

The absence of stone in all parts of the peninsula meant there were no quarries from which material for stone chimneys could be obtained. It was entirely natural that the dwellings of the planters of that period would be generally made of wood. Unless the planter was very wealthy and had his own kilns and employed a brickmaker, the cost of transporting the large number of bricks needed for a house would have been prohibitive. The finest timber, however was extremely abundant.

During the first part of the seventeenth century the colonist could only obtain nails at a considerable expense because they shared the costliness of all articles made from iron. They were so valuable that smaller landowners, in deserting their homes and intending to make a settlement elsewhere on more fertile soil, were in the habit of burning their home when abandoned so as to secure the nails by which the planks were held together, and so general did this habit become that in 1644-45, to stop the burning of houses, it was provided by law that each planter, when he gave up a dwelling, should be allowed at public expense, as many nails as two impartial men should calculate to be in the frame of the deserted house. (4)

A look into the furnishings in Harmon Read's home would reveal a life style quite different from what we know today. Apparently no effort was made to preserve a distinct character for each room, and except for the kitchen, there was rarely a room in the house that did not contain a bed. The beds owned by the planters were the same as in English homes of the same period, and there was frequently a trundle-bed that was rolled under the big bed during the day. The bed tick was generally made of canvas, and stuffed with feathers of wild or domestic fowls, hair, straw or cattail. The sheets were oznaburg, canvas, brown or white holland. The most common blanket was known as the duffield. The outer cover could be a coverlet, quilt or bed-rug. Most rooms contained a trunk and a chest. These were the storage receptacles for garments, linen, trinkets of value, and sometimes silver. The substitute for the modern bureau was a case of drawers with a looking-glass either affixed to its top or hung separately.

Chairs were of various styles. The rush chair, named for the material of which the seat was woven; small wooden chairs with seats of woven white oak strips, cane chairs and stools. The articles in the hall or dining room were comparatively few. The most common tables were the short or long framed tables, with benches in proportion to their lengths, for seats. There would be a cupboard, in which the plates and dishes were kept. Table napkins were in large quantity, the need for them being great because of the rarity of the fork. Knives seem to have been more plentiful. Spoons were of tin, pewter or alchemy. Plates were of earthenware, wood or pewter, pewter being the most common because they were inexpensive and durable.

The utensils of the kitchen were made of brass, tin, pewter, wood and clay. The principal utensil for boiling was a great iron pot, usually weighing forty pounds or more. It hung on sturdy iron