

[Editor's Note: This information was transcribed verbatim from crumbling, faded papers found in the lab trailer in summer 1995. Be cautious when using these interpretations: not all of the data had been analyzed yet when this information was recorded, and the methods, dates, & interpretations are erroneous in several instances.]

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**EXCAVATION:** The primary purposes of the limited excavation undertaken during this period were to determine (1) if the house which had stood on the stone foundation could have served as the residence of Thomas Wythe III and his family, and thus be a potential birthplace of George Wythe, and (2) if the house might have been built originally by either Laydon or Hewitt (the carpenter), and thus served as their residence as well. To answer these questions, to obtain other information of interest on these early 17th and 18th century residents, to leave part of the site unexcavated for future archaeologists, were the objectives for which the original plan was devised. An earlier survey of the site had indicated that the building had been constructed in two phases; the western section of the foundation was of rounded river stones held in place with oyster shell mortar, while the eastern section was constructed of the same type of stones chinked with brick and mortar rubble to form a type of "dry wall".

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**APPROACH:** The initial approach taken to the excavation was to excavate 8-ft squares within a grid of 10 ft squares, the grid being oriented to a north-south axis. After these squares were excavated down to the level of the surrounding subsoil, specific squares were then selected for further excavation. At this time it was discovered that the building foundation was constructed in two parts, the NE part being without cellar and the foundation constructed of a dry wall composition consisting of field stones held in place with tightly-packed brick and mortar rubble, while the SW part contained a full cellar and was constructed of field stones held in place with oyster-shell mortar. In the area of the NE part of the foundation, all squares were excavated to subsoil, the bulks recorded and then removed. In the SW part of the foundation, one square was excavated to the bottom of the cellar and then the one bulk was recorded and removed. This square, #6, was the one which included the outside cellar entrance.

The ash and charcoal layer (6G) covers and "seals" the occupational layers below, allowing us to obtain a "terminus post quem" for the destruction of the building. This date is provided from the artifact of latest manufacture in the layer below it. Thus, the fire did not occur before 1764, the date associated with the first manufacture of Wedgwood's "cauliflower" molded creamware. Two fragments of this ware were found, one just below the fire layer, and another several inches below, in an apparent "occupational" layer. These key artifacts were accompanied by several fragments of a dark creamware bowl and plate (TPQ 1762) and some fragments of Wedgwood's "green" glazed creamware (TPQ 1759). Thus they are not chronologically unique, but characteristic of the general ceramic assemblage. It is also important to note that although there were a number of developments in English ceramics during the next few years, none of those quite common forms were found in these [lower] layers. Thus, the fire probably did not take place too long after 1764 (5-10 years?).

The contents of the ash and charcoal layers (6G /H) indicate that the building was not being used as a residence when it burned, but rather was abandoned at the time. At best, the house was being used for occasional storage, a possibility attested to by the fragments of the large stoneware jug, which was almost totally reconstructable, and the two meat hooks which were found in these layers. Most indicative of its abandoned or near abandoned state was the large number of large fragments of "mud dauber" wasp nests which were found in the fire layers, which had been fried to brick-like consistency by the conflagration.

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SOME HYPOTHESES ON SQUARE 6 DATA: (5/3/80)

E.R.# 6G is the fire layer. Heavy charcoal mixed with nails and plaster (coarse plaster looks like mortar). This material which dropped down on the existing surface under the house and in the entranceway during and immediately after the fire. Mud-dauber nests in this layer may indicate the house was abandoned or used only for storage.

E.R.# 6F' is a layer of materials which dropped down from the ruin within a few months or years after the fire. Mostly plaster, this material would have loosened and fallen due to weathering (probably already damaged by fire). Since many nails without charcoal are in this layer, it could also represent the material lost during subsequent dismantling of remaining structure.

E.R.# 6F consists primarily of brick and mortar from the entranceway, which may have been constructed completely of brick.

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GENERAL NOTES ON W-1 [STONE HOUSE] ARTIFACTS, RE: REPORTING (6/10/82)

- 1) Nails from E.R. # 6L (posthole in basement) show evidence of fire. Perhaps they came from an earlier structure which burned.
- 2) Pins and upholstery tacks in E.R. # 6I (7/22/80) : occupation layer?
- 3) Pins and window glass in E.R. # 6H indicate occupation layer?

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LIST OF FINAL PROJECTS FOR ARCHAEOLOGY PAPER PREPARATION (9/20/82)

- 1) Complete cataloging of significant artifacts.
  - a) Some still need to be washed and labeled.
  - b) make a list of unidentified artifacts and check this out with Blye ASAP.
- 2) Complete metal conservation for all artifacts to be photo'ed.
  - a) 2 Meat hooks (#'s 6EE-1 and 6F-8)
  - b) 6H-17

- c) 6HH-10 and 6HH-11
- d) 6G-4 (looks like a plow blade)
- e) 6H-53 (tool?)
- f) Large hinge and pintil (if time allows)

3) Complete photographs for paper.

- a) meat hooks
- b) other metal artifacts - i.e. iron
- c) stoneware jug
- d) select two photos of excavation in progress
- e) - poss. use last photo
- f) Brass artifacts - spigot and spout in particular

4) Organize bone collection for analysis by others.

Preliminary catalog and analysis of artifacts from Sq. # 6, Chesterville site (11/9/81)

NOTE: This catalog will apply only to those "colonial" layers in sq. 6, i.e. those below the fire layers. Level 6E is presently interpreted as the first post-fire layer. The grey stoneware in this layer is mostly large pieces which were setting on the fire layers. (6EE, F, G)

- Layers included should be E.R. # 6 H, HH, I (?), J, K, L, M, T, etc.

- Layer 6G could be pre-fire, as mortar and charcoal frags could have been pressed into layer by weight of overburden.

Artifact #	Description of Artifact	<u>E.R. # 6H</u> # of frags.	TPQ	Excav.Date	zone in sq.
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8,10,20	creamware bowl frag., dk color	3	1762	7/7/80	
11	creamware plate frag	1	1762	7/7/80	
12	earthenware, lead glaze interior	1	1700	7/7/80	
13	Nottingham stoneware	1	1700	7/7/80	
14	“ “	4	1700	7/7/80	
15	“Whieldon” ware, w/ sprig molding	1	1750	7/7/80	
16	“Combed” slipware	1	1670	7/7/80	
17					
18	white saltglazed stoneware, fine	1	1740	7/7/80	
19	Delftware, cobalt & manganese dec.	1		7/7/80	
20					
21	Earthenware, Rogers, cream pan	1	1720		
22	creamware, plate frag.	1	1762		
23	“Whieldon” ware - green splotched	2	1750		
24	“Cauliflower” ware, green glaze int.	1	1764*		
25	Earthenware, Rogers	1	1720		
26	“Whieldon” ware	1	1720		
27	Delftware, w/ border pattern	1			

(\*- see A. Noel Hume, Post Medieval Archaeology, vol. 2, 1968, p. 163)

SUMMARY OF T.P.Q. DATA, E.R.#6 (5/21/82)

LEVEL-T.P.Q.	Artifact type, description	Reference	Remarks
H 1764	creamware, cauliflower mold	A.N.H.	several c. 1762
HH 1762	creamware, plain, dark shade	A.N.H.	next date c.1759
I 1764	creamware, cauliflower mold	A.N.H.	next date c. 1750
J 1750	Whieldon ware, sprig leaf	I.N.H. p.124	next date c.1730
J' (1730)	Delftware, blue dec., leaf style	G. & A.	begin dec. style

K	1720	Earthenware, Rogers (Yorktown)**	C. in A.p.293	next date 1720
L	1720	“	“	“
M	1720	“	“	“
N	1720	“	“	“
S	1720	“	“	“
T	1700 or earlier - only one artifact			

\*\* - Wine bottle from this level may be c. 1725-30

## **ARTIFACT DISPLAY CASES**

### **A. Indian Artifacts**

Indian artifacts are often found on historic sites, leftovers from earlier days. Most common are the brown clay pipes, both those made by the Indians before the whites came and those made for sale after the first colonization. It is difficult to tell Indian pipes from those made by the first settlers. Indian pottery is common, some being plain and some decorated by hatch patterns. Arrow heads and spear points are found occasionally. These and the pottery are the best tools for site dating. The blue bead was the most common of those used to trade with the Indians. A stone, hollowed out by nature, was used to crush seeds and minerals for use as dyes and for personal decoration. Most of the Indians had left the Langley area and moved to York and Gloucester by the 1630s.

### **B. English Colonial Artifacts**

The material remains of an early culture can tell us much about it. Artifacts such as the gold filled spur and the sword hilt gullions indicate a well-to-do family lived here. One type of artifact which surprises those unfamiliar with colonial life is the large # of things made of bone. Examples in the case include a comb, button, domino, and several eating utensil handles made of horn. Brass was a more commonly used material in the 18th century than now and was used for buttons, thimbles, pocket watches, and bridle bosses. Iron objects include a knife blade, shoe and belt buckles, bit (1/2), stirrup, fish gig, pistol barrel, door lock bolt, nail and spike, and a reinforcing band from a wagon tongue. Other metal artifacts include a pewter spoon & handle and lateen shoe and clothing buckles. The latter are indicative of a well-dressed member of the gentry, as the average man would wear iron buckles. Included in the collection were some children's toys; ceramic and glass marbles, a ceramic doll and a slate pencil. Most of these artifacts came from a first half 18th century context.

### **C. Foods eaten by Early Settlers**

The remains of garbage buried by these colonists provide considerable information on the type of food they ate. Most common are the shells of oysters which occurred naturally and were free for the taking. Many plantations had slaves who did nothing but tong for oysters. Clam shells are found only occasionally, indicating that clams were rarely eaten. Most commonly found bones are those of the pig. Occasionally domestic goat or sheep, domestic \_\_\_\_ and cow bones are found. Wild animals were not a prime source of meat by the 1720's, but deer, possum, raccoon and wild kid bones have been found. Although fish were a very important part of the colonial diet, the bones do not survive well in the soil, but some such as sturgeon have been found on a few sites. Seeds are often found in colonial sites, particularly in old wells. Included are peach, cherry, and apple.

### **Dating Historical Sites by Artifact Analysis**

There are two approaches to dating sites from the colonial period. One technique utilizes the most recent artifact found in a layer as a terminal date, i.e. that layer could not have been deposited before that date. Another is more statistical, and leads to an average date for a layer or site. The former method utilizes ceramics, pipe bowl shapes and makers marks, nails, wine bottles, coins, and/or makers marks on metal artifacts such as hoes, spoons, guns, etc. Another more recent source of dating information is patent registration such as shown on the suspender clasp. The latter method utilizes ceramics (see table), pipe stems, or occasionally wine bottles.

### **The LRC Historical and Archaeological Society**

The LRC Historical and Archaeological Society is a group of NASA employees and their families who have a common interest in history and archaeology. The Society operates under the Langley Activities Association, but is primarily supported by member dues. The focus of the Society's activities is the private properties which were acquired to build Langley Research Center. Presently, the two primary projects of the society are the tracing of land ownership from the original settlers down to NACA/NASA acquisition (historical) and excavation of the stone foundation on the Wythe property, which may be the site of George Wythe's birthplace (archaeological).

### **The Moore House (Cloverdale ) Site**

During the fall of 1973, the LRC Historical and Archaeological Society excavated a portion of a large colonial trash pit in an area adjacent to the present excavation. Artifact from this dig are here displayed, arranged in a context of either cultural or period information content. The trash pit was found to date from the 1720's, a period during which the site was occupied by Merritt and Augustine Moore, grandson and great-grandson of the original settler, John Moore. The artifacts from this pit have been supplemented with others where required to illustrate certain points.