

SPESUTIA HUNDRED, 1681-1799: A STUDY OF A  
COLONIAL MARYLAND PARISH

by  
Ruth Anne Becker

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of the University of Maryland in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
1978



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#### ABSTRACT

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Ruth Anne Becker, Master of Arts, 1978

Thesis directed by: Alison Gilbert Olson, Professor, Department of History

My study of some aspects of the lives of the people of Spesutia Parish in Harford County, Maryland, was made possible by the discovery of three surviving documents from this area. There is a parish record listing births, marriages, and deaths from 1680 to 1790. Information about households and wealth, as well as slavery, can be learned from a census taken in 1776 and a tax list from 1783.

From the parish record and census, I found data on births, and was able to estimate the birth rate. The total population grew rapidly, so there must have been significant in-migration. The number of children per family was about four.

I was able to estimate the age at marriage from the parish record and census. Second marriages seemed common. There did not appear to be many single adults except for servants, and bachelors had to pay a special tax. There was little evidence of extended families in one house but many had servants.

Deaths were the least frequent entry in the parish record, and, if the death entries were accurate, Spesutia had a low death rate. In 1776 there were significant numbers of blacks and whites over age fifty. Maternal and infant deaths from childbirth were not especially high.

Spesutia's population of 1440 in 1776 was almost half free and half slave. Over half the households did not have any slaves. Slave owning contributed to taxable wealth, but wealth did not correlate with social and political leadership.

Lastly, I compared my data with other studies of colonial Maryland, and studies of New England and the South. More demographic studies are necessary, however, before we can speak definitively about birth, death and marriage in colonial Maryland or other parts of the colonies.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

A lack of documents dictates that probably most people who lived in Colonial America have from the historian's point of view vanished forever. As a rule, traditional literary sources--letters, diaries, newspapers--yield little information about ordinary people. Census, tax lists and parish registers, records that provide data about the mass of the population, are not abundant. Yet such documents exist for some areas for some periods, and they have allowed several colonial historians in recent years to learn much about the population in small areas of New England and the Chesapeake region.

Fairly complete parish and vestry records exist for Saint George's Parish, also called Spesutia, in Harford County, Maryland, for the years 1681-1799. Other important sources of information have also survived, most significantly a 1776 census of Lower Spesutia Hundred. There is also a 1783 tax list of some residents of the area.

The documents for Spesutia permit an investigation of several aspects of the life of the population in this area. The parish register provides basic information about births, marriages and deaths. From it we can estimate the numbers of children per family; the rates of infant and maternal mortality; the interval between the birth of children; the numbers of illegitimate children; numbers of births, deaths and marriages per year; the age at which women bore their first child; the

the incidence of premarital conception; and the age at death. The vestry record provides information about local taxes, governance of the parish and church officials.

The census, unlike the parish register, provides information about only one year. But its data provide depth to my study, providing relatively full data about the size of families and the composition of households. This document is the one source for Spesutia that provides information about the slave and servant population. The census also makes possible calculations about the proportional distribution of the population by sex, age and marital status. The 1783 tax list of some of the residents, used in conjunction with the parish register and census, permits judgments about the relationships between personal wealth and the holding of local positions of church and civil leadership.

## CHAPTER II

### PERSPECTIVES ON THE SPESUTIA DATA

It is unusual that two rich primary documents have survived for one rural area. The record of Saint George's Anglican Parish in Harford County has continuous entries from 1656-1799. A parish record is a particularly good source of data about large numbers of people historians previously knew little about. It does not by any means tell us everything, but its aggregated data are a most revealing source of information. The record of Saint George's Parish is one of the best surviving for Maryland. Indeed it may be one of the best demographic records of any area in late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century Maryland.

A lengthy manuscript, the Spesutia Parish Record is 280 pages of births, marriages and deaths listed chronologically, except for the occasional listing of an entire family. Such an entry included the date of the parent's marriage, followed by the birth dates of the children in the family, sometimes followed by the date of death of some members. Presumably, such entries were made when a family moved to the area, or when the baptism of one of the children prompted the family to record all its vital statistics at one time (see Fig. 1, a page from the register).

Nevertheless, the parish record is a skeletal document of names and dates, at times difficult to interpret. As in other colonial

Anne Smith the wife of Richard Smith Died August the  
 31<sup>st</sup> 1744.  
 Martha of Israel Combest son of Daughter of Jacob of  
 Mary Combest his wife was Born May the 24<sup>th</sup> 1744 -  
 John Hall Hughes son of Sarah Hughes Born the 10<sup>th</sup> 1742 July  
 William Lallou son of James Lallou & Phebe his wife  
 was Born August the 10<sup>th</sup> 1744 -  
 Benjamin Hanson son of John Hanson and Semelia  
 his wife was Born June the 11<sup>th</sup> 1744.  
 Aaron Tredway son of Thomas Tredway and Elizabeth  
 his wife was Born November the 2<sup>d</sup> 1744 -  
 Sarah Ramsey was Born March the 4<sup>th</sup> 1734  
 Elizabeth Ramsey was Born July the 10<sup>th</sup> 1736  
 William Ramsey was Born Jan<sup>y</sup> the 9<sup>th</sup> 1738  
 Charles Ramsey was Born Feb<sup>r</sup> the 11<sup>th</sup> 1740  
 Mary Ramsey was Born Nov<sup>r</sup> the 13<sup>th</sup> 1742  
 } All Children of  
 } Wm Ramsey  
 } and Elizabeth  
 } his wife -  
 Ann Preston daughter of James Preston and Sarah his wife  
 was Born Sept<sup>r</sup> the 4<sup>th</sup> 1744.  
 John Johnson son of Thomas Johnson and Sarah his  
 wife was Born January the 20<sup>th</sup> 1743.  
 Charles Gilbert was married to Elizabeth Hawkins

Fig. 1. A page from the register



records, names are spelled variously. Not unusual is an entry such as "John Smyth, son of Roger and Mary Smythe," creating confusion because different families in the county spelled their names Smyth and Smythe. Similar problems occur in the vestry record. At one meeting Robert Collins and Anna Selby were ordered to appear. The next meeting reported that "Robert Collings and Anna Selbe" did not appear as summoned. Both documents contain countless cases of people with the same name--a son named for his father, a child named for a sibling who had died, or cousins with identical names. And there was little variety in Christian names or in surnames, since all were from a similar English background. Indeed there was a frustrating popularity to some names which seem peculiar to the area: Aquila and Garrett for men and Avarilla, Clemency and Ketturah for women. Thus, the Anna Smith whose marriage was recorded on one page could not have been the Anna Smith whose birth appeared on the previous page.

Not only is the parish record a list of at times variously spelled names, it is also a document that raises questions about its completeness. Judgments on completeness are of necessity tentative, however, for one can never be sure that all the information was or was not reported. In 1786, one contemporary, the Reverend Henry Addison of Prince George's observed that there was

a law of the county whereby births and marriages are directed to be registered by the clerks of the parishes, but every man here knows that it is almost universally neglected to be done. If the rule were established here that no marriage should be deemed valid that had not been registered in the parish book it would, I am persuaded, bastardize nine-tenths of the people in this county.<sup>1</sup>

Whether or not Rev. Henry Addison overstated the case--and I think that he has--there are obvious errors in the record. One entry, for example,

records a woman's death some months before the birth of her child; another lists two children born to parents within five months.

The question of completeness is more than simply a matter, however, of careless record-keeping. It was in large part a result of inward and outward migration from Harford County. A family that moved from the county may have had only one child while living there. The child's birth would have been recorded in the parish record. To the modern researcher, this family would appear in the record as a one-child family, when perhaps in fact the family had many other children elsewhere.

The parish record provided a frustrating source in another respect. One cannot learn from the record the total population of the parish in any one year. The document only reveals the total number of births and deaths per year, as well as the total for the one-hundred-year span. In the absence of total population figures, birth and death rates cannot be calculated with certainty. Nevertheless, estimates of the total population of Spesutia can be made for a few scattered years, making possible judgments about birth and death rates.

But we have more than the parish record alone. In 1776 the state government conducted a census of each parish in Maryland. Aside from the parish registers, which became official records of births and deaths when in the early eighteenth century the Church of England became the established church, the censuses are the only other major sources of information about people and households. The first general state census was made in 1783, and the United States government made its first survey in 1796.



Fortunately, Spesutia Lower Hundred's 1776 census is preserved. Sixteen pages long, it was organized according to households (see Fig. 2). A typical entry began with the name of the male head of household, then his wife; their children; the family's servants, usually people in their twenties with different surnames; and lastly their slaves. Slaves did not have surnames in the colonial period, making the study of the black population less complete than the white. Nevertheless, the census makes possible calculations about such things as the average age of the slave population and patterns of slaveholding.

By 1776 Spesutia Parish had split into two--the Upper Hundred and the Lower Hundred. The census list survives for the Lower Hundred only, although there are totals for the Upper Hundred. The census listed a total number of 1,440 for the black and white population of Spesutia Lower in 1776. Combined with the total figure for Spesutia Upper there were 2,547 people in 1776. But the parish record data falls off by 1765 with fewer and fewer entries, making comparisons with the census difficult. Total Harford County figures are not useful because the county contained three parishes. Also in the early period--in fact, until 1774--Harford and Baltimore Counties were one, called Baltimore County.

Rich as these documents are in information, they nevertheless have many limitations. Neither offered explanation nor commentary about entries. The parish record listed only one cause of death--one man drowned in the Susquehanna. A marked rise in deaths in one year (fifty-three in 1720 with only five and eight in the years before and after) was not explained nor was the fact that births went up sharply the next year.

14.	White Age Years	Black Age Years	Name of Person	Persons Names	White Age Years	Black Age Years	Name of Person
John Broughton	50	...	1158	D. Broughton	...	...	1266
Elizabeth Brown	16	...		James Brown	26	...	
Walter Brown	13	...		Francis Brown	21	...	
James Brown	21	...		Henry Brown	10	...	
James Brown	6	...		Robert Brown	8	...	
James Brown	11	...		Richard Brown	6	...	
James Brown	100	...		William Brown	2	...	
James Brown	100	...		James Brown	15	...	
James Brown	50	...		...	...	...	7
James Brown	30	...		...	70	...	
James Brown	24	...		...	44	...	
James Brown	29	...		...	46	...	
James Brown	16	...		...	21	...	
James Brown	15	...		...	17	...	
James Brown	14	...		...	10	...	
James Brown	9	...		...	8	...	
James Brown	7	...		...	7	...	
James Brown	5	...		...	8	...	
John Smith	19	...	20	...	...	...	9
James Smith	26	...	2	...	...	...	
James Smith	25	...		...	...	...	
James Smith	25	...		...	30	...	
James Smith	30	...		...	29	...	
James Smith	30	...		...	28	...	
James Smith	14	...		...	23	...	
James Smith	5	...		...	26	...	
James Smith	3	...		...	16	...	
James Smith	1	...		...	14	...	
William Hill	36	...	9	...	5	...	
James Hill	22	...		...	7	...	
James Hill	3	...	6	...	2	...	
James Hill	...	...		...	3	...	
James Hill	...	...		...	...	...	10
James Hill	19	21	4	...	...	...	
James Hill	20	...		...	...	...	
James Hill	20	...		...	19	...	
James Hill	14	...		...	18	...	
James Hill	17	...		...	4	...	
James Hill	14	...		...	2	...	
James Hill	11	...		...	...	...	7
James Hill	4	...		...	25	...	
James Hill	4	...		...	27	...	
James Hill	3	...		...	16	...	
James Hill	...	...	11	...	60	...	
James Hill	...	...		...	...	...	3
James Hill	...	...		...	...	...	1
James Hill	...	...	1264	...	...	...	1267

Fig. 2. A page of the 1776 Census, Spesutia Lower Hundred

Social rank was difficult to ascertain from the parish register. Some men were titled "Gent'n," others "Dr." and still others "Capt.;" some women were called "Madam." A few were mentioned as servants or "man to" someone. The census was of more help in this regard, since it showed that white servants were in residence at fifty-nine of the 167 households.

Another limitation is that one cannot tell much of anything about individuals from the parish record, except their vital statistics. The early pages of the register, however, did indicate where people lived-- Bush River, Spesutia Island, or at a plantation like Cranberry Hall. The early record also noted where the dead were buried, which was usually on their own land. One death was "regretted," that of Madam Hall of Cranberry Hall, a member of one of the most important families in the parish. Her obituary was the only one in the 280 pages of the record. Even the minister's death was listed unceremoniously among all the other entries on the page. A death of "two Irish servants" was the only reference to a country of origin; a foreign city was mentioned once in referring to one partner in a marriage who was from "the city of London." There were no references to slaves in the parish record, although slavery was widespread in Maryland. By 1776 almost half of Spesutia Lower's population (650 of 1,440) were blacks, and only four were free Negroes. There were no references to Indians either, although Susquehannocks and other tribes lived in the area.<sup>2</sup>

The limitations of the Spesutia Parish Record are common to parish registers. Scholars first demonstrated the utility of parish records in studies of sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth-century European towns. Demographers have most extensively analyzed English

towns. Scholars such as D.E.C. Eversley, Peter Laslett, and E.A. Wrigley developed methods for analyzing English parish registers. They were able to amass statistics and then estimate such things as birth rates, death rates, age at marriage, life expectancy, and infant and maternal mortality.<sup>3</sup>

As in the studies of Europe and England, the kind of data available has influenced greatly the way in which historians have studied the life of early Maryland. Most studies of population and family in colonial Maryland have focused on the lower Maryland counties--Saint Mary's, Charles and Calvert. Lois Carr and Lorena Walsh have investigated Saint Mary's, concentrating on the seventeenth century. They relied on wills and household inventories and they had no census to work with.<sup>4</sup> Alan Kulikoff's dissertation on Prince George's County integrates family data with much information about economic change. Carville Earle, an historical geographer, concentrates on the economic geography of All Hallow's Parish.<sup>5</sup>

Other American studies in demographic and family history have been dependent on the evidence available for a particular area. Parish records do not form a part of the documentation in studies of New England, the area most thoroughly investigated statistically. New England did not have the parish-by-parish county government of the Maryland and Virginia colonies, so church records did not serve the same purpose as they did in the South. John Demos' *A Little Commonwealth* is a study of family life. He studied the town of Bristol, Rhode Island, mainly because an unusual census of 1689 survived. The census listed the names of all heads of household in 1689, as well as the name of the man's wife, children, and servants. From the total of 421 people in

seventy families, Demos estimated family size, the numbers of children per family, remarriages, infant mortality, etc. He found no other seventeenth century town census, and New England generally kept better records than the South.

Phillip Greven studied seventeenth-century Andover in *Four Generations: Population, Land and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts*. He used a variety of remarkably complete documents, among them the records of the town clerks, church and court. He also utilized as evidence deeds and even inscriptions from gravestones. From these sources Greven reconstructed twenty-eight first-generation families through several succeeding generations. Equally resourceful is Kenneth Lockridge's *A New England Town: The First Hundred Years*. In this study of Dedham, Massachusetts, Lockridge used a variety of town records to discuss lifespan, age at marriage and childbearing, and the differences between American and English life at the time.

Demographic and statistical studies like those for New England have not yet been done extensively for the Southern or Middle colonies.<sup>6</sup> New England has always been more widely studied than any other region of the colonies, in large part because records were more complete. Town government was often not the rule in the South and good records generally do not exist before the mid-nineteenth century. An excellent if limited book nevertheless exists on family life in the South, Julia Cherry Spruill's *Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies*. This remarkable volume, published in 1938, tried to deal with subjects now again studied by family and demographic historians. Professor Spruill used literary sources: diaries and letters of upper-class ladies, as well as more traditional colonial records, newspapers, magazines, and

biographies. She considered Maryland a southern colony, although most of her sources were from Virginia and the Carolinas. Comparison of my work with Spruill's is hampered by the fact that it is not a statistical study.

Like these other works, my study has been greatly influenced by the data available. Although the information about Spesutia differs from that used in these other studies, we are all interested in similar questions. We all seek to know more about patterns of family life, the numbers of children in a family, age at marriage, frequency of remarriage and the like. Even though the evidence is different, tentative comparisons can be made when this study touches on questions raised in these other works.

My goal, then, is to add to our knowledge of ordinary people and their families in colonial America by focusing on the population of Saint George's, a rural area of the Maryland colony. While what I have found may be atypical, the result of the peculiarities of the geographical area, the parish register for Saint George's is a rich source, and should provide a useful basis of comparison for those studying other areas of Maryland and Virginia.

Methodologically this thesis is a combination of techniques drawn from parish register studies, as well as insights from other works on colonial American population and family. E.E. Wrigley, in *Parish Register Demography*, set out a method which used a card for every entry on the parish register he studied (Wapentake of Morley in England). An index of the Spesutia Parish Register, prepared by the Maryland Historical Society for geneological purposes, facilitated my study. I needed to make only one card per person, instead of a card for each entry.

When completed I had over 4,000 cards. I then coded the cards, recording the birth, marriage(s) and death of that person, as well as the birth of that person's children. I included on the card the person's parents, if I knew who they were. An "ideal card" would be coded with information about an individual's birth, marriage(s), children and death. Very few cards were complete.

The questions posed in this study dictated the way in which I utilized the 1776 census and 1783 tax list (see Fig. 3). The sixteen-page census required the preparation of lists and charts which divided the population by sex, age, children, servants, slaves, households, etc. To correlate wealth with the holding of local civil and church positions, I utilized the census, the 1783 tax lists and several rosters of local officials.





## CHAPTER III

### THE OPERATION OF SPESUTIA PARISH

The parish record is a particularly important source of information for a rural area such as Harford County. Never has this region been a governmental, trade or population center. In seventeenth-century Maryland the center of government was in southern Maryland, and in the eighteenth century at Annapolis. Late in the eighteenth century Baltimore and central Maryland became important as a center for trade.

The parish was a legal unit of local government in colonial Maryland. The Anglican churches became the focus of local life in most rural communities, and became the place to register the area's important statistics. After Lord Baltimore received his grant in 1629, the settlement at St. Mary's got off to a slow start. There was much disagreement between the Catholic lords who planned to establish fuedal baronies and the Protestant majority upon which the settlement would depend for survival. Civil war broke out on the Eastern Shore in the 1660s. By 1689 the Protestants controlled the government, although the Catholic faith was tolerated. In 1691 Maryland became a Royal colony, although after 1715 the Calvert family regained control after converting to Protestantism.

In the area which became Harford County, the first known settlement was established between 1634 and 1637 on Palmer Island, as settlement proceeded up the Chesapeake and into the countryside along

the many streams and rivers that emptied into the bay. A rough outline of what was to become the Parish of Saint George's was marked out in a grant of 1658. Saint George's was also called "Spesutia Hundred." Spesutia is the name of a large island in the Chesapeake within the parish boundaries, five miles below Havre de Grace.<sup>7</sup> A "hundred," derived from England's use of the term, was variously defined as an area capable of raising one hundred military men, or an area of approximately one hundred square miles.

The failure of towns to develop in Maryland made the church an especially important institution. The churches became the official recorders of vital statistics. As tobacco cultivation proved successful, settlers were attracted to the Harford County area, and churches were needed. Towns did not develop as quickly in Maryland as in New England because the rivers made it easy for farmers to roll hogsheads of cured tobacco to the Chesapeake for direct shipment to England. Indeed, several towns failed after getting a charter, among them two "Baltimores." Eventually a few small towns developed. Joppa in the mid-eighteenth century became a commercial center of the wheat and tobacco trade. Such towns, however, did not reduce the importance of the established church in the life of the rural population.

The Church of England became an especially important institution after 1702 when it became the established church. As a result, local taxation supported the church and its minister, as well as local education and record keeping.<sup>8</sup> The parish was the legal division of government for record keeping and tax assessment.

The church's elected vestrymen acted as a government, a court, and a keeper of public peace and morality when no other institutions

existed for these purposes. The vestry of six was chosen from among all the freeholders. Two new members were elected each year, as two of the longest sitting members left the vestry. The vestry helped determine the tax list, and those taxed in the early eighteenth century were "all males above sixteen years of age, except benificed clergymen, paupers, and aged slaves, together with all females, negroes, and mulattos." The vestry exercised parental and in some respects executive control over the population, although they could not pass sentence upon offenders. They called witnesses in hearings and in cases of suspected immorality admonished the wayward.<sup>9</sup>

Record keeping was so important that, according to the Vestry Record in 1729, the church paid someone to keep the parish register. To induce diligence in his duties, the registrar was paid a small fee for each statistic entered. The parish registrar was to enter information about all whites "when known or deserved to be recorded." Parents were to receive a small fine for not recording family data.<sup>10</sup>

By the time the Church of England was established in Maryland, many of the colony's thirty parishes had already taken shape. The present Harford County area was then still a part of Baltimore County, and Baltimore County contained three parishes: St. Pauls's, centering around Patapsco Neck; St. John's Parish in Gunpowder Hundred, from Middle River to the west side of Bush River; and St. George's in Spesutia Hundred (see Figs. 4 and 5). Baltimore County was then the size of Delaware and Rhode Island combined. By 1670, Baltimore County may have had about 2,000 people, one-third of whom lived in the Bush River Neck area.<sup>11</sup>

Saint George's was the oldest of the three original parishes and dates from 1671 when a small church was built at "Gravelly" near

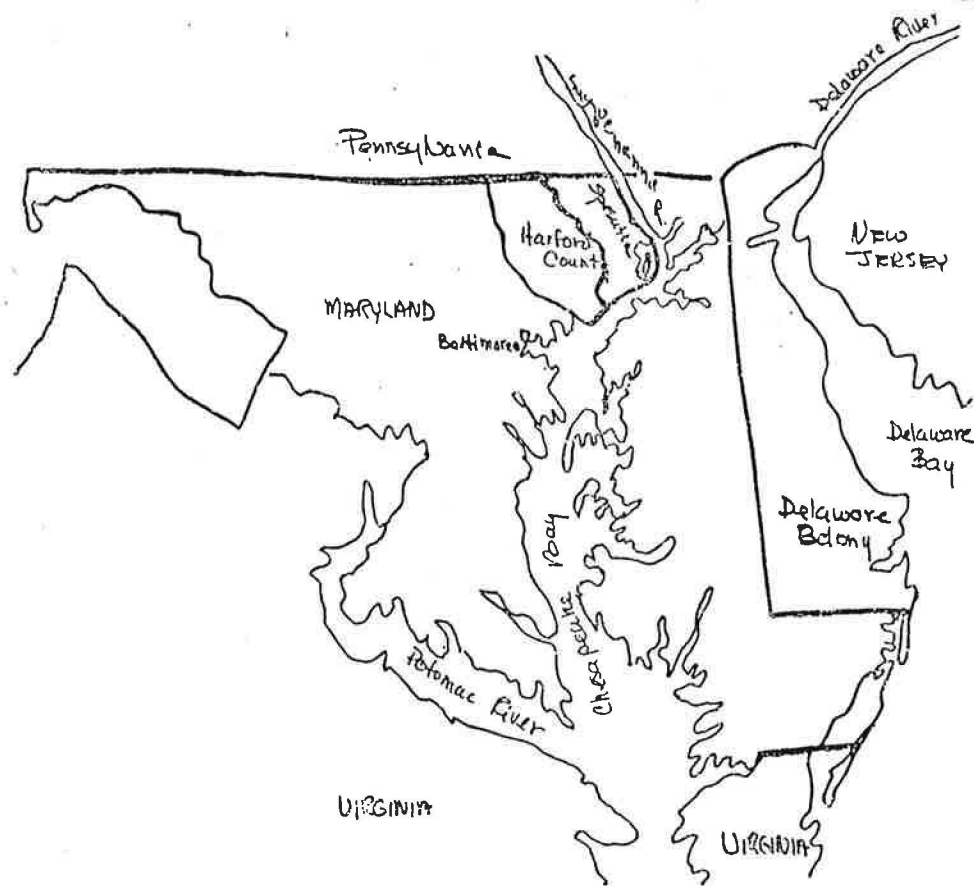


Fig. 4. Original boundaries of Spesutia Parish, from 1696 to 1765. The area then was approximately 67 square miles, or 42,819 acres.

"From the mouth of Bynum's Run to its head; thence north to the northern boundary of Stirrup Run; up Deer Creek to its head; thence north to the boundary of the province; east to the Susquehanna River; down that river to its mouth at the head of Chesapeake Bay; along the bay to the mouth of Bush River, and up that river to the beginning of the mouth of Bynum's Run."

C. Milton Wright, *Our Harford Heritage*, p. 194

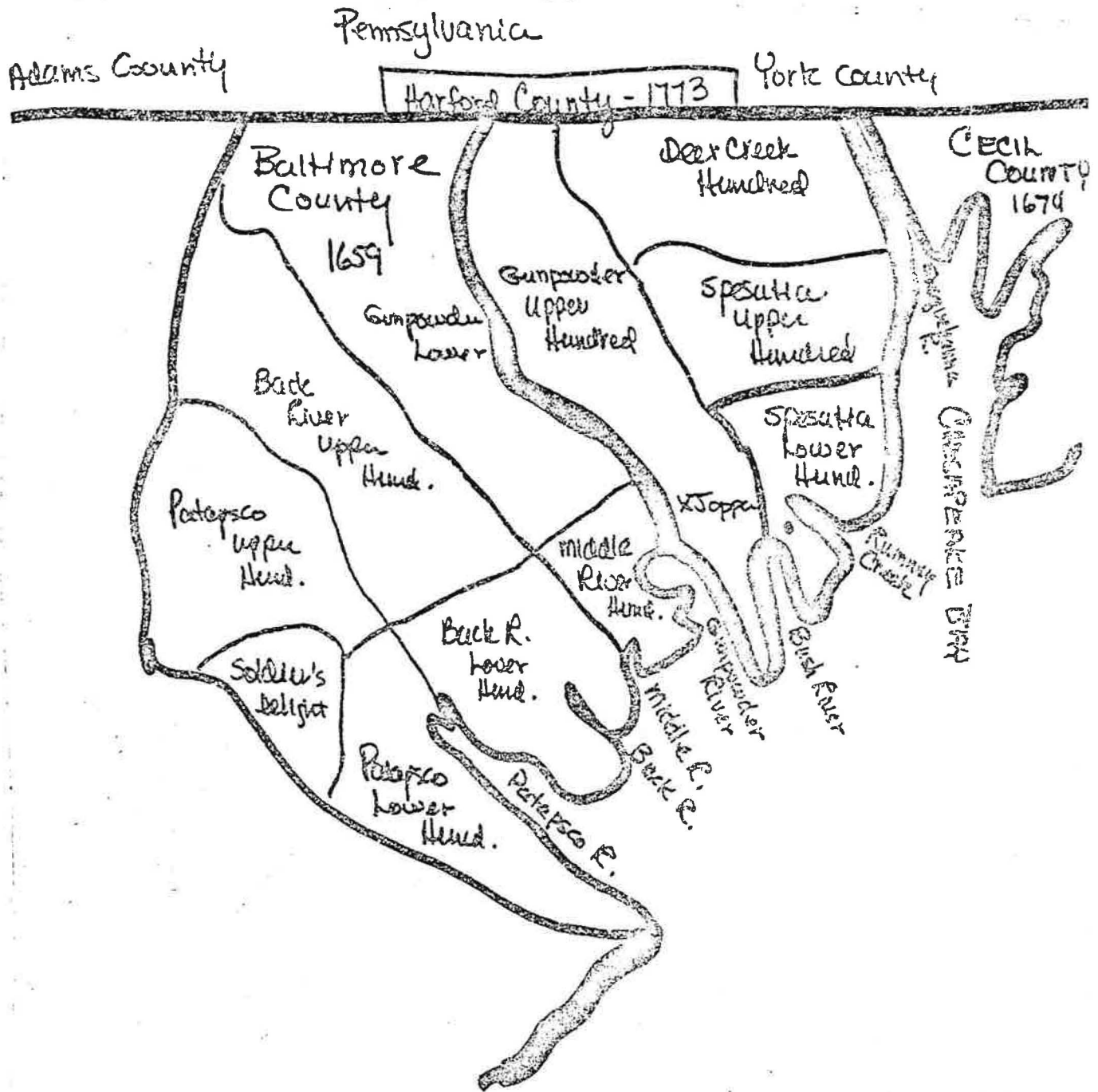


Fig. 5. The parishes of Baltimore and Harford County, 1771, showing Spesutia Lower Hundred. Area then about 21,000 acres. From *Maryland Slave Owners and Superintendents*, 1978, Volume 1. Bettie Stirling Carrothers, Lutherville, Maryland, 1972. Map by William N. Wilkins, May 2, 1950.

Michaelsville, five miles south of the later (and present) church site at Perryman.<sup>12</sup> There is some dispute on who owned the land on which the church was built. The Reverend Jeremiah Eaton, some chroniclers maintain, was the first minister--in fact the first Protestant minister in Baltimore County west of the Chesapeake Bay. One county historian maintains that the first church was built on a devise of Eaton's 350 acres on Winters' Run "to the first Protestant minister who should reside in Baltimore County and to his successors forever."<sup>13</sup> Another argues that the land on which the first church was located was a 500 acre tract called "Stokeley Manor" given to the first minister in 1675. And still another source called the original tract "Walstone's Addition."<sup>14</sup>

Records began to be kept with regularity in 1681. At this point settlement was still sparse, although by 1696 Saint George's Parish had grown to 137 "tithables," that is, free males over sixteen years of age with assets.<sup>15</sup> Record-keeping continued even as there were changes in landholding and church leadership in the parish at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries. An act of the Assembly in 1692 divided the area of each parish into tracts, each having a name and a patentee. Some were glebes of the parish itself, that is, tracts belonging to the church and perhaps leased out or farmed by the minister. The families of the original patentees, however, continued as leaders of the parish in the hundred years following, as the names of Collet, Goldsmith, Utie, Parker, Paca, and Hall figured prominently in the history of the area. "Cranberry Hall," granted to John Hall in 1694, was the most notable plantation in the county, and the Halls were social and political leaders for generations. The plantation

area became the town of Perryman. The original large tracts were subsequently further divided into plots as inheritances or dowries.<sup>16</sup>

The vestry held the church together, since there was not a permanent minister until 1718. Rev. John Yeo, for example, preached at the church in 1683.<sup>17</sup> But he had large responsibilities, being in charge of Patapsco, Gunpowder and Spesutia parishes, serving each by horseback.<sup>18</sup> Other early ministers had wide responsibilities. It was considered a vacant parish because no permanent minister had been appointed and it was "held in plurality" with Saint John's Parish until 1718.<sup>19</sup>

The vestry first organized itself under the Act of 1692, a precursor of the Act of 1702 that established the Anglican Church in Maryland. The meetings of the Gunpowder Courthouse for April 25, 1693, provided an account of court proceedings under "Private Court"--"A account of what commissioners were met at the usual Court house the 25th day of April A.C. 1693 for the election of vestrymen for the church government." The commissioners of Justices adjourned to the house of Robert Benger, the inn-holder, where the vestrymen for the three parishes of the county were elected by the freeholders, and an order was passed for them to appear at the June courts answering "at the Usual Court House at Gunpowder River for the propagation of Churches."<sup>20</sup>

More is known of the parish in the eighteenth century. In 1718, as the population moved northward, the church relocated five miles north of the first site to the location of the present church, about one-half mile north of the town of Perryman.<sup>21</sup> The new site was on one of the few good roads in the county. Two years later the parishioners built a vestry house for meetings and education, and the rector became, as was the custom, the first schoolmaster. A regular schoolmaster was not hired until 1811.<sup>22</sup>

By 1759 the parish was at the height of its prosperity and influence and the church was at the center of local life. The area contained one of the few good roads between the Pennsylvania and Delaware colonies. Wheat began to rival tobacco as a market crop for Maryland farmers, although tobacco still was the major commercial crop. And the area contained several iron furnaces and tanning and grist mills. In 1754 the Saint George's vestry petitioned the Maryland Assembly for 75,000 pounds of tobacco in order to finance the reconstruction of their 1720 church structure. The new brick building was finished in 1758; in 1766 the vestry house was rebuilt.<sup>23</sup>

The growth of the population affected the parish register. Around 1760 the parish divided into upper and lower sections, each called a hundred.<sup>24</sup> As the congregation of Spesutia grew, and as the population continued to move northward, it became difficult for people in the northern parts to attend services. Saint George's sponsored the building of a "chapel at ease" at Trappe, two miles north of Priestford. The chapel had the same dimensions as the mother church and was served by the rector of Spesutia. This area eventually became a separate parish.<sup>25</sup>

The numbers of births, marriages, and deaths recorded in the parish register declined abruptly in the 1760s. Apparently the new chapel at Trappe kept records for its own congregation. But a gradual decline in entries had begun before this split. Perhaps, then, there were other reasons for this change. The new city of Baltimore no doubt proved attractive as the decline of the tobacco economy made rural life less desirable. One of the Halls, for example, became a merchant in Baltimore.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, Joppa and Havre de Grace had become centers of



commerce and county business, and perhaps people moved to work in the blacksmith shops, iron forges, and tobacco warehouses there.

The growth of other protestant churches and American Independence affected the register too. The Anglican Church was disestablished with Independence, although the Episcopalians were no longer by 1776 the dominant force in religion in the county. The Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists had more followers and there always had been a few Catholics. After the Revolution, some of the Anglican churches were taken over by other groups. Methodism and other evangelical groups gained followers. The chapel at Trappe eventually became a Baptist church. In 1776 there were forty-five parishes in Maryland. Of these, twenty-eight were vacated by rectors who were Loyalists, although twenty-five of them returned after the Revolution and took the oath of allegiance.

The establishment of Harford as a separate county in 1773 strengthened local government, lessening somewhat the importance of the church's civil functions. The officials of Harford County were the High Constable, the Commander of the Militia, the Overseer of Roads, the Roads Inspector, and the Assessor of Taxes. The census taken in 1776 was conducted according to parishes, but was supervised by county official Ashberry Cord. The census of "all the Inhabitants both white and black, old and young of Spesutia Lower Hundred..." was sworn to the Constable Amos Garrett.

The troubles with Great Britain and eventually the War of Independence affected life in the county too, and no doubt had an influence on recording vital statistics as local people went to war. Harford County had a war committee and sent troops which fought in New York. The county became a crossroads for troops.<sup>27</sup> As the eighteenth century

drew to a close the area economically turned more and more to wheat production, but industrialism never really made much of an impact on this part of Harford County.

Despite the limitations in the parish record brought about by economic and political changes in rural Spesutia, the register remains an invaluable document for the study of the population in this area.

## CHAPTER IV

### BIRTHS IN COLONIAL HARFORD COUNTY

#### Family Life in Colonial Harford County

From the parish register and 1776 census it is possible to learn something of the facts of life of colonial frontier Maryland. The primary "events" of life then as now were birth, marriage, and death.

Births and numbers of children were the most notable entry in the parish record, and children outnumber adults on the census. The numbers of births per year range from one or two a year in the 1680s to eighty-nine children born in 1734. There was a total of 2,902 births in the eighty-four-year period considered from the parish register, which averages out to 35.7 children born per year<sup>28</sup> (see Table 1 and Figure 6). Births by far outnumber deaths, which total 491 and average 5.8 per year. Thus, in an average year thirty more people were born than died. This was a high number of births compared to deaths, although there were sharp variations in the numbers of births: forty-eight in 1721, compared to twenty-seven the year before, and twenty-five in 1722. The forty-eight births in 1721 followed a year of unusually high numbers of deaths: thirty-three in 1720, with six in 1719 and five in 1721. The sudden increase in births was unexplained. Perhaps it reflected the population's attempt to replace those lost in an epidemic. More than likely, however, it reflected migration into Spesutia. The gradual decline in the numbers of births after the peak years of the mid-1730s was also unexplained, although the averages remained approximately forty

TABLE 1

## BIRTHS FROM THE PARISH RECORD, 1681-1765\*

Year	Number of Births	Year	Number of Births	Year	Number of Births
1681	1	1710	25	1739	72
1682	1	1711	16	1740	72
1683	..	1712	20	1741	61
1684	4	1713	25	1742	73
1685	..	1714	18	1743	58
1686	1	1715	30	1744	53
1687	1	1716	20	1745	28
1688	1	1717	21	1746	41
1689	5	1718	20	1747	36
1690	4	1719	28	1748	22
1691	11	1720	27	1749	45
1692	7	1721	48	1750	32
1693	12	1722	25	1751	28
1694	7	1723	55	1752	41
1695	20	1724	41	1753	39
1696	13	1725	61	1754	50
1697	12	1726	59	1755	54
1698	20	1727	48	1756	67
1699	22	1728	62	1757	48
1700	10	1729	61	1758	65
1701	14	1730	49	1759	57
1702	17	1731	77	1760	40
1703	21	1732	61	1761	43
1704	16	1733	79	1762	44
1705	15	1734	89	1763	20
1706	20	1735	79	1764	10
1707	19	1736	88	1765	11
1708	17	1737	61		
1709	25	1738	83		

Total Number of Births = 2,902

Average Number of Births Each Year = 35.7

\*Three births recorded earlier for Frezland in 1659, 1664, and 1668. Parish record begins at 1681.

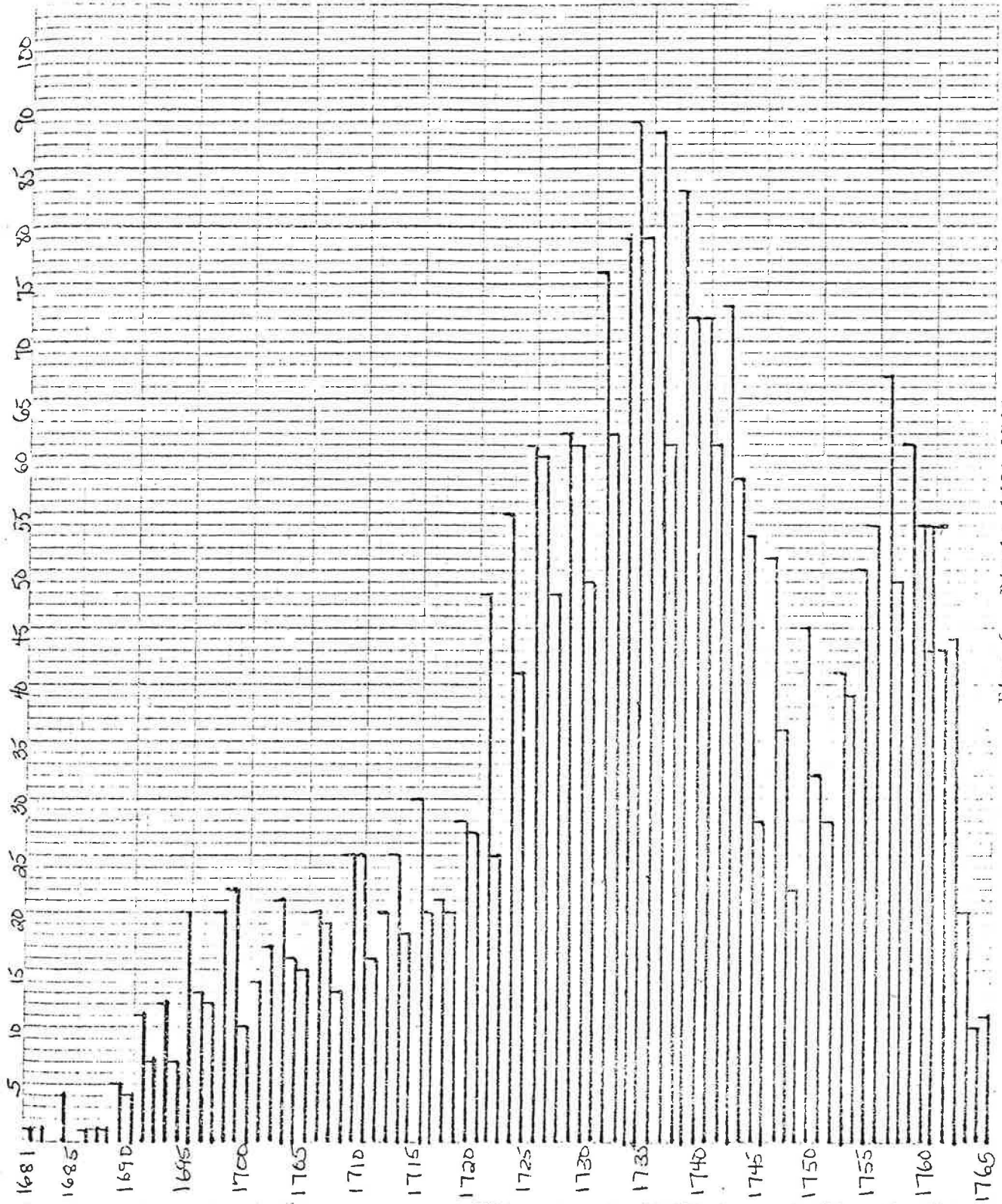


Fig. 6. Births 1681-1765

to fifty per year until the 1760s when the parish split. The population of the area must have increased rapidly in the early eighteenth century. Aside from the high numbers from natural increase, the parish evidence indicated that new families moved into the area. Frequently, when families moved to Spesutia the entire family's birth and marriage statistics were added to the register at the same time.

For 1776, it is possible to know much about the vital statistics of the people in Spesutia. In the 1776 census of Spesutia Lower Hundred twenty-eight white children were under a year old and so were born in one year. Thirty white children were age one, so roughly the same number were born the previous year. Children were numerous in Spesutia in 1776, and represented a large percentage of the total population. In the 113 families recorded in the census there were 314 white children, out of a total white population of 790.

Without consistent and long-run total population figures, it was not possible to estimate the birth rate with certainty. The parish register never recorded total population figures. Yet from the vestry minutes one can learn the numbers of people taxed in some years, and make estimates of total population from these data. The vestry record, at times, included the names of "tithables," or men of property. Although these lists provided the names of those taxed and the amounts that they paid, they do not indicate anything about the numbers of men not wealthy enough to be taxed. Men were taxed five shillings if they were worth £100-300, and twenty shillings if their worth exceeded £300.

Estimates of the total population can be made, however, for some years. The most accurate total population figure was available for Spesutia Lower (half the original area), and of this only for one

year--1776. The population then was 1,440; 790 were white, 650 black. Birth rate estimates were possible only for whites, and of these whites, 419 were men, 371 women. Thirty children were born that one year. For earlier years estimates of the birth rate were possible when we use the tithables as a part of the total population. According to the historian of Saint George's Parish, George W. Archer, the tithables represented roughly one-fourth of the total population. For eight scattered years, the parish record included the total number of tithables; the 1783 tax list provided lists of the taxables too (see Table 2).

TABLE 2  
TOTAL POPULATION ESTIMATES AND  
BIRTH RATE ESTIMATES

Date	Tithables	Total Population	Births	Birth Rate
1696	137	548	13	2%
1720	381	1,524	27	2%
1721	420	1,700	48	3%
1723	475	1,900	25	1%
1737	873	3,600	61	2%
1738	915	3,600	83	2%
1739	919	3,600	72	2%
1742	991	4,000	73	2%
1776	N/A*	790	30	4%
1783	200	800		

SOURCES: (1) George W. Archer, *History of St. George's Parish*, originally printed in the *Bel Air Aegis*, 1890. Reprinted in 1940, at the Maryland Historical Society.

(2) Census of 1776, Spesutia Lower Hundred.

(3) Tax list of 1783 of Spesutia Lower.

\*Not available. Total population calculated on the number of tithables in 1783.

As a basis of comparison these Spesutia figures can be compared to estimates made by the United States Department of Commerce for the birth rate. Using Commerce's historical data for the earliest year available (1800), we can see whether Spesutia had a birth rate above or below the national average. In the United States in 1800, *Historical Statistics* estimated that of any 1,000 of population (whites), 278 of these would be women of childbearing age (15 to 44), and 55 children would be born in one year. The birth rate in 1800, then, was 5 percent per thousand. This estimate can become a tool for cautious estimation, assuming that the estimated birth rate could bear relation to births earlier in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>29</sup> The 5 percent figure for 1800 is the earliest year for which the government estimated the birth rate. Birth-rate estimates declined over the rest of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The 5 percent figure for 1800 was double the rate for most of the nineteenth century. Perhaps the 1800 estimate was too high. Kenneth Lockridge's data for Dedham, Massachusetts, concluded that the birth rate was about forty births per thousand total population for one year. These data, he noted, were similar to English towns at that time.<sup>30</sup>

The Spesutia rate, while fairly consistent through the eighteenth century, was lower than 5 percent even in 1776. Spesutia's birth rate was closer to Lockridge's estimates. The one year in the seventeenth century that the tithables were listed in Spesutia was 1696. There were 137 that year; using Archer's formula, the total population would be 548. Total births for that year, as recorded in the parish register, were thirteen. The birth rate was then 2 percent (.023).



There were three figures from the 1720s of the tithables, showing an increase in their number from 381 to 475, and a corresponding population estimated increase from 1,500 to 1,900. The births in these years (1720, 1721, and 1723) were 27, 48, and 25, respectively. The birth rate for these years then were 2 percent (.018); 3 percent (.028); and 1 percent (.013).

There were three years in the 1730s in which tithables were listed. Archer estimated that these years together showed that Spesutia must have had about 3,600 souls by this time. The births for the years 1737 to 1739 were 61, 83, and 72. The birth rate then was 2 percent for 1737, and about the same for 1738 and 1739. One figure survived of the tithables for the 1740s, that of 1742 with 991 tithables, a rough estimate of a total population therefore of 4,000. There were 73 births this year, so the birth rate was 2 percent (.018).

For 1776 there was not a list of tithables but some useful figures nevertheless. As previously stated, the 1776 census listed thirty children under a year of age, so thirty children were born that year. Also, we know there were 790 white people in Spesutia Lower (the parish had split by that time) as the total population. The birth rate was then 4 percent (.037) of total white population for 1776.

Archer's estimate that 25 percent of the population were tithables is perhaps too high. If we use the data from 1776 and a tax list from 1783, we see that Archer's estimate may overstate the percentage of tithables. There were in 1783, 151 tithables, 33 bachelors and 49 paupers, according to the tax list. Assuming that out-migration between 1776 and 1783 offset natural increase and in-migration, we can use the total population in 1776 and the tithables in 1783 to get a percentage different

from Archer's to estimate total population in the early years of the register. By the 1780s and 1790s entries in the parish record had become irregular. The 151 tithables listed in 1783 were 19 percent of the 1776 white population. On this basis, Table 3 lists estimated total population, births and birth rate. Since the total population, by this calculation, is larger than when we use Archer's formula, we come up with a birth rate lower than using total population figures figured on 25 percent of tithables.

TABLE 3

TOTAL POPULATION ESTIMATES AND BIRTH RATE ESTIMATES BASED ON  
TITHABLES AS ONE-FIFTH TOTAL POPULATION

Year	"Tithables"	Estimated Total Population	Births	Birth Rate
1696	137	685	13	.018
1720	381	1,905	27	.014
1721	420	2,100	48	.022
1723	475	2,375	25	.010
1737	873	4,365	61	.014
1738	915	4,575	83	.018
1739	919	4,595	72	.016
1742	991	4,955	73	.015
1776	N/A*	790 (actual)	30	.038
1783	151	.790	N/A* (estimated 30)	.038

\*Not available.

Clearly, the population's increase in Spesutia was not simply a result of natural increase. Spesutia's birth rate was lower than the United States government's estimates of 1800 birth rate. It was even lower than that found in Lockridge's study of Dedham. In-migration was of great significance, especially if we take into account evidence of a growing number of tithables. Although the wealth of residents might have increased rapidly, the years 1720-1723 and 1737-39 clearly indicate that there was significant migration into Spesutia. There were one hundred births between 1720 and 1723. At the same time, there was an increase of ninety-four tithables. The numbers of tithables become even more significant if we take into account that most tithable males represented a family; certainly the tithables represented at least a man and his wife. Average number of children per family, as will be discussed, was above four, making the in-migration of tithables and their families very significant in the growth of population in Spesutia. Using the estimate of six people per family, the ninety-four tithables added between 1720 and 1723 mean an increase of population of 376; for 1737 through 1739 there would be added 184. These figures must be modified, of course, because local wealth probably increased and those long resident were among those who were added to the lists of tithables. But increasing local wealth cannot be the only answer to the question of why such an increase in tithables. In-migration must have represented a significant proportion of them. Thus, the population could have grown at a rapid rate, even though the birth rate remained comparatively low.

Numbers of Children Per Family

The Saint George's Parish Record provides good evidence about the numbers of children per family. When families entered the parish, vital statistics about each member was recorded at one time. Thus, the record contained many lists of the children in a family, sometimes preceded by the parents' marriage date, and followed by the deaths of immediate members who had already died. There were 123 such lists in the record, which showed entries with three or more children. I assumed because of the age of the parents in many families that it was not a mature family and that the parents would have more children later. The average number of children per mature family from these 123 lists was 5.20. Only one family had ten children, although there were several with eight or nine. If families with fewer than three children were averaged in with the others, the average number of children per family was close to four (3.8). These data include children who did not survive infancy, for children who died shortly after birth were recorded in the parish record. Also included in these calculations were illegitimate births. (Miscarriages were not listed on the record.) Thus, the average number of children in mature families was 5.2; and the average in all families was almost four children.

The 1776 census data on mature families is consistent with the parish register. There were 113 families noted on the census. In 1776 the average number of children per mature family was 5.7 when families of four or more children were averaged (see Table 4). The largest family was one of eleven children, although the oldest ones could not have been the children of the wife listed. The census showed, however, a much smaller number of children per family when all married couples

TABLE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN PER FAMILY  
FROM THE 1776 CENSUS\*

Numbers of Children in a Family	How Many Families Had This Many Children
0	15
1	27
2	21
3	20
4	9
5	11
6	2
7	4
8	1
9	2
10	1
11	1
(Family of George Ford)	

\*Average numbers of children per family is 2.66 of all couples. Average number for families of four or more children is 5.77.

were averaged together, including those with no children. The fifteen couples without children were in almost all cases young marrieds; only two were older parents whose children were adults who had established their own households. The average number of children, then, was 2.7 children per family. The average number of children per family was higher when those families without children were left out of the calculation: 3.1 children per family of those families with children.

Keeping in mind that Spesutia's experience might have been un-  
typical, the data about the numbers of children per family nevertheless

tend to agree with studies done on New England in the last fifteen years. But Spesutia's data, like those of the New England studies, are not in line with the assumptions about family size found in older studies by Julia Spruill, *Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies*, and Edmund Morgan, *The Virginia Family* and *The Puritan Family*. Spruill and Morgan concluded that families were extremely large. In contrast, the largest group in Spesutia (27 families) had one child, the second largest (21) had two, and the third largest (20) had three. Sixty-nine percent of Spesutia's white families with children at home, thus, had three or fewer children in 1776. John Demos used a census from Bristol to estimate that there were three to five children per family, but surmised that for total married years it would be seven to eight children.

Birth Intervals Between Children; Span of  
Childbearing; and Age at Birth  
of First Child

The interval of births in Spesutia was similar to that found in the work of other recent colonial demographic historians. Women in Spesutia had children about two years apart, with perhaps a three-year span toward the end of their childbearing years. There were examples of women with more or fewer years between children. Students of New England demography, however, accept such variations as the norm. The two-year interval was the result of "natural spacing." If a woman breast-fed her children she was usually infertile while she nursed. Children were usually weaned at the age of one year and historians surmise that when a woman had children less than two years apart, the first must have died. Some studies show more children per family in Virginia and the Carolinas, and children more closely spaced. Women in the south of all classes often did not nurse their own children, using instead wet-nurse slaves.

Spesutia, as I will discuss in a later section, had a large slave population. Slave women apparently were not used as wet nurses since the birth interval of two years appears consistent in both the parish record and the census.

The spacing of children did not change over a period of time. Two (plus a fraction) years was the interval in Spesutia in the seventeenth century, as well as for the years covered by the record in the eighteenth century. The 1776 census also provided information on birth intervals. It was also roughly two years. There were larger intervals in some families, but they may be explained as the result of the time between the death of the mother of the first children and the remarriage of the father. One to three years was the typical birth interval; two years then was the average.

Both New England and southern studies of families estimated that colonial women bore their children over twenty years. But, according to the parish record, only one woman in Spesutia had children over so long a number of years. Other examples show that one other woman had a seventeen-year span, and another fifteen years. Even women who bore many children, had them over a shorter number of years than indicated in other studies. The census also indicated that women bore the children over a period of time shorter than two decades. Even so, then, this raises questions on the accurate reporting of infant deaths. A fifteen-year span of child-bearing should have produced more than a rough average of four children per family.

The 1776 census indicated clearly the age of men and women at the birth of their first child (see Table 5). The average age at the birth of the first child was 22.8 for women and 27.2 for men. There were

TABLE 5

AGE DISTRIBUTION AT BIRTH OF FIRST CHILD\*  
FROM THE 1776 CENSUS

Age	Number of Women	Number of Men
15	..	..
16	4	..
17	8	1
18	7	0
19	7	2
20	7	4
21	7	4
22	5	5
23	4	3
24	9	4
25	3	9
26	2	11
27	3	7
28	6	3
29	2	3
30	3	1
31	3	1
32	1	2
33	0	1
34	3	5
35	1	2
36	..	..
37	..	..
38	..	..
39 and over	3	13

Note: Average age at birth of first child is 27.2 for men; 22.8 for women.

\*1776 Census.



significant numbers of teen-aged mothers, but very few fathers younger than 20 years old. Twenty-nine percent of the mothers were under twenty at the birth of their first child. In contrast, only 4 percent of the men were teenagers. When it appeared in the census that a sixteen-year old was the mother of a child older than one year, I assumed that that child or children were born to a former wife. No girls were married any younger than 15 in the parish record, even in the early eighteenth century.

The parish record provided fairly similar data about the early eighteenth century, with perhaps somewhat younger mothers and fathers. These parish data were not so easily assembled as those in the census. In and out-migration made it difficult to trace large numbers of individuals from birth to marriage to the birth of their first child. Those for whom complete data could be compiled, however, indicated that for men the average age was 26.2 and for women 21.8. Young parents were clearly not the norm. Only 30 percent of the mothers were under twenty years old and only 4 percent of the fathers.

#### Pre-Bridal Pregnancies and Illegitimate Children

The Spesutia Parish Record revealed a substantial number of pre-bridal pregnancies. The time between the marriage and the birth varied. Sometimes the marriage was six months before the birth, at others only a month, and twice the marriage was a week before the child was born. No action, according to the vestry record, was taken by the vestrymen in any of these cases. The vestrymen did at times concern themselves about the morality of parishioners. Certain couples were admonished to "cease cohabitation," but none of these warnings was directed at couples married after the conception of their first child. Apparently, the

vestrymen were more concerned about adultery than about pre-marital sex. There were usually one or two pregnant brides every year (see Table 6). The census revealed nothing about pre-bridal pregnancies.

TABLE 6  
CHILDREN BORN BEFORE PARENTS MARRIED NINE MONTHS  
FROM THE PARISH REGISTER

1707. . . . 1	1725. . . . 0	1743. . . . 0
1708. . . . 0	1726. . . . 0	1744. . . . 2
1709. . . . 0	1727. . . . 2	1745. . . . 0
1710. . . . 0	1728. . . . 0	1746. . . . 0
1711. . . . 0	1729. . . . 4	1747. . . . 1
1712. . . . 0	1730. . . . 0	1748. . . . 0
1713. . . . 0	1731. . . . 1	1749. . . . 0
1714. . . . 0	1732. . . . 2	1750. . . . 0
1715. . . . 0	1733. . . . 2	1751. . . . 0
1716. . . . 0	1734. . . . 2	1752. . . . 0
1717. . . . 0	1735. . . . 0	1753. . . . 1
1718. . . . 0	1736. . . . 0	1754. . . . 2
1719. . . . 1	1737. . . . 2	1755. . . . 2
1720. . . . 0	1738. . . . 3	1756. . . . 2
1721. . . . 0	1739. . . . 1	1757. . . . 1
1722. . . . 0	1740. . . . 0	1758. . . . 1
1723. . . . 1	1741. . . . 1	1759. . . . 0
1724. . . . 0	1742. . . . 0	1760. . . . 0
		1770. . . . 1
Total 36		

Not every child conceived out of wedlock, however, was legitimized by the marriage of the parents. There were a higher number of children born to an unmarried woman than there were marriages of pregnant brides. Illegitimate births were entered in the parish record with the mother's surname. Fathers were not listed. Among married women, sometimes a deceased father was noted as such. In twenty-year periods, there were seven illegitimate children born between 1700 and 1720; sixteen between 1720 and 1740; and fifteen between 1741 and 1760.

Illegitimate births were only a small percentage of the total number of children born. The year of the most illegitimate births was 1738, with three out of eighty-three children born to women without the name of a father, or 36 percent. A statistical trend cannot be seen. Generally, there was about one a year. The vestry record generally did not take notice of the birth of a child under such circumstances. One woman who twice had a child out of wedlock, however, had to appear before the vestry with her "cohabitor." The vestryman told them to "cease cohabiting," with apparently little success, since they were both called back twice for the same offense. Four other women had two or more illegitimate births. One of these women conceived a third child out of wedlock, although she married two months after its birth. Overall, Spesutia's illegitimate births were roughly one in sixty-four (see Table 7).

#### Twins

Noteworthy in the birth data for Spesutia was the frequency of twins. Current frequency of twinning is one in ninety births.<sup>31</sup> There were twenty-seven sets of twins recorded in the parish record. Thus fifty-four out of 2,902 children born were twins, or about one in fifty births were twins. In 1732 there were sixty-one births and two sets of twins, or four of sixty-one children born were twins. In 1717, two sets of twins were born of a total of twenty-one children. Such a high incidence suggests a possible high rate of intermarriage among people with a genetic disposition towards twins. Indeed one birth of twins was described in the record as that of "twins of twins." The 1776 census showed four sets of living twins; that is, eight children out of 314 were twins in Spesutia in 1776. Unfortunately, other colonial demographic

TABLE 7

## CHILDREN BORN TO A SINGLE WOMAN, 1681-1765

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---

1699	.....	1	1721	.....	0	1742	.....	1
1700	.....	0	1722	.....	0	1743	.....	2
1701	.....	1	1723	.....	1	1744	.....	1
1702	.....	0	1724	.....	1	1745	.....	1
1703	.....	0	1725	.....	0	1746	.....	0
1704	.....	0	1726	.....	1	1747	.....	1
1705	.....	0	1727	.....	2	1748	.....	0
1706	.....	1	1728	.....	1	1749	.....	1
1707	.....	1	1729	.....	0	1750	.....	0
1708	.....	0	1730	.....	0	1751	.....	0
1709	.....	0	1731	.....	1	1752	.....	0
1710	.....	1	1732	.....	0	1753	.....	1
1711	.....	0	1733	.....	2	1754	.....	1
1712	.....	0	1734	.....	1	1755	.....	1
1713	.....	0	1735	.....	1	1756	.....	1
1714	.....	0	1736	.....	1	1757	.....	1
1715	.....	1	1737	.....	0	1758	.....	1
1716	.....	0	1738	.....	3	1759	.....	1
1717	.....	0	1739	.....	1	1760	.....	1
1718	.....	0	1740	.....	0	1761	.....	1
1719	.....	1	1741	.....	0	1762	.....	2
1720	.....	0						

---

Total 42

NOTES: Child always given mother's surname, even if the father known.

In lists, the mother's illegitimate child first with her name, then the rest of the family with the father's name.

Twice to one woman: Bridget Daugh

Mary Evans--then became pregnant bride of  
Jos. Yates in 1729--baby born two  
months later

Eliz. Pritchard

Eliz. Mitchell

Eliz. Hargues--she and lover told to cease  
cohabitation by Vestry three  
times

studies do not include information about twins. This suggests that, despite extensive in and out-migration, a number of families remained over several generations.

## CHAPTER V

### MARRIAGE

There was an average of seven marriages per year in Spesutia Parish. The total number was 634 for the eighty-year period. The highest number was thirty in 1737, while in other years there were none. The marriage entries noted each person's name and sometimes parents' names. There were a few entries that provided the home of the bride and groom, listing their plantation or the area where they lived, especially if they were from another county or area. The years of the highest number of marriages were sometimes followed the next year by a high number of births. The data, however, do not suggest a definite pattern, for the year in which there were thirty marriages was followed by a year of 83 births, which was not the highest number of births (see Table 8). In the years that the population was rising dramatically, the number of marriages did not increase accordingly. This might indicate that there was in-migration of already married couples.

The census of 1776 provided no information about the numbers of marriages that year. But the census, perhaps not surprisingly, indicated that the married state was the norm in Saint George's. Of the 167 households, or units, represented in the census, 113 were families (at least a parent and child or a married couple). There were forty-three households that did not appear to be families because of the mixture of surnames or the lack of two people listed who could be husband and wife. There were units made up of a single white man and several slaves; some

TABLE 8

## MARRIAGES 1681-1765

1681	0	1724	8
1682	0	1725	8
1683	0	1726	18
1684	0	1727	6
1685	0	1728	11
1686	0	1729	16
1687	0	1730	10
1688	0	1731	14
1689	0	1732	12
1690	0	1733	22
1691	0	1734	21
1692	0	1735	25
1693	1	1736	12
1694	0	1737	30
1695	4	1738	17
1696	2	1739	20
1697	4	1740	24
1698	5	1741	17
1699	8	1742	15
1700	2	1743	22
1701	3	1744	9
1702	5	1745	4
1703	7	1746	6
1704	2	1747	6
1705	3	1748	8
1706	6	1749	6
1707	1	1750	5
1708	3	1751	11
1709	11	1752	8
1710	5	1753	3
1711	0	1754	11
1712	3	1755	9
1713	11	1756	10
1714	9	1757	14
1715	2	1758	16
1716	1	1759	5
1717	8	1760	4
1718	5	1761	11
1719	2	1762	9
1720	7	1763	4
1721	7	1764	9
1722	8	1765	1
1723	2		

... and men did not receive their inheritance of land until  
 the age of twenty-five, or perhaps many men were indentured

units were made up of slaves living alone on a white man's property. The number of single heads of household was thirty-six (twenty-six men and ten women). These ten women were either unmarried or widows, although none of them had children living with them. Twenty-two more households were headed by people who had been widowed and lived with their children.

The age at marriage can be estimated from both of these documents. Early data from the parish record showed that the age at marriage was about nineteen as an average for women, and twenty-two for men (see Table 9). In arriving at this average, it can be seen that there were marriages at fifteen. There was no clear trend, however, over the eighteenth century. Marriages of teenagers, for example, were observable in the early eighteenth century, as well as seventy years later.

The 1776 census can be used to estimate age at marriage too. By taking the age of husband and wife at the birth of their first child, and subtracting one year, an estimate can be made of the age at which they married. This age could be too high, but it could not be too low. Colonial historians have employed this calculation in other studies. In the days before effective birth control, most couples would probably have had their first child within one year, especially since colonial society expected that marriage would produce children.

An average of the 1776 figures showed that most men married at age twenty-six, and most women married at age twenty-two. This was slightly later for both men and women than the parish record figure for the early part of the century. The age at which men married both early and late in the century was probably related to inheritance or indentured servitude. Perhaps young men did not receive their inheritance of land until they reached the age of twenty-five, or perhaps many men were indentured



TABLE 9

## AVERAGE AGES AT MARRIAGE OF MEN AND WOMEN

## Examples from the Parish Record

Men

Charles Whiteaker . . . . .	b. 1693	m. 1718	aged 25
Peter Whiteaker . . . . .	b. 1696	m. 1723	aged 27
John Newsom . . . . .	b. 1694	m. 1715	aged 21
Elisha Perkins . . . . .	b. 1697	m. 1718	aged 21
Gregory Farmer . . . . .	b. 1704	m. 1723	aged 19
William Hamby . . . . .	b. 1703	m. 1722	aged 19
Absalom Brown . . . . .	b. 1703	m. 1728	aged 25

Average age of men at marriage was twenty-two in the early eighteenth century.

Women

Susanna Simpson Knight . . . . .	b. 1693	m. 1718	aged 25
Elizabeth Swift . . . . .	b. 1704	m. 1725	aged 21
Constantio West Barns . . . . .	b. 1703	m. 1722	aged 19
Hannah Jackson Kemble . . . . .	b. 1701	m. 1716	aged 15
Ann Preble Hawkins . . . . .	b. 1689	m. 1709	aged 20
Rachel Emson Farmer . . . . .	b. 1708	m. 1723	aged 15
Martha Beadle Hall . . . . .	b. 1668	m. 1693	aged 25
Hannah Jackson Harrington . . . . .	b. 1705	m. 1720	aged 15
Sarah West Cook . . . . .	b. 1701	m. 1726	aged 25

Average age of women at marriage was nineteen in the early eighteenth century.

TABLE 9--Continued

## Marriage Age from the 1776 Census

Ages at Marriage	How Many Men Were That Age	How Many Women Were That Age
15	0	4
16	1	8
17	0	7
18	2	7
19	4	7
20	4	7
21	5	5
22	3	4
23	4	9
24	9	3
25	11	2
26	7	3
27	3	6
28	3	2
29	1	3
30	1	3
31	2	1
32	1	0
33	5	3
34	2	1
35	3	2
36 and over	10	1

In 1776 average age at marriage for men was 26.2; for women 21.8.

and did not receive their release until their mid to late twenties. The census listed many men and women in their twenties as a part of their parents' family group, along with younger brothers and sisters.

Ashberry Cord, who took the census, lived with his mother, who was head of the household.

The average ages at marriage in 1776 indicated that husbands usually were older than wives. According to the census, of the ninety-three intact marriages, seventy-six showed the husband to be older than the wife. Thirteen women were older than their husbands and in four marriages the couple was the same age.

#### Remarriages

The parish record and the census provided information about second marriages, that is, remarriage after the death of a spouse. Calculations of the incidence of remarriage in Spesutia were difficult to make. The numbers of those widowed who did or did not remarry were hard to ascertain, as were many patterns in the parish record, because many people drop from further mention in the parish register with no explanation. Most likely, they moved on to another area. Nevertheless, remarriages were observable as such by closely located entries, or by successfully following names through the years. Remarriage clearly took place in Harford County, and often soon after the death of a husband or wife. The usual period between the loss of a spouse and remarriage seemed to be a year or so, but an interval of only a few months was not unusual. Indeed one couple married a month after the death of the woman's first husband. The parish record indicated, however, that overall more people had one spouse than two throughout their lifetimes.

by date of birth, date of wedding, marriage, date of death.

The 1776 census' clue to a second husband or wife was the ages of parents and the ages of children. When the oldest child was too old to have been born to the wife, clearly there had been a remarriage. Similarly, more than one marriage was suggested when in one family there was a gap between a group of older children and several younger children. The family of Thomas Ayres was one example. Thomas Ayres was thirty-eight in 1776 and his wife Bethia was twenty-three. Abraham Ayres was sixteen, Elizabeth and Milburn were six and three. From such calculations, sixteen of the fifty-five intact marriages (29 percent) were not first marriages. Similarly, of the total of 314 children, 23, or 7 percent, had a stepmother. Remarried husbands were harder to trace because husbands usually were older than their wives. A remarried wife's children would have had a last name different from that of the father. Since children, however, often lived with another family--"housed out" or apprenticed--it cannot be certain that children with different surnames were stepchildren.

In 1776 there were sixteen widows and six widowers who had not remarried. Since the census did not reveal the death of their spouses, it was impossible to determine the significance of the widowed as a percentage of those who had married. On the fact of it, the widowed population was equal to 40 percent of the married population.

In Spesutia, as far as one can tell by the data, only death broke the bonds of marriage. Divorce or separation was never mentioned in the vestry or parish record. Desertions were frequent in colonial times, as evidenced by newspaper advertisements for runaway wives. Divorce was possible under certain circumstances, but the parish record provided no information on any way of ending a marriage except death.

The vestrymen behaved as if marriage was the norm. The high rate of in-migration created special problems in Spesutia in regard to proof of marriage. The vestry record showed that several couples were called upon to prove that they were married. One couple produced a marriage certificate from Pennsylvania, another from Queen Anne's County. Two others were called upon to show proof and could not, so were ordered to "cease cohabitation." Of some, no more was heard, others were recalled in successive years, three or four times. No punishment or fine was mentioned. The legal authority the vestry possessed was unclear from the available evidence, although a Maryland Act of 1702 imposed fines in tobacco for various illegalities in marriage.<sup>32</sup>

#### Single People

Neither the parish record nor census provided explanations of relationships. Those who never married or who married late were hard to ascertain. If a marriage cannot be found for someone whose birth was noted on the parish register, we cannot know whether that person was single, had moved away, or even had died without the death being recorded. The census listed several people, mostly men, who lived in the household of another. Perhaps, these men and women in their thirties to fifties were servants who stayed on after their indentures ran out.

In Spesutia in 1760, however, we know that there were at least forty-five bachelors. During the 1760s a special bachelors' tax was levied on unmarried men over twenty-five years with estates worth over one hundred pounds. This tax was levied in Spesutia as forty pounds of tobacco per man.<sup>33</sup> The bachelor's tax was assessed every year from 1757 to 1763. (Table 10 lists those who appeared on the tax list more than once.)

TABLE 10

BACHELORS TAXED MORE THAN ONCE, 1757-1763

	1757	1758	1759	1760	1761	1762	1763
Garrett Garrettson	•	•	•	•			
John Peacock	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
James Kimball	•	•		•	•	•	
John Kimball	•		•				
Isaac Webster, Jr.	•	•	•	•			
Henry Ruff	•						
James Billingsly, Jr.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
James Armstrong	•	•					
Robert Gray	•						
John Bennett	•						
John Gallion	•	•	•				
Henry Waters	•						
Michael Webster, Jr.	•	•	•	•	•		
John Lee Webster		•	•	•	•	•	•
John Jolley Forgerman		•					
John Hanson Forgerman		•					
James Lee, Jr.		•	•	•	•	•	
Jacob Giles, Jr.			•				
James Matthews			•	•			
James Creswell			•	•	•		
James Wallis				•	•	•	
Richard Johns				•	•	•	•
Francis Billingsley				•	•	•	
Richard Dallam, Jr.				•	•	•	•
Robert Brierly					•	•	
Nathaniel Giles					•	•	•
William McClure						•	•
Samuel Griffiths						•	•

Clearly, their society thought that they should be taxed additionally because they had no family to support. Most of the men were assessed at being worth £300. One man protested the tax, saying he was not worth £100, and would not pay "this vain bachelor's tax."<sup>34</sup>

Although marriage was the norm, unmarried men apparently were not discriminated against in any other way than the bachelor's tax. Indeed some were most prominent and wealthy. John Lee Webster, for example, who was twenty-five years old in 1760, was listed on the 1776 census as the largest slaveowner in the parish. He was forty-one in 1776, his wife Elizabeth was thirty-three, and they had a year-old son, John, one twenty-five year-old servant woman, and sixty-four slaves. Webster must have married late, having amassed considerable property by the time he married.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, the 1776 census indicated that nearly everyone married. Neither the census nor the parish register provide much information about unmarried women.

#### Extended Family or Other Household Arrangements

The 1776 census listed social units as households: a household was more than a husband, wife and children. Living arrangements often included more than a nuclear family. The groups were not extended families of several generations under one roof; they were households of nuclear families, servants, slaves and apprenticed children of other families (see Table 11). Of the total 167 households on the census, 43 were not families, as far as can be determined by the listing of names and ages. These might have been single men overseeing slaves, slaves themselves on their owners' property, or other unusual arrangements. Eighty-six households (of the 167) were composed of a nuclear family-- a husband, wife and children--and no other relatives, servants, or

TABLE 11

## NUMBER OF PEOPLE PER HOUSEHOLD, 1776

People	Number of Households	People	Number of Households
1	23	35	0
2	19	36	0
3	20	37	1
4	20	38	1
5	15	39	0
6	12	40	1
7	13	41	0
8	5	42	0
9	14	43	0
10	1	44	0
11	2	45	0
12	4	46	1
13	5	47	0
14	3	48	0
15	1	49	0
16	3	50	0
17	1	51	0
18	0	52	0
19	1	53	0
20	4	54	2
21	0	55	0
22	1	56	1
23	0	57	0
24	0	58	0
25	0	59	0
26	0	60	0
27	1	61	0
28	1	62	0
29	0	63	0
30	1	64	0
31	0	65	0
32	0	66	0
33	0	67	0
34	0	68	1

Average number of people per household is 7.7.



slaves. Just over half, then, of the total households were a nuclear family. The balance of Spesutia's society was made up of households-- eighty-one of them--that included people outside a nuclear family. In most cases, the additional members were white servants or slaves. The average number of people per household was seven.<sup>36</sup>

Those families with relatives living with them, as far as can be determined, were not many. Six households apparently included the mother of the husband or wife. Three married children lived with their parents. In each case it was someone who had apparently been widowed, since there were young children with the surname of the younger adult. One household appeared to be of two brothers and their families. In seven households an unmarried brother or sister of the husband or wife resided with the nuclear family.

Nineteen families had children under ten living with them with surnames other than that of the head of the household. These could have been children of a wife's former marriage, or perhaps orphans. They also could have been children "put out" in another household, as was customary in colonial America. Children under ten, in view of the availability of slaves, would not have been primarily hired as servants. Forty-one households included teenaged children with surnames different from those of the head of the family. These children could have been servants or apprentices, but they could have been orphans too. Sometimes an unusual name revealed that a young adult resident in a particular household had parents in the parish. Twenty-four-year-old James Filiganelle, for example, lived in the Fie's household; his parents Thomas and Mary Filiganelle, aged sixty and forty-nine, lived alone. The sixty people over age twenty living with another family were most likely servants, either hired or indentured.

Spesutia's households, then, were about evenly divided between nuclear families and households which included some "outsiders." The relevance of these findings about Spesutia's households to other geographic areas will be discussed later.<sup>37</sup> Households which owned slaves numbered 54; 113 households therefore did not have slaves. Similarly, slavery will be discussed in a later section.

## CHAPTER VI

### DEATH

Deaths were the least frequent entry in Spesutia's Parish Record. John Demos and Phillip Greven maintain that the colonials were notoriously neglectful about recording deaths, although neither they nor I can offer a good explanation for failure to list deaths.

Deaths were reported without comment in the parish record. Only one entry read anything like an obituary. Madam Martha Hall, the register noted, "departed this life the 4th day of February in the year One Thousand Seven Hundred and Twenty, Aged 52 years 4 months and 4 days Being the Daughter of Mr. Edward Beadall and May his wife and was married to her Husband John Hall Esq. Twenty-seven years six months and nineteen days." Her husband and others of her social rank did not receive such full treatment, nor did ministers of the church. Reverend Stephen Wilkinson, pastor in the mid-eighteenth century, died in 1744, and was merely listed among other entries for the year.

Even in the years around the Revolution the register did not attribute deaths to the war or war-related mishaps. Tombstones in the Hall family plot, the earliest family to be buried in the churchyard rather than on their own land, took note of the Revolution. Captain John Hall's service in the Revolution was noted on his tombstone, but not in the parish record. Colonial Thomas White's death in the war was acknowledged on his headstone. Despite the lack of comment, several sets of entries suggested sad little stories, such as a marriage, a

birth of twins, and the death of the mother a year later. Some others were of a marriage, a birth of a child less than nine months later, and then the death of that child.

The numbers of deaths compared to births was extremely low. The year of the highest number of deaths was 1720 with thirty-three deaths; in the years before and after there were six and five deaths (see Fig. 7). Apparently there was an epidemic of some kind in 1720. Northern Maryland was not as susceptible to semi-tropical diseases as was Jamestown and the Carolinas, but there were references in the southern Maryland studies to "the ague," "bloody flux," "gripping of the guts," and "general weakness," suggesting influenza, smallpox, and typhoid. The New World never experienced plagues like those in Europe or England, and there was never a food shortage after the first few years of settlement. Maryland was not an area of severe winters as was New England, although many seventeenth-century deaths apparently were due to "seasoning" of newcomers. The slaves were particularly prone to diseases and death because of adjustment.<sup>38</sup>

Despite the problems of disease, weather, and "seasoning," the life span had clearly lengthened by the eighteenth century. A study of twenty-five seventeenth-century Maryland men in Charles County, Maryland, showed that most died before the age of 50.<sup>39</sup> Other studies of seventeenth-century southern Maryland showed similar life spans.<sup>40</sup> Life spans were hard to trace in Spesutia. Although the deaths of a significant number of people appeared on the parish record, rarely were their births recorded (in the early eighteenth century). Most likely they had been born elsewhere. Examples of lifespans drawn from the parish register are found in Table 12.

Table 12. Lifespans of people recorded in Table 12

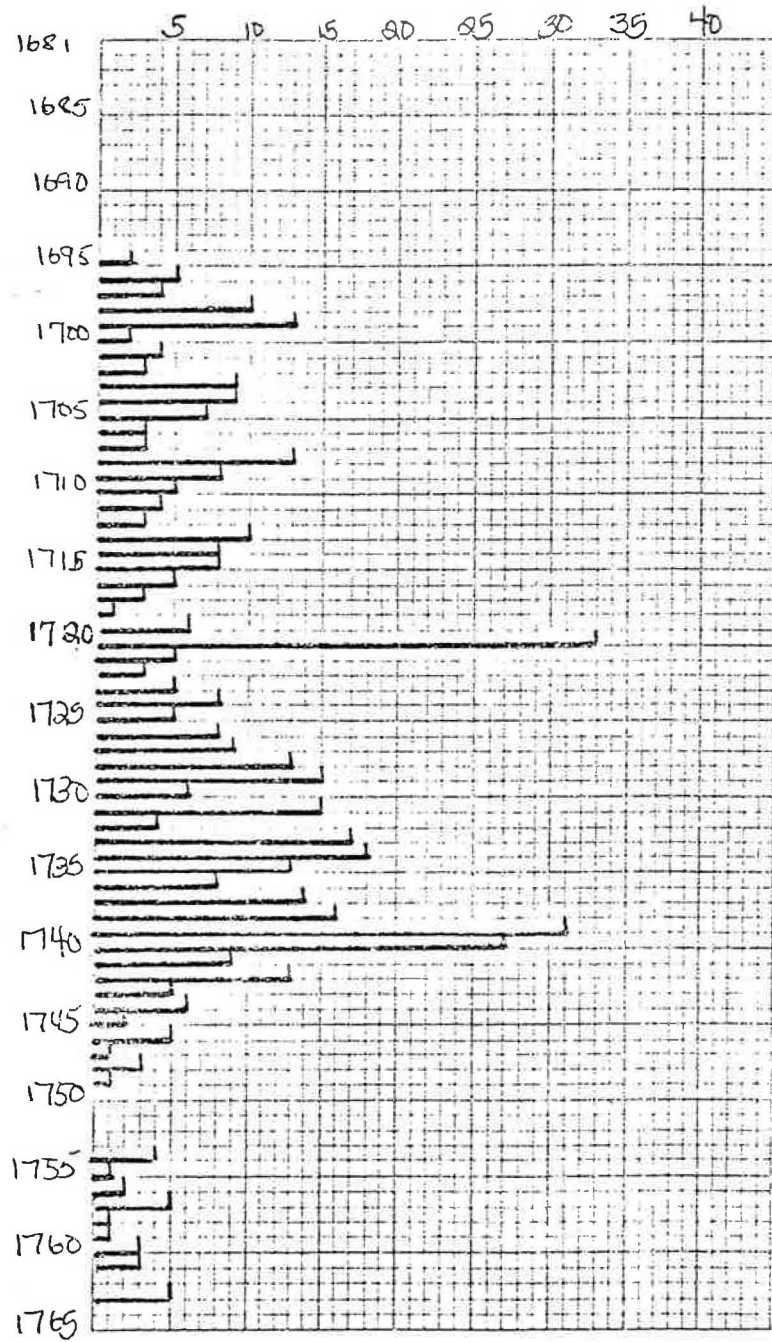


Fig. 7. Numbers of deaths recorded, 1681-1765

TABLE 12

## SOME EXAMPLES OF LIFESPAN FROM THE PARISH REGISTER

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Most of the entries that are easy to spot are children.

---

John Webster . . . . .	b. 1717	d. 1720
Elizabeth Simpson . . .	b. 1697	d. 1698
Ann Lester . . . . .	b. 1720	d. 1720
Even Miles . . . . .	b. 1694	d. 1698
John Miles . . . . .	b. 1696	d. 1697

---

Some adults and their dates:

---

John Newsom . . . . .	b. 1694	d. 1720	26 years
Mary Paca . . . . .	b. 1632	d. 1699	67 years
Martha Hall . . . . .	b. 1668	d. 1720	52 years
Sarah Fresland . . . . .	b. 1664	d. 1708	44 years

---

The ages of the population of Spesutia Lower in 1776, however, clearly showed a longer life span than fifty years. The white people ranged in age from newly-born to seventy-four; forty-two whites were fifty years or older, or 5 percent of the white population was over twenty-one years old. The slaves claimed to have more septegenarians than the whites (three). Two slaves claimed to be eighty, one ninety-nine, and three slaves said they were one hundred, although these latter figures are suspect (see Tables 13, 14, 15).

What the parish record showed most clearly was that the birth rate exceeded the death rate, unless the recording of deaths was often omitted. The year of the highest number of births (eighty-nine in 1734)

TABLE 13

## AGE DISTRIBUTION OF WHITES, 1776 CENSUS

Age	How Many Are That Age	Age	How Many Are That Age
-1	30	38	8
1	28	39	6
2	26	40	10
3	30	41	42
4	24	42	4
5	26	43	2
6	21	44	3
7	22	45	7
8	16	46	5
9	14	47	0
10	18	48	5
11	16	49	3
12	19	50	9
13	17	51	1
14	24	52	8
15	24	53	3
16	14	54	1
17	16	55	2
18	13	56	3
19	14	57	1
20	25	58	1
21	9	59	0
22	14	60	5
23	27	61	0
24	10	62	2
25	30	63	0
26	23	64	3
27	24	65	1
28	15	66	1
29	11	67	1
30	28	68	1
31	11	69	1
32	14	70	2
33	14	71	0
34	4	72	0
35	11	73	0
36	8	74	1
37	5		

TABLE 14

## AGES OF WHITE POPULATION IN 1776

Age	Men	Women
-1	9	19
1	10	15
2	7	14
3	17	13
4	10	14
5	7	15
6	8	10
7	10	13
8	8	7
9	6	6
10	9	4
11	9	5
12	11	6
13	1	12
14	11	12
15	8	12
16	3	9
17	7	3
18	1	7
19	7	9
20	9	16
21	3	6
22	5	9
23	15	11
24	6	5
25	15	14
26	17	6
27	10	4
28	9	5
29	9	3
30	13	14
31	7	4
32	11	4
33	5	8
34	1	3
35	8	3
36	8	1
37	4	1
38	4	3
39	4	2
40	4	5
41	2	0
42	2	1
43	0	2
44	2	1
45	2	3



TABLE 14--Continued

Age	Men	Women
46	4	1
47	0	0
48	4	1
49	2	2
50	7	3
51	0	1
52	2	4
53	2	0
54	0	1
55	1	1
56	2	1
57	1	0
58	1	0
59	0	0
60	2	3
61	0	0
62	2	0
63	0	0
64	2	1
65	1	0
66	1	0
67	1	0
68	1	0
69	0	0
70	0	0
71	0	0
72	0	0
73	0	0
74	0	1
75	0	0
76	0	0
77	0	0
78	0	0
79	0	0
80	0	0
81	0	0
82	0	0
..	..	..
..	..	..
99	0	0
100	0	0
Total	419	371

TABLE 15

## AGES OF BLACK POPULATION IN 1776

Age	Women*	Men*
-1	13	11
1	4	13
2	4	12
3	14	14
4	10	10
5	10	12
6	8	15
7	12	18
8	3	8
9	9	10
10	4	12
11	9	8
12	11	9
13	10	10
14	7	9
15	6	15
16	5	4
17	11	10
18	1	7
19	2	6
20	11	13
21	5	4
22	1	5
23	3	2
24	4	5
25	8	9
26	5	5
27	1	6
28	6	6
29	0	3
30	8	11
31	1	0
32	1	2
33	2	3
34	1	1
35	6	12
36	2	1
37	1	2
38	0	4
39	1	1
40	4	4
41	0	0
42	0	1
43	1	3
44	2	1

TABLE 15--Continued

Age	Women*	Men*
45	3	2
46	1	0
47	2	1
48	0	0
49	0	1
50	4	9
51	0	0
52	0	0
53	0	0
54	0	0
55	0	3
56	1	1
57	1	
58	0	1
59	1	0
60	3	10
61	0	0
62	0	1
63	1	5
64	1	0
65	2	2
66	1	0
67	0	1
68	0	1
69	0	0
70	2	1
71	0	0
72	0	0
73	0	0
74	0	0
75	0	0
76	0	0
77	0	0
78	0	0
79	0	0
80	1	1
81	0	0
..	..	..
..	..	..
..	..	..
99	0	1
100	2	1
	251	352

\*Where possible to identify sex by the slave's name.

had only eighteen deaths. Three years, 1750-1753, did not show any deaths at all, and the births in those years were thirty-two, twenty-eight, and forty-one. The total number of births was 2,802, while the death total was 491; the average number of births per year was 35.7 and the average number of deaths was 5.8. The population, according to the parish register, was reproducing itself at a much faster rate than it was dying off. In fact the year after the thirty-three deaths in 1720, forty-eight children were born, as compared to twenty-seven the year before and twenty-five the year after (see Table 16 and Fig. 8). English studies of seventeenth-century parishes showed a death rate nearly the same as the birth rate.<sup>41</sup>

#### Maternal and Infant Deaths

The parish record offered evidence of both infant and maternal death from childbirth. In Spesutia there was a low incidence of maternal death. If a mother died in childbirth, her death was noted not far from the notation of her child's birth. On average, there were only one or so deaths in childbirth in a year. To be sure, a woman's health could have been weakened causing death some months or a year later. In 1703 two women died, and twenty-one children were born; in 1716 one died of twenty; in 1733 one of seventy; and in 1738 one of eighty-three. The rate went down, but the data were too scanty for definite conclusions.

The death of newborn infants was recorded in the parish record too. Unfortunately, the data must be flawed because the rate was so low. We can cautiously ascertain rates from the data we have because we know the total numbers of births and deaths, as well as the deaths of some newborns. Miscarriages were obviously not recorded. Stillborns would not have been recorded, and possibly many premature infants were born

TABLE 16

## BIRTHS AND DEATHS, 1681-1765

Year	Births	Deaths	Year	Births	Deaths
1681	1	0	1723	55	5
1682	1	0	1724	41	8
1683	0	0	1725	61	5
1684	4	0	1726	59	8
1685	0	0	1727	48	9
1686	1	0	1728	62	13
1687	1	0	1729	61	15
1688	1	0	1730	49	6
1689	5	0	1731	77	15
1690	4	0	1732	61	4
1691	11	0	1733	79	17
1692	7	0	1734	89	18
1693	12	0	1735	79	13
1694	7	0	1736	88	8
1695	20	2	1737	61	14
1696	13	5	1738	83	16
1697	12	4	1739	72	31
1698	20	10	1740	72	27
1699	22	13	1741	61	9
1700	20	2	1742	73	13
1701	14	4	1743	58	5
1702	17	3	1744	53	6
1703	21	9	1745	28	2
1704	16	9	1746	41	5
1705	15	7	1747	36	1
1706	20	3	1748	22	3
1707	19	3	1749	45	1
1708	17	13	1750	32	0
1709	25	8	1751	28	0
1710	25	5	1752	41	0
1711	16	4	1753	39	0
1712	20	3	1754	50	4
1713	25	10	1755	54	1
1714	18	8	1756	67	2
1715	30	8	1757	48	5
1716	20	5	1758	65	1
1717	21	3	1759	57	1
1718	20	1	1760	40	3
1719	28	6	1761	43	3
1720	27	33	1762	44	0
1721	48	5	1763	20	5
1722	25	3	1764	10	0
			1765	11	0

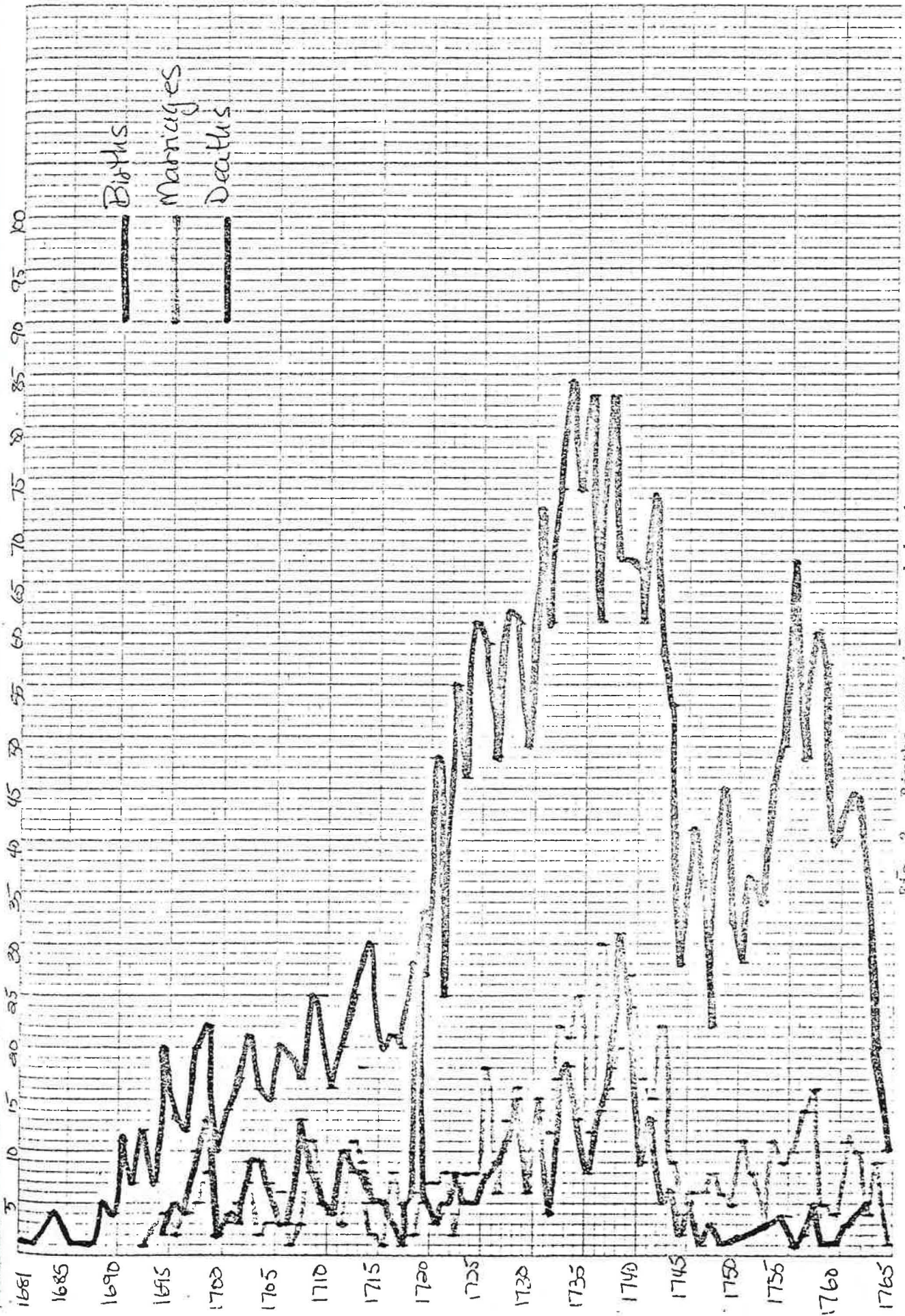


Fig. 3. Births, marriages and deaths compared

who could neither be named nor christened. There were a few entries, however, of children who were born and died the same day. All were given a name, except one noted as "baby girl." Table 17 on infant deaths includes children who lived less than a year in most cases, and not any who lived beyond age three. There were in the parish register a total of 48 deaths of infants, of a total of 2,718 births between 1703 and 1761. As a result, the infant death rate was .018, or one in fifty-six. These rates are far below those of today, making these data suspect. When the Spesutia rate was arbitrarily doubled or tripled, it remained quite low. The parish register indicates that on average 1.2 children died each year. Many years go by with no infant deaths, while in some others there were four or five. In 1724, forty-one children were born and five died; in 1727 five died out of forty-eight. But in 1736, the year of the highest number of births, eighty-eight children were born and none died. In some earlier years, the figures are one death in twenty-one, one in twenty, and two in sixteen. The year of the highest number of total deaths was 1720 with thirty-three deaths, but there were no infant deaths that year. The general relationship of infant deaths to all deaths recorded in the register was .097 or approximately 10 percent of all deaths were of infants. The experience of individual families belied these rates too. One of the notable Hall families, for example, lost two of their seven children as infants.

In the face of this evidence, and the 20 percent infant mortality rate estimated for New England, the Spesutia figures must be in error. If not, Harford County, Maryland, must have been the healthiest place in the colonies to have a baby.

TABLE 17

## INFANT DEATHS, 1703-1761

1703 . . . . .	1	1733 . . . . .	0
1704 . . . . .	0	1734 . . . . .	0
1705 . . . . .	0	1735 . . . . .	2
1706 . . . . .	1	1736 . . . . .	0
1707 . . . . .	0	1737 . . . . .	0
1708 . . . . .	0	1738 . . . . .	1
1709 . . . . .	0	1739 . . . . .	2
1710 . . . . .	2	1740 . . . . .	2
1711 . . . . .	2	1741 . . . . .	0
1712 . . . . .	0	1742 . . . . .	2
1713 . . . . .	1	1743 . . . . .	0
1714 . . . . .	0	1744 . . . . .	0
1715 . . . . .	2	1745 . . . . .	0
1716 . . . . .	1	1746 . . . . .	0
1717 . . . . .	0	1747 . . . . .	1
1718 . . . . .	0	1748 . . . . .	0
1719 . . . . .	0	1749 . . . . .	0
1720 . . . . .	2	1750 . . . . .	0
1721 . . . . .	1	1751 . . . . .	0
1722 . . . . .	0	1752 . . . . .	0
1723 . . . . .	0	1753 . . . . .	0
1724 . . . . .	5	1754 . . . . .	1
1725 . . . . .	0	1755 . . . . .	0
1726 . . . . .	3	1756 . . . . .	0
1727 . . . . .	5	1757 . . . . .	0
1728 . . . . .	3	1758 . . . . .	0
1729 . . . . .	4	1759 . . . . .	0
1730 . . . . .	2	1760 . . . . .	0
1731 . . . . .	2	1761 . . . . .	1
1732 . . . . .	0		

NOTES: Able to note if child's death listed with its birth, or right after.

All named but one--called baby girl.



## CHAPTER VII

### SERVANTS AND SLAVES

To study the people of Spesutia fully we need to consider the parish's servants and slaves. Spesutia Lower Hundred had a total of 1,440 people in 1776; 790 were white and 650 black. Only four blacks were designated as free. Spesutia Lower was, therefore, nearly half white and half black, or half free and half slave. When the number of white servants living at the home of another were added (nineteen under ten, forty-one from ten to twenty, and sixty over twenty-one) to the slaves, Spesutia had 770 people in service.

These data were striking in the census because the parish record made little or no mention of servants. Slaves were not mentioned at all either in the parish or vestry record. Two deaths were recorded in the record as "two Irish servants," and occasionally an individual was identified as a "servant to" or "man to." Since Negroes did not have last names on the census, and did not years earlier either, we can be reasonably certain that they were not any of the people mentioned on the parish record. Only one of the four free Negroes of 1776 had a last name.

Despite the large total number of slaves and servants, more households did not have slaves and servants than those that did. Of a total of 167 households listed in the census, 54 included slaves; 113 did not have slaves. Of these 113 households without slaves, however, 22 had at

least one white servant. There were, then 91 households without "help," while 76 had either servants or slaves; 37 had both.

White servants were not necessarily wage laborers. They could have been indentured, typically as youths for a specific period of time. A three-year-old, for example, was bound out to a Justice of the Peace for eighteen years for "all such services and employments as his master should think fit."<sup>42</sup> Sometimes orphans (and at times this meant only that the child's father was dead) were indentured as part of the settlement of a parent's estate. Children were often "put out" in the household of another for education, or simply because it was common practice in England and New England. But court cases involved cruel treatment of ten and twelve-year-old children who had been bound out, used only for labor.

The largest number of white servants on the census, however, was of those over twenty-one, and there were many servants in their thirties and forties. These older servants were more than likely "hired hands" rather than indentured servants. Some Maryland historians believe that there were not many white servants in Maryland by the mid-eighteenth century because of the large numbers of slaves. Clearly, this was not the case in Spesutia.

Among the fifty-four slave-owning households there were from one to sixty-four slaves (see Table 18). The households containing large numbers of slaves were those of the county's political, social and militia leaders: the Halls, Garretts, Dallams, Websters, and Fords. Slave-owning obviously contributed to wealth, and wealth to political, military and social position. This correlation was not absolute, however, for the man who owned the most slaves, John Lee Webster, was not a

TABLE 18

NUMBERS OF SLAVES IN HOUSEHOLDS IN  
SPESUTIA LOWER HUNDRED, 1776

Numbers of Slaves	Households	Numbers of Slaves	Households
1	4	33	0
2	4	34	0
3	4	35	1
4	7	36	0
5	6	37	1
6	2	38	0
7	3	39	0
8	2	40	0
9	4	41	1
10	2	42	0
11	2	43	0
12	0	44	0
13	1	45	0
14	2	46	0
15	2	47	0
16	1	48	0
17	1	49	0
18	0	50	0
19	1	51	0
20	0	52	0
21	0	53	0
22	1	54	1
23	0	55	0
24	0	56	0
25	0	57	0
26	0	58	0
27	1	59	0
28	0	60	0
29	0	61	0
30	1	62	0
31	0	63	0
32	0	64	1

leader in Harford County government. Webster owned sixty-four slaves. Most slaveowners had from one to ten, while larger numbers of slaves were distributed among twelve or so families. Hannah Hall had fifty-four; Amos Garrett, the Constable, had twenty-five.

Neither the census nor the parish record indicated much about slaves' family life. It was probably determined largely by the fact that by 1776 there was still a "plantation" economy in Harford County. Tobacco was still grown as the staple export crop. In fact, into the nineteenth century, tobacco itself was sometimes still used in exchange instead of money.

The census did not distinguish slaves well enough to identify which were parents and which were children. The slaves had first names only, and the stereotypical "Jupiter," "Cato," and "Dido" persisted on the lists, along with politically-motivated names like "Marlborough" and "Orange." But most were Joe, Bill, Hannah and Mary. There were more male slaves (352) than female (251); the majority were younger than twenty-five.

There were four free Negroes, each employed at a separate household. "Ben Galloway" was the only free Negro (or slave for that matter) with a last name. "Hannah," another of the four free blacks, was designated as a free mulatto. Seven households contained slaves alone. Five of these households were referred to as someone else's "quart." for "quarters." A "quarter" was an area being cleared by slaves for future cultivation. The quarters belonged to the leading families: the Halls, Castledines, Hughes, and Wests. Two households contained only a white man, presumably an overseer, and several slaves.

Spesutia Lower Hundred had a higher ratio of slaves to whites than the Upper Hundred, where whites were 769 and blacks 340. Since the Upper had a higher ratio than almost any other hundred in Harford County, Spesutia Lower's half-white, half-black population was not typical at all of Harford County. The total county population in 1776 was 12,765--9,423 whites, 3,342 blacks.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PROMINENCE IN SPESUTIA

The data about the people of Spesutia provide insights into the social and political organization of Harford County. Alone, the parish register and vestry record told little of the wealth and political prominence of the community. The 1776 census and 1783 tax list provided an important insight into the social and political life of Spesutia when studied in connection with the lists of the members of the many committees and organizations connected with either the first Harford County government or the Revolutionary movement.<sup>43</sup> In the 1770s every county organized a militia and held meetings to discuss the changes in British trade policy and events in New England. Additionally, these were the years when Harford County government was organized. In 1774 Harford County separated from Baltimore County and organized itself separately.

We can determine roughly how wealth, family size, numbers of slaves and property ownership contributed to a man's social prominence and likelihood of a position of community leadership. Table 19 shows men who appeared on at least two "rosters" from Spesutia. They had to be included on two of the following: the tax list, the census, among those who rented pews, as members of the vestry, or among those who paid the bachelor's tax. Not everyone on the many county-wide committees was from Spesutia; some came from another hundred. Some men were on the tax list but not on the census. Aquila Hall was one of these. Maybe those were counted who were physically there--Hall could have been off with

TABLE 19  
THE ELITE OF SPESUTIA IN 1776

	Bachelor's Tax	First County Government	First Grand Jury	First Petit Jury	First Attorneys	First County Officers	Maryland Convention	Committee of Correspondence	War Committee	Militia Officers	Bush Declaration Signers	Pew Renters	Vestrymen 1760-90	On 1776 Census	Age at 1776	Slaves in 1776	On Tax List 1783 (=208)	Amount Taxes (=£)	Mill of Forge Investors	"Title" Holder
John Carlile										X				X	29					
Gabriel Christie														X	19		X	24		
Ashberry Cord			X											X	35		X	4		
Josias Dallam														X	28	19	X	64		
Richard Dallam	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X		X				X			
Greenberry Dorsey									X	X	X			X	46	9	X	17		
Jacob Forward										X				X						
Anos Garrett		X				X		X	X				X	X	53	35	X	21		
Garrett Garrettsen	X												X	X	29	4				
Jacob Giles	X													X		1			X	
Nathaniel Giles	X							X											X	
Saouel Griffiths	X									X			X	X	39	27	X	34		
Aquila Hall		X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				27		
Edward Hall			X						X			X								
John Hall	X	X				X						X							X	Capt.
Josias Carvil Hall									X	X	X		X	X		14				Dr.
William Hall	X		X											X	26	30	X	36		
Francis Holland									X	X	X	X		X	30	9				
Thomas Johnson				X					X	X	X									
William Johnson	X													X	36					
James Kimball	X													X	49	15				
William Loney														X	24	6	X	36		
John Love	X							X	X	X										
John Matthews		X				X		X	X					X	32	16	X	22		
Leven Matthews			X											X	40	11				
William Osborn	X	X																		
Aquila Paes	X	X				X					X			X	23	8	X	58		
John Paes		X				X		X	X			X								
George Patterson										X	X		X							
Jeremy Sheradine		X				X							X							
William Smith											X		X	X	28	15			X	
James Stewart										X				X	30	7				
Robert Stokes														X	19	10	X	77		
Edward Ward											X			X	40	3				
Isaac Webster	X								X											
John Lee Webster	X													X	41	64	X	92		
Thomas White												X	X				X	25	X	Col.
John Wood										X				X	40	3				

the Continental Army. Similarly, I know Thomas White was killed in the Revolution, but others are not so easily explained.

The earliest criterion was the bachelor's tax list, taken yearly from 1757-1763. Some men appear on it every year, some drop out, or do not start to appear until the last years. The men had to be twenty-five and have sufficient assets (£100) to be taxed, so maybe some were not eligible until the later years. Obviously marriage exempted one from the tax. A man could have been married before twenty-five and never paid, or married after paying the tax once or twice. This list showed young men of fairly considerable assets, and many of these men went on to prominence in the 1770s and 1780s.

The first government of Harford County of 1774 listed several offices and committees. There was a grand and petit jury, attorneys at the bar, and the county officials themselves. Many names familiar from Spesutia Parish appeared on these lists. By 1774 Spesutia had split into the upper and lower hundreds, and the names on the census and tax list would not have contained names of men who had been "districted out" by living in the upper part of the parish.

The years before the Revolution also saw the prominent men of Spesutia join together to petition and then defy Britain. Recent studies argue that "frontier" Maryland was generally Loyalist, but Spesutia appeared pro-revolution.<sup>44</sup> The rectors of Maryland were loyalist for the most part--many left but returned after the war and swore allegiance to the new government. Only about four of twenty-eight ministers did not return. There was no record of Spesutia's ministers personal sentiments. The county's leaders, however, signed an important revolutionary document. Thirty-four men met at the town of Bush on March 22, 1775,

signed a statement supporting the Boston boycott of British goods and pledged Maryland's support of the cause. The so-called Bush Declaration went so far as to state that the American colonies should be separate from Great Britain. This was supposed to be the first such document signed by a duly elected body in the American colonies advocating independence. The county's leaders all signed--members of among others the Hall, Paca and Dallam families. Similarly, Spesutia sent representatives to the Maryland Convention, selected men from the parish to correspond with other counties to report and receive news. There was a War Committee for the Upper and Lower Hundreds, and seventeen groups of militia, plus the two companies of the Harford Rifles. Several men were in the Continental Army rather than the militia; among them were Aquila Hall and Col. Thomas White.

What we know of participation in county government and revolutionary affairs allows us to correlate taxable wealth to these activities (see Table 19). If a man appeared on lists only having to do with wealth or business, we can conclude he was not a social or political leader. From the Maryland Tax List of 1783, I have included all men from this area taxed over £20. If a man was known from several county positions, I have included when he was taxed, even if it was less than £20. The numbers of slaves owned in 1776 was known and was an important indication of wealth. The vestry minutes provided important indicators of importance in the community, as well as wealth. Members of the vestry were no doubt important individuals in the community, perhaps an elite. The office was not entirely honorific, in view of the fact that men turned down election and were fined for refusing to serve. The ability to rent pews was a sign of wealth and no doubt status, given the



importance of the church in the life of the community. Some rented pews for others; some rented them for visitors or sea captains.

By choosing the apparently prominent men listed on the census and the tax list, and then seeing where they fit into the community's political and social activities, we can know something of the leadership in the local society and polity.

The table correlating these factors speaks for itself. Obviously the men who were on the most lists of local activities were the most "observable," prominent men in Spesutia. When checked against the three lists which indicate taxable wealth, however, we can make a number of perhaps surprising conclusions.

The wealthiest men were not necessarily the community leaders. The wealthiest man, John Lee Webster, was mentioned only on tax lists and the census. He was a wealthy bachelor in his late twenties in the 1760s. By 1776 he was married, had one young child, and owned sixty-four slaves. By 1783 his assessed taxes were £93. Yet, he held not a single office in Harford County. Another wealthy man in 1783 was Robert Stokes. If he was the same Robert Stokes listed on the 1776 census, he was only nineteen in 1776, but owned ten slaves. By 1783, he was taxable for £77. Like Webster, however, he held no county offices. Neither man was active in the vestry either. William Loney was another mentioned only as a slaveowner and taxable at £36 in 1783, who held no offices. Josias Dallam had nineteen slaves in 1776 and was worth £64 in taxes in 1783. He was then the second wealthiest man in Spesutia in 1783, but held no offices. Gabriel Christie was only on the census and tax list (for £24). Samuel Griffiths was taxed in 1783 for two properties. The two of them added up to a large property holding, taxable for

a total of £61, and he owned twenty-seven slaves. Unlike all the other of the wealthiest, he served as a vestryman and also as a commander in the militia.

With the exception of Samuel Griffiths all of these wealthiest men in 1783 held no office at all. Perhaps they were Loyalists, although that was doubtful since they were still around in 1783 and were even more prosperous than in the years of the Revolution. More than likely they were simply not political men and were interested only in their own property. At any rate, the wealthiest and the largest slave-owners were not the most active politically.

Political prominence belonged to men of a lower scale of wealth. Richard Dallam was the most eminent Spesutian by my criteria of activity in church and political activities. He was not on the census, inexplicably, but was assessed £33 on the 1783 tax list. He held many offices in the county and was active on every war committee. Amos Garrett, the constable, served on several other committees. He owned thirty-five slaves and was taxed £21. Similarly, John Paca, Jeremy Sheredine, John Matthews and Francis Holland were active politically. They were men of moderate wealth in terms of slave ownership and taxation. Aquila Hall and Dr. John Archer, for whom the evidence was not so complete, nevertheless appear to have been men of moderate wealth who were very active in church and local affairs.

No man in the pauper's category held any positions at all. One or two men, though, held some committee posts but were not listed on either the census (for slaveowning) or the tax list of 1783. They were not paupers, but they were not men of any apparently taxable property either.

Generally it can be said, then, that wealth and slaveowning contributed to political prominence, but that the wealthiest men were not the political leaders in Saint George's Parish.

## CHAPTER IX

### COMPARISONS OF STUDIES OF NEW ENGLAND, MARYLAND AND THE SOUTH

My findings on colonial Harford County can be compared in part at least to recent demographic and family studies of other parts of colonial America. Most of these have covered New England, although certain areas and sects in Pennsylvania have been investigated statistically as well. In Maryland studies, Lois Carr, Lorena Walsh, Russell Menard, and P.G.M. Harris have studied intensively the people and life of the three southern counties of Calvert, Charles and Saint Marys. Most of these investigations have concentrated on the seventeenth century. Alan Kulikoff, in contrast, has made a statistical and economic study of Prince George's County into the eighteenth century. Areas further south than Maryland have not been studied demographically in any significant way.<sup>45</sup>

My study of Spesutia was not entirely comparable to these other works. Like these other studies, the subjects I studied were determined by the availability and quality of my sources and data. In some respects Spesutia cannot be compared to New England or southern Maryland. Where the subjects were comparable, a discussion of other findings was useful. Spesutia, like the other places and times studied, might have been atypical, but colonial and regional patterns of birth, death, marriage, family size, etc., will be established only as more and more local studies are done. As a student of Maryland, my only regret is that this

study of the people of Spesutia was not easily comparable to the studies of southern Maryland. These works concentrated on the seventeenth century in the most populated area of Maryland. They were conducted for a period of time when the population did not in the majority conform to family patterns. Indentured servants were prevalent in the population, and an imbalance was created by the presence of many single men of the "adventurer" sort. Southern Maryland statistics on lifespan and age at death were not comparable to the eighteenth century because the population was in large part first-generation immigrant, and "seasoning" took off many by disease.

Alan Kulikoff extended his study of Prince George's County to the eighteenth century. His findings about Prince George's were comparable in certain respects to mine for Spesutia. Our studies, however, were not entirely similar because his focused on the economic development of Prince George's County along with social changes. Many of the subjects I investigated he did not consider. He estimated seven children per family, however, as the average for Prince George's County in the eighteenth century. This was higher than my estimate for Spesutia. Life expectancy rose during the eighteenth century, he estimated, as did that of the age of marriage which went up from late teens in the seventeenth century to early and even late twenties in the eighteenth century. These findings generally are in line with the Spesutia experience, although there were greater fluctuations in Prince George's.

When Spesutia is compared to other areas in colonial America, we can see whether Harford County, Maryland, appeared to be typical or unusual. Comparisons also provide some insight into whether Maryland was more similar to the South or to the North. A more definite judgment

about Spesutia's typicality must await further studies of other parts of Maryland and other parts of the colonies.

#### Births, Numbers of Children

Spesutia's data on family size and composition allowed comparisons with a number of other studies. Family size in colonial America is a subject that has been significantly reinterpreted by modern historians. Many earlier historical studies of the colonial family pictured a married woman having perhaps fifteen children during her childbearing years, many of whom died in infancy. So many pregnancies ruined her health, and she died before her surviving children were grown. Men were described as having two or three successive wives, perhaps fathering twenty or more children.<sup>46</sup>

Julia Spruill's 1938 study of women in the Southern colonies supported the view of numerous births per family. The chief condition of women in Virginia and the other southern colonies seemed to be forever "in the increasing way." The family of a planter was "in truth a little kingdom."<sup>47</sup> Men prided themselves in their numerous offspring, supported by scriptural commands to reproduce, as well as a belief that children were a material investment for protection in old age. Diaries and letters revealed to Spruill that men and women desired larger families here than in England. A virgin land needed every able hand, and people who often lived far away from their nearest neighbors desired the companionship of many children. A popular toast among southerners was "Our land free, our men honest, and our women fruitful."<sup>48</sup>

Spruill used records of prominent families--diaries, wills and family histories--to gather data on family size in the south. She maintained that ten to twelve children born to a couple was common, and that

many families were larger. Many prominent Virginians had ten, fifteen or eighteen children. William Byrd III had five children by his first wife and ten by his second. John Marshall, the Chief Justice, was one of fifteen children.<sup>49</sup> Many women had in excess of ten children, marrying at age fifteen and becoming grandmothers by thirty. It was not uncommon for a mother and her daughter to bear a child at the same time. Women who were by the standards of their time "old" still bore children, often producing at this late age feeble-minded offspring. Many women suffered ill health all their lives as a result of early childbirth experiences. Still women apparently did not speak of stopping having children because of their health or fear of death. Childbearing was looked on as an integral part of God's plan. Men who sorely grieved at their wives' death never felt remorse for their responsibility in contributing to its cause.

Spruill's data on incessant childbearing was accompanied by information on high maternal mortality. John Thurston of Virginia, for example, had two wives and a total of twenty-four children, fourteen of whom died as young children.<sup>50</sup> Overall, Spruill discovered a "shockingly high" rate of infant mortality. Some families buried nine or ten children. In large families it was not uncommon for only two or three to survive their father.<sup>51</sup>

Spesutia's average number of children per family was not consistent with Spruill's estimates of family size in the South. Families with children had on average five or fewer children born per mature family, according to the parish record. This figure would be lower if deaths of infants were considered. The area Spruill studied in Virginia had a climate and plantation system roughly similar to that found in

Harford County. The sharp variation in family data can be explained in part as a result of the data she used. Mrs. Spruill's qualitative evidence only studied some of the wealthiest people in the society whose experience might not have been typical of all of the wealthy, as well as of the poor.

The findings of those who studied southern Maryland were also at variance with what was found in Spesutia on average numbers of children per family. Carr, Walsh, and Menard do not have much to say on numbers of children per family, but their studies of seventeenth-century southern Maryland show very many cases of widowhood and remarriage. Men and women both had typically short lifespans. Infant survival was also perilous for this area in the seventeenth century.

In both the South and the North many children over the age of five or seven went to live in the house of another family as apprentices or domestics. This practice was common to all classes and so was not always for the purpose of learning a trade. For the wealthy it was simply a custom. Historians of New England speculate that perhaps parents were afraid of getting too attached to children who might die, or spoiling them by overindulgence out of love. Many children went to live with other families as part of their "education."<sup>52</sup> The custom was in evidence in Spesutia as well. In Spesutia's 1776 census, children were often listed in a household of another surname.

It was the statistical studies of New England, however, that showed numbers of children per family more in line with the Spesutia statistics than any of the statistical studies of the South. Family size in Bristol, as studied by John Demos, was most similar to that of Saint George's Parish. Demos based his study on a remarkable document,



a city census taken in 1689. The population of 421 was composed of seventy families. The average, therefore, was six people per family, usually two parents and four children.<sup>53</sup> For Demos, the "hard data" of the Bristol census dispelled the myth of large numbers of children per family. The census did not provide totals of the numbers of children per marriage but merely showed the number living at home in the one year the census was taken. He recognized that over the course of a marriage four children per family was too low. Yet he concluded that overall families with ten or twelve children were far from common. He actually found that there was an average of three children per family in 1689, because of the 421 people, 59 were servants or single, reducing the total number of people from which to calculate the numbers of children per family. He adjusted the average to three to five per family, and, as in Spesutia Parish, the largest family had ten children.<sup>54</sup> His census was, of course, taken one hundred years before the 1776 census in Harford, and in another place. Thus, in a location far from Harford and almost a century before, Spesutia's data on family size were similar to those in Bristol.

The 1689 Bristol census prompted Demos to question another common notion. He did not find much evidence of an extended family living under one roof. In Bristol the majority lived within a nuclear family. Aged parents, cousins, etc., lived on their own for the most part. In addition, he found that the rates of infant and maternal mortality were comparatively low, certainly lower than previous studies he cited. He also found a lower rate of remarriage than had others. Similarly, he calculated that life expectancy was higher than formerly thought. The census provided other new information. Children were generally spaced;

at two-year intervals when the parents were younger, becoming longer as the couple got older. This was also true in Spesutia. He assumed that some families might have had eight or nine children in their entire married lives (or 17 percent of the total number of families had over six children to a family). Significantly, Demos was able to calculate that every fifth woman died in childbirth, and one in every ten infants died.<sup>55</sup> The Harford County rates of maternal and infant mortality were not so high.

Phillip Greven's study of seventeenth-century Andover, Massachusetts provided another in-depth analysis suitable in some respects for comparison. Unlike Demos' study, Greven's analysis traced people over time, studying several families through four generations. The twenty-nine men who settled in Andover between 1645 and 1660 had 247 children. Of these, thirty-nine, or 15.7 percent, died before reaching twenty-one.<sup>56</sup> On average, he estimated that eight children were born per family, an average at variance with those in Bristol and in Spesutia. Greven used a variety of well-kept records in Andover for his findings, but he also researched Plymouth, and found a "remarkably similar" average of seven children per family. Like Demos he believed that he had dispelled many misconceptions generated by earlier historians. T.J. Wertenbaker, writing in the 1940s, maintained that colonial families were extremely large, with ten to twenty children per family common.<sup>57</sup> Like Wertenbaker, Greven researched the town of Hingham, Massachusetts. But Greven found that 105 women had "five or more children" with a total of 878 children, "giving an average similar to Andover and Plymouth."<sup>58</sup> In Andover the highest number of children per family was twelve, but 59 percent of the families had seven to eleven children, and 40 percent had

zero to six children. But he found that a century later in 1764 the average number of people per household was 7.23 and 6.9 in 1790. He concluded that there were more likely about five children per family plus servants, suggesting that the number of children per family was decreasing. He contrasted this with the South, which he said (without documentation) was a more "unhealthy area" and thus had significantly smaller families."<sup>59</sup>

Harford County, Maryland, therefore, was not entirely similar to either areas to the North nor to the South. Large numbers of children per family in the South may have been typical for the upper class. Those of the lower ranks of the same society indeed might have had smaller families which, if the data were available, might be shown to reduce the average for the South. Similarly Demos' census for one year may not have been representative.

The Spesutia Parish Record then was in some respects a more reliable source than those used in New England. It recorded all classes over a period of at least eighty years. Although there were no doubt omissions in the record, the census of 1776 allows us to be more confident about estimates of the numbers of children per family. Spesutia seemed to have had five children per family on average throughout the colonial period. Harford Countians clearly did not have so many children as Julia Spruill thought Southern women did. Families in Harford were closer in size to those in New England where people lived in towns in a cooler climate.

Data from Spesutia made possible comparisons of pre-bridal pregnancies. Studies of New England and Europe showed a steady if slight increase in the number of pregnant brides over the eighteenth century.

Edward Shorter, in his studies of pregnancy rates for eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe, found an increase in pre-bridal pregnancies toward the end of the eighteenth century, citing statistics from North America as well as Europe. In Hingham, Massachusetts, the percentage went from zero in the 1650s to 31 percent in the 1790s. In Dedham, Massachusetts, for the same period, the percentages went from 4 percent to 28 percent; and in Matthews County, Virginia, according to Shorter, from 13 percent to 17 percent.<sup>60</sup> John Demos found a steady increase in the number of "shotgun weddings" in Bristol in the eighteenth century (from nine to forty-four). More children were conceived before marriage in 1790 than one hundred years before. He cannot explain these changes. He speculated, however, that perhaps there existed a kind of trial marriage among engaged couples, for fornication was no longer punished during the eighteenth century so long as paternity did not ensue. He questioned whether morals became looser in the one hundred years intervening. Indeed, "morality" increased, he argued, since pregnancy forced marriage, where earlier there might have been an illegitimate birth.<sup>61</sup> Spesutia had a slight increase in pre-bridal pregnancies, but nothing to suggest a real trend which would lead one to speculate on "looser morals."

#### Comparisons on Marriage

Most of the studies cited provided information on marriage, especially the age at which men and women married. Frequency of remarriage can be compared, and some comparative information about the fate of those who never married. In Spesutia the 1776 census indicated that averages on marriage age were twenty-two for women and twenty-six for men and nineteen and twenty-two for earlier in the eighteenth century.

Teen-aged marriages were not common in Harford County, nor apparently elsewhere in colonial America.

For Bristol John Demos found that men married at about twenty-seven in the late seventeenth century, and at age twenty-five by the end of the colonial period. Women married at age twenty at the beginning of his study, and twenty-two at the end.<sup>62</sup> Greven's figures for Andover showed that the majority of women married between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-four. Ninety percent married before the age of twenty-nine.<sup>63</sup>

Greven found similar figures for those under the upper class in England at the same time. The upper classes married young for reasons of inheritance and of cementing family connections. The "ordinary people" in Devon married between twenty-seven and twenty-nine. Men, however, married mostly between the ages of twenty-five and twenty-nine with significant numbers younger and older. In contrast, Greven found that only one of his "94 second generation sons" married in his teens. Even though life expectancy was much lower than today, many colonial men waited until nearly thirty to marry and begin their own families. Women married earlier than men in all areas, although brides in New England apparently were not so young as those in the South.

Robert V. Wells provided some comparable data from the middle colonies. In a study of the Quakers of Pennsylvania in the eighteenth century, Wells concluded that the median age of marriage for women was 20.5.<sup>64</sup>

Alan Kulikoff's study of Prince Georges made estimates on age of marriage too. He concluded that the average age of marriage for both men and women fluctuated throughout the century. People married generally in their late twenties in the first part of the century (and earlier)

but then went to late teens by the end of the first generation native born. The average age then levelled off to the mid-twenties, with men marrying at an older age than women. In all these estimates, men were a few years older than the women.<sup>65</sup> A study of southern Maryland, Lorena Walsh's "Til Death Us Do Part," showed an average age at marriage in southern Maryland in the seventeenth century of twenty-three for women and twenty-eight for men.<sup>66</sup>

Data about age at marriage also provided in many of these studies information about the extended family, the fate of the unmarried, and the practice of arranging marriages. Men lived with their parents until they married. But the idea of a man bringing his bride to his parents' home to live, as was often done in England among the upper classes, was almost never found in the American colonies north or south. Getting married simply meant living in your own household, or at least establishing a "modified extended family" arrangement where relatives lived on adjacent land to each other. Sons did not have to bring their brides home because they often inherited land before their fathers' death. Inheritance was often made at a specified age (twenty or twenty-five) or at the time of marriage. They would receive a part of their parents' land to build their own home. The nuclear family, then, was the rule, although families would sometimes take in a spinster or an older widowed mother or father.<sup>67</sup> The nuclear family was the rule in Spesutia and southern Maryland too, although Maryland households had larger numbers of servants than those in New England.

Colonial society in all regions made few provisions for the unmarried. The unwed were disdained and discriminated against. Demos found significantly that almost everyone got married. There was no

shortage of either men or women of marriageable age, and spinsters and bachelors were rare. The widowed were snatched up promptly after the death of their spouse.

In the south, marriage was extolled as the proper state--the "holy institution." A woman's reason for existence was to be a helpmate to man and to continue the species. Chief among the inducements to emigrate to the new world were the promises of desirable marriage prospects in what was described as the "disposal of single females."<sup>68</sup> Unmarried persons were a pitiable encumbrance on their families and society. Spesutia taxed bachelors separately, indicating the feeling that a man without a family was evading a civic duty. Similarly, a woman unmarried was thought to have no purpose in life, although some expressed the thought that a single life was preferable to a union with an unworthy person. An "old virgin," however, became something of a joke, and newspapers related accounts of fictitious auctions held for "ancient maids of desperate expectations."<sup>69</sup>

Spruill provided a few accounts of unmarried women, mostly widows, who became astute and respected businesswomen, owners of taverns, shops and land. But she maintained that in the South women usually married before age twenty, and if she had not by twenty-five, she was clearly an old maid. William Byrd declared in 1727 that his own daughter then twenty was an "antique virgin."<sup>70</sup> In the "backwoods" areas of the South, again according to Spruill, women married at age thirteen or fourteen, although geneologists show evidence of upper-class girls who married at fourteen or fifteen too. These latter girls obviously stood to receive part of their father's land, making them desirable partners at a young age. No girl in Spesutia, however, married before fifteen.

In all areas, marriages were often arranged by parents, but there was ample evidence that in both the North and South that if either of the pair objected strongly the match was not completed. In Spesutia there was no way to tell from the parish register how many marriages were arranged. Occasionally, however, there was a marriage between members of the local "notables" (like the Halls or the Farretts) presumably to cement the ties between important families. Yet, many matches probably came about because of mutual attraction or, as likely, as a result of a small pool from which to choose.

Rates of remarriage were discussed in most of the studies under consideration here. Generally remarriage after the death of a spouse was not only customary but also often took place soon after the loss of a partner. Edmund S. Morgan, one of the earliest historians of family in New England, maintained that a constant warning to couples was to avoid too much affection between husbands and wives. This warning was given almost more often than the more "Puritanical" virtues, which most agree now reflected more the Victorian age's projection back in time than the seventeenth century itself. Too great love had to be avoided lest partners find more love with each other than in the Lord; and separation of husband and wife was an inevitable part of any marriage.<sup>71</sup> An interval of about six months to a year for remarriage was not from lack of respect for the dead but simply the custom and necessity. But the frequency of remarriage was perhaps not as high as previously thought. Demos calculated the proportion of the people in Bristol who lived out the sequence of a marriage, bereavement, and remarriage. He found that this occurred in a considerable number of families' histories but not the majority. Of 700 people who lived to be at least fifty years of



age, 60 percent were married just once. For women, the comparable figure was 75 percent. Of the remainder, most people had two marriages during their lifetimes, and only 6 percent of men and 1 percent of women were married more than twice. Thus, Demos concluded that Bristol's statistics showed that the old stereotype of a "doughty settler going through a long series of spouses needs to be quietly put aside."<sup>72</sup> Greven found similarly low figures on remarriage. Of thirty-four men, twenty-three had only one wife during their lifetimes (67 percent) and 26 percent were married twice. Two were married three times, and none four.<sup>73</sup>

Similarly, Elizabeth Keyssar studied widowhood in eighteenth-century Massachusetts exclusively. She found that many women lived out the rest of their lives widowed, and that remarriage was not inevitable.<sup>74</sup>

Mrs. Spruill found many multiple marriages in the South. She claimed that three marriages for one person was not at all unusual; some made four, five and even six marital ventures. Colonel John Carter, the first of his family to come to Virginia, had five wives.<sup>75</sup> She cited other examples like that of George Washington's brother Samuel who married five times and had 27 children. Another recorded in his Bible the "taking away" of five wives and his marriage to a sixth.<sup>76</sup>

She reported that the southerners also remarried with relative haste. Often a man would receive a letter of condolence on the death of his wife, coupled with congratulations on his choice of a new one. Spruill cited cases of remarriage within a few months, or even weeks. Occasionally unfavorable comment was made of such haste, and occasionally children would object to their new stepmother, but most went along with the customs of the time. Dame Frances Berkeley had the distinction

of being married to three governors.<sup>77</sup> Also, people continued to marry at advanced age, even into their seventies. Older men often married girls in their teens. Of course some did not remarry. Thomas Jefferson promised his wife (or himself) that he would never marry again after his wife died, and he did not. In Spesutia, the rate of remarriage was difficult to ascertain because people often left the parish to remarry and thus the notation would not have been on the parish record. A significant number of remarriages, however, were easily noted in studying the parish record.

Marriages, however, were clearly not all blissful, for all sections of the colonies had court cases recording domestic discord with both men and women running away from spouses. As previously noted, colonial newspapers often carried advertisements for a runaway spouse. Divorce was possible in New England, if extreme physical cruelty could be proved, a man was "unable to perform the act of profligation," and desertion or bigamy could be proved. Divorce, however, was rare. In the South there was no tribunal empowered to grant absolute divorce, although courts frequently heard cases on domestic discord. Often they ordered a separate maintenance agreement for the wife or required the husband to give bond for good behavior. Although divorce rates were not in any way comparable to current rates, the many pages of colonial court records dealing with domestic troubles indicate a state of matrimony somewhat out of line with the ideals expressed in books on domestic conduct and guides to conjugal felicity.<sup>78</sup>

#### Death: Comparisons

The death rate was tied to the birth rate in terms of the maintenance and growth of population. In Spesutia the birth rate, while

comparatively low, was higher than the death rate. This fact combined with the obvious increase in population through migration accounted for the large growth in population in Spesutia. The most striking comparison on this subject was not Spesutia compared with New England and the South, but with America compared to England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Generally population grew more rapidly in America than in Europe in the corresponding years of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Michael Drake's studies of three parishes in England make comparisons possible. Although each of these parishes was larger than Spesutia, and although Drake concentrated on a somewhat earlier period of time, it is striking to compare the births (baptisms) and deaths (burials) with Saint George's of Maryland. In his study, in many years, deaths outnumber births; in most years they were equal, and in a few years they lagged slightly behind births. In the twenty-year period 1680 to 1700, one parish had births totalling 16,336 and deaths of 16,152. Spesutia for the same two decades had 161 births and thirty-six deaths.<sup>79</sup>

New England statistics similarly show a much lower death rate than England, and lower than commonly believed of the eighteenth century. Low recorded death all over colonial America could reflect high mobility. Also, demographers now believe that life expectancy was longer than historians previously thought. By excluding infant and childhood deaths from the computations, John Demos concluded that a man who lived to twenty could expect to live to about seventy, and a woman seven years less. The "life expectancy" rate of forty or fifty years comes about by averaging all deaths of all ages together--from one day to the

eighties. Demos traced 700 people in Bristol who lived to be at least fifty years of age.<sup>80</sup> Phillip Greven found almost exactly the same for colonial Andover. Of those who survived to twenty, the average man could expect to live to be 71.8 years and the woman to 70.8.<sup>81</sup> Second generation men averaged 65.2 years at death and women 64.0.<sup>82</sup> Other New England studies brought the age down somewhat; on average the mid-sixties seems to have been age adults could expect to live.<sup>83</sup> Kenneth Lockridge concluded that people in colonial Dedham, Massachusetts, generally died in their fifties. He said "a person who lived to seventy, a normal life-span in our century, found that he was one of the few survivors of his generation."<sup>84</sup> He believed that even these figures showed a longer life-span than the "folklore" about the brevity of life in colonial times. James Henretta compiled several studies on New England and concluded sixty years was the average at death, which he said was true only of ducal families in Europe and England at this time. So he concluded the frontier was a healthier place to live.<sup>85</sup> Extensive computations about the age at death in Spesutia were difficult because of in and out-migration, but Madam Hall was fifty-two, Martha Hall died at thirty-five, John Hall at sixty-one, and Colonel Thomas White at seventy-one. The last two died in the war before reaching their natural lifespan. The 1776 census listed 26 white men over the age of 50 (the oldest was 68) out of a total of 419; or 6 percent of white male population was over 50. Out of a total population of white women of 371, 16 were over 50. Eleven were in their fifties, four in their sixties, and only one lady was seventy-four. Thus, 4 percent of white women were fifty or over.

These data from the 1776 census tend to confirm the view of those who have studied New England that people in the South had shorter life-spans than those in the North. Harford County could have been untypical,

for Julia Spruill spoke of men in Virginia in their sixties and seventies remarrying much younger women.

The study of Spesutia tends to agree with recent demographic studies that have softened somewhat the harsh view of infant and maternal mortality. Compared to today, childbirth in the colonial period entailed considerable risk. In her study of the South, Julia Spruill concluded that "among the rich and poor, mothers frequently died in childbed." She cited numerous newspaper obituaries from Maryland to the Carolinas. She concluded that "women married young, and often suffered continuing ill health. Therefore and all too frequently, before reaching middle age succumbed to the strain of incessant childbearing." Tombstone inscriptions tell that women accepted "God's plan." Men too felt no blame for their part in this nor suggested that these tragedies could have been prevented by having fewer children. Henry Laurens of Carolina had twelve children, seven of whom died before his wife, who died a few weeks after the birth of the twelfth. He suffered real anguish but in the spirit of the age submitted to this "stroke of Providence."<sup>86</sup>

In the study of Bristol, 20 percent of the total deaths of adult women were a result of childbirth; one birth in thirty resulted in the death of the mother.<sup>87</sup> Demos believed that these data suggest that childbirth was less dangerous than most people imagined about colonial times.

Like Spesutia's statistics on maternal deaths, infant deaths showed a very low rate, perhaps too low to be accurate. Infant deaths were discussed in other studies, although not all in comparable terms. Phillip Greven discussed survival rates in some detail, but of children born who did not reach twenty-one. This is quite different of course

from newborn deaths. Nevertheless some comparisons can be made. Greven observed that in the 1650s in Andover there were seven deaths recorded, and five of these were of children; in 1660 twelve of eighteen deaths were of children. He computed the mortality rate of children, therefore, at 123 per thousand.<sup>88</sup> He acknowledged that this was high, but that it was a good rate as compared to the rest of the colonies (although he did not provide specific comparison). The first generation settlers in Andover had large families, not even taking into account the numbers of children who might have been born but died unrecorded. As summarized before, he concentrated on 29 men and traced their families. These 29 men fathered 247 children. Thirty-nine of these 247 died before reaching 29 years (15.7 percent). Therefore, 208 or 84 percent survived to age 21. Such data suggest that the survival rate of children there was higher than might have been expected. Those who survived to twenty-one had a good chance of a long life; an average of seventy was recorded at their death.<sup>89</sup>

An earlier study by Thomas J. Wertenbaker discussed survival rates in terms of children born to Harvard graduates for the years 1658-1690. Of the 808 children born to this group, 162 died before reaching maturity, or a child mortality rate of 20 percent and a survival rate of 80 percent.<sup>90</sup> The rates were not too different from Greven's study of Andover.

John Demos also found that records of infant mortality were not complete, but he estimated that the rate was lower than supposed. He cited a maximum of 25 percent mortality for the period between birth and age twenty-one. He maintained nevertheless that this figure was below common assumptions about colonial mortality rates. James Henretta com-  
piled a list of the names of the children who died in 1686

piled several studies on New England towns in a general study of New England society. He concluded that an average of nine out of ten children survived to age twenty-one, and then the average length of life was about sixty. The average family he found would have eight children, seven of whom would survive (in the seventeenth century). Then the average fell toward 1720 to eight born and six survivors. By 1735 average families had seven births, five of whom survived.<sup>91</sup> In England at this time, it was estimated that three of ten born survived both birth and infancy. This is quite different from all studies of America. Another estimate for England from a specific study of one parish was that eleven percent of the registered burials were infants not baptised or "chrysons." These represented 135 of 1,231 entries. In another instance one year of 1636 showed that ten of ninety-six burials were of children.<sup>92</sup>

Julia Spruill's opinion was that many infants died before reaching maturity. She illustrated the "large infant mortality...not uncommon at the time" by many examples. One example took note of Mrs. Henry Laurens who bore twelve children, seven of whom were buried before her.

Spruill maintained that the rate of infant mortality was "shockingly great." Many small graves in churchyards and surrounding grounds supported her conclusion. One tombstone inscription tells a story often repeated:

In Memory of

Helen daughter of Ebenezer and Elizabeth Statt, who departed this life...aged one year and three days. Of another daughter...who died three days after her birth, and of five others of their infants still born...<sup>94</sup>

Even the prominent and the well-to-do lost many children, accepting their deaths as the will of Providence. William Fitzhugh wrote in 1686

that "God Almighty hath been pleased to bless me with a very good wife and five pledged of our conjugal affection, three of which he has been pleased to call into the arms of his mercy, and leave me two..."<sup>95</sup> A famous Quaker preacher, Thomas Chalkey, buried nine of his children, and wrote after the death of the tenth that

it was some exercise to me thus to bury my children one after the other; but this did a little mitigate my sorrow, that I knew...it was safer and better for them, and they were more out of danger, being taken away in their infancy and innocency...

Charles Carroll of Carrolltown in Maryland lost four of his seven children.<sup>96</sup>

#### Slaves: Comparisons

The rate of slavery and the life of slaves in colonial Maryland has not been studied in depth. Scholars, however, have attempted to study slavery demographically for early Maryland. Russell Menard in "The Maryland Slave Population 1658-1740: A Demographic Profile of Blacks in Four Counties," utilized listed inventories from estates as his source of information about slaves in the southern Maryland counties (Calvert, Charles, Saint Marys and Prince George's). In the 1650s there was a total of 100 slaves there, or about 3 percent of the population. By 1710 there were 3,500 slaves, or 24 percent of the population. If slavery continued to increase at this rate, there would have been in the four southern counties, a ratio of blacks to whites similar to that in Spesutia Lower; that is, nearly half of the total population was black.

Menard found that in the 1680s and 1690s, the sex ratio of blacks was similar to that of whites; that is, there were more men than women. He found also that there seemed to be fewer black children born than



white, which does not seem to be true in Spesutia in 1776. He attributed this low birth rate to the West African custom of nursing children for two to five years and therefore producing a three to five year gap between children. He found life expectancy short for slaves (as well as whites) in the seventeenth century. My data for a later period showed that there was a substantial number of older slaves. In fact, the oldest slaves were older than the oldest whites.

In addition, if Spesutia Parish was fairly typical, then one

## CHAPTER X

### CONCLUSIONS

In Spesutia the average number of children per family was five or less. There was a steadily rising birth rate, the death rate, compared to births, was low, and infant and maternal mortality was not overwhelmingly high. All the death data, however, may be incomplete. Generally the span between the birth of children was about two years or more, and remarriage was the norm after the death of a mate. Slavery was widespread and many white people were in service to others as well. Wealth contributed to political and social prominence, but the wealthiest were not automatically the political leaders.

Comparisons to other colonies in New England and the South were hampered by the lack of demographic studies on more than a few areas. More work of this sort must be done before we approach a truly accurate picture of ordinary life in the American colonies. We will then need to correlate this demographic information with the rich literary evidence on the colonies, for as useful as demographic studies are, they need to be "fleshed out" with the information provided by traditional sources.

Spesutia Parish did not conform neatly to other areas, although it seemed more like New England than the South. The limited recent statistical studies of Virginia and Maryland do not yet present a full picture of the Chesapeake area. My work suggests that the South might not have been as unhealthy area as some have thought, especially in the eighteenth century. In addition, if Spesutia Parish was fairly typical, then one

must question fairly common notions about large families, as well as very high rates of infant and maternal mortality.

My study of Spesutia convinces me that the parish record and census yield invaluable information about the Maryland colony in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It will contribute, I hope, to the growing work on the entire Chesapeake region.

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Alan Kulikoff, "Tobacco and Slaves: Population, Economy, and Society in Eighteenth Century Prince George's County, Maryland," (unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Brandeis University, 1976), p. 434; quoted from Montgomery County land records, A. 330.

<sup>2</sup>George W. Archer, *A History of St. George's Parish* (Bel Air, Md., 1890), pp. 4-6.

<sup>3</sup>D.E. C. Eversley studied Worcestershire from 1660 to 1850. He, Peter Laslett and E.A. Wrigley have written on the uses of the parish register in historical demography in E.A. Wrigley, ed., *An Introduction to English Historical Demography* (New York, 1966). Laslett's *The World We Have Lost* (New York, 1973) is another work that suggests the possibility of using the parish record rather than making a specific parish study. The French town of Crulai has been the subject of a study by E. Gautier and L. Henry, *La Population de Crulai, Paroisse Normandie, Etude Historique* (Paris, 1958).

<sup>4</sup>The three southern Maryland counties have been studied extensively by Lois Carr, Lorena Walsh, Russell Menard, and P.G.M. Harris. Some of their articles and conference papers have proved useful in comparing by findings are Lorena Walsh's "Til Death Us Do Part," a Chesapeake Conference paper of August 1974; Lorena Walsh and Russell Menard, "Death in the Chesapeake: Two Life Tables for Men in Early Colonial Maryland." *Maryland Historical Magazine* LXIX (1974), 211-227; and Lois Carr and Lorena Walsh, "The Planter's Wife," also an unpublished conference paper.

<sup>5</sup>Kulikoff, *passim*, and Carville Earle, *The Evolution of a Tidewater Settlement System: All Hallows Parish, Maryland 1650-1783* (Chicago, 1975).

<sup>6</sup>Robert V. Wells has studied Quaker marriage in Pennsylvania in "Colonial Marriage Patterns in a Colonial Perspective," *William and Mary Quarterly*, XXIX (1972); there is also a useful unpublished doctoral dissertation by George W. Franz, "Paxton: A Study of Community Structure and Mobility in Colonial Pennsylvania Back Country" (unpubl. disst.; Rutgers University, 1974). In addition to Walsh and Menard's "Death in the Chesapeake," there is another article on demography in the Chesapeake region. It is Irene Hecht's "The Virginia Muster of 1624/25 as a Source for Demographic History," *William and Mary Quarterly* XXX (1973). These two articles are too narrowly focused to warrant comparison with other studies noted here.

<sup>7</sup>The name of the Island was later changed to Watson's Island and then to Garrett's Island in the nineteenth century in honor of the president of the B&O Railroad. C. Milton Wright, *Our Harford Heritage* (Baltimore, 1967), pp. 27-32.

<sup>8</sup>All free males over the age of sixteen were to be taxed forty-six pounds of tobacco per year. The financial dealings in tobacco in Maryland were often conducted in the actual kegs rather than the monetary equivalent of their worth. A man would bring a wagon load of his "taxes" to the sheriff rather than a purse of money. In addition, a man was taxed for his "taxables" as well: male servants over sixteen, and male and female slaves over sixteen years of age.

<sup>9</sup>Archer, pp. 17,18.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 2-8.

<sup>12</sup>The first church building in Harford County has not survived except for the remains of a wall, a foundation, some sunken graves, and a nearby bridge called "church bridge."

<sup>13</sup>Archer, p. 8.

<sup>14</sup>Charles W. Michaels, "Spesutia Church and Vestry House", *The Maryland Churchman* (1905) p. 54 and Isabel Davidson, *Real Stories from Baltimore County History* (Hatboro, Pa., 1917), p. 36.

<sup>15</sup>Archer, p. 7.

<sup>16</sup>Another plantation called Tudor Hall was the home of Junius Brutus Booth in the nineteenth century and the childhood home of Edwin and John Wilkes Booth. John Paca, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, was born on a plantation in Spesutia.

<sup>17</sup>C. Milton Wright, *Our Harford Heritage: A History of Harford County Maryland* (Baltimore, 1967), p. 193.

<sup>18</sup>Archer, p. 11.

<sup>19</sup>Nelson W. Rightmeyer, *Maryland's Established Church* (Baltimore, 1956), p. 144.

<sup>20</sup>All quoted from Michaels, p. 54.

<sup>21</sup>The Church acquired a valuable Bible sometime during this decade which was presented in 1717, known as a "vinegar Bible". The name derives from a printer's error in the word "vineyard". The communion service dated 1722 was acquired and is still used by the church. See Michaels, p. 54.

<sup>22</sup>Wright, p. 231.

<sup>23</sup>The brick vestry house still stands today. It is the oldest vestry house in Maryland, and some sources maintain that it is the oldest in the United States. A hundred years later in 1851 Spesutia Church was rebuilt and that building is still in use for regular services today. So four successive buildings have been Spesutia Church, three on the site of the present church.

<sup>24</sup>There is no exact date for this division or for when records began to be kept at Trappe as well as at Saint George's.

<sup>25</sup>Walter Preston, *A History of Harford County Maryland* (Baltimore 1901), p. 154.

<sup>26</sup>This area today is still very rural. Corn has replaced tobacco and wheat, but it must look very much today as it did then. Spesutia Church is located on Spesutia Road, off Route 40 north, north of Belcamp. The village of Perryman is little more than a crossroads. There is a Maryland Historical marker nearby, and the date is dated 1671-1850.

<sup>27</sup>Lafayette and his troops passed through during the war and were quartered for a while on Col. Nathaniel Rigbie's estate. When Lafayette crossed the Susquehanna, his boat ran aground before reaching shore and one of the Harford soldiers, Aquila Deaver, carried the General ashore on his back. Deaver went on to live until 1835 and told the story over and over as an old man. In 1824 Lafayette returned for a tour of the United States and passed through Harford County for a reception at Port Deposit. He and Deaver met again and both recalled the incident. The town of Bel Air was named in this spirit of Franco-American friendship (and some maintain Havre de Grace too, but this town is older than Bel Air.)

<sup>28</sup>They are listed as births, not "baptisms," as in some parish records, especially in England. Many of the large-scale demographic works on England work with baptism notations and "births" as such are not listed. Spesutia listed births and baptisms for the first few years, but by 1700 dropped the baptism entry. Similarly in the early years the banns of marriage are noted and then the marriage. By 1700, only the marriage is recorded. The same is true of "burials" and "deaths". Only deaths are noted for the great proportion of the entries.

<sup>29</sup>U.S. Department of Commerce, *Historical Statistics of the United States from Colonial Times to 1957* (Washington 1967), p. 23.

<sup>30</sup>Kenneth Lockridge *A New England Town: The First Hundred Years Dedham, Mass. 1636-1736* (New York 1970), p. 66.

<sup>31</sup>Alan F. Guttmacher, *Pregnancy and Birth* (New York, 1962), p. 214.

<sup>32</sup>Gerald Hartdagen, "The Vestries and Morals in Colonial Maryland" *Maryland Historical Magazine* LXIII (1968), p. 364.

<sup>33</sup>The Assembly of Maryland in 1755 imposed this tax, and specified that men worth one hundred to three hundred pounds were to be taxed five shillings, and men worth over three hundred pounds were taxed twenty shillings. It is not clear whether this was their total taxation or a surtax above that levied on every head of household from the beginning of the century. The Assembly also stated that wines, liquors, and billiard tables were to be taxed. Archer, p. 44.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>35</sup>Three others on the Bachelor's Tax List from the Upper Hundred and therefore not on the census had reached social and political prominence in Harford County later. William Osborn became sheriff in 1791, and Nathaniel Giles was one of those selected to meet with representatives of other counties on problems with the British trade regulations. Richard Dallam was on the committee as well, and in addition was the quartermaster of the militia; on the War Committee; was sent to the Maryland Convention of 1774; was on the first commission of Harford County in 1773; signed the Bush Declaration; and was the warrent officer at the Maryland Convention at Annapolis in June of 1774.

<sup>36</sup>These seven additional people must have made for a crowded situation. The average house in colonial Maryland was 25 feet long, 20 feet wide, one story with a loft, and made of wood with chimney alone of brick. A few may have had brick foundations. The houses of the wealthy were large and had glass windows. Most of these had two chimneys (bricks were made locally).

<sup>37</sup>Households as such are discussed by Robert V. Wells in his studies of the British Colonies, including Newfoundland, Bermuda, and the West Indies. In these he found "households" very large because of the large numbers of slaves and servants. John Demos in working with his Bristol census, also deals with households, but he found the vast majority of the households tabulated on the census to be family groups only. See Robert V. Wells, *The Population of the British Colonies in America Before 1776* (Princeton 1975).

<sup>38</sup>Lorena Walsh and Russell Menard, "Death in the Chesapeake: Two Life Tables for Men in Early Colonial Maryland," *Maryland Historical Magazine* LXIX (1974), 211.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 227.

<sup>40</sup>Lois Carr and Lorena Walsh, "The Planter's Wife," unpublished conference paper, 1976 passim.

<sup>41</sup>Carl Bridenbaugh, *The Vexed and Troubled Englishmen* (New York 1967), p. 15.

<sup>42</sup>Raphael Semmes, *Crime and Punishment in Early Maryland* (Baltimore 1938), p. 89.

<sup>43</sup>All the lists of county officials in this section are from C. Milton Wright *Our Harford Heritage*.

<sup>44</sup>Ronald Hoffman *A Spirit of Dissension: Economics, Politics, and the Revolution in Maryland* (Baltimore, 1973), passim.

<sup>45</sup>These references are from Carr, Walsh, Kulikoff (see notes one and four).

<sup>46</sup>Similar characterizations have been applied to England at this time. Data compiled for England show only about three of ten children born living to adulthood, while a man would typically be widowed at least once and remarry. Life expectancy was only about thirty-five, and thus large families--or at least many births per married couple--were common. Wallace Notestein *The English People on the Eve of Colonization* (New York 1954), p. 58.

<sup>47</sup>Julia Cherry Spruill, *Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies* (Chapel Hill, 1938), p. 44.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>52</sup>John Demos *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York, 1970), p. 72.



- <sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 64.
- <sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 64.
- <sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 31.
- <sup>56</sup>Phillip Greven, "Family Structure in Seventeenth Century Andover, Mass.", *William and Mary Quarterly* XXIII (1966), p. 237.
- <sup>57</sup>T.J. Wertenbaker *The First Americans 1607-1690* (New York 1929) p. 56.
- <sup>58</sup>Greven, "Family Structure," p. 238.
- <sup>59</sup>Phillip Greven, "The Average Size of Families and Households in the Province of Massachusetts in 1764 and in the United States in 1790: An Overview," in Peter Laslett and Richard Wall, *Household and Family in Past Time* (London, 1972) p. 559.
- <sup>60</sup>Edward Shorter, "Female Emancipation, Birth Control and Fertility in European History," *American Historical Review* LXXIII (1973), 636.
- <sup>61</sup>Demos, "Families in Colonial Bristol: An Exercise in Historical Demography," *William and Mary Quarterly* XXV (1968), 56.
- <sup>62</sup>Demos, *A Little Commonwealth*, p. 150.
- <sup>63</sup>Greven, "Family Structure", p. 255.
- <sup>64</sup>Robert Wells, "Quaker Marriage Patterns in a Colonial Perspective", *William and Mary Quarterly*, XXIX (1972)
- <sup>65</sup>Alan Kulikoff, "Tobacco and Slaves," p. 29-33.
- <sup>66</sup>Lorena Walsh, "Til Death Us Do Part," passim.
- <sup>67</sup>Greven, "Family Structure", p. 255.
- <sup>68</sup>Spruill, p. 52.
- <sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 137.
- <sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 139.

- <sup>71</sup>Edmund S. Morgan *The Puritan Family* (Boston, 1944), p. 10.
- <sup>72</sup>Demos, *A Little Commonwealth*, p. 67.
- <sup>73</sup>Greven, *Four Generations*, p. 29.
- <sup>74</sup>Elizabeth Keyssar, "Widowhood in Eighteenth Century Mass." *Perspectives in American History*, VIII (1974).
- <sup>75</sup>Spruill, p. 156.
- <sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 156.
- <sup>77</sup>Ibid., p. 159.
- <sup>78</sup>Ibid., p. 184.
- <sup>79</sup>Michael Drake, "An Elementary Exercise in Parish Register Demography," *Economic History Review* XIV (1961-2), 427-445.
- <sup>80</sup>Demos, *A Little Commonwealth*, p. 62.
- <sup>81</sup>Greven, *Four Generations*, p. 26.
- <sup>82</sup>Greven, "Family Structure," p. 240.
- <sup>83</sup>James Henretta, "The Morphology of New England Society," p. 197 in Theodore K. Rabb and Robert Rotberg, eds., *The Family in History: Interdisciplinary Essays* (New York, 1971).
- <sup>84</sup>Kenneth Lockridge, *A New England Town: The First Hundred Years* (New York, 1970), p. 77.
- <sup>85</sup>Henretta, p. 197.
- <sup>86</sup>Spruill, p. 52-53.
- <sup>87</sup>Demos, *A Little Commonwealth*, p. 66.
- <sup>88</sup>Greven, *Four Generations*, p. 25.
- <sup>89</sup>Greven, "Family Structure," p. 237.
- <sup>90</sup>Wertenbaker, pp. 185-186.

<sup>91</sup>Henretta, p. 197.

<sup>92</sup>Notestein, p. 58.

<sup>93</sup>Spruill, p. 47.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

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