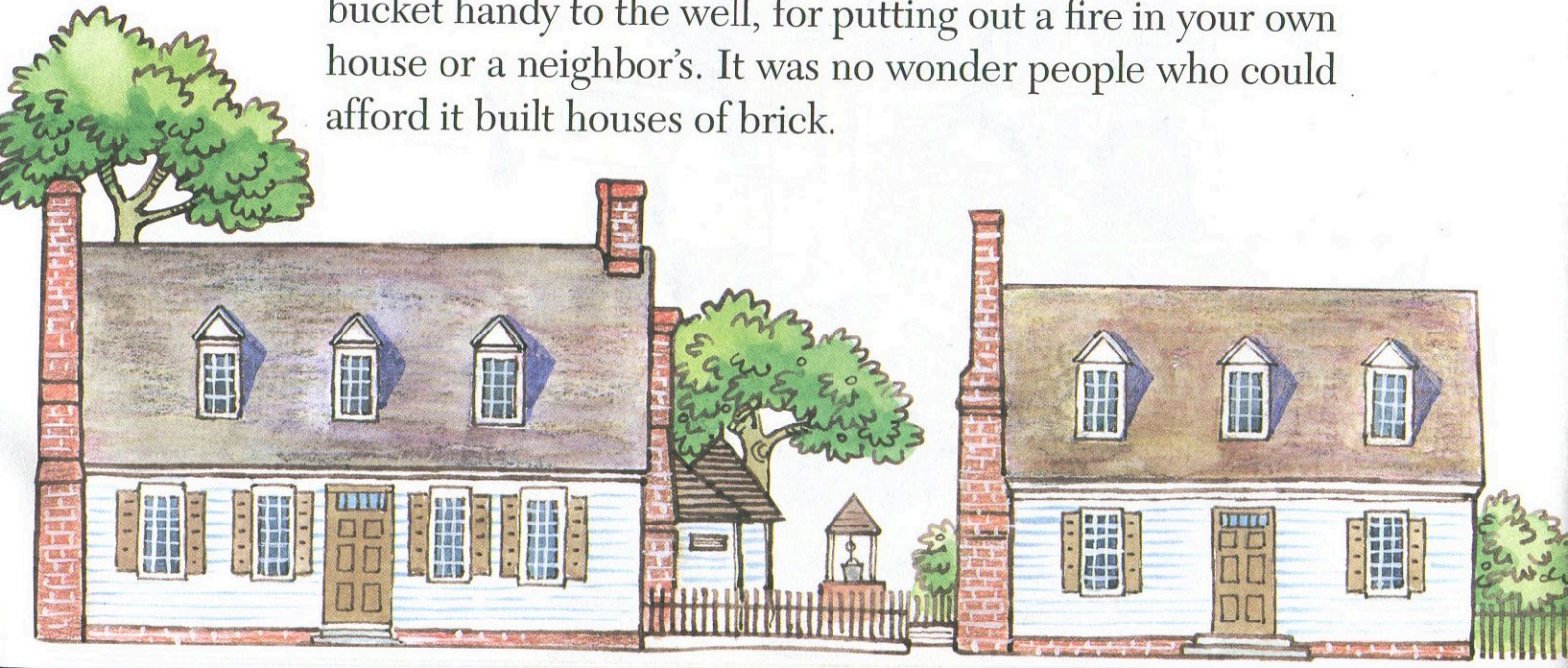


What did Williamsburg houses look like?

There were a few roughly made wooden houses on the backstreets. Some of them had oiled paper in the windows instead of glass. The more up-to-date homes had glass windows and were built of brick or painted wood. They often had an upstairs and a downstairs.

No houses had electric lights. You would have used candles. Heat for warmth and cooking came mainly from open fireplaces.

Everyone worried about fire. There would have been a bucket handy to the well, for putting out a fire in your own house or a neighbor's. It was no wonder people who could afford it built houses of brick.





Many middling-sort families in Williamsburg were farmers. If you came from a farm family, your house would most likely have been at the end of town, where there was a little more grass for your sheep and cows —

and less dust.

If your father was a miller, you would have had a windmill on your property to grind the corn and wheat before it was sold.

The gentry lived in elegant mansions in and around Williamsburg. Some of their homes had as many as eight rooms and several outbuildings. Sometimes the rooms had plaster walls instead of wooden ones. Sometimes they were painted or papered with fancy imported wallpaper.

If your father was a tradesman or merchant, you would have lived close to the main part of town. The house was often attached to a shop or an office.



*There was an old woman
Lived under a hill,
And if she's not gone
She lives there still.*

Enslaved people who worked in town slept close to the master they worked for. Some slept in outbuildings, such as the kitchen or laundry, or in the main house on a mat outside their master's or mistress's room. Those on farms also lived in outbuildings or spaces in the house.

Slaves on plantations often lived in one-room huts in a separate area called a *quarter*. Sometimes the slaves built a fence around their houses like the ones they remembered from their African villages.

