2007

Material Culture and Multi-Cultural Interactions at Sylvester Manor

Jack Gary

Follow this and additional works at: <http://orb.binghamton.edu/neha>

Part of the [Archaeological Anthropology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Gary, Jack (2007) "Material Culture and Multi-Cultural Interactions at Sylvester Manor," *Northeast Historical Archaeology*: Vol. 36 36, Article 9.

<https://doi.org/10.22191/neha/vol36/iss1/9> Available at: <http://orb.binghamton.edu/neha/vol36/iss1/9>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). It has been accepted for inclusion in Northeast Historical Archaeology by an authorized editor of The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). For more information, please contact ORB@binghamton.edu.

Material Culture and Multi-Cultural Interactions at Sylvester Manor

Jack Gary

The material culture recovered from Sylvester Manor's 17th-century deposits not only informs our understanding of the plantation's depositional history but also is characteristic of cultural interactions between Europeans, Native Americans, and possibly Africans. The mixture of cultural material in these deposits suggests intense and sustained cultural interactions that have led to the production and use of certain materials outside of their cultural norms. Several of these items are European goods altered for use in Native or possibly African cultural systems, while other items reflect the creolization of material culture by blending morphological and stylistic attributes of two material cultures. These objects point to a very visible Native American presence in the 17th century.

Les artefacts mis au jour dans des dépôts du Sylvester Manor et datant du XVII^e siècle permettent non seulement la compréhension de l'histoire des dépôts de la plantation, mais ils caractérisent aussi les interactions culturelles entre les Européens, les Autochtones des États-Unis d'Amérique et, possiblement, les Africains. Le mélange d'artefacts observé dans ces dépôts suggère que des interactions intenses et soutenues ont eu lieu et que ces interactions ont mené à la production et à l'utilisation de certains matériaux à l'extérieur des normes culturelles de ces groupes. Dans plusieurs cas, il s'agit de biens européens ayant été modifiés pour permettre une utilisation dans un système culturel autochtone ou africain alors que dans d'autres cas, les objets reflètent la créolisation de la culture matérielle en mélangeant les attributs morphologiques et stylistiques des deux cultures matérielles. Ces objets démontrent clairement une présence autochtone au XVII^e siècle.

Introduction

In order to study social interactions through Sylvester Manor's material culture it is necessary to look at deposits most clearly associated with the 17th-century Early Plantation period. It is during this period that Europeans, Native Americans, and enslaved Africans were still negotiating their roles in a landscape of culturally contested space. This chapter therefore focuses primarily on three areas that have yielded the earliest historic deposits in order to address the issue of cultural interaction in this negotiated landscape. These areas, described in detail in this volume by Hayes, include the South Lawn midden, Feature 226, and Feature 221 (see FIG. 6 in Hayes, this volume). Due to the overwhelming amount of material recovered over the past seven years of excavation, only select material types have been chosen for discussion. Several types are discussed in the aggregate in order to provide broader contextual information while several individual artifacts and artifact types are discussed with regard to creolization, continuation of traditional practices, and the negotiation of cultural reproduction. This should serve as a starting point for the analysis of material culture in

terms of the myriad and intense cultural interactions that took place during the 17th century at Sylvester Manor.

Architectural Material

Architectural debris is by far the largest category of material culture recovered from the historic deposits at Sylvester Manor, with all three 17th-century deposits containing large quantities of destruction and construction-related materials. While the specifics of such mundane objects often merit only a passing reference, several material types found are worth closer examination. One of the most visible categories of architectural debris has been mortar and plaster. While large homogenous deposits of finished plaster and mortar are ubiquitous across the site, and are assumed to be related to destruction episodes, it is the byproducts of mortar and plaster production that dominate many of the early deposits. Unlike imported brick and pantile, the manufacture of mortar and plaster is evident on-site. A single stratum of burnt shell and clay within Feature 221 is indicative of burning locally harvested quahog shell in order to obtain lime, while large homogenous deposits of burned and unburned

coral in the South Lawn midden may indicate mortar production using materials presumably shipped from Barbados. Preliminary examinations of plaster thin-sections from Feature 221 and the South Lawn midden show that shell and coral were indeed the basic ingredients for plaster at Sylvester Manor, but were not used in conjunction. Samples of plaster from the midden contained only coral, while plaster from Feature 221 and Feature 245 contained only shell. Feature 245, found underneath the midden and partially capping Feature 226, is a single homogenous layer of unused shell-derived plaster or mortar that appears to have been excess, dumped after it was no longer needed. This may be the end product of the burnt shell found in Feature 221. A suggestion as to how the wet mortar that created the Feature 245 deposit was transported around the site can also be found in two mortar-covered fragments of a lead-glazed redware pot found in the mortar-free bone layer of Feature 221.

The seemingly ubiquitous presence of material related to mortar production within early Sylvester Manor deposits highlights the fact that the European structures dominating the plantation core were not only prominent features on the landscape but were also constantly changing and under repair. These activities may have required the involvement of a significant labor force in the procurement and production of building material throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. The difference in raw materials used for plaster and mortar may be temporal indicators, with shell plaster found only in the 17th-century deposits and concentrations of coral and coral plaster found in the upper layer of the 17th- and 18th-century deposit of the midden, suggesting deposition near the end of the deposit's development. Shell may have been used for early construction episodes before shipments from Barbados arrived with loads of coral ballast, providing a more expedient material that required less labor to procure.

Perhaps the largest and most dramatic of these construction projects can be seen in the architectural debris recovered from the South Lawn midden. Large concentrations of brick, pantile, mortar, and coral found in the upper levels of the midden, which had become an accumulation of residential trash, suggest a shift in the landscape during a large scale

destruction and construction episode. Weights of brick, pantile, and mortar recovered from the midden were entered into the site GIS in order to plot material densities. This revealed at least two discrete areas of material. Unit A-6 contains by far the highest concentration of brick at almost 30 kilograms, three times the amounts found in surrounding units, while Unit I-7 contained a staggering 37 kilograms of coral, assumed to be associated with the above-mentioned production of mortar. No other units excavated to date have had comparable amounts of coral. It would appear that the South Lawn's function as a deposit for domestic refuse shifted during a construction episode, most likely that of the 1735 manor house, with piles of architectural materials collecting in the top layers of the midden while the nearby house was being built and/or a nearby structure was dismantled. Deposits of burned brick in Unit A-6 are suggestive of an episode of destruction occurring at the same time. The midden and the deposits of architectural material within it were eventually obscured by a landscaping layer of dark loam (Stratum A). A *terminus post quem* of 1749, derived from a George II farthing, for this layer suggests that the midden was left exposed or continued to be used until the mid-18th century. With the front door of the house opening onto a trash deposit, the landscaping layer may have been placed in an effort to create a formal front lawn as part of an increasingly Georgian landscape.

Clay Tobacco Pipes

Due to the large number of pipes attributed to Dutch manufacture, pipestem dating, designed for use on English produced pipes, has been largely ignored for Sylvester Manor. Form, markings and decoration however have proven to be informative regarding dates and cultural affiliation. Of the 158 pipes examined, 113 are attributed to a particular country of manufacture. The majority, at 52%, are of Dutch manufacture, while 47% were imported from England (TAB. 1). All pipes that are solidly attributed to Dutch manufacture are from the 17th century with the majority falling within the second and third quarter. Only 15% of the English pipes are attributed solely to the 17th century while 47% fall between the last half of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th. This is somewhat misleading as this 47% is composed entirely of pipes manufactured by Robert Tippet I-III, a common type manufac-

Table 1. Pipe decorative styles and date ranges.

<i>Dutch Pipe Type</i>	<i>Date Range</i>	<i>N</i>
"Baroque" Style	1620–1640	1
EB	1630–1665	14
Fleur-de-lis	1620–1680	15
TIP	1650–1680	1
Raleigh	1625–1700	17
AI	1665–?	5
Tudor Rose	17th Century	6
Pinched Stem	17th Century	2
Total		61
<i>English Pipe Type</i>	<i>Date Range</i>	<i>N</i>
PE	1649–1680	3
LE	1661–1688	2
WE or WIL EVANS	1670–1700	3
RT or R TIPPET	1660–1722	26
Elbow Pipes	1720–1820	17
TD	1748–1780	1
Total		52

tured over three generations with little variation, making them difficult to temporally pinpoint (Alexander 1983: 205–09).

Several 17th-century tobacco pipes recovered from Sylvester Manor exhibit distinct design motifs or stampings outside of simple maker's marks. The two most frequently occurring design elements have been effigy-style Raleigh pipes and stamped fleur-de-lis designs. Originally produced in England before being banned, Raleigh pipes are most commonly attributed to Dutch manufacturers. The pipe depicts the legend of Sir Walter Raleigh, swallowed by a crocodile before being spat out due to the amount of tobacco smoke permeating his body (Faulkner and Faulkner 1987: 170; Oswald 1975: 116). Early pipes bearing this scene, produced in the 1630s, were detailed in high relief. Around 1650, however quality began to decline until the end of the century (Faulkner and Faulkner 1987: 170). All 17 examples recovered from Sylvester Manor are most likely from the later "debased" versions (FIG. 1A). Of these 17 pipes, seven fragments were found within or overlying Feature 226, six fragments came from the midden, three fragments were recovered from features or strata underlying the midden, and one of the more complete examples of the crocodile stem was found in the West Lawn. One fragment found in the midden in unit CC-2 shows signs of altering where the smoker may have scored a line on the stem behind the

Figure 1. Examples of clay pipes. A) Fragments of Raleigh pipes. B) Raleigh pipe with whittled-off scale design (5.2 cm). C) Stamped fleur-de-lis (2.3 cm). D) Four-on-diamond fleur-de-lis (5.9 cm).

head of the crocodile and whittled off the scale design (FIG. 1B). This may have been done in an effort to customize the pipe, convert the pipe to accept a reed stem, or prolong the pipe's life (Hoffman 1991: 94–95). The similar act of abrading, where the mouthpiece is continually ground down, is not uncommon when pipes are in short supply (Bradley 2000: 128).

The second decorative style is the stamped fleur-de-lis contained in a diamond (FIG. 1C). Of the 14 recovered stems with the fleur-de-lis motif, 11 were found in Feature 221 or contexts related to Feature 226. Of the other three, one was found in the midden, another below the midden, and one was recovered from the North Lawn fill. Based on the occurrence of this design type at Fort Orange in New York (Huey 1988), Fort Shantok in Connecticut (Williams 1973), Fort Pentagoet in Maine (Faulkner and Faulkner 1987: 176–77), and numerous colonial Onondaga Iroquois sites (Bradley 1987, Bradley and DeAngelo 1981), a date range of 1640–1685 can be given for this widely encountered mark. Generally assumed to be a product of Dutch pipe makers (Faulkner and Faulkner 1987: 176; Oswald 1975: 116) the Sylvester Manor assemblage has different stamp configurations. The four-in-diamond fleur-de-lis is the most common pattern (FIG. 1D), often arranged in a row down the stem; at least five stems also exhibit simple rouletting. Only three stems

Figure 2. Borderware fragments (left) and North Devon gravel-free pipkin fragments (right).

possess a single fleur-de-lis stamped in a single row. While there is also variety in the actual stamps used within each configuration, suggesting different makers or sources, there do not appear to be any concentrations of one type in the deposits in which fleur-de-lis pipes are found.

Due to the common occurrence and large quantities of pipes with the fleur-de-lis mark on historic Native American sites (Bradley and DeAngelo 1981: 131), and sites such as Fort Orange where trade with Native Americans was intense, it has been suggested that pipes of this type may be associated with trade activities (Faulkner and Faulkner 1987: 177). Certain pipe types may have been attractive to Native inhabitants due to similar design patterns or motifs that fit within their preexisting symbolic system, such as the effigy style of Raleigh pipes. It must be noted that the highest concentrations of the two pipe types mentioned above are also found within Sylvester Manor deposits containing the highest site concentrations of Native American materials such as ceramics, waste from wampum production, and copper adornment items, suggesting they could have been used by the Natives working at the Manor.

European Ceramics

As is often the case on historic sites in North America, European ceramics comprise the bulk of the non-architectural material assemblage. The collection from Sylvester Manor contains a

wide variety of European ceramics with some of the earliest material recovered from the different deposits of Feature 221. Several fragments of buff bodied borderware jugs and bowls along with sherds from a North Devon gravel-free pipkin and at least eleven other redware jars were recovered from the mixed domestic and construction deposit (Maryland Archaeological Conservation Lab 2002; Pearce 1992) (FIG. 2). Exterior burning on the pipkin and several other vessels suggests these objects were used for food preparation. The excavated portion of the lower bone layer contained only the above-mentioned lead-glazed redware pot with the interior coating of plaster. These mid-17th-century coarse earthenwares comprise the bulk of the European ceramics recovered from the feature. Several fragments of tin-glazed earthenware were also recovered, representing at least five vessels, three of which can be identified as hollowwares.

The ceramic assemblage of the South Lawn midden is noticeably different from the mid-17th-century ceramics of Feature 221. Constituting a large portion of the non-architectural artifacts recovered from the midden, ceramic material is largely represented by lead-glazed coarse redwares. A minimum vessel count revealed a possible 75 redware vessels within the midden deposit. Nine of these are slip decorated with simple floral patterns or dots and clear lead glaze. Vessel form was almost exclusively related to storage and liquid cooling in the form of pots, jars, and milkpans (Beaudry et al. 1983). Several fragments of a

Figure 3. Blue decorated stoneware quarter and jug fragments.

heavily burned redware candlestick or pedestal dish base are also among the assemblage. Four North Devon slip-decorated dishes are also present in the midden assemblage. There is also a larger number of Staffordshire slipware vessels have been recovered from the midden. With the exception of one candlestick, all vessels are related to beverage consumption and have slip-combed or applied dot exterior decoration.

Stoneware vessels, with a total of 29 individual objects identified, are also well represented in the midden. The majority of these vessels can be attributed to German manufacture with 14 blue decorated and 7 brown-slipped vessels identified. Four British brown vessels, all jugs, were also recovered. Not surprisingly the majority of the stoneware vessel forms are related to personal consumption or storage of beverages with 14 jugs, 8 tankards, and 4 quarterns identified. At least three of the stoneware vessels have provided potentially early dates suggestive of a long period of midden development or possibly the curation of certain materials over time. Two quarterns with small applied medallions and cobalt decoration and a small jug bearing the "Arms of Amsterdam," have been dated to the early to mid-17th century by Noël Hume (2001: 101), and somewhat later around 1660–1675 by Charlotte Wilcoxon (1987: 73–74) when found in western New York (FIG. 3).

Native Ceramics

While European ceramics bolster, and sometimes confuse, our temporal interpretations of Sylvester Manor, it is their co-occur-

rence with large quantities of Native American ceramics that draws attention to questions of early cultural interactions. Feature 221 in particular offers an interesting assemblage of ceramic material to query regarding the changing cultural landscape of Sylvester Manor. In total, 50 possible Native American vessels were recovered from the Feature 221 deposit, five more vessels than the European ceramic vessel count from the same feature. Of these vessels, 94% were shell tempered with the other 6% containing mineral temper or a combination of shell and fine mineral. Eighty-four percent were decorated in some way with the most common form of decoration being incised lines, found on 38 vessels, followed by triangular lobes on 13 vessels. Eight vessels also had castellated rims. One shell and fine mineral tempered vessel, however, exhibited a net impressed design more indicative of pre-contact ceramics and may indicate that there is some inclusion of pre-17th-century material in Feature 221. Eighteen vessels bore evidence of carbonized organic residues on interior and exterior surfaces with most incised triangular lobed rims and collars exhibiting residue.

The majority of the ceramic styles have been identified as Shantok Castellated, a highly decorative style of ceramic produced in 17th-century southern New England (FIG. 4 and 5). While the majority of vessels recovered from Feature 221 not only exhibit many of the classic

Figure 4. Examples of Shantok castellated rims (Rouse 1945).

Figure 5. Two examples from Feature 221 of castelated rims and triangular lobed collars.

characteristics of Shantok ceramics (i.e. castelated rims, highly decorative collars, smoothed interiors and exteriors, moderate to high shell tempering) at least two examples exhibit the distinctly European characteristic of handles.

The most complete example of handled pottery is a large globular container with a 14 cm interior rim diameter (FIG. 6). The neck is ringed with a triangular lobed collar with a small punctate placed at the tip of each lobe. The whole collar is decorated with diagonal incised lines. The body slightly constricts underneath the collar before expanding into the globular shape. A portion of a handle is located underneath the collar and appears to have been attached by puncturing the body of the vessel, inserting the handle into the resulting hole and then blending the paste of the two pieces together. A piece of the handle not attached to the vessel but found in the same context and assumed to belong to it is similar in form to the rounded handles found on European borderware and stoneware jugs. The second example is also a large globular jug or pot, but interestingly it is one of the few vessels that does not have any decoration. The vessel contains a large amount of shell temper with a smoothed interior and exterior. An apparent base piece may suggest that the vessel had a flat base. The associated handle is not attached and is considerably smaller than the one found on the other vessel but appears to have been constructed in the same manner.

One question still surrounding these anomalous forms is whether these handles were at all functional. Carbonized organic residue and exterior burning on the more complete vessel suggest that it was at least used for food preparation at some point. However it is question-

Figure 6. Handled pot.

able if attaching such relatively small handles would work well for such low-fired vessels. Whether these handles were meant to be utilitarian or decorative is open to debate, but the blending of Native American and European attributes is unquestionable.

Trade Items and Appropriated European Material

Other items of material culture outside of indigenous ceramics continue to indicate a strong Native American community presence. Some of these artifacts fall into the category of trade items, while others appear to be European materials reused by Native Americans in ways more compatible with the latter's traditional cultural practices. A mixture of trade goods and altered European materials has been recovered from the early contexts of Feature 221 and 226 as well as from the somewhat later midden contexts. The reuse of European copper kettles, lead and other trade material has been well documented archaeologically in the Northeast (Beaudry 1980, Bradley and Camp 1994, Dilliplane 1980, Groce 1980, Van Dongen 1996) with many similar objects recovered from Sylvester Manor as well. However, the number of recognizable European materials produced

specifically for trade (i.e. beads, tinkling cones, bells, mirrors, blades, etc.) is relatively small at Sylvester Manor given the evidence for a strong plantation era Native American presence found in 17th-century deposits. A total of only nine glass beads have been recovered from the entire site, with two of those found in 19th-century contexts. Two beads recovered from the South Lawn midden are yellow/amber in color and are wire wound with five-sided facets. These can be classified as WIIc5 or 6 in the Kidd and Kidd system (Kidd and Kidd 1983: 227–256). Feature 221 yielded four glass beads: two circular and black and classified as IIa7; one circular and red with a black core classified as IVa3; and one tubular and red with a black core classified as IIIa1 (Kidd and Kidd 1983: 227–256). All six of these bead types are among the most common varieties produced in Amsterdam for North American trade during the 17th century (Karklins 1983: 126 and 1985: 37).

Three other items possibly intended for trade were iron mouth harps recovered from the midden. These objects, which thus far have escaped intense study within the discipline of archaeology, are difficult to date but have correlations to items found in the 17th-century contexts of the Burr's Hill Wampanoag burial ground (Gibson 1980: 171–172), Fort Shantok (Salwen 1966: 10), and Fort Corchaug (Williams 1973: 311) as well as the mid to late 18th-century site of Fort Michilimackinac (Stone 1974: 142). The very small size of two of these mouth harps may indicate that they were intended for use by children. Another possible trade item found was a common tinned buckle that is an exact match to one found in a Montauk burial in Easthampton on Long Island (Saville [1920]1993: 628).

The dearth of pre-made European trade items produced specifically for Native American consumption is interesting and may be the result of a plantation relationship under which Native Americans residing at Sylvester Manor functioned as laborers. This may have resulted in compensation with materials not usually recoverable in an archaeological context, such as cloth and consumables, or in goods used by both cultural groups, such as tobacco pipes. However, there is ample evidence to show that the indigenous inhabitants of Sylvester Manor were appropriating or

Figure 7. Silver Spanish cob. A) Obverse side. B) Obverse detail. C) Reverse side. D) Reverse detail.

trading for other European goods and altering them for their own purposes.

Perhaps the most intriguing of these appropriated items is an altered silver Spanish cob found in the South Lawn midden above Feature 226 (FIG. 7). Cobs were expediently minted coins produced for ease of transportation, often from South America, and were clipped down to obtain silver or later melted down in order to be made into formal coinage. The example from Sylvester Manor has been extensively clipped with the majority of its original markings obscured by wear. Dating this coin has proven difficult due to the amount of wear but the visible markings appear similar to cobs produced during the reign of Phillip IV (1621–1665). What makes this coin particularly unique are the hand etched designs applied to both sides of the object. A cross or X has been marked in the corner of the obverse (FIG. 7A, B) while a Native American etching of a thunderbird design has been placed in the opposite corner on the reverse (FIG. 7C, D). Both marks fall within areas where original markings have been worn completely smooth, perhaps done intentionally to provide a blank space or platform for the etchings. A second object, a smooth quartzite cobble also found in the South Lawn in Unit A-7, bears a strik-

Figure 8. Cobble with thunderbird etching (9 cm in length).

ingly similar thunderbird inscription (FIG. 8). The similarity suggests that both objects may have been created by the same hand and at the least indicates a continuation of traditional Native American symbolic practice in Sylvester Manor's 17th-century colonial contexts. The thunderbird design has been found in various pre-contact contexts in Southern New England, often in the form of petroglyphs and amulets (Bragdon 1996: 208), and may have been the representation of a deity recognized as far north as Maine and as far west as the Great Lakes.

While the exact function of the coin is uncertain, it was recovered near other appropriated objects, all related to personal adornment. A European thimble that has been pierced through the top in order to turn it into a tinkling cone (see Van Dongen 1996: 147) was also found in the midden above Feature 226 (FIG. 9A, B). During the conservation of this item, a small piece of cut bark wrapped in bast fibers (material derived from the stalk of a plant such as nettle) was recovered from the interior of the thimble. The bark may have served the purpose of a clapper tied to the cord on which the thimble was strung. It may have also been used to keep the thimble from slipping off the fiber cord. Seven rolled copper beads, the highest concentration at the site, were recovered from directly above and within the fill of Feature 226 as well (FIG. 10). The beads, ranging in length from 15–19 mm, are similar to those found in burials at the Wampanoag burial ground at Burr's Hill (Groce 1980: 117) and on numerous historic and protohistoric Onondaga Iroquois sites (Bradley 1987: 130–133). Several of the beads from Sylvester Manor retain the original reed cord on which they were strung. The beads were formed by either crimping the metal around the fibers in a "C" shape or

Figure 9. A) Thimble with hole pierced through top (1.2 cm across top). B) Cut bark from thimble (2 cm across bottom).

rolling scraps of copper around the cord. With amounts of tin and lead noted in the copper alloy of these beads, it is highly suggestive that the source material is European in origin and may have come from cutting kettles into scrap for use in ways more compatible with Native American practice (see Bradley 1987: 131). The recovery of these beads, pierced thimble, etched coin, and waste shell from wampum production (Foutch 2004) along with domesticated animal remains and large quantities of brick in such a discrete space both within Feature 226 and the directly overlying midden suggests an area that was a locus of cultural interaction.

While there is this distinct concentration of altered European materials over Feature 226, other areas have yielded similar items that may have been incorporated into Native American practices. Another altered coin, while somewhat less dramatic than the etched cob, is a Charles II silver penny pierced through the top with a small hole (FIG. 11), recovered from the midden in Unit J-4. These small English coins were in production from 1660 to 1662 (Purvey 1984: 196). Found in the context with the highest concentration of finished wampum beads (4), it is very possible that the coin was appropriated for incorporation into a Native decorative item

Figure 10. Rolled copper beads (size range 1.5–3 cm).

Figure 11. Pierced Charles II silver penny (1.2 cm diameter).

in the same manner as a German jetton found at Fort Pemaquid in Maine (Bradley and Camp 1994: 213). However, pierced silver coins have also been strongly associated with African-American practices, in particular wearing the object on a string around the neck or ankle in order to ward off evil. The occurrence of these objects in archaeological deposits in southern contexts and African-American burials (Brown 1998; Leone and Fry 1999; Russell 1997: 68; Wilkie 1997: 89) may be the one subtle archaeological indication for the presence of Africans at Sylvester Manor.

In addition, a fair amount of scrap copper plate, possibly derived from European kettles, has been recovered from the South Lawn midden and Feature 221. Occurring in various shapes and sizes, several pieces with roughly punched or widened holes may have served as pendants, medallions, or clothing ornaments while at least one tinkling cone made from scrap copper has been recovered from Feature 221 (FIG. 12). One copper object that continues to elude solid identification is a potential ferrule that, like the Spanish cob, has been etched with what may be considered Native American design elements (FIG. 13). The word ferrule is used here to describe tubular objects that may have once fit over wooden or bone shafts. Found in Feature 221, this particular object is now crushed, but would have been tube-shaped with a rolled lip. The outside surface of the object has been etched with two rows of bands that ring the entire ferrule. In between these bands the owner etched a row of connected diamonds. Correlations to this diamond design can be found around the world, but one need look no further than the large quantity of Shantok Castellated pots recovered from the

Figure 12. Rolled copper cone (2.5 cm in length).

Figure 13. Copper ferrule with etched designs.

same context as the ferrule. A potential correlation could be drawn between the highly decorated "spiked" collars ringing the rims of the Native ceramics found in Feature 221 and the diamonds ringing the top of this copper object. Similarly, the diamond motif is also well represented in the European fleur-de-lis pipestem assemblage from Feature 221.

Lithic Material and the Absence of Iron Tools

The analysis of iron artifacts from Sylvester Manor is ongoing, but a preliminary exami-

Figure 14. Door hardware recovered from the midden and Feature 221.

Figure 15. Utilized flint recovered from Feature 221.

nation of material recovered from the South Lawn and Feature 221 reveals an assemblage dominated by architectural items in the form of nails, lock-plates, keys, hinges, and other door hardware (FIG. 14). Two iron awls have been recovered from Feature 221, but otherwise absent from the collection are iron blades, axes, or tools that one would associate with the primary activities taking place on a provisioning plantation. This absence may be explained by our choice of areas for excavation that are dominated by assemblages of domestic material, with large quantities of ceramics, personal items, and architectural debris. If this is the case then we have yet to locate the primary areas of production where items related to the provisioning operation, such as barrel stave and meat production, might be encountered. However one would still expect to find blades of some sort employed in the butchery of meat, which is certainly well represented in the faunal remains, at a domestic level. This pattern has also been observed in the work done by Stephen Silliman at Rancho Petaluma in California, where Native inhabitants may have actively chosen not to use certain European

derived materials in a residential setting as a way of distancing their identity from an oppressive labor system (2004: 192). An analysis of the lithic material from Sylvester Manor conducted by Kat Hayes may also shed considerable light on the absence of metal blades (2005). The lithic assemblage from the 17th-century colonial component of the site is dominated by European derived ballast flint, often assumed to be deposited when a ship takes on cargo, and good only for the expedient production of gunflints or tinderflints. While this production is well represented at Sylvester Manor, with a large quantity of well worn and probably locally produced gunflints present particularly in Feature 221 (FIG. 15), there is also an indication that flint may have been expediently used for purposes other than spark production. Taken as a whole, the use-wear patterns on the flint from 17th-century deposits suggest the material was being used for a variety of purposes, including cutting and scraping. One interpretation suggests that Native Americans were appropriating this readily available material for their own domestic use. The employment of flint for expedient tools, in light of the paucity of metal cutting instruments, may suggest limited access to metal tools, deposition of metal tools in areas more associated with labor, curation of metal tools, or perhaps a deliberate effort to use a more traditional technology with new materials. Numerous Spanish American contexts have shown that the domestic sphere is often dominated by traditional or mixed technologies (Deagan 2003: 7).

Material recovered from Feature 221 suggests that in addition to the possibility of flint used for domestic purposes there was a continuation of traditional ground-stone tool use into the mid-late 17th century. Feature 221 has yielded at least four ground stone implements coinciding with the quantities of worked ballast flint. Two pestle fragments, one made of quartzite and a much larger one made of granite, have been recovered (FIG. 16). At least one nutting stone or grinder has also been identified. The fourth tool is a possible hammerstone. Shaped like a celt, the bulbous end tapers down to a flattened narrower end. One side of the narrow end and the tip show extensive battering from repeated striking (FIG. 17). The bulbous end and sides of the object also exhibit evidence for battering, but not to the

Figure 16. Granite pestle fragment from bone layer in Feature 221.

Figure 17. Possible ground hammerstone (13.7 cm in length).

extent found around the narrower end. Also of interest is staining on the side of the object opposite the heavily battered side, both near the bulbous and narrow ends. It is possible this is related to gripping the object the same way for repeated use. One suggestion for the tool's use would be as a hammerstone for lithic tool production as the shape, wear pattern and size are similar to ones used by modern flintknappers (Whittaker 1994: 87).

Conclusion

The material culture recovered from the provisioning era of Sylvester Manor increasingly points to an amalgamation of at least two cultures residing and interacting in the same space. This interaction resulted not only in materially mixed assemblages but also in blending of resources, technologies, and stylistic elements in several classes of artifacts. However, the incredibly mixed nature of the

17th-century deposits hinders our ability to make definitive statements concerning which cultural group or groups used these materials. Mixed in with materials often associated with European habitation, such as lead-glazed earthenwares, iron nails, locks, hinges, and bricks, we have encountered large quantities of Native American ceramics, copper beads, a pierced thimble, and evidence for a continuing lithic tradition. While this mixture obviously points toward at least two cultural groups in contact, it is the idiosyncratic items in these assemblages, items that have been altered or produced outside the norm, which speak the loudest concerning intense cultural interactions at Sylvester Manor. Objects such as the handled pots from Feature 221 represent a blending of Native American and European styles that occur only during sustained interactions between cultural groups, thereby creating a creolized material culture. Other objects, such as etched and pierced coins, pierced thimbles, and utilized scrap copper, are particularly evocative of making European materials "function in another register" where one group has replaced an object's intended meaning or function with one more compatible with their traditional practices (de Certeau 1984: 32). For Native American inhabitants this act of cultural reproduction may have helped to cope with the rapid influx of European material, possible incorporation into a plantation labor system, and even relationships that may have created culturally mixed households. The latter is a tantalizing option, but difficult to substantiate without documentary evidence or areas of primary residence. What does seem clear is that the presence of these mixed deposits strongly suggests that Native American laborers were a prominent fixture on the early landscape of Sylvester Manor.

References

- Alexander, L.T.
 1983 Clay Tobacco Smoking Pipes from the Caleb Pusey House. In *The Archaeology of the Clay Tobacco Pipe VIII: America*, ed. by Peter Davey, 195–233. BAR International Series No. 175.
- Beaudry, Mary C.
 1980 Spoons from the Burr's Hill Collection. In *Burr's Hill, A 17th Century Wampanoag Burial Ground in Warren, Rhode Island*, ed. by Susan G. Gibson, 72–77. The Haffenreffer

- Museum of Anthropology, Brown University, Providence.
- Beaudry, Mary C., Janet Long, Henry M. Miller, Fraser D. Neiman, and Garry W. Stone
1983 A Vessel Typology for Early Chesapeake Ceramics: The Potomac Typological System. *Historical Archaeology* 17(1): 18–43.
- Bradley, Charles S.
2000 Smoking Pipes for the Archaeologist. In *Studies in Material Culture Research*, Karlis Karklins editor, 104–134, The Society for Historical Archaeology, California, PA.
- Bradley, James W.
1987 *Evolution of the Onondaga Iroquois: Accommodating Change, 1500–1655*. Syracuse University Press, Syracuse.
- Bradley, James W. and Gordon DeAngelo
1981 European Clay Pipe Marks from 17th Century Onondaga Iroquois Sites. *Archaeology of Eastern North America* 9: 109–33.
- Bradley, Robert L. and Helen B. Camp
1994 *The Forts of Pemaquid, Maine: An Archaeological and Historical Study*. Occasional Publications in Maine Archaeology Number Ten, Augusta, Maine.
- Bragdon, Kathleen J.
1996 *Native People of Southern New England*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK.
- Brown, Kristine N.
1998 Archaeology and Spirituality: The Conjuror/Midwife and the Praise House/Church at the Levi Jordan Plantation. Paper presented at the annual meetings of the Society of Historical Archaeology, Atlanta, GA.
- de Certeau, Michel
1984 *The Practice of Everyday Life*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Deagan, Kathleen
2003 Colonial Origins and Colonial Transformations in Spanish America. *Historical Archaeology*, 37(4): 3–14.
- Dilliplane, Timothy L.
1980 European Trade Kettles. In *Burr's Hill, A 17th Century Wampanoag Burial Ground in Warren, Rhode Island*, ed. by Susan G. Gibson, 79–83. The Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, Brown University, Providence.
- Faulkner, Alaric and Gretchen Faulkner
1987 *The French at Pentagoet, 1635–1674: An Archaeological Portrait of the Acadian Frontier*. Special Publications of the New Brunswick Museum and Occasional Publications in Maine Archaeology, Augusta, Maine.
- Foutch, Amy
2004 Shelltopia, Mortar, Wampum, Too Many Snails, & \$50 Worth of Pennies: An Analysis of the Shell Assemblage at Sylvester Manor. REU report submitted to the Andrew Fiske Center for Archaeological Research, University of Massachusetts Boston.
- Gibson, Susan G.
1980 *Burr's Hill, A 17th Century Wampanoag Burial Ground in Warren, Rhode Island*. The Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, Brown University, Providence.
- Groce, Nora
1980 Ornaments of Metal: Rings, Medallions, Combs, Beads and Pendants. In *Burr's Hill, A 17th Century Wampanoag Burial Ground in Warren, Rhode Island*, ed. by Susan G. Gibson, 108–118. The Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, Brown University, Providence.
- Hayes, Katherine Howlett
2005 Ballast Flint and Bottle Glass: Intersections of Lithic Analyses and Colonial Archaeology. Paper presented at the annual meetings of the Society for American Archaeology, Salt Lake City, Utah.
- Hoffman, Curtiss R.
1991 *A Handbook of Indian Artifacts from Southern New England*. Revised from the original text by William S. Fowler, Massachusetts Archaeological Society Special Publication #4.
- Huey, Paul Robert
1988 *Aspects of Continuity and Change in Colonial Dutch Material Culture at Fort Orange, 1624–1664*. Ph.D Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania.
- Karklins, Karlis
1983 Dutch Trade Beads in North America. In *Proceedings of the 1982 Glass Trade Bead Conference*, 111–126. Rochester Museum and Science Center, Rochester, NY.
- 1985 Early Amsterdam Trade Beads. *Ornament*, 9(2): 36–42.
- Kidd, Kenneth E. and Martha A. Kidd
1983 A Classification System for Glass Beads for the Use of Field Archaeologists. In *Proceedings of the 1982 Glass Trade Bead Conference*, 219–

256. Rochester Museum and Science Center, Rochester, NY.
- Leone, Mark P. and Gladys-Marie Fry
- 1999 Conjuring in the Big House Kitchen: An Interpretation of African-American Belief Systems Based on the Uses of Archaeology and Folklore Sources. *Journal of American Folklore*, 112(445): 372–403
- Maryland Archaeological Conservation Lab
- 2002 Diagnostic Artifacts in Maryland, Historic Ceramics in Maryland. Electronic document, <http://www.jefpat.org/diagnostic/HistoricCeramicWebPage/HistoricMain.htm>.
- Noël Hume, Ivor
- 2001 *If These Pots Could Talk*. Chipstone Foundation, Milwaukee, WI.
- Oswald, Adrian
- 1975 *Clay Pipes for the Archaeologist*. British Archaeological Reports 14. Truexpress, Oxford.
- Pearce, Jacqueline
- 1992 *Post-Medieval Pottery in London, 1500–1700, Vol. 1, Border Wares*. HMSO, London.
- Purvey, P. Frank
- 1984 *Coins of England and the United Kingdom: Standard Catalogue of British Coins, Vol.1, 20th edition*. Seaby, Essex, England.
- Rouse, Irving
- 1945 Styles of Pottery in Connecticut. *Bulletin of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society* 7: 1–18.
- Russell, Aaron E.
- 1997 Material Culture and African American Spirituality at the Hermitage. *Historical Archaeology*, 31: 63–80.
- Salwen, Bert
- 1966 European Trade Goods and the Chronology of the Fort Shantok Site. *Archaeological Society of Connecticut Bulletin*, 34: 7–36.
- Saville, Foster
- 1920 A Montauk Cemetery at Easthampton, Long Island. *Indian Notes and Monographs*, 2(3). Reprinted in *The History and Archaeology of the Montauk*, ed. by Gaynell Stone (1993), 615–628. Readings in Long Island Archaeology and Ethnohistory, Suffolk County Archaeological Association, Mattituck NY.
- Silliman, Stephen W.
- 2004 *Lost Laborers in Colonial California: Native Americans and the Archaeology of Rancho Petaluma*. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.
- Stone, Lyle M.
- 1974 *Fort Michilimackinac 1715–1781: An Archaeological Perspective on the Revolutionary Frontier*. Publications of the Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing.
- Van Dongen, Alexandra
- 1996 “The Inexhaustable Kettle”: The Metamorphosis of a European Utensil in the World of the North American Indians. In *One Man’s Trash is Another Man’s Treasure*, Exhibit/Collection catalog, 115–173. Museum Boymans–van Beuningen, Rotterdam.
- Whittaker, John C.
- 1994 *Flintknapping: Making and Understanding Stone Tools*. University of Texas Press, Austin.
- Wilcoxon, Charlotte
- 1987 *Dutch Trade and Ceramics in America in the Seventeenth Century*. Albany Institute of History and Art, Albany, NY.
- Wilkie, Laurie A.
- 1997 Secret and Sacred: Contextualizing the Artifacts of African-American Magic and Religion. *Historical Archaeology*, 31(4): 81–106.
- Williams, Lorraine Elise
- 1973 *Fort Shantok and Fort Corchaug: A Comparative Study of Seventeenth Century Culture Contact in the Long Island Sound Area*. Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, UMI.
- Jack Gary currently holds the position of director of archaeology and landscapes at Thomas Jefferson’s Poplar Forest in Bedford County, Virginia. He is presently leading the investigation to reveal the multitude of plantation buildings that once surrounded Jefferson’s private retreat home. Gary received his B.A. in anthropology from the College of William and Mary and an M.A. in Historical Archaeology from the University of Massachusetts Boston.
- Jack Gary
Thomas Jefferson’s Poplar Forest
P.O. Box 419
Forest, VA 24551
jack@poplarforest.org