Social and Economic Opportunity in Seventeenth-Century Charles County, Maryland

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ABSTRACT

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY CHARLES COUNTY, MARYLAND.

Garett William Hughes
Old Dominion University, 1996
Director: Dr. Jane T. Merritt

This study explores social and economic opportunity within Charles County in the context of the seventeenth-century and the founding of the Maryland colony. By illustrating the strong cross-Atlantic ties between England and the Chesapeake region, as well as the impact that a high population turnover rate and unsteady tobacco economy had upon the Maryland colony, this study first establishes the environment that those settlers who chose to immigrate to the Chesapeake inhabited. Further, by utilizing community connections, personal relations, and the legal system, the men and women of Charles County developed new methods in which to access opportunity. The source material used for this study consists primarily of the Charles County Court Proceedings and the Maryland Provincial Court records.
For Tabitha & Wolf, Summer 1995

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INTRODUCTION

Interest in the Chesapeake region as a model by which to examine life during the colonial period has traditionally been limited. A majority of scholars have instead focused upon the well-documented New England model to demonstrate the American colonial experience. However, as an important region in the British Empire, the Chesapeake colonies have much more to offer the historical field, particularly in addressing the changing nature of social and economic opportunity throughout the seventeenth-century. This work focuses on Charles County, Maryland and how white English immigrants, through cultural relations such as interpersonal connections and social institutions, continued to access opportunity in the seventeenth-century.

A revival of interest in the Chesapeake region emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s. A formidable group of scholars, known collectively as the Chesapeake School, examined the region as a model of American colonization and analyzed its impact upon the American character. These historians focused predominantly upon the political and economic aspects rather than the social or cultural implications of the Chesapeake as applied to the greater American experience. Yet, these works which shape the Chesapeake historiography assert that the Chesapeake region
existed as an inherently unstable region. In other words, the region's high death rate, unbalanced sex ratio, and general aura of uncertainty permeated early colonial society, ultimately creating instability. Lorena S. Walsh's "Staying Put or Getting Out: Findings for Charles County, Maryland, 1650-1720," Russell R. Menard's "Population, Economy, and Society in Seventeenth-Century Maryland," and Lois Green Carr and Russell R. Menard's "Immigration and Opportunity: The Freedman in Early Colonial Maryland" have done much to advocate this theory.¹

The Chesapeake School has concentrated on demographic information to illustrate the instability of the Chesapeake region. Statistics such as life spans, the proportion of women to men, the ratio of householders to servants, tobacco prices, wealth distribution, as well as other economic aspects are vital to these writings. With this type of information the scholars then trace how colonial society changed, eventually providing opportunity for colonists. As Thad W. Tate acknowledges in "The Seventeenth Century Chesapeake and its Modern Historians,"¹

if the instability arising out of demographic failure is the great theme of Chesapeake history . . . then the pervasive transformation of society, economy, and government that occurred constitutes the overriding concern of most of the recent scholarship. 2

Yet, in searching for this pervasive transformation of society within a possibly unstable region, the recent historiography has not effectively traced all methods through which many Marylanders accessed opportunity and established themselves as independent planters. For Charles County, the Chesapeake School performs a remarkable job, much of it quantitative, to reveal those opportunities available to servants. Yet these historians do not adequately address those methods that either freemen or women used to establish their own opportunities within the region. In emphasizing demographic information, the Chesapeake School ignores the importance of cultural relations such as interpersonal connections and the role of social institutions that permitted settlers access or the ability to preserve their opportunity and improve upon their lot. These cultural relations within the Chesapeake fostered a shared sense of mutual interdependence and locally felt community where residents could depend upon one

2 Thad W. Tate, "The Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake and Its Modern Historians," in The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century, ed. Thad W. Tate and David L. Ammerman (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979), 37.
another for both association and assistance.¹ This project, while acknowledging the invaluable amount of demographic work done to understand the nature of social and economic opportunity within the Chesapeake region, proposes to move beyond that of its predecessors. The Charles County court records reveal that settlers, both men and women, continually developed new cultural relations in order to improve their chances of success. Single men formed household partnerships, and both men and women interacted with their social betters as a source of legal representation, credit, and education for their children.

In the colonial era, the presence and activities of the servant class provide a considerable amount of information to the Chesapeake School regarding the relative stability or instability of the region. Lorena Walsh's "Staying Put or Getting Out in Charles County, Maryland, 1650-1720" and "Servitude and Opportunity in Charles County, Maryland, 1685-1720," Lois Green Carr and Russell R. Menard's "Immigration and Opportunity: The Freedman in Early Colonial Maryland," and Russell R. Menard's "From Servant to Freeholder: Status Mobility and Property Accumulation in Seventeenth-Century Maryland" stress the abundant opportunities available to ex-servants in Maryland, at least

until the end of the 1670s, in terms of access to land, wealth, and public office. The Chesapeake School further argues that former servants usually entered the ranks of small planters. After a few years work for an established planter, many ex-servants were able to acquire a small tract of land and set up independent plantations. Yet, the Charles County court records at least do not support such claims, as most servants did not stay or survive long enough to establish themselves. Although many Chesapeake planters turned to slave labor to offset these losses, the court records indicate that Charles County planters did not do so on a vast scale. As late as 1675 Charles County remained a land of newcomers, much as it had in 1660, attracting both servant and free English immigrants.

Like this present study, historians of Virginia, particularly Edmund S. Morgan, in American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal Of Colonial Virginia, and T. H. Breen in "A Changing Labor Force And Race Relations In Virginia

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1660-1710," argue that contrary to the portrayal of colonial life by the Chesapeake School, the Chesapeake region did not present abundant opportunities to ex-servants. Instead, these works argue that ex-servants faced enormous obstacles in establishing themselves. As in the Maryland colony, indentured servants flooded into Virginia in the 1650s, with several thousand arriving annually. It is suggested that those who chose to immigrate as indentured servants found it very difficult to leave the ranks of the servant class. Land in colonial Virginia, although abundant, was no longer free except in those areas "where the danger from Indians or the lack of transportation for tobacco made it uninviting." Should a servant acquire land, "it was not likely to be in one of the counties where rich land would insure success." In Virginia, no more than six percent of ex-servants ever became independent planters. Many fell into debt, unable to purchase necessary imported goods such as clothing. In fact, Morgan and Breen argue that many ex-servants were more likely to be found paying rent as tenants to their former

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7Ibid.

masters than establishing independent plantations.  

There are other ways that this study's findings deviate from the Chesapeake School. Both Russell R. Menard and Lorena S. Walsh correctly identify the household as the primary means through which settlers accessed social and economic opportunity. Marriage is frequently cited as the most common method in which individuals established a household. Yet so great had been the pressure or drive to establish a household in places such as Charles County that a more significant proportion of settlers than has previously been realized established households as bachelors or as partners with other male settlers as a means to improve their chances for success. The Chesapeake School historiography, with its emphasis upon demographic trends, does not adequately explain how such relationships developed in a supposedly unstable region and whether these new households provided opportunities for settlers.

The Chesapeake School historians have also suggested that marriage provided social and economic opportunity to women. Such a statement or generalization is true to a certain extent. The importance of these women is commonly

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associated with their low numbers within the region, which increased their potential for marriage. Lois G. Carr and Lorena S. Walsh argue in "The Planter's Wife: The Experience of White Women in Seventeenth-Century Maryland" that the small number of women within the colony enabled women to make suitable marriage arrangements and thus experience considerable liberty. The Charles County court records suggest, however, that women's roles were not limited to marriage. The records show women independently administering estates, registering animals, conducting land transactions, accumulating bills, prosecuting outstanding debts, and assuming careers. Although women may have seen marriage as an ideal or a method in which to participate in the larger community, the Chesapeake School has not clarified sufficiently the roles of women both within and outside of the institution of marriage and how these women experienced and defined opportunity.

While the Chesapeake School has focused upon demographic information to better understand the composition

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and traits of the colonial population, more recent historians such as Cornelia Hughes Dayton, Marylynn Salmon, and James Horn have approached the enigmatic issues of social and economic opportunity in a different manner. By analyzing court records, these authors emphasize the importance of cultural relations and their meanings rather than demographics to the pursuit of opportunity in the colonial era. Subsequently, these studies have offered historians a new, although seldom used, methodology in which to analyze opportunity in the Chesapeake region.

Cornelia Hughes Dayton and Marylynn Salmon examine the cultural and social history of women through an analysis of the colonial legal system. Their examination, which spans the seventeenth and eighteenth-century, presents a useful framework in which to view Chesapeake women's relationship to the court system and community.

In "Turning Points and the Relevance of Colonial Legal History," Cornelia Hughes Dayton presents a synthesis of the scholarship conducted during the 1970s and 1980s regarding the changes and challenges to colonial legal history. The current scholarship, according to Dayton, portrays the late seventeenth-century as a transitional period between an "archaic" colonial legal system and a "formative" early national period. From 1680 to 1720, particularly in New

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England, scholars find

a transitional era where economic, demographic, political and attitudinal forces coalesced to turn the legal system towards professionalism and [away] from simple rules, conciliation, wide accessibility, and concern with moral regulation.  

Dayton also emphasizes that the scholarship of the 1970s argued that during the late seventeenth-century

by statute and custom, legislatures and courts in the colonies expanded married women's rights, particularly their opportunity to trade and to operate their own business.

From this, Dayton concludes, came the Golden Age thesis, that "colonial housewives labored away industriously and cheerfully in a frontier world that afforded them a substantial degree of autonomy and self-control."

Marylynn Salmon's extensive study of property law, Women And The Law of Property In Early America, reveals "a picture of . . . enforced dependence [for women] both before and after the Revolution." As Marylynn Salmon argues, the Chesapeake followed English law and custom; it did not initiate a departure in terms of married women's roles.

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14 Ibid., 11.
15 Ibid., 13.
16 Ibid., 14.
18 Ibid., 10.
The court records of Charles County support Salmon, in that married women's opportunity before the law was limited. Yet, the Charles County court records also show that widows of various legal status often independently accessed the legal system to secure financial and social opportunity.

Similar to Cornelia Hughes Dayton and Marylynn Salmon, James Horn also extensively uses court records in order to analyze the development of social and economic opportunity. In "Servant Emigration to the Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century" and *Adapting To A New World: English Society In The Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake*, Horn examines the court records available in England, Virginia, and Maryland to understand the impact that the evolution of English society and the development of community relations had upon accessing opportunity in the Chesapeake. Horn emphasizes the immigrants' experience:

> the sorts of backgrounds they came from and the reasons that encouraged, or forced, them to leave England; their impressions of the Chesapeake; how they adapted to the novel conditions they faced; their experience of family life, the local community, and work; their perceptions of the social order, disorder, and religion. 18

Horn asserts that the local community was important in helping these immigrants adapt to their surroundings. The community is defined by Horn as small "clusters of households that constituted neighborhoods, friends, and

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18 Horn, *Adapting To A New World*, 12.
neighbors." Through these communities, individuals and families interacted in a complex web of interrelationships, as the community allowed colonial settlers to access opportunities in the Chesapeake region. Horn writes that friends and neighbors provided company and recreation, helped in periods of crisis, witnessed vital events in individual lives, kept watch and ward, mediated in local disputes, defined acceptable standards of behavior, lent money and tools, exchanged produce, participated in various communal activities, and carried out official duties.

The Charles County court records also demonstrate that men and women turned to community connections, such as those emphasized by Horn, in order to provide for their social and economic well-being.

Although this current treatment of Charles County, Maryland does not fully address the subject matter contained within the studies conducted by Cornelia Hughes Dayton, Marylynn Salmon, and James Horn, their methodology can be applied to this study, where court documents provide the primary source material. By using the Charles County court records, it will be shown how individual settlers utilized community connections, personal relations and the legal system to develop new methods in which to access opportunity.

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10 Ibid., 234.
11 Ibid.
This process is depicted within two chapters. The first focuses upon the strong cross-Atlantic ties between England and the Chesapeake region, which James Horn has depicted. This study shows that the rapid downturn of the English agricultural economy, similar to that experienced by the Chesapeake with tobacco in the late seventeenth-century, forced laborers to migrate out. Many English immigrants who chose to leave for the Chesapeake did so as servants, for they lacked sufficient wealth to establish themselves independently. This study also shows that Charles County was unable to maintain a stable labor force for the cultivation of tobacco. Few servants remained in Charles County, due either to death or out-migration, suggesting that planters could not maintain the status quo in terms of labor. Although other Chesapeake planters altered their labor force from servants to slaves, the court records indicate that Charles County planters did not do so in significant numbers. Rather, as tobacco prices fell in the late seventeenth-century, Charles County planters sought to increase the number of servants and thus tobacco output in order to offset decreasing market prices. This suggests that the demand for labor for tobacco cultivation still provided opportunities for immigrant servants.

The second chapter's treatment of the Chesapeake region moves beyond demographic information in order to demonstrate the various methods that individuals used to attain and
secure opportunity in the New World. By examining existing community ties, it will discuss the ways that settlers utilized social hierarchies and personal relations to secure opportunity. Household formation, whether through marriage, partnerships, or among bachelors, remained integral to a Charles County settler's search for opportunity. This study shows that settlers who formed households attained better social positions and acceptance within the larger community. Charles County residents could then turn to their wealthier neighbors in order to secure credit with which to purchase goods and property to maintain their households. This extension of credit created a visible social hierarchy and system of dependence that can easily be traced within the court records. Charles County settlers also utilized the legal system in order to secure opportunity. Settlers initiated lawsuits and defended against legal actions, typically involving debt, which might threaten their ability to pursue opportunity.

As this study also demonstrates, the search for opportunity had not been the sole province of men alone. Women used the same connections and relations as men in order to protect their social and economic position within Charles County. Through marriage, women gained access and participation within the larger community, and as widows enjoyed roles normally reserved to men. All women, regardless of marital status, also utilized the legal system
to secure their opportunity. Chapter II then concludes with a discussion of the opportunities for children within Charles County. This study shows that orphans and children were typically cared for by widows and the community, who through guardianships, apprenticeships, or indentured servitude, sought to provide these children with opportunity. However, many children faced abuse from unscrupulous masters or guardians and as this study shows, although children most often received practical education rather than academic instruction, it did not impair their ability to survive or make a living.

Chapter III concludes the study, presenting a summary of the ideas drawn forth from the previous chapters with particular emphasis upon the methods that settlers used in order to create opportunities for themselves.
CHAPTER I
ENGLISH PLACE SETTINGS

The lure of wealth enticed many white English immigrants to the Chesapeake region. The promise of profits and opportunities based upon the tobacco crop dominated the link between Chesapeake planters and the larger Atlantic world. Tobacco, according to historian Russell R. Menard, shaped the pattern of settlement and the distribution of wealth, structured daily and seasonal work routines, channelled investment decisions and occupational choices, limited the growth of towns and the development of domestic industry.1

In short, tobacco touched every facet of Chesapeake colonial life. From 1654 to 1686, approximately 5000 servants arrived in the Chesapeake for its cultivation.2 At least two hundred and twelve of these servants arrived in Charles County, Maryland.3 What motivated these prospective settlers to leave the world they knew for the uncertainty that awaited them within the New World? A momentary glimpse at England, or more importantly the ports of London and


2Horn, "Servant Immigration," 53.


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Bristol, will serve as an entrance into understanding what factors induced such a large scale migration and its impact upon the Chesapeake.

The two English cities of London and Bristol served as hubs from which most settlers embarked towards the New World. These ports acted as gravitational centers, pulling workers away from their traditional, rural homelands to the bustling pre-industrial urban centers. Throughout seventeenth-century England, urban centers experienced surges in population; London, in particular, experienced a growth in population from 200,000 to 575,000 by 1700. The reasons for such a dramatic increase may be traced to the downturn of the English agricultural economy. Specifically, the English wheat market, similar to the colonial tobacco market during the late seventeenth-century, experienced wild fluctuations in prices and production. The palpitations of this economic "heart" of England devastated local economies, households, and families, inducing many to leave the world they knew to the unknown urban centers in order to find work. Nascent pre-industrial sectors located within these urban centers could not accommodate this worker migration, resulting in employment scarcity, a high poverty rate, and a rapidly declining quality of life among the middling class.

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*Horn, "Servant Emigration," 72.

"Gloria L. Main, "Maryland and the Chesapeake Economy, 1670-1720," in Law, Society, and Politics, ed. Aubrey C. Land, Lois Green Carr, and Edward C. Papenfuse (Baltimore:
Faced with such fearful prospects many chose to emigrate to the New World. This migration is a constant theme which resonates throughout the history of the Chesapeake region as a whole and its roots are distinctly connected to these events in England.

James Horn has concluded in his study "Servant Emigration to the Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century" that 46.9% of those immigrants bound for the Chesapeake region from the port of Bristol came from agricultural backgrounds. The common laborer composed only 19% of these totals, and those from the textile industry 14.5%. In London, the semi-skilled worker composed the largest totals at 28%, while those from agricultural backgrounds totalled 24%. In all, the study concludes that those who emigrated from the port of Bristol practiced 66 different trades while those from London practiced 34. The predominance of agricultural backgrounds within this migratory work force was a result of the English wheat market collapse. Those workers who could not support themselves within England left for the Chesapeake, which needed a labor source to harvest tobacco. This demand for labor drastically altered the

Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 139-140.

'Horn, "Servant Emigration," 59.

'Ibid.

'Ibid.

'Ibid.
population composition within the Chesapeake community.

Population Composition and Economy

Unlike New England, whole families did not typically emigrate to the Chesapeake region. The English trading community preferred men and boys for their greater labor potential, although their skills or occupations mattered little in terms of their relocation. Many lacked sufficient wealth to establish themselves independently in the New World and so arrived as servants. Of the 181 males who entered Charles County during the late seventeenth-century, many arrived as minors or unskilled workers and were placed in the tobacco fields in order to increase tobacco output.

Women had often been overlooked as a labor force by the English trading community, who held different expectations for women during the seventeenth-century. English society disapproved of field work for women, and scorned those continental countries where female peasants worked alongside their men.10 English women, according to Gloria L. Main in Tobacco Colony: Life in Early Maryland, 1650-1720, may "have felt demeaned by such labor, and rumors that the tobacco planters might require them to work at the hoe did

not aid recruitment efforts." This is evident in the limited number of women registered in the immigration and court records within the Chesapeake region. From 1658 to 1686 only 32 women are recorded in the Charles County Court records as arriving as servants, despite the fact that three men for every woman sailed for the Chesapeake from the port of Bristol alone. Although those women who chose to emigrate had been relatively young, falling roughly between the ages of 15 and 24, their limited numbers allowed them to operate with a greater degree of freedom and mobility that provided opportunities for their own advancement.

The effects of male immigration on the Chesapeake region may be seen within Table 1, which provides an estimation of the Charles County population for the years 1658 to 1690. In this cross-section of the Charles County community, the rate of increase for servants will be helpful in determining the potential for opportunity available to those immigrants who arrived as servants. The rate of increase is determined as follows: a rate of 1 indicates a stagnant population, a rate above 1 an increase in population, and a rate below 1 a decrease in population.

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11Ibid., 108-109. Alice Rogers of York County, Virginia complained in 1669 that her master made her "work in the ground," a task she expected the court to exclude from her regular duties.


14Rate of Increase is determined as follows: a rate of 1 indicates a stagnant population, a rate above 1 an increase in population, and a rate below 1 a decrease in population.
increase for servants fluctuated much more dramatically than that of the free male population, which remained relatively stable at 1.2 (for every 1 male who died or left, 1.2 arrived) for the better part of the period. From 1660 to 1662, the rate of increase for servants measured at 1, with its highest rating of 3 occurring later from 1662 to 1664. Comparatively, the free male population enjoyed its highest increase rate, measured at 1.8 from 1660 to 1662. For the remainder of the seventeenth-century, the servant increase rate hovered between .9 and 1. Only briefly during the period of 1666 to 1669 did the rate increase to 1.5.

What do these numbers reveal concerning servant opportunities within Charles County? They indicate that Charles County did not maintain a sufficient servant labor base for a geographic area known for tobacco cultivation. Although servant numbers sometimes increased at a higher rate than that of freeholders, information taken from the Charles County court records suggest that the labor population was still small. Maryland estates, as early as the 1660s, show a mean of 1.7 servants per household. By 1720, the mean declined to .53 servants per household. For Maryland's Western Shore, this decline by the early

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population. See Appendix B.

"Carr and Menard, "Immigration and Opportunity," 239. For further reference, see Russell R. Menard, "Economy and Society in Early Colonial Maryland" (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1975), fig. VIII-I, 337.
eighteenth-century in servants per household can be traced to an increased demand in slave labor. As the American colonial region continued to expand and develop, settlers began to draw upon slaves to meet their needs for labor. By 1690 in New England, slaves constituted about 1 percent of the population, totalling slightly fewer than a thousand in number. \(^\text{16}\) The slave population of both the Middle Colonies and the Lower South amounted to approximately 6,000 each in 1710. \(^\text{17}\) From 1658 to 1710, 1,618 slaves can be found in the inventories of the Maryland Western Shore inhabitants. \(^\text{18}\) Of these, the census of 1710 reveals that the settlers of Calvert and Prince George's counties account for 50% of the slave population. \(^\text{19}\) In contrast, slaves were a minority in seventeenth-century Charles and Anne Arundel counties, indicating that immigrant servants and ex-servants remained the backbone of the labor supply in those areas. Lorena S. Walsh, in "Servitude and Opportunity in Charles County," accounts then for the low servant numbers by arguing that ex-servants


\(^\text{17}\)Ibid., 132, 143.


\(^\text{19}\)William Hand Browne, ed., *Archives of Maryland*, 73 vols. to date (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1883-1972), XXV: 258. See also Carr and Menard, "Immigration and Opportunity," 239.
might have remained in the county but lived obscure lives, neither owning land, registering livestock marks, witnessing documents, holding minor offices, or serving on juries, nor suing or being sued in county court.20

The low number of servants can also be traced to death or out-migration. Although Charles, Anne Arundel, and Calvert County accounted for the majority of the tobacco crop as well as the servant population, most servants themselves did not assist in further creating their own opportunities.21 Most servants who entered the Chesapeake did so without an indenture or wealth. These immigrants served according to the custom of the country, a practice which bound them to a term of service which lasted until age twenty-one. Upon completion, most would receive their freedom dues which until 1681 when the headright system was abolished, consisted of clothing, an axe and a hoe, three barrels of corn, and 50 acres of land worth up to £700 of tobacco.22 Forty percent of these servants never received their dues for they perished long before they could complete their terms of service.23


21 Main, "Maryland and the Chesapeake Economy," 141-142. Anne Arundel claimed 25.8%, Calvert 26.8%, Charles 20.2%, Baltimore 10.6%, Kent 7.8%, and Somerset County 8.7% of the servant population in Maryland.

22 Carr and Menard, "Immigration and Opportunity," 207-208.

23 Ibid., 208; Walsh, "Servitude and Opportunity," 117.
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<td>1690</td>
<td>739</td>
<td></td>
<td>51-226</td>
<td>790</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Notes: This estimate is based largely upon the public levy which provides information for free males. Servant numbers are extrapolated from those presented to the Charles County Court. The years 1676 to 1689 are excluded from this table for no information recorded in the public levies are available to present an acceptable figure. Further calculations would have to be constructed upon a static population which would damage further testing. As a result, the 1690 figures are the best estimate of Lorena S. Walsh's study, which admits that the minimum numbers of male servants may be too low.
The low rate of increase for servants suggests that Charles County planters could only maintain a status quo in terms of labor. For example, between 1669 and 1671 the greatest number of servants were present in Charles County. Yet, the rate of increase remained relatively low at 1. This rate indicates a stagnant servant population and that the number of servants brought into Charles County could not sufficiently offset those servants who left or perished. The period of 1662 to 1664 provides the lone exception to this maintenance of the status quo in terms of servant numbers with a servant increase rate of 3. During the following period of 1664 to 1666, the servant increase rate dropped precipitously to .9, suggesting an exodus of servants either through out-migration or death. Although the free male population maintained a stable, yet meager rate of increase, it may be equally said that few servants were also able to enter the free male population within Charles County after completing their terms of service.

Another indication of servant opportunity may be detected within the fluctuations of tobacco cultivation in Charles County. As the value of tobacco waned throughout the seventeenth-century, Charles County planters sought to increase the number of servants and thus tobacco output to offset decreasing market prices. This process served to saturate the market and decrease the value of tobacco at a substantial rate. Yet, the demand for labor remained high.
As seen through the preceding text, servant increase rates for Charles County remained relatively low during the seventeenth-century despite the large number of servant immigrants. Since servants were dying in droves, planters attempted to bring in more laborers to cultivate more tobacco. Clearly, opportunity remained in Charles County for servants due to this increasing demand for labor.

From 1658 to 1663, low tobacco exports garnered high market values, which fluctuated between 1.55 and 1.60 p. (see Table 2). The year 1666 marks a pivotal year in the development of Charles County and the fortunes of its inhabitants. Tobacco prices dropped to their lowest point, falling to .90 p. as total tobacco exports increased well past £10,000. From 1667 to 1670, tobacco prices rose slowly, fluctuating between 1.15 and 1.25 p. and then dropping to 1.00 p. until 1673.

While tobacco prices seemed to enter a period of stagnation, this did not curtail tobacco exportation. Table 2 shows that the total value of tobacco exports increased during this period from roughly £10,000 to nearly £20,000. With continued exportation, planters in Charles County demanded laborers, as shown in Table 1 and Appendix B, especially by 1666 when the servant increase rate rose from .9 to 1.5. What these numbers suggest is that despite the rapid fall in the value of tobacco, which occurred from 1664 to 1666 and the economic stagnation in terms of tobacco
TABLE 2
MARYLAND PRICE & ESTIMATE OF TOBACCO EXPORTATION
1658-1673

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Price of Tobacco In English pence (p) per pound</th>
<th>Estimate Of Tobacco Exported (In Thousands of £)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1658</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1659</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1660</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1661</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1662</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1663</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1664</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1665</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1666</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1667</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1668</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1669</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1670</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1671</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1672</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>17,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1673</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The price that followed from 1667 to 1670, the demand for labor for tobacco cultivation still provided opportunities for immigrant servants.

Gloria L. Main concurs with this assessment in "Maryland and the Chesapeake Economy, 1670-1720" stating that Charles County, more so than Anne Arundel or Calvert,
"devoted itself narrowly to the cultivation of [tobacco]."² It may be tempting to assert that the economic stagnation that Charles County experienced after 1664, with tobacco prices declining or remaining around 1.00 p., may have forced diversification of its worker and economic base in order to offset these losses. In the heady days of high tobacco prices many unskilled workers filtered into the colony to harvest tobacco for other Maryland planters. As prices fell, it would be natural to assume that the Chesapeake followed a pattern similar to the English model, in that the value of the agricultural laborer would fall as the market declined. The worth of the artisan would then rise upon the ashes of the unskilled worker, who would see

²Main, "Maryland and the Chesapeake Economy," 141.
³Ibid.
TABLE 3
ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF MARYLAND COUNTIES, 1674-1719
(EXPRESSION AS PERCENTAGE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>2 Raising Wheat</th>
<th>3 Artisans</th>
<th>4 Commerce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anne Arundel</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvert</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


their opportunities dwindle with the falling tobacco prices.

This kind of economic diversification was common in the Chesapeake region with the exception of Charles County. In placing its fortunes solely upon the unsteady floor provided by the tobacco market, Charles County, as shown by Table 3, consistently ranked last or next to last in other economic categories such as wheat production, commerce, and crafts. Charles County produced a dismal 5.3% of the total value of commerce in colonial Maryland and contained only a total of 8.7% of the colonial Maryland artisan population. In comparison, Anne Arundel County produced a larger share of the Maryland commerce at 15% as well as 11.2% of the artisan population.

Ibid.
population. In other words, in Charles County the unskilled worker had not been supplanted by the artisan. Although it may be argued in general for colonial Maryland that there was an increasing demand for servants with diversified skills, the inverse is true of Charles County.

The collapse of the English wheat market motivated many prospective immigrants to leave England for the uncertainty of the Chesapeake region. The Chesapeake region, an area which experienced booming tobacco markets and a shortage of labor, promised profits and opportunities through the tobacco crop to those in England who faced the dissolution of their local economies, households, and families. Many who chose to immigrate to the Chesapeake region did so as servants. The increasing labor demand in the Chesapeake for the cultivation of tobacco significantly altered the composition of the population, in that a larger percentage of men immigrated to the area than women. As the value of tobacco declined throughout the later years of the seventeenth-century, some of the servant population disappeared, moved, or perished. Yet for some regions, such as Charles County, the production of tobacco increased, which while forcing tobacco prices further downward, still provided opportunities for those laborers who chose to remain. For these laborers, the need to stabilize their situations through the creation of households and community

"Ibid."
networks emerged as a necessary step in their pursuit of economic and social opportunity in seventeenth-century Charles County.
CHAPTER II
A WEALTH OF OPPORTUNITY

Having established the setting within Charles County in the previous chapter, where servants by virtue of the high demand of labor experienced more immediate opportunity, the focus must now shift towards understanding the manner in which former servants sought opportunity. Those members of the servant class who made the successful transition from servant to freeman in Charles County found their future success not only threatened by their limited wealth, but by an unsteady tobacco market and an unnaturally high death rate. In order to successfully establish themselves, these former servants found it necessary to consciously create new ways or methods in which to access opportunity. This was accomplished not only through the legal system, but by establishing community relationships and networks that stretched across class lines. For many, this meant turning to their wealthier neighbors for both social and economic assistance. By analyzing three specific institutions--the household, marriage, and education--this chapter will explore the manner in which free Charles County settlers sought and used these networks to secure opportunity.
The Household

The presence of a household separated the freeholder from the newly freed servant not only in terms of property, but status. Households conveyed upon their owners a position stronger than those who could not or did not make the transition to householder. For example, unlike the larger Charles County economy which relied solely upon the tobacco crop, the typical household could support a diverse number of products for its own use and maintenance. Such products included orchards, small kitchen gardens, and livestock, all of which provided a slight hedge against the fluctuations of an unsteady tobacco market. By being part of a household, individuals also gained social position and acceptance within the larger community. This status eased the creation of local connections that could, among other things, secure credit, locate farms for purchase, or find a means of employment.

Many sought, with varying degrees of success, to create their own independent households when opportunity best presented itself. Marriage was the most common means for immigrants to form a household, for it provided both men and

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women stability. Ex-servants married widows who most likely possessed property as well as necessary wealth, and women had their choice in terms of marriage partners. Yet due to the labor demands of the English trading community and the small number of women in Charles County, many male settlers were unable to marry and form a household in this manner. These settlers developed new methods by which to create an independent household. Many formed households as bachelors or through partnerships, satisfying both the need for local connections and a role within the community.

Partnerships

Partnerships bound two or more settlers in a legal arrangement to each other in terms of land, resources, household goods, and debt. More importantly, partnerships provided a transitional period for the less affluent to accumulate wealth and to create those social and economic ties necessary to become independent householders. Although two definitive examples of partnerships exist within the Charles County court records, they should not be seen as anomalies since several more, perhaps six, are in evidence in Charles County alone as well as in other parts of Maryland. Based upon studies of St. Mary's, Calvert, Charles, and Prince George's counties, Lois Green Carr and Russell R. Menard suggest that as many as twenty

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partnerships may have existed in colonial Maryland. These partnerships should be viewed as an indication of the new ways in which unmarried Marylanders sought to create opportunities for themselves through communal efforts.

In 1659, Thomas Baker and William Empson, two single men facing difficulties in their quest to wed or accumulate wealth, agreed to join their "Esstates of goods and Chattles" as well as their debts equally for an indeterminate number of years. This arrangement specifically did not include land, for upon termination of their agreement, "what goods or Chattles Estates or Essates . . . [were to be] Equally Deuided, Land Excepted." Despite an apparent willingness to join their remaining assets together, the conspicuous absence of land from the agreement suggests several things. In separating land from the partnership, its value may be readily seen. If the partnership failed, the would-be householders had their own land to fall back on and begin the process anew. If the partnership proved successful, land may have been retained to produce a separate independent household. Yet, what of marriage? This contract does not mention what should happen to the partnership should one member choose to wed. Perhaps by withholding land from the partnership, settlers could also provide for their future families, should they have any.

2 Carr and Menard, "Immigration and Opportunity," 232.
3 Pleasants, LIII: 74-77.
In a similar arrangement in 1667, William Boyden and Walter Cooper agreed to live with each other as joint partners for a limited term of seven years. A similar agreement as the Baker-Empson was prepared, in that "cattell, hogges, household goods, and debts . . . [are to be equally] satisfied." Land did not seem to be an issue in this particular case, for it seems that Walter Cooper entered the arrangement without land. The contract specified that upon its expiration, William Cooper would pay William Boyden the sum of £15,000 of tobacco for half the land belonging to William Boyden. This partnership allowed Cooper the opportunity eventually to purchase property without having to become an indentured servant. Although the contract is silent as to the status or occupation of William Cooper, he must have been a freeman. As a member of the servant class, he would not have been recognized as a freeholder or householder, but as belonging to a specified master. As a freeman, he may have entered into this contract possibly as a man of some skill, although again the records are silent as to this matter. William Boyd, as a freeman seeking entrance into a community so important to the success or failure of a settler, probably would not have entered into an agreement with a common laborer when he simply could have hired one. As to the question of

*Pleasants, LX: 103.

*Ibid.
marriage, this contract specifically states that "if either partie be minded to marrie both parties are still to remained joynt mates until the full time of seaven years are ended."

Despite the economic troubles that dogged Charles County, even as late as 1667, partnerships offered a viable hope of economic opportunity for fledgling freeholders. Through pooled resources such as land, wealth, and ordinary goods, these households seemingly provided unmarried men a stable environment in which to better their lot in life. The formation of these households, although atypical, demonstrates an alternative method developed by unmarried men within Charles County and the larger Chesapeake society to access opportunity.

Community Ties

Because of the limited numbers of women in the Chesapeake region, many male colonial settlers formed households as bachelors and waited to marry at a later point in time. Lois Green Carr and Russell R. Menard in "Immigration and Opportunity: The Freedman in Early Colonial Maryland" suggest that at least seventy bachelors set up separate households in Maryland during the seventeenth-century. This was also a common pattern in

'Ibid.

'Carr and Menard, "Immigration and Opportunity," 232.
Charles County. The circumstances of five settlers, Hennrie Addames, Gils Glouer, Richard Trew, Richard Dod, and Benjamin Gill, illustrate another acceptable method outside of marriage in which male immigrants successfully formed households within a troubled Chesapeake colonial society. The formation and attributes of these households are indicative of not only the manner in which settlers sought to order their lives, but of the community connections and relations that were so important to their overall social and economic opportunities.

Although a household existed as a place of opportunity, its formation and maintenance entailed a cycle of credit and debt that haunted most Maryland planters. Given that the economy of Charles County was agricultural in nature, most settlers only derived income at harvest. They needed credit to purchase household items during other times of the year. Wealthy, prominent members of the community, such as Hennrie Addames, provided such a source of credit for poorer planters. Due to the absence of coin in the region, tobacco became the principal medium of exchange. Because tobacco "was so perishable a medium, planters often made these exchanges in advance, in promissory notes stated in pounds of tobacco payable at the next crop." Wealthier neighbors


"Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom, 177-179.
became merchant planters, purchasing shiploads of English goods and supplying their neighbors with household items in return for such notes. Such credit was more readily available to stable community members than to the unsettled, although the court records demonstrate that middling planters posed the same risk to would-be creditors.\textsuperscript{10}

Debtors, however, enjoyed unique legal protection in the Maryland colony. According to the Maryland colonial statutes, no settler could be deprived of their property, or freehold, should they be unable to repay their creditors.\textsuperscript{11} Maryland's northern neighbor, Pennsylvania, offered a vastly different outlook to the question of debt. In Pennsylvania, "a concern for the rights of creditors weighed more heavily upon the consciences of lawmakers."\textsuperscript{12} In a provision unique to English law, property, the only security that Pennsylvania lawmakers considered could be given for a loan, was made liable to repay debts. Under this code, all the land a man owned could be applied for the payment of his debts, even if the widows and children, who might well have been ignorant of the financial situation of the family, were left without any means of support.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{10} Walsh, "Staying Put or Getting Out," 97.

\textsuperscript{11} Raphael Semmes, \textit{Crime And Punishment In Early Maryland} (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1936; reprint, Montclair: Patterson Smith, 1970), 29.

\textsuperscript{12} Salmon, \textit{Women And The Law Of Property}, 164.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
Poorer residents in Charles County clearly enjoyed superior legal protection, enabling them to not only borrow money from their wealthier neighbors without incurring the loss of property, but establish community ties across class lines in order to access opportunity. This not only reveals a visible social hierarchy within Charles County, but an avenue of opportunity consciously created by freeholders.

From 1658 to 1665, Hennrie Addames involved himself in the day to day operations of county government. From 1658 to 1661, he held a seat upon the county court, and later in 1665, he was commissioned as Sheriff of Charles County.¹⁴ The office of Sheriff by no means had been a step down in terms of social or economic position. On the contrary, "[the sheriff] was a competing power in the community . . . [who] unlike the justices took fees for his services, and the position was highly profitable."¹⁵

These governmental duties added to the lustre of his household, and Addames is continually referred to in the court records as "Mr Hennrie Addames" which indicates his status as a respected member of the community. Since he established himself quickly and successfully within the community, as evident through his service as a county justice and sheriff, Hennrie Addames most likely possessed a

¹⁴Pleasants, LIII: 4, 23, 107, 128, 572.

considerable amount of wealth. Clearly, his wealth coupled, with "the presence or absence of political and economic institutions" had been critical to Addames future success or failure. By possessing wealth and assisting in the formation of early community institutions such as the county court, Addames secured his social and economic position. Addames's example demonstrates that despite the low numbers of settlers within the county, which may have encouraged a broad participation base in terms of community affairs, the appointment of settlers such as Addames to positions upon the county court or to the Sheriff's office indicates that the community in its early period desired the guidance of its established social betters.

Two court cases in 1659 also attest to the social level of Hennrie Addames within the Charles County community and the ways that poorer men turned to their betters for assistance. Thomas Green and Benjamin Gill, each of whom died in 1659, entrusted their estates to Hennrie Addames which demonstrates Addames's position and respect within the community. Thomas Green, an ordinary planter of no appreciable social standing, upon his death entrusted the care of his estate and children to Hennrie Addames. Thomas Green clearly felt that the interests of his children would be better served through the ministrations of Hennrie

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"Horn, "Servant Emigration," 54-55.

Pleasants, LIII: 38.
Addames, a successful planter and man of influence within the community social structure.

The second court case involving Hennrie Addames and Benjamin Gill demonstrates the social hierarchy within Charles County and how settlers used these hierarchies to provide for themselves. Early in 1659, Hennrie Addames petitioned the court for compensation for the funeral charges incurred for burying Benjamin Gill, which amounted to £724 of tobacco. Those poorer colonists, such as Benjamin Gill, entrusted wealthier or respected members of their community as executors of their estates to ensure that they received a proper "Christian burial." Proprietary officials disapproved of excessive funeral expenses, desiring rather a reasonable expense based upon "the proportion of the estate and the quality of the person." In most cases, funeral arrangements were made in which the cost of the burial would be deducted from the estate of the deceased.

Since Hennrie Addames petitioned for defrayment of the funeral expenses, Benjamin Gill probably left little in terms of physical property or wealth. Gill's 1658 inventory depicts only items of little value, such as "one old Bed, 1 old pillow, 1 old Rugge, a parcell of old pewter, one old iron Kettle, old Bookes, a parcell of old cloathes, a

\[18\] Ibid., 56-57.
\[19\] Semmes, Crime And Punishment, 256.
There is no listing of goods of finer quality such as ribbons or handkerchiefs. The lack of these finer quality items suggests that Benjamin Gill did not have sufficient time or ability to secure credit within the community to purchase improved goods, despite the presence of pewter within his estate, but he and other bachelors could and did turn to wealthier members of the community to assist in managing their affairs.

Unlike the Addames household, the households of Gils Glouer and Richard Trew, a planter and artisan by trade respectively, are representative of middling class bachelors and their struggle for survival in the Chesapeake. Their households present examples of middling class life and the lengths to which colonial settlers went to in order to create opportunity and protect the household. For these less wealthy settlers property, whether through its sale or purchase, was not only important in solidifying their positions as householders but in ensuring their continued success.

From 1658 to 1664, Gils Glouer fervently pursued and defended his independent householder status. Although he ranked considerably below persons of such stature as Hennrie Addames in terms of property and wealth, Gils Glouer did attain modest community participation through jury duty in

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Browne, XLI: 100.
both 1661 and 1662, an ironic role given his numerous court appearances as a debtor. Regardless, Gils Glouer first achieved householder status in Charles County in 1658 when he purchased a plantation and its surrounding property "lying one the west sid of the Wicokomeco River" from Richard Trew. Neither the court records nor the Maryland marriage listings indicate that he had been married at the time of purchase, suggesting that Glouer formed his household as a bachelor. By 1660, he married a woman named Elisabeth and sought to purchase an additional 200 acres of land "Lyinge and beinge upon the Eastermost Branch of Avon Riuier" from Edmond Lendsey.

This tract of property proved integral to the continued success of the Glouer family. Later in 1660, Christopher Rivers allegedly purchased 100 acres of this unimproved land from Gils Glouer. Glouer however did not deliver a bill of sale or assurances that he would defend Rivers' claim to the property "against all Claime or Claiimes in the Law," thus leaving this bargain with a tidy sum of money. Although Rivers placed a petition to the court addressing his }

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21 Pleasants, LIII: 197, 308. Gils Glouer appeared at least 15 times within the Charles County Court from 1658 to 1665. Of those 15 cases, 11 involved Glouer being sued for debt.

22 Ibid., 19.

23 Ibid., 89.

24 Ibid., 120.
grievances, the court dismissed his claims for lack of evidence. Four years later, the Glouers sold the full 200 acres of land purchased from Edmond Lendsey to John Lumbrozo for an undisclosed sum.25

Although the middling classes used property transactions to solidify their economic standing, the cycle of credit and debt continually threatened the security of many middling households. Like their poorer neighbors, middle class planters depended upon more established, wealthier members of the community as a source of money. The county court had often been the site where middling planters, such as Glouer, sought to stymie suits placed against them in order to preserve their households. For Glouer, eleven of the fifteen cases he had been involved in had been suits filed against him by creditors.26 Glouer owed these debts to prominent members of the Charles County community, such as Edmond Lendsey, William Robisson, and Hennery Lillie. On average, the total loans that Glouer accumulated ranged from £1200 to £3200. Frequently, Glouer failed to repay these debts, and in 1660 these prominent members of the community revoked their credit. The court records indicate that Edmond Lendsey had been the last to extend credit to Glouer in the amount of £600 of tobacco.27

25 Ibid., 496-500.
26 Ibid., 59-60, 117, 140, 156, 187, 189-190, 450.
27 Ibid., 78.
From 1660 on, Glouer depended upon fellow middling farmers or property transactions, such as the one that involved the Glouers, Christopher Rivers, and John Lumbrozo, to procure the necessary funds needed to secure his household.

Because wealthier men were pursuing Glouer for repayment, Glouer, in turn, was forced to pursue those in debt to him with utmost ferocity. In 1659, Hennery Lillie purchased a boat from Gils Glouer "which was Delliuered and all but paid for But 100 pounds of tobaccoe." Enraged that he could not receive a bill for that £100 of tobacco, Glouer simply took the boat back, causing Hennery Lillie further distress and expenditures in renting a boat.

Although Charles County had been dominated economically by the agricultural work force, those few artisans within the county had similar agendas as their planter counterparts--to form a household and secure community ties in which to pursue opportunity. In other words, artisans also made use of property transactions in order to solidify their positions as householders, endured the same cycle of credit and debt which forced their dependence upon the more established, wealthier members of the community, and utilized the legal system in order to preserve their households. One such artisan in Charles County by the name of Richard Trew followed this strategy with perhaps more success than his counterpart Gils Glouer.

"Ibid."
Between 1658 and 1673, Richard Trew appeared in Charles County court countless times, a rare example of longevity for any settler during this period. Trew emerged within the Charles County community in 1658 as a "boat right," with his business interests spanning not only the Maryland colony but Virginia as well. Part of the middling class, Trew entered the county as a freeman and as far as the court or marriage records may tell, acquired a household as a bachelor. Occupying a rather stable and accepted position within the community, Trew became active in property transactions. In 1659, he assigned his rights to over 300 acres of land to John Belaine and sold over 150 acres of land situated on Nangemie Creeke to Andrew Watson in 1660. Sometime between 1660 and 1666, Richard Trew took a wife named Anne, fully completing the transition to householder and further solidifying his position within the community. During this marriage, the Trews only engaged in three other land transactions. In 1666, John and Eleanor Lambert sold the Trews 150 acres of land laying upon Poynton Creeke called Nonesuch, which later in 1673, they would sell 100 acres of to John Boyden for £3000 of tobacco. Also in 1666, they purchased 300 acres of land lying upon Nangemy Creeke from William Boarman.

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39 Browne, LIII: 97-198; Pleasants, LIII: 108, 479.
31 Ibid., 58.
Richard Trew, much like his counterpart Gils Glouer, used community ties in order to access economic opportunity. From 1658 to 1661, Trew turned to the more prominent members of the community as a source of credit and like Gils Glouer, encountered trouble with his creditors. In the closing years of the 1650s, Richard Trew amassed a debt of £3703 of tobacco to creditors such as John Courts, John Dodman, and Thomas Michel. Through his trade and a successful suit against Hennrie Addames, he managed to repay these loans and maintain his reputation as a safe investment. In 1660, Richard Trew accepted £2000 of tobacco in credit from James Lendsey. Later that year, Trew had only repaid £900 of tobacco in return and defaulted on the remainder, prompting Linsey to file suit in court.

Although it would seem that Richard Trew juggled his debts in a fashion similar to Gils Glouer, his standing in terms of credit rating within the community remained intact. The source of his financial woes in 1660 had been his business interests in Virginia. As a "boat right," Richard Trew relied upon Richard Pinnar of Virginia to ship tar, a necessary component in the construction of boats, to his residence in Charles County. In 1660, Pinnar did not ship ten gallons of tar that Trew had requested thus halting his

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32 Pleasants, LIII: 29.
33 Ibid., 19.
34 Ibid., 109-110.
trade and forcing him to default on his loan from James Linsey.\(^3\) When Trew presented his cause to the county court, the court ordered the value of £1500 of tobacco in goods belonging to Richard Pinnar in Charles County to be seized as compensation. This amount proved more than enough to satisfy the debt to James Linsey and secure the Trew household.

The poorer segments of the Charles County community also struggled with the environment and an unstable tobacco market. Although Charles County remained beholden to the tobacco market until the end of the seventeenth-century, the poor, much like the middling class, had to contend with maintaining their households and opportunity through the establishment of community ties. Again, poorer settlers employed land transactions, the extension of credit from more well-to-do settlers, and the legal system in order to access opportunity. Within this framework during the heart of economic crisis, the example of Richard Dod demonstrates the opportunity still to be experienced by those seeking to ascend into the community despite an ever-widening gap in wealth separating the social classes.

In 1666, Richard Dod joined the ranks of householders when he purchased a forty acre tract from Thomas Baker which included all "howses buildings buildings structurs or edifices" as well as "orchards Gardins pasturs feedings

\(^{3}\text{Ibid.}, 110.\)
Commons Common of Pastur Range for hogs woods underwoods walter walter Courses fishings fouling ways Easments Profits Commodities and hereditaments."36 This forty acre tract represented the minimum requirements necessary to construct a viable farm in the Chesapeake. According to Russell R. Menard, a settler needed "20 acres of land per working hand for continuous tobacco production [as well as] 2 acres per hand for corn, the basic food crop, and additional land for pasture and wood."37 Richard Dod's tract of land is a testament to those settlers who, even at the lowest levels as Dod apparently had been, sought to improve their status through creating a household. Richard Dod apparently used community ties in order to secure economic opportunity for in 1670 and 1671, he secured credit from Richard Ambrose for a total of £1100 of tobacco which he failed to repay. In a fashion reminiscent of Gils Glouer, a rather deft artist at evasion, Richard Dod avoided one suit in 1670 concerning £400 of tobacco by simply avoiding the county sheriff, a feat he could not duplicate in 1671.38

For all social classes within the Chesapeake, households fulfilled several necessary social and economic

38Pleasants, LX: 317, 333.
functions. Through these households, Charles County settlers established themselves within the community, an important step towards securing opportunity. Often for male settlers this transition occurred as bachelors, with marriage later solidifying their place within the community. For others, partnerships with other men provided a viable, if not frequently used, alternative. Households allowed their occupants access to community connections which helped locate property to purchase or find employment. Hope of opportunity, however, rested upon credit. Households, based upon an agricultural economy, survived on credit provided by more well-to-do neighbors. The issue of credit became a source of contention, as householders vigorously brought or fought suits which threatened the security of the household and the ties they so coveted. It is interesting that when a source of credit was restricted, as happened to Gils Glouer, other members of the community, typically of the middling class, filled the void as creditors in support of their fellow householders in an extension of community benefits.

These households also served to maintain the prevalent social order. The wealthier segments of the Charles County community, as represented by Hennrie Addames, were looked upon as dispensers of social or economic assistance to those less fortunate, while those of the middling class, such as Gils Glouer and Richard Trew, struggled socially, economically, and legally to maintain their households and
the promise of wealth. The poorer segments of the population, such as Benjamin Gill or Richard Dod, also sought to establish themselves as householders, despite the economic troubles that beset the county. Their presence, as well as the presence of the middling class of householders within the community attests to the opportunity that still remained within the county.

**Women and Marriage**

Although marriage was one way to establish a household, it did not necessarily bestow social and economic opportunity only upon the male segments of the colonial population. Women also experienced opportunity through marriage, although in a different fashion. Ideally, colonists "considered normal and exclusive sexual union, peaceful cohabitation, and economic support of the wife by the husband the minimal duties that spouses must perform [in a marriage]." Husbands were expected to acknowledge their wives, appear with them in public, display appropriate affection and respect towards them and to share responsibility in raising any children. Husbands also exercised the highest authority in the family, while wives were expected to be obedient, submissive, and wholly

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"Walsh, "Till Death Us Do Part," 139.

Ibid., 140.
dependent." As Lorena Walsh points out,

as in England, all marriages were recognized
as valid that had been consummated in sexual
union, and preceded by a contract, either
public or private, with witnesses or without,
in the present tense or the future tense."

Yet this perception of marriage did not take hold within the
Chesapeake. In Charles County, the ideals or concepts of
what constituted a proper marriage did not change, but
rather the ability of colonists' to maintain them. The lack
of a religious presence, the disproportionate ratio of men
to women, and the relative youth of the settlers drastically
affected not only marriage and family structures in Charles
County, but women's opportunities within and outside of
marriage.

Few marriages in Charles County had been solemnized by
a minister. In Virginia, many couples did not care to go to
the trouble or expense of a formal wedding." Civil
procedures for marriage, such as those authorized by
justices of the peace, remained uncommon in Maryland until
the middle of the eighteenth-century." Although "English
canon law recognized that vows made in the presence of

\[41\] Horn, *Adapting To A New World*, 205.

\[42\] Walsh, "Till Death Us Do Part," 129. See also Edmund
S. Morgan, *The Puritan Family: Religion and Domestic
Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England* (New York,
1966), 30-32.

\[43\] Horn, *Adapting To A New World*, 213.

\[44\] Walsh, "Till Death Us Do Part," 130.
witnesses without solemnization in church were a binding, if irregular, form of union," only twelve recorded cases can be found in church records where Charles County couples engaged in a marriage ceremony under the auspices of a religious institution." This substantiates the notion that many couples in Charles County married themselves, "signifying their union by some customary ceremony such as breaking a piece of silver between them." Such was the case with Gils Tomkinson of Charles County. In 1665, Tomkinson claimed that the woman he lived with

[w]as] his lawful wife . . . and that his marriage was as good as possibly it Coold bee maed by the Protestants hee beeing one becaus that befor that time and ever since thear hath not bin a protestant Minister in the Province and that Matrimony is only necessary the parties Consent and Publication thearof befor a Lawfull Churchman and for their Consents it is Apparent and for the worlds Satisfaction thay hear publish them selves Man and wife till death them doe part."


"Walsh, "Till Death Us Do Part," 130-131. Registration of marriage still had been uncommon in the eighteenth-century. In 1786 an Anglican minister, Rev. Henry Addison, stated, "If the rule was Established here that no marriage should be deemed valid that had not been registered in the Parish Book it would I am persuaded bastardize nine tenths of the People in the Country."

"Pleasant, LIII: 599. According to Tomkinson's testimony, a Protestant religious presence did not exist in
In Charles County, conditions permitting, couples clearly placed mutual consent, the publication of their vows before a respectable churchman, social recognition, and commitment for life as the key requirements for marriage.48

The character of colonial family structures can also be detected through demographic experiences. The New England region, for example, experienced a much lower mortality rate than England or any of its colonies. Consequently, settlers could "anticipate long and healthy lives: 71.8 for men and 70.8 for women among first generation settlers."49 These favorable conditions also permitted a vigorous birthrate, in excess of seven children per family, which resulted in an upward population surge.50 This increased longevity, however, also served to extend parental authority. As parents lived longer, they were able to implement a substantive amount of control over their children than other settlers. New England parents ensured their children's obedience and dependence by delaying the establishment of their own independent freeholds. This forced many male

Charles County prior to 1665. According to both church and county records, a Protestant church was established only after 1666. In 1666, church records indicate that three marriage ceremonies took place in Charles County with two others following in 1667.

48 Horn, Adapting To A New World, 213.


50 Ibid., 20.
children to delay their own marriages until their late twenties or early thirties. In contrast, women tended to marry at a relatively young age (19.0 for the first generation and 22.3 for the second). As Jack Greene notes, "[these factors] contributed to the rapid development of [extended] families that were . . . patriarchal in character and deeply rooted to their local communities."51

The situation was different in seventeenth-century Charles County. The structure of families in Charles County was modified by the brief duration of marriages. The death of a spouse might break up a marriage within the space of seven years. Given the sexual imbalance within the community,

remarriage for women was common and quick, creating a marriage system best described as serial polyandry [which] moderated the impact of the shortage of women and the opportunities for men to find wives.52

Both single men as well as women married into families broken up by death. These brief marriages drastically affected the size of the family, reducing it in numbers to roughly two or three children at most.53 As the family could not reproduce at a pace equivalent to the death rate, the Maryland population was small and subject to a myriad mixture of afflictions that ravaged the colony.

51Ibid., 23.
Although marriage and subsequent remarriage was one method to obtain access to householder status and the larger community in Charles County, it did not truly exist as a practical or viable option for servants. For those immigrants who arrived as indentured servants, the possibilities for marriage were remote. Servants could not marry until their term of service ended, which typically lasted until the age of twenty-one. Given the spiraling death rate in the Chesapeake region, an ex-servant at the age of twenty-one could expect to perish by their early forties. In addition to such a dismal start, a newly freed male servant often required additional years to acquire the necessary wealth with which to establish a household. Assuming that they lived long enough to do so, these freedmen could hope to marry in their late twenties.

Similar to those women in New England, marriage for women in the Chesapeake often occurred at an early age, usually before their twenty-first birthday. Those who survived "seasoning and service . . . [typically] became a planter's wife." Upon marriage, a ten year age difference usually separated the groom from his younger bride. Unlike marriages in New England, marriages in the Chesapeake region often occurred without parental consent because familial ties were sometimes broken upon the decision to


emigrate. Immigrants, women especially, found themselves unfettered by parental control or advice and free to decide for themselves when and whom to marry.

Widows

Due to the mortality rate and limited duration of marriages in the Chesapeake, women discovered new opportunities that further expanded their roles. Between 1640 and 1710, approximately 400 widows lived in St. Mary's and Charles counties. For these women, widowhood conveyed the status and power usually reserved for freemen. More so than in New England, the Chesapeake region protected women's enhanced status, particularly in terms of property rights. In Charles County between 1660 and 1673, 25 widows engaged in activities normally reserved to freemen. Widows assumed careers, administered estates, registered animals, conducted land transactions, accumulated bills, and prosecuted outstanding debts.

Similar to the freemen within Charles County, widows also took advantage of their enhanced status and forged new relationships within the community in order to further their own opportunities. Widows turned to their wealthier

Horn, Adapting To A New World, 227.

The Charles County Court records show thirteen cases where widows brought suits before the county court for decision. Of these 13 suits, six had been decided in favor of the women litigants. See Pleasants, LIII: 145-149, 269, 314, 414, 496-498; Pleasants, LX: 1-2, 339-340.
neighbors for support and utilized the legal system in much the same manner as freemen in order to access opportunity. Even though their roles expanded, women were not able to represent themselves within the legal system. In 13 court cases surveyed in the Charles County court records where widows brought suits forward to the court for decision, eight widows chose to vest their power in a male attorney." This indicates that although widows may have utilized the court system to maintain their right to economic independence, they still needed the services of men to make their case in public.

In 1662, two widows, Margaret Batten and Hanna Lee, appointed male attorneys as their legal representatives with very specific letters of intent. The letter of intent composed by Hanna Lee, a woman of lower social standing than Margaret Batten, indicates that regardless of social status, independent women had similar access to legal and economic protection. The framework in which power was transferred to the attorney was quite similar in both letters of intent. Each attorney was charged with the power to "demand all such sume and sumes of Mony and Tobacco" due to the client." The attorney is also empowered to "sew plead and imprison [as well as] . . . to answer and defend all suits and


"Pleasants, LIII: 269, 314.
differences in Law that is or may bee Commenced against [the client]."60 What differs in these forms is the person chosen as the attorney. Margaret Batten appointed Captain Josias Fendall as her attorney to represent the estate of her late husband, Captain William Batten.61 In contrast, Hanna Lee appointed her "trusty Servant William Price" as her attorney, but not under the clear context of defending a deceased husband's estate.62

Widows also turned to business ventures or trades in order to access opportunity in Charles County. Widows who did so, such as Mary Vanderduncke, relied upon the legal system to ensure their economic well-being. Often the obstacle to a widow's economic health had been their clients' unwillingness to pay for services rendered. For instance, Mary Vanderduncke was a surgeon or practitioner of physick who brought three suits to court against her clients for failure to render payment.63

In 1661, Captain Josias Fendall, one-time governor of Maryland, sent three of his servants to Mary Vanderduncke in order to procure relief for their ailments. One servant, known to the court as Henry, "had let his legg run to so bad a Condition that Captain Fendall coold not tell what to do

60 Ibid.
61 Ibid., 269.
62 Ibid., 314.
63 Ibid., 145-149.
with it: but sent him to [Vanderduncke's] house to . . .
endeavor the Cure of his leg."\(^{64}\) The servant, his leg
covered and swollen with sores, arrived before Mary
Vanderduncke's home with a notice that his master, Josias
Fendall, would render prompt satisfaction for its cure.
Although the servant had arrived in a very dangerous
condition, Vanderduncke had effected a cure that reduced the
swelling to the size "of a grate or a六pence."\(^{65}\) Despite
this success, Vanderduncke did not receive payment for her
services. Instead, Fendall sent two other servants
suffering from cankerous growths in their mouths for
treatment. Fearing that her services as surgeon had been
abused by Fendall, Mary Vanderduncke filed a suit within the
Charles County Court.

In court, Mary Vanderduncke produced Captain Fendall's
notice concerning the servant Henry, and requested that it
be placed within the court records as evidence."\(^{44}\) This
notice stated that "if you [Mary Vanderduncke] . . .
endeavor the Cure of it I shall give you such satisfaction
as you shal think fitt."\(^{67}\) In an astute maneuver,
Vanderduncke also called upon the testimony of James Walker
and Richard Morrice as to the state of Henry's condition

\(^{44}\) Ibid., 145.

\(^{45}\) Ibid.

\(^{46}\) Ibid., 145-149.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., 146.
prior to her ministrations and to the successful effect of any applied remedies. By calling upon James Walker and Richard Morrice, Mary Vanderduncke produced the testimony of accepted members of the Charles County community, in effect casting the community in favor of her suit. These character witnesses may have induced the county court to find in Mary Vanderduncke's favor, if given the opportunity. Instead, Captain Josias Fendall through his attorney Thomas Lomax appealed the case directly to the Provincial Court. The suit does not appear in the Provincial Court records and may never have been settled.

A second lawsuit by Mary Vanderduncke further demonstrates the importance of the legal system in preserving women's opportunity. In 1661, William Smoote saw that his friend Christopher Russell had become violently ill, and perhaps lay near death. Fearing for his life Smoote, possibly under direction from the afflicted, brought Mary Vanderduncke to Russell's home in order to nurse him. Examining Russell's condition, Vanderduncke decided upon an administration of "phisick unto him."6 Apparently her concoction worked as Christopher Russell recovered soon afterwards. When Mary Vanderduncke later returned to Christopher Russell's household, she asked for £1000 of tobacco in return for her services, which Russell apparently

"Ibid., 148."
refused." Vanderduncke subsequently had Christopher Russell arrested for failure to tender payment. In court, Russell angrily stated that he "never sent for [Vanderduncke] and that no man hath Command of his purs but himself." Russell then asked and received from the court a postponement, but this case, much like the one against Josias Fendall, seems to never have been finally settled.

Whether Mary Vanderduncke was successful or not in court, women clearly had equal recourse to the legal system in order to maintain their right to economic opportunity. Seventeenth-century Maryland legislatures did not enact specific laws governing the actions of independent women such as Mary Vanderduncke. Marylynn Salmon suggests that such statutes did not exist because "courts or legislatures developed other methods, [perhaps locally, in] dealing with women who worked." As such, women's ability to act autonomously increased, although their legal rights were susceptible to challenge." Despite the limited number of suits presented by women before the Charles County court, suggesting that most women did not exercise their legal rights, the legal system did allow independent women to use the court system much like middling and poorer men to

"Ibid., 149.
"Ibid.
"Salmon, Women And The Law Of Property, 45.
"Ibid., 46.
protect not only themselves but their business interests. Outside of practicing a profession, most independent women gained status through property ownership. Death, which struck down many husbands, allowed property to pass into the hands of widows. Many husbands in the Chesapeake region trusted their wives, making them their executor and thus responsible for the care of their children, the repayment of any debts and the preservation of the family estate. "Only 11 percent [of all husbands in Maryland] deprived their wives of such powers." These women, finding themselves no longer junior partners in the family economy, quickly took over as heads of household in charge of all aspects of family affairs. If a will or instructions on the part of the deceased concerning an estate did not exist, in most instances the widow took possession of the entire estate and became responsible for its maintenance and that of any surviving children. This ground has been well-documented in far greater detail than the limits of this study will permit. Instead, this


"8"Ibid.

"9"Horn, Adapting To A New World, 226-227. Approximately 80% of all widows in St. Mary's and Charles counties were appointed as sole executrix.

section will focus on three widows, Hanna Lee, Johannah Nevill and Eliza Emanson, each of whom engaged in property transactions within the Charles County community. Their activities serve to illustrate the manner in which widows used the various types of community connections and relations, much like single men, to pursue opportunity in Charles County.

In the spring of 1662, the plantation of the widow Hanna Lee had been the meeting site for the Maryland Assembly and Provincial Court. Serious discussion emerged that spring concerning the necessity of constructing a prison "for the securing of malefactors and other exorbitant persons." To that end, the Maryland government purchased Hanna Lee's home and surrounding lands for the sum of £12,000 of tobacco. The Assembly then ordered Charles County to assume the burden of debt. However, the county did not discharge this debt in a timely fashion, prompting Hanna Lee to petition successfully the Council of Maryland for payment. The failure to repay the debt, it seems, lay within the office of the Sheriff of Charles County. Sheriff James Lendsey failed to "[engage] himself to bring up a discharge for the sayd order." Hanna Lee faced an additional delay of twelve days, waiting for James Lendsey

"Semmes, Crime and Punishment, 32.

"Pleasants, LIII: 414.

"Ibid.
to raise the necessary funds. Her actions offer a provocatively example of widows engaged in the transaction of property for wealth with governmental agencies. Hanna Lee clearly was recognized as a widow who owned and managed her late husband's estate and engaged in practices normally reserved for freemen. Hanna Lee seemingly had been accepted by the colonial government as a settler with legitimate status who could make her own legal arrangements.

The property transaction involving the widow Johannah Nevill and Henry and Elisabeth Moore, although on a much smaller scale than that of Hannah Lee, serves to reveal another type of business transaction between members of the community. In 1665, Henry and Elisabeth Moore sold the widow Johannah Nevill a parcel of land known as Moorditch, a 500 acre tract which lay on the west side of Sachaya [Zachiah] Swamp for the sum of £5,000 of tobacco. The estate contained "howses Edifices Buildings Barnes Stabels tobacco howses Gardains Profits Commodities Easments and Hereditaments" which would then be transferred into her possession. As such, Johannah Nevill would be entitled to "rents issews And Profits" without fear of eviction.

Mary Vanderduncke appears to not have been accepted in a similar fashion as Hanna Lee, for although the legal system granted autonomy, it did not appear to grant complete equality, which Vanderduncke assumed based upon the court records.


Ibid.
recovery, or expulsion by the Moores. This arrangement also specified that for the duration of seven years the Moores would be liable to defend the estate now transferred to Johannah Nevill from the claims or acts of others. Yet what does this arrangement truly mean? Johannah Nevill clearly had access to wealth or credit in order to purchase Moorditch from Henry and Elisabeth Moore, demonstrating that widows, like men, used credit and business relations in order to secure economic opportunity. Johannah Nevill also lived alone and probably had been unwilling to divest herself of her independent status. This may account for her purchase of a functional estate. As a widow it would not be possible to operate an estate which in all probability had been dependent upon the labor intensive crop of tobacco. Rather, she was more secure purchasing an estate with rent paying tenants or laborers to work the land for her.

The property transaction between Edmond Lendsey and Eliza Emanson in 1671 represents a departure from the previous two examples, in that it illustrates a private arrangement between a lower class widow and a male householder or benefactor. In 1671, Edmond Lendsey "for divers good, just, & reasonable Causes & Consideracons" bestowed upon Eliza Emanson, late widow of Nicholas Emanson, the tract of land called Nangemy [Nanjemoy] Creek. The

"Ibid.

"Ibid., 339-340.
Nangemy Creek estate contained approximately 200 acres of land, as well as "houses, buildings, Edifices, barens, Stables, Gardens orchards, yards, backsides, Basements, lands, tenements, meadows, feedings, pastures, woods, underwoods, ways, proffitts, Comoditys, & Hereditamts."

Similar to the arrangement struck between the Moores and Johannah Nevill, this contract also specified that under no conditions could Lendsey or his heirs challenge, claim, use, or possess Nangemy Creek and that they should defend this arrangement against rival claims. Nangemy Creek appears to be similar to that of Moorditch, existing as a fully-functional estate in which rent could be collected to ensure the independence of its occupant.

But that is where the similarity to the land transaction made by Johannah Nevill ends. This particular type of arrangement differs in that it was classified as a gift. Eliza Emanson, unlike Johannah Nevill, seems to have lived within the lower spectrum of the community. This may be traced to the business arrangements conducted by her late husband, Nicholas Emanson. In 1660, Nicholas Emanson purchased from John Lumbrozo the same 200 acre tract of land called Nangemy Creek. The contract stipulated that:

if in Case that sayd Emanson dey and the bill taken for the sayd Plantation bee not satisfied to the Contents then the sayd

"Ibid.

"Ibid."
Nicholas Emanson died in 1670 without satisfying the terms of the contract and Nangemy Creek returned to its former owner, who in turn sold it to Edmond Lendsey. The fact that Nangemy Creek had been returned to Eliza Emanson by Lendsey suggests that Nicholas Emanson did not leave his widow either wealth or property. Therefore, the land gained through the transaction provided by Edmond Lendsey gave Eliza Emanson only limited security similar to that enjoyed by Johannah Nevill. That no money changed hands for the purchase of Nangemy Creek is suggestive that ties, whether business or familial, existed between Nicholas and Eliza Emanson and Edmond Lindsey.

The actions of Hanna Lee, Johannah Nevill, and Eliza Emanson regarding property transactions were staged both publicly and privately. Yet more than that, their actions also demonstrate the effect of community relationships in securing financial and social stability. In the case of Hanna Lee, her transaction with a governmental institution secured not only wealth but upgraded her status. For Johannah Nevill, community ties allowed her to make useful business arrangements which secured her household. And lastly, the private ties between Eliza Emanson and Edmond Lendsey secured her independence. By utilizing the legal

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87 Pleasants, LIII: 496-498.
system for protection, as well as ties to kinfolk and wealthier members of the Charles County community, these widows not only had been able to protect themselves but their economic opportunity.

**Children and Education**

For the men and women of seventeenth-century Charles County, the formation of a household or marriage provided a framework in which to seize social and economic opportunity. Yet as settlers seized these opportunities, their inability to create traditional or ideal family structures threatened the future security of their children. In order to preserve their children's interests, families turned to their neighbors and the community to provide for their children's education, whether practical or academic. By doing so, the family and the community found itself forced to construct new ways in which to both protect and provide for children's opportunities.

During the 1660s, the Charles County court cases involving children and their instruction suggest that survival, not education or refinement, had priority in the day to day lives of families. Although parents concentrated upon rearing their children in the fear of God, the struggle to survive made this difficult, if not impossible.\(^{149}\) In most cases, parents did not live long enough to provide

\(^{149}\)Walsh, "Till Death Us Do Part," 149.
formal instruction to their children. In such instances parents, through contractual arrangements, entrusted their children to guardians or step-parents, who seemingly did not have the same interest in educating children as their real parents may have." Many children faced abuse from unscrupulous guardians who took advantage of their labor and refused to fulfill their obligations to instruct them."

The wishes of parents, expressed through wills, the community, or surviving widows, served as a means to protect children from such abuses. Wills served as a posthumous extension of a parent's wishes. In these wills, parents rarely sought to control their children through specific provisions. Instead, they sought to provide flexibility and freedom of action in an uncertain world. Although many husbands usually gave executorship to their wives, many believed, rightly so, that their orphaned children would receive poor treatment from a step-father or guardian. As an additional protective measure, many husbands "appointed overseers to assist their wives and to see that their children were not abused or their property embezzled." Of those husbands who perished in the 1650s and 1660s, "over half appointed overseers to ensure that their wills were

"Ibid.
"Ibid., 135-136.

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followed." Their fears had not been groundless. In one instance taken from the county court records in 1669, two children, Richard and Ann Randall, filed a suit against their late father's executors Joseph Harrison and Stephen Montague to recover their inheritance. The Randalls, appointing Jonathan Barnes and William Christopher as their attorneys, sought to have "all such lands plantations Tobaccoes & other things whatsoever as remaines of the estate of the said Richard Randall deceased & which were given & bequeathed unto us."

In Charles County, both the community and widows played a prominent role in the care and education of children. The community, however, was largely unprepared for this role. Death, which often took one if not both parents, left orphaned children alone to face the harsh realities of colonial life. During the greater part of the seventeenth-century no networks of kin existed for these orphaned children since most immigrants had left their families 3,000 miles across the ocean. Prompted by the possible disintegration of the family household, the community was forced to become an institutional substitute for kin. According to Lois G. Carr,

provisions for the care of Maryland orphans and their estates were part of a larger

"Ibid. The practice of appointing overseers ended at the close of the seventeenth-century.

"Pleasants, LX: 221."
administrative structure for preserving assets of dead men, paying their creditors, and distributing the balance to the heirs."

Given the short duration of many Charles County marriages, early death on the part of the father left the widow as the unifying family element which may have increased her authority within the household." Should any children exist from a previous marriage, a surviving widow would have to consider their interests as well as her own. One such case found in the county court records which exemplifies the protection of children's interests is that of Verlinda Burditt, who in 1668 intended to marry Richard Boughton. Placing Samuel and Nathaniel Eaton as trustees for her four children from a previous marriage, Verlinda Burditt relinquished "all Right title, and interest" in her husband's estate, which consisted of "foure cowes . . . foure two yeare old Heifers . . . foure yearling heifers [and] three Mares . . . with all and everie their increase." The agreement also specified that an equal portion of the 1000 acre estate belonging to their deceased father would be divided among the children "as anie or either of them Shall come to full age or shall enter into the estate of Marriage.""

"Carr, "The Maryland Orphans' Court," 42.
"Pleasants, LX: 133.
"Ibid.
Should a widow be unable or unwilling to remarry quickly in order to provide a stable household environment for her children, she had to ensure that her orphaned sons and daughters received care and training. This occurred through either guardianships or indentureships. The limited number of cases involving widows arranging such contractual obligations for their children suggests that widows sought to retain the integrity of the colonial family.

In three Charles County court cases, parents arranged contractual obligations for their children in order to preserve their opportunities. The plight of the widow Eleanor Empson in 1661 reveals not only the dissolution of her family due to health and economic problems, but the manner in which mothers sought to preserve opportunities for their daughters. Eleanor Empson's health and economic distress hindered her chances for remarriage, so she relinquished her child Mary into the care of Richard Dod and Thomas Baker. Stating that her daughter "might have perished [due to her present] condition," Eleanor Empson contracted with Richard Dod and Thomas Baker for her maintenance. In return for two heifers and any calves they provided as compensation, Thomas Baker promised to raise "the sayd Mary Empson to bring it up and Maintaine it as if it wear my owne," thus assuming the responsibility to raise and educate Mary as well as to preserve her economic

"Pleasants, LIII: 136-137.
future."

In the same year, Thomas Baker would again become involved in the care of children but under the more formal arrangement of an indenture. He agreed to take in Anne Ges' daughter-in-law, Mary, under the provision that she serve in all such "saruices and imployments . . . for the full and just tearme of six years." In return, Mary Ges would be allotted sufficient "meat, drinke and good Lodging fitting for a saruant." In all likelihood, Anne Ges, to provide for her daughter-in-law, bound her out to learn the trade of housekeeping.

In 1666, George Closse bound over his son John to serve Owen Jones until he reached the age of twenty-one. In exchange for his services, John Closse expected to receive sufficient "meate drinke and Cloathes" from Owen Jones upon completion of his term. The court records remain silent as to the nature of John Glosse's servitude, but it may be assumed that he entered the community as a common laborer. His removal from the household indicates that his father may have experienced economic troubles, for fathers rarely bound out male children who provided a valuable labor source in harvesting tobacco.

99Ibid., 136-137.
100Ibid., 182.
101Ibid.
102Pleasants, LX: 55.
Although the court records do not disclose the fates of Mary Empson, Mary Ges, and John Closse, their contracts represent the means by which children received a modicum of training. Yet once outside the boundaries of the legal system, contractual obligations for training often went by the wayside. Masters or guardians often abused their charges' services or labor. These children then depended upon outsiders, widows, or the court system to protect their rights.

The Charles County court records reveal three separate instances of such abuse. In 1652, John Ward, an orphan, agreed to serve as an indentured servant to Arthur Turner. Making his mark upon the indenture contract, John Ward at the tender age of five entered into Arthur Turner's household to begin his training as a cooper or carpenter. The indenture stipulated that the boy should serve until he reached the age of twenty, and that during that time he would receive meat, drink, apparel, and lodging befitting a servant. His benefactor, Arthur Turner, had also agreed to teach the young lad how to read. Yet in 1663, after fifteen years of servitude, things had become horribly wrong for John Ward and it is only the interference of the community on his behalf that saved him. In 1663, the community raised an uproar over his treatment. Dressed in ragged clothing, his body covered in foul ulcers, and "rotted" hair falling about his head, John Ward had been

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brought before the Charles County court described by some as "filthy [and] stincking." The court noted that the "Voyce of the people [had] crieth shame [at his condition]" and promptly released him from his indenture.

Although the role of the community had been important in his release from such ill-treatment, John Ward in the end, lost. Taking note of the condition he had been found in, Arthur Turner is clearly guilty of negligence in the care of his servant. This failure on his part casts doubt upon whether he fulfilled the obligations set forth in the remainder of the indenture, namely to impart the skills of reading and a trade upon John Ward. Eleven years later, when the community and not John Ward brought attention to his condition, it is entirely plausible that at age sixteen John Ward still could not read. Not knowing that the terms of his indenture had been violated, Ward must have become accustomed to his treatment until the community had at last become aware of his condition.

A 1663 case between John Helme and John Meeks paints a similar picture of abuse and missed opportunity. As a young man, John Helme agreed to an indenture in England to John Meeks, serving as a surgeon's apprentice. In the typical

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103 Pleasants, LIII: 410-411.
104 Ibid.
105 It must be remembered that John Ward made his mark upon the indenture not his signature, indicating that he could not read or write at that time.
English custom, it had been agreed that in return for Helmes' services as a servant, John Meeks would provide sufficient meat, drink, apparel, and lodging. Yet, when brought to Charles County, John Helme quickly found himself abandoned in a "strang cuntry and destitute of frinds."106 According to the petition presented to the Charles County Court, John Meeks had no intention whatsoever of fulfilling his obligations as a master. Desiring rather to use the importation of a servant to receive "tobacco due to him in the contry," Meeks abandoned his new servant.107 Appealing to the court, Helme presented himself as destitute, having "but one shirt [upon] his back besides the rest of his apparrell."108 The court ordered John Meeks to clothe his servant in a manner befitting an apprentice.

There are several differences that emerge when comparing this particular indenture contract and the one involving John Ward. An obvious age difference exists between the two but no evidence within the county court records suggests that the community evinced greater concern over the treatment of younger servants. The role of the community in support of the servant provides another difference. For John Helme, the community did not act as support since he was new to the area and lacked friends

106 Pleasants, LIII: 431.
107 Ibid.
108 Ibid.
within the county to uphold his claims. Through the petition that he personally placed in the county court and the absence of attorneys, it is evident that John Helme is educated to some degree. It is clear that he formulated the indenture with John Meeks and was aware of its terms and conditions, unlike John Ward. The court also did not release John Helme from the service of his master, but rather ordered him to be clothed. Unlike the misfortune that befell John Ward, cruel or inhuman treatment did not befall John Helme that would justify the sundering of the servant-master contract in the court's view. Only in such rare and extreme circumstances as in John Ward's case would such action be justified.

The third case involving children underscores the difficulties in attaining an education within Charles County. In 1668, William Smoot allegedly had made arrangements with Thomas Thorowgood to teach William Hungerford, a child under his charge, to "write and cast accounts" in exchange for "one boate of foureteene foot by the keele, one cow, and one yearling heifer." Although William Smoot believed the bargain to have been done in good faith, he discovered that Thomas Thorowgood had left the country soon afterwards and left his charge untaught. Seeking damages of £2900 of tobacco as compensation, William Smoot brought his case to court in 1669. Thomas Thorowgood

\[109\] Pleasants, LX: 247.
denied that any arrangements had been made with him to teach William Hungerford and stated that "when he was out of the country Mr. Blakiston did teach the youth."

This particular case does not answer whether or not William Hungerford actually received an education. It does, however, demonstrate that children relied upon outsiders, in this instance William Hungerford's master, to protect their rights and provide them with opportunity. It also serves to illuminate those citizens within the community that garnered enough prestige or respect that others would entrust their children to them for the purposes of education.

In the seventeenth-century Chesapeake, the inability of settlers to create ideal, stable family structures threatened the future opportunities of their children. Confronted by the realization that they, as parents, would not survive long enough to provide instruction or guidance to their children, many families as well as the larger community constructed new methods in which to ensure the interests of surviving children. Families turned to their betters as well as the community, who acted as a substitute for kin should both parents perish, in ensuring that their children received proper care and training. In most cases, this process took place through guardianships or indentureships. In order to protect children from the possibility of abusive guardians or masters, surviving

11Ibid.
parents or wills, the community, and the court system served to protect children from poor treatment or misuse of inheritance. Through these methods seventeenth-century settlers sought to preserve future generations' interests and opportunities.
CHAPTER III
CONCLUSION

Charles County, oddly enough, remained a land of opportunity for both servant and free English immigrants in the seventeenth-century. Tobacco and its associated economic boom, which characterized the early years of the Virginia colony, had largely receded by the founding of Charles County, Maryland in 1658. Still, tobacco, as we have seen, continued to dominate every facet of colonial life in Charles County. It influenced the distribution of wealth, investment decisions, occupational choices, and the development of industries. Yet in this era of increasing tobacco production and rapidly decreasing prices, how did opportunity continue to exist? The residents of Charles County developed new ways or methods to create opportunity for themselves and thus transcended economic distress. Through strong community and kinship connections, as well as the legal system, Charles County settlers, both men and women, protected themselves and their right to opportunity.

Two events, the population turnover rate and the out-migration of the servant class, appear to be critical to continued opportunity in the Chesapeake region. For Charles County, these events show that a continual turnover of a
significant proportion of the county population allowed opportunity or the possibilities for that opportunity to remain for those inhabitants who survived their first years. During the seventeenth-century, Charles County experienced a 10% death rate which deprived the county of a sizeable labor or householder population. Virginia as well "had to cope year after year with a death rate comparable only to that of severe epidemic years in England."\(^1\) As a result, the life expectancy of those in the Chesapeake "was somewhat lower than [that of] England and very much lower than that of [New England]."\(^2\) Coupled with the limited numbers of women, immigrant settlers not only in Charles County but throughout the Chesapeake region could not replenish their numbers at a rate consistent with the death toll.

This study also suggests that servants and non-householding freemen often did not survive long enough or acquire sufficient wealth to establish themselves independently. As James Horn notes in *Adapting To A New World*, many left the more settled areas and towards the frontier in search of opportunity.\(^3\) In Virginia, land was so plentiful and cheap the wealthier segments of the population acquired it in vast tracts, forcing ex-servants to move further outward to establish themselves

\(^1\)Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 159.
\(^2\)Ibid., 161.
\(^3\)Horn, *Adapting To A New World*, 163.
independently. In Charles County, the ebb of the tobacco market affected servant opportunities in a similar manner.

For those settlers who remained or survived in the Chesapeake region it was necessary to first establish themselves within a community. The formation of a household was a critical step towards that end. The household existed as the primary economic unit in which settlers could accumulate wealth and cultivate opportunities. Households, aside from helping a settler's entry into the community, offered unique benefits. As a member of the community, householders could arrange for credit, find work, or locate farms to purchase or rent. Marriage represented the most common means to establish a stable position within a given community. However, the low numbers of women within the county made it difficult for many male settlers to marry. Consequently, Marylanders devised new methods in which to circumvent this obstacle. Many male settlers formed households as bachelors and married late. A few even formed partnerships, pooling their resources in order to establish themselves within the community. Such methods were not available to settlers in seventeenth-century New England. The longevity and strength of parental authority ensured that fathers retained control of any property, leaving their children dutiful and dependent.

*Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom, 218.*
For women, marriage was the best way to establish themselves in a given community and experience opportunity. Women looked upon marriage as an ideal, a method to find security or perhaps participate in the larger community. Yet marriages in Charles County typically lasted only seven years, and many women found themselves marrying as many as three times within their lifespan. The frequent deaths of husbands and the subsequent reconstitution of the household through remarriage left women as the sole unifying element within the family structure, which may have given them considerable authority within the household. With the death of their spouses, women sometimes gained control of a considerable amount of property, whether to manage the estate until their children came of age or the entire estate itself. Unlike those widows in New England, where the law viewed women's rights and legal protections as "unnecessary, restrictive, and . . . destructive of family harmony," southern widows found themselves exercising prerogatives that extended their roles beyond the household and into the public domain once occupied by their husbands.\^{5} They could and did act to secure their own prosperity through careers, maintaining estates, engaging in transactions, initiating suits, and registering animals. Such extended roles were not entirely due to women's scarcity in the Chesapeake. Instead, as Marylynn Salmon suggests, many colonial regions

\^{5}Salmon, Women And The Law Of Property, 10.
did not enact specific laws governing women's rights or protections, but rather, developed more local methods to do so.‘

Women as well as the community itself sought to secure the same prosperity or opportunity for their children through binding them out to other households for training and education. Contract arrangements to that purpose specified that children should learn a trade or receive academic tutelage while in the care of a master. Unless these terms were enforced by a parent or guardian, children sometimes faced exploitation by their masters, who used them as a cheap labor force. In Charles County, practical education in the form of apprenticeships rather than academic instruction sufficed for future generations. Simple survival skills dominated community concern. That is to say that the lack of an academic education did not impair economic success or the ability to make a living.

Faced with uncertainty and harsh living conditions, those settlers that survived or entered the Chesapeake region still experienced opportunity. Although Charles County, unlike other Maryland counties, remained dependent upon tobacco, it slowly diversified its economic base in the eighteenth-century to include increased wheat production and commerce. Still for those without wealth, such as ex-servants and non-householding freemen, by the late

‘Ibid., 45.
seventeenth-century opportunity in the Chesapeake waned. As James Horn suggests in *Adapting To A New World*, "in the best tradition of migration within England, when opportunities declined, the poor moved on." What the example of Charles County demonstrates is that the fortunes of Chesapeake settlers and their pursuit of opportunity in the seventeenth-century rested as much upon the manipulation of social and cultural relations as upon economic circumstances.

'Horn, *Adapting To A New World*, 163.
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APPENDIX A
CALCULATIONS FOR TABLE 1

In constructing Table 1 information taken from the study done by Lorena S. Walsh, namely the 20 male servants within Charles County at a total population of 212 settlers, forms the first entry and basis for further calculations.¹ The remaining known numbers concerning total population are taken from the county levies and placed accordingly in column five.² The number of male servants brought before the Charles County Court in all the years excepting 1661, 1663, and 1665 are placed within column three.³ One assumption made in constructing this table is that the colony experienced an annual death rate of 10%. This number is taken from several secondary sources which cite 10% as an acceptable percentage concerning servant turnover levels.⁴ The equation used to reconstruct an estimated male servant

¹Walsh, "Staying Put or Getting Out," 90.
population is reduced to the following:

\[(S \times D) + (Y \times D) - P = E\]

Where S equals the number of recorded male servants in the county court records, Y the previous year's servant population, and D the 10\% annual death rating, the combined equation yields an adjustment figure. This adjustment figure is then subtracted against the previous year's servant population (P) in order to produce an estimated male servant population (E) for that year. The 10\% rating is applied equally to both the incoming servant population as stated by the court records and to the past year's servant pool in order to simulate approximate deaths. The reduction in the total male servant pool might also occur through the expiration of service. However, only five individual cases across the broad spectrum of years included within this table exist in the court records, making its impact upon the estimation of the county census quite negligible.
### APPENDIX B

#### RATE OF INCREASE FOR SERVANTS AND FREE MALES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male Servant Population</th>
<th>Calc. Rate Of Increase</th>
<th>Free Male Population</th>
<th>Calc. Rate Of Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1660</td>
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<td></td>
<td>192</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1661</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>1.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>1662</td>
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<td></td>
<td>337</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1663</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td>468</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.9</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1671</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The male servant and free male population numbers shown in columns two and four have both been derived from Table 1.
Appendix B purposely places these numbers in a series of groups designated by years in order to have an equal comparison of both the servant and free male populations for that given period. The rate of increase is calculated as follows:

\[ B \div A = C \]

The last population number in a given group (B) is divided by the first population number (A) in order to yield a rough estimate of the rate of increase for that given period (C). In calculating the rate of increase, the figure 1 is considered to indicate a stagnant population. A rate above 1 an increase in the population and a rate below 1, a decrease in the population.
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