

Advertisement in the Virginia Gazette in 1795:

FOR SALE

Or to be Exchanged for Property in New York,
New Jersey, or Philadelphia
A Valuable Plantation Called
CHESTERVILLE

On Back River, in Elizabeth County; containing by a late survey 920 acres of LAND, of which 477 are cleared, divided and ditched round in 50 acre lots, 233 in wood, and 210 in fine grazing marsh, capable of producing the best salt hay, and supporting from 200 to 300 head of cattle through the winter. The upland is of extra-ordinary quality, fitted either for corn, wheat, barley or hay - and the natural grass is well calculated to make the latter. There is on it an orchard of about 6 acres of Hughes Crab, and other bearing apple trees; with about 500 more choice apple trees ready to set out, near to the dwellings. They consist of a large new convenient brick house, nearly finished, with four large rooms in it, and offices below; a large negro quarter, a kitchen, stable, and storehouse in good repair, and a granary 60 by 22 feet, lately completed; and at which vessels of 60 tons may load.

Besides the above, there are about 400 acres of Dry and Marsh LAND, belonging to the Free School, adjoining and rented to Chesterville, at 15 l. a year, upon a life lease, and may be taken or not with the place. Also about 80 head of CATTLE and HORSES, 150 SHEEP and HOGS, and some NEGROES.

The advantages of this Plantation for game and fish of every kind, and its adjacence to Norfolk market by water, are recommendations which render it desirable and profitable. For further particulars apply to Doctor Foushee, Daniel L. Hylton, and Wm. Dabney, Esqrs. Richmond.

Notes:

By the end of the eighteenth century cultivation of tobacco in Elizabeth City County had been largely replaced by the production of grains and livestock, as well as feed for horses. Diseases and pests necessitated new land for tobacco, but good water transportation to coastal cities meant that other farm products were profitable.

As roads were improved, and as canals and railroads were built during the first half of the nineteenth century, Elizabeth City County farmers were undoubtedly hurt by competition from farmers in the Valley of Virginia, Ohio, and then the Middle West. This probably accounted for the increased number of farm mortgages and the trend toward smaller farms.