alongside but not in the primarily agricultural economy. The line between large and small yeomen, however, may seem arbitrary and artificial. Yet it represents a familiar line of division used by historians to distinguish smaller and more substantial slaveholders as those, respectively, owning up to four or five slaves and those owning more than five. Similarly, as 800 acres could sustain the labor of 19 slaves, the upper limit of the category of large yeoman falls just short of the requirement normally used to classify a slaveholding planter. One might move the line a little bit one way or the other, but that would make no significant difference to the aggregate and average wealth or to figures given below and in the Appendix. And it is certainly worth drawing the line somewhere. One senses intuitively that there will typically be large differences in fortune between someone with a small farm of 50 to 150 acres and someone else with a large farm of 700 acres upward, and evidence below shows that typically there were indeed.[9]

The figures above show that large yeomen constituted almost a quarter of the county's 524 resident landowners, but only just over 7 percent of the county's total of 1,712 free household heads. Small yeomen formed almost 55 percent of landowners, and 16.8 percent of free household heads. Even expanding the definition of the yeomanry to combine owners of 40 to 800 acres together, this category accounts for less than a quarter of free households.[10] One of the reasons to make a clear distinction between large yeomen and small, however, besides considerable wealth differentials, is that the former grew in number in subsequent years, while the latter group shrank in number. Numbers of large yeomen grew from 123 households in 1800 to 147 in 1810 and 141 in 1820. As a proportion the county's landowners, they rose from under a quarter to near 28 percent and then just over 30 percent. As a proportion of free household heads, they rose from 7.2 percent to just over 9 percent and just under 8 percent. At the same time, the numbers of small yeomen fell from 287 in 1800 to 260 in 1810 and then even more dramatically to 193 by 1820, by which time small yeomen had suffered disproportionately from the effects of the embargo, nonintercourse, and the War of 1812 on the Atlantic economy and in turn on the local one. As a proportion of landowners, small yeomen fell from near 55 percent in 1800 to 49 percent in1810 and 42 percent in 1820. And as a proportion of all free householders, they fell from near 17 percent to exactly 16 percent and then to 10.8 percent.

Smallholders, meanwhile, rose in number from 45 in 1800 to 64 in 1810 and 68 in 1820. That is a steady rise from 8.6 of landowners to just over 12 percent and just under 15 percent. Smallholders only formed small proportions of all free householders, however: just over 2.5 percent in 1800, 4 percent in 1810, and 3.8 percent in 1820. This means that the total number of landowners rose slightly from 524 in 1800 to 531 in 1810, but then fell to 462 by 1820. As the numbers and proportions of planters, large yeomen and smallholders either stayed more or less the same or rose, this overall fall in the rate of landownership reflects the continuing decline in the size of the small yeomanry that had first begun in the Chesapeake region in the 1680s.

These phenomena are reflected in social-economic mobility figures. The large yeomanry was remarkably stable, with few moving up or down the social scale. Among 65 large yeomen of 1800 who were still Prince Georgian household heads in 1810, 51 were still large yeomen in the later year. One had risen to the heights of being a large planter, but smaller steps were more common, as six had become smaller to middling planters with over 800 but less than 2,000 acres of land. Seven had gone down the social scale over the course of the decade, three to become small yeomen, with four falling into landlessness. Twenty-one of the large yeomen of 1800 were still Prince Georgian household heads in 1820. Eleven remained large yeomen throughout the 20-year period. The one who had become a large planter by 1810 was still a large planter in 1820, and one who had become a planter by 1810 also retained that position to 1820. Four more who remained large yeomen in 1810 also became planters in the second decade. Two more went downward and became small yeomen. One of those who had become a small yeoman returned to the large yeomanry and another remained in the small yeomanry. None of the four who had fallen into nonlandownership by 1810 survived to 1820.

There was similar stability of status among smallholders with fewer than 40 acres. Of 23 survivors to 1810, 14 remained smallholders, four increased their landholdings to small-yeoman size, two became large yeomen, and one became a planter. Only two fell into landlessness. One who obtained a large yeoman's acreage by 1810 survived and retained that status to at least 1820, as did one who became a small yeoman, while another who had reached the small yeomanry by 1810 returned to the class of smallholders by 1820. Of those who had remained smallholders to 1810, one later obtained a small yeoman's acreage, six remained smallholders, and none fell into landlessness. Only one of the two who previously fell into landlessness survived, remaining landless in 1820.

There was much more mobility among small yeomen, especially of the downward kind. Of the 287 small yeomen of 1800, 166 were still Prince Georgian household heads in 1810 and 65 survived as such to 1820. Of these survivors, 24 were upwardly mobile in the first decade and eight more in the second, at least some of them through inheritance. Twenty-nine, however, were downwardly mobile in the first decade and 12 more in the second. Of the downwardly mobile, some 22 lost all their land by 1810 and 10 more did so by 1820, most likely becoming tenants. In addition, three who had been upwardly mobile in the first decade, lost their land in the second, while one who fell into nonlandownership by 1810 returned to the small yeomanry by 1820. In total, then, at least 35 small yeomen of 1800, just over 12 percent of them, fell into landlessness by 1820. This figure is a minimum, however, as it does not include those who might have been dispossessed after 1800 and left the county or died before 1810, or those who might have been dispossessed after 1810 and left or died before 1820. Of those small yeomen who were dispossessed and then left Prince George's, some might have become proprietors elsewhere, although this seems unlikely given that the social-economic conditions of Prince George's County were common across the tobacco-plantation South. In nearby St. Mary's County, for instance, landlessness extended to 65 percent of householders in 1800 and 75 percent in 1840. Even on the tobacco frontier, land was expensive and landlessness was extensive. As Fredrika Teute has shown, in Kentucky in 1792, the poorest land cost $1 per acre, while prime, improved, riverbank plots cost $60 an acre, and landlessness rates were as high as 65 percent of householders. Land prices subsequently fell as speculators tried to encourage settlement, but even in 1802 landlessness still extended to 52 percent of free household heads.[11]

Prince George's small yeomanry was partly but not fully replenished by new members rising from among the landless. Forty-five nonlandowners of 1800 became small yeomen by 1810, some no doubt through inheritance. Yet the small yeomanry still declined in size from 287 in 1800 to 260 in 1810 and 193 in 1820. From forming 17 percent of householders in 1800, small yeomen comprised 11 percent of householders in 1820. Clearly, like today, some small farmers struggled to make their livings and some went out of business. The wealth figures below show that small yeomen were significantly less wealthy than large yeomen, although that only provides the contextual beginning of an explanation why quite a few small yeomen lost their land and why the group as a whole was getting smaller.

Wealth and Slaveholding

Large yeomen collectively owned $277,011.81 in total taxable wealth in 1800, an average of just over $2,250 each: somewhat less than the $6,330 average among smaller planters and over $12,000 average among large planters. Yet it is still the case that this 7.2 percent of householders owned 22.8 percent of taxable wealth held by Prince George's resident household heads. By 1810, large yeomen collectively owned almost half-a-million dollars worth of taxable wealth and in 1820 just over half-a-million, well over $3,000 each, on average. Their share of all resident-owned taxable wealth rose from 22.8 to 29.7 percent in 1810 and 31.3 percent in 1820. Ownership of taxable gold and silver plate supports the impression of some comfort and prosperity among large yeomen. Of 123 large yeomen in 1800, 72, nearly 60 percent, owned taxable plate. Collectively, they owned 1,875½ ounces of plate, an average of 15 ounces each, or 25 ounces counting only the owners. The quantity of plate owned by large yeomen rose to 1,924.9 ounces in 1810, although there was a small fall in mean holdings from 15 ounces to 13. By 1810, however, they held 3,628½ ounces, or near 28 ounces each, suggesting growing prosperity even during the difficult years of embargo, nonintercourse, and war.

Like planters, large yeomen were first and foremost cultivators of tobacco. Or, more accurately, their slaves were. Large majorities of large yeomen held slaves. In 1800, 116 out of 123 did so, a slaveholding rate of nearly 95 percent. The number of slaveholders in the group rose to 125 by 1810, although as a proportion of the group slaveholders fell to 85 percent of 146 large yeomen. By 1820, however, there were 130 slaveholders among

141 large yeomen, a rate of slave-ownership that was back up to 92 percent. Large yeomen held a total of 1,861 slaves in 1800: 15 each on average, 16 each among owners. In 1810, they held 2,119, or 14 or 17 each, and in 1820, 2,083, 15 each, or 16 among owners only, on average.

Smallholders' held $26,882.11 in total taxable wealth in 1800, rising to $40,556.53 in 1810 and $45,494.90 in 1820. Their proportion of taxable wealth was therefore small, but it increased steadily from 2.2 percent to 2.5 percent and 2.8 percent. Average quantities rose from just under $600 to just over $630 and just under $670. Ownership of plate was less widespread among smallholders than it was among large yeomen, and those who held some held less. Yet 10 of 45 smallholders did so in 1800, with a total of 240 ounces, or 5.3 ounces each on average, or 24 ounces among the owners. Smallholders' shares of plate fell to 168 by 1810, but rose dramatically to 446 ounces by 1820. Smallholders held an average of 5.3 ounces in 1800, 2.6 in 1810, and 6.6 in 1820. About half of Prince George's smallholders also held slaves. Twenty-five of 45 did so in 1800, as did 31 of 64 in 1810, and 35 of 68 in 1820. Smallholders also held 124 people in bondage in 1800, 169 in 1810, and 143 in 1820. That is, an average of three slaves each in 1800 and 1810, and two in 1820, or respectively five, six, and four, counting owners only.

On the face of it, the small yeomanry seems to have been fairly prosperous, but, as with George and Sarah Magruder, that impression is in some ways deceptive. In 1800, small yeomen held total taxable wealth of $231,290.18, rising to $63,534.62 by 1810, and then falling with small yeomen's falling numbers to $209,914.90 in 1820. This means that small yeomen, 16.8 percent of household heads in 1800, held 19.1 percent of taxable wealth held by resident Prince Georgian householders. In 1810, as 16 percent of householders, they held 16.1 percent of taxable wealth, and in 1820, as 10.8 percent of householders, they held 13 percent of taxable wealth. Their average wealth increased from just over $800 in 1800 to just over $1,000 in 1810 and 1820, and remained just above the mean for all free householders of $709, $1,010, and $901 in those years. To put these figures in further perspective, landless taxables (household heads with no land but more than £40 in personal property) owned 13 percent of the wealth in 1800, 9 percent by 1820, and on average each held less than half the property of the average small yeoman. There were also significant numbers of household heads with less than the £40 minimum to qualify to pay tax: 782 in 1800, falling to 660 in 1810, but rising to 1,006 in 1820. Nontaxable household heads thus formed 45.7 percent of all householders in 1800, 40.7 percent in 1810, and a majority of 56 percent in 1820.[12] Small yeomen were therefore much better off than many free Prince Georgians. And yet their share of taxable wealth was declining at a steady and significant rate detailed above, falling by 6.1 percent over the course of 20 years, or by almost one-third.

An impression of somewhat more modest living standards among small yeomen than among large yeomen and planters is supported by rates of ownership of gold and silver plate in the group. In 1800, 41 of 287 small yeomen owned plate, just 14.3 percent, compared to 60 percent of large yeomen. They owned a total of 1,066 ounces in 1800, an average of 3.7 ounces each, compared to 15 ounces among large yeomen. Although, among owners, the average was 26 ounces: precisely one ounce more than among large yeomen. That, though, is in part accounted for by the fact that some people who appear to be small yeomen were, as we shall see shortly, so exceptionally wealthy compared to others that they did not really belong in the same category in any meaningful sense. Small yeomen's share of plate initially rose but then fell to 1,467 in 1810 and 649 ounces in 1820. That is, from 3.7 to 5.6 to 3.4 ounces each on average. In many small yeomen's estate inventories, furthermore, as with the Magruders, one frequently finds qualitative assessments of items that are rare among the inventories of the rich, such as "old," "worn," and "broken."

What is perhaps more surprising than anything, though, is the high rate of slave-ownership among small yeoman farmers. The Magruders were far from unique in holding a handful of fellow human beings in bondage. In fact, they were normal and belonged to a large majority among their kind. Among the 287 small yeomen of 1800, some 206, near 72 percent of them, almost three-quarters, held slaves. By 1810, the number had fallen to 173 out of 260, and by 1820 to 128 out of 193, but those numbers still represented just a little under two-thirds of small yeomen in both years. Small yeomen held 3 shy of 1,500 enslaved people in 1800, and held 1,204 in 1810 and 892 in 1820. They thus consistently held an average of five slaves each, or seven if one counts the owners only. The nonslaveholding yeoman, the supposedly archetypal early national southern farmer, formed only a small minority of the population of early national Prince George's County. Counting small yeomen alone, they numbered 81 in 1800, 87 in 1810, falling to 65 by 1820: only 3 to 6 percent of free household heads. Even adding in large yeomen, the nonslaveholding yeomanry still only numbered 88 in 1800, 109 in 1810, falling to 77 by 1820, or between 4 and 7 percent of household heads. Furthermore, many nonslaveowners may have hired slaves, purchased slaves later on, or else had the use of slaves belonging to others who lived with them but who were not counted as heads of household. If so, almost all the yeomanry of Prince George's County was involved in enslavement. Slaveholding was even common, as we shall see, among the nonlandowning majority. Twenty percent of nonlandowners held slaves in 1800, although the proportion fell to 14 percent by 1820. The situation was similar in Charles County, Maryland, where Jean B. Lee found that 60 percent of household heads in 1790 were slaveholders. And Bayly

Marks found too that from 1790 to 1840, between 60 and 70 percent of St. Mary's County householders held slaves.[13]

The picture of a property-owning, slaveholding yeomanry thus far presented in aggregate and average statistics, however, gives a somewhat false impression that small yeoman were generally fairly prosperous. To be sure, some of them were more than fairly prosperous, to the point that their property holdings skew the average for the group as a whole and obscure the considerable hardship that others in the group endured. In 1800, for example, Richard Tasker Lowndes owned 130 acres of land and nine slaves, too many hands for that much land. However, he also owned $1,335-worth of improvements and half a lot of land in the town of Bladensburg, worth $667.50 as well, and so appears to have been involved in activities other than farming. He also owned 364 ounces of plate, slightly over one-third of all the plate owned by small yeomen in 1800. His total taxable wealth of $3,849.23, compared with the $809.89 average for small yeoman as a whole, made him one of the richest 10 percent of household heads in Prince George's County in 1800. Lowndes was, in fact, a member of the county elite, a lawyer and stalwart of the court system, and a close friend of George and Rosalie Calvert, and he was mentioned often and affectionately in Mrs. Calvert's letters.[14] Lowndes was still kicking around in 1820, when he had $4,510.20 in total taxable wealth, over four times more than the small yeoman average of $1,087.64. By then he had increased his landholdings to 391 acres of land, and held 16 slaves and 368 ounces of plate, although he had sold his land in Bladensburg.[15] Another stalwart of the county court system was John Read Magruder, Jr., clerk of the Levy Court and owner in 1800 of over $1,400 in total taxable wealth, 20 slaves, and 100 acres of land. He therefore falls into our small yeoman category, but was one of the few who was upwardly mobile. He eventually inherited his father's 2,350 acres of land, 52 slaves, and total taxable wealth of over $7,000. In St. Mary's County, too, attorneys were invariably among the wealthiest 5 percent, and many of them trained in law and then either bought or inherited plantations.

It was a similar thing with doctors, and Colmore Beanes of Prince George's County, Maryland, is another case in point. In 1800, he held 248 acres of land, 38 slaves, and 20 ounces of plate. His total taxable wealth was $3,641.48, almost as much as Richard Tasker Lowndes.[16] He also acquired another 193 acres of land in December 1800, after the assessments were taken, as an inheritance from his father, William Beanes, Sr.[17] Early the next year, however, on February 25, 1801, Colmore and his wife, Millicent Beanes, sold 237 ¾ acres of land to Benjamin Harwood for $5,340 (£2,000). And in August 1803 they sold another 160 ¾ acres of the same tract, "Bowldes Choice Beginning," to James Mullikin for $3,204 (£1,200).[18] In a series of smaller sales, the

Beaneses sold all their agricultural operations by 1809, although they kept six of their slaves.[19] In August 1809, however, Colmore purchased a three-quarter lot "in the village of Piscattaway" from his brother, John Hancock Beanes, for $800.[20] He equipped it for domestic purposes in March 1811 with "two chairs, six knives and forks, Six Earthen Plat[e]s, One Iron Pot, One frying Pan . . . four stone juggs, One tea Kettle, One tea Pot, Six Cups and sausers . . . two Pails, One large tub and one Feather bed and furniture," as well as sundry barrels and bushels of tobacco and grains, and some cattle and hogs, all bought from Erasmus Maddox for $200.[21] In 1818, he augmented his landholdings with "a lot or parcel of land adjoining the Town of Piscataway . . . at a spot or point at the edge of the street or road . . . containing one acre more or less," purchased from Thomas Clagett for $200. By then he also had 12 slaves, 12 ounces of plate, and $2,177.34 in total taxable wealth. Doctors were not quite as wealthy as attorneys, but all doctors were among the wealthiest 10 percent of residents of St. Mary's County.[22]

It seems that Beanes sold his agricultural interests and either established or bought into a medical practice in the little town of Piscataway in the south-western corner of Prince George's County. In his will of December 30, 1829, he left to "my friend and Partner in the Practice of Physic Doctr John A. Magruder, all my share and interest in the debts due to us jointly as Partners . . . and also all the medicine, and the bottles, Phialls and boxes containing the same . . . together with the choice of two Electrical machines." This was clearly a family operation, for he also left "to William B Magruder the son of my brother in Law James A Magruder all my medical books and also the other Electric Machine and all the Other articles in the Shop not bequeathed to Doctr John A Magruder." Beanes also held at least eight slaves at the time he wrote his will, for in it he set five adults, "Butler, Lean, Bill, Nelly, and Mima," free upon his death, and three others, aged three to six years, were placed in the care of his grandson, Philip Key, to be "raised soberly," trained in a trade, and freed with a gift of $25 each when they reached the age of 18. Philip Key, also Beanes's executor, was to sell his (unspecified) real estate to pay off debts and was to receive the residue of the personal property.[23]

Including Richard Tasker Lowndes and Colmore Beanes, six apparent small-yeomen owned over $2,670 (£1,000) in taxable wealth in 1800. Including the younger John R. Magruder, another 39 held more than $1,335 (£500). Most of these people probably never muddied their hands in Prince Georgian soil. Most small yeomen were much poorer than these men. Average taxable wealth among small yeomen that year was $805.89, while 175 small yeomen, 61 percent, owned less than that. Average taxable wealth among all free households in the county in 1800 was $708.51: 158 out of 287 small yeomen, 55 percent, owned less than that. The median small yeoman (in terms of total taxable wealth) was

Paul Summers, who owned $597.65 in total taxable wealth, including 100 acres of land and eight slaves. George and Sarah Magruder owned $2.40 less in taxable wealth than Paul Summers. Fifty-one small yeomen owned less than $267 (£100), including 11 with less than $133.50 (£50) and five with less than $66.75 (£25). The poorest small yeoman of them all in 1800 was a woman named Ann Adams, owner of 50 acres of land, worth $46.16, and no other taxable property at all.[24] It is among these poorer small yeomen that we find those who struggled to make a living and those who lost their land. But why were small yeoman significantly poorer than other property owners? And why was the small yeomanry shrinking, with quite of few small yeomen falling into landlessness?

Yeoman and Smallholder Economies

The answers to those questions may be twofold. First, small yeomen, at least the poorer and most vulnerable ones, seem to have engaged in less diversified economic activities than planters, large yeomen, and smallholders. An analysis of town lots and especially taxable built improvements owned by different groups of landowners shows that, very much like planters, large yeomen seem to have practiced tobacco agriculture mixed with other activities. Smallholders also appear in many cases to have been primarily artisans. The most economically successful small yeomen were also those who diversified their economic pursuits, and some of those with between 40 and 280 acres of land were not only or even primarily small yeoman farmers. Some, like Richard Tasker Lowndes, John Read Magruder, Jr., and Dr. Colmore Beanes, were not even yeoman farmers at all. The small yeomen who became insolvent appear to have been those who diversified the least and who were therefore the most dependent on tobacco and Atlantic trade. Second, one can subtract the value and quantity of town land and the value of improvements to determine the net value of different groups' rural land. Smallholders, small and middling planters, and large yeomen held the most valuable lands per acre: smallholders because they seem to have been engaged in artisanship rather than or in addition to farming, while small and middling planters used their lands the most efficiently to maximize profits. Large planters left more of their land in forest and fallow, which made it less valuable per average acre, but which gave them more choices and flexibility with economic tactics. Small yeomen's rural land was by far the least valuable per average acre, and that was increasingly the case as time went by. An analysis of small yeomen's use of labor shows that this was certainly caused by soil exhaustion in some cases and may have been so with many others.

Prince George's County's towns were small, as one would expect in an agricultural economy and society like the early national tobacco-plantation south. There were 50 household heads who owned taxable town lots in the county in 1800, 56 in 1810, and 54 in 1820. These towns, Beall Town, Bladensburg, Nottingham, Queen Anne Town, Pistcataway, the county capital of Upper Marlboro, and finally Vansville, were mainly small service centers numerically dominated by smallholding artisans. Roughly one-half of smallholders owned lots in towns: 22 of 45 in 1800, 27 of 64 in 1810, and 36 of 68 in 1820. They owned 27 ½ of Prince George's 63 resident-held taxable town lots in 1800, or 43.6 percent of town lands and 33.1 percent of their value. By 1810 they held more lots, 41¼, or 40 percent of the then 103 ⅓ resident-held lots. Yet they also held a considerably larger share of the value of town land in 1810, 47.9 percent, surpassing their share of the amount of town land. The share of the value of town land they held dipped slightly below their share of lots in 1820, but their shares of both nevertheless increased substantially to over one-half of each. By 1820, smallholders held 59 percent of town ground, or 56 lots out of 95, and 52 percent of their value. When we look at smallholders' improvements and the values of their countryside landholdings (below), we see that many of them were rural artisans or other extra-agricultural or nonagricultural service providers.

Evidently, Prince George's County's towns were taking on more and more the character of small artisanal and perhaps retail centers. It was similar elsewhere. The state capital of Annapolis was, perhaps not surprisingly, a center for many pursuits of profit. Edward Papenfuse found that, in 1783, 14 percent of occupations in the city involved in professional and government services, including 5 percent in the law. Another 21 percent were merchants and shopkeepers, and 13 percent were innkeepers. Some 29 percent, though, were artisans, and another 10 percent were mariners, with the rest in miscellaneous occupations. Charles County merchant Thomas Stone described the capital Port Tobacco to Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer in the late 1780s as "a most convenient stand for any merchant who proposes to carry on the purchase of tobacco, or any other produce in this part of Maryland." Trade and artisanship were geographically connected. When some attempted to have the courthouse moved, Stone noted that "it is impossible that there can be a Town of any Consequence at Chappel point, because there is no Subject to export which will bring any considerable trade & because there is no reason to expect Manufacturers to settle there."[25]

Baily Marks counted 129 householders in nonfarming occupations in 1790 in St. Mary's County, south and east of Charles County, and near double that number in 1820, although there was a gentle decline in numbers thereafter. These nonfarmers increasingly favored small towns as a place to reside and do business. Leonardtown, a little downriver from Port Tobacco, was a hive of many kinds of activity. As the capital of St. Mary's, its courthouse stood at the top of Main Street. When it burned down on March 8, 1831, its replacement was built in Greek revival style. Besides public officials who no doubt proudly occupied this building, the town's residents also included, in 1810, for example, five attorneys, two physicians, a clergyman, six storekeepers, three tavern keepers, a sailor, a carpenter, three tailors, and a shoemaker. In other years there was a teacher and a bricklayer, 12 others involved in unspecified professions, yet others in unspecified forms of commerce (6 in 1820, 4 in 1840), and others still in unspecified forms of manufacturing (11 in 1820, 23 in 1840). There was also a race course and a Leonardtown Jockey Club. It also had a school from the 1820s, an Academy for young ladies from 1835, and from 1840 a printing shop in which Francis M. Jarbo produced the *Leonardtown Herald*. In 1847, St. Aloysius Catholic Church moved two miles southward to relocate in Leonardtown, indicating the increasing importance of the place.[26]

Of course, these places were not all about business. St. Inigoes Town in St. Mary's County first formed around a tobacco-inspecting warehouse that closed in 1830, but a store and a blacksmith's shop appeared nearby, and by the 1820s they were joined by five merchants, a tailor, and other unidentified craftsmen. People could do business there on their way to the church at St. Inigoes Manor. Or else they might find another form of recreation. The Reverend Joseph Jackson complained in a letter to a friend named James Kemp in 1814 that his Episcopal Chapel was "so contiguous to the grog shop," which he described as a "temple of satan" wherein occurred "drinking, gaming, fighting, cursing" and other kinds of Sabbath breaking. The place was quite notorious. After an Easter Monday 1817 "riot" by revelling African Americans, a letter to the editor of the *National Intelligencer* complained that one could "ride by a dram shop almost any day of the week, or any hour of the day, after breakfast, and you will see the doors and yards of these shops crowded with white men and boys," so it was only to be expected, he believed, that black men and boys would get similarly drunk and disorderly. Port Tobacco was evidently a more polite place. Thomas Stone's brother, Walter, called it "the most agreeable . . . I know, Philad[elphia] not excepted." Townspeople kept the place tidy too. Any geese and swine allowed to run loose could be shot on sight.[27]

Of 15 large planters in 1800, only one, George Calvert, possessed a town lot. Three of 17 did so in 1810, and two of 12 did so in 1820. Among other planters, the numbers with town lots declined from eight of 54 in 1800 to four of 43 in 1810, and two of 48 in 1820. The five of 123 large yeomen (4.1 percent) who owned town land in 1800 grew to ten of 147 (6.8 percent) by 1810 and then fell to seven of 193 (5 percent) by 1820. Fourteen of 287 small yeomen owned town lots in 1800, 12 of 260 did so in 1810, as did 7 of 193 in 1820. That is a fall in numbers by half and as a proportion of small yeomen a fall from 4.9 percent in 1800 and 4.6 percent in 1810 to 3.6 percent in 1820. Small yeomen's share of lots fell consistently too, from 26.6 percent in 1800 to 18 percent and 12 percent in 1810 and 1820 respectively. But their share of values at first fell precipitously and then, to an extent, recovered: from 30 percent of the value of town lots in 1810, they held only 11 percent in 1810, but 18.6 percent in 1820. It is notable that although by 1820 their shares had fallen considerably from those in 1810, as had the proportion among them who held town lots, small yeomen remained the largest holders of town land besides smallholders. Also, by 1820, small yeomen's town land was more valuable per lot, on average, than anyone else's, including that of smallholders. This increasing value might indicate why some small yeomen were surviving and even prospering, despite the fact that many in the group were struggling and even failing.

It seems probable that some of them were not principally small-yeomen-agriculturalists after all, but perhaps made a living by artisanship supplemented by small-scale agriculture. It is very likely, for example, that Philip Miller was an artisan as well as a farmer. In 1820, Miller owned 242 rural acres, worth $515.53, including improvements worth $20. He also had three lots of land in Bladensburg, however, worth $400, plus four slaves, two men and two women, all of working age, and four ounces of plate. His total taxable wealth was $1,652.53, almost $600 more than the average for small yeomen in that year.[28] George W. Biscoe was probably an artisan too. He held 49½ acres, worth $214.87, and was therefore very much at the lower end of the small yeomen landownership scale. But he also owned two-and-a-half lots in Nottingham, worth a substantial $1,080.01. His 12 slaves, five of whom were men aged between 14 and 45, were far too many in number to have cultivated Biscoe's land on a full-time basis, at least in tobacco. He also held $775 in other property and had a total worth of $2,953.88. Of course, Philip Miller and George W. Biscoe might have rented farms, but even in that event these owners of town lots were clearly much better off than most of those with landholdings of small yeoman size.[29]

As with other forms of property ownership, changes in the distribution of improvements were complex. They were small, but in some ways nonetheless significant. The principal changes in ownership of improvements were similar to those in landownership generally: a slightly more even distribution among large planters, small- and medium-sized planters, and large yeomen; decline for the class of small yeomen; and increasing economic strength overall for smallholders.[30] In 1800, 10 out of 15 large planters owned taxable built improvements on their land, as did 30 out of 54 smaller and middling planters. Much smaller proportions of large yeomen did so: 33 out of 123. Those who had them did well, though, out of diversification. Zachariah Mattingly of St. Mary's County owned 600 acres of land, 20 slaves, and owned a water gristmill and was a building contractor as well. John Kilgour also owned 600 acres and was also a building contractor. In addition, he owned the Charlotte Hall tavern and in 1820 had a carpenter and a blacksmith among his 43 slaves, three other slaves employed "in manufacturing" and two white men in his household who were "in commerce."[31]

Still smaller proportions of small-yeomen-owned built improvements: 34 out of 287. Not many smallholders did either, just 4 out of 45 in 1800. The numbers of large planters with built improvements fell to 8 out of 17 in 1810 but rose to 10 out of 12 by 1820. The same probably insignificant pattern of change happened with other planters too, where numbers fell to 17 of 43 by 1810 but rose to 23 of 48 by 1820. The numbers of large yeomen with taxable improvements rose, but stayed very similar as a proportion of all large yeomen: 47 of 147 in 1810 and 43 of 141 in 1820. Both the numbers and proportions of smallholders with taxable improvements rose: to 8 of 64 in 1810 and 14 of 68 in 1820. The number of small yeomen with taxable built improvements fell very slowly and very steadily from 34 in 1800 to 33 in 1810 and 32 in 1820. But as the total number of small yeomen declined from 287 to 260 and 193 in those years, the proportions among them with taxable improvements rose from 12 to 17 percent. This again suggests that it was those small yeomen who could diversify the most who were the best off. Bennett Abell of Lower Newtown Hundred in St. Mary's County is a case in point. He died in 1835 still owning his 218-acre farm. He had six acres planted in tobacco, 25 in wheat, and 10 in corn, and his inventory also recorded oats, cattle, sheep, hogs, and cordwood. He also owned a water grist mill, and among his 26 slaves was a trained carpenter. William Bean, also of St. Mary's County, Maryland, was a carpenter and miller as well as a farmer. Starting out with 140 acres of land, he eventually acquired as many as 357 acres, and when he died in 1825 he had $4,254-worth of personal property.[32]

It is worth noting that small yeomen's improvements were valuable, though not surprisingly not as valuable as those of most others. The 10 large planters who owned taxable improvements in 1800 collectively held $4,701.87 or $470.19 each on average. The 30 smaller and middling planters held $11,662.56: $388.75 each. The 33 large yeomen with collectively $8,270.33 in taxable improvements held an average of $250.62 each. The total figure among 34 small yeomen was $5,887.35, amounting to $173.16 each. The four smallholders' $534 in taxable improvements added up to $133.50 each. Over subsequent years the average amounts held by owners in each group rose slightly, except among large planters where the average value rose very significantly, even while quantities fell a little. By 1810, average holdings among large planters had more than doubled to $971.23 and by 1820 were $1,356.04. Among other planters it fell by almost $50 to $339.17 by 1810, but was $391.54 in 1820, or

$2.79 more than in 1800. For large yeomen, the averages were $259.97 in 1810, a rise of just under $10, and $293.22 in 1820. With smallholders, the average in 1810 was $131.67, a fall of just shy of $2, but $156.19 in 1820. For small yeomen there was a rise of over $10 to $185.36 by 1810, but a fall to $166.38 by 1820.

Nevertheless, small yeomen with improvements were considerably better off than those without, and by more than the value of their improvements. An example of a small yeoman with substantial improvements in 1820 can be found in the person of Notley Maddox, owner of 260 acres worth $1,496.68, an amount that included $500 in improvements. In slaveholding terms, Notley Maddox was a planter. His 20 slaves were far too many to cultivate 260 acres, and with 15 ounces of plate he had a total taxable wealth of $3,436.68.[33] Apparently situating him at the lower end of the small yeomanry, John Palmer's 45 acres in 1820 were worth $338.32, and included in the valuation were $200 worth of improvements. A substantial slaveholder, with 11 slaves, he also held 8 ounces of plate and a taxable total of $1,014.32.[34]

Subtracting the values and acreages of town lots and the value of built improvements from total real estate figures reveals the net values of rural land each group held, and that small yeomen were yet again disadvantaged compared to others. In 1800, rural smallholders' land was worth an average $4.32 per acre and was by far the most valuable of all landowning groups, indicating that many of those even without taxable built improvements made livings in artisanship or other nonagricultural or extra-agricultural pursuits.[35] In the same year, large planters' land was worth an average $1.65 per acre, while that of other planters' was an average $2. It seems that smaller and middling planters exploited their land more intensively than large planters, as shown in the analysis of labor–land ratios below. Large yeomen's rural soil was worth an average $1.47 per acre, while small yeomen's was worth $1.25. Small yeomen's land remained the least valuable in 1810 and 1820 too. Also, small yeomen's average net values per acre declined slightly during the second decade, and might have done so during the first decade too, were it not for the increase of rating of taxable values that took place in 1801. Meanwhile, the average value of all other landowning groups' land increased, except that of small and middling planters. The value of smallholders' land was an average $5.44 in 1810 and $5.79 in 1820. That of large planters was $4.14 in 1810 and 6 cents more in 1820, while that of smaller and middling planters was $4.83 in 1810 and 30 cents less in 1820. Large yeomen's land was worth an average $4.06 in 1820, up 30 cents on 1810, while small yeomen's was $3.25 in 1810 and 3 cents less in 1820. To go back for a moment to George and Sarah Magruder, and to put their predicament in some perspective: their land was only worth 61 cents per acre in 1800, compared to the $1.25

small-yeoman average and $1.63 county average. In some ways, then, the Magruders were somewhat worse off than the average small yeoman.

Why were small yeomen's lands worth that much less than the lands of others? Given colonial historians' demolition of Avery O. Craven's soil exhaustion thesis for the tobacco south, the most likely explanation for small yeomen's low land values was that poorer people could not afford to buy high-quality soil and riverbank land in the first place and that this legacy passed through the generations by inheritance. There is, however, solid evidence that soil exhaustion was a contributing factor to at least some early national small yeomen's difficulties, and circumstantial evidence that this was the case for many. The former comes in the form of a yeoman farmer named Margaret or Peggy Adams, who certainly overworked her land and whose story concludes this chapter. The latter comes in the form of tax assessments, which indicate that small yeomen held more slaves than was good for the amount of land they possessed.[36]

For the following analysis of labor–land ratios, I have discounted slaves under the age of eight years, counted men aged 14 to 45 and women aged 14 to 36 as full hands, slaves aged 8 to 14 and men over 45 and women over 36 as half-hands, in accord with values given in the county assessments. By these measures, large planters held labor–land ratios a long way short of the ideal of between one laborer per 40 acres and one laborer per 50 acres for optimal tobacco cultivation. Their average labor–land ratio in 1800 was 1: 113 acres. Also, a high proportion of larger planters' slaves probably worked as artisans, drivers, and domestic servants, so that their labor–land ratio was probably even further from the ideal range than these figures suggest. Given that planters could invest in more slaves if they wanted to, they clearly exercised choices about how to exploit their land, including maintaining valuable tracts of forest. Owning larger numbers of families also meant potential growth of planters' labor pools. Indeed, by 1820, large planters had comparatively less land and more labor, apparently opting for more intensive cultivation, with labor–land ratios of 1: 114 in 1810 but 1: 86 in 1820. Labor–land ratios for smaller and middling planters were 1: 55 in 1800 and respectively 1: 65 and 1: 64 in 1810 and 1820, so they too left more land in fallow and perhaps in forest than they strictly needed to, and therefore also exercised options about land-use. Labor–land ratios among large yeomen were 1: 56.3 in 1800, 1: 60.9 in 1810, and 1: 54.4 in 1820, somewhat closer to the ideal, especially as more of their slaves would probably have been employed in field labor. As large yeomen's labor–land ratios did not suggest soil exhaustion and indeed were closest to the ideal for maximum tobacco production, their land was less valuable than that of planters because planters or their ancestors purchased better quality soil or more riverbank land. Small yeomen's labor–land ratios, on the other hand, at least suggest a possible problem with soil exhaustion. Small yeomen possessed the equivalent of 807 enslaved full hands in 1800, 666 in 1810, and 486 in 1820, relatively few of whom would have been employed outside of agricultural work, judging by the comparative lack of town lots and taxable improvements previously elucidated. Furthermore, when classifying small yeomen as a landowning group, I assumed that the equivalent of two free members of each household also labored in the fields. If that is correct, then small yeomen employed 1,381, 1,186, and 872 full hands in each of the years considered, meaning labor–land ratios of 1: 32 in 1800 and in 1810, and 1: 33 in 1820: consistently too few acres to leave enough in fallow to allow the soil to replenish itself.

Contemporaries noted the sometimes impoverished-looking state of small farms, including exhausted soil, and attributed it to excessive reliance on tobacco cultivation. In 1811, "A St. Mary's Farmer" wrote that "Everything is scarce on these plantations. Every living thing looks gaunt and hungry, and pinched.... Here are squalid lazy negroes, lean horses, poor cattle, runty hogs, hardly such things as veal or mutton fit to eat, pastures gleaned bare, parched; in fine, animated nature in a constant state of suffering, and the land exhausting." Similarly, 8 years later, "Agricola" a St. Mary's County correspondent of the *American Farmer*, described "Dreary and uncultivated wastes, a barren and exhausted soil; half-clothed negroes, lean and hungry stock, a puny race of horses, a scarcity of provender, houses falling in decay, and fences wind-shaken and dilapidating." Joseph Muse's *Address upon the Dominant Errors of the Agriculture of Maryland* of 1828 mainly addressed small farmers' bad habits of rotating tobacco and corn without fallow and without fertilization.[37]

There are too many unknown variables to be sure that soil exhaustion explains why small yeomen generally had relatively low-quality land. If, for example, we discount small yeomen and members of their families and count only slaves as working hands, then small yeomen's labor–land ratios ranged between 1: 54 and 1: 59. Alternatively, many small yeomen may have leased surplus slaves to others who possessed surpluses of land. Furthermore, as Lorena Walsh has said, by the late eighteenth century productivity was sometimes lower than some historians have estimated, requiring fewer acres per laborer. It is also possible that small yeomen rented extra acres from larger landowners. County Land Records do not indicate that these arrangements occurred on a scale required to balance labor–land ratios throughout the landowning classes, although such arrangements may have been made privately or orally.[38] Nevertheless, whatever the reason, small yeomen's rural land was worth 15 to 40 percent less per acre than that of large yeomen and planters in the early nineteenth century, and was perhaps, therefore, that much less productive, which certainly helps explain many small yeomen's relative economic weakness and evident susceptibility to dispossession.

Planters and Yeomen

Furthermore, small yeomen's problems were compounded by the acquisitiveness of their planter neighbors. As we saw in chapter 1, the Calverts of Riversdale made a policy of buying up smaller farmers' crops and land. As Rosalie Calvert wrote her father, Henri Joseph Stier, in April 1805, she and her husband George made "a safe and extremely profitable speculation by buying" tobacco "from small farmers in the country." She wrote, as we saw, of making "a huge fortune, easily and without risk" from these sorts of purchases, and indeed by this means could make profits of 400 percent. Tobacco "can be bought for $4 and $3—even for $2.50 a hundred for ready cash," she informed her father in a letter of September 1805. "Our last, which we sent to Murdoch [the Calverts' European agent], brought an average of $12 a hundred net, after all expenses, etc. were paid. There hasn't been a year [recently] when you could fail to make a good speculation by buying tobacco from the small farmers at the beginning of the season."[39]

Smaller farmers had to sell tobacco early and thereby take much lower profits on it as they needed ready cash to cover their daily needs and to pay creditors and taxes. The disruption of trade through embargoes, nonintercourse, and war between 1807 and 1815 made matters even worse. A tobacco house for storage could cost $20 in the 1820s and many smaller yeomen and tenants could not afford one. Although Mrs. Calvert frequently expressed irritation at trade disruption, she and her husband anticipated huge rewards when commerce resumed. During these years, the Calverts and other large planters purchased tobacco from farmers who did not have the means to stockpile crops and wait for the resumption of trade. And Rosalie Calvert showed that she could be just as ruthless in relieving the needy of their crops as she was when relieving others of stocks. As she wrote her father in the spring of 1809, "[e]veryone was waiting for another change [in tobacco prices], so I was only able to buy 100 hogsheads at $5 and $3—and this sometimes one or two [hogsheads] at a time from people who had the sheriff at their heels."[40] As we saw before, the Calverts continued growing their own and purchasing others' tobacco up to the Treaty of Ghent of 1816, at which point they made a gross profit of around $85,000 from 410 hogsheads exported to Europe. She complained that "if Murdoch had followed our instructions" to wait for a better price because supply would nowhere near meet demand, "we would have had $20,000 more," so the Calverts could lose out too, but that figure also represents a loss to all those smaller farmers who had sold their tobacco to the Calverts in the first place.[41]

Planters coveted smaller farmers' land as well as their crops. George Calvert's landholdings increased from 2,000 acres in 1788, when he took control of Mount Albion plantation at the death of his father, to almost 14,000 acres in 1835, the year before he began redistributing property among his children. The most dramatic leaps in large planters' landholdings came from inheritances, dowries, and purchases from other planters who had either encountered financial difficulties or who liquidated some or all their assets for easy distribution among heirs. But, as we saw previously, smaller increments to landholdings were more frequent and, cumulatively, highly significant.[42] What is also clear, though presumably unintentionally, in Rosalie Calvert's descriptions of the negotiations preceding a number of these transactions is that smaller farmers fought hard to retain their property, resisting and perhaps resenting their richer neighbors' depredations.

The Halls of Part of Partnership

In 1814, Rosalie Calvert reported to her European family on her American family's desire to purchase a "superb farm . . . called Oatland" and an adjacent property belonging to two brothers called Henry Lowe Hall and William A. Hall. The Halls lived either together or on adjacent farms on a tract called Part of Partnership. Judging by the assessments, Henry Hall at least was a fairly substantial planter, with 1,034 ¾ acres of land, worth $11,103.66, 20 slaves, and a total wealth of $13,405.66. William Hall owned a total of $3,432.34, including 250 acres of land, worth $2,603.34, and seven slaves.[43] They appear, though, effectively to have co-owned their properties, for they seemed to be in some kind of financial trouble together. According to the Land Records, the Calverts purchased 595 acres of the Halls' land for $25,960 on April 6, 1815.[44] But the Calverts already had possession of a good deal of the Halls' land by late 1813 or early 1814. Local assessments recorded an augmentation of the Calverts' land by 590 acres of Part of Partnership in 1814. Also, as Rosalie wrote her brother in February 1814 of a recent purchase,

> [e]very foot of the land is of the greatest fertility; 80 acres are in woods of the best quality, and there is plenty of pasture. I consider this a most fortunate purchase. The poor man who was obliged to sell it [at public auction] in order to pay his debt is an old bachelor who is always drunk. He has 700 adjoining acres where he lives in a fine brick house. He can't live long, and at his death the part which he has kept will probably also be sold.[45]

The Calverts were clearly eager to get the rest of the Halls' land, but the Halls were reluctant to let it go. In what was presumably some desperation, Henry Hall offered the Calverts 200 of his remaining 700 acres. But the Calverts wanted all or nothing, probably calculating that the debt-burdened alcoholic's debts would increase and he might sell more cheaply. As Rosalie related,

> I have purchased a very valuable property (whose description you will find in my observations). The owner of the property is so weighed down with debt that I believe we could acquire that [adjoining] one, too, which would be most desirable. He offered to sell my husband 200 acres the other day, but we turned it down unless he would sell us the entire farm of 700 acres with a good brick house.[46]

By this time, the Halls were evidently heavily beholden to the Calverts. "We have leased it for one year," Mrs. Calvert wrote in June 1814 of the land already purchased, "to the former owner at five percent interest on the purchase [price]. I don't know whether he will want to continue this arrangement."[47] The tenants turned out to be unable to continue the arrangement, and it was the Calverts who terminated it. As Rosalie reflected in October 1816,

> [t]he owner was heavily in debt and it was necessary to buy up his debts to avoid having the land attached. . . . You will recall that at the time of the sale Mr. Hall's nephew had his grain, etc. on the land, and he agreed to rent [the property] for the year for $500. . . . [However,] during the following two years he could not afford to rent it.

Rosalie Calvert still hoped to get a good return on the land, however. She planned to replace the problematic tenant by purchasing "three or four negroes" and "supplying four or five of our own negresses, in order to work the place with an overseer." She concluded confidently that "I shall report the profit involved."[48]

Oatlands began returning its costs by the end of 1817, and by then the Calverts were hoping to purchase the remainder of it. "We were over there a few weeks ago," Rosalie wrote of Oatlands in August of that year,

> with all the children who were much amused at dining in the woods on ham and a couple of cold chickens, with a tree trunk for our table and cushions from the carriage for chairs. We bought three negroes who are there with five of our negresses, and they have been busy building houses for the negroes, for the overseer, for tobacco, a barn, etc. Last year they made over 100,000 bricks there. The crop they are growing there looks very promising for a first season. The owner of the adjoining property of about 600 or 700 acres just died, and it will be sold this winter.[49]

For some reason, however, the Calverts did not buy the remaining 600 or 700 acres. No relevant transaction appears in the Land Records and the tax assessments record no further augmentations of Calvert land in Collington and Western Branch hundreds at this time or later.

Peggy Adams of Copenhagen

Small farmers fought hard to retain their property, but the persistence of the rich often paid off. The Calverts had short-term difficulties but long-term success, for example, in acquiring the land of a widow named Margaret Adams. According to the 1800 assessments, "Peggy" Adams owned 102 acres, called Copenhagen, 20 slaves, and near $2,000 in total wealth. By 1804, however, she either had debt problems or else wished to settle her affairs before she died. On November 9 that year, she sold her land in Prince George's County and a lot in Washington DC to Benjamin Armitage of New York city for a dollar, leasing it all back from him "for her natural life" for "the yearly rent…of One Cent Current Money." A month later, she deeded her by then 21 slaves to Benjamin Lowndes also for $1 and similarly retained life-long use of them and even the right to sell and manumit them, provided she reimbursed him. She later sold a slave named Peale to Leonard M. Deakins for $300, another named Stanley to Thomas Claxton of Washington for $450, and manumitted a woman named Caroline and her two children in May 1807, indicating that her immediate debt problems were solved or that she had settled her affairs to her own satisfaction.[50]

Peggy Adams thus lost full ownership of almost all her property, and her children, if she had any, would not have benefited from any landed inheritance. But she retained a good deal of economic freedom for herself, even if it was in circumstances not of her own choosing. Though her deed to Benjamin Armitage did not say so, she must have retained the right to sell her leasehold (provided she reimbursed him, presumably), for the Calverts tried to buy her out. They particularly wanted her land because it was situated between their own Riversdale and Buck Lodge plantations. Rosalie expressed the hope of obtaining it as early as 1806. "Peggy Adams' small plantation," she wrote her father, "which you recall is in the middle of ours, is going to be sold shortly. If it goes at a reasonable price, we ought to buy it because it is completely surrounded by our land. Besides, it is a continual source of problems from the cattle and negroes of its tenants, which frequently cause us a great deal of damage."[51]

Peggy Adams, however, refused to budge, despite considerable pressure. "You ask whether we have bought the land," Rosalie Calvert wrote her father the following year,

> of Peggy [Adams] and the late Mr. Cramphin. We have not yet made these acquisitions. Of course, we ought to have Peggy Adams' [land] some day, but there is no dealing with that ill-natured shrew. I had a four-page letter

> from her the other day complaining to me that Mr. Calvert had offered her too low a price, and would you believe that he offered her $16 cash an acre—which is much more than any other land in the neighborhood.[52]

It is a pity that Peggy Adams's letter is lost, as its contents would have provided insights on how a poor farmer, once a small yeoman and then a freeholding tenant, related to an imperious planter family who felt they "ought" to have her land. Did Mrs. Adams assert a kind of republican equality despite her social and economic circumstances and despite the pretensions of the Calverts? Did she give expression to the same "manly" independence exhibited by her contemporary, Sarah Magruder? Mrs. Calvert's offended reaction to her letter suggests that she did. What is certain is that Peggy Adams felt her land was worth more than $16 an acre and she was not willing to settle for so low an offer, even from people with the clout of the Calverts. In other words, she had a sense of her economic rights and she literally stood her ground.

Nevertheless, the Calverts eventually gained possession of Copenhagen, along with other properties. "This year," Rosalie wrote her father in 1811, "my husband bought the best part of Thomas Dick's plantation which adjoins ours. Peggy Adams' little farm is going to be sold; if it is cheap enough that we could make some interest, we will buy it and cover it with fruit trees." Rosalie Calvert proposed planting an orchard because "the soil is too worn out and poor to continue cultivating it," further indicating a problem of soil exhaustion among small yeomen. The Calverts bought the 100 acres from Benjamin Armitage on April 2, 1814, for $1,000, after Peggy Adams died. "We have bought a piece of Cramphin's land which lay between us and the road going to Baltimore," Rosalie told her father four years later, "and also the small plantation of Peggy Adams which our property surrounded."[53] And so it was that another plantation got a little larger and another small farm disappeared.

Chapter 4

"Being allowed the liberty": Tenant Farmers and Artisans

To Rent or Not to Rent?

In December 1804, Rosalie Calvert wrote to her father, Henri Joseph Stier, about a dilemma that wealthy planters like the Calverts knew well. "I don't see any advantage in buying land," she informed him, "We find we have too much to give it the attention it requires to be productive. If you rent it out, you have the drawback of not being on the spot, tenants destroy the forest, impoverish the soil, and then you can't be sure of being paid."[1] On another occasion she wrote that although she was keeping herself "informed of all properties for sale . . . few possess favorable conditions or return a good interest unless you cultivate the land yourself." Any property purchased therefore "should have good soil and especially good forest which can be leased, as the tenant ruins your land, never fertilizing it, and cuts your woods without the slightest regard—if he does not take it to market!"[2] She also noted another time that leased land "would deteriorate in value every year because the tenant isn't interested in improving it but rather in getting all he can out of it."[3] Although Rosalie Calvert was given to groundless general condemnations of working people, the specificity and repetition of some her observations about tenant farmers give them a ring of truth, even though tenants' possible motivations were not part of Mrs. Calvert's assessments of their actions.

Indeed, Rosalie Calvert sometimes related direct experience of problems with tenants. In 1814, she wrote to her father about land that he owned and that she supervised in his absence, informing him that "two tenants who are staying there have not paid their rent so you won't earn any return this year." She noted that "perhaps" next year "some new [tenant] would do better," but also suggested that she could on his behalf "sell it right away at a good profit." Her advice in this instance, though, was that he should keep the property, as "[m]ost of the land is wooded and since it is only thirteen miles from Baltimore and on a good road, it will increase in value daily," even if uncultivated or populated by defaulting leaseholders. Some of the Calverts' own tenants also defaulted around this time, due to hardships caused by the War of 1812. As Rosalie wrote in 1815, "[a]ll our poor tenants have been so hard hit by the war that it was impossible to rent this year. . . . [Another property] is in the same predicament. There are two wretched houses on that property, each rented for $35; one of the tenants defaulted, so for the year 1814, I have only received $35."[4]

Planters therefore generally preferred enslaved workers on their land. Slaves could be supervised more directly, there was no danger of them not paying any rents, and if they underperformed then their masters could literally whip up profits from them. Mastery over slaves was so great that Rosalie Calvert referred, as above, to exploiting land with enslaved workers as "cultivating it oneself."[5] That was undoubtedly an exaggerated or perhaps an idealized notion of the level of mastery that planters achieved over the enslaved, but they certainly had greater power over them than they did over tenants. All the same, planters sometimes found it more profitable to employ tenants than not, even if only as a temporary expedience. As Mrs. Calvert put it in August 1810, referring to land she proposed to buy for her father as an inheritance for her children: "Our negroes are multiplying and within a few years could cultivate these properties, which in the meantime could be leased out, although they wouldn't produce that much interest."[6] Five years later, she proposed "a very valuable acquisition" for her father, asking him whether he preferred "to rent this property and risk the tenant cutting down the fine forest to grow corn each year, thus impoverishing the soil, or on the other hand, lose the interest on a considerable investment." Despite the risks, she advised him to buy, reckoning on a "five or six percent return" on the value of land by leasing it out.[7]

Landlords and Landlessness

The Calverts were by no means alone in having "too much" land "to give it the attention it requires to be productive." The 69 Prince Georgian planters with 800 acres or more in 1800 owned close to 118,000 acres of rural land and held 3,000 slaves, amounting to an equivalent of 1,631½ full-time laborers. Their mean labor-land ratio was thus one slave per 72 acres, well short of the ideal of between 1: 40 and 1: 50 for maximum tobacco cultivation, even without accounting for illness, injury, disability, pregnancy, and employment in nonagricultural or extraagricultural work. In 1810 and 1820, the ratios were, respectively, 1: 83 and 1: 72 again.[8] Labor-land ratios were furthest from the ideal for large planters with 2,000 acres or more. Theirs were 1: 113 in 1810, 1: 114 in 1810, and one laborer per 86 acres of land in 1820.

Planters had numerous options for dealing with their apparent labor shortage. One possibility, as Rosalie Calvert noted, was simply to leave tracts of land uncultivated, offering the advantages of extra fallow and of valuable forest cultivation. Another option was to increase wheat and other food-crop production, buy or breed livestock, and decrease cultivation of the more labor-intensive tobacco staple. Alternatively, planters could hire slaves and employ wage laborers. Planters chose all these different options at different times, depending on prevailing economic conditions and their own particular temporary requirements. As a result, their land generally remained an economic asset, judging by the way it retained its value. In 1800, 1810, and 1820 planters' land (minus town lots and built improvements) was respectively worth an average of $1.84, $4.49, and $4.38 per acre. These figures compare with the average value of land per acre owned by yeomen with fewer than 800 acres in the same years: $1.39, $3.66, and $3.81.

But another option that planters often took was to lease land to tenants. The Federal Direct Tax of 1798 reveals that at least 129 people were renting land out in Prince George's County, Maryland, at the time, 34 of them to more than one tenant. William Dudley Digges, owner of 4,253 acres of land, with at least 14 tenants, was the largest multiple renter.[9] Of the 69 planters in 1800, no fewer than 23 were landlords between 1798 and 1800, including at least eight of the 15 largest planters with 2,000 acres or more.[10] In addition, the apparently landless Mary Wootton leased out some of the more than 1,500 acres she managed as Turner Wootton's widow.[11] Some larger yeomen were landlords too, including Francis Magruder, Tobias Belt, and Thomas Richardson, who respectively owned 798¼ acres, 625½ acres, and 578¾ acres of land.[12] Even a few small-scale landowners leased, such as Rezin Beck, with 116 acres, and Richard Ponsonby, with five acres.[13] The Federal Direct Tax records for Prince George's County are incomplete, so 129 renters is very much a minimum figure. Other Prince Georgians may also have rented but left no leasing records, and others might have leased land outside the county, just as 17 non-Prince Georgians were absentee landlords of county realty.

There was no shortage of people to rent to. Planters, yeomen, and smallholders formed a minority of the free population in the early national tobacco-plantation south. In the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century, the landless proportion of the free population in the tidewater Chesapeake grew from a third to more than half, and the increase in landlessness continued after independence.[14] Of 1,712 free Prince Georgian heads of household in 1800, 1,188, a fraction short of 70 percent, owned no land. By 1810, the number of landless had dropped to 1,089 out of 1,620 free heads of household, a slightly lower landlessness rate of

67 percent. By 1820, however, the number of landless Prince Georgians had risen to 1,333, or very nearly 75 percent of the county's 1,795 free householders. The drop in landlessness by 1810 was due to disproportionate outmigration to Kentucky by nonlandowners, but thereafter the long-term growth of landlessness resumed, compounded by trade embargo, nonintercourse, the War of 1812, and a drought and grain harvest failure in 1816. Landlessness was not quite as extensive in St. Mary's County, Maryland, where wheat farming in the east of the county meant fewer poorer farmers. But it was still high and rising. In 1790, landlessness there stood at 58 percent, and it then rose steadily to 61 percent by 1800, 66 percent by 1810, 67 percent by 1820, and 71 percent by 1840. In the tobacco-growing Fourth District, in the west of the county, landlessness reached 78 percent by 1840.[15]

It is often impossible to tell exactly how the landless made their livings, but probably most were tenants. The Federal Direct Tax of 1798 identified 183 tenant farmers, 29 tenant artisans, and 29 overseers in Prince George's County, Maryland. But it recorded another 166 landless taxables with no discernible occupation, did not record every nonowner occupier of tenant and overseer houses, did not always account for nontaxables, and, in any case, schedules for a number of Prince Georgian districts are lost. If we assume, though, that the 166 landless without identified occupations were wage workers, and suppose that these figures accurately represent occupations among all landless householders, then 45 percent of the landless were tenant farmers, 7 percent were tenant artisans, and 48 percent were overseers or otherwise worked for wages. In numerical terms, that means there were 535 tenant farmers, 83 tenant artisans, and 570 wage workers among the 1,188 landless and total of 1,712 household heads in 1800. Tenancy was thus common, accounting for over 36 percent of free householders, including artisan renters. This figure probably understates the extent of tenancy, though, as some of the landless without identified occupations may have been tenants rather than wage workers. Also, a number of people probably switched back and forth between tenancy and wage labor, or else worked for wages while single or newly married, undertaking tenancies later on in life when they were older and had larger families to support and to help around the farm. Over time, then, it is likely that more of the landless rented farms than these statistics suggest. Wage labor and bi-occupationalism were extensive in staple-crop economies where secondary crops were cultivated, as in Maryland's lower western shore, though they were more common in mixed economies, such as in much of the rest of Maryland and in Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York, and throughout New England.[16]

In the early colonial Chesapeake, freed indentured servants commonly obtained land, often with capital accumulated from a few years' renting after their terms had expired. Mobility declined from the late seventeenth century, however, and immobility was common by the early national era.[17] Of the 1,188 nonlandowners of 1800, 396 still lived in the county in 1810, of whom 74 had become landowners (five returning to landlessness by 1820). Of 158 who survived to 1820, only 46 became landowners (excluding the five temporary landowners of 1810). In short, 18.7 percent acquired land over one decade, and just shy of 30 percent over two decades. These figures overstate the extent of opportunity, though, for the propertied landless were much more likely to become landowners than the unpropertied. Over 25 percent of landless taxables in 1800 obtained land by 1810, compared to just over 10 percent of nontaxables. And almost 40 percent of landless taxables obtained land by 1820, compared with fewer than 20 percent of nontaxables. Also, of the 15 nontaxables of 1800 who obtained land by 1820, 11 had acquired some property by 1810. The market price for land (distinct from assessed values) was normally £2 to £10 per acre in 1800. Even buying a small farm, then, was well beyond the means of the majority with little or no taxable wealth. Also, few landless nonslaveholders became slaveholders, and thus the acquisition of labor does not seem to have necessarily been a first step toward landownership.[18]

Landlessness and Westward Migration and Settlement

Nor was westward migration necessarily a step toward landownership. As far as geographic mobility is concerned, 792 householders disappeared from Prince George's County's records between 1800 and 1810, and 1,030 did so between 1800 and 1820. Nontaxables disappeared from the census at twice the rate of the wealthiest Prince Georgians and 50 percent more often than poorer property owners over the course of a decade. Although it is impossible to tell how many died or relinquished the position of household head, this disparity indicates disproportionate outmigration by the poor. It also suggests that many of those who stayed did so because they expected to gain, and thus the upward mobility figures among survivors again overstates the extent of opportunity. In St. Mary's County too, over one third of tenants moved out of the county, and Bayly Marks concludes that "these men simply could not make a living growing tobacco." Of those migrating from St. Mary's County in the 1790s, 90 percent were landless and 67 percent were nontaxables. Furthermore, migration peaked in years when tobacco prices were low: 1791–1793, 1801–1802, 1809–1811, 1821, and 1830.[19]

Poor migrants generally did not fare well. Those going to neighboring counties such as St. Mary's, where landlessness rates were 65 percent in 1800 and 75 percent in 1840, had little chance of finding land. Most migrants, however, as with 72 percent of those from St. Mary's, were

Kentucky-bound, and certainly expected to fare better there than most of them actually did. British-American colonists first appeared in Kentucky in a trickle in the 1750s and soon word was sent back east "to Move to the land of Milk & Honey," as early Kentucky settler George Thompson advised Virginia laggard John Breckinridge. According to Richard Henry Lee, "the powerful emigrations" to "Kentucki" and elsewhere came from "the desire of removing from heavy taxes, and the search after land." The 1790 census lists 73,677 people, including the enslaved, in the Kentucky district of what was still then Virginia. By 1800, there were 220,955 in the 8-year-old state. The rapidity of geographic expansion is evident in the fact that at the time of statehood in 1792 Kentucky had nine counties. It had 13 by the end of that year and 44 by the end of 1802.[20]

Migrants' expectations were fuelled by promotional literature of various kinds. Between 1789 and 1799, Maryland newspapers carried advertisements for 480,000 acres of undeveloped land in the west that was available either by lottery or on easy terms and, in the tradition of colonial promotional literature encouraging migration to the New World, sponsors of Kentucky settlement offered the promise of cheap and easy land and personal independence and happiness that went with it. Earlier than that, in 1786, the *Maryland Gazette* advertised tracts of between 160 and 1,000 acres "on the waters of the Little Kanhawa," describing the lands as "of the first quality, rich, level, well watered, abounding in sugar trees, poplar, walnut, locust, wild cherry, oak, and other valuable timber. There are fine fish and wild fowl in the streams; deer and turkies in the woods, many good mill seats." The commercial prospects were good, as there "is an easy communication with the Ohio, Pittsburg, and soon will be with the Patowmack." Buying was easy, as "A long time will be allowed to purchasers" and "Good tobacco or cotton, which may be easily raised, will be taken in payment." And applications could be made locally, to a "Mr. West" in Prince George's County. The advert concluded with an appeal to those struggling in the tidewater that "it is not to be doubted, but that many people who are forced to pay heavy rents and tend worn-out lands, which produce little or nothing, will avail themselves of an immediate opportunity of providing for their families in a rich, fertile soil, where the necessaries of life can easily be raised."[21]

John Filson's *The Discovery, Settlement and present State of Kentucke* (1784), as well as giving information and providing the first published map of the region, enthusiastically encouraged the less well-off to believe they would become well-off by going there. Filson listed

> the happy circumstances, that the inhabitants of Kentucke will probably enjoy, from the possession of a country so extensive and fertile…where afflicted humanity raises her drooping head; where springs a harvest for the poor; where conscience ceases to be a slave, and laws are no more that the security of happiness.

> "In your country," he continued, "like the land of promise, flowing with milk and honey,...you shall eat bread without scarceness, and not lack any thing in it....Thus, your country, favoured with the smiles of heaven, will probably be inhabited by the first people the world ever knew."

Politicians and writers in the east certainly latched on to images of free western land as a way of solving the problem presented to their views of an ideal agrarian society by overcrowding and growing landlessness in longer-settled areas. Charles Pinckney of South Carolina orated at the federal convention of 1787 that "The vast extent of unpeopled territory which opens to the frugal & industrious a sure road to competency & independence will effectually prevent for a considerable time the increase of the poor or discontented, and be the means of preserving that equality of condition which so eminently distinguishes us." James Madison assured Thomas Jefferson that the West would absorb the "redundant" and preserve or restore the yeomanry as the basis of the American republic.[22]

Jefferson and others indeed actively attempted to make Kentucky a genuine land of opportunity. Jefferson drafted a clause for the 1776 Virginia Constitution that would entitle "every person of full age neither owning nor having owned [50] acres of land" to be given that by the state in the west. The convention struck the promise out, but nevertheless allowed "That all persons, who are now actually settled on any unlocated or unappropriated lands in Virginia, to which there is no other just claim, shall have the preemption, or preference, in the grants of such land." The following year the General Assembly upheld the right of preemption of up to 400 acres per family for those who settled western lands before June 24, 1776. Subsequently, Jefferson's land office bill proposed resurrecting "the antient custom of importation rights" or headrights of 50 acres to anyone moving there and 50 acres more for any other person they took with them. Jefferson also allowed 75 acres of land to every free Virginian man and woman after he or she married, to effect, as he put it to Edmund Pendleton in January 1778, "the more equal Distribution of Lands, and to encourage Marriage and Population by making Provision for the Natives of the Country."[23]

Later on, however, land speculators lobbied the legislature and got these laws changed through the creation in 1779 of a Land Office that would be those speculators' creature. It allowed wealthy buyers to purchase any acreage they could afford at £40 per acre. All that was left of preemption rights for settlers was an ability to claim 400 acres if they had settled before January 1, 1778 and had made a crop of corn or resided there one year. Later settlers could have 400 acres but at the state price, or 1,000 acres if they had made improvements. Petitioners complained that those "who have suffered equally as much as they that first setled, who could only loose their all; is now deprived of the opportunity of securing any land except four hundred acres and that at the state price which is fair from many of our capacities to be able to comply with." These kinds of complaints were well justified. After 1779, land speculation was so rife that by the turn of the nineteenth century only about 5 percent of properties were still owned by their original patentees. Paul W. Gates estimated that by 1821 a quarter of the land in Kentucky was claimed by just 21 large-scale speculators and that banks and other out-of-state investors had acquired one-third of Kentucky realty through foreclosures and forced sales. Even in regions supposedly reserved for the deserving poor, speculators got their hands on the lands of those they were originally intended for. The 1779 land law, for example, reserved the southwestern region for revolutionary war soldiers' pay, but by the 1790s military warrants were mostly in the hands of large landowners and speculators.[24]

The profits that rich investors could make out of land were huge. Arthur Hopkins of Green County informed his cousin, John Breckinridge, in November 1793 that he could buy 1,000 acres for £5 or £6 per 100 acres and then sell it for £30 per 100 to a Colonel Casey, another speculator who himself then made large profits. As Hopkins noted, Casey "has speculated a great deal in Lands here, and made a clever little Fortune by it." David Meade of Fayette County thus wrote in 1802 of land speculation as "a profession scarcely heard of in Virginia," and yet, he continued, "here are many—who have no other occupation, or other means of support, than that of bartering lands and other property." Speculators often resorted to various subterfuges to undermine the already limited restrictions placed on their investment. John Campbell of Henderson County admitted in a letter of 1805 to his brother David to obtaining lands illegally. He noted that "it has been a practice among land locators in this country to take up headrights in the names of their absent friends. . . . This is an evasion of the law, but one that is now universally practiced in this country, indeed some have gone so far as to take up fictitious names." And he had "taken the liberty" of using his brother's and others' names. "As these acquisitions are the result of my own industry, and I have barely used the names of my friends," he continued, "I hope they will feel no difficulty in permitting me to transfer the certificates, as I shall do it without recourse," concluding, "as I may probably sell some of the land."[25]

An added complication in Kentucky was that of rival claims laid on land due to inaccurate surveying and multiplication of grants. In 1797, Kentucky's Surveyor General noted that "there has been Lands granted to sundries in the State above 24 Millions of Acres, that all the Counties contain but 12,476,116 Acres, so that some persons will fall short."

Of course rich people with connections could dispute rival claims much more easily than poor ones due to their greater familiarity with the law and with lawyers and due to having more money to spend on litigation. As Humphrey Marshall admitted, suing for redress of grievance was "circuitous, dilatory, expensive, and troublesome," and the outcome could "well be doubted." Caleb Wallace thus described "the Character of our Land-Jobbers" of Kentucky as follows. Though "this Business has been attended with much villainy in other Parts, Here it is reduced to a System, and to take the advantage of the Ignorance or of the Poverty of a neighbor is almost grown into reputation; which must multiply litigation and produce aversions that will not quickly subside." Wallace was a wealthy and successful speculator himself, yet still had this low opinion of his own kind.[26]

As Fredrika Teute found, speculators drove land prices up and beyond the means of many ordinary people. In 1793, unimproved lands in the Kentuckian interior sold at 15 to 20 shillings per acre, or £75 to £100 per 100 acres, while improved land fetched 25 to 40 shillings per acre. A lot of land was even pricier. David Meade considered paying £4 an acre for some land in Fayette County and John Breckinridge offered £60 an acre for prime land on Elkhorn Creek in the Bluegrass. Speculators encouraged sales with a deferred payment plan in 1797, so that starting prices fell to \$20 (£7.50) per 100 acres by 1800, and landlessness consequently declined to 52 percent by 1802. It rose again thereafter, however, especially when the legislature discontinued a state-sponsored instalment payment program in 1806, leaving new landowners encumbered with debts they could not pay and therefore facing forfeitures.[27]

Most poorer people migrating from the east simply could not afford these prices in the first place. The majority, "perhaps 75 percent" according to Fredrika Teute, "were poor and without land" when they left their old homes. There is plenty of evidence of dire poverty among those moving from the east. Moses Austin, travelling west in 1796–97, wrote that "I cannot omitt Noticeing the many Distressd. families I passd. in the Wilderness." He saw "women and children in the Month of Decembr. Travelling a Wilderness Through Ice and Snow passing large rivers, and Creeks without Shoe or Stocking, and barely as maney rags as covers their Nakedness." These people were "without money or provisions except what the Wilderness affords, the Situation of such can better be Imagined then described. to say they are poor is but faintly express'g there Situation,—life What is it, Or What can it give, to make compensation for such accumulated Misery." Not much, by Austin's own estimation, and certainly not what these people anticipated. "Ask these Pilgrims what they expect when they get to Kentuckey," he continued, "the Answer is Land. have you any. No, but I expect I can git it. have you any thing to pay for land, No. did you Ever see the Country.

No buy Every Body says its good land." Austin found it "Absurd . . . the conduct of man . . . hundreds Travelling hundreds of Miles they know not for what Nor Wither, except its to Kentucky." And he continued, with a tangible sense of the tragedy of what he beheld, "but it will not do its not Kentuckey its not the Promisd. land its not the goodly inheratence the Land of Milk and Honey." "And when arrivd. at this Heaven in Idea what do they find?" he asked, "a goodly land I will allow but to them forbidden Land. exausted and worn down with distress and disappointment they are at last Obligd. to become hewers of wood and Drawers of water."[28]

In fact, as Fredrika Teute showed, most migrants became tenants on other people's land. The 1792 tax books show 12,554 heads of household in the new state of Kentucky. Of these, 8,177—65 percent—owned no land. In the older settled Bluegrass Region, broadly defined, landlessness was as high as 72 percent in the year the state was founded. And in Bourbon, Jefferson, and Mason counties, in the heart of the Bluegrass, it was as high as 84 percent. Frontier counties still had landless majorities of an average of 56 percent. Five years later, landlessness statewide was down to 59 percent due to rapid settlement of the expanding frontier, speculators' sudden bout of liberality over payment plans, and legislation supporting preemption, but it remained as high as 81 percent in places like Montgomery County. Landlessness statewide in 1802 was 52 percent, with the highest rate being in Montgomery County again at 64 percent.[29]

Only in the southwestern counties of Logan, Livingston, and Cumberland was the rate of landlessness below 45 percent of householders. All three counties were in the Green River Military District in which land was granted as compensation to revolutionary soldiers. Also, legislation in 1795 and 1797 allowed preemptions of 100 to 200 acres. Furthermore, from 1795 land was sold there at a set price of $30 per 100 acres for second-rate land and $60 for prime, though all was deemed second-rate. The 1797 act also allowed deferred and instalment payments. Furthermore, an 1800 act "for settling and improving the vacant lands of the commonwealth" allowed settlers to claim 400 acres at $20 per 100. In 1806, however, legislators abolished deferred payments and imposed a 100 percent fine for nonpayment of taxes, resulting in an immediate increase in landlessness. Between 1792 and 1802 landlessness in Logan County in the Green River District fell from 69 percent to 26 percent. By 1807, however, it had risen back up to 40 percent.[30]

Even Kentucky founding father George Nicholas admitted that "At present a great proportion of the persons settled on lands in this country are tenants and not proprietors of the land on which they live." Such a status, he said "debases the minds of the people and deprives them of that spirit of independence which ought to be possessed by the free citizens of a free country." He also noted, consistently with agrarian philosophy, that "property is everywhere power: and from the connection between landlord and tenant the latter always has and always will in every country be more under the controul of the former than is consistent with the welfare and liberty of a free state." He even proposed taxes on land and slaves written into the constitution to raise money for a loan office to assist poor farmers and therefore be rid of taxes on crops. These policies would, he said, "diminish the necessity of those impositions, which might bring on distress ruin and discontent in the poorer and most numerous class of our citizens." He also warned that "it will take all our wisdom to keep [aristocracy] from growing to a size that effectually stop the growth of liberty." But, above all, going against seventeenth- and eighteenth-century precepts that a man should have property to vote, he favoured white manhood suffrage irrespective of means as a way of compensating for economic inequality and giving people a stake in authority and thereby preserving the security of richer people's property. Nicholas thus pushed through a Kentucky state constitution that guaranteed white manhood suffrage, a political solution of sorts to a social–economic problem. "Rather than rearrange economic relations to create a widespread landed electorate," as Fredrika Teute put it, "the ruling elite chose to alter the political framework. By incorporating the unpropertied into the body politic, they sought to maintain their control over them."[31]

Landlessness and Living Standards

Landlessness did not always equate with poverty. A few landless householders in Prince George's County, Maryland, were quite rich, including three whose taxable wealth exceeded £1,000. The wealthiest nonlandowners had access to land. Mary Wootton, for instance, owned over $5,000 in personal property in 1800, and controlled over 1,500 acres of land recorded in the name of "Turner Wootton heirs."[32] Clement Hill, Jr. owned $1,361.13, and while he had no real estate he probably used land in New Scotland, Oxen, and Bladensburg hundreds, where he lived and where Clement Hill, Sr. owned 3,000 acres but no personal property.[33] In total, the landless owned almost $155,407.74 in 1800, close to 13 percent of taxable wealth held by county residents. After 1801, their proportion of county taxable wealth fell to just over 8 percent because of the rising taxable value of land compared to other kinds of property. The quantities of personal property owned by the landless were $133,543.10 in 1810 and $136,566 in 1820.

Perhaps the most surprising fact about property ownership among the landless was the number who held slaves. Enslaved human property was more widely distributed than land. In Prince George's County, Maryland, in 1800, there were 652 slaveholders and 524 landowners among 1,712 householders, a 38 percent rate of slave ownership compared to a 31 percent rate of land ownership. Two hundred and thirty nine landless slaveholders therefore comprised over a fifth of the county's 1,188 landless householders and over a third of the county's 652 resident slaveholders in 1800. They held 1,320 slaves, or 17 percent of the total of 7,726 held by resident household heads. By 1810 the number of landless slaveholders had fallen to 205 and by 1820 to 190, or respectively 18.8 percent and 14.3 of all landless county household heads. They still formed over a third of all slaveholders in both years, however. And, with 1,054 slaves in 1810, the landless held 15.6 percent of the county's 6,761 resident-held taxable slaves. With 1,059 slaves in 1820, the landless held 16.1 percent of the county's 6,589 slaves.

Some of the landless were very substantial slaveholders. In 1800, Mary Wootton held 61 slaves, enough to count as a large planter, and Clement Hill, Jr. was among nine other nonlandowners with 20 slaves or more, and who would count as planters according to the slaveholding criterion often employed by historians to identify the planter class.[34] There were also 24 nonlandowners among 125 substantial slaveholders with 10 to 19 slaves, and 40 among 164 owners of 5 to 9 slaves. Most interestingly, perhaps, a large majority of small-scale slaveholders were nonlandowners. Of 250 owners of one to four slaves, 145, or 68 percent, were landless. The figures are similar for subsequent years and the situation was the same in St. Mary's County, suggesting again that the early national tobacco-South generally was more a slaveholding than a landowning region. In Kentucky too, slaveholding was sometimes as or even more extensive than landownership in older settled areas. Between 1792 and 1802, for example, a consistent 37 percent of residents of Fayette County were landowners, while the proportion owning slaves rose from 32 to 41 percent.[35]

Most of these small slaveholders must have been tenant farmers. A few skilled wage workers might have been slaveholders, but more tenants would have been able to afford, and perhaps all tenants more able to use, enslaved workers. Indeed a tenancy must have been essential for most nonlandowning slaveholders for the slaves to cultivate their own food, especially since food prices were rising after the Revolution.[36] Although we cannot tell for certain how many landless people were tenants rather than wage workers (or how many alternated), we can surmise that, as one-fifth of the landless were slaveholders, then at least one-quarter and probably a third of tenants owned slaves.[37]

But most landless householders were poor. Mean wealth for all households in 1800 was $708.50, but it was $382.78 among the propertied landless in Prince George's County, Maryland. The gaps were even greater after the upward appraisal of real estate in 1801. In 1810, mean taxable wealth among all householders had risen to $1,010.40, but among the landless it had fallen to $311.29. The opposite occurred over the course of the next decade, so that by 1820 the means were $900.61 for all householders and $417.63 among the landless. That rise, however, was most likely mostly caused by larger numbers of erstwhile landowners falling into landlessness. It is also notable that many household heads had zero taxable wealth on account of having less that $40-worth of taxable property altogether. There were 406 among the landless in 1800 who owned some taxable wealth, leaving 782 householders, a large minority of over 45 percent of all householders, who owned too little property to appear in local assessments. By 1810, outmigration meant that nontaxable householders had fallen in number 660, or just over 40 percent of householders. By 1820, however, nontaxable householders numbered 1,006 and formed a 56 percent majority of free household heads. Bayly Marks made similar findings for St. Mary's County, where, in 1790, 31 percent of householders on the census did not appear in the tax records, rising to 40 percent by 1800, 46 percent in 1810, 41 percent in 1820, due perhaps to the increasing practice of wheat cultivation in the eastern part of the county, which drove out the poorest farmers. Nontaxables then rose to 55 percent of St. Mary's household heads by 1840.

While landless people's economic resources and standards of living were clearly much lower than those of wealthy landowners, even the nontaxables among them did own small amounts of property. Probate inventories show that poorer taxables and nontaxables possessed basic household and farm equipment. Yet these records also serve to deepen our perception of wealth differentiation, for they make it clear that the quantity and quality of poor people's property was vastly inferior to that of the rich. James Hinton, for example, was a taxable but was outside Prince George's County's richest 50 percent best-off heads of household. Like 16 others, he owned only $80 (£30) in "other" property.[38] Mr. Hinton died in late 1801 or early 1802, and his personal estate was inventoried at $234.93, although it subsequently fetched $289.94 at auction. Most of his wealth consisted of animals: three horses valued at $72, five head of cattle, worth $36, and three pigs, worth $16.40. He had no tobacco or other marketable crops, only four and three-quarter barrels of corn, worth $12.67, and a peck of beans worth 25 cents. This record does not necessarily mean that he avoided market agriculture. Probably a tenant, he may have sold part of his crop and, like others we shall encounter, owed the rest to a landlord. He also owned "1 Small Grind Stone" and "1 Spinning Wheel," worth $2.33. The rest of his property comprised 28 other items, mostly basic household articles such as one small and one large table, two chairs, three beds, a quilt, a blanket, a frying pan, and so on. The closest he came to material gentility was ownership of "1 pair Brass Candle Sticks" and another odd one, together worth 70 cents.[39]

James Hinton could probably not have imagined the wealth and luxury that the likes of the Calverts enjoyed, and yet he was still somewhat better-off than some. Charles Jones, a nontaxable in 1800, had an inventory taken in January 1802, a week after James Hinton's, the entire contents of which comprised "one Old horse," "one Cow and Calf," "one Sow," two feather beds and bedsteads, two tables, "4 Old Chears," and "1 Old Chest." Jones's estate was worth in total $60.50.[40] Priscilla Howington, also a nontaxable in 1800, had even less when she died soon thereafter, and almost all of it was old. Her inventory, taken in March 1802, consisted of "one Old horse . . . One Cow and Calf . . . three piges," 21 ounces of "Old Pewter . . . one Old Table . . . One Old Cupbord . . . two Old Beds and Bedsteades . . . two old pots and [an] oven . . . Old Lumber," and "Nine pounds of old iron and Skillet." Her entire estate was valued at $42.54.[41] There was plenty of poverty in Kentucky too. When William Clinkenbeard arrived at Strode's Station in 1779, as he later recalled in an interview with pioneering oral historian John Daney Shane, "My wife and I had neither spoon, dish, knife, or anything to do with, when we began life. Only I had a butcher knife." Shane reported that another interviewee, Samuel McDowell, in the early 1840s "lived in a miserable open house. It was a cold time and they were just filling in mud [chinking] to make it more comfortable. Bed clothing not enough. Neither table cloth, nor table wear." Even they were better off than Abel Morgan, who was "without a house."[42]

Where we can identify particular landlords and tenants, we can gain a more detailed picture of differences between their standards of living and between economic resources available respectively to them. We have already looked at the Calvert family fortune in some detail in previous chapters. We can also identify some of their tenants. In 1798, George Calvert owned 650 acres of land in Rock Creek and Eastern Branch Hundreds, worth $3,575, which he rented out. The exact acreages of the individual farms were not recorded, but Isaac Barrett leased Denmark, Hogyard, and Buck Lodge, and lived in a 16-by-14 foot log house, worth $40, and used a 40-by-24 foot tobacco house. Thomas Parker evidently lived better and had a bigger operation on his Part of Hogyard leasehold. His 24-square foot log house was worth $60, and there were three 20-by-16 foot "Quarters" and two 50-by-30 foot framed tobacco houses. Joshua Brashears, also a tenant on Part of Hogyard, seems to have been the best provided for of the Calvert leaseholders and to have engaged in slightly more diversified agriculture than the others. He lived in a 24-square foot framed house, worth $75, used a 16-by-10 foot log corn house as well as two 40-by-24 foot tobacco houses. A further 200-acre tract in Upper Marlboro, Charlotte, and Mount Calvert Hundreds, Leavings Delight, worth $1,200, was leased to a tenant named Richard Jameson, but there is no Particular List of Lands, Lots, Buildings, and Wharves to furnish details.[43] These Calvert tenants seem to have been better off than some of the later ones who defaulted on their rents during the War of 1812 and whose housing even Rosalie Calvert admitted was "wretched."

Zachariah Berry was the third wealthiest taxpayer in Prince George's County in 1800, with $16,159.67 to his name, including 3,183 acres of land, 70 slaves, 57½ ounces of plate.[44] The federal tax, two years before, recorded 3,123⅓ acres, which, together with buildings, were worth $20,357.16 (demonstrating how far local taxes understated wealth, especially since the federal tax also rated properties below market values). His home plantation was the 1,426-acre "Part of Outlet and Concord Rectified" in Collington and Western Branch Hundreds, where he lived in a two-story 54-by-36 foot brick house, with a kitchen attached, which assessors described as "new" and "very elegant." In the one and one-half acres surrounding the main house were a 24-square foot smoke house, a 12-square foot meat house, an eight-square foot milk house, a 36-by-12 foot cow house "with ten foot sheds for Stables," a 27-by-16 foot poultry house, and two 32-by-12 foot slave cabins. These buildings together were given a taxable value of $2,250. Other slaves lived in another 16-by-12 foot slave cabin at a greater distance from the big house. The plantation also had a 20-by-16 foot tenant house and a 20-by-12 foot miller's house, together worth $80, though neither a miller nor a tenant were listed as occupants. There was a two-story high, "overshot," "two pair stone" mill, which was 30-by-26 feet in size, but "Part of Outlet and Concord Rectified" was principally a tobacco plantation. The remaining buildings on the tract consisted of nine tobacco houses, of which four were 50-by-24 feet in size, two were 40-by-24 feet, and three were 32-by-24 feet.[45]

This was only one of Mr. Berry's properties. Most of the others were occupied by tenants. The largest of these was the 514-acre "Part of Chelsea" tract, worth $5,274.50, and was worked, or at least part of it was, by William Brown. It is not clear whether Brown lived in the 36-square foot "Framed Dwelling House with Hip Roof" and thus used the 28-by-16 foot kitchen "adjoining," or whether he lived in the 24-by-16 foot "Tenant House" of unspecified construction material (and therefore probably log-built) located nearby. Within one and one-quarter acres of the framed house was a 12-square foot meat house, a 16-square foot wash house, a 30-square foot stable, a 30-by-10 foot corn house, and a 16-by-eight foot poultry house. These buildings (not including the tenant house, which was given no value) were worth $400. In addition, the tract featured one 24-by-16 foot slave cabin and two tobacco houses, which were 60-by-24 feet and 40-by-20 feet in size.[46]

A tenant named Verlinda Newman occupied Berry's 300-acre, $268, "part of Good Luck and Levels" property, living in a tenant house of no specified composition, which was 26-by-20 feet in size and worth $60.

The farm featured a 20-by-12 foot slave cabin and a 32-by-24 foot tobacco house and nothing more.[47] Berry owned two more small properties in New Scotland, Oxen, and Bladensburg hundreds, which he rented out. "Cecils Pasture," 108 acres, worth $310, contained an "old" 32-by-22 foot framed tobacco house and an also "old" 16-square foot framed dwelling house occupied by George Hardy. "Bealls Pasture," 134 acres, worth $268, occupied by Newman Harvey, contained buildings of the same construction material, size, and purpose as Cecil's Pasture plus a 16-by-10 foot "Quarter."[48] Three other small tracts belonging to Zachariah Berry seem not to have been in use. "Part of Magruders," 114 acres, worth $342, was "all in wood," and seven acres named "Resurvey on Good Luck and Levels," worth $42, was similarly "all wood, unimproved." Evidently, though, "Part of Waring's Grove," 119 acres, worth $773.50, was about to come into use. It already had a 30-by-20 foot tobacco house on it in 1798, and there was also a 30-by-16 foot, two-story, framed tenant house, worth $70, though it was "not finished."[49] Berry also owned 208 acres, worth $2,080, in Upper Marlboro, Charlotte, and Mount Calvert Hundred, but no record survives of buildings there.[50]

Benjamin Berry was also listed in the Federal Direct Tax in 1798 as an owner of properties occupied by tenants. He was Prince George's twenty-fourth wealthiest household head in 1800, and thus a member of the second wealthiest one percentile, with $8,292.89 in total wealth, including 1,910 ½ acres of land, 65 slaves, and 22½ ounces of plate.[51] In the New Scotland, Oxen, and Bladensburg entries in the federal tax he had 1,006 acres that, with improvements, were worth $4,500. Berry lived on a plantation called "Part of Independence" in a 50-by-40 foot, two-story, brick house with six windows. Within two acres of the house was an "old" 20-by-16 foot framed "Out House," a 20-by-16 foot framed kitchen, a 24-by-12 foot shed, a 14-square foot log meat house, and two 10-square foot hen houses. These were worth $2,000 in total. A little further away from the big house were five 50-by-24 foot tobacco houses (one of them "old"), another 100-by-18 foot tobacco house, a 100-by-12 foot "shed" of no specified purpose, and six log "negro quarters" that were described as "generally twelve by twelve foot" in size and "old." On the same plantation lived a tenant named James Smith, who occupied a 12-square foot framed house with a 12-square foot "addition." He had access to an "old" 40-by-24 foot tobacco house and, evidently, nothing more. "Part of Concord," 230 acres and worth $900, was occupied by Joseph Wallingsford. He lived in a 20-by-16 foot log house, worth $10, and his farm contained a 16-by-12 foot log quarter and two 40-by-24 foot framed tobacco houses, which were not given values.[52]

We can already see that the economic prospects and standards of living of Zachariah and Benjamin Berry contrasted sharply with those of people who worked some of their lands. But there were also clearly some distinctions between the wealth of the tenants too. The Berry tenants indeed covered a wide range of the county's poorer residents. Verlinda Newman and William Brown appeared on the census of 1800 but not in the tax records of that year, and were thus among Prince George's County's nontaxables.[53] No one named Joseph Wallingsford appeared in either the census or tax records, but someone named Joseph Warrensford, who may have been the same person, was on the census.[54] Newman Harvey, George Hardy, and James Smith were still living in the county in 1800 and were taxables, though not wealthy ones. Of these three, Newman Harvey was best-off, with $373.80 to his name in 1800, including six slaves. One wonders how much use the slaves were as laborers, however, as two were children under eight years of age, one was a child between eight and 14, and one of the three women aged 14 to 36, in the stark manner of the occasional qualitative comments contained in local assessment records, was described as a "cripple."[55] Harvey was in the wealthiest fourth percentile, as was George Hardy, with $221.45, though he bordered on the fifth. He held no slaves but did own 45 acres of land. Whether Hardy owned this land in 1798 or whether he bought it afterwards and then ceased to be a tenant is not clear, but the weight of the evidence is that he remained a tenant. First, his small acreage was only just large enough to support tobacco cultivation. Second, it was poor quality land, at 77 cents an acre, compared to the county average of $1.63. Finally, Hardy's land was in Piscataway and Hynson hundreds, but his "other" property was situated in New Scotland, Oxen, and Bladensburg.[56] James Smith owned $125.49 in "other" property, and no land or slaves.[57]

Bayly Ellen Marks found that the most common dimensions of tenant houses in St. Mary's County was 16-foot-square in the 1780s and 1790s, but rose to 16-by-24 in the early 1800s. After that, it declined to 16-by-20 in the 1810s and all the way back to 16-foot-square in the 1820s and 1830s. Yet the building quality of tenant housing in many cases improved. In the late eighteenth century, all tenant houses were frame or log dwellings. In the early nineteenth century some were made of brick and more had brick gables. By the 1830s, over a quarter of tenant houses had two stories, and there is no evidence of any having more than one prior to that decade. To put these figures in perspective, though, the most common dimensions of the houses of planters with 20 slaves or more ranged over time from 18-by-26 to 48-by-30, a far larger proportion were brick, none were log, and more had two stories. The houses of landowners with fewer than 20 slaves were only a little bigger than those of tenants, generally being 16-by-20 or 16-by-24 across the years from 1790 to 1840, although, again, more were brick-built and framed. On the other hand, slave housing was not much smaller than tenant housing, being most commonly 16-by-12 foot. Nearly all slaves' housing was log-built, but on some of the grandest plantations, slaves lived in brick houses before any tenants did, as was the case with some of the Calverts' slaves. The Federal Direct Tax for St. Mary's also shows that in 1798 the average value of landowners' houses was $125, while that of tenants was $51, with a quarter of tenants' houses valued between no dollars and $10. Two-thirds of tenant farmsteads also had no outbuildings. Those that did have outbuildings, generally had just a kitchen and a tobacco house.[58]

As in Prince George's County, St. Mary's tenants' housing and living conditions varied. James Howard rented land owned by the orphans of Lewis Ford and lived in a two-storey, 44-by-18 foot house with a piazza. The farm had two kitchens, a barn, meat house, corn house, pigeon house, and even a dairy, although all were in poor condition. Aloysius Thompson dwelled in a two-storey, 42-by-18 foot house, with two rooms and a hall on each floor, with a kitchen, meat house, and corn house. The dwelling was described by the Orphans' Court as being "in good condition." Some were able to make a decent living. Joseph Daffin leased a St. Inigoe's farm for 19 years until he died in 1820 with $611 worth of property to his name as well as eight slaves in his possession, although he was also an oyster catcher and general laborer on the plantation and his wife, Mary, was a mid-wife whose services earned the family $44 in 1805. Yet the valuations of the 15 tenements of James Forrest received such descriptions as "old," "very old house abandoned," "very bad," and "past repair." And on St. Inigoes in 1818 there was a walk-out by some tenants, according to the manor's own accounts, "because the houses were too bad and old."[59]

Economic opportunity and tenants' standards of living were generally declining in an era when rents were generally rising and the price of the tobacco that tenants grew was unstable and often falling. For a little while things were looking up for John Lyon, a tenant of St. Mary's County. In 1793, he held $295 in assessable property, including four slaves. In 1798, he was renting a farm for $40 a year and living in a "bad" house, according to tax assessors. That year, though, he moved into a new 12-foot-by-18-foot house, though his rent rose to one hogshead of tobacco, worth about $50 that year. By the time he died in 1805, however his fortunes seem to have declined, as his assessed property had fallen to a value of $170 and he held one male slave, aged 49. He had some livestock, an oxcart, and some farm tools, and his inventoried household goods comprised two beds, two tables, seven chairs, a desk, a couch, and some "old" books. Hanson Burroughs of Upper Resurrection, also in St. Mary's, had property worth $119 in 1811. He managed to build his fortune up to $367, including the value of three slaves, by 1829. But in 1830 the tax assessors deemed him "insufficient" to pay the local levy. By 1833, he was $58.56 in arrears on his rent of either three hogsheads of tobacco or $116.80, the production of which required three full-time hands. He was clearly finding it hard to make ends meet.[60]

Tenants were particularly hard-hit by the War of 1812, as Rosalie Calvert averred. St. Mary's County was especially vulnerable, almost surrounded as it was by waterways menaced by the British. The 350 men of the twelfth and forty-fifth regiments who were charged with protecting the county could do little against sudden British raids launched from the St. Mary's River and along the lowlands by the Patuxent. Thomas Swann reported a landing by the British on July 26, 1813, at Smith Creek, from where they marched to Ridge and "formed a line and carried before them, from thence, to Point Lookout all the cows, horses, sheep, Hogs, and Poultry. The Horses, they rode, finding it more convenient in driving the stock." Reverend Joseph Mobberly petitioned James Madison for more protection, to which the President allegedly haughtily replied that "It cannot be expected that I can defend every man's turnip patch in St. Mary's County."[61]

Tenant Contracts

As wealth differentiation suggests, and as evidence from leases confirms, power in early national landlord–tenant relations was by no means equal, although there was room for negotiation and compromise. In colonial times, the social relations of tenancy changed in accordance with increases in population and economic inequality. To get land under cultivation in the early settlement period, landlords sometimes offered tenants such incentives as low rents (even sometimes waiving rents for a number of years), long leases (although short leases often reflected the ability of tenants to accumulate capital and buy land), equity and alienation rights in leaseholds, and a good deal of freedom in leasehold use, although there were some restrictions. As land became scarcer and dearer, however, and as planters acquired greater wealth relative to small farmers, landlords gradually transformed tenancy into an institution that favored themselves more and leaseholders less. The process was highly advanced by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when tenancies were characterized by high rents, short durations, and some new and some possibly further elaborated prescriptions and proscriptions on equity, alienation, and leasehold use. It is worth noting that leases also used the term "liberty" in an old-fashioned sense, as liberties granted from above, not obtaining by right. Many lease provisions put landlords and tenants at odds. Tenants often acted against landlords, perhaps with some success in individual instances, and possibly mitigating potentially worse developments in tenancy. Tenant resistance was, however, limited in scope and effect.[62]

Some tenancies were based on cash renting and sharecropping, but most appear to have required fixed-crop payments. Apparently, cash renting was the least common form of farm tenancy. In a relatively cash-scarce economy it made sense for landlords and tenants to exchange crops or crop notes, especially as tobacco had long stood in for money in the Chesapeake region. When cash renting, however, landlords used advance payments and rapid repossession as insurances against default. Both measures were included in the single cash-rent farm lease extant for this period. In 1800, Henry Harvey rented 230 acres from Edward Henry Calvert for "five pounds Current money . . . in hand paid" and "three pounds nine Shillings Sterling Money and two Capons" every Christmas. Calvert could repossess if rent payment was 30 days late.[63] Nevertheless, as Edward Henry Calvert's sister-in-law discovered, cash renters sometimes defaulted. As Rosalie Calvert wrote in 1814, in relation to her father's property, "two tenants who are staying there have not paid their rent so you won't earn any return this year." And as she noted the following year, and as related at the top of the chapter, "[a]ll our poor tenants have been so hard hit by the war that it was impossible to rent this year. . . . [Another property] is in the same predicament. There are two wretched houses on that property, each rented for $35; one of the tenants defaulted, so for the year 1814, I have only received $35."

Cash renting was apparently more common for tenants whose primary occupation was nonagricultural than it was for farmers. In 1800, Thomas Grafton Addison leased to "Daniel Moxley two acres of land situated on the River Potomak" for 38 years for "yearly . . . Eight pounds Maryland currency." The small acreage and riverine location suggest that Moxley was a fisherman or ferryman. Addison nevertheless minimized the cash-rent risk by asserting that if Moxley failed to pay his rent within 60 days of January 1, he could "repossess and re-enjoy as if this Indenture had never been made." In the same year, the same landlord secured advance payment from an artisan tenant, leasing a mill to Richard Neale for "two hundred dollars to him in hand paid . . . for which the said Neale is to have Credit, untill the whole is exhausted at the rate of forty six dollars a year," although Addison paid Neale interest on the down payment.[64]

Landlords could profit well from cash renting to artisans. In 1812, George Calvert leased a mill and race on land "not exceeding five acres" to Thomas Ewell for $500 per year plus $5 daily for exclusive use of mill-race water during the dry season. He also rented a Bladensburg lot in 1820 to Thomas Ferrall for only $6 per annum, but this was a developmental lease requiring Ferrall to "build a good and Substantial framed grainery or Store House two Stories high of twenty four feet in width and length to be supported on a sufficient brick or stone foundation," or pay an extra $12 annually until he did so.[65] Even skilled artisan tenants who had their own resources experienced high rates of exploitation if they were involved in capital-intensive trades. Rosalie Calvert wrote in 1810 that

> We rented an acre of land near Spa Spring to build a tannery. The man who undertook it is quite industrious and a good manager, but he doesn't have

> enough capital. In leasing him the site for a term of 23 years, I planned on lending him half the necessary capital and on taking half of the profits. Being so nearby it could be easily supervised.

Although she then reported that the venture was "thwarted by the Emperor of the French," her expectation of half the tanner's profits shows that much could be made from the economic dependence of artisans, although the tanner perhaps stood to gain a good living too.[66]

Sharecroppers, as in the post-Civil War era, rented for thirds and halves. In 1782, Enoch Jenkins leased 33 1/3 acres from Dorothy Coombes for "the one third part of all the produce of the . . . premises and all the profits thereon Accruing or any wise Appertaining." In 1800, Nicholas Lowe agreed to pay Thomas Grafton Addison "one half of the Tobacco, one half of the small Grain & one third of the corn which may be made annually . . . also one third of the fodder and straw." Furthermore, Lowe was "to manage the fishing as a compensation for which & his being at one half of the Expense the profits arising therefrom are to be equally divided between" the two men.[67]

Fixed-crop renting was the most common form of tenancy, probably suiting both landlords and tenants. For landlords, sharecropping was problematically speculative. Good harvests might have reaped them larger rewards than fixed rents, but bad weather or weevils might have left them a share of little or nothing. Fixed-crop rents had limited ceilings, but even after crop failures losses might have been recovered later as rent arrears or labor. In 1823, Robert Cole of St. Inigoe's Manor, St. Mary's County, did not pay his rent in the contracted form of 50 bushels of wheat and 12 barrels of corn, "as he did not make it and he was not able to pay it," but apparently made up for at least some of it in labor. Planters wished to maximize profits, but also sought to minimize risk. As all kinds of tenancy were risky, landlords may have favored the possibly less profitable but safer and still lucrative option of fixed-crop rents. Also, though, fixed-crop tenants probably paid less than a third of their income in rent. This form of renting may therefore have been tenants' preference too.[68]

From 1786, a few of the 15 tenants on St. Inigoe's Manor in St. Mary's County, Maryland, paid a "wheat rent" of four bushels, but until 1804 most paid for their 50–150 acre tenements in tobacco at an annual rate of a hogshead of tobacco per 100–110 acres, and a hogshead, 1,000 pounds of tobacco, was pretty much what one pair of hands could produce in a year. Most tenants elsewhere also mostly paid rent in tobacco.[69] Although crop rents lessened the likelihood of default, problems remained. Landlords guarded against fixed-crop tenants paying rent in trashy produce by requiring it to be inspected and collected at one of the county's Levy Court-run warehouses. In a 1792 lease, for example, Thomas Harwood, Jr. of Prince George's County required William Mayhew to pay "5000 pounds of net inspected Crop Tobacco at Magruder's Warehouse on or before 20 June every year." Three years later the same tenant agreed to pay Ann Mary Gates 2,000 pounds of "Nett Crop Tobacco at Magruders Warehouse." Thomas and Barbara Lane preferred to receive their rent in notes issued by warehouses, in 1791 requiring John Smith to pay 1,800 pounds of "good sound inspected Tobacco clear of Cask in Crop notes . . . to be issued by Nottingham Inspecting warehouse."[70] The costs for tenants were high, for inspectors may have declared up to a third of a crop unexportable, although rejected yield could still be sold locally, albeit more cheaply—an improvement on the period from the Maryland inspecting act of 1748 to the Revolution when substandard tobacco was burned.[71]

It is little wonder that fixed-crop tenants would pay in poor tobacco if they could, for although fixed-crop renting was probably the cheapest form of tenancy it was nevertheless expensive. Most leases identified farms by name without recording numbers of acres, rendering it impossible to calculate rents as portions of tenant incomes. From a few cases where acreages were recorded, however, it appears that fixed-crop tenants probably paid between a quarter and a third of their income in rent, although given the small number of cases and large number of unknown variables, this conclusion must be tentative.[72]

In 1769, Benjamin Brashears leased 100 acres from William Turner Wootton for 21 years for "yearly Eight hundred pounds of Crop Tobacco" to be delivered at Queen Anne warehouse, Prince George's County, but not specifically in net crop after inspection. From that we can calculate his possible produce and rate of rent. One laborer could produce 1,000–1,500 pounds of tobacco in a year, although in time production rates in some areas fell to between 700 and 800 pounds, meaning, in effect, rising rents.[73] By the upper calculation, Brashears and one full-time or a few part-time hands might have made 2,000–3,000 pounds and by the lower calculation 1,400–1,600 pounds. He thus paid either as little as two-fifths or as much as half of his tobacco in rent, keeping the rest plus all income from food crops, animal husbandry, and any other economic activity, probably amounting to over two-thirds of his total income. In addition, however, he had to build

> a Dwelling House[,] Tobacco House and all the other necessary out Houses fit and Convenient for a Tenant, and also to Plant . . . One hundred & fifty Apple Trees in a regular Orchard each Tree being distant at least Forty feet, One hundred good Peach Trees and fifty good Cherry Trees in regular Orchard each Tree Distant at least Fifteen feet, and the said Different sort of Fruit Trees to trim and keep in good Order and Inclosed by a good fence.[74]

Brashears perhaps profited from fruit harvests while leasing, once the orchards had matured, but these improvements ultimately benefited Wootton and thus in effect represented extra rent in kind.

John Smith's case was similar. He leased a farm in Prince George's County from Thomas and Barbara Lane for 13 years from 1791 for 1,800 pounds of tobacco per annum. The acreage was not recorded, but Smith was allowed to cultivate exactly "fifteen acres in tobacco," permitting him to make, with help, between 3,500 and 7,500 pounds (although as the specified land was hitherto uncultivated and fresh, he most likely produced something closer to the larger amount). Smith's tobacco, however, had to pass first through an inspection warehouse. If a third of the crop was substandard, his rent represented either almost three-quarters of a 2,450-pound exportable yield or, more likely, just over a third of a 5,000-pound exportable yield. Smith may have had more top-notch tobacco than that, sold the rest locally, and profited from food crops, animal husbandry, and other economic activities. But he also had "to put and Keep the Houses in good and tenantable repair... [,] plant three hundred Apple trees[,] three hundred Peach Ditto[,] three hundred Cherry Ditto which [illegible] to inclose and keep from being destroyed by Creatures," and clear 15 acres of forest for tobacco.[75] As with Benjamin Brashears, then, making improvements added substantially to Smith's expenses.

As well as representing extra rent, material improvements were among numerous requirements written into leases. Every extant early national Prince George's County lease required improvements to be made, as was the case in colonial times when hitherto uncultivated land needed to be broken, built on, and planted. Later specifications may have been more elaborate than earlier ones, although the evidence is not full enough to be certain. Also, early national tenants probably received equity in their efforts and expense less frequently than their colonial counterparts.[76] Only rarely did they obtain financial assistance to make improvements and even then it was usually limited. Ann Mary Gates required that William Mayhew "repair the dwelling house and build a Tobacco house in the most reasonable manner... at the proper cost and charge of the said Ann Mary Gates except the lodging & diet of the workmen to be deducted out of the rent." Leasing from Walter Dulaney Addison, John and Ebsworth Bayne were obliged "at their and his own proper cost and charge... [to] keep up all and singular the houses[,] buildings[,] fences and Improvements of every kind upon the said plantation in good and Tenantable repair." These were exceptions, however, and the labor and value added to land through improvements usually benefited landlords. There were certainly some who thought that rents were excessive and exploitative, especially bearing in mind the quality of farms rented. Athanatius Fenwick of St. Mary's County wrote in the *American Farmer* in 1819 that 90 acres in 100 of rented land were impoverished, and "the unenclosed and unimproved lands also have become parched and arid heaths, and the sun, wind, rain and frost, acting on their naked surface, not to mention the over-greedy and self-destroying system of extortion, and rack-rent practice on every spot of ground."[77]

Tenants might have gained from improvements as long as they held their leases, except that most tenancies were fairly short. Early colonial leaseholds were frequently for life, three lives, or 99 years, offering security, a potentially saleable asset, and a legacy.[78] Benjamin Brashears's 21-year tenancy was signed in 1769, but early national fixed-crop farm tenancies generally lasted 7 to 10 years, although Philip Green leased from Margaret Conaway for one year only and there may have been others like him.[79] Longer-term early national leases tended to be exceptional in some way: Henry Harvey's life-lease was a cash rental. Enoch Jenkins rented for his landlord's lifetime on a sharecrop basis. Daniel Moxley's 38-year tenure was for non or extra-agricultural purposes. And Thomas Ewell's 99-year leasehold was on a mill in the town of Bladensburg.[80]

Short leases precluded subletting and selling leaseholds, although these practices were sometimes restricted in longer-term colonial tenancies too. Even in the few longer-term leases where these rights remained, they were restricted. Thomas Ewell transferred his mill leasehold to William Grayson and partners of Washington, DC, and Thomas Ferrall his Bladensburg granary to Levi Sheriff, seemingly without obstruction by George Calvert. But the later transactions were recorded with Calvert as landlord, suggesting his supervision of procedures. Daniel Moxley could sell his lease, but only if "Thomas G. Addison his heirs & assigns shall have the preference and refusal in any sale . . . he or they giving as high a price as can be obtained from any other person." Henry Harvey faced a fine of "Twelve pounds Sterling money for and upon every letting and setting the premises or any part thereof without" permission. Thomas Mattingly would have forfeited equity if he either defaulted on his rent or leased to a subtenant without consent.[81]

On balance, short-terms probably benefited landlords more than tenants. Some tenants may have preferred shorter tenure, even without equity or alienation rights, because it allowed them opportunity to move to other farms or to undertake wage work. Also, short-term tenants could maximize exploitation of land without suffering long-term diseconomies. That is what Rosalie Calvert was referring to when she wrote that leased land "would deteriorate in value every year because the tenant isn't interested in improving it but rather in getting all he can out of it." The Jesuit owners of St. Thomas Manor in Charles County reported that prerevolutionary long-term tenants had conserved soil and improved farms, but admitted, as a direct result of imposing short-term tenancies after the Revolution, new tenants worked more land more intensively, exhausted soil and timber, and "allowed buildings, fences, and orchards to deteriorate." Potential problems for landlords were outweighed, however, by the advantage of having tenants who could be removed if and when slaves were available to cultivate the land. As Rosalie Calvert also put it, referring to land she was thinking of buying for her father and as an inheritance for her children, "[o]ur negroes are multiplying and within a few years could cultivate these properties, which in the meantime could be leased out."[82]

In any case, the risk of tenants exhausting the soil and other resources was minimized by various restrictions and requirements. A common way of ensuring land was not overworked was limiting the quantity of labor that could be applied to it. Benjamin Brashears was forbidden to "suffer more hands to Work or till the Demised Land than himself[,] his wife and . . . such of his Children that shall be at any time under the age of Eighteen years, and in case he shall have no Children capable to work then only to take in one able hand." William Mayhew was similarly restricted by Thomas Harwood, Jr. to "working six hands besides his Children and no more" on his leasehold, although this suggests that Mayhew was a better-off slaveholding tenant.[83]

Landlords also required crop rotation—an apparently novel imposition in early national tenancy. Thomas Grafton Addison allowed Nicholas Lowe "to Cultivate at least twenty Acres annually in Tobacco[,] the remainder of the said Land alternately in Indian Corn and small Grain." After earmarking land for tobacco cultivation and timber cutting, Thomas Harwood, Jr. required William Mayhew to "sew in small grain each shift of Corn ground every other year except one, the said William Mayhew being allowed the Liberty of tending the whole of the Corn ground in corn any one year he may think proper," although he was forbidden to "tend any of the Tobacco Ground in Corn which is well for manuring and making Tobacco."[84] Lowe and Mayhew were encouraged to cultivate minimum quantities of tobacco, but landlords set maximums for others. John Davis's 21-year lease from Walter Dulany Addison stipulated "that after the first ten years from [1801] he . . . shall confine the Crops issuing from these premises altogether and intirely to Timothy rye grass and clover." Rent comprised extensive swamp clearing through building a bank which "is to be solid[,] lasting and permanent and to be completely proof against the wind and tides," and leaving the land at the end of the tenure "in timothy in complete and perfect order for the Scythe at the ensuing harvest thereafter." The Calverts also profitably used tenants to cultivate certain crops. As Rosalie wrote in 1805, "[o]ur wheat, which we leased out in the neighborhood, made us about 500 bushels." Before 1804, the 15 tenants on St. Inigoe's Manor in St. Mary's County, Maryland, paid rent in tobacco or wheat. After that, however, manager Joseph Mobberly reduced the tobacco rent by about half to 12,000 pounds to 14,000 pounds to encourage tenants to grow other crops. By 1811 leases forbade tenants from cultivating tobacco, and required three-field crop rotation, with only one field in corn. Mobberly also reduced the number of tenants to eight. Zachariah Zachary, for example, was not allowed to plant tobacco and had to do three shifts, only one of which could be corn, and he had to sow two bushels of clover seed. By the 1830s there were six tenants on St. Inigoe's, sharecropping and paying thirds of their tobacco, corn, and wheat.[85]

Landlords also regulated use of other resources, especially forest and even fallen timber. Although this regulation was not new, it seems to have grown more frequent and restrictive over time as timber grew scarcer and more valuable. William Turner Wootton subjected Benjamin Brashears to the general condition that he could not "Sell or Destroy any timber in the said Premises nor suffer it to be done by any Person whatever nor apply any but to the necessary repairs[,] Buildings and use of the Demised Premises," and Mary Franklin forbade Walter Duvall "to sell[,] cut or waste any wood or timber off the said land only for the use of the farm." But landlords were often very specific about where wood could be obtained from and how it could be used. Thomas Grafton Addison, for instance, allowed Robert Baillie to cut "no growing Woods or timber excepting for Repairing of Houses & ca. The fire wood to be used by the said Baillie to be taken from the dry or lying down wood.... Baillie may have fence Rails that may be necessary" for the plantation only. So important was the preservation of timber that even kinship did not prevent William Wilson threatening James Wilson with eviction if he used more wood than necessary for fences, buildings, implements, and fuel, or if he cut down, sold, or removed timber, or committed "any waste of any nature."[86]

Landlords sometimes reserved portions of tenements for their own uses. Thomas Harwood could "at any time... plant an orchard of fruit trees" on William Mayhew's leasehold. Edward Henry Calvert required Henry Harvey to "reserve ten Acres... which Shall never be cleared" and on request to "relinquish his right and title and interest in and to... the aforementioned land... now occupied by the said Henry Harvey so as to include a convenient distillery which the said Edward Henry Calvert now wishes to erect." Walter Dulaney Addison kept from John Davis "exclusive right[,] privilidge and power to and Over all and every fishing landing... [,] houses most generally used for the convenience of the fishing landing... [,] so much land as may be necessary for the Road next adjoining the River so as to make the Road twenty feet wide and also so much land... [for] fishing houses."[87] None of these leases offered any compensation if the landlords took up their options, although rents might have been lower than they would have been without such landlord options.

Landlords reserved inspection rights to deter tenants from exploiting leaseholds illicitly. William Mayhew's lease was typical in its requirement that he must allow Thomas Harwood "from time to time and at all times . . . to enter upon and view the State of the demised premises." Some asked their neighbors to keep an eye out for them. When Edward Aprice of St. Mary's County died, he put his land into administration on behalf of his young children, with the proviso that "If the level ground, which I have prepared for and cultivated in Tobacco (be turned) into a cornfield, or should cultivate them materially different from what I have been accustomed to do, or if any waste should be committed or damage done by a tenant or any other person, to my land, which I have taken such pains to improve, it is my hope that some friend, hearing me in recollection, may procure an injunction to prevent it." [88] This policy is not surprising, but the vagueness of many of the qualitative aspects of lease requirements offered potential legal opportunities to landlords. Those wishing to evict a tenant might easily have decided that a farm was not "in good order and Tenantable repair," or that fences were not amended "well and Sufficiently," or that "any waste of any nature" had taken place. No less a person than George Washington, for example, at least considered such possibilities. In 1789 he told his agent, Battaile Muse, to "set aside every old lease where the covenants, with respect to orchards and buildings, are not complied with—if there is reason to suppose the lotts will let for more than their present rate."[89] Perhaps Washington was unusually sensitive about the issue of chopping down fruit trees. There is no evidence of Prince Georgian landlords taking such actions, but the potentiality of it may have encouraged tenants to ensure that their improvement and maintenance work was of unimpeachable quality and they did not cut timber or remove lying-down wood from the wrong parts of their farms.

One might suppose that more widespread availability of land in Kentucky would allow tenants to demand longer and more liberal lease terms to the advantage of tenants, as was the case in early colonial Maryland and Virginia. As Fredrika Teute found, there certainly was demand for tenants in Kentucky. Leaseholders defended land claims against Indian attacks, their presence deterred squatters, and they helped secure possession against rival claimants. By peopling unsettled areas, they also attracted other settlers and thereby increased the value of land. They also "cleared land, made it productive, brought in crops, and provided the landlord with perhaps two-thirds of the harvest. And they freed slave labor for more lucrative purposes." Indeed, "Tenant labor," as Teute puts it, "was one of the cornerstones on which the Bluegrass economy was based." Thus it was that, in April 1790, three years before his planned arrival in Kentucky, John Breckinridge instructed his manager, Colonel William Russell, regarding his future home plantation, "to fix several Tenants at two or three places on this Tract. . . . This will be of great Advantage to the Land."[90]

Yet it seems there were so many landless migrants that landlords in fact were able to offer terms similar to those offered by their counterparts in the early national Chesapeake. And they did so for the same reasons. Kentucky landlords, as Teute described them, "often carefully stipulated expectations and privileges of tenants and restrictions on their use of the property, as they could wreak havoc on a place." Agents and landlords in Kentucky wrote of experiences with tenants and of lessons learned from them in terms remarkably similar to those expressed by their Chesapeake counterparts. In July 1792, for example, Thomas Tate wrote to John Preston in Virginia that his agent had put 16 tenants on one property who then proceeded to "slash the Timber down without mercy, which at this juncture is very valuable." James King, manager for Isaac Shelby, Kentucky's first governor and owner in the 1790s of some 9,000 acres of land, informed his boss in 1805 that his Sapling Grove farm "is no more. It is going out of repair very much and i know by experience that renters will Never do Anything on land that will benefit the Owners." He added that "the Meadow is good for little and Not likely to be made better by renting[,] the fences is roting down and No New ones Making." Yet there was a hint of a solution, for he also noted that "perhaps a repairing lease would best serve the land."[91]

Western landlords thus adopted the same methods as eastern ones to try to combat problems with tenants. Kentucky leases were short, usually four years in length. They stipulated that rents be paid in "good Merchantable" crops, usually cotton or corn, to be delivered to the landlord's or agent's house. In a lease of April 1807, Isaac Shelby required that William Scott "is not to comit any waste of green timber on sd. land on any account . . . [and] is to use dead wood for fuel." Also, Scott was not allowed "to transfer this lease to any one without the consent of" Shelby. Abraham Jones's 1795–1799 lease from John Breckinridge specified what crops must be cultivated field-by-field, and each field had specific rents applied. A 12-acre field around the house was to be planted in corn from which Jones would deliver up 24 barrels of corn in rent. At the end of the tenancy this field was to have "good & sufficient fence." Thirty acres to the west of this field was to be rent-free, but cleared by girdling the trees and leaving them to rot and then cutting them down and leaving the stumps, "in the Kentucky fashion." He was to build a "proper fence" around the 20-acre "Big Meadow," which he had to keep in "good order" and sow in timothy seed in August 1796 "in a good farmer like manner," and for which he would pay one third of the hay, cured and stacked, each year beginning in 1797. He was also required to build "a comfortable log dwelling House for himself" with a shingle roof, for which Breckinridge would pay him at the end of the term. He could not pass on the leasehold to anyone else without Breckinridge's consent. It was normal that tenants were required at end of leasehold "to deliver up sd. Place . . . in good tenantable repair." Until 1797 legally evicted tenants were liable for rents but would lose the value of their improvements, although that year "an Act concerning occupying claimants of Land" stated that "it is just" that "the proprietor of the better title . . . pay the occupying claimant of the land for valuable improvements made thereon." That, however, did not apply to squatters.[92]

Tenant Disaffection and Resistance to Landlords

Although leases reflected the imbalance of economic power between landlords and tenants, landlords did not get everything their own way. In 1817, Rosalie Calvert wrote her father that "we have been unable to rent out [his Oatland estate] since it had no houses, etc. And [tenants] who have sufficient funds to undertake so large a farm prefer to buy a smaller one where they are their own master—or else they are off to Kentucky."[93] Thus, at least better-off nonlandowners had some negotiating power in landlord–tenant relations. This bargaining position may explain why, for example, fixed-crop renting was common even though it was probably cheapest for tenants. Also, lease prescriptions and proscriptions might have been greater still had tenants not had some measure of leverage with landlords.

Leasehold use may have been a highly contentious issue, judging by the frequency, variety, and specificity of instructions and interdictions. Court records contain no direct evidence of tenant resistance, such as instances of litigation by landlords for lease breaking, except in one case of rent default.[94] This apparent absence of conflict, however, may merely reflect the record's incompleteness, or the possibility that lease-breaking tenants evaded the law by absconding. Indeed, George Washington complained upon returning to Mount Vernon after defeating the British that many of his tenants had disappeared "into the Western country" owing him rents and other obligations.[95] Alternatively, landlords perhaps simply did not bother, as Washington put it, to "sue a beggar and catch a louse."[96] Moreover, Rosalie Calvert's complaints about tenants exhausting the land and cutting down forests strongly suggest tenant resistance to restrictive provisions in leases. As Rosalie Calvert noted, "the tenant ruins your land, never fertilizing it, and cuts your woods without the slightest regard—if he does not take it to market!" She was not alone in making these kinds of complaints. The agricultural writer and reformer, J. Beale Bordley complained that tenants frequently grew corn after tobacco and wheat after corn, the soil-exhausting "three shifts" system. "This," he said, "answers exactly for the tenant—he makes money fast—and when one plantation is done for, or much weakened, he can find a better." When managing a manor in St. Mary's County, Joseph Mobberly complained that a tract named "Truth and Trust" near Clifton had "been much abused by tenants, and it is at present very poor." Of course, what Rosalie Calvert and others saw as tenants' offences against their property rights, tenants themselves may have regarded as principled defences of their own property rights. Perhaps tenants felt that since they paid the rent, the trees belonged to them. Or they might have possessed a more generalized notion that, as hard-working people, they deserved a little more reward for their efforts and their landlords a little less.[97]

Although Allan Kulikoff described tobacco-cutting riots and warehouse arson by poor farmers protesting invidious tobacco regulation practices in the colonial Chesapeake, such crowd actions are absent from the record after the Revolution.[98] That may very well be because after Independence tobacco growers were allowed to sell substandard tobacco in local markets as opposed to previously when Inspectors burned it. Early national tenants may have acted individually against individual landlords, but apparently not collectively. Also, this individualistic form of tenant resistance may have reflected a possessive–individualist ideological content. Tenants appear to have contested where their own property rights began and those of their landlords ended, but no evidence exists of radical assault on private property rights or even on tenancy as a social–economic institution per se. In fact, in claiming free use of leaseholds by utilizing land and other resources just as they pleased, and especially in marketing the proceeds, tenants were affirming notions of private property rights by asserting their own over those of their landlords. As well as selling timber, numerous enterprising Virginia tenants illicitly sold their leaseholds and ran off with the money.

It would be surprising if Chesapeake tenants had thought and acted otherwise. Aside from Allan Kulikoff and Rhys Isaac, most colonial historians portray tobacco society and culture as highly capitalistic and, though not without community bonds, individualistic. Commercial production and exchange, and their congeries of accompanying values, penetrated even poorer free households from early colonial times.[99] Later landlord–tenant relations, then, are unlikely to have taken the form of a class conflict of capitalist planters against household producers augured by burgeoning markets—a popular interpretation in the current historiography of early national rural economy and society. Rather, those relations entailed individual battles over issues of self-interest. The issues were important, and tenants may have viewed their rights to more reward for their rent and labor as compelling matters of principle. But conflict nevertheless appears to have been confined within the ideological parameters of possessive individualism.

There was somewhat more conflict over land tenure in western regions, perhaps because migrants and tenants had higher expectations, driven up by promotional literature and by a sense that they deserved more for their greater sacrifices and endeavors. Even then, though, they seem to have wanted essentially the same things and thus shared same ideological values as those they complained were more fortunate than themselves. As early as 1779, "The Destressed Inhabitants of the county of Kentucky" petitioned the Virginia General Assembly to complain that "We your depressed petitioners . . . many of us will be intirely deprived of the opportunity of geting so much as one hundred acers of land, notwithstanding the loss of our properties and so many of our lives which we have expended in Defence of this country." Indeed, militia service against Native Americans was a particular grievance, as defending the frontier had fallen on the "poor militia, the most of whom have little or not property," and militiamen had to risk their lives while leaving their crops and families, according to "A Farmer" writing to the *Kentucky Gazette* in October 1788. Often, furthermore, they went unpaid and had to provision themselves. Militiamen, however, were sometimes required to act against their own social–economic kind. In 1781 at Harrodsburg, Lincoln County, for example, a "discontented few," amounting actually to 50 or 60 people, "most of whom had no land," were dispersed by the militia after gathering with the intention of petitioning Congress to set aside Virginia's 1779 land law and replace it with a headright system, "as they found the Land was like to be ingroasd by a few who was then possess'd of Land Warrants."[100]

A 1784 "Petition from the Inhabitants of Kentucky," signed by 751 people, some with a cross, even phrased its complaints in terms of agrarian idealism. It noted first that "numbers of monied Gentlemen in the settlement, who lived in security and affluence," and who did not serve in the militia and risk their lives against the Indians, "monopolized great part of the most valuable lands . . . to the great discouragement and hindrance of the equitable settlement thereof." The poor were therefore living "generally on land claimed by other persons . . . [and] unable either to move away or purchase land at the advance price the monopolizers hold it" so that they were "forced to give an exorbitant price, or rent the land we have been fighting for, or turn off" and abandon it. The petitioners then reminded Congressmen "that the riches and strength of a free Country does not consist in property being vested in a few individuals." Rather, they continued, "the more general it is distributed, the more it promotes industry, population and frugality, and even morality."[101]

Sometimes western migrants and tenants went beyond the law in asserting what they thought were their rights. John Umstead in 1800 informed Lexington resident Thomas Hart that squatters in the latter's Appalachian lands were refusing to accept terms offered them as incentives to move, and that "the People are much disposed to give all the trouble they can." Four years later, absentee landowner John Peyton of Virginia complained to John Breckinridge "that the Squatters were playing the vengeance with our lands upon the Ohio." These actions were collective, but others were individual. Isaac Shelby received a letter from his agent Richard Davis in early 1796 saying that not all rents were "paid up," and that "I have let all your places for this yeare, But I Shall be Glad to See you, for I Cant Get McWilliams away all that I Can [Doe?]. I bought him out but that Wont Do, he has Rented it to another Man as big a Rogue as his Self and there he will Stay." Twenty years earlier, John Floyd, deputy surveyor of Fincastle County, visited his own Royal Spring property, only to find "a man who has his wife and family there, and has made large improvements and is determined, as I am told, to hold the land at the risk of his life." There were clearly very serious conflicts of interest in the west therefore, but they were nevertheless conflicts of the same interest.[102]

A meeting of minds between early national planters and some landless whites is further suggested by shared commitments to enslavement, at least among the substantial minority of slaveholding tenants. Despite wealth inequality and inequities in landlord–tenant relations, a significant number of poorer whites had a stake in slave society. In a sense, the interest of landless slaveholders in enslavement was greater than that of large planters, for even just a slave or two represented the principal property and only major capital they possessed. Ownership of slaves may thus have blunted any resentment of landlords that tenants otherwise might have felt. At the same time, slavery may have divided some tenants from others who were not, and were never likely to be, slaveholders. Slaveholding rates and general wealth distribution figures explored earlier do not suggest a united class of tenants. Even if tenants shared many economic interests in opposition to those of landlords, the tenantry may have been as diversified in social–economic perspectives as it was differentiated in material conditions. Such differentiated and divided conditions and perspectives were not likely to provide a basis for concerted resistance to the growing power of landlords.

Chapter 5

"The Torment with the Servants": Wage Workers, Servants, and Slaves

The Plantation Mistress

In April 1818, after almost 20 years of married life at Riversdale, Rosalie Calvert wrote to her sister, Isabelle van Havre, that

> [m]y husband has become so lazy that I must exert myself even more, since I have to manage everything myself. He lives in our house as if he were not the master—not giving any instructions, not worrying about anything—and is content to manage his various farms. So you can imagine how overwhelmed with work I am at times.[1]

Acknowledging that George Calvert was "content to manage his various farms," Rosalie implied that he was not necessarily "lazy" in the strictest sense of the term. Rather, he believed in or at least found agreeable and convenient a gendered division of labor in which his responsibilities ended where his wife's began: at the threshold of their home. This was somewhat unusual, as most planter men exercised or were supposed to exercise mastery indoors as well as out, as the mistress of Riversdale also implied.[2] Furthermore, and perhaps adding to her sense of the unfairness of things, Rosalie expended considerable efforts keeping plantation accounts and dealing in stocks and bonds, thus shouldering some of the burden that men were supposed to carry. While Rosalie Calvert had no objection to her husband being "master," she clearly disliked an order of things that left her to cope with domestic tasks alone.

The cares of a large family certainly bore heavily on Rosalie Calvert. As she wrote her brother, Charles Jean Stier, in December 1808, at which time she had five children at the demanding ages of eight, five, four, and two years, plus a baby of 15 weeks:

> One time Charles has to be soothed, which takes a half-hour. Then they [servants] come to ask for mustard for a ragout or sugar for pastry, for you are aware that we American ladies are, alas, our own housekeepers! Then Caroline must have a reading lesson and George must write. A new coat is brought from the tailor which must be tried on. No, it is not right and a note has to go back with it. The man is going to Georgetown and a long list of details for the household must be remembered. All these occupations seem trifling and still they prevent me from chatting with you.[3]

Indeed, Mrs. Calvert found the routine exhausting at times. As she wrote her sister in 1816,

> although I live so quietly and see so few people, I nevertheless rarely have time to rest and am nearly always behind in everything that needs to be done. But this is partly due to having poor servants whom I must supervise constantly, and frequently I must be extremely sparing of myself because of poor health.
>
> Sometimes I am even forced to spend half my time reclining on a sofa. You can imagine how disagreeable this is, especially for someone like me who loves activity and directing and overseeing everything myself.[4]

As the above makes clear, Riversdale, like other plantations, was a place of work for various people, free, indentured, and enslaved. The Calverts employed overseers, tutors and governors for their children, gardeners, butlers, chefs, general domestics, as well as farm workers and artisans. As mistress of Riversdale, Rosalie Calvert oversaw the work of those who labored in the house. That she had to do so much in this capacity says much about the burdens of gender. Yet, as the foregoing complaints reveal, Rosalie Calvert's position as a plantation mistress was as much defined by class as it was by gender, and perhaps more so. In this context, she regarded those who worked for her to be almost as unhelpful sometimes as her husband. As she wrote her sister in September 1819, "[m]y servants are very negligent and my husband does absolutely nothing other than manage his lands. The wines, the provisions, the servants' work, horses, carriages, garden, dairy—I am in charge of all that. Besides which, all our clothes, linens, etc., from mine to Emily's are made here at the house and I have to supervise everything, often cutting and fitting them myself."[5]

Though she complained that her servants were lazy and feckless, it is nevertheless clear that she kept them at least as busy as she was. More so, in fact, for she would not have tolerated them reclining on sofas when they got tired. The precise nature of the mistress's problems mostly lay in "directing and overseeing," while others did the actual work. "So what do I do all day?" she asked Isabelle van Havre, rhetorically, in 1807: "I get up at five o'clock and we breakfast at seven. Most of the day is spent continually trotting from one end of the house to the other, in the morning giving directions about what has to be done and then after dinner seeing that my instructions have been carried out."[6] As Elizabeth Fox-Genovese has said, plantation mistresses were managers, and this fact put them in a position of antagonism with other members of their households, including other women.[7]

Rosalie Calvert thought a lot about how to structure and manage her household. In May 1807, she described the workings of Riversdale to her sister in revealing detail. "A family like ours," she wrote,

> is like a little kingdom—the ministers often fail to do their duty, and sometimes, too, the subjects become discontented and have to be replaced. We have three white servants—a chambermaid, a gardener, and an overseer. Then [there is] a black prime minister who serves as chamberlain, confidant, 'housekeeper,' in short, as man-of-all-work. Our household consists of 21 persons, including my children. Besides that, there are always workmen about, sometimes one, two, three, even four at a time—all to be lodged and fed, of course. You can see that so large a household requires care to manage, especially as things are not yet properly settled.[8]

The Riversdale household was clearly a large and complex organization. It consisted at this time, the early summer of 1807, of Rosalie, husband George, and four children, plus 15 laborers, including slaves, indentured servants, and wage workers, black and white, cooking for the family, waiting on them, and tending their house and garden. Besides the specified occupations, the Calverts also employed at various times, and in some cases permanently, midwives, wet nurses, nannies, cooks, tutors, and carriage drivers. Rosalie also regarded a waged overseer as a member of her household and as a servant, although this was not peculiar to her, as we shall see. She did not, however, count the "workmen," builders, and decorators completing work on the new mansion, as servants because their work was impermanent and not integral to the regular running of the household.

The passage also says much about the plantation mistress's idealized view of the world around her. Rosalie Calvert's generic use of the term "servant" (here and elsewhere) for laborers of different occupations, conditions of service, and race suggests that she saw the social distance between herself and her workers as greater than any between the laborers themselves. Yet, at the same time, she was quite perceptive about the world around her. Despite her generalization about workers, she acknowledged the existence of a complex hierarchy of household labor. And despite the possible absolutist implication of her monarchical simile, she was well aware of ministers' failings and subjects' discontent.

Rosalie Calvert found the failings of the discontented difficult to deal with, at least during her early years as she acclimatized to her new role as mistress of the house. In another revealing comment, written shortly after her parents' return to Belgium, she expressed considerable ambivalence about remaining in America. "In my opinion," she told her mother, Marie Louise Stier, "there is only one objection to this country, but that one is dreadful and without remedy—the difficulty we have with servants. Except for that inconvenience, which destroys all other pleasures, America would certainly be a more pleasant country in which to live."[9] The nature of relations between the mistress and different kinds of laborers, however, varied enormously. This variety is partly attributable to occupational diversity, differing degrees of propinquity, and partly to the laws of slavery and freedom and the conventions of gender that permitted and proscribed certain actions by plantation mistresses. But variability in labor relations also existed because slaves and different kinds of wage laborers exercised different kinds and degrees of agency in dealing with masters and mistresses.

In labor relations at Riversdale and other plantations, there was no simple or reductive relationship between power and victimhood. Slaves, for example, extremely resentful of their situation, seem to have resisted planters much more vigorously and consistently than wage laborers did. Senses of justice and injustice thus meant that more power on the part of mistresses and masters did not necessarily mean less agency on the part of laborers. Also, though, power operated in different ways, sometimes brutal and open, other times subtle and disguised. Slaves could be bought, sold, and beaten, but were guaranteed a subsistence, however meagre it might have been. Free workers could not be bought, sold, or beaten, at least legally, but they could be fired and thereby lose their livelihoods. No doubt, of course, slaves would have preferred freedom to their enslavement and free workers would not have exchanged liberty for slavery. But it does not make slavery any less heinous to observe that the free could not eat their liberty, and that this basic vulnerability may have helped to make them more compliant as workers. Or that thereby the conditions of enslavement gave slaves not only more reason but also more freedom to resist and to rebel. This chapter therefore agrees with those historians who, in critiquing scholarship that emphasizes slaves' cultural autonomy, have argued that master–slave relations are fundamental to a full understanding of the nature of agency in slave society.[10]

Overseers and Farm Laborers

As we saw in the last chapter, although landlords maintained inspection rights over their leaseholds, tenants were able to resist or at least had some freedom to do as they pleased to a limited extent partly because they were not subject to constant oversight. This fact represents an important distinction between tenants and wage laborers, although different kinds of wage workers had different levels of autonomy. Overseers' working lives, for example, were not easy, given their invidious position between battling masters and slaves.[11] The Calverts habitually fired overseers, although that had more to do with quality of crops and personal flaws, at least according to Rosalie, than with strategic compromises with slaves. "We discharged [our overseer Watson] at the end of the year for being good-for-nothing," Mrs. Calvert wrote in 1805, "and hired another man who quickly turned out to be a worse and the biggest rascal. We dismissed him at mid-year and rehired Barett, who is a good, honest man."[12] Two months later, however, she described her husband as "busy dismissing all his overseers in order to take on new ones who will, I trust, be better than the one at Mount Albion. He let six to eight hogsheads of tobacco be ruined in two days."[13]

Turnover of overseers was commonly high throughout the tobacco south and indeed notoriously so throughout the whole south. As the Calverts frequently hired and then fired, so it was at Newtown Manor in St. Mary's County where at least 17 overseers worked over a period of 50 years between the 1790s and 1840s, and there were very probably more than that as records are incomplete. Overseers in Kentucky typically lasted one or two years in any one post. As a function of the inherently antagonistic relationship between the enslaved and those who enslaved them, the latter developed certain ideas about overseers. Like the Calverts, Joseph Mobberly of St. Inigoe's in St. Mary's County, often saw overseers as scourges and scapegoats "who may either enrich or ruin his employer." He stereotyped overseers as characters ranging from good ones who kept order and made profits, to the honest but drunk or incompetent, to the overly harsh who would force up productivity but undermine profits by provoking slaves to resist through damaging plantation resources. Sometimes overseers themselves resisted the demands placed on their time, or else used slaves and other plantation resources for their own purposes. John Leach, an overseer on St. Inigoe's, was charged by Mobberly with "taking a slave to the factory [Clifton] mill three times, neglect of overlooking having no farm work done from 15th Dec. 1817 to Jan. 23 1818." Leach also made unauthorized use of a plantation boat, had a slave named Nelly work his garden and another named Michael dig his potatoes. Leach's son Samuel was evidently a chip of the old block. He let two hogs run with the sows and pigs, and also neglected farm work entirely from December 20, 1817 to January 15, 1818, was absent four times, sometimes fishing and oyster catching, was "frequently in the house when I visited the farm" and indeed "in the house doing nothing." After a barn and crops burned down at one of his Kentucky plantations, John Breckinridge wrote that even his presence would not have secured against what he called "the negligence of overseers. But I care little for them."[14]

To try to obviate these kinds of problems, planters sometimes encumbered overseers with restrictive contracts, as they tried to do with tenants. And, as with tenant leases, wage labor contracts used the term "liberty" in its older sense, as privileges granted from above rather than as rights derived from nature, God, or somehow inhering in a particular status. While many overseers lived on plantations in separate overseers' houses and were paid in cash or crop, others had more complicated relationships with their employers. Stephen Lee of Prince George's County, Maryland, for example, was Mary Pottenger's overseer from January 1803 through December 1806 for "annually seventy-five pounds Current Money and one dollar for every thousand weight of Tobacco, that he should carry to Market." If he stayed single, he would "live in the family of the said Mary" without payment in kind. If he married, though, he was

> at liberty, to keep two Cows on the plantation to be fed and treated as the said Mary's Cattle, and also two horses, one to be fed and treated as the said Mary's carriage horses are, the other to be fed only on hay and no corn to be allowed, also to keep two hogs and to raise chickens and ducks, and should be furnished with four hundred pounds of Pork, by the said Mary and corn for the use of his family.

Also, Lee could not "use the Negroes or horses of the said Mary on his private business without" her say-so. Pottenger thus painstakingly protected her own property even while enumerating Lee's entitlements. This protectiveness extended, among other things, to controlling the size of Lee's family. If he were to marry, his household

> shall not consist of more than four persons, to wit himself and Wife, his child and one Servant only, [and] the said Stephen shall not make use of more fire Wood, than is absolutely necessary for his family, and . . . he shall not on any Pretence feed the Horses of any of his Visitors with the Corn, or provinders of the said Mary. And . . . the said Stephen shall not keep more than one fire for the use of his family.

Lee's contract was annually renewable. This common arrangement allowed employers a yearly option to replace employees even without terms being broken. Annual contracts gave short-term protection to overseers too, although George Calvert fired an overseer "at mid-year" at least once, and more often than that judging by Rosalie Calvert's comments.[15] Overseers could sue employers for breach of contract, though only following loss of livelihood and after much trouble and expense. Nevertheless, in 1810, Lee sued Pottenger for £500 ($1,335) in unpaid wages and expenses, and £300 damages ($800—he sued for the money in Maryland pounds current). He won at least a partial victory, for he assigned "the amount of [£135, 13 shillings and 5 pence] obtained by me, in Prince George's Court against MP" to William M. Lansdale. That is, $362, though he may have won more and just used this amount to pay off a debt via the court.[16]

It is perhaps not surprising that some overseers did not put the effort into their work that employers expected. Pay was not high. John Leach was paid $100 a year at St. Inigoe's and Samuel $15. Cash pay went up and down. At Newtown, pay was an annual $119 in 1786, $150 from 1805 to 1811, $200 in 1812, and $140 for the rest of the decade, but $89 in the 1790s. At St. Inigoe's the rates were $60 in 1810, $140 from 1815 to 1817, $100 in 1817–1818, and $140 in 1821. William Somerville's estate paid his overseers $93 in 1807, and $104, $120, and $135 in 1813. Pay was often lower, however. Ann Fenwick paid Rudolph Booth just $30 in 1798, and in 1811 George Fenwick lowered his overseer's wages to $80 because he believed "he can get as good a manager for less wages to lower plantation expenses." James Gatton was making $55 for 1822 working for Jon Briscoe, and just $15 more than that ten years later working for the Platers at Bloomsbury. James McMullin made $96 from his share of Brisoe's tobacco, pork, and wheat in 1822, and then worked for Bennett Abell for $70 in 1829, $50 in 1832, but $156 in 1833 and 1834. Cash pay was unusual, though. St. Mary's County's overseers mostly received between one-sixth and one-ninth of a crop. In the 1790s and 1800s, John Breckinridge paid his Kentucky overseers provisions plus between a tenth and seventh of the crops they raised, sometimes offering livestock or cash as an incentive to take care of property. Cash salaries in Kentucky were usually £45 a year. Contracts typically specified such duties as overseeing between six and 14 slaves, taking care of livestock, breaking in horses and oxen for the plough, cultivating corn, clearing land, logging, making fences, and erecting buildings.[17]

These were not rates of pay that made it easy for overseers to accumulate money to buy a farm. More than half of the identifiable overseers of St. Mary's County were young men in their twenties, a fifth of whom were single, probably attempting to accumulate the means to establish a household and obtain a tenant farm, at least to begin with. Others were more mature men, often with families, who alternated between tenant farming and overseeing. Some succeeded in becoming landowners. Norman Burroughs was in his mid-thirties with two children and was working as an overseer for Polly Bond Biscoe in the mid-1790s. By 1798 he had five children and was renting a farm from Philip Key, though he was still a nontaxable. In 1806, however, he bought a 170-acre farm and by then had two slaves. He sold the farm two years later and rented from William Somerhill for three years, at the end of which he bought 174 acres that he owned when he died a year later still in 1812. He still held two slaves, included in his inventoried personal property amounting to $1,483. But he was one of only three of 64 of St. Mary's overseers known to have acquired land. Forty percent left the county and of those who stayed only half made enough to make the tax lists. The other half remained nontaxables throughout their lives.[18]

Owing to competition from enslaved labor, besides overseeing slaves there was little wage work on farms and plantations in the tobacco-plantation south for free white men who might have needed to start making a living—sons of yeomen and tenants in particular. Where there was a significant degree of it, it was in areas such as the eastern end of St. Mary's County, Maryland, where wheat became a dominant crop. Even then, opportunities were often limited to two or three weeks at plowing time and another two or so at harvest time. Contracts were therefore often short and wages were low because the slave labor system survived within these tobacco-region wheat enclaves, as opposed to regions where wheat came to dominate and where therefore slavery declined. In the 1790s, farm laborers in St. Mary's County earned an average 45 cents a day plus board. The figure rose to 66 cents by 1810 but then dropped again to 45 cents during the War of 1812 and fell to 37 cents a day in the 1820s and 1830s. Wood cutters made 40 cents a cord, which required a minimum of a day's work just to split. Some were hired by the day, but at certain times contracts could last a few weeks. Hence, in 1810, "Michael Barnes agrees to work from March 23*rd* till 20*th* June except 4 days he is to have to go to Leonardtown…for the sum of $10." And a young man named Malachi Beckwith worked on St. Inigoe's Manor 15 May to Christmas Day for $25-worth of corn, wheat, and meat to be paid to his mother. The managers of St. Inigoe's Manor increasingly hired free wage labor on an annual basis at rates of $42 a year in 1810, rising to $65 in 1811, $70 in 1819, and $85 in 1820. Wages then fell to $30 between 1821 and 1824, but rose back to $60 by 1830. But that was unusual in that the Jesuits by then had not only decided to diminish their dependence on tobacco in favor of wheat, but were also making efforts to use enslaved labor less.[19]

Even the relatively few who worked for wages in skilled nonfarming occupations mostly found it difficult to accumulate capital. Carpenters, for example, made $33 a month in St. Mary's County in 1788, down to $12 a month in 1794 and back up but only to $22 in 1820. Bayly Marks found 32 carpenters working in St. Mary's County between 1790 and 1840 who did not form households. Of these men, 15 percent acquired taxable wealth, 34 percent died with no assessable wealth, and the rest left the county before they died. Most of their inventories were worth less than $100. In the early 1820s, the family of St. Inigoe's carpenter

John Hopkins was "in a state of starvation." The richest was a master carpenter who left assets worth $2,957. Twenty other carpenters who did form households left inventories. These men were generally better off, with inventoried wealth at the ends of their lives ranging from the $286 owned by John B. Davis to that of $3,797 accumulated by John Berry. Bricklayers earned about the same monthly rates of pay as carpenters, but the county's population and demand for building work could generally only keep three or four bricklayers in a living at any one time. Revolutionary war veteran Jesse Thompson was one of the best off, acquiring $136 in taxable wealth between 1793 and 1800, and by 1811 he had 155 acres of land. Half to three-quarters, however, were nonlandowners. By the 1820s, though, Thompson needed a war pension to pay off his debts and keep his land. Also in the St. Mary's County building trade between 1790 and 1840 were two plasterers, three painters, seven brick makers, and one stone mason. Both plasterers, two of the painters, and three of the brick makers never accumulated taxable assets in St. Mary's and eventually left the county. The remaining brick makers died with inventoried property worth less than $200. George McClelland, the stone mason, died in 1832 with $269-worth of inventoried property, including $3 in tools, $166 in livestock, a silver watch, and $11 in cash. The painter managed to obtain 140 acres of land and inventoried wealth worth $1,564. It was similar a situation for all others engaged in extra- or nonagricultural labor, with one exception.[20]

Of all nonfarming wage workers, blacksmiths were generally the best off economically. Indeed, many were able to acquire at least enough land to establish their own shop and become one of the smallholders dotted about the countryside or increasingly concentrated in the little towns of the Chesapeake region. Indeed, 65 percent of blacksmiths in St. Mary's County in 1820 owned land. Zachariah Tippett was a householder and wage-earning blacksmith from at least 1790. By 1806 he had $30 in taxable personal property, but in 1810 he bought 115 acres of land and had added another 70 acres to his landholdings by the time he died in 1825. He must have been farming as well as smithing. Nevertheless, he still had only $419 in personal estate when he died, which he described as "acquired by the joint industry and frugality of my dear wife and myself." Some did well, but then got into trouble. When William Estep set up home he had only use of the shop and tools on the farm of his father, Philomen. In 1796 he was assessed with $45-worth of personal property, but by 1804 had $769 and held 12 slaves. He also acquired 200 acres of land between 1808 and 1811. When he died in 1820 he still had the land, three slaves, and $1,360 in personal estate. Yet he also left $617 in business debts and $5,862 in personal debts. Some never achieved propertied independence. Lewis N. Hall leased a St. Inigoe shop until the late 1820s and then one on Newtown Manor until he left St. Mary's in 1836. The

Newtown manager despaired that “It was very certain that not a cent could be got from him for old debts to Newtown” and that the “little he was doing for us, would not amount to more than 5 or 6 dollars.”[21]

Women frequently worked for wages too, often as weavers and seamstresses, often to supplement family incomes but also commonly as widows. They rarely made more, however, than an annual $30, which the St. Mary’s County Levy Court deemed was required to sustain an almshouse out-pensioner for a year. Mary Dorsey earned $12 a year as a seamstress at St. Inigoe’s but otherwise survived on a county pension and the charity of her neighbors. As at Riversdale, some women worked as domestic servants. Ann Steale made $4 a month serving the masters of Newtown Manor in the 1790s. Others earned less. Lydia Woodburn made only $1.50 a month at the same time in the same job. The Somervilles paid Bibiana Cissell and Ann Nottingham a living wage of $53 a year in 1808, and in the 1810s and 1820s the Jesuit plantations in St. Mary’s County paid housekeepers an annual $50. Midwives were generally paid $2 per delivery in St. Mary’s from the 1810s through the 1830s. How many deliveries they did and how much they were able to accumulate is unknown, but anecdotal evidence suggests it was at least sometimes less than a living wage. Mary Daffin received $43.75 for one month shy of three years’ work as a midwife at St. Inigoe’s.[22]

Plantation Tutors

Even well-educated and higher-status employees such as tutors were not exempt from their employers’ complaints and sometimes even condescension, contempt, and derision. The mistress of Riversdale wanted her children well educated, understandably enough. But she showed a presumption of her own pedagogical skills that was more consistent with her instinct that she was always right about everything than it was with any training or experience she possessed. As well as her sometimes difficult personality, Rosalie Calvert’s European background might have made her more exacting of tutors than other planters were. Home tutors were common in the Chesapeake, though only among the social elite, and the likes of Philip Vickers Fithian seem to have suffered less contrariness from the Carters of Nomini Hall in Virginia, for example, than Mrs. Calvert’s numerous tutors endured with her, however tellingly short their tenures often were. Yet, other members of the Chesapeake gentry had very firm ideas about what they expected their children to learn, both academically and socially, and they passed that on to tutors in no uncertain terms. Also, perhaps, Rosalie’s impatience and quick and frequent willingness to fire tutors reflected planters’ sense of the prerogatives of mastery, even over relatively well-educated free white people.[23]

Rosalie Calvert first expressed concern about her children's education to her European family in December 1806. At this time, Caroline was aged six, George was three, Marie Louise was two, and Rosalie Eugénie was a baby of two months. "My children are not yet of an age," the elder Rosalie wrote to her father, "to give me real companionship. It is, however, almost time to give them some teachers for their education. I don't know how we are going to do that—it isn't easy to find a good tutor."[24] Mrs. Calvert's concern appears to have been either justified or, more likely, a self-fulfilling prophecy, for a little over two years later she still had not found a tutor to her liking. "I continue to be a schoolmistress (much against my inclination)," she complained, "but what can I do? We cannot find the kind of teacher I want."[25]

The financial uncertainties caused by embargo, nonintercourse, and war also discouraged Mrs. Calvert from employing a tutor. Having written her brother, Charles Jean Stier, of the "commercial obstacles which prevent our selling our harvests and consequently leave us without income," in September 1809, Rosalie continued, "I was just about to engage a tutor who was quite what I wanted for my children, but I must put it off still for those reasons and continue to teach them myself, which not only bores me insufferably, but by confining me still more closely to the house is injurious to my health and confuses my brain so that I often reason falsely and don't have good common sense." Perhaps because of her own experience, then, she might have been more understanding than she was about the characteristics of tutors, as she saw them. "Have you not remarked," she asked her brother, clearly agreeing with him, "that schoolmasters are always stupid people, like wanderers from another world or from a dead and bygone century[?]"[26] This comment perhaps reflected a very modern anti-intellectualism that reinforced her low opinion of tutors. Rosalie evidently considered the cerebral distinct from and inferior to the practical, commonsensical, business-like mentality of the "world" and "century" with which she identified herself.

Despite her financial and other reservations, Rosalie Calvert hired a tutor in November 1809. She soon reverted to teaching her children herself, however, because the tutor did not measure up against her tellingly precise and very modern scale of time and pedagogical progress. Having written that her garden and her children took "much" and "the rest" of her time, she continued, "I employed a tutor for six months, but he didn't teach them half as much, and now I instruct them myself. . . . You can imagine, dear Father, how much time this takes, and having a large household to direct in addition leaves me few moments of leisure."[27] Her dislike of teaching, though, often overcame her dislike of tutors, for she kept trying new ones. "As of three days ago," she announced to her sister in June the next year, "I have a tutor for my children—he is an

Englishman between 50 and 55 years old. This is a great relief to me."[28] Relief was short-lived, however. In August, Rosalie wrote her other sibling, "I have a tutor for the two oldest, but I am not satisfied with his attainments so he cannot stay much longer."[29] "The tutor I had was so worthless," she told her Isabelle van Havre the following July, "I had to dismiss him, and I have none at present."[30]

By December 1811, Mrs. Calvert was reporting serious dissatisfaction with what was at least the third tutor she employed. "I thought," she wrote to her father,

> I had acquired an assistant to keep my accounts in my children's new tutor—he told me he had kept book for several years. I don't know whether it is my manner or my not following the rules of the art or what, but we cannot come to an understanding. I had a hundred times more trouble getting him to copy this account out of my book than if I had done it myself. He is so slow to understand and even slower to get it done that I lose patience.[31]

Rosalie briefly entertained the possibility here that the bookkeeping difficulties were her own fault, not his, but then concluded that they were his after all. But it was not just his alleged ineptitude as an accountant that aggravated Rosalie. She also thought him, like previous tutors, too slow a teacher. On this occasion, she felt herself not just twice but at least five or possibly seven times faster than a tutor as an educator. "I am not very happy," she told her father, "with the tutor of my two eldest. He is so slow that they don't learn as much in a week as they should in a day. For the rest, he is a good man, but I cannot make him appreciate the value of wasted time."[32] It is not clear whether and when this tutor was dismissed or voluntarily left Riversdale, but four years later, when Caroline and George Henry were attending school in Philadelphia, Rosalie was facing an old dilemma in relation to her younger children. "I am beginning to be quite perplexed," she wrote to her sister, "as to what I will do with the [children] I have here. Eugénie especially ought to be at school or have a tutor, but we have been so little pleased with our last two that I don't know what to do. Meanwhile, I am once more obliged to resume my old profession of schoolmistress which I find not at all amusing."[33]

Rosalie Calvert was dissatisfied with every teacher she employed. As late as 1819, she was still making the same complaints she first expressed 13 years before, although by this time, Caroline, her eldest daughter, was able to assist her. "I have just dismissed the governess," she told her father, "whom I employed for the past year for Eugénie, Henry, and Julia. She did not have a good method of teaching. If I cannot find a better one, I shall have to send Eugénie to a school and teach the other two myself with Caroline's assistance."[34] Within six months she did just that. "Since winter," she reported to her sister in September, "I haven't had a teacher for my three youngest children; Caroline gives them some lessons, but it takes up some of my time too."[35]

Indentured Servants and Domestic Wage Workers

Yet Rosalie Calvert's metaphorical and literal dismissals of tutors were no more or less severe than her treatment of others, including indentured servants, although there is only one known case at Riversdale to judge by. Indentured servitude had been in decline since slavery became the Chesapeake's pre-eminent labor system in the late-seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, but indentured migrants were still trickling into the region a century later.[36] In March 1819, Rosalie Calvert wrote that "[I] recently discharged my German gardener, whom we bought along with his wife off a ship. He knew nothing at all and couldn't tell a carrot from a turnip." The unnamed man had been at Riversdale since at least October 1813, when Rosalie described him as "knowledgeable," and even after dismissing him she admitted that, in a characteristically Calvertian calculation, "he was very industrious and did more work in a day than three or four of our negroes." He was probably less a poor gardener, then, than a victim of his employer's excessive expectations, caprice, and arbitrary power.[37]

If overseers, tutors, and indentured servants were sometimes troublesome, free, white domestic servants often proved more tractable. This was not necessarily because young women domestics (most of those Rosalie Calvert referred to were women) were happier employees, but was probably because their sex, limiting the number of occupational options available to them, and the fact that their work could be done by any number of slaves, made it harder for them than for others to find new livings if they were fired. Rosalie Calvert was certainly sometimes happier with her domestic wage workers than with any other "servants."[38] Of a "white children's nurse who also sews very well," she wrote in 1804:

> I pay her high wages—five dollars a month—but she is worth it. Never have I seen such patience and good humor about everything. I don't have the least trouble with the children now—she even makes their clothes with very little help from me.... Kitty, whom you know, is my chambermaid and an excellent one. She is quite skilful and even puts my hair in curlpapers every night.[39]

Kitty also managed the household at certain times. "When I have guests," Rosalie wrote, "all my functions cease and are performed by a white woman who is really my chambermaid but on occasion my 'housekeeper.'"[40]

It seems unlikely that the nurse, who the mistress of Riversdale never named, really loved the Calvert children "as if they were her own," as Rosalie claimed, or considered $5 a month for her long hours among the Calverts' offspring an especially generous wage. Kitty, too, may have been less contented than Rosalie realized. Free domestics, working alongside slaves and witnessing slave gangs enduring field labor from sunup to sundown, had good and obvious reason to feel relatively fortunate. There may have been other reasons for their apparent tractability, however, including the almost constant supervision that Rosalie Calvert described.

The Enslaved

Of all the different types of workers Rosalie Calvert encountered, she found enslaved ones the most difficult to deal with. While she appeared to have no ideological or moral misgivings about enslavement, she found slaves hard to master, at least initially, because she had not grown up with them. She told her father in 1804 that she loved the Maryland climate and "the liberty of everyone to live as he pleases. But," she added, "the torment with the servants poisons all these pleasures. Perhaps by hiring housekeepers and spending twice as much, we would have less trouble, but I am not in a position to do that. My husband doesn't feel this inconvenience as I do, since he is used to it."[41]

The Calverts were among the Prince George's County's largest slaveholders. In 1800, they held 76 slaves. By the time Rosalie died in 1821 they held 124.[42] Most of these enslaved people, at least those of prime working age, toiled in the tobacco fields. Those who Rosalie supervised personally were household workers. Even so, the born-outsider could learn much about slavery—and about mastery—by looking around her own plantation, observing the actions of her peers and listening to their advice, and learning from her own experience. Certainly, in time, Rosalie Calvert grew more accustomed to slaves and gained greater mastery over them. The process by which she did so tells us much about managerial strategies available to plantation mistresses. As numerous historians have shown, the gendered convention of female nonviolence disadvantaged slaveholding women in a labor system that depended on physical force, and there is no evidence that Rosalie Calvert beat her slaves, though she may have done so without feeling any wish to mention it.[43] But there were other management methods that Calvert learned to use to great effect. And, not at all surprisingly, they were the same or similar methods to those that all slaveholders used. That is, she used the slaveholders' prerogatives of punitive sale, removal of privileges, and personnel selection. Yet, faced with slaves asserting their privileges, she also had to develop carefully calibrated degrees of negotiation, toleration, and accommodation.

A fundamental fact of enslavement, of course, was power over the body, including the power to buy and sell human beings. An essential precondition for using sales as a labor management strategy was an ability to objectify slaves, and Rosalie Calvert possessed that ability. "I don't know whether I told you," she wrote her father matter-of-factly in November 1803, shortly after the Stiers' departure, "that for $300 we bought a man who is a good carpenter and knows how to keep a mill in good repair."[44] She also used distinctly economic language when referring to another way in which slave property increased. A little later, listing recent purchases, including the aforementioned carpenter and "a negro at auction . . . for $400," she added that a "little darky arrived here day before yesterday—Betty's production."[45] Mrs. Calvert also sometimes referred to slaves in the same breath as she did beasts of burden. "We have," she wrote of the Calverts' Oatlands property that they bought off the Halls, "put five of our negresses there and bought three negroes, four mules etc., in order to operate this farm."[46] She also appears to have considered her carriage drivers as part and parcel of the carriage apparatus. "Since the body of the carriage was too short to put a *passe*," she wrote her mother in 1803 of modifications they were making, "we manage with two postilions in yellow jackets, leather pantaloons, and black velvet caps with gold lace trim. It makes a very fine equipage."[47] Even the imminent death of one of her drivers failed to awaken in Mrs. Calvert an appreciation of the slave's humanity that entirely over-rode concerns for her own convenience. "Cooks and coachmen are the most difficult to find," she wrote her sister in 1805, "especially the latter. We have a very good [coachman], but I am afraid he won't last long, as he has the consumption which I think is killing him."[48]

Rosalie Calvert maintained enormous emotional distance even from her enslaved household servants. There is no evidence that she made a conscious decision to do this, but it is revealing that she seems never to have thought of doing otherwise. There is perhaps no better illustration of this than the fact that the mistress of Riversdale did not worry about the separation of slave children from their parents, except in as much as it affected their work and attitude. Of a slave called Lucie, who had accompanied the Stiers on their return to Belgium and then returned to Riversdale, Rosalie wrote her father on Christmas Day 1803, "[s]he really is a very good chambermaid and conducts herself well since she has been separated from her mother." Yet Lucie turned into a problem for her mistress. "I am going to try to sell her soon." Rosalie continued, "I could not make her say that she had not left the ship, as she tells me about having been on land several times, but I don't think it is important."[49] And yet Rosalie informed her father less than six months later that "[y]esterday we sold your girl Lucy to Dougherty for $225."[50] Lucie had, it seems, temporarily jumped ship a few times, perhaps taking the opportunity to see some of the world, or just to have a little time to herself while she could, but she had nevertheless returned to Riversdale. Rosalie Calvert's attitude to Lucie was contradictory. If it was not important that Lucie had left the ship, why did the mistress try to make her admit she had? And why did she sell her for doing so or not admitting that she did so, despite her acknowledged skills as a chambermaid? The reason for the apparent contradictions may have been that before writing the first letter Rosalie had consumed too much Christmas cheer, only later losing her feelings of good will. More likely, though, she sold Lucie as a part of a strategy for dealing with and diminishing "the torment with the servants" she complained about by ridding herself of a disobedient slave and setting an example to the others.

Mrs. Calvert made no explicit statement to that effect, but Lucie was not the only Calvert slave sold at this time. "The old witch Sara and her granddaughter," Rosalie wrote her parents in August 1803, "have been sold for $100. We tried to sell her in Baltimore, but couldn't; [she was] afraid of being sold to some Georgian and took it in her head to make herself look bad. Finally, she made so many fine promises that she persuaded Ben Lowndes to buy her."[51] Rosalie Calvert did not detail exactly what Sara did to earn her reputation, possibly because Sara had gained it before the Stiers' departure and had been a troublesome property for some time, obviating the need for explanation. Even on the auction block, Sara had tricks up her sleeve, actively deterring unwanted buyers. She continued to torment her new master too. "The old woman Sara," Rosalie wrote two years later, "whom we sold to Ben Lowndes, is the worst I know of among all the servants of our friends, and she regrets every day of her life the change of masters since your departure."[52] Rosalie Calvert may have derived some satisfaction from this outcome, for, as we saw in chapter 2, Benjamin Lowndes and his wife had "vexed" her mother and father, and she had thus received Anne Lowndes "imperiously."

Another way Rosalie Calvert gained greater control over her enslaved household workforce was removal of privileges. "My gardener John," she wrote her mother in 1803, revealing her tendency once again to quantify laborers' efforts and judge people's worth accordingly, "works as hard as four people—he is a good man."[53] Some time the following year, however, John somehow incurred Rosalie's wrath. "I had to dismiss my gardener John," she told her father, "because he had become so insolent. He has been back three times since, begging me to take him back, [but] I am now without [a gardener]."[54] Again, Rosalie Calvert did not detail exactly what John's insolence comprised. Perhaps he became tired of the mistress's demanding nature, oversight, or criticism, and consequently developed a resentful demeanor toward her. Perhaps he even lost his temper and gave her a piece of his mind. If he thought he might get away with disrespecting Mrs. Calvert on account of his masculinity or her naivety, however, then he misjudged this mistress or did not reckon on her developing ways of making people work and behave in a manner that suited her. Whatever the case, Rosalie condemned him to the boredom, intensity, regimentation, and, no doubt, whippings of the gang-labor regime of the tobacco fields. It seems that this reduced him to pleading for forgiveness, but Mrs. Calvert remained unmoved.[55]

Truculence and resistance among the Calverts' slaves did not entirely cease once the mistress of Riversdale began asserting her power over the likes of Lucie, Sara, and John, but it seems to have moderated significantly, at least to a level that Mrs. Calvert could live with. "My cook Sam," Rosalie wrote in August 1805, "is the most heedless and least tractable of all my servants." Yet she did not sell or remove Sam, and perhaps he had more license than other slaves because he was an irreplaceably fine chef who helped the Calverts impress their many important guests. But she appears to have been able to accommodate Sam because labor relations in general appear to have calmed down. Her complaints about slaves grew much less bitter after 1804, following the removal of John and sales of Sara and Lucie, and even the comments about Sam did not exude the air of exasperation perceptible in her earlier lamentations. Moreover, the same letter makes clear that she had turned her household help into a tolerably manageable workforce. Encouraging her sister to move back to Maryland, she wrote that:

> [t]he servants are somewhat better than before. Surely it would be impossible to have any worse than those Papa had.... I have a little fourteen-year-old negress who is invaluable. I could let you have half a dozen young girls to mind the children, all very good for that job with a little supervision. If you do return, I will undertake to provide you with servants who won't be perfect but a hundred times better than the best you had when you were here.[56]

It is possible that the mistress of Riversdale had simply become more accustomed with time and experience to the work rates, standards, and attitudes of her slaves, and that they only seemed so much better than before. But the treatment of Lucie, Sara, and John probably served as lessons to other slaves as well as punishments for those individuals. Perhaps even Sam only dared push things so far. It is likely, therefore, that Rosalie complained less because she had succeeded in cowing her slaves to some extent by getting tougher. Her slaves had battled with their new mistress, and they had caused her grief. But, judging by her own estimation of things, she had won at least a points victory if not necessarily a knockout.

Rosalie Calvert increased her control not only through punitive sale, removal, and the threat thereof, but also through careful personnel management. As some of her comments suggest, on an abstract and even perhaps philosophical level, Rosalie Calvert could generalize about "servants" to the point of regarding them as to be so far beneath her as to be indistinguishable from each other. Yet, when it came to practical and day-to-day matters such as work rates, reliability, and tractability, she knew one worker from another. By October 1805, her careful selection of individuals was bearing dividends in more industrious and submissive service. "I was surprised to hear," she sympathized with her sister, who was apparently having problems with her own, "that your servants have become worse. As for myself, I have a pretty good set now. Several are quite young, but I find these the best—they are the most attentive and docile."[57] In 1804, Rosalie considered various options for help with the birth and postnatal care of her third child and second daughter, Marie Louise. "I had planned on using a doctor from Washington," Rosalie recounted to her sister,

> but after I hired as a nurse an old negress who used to belong to Mrs. Washington and who is highly regarded, I liked her so much that I wanted only her.... This little old woman is worth her weight in gold. I don't have the least bother—she dresses the child, if the baby wakes at night, she takes her until she falls asleep, and she takes marvellous care of me so that I won't catch cold.[58]

Rosalie Calvert became dissatisfied with the unnamed free black nurse, however. In February 1805, believing (wrongly, as it turned out) that she was pregnant again, Mrs. Calvert considered employing a white wet-nurse for two-month-old Marie Louise. Rosalie believed that finding a white wet-nurse would be difficult, but that she believed she might find one at all is perhaps surprising. Less surprising is the common racial attitude she entertained with regard to black people's ability to nurture children. "I am afraid to continue nursing her [Marie Louise] for long," she confided to her sister, "[for fear] of hurting the other one, and it is hard to get a wet nurse whom you really know. I never want to have a black one again—they are not capable of attachment to a child."[59] Although she gained a large degree of mastery over her workers' labor and general behavior, she appears to have remained frustrated that she could not control their inner feelings. Imbued with the slaveholders' imperative to achieve absolute mastery, even over a free black nurse as well as slaves, she had to conclude when she did not achieve it that there was something wrong not with her but with black people. For slaveholders who idealized their mastery, the notion that slaves or black people more generally would not love them, and certainly the possibility that slaves might resent them, was unthinkable or impossible to dwell upon. This almost wilful incomprehension, along with the need to justify beating people, separating enslaved children and their parents, and the committing of other enormities that could not be legally perpetrated against white people, helps account for slaveholders' belief that African Americans were naturally emotionally obtuse.

Rosalie Calvert never articulated a racial justification of enslavement, or of her treatment of slaves, beyond the occasional and incidental comment such as the one above. She hinted sporadically in her letters at an antipathy for black people based upon race, although only sporadically. In 1817, for instance, referring to some land that the Calverts were tempted to purchase, she wrote that "[t]here is a good house on the property, but he [the deceased former owner] has freed two of his negroes and given each of them 150 acres, which would give it bad neighbors unless one could make them sell their land."[60] Yet, given her normal willingness to express any kind of animus often and in no uncertain terms, we can surmise that she did not have especially strong feelings about race. Furthermore, as we have seen, she often expressed prejudice against poor whites as well. In a sense, therefore, the Calverts were not especially racially discriminatory. They disliked all kinds of poor people.

Of course, in general, black people were nevertheless treated distinctly. In Prince George's County, in 1800, 12,291 enslaved people comprised 57.6 percent of the county's total population of 21,175. In 1820, 11,185 slaves constituted 55.3 percent of the total population of 20,216. This slight decline subsequently reversed itself. In 1830, 11,585 slaves comprised 56.6 percent of 20,474 Prince Georgians. In next-door Charles County, the slave population of 10,085 in 1790 constituted fractionally less than half the total population of 20,613. By 1800, 9,558 comprised just over half of the total of 19,172. After that, as poorer whites migrated, the enslaved far outnumbered the free: numbering 12,435 of 20,245, 61.4 percent, in 1810, and 9,419 of 16,502, 57.1 percent, in 1820. On the eve of the Civil War, 9,653 slaves formed 57 percent of the 16,517 people of Charles County, Maryland. Similarly, in 1790, 45 percent of the residents of St. Mary's were enslaved, and, due to outmigration, majorities of the county's population were enslaved by the 1820s, although numbers of slaves fell from 6,985 in 1790 to 5,761 in 1840.[61] Most of these slaves worked in the fields, but in St. Mary's County in the early nineteenth century there were 220 to 231 enslaved craftsmen at any given time, though that is just 2 ½ percent of male slaves aged between 10 and 50. Their most common callings were those of blacksmith and carpenter, and indeed 45 percent of all St. Mary's County blacksmiths were enslaved. They not only served their own plantation's needs but were also normally hired out to others or employed in shops their owners leased in towns, where they provided direct competition for free blacksmiths, black and white. Many worked for the well off. Forty percent of skilled craft-working slaves were owned by the wealthiest 5 percent of residents of St. Mary's County. The rich exclusively used slaves in such occupations as cooks, servants, carriage drivers, and gardeners.[62]

While slave populations in the tidewater were declining, slavery continued to thrive in the tobacco-plantation south by spreading west. Enslavement was protected by the 1792 and 1799 Kentucky constitutional conventions. As one the state's founding fathers, George Nicholas, wrote to James Madison in 1799, "Policy obliged us to do something of the kind, for if we had not we should have received no more valuable emigrants from the five S. states." A Virginian named William Lewis wrote to John Breckinridge on the same subject, "It would be a wretched piece of pollicy in excluding all wealthy emigrants possessing that property from seeking an asylum in that state." Planters, he continued, "are certainly the most desirable emigrants, on account not only, of the wealth they introduce, but their erudition and polite manners—it is from those that your character as a State is to be formed—exclude this class from your citizens, and what/will the balance be? 'a rude and indigested mass.'" Slaves thus formed 23 percent of the population of Kentucky in 1792 and 27 percent in 1820, with most concentrated in the Bluegrass and counties adjoining on the south-west.[63]

The new western slave population was of course to a great extent a product of migration from the east. Bayly Marks found that between 1790 and 1840, 682 slaves are known to have migrated out of St. Mary's with their masters, while 135 moved into the county, and 908 disappeared due to out-of-county sales. There was therefore considerable disruption of slave families and communities, which in turn added a new or at least enhanced dimension to early national slave resentment and resistance. There was a particular fear of course of being sold south. The Calvert slave, Sara, saved herself from such a fate by acting up in front of a potential buyer from Georgia. Charles Ball lost his mother to sale in Georgia on the death of her master and Ball himself later went to Georgia, sold away from his wife and family, along with 51 other slaves in one lot from Calvert County, Maryland. Two slaves of Ignatius Ford of St. Mary's County, Maryland, ran away out of fear that they "would probably be purchased by a foreign negro buyer, then in the neighbourhood." In 1802there was a small "insurrection" at Leonardtown, St. Mary's County, with slaves saying, according to witnesses, that "the whites will *soon* pay for selling negroes to Georgia men." Certainly some masters feared those they oppressed. George Slye of St. Mary's County was advised to sell his slaves "or we should be found some day murdered in our bed." James Mobberly feared a widespread mass insurrection after a mini-riot at St. Inigoe's Manor in 1817.[64] Mobberly accepted that there was little a master could do to stop it, and even opposed certain methods of trying to, perhaps mindful of Gabriel Prosser's Richmond, Virginia, attempted insurrection, which at the time was still a recent memory. If a master should "commence the system of whipping," he wrote in his journal, "he will from that moment be a very *bad man*. His plantation utensils will be frequently broken & spoiled from inattention, carelessness, or malice; however he ought to meet these accidents with Christian patience—In fine, his negroes may rise, & put an end to his life. Such are the taxes and various expenses that the planter must pay; and such are the trials, vexations, and even dangers, which he must meet."[65]

Most resistance, however, was relatively harmless. Runaways ran not just when they feared being sold, but, as famous Maryland runaway slave Frederick Douglass made abundantly clear, because they detested their enslavement. In 1786, Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer of Charles County reported in the *Maryland Gazette* that a 27-year-old slave named George may have taken one of "his usual walks," implying he was one of those slaves who regularly took a vacation. On this occasion, though, the master feared that George may have got to Baltimore, "as he once before attempted." Cities with large black communities offered potential secure sanctuaries. A 1792 advertisement reported that "A YOUNG MULATTO WOMAN left my plantation some weeks ago, and (as I am since informed) has been about Annapolis passing for of the Butlers." That is, she affected to be one of a large free black extended family notorious for assisting others to reach freedom. In 1796, Osten's owner reported that "[I]t is probable he will push to George-town, he is acquainted with almost every negro and free mulatto of that town." The Upper South of course, after Independence, offered opportunities to escape enslavement permanently by reaching relatively nearby free states. According to Philip Briscoe, writing in August 1783, runaway Will "will try to get to Philadelphia, as he has been heard to say that he would try to get there; he has a brother that lives there." Will was a force to be reckoned with, matching his "down roguish look." Briscoe warned that "he will make a stout resistance before he will be taken, and if taken will get away" again, unless "well secured." When recaptured, Briscoe had Will committed to the county jail. But Will had friends, and in March the next year one of them set fire to the jail. The Sheriff reported that Will "had round his neck when he made his escape a pair of pot hooks with a long chain fastened to them, and a pair of handcuffs on." Although such treatment and further punishments, including being sold away, may have deterred some from trying to escape, it did not deter Will and did not deter all others. In 1790, Isaac ran off "with an intention of going to some one of the northern states, where he should be entitled to his freedom."[66]

Between 1790 and 1840, some 75 slaves ran away from their owners in St. Mary's County. All ran from large plantations, all but one were men, and most of them were in their 20s. Several had recently been sold and were perhaps attempting to return to their old families and communities. Two were caught off-plantation visiting family in Charles County and another further away in Frederick County. These people were perhaps only attempting temporary escapes. At least two ran to avoid being sold south. Several were kin of the Butler and Shorter families, free black families. Phil, also known as Charles Butler, and George Shorter went to Annapolis to hire themselves out. Several got as far as Baltimore before being caught. At Easter 1795, David, a slave of Nathaniel Ewing, attempted with two others to get to Pennsylvania after copying the freedom papers of Clement Butler.[67]

The disruptions of wartime and its aftermath gave slaves added opportunities to abscond, as did the inspiration of the American Revolution. In the five years following Yorktown, the number of Charles County runaways advertised in the *Maryland Gazette* doubled and continued to increase steadily thereafter. The War of 1812 also provided opportunities for escape for Chesapeake slaves. Hezekiah Niles noted that the British saw slaves as "objects of the greatest desire" and indeed an anonymous British "Captain of the Navy" reckoned the fleet embarked 1,500 to 2,000 slaves. "A great many black slaves," he observed, in *A personal Narrative of Events by Sea and by Land from the Year 1800 to 1815*, "with their families, used to take advantage of our visit to come away with us." Absconding during wartime was more likely to be successful that in peacetime. The only evidence of successful escape from St. Mary's County, for example, comes from the Guardian Account of Stephen Milburn, which recorded a slave named Henry, "who ran away & never returned."[68]

Eleanor Beckett and Her Daughter

There is one extraordinary story of escape from enslavement in Prince George's County, Maryland, which, though unusual, is worth recounting as it involved the Calverts of Riversdale and sheds some light on the complexities of class and race when it came to sex. Eleanor Beckett was "an Indian–Negro mulatto," according to her great-granddaughter, Nellie Arnold Plummer, and she was George Calvert's long-term lover. Caroline Calvert Cramphin was their daughter. Both were born enslaved, but, despite uncertainties and struggles, they escaped enslavement and became women of considerable wealth. Like Harriet Jacobs, though in different ways, both used their sexuality, their intelligence, and the patronage and almost certainly in both cases the genuine love of white men to attain freedom, property, and even prosperity.[69] Rosalie Calvert never wrote about Eleanor Beckett or her children, and perhaps knew nothing of them. If she did know, she may have failed to write about the affair to avoid the pain of doing so or because that was not the done thing. Or she might have accepted it, as some southern white women did, as an undesirable though often unavoidable consequence of the perceived nature of men, or of black women, or of the society they lived in. Alternatively, she might have adopted the head-in-the-sand perspective famously described by Mary Chesnut. If the latter, she must have buried her head pretty deeply, for her husband's relationship with Eleanor Beckett was affectionate, enduring, and consequential enough to enter contemporary public records, at least indirectly.[70] On the other hand, George Calvert seems to have gone to considerable pains to cover up his affair in those records.

George Calvert's relationship with Eleanor Beckett began, before he met Rosalie Stier, at the Mount Albion plantation he came to control at his father's death in 1788 and inherited after his mother's death a decade later. When George married Rosalie in 1799, he arranged Eleanor's marriage to William Norris, an English indentured servant and shoemaker, perhaps to divert his new bride's attention from his old liaison. Both couples moved to Riversdale, though, where George continued his relationship with Eleanor, notwithstanding both their marriages. Family memory has it that William Norris died of a broken heart, as recorded by Nellie Arnold Plummer, who was Norris's great-grand-daughter and not therefore a descendant of George Calvert.[71] For all his cheating and cuckolding, however, George Calvert was decent enough to free Eleanor Beckett and her children. He did so, though, with enormous circumspection. He initially manumitted Eleanor on November 12, 1801, under the name of Charlotte (with children Ann, Caroline, Cyrus, Charlotte, and John). The deed appeared in the county Land Records discreetly under the names of George Calvert and "Negroes Nick and others." On October 30, 1822, 18 months and thus perhaps a decent and seemly interval after Rosalie's death, George manumitted Eleanor again. The new manumission explained its repetition of the old one as follows: "Charlotte altho generally So called was christened by a different name that is by the name of Eleanor. Now the intention of this instrument is to rectify the mistake and to explain any difficulty that might occur hereafter and to certify that the said Eleanor Sometimes called Eleanor Beckett was the person intended to have been manumitted by the said deed under the name of Charlotte." Given the unlikelihood that George Calvert got his long-time lover's name wrong, and given the timing of the correction, one suspects an earlier subterfuge aimed at sparing embarrassment and perhaps more before Rosalie.

In all, George Calvert manumitted 33 slaves, most of them with verifiable connections to Eleanor Beckett. Twenty were named Beckett, three more were Norrises, five were Scotts, one was named Rachel Herbert, and four others had no recorded last names. It is possible that all or some of the ten not obviously connected to Beckett or Norris by name were other lovers or children of George Calvert.[72] When William Norris died, George Calvert sent Eleanor Beckett and some of her children to Part of The Hermitage, his property in neighboring Montgomery County. Perhaps it would have been indiscreet or too tempting to have them remain at Riversdale. Local tax assessments show Calvert as owner of nine slaves there from 1813, although the censuses of 1820 and 1840 record the residence there of six "free colored" persons.[73]

Despite these complications, further evidence of genuine affection between Eleanor Beckett and George Calvert lies in name sharing between the two families. George's second daughter by Eleanor, born in 1793, was named Caroline, as was the eldest daughter of George and Rosalie, born seven years later. Of course, two sisters with the same name poignantly highlights the father's semi-abandonment of his black family for his white one and at the same time his betrayal of his white one with the black one. The attachment, though, seems to have been mutual, for the elder Caroline and her older sister Ann, born in 1790, took the name Calvert, or else were given the name by their mother, and Caroline subsequently named her own first-born son George.

The elder Caroline Calvert also lived an unusual life. After moving with her mother to Montgomery County, next door on the north side to Prince George's, she took up residence with Thomas Cramphin, Jr., who lived on a nearby plantation, also on the Hermitage tract, and who was half-brother of George and Rosalie Calvert's friend, Richard Cramphin. Although inter-racial marriage was legally unrecognized, Caroline Calvert took Thomas Cramphin's name and the two lived as wife and husband for 19 years and had nine children together. Thomas Cramphin, unlike George Calvert, never married a white woman, and made a will in 1824 that would have left Caroline life-time use of his Hermitage plantation, most of its contents, and ten slaves. He left the remaining property in the trusteeship of George Calvert for the benefit of his children by Caroline. When Thomas Cramphin died in 1831, his properties, including five plantations and 245 slaves, were worth some $68,148.68. It is a notable irony that in partnering a wealthy planter, George Calvert's mixed-race daughter made what her father would have considered a better match than did the white Caroline, who went to private school in Philadelphia where she befriended the daughter of James and Eliza Monroe, and whose debutante ball took place at her friend's parents' residence, the White House, and who married a mere Philadelphia lawyer. Sadly, though, Caroline Cramphin's future was not quite so easily secured. This relationship was compromised too, in this instance by her husband's other relatives.[74]

Thomas Cramphin worried that his white nephews and nieces would challenge his beneficence towards his black family, which is most likely why he left most of his property in the trusteeship of George Calvert in his 1824 will. His fear of his white relatives was so great, though, that he later changed his will and left almost all his property in George

Calvert's hands, reducing Caroline's direct legacy to a $500 annuity. He no doubt had in mind that a court of law would have a harder time ruling against the master of Riversdale than it would have done against a woman of mixed race who was legally designated as black and who had never legally been married to him. These events occurred just over a quarter century after Maryland's Chancery Court had dispensed with the need for trustees for women's property; a measure of how recognition and protection of free black women's property rights lagged behind that of white women's. Cramphin must also have trusted George Calvert to safeguard the welfare of his wife and children, who were, after all, George's own child and grandchildren. Cramphin's fears of his relatives and his trust in Calvert were both vindicated, as, perhaps, was his sense of legal realities. In 1835, his niece, Elizabeth Bowie Davis, sought to have her uncle adjudged as having died intestate. The Maryland Chancery Court ruled that Calvert and Davis must reach a private agreement. George Calvert subsequently went to considerable trouble and expense, and he was not normally generous with his time and money, to protect the interests of Caroline and her children. Davies received the verdict of intestacy she desired in return for Calvert purchasing her claim in the Cramphin estate for $30,000, leaving him free to manage his daughter's and grandchildren's interests. In recording the transaction publicly, George finally openly acknowledged Eleanor Beckett as mother of his child and Caroline Calvert Cramphin as his daughter. The deed handing Cramphin's property to him was recorded as an arrangement made between George Calvert and "Caroline Calvert the daughter of Eleanor Beckett . . . of the one part and of George Calvert . . . of the other part." Caroline named herself Calvert in the deed rather than Cramphin, perhaps to avoid legal ambiguity. Although she was the *de-facto* wife of Thomas Cramphin, they were never married *de-jure* and so she never legally carried his name, facts that made her ability to come out of this situation on top all the more impressive. She must have known only too well what she was up against, but she also knew how to handle it. Literate and educated, she signed and sealed this deed in an immaculate hand. Only half of free white American women could read and write at this time, yet either George Calvert educated his daughter or Thomas Cramphin educated his wife exceptionally well.[75]

When George Calvert died in 1838, the Maryland Chancery Court ruled that Charles Benedict Calvert would inherit trusteeship of his half-sister's estate. Family memory recounts that Eleanor Beckett moved to Pennsylvania with her family and Caroline Calvert Cramphin moved with hers to Liberia. No records survive to support these claims, but other records verify all other knowable family memories. In any case, Eleanor Beckett and her daughter were women of considerable means, and might have moved almost anywhere they pleased.[76]

Of course, Eleanor Beckett and Caroline Calvert Cramphin were highly unusual. First, they were exceptionally well-treated by white men who loved them enough to take risks and make sacrifices for them, and Catherine Clinton rightly reminds us that few relationships between enslaved women and their masters were based on consent, much less any degree of emotional and material reciprocity.[77] Second, they were exceptionally wealthy for free African Americans. Finally, of course, most slaves remained enslaved and experienced the brutalities of the institution in all their fullness.

THE FREE BLACK POPULATION

The free population of 8,984 in Prince George's County in 1800 included a disproportionately poor group of 648 free black people. There were 123 free black heads of household there in 1800, of whom just eight qualified for the local levy. The wealthiest of them was John Henry Hall, who owned a total of $554.29 in taxable property, including 12 acres of land, worth $220.54, which made him the 444th wealthiest of 1,712 Prince Georgian heads of household.[78] Next was John "Free," also in the third 10-percentile, with $475.26, including one lot of land in Bladensburg, worth $315.06, meaning he was probably a skilled artisan with his own business.[79] George "Free" was in the fourth 10-percentile, with $301.71, including half a lot in the same town, worth $275.01.[80] Also in the fourth 10-percentile were Cupid Clayland, who owned $241.64, including 60 acres of land, worth $148.19, and George Wedge, with $223.05, including 70 acres of land, worth $26.81.[81] These small yeoman farmers do not, due to the colour of their skin, besides anything else, fit Thomas Jefferson's profile of the early republican husbandman. The other three, one of whom was in the fifth 10-percentile and two of whom were outside the wealthiest 50 percent, were nonlandowners: Thomas Barton, Daniel Pearl (or Purl), and John Adams respectively owned $146.85, $99.46, and $66.75 in "other" property.[82] Of Prince George's 782 nontaxable households in 1800, 115 were African American. The free black community, 7.2 percent of Prince Georgian households, altogether held $2,028.91, or 0.2 percent of the wealth. Mean wealth among all free black households was $16.50. Including the estimated 2,322 slave households, average wealth among 2,445 African-American heads of household was 83 cents.[83]

Wealth and living conditions in the free black community of St. Mary's County were much the same as in Prince George's. Bayly Marks found that in the 1790s about a quarter of free African Americans lived in St. Mary's white households, as kin of people who were still enslaved, or as domestic servants, hired farm hands, or as orphans or children of indigent parents who were apprenticed on farms. Increasing numbers, however, lived more independently in small, unnamed villages of their own making. These communities were built on poor soil, judging by the cheapness of the tenements, normally ranging from $3 to $20. Those who were not tenants often worked as hired farm hands at low pay. Some cradled wheat for $1.50 a day, but others had less skilled work as plowmen, binders, ditchers, sawyers, cutters and haulers of wood, and general hands, earning 25 to 30 cents a day. An increasing but still small number worked in skilled crafts. In 1840, there were ten carpenters, one blacksmith, one bricklayer, two shoemakers, and four sailors among the free black people of St. Mary's County. Women found work as binders during harvest time at 15 cents a day. Minty Cole earned 15 cents a day as a housekeeper in 1825. But most were midwives and made very little from it.

A few accumulated property in a modest fashion. In 1790, Joseph Mason was leasing 152 acres off Thomas Jenkins and living in an "old" wooden house that was 10-foot-by-20 foot in size and worth $10. By 1796 he was assessed as owning $56 in personal property, but two years later he had 83 acres of land, which he retained possession of until his death in 1821. His total assessable wealth, however, was just $250 in 1800 and only $3 more in 1821. George Rimer (or Risner) had 200 acres of land in 1793, worth $1,043, but he lost or sold it and was a tenant farmer by 1798. By 1801, though, he once again owned land, 128 acres this time, which he kept until he died in 1816. He left cash bequests to his son, Jeremiah, and daughter, Ann. Jeremiah was a tenant of James Broom but apparently left St. Mary's by 1828, when his "very old and bad" house fell down. George left his land and $445 in personal property to his grandchildren, but they seem to have sold up and left the county too. Some better-off free blacks owed their relative success to skills they acquired when enslaved. Richard Barnes freed a 29-year-old slave carpenter named Abraham in his will in 1808. As a free man he found plenty of work as a house builder, and in 1819 bought a 268-acre farm. The farm was worth $358 and he had personal property inventoried at $328 when he died in 1841. Mason, Rimer, and Barnes, however, were three of only 19 free African Americans who obtained land in St. Mary's County in the half-century between 1790 and 1840. As many as 22 percent of free black households had assessable wealth in 1820, but that was unusual. The figures were 6 percent in 1793, 10 percent in 1811, and 8 percent in 1840.

Free African Americans were therefore notably poor, but at least they were no longer enslaved. In St. Mary's County, a total of 607 slaves were manumitted between 1790 and 1840, although most of those after 1810 were freed as a result of wills that had been written some years earlier. Manumissions tailed off somewhat after 1820, as was the case elsewhere. In 1796, Maryland law partially clamped down on manumissions by banning the freeing of those too young and too old to look after themselves, and the state of Virginia effectively banned manumissions after Gabriel's Rebellion. As erstwhile revolutionary enthusiasms faded away and the antebellum era approached, more typical was the attitude of Joseph Mobberly of St. Inigoe's Manor, St. Mary's County, who, though he disliked slavery as a labor system, defended the institution on the grounds that "I like old systems, old doctrines, and good old morality." Thus, he said, "A man can serve God and own slaves." Mobberly sounded a lot like Thomas Jefferson when he wrote that "I sincerely regret that slaves were ever introduced into the United States; but as we have them we know not how to get rid of them." In 1801, Mobberly refused the "manumission of negro Peter" as it "would prove a precedent not a little injurious to that subordination which ought to be preserved among the other slaves" at St. Inigoe's Manor.[84]

Epilogue

"Objects of distress": The Poor and the Destitute

On September 6, 1823, Guy Vermillion, "aged seventy two," appeared before the First Judicial District Court, whose jurisdiction encompassed Charles, Prince George's, and St. Mary's counties on Maryland's lower western shore. He was there to claim a war pension. Back in September 1776, he had enlisted in Patrick Henry's Virginia regiment and had fought at "the battles of White Plain, Trenton, Brandy Wine & German Town." At the last of these encounters "he was wounded in the Thum & was obliged to be amputated." The court noted that he qualified for an unspecified sum because he possessed "neither real nor personal property" and was "in such indigent circumstances as to be unable to support himself without the assistance of his country." The court gave him at least some of the assistance he needed, but Mr. Vermillion was evidently unable to live the American dream of economic independence that would have allowed him to support himself in his old age.[1]

Jesse Thompson, another revolutionary war veteran who lived in St. Mary's County, found himself in the same position at the same time. He had been a bricklayer and had made enough out of his trade to buy a 151-acre farm that he tended with the aid of two slaves. As well as these slaves, he held taxable wealth of $530, and his pension application listed his possession of "1 cart, 11 head of cattle, 2 Mares, 1 colt, 2 sows and Pigs, 3 shoats, 1 Plough and geer, 4 Hogs, 1 Bull, 7 Head of Sheep, 5 knives & Forks, 1 set of tin ware, I old Desk, 8 Chairs, 2 Tables, 3 Iron Potts, 2 wooden tubs, 4 Cider hogsheads and 3 Barrels." Yet, by the early 1820s, he was "old and unable to work" and therefore maintain himself and sustain or pay off his $260 in debts. Again, his country helped him when he could not help himself, and he lived to 1829, still in possession of his farm and inventoried property worth $620.[2]

Guy Vermillion and Jesse Thompson received assistance from their country as old soldiers. Normally, though, extreme cases of poverty were dealt with on a county level, paid for by county levy courts, sometimes administered through those levy courts, sometimes through orphans' courts, justices of the peace, and almshouse trustees. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the poorest people often were children, either orphaned, illegitimate, or deserted for whatever reason. The clerk of the Levy Court of Prince George's County noted a mistake in payment to a patron in 1795, and ordered that "Twelve pounds current money Levied for Verlinda Mitchell for supporting two Orphan children be paid...to Verlinda Wilson...it appearing to have been erroneously Levied for Verlinda Mitchell instead of the said Verlinda Wilson."[3] In July 1801, the Prince George's County Levy Court paid the splendidly named Charity Lowe "Twenty dollars for the purpose of supporting and maintaining an Infant found by the said Charity for Twelve Months." The following year, the court gave John H. Hall "Two Dollars for one Week's support of Sauncy Swann, a young Child whose Mother has left it—and for sending the Child to the Poor House." While Sauncy Swan went to the "Poor House," there is no record of what became of the child Charity Lowe found. Nor is it known what caused the parents of these children to abandon them, although it seems likely that those parents also suffered tragic personal circumstances and great privation.[4]

Although such starts in life were inauspicious, the poorest children were given a chance to make livings through apprenticeships. Between 1794 and 1840 the various authorities of St. Mary's County, Maryland, bound out a total of 253 orphans. A quarter of them were bound out as pilots in this particularly water-bound corner of Maryland. Another near-quarter were apprenticed in other crafts. They received one year's schooling and at the end of their apprenticeships, normally when they reached the age of 21, they received clothes and the tools of their trade. Farm apprentices also received a year's schooling, two suits of clothes, and a hoe and an axe. Race and gender discrimination began early. Only three free African-American orphans were trained in crafts, the other 111 were placed on farms, and none of them received any schooling. All girls were farm apprentices, though white ones learned sewing, knitting, weaving, spinning, washing, and ironing, and black ones did not.[5]

Many poverty-stricken adults ended up in almshouses. In Prince George's County, the amount of money paid to the trustees of the almshouse for the care of the poor varied, but normally ranged between $500 and $1,500 annually, presumably depending on the number of residents in any one year. The smallest amount the trustees received was zero dollars in 1820 through 1823, but the highest sum in any one year was $1,733.33 in 1799. The St. Mary's County Almshouse was by Bretton

Bay, about a mile from Leonardtown. Built in 1774, it had 52 residents in 1790, 37 in 1800, but less than 20 in 1820, the majority of them women, most likely widows, and children. The reason for the declining numbers was a new policy driven by levy courts of binding out orphaned and abandoned children to trades and farming, and of paying for Almshouse "out-pensioners" instead of keeping people in.[6]

Prince George's County Levy Court usually provided $10 to $20 for the support of individual almshouse out-pensioners. The St. Mary's Levy Court was slightly more generous, settling on $30 as necessarily for a poor person's support for one year. Prince George's Levy Court kept no regular records of such handouts before 1799, but the Levy Lists for that year recorded payment of $53.33 to Francis Magruder for "the support [and] safekeeping of Mary Brown and Eleanor Lowe (lunatics)."[7] As with Mary Brown and Eleanor Lowe, some people needed help because of particular mental or physical disabilities. In St. Mary's County, in 1797, Mary Goodrick, "a very poor widow," began receiving $40 a year to support her six children, one of whom was mentally handicapped. Even more tested perhaps was Theophilus Davis, who was blind in one eye, whose wife was sickly and had only one leg, and whose daughter was deaf, mentally handicapped, and violent. He received $30 a year from 1819. From the 1820s, St. Mary's County Charitable Society began distributing corn among the very poor, including Joshua King, "the man without feet." Others had simply grown too infirm with time to make their own livings, and had not made enough in their lives to put aside for their old ages and had no kin who could help. In 1798, Ann Walker began receiving $30 a year, as she was "entirely destitute of any means of support, from extreme poverty and infirmities of old age."[8] On January 4, 1812, the Prince George's Levy Court gave Edward Scott "Twenty dollars for the support of Ann Keadle a poor woman." Ann Keadle was a nontaxable householder in 1800 and 1810, and possibly a relative of Wiseman and George Keadle and therefore an in-law of the poor but feisty small yeoman Sarah Magruder. Unlike her likely kinswoman, however, Ann Keadle was unable to maintain her independence. In almost all such cases, such dependents were not given the money themselves, but were beholden to a county representative such as Edward Scott. On the same day, for example, William Bradley Beanes received "Twenty dollars for the support of Elizabeth Peters (the Widow of Charles Peters) a very Poor Woman."[9] In 1811, Edward Scott also received from the Levy Court "Twelve dollars to be applied towards the support of John Weedon who is in a very indigent situation."[10]

Sometimes people received payments for the poor for urgent and ad hoc reasons. In 1803, the Prince George's County Levy Court paid Dr. Alexander Mitchell $12.25 for "nursing and burying" Martin Murphy, "a poor travelling man." Rather than having been forced into vagrancy, it is possible that Murphy chose the freedom of peripatetic poverty over the confinements of other lifestyles. Whatever the case, he seems to have had no family or friends to rely on in his time of greatest need. He died, though, in the care of the community in the form of a local physician who was compensated by the public purse. In this last respect even Martin Murphy was luckier than some. In 1805, Joseph Schofield received $8 from the Levy Court "for digging [a] grave . . . and making a coffin" for James Fletcher, "a Mulatto Man . . . found dead on the public road." With no family to claim his remains, James Fletcher appears to have died homeless, possibly of exposure, perhaps unknown and unnoticed by anyone until someone found him and someone buried him.[11]

Clearly, some poor people, those who struggled with handicapped children, the elderly, the infirm, those without feet, were not necessarily struggling primarily because of the structure of the early national tobacco economy and society and the Atlantic trade that supported them. Yet those were the contexts in which people struggled, and indeed more and more people were becoming destitute directly due to the inequities engendered by this economic and social system. Colonial historians have shown that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the living standards of poorer people generally improved, even while inequality increased.[12] But they have also shown that there was a growing number of propertyless people who were unable to benefit much if at all from a consumer revolution that built up from the 1720s. Evidence on mobility and increasing general wealth disparities from 1800 to 1820 demonstrates that the early national tobacco economy was still structured to the advantage of larger producers and the disadvantage of smaller ones. Indeed, all the more so than ever, as the American Revolution had nullified the Navigation Acts and large planters had therefore profitably taken the places of local tobacco factors and of international merchant-house consignees. Certainly, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, some people were vulnerable to subsistence crises, at least in the event of peculiar adverse circumstances. Maryland's lower western shore suffered floods in 1804, a drought in 1806, and from 1807 the embargo began and was followed by nearly a decade of trade disruption and war. During these years, destitution appears to have been on the rise.[13] In 1805, there were 4 out-pensioners in Prince George's County, and in 1808 there were 24, at which point the number levelled off for the next several years.[14]

In late 1816 and early 1817, however, soon after the end of the War of 1812, a perfect storm of circumstances overwhelmed enormous numbers of Marylanders. In early 1815, as news of the Treaty of Ghent reached the United States, people were no doubt looking forward to better times ahead. After many years of embargo, nonintercourse, and war, however, they did not need anything more to go wrong. The next year, however, the Maryland wheat crop failed. Things got so bad that on January 30, 1817, the Maryland Assembly passed "an act for the temporary relief of the Poor in the several Counties in this State" authorizing all the state's county levy courts to borrow money so they could hand cash out to the suddenly desperate. That spring and early summer, the Prince George's County Levy Court gave "temporary relief" in sums ranging from $5 to $30, amounting in all to $3,140, to as many as 217 people.[15]

People's needs were evidently urgent, as the Levy Court justices quickly got into action. They first met to get things organized on February 21, three weeks after the passing of the "act for the temporary relief of the poor," and appointed 18 of the county's most eminent citizens "to enquire into the situation of the Poor in their respective Neighbourhoods and . . . to report to the Court on Saturday the first of March next the names of all those whom they may discover to be such objects of distress as to require immediate relief." One week later, on that first of March, members of the court procured an immediate loan of $1,500 and authorized themselves to obtain a further $1,000 "as soon as circumstances will admit of it." The same day, they gave several benefactors no less than $2,175 to distribute among no fewer than 139 people. The court also provided another $675 for the aid of 44 more people on March 17, $255 for 30 others on May 19, and $35 for a further 4 on July 7. In addition to this total of $3,140 for 217 people, the court allocated $500 for the almshouse on August 6.[16]

Although there were no doubt philanthropic motives for the 1817 dole, its administrators were not averse to making a little profit from it for themselves. The loan that the justices raised was obtained from John Read Magruder, Jr., still the Prince George's County Levy Court clerk after all those years. This may have been expedient—an undoubtedly important consideration under such urgent circumstances—but it is notable that the justices and clerk arranged an 8 percent interest rate: 2 percent higher than planters normally expected from investment in land, stocks, and bonds.[17] More significantly, perhaps, the manner in which the money was supposed to be given reflected planters' belief in patriarchy. In the first place, wealthy men were asked to "enquire into the situation of the Poor" and then report back to the court. It was not therefore intended that the destitute should define their own needs or to claim alms as of right. Also, as with out-pensioners in other years, money was not provided directly to those in need, but was given to a patron "to be applied in such a manner as he may judge most effectual to relieve the said out Pensioners from Suffering." Beneficence, then, was tempered by the court seemingly depriving the needy of their freedoms as consumers and rendering them beholden to wealthy patrons. In actuality, however, it seems most likely that some sort of dialogue took place between patrons and beneficiaries in which the latter's views on their own needs and how they should be accommodated may have been both aired and respected. Because the court directed its patrons to "enquire into the situation of the Poor in their respective Neighbourhoods," those patrons would have been familiar with the individual needs and wishes of their particular charges, and taking those wishes and needs into account would probably have been the "most effectual" way "to relieve the said out Pensioners from Suffering." If so, then alms recipients were not so much "objects," as the Levy Court described them, but to some extent agents in the provision of their own welfare, even if they were in distress and required immediate relief.[18]

However large or small a role recipients played in the distribution of the dole, most of them were already among the most economically vulnerable of Prince Georgians even before the wheat crop failed. Of those identifiable in the censuses or tax records, 40 were nontaxables in either 1800 or 1810 or both. Of those who were taxables, most owned only a small amount of "other" property. A few had once been quite well-off, but had fallen on hard times by 1817. Among them was Elizabeth Hill, who had owned \$1,963.73 in 1800 and \$2,887.95 in 1810, including 382 acres of land and 15 and 18 slaves in these years respectively.[19] Another was Elizabeth Eastwood, who had owned 100 acres in 1800 and 1810, respectively worth \$60.08 and \$153.53.[20] Patrick Sim also received alms in 1817, although he had been in dire straits for some time. He was once fairly prosperous, probably an artisan, with \$1,108.85 to his name in 1800, including two acres of land in Beall Town, worth \$203.88, and 8 slaves. He was a nontaxable by 1810, however, and, in January 1812, John Hodges of Thomas received \$40 from the Levy Court for past and future "support of Patrick Sim who is in very indigent circumstances."[21] There were also four people named Vermillion in the 1817 lists, although it is impossible to know if they were related to the old soldier, Guy. Charles Proctor and his wife (she was unnamed in the list) were members of Prince George's materially poor free black community. So were Esther Churb and Kitty Gray, both surnames belonging exclusively to extended free black families in Prince George's County, Maryland, in the early 1800s.[22]

Of those who cannot be traced, many must have been widows left without means of support. That appears to have been so with "Tobias Belts Widow," whose husband had once owned \$2,829.21, including 590 ½ acres of land and 14 slaves, but who had perhaps died indebted. It was most likely the same with "Benjamin Jones Wife & Children," whose husband and father had been a nontaxable.[23] Many other women were not noted as someone's wife or widow, such as "Elizabeth Stone her Daughter Eliza Thompson & child," but may also have been widowed, divorced, or separated. Some of the young people on the list of 1817 were apparently orphans, such as the "Children of Thomas Littleford," whose father had been a nontaxable in 1800 but had owned \$200.25 in "other" property in 1810. All told, 65 men, 127 women, and 24 children of Prince George's County received alms under Maryland's 1817 Act for the Temporary Relief of the Poor (one first name is indecipherable and the person's sex is thus not known).[24]

* * *

One reason for the enormous disparity between some historians' perceptions of economy and society in the early national tobacco-plantation south and the realities experienced by many of its people is the kind of sources historians use. Not surprisingly, historians who rely exclusively on contemporary texts that claimed that the early republic was roughly egalitarian, claim that the early republic was roughly egalitarian. This kind of approach has became more popular than ever after the "linguistic turn" that gave it the theoretical justification that social realities are intellectual constructs, encouraging some historians, though requiring none, to take writers at their word. But social realities are not intellectual constructs, or at least not only intellectual constructs. Social realities are also about who owns what and who does not, and who can make a living and who cannot. This book's analysis of economy and society in the tobacco-plantation south is therefore based on bread-and-butter sources such as tax records, censuses, and so forth, by which we can quantify what property people actually possessed and what that meant, not just what Thomas Jefferson and others imagined they possessed and what that meant. In that respect, it follows a lead taken by Simon Middleton and Billy Smith in *Class Matters*, a collection of essays that aims to bring class analysis back into early American history, some of the authors of which aim to bring kinds of historical materialism back into class analysis.[25]

Yet, other kinds of sources have been crucial to this study too, not least the letters of Rosalie Calvert. Furthermore, the line between quantifiable and literary sources is not always as clear as we sometimes seem to think. The measurable data contained in tax lists and probate records, for instance, was often accompanied by qualitative information. It is thanks to such qualitative comments that we know about George's Calvert's cheaty subterfuge regarding Eleanor Beckett, George and Sarah Magruder's very different views about what should happen to their property when he died, that Zachariah Berry's mansion was "new" and "elegant," and that many of Priscilla Howington's possessions were "old" and "broken." Indeed, even quantifiable evidence itself can sometimes be treated as a kind of text. That is possible with the Prince George's County Levy Court lists of names of people who were "such objects of distress as to require immediate relief" in the first half of 1817, and I have reconstituted them as such below. These lists make an eloquent counterpoint to the idealizations about free society in the early national tobacco-plantation south offered in the writings of agrarian-republicans. The court gave money to patrons of the poor on four different days, hence four lists. The dates, names of patrons (in bold letters) and recipients, and the allocation (in US dollars) for each recipient (or group thereof), are listed below. Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are as in the original document. If you want to see the originals, you can find them and the background information for them at the Maryland Hall of Records in Annapolis, in the Prince George's County Levy Court Proceedings for the dates of February 21, March 1, March 17, May 19, and July 7, 1817.

Recipients of Poor Relief and Their Patrons, March to July, 1817

March 1, 1817

Josias Jones: Elizabeth Stone her Daughter Eliza Thompson & child, 30, Edward Welsh & Wife, 20, Ruth Hinton & her children, 25, Elizabeth & Ann Cross, 20, James White & his four children, 20, Margaret Miller, 15, Mary Hyatt, 15.

Dr. Samuel Franklin: Sibby Felton & her two Daughters, 15, Sarah Mitchell & Elizabeth, 30, Charlotte Baldwin & her three children, 20, Jacob H. Waters & his Sister Rachel Donnison, 25, Uriah Mitchel & his Daughter & her child, 20, Isaac Clark, 15, Mary Brashears, 15, Nancy Hinton & her two Children, 25.

William Dudley Digges and Jasper M. Jackson: Jane Thompson, 15, Mrs Haywood, 25, Thomas Baldwin, 10, Mrs Magee, 30, Henry Fowler & five children, 20.

William Hebb: Mary Ridgeway, 20, Jemima Allen, 20, Jacob King, 30, Thomas Cook, 15, Lenna Hurley, 30, Mrs Locker, 15, Susanna Tenby, 15.

Thomas Mundell, Horatio McEldery, William Marshall: John Thorn, 20, Ann Thomas, 10, Mrs Tracy, 15, Theodore Glasgow, 20, Thomas Barton, 15, Milly Thompson & Daughter, 15, Jeremiah Ivington, 20, Miss Knotts, 20, Miss Gregory, 10, John Martin, 20, William Rowe, 10, Osborn White, 15, Hannah Lucas & her Daughter, 10, Joseph Gales, 20, Lewis Dent, 15, Thomas Underwood, 15, Levin Webster, 30, Mrs Boswell, 15, Luke Day, 15, Mrs Richards, 20, Basil Talbot, 15, James Atchison, 15, Mary Short, 15, Luke Thompson, 15, Mrs Howard, 20.

Francis Magruder and Edward Henry Calvert: Caroline Mullikin, 20, Henrietta Thompson, 15, Elizabeth Price, 20, Priscilla Vermillion, 20, Mary Fowler, 20, Ann Beckett, 15, Ruth Brown wife of M Brown, 20, Druscilla Mitchell, 15, Elizabeth Free, 15, Patrick Sim, 20, Lydia Clereland, 15.

Francis M Hall: Mrs Ryon Widow of Thomas Ryon, 25, Samuel Mockbee, 25, William Russell, 10.

Richard W West: Jonathon White, 30, Thomas Fry, 25, Archibald White, 20, Margaret Winkler, 30, George Winkler, 30.

Edward Henry Calvert and William Marbury: James Carroll, 30, Sarah Sansberrie, 15, Aquilla Wilson, 20, Lydia Kidwell, 20, Zachariah Scott, 15, John King, 20, Francis Walker, 20, Joseph Barrott, 15, Hilleary Piles, 15, Zadock Reston, 15.
Thomas Somerville: Ann Richards, 20, Elizabeth Eastwood, 20, Elizabeth Richards, 20, Priscilla Collins, 20, Elizabeth Carrico, 20, Elizabeth Devan, 20, Sarah Cooksey, 20, Ann Williams, 20, Monica Carrico, 20, Rebecca Lynch, 20, Mary Bedds, 20.
Robert Bowie and Edward Henry Calvert: Ann Tarvin, 15, Ann Gardiner, 25, Mary Venables, 25, Elizabeth Venables, 15, Mary Magruder, 25, Sarah Linthicum, 25, Elizabeth Nowell, 25, Elizabeth Worrell, 25, Mrs Crook, 15, Mrs Hazard, 25, Mrs Mobberly, 15, Joanna Retter, 15, Dennis Curton, 20.
David Craufurd: Sarah Ryan, 15, Sarah Burgess, 30, Esther Churb, 20;
Samuel Clagett: John Garner, 20, Rebecca Dorsett & her three Sisters, 60

March 17, 1817

Henry A Callis: Charles Tenbys Widow, 25, Mrs Ralph, 15, Thomas Biggs, 15, Mrs Summers, 15, Kitty Gray, 10.
William Hebb: Richard Ridgway, 15, William Palmer, 20, Henry B Thorn, 20.
Francis Magruder: John McDowell, 15, Ann Keadle, 15, Elizabeth Arnold, 15, Ann Hay, 10, Rachel Hunter, 10, Benjamin Cooke, 15, Esther Stone, 15, Ann Webster, 15, Eleanor Summers, 15.
Dr Joseph Kent and William A Fitgerald: Mrs Hinton, 30, Sarah Barron, 20, Rachel Deakins, 25, Catherine Medcalf, 20, Mary Danford, 15, Ann Onions, 10, Julia Neal, 15, Benjamin Jones Wife & Children, 25, Jacob Brown, 20, Tobias Belts Widow, 30, Sarah Riddle, 15, Rebecca Brashears, 10, Eleanor Clarke, 10, John Brashears Wife and Children, 20, Oliver B Suit, 30
Edward Henry Calvert: Elizabeth Swann and Daughter, 15, Eleana Burgess and Daughter Priscilla Day, 15, Mary Barklay, 15, Thomas Mullikin, 30, John Sansberrie, 15.
Trueman Tyler: Henrietta Young, 15

May 19, 1817

Thomas Mundell: Elisha Arvin, 10, Thomas Arvin, 10, Price Collins, 10, Elizabeth Hill, 8, Luke Windsor, 5, Edward Curtain, 5.
Francis Magruder: Mary Roby, 15, Ann Weaver, 10, Elizabeth Weaver, 8, Sarah Allen, 5, Ann Vermillion, 8, Letty Day, 5, Mary Willing, 15.

Dr Joseph Kent: Nathaniel Hall, 10, Hetty Brashears, 10, C[ary?] Vermillion, 8, Lucy Vermillion, 8, Fielder Hays, 8, Richard Martin, 8, Zachariah Halsall, 10, Lucy Hinton, 5.
Edward Henry Calvert: Charles Proctor & wife, 16, Elizabeth Griffin, 8, Elizabeth Power, 10, James Mobberly & wife, 10.
David Craufurd: the Children of Thomas Littleford, 20.
Dr Samuel Franklin: Allen Harvey, 10

July 7, 1817

Thomas Mundell: Nehemiah Kidwell, 5, James Hill, 5, Mrs Wood, 5.
William Dudley Digges: Thomas Baldwin wife, 10

Appendix

A Statistical Analysis of Wealth Distribution and Mobility

Levy Courts and Tax Records

To pay for such things as poor relief, building and repairing roads, bridges, and wharves, remunerating local legal and administrative officials, occasionally raising new courthouses and jails, and whatever else their members believed was in the interest of their counties, Levy Courts of course raised local taxes. That indeed was their first and foremost purpose, if the name Levy Court is anything to go by. They therefore kept records of the quantity and sometimes the quality of taxable property that people owned. These assessment lists allow us to reconstruct the distribution of wealth and the waxing and waning of individual fortunes of each of a county's inhabitants. Throughout this book, for reasons of readability, I have tried to keep analysis of statistical details of wealth distribution and mobility to what I hope is an acceptable minimum within each of the chapters. The purpose of this Appendix, however, is to explore these tax lists in more detail. The appendix therefore goes into greater depth of wealth analysis of planters, yeomen, smallholders and the landless than the chapters have done. Besides trying to keep the book as readable as possible, another reason for confining some of the statistical analysis to the appendix is that in this one place one can more easily compare levels of wealth and rates of mobility across the different groups of landowners and nonlandowners.

Prince George's County, Maryland, has a near-complete run of Levy Court annual property assessments from 1792 through the 1820s. County levy courts assessed land (including built improvements such as barns and stables), slaves (according to age and sex), gold and silver plate, and "other" property in the form of ready cash, livestock, stills, riding carriages, vessels over 20 tons, and, after, 1813, some farm equipment and furniture. Matching these records against the decennial census population schedules for 1800, 1810, and 1820 reveals how much and what kinds of property individual household heads possessed at those moments. The courts did not record or lay a levy on those with less than $40 worth of taxable wealth, so an advantage of matching the tax records against the census is that it captures these poorer householders as well as the wealthier taxable ones. One can also use the tax lists matched against the census to measure social-economic mobility of individuals at these 10-year intervals.[1]

Problems with Sources and Methods

Although local assessments provide the best measures of wealth and mobility available, there are of course complications and imperfections that one must take account of when using them. First, this analysis focuses mainly on a single county, and it will soon become clear that researching more than one would have been an impossible undertaking. I have, however, where possible, compared my findings for Prince George's County with those of others who have done similar studies elsewhere in the tobacco south.

Furthermore, the figures used here only account for household heads residing in Prince George's County at the time of each census. The lists also contained another 768 named individuals in 1800, 782 in 1810, and 688 in 1820, besides those on the census as well, and in each year they owned a little under one-third of the county's taxable wealth. These people fall into three categories: those whose permanent residence was in another county; those who lived in the county in a household in which census takers designated someone else as head; and those who had died but whose estates had not been distributed among decedents at the time assessments were made. Assessors occasionally revealed who belonged in what category with such designations as "George Digges' heirs" and "Rezin Beall of Kentucky," but only rarely and apparently by whim rather than by rule or routine. It would be impossible to trace all these people though other records. There are also too many unknown variables to make precise calculations about the implications of these people and their property for the county's wealth distribution. One can, however, safely make the following generalizations.[2]

First, absentee ownership in one county by someone living in another usually indicated considerable wealth, and indeed preceding chapters have shown that wealthy Prince Georgians often owned property elsewhere as well as near home. As seen in chapters 1 and 2, the 1800 county assessments recorded George Calvert as owner of 3,325 acres of land, 76 slaves, and other property to a total value of just under \$14,000, making him Prince George's seventh wealthiest household head at the time. Assessments show that by 1820 he was the richest householder in the county by far. Also, however, Rosalie Calvert's letters and George's last will and testament reveal that at various times between the early 1800s and mid 1830s the Calverts owned 875 acres of land in neighboring Montgomery County, Spurrier's Tavern and its 516 acres in Anne Arundel County, lots on Pennsylvania Avenue, 6th Street, and C Street, and a majority share in the National Hotel in Washington, D.C., unknown quantities of land in Alexandria, Virginia, and investments and shares in various banks and other institutions. George Calvert was also, as his wife Rosalie wrote to her father in 1810, "director of the Bank of Washington . . . [and] director of a manufacturing company in Georgetown."[3] As we saw in chapter 1, the bank investments the Calverts made were immensely profitable. The Calverts also invested \$10,000 in the Baltimore-Washington Turnpike, which was incorporated by the Maryland Assembly in 1812, and capitalized at \$100,000 with shares at \$50 each. And they put "\$5,000, or 100 shares" into it on behalf of Rosalie Calvert's father, Henri Joseph Stier.[4] Rosalie expected that it "will pay 10 ½ percent which the law authorizes."[5] It seems safe to suppose that most of those who owned substantial amounts of property outside of Prince George's County or had large noninvestments of this kind in it, were, like the Calverts, among the richest people in the county, and that many of the county's richest residents owned property elsewhere. Indeed, Lee Soltow has estimated that perhaps as much as "one-third of the real estate belonging to a rich person lay outside the county containing his holdings of greatest value, and in which he was most likely to reside." If that is correct, then the gaps visible in the following analysis between the richest Prince Georgians and the rest can be multiplied by 1.33 of the value of real estate to account for this factor alone. Similarly, we can safely assume that those who were subsumed by census takers in the household of someone else usually held less property than that someone else (they would normally be the wife and children of the census-designated household head). As for those who had died, as previous chapters have shown, inheritance was more often a means of perpetuating fortunes and consequently inequality than it was of redistributing wealth. Although Jean Lee is right that both ante- and postmortem bequest practices generally continued to favor all family members, not just eldest sons, in the early national era, it also seems to have helped to maintain class privilege.[6] Property owned by those who were not Prince Georgian residents or householders, and that recorded in the estates of the deceased, would therefore have had the effect of increasing the levels of inequality as measured here—according to property held only by living, locally resident household heads.[7]

In addition to the above, local assessments rated property sometimes significantly below market values. Slaves under the age of eight, for example, were valued at an average of $14.68 each (the exact amount depending on age), those aged 8 to 14 were routinely valued at $40, women of 14 to 36 at just over $80, men of 14 to 45 at just over $120, and women and men of 45 and over at an average of a little over $40 (with variations according to age, health, and occupational skills). Yet, in December 1800, Susanna Cannon sold "one negro lad named Nathan Aged about thirteen years[,] One negro Woman named Sall aged about Twenty five years and her male child named Joe aged about Eleven months" to Augustus Levine and John Lynch of Baltimore County for $375, while their taxable value would have been somewhere between $267 and $320. Sometimes the gap between assessed and market values was even greater. The same month, Margery Belt sold "One Negro woman named Peg" to Charles Hodges for $220 and Gibson Keadle sold "One Negro Man Slave named John" to Ninian Willett for $300.[8]

Land was undervalued in the assessments even more than slaves. The 1800 levy lists reveal an average taxable value of land of just under $1.90 (although actual values varied quite widely, as is already clear in previous chapters). Yet, in August 1800, Zachariah Baldwin sold "one hundred and fifteen Acres and half of an Acre" to Benjamin Fairall for $1,231.24, or $10.66 per acre. Some land was worth even more. In November the same year, Nathaniel Craufurd sold five acres to Zachariah Berry for $133.50, or $26.70 per acre. Some was worth less. In December, Elizabeth Hilton sold 4½ acres to Richard Coe for $26.67, but even that, at near $6 per acre, was well above the values recorded in local tax assessments. Tax assessors revised their land valuations upwards by over 100 percent in 1801, though even after that, real estate assessments were still way below market values.[9] Curiously, also, the amount of land assessed declined from 329,532 ½ acres in 1800 to 313,226.4 acres in 1810, and 307,674.6 acres in 1820. Neither the assessors nor the Levy Court Proceedings give any reason why, but one possibility for the apparent disappearance of 21,858 acres of land is that owners persuaded tax assessors to reduce their declared acreages so that they could pay less tax. One might also note that the largest landowners had the greatest opportunity to do this.[10]

Assessments also often underrated how much of other kinds of taxable property people had. Assessors updated the levy lists by visiting households only intermittently, and in intervening years they updated assessments according to transactions recorded in the county Land Records. If newly acquired taxable property was not recorded in the Land Records, or if new slaves were born or younger slaves entered higher tax bands as they reached the ages of 8 or 14, owners were required to notify the levy court themselves. It appears, however, that people rarely did this. The 1800 census, for example, counted 12,191 slaves residing in Prince

George's County, while the tax assessments that year record only 10,830. This undercount cannot be attributed to assessors ignoring slaves of no financial worth, as they often recorded individuals as being of "no value." As always, opportunities for cheating on taxes were greater for those with more property to hide. For this and all the above reasons, therefore, the following analysis provides a useful base-measure of wealth distribution, but undoubtedly underrepresents the extent of inequality.[11]

Wealth Distribution by Percentile Groups

Throughout this book I have categorized people according to landownership and by a formula that takes slaveholding into account, which seems the most appropriate way to measure economic and social structure in a region dominated by tobacco-staple agriculture. Also, land and slaves represented over 70 percent of the value of all taxable wealth in 1800 and over 80 percent in 1810 and 1820 (after assessors reevaluated land in 1801), and were productive forms of capital as well. Most of what follows therefore analyzes wealth distribution and mobility in the same way. However, as many studies of wealth distribution elsewhere measure the same phenomenon by percentile groups, it is worth first briefly analyzing Prince George's County that way too for comparative purposes.

In 1800, the wealthiest 1 percent of Prince Georgian household heads, just 17 out of 1,712, held 18.1 percent of taxable wealth owned by resident householders. In all, as Table A.2 shows, the richest 5 percent held almost 50 percent of taxable wealth and richest 10 percent held over two-thirds of it. The next 10 percent held a relatively modest 17.2 percent, and thereafter shares of taxable wealth fell by about ½ per decile among the wealthiest 50 percent of householders. This 50 percent of householders, however, owned 99½ percent of taxable wealth. Remaining property was held by just 74 other household heads, leaving 782 household heads who were too poor to be taxed. That is, very nearly 46 percent of Prince Georgian householders in 1800 held less than $40 in taxable property.

Inequality in Prince George's County was therefore slightly higher than in the nation as a whole. South of Prince George's, in Charles County, the wealthiest 10 percent of taxpayers in 1782 held 58 percent of the wealth and wealth per capita of £464. The poorest 25 percent, however, owned less than 1 percent of wealth and £3 per capita. And those figures omit those too poor to pay tax. South of Charles County, in St. Mary's, five percent of householders owned one-third of taxable wealth and 40 percent were too poor to be taxed. This slightly less extreme inequality may have been due to more equal wealth distribution in the eastern wheat-growing section of that county, however. Lee Soltow's analysis of the 1798 Federal Direct Tax shows that the richest 1 percent of Americans owned 13 percent of taxable wealth, 5 percent owned almost a third, and the wealthiest decile 45 percent.[12] Similarly, Prince Georgians were slightly poorer than other Americans, with per capita wealth of $709.39, compared to a national average of $814.20. But they were better off than Europeans, whose per capita wealth ranged from between $569.73 and $1,141.43 in England (depending on population samples analyzed) to $127.17 in Finland. Like Europeans and other Americans, though, few Prince Georgians were average. Mean wealth in the richest 1 percent in 1800 was $12,901.12, with Edward Henry Calvert the wealthiest of all with $17,856.40 in taxable property. The poorest 74 taxables owned an average $80.26 each, with the poorest individual, John Brown, owning just $6.68 (£2.50) in "other" property. As noted, another 782 did not own enough property to qualify for the levy.[13]

Inequality increased over the next 20 years. By 1810, the richest 1 percent comprised 16 households who owned 21.2 percent of taxable wealth and by 1820 they formed 18 households and owned 24.3 percent of it, a steady increase of slightly over 3 percent per decade. The proportion of taxable wealth owned by the richest 5 percent rose by 3.2 percent in the first decade and by another 4.8 percent in the second, so that they held almost 58 percent of it by 1820, topping a million dollars' worth by the latter year. The share of the second-wealthiest 5 percent dipped slightly initially, but by 1820 was fractionally higher than it had been in 1800. By 1820, then, the richest 10 percent held over three-quarters of taxable wealth, up from two-thirds 20 years before. The proportion held by the next three decile groups fell by around 2 percent in each case over two decades, but what was perhaps most dramatic was the falling fortunes of the poorest free Prince Georgians. The number of householders too poor to tax fell by 122 to 660 in the first decade of the nineteenth century, almost certainly because 1790 to 1810 was the period of most intensive migration to Kentucky.[14] Nontaxables also fell by 5 percent as a proportion of household heads. By 1820, however, nontaxables rose in number to over 1,000 and constituted 56 percent of householders. This may have had something to do with a temporary decline in out-migration once "the rage for Kentucky" subsided, and migration no doubt rose again in later years. The dramatic nature of the increase is also at least in part explained by the particular hardships caused for poorer people by embargo, nonintercourse, the War of 1812, and the wheat crop failure of 1816, as examined in previous chapters and in the Epilogue.

Again, looking at individuals and averages makes wealth differentials more vivid. Mean wealth among the richest 5 percent was $10,734.42 in 1810, compared to $3,475.75 in the second 5 percent, $1,666.24 in the second decile, $770 in the third, $357.83 in the fourth, $156.14 in the fifth, and $66.16 among the remaining 150 taxpayers, leaving 660, 40 percent of households, who were not taxable. Mean wealth in the richest 5 percentile in 1820 was $10,396.10, falling to $3,278.71 in the second 5 percentile, $1,378.13 in the second decile, $533.51 in the third, $201.65 in the fourth, and $99.37 among the remaining 71 taxpayers, leaving 1,006 household heads, 56 percent of the total, with no taxable wealth at all. The wealthiest head of household in 1810 was Zachariah Berry, with $47,366.45 in total wealth, just over twice as much as the average in the wealthiest 1 percent, including 5,590⅓ acres of land and 57 slaves. In 1820, it was George Calvert, with $46,269.16 in total wealth, including 5,100 and a quarter acres of land and 124 slaves.[15]

Gini Coefficients and Wealth Distribution

Another way of measuring wealth distribution in one place that allows comparison with others is through Gini coefficients (G), scales of 0 to 1 in which 0 represents total equality (where everyone owns the same amount of property) and 1 represents total inequality (where one individual owns everything). Economic historians generally reckon that 0.5 represents a considerable degree of equality, while 0.9 represents very significant inequality. G is calculated in the following way: $G = 1–2\ (\Sigma\ PcumW) + PW$, where P is the proportion of household heads, W is the proportion of property, and cumW is the cumulated proportion of property of groups in ascending order, from the poorest to the richest.[16] G for total taxable wealth in Prince George's County is therefore calculated as shown in Table A.1 and amounted in 1800 to 0.7982.

G then rose to 0.8121 by 1810, primarily because of growing concentration of wealth among the richest 5 percent. By 1820 it had risen even further, to 0.8462, this time primarily because of the growing numbers of those who were too poor to pay tax. These figures represent a 4.8 percent increase in inequality over two decades. Lee Soltow calculated a G of 0.8 for the United States as a whole, although he made that calculation from the Federal Direct Tax of 1798, which only assessed real estate and slaves and might therefore overstate inequality. Nevertheless, Prince Georgian inequality was in line with the rest of the tobacco-plantation south and not much greater than in the nation as a whole. G was higher in Europe, though, generally ranging between 0.9 and 0.95.[17]

Wealth Distribution by Land Ownership (or Lack of)

For the purposes of this book, I have most of the time analyzed social-economic structure by categories that would have been recognizable to people in an early American southern rural community: that is, according to ownership of and access to land and labor. The acreages used to distinguish one category from another are not "arbitrarily selected," but are based on the relationship between labor and land usage in a tobacco economy, combined with what contemporaries would have broadly recognized as distinguishing between smallholdings, small farms, large ones, modest plantations and great ones. Typically, in the eighteenth century, one laborer could produce 1,000 to 1,500 pounds of tobacco in a year, although it was probably closer to 1,000 by the early nineteenth century due to diminished availability of fresh soil. This rate of production required at least 40 acres of land per laborer: three acres in tobacco, the rest in food crops and fallow.[18] Combining ideal labor-land ratios with commonly used classifications of slaveholders, landowners fall into five groups. One group is smallholders with less than the 40-acre minimum for full-scale tobacco production. Then, small yeomen with at least 40 but fewer than 280 acres, farm sizes suited to at least 1 but no more than 7 full-time hands (for example, two family members and five slaves working as full hands, or the equivalent). Third, large yeomen with at least 280 but fewer than 800 acres, land that could sustain the equivalent of between 7 and 19 full hands (at the higher end of this category probably few, if any, family members worked in the fields alongside slaves, except in managerial capacities). Next, small and medium planters with at least 800 but fewer than 2,000 acres, suitable for 20 to 49 full hands (probably all slaves with perhaps a few indentured servants). Finally, large planters with 2,000 acres or more, landholdings capable of employing 50 full hands or more.

There are, of course, imperfections in this method of classification. First and most obviously, as with any division along a continuum, lines fall between people of very similar means. In 1800, for instance, John Hilleary held 13 slaves and $1,499.21 in total wealth, and Thomas Baldwin held 11 slaves and $1,415.93. Yet, because Hilleary owned 286¼ acres and Baldwin fractionally over 275, Hilleary is classified here as a large yeoman and Baldwin as a small one. Also, one might assume the labor of only one extra hand in addition to 5 slaves and make 240 acres the cut-off point between large and small yeomen, or else assume 3 free laborers and call it 320 acres. Furthermore, in many individual cases actual labor-land ratios did not correspond to the ideals used here for classification.[19] Despite these issues, however, the exercise is well worth undertaking. Significant differences of economic condition between classes of landowners are discernible in mean statistics, and general tendencies within groups would not change much by moving the line of division in either direction. Also, the fact that labor-land ratios were often not ideal tells us much, as we saw in chapter 3, the one on yeomen, about the different economic circumstances of various landowning groups. Moreover, analyzing wealth and mobility by access to land and labor is the best way to test the accuracy of the Jeffersonian characterization of the early national upper south.

Table A.3 immediately shows that the Jeffersonian characterization of the early national upper south as a region in which smaller landowning husbandmen predominated is inaccurate. In 1800, there were 15 large planters with over 2,000 acres of land, 54 smaller planters with a minimum 800 acres, 123 large yeomen with a minimum 280 acres, 287 small yeomen with at least 40 but fewer than 280 acres, and, finally, 45 smallholders with less than the 40-acre minimum for a tobacco farm. That means that, out of 1,712 household heads in Prince George's County in 1800, only 534, just over 30 percent, owned land. Bayly Marks found a slightly higher rate of landownership in St. Mary's County in 1800, but it was still only 34 percent, and landownership was more common in the eastern wheat-growing corner of the county.[20]

As Lee Soltow showed, across the United States, 50 percent owned land and the G for landed property was 0.79.[21] But if Prince Georgian landed inequality was greater than the United States average, it was similar to that in the western tobacco country. In both Tennessee and Kentucky, 1 percent of the population owned one-third of the land, and out-of-state speculators held much of the rest. Fredrika Teute's detailed study of Kentucky finds that statewide nonlandownership was 65 percent in 1792 and as high as 84 percent in particular regions within the Bluegrass district. It declined to 52 percent by 1802, but began to rise again after 1806 when the government discontinued a state-sponsored instalment payments program, leaving new landowners overburdened with debts and taxes. By 1821, out-of-state banks and land speculators owned no less than one-third of Kentucky real estate.[22]

By 1810, the number of landowners in Prince George's had risen slightly to 531, and landowners as a proportion of householders had risen to nearly 33 percent, almost certainly reflecting migration to Kentucky by nonlandowners. By 1820, however, the number of landowners had fallen to 462, only a fraction over one-quarter of household heads. This decrease in the rate of landownership was nothing new. Colonial Chesapeake historians have found that landownership extended to 70 percent of household heads in the 1660s, but that the rate had declined to 50 percent a century later.[23] The decline in the rate of landownership in the colonial era was linked to the Atlantic tobacco trade in which larger planters benefited from economies of scale. As chapter 1 showed, once the consignment system and local Scottish merchants were displaced by Independence and the consequent annulment of the Navigation Acts, planters' advantages were even more pronounced. The accelerated decline in the rate of land ownership in the early national era was therefore the result both of long-term processes and of new economic freedoms secured for some through the Revolution.

Table A.3 also shows that numbers of large and smaller planters declined between 1800 and 1820, but only slightly, and they remained almost exactly the same as a proportion of household heads. Large yeomen seem to have prospered, rising in number from 123 to 141 and as a proportion of landowners and householders, from 7.2 percent to 7.9 percent. Small yeomen, however, fell in number from 287 to 260, even in the relatively prosperous 1800s, and then fell in number even more dramatically in the harder 1810s, to just 193 by 1820. They therefore formed just under 17 percent of household heads in 1800, but less than 11 percent in 1820. Even if one takes the most expansive possible definition of the yeomanry, adding together all those with a minimum of 40 acres of land up to 799 acres, the yeomanry still constituted under a quarter of householders in 1800 and under a fifth in 1820. Smallholders numbered 45 in 1800, 64 in 1810, and 68 in 1820, but never constituted more than 4 percent of householders.

The number of landless householders fell from 1,188 in 1800 to 1,089 as many moved to Kentucky, but then rose to 1,333 by 1820 due to disruptions caused by interruptions in Atlantic trade and then by the harvest failure of 1816. Over two-thirds of free householders were landless in 1800 and 1810, but very nearly three-quarters were in 1820. In 1800, 406 nonlandowners owned some taxable wealth, but 782 did not. While the number of nontaxables fell from 782 to 660 between 1800 and 1810, it rose to 1,006 by 1820. Strikingly, free household heads with less than $40 in taxable wealth formed large minorities of near 46 percent and 41 percent of householders in 1800 and 1810, and a majority of 56 percent in 1820. Many of these newly landless heads of household may have formerly been small yeomen. Certainly, the decline in landownership is accounted for by the shrinking of the small yeomanry as a group. All other landowning groups either remained more or less static or grew in size. As Table A.2 shows, the number of landowners dropped by 62 between 1800 and 1820, as the number of small yeomen shrank by 94. The proportion of landowners among all household heads fell by 4.9 percent; the proportion of small yeomen among householders fell by 6 percent. Prince George's County was no yeoman society in 1800. It was even less of one in 1820.

Inequality in landownership among early national Prince Georgian free people was less than that in most of Europe, greater than that within the United States generally, but comparable with that in other parts of the tobacco-plantation South. In Scotland, landownership was limited to 3 percent of the population, although the hegemony of the lairds was unusual. In England and Wales, landownership was limited to 10 percent of the population. In Scandinavia, it tended to be higher. Sweden's landownership rate was 27 percent, only a little shy of that of Prince George's County, Maryland. The Gini coefficient of landed property in Sweden was 0.92, so land was more unevenly spread among owners than in Prince George's, where the G for land ownership was 0.8414. In England and Wales, real estate G was 0.949.

Distribution of Total Wealth

Inequality is even more visible in Table A.4, which accounts for all kinds of local taxable property held by landowners and nonlandowners. Large planters formed less than 3 percent of household heads but possessed near 15 percent of taxable wealth held by resident householders in 1800 and over 18 percent of it in 1820. The proportion held by other planters fell slightly, in line with their moderately declining numbers, from 28 to 22 percent. That of large yeomen rose in line with their growing numbers, from 22.8 percent of taxable wealth in 1800 to 31.3 percent in 1820. Small yeomen's share of taxable wealth fell from 19 to 13 percent. That of smallholders remained fairly static, despite rising numbers, and that of the taxable landless fell from near 13 percent to just over 8 percent. Interestingly, the fall in the fortunes of nonlandowners occurred in the first and more prosperous of the two decades, indicating that wealthier landless householders migrated out of the county in larger proportions than poorer ones.

It is also worth noting that average wealth among large planters was over \$12,000 in 1800; almost twice that of smaller planters. Furthermore, large planters' average wealth more than doubled by 1820 to over \$24,000. That of all other propertied groups grew as well, but much less dramatically. While large planters' mean wealth grew by over 100 percent in two decades, that of smaller planters grew by near 40 percent, large yeomen's by near 60 percent, small yeomen's by 35 percent, smallholders' by 12 percent, and that of landless taxables' by 9 percent.

While increases in wealth are due in part to tax assessors' occasional reevaluations of property holdings, the relative increase of that of the richest reflects their comparative immunity from the problems of Atlantic trade and in some cases their ability eventually to profit from embargo, nonintercourse, and war at the expense of poorer neighbors. Planters and large yeomen, however, held less contingent advantages over others as well. These groups held higher proportions of the value of the county's real estate than of its total property, which is not surprising considering the more limited nature of land ownership compared to other forms of property. Smallholders' share of real estate was roughly commensurate with their share of total property. On the other hand, small yeomen's share of real estate value was less than their share of total property. As we shall see by analyzing subsequent tables, and as we saw in chapter 3, this was due to poorer quality land, and that poorer quality of land may have been due at least in part to soil exhaustion.

Distribution of Land

Prince George's County's 15 large planters in 1800 held 54,923.4 acres of land (including town lots and rural land). In other words, less than 1 percent of household heads held 25.1 percent of Prince Georgian land. The 54 middling and smaller planters held another 62,865.8 acres. So, around 3 percent of household heads owned another 28.7 percent of the land. The planter class as a whole, then, owned 117,789.2 acres of the county's 218,788½ resident-owned acres of land. These 69 people comprised just 4 percent of household heads, and yet they owned 53.8 percent of the land. The 123 large yeomen, 7.2 percent of householders, held 56,691½ acres, or 25.9 percent of the land. Small yeomen, 287 in number and 16.8 percent of households, owned 43,934.8 acres, or 20.1 percent of the land. Finally, 45 smallholders held 373 acres, just 0.2 percent of the land.

In the following years, the shares of acres owned by the largest planters fell, but only by a little bit. In 1810, 17 of them owned 53,482⅓ acres, 24.9 percent of the land, two-tenths of 1 percent less than 10 years before. In 1820, 12 of them owned 44,765.4 acres, or 23.8 percent of it. The share belonging to other planters (43 in number in 1810 and 48 in 1820) at first fell to 52,255½ acres, 24.4 percent, but then rose to 56,784.8 acres, or 28.9 percent, two-tenths of 1 percent more than 10 years before. Large yeomen's share rose from a quarter to a third, as their numbers rose to 147 in 1810 and 141 in 1820. In the former year they held 70,642⅓ acres, and in the latter year 66,022½, or 32.9 percent rising to 33.6 percent. The share held by small yeomen fell as their numbers declined to 260 and 193. They owned 37,541⅓ acres in 1810 and 28,510.4 acres in 1820, or 17½ percent of the land falling to 14½ percent, compared to one-fifth in 1800. Smallholders numbered 64 and 68 and in 1810 and 1820 held 659.8 acres and 495⅓ acres, or a third of 1 percent falling to a quarter of 1 percent, up on the 0.2 percent of 1800. But because smallholders' numbers rose from 45 to 64 and 68, the average amount held by each of them declined.

Table A.5 shows that land values were in some respects even more unevenly shared than quantities of acres. Large planters' $94,949.55 worth of real estate represented 22.8 percent of the value of all taxable land and other recorded resources, actually a bit less than their quarter-share of acreages. This fact does not mean that large planters' land was poor, however. Their numbers of slaves were fewer than the number required for optimal labor-land ratios, implying that much of their land lay unimproved or in fallow, as opposed to implying that they had a problem with soil exhaustion. Large planters thus had options open to them about whether, when, and how to exploit their land. Smaller and middling planters, on the other hand, owned $144,208.87 in landed property, or 34.5 percent of its value, considerably higher than their 28.7 percent share of acreage. Large yeomen's land was worth $96,580.07, 23.2 percent of the value, compared to 25.9 percent of acreage. Small yeomen's land was worth $69,298.14, 16.7 percent of the value, against 20.1 percent of the acres. Smallholders held 0.2 percent of the land, but it was worth $11,185.11, or 2.7 percent of its value. The average value of land per acre within each group, then, was $1.74 for large planters, $2.27 for other planters, $1.71 for large yeomen, $1.58 for small yeomen, and a remarkable $29.98 for smallholders.

Large planters' share of the value of land grew to 24.7 percent in 1810, although it fell with their diminishing numbers back to 22.8 percent in 1820, exactly the same as in 1800, although, numbering 15 in 1800 and 12 in 1820, there were 3 fewer of them. That of smaller planters also fell to 27.8 percent and then rose part of the way back up to 30.6 percent. That of large yeomen grew very considerably, from 23.2 percent to 31.1 percent in 1810 and 32.3 percent in 1820. Small yeomen's share fell to 14 percent in 1810 and 11.7 percent in 1820, a fall of 5 percent since 1800. Smallholders' shares remained steady at between 2 and 3 percent throughout the period.

The most dramatic change here was that tax assessors upped their land valuations by over 100 percent in 1801, so that in 1810 and 1820 the differentials in land values between landowning groups and especially between landowners and nonlandowners more closely though no means fully reflected market values. This fact is perhaps best represented in land values per acre held by each of the groups. For large planters these were $4.35 and in 1810 and $4.51 in 1820. For smaller and middling planters they were $4.99 and $4.77. Large yeomen's average land values per acre were $4.17 and $4.34. Small yeomen's were notably lower, at $3.52 and $3.64. For smallholders they were very significantly higher, at $32.36 and $47.17. The rise in the value of smallholders' real property was less than that of other groups because when the levy court raised the assessed value of land in 1801 it did so only for land, not for built improvements.

Distribution of Town Lots and Taxable Improvements

The land values discussed so far are gross figures which include real property in or adjoining the small towns of Beall Town, Bladensburg, Nottingham, Piscataway, Queen Anne Town, Upper Marlboro, and Vansville. They also include the value of taxable improvements in the countryside. It is worth analyzing ownership of town land and rural improvements in their own rights for what they can add to our understanding of wealth distribution and the workings of the local and larger economy, but doing so also allows us to produce figures for the net value of the land, and thus allows us to reinforce the analysis in chapter 3 of the quality of soil belonging to different groups of landowners.

Table A.6 shows that Prince George's County really was a predominantly rural place, as only a few landowners in all categories except smallholders owned town lots. Roughly half of smallholders, however, owned town lots, suggesting their involvement in nonagricultural or extra-agricultural artisanship. They also owned close to half the county's town lots in 1800 and 1810, and over half of them in 1820, and the value of their town land in total outstripped that of all other groups by a considerable distance. Differentials in holdings of built improvements, though, begin to explain some of the differences in land values held by different landed groups. As with other forms of property ownership, changes in the distribution of improvements were complex. Also, changes were small, but in some ways significant. The principal changes in ownership of improvements were similar to those in landownership generally: a slightly more even distribution among large planters, small and medium-sized planters, and large yeomen; decline for the class of small yeomen; and increasing economic strength overall for smallholders.[24]

As Table A.7 shows, among large planters, the number with improvements was 10 of 15 in 1800, or two-thirds. That fell to under half, 8 of 17, in 1810, but rose to 10 of 12 in 1820. Their share of the value of improvements, though, rose consistently and greatly, from 15.1 percent to 23.6 percent, and 31.8 percent. By 1820, then, 12 large planters owned almost one-third of the value of the county's taxable improvements. Small and medium-sized planters' share of improvements declined overall. In 1800, over half were taxed on improvements, but that fell to 40 percent by 1810, although it then rose to near half again by 1820. Small and medium-sized planters were the largest owners of improvements in 1800, with 37.6 percent of the total. In 1810, they held 17.5 percent, and only smallholders owned less. In 1820, they owned 21.1 percent of improvements, but large planters and large yeomen still held more. Large yeomen's shares of improvements increased a little overall. They held 26.6 percent of resident-held improvements in 1800, 37.1 percent in 1810 (holding more than any other group that year), and 29.5 percent in 1820. The impression of marginally increased prosperity is reflected by an overall growth in the proportion of large yeomen in possession of improvements, from just over a quarter to near one-third. The opposite impression is confirmed in the case of small yeomen. Their share of improvements fell a little in the first decade of the nineteenth century from 19 percent to 18.6 percent (although as a landholding class they declined in size by more than this), and then fell dramatically in the second decade to 12.5 percent. It is significant, though, that the proportion of those within the small yeomanry who possessed improvements increased from 11.9 percent to 12.7 percent and 16.6 percent. Interestingly, despite a marked decline in small yeoman numbers over the years, the number in the class with improvements decreased by only, and exactly, one per decade, from 34 in 1800 to 32 in 1820. This stability indicates again that the class was being pared down to size, its better-off members, those with town lots and improvements, surviving, while its poorer members disappeared out of the county or into the growing ranks of the landless.

Smallholders' shares of improvements consistently and significantly rose, from 1.7 percent in 1800 to 3.2 percent and 5.1 percent in 1810 and 1820 respectively. Also, proportions of smallholders who owned them increased significantly, from 9 percent to 12.5 percent and 20.6 percent. It seems, then, that there was a small but growing and increasingly prosperous nonagricultural or extra-agricultural population in the countryside as well as in the towns. Of course, the increasing share of smallholders' property consisting in town land and rural improvements meant a relative decline in the net value of their rural land. Nevertheless, they continued to hold rural land that was considerably more valuable than that held by any other group.

Net Values of Rural Land

Tables A.8, A.9, and A.10 show the results of subtracting the quantities and values of town land and improvements and they thereby reveal the net values of rural land. The figures confirm most of the differentials in land values already established. Large planters' held 25.1 percent of rural acres and 25.3 percent of its net value in 1800, falling a little in both cases by 1820. Smaller and middling planters' land was apparently more intensively farmed. They held 28.7 percent of rural land in 1800, but 35.4 percent of its value. Similarly, in 1810, they held 24.4 percent of acres and 28.9 percent of values and in 1820, 28.9 percent of acres and 31.9 percent of values. Large yeomen held similar proportions of acres and values, but the quantities rose from around a quarter to a third. Again, small yeomen's share of land values was smaller than their share of acres. Holding 20.1 percent of rural acres in 1800, they owned 15½ percent of the value of rural land. Those proportions fell to 17½ percent of acres and 14 percent of value in 1810, and 14½ percent of acres and 11.4 percent of value in 1820.

The values per rural acre in 1800 for large planters were $1.62, but smaller planters had more valuable rural land at $2 per acre on average. That of large yeomen was significantly less, at $1.47, and all the more so for small yeomen with an average value of $1.25. Smallholders' was again the highest. At $4.32 per acre on average, it was a lot less valuable than their town land, but a lot more so than others' rural landholdings. That suggests again that many of these rural smallholders were also engaged in artisanship or other nonagricultural or extra-agricultural pursuits.

The patterns were very similar in 1810 and 1820, although the difference between the value of smallholders' rural land and that of others shrank quite considerably. Between 1810 and 1820, the value of large planters' land went up from an average $4.14 per rural acre to $4.20, while that of smaller and middling planters went down from $4.83 to $4.53. That of large yeomen also went up, from $3.86 to $4.06, as did that of smallholders, from $5.44 to $5.79. That of small yeomen went down slightly from $3.25 to $3.22. The slightness of the fall reflects the probability that as economically less well positioned small yeomen lost their land, the fortunes of survivors stabilized.

Exploitation of enslaved labor provides some of the evidence for soil exhaustion as a factor in the declining fortunes of some small yeomen. Looking at slaveholding patterns also further undermines the Jeffersonian characterization of the early national American husbandman. In many ways, slaveholding patterns in Prince George's County were similar to those in most parts of the Old South. Slaveholding on a large scale was rare and on a Caribbean scale was nonexistent. In 1800, only two Prince Georgians held more than 100 slaves, and only 2 more held more than 80. Another 23 owned 50 or more, making a total of 27 who would fall into the class of large planters, as normally defined by historians. Another 86 held between 20 and 49 slaves, 125 owned 10 to 19, 164 owned 5 to 9, and 250 held fewer than 5, 85 of them owning only a single slave. The number with 50 slaves or more fell by 5 to 22 and by another 3 to 19 in 1820. Those with 20 to 49 also fell a little, from 86 to 80 and 78. Those with 10 to 19 dropped a bit more dramatically from 125 to 106 and 105, while those with 5 to 9 fell from 164 to 153 and 129, and those with 1 to 5 from 250 to 228 and 208. In other words, the extensiveness of slave ownership was declining. The total number of slaveholders fell from 652 in 1800 to 589 in 1810, and 539 in 1820. That is, from 38.1 percent of household heads in 1800 to 36.4 percent by 1810 and 30 percent, the antebellum norm, by 1820.

Distribution of Slaves and Labor-Land Ratios

What is even more revealing is the pattern of slave-holding in relation to landownership. Not surprisingly, large majorities of planters and large yeomen held slaves. As shown in chapter 1 and in Tables A.11 and A.12, in 1800, 14 out of 15 large planters held a total of 886 slaves, or an average of 63 each those who owned them. The exception was Samuel Snowden whose conscience made him make do with tenants and wage laborers to work his lands. Out of 54 smaller planters, 52 owned 2,038 slaves, or 39 each on average. Of 123 large yeomen, 116 owned 1,861 slaves, or 16 each. In 1810, all 17 large planters owned slaves totalling 814 in number, or 48 each. Thirty-eight of 43 other planters held 1,401 slaves, 37 each, and 125 of 147 large yeomen held 2,119 slaves, or 17 each on average. All 12 large planters in 1820 owned a total 911 slaves, 76 each, and 44 out of 48 other planters held 1,501 slaves, or 34 each. Of 141 large yeomen, 130 owned 2,083 slaves, or 16 each.

More surprising is the spread of slave property among smaller landowners and, most surprising, among nonlandowners. In 1800, 206 out of 278 small yeomen owned slaves, an average of 5 slaves each, or seven among those who held them. That is, over 70 percent of small yeomen owned slaves. The proportion of slaveholding small yeomen fell slightly in subsequent years, to 173 out of 260 in 1810 and 128 out of 193 in 1820, but over two-thirds of small yeomen were still slaveholders in those years. The non-slaveholding yeoman of historical and historiographical imagination was thus a minority of the yeomanry and indeed a very small minority of the population. There were just 81 of them in 1800, 87 in 1810, falling to 65 in 1820. Non-slaveholding small yeomen thus formed respectively to 4.6 percent, 5.4 percent, and 3.6 percent of household heads. Once again, even if one adds small and large yeomen together, the non-slaveholding yeomanry constituted just 88 households in 1800, 109 in 1810, and 76 in 1820.

As shown in chapter 3 and Table A.10, slaveholding patterns indicate the possibility of soil exhaustion as a factor in small yeomen's declining fortunes. In analyzing labor-land ratios for groups of landowners, I discounted slaves under the age of 8 years, counted men aged 14 to 45 and women aged 14 to 36 as full hands, slaves aged 8 to 14 and men over 45 and women over 36 as half-hands, in accord with values given in the county assessments. By these measures, planters held labor-land ratios short of the ideal of between 1 laborer per 40 acres and 1 laborer per 50 acres. Also, a relatively high proportion of planters' slaves probably worked as artisans, drivers, and domestic servants, so that their labor-land ratio was probably even further from the ideal range than these figures suggest. Given that planters could invest in more slaves if they wanted to, they clearly exercised choices about how to exploit their land, including maintaining valuable tracts of forest and maintaining and redeveloping land in fallow. Owning larger numbers of families also meant potential growth of planters' labor pools. Indeed, by 1820 large planters had comparatively less land and more labor, apparently opting for more intensive cultivation. Labor-land ratios among large yeomen were 1: 54 to 1: 61—closer to the ideal, especially as more of their slaves would probably have been employed in field labor. As large yeomen's labor-land ratios did not suggest soil exhaustion and indeed were closest to the ideal for maximum tobacco production, their land was less valuable than that of planters because planters or their ancestors purchased better quality soil or more riverbank land. Small yeomen, however, possessed the equivalent of 807 enslaved full hands in 1800, 666 in 1810, and 486 in 1820, relatively few of whom would have been employed outside of agricultural work, judging by the comparative lack of town lots and taxable improvements. Furthermore, when classifying small yeomen as a landowning group, I assumed that the equivalent of two free members of each household also labored in the fields. If that is correct, then small yeomen employed 1,381, 1,186, and 872 full hands in each of the years considered, meaning labor-land ratios of 1: 32 and 1: 33. These figures, combined with declining rural land values, suggest that small yeomen overworked their land.

As acknowledged in the longer analysis in chapter 3, we cannot be certain that soil exhaustion explains why small yeomen generally had relatively low-quality land. If, for example, we discount small yeomen and members of their families and count only slaves as working hands, then small yeomen's labor-land ratios ranged between 1: 54 and 1: 59. Alternatively, many small yeomen may have leased surplus slaves to others with surplus land. Furthermore, as Lorena Walsh has pointed out, productivity was sometimes lower than some historians have estimated, requiring fewer acres per laborer. It is also possible that small yeomen rented extra acres from larger landowners. County Land Records do not indicate that these arrangements occurred on the scale required to balance labor-land ratios throughout the landowning classes, although such arrangements may have been made privately or orally. Nevertheless, whatever the reason, small yeomen's rural land was worth 15 to 40 percent less per acre than that of large yeomen and planters in the early nineteenth century, and was perhaps, therefore, that much less productive.

Around half of smallholders also held slaves throughout the first two decades of the nineteenth century: 25 out of 45 in 1800; 31 of 64 in 1810; and 35 of 68 in 1820. In all, of 524 landowners in Prince George's County in 1800, 413 owned slaves. In 1810, the figure was 384 out of 531, and in 1820 it was 349 out of 462. In percentage terms, between 1800 and 1820 respectively 79 percent, 72 percent, and 76 percent of landowners held slaves. Perhaps most surprisingly, though, is the fact, in Prince George's County in 1800, 239 nonlandowners also held slaves: that is, just over one-in-five of the county's 1,188 nonlandowners. They owned 1,320 slaves in total, or 17 percent of the county's enslaved population. The numbers of landless slaveholders fell to 205 of 1,089 in 1810 and 190 of 1,333 in 1820, or to 19 percent in 1810 and just over 14 percent in 1820. They nevertheless still held collectively over 1,054 and 1,059 slaves in those years, more than 15 and 16 percent of slaves respectively. Nonlandowners also constituted a third of all slaveholders, and formed a substantial majority of small scale owners of 5 slaves or fewer.

In total, as noted above, 652 household heads held slaves in Prince George's County in 1800, over 38 percent of all 1,712 householders. The number fell to 589 in 1810 and 539 in 1820, but even in the latter year remained at 30 percent. That compares to 524 landowners in 1800, 531 in 1810, and 462 in 1820, or 30.6 percent falling to 25.7 percent who owned land. If Prince George's County was typical of the plantation belt, or even if it was only typical of the eastern tobacco plantation region around Chesapeake Bay, this finding has great significance for our understanding of the South. Whereas the southern uplands seem to have been peopled by many landowning non-slaveholders, the lowlands were peopled by many slaveholding nonlandowners.[25] The phenomenon of nonlanded slaveholding meant that large numbers of poor whites had a direct material interest in slave society. Indeed, the interest of landless slaveholders in the enslavement of others would have been greater in some respects than that of landowning slaveholders, in that even just a few slaves represented most of the property and pretty much all the major capital they owned. Furthermore, many other poor whites may have coveted slaves, as human property was easier to acquire than landed property, while others would have purcharsed or hired slaves at some point in their lives.

Distribution of Wealth Including Enslaved Heads of Household

Even the figures thus far given, however, do not describe the full extent of Prince Georgian inequality. In fact, in one very important respect, they describe a lot less than half of it. Taking the 1800 census figures, 12,191 people, or 57.6 percent of Prince Georgians, not only also had no taxable wealth, but were legally deprived of possession of themselves. Factoring the enslaved into an analysis of wealth distribution reveals some interesting figures. There were 8,984 free people in 1,712 households, a rate of 5.3 people per household. If we assume the same average household size among would-be free people, then we can add another 2,322 heads of household to our population.[26] Having freed the slaves, we can now subtract their value from total wealth in the county, leaving $771,020 divided among 4,034 households and therefore an average wealth of $191.13 in 1800. Looked at this way, Prince Georgians, all of them, black and white, enslaved and free all included, were as poor as the poorest Europeans. The Gini coefficient would not have been greatly affected because the effect of the increase in the number of free propertyless households would have been largely offset by the huge diminution of wealth among slaveholders. But it is interesting to note that emancipation in 1800 would have left Prince George's County with 930 taxable households (no taxable resident household heads owned slaves alone) and 3,104 nontaxable households, or 23 propertied and 77 percent unpropertied. If we factor in the 2,322 slave householders previously hypothesized as potential property owners, planters with over 800 acres would have constituted only 1.7 percent of 4,034 householders. Large yeomen would have formed only 3.1 percent and small yeomen only 7.2 percent. Smallholders would have constituted another 1.1 percent. So that non-landowners would have formed 87 percent of all householders and the Gini coefficient of land would have been 0.9173.

Geographic and Social-Economic Mobility (or lack of)

One might expect that social-economic inequality was ameliorated by social-economic mobility. This was true only to a limited degree. Tracing each individual through every extant economic record would be the ideal way to measure social-economic mobility, but would be an impossibly long task for a single researcher. Instead, I have cross-referenced the databases of wealth distribution in 1800 with those of 1810 and 1820 to identify and create two datasets composed of people who survived from 1800 to 1810 and from 1800 to 1820. Ideally, one would follow this procedure through to 1830 or even take each person to the end of his or her life, but only the Prince Georgian census totals, and not the population schedules, survive from 1830. A 20-year period does, though, give a good idea of the extent of mobility that people of different social-economic backgrounds could expect.

As interesting as it would be to determine the reasons for upwards or downwards mobility, it would be impossible to do so systematically, not only because of the dimensions of the task, but also because not everyone left a will or had an inventory of their wealth taken, and not all transactions were recorded in the Land Records. Some individual cases, though, can give at least an impression of the probable predominant causes of mobility in both directions. These individual examples have already been examined in previous chapters. The following analysis is therefore largely confined to determining and comparing degrees of mobility for people in different land-owning groups. It is possible that statistics relating only to the county's surviving populations in 1810 and 1820 exaggerate the extent of mobility, for there is evidence that many of those who stayed in the county did so because their economic prospects were relatively good and many of those who moved did so because their prospects in Prince George's were poor.

The first sample for this analysis comprises 687 household heads of 1800 who were still Prince Georgian household heads in 1810 (see Table A.13). That is, slightly over 40 percent of the original 1,712. The second sample comprises 268 household heads who were still Prince Georgian household heads in 1820, 15.7 percent of those who headed households in 1800 (see Table A.14). However, if 687 of the original resident householder population of 1,712 in 1800 survived as household heads to 1810, then 1,025, or 60 percent, did not. And, if 268 survived to 1820, then 1,444, or near 85 percent, did not. We must begin, therefore, with at least a tentative accounting of those not accounted for in the main samples. A number of the people who were no longer household heads in 1810 or 1820 may have ceded their position to someone else. Others, of course, would have died in the intervening years, especially in the second decade, as the sample population derived from 1800 was, of course, growing older. Another portion, however, must have left Prince George's County to set up home either in neighboring counties, some in other places in Maryland, others across the Potomac in Virginia, and others still, no doubt in many cases, in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and especially Kentucky and Tennessee.[27] Indeed, between 1800 and 1810, the population of household heads in Prince George's County fell from 1,712 to 1,620. This was a decade of continuing extensive out-migration from the eastern Chesapeake region to the new tobacco lands of the west. By the second decade of the nineteenth century, out-migration had slowed, however, and by 1820 the number of household heads in Prince George's had risen to 1,795. It is impossible to know precisely who ceded the title of household head to another, who died, and who moved away. Also, of those who migrated, it is impossible to trace how many attained material advancement as a result, and how many did not. To these important extents, this analysis of mobility must remain somewhat incomplete.

It is still possible, though, thanks to the work of other historians, to make some conjectures about the social-economic fate of migrants. First, if surrounding counties were similar to Prince George's in terms of wealth distribution, it seems unlikely that large numbers of Prince Georgians could have expected to make their fortunes by moving to the neighboring tobacco counties of St. Mary's, Charles, or Calvert. The same would be true of those moving to Virginia. Nor, according to Fredrika Teute and Lee Soltow, did poor people necessarily gain much from moving to Kentucky or Tennessee. As noted previously, Fredrika Teute found that, in 1792, 65 percent of free Kentuckians were landless, a proportion rising to as high as 84 percent in parts of the Bluegrass District. With land prices starting at a dollar an acre for unimproved tracts, double that for improved tracts, and up to $60 an acre for improved, prime, river bank land, poorer migrants from the eastern plantation regions found it impossible to purchase sufficient land for a viable farm. The landlessness rate fell considerably thereafter because the starting price for land had dropped to $20 per 100 acres by 1800, and because speculators inaugurated a deferred payment practice from 1797, which helped lower the landlessness rate considerably. Even so, in the first decade of the nineteenth century, landlessness was still high, at 52 percent overall, and while some had escaped landlessness, others fell into it by defaulting either on instalment payments or taxes or both, so that by 1821 one-third of Kentucky land was owned by out-of-state banks and speculators.[28]

Although moving West was therefore no guarantee of attaining economic independence, the frontier may still have represented a pull factor that motivated easterners to move there. People may have believed they were going to achieve material betterment by moving to Kentucky or Tennessee, only to be disappointed after they arrived. But poverty in the east may at the same time have been a push factor. Indeed, from what follows it would seem that many of those who stayed behind did so because they could expect to obtain property, even slaves and land.

The reproduction of tobacco society inequality in the west makes sense when we observe that poorer people left Prince George's County at a higher rate than wealthy people.[29] Taking all 856 of the wealthiest 50 percent of Prince Georgians together, we can see that 413, or 48.3 percent, had gone by 1810, and 673, or 78.6 percent, had gone by 1820. These figures very much contrast with the disappearance rates among poorer Prince Georgians. Of the remaining property owners (numbering 74 in all in 1800, or 4.3 percent of householders), 47, or 63½ percent, had either ceded their position as household head, died, or moved by 1810, and 67, or 90½ percent, had done so by 1820. Among the 782 (45.7 percent of householders) who held no taxable wealth in 1800, 565, or 72.3 percent, disappeared by 1810, and 704, or 90 percent, by 1820. Assuming death rates and household head abdication rates were the same in each group, these figures indicate that out-migration was more common among poorer people than among the wealthy. It is probable, though, that wealthier Prince Georgians were also on average older than poorer ones, having accumulated their greater wealth over a longer period of time. The death-rate among them would thus have been somewhat higher than that among their poorer neighbors. The preponderance of the poor amongst migrants, therefore, was probably even greater than these figures suggest. There seems to have been greater persistence among smaller landowners than among larger ones, although this phenomenon may also have been attributable to larger landowners being older and therefore leaving the historical record by dying. Again, though, while disappearance ranged between 42.2 percent and 53.3 percent among the different classes of landowners over the first decade, and between 75.6 percent and 83.3 percent through the two decades, for nonlandowners the rates were 66.7 percent and 86.6 percent.

It is impossible to tell how many people migrated compared to how many abdicated from the position of household head or how many died. But the difference between the total numbers who disappeared must be largely attributable to out-migration. Again, though, these figures most likely understate differentials in migration rates, for if slaveholders and landowners, especially the wealthiest ones, were older on average than those who owned no slaves or land, then a larger proportion of the disappearance rates among them would be attributable to death rather than out-migration. It is safe to say, therefore, that poorer, non-slaveholding, and landless householders were more likely to migrate than their wealthier neighbors. Bayly Marks found a similar correspondence between poverty and outmigration from St. Mary's County, finding a consistent pattern from the 1790s to the 1830s in which about 90 percent of outmigrants were landless, 55 percent were non-slaveholders, and 67 percent were nontaxables.[30]

Of the 687 Prince Georgians who were household heads in 1800 and remained so in 1810, 524, over three-quarters, remained in the same landowning or nonlandowning group to which they had belonged in 1800. One-hundred-seventeen, fractionally over 17 percent, were upwardly mobile, and 46, a little less than 7 percent, were downwardly mobile. Between 1800 and 1820, 166 of the 268 survivors, or nearly 62 percent, remained in place, while 73, less than 30 percent, were upwardly mobile, and 29, fractionally over a tenth, were downwardly mobile.

There was considerably less downward mobility among the wealthier groups of landowners and by far the most downward mobility was experienced by small yeomen. Among the seven large planters with 2,000 acres or more who survived to 1810, six remained large planters and one became a planter over the course of the decade. Four still headed Prince Georgian households in 1820, by which time three of them were still large planters, and one more was a smaller planter. The two who went one rung down the ladder were respectively John Waring and Francis Tolson, and, as we saw in chapter 1, both remained wealthy men and perhaps only became less wealthy through premortal bequests that helped give their offspring a start in their lives.[31]

Of 30 planters with 800 acres but less than 2,000 acres who survived to 1810, 18 retained planter status and 5 became large planters. Just under one-quarter went down the social-economic scale, but in none of these cases was the decline dramatic. All 7 whose status declined moved down into the large yeoman class (with 280 to 799 acres). Of the two who had become large planters by 1810 and survived to 1820, one fell back to the status of planter and one fell two steps to large yeoman status. One who had previously remained a planter had become a large planter by 1820, four more remained planters throughout the period, and another became a large yeoman.

Among the 65 survivors from the large yeomanry from 1800 to 1810, there was very little mobility. Fully 51 remained as they were, one becoming a large planter, six becoming planters, three going down into the small yeomen category, and four falling into nonlandownership. One who had become a large planter by 1810 survived and was still a large planter in 1820. One who had become a planter by 1810 also retained that position to 1820. Four more who remained large yeomen in 1810 became planters in the second decade, 11 remained large yeomen throughout, and two became small yeomen. One of those who had become a small yeoman returned to the large yeomanry and another remained in the small yeomanry. None of the four who had fallen into nonlandownership by 1810 survived to 1820.

In the small yeomanry, mobility, especially of the downward kind, was much more common. Of 166 surviving heads of households from 1800, 113 remained small yeomen in 1810, 23 rose into the large yeomanry, and one into the planter class. Seven, however, became smallholders and fully 22 became nonlandowners. One of those who reached planter status by 1810 remained so in 1820, and another who became a large yeoman later rose to the planter class. Seven who had become large yeomen remained large yeomen, while three fell into nonlandownership. Another 8 who had previously remained small yeomen became large yeomen, 27 remained small yeomen throughout, 2 more became smallholders between 1810 and 1820, and another 10 fell into nonlandownership. Five who previously became landless survived and remained landless in 1820, but the other 16 disappeared from the record. Altogether, 35 of the 166 small yeomen who survived at least until 1810 fell into landlessness between 1800 and 1820. This figure includes 3 who had previously risen to the large yeomanry and one who returned from landlessness to a small proprietorship, but does not include those who might have been dispossessed after 1800 and disappeared before 1810, or those who might have been dispossessed after 1810 and disappeared before 1820. Of those who were dispossessed and then left Prince George's County, some might have become proprietors in neighboring counties or elsewhere, but it is clear that small yeomen were far more vulnerable to dispossession than any other landowning group.

Unlike most of those with over 40 acres, many smallholders were either artisans or wealthy town residents. Probably because of this fact, they seem to have been much less vulnerable to the dispossession that afflicted or threatened large numbers of small yeomen. Of 23 survivors to 1810, 14 remained smallholders, 4 increased their landholdings to small-yeoman size, though they probably retained artisanal occupations, two became large yeomen, and one became a planter. Only two fell into landlessness. One who obtained a large yeoman's acreage by 1810 survived and still enjoyed it in 1820, as did one who became a small yeoman, while another who had reached the small yeomanry returned to the class of smallholders. Of those who had remained smallholders to 1810, one later obtained a small yeoman's acreage, six remained smallholders, and none fell into landlessness. Only one of the two who previously fell into landlessness survived, remaining landless in 1820.

Of 1,188 landless householders from 1800, 396 were still heading Prince Georgian household in 1810. Of them, 74, or 18.7 percent, had become landowners during the decade. One rose to the large planter class and two to the small- to medium-sized planter group by 1810. Another 16 rose to the large yeomanry, 35 to the small yeomanry, and 20 others became smallholders. By 1820, the large planter fell to the smaller planter class and one who had become a smaller planter remained one. Five of those who rose to the large yeomanry by 1810 remained there in 1820, two fell into the small yeomanry, and one returned to landlessness. Two of the new small yeomen subsequently became large yeomen, 11 remained as they were, and 4 fell back into landlessness. Two who became smallholders subsequently rose to the large yeomanry, one to the small yeomanry, and three remained smallholders. Three who had hitherto remained landless eventually rose to the large yeomanry, 10 more to the small yeomanry, 5 more became smallholders. Of the 158 who survived to 1820, 109, almost 70 percent, remained landless throughout the period. Furthermore, 38 of the new landowners of 1810 already owned taxable property in 1800, as did 13 of the 46 who acquired land by 1820, though others had acquired property by 1810. Some of them owned substantial properties before they obtained land. Thirty-five of the 38 new landowners of 1810, for example, were slaveholders in 1800, as were 11 of the 46 of 1820.

Such mobility as there was in landownership tended to take the form of small steps rather than large leaps. Of the total of 117 who were upwardly mobile to 1810, 58 moved only one step, as did 26 of the 46 downwardly mobile. Altogether, with the 524 who remained stationary, there were 602 of 687, or 87.6 percent, who moved little if at all. Of the remaining upwardly mobile, 39 moved two steps, 17 moved three, 2 moved four, and 1 moved five. Of the remaining downwardly mobile, 22 moved two steps down, all of them small yeomen who fell into landlessness, and 4 moved three down, all of them large yeomen who also fell into landlessness.

Some of those who had been upwardly or downwardly mobile between 1800 and 1810 had returned to their original position by 1820. Of the 166 who were in the same position in 1820 as in 1800, 157 had remained in the same class throughout, 7 had been upwardly and then downwardly mobile, and 2 had been downwardly and then upwardly mobile. Between 1800 and 1820, 31 of the 73 upwardly mobile moved a single step, as did 11 of 29 downwardly mobile. Adding those to the 166 who remained in place, we have 208 of 268, or 77.6 percent, who moved either one step or not at all. Of the remaining upwardly mobile, 28 moved two steps, 12 moved three, and 2 moved four over the course of 20 years. All but 4 of the 42 who moved two steps or more were originally landless. Of the remaining downwardly mobile, 18 moved two steps, all of them small yeomen who fell into landlessness. Seventeen percent improved their landowning status over one decade, and 27 percent over two. Especially significant, perhaps, is that 159 nontaxable householders became taxable ones at some point between 1800 and 1820.

* * *

If the social-economic circumstances of Prince George's County were replicated across the tobacco South, and the findings of Bayly Marks, Lee Soltow, Fredrika Teute, Elizabeth Perkins, Matthew Ward and others suggest they were, then large portions of the early national tobacco-plantation South were characterized by high levels of inequality, extensive poverty, and low levels of opportunity. Social-economic inequity was not as great as in Europe, unless slaves are counted as part of the potential property-owning population. Inequality, poverty, and the constriction of opportunity did not, of course, just happen. As shown throughout this book, they were intrinsically related to tobacco-plantation economy, which was inextricably connected to the Atlantic tobacco trade. Inequality and immobility were embedded in the exploitative social and economic relationships of local tobacco society, and encouraged by the capitalist mentality and behavior that guided Atlantic commerce just as surely as the so-called trade winds.

Statistical Tables

Statistical Tables on Property Distribution and Mobility in Prince George's County, Maryland, 1800–1820

Table 2.1 Distribution of plate (in weight) among landowning groups

Landed group	1800			1810			1820		
	Ounces	Mean	%	Ounces	Mean	%	Ounces	Mean	%
Lg plrs	1964.7	131.0	18.3	1093.3	64.3	13.8	1975.0	164.6	18.3
Plrs	4238.7	78.5	39.5	2572.3	59.8	32.4	3293.0	68.6	30.5
Lg y'm	1857.5	15.1	17.3	1924.8	13.1	24.2	3628.5	25.7	33.6
Sm. y'm	1065.9	3.7	9.9	1467.0	5.6	18.5	649.0	3.4	6.0
Sm'rs	240.0	5.3	2.2	168.0	2.6	2.1	446.0	6.6	4.1
L'dless	1372.6	1.2	12.8	717.5	0.7	9.0	806.5	0.6	7.5
Total	10,739.3	6.3	100	7942.8	4.90	100	10,798.0	6.0	100

Table A.1 Gini Co-efficient of total wealth in Prince George's County, Maryland, 1800

P	W	cumWPW (P x W)	PcumW	(P x cumW)
.5	.0049	.0049	.0025	.0025
.1	.0216	.0265	.0022	.0027
.1	.0430	.0695	.0043	.0070
.1	.0837	.1532	.0084	.0153
.1	.1723	.3255	.0172	.0326
.05	.1755	.5010	.0088	.0250
.05	.4990	1.0000	.0250	.0500
1.00	1.0000	.0684	.1351 x 2 = .2702	
G = 1 − .2702 + .0684 = **.7982**				

Table A.2 Distribution of total wealth by percentile groups, Prince George's County, 1800–1820

1800		1810		1820	
% of house-holds	% share of total wealth	% of house-holds	% share of total wealth	% of households	% share of total wealth
5	49.9	5	53.1	5	57.9
5	17.6	5	17.2	5	18.3
10	17.2	10	16.5	10	15.3
10	8.4	10	7.6	10	5.9
10	4.3	10	3.5	10	2.2
10	2.2	10	1.5	4	0.4
4.3	0.5	9.3	0.6	56	0
45.7	0	40.7	0	–	–
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100

Table A.3 Landowning groups as proportions of household heads

Landed group	Acres	No 1800	% of l'drs	% of h'hrs	No 1810	% of l'drs	% of h'hrs	No 1820	% of l'drs	% of h'hrs
Lg plrs	2,000+	15	2.9	0.9	17	3.2	1.0	12	2.6	0.7
Plrs	800–1,999	54	10.3	3.2	43	8.1	2.7	48	10.4	2.7
Lg ym	280–799	123	23.5	7.2	147	27.7	9.1	141	30.5	7.9
Sm ym	40–279	287	54.8	16.8	260	49.0	16.0	193	41.8	10.8
Smhrs	–40	45	8.6	2.6	64	12.1	4.0	68	14.7	3.8
Subtot	–	524	100	30.6	531	100	32.8	462	100	25.7
Propd ldless	0	406	–	23.7	429	–	26.5	327	–	18.2
Unpd	0	782	–	45.7	660	–	40.7	1,006	–	56.0
Subtot	–	1,188	–	69.4	1,089	–	67.2	1,333	–	74.3
Total	–	1,712	–	100	1,620	–	100	1,795	–	100

Table A.4 Distribution of total wealth among landowning groups

Landed group	1800			1810			1820		
	Total	Mean	%	Total	Mean	%	Total	Mean	%
Lg plrs	180,574.65	12,038.31	14.9	319,370.80	18,786.53	19.5	294,284.79	24,523.73	18.2
Plrs	341,789.31	6,329.42	28.2	394,066.47	9,164.33	24.1	425,014.31	8,854.46	26.3
Lg ym	277,011.81	2,252.14	22.8	485,771.17	3,304.56	29.7	505,326.63	3,583.88	31.3
Sm ym	231,290.18	805.89	19.1	263,534.62	1,013.60	16.1	209,914.90	1,087.64	13.0
Sm hrs	26,882.11	597.39	2.2	40,556.53	633.71	2.5	45,492.90	669.01	2.8
Propd Ldless	155,407.74	382.77	12.8	133,543.10	311.28	8.2	136,566.00	417.63	8.5
Unpd	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0	0	0	0
Total	1,212,955.81	708.51	100	1,636,842.69	1,010.40	100	1,616,599.53	900.61	100

Table A.5 Total real estate values among landowning groups (rural and town land, plus built improvements)

Landed group	1800		1810		1820	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
Large planters	94,949.55	22.8	232,633.78	24.7	202,028.79	22.8
Planters	144,208.87	34.6	261,021.44	27.8	270,766.31	30.6
Large yeomen	96,580.07	23.2	292,978.89	31.2	286,414.63	32.3
Small yeomen	69,298.14	16.7	131,947.34	14.0	103,639.40	11.7
Smallholders	11,185.11	2.7	21,353.74	2.3	23,364.40	2.6
Total	416,221.73	100	939,935.19	100	886,213.53	100

Table A.6 Town lots among landowning groups

Landed group	1800			1810			1820		
	No with town lots	No of lots	Value	No with town lots	No of lots	Value	No with town lots	No of lots	Value
Lg plrs	1/15	1	40.05	3/17	4¼	3,631.20	2/12	3	548.89
Plrs	8/54	10¾	5,327.99	4/43	19	3,054.16	2/48	10	4,533.34
Lg ym	5/123	7	4,900.12	10/147	20¼	7,849.80	7/141	14	5,532.79
Sm Ym	14/287	16¾	8,330.27	12/260	18½	3,893.87	7/193	12	6,686.03
Smhrs	22/45	27½	9,157.43	27/64	41¼	16,929.27	36/68	56	18,633.08
Total	50/524	63	27,755.86	56/531	93¼	35,358.30	54/462	95	35,934.13

Table A.7 Built improvements among landowning groups

Landed group	1800		1810		1820	
	No with impvmts	Value	No with impvmts	Value	No with impvmts	Value
Large planters	10/15	4,701.87	8/17	7,769.80	10/12	13,560.36
Planters	30/54	11,662.56	17/43	5,765.87	23/48	9,005.34
Large yeomen	33/123	8,270.33	47/147	12,213.92	43/141	12,608.32
Small yeomen	34/287	5,887.35	33/260	6,116.97	32/193	5,324.14
Smallholders	4/45	534.00	8/64	1,,053.32	14/68	2,186.65
Total	121/524	31,056.11	113/531	32,919.88	122/462	42,684.81

Table A.8 Net rural acres, values, and labor-land ratios among landowners, 1800 (counting full-hands or equivalents only) * The small yeomen labor-land figures include the assumed two free family members per household

Landed group	Acres	Mean	%	Value	Mean	%	Labor hands	Labor-land ratio	Value per acre
Lg plrs	54,922.4	3,661.5	25.1	90,207.6	6,013.9	25.3	488	1 : 112.7	1.65
Plrs	62,855.2	1,164.0	28.7	126,218.3	2,337.4	35.4	1,144	1 : 54.9	2.00
Lg ym	56,684.4	460.9	25.9	83,409.5	678.1	23.4	1,006	1 : 56.4	1.47
Sm ym	43,918.1	153.0	20.1	55,080.5	191.9	15.5	1,382	1 : 31.8	1.25
Smhrs	345.5	7.7	0.2	1,493.7	34.5	0.4	78	1 : 4.4	4.32
Total	218,725.5	417.4	100	356,409.7	680.2	100	4,097	1 : 53.4	1.63

Table A.9 Net rural acres, values, and labor-land ratios among landowners, 1810 (counting full-hands or equivalents only)

Landed group	Acres	Mean	%	Value	Mean	%	Labor hands	Labor-land ratio	Value per acre
Lg plrs	53,478.0	3,145.8	24.9	221,232.8	13,013.7	25.4	468	1 : 114.3	4.13
Plrs	52,236.5	1,214.8	24.4	252,201.4	5,865.2	28.9	801	1 : 65.2	4.83
Lg ym	70,622.0	480.4	32.9	272,915.2	1,856.6	31.3	1,160	1 : 60.9	3.87
Sm ym	37,522.8	144.3	17.5	121,936.5	469.0	14.0	1,186	1 : 31.7	3.25
Smhrs	618.6	9.7	0.3	3,371.2	52.7	0.4	94	1 : 6.6	5.44
Total	214,477.9	403.9	100	871,657.0	1641.6	100	3708½	1 : 57.8	4.05

Table A.10 Net rural acres, values, and labor-land ratios among landowners, 1820 (counting full-hands or equivalents only)

Landed group	Acres	Mean	%	Value	Mean	%	Labor Hands	Labor-land ratio	Value per acre
Lg plrs	44,762.38	3,730.20	22.8	187,919.54	15,659.96	23.3	518	1 : 86.4	4.20
Plrs	56,774.77	1,182.81	28.9	257,227.63	5,358.91	31.9	889	1 : 63.9	4.53
Lg ym	66,008.45	468.15	33.6	268,273.52	1,902.65	33.2	1,13½	1 : 54.4	4.06
Sm ym	28,498.43	147.66	14.5	91,629.23	474.76	11.4	871½	1 : 32.7	3.22
Smhrs	439.21	6.46	0.2	2544.65	37.42	0.3	78½	1 : 5.6	5.79
Total	196,483.24	425.29	100	807,594.57	1748.04	100	3578½	1 : 54.9	4.11

Table A.11 Frequency of slaveholding among landowning groups (includes all slaves of all ages)

Landed group	1800			1810			1820		
	Tot no.	No/% owners	No/% non-o'rs	Tot no	No/% owners	No/% non-o'rs	Tot no	No/% owners	No/% non-o'rs
Lg plrs	15	14 / 93.3	1 / 6.7	17	17 / 100	0 / 0	12	12 / 100	0 / 0
Plrs	54	52 / 96.3	2 / 3.7	43	38 / 88.4	5 / 11.6	48	44 / 91.7	4 / 8.3
Lg ym	123	116 / 94.3	7 / 5.7	147	125 / 85.0	22 / 15.0	141	130 / 92.2	11 / 7.8
Sm ym	287	206 / 71.8	81 / 28.2	260	173 / 66.5	87 / 33.5	193	128 / 66.3	65 / 33.7
Smhrs	45	25 / 55.6	20 / 44.4	64	31 / 48.4	33 / 51.6	68	35 / 51.5	33 / 48.5
Ldless	1188	239 / 20.1	949 / 79.9	1089	205 / 18.8	884 / 81.2	1333	190 / 14.3	1143 / 85.7
Total	1,712	652 / 38.1	1060 / 61.9	1620	589 / 36.4	1031 / 63.6	1,795	539 / 30.0	1256 / 70.0

Table A.12 Distribution of slaves among landowning groups (includes all slaves of all ages)

Landed group	1800			1810			1820		
	No.	Mean all/o'rs	%	No.	Mean all/o'rs	%	No.	Mean all/o'rs	%
Lg plrs	886	59 / 63	11.5	814	48 / 48	12.0	911	76 / 76	13.8
Plrs	2,038	38 / 39	26.4	1,401	33 / 37	20.7	1,501	31 / 34	22.8
Lg ym	1,861	15 / 16	24.1	2,119	14 / 17	31.3	2,083	15 / 16	31.6
Sm ym	1,497	5 / 7	19.4	1,204	5 / 7	17.8	892	5 / 7	13.5
Smhrs	124	3 / 5	1.6	169	3 / 6	2.5	143	2 / 4	2.2
Ldless	1,320	1 / 6	17.1	1,054	1 / 5	15.6	1,059	1 / 6	16.1
Total	7726	5 / 12	100	6761	4 / 12	100	6589	4 / 12	100

Table A.13 Social-economic mobility among landowners and non-landowners, 1800–1810

Land- owning group	No in 1810	No. immobile	% immobile	No up-wardly	% up- wardly	No down-wardly	% down- wardly
Lg. planters	7	6	85.7	–	–	1	14.3
Planters	30	18	60.0	5	16.7	7	23.3
Lg. yeomen	65	51	78.5	7	10.8	7	10.8
Sm. yeomen	166	113	68.7	24	14.5	29	17.5
Smallholders	23	14	60.7	7	30.4	2	8.7
Non-owners	396	322	81.3	74	18.7	–	–
Total	687	524	76.3	117	17.0	46	6.7

Table A.14 Social-economic mobility among landowners and non-landowners, 1800–1820

Land- owning group	No in 1810	No immobile	% immobile	No up-wardly	% up-wardly	No down-wardly	% down-wardly
Lg. planters	4	3	75.0	–	–	1	25.0
Planters	9	5	55.6	1	11.1	3	33.3
Lg. yeomen	21	12	57.1	6	28.6	3	14.3
Sm. yeomen	65	27	41.5	17	26.2	21	32.3
Smallholders	11	7	63.6	3	27.3	1	9.1
Non-owners	158	112	81.3	46	29.1	–	–
Total	268	166	61.9	73	27.3	29	10.8

Notes

Introduction The "chosen people": Agrarian Myths and Messier Realities

1. *Jonathan Boucher, A View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution; in Thirteen Discourses, Preached in North America between the Years 1763 and 1775* (London, 1797. Reprint, New York, 1967), 186, 154; Nicholas Cresswell, *The Journal of Nicholas Cresswell, 1774–1777* (New York, 1924), 19; cited in Jean B. Lee, *The Price of Nationhood: The American Revolution in Charles County* (New York, 1994), 43, 94–95.
2. That much-cited phrase of course comes from Carl L. Becker, *The History of Political Parties in the Province of New York, 1760–1776* (Madison, WI, 1909). For interpretations of the Revolution in the Chesapeake, see David Curtis Skaggs, *Roots of Maryland Democracy, 1753–1776* (Westport, CT, 1973); Ronald Hoffman, *A Spirit of Dissension: Economics, Politics, and the Revolution in Maryland* (Baltimore, MD, 1973); Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740–1790* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1982); Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680–1800* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1986), 300–13, 421–35; Lee, *The Price of Nationhood*, 126–32, 182–84, 199–200; Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1999); and Michael A. McDonnell, *The Politics of War: Race, Class, and Conflict in Revolutionary Virginia* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2007). The Carroll quotes come from Hoffman, *A Spirit of Dissension*, 210, 220. For a critique, see Steven Sarson, "Similarities and Continuities: Free Society in the Tobacco South before and after the American Revolution," in Eliga H. Gould and Peter S. Onuf, eds., *Empire and Nation: The American Revolution in the Atlantic World* (Baltimore, MD, 2005), 136–58.
3. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787), Query XIX, *The Present State of Manufactures, Commerce, Interior and Exterior Trade?* in Merrill D. Peterson, ed., *Thomas Jefferson: Writings* (New York, 1984), 290–91.
4. For a manifestation of the myth in modern historiography, see Robert E. Shalhope, *John Taylor of Caroline: Pastoral Republican* (Columbia, SC, 1980) and *The Roots of Democracy: American Thought and Culture, 1760–1800* (Boston, MA, 1990). For previous critiques of this historiography, see Daniel T. Rodgers, "Republicanism: The Career of a Concept," *JAH*, LXXIX (1992), 11–38 and Joyce Appleby, "Commercial Farming

and the 'Agrarian Myth' in the Early Republic," *JAH*, LXVIII (1982), 833–49, which remains one of the best warnings against confusing contemporary rhetoric with reality.

5. On different approaches to "Atlantic history," see David Armitage, "Three Concepts of Atlantic History," in Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, eds., *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800* (New York, 2002), 11–27.
6. Historical, Social, Economic and Demographic Data from the US Decennial Census, Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, Ann Arbor, Michigan (http://icg.fas.harvard.edu/edu~hist1651/census/); Prince George's County Tax Assessments, 1800, Personal Property, 25; 1821, Personal Property, 27, 33, 37. Jean Lee shows that Charles County a population of 10,124 whites, 10, 085 slaves, and 404 free blacks in 1790, and 6,514 whites, compared to 9,419 slaves and 569 free blacks in 1820: Lee, *The Price of Nationhood*, 267.
7. William Kilty, *Laws of Maryland, 1776–1818, Revised and Collected under the Authority of the Legislature* (Annapolis, MD, 1820), 1784, chapter 4. The real estate schedules for 1820 are lost, and I have thus had to reconstruct one using the schedules of 1819 and 1821 and the Land Records. I cannot include 1790 and 1830 in this analysis as assessments are only extant from 1792 (and those extant to 1798 are moldy and barely readable), and the 1830 census population schedules are lost.
8. Margaret Law Callcott, ed., *Mistress of Riversdale: The Plantation Letters of Rosalie Stier Calvert, 1795–1821* (Baltimore, MD, 1991), 1–38; John A Scott, ed., *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation in 1838–1839* (Athens, GA, 1984); C. Vann Woodward and Elisabeth Muhlenfeld, eds., *The Private Mary Chesnut: The Unpublished Civil War Diaries* (Oxford, 1984); Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1989) 22–25; 112–16, 38–29, 43, quote from page 35; for an alternative view, see Catherine Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress: Woman's World in the Old South* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1982), 180–98. I should note here that I have generally referred to Rosalie Eugenia (Stier) Calvert as Rosalie Calvert, Rosalie, and Mrs. Calvert (and in endnotes as REC). I have generally avoided calling her Calvert in order not to confuse her with her husband, George Calvert, and I have used the alternative forms to minimize repetition in the text. For the same reasons I have also referred to George Calvert sometimes as George or Mr. Calvert. Margaret Law Callcott refers to Mrs. Calvert as Rosalie Stier Calvert, but I have not used Stier (except when referring to Rosalie before her marriage) because she never used the name herself after she married.
9. Willard F. Bliss, "The Rise of Tenancy in Virginia," *VMHB*, LVIII (1950), 427–41; Aubrey C. Land, "Economic Base and Social Structure: The Northern Chesapeake in the Eighteenth Century," *JEH*, XXV (1965), 639–54; Jackson Turner Main, *The Social Structure of Revolutionary America* (Princeton, NJ, 1965); Edward

C. Papenfuse, Jr., "Planter Behavior and Economic Opportunity in a Staple Economy," *AH*, XLVI (1972), 297–312; Russell R. Menard, P. M. G. Harris, and Lois Green Carr, "Opportunity and Inequality: The Distribution of Wealth on the Lower Western Shore of Maryland, 1638–1705," *MHM*, LXIX (1974), 169–84; Carville V. Earle, *Evolution of a Tidewater Settlement System: All Hallow's Parish, Maryland, 1650–1783* (Chicago, IL, 1975); Lorena S. Walsh, "Servitude and Opportunity in Charles County, Maryland, 1658–1705," in Land, Carr, and Edward C. Papenfuse, Jr., eds., *Law, Society, and Politics in Early Maryland* (Baltimore, MD, 1977), 111–33; Gregory A. Stiverson, *Poverty in a Land of Plenty: Tenancy in Eighteenth-Century Maryland* (Baltimore, MD, 1977); Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "Inventories and the Analysis of Wealth and Consumption Patterns in St. Mary's County, Maryland, 1658–1777," *Historical Methods*, XIII (1980), 81–104; Jean B. Russo, "Free Workers in a Plantation Economy: Talbot County, Maryland, 1690–1759" (unpublished Ph.D., Johns Hopkins University, 1983); Menard, *Economy and Society in Early Colonial Maryland*; Lorena S. Walsh, "Land, Landlord, and Leaseholder: Estate Management and Tenant Fortunes in Southern Maryland, 1642–1820," *AH*, LIX (1985), 373–96; Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*; Jean B. Russo, "Self-Sufficiency and Local Exchange: Free Craftsmen in the Rural Chesapeake Economy," in Lois Green Carr, Philip D. Morgan, and Jean B. Russo, eds., *Colonial Chesapeake Society* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1988), 389–432; Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1988), esp. 8–18, 81–100; Christine Daniels, "Alternative Workers in a Slave Economy: Kent County, Maryland, 1675–1810," (unpublished Ph.D., Johns Hopkins University, 1990); Lorena S. Walsh, "Slave Life, Slave Society, and Tobacco Production in the Tidewater Chesapeake, 1620–1820," in Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the Americas* (Charlottesville, VA, 1993), 175; James Horn, *Adapting to a New World: English Society in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1994); Lorena S. Walsh, "Summing the Parts: Implications for Estimating Chesapeake Output and Income Subregionally," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., LVI (1999), 55–80, 87–89; Ronald Hoffman in Collaboration with Sally D. Mason, *Princes of Ireland, Planters of Maryland: A Carroll Saga, 1500–1800* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2000); Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2010). Sarah Shaver Hughes, "Elizabeth City County, Virginia, 1782–1810: The Economic and Social Structure of a Tidewater County in the Early National Years" (unpublished Ph.D., College of William and Mary, 1975); Bayly Ellen Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System: St. Mary's County, Maryland, 1790–1840" (unpublished Ph.D., University of Maryland, 1979); Whitman H. Ridgway, *Community Leadership in Maryland, 1790–1840* (Chapel Hill, NC 1979); T. Stephen Whitman, *The Price of Freedom: Slavery and Manumission* *in Baltimore and Early National Maryland* (Lexington, KY, 1997); Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore, MD, 2009). Fredrika J. Teute, "Land, Liberty and Labor in the Post-Revolutionary Era: Kentucky as the Promised Land," (unpublished Ph.D., Johns Hopkins University, 1988); Lee Soltow, "Land Inequality on the Frontier: The Distribution of Land in East Tennessee at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century," *SSH*, V (1981), 275–91; "Kentucky Wealth at the End of the Eighteenth Century," *JEH*, XLIII (1983), 617–33; *Distribution of Wealth and Income in the United States in 1798* (Pittsburgh, PA, 1989); Elizabeth A. Perkins, *Border Life: Experience and Memory in the Revolutionary Ohio Valley* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1998).

10. For a discussion of these social categories and of the statistical methods and findings of this book, see the Appendix.
11. Kilty, *Laws of Maryland*, 1817, chapter 192; Prince George's County Levy Court, Proceedings, February 21, 1817, 603; March 1, 1817, 604–16; March 17, 1817, 621–24; May 19, 1817, 626–29; July 7, 1817, 639–40; August 6, 1817, 648.

Prologue "The interest of the county": Prince George's County Levy Court and Local Politics, Economy, and Society

1. Prince George's County Levy Court (PGCLC), Proceedings, April 26, 1799, 82.
2. Ibid., June 11, 1799, 93.
3. Ibid., June 22, 1799, 94.
4. Ibid., August 3, 1799, 95.
5. Ibid., November 14, 1799, 97.
6. Ibid., April 22, 1800, 105.
7. Ibid., May 20, 1799, 89–90.
8. Prince George's County Tax Assessments (PGCTA), Real Property, 1800, 3. Prince George's Levy Court made its assessments entirely in Maryland pounds current until 1813. That year, though, it directed that "the sum of fifty cents be assessed in every one hundred pounds [Maryland currency] of assessable property in the County for Amending and Keeping the public Roads in repair." Not until 1817, however, did the Court order "that the sum of seventeen cents be levied on every hundred dollars of assessable property in the County." Even then, assessors continued to count the value of improvements to land in pounds, shillings, and pence, converting totals by multiplying them by 2.67 to reach dollar values for the total value of land. Here and throughout this book, however, I have most of the time converted assessments Maryland pounds to dollar values for ease of reference and for comparability across the years. Kilty, *Laws of Maryland*, 1784, chapter 4, 643. PGCLC, Proceedings, October 18, 1813, 476. Because the main Federal Direct Tax returns for Upper Marlboro, Charlotte, and Mount

Calvert Hundreds have not survived, a more detailed survey of the town is not possible.

9. Kilty, *Laws of Maryland*, 1794, chapter 53.
10. PGCLC, Proceedings, April 21, 1795, 4–5.
11. Ibid., May 6, 1795, 11.
12. Ibid., May 6, 9–11.
13. Ibid., April 21, 1795, 3–4; May 19, 1800, 108–09.
14. Ibid., May 5, 1795, 6–7, 7.
15. Ibid., April 18, 1796, 30. For the court and the development of transport infrastructure in colonial Prince George's County, see Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves* 94, 210–15, 341.
16. PGCLC, Proceedings, May 5, 1795, 9.
17. Ibid., May 6, 1795, 11.
18. Ibid., April 21, 1795, 5.
19. Ibid., August 18, 1795, 18–19. The Court Proceedings do not reveal what the case was about.
20. Ibid., April 21, 1795, 4.
21. Ibid., May 2, 1798, 66.
22. Ibid., June 9, 1795, 14–15.
23. Ibid., September 24, 1799, 73.
24. Ibid., May 16, 1799, 86.
25. PGCTA, Real Property, 1800, 1, 3; Personal Property, 1800, 1.
26. PGCLC, Proceedings, April 18, 1796, 28; May, 3, 4 1796, 30, 35; May 1 and 2, 1797, 45, 50; June 5, 1797, 54; August 7, 1797, 55; January 17, 1798, 61; May 2, 1798, 64; September 17, 20, 24, 28, 1798, 70, 70, 72, 74; November 27, 1798, 75; January 22, 1799, 79. Prince George's County Orphans' Court (PGCOC), Proceedings, March 26, 1799, 200; February 11, 1800, 223.
27. From 1791 onwards the judicial District Court bench comprised a Chief Justice and two Associate Justices. Michael Jenifer Stone of Charles County held the higher post and David Craufurd and Thomas Duckett the associate positions through at least 1800. Prince George's County District Court (PGCDC), Judgements, April Session, 1790, 191; April Session, 1791, 245; September Session, 1800, 485.
28. PGCLC, Proceedings, May 5, 1795, 7.
29. Ibid., June 9, 1795, 14; July 26, 1795, 16.
30. Ibid., June 9, 1795, 14.
31. Ibid., June 6, 1796, 37.
32. Ibid., June 12, 1797, 54.
33. Ibid., June 27, 1797, 55.
34. Payment to those holding the office is listed in ibid., November 2, 1795, 20–23.
35. Ibid., January 19, 1796, 26.
36. Ibid., April 6, 1795, 1; April 7, 1795, 1; April 21, 1795, 3; June 9, 1795, 13; April 18, 1796, 28; April 9, 1798, 62; April 3, 1799, 80.
37. Ibid., January 21, 1800, 100; June 3, 1800, 115. Justices of the Peace whose commissions were confirmed by the District Court in 1800 were Dr. William Baker, William Bayley, Joseph Noble Baynes, Richard

Augustus Beall, Robert Bowie, Thomas Bowie, Robert Brent, Overton Carr, Daniel Carroll of Duddington, Thomas Contee, Richard Cramphin, Nathaniel Craufurd, Cornelius Cunningham, Richard Forrest, Thomas Gantt, Thomas Hanson, Samuel Hepburn, Rinaldo Johnson, Richard Tasker Lowndes, William Lyles, Francis Magruder, Henderson Magruder, William Marshall, Thomas Mundell, James Somervell, Gabriel Peterson Vanhorn, Henry Whitcroft, and Nicholas Young. Prince George's County Court (PGCC), Judgements, April Session 1800, 467, 468.

38. PGCTA, Real Property, 1800, 1, 3, 4, 9; Personal Property, 1800, 1, 4.
39. Ridgway, *Community Leadership in Maryland, 1790–1840.* For office holding in Charles County, where "the elite dominated elective offices and the county court," see Lee, *The Price of Nationhood*, 200–01, 246. For the role of county courts in establishing Chesapeake elites, see Carr, "County Government in Maryland, 1689–1709" (unpublished Ph.D., Harvard University, 1968); Warren M. Billings, "The Growth of Political Institutions," *WMQ*, 3rd Ser., XXXI (1974), 225–42; David W. Jordan, "Political Stability and the Emergence of a Native Elite in Maryland," and Carole Shammas, "English-Born and Creole Elites in Turn-of-the-Century Virginia," in Thad W. Tate and David L. Ammerman, eds., *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century: Essays in Anglo-American Society* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1979), 243–73, 274–96; Horn, *Adapting to a New World*, 334–68; Trevor Burnard, *Creole Gentlemen: The Maryland Elite, 1691–1776* (New York, 2002), 167–204; Lorena S. Walsh, "The Development of Local Power Structures: Maryland's Lower Western Shore in the Early Colonial Period," in Bruce C. Daniels, ed., *Power and Status: Officeholding in Colonial America* (Middletown, CT, 1986), 53–71; Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 271–76, 280–84, 293–94, 304–06, 425–28; Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit*, 90–91. PGCTA, Real Property, 1800, 30, 42, 41; Personal Property, 1800, 33, 43, 41.
40. PGCTA, Personal Property, 1800, 2. The Land Records do, however, show that Hepburn gave at least some property to children and a grandchild. On December 29, 1794, he gave "one Mullatto boy Slave named Bill" to Samuel Hepburn, Jr., and "One Negro boy Slave named Ben" to another son, John M. Hepburn, and on January 30, 1800, he gave "One Negro Girl Slave named Scylla" to his granddaughter, and daughter of Mary and Samuel Judson Coolidge, Mary Johnson Coolidge. Prince George's County Court, Land Records (PGCLR), Deed of Gift, JRM 3, 277–78, 278–79; Deed of Gift, JRM 8, 383–84. In 1800, John Hepburn was recorded as owner of seventy acres of land, worth £24.03, but of no other property. PGCTA, Real Property, 1800, 16.
41. PGCTA, Personal Property, 1800, 13; Real Property, 1810, 12, 14; Personal Property, 1810, 12.
42. Ibid., Real Property, 1800, 2, 3, 17, 42; Personal Property, 1800, 2, 2, 20, 43.
43. Ibid., Real Property, 1800, 2, 6, 42; Personal Property, 1800, 6. I would have given wealth figures here for the years in which the people concerned actually served, but the only evidence that survives are contained in a real property list for 1793, a personal property list for 1794

(both drawn up under the auspices of the old court system), and real and personal lists for 1796. All of these lists, however, have pages missing and other pages rendered illegible by mold.

44. Ibid., Real Property, 1800, 43; Personal Property, 1800, 43.
45. Ibid., Real Property, 1800, 1, 41, 13, 27, 3, 4, 9, 11, 21, 24; Personal Property, 1800, 1, 41, 15, 30, 4, 25.
46. Ibid., Real Property, 1800, 33, 11; Personal Property, 1800, 39, 11.
47. Neither Land nor Probate Records record any such transaction, but that is not to say it did not take place. Francis Clement Dyer had six taxpaying relatives in the county: Giles Dyer, with £442.76, including 390 acres of land and seven slaves; Thomas Dyer, with £63.75, including 100 acres; George Dyer, with 200 acres, worth £57.50, but no other property; John E. Dyer, with £50.00, including one slave; Baker Dyer, with £60.00 in other property; and William Dyer, with £55.00 in other property. There was also an Archibald Vanhorn, with £145.00, including two slaves and ten ounces of plate. PGCTA, Real Property, 1800, 15, 11, 11; Personal Property, 1800, 17, 11, 17, 11, 24, 26.
48. Ibid., Real Property, 1800, 1, 23, 33, 43; Personal Property, 1800, 3, 27, 40, 44.
49. PGCDC, Judgements, April Session, 1790, 191; June Session, 1790, 207; September Session, 1790, 233.
50. PGCOC, Proceedings, February 14 and 23, 1792, 27; April 11, 1798, 181; February 11, 1800, 223.
51. Ibid., August 12, 1794, 94; April 9, 1795, 111; March 26, 1799, 200. Others who served as justices of the Orphans' Court were William Kitty, Thomas Clark, and Richard Sprigg, February 8, 1791, 19; Richard Duckett, April 9, 1793, 45; James Alexander Magruder, August 9, 1796, 146; and Thomas Bowie, March 26, 1799, 200. In 1800, the court bench comprised Robert Bowie, Thomas Bowie, and Nathaniel Craufurd, February 11, 1800, 223. Bayly Ellen Marks found that in St. Mary's County, Maryland, between 1790 and 1840 just 155 men, almost all drawn from the wealthiest 5 percent, held important county offices. She also found that men held offices for long periods and multiple office holding was common among them. See "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 372–76.
52. PGCLC, Proceedings, April 26, 1799, 82.

1 "The way to make a huge fortune": The Planters

1. Prince George's County Levy Court (PGCLC), Proceedings, July 16, 1805, 250.
2. Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 277.
3. PGCLC, Proceedings, July 18, 1810, 374.
4. Ibid., July 25, 1809, 346; August 6, 1812, 435.
5. Ibid., August 3, 1813, 467–68.
6. Rosalie Eugenia Calvert (REC) to Henri Joseph Stier (HJS), December 12, 1808, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 198.

7. REC to HJS, April 12, 1813, ibid., 256, and 218, 248, 257, 258, 323.
8. PGCLC, Proceedings, February 25, 1815, 523.
9. The toll charges are listed by Margaret Law Callcott in *Mistress of Riversdale*, 258, n. 1. Rosalie Calvert's list of investments and projection of profits are from REC to HJS, April 12, 1813, 256–57, and October 29, 1816, 307.
10. For a discussion of methods of dividing the population according to land ownership, see the Appendix. For the figures here, see Tables A.3, A.4, A.8, A.9, and A.10. The findings here correspond with those of Jackson Turner Main, who found that the wealthiest 100 Virginians owned property worth £15,000 sterling each, and belonged to just 51 family groups. "The One Hundred," *WMQ*, 3rd Ser., XI (1954), 354–84.
11. Prince George's County Tax Assessments (PGCTA)], Real Property, 1800, 22, 32, 1, 11, 15.
12. Prince George's County Land Records (PGCLR), Manumission, June 12, 1781, FF 1, 135–37; Manumission, September 27, 1785, FF 2, 431–32
13. PGCTA, Real Property, 1800, 8, 28; 1810, 8, 26; Personal Property, 1800, 8, 31, 39; 1810, 9, 27.
14. Jean B. Lee, "Land and Labor: Parental Bequest Practises in Charles County, Maryland, 1723–1783," in Lois Green Carr, Philip D. Morgan, and Jean B. Russo, eds., *Colonial Chesapeake Society* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1988), 306–14.
15. PGCTA, Real Property, 1810, 18; 1819, 17; 1821, 19; Personal Property, 1810, 21; 1820, 18.
16. For the origins of the tobacco economy, see Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit*, chapter 1; for the "Age of the Small Planter, 1640–79," chapter 2; for the development of elite domination, see chapters 3 and 4; and for the "Golden Age," see chapters 5–8. For the development of individual fortunes, see Walsh on William Fitzhugh and William Byrd I, 246–50, on William Byrd II and Robert "King" Carter, 251–67, John Tayloe, 271–80, on the later Carters, 518–38, and on the Carrolls, 551–54. See also Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 23–161.
17. Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 20; Prince George's County Register of Wills (PGCRW), Wills (Benedict Calvert), February 18, 1788, T 1, 258–62.
18. PGCTA, Personal Property, 1793, 39.
19. Federal Direct Tax, Prince George's County, Maryland (FDTPG), Rock Creek and Eastern Branch Hundreds, Particular List of Lands, Lots, Buildings, and Wharves, 2; Horsepen and Patuxent Hundreds, Particular List of Lands, Lots, Buildings, and Wharves, 5, Particular List of Slaves, 2; Upper Marlboro, Charlotte, and Mount Calvert Hundreds, General List of Lands, Lots, Buildings, and Wharves, 1.
20. See Table A.3. The Table breaks property ownership down by all landowning groups, nonlandowners, and nontaxables, and the Appendix provides a detailed statistical analysis.
21. PGCTA, Real Property, 1800, 25.

22. Ibid., Real Property, 1801, 30, 31, 35; Personal Property, 1802, 28. The real property assessments for 1802 and personal property assessments of 1801 are not extant.
23. Ibid., Real Property, 1803, 25, 27, 32.
24. Ibid., Real Property, 1804, 23, 25, 30. Because of complications over foreign ownership of American land, Riversdale was listed in most records as belonging to Charles Jean Stier, who became a naturalized U.S. citizen in June 1798. For local assessments, however, it was recorded under the name of George Calvert. It finally passed formally into Rosalie Calvert's ownership in 1816, although the plantation remained under George Calvert's name in the tax records. Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 288, n. 2; PGCLR, Charles John *[sic]* Stier to Rosalie Eugenia Calvert, Deed, April 2, 1816, JRM 15, 612–16.
25. PGCTA, Real Property, 1804, 23, 25, 30.
26. The details of this story are found in Chapter 3.
27. HJS to REC, February 24, 1804, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 90.
28. PGCTA, Personal Property, 1806, 35, 39.
29. Ibid., Real Property, 1809, 28; 1811, 28.
30. Ibid., Real Property, 1812, 23, 24, 29.
31. Ibid., Personal Property, 1807, 32; 1812, 25, 28; 1813, 30, 35, 40.
32. Ibid., Personal Property, 1813, 30, 35, 40; Real Property, 1813, 24, 29.
33. Ibid., Real Property, 1814, 34.
34. Ibid., Real Property, 1815, 29; 1816, 24, 35.
35. Ibid., Real Property, 1818, 29; 1821, 24, 29, 34.
36. Ibid., Personal Property, 1818, 25, 31, 35; 1821, 27, 33, 37.
37. Ibid., Real Property, 1823, 29; 1825, 23.
38. Ibid., Personal Property, 1825, 21, 25, 30, 36; 1830, 24, 30, 34, 39.
39. PGCLR, Mortgage, March 2, 1811, JRM 14, 336–42; Release, November 4, AB 3, 434–36; Mortgage, November 5, AB 3, 422–25; Bill of Sale, April 10, 1826, AB 4, 205–06; Deed in Trust, October 24, 1836, AB 10, 510–13.
40. PGCTA, Personal Property, 1831, 22, 27, 31, 36; Real Property, 1826, 10; 1829, 10, 23, 24, 29, 34; 1831, 11, 17, 26, 28, 33, 39.
41. Ibid., Real Property, 1832, 2, 14, 18; Personal Property, 1833, 34, 67–68. Although Calvert was at the height of his prosperity generally in 1834 and 1835, his largest recorded holding of slaves was 178; ibid., Personal Property, 1832, 1, 7, 13.
42. Ibid., Real Property, 1834, 9, 17; 1835, 9, 17; Personal Property, 1834, 8, 16; 1835, 8, 16.
43. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," quotes from page 109; see also 465–69.
44. Lee, *The Price of Nationhood*, 226–28. See also Jacob M. Price, *Capital and Credit in British Overseas Trade: The View from the Chesapeake, 1700–1776* (Cambridge, MA, 1980), chapter 1.
45. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 92–93 lists Baltimore tobacco prices for every year from 1784 to 1850. For the Virginia figures, see Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 157–58.

46. Burnard, *Creole Gentlemen*, 1–102. On Charles County planters diversifying after the War of Independence, see Lee, *The Price of Nationhood*, 230–58. For diversification in the colonial era, see Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit*, 144–93, 210–17, 222–27, 295–328, 336–73, 401–03, 407–16, 419–71.
47. REC to HJS, July 8, 1804, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 91. For colonial account books, see Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit*, 228–37.
48. REC to HJS, September 22, 1805, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 128.
49. REC to HJS, March 26, 1807, ibid., 160.
50. REC to HJS, November 19, 1803, ibid., 59.
51. REC to HJS, August 20, 1805, ibid., 126.
52. REC to HJS, June 28, 1803, ibid., 52.
53. REC to HJS and Mary Louise (Peeters) Stier (MLS), August 12, 1803, ibid., 55; Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 176, 129.
54. REC to HJS, August 20, 1805, ibid., 126.
55. REC to HJS, January 19, 1807, ibid., 156.
56. REC to HJS, June 23, 1807, ibid., 169.
57. REC to HJS, June 5, 1820, ibid., 360.
58. REC to HJS, August 20, 1805, ibid., 126; Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 125–26.
59. REC to HJS, January 25, 1805, ibid., 108, 105.
60. REC to HJS, March 26, 1807, ibid., 160.
61. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 84–85
62. PGCRW, Inventories, April 3, 1838, PC 1, 411–17.
63. REC to HJS, September 22, 1805, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 128. Chapter 5 discusses the issue of gender raised by Rosalie Calvert's and others' economic activities.
64. REC to HJS, October 7, 1805, ibid., 129.
65. REC to HJS, January 19, 1807, ibid., 156. "The Mick" refers to the Stiers's eighteenth-century country home, the Château du Mick, at Brasschaat, in modern-day Belgium. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 122.
66. REC to HJS, September 22, 1805, ibid., 128.
67. REC to HJS, June 9, 1809, ibid., 206.
68. REC to HJS, April 1, 1809, ibid., 202; George Calvert to Thomas Ewell, Lease, PGCLR, JRM 15, February 25, 1812, 575–77; to Thomas Ferrall, Lease, AB 1, July 18, 1820, 383–87; Lease, April 1, 1826, AB 2, 285–87.
69. REC to HJS and MLS, August 12, 1803, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 55.
70. REC to HJS, November 19, 1803, ibid., 60.
71. REC to HJS, March 17, 1812, ibid., 250.
72. REC to HJS, June 5, 1820, ibid., 360.
73. REC to HJS, August 30, 1810, ibid., 229.
74. This is also Margaret Law Callcott's calculation, ibid., 183–84, n. 1.
75. REC to HJS, June 13, 1805, ibid., 121.

76. REC to HJS, October 18, 1805, ibid., 132, 133, n. 1.
77. REC to HJS, Mid-July, 1807, ibid., 171.
78. REC to HJS, March 31, 1814, ibid., 265.
79. REC to Charles Jean Stier (CJS), February 18, 1814, ibid., 263.
80. REC to HJS, April 12, 1813, ibid., 256, 257–58, n. 1.
81. REC to HJS, October 29, 1816, ibid., 307.
82. Ibid., 257–58, n. 1, n. 2. The Maryland Assembly incorporated the turnpike company on December 17, 1812. Kilty, *Laws of Maryland,* 1812, chapter 78.
83. REC to CJS, July 23, 1810, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 222.
84. REC to HJS, February (no date), 1811, ibid., 235.
85. REC to HJS, May 12, 1817, ibid., 317–18.
86. REC to HJS, March 13, 1819, ibid., 242.
87. REC to HJS, November (no date), 1810, ibid., 230.
88. Ibid., 105.
89. REC to HJS, May 14, 1804, ibid., 84, 106, Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 166–67, 168.
90. PGCTA, Real Property, 1806, 23, 25, 30; Personal Property, 1806, 35, 39; Real Property, 1815, 24, 29, 34; Personal Property, 1815, 29, 34, 39.
91. For tobacco profiteering after the War of Independence, see Lee, *The Price of Nationhood*, 113–14, 118–19.
92. REC to HJS, March 26, 1807, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 161.
93. REC to HJS, May 5, 1808, ibid., 184.
94. REC to HJS, July 9, 1808, ibid., 191.
95. REC to HJS, March 17, 1812, ibid., 250.
96. REC to CJS, February 18, 1814, ibid., 261.
97. REC to HJS, March 31, 1814, ibid., 265.
98. REC to HJS, April 1, 1809, ibid., 201–02.
99. REC to HJS, August 30, 1810, ibid., 229.
100. Charles Varlo, *The Essence of Agriculture, being a regular system of husbandry, through all its branches; suited to the climate and lands of Ireland.... With the author's twelve months tour thro' America:... With an address to the legislature and gentlemen of Ireland. How to levy taxes on luxury,... In two books, bound in one volume* (London, 1786), quoted in Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 82; the calculations about livestock and food crops are from p. 127.
101. REC to HJS, August 2, 1810, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 223.
102. REC to HJS, March 26, 1807, ibid., 161.
103. REC to HJS, September 10, 1808, ibid., 191–92.
104. REC to HJS, August 30, 1810, ibid., 229.
105. REC to HJS, March 20, 1815, ibid., 279.
106. REC to HJS, November 11, 1815, ibid., 285.
107. REC to HJS, March 20, 1816, ibid., 291–92.
108. REC to CJS, April 8, 1816, ibid., 295–96.
109. This is Margaret Law Callcott's calculation, ibid., 293, n. 1.
110. REC to HJS, March 20, 1816, ibid., 292.
111. REC to CJS, April 8, 1816, ibid., 296.
112. REC to HJS, October 29, 1816, ibid., 307.

2 "One must differentiate oneself a little": Planter Gentility, Economy, Dynasty, and Politics

1. D. B. Warden, *A Chorographical and Statistical Description of the District of Columbia* (Paris, 1816), 156, cited in Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 234. Callcott notes that Warden's descriptions of the dimensions of the mansion excluded the wings, and that what he called the hall the Calverts called the salon, and what he called the saloon they called the drawing room. After his Washington trip, Mr. Warden was appointed British Consul General in Paris.
2. These effects are well documented in, for example, Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York, 1992), 128–38; Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia,* 30–42, 52–57; and C. Dallett Hemphill, *Bowing to Necessities: A History of Manners in America, 1620–1860* (Oxford, 1999). On the appearance of Riversdale in particular see Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 35–39, 137, 145, and the illustrations on pp. 147 and 388. Bayly Ellen Marks made similar findings about houses and gardens in nearby St. Mary's County: "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 376–77. Riversdale is now restored and under the direction of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Located at 6005 48th Avenue, Riverdale, it is open to the public. The dowry was detailed in one of the Stier–Calvert correspondences, Henri Joseph Stier (HJS) to Rosalie Eugenia Calvert (REC), February 24, 1804, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 90.
3. REC to HJS, April 12, 1813, ibid., 257.
4. REC to HJS, September 6, 1806, ibid., 146, 147–48.
5. REC to Isabelle van Havre (IvH), June 2, 1816, ibid., 299–300.
6. Prince George's County Register of Wills (PGCRW), Inventories, April 3, 1838, PC 1, 411–17. See also Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 377.
7. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London, MA, 1984–2006).
8. Warden, *A Chorographical and Statistical Description*, 156, cited in Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 234. Callcott points out that a catalogue of 1817 listed no self-portrait of Rubens.
9. Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 2, 38–39, 277, 290–94. For Henri Stier's list of the paintings see 395–97.
10. REC to HJS, June 5, 1816, ibid., 300.
11. Sarah Gales Seaton, in Josephine Seaton, *William Winston Seaton of the National Intelligencer* (Boston, MA, 1871), 134–35; David Horsford, ed., "Exile in Yankeeland: The Journal of Mary Bagot, 1816–1819," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society* 51 (1984), 36; Rembrandt Peale, "Reminiscences," *The Crayon*, September 19, 1855, all cited in pp. 296–97.
12. Prince George's County Tax Assessments (PGCTA), ibid., Real Property, 1800, 41; Personal Property, 1800, 41.

13. Federal Direct Tax, 1798, Prince George's County, Maryland (FDTPG), Collington and Western Branch Hundreds, Particular List of Slaves, 1; Particular List of Dwelling Houses, 2; Particular List of Land, Lots, Buildings, and Wharves, 3.
14. PGCRW, Inventories, January 15, 1801, ST 4, 88–100.
15. Lee, *The Price of Nationhood*, 46.
16. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 55–58, 62–63. On colonial plantations as social symbols in the landscape see Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*, 34–42, 70–79, 350–54; and Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1996), 260–67.
17. Ibid, 426, 428, 544.
18. PGCTA, Personal Property, 1810, 29.
19. Ibid., Personal Property, 1820, 30, 22, 15, 25, 29.
20. For similar findings on gentility in St. Mary's County, Maryland, see Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 376–79. For the development of gentility in the colonial Chesapeake, see Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 118–20, 276–78; Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs*, 260–77, 291–95; Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit*, 238–43, 413–19.
21. REC to HJS, June 13, 1805, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 120.
22. REC to HJS, January (no date), 1807, ibid., 159.
23. REC to HJS, March 26, 1807, ibid., 161.
24. REC to HJS, May 12, 1817, ibid., 318.
25. REC to Charles Jean Stier (CJS), December 10, 1808, ibid., 196.
26. REC to CJS, March 24, 1819, ibid., 345.
27. REC to HJS, September 22, 1805, ibid., 127.
28. REC to HJS, May 12, 1808, ibid., 190.
29. REC to HJS, April 1, 1809, ibid., 201; March (no date), 1810, 217; and June 15, 1810, 221.
30. REC to HJS, August 30, 1810, ibid., 228.
31. REC to IvH, January 11, 1819, ibid., 340.
32. More detail on the Stiers' history can be found in ibid., ix–xv, 1–48.
33. REC to Marie Louise (Peeters) Stier (MLS), November (no date), 1803, ibid., 62–63.
34. REC to CJS, September 12, 1803, ibid., 57.
35. REC to HJS and MLS, September 16, 1803, ibid., 58. Bayly Marks found similar social ostentation, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 362.
36. REC to Marie Louise (Peeters) Stier (MLS), November (no date), 1803, ibid., 62–63.
37. REC to IvH, August 1, 1817, ibid., 320.
38. REC to IvH, March 25, 1819, ibid., 348, 311–12.
39. REC to IvH, January 8, 1818, ibid., 330.
40. REC to IvH, March 25, 1819, ibid., 345–46.
41. REC to IvH, April 26, 1818, ibid., 334.
42. REC to IvH, March 25, 1819, ibid., 346.

43. REC to HJS, March 13, 1819, ibid., 343–44. On the economics of gentility in the colonial Chesapeake, see Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit*, 158–59, and on hospitality in particular see Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 230 and Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs*, 267–72.
44. REC to IvH, March 5, 1816, ibid., 289–90.
45. Prince George's County Land Records (PGCLR), Benjamin Stoddert's heirs to William Knight, Deed, April 24, 1816, JRM 16, 616–19; PGCTA, Real Property, 1815, 23; Real Property, 1816, 23.
46. REC to IvH, July 25, 1819, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 349.
47. REC to IvH, December 30, 1803, ibid., 72, 73, n. 1.
48. Ibid., 377–78, 390 n. 29, n. 30. PGCLR, George Calvert to Charles Henry Carter, Rosalie Eugénie (Calvert) Carter, George Henry Calvert, and Robert E. Lee, Deed in Trust, January 13, 1832, AB 11, 32. For a superb analysis of an upper-class sex scandal involving the Randolphs of Virginia, see Cynthia A. Kierner, *Scandal at Bizarre: Rumor and Reputation in Jefferson's America* (New York, 2004). See also Bertram Wyatt Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (Oxford, 1982); Jan Lewis, *The Pursuit of Happiness: Family and Values in Jefferson's Virginia* (Cambridge, 1983); T. H. Breen, *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution* (Princeton, NJ, 1985); and Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs*, 283–366.
49. REC to IvH, August 14, 1815, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 283, 284, n. 3.
50. REC to IvH, January 8, 1818, ibid., 331.
51. REC to IvH, April 26, 1818, ibid., 335.
52. REC to HJS, March 13, 1819, ibid., 343.
53. REC to IvH, March 25, 1819, ibid., 348.
54. REC to HJS, November 17, 1817, ibid., 325.
55. REC to IvH, April 26, 1818, ibid., 335.
56. REC to HJS, April 17, 1820, ibid., 358.
57. REC to HJS, March 13, 1819, ibid., 343.
58. REC to IvH, January 8, 1818, ibid., 331, 332.
59. REC to HJS, March 13, 1819, ibid., 343, 334, .
60. HJS to REC, June (no date), 1819, ibid., 354–55, n. 6.
61. REC to HJS, November 22, 1819, ibid., 353.
62. George Calvert to CJS, November 2, 1822, January 25, 1823, ibid., 374, 390.
63. Ibid., 376–78, 390.
64. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 367–71, 376. See also Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 265–67 and Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs*, 16–17, 22–28, 80–83.
65. REC to HJS, April 1, 1809, ibid., 202.
66. REC to HJS, June 13, 1805, ibid., 121. The number of years before these tontines paid interest was left blank by Rosalie Calvert.

67. REC to HJS, October 29, 1816, ibid., 306–07. Henry, born in 1810, died in 1820. Riversdale eventually came into the hands of George and Rosalie's fifth child and second eldest son, Charles Benedict Calvert.
68. REC to HJS, November 9, 1817, ibid., 325.
69. Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 372–74.
70. PGCLR, Deed, March 4, 1834, AB 8, 393–97.
71. PGCTA, Real Property, 1838, 9, 17; Personal Property, 1838, 9, 14; PGCRW, Inventories, April 3, 1838, PC 3, 410–17.
72. Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 384–86, 393, n. 64; PGCRW, Wills, June 8, 1835, executed February 3, 1838, PC 1, 89–90.
73. Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 387. For similar inheritance strategies in the colonial Chesapeake, see Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit*, 629–30.
74. Perkins, *Border Life*, 132–40, 128; Teute, "Land, Liberty and Labor in the Post-Revolutionary Era," 162, 163, 167.
75. Teute, "Land, Liberty and Labor," 161, 145–51, 149. See also Thomas Perkins Abernathy, *Three Virginia Frontiers* (1940: Reprint, Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1962).
76. Teute, "Land, Liberty and Labor," 168, 161, 167, 154.
77. Ibid., 218, 219, 219, 154, 155, 156.
78. Ibid., 282, 308, 337
79. Ibid., 158.
80. REC to IvH, July 20, 1806, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 145.
81. REC to HJS, December 11, 1806, ibid., 156.
82. REC to IvH, April 26, 1818, ibid., 334.
83. REC to MLS, December 29, 1803, ibid., 70–71. As Callcott notes, Edward Henry Calvert was elected to the House of Delegates in 1795, 1803, 1809, and 1815, ibid., 71.
84. REC to HJS, December 4, 1804, ibid., 102.
85. REC to HJS, June 15, 1810, ibid., 220.
86. REC to IvH, February 2, 1811, ibid., 232.
87. REC to HJS, June 21, 1805, ibid., 123.
88. REC to HJS, January (no date), 1807, ibid., 159. Jean B. Lee gives an excellent account of how political democracy compensated for continued inequality in Charles County, Maryland, in *The Price of Nationhood*, esp. 126–32, 182–84, 199–200, as does Fredrika Teute for Kentucky, "Land, Liberty and Labor." See also Charles S. Sydnor, *Gentlemen Freeholders: Political Practices in Washington's Virginia* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1952); J. R. Pole, *Political Representation in England and the Origins of the American Republic* (London, 1966), 281–338; "Suffrage and Representation in Maryland from 1776 to 1810; A Statistical Note and Some Reflections," JSH, XIV (1958) 218–25; "Constitutional Reform and Election Statistics in Maryland, 1790–1812," *MHM*, V (1960) 275–92; and Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 300–13, 421–32.
89. REC to HJS, January (no date), 1807, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 159.
90. REC to HJS, September 26, 1806, ibid., 149.r

3 "I don't stand to the will": Yeomen Farmers and Smallholders

1. Prince George's County Register of Wills (PGCRW), Wills, February 18, 1800, T1, 450; Inventories (no date), 1800, ST3, 347. A fourth slave noted in the tax records and the will was, for some reason, not recorded in the inventory.
2. Prince George's County Tax Assessments (PGCTA), Real Property, 1800, 6; Personal Property, 1800, 6; Maryland State Papers, Federal Direct Tax, 1798, Prince George's County, (FDTPG), Prince Frederick and Washington Hundreds, Particular List of Lands, Lots, Buildings, and Wharves, 16.
3. PGCRW, Wills, February 18, 1800, T1, 450.
4. In Maryland, dower rights included personal property as well as real estate, and whereas widows kept a mere life interest in land, they gained absolute ownership of personal property and could devise it as they wished in their wills. In all other states except Virginia, widows were entitled to one-third of real estate only, and even in Virginia slaves were excepted from the rule that widows had absolute title to personal property (Virginia had in fact classified slaves as real estate until 1792). Maryland was therefore one of the most generous of the United States to widows. For Maryland and Virginia specifically, see Marylynn Salmon, *Women and the Law of Property in Early America* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1986), 141–84, especially 4–6, 147–56; Linda Speth, "More Than Her 'Thirds': Wives and Widows in Colonial Virginia," in Speth and Alison Duncan Hirsch, eds., *Women, Family, and Community in Colonial America: Two Perspectives* (New York, 1983), 5–41; and Vivian Bruce Conger, "If Widow, Both Housewife and Husband May Be: Widows' Testamentary Freedom in Massachusetts and Maryland," in Larry D. Eldridge, ed., *Women and Freedom in Early America* (New York, 1997), 244–66. For more, see Steven Sarson, "Yeoman Farmers in a Planters' Republic: Socioeconomic Conditions and Relations in Early National Prince George's County, Maryland," *Journal of the Early Republic*, XXIX (2009), 63–99.
5. Lee, *The Price of Nationhood*, 60. See also, Lee, *The Price of Nationhood*, 58–63, 204–08; Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress*; Lewis, *The Pursuit of Happiness*; Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household*, 192–241; Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 165–204; Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs*, 247–373. Julia Cherry Spruill, *Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies* (New York, 1972) and Daniel Blake Smith, *Inside the Great House: Planter Family Life in Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Society* (Ithaca, NY, 1980) in particular stress colonial women's extensive economic activities, as does Kirsten E. Wood for women after the Revolution, *Masterful Women: Slaveholding Widows from the American Revolution through the Civil War* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004), 2–5, 15–34. Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New

York, 1995) analyzes gender among yeomen, though for a different time and place.

6. For vexatious sons-in-law standing on their masculine prerogatives against their widowed mothers-in-law in other parts of the south, see Wood, *Masterful Women*, 74–77.
7. PGCTA, Real Property, 1803, 8; Real Property, 1804, 6; Real Property, 1806, 6; Personal Property, 1806, 7 (Personal Property assessments for 1803–1805 are lost); Real Property, 1808, 6; Real Property, 1809, 6; Personal Property, 1809, 6.
8. PGCTA, Real Property, 1803, 8; 1804, 6; 1806, 6; 1808, 6; PGCRW, Inventories, December 16, 1800, ST4, 59–61; PGCTA, Real Property, 1809, 6; Personal Property, 1809, 6; PGCRW, Inventories, August 4, 1809, TT1, 351. T. Stephen Whitman found that manumission was rare but not unheard of in Prince George's County, where bills of sale show that 2 percent of county slaves had term limits on their enslavement (compared with 20 percent in Baltimore City and County): *The Price of Freedom*, 115. The number of free African Americans in the county rose from 648 in 1800 to 824 and 1,096 in 1810 and 1820 (the census summary records 4,929 free black people in 1810, but that is an error caused by an enumerator counting the wrong box for several pages in the schedules).
9. The implications of these lines of division are discussed at greater length in the Appendix, and the taxable wealth owned by and social-economic mobility of large and small yeoman and smallholders is also discussed in greater detail there.
10. Prince George's total population figures were: 1800: 21,175, 57.6 percent enslaved; 1810: 20,589, 46.6 percent enslaved; 1820: 20,216, 55.3 percent. If we counted slaves, of course, then small yeomen constituted even smaller proportions of the county population. For landownership in the colonial tidewater Chesapeake see Jackson Turner Main, *The Social Structure of Revolutionary America*; Lois Green Carr, "County Government in Maryland, 1689–1709," 581–97; Papenfuse, "Planter Behavior and Economic Opportunity in a Staple Economy," 301–02; Skaggs, *Roots of Maryland Democracy*, 40–41; Earle, *The Evolution of a Tidewater Settlement System*, 206–12; Menard, *Economy and Society in Early Colonial Maryland*, 51–77, 155–201, 302–20; Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 30–44, 85–92, 131–41, 152–61, 296–97; Horn, *Adapting to a New World*, 147–60, 253–92, 328–33; Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit*, 122–92. For studies of tidewater tenancy and wage labor see Bliss, "The Rise of Tenancy in Virginia," 427–41; Stiverson, *Poverty in a Land of Plenty*; Walsh, "Land, Landlord, and Leaseholder," 373–96; Steven Sarson "Landlessness and Tenancy in Early National Prince George's County, Maryland," *WMQ*, 3rd. Ser., LVII (July 2000), 569–98; Jean B. Russo, "Self-Sufficiency and Rural Exchange: Free Craftsmen in the Rural Chesapeake Economy," in *Colonial Chesapeake Society*, ed. Lois Green Carr, Philip D. Morgan, and Jean B. Russo (Chapel Hill, NC, 1988), 389–432; Christine Daniels, "'Getting His [or Her] Livelyhood': Free Workers in Slave Anglo-America, 1675–1810," *AH*, LXXI (Spring 1997), 125–61.

11. Marks, “Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System,” 222–29. Marks shows that 72 percent of southern Maryland out-migrants went to Kentucky: “The Rage for Kentucky: Emigration from St. Mary’s County, 1790–1810,” *Geographical Perspectives on Maryland’s Past*, University of Maryland Occasional Papers in Geography, 4 (April 1979), ed. Robert D. Mitchell and Edward K. Muller, 108–30. For western landlessness, see Teute, “Land, Liberty and Labor in the Post-Revolutionary Era,” 275–91; Soltow, “Land Inequality on the Frontier,” 275–91; “Kentucky Wealth at the End of the Eighteenth Century,” 617–33.
12. Kilty, *Laws of Maryland,* 1812, chapter 141; Prince George’s County Levy Court (PGCLC), Proceedings, October 18, 1813, 476.
13. Lee, *The Price of Nationhood*, 253; Marks, “Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System,” 229.
14. PGCTA, 1800, 21; Personal Property, 1800, 25; Prince George’s County Levy Court (PGCLC), Proceedings, April 7, 1795, 1; Prince George’s County Circuit Court (PGCC), Judgements, April Session, 1800, 467; Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 54, 93, 112, 119, 128, 130, 131, 141, 164, 168, 200, 345.
15. PGCTA, Real Property, 1800, 21; 1810, 20; 1819, 20; 1821, 21; Personal Property, 1800, 25; 1810, 23; 1820, 21.
16. Ibid., Real Property, 1800, 1, 1810, 14, 1819, 13, 1820, 14; Personal Property, 1800, 1, 1810, 1, 1820, 1. It should be noted that in the 1810 Personal Property Assessments the first page is marked “3.” The second and third pages, however, are marked, as one would expect, “2” and “3.” For this reason I refer to the first page as page “1.”
17. Prince George’s County Land Records (PGCLR), Deed, December 13, 1800, JRM 8, 331–33.
18. Ibid., Deed, March 9, 1801, JRM 8, 411–13; Deed, August 31, 1803, JRM 10, 85–87.
19. PGCTA, Personal Property, 1809, 3.
20. PGCLR, Deed, June 19, 1809, JRM 13, 282–83. In the 1809 assessments the three-quarter-acre lot was still recorded under the name of John Hancock Beanes and, although assessed as “unimproved,” was given a value of £312.50. PGCTA, Real Property, 1809, 14.
21. PGCLR, Deed, March 1, 1811, JRM 14, 342–43.
22. PGCTA, Real Property, 1819, 13, 1821, 14; Personal Property, 1820, 1; PGCLR, Deed, December 18, 1818, EH 1, 188–90. Marks, “Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System,” 575–77.
23. PGCRW, Wills, October 4, 1831, TT 1, 481.
24. PGCTA, Real Property, 1800, 18; Personal Property, 1800, 21; Real Property, 1800, 4.
25. Edward C. Papenfuse, Jr., *In Pursuit of Profit: The Annapolis Merchants in the Era of the American Revolution, 1763–1805* (Baltimore, MD, 1975), 16–34, 250–56. Papenfuse’s analysis was based on 172 known people in business. Lee, *The Price of Nationhood*, 224–25.
26. Marks, “Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System,” 470–74, 508–09, 31–42.
27. Ibid, 45, 76; Lee, *The Price of Nationhood*, 224.

28. PGCTA, Real Property, 1819, 20, 23; 1821, 21, 23; Personal Property, 1820, 22.
29. PGCTA, Real Property, 1819, 8; 1821, 4, 9; Personal Property, 1820, 10.
30. The calculation of improvement values is complicated by the fact that assessors continued to evaluate them in pounds, shillings, and pence, even after assessments switched over to dollar totals. They also gave individual tracts a per-acre value in pounds, shillings, and pence. To arrive at a dollar total for gross land values, including the value of improvements, assessors multiplied by two-and-two-thirds. See the Appendix for further details.
31. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 531.
32. Ibid., 183–85.
33. PGCTA, Real Property, 1819, 16; 1820, 17; Personal Property, 1820, 12, 17.
34. Ibid., Real Property, 1819, 16; 1820, 18; Personal Property, 1820, 17.
35. For the growth of rural artisanship from the colonial and into the early national era in the Chesapeake see Russo, "Free Workers in a Plantation Economy,"; "Self-Sufficiency and Local Exchange," 389–432; Daniels, "Alternative Workers in a Slave Economy" and "'Getting His [or Her] Livelyhood'," 125–61.
36. Avery O. Craven, *Soil Exhaustion as a Factor in the Agricultural History of Virginia and Maryland, 1606–1860* (1925; Columbia, SC, 2006). Craven's thesis has been disputed by Land, "Economic Base and Social Structure," 639–54; Papenfuse, "Planter Behavior and Economic Opportunity," 297–312; Paul G. E. Clemons, "The Operation of an Eighteenth-Century Tobacco Plantation," *AH*, XLIX (1975), 517–31; Carville V. Earle, "The Myth of the Southern Soil Miner: Macrohistory, Agricultural Innovation, and Environmental Change," in Earle, ed., *Geographical Enquiry and American Historical Problems* (Stanford, CA, 1992), 258–99; Lois Green Carr, Russell R. Menard, and Lorena S. Walsh, eds., *Robert Cole's World: Agriculture and Society in Early Maryland* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1991).
37. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 83.
38. Walsh, "Slave Life, Slave Society, and Tobacco Production in the Tidewater Chesapeake, 1620–1820," 175.
39. Rosalie Eugenia Calvert (REC) to Henri Joseph Stier (HJS), May 19, 1805, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 117; REC to HJS, September 10, 1808, ibid., 191–92.
40. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 90; REC to HJS, April 1, 1809, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 201.
41. This is Margaret Law Callcott's calculation, ibid., 293, n. 1. REC to Charles Jean Stier (CJS), April 8, 1816, ibid., 295–96. See also REC to HJS, March 20, 1816, ibid., 291–92; REC to HJS, March 20, 1816, ibid., 292; REC to CJS, April 8, 1816, ibid., 296; REC to HJS, November 11, 1815, ibid., 285.
42. Ibid., 20, 384–86, 393; PGCTA, Real Property, 1835, 9, 17; PGCRW, Wills, June 8, 1835, executed February 3, 1838, PC1, 89–90; Inventories, April 3, 1838, PC3, 410–17.

43. PGCTA, Real Property, 1813, 35; Personal Property, 1813, 46.
44. PGCLR, Henry Lowe Hall to George Calvert, Deed, April 6, 1815, JRM 16, 353–56.
45. PGCTA, Real Property, 1814, 34; REC to CJS, February 18, 1814, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 263.
46. REC to HJS, March 31, 1814, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 265.
47. REC to HJS, June 10, 1814, ibid., 269.
48. REC to HJS, October 29, 1816, ibid., 306. The owner must indeed have been heavily in debt. William A. Hall seems to have died shortly before Henry Lowe Hall at some point in 1816 or 1817. When the latter died, he had no real estate (in the tax assessments) and his personal property was sold for a total of $2,342.05. PGCRW, Inventories, October, 17, 1817, TT 3, 73–76.
49. REC to HJS, August 1, 1817, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 322.
50. PGCTA, Real Property, 1800, 30; Personal Property, 1800, 33; PGCLR, Margaret Adams to Benjamin Lowndes, Deed, December 8, 1804, JRM 10, 438–39; to Benjamin Armitage, Deed, November 9, 1804, JRM 10, 449–50; from Benjamin Armitage, Lease, November 9, 1804, 451–53; to Leonard M. Deakins, Deed, April 30, 1805, JRM 10, 490–92; to Thomas Claxton, Deed, July 20, 1808, JRM 12, 645–46; to Caroline and others, Manumission, May 5, 1807, JRM 12, 242–43. In the Land Records her property is referred to as Attention of the Faithful Steward rather than Copenhagen.
51. REC to HJS, September 26, 1806, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 149, 65.
52. REC to HJS, December 7, 1807, ibid., 175.
53. REC to HJS, June 1, 1811, ibid., 237; REC to HJS, June 5, 1820, ibid., 360, 361, n. 1. Benjamin Armitage to George Calvert, Deed, April 2, 1814, PGCLR, JRM 16, 126–27. There was no inventory for Peggy Adams, presumably because her property had already been ceded to Benjamin Lowndes and Benjamin Armitage. The Attention of the Faithful Steward appeared in George Calvert's possession in local assessments from 1815, renamed Copenhagen from 1818; PGCTA, Real Property, 1815, 29; 1818, 29.

4 "Being allowed the liberty": Tenant Farmers and Artisans

1. Rosalie Eugenia Calvert (REC) to Henri Joseph Stier (HJS), December 4, 1804, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 102.
2. REC to HJS, March 17, 1812, ibid., 251. This was also the experience of some Virginia landlords, as found by Bliss, "The Rise of Tenancy in Virginia," 436.
3. REC to Charles Jean Stier (CJS), February 18, 1814, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 263; to HJS, August 2, 1810, 223; Walsh, "Land, Landlord, and Leaseholder," 392, 394.
4. REC to HJS, June 10, 1814, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 269; to HJS, March 20, 1815, 280. Willard Bliss found that Virginia landlords

also felt sympathy but looked after their material interests by evicting anyway, "Rise of Tenancy," 435–36.

5. REC to HJS, December 19, 1813, ibid., 260.
6. REC to CJS, February 18, 1814, ibid., 263; to HJS, August 2, 1810, 223; Walsh, "Land, Landlord, and Leaseholder," 392, 394.
7. REC to HJS, March 20, 1815, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 279–80; to HJS, August 2, 1810, 223; to CJS, February 18, 1814, 263. Willard Bliss found that Robert Carter of Nomini Hall, George Washington, and others wrote about the dilemmas of tenancy in these terms during the 1790s, "Rise of Tenancy," 433–36.
8. For land and labor requirements in tobacco cultivation see Aubrey C. Land, "Economic Behavior in a Planting Society: The Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake," *JSH*, XXXIII (1967), 473; Papenfuse, "Planter Behavior and Economic Opportunity in a Staple Economy," 303–06; Earle, *Evolution of a Tidewater Settlement System*, 24–30; Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 47–48; Walsh, "Slave Life, Slave Society, and Tobacco Production in the Tidewater Chesapeake, 1620–1820," 175; "Summing the Parts," 55–80, 87–89; *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit*, 72, 99–101, 181–93, 437–38, 541, 639–57. To derive labor–land ratios I discounted slaves under the age of 8 years, counted those aged 8–14 to, men over 45, and women over 36 as half-hands, and men aged 14–45 and women aged 14–36 as full-hands. See also Sarson, "Landlessness and Tenancy in Early National Prince George's County, Maryland," 569–98.
9. Federal Direct Tax, Prince George's County, Maryland (FDTPG), Particular List of Lands, Lots, Buildings, and Wharves, Eastern Branch and Rock Creek Hundreds, 3–4.
10. Twenty-one planters with 800 acres or more according to the 1800 county assessments were noted in the Federal Direct Tax as renting land to tenants, including six of the fifteen with over 2,000 acres. Two others are revealed as renters by leases in the Land Records: Edward Henry Calvert to Henry Harvey, Lease, Prince George's County Land Records (PGCLR), JRM 8, November 8, 1800, 363–65; Walter Dulany Addison to John Bayne and Ebsworth Bayne, Lease, JRM 6, May 19, 1798, 351–56; to John Davis, Lease, JRM 8, July 7, 1801, 570–74; Prince George's County Tax Assessments (PGCTA), Real Property, 1800, 1, 11, 15; Personal Property, 1800, 11, 15, 16, 17.
11. FDTPG, Particular List of Lands, Lots, Buildings and Wharves, Collington and Western Branch Hundreds, 13; Horsepen and Patuxent Hundreds, 16; PGCTA, Real Property, 1800, 28, 29, 43; Personal Property, 1800, 3, 31, 44.
12. FDTPG, Particular List of Lands, Lots, Buildings and Wharves, Collington and Western Branch Hundreds, 9; Horsepen and Patuxent Hundreds, 2; Eastern Branch and Rock Creek Hundreds, 7.
13. Ibid., New Scotland, Oxen, and Bladensburg Hundreds, 2; Particular List of Dwelling Houses, New Scotland, Oxen, and Bladensburg Hundreds, 11.
14. Main, *The Social Structure of Revolutionary America*, 44–67; Carr, "County Government in Maryland, 1689–1709," 581–97; Papenfuse,

"Planter Behavior and Economic Opportunity," 301–02; Skaggs, *Roots of Maryland Democracy*, 40–41; Earle, *Evolution of a Tidewater Settlement System*, 206–12; Stiverson, *Poverty in a Land of Plenty*, xii; Menard, *Economy and Society in Early Colonial Maryland*, 51–77, 155–201, 302–20; Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 131–41, 152–61, 296–97; Horn, *Adapting to a New World*, 147–60, 253–92, 328–33.

15. These and all wealth distribution figures in this article are derived from censuses matched with county tax assessments beginning in the 1790s (the 1830 census for Prince George's is lost). Methods are explained in detail in Sarson, "Wealth, Poverty, and Labor," 88–90, 167, 220–23. Figures for St. Mary's County are from Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 227–28, 243.
16. Daniels, "'Getting His [or Her] Livelyhood,'" 125–35. The occupation figures from the federal tax of 1798 are here projected on to population data from the 1800 census and county levy.
17. Russell R. Menard, "From Servant to Freeholder: Status Mobility and Property Accumulation in Seventeenth-Century Maryland," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., XXX (1973), 37–64; Menard et al., "Opportunity and Inequality," 169–84; Lois Green Carr and Russell R. Menard, "Immigration and Opportunity: The Freedman in Early Colonial Maryland," in Thad W. Tate and David L. Ammerman, eds., *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century: Essays on Anglo-American Society* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1979), 206–42; Walsh, "Servitude and Opportunity in Charles County, Maryland, 1658–1705," 111–33; Earle, *Evolution of a Tidewater Settlement System*, 210–12; Stiverson, *Poverty in a Land of Plenty*, 45–48, 52–55; Papenfuse, "Planter Behavior and Economic Opportunity," 307–10; Menard, *Economy and Society in Early Colonial Maryland*, 51–77, 155–201, 302–20; Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 131–41, 152–61, 296–97; Horn, *Adapting to a New World*, 147–60, 253–92, 328–33.
18. Slave hiring may have been a way of acquiring labor and building capital among non-slaveholders. Land Records show that hiring generally was common, and there is evidence of widespread hiring in the region, although I have not been able to link it directly to poorer tenants, and poorer tenants' immobility suggests that hiring allowed few if any to become landowners. See Sarah Shaver Hughes, "Slaves for Hire: The Allocation of Black Labor in Elizabeth City County, Virginia, 1782–1810," *WMQ* 3d Ser., XXXV (1978), 260–86; Whitman, *The Price of Freedom*, 13–15, 53–57.
19. The landlessness figures for St. Mary's County come from Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 101, 222–29, 303, 323. Marks found that before 1810 about 72 percent of migrants from St. Mary's County moved to Kentucky, 13 percent elsewhere in Maryland, 5 percent to Virginia, and the rest further afield. After 1810, the proportion moving to the Deep South and southwest increased. The same was probably true for Prince Georgians. She also found disproportionate out-migration by the poor, especially the landless, which was also the case in Prince George's: "The Rage for Kentucky," 108–28.

20. Teute, "Land, Liberty and Labor in the Post-Revolutionary Era," 143, 254, 255, 302; Perkins, *Border Life*, 54–55.
21. Lee, *The Price of Nationhood*, 260.
22. Teute, "Land, Liberty and Labor," 176–77, 43, 3.
23. Ibid., 185–86, 186, 188.
24. Ibid., 189–90, 223–24, 260–62, 215; Paul W. Gates, *Landlords and Tenants on the Prairie Frontier: Studies in American Land Policy* (Ithaca, NY, 1973), 15–21.
25. Teute, "Land, Liberty and Labor," 216, 223, 300.
26. Ibid., 192, 317–18, 191; Perkins, *Border Life*, 122–23.
27. Teute, "Land, Liberty and Labor," 160, 266, 267; Soltow, "Land Inequality on the Frontier," 275–91; "Kentucky Wealth at the End of the Eighteenth Century," 617–33.
28. Teute, "Land, Liberty and Labor," 63,172–73; Perkins, *Border Life*, 55–56.
29. Teute, "Land, Liberty and Labor," 185, 254, 258, 262–64, 264, 265.
30. Ibid., 266, 267, 287.
31. Ibid., 125–26, 126, 126–27, 127, 128, 4–5; Perkins, *Border Life*, 146–50.
32. PGCTA, Real Property, 1800, 28, 29, 43; Personal Property, 1800, 3, 31, 44; Prince George's County Register of Wills (PGCRW), Wills, T 1, April 12, 1797, 397.
33. PGCTA, Real Property, 1800, 3, 12, 27, 42; Personal Property, 1800, 24, 30, 42.
34. Ibid., Real Property, 1800, 3, 12, 27, 28, 29, 42, 43; Personal Property, 1800, 3, 24, 30, 31, 42, 44; Sarson, "Wealth, Poverty, and Labor," 88.
35. Of 1,620 householders in 1810, 589, or 36.4 percent, were slaveholders and 531, or 32.8 percent, were landowners. There were 205 nonlandowning slaveholders and they held 1,054 slaves, or 15.6 percent of 6,761 resident-held slaves. Nonlandownership among slaveholders was 0 of 22 with 50 or more slaves; 6 of 80 with 20–49; 19 of 106 with 10 to 19; 56 of 153 with 5 to 9; and 124 of 228 with 1 to 4. Nonlandowners comprised 34.8 percent of all slaveholders and 54.4 percent of small-scale slaveholders. Of 1,795 householders in 1820, 539, or 30 percent, were slaveholders, and 462, or 25.7 percent, were landowners. There were 190 nonlandowning slaveholders and they held 1,059 slaves, or 16.1 percent of 6,589 resident-held slaves. Nonlandownership among slaveholders was 1 of 19 with 50 or more slaves; 6 of 78 with 20 to 49; 20 of 105 with 10 to 19; 46 of 129 with 5 to 9; and 117 of 208 with 1 to 4. Nonlandowners comprised 35.3 percent of all slaveholders and 56.3 percent of small-scale slaveholders. Sarson, "Wealth, Poverty, and Labor," 85–88, 217–18, 243–44; Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 402–06. Teute, "Land, Liberty and Labor," 160.
36. Donald R. Adams, Jr., "Prices and Wages in Maryland, 1750–1850," *JEH*, XLVI (1986), 625–45.
37. This phenomenon contrasts with pre-Revolutionary tenants, few of whom held indentured or enslaved labor. Lorena Walsh traces the rise of wealthier slaveholding tenants in the 1770s and 1780s in "Land,

Landlord, and Leaseholder," 381, 388–90. See also Papenfuse, "Planter Behavior and Economic Opportunity," 306; Stiverson, *Poverty in a Land of Plenty*, 45–53; and Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 136–40.

38. PGCTA, Personal Property, 1800, 30.
39. PGCRW, Inventories, January 12, 1802, ST 4, 240–42.
40. Ibid., January 22, 1802, ST 4, 244.
41. Ibid., March 10, 1802, ST 4, 266.
42. Perkins, *Border Life*, 35.
43. FDTPG, Rock Creek and Eastern Branch Hundreds, Particular List of Lands, Lots, Buildings, and Wharves, 2; Upper Marlboro, Charlotte, and Mount Calvert Hundreds, General List of Lands, Lots, Buildings, and Wharves, 1.
44. PGCTA, Real Property, 1800, 20, 30, 41; Personal Property, 1800, 41.
45. FDTPG, Collington and Western Branch Hundreds, Particular List of Slaves, 1; Particular List of Dwelling Houses, 1; Particular List of Lands, Lots, Buildings, and Wharves, 2.
46. Ibid., Particular List of Dwelling Houses, 1; Particular List of Land, Lots, Buildings, and Wharves, 2.
47. Ibid., Particular List of Lands, Lots, Buildings, and Wharves, 2.
48. Ibid., New Scotland, Oxen, and Bladensburg Hundreds, Particular List of Lands, Lots, Buildings, and Wharves, 1.
49. Ibid., Collington and Western Branch Hundreds, Particular List of Lands, Lots, Buildings, and Wharves, 2.
50. Ibid., Particular List of Lands, Lots, Buildings, and Wharves, "Unidentified Hundred," (Upper Marlboro, Charlotte, and Mount Calvert Hundreds), 1.
51. PGCTA, Real Property, 1800, 10, 20; Personal Property, 1800, 1, 23, 41.
52. FDTPG, New Scotland, Oxen, and Bladensburg Hundreds, Particular List of Slaves, 1; Particular List of Dwelling Houses, 3; Particular List of Land, Lots, Buildings, and Wharves, 4.
53. Population Schedules of the Second Census of the United States, 1800, Prince George's County, Maryland, 466, 456.
54. Ibid., 488.
55. PGCTA, Personal Property, 1800, 24.
56. Ibid., Real Property, 1800, 16; Personal Property, 1800, 25.
57. Ibid., Personal Property, 1800, 21.
58. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 48–54.
59. Ibid., 60, 79, 268–69.
60. Ibid., 401–02, 407.
61. Ibid., 324–25, 325–29.
62. Bliss, "Rise of Tenancy," 429, 430–33; Earle, *Evolution of a Tidewater Settlement System*, 212–13; Stiverson, *Poverty in a Land of Plenty*, 1–27; Walsh, "Land, Landlord, and Leaseholder," 374–77, 379–80, 386–87; Menard, *Economy and Society in Early Colonial Maryland*, 75–76; Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 132–35; Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit*, 108–10; 312–16, 545–49, 620–21.

63. Calvert–Harvey Lease, 363.
64. Thomas Grafton Addison to Daniel Moxley, Lease, PGCLR, JRM 7, October 28, 1799, 477–79; to Richard Neale, Lease, JRM 8, November 2, 1799, 63–64.
65. George Calvert to Thomas Ewell, Lease, PGCLR, JRM 15, February 25, 1812, 575–77; to Thomas Ferrall, Lease, AB 1, July 18, 1820, 383–87.
66. REC to HJS, August 30, 1810, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 229.
67. Dorothy Coombes to Enoch Jenkins, Lease, PGCLR, JRM 1, April 26, 1792, 179–80; Thomas Grafton Addison to Nicholas Lowe, Lease, JRM 7, January 21, 1800, 606–07.
68. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 267. Willard Bliss found Virginia tenants laboring in lieu of rent arrears, "Rise of Tenancy," 440.
69. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 259.
70. Thomas Harwood, Jr., to William Mayhew, Lease, PGCLR, JRM 2, December 11, 1792, 26–30; Ann Mary Gates to William Mayhew, Lease, JRM 4, October 12, 1795, 176–79; Thomas Lane and Barbara Lane to John Smith, Lease, JRM 1, July 15, 1791, 128–29.
71. Edward Papenfuse and Allan Kulikoff found inspectors deeming up to a third of tobacco unmarketable, although the latter discovered variations downwards too, while Carville Earle estimated that inspectors rejected more than half of poor farmers' tobacco: "Planter Behavior and Economic Opportunity," 303, 305; *Tobacco and Slaves*, 113–15; *Evolution of a Tidewater Settlement System*, 25–26. It is likely that farmers a half century and more after the Maryland inspection act of 1748 had adapted and grew less trashy tobacco, although for small farmers any loss of income remained important.
72. Colonial rents varied according to whether they were for tenancies on private, church, or proprietorial land. The portion of income tenants paid varied too, depending on land quality, availability of labor, and other sources of wealth. The same may have been true for the post-revolutionary era. Lorena Walsh found that early rents amounted to a quarter, sometimes half, of tenant income, but rose considerably from the mid-eighteenth century. The rise was partly offset later because increasing slaveholding among tenants enabled some to cultivate more tobacco. See "Land, Landlord, and Leaseholder," 374–77, 380–81, 388–89; Earle, *Evolution of a Tidewater Settlement System*, 212–13; Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 134.
73. Land, "Economic Behavior in a Planting Society," 473; Papenfuse, "Planter Behavior and Economic Opportunity," 303–06; Walsh, "Slave Life, Slave Society, and Tobacco Production," 175; "Summing the Parts," 55–80, 87–89.
74. William Turner Wootton to Benjamin Brashears, Lease, PGCLR, AA 2, October 28, 1769, 29–30. With a 21-year leasehold, Brashears had an interest in soil conservation and, though not limited by his lease, would probably not have cultivated more tobacco than this.
75. Lane–Smith Lease, 128–29.

76. Bliss, "Rise of Tenancy," 431; Walsh, "Land, Landlord, and Leaseholder," 375; Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 134.
77. Gates–Mayhew Lease, 177–78; Addison–Bayne Lease, 355. Fenwick quoted in Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 258.
78. Walsh, "Land, Landlord, and Leaseholder," 375–76.
79. Wootton–Brashears Lease, 29. Jason Jones, administrator of the estate of Margaret Conaway of Ann Arundel County, deceased, versus Philip Green, June 26, 1811, Prince George's County General Court (PGCGC), Box 19, Folder 16. This court case arose because Green defaulted on his rent and the documents include portions of a lease which was not registered in the Land Records. The rent, "Two thousand Pounds of Sound Merchantable Tobacco and Ten barrels of Merchantable Corn," indicates the same means of payment and concern over quality contained in Land Record leases. One-year leases probably required fewer improvements than longer leases, although Green was to "till[,] clear and Cultivate the said Land as above described . . . [and] leave the said Plantation in as Good repair as when he took Possession." The lease, though, is incomplete, and there may have been improvement requirements missing from the record. This case does not indicate that leases not registered in Land Records were all one-year long and that, therefore, Land Record leases were untypical. In a suit brought by Robert Jones and wife against Zadock Duvall for the eviction of a tenant named Rachael Cecil on July 24, 1813 (for which the surviving court records contain only a petition), the leasehold (not recorded in the Land Records) was supposed to last a decade. PGCGC, Box 20, Folder 1. Additional material on period leasing can be found in the Robert Darnall Ledger, 1787–1821; Brooke Beale Ledger, 1790–1798; and the Digges of Warburton Papers, in the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore.
80. Calvert–Harvey Lease, 364; Jenkins–Coombes Lease, 180; Addison–Moxley Lease, 477; Calvert–Ewell Lease, 576.
81. George Calvert to William Grayson, John J. Still, and John Williams, Lease, PGCLR, JRM 15, June 7, 1813, 579–81; to Levi Sheriff, Lease, AB 2, April 1, 1826, 285–87; Addison–Moxley Lease, 478; Calvert–Harvey Lease, 364; Frances Edelen to Thomas Mattingly, Lease, AB 2, September 14, 1822, 530–31.
82. Lee, *The Price of Nationhood*, 64–66; REC to CJS, February 18, 1814, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 263; to HJS, August 2, 1810, 223; Walsh, "Land, Landlord, and Leaseholder," 392, 394.
83. Wootton–Brashears Lease, 30; Harwood–Mayhew Lease, 1792, 29.
84. Addison–Lowe Lease, 607; Harwood–Mayhew Lease, 28, 29.
85. Addison–Davis Lease, 570–74; REC to HJS, August 20, 1805, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 126; Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 134, 196, 266–67.
86. Wootton–Brashears Lease, 30; Mary Franklin to Walter Duvall, Lease, October 22, 1822, PGCLR, AB 2, 367–68; Thomas Grafton Addison to Robert Baillie, Lease, JRM 8, January 23, 1800, 220–21; William Wilson to James Wilson, Lease, JRM 15, April 5, 1812, 352–54.

87. Harwood–Mayhew Lease, 30; Calvert–Harvey Lease, 365; Addison–Davis Lease, 573–74.
88. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 107.
89. Harwood–Mayhew Lease, 29, 30; Addison–Bayne Lease, 352. George Washington cited in Bliss, "Rise of Tenancy," 438–39.
90. Teute, "Land, Liberty and Labor," 194–95, 301, 314; Perkins, *Border Life*, 123.
91. Teute, "Land, Liberty and Labor," 314, 327.
92. Ibid., 314, 327, 316, 331, 331–32, 332, 327, 317, 318, 319.
93. REC to HJS, May 12, 1817, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 318.
94. Jason Jones, administrator of the estate of Margaret Conaway, deceased, versus Philip Green, June 26, 1811, PGCGC, Box 19, Folder 16.
95. Bliss, "Rise of Tenancy," 436, 437.
96. Ibid., 434.
97. REC to HJS, March 17, 1812, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 251. This was also the experience of some Virginia landlords, Bliss, "Rise of Tenancy," 436. Bordley, *Sketches on Rotations of Crops* (Talbotown, 1792), quoted in Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 106, Mobberly, quoted in Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 191.
98. Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 107–16; Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit*, 124–31, 424–31.
99. For a summary of Chesapeake scholarship see Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness*, 8–18, 81–100; for syntheses by specialists see Carr et al., *Robert Cole's World* and Horn, *Adapting to a New World*; for a different view see Allan Kulikoff, "The Transition to Capitalism in Rural America," *WMQ*, 3rd Ser., XLVI (1989), 120–44; "Households and Markets: Toward a New Synthesis of American Agrarian History," *WMQ*, 3rd Ser., L (1993), 342–55; and *The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism* (Charlottesville, VA, 1992); and for a recent account of the debate about markets see Richard Lyman Bushman, "Markets and Composite Farms in Early America," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., LV (1998), 351–74.
100. Teute, "Land, Liberty and Labor," 58, 64–65, 59. The Harrisburg incident was described by John Cowan to Levi Todd in a letter of August 21, 1806.
101. Ibid., 61.
102. Ibid., 319–20, 319, 326; Perkins, *Border Life*, 126.

5 "The torment with the servants": Wage Workers, Servants, and Slaves

1. Rosalie Eugenia Calvert (REC) to Isabelle van Havre (IvH), April 26, 1818, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 334.
2. Daniel Blake Smith, *Inside the Great House: Planter Family Life in Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Society* (Ithaca, NY, 1980), 160.
3. REC to Charles Jean Stier (CJS), December 3, 1808, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 193–94.

4. REC to IvH, March 5, 1816, ibid., 290–91.
5. REC to IvH, September 17, 1819, ibid., 351.
6. REC to IvH, May 6, 1807, ibid., 168, 136.
7. Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household*, 6–7, 29, 100–45; Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress*, 16–35; Lee, *The Price of Nationhood*, 58–63.
8. REC to IvH, May 6, 1807, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 168.
9. REC to Marie Louise (Peeters) Stier (MLPS), May 12, 1804, ibid., 83.
10. For examples of emphasizing agency see George P. Rawick, *From Sundown to Sunup: The Making of the Black Community* (Westport, CT, 1972); John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York, 1972; revised and enlarged edition, 1979); Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925* (Oxford, 1976); Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York, 1978); and perhaps especially Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (New York, 1987). Examples of scholarship emphasizing the importance of masters' power include Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York, 1972); Peter Kolchin, *Unfree Labour: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom* (Cambridge, MA, 1987); *American Slavery, 1619–1877* (Harmondsworth, 1995); and especially Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA, 1982). See also, Steven Sarson, "'The Torment with the Servants': Management and Labor in a Southern Maryland Plantation Household in the Early Nineteenth Century," *MHM*, CII (2007), 131–55.
11. William K. Scarborough, *The Overseer: Plantation Management in the Old South* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1966); Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 12–22.
12. REC to Henri Joseph Stier (HJS), September 15, 1804, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 97.
13. REC to HJS, November 24, 1805, ibid., 134.
14. Teute, "Land, Liberty and Labor in the Post-Revolutionary Era," 336–37; Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 432–34; Lee, *The Price of Nationhood*, 66.
15. REC to HJS, September 15, 1804, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 97.
16. Stephen Lee versus Mary Pottenger, Prince George's County General Court, Circuit Court Papers, Maryland Hall of Records, T-67, Box 18, Folder 15, 1810.
17. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 432–35; Teute, "Land, Liberty and Labor," 336.
18. Marks, "Economic and Society in Staple Plantation System," 432, 435–36. See also, Lee, *The Price of Nationhood*, 66; Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit,* 319–20, 457–58.
19. Marks, "Economic and Society in Staple Plantation System," 274–76, 549.
20. Ibid., 531–37, 542–50. For more on Jesse Thompson and on destitution and welfare, see the Epilogue.

21. Ibid., 537–42.
22. Ibid., 550–51.
23. Hunter Dickinson Farish, ed., *Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian, 1773–74: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion* (Charlottesville, VA, 1968, orig. 1843); Louis Morton, *Robert Carter of Nomini Hall* (Charlottesville, VA, 1941), especially 205–30; Lewis, *The Pursuit of Happiness*, 126–30, 149–50.
24. REC to HJS, December 11, 1806, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 155.
25. REC to IvH, January 20, 1809, ibid., 200.
26. REC to Charles Jean Stier (CJS), September 1, 1809, ibid., 208–09.
27. REC to HJS, November 1, 1809, ibid., 213.
28. REC to IvH, June 5, 1810, ibid., 219. As Margaret Law Callcott notes, according to George Henry Calvert's autobiography, this tutor appears to have been a Mr. Gunston, ibid., 220, n. 2.
29. REC to CJS (no date), August 1810, ibid., 226.
30. REC to IvH, July 15, 1811, ibid., 239–40.
31. REC to HJS, December 7, 1811, ibid., 241. This appears to have been Mr. Gunston's successor, a Mr. Bradley. Callcott, relying in this instance on George Henry Calvert's autobiography, notes that Mr. Gunston "lasted two years as the children's tutor," ibid., 242. Rosalie Calvert's letters would seem to indicate, however, that he lasted only one year.
32. REC to HJS, March 17, 1812, ibid., 249.
33. REC to IvH, March 5, 1816, ibid., 289. See also REC to CJS, February 24, 1813, ibid., 254, 255–56, ns. 2, 3.
34. REC to HJS, March 13, 1819, ibid., 343.
35. REC to IvH, September 17, 1819, ibid., 351.
36. Russell R. Menard, "From Servants to Slaves: The Transformation of the Chesapeake Labor System," *Southern Studies*, VVI (1977), 355–90; David W. Galenson, *White Servitude in Colonial America: An Economic Analysis* (Cambridge, MA, 1981).
37. REC to IvH, October 25, 1816; REC to HJS, March 13, 1819, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 304, 343.
38. See, for example, REC to IvH, May 6, 1807, ibid., 168.
39. REC to IvH, September 28, 1804, ibid., 100, and 81, n. 1.
40. REC to IvH, December 10 1807, ibid., 177–78.
41. REC to HJS, May 14, 1804, ibid., 85.
42. Historical, Social, Economic and Demographic Data from the US Decennial Census; Prince George's County Tax Assessments (PGCTA), 1800, Personal Property, 25; 1821, Personal Property, 27, 33, 37.
43. Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household*, 23–24, 34–38, 47–48, 96–99, 131–61, 205–06, 334–71; Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress*, 19, 187–88, 191–93; Drew Gilpin Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War," in Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber, eds., *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War* (New York, 1992), 171–99; Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (New York, 1996), 53–79.
44. REC to HJS, November 19, 1803, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 59.
45. REC to HJS, December 25, 1803, ibid., 65.

46. REC to HJS, May 12, 1817, ibid., 318.
47. REC to MLPS (no date), November 1803, ibid., 63.
48. REC to IvH, August 8, 1805, ibid., 125.
49. REC to HJS, December 25, 1803, ibid., 65.
50. REC to HJS, May 14, 1804, ibid., 85.
51. REC to HJS and MLS, August 12, 1803, ibid., 55.
52. REC to IvH, August 8, 1805, ibid., 124.
53. REC to MLPS (no date), November 1803, ibid., 63.
54. REC to HJS, February 20, 1805, ibid., 113, 105.
55. Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household*, 159–61
56. REC to IvH, August 8, 1805, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 124.
57. REC to IvH, October 7, 1805, ibid., 131.
58. REC to IvH, December 4, 1804, ibid., 103.
59. REC to IvH, February 18, 1805, ibid., 111; Smith, *Inside the Great House*, 35–38.
60. REC to HJS, August 1, 1817, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 322.
61. Historical, Social, Economic and Demographic Data from the US Decennial Census,; Prince George's County Tax Assessments, 1800, Personal Property, 25; 1821, Personal Property, 27, 33, 37. Lee, *The Price of Nationhood* 267; Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 153–55.
62. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 553–62.
63. Teute, "Land, Liberty and Labor," 212–13.
64. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 153–60, 162; Charles Ball, *Fifty Years in Chains; or, the Life of an American Slave* (New York, 1859), 9, 32.
65. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 167. For the evolution of enslavement, including slave community, culture, and resistance, in the colonial era there are numerous brilliant works. The most recent relevant scholarship for this study are Lee, *The Price of Nationhood*, 67–74, 208–21; Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 317–420; Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1998); Walsh, Motives of *Honor, Pleasure, and Profit*, 112–21, 131–44, 199–205, 373–93, 403–04, 457–58, 607–08, 622–25, 636–37.
66. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (Boston, 1845); Lee, *The Price of Nationhood*, 218–19, 218, 221, 218, 217.
67. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 156.
68. Ibid., 162, 163–64.
69. Nellie Arnold Plummer, *Out of the Depths; or, The Triumph of the Cross* (Hyattsville, MD, 1927; New York, 1997), 11; Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself*, Jean Fagan Yellin, ed. (Cambridge, MA, 1987), 54–94; Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household*, 372–87.
70. Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress*, 72–74, 91, 207, 211; Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household*, 237–40; Woodward and Muhlenfeld, *The Private Mary Chesnut*, 42–43.

71. Plummer, *Out of the Depths*. Plummer erroneously names Caroline Cramphin as "Crompton". For more detail on the story see Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 379–84; Bianca P. Floyd, *Records and Recollections: Early Black History in Prince George's County, Maryland* (Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 1989), 80–81.
72. Prince George's County Land Records (PGCLR), Manumission, November 12, 1801, JRM9, 946–47; October 30, 1822, AB2, 371; July 12, 1824, AB3, 349–50; April 7, 1825, AB3, 549–50; August 29, 1825, AB4, 24–25; Prince George's County Certificates of Freedom, 1806–1829, 244, 248, 250, 269.
73. Montgomery County Tax Assessments, Personal Property, 1813, 37. Population Schedules of the Fourth Census of the United States, 1820, Montgomery County, Maryland, 148; Population Schedules of the Sixth Census of the United States, Montgomery County, Maryland, 1840, 303. The population schedules of the fifth census, of 1830, are lost.
74. Like most planter parents, George and Rosalie Calvert agreed that their children should marry a wealthy man. Like many planter children, theirs gave romantic love in a higher priority. See Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 374–78; Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress*, 59–60, 62; Smith, *Inside the Great House*, 126, 135–50; Lewis, *The Pursuit of Happiness*, 69–108.
75. PGCLR, Deed, August 29, 1831, AB7, 69–71; Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress*, 20, 184–85; Smith, *Inside the Great House*, 62.
76. Maryland Chancery Court, MS 7627; Callcott, 381–84, 392, ns 50–59.
77. Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress*, 221–20.
78. PGCTA, Real Property, 1800, 2; Personal Property, 1800, 2.
79. PGCTA, Real Property, 1800, 24; Personal Property, 1800, 24. Many free blacks were recorded only with a first name. Some others were called "Free," but whether that was a name they chose for themselves or one ascribed for the convenience of census takers is not known.
80. Ibid., Real Property, 1800, 24; Personal Property, 1800, 24.
81. Ibid., Real Property, 1800, 15, 13; Personal Property, 1800, 17, 15.
82. Ibid., Personal Property, 1800, 16, 43, 4.
83. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 227–28, 437–44. See also Ira Berlin, *Slaves without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York, 1974), 217–49, and Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven, CT, 1985), 29–30, 37–38, 69–71, 83.
84. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 153–56, 212, 437–45, 551–52.

Epilogue: "Objects of distress": The Poor and the Destitute

1. Prince George's County Commissioners of the Tax, Almshouse and Pension Papers, 1820–1842, Maryland Hall of Records, C1153.

Vermillion made his claim under "an act to provide for certain persons engaged in the land and naval service of the United States, in the Revolutionary war," passed by the US Congress March 18, 1818.

2. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 280, 289.
3. Prince George's County Levy Court (PGCLC), Proceedings, June 9, 1795, 13.
4. Ibid., July 16, 1801, 133; June 9, 1802, 162.
5. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 277–78.
6. Ibid., 277
7. PGCLC, Levy Lists, 1799, 11, 7.
8. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 279–81.
9. PGCLC, Proceedings, January 4, 1812, 415. Edward Scott was given another $10 later in the year for Ann Keadle's support. Ibid., December 19, 1812, 447.
10. Ibid., January 21, 1811, 388.
11. PGCLC, Levy Lists, 1800, 1; 1803, 4; 1805, 5; Proceedings, May 21, 1800, 114; June 8, 1807, 289; July 14, 1807, 292–93.
12. Lorena S. Walsh, "Urban Amenities and Rural Sufficiency: Living Standards and Consumer Behavior in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1643–1777," *JEH*, XLIII (1983), 109–19; "Questions and Sources for Exploring the Standard of Living," Gloria L. Main, "The Standard of Living in Southern New England, 1640–1773," Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "The Standard of Living in the Colonial Chesapeake," Jackson Turner Main, "Summary: The Hereafter," Billy G. Smith, "Comment," and John J. McCusker, "Comment," in "Toward a History of the Standard of Living in British North America," Forum, *WMQ*, XLV (1988), 116–70. See also, Steve Sarson, "'Objects of Distress': Inequality and Poverty in Early Nineteenth-Century Prince George's County, Maryland," *MHM*, XCVI (2001), 141–62.
13. Rosalie Calvert recorded the hardships caused, especially for the poor, by the flood, the drought, and the embargo in various letters at the time. See Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 85–86, 88–89, 147, 181, 190, 195, 198, 201.
14. PGCLC, Levy Lists, 1805, 10; 1808, 12.
15. Kilty, *Laws of Maryland*, 1817, chapter 192; PGCLC, Proceedings, February 21, 1817, 603; March 1, 1817, 604–16; March 17, 1817, 621–24; May 19, 1817, 626–29; July 7, 1817, 639–40.
16. Kilty, *Laws of Maryland*, 1817, chapter 192; PGCLC, Proceedings, February 21, 1817, 603; March 1, 1817, 604–16; March 17, 1817, 621–24; May 19, 1817, 626–29; July 7, 1817, 639–40; August 6, 1817, 648. In adding up the number of people on the levy court's lists, I assumed that when the number of children were unspecified there were two children. I have also assumed that "Benjamin Jones Wife & Children," for example, meant just the wife and (two) children, as opposed to "Charles Proctor & wife," which clearly means two people.

If I have erred, therefore, it is on the side of caution. The entire list of patrons and beneficiaries is transcribed in the Appendix. Again, Rosalie Calvert made many references to economic difficulties and hardships caused by the War of 1812: Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 217–75.

17. Rosalie Calvert wrote on several occasions about normally expecting a 5 or 6 percent rate of return on various kinds of investment. See for example, letters to Henri Joseph Stier, August 2, 1810, March 20, 1815, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 223, 279–80.
18. PGCLC, Proceedings, February 21, 1817, 603.
19. Prince George's County Tax Assessments (PGCTA), Real Property, 1800, 12; 1810, 12; Personal Property, 1800, 12; 1810, 11.
20. Ibid., Real Property, 1800, 5; 1810, 5; Personal Property, 1800, 5; 1810, 5.
21. Ibid., Real Property, 1800, 32; Personal Property, 1800, 38; PGCLC, Proceedings, January 4, 1812, 404, 414–15.
22. Kitty Gray may have been Caty Gray who was identified as a free black person in the census of 1800. If not, there were numerous other Grays, all free African Americans, to whom Kitty Gray was probably related. Esther Churb was probably a relation of either or both of George and Robert Churb, also identified as free black people. See Population Schedules of the Second Census of the United States, 1800, Prince George's County, Maryland, 446 (Benjamin and Peter Gray), 456 (Richard, Thomas, and Millie Gray), 457 (George and Robert Churb), 477 (Mary Gray), 478 (Caty Gray).
23. PGCTA, Real Property, 1800, 25; 1810, 23; Personal Property, 1800, 28; 1810, 25.
24. Ibid., Personal Property, 1810, 2.
25. Simon Middleton and Billy Smith, eds., *Class Matters: Early North America and the Atlantic World* (Philadelphia, PA, 2008).

Appendix: A Statistical Analysis of Wealth Distribution and Mobility

1. Kilty, *Laws of Maryland*, 1784, chapter 4. The real estate schedules for 1820 are lost, and I have thus had to reconstruct one using the schedules of 1819 and 1821 and exchanges recorded in the Land Records between October 1819 and October 1821. I cannot include 1790 and 1830 in this analysis as assessments are only extant from 1792 (and those extant to 1798 are moldy and barely readable), and the 1830 census population schedules are lost. Until 1813, Prince Georgian assessments were recorded exclusively in Maryland pounds current. In 1813, that began to change, as the Levy Court ordered that "the sum of fifty cents be assessed in every one hundred pounds of assessable property in the County for Amending and Keeping the public Roads in repair." Not until 1817, however, did the Court order "that the sum of seventeen cents be levied on every hundred dollars of assessable property in the County." Even then, assessors continued to count the value of improvements to land in pounds, shillings, and

pence, converting totals by multiplying them by 2.67 to reach dollar values for the total value of land. Kilty, *Laws of Maryland*, 1812, chapter 141; Prince George's County Levy Court (PGCLC), Proceedings, October 18, 1813, 476; Proceedings, August 4, 1817, 643. See also, Steven Sarson, "Distribution of Wealth in Prince George's County, Maryland, 1800–1820," *JEH*, LX (2000), 847–55.

2. Prince George's County Tax Assessments (PGCTA), Real Property, 1800, 2, 30.
3. Rosalie Eugenia Calvert (REC) to Charles Jean Stier (CJS), July 23, 1810, Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 222.
4. REC to Henri Joseph Stier (HJS), April 12, 1813, 256, 257–58, n. 1.
5. REC to HJS, October 29, 1816, ibid., 307.
6. Lee, "Land and Labor," 341.
7. Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 384–86, 393, note 64; Prince George's County Register of Willas (PGCRW), Wills, June 8, 1835, PC 1, 89–90. Soltow, *Distribution of Wealth and Income in the United States in 1798*, 46, 163–68.
8. The values were taken in Maryland pounds current as follows: £5.50, £15, £30, £45, and £15.50. PGCLR, Deed, December 6, 1800, JRM 8, 344; Deed, December 8, 1800, JRM 8, 339; Deed, December 30, 1800, JRM 8, 361.
9. PGCLR, Deed, August 9, 1800, JRM 8, 367–69; Deed, November 15, 1800, JRM 8, 370–72; Deed, December 11, 1800, JRM 8, 346–48.
10. The total number of acres given by the assessors in 1800 was 326,715 and 7/8 (worth £483,136.02). In the case of land values, the assessors made a number of small adding miscalculations. For some reason they over-calculated the value of town land massively at £274,594.43 (rural land was given a summary value of £208,541.44 by the assessors); PGCTA, Real Property, 1800, 44. By 1801, the value of rural land was much higher, at £489,015.29 (the implications of rural land value inflation are discussed later), but town land was assessed at £26,382.13. PGCTA, Real Property, 1801, 32. Quantities of real property recorded in 1810 were 311,537.33 acres of rural land which, together with town lots, were worth £497,619.95: PGCTA, Real Property, 1810, 36. I have used an SPSS database to reach my own totals of various property holdings based on my own transcriptions of individual property ownership from the original records. The real property assessments for 1820 are lost and I have had to cross reference those of 1819 and 1821 with the personal property assessments of 1820 and the fourth decennial census to work out as closely as possible who owned land in 1820 and, of them, who were resident household heads and who were nonresidents/nonhouseholders. The totals given by assessors were: in 1819, 308,818.13 acres, worth $1,359,046.20, PGCTA, Real Property, 1819, 35; and in 1821, 308,221.81 acres, worth $1,350,860.25: PGCTA, Real Property, 1821, 35. Prince George's County's tax assessments were taken in Maryland pounds current until 1813, but for ease of reference and comparability I have converted all figures to dollars at the levy court's own exchange rate

of £1 to \$2.67. Kilty, *Laws of Maryland*, 1812, chapter 141; PGCLC, Proceedings, October 18, 1813, 476.

11. Population Schedules of the Second Census of the United States, 1800, Prince George's County, Maryland, 491. Again, though, assessors miscalculated the numbers of slaves and other forms of property in arriving at their own totals. Personal property assessments in 1800 recorded total of 10,759 slaves (worth £233,350.96), 25,182.2 ounces of plate worth £6,325.94, and £181,593.36 of "other" property: PGCTA, Personal Property, 1800, 45. In 1810 they recorded 9,773 slaves, worth £211,977.85, 10,838.5 ounces of plate worth £4,569.27, and £153,048.95 in "other" property: PGCTA, Personal Property, 1810, 35. Totals given for personal property by the assessors for 1820 were: 9,601 slaves, worth \$590,471.00, 14,284 ounces of plate, worth \$14,284, and \$444,201.50 in "other" property. PGCTA, Personal Property, 1820, 37. I have, again, used my own totals figures. Prince George's County's tax assessments were taken in Maryland pounds current until 1813, but for ease of reference and comparability I have converted all figures to dollars at the levy court's own exchange rate of £1 to \$2.67. Kilty, *Laws of Maryland*, 1812, chapter 141; PGCLC, Proceedings, October 18, 1813, 476.
12. Lee, *The Price of Nationhood*, 189–90, 266, 267. St. Mary's County's tax records refer to a practice of not taxing people whose property was worth less than \$40. It was probably the same in Prince George's, and this indicates that poorer taxables' wealth was slightly higher than these figures suggest and that the county's 782 nontaxables were not necessarily destitute; Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 218–19, 221, 227–40, especially table 4.3, 227; Soltow, *Distribution of Wealth and Income*, 38.
13. Soltow, *Distribution of Wealth and Incom*e, 38, 134–40, 238–39. The figure here adds 12 percent to the mean derived from the Federal Direct Tax, as advocated by Lee Soltow, to take account of property aside from slaves and land. The British figures are alternatives depending on whether a 10 percent or 5 percent data sample was used for analysis. Soltow believes the truth lies between the two: "The Distribution of Property Values in England and Wales in 1798," *Economic History Review*, 2nd. Ser., XXXIV (1981), 60–70. PGCTA, Real Property, 1800, 1, 11, 15, 25; Personal Property, 1800, 11, 17, 28, 1. John Brown appears in the assessments under the entry for William Bradley Beanes, with whom Brown shared, I have assumed equally, £5.00.
14. Marks, "The Rage for Kentucky," 108–12.
15. PGCTA, Real Property, 1810, 4, 15, 19, 33; Personal Property, 1810, 32; Real Property, 1819, 23, 28, 32; 1821, 24, 29, 33; Personal Property, 1820, 24, 29, 33.
16. See Charles M. Dollar and Richard J. Jensen, *Historian's Guide to Statistics: Quantitative Analysis and Historical Research* (New York, 1971), 122–26.
17. Soltow, *Distribution of Wealth and Income*, 171, 236, 110–40, especially 124, and "Kentucky Wealth at the End of the Eighteenth Century," 618, 631.

18. Land, "Economic Behavior in a Planting Society," 473; Papenfuse, Jr., "Planter Behavior and Economic Opportunity in a Staple Economy," 303–06; Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 47–48; Walsh, "Slave Life, Slave Society, and Tobacco Production in the Tidewater Chesapeake, 1620–1820," 175; "Summing the Parts," 55–80, 87–89; *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit*, 72, 99–101, 181–93, 437–38, 541, 639–57. I have been particularly attentive to Lorena Walsh's analyses of land and labor as she is the most prolific and proficient modern scholar of the subject and the most critical of "arbitrarily selected" categories of farm and plantation size (*Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit,* 5).
19. PGCTA, Personal Property, 1800, 42, 41; Real Property, 42, 25.
20. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 222–28. Bayly Marks uses different slaveholding and landowning classifications from mine, dividing the population into large planters (i.e., possessing 500 acres) with 20 slaves, large planters without slaves, other landowners, tenants with property, tenants without property, and free blacks. Her conclusions, however, that larger slave- and landowners economically and socially dominated tobacco society, are broadly similar to mine. See 216–463. Her comparisons with the more equal distribution of land and even slaves in the wheat-dominated parts of the county are especially informative.
21. Soltow, *Distribution of Wealth and Income*, 113, 127–28, 131, 237.
22. Jackson Turner Main, "The Distribution of Property in Post-Revolutionary Virginia," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 61 (1954), 241–58; Hughes, "Elizabeth City County, Virginia, 1782–1810,"; Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System"; Soltow, *Distribution of Wealth and Income*, 121; "Land Inequality on the Frontier," 275–91; "Kentucky Wealth at the End of the Eighteenth Century," 617–33; Teute, "Land, Liberty and Labor in the Post-Revolutionary Era."
23. Menard et al., "Opportunity and Inequality," 169–84; Carr and Walsh, "Inventories and the Analysis of Wealth and Consumption Patterns in St. Mary's County, Maryland, 1658–1777," 81–104; Walsh, "Servitude and Opportunity in Charles County, Maryland, 1658–1705," 111–33; Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 30–37, 85–92, 131–41, 428–32.
24. The calculation of improvement values is complicated by the fact that assessors continued to evaluate them in pounds, shillings, and pence, even after assessments switched over to dollar totals. They also gave individual tracts a per-acre value in pounds, shillings, and pence. To arrive at a dollar total for gross land values, including the value of improvements, assessors multiplied by two-and-two-thirds. To take an example from the records: Jeremiah Hemsworth in 1821 was assessed as the owner of 159.75 acres of land on land known as "part of Maidens Downey and Grey Eagle enlarged." The total value recorded by the assessors was $394.09, but this was the sum of land valued at seventeen shillings and three pence per acre, and ten-pounds-worth of improvements. Multiplying 159.75 acres by 17.25 shillings gives a land value

of 2,755.6875 shillings, which, divided by twenty of course, amounts to £137.78438. Multiplied by two-and-two-thirds, this gives a dollar value of $367.42505. Ten pounds-worth of improvements multiplied the same way equals $26.6677. Adding this to the land value, we have a gross land value of $394.09, to the nearest cent (the actual sum is $394.09172, but I have multiplied by 2.67, which of course is a tiny fraction more than two-and-two-thirds—though close enough always to arrive at exactly the correct sum when rounding up or down to the nearest cent). PGCTA, Real Property, 1819, 2; 1821, 2. For this analysis, therefore, I have multiplied the assessors' evaluations of improvements by 2.67, and for net values of land, below, have subtracted these amounts from gross land values given by assessors in dollars.

25. See Lacy K. Ford, Jr., *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800–1860* (New York, 1988), 83–88.
26. Population Schedules of the Second Census of the United States, 1800, Prince George's County, Maryland, 491.
27. As Bayly Marks found for St. Mary's County, there are no age-specific data from which to tell how many people died. She found a high outmigration rate, though, and from samples discovered that in the 1790s and early 1800s about 72 percent moved to Kentucky, 13 percent elsewhere in Maryland, 5 percent to Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C., and the rest further afield to the north, south, and west. After 1810, larger proportions were migrating to western Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Missouri. "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 330–32, and "The Rage for Kentucky," 108–28.
28. Teute, "Land, Liberty, and Labor," 139–311.
29. Ibid., and Soltow, *Distribution of Wealth and Income*, 78–80, 121.
30. Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System," 303–18.
31. PGCTA, Real Property, 1800, 8, 28; 1810, 8, 26; Personal Property, 1800, 8, 31, 39; 1810, 9, 27; Real Property, 1810, 18; 1819, 17; 1821, 19; Personal Property, 1810, 21; 1820, 18.

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