

THE BUILDING SEQUENCE AT HOMEWOOD'S LOT, ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND

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Abstract

Homewood's Lot (18AN871), located off Whitehall Creek near the Chesapeake Bay in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, is a site that has been continuously occupied from about 1650 to the present day. Homewood's Lot is one of eight known sites associated with the Puritan town called Providence, the first European settlement in the county (Figure 1). Between 1999 and 2002 a series of archeological salvage excavations was conducted at this location by Anne Arundel County's *Lost Towns Project*. These excavations resulted in the discovery of a number of structures including two dating from the 1650s and 1660s and two built in the early 18th century. The latter show evidence of abandonment and demolition about 1770.

This paper will give an overview of the buildings discovered on Homewood's Lot. Emphasis is placed on the determination of the construction sequence of these structures through analyses of the artifactual contents recovered from associated features. The 18th century component includes an impressive Georgian brick mansion as well as a highly unusual, and early, kitchen/wash house and associated well and drain system.

Introduction

In 1975, a survey of the Belfield Farm site was performed for the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties. The inventory form states that the only remains of the Belfield house, which burned down in 1939, were the foundations of the house, a graveyard, and several out-buildings. The smokehouse, carriage-house, and corncrib were still standing at the time of survey. There are traces of a number of buildings that predate the aforementioned structures (Maryland Historical Trust 1975).

In October of 1999, the firm Applied Archaeology and History Associates performed a Phase I survey of Belfield Farms Subdivision in Anne Arundel County at the request of Anne Arundel County Department of Planning and Code Enforcement. The survey of the Belfield Farm (18AN871) area consisted of three 0.5-acre plots, within the larger 40-acre parcel, in the proposed subdivision. Twenty-seven shovel test units were excavated in one area that resulted in the discovery of an 18th century midden as well as a buried A horizon with potential construction de-

bris. Further investigation was recommended in this area. Sixteen additional shovel tests were excavated in the other two test areas. No artifacts were recovered from either of these areas and no further investigation was necessary in these locations (Ward 1999).

Between November 1999 and October of 2002 Anne Arundel County's *Lost Towns Project* returned to Homewood's Lot (18AN871). This was done for two reasons—to refine the site boundaries and to mitigate damage to cultural resources by an impending single house construction project. Staff archeologists, along with a group of volunteers, excavated nearly 90 five by five-foot square units (Figure 2). A total of sixty-five features were found and recorded, representing the evidence for a series of 17th and 18th century structures (see Gadsby 2004).

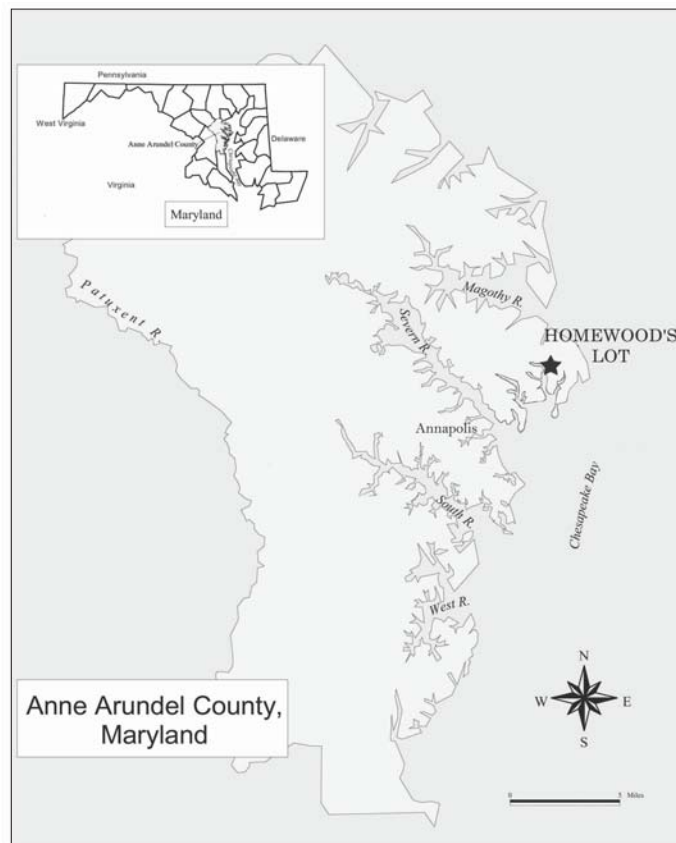


FIGURE 1. Location of Homewood's Lot in Anne Arundel County.



FIGURE 2. Excavation of Homewood's Lot.

Historical Background

The first recorded European settlement of Anne Arundel County took place in 1649 when a group of Puritans settled on the Chesapeake Bay around the mouth of the Severn River. These religious non-conformists, led by William Bennett, had migrated north to escape conflicts over their religious practices in Virginia. They named their new settlement Providence or Severn (see Luckenbach 1995).

Homewood's Lot is one of eight sites of the Providence settlement which have been located archeologically. Homewood's Lot was first settled around 1649 when James Homewood came to Maryland from England. A parcel of land was laid out for him in 1650. James Homewood and his descendants occupied this land for over a century before creditors claimed the property in 1760 (Gadsby 2004).

Whitehall Creek was one of the boundaries of the parcel of land that was laid out for James Homewood in 1650. An interesting document related that in 1664 one of John Homewood's servants drowned in this creek. Historical records state that the servant, Charles Hodges, drowned while helping to launch a canoe from the landing. He was found the next day lying on the shore across a log (MSA 1664).

James Homewood's brother John resided on the property until his death in 1681/82, leaving the land to his wife Sarah and his first nephew, Thomas. Thomas died in 1709/10 and left the land to his minor son Thomas under the guardianship of John Ingram.

The lands and buildings of Homewood's Lot were inventoried in 1714 before Thomas Homewood, son of James, took over rights to the land. The survey states that there were eighteen buildings including a great dwelling house "much out of repair," two kitchens, a storehouse, a wash house "in very good repair," and a "good corn house." There were thirteen other buildings on the plantation in

different stages of repair along with gardens, pens, orchards, a cornfield, a pasture and a graveyard (MSA 1714). When Captain Thomas Homewood, son of Thomas, took over the rights to the land sometime between 1713 and 1731 he consolidated eight tracts of land into "Homewood's Lot" (MSA 1731).

In December of 1731, Captain Thomas Homewood married Anne Hammond and went on to have three children, the eldest of whom was Charles Homewood, born in 1734 (MSA 1734). When Thomas died in 1739, his widow Anne remarried a sea captain, William Govane, and together they continued to occupy Homewood's Lot. They lived there for ten years before obtaining a divorce in 1749. After the divorce proceedings, the court conducted a survey of the lands and buildings of Homewood's Lot in 1750/51. They found there were 29 buildings, 17 in good repair and 12 in "middling" or bad repair (MSA 1750/51).

Charles Homewood showed up in court records for violent and extravagant behavior in 1756 for the assault and battery of Mary Bishop. One year later in March of 1757 Charles was again in court for assaulting and beating John Greeland. His wife Elizabeth left him a year later for unknown reasons. In 1760, Charles mortgaged all of his lands to Henry Woodward. Henry Woodward took up residence there with his wife Mary (MSA 1761). Woodward died in 1763 leaving his wife Mary with all lands that belonged to him.

Mary Woodward remarried to John Hesselius, the famous painter, the day after her husband's death. Mary Woodward brought the Homewood property to the union, as well as another mansion, Primrose Hill, which still stands in Annapolis. Together John and Mary sold many of Henry Woodward's lands and when John Hesselius died in 1778 (still in possession of Homewood's Lot), he left his land to his son, John Hesselius. However, the 1783 tax assessment for the property shows a division of land between four individuals: Anne Homewood (Govane), Mary Woodward (Hesselius), James Moss, and John Ridout. Mary received 723 acres of land as well as a brick dwelling house, a single story brick kitchen, a frame stable, and a brick smoke house (MSA 1798). It is possible that the division of the land is one reason that the descriptions of only these few buildings are in the tax assessments of the land. A decline in the wealth of the people who owned the land is another possibility.

Archeological Investigations

Based on the results of shovel tests and topographic information, a total of 89 5 by 5-foot test squares were excavated at Homewood's Lot by the *Lost Towns Project*. Due to changes in property ownership and shifting development threats, these excavations were conducted over portions of three field seasons. Emphasis was placed on

determining the location and nature of a series of structures built on the site, and on the earliest components related to the mid-17th century Providence settlement (Figure 3).

All excavation units were excavated stratigraphically and screened through ¼-inch hardware mesh. All cultural materials were retained except red brick fragments, which were weighed and discarded. Samples of whole bricks were collected and curated. Only the female hinges of oyster shells were retained for future analyses. All artifacts were taken to the *Lost Towns Project*

laboratory where they were processed and will be permanently stored.

Beneath a disturbed plowzone, which extended over the entirety of the site, a total of 66 cultural features were discovered and mapped. Due to limitations of both time and resources only 42 of these were tested. Except for two instances where features were completely excavated, this usually involved sectioning a sample of the contents. Soil and charcoal samples were retained from all intact features.

Given that the emphasis of this work was on the

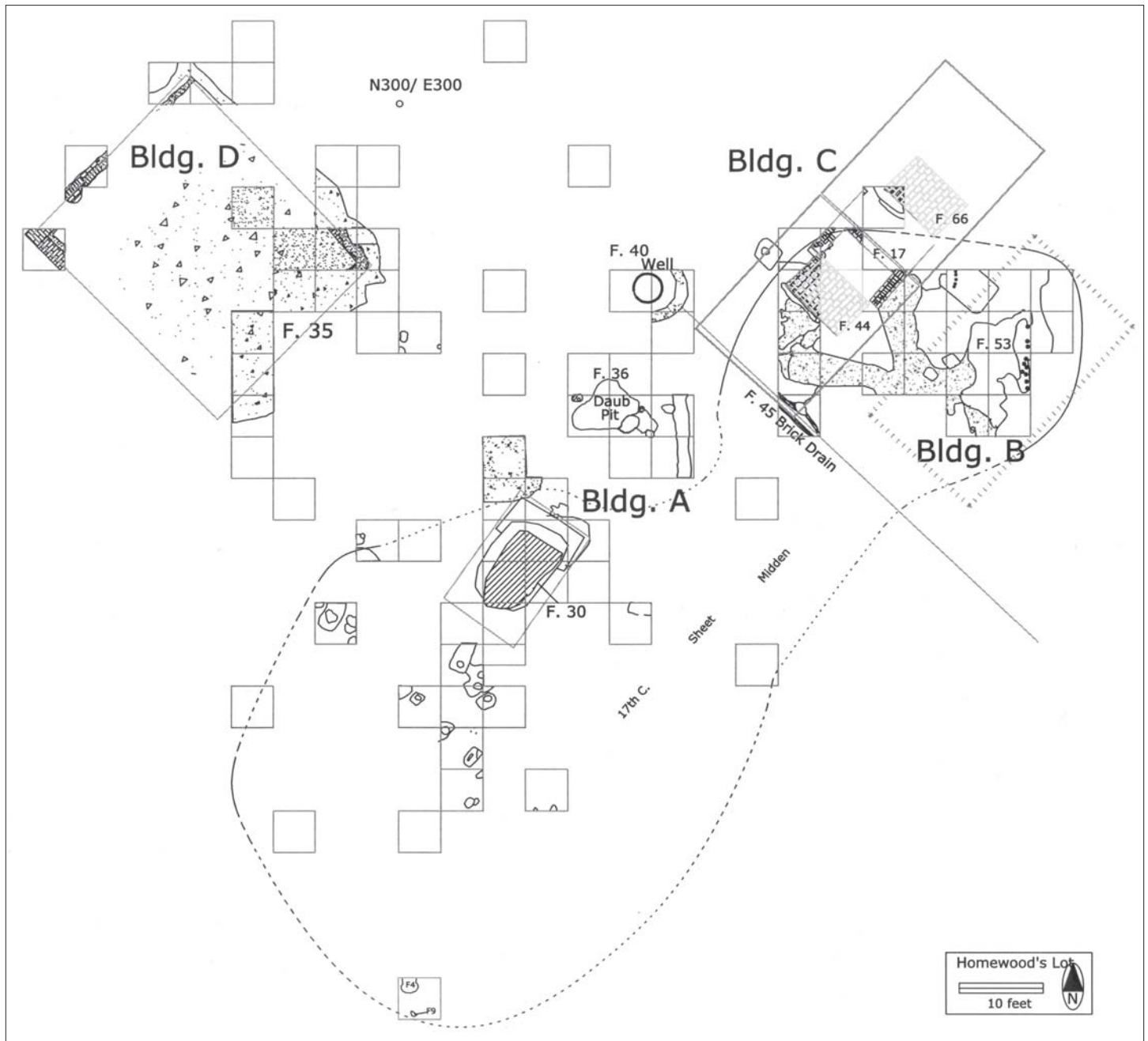


FIGURE 3. Site map of units and features at Homewood's Lot.

delineation and dating of the structures encountered, the results of the excavations are organized around a series of specific buildings and their associated features.

Building A—Earliest Construction

The earliest structure located at Homewood's Lot was a small building whose sills rested on a highly degraded, native ironstone foundation or piers. It had an external wattle and daub chimney on its northern elevation (Feature 33), and a sub-floor storage cellar (Feature 30). Compared to other structures found on the site, this building was tiny, measuring approximately 16 by 10 feet.

The nearly full-cellar measured 10 by 6 feet and its base was reached at 2.2 feet below the current ground surface (Figure 4). A summation of the artifacts that were found in this cellar is displayed in Table 1. These included an interesting delftware assemblage, Rhenish stoneware, and small amounts of North Devon and Staffordshire wares. Significantly, there was no English brown stoneware (or white salt-glazed stoneware) found in this feature, suggesting a pre-1680 fill date. Pipe bowl forms suggest an even earlier mid- to late 1660s' deposit.

Based on the artifactual assemblage, Building A is believed to be the first structure built at Homewood's Lot, presumably around 1650. Interestingly, construction debris was recovered in the Feature 30 cellar that did not appear to relate to the structure above. This included green-glazed, Dutch floor tiles, bricks, and a 1661 dated window lead, suggesting that Building A was occupied during the construction of another, more elaborate dwelling nearby.

Northeast of Building A was another associated pit (Feature 36). This was a shallow, ovoid pit with relatively few artifacts, consisting of mostly animal bone and

TABLE 1. Building A (Feature 30), diagnostic artifact assemblage.

WARE	COUNT	%
North Devon gravel-tempered	9	7%
North Devon sgraffito	4	3%
Rhenish stoneware	32	26%
Redware	23	18%
Tin-glazed earthenware	55	44%
Borderware	2	2%

broken pipe stems. Among the pipe stems found were examples of terra-cotta pipes manufactured in Virginia by a maker termed "the bookbinder" and assumed to date between 1635 and 1650 (Luckenbach and Kiser 2005), "Broadneck" pipe forms (also presumed to be Virginian; see Luckenbach and Cox 2002), and pipes made by Emanuel Drue at the nearby Swan Cove site before his death in 1669 (see Luckenbach and Kiser 2005). The pit was 6.75 by 5 feet, and only 0.6 feet deep. The feature also contained large deposits of charcoal and ash. It is believed that this pit was initially created for the daubing of the chimney associated with Building A, a conclusion supported by its containing some of the earliest artifacts from the site.

Building B—1660s' Main House

The primary evidence for Building B is a 17th century Dutch yellow brick and red brick chimney fall (Feature 53) located in the northeasternmost corner of the site. Unlike other Providence sites, the numerous yellow bricks discovered here were of the softer, "moppen" variety. While this chimney was clearly part of a large, well-built structure, time constraints did not permit the delineation of this building's floor plan.

Although no intact features were excavated which could date this structure, there are two mutually supportive means of theorizing a date for Building B. The first is the 1661 window lead found in Feature 30, which presumably contained debris from the construction of Building B (including green-glazed Dutch floor tiles). Marked and dated window leads have usually proven accurate indicators of the construction dates of buildings (Luckenbach and Gibb 1994).

The second was an analysis of plowzone materials around the chimney fall. Since the plowzone was divided into at least four strata, the fourth stratum in each of the six units above the feature was tested. There were no dateable ceramics found in the plowzone stratum above the feature, so the feature was dated using Binford's (1962)



FIGURE 4. Building A cellar (Feature 30).

formula for pipe stems. Using this method of calculation, the mean date for this feature is 1660.6. It is believed, therefore, that this is the building that was built around 1662 or 1663 when the residents still occupied the sill-laid structure (Building A) to the south.

Cockey and Jones (MSA 1714) mention the dwelling in their survey of 1714 as “a great dwelling house much out of repair.” There is apparently another mention of this great house in a 1750/51-court judgment stating that there was an “old dwelling house all to pieces quite out of repair” (MSA 1750/51). If this is the same structure, then this building was standing for nearly a century.

Building C—Kitchen/Wash House (Laundry)

Perhaps the most intriguing structure at Homewood’s Lot was Building C. This structure was evidenced by an H-shaped brick chimney base (Figure 5) with two associated brick-lined storage pits (Features 44 and 66). A brick drain (Feature 45) once ran through the western end of this building that ultimately attached to a well, which acted as its water source. The brick drain was about half of a foot deep with a chunky brick and pebble layer (Figure 6). The drain extended from the well, through Building C, and continued on at least 20 feet outside to the southeast of the structure.

This is quite clearly the remains of a kitchen/wash house or laundry (Graham, personal communication, 2000). A wash house is a room or building in which clothes, linens, and other items are washed. Most wash houses were contained in outbuildings, often in association with kitchens during the late 18th century. They are also associated with hearths needed to boil water. The first known documentary appearance of the term “wash house” in America had been in an advertisement in the *South Carolina Gazette* in 1733 (Lounsbury and Patrick 1994:398). The first previously known wash house reference in the Chesapeake Bay region was a 1798 description of a structure on King George Street in Annapolis, Maryland (Lounsbury and Patrick 1994:208). In the inventory of the lands of Homewood’s Lot in 1714, it is stated that there was a “wash house in very good repair.” This date would make the structure on Homewood’s Lot the earliest known wash house in the Chesapeake region to date, as well as the earliest documentary reference yet known in the American colonies. Interestingly, another such early reference (1715) has recently been discovered from Calvert County (King and Chaney, personal communication, 2004), indicating that there clearly are others, yet undiscovered.

The kitchen/wash house was located in the northeast corner of the site. The building was likely of earthfast construction, but the lack of identified postholes makes speculation over the size of the building difficult. The H-shaped chimney found inside the building is a 10 by 10-



FIGURE 5. H-shaped chimney base (Feature 17).



FIGURE 6. Brick drain (Feature 45).

foot square oriented 45 degrees northeast of grid north. The brick-lined drain is ten feet south of the hearth, while the well is fifteen feet to the west. The distance from the drain to the middle of the chimney is twenty feet. Since only one 5 by 5-foot unit was excavated on the north side of the chimney (to identify the second storage pit and the end of the chimney), a total building length cannot be determined. However, to encompass the drain and both storage pits, the building can be assumed to have been at least thirty, perhaps forty, feet long.

The storage pits associated with this building were to the north and south of the hearth (Figure 7). The pit to the south was the only one tested. This 8 by 6-foot storage pit (Feature 44) was brick-lined. The feature was excavated to the pit floor, which was 4.5 feet below ground surface at the west wall. The brick had been removed from the north and south walls. Evidence of this was the robber's trench, a 4 by 8-foot trench that was about three and a half feet deep, against the south wall of the pit. The bricks used to initially build this cellar were likely re-used from another structure.

This feature was only partially tested, due to time constraints, but the artifacts help refine the construction sequence of the buildings on site. The lowest stratum in Feature 44 contained Whieldon ware, giving the stratum a *terminus post quem* of 1740. The second stratum had artifacts such as Rhenish blue and gray stoneware, Whieldon ware, creamware, and white salt-glazed stoneware. This stratum, unlike the one below it, had creamware, giving it a *terminus post quem* of the early 1760s (Table 2).

Besides an abundance of nails, copper alloy and pewter buttons, straight pins, scissors, and a buckle were recovered from the pit. These artifacts might be seen as



FIGURE 7. Storage pit (Feature 44) to the south of the H-shaped chimney base.

TABLE 2. Artifact assemblage for the storage pit (Feature 44).

WARE	COUNT	%
Creamware	4	7%
Whieldon ware	5	8%
Tin-glazed earthenware	22	35%
English brown stoneware	8	13%
White salt-glazed stoneware	4	7%
Rhenish stoneware	6	10%
Porcelain	9	15%
Staffordshire slipware	1	2%
Manganese mottled	2	3%

further support for the contention that this building was a wash house as well as a kitchen. Items such as olive bottle glass, broken utensils, and cookery items were found in the feature as well. No window leads were found, nor was any identifiable window glass, suggesting that wooden shutters were used in the building. When opened, these could be of help in the drying of clothes after they were clean.

The Well

The well itself is located fifteen feet west of the kitchen/wash house (Figure 8). Four five by five-foot units were opened over this feature. Initially a circular dark feature that was ten feet in diameter was delineated; it was later discovered that the feature covered a well about four feet in diameter. When excavation of the feature began, a layer with chopped-up oyster shell and brick was found. Under this layer was a hollow hole that reached down into the feature almost three feet. Excavation continued to a depth of 7.5 feet. The bricks, shaped to fit the circumference of the well, were robbed out down to about 5 feet. This helps to explain why the footprint of the well was so much larger on the surface. Concern for worker safety stopped the excavation of the well before the bottom of the well had been reached.

There is clear delineation between the strata of this feature (Table 3). The lower level had North Devon sgraffito as well as white salt-glazed stoneware, suggesting that the cellar was at least from the early 18th century. It may be, however, that the well was one of the first things constructed on Homewood's Lot by John Homewood after he took up residence on the parcel of land. Excavations of a builder's trench surrounding the well bricks produced a "bookbinder" pipe, redwares, tin-glazed earthenware, and a Rhenish brown Bellarmine face. The "bookbinder" pipe dates this stratum with a *terminus post quem*



FIGURE 8. The well (Feature 40).

of between 1635 and 1650 (Luckenbach and Kiser 2004). Pipes made by Emanuel Drue were also found in the lower strata of the well along with other types of terra-cotta pipes.

While excavating this feature an air pocket was found about a quarter of the way down. Most of a horse skeleton was also found in this area of the well shaft. It is possible that as the body decayed the gases filled the gap under enough pressure to keep it from collapsing. In the level above the skeleton a broken projectile point was found along with honey-colored flint, a Bellarmine face, manganese-mottled earthenware sherd, and a window lead. A few sherds of creamware were found in this level but the sherds are believed to be contamination from the layer above. If this is correct the English brown stoneware and manganese-mottled earthenware help to date this layer from the late 17th century to the mid-18th century.

A geode, a projectile point, Whieldon ware, and some hand-painted creamware, as well as an Irish halfpenny dating to 1766, were found in the second layer from the top of the well. This means that the top stratum is post-1766. This layer contained, among other things, Whieldon ware, creamware, English brown stoneware

TABLE 3. Artifact assemblage for the well (Feature 40).

WARE	COUNT	%
Creamware	256	31%
Whieldon ware	44	6%
Redware	190	24%
Tin-glazed earthenware	107	13%
English brown stoneware	47	6%
White salt-glazed stoneware	55	7%
Rhenish stoneware	39	5%
Porcelain	45	6%
Staffordshire slipware	7	1%
Manganese mottled	6	1%

bottles, and a copper pot. All of these can date up to the end of the 18th century. The artifact assemblage from the well is not complete; however, it is safe to say that the well was present on the property from the middle of the 17th century up to the late 18th century.

Willie Graham (personal communication, 2000), an architectural historian from Colonial Williamsburg, has suggested the interesting possibility that a windmill pump drove the well in order to provide a nearly continuous supply of water to the wash house.

Building D—18th Century Main House

The largest structure discovered, built of brick, was once an imposing example of Georgian architecture. It served as the home for Thomas Homewood and his descendants from about the 1740s until 1763 when it became the property of John Hessilius, Maryland's most famous colonial portrait painter. Besides the substantial brick foundation walls, the most impressive evidence of this structure was a brick-lined three-quarter cellar (Feature 35) filled mainly with demolition debris.

The main house is located in the northwest corner of the site, oriented at about a 45-degree angle northwest from grid north. It is a 32 by 28-foot structure with the main entrance of the building facing the creek to the southwest. The house was probably a two and one-half story structure. One can presume that it had at least eight rooms—four on the first floor and four on the second, perhaps with one hall running in between the four rooms on each floor. There was also probably a loft above the second floor. In a court judgment from March 1750/51, the house is mentioned as “the large New Brick Dwelling in Good Repair only wants plastering” (MSA 1750/51).

Only a portion of the cellar (Feature 35) associated with this house was excavated because an agreement reached with the property owners removed this part of the site from potential destruction. A 10 by 15-foot section of

the cellar was exposed and a 5 by 12-foot trench was excavated down to the cellar floor. The bottom of the cellar was at 4.5 feet below the bottom of the plowzone. During excavation, the four corners of the house were also uncovered. The cellar was found under the eastern portion of the building but not the western section, indicating that the cellar did not extend the entire length of the building.

John Homewood probably built Building D and its associated cellar (Feature 35) in the 1740s. It continued to be in use until after about 1763, when John Hesselius had control of the property. Archeological research suggests that it was around this time when owners tore down the house above Feature 35. After the destruction of the house, the cellar continued to be used as a trash pit for the occupants of another structure that was built near the original house, probably in the 1770s. This later structure (Building E) was not included in the present investigation.

Excavation of Feature 35 identified a high concentration of artifacts and oyster shell at the outer edge of the feature. It was also discovered that the further from the edge of the feature the more the elevation of each stratum dropped. The strata were deeper in the southwest corner than in any other area of the excavation. When the bottom of the feature was reached, a floor of crushed mortar and plaster was encountered. A small “window” cut into the plaster flooring showed sandy orange subsoil below, as well as soldier bricks set at the base of the corners of the building. The trench exposed one of the interior walls of the cellar (Figure 9). There was no robber’s trench present around the cellar suggesting that some bricks were taken out of the cellar after demolition but before it was filled with debris. Three main strata in the cellar were discovered that span the 18th century. The lowest stratum represents the occupation of Homewood’s Lot in the early 18th century, with a *terminus post quem* of 1715. The hundreds of artifacts found in the lowest stratum—English Brown stoneware, dipped white salt-glazed stoneware, North Devon earthenwares, and others—demonstrate that the house related to this cellar was used as a domestic dwelling. This lowest stratum consisted of a thin, dark lens of soil at the base of the excavation consisting of domestic debris (Table 4). This presumably represents the active life of the structure. Other artifacts included table implements (a knife and a white metal alloy spoon), an iron kettle leg, olive bottle glass, and 24 window leads. Although there were a large number of window leads found, none had a legible date. It does, however, confirm that there were leaded casement windows in the brick house, suggesting a formidable and well-appointed dwelling.

The stratum above the domestic layer had fill that was mostly destruction debris. This layer included creamware and Whieldon ware, but lacked pearlware,



FIGURE 9. Cellar (Feature 35) from Building D, 18th century main house .

TABLE 4. Artifact assemblage for Building D cellar (Feature 35).

WARE	COUNT	%
North Devon gravel-tempered	23	11%
Redware	40	38%
White tin-glazed earthenware	11	10%
White salt-glazed stoneware	11	10%
English brown stoneware	14	13%
Rhenish stoneware	8	7%
Creamware	1	1%

which suggests that the house was demolished in the 1760s or 1770s. The uppermost stratum had many different artifacts present, including creamware, pearlware, and Chinese porcelain, dating between the 1760s and 1780s (Noël Hume 1969). Since it is believed that the brick dwelling house was already destroyed by this date, these different ceramic types are probably from the unexplored 18th century house (Building E), once located to the northeast of the cellar (Maryland Historical Trust 1975).

Conclusions

Two seasons of archeological excavations conducted at Homewood's Lot have revealed evidence of a sequence of structures once standing on the site which range in date from about 1650 to 1770. The analysis of the artifactual content of related features, with particular reference to ceramic types, has allowed the determination a general chronological sequence for four buildings and an associated well. In determining construction dates, particularly useful ceramic components proved to be the presence or absence of North Devon sgraffito, English brown salt-glazed stoneware, and white salt-glazed stoneware. In terms of demolition and abandonment, creamwares and pearlwares proved to be the most useful and sensitive temporal markers. Tobacco pipe bowl forms were also highly informative, as was the presence or absence of terra-cotta pipes.

The 17th century occupation at Homewood's Lot is represented by two dwellings—the diminutive Building A, presumably built around 1650 and abandoned about 1670, and Building B, built around 1661 and apparently still standing in 1750, “all to pieces and quite out of repair.” The lowest levels that were excavated in the well seem to clearly indicate that this was also a 17th century construction.

The most interesting structure encountered was the kitchen/wash house that was mentioned as being “in very good repair” in 1714—the earliest documentary mention of such a building so far seen from colonial America. This structure incorporated a drain system that ran from the well, through one end of the wash house, and out the other side. The discovery of this building is even more important, as it is the earliest such structure yet encountered by archeologists in the region.

Finally, the discovery and delineation of an imposing Georgian mansion completes the series of excavated structures on Homewood's Lot. Built around 1740 and abandoned for reasons unknown a mere thirty years later, this building not only housed the Homewood family at the height of their prosperity, but also is important for its later association with John Hesselius, a highly significant colonial portrait artist.

The location of this impressive brick structure also proved interesting in not conforming to the existing paradigm on site settlement patterns. In the area of the 1649 Providence settlement, all first period housing discovered previously proved to be oriented both to potable springheads and navigable water. Invariably, around 1700 the later owners of these properties erected new structures that were more oriented to higher elevations and access to the growing road system. Homewood's Lot does not fit this pattern. While the earliest occupation is near a springhead and navigable water, the later Georgian mansion sits a mere

100 feet from the oldest known structure, and at the same elevation.

Although both time and resources limited the salvage excavations conducted by Anne Arundel County's *Lost Towns Project* at Homewood's Lot, it is clear that significant contributions were still made. The excavation of 89 5 by 5-foot units resulted in the recovery of over 156,000 17th and 18th century artifacts and the delineation of five previously unknown structures that have added greatly to our understanding of how colonial life evolved in this region.

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