The following excellent text and pictures on Pioneers' Houses is a copy of the extensive work done by William F. Milam M.D. of Richmond, Virginia and is posted on his web site. Go to Milam’s site to utilize the links for addition information.

http://www.milaminvirginia.com/Links/HOUSES/colonial_virginia_and_maryland_houses.html

Innovation in Early Settlers' Houses in Virginia and Maryland
The Pioneers' Progression: Hovel, House, Home

Unlike in New England, villages were few and far between in the Chesapeake Bay region. Perhaps the most distinctive feature of colonial dwellings in the South was their isolation, situated along rivers and creeks amongst forest and cleared fields. [320] This was unlike the communal village setting typical of England or even New England. Roads except near the established towns of the Tidewater were almost nonexistent so transportation was via rivers and the bay. The wealthy gentry took up large tracks of land on major water-ways so they could more easily transport their tobacco and corn to England and have personal access to the water routes. Their mansion was located facing the river, overlooking their dock. Surrounding the main house were out-buildings: kitchen, storehouse, smoke house, barn, stable, tobacco sheds and slaves’ quarters. [321] At a distance when approached from the water, the gentry’s complex resembled a small village.

In April 1732, William Hugh Grove wrote in his diary of his approach to Yorktown by boat:

"This City (as tis called) is indeed a delicate Village. Stands elevated on a Sandy hill like Black Heath or Richmond Hill {in England} and like that overlooks a fine river broader than the Thames at those places and has likewise the prospect of a noble bay. A stranger {would} conclude there were at least 100 houses whereas there are really not 30 – for their kitchens, warehouses, etc. are here and generally everywhere separate {buildings} and make them appear different habitations. There are about 10 good houses, not above 4 of brick, the rest of timber, viz. pine planks covered with shingles of cypress. They are not contiguous but separated 40, 50, or 100 yards from each other...." [322]
Thus even one hundred and twenty-five years after Jamestown was settled and about the time Thomas Milam located on the western frontier in Orange County, Yorktown near the Chesapeake Bay consisted of fewer than 30 families of whom only ten had good houses. A few days later Grove wrote:

"I went up the {York} river, which has pleasant {Gentrys’} Seats on the Bank which show Like little villages, for having Kitchins, Dairy houses, Barns, Stables, Store houses, and some 2 or 3 Negro Quarters all Separate from Each other but near the Mansion houses....{They} make a show to the river of 7 or 8 distinct Tenements, tho all belong to one family....Most of These have pleasant Gardens and the Prospect of the River render them very pleasant {and} equal to the Thames from London to Richmond, supposing the Towns omitted." [323]
Dwellings of the Common Plantors and Yeoman

Yet, the great majority of pioneers - the planters and yeoman - lived along the smaller rivers and creeks surrounded by forest with initially very limited or no access to roads. Until the 1980s the standard textbook, *Early American Architecture* by Hugh Morrison, described how primitive shelters of early pioneers quickly developed into "faire framed" or brick farmhouses. [351] However, tree ring dating (dendrochronology) of timber from these houses performed by Heikkenen and Edwards in the 1980s demonstrated that most of the early brick farmhouses were actually constructed in the eighteenth century, not the seventeenth. [355]

Here is a contemporary observation by an English traveler, J. F. D. Smyth, who visited Virginia in the 1770s and wrote:

"....the houses here are almost all of wood, covered with the same; the roof with shingles, the sides and ends with thin boards {clapboards}, and not always lathed and plastered within; only those of the better sort are finished in that manner and painted on the outside. The chimneys are sometimes brick, but more commonly of wood, coated on the inside with clay. The windows of the better sort have glass in them; the rest have none, and only wooden shutters...." [324]

Even as late as 1778 a Virginian knowledgeable of architecture, Thomas Jefferson, wrote in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*:

"The private buildings are very rarely constructed of stone or brick; much the greatest proportion being of scantling and boards {clapboards}, plastered with lime. It is impossible to devise things more ugly, uncomfortable, and happily more perishable.
There are two or three plans, on one of which, according to its size, most of the houses in
the state are built...." [314]

For those on the Virginia frontier - as Thomas Milam surely was in the Orange County of the 1730s - a
natural progression in housing occurred, sometimes referred to as: "hovel, house, home". [326] The
rationale for this progression was put to pen in 1649 by Cornelius Van Tienhoven in a pamphlet for
settlers to New Netherland (New York) but it was apropos to all new settlers in the colonies:

"....ought to sail from this country in the fore or latter part of Winter in order to arrive
with Gods help....early in the Spring in March, or at latest in April, so as to be able to
plant, during that {first} Summer, garden vegetables, maize, and beans, and moreover
employ the whole Summer in clearing land and building cottages (that is the dugouts
which he describes later).

"All then who arrive must immediately set about preparing the soil, so as to be able if
possible to plant some Winter grain, and to proceed the {first} Winter to cut and clear the
timber as are suitable for building for palisades, posts and rails {for fences} which must
be prepared during the Winter so as to be set up in the Spring on the new made land
which is intended to be sown in order that the cattle may not in any wise injure the crops.

"The farmer can get all sorts of cattle in the course of the second Summer when he will
have more leisure to cut and bring home hay, also to build houses and barnes for men and
cattle. Even the wealthy and prinicipal men in New England, in the beginning of the
Colonies commenced their first dwelling-houses in this fashion for two reasons: first in
order not to waste time building and not to want for food next season.

"In the course of three or four years, when the country became adapted to agriculture,
they built themselves handsome houses, spending on them several thousands." [326, 340]

As Cary Carson, Norman Barka et al wrote: "For many newcomers a hut was followed, as soon as could
be, by a weather proof but cheaply built house which was not expected to last longer than it took its
owners to accumulate enough capital to build yet another more substantial dwelling. Over and over again
homesteaders on each new frontier moved in the same three steps from primitive shelters to temporary,
impermanent buildings, to the ‘faire houses’.... For wealthier settlers who expected in a few years to
build a fully framed house on a waterproof brick or stone foundation, they often located their cheaply
built, impermanent house so it could later be used as the kitchen." [326]

Perhaps the best source on how to build an inexpensive, weatherproof dwelling is a 1684 pamphlet
addressed to "Such Persons as are Inclined to America" which provided detailed instructions for
constructing a house of 30 feet by 18 feet as follows:

"There must be eight Trees of about sixteen inches square and cut off to Posts of about
fifteen foot long, which the House must stand upon; and four pieces, two of thirty foot
long and two of eighteen foot long, for Plates, which must lie upon the top of those Posts
the whole length and bredth of the House for the Gists {joists} to rest upon. There must
be ten Gists of twenty foot long to bear the Loft, and two false plates of thirty foot long
to lie upon the ends of the Gists for the Rafters to be fixed upon, twelve pair of rafters of
about twenty foot to bear the Roof of the House, with several other small pieces as Wind-
Beams, Braces, Studs, etc. which are made of the Waste Timber. For Covering the House,
Ends and Sides, and for the Loft we use Clapboard, which is Rived feather-edged, of five
foot and half long, that well Drawn lyes close and smooth. The Lodging Room may be
lined with the same and filled up between (with nogging), which is very warm." [337]

Of such a house the author continued: "These houses usually endure ten years without repair." [326, 337]
You will note that the instructions did not mention a masonry foundation because this house was to "stand upon" the eight 16 inch posts which were to be set in post-holes several feet deep. Note also that there was no mention of joist or planks for the first floor. The pamphleteer explained: "The lower floor is the Ground; the upper is Clapboard." You may view an enlargement of the 1684 re-construction drawing by clicking on it.
Development of the Virginia Frame

What is most intriguing about the vernacular architecture of the Chesapeake Bay area – the tobacco culture region – is that the “weather proof but cheaply built house” became the preferred architectural design not only on the advancing frontier during the 17th century but throughout the Chesapeake Bay area well into the 18th century as Thomas Jefferson noted. By the 1640s, this impermanent, post-in-the-ground architecture became known as the Virginia house, or the Virginia frame, and was widely disseminated and generally accepted by 1675. [353, 364, 368]

The earliest dwellings at Jamestown settlement (1607) were quick and dirty structures of lightweight wooden frames encased in clay. The posts forming the sidewalls were irregularly spaced and set into holes dug into the subsoil to hold the posts erect - a form of "earthfast" construction. The roofs were of reed or thatch. As the seventeenth century progressed settlers to the region experimented with various framing techniques. Excavations of 450 + buildings by archaeologists at dozens of sites in the Chesapeake Bay region show that nearly 60 percent of all dwellings were of earthfast construction. [361]

Archaeological Sites. Graham, Hudgins, "Adaptation and Innovation, etc." [362]
Willie Graham and Carter Huggins wrote:

"The building technology that eventually emerged as the common solution to regional conditions looked unlike anything in contemporary England. Its lineage, however, was related to the mud-clad, lightly structured dwellings found in early Virginia and to more substantially framed buildings common in postmedieval England." [363]

The Virginia house was devised through adaptation by the settlers to their new, heavily forested, humid environment and through experimentation with different framing methods rather than simply the importation of a building design which they knew from England. The innovation proved highly adaptable to the pioneers' needs for a simple, quick and economical framing system. [356] Its major components included minimally prepared timber, simplified joinery, earthfast construction and, for structural strength, riven (hand-split) clapboards of oak or chestnut not only for the siding but also for the roof - substituting for the clay walls and the thatch roofs of earlier construction. [368, 371] The key archaeological marker of a Virginia house was the finding of posts-in-the-ground set at regular intervals. This was necessary for the use of 5 foot lengths of clapboards. Typically, large posts were set 10 feet apart with intervening vertical studs at 2 1/2 to 5 feet. For houses with a gable chimney, side-wall assembly (as illustrated below) became the preferred method for raising the walls. [365] This framing technique was also used for outbuildings, tobacco barns, warehouses, courthouses and even churches. [371] Indeed, many more tobacco barns were built than houses. [343]

Carson, Bowen and Graham, "New World, Real World: Improvising English Culture" [369]
An ingenious feature adapted from the archaic houses of postmedieval England was the simple, lightweight method for framing the roof which was given structural strength by the use of clapboards. [365] Unlike the heavily constructed, box framed houses of old England which had a roof rafter tied into every wall post by complicated joinery, the *Virginia House* used "tie beams" (joist) that extended beyond the wall lines and supported the principal rafters entirely independently of the posts". [328] A "false plate" was run horizontally along the outer ends of the tie beams so paired lightweight rafters could be attached - usually at 2 1/2 feet intervals. [354] Click [here](link) for details of the roof truss assembly.

![A diagram of a roof truss assembly](image)

Fig. 52 from Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia*, page 124 [375] Timbers Labeled by Me.

The lightness of clapboard roofs allowed the use of fewer rafters and of smaller size. [365] Thus construction was simplified so a carpenter needed to know only one simple joint: the lap joint, not the more complicated, precise and time consuming mortise-and-tenon joint used in a "faire framed" English house.
Carson, Bowen and Graham, "New World, Real World: Improvising English Culture" [372]

The cost of construction was further minimized by not using a waterproof masonry foundation nor a brick chimney, both of which required the production of bricks and a brick mason - an expensive proposition in the colonies. The method of choice for constructing a chimney also used a post-in-the-ground wooden scaffolding which was lined with clay as seen on the re-constructed Godiah Spray House. These were referred to as "Welsh chimneys". By living on the earthen ground floor they avoided the cost of floor joists and flooring planks. Through re-constructing the Spray House, Stone estimated that three carpenters could fell the trees and build a 25 foot long Virginia House in about three weeks. [343]
Re-constructed "Virginia House", York County, Virginia.

Archaeologists refer to the construction of a building as earthfast when the wooden structural members forming the sidewalls of a building came in direct contact with the earth, such as horizontal sills laid directly on the ground or in trenches ("groundsills"); or vertical wall posts and/or studs set into holes dug into the subsoil to hold the structure erect. [361] Archaeological excavations have disclosed dwellings utilizing combinations of these techniques. This earthfast construction doomed the wood to rot over time from mold or insects and doomed the dwelling to impermanence. The pamphleteer in 1684 estimated that "these houses usually endure ten years without repair." [337] The concept of impermanence is brought home by the fact that the number of surviving seventeenth-century buildings from England’s two largest and most populous American colonies - Virginia and Maryland - are fewer than six. [328, 334] This compares with Massachusetts which alone has 71 houses built before 1700 still standing. [330]

That earthfast construction was used in the majority of dwellings in the seventeenth century and well into the eighteenth century is known from archaeological excavations at more than 240 sites. For example, in Maryland: Cedar Park, Anne Arundel County and St. Mary’s City; in Virginia: Flowerdew Hundred along the James River, Jamestown, Littleton Quarter, Kingsmill near Williamsburg, River Creek in York County; and in digs in North Carolina’s Albemarle Sound region. [326, 327] Of all examined dwellings
built between 1607 and 1720, 59% were earthfast; and for rural sites, 71% were earthfast. [363] Cary Carson et al wrote:

"….the magnitude of the southern builders’ debt to the region’s impermanent architectural tradition is only fully appreciated by looking ahead at the timber-framed house type that became absolutely standard and universal in the eighteenth century throughout Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas, and eventually all those trans-Appalachian states settled by immigrants from the tidewater South. Virtually every member of its frame…..can be traced back a hundred years or more to origins in the Virginia house...."

"Eventually its vulnerable earthfast features - hole-set post and studs and ground-laid sills – were winnowed out and eliminated in preference to wooden blocks, brick piers and finally waterproof masonry foundations. But, for a considerable time, posts in the ground were acceptable to many builders of houses...." [332]

Starting in the 1680s impermanent buildings were raised off the ground on wooden blocks upon which the horizontal sills were placed. By the 1740s earthfast construction became increasingly uncommon. [331] In the Chesapeake region, small, fully framed dwellings only began to appear in numbers after 1715 and gradually increased over the next century. Extensive replacement of impermanent, earthfast housing was delayed until the early 1800s in tobacco growing, backwaters such as St. Mary’s County, Maryland; southside Virginia; and the Albemarle Sound region of North Carolina. [331, 336]
Cedar Park, originally built in 1702 as a 1 1/2-story post-in-the-ground structure, is the earliest surviving earthfast constructed dwelling in Maryland and Virginia. Its massive timber frame rests on 12 hole-set posts and its exterior walls, roof and porch tower were originally sheathed in oak clapboards. It survived until this day only because of continuous repairs, a series of additions and, in the mid eighteenth century, the wooden structure was underpinned with a brick foundation and faced with a brick skin. [357] You may read more about Cedar Park's history by clicking here (link). To view details of the Historic American Building Survey including photographs at the Library of Congress please click here (link).

Pear Valley House, Built 1740, Northampton County, Virginia. Click for more images.

Of the thousands of one room Virginia houses built, the Pear Valley House, built about 1740 as a 1 1/2 story dwelling on a brick foundation, is the earliest surviving single-room-plan house in Virginia. After one hundred years of evolution, it is a mature version of the Virginia house architecture. Like Cedar Park, it was built for a wealthier planter although the original builder is not known. Its present survival depended
upon its original brick foundation upon which the horizontal wooden sills were laid. Excluding the chimney, the dwelling measured about 20 feet by 16 feet. The first floor had wooden planking supported by floor joist. Typical of the *Virginia house*, the roof truss was supported by tie beams (joist) extending beyond the walls where they were exposed. The lower ends of the paired rafters were attached to angled false plates run perpendicular to the outer edge of the tie beams. The sides of the house were originally covered with riven clapboards; and the roof was covered with round-butt shingles. The entire north wall was Flemish bond brickwork with an 11 foot wide pyramidal chimney enclosing an 8 foot wide fireplace. You may see these features illustrated by clicking on the photograph and also the drawing above.

The original interior walls were plaster on wooden lath with the ceiling joist exposed. The first-floor was whitewashed including ceiling joists, the underside of the loft flooring as well as the plaster. The loft or garret was a single room, 19 1/2 feet by 10 1/2 feet and 6 1/2 feet high which was lighted by three gable windows. All woodwork upstairs was left unfinished. According to a 1992 survey prepared for the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities:

"The house appears to have remained in use and was left unaltered, except for improvement of finish on the fireplace wall inside, until about 1820-35 when it was transformed into a more refined multi-room house....The house was reoriented to face in the opposite direction, a shed-roofed room { leanto} was added to the west, cooking was removed from the main room (probably to a detached kitchen now long lost), and both inside and out were retrimmed."

Dell Upton, author of *Early Vernacular Architecture in Southeastern Virginia*, wrote of the Pear Valley House:

"This may be an early eighteenth-century house, but nothing about it precludes its being late eighteenth century. All of the features adduced to support its early dates – the pyramidal chimney, the exposed chamfered framing, the tilted false plate, and the raking glazed headers – can, as I have shown, be found on buildings of this sort, in this combination, until at least 1800." [358]

You may read the survey report containing drawings, old photographs and a discussion of the significance of the Pear Valley house [here](link).

**Why was the Impermanent *Virginia House* so Persistent?**

Why then did the vast majority of folks in the Chesapeake Bay region as late as the middle of the eighteenth century still prefer to build impermanent dwellings – or as Jefferson wrote, "perishable"? In New England, the new settlers regularly replaced their initial, impermanent homesteads within a few years with a "faire framed" English house. As early as the mid 1600s in New England it was remarked: "...the Lord hath been pleased to turn all the wigwams, huts, and hovels the English dwelt in at their first coming into orderly, fair, and well-built houses, ....". [344] By 1700 in New England the replacement of primitive dwellings with fully framed houses on a masonry foundation was nearly complete. [330] Cary Carson and colleagues in their extensive study entitled "Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies" discussed the geographical, social and economic forces which lead to the persistence of impermanent architecture in the Chesapeake region. [333 - 336]

A grim reality for pioneers who settled along the great waterways of Virginia and Maryland was the high incidence of tropical diseases like typhoid fever, yellow fever and malaria - imported from Africa with the slave trade - which lead to a much shorter life expectancy in the mid-Atlantic colonies. Hugh Jones wrote in 1724: "Gentlemen and planters love to build near the water, though it be not so healthy as the uplands and barrens." [338] The life expectancy for a man who reached his majority was only 45 years. [345] This compared with an average of 70 years in New England and 60 years in England. [346] The effect of early mortality was devastating on their children since 2/3 would lose at least one parent before they reached their 21st birthday and fully 1/3 lost both of their parents. Fathers therefore had no certainty that the little wealth they were able to acquire would be passed on to their heirs in a predictable manner. These
realities and their limited financial resources made it reasonable to invest in greater crop production rather than to invest in a “faire framed” dwelling which could last 200 years. [334]

Everywhere in the mid-Atlantic colonies experienced carpenters and masons were in short supply and, when available, their wages were high - 2 to 3 times that in England. [354] Thus it was very expensive to build a fully framed and proper house - unaffordable really - even for most of the better off as the archaeological excavations have demonstrated. In 1687, William Fitzhugh, a Potomac merchant, who built a fully framed house for himself wrote a friend in England who was considering settling in Virginia:

"...but should not advise to build either a great house or English framed house, for labor is so intolerably dear and workmen so idle and negligent that the building of a good house to you there will seem insupportable....

"...not withstanding {that} we have timber for nothing, but felling & getting in place, the frame of my house stood me more money...than a frame of the same Dimensions would cost in London by a third at least....& near three times as long preparing." [347]

Because growing tobacco was such a labor intensive crop, the planters typically chose to invest in hiring more servants and slaves to increase production. But this was costly as well. In late 1775, one planter noted that the cost of twenty slaves was five times more than the total cost of his modest house and outbuildings. [348]

Also planters soon learned that tobacco planting depleted the nutrients from the soil after 10 years or so. The science behind this was not known at the time nor was the rationale for crop rotation. Farmers only knew that their tobacco yield decreased year after year until it was no longer worthwhile planting at that location. The planter then needed to either buy more virgin land nearby or to remove completely. Unfortunately virgin land in the older Tidewater area of Virginia had become scarce and expensive so often the only choice for the planter was to relocate toward the western frontier where land was affordable. [321] It was not uncommon for 20% of the population of a Virginia county to remove each year. The poor moved more often than the rich, partly because former servants rarely were able to find affordable land near where they were indentured. [341] These facts also argued for not building a permanent, "English framed" home.

This was especially true from 1680 through about 1715 when tobacco prices collapsed resulting in an economic depression in the Chesapeake Bay region. [349] The economic hard times decreased the arrivals of white indentured servants seeking opportunity and increased the purchases of black slaves from Africa. These financial and social events brought about a change in house floor plans too. Dell Upton studied court probates for room inventories and also 180 individual buildings dating from the early seventeenth to early nineteenth centuries. He observed that during the 1600s common planters constructed progressively larger - but of course modest - houses to accommodate increased numbers of servants generally preferring two rooms on the ground floor - the so-called hall-and-parlor arrangement - with a loft above. [368] This allowed for a division of activities: the hall for cooking, eating, storage and certain work like spinning or weaving; and the smaller parlor for the master's bedroom, sitting room and some socializing. After 1680, these planters began to house servants and slaves in outbuildings and, because of the hazard of fire, cooking preparation was moved to a separate kitchen building. From the 1680's to about 1730 the planter's houses decreased in the number of rooms, with the planter's family content to live in a smaller, one room house - the so-called hall plan - with a loft. [358]

After economic recovery a few, fully framed houses began to appear and these increased throughout the eighteenth century. Most farmers had responded to the very lean years by diversifying their production to include corn, wheat, vegetables and fruits or began producing hogs, cattle and dairy products especially those near growing cities. Eventually mixed farming replaced the dependence upon tobacco everywhere except southern Maryland and southside Virginia. [334] Carson, Barka et al document the strong correlation between the timing of the shift to mixed farming and the first appearance of fully framed, permanent houses. The correlation of rebuilding with permanent houses was particularly strong with the timing of the shift from tobacco to cereal crops: corn and especially wheat. [336] They wrote:
"Take Lower Norfolk County, Virginia, for example. Its planters gave up tobacco in the middle of the 1680s never to plant it again….Between 1700 and the 1720s they turned overwhelmingly to the planting of cereal grains, mostly corn,….It is surely significant that the earliest small brick houses in Virginia, buildings of the late seventeenth century and very early eighteenth, are concentrated in the Lynnhaven district of Lower Norfolk (later named Princess Anne) County. In the same general area a one-room frame house dated 1714 still stands along the banks of the Nansemond River."

“Across the mouth of the bay, the lower eastern shore of Virginia also grew less and less tobacco after 1700 and none to speak of by 1740. It, too, is a locality that boasts not only two of Virginia’s earliest timber-framed buildings,…..but also, in Northampton County, an unusual abundance of small, smart, mostly one story, brick farmhouses from the middle decades of the eighteenth century by which time tobacco patches had mostly been plowed into cornfields.” [334]

On the three great Necks of Virginia - the Northern Neck, the Middle Peninsula and The Peninsula - where most of the colony’s population dwelt, the planter’s rebuilding with permanent dwellings wasn't complete until the 1770s because of the regions' devotion to tobacco growing. [336]

Beginning in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, the steady and reliable income from harvesting grain crops and their improved economic outlook enabled modest farmers to generate a small degree of wealth and to improve their impermanent housing with permanent, fully framed dwellings. The trend toward one room houses may have been partially due to the better framed houses with brick foundations. With the stronger walls, the house could be built wider providing more space and headroom in the loft for additional bedrooms and storage. With the kitchen and servants quarters removed to outbuildings, a larger, one-room hall could serve well for dining, the master's bedroom and entertaining guests. Thus it functioned more like the "parlor" in the former two room, hall-and-parlor plan. [367] From the mid eighteenth century, a desire for greater separation of social and living functions lead to the addition of specialized rooms such as a central passage or a dining room, often built as a leanto onto the back of the house. Indeed, the leanto option for adding specialized rooms to the house would remain popular in Virginia for another century. [360]
Ten years after Thomas Jefferson's published quote about housing, the 1798 U. S. tax rolls enumerated the housing stock of the new nation. Elizabeth Gallow surveyed the surviving 1798 records for a number of Maryland counties near the Chesapeake Bay: [366]

"In 1798 the median size of dwellings in Baltimore County was 432 square feet (a median length and width of 18 x 24 feet). In Anne Arundel County, the median size was 360 square feet (a median length and width of 18 x 20 feet). The size of houses in Prince George's County matched those in Baltimore County at 432 square feet and in Somerset County on the lower Eastern Shore, the median was 400 square feet (20 x 20 feet). Some of these small dwellings may have contained two rooms {on the ground floor} but the data suggest a preponderance of one-room plans." [350]

In addition to the Pear Valley House, the Rochester House and the Lesser Dabney House are representative of the fully framed houses which planters could afford to build more frequently after 1730. The single room, "hall plan" Rochester House and Pear Valley House had a separate outbuilding for the kitchen. The "hall-and-parlor" plan Lessor Dabney House had a leanto, or shed, attachment on the right side which served as the cooking and dining area. As Carson and Barka wrote:

"….the magnitude of the southern builders’ debt to the region’s impermanent architectural tradition is only fully appreciated by looking ahead at the timber-framed house type that became absolutely standard and universal in the eighteenth century throughout Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas, and eventually all those trans-Appalachian states settled by immigrants from the tidewater South. Virtually every member of its frame…..can be traced back a hundred years or more to origins in the Virginia house...." [332]

The Pear Valley House, the Rochester House and the Lessor Dabney House represent rare survivors of what were once the most common form of dwelling in the eighteenth century Chesapeake and are direct descendents of the Virginia house.
NOTE TO READERS: All the words in **bold type face** are links to images, maps or word definitions in the Glossary. The *Citations* and *Glossary* are available under the Resources tab or [here](#) (link).

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