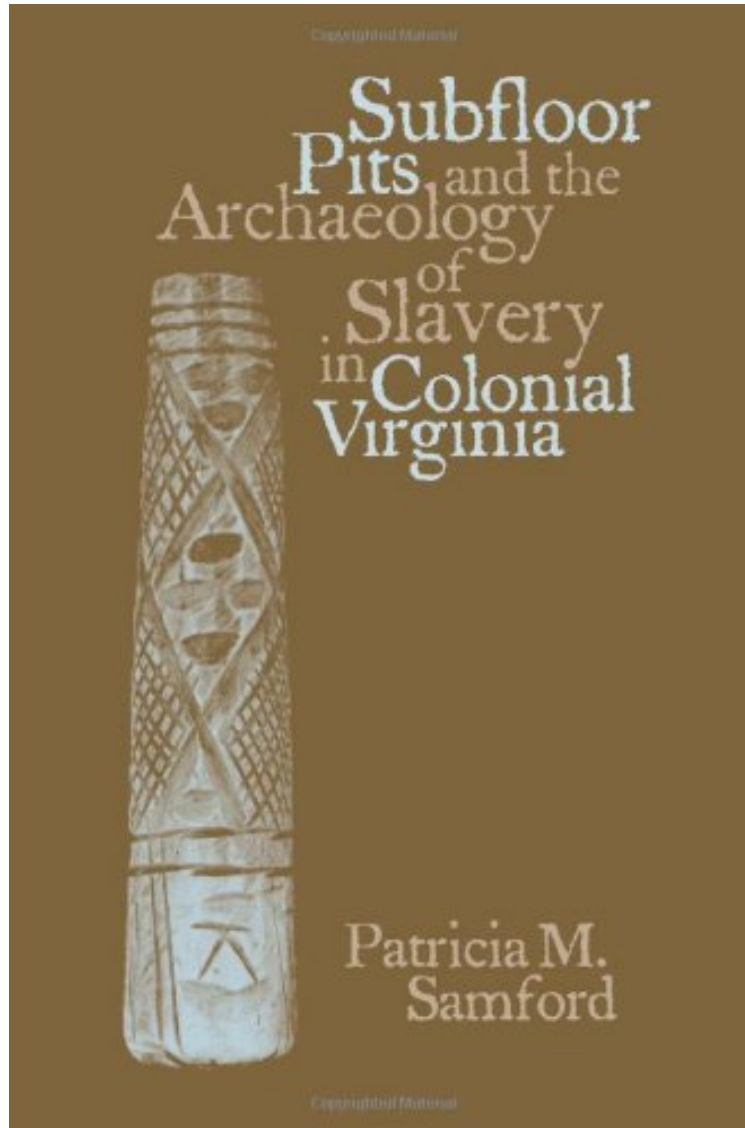


(Ebook free) Subfloor Pits and the Archaeology of Slavery in Colonial Virginia

## Subfloor Pits and the Archaeology of Slavery in Colonial Virginia

Patricia Samford

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#2306124 in Books University Alabama Press 2007-12-16 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.25 x .70 x 6.131, .93 #File Name: 0817354549246 pages | File size: 72.Mb

**Patricia Samford : Subfloor Pits and the Archaeology of Slavery in Colonial Virginia** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Subfloor Pits and the Archaeology of Slavery in Colonial Virginia:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. boring title, fascinating book By Bojo Payne If you ever wondered, "How do historians know that?" about slave culture or the colonial period, or want to know more about how much of African culture survived in American slave culture, this book is for you! In the tradition of dozens of scholars who stress the agency of colonial slaves in shaping their new American identity, Samford uses profusely interdisciplinary

analysis, including "archaeology, history, anthropology, religious studies, and art history" of pits under slaves' quarters (mostly in lower tidewater Virginia) as particular evidence of the general continuity between the cultures of free Africans and enslaved Americans (p. 189). She argues that the development of African-American culture was more a gradual "creolization" than a total rupture with African identity, more a process of adaptation and accommodation than building a culture from scratch, and rejects as "implausible and offensive" the notion that colonial slavery in Virginia stripped Africans of their former culture - e.g., the "spiritual holocaust" claim of Jon Butler is an exaggeration (p. 13, 11). The author argues persuasively that subfloor pits in slave quarters arose primarily in Virginia after 1780 due to the arrival of Igbo people from Africa, and much of the book examines links between the findings in the pits and Igbo culture of that time, including religious ritual, personal storage, and family ties. Any book drawing major conclusions from items in subfloor pits is bound to be somewhat speculative, and the author indulges in several imagined vignettes from slave life. Yet even the author's flights of fancy are grounded in solid evidence, superb interdisciplinary methodology, rigorous argumentation, and pleasant writing, and are more than justified as means to connect the reader with the implications of otherwise abstruse data.

This book discusses the daily life and culture of enslaved Africans and their descendants. Enslaved Africans and their descendants comprised a significant portion of colonial Virginia populations, with most living on rural slave quarters adjacent to the agricultural fields in which they labored. Archaeological excavations into these home sites have provided unique windows into the daily lifeways and culture of these early inhabitants. subfloor pits beneath the houses. The most common explanations of the functions of these pits are as storage places for personal belongings or root vegetables, and some contextual and ethnohistoric data suggest they may have served as West African-style shrines. Through analysis of 103 subfloor pits dating from the 17th through mid-19th centuries, Samford reveals how data on shape, location, surface area, and depth, as well as contextual analysis of artifact assemblages, can show how subfloor pits functioned for the enslaved. Archaeology reveals the material circumstances of slaves' lives, which in turn opens the door to illuminating other aspects of life: spirituality, symbolic meanings assigned to material goods, social life, individual and group agency, and acts of resistance and accommodation. about how West African, possibly Igbo, cultural traditions were maintained and transformed in the Virginia Chesapeake.

" The manuscript is thorough and richly textured in use of ethnohistoric, art history, archaeological, and historical data. This will be a useful and concise source of data." -- Amy L. Young, Associate Professor of Anthropology, The University of Southern Mississippi" This is a well-conducted piece of exciting synthetic research on a topic of interest to many archaeologists. This study features a thorough and sophisticated integration of ethnographic, documentary, and archaeological analyses. This work is an outstanding example of contextual archaeology." -- Laurie A. Wilkie, Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley" The manuscript is thorough and richly textured in use of ethnohistoric, art history, archaeological, and historical data. This will be a useful and concise source of data." -- Amy L. Young, Associate Professor of Anthropology, The University of Southern Mississippi" This is a well-conducted piece of exciting synthetic research on a topic of interest to many archaeologists. This study features a thorough and sophisticated integration of ethnographic, documentary, and archaeological analyses. This work is an outstanding example of contextual archaeology." -- Laurie A. Wilkie, Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley About the Author Patricia Samford is Director, Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory, Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum, St. Leonard, Maryland.