

*Walking Softly and Carrying a Big Stick: Being Fashionable on Maryland's Western Shore in the Late 17<sup>th</sup>-Century* Patricia Samford, Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory, Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum, St. Leonard Maryland

*Abstract:* In the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Zekiah Swamp was a sparsely settled frontier region on Maryland's western shore. Investigations were conducted in 1996 at the site of Westwood Manor, a plantation and general store during the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. Reanalysis of this assemblage in 2010 suggested that the Manor's occupants and their clientele were striving to reconstitute an English material world in the Maryland colony. Along with a variety of expensive and presentation quality ceramic and glass vessels, the assemblage included an elaborately decorated ivory walking stick handle, a silver spoon and other luxury items. The walking stick and other high quality merchandise available through the Westwood Manor store are used to discuss archaeological evidence of fashion as statements of power, wealth and status in early colonial Maryland.

In the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Zekiah Swamp was a sparsely settled frontier region on Maryland's western shore in what is today Charles County, but at the time was part of St. Mary's County. By the end of 17<sup>th</sup> century, a number of community institutions—public roads, houses of worship, mills, general stores, and a courthouse—had developed in the Zekiah (King 2010: 21-22), creating a landscape of interconnected people, plantations and community services.

The discovery in the mid-1990s of one of these plantations, followed by a recent analysis of its associated artifact assemblage, has allowed a look into the social aspirations of the gentry in this region. Despite its semi-isolated nature at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, wealthy inhabitants of the



**Figure 1.** Reconstructed boundaries of Westwood Manor. The red dot shows the location of 18CH621. Scott M. Strickland.

Zekiah were living elite lifestyles, in which their social and economic standing was readily visible through their homes and furnishings, as well as their clothing and accessories. Awareness of fashion trends gleaned from England and Europe was put to work along the borders of Maryland's colony in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and used by the social elite as a means to signal their authority and status. This paper will use archaeological and documentary data from one late 17<sup>th</sup>-century site on Maryland's western shore, focusing on one particular artifact from the site – a walking stick—in order to examine how material culture functioned symbolically.

In 1996, the Southern Maryland Regional Center at Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum received a call from a homeowner about a colonial site discovered during house construction near Allen's Fresh Run, at the head of the Wicomico River (Figure 1). The landowners had done some digging, documenting their findings, and a field

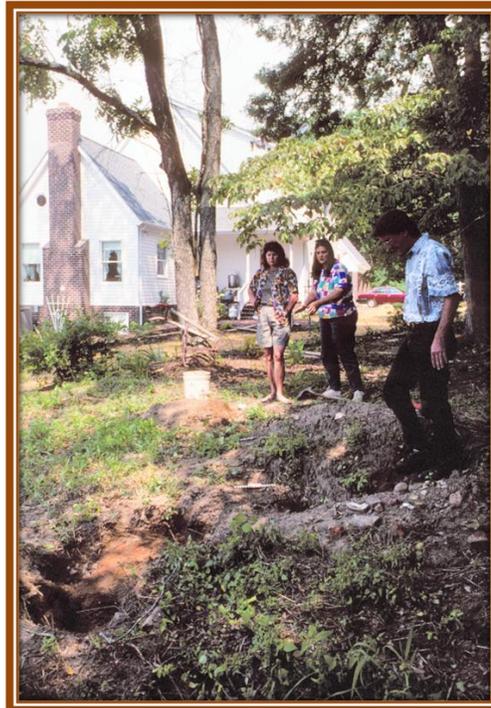
visit by regional center staff Dr. Julie King and Ed Chaney confirmed what appeared to have been an earthen structure underlain by a 16 x 20 ft. tile floored cellar (Chaney n.d.) (Figure 2). The archaeological and documentary record suggests the house at Westwood Manor (18CH621) was an elite residence, replete with a porch tower, two brick end chimneys, plastered walls, and glazed windows.

Deed research indicates that Thomas Gerard the Younger constructed this house in the late 1670s. Within two years of Gerard's death in 1686, his widow Anne married planter and innkeeper John Bayne (King 2010:7-8). The couple resided at Westwood until their deaths; John in 1701 and Anne the following year. Thomas Gerard's nephew gained control of the property, which remained occupied until around 1715 and was then apparently abandoned and forgotten until its discovery over 250 years later (King 2010).

Following the site's initial discovery the landowners continued, over the next few years, to collect and record artifacts that surfaced through gardening and other ground-disturbing activities. In 2009, Julie King made arrangements with the property owners to have students enrolled in her Archaeology Practicum class at St. Mary's College catalogue and analyze the artifact assemblage. The results of their analysis have been invaluable in the preparation of this paper.

The site's artifact collection, recovered from the structure's cellar and a probable trash pit, was quite large and included a full range of material culture associated with Chesapeake domestic sites of the late 17th century. Detailed analysis of the tobacco pipes, wine bottle glass and Rhenish stoneware in particular indicates that the assemblage was associated with the 1688 to 1701 occupation by the Bayne household.

The assemblage, combined with data from the probate inventory completed after Bayne's death, establishes his position as a member of the elite planter class.<sup>1</sup> At the time of his death, Bayne owned nearly 2,500 acres of land, well above the 200 acres that was the median holding in St. Mary's County in 1700 (Carr et al. 1991:35). His labor force consisted of 24 enslaved laborers and 13 indentured servants, spread out over five separate quarters; his household furnishings, livestock and labor were valued at 969 British pounds. His real and personal estate placed Bayne economically within the top tier of the population in southern Maryland.<sup>2</sup>



**Figure 2.** 1996 visit to the Westwood Manor site by Regional Center staff. Photo courtesy of Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

<sup>1</sup> Inventory of the Goods and Chattells of Capt. Jno. Bayne and the Reserve of Madm Anne Bayne both of Charles County. 1703. Maryland Prerogative Court, Book 24:134-140, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis. My thanks to James R. Tarrant for letting me use the transcription of this inventory in the preparation of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> See *Robert Cole's World; Agriculture and Society in Early Maryland*, by Lois Carr, Russell Menard and Lorena Walsh, pages 21-28 for a discussion of economic and social stratification in Charles County in the 1660s and 1670s.

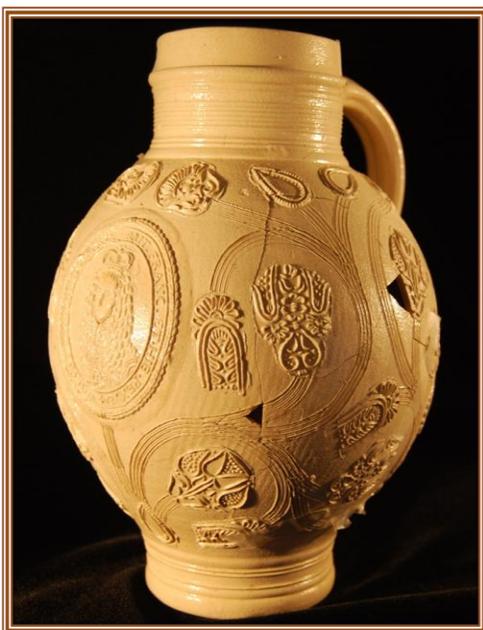


**Figure 3.** Base of a tin enameled earthenware tulip vase found at Westwood manor.



**Figure 4.** Example of complete tulip vase similar to Westwood Manor example.

Visitors to Bayne’s home, seated on turkey work chairs and offered punch from painted bowls or wine in delicately molded stemware, surely could not help but be impressed with the genteel furnishings designed to showcase his education, taste and wealth: a large looking glass, pictures of King William III and Queen Mary in gilt frames, chests of drawers, fashionable cane chairs covered in green fabric, a variety of books, silver tankards, tumblers and spoons, and a pedestal footed vase (Figures 3 and 4) manufactured for displaying tulips whose bulbs, incidentally, had to be imported from Holland. In a world where most planters lived in one or two room house without architectural embellishments, Bayne’s home and its contents would have seemed very grand, indeed.



**Figure 5.** Reconstructed Hohnware jug from Westwood Manor.

But Bayne’s furnishings spoke of more than his wealth and leisure pursuits, hinting at his political and religious alliances as well. Bayne was a Burgess in the Maryland Assembly and a member of the Church of England (Warner 2010 in King 2010). A number of the Rhenish stoneware vessels from the site were molded with the initials of William III, the British monarch who ruled between 1689 and 1702. Particularly striking was a magnificent Hohnware jug, which bears a likeness of the king (Figure 5). This jug no doubt served as a display piece in one of the public rooms of his home and was a nice complement to the framed likenesses of William and Mary. Bayne, a Protestant, seems to have taken pains to affirm his loyalty to the Protestant monarch and the Church of England. His declaration took place at a

time when the King had just supported the overthrow of the Calvert family's Catholic government in Maryland, establishing the Church of England as the official tax-supported religion in the colony (King et al. 2008; Tolbert and Warrenfeltz in King 2010:54). Non-Catholic leaders from Charles County had been instrumental in this 1689 overthrow (Brugger 1988:39), although whether Bayne was involved is unknown. We do know that the Council of Maryland met at Westwood Manor in late June of 1694, and these William III objects would have been powerful statements to his fellow burgesses of Bayne's alliances, particularly as they hoisted tankards of ale bearing the King's initials (MSA Volume 20).

Just as John Bayne's household furnishings provide important evidence of his allegiance and status to guests, equally important in conveying information was his personal appearance. As anyone who has ever looked at a fashion or entertainment magazine in the dentist office or grocery store checkout line can attest, clothing is about much more than just providing protection, concealment and comfort to the human form. Clothing serves as an important means of display and representation of individual identity—and is a highly personal means of providing that information to the world at large. One object in particular from the excavation was interesting in regards to the manner in which Bayne constructed his public image.



Included in the trash pit assemblage was a decorated ivory walking stick handle (Figure 6). The bell-shaped knob was inlaid with hollow silver pins in an elaborate design of overlapping C-scrolls and flowers. This decorative technique, known as “piquework” was extremely fashionable between the mid-17th century and the early decades of the 18th century (De Vecchio 1994:23). Surviving dated canes date between 1667 and 1717 (Klever 1996:82; Snyder 1993:4), although most seem to cluster in the 1670s to 1690s period. These canes are generally around three feet in length, with shafts of exotic foreign woods, like Malaysian rattan, often joined to the knob with a silver collar. The Westwood Manor cane contained an eyelet hole, through which was passed a cord for hanging the cane from the wrist (Snyder 1993:11). Piquework walking sticks were made in France and England; the use of silver rather than gold pins indicates that the Westwood example was of English manufacture (Kadri 2011). Probate inventories of Maryland merchants during this period do not list walking sticks; John Bayne would have acquired this object either during a trip to England or through a special order with an agent.

**Figure 6.** Ivory and silver piquework walking stick handle.

In addition to being a beautiful and unusual archaeological find, what does this ivory handle reveal about the culture of the late 17th-century Zekiah frontier? To answer this question, we need to explore the meaning of walking sticks within the larger context of social behavior in the British colonial world. Before the turn of the fifteenth century, walking sticks served either a purely functional purpose as an aid to walking, or as a symbol of authority (De Vecchio 1994:13-15). The transformation into elegant fashion accessories and statements of power and status began in Europe and continued over the next several hundred years. During the reign of Henry VIII in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (1509-1547), the English aristocracy carried elaborate walking sticks crafted of rare imported woods and precious metals. The French aristocracy, too, viewed walking sticks as a must-have accessory during the 17<sup>th</sup> century reign of Louis XIV (Snyder 2004:49).

Such was the symbolic power these objects came to evoke over time that authorities in some British towns and cities felt compelled to regulate their use. By the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, individuals wishing to carry walking sticks were required to purchase a license in order to do so. This requirement seemed to function in some regards as a luxury tax, since carrying other fashionable accessories, such as snuffboxes and perfumed handkerchiefs, also required licenses. The public was empowered with the authority to take away the sticks of any user who flailed them about or hung them from a button (Lester et al. 1940:394), suggesting that walking sticks or, at the very least, the behavior of their owners while carrying them was often a source of conflict in public situations.

So, did owning a walking stick in late 17<sup>th</sup>- century Maryland have the same status connotations it carried in England and Europe? Undoubtedly, road and travel conditions in the Zekiah at the time necessitated the aid of a sturdy walking stick as a planter traveled about his land to survey crops and the laboring workers who tended them. But it is unlikely that an elaborately decorated walking stick would have been used to traverse muddy roads or ford the numerous streams that bisect the Zekiah landscape. A gentleman of Bayne's standing would have likely done much of his travel on horseback, negating most need for a functional walking stick. This stick would have been much more at home as a prop in the social setting of a parlor or a tavern, or wielded as its owner made an appearance at the local court or in front of the Assembly.



As such, walking sticks can be viewed as an extension of or accessory to an individual's clothing and the Westwood Manor stick would indeed have been an impressive accessory: the polished white of the ivory knob set with flashing silver pins would have provided a striking contrast to the deep orange patina of the Malaysian rattan shaft (Figure 7). These walking

**Figure 7.** Piquework cane similar to example from Westwood Manor.

sticks were often ornamented further with a decorated silver collar that masked the join between the knob and the shaft. Although Bayne's walking stick did not bear a date, the artifact assemblage date range of 1688 to 1701 indicates that he acquired it during the period piquework sticks were very much in style in England and France. This fashion accessory, used in combination with stylish clothing in expensive fabrics, wigs and jewelry, would have confirmed John Bayne as a gentleman to anyone who saw him.

Unfortunately, Bayne's inventory does not list any clothing or clothing accessories; he was traveling in England when he died, and most of his clothing would have been with him there. Thus, we are left to make an educated guess about his appearance based on the fashion of the



time. During the reign of King William III (1689-1702), the stylish English gentleman (Figure 8) wore coats fitted at the waist with full, flaring skirts and huge cuffs, over a slightly shorter waistcoat and close-fitting breeches (Bradfield 1987:109). A late 17th-century portrait by an unknown American artist shows a gentleman in what was surely his finest attire: a coat fitting the style popular in the William III period – the garment is lined with chartreuse silk and both it and the waistcoat underneath are adorned with silver buttons (Figure 9). The signs of his rank and wealth are quite obvious: a gold pin holds his fashionable neck cloth (known as a cravat) in place and at its base is what appears to be a watch or medal bearing a star-shaped insignia. In his gold ring-adorned left hand are a pair of leather gloves; his right hand rests on a silver headed walking stick. It is not too difficult to imagine John Bayne attired in a similar fashion as he entertained guests in his home, visited fellow planters or hosted the Maryland Assembly.

**Figure 8.** Men's fashion during the William III period (1689-1702). Illustration credit: *900 Years of English Costume; From the Eleventh to the Twentieth Century*. Nancy Bradfield, Crescent Books 1987.

While this painting is a compelling visual reference, probate inventories also provide a great resource for comparative data. These court-ordered documents “preserve in some measure a record of how Anglo-Americans perceived and valued artifacts.... [helping] lead us to an understanding of the communicative and symbolic value of artifacts” (Beaudry 1978:20). Late 17th- and early 18th-century Maryland probate inventories reveal that walking sticks, while not common, were a part of the repertoire of elite planters’ possessions. An examination of 106 probate inventories from St. Mary’s County, dating to this period revealed that eight individuals owned walking sticks.<sup>3</sup> Three of these individuals owned sticks that were described as having silver heads. Not surprisingly, these men’s estates were valued among the wealthiest in the county, and included Governor Lionel Copley, Major Thomas Beale and mariner and planter Paul Simpson.<sup>4</sup> John Notley of nearby St. Clements Manor had a painted walking stick with a pewter head—definitely less elegant and costly than the silver headed sticks, but still considered worthy of a more detailed description than the generic walking sticks of carpenter Daniel Clocker, constable Thomas Bassett or Major John Low.<sup>5</sup>



**Figure 9.** Late 17<sup>th</sup>-century portrait of an unknown American gentleman depicting clothing popular in this period. Artist unknown. Illustration accessed at <http://en.allexperts.com/q/U-S-History-672/2010/5/17th-century-art-Massachusetts.htm>

By the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, walking sticks had become more ubiquitous among planters in Virginia and Maryland; the Gunston Hall Plantation Probate Inventory Database yielded 35 inventories taken between 1740 and 1774 – of which 17 listed walking sticks as a part of the estate’s possessions (Gunston Hall). This sample suggests that a greater number of individuals had the means, desire or ability to acquire these

<sup>3</sup> Transcriptions of Maryland Probate Inventories, on file at Historic St. Mary’s City.

<sup>4</sup> An Inventory of the Goods & Chattles of this late Eccelence Cott: Lionel Copley Esq., 1693. Maryland Prerogative Court, Book 12:45-60, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis; An Inventory of the Goods & Chattells of Maj. Thomas Beale, 1713. Maryland Prerogative Court, Book 34:201, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis; and A true and just appraisement of the Estate of Mr. Paull Simpson, 1658. Maryland Prerogative Court, Book 1:47-48, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis.

<sup>5</sup> An Inventory of all and singular the goods and Chattells of John Notley, 1675. Maryland Prerogative Court, Book 1:447-449, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis; An Inventory of the Goods & Chattells of Daniel Clocker senior, n.d. Maryland Prerogative Court, Book 2:144-145, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis; An Inventory & Appraisalment of the Goods Chattells Rights + Creditts which were of Thomas Bassett, 1682. Maryland Prerogative Court, Book 7:48-52, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis; and An Inventory of all and singular the goods and Chattles wch were of Majr John Low, 1701. Maryland Prerogative Court, Book 21:208, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis.

objects. Unlike the previous century, gold headed canes begin to appear in the inventories.<sup>6</sup> The use of more costly precious metals may have been designed to elevate the status of their owners above that of the larger populace, who could now afford walking sticks, albeit those with only silver or brass heads. Other fashionable accessories, such as watches and jewelry, had become more common as well. The increasing appearance of these goods was tied in part to greater access to imported and manufactured goods as a consumer society emerged.

Walking sticks formed just one component of the larger picture Maryland elites presented of themselves to their fellow citizens in the late 17th century. Clothing formed the primary canvas, so to speak, upon which accessories such as hats, wigs, jewelry, walking sticks, snuffboxes and the like were displayed. Since we have no evidence of clothing from Bayne's inventory, the limited evidence in probate inventories of his gentry contemporaries forms a basis for extrapolation. The standard attire for gentlemen consisted of a linen shirt, breeches, waistcoat, coat, stockings and a cravat (Calvert 1994:261). Since the garment types were standardized, the cut of the garment, as well as the fabrics, buttons, ribbons, lace and ruffles were what served to distinguish an individual from his fellow planters. Planter John Notley was listed as owning a "silck Crevat with silver lace" valued at ten pounds of tobacco.<sup>7</sup> Merchant Michael Rochford's "Camlett<sup>8</sup> coate and Breeches... silks Wastcoate ... Stockings and garters", valued at 1,000 pounds of tobacco in 1678, were described as "all very fashionable".<sup>9</sup> Completing the array of stylish clothing was a silk waistcoat, four fine Holland shirts, fifteen pairs of hose, crystal coat buttons, 10 yards of silk and silver ribbon and four gold rings. Rochford, who had arrived from Ireland within four or five years of his death in 1678, had clearly chosen his wardrobe to impress. St. Mary's City innkeeper John Baker owned two pair of summer breeches made from high quality Holland linen, as well as a striped Dimity (fine ribbed cotton) waistcoat, a laced cravat and laced Ruffles for either his sleeves or shirt front.<sup>10</sup> William Lowry's silk breeches were worn with a camlet coat lined with a blue fabric and set off with lace ruffles.<sup>11</sup>

Other trappings that framed primary clothing items—head and foot coverings—were important as status indicators as well, but do not appear with frequency or detail in the St. Mary's inventories. Wigs had become fashionable for men at the British royal court in the 1660s (Condra 2008), after they were introduced from France by Charles II. They began to be popular in the American colonies more at the beginning of the 18th century and remained a status item, not available to most levels of society here until the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century (Calvert 1994:263; CWF 2011). Wigs were unusual in the early Maryland probates, only appearing in two inventories. Governor Lionel Copley owned three wigs—each in a different style—at his death in 1693.<sup>12</sup> One was a periwig – which has been described as 'a fat mass of curls falling over the shoulders

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<sup>6</sup> The 1775 probate inventory of wealthy Maryland planter Thomas Addison showed that he owned a gold-headed cane, and two other planters owned gold canes.

<sup>7</sup> Inventory of John Notley (see note 5).

<sup>8</sup> Camlett is a silk or wool fabric.

<sup>9</sup> An Inventory of the Estate of Mr. Michael Rockford, 1678. Maryland Prerogative Court, Book 6:26-29, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis.

<sup>10</sup> A true and pfect Inventory of all and Singualr The goods and Chattells and Creditts of John Baker, 1687. Maryland Prerogative Court, Book 10:111-124, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis.

<sup>11</sup> Inventory of the Goods and Chatles of Wm Lowry, 1699. Maryland Prerogative Court, Book 11:9-11, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis.

<sup>12</sup> Inventory of Gov. Lionel Copley (see note 4).

and down the back... large, heavy, and expensive... requiring more than ten heads of human hair.' (Condra 2008). These wigs gave rise to the term “bigwig”, a less-than-endearing connotation that emerged to refer to the rich and powerful. St. Mary’s County Innkeeper James Harper owned two “campaigne” wigs—a shorter, close fitting style of wig just beginning to become fashionable at his death in 1690s.<sup>13</sup> But overall, it appears that wearing wigs was not customary, even among the gentry, in 17th-century Maryland, although they were later to become one of the most formal manifestations of the new social order (Calvert 1994:263).

Status footwear is more difficult to determine from inventories of this period, since most footwear is described simply as men’s or women’s shoes. A type of boot known as a French fall seemed to have been particularly favored by gentry planters in the 1660s and 1670s; many men owned several pairs, while attorney Thomas Dent’s inventory listed an astonishing 13 pair.<sup>14</sup> These boots, so named for the perceived extravagance of the French, had excessively wide tops, using far more leather than necessary for an adequate boot (Rivers-Cofield 2010). Many aspects of French fashion, including this boot style, were adopted by Charles II (1630-1685) and brought back to England in 1660 after the Restoration.

While some accessories to embellish clothing—such as gold and silver gimp buttons, gimp lace, fringed gloves—could be purchased at local stores, expensive fabrics would have to be ordered from England as a special purchase.<sup>15</sup> Stores generally stocked only coarser fabrics used around the household and for constructing laborer’s clothing. Maryland gentry viewed England as a cultural touchstone and depended on agents there to keep them abreast of and supplied with the latest fashions in clothing styles, fabrics and accessories.

Bayne’s occupation at Westwood Manor spanned a critical period in Maryland’s history. The Calvert Catholic stronghold had just been replaced by a Protestant-led government and the fluid social structure that characterized the third quarter of the 17th century had begun to solidify into a society characterized by greater social and economic inequality.<sup>16</sup> Research by Lois Carr, Lorena Walsh, and Dennis Pogue has shown that for most of the second half of the 17th century, the gentry did not have different material possessions from ordinary planters; they just had greater quantities of the same items (Carr and Walsh 1994; Pogue 1997:264). This situation had changed by the very end of the century, as men like John Bayne and his gentry contemporaries sought to distinguish themselves and the changing class structure through their personal possessions. Although part of a frontier society, Bayne and his contemporaries were eager to demonstrate that they were men with knowledge and access to the larger world. Bayne’s walking stick, an unusual sight in late 17<sup>th</sup>-century Maryland, would have set Bayne apart from the crowd, one of an array of material possessions that he used to assert his position in the new class and political structure of the Maryland colony.

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<sup>13</sup> An Inventory of ye goods & Chattles of Mr. James Harper, 1696. Maryland Prerogative Court, Book 13:132-143, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis.

<sup>14</sup> An Inventory of the Estate of Mr. Thomas Dent, 1676. Maryland Prerogative Court, Book 2:191-195, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis.

<sup>15</sup> From the 1678 inventory of Thomas Ceely, merchant in St. Mary’s County. Maryland Prerogative Court, Book 2:287-294, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis.

<sup>16</sup> See Carr et al. (1991) pages 21-28 for a discussion of this period.

**Acknowledgments:** The author would like to thank the following individuals and institutions for their assistance with the preparation of this paper: Dallas Bolen, Ed Chaney, Sandra and Phillip Harrison, Dr. Julie King, Sharon Raftery, Sara Rivers-Cofield, Scott Strickland, St. Mary's College of Maryland and students enrolled in the Archaeology Practicum Class, and James R. Tarrant.

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