ARTIFACTS OF AMBITION: HOW THE 17TH-CENTURY MIDDLE CLASS AT PORT ROYAL, JAMAICA, FORESHADOWED THE CONSUMER REVOLUTION

A Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

Artifacts of Ambition: How the Seventeenth-Century Middle Class at Port Royal Foreshadowed the Consumer Revolution (May 2004)

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On June 7th, 1692, a devastating earthquake struck the English colonial trading city of Port Royal Jamaica, causing two-thirds of the city to sink beneath Kingston Harbor. This study utilizes artifacts recovered by the Institute of Nautical Archaeology at Texas A&M University during more than a decade of underwater excavations at Port Royal, combined with a study of probate inventories and other primary documents. It is argued that the people of Port Royal were utilizing conspicuous display of luxury items as a strategy for social and economic advancement, and that the degree of luxury consumption evident at Port Royal was not matched among comparable wealth groups in England or the Chesapeake for another twenty to forty years. This study asserts that particular social contexts and unique historical circumstances at Port Royal facilitated the early adoption of consumerist behaviors, and that the identification of these factors provides important insight into the circumstances surrounding the later adoption of these behaviors throughout the English-colonial world, in the seminal cultural shift scholars have termed the consumer revolution.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In the English colonial city of Port Royal, Jamaica, a man named William Smith died of causes unknown in April of 1688. Smith was a small-time merchant who left an estate valued at just £62, the vast majority (£48) of which was in ready cash on hand at the time of his death. The small accounting of the remaining £14 worth of his personal effects, however, included "2 suits of clothes w/ shooes stockings a hatt & other appurtences", as well as 11 neck clothes, two pair neck ruffles, two green silk handkerchiefs, a set of silver shirt buttons, a silver tobacco stopper, and a silver studded case watch (Archives of Jamaica, Vol. 3, folio 318). That so much of his meager personal wealth was tied up in expensive, or at least fashionable, items is interesting given his lack of personal wealth. Perhaps Smith perceived that to achieve success, it was necessary to portray the image of a successful merchant in order to attract business. If this were the entire story, the fashionable personal items in Smith's probate inventory might be explained simply as natural consequence of the public, and possibly image-dependant, nature of the business he was in.

But what, then, are we to make of Charles Newell? Newell's occupation was listed as sea captain when he died at Port Royal worth just over £67 in 1690, but despite his modest estate he must have cut a dashing figure when he chose, given his "speckled

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This dissertation follows the style of *Historical Archaeology*.

stuffe coate & silk pr of breeches... 1 callico sash... Two pr of silk hose & 2 pr thred ditto... 1 silver hilted sword... 1 other silver hilted sword... 1 silver headed cane... 2 pr gold buttons". The Captain may also have entertained in some style, though on a small scale, with "silver spoones weighing 5 oz 1d weight... 3 Dishes and 6 plates of pewter... 1 Brass candlestick... 9 napkins & 1 table cloth" (Archives of Jamaica, 1690, Vol. 3, Fol. 309-310).

Nor were small assortments of luxuries confined to merchants or sea captains. George Diggins, a poor carpenter whose estate was valued at a meager £18 at the time of his death in 1690, chose at some point to purchase, "seaven silver spoons... one silver caine... a looking glass..." (Archives of Jamiaca, 1690, Vol.3, Fol. 326). Another Port Royal man, William Belsher, died in 1689 worth just over £40, yet his small inventory included "Two setts gold buttons and four gold rings... three silver shoo buckells... two cravats & six white Allejarr shirts... a suite of cloths... two paire silk stockings" (Archives of Jamaica, 1689, Vol.3, Fol. 297).

Women of low to middling economic standing also appear to have valued "niceties". Darcas Dayly, listed as "Port Royal Widow" in the archives, died in 1687 with an inventory valued at £57. Among her possessions were "one looking glass... 1 lining pettycoatte... 3 rufled holland wastecoats... a Silver porringer and silver spoons of 11 oz... 3 small gold rings and one old gold necklase" (Archives of Jamaica, 1687, Vol.3, Fol. 4). Another Port Royal widow, Dorothy Richardson, was the wife of a deceased tavern keeper whose estate, not including small sundry debts owed to her, was valued at £82 when she died in December of 1687. The first part of her inventory lists

items associated with the tavern trade, including quantities of rum, tables, cane chairs, and "old Table Lynnen". Yet items which appear to have been inventoried in her personal living area included "2 small looking glasses… 1 spice box… 1 small feather bedd boulster 10 pillows one pr of callico curtains with a beddstead & rodds… 1 callico gown & silke petticoate… 1 small glass case a little box & small gilded trunk… Brass candlesticks… 6 silver spoones…1 silver cupp… 2 pr of gold buttons" (Archives of Jamaica, 1687, Vol. 3, Fol.54-55).

There are several important commonalities shared by the people whose inventories are noted above. All of them died in the English city of Port Royal, Jamaica in the late 1680's or early 1690's, and all left estates valued at less than £100. Their relatively modest personal wealth, or their known occupations (small-time merchant, carpenter, tavern-keeper's wife), places them far below the elite, both of their local society and of the broader English society of which Port Royal was a distant outpost. Also, despite relatively modest wealth and position each chose to purchase, at some point in their lives, multiple items that can accurately be described as non-utilitarian luxuries.

To the modern eye, the presence of a few small items of gold, silk handkerchiefs, fancy clothes, mirrors, or even a few silver trinkets, does not appear especially discordant even in the possession of people of rather modest standing such as these. After all, in the mind of the modern consumer everyone needs a few luxuries, and we all enjoy dressing up once in a while. The problem, however, is that according to historians and archaeologists, people of low to middling economic and social standing

should not have been behaving this way in the 1680's and early 1690's. As will be discussed later, the consensus among scholars who have studied consumer behavior in England and the colonies is that widespread middle class consumption of non-utilitarian consumer goods did not begin until sometime between 1720 and 1740. In short, the Port Royalites of modest means discussed above should not have been purchasing such items en-mass for another 30 to 50 years.

If this were simply a question of minor geographic or temporal variations in the rise of the consumption of certain items, such a gap could be dismissed as trivial, merely a case of historical hair-splitting. What does it matter if a certain group of people in a certain place were buying luxuries a few decades before their peers in the rest of English society? It matters, in brief, because within these behaviors lies the origins of profoundly transforming events in western history. The rise of consumerist behaviors is implicated in the rise of international trade, and the establishment of a global economy based on capitalism. Profound changes in social behavior were created, and in many ways actively negotiated, through the use of items as social tools, permanently altering how people related to each other and how they conceived of their place and prospects within society. Consumer items served as a medium cross-cultural exchange of ideas and concepts, shaped economic trends, and began to be deployed by individuals in a most deliberate way to pursue personal strategies of advancement. The rise in consumer behavior permanently altered concepts of individualism and identity formation, particularly affecting how those concepts were expressed on a daily basis. Ultimately, the consumer revolution gave rise to our modern world of mass-

consumption and fashion change, and the intense demand for goods it created spurred, during the 18th century, another profoundly transforming event in human history: the Industrial Revolution.

Neil McKendrick initiated an intense and ongoing scholarly inquiry into the origins of consumer behavior in the 17th and 18th centuries with *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (1982). McKendrick began with the idea that traditional scholarship of the Industrial Revolution essentially concentrated on supply-side events, emphasizing especially technological innovations and organizational improvements in production. He argued that changes in means or methods of production are only economically beneficial when there is sufficient demand to make such changes profitable, and the important place to look for causal factors for such economic or technological change is within the society itself; in this case, specific changes in consumer tastes and preferences (McKendrick *et al* 1982:3-18). McKendrick's basic thesis was that an important change in social behavior was expressed through changes in consumption patterns, and that this social change, termed the "consumer revolution", predated and was an essential impetus for the Industrial Revolution in England.

This work underscored the importance of research into the rise of consumer behavior in England and its colonies. Even taking into account revisionist historical scholarship of the Industrial Revolution, which asserts a broader time frame and somewhat less "revolutionary" status than traditional scholarship has maintained, the event, no matter how it is defined, is nonetheless one of the most important and transforming events in the course of human history (McKendrick 1982: 9). In fact, this

social transformation of behavior laid the groundwork not only for the industrial revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries, but also for the permanent state of technological innovation and fashion change of our modern world, what one researcher describes as "a permanent revolution of revolutions" (Adshead 1997:30). For this reason, understanding the nature and origins of the consumer revolution proceeding and contributing directly to this immense change is clearly a research topic of some importance. The key questions, therefore, revolve around who was consuming (in terms of social or economic standing in society), what were they consuming, when and where did people first adopt such practices on a large scale, and why did people who previously had not behaved this way begin to do so.

The purpose of this research is to address these questions through an examination of the English colonial city of Port Royal, Jamaica, in the decade leading up to its destruction in a massive earthquake in 1692. Port Royal, as a catastrophic archaeological site with an array of surviving primary documentation, offers a unique opportunity to address the weaknesses and ambiguities inherent in the data used in many archaeological and historical examinations of the consumer revolution. This research asserts that Port Royal, and potentially other colonial urban trade centers as well, played an important early role in the development of consumer behavior in the middle class throughout England and the colonies, a role that has been previously overlooked.

CHAPTER II
THE STATE OF THE QUESTION

A fundamental task of the archaeologist, and perhaps *the* fundamental task, is to explore and explain the relationships between the material items that are recovered from the archaeological record and the human beings who produced, used, and discarded them. The broad trend in recent human history has manifestly been one of increasing technological, societal, and economic complexity through time. Concomitantly, the spectrum of material culture found within a given society has also grown more varied and complex in recent history, and so, in turn, has the relationship(s) of the people within a particular society to those items. In America, the discipline of historical archaeology takes as its task the archaeological and documentary study of societies after European contact (Deagan 1996:16-18), so historical archaeologists face perhaps the most difficult task of all archaeologists in this regard. The effort to infer context-specific social meanings from a vast array of material items from the historic period, each potentially containing multiple layers of significance within the social milieu in which they operated historically, is daunting at best. One of the most profound and vexing questions that can be asked of archaeological materials from the historic period is simply: why did someone choose this particular item and what did it mean to them?

Given that 100 years of scholarly study of consumer behavior theory has been produced since Simmel (1904) first elaborated the trickle down theory of fashion change, incorporating the works of sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists,

historians and economists, a thorough review of the past 100 years of consumer scholarship is outside the scope of this work. The present discussion concentrates on concepts and theories, especially those pertaining to historical archaeological study, that are directly relevant to understanding modern scholarship's conception of the consumer revolution, and the place of the artifact assemblage recovered from Port Royal within that milieu.

MATERIAL CULTURE

Few things illustrate more clearly the nascent stage of development of the discipline of historical archaeology than the divergent, and often contradictory, ways in which historical archaeologists deal with the interpretation of the small, broken bits of things they retrieve from the earth. Something as simple as a fragment of a ceramic plate can be interpreted by archaeologists as, variously, (1) the product of an essentially capitalist system of international trade and resource exploitation dependant upon and controlled by economically powerful nations (Wallerstein 1976; South 1977), (2) an ideological tool of class domination used to naturalize the subordination of the less powerful (Leone 1988), (3) as an expression of resistance to prevailing dominant ideologies and an assertion of individuality in the face of economic and/or social inequality (Cook 1989), (4) a culturally derived "text" which should be "read" within its particular historical context through a nexus of interrelated meanings (Hodder 1991), (5) the product of a specific historical cultural mindset (Deetz 1977), (6) or as simply a

fragment of a plate. Many other interpretations exist as well, and few of them are mutually exclusive, opening even wider vistas of possibility.

When archaeologists refer to objects they find in the ground, they do not merely refer to those things as "material". Instead, such items are referred to as "material culture" to denote a special quality inherent in all things produced by humans. The acts of production, use, and even discard, are all predicated on, or are expressions of, cultural values. However, as the multitude of potential interpretive avenues of inquiry discussed above indicates, material culture is a distinctly difficult subject for study and interpretation. This is, in part, because of the dualistic nature of material culture; it is both functional and symbolic.

On the one hand, the fact that most items have a utilitarian function, a specific purpose for which they were produced and used, may mean that in the eyes of those using the item, it has no signification beyond the function which it is intended to perform. A fence post, for instance, may have no other meaning to those putting it up than the fact that it is a fencepost. In this way, the cultural meaning embodied in an object is essentially behavioral, rather than semiotic (Adshead 1997:5-6). On the other hand, symbolic qualities may very well be inherent in most objects, at least when understood within specific cultural contexts. In the aforementioned example, the simple fencepost might, in fact, signify concepts of ownership, protection of private property, or even physical or social barriers intended to exclude and include different economic, social or racial groups.

The text metaphor has often been invoked as an analogy for understanding this aspect of material culture. Drawn initially from Clifford Geertz, who in his now famous description of a Balinese cockfight likened what he saw, and indeed all of human culture, to "an assemblage of texts" (Geertz 1973:448), the use of text as a metaphor for culture has branched off in multiple theoretical directions in anthropology. In general, however, it has been linked to both a rejection of the concept of scientific objectivity, and to a desire to gain a humanistic understanding of the subject under study (Clifford and Marcus 1986). More recently it has served as a major basis for Foucaltian discourse analysis, where people are viewed as "sites of ideological discourse, in other words, bundles of texts" (Triton 1995:435-439). In this view, the mind of each person is made up of masses of competing, and often contradictory texts which coalesce to form ideologies. Because all texts are an endlessly self-referent circle (only deriving meaning or defined in relation to other texts), the very act of attempting to study culture means that such a study will inevitably be merely a statement of a particular individual ideology, and can have no claim to authority or authenticity beyond the person who created it (Triton 1995).

Though it is not the purpose of this present work to discuss the implications of the extreme postmodern critique, this research has been conducted from the standpoint that an actual historical reality once existed, independent of the locus of the minds of researchers. Though objectivity and demonstrable accuracy of claims made about the past will always be difficult to achieve given the extraordinary complexity of human behavior and culture, it is a reasonable goal to attempt to understand what happened in

the past, and why, as best we can from the far remove of the present. As historian Woodruff D. Smith has noted:

> [To] some critics, ...what passes for causal explanation in history is usually a myth, often derived from the system of power relations that obtains in the society of the interpreter [and thus] such myths can never be objectively accurate. Comprehensive, objective, "scientific" understanding of historical causation and change may be impossible, but there is no reason that we should not try to understand in part, to make tentative approximations. That, after all, is what science actually does, and at least historians are not required to frame their results in the rather awkward form of general laws. As long as we understand the problematical character of what we are doing, the effort to extract understanding of causation in history is not completely different from our efforts to understand anything else. (Smith 2002:11-12)

In terms of the present study, it is also considered problematic to regard material culture as directly analogous with texts or human language. For example, some of the signs of material culture are much clearer or more direct than either text or language has the power to evoke, such as physical properties of form, shape, or an infinite variety of colors. But while its visible and tactile properties can be far more complex, and hence form a more comprehensive specific "sign" of a particular object, than language could possibly describe, the object's symbolic meanings are often far less clear than meanings or concepts evoked by written or spoken texts. As Adshead has noted, "...the disjunction between authorial intention, artwork and audience, is wider than it is in texts" (Adshead 1997:5). Thus a single object could theoretically take on such an enormous variety of symbolisms, either as regards the intent of the producer, the intentions or values of the user, or those of various audiences viewing the item, that

attempting to understand it even within a specific historical context has the potential to spin off uncontrollably in an infinite number of potential "meanings".

The study of the contextual meanings of material culture is brought back to the realm of the possible by a particular property of culture; the fact that at some point is it must be *shared* to be part of a "culture", or more accurately, cultural knowledge. Though on an individual level the variety of meanings carried within a single object might well be infinite, those that should concern us most are those that were broadly understood within their particular historical cultural context and which, therefore, may reflect broad societal ideas and trends. In fact, if an object is to be intentionally used to convey specific social messages, the symbolism or meanings to be communicated must not be lost on the intended audience. This is not to say that everyone within a particular culture at a particular time would understand a specific symbolic meaning. In fact, the exclusionary aspect of certain symbols only enhances their effectiveness to a small, intended audience. It is to say, however, that if we are to identify particular culturally understood meanings resident in artifacts, those meanings must have been understood broadly enough, at least by an intended audience, to have fulfilled the user's purpose to such a degree he or she would choose to purchase that item.

CONSUMPTION

Humans are, and always have been, users of the material world, in the sense that they manipulate the material world for their own purposes. The most obvious examples would be food, water, and shelter. The term consumer, however, implies both the use

of something that was deliberately produced for a particular purpose, and a conscious choice in making and/or acquiring that item. In this sense, humans have been what might be termed "simple consumers", or even "utilitarian consumers", ever since the Neolithic revolution and perhaps even earlier.

However, the kind of consumption which interests us here is the deliberate procurement of items not solely for their utilitarian function, but additionally for their cultural value within that particular cultural milieu, and hence for their perceived symbolic qualities. In this manner, historians (Adshead 1997, and Weatherill 1988, for example) use the term "consumerists", which denotes a qualitative and quantitative difference from the simple or utilitarian consumer discussed above. Some historians use the term "consumer culture" to denote essentially the same thing (see essays in Berg and Clifford 1999).

> Consumerism connotes a different state of affairs: one where consumers follow a scale of values and where production is shaped by those values. Consumerism was not necessarily materialistic. On the contrary, it was the imposition on material processes on non-material values. It was an extension of the kingdom of the mind into the realm of commodities (Adshead 1997:24-25).

An essential component, then, is that consumerists made conscious choices on the basis of a sliding scale of cultural values, derived in part from the increasing importance of fashion and personal identity within their historical cultural milieu (Adshead 1997:26-27). It is important to emphasize and explain two related aspects of this concept. The first is the recognition on the part of historians and archaeologists that

in terms of English culture, the phenomenon of asserting social identity through the deliberate use of material culture symbols intensified dramatically between 1600 and 1800 (Carson 1994). Consumerism as a phenomenon grew, from a practice confined essentially to a relatively small elite, to a broader-scale phenomenon that included larger portions of the society; indeed, by 1800, likely including the whole of English and English colonial society to varying degrees. There is much disagreement, however, as to when this shift occurred, and this aspect will be addressed in the following section.

The second aspect to note is that consumerism often (though not always) implies short-term consumption for self, as opposed to long-term consumption for posterity or family use. By definition, buying something which has an immediate cultural currency, in terms of being a "fashionable" symbol presently understood by an intended audience, means its primary value may also be a transient value, since fashions change. A good example is the eclipse of the value of "patina" in material possessions in a consumerist society.

McCracken (1988) has noted established English families in the early modern period valued "patina" in material culture, a concept used to describe the worn or aged appearance of items that had obviously been in a particular family for a long time. Patina was linked with the practice of buying items with the intention of passing those items, as well as the investment they represented, on to subsequent generations of family members. McCracken notes the value of patina as an effective gate-keeper among the elite, forming a clear marker of aged stability, material wealth, and family establishment, and linked to the "five generation" rule of respectability among the elite,

it effectively limited the ability of those possessing newly-acquired wealth to enter long established hierarchies and social circles. Indeed, McCracken makes the case that one of the most revolutionary aspects of the rise in consumerist behavior is the replacement of the concept of patina by the practice of fashionable, or fashion-oriented consumption, among the elite, especially the newfound necessity to keep pace with the hectic and changing pace of the latest trends as a new determinant of respectability (McCracken 1988: 37-40). Thus the consumerist concept includes the practice of shorter-term purchases as opposed (or at least in addition) to long-range investment in material goods, and also emphasizes consumption at least partly on the basis of perceived symbolic power; for what one researcher has describes as the use of items as "social tools" (Carson 1994:556).

It should be noted that some historians feel that it is important to distinguish between production goods and consumption goods when analyzing consumer behavior. Production goods are items that functioned within the realm of activities associated with production, so the purchase of tools required to cultivate and harvest tobacco on a Chesapeake plantation, for example, would be considered a production purchase. Consumer goods, conversely, are sometimes defined as all items associated with daily living, and proponents of this view often use the term consumer durables (Weatherill 1988). However, a slightly narrower definition is also sometimes employed, where consumer goods are simply household furnishings (Walsh 1983). Though this definition has the benefit of grouping artifacts for study into a specific historical use context (within the home) it also potentially excludes items which could reveal the

changes in behavior and use of items as social tools with which we are concerned, such as the purchase of an expensive carriage or a set of bound volumes for display in an office, or expensive plates for a tavern or hotel. In addition, while changes in consumer behavior may be expressed in the purchase of new, or hitherto unusual items in this regard, it may also be expressed through the purchase of exactly the same types of items the household had owned earlier, with the exception that those items are now made from more expensive materials or contain decorative elements which make them more costly. A more thorough discussion of how consumerist behavior may be manifested in the material culture deposited in the archaeological record will be pursued in following chapters.

THE CONSUMER REVOLUTION

In the most direct terms, the "consumer revolution" could potentially be described as the shift from a "simple consumer" to a "consumerist" approach on a large scale, as discussed above. However, the term consumer revolution is perhaps the most contested concept we have yet discussed. Scholars have claimed to have found a "consumer revolution" in 16th-century England (Majurki 1983), 18th-century England (McKendrick *et al* 1982), and 19th-century France (Williams 1982). How one defines the consumer revolution, then, depends greatly on how one chooses to define what qualifies as "consumerist behavior", and how one chooses to define "revolution".

Despite many differences on specific issues, historians and archaeologists have reached a ragged consensus on several facets of the broad phenomenon we are

concerned with here. First, it is generally agreed that for any sweeping change to be considered "revolutionary" it must extend beyond the pale of a relatively small elite to include, to an important degree, some members of the middle class. In the case of the consumer revolution, this is due to the fact that conspicuous consumption and changing fashion were present, to varying degrees and in certain areas, among the elite of England long before the 18th century. McCracken, for instance, notes that seasonally changing fashion in clothing, considered a key indicator by several researchers (McKendrick *et al* 1982; McCracken 1988; Williams, 1982) was clearly evidenced in certain circles of the English elite at least as far back as the 16th century, and describes how Queen Elizabeth I inspired and virtually demanded nearly ruinous display expenditures by members of the nobility seeking her favor in the highly ceremonial court of the late 1500's (McCracken 1988:612). Other researchers note examples of a rise in conspicuous consumption in elite circles in England at various times during the 17th century, but hesitate to ascribe 'revolutionary' status to the behavior until it began to affect larger numbers of people, primarily the middle class (Carson 1994; Shammas 1990; Weatherill 1988). Thus, for most researchers, the actions of the middle class are the key indicator of broad social change, crucial in terms of the breadth and depth of the phenomenon necessary to describe any change as "revolutionary".

Second, most researchers seem to agree that McKendrick's time frame places undue emphasis on the late 18th century, concentrating as he does on fully expressed manifestations of middle class consumption rather than on smaller scale, earlier manifestations of that same behavior. Though disagreement abounds, it is now

generally believed that the middle class in England and her colonies began to think and act like conspicuous consumers, that is, to purchase more elaborate or expensive items not merely for their utilitarian value but as "social tools" to convey specific messages about their owners, sometime between about 1710 to 1740.

There is much disagreement, however, as to the exact time frame. For example, Lorna Weatherill has done extensive research into the question of the rise in consumerist behavior in England, using more than 3,000 probate inventories from eight different parts of England taken during the period of 1675-
Weatherill documented the expansion of ownership, into the middling ranks, of four categories of consumer goods; (1) larger numbers or increasing frequencies of previously known items, (2) the expansion of previously known but unusual items, (3) the expansion extremely rare items, and (4) the appearance of new items (Weatherill 1988:27-29). In terms of the timing of these phenomenon, on the basis of her research Weatherill concludes that the decade of 1705-1715 was the most significant period in terms of broad change in the material culture of English households (Weatherill 1988: 40), and notes that although hints of consumer behavior appear in the late 17th century "...the 'consumerist' approach is not so appropriately applied either to the earlier period or to the bulk of the middle ranks" during the 17th century (Weatherill 1988:16).

Similarly, archaeologist Paul Shackel has noted what he considers to be solid evidence for the rise of consumer behavior at roughly the same time in the colonial Chesapeake, placing the advent of a consumer revolution in the Chesapeake between 1710 and 1720 (Shackel 1992:213). Historian Cary Carson, in his seminal essay titled

"The Consumer Revolution in Colonial British America: Why Demand?" (1994), describes a broad time frame for the rise in consumerist behavior. He notes an evident rise in elite 'consumerist' behavior post 1660, but asserts that this behavior does not fully involve the middle class until the 1730's and 1740's (Carson 1994: 504).

Historians Lois G. Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, based on 7,500 inventories from the colonial Chesapeake, note that while the elite of Chesapeake society often owned a few significantly different items than their middling and poorer neighbors by 1700 (Carr and Walsh 1994: 65), it wasn't until 1730's and 1740's that the acquisition of amenities by the middling ranks really began to expand (Carr and Walsh 1994: 70). Anne Yentch (1990, 1991) argues for significant change in foodways between 1700 and 1730, noting a major shift towards individualized servings of food and drink based on colonial Chesapeake ceramic assemblages (Yentch 1990:35), shifts linked directly to the behavioral changes which concern core issues of consumer behavior. Anne Smart Martin (1994) notes an early 18th-century fashion quest among elite, but concentrates on the competitive aspect of fashionable consumption among the middle class, placing the significant rise in the changing pace of consumption later, after mid-century. Archaeologist John Bedell, based on a composite study of 21 excavated sites from 18th-century Delaware, notes an increase in consumer items among the middling farmers in this region increasing after about 1740 (Bedell, 2001: 95,100).

The general consensus of most researchers, then, is that at some time between about 1710 and 1740, people in the middling ranks of England and wider English colonial society first began to purchase consumer items previously associated almost

exclusively with a narrow elite, and to conceive of and use material culture as social tools for their own particular ends. This movement spread increased in both scope and pace by the third quarter of the 18th century to include not just the middle ranks, who were engaged in consumerist behaviors to a significant degree by this time, but also appears to have begun to effect consumption within the lower ranks of society.

APPROACHES TO CONSUMERISM

Within the study of the material culture of the historic period, the figure of the conspicuous consumer and the notion of aggressive emulation as a driving force behind the acquisition of material goods both have a long history, and loom large even in recent scholarship. The term "conspicuous consumption" was coined by Thorstein Veblen (1912) in his strident critique of the behaviors of the privileged few who found themselves at the top of the capitalist economic pyramid in the wake of the Industrial Revolution. In "The Theory of the Leisured Class" (1912) Veblen described the process by which society's elite used material goods to establish their dominance over their social and economic inferiors, and to advance their personal interests and reputations among their peers. In explaining his idea of conspicuous consumption, Veblen noted:

> The canon of reputability is at hand and seizes upon such innovations as are, according to its standard, fit to survive. Since the consumption of these more excellent goods is an evidence of wealth, it becomes honorific; and conversely, the failure to consume in due quantity and quality becomes a mark of inferiority and demerit. (Veblen 1934: 35)

Both Veblen and Simmel (1904) also advanced the idea that social or class competition was the key to understanding what they would have called the fashion phenomenon in complex societies. According to Simmel, the upper classes were the instigators of fashion change, introducing trends that were then copied by the lower classes. Wanting to differentiate themselves from the lower classes, the upper classes then initiated new changes in fashions and the cycle continued (Simmel 1904). Thus the agent for change in this model is the desire of members of the elite to maintain their claim to status among their peers, necessitating that they actively keep up with the latest fashions, emulating new displays of wealth and/or taste among the people with whom they wish to associate. Strivers from the lower classes or differing grades of subordinate groups emulate, to the degree they are financially able, the fashions of the elite thus creating a "trickle-down" of goods and fashions through the society from the top-down (McCracken 1988:18). Veblen noted:

> So soon as the possession of property becomes the basis of popular esteem, therefore, it becomes also a requisite to the complacency which we call self-respect. In any community where goods are held in severalty it is necessary, in order for his own peace of mind, that an individual should possess as large a portion of goods as others with whom he is accustomed to class himself; and it is extremely gratifying to possess something more than others. But as fast as a person makes new acquisitions, and becomes accustomed to the resulting new standard of wealth, the new standard forthwith ceases to afford appreciably greater satisfaction than the earlier standard did. (Veblen 1912:23-24)

Thus, the trickle-down concept of competitive emulation was seen as the engine driving change through time, an idea succinctly summed up as "keeping up with the Joneses" (Weatherill, 1988:194-196). As important as these contributions to the study

consumer behavior theory have been, it is not surprising that subsequent generations of anthropologists, historians, and economists have modified or rejected many of the assumptions implicit in these arguments.

A closely related alternative to the "trickle-down" model discussed above can be termed the "flight and chase" model. In this model, rather than a top-down movement initiated by the elite, it is an aggressive middle class which is the agent for change. By pursuing and co-opting elite consumer goods, aggressive social strivers take on the social props of the elite so successfully that these material symbols are no longer effective distinguishing marks of elite-hood, and thus lose any utility for an elite concerned with maintaining their social distance from the middling sort (McCracken 1988: 93-95). The elite are therefore forced to run off in search of new symbols, pursuing new fashions and styles at an ever-increasing pace through time, chased doggedly by those wishing to join, or at least imitate, their ranks. Though this theory is quite similar to the trickle-down concept, its key distinguishing feature is that change is forced by the actions of an aggressive middle class rather than by a competitive elite.

Though the two models outlined above remain useful, they are by no means exhaustive. Both concentrate, for example, on the use of material items almost exclusively within the realm of status competition, yet as many recent scholars have pointed out, this is only one of numerous potential meanings or uses implicated in the rise of the consumption of consumer goods. In fact, a recurrent theme of recent scholarship has been to question a narrow focus on status alone in favor of theoretical models emphasizing the multiple meanings, symbolisms, and uses artifacts can have in

social behavior (McCracken 1988; Gibb 1996). Indeed, much of this scholarship has successfully made the case for multiple meanings of consumer goods. However, while broadening our understanding of the role of consumer goods within different historical cultural contexts, an unfortunate draw back has been that much of this scholarship often contains, either implicitly or explicitly, one of two primary errors in terms of identifying causal factors. The first has been a reliance upon teleological, or functionalist explanations, while the second has been to confuse the precursors necessary for a behavior to take place with the cause of the rise in that behavior.

In terms of the first error, it is enough to say that simply because a certain practice or behavior comes to play a specific and necessary role within a society over time does not necessarily mean this particular function is the reason such behavior came about in the first place- it must be demonstrated to have come about for such reasons. This mistake is particularly apt when discussing the multiple roles consumption may have played in 17th- and 18th-century English society, and it must be kept in mind that while it is clearly important to delineate the different ways in which consumerism may have operated within that historical context, these roles are not necessarily causal reasons for its rise.

Williams (1982:26-30), for instance, notes that beyond the mere reckoning of status, consumption can be demonstrated to have been used as a political instrument by Louis XIV, a theme also recognized by McCracken (1988:11) in the Elizabethan court. Williams (1982:31-33) also identifies consumption having been used as a tool for improving social harmony based on Elias' notion of the civilizing process. The essence

of this theme is also partially echoed by Anne Bryson in *From Courtesy to Civility* (1998). Bryson notes an important change in the socially constructed and accepted rules of conduct and interaction in early modern Europe. She argues that the concept of civility, a complex notion with many specific components including manners, deportment, and the knowledge of "correct" rules of conduct which eventually came to include highly ritualized codes of conduct in the use of material items, helped ease the transition from the disintegrating concept of a unified Christendom to a more independent, "self-valuing" social system (Bryson 1998: 276-277).

In terms of American society, T.H. Breen has made an argument for the social significance of consumer goods in terms of the coalescence of disparate and different colonies into a single nation. He argues that the broad consumption of consumer goods in the 18th century gave the American colonies a "shared language" which allowed them to think not merely in terms of local or colony specific identification, but to instead conceive of an American nation (Breen 1994:460-461). He asserted that the consumption of goods, and the subsequent effects of English taxation and control of those goods on American colonials, was a rallying and unifying agent, binding together the interests of geographically and politically diverse groups in a manner requisite for a unified revolution against England (Breen 1994:461,481).

James Gibb has articulated a theory of consumer goods that is derived specifically from historical archaeological study of material culture. Gibb argues that it is useful to conceive of the primary "meaning" of items historically in terms of identity formation, reflecting "...the self-perceptions of those households, measurable in terms

of economics, ethnicity, nationalism, and religion" (Gibb 1996:25). Taking a primarily contextualist approach, Gibb argues that all forms of material culture were, in their historical contexts, chosen expressions of wealth in various forms, and hence represent the conscious "...efforts of the household to create and assert its identity on a daily basis" (Gibb 1996: 43).

Consumer goods, then, clearly could have, and likely did, represent a multitude of possible meanings and potential expressions of and by the people who chose to purchase them. However, even in the act of identifying these possible meanings we are still left with the question of how to explain change through time. Eliciting possible social uses for and symbolic meanings of material culture, as noted in the examples from Breen, Williams, and Bryson, still leaves unanswered the primary question of why behaviors associated with those meanings saw such a dramatic expansion, or, conversely, why those meanings were not present earlier to the degree they eventually came to be. If, for example, material goods should be thought of primarily as Gibb asserts, in terms of household level identity creation, how then can we explain the drastic changes in spending habits, the rise of non-utilitarian luxuries, and the proliferation of styles and forms that took place between 1600 and 1800? What caused, suddenly, a need to express one's identity during this time period that was so much greater than in earlier generations that it ultimately took, to paraphrase Cary Carson, an Industrial Revolution to supply the demand?

In terms of the second error, of confusing precursory conditions with causes, multiple preconditions have been identified which were, either wholly or in part,

necessary for or directly implicated in the expansion of consumerist behavior beyond the relatively small pale of a courtly elite. The rise of urbanism and the growing importance of urban centers as centers of social, political, and economic power could clearly be one example. The emergence of chattel slavery and the expansion of conquest colonialism also likely played important roles, as did the establishment of global transportation networks and the concomitant improvements in shipbuilding technology and knowledge of navigation and mapmaking. A slowly rising standard of living throughout the 17th and 18th centuries may also have been an important factor as well, as could the effects of the Protestant reformation on perceptions of individualism. In actuality, all of these may have, and likely did, form a portion of the larger picture of the rise of consumerism.

However, it cannot be assumed that such preconditions actually caused this behavior. Preconditions are not causes, in and of themselves, and must be demonstrated to have been such. If one makes the mistake of assuming that a precondition necessary for a given behavior actually caused that behavior, the historical record is replete with uncomfortable contrary instances calling into question such assumptions. In this case, for example, if one were to argue that a rising standard of living throughout English society caused the consumer revolution by giving people more money to spend on luxuries, one would have to explain the awkward fact that England had been experiencing a slowly rising standard of living since about 1500 (Shammas 1990:2-4; Carson 1994:501). Why, then did the consumer revolution not begin to bloom

throughout the society until the early 18th century, and given this time lag, can a rising standard of living really be considered an adequate explanatory cause?

Additionally, to simply list preconditions as causes in the case of the consumer revolution is to commit the error of viewing luxury consumption as an innate social desire, present in all humans through all time, something that it most certainly was not. The error of viewing past peoples as ready-made consumers, requiring only the means or the availability of luxuries to begin their orgy of spending, is a serious one. As Smith (2002) has noted;

> Status consumption… is not a universal aspect of human life. Status differences have existed in most societies for which there are historical records, but they have been constituted in many different ways and not all of them have involved the kind of consumption as a sign of status that developed in the modern West. (Smith 2002:25-26).

Carson also argues that it is quite wrong to believe the desire for consumer goods is "…intrinsic to the human condition, awaiting only the lifting of demographic, economic, or commercial constraints to achieve some inevitable, natural fulfillment" (Carson 1994:494). Carson provides powerful evidence to the contrary, noting that before people could become consumers, people had to absorb a "radically new way of thinking that deployed personal possessions" (Carson 1994: 502-504, 558) to their chosen social ends, a way of thinking which was alien to all but a privileged elite prior to the consumer revolution.

It is, perhaps, the very difficulty in adequately identifying causality for this complex phenomenon that so many researchers continue to lean heavily upon the classic explanations of fashion change proposed by Veblen and Simmel, and why

versions of trickle-down theory and the flight and chase theory continue to have scholarly currency. McCracken (1982), for instance, published an article titled "The Trickle-Down Theory Rehabilitated" in which he asserts the power of this explanatory framework, though with some modification, for understanding fashion trends even today. Yet even with these two venerable theories, the question remains why drastic change occurred at a particular time, as it clearly did between roughly 1650 and 1750. As Cary Carson has noted:

> There have always been Joneses to keep up with, even in peasant communities. Social upsmanship was nothing new. The real question is why social standing was so suddenly measured not by the number of cows a man owned or his acres of plowland, but by the cut of his coat and the fashionableness of his wife's tea table (Carson 1994:494)

Carson posits perhaps the most compelling causal argument for the sudden rise in consumption produced by modern scholarship to date. In his essay "The Consumer Revolution in Colonial British America: Why Demand?" Carson (1994) argues that an increasing mobility among England's population, especially after 1660, lessened the utility of traditional, locally situated markers of status, such as family name, land, and local reputation. With increasing population movement, "newcomers and travelers inevitably found themselves measured against perfect strangers. Alas, the old yardsticks were nowhere near at hand" (Carson 1994:523). Over time and space, this process, according to Carson, spurred the use of items as tools for negotiating and asserting membership, or aspirations to membership, in particular social groups or classes. Items

previously valued primarily for their utilitarian function became "...badge(s) of membership in class-conscious social groups" (Carson 1994:522).

Carson had a strong impact on recent historical archaeological research, both because of his powerful explanation for change through time, and perhaps because Carson's argument is enhanced by expanding beyond the historian's traditional reliance on documentary sources to incorporate architectural and archaeological data into his research. It is important to note that Carson's argument includes many of the potential meanings of and uses for material culture noted by the authors discussed above. "Badges of membership" are not merely or solely status markers, they incorporate a range of potential meanings and possible intentions on the part of the user, and Carson's explanation actually dovetails nicely with Gibb's concept of items as tools for identity formation and assertion. Carson adds a significant element, however, in his identification of both a motive (membership, in whatever group the aspirant belonged, or wanted to belong to) behind the intentions of the historical participants, as well as a convincing explanation as to why the physical manifestations of this desire would have changed so dramatically at this particular time (the pronounced increase in population movement).

If Carson is correct, and one of the primary engines driving the drastic change in social relations reflected by the consumer revolution was, indeed, an increasing mobility of populations that lessened the utility of traditional markers of membership, then how might such a phenomenon have been manifested "on the ground" in specific circumstances among individuals, and how was this process effected by local

conditions? As noted earlier, the consensus among historians and archaeologists is that such behavior only became adopted by the middle class, and hence attained a broad cultural importance within English society as a whole sometime between 1710 and 1740. This date does not agree particularly well with the evidence from the English colonial trading city of Port Royal, Jamaica.

CHAPTER III
THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PORT ROYAL

The island of Jamaica is a land mass of 4,244 square miles, measuring 102 miles north-south and 294 miles east-west at its farthest points (Figure 3.1). It lies in the Caribbean approximately 97 miles south of Cuba, and 106 miles west by southwest of modern day Haiti. The native peoples of the western West Indies originated in northeastern South America, spreading out into the Antilles sometime around 500 BC, and moving as far north as modern day Puerto Rico. Though referred to as Arawaks in earlier scholarship, archaeologists have now adopted the name Tainos to distinguish them from South American peoples of the same name. For reasons still unknown, an outward migration from Puerto Rico began around 600 AD, and some of these people became the first inhabitants of Jamaica. It should be noted that archaeological investigations of Jamaica's prehistory have been rather scant, and it is entirely possible that future work will eventually push back the presently accepted chronology, which indicates an initial occupation sometime around 650 AD (Keegan 1997:3-28).

European discovery of the island came during the very earliest phases of Spanish colonial voyages of exploration in the new world. Columbus himself first set foot on Jamaica in 1494 during his second voyage and was stranded there on his last voyage in 1504. The island was permanently settled by the Spanish beginning in 1510. For the next 145 years, the Spanish used Jamaica primarily as a supply outpost in the Caribbean. The island was always sparsely settled under the Spanish, and attempts to colonize the

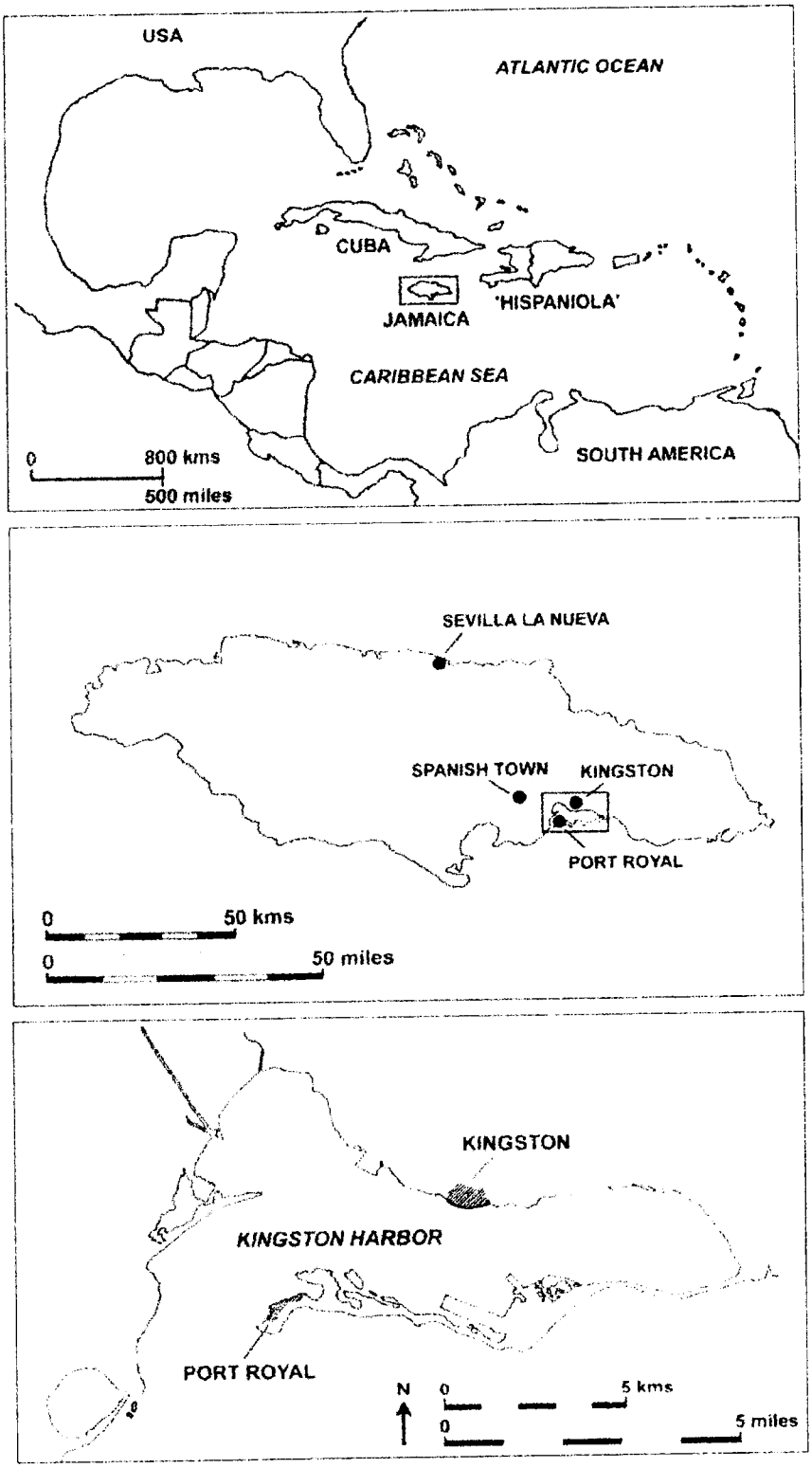

FIGURE 3.1. Location of Port Royal, Jamaica (From Donachie 2001).

interior of the island on a large scale and to develop agricultural products for export never realized their full potential, in part because the native population was wiped out by a combination of European diseases and egregious mistreatment on the part of their Spanish "masters". Thus, Jamaica was of ultimately little economic importance to the Spanish Crown during the period in which it was controlled by Spain (Black 1965: 9-33).

In late 1654, Oliver Cromwell put his "western design" into action, a plan intended to challenge Spanish trade and maritime supremacy in the new world through military force. Cromwell desperately desired an English foothold in the Caribbean, but the expedition which left England in December of 1654 failed miserably in their efforts to take Santo Domingo, the capital city of the island of Hispañola. In part to deflect possible repercussions in England for the debacle on Hispañola, the leaders of the expedition turned their attention to Jamaica, taking the island by force in 1655. The capture of Jamaica was easily accomplished by an English force of more than 8,000 soldiers and sailors, as the total Spanish population on the Island was approximately 1,500, only 500 of which were fit to bear arms at the time of the attack (Dunn 1973:149-155; Black 1965:36-51).

Jamaica was the last English territorial acquisition in the Caribbean during the 17th century, and its long-term development generally emulated the successful model of exploitation already in operation on Barbados, where a cash-crop agricultural pattern

based on sugar and African slaves was firmly established and had proven economically successful (Zahedia 1986:206-208). In the near term, however, privateering played an important role in the development and early history of the Island under English rule.

The French colonial term '*boucan*' was originally adapted from a similar sounding native Carib Indian word referring to the crude wooden frame upon which meats were slow roasted (Black 1965:41). In some parts of the Caribbean, escaped slaves learned, or re-learned, this practice from the Carib natives, and the Spanish translated the same Carib word for the cooking rack as *Barbacoa*, the ancestor of our modern term Barbeque (Mouer 1993:120). The French derived '*boucan*', however, came to have an entirely different meaning, as it was eventually used to denote the outlaw refugees who lived in the backcountry of Hispañola in the early 1600's through the term '*buccaneer*'.

These men, almost literally the detritus of 17th-century European colonialism, were runaway slaves and indentured servants, castaways, runaway sailors, or escaped prisoners, and they originally subsisted by poaching cattle and pigs in the forests of Hispañola and subsequently barbequing them, hence earning their name (Black 1965:41). Attempts by the Spanish authorities to starve them and drive them out resulted in a forced migration from Hispañola to the neighboring island of Tortuga sometime around 1630, but it also established a healthy hatred of their tormentors and a desire for vengeance. Banding together into what they called the "Confederacy of the Brethren of the Coast", their strength slowly grew as they captured Spanish ships and more men swelled their ranks; they proved to be a thorn in the side of the Spanish

crown for decades to come (Briggs 1970:11-13). Their involvement in the early decades of Port Royal shaped much of the character, as well as outsider's perception, of the place.

After the conquest of Jamaica, it was immediately apparent that the primary defensive position for protecting Kingston harbor, and an excellent anchorage and unloading point for trans-Atlantic ships, was a small spit of land projecting from the southeast into the harbor. At the tip of this promontory, construction of "Fort Cromwell" began in 1657, and the small town which quickly grew up around this secure anchorage and unloading point for ocean going vessels was renamed Port Royal after the restoration in 1660 (Pawson and Bruisseret 1974: 10-15).

Expecting that the Spanish would not settle for the loss of such a large holding in the heart of their Caribbean empire, the English administrators, sailors and soldiers who stayed behind after the initial victory quickly grew worried about the possibility of a counter-attack, especially as they witnessed their naval protection wither away to fewer than 10 seaworthy warships in less than a year following the conquest (Pawson and Bruisseret 1974:25). Governor D'Oyley, through communications and means that remain mysterious to this day, contacted some of the Buccaneers and began luring them away from their base in Tortuga beginning sometime in 1657. His bargain was that they would serve as naval protection and a show of force to the Spanish, while the buccaneers would receive access to an excellent and well positioned harbor, be granted "letters of marque" making their activities semi-legal. They wouldhave access to Port Royal as a base for re-supply and refitting, as well as a ready market for their prizes and

plunder (Pawson and Bruisseret 1974:20-27). This tactic was so successful that by 1670, more than 20 pirate vessels and over 2,000 pirate crewmen and associated ships maintenance staff were to be found at Port Royal (Zahedia 1986: 215).

Used initially as a base for raids against the Spanish West Indies and the Spanish Main, Port Royal also offered a safe anchorage and outpost for merchants and traders, though many of these also had more than a tinge of the illicit to them. While the official stance of England, France, and Spain was "no peace beyond the line", and despite the fact that each country enacted legislation limiting or barring altogether any trade with ships or merchants from the other countries during this time period, illicit trade was nonetheless a major component of the overall Caribbean economy (Clifford 1993:37-39). In fact, the de-facto stance of the English, at least as regards Port Royal, was to publicly proclaim peace and a no-trading policy to the Spanish Crown, while privately encouraging, or at least not actively discouraging, the activities of the buccaneers and illegal traders plying the Spanish main. As long as wealth continued to flow into Port Royal, and from thence to England, the reality on the ground at Port Royal was that official English laws regarding trade and/or piracy were, especially in the early years, rather malleable.

The Spanish attempted to supply most of their colonial holdings via large supply fleets from Seville and Cadiz (Zahedia 1986:572). However, bureaucratic inefficiency and a total inability to keep up with the needs of their colonies over time through this mechanism, coupled with their strict monopolization policy of refusing to legalize trade with merchants from other countries, pushed the door wide open for merchants and

traders from Port Royal. Spanish haciendas and plantations in Cuba and the Spanish Main were ready targets for the "coasters", a fleet of sloops based at Port Royal that were small enough to wend their way along coastlines without attracting much attention and could discreetly land in 'friendly' ports or small inlets to discharge their cargos (Zahedia 1986:579-582).

The desperate needs of Spanish colonists for basic commodities translated into huge profits for English traders willing to take the risk. Clifford notes that large quantities of foodstuffs, beverages, naval stores, arms, as well as a wide variety of consumer durables including cloth, clothing, earthenware, furniture, tools, cooking implements, glass wares, nails, and many other items, were all exported from England and the American colonies to Jamaica in large quantities (Clifford 1993:46), and a significant proportion of this found its way to Spanish buyers. Perhaps the single most profitable cargo in this trade was human cargo. Slaves would be purchased in Port Royal then smuggled into Spanish ports, where the standard accepted rate of payment was the Port Royal purchase price plus 35% interest, leading to the commonly used euphemism "the 35% trade" (Clifford 1993:39).

Though cash was preferred in such transactions, making Port Royal probably the only English colonial city which contemporary observers noted did not suffer from a lack of coin in circulation (Hanson 1683), the traders also returned with goods for resale, including cocoa, hides, indigo, jewels, plate, hogs, horses, and mules (Claypole 1972:127-130). In fact, Zahedia (1986: 570-593), in her article "The Merchants of Port Royal, Jamaica, and the Spanish Contraband Trade", argues that this illicit trade was

such a large part of the overall Jamaican economy that, via the re-investment of profits so derived, it supplied the majority of capital used for the development of agricultural works on the mainland, endeavors which eventually helped Jamaica eclipse Barbados as England's primary sugar producer.

Thus, while the buccaneers may have been the public image of the source of Port Royalites wealth, trade quickly became, in actuality, the driving force of the Port Royal economy. Not surprisingly, this shift meant that merchants and planters soon eclipsed the Buccaneers in terms of importance, political power, and wealth. Eventually, more money could be made in trade than could be garnered through plunder, and when the buccaneers became more trouble than they were worth, official or semi-official acceptance of their activities declined to the point that only the most discreet activities would be tolerated. (Pawson and Bruisseret 1974:40-44). Thus, it was both the legal trade with England and her colonies and the illegal trade with Spanish colonies, in addition to the growth of agricultural production on the Jamaican mainland, which really drove the enormous growth of the city. Zahedia has remarked that this dual economy (trade and agriculture) sets Jamaica apart from all other English holdings in the Caribbean (Zahedia 1986:571).

As noted earlier, at the time of the conquest, the sand spit upon which Port Royal was built was uninhabited. An estimated 400 hastily constructed houses had been built by 1663 (Bridenbaugh 1972:314), and six years later officials estimated that the town of Port Royal had roughly doubled in size to include approximately 800 houses (Gardener 1971:60). By 1692, Port Royal was the largest British colonial

commercial port in the new world, with approximately 2000 houses, crammed into about 50-60 acres at the end of the spit, and containing a population estimated conservatively between 6,500 to 7,000 inhabitants (Hamilton, 1992:38-40), and possibly as high as 8,000 (Buisseret 1971:26)

Perfectly located to facilitate trade between Spanish possessions in the new world, English colonies in North America, and of course mother England, Port Royal was primarily an international trading and re-export hub. Inventories suggest that nearly half of Port Royals inhabitants were merchants of some kind (Zahedieh 1986:570). Following the lead of the Spanish and Dutch, by the late 17th century the English were deeply engaged in international trade and the profits derived from this increasingly globally-oriented merchant capitalism were central to English goals, policy, and colonialism. The importance of Port Royal within this overall network of British colonial trade of the late 17th century is indicated by the fact that in 1688 alone, 213 ships docked at Port Royal. In the same year 226 ships docked at all of the ports of colonial New England combined (Donachie 2001:10-12; Zahedieh 1986:570). The size of the vessels thus engaged is even more demonstrative of the importance of Port Royal. In 1688 the total tonnage of vessels arriving in all of the North American colonies combined was about 2,500 tons while in the same year the total tonnage of ships arriving at Port Royal exceeded 9,000 tons (Pawson and Buisseret, 1974: 88). From the time of the capture of Jamaica by the Spanish, Port Royal was the only legal port of entry for Jamaica (Claypole 1972).

This heyday of commercial dominance of England's new world empire was to quickly come to an end. On June 7th 1692, sometime around 11:45 in the morning, a massive earthquake struck Port Royal. A particularly detailed account related by the Anglican rector Dr. Emmanuel Heath was reprinted in London as a pamphlet in September of that same year, and it is perhaps the most detailed eyewitness view of the devastation. Heath noted that he was sharing a drink with John White, the president of the Port Royal council, at a wine shop near the merchants exchange when:

> I felt the ground rowling and moving under my feet, upon which I said to him, *Lord, Sir, whats this*? He replyed very composedly, being a very Grave man, *It is an Earthquake, be not afraid, it will soon be over*, but it increased, and we heard the church tower fall, upon which, we ran to save our selves; I quickly lost him, and made toward *Morgan's Fort*, which being a wide open place, I thought to be there secureth from the falling houses; But as I made towards it, I saw the earth open and swallow up a multitude of people, and the Sea mounting in upon us over the fortifications (Heath Pamphlet, 1692:1-2)

The water-soaked sand spit upon which Port Royal was constructed was essentially liquefied by the violent tremors, causing the impression by eyewitnesses in some places that the ground was "swallowing up" people and houses. A Quaker, writing home to a friend in England, noted: "The ground opened at Port Royal, where I dwell, with a shake and swallowed whole houses, nay the street I dwell in was in less than 3 hours after 4 fathoms under water" (Cadbury, 1971:20). The liquefying action also caused much of the land along the leading edge of the harbor to simply slide down-slope, along the underlying coralline mass northwards into Kingston harbor and some houses were still visible in the water after the earthquake, either standing partially

submerged or only visible as roofs poking out of the bay (Pawson and Buisseret 1974:166). The houses and streets more centrally located within the core of the city remained above ground, but when the sand liquefied in the areas nearer the harbor, many houses sunk vertically with little horizontal disturbance (see excavation plan of the building 4-5 complex in the next chapter). As brick was a favorite building material of the English in Port Royal, many buildings simply collapsed during the initial violent shaking, prior to sinking into the sea. In the final analysis, it has been estimated that the earthquake likely killed 2000 residents immediately, with another 3,000 perishing due to starvation, lack of clean drinking water, and disease in the weeks that followed, a devastating percentage of the estimated total population of 7,000-8,000, leaving just 25 of the original 50-60 acre town-site above water (Mayes 1972:7-8; Pawson and Buisseret 1974:121-123).

CHAPTER IV
EXCAVATIONS

The sunken city of Port Royal Jamaica might be termed the Pompeii of the 17th century English colonial world. In just moments, a disastrous earthquake turned large portions of the pre-eminent English trading city in the New World into an archaeological site, sinking buildings, artifacts, and even people beneath the waves in a matter of minutes (Figure 4.1). No other English colonial-era archaeological site in the world was created under such extraordinary circumstances. In fact, most artifact assemblages studied by scholars are from sites created primarily through the discard of broken or useless items, and this is the norm for virtually all 17th-century English archaeological sites. In addition to this ubiquitous discard assemblage, the assemblage of Port Royal contains a remarkable "point-in-time" cross-section of the items actually being used by people in the city at the time of the earthquake. Most excavated 17th-century English buildings are sites that were abandoned or destroyed, usually years after they were originally built or in use. The buildings excavated at Port Royal had people living in them right up until the earthquake slid them into the sea. In addition, this underwater deposition resulted in an almost unprecedented large-scale preservation of organic materials, since organic items from the 17th century almost never survive in land sites. The occupation of the cobbler in Building 1, for example, was rather directly inferred from tools, and an assortment of several thousand heel and sole scraps for repairing shoes, still sitting in the corner of his workshop in a large pile. In short, no other 17th-century English colonial-era archaeological site has the potential to reveal the

FIGURE 4.1. Close-up of 1692 woodcut portraying the earthquake of June 7, 1692. This image headed pamphlets based on the eyewitness account of Anglican rector Dr. Emmanuel Heath.

unvarnished essence of 17th-century English colonial life the way Port Royal does. In terms of the preservation of materials, the catastrophic deposition of the site preserving items as "in-use" in their cultural context, and the immense scale of the site, it can be argued that Port Royal is the preeminent archaeological site from English 17th century anywhere in the world.

Between 1981 and 1991, the Institute of Nautical Archaeology, in cooperation with the Nautical Archaeology Program at Texas A&M University and the Jamaica National Heritage Trust, conducted underwater archaeological investigations of the submerged portion of Port Royal under the direction of Dr. Donny Hamilton. Hamilton's team excavated a total of the remains of 8 buildings, shown in Figure 4.2, and often their associated work-yards, at what was once the intersection of Queen and Lime streets in the commercial center of 17th-century Port Royal (Hamilton 1988, 1990, 1992).

The artifacts have, in some cases, given a clear indication of the types of economic activities engaged in by the occupants of the buildings. As can be seen in Table 4.1, this is a middle-class neighborhood, including occupations ranging from cobbler, smoking shop (pipe) vendor, blacksmith, and tavern-keeper. It should also be noted that evidence for multiple economic activities were found in several buildings or rooms, suggesting that precise occupation names given in Jamaican inventories may mask a more complex range of economic activities within the same household, and a blurring of traditional separations of economic activities or occupations. A good example is the cobbler who lived and worked in rooms 1 and 2 of Building 1, who also

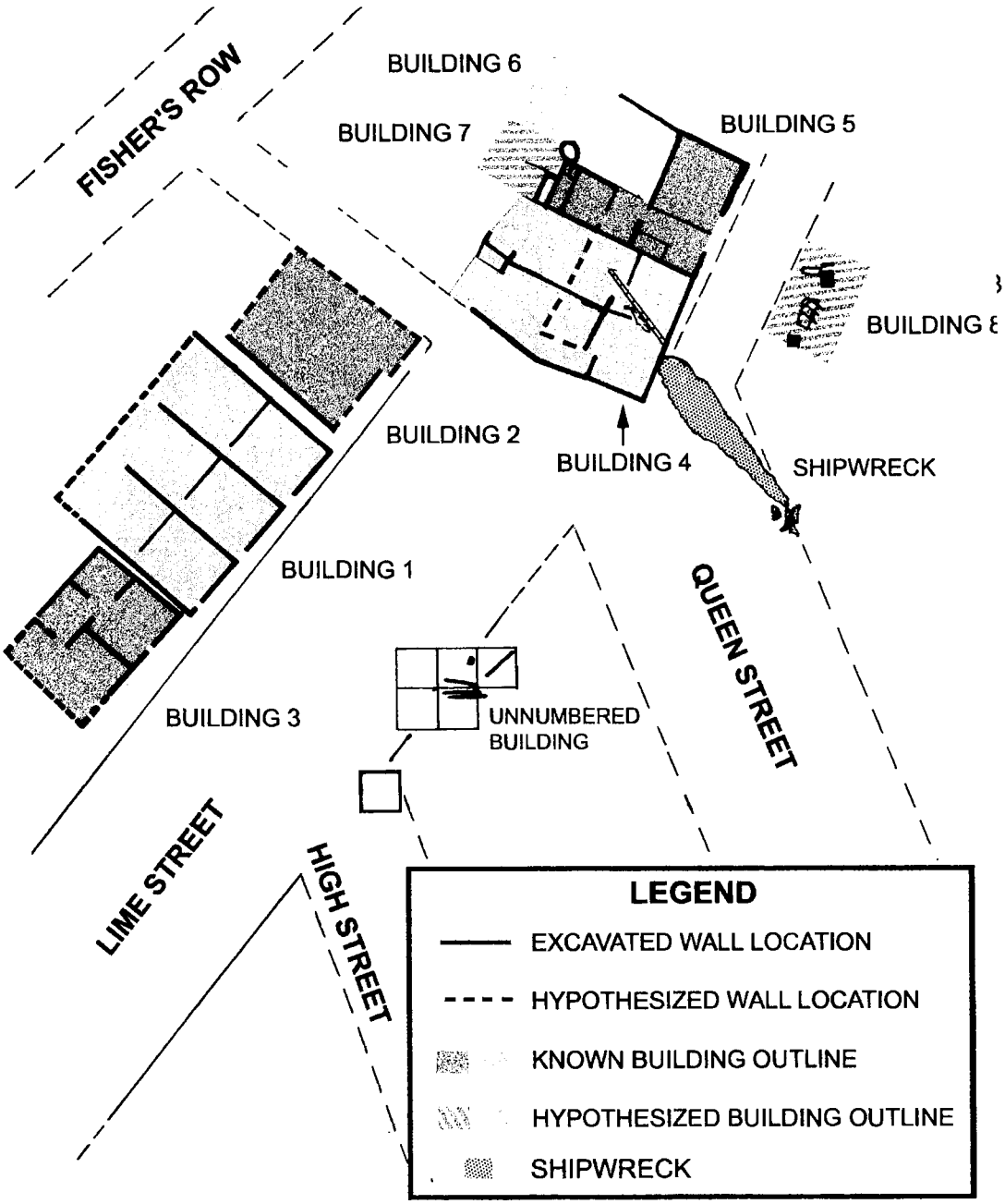

FIGURE 4.2. Map of buildings excavated by the Institute of Nautical Archeaology, and Texas A&M University, 1981-1990.

Table 4.1. Buildings excavated and inferred commercial function

Structure	Associated Rooms	Inferred occupation
BUILDING 1	Rooms 1 and 2	Cobbler / Woodturner
	Rooms 3 and 4	Tavern
	Rooms 5 and 6	Pipe / Wine Shop
BUILDING 2	Building site	Possible Residence
BUILDING 3	Rooms 1-4 and yard	Possible Market Storage Area
BUILDING 4	Rooms 1-4, yards, hearth	Possible Residence, likely cheap tenements of building 5
BUILDING 5	Rooms 1-4	Tavern / Victualler
BUILDING 6	Work Yard	Possible Residence
BUILDING 7	Work Yard / Hearth	Blacksmith or Tinker
BUILDING 8	Collapsed front wall and plaster floor	Tea or Coffee House and / or Store

apparently engaged in butchering, as well as commercial woodturning presumably for furniture production or repair, as additional sources of income.

BUILDING 1

Hamilton's team began excavation of building 1 in 1981. A solidly constructed, two storied brick building, building 1 consisted of two construction phases; an initial phase that included three ground-floor rooms (1, 2, and 5) which fronted Lime Street. There was a subsequent expansion of additional sections including rooms (4, 6,

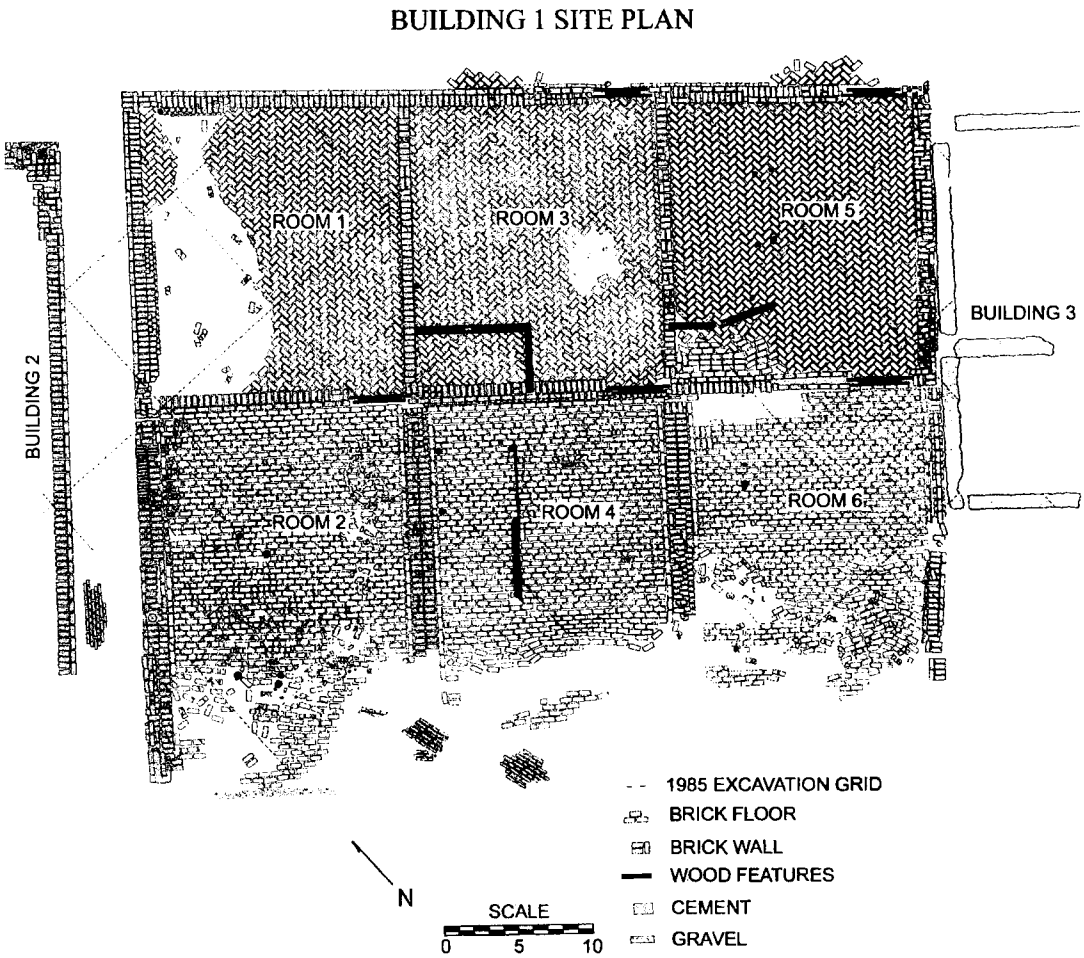

FIGURE 4.3. Excavation planview of Building 1 showing rooms, materials, excavation grid, and locations of adjacent buildings.

and 7) to the rear of the first three rooms. This sequence is illustrated by both the differences in the patterns of brick flooring (herringbone in rooms 1,3, and 5, but overlapping in rooms 2,4, and 6), as well as the details of wall construction and the fact that it abutted a bonded wall of differing thickness, as well as the floor bond pattern. Many of these details can be seen in the excavation plan shown in Figure 4.3. The interior walls of this well-made building were covered in white plaster (Hamilton 1988:9).

Organizationally, building 1 consisted of six ground-floor rooms divided into three separate two-room combinations, forming a row house typical of urban areas in England at this time. These two-room combinations likely represent three different families and their associated businesses, where commercial activities took place on the ground floor, with the familial living areas in the second story rooms overhead. Rooms 1 and 2 belonged to a cobbler/woodturner/butcher. An array of shoe soles and heels, and other miscellaneous leather scraps for repairing shoes in one corner testified to the cobbling work being done. Wood-turning equipment was also found, while cattle and turtle bones concentrated on the floor, as well as an array of bones found in the street directly outside, indicated the butchering work being done. Rooms 3 and 4 formed a small tavern as evidenced by the presence of multiple onion bottles and artifacts associated with food preparation and serving. Finally, rooms 5 and 6 appear to have formed a combination pipe and wine shop. Large numbers of onion bottles were found, along with hundreds of intact and un-smoked white clay pipes of English manufacture.

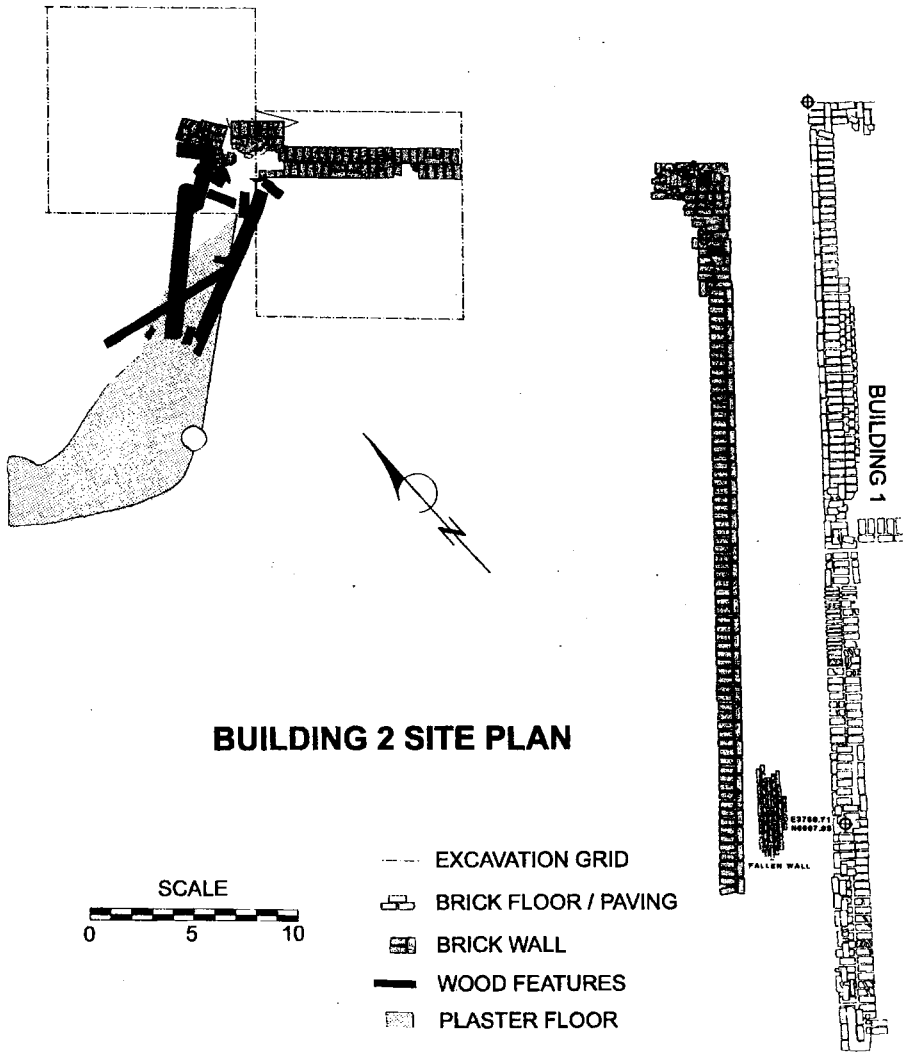

FIGURE 4.4. Excavation planview of Building 2, showing existing walls, wooden structural materials, and plaster floor section.

BUILDING 2

In contrast to the solid brick construction and plaster covered walls of building 1, building two was a less substantial structure, and appears to have been a wooden structure built upon a brick foundation with plaster floors (Figure 4.4). This building suffered considerable damage during the earthquake. Located on the northwest side of Building 1, only a portion of the front north-east facing wall along Lime Street and the side wall along the alley, survived intact. The surviving portions indicated that the brick wall on the front was originally two courses thick and covered with plaster. A portion of the southeast facing wall which abutted Building 1 was also still intact, though it was even more lightly built (1 and ½ bricks wide) than the front portion, as can be seen in Figure 4.4. The front room appears to have had a plaster floor similar to that found in Buildings 3, 4, and 5. The northwest wall had been completely destroyed in the earthquake, as had the entire rear portion of the building including the southwest wall line (Hamilton 1988:9). Because of the severe destruction and missing walls, especially in the rear areas of the building, this portion of the site revealed little architectural information, and it appears that most of the superstructure of this wooden building was washed away by the wave that followed the earthquake. Because the pattern at Port Royal was that the street-side rooms were typically commercial, and thus were the locus of whatever specific economic activity was being conducted in the household, the rear areas of the house most likely to contain personal items were not recovered during excavation of this building. Hence, the artifact assemblage from

BUILDING THREE SITE PLAN

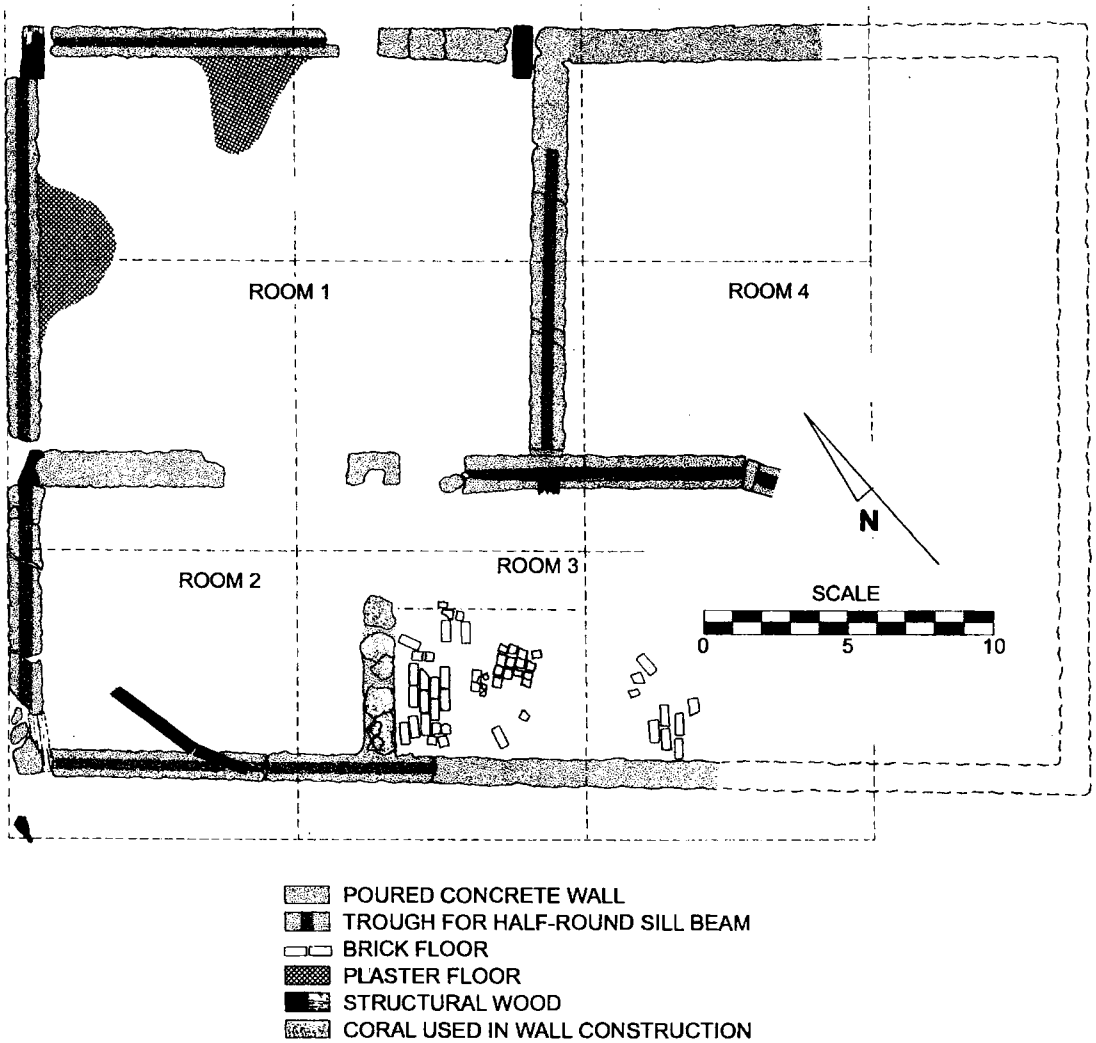

FIGURE 4.5. Excavation planview of Building 3, showing existing walls, construction materials, room flooring, and wooden structural remains.

building 2 is fragmentary and incomplete, and most likely under-represents items associated with the private lives and the personal possessions of the occupants.

BUILDING 3

Located on the southwest side of Building 1, Building 3 was a lightly constructed earth-fast wood frame building. A plaster or mortar wall foundation was intact in the northern 2/3rd of the building, but the entire southeastern wall was destroyed by the earthquake, including the northeast and southeast corners of the building. This section of the structure apparently slid down-slope into the deeper water of the adjacent Marx excavations to the east. Figure 4.5 illustrates that several portions of this poured mortar or plaster wall contained a rounded trough for sill beams, and portions of five large vertical support beams were found, as well, indicating the interrupted sill wood-frame construction of the building. Interestingly, large chunks of coral were utilized within the plaster or mortar in at least one interior room wall, between rooms 2 and 3. Evidence indicates that this building contained at least four rooms, also shown in Figure 4.5, though it is possible that several additional rooms once existed on the southeast side of the building but were destroyed or slid farther down-slope during the earthquake. Evidence in Room 1 suggested that the entire floor was originally plastered, though only portions of this were still intact. The other rooms appear to have had consolidated sand floors, while tiny room 3 (11 x 5 Feet) contained a brick hearth. Building 3 is notable in that it clearly was a cheaper, more hastily built structure than the other buildings investigated, and may have served as a market/storage

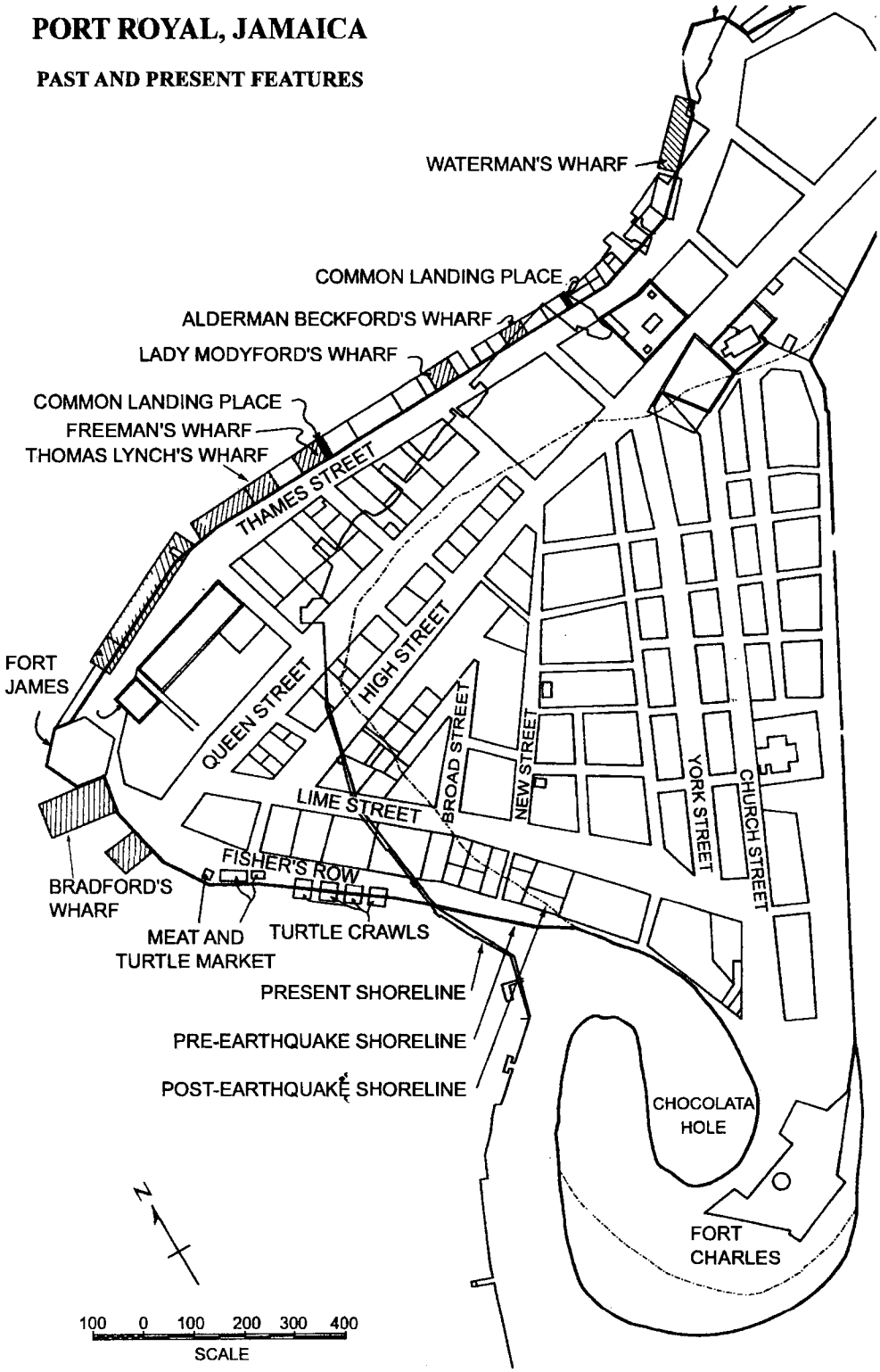

FIGURE 4.6. Map of 1871 showing Port Royal before and after earthquake.

area, since large quantities of new kaolin pipes, and two sets of weights and scales, were stored there.

BUILDING 4

The location of the building 4/5 complex came as a surprise to investigators. While buildings 1,2, and 3 are aligned with and face Lime street, the building 4/5 complex appears to have been aligned with the street grid in a very peculiar manner, one which does not appear to match with the overall street plan of Port Royal, shown in Figure 4.6. As can be seen in the overall excavation map shown in Figure 4.2, the southeast wall of Building 4 juts out about 20 feet into the intersection of Queen and Lime streets. It now appears that small, alley-like pathways allowed access from this corner of Queen and Lime streets onto Fishers row to the south, and possibly to Thames street to the west, around the walls of this building.

Building 4 was a cheaply built one-story building that was tacked onto building 5 (sharing a common wall), and was heavily damaged in the earthquake. The walls, floors, and interior architectural features were broken apart quite considerably, and in several areas the exterior wall lines were totally absent, as can be seen in building location map, Figure 4.2. Building 4 also has the distinction of likely being the only structure ever archaeologically investigated to have been badly damaged by a ship crashing into it. The remains of a small schooner, shown in the overall excavation map of the buildings 4/5 complex in Figure 4.7 in an in-situ position partially smashed into the building's northwest wall, may well have been the *Swan*, a Royal Navy vessel noted

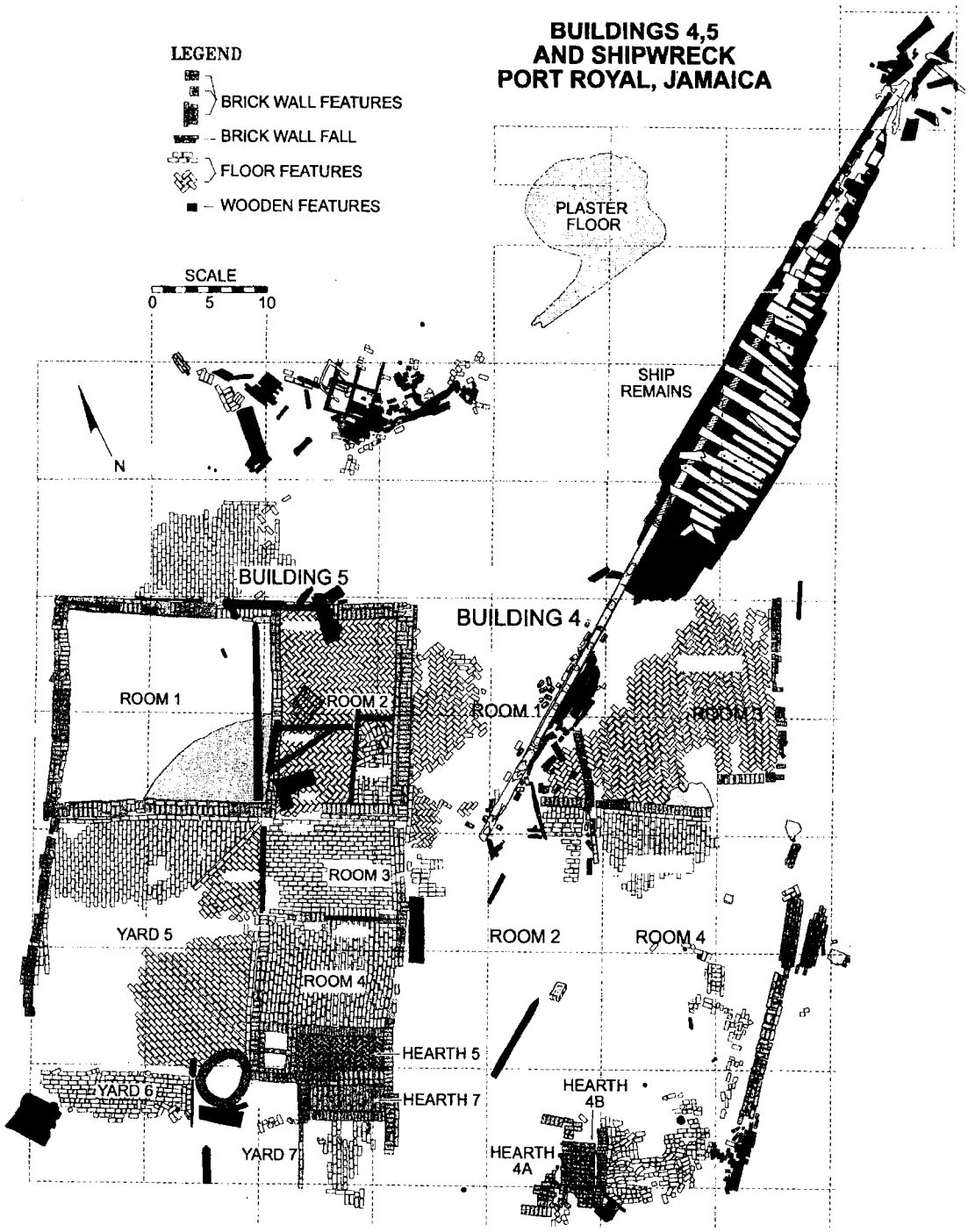

FIGURE 4.7. Excavation planview of the building 4/5 complex, showing locations of walls, flooring, wooden structural materials, cisterns, yards, and location of shipwreck.

as having been lost in the harbor at the time of the earthquake. The ship had an overall keel length of about 75 feet, and heeled over onto its port side before crashing through Building 4 (Hamilton 1990:16). Between the earthquake and the ship, the structure of Building 4 was left in a rather tattered condition as revealed by the excavations, though much could still be discerned.

Building 4 probably consisted of two front rooms, paired with a yard to the back, as illustrated on the excavation map, Figure 4.7. Rooms 1 and 2 represent one unit, while what is labeled rooms 3 and 4 likely were paved yards. Each unit shared half of a double hearth built with a shared back wall. All floors were paved in brick, but room 3 was originally plastered (Hamilton 1990:16). Interestingly, the excavation sequence in this area may indicate evidence of an earlier earthquake. On top of the original plaster floor in room 3 was a broken layer of ceiling plaster, over which a herringbone pattern brick floor was overlain. Dr. Donny Hamilton, who conducted the excavations, believes that this sequence demonstrates evidence of damage and repair from the 1687 earthquake, which is mentioned in historic records and accounts, but which was relatively small compared to the 1692 earthquake (Hamilton 1990:16). The evidence from the Building 4 area indicates that this was a one-story, two-unit tenement building attached to the far more substantial Building 5, and possibly constructed by the owners of Building 5.

BUILDING 5

Building 5 abuts building 4 on the southwest side, and was a relatively intact, well-built brick structure. Building 5 appears to have been constructed in at least two phases. The initial construction phase is represented by rooms 1 and 2, as well as an exterior brick sidewalk at the front of the building facing the alley-like extension of Lime Street. Both rooms had front doors opening to the front sidewalk and an interior door connected the two rooms. As can be seen in the overall excavation map of the building 4/5 complex (Figure 4.7), Room 1 was the largest room in the complex and was located on the northwestern corner of the building, was floored with plaster. Room 2 was floored in brick lain in a herringbone pattern, and contained surviving wooden structural remains of the interior door between rooms 1 and 2. A rear door, door sill, and wooden stairwell frame all survived in the rear of this room. The front door and the wooden sill also survived at the front entrance of this room. To the rear of room 2, rooms 3 and 4 appear to have been added in one, and possibly 2 later construction phases. Room 4 joined the hearth area, titled hearth 5 in Figure 4.6, to the main front of the building forming a large L-shaped house. An exterior work yard area labeled yard 5 existed to the west of these rooms, behind room 1 and in the crook of the L-shape of the structure. At the back of yard 5, a round, brick-lined cistern was found. This cistern was probably shared with the occupants of buildings 6 and 7, located to the rear (southwest) of building 5.

BUILDING 6

The presence of Building 6 can be inferred through several lines of evidence, though it should be noted that nothing is known about the size or shape of this building as the area south of the extent of excavations illustrated in Figure 4.2 was not excavated. A wooden fenceline separating exterior work yards was located, between Yard 5 (associated with Building 5) and Yard 6 (associated with building 6), indicating the presence of Building 6 to the rear of Building 5. Artifact recovery from building 6 was limited to these few small spaces. In sum, we know Building 6 was present at the rear of Building 5, but we know very little about it. For this reason, its outline is only suggested in the overall building location map, Figure 4.2.

BUILDING 7

Building 7 is very similar to Building 6, in that its presence can be inferred from several lines of evidence, but only a portion of the yard and accompanying hearth was excavated, and nothing is known of the structure of the building itself. Its presence is only suggested in the overall site map shown in Figure 4.2.

BUILDING 8

Building 8 was apparently located to the northwest of the building 4/5 complex, across the small alleyway extension of Lime street, which appears to have connected the intersection of Queen and Lime streets to Thames Street and the area around Fort James. Directly in front of Building 5, evidence of a portion of a plaster floor, along

with a large fallen wall was uncovered, and this appears to have been the front wall of building 8. This fallen wall was a remarkably rich repository of artifacts. A wooden window frame and a four partition window with leaded glass panes survived, resting within its original exterior wrought-iron frame. In and around this window were two sets of Chinese porcelain "Dog of Fo" figurines, and 28 Chinese porcelain cups and bowls. In addition, pewter plates, candlesticks, silver forks and spoons, and a gold ring were also found in this location. The evidence suggests that this was most likely a retail shop, selling a wide variety of wares, or a combination retail shop and coffee house. Nothing else is known about the structure or size of Building 8 aside from the rich trove of artifacts located beneath its fallen southwestern wall, and a section of plaster flooring.

CONCLUSIONS

It is important to keep in mind the specifics of these excavations when analyzing the artifact assemblage, discussed in the following section. Only 3 of the buildings survived intact to be excavated in their entirety; Building 1, Building 4, and Building 5. The assemblages from these building can at least be roughly considered to be representative of the original material culture of their occupants. Building 1 almost certainly housed three separate families and their associated businesses (cobbler/woodturner, Pipe and wine shop owner, and tavern owner). Building 4 was most likely a tenement type residence containing 2 occupants or families, that belonged to Building 5, which was the home and place of business for a tavern/victualler. Most

significantly, due to their intact state and the nearly total recovery of materials associated with the structures, these three buildings and at least 6 separate occupants or families represent our most reasonable opportunity to infer the consumer behavior of the people once living and working within their walls.

Building 8 is also helpful in this regard, though for a different reason. What was found was, essentially, the debris scatter from the street-side front room of a commercial retail shop, or a combination retail shop/coffee house. Thus, although not representative of the consumer behavior of a particular family per se, the assemblage from this area is a very useful indicator of the types and forms of items that were for sale to the general public in Port Royal at this time. Although this one fallen wall covered a plethora of consumer goods, little else is known about the occupants of this structure, and the importance of Building 8 is the generalized picture it provides us of broad consumer behavior and preference.

The archaeological record is problematic regarding the question of consumer behavior for the families living in other excavated buildings. Building 2, for instance, only retained parts of its two street-side rooms. As noted earlier, the pattern at Port Royal was that the street-side rooms were typically the locus of commercial activity; the rear areas of the house most likely to contain personal items were missing. Hence, the artifact assemblage from Building 2 is fragmentary and incomplete, and most likely drastically under-represents items associated with the private lives and the personal possessions of the occupants. This assemblage may not be especially useful for

inferring the consumer behavior of its original occupants, depending on what was originally there.

Building 3 was mostly intact, but the southeastern section of the building was absent. In addition to being incomplete, however, the salient aspect of this structure is that it was probably a market storage area. Therefore, the artifact assemblage from building 3 is most likely indicative of this function, rather than as evidence for the personal belongings of a particular occupant or family.

Buildings 6 and 7 are almost total mysteries, as only cooking areas and work yards remain. The artifactual evidence from these areas is also predominantly the result of these activities. The areas of the building which would have been most likely to have functioned as private living spaces, and thus would have provides evidence for consumer behavior though the presence of personal items, were missing due to earthquake destruction and the down-slope slide of these areas. Because of this, Buildings 6 and 7 are not especially useful for inferring consumer behavior, though they do provide solid evidence for cooking activities. In addition, the hearth of Building 7 also contained an array of iron door locks, some in need of repair, potentially hinting at the form of commercial activity being done there.

With these caveats in mind, the next step is to examine what the artifacts recovered from these areas have to tell us about consumer behavior in Port Royal, circa 1692. Given the implications of the above discussion, analysis will concentrate on the 5 families living in the intact buildings 1, 4, and 5, as well as the contents of the front room of the retail shop at Building 8.

CHAPTER V
METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO ARTIFACT ANALYSIS

Most scholars studying consumer behavior in the 17th and 18th centuries have concentrated on quantitative analysis in order to elucidate changing patterns through time. Historians have used quantified information derived primarily from inventory data, and the difficulties in utilizing probate inventory data will be discussed in the following chapter. Archaeologists have also typically concentrated on comparative quantitative studies of artifact assemblages, arrayed numerically for comparison to other sites, as well as seriation studies of the presence of specific types or forms through time. Hence, a standard approach for the present study would be to array the archaeological data from Port Royal statistically in terms of counts or artifact densities, and compare that data to other excavated sites from the same time period within the English colonial world. Such an approach, however, is quite problematic as regards both the specific nature of the site of Port Royal, and the overarching goal of determining the degree to which consumerist behavior at Port Royal can be compared to the larger English colonial world.

The primary reason archaeologists quantify material culture data is for purposes of comparison, either to other sites or to facilitate inter-site examination of change through time. The underlying assumption upon which such statistical comparisons are based is that the processes of use, artifact discard, and deposition are similar enough at the sites being compared that statistical differences between the types, frequencies, or

iven artifact types or classes, can be used to identify meaningful
cultural behavior. This method has a long pedigree in historical
centered primarily in the effect of the "New Archaeology" movement
toric archaeology of the 1960's and '70's, where many of the founders of
chaeology received their initial training, as well as in the "pattern
approach in historical archaeology championed initially by Stanley South
posited that similar sites should produce similar artifact patterns, based
ural norms and standardized behaviors of English men and women,
to colonial settings. Statistical comparison and the recognition of regular
sposal could therefore be used to create models of "normal" behavior and
patterns in the archaeological record, while variation from these should
t against the statistical or pattern norm. Despite influential critiques of the
ctiveness of South's approach to pattern recognition (Deetz 1987; Beaudry
sic method of statistical comparison remains a strong element in historical
al analysis and research today. Unfortunately, the Port Royal assemblage
itself well, especially in terms of consumer artifacts, to such statistical
to other excavated sites in most cases.

ill be seen in the material culture discussion below, the depositional event
arthquake resulted in a highly unusual artifact assemblage. For the vast
and sites, the archaeological assemblage is composed primarily of
lost items. Furthermore, items made from organic materials, such as wood,
, etc, decompose rather easily and rarely survive several hundred years in

the ground. In short, the artifact assemblages found by archaeologists on land sites are rarely an unvarnished reflection of the material items in use historically on that particular site, but instead are the result of many rather significant cultural and depositional 'filters'.

The underwater archaeological site of Port Royal is different from virtually any other excavated land site from the 17th century yet studied. In terms of preservation, many organic materials that are virtually absent from land sites were found intact and in large numbers at Port Royal. More significantly, however, rather than the result of discard activities, the Port Royal assemblage reflects a single depositional event, creating unusual difficulties in terms of comparing this assemblage to those excavated from land sites. Hamilton analyzed the distinctive nature of the Port Royal assemblage when he coined the term "catastrophic site" to describe Port Royal and similar sites such as shipwrecks (Hamilton and Woodward 1984: 38-45).

Metals are one material culture class presenting special problems in this regard. Metals, (pewter, brass, gold, and silver, predominantly) were commonly used to elaborate an otherwise utilitarian item into a consumerist item, and hence are of special interest in this study, yet they are relatively scarce in the archaeological assemblages of land sites. An excellent example of this is pewter, classified by some historians (Weatherill 1988, Shammas 1990, Carr and Walsh 1994) as a metal whose presence, or conversely whose absence, in probate inventories may be one indicator of rising consumerist behavior during the late 17th and early 18th centuries. However, archaeologist Anne Smart Martin (1989) has noted that pewter (and for our purposes,

the argument can be extended to brass, silver, and gold, as well) is seldom recovered in archaeological excavations from the colonial period, despite the fact that it was in use as a material for table wares for nearly 2 centuries, and by the late 18th century was nearly ubiquitous in probate inventories in the colonial Chesapeake (Martin 1989:26). She explains this discrepancy by noting first that pewter is highly durable, and is not subject to ordinary use-breakage that ceramics, glass, or other commonly found artifact types are. Second, even if pewter items (or other metal items, for that matter) did break, they could be sold for recasting, and since they thus retained a monetary value would not be intentionally discarded (Smart-Martin 1989:26-27). The artifact assemblages of land sites, which are primarily the result of discard activities, are therefore not especially reflective of the historical presence of pewter, and by extension, brass, silver, or gold as well.

In addition to this difficulty, more elaborate and expensive forms of items made from traditional materials (ceramics or glass, for instance) are also precisely the types of items that, due to the curation effect (Schiffer 1987) are usually deposited on land sites only through an occasional and unlikely accident. If they are deposited, there is likely to be a considerable time lag between their date of initial purchase, and their date of deposition into the archaeological record. In short, these are precisely the items which people would have been most likely to take care of and hence are among the least likely to wind up in the archaeological record near the time of the inception of their use.

For these reasons, any numerical comparison of the consumerist items found at Port Royal to land sites from the same time period would be much more reflective of

the massive differences in site formation processes than it would be an indication of true differences in cultural behavior between the sites compared. In addition, as a catastrophic site Port Royal is, in part, a "point in time" assemblage (though clearly the assemblage would also represent the discard behaviors of colonists to some degree), while most land sites reflect deposition primarily from discard which accumulated over longer periods of time. Thus inter-site statistical comparisons through time would also be similarly misleading, as well as difficult, given the broad time frame of manufacture for much 17th-century material culture.

For these reasons, this study emphasizes a primarily qualitative examination of specific artifact classes from the Port Royal assemblage. This approach is influenced strongly by scholarship on the manifestations of consumer behavior in material culture. Quantitative comparisons will be utilized for historical documentary data, and these will be discussed in later chapters.

SCALE OF ANALYSIS

Because the archaeological site of Port Royal was an urban area, households were densely packed together. Especially in terms of artifacts excavated from work-yards and building additions, it is often impossible to say with any degree of certainty to which "household" (of the two or even three potential choices) the contents of a yard or building addition might belong. Additionally, the earthquake jumbled many excavation areas considerably and may have caused several buildings, especially their second-story contents, to fall into an adjacent building or work yard. This potentially mixes the

culture of several households together in terms of the spatial provenience of
cts. Thus, it might be very misleading to attempt to infer consumer behavior at
of the individual household by relying solely on excavation provenience data
ildings excavated in this study.

he scale of analysis chosen for this study differs from that of most
gical inquiry. In consumer studies, the most commonly utilized unit of
s the household, also variously called the homelot, family unit or, if
e, the plantation. There are many valid reasons for analyzing artifacts and their
at the "single-family" level, especially where consumer behavior is concerned
Gibb notes, the homelot "...represents a culturally meaningful category to its
s and to those from neighboring homelots" (Gibb 1996:19). This study,
while taking into account provenience information for the various artifacts
l and making some attempt to address consumer behavior at the level of the
l households excavated, concentrates instead on analysis at a broader level of
or several reasons. Given the potential mixing of household assemblages
above, the salient point is not that a particular item came from household "x",
he item was in use in the cultural context of these middle-class homes, taverns,
d work-yards located at the intersection of Queen and Lime Streets, in the late
ry.

he research questions being asked here do not generally pertain to consumer
at the level of the individual household specifically. Instead, our concern is
n a broad picture of consumer behavior within the middle class of Port Royal,

circa 1680-1690. The artifacts are attributable to at least 8, and possibly as many as 11 separate familial households, representing a cross-section of middle class occupations and levels of wealth, neither very poor nor very rich (see Table 1). Given the range of occupations and commercial activities of the residents of these buildings, the material culture recovered can reasonably be considered to be at least broadly representative of the consumer choices being made by the middle class of Port Royal as a whole.

TIMING

In terms of the timing of the consumer revolution, there is a danger in focusing too exclusively on the catastrophic nature of the archaeological site when analyzing the material culture from Port Royal. It is tempting to view this assemblage as a "slice of life" of the 1690's on the morning of the earthquake. This generalization is certainly true as far as it goes, in that the site itself was 'created' on the morning of June 7, 1692. However, the material culture deposited on that date is most likely primarily representative of life in Port Royal in the decade of the 1680's, items which were still in use in an active cultural context on the morning of the earthquake. It would stretch credibility, for instance, to assert that the majority of artifacts recovered from Port Royal were manufactured, transported by ship to Jamaica, and put into use in a cultural context, post-1690, or within less than 2 ½ years of the earthquake, or similarly to conclude that they are representative of social behaviors present in the early 1690's alone. This assertion is borne out by recent studies of ceramics indicating that there is a considerable lag between the time an item is manufactured, and the time it is deposited

in the archaeological record (Adams 2003). Dr. William Hampton Adams has statistically evaluated ceramic assemblages from the colonial period to the early 20th century, and has concluded that on average, most ceramics were in use for 15 to 20 years prior to deposition in the archaeological record (Adams 2003:1-24). Although Adams is essentially dealing with the timing of discard, while the archaeological assemblage at Port Royal is predominantly the result of a "point in time" deposition, his basic point is that items can, and usually are, in use for a fairly long time after they are manufactured. Common sense tells us that even in our modern world of planned obsolescence and disposable material culture, there are few in our society for whom the bulk of their possessions are less than 3 years old, and the speed of shipping and rate of obsolescence are far greater today than they were in the 17th century.

Therefore, if it were possible to determine a "mean assemblage date" for the entire Port Royal collection, it is reasonable to expect that it would fall sometime in the mid-1680's, including some items manufactured in the 1660's and 1670's, many from the 1680's, and a few from the early 1690's. Such a characterization might seem to be a case of splitting hairs, but it becomes very important if we are attempting to infer the timing of significant changes in social behavior from specific material culture types and forms. For these reasons, the following discussion of consumer choice as revealed through the archaeological record is probably most accurately applied to the consumer behavior of the middle class of Port Royal, Jamaica, primarily during the decade of the 1680's.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF CONSUMERIST ARTIFACT TRAITS

Much of the theoretical framework utilized in this analysis was outlined in the subsection titled Material Culture in Chapter II. One important element of this study is that the term "consumer behavior" directly implies consumption at least in part for the purposes of display, as opposed to merely (or solely) for utilitarian usage. Carson notes "As the outward signs of status, consumer goods served first as shared symbols of group identity and, second, as devices that social climbers imitated in hopes of ascending the social ladder" (Carson 1994: 522). Historian Lorna Weatherill, in her study of consumer behavior in England between 1660 and 1760 argues that it is useful in this regard to make a distinction between luxuries, decencies, and necessities. However, her proviso that each of these descriptors is culturally relative, and should be thought of in terms of shifting societal expectations over time, is very important to keep in mind. For instance, in terms of defining what goods should be considered necessities, Weatherill notes,

> While it is amusing to speculate on the minimal food, clothing, and utensils needed for people to survive, it does not make sense to interpret behaviour in these terms, for this was already a society in which people expected to have a selection of domestic goods... for people did not just have physical requirements; they valued non-material aspects of their lives (Weatherill 1988:15-16)

Thus one important aspect of this study was to determine which artifacts found in the archaeological record of Port Royal are characteristic of consumerist behavior, as discussed in Chapter V.

Another important aspect is to determine, or at least to broadly explore, what types of behaviors or motivations can be inferred when describing a particular artifact, or suite of artifacts, as being evidence of a consumerist approach. There is often a tenuous and somewhat subjective link between the motives or meanings underlying a particular human behavior, and the physical items that might be potentially linked to such behavior. As noted in Chapter II, many researchers have criticized what they consider to be a simplistic focus on status in previous studies of the potential social meanings of certain artifacts in the archaeological record. These researchers have rightly criticized simple explanations based upon the concept of status alone, in favor of theoretical models emphasizing multiple meanings and symbolisms (McCracken 1988; Gibb 1996). Unfortunately, attempts at finding more contextualized meanings in artifacts often seem to grind to a halt after the theory stage, failing to link complex theoretical underpinnings to actual artifacts in a convincing manner (Beaudry 1999:266-268). For example, James Gibb, in *The Archaeology of Wealth* (1996) argues that it is useful to conceive of the primary "meaning" of items historically in terms of identity formation, reflecting "...the self-perceptions of those households, measurable in terms of economics, ethnicity, nationalism, and religion" (Gibb 1996:25). Gibb argues that all forms of material culture were, in their historical contexts, chosen expressions of wealth in various forms, and hence represent the conscious "...efforts of the household to create and assert its identity on a daily basis"(Gibb 1994:43). However interesting this concept might be, it is essentially a theoretical exercise, discussing how material culture might have been used and how it may have functioned. As Beaudry (1999) has pointed

out, in his actual artifact analysis Gibb fails to connect this conception to the actual artifacts found at the sites in any tangible, meaningful way. In fact, she notes that in terms of the artifacts analyzed in his study, Gibb makes almost no claims whatsoever regarding specific uses for specific items or artifact classes, lapsing into what she describes as "hyper-relativism… by claiming that since any vessel could be used for multiple purposes, we can't really say anything about the way they were really used" (Beaudry 1999:226).

In terms of this study the intent is to, on the one hand, recognize that multiple specific meanings could have existed for even a single artifact, but on the other hand, to infer the broader trends from which these meanings were derived by characterizing consumerist items in terms of their use as social tools. In other words, specific meanings associated with particular artifacts (for example, "this Chinese porcelain cup was intended by its owner to signify worldliness") are not the goal; the intent is to consider meaning on a shared, group level, acknowledging full well that this kind of approach could be criticized as "totalizing" or generalist in nature. This approach is based on the principle that it is better to attempt to make accurate statements about broad, generalized meanings, rather than, as Beaudry points out, to lapse into hyper-relativism, and say nothing at all. "Badges of membership" are not merely or solely status markers, but incorporate a range of potential meanings and possible intentions on the part of the user. The concentration of this research on consumer goods as tools for negotiating social status and group membership, while certainly a simplified version of the likely contextual reality of 17th century Port Royal, has been chosen as a relatively

demonstrable inference, within a range of possible, but as yet undemonstrated, potential meanings.

A second theme important to this approach, and one that is central to identifying consumer behavior from an archaeological assemblage, is that prior to the rise of consumer behavior, despite whatever specific time-period the particular scholar assigns to this event, many researchers assert that there was little differentiation in the types and forms of household goods throughout the society, or at least there was considerably less than after the society became steeped in advanced consumer behaviors. Several researchers have summarized this as the concept that in pre-consumer society, virtually everyone (except for a tiny "hyper-elite" usually associated with the Royal Court or the very upper-tier society in urban areas) owned generally the same types of items, but that wealthier people owned those things in greater quantity (McKendrick 1982; Carson 1994; Carr and Walsh 1994). This conceptualization does not imply that wealthier citizens did not own some special items which would distinguish them from others in society, but is based on the fact that the bulk of their material possessions would have been quite similar to, or in many cases even the same, as those owned by citizens from lower economic strata.

A corollary to this is that the 'value' of most items therefore resided primarily in their utilitarian value; i.e., the value of a cup is centered on the fact that you can drink from it, and the price one is willing to pay is therefore based on the need for that particular utilitarian function. The implication of this, when studied from a societal

level, is that there will be a rather limited range of types, forms, materials, and decorations, for most items in a pre-consumer culture.

In a consumer society, however, many items would have had to have been made in a fairly wide range of types, forms, materials, and decorations, reflecting not just cost of manufacture (though this is clearly very important) but also potentially incorporating some of the symbolic values and the use of items as tools to convey social messages. In other words, in looking for evidence of consumer behavior within any particular item or artifact class, the significant point is how much more elaborate the item is, in terms of form, decoration, or material, above and beyond the minimum necessary to perform the basic utilitarian function which it ostensibly fulfills.

This idea is the foundation of the approach taken in this study of Port Royal material culture, and underlying each of the classifications discussed below is the simple idea that consumer behavior must, by definition, be based on observable differences in items of similar function; differences that the historical audience could 'read' in terms of specific social messages. These messages might be basic themes such as 'expensive' or 'rare', or might be more complex, such as allusions to certain behaviors or even the 'membership' (or aspirations to membership) of the owner to a particular social or economic group. A fundamental concept underlying this analysis is that there must be a fairly wide range of choices in terms of form, style, decoration, and material, and often linked to price, in order for any particular items to serve as an effective tool for negotiating social relationships.

Based upon this central idea of observable difference and range of form, and taking into account previous researchers methods for identifying artifacts associated with the rise in consumer behavior (Weatherill 1988, Shammas 1990, Carr and Walsh 1994, Pogue 2001), the method of analysis for the artifact types and classes chosen for this study were selected by evaluating the archaeological assemblage recovered from Port Royal according to the four following qualitative criteria, summarized in Table 5.1. The first can be termed *elaboration in form or decoration above the utilitarian minimum.* Quantifying decoration is an extremely difficult, and inherently subjective, task. The approach utilized here is, for any particular artifact type, to note the minimum necessary to do the utilitarian task, then observe whether examples of this type indicate greater elaboration, either in form, decoration, or both, than would be necessary for the item to perform its basic utilitarian task. In a hand-production economy, greater elaboration in terms of decoration or form typically translates into a higher purchase cost, but does not necessarily add to the functional utility of the item. For example, if someone chooses to pay more, even if it is only slightly more, for an elaborately shaped or decorated vessel, this may be evidence for consumer behavior. This particular criterion is not especially applicable to decorative types for which a range of options were available with apparently little variation in terms of labor input or eventual price. Differences in decoration for refined 17th-century earthenwares are a good example, and for these types the concentration would be on elaboration of form, rather than decoration.

The second criterion is very similar to the first, but deals perhaps more directly

TABLE 5.1 Qualitative methods of identifying consumerist behavior in material culture

Criterion	Stylistic attributes	Examples
Elaboration in form or decoration above the utilitarian minimum	Form or decoration is expressed to a degree beyond other similar items- decorative elements such as fleur-de-lees, engraved markings, elaborate coloring, unusual physical elements, etc.	Engraved spoons, ceramic vessels with non-essential elements, elaborate carved handles, etc.
Elaboration in material above the utilitarian minimum	Material used is of higher quality / expense than is common for utilitarian purposes alone. Metals such as gold, silver, pewter, or brass are, common, but porcelains or refined earthenwares also be considered.	Brass candlesticks, gold buttons, silver utensils, pewter plates, porcelain vessels, etc.
Presence of non-utilitarian items	Items for which there is not a common, 'everyday' function in typical late 17th century households	Elaborate flower-pot, spice grinder, parasol, wig, clock, books, pictures, etc.
Presence of 'new' types, or older types in new forms	Items that were rare or non-existent in most households in the mid-17th century	Wares or utensiles for the consumption of hot drinks, spices or related spice accoutrements, forks, sugar or sweet-meats vessels, etc.

with the inferred cost of the item. It is summarized as *elaboration in material above the utilitarian minimum*. As an example, if a wooden implement is just as effective at performing a specific task as a silver one, then it can reasonably be inferred that the

purchase of silver rather than wood represents an act that has to do not just with the utilitarian task the item will be used for, but also with the symbolic value of the item, potentially indicating consumerist behavior.

The third criterion used is the *presence of non-utilitarian items*. Things which do not serve a basic, common or 'everyday' function within most households in a society can be strong expressions of consumer behavior. These items may be as close to direct indicators of consumer behavior as we are likely to find in the material record, since their value, and indeed their purpose, is often directly derived from their role as display items. The fourth criteria, related to the third, can be summarized as the *presence of 'new' types, or older types in new forms*. These items are important given that one of the descriptions of pre-consumer culture is that rich, middle, and poor groups all own roughly the same items. Historians (Carr and Walsh 1994; Weatherill 1988) consider the emergence of new items, or the adoption of items not previously widespread, as key hallmarks of consumer behavior.

It should be clear that none of these criteria is a "perfect" indicator of consumer behavior, nor is any specific artifact class an infallible marker of conspicuous display or aspirations to membership in social groups. The emphasis, therefore, should be on particular items or artifact categories that demonstrate the attributes discussed above, and the aggregate interpreted in terms of the overall extent to which the middle class of Port Royal was engaging in consumer behavior during the 1680's. Obviously, such an interpretation must also be informed by additional analysis in the documentary record, and that evidence is discussed in later chapters. The following discussion is not an

exhaustive examination of all of the artifacts recovered from Port Royal, but instead is a deliberately selective study intended to focus on consumerist behavior in the terms outlined above.

WHY THESE PARTICULAR ARTIFACTS?

The previous discussion outlined the basic ideas underlying the four qualitative criteria that will be used to evaluate the artifacts from the Port Royal assemblage for evidence of consumerist behavior. Every artifact found at Port Royal could be examined using these terms, though the vast majority would not meet any one of the four criterion for the simple reason that they are essentially utilitarian in form and function, and would therefore not demonstrate any of the qualities inherent in items most closely associated with consumerist behavior. While these four criteria are essentially subjective, they were not chosen arbitrarily but instead reflect, and were strongly influenced by, established scholarship on consumerist behavior discussed above. In addition to these broader means of evaluation, it is also important to note that the specific artifact types and classes chosen for this study were also based predominantly on previous scholarship.

Historians and archaeologists are generally in agreement as to the artifact classifications and types that should be considered key indicators in rising consumer behavior during the 17th and 18th centuries. Some differences arise, however, based on the nature of the data being analyzed (probate inventory listings vs. archaeological assemblages, for instance), or on how such data should be properly organized (arrayed

rural vs. urban or how economic scaling can best be stratified to accurately reflect social or economic differences). The following discussion concentrates on three studies of consumer behavior during the time period in question, two by historians and one by an archaeologist, and is intended to demonstrate both the degree of agreement as to which artifacts should be included in a study of consumerist behavior during the 17th and 18th centuries, as well as revealing some specific areas of disagreement.

In *Consumer Behaviour & Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760*, historian Lorna Weatherill (1988) utilizes the classification scheme listed in Table 5.2. Based on extensive analysis of nearly 3,000 probate inventories taken from selected regions in England between 1675 and 1725, Weatherill identified four broad categories of goods within which she believed that changing patterns of consumption could be demonstrated through time. Though these categories are different than the four criteria used in this study and discussed above, they are quite similar in the thought underlying them, as will be seen.

Weatherill started by looking at items that she classified as already being 'well established' by 1675, within which classification she places furniture such as tables or chairs, cooking pots, and pewter utensils. Secondly, she notes several categories of items that were 'known but not common' in 1675, within which classification she places books, table linen, pewter dishes, pewter plates, looking glasses, and earthenware. Third, she classifies some items as 'extremely rare' in 1675, including clocks, pictures, books, window curtains, and knives and forks. Finally, she notes the

TABLE 5.2. Categories of household goods indicating a rise in consumerist behavior in England, 1675-1725, as chosen by Lorna Weatherill (table adapted from *Consumer Behaviour & Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760*, Weatherill 1988:26)

Item	% of household ownership in 1675	% of household ownership in 1695	% of household ownership in 1715
Tables	87	89	91
Cooking pots	66	69	74
Sauce-pans	2	8	17
Pewter	94	93	95
Pewter dishes	39	44	56
Pewter plates	9	21	42
Earthenware	27	34	47
Books	18	18	21
Clocks	9	14	33
Pictures	7	9	24
Looking Glasses	22	31	44
Table linen	43	41	44
Window curtains	7	11	19
Knives and Forks	1	3	6
China	0	2	8
Utensils for hot drinks	0	1	7
Silver or gold	23	24	29

appearance of 'entirely new' items, such as china (Chinese porcelain) and various equipments for hot drinks, such as chocolate, coffee or tea (Weatherill 1988:28).

Weatherill documented the expansion ownership into the middling ranks of specific items within these four categories of consumer goods, concluding that the decade of 1705-1715 was the most significant period in terms of broad change in the material culture of English households (Weatherill 1988: 40). Her conclusion was that although hints of significant changes in consumer behavior can be discerned in the late 17th century among the most wealthy in her sample, "...the 'consumerist' approach is

not so appropriately applied either to the earlier period or to the bulk of the middle ranks" during the 17th century (Weatherill 1988:16).

Weatherill's fine study is not without its flaws, however, and most are related to common problems historians face in attempting to discern changes in consumer behavior from probate inventory data alone. For example, Weatherill, through no fault of her own, does not have the ability to distinguish between changes in form, decoration, or even in some cases materials, from the generalized probate descriptions yet for many items such aspects are key indicators of a shift towards consumerist behavior. A hardscrabble, home-made table is indistinguishable from a professionally built scrollwork masterpiece, and hence they are recorded as equivalent, and Weatherill eschews the difficult but potentially rewarding approach of sorting within categories based on the probated values of items to discern such differences. Several of her categories are "catch-all" meaning, for example, that a tiny silver sewing thimble and a large, elaborately formed and inscribed silver tureen are both recorded simply on a presence-absence basis as 'silver'. In addition, she does not adequately address the issues of recording bias and under-reporting inherent in such data. It is inconceivable, for instance, to any archaeologist familiar with the ever-present earthenware sherds that litter the ground of archaeological sites from this time period that, as Weatherill asserts, only 27% of all households contained earthenware in 1675, and that this had risen to just 34% by 1695 (Weatherill 1988: 26). This is a typical example of ubiquitous items not being mentioned in inventories, and in this case, an unquestioning reliance on probate data alone leads Weatherill to the unfortunate conclusion that "the composite

picture is of earthenware as a known, but not ubiquitous, item in 1675" (Weatherill 1988:30), a statement which would be rather shocking to any archaeologist who has excavated sites from this time period.

A slightly different methodology and artifact classification system was utilized by historians Lois Carr and Lorena S. Walsh in their research into standards of living in the colonial Chesapeake during this same time period. Carr and Walsh proposed creating an "amenities index" based on over 7,500 probate inventories from colonial Maryland between 1655 and 1777 (Carr and Walsh 1994:67-79). The items they chose to examine were very similar to those studied by Weatherill, including books, earthenware, knives and forks, clocks and watches, pictures, and tea and teawares. They chose, however, to have separate categories for knives and forks, instead of lumping them together into one category, as Weatherill did. Books, too, were separated into two categories, splitting religious from secular titles. Similarly, they also distinguished between coarse earthenwares and fine earthenwares, and included Chinese porcelain within the latter category rather than as a separate category as Weatherill chose to do. Weatherill also, as noted earlier, chose to put all silver into one catch-all category, regardless of form, whereas Carr and Walsh chose to limit their study to silver plate specifically, leaving out any other forms of silver which may have been present in the inventories. Carr and Walsh also included spices and wigs as items worthy of analysis in this regard, two categories Weatherill chose not to examine.

Carr and Walsh conclude that during the 17th century, only the very wealthiest of Marylands elite, themselves a tiny fraction of the total population, began to show a

slight increase in the aforementioned amenities in the 1680's. Their analysis indicates the middle and lower ranks did not begin to see much movement in the overall amenities score until at least the 1730's (Carr and Walsh 1994: 70,108). As will be demonstrated, the following analysis of the archaeological assemblage and the documentary evidence appear to indicate a very different story for the middle class of Port Royal, Jamaica, during the late 17th century.

CHAPTER VI
CONSUMERIST ARTIFACTS

Before discussing specific consumerist materials from Port Royal, it may be useful to broadly characterize a typical assemblage recovered from an excavated English colonial land site from this same period. At the time of this writing, archaeologists Dennis J. Pogue, Julia King, and David Muraca are in the process of creating a comparative database of material culture for 17th-century sites in Virginia and Maryland, based on excavated assemblages from 20 different archaeological sites. This massive undertaking is scheduled for completion in 2006, and will eventually provide the opportunity for true regional-level characterizations to be made regarding 17th-century material culture from the Chesapeake. At present, the best option available for comparative purposes is to discuss a particular example of an excavated site. The site selected for this comparison is the Clifts Plantation.

Excavated by Dr. Fraser Neiman between 1976 and 1979, the Clifts Plantation site was located in Westmoreland County, on Virginia's "Northern Neck" overlooking the Potomac river. The initial plantation appears to have been established in the early 1670's, and was occupied for roughly the next 60 years until its abandonment around 1730 (Neiman 1980:31-60). Neiman was able to discern four major phases of activity at the site, potentially corresponding to significant and distinct periods in the history and use of the property, around which he organized artifact and archaeological information temporally. For the purposes of this comparison, the period Neiman

termed Clifts II (1685-1705) was selected, as it roughly overlaps the 1692 terminus date for the Port Royal materials. Table 6.1 shows the artifact assemblage recovered from four major trash pit features dating to the Clifts II phase of occupation. While every individual archaeological site is in some ways unique and distinct, this artifact assemblage provides a typical example of the artifact assemblage recovered from English colonial land sites at this time period. Only selected classes of artifacts germane to the discussion of the rise in consumerist behavior are included in this table, while the categories of tools, architectural materials, clay pipes, horse equipment, arms, and miscellaneous finds were not included.

This assemblage can be characterized as generally utilitarian in nature, with a paucity of luxury items and expensive materials. No lighting devices or silver items were recovered, and the only pewter item was a single spoon. The ceramic assemblage contained just eight different ware types, and tended towards generally plain, utilitarian wares, especially North Devon gravel, Coarseware, and the locally made Morgan Jones. No Chinese porcelain was recovered, nor was any evidence found indicating the use of spices or the consumption of hot drinks. In short, this assemblage appears indicative of a rather spartan lifestyle, oriented strongly towards practical activities.

As discussed earlier, items most characteristic of consumerist behavior are also quite likely to be carefully curated by their owners, and it is possible that such items were in use at the site but did not find their way into these trash pits. Nonetheless, this assemblage is typical of late 17th-century material culture recovered from English

TABLE 6.1. Selected artifact classes from trash pits dating to the Clifts II (1685-1705) occupation (Neiman 1980: 167-169)

ARTIFACTS	TRASH PITS				
	273A-C	250D-E	274A-B	274E-G	TOTAL
CERAMICS					
Morgan Jones	2	14	0	0	16
Delft	3	9	0	1	13
North Devon Gravel	12	3	3	0	18
Rhenish Brown Stoneware	3	0	1	0	4
North Devon Sgraffito	8	5	0	1	14
Staffordshire Slip	7	5	1	2	15
Coarseware, green glaze	15	0	0	0	15
Majolica	1	0	1	0	2
GLASS					
Case bottle	10	0	0	0	10
Wine bottle	5	7	0	2	14
Table glass	0	4	0	0	4
Pharmaceutical	0	1	0	0	1
KITCHENWARE					
Pewter spoon	1	0	0	0	1
Iron table knife	2	0	0	0	2
Iron bucket bail	1	0	0	0	1
Iron frying pan	0	0	0	1	1
Iron pot handle	1	0	0	0	1
FURNITURE					
Hasp lock	1	0	0	0	1
Brass curtain ring	0	0	0	1	1
Brass tack	0	1	0	0	1
CLOTHING					
Pins	0	0	1	0	1
Tinkling cone	0	1	0	0	1

colonial sites in the Chesapeake, and provides an informative contrast to the Port Royal materials discussed below.

The following discussion of consumerist artifacts concentrates on a selected sample of the entire artifact assemblage recovered from Port Royal. As discussed in the previous chapter, these artifacts were selected based both on previous material culture

research into the rise of consumerist behavior (Carr and Walsh 1994, Shammas 1990, Weatherill 1988) and on four qualitative criterion developed for this study to reflect particular artifact properties or characteristics that often distinguished items reflective of consumerist behavior. These criterion are (1) elaboration in form or decoration above the utilitarian minimum, (2) elaboration in material above the utilitarian minimum, (3) non-utilitarian items, and (4) 'new' types, or older types in new forms. The following material culture categories and types clearly illustrate the prevalence of consumerist behavior among the middle-class households excavated at Port Royal.

LIGHTING DEVICES

The TAMU / INA excavations at Port Royal recovered a total of 25 artifacts related to lighting. In addition to 2 lanterns, one made of copper and one of brass, a total of 16 candlesticks, 2 wick trimmers, and 5 oil lamps were found. Oil lamps were the cheapest form of lighting available, and 4 of the 5 recovered were made from a relatively cheap material, copper. These oil lamps represent the lower end of the cost spectrum, as they were not only cheaper to buy initially (compared to brass candlesticks), they would also have been cheaper to operate over time since oil would have been less costly than candles (McLaughlin-Neyland 1987: 3-5). The 15 brass and 1 pewter candlestick holders, on the other hand, represent the higher end of the spectrum. Made from more expensive material, they are also considerably more ornate, both in form and decoration, than the oil lamps. The cheaper tallow candles were not available in Port Royal, where the mean yearly temperature of 85 degrees rendered

FIGURE 6.1. The spectrum of lighting devices chosen by Port Royal residents ranged from copper oil lamps (foreground) to large and often ornate brass candlestick holders (background).

tallow candles unusable due to their low melting point (McLaughlin-Neyland 1987:8), necessitating the use of the more expensive beeswax candles. Thus, in addition to the higher initial purchase cost of the brass candlesticks, they would have necessitated higher continuing expenditures over time compared to oil lamps. Figure 6.1 shows

some of the lighting devices recovered from Port Royal. The grouping illustrates the wide range of options available, and is evocative of two of the criteria for consumer behavior outlined above; namely, elaboration in form and decoration above the utilitarian minimum, and elaboration in material above the utilitarian minimum. The middle class of Port Royal had other choices, but predominantly purchased well made brass candlesticks in decorative forms, an important point given that some researchers (Carr and Walsh 1994; Shammas 1990; Pogue 1997) have pointed to candlesticks as one of the types of 'amenities' indicative of the rise of consumer behavior and an overall standard of living.

UTENSILS

Utensils for eating were found in significant quantities, and clearly reflect a new emphasis on fashionable dining and the rise of etiquette and table manners. In terms of evidence for luxury and display behavior, among the items recovered were six silver spoons, three silver forks, and three silver handles for table utensils. The choice of silver was not the only one available to Port Royalites, as pewter utensils were also found (Figure 6.2), and in fact, Pewter was the most common material used for utensils. Spoons are a good illustration, as besides the six silver examples discussed above, an additional 19 pewter spoons were also recovered (Figure 6.3). The choice of silver for some of these items was a step up from the usual standard. In addition, even among the pewter spoons, several examples display a remarkable degree of ornamentation, clearly above the utilitarian minimum.

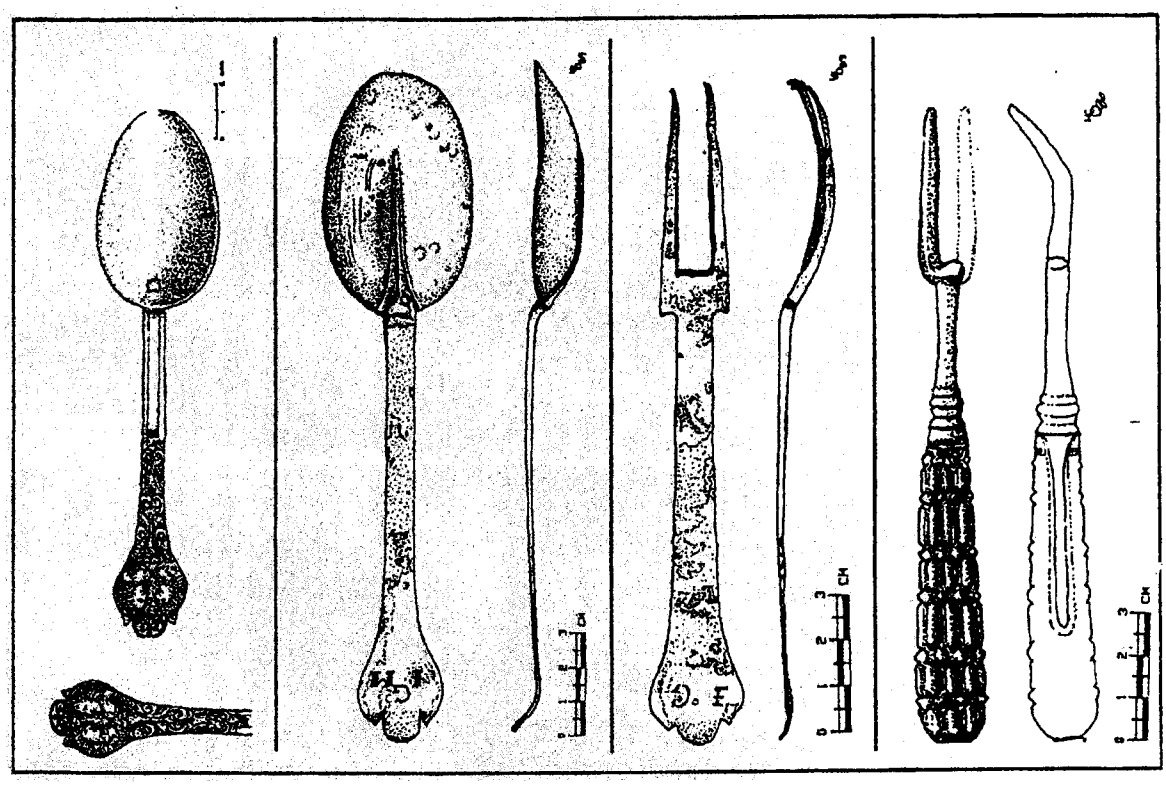

FIGURE 6.2. Artifact drawings of selected spoons and forks recovered from Port Royal. The material(s) from which each was made is, from left to right: Pewter, silver, silver, and iron with carved bone handle.

It is also significant that three silver forks, one brass fork, and one bone-handled iron fork were recovered. Forks were virtually an unknown quantity in England until after the middle of the 17th century, but thereafter found increasing favor, initially among the wealthy. Forks were linked directly to the rise in genteel manners and etiquette, applied in this case to the table and eating habits, which increasingly came to be identified with concepts of gentility and civil behavior. Many researchers agree that forks were emblematic of this important movement as regards the refinement of table manners and etiquette associated with changing social behavior (Carson 1994:603; see also Walsh

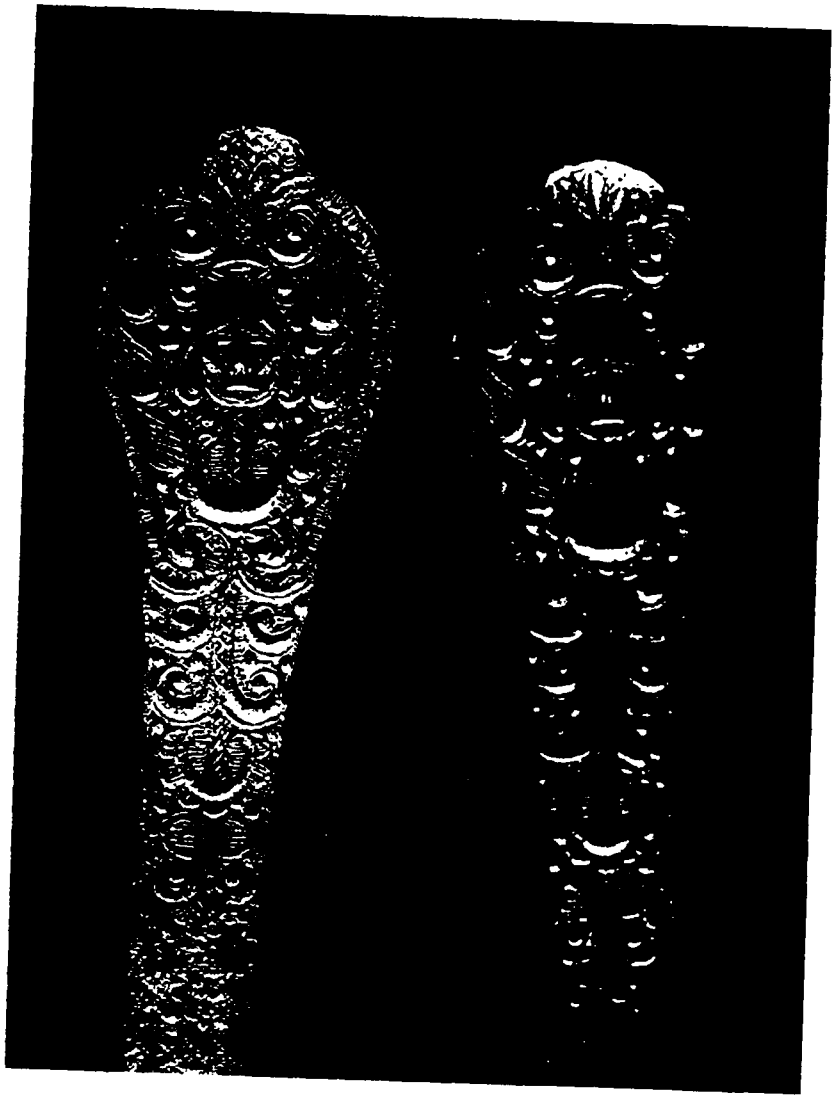

FIGURE 6.3. These pewter spoons demonstrate a remarkable degree of ornamentation, clearly above the utilitarian minimum.

and Carr 1994; Yentch 1990). Thus, the presence of these forks in middle-class houses of Port Royal in the late 1600's may be evidence not only of the physical props requisite for an aspired-to social position, but also hint that unique social codes of

behavior and table manners of the elite were also being adopted by social climbers eager to demonstrate their membership through the demonstration of such knowledge.

SILVER

Due to its expense, silver is often considered a "status" item, but while this is likely an accurate broad characterization, exceptions likely existed. For example, in her 1992 M.A. thesis on Port Royal silver, Laurel Anne Breece noted that a study of inventories from Port Royal revealed many instances where poorer citizens died owning a few items made of silver, while a grandee worth nearly 2000£ had none (Breece 1992:43). Silver represented capital, and like pewter, could be "cashed-in" through the melting pot during lean times or after an item was broken. Thus, while it is not a perfect marker of 'consumerist' behavior, it nonetheless is an important potential indicator, and clearly represents an expensive elaboration in material above the utilitarian minimum.

As noted above, among the silver items recovered included six silver spoons, three silver forks, and three silver handles most likely for table knives. Also noted above, the three silver forks recovered are a in fact represent a "double sign", as they are not only made of an expensive material, but signify a knowledge of table manners which the use of the forks required, a mark of (aspired-to) gentility.

Also among the artifacts recovered were a gold earring with a pearl, and a silver parasol handle. As will be discussed in the probate inventory analysis, nearly 80% of all Port Royal inventories referenced silver in some form, a stunning percentage compared

to the 21-24% frequency of silver or gold in England at this same time period (Weatherill 1988:26). As a valuable and beautiful material, the use of silver indicates a desire to elaborate items into visible symbols of wealth and/or taste. The use of a precious metal underscores such a sign or statement.

One of the most interesting artifacts was a silver Nutmeg Grater (Figure 6.4). Miles notes that nutmeg was an expensive product itself, highly prized for its perceived medicinal qualities and often used to add spice to tobacco or hot drinks (Miles 1986: 10-11). Miles also notes that the earliest literary reference to such an item comes from 1695, and in a study of fifty English silver nutmeg graters, the earliest dated example was from 1693 (Miles 1986:13). Thus, at the time of the Port Royal earthquake, this item would have been very new and fashionable, and use of an ornamented, silver nutmeg grater only emphasizes the choice of an expensive spice. As a non-utilitarian item made from an expensive material, and as a new and unusual piece used in conjunction with an exotic spice, the silver nutmeg grater is an excellent example of a 'consumerist' artifact owned by a middle class household at Port Royal.

To archaeologists accustomed to the near absence of these types of silver artifacts on land sites, the Port Royal collection may appear remarkable for what the amount of silver items it contains. However, what may be more remarkable is that this is likely only a portion of the total amount of silver owned by these households at the time of the earthquake. In the months and years following the earthquake, treasure hunting, or 'wracking' in the ruined city of Port Royal was a major industry since the recovery of valuable items from the sunken city was easily accomplished by men used

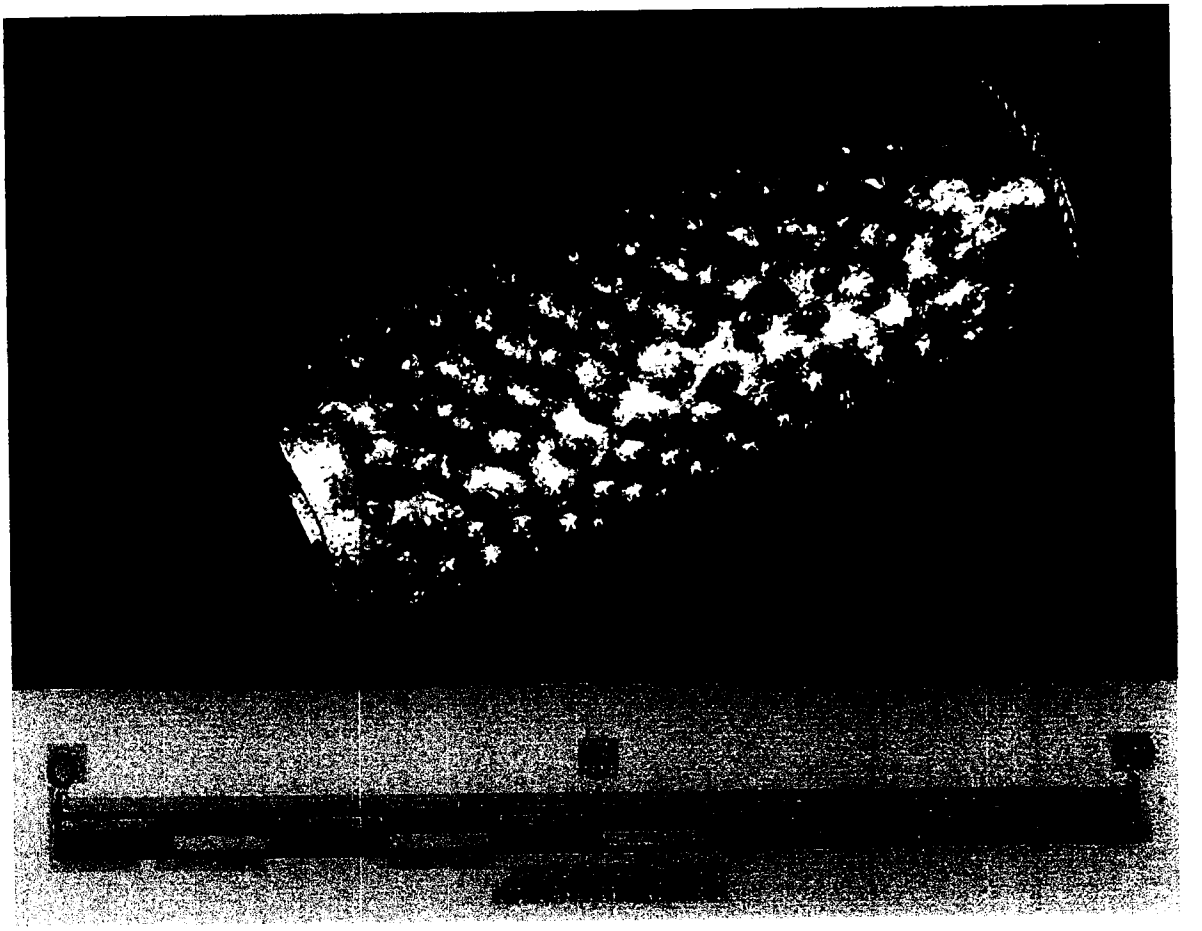

FIGURE 6.4. Silver nutmeg grater, one of the earliest examples of such a spice accoutrement ever found.

to salvaging the wrecks of Spanish galleons (Breece, 1992: 12). Both Hamilton (1992) and Marx (quoted in Breece, 1992) note that during their excavations, silver artifacts at Port Royal were almost exclusively found buried beneath collapsed brick walls, or where divers couldn't easily get to them. The silver artifacts recovered from Port Royal

therefore are likely to represent only those items which escaped being recovered in salvaging operations in the years following the earthquake, and probably under-represents the actual amount of silver artifacts in use in these households at the time of the earthquake. What silver there is, however, clearly indicates a people choosing material items for reasons that go far beyond their basic utilitarian function.

CERAMICS

Researchers interested in an in-depth study of Port Royal ceramics should consult Madeliene Donachie's 2001 Ph.D dissertation *Household Ceramics at Port Royal, 1655-1692* (Donachie 2001) analyzing the decorated wares from the TAMU / INA excavations of Port Royal. As part of her analysis, Donachie statistically compared the assemblage of decorated earthenware at Port Royal to two other excavated sites from roughly the same time period. Ceramics are one of the few artifacts classes discussed here that may be appropriate for such statistical comparison to land sites, because earthenware assemblages are less subject to some of the depositional filters and site formation differences that render the Port Royal assemblage difficult to compare to typical land sites, as discussed earlier. Earthenwares are subject to regular breakage while in use, and hence are discarded at a higher rate than many other artifact classes, yet their durability in the soil means that they survive the passage of time well in archaeological sites. Thus, while they are still affected by a number of depositional, and especially discard processes (see Schiffer 1977), the ceramic assemblage at a land site still has a high degree of "representativeness" (Spencer-Wood

and Heberling 1987:57) in terms of what was in-use within a household during a particular historic period. For these reasons, the decorated earthenware assemblage at Port Royal offers a valuable opportunity for the direct comparison of a specific artifact class present at Port Royal to land sites, and hence is particularly germane to this study.

Donachie chose for her comparative study two sites from roughly the same time period as the Port Royal collection, the Drummond II site in Virginia and the Tun Inn site in England. The Drummond II site (dating from 1680-1710) was the home of one of the most elite of Chesapeake society (really an "elite of Chesapeake elite") of the late 17th-century, Virginia Governor William Drummond, while the Tun Inn site, dating from 1702 – 1714, was from a refuse pit associated with a commercial Inn in Surrey, England. Donachie statistically compared the decorated ceramic assemblage from these sites to that excavated from the Building 4/5 complex at Port Royal (Donachie 2001).

It is important to remember that Building 5 was the home and place of business for a tavern owner / victualler, while Building 4 likely represented tenement dwellings owned by the family at Building 5. It therefore might be expected that this assemblage would be quite comparable to that recovered from the Tun Inn site, as the commercial activities taking place at the sites were roughly similar (both were serving food and/or drink) and because such occupations would typically place these families solidly within the middling ranks of English society. Weatherill, for example, in her analysis of English probate inventories (1675-1725), recorded 77 probates from people listing their occupation as victualler. The mean value of the victualler's overall estates averaged 155£, while the mean value of household goods averaged just 43£ (Weatherill

1988:210), placing this occupation solidly within the middling ranks. Conversely, the Drummond II site was associated with one of the highest-ranking colonial officials and plantation owners in Virginia, and one might expect that the ceramic assemblage would therefore reflect this "elite" social, political, and economic status and thus might be quite different from the Port Royal materials.

Donachie's analysis indicated something quite different. While the Drummond II site did indeed produce a ceramic assemblage "indicative of an extremely affluent colonial planter" (Donachie 2001:178), the composition of the ceramic assemblage was actually very similar to the Port Royal materials. In fact, in terms of the different types of wares present, the range of ware types, and even the relative percentages of specific ware types, the Port Royal assemblage virtually paralleled the Drummond II site (Donachie 2001:182-187) in most areas. Conversely, the Tun Inn site in England was markedly different than the Port Royal Assemblage. The Tun Inn assemblage contained fewer types and forms associated with fine dining, fewer expensive wares, and the assemblage was dominated by cheaper, coarse wares (Donachie 2001:186-189). Donachie noted that the differences between Tun Inn and Port Royal were especially striking, and that of the two, the Port Royal assemblage contained by far the richer, more diverse assemblage, including wares and forms associated with fine dining (Donachie 2001:186-189).

The comparison of ceramic assemblages thus produced a surprising conclusion; the Port Royal assemblage was quite comparable to the Drummond II site in terms of quality, types, forms, and overall composition, while the Port Royal materials were of

markedly better quality and higher expense than the Tun Inn materials, with Port Royal producing a far more diverse assemblage than the English site. In short, the analysis of ceramics indicated that the consumption patterns and consumer choices (in terms of ceramics) being made by the tavern owner / victualler family at Building 4/5 were far more comparable to the "hyper-elite" household of a former Governor of Virginia than to the Tun Inn assemblage.

In addition, in her analysis of the Port Royal ceramics Donachie concluded that multiple ceramic types, vessel forms, and individual items clearly indicated a change towards the types of social behaviors directly implicated in the consumer revolution. She noted evidence for a rise in individualized dining, specialized items associated with fine dining such as a faux-Chinese delftware "flower-cup" (Figure 6.5) used for serving sweet-meats or sugar, the adoption of new vessel forms such as a large punch bowl and chocolate/coffee cups, and evidence for a concern with social status and display (Donachie 2001: 202).

In order to add specific examples to this broad discussion, several examples of ceramic wares from the Port Royal collection will be discussed here as per 'consumerist' behavior. The first is an elaborate delft flower vase shown in Figure 6.6. The reconstructed vase has a hollow-stemmed trumpet foot, with rounded body and a delicate fluted rim. Three ornate sockets for flowers are seated on the shoulder of the vessel, which originally had a blue-green glaze and was likely decorated with hand-painted Chinese or floral designs (Donachie 2001: 162). The vase could have been

FIGURE 6.5. Elaborately formed delftware flower-shaped cup, likely used for serving sweetmeats or sugar.

used simply as a decorative flower holder, or it could have been filled with earth and a potted plant placed inside, although water poured in the top would drain out of the hollow stem. The piece may also have been simply an *objet d'art* and displayed as a beautiful curiosity on its own (Donachie 2001:162). As a non-utilitarian object, with an elaborate form and ornate decoration, the very function of this item was to serve as a display.

FIGURE 6.6. Highly ornamented, delicate, and with a complex form, this Delft flower-vase was clearly an item whose function was to act as a display, demonstrating its owners taste and sensibility.

A wide variety of porcelain vessels were recovered, shown in Figure 6.7. Much like silver, these items are likely not evidence of "status" in every case but are a good general indicator that the middle class of Port Royal had access to a wide range of

FIGURE 6.7. Range of Chinese export porcelain recovered from the Port Royal excavations.

commodities, and was regularly choosing to buy more expensive wares (Dewolf 2000: 197). The assemblage shows clear evidence of the presence of matched sets. Several matching sets are evident for the hot drink cups, which could have been used for coffee, chocolate, or tea. Of particular interest are the Chinese "Dog of Fo" porcelain figurines. The remains of two small and three large figurines (examples shown in Figure 6.8) were recovered. While they could nominally be used to hold incense, the 'function' of these expensive and very unusual items was clearly as display items. Considering that they evince elaboration in style and decoration, are made from a

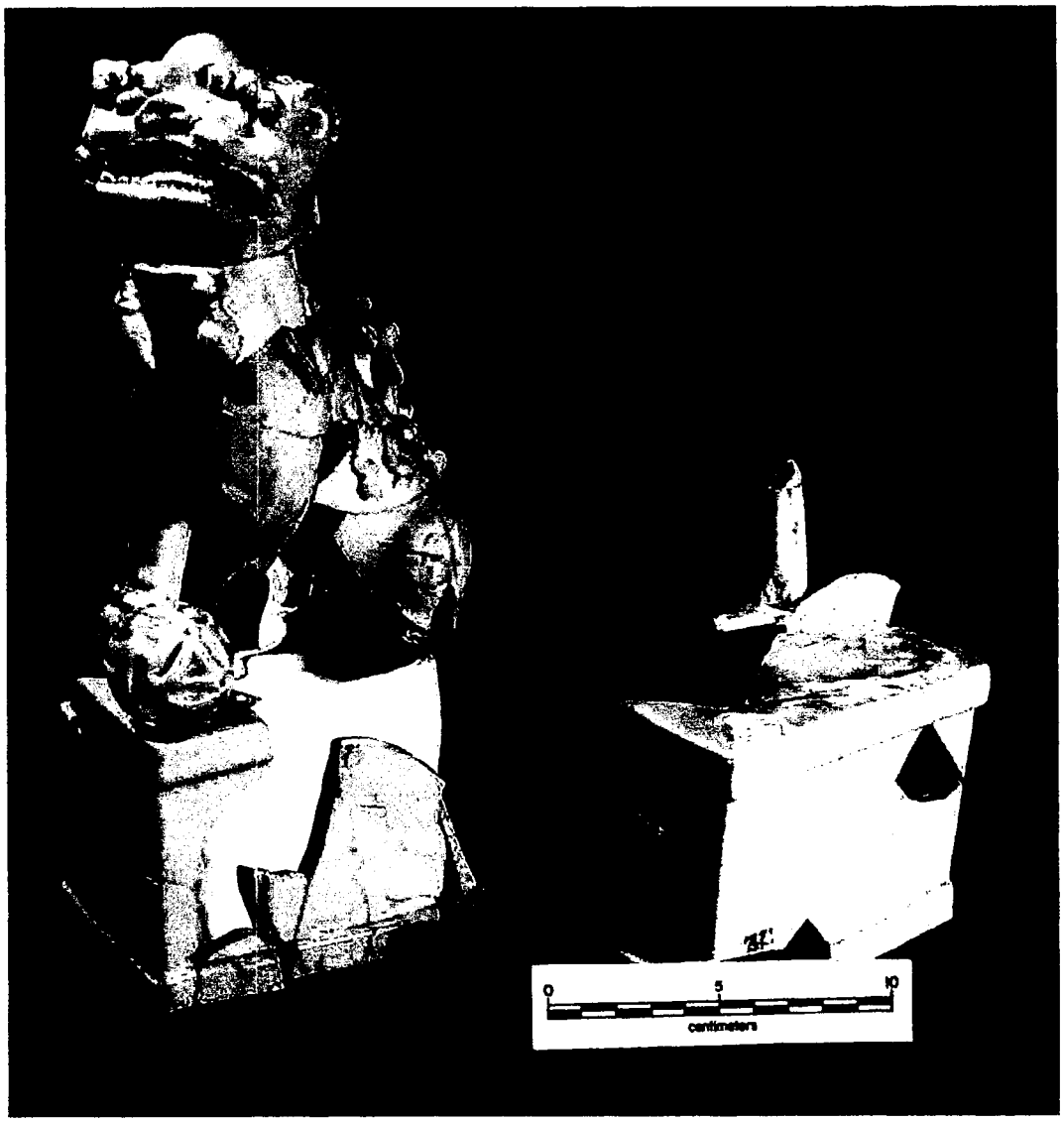

FIGURE 6.8. Porcelain "Dog of Fo" figurines.

relatively expensive material, are a new or at least a highly unusual item, and have no utilitarian value whatsoever, these objects are very likely as close to direct evidence of consumer behavior as we are likely to find in the archaeological record.

PEWTER

There is some scholarly disagreement as to whether pewter should be considered a luxury item or as evidence for a higher standard of living during the second half of the 17th century. Some historians (Horn 1994;Weatherill 1988) consider the presence of pewter in probate inventories as indicative of a luxury item, and chart its rising frequency of ownership within households as one piece of evidence for a rising standard of living. Others (Smart-Martin 1989) consider pewter to be a more ubiquitous item, a regular and unremarkable aspect of ordinary material culture of the 17th century. This material presents particular problems for researchers, for two related reasons. First, if it was truly a ubiquitous and unremarkable item, it may be just the type of property that went overlooked, or at least was not often mentioned specifically by name, in probate inventories. Second, because it was a material for which there was still some value after the piece was broken, since it could be melted down and recast, and because it was a material that was relatively strong and resisted breakage, it is very likely that the amount of pewter recovered in archaeological excavations is probably not representative of the amount of pewter actually in use historically at the site (Smart-Martin 1989). Thus, pewter is potentially problematic as regards its utility for inferring consumerist behavior, however it is possible that pewter was a "lower-end" luxury material.

An astonishing 321 separate pewter artifacts or fragments of pewter artifacts were recovered during the TAMU/INA excavations at Port Royal. A total of 91 complete pewter plates were recovered, along with 25 partial or complete pewter

spoons. Four tankards, three chargers, three bowls, and two porringers were also recovered, indicating the primacy of pewter as the material of choice for eating and drinking accoutrements at Port Royal. Interesting individual pewter artifacts included a candlestick, a salt cellar, an ink stand, and part of a pewter sundial. In short, pewter was heavily represented in this assemblage from just 11 individual households, only five of which were completely excavated. Due to the rather nebulous status of pewter, as a material that may or may not be a good indicator of consumerist behavior, it is difficult to say whether most of these artifacts (especially the inordinately large collection of plates) signify a slightly higher standard of luxury consumption, or simply the utilitarian usage of a durable material. Certainly the ink stand, salt cellar, candlestick, and sundial represent items that can be accurately classified as unusual or a cut above the utilitarian minimum, and are thus potentially indicative of luxury consumption.

CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that the vast majority of artifacts found during the Port Royal excavations were exactly what might be expected at an English colonial site from the late 17th century. The overarching feature of the entire assemblage is continuity with the past and with the larger British colonial world, rather than any sort of massive break. This admittedly selective survey, however, intentionally focuses on particular items or artifact types that do not seem to fit neatly into that larger picture. Individually, none of the artifacts discussed in this section is undeniable 'proof' of the

use of items as a "...badge of membership in class-conscious social groups" (Carson 1994:522), or of aggressive social climbing by using objects as symbolic tools to make statements regarding the owner's claims, or aspirations to, social status. In aggregate, however, these items are clearly not what one would expect to find in a middling neighborhood circa 1692, circulating within a middle class that, according to many historians and archaeologists, should still have been 20 to 40 years away from 'consumerist' behavior.

It is remarkable that all of these items came from households in a very "middling" middle class neighborhood in Port Royal. This middle-class status is brought home when one considers the trades and occupations of the residents of these homes- a cobbler/woodturner/butcher, a blacksmith/tinker, a wine and pipe shop, a tavern, a tea or coffee house, a tavern / victualler, and possibly a small shop keeper. For example, research suggests that Nicholas Colson and his wife Jane might have been the victuallers / tavern owners residing at Building 5, where the silver nutmeg grater and several silver forks were found. They have been tentatively identified based on ownership marks on pewter artifacts found at this location, yet the Colsons appear to have been relatively unimportant people in Port Royal. Neither left a will or probate inventory, and Nicholas only appears twice in Port Royal documents from this time period; as a witness to a will and in a property deed transaction (Hamilton, personal communication). Nicholas did not hold public office, does not appear in any documents relating to the business of important merchants or townspeople, and does not appear in any public governmental records. If the Colson's were, in fact, the victuallers

/ tavern owners residing at Building 5, they certainly do not appear to have been prominent citizens.

Conventional scholarship on ownership of household goods would suggest these were not houses where we would expect to find silver tableware, the silver nutmeg grater, the delft flower vase, or one of the Dog of Fo figurines, circa 1692. Even if it is considered that at least a few of these items could have been for sale, and therefore were not the personal possessions of these particular households, the items were still in circulation within the city and the shop owner evidently believed there was a potential market for these kinds of objects in Port Royal, itself a clear comment on consumer behavior since, as Carson remarked, "The consumer revolution put gentility up for sale"(Carson, 1994: 521). It seems clear that gentility, or at least items which indicated aspirations to social climbing, were up for sale at Port Royal at the time of the earthquake. The archaeological assemblage, and primary accounts of life in Port Royal prior to the earthquake, indicates that the middle class was buying.

CHAPTER VII
PROBATE ANALYSIS

The previous section outlined the argument that the artifact assemblage from the middle class houses excavated at Port Royal clearly indicates strong evidence of consumerist behavior. This conclusion is advanced based on two primary lines of evidence. First, multiple items which have been identified by other researchers as being evidence for, or key markers of, a rise in consumerist behavior were found in the excavations in significant quantities. Second, the qualitative examination of artifact attributes associated with the use of goods as social tools- the elaboration of form, decoration, or material, the presence of rare or brand new items, and the presence of a broad range of variations for single artifact types- is another line of evidence that suggests the people living in these houses were influenced in their purchase decisions by symbolic values, and were not simply procuring goods for utilitarian purposes only. In short, the hallmarks of consumerist behavior are clearly evident in this assemblage.

As noted earlier, the problem with this conclusion is that according to previous research on the subject of the origin and timing of the consumer revolution, these items simply should not have been in these houses in 1692. Middle class families throughout the English colonial world did not, according to current scholarship, start to behave this way or purchase these types of items en mass until sometime between about 1710 to 1740 (see Chapter 2 for full review of scholarship on this question).

If the artifactual evidence does indeed indicate the residents of Port Royal were engaged in consumerist behavior, then two potential implications need to be considered.

First, it is possible that specific conditions in Port Royal advanced, or created an atmosphere conducive to, fast-forwarding consumerist behavior among the middle class, and that people in Port Royal were simply behaving in a way that did not become widespread among their peers in the rest of the English-colonial world until several decades later. Before this scenario can be advanced, however, a second potential conclusion must be addressed.

It is also entirely possible that the 'consumerist' behavior evidenced in the Port Royal artifact assemblage was indeed happening elsewhere in the middle class to a similar degree across the larger English-colonial world, and that historians and archaeologists have been hampered by a lack of evidence or evidential bias in ascertaining the exact timing of the phenomenon. This potential explanation should not be taken lightly, as both historians and archaeologists face tremendous difficulties in their quests to pin down the timing of such behavior from various data at their disposal.

Pogue, for instance, makes several excellent points in this regard in his critique of the "cultural impoverishment" hypothesis of Chesapeake historians. In his 1993 article titled "Standard of Living in the 17th-century Chesapeake: Patterns of Variability among Artifact Assemblages" (1993) Pogue discusses a recurrent theme in the historiography of the early Colonial Chesapeake; the proposition that English colonials in Virginia and Maryland lived lives that were significantly cruder than their social and economic contemporaries in England. Multiple historians have taken this position, including Main (1982), Carr and Walsh (1994), and to a lesser degree, Horn (1988a, 1988b, 1994).

Pogue argues that historians have acknowledged documentary bias in a general way, but that they tend to form their conclusions based on the assumption that such problems are comparatively small or can be accounted for, by utilizing large sample sizes for instance. In short, Pogue argues that most historians do not believe such bias ultimately affects their broad conclusions. Pogue counters with evidence that important biases are at work in the inventory-based historical picture, the most important of which is "a habitual under-representation in inventories of certain artifact types and classes..."(Pogue 1993: 376-379), many of which are crucial markers used by historians to ascertain the timing of the consumer revolution.

An excellent example of this can be shown by comparing ceramic assemblages from excavated 17th-century sites to probate data from that same time period. Pogue notes that in his comparison of 17th-century Maryland to the Vale of Berkeley in England, historian James J. Horn (1988a, 1988b) asserted that probate inventories from 17th-century Maryland indicated that just 13% of the poorest households and 79% of the richest contained ceramics made of earthenware or stoneware. However, in an analysis of 22 excavated 17th-century sites from the Chesapeake for which ceramic data were available, Pogue notes that not only did every site (100%) contain large numbers of fragments of these ceramics, the minimum vessel count for each site averaged an astounding 62 vessels per household (Pogue 1993:378,382). For a specific example of this habitual under-representation, Pogue cites Nick Luccketti's excavation of the Bennett Farm site, for which a detailed probate inventory survived from the time the site was occupied. Though the inventory merely lists "earthen cups", Luccketti's

excavations produced a ceramic assemblage with a minimum of 68 vessels, including tin-glazed earthenware, English and Rhenish stoneware, multiple English slipwares, and locally made earthenwares (Pogue 1993:385).

Pogue also notes other artifact classes where there is a clear discrepancy between inventory data and archaeological evidence. For instance, while table knives were found at 11 of 13 17th-century sites (85%) tabulated for domestic materials, knives are listed in only 22% of the inventories from even the wealthiest of Maryland households. Similarly, spoons were found at 10 of those 13 sites (77%), yet are listed on only 45% of the inventories from the wealthiest households. Finally, furniture tacks were found at 11 of the 13 sites in the sample (85%), yet furniture is listed in only 30% of all inventories (Pogue 1993:385-386). Given that table utensils and furniture are two categories of consumer goods where historians have pointed to changes in probate inventories through time to illustrate the rise of consumerist behavior among English colonials in the Chesapeake, these discrepancies are not to be taken lightly.

Pogue makes the case that archaeological evidence is pointing to significant gaps in probate data, and hence is calling into question some of the broadest interpretations of Chesapeake history. In short, it appears increasingly probable that historians have not come to terms with the limitations of probate inventory data, to the degree that their characterizations of the timing of the rise in consumerist behavior among the English colonial middle class might be reasonably called into question.

Archaeologists, on the other hand, are plagued by a different type of data bias in this regard. The very items most evidential of consumer behavior, those things that are

more expensive or rare, are made from higher quality materials or metals, or are elaborated through decoration, are precisely the typed of items most likely to be carefully curated by their owners, potentially delaying their entry into the archaeological record for years or even decades (Schiffer 1987). Therefore, the artifacts most evidential of consumerist behavior are precisely the types of items that are least likely to wind up in the archaeological record near the time of the inception of their use. For this reason, it is entirely possible that archaeological evidence from land sites may not be adequate to really pin down the timing of important changes in consumer behavior in this regard, especially when it comes to determining a reasonable estimate for the timing of the inception of this behavior.

As a specific example, metals such as pewter, brass, gold, and silver were commonly used to elaborate an otherwise utilitarian item into a consumerist item, and hence are of special interest in this study. Yet they are relatively scarce in the archaeological assemblages of land sites because, as archaeologist and historian Anne Smart-Martin has pointed out as regards to pewter, such metals are highly durable, not subject to ordinary use-breakage that ceramics, glass, or other commonly found artifact types are. Perhaps more importantly, even if they did break they could be sold for recasting, and since they thus retained a monetary value would not be intentionally discarded (Smart-Martin 1989:26-27). Hence the archaeological assemblages for land sites, which are primarily the result of discard activities and often accumulate over decades, may not be especially reflective of the historical presence of such materials in

those homes, nor is there any reason to believe that the timing of the initial inception of behaviors associated with such items can be readily inferred from such assemblages.

In sum, it is possible both historians and archaeologists have not fully appreciated the limitations of their respective data sets. In terms of this study, therefore, it is possible people in Port Royal are behaving, circa 1692, in a manner fully consistent with the rest of the British colonial world. Though the archaeological evidence discussed thus far strongly suggests this is not the case, the greatest advantage of the Port Royal collection- that of being the result of a catastrophic depositional event that preserved a far more complete material assemblage than is deposited on land sites- also presents a major barrier in terms of statistical comparison to land sites. One can never be sure whether major differences are the result of differences in cultural (or in this case, consumer) behavior, or are merely the result of massively different depositional histories. Fortunately, the incomparable archaeological assemblage from Port Royal is matched with an equally impressive surviving documentary record. This documentary record is especially useful in that it provides the opportunity to examine a line of evidence that is independent of the archaeological data, and hence can be used to identify differences in specific consumption behaviors between residents of Port Royal and their English-colonial peers in a way that archaeological data alone may not allow, given the site formation differences between Port Royal and most English colonial sites from this time period. In short, the probate inventory data allows us to examine the hypothesis that the middle class at Port Royal was engaging in consumerist behavior at

a date earlier than previously thought using evidence that is independent from the archaeological record.

PROBATE DATA FROM PORT ROYAL

Seventeenth-century primary document collections from the Caribbean are notorious for being incomplete or for simply not having survived at all; 300 years is a long time for paper to outlast the effects of insects and humid tropical conditions. Fortunately, the extremely unusual circumstance that many of the 17th-century records from Jamaica were re-copied from the originals during the 19th century has provided researchers with a surviving primary document dataset that, though it contains omissions and undoubtedly some transcription errors, is nonetheless quite useful. The probate inventories utilized in this analysis are all contained in Volume 3 of the *Jamaica Inventories of Probated Estates,* which survives in its entirety and is housed in the Jamaica National Archives. Volume 3 includes all of the probate inventories recorded on the island between 1686 and 1693; an excellent time frame to assess consumer behavior patterns of material culture acquisition in the years leading up to the earthquake.

The methodology used was to select for analysis only those inventories in Volume 3 that were listed specifically as being from Port Royal, primarily because the consumer behavior of sugar planters in the interior of the island might not be especially reflective of trends in the urban area of Port Royal. In addition, several of these inventories were unreadable or were clearly missing major portions, and information

from these was not included either. It should also be noted that the practice of taking probate inventories appears to have stopped at Port Royal almost entirely in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, not surprising given the death toll and the confused situation at the time. Therefore, the information within these probate inventories should not have been biased, in terms of material culture, by the devastation of the earthquake.

Unfortunately, the aforementioned limitations mean that the size of the sample available for analysis is rather small, though this cannot be helped as the study is based upon the only data available for Port Royal during this time period. Thus all of the conclusions of this study should be considered tentative only; they are the best approximation we can achieve given the relatively small sample size. A total of 112 probate inventories were complete enough to be used in this study, and include all of the entries from Port Royal contained Volume 3 and all dating from between March 1686 to September 1693. In addition, it is important to note that the sample is quite "top-heavy" in that it is substantially weighted in terms of raw numbers towards the middle and upper classes in relation to their actual numbers within Port Royal. In terms of the sample sizes for different economic segments of Port Royal society, a total of 35 inventories survive for estates valued at less than 100£, 30 inventories from estates valued at between 100 to 200£, 25 inventories from estates valued at between 200 to 800£, and 20 inventories from estates larger than 800£.

In general, it seems likely the practice of probating was confined in Port Royal to those segments of society with more material possessions. Only 15 inventories

survive for estates valued at less than 50£, yet the estimated population of Port Royal at this time (around 6,000 to 7000) and the high death rate of English immigrants to the Caribbean, should have resulted in a total number of deaths within this group approaching 100 times the number of surviving probate inventories from this group at this time. For this reason, little can be said regarding the consumer behavior of the lower economic strata of Port Royal society, and the intent of this study is instead, to concentrate on the middle and upper portions of the society, in comparison to other areas within the greater English-colonial world.

Researchers studying the history of English colonial expansion and the rise of consumer behavior have often used probate analysis to discern long-term cultural trends. Though many studies exist for this time period, two excellent examples were chosen for comparison to the present research: a study of 17th-century England by Lorna Weatherill (1988), and a study of the 17th-century Chesapeake by Lois Carr and Lorena S. Walsh (1994). Each study has its strengths and weaknesses, and though there is much overlap, many of the categories utilized by one researcher are qualitatively different from those used by the other. Weatherill, for example, lumps all silver and gold into one category, while Carr and Walsh chose only to record silver plate, leaving out any other form of silver. To facilitate accurate comparison between these data sets, the Port Royal probate data was analyzed in two separate studies, utilizing the same specific categories and probate terms utilized by each of the two aforementioned researchers.

PORT ROYAL COMPARED TO ENGLAND

When Lorna Weatherill wrote *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in England, 1660-1760* (1988), she based her analysis of long-term changes in consumer behavior on shifts that she discerned while analyzing nearly 3,000 probate inventories from different areas of England. Her samples were chosen to provide a broad look at English society, and included inventories from eight carefully selected regions to facilitate this goal. The sample included inventories from Kent, Hampshire, Cambridgeshire, the north-east, the northwest, Staffordshire, Cumbria, and London, as well as 300 inventories from the wealthy Orphans Court region of London, to provide a look at a high-end group not covered in the main samples (Weatherill 1988:3-4). Weatherill's data clearly showed upward trends in ownership of certain classification of goods that she argued were important markers of a rising tendency toward increased consumerist purchases. She noted that while certain items associated with display behavior (looking glasses, for instance) were already well established in the most upper echelons of society by the 1680's, these did not extend downwards into the middle classes to any large degree during the 17th century, though hints of change begin to appear at this time. Instead, the period of greatest overall change, in her opinion, was the decade between 1705 – 1715, during which ownership of many items increased, seemingly at most levels of the economic scale (Weatherill 1988:40). Her conclusion was that although the highest levels of English society were active consumers of household goods during the late 17th century, the middle ranks did not become involved to a large degree until later. She notes "...the 'consumerist' approach is not so

appropriately applied either to the earlier period or to the bulk of the middle ranks" during the 17th century (Weatherill 1988:16, 200).

The following comparison uses Weatherill's data in order to elucidate how Port Royal fits into this overall scheme of change through time in England. The six calendar years she sampled, each at ten-year intervals from 1675 to 1725 and shown in Table 7.1, demonstrate quite well how her overall conclusions regarding changes in consumer behavior in England were derived. There is clear movement in goods especially implicated in the consumer revolution, including clocks, pictures, curtains, table utensils, tea or utensils for hot drinks, and even gold or silver, in the decades after 1705. The column showing how the Port Royal data compares to this trend is in the third column, where it should be placed chronologically in terms of the overall time frame of her analysis.

As can be seen in Table 7.1, certain categories of material culture are found in far fewer inventories from Port Royal than in those sampled in England at this time. These categories of goods are primarily utilitarian, everyday items such as tables, earthenware, and pewter. Though it is certainly possible that these goods were far less prevalent in Port Royal than in England, one gets the strong impression that this is an example of the habitual under-representation of certain artifacts which Pogue describes, and that people taking inventories in Port Royal simply discounted these items or failed to list them separately. It would seem rather strange, for instance, that while roughly 87-91 percent of English households owned tables during this period, they only appear in 55 percent of Port Royal inventories. In fact, slightly more households in Port Royal

Table 7.1 Frequency of ownership of selected goods in probate inventories from England 1675-1725 compared to Port Royal, Jamaica, 1686-1693 (England data from Weatherill 1988:26)

	Engl. 1675	Engl. 1685	PR 1686-1693	Engl. 1695	Engl. 1705	Engl. 1715	Engl. 1725
Tables (%)	87	88	**55**	89	90	91	91
Cook pots (%)	66	68	**57**	69	71	74	76
Saucepans (%)	2	6	**17**	8	11	17	23
Pewter (%)	94	93	**53**	93	93	95	91
Pewter dishes (%)	39	46	**10**	44	47	56	55
Pewter plate (%)	9	18	**20**	21	34	42	45
Earthenware (%)	27	27	**13**	34	36	47	57
Books (%)	18	18	**45**	18	19	21	22
Clocks (%)	9	9	**21**	14	20	33	34
Pictures (%)	7	8	**13**	9	14	24	21
Looking glass (%)	22	28	**49**	31	36	44	37
Table linen (%)	43	45	**59**	41	41	44	37
Curtains (%)	7	10	**31**	11	12	19	21
Knives/Forks (%)	1	1	**23**	3	4	6	10
China (%)	0	1	**5**	2	4	8	9
Tea/ Utensiles (%) For hot drinks	0	0	**13**	1	2	7	15
Silver or Gold (%)	23	21	**80**	24	23	29	21

reported owning table linen (59%) than reported owning tables (55%). In general, the contents of Port Royal inventories give the impression that utilitarian or common items like tables, chairs, earthenware, etc. were overlooked fairly often and as a matter of course during the process of taking inventory. It is difficult to believe, for example, that a merchant like Stephen DuCloise, who owned gold, silver, silver plate, and teaware, and died with a probated estate valued at 469£ (Jamaica Inventories Vol.3 Folio 319), didn't own a table, chairs, or any coarse or fine earthenwares. It seems far more likely that common or utilitarian items were often not mentioned specifically in the

inventories, but were ignored or included in such catch-all phrases as "lumber" or "things about his room" as a matter of standard practice in Jamaica.

Several categories stand out in this comparison due to the fact that, while the frequency of ownership of these items at Port Royal was roughly in keeping with the overall numbers from England for the entire time period, the frequency at Port Royal was higher at an earlier date than it was in England. The ownership of saucepans, for instance, was at a level during the 1686-1695 period (17%) that was not reached by the overall population of England until around 1715. Similarly, the frequency of ownership of clocks and timepieces (21%) in Port Royal was not exceeded in England as a whole until after 1705. Pictures (13%) also fall into this category, far more comparable to the decade following 1705 (14%), than 1695 (8%), as does the ownership of China, the 5% frequency at Port Royal not surpassed in England as a whole until sometime between 1705 and 1715.

Multiple categories of material tabulated for this study, which were chosen by Weatherill primarily because she believed them to be indicative of consumerist behavior, were found in a higher frequency in the Port Royal inventories than in the average of the English inventories at any time between 1675 and 1725. Ownership of books, for instance, rose at a roughly steady pace in England reaching a peak in 1725 of 22% of the total inventories. Yet, a full thirty years earlier, frequency of ownership of books at Port Royal was 45%, potentially indicating a much more literate population, as might be expected from a group of people whose lives revolved around a trans-Atlantic trade dependant on letters and long-distance transactions.

It is significant that Weatherill found certain items to be particularly important indicators of changing behavior. She associated these with what she termed "frontstage" activities, that is, items associated with activities where people presented themselves to others socially, in contrast to "backstage" activities which took place in areas of the home typically beyond the public view (Weatherill 1988:9). In the former category, she included items such as books, linen, silver, plates, china, looking glasses, tea or hot drink equipment, knives and forks, pictures, clocks, and curtains. Books, clocks, pictures, and china have already been discussed, and Port Royal appears to be clearly "ahead of the timeline" in comparison to England in these categories. However, what is most striking is that for the "frontstage" categories of looking glasses (49%), linen (59%), curtains (31%), knives and forks (23%), tea or hot drink equipage (13%), and silver (80%), the percentage of ownership of these items in the Port Royal inventories was higher than at any time in England between 1675 and 1725. In other words, by the time Weatherill's study ends in 1725, England had not yet passed Port Royal in terms of overall percentage of ownership of any of these "frontstage" items.

It would be misleading, however, to end the analysis here, particularly because the probate inventories from Port Royal are, as mentioned earlier, skewed numerically towards the middle and upper classes. Neither Weatherill, nor other researchers in this area, claim that no people in English society were engaging in consumerist behavior during the 17th century; instead, they argue that the middle class did not begin to fully engage in such behavior until later in the 18th century, and acknowledge full well that the upper echelons of society were already showing considerable movement in this

regard during the late 1600's. It is necessary, therefore, to array the data from probate inventories so as to allow for direct comparison between households of equal economic ranks. In addition, it is also necessary to gain a broader geographic perspective by looking at the wider English-colonial world.

PORT ROYAL COMPARED TO THE CHESAPEAKE

Lois Carr and Lorena S. Walsh have produced perhaps the most exhaustive examination of Chesapeake probate inventories to date, summarized in their article "Changing Lifestyles and Consumer Behavior in the Chesapeake" (1994). Their study was funded by the Historic St. Mary's City Commission, and included the examination of 7,500 inventories from four Tidewater Chesapeake counties. The inventories dated from 1643 to 1777, but for the purposes of this examination, only the data from 1678 to 1732 were included, to provide a solid overlap with the 1686-1693 Port Royal data. The present comparison utilizes their data from St. Mary's county and data from Port Royal, sorted by wealth and year. Carr and Walsh used many of the same categories Weatherill chose, with several notable exceptions. They distinguish between religious books and secular books rather than a single "books" category, and for the Port Royal inventories, all books that did not contain specific religious titles were placed into the latter category. Carr and Walsh also place knives and forks into two separate categories, they distinguish between course and fine earthenwares (with Chinese porcelain placed into the latter category), and the category of linen includes both bed and table linen. In addition, they add wigs as a separate category, and only tallied silver

plate, while other types of silver were not counted (Carr and Walsh 1994: 78-80). Finally, the percentages of tea and teaware ownership were taken from Carr and Walsh's data from Anne Arundel country, since this category was inexplicably left off their St. Mary's study.

For purposes of comparison, only the three middle wealth categories utilized by Carr and Walsh were taken for this study, and can be classified as lower-middle (50-94£), middle (95-225£), and upper middle (225-490£). The far upper and lower ends of Carr and Walsh's wealth classifications were not included in this study primarily because there were not enough inventories surviving from Port Royal from either of the outlying wealth categories to provide meaningful statistical evidence for either the richest, or the poorest sections of society. Fortunately, it is precisely these middle class layers of society with which we are most interested.

In many ways, the comparison of the Port Royal data to Carr and Walsh's St. Mary's county data was surprisingly similar to the comparison of Port Royal to Weatherill's data for England as a whole (Table 7.2). As with the first comparison, certain categories which could be described as "utilitarian" were considerably lower in Port Royal than in St. Mary's county; specifically, the percentage of course and fine earthenwares were lower at nearly all wealth levels, though it could be reasonably argued that fine earthenwares, especially Chinese Porcelain, should not be categorized as utilitarian. In the case of coarse earthenwares, however, the percentage of households owning was far lower. Only 10% of the households at Port Royal in the 50-94£ range were recorded as having some form of coarse earthenware, yet the 1678-1687

Table 7.2. Frequency of ownership of selected goods in probate inventories from St. Mary's County, Maryland, 1678-1732 compared to Port Royal, Jamaica, 1686-1693. (St. Mary's data adapted from Carr and Walsh 1994:78-81)

	St. Mary's 1678-1687	**Port Royal 1685-1693**	St. Mary's 1688-1699	St. Mary's 1700-1709	St. Mary's 1710-1722	St. Mary's 1723-1732
Coarse Earthenware %						
50-94£	54	**10**	28	41	48	71
95-225£	62	**25**	65	68	62	80
226-490£	55	**14**	80	43	77	90
Bed or Table Linnen %						
50-94£	43	**74**	28	48	47	51
95-225£	54	**78**	78	50	75	77
226-490£	73	**79**	80	93	90	100
Table Knives %						
50-94£	4	**5**	3	10	18	18
95-225£	15	**19**	9	18	30	23
226-490£	36	**7**	10	36	40	55
Table Forks %						
50-94£	0	**5**	0	3	13	15
95-225£	0	**6**	0	14	27	23
226-490£	0	**21**	0	14	40	52
Fine Earthenware %						
50-94£	0	**0**	0	3	13	15
95-225£	8	**3**	13	5	27	23
226-490£	0	**9**	20	0	40	52
Spices %						
50-94£	11	**14**	3	3	16	26
95-225£	23	**25**	22	18	25	23
226-490£	27	**36**	20	29	33	38
Religious Books %						
50-94£	25	**5**	28	59	52	53
95-225£	54	**16**	70	50	55	57
226-490£	36	**21**	50	79	87	76
Secular Books %						
50-94£	0	**24**	0	3	2	0
95-225£	8	**37**	4	0	2	5
226-490£	18	**50**	0	14	0	1
Wigs %						
50-94£	7	**10**	6	10	7	0
95-225£	8	**9**	4	14	12	5
226-490£	0	**14**	30	0	17	7
Timepieces %						
50-94£	4	**14**	0	0	2	2
95-225£	8	**22**	4	0	13	5
226-490£	9	**7**	20	0	13	17
Pictures %						
50-94£	0	**0**	3	7	3	4
95-225£	8	**13**	9	18	12	5
226-490£	9	**21**	30	14	132	10
Silver Plate %						
50-94£	11	**0**	11	7	10	6
95-225£	15	**25**	26	23	27	18
226-490£	36	**28**	50	71	50	38
***Tea or Teaware %**						
50-94£	0	**0**	0	0	0	5
95-225£	0	**6**	0	0	3	4
226-490£	0	**14**	0	0	5	0

data from St. Mary's county recorded coarse earthenware ownership at 54% for this wealth range. Similarly, at Port Royal the percentage of ownership of coarse earthenware in the 95-225£ range was just 25%, while the St. Mary's ownership percentage from 1678-1687 for this range was 62%. As noted earlier in the discussion of Weatherill's data, the contents of the Port Royal inventories give the impression that utilitarian or common items like tables, chairs, earthenware, etc. were overlooked fairly often and as a matter of course in the taking of these inventories.

Fine earthenware also appears less frequently in the Port Royal inventories, especially at the upper wealth ranges, though again, problems with the consistency of reporting may play a role in this. It seems difficult to believe, for instance, the St. Mary's data for ownership of fine earthenwares at the upper range of wealth between 226-490£ would have, in actuality, fluctuated from 9% in 1678-1687, risen to 20% from 1688-1699, had fallen to 0% from 1700-1709, then risen to 40% by 1710-1722. Though the overall trend is clearly towards a higher percentage of ownership (or at least a higher frequency of recording that ownership), the fact that no households in this upper class strata recorded any fine earthenwares from 1700-1709 shows the difficulty in placing too much emphasis on any single 'point-in-time' comparison for this category, and suggests that differences in recording may be having a larger effect on this category than the actual percentage of ownership of fine earthenwares at the time.

Another area where Port Royal appears to have lagged significantly behind the citizens of St. Mary's county is in the ownership of religious books. Though this might

well be advanced as evidence for the "wickedest city in the world" characterization, it is more likely a product of the sampling strategy and the category classification itself. The fact that Port Royal inventories usually didn't mention specific titles meant that a judgment had to be made in terms of how to characterize common entries like "...a pcell of books" from the inventories, and the decision here was to place all books without titles into the secular books category rather than to assume a religious subject. This likely explains both the paucity of ownership of religious books in the Port Royal inventories, as well as the extremely high percentages of secular book ownership. As the data on secular books suggests, the percentage of ownership within this category at Port Royal was far higher than the St. Mary's county data would indicate for all time periods. While ownership of secular books ranged from 0-5% at the 50-94£ and 95-225£ wealth classifications, and from 0-18% in the 226-490£ wealth classification at St. Mary's county; the Port Royal data is far higher across the board, at 25% for the 50-94£ range, 38% for the 95-225£ range, and 50% for the 226-490£ range. As can be seen in the previous comparison to Weatherill's data, book ownership in general appears to have been higher at Port Royal than in either England or the Chesapeake, at nearly all levels of the wealth continuum.

Silver plate is a difficult category to compare, since entries noting "silver" alone probably were, in many cases, likely describing silver in plate form, but were not recorded specifically as plate in the Port Royal inventories, and hence do not appear in the "silver plate" category for Port Royal. Much more typical would be an entry listing "37 oz silver" for example, and the researcher can know what form that silver actually

took. As noted earlier, an astonishing 79% of all households at Port Royal recorded silver of some form, so the relatively small percentage of silver plate in comparison to the frequency of ownership of silver plate at St. Mary's county very possibly a consequence of differing recording practices. Nonetheless, this is one category where frequency of ownership at Port Royal was generally lower than that in St. Mary's county. Both the 50-94£ and 226-490£ wealth groups showed this trend, although for the 95-225£ wealth group, frequency of ownership at Port Royal was quite comparable to that in St. Mary's during the same period.

In several other categories, the Port Royal data was, in general, fairly comparable to the frequency of ownership in St. Mary's county at the same time period. For example, Walsh and Carr chose to include wigs as a category for analysis, as the rising use of wigs, primarily in the 18th century, was linked directly to a new fashion consciousness implicated in the rise in consumer behavior. As can be seen in the data in Table 7.2, frequency of ownership of wigs appears to have fluctuated in St. Mary's county rather unevenly over time, possibly due to irregularity in recording of these items. In general, however, frequency of ownership of wigs at Port Royal appears to have been either roughly equivalent to, or slightly ahead of, the frequency of ownership in St. Mary's county, a surprising finding given that the tropical climate of Jamaica would have made the wearing of wigs rather uncomfortable. The 10% frequency of ownership within the 50-94£ wealth group at Port Royal was not equaled in St. Mary's county for this group until the 1700-1709 period, after which wigs appear in only 7% of the St. Mary's inventories for the 1710-1722 period, and finally none were reported

during the 1723-1732 period. For the middle 95-225£ wealth group, Port Royal again appears to have reached a higher frequency of ownership at an earlier date, with 9.3% frequency recorded at Port Royal not surpassed in St. Mary's until the 1700-1710 decade. Finally, for the highest wealth group in this study, the 226-490£ range shows widely fluctuating percentages for St. Mary's making comparison difficult. The overall mean frequency of ownership for St. Mary's county of 11% compared fairly well with the 14% frequency recorded for Port Royal. In sum, the data suggests wigs may have been in use at Port Royal slightly earlier than in St. Mary's, but the non-linear distribution of the data through time renders this conclusion tentative, at best.

Frequency of ownership of pictures is another category where Port Royal is generally quite comparable to St. Mary's county. For both the middle (95-225£) group and the upper-middle group (226-490£), the frequency of ownership of pictures in the Port Royal inventories is roughly in keeping with the timeline indicated by the St. Mary's data. It should be noted, however, that the frequency of ownership for both these groups at Port Royal was, comparatively, higher than the frequency reported for these groups in St. Mary's county for four of the five decades covered by this study. Put another way, the frequency of ownership of pictures at Port Royal was higher than the five-decade average from St. Mary's for both the 95-225£ group (12.5% for Port Royal vs. 10.4% for St. Mary's) and the 226-490£ group (21.4% for Port Royal vs. 15.2% for St. Mary's).

Spices, linked with newly fashionable dishes and dining behaviors, appear to have been more common in Port Royal, at an earlier date, than in St. Mary's county.

The frequency of ownership in the 50-94£ wealth group at Port Royal (14%) would not be exceeded in the St. Mary's county sample until the 1710-1722 period. Similarly, the frequency of ownership in the 95-225£ wealth group at Port Royal would not be met in St. Mary's county until the 1710-1722 period. Finally, the frequency of ownership of spices in the 226-490£ wealth group at Port Royal would not be exceeded in St. Mary's county until the 1723-1732 period. Though it should be noted that the overall differences indicated here are comparatively small, and the two samples are relatively comparable in this regard, they do suggest spices may have been slightly more common, earlier, at Port Royal than in St. Mary's county.

The previous discussions have dealt with categories where Port Royal was either well behind, was generally comparable, or was slightly ahead of St. Mary's in terms of overall frequency of ownership. Several categories, however, indicate a demonstrably higher frequency of ownership at Port Royal. For example, the Port Royal inventories indicate a substantially higher percentage of ownership in the category of bed or table linen than was found in the St. Mary's sample. For the 50-94£ wealth classification, St. Mary's county ranges from a low of 28% (1688-1699) to a high of 48% (1700-1709), while the percentage of ownership within this wealth classification for Port Royal was 71.4%, far higher than at any time in St. Mary's from 1678-1732. The middle wealth classification 95-225£ shows a similar trend, with the percentage of ownership at Port Royal surpassing four of the five time periods for St. Mary's county, and tying the highest percentage for the entire period at St. Mary's county, with 78%. The 226-490£ wealth classification shows the upper middle class of Port Royal at about the same

percentage of ownership as in St. Mary's county given the placement of the Port Royal data on the timeline, considering the trend of increasing ownership through time indicated by the St. Mary's data. Overall, a higher percentage of middle class Port Royalites owned table linen than their economic counterparts in the Chesapeake at the same time, and the lower two wealth classifications showed as high or higher frequency of ownership in 1685-1693 than in St. Mary's at any time from 1678-1732.

In terms of utensils potentially indicating a new emphasis on manners and dining etiquette, knives and forks also display interesting differences between Port Royal and St. Mary's county. Knives are a particularly difficult category since, as Pogue points out, there is seldom a descriptive term attached to "knife" that would distinguish a table knife from a work or even tobacco knife (Pogue 1993: 385-386). For this reason, data on ownership of knives may be inherently unreliable or misleading. With this caveat in mind, the data appear to indicate that for the lower-middle wealth classification (50-94£), the percentage of household ownership in Port Royal from 1685-1693 was basically in keeping with the percentage of ownership at St. Mary's county during that same time period. However, the middle (95-225£) wealth classification indicated a higher percentage of ownership at an earlier time at Port Royal than at St. Mary's; the percentage of ownership at Port Royal not being exceeded by that in St. Mary's until the 1710-1722 sample. Finally, the upper-middle (226-490£) wealth classification shows a lower percentage of knife ownership at Port Royal than at St. Mary's among the wealthier households at the same time period, though the 7% at

Port Royal (1685-1693) is comparable to the 10% for St. Mary's for the 1688-1699 time frame.

Forks are probably a more reliable indicator, since there is no chance of confusing them with a utilitarian item by the same name. In addition, many researchers note that forks were emblematic of an important refinement of table manners linked directly to changing codes of social interaction and the rise in consumerist behavior, (Carr and Walsh 1994; Yentch 1990; Pogue 1997), and hence are of particular interest in this study. For St. Mary's county, no forks appear in any of the probate inventories from any wealth level for the entire period from 1678-1699, yet forks appeared in each wealth level in the Port Royal inventories (1685-1693). For the 50-94£ wealth classification, ownership of forks (5%) at Port Royal was not exceeded until the 1710-1722 period in Carr and Walsh's study. Similarly, ownership of forks at Port Royal in the 95-225£ wealth level (6%) is not exceeded at St. Mary's until sometime between 1700-1709. Finally, at the highest wealth classification 226-490£, ownership of forks at Port Royal (21.4%) is not exceeded in St. Mary's county until sometime between 1710 and 1722. In sum, a higher percentage of middle class citizens of Port Royal owned forks than their equivalent economic counterparts in St. Mary's county of the same time period, and it would take roughly 10 to 20 more years for those Chesapeake groups to show evidence of an equivalent percentage of ownership compared to their economic equals in Port Royal during the period 1685-1693.

Timepieces are another category where Port Royal appears to have been well ahead of St. Mary's county. In both the 50-94£ wealth group, and the 95-225£ wealth

group, the frequency of ownership of timepieces (14% and 22% respectively) was far higher than at any time in the St. Mary's sample, 1678-1732. In fact, this percentage of ownership at Port Royal would not be exceeded by either of these two groups in St. Mary's county until sometime after 1777, when Carr and Walsh's study ends. Ownership of timepieces in the 226-490£ wealth group at Port Royal (7%) was slightly behind St. Mary's, but still is still quite comparable to the overall average of 11% for the entire time period. Similarly, the frequency of ownership of tea or tea ware at Port Royal was higher in the 95-225£ and 226-490£ wealth groups than at any time in the St. Mary's sample, 1678-1732.

The overall results from this analysis are quite similar to the results from the comparison to Weatherill's data for England. In general, Port Royal lagged behind St. Mary's in terms of frequency of ownership of coarse earthenware, fine earthenware, religious books and silver plate. As discussed above, there is some reason to believe coarse earthenwares were not regularly recorded as a specific entry in most of the Port Royal inventories, and thus the figures for frequency of ownership are likely somewhat misleading on this count. Similarly, the disparities in ownership of religious books and silver plate are most likely the result of the criterion chosen for study, rather than major actual differences. Book titles, for example, were not typically recorded at Port Royal, and the overall frequency of ownership of books in general appears to have, in actuality, been generally higher at Port Royal than in either England or the Chesapeake, as the comparison to Weatherill's data bears out.

In addition, it does not appear people taking inventory in Jamaica made much of an attempt to denote silver plate specifically, most likely artificially lowering the frequency of ownership statistics for silver plate at Port Royal. Again, as the comparison to Weatherill's data suggests, ownership of silver in general, regardless of whether it was recorded as plate specifically, was far higher in Port Royal than in either England or the Chesapeake. There is strong evidence to suggest, in other words, that the few areas where Port Royal appears to have lagged behind St. Mary's may be somewhat misleading.

On the other hand, Port Royal consistently matched or exceeded the frequency of ownership at an equivalent time period in St. Mary's for multiple categories, including table knives, forks, and wigs. Port Royal substantially exceeded St. Mary's in frequency of ownership of several other goods, including bed or table linen, secular books, spices, timepieces, and tea/tea wares. Some differences between wealth levels were also apparent. For example, the highest wealth group in this study, the 226-490£ probate value wealth group, appears to have been generally quite comparable to its peers in the Chesapeake at the same time, trailing in some categories like pictures, knives, and plate, while leading in others such as spices, books, and tea/tea wares. The lower-middle (50-94£) wealth group and the middle (95-225£) wealth groups were more consistently "ahead of the timeline" compared to their economic peers in St. Mary's county. In some cases, (secular books, timepieces, and bed or table linen for example), the frequency of ownership of these items at Port Royal was not exceeded by equivalent households in St. Mary's county until after the 1730's. As a whole, this

study suggests the middle class at Port Royal was ahead of its time in terms of frequency of ownership of "frontstage" goods, those most directly implicated in the rise in consumerist behavior.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The goal at the beginning of this analysis was to attempt to substantiate or refute the general conclusion drawn from analysis of the artifact assemblage from Port Royal: that the middle class of Port Royal appears to have been behaving in a consumerist manner at an earlier date than historians and archaeologists have generally believed was the case for their peers in the rest of the English colonial world. The results of the comparison of probate inventory data from Port Royal to England and the Chesapeake appears to substantiate this conclusion. In many key artifact categories, such as linen, books, timepieces, tea wares, spices, looking glasses, table utensils, and silver, the middle class of Port Royal appears to have owned these goods at a higher frequency than was found in either England or the Chesapeake. Comparisons among groups of equal wealth lends further support for this conclusion, though there appears to have been less difference among the wealthier decedents than among the middle and lower-middle class.

It is important to stress that these differences are situated in "frontstage" goods, as Weatherill describes them, intended to put their owners tastes, and indeed, the owners themselves, forward into the public sphere. As such, they are key markers of a change in social behavior and the ways in which people conceived of relating to each

other by using artifacts. Whether cast in an "identity formation and negotiation" light, or whether characterized more starkly as an "active competition for status", the important point is the probate analysis supports the contention that the middle class of Port Royal seems to have been ahead of their its in the adoption of the use of items as social tools, in comparison to its peers in England and the Chesapeake.

A drawback to this analysis stems from the relatively small sample size available for Port Royal at this time, and the comparisons discussed above should not be considered anything other than the best estimate we can make, given the limitations inherent in the probate data. However, the utility of being able to compare probate data from Port Royal to these other areas is clear in that it does allow us the opportunity to examine the central thesis of advanced consumerist behavior in Port Royal artifact through analysis of a separate line of evidence. Fortunately, there is one additional area of documentation where it is possible to examine whether middle class people at Port Royal were indeed behaving differently from their counterparts in the wider English-colonial world: surviving primary accounts of life at Port Royal.

CHAPTER VIII
PRIMARY ACCOUNTS OF PORT ROYAL

Contemporary descriptions of life at Port Royal, and surviving correspondence between Port Royal merchants and their English factors provide important evidence for two important points relevant to this analysis. First, they clearly indicate that the citizens of Port Royal, at least during the 1680's and early 1690's, appear to have been enthusiastically jumping into the waters of luxury consumption and conspicuous display with both feet; the consumerist mentality is very much in evidence. Secondly, and perhaps more important in relation to the conclusions of the artifact and probate analyses discussed earlier, it appears this was not something observers from England were accustomed to seeing.

A 1687 account by Francis Crow provides a good example. Crow, who came to Jamaica from Essex and lived in Port Royal from 1686 until 1690, evidently found remarkable the degree to which people of the "lower sort" imitated the finery of the elite back home. In a letter describing Port Royal to a friend in Essex, Crow noted;

> "This is one of the most expensive, dear places in the known world, for all manner of provisions; and yet 'tis the most proud and prodigal place that I have ever beheld…a cooper's wife shall go forth in the best flowered silks and richest silver and gold lace that England can afford" (Cadbury, 1959:54).

It is important to emphasize that if Crow were used to seeing cooper's wives, or other people of that particular economic and social standing in society, dress in the

manner which he was observing at Port Royal, or if he thought his friend in Essex was used to seeing such behavior back home, it wouldn't have been worthy of comment. Implicit in Crow's description is the fact that, to his eyes, this was unusual behavior. The phrase 'proud and prodigal' also makes clear his negative opinion of such self-aggrandizing behavior on the part of people whom he didn't believe should behave in this manner, echoing the tone of a similar comment by Christopher Jeffreason that Englishmen in the Caribbean often "dressed beyond their abilities, or at least their qualities" (Quoted in Dunn 1973:286).

Another primary description comes from 1681, written by merchant John Taylor who arrived in Jamaica from England with a batch of indentured servants he wished to sell. The manuscript he wrote documenting his time in Jamaica is an outstanding source of information about Port Royal at this time. He observed that the merchants of Port Royal were living:

> ...to the height of splendor, in full ease and plenty, being sumptuously arrayed, and attended on and served by their Negroa slaves, which always waits on them in livereys, or otherwise as they please to cloath them" (quoted in Pawson and Buisseret, 1974: 149).

The phrase "sumptuously arrayed" certainly connotes a consumerist use of material culture, and in addition to the high living he notes it is interesting that Taylor chose to comment on the way in which slaves were clothed. Finely dressing one's house servants, in effect turning a human being into a show of one's wealth and standing, would certainly qualify as a clear and rather dramatic symbolic display.

Another description of Port Royal, from 1683 by Francis Hanson, portrayed exactly the kind of behavior that included, in later years and in other places around English world, the very hallmarks of consumerist behavior. While describing economic activity on the island of Jamaica in general, Hanson mentioned that goldsmiths were in great demand on the island, to work the precious metals flowing from the Spanish Main into Port Royal into decorative items. He noted as an aside that a ready market for such items existed in Port Royal, reporting that in addition to silver, jewels and pearl:

> We are furnished with the purest and finest sorts of dust gold... some of which our Goldsmiths there work up (who being yet but few) grow very wealthy, for almost every house hath a rich Cupboard of Plate which they carefully expose, scarce shutting their doors in the night (Hanson 1683:30-31).

This casual mention, an aside in a discussion of economic activities, provides us with a clear description of consumerist behavior. The "rich cupboard of plate", and presumably other items worked up by the goldsmiths and purchased by these households, obviously was not procured merely for a utilitarian function, but as an expensive alternative that would be immediately recognized as such by an intended audience. The phrase "carefully exposed" clearly portrays the owners deliberate presentation of these items to their visitors 'frontstage', as Weatherill might describe it, a calculated and intentional statement of the family's wealth, taste, and likely their (aspired-to) place in society. This is exactly what Carson describes when he notes that the consumer revolution, at its core, was the use of items as social tools, as "a badge of

membership (or a declaration of aspirations to membership) in class-conscious social groups" (Carson 1994:522).

Probate inventories also have the potential to serve as a primary account of consumerist behavior in ways that go beyond the presence or absence of statistical analysis, which often tends to sterilize the contents of inventories into catch-all categories. Most especially, rare or unusual items that do not appear often enough to warrant a separate "counting category" for statistical analysis are lost in generalized, catch-all categories. Yet it is precisely those rare, new, or unusual items that are often the very things most emblematic of consumerist behavior. In fact, items most often used in statistical comparisons, those things researchers decide DO warrant an individual counting category, could accurately be described as only those items which eventually became rather common, but at a later date.

For this reason, it may also be instructive to discuss subjectively some of the entries within the Port Royal probate inventories. For example, a moderately well-off cooper named Adam Weenan died worth £ 139 in 1690 owning "a Glass Case and looking glass... a back sword and belt... pr of boots and spurrs and a pr of Pumps... hat and hatband... Serge coat and breeches black hair buttons... small looking glass and a small dressing box... a Spice Box...a Lignum Vite Tumbler and a sparling spice box..." as well as a silver tankard, silver salt cellar, and silver spoons (PR Archives Vol.3, Fol. 380). Mr. Weenan appears to have been a rather finely outfitted cooper.

Dr. Richard Greenfield owned £140 worth of human property in the form of indentured servants and slaves at the time of his death in January of 1690, but the value

of the rest of his estate totaled just under £60, nearly £30 of which was the value of his medical supplies and equipment. Nonetheless, Dr. Greenfield's remaining personal effects included "one violin... One Beaver Hatt... 1 caine with a silver head... One large looking glass... Three paire of gold buttons, One paire of silver shoo buckells" (PR Archives Vol.3, Fol. 308).

Many entries speak to straight-forward expense, such as "six pearl necklaces", "gould ring and emerald", "2 agget forks", "agatt hafted knives", or simply "in wrought gold". Furniture included "turkey workt chairs", "mahogany oval table", "marchaneel table", or the rather impressive "silke mohaire suite of curtins lynd wth Persian with bedd coverlid". A simple check in the "curtains" box in a probate analysis hardly does justice to the latter entry. Additionally, unusual little items abound in the Port Royal inventories; a "childe's silver sword", "chocolate grater", "billiards table", "parrot cage", "one coker nutt tipt wth silver", even a merchant with 119 pounds of "Oliphant's tooth". Silver headed walking canes were apparently a rather useful status item to carry around town, and were quite common in the inventories. Nearly 4/5^{ths} of all of the inventories from Port Royal included a mention of silver in some form.

Clothing is another area with the potential to reveal the extent to which conspicuous display was practiced at Port Royal. As Dunn has noted, in the seventeenth-century, "The clothes a man wore... identified his social position more readily than the food he ate. Every occupation had its own designated wardrobe. The rich took care to dress richly, and the poor were expected to dress poorly." (Dunn 1973:282). Pawson and Bruisseret note that inventories from Port Royal during this

time period indicate an extraordinary variety of cloth offered in the haberdashery shops, including:

> Ghentish Holland, dimity, platillas, plain silk, flowered silk, Persian silk, plain and coloured calico, 'Linsey Woolsey', paragon, fine serge, coloured serge, 'French falls', fine women's hose, ribbons, cotton gloves, 'country blew thred', 'whited brown thred', and hooks and eyes. One merchant even offered a 'Pertian goune £1. 1s. 0d (Pawson & Bruisseret 1974: 149-150).

In fact, surviving correspondence clearly indicates the manner in which Port Royal merchants closely tracked the latest elite fashions from London and sought to gain an edge in the local Port Royal market by keeping on top of such changes. This sensitivity to quickly changing fashion is one of the key hallmarks of advanced consumerist behavior, and is clearly evidenced in the following letters from merchants to their London factors. In September 1688, Port Royal merchants William and Francis Hall wrote to their London associate, Thomas Brailsford. They advise him to:

> ...be searching out for new pretty things cheap and good for men's and women's apparel, yet newest gymps in fashion and silver foots, or what is in fashion with you (Pawson & Bruisseret 1974:195)

In another letter, the same two write Brailsford to send:

> ...a few curious silks cheap, some silver and gold twist, 3 silver and 1 gold is enough, silver and gold buttons, woman's laced shoes may do well, your narrow sletia [Silesia] launes will not go off, the broad very well, however, in blew papers. 100 will be enough, and if you have in Stubbs send no more of them until we advise you... the silk hose account is drawn out; if you send any more here they must be long enough to roll up, about 12 pair of blew, 6 of purple, and 12 of scarlet, non carnation. (Pawson& Bruisseret 1974:195-196)

It is plain that these merchants were catering to a clientele with very specific tastes; people who were concerned with appearing fashionable, or conversely, concerned that they should not look out of fashion. They were selling to consumers who might buy blue, purple, or scarlet hose but would not touch the unfashionable carnation colored stocking, who favored a certain style of women's shoes but rejected another, and who were buying gold and silver buttons and twists. This certainly does not sound like a market that is still 20 to 40 years away from luxury consumption or consumerist behavior.

CONCLUSIONS

The documentary record suggests several points. First, relative to their counterparts in England and the Chesapeake, the middle class of Port Royal was ahead of its time in terms of ownership of items researchers have agreed are emblematic of consumerist behavior. The probate evidence shows stronger consumption of "frontstage" luxury goods at an earlier date than was common either in the Chesapeake or in England as a whole at the same time period.

Second, primary accounts clearly indicate that the citizens of Port Royal were enthusiastic consumers of luxury goods; well-attuned to changing fashions, carefully displaying expensive items in their homes or on their persons, and using these items to assert their place in the world. The fact that these contemporary descriptions of Port Royal indicate that such behavior was not something observers from England were used to seeing, confirms the conclusions of both the artifact and probate analyses. In short,

these three lines of independent evidence strongly support the central conclusion of this study; the Port Royal middle class were fully engaged in classic "consumerist" behavior in the 1680's and early 1690', and thus were behaving in a manner that did not become as fully expressed among their peers in the rest of the English-colonial world until decades later.

CHAPTER IX
EXPLAINING REASONS FOR ACTION

If the artifact analysis, probate data, and primary accounts from Port Royal, all indicate that the middle class citizens of Port Royal were ahead of their peers in the rest of the English-colonial world in terms of adopting consumerist behaviors, the question then becomes, simply, why? Why did these people, in this particular place, at this particular time, begin to purchase luxury items with an enthusiasm not equaled in England or other areas for at least several decades? Why did they choose the particular items they bought, what were they hoping to accomplish, and above all, what was different about Port Royal that this behavior came to be adopted so early? The hope, of course, is that if we can answer the basic question of why Port Royal was so amenable to "fast-forwarding" consumer behavior among members of the middle class, such insights could well be pertinent for identifying and explaining key factors in the subsequent adoption of these same behaviors on a massive scale by the rest of the Anglo-colonial middle class in the coming decades.

The following discussions are centered on a specific approach to the study of human behavior, an orientation positing that any broad social phenomenon, or any change through time in that phenomenon, must necessarily be the result of human actions and choices made at the level of the individual. This approach is based on a concept that has been termed "methodological individualism" (Flew 1995:65-67). In social science research, causal explanations often commit the error of ascribing

intentionality or will on the part of what is simply a researcher-defined concept, such as "the middle class". In reality, the "middle class" is simply an abstraction that is a useful linguistic device, saving us from having to define in precise but lengthy terms every individual within a particular group we wish to discuss, in every sentence where we wish to say something about that group. In this manner, historians and archaeologists are confined by the dictates of narrative to some degree, as such abstractions are necessary linguistic tools used to keep our writing from becoming overly cumbersome. This study has, up to this point, regularly used broad characterizations to descripe groups of people, such as "middle class" and "elite". It is difficult to imagine how one would proceed without using such terms, nor is it necessary to do so. What is necessary when constructing explanations of broad, societal-level social behaviors is to be vigilant that those explanations do not ascribe intentionality to abstract concepts, but instead to formulate explanations that include reasons for acting at the level of the individual. The "middle class", for example, doesn't actually exist in the corporeal sense, as a thing *sui generis*. It doesn't make decisions, doesn't think, doesn't hold opinions or values, it doesn't act, and it certainly doesn't formulate a coherent strategy for action; individuals do.

Adequate explanations of social change cannot be based on an abstract concept like the "middle class" somehow acting instinctively by means of some shared consciousness, or deliberately in concert as a group to intentionally bring about a specific goal. This error is sometimes referred to as reifying, or hypostatizing an abstraction; that is, to treat as real something which does not exist in reality.

Unfortunately, this is an error we see repeated in many explanations of the consumer revolution.

Though this may seem to be a case of semantic hair-splitting, this distinction becomes crucial when attempting to formulate theories of causation for large-scale social movements such as the consumer revolution. For example, in explaining some of the more fully expressed aspects of this phenomenon during the 18th century, Anne Smart-Martin, describes what is essentially the "flight and chase" model discussed in chapter 2, and offers the following description of the process of fashion change in the 18th century Chesapeake:

> The elite raced off for new social symbols; the middling ranks galloped after them; even the poorer sorts jogged along, at least to the degree that their economic abilities enabled them. As each group desperately sought to guard its borders from improper intruders, the wheel of fashion change spun faster and faster (Smart-Martin 1994:171).

Though perfectly acceptable as a generalized description of what happened, such a description is fully insufficient to explain WHY such things happened unless connected directly to the individuals whose actions create, in aggregate, such large-scale movements. One cannot possibly imagine, for example, that all of the elite of Virginia gathered together secretly and decided, en-mass, that they needed to "guard their borders", needed a new fashion litmus test for membership in their group, and formulated the strategy that henceforth they would only purchase matched sets of imported earthenwares, or that they did this without leaving a single documentary

reference to the planning or implementation of such a massive group action. "The elite" simply cannot reasonably be ascribed intentionality of action in this way.

Large scale societal movements must, by definition, be made up of thousands of individual actions and choices, and none of those individuals can possibly know what all of the others in their "group" are thinking or intending to do at any given time (indeed, each is likely to have different ideas about who, exactly, is in "their" group). Thus, any such movements cannot be explained by ascribing intentionality of action or by implying some overarching strategy on the part of an abstract concept like "the elite", and must inevitably falter unless linked directly to individual choices. Conversely, for any causal explanation of broad social change to effectively explain change through time, it must be centered upon distinguishing why, given numerous options and potential strategies, an individual would choose a particular course of action within that particular context. On this foundation, one can then extrapolate the aggregate effect; why multiple individuals (within, perhaps, the researcher defined "middle class") might also have responded similarly, thus resulting in a demonstrable, group-wide change in social behavior through time.

If it is true that large-scale social change through time, in this case the shift from a utilitarian to a consumerist society, can only take place through the cumulative effects of an aggregate of individual choices, then such a proposition necessarily structures any attempt to formulate an explanation of that phenomenon. In his book *Thinking about Social Thinking,* Anthony Flew (1995) argues that a perfectly reasonable explanation for human action is free will; that generally, people do as they do because they intend

to, something Flew terms the "voluntaristic theory of action" (Flew 1995:34). He argues that long term social change is almost always an unintended consequence of aggregates of individual actions, but that individual action is almost always intentional on the part of the specific person involved. Therefore, explanations of these must take into account certain logical propositions.

First, any explanation of why people did what they did cannot include ideas the people themselves didn't know at the time of their acting. This both necessitates an understanding on the part of the researcher of the specific context for action, and obviates any reliance upon explanations incorporating knowledge the actors themselves couldn't have had, such as some pan-elite shared consciousness impelling them all to protect their group borders from lower class intrusions. Second, it must be kept in mind that people respond to perceived situations, not necessarily actual situations, and since human perception is fallible and changing, any explanation of their actions must attempt to account for how their perception of a situation affected their decisions (Flew 1995: 31-60). Finally, underlying all of this is the notion that people generally behave in a way that makes sense to them, based on their (fallible) perception of the world, which is to say, people generally act in a rational way according to their perception of a given situation even though hindsight or broader specific knowledge might later reveal these choices were not, in fact, the wisest they could have made.

The intent of this research is to examine why middle class individuals in Port Royal appear to have been more fully engaged in advanced consumerist behavior at an earlier date than their middle-class peers in the rest of the English-colonial world.

Therefore, the following discussions are intended to explore two interrelated factors which, given the previous discussion, are necessary for formulating reasonable explanations as to why this was so; context and reasons for acting. As regards the first, it is necessary to both explore and attempt to understand significant contexts of action, and specifically the unique historical circumstances existent in Port Royal in the years leading up to the earthquake of 1692; in short, to answer the questions of why people would perceive that purchasing expensive or unusual items would be of some benefit to them. Second, by elucidating the unique social, cultural, and economic contexts within which these people lived their daily lives at Port Royal, we can begin to understand people's reasons for acting, for explaining why individuals would have chosen to attempt to assert their position (or hoped-for position) in the world through the use of consumerist material culture.

CHAPTER X
CONSUMPTION IN THE CONTEXT OF PORT ROYAL

In order to understand why middle class individuals at Port Royal chose to act, or in this case, to consume as they did, it is necessary to examine the specific social and historical contexts within which these people were living their lives and making decisions. In many ways, Port Royal was a rather unique place in the English-colonial world. In terms of population, it was the foremost English colonial city in the New World, larger than Boston, New York, Jamestown, Bridgetown, or any other English colonial urban center for trade. However, this urban enclave of more than 8,000 people was literally crammed onto a sand spit with an area of just 60 acres, producing overcrowded conditions and a style of architecture favoring two and three story brick houses which reminded people more of the densely packed areas of London than of a colonial town (Blome 1674:14).

It may also have been the most "multi-cultural" English city of its time in terms of the nationalities and religions of its citizenry. The English and Anglicans were the strongly dominant majority, while African slaves and servants constituted the largest minority. Port Royal also contained a significant contingent of Jewish merchants, primarily Portuguese, who traveled in groups to settle in Port Royal from such disparate places as Surinam, Brazil, London, and Cayenne (Pawson and Buisseret 1974:159). English and Scottish Quakers were present as well. The trading classes and the buccaneers contained people of Irish, Spanish, Dutch, and French derivation. Native

Americans originally from both South America and North America were also present, both enslaved and free, and often were present as crewmen on pirate ships. In fact, it is especially among the ranks of the Buccaneers that we find a wide variety of nationalities and races present. The Buccaneers in some ways represented the unruly outcasts of virtually every 17th century European colonial endeavor in the New World, their ranks continually swelled by people from many areas and nations who found themselves, for one reason or another, on the outside of European colonial "officialdom" and who chose to make their way in the world in a highly dangerous but potentially lucrative arena.

The unique aspects of Port Royal should not, however, obscure the fact that continuity with England and the larger English-colonial world was clearly a dominant theme. It would be erroneous, for instance, to conceive of the citizens of Port Royal as living lives completely foreign or unfamiliar to their English counterparts at home. The basic foundations of English society and culture were unquestionably present and strong, for example, English common and civil laws were prevalent throughout the English colonies, providing in many ways a societal template that structured and defined individual behavior and action. Additionally, the extraordinarily high death rate for Englishmen and women in the Caribbean meant that both the population and the culture were constantly being replenished and renewed from native English stock, presumably reinforcingt, at a regular pace, English cultural traditions and practices. Historian James J. Horn's (1994) observations regarding the socio-cultural continuities

between England and colonies in the Chesapeake is quite appropriately applied to Port Royal:

> Conventional attitudes about the social order, the locus of political power, hierarchy, government, justice, property, marriage, the family, gender relations, and religion left immigrants in no doubt that they had arrived on "English ground" (Horn 1994: 427)

Exploring the balance between continuity and distinctiveness is a crucial step towards understanding the historical contexts of action for Port Royal citizens.

TRADE AND WEALTH

Port Royal was, first and foremost, a trading city. As noted earlier, the desire of the Spanish to monopolize trade with their extensive holdings in the New World, combined with a total inability to meet the practical needs of their colonists, contributed to circumstances where illegal trade was extraordinarily profitable. Spanish haciendas and plantations in Cuba and the Spanish Main required far more in the way of both luxuries and necessities than it was in the power of Spanish authorities to provide via their supply fleets. The merchants of Port Royal thrust themselves into this breach to meet the demand. The situation, however, required that both the Spanish colonists and the Port Royal merchants involved in the contraband trade exercise a fair degree of subtlety and discretion in their actions. The most propitious manner in which to conduct such trade, always under the noses of Spanish authorities, was to employ the "coasters". This fleet of small sloops based at Port Royal would make clandestine

voyages to inlets or small ports, where Spanish traders or landowners would make their transactions and perhaps arrange for future meetings. (Zahedia 1986a:579-582).

The desperate needs of Spanish colonists for basic commodities translated into huge potential profits for English traders, but these profits came at a great risk on any particular voyage. Capture was the primary danger for the captain and crew, while loss of an entire cargo was the considerable chance taken by merchants engaged in such trade. Spanish ships, the *guarda-costas*, routinely cruised these waters and their captains could make a tidy personal profit if they could capture illegal English traders engaged in the contraband trade. Zahedia reports that, although prices fluctuated considerably in relation to the timing of the Spanish supply fleets, it was usual to expect to sell goods in the contraband trade at an astounding 75 percent markup (Zahedia 1986a:587-588). Some contemporary observers believed merchants trading via Jamaica in this manner could expect even more, a profit of "at least cent per cent" (Cary 1695:115-116). The huge markups placed on goods in this trade were due in large part to the extremely high risk associated with such operations. In fact, the danger of a total loss on any particular voyage was so high that insurance was typically not available for the contraband trade (Zahedia 1986a:586). For a merchant with the savvy, experience, and the boldness to pull it off, however, a fortune could be made.

It is important to keep in mind the dominant place of Port Royal in terms of overall British colonial trade. For example, trade records from 1688 indicate that the total tonnage of vessels arriving in all of England's North American colonies combined was about 2,500 tons, while in the same year the total tonnage of ships arriving at Port

Royal exceeded 9,000 tons (Pawson and Buisseret 1974: 88). In addition, this figure is probably far lower than the actual volume trade at Port Royal, since much of the fleet engaged in illegal trade with the Spanish Main operated outside of officialdom, and would not have been recorded in many instances. In fact, it would be accurate to describe Port Royal as the pre-eminent international trading and re-export hub in the New World British colonial empire.

As a consequence of the volume and diversity of trade, the merchants of Port Royal were well versed in the trade of virtually every major or minor commodity bought or sold anywhere in the English colonial world. Clifford notes that large quantities of foodstuffs, beverages, naval stores, arms, as well as a wide variety of consumer durables including cloth, clothing, earthenware, furniture, tools, cooking implements, glass wares, nails, and many other items, were all exported from England and the American colonies to Jamaica in large quantities (Clifford 1993:46; Dunn 1972:202-211; Pawson and Buisseret 1975:66-71), and a significant proportion of these materials found their way to Spanish buyers via the "coasters". Merchant's records and probate inventories from Port Royal show an astonishing array of goods, from all over the world. Cattle, vegetables and barrel staves from New England, ivory from Africa, cloth and clothes from Holland, France, and Germany, porcelain and incense from China, wines and liquors from Spain and Portugal, even hardwoods illegally harvested in South America, all could be purchased in Port Royal for the right price.

Perhaps the single most profitable cargo in the illegal Spanish trade was human cargo. Slaves would be purchased in Port Royal then smuggled into Spanish ports,

where the standard accepted rate of payment was the Port Royal purchase price plus 35% interest, leading to the commonly used euphemism "the 35% trade" (Clifford 1993:39). Though cash was preferred in such transactions, making Port Royal probably the only English colonial city which contemporary observers noted did not suffer from a lack of coin in circulation (Hanson 1683), the traders also returned with a plethora of goods from the Spanish Main for resale, including cocoa, hides, indigo, jewels, plate, hogs, horses, and mules (Claypole 1972:127-130). In fact, in her article "The Merchants of Port Royal, Jamaica, and the Spanish Contraband Trade", Zahedia argues that this illicit trade was such a large part of the overall Jamaican economy that, via the re-investment of profits so derived, it supplied the majority of capital used for the development of agricultural works on the mainland, endeavors which eventually helped Jamaica eclipse Barbados as England's primary sugar producer (Zahedia 1986a: 570-593).

The position of Port Royal, as an entrepot of trans-Atlantic and global trade, bears directly on the question of the rise in consumption of luxury goods. Ships and cargoes from Europe, North America, South America, Africa, and even goods (particularly porcelain) imported from China all found their way to Port Royal. Though it is tempting to point to an increased supply of goods (which would cause prices to drop) making consumer goods more affordable, thus facilitating a rise in luxury consumption at Port Royal, the evidence does not, on the whole, tend to support this conclusion. Though it is certainly true that the variety of items available at Port Royal would have been rather considerable, given the widespread mercantile connections of

traders and the role of Port Royal as a nexus of international goods exchange, there is no evidence that an "overabundance" of these items caused prices to drop, hence facilitating rise in consumption through increased buying power. In actuality, there is some evidence to suggest that prices of consumer goods at Port Royal were, in fact, relatively high compared to England. Crow, for example noted in his 1687 account of Port Royal, "This is one of the most expensive, dear places in the known world" (Cadbury, 1959:54). Several sources (Taylor 1687; Hanson 1683) note that Port Royal was one of the few colonial areas that did not suffer from a lack of coin in circulation, and it appears that this ready supply of money consequently drove local prices up, as merchants could inflate prices of goods according to the money supply. Thus, although it appears that a wide variety of goods were available in Port Royal, the actual prices of those goods were likely inflated due to currency pressures, and an over-supply of goods is most likely not a primary factor in the rise in consumption.

The massive volume of trade, however, and the opportunities presented by the location of Port Royal in the heart of the Spanish Caribbean, produced a large and relatively prosperous middle class of merchants and traders. In an account of his travels in Jamaica, Taylor noted that the burgeoning middle class of Port Royal was well positioned to engage in conspicuous consumption, seemingly at most levels of the economic spectrum. In 1688 he wrote:

> There are now settled here, on this port, all sort of Merchants and Trademen, as Smiths, Carpenters, Bricklayers, Joyners, Turners, Cabinetmakers, Tanners, Curriors, Shoemakers, Tailors, Hatters, Upholsterers, Ropemakers, Glasiers, Painters, Carvers, Armourers,

> and Comb Makers, and Watermen, etc: all which live here very well, earning thrice the wages given in England, by which means they are enabled to maintain their families much better than in England (Taylor MS; 267).

This rough picture of a broad and deep middle class is supported statistically by the research of William A. Claypole in *The Merchants of Port Royal 1655-1700* (1972). Claypole's analysis of Port Royal inventories indicates that the image of Port Royal as home primarily to the 'grandee merchant' is misleading. In his study of probate inventories from the 1680's from Port Royal, he notes that over 45% of all inventories fall within a middling range of 100-599£ (Claypole, 1972: 217). Even considering the fact that the surviving Port Royal inventories severely under-represent the poorest residents (as do most probate inventory records), the overall picture is of a broad and prosperous middle class.

It should also be noted that the pirates/privateers who made Port Royal their base of operations also added considerably to the merchant's wealth. When a crew managed to make a "haul" by capturing a Spanish ship or plundering a Spanish town, most of their ill-gotten gains became usable cash only when sold to the merchants of Port Royal, who would have been in a position to buy cheap and re-sell (either at Port Royal or through their overseas connections) at a substantial profit. Additionally, as will be discussed later in this chapter, the merchants of Port Royal were then in a position to make money from the spend-thrift pirate crews, who usually never managed to hold onto their cash for long while in port. In short, the merchants profited handsomely, and in multiple ways, from the illegal plunder of the pirates.

If it can be reasonably asserted that Port Royal was a colonial urban area of unusual economic vitality and diversity, and profits were, in the long run, good enough to create and support a prosperous middle class of merchants and tradesmen, what context for action did such a situation create? In other words, what would have been the effects of this unique situation on the local values, beliefs, and behaviors of the people who found themselves directly engaged in this milieu on a daily basis?

One answer is this unique situation would have engendered a distinct brand of calculated boldness. It has been noted that much of the business of merchants and traders at Port Royal revolved around the contraband trade with the Spanish. In such an atmosphere, certain character traits are not only rewarded, they are virtually a requisite. It takes a unique brand of merchant who is willing to eschew convention and routinely risk the seizure of an entire cargo on virtually every voyage. In fact, a willingness to "roll the dice" as a routine aspect of doing business seems more characteristic of gamblers than merchants, yet this was precisely what the contraband trade demanded.

Those who were adept at calculating risks accurately, yet bold enough to accept such risks as a matter of course and act accordingly, were handsomely rewarded with large profits in this trade. The competitive aspects inherent in such trade, whether in procuring cargos, setting prices, or simply competing daily against other merchants for an edge, must also have required these same traits. Inventories suggest that nearly half of probated white male inhabitants at Port Royal were merchants of some kind (Zahedieh, 1986:570), so the effects of these trade-specific conditions on the "culture"

and behaviors of the middle class at Port Royal as a whole was likely to have been significant.

The more timid or cautious merchant who was content to confine himself to legal avenues of trade with far lower profit margins might quickly discover that such a strategy was ill suited to the realities of life in the tropics. The very likely prospect of an early death in the Caribbean, a topic discussed in more depth in the following section, meant people generally couldn't count on enough time to make longer-range, cautious strategies pay off. Thus, in such a situation, the cautious traditionalist is not rewarded; the aggressive innovator and risk taker is. Fortunes were lost as well as made, but the people who emerged intact from this bloody arena were calculating, bold, self-made men. They were used to risks, and to competition, and had good reason to be confident in themselves and their abilities.

The tone of this confidence is evident in the following exchange between a merchant and a London factor in 1688. In September of that year, Port Royal merchant Thomas Hall found himself stuck with quantities of goods he had not requested, shipped by his Uncle James Brailsford who was an established and successful London merchant. Greatly irritated that Brailsford, his senior in both years and experience, had ignored the list of specific commodities he had requested, Hall wrote Brailsford to be certain to follow his requests closely in the future. Hall confidently assured Brailsford that he (Hall) would personally bear any losses himself if the items he asked for turned out not to be profitable, adding: "I must tell you I desire you to give me free liberty to do what I shall think best or else cannot serve you nor anyone" (Hall to Brailsford,

September 10, 1688). Brailsfords seniority and experience notwithstanding, Thomas Hall would do as he saw fit, and was willing to personally cover his losses if he were wrong. Confidence, calculated boldness, and the willingness to take risks, were all necessary equipage for the merchant classes of Port Royal.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND HIERARCHY

Despite a paucity of direct sources for long-term demographic trends in the Caribbean, scholars agree on two major demographic facts bearing directly on this investigation. The first is that the death rate for English colonists in the Caribbean was quite high, and the average lifespan for English colonists there was considerably shorter than it would have been in England (Greene 1992:21-24; Dunn 1973:300-302). The second fact, related to the first, is that the overall population was therefore far more youthful than in England.

With the aid of hindsight and a modern perspective on health and disease, it is evident the English did not adapt themselves or their lifestyles very well to life in the tropics. Many generally refused, for instance, to adopt suitable modes of dress such as lighter fabrics or fewer clothes. Though such practices which would have lessened the debilitating and dehydrating effects of heat and humidity, the traditionally heavy English clothing generally remained the norm.

When thirst necessitated liquid, alcoholic beverages appear to have been favored over water, which had to be shipped to Port Royal in large casks from the mainland since there was no natural source of fresh water on the spit. Sources suggest that in the

Caribbean, heavy drinking was endemic, or as one scholar has described it, "the premier sport in the islands" (Dunn 1973:300). Ligon, describing the regular over-consumption of rum on Barbados, wrote:

> The people drink much of it, indeed too much; for it often lays them asleep on the ground, and that is accounted a very unwholesome lodging (Ligon 1673:33)

At Port Royal, Taylor noted that merchants traditionally closed their shops from noon until three each day, during which time they joined their compatriots in the taverns for their daily refreshments. (Taylor 1688: 262-263). In his description of life at Port Royal in 1688, Taylor adds:

> The chiefe drink among the gentry merchants is Madera wine, Brandy Punch, Beer, Perinno, and Adam's ale, and amongst others Rumpunch, Killdivile, Rapp, Mobby and Watter, which are the chiefe liquors used by the planters in the Countrey, and they are soe generous at their tables are seldom free of servitude, of a lusty bowle of the Quakers cold drink called Rumm Punch, to accommodate their friends and visitors (Taylor 1688:262).

Frequent references to the brothels of Port Royal, and the prevalence of venereal diseases mentioned by physicians such as Dr. Hans Sloane (*Natural History of Jamaica* 1707) support Dunn's contention that the colonists "...retained English habits ill suited to the Caribbean climate and developed new habits ill suited to any climate." (Dunn 1973:264, 307). When these effects, of what might be termed lifestyle, are considered in relation to the malaria, fevers, dysentery, parasites, and other endemic dangers to

health that were prevalent during this period in Jamaica, it is clear why a short life expectancy was the norm.

Though the paucity of data makes it impossible to statistically document exactly how life expectancy for English colonists was affected by these factors in Port Royal, it is possible to make approximate estimates based on a similar situation, in this case, available data from Barbados. As a tropical island involved in trade and sugar production, and containing an urban enclave (Bridgetown) similar to Port Royal, the situation as regards health, illness, and demography at Barbados was probably as comparable to the situation in Jamaica as we are likely to find in the English colonial world. As can be seen in Table 10.1, the Barbadian census of 1715 indicated that 70% of the white inhabitants of the island were less than 29 years of age. Only about 16% of the English colonists reached their 40th birthday, and perhaps most telling, the median age for both sexes was 19.

The twin factors of a high death rate and a young population at Port Royal would have had several important implications for residents of Port Royal. First, the specter of an early death and the awareness that life in the Caribbean was a danger to ones health would have had a pronounced effect on how people behaved in terms of trying to live their lives and be successful, however that concept was defined culturally. The entire life-cycle of a Caribbean colonist would have essentially been a shorter, faster version of the normal life-cycle for an Englishman at home, as it would have been clearly necessary to adopt strategies and life-ways that were oriented towards benefits that would accrue rather quickly. This was a situation of which contemporaries

TABLE 10.1 Sex and age of white population in Barbados, 1715 (from Dunn 1973:331)

Age	Number of males	Percentage of males	Number of females	Percentage of females
0-9	2,383	28.5	2,392	28.8
10-19	1,824	21.9	1,858	22.4
20-29	1,648	19.7	1,494	18.0
30-39	1,296	15.5	1,076	12.9
40-49	731	8.8	781	9.4
50-59	288	3.5	424	5.1
60-69	128	1.5	174	2.1
70+	49	0.6	112	1.3

seemed to be aware. Taylor, for instance, noted that in the Caribbean:

> They grow generally tall, and slendor, of a spare thin body and pale Complection; having all light flaxen haire, being at the full growth and prime strength, att fifteen years old: and seldom live to be above five and thirty years, for as sone as they are twenty, they begin to decline (Taylor 1688:504).

In a situation where physical decline began at age twenty (an astute observation on Taylor's part, given the median age of 19 in the Barbados population sample), cautious, risk-averse strategies that took some time to pay off in terms of either social or economic success, would not be especially beneficial. Aggressive strategies that accepted high risk and aimed at securing fast success would be the only reasonable course of action in such a situation. As Dunn has noted, "Everyone seemed caught up in a race between quick wealth and quick death" (Dunn 1973:333).

Another important effect of a high death rate and comparatively young population would have been that people filling positions of leadership and power in the community were generally younger than their counterparts in England. Caribbean contemporaries noted:

> We have assistant Judges sitts upon the bench that are minors... They shall jump from a boy and a hobby horse to a Collonel of a troope of horse at once. There is no age of Adolescens here: they are either Children or men (Quoted in Dunn 1972:333)

In short, one important effect of the death rate at Port Royal was that this was a society where even people in traditional positions of authority and power were likely to be fairly young. People who were already wealthy or powerful had little incentive to move to Jamaica, and risk the well-known debilitating effects of the tropics. Instead, people of more modest background or social standing were attracted to Jamaica because of the opportunities that the situation presented; opportunities they perceived were not present for them in England.

This meant the social, political and economic positions of power or authority would have been filled with young, aggressive, but primarily self-made men. In this context, an outsider of modest means could observe such people manning the traditional positions of power and authority and reasonably believe that he, too, could potentially enter into and rise within such a hierarchy. In short, this was a society which was clearly more fluid and open than what colonists were used to seeing in England, and it is not unreasonable to suppose they perceived that real opportunities were available to take advantage of such a situation.

SOCIAL NORMS

A hierarchical structure within a large society results from a complex combination of wealth, power, and social stature, therefore social norms and behaviors are a crucial component. If the hierarchical structure in Port Royal can reasonably be said to have been more fluid and open than in comparable English towns, it is also true that social norms were considerably more relaxed. Contemporary descriptions of Port Royal and Jamaica are heavily reflective of authorial intent, and swing wildly from the sterilized promotional pamphlet genre of Blome (1678) to the comically-intended skewering of Edward Ward, and his description of Port Royal as "the Dunghill of the Universe, the Refuse of the whole Creation" (Ward 1698:14). Hyperbole aside, it is certain the Buccaneers who came to Port Royal to enjoy the rewards of their dangerous labors were an unstable and unsettling social force which shaped some of the character, and much of the contemporary perception, of Port Royal.

The Buccaneers were present in Port Royal virtually from the beginning. After the conquest of Jamaica, the English administrators and soldiers believed a counter-attack to retake the island was a distinct possibility. When the protection of the Royal Navy began to melt away, Jamaican Governor D'Oyley, began luring the buccaneers away from their base in Tortuga beginning sometime in 1657. The protection and naval power of the Buccaneers, it was hoped, would keep the port and island secure from Spanish incursions. Thus, by 1670, more than 20 pirate vessels and over 2,000 pirate crewmen and associated ships maintenance staff were to be found at Port Royal, at

which time the Buccaneers had been a fact of life at Port Royal for well over a decade (Zahedia 1986b:215).

A surviving first-hand account from one of the Buccaneers themselves leaves no illusions about what it meant to live the life of a pirate John Esquemeling was a Dutchman, probably born in Flanders, who sailed to the West Indies as an indentured servant in 1666. After falling gravely ill, he was sold as worthless for a small fee to a doctor, who nursed him back to health and freed him on the condition that he would pay 100 pieces of eight in exchange for his freedom, when he came into the money. Without prospects, Esquemeling "determined to enter into the wicked order of Pirates, or Robbers at Sea", with whom he sailed, fought, and caroused until 1672 (Esquemeling 1684:10-11).

Esquemeling's account was originally printed in his native Dutch in 1684, and was quickly translated into Spanish and English. In terms of Port Royal specifically, his description of activities in the aftermath of a successful cruise is instructive:

> They took their prize home to Jamaica, and, according to their custom, wasted in a few days, in Taverns and Stews [brothels] all they had gotten, by giving themselves to all manners of debauchery with Strumpets and Wine. Such of these Pirates are found who will spend two or three thousand pieces of eight in one night, not leaving themselves a good shirt to wear on their backs, in the morning. I saw one of them give a common Strumpet, 500 pieces of eight, only that he might see her naked. My own Master would buy, on such occasions, a whole pipe of wine, and placing it in the street, would force every one that passed by to drink with him; threatening also to pistol them if they refused. At other times he would do the same, with barrels of Ale or beer. Often with his hands, he would throw these liquors about the streets, and wet the cloathes of such that walked by, regardless of whether he spoiled their Apparel, were they men or women (Esquemeling 1684:27-29)

The merchants and citizens of Port Royal chose to accept, at least to a degree, such behavior because they benefited considerably from fencing the loot these pirates brought into port. Whether it was a merchant acting as middleman for the resale of captured goods, or the tavern and brothel owner who reaped large rewards from the wild orgies of spending which appear to have been the norm following a successful action, there was a tangible incentive for the community to tolerate social behaviors in their midst which certainly would have caused an uproar in most areas back home in England. In addition, the presence of the Buccaneers for the security of the island from the earliest years following the English invasion meant that in some ways, they had essentially been grand-fathered in, as Port Royal grew up around them into an international mercantile center.

Despite whatever uncomfortable situations their presence might provoke for the citizens of Port Royal, their money was welcome. As a result of the sack of a Spanish town in Nicaragua, for example, Esquemeling notes that the victorious rogues reputedly captured:

> 4,000 pieces of eight in ready money, besides great quantity of Plate Uncoyned, and many Jewels, all which was computed to be worth the sum of 50,000 pieces of eight, or more. With this great purchase, they soon arrived at Jamaica, but as these people are never Masters of their money, they were soon constrained to seek more by the same means as before (Esquemeling 1684:29-30).

It is not surprising that a town benefiting from, and which in fact grew up around, the actions and lifestyle of the Buccaneers would develop a local culture more

f certain social behaviors than would have been the case in England. This is
gest, however, that citizens of Port Royal rejected English social norms, or
did not attempt to curb some of the behaviors they found most distressing. At
of the earthquake, Port Royal is known to have had considerable means of both
d private correction. Bridewell jail was a solid brick structure built in 1687, as
of Correction for Lazie strumpet of which here are plenty" (Taylor 1688:255).
augmented existing Marshallsea prison as well as another jail in the center of
l around Port Royal could be found a ducking-stool and gallows, a public
the central portion of High Street, a gallows, and a 'cage for strumpets' by the
the Turtle Market (Pawson and Buisseret 1974: 156). The more unruly were
the end of a sand-spit at the entrance of the town. Ten companies of volunteer
would rotate watches, with one of the companies patrolling the city streets each
keep civil order, though they probably enforced law somewhat selectively as it
lt to imagine these part-time volunteers aggressively taking on the hard-bitten
ewmen.

Despite these efforts, Port Royal remained a place where some traditional civil
n social behavior were only marginally effective. Taylor, whose descriptions
inly the most detailed and accurate we have of Port Royal in the years
tely prior to the earthquake, is quite direct in his characterization of the
g of social norms in Port Royal. His account of life and activity at Port Royal
e 1680's indicates in no uncertain terms that this was a society in which
customs and behaviors were greatly relaxed. In terms of traditional English

attitudes towards marriage, for example, Taylor notes that accepted norms at Port Royal differed considerably from those in England:

> Here the rude and common sort of people seldom marie, according to the Ceremony of ye Church; but are soe full of faith as to take anothers words, and soe live together, and beget children, and if they fall out, or disagree, they part friendly by consent (Taylor 1688:264-265).

Not just co-habitation replacing traditional marriage, but public deportment also appeared strange and unconventional to Taylor's eyes. Describing as "very loose" what we might term social standards of conduct at Port Royal, he writes:

> You shall see a common woman, only in hir smocke or linen peticote, bare footed, without shoo or stockins, with a Straw hatt, & a red tobacco pipe in their mouths, and they Trampouse about their streets, in this their warlike posture, and thus arrayed they will boose a cupp of punch cumly with anyone (Taylor 1688:264-265)

The overall picture of social norms at Port Royal, then, is a mixture of the attempt to replicate English laws, as well as standards of morality and behavior, tempered by the fast and loose reality of a prosperous frontier boomtown "beyond the line" (Bridenbaugh 1972). The presence of the Buccaneers alone would have lent a wilder edge to everyday life at Port Royal than would have been found virtually any place in England, yet the importance of the contraband trade with the Spanish meant that even traditionally respectable community members like the merchants had a tinge of the illicit and the reckless to them. While descriptions like Ward's, characterizing Port Royal as a place where "Virtue is Dispis'd, and all sorts of Vice Encouraged, by both Sexes, that the Town of Port Royal is the very Sodom of the Universe" (Ward

1698:16), are greatly exaggerated, it is clear that at least some of the social norms and traditional attitudes developed in the long-established, close knit communities of England were not replicated intact at Port Royal, but were reformulated to some degree by local circumstances and culture.

CONTEXT AND CONSUMPTION

Multiple facets of the particular historical context of Port Royal created an atmosphere that would have been highly conducive to a "fast-forwarding" of consumerist behavior. The ever-present specter of an early death necessitated a fast paced life-cycle, placing a premium on high risk-fast reward behaviors. Those possessing the right balance of calculated boldness emerged with newly-minted fortunes, and such men were not likely to be predisposed to respecting traditional ideas about "place" within an already fluid social hierarchy. This fluidity was, in turn, partly the consequence of a comparatively young population of self-made men manning the posts of those traditional authority positions, a situation that would not have been particularly conducive to the maintenance of rigid social hierarchies.

Thus, the potent mix of a high death rate, a young population, and potentially large profits from risk-filled ventures, all combined to create opportunities for social mobility in that were clearly far greater than in England. Perhaps only in Port Royal could a former indentured servant and pirate, who in his earlier years was known to "...drag a wine cask out into the street and, pistol in hand, threaten to shoot any passer-by who did not stop and drink with him" (Black, 1983:45), rise so high in the political

and economic hierarchy as to be Knighted by Charles II and named Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica, amassing a considerable fortune prior to his death. No greater example of the fluidity of this society and the potential opportunity to improve one's station can be found than the case of Sir Henry Morgan, and this example would not have been lost on Morgan's contemporaries.

However, within the particular social, cultural, and economic contexts that existed in Port Royal, many strategies could potentially have been employed to take advantage of the situation. One could choose, for example, to concentrate on accumulation of wealth and property at the expense of show, building up a considerable net worth in terms of land holdings, ownership of buildings or ships, or other tangible assets, yet still live one's daily life in a relatively frugal manner, eating off inexpensive plates, dressing conservatively, etc. In fact, such frugality in terms of luxury items would directly benefit the ability of a person to accumulate long-range capital or assets, hence allowing them to leave Jamaica and return to England, obviously a goal for many in this culture (Claypole 1972:216). Why, then, was a strategy of expenditures on non-utilitarian material culture an important ingredient in the life-strategies of this middle class, even given the context of economic opportunity and social fluidity which characterized Port Royal at this time? The artifact analysis, probate inventory analysis, and primary accounts of life at Port Royal support the conclusion that individuals at Port Royal chose to use and display luxury items to assert their place in the world. Such choices need to be explained in terms of individual's reasons for acting, and in this case, must be related to conspicuous display and luxury consumption.

One area of behavioral theory is especially pertinent to this question. It has been argued that, in terms of understanding luxury spending and conspicuous display behavior in human groups, a certain degree of wasteful advertising can ultimately be beneficial to the individual. Known variously as Costly Signaling Theory (Hawkes and Bird 2000, Wiessner 2002) or the Handicap Principle (Zahavi and Zahavi 1997), this idea is centered on the notion that waste can actually be beneficial, when an individual has something to gain by demonstrating to others that they are fit enough to waste valuable resources.

> Waste can make sense, because by wasting one proves conclusively that one has enough assets to waste and more. The investment- the waste itself- is just what makes the advertisement reliable. (In fact) the receiver of a signal has a stake in the signal's reliability, or accuracy, and will not pay attention to it unless it is reliable (Zahavi and Zahavi 1997:229).

Thus interpreted, the adoption of a mode of conspicuous display, whether expressed as a particular style of dress, accoutrements about the home, or even the construction of the home itself, all become costly but accurate signals of the fitness of that particular individual within that place and time. In fact, it is the very cost of the signal that ensures its accuracy, thus placing a premium on expensive goods or other items used in such a manner.

As noted earlier, any explanation of why people did what they did cannot include ideas the people themselves didn't know at the time of their acting. Much of the literature on Costly Signaling Theory explains reasons for acting by relying upon detailed formulas of cost-benefit analysis or maximizing return equations, yet people in

a place like Port Royal could not possibly have been in a position to perform such calculations, or even know all of the variables affecting such principles. People in the merchant class, for example, would not, except perhaps crudely or viscerally, be able to assess the "strength of their next closest competitor", and thus could have been in any position to even calculate, much less act upon, such information. Indeed, in terms of competitors, they likely could not even know who all of their competitors were at any given time. At best, people would have had to rely on their fallible perception of the situation.

Given these caveats, it appears that middle-class individuals living in Port Royal perceived that the best way to rise in this fluid society was to look the part. Concomitantly, this would suggest that people perceived that the money spent on such displays was worth the rewards improving one's position might bring in this society. These rewards might include marriage into a higher echelon of society, improved business opportunities, improved social networking, increased political power, and many other potential rewards associated with joining the gentry, albeit a colonial gentry. One had to look the part, however, and the most accurate signals of such "membership", the Handicap Principle tells us, are the most costly.

At Port Royal, the successful merchants strode about town clutching their silver-headed canes. They carefully chose their clothes and accessories to be in fashion with the latest things from London, and the more expensive, the better. Gold and silver was better than brass and copper, and his buttons, rings, and buckles should be made of the former if he wished to impress. They would also be sure to entertain friends and

acquaintances in fine style in their homes, with silver or pewter plate, fashionable utensils, new spices, and even hot drinks. In this fast and loose society of self-made men, one could claim to be virtually anything, provided others could be made to believe. Costly signals and the trappings of luxury were, evidently, perceived as an effective way to go about it. Consumerism thus became entrenched at Port Royal.

CHAPTER XI
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The Consumer Revolution was a profoundly transforming event, which in many ways ushered in the modern world of globalization and international trade. It lay the foundations of our modern world of fashion-consciousness and conspicuous consumption on a mass scale, a process that has, in turn, resulted in a sustained period of unparalleled consumption of resources to the degree that the long-term sustainability of such cultural practices may be seriously called into question. The consumer revolution also appears to have been an essential ingredient in, and major impetus for, the Industrial Revolution and all of the massive technological, economic, political, and social changes to the western world created by that phenomenon. In short, this study of Port Royal is significant because it deals directly with the question of the origins of some of the most important events in modern world history.

Documentary and archaeological evidence supports the contention that the middle class of Port Royal was engaged in conspicuous consumption, aggressive social climbing, and the use of material culture for symbolic display – all hallmarks of the consumer revolution – at least as early as the 1680's. Thus, one major conclusion of this study of Port Royal is that it appears to provide specific support for the causal explanation of the rise of consumer behavior throughout the English colonial world put forth by Cary Carson (1994).

As noted earlier, Carson posited that increasingly mobile populations post-1660 lessened the utility of traditional local markers of status such as land, family, and reputation. With increasing population movement, "newcomers and travelers inevitably found themselves measured against perfect strangers. Alas, the old yardsticks were nowhere near at hand" (Carson, 1994:523), spurring the use of items as tools for negotiating and asserting membership, or aspirations to membership, in particular social groups or classes. If Carson's causal explanation is correct, would it not follow that citizens of communities with the fewest established "yardsticks", meaning the weakest traditions in terms of established hierarchies, families, or reputations, would be among the earliest to adopt such practices?

Port Royal in the 1680's was above all a boomtown community, a place that literally didn't exist prior to 1655. It was a place where the exclusionary power of the traditional social and economic hierarchies present in English villages, towns, and cities appears to have been weakened considerably, and where some customary English social norms were plainly modified by local circumstances. Virtually every contemporary description includes some variation of the "wickedest city on earth" theme, and though the stereotype is clearly overdrawn given the primacy of mercantilism and trade, it reflects the contemporary impression that social norms in Port Royal were considerably looser than the observers were used to seeing in England. This was, after all, an extraordinarily fluid society where a brawling pirate like Henry Morgan could be Knighted by Charles II and named Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica.

The extent to which the middle class of Port Royal was engaging in consumer behavior, and the timing of this behavior (seemingly well-represented in the 1680's), suggests that dynamic urban colonial societies like Port Royal facilitated aggressive social climbing and the use of material culture as a tool for making a claim to status or group membership. These were more easily accomplished in a fluid society and, presumably, were more directly rewarded, than within areas where long-established tradition and more rigid hierarchies retarded or hindered such behaviors or the perceived payoff from such behaviors.

In addition, the shortened life-span and likelihood of an early death for most colonists ensured that many who manned traditional positions of authority and power in this society were younger and less established than those in similar positions in England. The death rate would also have contributed more pressure for people to adopt strategies of high-risk/quick-reward, creating an aggressive group of self-made climbers. All told, the net effect of these particular contexts and pressures was to create an atmosphere where consumerist behavior, aggressive social climbing, and conspicuous display, all made sense as personal strategies for advancement. People would have clearly perceived the opportunity, and were in a position to act upon this knowledge.

It is possible that, in addition to Port Royal, other urban colonial outposts may have offered a combination of circumstances that were favorable to a "fast-forwarding" of middle class consumer behavior as well. It would appear that many of the conditions identified in this study as being important factors in facilitating consumerist behavior at

Port Royal would presumably have been present in other colonial urban settings, to varying degrees. If such evidence for similar advancement of consumerist behavior could be found in other colonial urban settings, it would provide strong confirmation for Carson's causal explanation. This examination of Port Royal certainly supports Carson's framework, by identifying multiple ways in which aspirations to membership in social groups played out within the particular historical cultural context of Port Royal, Jamaica, and by demonstrating the presence of the material manifestations of those behaviors – consumer luxury goods.

If the middle class of Port Royal was significantly ahead of their peers, in England and elsewhere in the colonies, in the use of material culture for aggressive social climbing, then this conclusion could potentially have important implications for general models of the consumer revolution, and specifically, for the rise of consumerist behavior in the wider British and colonial middle classes. Both the Emulation and Flight-and-Chase models discussed earlier explain the process of middle class adoption of consumerism as essentially pan-English, and assume that the most important locus of interaction in this regard was interaction between classes, specifically, the entire English and colonial middle class and the entire English and colonial elite. Though researchers are quick to point out that changing patterns of consumption proceeded much faster in urban areas than rural ones (Carson, 1994: 517), the basic underlying assumption of class interaction as the primary dynamic remains intact. However, if Port Royal was indeed an unusually early example of aggressive middle class consumerism as has been argued here, then it is possible that an important agent for

change within the middle class of England and her colonies could, at least in part, have come laterally, from interaction with middle-class colonists who were already steeped in consumer behavior in colonial urban areas such as Port Royal. Such a model for change could accurately be described as a diffusionist explanation, as the behaviors facilitated in the unique historical context of Port Royal could, under this model, have diffused outwards with subsequent out-migration of the Jamaican middle class.

To a limited degree, some interesting possibilities for the transmission of such behavior are suggested by the exit of the Port Royal middle class and merchant elite during the 1680's and 1690's. The political power of the merchants was being slowly usurped by the power of the grandee sugar planters in the 1680's, and the 1692 earthquake marked the end of the heyday of the middle class in Port Royal. Starting slowly in the 1680's, the middle class began leaving Port Royal and Jamaica, a movement that increased considerably after the earthquake (Claypole 1972: 225-244). The most popular destinations for these colonists were the slave states of North America, especially South Carolina, North Carolina, and to a lesser extent Virginia (Hamilton, personal communication, 2002). It is interesting, though certainly not conclusive, to note that their arrival in the early 1700s' comes immediately before some researchers begin to see a rise in consumer behavior or changing consumption patterns in the North American colonies (Shackel 1992; Carr and Walsh 1994; Yentch 1990). Concomitant with this exit from Port Royal came similar middle class out-migrations from Barbados and the Leeward Islands, again with the Carolinas as the destination of choice (Dunn 1973: 112-116).

It is also interesting to note that a large number of the most successful merchants of Port Royal simply left for England once they had attained a sufficient level of wealth. This practice was so pervasive that Claypole, in his study *Merchants of Port Royal,* found that a large number of the inventories he was seeking were not actually housed in Jamaica, but instead located in London. In fact, so many Port Royal merchants returned to London after making their fortunes that Claypole remarked dryly; "Not all merchants, however, went back to London. A number of them died in Port Royal" (Claypole 1972: 216), presumably before they could return. It goes without saying that wealthy merchants did not leave England for the tropical dangers and short life expectancy of the Caribbean. However, poorer ones did take the risk and many returned rich, re-inserting themselves into English society with the means, and likely the inclination, for aggressive social climbing.

It is not unreasonable to suppose that during the return of newly-risen merchant elites to England and during the exodus of the middle class to the North American Colonies, people would have carried the consumer behaviors and social ideas discussed here. It is rather unlikely, however, that people from Port Royal alone could have had any appreciable effect on the entirety of English society or the middle class. Although Port Royal is just one of many colonial urban areas where circumstances may have been favorable for a "fast-forwarding" of the use of material culture for asserting membership in social groups, such an explanation is still somewhat limited in its applicability.

However, the sea-change of consumer behavior which swept through the English and colonial middle classes in the eighteenth century is unlikely to have been more than tangentially effected by colonials returning home. It is far more likely that specific conditions that made such a strategy an appealing and even potentially lucrative option for member of the middle class at Port Royal (potentially other colonial urban areas as well) may have increased in other areas over time. In other words, it might not be the spread of people, per se, from colonial urban areas amenable to such behaviors, but the increase or spread of certain conditions, which early on made the colonial urban centers more amenable to such behavior, throughout the English colonial world. A dampening of traditional hierarchies, the economic success and buying power of an aggressive middle class, the potential for changing one's social as well as economic position, and the evident rewards for those who successfully played this game, are conditions likely to be credited with the rise in consumer behavior elsewhere. In this light, the historical narrative of colonial urban centers may be one in which such conditions were favorable earliest, and suggests that the rise in similar conditions throughout the entire English colonial world during the early eighteenth century may lie at the heart of the rise in consumerist behaviors.

The deliberate use of items as social tools, to negotiate social identity and pursue one's aspired-to place in the world, appears to have taken hold in the middle class at Port Royal far earlier than in other areas within the English-colonial world. Obviously, this is not to suggest that coopers wives dressed in fine silks and gold, parading around the streets of Port Royal, ultimately "caused" the Consumer or

Industrial Revolutions. It does appear, however, that the early appearance of conspicuous display and aggressive social climbing evident in Port Royal was due to specific historical circumstances that made this place especially amenable to fast-forwarding the adoption of consumerist behaviors within the middle class at an early date. It will be the study of these conditions and their effect on the behavior of other individuals, in other areas and different times, which holds the potential for ultimately tracing the arc of consumption through to the present time.

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