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instructor: Carl Lounsbury
course title: Recording Buildings: Field School in Early American
Architecture
institution: College of William and Mary
date offered: Spring, 2003

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***Recording Buildings:
Field School in Early America Architecture***

History 490, 590; American Studies 470-570
College of William and Mary

Summer 2003
Monday through Thursday, 10:00-4:00
Room 207, Bruton Heights School
301 First Street, Williamsburg
and other locations as noted

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Course Goals:

Fieldwork is at the heart of good scholarship in the study of early American architecture. This course is intended to introduce students to the methods of fieldwork—from learning to recognize diagnostic features and reading the chronological development of a structure to the recording of a building through measured drawings, photography, and written descriptions. The seminar will consist of a few introductory lectures and much active fieldwork. By the end of the five-week session, students will recognize the difference between a wrought and cut nail, discern the hierarchy of ornamentation used in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century buildings, and know how to do basic measured drawings.

Attendance and other matters:

As this is an intensive course dedicated to learning field skills, your presence is essential. In addition, there may be additional assignments (small ones) that grow out of our fieldtrips and discussions that you will not want to miss.

Classes will meet from 10:00am to 4:00pm each day, Monday through Thursday. When in Williamsburg, there will plenty of time for lunch. When in the field, we may run over the 4:00 schedule so you should take this into consideration when planning your life around the course. There will be a NIAHD van that will take us in comfort to the various sites outside of town.

When in the field, you will wish to wear sensible clothing—that is things you don't mind getting dirty or torn. Also, a note of caution, old buildings can be dangerous. From sharp nails in attic roofs to rotting floors, hazards are always lurking. In the summer dangerous animals—chiggers, ticks, snakes, mad dogs, etc.—can be a nuisance. In all these matters be careful and bring bug spray.

Readings:

Naturally, there is no one publication that will teach you how to read and record historic buildings. Most field recorders pick up information from the experience of looking at evidence in the field. However, there are some helpful books that illustrate many of the features that you will see in slides and in buildings. These readings are intended as handy references. Please read the assigned readings before each class and use them again to refer back to after lectures and fieldwork. In addition to the listed readings, I will hand out other material as warranted or demanded. Books available at the bookstore for purchase include: Garvin, *A Building History of Northern New England*, Lanier and Herman, *Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic*, and Lounsbury, *An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture and Landscape*.

Final Project:

The final project is a recording project. We will select a site that has several buildings that need to be recorded. We will spend the last two weeks of the course investigating and recording these buildings. As a final project, you will do measured drawings of the buildings and write a description of their architectural development. The purpose is to introduce you to the two basic means of communicating evidence—through drawings and the specialized language of architecture.

The final project should include:

1. Accurate and neatly presented measured drawings of the building or complex. At the minimum this should include a floor plan of the principal stories, but for the adventuresome,

elevations, sections, and detail drawings are also desirable. Include your field notes with the measured drawings.

2. A written, four- to eight-page description and analysis of the building or complex. It should include a detailed, accurate description of the building's plan, form, materials, and details. It should note the salient features that distinguish the building's date of construction or significant changes, and describe important alterations made to it over time. A brief account of the building's plan and function should also be included.

Final Grade:

Final grades will be a composite of the final project (50%), and class participation (50%).

Schedule of Classes

Week 1

Tuesday, May 27

Introduction

Looking at Buildings

Wednesday, May 28

Building Materials

Building Components

Reading: Lanier and Herman, 1-9, 61-118; Garvin, 5-94

Thursday, May 29

Building Components continued

Reading: Lanier and Herman, 119-176; Garvin, 95-135

Week 2

Monday, June 2

Fieldtrip: Hanover Tavern: Reading evidence in the field

Reading: Garvin, 136-172

Tuesday, June 3

Fieldtrip: St. Luke's Church, Bacon's Castle: Reading evidence in the field

Wednesday, June 4

10:00: "House Planning in Early Virginia," Mark R. Wenger, guest lecturer

pm: Tour of Historic Area with Mark R. Wenger

Reading: Lanier and Herman, 10-60; Wenger, "The Central Passage in Virginia," in Wells ed., Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, II, 137-149; Wenger, "The Dining Room in Early Virginia," in Carter and Herman eds., Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, III, 149-159.

Thursday, June 5

am: Historic Trades: Visit on your own the Carpenters, Brickyard, Blacksmiths, Cabinetmakers: Observe and ask questions about the fabrication of building materials

2:00: "Building in Timber," Willie Graham, guest lecturer

Reading: Graham, "Preindustrial Framing in the Chesapeake" in Hoagland and Breisch eds., Constructing Identity, Image, and Place: Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, IX, 179-196

Week 3

Monday, June 9

10:00am: Timber framing: Visit Booker Tenement with Willie Graham

pm: Discovering details in the Historic Area: An self-guided exercise in looking closely building details

Tuesday, June 10

am: Review of yesterday's material; exam (making sense of a lot of information)

pm: Making sense of the evidence: Saunders House

Reading: McDonald, Understanding Old Buildings, NPS Preservation Brief #35

Wednesday, June 11

Fieldtrip: Field Investigation: Debtor's Prison, Gloucester County

Reading: Lanier and Herman, 316-350

Thursday, June 12

Fieldtrip: Field Investigation: Debtor's Prison, Gloucester County

Week 4

Monday, June 16

Recording: How to measure a box: Hoke House

Reading: Recording Structures and Sites with HABS Measured Drawings available on line at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/habshaer/habs/guidelines>

Tuesday, June 17

Fieldtrip: Recording

Wednesday, June 18

Fieldtrip: Recording

Thursday, June 19

Fieldtrip: Recording

Friday, June 20

Fieldtrip: Recording (if needed)

Week 5

Monday, June 23

Measured drawings: Translating field notes into finished drawings: Pencil, paper, t-square, and scale; or CAD

Presentation: Alfredo Maul: Drafting at the keyboard

Tuesday, June 24

Measured drawings

Wednesday, June 25

Measured drawings

Thursday, June 26

Measured drawings

pm: Final presentations