

African America

My students and I at Cape Town worked hard, but I left realizing full well that they would eventually have to make the difference there, not me. The only difference I could make would be in Annapolis. When I returned there, I went to the Banneker-Douglass Museum to meet the director and the associate director, Barbara Jackson. I told them I wanted to work on archaeology with them. The director laughed at me. But Jackson said: "We want to know if we have archaeology; we want to hear about freedom—we're tired of hearing about slavery." And, "Tell us what is left from Africa." I had never been given a bigger gift as an archaeologist than at that moment. I know this more now than I did then, but I knew it then too. She articulated the problems that I have worked on ever since in Annapolis, which include the role of archaeology itself.

DO WE HAVE ARCHAEOLOGY?

The puzzle for scholars, African Americans, and other members of oppressed cultures, or lifeworlds, is what happens to their members within capitalism. What does resistance to exploitation and its powerful ideology embodied in personal liberty and freedom look like? Sticking with Louis Althusser meant using the concept of ideology to understand how a large, creative group that was homogeneous when viewed from outside, but really internally diverse, handled the threats of living alongside

capitalism. How could we learn; what would we learn; how had African Americans in Annapolis made many lives for themselves?

If Jürgen Habermas wanted alternative forms of resistance, how could archaeologists preserve the heterogeneity of the black experience in the city? If Habermas wanted an antidote to capitalism, how could we avoid essentializing and naturalizing people who wanted to be and were members of the middle class. If Althusser wanted no one outside ideology, how could I both want to find African traditions of kin-based communities intact after two centuries and also accurately describe archaeological remains that were able to sustain several levels of complex interpretation, including one that showed that Africa survived and another that showed membership in the middle class?

Where would I find the ideology of possessive individualism? If this ideology were breached by African Americans, what would that look like and who would it include? And then, who would care enough about these discoveries to use them to reflect back on the dominant culture of Annapolis today? How could such knowledge contribute to making critical theory work for people in the city?

Wanting to know whether there is archaeology for your group was asking whether knowledge of the past mattered and whether or not your people could use it for their own purposes. Would it make your people look right? Would your people belong more to mainstream society and be more acceptable? In other words, would it reverse racist treatment? That is what I think Barbara Jackson's questions meant. But there was also concern about the use of archaeology as a process. Would using it appear so neutral that its ability to create chronologies, origins, and successive elites just continue current efforts to maintain inferiority and then domination, while also deepening these relationships by absorbing people of African descent into the results of archaeology and into the middle-class sciences, some of whose results they had been able to avoid so far?

Shortly after these questions were asked, my field school began to dig in the parking lot immediately adjacent to Jackson's Banneker-Douglass Museum, where a new county courthouse was eventually to be built. The museum is in a Victorian church, once home of an African Methodist Episcopal congregation, whose parishioners had lived in houses surrounding it. Some of the houses had been taken down in the 1950s and 1960s and others in the 1970s for the parking lot that now covered their old neighborhood and surrounded the surviving church. We dug our units in the lot, discovered the old backyards and cellars, and found lost slate pencils, buttons, and thousands of other items from the nineteenth and

early twentieth centuries that had belonged to the owners and renters who lived there.

Because Barbara Jackson told us who had lived in the houses, their names, address by address, we automatically answered her first question. Yes, there was archaeology by and of African Americans, and we knew what it looked like, in great detail (Mullins and Warner 1993b). There was material that was directly connected to people who had lived there. From systematic analysis, we discovered the patterns of purchase and use of the bottles, tin cans, buttons, pins, plates, bowls, and animal and fish bones. These produced different patterns of purchase, cooking, and discard. The patterns all answered the question of whether or not an archaeology of black life existed. The archaeology turned out to be there, as we found in 1992 and beyond, and it was both immediately recognizable and different in important ways from that of sites that had been occupied by people of European descent.

An analysis of tins cans showed that residents preferred national brand-names, because weight, quality, and price were guaranteed. The local grocer could circumvent such guarantees where he sold loose produce. Bottles were discarded quickly according to a match between their manufacturing dates and the associated stratigraphy. This meant that few containers were reused for canning and preserving fresh goods. Food could evidently be bought fresh and probably inexpensively. Fish scales, a sign of fresh fish caught locally and cleaned at home, disappeared after 1880. Fresh fish were bought from black vendors after this date. These were the patterns that attempted independence. They were also explained through oral histories (Jopling 1991, 1992) obtained from former residents of the courthouse block by Hannah Jopling at Barbara Jackson's request.

Jopling is the first cultural anthropologist to work with Archaeology in Annapolis. While she was learning archaeology, she introduced oral history and, later, life histories into Annapolis by recording and teaching others to record the stories that African Americans tell, told, and wanted others to hear, which were regarded as one of the essential ways of documenting, cementing, sharing, and celebrating their experiences, lessons, and testimonies. Jopling's first oral histories, when recorded, were crucial to Warner's and Mullins's work. Her own later work has been mainly with African American women's oral histories in a traditionally African American area near places we have excavated.

Because censuses, as well as people's memories, told us that the foundations and backyards we dug in had belonged to people of African descent,

the archaeological discoveries were unambiguous. African Americans visiting the Banneker-Douglass Museum saw archaeology in their neighborhood, and it was theirs. Supported by both the museum and a grant from the Maryland Humanities Council, we dug on Sunday afternoons and opened our excavations to people from all the black congregations in town, after having been invited to speak to several of the congregations directly. People from those churches came to visit. Many African Americans from the city came during the annual Kunta Kinte Festival devoted to celebrating African American culture. Many, many more read about our work and discoveries. When we exhibited our findings in the Banneker-Douglass Museum a short time later, hundreds of African American youngsters came (Leone et al. 1995). When we moved the exhibit to the headquarters of the Historic Annapolis Foundation, thousands of schoolchildren came. There was no doubt that there was an African American historical archaeology.

The content of local archaeology from backyards, basements, privies, and wells was perfectly ordinary: bones, buttons, bottles, glass, broken dishes, pins, cans, and everything you would expect. Because we conducted oral history interviews with some of the block's former residents, we knew that a woman had done laundry in a yard where an unusual number of buttons was recovered, including some with U.S. Naval Academy insignia on them. We also knew that discarded uniforms were often given to Naval Academy workers who lived in this neighborhood. Slates and pencils were from turn-of-the-century schools. Some chicken bones came from chickens raised in backyards. Some ham bones were from the Naval Academy, where many African Americans worked. Bric-a-brac and fine china sets were sometimes gifts from employers, but much more often were bought new from street vendors to be used on special occasions. Very little was said to be hand-me-down; much was from hard work and "makin' do." Thus, former residents remembered what the recovered remains meant, which provided the look of daily life among working-class and property-owning people of African descent. And after that came the results of archaeology that showed little fine china and frequently mismatched and hand-me-down dishes (Paul R. Mullins, written communication, 2004).

During the history of these houses, the neighborhood changed. By the time of its destruction for urban renewal—courthouse expansion and a parking lot—the houses were either all or almost all owned and occupied by African Americans. But it had been a mixed neighborhood earlier, with people of African and European descent living there in the later nineteenth

and early twentieth centuries. It became mostly black in the twentieth century. Bellis Court, behind the African Methodist Episcopal Church, was built for poor black renters.

TELL US ABOUT FREEDOM

Our first excavations and our first oral histories were along Franklin Street, an African American neighborhood in which people owned their own homes from the 1830s to the 1970s. The neighborhood included Wylie Bates's store and William Bishop's properties in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Both men owned real estate in Annapolis, became wealthy, and left impressive legacies. Bishop was one of the wealthiest men, black or white, in Annapolis. Bates was influenced by Booker T. Washington's idea "that hard manual labor would compel white America to grant African Americans political rights" (Mullins, written communication, 2004), and in his autobiography (Bates 1928) he describes his efforts to circumvent the racism of his time. The segregated high school for African Americans was named for him. Although we excavated houses once owned by Bishop and wanted to include Bates's store, which had been disturbed by later building, the archaeology did not include them specifically. The archaeology was, however, about Annapolis middle-class black families whose material culture showed them to be trying to be both in and outside the middle class. Racism pushed them to the margins, but American ideology drew them in.

Wylie Bates's critique no doubt speaks for many members of the black middle class:

The North tried to saddle the responsibility for Slavery upon the South. Slavery was an American Institution, and America is responsible for the past and present treatment of the Negro, and must account to God for her sins both of omission and commission. Americans to a great extent are still unwilling to recognize the Negro as a *bona fide* citizen, a member of the body politic, a loyal patriot. Five hundred thousand foreigners came to America during the last year, and it is easier for that half-million to get remunerative employment than for the same number of Negroes, who would lay down their lives for the Flag of this Country; and would also experience great difficulty in receiving fair and just treatment.

Bates 1928, 18

Wylie Bates had a clear view of reality, but he wanted to be middle-class and succeeded. His autobiography shows him to be fully within the ideology of possessive individualism. Yet his people were excluded and

exploited. The combination occurring so clearly here shows the conflict between a steeply hierarchical society that used racism and segregation to keep workers as poor as possible and an ideology that fooled the two-thirds of society that employed the other third, which combined clear knowledge of its condition with a hope for inclusion that would prove very damaging to a hierarchy of unequal wealth.

Most of the archaeology along Franklin Street was about free people, because most of the neighborhood's houses dated to after 1865. But once we touched free blacks before Emancipation and then the survival of African traditions in Annapolis, both excitement and controversy were there all at once. Our discoveries produced different reactions, depending on race.

When we started to excavate the Maynard-Burgess House, attitudes to us started to change. This house had come onto the real estate market in the mid 1980s and been sold to a woman who soon found that it was too eaten by termites and deteriorated to restore. She then sold it to Port of Annapolis, a for-profit preservation group that was interested in it because of its location and historic fabric. The land was once owned by Charles Carroll of Carrollton, and the house had a Federal Era look about it and was part of a block of similar houses opposite the Annapolis City Hall on a historic street.

The Historic Annapolis Foundation got Archaeology in Annapolis involved. We dug a great deal there over three seasons, and ultimately both Paul Mullins (Mullins 1999a; Mullins and Warner 1993) and Mark Warner (1998) wrote dissertations based on their work at the house, which we proved to be far more special than was at first suspected.

Whose house had this been? Had they been black or white? Someone connected to Charles Carroll of Carrollton, who was white, rich and famous, but Catholic? Or John Maynard and Willard Burgess, who were black? John Maynard was born free in the early nineteenth century, bought his wife out of slavery and step-daughter later, and then, in 1847, built or bought, moved, and reassembled in changed fashion, this house for his family. It was always lived in by the Maynards from then on until it was sold early in the twentieth century to one of the Maynard's boarders, a relative and member of the Burgess family, whose descendants lived there uninterrupted until the 1980s. So potentially this was a site where only African Americans had lived.

Preservationists, local historians, and architectural historians focused on the fact that some parts of the house dated from before 1847, must have been built somewhere else, and had perhaps been bought, disas-

sembled, and reconstructed in their present form and location by John Maynard. Thus, part of the house had presumably originally had a white owner. The archaeology showed that nothing on the site dated from before 1847. There was nothing that could be tied to Charles Carroll or anyone else before then. The land had been unoccupied, and there was neither trash nor yard scatter. Nothing existed to show a tie to an architecturally earlier house. Indeed, for the Maynard house to be older than 1847, it had to have been built somewhere else and moved piecemeal to its current location, and architectural historians argue this to be the case.

The Maynard-Burgess House produced a rich archaeology that showed, when analyzed by Mullins and Warner (1993a), how its black owners developed different strategies over time to preserve their economic independence, fishing the Bay, using black street vendors as opposed to white grocers, and patronizing national, regulated brands, while keeping up a conventional Victorian exterior and an interior of their own choosing, following W. E. B. Du Bois and other black intellectuals. Mullins points out that some of the behavior behind the archaeological remains like changes in the consumption of fish occurred because of anti-black stereotyping. He argues that many blacks—at least the Maynards—stopped consuming fish because of the anti-black racial caricatures associated with fishing (Mullins 1999: 110, 118). “If anything, racism drove Blacks away from fish consumption and toward marketplace consumption, so the ideological caricature of Blackness and fishing served market interests. Vendors did provide a halfway point; i.e. Black consumers could have fish but avoid the caricatures associated with fishing” (Mullins, written communication, 2004). This was how they negotiated the town’s racism and preserved their own integrity. All these patterns are fully described by Paul Mullins and Mark Warner.

To this day, Annapolis has not decided how independent blacks can be or have been, which is to say, how much it wants to see and hear from them about their mutual lives and conditions. The Maynard-Burgess House became more and more derelict, even as it passed from private, to nonprofit, to city ownership. It has been stabilized by an intrusive internal wood skeleton that both keeps it from collapsing and prevents anyone from seeing its insides. It is a very long way from housing a demonstration to anyone in or out of Annapolis of the many lives that free people of color made for themselves there from 1847 to 1980. But by excavating it and analyzing the material from the courthouse neighborhood and two turn-of-the-century tenements built largely for people of African de-

scend, the archaeology of Annapolis unlocked black communities living in freedom, escaping racism, and making independent lives, with integrity and consciousness of their condition.

Although Barbara Jackson Nash told us that there were differences in wealth and standing within the Annapolis black community, and other black intellectuals and leaders told us to see communities and not one large group, Mullins’s archaeological results provided nuanced results. He argues that the most striking distinctions were really in social space—church memberships, family lineage, skin color, education, home ownership—and less in portable material culture. The Maynard probate and Maynard’s earliest deposits contain stylish things, but the similarities with poorer African Americans are more striking than the differences. This suggests that archaeology can provide an important comment on difference along the color line because it demonstrates similarities in material culture while also showing radically distinct social and cultural worlds (Mullins, personal communication, 2004). The archaeology of the Maynard-Burgess House and our associated research did show such distinctions, which led to a better understanding of black Annapolis. They had archaeology, and it commented on capitalism, democracy, and the ideologies of both.

WHAT IS LEFT FROM AFRICA?

I want to turn to what was left from Africa. I had no expectation that this question could be answered when Barbara Jackson asked it around 1990. I knew that there was a scholarly search for Africanisms like house forms, food ways, and some musical styles that preserved African traditions. But I thought that a place like Annapolis was so middle-class, had been so completely the home of government bureaucrats for so long, so utterly the home of people who thought they were descendents of eighteenth-century European traditions that it could not be a place to find Africa alive.

The search for Africa is well established in archaeology, folklore, American history and literature, and American studies. The comprehensive *Archaeology of the African Diaspora in the Americas* by Theresa Singleton and Mark Bograd (1995) offers hundreds of citations and a clear overview. The demographic, ethnic, and cultural composition of the Chesapeake area in particular, and of the U.S. East Coast and Caribbean in general are described by Lorena Walsh (1997), Michael Gomez (1998), Michael Mullin (1976, 1999), and Robert Ferris Thompson (1983, 1991,

1993). Detailed analyses of African origins and traditions come from Margaret Washington Creel (1988), Gwendolyn Midlo Hall (1971, 1992), and Charles Joyner (1984, 1999). My own effort here is a local contribution to their larger, older and more comprehensive effort.

Africa survived in Annapolis and flourishes. It is hard to get hold of what you do not know, and archaeologists are no better at this than any other scientists. But within archaeology there is a tradition of recording almost everything that is excavated. If you dig it up, you write it down, count it, identify it, say what it is made of, and save it. You certainly do not throw it away, even if you have no idea of what it is or was.

So, one afternoon in 1991 at the Charles Carroll House in Annapolis (Logan et al. 1992), Dr. Robert Worden, who had taken the lead in preserving the historic structure and its grounds, and who was excavating with us as a volunteer on a project he had funded in his capacity as head of the museum house, showed me what he had just found that day. He knew the material was important; so did I. He had kept it separate from the rest because he had found all the pieces together about eighteen inches below the modern dirt floor in a ground-floor room of the house that was called the East Wing.

He showed me an as yet unwashed group of fourteen rock crystals, at least half a dozen white bone discs about one and a half inches in diameter, a black pebble that was very smooth, two coins with dates, one 1790, one 1810, the bottom of a pottery bowl with a blue asterisk on it, and some common pins. There was an ensuing debate about those items, which continues to this day. On one side, the stuff was trash; nothing. The room, whose function we did not know then, had produced large amounts of small bones, pins, and other archaeological finds from the upper few inches, which told us that it had been some kind of work or disposal space. The material could be waste from a workroom associated with the house's main kitchen, which was immediately adjacent. But what Robert Worden was showing me was not scatter. It had all been concentrated and packed together and found as a unit, he said. He knew it belonged together. And because none of it looked broken up into small fragments, even though everything was mostly pieces, it did not appear to be discard. The pieces were also bigger than much of the material coming from the rest of the room.

The material "was concentrated in very loose soil underneath a layer of hard-packed soil or clay—like the clay was a covering for what came next. The excavation area was very small—between floor joists and against a wall. To me it seemed like a chamber now filled with loose dirt—



FIGURE 38. The Charles Carroll House in Annapolis, where the first cache of spirit materials was discovered. This house was begun in 1699 and was extended and enlarged through the 1770s. Its current shape and height were imposed by Charles Carroll of Carrollton. Archaeology in Annapolis excavated the ground floor of the house, the ruins of its extension, and through-out the large garden laid out by Charles Carroll when he enlarged the house. Courtesy of the Anacostia Museum and Center for African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution. Photograph by Steven M. Cummings.

unlike the rest of the hard-packed area adjoining, and above and below. The cache was also near a door (to the outside) [on the] northeast [corner]" (Robert Worden, personal note, November 2004.)

One opinion was that the material was household discard. A pebble was a rock. The pierced discs were button backs; the crystals had perhaps occurred there naturally. In other words, the first inclination among some early viewers was to identify things based on their own experience. Because the material Robert Worden found had no obvious meaning in anyone's experience, it was regarded as bits and pieces of virtually no importance, which should perhaps simply be counted and then discarded, like brick fragments or oyster shells. Worden himself had no intention of treating it this way, and he carefully recorded and photographed it.

I had two thoughts, one automatic and one based on an old experience of my own. Because we archaeologists do not discard anything, except bricks and oyster shells, and then only after counting or weighing them, there was never any chance that we were going to throw this material away.

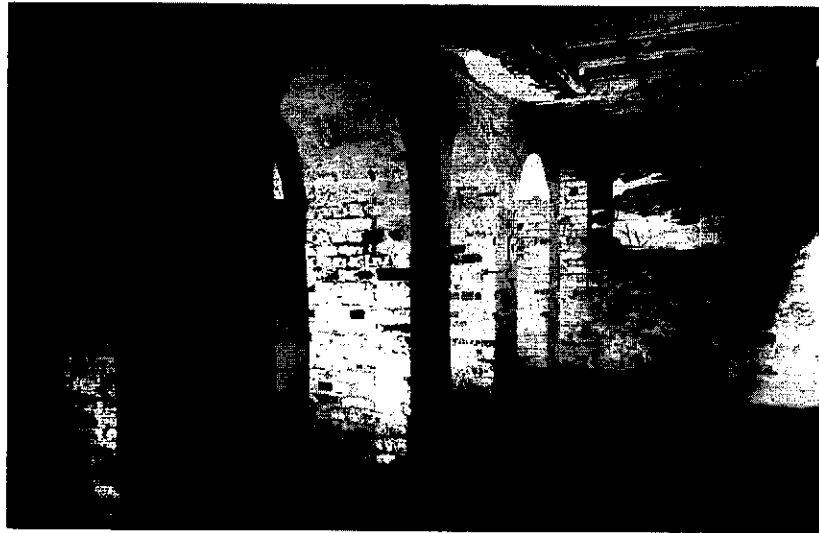


FIGURE 39. The room in the Charles Carroll House where the main cache of spirit materials was found. Substantial archaeological deposits from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were recovered here. The cache was discovered in the northeast corner. Courtesy of the Anacostia Museum and Center for African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution. Photograph by Steven M. Cummings.

That was the first antidote to discarding these materials actually or intellectually. The second antidote came from my own field school training in Arizona in 1964. I dug in a prehistoric pueblo ruin at Grasshopper, Arizona, the site of the University of Arizona's field school under the direction of Raymond Thompson. At the bottom of the twelfth- or thirteenth-century room where I was digging, on its floor or just below it, was a set of crystals, and, as I remember, a pebble or two. These were identified at the time as a magician's cache or bundle. They were said to have belonged to a practitioner. This did not mean that what I was looking at in Annapolis was something similar, but it seemed familiar.

Shortly after this find, and for reasons I no longer remember, I encouraged a campus newspaper reporter who was the local stringer for the *New York Times* to write up the material. He did, and it was published in the *Sunday Times* ("Scientists Find Slaves Kept African Culture," September 15, 1991), beginning a process that still continues. Monday, the next day, Dr. Frederick Lamp, a former student of Robert Ferris Thompson's, and curator of West African Art at the Baltimore Museum

of Art, called me up and said we had discovered a spirit bundle whose origins were in West Africa and that must have been made by an African or African American. A little while later, Professor John Vlach of George Washington University called and said there was a whole American tradition of African beliefs that had been transferred here from West Africa and was well known.

Lamp explained that the crystals we had discovered at the Charles Carroll House were used to contain spirits (personal communication). White buttons with their four holes, were a cosmogram, often referred to as an X, Vlach explained (see Vlach 1978, 1987, 1991, 1993). White clay, or ash, or the opacity of a crystal looked like the water through which spirits of dead relatives traveled home, back to the sea from which we and they ultimately came. The cosmogram was sometimes represented as an X, but more fully as an X within a circle or lozenge. The arms of the X are encircled to show both motion and completeness. It is a combination of a horizon line that divides the living world from the world of the dead and a vertical line that is the axis between the living and the dead, who live in the world of spirits below. The cosmogram is the circle of life, seen as a life cycle from birth to midlife to death, and to life in the spirit or underworld (Ferguson 1992).

The cache or bundle that we had discovered had probably been put in the ground by a ritual specialist, Lamp said. It would have been used to manage the spirits in the house or to protect the inhabitants from spirits. This was a practice from the BaKongo tradition, brought directly from West Africa. Although we did not know it fully at the time, we had found materials from the larger diasporic world of which these African spirit practices were a part.

I knew I was a beginner in this field, but I felt that the archaeological and folkloristic search for items and practices deriving from Africa was weak. I knew the search was important to people of African descent, because Barbara Jackson and John Vlach had said so, and I knew there was a literature in anthropology on the issue. Beyond this discussion, I was interested in why African practices and religious traditions had survived, in what contexts, and for what larger reasons.

My students and colleagues' work at the Charles Carroll House helped expand on the opening to West Africa provided by a public discussion of the crystals in two other ways. On the other side of the wall from the room where Robert Worden had discovered the cache was the main kitchen of the great house. Under the kitchen hearth was a single enormous crystal weighing several pounds. The large kitchen and the origi-

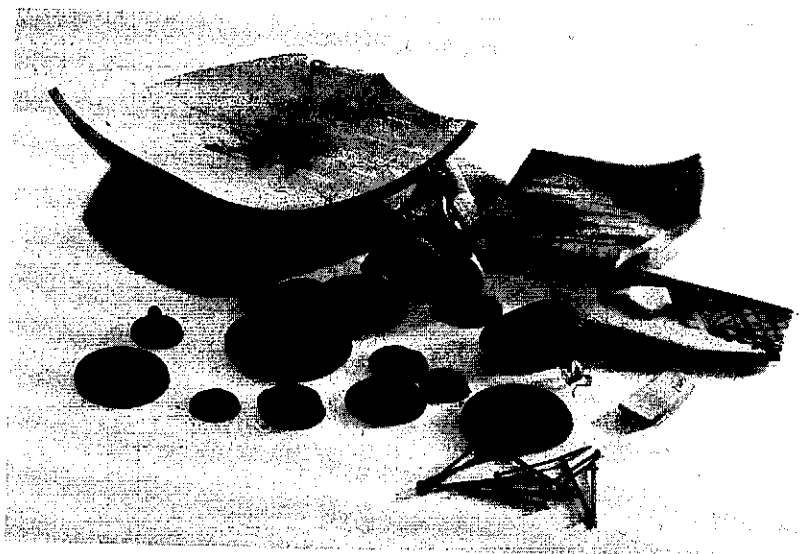


FIGURE 40. Artifacts in the main cache of spirit materials in the Charles Carroll House. The cache contains at least a dozen rock crystals (not shown in this photograph), two dated coins, many white pierced discs, buttons, and a black pebble. The cache was capped by a pearlware bowl fragment with a blue asterisk in its bottom. Courtesy of the Anacostia Museum and Center for African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution. Photograph by Steven M. Cummings.

nal room were connected by another smaller room, and under one of its thresholds was a set of three crystals. We now had a pattern that was neither random nor trash.

We were more firmly establishing an African presence in the Charles Carroll House. These basement rooms, which had had no particular identity before, were now seen to have been the rooms of Charles Carroll's cook, whom he wrote about. Archaeology now showed that she had protected her environment with these ritual bundles, and she may have worshipped through them as well. Thus, while the Jesuits were upstairs saying Mass, she was in an African safe zone beneath. At least that was our hypothesis.

"Poor old Grace died suddenly last Friday morning between the hours of 10 & 11: her death was instant and without groan . . . she had been sick, but that morning she eat [*sic*] a hearty breakfast & told her mistress she hoped now the warm weather was coming on, she should get well. I saw her about 5 o'clock in the old kitchen that morning poor old

creature. I hope she is happy" (Worden 2004, April 3, 1773). Grace's death as recorded by Charles Carroll of Carrollton, may have preceded the placement of caches but not the domestic uses of the rooms.

The Carroll households, including that in Annapolis, saw frequent floggings, whippings, and sometimes the chaining of slaves in an iron collar. There are many, many references to these, their frequency and apparent necessity. In the correspondence between Charles Carroll of Annapolis and his son Charles Carroll of Carrollton, it is clear that such violence was an accepted and routine part of daily life for them and their many slaves (Carroll and Carroll 2001, Appendix III, 1585) on their thousands of acres (*ibid.*, 646, 655; Worden 2004, September 28, 29, 30, and October 6, 1774.) This violence provides some of the context for the use of spirit caches. Two notations by Charles Carroll of Carrollton from the Annapolis house serve to illustrate it:

October 19, 1772,

I lost a pair of thread stockings when last with you, pray enquier for them, Nanny is not the only thief in your house, I think to give Molly and Henny a severe whipping when I go down if my stockings are not found.

Carroll and Carroll 2001, 646

November 23, 1772,

Little Nan has been whipt about Mrs. Moreton's shifts, she confessed she stole them and said she gave them to Moll, search Moll's box etc., privately, but it is probably she has sold them. I am determined to see Moll and Henny well whipped when I go down.

Carroll and Carroll 2001, 655

A short time later, I was asked by the Historic Annapolis Foundation to run an excavation just across the street from the Carroll House, at Slayton House, a building newly donated to the Foundation (see Jones 2000). Slayton House is a late eighteenth-century row house built just before the Revolution. It has five stories, and its basement workrooms, including its kitchen, are accessible from the street by a separate stair and lower passage well below street level. Work yards were at the rear of the house, and the kitchen can be entered directly from these. The basement kitchen is large, with a huge fireplace, like the others in eighteenth-century Annapolis great houses, and a separate laundry room that also had a fireplace. There are also a lower foyer, which receives a descending stair and the shaft of a dumbwaiter, and some smaller, newer rooms for storage and an early twentieth-century electric and gas kitchen.

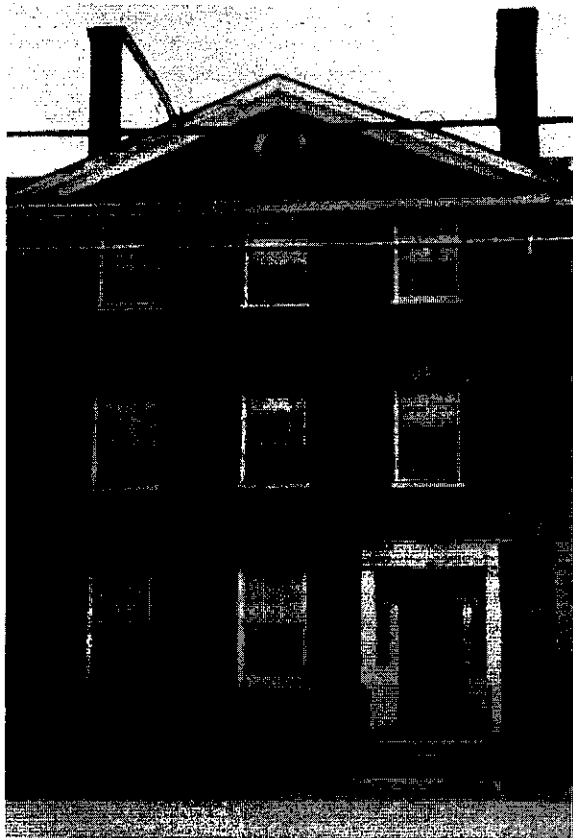


FIGURE 41. Slayton House, street façade, 1920s. A separate entrance to the basement workrooms led from the street and was immediately below the elaborate front door.

By the time we excavated in these spaces, we knew that such places were the domain of African Americans who worked there and of the possibility of finding spirit bundles in certain locations beneath the floor, which in this case was made of cement-covered bricks. By the time we began work at Slayton House, we had already begun to understand that caches of the kind we first found at the Carroll House constituted efforts to control the passage of potentially harmful, or helpful, spirits, who used chimneys, doors, pipes, stairs, and northeast corners to gain entrance to people whom they were to harm or protect (Jones 1999; Leone and Fry 1999). Spirits use drain pipes, gates, arbors, doors, chimneys and there-

fore hearths and fireplace openings to come and go. Caches to control this movement are properly called hands, mojos, bundles, or tobys. They trap and contain the spirits and direct their powerful action to or at someone. Spirits can cure, protect, foretell, control, or harm. At this point, I did not understand much about these traditions derived from Africa, and I did not yet know much about the religions from which they came or into which they changed. I was even confused about whether there was a religion or a scattering of magical practices.

My former student Lynn Jones, who ran our archaeological laboratories, also ran the excavations over two years (Jones 2000). We discovered seven caches in these workrooms (table 11). A large cache with a porcelain doll's head, arms, and legs, a ring, pins, and buttons were found under the kitchen hearth. Pins with a pierced Chinese coin were found in the northeast corner near a doorpost in a twentieth-century storeroom. A painted bottle filled with solidified black material was buried in a niche in the northeast corner of the new kitchen under the floor. A pile of white plaster with a broken sherd from a crock showing a dolphin swimming in waves was found in the old kitchen's northeast corner mixed with a white powdery material. Pins and glass fragments were found under the threshold of the door connecting the kitchen to the stair hall. And pins and buttons were found at the base of the staircase. Because some of the caches had been disturbed by rodents and by trenches for drains and pipes, we could not be sure that all the objects we found were part of a cache. But with years of retrospection and learning, I am confident that this was a carefully marked space protected by spirit bundles. The cook and others were probably protecting themselves, but such protection has an active component to it and might have aimed the spirits at the owners, which might have had an effect if the whites who owned the house had been raised by people of African descent who explained the ways of spirits to them as children. This was a much later insight provided by Gladys-Marie Fry.

Our finds at Slayton House received substantial, unsolicited publicity. Because our finds at the Carroll House had become better known, the circle of people seeking to contact us got larger. Professor Fry, a folklorist in the University of Maryland's English Department and an expert on African American material culture (Fry 2001 [1975], 1990), told me of her long-standing hope of exploring the sorts of things we were discovering in archaeology through written materials about them. Fry explained two things to me when we first met. One caused substantial relief and the other a transformation in how I thought about my group's discoveries.

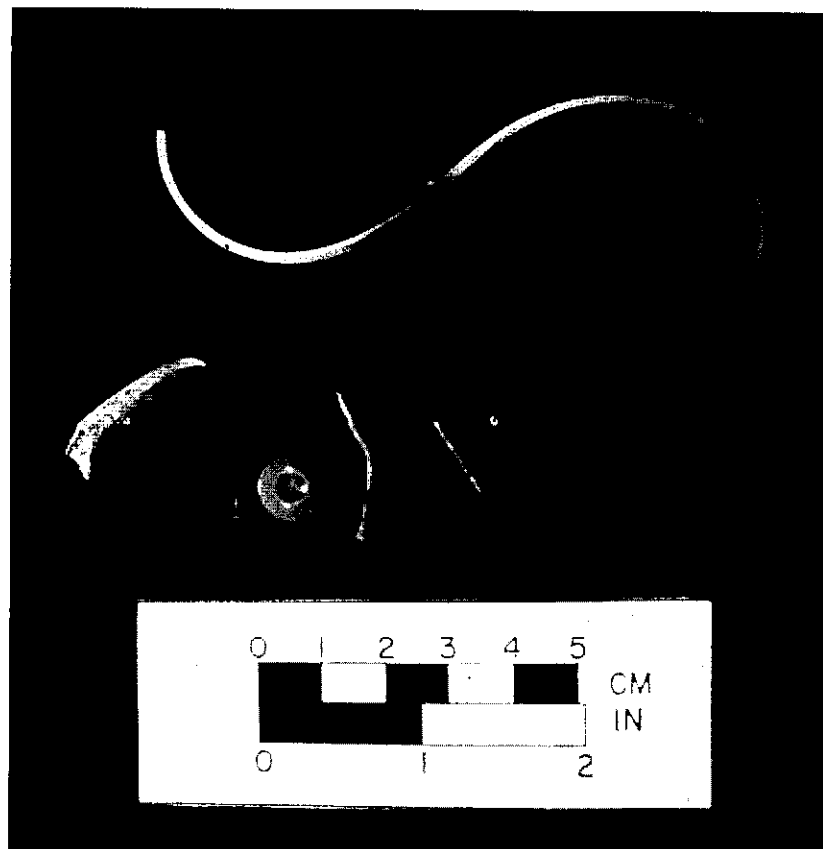


FIGURE 42. Cache from the Slayton House kitchen. There are nine common pins, a crab claw, a button, and a bead with a modern thread through it.

For the first time since I had begun to learn about crystals, caches, or West African religious traditions, I learned that large amounts of similar material had been discovered throughout the American South in houses and workplaces associated with slaves (Brown and Cooper 1990; Galke 1992, 2000; Jones 1999; LaRoche 1994; LaRoche and Blakey, 1997; Logan et al. 1992; Orser 1988a, 1986b, 1994; Patten 1992; Wilkie 1997, 2000). I knew, as most historical archaeologists did, of Leland Ferguson's (1992) colonoware pots and spoons with Xs on them. But Fry had heard of a whole pattern of archaeological discoveries from Virginia to Texas that involved caches or bundles from chimneys, hearths, and beneath floors and doors. Suddenly, I did not have to worry about my

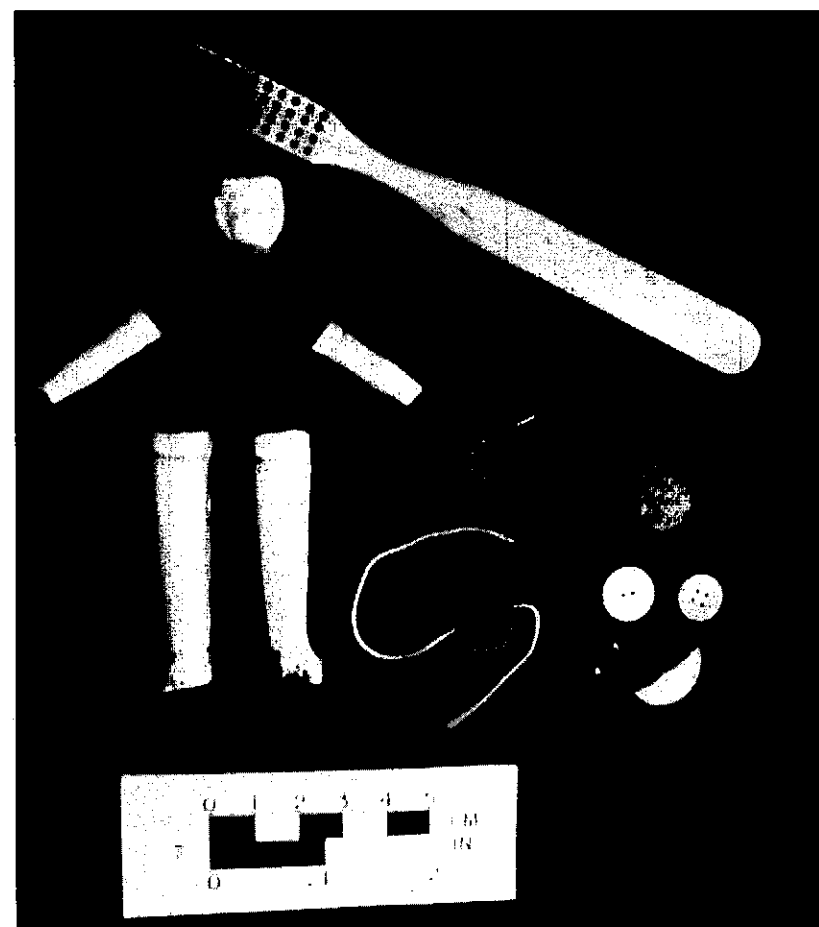


FIGURE 43. Cache from the hearth, Slayton House kitchen. These materials come from beneath the hearth and were recovered close together and intact. Doll fragments, rings, and discs are common in these caches. The kitchen contained at least two other caches.

own narrow frame of reference. Instead of making a unique discovery that some local professionals dismissed as trash, our discovery was one example of a pattern that Fry saw emerging from the archaeology done in the South since the 1970s.

The second part of my conversation with Fry was about the records of slave life that came from the stories recorded by and with former slaves

TABLE II. Caches of artifacts from the Slayton House in Annapolis tied to African spirit traditions

Artifacts	Unit where found	Location of unit	Date of artifacts
Porcelain doll parts, peanut shell with pin, brass button, white shell buttons, a gold ring	Unit 8, level B, throughout	In front of hearth in old kitchen	ca. 1870
6 white glass buttons, 2 white shell buttons, a straight pin	Unit 7, level E, throughout	Northeast corner of old kitchen	after 1845
Whiteware soup plate sherds, ironstone wash basin, stoneware butter crock, a white button, a gray shell button	Unit 7, feature 27a	Along east wall of old kitchen (northeast corner)	after 1845
A bone button, a white glass button, a metal button, whiteware soup plate sherds, ironstone wash basin sherds	Unit 7, feature 28a	Along east wall of old kitchen (northeast corner)	after 1845
A black bead, a gray glass button, 9 straight pins, a fragment of crab claw	Unit 12, level B	Northeast corner of present-day kitchen	after 1828
Tumbler base, bottle base, lamp chimney glass, lamp globe glass (white with pink painted decoration)	Unit 12, feature 42b (inside wall in corner)	Northeast corner of present-day kitchen	after 1870
Chinese coin, brass bell, 3 straight pins	Unit 18, level A	Storage room under the stairs	after 1870

SOURCES: Jones 2000, 59–60, table 1.

in the 1930s as part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) Federal Writers' Project (FWP), which produced the so-called slave narratives, better known now as slave autobiographies (Hyatt 1970–78 [1935]; Rawick 1972, 1977, 1979; and see <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snabout.html> [accessed October 23, 2004]).

There are 11,000 pages of typescripts of narrative answers to standardized questions given by people in the 1930s who led their early lives in slavery before Emancipation in 1865. There was a protocol of over



FIGURE 44. Cache from the kitchen, Slayton House. A set of white buttons, each with four holes representing the cosmogram, distinguish this cache. Courtesy of the Anacostia Museum and Center for African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution. Photograph by Steven M. Cummings.

350 questions that were asked, mostly by white interviewers, of anyone who had grown up in slavery. Many hundreds of people were interviewed, from Delaware to Indiana, and from Texas to Florida. Some of the richest narratives come from the deep South. These narratives, published under the title *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography* (Rawick 1972, 1977, 1979), are readily available in research libraries.

Some of the questions are about religion, and Gladys Fry planned a survey of them for us to find statements about the materials we were excavating. She opened my eyes to a written source that might help understand and explain the bundles. This process opened up the possibility of a better, more comprehensive understanding of the practices associated with the bundles and their meaning. But beyond this was the possibility of seeing the world of late American slavery from the vantage point of those who had lived in it and survived it. What did slaves think about their world, and how did they create it and understand their circumstances? The tension in a democracy whose economic base is capitalism is between external power and power from instruments of self-discipline. Capitalism inevitably creates opportunities, both to be achieved and al-

ready taken. Because it produces both great wealth and the power to protect it, and is defended as producing opportunities in the future for others, it is a system that mixes armed might, like that required to keep slaves, with self-discipline exercised through aspirations.

Neither capitalism nor democracy was extended very far after the Revolution. Capitalism, to be sure, did not look like the coherent system we know it to be now, nor had it been fully described analytically by the later eighteenth century. It was still possible to escape. And it certainly was possible to mount temporarily successful critiques of it, as was done throughout the early industrializing world by religious and secular utopianists. A parallel constraint on social life was that at first democracy was restricted to property-owning men in the new United States. Democracy was not to be extended to those without property, to women, to slaves, or to free people of color. Not only were all those outside the boundaries of the alliance of those who won the Revolution, but so was the optimism that the alliance generated. What then were slaves to do?

Slaves were property, but they were people in everybody's eyes, even if there was a debate among some whites about what kind of humans they were. Certainly, in their own eyes, they were not slaves. They never ceased resisting. Individually, there was subservience, but collectively this was less and less the case. This was especially true after the Haitian Revolution of 1793. And free people of African descent were constantly under threat of having their freedom removed, trumped by racism and by having no voting rights at all. What did these people have to say about the republic to which they belonged? Did they accept the self-improvement and self-monitoring vehicles of their masters and surrounding whites? Or, did they see the lie in its tale of opportunity and find something different? This is one question.

I have used Althusser (1971) so far as a basis for my analysis, and my final question about escape comes from the critiques of Althusser's ideas on ideology (e.g., Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner 1980). Individualism and its ally citizenship, Althusser would argue, are masks hiding a sharp hierarchy of wealth and power. Can anyone of a class of people see through the mask so that underlying relationships are visible? In Annapolis, the underlying relationship throughout the eighteenth century was that fewer and fewer people possessed more and more of the city's total wealth, and more and more of their neighbors possessed less and less of it. This inequality, I argue, was possible without violence largely because of the effectiveness of the ideology of individualism, with explicit personal freedom and individual liberty, and finally citizenship. This

ideology appeared so true to so many that it was not regarded as debatable. Did an ideology that included personal freedom and opportunity persuade those kept outside the promises of liberty before and after the Revolution, particularly slaves and free people of African descent? And how would an archaeologist know? Through the collaboration suggested by Fry, we discovered much of what we had hoped for about African traditions in Annapolis and how people of African descent handled their place in Annapolis society.

Part of the surprising mix of events along my way came from the dates of our archaeological discoveries. The earliest, 1790–1810, were dated by pierced coins in the Charles Carroll House cache. The cache material from Slayton House was as recent as 1920, however, so it had been made or used, not by slaves, but by free workers in the twentieth century. When we published these findings in newspapers, I was invited to speak to a radio talk show in New York City with a predominantly African American audience. Six women called in, and five of them identified relatives who used the practices described in the narratives and materials related to what I described from Annapolis. Five of the six were happy to have archaeology comment on traditions they knew. The sixth thought a white guy could not be knowledgeable enough to comment on black culture. When I finished listening, I knew that some aspect of the materials from Annapolis was still alive now. I also knew I had to work at my relation to African American culture.

One day, I got a call from Catherine Yronwode, who lives in northern California and runs a business on the Internet supplying authentic and pure materials for making mojos or hands, material that we were calling caches or bundles (Yronwode 2002). Yronwode sells most of the well-known components for mojos, tobys, or hands from a website of over 600 pages (www.luckymojo.com). She had read the FWP narratives and then collected for sale the materials for hands mentioned there. She began to advertise and sell them to a large customer base that was mostly in the U.S. South, about 80 percent of whom are African American. But she also had a customer near my own office at the University of Maryland, College Park. We talked for thirty minutes, and I realized that our Annapolis discoveries were important to people far beyond archaeology and African American folklore.

Yronwode obtained authentic St. John the Conqueror root, black dog hair, bluing, red flannel, and a dozen other key, standard ingredients for making hands. She had a knowing clientele who came to her with a clear understanding of what each wanted. Furthermore, she had read some of

the 1930s narrative sources and used those as definitions of authenticity and purity. She did not sell substitutes or corrupted material. She sent me a box of about two dozen of these items. My conversation with Ms. Yronwode showed me that the tradition was alive, large, and in my own backyard, which is to say, on the edge of Annapolis. Now there was no gap between 1920 at Slayton House and today. The tradition was alive and was called Hoodoo, or conjure, conjuration, or root work. It is probably best to refer to it here as African spirit tradition. It had been in America since the eighteenth century, and had its origins in West and West Central Africa, so it was both African and American. It is part of what is left of Africa in America.

My students and I were guided by Herskovits (1958 [1941]) to the debate over whether or not anything is left of Africa in America, which dates from about 1900 and includes discussions of African dance, music, food, dress styles, and religion. But the more recent question of what happened to African traditions in the New World also seemed important (see Gundaker 1998a, 1998b; Price 1990; Price and Price 1999; Thompson 1983, 1991; Theophus Smith 1994). There is little or no evidence for West African religious traditions in seventeenth-century Anglo-America through historical archaeology, certainly in Annapolis. Even though there were African indentured servants, for example, from the Caribbean, and some slaves late in the 1600s, African spirit traditions or their early forms are not visible archaeologically. They are not apparent until early in the eighteenth century as far as I know.

There is thus a century in North America with people of African descent but without evidence of their religious traditions. So when African spirit traditions appear archaeologically in the early eighteenth century, they are African, but are probably also American, and they may be the beginning of an amalgam of several African traditions, such as the BaKongo, Fan, Ifa, and Yoruba traditions. I and others thus tend to see them as coming from a combination of sources and as a creation in America of African origin. But there is another, more traditional position that argues that spirit use is what is left of religious traditions torn from their origins and practiced secretly, largely bereft of specialists and their original web of meaning. It is thus a remnant, but is purely African, not part Native American religion, Christianity, or English witchcraft. It is not creole.

This debate was the context for our excavations at the James Brice House, where initially we did not expect to find much related to African Americans, but where we certainly would not have missed it. The Brice House was built late in the eighteenth century and is one of the largest

and best preserved of the great Annapolis houses. It is a five-part Georgian house with the west wing devoted to an office and stable or warehouse and the opposite east wing containing a kitchen and laundry. Our job was to excavate within and around the west wing and inside the east wing and its connection to the main block of the house. In the 1980s, during renovation and restoration of the house, then newly bought and owned by the not-for-profit arm of the bricklayer's union, called the International Masonry Institute, the attic of the main house was substantially altered. This was supposed to have been where the family's slaves had lived. Whether they lived there or not, the various owners did have slaves, and the current owners were also interested in that aspect of the house's past. We found that past in a number of different places in the house. At the base of one of the house's lightning rods, which was near a downspout, we found a dense, compact cache of oyster shells, a crystal decanter top, and a broken up tortoise shell; there was also a pierced coin with the bundle. Both the downspout and lightning rod provided an obvious connection with the flash of the spirits and a pathway for them, probably marked by the whiteness of the oyster shells. The likely meaning of the artifacts as a hand was clear, and we did not doubt that this find was African American. The discovery was made and immediately recognized by Colin Beaven.

The major scholar of West African religious traditions in the United States is Robert Ferris Thompson of Yale. His best-known books on the topic, *Flash of the Spirit* (1983) and *Face of the Gods* (1993), use the known connection between the ways spirits express themselves and ways to contain and direct them. Spirits are associated with beams of light and things that flash like mirrors, crystals, decanter tops, pie plates, and, more recently, hubcaps. These embody spirits. They capture and control them and then direct them. This is called a metonym. The thing controlling spirits is not what it appears to be; it is actually something entirely different. It doesn't stand for something else; it is something else, so a crystal or mirror actually held the spirit.

The Brice House excavations were conceptualized by James Harmon (Harmon and Neuwirth 2000), who began our work in the west wing and moved us to the east wing after the first excavation was well along. Two of our archaeologists, Colin Beaven and Matthew Cochran, were already very familiar with the work we had done on spirit traditions, and Cochran had independently discovered Yronwode's website. These men dug in the east wing along with a prehistorian who insisted that the archaeology of African spirit use was intellectually unconvincing, because

there was no way to distinguish its remains from scatter or trash. Because a number of other local archaeologists continued to hold this opinion, they constituted a useful foil to our work.

The east wing of the Brice House (Harmon and Neuwirth 2000) became a treasure trove of African spirit usage over the year, from the beginning of our work there until Jessica Neuwirth and Matthew Cochran figured out fully what was really there (Neuwirth and Cochran 1999; Cochran 1999). During the excavations, several members of our team knew virtually immediately that we had discovered several caches. The first two seemed independent of each other. On the north side of the room that we knew as the laundry, a room we believed to have been thoroughly disturbed by gutting and installation of central heating early in the twentieth century, asbestos removal, the tearing up of two or three layers of twentieth-century wooden flooring, and general careless treatment, we began to find significant collections below the floor. Cochran and Beaven right away saw interesting things that were as yet new to them.

The deposits were dry and included beads, peach pits, pins, a medicine bottle with a stopper in place and a seed inside it, buttons—including one with what looked like a handmade letter M impressed on its top, three pieces of red cloth, and many more things, forming a circular deposit about eight feet wide and two to three inches deep, ending at a bricked-up doorway that had led to a hallway and then to the kitchen. The old doorway was in the center of the wall, on the centerline between the hearths at either end of the long axis of the whole wing itself. My students thought this collection was a cache but had never heard of one so big, so flat, so oriented, so rich, and so stratified. Why was it more or less oval, why had it been used over about forty-five years, as dated by its ceramic contents and through its internal stratification, why did it have between 500 and 1,000 items in it, why was it so oddly placed in the room? Its being in front of a doorway made sense, but not much else.

The modern door that connected the laundry to the modern hall and then to the north room and former main kitchen was only a few feet from the original door, now bricked up. Another and far more recognizable collection of materials was discovered near the new door, but on the other side of the threshold—the hallway side of the now closed-up door. Two iron rings, each about an inch and a half in diameter were in the deposit, along with buttons and pins. Because rings are so well known from archaeological deposits of spirit use, and in part too, because the materials were close together—not spread out—and in front of the older doorway, we thought right away that we had a spirit deposit. We were elated,

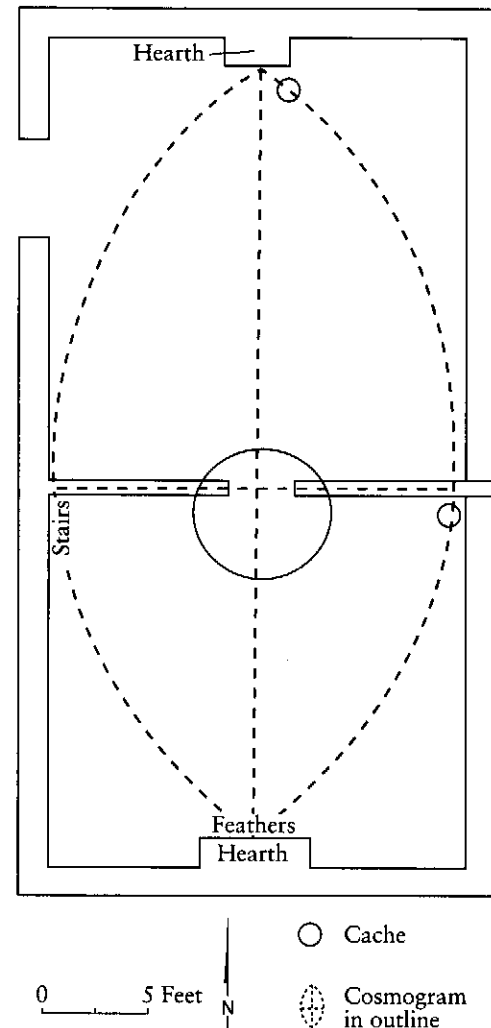


FIGURE 45. Brice House cosmogram. This diagram schematically shows the deposits, consisting of about a thousand items, buried below the floors of the kitchen and laundry of the Brice House. The deposits date from the 1880s to the 1920s. Drawing prepared by Bill Nelson based on original by Jessica Neuwirth and Matthew Cochran.

except that no amount of our logic placated the prehistorian. It was meaningless to him.

The prehistorian supervisor was excavating what was left of the very large hearth for the original kitchen fireplace. I knew this was a very important locale for African traditions. Even when he turned up porcelain doll fragments under the hearth, he refused to believe he had found anything significant, refused to record associated materials, and left me exasperated. I wanted more and more context, but I was grateful that the

hearth had yielded enough to guarantee our understanding of its role in managing spirits in the house. More and more, I knew, this had been an African environment; on the one hand, we should have expected it, on the other, we were delightfully surprised to find it.

Next, on the inside of an exterior door, we found a pierced coin. The door was in the center of the outside wall of the east wing, directly opposite a staircase to the second floor and on the short axis of the building. Next, at the southern fireplace, which had been heavily reconstructed, but near some of its hearth area that remained undisturbed, we found a clump of feathers, meaningless to us at the time, but recorded. The staircase to the upper floor, where slaves or free servants might have lived, had originally ascended from near the big oval deposit in the laundry. This stair had been moved so that it now centered on the hall between the kitchen and laundry. Furthermore, pipes insulated with asbestos had been installed at the location of the earlier staircase. The entire surrounding floor area had been disturbed, and we never excavated it. If I had the dig to do over again, I would try to excavate there, as well as at the base of the newer, twentieth-century stair.

About six months after our excavation was finished, and long before our report was complete, Jessica Neuwirth and Matthew Cochran (1999) called me up with an amazing discovery made from their much deeper reading of materials connected to African spirit traditions. They believed that rather than there being a series of unconnected caches in the workrooms, the entire space was laid out as a cosmogram. In the middle of the two rooms was the cosmogram's center, located at the crossing of the east wing's long and short axes, as marked by the openings through the two chimneys at either end and the outside door and the staircase at either end of the short axis. The floor, plus the flues, the outside door and the stair opposite, composed a large, three-dimensional environment both illustrating and enabling a life's safe journey.

A cosmogram is not representational, like most uses of a cross. It facilitates. A cosmogram made up of bundles, mojos, or hands, controlled the passage of spirits who came and went. Spirits pass up and down chimneys, in and out of doors, up and down stairs, and caches control their intent and action.

The cosmogram's center is its key element, because it is the crossing point of the lines that connect the land of the living and the spirits in the world of the dead, as well as the beginning and end of life's path. The first is the vertical axis; the second is horizontal. Not only do these crossed axes represent life and its relationship to death, but they help control the

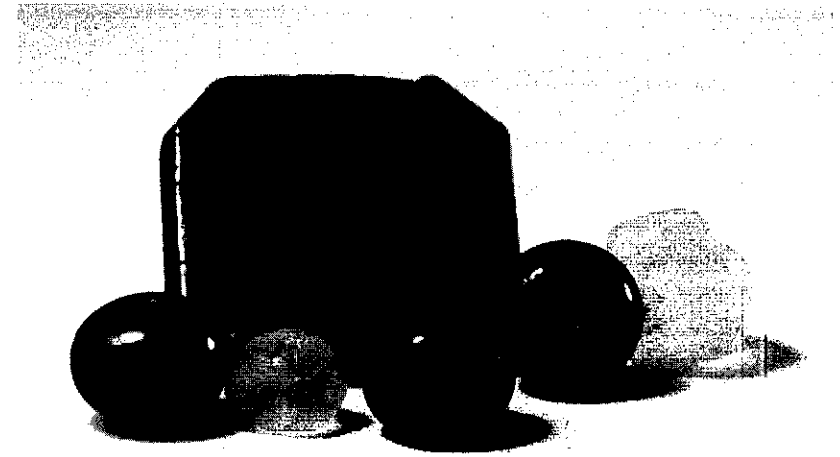


FIGURE 46. Black mirror and black and white beads, Brice House cosmogram. Mirrors, like crystals, can capture and direct spirits. Courtesy of the Anacostia Museum and Center for African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution. Photograph by Steven M. Cummings.

relationship as well. The crossed axes are often seen as an X. Once we knew we had a cosmogram, we realized that the whole space was protected by a coherent set of moves that showed us we had made a mistake in seeing individual bundles as the largest unit of this tradition's operation. Upon reflection, we also began to understand that at least the kitchen in Slayton House (Jones 2000) was probably just as completely marked, and that we had only seen individual bundles, not a whole cosmogram. This may have been true of the Charles Carroll House finds as well. Because our own internal debate had centered on whether or not we actually had bundles, we completely missed the bigger picture. That mistake did not happen again.

The debate within my own team was an unpleasant one. Unless you could be sure something was a cache, it was best to be scientifically conservative and conclude nothing. Some argued that this should be our way of operating to avoid more criticism from the local archaeologists, who always proclaimed these discoveries to be trash and not discoveries at all. Why add fuel to the fire of criticism, after all? The political side effect of this position was our silence, with little or no understanding of how this denied historical access to the black community.

My response to this position was to suggest that all such caches be



FIGURE 47. Pins from the Brice House cosmogram, one of the few ever discovered with datable layers. The large number of pins may represent either replenishing of the cosmogram's power or its constant use. Courtesy of the Anacostia Museum and Center for African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution. Photograph by Steven M. Cummings.

studied comparatively so as to note the common elements. I figured that once an archaeological signature for a cache was found by such a comparative study, the debate would be ended. This was a somewhat primitive technique, but the more we discovered such materials archaeologically, the easier such a technique would be, and the more it would be needed and appreciated. No dice from my crew at first.

The idea of comparison was behind Gladys Fry's suggestion that she had long wanted to survey the Cultural Resource Management literature on slave houses, quarters, and other living spaces. To quiet the doubts voiced by my own staff, I followed Fry's suggestion and we created a research design. Cultural Resource Management archaeological projects,

normally mandated by some level of law, require an excavation and a site report that is descriptive. Such reports normally contain no coherent analysis and follow various formats. In other words, they are hard to follow if you are not an archaeologist, and Fry readily admitted that she could not find her way through them to get coherent results. I knew she was right.

She and I hired Jane Cox to begin a survey of such reports, and Cox obtained remarkable results. We began with CRM reports on slave environments in Virginia. She found that the major collection of archaeological reports was in a state library in Richmond, with some in Williamsburg. As she visited, counted, called around, explored, and convinced people of what she needed, Jane Cox found there were about thirty-four sites in eastern Virginia that had been excavated and were connected with slaves. These were quarters, field houses, tenant farms, slave pens where people were held while awaiting sale, places where free people had lived, and places in plantation houses assigned to slaves or freed people of African descent.

Of the thirty-four such sites, only seventeen were useful to our survey. There were no written reports on many of the thirty-four sites, and others had no evidence of bundles or caches. Cox counted each item in each cache at the seventeen sites by location, like the northeast corner, hearth, chimney base, door threshold, or doorpost. She made a table of the results, which we subsequently published in the *Journal of American Folklore* (Leone and Fry 1999). Cox's survey produced both more and less than I expected. It covered a little more than the eastern half of the state. The survey showed that very much more had been done in Virginia for and on African Americans through archaeology than is true in Maryland even up to the moment of this writing. This is true despite Virginia's noted past in sustaining slavery and segregation, while Maryland was home to a very large number of free black people from well before Emancipation.

The survey showed that caches were found in only three locations: (1) northeast corners, (2) hearths, or chimney bases, and (3) thresholds or bottoms of staircases or steps. They were composed of a combination of things, often pins, buttons, coins, glass bits, rings, bone pieces, and stones. No one thing or set of things was always there. There was no set of things that was a common denominator. But when a deposit was found, the original archaeologist noted it, because all the items were found very close together, often dug into the ground, in one of the three

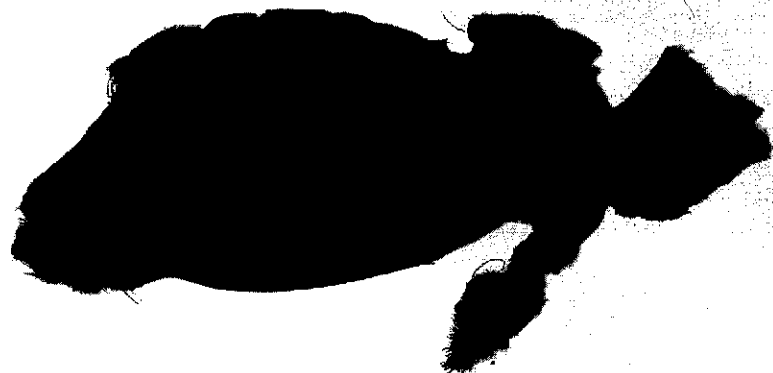


FIGURE 48. Red flannel from the Brice House cosmogram, a powerful element in the spirit practices derived from West Africa. The Brice House deposit was dry and provides a rare surviving example of the use of this cloth. Three swatches of it were recovered, along with a separate mass of threaded material and a root mass. Courtesy of the Anacostia Museum and Center for African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution. Photograph by Steven M. Cummings.

locations. As a result of Cox's work and our team's subsequent analysis, our finds in Annapolis had a comparative context and became indisputably associated with African American use of spirit traditions in both slavery and freedom.

There was no material associated with these practices in the seventeenth century in Virginia. The earliest date in Virginia is 1702; the earliest in Annapolis is 1790. The latest date in Virginia is 1880; the latest archaeological date in Annapolis is 1920. These dates are important, because the chronology of West African traditions cannot be established through the FWP composite slave autobiographies (Rawick 1972, 1977, 1979). From those narratives, one can tell that spirit use was a part of people's lives and beliefs and had African origins. But archaeology gave it a beginning, an end, and a spatial context.

At first, I thought that African spirit use was associated with slavery, then after the Slayton and Brice Houses, I realized that it had continued, so that it must be associated with living in a racist context. Was the absence of seventeenth-century evidence because there was little permanent slavery in Virginia in the seventeenth century or because there were comparatively few slaves? If African spirit traditions were a "slave religion"

as Albert Raboteau (1978) said, then it would not be found where slavery did not exist or was a marginal part of society. But there were Africans and there must have been African beliefs. I would rather leave this issue unresolved with a search that expects African traditions to have been alive in the seventeenth century but yet to be uncovered through archaeology. I have come to suspect that while African spirit traditions may have been fostered in slavery and racism, they were not created within them. While there is a strong component of fear in conjure, there is in other religions as well, and it is not the dominant theme. Thus, I do not think the West African traditions should be associated with slavery as a matrix that explains them. I think they should be understood in the contexts of diasporic religions like Santeria, Condomble, Voodoo, and Palo Mayombe that appeared among Africans exposed to Christianity, and Native America, in the New World. Sorting out a combination may be fruitless, but acknowledging the combination as creative is essential to seeing how the religions work in the New World circumstance of slavery and racism.

I have read and been influenced more by Rabateau (1978) and Theophus Smith (1994) than by Michael Gomez (1998). My own former students Lynn Jones (1995, 1999) and Christopher Fennel (2000, 2003) have been oriented more to Robert Ferris Thompson than to individual ethnographic areas of Africa or the different influences of Muslim and non-Muslim peoples. As a result, our interpretations tend to stress Congo and BaKongo-speaking traditions, while attempting to recognize the ethnic variety among these, as well as the hierarchical order of the Congo kingdom itself, which emerged in the centuries just before the initiation of the European slave trade.

I recognize that neither a search for the specific African religious traditions nor an attempt to assess the actual ethnographic variety within them has been accomplished by the work I report here. This is the case even though such a search has been initiated by scholars on whom I rely, like Theophus Smith (1994), Grey Gundaker (1993, 1998a, 1998b), and Christopher Fennel (2000, 2003). My effort has been an intermediate step, to produce a correlation of the archaeology of spirit traditions with the FWP slave autobiographies.

All around the periphery of my archaeological work was the possibility that reading the FWP autobiographies would produce a reconstruction of what the caches meant. Citations from them regarding religion, charms, spells, magic, and curing were frequent in the scholarly literature, but as isolated, evocative quotations. Fry and I did not want to be

impressionistic, because that work had already been done; we wanted to be comprehensive and, therefore, comparative.

Timothy Ruppel, a colleague of Fry's, who also knew the FWP composite autobiographies very well, began to work with us, teaching me a great deal. Following guidelines laid out by Fry, Ruppel read all the composite autobiographies, recording every single mention of an item found in our archaeological caches for magical purposes. He took the list of Jane Cox's research of everything discovered in archaeological caches in Virginia, went through the composite autobiographies searching for a mention of these items, and found the contexts of their use.

Table 12 lists the thirty-six items found in secure archaeological proveniences in the eastern half of Virginia that come from known African and African American contexts. While these have been published before by our research team, it is important to see the material here, because it helps constitute our case for knowing the material pattern. The number of occurrences by object is particularly significant, because it indicates frequency.

Table 13 extends the list to items mentioned in the FWP composite autobiographies, which is where most details of perishable items necessarily come from. To achieve this list, Ruppel did not read only for items by themselves but also for mentions of charms, hands, or tobys. There were 239 such occurrences in the narratives, and they are the base for extending the thirty-six items in table 12 to the seventy-four or so items listed in table 13. This is the universe of things that an archaeologist can expect to find when looking for the remains of West and Central West African traditions. The list could be expanded through spreading the survey into other archaeological areas in the South, although not likely by much.

The point of our surveys was to establish both the universe of materials used for spirit purposes and their meaning, which is essential in order to create an understanding of how West African religions functioned in Annapolis and elsewhere in North America. Table 13 shows only the list of items mentioned in the slave narratives and what each was intended to do. It is quickly clear that the majority of items were worn, not buried. According to the FWP autobiographies, however, twenty-two items—beads, bones, bricks, brooms, buttons, claws, coins, corn shucks, feathers, graveyard dirt, matches, nails, needles, pins, red pepper pods, rings, roots, salt, saltpeter, shoes, sticks, and yellow dust—were to be buried or used outside, and so some of them might be expected to be found archaeologically. (Note that these items are distinct from and in addition to those in

TABLE 12. Artifacts in caches from archaeological sites in Virginia tied to African spirit traditions, 1702–1920

Items	Frequency
Beads	87
Bottles	13
Bones	93
Broach	1
Buckles	30
Buttons	285
Cameo	1
Ceramics	10
Chisel	1
Circular frame	1
Coins	19
Comb	2
Crystals	47
Discs	48
Gaming pieces	4
Glass	11
Hinge	1
Hook	2
Horse bit	1
Horseshoe	3
Jewelry	5
Keys	2
Knife blade	2
Nails	49
Necklace	1
Needles	3
Pendant	2
Pins	625
Rings	4
Sinker	1
Spring	1
Stones	8
Strainers	1
Watch fob	2
Wire	149
Wood	1

SOURCE: Leone and Fry 1999. Compiled by C. Jane Cox.

TABLE 13. Textual references in the Federal Writers' Project composite autobiographies listing purposes and placement of artifacts tied to African spirit traditions

Charm (with key ingredients)	Function	Location worn or placed
Bag (toby)	prevent whipping	unspecified
dimes	protect from conjure	over heart
red ants	ease teething	around neck
asafetida (herb)	prevent smallpox, prevent chills, protect from conjure, ease teething	around neck
devil's snuff	make friendly	under steps
lodestone	protect from conjure	around neck
powder	protect from conjure	around neck
salt	prevent palpitations	over heart
sand	avoid whipping	carry
sulfur	protect from conjure	around knee or in shoe
wood ash	fix court case	carry
Ball (silver)	protect from conjure	unspecified
Band (red flannel)	gain strength, prevent rheumatism	wrist, arm, or leg
Beads	prevent sickness	around neck
Belt (snakeskin)	not given	wear; place unspecified
Bone (black cat)	avoid whipping	pocket
	bring luck with law	carry
	make disappear	unspecified
	avoid detection	carry
bones	not given	unspecified
brick (powdered)	protect from conjure	steps
broom	protect from witch	before door
buckeye	bring luck	carry
	prevent sickness	in pocket or around neck
Button	bring luck	carry
charm string	bring luck	neck
white	bring luck/ease teething	neck
pearl	ease teething	neck
shiny	prevent sickness	wear
Calf dropping	escape patrol	feet
Claw (bizzard)	ease teething	neck

TABLE 13 *continued*

Charm (with key ingredients)	Function	Location worn or placed
Coin	protect from conjure	ankle, neck
	prevent rheumatism	ankle
	bring luck	carry
	prevent sickness	ankle
Coin (brass)	avoid indigestion	neck
Coin (dime)	not given	on string of beads
	protect from conjure, swallow with tea	shoe, ankle
	prevent cramps	neck
Coin (penny)	prevent sickness	ankle
	protect from conjure	floor by door
	avoid indigestion	neck
Coin (pierced dime)	prevent rheumatism	unspecified
Corn shuck	protect from conjure	shoe
Crab	make invincible	hold in mouth
Feathers (bird)	protect from conjure	shoe
Flaxseed	protect from witch	around bed
Fork	protect from witch	by bed
Frog (dried)	ease teething	neck
Graveyard dirt	escape patrol	feet
Hand	control mistress	unspecified
Hand (red flannel)	protect from witch	under armpit
	bring luck	pocket
	protect from conjure	neck
Horseshoe	protect from spirits	over door
	avoid whipping	over door
	bring luck	over front door
	protect from spirits	over door
	ease teething	unspecified
	prevent palpitations	around neck
Jawbone (hog)		
Lead disc (with holes)		
Matches	prevent headache, protect from conjure	hair
Mole foot	ease teething	neck
Nails (5 new)	avoid whipping	in ground
Needles (2)	protect from conjure	crossed in hat
Newspaper (with red pepper)	protect from conjure	shoe

TABLE 13 *continued*

Charm (with key ingredients)	Function	Location worn or placed
Nutmeg	prevent rheumatism	neck
	ease toothache	neck
	prevent headache	neck
	ease teething	neck
Peace plant	protect from conjure	pocket or shoe
Pins (in pincushion)	protect from witch	side of bed
Rabbit foot	bring luck	carry
	protect from witch	wear
	avoid detection	carry
	avoid whipping	neck
Raccoon foot	protect from witches	wear
	bring luck	carry
Rattan	avoid whipping	wave in face
Rattlesnake rattles	ease teething	neck
Red pepper pod	protect from conjure	over door
Ring (black)	bring luck	hand
Ring (brass)	prevent croup	finger
	prevent heart pains	left hand
	prevent rheumatism	finger
	avoid whipping	chew and spit
Root	avoid whipping	neck
Anjillico	prevent sickness	neck
Devil's shoe string	bring luck	unspecified
	get money or job	chew
Drink	protect from conjure	drink
Five-fingered grass	protect from conjure	over bed
John the Conqueror	protect from conjure	pocket
	bring luck	carry in pocket
Rattle snake master	bring luck	unspecified
Devil's shoestring	obtain favors	chew
	release from jail	spit in cell
	avoid whipping	tie around waist
Salt	avoid ill will	footprint of guests
Saltpeter	protect from conjure	shoe
Shoe	protect from conjure	over door
	old	over door
Sifter (flour)	protect from witch	by bed
	silver	wear
pieces	protect from conjure	boil and drink

TABLE 13 *continued*

Charm (with key ingredients)	Function	Location worn or placed
Snakeskin	protect from conjure	wear
Stick	avoid pursuit	crossroads
	avoid whipping	under master's door
	avoid mistreatment	under master's door
String	protect from witch	on image in hair
	prevent sickness	neck
	prevent cramps	wrist and ankle
		wrist
	ease teething	neck
Teeth (alligator)	ease teething	unspecified
Turpentine	escape patrol	feet
Urine	protect from conjure	back steps
Urine and salt	protect from conjure	around door
Yellow dust	avoid mistreatment	sprinkle

SOURCES: Rawick 1972, 1977, 1979; Leone, Fry, and Ruppel 2001, 150n.

NOTE: These items together with those in table 12 compose a complete list of material used in the African spirit tradition from our sources.

Table 11, which were actually found archaeologically.) A further twenty four items—bottles, broaches, buckles, cameos, ceramics, chisels, circular frames, combs, crystals, gaming pieces, glass, hinges, hooks, horsebits, jewelry, keys, knife blades, necklaces, pendants, sinkers, springs, stones, watchfobs, and wire—that were found through archaeology in Virginia, as shown in Table 12, are not mentioned in the slave narratives, and we thus have only an approximation of what they might mean.

Some very important patterns are thus now clear for the first time. The first is that the FWP composite autobiographies are not a complete guide to explaining the archaeology of the spirit traditions. Only fourteen of the items found archaeologically are mentioned in the narratives. To be sure, the most commonly used are mentioned, usually multiple times. However, only twenty-two of the sixty items mentioned as being associated with spirits were put in the ground. The rest were worn or carried. This means that putting items apart from a person and not wearing them was a much less frequent practice. It does not mean that such a way of dealing with spirits was less significant or less powerful; it was

just less frequent. We also saw with these lists that establishing an archaeological signature for the spirit tradition was going to be difficult, because buttons, coins, pins, beads, and rings were frequently worn or carried, as well as buried, and thus could be associated with different purposes. So, while we might find an archaeological cluster, it would not be easy to establish its meaning or purpose.

To summarize the newly discovered pattern: thirty-six items are visible through Virginia archaeology for African spirit traditions. This list includes most of the items found in similar deposits in Annapolis, but not all, for example, peach pits from Brice House. The archaeological list should be expected to be expandable, because spirits shape shift in their expressions and cannot be pinned down completely by way of this kind of archaeological categorization (Grey Gundaker, personal communication, October 25, 2003).

The composite autobiographies mention sixty items, some more than once, that are involved in spirit use. These sixty items include thirty-eight not so far found archaeologically. Tables 12 and 13, taken together, show all the items from both archaeology and the narratives, but the latter do not mention twenty-four items that were found archaeologically. Thus, almost a third of all the archaeological items found were never mentioned by former slaves in their FWP autobiographies.

Finally, as shown above, forty-six items were meant to be buried or used outside in the yard, where some of them might be found archaeologically. Twenty-four of these were actually found in Virginia, and twenty-two of them are mentioned in the composite autobiographies. This is over half of all the seventy-four items used to manage spirits. The rest of the items were worn, usually singly for protection or curing. The items buried or used outside involved fixing, that is, turning spirits used against a person away, or directing spirits onto others. While this is so, it is also clear that rings, pins, and coins, for example, could be carried as well as buried and thus their meaning depends on use, not just on location. This, too, indicates shape shifting in the spirit tradition. A form like a ring does not mean only one thing, but its meaning comes partially from its location and context.

The composite autobiographies are quite clear on the purposes of items worn or carried as charms. Fry, Ruppel, and I could see two patterns. One was the full inventory of seventy-four items involved in spirit traditions, which was a basic discovery in itself. The second pattern was the effect of using them. Use was to prevent disease, to cure it, or bring luck by controlling the future of events in about two-thirds of all recorded

cases. The diseases were limited to rheumatism, headache, the pain of teething, smallpox, chills, indigestion, and protecting from conjure itself. Table 13 shows the variations.

After we discovered the purposes of the items listed in table 13, we also found a substantial discrepancy between our archaeological discoveries regarding spirit traditions and the FWP composite autobiographies' description of what was used and where the items were placed. The archaeology showed us bundles of items buried permanently or added to over a long period, say for the forty or so years of use at Brice House. The bulk of the data from the autobiographies refer to single items worn for a purpose and relatively briefly.

Then we had a breakthrough that began to explain the discrepancy between those items found through archaeology and where the same items were to be placed as listed in the FWP autobiographies. I looked at the combination of location and purpose and realized that buried bundles were used for fixing. Fixing is often called conjure, refers to harming someone, and is a part of Hoodoo. Hands, mojos, tobys, root work, fixing, conjure, and malign conjure can all mean the same thing. Hands, mojos, tobys, bags, bundles are the actual material used. Conjure, fixing, and malign conjure are the processes of harming, killing, making crazy, crippling, or otherwise causing some kind of physical injury—often extremely serious—to some intended victim. This side of spirit use required a cache.

In the FWP autobiographies, when fixing was to be done, the bag was usually put under the steps where the intended victim was going to walk. That was the most common location in the thirty-five times bags are specifically mentioned in the composite autobiographies. In the fireplace, in the ground, in running water, and near the bed of the victim are also specified as effective locations. The bag had to be near the person to be harmed for it to work.

Suddenly, I realized that I was quite wrong. Our work in Annapolis was not just about protection and health; it was also not just about building a cosmogram for symbolic purposes and celebrating African antecedents. It was also about using spirits to keep dangerous, burdensome people away and in their place. It was not passive; it was aggressively about wishes to kill, drive crazy, and cause sickness and harm. Bad conjure is dangerous to engage in.

Our discovery is that within a hierarchically organized household there was symbolic violence. There was rebellion and resistance. The Annapolis households where we find fixing were not tranquil places as

we saw with the Charles Carroll household, where we should see just African superstitions and African survivals. There was violence and not social harmony. This conclusion, suggested by Ruppel, comes from our analyses and should be taken as a hypothesis and explored. Its virtue comes from allowing a view of Annapolis as a torn society made up of two cultures, not as a hierarchical one living in subdued peace. It calls for seeing a clear consciousness of conditions of the part of people of African descent.

Who was it aimed at? The kind of conjure that is fixing was normally done away from home according to the narratives. It was done on others, rarely to people in one's home. In the Virginia cabins, which were marked by buried caches and bundles and in the Annapolis kitchens and surrounding workrooms, who could the object be? One item in the Brice House cache was a button with resin on top and with pieces of mother of pearl pressed into it to form what seemed like an M. Matt Cochran pointed out that the Martins had owned the house at the time of the cache's use. Might fixing have been aimed at owners, overseers, employers, masters, mistresses, and those who caused the working conditions in which people of African descent found themselves?

In the composite autobiographies, it is clear that fixing was done to people who were likely to believe in it, especially people of African descent. Some scholars are reluctant to believe that it was directed against whites (Raboteau 1978), but the question arises from our work. When we see fixing in the narratives, it was usually done away from home. Yet the archaeology shows fixing done at one's workplace at home. We do not know why yet. We know from the autobiographies that it was sometimes directed at family members. But because it was the most dangerous part of spirit practice, we have a puzzle about the relation between the owners/employers and those doing the fixing.

This newly discovered question posed a problem because it brought fixing into the house, where the FWP composite autobiographies do not mention it. For people who know, use, and care for spirits, especially in their yards, there is a daily practice known as sweeping. A sweeper begins at the door and sweeps carefully to the gate, guiding and pushing out spirits who are not wanted. The gate is one of two dividing lines. The safest zone, with the most domesticated spirits, is in the house. The yard also has spirits under control, but is a zone for further domestication of those who are out of control, or wild. The zone of greatest danger is beyond the gate. New spirits can be discovered all the time in the woods or wilderness. They can be brought closer and closer to home in

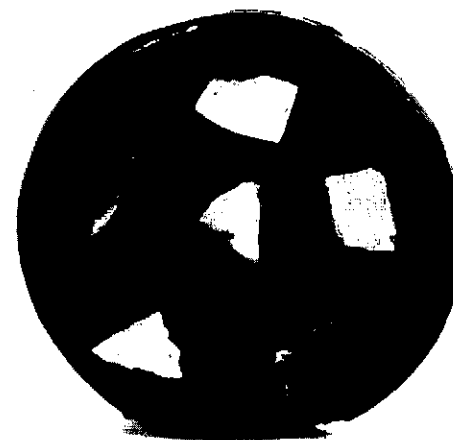


FIGURE 49. Button with inlaid bits of mother of pearl from the Brice House cosmogram. The inlays in this created piece may form an M, perhaps standing for the surname of the family that owned the house at the time the cosmo-gram was laid down. Courtesy of the Anacostia Museum and Center for African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution. Photograph by Steven M. Cummings.

a deliberate process of control. But the safest spirits are those in the house. This is the paradigm in some Caribbean islands, not necessarily in Annapolis, but I cite it here for a purpose.

Fixing occurred in the wild, outside the gate, in the composite autobiographies, so that a spirit could be brought under control. According to the autobiographies, that is where bundles, which were like those found archaeologically, were supposed to be placed. The autobiographies rarely discuss the elaborate array of protections or conjure items we found in houses in Annapolis or throughout Virginia. Who, then, were they used against?

It should be kept in mind that the composite autobiographies, gathered in the 1930s, were obtained from people who had been children or at best teenagers in the slavery era almost sixty years before. They may thus not have been fully informed about what was going on. It might not be safe to tell a child that one was putting a hex on the master. Children

under a certain age might also not be initiated into all the details of religious practice.

I think there are three hunches to hold in mind that come from this juxtaposition of two quite different, equally valid sources. When I realized, quite gradually, that there were cosmograms made of bundles in Annapolis houses, I began to see that, because they were maintained for decades, possibly over whole lifetimes, the environment their makers created was one akin to worship—in this tradition, it is called centering—and were not just momentary acts for protection, no matter how potent. A cosmogram served to placate, domesticate, and direct spirits for the long term, possibly even to teach. Second, in a world of spirits that moved and were powerful, and where competing and neighboring social forces directed them, a well-marked space or yard offered long-term protection or was a safety zone. Third, since the bags mentioned in the FWP autobiographies that best describe those we found archaeologically had a single, general purpose, which was to cause harm, the role of masters and employers needs to be specifically examined for antagonisms, more than that of family members of the user of the cache.

As a result of systematically comparing the whole range of archaeological material found within the autobiographies' formulas, we saw a clear division between items used for curing, prevention, and foretelling the future, on the one hand, and warding off danger and provoking vengeance, on the other. There is little archaeology for the first, but it is extensive for the second. The very close, domestic placement of items used for fixing raises a provocative question about at whom such fixing was aimed. Even with this new question, we still have an archaeological signature we did not have before. But what does the signature mean within African American culture?

We have African households in the middle of historic Annapolis with practices so different, so secret, so effectively coherent in their own terms, that we have found a whole part of Annapolis society outside the Georgian city.

What did African spirit traditions accomplish? I think there are two answers. The first is how caches work. They work by containing three elements, and this is the signature. At first, I made the mistake of supposing that there could be common denominator items, like pins or buttons, or graveyard dirt, that were somehow interchangeable and had to be in any bundle. This was incorrect when we compared the lists of archaeological bundle contents to the lists from the FWP autobiographies of spirit use. Theophus Smith led me to see that a bundle always had a

purpose, like curing, protecting, or driving a specific person away. It was always aimed at a person, for a specific reason, and was placed in a specific location. As a result, there were three items, or a set of elements, in a hand. There was something to identify the person, like hair or a small possession. There was something allied to a wish, a bent pin or nail to cure rheumatism or a crab claw for tenaciousness or strength. Third, there was something to contain the spirit, like a crystal, a piece of red cloth, a mirror fragment, graveyard dirt, or white powder. When the object of the bundle or hand passed near it, the spirit caused the desired result. These were the three elements as represented by things in a cache.

This appears simple enough, but it does not explain the bundles in the workrooms of the big Annapolis houses or in some of the slave cabins and tenant homes of Virginians of African descent. There, something much longer-term and akin to centering, or teaching, or continual maintenance was likely.

The second answer is that Africa's spirit traditions have their origins in societies organized by kinship, where face-to-face knowledge was essential to social control (William Stuart, personal communication). Under these circumstances, magic was worked by some on others and was based on close, direct knowledge of one another and universally shared beliefs. Ancestors were important because everyone shared them and they were in direct relationship to the hierarchy among the living, because they had once been the living. Because of virtually universal beliefs, spirits reflected the organization of society and managed ties among the living, whose needs and sore spots were known. On these bases, spirits could be used in transplanted African communities in the New World and form part of how Santeria, Condemble, Voodoo, and North American variants work. These beliefs helped to achieve order.

This leads to asking whether spirit use is an African remnant. Or is it part of a new religion? African religions did not have to explain and create ways to deal with racism, permanent inferior statuses, or long-term racial hatred. African religion in America did.

One major explanation advanced for how people of African descent dealt with hatred is that they did so by using aspects of Christianity and making it their own; they created a combination of African religious beliefs and Christianity. From the standpoint of archaeology, there is no evidence of anything from Christianity in the bundles from anywhere they have been excavated. The FWP autobiographies tell of no use of Christian ideas or definitions when wearing charms or fixing enemies or

witches. But, the FWP autobiographies very often show that people who used or believed in spirits were devout Christians. The composite autobiographies show a bifurcated world, where there was neither a connection nor a contradiction between going to church and wearing a pierced dime around your ankle at the same time.

Theophus Smith (1994) argues for a profound connection, however, even though there is only partial evidence for it. And here is the link to Habermas's lifeworlds, or cultures, outside capitalism that may provide insight into what exploitation produces. The insight comes through seeing how different something familiar can be when it is in another's hands, thus showing the artificial and arbitrary way the dominant society has arranged its relations between peoples.

Smith starts with black churches in the United States and asks why Moses, Jesus, and the saints of the Gospels are held in such high but equal regard in them. Indirectly, he asks why black churches are different from other churches. For him, this is a positive distinction. His answer comes from the heart of West African religion. Humans can make spirits do things (Smith 1994, 39-45). By using and understanding the means for controlling elements of the supernatural, as happens in African spirit traditions in North America through the use of charms and bundles, people can advance their causes through managing spirits to act. Moses, Jesus, and the saints caused God to act. God acted when Moses asked it; when Jesus asked, God obeyed; the saints got action, which is why they were saints. These heroic Christian figures caused God to do things. And this is what people achieved through caches and bundles within their use of African practices. The same is true (Smith 1994, 48-49n27) in the other diasporic religions like Santeria, Condomble, Voodoo, and Palo Mayombe.

Within Calvinistic Protestantism, there is the central understanding that the life and sacrifice of Jesus is the core of redemption. Unity with God is God's choice. One listens to the preached word in order to exemplify choices already determined. Within the Orthodox and the Roman traditions of Christianity, the sacraments are ways to grace and may lead to God's intercessions. In all of these, God's ways are mysterious, his actions remote, unforeseeable, yet ever-present. But there is no sense of commanding God to act. Imploring and waiting are different from direct commands with expectable results.

On this basis, Theophus Smith shows that managing spirits is an African tradition in North America. Afro-Christianity is a combination of Christian text and West African ideas of direct action taken by believing people who get God to act. And the models, beyond Jesus, are Moses,

the prophets, and the early Christian saints. It follows that using spirits, which anyone can see from the FWP autobiographies is largely devoid of explicit theology or a large practitioner class, is a set of practices for specific purposes, for example, charms against rheumatic pain and aids for teething babies. But when all the information from the composite autobiographies is added together, devout Christians can worship as all Christians do and also obtain specific aid for specific causes by using charms and bags as their African forebears had done. Thus, modern African spirit traditions and black Christianity are not within the zone of the highly rationalized, ritualized, and hierarchical Christianity that characterized eighteenth- and much of nineteenth-century Annapolis. They were largely closed to whites by mutual agreement and practice.

What happened in African American Annapolis between 1790 and 1920 that can shed light on work, racism, slavery, individualism, and American citizenship? Were Africans and African Americans made part of the work environment through the same means of individualism as an ideology that appeared to have worked relatively well for the middle classes? Beyond this question, were the processes of capitalism, including the constantly shifting exploitation in the service of profits, visible to people of African descent? And if so, what did they do that we can use to educate ourselves? Where did their beliefs fit into their lives to describe and improve their existence? Did the spirit traditions form an alternative set of actions and understanding for African Americans that were separate from those of their masters and employers? Did these religions save by being very different and removing believers from the world? Or did they save by being violent, symbolically or otherwise? What were their believers up against? The answer to that comes next and last.

The archaeology showed what bundles and hands were composed of, and our systematic survey of the FWP autobiographies expanded the array of items and identified their range of use so that we could present a catalogue of this spirit tradition. The full meanings of the practices that involved the objects are available. The following materials were collected by Timothy Ruppel under the direction of Gladys Fry. I have been reporting our work using the composite autobiographies, as edited by George Rawick. The following very clear description of practices comes from Harry Hyatt's famous collection, *Hoodoo-Conjuration-Witchcraft-Rootwork: Beliefs Accepted by Many Negroes and White Persons, These Being Orally Recorded among Blacks and Whites* (1970-78 [1935]). This large set of interviews was made during the 1930s by an Episcopal priest and contains lengthy clarifications of how the spirit tradition worked. I

have chosen a few quotations from a large number that either show the detailed context of intentions or the materials used that can be expected from archaeological work. I have not sought out materials only from Maryland for these illustrations. Indeed, there is not enough from Maryland to do that. I have used the most convincing material regardless of the state of origin. While we do not actually know how coherent the use of spirits was, it is normally treated as a fairly coherent creole tradition by the time it was recorded.

Ah wus troubled an' worried ovah life. Dat fo' fo'ks [four forks] of de road means where mens will perceive where he wus goin'. It's a fact dere's turn in de road, isn't dere—dere's a real turn. Yo' kin go dis way an' yo' kin go dat way. Well now, de fo'ks de road means de turn of life.

Yo' go out to the fo' fo'ks of de road an' there, there's where yo' kin git the real spirit—now, listen to me—of Jesus or de devil. If yo' are a man that's pullin' an' strivin' fo' the right, the Holy Spirit will give you whut end of de road tuh take. Then, if yo' wanta come tuh be a evildoer of evil things an' learn how tuh put evil things ovah, yo' kin learn it right there in de corner of that road. Satan will meet chew right dere wit great power an' great strength, an' take an' tell yo' jes' whut route tuh take an' jes' whut uh do fo' that individual.

Now, heah whut chew do. If yo' wanta git a real message from Satan in de fo' corners of de road, dere's a certain bath whut yo' should use. Yo' take a tea-spoonful of red peppah—listen good—a teaspoonfulla blue-stone, a teaspoon of soda an' a teaspoon of alum. An' then yo' have a teaspoon of very common table salt. Put those seven [five] ingredients into chamber lye [sixth ingredient]—one quart—put those seven ingredients into one quart [of water, seventh ingredient]. Then yo' po' all of that into yore bath. Then yo' begin tuh bath yo'self. Now, if yo' want Jesus tuh cleanse youre soul from all uncleanness, say, "Ah'll dry this of de Jordan Rivah."

... Now regardless to yore bad luck or regardless of whatevah comin' agin yo', ... or whatevah yo' gotta [do], if yo' will only give yo'self up an' apply that bath to yo', an' turn yore face to de east an' repeat de Lord's Prayer three times, an' then when yo' are through wit that, go to de fo'ks of de road, say, "Now, Lord, show me jes' whut end of de road tuh take." An' de one that yore mind follows, that's the one yo'll be successful in. That's de way that ah got this spiritual gift that ah've got.

... Then you go out to the forks of de road an' come quiet with de whole mind an' sit there fo' bout ten or fifteen minutes. An' then whatevah yo' wanta do, right or wrong, that spirit will meet chew there.

Hyatt, 2: 1116

This general view shows that use of the spirit tradition was involved with life's problems including one's overall sense of purpose. It also shows

the overlay of Christianity on the African use of spirits. Such an amalgam justifies people like Theophus Smith, who saw a novel religion coming from the mixture of African spirits, who were immediate and could be made to act, and Christian spiritual beings. The red pepper, blue stone (probably bluing), (baking) soda, alum, and salt probably involve the invocation of red, blue, and white. Red was the color of communication, blue prevented unwanted spirits from entering, and white was the way to enter the world of the spirits of the dead.

This use of pins, a doll, four corners, crossing, and evil spirits comes from Maryland. These items were found in many of the archaeological caches.

I remember one time when I wus in Philadelphia. There wus a lady, her husband left her, she wanted to bring him back. So she got ready an' she went to this *doctor*. So she ast 'er, she said, "Could joo get my husband back?"

She told 'er, "Yes."

She said, "What way could joo get 'im back?"

So she said, "I'll tell you wha' choo do." She said, "You get a black cloth, you make it up like you do a baby, an' you stick out one pin an' one needle in it—new needle an' new pin."

An' she [the wife later] taken the needle an' she stuck it up one place, here [she demonstrates]. (In the head.)

I guess it must have been the eyes she makin'—an' [she half-pantomimes]. (The pin.)

Another place. [Many persons acted out everything they did.] (For the other eye.)

She put it [the doll] right up over the doah [still demonstrating].

So that it was held there by the needle and pin stuck through the eyes and into the plaster.) [Final result of my commenting.]

I was in the house. I seen that mahself.

An' she [the *doctor*] said, "Ev'ry time you come to this house [the wife's own]," she said that—"an' I'll pin it up here over the doah—an' ev'ry time you come in," [she] said, "before you speak to anybody," she said, "you cuss at it, an' that'll bring 'im back again an' make 'im stay with you."

So, after that, another time, I seen her *dress* [prepare magically] a letter, this lady [the wife]. She *dressed* that letter she took an' went down there [the page] jes' like that with her fingernails—you know, went down jes' like that. Den she had somepin, ever now an' then she dip her fingernails into this mess—it was jes' like perfume. She'd dip her fingernails into it, she'd make a straight line, she'd go straight on down [the page] for to make him start writin'.

So they went on at dat an' went on at dat [using various devices to bring the man back].

So the next two weeks—I think it wus, yes—the moon wus shinin'. You

see, this was dark nights when this happened. So the next two weeks there would be a moon shinin' at night. So after that [in the light of the moon], she said to dis lady, she said, "When you come again," she said, "you bring me a piece of money, but let it be silver—a ten-cent piece, but don't bring it in two nickels."

So when this woman [the wife] came [home] again she ast me to go with 'er, an' I went back with 'er. An' it was some way out in de country, see. We taken de trolley [or streetcar] because we went a long ways. You know I'd heard tell of these things an' I wanted to see 'em. So when I went with 'er, she taken this money—she tied it up. It was tied up in four corners—it was a handkerchief. She made it [the four corners of the handkerchief] in a cross like—like a baby. An' after she got way out de country, she taken an' threw it to the end of this road. The road was crossed up. She threw it to the end of the road [down the left prong which was crooked]. She threw it over her right shoulder an' said somepin three times.

So I said to the lady, I said, "Whut did you do that for?"

She said, "We got to pay off the evil spirits whut we git our work to act, so they'll do whut we want to do, see."

So I imagine that's whut dey did that for. That's all I know about that. But anyhow I went with 'er.

So after that, why she [the doctor] said to this woman, she says, "When this baby falls down off of the doah," she says, "in seven days after that, if not seven days then the ninth day," she says, "he'll come home."

I didn't go back with 'er though after dat baby fell, but I went with 'er for to pay off, you know, dat concern to the ends of that road. I went with 'er den.

So after that I ast the lady, I said, "Did your husband come?"

She said, "Yes, he come back all right."

I said, "Well, how he's treatin' you?"

She said, "Fine, better than he did before."

Hyatt, 1: 54-55

This use shows the actions taken through the use of pins, black cloth, the door through which spirits enter, a powerful liquid, a shiny ten-cent piece, and a handkerchief, with clear reference to spirits who were invoked to work specifically for a person.

Cosmograms were not symbols like flags or crosses. They were active and causal and drawing one or renewing one was to be engaged with spirits. Here is a brilliant example of how use of a cosmogram worked.

Well, yo' run along den, after yo' do dis, yo' see. Well, yo' take an' set down, jis' lak yo' settin'. Set down an' fix yo' out a little—yo' take jis' lak yo' take a sort of a little clay doll or somepin in de shape of a person. It's de form of a person, yo' see. Yo' take dat doll an' make it outa rags. Jis' as well say yo' make yo' a rag doll, yo' understand. Yo' see, take an' make de two eyes an' evah'thing an' bear [bury] it in de front of yore' do'. But

chew let dis be purtty late at nighttime, yo' see. But chew take befo' yo' do dis now—yo' take an' draw yo' a circle. Yo' see, take an' draw yo' a circle on a clar [clear] sheet of paper, yo' see. Write it with ink pen, yo' see. Yo' don't have tuh put de stars around dere 'cause yo' ain't gotta burn no candles now, yo' see. Jis' draw dis circle an' inside of dis circle yo' put dat cross inside dat circle, which like yo' put it on de ground, but chew put it inside de circle yo' see. [He demonstrates and I comment for my own benefit.] (Like quartering a pie.)

Dat's right. But it inside dat circle. Yo' put dat little rag doll on top of dat. Well, understand, yo' write *O. L. Young* an' *L. L. Young*, yo' see, an' yo' put chure name under de bottom of dat, right up under de bottom of his name, yo' understand. Well, yo' explain yore condition to them—to him, yo' see. Tell him jis' whut chew wants to do, an' whut chew wanta be successful in, yo' see, an' jis' why dat yo' controllin' de other ones. An' explain things to him jis' lak yo' talkin' to a person ord'nary [ordinary person]. Den yo' take an' bear dat man, dat little rag doll on top of dat—jis' bear it an' smooth it, smooth de ground right smooth yo' see.

(Where do you bury it?)

Right in front of yore business, yo' see, but let dat be—whenevah yo' doin' dis work, buryin' de rag doll in de circle, let dat be at nighttime, yo' understand, real late at night. But it mus'n't be befo' twelve a'clock—[yo' mustn't] take an' bury it anytime befo' twelve, yo' know.

Hyatt, 2: 1186

This example is particularly helpful because it shows the generic wish to be successful to be behind the cosmogram's use. An actively composed cosmogram can be done at any time. As the next description tells, the cosmogram is an action that achieves its purpose while a person composes it. The bag not only contained the desired person's track, but was buried for permanent effect under the corner of the house.

Dey say yo' could take an' git chew Adam-an'-Eve root an' *High John de Conkah*, see. An' git chew some *Hearts Cologne*, dis [just a] little—called *Hearts Colgne*—an' take an' put dis heah root on dis. An' evah time yo' git ready tuh go out wit—git close tuh 'ah [her] enough, in conversation somewhere, an' let 'ah [her] git de scent of dat. An' if she come anywhere about chew, pick up 'ah tracks see, an' put dem 'em in a bag yo' undahstan'.

Take an' put 'em in de sack yo' see an' take an' bury 'em undah de cornah of yore house, an' dat will keep 'ah love. Dat will make hah come dere all de time. Jes' stay right roun' yo'.

Hyatt, 4: 2818

Many spirit items were found in water, although it is the action of composing a hand, with its implements of a new shiny spoon, a rusty

nail, dirt from a track, and a rock, that leaves some remains that are visible archaeologically. This quotation shows the ritual that accompanies the making of a cosmogram in a footprint and then using the kalunga line, the horizontal line between this world and the world of spirits, to get the spirits to be available. The latter move is to have the named individual to be dealt with by them.

Yo' take a person dat yo' dislike an' yo' wan' 'em away from yo'. Yo' meet 'im. He's comin' dat way an' yo's comin' dis way. Take a bran'-new piece of papah, a piece like dat [he changes this for cloth later]. Take a bran'-new teaspoon. When ah say bran'-new, ah mean one dat was nevah used fo' any purpose. An' yo' put it—take a piece of cloth, white cloth dat yo' have nevah used fo' any othah purpose. Take dat wit yo'. An' prepare tuh meet yore man, whomsoever it is. An' meet 'im dere, an' git a smile if yo' kin. Pass 'im an' pass 'im a certain distant [distance]. But gauge yoreself so as tuh not allow 'im tuh git away too far. An' yo' take de track up wit dat teaspoon. Begin right at de toe, don' cha know an' pull it directly back tuh de heel. An' git de spoonful an' put it intuh dis cloth, an' wrap it up so it won't—yo' know, it will be out of de way. An' yo' take a rust nail an' yo' cross de track directly in de centah, an' den cross it ag[in from de heel tuh de toe—away from yo', directly. An' throw de nail ovah yore left shoul-dah. Den yo' keep de stuff dat yo' got in de cloth, take dat an' take de spoon an' throw dat ovah yuh right shouldah. Take dat cloth right on, roll it up tight, tie it away from yuh, don't cha know. Take a piece of rock an' put in it, in de othah part of it, an' yuh care [carry] it an' yuh throw it ovah uyh lef' shouldah, right ovahbo'd intuh runnin' watah. Or if de tide is goin' down, on de tide, when yuh throw it ovah. An' yuh mention de person's name. Dey goes right on out like dat [with the tide]. As it go ovahbo'd, dey die. An' if it's comin' up, yuh know what yuh call a spring tide, huh, when it's comin' up, why dey'll git almos' crazy until de tide turns. An' as soon as de tide turns ag'in, dey gone.

Hyatt, 4: 2879–80

Discs, dimes, Chinese coins, buttons, and spoon bowls could be used to create spirit movement on behalf of the practitioners. Embodied in this quotation is the idea that anyone could employ spirits; there is very little mention of professional root doctors compared to ordinary folks who were adepts. Dimes were the most common form of discs, and, like buttons, could easily be remade into the movement of life that invoked spirit action. It is like a constant centering (Grey Gundacre, personal communication).

Yes sir, ah've heard dat yo' take an' steal a dime—a sliver dime—an' carry it to de . . . (You steal this dime?) Yes sir, steal it from someone. (And then you cross it. How do you cross it?) Right cross de piece. Take a pocketknife

or sompin an' cross a cross mark cross de face [on the dime]. An' carry it to de cemetery an' bury it, an' she'll follow yo' ev'ywhere yo' want her tuh. (Whom would you steal this dime from?) Anyone. It be best tuh steal it from her, providing if she got one. (Oh, I see. To make her love you?) Yes sir.

Hyatt, 5: 4423

Because dimes like other coins were widely used, the following array is essential to see. Both shape and shine could be important. The seven formulas below serve to show the multiple uses such coins could be put to. However, what this array actually shows is that the spirits doing the curing, protecting, and diagnosing are subject to the action desired, and this is what determines the definition of what the colors and treatment of the dimes actually mean. In other words, the dime has meaning imposed, given the need or use sought.

13007. Dey tell me dey take a piece of silver money an' put it in a red sack—flannel—an' put a piece of garlic to it an' tote it on yo'. That be fo' good luck. . . .

13008. Nine silver dimes, file them, wear in NATION SACK [brand name of bag worn by women] with lodestone for protection and trade. . . .

13009. Jes' lak if yo' didn't know whether yo' wus *poisoned* or not, but a piece of silver is de best. If yo' think yo' were *poisoned* an' don't know enough fo' shore, if yo' put a piece of silver in yore mouth an' hold it in dere, in de length of time it will turn black if dey is any *poison* in yo'. . . .

13010. A dime under the tongue turns black if you are *hurt*. . . .

13011. "Hold it in your mouth . . . if you is always *hurt* like dat, dat dime will turn black." . . .

13012. "Take a silver dime, if you think somebody is trying to *hurt* you. Put it in your mouth right under your tongue and you can drink and eat all you want. That dime takes [absorbs] everything." [This must be a unique experience, to keep a silver dime under your tongue while eating and drinking!] . . .

13013. "You take a silver dime and put it in your mouth under your tongue, and take a thimbleful of sulphur, swallow it, and keep this dime under there about one or two hours and take it out. If it's black, it's bad [you are hoodooed]; if it's not black [the sickness] it's nashural." . . .

13014. Well, if yo' git poisoned, yo' kin take a dime an' tie it round yore laig, roun' yore neck, an' if yo' poisoned, dat dime will turn green an' it'll cure it.

Hyatt, 5: 4426

These quotes establish a whole other world apart from European medicine and social control. It is another lifeworld or culture and it does not

matter whether it was creole or wholly African. It does matter that it was coherent and so integrated into the lives of people of African descent that it extricated them from some aspects of capitalism's actions.

There are no possessive individualism, no measurement, no self-improvement, virtually no property, and no rights in the world of people using African spirit traditions. The archaeology and citations from the FWP autobiographies show a culture apart from the rest of Annapolis and English North America. The sources show it to have been coherent; that is, another culture. It provided a complete, separate identity and tied people from Africa to one another. Thus, to use Habermas's term, it was a separate lifeworld.

Can we learn from it? Certainly. The purpose of seeing the survival and florescence of African religion is not to borrow what it was but to see where and what an alternative looked like. The alternative showed that the ideology in the rest of Annapolis was not as inevitable, natural, God-given, or superior as it said it was and hoped it would become. Now that we can see that the people at the bottom created an option for themselves, can we know why? Can we know what they saw that made them stay different?

CHAPTER 8

What Do We Know?

What does African American culture in Annapolis, from between 1790 and 1920, teach us about our own conditions? How does it shed light on work, slavery, racism, equality, and the level to which African Americans were within or lived beyond the ideology of individualism? The picture so far shows that middle-class people like Jonas Green and William Faris, white men with slaves, lived within and duplicated the ideology and its technologies. They may have seen through the ideology, but they also did not find a way to avoid it. How did people of African descent, slaves, and free men and women behave, given the ideology alive in the city? Were the processes of capitalism like low wages, poor working and living conditions, treating people like sources of profit, and the constantly shifting means of exploitation, like encouraging members of economic groups to despise each other through racism and ethnic hatred, visible despite the ideology of individual freedom? What did they say and what did they do? If we can know the answers to these questions, then can we use them to educate ourselves?

We can see how deeply the ideology penetrated, and the conflict it produced, in the figure of Wylie Bates, a prominent African American Annapolitan, born a slave in North Carolina in 1859, who founded and ran a grocery store in a mixed neighborhood in Annapolis from the late nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries. There were dozens of businesses in the city owned by African Americans, although they often flourished only briefly, for lack of either an adequate clientele or capital. Such