
Vernacular Houses and Domestic Material Culture on Barbadian Sugar Plantations, 1640–1838

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Abstract

This paper describes the houses and household furnishings of the enslaved people on Barbadian sugar plantations, and traces the development and changes in architectural forms, including wattle-and-daub, stone, and wooden plank dwellings, over the several centuries of slavery on the island. We also treat the housing policies of plantation owners/managers, and explore possible African and European cultural influences on the Barbadian vernacular housing tradition that emerged during the period of slavery.

Introduction

In this paper we describe both the houses and household furnishings of the enslaved people on Barbadian sugar plantations, and also trace the development and changes in architectural forms over the several centuries of slavery on the island. We also treat the housing policies of plantation owners/managers and explore possible African and European cultural influences on the Barbadian vernacular housing tradition that emerged during the period of slavery. It must be emphasized at the outset that, as with so many areas of the social, cultural and material life of the enslaved people in Barbados, information in documentary sources is often very superficial, highly limited, fragmented and ethnocentric. Because of the sparse historical and archaeological record, severe limitations are placed on the amount of detail that can be captured with respect to the topics treated in this paper.¹

Village Settlements and Plantation Housing Policies

During the period of plantation slavery in Barbados, from around the 1640s to between 1834 and 1838, the great majority of enslaved Barbadians lived on sugar plantations, in small villages or hamlets formerly referred to as "Negro Yards". The villages were on an average of about five acres or less of land and were usually located not far from the house of the planter (the "dwelling house") and plantation yard, which contained the sugar mill and factory, stables, and various out-buildings. During this period there may have been roughly 400 or more such villages, though their numbers fluctuated over the years. Villages on smaller plantations had fewer than 50 inhabitants, but settlements on medium and large plantations held between 100 to 200 people. A significant number had populations in the 200s while settlements exceeding 300 people were relatively rare. On smaller plantations, or farms with few enslaved labourers, there were only a handful of houses, while on many others the number of houses was closer to twenty-five. On a still larger number of plantations, with enslaved populations from 100 to 200, the settlements usually contained from 25 to 50 houses, while a significant number of settlements with populations numbering in the 200s contained up to around 75 houses. It is doubtful that many plantations had more than 80 houses. In 1833, for example, Vaucluse, in the parish of St Thomas, was among Barbados's largest plantations, consisting of "nearly 600 acres" and "more than 300" enslaved persons. At this time, less than four percent of the island's enslaved population lived on plantations of this size, and the Vaucluse settlement had "nearly" 80 houses. Finally, it can be noted that while planters determined the actual locale of the "Negro yard", the enslaved were generally free to choose their specific house sites within this area.²

The slave code of Barbados, reflecting a general, British West Indian pattern, contained no provisions for housing, "but by voluntary custom", a planter in the 1780s reported, "the masters generally allow them to build little cottages for that purpose".³ Even if Barbadian law had provided for shelter, it would probably not have been enforced, nor would it have had any significant impact on the policies of plantation managements. In practice, Barbadian planters, in common with planters in other parts of the West Indies, pursued different policies in providing housing materials and incurring expenses in the construction and repair of houses. Moreover, these policies varied throughout the period of plantation slavery.

The legal code aside, little evidence exists that planters paid much formal attention to shelter during the seventeenth century or for much of the eighteenth; later (usually pro-slavery) sources indicate that slave houses were sometimes constructed and maintained at the plantation's expense. The most common policy in Barbados was probably similar to that described by the historian J. Harry Bennett for the two Codrington plantations owned (from the early eighteenth century until 1983) by the Church of England's Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. On these plantations in the eighteenth century and until around 1820, "shelter was regarded as the slave's own problem . . . [and he] was left to build, repair, and furnish his hut with such materials as he could find for himself". By the late-eighteenth century, plantation account books show occasional small expenditures to aid favoured workers, usually drivers and tradesmen, in the construction and repair of shelter, and Codrington's management sometimes assisted in emergencies, such as after damage by storms. However, as late as the 1820s, "most of the slaves continued to find housing for themselves, with only occasional help" from Codrington's management because, as a group of resident planters observed in 1812, "to furnish proper houses to a whole set of slaves is certainly a very expensive & tedious work".⁴

For most of the period of slavery, the enslaved peoples in Barbados were expected to construct their own shelters and provide their own building materials, although planters occasionally gave "some assistance with materials".⁵ It is doubtful that this involved much, if any, financial expenditure. By the 1820s and early 1830s, however, this changed somewhat as more stone and wooden houses (but still a definite minority), were being "built, and regularly repaired, at the expense and with the labour of the estate".⁶ Regardless of how much plantations became involved in housing, most of the enslaved people were largely left to their own devices in both house construction and repair, and they generally built their houses in Barbados, as in Jamaica, "according to their own fancy both in size and shape".⁷

House Types

Although housing is often mentioned in documentary sources, these sources offer only superficial and sparse descriptions of building materials and give virtually no architectural details on, for example, methods of construction and interior and exterior design. It is clear, however, that the most common dwelling throughout the period of slavery was a rec-

tangular, single-storey, wattle-and-daub structure with a packed earth or dirt floor, and a pitched roof covered with thatch: a dwelling form undoubtedly deeply influenced by West African building architecture.⁸ Constructed of local materials available from plantation woodlands, this type of house was also the most widespread house-type throughout the Caribbean.

In the wattle-and-daub house, at least four, but probably more, forked wooden posts or stakes were driven into the ground to form a framework for the twigs or slender tree branches interlaced around the posts to form the walls; branches or boards were laid on top to form roof rafters. Planters were sometimes advised to keep a portion of their land in "wood for Negro houses", and some plantations advertised the sale of "rafters and other sticks for building Negro-Houses". When wood was lacking, the wattle of the walls was constructed of "the strong reed or cane of the Guinea corn". The wattle was plastered on the interior (and probably the exterior as well) with mud or clay daub; in later years, the exterior also may have been coated with a lime plaster. The sources do not suggest any exterior decoration, a common feature in West African indigenous architecture, and there is no evidence of verandas or porches, also common in West Africa.⁹ Because wattle-and-daub thatched houses were constructed of perishable materials, their remains decayed rapidly from contact with natural elements, and no traces were detected in archaeological investigations of Barbados plantations during the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁰

There is ample evidence that thatched roofs, a ubiquitous feature of indigenous West African houses, as well as early vernacular houses throughout the Caribbean, were pervasive on all types of Barbados houses, including those of stone and wood (see below). Roof thatching could consist of plantain leaves, palm leaves or branches, and the leaves or trash of the sugar cane. Plantain leaves may have been more widespread in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, when plantains were a more common food staple, but parts of the sugar cane were probably the most common thatching throughout the slavery period. Cane leaves and tops as well as the "cane trash" (cane stalks after they have been crushed and the juice expelled), and "rotten canes" were used as thatching, but the leaves and tops were considered preferable.¹¹

George Pinckard, a British naval doctor visiting Barbados in early 1796, observed that the roof extended "to some distance over the doorway [which was located on the leeward side], forming a defence against both the sun and the rain"; and William Lloyd, the emancipationist who

visited Barbados during Apprenticeship, observed that the "Negro huts" were covered "with a loose overhanging thatch". Reporting on Jamaican wattle-and-daub houses in the early nineteenth century, Alexander Barclay observed that "to throw off the rain the thatch is brought down a considerable distance over the walls, which in consequence look low, and the roof high". C.G.A. Oldendorp, the late-eighteenth-century Moravian missionary, made a similar observation of roofs on wattle-and-daub houses in the Danish West Indies, also describing these houses as low and small; the entry way, in fact, was "so low that a man cannot pass through it without bending down". Barbadian houses were probably similar in these features, and the overhanging roof, which could serve as shelter during rain or from the sun's heat, was reminiscent of African architectural forms. An idealized, perhaps even romanticized, view of Barbadian houses is shown in an engraving in John Waller's account of his travels in the West Indies (figure 1). House constructional materials are unclear from the illustration, but they may have been plastered wattle-and-daub or, perhaps, stone. The thatching probably closely resembled thatching on working class rural Barbadian houses during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries (figures 2, 3, 4).¹²

By the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, enslaved Barbadians increasingly lived in stone and wooden dwellings as plantations began to use more substantial housing materials, a reflection of the growing interest among planters during this period of the material

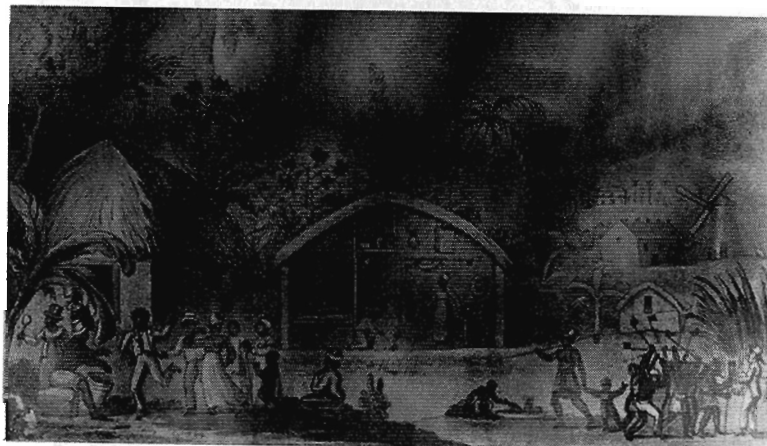


Figure 1 "Slaves in Barbadoes", in John A. Waller, *A Voyage in the West Indies* (London, 1820), facing p. 20. This engraving gives a rather idyllic view of plantation life, but it is unknown if it is based on Waller's own sketch or is a construction of some other artist or the engraver.



Figure 2 Wattle-and-daub houses with thatched roofs, probably very similar to ones found during the slavery period. Judging by the topography, the photo was taken in the Scotland District, quite possibly Chalky Mount in St Andrew (as suggested by the packed "beehive" potter's kiln in the lower right hand corner). The photo was taken by the well-known American photographer Frank Carpenter, probably in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century (he died in 1924), judging by his various publications on his early travels to the West Indies and South America. [Courtesy, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Frank and Frances Carpenter Collection, LC-USZ62-95078.]



Figure 3 Stone house with thatched roof. The poles on top held down the roof thatch. Although this photo was probably taken in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, the house shown appears to be very similar to the type of stone house found in the later years of the slavery period. [Courtesy, Barbados Department of Archives, Laborde Collection, # 8.]

welfare of the enslaved people. As is well known, this interest was precipitated by the debates in Britain surrounding the abolition of the slave trade and the possible implications of abolition for the recruitment and reproduction of the enslaved population. In subsequent decades, amelioration responded to increasing emancipationist pressures from Britain. A similar trend was also evident in other West Indian territories where plantations sometimes provided building materials, employed tradesmen to work on the houses of labourers, and expended funds in house construction and repair. In general, these practices seem to have become more noticeable, as in Barbados, during the later years of the slavery period, as planters intervened increasingly in matters of shelter.¹³

Houses constructed and repaired by the enslaved carpenters and masons, who were assigned these tasks by plantation managements, were made from locally obtained and easily worked coral limestone, or from imported wooden planks, sometimes with roofs of imported wooden shingles.¹⁴ Some stone dwellings (probably most were of rubble, rather than cut or dressed stone) were covered with exterior or interior limestone plaster.¹⁵ Roof-thatching materials were the same as on the wattle-and-daub houses, although stone houses occasionally had wooden shingles. A few sources also suggest that, in the late slavery period, some houses were constructed of rough boards or planks nailed to wooden posts. Since the indigenous forests of Barbados were virtually gone by the late-seventeenth century, planking was usually imported. Houses constructed from coral limestone, the geological base of most of the island, would have involved much less expense to the plantations. Photographs from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries show various stone houses (some with exterior plaster) and wooden ones (figures 4, 5). These houses, we assume, were probably not very different from those erected during the later years of the slavery period.¹⁶

The above sequence of house types, with wattle-and-daub being the earliest, and stone and wood later, was derived from fragmentary information in a number of documentary sources.¹⁷ The sequence is also specifically suggested by data from Newton plantation whose managerial policies generally reflected island-wide practices in the late-eighteenth century. In 1796, Sampson Wood, Newton's manager, reported that "some of . . . our Negro huts or houses [are] built of stone (and they shall all be built of that material before long as most convenient for them), others of the strong reed or cane of the Guinea corn". From this we infer that the transition from wattle-and-daub houses to



Figure 4 Wood plank house with thatched roof, June 1907. This house probably closely resembles the wood plank house found during the later years of the slavery period. [Courtesy, Barbados Department of Archives, Registered photos, 1905-1907, #81.]



Figure 5 House of rubble stone construction, with limestone exterior plaster and galvanized iron hip roof. In earlier days, the roof would have been thatched. The photograph is undated, but was perhaps taken in the 1940s or 1950s. The location is unknown. The photo was given to Handler by Maggie Goodridge in December 1983.

other types was occurring at Newton by the very end of the eighteenth century. Although Wood may have intended to have all slave houses constructed of stone in the near future, he died in 1803, and the Newton records after that date are almost silent on the issue. It can be surmised, however, that there was an increase in more substantial constructional materials because the plantation's two masons worked on slave dwellings for seventy-seven days in 1796-1797, and in the mid-1820s Newton's accounts show expenditures on materials such as "deal boards", "planks", and nails "for building Negro houses".¹⁸

The changes in house types over the years and the specific chronological sequence of house types are corroborated by Bennett's study of the Codrington plantations. From the early-eighteenth century to the second decade of the nineteenth, the houses at Codrington were thatched roof, and wattle and daub. In 1819 or 1820, following "a great storm [which] destroyed almost all the Negro huts", and during a period when ameliorative measures for treatment of the enslaved were being instituted in Barbados, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel began erecting houses that "were walled with [lime] stone from the . . . plantation quarry". By 1823, stone houses "predominated", but some houses had wooden plank walls; both types had "plank" or thatched roofs. Around this time, the Society decided to build a new village for the enslaved people, and by 1829 a number of "stone with shingled roofs" houses had been completed.¹⁹

By the late 1820s and early 1830s, the Codrington plantations were not unique in their managerial policies and reflected trends elsewhere on the island. Stone houses with wooden shingle roofs were also found on other plantations. For example, in the 1830s at Lightfoots plantation (St John and St Philip parishes), "a Negro village newly built" contained twenty-seven "stone wall houses . . . beam filled and plastered inside and painted outside, deal roofs, lathed and shingled".²⁰ Today in Barbados one can occasionally still see such houses (with or without wooden shingles) or, more commonly, their ruins, especially in some areas of St Peter, St Lucy and St Andrew. Barbadians frequently refer to these as "slave houses". For example, a recent book containing vignettes of Barbadian history refers to an old photograph of a stone house as "thatched slave house, c. 1920".²¹ An undated photograph, probably from the 1930s or 1940s, shows stone construction with remnants of exterior plaster; the thatched roof had been replaced by the more modern corrugated or galvanized iron so widespread in the Caribbean today (figure 5). The elderly Barbadian, who gave Handler this photograph in the

1970s, identified the house as a "slave house". In a sense, Barbadians today are correct when referring to these stone houses as "slave houses", although it is not known if those buildings that have survived in present day Barbados were actually inhabited at one time by enslaved people, free people of colour (freedmen) or working class Whites. It is erroneous, however, to assume that such houses were typical slave dwellings. Although there is some evidence of stone houses in the seventeenth century [for example, a 1678 plantation owner's will mentions "7 negro houses of stone and tyled"²²], stone houses did not become numerically significant until the first decades of the nineteenth century, and were still much fewer than wattle-and-daub houses.

Various sources, including small sketches and illustrations in plantation maps as well as printed accounts, indicate that the houses contained windows, but those on early wattle-and-daub houses were probably no more than openings in the walls or ventilation holes. Later, stone and wooden houses may have had wooden frames and shutters similar to those in working class houses in the twentieth century.

Nothing is known of doors on the earliest houses. They probably existed on many wattle-and-daub structures and, judging by early illustrations, were present on the stone and wooden ones. William Dickson, who had lived in Barbados from 1772 to about 1785, provided a unique reference to wooden locks while discussing the talents of Black carpenters: "On the doors of some of the Negro huts, I have observed wooden locks, at once simple and well contrived, and which it was impossible to open, without the wooden key, which had two or three square, polished prominencies [sic], adapted to the internal parts of the lock, which I have also seen, but it cannot be explained without a model." There is no other information on wooden door locks for Barbados.²³

Contemporary observers in Barbados usually referred to slave dwellings as "huts", occasionally as "cottages" or "cabins", and described their size as "small" or "little". Specific dimensions are available in only a few sources, dating from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Moreover, these dimensions apparently refer only to stone or wooden houses, not to wattle-and-daub ones. In a 1777 will, a planter ordered his executors to build "shingled stone houses 12 feet by 25 feet" for several manumitted persons. In 1789, Governor Parry reported that slave houses "are in general 30 feet long by 12 broad". Around the same time, Philip Gibbs, a prominent planter, instructed his manager that houses should not "be wider than twelve feet [and] the houses of the inferior Negroes need not be more than ten feet wide" - although he

does not specify length. "Every Negro who builds a new house", Gibbs added, should receive "four hardwood posts" as well as "two pair of strong deal rafters and a ridge pole"; rafters for twelve-foot-wide houses were to be "nine feet long", while those for ten-foot houses "should be seven feet and a half". J.W. Jordan, another Barbadian planter, writing in the 1820s, mentioned that of the seventy-six "negro-houses" on one of his plantations, "many" were "thirty feet long and twelve feet wide", and during the same period Trelawney Wentworth, an Englishman who had resided in the West Indies including Barbados for "several years", observed that, in general, West Indian slave houses were "twenty-five feet in length, by ten or fifteen in breadth". Finally, at Lightfoots plantation in the mid-1830s, the "newly built" village for enslaved people, consisting of twenty-seven "stone wall houses", included five houses that were twenty-three feet long by thirteen feet wide and twenty-two that were twenty-one feet by twelve feet.²⁴ The preceding figures suggest an average of approximately 305 square feet, ranging from 250 to 375 square feet.²⁵

These figures, however, appear mainly in pro-slavery sources, which stress that enslaved Barbadians were generally well treated and received adequate shelter. We thus assume that even during the late-eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth the dimensions and square footage of slave houses in general, particularly those of wattle-and-daub, were not greater than those given above; in all likelihood many were less.²⁶

Rooms and Furnishings

Regardless of size or house type, houses were generally partitioned into rooms. In the mid-seventeenth century, Richard Ligon, who had lived in Barbados for three years in the late 1640s, reported that the enslaved people have "several divisions . . . in their little houses, and none above six foot square".²⁷ Documentary sources record from one to three rooms although they suggest that the typical dwelling, as elsewhere in the Caribbean, consisted of two rooms, divided by a wooden partition. John Vlach postulates that the two-room division found in African American houses may have been influenced by West African architectural traditions. In Barbados this division has persisted into modern times. One room was a sleeping chamber for the adult couple; the other was used for general purposes, including meal preparation and sometimes cooking, and it was also the place where the children slept.²⁸

European-type beds were rare and seem to have been used only in the final decades of the slavery period, primarily by "privileged" persons such as tradesmen or head drivers.²⁹ The most common bedding was a rough board or "hard plank" that rested directly on the earthen floor; sometimes this board was sold or split up if firewood was in short supply. Ligon reported the frequent occurrence of colds because they had "nothing under them in the night but a board, upon which they lie, nor anything to cover them"; "and though the daies be hot", he added, "the nights are cold". They usually slept in their tattered work clothes. Blankets were probably distributed in later times, but without regularity or frequency – as suggested by a committee of planters who in 1812 recommended that "blankets ought to be furnished once in 8 or 10 years".³⁰ By the latter half of the eighteenth century, and perhaps earlier, the board to which Ligon and others referred was often elevated and gave the appearance of a raised platform (for example, figure 1).³¹ During the eighteenth century, and perhaps earlier, the enslaved population occasionally used a mat or crude mattress that, according to Pinckard, was made from "plantain leaves, or some other species of bedding, to defend them from the rough plank; but this is an indulgence self-attained, not a necessary provided by the master".³² There is no information as to whether headrests were used.

Aside from bed materials, houses contained little furniture and few tools or utensils. Furnishings were limited to an occasional wooden stool or bench, or sometimes a table and chair – items manufactured or acquired by the enslaved people themselves, not provided by plantation managements. By the early-nineteenth century, furnishings may have become relatively more elaborate and plentiful, especially among tradesmen and head drivers.³³ Utensils were largely confined to items used in food preparation or for cooking, eating, and the storage of food and liquids. They included earthenware made from local clays (as well as occasional imported pottery), and dishes and containers made from gourd or calabash. Enslaved potters were involved in pottery production from early in Barbadian history and made the conical pots used in the manufacture of muscavado sugar. Later, Black potters also made utilitarian household wares, including water jars (for example, the so-called monkey jar), some of which were made in Barbados, until recent times, by a crank-shaft-driven wooden wheel and "beehive" kiln technology.³⁴

Writers on Barbados who mention containers made from gourd (*Lagenaria siceraria*; a vine-grown plant of tropical African origin, also called the "bottle gourd") and calabash (*Crescentia cujete*; a tree native

to the Americas) give the impression that these materials were used more widely than pottery. Writing of Barbadians in general – without specifying racial group – Ligon reported the existence of "gourds so great as will make good great bottles, and cut in two pieces good dishes and platters". He distinguished the "gourd" from the "calabash tree" whose fruit, "round as a ball, green . . . smooth and shining" and "of different sizes", was also used to make a variety of household items: "some for dishes, some for cups, some for basons, and some of the largest to carry water in, as we do goards, with handles atop, as that of a kettle, for they are smoother and much stronger than" the gourd. About fifty years later, John Oldmixon, who had never visited Barbados but derived his information from former island residents, repeated Ligon's information and added the fact that "many" calabash "pitchers and pails" contained "2 or 3 gallons". Several decades after Oldmixon, Griffith Hughes, who had lived in Barbados for about eleven years in the mid-eighteenth century, observed that the "fruit" of the "Calabash-tree" not only "makes very convenient drinking-cups", but also is "serviceable to many other uses". As with earlier writers, Hughes did not suggest that these "uses" were confined to any one social class or racial group, but Philip Madin, who visited the island in the 1770s, observed that the calabash was "only used for the shell, out of which the Negroes eat their victuals". F.W.N. Bayley, who was in Barbados for four months in the late 1820s, observed that "the Negroes scoop [the calabash] clean out of a small hole, which they cut in the top; it then serves as a bottle to contain rum, etc. Or, by sawing it in half they are provided with two vessels, which answer the purposes of basins or dishes. These calabashes are sometimes dyed by the slaves, who carve figures on them with a regularity and order that display much cleverness and ingenuity." In addition to containers and "other utensils for slaves to eat out of", spoons and perhaps ladle-like utensils were also made from the "useful calabash".³⁵

Amerindians commonly used the calabash for household utensils and containers, and the few who were present in Barbados in its early history may have directly or indirectly influenced its use in Barbados. The calabash was also painted and carved in other West Indian colonies, and such embellishments may have been creole adaptations, perhaps also reflecting early Amerindian practices – although African influences are also likely since the calabash and gourd were also widely used for utensils in African cultures. In addition to these gourd or calabash utensils, enslaved Barbadians may have sometimes used coconut shells as drinking cups.³⁶

Rev. Davies reported that corn, the food staple of enslaved Barbadians, was ground in their houses "by rubbing it between two stones, by the strength of their arms". Despite being mentioned in several primary sources, these grinding stones are not described and archaeological research on Barbadian plantations in the early 1970s and late 1980s yielded no trace of them.³⁷ However, the English slave trader, Thomas Phillips, gives some clues on these stones. In early 1694, his ship stopped at the Gold Coast where he acquired "some cancy-stones, for our slaves to grind their corn upon" during the Atlantic crossing. A few months later he landed at Whydah (Ouidah), the port in Dahomey where he acquired captive Africans for transportation to Barbados. He described how the Africans made their "bread": "Indian or Guiney corn [is] ground . . . between two stones call'd the Cancy stones, and Rubber . . . they place the cancy stone, which is smooth and broad, shelving in a frame; then put on it thirty or forty grains of Indian corn . . . then with the Rubber [which is a small stone big enough for one to grasp in his hand] they bruise the corn, and continue rubbing it till it is reduc'd to a meal." Other early sources sometimes refer to corn-grinding stones in West Africa as "cankey" or "canky" stones, but the term actually applied to the dish made from the flour, described as a sort of "dumplings" or "a sort of bread made of maize or Indian corn, rub'd between two stones to powder". By whatever name Europeans called corn-grinding stones, descriptive details on these stones are difficult to obtain.³⁸

In 1758 a European-invented windmill was introduced into Barbados and was proclaimed as having a "vast advantage and a great ease . . . in the beating out and grinding of corn for the food of their slaves". Within a decade or so, William Dickson reported, this windmill had been adopted by "a few" plantations, and by the late 1790s, John Brathwaite, the island's agent, observed that "formerly the Negro used to grind the corn between two stones with hand. Now wind and hand mills are introduced in most plantations for that purpose". Thus, by the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries many plantations had apparently introduced centrally located windmills or several manually driven ones to grind corn, thereby relieving the enslaved people, wrote a prominent planter, "from a great deal of bodily labour and exertion". In 1812, a committee of a resident planter group recommended that plantations lacking a "wind corn mill" should always have "a sufficient number of hand mills for the convenience of the slaves", thereby suggesting that the practice was not very widespread. The two "corn stones" of earlier

periods persisted into later periods as major household utensils, and may have been distributed by plantations. For example, in 1786 Philip Gibbes instructed his manager that "upon the marriage of a young couple", they were to be given "a cabin to lodge in, a water-jar, an iron-pot, [and] a corn-stone".³⁹

Iron pots for cooking [earthenware may have been used as well] were imported and sometimes distributed by the plantation. They were also recommended as one of the "gratuities" that could serve as "encouragements to the slaves which should be given as bounties for good behavior". Other recommended "gratuities" included knives and spoons (presumably imported metal), but they appear to have been uncommon, and "some" of the enslaved, reported a plantation medical doctor in 1812, even lacked "utensils for cooking". However, the general availability of iron pots may have increased during the later years of slavery.⁴⁰ Some houses also contained other items which the enslaved people are known to have used or manufactured, probably informed by African-influenced skills: for example, various types of baskets, fish nets, ropes, wooden trays, and wooden mortars and pestles; and musical devices like drums, rattles and string instruments.⁴¹

Documentary sources give the impression that household furnishings and utensils were largely manufactured from organic materials, but there are no details on the construction or design of such items, except for some musical instruments, calabash containers and wooden door locks. Moreover, archaeological research on a number of plantations yielded no evidence of organic household objects that are, of course, particularly susceptible to the destructive influences of a tropical environment. The archaeological research yielded a great number of pottery fragments and other material objects, such as imported white clay tobacco pipes, but failed to find evidence of non-organic utilitarian items. Aside from the depredations of the tropical environment on organic materials, and the disturbance of archaeological remains through a long history of agricultural activity and cultural modifications of the Barbadian landscape, it may be that enslaved plantation workers were far more materially impoverished than the documentary sources suggest. In trying to account for their failure to discover archaeological evidence for utensils and tools on plantation sites in the early 1970s, Handler and Lange concluded as follows: "from a materialistic perspective plantation slaves were poor in every sense of the word, and they had relatively limited resources for acquiring material goods. Within this context then, it might be assumed that such goods were considered

too valuable and difficult to replace, and thus they were not readily discarded or simply left lying around; when broken and beyond use, evidence of these artifacts can have easily been obliterated by cultural practices and natural forces.⁴²

Enslaved Barbadians acquired most of their food from plantation rations, usually distributed weekly. In addition, many plantations allotted adults or households small plots of land on which they cultivated food and (later in the slavery period) cash crops as well as raised small animals. The produce was used to augment plantation food rations, or it could be exchanged in the island's markets for foods or material goods. By the late 1700s, during the workweek, larger plantations provided a "dressed dinner" at midday times. This practice became more widespread and, by the 1820s and 1830s, a "meal, ready dressed and prepared for their dinner" had become a standard feature on many plantations. Regardless of this practice, those who received a cooked midday meal were still required to prepare their own "breakfast" which they carried into the fields and ate around mid morning. In general, however, throughout the slavery period, plantation workers were usually responsible for preparing their own meals.⁴³ Each household prepared its food outside the house, if weather permitted, or inside, if the weather was damp or raining. Provided they had the necessary firewood or charcoal, people preferred hot meals. In the only documentary reference discovered on how cooking fires were started, Thomas Walduck, an English army officer stationed in Barbados between 1710 and 1712, alluded to the rotary friction method: they "rub[bed] fire out of two sticks, one being soft and the other hard". Since this is the only mention, it is not known how widely this method was practised or if it persisted throughout the period of slavery.

Food was either roasted or boiled over open fires; fireplaces or hearths do not seem to have been permanent fixtures of houses, although the historical sources are ambiguous on this point. For example, in 1796, Pinckard observed that the fire "for cooking their supper . . . is commonly in the open air near to the door of the hut, but they sometimes place it upon the middle of the dirt floor withinside the building"; a few decades later Bayley wrote that "the Negroes cook their little messes before their doors" (see also figure 1). In all probability, apparently following the common African practice, most cooking took place outdoors (as did so many other activities, ranging from relaxing and gossiping to making handicrafts). Although stones were probably used to support utensils, such as iron pots, over the cooking fires, no documen-

tary or archaeological evidence indicates whether these stones were constructed into permanent hearths.⁴⁴

By the 1820s, slave dwellings with detached kitchens were reported for some plantations. Although not described, these kitchens were probably no more than wattle-and-daub sheds and may have been, as in Jamaica around the same time, confined to the "more wealthy".⁴⁵ In general, however, the sources convey the impression that detached kitchens were not especially common. The failure of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers to mention kitchens in their discussions of housing, cooking and household practices suggests that detached kitchens were not found in the houses of plantation workers until the final decades of the slavery period.

The Quality of Housing

Within each plantation, members of the field gangs inhabited the poorest and most sparsely furnished houses. There are indications that enslaved people with higher rank (it must be emphasized that this ranking was determined by slaveholders, not by the enslaved community itself) sometimes had relatively larger houses and more furnishings – a pattern also evident in other areas of the West Indies – but housing distinctions associated with rank may have emerged only in the later years of the slavery period. For example, as noted above, in the late-eighteenth century, Philip Gibbes instructed his manager that dwellings "of the inferior Negroes" should not be as wide as those of the driver or various tradesmen; in the 1820s, Trelawney Wentworth observed that among enslaved West Indians in general, including Barbadians, "larger proportions, and an extra room . . . occasionally mark the residence of one of the 'head people' . . . We have found some of them possessed of sideboards, drawers, and other articles of furniture . . . In such habitations may be seen mosquito [sic] netting to their bedsteads, a quantity of earthenware, the walls nicely whitewashed, and decorated with some gaily coloured pictures." Henry Nelson Coleridge, a visitor to Barbados in 1825, described the average dwelling as "a cottage thatched with palm branches and divided into two rooms". However, he observed, "some huts are larger and smarter than this . . . the driver on the Society's estate [Codrington] has two large four post beds, looking glasses and framed pictures". On a visit to a plantation during the 1820s, Bayley observed that "some . . . huts . . . were furnished much better than others"; he attributed this to "their owners' . . . superiority of privileges

over the other slaves. The mechanics of the estate, however, such as masons, coopers, carpenters, etc., have certainly an opportunity, from the knowledge of their trade, of making their abodes more comfortable and convenient than the rest."⁴⁶ Bayley described how one of these houses

contained a neat four-post bedstead, of polished hard wood [from Barbados], . . . on which was a good mattress stuffed with dried plantain leaves, with bolster and pillows. . . . also a little shelf, on which stood a basin and a jug, a wooden chair, and a box, painted green, for containing the wearing apparel. The hall was furnished with half a dozen chairs and two tables. On one of these stood a pair of decanters, with some tumblers and wine glasses, and about eight cups and saucers of different patterns; while on a shelf above were ranged some dozen of plates and dishes. There were two framed pictures hanging in the room, and many more without frames, pasted against the walls.⁴⁷

In very general terms, Bayley's description has a familiar ring to those who have entered the homes of plantation workers in the modern era, and a pattern of furnishing and interior decoration that is observable today clearly has its roots in the period of slavery. By his reckoning, Bayley (an apologist for the slave system) was describing an exceptionally well-furnished house. However, he and other defenders of slavery often exaggerated the quality of housing, and described it in relatively idyllic terms, sometimes comparing it favourably, in the words of the Barbadian Assembly, with the "houses of the poor cottagers in England". One can easily gain such an idyllic impression from the illustration in Waller's book (figure 1). However, Pinckard's observation that the "small huts" were "commonly of very coarse construction, and are dark, close, and smoky", and the report from Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey, the British emancipationists, describing how apprentices lived in "huts [that] are wretched little thatched hovels" both more accurately depict what probably actually existed among the mass of enslaved plantation workers. A similar observation was made by a liberal-minded member of a Barbadian plantation-owning family when he wrote that rural peoples in the 1850s usually inhabited a "savage and untutored hut" that was "a scandal and an eyesore to our estates". In 1812, a plantation doctor, reporting on the material condition of the enslaved population in general (and indirectly commenting on their paltry food rations), believed that one reason why their houses "are bad is that the Negroes use the trash, corn stalks, etc. of which they are made to dress their victuals". Around the same time, a plantation doctor asserted that houses "for the most part are much too confined, and too frequently not so well constructed

as to secure them from the inclemency of the weather".⁴⁸

The tropical climate of Barbados did not pose excessive demands for shelter, but evenings could be chilly, especially during the winter season, and rains could be heavy. The materials out of which most houses were constructed made them relatively fragile. They required frequent repair and were particularly vulnerable to leakage during heavy rains, and to destruction by hurricanes, storms or fire. Moreover, the proximity of dwellings within the plantation villages and the strong sea breezes that fanned the island facilitated the spread of fire from one house to another. Communicable diseases were also readily diffused because of the nature of housing conditions and the relative density of the population in the small villages.⁴⁹ In the mid-eighteenth century, William Belgrove, a "long experienced" Barbadian planter, stressed that "Negro houses" should "be kept in good order, as more Negroes dye for want of proper houses than by other means". A plantation doctor, around 1810, found that the houses of the enslaved people were "much too confined, and too frequently not so well constructed". In 1812, a group of relatively progressive resident planters summarized the housing conditions of plantation workers in this way: "Some improvement is requisite in the construction of houses. They should be a little loftier than they are at present, they should be built so as to admit a great degree of light, ventilation, & cleanliness, & to exclude air except through the doors & windows."⁵⁰

Considering the whole of the plantation-slavery period from the middle of the seventeenth century to around 1834-1838, it is impossible to say how the enslaved people evaluated their own housing. The evaluations given in European sources, as noted above, are mixed, and they applied European standards to judge what were essentially African-type houses inhabited by Africans and their descendants. There is no direct testimony from enslaved persons, but they valued their houses beyond the need for basic shelter as evidenced, for example, in how persons who were better off embellished their houses and furnishings. Shelter was a means of expression, and housing was closely linked to other dimensions of life, such as family and household, notions of self-esteem, and customary property rights in a society which emphasized the enslaved person as property, and religious and mortuary practices. For example, although most plantations had separate burial grounds, people sometimes buried their dead under their houses, following an African practice, which induced, as Governor David Parry noted, a great attachment to their houses as "the burial places of their ancestors and friends". During the Apprenticeship period, "many" of the newly emancipated

plantation workers were reluctant to leave their houses and provision grounds which they had come "to regard as their own property; others revered their burial grounds . . . where their relations had been interred, so that they too would be buried there".⁵¹ Legally, of course, all houses belonged to the slaveholder, but over the years there seems to have evolved some customary rights to these houses (similar, perhaps, to what existed with certain types of moveable property, such as poultry, small livestock, clothing, jewellery and household furnishings), although the social patterns surrounding these rights are largely unknown.⁵² Also, the evidence suggests that elaboration in and acquisition of utensils and other house furnishings were ways in which enslaved people expressed their status within their village communities as well as satisfying certain esthetic needs. Finally, since the enslaved people were largely responsible for the construction and maintenance of their own houses, houses were items of material culture over which they exercised some control and could express some autonomy, relatively free of slaveholder dictates.⁵³ Whatever the reasons and specific meanings that shelter had in their lives, when a group of planters claimed, "We know nothing that so strongly attaches a slave to the plantation to which he belongs as being in the possession of a comfortable house", the group was probably reflecting a very positive value within the enslaved community.⁵⁴

Trends and African/European Influences on Housing

Since, as George Pinckard observed, the enslaved people were "allowed to build themselves small huts to live in",⁵⁵ they constructed these "small huts" largely, or entirely, without planter intervention and according to their own inclinations. The most common Barbadian dwelling (referred to as a "hut" in the primary sources) was the rectangular wattle-and-daub thatched-roofed structure that was probably very similar to what Kwamina Dickson has called the "Guinea forest house type", a type widely distributed on the southern Gold Coast (modern Ghana) and other tropical forest areas of West and West Central Africa. This remained the most typical architectural type until the emancipation period. Similar structures were also widespread in the Caribbean during the period of slavery.⁵⁶

However, by the end of the eighteenth century and the pre-emancipation decades of the nineteenth planters increasingly intervened in housing, and they changed structural materials and designs. They also

began to assign enslaved plantation carpenters and masons to construct houses or aid in their construction. The increased use of enslaved tradesmen, employing basically European-derived/taught techniques and tools to construct houses, was part of a wider trend in the West Indies. The "tendency toward master-controlled building", Barry Higman observed for the West Indies in general, often followed "standardized [architectural] plans chosen by the masters".⁵⁷ Thus Barbadian carpenters and masons were involved in the construction of stone and wooden houses. These types increased in frequency toward the end of the slavery period, and formed the beginnings of the long post-emancipation vernacular tradition of working class housing in Barbados. By the end of slavery, wooden and stone houses had not entirely replaced wattle-and-daub ones; the last type still predominated. By the late 1840s, John Davy, who had lived in Barbados for over three years, observed how the "low huts" in which the enslaved people had lived were "commonly still preserved . . . and are occupied by labourers employed on the estate"; yet, the houses of the working class were "commonly of wood, consisting of two rooms".⁵⁸ The "small wooden houses resting on clumps of wood or blocks of stone", reported an English visitor in 1850, were more common among the working class and were easily moveable if people did not own their house sites. These landless people were reluctant to build stone houses but such houses may have become more common as land ownership increased among the working class.⁵⁹ While wooden houses existed in both rural and urban areas of Barbados, the number of wattle-and-daub houses declined over the years and became confined to the rural/plantation areas; as time progressed, they became increasingly rare, although they persisted well into the twentieth century.⁶⁰

During the period of slavery, planter intervention in housing was initially linked to what slaveholders perceived as the diminution of their labour supplies if the slave trade was to be abolished and if enslaved people were to be emancipated. Stone and wooden houses, viewed by Europeans (including Barbadian Whites) as more durable and of better quality than wattle-and-daub structures, probably resulted in more uniform housing and were modelled after vernacular British rural working class cottages. These English/British (perhaps even rural Irish) influences on housing became more evident during the later years of the slavery period, and it resulted in the basic rectangular designs of stone and wooden houses, construction techniques, door and window placement, and the hipped roof.⁶¹

Although stone and wooden houses occasionally had wooden shin-

gled roofs, thatching continued to be the major roofing material on all types of houses long after emancipation. Thatching of some kind was also found on Barbadian planters' houses in the mid-seventeenth century as well as on the houses of working-class or poor Whites for much of the slavery period. Thatching was also common in certain parts of Britain (and Ireland), but was far more common in West Africa.⁶² Without specific details on Barbadian thatching techniques, it is difficult to determine the nature of African or European influences.⁶³ In all likelihood, however, Barbadian wattle-and-daub houses, including the techniques of their thatching, owed far more to African architectural influences than to any English/British ones.

The West African forest areas probably yielded the greatest number of captive Africans transported to Barbados in the earliest periods of the island's slavery, roughly from the 1640s to around 1690.⁶⁴ This very large area contained a wide variety of house types and styles. Even within relatively small areas, considerable diversity was found in basic architectural forms and structural features. As Susan Denyer, a student of African architecture, writes, "many tribes have more than one house style."⁶⁵ Although some scholars have reduced the many architectural forms in the West African forest areas to a simple typology that stresses the rectangular wattle-and-daub form with a pitched thatched roof, the actual diversity in architectural forms and construction techniques makes generalizations difficult. Since many specific details on Barbados wattle-and-daub housing are lacking, it is impossible to link architectural forms and construction techniques at different chronological periods with specific African peoples or ethnic groups. Nonetheless, several lines of reasoning suggest the importance of African influences on Barbadian houses.

First, during most of the slavery period, enslaved people were primarily responsible for constructing their own houses and they used locally obtainable vegetal resources. It thus seems reasonable to assume that early captive Africans (and their descendants in succeeding generations) applied what they knew of African building techniques and designs to their new tropical environment – which was not fundamentally alien to the West African homelands of many of them. Second, documentary sources neither explicitly nor implicitly indicate that Barbadian wattle-and-daub thatched houses resembled British or European vernacular housing. A final reason stems from the way that contemporary observers viewed the plantation settlements, referring to them as "little villages", "small towns", or "little towns". No source

suggests or indicates a resemblance to British villages or hamlets, while a few explicitly compare them to African villages.⁶⁶

Although architectural forms, building techniques, and labour practices (inter-household cooperation, for example) in house construction varied among Africans, they commonly adapted their traditional construction techniques to changes in the availability of materials. A similar process of improvisation – wherein, as Vlach has noted, "black builders constantly responded to changes in climate, both natural and social, as well as to changes in technology and design" – was found elsewhere in the New World. The same general adaptive behaviour surely occurred in Barbados among the African-born and their descendants; over time the wattle-and-daub houses may have become more standardized in form, appearance and construction techniques.⁶⁷

Such adaptations also may have occurred in house size. Although there are no data on dimensions of Barbadian wattle-and-daub houses, commentators often referred to them as relatively small and implied that stone and wooden dwellings were larger. Perhaps the smaller house sizes resulted not only from limitations on available building materials, but also from the social preferences of the enslaved people and how they perceived architectural space. Vlach points out that the small rooms of traditional West African houses reflected a "constant proxemic dimension" that provided for "intimate spatial encounters", and among the "shared cultural perceptions" of enslaved West Africans in the New World "was a preference for a specific kind of spatial arrangement both in form and dimension. African slaves . . . shared these attitudes about architecture and were able to unite their ideas when they were brought together in the West Indies". In the earlier periods in Barbados it is not unlikely that the African-born and their descendants followed these African notions of space, something they apparently also followed in the ways in which they placed and arranged houses in their plantation villages.⁶⁸

There is no information on the social patterns surrounding house construction: for example, if members of different households or families were expected to help one another in gathering materials or in construction itself; if patterns of reciprocity existed between individuals or households; or if there were special community-defined leadership roles in house building, aside from the enslaved tradesmen assigned to construct wooden and stone houses. However, Barbadian practices, especially in the earlier periods when wattle-and-daub was the major house type and many of the enslaved people were African-born, or first or

second generation Creoles, were probably not very dissimilar from what traditionally existed in West Africa. Denyer has observed that African indigenous architecture was largely "created without the aid of architects or even specialized builders". Most men and women were acquainted with the basics of their culture's architectural traditions and social patterns of construction. She notes that traditional construction in "at least the rural areas of tropical Africa was almost always a highly cooperative venture. . . . Building would be a major social occasion in which both the men and women of a village cooperated." Among enslaved Barbadians, households or individuals may have helped one another in construction and perhaps even engaged in one form or another of exchange labour (or "swapping change"), a pattern that existed in West Africa and is evident in the West Indies, including Barbados, in modern times.⁶⁹

Enslaved Barbadians, as those in other Caribbean areas, created an architectural tradition which, in its earliest phases, probably displayed a diversity of basic West African forms and construction techniques, reflecting the variety of cultural backgrounds from which the earliest migrants came.⁷⁰ Over time, as the culture of the enslaved people became more creolized, these features were probably increasingly modified, and wattle-and-daub houses may have become more standardized in form and appearance. Lacking detailed historical data and without archaeological evidence, the details of this architectural tradition and its changes over time cannot be charted. However, West African influences on this tradition during the period of slavery seem to have been especially prominent. Moreover, African architectural and social values may have influenced later developments in the island's vernacular architecture, particularly in the stone and wooden houses, of fundamentally European style, that became increasingly widespread among the Barbadian working class in the post-emancipation period. With respect to wooden houses, in particular, each Caribbean territory developed its own vernacular architecture and today there is considerable variation in styles and types. The distinctive contribution of Barbados to Caribbean vernacular architecture is the post-emancipation development of the "chattel house", but its roots were found within the wooden houses that emerged during the period of slavery.⁷¹

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Notes

1. Archaeological research in the early 1970s and late 1980s yielded little pertinent information: see Jerome S. Handler and Frederick W. Lange, *Plantation Slavery in Barbados: An Archaeological and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978); Handler, with M.D. Conner and K.P. Jacobi, *Searching for a Slave Cemetery in Barbados, West Indies: A Bioarchaeological and Ethnohistorical Investigation* (Research Paper No. 59, Carbondale: Center for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University, 1989). Except on rare occasions, such as searching houses for weapons or runaways, Barbadian Whites did not generally enter the houses of enslaved people; this was certainly the case with the vast majority of foreign visitors who wrote about the island.
2. This paragraph is derived from Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery*, 34–40, and Handler, "Plantation Slave Settlements in Barbados, 1650s–1834", in Alvin O. Thompson, ed., *In the Shadow of the Plantation: Caribbean History and Legacy* (Kingston: Ian Randle, 2002), 123–61.
3. Joshua Steele, quoted in William Dickson, *Mitigation of Slavery in Two Parts* (London: Longman, 1814), 149. Not even the major Barbadian ameliorative law of 1826, the "Slave Consolidation Act", mentioned housing ("An Act to Repeal Several Acts and Clauses of Acts Respecting Slaves", 23 October 1826, in House of Commons Sessional Papers [*Parliamentary Papers*] 25 [1826–1827], 205–30).
4. J. Harry Bennett, *Bondsmen and Bishops: Slavery and Apprenticeship on the Codrington Plantations of Barbados, 1710–1838*, University of California Publications in History, 62 [Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1958], 32–33, 43, 101, 138; Raymond Richards Collection of Miscellaneous Historical Documents, University of Keele Library [Staffordshire, England], "Minute Book of the Society for the Improvement of West India Plantership, 1811–1812 and of the Agricultural Society, 1812–1816" [Barbados], 144. See also Phillip Gibbes, *Instructions for the Treatment of Negroes, etc., etc., etc.* (London, 1786), 20–21; Barbados Assembly, *Report of a Committee of the General Assembly upon the Several Heads of Enquiry &c. Relative to the Slave Trade* (London, 1790), 4; Barbados Council, *A Report of a Committee of the Council of Barbadoes, Appointed to Inquire into the Actual Condition of the Slaves in this Island* (London: W. Sior, 1824), 15, 103, 107, 114; John Brathwaite, Governor David Parry and Barbados Council, Replies to Query 6 [on housing of enslaved in Barbados], in British House of Commons, *Report of the Lords of the Committee of Council Appointed for the*

- Consideration of all Matters Relating to Trade and Foreign Plantations . . . Concerning the Present State of the Trade to Africa, and Particularly the Trade in Slaves* 26 [Parliamentary Papers] (London, 1789), Part 3; Foster Clarke, "Plan of Treatment of the Negroes on the Estates in Barbados" [1823], *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society* (hereafter *JBMHS*), 2 [1934–1935]: 29–31; J.W. Jordan, *An Account of the Management of Certain Estates in the Island of Barbados* (London, 1824), 3; Thomas Rolph, *A Brief Account, Together with Observations, Made During a Visit in the West Indies* (Dundas, Upper Canada, 1836), 53.
5. Joshua Steele in Dickson, *Mitigation of Slavery*, 149.
 6. Jordan, 3; also, Barbados Council, *Report of a Committee*, 103, 107; Clarke, 30; Rolph, 53. For plantation woodlands, see Handler, "Slave Settlements", 36–37.
 7. Bryan Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies* (London, 1793–1801), 2: 126.
 8. No Barbados source mentions round or circular houses, which are widespread forms in certain areas of West Africa. A few early Barbadian plantation maps contain very small drawings of houses in the villages, but these illustrations are too small to yield specific architectural details. However, they show the houses as rectangular with pitched roofs (Barbados Museum Library, plan of Staple Grove plantation, 1818; Barbados Department of Archives [hereafter BDA], plan of Hope and Drax Hall plantations, 1719). Cf. Labelle Prussin, "An Introduction to Indigenous African Architecture", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 33 (1974): 182–205. The paucity of early plantation maps and plans for Barbados starkly contrasts with the abundance of such items for Jamaica [Barry W. Higman, *Jamaica Surveyed: Plantation Maps and Plans of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Kingston: Institute of Jamaica Publications, 1988)].
 9. William Belgrave, *A Treatise Upon Husbandry or Planting* (Boston, 1755), 31; "Rafters and other sticks for building Negro- Houses", *Barbados Mercury*, March 4, 1788; University of London Library, Ms. 523/593 [Newton Estate Papers; hereafter NEP 523], Farrell to Lane, 29 November 1804; "Minute Book of the Society for the Improvement of West India Plantership", 111. In addition to sources quoted in the text of this paper, information in this and the following paragraphs is derived from: Barbados Assembly, *Report of a Committee*, 4; Brathwaite, Parry, Barbados Council, Replies to Query 6, in *Report of the Lords*; Barbados Council, *Report of a Committee*, 15, 114; *Barbados Mercury*, February 20, 1819; F.W.N. Bayley, *Four Years Residence in the West Indies, During the Years 1826, 27, 28, and 29* (London: William Kidd, 1832), 90; Bennett, 32, 116; "Treatment of Slaves in Barbadoes" [Codrington Plantations], *The Christian Remembrancer*, 5 [London, 1823], 408; Henry Nelson Coleridge, *Six Months in the West Indies in 1825* (London: John Murray, 1832), 126; William Douglass, *A Summary, Historical and Political of the . . . British Settlements in North America* (2 vols. Boston and London: 1755), 1: 123; Gibbes, *Instructions*, 1786, 20–22;

- Alexander Gunkel and Jerome S. Handler, eds., "A German Indentured Servant in Barbados in 1652: The Account of Heinrich von Uchteritz", *JBMHS* 33 (1970): 92; Henry Evans Holder, *A Short Essay on the Subject of the Negro Slavery, with Particular Reference to the Island of Barbados* (London: Coucham and Fry, for C. Dilly, 1788), 23; Griffith Hughes, *The Natural History of Barbados* (London, 1750), 242; Ronald Hughes, "Sweet Bottom, St. George, Barbados: An Early (1777) Non-White Freehold Village", *JBMHS* 36 (1981): 270; Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Iland of Barbados* (London, 1657), 75; BDA, Lightfoots plantation, 1839; NEP 523/110, 111, Work Logs, Newton and Seawell Plantations, 5 May 1796 to 26 April 1797; William Naish, "Notes on Slavery, Made During a Recent Visit to Barbadoes", *The Negro's Friend*, 18 (London: Harvey and Darton, 1830), 7; John Oldmixon, *The British Empire in America*, 2 vols. (London, 1741), 2: 131, 134; David Parry, "Extract of a Letter from Governor Parry to the Right Honourable Lord Sydney", House of Commons, *Accounts and Papers, Slave Trade*, 26 (London, 1789), 14; George Pinckard, *Notes on the West Indies*, 3 vols. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1806), 1: 287–89; 2: 114–15; Robert Poole, *The Beneficent Bee* (London: Printed by E. Duncomb, 1753), 257–58; Thomas Gwynn Rees, Testimony, in *Minutes of the Evidence Taken Before a Committee of the House of Commons . . . For the Abolition of the Slave Trade* [Parliamentary Papers], 30 (London, 1790), 247–48; Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, *Annual Report* (London, 1836), 48; Robert T. Schomburgk, *The History of Barbados* (London: Brown, Green and Longmans, 1848), 70; Trelawney Wentworth, *The West India Sketch Book* (London: Whittaker, 1834), 2: 216–18; "Odd Pages in Old Barbados" [Letters between Seale Yearwood and A. Frere, March 1796 and 26 April 1797], *JBMHS* 16 (1949): 114–15.
10. Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery*, 52–53; Handler et al., *Searching for a Slave Cemetery*.
 11. For example, NEP 523/ 290, Sampson Wood, "Report on the Buildings at Newton", 24 June 1796; Gibbes, *Instructions*, 1786, 22.
 12. Pinckard, 1: 114; William Lloyd, *Letters from the West Indies During a Visit in the Autumn of 1836 and the Spring of 1837* (London: Darton and Harvey, 1839), 9; Alexander Barclay, *A Practical View of the Present State of Slavery in the West Indies* (3rd ed. London: Smith, Elder and Company, 1828), 303; C.G.A. Oldendorp, *History of the Mission of the Evangelical Brethren on the Caribbean Islands of St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John*, [Johan J. Bossard, ed. Ann Arbor: Karona Publishers, 1987], 221; John A. Waller, *A Voyage in the West Indies* (London: Richard Phillips, 1820), "Slaves in Barbadoes", facing p. 20. Waller, a British naval surgeon, had lived in Barbados for a year during the period of 1807 to 1808, but it is unknown whether the engraving showing thatched slave dwellings was based on his own eyewitness sketch or was the idea of some artist or the idea of the engraver himself, R. Stennett.
 13. Barry W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807–1834*

- (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 218–23; Elsa V. Goveia, *Slave Society in the British Leeward Islands at the End of the Eighteenth Century*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), 139; Bernard Marshall, "Society and Economy in the British Windward Islands, 1763–1823" (PhD diss., History, University of the West Indies, 1972), 26; Edwards, 2: 126–27; Frank W. Pitman, "Slavery on British West India Plantations in the Eighteenth Century", *Journal of Negro History* 11 (1926): 606.
14. For example, NEP 523/110, 111, 122, 123, Work Logs, Newton and Seawell Plantations, 1 August 1797 to 4 October 1798; Jordan, 3; Gibbes, *Instructions*, 1786, 22.
 15. In Barbados, the expression "rubble stone" refers to the wall of a house largely built of uncut stone, held together by a mortar "that may have been mainly molasses" (Ronald Hughes, personal communication, 4 March 2009). Molasses has been used historically as an ingredient in mortar, especially in "hot countries", and often as a retardant (Arthur Henry Heath, *A Manual on Lime and Cement: Their Treatment and Use in Construction* [London: E. and F.N. Spon, 1893], 41, 132).
 16. For other photos of stone and wooden thatched-roofed houses in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, see Edward A. Stoute, *Glimpses of Old Barbados* (Bridgetown: Barbados National Trust, 1986), 156; Robert T. Hill, *Cuba and Porto Rico* (New York: Century, 1898), facing p. 394; Frederick Treves, *The Cradle of the Deep* (London: John Murray, 1908), facing pp. 12, 20.
 17. A similar progression of house types for the working class, with wattle-and-daub being the earliest, occurred in other Caribbean areas (see, for example, Barry Higman, *Montpelier, Jamaica: A Plantation Community in Slavery and Freedom, 1739–1912* [Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 1998], 160–61; William Chapman, "Slave Villages in the Danish West Indies", in Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman, eds., *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture IV* [Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991], 112; Kenneth Kelly, "Creole Cultures of the Caribbean: Historical Archaeology in the French West Indies", *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 12 [2008]: 393–99).
 18. NEP 523/290, Sampson Wood, "Report on the Buildings at Newton", 24 June 1796; NEP 523/110, Work Log, Newton Plantation, 5 May 1796 to 26 April 1797; Barbados Museum Library, Newton Plantation Journal, vol. 1, 1805–1841. "Deal boards" were usually seven or nine inches wide, "not more than 3 thick, and at least 6 feet long" (Oxford English Dictionary Online, 2nd ed. 1989).
 19. Bennett, 32–33, 101, 115–16.
 20. BDA, Lightfoots plantation, 1839.
 21. Stoute, 156.
 22. "Quaker Records: Settle-Taylor", *JBMHS* 21 (1953): 27.
 23. Dickson seems to have been unfamiliar with these locks, perhaps suggesting either an African influence or creole innovation (William Dickson,

- Letters on Slavery* [London, 1789], 74). Wooden doors and locks were common in traditional West African houses, and are also reported from elsewhere in the West Indies, in, for example, St Vincent, Jamaica, and also among Maroon groups of Suriname and coastal Afro-Surinamers (Mrs Carmichael, *Domestic Manners and Social Condition of the White, Coloured, and Negro Population of the West Indies* [2nd ed. London: Whittaker, 1834], 1: 129; Edward Kamau Braithwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770–1820* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 236; Richard Price and Sally Price, eds., *John Gabriel Stedman's Narrative of Five Years' Expedition Against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam [1790]* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 259, 645n259.
24. Hughes, "Sweet Bottom", 270; Parry, 14; Barbados Council, Reply to Query 6; Gibbes, *Instructions*, 1786, 20–21; Jordan, 3; Wentworth, 2: 216–18; BDA, Lightfoots plantation, 1839. A stone house in the former Nicholas Abbey tenantry (St Peter) may date to the very late slavery period. It was investigated archaeologically in the summer of 2008. The building is 23 feet by 13 feet, or 299 square feet – dimensions consistent with those given above (Stephanie Bergman, Barbados field notes, Summer 2008). In 1857, a reform-minded member of a planter family, generally appalled at the "wretched hovels" of the island's rural poor, wrote that the "wooden hut" in which many lived was often "not twenty feet by ten, with the bare, unlevelled earth for a flooring" (Meliora, *Letters on the Labouring Population of Barbadoes* [London: Bell and Daldy, 1858], 12). Meliora, a pseudonym, has been identified as the Rev. Edward Pinder (see John Gilmore, ed., *Letters on the Labouring Population of Barbadoes* [Barbados: National Cultural Foundation, 1990]).
 25. The dimensions of Barbadian houses were similar to those elsewhere in the West Indies (see, for example, Barry W. Higman, "A Report on Excavations at Montpelier and Roehampton", *Jamaica Journal*, 8 [1974]: 44–45; Douglas V. Armstrong, *The Old Village and the Great House: An Archaeological and Historical Examination of Drax Hall Plantation, St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica* [Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1990], 93–98; J. Stewart, *A View of the Past and Present State of the Island of Jamaica* [London: G. and W.B. Whitaker, 1823], 266; Marshall, 26; Carmichael, 1: 128; Chapman, "Slave Villages", 112; Kelly, 395.
 26. Philip Gibbes's later edition of his "Instructions" to his manager includes a reference to housing "newly purchased African slaves" and seems to suggest the existence of sexually segregated barracks (*Instructions for the Treatment of Negroes, etc., etc., etc.* [London: Printed for Shepperson and Reynolds, 1797], 2–3). No other source on Barbados, however, states or implies barracks or a dormitory-style arrangement. Despite a few reported cases of dormitories or barracks in other West Indian areas, these seem to have been exceptional arrangements, and none is known for the older sugar colonies (Higman, *Slave Populations*, 220–21).
 27. Ligon, 47–48. No other Barbados source reports room size.

28. John Michael Vlach, *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts* (Cleveland Museum of Art, 1978), 124–25. For rooms and their uses in Barbados, see figure 1; *Authentic History of the English West Indies* (London: Printed for the author and sold by Dean and Munday, 1810), 41; Barbados Assembly, *Report of a Committee*, 4; Bayley, 90; Coleridge, 126; Holder, 23; Hughes, 270; Ligon, 47–48; BDA, Lightfoots plantation, 1839; Naish, 7; Oldmixon, 2: 134; Pinckard, 2: 114–15; Wentworth, 2: 216–18; Joseph Borome, ed., "John Candler's Visit to Barbados, 1849", *JBMHS* 28 (1961): 135.
29. Coleridge, 126; Bayley, 90, 91.
30. Pinckard, 2: 113–14; J.W. Orderson, *Directions to Young Planters for Their Care and Management of a Sugar Plantation in Barbadoes* (London: T. Bensley, 1800), 5; Ligon, 93, 44, 47; "Minute Book of the Society for the Improvement of West India Plantership", 145.
31. For example, the Rev. Thomas Gwynn Rees, a visiting British naval chaplain, reported in 1782 that enslaved plantation workers "slept on a kind of board a little raised from the ground, and some on the ground" (Testimony, 247–48; also Gibbes, *Instructions*, 1786, 25; Orderson, 5). Perhaps the board was placed on a raised mud platform, as was commonly found in traditional West African houses [see, for example, Roy Sieber, *African Furniture and Household Objects* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 27, 31].
32. Pinckard, 2: 113–14; also, *Authentic History*, 41; Bayley, 91; Douglass, 1: 123.
33. Aside from sources quoted in the text, information on house furnishings and utensils has been derived from the following: figure 1; *Authentic History*, 41; Bayley, 90–92; Bennett, 33; Coleridge, 126; Gibbes, *Instructions*, 1786, 21; Ligon, 114; Philip Madin, *Account of His Journey to the West Indies with Thomas Colley, 1779* (Manuscript, Society of Friends Library, London); Naish, 7; Hughes, *Natural History*, 8; Rees, Testimony, 247–48; Wentworth, 2: 216–18; Borome, 135.
34. For many years the island's cottage pottery industry was localized in Chalky Mount, St Andrew, where Handler lived in the early 1960s. The technology involved a unique (for the Caribbean) wooden wheel that was driven by a crank shaft to which was lashed a stick or branch that was pushed by an assistant. The kiln was a simple, wood-burning beehive type (see figure 2, lower right corner). In a 1963 publication, Handler speculated that the Chalky Mount crank-shaft wheel was a local invention. Several decades later, he found historical evidence clearly showing that the wheel came from England and had probably been introduced in the late-seventeenth century, along with the beehive kiln, when earthenware was produced for the sugar industry [see Handler, "Pottery Making in Rural Barbados", *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 19 (1963): 314–34; *ibid.*, "A Historical Sketch of Pottery Manufacture in Barbados", *JBMHS*, 30 (1963): 129–53; *ibid.*, *Land Exploitative Activities and Economic Patterns in a Barbados Village*

- [Ph.D. dissertation, Anthropology, Brandeis University, 1965], 246–62; William Pyne, *Pyne's British Costumes* [1805; Ware, England: Wordsworth Editions, 1989], plate 1; John Thomas Smith, *The Cries of London* [London: J. B. Nichols 1839], 58–60.
35. Ligon, 72–73; Oldmixon, 2: 111; Hughes, *Natural History*, 116; Madin, 18; Bayley, 90; cf. Matthew James Chapman, *Barbadoes, and Other Poems* (London: J. Fraser, 1833), 11; Linnean Society of London, Burlington House Ms. 610, Arthur Anderson, "Barbados" (ca. 1784–1785); Native of the West Indies, *Poems on Subjects Arising in England, and the West Indies* (London, 1783), 7; Richard Watson, *A Defence of the Wesleyan Methodist Missions in the West Indies* (London: Sold by Blanshard, 1817), 17; Captain John Smith, *The True Travels, Adventures, and Observations of Captain John Smith* (London, 1630), 56.
36. Jerome S. Handler, "The Amerindian Slave Population of Barbados in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries", *Caribbean Studies* 8 (1969): 38–64; *ibid.*, "Aspects of Amerindian Ethnography in 17th Century Barbados", *Caribbean Studies* 9 (1970): 50–72; Ligon, 73; Oldmixon, 2: 110–11. The "calabash" and "gourd" are quite different plants, but the two terms have been, and are still, used interchangeably, with misleading implications for interpreting their cultural usages by Africans and their descendants in, for example, carving or as containers [see Sally Price, "When Is a Calabash Not a Calabash?" *New West Indian Guide* 56 (1982), 69–82; Barclay, 304–5; Sieber, 178, 195].
37. Davies lived in Barbados from 1756 to 1770, and during three of the years he lived on a sugar plantation. Rev. Davies, Testimony, in *Minutes of the Evidence Taken Before a Committee of the House of Commons . . . For the Abolition of the Slave Trade, [Parliamentary Papers]*, 34 (London, 1791), 186; Robert B. Nicholls, Testimony, in *ibid.*, 30 (London, 1790), 349–50; Dickson, *Letters on Slavery*, 14; Brathwaite, Reply to Query 6; Poole, 245; "Minute Book of the Society for the Improvement of West India Plantership", 134.
38. Thomas Phillips, "A Journal of a Voyage Made in the Hannibal of London, ann. 1693, 1694, from England, to . . . Barbados", in A. Churchill, ed., *A Collection of Voyages and Travels* (London, 1746), 6: 218, 237–38; William Smith, *Thirty Different Drafts of Guinea* (London, 1727?), plate 14 (See www.slaveryimages.org for plate 14). Cf. John Atkins, *A Voyage to Guinea, Brazil, and the West Indies* (London, 1735), 73, 75, 79; W.B. Baikie, *Narrative of an Exploring Voyage up the Rivers of Kwóra and Binue . . . in 1854* (London: J. Murray, 1856), 115; William Allen and T.R.H. Thomson, *A Narrative of the Expedition Sent by Her Majesty's Government to the River Niger, in 1841* (2 vols. London: R. Bentley, 1848), 2: 388; M.P. Miracle, *Maize in Tropical Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), 53; R.S. Rattray, *The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland* (London: Clarendon Press, 1932), 2: 253; R.F. Burton, *Wanderings in West Africa from Liverpool to Fernando Po* (2 vols. London: Tinsley Brothers, 1863), 2: 142, 144. The word Canky/Cankie/Kankie derives from Akan, a language group mainly concentrated

- in southern Ghana and neighbouring areas, and it also refers to a type of bread made from corn flour (Richard Allsopp, *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996], 134; Oxford English Dictionary Online, 2nd ed. 1989). The Barbadian delicacy "Conkie", made from Indian corn, sweet potato and other vegetable ingredients, seems to owe its origins to this West African antecedent.
39. Richard Hall, *Acts, Passed in the Island of Barbados* (London, 1764), 400; Dickson, *Letters on Slavery*, 14; Brathwaite, Reply to Query 41 [on food supplies of enslaved persons], in *Report of the Lords; West India Committee, Alleyne Letters*, John Foster Alleyne to Richard Smith, 20 September 1801, 12; "Minute Book of the Society for the Improvement of West India Plantership", 134; Gibbes, *Instructions*, 1786, 21.
 40. "Minute Book of the Society for the Improvement of West India Plantership", 105, 146, 151; Bayley, 90; Bennett, 33; Ligon, 110; Gibbes, *Instructions*, 1786, 21; British Library, Additional Mss.43507, "Abstract of the Accounts of Lowther's Plantation in Barbados", 1825-1835; BDA, Mount Gay Plantation and Refinery Journal, 1809-1836. For the plantation "reward-incentive" system and "gratuities" occasionally given to labourers, see Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery*, 78-80, 93-94.
 41. For example, Hughes, *Natural History*, 155, 167-68, 242; Benjamin Browne, *The Yarn of a Yankee Privateer* [Nathaniel Hawthorne, ed., New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1926], 83, 107; Samuel Moore, *The Public Acts in Force* (London, 1801), 357-58; "Sketch of a Voyage to and Description of the Island of Barbados", *European Magazine and London Review* 26 (1794): 283; Dickson, *Letters on Slavery*, 183; Ligon, 48, 97-98; Oldmixon, 2: 133; Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery*, 76; Bennett, 16, 18; Jerome S. Handler and Charlotte J. Frisbie, "Aspects of Slave Life in Barbados: Music and its Cultural Context", *Caribbean Studies* 11 (1972): 5-46; cf. Sieber, *passim*.
 42. Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery*, 56.
 43. This paragraph is based on the following: Barbados Assembly, *Report from a Select Committee of the House of Assembly, Appointed to Inquire into the Origin, Causes, and Progress of the Late Insurrection* (Barbados, 1818), 42, 47; Barbados Council, *Report of a Committee*, 102, 106, 113; Jordan, *Account of Management*, 7; Clarke, "Treatment of Negroes", 30; Joseph Borome, ed., "William Bell and His Second Visit to Barbados, 1829-1830", *JBMHS* 30 (1962), 34; Gibbes, *Instructions*, 1797, 7-15; Rolph, 54.
 44. British Museum, Sloane Mss. 2302, J. Walduck, "Letters to J. Petiver, November 1710 to September 1712"; Pinckard, 2: 114-15; Bayley, 92; Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery*, 54. John Candler, a British Quaker visiting Barbados in 1849, also reported that cooking took place outside (Borome, 135).
 45. Jordan, 3; Rolph, 53; Barclay, 303.
 46. Gibbes, *Instructions*, 1797, 120; Wentworth, 2: 216-18; Coleridge, 126; Bayley, 91; Bennett, 18. We have little direct information on housing for domestic servants. Some occasionally lived in houses located behind the

- manor or dwelling house, and personal servants occasionally slept in the manor house itself. However, inferential evidence indicates that most domestic servants lived in the villages, and their housing probably differed little from that of others.
47. Bayley, 91.
 48. Barbados Assembly, *Report of a Committee*, 4; Pinckard, 2: 287-88; Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey, *The West Indies in 1837* (London: Hamilton Adams, 1838), 2; Meliora, 13; "Minute Book of the Society for the Improvement of West India Plantership", 111; *Minutes of the Society for the Improvement of Plantership in the Island of Barbados, Instituted December 8th, 1804* (Liverpool, 1811), 128.
 49. See, for example, Samuel Hyde, *Account of the Fatal Hurricane by which Barbados Suffered in August, 1831* (Bridgetown, 1831), 8-10; Barbados Council, Reply to Query 15, in *Report of the Lords; Bennett*, 33, 101, 115-16; "Account of the Hurricane in Barbados", *Gentleman's Magazine* 50 (1780): 621-22; "Extract from a letter" [Barbados, 26 November 1795], *Gentleman's Magazine* 66 (1796): 70-71; Oldmixon, 2: 134; Parry, 17; *Periodical Accounts Relating to the Church of the United Brethren* 7 (1818): 175-77; James C. Brandow, ed., "Diary of Joseph Senhouse" [1776-1778], *JBMHS* 37 (1986), 405; Society for the Propagation, *Annual Report*, 48. For the plantation villages, see Handler, "Slave Settlements"; *ibid.*, "Diseases and Medical Disabilities of Enslaved Barbadians from the Seventeenth Century to around 1838: Part 1", *Journal of Caribbean History* 40 (2006): 1-38. Pinckard (2: 114-15) observed that "the Negroes feel the evenings chilly, and we frequently see them crowding round the bit of fire which they make for cooking their supper". At Codrington, people left their fires burning "overnight for warmth in their huts" (Bennett, 33). This was probably widely practised in plantation villages and obviously contributed to the danger of house fires.
 50. Belgrove, 31; "Minute Book of the Society for the Improvement of West India Plantership", 118-19, 138, 144; *Minutes of the Society for the Improvement of Plantership in the Island of Barbados, Instituted December 8th, 1804* (Liverpool, 1811), 128-34; Frank J. Klingberg, *Codrington Chronicle: An Experiment in Anglican Altruism on a Barbados Plantation, 1710-1834* (University of California Publications in History, 37. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1949), 49.
 51. Parry, 17; Governor McGregor to Lord Glenelg, 31 July 1838, quoted in W. Emanuel Riviere, "Labour Shortage in the British West Indies After Emancipation", *Journal of Caribbean History*, 4 (1972): 4. The Barbados Council also reported on the occasional "injudicious situation of their houses, which it would be dangerous to alter on account of their superstitious attachment to the burying places of their ancestors" (Reply to Query 15 [on mortality and illness among the enslaved], in *Report of the Lords*; see also Handler, "Slave Settlements", 137-39). An English visitor to Barbados, shortly after emancipation, briefly reported that "the cottages [of emanci-

- pated people] are devoted each to a single family [and] are surrounded with a little garden . . . a pretty flower bower decorates the door of the Negro dwelling" (Edward Cust, *Reflections on West India Affairs* [London: J. Hatchard and Son, 1839], 18).
52. On the Codrington plantations in 1822, Bennett (p. 105) writes, "the slave's customary right had become so far defined as to permit him to bequeath his cottage, garden, and personal belongings to any other Codrington slave". By this period, Codrington was probably somewhat more liberal in its policies than most other Barbadian plantations, but it was not unique.
 53. While planters determined the actual location of the "Negro yard" or village area, plantation workers were generally free to choose their specific house sites within this area.
 54. "Minute Book of the Society for the Improvement of West India Plantership", 143-44.
 55. Pinckard, 1: 287-88.
 56. Kwamina Dickson, *A Historical Geography of Ghana* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 51, 52, 61, 284, figure 45; cf. Prussin, "Indigenous African Architecture". In general terms, Barbadian wattle-and-daub houses, including the general tendency for two-room division, seem to have been very similar to the most common forms of slave housing in other Caribbean areas [see, for example, Barclay, 303; Carmichael, 1: 128-29; Edwards, *History*, 2: 126-27; Goveia, 139, 140-141; Higman, "Report on Excavations", 43-45; *ibid.*, *Slave Populations*, 218-23; *ibid.*, *Jamaica Surveyed*, 243-48; *ibid.*, *Montpelier*, 153-59, 182-90; Marshall, 26-27; Hans Sloane, *A Voyage to the Islands Madera, Barbados, Nevis, S. Christophers and Jamaica* (London, 1707), 1: xlvi; Stewart, 266-67; Kelly, 398; Gabriel Debien, "Les Cases des Esclaves de Plantation", *Notes d'Histoire Colonial* no. 98 (Dakar, 1966); Jay Edwards, "The Evolution of a Vernacular Tradition", *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 4 (1991): 77; Chapman, "Slave Villages", 108-9; Jay Haviser, "Social Repercussions of Slavery as Evident in African-Curacaoan 'Kunuku' Houses" (Paper presented at the symposium "West Africa and the Americas: Repercussions of the Slave Trade", University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, 21-23 February 1997).
 57. Higman, *Slave Populations*, 220.
 58. John Davy, *The West Indies Before and Since Slave Emancipation* (London: W. and F.G. Cash, 1854), 101, 111.
 59. The visitor was also "told that a street of stone huts, constructed for their use, is almost abandoned by reason of the immobility of such residences" (Thomas Cochrane, *Notes on the Minerology, Government and Condition of the British West India Islands* [London: Ridgway, 1851], 50). John Candler's account in 1849 also suggests that shingled-roof wooden houses were the most common type among plantation labourers (Borome, 135).
 60. During Handler's anthropological fieldwork in the early 1960s and 1970s, one could readily encounter Barbadians who remembered the "trash house" or "trash hut" with its roof of thatched "cane tops tied together". He

- also recalls having seen one in 1961-1962, in the St Andrew village of Lakes, at the base of Chalky Mount. Today, Barbadians might refer to a "trash house" as any house with wooden or stone walls that had a thatched roof, but it could also refer to a wattle-and-daub house. During the period of slavery, "trash house" could also have referred to a plantation building that stored cane trash to be used as fuel in the boiling house; it was termed that way by the late-seventeenth century (Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Rawlinson Mss. A. 348, Henry Drax, "Instructions which I would have observed by Mr. Richard Harwood", n.d. [ca. 1670-1679]). Wattle-and-daub houses continued to be common among the rural poor in various areas of the Caribbean well into the twentieth century, and they continue to be so in Haiti today [see for example, Pamela Gosner, *Caribbean Georgian: The Great and Small Houses of the West Indies* [Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1982], 73; Suzanne Slesin, Stafford Cliff, Jack Berthelot, Martine Gaumé, Daniel Rozensztroch, *Caribbean Style* [New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1985], 54-55].
61. Edwin Doran, "The West Indian Hipped-Roof Cottage", *California Geographer*, 3 (1962): 97-104; Higman, *Jamaica Surveyed*, 244-245. We have not been able to establish when hipped (or hip) roofs were incorporated into Barbadian vernacular architecture. Such roofs were common in south and southeast England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as among Southern Irish peasants (Doran, "Hipped-Roof Cottage", 103; Eric Mercer, *English Vernacular Houses* [London: HMSO, 1975], *passim*; E. Estyn Evans, *Irish Heritage: The Landscape, The People, and Their Work* [Dundalk, Ireland: Dundalgan Press, 1942], 57-66). These roofs might have been found on some of the stone and wooden houses that came into use in Barbados during the later slavery period or post-emancipation decades of the nineteenth century. Hipped roofs seem to be depicted on a sketch/drawing, done between 1837 and 1845, of houses in the Ashford (St John) plantation yard (Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery*, 48, 297-98), but the earliest photos of Barbadian vernacular houses that appear to show hipped roofs date from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries [see figures 3, 4; also Hill, *Cuba and Porto Rico*, facing p. 394, and Treves, *Cradle of the Deep*, facing pp. 12, 20].
 62. Mercer, 8-9 and *passim*; P.H. Ditchfield, *The Cottages and the Village Life of Rural England* (London: Dent, 1912), 8-9; J.H. Bettey, "Seventeenth Century Squatters' Dwellings: Some Documentary Evidence", *Vernacular Architecture* 13 (1983): 28-30.
 63. See, for example, Gunkel and Handler, "German Indentured Servant", 92; Ligon, 74-75. Only Ligon provides any details on thatching techniques, but we are uncertain if he is talking about the houses of Blacks, Whites or both.
 64. It is estimated that from 1640 to 1690 approximately 80 percent of the Africans shipped to Barbados embarked from ports in the Gold Coast, the Bight of Benin and the Bight of Biafra; from 1691 to 1740, about 79 percent of the people embarked from these ports. These coastal port areas roughly

correspond to the present geographical area from the Ivory Coast-Ghana to Nigeria-Camerouns. We are aware that the issue of African origins of enslaved peoples is a very complex one and that figures for coastal embarkation points can only serve as a rough guide. However, there is sufficient qualitative evidence along with these figures to suggest the rough geographical areas from where enslaved Africans to Barbados originated. For purposes of this paper, we intentionally avoid the highly contentious and problematical issue of ethnic origins. For persons interested in this issue see the following source: "The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database" at <http://www.slavevoyages.com>.

65. Susan Denyer, *African Traditional Architecture: An Historical and Geographical Perspective* (New York: Africana Publishing, 1978), 99.
66. Handler, "Slave Settlements", 124-25.
67. Denyer, 138; Vlach, *Afro-American Tradition*, 138.
68. Handler, "Slave Settlements", 129-30.
69. Denyer, 4, 82. "The building process in sub-Saharan rural Africa", Prussin (p. 191) writes, "is a communal process . . . [and] involves the community at large". For exchange labour in rural Barbados, see Handler, "Small-Scale Sugar Cane Farming in Barbados", *Ethnology* 5 (1966): 277-78, 281, 282.
70. Studies of indigenous African architecture offer clues to the range of wattle-and-daub houses, including the rectangular house form that Prussin informs us was the "architectural prototype of the rain forest", and which was probably found in Barbados during the earlier periods of slavery (*Architecture in Northern Ghana: A Study of Forms and Functions* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969], 4); *ibid.*, "Indigenous African Architecture". Cf. Denyer, 96, 133-42; Paul Oliver, ed., *Shelter in Africa* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1971), 7-25; S.D. Dodge, "House Types in Africa", *Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science Arts and Letters* 19 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1928), 59, 61, 62.
71. The Barbadian "chattel house" was a post-emancipation development (see Henry Fraser et al., *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage* [Kingston: Heinemann Publishers, 1990]; Mark R. Watson and Robert B. Potter, *Low Cost Housing in Barbados: Evolution or Social Revolution?* [Mona: University of the West Indies Press, 2001]), 50-55). Although the basic "chattel house" is similar to wood-frame houses found elsewhere in the Caribbean, "it is distinguished", writes an art-oriented architectural historian, "by the steep pitch of the roof and the fretted bargboards and ginger-bread on the porch"; it may, indeed, as Edwards has claimed, "represent an amalgam of many distinct architectural currents which have swept over the island" historically (Gosner, 113; Jay Edwards, "The First Comparative Studies of Caribbean Architecture", *New West Indian Guide* 56 [1983], 176-77). Clear architectural drawings of different styles and types of Caribbean wood-frame houses are shown in Slesin et al., 280-84.