

Women in Colonial-Era Public Houses Script¹

On February 18, 1697, in Virginia's Elizabeth City County Court, Ann Combs complained to the justices that Jacob Walker and his wife Rebecca gave her a drink of "wine and piss mixed together."² When the court met one month later, on March 18, the case was dismissed and Jacob Walker ordered "to pay all Court charges." Additionally, Ann Combs was ordered to pay both Mary Downes and Mary Ohanen "40 lbs. tobacco" each "for [their] attendance one day as [witnesses] for her against Jacob Walker."³

Though this case may be an example of an inventive means of disposing of one's chamber pot's contents, I like this case because it addresses many of the issues I want to talk about today concerning women and colonial-era public houses. To wit, what is Rebecca Walker's role in this situation? Though a notation in the January 1697 court records tells us that Jacob received the ordinary license for this establishment, Rebecca's inclusion in the case indicates that she was either acting as the proprietor that day or was what I've termed for this talk (for alliterative purposes mostly) a peon. Ann Combs is obviously a patron. And though we do not have enough evidence to say what roles Mary Downes and Mary Ohanen actually played in this, the fact that they are called in as evidence means they were there. This limits their involvement to either patrons or peons. Either way, in this court case involving an ordinary, four of the five players are women. [NS]

As you could already guess from both this talk's title and my focus on the various women in the preceding court case, I want to explore women's roles in colonial-era inns, ordinaries, and taverns. This is a challenging topic to explore because as we already know, public houses were definitely male-dominated spaces. The social, legal, and political trends of the day operated to limit women's roles in the public sphere. But just because they were limited, that doesn't mean women didn't have any roles to play. And though public houses were male-dominated spaces, that doesn't mean they were male-exclusive. As a matter of fact I will make the claim now, and hopefully prove it to you by the end of this talk, that women were integral to these establishments. It does not matter if you want to examine public houses from an owner's or operator's perspective (proprietor), from the labor perspective (peon), or the customer's perspective (patron). From each perspective women played a part and we cannot understand these establishments if we dismiss or discount how women interacted with these establishments. They were proprietors, they were peons, and they most assuredly were patrons. [NS]

Now, before we delve more deeply into our discussion, I'd like to take a few moments to comment on how this research was conducted and a couple of other items. As for sources, this is based on primary and secondary source research as well as information passed on to me by a variety of people. Because of the dearth of 17th-century information, this is admittedly an 18th-century focused paper. And because of our location, it also focuses heavily on the Chesapeake. As the paper progresses I'll either mention particular people or sources along the way when pertinent. Additionally, I can almost guarantee that there are people in this room who have more knowledge than I about particular people or places that will be mentioned. The nature of this

¹ This is the script to a presentation offered at Historic London Town and Gardens on 2 March 2010 by Rod Cofield. As such, the tone is more conversational than academic. Citations and references are found both on the accompanying slides and the following footnotes. The information contained herein should not be used without permission of the author.

² Rosemary Corley Neal, *Elizabeth City County, Virginia: Deeds, Wills, Court Orders, Etc., 1634, 1659, 1688-1702*, Heritage Books, Inc., Bowie, 1986, 208. Sincere thanks is given to Hank Lutton for telling me about this case.

³ *Ibid*, 210.

presentation meant that I had to cast a wide, yet relatively shallow net. If you'd like to help me learn more about any particular people or places, feel free to pass on any information to me. I do not believe though that much more in-depth knowledge will significantly alter the thoughts and conclusions reached herein. And finally, though I have a written script, if something is not making sense or if you'd like to question me on something, just speak up. So, unless there is already a question or clarification needed, let us start our discussion with proprietors. [NS]

I'd like to begin by stating that a lot of research concerning women proprietors has already been conducted. Locally, Jessica Kaplan wrote a master's thesis in the 1990s about Annapolis public house keepers. For Virginia, Patricia Gibbs' 1968 thesis also touched upon women proprietors in Williamsburg. More recently, Sarah Hand-Meacham's dissertation also included a good amount on Virginia proprietors and the similarities between domestic duties and public house keeping. A little farther afield, Marcia Schmidt-Blain and Natalie Zacek have looked at women proprietors in New Hampshire and the British West Indies. Additionally, Peter Thompsom, David Conroy, Sharon Salinger, and Kym Rice have studied Philadelphia, Boston, and the colonies as a whole and included commentary on women proprietors in their work. Suffice it to say, these next few minutes will not add a significant amount to the work that is already out there. However, I do hope to provide some slightly newer local information as well as discuss the various ways by which the above researchers differ and where I stand in the mix. [NS]

To understand how integral women were to public houses, a quick glance at some numbers that show the percentage of licenses held by women is quite revealing. Depending on the time and place, the percentages (at least from this list) range from a low of 4.5% in Craven County, North Carolina's to the high of 100% found in 1758 Stratham, New Hampshire.⁴ Additionally, while the percentage of women license-holders waxes and wanes throughout the years in some places such as Annapolis, in other places such as Boston, the interesting consistency between years is remarkable. Before getting into some conclusions about these numbers, I'd like to point out that a rigorous comparison between these places and times is not feasible at this time. For me, there is too much emphasis on more urbanized areas and in many places the date ranges are too broad. Until we have more smaller towns such as London Town, as well as more rural areas, which of course hosted the majority of the American population at that time, and until we have more specific date ranges, I'd like a series of 10-year intervals with maybe 2-year intervals between 1770 and 1786 because of the American Revolution and its consequences, a good discussion about the depth of women's involvement in public houses as licensed proprietors can only be relatively shallow.

Now that I've just preemptorily challenged the conclusions I'm about to offer, here are a few thoughts. First, as this limited amount of data shows, women's involvement in public houses as license holders is geographically widespread. This should not be too surprising, for women had received licenses in England for a few hundred years before the colonies were

⁴ Percentages for Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, Plymouth County, Suffolk County, Chester County, Craven County, and Cumberland County come from Sharon Salinger, *Taverns and Drinking in Early America*, pages 163 & 164, 2002. The percentage for Maryland's Prince George's County is found in Mike Lucas, *Negotiating Public Landscapes*, Ph.D dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park, chapter 4, 2008. The Portsmouth and Stratham numbers are found in Marcia Schmidt-Blaine, "Entertaining the Government," *Proceedings of the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife: Annual Proceedings, 2002*, pages 191-201. London Town's percentages are taken from data collected by Rod Cofield and Mechelle Kerns and is on file at Historic London Town and Gardens. The St. Christopher's percentage is found in Natalie Zacek, "Women and Work in the Cities and Towns of the Eighteenth-Century British West Indies," paper presented at the 2002 meeting of the Bi-Annual Southern Labor Studies Conference in Miami, and at the Staff Work-in-Progress Seminar of the Department of History at the University of Manchester, March 2007, and kindly provided to me by her via email.

founded.⁵ From the far northern colonies to the West Indies, women gained licenses in their own name. Second, as other researchers have commented on, there does seem to be more opportunities for women to operate these establishments in towns as compared to rural areas. And third, though Jessica Kaplan, Patricia Gibbs, and Nancy Struna in their respective research on Annapolis, Williamsburg, and Baltimore discuss the 18th-century decline of women public house keepers and their shift to the supposedly more appropriate private boarding house service, I'd like to challenge this by pointing to Boston's consistency and the uptick in Philadelphia's and Charleston's percentages as the century wears on.⁶ Their conclusions fit into a broader argument that has been made concerning the decline of women's opportunities as the colonial era progressed. Others, such as Sarah Hand-Meacham have called for a 'shading' of that declension model and I agree.⁷ The drop in percentage of women having licenses in both other areas and the above-mentioned towns does seem real. But is that true for just those places? Though I agree that more rural areas generally had fewer female license holders as a percentage of a whole, do the numbers show a decline there too, or are those percentages consistent? Is there an East Coast, port town bias? Does the American Revolution affect these numbers? How about the supposed refinement of manners in America? And though I mentioned this earlier, the lack of 17th-century evidence also frustrates our search for these numbers' proper context. So, for a short recap, these percentages hint at how involved women were as proprietors, but additional research and information is needed for more rigorous study.

As for the question as to how differently women proprietors were treated when compared to their male counterparts. My answer is not at all, and maybe in some places, they were preferred. I will go into more detail in a few moments, but just like male-owned establishments, the ones that had women proprietors were used as court and government meeting places, election-related activities occurred there, they housed the sick, were patronized by all segments of society, and these establishments sometimes offered specialized services (and no, I'm not talking about the one that immediately comes to mind).

As the title of Martha McNamara's book, *From Tavern to Courthouse* indicates, there is a close tie between government and drinking establishments during the colonial era. And if you go to Annapolis during the legislative session today, you'll find that that tie is still strong. Because essentially every researcher into colonial-era public houses has commented on this connection I will only focus on a few women to show that when the local or provincial government needed a place to meet and did not have a structure specifically for them, their meetings could occur in either a man's or a woman's public house. [NS] A good example of this is found in Portsmouth, New Hampshire and Elizabeth Harvey's establishment. In a 2002 paper at the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, Marcia Schmidt Blaine used Harvey's story to make this point and I should note that I have borrowed liberally from Blaine (who sent me a digital version of her paper) for most of the historical references to Harvey and New Hampshire.⁸

As you can see on the slide, Elizabeth Harvey received permission to keep a "public house of Entertainment" in 1697. This occurred after her husband, Captain Thomas Harvey, was captured by the French in that same year. He later died while in their custody. As for Elizabeth,

⁵ Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History 1200-1830*, chapters 2 & 4, 1983.

⁶ Jessica Kaplan, *Female Tavern and Boardinghouse Keepers of Eighteenth Century Annapolis, Maryland*, masters thesis, University of Maryland, 1994. Patricia A. Gibbs, *Taverns in Tidewater Virginia, 1700-1774*, masters thesis, College of William and Mary, 1968. Nancy Struna, *People of Prowess*, 1996.

⁷ Sarah Hand-Meacham, "Keeping the Trade," *Early American Studies*, Spring 2005, 140-163.

⁸ Marcia Schmidt Blaine, "Entertaining the Government: Female Tavern Keepers and the New Hampshire Provincial Government," *Proceedings of the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife: Annual Proceedings, 2002*, 2002, p. 191-201.

in November 1699 her establishment received the privilege of becoming the de facto post office for New Hampshire and all points north. In return for acting as post master, Elizabeth no longer had to pay any excise on “beer, ale, or cider.” Though I do not know how long Elizabeth’s establishment served as the post office, the fact that she received this privilege speaks to the government’s confidence in her and the importance of her establishment.

As you continue reading the excerpts from New Hampshire’s provincial records, you’ll see that Elizabeth Harvey also hosted the government from time to time. Though the dates that you see on the slide are mostly during the 1710s, Blaine found references to Harvey hosting both the executive and legislative branches of government as early as 1706. And when either standing or special committees met, Harvey’s account book referenced them by name and task. Again, these records speak to the government’s confidence in Elizabeth Harvey. And from her view, that confidence meant profit.

Now it is not as if Elizabeth Harvey was a singular case. During Blaine’s research into colonial New Hampshire’s women proprietors, she discovered that of the 45 years between 1690 and 1762 when a government meeting place is known, the government used an establishment licensed by a woman for 38, or 84% of those years. Even if the government did not ever meet at a woman-owned establishment during the other years, that percentage is a still impressive 53%. Without any other evidence, this percentage hints at a potential preference by the government for woman-owned establishments. [NS]

Of course, having a government meet in a public house can create problems. In July 1701, when the New Hampshire legislature convened at Patience Atkins’ establishment, those problems caused the legislature to create regulations to rectify some of those issues. The first problem is definitely one unique to public houses and hints at how rooms served multiple uses. As the slide shows, the legislature was apparently having so many problems with either their members or other patrons “sitting or lying on the bed[s]” that a fine of three pence was deemed necessary to stop it from happening in the future. Also, the temptation to take a smoke break in the chimney was so great, and disruptive, that the legislature decided another fine of three pence was also needed to discourage that activity. [NS]

And as the case of Robert Gelly’s ordinary in St. Mary’s City shows, even if the government did not meet in a public house, the nearness of one posed similar problems. When Maryland’s Provincial Council met in September 1686, complaints about the deleterious effects Gelly’s had on governmental business, such as drunken jurors, lawyers, and clerks, had reached the point where the Council ordered the city government to suppress Gelly’s ordinary.⁹ Obviously this is not a woman-owned establishment, but I can imagine that similar issues arose throughout the colonies whenever a government met in or near a public house.

The allure of these establishments to members of the government is also found when we look at a Philadelphia public house called the Sign of the Three Crowns. In the late 1740s and early 1750s this establishment was operated by the Widow Jones. As Sharon Salinger discovered during her research, the Philadelphia County Commissioners met at various public houses between 1746 and 1750 because they did not have a building specifically for their use. At some point they met in a coffee house before settling on Jones’ establishment. In 1748 they migrated to the county courthouse, but their records indicate that building was unsatisfactory. In their justification as to why they did not want to meet in that building and preferred to go back to the Sign of the Three Crowns, they commented on the lack of drink and heat source in the courthouse and that by going back to Jones’ place, they would be “more comfortable when [we] are administering justice.” Eventually, a fireplace or stove was installed in the building and they

⁹ Maryland State Archives (MSA), *Archives of Maryland (AMD)*, Vol. 19, pages 494 & 498.

did have to start meeting there.¹⁰ There is no account as to whether or not a wet bar was installed in the corner as well. [NS]

Before moving on, I want to bring in three relatively local examples to show that various aspects of Maryland's government during the 17th and 18th centuries also met in or utilized woman-owned establishments. The first instance dates to 1662 in St. Mary's City. At this point, because a building did not exist solely for the use of the government, all branches of the provincial government sometimes met in what had been Leonard Calvert's house that had been turned into an ordinary a few years after his death. As you can see on the slide, when it came time to pay the government's bills, Hannah Lee, the establishment's proprietor, received 1000 pounds of tobacco for letting them use space in her establishment and for providing some of the burgesses with "meate, drink, and Lodging." I should note that later in that same session, Hannah was promised 12,000 pounds of tobacco if she sold the building and associated land to the Maryland government so that structures could be built specifically for the government's purposes. But even though the government expressed a desire for purpose-built structures because, as they claimed, "it is most necessary that a howse and place be provided for the houlding [of] Provincial Courts requisite for the administraction of Justice and keeping of Assemblies in this Province," the Council also asked the widow Lee to agree to keep ordinary in the current building for three more years.¹¹ She agreed.

A few years later in 1676, when Maryland's legislature passed an act to pay government expenditures, Elizabeth Delaroche was one of four St. Mary's City ordinary keepers who received quite a bit of tobacco for their services. The first time she is listed in the act she received 17,932 pounds of tobacco for "publick expences." The second time she is listed she received 1,277 additional pounds of tobacco for accommodating members of the General Assembly for a grand total of 19,209 pounds of tobacco.¹² At that point Elizabeth's establishment was at what is now called the St. John's site at Historic St. Mary's City and as Silas Hurry discussed a few weeks ago, is an open exhibit building at the museum. Two years later in 1678, Elizabeth received an additional 2,830 for more "Publick charges of this province."¹³ However, at this point it is unclear as to where Elizabeth was because Henry Exxon had become the licensed ordinary keeper at the St. John's site. [NS]

As for the third instance, this one concerns the Anne Arundel County Court and its meeting in November 1719.¹⁴ It was not unusual for county courts to meet in various locations throughout the county to better serve the population. Samuel Sewall, a Boston-area county justice in the late 1600s and early 1700s wrote in his diary about the different public houses where he and his fellow justices held court. And we already learned a bit about the Philadelphia County Court's preference to meet at widow Jones' place. But for this November 1719 meeting, the Anne Arundel County Court met at Ann Hutton's ordinary. I do not know if they had met there previously, or if they ever met there again, but I bring it up as a local example of a woman-owned establishment hosting an aspect of the government.

By now it should be obvious that the various colonial governments and public houses were inexorably linked throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. When a building did not exist solely for the government's use, and even sometimes when one did, the government preferred the comforts of a public house. And often, these establishments were operated by women. [NS]

¹⁰ Sharon Salinger, *Taverns and Drinking in Early America*, page 65-66.

¹¹ MSA, AMD, Vol. 1, pages 440 & 455.

¹² *Ibid*, Vol. 2, pages 551 & 554.

¹³ *Ibid*, Vol. 7, page 102.

¹⁴ MSA, AACCR, November Court 1719, Liber RC, Folio 463.

Of course, the link between members of government and public houses did not always begin once someone entered government. For many people, to get into government meant that you had to be elected, and what better way to do that than to ‘offer’ drinks to potential voters to engender goodwill? Much has already been made of George Washington’s 1758 election where he received 309 out of 397 votes cast in Frederick County, Virginia. The back story here is that his campaign expenditures consisted of the items you see on the slide. When some of these expenditures are added together, you’ll notice he spent 66 gallons of rum punch, 58 gallons of beer, and 35 gallons of wine. The image in the background is a William Hogarth painting that is a commentary on how elections were bought, sorry, facilitated with alcohol. Though I do not know where exactly Washington and his supporters distributed these drinks, I would imagine that a public house or two was involved somehow. [NS]

A similar situation is hinted at in Maryland in this *Maryland Gazette* advertisement by Ann Tilly from October 1768.¹⁵ In it, Tilly asked people who had participated in the most recent election for the general assembly to pay her for the costs incurred at that time. You’ll also notice from this advertisement that Anne is still seeking payment for charges that occurred ten months earlier. This is just one instance of the many election entertainments that occurred during the colonial era. Public houses were places where candidates and voters came to campaign and celebrate before, during, and after elections. And as this advertisement shows, that did occur in woman-owned establishments.

Something else that this advertisement indicates is that like their male counterparts, when a woman operated a public house near a ferry crossing, that woman often also became involved with that particular ferry. Now, I only have data for the immediate area so I need to offer it with the caveat that what occurred around here did not necessarily occur in other locations. That being said, since I am aware of three non-Maryland references to women ferry keepers, one in 17th-century Massachusetts and two in 18th-century North Carolina, I would be surprised if what occurred here did not occur in other parts of colonial America.¹⁶ A perusal of the Anne Arundel County Court Judgment record shows that many of the public ferries were at some point operated by a woman in her own name. Additionally, each of the following women were also ordinary keepers at the same time. During the first few years of the 18th century, two women were named keepers of the publicly-supported Severn River Ferry. Sometime before November 1708, Dinah Olle (better known to me as Dinah Nuthead) was paid 6000 pounds of tobacco per year to operate that ferry. Though Robert Cross became public ferry keeper at that court session, one year later at the November 1709 session, Audry Taylard (whose husband, William Taylard is relatively well-known by researchers of colonial Annapolis) became the public ferry keeper for Severn River.¹⁷ As I said earlier, both women during their tenure as ferry keeper were also licensed ordinary keepers. Dinah’s establishment I believe was on the north side of the river and as Audry’s March 1708 ordinary license makes clear, hers was in Annapolis proper.¹⁸

Other Anne Arundel County rivers also had women who kept the public ferries. At the November 1746, county court session Mary Hughes, another ordinary keeper, received permission to manage the Patapsco River ferry.¹⁹ One year later, Mary sent her son, Thomas, to ask for a renewal on her behalf; it was granted. Starting in March 1749, Mary Allen received the

¹⁵ *Maryland Gazette*, 27 October 1768, page 3.

¹⁶ Herbert Applebaum, *Colonial Americans at Work*, pages 151 & 255. Elizabeth Caldwell in Massachusetts. Annie Wilson and Elizabeth Hill in North Carolina.

¹⁷ MSA, *Anne Arundel County Court Judgment Record (AACCR)*, Liber TB2, November Court 1708 folio 5; November Court 1709, folio 94.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, March Court 1708, folio 688-689.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, November Court 1746, folio 290.

privilege to keep the Pigg Point Ferry. I have only gotten so far in the records, but I can tell that she retained that privilege at least through the majority of 1753.²⁰ And during the 1710s, at different times, both Alice Macklefish and Elinor Rumney were granted management of the South River ferry. Again, like Dinah, Audry, and the two Marys, Alice and Elinor each operated both a ferry and an ordinary, this time, in London Town.²¹ Obviously in the larger picture women did not seem to be a large percentage of the public ferry keepers, but it is interesting that in just this one county, and spread throughout time and space, a variety of women were trusted by the county court to operate the public ferries. These are just some more examples of women not being thought of any differently when compared to their male counterparts. [NS]

And from these next few newspaper advertisements, it seems clear that women also operated private ferries that were not guaranteed public support. As you see on the slide, in September 1764 Mary Anne Noble informed the public that she planned to keep not one, but two ferries; one to cross the Potomac and one that crossed Piscataway Creek. A few years later, in July 1768, Sarah Flynn announced that she had opened “a house of entertainment” at Broad Creek and was also involved with the ferry to Annapolis. And in an August 1770 advertisement wherein Anne Middleton asked people to pay off their debts to her dead husband’s estate, Anne also made sure to tell the public that she kept “tavern and ferry-boats as usual.” By now I hope I have convinced you that both men and women undertook a combination of public house- and ferry-keeping when the situation warranted it and neither the government nor the public at large seemed to care if the licensed individual was a man or woman. [NS]

I’d like to turn now to an aspect of ordinary keeping that is sometimes mentioned, but not usually in the forefront of our interpretation of these establishments: health care. As you see on the slide, in June 1707, Mehitable Pierpoint, an ordinary keeper in London Town, received 2,000 pounds of tobacco for “maintaining and applying medicines to Jane Brown....” This amount was to cover expenses for the next few months as well as previous costs on Mehitable’s part. Even after Mehitable left London Town for Prince George’s County, she continued to care for sick individuals. In 1719 the Prince George’s County Court allowed her 1,000 pounds of tobacco to care for Elizabeth King and an additional 300 pounds to care for Grace Goodwin.²² The fact that Mehitable was paid by the government to care for a sick individual is not an aberration. In 1667, Walter Peake, a St. Mary’s County ordinary keeper, was ordered by the Provincial Court to maintain Martha Crab because she was “lame and [could] not maintain herself.” This arrangement was extended one year later.²³ In 1679, Chancellor Philip Calvert intervened in the situation between James Anderson and Mark Cordea (a St. Mary’s City ordinary keeper). In this instance Anderson had been kept by Cordea past his term of indenture and had also become sick and needed medical care. Calvert ordered another local ordinary keeper, John Barnes, to accommodate Anderson and tend to his wounds.²⁴

In addition to these government-sponsored incidences, there are also references to ordinary keepers privately agreeing to tend to someone’s illness or wounds. One such reference occurred in the 1670s when Richard Ridgell, an ordinary keeper in St. Mary’s County, agreed to let John Warwick stay at his establishment while his wife, Hannah, acted as Warwick’s nurse. During the course of Warwick’s stay, Ridgell claimed that Warwick had racked up 1,445 pounds of tobacco in charges. The reason we know about this today is because Warwick, who did

²⁰ MSA, AACCR, Liber ISB1, March Court 1749, folio 197.

²¹ MSA, AACCR, Liber TB2, November Court 1711, folio 377 (Macklefish); November Court 1719, folio 555 (Rumney).

²² Lucas dissertation, page 219. PG County Court, Liber H, Folio 957 & 966.

²³ MSA, AMD, Vol. 57, page xxi.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 69, page 122.

eventually get better, refused to pay and the case made its way to the Provincial Court in 1676. Because Ridgell had kept Warwick's silk clothing for nonpayment, the jury decided that neither could take any payment from the other and both were to pay their share of court costs.²⁵ As these cases show us, public houses did act as both temporary and long term medical care facilities and both women and men were involved with this oft-overlooked function.

Medical care was just one of the specialized services public houses potentially offered to the population at large. And we've also already discussed postal service. But public houses, even ones owned and operated by women offered other specializations. To begin with, let's get the whole prostitution thing out of the way since I'm almost positive that has crossed some of your minds by now. And if not, it is about to. [NS]

In the Annapolis area the best know woman proprietor who very likely kept a house of ill fame is Anne Burman in the mid-18th century. But before I turn to her story, I want to show you John Navarre's 1715 petition to the Anne Arundel County Court. As you can tell from his petition, Navarre kept an ordinary in Annapolis. He is petitioning the court because he believes that there are some people in Annapolis who are hurting his business because they "undersell him and all the other vintners of this city and entertain whores and lewd women in their houses to promote trade..." Who these unnamed people are, I do not know. They are not listed in the petition and though the court hears the petition, as they say, it is "referred until further consideration." As far as I can tell, that "further consideration" never occurred.

I should point out that Navarre seems to be doing what many other public house keepers did during that time, complain about problems with others without actually doing a critical self-evaluation. I say this because when the court met in March 1720, Navarre was brought up on a charge of illegally entertaining Katherine White's servant without her permission; an activity Navarre complained about in his 1715 petition. Navarre credited the servant 20 shillings, which Katherine White was legally responsible for. Navarre seems to have pleaded guilty in an effort to only have to credit White the 20 shillings instead of having to pay the official fine of 2000 pounds of tobacco. It didn't work. He had to pay the fine. [NS]

But enough about Navarre, let us turn to Madame Burman. Jessica Kaplan's work on Annapolis women proprietors delves more deeply into Burman's history, but for this presentation the information that concerns us is that she was a licensed public house keeper for a number of years throughout the mid to late 1700s. Her association with prostitution is found in Alexander Hamilton's records of the Tuesday Club. In it there is a poem, Carmen Dolorosum that pretty plainly claims that Anne Burman's establishment is where "gentle nymphs" are joined with "amorous Swains."²⁶ It should be noted that though Burman is found in the court records frequently as both a plaintiff and defendant, there is no known charge against her for keeping what we might call a brothel. And though I might be wrong on this, I do not believe that during the colonial period Maryland ever specifically forbade prostitution. [NS] If I am right on that, then that is an interesting difference between Maryland and Virginia. For during the April 1691 legislative session, Virginia's government, alarmed at the number of houses keeping "women of ill names and reputation," laid out a variety of fines and punishments for what were humorously called in Maryland the gentle nymphs and amorous swains. However, I have not seen in my primary source research or other people's research anything that indicates this law was used to prosecute any Virginians. And even if Maryland had passed a law against prostitution, I have not seen any references to prosecutions here.

²⁵ *Ibid*, Vol. 66, pages xxiii-xxiv & 552-554.

²⁶ Quoted in Kaplan, page 33.

However, if we go a little farther afield, there are court cases involving prostitution in public houses owned by women. Kirsten Fischer, in her research concerning gender and race in colonial North Carolina, found some interesting examples from Edenton's court records. One of the proprietors who appeared in court more than once was Elizabeth Marston. In 1725 Marston was accused by William and Mary Havett of keeping a "Common Bawdy house." Mary Havett's deposition goes on to claim that Marston's "two daughters are the young whores... and that Six men hath been taken in bed with her daughters in one night..." Three years later in 1728, Marston was accused by James Trotter "of being 'a Bawd to Your Own Daughters'" because she had "putt two of [her] own daughters to Bed with two Men in Virginia and received a pistole of the Sayd Men." Additionally, Trotter claimed that one of Marston's daughters had had a "Molatta Bastard in Virginia." Fischer does not say if Marston was found guilty on either charge.

A few years later, in 1737, and again in Edenton, another woman was accused of similar crimes. This woman, Elizabeth Abell was first accused by Edmund Gale of keeping a "disorderly house without Lycense." When the county court met again one month later, Gale appeared before the court and this time accused Abell of operating a "Lew'd and disorderly" house wherein servants, slaves, and sailors could find a prostitute, maybe even Elizabeth herself. This is hinted at because in 1737, 1745, and 1750 Elizabeth gave birth to mulatto children and was fined by the court. One of her punishments involved her being "tyed to a Carts tayl and... whipt out of the Town by receiving Thirty Lashes on her bare Back well laid on."²⁷ [NS]

Sharon Salinger is another researcher who has found some references to prostitution being prosecuted in the local courts. An interesting case from 1672 Massachusetts involves Alice Thomas. In this instance, Thomas was accused, and found guilty, of helping some of her patrons break into and steal items from a warehouse as well as giving people "frequent and unseasonable entertainment in her house to lewd lascivious & notorious persons of both sexes [and] giving them opportunity to commit carnall wickedness." For these crimes Alice was fined more than 100 pounds sterling, ordered to the gallows to stand with a rope around her neck for one hour, then stripped to the waist, tied to a cart and whipped through Boston's streets to end up at the prison where she would receive 39 lashes and then once that was done, she would stay in prison until the court sought fit to let her out.²⁸

Now these are fascinating cases and prove without a doubt that prostitution and illicit sexual activity occurred at places where people could eat, sleep, drink, and socialize during the colonial period. But what is really new about that. Those activities happened before the colonial period and if you look at enough news items today, it is still happening. I bring this up because though this is something that should be addressed and acknowledged, I feel that it is sometimes overplayed by historical investigators because of the shock value. And I think we have to admit that a number of historic sites, particularly those with colonial-era taverns and ordinaries, use this theme as a contrast to their 'clean, orderly' establishments where these activities never, ever occurred. It is best if we acknowledge that then, like now, these activities occurred and different segments of the population either cared a lot or were indifferent about it. So, let us turn from the salacious to the genteel and examine Mary Howard's story. [NS]

Many researchers have already commented on how one of the specialized purposes public houses filled was as a place for public sales, or vendues, as they were often called in the colonial period. Additionally, these establishments were where people could meet up with one another for business purposes. Spend a few minutes looking through the *Maryland Gazette*, and

²⁷ Kirsten Fischer, *Suspect Relations: Sex, Race, and Resistance in Colonial North Carolina*, page 121 and footnote 42 on page 229.

²⁸ Sharon Salinger, *Taverns and Drinking in Early America*, page 112

you'll see the truth to this. What I want to focus on is Mary Howard's coffee house and how it fulfilled many of these functions.

As you can see from this slide, on April 9, 1767, an advertisement appeared in the *Maryland Gazette* stating that the Maryland Coffee House would open on the following Monday. Though there is no name attached to this particular advertisement, later advertisements tell us that Mary Howard was owned and operated the coffee house. Four months later in August, Howard's establishment hosted a public auction between three and four o'clock on the 22nd where the public could try to win the schooner *Sharp* and all of her rigging. In October of that same year, when the Anne Arundel Free School wanted to find a new headmaster, applicants were directed to come to the coffee shop on the 29th where the school's Board of Visitors would be waiting for them. The November 1767 advertisement tells us that another public auction of a sailing vessel, this time the sloop *Maryland*, would be held at Howard's place. And as the February 1770 item indicates, the "Trustees for the poor of Anne Arundel County" would, starting at 10:00am on Wednesday, March 13, be at the coffee house to offer a contract on the building of the planned Alms and Poor House. I'm certain that was a much better setting than how it is done now at the county's offices on Riva Road. These are just a few of the many advertisements in the *Maryland Gazette* that speak to the specialized services offered at Mary Howard's coffee house. [NS]

I'd like you to keep Mary Howard in the back of your mind for a few moments while I show you a couple of other *Maryland Gazette* items concerning women proprietors, specifically their deaths and what that tells us about their establishments and personal situations. As you can see, on March 6 1755, an item ran in the paper announcing the death of Elizabeth Marriott, proprietor of the Ship Tavern. Not only is her death mentioned, but her supposed net worth, 3,000 pounds (of tobacco I believe), is also mentioned. That amount puts her in at least the upper third of the economic scale at that time. In December 1758, Elizabeth McLeod died and her death was also announced in the paper. Though her net worth was not included, the obituary's language indicates that she was not a poor person. [NS]

I mention these items, along with Mary Howard's place, to push back at some of the conclusions and interpretations reached by some people who have commented on women public house keepers. Specifically, some researchers, like Kym Rice in her 1983 book, *Early American Taverns*, claim that women proprietors "were motivated by simple economic necessity." Or that "tavern keeping appeared to many widowed women and some public officials as one means of insuring sufficient economic support for themselves and their families." And that "generally, tavern keeping was a short-lived occupation for women proprietors."²⁹ [NS]

Now, I admit, I have selectively pulled Rice's assertions out of a broader context and eliminated a few of her qualifying words. I will also admit that Rice and other researchers who hew to these conclusions have some concrete examples in their research that seem to back up their claims. And if we look hard enough in the local records, a petition or two does turn up like this one from Mary Harris in 1719 wherein she asks for an ordinary license to support herself and her children because she has no support from her husband. So, there is evidence out there that these claims can hang on. [NS]

That being said, I am now going to challenge them. Concerning the 'economic necessity' argument, I would say that Mrs. Marriott's supposed net worth of 3,000 pounds surpasses economic necessity. In Jessica Kaplan's study, she has a table in her appendix that lists probate amounts for a few women proprietors. I have pulled out the nine women who had probates in their name only and put them on the slide. As you'll notice, only one of those nine, Susannah

²⁹ Kym Rice, *Early American Taverns*, pages 49-56.

Murray, has what could be termed a poverty-level amount. All of the other women have estates worth more than £100. So again, I question how comprehensive the statement about economic necessity actually is. [NS]

And if you were to take as dogma that woman-owned establishments were, “generally short-lived,” then the amount of women who operated establishments in their own name for many years would surprise you. Turning to Kaplan’s study again, there are a number of women who were proprietors for more than just one or two years. Eleanor Williamson and Susannah Murray each had a license for at least seven years; Anne Hutton, at least 6; Sarah Ramsay, 16; Catherine Minskie, 8; Elizabeth Marriott, 14; Elizabeth McLeod, 11; Ann Burman, 12; and Deborah Wilkins, 22+. If we return to *Mehitable Pierpoint*, her combined total for ordinary keeping in London Town and Prince George’s County is at least 10 years if not 20. Staying within Prince George’s County and using Mike Lucas’ research, we have Mary Boyd being licensed for 6 years; Jane Addison for 7; and Solomy d’Hinoyossa for 6. Based on some research done by Mechelle Kerns in Anne Arundel County, *Mahitable Bateman* was licensed for at least 20 years; Ann Connor, 15; Ann Hammond, 15; and Mary Hughes, 10. Alan Watson’s research into the tidewater area of North Carolina, indicates that three women in Edenton, Dorothy Sherwine, Elizabeth Wallace, and Mary Wallace each held licenses for 12 years. And research in Patricia Gibbs’ thesis on Williamsburg proprietors, with Anne Pattison’s information provided by Heather Wainwright, shows us that Susanna Allen was a licensed proprietor for 9 years; Christianna Campbell, at least 16; Mary Maupin, 6; Anne Pattison, 11; Anne Marot Sullivant, 18; and Jane Vobe, 33. Short-lived my arse.

Though these women are drawn from a relatively tight geographic area, Marcia Schmidt Blaine and Sarah Hand Meacham have also commented on the longevity of a number of women’s establishments in New Hampshire and Virginia respectively. These numbers are particularly interesting when the research about Williamsburg, Annapolis, Anne Arundel County, and Prince George’s County all seems to indicate that somewhere between ½ and 2/3 of all license-holders did not last more than 5 years.

Now, I will acknowledge that there are examples of poor women proprietors and short-lived, woman-owned establishments. And I have to admit that researchers such as Natalie Zacek in her examination of the English West Indies undertake nuanced explorations of this topic. But when researchers like Rice (and I don’t mean to pick on her too much, but as the researcher who first put out a book about colonial-era establishments that has been the basis for most all other research, I kind of have to), and others have made these claims, they have never buttressed their conclusions with comparative numbers; instead, they have done what I just did and cherry-pick examples to suit their arguments. What needs to happen then, before anyone really accepts either side’s claims at face value (though I of course hope you’ll leave in agreement with me), is that in addition to doing more research to learn exactly how many licenses were given to women throughout the colonies, we also need to see how the average length of female-operated establishments compare to the average length of male-operated establishments. Kaplan did that for Annapolis and discovered that “33% of all female ordinary keepers ran establishments for more than ten years [when] compared to 4% for male proprietors.”³⁰ Also, is there a difference between urban and rural? What about north, mid-Atlantic, and south? Continuing along geographic lines, as the frontier moves west, are there differences between port towns and frontier towns? And of course, how does time period affect these comparisons?

There is one more issue concerning women proprietors I want to address before moving on, and that is the hidden woman proprietor. Up till now, all of the numbers and the majority of

³⁰ Kaplan, page 21.

this narrative have dealt with establishments who were licensed solely to women. But even when a married man received a license, we have to ask the question, who really ran the public house? If you remember back to the case involving Ann Combs complaint against Jacob and Rebeccah Walker, I mentioned that Jacob received the ordinary license. Yet Rebeccah's inclusion as a co-defendant hints at the fact that wives were also, if not mostly, responsible for the daily business concerning public houses. This should come as no surprise and essentially every other person who has researched these establishments use a variety of sources to look behind the legal façade of male licensees. Newspaper advertisements, travelers' journals, and government records all contain information that allows us to peek at how involved wives were with the establishments licensed in their husbands' names. [NS]

A blatant example of this is found in the October 6, 1768 edition of the *Virginia Gazette*. In this advertisement, Christopher Ayscough used his wife's cooking skills as an inducement for people to patronize his establishment. I wonder if it worked. And when advertisements similar to the March 1766 one by Robert Johnson appear in the local paper wherein other activities such as cabinet-making and rope-making are mentioned, we have to wonder how much time guys like him actually had to devote to their public houses. [NS]

The deep involvement of wives in their husbands' establishments is also found in the court records. When John Boyce sued Thomas Jones in March 1705 for not paying his debt for "divers ordinary accommodations," it is his wife, Mary Boyce, who swears before the court that the accounting is "just and true." When the court met in August 1705, even though John Peirpoint was the one that brought suit against Samuel Moore, it is his wife, Mehitable Pierpoint who actually accounts for the debt before the court. [NS] And as the two references for Anne Roberts and Mary Freshwater show, wives sometimes went before the court to ask for licenses in their husbands' names. These are just a few of the many examples that clearly indicate that even if a public house was licensed in a man's name, if that man was married there was a very good chance that his wife oversaw the majority of the establishment's operations and was thus the legally 'hidden' proprietor. [NS]

Now I'd like to continue on the family theme and turn the discussion to peons. But before I do, since I know it has already been awhile since I started talking, let us take a quick break before finishing the presentation. [NS]

We left off with me promising to continue the family theme concerning public house workers. And so to start, I'll begin with one of the better known references to an entire family being involved with running a public house. Near Natural Bridge, Virginia, around 1780, the Marquis de Chatellux remarked in his journal that after spending the night a Mr. Praxton's public house, Praxton's daughters served breakfast to him and his traveling companions. [NS] Another traveler, Sarah Kemble Knight (who we'll return to later under the patrons section), while describing her lodgings in New England in October 1704, commented on the fact that as the eldest daughter helped Knight get settled for the night, she asked many questions thus irritating Knight. [NS] In March 1738, while on an expedition to determine the boundary between North Carolina and Virginia, William Byrd II remarked in his journal that the landlord's daughter not only served him food, but also offered to do his laundry. [NS] And in January 1774, Hugh Finlay expressed disgust at the practice of the proprietors' children and servants sitting at the same table as himself.

The fact that the family would help with operating the establishment, particularly the daughters, should come as no surprise to anyone here. As we know, children were expected to help their family whenever they could and if the family relied on a public house for some or all of their income, then the more help the better. Additionally, the involvement of the children with

the establishment's operations could serve as training and experience that would prove useful if and when one of the children either inherited that establishment or started one of their own.

There are records that infer that a child was waiting in the wings and could easily take over when something occurred to the licensed proprietor. Returning to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, when Thomas Packer died in 1723 it was his daughter, Susanna Small that became the newly licensed proprietor.³¹ [NS] In Annapolis, when Elizabeth McLeod died in 1759, her daughter, Anne Sligh, became the new proprietor.³² And if you remember the death notice for Elizabeth Marriott that ran in the *Maryland Gazette*, in March 1755, on the same day that that notice occurred, Marriott's daughter included her own notice that let the public know that as the tavern's new proprietor, she would continue to serve both old and new customers.³³ These are just a few of the many examples indicating that the family of the public house's proprietor was deeply involved in the day-to-day operations. [NS]

Now, as was mentioned earlier, when an establishment was near a river crossing, then chances were good that the proprietor was also involved with a ferry. And so it should come as no surprise to find examples of the proprietor's children also assisting with the ferry. A traveler's account from 1803, indicates surprise at the size of the children entrusted with operating the ferry. The efficiency of the children though convinced him that maybe he had underestimated children in general.³⁴ And though our mental image of these children may be one of some boys, an interesting court reference to Anne Arundel County's Magothy Ferry may surprise you. [NS]

When the county court sat in August 1751, they summoned William Kately, then ordinary keeper and ferry keeper, before them. Though the summons seems to center on a complaint brought against him by John Gray, an order in the summons to "bring with him the girl named Linstead that usually rows the ferry" foreshadows what occurred later at that same session. As you can see on the slide, Elizabeth Linstead chose Lancelot Todd as her guardian. I do not know how long Elizabeth had been in Kately's care, nor do I know how young she was, but as this record shows, during her time with him she spent time operating the Magothy Ferry. And because Kately was also involved with a public house, it is a good bet that Elizabeth also served in that establishment when not rowing or sailing the ferry boat. As an aside, I should also note that the court continued Kately's public ferry license for at least the next three years.

Of course, as the Kately case indicates, non-family members also served in public houses. Depending on the establishment, a good portion of the labor force could be hired hands, indentured or convict servants, enslaved Africans, or some combination of the three. And women are found in all three categories. [NS]

Concerning hired servants, the records are full of references to free women who worked, or who were asked to work, in public houses. I should add the caveat though, that depending on place and time, laborers who were free women are found in greater or lesser quantities in public houses. I'll begin relatively late, October 1805 to be exact, to show you a newspaper advertisement that appeared in New Hampshire. As you see on the screen, this notice, for a "smart young woman" appeared in the *Farmer's Cabinet* because a woman was wanted as an assistant in a tavern. The initials I. M. stand for Isaac Marsh who kept the Coachman and Farmer's Tavern.³⁵ [NS] Twelve years earlier, another reference to a woman hired to help in a tavern is mentioned, this time in tavern keeper Samuel Adams' journal. In June 1793 he noted

³¹ *On the Road North of Boston*, page 115.

³² Kaplan, page 54.

³³ *Maryland Gazette*, 6 March 1755, page 3

³⁴ *On the Road*, page 111.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 116.

that Betsy Deverun had decided to go to Salem, Massachusetts and not work for him anymore. That required him to pay her wages up to that point. [NS]

Now, these are both obviously early Federal period and New England references, but there are many other references that occur during the colonial period and closer to us. As you can see on the slide, two such examples are found in the *Maryland Gazette*. The first one, from May 1752, was placed by Samuel and John Hanson who were living in Charles County. As the advertisement states, they wanted “a neat, careful, industrious woman... who [was] willing to undertake the management of a Public house...” The second example on the slide is from October 1768 and was put in by William Urquhart of Upper Marlborough. And though the first position for hire mentioned in the advertisement is directed toward men, the position of cook is open for either man or woman.

There are other references to hired women to help with public houses. As Kym Rice notes in her research, Hannah Dean lived with tavern keeper Joshua Barker between October 1761 and March 1763 while working in his establishment. During that time she was paid 20 pounds sterling. Additionally, she received schooling and clothing items such as a gown, bonnet, shoes, quilted winter coat, and whalebone stays.³⁶

And as an interesting case involving murder from St. Christopher’s in the West Indies shows us, the public houses down there also hired women. This case, from 1753, involved Patience Dorset who had been hired to help with the lieutenant-general’s celebration of King George II’s birthday at Alexander McCabee’s establishment. At the party, Patience overheard John Barbot tell a group of men gathered on the porch that he was going to kill “a certain gentleman” within a fortnight. Patience’s testimony helped convince the jurors to recommend the death penalty for Barbot since this was a premeditated action.³⁷

Now, it was not just white women who were hired to work in public houses, free Africans and African-Americans are also recorded as being paid by certain proprietors. The few references I’m aware of come from Rice’s research and are from New York and Boston. In 1704, to help with a dinner for New York City’s Mayor, the owner of Swift’s Tavern hired some free blacks to assist with the feast. One year later in Boston, Nicholas Hobert paid two Africans “for cleaning house.” And Joshua Baker, in 1769, paid an unnamed “Negro girl” nine pence for providing laundry services.³⁸ Though there are undoubtedly more references concerning the hiring of free blacks, particularly women, these are the only ones I am aware of.

As for indentured and convict servants serving in public houses, very little research that I am aware of has been undertaken on them. It makes sense that they did, there just has not been an in-depth study of how many and how it changed over time or a comparison across geographic regions. However, I have some records we can examine that do show that female indentured and convict servants were a presence in public houses. [NS]

The first record is ordinary keeper John Baker’s June 1687 inventory. As you can see on the screen, his labor force was comprised of individuals from three continents. Though the focus right now is on Alice and Mary Welsh, remember that Baker also used four enslaved Africans and an Indian boy in his establishment.³⁹ At the time of his death Baker, and his wife, operated what was called the Country’s House in St. Mary’s City. As such, his labor force would provide service for not only the common person, but jurors, sheriffs and their prisoners, legislators, and judges. Their service would reflect on Baker’s reputation. [NS]

³⁶ Rice, page 56.

³⁷ Natalie Zacek, “Women and Work in the Cities and Towns of the Eighteenth-Century British West Indies”

³⁸ Rice, page 56.

³⁹ MSA, *Inventories and Accounts*, Liber 10, folio 111-115.

A perusal of inventories belonging to other proprietors also turns up an assortment of female indentured servants who most likely assisted with their master's or mistress' establishment. On this slide I have listed the proprietor's name as well as the pertinent reference to each female servant. My assumption is that with the obvious exception of the unnamed mulatto girl in Barnes' inventory, six of the seven remaining women are most likely indentured servants. The length of time listed for Ruth Murphy makes me think that she could very well be a convict servant. And I should note that in an effort to save space on the slide because my focus right now is on indentured or convict servants, only references to female servants are listed. Each of the inventories used for this slide also contained references to enslaved Africans, both male and female. [NS]

There are also a number of court cases that refer to an indentured or convict servant woman serving in a public house. In June 1720, when the Anne Arundel County Court met, Henrietta Maria Agers testified that when the servant of John Navarre (remember him?) came into her master's place, she gave the servant "two small glasses of rum" for about four pence.⁴⁰ Agers testimony was just one of many individuals at that court session used to indict a variety of Annapolitans who had broken some regulation concerning public houses. [NS]

Many of the court cases though wherein we learn about a female servant at a public house come from bastardy cases. One such case involves Frances Plunkett, servant to Ann Burman. At the March 1748 session of the Anne Arundel County Court, Plunkett appeared before the justices to ask for help. She told the court that while a servant of Burman's, she became pregnant and delivered a child who died. She claims that Burman did not offer her the care necessary for a healthy pregnancy. The court rejected her claim and used it against her in the judgment you see on the screen. Because Frances had admitted to bearing an out of wedlock child, the court punished her by both ordering her to receive five lashes and forcing her to work an additional twelve months in Burman's service. [NS]

Another female servant, this time a convict, who was brought before the court for bastardy, was Mary Jones. In November 1762, William Brown brought Jones to court for having two illegitimate children while in his service. Jones did not name the eldest child's father, but she claimed that another convict servant, William Logan, whose master was Andrew Buchanan, fathered the younger child. In return for the care she and the children received, Jones was ordered to serve up to three additional years.⁴¹ It is a good bet that during her time in the Brown household she assisted with Brown's establishment, first in the wooden building Brown bought from Stephen West then in the brick building Brown built around that time. [NS]

The last servant found in the court records for bastardy I want to discuss is Ann Holmes, servant to Mary Frazier of Annapolis. In August 1747, Frazier sued John Campbell, tailor of Annapolis, for "begetting a bastard child on her servant Ann Holmes." The court ordered Campbell to pay Frazier fifty shillings and 149 pounds of tobacco for damages and the costs of child care.⁴² An interesting thing to note is that the very next reference on that page is to Frazier's renewal of her license. Unfortunately the record does not say if Holmes and Campbell were involved in a romantic relationship and they slipped away at some point when he visited Frazier's establishment. Nor does the record indicate if this was one of the many examples of a male patron taking advantage of a female servant. The only reason we know about their union, free or forced, is because of this record. [NS]

Though the record involving Ann Holmes is unclear on many issues, this next reference to an unnamed female in a public house on the North Carolina and Virginia border is not. On

⁴⁰ Anne Arundel County Court, June 1720, folio 223

⁴¹ MSA, AACCJR, November Court 1762, folio 604

⁴² August Court 1747, folio 547

September 20, 1728 when he and the surveying party were spending the night at an establishment near the Roanoke River, Byrd noted that the proprietor gave the men some brandy, causing a bit of mayhem. In this particular instance a hapless female servant who came into the kitchen was accosted by one or more men. As the journal entry makes clear, she did eventually have sex with at least one of the men before leaving during the early morning hours.

Now I want to focus on this entry for just a moment because a closer examination of both it and the previous cases should allow us to more clearly understand Byrd's worldview and thus peel away some of the biases inherent in many of the records telling us about these establishments. Byrd's tone is not really one of disapproval. He seems to assume that if you give a man a drink, and a woman is nearby, then we should not be surprised if a sexual encounter should happen. I imagine that all of us in this room understand that the unnamed woman in this encounter, recognizing her situation, decided to not make a bad situation worse and chose the path of least resistance. If you read Byrd's diary, Samuel Pepys' 17th-century diary, or many other records from the time period, you will read about a large number of acceptable sexual liaisons between men and women, both in and out of wedlock. We saw in the Frances Plunkett case, that though her child died and her association with Ann Burman may give a hint as to how she became pregnant (though we cannot say for certain), the male justices of the Anne Arundel County Court chose to use her own testimony, seemingly made in despair, against her. And with both the Ann Holmes and Mary Jones cases, the court is more concerned with the servant's owner than the servant's wellbeing. These cases serve to illustrate that we should read a lot of these records with a recognition and appreciation of both the male-dominated worldview and legally-sanctioned power relationships that operated in the background. **[NS]**

With this in mind, the outcome of the next case should not be too surprising. At the March 1720 session of the Anne Arundel County Court, Lord Baltimore's government brought Edward Smith, an Annapolis ordinary-keeper, to court for the death of his servant, Sarah Skippon. As the record states, Skippon entered Smith's service on November 1, 1719. But just 11 days later, Smith "not having God before his eyes [and] all humanity and Christian charity being totally deprived" from him forcibly ejected Skippon from his household and refused her entry to his dwelling. Due to her apparent sickness at the time and the night's cold, she died sometime during the night, essentially on his doorstep. [To bring it into our world for just a moment, this is the Shiplap House, where some of the Historic Annapolis Foundation's offices are. This could make good ghost tour fodder. And I guess if there have been any unexplained activities there, you might have a reason now.] Though there seems to be no question that Skippon's death could be directly due to Smith's actions, the grand jury wrote on the indictment *ignoramus*. This meant that the jurors claimed there was not enough evidence for the case to proceed to a trial jury, thus saving Smith from further prosecution. And when it came time for Smith to renew his ordinary license at the June court session, it was granted. This makes you wonder if the servant, Mary, listed in his 1723 inventory we saw earlier was either around for this incident, or if Smith acquired her to replace Sarah. Either way, this case shows that female servants had to sometimes worry about other fates than having an illegitimate child. **[NS]**

Now, there is one more group of individuals I would like to discuss who could be part of a public house's labor force, enslaved Africans. I already mentioned that all of the inventories I used earlier to reference female servants each had multiple slaves listed in them as well. This is not surprising because there are many, many references to enslaved Africans being used to help operate public houses. As this *Virginia Gazette* advertisement from May 1774 shows, some masters specifically trained their slaves to work in their establishments. In this instance, Betty ran away from Hardin Burnley in Hanover Town on May 6th. In his description of Betty, Burnley wrote that Betty "has been used to attend in a Publick House from her infancy." An

unnamed visitor to Williamsburg mentioned in 1783, African and African-American “cooks, women waiters, and chambermaids” attended to the traveler during their stay at a Williamsburg establishment.⁴³ [NS] And as John Marrot’s 1718 inventory shows, earlier in the century, proprietors were using slaves to work in their establishments.

Not surprisingly, enslaved Africans were used in public houses in other colonies as well. Susanna Small, who we discussed earlier as inheriting her father’s license in 1723 in Portsmouth, was assisted by an African girl named Venus. In mid-18th-century Plymouth, New Hampshire, tavern keeper David Webster (the first one in that town) purchased “one negro-man, named Ciscow and one negro-woman, named Dinah, wife of said Ciscow.”⁴⁴ And when Bostonians Samuel and Hannah Mears operated their establishment, called the Sign of the Sun, between 1708 and 1726, they used their two female slaves, Phillis and Jenny to help serve customers.⁴⁵

Here in Maryland, references to enslaved Africans who most likely worked in public houses are also found in the court records. In a number of court cases involving William Brown, there are references to two African females, Sall and Bett that were in his household during the third quarter of the 18th-century. However, the 1776 census indicates that only one black female was in his household at the time. But during their time with the Brown household, it can be assumed that they assisted Brown and his family with the operation of his tavern and ferry. [NS]

Another type of reference to enslaved Africans found in the court records occurs when an owner asks the court to declare their slave levy free for the future. When these references occur, they are a good opportunity to capture information on individuals who might not otherwise make it into the historical record. As you can see on the slide, two such individuals were brought before the court; one in June 1747 and the other in March 1748. As the court records indicate, because these women could no longer work, the county allowed Thomas Lusby and Stephen West to not have to pay any further taxes on them. I used these references because both Lusby and West were ordinary keepers and involved with ferrying people over the South River. During their times with Lusby and West, Sarah and Hannah, like Sall and Bett in the Brown household, most likely helped with their masters operate their establishments and maybe even their respective ferries. [NS]

I also use these two women not only because they are associated with men who operated public houses, but because if it wasn’t for these references, we would not know that Lusby had a slave named Sarah and West had a slave named Hannah. When Lusby’s inventory was recorded in 1759, there is no mention of Sarah. We know he had a Simon, Frank, Bess, Nasey, Will, Fanny, Jenny, and Billy at the ferry, but no Sarah. The same is true for Stephen West. Though we do not have an inventory for him, in his 1752 will he gives his various children slaves named Phillis, Rachel, Maria, Dinah, Ned, Job, and Patience, but no Hannah. I imagine that a scouring and comparison of the different records that exist would turn up more individuals such as Sarah and Hannah. The one thing we can be relatively certain of though, it did not matter if a woman was considered white, black, or mulatto, free or unfree, the women who labored in public houses had many shared experiences while they served the various patrons who entered their master’s or mistress’ establishment. [NS]

And speaking of patrons, let us now turn to the last section of this presentation and discuss the women who ate, drank, lodged, and partook in the offerings available at colonial-era public houses. [NS]

I want to begin this section though not by looking at primary source material, but by quickly reviewing what seems to currently be the common understanding concerning women

⁴³ As quoted in Rice, page 58.

⁴⁴ *On the Road*, 115.

⁴⁵ Conroy, 119.

patrons, namely, they didn't really exist, and if they did, they weren't respectable. As you can read on the slide, Sharon Salinger in her 2002 book, *Taverns and Drinking in Early America*, concluded that "women were clearly not part of the public culture of drink." And that "respectable women in the colonial period entered public houses rarely...." During his review of her book, John Crowley makes a similarly strong statement by claiming that "women were not even supposed to be in taverns...." When Wetherburn's Tavern at Colonial Williamsburg was re-examined for interpretive purposes a few years ago, an article in the *Colonial Williamsburg Journal* strongly reiterates Salinger's (and others) conclusions. [NS]

Continuing our review of secondary sources, Rorabaugh's 1981 book makes the claim that the "public" during the colonial era, "was not tolerant of women drinking in taverns." Additionally, women apparently only drank "watered and highly sugared spirituous cordials." This sentiment is echoed in Daniel Thorp's commentary on North Carolina's Rowan County during the colonial period. [NS] And of course any 'respectable' commentary on colonial-era public houses has to directly state that "prostitutes frequented taverns; respectable ladies avoided them."

There are of course many other secondary sources that could be used to continue to drive this point home, but I think that the ones used here have covered the basic idea. Women were really not patrons of public houses, and those that were, well, we know what they were. Is that the general idea that everyone here has heard, and maybe even agrees with? [NS]

Well, let us now re-examine these claims and overturn them because I, and apparently the lady on the screen agrees with me, think that these claims are over-simplistic and do not take into account how strongly researchers during the Victorian era and colonial revival movement ignored the public acceptance of women in public houses while overemphasizing the claims and fears of zealous moralizers. [NS]

I'd like to begin the discussion by looking at English custom at the time because, as far as we're concerned, our discussion focuses mostly on English colonists. Specifically, I'd like to start with this circa 1500 observation by an unknown Italian visiting England. In the observation, the Italian comments that "ladies of distinction" drink at taverns. [NS] If we move forward about a century, Thomas Platter's 1599 observations about London also include commentary about women in public houses. From his perspective, "women as well as men, in fact more often than they, will frequent the taverns or ale-houses for enjoyment. They count it a great honour to be taken there... and if one woman only is invited, then she will bring three or four other women along...." [NS]

Going forward to the mid-1640s, Adam Eyre's diary includes many references to he, his wife, and other women enjoying public houses without any concerns that they were undertaking immoral actions. One such entry states that Adam borrowed a horse "to carry my wife and myself to John Shawe's" an alehouse in Swindenwall. At the alehouse, Eyre and his wife met a few other couples with who they had already planned this gathering. As Eyre wrote, "we met this day only to be merry."⁴⁶ [NS]

Eyre's acceptance and nonchalance about his wife being in an alehouse is corroborated a few years later during Cromwell's Protectorate by a letter from a French nobleman to his government. One of the observations made within the letter contains the statement, "the ladies of greatest quality suffer themselves to be treated in one of these taverns...." Remember, this is during the Protectorate which was not one of the more tolerant periods in English history. [NS] The societal acceptance of women in English public houses is also shown in this ballad from 1707. Though the ballad is mostly about men being men, the pertinent lines for this discussion

⁴⁶ As quoted in A. Lynn Martin, *Alcohol, Sex and Gender*, page 75

are where the narrator indicates that she is an “honest women” who goes to the alehouse and drinks. [NS]

William Byrd’s diary is also useful for this examination because he spent a bit of time in London during the first quarter of the 18th century. Byrd makes many references to women in public houses. Some are admittedly ones he has sexual encounters with. But there are also many other references that indicate we should not paint every woman who is found in a public house as a prostitute. One reference occurred in May 1718 when Byrd met an unnamed woman at Will’s Coffeehouse. After meeting there, they went to “the tavern and ate some chicken and asparagus” while drinking Burgundy. A few months later, at the coffeehouse in Sonning, Byrd ran into “Lady Rich, Lady Blackett, and several other ladies.” At that encounter Byrd gambled with them and lost. And in July 1719, Byrd met “Mary York at the Union Tavern” where they “had a broiled chicken for supper.” These are just a few of the many times that Byrd met or encountered a woman or women at an English public house without making any derogatory comments about the women’s morals or the oddity of the situation. This clearly indicates that Byrd did not find it odd to encounter women in such settings. [NS]

And the last reference I want to use actually comes from an item about Worcester, England found in an issue of the *Maryland Gazette* from November 1750. In this instance, the paper included a short story concerning the drinking prowess of Thirsty Martha. In July of that year she had entered a public house and drank as much as she could while a man smoked his pipe of tobacco. During that time, “which was not less than a quarter of an hour,” she apparently drank eight pints. According to the story, she was “not at all disordered.” Though this is an amusing reference to a woman who could probably drink most of us in this room under the table, I’d like to point out the absence of moralizing in the story. There is no bemoaning the fact that a woman was in a public house. Nor is there any commentary about excessive drinking. Yes, those types of commentary are found during that time period, but I challenge you to find a point of time in history when women in public houses and excessive drinking weren’t complained about. You can’t, not even today when our culture is supposedly more accepting of mixed-gender drinking than theirs. [NS]

My point in starting with the English side of this issue and using numerous sources spanning over three hundred years is to show that there was a consistent acceptance of women in public houses throughout that period. Many of the researchers that have described in-depth the English colonial establishments usually turn to England’s history to show that yes there were drinking establishments in England, yes they were regulated by the government, and so we shouldn’t be surprised that drinking establishments regulated by the government should appear in the English colonies. This line of research usually occurs at the start of their narrative when they want to show the deep connection between government and drinking establishments like I did earlier in this presentation. Eventually, many of these same researchers then go on to make claims like the ones I discussed earlier that severely limit female patronage of public houses mostly to “women of ill repute.” My question to them then is: what drastic shift in societal norms or cultural environment occurred in the English colonies that caused such a break from the mother country? Why, in the Chesapeake, which was reliant on immigration for population increase throughout the 17th century, did female newcomers (which were admittedly in the minority) so quickly to adapt, apparently without fuss, to this supposed idea that they were not allowed in public houses? The answers to those questions would be a fascinating addition to the already large body of research describing European adaptation to the Americas. However, those answers don’t exist because no such thing happened. Instead, as I’m about to show you, women continued drinking, eating, lodging, and socializing in public houses like they did in England.

Merrily, happily, in a variety of circumstances, and with the same level of approbation found in England women patronized colonial public houses. [NS]

The first example I'd like to use comes from Northampton County on Virginia's Eastern Shore. On November 28 1663, Anne Orthwood and John Kendall had sex at John Webb's ordinary. The reason we know about this is because, as you can guess, Orthwood became pregnant. With twins. It probably helped that they were sexually intimate for the next few consecutive days as well. The full story and implications of this encounter are detailed in John Pagan's 2002 book entitled *Anne Orthwood's Bastard: Sex and Law in Early Virginia*. What concerns us here is the fact that Orthwood was at Webb's establishment because her master had need to travel there because of a county court session. What this means is that Anne was a patron of Webb's ordinary who ate, drank, lodged, and socialized. She is one of the many female servants who, while attending court sessions with their masters and mistresses, needed a place to eat, drink, and lodge. [NS]

However, we should not conclude that the only reason Anne, as a woman, was accepted at Webb's was because she was with her master at the time. When the justices of Virginia's York County Court met in October 1686, Humphrey Takett publicly proclaimed that his wife Margaret should not be entertained or given a credit of six pence in the future. A similar proclamation, this time concerning Christopher Scott and his wife Ellis, was entered into the record at the May 1689 session. These references are interesting because they not only reveal the legally-sanctioned power arrangements between man and wife, but they also indicate that these women, on their own, patronized public houses. Otherwise, there'd be no need for the husbands to make a public pronouncement. Granted there is no direct mention of these establishments, but at that time these businesses were frequently called "houses of entertainment." Additionally, the six pence credit mentioned in the Takett reference is the exact amount required to buy a quart of rum or rum punch or two quarts of beer or cider. [NS]

Examples of women patronizing public houses are also found in other parts of the colonies. When Samuel Sewall, a stalwart Puritan, went to Roxbury on July 11, 1687, he hired a coach to accommodate himself, his wife, Hezekiah Usher and his wife, as well as Mrs. Bridget and her daughter. Upon arriving at Roxbury, they visited Mr. Dudley and Mr. Eliot before all "sup[ping] together at the Grayhound Tavern [on] boil'd Bacon and rost Fowls." By my count, that dining party of eight included four women. Nothing about this seemed out of the ordinary to Sewall. [NS]

There are also examples of women traveling by themselves and being accepted in public houses without comment. One of the best examples is Sarah Kemble Knight who, though married, traveled sans husband from Boston to New York and back between October 1704 and January 1705. During her travels there were no comments concerning the inappropriateness of her either traveling without a husband or her presence in a public house. Knight's diary is useful because it has many examples of women traveling, eating, drink, and lodging that should not exist according to the usually understood narrative concerning women and public houses.

One such instance occurred just a few days after starting her journey. On October 5, she wrote that she "heard there was an old man (Polly) and his Daughter (Jemima)" traveling to North London. Because Knight was without a guide at the time, and since she was headed in that direction anyway, she decided to wait for them before continuing her own journey. [NS] Two months later in December, she wrote in her journal that while staying at an ordinary in Rye, New York, she "hastned to Bed superless" because the food was not to her liking. As you can see on the slide, her commentary concerning the lodging area indicates that it was on par with the food. However, what I really want you to focus on is the fact that Knight mentions sharing the room with some men. Though she commiserated with the men about the shortness of the bed

(which as we all know was the norm during the colonial period because people were shorter back then), Knight does not complain about sharing the room with strangers, specifically strange men. Nor do her comments make it seem like this is an aberration. [NS] A little later in her travel diary, her narrative discusses sleigh riding around New York City and how she traveled to a Madame Dowes with Mr. Burroughs, his wife, and his daughter. At Dowes, Knight and her companions drank beer, mead, and cider. These are just a few of the instances recorded by Knight that show women, either singly or in groups eating, drinking, lodging, and socializing at public houses without any cause for alarm or presupposition that the women were not respectable. [NS]

If we come back to Virginia for a moment, I'd like to show you another Virginia court reference. In this record James Morris, an ordinary keeper, sued Graves Packe for unpaid debts. An interesting notation comes from March 1, 1716. This record clearly indicates that on that day Graves Packe and his wife drank at Morris' establishment. Specifically, Grave's wife partook in a "bole of lemonade" that cost one shilling. Yes, this could be one of those "highly sugared" drinks that Rorabaugh said women drank. But I challenge you to drink a bowl of colonial-era lemonade and then agree with Rorabaugh's apparent dismissal of women's drinking capabilities at that time. [NS]

We continue to find records of women enjoying all that public houses had to offer in Francis Goelet's mid-18th-century journal. When Goelet was in Boston on October 1, 1747, he wrote that while going home at three o'clock in the morning, he and his companions "surprised a company of country young men and women with a violin at a tavern dancing and making merry. Goelet's account of this does not contain one bit of surprise nor condemnation concerning the inclusion of women at the tavern. [NS]

One decade later, during the French and Indian War, Charlotte Browne wrote about her experiences while traveling with Braddock's army in Virginia. She had come to the colonies with her brother who was associated with the army. As her journal makes clear, on March 11, in Hampton, Virginia, both Charlotte and her brother breakfasted and had dinner at the Kings Arms. At dinner they had ham, turkey, veal, and oysters washed down with wine, punch and cider. And on June 1st, before her brother would eventually die from sickness, Browne recorded that her lodgings, Coleman's ordinary, had a room with only three beds in it. She spent the night there in mixed company without any incident or shamefulness on her part. [NS]

Another woman who traveled alone and who left a narrative of her journey and life is Susanna Johnson. After her husband died in 1759, Susanna had to take care of the household business and settle her husband's estate. Due to the complexity of the process, it was a long, drawn-out affair. As she stated in her narrative, Susanna claimed to have made "three journeys to Portsmouth, fourteen to Boston, and three to Springfield...." And as her recollections of her later years make clear, Johnson continued her travels. An interesting account comes from 1801 when, while traveling with just another woman and no one else, their horse was startled by a boy moving a load of flax. During all of these travels she surely had to have spent some time in public houses along the way. [NS]

Returning to Virginia, Alexander Macaulay's account of his journey to Williamsburg includes his wife. In this instance, Macaulay and his wife, at Byrds Tavern, "had a dish of tea" as well as "a pretty good bed and clean sheets." He notes that the only other traveler in the tavern, a Frenchman, stayed in the next room over and had breakfast with them in the morning. [NS]

Now, I'm going to take us a little farther afield for the next set of references, but that is because of the uniqueness of the record. In 1802, Ely Plater kept a journal while living and working in York, Upper Canada. As Julia Roberts discusses in her examination of the journal,

the uniqueness of this record stems from the fact that Plater's record is "the only tavern-keeper's journal known to have survived in all of British North America, including the Thirteen Colonies." Though there are account books, court cases, newspaper advertisements, and other records left by proprietors, as Roberts again states, "none of these sources contain a comparable daily record of the ins and outs of the trade. None offers literate reflection upon the men and women who frequented" these establishments. So I feel it is appropriate to use this record for this discussion because the social rhythms and ideas shown in the diary are easily found in other colonial records from the 17th and 18th centuries.

As you can see on the slide, Plater makes many references to female patrons in his diary. The first entry of his journal, February 14 1802, includes a very domestic reference where a lodger, Miss T, borrowed the *Adventures of Versorand* from Plater. They stayed up till 9:00pm reading. In April, Plater noted that "a Dutchman and his family staid all night." On June 27 Plater, due to the establishment's crowded conditions that night, gave up his bed to an unnamed couple. Just a few days later, Slater mentioned two traveling women staying there on the same night. One, from the Bay of Quinty, seems to be on her own. The other, Miss Rea, was with her brother because they wanted to settle in the town. In September, Ely and Betsy Miles were out riding and "called at Everson's Tavern" to get "something to drink." And though it is a couple of years later, it is interesting to note that while at Mr. Post's tavern, Ely was playing a game of whist with two other men when one of them left and the proprietor's wife took his place. These are just a few of the instances included in Ely's journal that give credence to the idea that women patrons were an accepted, everyday occurrence at public houses. Their presence did not cause men to throw things at them nor did their presence create alarm amongst the general populace. I should also note that Roberts, who had access to Plater's entire journal, mentions a few times when women patrons outnumbered male patrons. [NS]

And the last journal I want to use as more evidence for the acceptance of female patrons is Sarah Connell's early 19th century journal from New Hampshire. In February 1806, at the age of 15, during her journey from Andover to her home in Bow, Sarah stopped at Hill's tavern to get warm. Traveling by herself in October 1807, Sarah mentioned that between Portland and York, Maine, another woman traveled in the same stage as her before getting off at York. On that same day, Sarah "dine'd in Portsmouth, at Devenport's tavern." Sarah, again on her own, seems to record with pleasure the fact that on June 4, 1808, the strangers she met while traveling from Pembroke "were four ladies [and] no gentlemen." All five females "stopt at the tavern on the Turn pike." In April 1809, while traveling with her father, they spent the night at Richardson's tavern. And in June 1809, Sarah and her mother walked from their house to Stickney's tavern where they met "Mrs. Emery who [had come] from Haverhill." These, as well as another June 1809 reference wherein Sarah mentions an excursion and dinner at Bailey's tavern with Susan Ayer" are just a few of the many times that Sarah, either on her own, in mixed company, or as we saw with the Pembroke and Bailey's tavern trips, female-exclusive company, ate, drank, lodged, and socialized at public houses.

I hope that at this point you're in agreement with me that there are enough sources, from a variety of places, and throughout the colonial period (and in many instances, after) to cast serious doubt on the claims concerning female patrons mentioned earlier. The references to servants, single women, married women, young, old, and in-between all nicely complement the contemporaneous references found in England proper thus showing there was not a sudden shift in societal attitudes concerning female patrons.

But for those of you who want more, who are still unconvinced, why don't I bring it home and show you the bountiful references to female patrons found in Maryland's records.

[NS]

At the October 1659 session of the Kent County Court, Captain Brodnax sued Jonathan Deere, a local ordinary keeper, for illegally entertaining his servant, Sarah Tailer. One of the key pieces of evidence that allowed the court to find in Brodnax's favor was Katteren Gamer's testimony wherein she swore that she "esspyed a paire of Leggs under the Bedd" when she came into Deere's establishment. The said pair of legs belonged to Sarah Tailer. Though this case is concerned with Broadnax, Deere, and Tailer, Katteren Gamer's testimony makes it clear that single women patronized public houses at that time. **[NS]**

There are also references to women patronizing public houses in other Maryland counties. Thanks to the access I had to some of Lorena Walsh's files from her dissertation on Charles County, I was able to find many interesting references to women in public houses. At various times during the early 18th century, a Charles County ordinary keeper, Thomas Orrell, like many of his fellow publicans, sued some of his patrons for nonpayment of debts. When William Watt was sued, the account reference for May 18 indicates that Watts' wife drank 2 pottles of cider in Orrell's establishment. There is no record of William being there that day. Concerning Humphrey Harrington's debt, his wife had "1 gill cherry rum" for 2 shillings on July 10, 1709. Like Watt's wife, Harrington's seemed to have been there without her husband. A few months later Harrington's account with Orrell shows that on October 15, Harrington had a pottle of cider. The interesting thing to note is that he was drinking with Mary Pope who had her own pottle of cider that he paid for. And, at least as far as I'm concerned, the most interesting listing of debts on this slide is Ellsworth Bayne's. As you can see, his wife drank quite a bit of cider on various occasions. I am comfortable saying that she, or she and some companions, drank at Orrell's instead of taking it home because he notes when cider and other drinks were taken out of his establishment to his patrons' homes. Now, this listing is not interesting because of the amount of times Bayne's wife is mentioned. Nor is it interesting because of the seemingly large amount consumed on any given day. Both are par for the course. No, the interesting thing here is that this woman, who is unnamed in this record, is none other than Kendrick Rumney, daughter of London Town's Edward and Elinor Rumney. **[NS]**

There are more references to women patronizing ordinaries in Charles County. In June 1705, John Dobson's wife had a pottle of cider while drinking with her husband. In September, it was a quart of wine. And during the January 1706 court session, they had another pottle of wine. When William Stone sued Philip Regley for nonpayment of debts, the list of debts included a "half gallon of perry to Grace the Irish woman per your order." See, men ordering drinks for women in bars in nothing new. **[NS]**

Nicholas Sporne, an ordinary keeper who had establishments in multiple counties, also had women patronize his establishment. When he was in Charles County, John Bayne (who I believe was Ellsworth's father) visited Sporne's establishment "sundry times with Mrs. Groves." And in Prince George's County, Phillip Dennis' debt to Sporne includes a reference from March 1699 that indicates Dennis had a female companion with him. **[NS]**

If we stay in Prince George's County, and use some of Mike Lucas' doctoral research that focused on a few ordinary keepers from the years 1690-1720, more female patrons turn up. William Cooper's August 21, 1696 debt indicates a mixed-gender drinking milieu. For on that date Cooper, apparently feeling generous, told Tracey that he'd pay for "2 gallons [of] syder" for Cortnys' wife to drink. And as George Spicer's debt record shows us, on June 24, 1702, the drinks and food that Spicer and his wife had at James Moore's establishment amounted to 7 shillings. **[NS]**

Some court cases involving another ordinary keeper from Prince George's County, Jonathan Wilson, also have many references to women patronizing his establishment. When Wilson sued Isaac Williams, one of the items listed was a charge for 50 pounds of tobacco for

the “drinks, dyetts, and lodgings” of Widow Graves. John Mills owed Wilson 100 pounds of tobacco for his wife’s consumption of 6 pottles of cider and a meal on November 3, 1696. On June 22, 1697, Maureen Duvall’s wife ordered a “dyett and quart of beer.” Robert Brothers was on the hook for “the quart of syder and a gill of rum” that Brothers’ female housekeeper and male companion had while at Wilson’s establishment. Nathaniel Taylor owed Wilson for a “bottle of syder” Taylor’s wife drank on October 8 1697. And Taylor also owed Wilson for “drinks, 6 dyetts, 4 lodgings, and sundry expences charged” by Taylor’s wife and daughter. The wording of that last debt indicates that the wife and daughter, but not Nathaniel Taylor, were there with two other people, either male or female. During their time there, they ate, drank, spent the night, and socialized. [NS]

To come even closer to home, Zacharia Allen of Annapolis, sued Charles Killburne in August 1703. Though many here may know Allen as a doctor, at this time he was also a licensed ordinary keeper. One of the enumerated items listed in the debt cast is a reference to Charles sharing a “tankard of phlip with Taylor’s wife” on March 12, 1701. [NS] When John Freeman sued John Noades, one of the debts was for a bottle of rum to Noades’ wife sold on October 28, 1706. The June 1707 reference indicates that even though Noades was not staying at Freeman’s, he sent his maid to get beer from Freeman to bring to him. And in a curious twist, when Benjamin Rawleigh was sued by William Taylard, on behalf of his wife Audry who was the licensed ordinary keeper, one of Rawleigh’s debts included a payment of 1 shilling for Mrs. Noades meal on August 11, 1709. Maybe his club with Macklefresh on that same day put him in a giving mood. [NS]

There are also references to female servants in Annapolis and Anne Arundel County being served in public houses. One reference comes to us because “Thomas Williams [a] servant to John Navarre,” testified that in April 1719 he and Bridget, a “servant to Mr. Fraser,” when to Robert Johnson where they had a pint of rum. [NS] And on August 5 1750, John Bear’s servant, called “his woman Hannah” in this court case, had 2 gills of rum for a cost of 1 shilling.

But the best reference that allows us to paint a surprisingly full picture of socially acceptable, mixed-gender drinking is actually a pair of references concerning Edward Smith’s attempts to recover debts owed him by two different people. When Smith took John Wyer, and later Samuel Orwin to court, a daily listing of expenses by these two men was fortunately entered into the record. [NS] I say fortunately because it just so happens that on a particular day, March 31, 1716 to be exact, their records overlap and give us a rare detailed glimpse of what I expect was a relatively common experience not only in Annapolis, but throughout the Chesapeake. If we just focus on John Wyer’s account, it doesn’t seem too terribly different than a lot of the other ones we’ve already looked at. Wyer is charged for drinks in his own name, he shares some drinks with some other men, and he shares or purchases a pot of beer for Dorothy Carter. All relatively similar to other court cases and not too terribly illustrative. [click] However, once we add Samuel Orwin’s information, some neat things happen.

First, notice that Orwin is charged five different times in connection with Kathleen Harper. I imagine that Kathleen is related, either as sister, or more likely, husband to the Nathaniel Harper mentioned in the Wyer account. Also, notice how Dorothy Carter appears in both the Wyer and Orwin accounts. Add on top of these connections Wyer’s other drinking partners, Middleton and Samuel as well as Orwin’s drinking partners, Richard Pawson, James, and Mr. Johnson, and you have a mixed-gender, full crowd, drinking party. Keep in mind, this is happening in what we now call the Shiplap House. What I’m getting at is that we have here a good pair of records that shows us how men and women came together on a particular night, in a particular place, to drink and socialize. The only reason we know about it is because Wyer and Orwin did not pay their bills; not because the gathering broke any laws or caused major social

unrest because women were drinking there. If it wasn't for these cases, we would have had no record of it. [NS]

There are other reasons why women would be patrons of colonial-era public houses. A quick perusal of the Anne Arundel County Court judgment record shows us that many women were witnesses in 18th-century court cases. Because they were witnesses, they received a certain amount of money to pay for food, drink, and lodging while attending court. From what I can gather, the going rate was 30 pounds of tobacco per day. That is a little less than the 40 pounds Mary Downes and Mary Ohanen received when they were witnesses for Ann Combs. Since these women needed places to eat, drink, and sleep, it is a good bet that the vast majority of female witnesses from out of town utilized local public houses thus providing proprietors with a goodly number of female patrons. [NS]

Women also performed the same actions that caused men to get into trouble when they drank too much. A revealing case from November 1747 involving Isabella Arena and Elizabeth Kelly shows that some women become aggressive drunks. Though the case is brought to court by Isabella against Elizabeth, because Elizabeth allegedly beat Isabella, it is ultimately decided in Elizabeth's favor. When Elizabeth, who was the ordinary keeper testified, she claimed that "Isabella at the time in which the trespass and assault aforesaid is supposed to be done was drunk with drinking strong liquors...." There is no social commentary in the court case concerning Isabella's drinking. The problem is not that she drank, nor is it really that she drank too much. Instead, we know about her because she drank too much and assaulted the proprietor that was serving her. [NS]

If we turn our attention to London Town, another assault case, this time involving Edward Rumney and Thomas Davis is interesting because the references surrounding it cite three women. The case is focused on Davis' assault on Rumney on August 25, 1712. In the record on the screen, Katherine Pearce and Anne Hill are listed as witnesses. In a separate recognizance citation earlier at this June 1713 court session, Elinor Rumney is also listed as a witness for the government. The point here is that it is interesting that two of the three women, Katherine Pearce and Anne Hill, do not seem to be directly associated with the Rumney household. They're not listed as servants. This begs the question, what were they doing in Rumney's establishment at the time? This is the same question that can be asked about the two Marys in the Ann Combs case. Neither one of them are mentioned as being servants to Jacob or Rebeccah Walker. Though neither court case allows us to definitively say if these women were patrons, I'd argue that at this point we have to say that that it is a strong possibility and that we should not discount the possibility out of hand. [NS]

There is one more type of evidence I'd like to discuss that can also be used to support the claim that female patrons were found, and accepted, in colonial-era public houses. I've actually been surreptitiously giving you this evidence during the entire presentation. That evidence is artwork. By my count I have shown you 74, and by the end of the presentation, 78, distinct pieces of art that show female patrons. These pieces of art have been pulled from the 16th, 17th, 18th, and early 19th centuries. They show women in public houses in England, France, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, and yes, America. They were not too terribly hard to find, and all of them show widespread public acceptance of women in public houses.

Now, I will back up for just a moment and say that I do believe there is a strong case to be made concerning very genteel women and their connection with colonial-era public houses. As the 18th century wore on, they do seem to disengage more and more with these establishments. But they never totally sever their relationship with them because of the many balls, entertainments, and other social activities that drew them to public houses from time to time. However, that being said, we have to admit that they were a tiny minority of all women in

the colonies and early Federal period and if our interpretation of female patrons only uses them as an example, we are doing an extreme disservice to our own patrons. [NS]

So overall, with all of the information I have just given you concerning female patrons, it should thus come as no surprise to see newspaper advertisements such as this one by James Hodges wherein he states that he keeps “a House suitably furnish’d for the entertainment of Gentlemen and Ladies.” [NS]

I’d like to spend the last few minutes of this presentation exploring how and why the generally accepted role of women as proprietors, patrons, and even peons has been what it has been. I’m not going to argue against what Richard Bushman calls *The Refinement of America* or against the notion that increasing ideas of privacy and socially acceptable behavior altered during the 18th and 19th centuries. What I do want to do though, is push against it just enough to create the space required for our female proprietors, patrons, and peons to exist and be accepted in society.

When Elizabeth House Trist traveled from Philadelphia in Natchez in 1784, she kept a travel journal. An encounter in January 1784 is particularly revealing for our conversation. When Trist stayed at either public houses or private homes, she wrote that she “made it a rule to get up before day light that I might not see anybody nor they [see] me dress [because] it is so customary for the Men and Women to sleep in the same room that some of the Women look upon a Woman as affected that makes any objection to it. One told me that I talk’d to upon the subject that she thought a Woman must be very insecure in her self that was afraid to sleep in the room with a strange man.” In this quote we have a clash of values; those of a genteel, urban woman (a minority) with those of the rural folk, both men and women (a majority). This same clash of values and social acceptance is found in other accounts as well. When J. F. D. Smyth traveled throughout the colonies during the 1770s, he wrote that at the “house of Mr. Bailey” in North Carolina, every person of the family, excepting the master and mistress, lay promiscuously, men and women, boys and girls.”

Philip Vickers Fithian’s journal from the late 18th century also has examples of genteel ideals falling before the harsh realities faced by the majority of people. Fithian blushes when he is forced to sleep in the same room as the entire family. When Fithian is at Mr. Davis’ and needs “sleep in the same room with a large family, mostly women,” he is abashed. And he expresses dismay when, again sharing a room with a large family, he has to listen to the commentary of “one blinking Irish Female, searching out Subjects for Remark.”

These ideas and conditions continue into the Federal period. When the future King of France was in Tennessee in 1797, he cannot contain his amazement with the familiarity, and nonchalance, expressed by Captain Chapman and his family concerning a “strapping young man of about 20 or 22” who “undressed and plunked himself into” the bed with Chapman’s daughter. Louis-Phillippe is further confounded when the other daughter gets into the same bed.

William Faux, during his 1819 journey through Indiana, gets at the heart of the matter when he says that “shame, or rather what is called false shame, or delicacy, does not exist here. Males dress and undress before the females, and nothing is thought of it.” What Faux calls false shame, delicacy, is a genteel idea not shared by a large portion of the American public. However, delicacy is shared by the majority of people who left behind records at that time and it is shared by most of the researchers who first studied colonial America. Our records, a lot of preliminary research, and thus the general understanding of what was or was not proper in colonial America has been colored by this false shame, called delicacy. [NS]

Ben Wilson, author of *The Making of Victorian Values*, examines how deep genteel ideas permeated the culture and comes to the conclusion that there was a significant resistance to these ideas. Unfortunately, that resistance has been ignored because the majority of available

evidence, when read without regard to bias or prejudice, supports the idea of almost-total Victorian-value dominance. But if we read the records like we should, with an understanding and appreciation of their biases and prejudices, then it becomes possible to read against the grain and discover more about society actually was at that time, not just how the genteel thought it should be. If we do that, then we can agree with Donna-Belle and James Garvin's conclusion in their book, *On the Road North of Boston*, that "the freedom of women to travel and patronize [public houses] in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has been greatly underestimated, perhaps because of the stricter Victorian mores intervening between then and the present day."

So in the end, where are we. I hope that at the least you've come away with some more factual information to better inform your understanding and interpretation of colonial-era public houses. We've discussed how deeply involved women were as proprietors of public houses and how some data indicates that maybe woman-owned establishments were more stable than male-owned ones. Women were not, unsurprisingly, part of the labor force in these establishments. During their time associated with these establishments, many women laborers lived unremarkable lives. Others, like Sarah Skippon, are known to us because of the tragic consequences their connection with public houses caused. And women, due to a variety of reasons, were accepted patrons of colonial-era inns, ordinaries, and taverns. Women were integral to these establishments, and a better understanding of their connection to them allows us to better understand the whole.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to me and I'll let you know when I'm ready to discuss the apparently underappreciated role of monkeys in taverns. **[NS]**