



2 ■ Pre-University Native American, Colonial and European and African American Settlement, before 1817

A. BEFORE 1817 INTRODUCTION

During the Pre-University Land Use period, the landscape of the Academical Village underwent significant transformation from an environment that had been utilized for its local resources for centuries by Native Americans, to its incorporation within an international economy largely driven by the production of tobacco and other mixed grain crops. Gradual development of a network of roads linking quarters and plantations throughout the Piedmont eventually led to the formal establishment of 'lower plantation' in 1789, James Monroe's first agricultural endeavor, now known as Monroe Hill.

Pre-European settlement landscape history necessarily relies upon archaeological and paleo-botanical research conducted within the larger Piedmont region. Key sources of information that informed the Academical Village landscape for the Pre-University Land Use period include:

- Regional archaeological research
- Early Goochland County, Virginia land grants
- Early Albemarle County, Virginia deeds
- Primary source documents associated with James Monroe

Taken together these source provide evidence of the character and uses of the land that became the Academical Village in the centuries and decades leading up to the creation of the University.

B. BEFORE 1817, PRE-UNIVERSITY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERIZATION

Dramatic change occurred to the Pre-University Land Use Period with the onset of the eighteenth century. Although European and Native American contact occurred sporadically from the seventeenth century onwards, it was in the second quarter of the eighteenth century that permanent European and African American settlement in what is now Albemarle County led to significant clearing and planting of valuable lands, and harvesting of forest resources. Over time, a complex road system was also established, often utilizing pre-existing Native American trails, to facilitate transportation of agricultural goods to market, as well as communication with government centers. An agricultural-based economy led to widespread development of large and small-scale plantations based on the labor of enslaved African Americans.

Prior to the arrival of the first European and African American settlers in the seventeenth-century however, Virginia was occupied by native peoples. Archaeological evidence supports the presence of humans in Virginia as early as 15,000 years ago. Virginia's pre-European and African American history is