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White Columns and Black Hands: Class and Classification in the Plantation Ideology of the Georgia and South Carolina Lowcountry

ABSTRACT

Social relations on the plantations of the South Carolina and Georgia Lowcountry were structured by a series of classifications which in turn expressed and codified plantation ideology. Racism, paternalism, and emergent capitalism have all been demonstrated through archaeological investigations as major constellations within this ideological universe. The expression of these social and ideological relations occurred symbolically within the plantations, as evidenced by settlement systems, architecture, and material remains. This ideology was also expressed in the documentary record in the ways in which planters classified their slaves and other social groups. This article considers the archaeology of ideology among the plantations of the Georgia and South Carolina Lowcountry as expressed through symbolization and classification and examines the evolution of plantation ideology from the 17th century to the end of the Antebellum era. It suggests that the social and ideological structure shifted from one based on racial classification to one dependent on labor specialization and social stratification, in response to changes in the Lowcountry's plantation economy.

Introduction

Understanding *The Mind of the South* (Cash 1941) has been the Holy Grail of southern history since the first recognition of the South as a distinctive region. The various efforts to expose the southern mind, however, have invariably been confronted with the multiplicity and duplicity of their quarry. Southern ideology catered to the prevailing winds of an 18th- and 19th-century social hurricane; at various times "southernness" was defined in response to a variety of referents. Among planters the ideology of class was dominant; among whites race replaced class consciousness; between races paternalism was revered; white southern men placed white southern women on a pedestal of virtue and rallied to the cry of honor, while black southern women pulled around them the worn fabric of family and huddled in its shelter against the hypocrisy of white southern men. Ultimately, the South claimed coalition in opposition to the North and found, wagered, and redeemed southern identity within the ideology of regionalism. The South was consistently comprised and defined on the basis of "us" and "them": whites versus blacks; rich versus poor; men versus women; southerners versus northerners. The South was inevitably a class culture, yet one whose definition of class was transient, far-reaching, and fluid. More than class, the South was a culture of classification.

The archaeological ability to probe the southern mind has focused upon the most prominent of southern class distinctions: racial and social status. This article reviews the archaeology of plantation ideology and finds within it an avenue which offers further potential toward understanding the plantation ideology of the Lowcountry of Georgia and South Carolina. The plantation South defined itself in relation to its component parts as well as outward opposition. Ultimately it presented an ideology of class and classification whose symbolic representation achieved its greatest expression in the material record. This article considers the archaeology of Lowcountry plantation ideology by first reviewing the results of previous studies, and then embellishing upon these observations to develop a theory of ideological classification. This theory is then applied to the documentary and material record of Lowcountry plantations, an application which suggests substantive historic shifts in the minds of the plantations of the Georgia and South Carolina Lowcountry.

The Plantation's Periphery: The Archaeology of Race

Axiomatic to the understanding of the South in relation to either itself or the world at large was its unique dependence upon and perception of racial

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dominance. Other New World colonies would flourish from interracial relations, yet in the South alone were race and social class inextricably linked, and the exploitation of one race by another as brutally followed in the pursuit of financial gain. The origins and transfer of such racial bias are discussed below, but it is important to recall that southerners sought to settle and recreate English society in the lowland swamps of the Carolinas and Georgia. Southerners would not adapt to the New World as an uncensored society, as to some degree did the French and Spanish, but rather maintained the rituals and rigor of English culture beneath the pines and palmettos of the southern coast (Ferguson 1977). Historical evidence suggests that race relations may not have been as rigid and reprehensible during the early period of colonization as they later would become; southerners' hunger for black labor would eventually engulf their coastal society and place the preservation of white supremacy as paramount over human justice and social concern. For whatever circumstances, the origins of southern ideology were clearly cemented in the ideology of race, and it is racism which forms the foundation of current understanding of the southern mind.

While all of plantation archaeology is, fundamentally, the archaeology of racism, the most persuasive treatment of racism within plantation ideology is provided by David Babson (1987, 1988; see also Lees 1980) from research at the Tanner Road slave settlement of Limerick Plantation. Babson's definition of racism emphasizes the Marxian characteristics of social classification, drawing from Orser (1987), Benedict (1934), Wobst (1977), and others. Babson (1987:43) views racism as serving "to hierarchically organize a society dependent on the coercion of unfree labor, and to legitimate and justify this society against changes in its larger ideology which espoused greater individual freedom." Racist coercion was accomplished by infusing "racial or ethnic characteristics (in this case, the lightness or darkness of skin color) with social meaning, meant to define social groups and organize relations between them" (Babson 1987:43).

Babson's perception of racism at Limerick Plantation derives from two factors: geographic location and social control. Babson (1987, 1988) notes that the Tanner Road settlement was located on the periphery of Limerick Plantation, a sort of limbo in which Babson claims blacks attempted to negotiate their relationship to whites. Drawing from broader plantation settlement analyses (Ferguson and Babson 1986), he observes that such peripheral occupations by slaves were characteristic of the Colonial period of Lowcountry slavery, but would gradually be replaced during the Federal era. Babson notes that at Tanner Road greater control and recognition of these peripheral settlements is evidenced by the recording of the settlement's location on plantation plats. For him, such recognition implies that planters were beginning to extend greater control over their dominion slaves, delimiting the boundaries of the plantation, and in turn limiting the boundaries of negotiation.

Babson further recognizes control in the gradual replacement of slave-made African-American Colonowares with European industrial ceramics. Following Ferguson (1985), Babson views Colonoware as a marker of African-American identity and resistance to slavery, and thus considers these changes in material possessions as reflective of a negotiation of cultural meaning. For Babson (1987, 1988), this negotiation concerns dominance and control. The gradual erosion of slaves' ability to negotiate their position within the plantation society, both in terms of residential privacy and material possessions, is considered by Babson to signify a physical and ideological loss of African-American semi-independence fostered in turn by the cessation of the slave trade. Within his discussion, such change is presented as neither the intensification nor relaxation of racism, but rather recognizes changes in racist ideology in response to other stimuli. Among these, the most critical is perceived as a gradual shift within European and American ideology which placed greater emphasis on individual freedom (Davis 1975; Fields 1982). As such a perception ran counter to the ideology of racism, Babson suggests that planters responded by seizing those limited individual freedoms which slaves enjoyed, in defiance of individual independence. His work thus sheds light on transitions

within Lowcountry plantation ideology, although it should be noted that the social changes which he addresses have also been presented in socioeconomic, rather than ideological, terms (Lees 1980; Zierden and Calhoun 1983; Joseph 1989). While the integration of his model with others discussing change among the Lowcountry plantations has not yet been advanced, Babson's emphasis on racism as the foundation for plantation ideology provides a meaningful contrast and corollary to the archaeology of status and social structure.

The Big House and the Manor Grounds: Settlement, Architecture, and Social Control

As Babson notes, plantation ideology was defined in part through settlement patterning. Planters inevitably secured their position both on the plantation and beyond as evidenced by their command and control; command and control which were often most visibly expressed through the plantation's architecture and landscape. Archaeologists have recently refocused their attention on social power and have emphasized the political, economic, and ideological mastery of the planter elite as critical elements of a plantation ideology, while recognizing that power was always the object of contention, and that incessant give-and-take occurred between planters and their overseers, planters and their wives, planters and their slaves (Orser 1989). Indeed, the history of some plantations brings into question just who held the reins of power, and a subtle thread runs throughout the plantation text which suggests that slaves may have had a greater hand in their destiny than planters would have willingly acknowledged (Faust 1982). However, whether in the presence or absence of real control, the image of control overshadowed its substance. Plantation architecture and the plantation landscape appear to have been carefully constructed as an altar to the planter's perceived omnipotent relation to the world.

In a series of reports and articles, Lewis (1979, 1985) and others (Lewis and Hardesty 1979; Lewis and Haskell 1980; Ferguson and Babson 1986; Babson 1987; Wheaton 1989) have focused on the organization and settlement of Lowcountry plantations as an indicator of plantation ideology. Lewis emphasizes the Georgian characteristics of plantation settlement in expositions upon a view of plantation ideology which stress order, hierarchy, and symmetry. Within this landscape ideology, the main house dominated the visual perception, both in size and appearance, and was flanked by its dependencies, both architectural and social. Slave dwellings were rarely immediately associated with the planter's home, and instead were placed in subservient positions, either behind the main house or along its flank, sometimes in association with the livestock pens. As presented by Lewis, such settlement dynamics served to illustrate the social dominance of planters, particularly in relation to their slaves.

Power and control as expressed through landscape ideology have also been discussed by Wheaton (1989) in an examination of Drayton Hall's orangerie. This structure, a Colonial greenhouse, was situated along the Ashley River, in a setting somewhat distant from the main house settlement, but which, Wheaton notes, would have been highly visible to river traffic. As waterways served as the interstates of their day, Wheaton argues that such position was intended as a notice to the passersby. Reviewing the role of orangeries on plantations of the Lowcountry and beyond, Wheaton echoes the observations of Yentsch (1990) and others (Yentsch et al. 1987) that such structures were intended to display their owners' ability to control nature. Greenhouses, in essence, defied nature, allowing plants to grow in winter which otherwise would have died, and provided for the cultivation of exotic vegetation. Their use on the one hand provided an enthusiastic response to the scientific curiosity of the Enlightenment, as well as a practical effort to identify and propagate new plant species which might be of financial benefit to the plantation. Yet greenhouses, as with formal landscaping, also served to demonstrate the planter's ability to control nature. Within an agrarian society, such ability would have served to reify the planter's social and political status, an observation apparently not lost on either planters or their contemporaries.

Dwellings, Sherds, and Bones: The Archaeology and Ideology of Ethnic and Social Status

Perhaps one of the most perceptive appraisals of plantation social structure and ideology was provided by John Otto (1975, 1977, 1980, 1984) in a series of publications emanating from his landmark studies of Cannon's Point Plantation. While Otto's research nominally sought to explain and assess status differences in the archaeological record, his study of the archaeological correlates of status emphasized the duplicity of class and social classification and thus provides important insights to the plantation ideology of the Lowcountry.

Otto's work at Cannon's Point benefited from the presence of architectural and archaeological remains associated with individuals from three social classes: planter, overseer, and slave. Indeed, it is the presence of the materials associated with the socially intermediate overseer occupation which provide the greatest insight to the classification and social structure of Cannon's Point. Otto observed that the material record supported two distinct sets of social associations. Buildings, in their construction and location, served to emphasize what Otto termed "ethnic status." White planter and overseer dwellings were comparable in construction materials, permanency, square footage per occupant, and location, and would have outwardly indicated a racial coalition and the segregation of the white plantation occupants in opposition to black slaves. In its outward appearance, Otto argued that architecture served symbolically to emphasize race as the foundation of the plantation's social structure. However, the material detritus of these occupations—the pottery, glass, personal items, and faunal remains associated with planter, overseer, and slave sites—supported a socioeconomic status model, in which planters were distinct and opposed to both overseers and slaves by the quality, quantity, and nature of their material possessions (Otto 1975:360–362). While Otto was primarily concerned with the archaeological ability to detect status, his interpretations of the ways in which social class was manipulated and symbolically presented signalled to plantation archaeology the elusive nature of southern class structure, and the range of classifications presented by southern ideology.

Ourselves and the Others: Classification as an Ideological System

As outlined above, the plantation South found and expressed its identity through a hierarchical social structure in which the role of each social tier was defined by its object of comparison. Because of this dependence on social structure, archaeologists and historians alike have focused on class as the basis of plantation culture, and in consequence the archaeology of the Lowcountry has mostly devoted itself to the study of status, in its ethnic, social, and economic expressions. This review of prior archaeological thrusts at defining southern plantation ideology suggests that while the plantation South attempted to maintain a hierarchical social structure, the basis of this hierarchy was far more fluid than the traditionally recognized social categories of planter, overseer, and slave. As noted at the outset of this article, social structure was defined in reference to a number of critical oppositions, and different structural oppositions could be simultaneously maintained which in turn supported and obscured the foundation of the social hierarchy. It should also be recognized that the plantation social structure was far more elastic than traditionally assumed (cf. Moore 1985; Rosengarten 1986; Adams 1987). Planters were not always rich, and rich planters chose to expend their financial resources differently. Slaves played a role in the Lowcountry economy through their participation in the task labor system, and task labor in turn yielded historically notable differences in the social and economic positions of the various members of the slave society (Morgan 1982, 1983; Joseph 1987; Adams and Boling 1989). Slaves may also have shared to some degree in the financial successes of their planters (Moore 1981, 1985; Joseph 1986), placing the plantation as a whole as a unit of study in opposition to other plantations. The ways in which the social structure of the plantation were expressed served to maintain the social

hierarchy, while the economic successes and failures of all members of the plantation culture provided some movement within, if not between, social categories. While the social structure and ideology of the plantation South is thus less readily explained than might previously have been thought, the key to understanding the ideological basis of this structure appears to rest in classification.

Classification has long been recognized as perhaps the most fundamental of cultural systems, and this recognition has in turn influenced the development of anthropological theory regarding both cultural ideology and social structure. Indeed, social anthropologists from Evans-Pritchard (1940) on have identified classification as the single most critical mental aspect of a culture, and have noted the necessity for ethnographers to master classification in order to understand the intricacies of the society under study (Needham 1963). The definition of kin, the boundaries between the real and supernatural worlds, the hierarchy and relations of social groups—all of these are classifications which must be understood before the operation of a foreign culture can be grasped. Clearly, classification is crucial to the ideational and social structural operation of a culture. Yet despite the historical importance of classification to the development of the cultural mind, anthropological interest in classification has been geared more toward the elaboration of specific cultural systems, and not toward an understanding of the overreaching role of classification within cultural ideology.

One of the earliest and still most influential anthropological approaches to cultural classification was published by Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss in 1903. *Primitive Classification* established the importance of classification to the understanding of social organization. Durkheim and Mauss (1963[1902]:81–83) recorded several aspects of cultural classification which bear relevance to the current consideration. Among these was their depiction of classification as a hierarchical system which structured ideological thought. In their words "classifications are thus intended, above all, to connect ideas, to unify knowledge; as such, they may be said without inexactitude to be scientific, and to constitute a first philosophy of nature" (Durkheim and Mauss 1963[1902]:81). Durkheim and Mauss recognized classification in a Linneaean sense; classification represented each culture's attempt to structure and define the social and natural world, and to order and understand the objects recognized within such a system of classification. Their opinion that classification served to connect ideas and unify knowledge clearly demonstrates a recognition of classification as an ideological system. However, their perception of cultural classification as "scientific" in nature does not bear scrutiny. As is discussed below, classification served to justify and preserve the dominant social structure by placing such dominance within a hierarchical formulation of the natural and social worlds. In this respect, classification does not represent an objective ordering of the universe, but rather a set of subjectively constructed categories designed to support the social order.

Durkheim and Mauss were at least partially cognizant of this fact and broke from the natural sciences view of classification in their contention that order and classification was not observably inherent in nature, but rather represented a social and cultural construct. While their argument that the individual was incapable of recognizing and classifying without social instruction has since been countered, their formulation of classification as a cultural, rather than individual, system remains intact. Rather than viewing the natural world as the object of classification's attention, Durkheim and Mauss argued that classification was based in the social world and extended to the natural as a means of integration and control. They recorded that the "first logical categories were social categories; the first classes of things were classes of men, into which these things were integrated" (Durkheim and Mauss 1963[1902]:82).

This basic definition of classification is followed in the discussion of Lowcountry ideology presented below. Classification is considered as an ideological system which represents each culture's basis for ordering and understanding the social and natural worlds. At the origin of this structure is social classification and the ways in which social categories within and beyond the culture are de-

fined and represented. This social structure is likely to find extension to the natural world, such that the entire classificatory system will be integrated in support of the presentation of social categories as fundamental, objective, and natural truths. As such, classification is likely to be hierarchical in nature, and dominance and control exerted in the social world are likely to be reflected in the construction of a natural hierarchy.

The understanding of cultural classification is thus based on the recognition of social categories and of social/natural hierarchy. At its most fundamental level, classification is bilateral in nature; an object (or individual) is defined not only by what it is, but also in opposition to what it is not. Classificatory systems are also elaborated and expanded in part in response to the importance of an object type to a given culture. Each culture may have a variety of definitions and categories for natural or cultural items, the extent of which quantify the importance of these objects to the culture at hand. The Eskimos' numerous classifications for snow or contemporary America's plethora of categories of automobiles are indices of the ways in which each culture views and structures its world, and the proliferation of categories within a particular type provides a gauge to the significance of that type to the culture as a whole. Classification thus forms the basis of cultural ideology in what it recognizes, in what it counterposes, in its degree of elaboration, but also in what it ignores.

The review of plantation ideology presented here suggests that dismissal and the failure to recognize objective "types" presents the most powerful application of a classificatory ideology. A perhaps now classic example of dismissal and inelaboration exists in the Cold War confrontation between Capitalism and Communism, or the struggle between the free and the unfree world as it was also portrayed. The importance of this dialectic to the understanding of capitalist political ideology derives from the direct polar opposition of these defined political extremes, an opposition which dismisses numerous recognized intermediary political and economic philosophies in an effort to emphasize cultural and ideological difference. At this level, the relationship of classificatory ideology to classic structuralism cannot be ignored, as both theories are based on bilateral opposition. However, while structuralism's oppositions are perceived as buried and subconscious, classificatory ideology recognizes that the structure of cultural ideology is at least presented as explicit on the surface of its meaning. The oppositions are recognized; what is obscured is the existence of intermediary categories which would weaken bilateral tension.

Classificatory ideology also functions in some respects within classic Marxian formations of ideological structure. Here it is critical to recognize that each culture creates and employs its own system of classification, and that separate systems operating in the same historical context may define material items, social roles, human behavior, and explicit ideology through different classificatory structures. Hence the meaning of an object is dynamic and dependent upon the cultural context in which it is defined. The recognition of this disagreement in cultural classification has been noted by historians of the plantation South, many of whom have recognized that planters' and slaves' definition and interpretation of religious precepts varied greatly, to the extent that neither recognized nor fully understood the other's perspective definition (Joyner 1984). More recently, an archaeological recognition of the African-American definitions of certain material goods, as opposed to their commonly associated European classifications, has illustrated the ways in which many common 19th-century material items may have been reused in African-American rituals, and thus culturally redefined (Brown and Cooper 1990). Since classification is constructed by each culture as a means of justifying its social structure, it is not surprising that classification masks or misidentifies those elements of a society which threaten the dominant structure.

The values of the application of a theory of classificatory ideology to historical archaeology are three-fold. First, as stated above, the ideological structure of any culture should be found in its definition and classification of social categories. For the historic period, many of these social classifications were explicitly stated, and thus can be re-

covered through the examination of the contemporary written record. Second, since social classification was frequently integrated and justified through the divisions of the natural world, it follows that such social and natural structure would be symbolically expressed. Material culture thus offers perhaps the most accurate record of the expressed social structure. Finally, historical archaeologists work incessantly at classification through the analysis and study of historic artifacts. While many of the categories which archaeologists apply to these artifacts are derived from their modern—as opposed to historic—contexts, this constant attention with the ways in which material items were defined and presented offers a unique perception of the historical structuring of the material world. As an effort to demonstrate the linkage between social and natural structure, the written record of historic classification, the material residue of the expression of this social structure, and its meaning to historical ideology, a classificatory approach is applied to the ideology of the Lowcountry's plantations, below.

Linnaeus and the Great Chain of Being

The ideology transferred across the Atlantic to the Lowcountry featured a potent dialogue between theology and emergent scientific thought, and the give-and-take between these two poles would largely structure the debate concerning slavery through the end of the Revolution. Classification was explicit within this ideological system. On the one hand, the *Systema Naturae*, presented by Carl Linnaeus (1806 [1735]) offered a scientific classification of the world which recognized *Homo sapiens* as a natural creature within the Primate Order of the Mammalian family. While the Linnaean system presented an overall unspoken hierarchy, humans were given no special prominence over other members of the primate family, nor were divisions recognized among people, and in this respect Linnaeus provided a truly objective view of the human condition. Such a view was countered and co-opted by a cultural classification which made use of theology and pseudo-science to justify social categories, a co-option in keeping with classificatory ideology theory. As Winthrop Jordan (1974) has documented, the fulcrum of this classification system was the Great Chain of Being. The Great Chain of Being had its origins in Classical Greece but witnessed its most expansive development in 17th- and 18th-century Europe. The Chain was a hierarchical structure which extended from the simplest living creature into the supernatural. Within this hierarchy, *Homo sapiens* was composed of both heavenly and earthly forces, suspended between angel and beast. Such a system provided for both a classification of the natural world and for a spiritual quality in people, and also left open the prospect that the various forms of human beings might place differently upon this sliding scale.

The discovery of Africans, in combination with the encounter of a variety of other human "types" which occurred during the Age of Exploration, placed a premium on the definition and relation of these various human forms. Through the work of physical anthropologists and anatomists such as Peter Camper and Josiah Nott (1844), biologists such as Sir William Petty, and others, there soon developed a system of classification in which blacks were presented as a lower stage of human development (Jordan 1974:102–130; Stocking 1982:42–68). Camper's measurement of "facial angle" yielded a reported gradation from apes, to Negroes, and then to Europeans (Camper in Jordan 1974:103). Petty, a founder of the Royal Society, was among the first to comment upon the variation among human types and summarized the sentiments of the day:

> I say that the Europeans do not onely differ from the . . . Africans in Collour, which is as much as white differs from black, but also in their Haire . . . in the shape of their Noses, Lipps, and cheek bones, as also in the outline of their faces and the Mould of their skulls. They differ also in their Naturall Manners, and in the internall Qualities of their Minds (Petty in Jordan 1974:102).

As Jordan (1974:5–9, 100–105) notes, the perception of Africans as inferior humans was dependent upon several factors: skin color (English ideological thought associated whiteness with purity and blackness with sin prior to the African voyage

and thus carried this association into the relations between Europeans and Africans), climate (the hot and humid jungles of Africa were viewed in opposition to the cold but cultivated environs of northern Europe in a climatological association of temperature and human behavior), and a misconstrued association between apes and Africans brought back by English voyagers. As Jordan (1974) observes, it is important to recognize the co-discovery of apes and Africans by the Europeans. Early accounts referenced the physical coupling of blacks and apes, and such reports, in combination with the human-like appearance of the apes, served not only to justify the Great Chain of Being but also to position blacks at the bottom of the human scale and in close association with the top flight of the animal world, the ape. The symbolic and ideological basis for classifying blacks in opposition to whites thus pre-existed the African discovery: "What Englishmen did not at first fully realize was that Africans were potentially subjects for a special kind of subordination which was to arise as adventurous Englishmen sought to possess for themselves and their children one of the most bountiful dominions of the earth" (Jordan 1974:25). Historian Drew Faust's (1981:12) recognition of planters' manipulation of social and natural categories echoes the response of classificatory ideology: "Nature produced individuals strikingly unequal in both qualities and circumstances. 'Scientific' truths demonstrated through empirical study prescribed a hierarchically structured society reproducing nature's orderly differentiations." Classification did not dictate slavery, but it provided the ideological and social structure within which slavery could occur.

Mulatto, Quadroon, Black, and White: Race and Classification in the Colonial Lowcountry

The documentary basis of social classification within the Colonial period in the Lowcountry not surprisingly supports race as the most fundamental element within the emergent social structure. As touched upon above, the climatological philosophy of human nature was evident with regard to planters' views of Africans. The geographic (and to a lesser degree tribal-cultural) origin of slaves was emphasized in notices of sales and auctions, and planters frequently communicated their own assessments of the relative merits of Gold Coast or Calabar slaves for the climate and labor conditions of the Lowcountry (Littlefield 1981; Smith 1985). Such discussion and review was partially racial in nature, as the pros and cons of slaves from various parts of Africa were discussed in terms of human aptitude and physical conditioning, a sort of sliding scale within the greater scale of the Great Chain.

Skin color was remarked upon as one calibration of this scale. Planters preferred darker skinned Africans to those of lighter hues, associating blackness with the physical ability to labor and survive the conditions of the Lowcountry. Such preference was also in keeping with the social opposition which justified slavery; blackness and an animal nature were linked which in turn explained a slave's hardiness and justified slavery. As contact between the races increased, miscegenation complicated the racial question. Lowcountry planters nominally recognized the mulatto as intermediate between black and white, yet such recognition was rarely verbalized and carried with it no social benefit, as existed in the English colonies of the Caribbean and India and with the French and Spanish colonies. It is worth noting both that the Spanish developed an extensive listing of terms indicative of the percentages of a person's racial admixture—achieving a total of 64 classifications in the extreme—and that the English and French colonies of the Caribbean employed a three-tiered social structure in which mulattos were able to enjoy greater social freedom and status than blacks (Genovese 1969:106). Yet Lowcountry planters spoke mainly in terms of blacks and whites, occasionally of mulattos, seldom of quadroons or mestizos, and maintained a two-tiered social status structure in which anyone with any percentage of negro biological heritage was considered a black, and where nearly all blacks were slaves. Such denial of intermediary classes emphasizes the position of race within the plantations' social and ideological structure.

Thus within the classification system of the Colonial Lowcountry, the social adaptation of the

Great Chain of Being, racial distinctions are considered as forming the basis of the proscribed social structure. Blacks were depicted as a lower form of humanity, more directly associated with the animal world, uncivilized and pagan, and socially and racially distinct from whites. For whites, especially those who held the reigns of power within this social structure, the associations with civilization, a higher spiritual quality, and power and control all appear to have represented critical social signifiers. Not surprisingly, the archaeological record of the Lowcountry's plantations indicates a physical effort symbolically to represent such associations.

The plantation archaeology of the Lowcountry has documented a distinctive African-American material culture which was dominant throughout the Colonial era but withered rapidly following the Revolution. This heritage has been best documented in two material realms: ceramic production/use and architecture. Lowcountry archaeologists have focused on slaves' manufacture and use of Colonowares as one of the more significant attributes of African-American culture in the Lowcountry (Ferguson 1978, 1985; Lees and Kimery-Lees 1979; Wheaton et al. 1983; Wheaton and Garrow 1985; Anthony 1986; Garrow and Wheaton 1989). Colonowares—slave-made, hand-coiled, open-fired coarse earthenwares—represent one of the most visible aspects of African-American culture during the Colonial period. Architecturally, excavations at Yaughan and Curriboo plantations (Wheaton et al. 1983) have revealed the presence of wall trench-mud walled and post-wattle and daub constructions within the Colonial slave villages, architectural traditions which are reflective of a West African building heritage (Vlach 1978).

The significance of these material expressions as presented here lies not in their suggestion of an African heritage but in their ability visually and symbolically to segregate black slaves from white planters as socially, culturally, and racially distinct. The use of mud-walled and wattle-and-daub dwellings and coarse earthenware Colonoware vessels is symbolically reflective of the classification system presented above, as these material possessions would have signalled to other Europeans that blacks were less civilized and more closely associated with nature (an association measured here by the degree to which natural materials were modified to form cultural artifacts). Similarly, the positioning of slave settlements on the plantation's periphery physically disassociated blacks from whites. Conversely, the construction of brick manors featuring Greek and Roman classical design elements, the demonstration of the control of nature through landscaping and as expressed through the construction of buildings like greenhouses, and the setting of tables with European refined stonewares and earthenwares and Chinese porcelains employing a range of decorative design elements counter-signalled that whites, at least those near the top of the social structure, possessed greater social and racial qualifications than blacks. The construction by some planters of small churches on their properties, and the donations and prominent pews of many in Charleston's, Beaufort's, and Savannah's most affluent cathedrals, also served to signify their spiritual superiority. Thus this material culture symbolically expressed the classification ideology and social structure espoused by the plantation elite. It should not be forgotten that this expression in no way negated the significance of Colonowares or mud-walled houses to African-American slaves, whose own classification system was likely to have emphasized cultural autonomy in the face of racial repression. Unfortunately, the classificatory system of Colonial slaves is far more difficult to extract from the documentary record.

As noted above, many of these material attributes faded rapidly from the plantation landscape near the close of the 18th century. Lowcountry plantation archaeologists have spilled considerable ink in a dialogue concerning these changes in plantation material culture and the meaning of such change. African-American independence and resistance (Ferguson 1985; Babson 1988), acculturation (Wheaton et al. 1983; Joseph 1989), socioeconomic change and adaptation (Singleton 1985), technological innovation (Zierden and Calhoun 1983), and social power (Howson 1990) have all been presented as the mechanisms guiding and driving this social transformation. This article recognizes all of these aspects in the evolution of Lowcountry plan-

tations, but views the primary catalysts toward such change as being the technological reorganization of Lowcountry plantations to exploit the potential of tidal rice agriculture and the subsequent reordering of plantation social structure and ideology to respond to this new infrastructure.

Half Hand, Full Hand, Carpenter, Smith: Labor Management in Lowcountry Classification

Toward the end of the 18th century and throughout the first half of the 19th, planters wrote about and referred to their slaves with a different system of classification. Race was no longer the predominant concern; labor skills and ability became the most common of slave categorizations. As Morgan (1986:97) notes, "the increasing size of the plantations reflected other changing economic realities. One of the most significant components of the slaves' economic world was their opportunity to do specialized work." His review of slave inventories indicates that by 1770 nearly 18 percent of Lowcountry adult male slaves were exempt from fieldwork on the basis of their possession of some special skill. While similar statistics have not yet been compiled for the Lowcountry, Marks' (1987) research from St. Marys County, Maryland, shows a steady increase in the percentage of skilled male slaves to all slaves through the 1830s. While neither Marks nor Morgan recognize the influence of classification on plantation inventories, it should be noted that the increases discussed above may also reflect changes in classification as well as actual increases in the number of skilled slaves. Morgan (1986:101) lists 51 separate skill classifications among the Lowcountry inventories which he reviewed, including bakers, blacksmiths, boatmen, bricklayers, carpenters, cooks, coopers, drivers, seamstresses, shoemakers, and washerwomen. The recording of slaves by specialization represents in part economic adaptation and the maturation of the plantation society as well as the realignment of plantation ideology; skilled slaves were of greater value, and hence planters obviously found reassurance in their enumeration of the skilled slaves in their possession.

Far more prevalent than the inventory of slave skills was a second system of classification which underscores the planters' obsession with the division of labor. Beginning in the late 1700s, planters began to classify their slaves in reference to an index which established the quantity of work a healthy adult male slave was expected to accomplish in a day. This index was referred to as a "hand." Throughout the slave inventories, sale advertisements, and day-books this system of classification was heavily relied upon. Slaves' labor capacity was indexed to the hand system: children old enough to work in the fields might be denoted as quarter hands in the slave inventories; adults with infirmities or whose age limited their abilities would be likely for classification as half hands; healthy adults would be expected to perform to full hand specifications. The hand index provided a measurement for a number of different Lowcountry plantation tasks, so that planters knew how many acres could be hoed, or how many feet of rice ditching should be dug, by a full hand. In turn, plantation jobs were measured in the number of hands which they required. A planter might refer to the repair of a rice pond dike as a job for two and a half hands, not as an indication that he expected two and a half individuals to accomplish this task, but that he thought the job would require two and a half days for a full hand, or five days for a half hand (Morgan 1982, 1983; Anthony 1989).

This effort to classify and quantify labor was also expressed on Lowcountry plantations through task labor. Task labor, the dominant labor system employed on Lowcountry rice plantations, established a number of units which represented the amount of work a full hand was expected to accomplish within a day. Once these tasks were completed, the slave's obligations for the day were fulfilled. The combination of hand classification and task labor provided one of the most management-efficient expressions of the plantation economy, establishing a system in which work was measured, quotas assigned, and rewards provided for the prompt fulfillment of labor obligations. This system was dramatically different from the labor relations employed elsewhere in the plantation economy, and from the social structure of the Colonial era.

The basis of this ideological shift is uncertain, but it is considered to lie largely in response to the economic and social changes produced by the adoption of tidal rice agriculture and in turn by the influence of the Industrial Revolution. Tidal rice agriculture employed the tidal surge to flood and drain rice ponds and provided significant financial returns to planters who could afford the labor to construct dikes and gates and thus transform the Lowcountry's swamps into agricultural factories. Tidal rice agriculture by its very nature subdivided the plantation landscape and provided units of measurement for agricultural production. It also established the basis for a more stable and permanent settlement, since rice ponds were self-fertilizing and hence could be used over extended periods of time. The Industrial Revolution brought about two significant changes in 19th-century labor: labor specialization and labor quantification. The second has historically been largely ignored, but refers to the emergence of an assembly-line mentality in which a worker's productivity was predetermined and measured. In the factories this was accomplished by the assembly line, in which each worker responded to the speed of the operative machinery. On tidal rice plantations this same effect was achieved by the classification of hands and the grading of tasks in hand units. While the notion of a transfer of industrial philosophy to the plantations of the Lowcountry requires far greater research and consideration, it nonetheless appears that industrial philosophy as applied to tidal rice agriculture influenced the development of a new plantation ideology which emphasized labor management.

The integration of this system of classification and social structure into the natural world is also not as readily recognized as with the Colonial plantation ideology. It appears likely that this transformation was supported by the spread and acceptance of the Linnaean system and by subsequent theories of nature. By the late 1700s and early 1800s Linnaean classification was very much a part of the Lowcountry, as witnessed by the work of William Bartram, the LeContes, and other naturalists at classifying the flora and fauna of the region. Linnaean classification emphasized the distinctive characteristics of each species as separating one from other members of the genus. In turn, Spencerian theory and particularly the concept of the "survival of the fittest" (Spencer 1890 [1850]) and the later theory of Darwinian adaptation (Darwin 1964[1859]) represent the most widely recognized works of a general trend toward identifying species adaptation within the natural sciences. Substituting skills for natural qualities, these natural classifications could have supported a social world in which people were segregated based upon their abilities and socially assigned on the basis of their adaptive work environment.

While planters' classifications stressed labor qualities in the 19th century, this situation should not be mistaken as evidence that racism had withdrawn from the landscape. Rather, the ideological need to express and support racial segregation was lessened by a series of laws passed across the South which placed severe restrictions on slaves' actions while at the same time securing the institution of slavery and its association with blacks. Such legislation was enacted in South Carolina as early as the 1740s in response to the Stono Rebellion, and the title of the bill which placed these limitations on Lowcountry slaves clearly reflects its racial bias. This bill was known simply as the Negro Act, and it served to maintain the association between blacks and slavery to the extent that it prohibited masters from manumitting their slaves, transferring that right and responsibility to the legislature (Wood 1974:323–324). With the linkage between race and slavery cleared established by the law, planters were less motivated ideologically and symbolically to display their racial superiority than they had been in the absence of such legal justification.

"Let Our Fields Be Factories": Nineteenth-Century Plantation Ideology

The social structure of industrialization maintained a status hierarchy, although one which recognized labor specialization and the hierarchy of supervisory roles. This ideology also emphasized order and organization, employing a strategy in which resources were orderly distributed to pro-

vide for the uninterrupted flow from raw material to finished good. The transformations in Lowcountry plantations, alluded to above, mirror in many respects this emergent ideological structure. In terms of settlement, slave villages were pulled in from the periphery and established nearer the main house complex on Lowcountry plantations of the 19th century. These villages were referred to as "quarters" or "settlements" on plantation plats, and appear to have represented labor units on many plantations. Ten structures was a common number of houses to be found in a slave village, and these would have housed from 30 to 60 plus slaves. Plantations with more than 60 or 70 slaves were likely to have possessed additional quarters, and these were most often established in proximity to agricultural fields in which the slaves were employed (Singleton 1985; Anderson and Joseph 1988). On some plantations special settlements were established where intransigent slaves were sent; Pierce Butler's Settlement Four apparently housed the least cooperative of the Butler slaves and was situated the furthest from the main house complex and in the most hostile natural environment (Scott 1984; Bell 1987).

These settlements were organized as "streets," parallel rows of houses with an even spacing. Planters emphasized the benefits of streets by stressing the facility which they provided to supervision (Breeden 1980). Along these streets, 19th-century Lowcountry slave housing was normally of frame construction, with tabby and occasionally brick also employed as construction materials. Slave cabins were raised off the ground and placed on wood or brick piers; piered construction made these cabins cooler in the summer and also more cleanly, and increased planter supervision by eliminating subfloor hiding places. By this time planters and southern agricultural journals expressed greater concern with the health of slaves (Breeden 1980). In most respects these dwellings were barren and rudimentary, although a slave might expend income gained through the task labor system on plate-glass windows (Joseph 1986). It was customary for the slave driver to occupy the first house upon entering the village (Anthony 1976), a symbolic reflection of his superior social status within the slave society.

The material culture of slavery changed also. Colonoware was no longer made on a broad scale; slaves ate from English and American industrial ceramics purchased and distributed by planters. These ceramics were usually of the most inexpensive forms; planters reserved for their own tables transfer-printed wares and porcelain. The slave diet provided by planters was also rudimentary, and was supplemented by wild fish and game (Reitz et al. 1985). As with other items provided by planters, a considerable gap separated the quality and quantity of slave and planter assemblages.

All of these observations intermesh with the ideological structure expressed above. Plantation settlement reflected an efficient distribution of resources across the landscape: slave villages were dispersed as labor units and placed adjacent to rice fields; the planter's home, barns, livestock pens, and other buildings housing non-human resources were clustered and centrally located (Prunty 1955). Domestic architecture was indicative of this social scale. Slave dwellings were not nearly as different from planters' homes in construction as they had been in the Colonial era, and while they would not be mistaken for a planter's residence, the materials and construction of these buildings were common to both, suggesting that social scale was the intended signifier, not race. Within the village a status hierarchy based on labor skills was recognized in the relative position of occupants and possibly in materials and ornamentation as well. Finally, the material possessions of slaves reflected their relative social position within the plantation, a status also made malleable by slaves' ability to earn income through the task labor economy. In these respects, a social structure based on labor skills and socioeconomic status appears to have replaced race as the determinant of 19th-century Lowcountry plantation social organization and ideology.

"No African Hut": Conclusions

The ideology of Lowcountry plantations expressed above, the ideology of classification, suggests a shift in the Lowcountry mind-set from a classification based on race to one which empha-

sized labor skills and socioeconomic stratification. This ideological transition occurred during the second half of the 18th century, and is considered to be the product, and not the producer, of the particular history of the Lowcountry. Specifically, two aspects of the history of this region are regarded as fundamental to the nature of the plantation economy in the Lowcountry and in turn of its ideology. The dramatic influx of African slaves in the early decades of the European settlement, the corresponding "black majority" (Wood 1974), and the relatively isolated and forbidding landscape which formed the rural hinterland provided the basis for a plantation economy composed of isolated and semi-isolated settlements occupied predominantly by African slaves. This settlement and social structure in turn substantially provided for the non-European appearance of the African settlements within these early plantations. The introduction of tidal rice agriculture in the latter decades of the 18th century rewrote the Lowcountry's settlement and social structure. Tidal rice provided the basis for a more stable, complex, and elaborate plantation settlement, which the income generated by this crop helped to secure. Much of the material expression of the Lowcountry's plantations can thus be understood with regard to these demographic and socioeconomic forces; much, but not all.

The shift in plantation settlement which accompanied the introduction of tidal rice agriculture can explain the locations of slave settlements, but not the corresponding change in their organization and appearance. It has been argued that on Colonial plantations racial difference—and indeed, racial superiority—was symbolically represented by the appearance of slave and owner housing and in the material assemblages associated with masters and slaves. While the shift to tidal rice agriculture brought about a more compact and more stable settlement, such social differences could still have been maintained architecturally and materially. They were not. Instead, planters apparently sought to minimize cultural differences while emphasizing the social hierarchy. House form, settlement patterning, and material culture were all changed, at the planters' insistence. Ben Sullivan, a former slave of Thomas Cooper on St. Sullivans Island, Georgia, recalled that:

> Ole man Okra an ole man Gibson an ole Israel, dey's African an dey belong tuh James Couper an das how I knows em. . . . Ole man Okra he say he wahn a place lak he hab in Africa so he buil im a hut. I membuh it well. It wuz bout twelve by foeteen feet an it hab dut flo an he buil duh side lak basket weave wid clay plastuh on it. It hab a flat rof wut he make from bush an palmettuh an it hab one doe an no winduhs. Bu Massuh make im pull it down. He say he ain wahn no African hut on he place (*Drums and Shadows* 1940:179–180).

With the shift to tidal rice agriculture, European-American planters stopped emphasizing the differences between Africans and Europeans, to the point that the material evidences of such cultural variation disappeared. This dramatic change in material culture cannot be explained simply in terms of changing socioeconomics or acculturation. Rather, it reflects a fundamental difference in the ways in which planters thought. It is suggested here that their new way of thinking reflected the "industrialization" of the plantation economy brought about by the shift to tidal rice agriculture, and that this change, and the ideological structure which proceeded it, are legible in the archaeological record.

The theory of classificatory ideology presented herein was developed in response to the particular circumstances of Lowcountry plantation archaeology. It remains to be seen whether its application is unique or universal. It is suggested, however, that classification offers a rare access into the minds of other cultures, and one with particular relevance to historical archaeology. Historical archaeology is inherently associated with the classification of material culture. By extending systems of classification away from the archaeological and toward the historic, and by understanding the ways in which material items could have been used to symbolize social structure, it may be possible to work from the ground up and to reconstruct historic ideologies and classifications which are not represented in the documentary record. It is a difficult process to attempt to step back into the minds of historic cultures. The study of classification offers one possible path, and thus the potential for historical

archaeology to move away from What happened? and When? to the more important Why?

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