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POWER, PERSISTENCE, AND CHANGE IN A LOWER POTOMAC VALLEY LANDSCAPE

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The histories and materiality of landscapes accrue through a series of choices made by their inhabitants in reaction to changing cultural and environmental factors. Decisions to create, alter, or preserve structures, modify terrain, and use or abandon particular regions are constrained by the actions of earlier occupants, the affordances of the material world, and contemporary sociopolitical interests. Landscapes are well suited for explorations of the causes and mechanisms of environmentally and culturally driven change at varying scales of space and time because of their receptiveness to alteration and their ability to preserve evidence of it. The examination of change has been particularly important for understanding colonial landscapes, yet recent postcolonial theory has challenged uncritical assumptions, calling for greater attention to continuity of practices, especially among indigenous actors across the precolonial/colonial divide (Silliman 2005, 2009, 2012; Rubertone 2012).

In this chapter, we explore both continuity and change within a nested series of landscapes from the sixteenth to the early twentieth centuries to trace the impact and legacy of Algonquian culture and British colonialism on the decisions of individuals living in the lower Potomac River valley on Virginia's Northern Neck. Building on earlier work by Potter (1993) and Potter and Waselkov (1994), we use a multiscale settlement pattern analysis to explore the factors that drew seventeenth-century English settlers to Sekakawon, an Algonquian district that briefly became the center of colonial settlement on the lower Northern

Neck, and the changing significance of its geographical features over time.¹ Using the framework of persistent places—landscapes that possess certain combinations of topographic, hydrologic, biological, and cultural factors that result in their long-term use (Schlanger 1992)—we then narrow our focus to a particular place within that locality, known historically as Coan Hall (44NB11). Our study demonstrates how its successive Anglo- and African American occupants modified the landscape but maintained the ideological power that it materialized prior to colonial settlement. Based on an examination of the placement and duration of both long-term and ephemeral features, we trace the dynamic interactions between people and the cultural landscapes they created and consider the factors that led to persistence and change within this particular place over three centuries. Our research provides a case study of the efficacy of combining a variety of recent advances in spatial technologies—airborne light detecting and ranging (Lidar); geographic information systems (GIS); and geophysical prospection—with more traditional archaeological survey, excavation, and artifact analyses to establish the chronological and spatial frameworks necessary for landscape interpretations.

Landscape Archaeology

Archaeologists have borrowed from the work of cultural geographers to define the scope and scale of landscape inquiry, but no clear consensus has emerged. Is landscape the equivalent of physical environment, or is it defined by human interaction with space, broadly conceived (Anscheutz et al. 2001; Ashmore 2004; Ashmore and Knapp 1999; Blake 2004)? Are landscapes simply the neutral “spaces between” areas of cultural significance or the “connective tissues” that bring them together in meaningful ways (Deetz 1990)? Can landscapes exist independent of the people who inhabit and imagine them, or are they solely human constructs? Landscapes are clearly physically and psychically meaningful places within which inhabitants mediate social and spiritual relations and form and materialize personal and group memory (Cosgrove 1984; Delle 1999; Gundaker 1993; Heath and Lee 2010; Johnson 1996; King 2012; Kosiba and Bauer 2013; Leone 1984; Shackel 2001; Upton 1984). In an argument charting a middle ground between processual ideas of the neutrality of space and postprocessual emphasis on spatial subjectivities, Anscheutz and colleagues (2001:160–161) outline four aspects of a “landscape paradigm” that are useful

in conceptualizing the connections between space, place, and people: landscapes are not equivalent to nature or environment; as the “products of cultural production,” landscapes are inhabited, shaped, and given meaning by people; these human interactions result in patterned changes to the landscape; and these ongoing changes result in dynamic landscapes, a “kind of historical text” that can be empirically observed and objectively documented. We find their paradigm useful—but with an important caveat. We argue that landscapes are shaped by people, but we recognize that like other forms of materiality, landscapes have their own physical properties and cycles that are embedded in an independent reality (Olsen 2003:88). They are not texts—symbols to be decoded—but compositions of interrelated, interdependent objects and features, some living, some the products of human creation, that structure and shape experience. It is both the limiting and enabling qualities of landscapes and human dependence on them that make them meaningful and dynamic (Hodder 2012; Jones 2004).

The site that became Coan Hall was a cultural nexus from which power was projected outward for centuries, surviving both the invasion of European colonists and the collapse of the British colonial project in North America. When introducing the concept of persistent places, Schlanger (1992:97–98) has called attention to the importance of combinations of natural and cultural factors that result in the long-term use of particular landscapes by past groups. More recently, Thompson et al. (2011) have argued for the use of geophysical technologies to locate and interpret persistent places of the past. The application of technologies such as proton magnetometry, electromagnetic conductivity/electronic resistivity, and ground penetrating radar can reveal human-induced landscape changes over broad spatial scales and through time, and they can be used to distinguish anthropogenic from natural landforms.

People communicate and resist ideologies of power through the material world that they create and inhabit (DeMarrais et al. 1996; King, Bauer, and Flick 2016). Landscapes constitute one arena of active negotiation where, through the appropriation and organization of space, the expenditure of labor, the introduction of new animal and plant species and new material forms of architecture, the construction of defenses, and the modification of terrain, individuals and groups establish and resist claims to authority. Understanding the history and meaning of power at Coan Hall requires a consideration of the reasons for, and results of, changing settlement of this place over time.

Studies of settlement patterns are inherently sensitive to the scale

of analysis used. The size of the area chosen for analysis can have significant effects on the interpretation of the results (Bevan and Conolly 2006). Large-scale settlement pattern analysis can lead to broad insights about the use of an entire region or landscape, but it can also overgeneralize and overlook important factors affecting site selection that vary subregionally (Ridges 2006) or at the level of the individual site. In order to tease out the constraints and affordances of physical and cultural features over time, we chose to approach Coan Hall from a multiscale perspective, first considering the lower Potomac River valley as a landscape, then narrowing our focus to the Sekakawon/Chicacoan locality, and finally concentrating on the area within the site boundary itself as a landscape. The value of this multiscale perspective lies in its ability to demonstrate how temporally and spatially small-scale landscape changes represent active responses to broad-scale processes and events. Thus by examining these landscapes in the context of one another, the strategies that the inhabitants of Coan Hall used to establish, reinforce, and maintain the power and persistence of the place are exposed.

The Landscape of the Lower Potomac River Valley

The Potomac River functioned as a border and site of intercultural contact long before the founding of the Virginia and Maryland colonies. Archaeologists have traced a succession of migrations into the region during the Late Woodland period and early era of colonial encounter (AD 900–1600). From the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries, as migrant and local populations mixed, they formed a multicultural, multilingual society and constructed dispersed settlements along the river arranged around palisaded centers such as Potomac Creek and Accokeek Creek (Figure 9.1). These centers often contained elite domestic structures, community storehouses, and mortuary temples (Dent 2005; Gallivan 2011; Potter 1993; Rice 2009; Shephard 2009). According to John Smith's map of the political organization of Virginia's Powhatan polity in 1608, published in 1612, each chiefdom consisted of a number of dispersed hamlets (settlements without a resident leader) surrounding a single village inhabited by the leader (called the werowance), elite supporters (including kin), and commoners (Potter 1993:27, 48).

The choice of settlement locations was based on environmental conditions, cultural practices, and historical events. Individuals and groups gathered resources from the river, low-lying marshlands, and forested

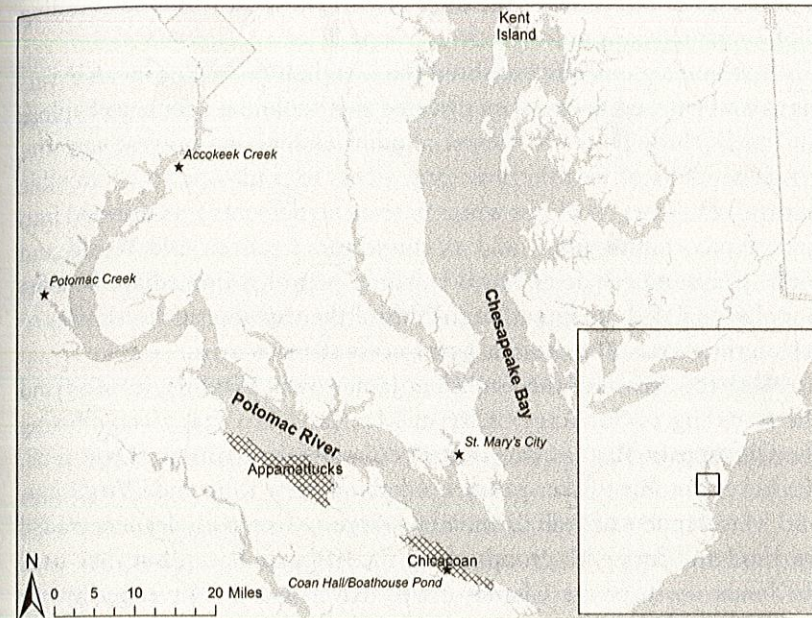


Figure 9.1. Map of the lower Potomac River Valley showing the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century central places and communities mentioned in the text.

uplands, requiring periodic travel through these areas. People primarily settled on the terraces adjacent to the Potomac River and its tributaries, using slash-and-burn agriculture to transform them into patchworks of small cleared fields that proved fertile for a few years, and then abandoned exhausted land to allow wild flora and fauna to replenish soil fertility (Potter and Waselkov 1994; Rountree and Turner 2002). Conflict also shaped settlement patterning in the Late Woodland and early historic periods. The consolidation of the northern Iroquois into the Great League in the sixteenth century resulted in the Five Nation Iroquois conducting long-term warfare against the Susquehannocks and other Iroquoian groups. They, in turn, undertook frequent raids on the groups inhabiting the Potomac (Rice 2009:48–50). Some Algonquian residents of the Potomac valley moved inland seeking protection from the raiding parties, leaving land along the shore less densely occupied and more open for settlement. It was in one of these areas, the peninsula between the St. Mary's and Patuxent Rivers on the north shore, that many of the first colonial settlers in Maryland patented land (King, Mansius, and Strickland 2016:10; Riordan 2004:66–68). Early colonial

landscapes of the Chesapeake were in part the legacy of long-standing diplomatic tensions among native groups (Rice 2009:70).

Riverine regions also captured the imagination of European sovereigns and entrepreneurs, who directed their colonial agents to explore and tame these places for imperial gain. Colonizing powers saw rivers as conduits of wealth, providing access to trade and to exploitable natural resources, as places where nascent settlements transformed into prosperous communities, and as connectors between Old World and New. Claiming estuarine lands not only provided immediate benefits but also signaled the intention to control the vast interior territories to which these coastal footholds gave access (Benton 2010:41,57).

With the arrival of the English at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607 and the founding of St. Mary's City in Maryland in 1634, rivers feeding the Chesapeake Bay became centers of colonial expansion. Over time, the lower Potomac River valley borderland grew to include Virginians and Marylanders as well as Indians. Virginia Company leaders traded for food and furs with groups along the Potomac River, but they used the lands north of the Charles (York) River as a buffer zone. By the early 1640s, however, a group of English landowners and indentured servants, as well as African laborers had established a community between the Yeocomoco River and Cubitt's Creek on the Potomac (Heath et al. 2017:7). Movement of settlers north of the York during the 1630s and early 1640s led to the onset of the Third Anglo-Powhatan War in 1644. In the 1646 treaty that ended the hostilities, the Virginia General Assembly banned settlement of lands north of the York River. Despite the hostilities—in which the Sekakawon did not take part—and the subsequent ban, the English colonists remained at their new settlement, anglicizing the name to Chicacoan (McCartney 1990:10–13; Potter 1982).

These newcomers appropriated a preexisting cultural landscape well suited for colonial settlement. The area consisted of fertile soils divided by navigable waterways that emptied into the Potomac River. Potter and Waselkov (1994:28) found a strong association in this area between seventeenth-century English sites and protohistoric and historic Indian sites. They argued that colonists chose to build their houses in cleared fields adjacent to Indian settlements and planted tobacco in the rich soils associated with places where Indians had formerly lived. The English settlers at Chicacoan, as elsewhere in the Chesapeake, adopted the practice of dispersing themselves across the countryside in part because native peoples had already created a landscape that favored such an approach to settlement and used a system of swidden agriculture that was

easily adopted by tobacco planters (Potter and Waselkov 1994:30–31). Yet Indian hamlets and fields could be found along creeks throughout the Northern Neck. Why then did settlement first occur around the Coan River? From the perspective of the lower Potomac River as a whole, the location of Sekakawon directly across the river from St. Mary's City, the legislative and economic center of the Maryland colony, provides a compelling answer (Figure 9.1).

Many of the earliest English settlers at Chicacoan were refugees from the fur trading outpost headed by William Claiborne on Kent Island, in what is now Maryland (Davison 1998:23–30). Claiborne, a land surveyor, member of the Virginia Council, and secretary of state for the colony in 1626, traded with the Susquehannocks and established a trading post on Kent Island in 1631 (Fausz 1988; Isaac 1957:100,102). The 1632 charter for the Maryland colony, which included the territory within which the fur trading island was located, posed an immediate challenge to the long-term sustainability of Claiborne's Kent Island venture. Following a series of armed skirmishes that resulted in casualties on both sides and sustained political maneuvering at the court of King Charles, the Marylanders won the day. In 1638, Governor Leonard Calvert led a military operation against Claiborne's establishment, confiscating goods and installing men faithful to his government to operate the trade there (Rice 2009:100–101). Loyal to Claiborne, deeply resentful of what they felt was an illegal takeover of the business, and grieving the loss of friends and family members killed in the violence, many of the Kent Island settlers left the island and settled at Chicacoan.

Claiborne backed the new settlement that was led by John Mottrom. Little is known of Mottrom's life prior to establishing the Chicacoan district, but the archaeological and historic record indicates that he was a trader, a planter, and a man of considerable financial means and political standing (Heath et al. 2017). Claiborne was a frequent visitor to the area during the 1640s, using Chicacoan as a base of operations in 1644, when he and a group of local residents attempted unsuccessfully to retake Kent Island (Riordan 2004:172–175). A year later, Richard Ingle recruited men at Chicacoan to join his uprising, known as Ingle's Rebellion, which resulted in the short-term overthrow of the Maryland proprietary government. The siting of Chicacoan can be seen as a threat to political adversaries in southern Maryland, a threat that was acted upon through the thwarted effort to retake Kent Island and the short-term success of Ingle's Rebellion. Residents may have feared reciprocal violence following Calvert's return to power, when former rebels fleeing

the reinstated regime found refuge within Mottrom's community or moved west to Appamattucks (Hatch 2015:82–85; Hatch, Heath, and McMillan 2014). At this broad scale of analysis, settlement decisions were based on the convergence of ecological, historical, and ideological factors and contemporary political conflict, which together narrowed the choice of potential lands to a particular place.

Despite the tensions between the Virginians and Marylanders, St. Mary's City provided the mid-seventeenth-century inhabitants of Chicacoan with access to trade, a market for goods, and companionship. With the end of Ingle's Rebellion and the subsequent settlement of Appamattucks in the late 1640s—increasing in intensity after the settlement ban was lifted by the legislature in 1649—colonists flocked to the Potomac River valley (Hening 1823 I: 323–329, 353–354). The Northern Neck was quickly divided into multiple counties and parishes, weakening the old boundaries of Chicacoan and tying the region more firmly to the Virginia colony. At the same time, political and economic power also became more diffuse in Maryland as Charles Calvert created a network of places throughout the colony between which he distributed legislative and military power (King, Bauer, and Flick 2016). In 1695, the capital of the Maryland colony moved north to Annapolis, and St. Mary's City was no longer an important node in the colonial network.

Larger-scale economic change began to transform the landscape in the final decades of the seventeenth century. As the Chesapeake economy became increasingly dependent upon the tobacco export trade, close connections to particular networks of British merchants were essential to its prosperity. These transatlantic ties gave rise to central places for inspecting, storing, and shipping crops. The soils of the lower Potomac River valley were conducive to the production of large quantities of the Orinoco strain of tobacco. While of lesser quality than the sweet-scented strain that was grown along the more fertile York and lower Rappahannock Rivers (Walsh 1999), Orinoco tobacco became the main commodity exchanged with groups of British merchants, based mainly in Bristol and Glasgow, who specialized in selling tobacco from the Potomac region to less choosy British consumers or to the continent (Carr and Menard 1989; Hatfield 2004; Walsh 1999). The tobacco grown in the lower Potomac yielded profits that successful planters reinvested in land and in increasing numbers of enslaved Africans, who began to shape the regional landscape through alliances

with Indians, indentured servants, and each other in ways that are still poorly understood.

In sum, on a subregional scale of analysis, settlement patterns along the lower Potomac River from 1500 to 1700 typically consisted of widely dispersed clusters along the river, placed to take advantage of natural resources and persisting due to historic ties. The attractiveness and longevity of particular places were based on shifting diplomatic alliances and proximity to places of political power such as palisaded centers and colonial capitals, population movements, and transatlantic economic networks that waxed and waned in importance depending on historical circumstances.

The Landscape of the Sekakawon/Chicacoan District

Potter (1993:48) identified the heartland of the historic Sekakawon district as the stretch of land that incorporates the drainage of the Coan River and Presley and Hull Creeks. From 1976 to 1979, he and Greg Waselkov conducted pedestrian and aerial surveys as well as limited test excavations in this area. They concluded that the seventeenth-century village of the werowance Machywap was located near Boathouse Pond (44NB111), an inlet off the Coan River (Figure 9.2).

Combining sites found during Potter's original survey with those discovered by later archaeologists resulted in a dataset consisting of 16 sixteenth-century sites, 8 seventeenth-century sites, and 10 eighteenth-century sites.² These data are not fine-grained enough to track settlement movement within centuries, and our study doubtlessly masks fine-grained temporal variation. Using ArcGIS, we extracted three geographic elements from each site: elevation above sea level, proximity to the river, and proximity to the nearest deepwater channel. The elevation of each site was extracted from a 2010 ARRA plane-based Lidar survey of 11 counties in Virginia. The distance from each site to the nearest waterway was calculated by georeferencing an 1868 map of the lower Potomac River (NOAA 1868). Finally, deepwater channel location was derived from a 1956 oceanographic chart (NOAA 1956). The shoreline and channel locations derived from these more modern maps were referenced against the 1670 Augustine Herrman map of the Chesapeake Bay, which includes a less precise representation of the Chicacoan region. Cartographic inaccuracies make direct comparison difficult; however, based on these limited data, it appears that most of

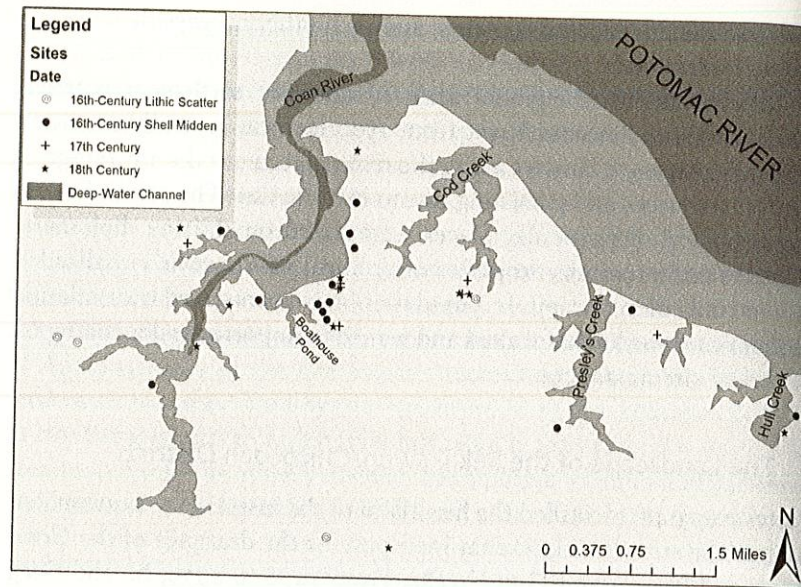


Figure 9.2. Map of the historic core of the Sekakawon/Chicacoan community showing the locations of the sites used in this analysis.

the changes in shoreline and channel location in the centuries during the creation of these three maps are not significant at the scale of this analysis.

Our analysis indicated that there was relatively little change in the average site elevation, river proximity, and deepwater channel proximity over time, but there were notable fluctuations in variation (Figure 9.3a–c, Tables 9.1–9.3). Our work reinforces the findings of Potter and Waselkov (1994) that early colonial settlement patterns closely matched indigenous site locations. Seventeenth-century sites did not differ significantly from sixteenth-century sites in terms of their overall variation in elevation, river proximity, or deepwater channel proximity. However, the locations of eighteenth-century sites were significantly more variable in regard to their elevations and proximities to rivers than seventeenth-century sites.

While the comparison of overall variance over time indicates continuities between the Algonquian and early English colonial settlement patterns at Chicacoan, when short-term sites from the sixteenth century are excluded and when the variation is divided at the median, divergences in settlement strategies become apparent (Figure 9.3d–f, Tables

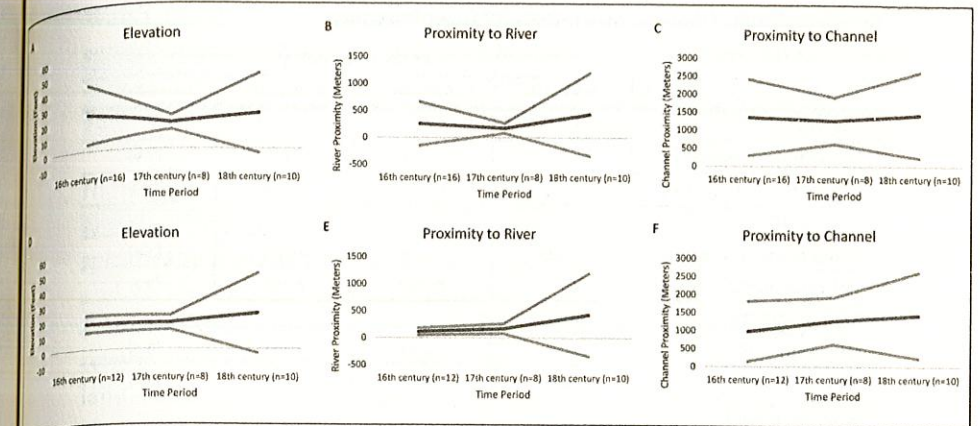


Figure 9.3. Site data by time period. The dark lines represent average values whereas the grey lines represent one standard deviation above and below the average. The upper row of graphs represents all of the sixteenth-century sites, whereas the lower row of graphs only represents sixteenth-century sites associated with long-term habitation.

Table 9.1. Results from Pairwise F-tests for Elevation

	ELEVATION ¹			
	P-VALUE	ALPHA ²	F-VALUE	DF
OVERALL				
17th century: 18th century	0.011*	0.025	0.121	(7, 9)
16th century: 17th century	0.091	0.050	3.630	(7,15)
BELOW MEDIAN				
17th century: 18th century	0.170	0.025	6.067	(3,4)
16th century: 17th century	0.788	0.050	0.870	(3,7)
ABOVE MEDIAN				
17th century: 18th century	<0.001*	0.025	718.107	(3,4)
16th century: 17th century	<0.001*	0.050	483.364	(3,7)

*Significant p-value.

1. Elevation data log-transformed to fit normal distribution.

2. A Holm-Bonferroni correction was used to modify the significance alphas in order to account for the increased probability of a type 1 error introduced by the pairwise nature of these tests.

9.1–9.3). Significant differences in variation are observed in the elevation of sites above the median and in the proximity to channels below the median, indicating that seventeenth-century colonists observed strict thresholds in these factors beyond which they did not settle.

The use of higher elevation sites over time is instructive. The Native people who occupied this landscape prior to and early in the history

Table 9.2. Results from Pairwise F-tests for River Proximity

	RIVER PROXIMITY			
	P-VALUE	ALPHA ²	F-VALUE	DF
OVERALL				
17th century: 18th century	0.019*	0.025	0.148	(7, 9)
16th century: 17th century	0.113	0.050	3.336	(7,15)
BELOW MEDIAN				
17th century: 18th century	0.025	0.025	24.195	(3,4)
16th century: 17th century	0.112	0.050	8.144	(3,7)
ABOVE MEDIAN				
17th century: 18th century	0.097	0.025	9.303	(3,4)
16th century: 17th century	0.123	0.050	7.597	(3,7)

*Significant p-value.

1. River proximity data log-transformed to fit normal distribution.

2. A Holm-Bonferroni correction was used to modify the significance alphas in order to account for the increased probability of a type 1 error introduced by the pairwise nature of these tests.

Table 9.3. Results from Pairwise F-tests for Deepwater Channel Proximity

	DEEPWATER CHANNEL PROXIMITY			
	P-VALUE	ALPHA ²	F-VALUE	DF
OVERALL				
17th century: 18th century	0.094	0.025	0.265	(7, 9)
16th century: 17th century	0.232	0.050	2.463	(7,15)
BELOW MEDIAN				
17th century: 18th century	0.002*	0.025	131.816	(3,4)
16th century: 17th century	0.141*	0.050	16.658	(3,7)
ABOVE MEDIAN				
17th century: 18th century	0.586	0.025	2.034	(3,4)
16th century: 17th century	0.540	0.050	2.257	(3,7)

*Significant p-value.

1. Deepwater channel proximity data log-transformed to fit normal distribution.

2. A Holm-Bonferroni correction was used to modify the significance alphas in order to account for the increased probability of a type 1 error introduced by the pairwise nature of these tests.

of English settlement made regular use of the forested uplands farther away from the river banks. In contrast, the seventeenth-century colonists did not settle the uplands, focusing instead on the more fertile lower terraces and depending on the tobacco trade with England and other colonies to provide them with necessary resources. By the eighteenth century, however, planters responded to increasing settlement pressure by expanding into less desirable interior land (Carr et al. 1991;

Walsh 1999). These changes in landscape use resulted in a strictly observed upper elevation threshold beyond which seventeenth-century Chicacoan community members did not settle, unlike their sixteenth- and eighteenth-century counterparts (Figure 9.3d).

While Native American canoes were not limited by river depth, European vessels that traversed the ocean required much deeper drafts and therefore could only sail in deepwater channels. Even small sloops specifically designed by North American colonists to sail both oceans and rivers had drafts too deep to safely sail outside of the Coan or Potomac Rivers' deepwater channels (Evans 2007). The first English settlers of Chicacoan, worried about retaliatory attacks from Maryland, situated their buildings at least 762 m (2,500 ft) from the nearest channel, beyond the effective range of seventeenth-century artillery carried on most privately owned ships of this period (Manucy 1949:32). The strict lower threshold on structure location observed by the earliest English settlers of Chicacoan demonstrates that not only did the settlers primarily fear attacks from privately owned ships, presumably sent by the government of Maryland, but also that this fear outweighed their desire to build alongside shipping channels that they depended on to supply them with resources. The placement of eighteenth-century sites indicates new considerations for siting houses (Figure 9.3c and f, Table 9.3). The end of intercolonial hostilities, the growth of population, and acts of political patronage opened up sections of the river bank close to deepwater channels for the development of ports and warehouses.

From this regional perspective, decisions about landscape use were primarily dependent on larger changes in economic and political contexts. The seventeenth-century Chicacoan landscape resembled the sixteenth-century Sekakawon landscape more than the landscape constructed by the settlers' direct descendants in the eighteenth century, as Potter and Waselkov (1994) predicted. However, divergences in resource acquisition strategies and the technologies of warfare between the indigenous and colonial groups led to some differences in their settlement patterning, mostly regarding proximity thresholds observed by the first generations of colonial settlers. Questions relating to the development of a particular landscape are best answered by a fine-grained examination of the archaeological remains that preserve evidence of its use. In our final scale of analysis, we turn our attention to Coan Hall.

The Landscape of Coan Hall

History and Methods

John Mottrom, the first leader of the Chicacoan district, established his home at Coan Hall by the early 1640s. Mottrom served as a justice in the local court, a leader of the local militia, and a representative in the House of Burgesses. In 1648, when the settlement was incorporated into Northumberland County (Rice 2009:121; Stanard and Stanard 1902:65; Tyler 1895:28; *William and Mary Quarterly* 1908:54), the manor house at Coan Hall functioned as both a central place for the fledgling community—serving as the courthouse and ecclesiastical seat of the new county—and as the nucleus of Mottrom's plantation operations and the center of his multiethnic, multiracial household. At the time of his death in 1655, it included his second wife, Ursula Bysse Thompson Mottrom, their six children, a resident referred to as "the parson" or "the minister" who may have stayed with the Mottroms to deliver Sunday services, three indentured Englishmen, two indentured English boys, an indentured Irish boy, two Negro women, and a Negro man and two boys (Heath et al. 2017:7–8). One of the Negroes in Mottrom's will was Elizabeth Key, the daughter of an Englishman and African who successfully sued for her freedom following Mottrom's death and married his former servant William Grinstead (Banks 2008; Billings 2007:195–199). A plantation store, brewhouse, and quarter, presumably lodging some of the indentured and enslaved labor force, stood at the home lot during Mottrom's lifetime (Northumberland County Order Book 1652–1665:172). His son John inherited Coan Hall. During Mottrom Jr.'s ownership, the property transitioned from a community center to a private plantation. Descendants owned the property into the nineteenth century as successful planters (Beale 1897; *William and Mary Quarterly* 1908:54).

Archaeological work at Coan Hall has combined pedestrian survey, systematic shovel-test survey, area excavations, and geophysical survey. Potter's previous surface collections defined concentrations of seventeenth-century artifacts within a field northeast of Boathouse Pond. More recent work in this area, directed by Heath, began with shovel testing along transects spaced 7.62 m apart. Eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century artifacts were found on the terrace closest to the Coan River. Several concentrations of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century artifacts and 12 historic features were discovered during initial testing of the field south of the river. From 2014 to 2017,

Brock conducted geophysical survey using gradiometer and ground penetrating radar³ (GPR) instruments to locate buried anomalies such as structural features, pits, fences, roads, and middens that could be associated with the historic occupation of the site. Over the course of fieldwork during those four years, we collected 14,530 m² / 3.59 acres of geophysical data in metric grids with zigzagged transects at a 0.5 m separation (allowing for features larger than 25 cm to be identified). This strategy provided a large contiguous comparative dataset in which time slices associated with the GPR data could be compared with profile images to interpret their context. GPR and magnetometry data have been overlaid in GIS to compare significant anomalies.

Interpretation of the Built Landscape

To date we have identified and begun to sample feature groups that include Locus 1, consisting of two pits (Loci 1A and 1B); Locus 2, the seventeenth-century manor house and yard (subdivided into Loci 2A and 2B); Locus 3, an unidentified feature possibly associated with another outbuilding; and Locus 4, a ditch discussed in more detail in the section of this chapter dealing with non-structural landscape features (Figure 9.4). For the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries, we combined locational and morphological data for features within each locus with chronological information derived from tobacco pipes and ceramics. Dating methods included using a modified version of Harrington's (1954) histogram and Binford's (1978) regression formula for white ball clay tobacco stem bore diameters to compare the distribution of ball clay pipe bores over time; ceramic seriation; and *terminus post quem* (*tpq*) dates of ceramics for excavated features (Loci 1 and 2) and plow zone assemblages (Loci 3 and 4) (Figure 9.5, Figure 9.9, Table 9.4). We recognize that different depositional environments (stratified contexts versus plow zone contexts) can make comparisons between loci problematical due to the higher probability of artifacts from different periods being mixed in plowed soils and to different taphonomic processes that affect sherd size and counts. Nevertheless, the dates derived from plow zone samples at Loci 3 and 4 show a fair degree of uniformity with those from stratified contexts at Loci 1 and 2, suggesting that the two areas can provide useful, if less refined, chronological information. Locus 4 may have had two discrete periods of deposition—one dating to the second half of the seventeenth century when activities occurred alongside the ditch, and a second dating to the mid-eighteenth century, by which time the ditch had been filled—that have been mixed

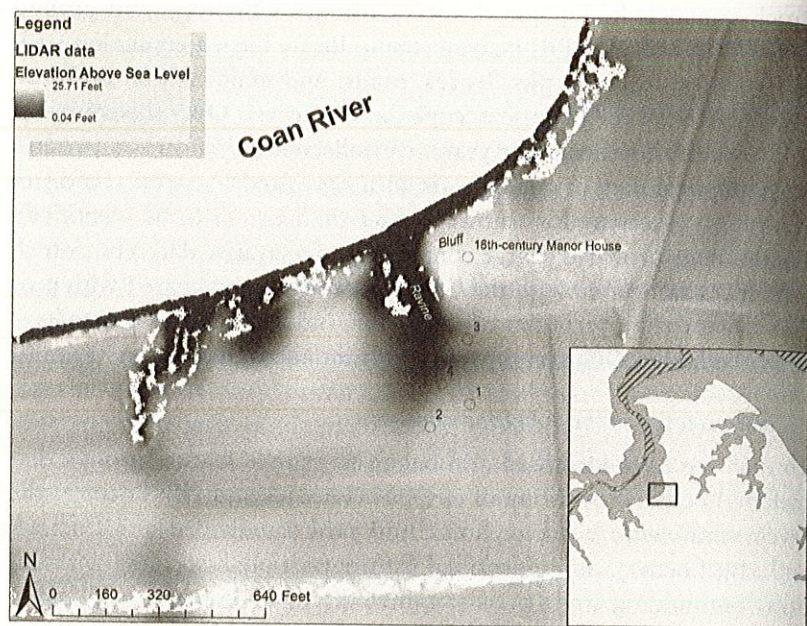


Figure 9.4. Overall map of Coan Hall showing the site loci in relation to the ravine and the bluff. LIDAR data from US Geological Survey.

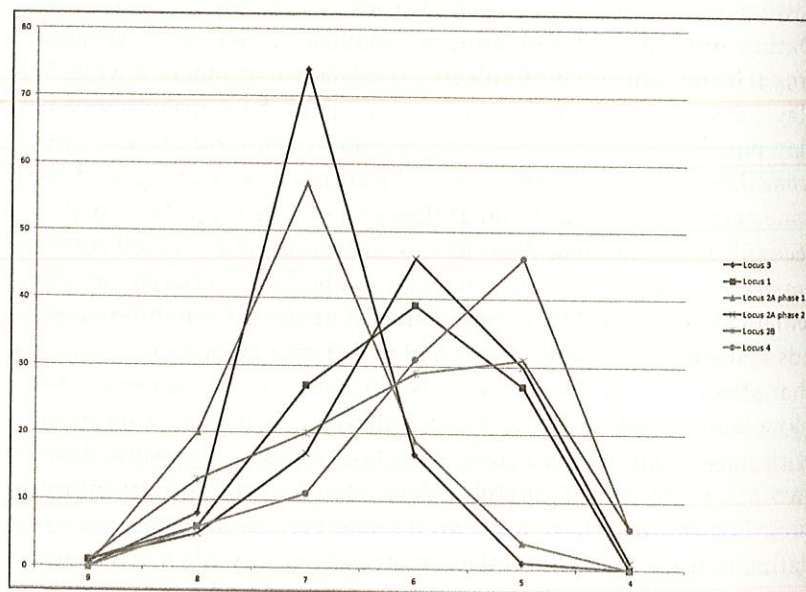


Figure 9.5. Distribution of white ball clay tobacco pipe bore diameters by locus and deposit over time. X-axis denotes bore diameters (in 64ths of an inch) which decrease over time (Harrington

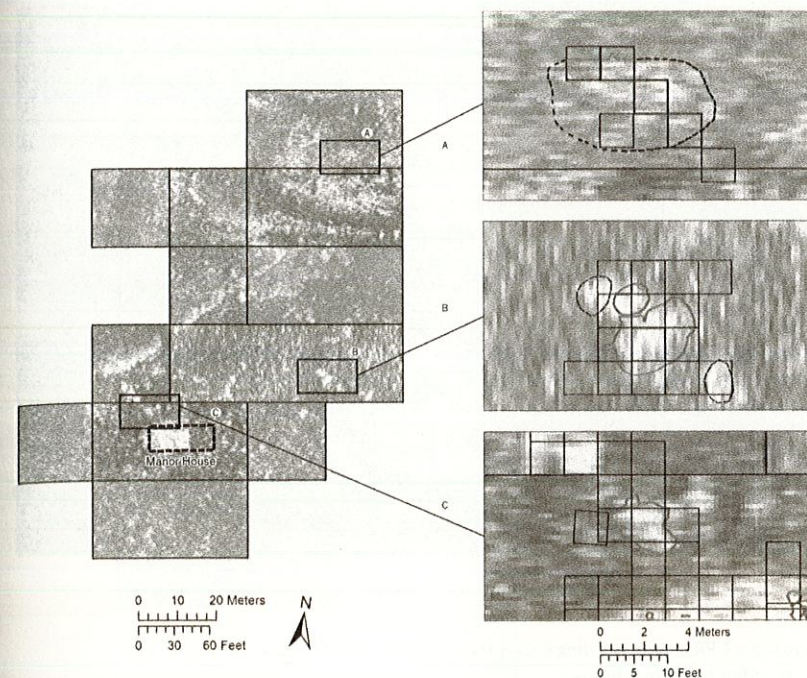


Figure 9.6. GPR output showing locations of structural features including the manor house.

by plowing. Excavations and artifact cataloging are ongoing for each locus, and results presented here are therefore based on preliminary findings that will no doubt be refined with future work. Assessing these loci spatially and temporally has allowed us to trace the development of the Coan Hall landscape from initial European settlement to the eighteenth century.

The earliest historic locus at the site (2B) includes two oval pits, one cutting the other (Figures 9.6c, 7). The plow zone deposits overlying the features yielded a Binford date of 1700; however, 11% (N=11) of the measurable pipe stems from plow zone at this locus were made of local red clay and are believed to date from the period 1625 to 1670 (Miller 2004/2005:247). They have not been included in the calculation. A sample of fill excavated from the top layer of the southwest quadrant and the entire east half of both features contained a mix of architectural debris, domestic items, and food remains. A single white ball clay pipe bowl and a stem were recovered from the fill of the intrusive pit

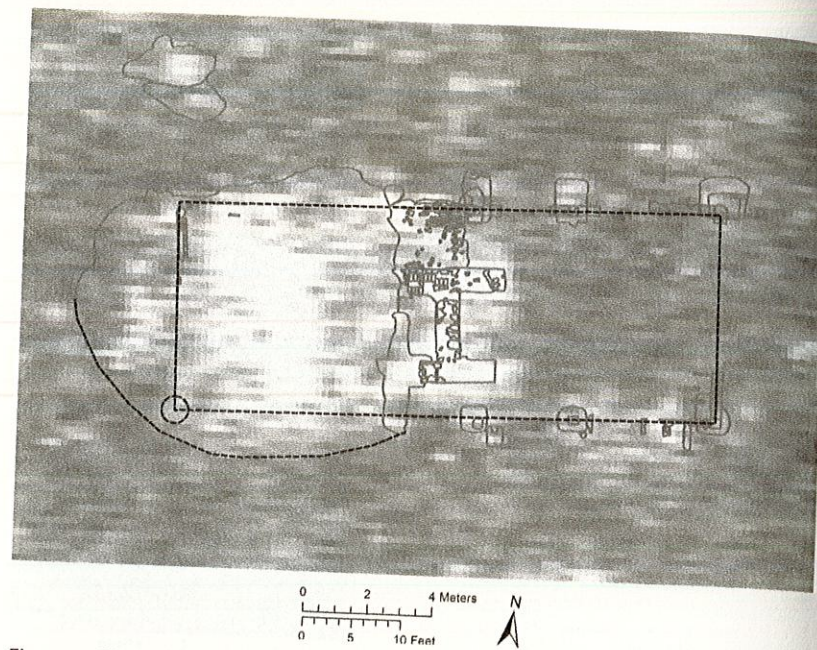


Figure 9.7. GPR output showing excavated and conjectured features surrounding the manor house.

tobacco pipes of Native American manufacture and the relatively small quantities of imported wares within the features suggest that these pits were filled early in the site's occupation, probably by the mid-1650s, while the plowed deposits above the pits contained a mix of fill from them and from activities relating to the occupation and abandonment of the adjacent manor house. A single architectural posthole and mold was uncovered north of the pits, and geophysical evidence indicates the location of additional posts in the area. Whether the pits were inside or outside of a structure is currently not known.

The remains of the manor house, Locus 2A, are located approximately 3 m south of the pit (Figures 9.6, 9.7, and 9.8a). The core of the earthfast structure measured 16.46 m by 6.55 m (54 ft x 21.5 ft), with a lobby-entry plan and a central stone and brick chimney. It was likely constructed by John Mottrom prior to his death in 1655. Its form is similar to the plans of a number of early manor houses in Virginia and Maryland, including St. John's, built in 1638 for John Lewger, secretary of the Maryland colony, in St. Mary's City (Miller 2013; Stone 1982), John Hallows's ca. 1647 house in Westmoreland County, and the ca.

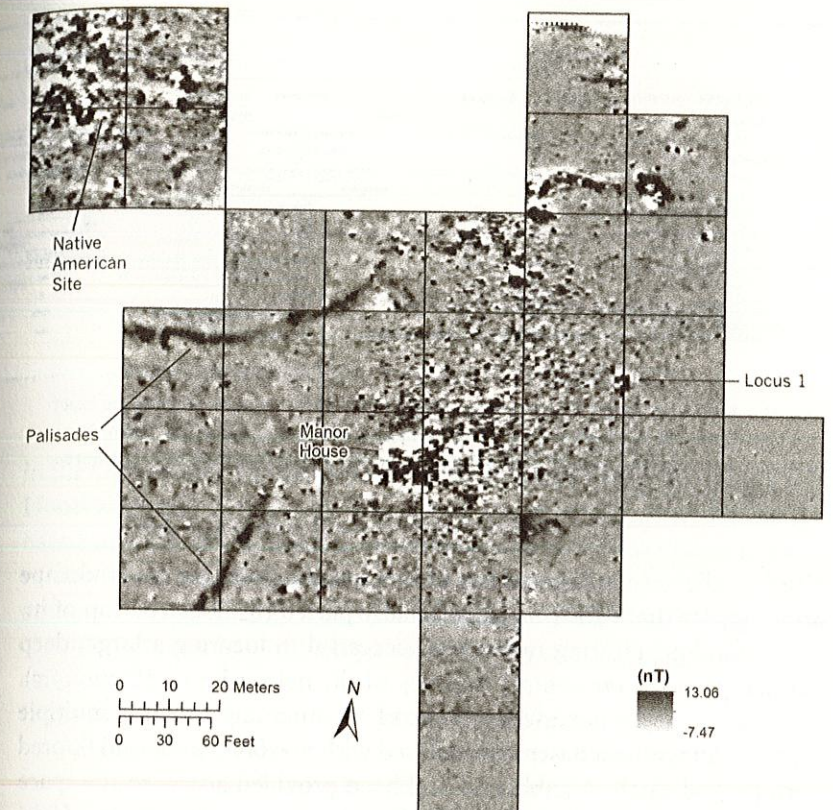


Figure 9.8. Gradiometer data collected at Coan Hall. (Note manor house (A), palisades (B), structure (C), and Indian/Plantation site (D)). Note that the palisade that is beneath the east half of the manor house is not visible in the gradiometer data.

1670s house at Newman's Neck in Northumberland County (Heath et al. 2017:12, 14, 17-18).

Although not detected by geophysical survey, a palisade line measuring 0.3 to 0.6 m wide runs diagonally across the east room of the house and is sealed by the eastern brick foundation wall, indicating that the house was constructed directly on top of a previously enclosed space in the landscape. Excavations of the palisade have not progressed to the point where we can determine whether it was constructed by the Sekakawon from whom Mottrom acquired the property, whether it represents a temporary enclosure constructed by English traders who visited the area in the 1620s, or whether it was constructed by Mottrom and members of his household when he initially settled the property. Whatever its history, the palisade's position relative to the later house

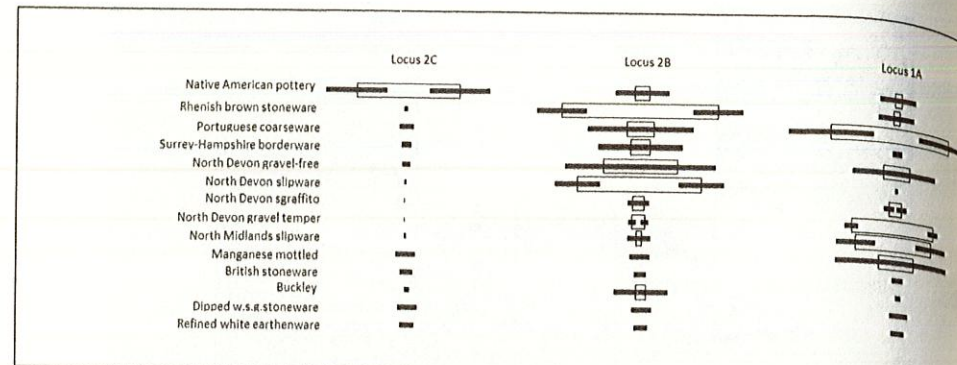
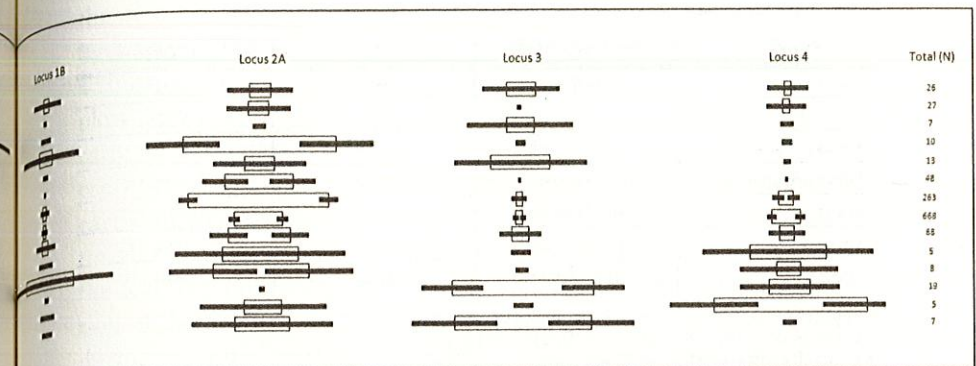


Figure 9.9. Frequency seriation of ceramics, using the beta distribution to calculate the exact confidence intervals (black lines) for the error term (Lipo et al. 1997; Lipo 2001). *Rhenish stoneware excludes Westerwald; +Refined white-bodied earthenware includes creamware, pearlware and whiteware.

clearly indicates the importance of this specific point on the landscape and suggests that Mottrom intentionally placed his house on top of it.

Ground penetrating radar was successful in locating a large, deep anomaly west of the central chimney of the manor house (Figure 9.7). Excavation of the northwest corner of the anomaly revealed multiple layers of fill within a basement enclosed with masonry walls and floored with packed earth. A gable-end bulkhead provided access to the space from the west end of the building. For the purposes of this analysis, the fill has been divided into two phases. The deeper layers, associated with phase 1, consisted of brick and stone rubble, concentrated deposits of plaster, burned wood, melted window glass, lead comes, and wrought nails. Using the Binford formula, white ball clay tobacco pipe stems contained within phase 1 deposits yielded a midpoint date of 1665 (N=54). The depositional midpoint for overlying layers associated with phase 2 was 1703 (N=154). Phase 1 deposits also have a higher frequency of earlier ceramics such as Rhenish brown stoneware, North Devon gravel-free earthenware, and North Devon slipware than phase 2 deposits (Figure 9.9). *Terminus post quem* (*tpq*) dates for the entire ceramic assemblage of the basement showed little difference in date between the two phases. A single sherd of Buckley, a ware type common in the eighteenth century but found on some late seventeenth-century sites in Maryland and Virginia, was present in the phase 1 assemblage (Diagnostic Artifacts in Maryland 2002). Phase 2 has a *tpq* based on the presence of dipped white salt-glazed stoneware, which was available



in the Chesapeake by the mid-1690s (Noël Hume 2001:199; Skerry and Hood 2009:97) (Table 9.4). The use of *tpq95*, which provides the *tpq* based on 95% of the ceramic assemblage and is “less sensitive to excavation errors and taphonomic processes that might introduce a small amount of anomalously late material into an assemblage” (Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery 2018), supports the pipe stem data, indicating that the two phases are temporally distinct. The *tpq95* for phase 1 is 1650, while phase 2 has a *tpq95* of 1675 (Table 9.4).

Architectural evidence indicates that John Mottrom Jr. conducted extensive repairs to the north wall of the structure, replacing the original timbers and underpinning the house with a brick footing (Figure 9.7) (Heath et al. 2017:13–14). Mottrom Jr.’s decision to make a significant investment in rebuilding parts of the house and to reoccupy Coan Hall suggests that he understood the benefit of dwelling at his father’s seat of power in the Chicacoan community. The house was abandoned and dismantled in the late seventeenth century, likely following his death ca. 1684. Early eighteenth-century occupants of the property placed additional fill over the abandoned structure. This later period of landscaping corresponds with the reoccupation of this area, perhaps by an overseer or enslaved laborers. Several small post holes, a shallow oval pit, and a larger rectangular feature that we believe are associated with the eighteenth-century occupation have been uncovered but only minimally investigated.

Evidence for three substantial seventeenth-century features, probably associated with outbuildings, has been found archaeologically and through geophysical survey; two at Locus 1 and one at Locus 3. Locus 1, located 31 m northeast of the manor house (Figures 9.6b and 9.8c),

Table 9.4. Dates for Loci

CONTEXTS	BINFORD DATE ¹	TPQ	TPQ95
Locus 1A ²	1696 (67/73)	1675	1675
Locus 1B ³	n/a	1690	1675
Locus 2A, phase 1 ⁴	1665 (54/57)	1690	1650
Locus 2A, phase 2 ⁵	1703 (154/155)	1690	1675
Locus 2B ⁶	1700 (109/120)	1600	—
Locus 3 ⁷	1669 (260/265)	1842	1762
Locus 4 ⁸	1715 (35/35)	1720	1690

1. Number of measurable white ball clay stems/total measurable stems.

2. Locus 1A contexts include 306C, 306D, 306F, 306G, 306H.

3. Locus 1B contexts include 552C and 552D.

4. Locus 2A, phase 1 contexts include ER574L, 605L-X, 650L-650AA.

5. Locus 2A, phase 2 includes contexts 271H-K, 574M, 583H-J, 599J, 603H-J, 605H-K, 650H-J.

6. Locus 2B contexts include 596A, 621A, 623A-625A, 627A, 628A, 635A, 664A, 665A for Binford dating; 624D-L for ceramic dates.

7. Locus 3 contexts include ER638A, 639A, 643A, 644A, 686A and 687A.

8. Locus 4 includes context 640A.

contains a large, rectangular pit that is 2.4 m by 3.96 m in size (Locus 1A) and a smaller oval pit measuring 1.4 m by 1.75 m (Locus 1B) that intrudes into its northwestern edge. Both features were partially excavated in 2018. The larger pit contained five layers of fill that together yielded 67 measurable ball clay pipe stems, for a Binford date of 1696 (Table 9.4). The smaller pit contained only 15 stems and was not dated using this method. Although artifact cataloguing and analysis has only begun, a review of the ceramics indicates that Locus 1A was filled after 1675 based on the presence of North Midlands slipware, manganese mottled coarse earthenware, and over 300 fragments of North Devon gravel tempered earthenware. Locus 1B was filled after 1690, based on the recovery of British brown stoneware in its fill (Figures 9.5, 9.9, and Table 9.4), and has a *tpq95* of 1675. Both features appear to have been filled over a relatively short period of time.

Another probable outbuilding is located 61 m north of the house at Locus 3, just east of the ravine (Figure 9.6a). To date, excavations have revealed the partial outline of a cut into subsoil filled with a matrix of dark brown sediment and numerous artifacts. GPR indicates that the feature, which is roughly 3.6 m by 6 m, may be a small cellar associated with another earthfast structure. The Binford date for the pipe assemblage is 1669 (N=260) (Table 9.4). The distribution of ball clay pipe bore diameters indicates a relatively rapid period of deposition followed by a later episode of light discard (Figure 9.5), while

the ceramic seriation indicates a period of early deposition followed by a second depositional episode in the late seventeenth century and a third in the mid-eighteenth century (Figure 9.9). The *tpq95* for the plow zone overlying the feature is 1762, while the *tpq90* is 1680, indicating a chronological break between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Table 9.4). Given the presence of North Devon gravel-free earthenware, Portuguese coarseware, and early white and lead-backed tin-glazed earthenware at Locus 3, the early Binford date for pipes, and the feature's proximity to the river, we offer a preliminary interpretation of this feature as associated with the plantation store constructed during the initial settlement of Coan Hall outside of the domestic compound. It appears to have persisted on the landscape in some form into the eighteenth century.

Finally, geophysical survey revealed the presence of a large brick foundation about 150 m northeast of the seventeenth-century manor house on the eastern bluff (Figure 9.10). The foundation is most likely associated with a new manor house that was built sometime after Mottrom Jr.'s death. Ground penetrating radar provided subsurface detail of the structure that exhibits a 15 m by 6 m basement with end chimneys supporting two 6 m by 6 m rooms divided by a central 3 m by 6 m passage. Gable-end chimneys and a basement are also present. Magnetics on the eastern edge of the structure provide evidence of a less substantial rectangular feature that could represent an addition to the house or the walls of a formal garden. The highly magnetic readings collected with the gradiometer indicate that the structure was likely burned. These data are in keeping with Richard Henry Lee's 1782 report of the burning of Dr. Mottrom Ball's house during the Revolutionary War and the later destruction of buildings at the site by fire during the War of 1812 (Ballagh 1914:270-271; Peters 1846:217). By the late nineteenth century, a Victorian-style guest house (to the left of the GPR anomaly in Figure 9.10) stood immediately adjacent to the former location of the eighteenth-century manor, incorporating bricks from the ruined structure into its foundations. That building still stands at Coan Hall today.

Other Landscape Features

The geophysical survey resulted in the discovery of other cultural anomalies that help connect the results of archaeological testing to the larger landscape (Figures 9.6, 9.8, and 9.11). Gradiometer results yielded spatial information on historic and prehistoric features including structural

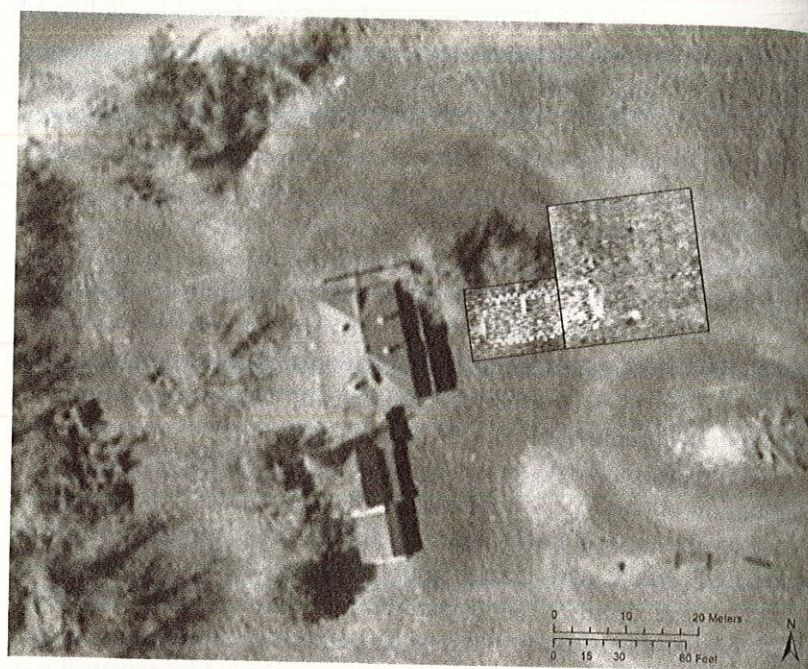


Figure 9.10. Combined GPR and Gradiometer data overlaying aerial imagery showing the location of the nineteenth-century mansion along the Coan River.

features and ditches. Two large positive linear high-contrast anomalies run the length and width of the surveyed area and may be palisades (Figure 9.8b). There are openings along the northern extent, and structures likely surround its opening to the Coan River. Other probable fence lines can also be seen surrounding the manor house. The north-west corner of the survey area situated on the small western bluff overlooking the river exhibits numerous high-contrast anomalies. These anomalies may represent a Late Woodland to early historic period component to the landscape as well as an unknown historic structure that was photographed on the site in 1937 (Figure 9.8d).

Locus 4, another large and highly reflective anomaly, runs northwest to southeast across a majority of the survey area and is interpreted as a ditch (Figures 9.11a and b). The feature measures 61 m long by 12 m wide and slopes to the south, against the natural topography. A small test excavation along its northern extent yielded small brick fragments and a single sherd of lead-glazed earthenware, confirming that it was

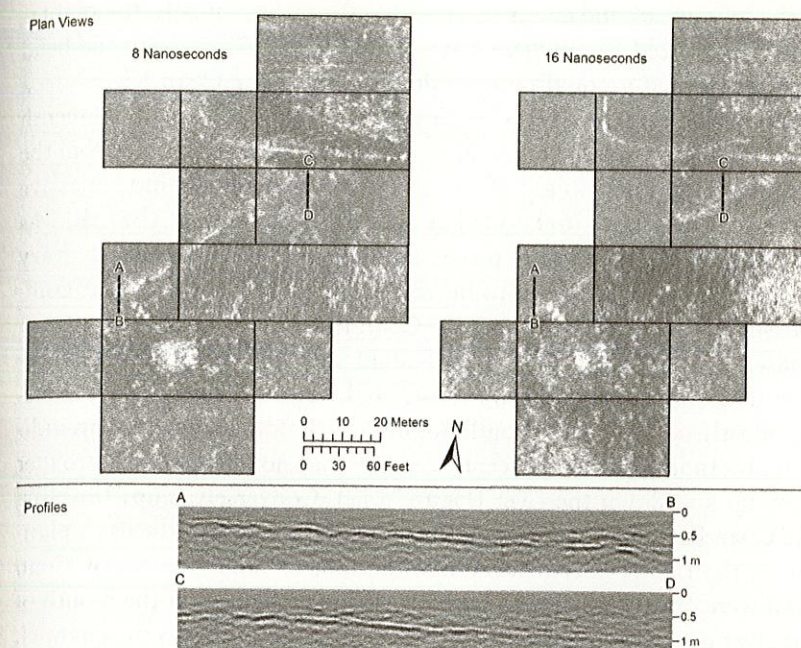


Figure 9.11. GPR data showing profiles of sloping ditch extending across the site (~40cbs left, ~70cbs right). (Note: topography slopes north towards Coan River.)

filled historically. The Binford date for plow zone at this locus is 1715 (N=35), while other artifacts recovered from plowed sediments primarily date from the second half of the seventeenth century to the early eighteenth century, indicating that the ditch had disappeared from the landscape by the early eighteenth century (Figure 9.5, Table 9.4). The ditch runs parallel to a bend in the Coan River and may have been created as part of a defensive earthwork early in the historic occupation of the site to protect the residents from enemies arriving from the water.

Conclusions

At the site-based scale of analysis, it becomes clear that the temporal changes and continuities of the landscape of Coan Hall are the physical manifestations of contingent, ever-shifting economic and political strategies within this persistent place. The placement of historic structures at Coan Hall varied over time, with later occupants moving to

higher elevations and closer to the Coan River. Specifically, the plantation core shifted from where it was established ca. 1640—at the head of a ravine that gradually slopes down to meet the Coan River—to a bluff overlooking the river where it was relocated in the early eighteenth century (Figure 9.4). The first plantation core, located farther from the deepwater channel, on top of an earlier palisade, and behind a massive ditch that may have functioned as part of a defensive earthwork, was designed to be more easily protected, whereas the eighteenth-century mansion house was meant to be visible from the Coan River. A comparison of the viewsheds along the Coan River between the two manor houses demonstrates that an individual standing at the seventeenth-century house had a relatively constricted view of the waterway, focusing mostly on the river's mouth out into the Potomac, whereas an individual standing at the eighteenth-century mansion had a much broader view up and down the river (Figure 9.12). Conversely, ships traveling the Coan River had fewer angles from which to observe the early plantation than its replacement. While the first colonial settlers of Coan Hall were mostly concerned with observing movement at the mouth of the river and with limiting their own visibility by ships in the channel, later occupants of the site desired to see and be seen by passing ships all along the river. The new structure's visibility and riverside location not only symbolically demonstrated its occupants' control over riverine trade but also emphasized their valuable landholdings on the fertile and increasingly difficult to obtain lower terraces.

The first generation of settlers at Chicacoan appropriated the historical power of the landscape in a number of ways. By choosing to keep but anglicize the place-name, they both referred to its importance and subtly made it their own. Mottrom carried this linguistic reference further still, keeping the place-name for his own plantation as a referent to the heart of the Indian polity while at the same time adopting the language of a respectable English estate, Coan Hall. By building this house near (future work may confirm its location on top of) the political and religious center of the dispersed Sekakawon community, John Mottrom made an explicit statement to both the indigenous and colonial immigrant communities about his centrality to the new political order. Like other leaders throughout the New World, he seized the preexisting power of the place for the colonial project. Moreover, his construction of a house similar in size and plan to St. John's, the home of one of the leaders of the Maryland colony, demonstrated his

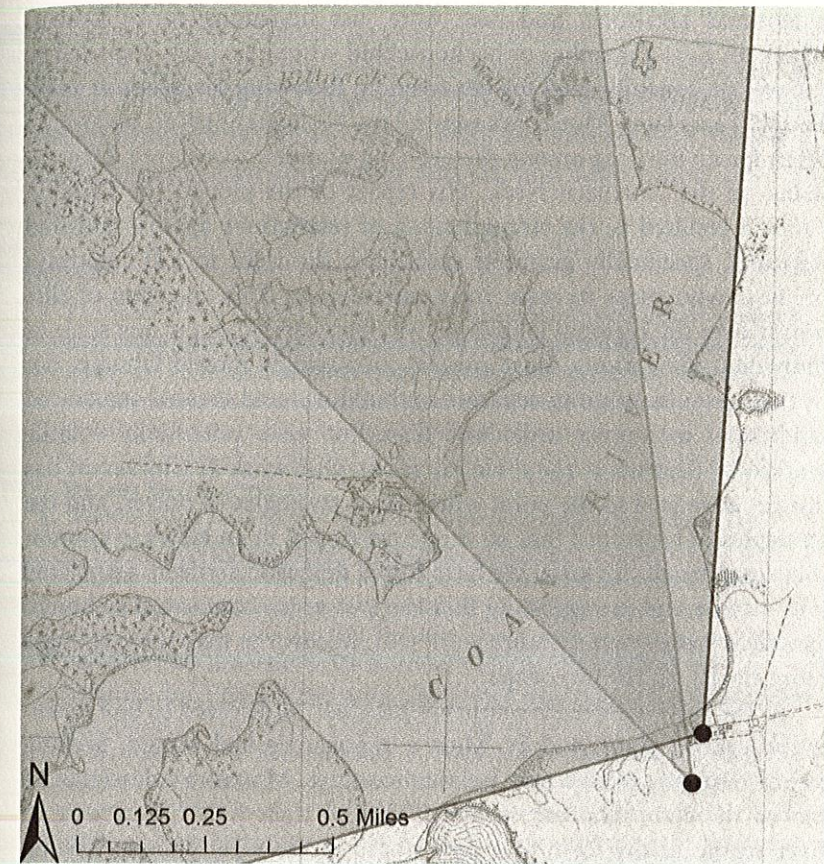


Figure 9.12. Map showing the view of the Coan River from the two historic cores of the Coan Hall plantation. Background image from NOAA's Office of Coast Survey Historical Map & Chart Collection (<http://historicalcharts.noaa.gov>).

membership among the elite of the lower Potomac valley who were able to marshal the necessary resources to build such a house. More broadly, his manor house at Coan Hall compared favorably to the dwellings of several of Virginia's early governors, making a visible statement about his authority within the fledgling settlement (Heath et al. 2017).

By the late seventeenth century, a new struggle for power was emerging within plantations across the Chesapeake as planters became increasingly invested in the institution of slavery. When Mottrom first established Coan Hall, the lines between permanent enslavement,

indentured servitude, and race were just beginning to be drawn. Elizabeth Key, a member of his household whom his heirs regarded as a slave, successfully sued for her freedom following his death in 1655. Twenty years later, Mottrom's son-in-law, Nicholas Spencer, uncovered plans for an uprising among the growing number of enslaved Africans living on the Northern Neck. His report of the plot to the Virginia Council resulted in the strengthening of restrictions against enslaved Africans, specifically granting authorities the right to kill runaways or those who chose to resist their enslavement. This assertion of elite power over the regional landscape was also carried out at the scale of individual plantations. Slave owners increasingly moved laborers out of their own homes into separate outbuildings and created structured landscapes to impose order and discipline on a potentially volatile workforce (Epperson 1999; Heath 2016). Our work at Chicacoan has not yet advanced to the point where these strategies of power, and the strategies of resistance that no doubt developed in an effort to counter them, can be clearly seen. We have found domestic artifacts associated with Loci 1 and 3, suggesting that the two areas functioned as homes as well as work spaces. Future work will endeavor to map these changes more clearly on the landscape.

By the early eighteenth century, Chicacoan had ceased to be a meaningful central place, and St. Mary's importance had waned. Seeking to assert power in this new political context, Mottrom's descendants moved the plantation core to better display their wealth and taste to river traffic in the form of a new house in the style popular among Virginia's gentry. Natural features like the bluff at Coan Hall were reinterpreted, as successive occupants used the affordances of the landscape to materialize power and control. Through both this large new mansion house and its riverside location, they asserted their membership within the ranks of the colony's elite. Ironically, this move to the riverfront ultimately resulted in the violent end to the settlement that John Mottrom Sr. had sought to avoid. A descendant, Mottrom Ball, lost the house and associated outbuildings to hostile invasion by the British twice during his lifetime, and he subsequently abandoned the property. Later residents built a new structure, in part with bricks from the eighteenth-century mansion house, in a final cycle of reappropriation. Although the last house on the property is abandoned today, it remains standing, a visible symbol of the persistence of this important place and its role in the emergence of the modern Potomac region.

Acknowledgments

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NOTES

1. The name of this Virginia Indian polity is variously written Sekakawon, Secakawoni (Rountree 1990:12), Cekakawon, and Chicacoan (Potter 1993:10). Potter (1993) and Potter and Waselkov (1994) use the name Chicacoan; however, to avoid confusion between the protohistoric and historic Indian group and the colonial group that replaced them on this landscape, we have chosen to use the term "Sekakawon" in reference to the Indians and Chicacoan in reference to the later English settlement.
2. While artifacts recovered by Potter and subsequent excavators indicate that several of the sixteenth-century Algonquian sites were occupied into the mid-seventeenth century, and many of the homes constructed by the first English settlers in the seventeenth century were used into the eighteenth century, emphasis was placed upon the date of construction in order to focus on the factors that were most important to the individuals who first selected each site.
3. Magnetic data were collected using a Bartington Grad 601(-2) Dual Sensor Fluxgate Magnetic Gradiometer System measuring the strength of the magnetic field in nanoteslas (nT). After collection, gradiometer data were processed using the program TerraSurveyor 3.0.31.0 and plan view images were exported for inclusion into the site's GIS database. A GSSI SIR-3000 Ground Penetrating Radar Unit with 400 MHz Antennae was used during the survey collecting a series of profiles which were stitched together and processed using Radan software.

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