Dressing Behavior in Eighteenth Century Virginia 1740-1800

Joanna Margaret Masters

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DRESSING BEHAVIOR IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY VIRGINIA
1740-1800

A Thesis
The Faculty of the American Studies Program
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
Joanna Masters
1993
APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to express her appreciation to Professor Barbara Carson whose guidance, suggestions and criticisms were invaluable throughout the writing of this thesis. The writer is also indebted to Margaret Pritchard, the Curator of Prints at The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation for her interest in this project and to Professor Alan Wallach for undertaking to read the manuscript at short notice.
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to consider Virginian attitudes towards presentation-of-self during the eighteenth-century and to consider reasons for any changes.

The method used was to take European prints showing people engaged in self-preparation and to subject them to analysis by means of a form designed to extract information about how people dressed and what kinds of equipment they used. Virginian probate inventories were similarly analyzed to see if Virginians owned the same dressing items as Europeans and whether they kept them in the same sorts of rooms.

The similarities and differences observed between European and Virginian dressing behavior were then considered in the light of studies into the consumer revolution in order to find out if an increased interest in appearance and related objects arose from the same shared factors.

It is suggested that the move of Virginians towards a European dressing pattern was not simply due to emulation but to specifically Virginian experiences.
DRESSING BEHAVIOR IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY VIRGINIA

1740-1800
INTRODUCTION

Recently much has been written about the steep rise in production and demand for consumer goods apparent in Europe and America during the eighteenth-century. While some have suggested that consumerism may have been born as early as the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries, the eighteenth century seems the most convincing time. Neil McKendrick argues that earlier manifestations of consumerism were part of a gestation process which led to the birth of a consumer society during the eighteenth century.¹ He rejects the notion that changes in

¹N. McKendrick, J. Brewer, and J.H. Plumb, The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth Century England (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p.3. McKendrick's thesis is that the consumer revolution arose in the eighteenth-century out of a combination of factors such as the economic climate and the closely packed layers of English society, which allowed new techniques of marketing and advertising to affect more people. Unlike previous historians of the industrial revolution, he addresses the demand side rather than the supply side. However, it is his explanation of the consumer society by factors which were apparent before the eighteenth-century that has opened him to criticism by other theorists. McKendrick believes that the existence of fashion changes prior to the eighteenth century are proof of the gestation process which led to the birth of consumerism; such changes do not indicate that a consumer society was in existence much earlier. Colin Campbell, The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism (Oxford and Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell, 1990), does not believe that McKendrick's explanation of the origin of the modern fashion pattern holds water; he sees it as an
consumer behavior apparent at that time were part of the "continued development of a consumer society" for that would be "too flat a description of an event which excited response from contemporary observers, and which introduced such marked changes into so many people's lives."² The purpose of this

²Ibid., p.5. McKendrick's work marks a break from earlier historical accounts surrounding the Industrial Revolution and its effects. Scholars are now divided into those who still concentrate on the supply-side of the industrial revolution and those who look at the demand side of the equation. Supply-side theories believe that the development of increasingly effective machines allowed increasingly rapid production of more and more goods at lower prices and so was responsible for new consumer patterns. Maxine Berg in her The Age of Manufactures 1770-1820: Industry, Innovation, and Work (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), considered the industrial revolution in such terms; changes in production techniques, both mechanized and cottage practices, allowed for increased production of consumer goods. Demand side historians take a similar stance to McKendrick in arguing that people's "need" for goods had to exist before mass production could successfully occur. Cary Carson "The Consumer Revolution in Colonial British America. Why Demand?" Of Consuming Interests, the Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century (Charlottesville, 1994) argues that the demand driven consumer revolution came before the power driven industrial revolution; that because artisans could not keep up with demand, technology had to develop new techniques to increase production. Such scholars concentrate on finding the source
thesis is to test the applicability of such "consumer revolution" theories to eighteenth-century Virginia. Is it true to say that luxury goods became more accessible to eighteenth-century Virginians, when previously they had been limited to only the richest? Where did the demand for consumer goods come from? From a desire to emulate social superiors,3 from the development of commercialization,4 or from religious or political events which altered the way people thought?5 Was it simply that people had always wanted goods, and once they were available in affordable and large quantities, a previously hidden consumerism was revealed? How did the choices and priorities people made regarding the purchase of material goods reflect their needs and aspirations? Did gender, wealth, and geographical location affect the level, quality and sorts of consumer goods purchased?

The whole debate surrounding the Consumer Revolution is too extensive for detailed consideration in a project of this length. However, it is possible to determine whether a change


4N. McKendrick, op. cit.

in consumer patterns affected the lives of eighteenth-century Virginians by selecting one important area of people's lives and observing it for evidence of changes in behavior over a sizeable stretch of time. Dressing behavior has been chosen because it touches on many aspects of material life. The presentation-of-self, how people dressed to present themselves to each other in specific ways, forms a large part of the arguments of consumer revolution theorists.6

6 G. Mc Cracken, Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982). McCracken discusses at length the whole concept of clothes as language in a chapter entitled "Clothing as Language: An Object Lesson in the Expressive Properties of Material Culture." He argues that while clothing is tightly bound to the concept of presentation-of-self and has expressive qualities, it does not comprise a language. Language has a clearly understood set of rules, or grammar, which may be read without ambiguity. When clothes are configured in unexpected ways it is hard for people to "read" what the wearer is trying to express. The ambiguity surrounding the meaning of clothing indicates that it is not a language, although it can express certain things about the wearer: wealth, taste, awareness of current fashion. That McCracken chooses clothing as the subject of this object lesson indicates the centrality of presentation-of-self to his thinking on consumption.

F. Braudel, The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible. Civilization and Capitalism 15th – 18th Century (New York: Harper and Row, 1967). Pages 321-324 illustrate the emphasis Braudel places on self presentation, most famously denying that fashion is frivolous but is instead "...an indication of deeper phenomena – of the energies, possibilities, demands, and joie de vivre of a given society, economy and civilization." In effect "...the future was to belong to societies fickle enough to care about changing the colors, materials and shapes of costume, as well as the social order and the map of the world – societies that is, which were ready to break with their traditions." For Braudel a willingness to change dress indicates an openness to
In order to chart changes two major sources of information, prints and probate inventories, were used. English and French prints provide a lead on how and where people dressed. Virginian probate inventories help to translate the information into an American context. The prints indicate what was involved in the process of getting dressed for people in eighteenth-century England and provide a starting point for uncovering the dressing habits of innovation which is "the source of all progress."

N. McKendrick, J. Brewer and J.H. Plumb., *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth Century England* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982). McKendrick based his argument that the consumer revolution was born in eighteenth-century England on his belief that it was at this time that the pursuit of fashion spread far beyond the tiny elite which had previously been the only group rich enough to do so.

C. Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (Oxford and Massachussets: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1990). The blurb on the back-cover to the above edition states that Campbell "..shows how fashion and the addiction to novelty - the crucial features of modern patterns of consumption - have their cultural origins in Sentimentalism and Romanticism...which...served to foster a pleasure-seeking outlook."

There are other examples too numerous to cite. Thorstein Veblen first published his *Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* in 1925 initiating a heated debate centering on whether or not people mold their appearance in order to improve their social status. Veblen argued that people emulate their superiors, so that the fashions of the elite "trickle-down" through society. Whether basically agreeing with, or refuting Veblen's concept, presentation-of-self is central to the arguments of consumer theorists.
Virginians. Prints are not only helpful in showing what fashions looked like, but in illustrating what equipment, activities, and the amount of time that was necessary to achieve the dresser's final appearance. The suggestions the prints provide as to the kinds of rooms and equipment used in dressing, as well as how they were configured, helps make the inventory information more understandable. It can be considered on the basis of how it fits, or does not fit, with British patterns.

THE FASHIONABLY DRESSED LADY

There are no contemporary descriptions regarding how people in the past dressed. We do not know where dressing

7Because only one of the prints used in the study was from a country other than England, they cannot be used as the foundation for discussing European dressing habits. The one French print, Le Strategeme Amoureux c 1760 (Fig. 5.) was retained among the prints used in the thesis, but it should be born in mind that the prints really only give significant evidence on British dressing behavior.

Details of the prints from the Colonial Williamsburg collection used in this paper may be found in Appendix D. The prints are listed in date order and have been numbered. When a print has been referred to in the text, its number appears in parenthesis. Numeration is intended to aid location of prints in both the Appendix and the illustrations. If a print has not been used as an illustration for the paper, a footnote has been provided to that effect.

occurred, what sorts of furniture and other equipment was considered necessary to the process, or where people stored their clothes. Neither are there any manuals indicating what their writers considered ideal dressing behavior to consist of. In the absence of such material I used sources which could act as substitutes; prints served as a proxy for some of the absent material. The use of prints as a source is no novelty, McKendrick wrote that pictorial evidence could:

...illustrate the story of a society in thrall to fashion and exhibiting an unprecedented capacity to pursue and purchase consumer goods.  

Certainly the proliferation of prints on the subject of the extremes of eighteenth-century dressing rituals, such as tight-lacing and elaborate hairstyles, indicates that print-makers had noticed a new development in society.

The prints suggest that for those who wished to be fashionably dressed the process of preparation was a long and complicated one which required many consumer objects. One set of three Dublin prints provides a good example of the sort of

people would have matched the rituals of the Sun-King or George III - certainly no-one in Colonial and Revolutionary Virginia.

9McKendrick, op. cit., p. 56.
activity involved (Nos. 22, 23, 24). A consideration of these prints is intended to give a clearer idea of the work that went into achieving a fashionable appearance.

**Lady's Toilet: Stays and Trousers c1800**

The first print shows a lady standing before her dressing table while her maid laces her stays. A picture on the wall is titled "morning," and may suggest the time of day of the activity illustrated. A pitcher, basin, and chamber pot can be seen in the corner of the print suggesting that the lady washed prior to putting on her underclothes. The lady wears lace edged drawers, a camisole under her stays, stockings and slippers, and a cap which conceals her hair. On the wall behind her hangs a bookcase, its glass doors closed. The expensively furnished room contains what may be termed a "dressing kit," which is a dressing table, a looking-glass, and a chair all of which are placed next to the window which

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10 *Lady's Toilette - Stays and Trousers* c1800 Ireland (No. 22). *Lady's Toilette - The Wig* c1800 Ireland (No. 23). *Lady's Toilette - Dress Complete* c1800 Ireland (No. 24). All three are hand colored line and etched engravings. All were published by J. Le Petit, 20 Chapel Street, Dublin.

There is no such set in the Colonial Williamsburg collection which offers the same detail for the dressing behavior of men, neither is there one in the British Museum collection. However, as will be shown in the following chapter, although certain activities differed between the sexes, for example shaving and tight-lacing, the ritualistic nature of self-preparation procedures revealed in all the prints is similar for both.
provides the room's main source of light." In addition to items which have a practical purpose related to self-preparation, there are luxury items which serve to indicate both the importance of the room and the amount of time spent in it. One notes a floral carpet, a marble-topped table, heavy drapes, and even a lap-dog.

Lady's Toilet: The Wig

The title of the picture on the wall has been altered to read "noon." The bookcase, in combination with the picture, indicates how long the dressing procedures are taking, for it is open and the volumes pulled out. The lady is now dressed in a petticoat and wrap, and is seated with an open book before a dressing glass. An elaborate bonnet lies on a chair and a clothes trunk, which appears to have been rummaged through, stands in one corner. The lady's cap has been removed to reveal cropped hair. It was probably cut so that the wearing of the wig the maid is about to put on her head would be less uncomfortable. The dressing table is covered with bottles and jars of various lotions and cosmetics, and another table with equipment for the care of hair and wigs.

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"The basic dressing kit of a table surface, a looking-glass and a seat is central to this study and will be covered in greater detail in the following chapter which deals with the print sources."
Lady's Toilet: Dress Complete

The lady is fully dressed and stands before a full-length glass as she pulls on her evening gloves and admires her reflection. Her wig is now decorated with flowers and she wears a pendant necklace. Her dress, although cut extremely low, is apparently simple with mid-calf length and a floral pattern. The previous two prints belie this impression of simplicity. The room is in some disarray: clothes are half-pulled out of a trunk which lies on the floor, and jewelry spills out of a box all over the dressing table as if it has been tried on and discarded. An open fashion magazine lies on the floor suggesting that the two women had been trying to achieve a specific "look." The picture on the wall is entitled "Evening."

The three prints admirably illustrate the time and leisure that was necessary to achieve a fashionable appearance. Money was evidently required to pay for clothes, jewelry, cosmetics, and other paraphernalia, as well as for a maid who could spend an entire day helping her mistress dress. Dressing was not a matter of covering the body out of modesty and practicability, at least not for the elite, instead it was a matter of effecting an appearance designed to impress those to whom it was presented.

The print collection of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation provided a manageably-sized sample for the purpose
of this study. Out of a total of some 5,000 prints, twenty-
eight dealt with dressing related subjects. Two of the prints
fell outside the 1740-1800 time frame and so were
discarded.\(^\text{12}\) A larger collection would have been preferable.
The British Museum collection of prints of the "Catalogue of
Personal and Political Satires" totals 14,000 of which sixty-
four deal with dressing behavior. At first these do not seem
like large samples at all, but two points need to be taken
into account. Firstly, the totals for both the Colonial
Williamsburg and the British Museum collections exclude prints
where the subject was fashion in hair and dress, and where
dressing or hairdressing as an activity was not indicated.
The process excluded a vast number of prints—satires on the
Macaroni alone provided the material for scores of prints.\(^\text{13}\)

\(^{12}\) The \textit{Rakes Progress} Plate II 1735 (England).
Line engraving, black and white. Invented, painted and
\textit{Lady at her Toilet} 1690 (France).
Colored engraving. N. Bonnart, rue St. Jacques.

\(^{13}\) The Macaroni was "[A]n exquisite of a class which arose
in England about 1760 and consisted of young men who had
travelled and who affected the tastes and fashions prevalent
in continental society." The Macaroni may also be termed a
"fop" or a "dandy." These young men formed the Macaroni Club,
the name of which was intended to indicate a "preference for
foreign cooking." The first extant reference to the term
"macaroni" was by Hugh Walpole in a letter to the Earl of
Hertford, dated 6th February, 1764:

Lady Faulkener's daughter is to be married to a
young rich Mr Crewe, a Macarone...

The June 1770 issue of the Oxford Magazine defined the
Macaroni:
Secondly, prints concerning dressing are largely concentrated in the 1771-1778 period. The second volume of the "Catalogue of Personal and Political Satires" which covers the years 1771-1783 contains twenty-nine prints, almost half of the total. It seems clear that dressing behavior had caught the attention of print-makers and their audiences at this time. The collection offered great potential for providing a wealth of information on dressing. A larger number of prints than the Colonial Williamsburg Collection would have allowed a fuller picture of the importance of self-presentation to people of the eighteenth century. Unfortunately time constraints made it imperative to use an accessible set of prints which was limited in number.\(^{14}\) However, occasional references to the British Museum collection will show that this paper has not greatly suffered from the use of a smaller collection. One of the problems linked to the use of

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There is indeed a kind of animal, neither male nor female, a thing of the neuter gender, lately started amongst us. It is called a Macaroni. It talks without meaning, it smiles without pleasantry, it eats without appetite, it rides without exercise, it wenches without passion.


\(^{14}\)The British Museum collection was only accessible to me on microfilm, while the Colonial Williamsburg prints were more readily available. All of the Colonial Williamsburg prints could be viewed at the DeWitt Wallace Gallery, Williamsburg, or on slides, making analysis and copying of prints a simpler and more accurate process.
print sources is that the artist's meaning is often unclear to a twentieth-century viewer. Many prints are obviously satires on the extremes of fashion and the follies and foibles of those who slavishly follow it, but others are more subtle - to the extent that they seem to lack a specific message. Working with a complete collection of prints, rather than drawing prints from a variety of locations, safeguards a little against the danger of choosing only those with clear meanings or those which supply the information most suited to the thesis.

The Colonial Williamsburg Collection proved a foundation for understanding dressing behavior in eighteenth-century Virginia. Most particularly the prints enabled one to establish a recurring basic kit of items that dressers considered necessary for self-preparation, and which could be taken as a benchmark for measuring information yielded by Virginian probate inventories.

Each print was systematically analyzed with a form designed to extract information about the objects and behavior associated with getting dressed, as demonstrated with the Dublin prints above. However, the prints were largely British in origin; there are no such prints from America. Since the American experience is being questioned, a way had

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15 See Appendix B for a sample of the form used to analyze the prints.
to be found to see how the British dressing picture may be applied, if at all. The Virginia sources could help provide possible avenues for answering questions arising out of the prints. Did Virginian men and women own dressing equipment like that shown in the prints? Where was it kept in their houses? Was their equipment arranged in similar configurations as in Europe, or in different ones? Did Virginians emulate European dressing patterns, or create their own?

Probate inventories provide an important connection between Virginian dressing patterns and consumer revolution theories which emphasize the importance of presentation-of-self. The prints show how British dressing behavior may justify this emphasis on the part of theorists, while the probate inventories suggest how a similar interest in self-preparation may also have applied to Virginia. The British derived print evidence cannot be said to apply equally to the Virginian experience unless a specifically American source indicates that is indeed the case. To do otherwise would be to argue that American consumerism was nothing but pure emulation of Europe - it would be to deny that it lacked home-grown motivational factors. Analysis of Virginian probate inventories is intended to provide an American point of comparison with Europe. With a Virginian source in hand, the prints can be used to isolate a basic kit used by English and
French dressers, and as a start to considering whether or not dressing behavior at this time was being affected by an increase in consumer objects and a change in attitudes towards the material world and consumerism. The inventories balance the study and provide an inroad to questions surrounding the applicability of changes in consumer behavior observed in Britain to Virginia.

Williamsburg inventories from the York County records provided a suitable set of records for this study. They allowed a glimpse of Virginia consumer behavior in a specifically urban environment. The inventories are only a small selection of a larger total of inventories, in the same way that the prints are only part of a larger collection. I decided to use this group of inventories because, while it is impossible to be certain, it seems probable that the prints illustrate rooms found in urban settings. Williamsburg was a town center providing professional and mercantile services to the region, and so its population included middle-class groups financially capable of using techniques of presentation-of-self to improve their social standing. The inventories were used to see whether or not they did.

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16 Williamsburg Inventories in the York County Records. Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Decorative Arts Department Library. The collection includes all inventories for the city of Williamsburg in the eighteenth century found in the York County records. The Williamsburg inventories were extracted from the York County records and drawn together to provide an aid to research into the buildings of Colonial Williamsburg.
Like pictorial evidence, probate inventories should be used with great care. Academics are well aware of the pitfalls inherent in using such sources. Carr, Menard and Walsh warn:

...inventories are biased in ways that prevent them from indicating for the living population the size of the groups they describe.\textsuperscript{17}

Among the problems they isolate are the fact that not everyone goes though probate, and that more rich than poor are likely to have taken advantage of the service because it entailed fees. Furthermore without tax lists as an indicator of the wealth of the living, inventories cannot be adjusted for differing reporting rates of various groups.\textsuperscript{18} In addition to these problems are the facts that inventory-makers did not record debts or any real estate, and that textiles were poorly listed and clothing unreliably valued.\textsuperscript{19}

Another limitation of inventories is that they are a record of a lifetime accumulation of property, so it is difficult to tell which objects were inherited and which were


\textsuperscript{18}Ibid. Paraphrased from page 278.

\textsuperscript{19}L. Weatherill \textit{Consumer Behavior and Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760} (New York: Routledge, 1988) p. 3.
purchased. This makes decisions, regarding how far people were affected by changes in the availability of consumer goods, a little more difficult to pin-point. Even the "poorest" in these inventories seem to be economically comfortable. Of the first twenty inventories only one had a total value of under £120. It rapidly became apparent that the word "poor" could not be applied to any decedent of the period. Although it would have been interesting if the inventories had covered a broader socio-economic range, the fact that they concentrate on those who had lived well above subsistence level is to the advantage of this study. The prints largely cover the lifestyles of the affluent, while much richer than those of most Virginians, they are more comparable with extant probate inventories of wealthy decedents than they would have been with inventories of the very poor. The inventories can, therefore, stand as a point of comparison between British and Virginia dressing behavior.

In summary, the thesis identified objects associated with dressing behavior through prints and inventories to build a picture of people's attitudes towards self-presentation, and the meanings they attached to clothes and dressing rituals.
CHAPTER TWO: ENGLISH AND FRENCH PRINTS

The twenty-six prints from the Colonial Williamsburg collection, which have dressing or dressing related themes within the period 1740-1800, broke down into four with male and twenty-two with female subjects. If a reminder is required of the criteria by which it was decided whether or not a print would be included in this study, reference should be made to page eight of the introduction.

The symbolism in many of the prints is of a loaded nature. They may be seen to form part of the polemic against luxury and decadence which began to emerge during the eighteenth century. The prints say much more about people's attitudes than this thesis can encompass. When the effects of the consumer revolution began to be felt, the upper-classes came to be attacked on the basis of luxury. Previously the wealthy had only been criticized for their spending habits if they succumbed to vanity. Prior to the eighteenth century it was believed that people had a right to be rich, but not to vanity. Vanity was a sin. This change in thought indicates a developing sense of class and a general change in society

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The collection includes one print concerning children which was not included in this study. Four children, dressed in scaled-down versions of adult dress are shown standing before a dressing table and glass which is well stocked with equipment. It was, however, the only print in the Colonial Williamsburg Collection, to associate children with dressing behavior and/or equipment, albeit in a rather loose manner. A larger collection might include other examples of children dressing, allowing further study of the subject.
which some believe to have spurred the consumer revolution
forward. Unfortunately it is not within the scope of this
paper to consider details of the symbolism which may be found
within the prints. However, it is well to recognize that the
prints are another facet of an important change in general
thinking which was closely related to the British consumer
revolution.

As noted in the Introduction, prints, like any source or
form of "evidence" must be used with extreme care. Lorna
Weatherill, while arguing that "[P]ictures, prints, and
drawings of domestic interiors...are potentially valuable in
giving coherence to descriptions from written sources" because
they can "...confirm information from inventories and
elsewhere" urges caution:

because artists were concerned with images and ideas
as well as with description. There was, it is true
a longstanding tradition of painting graphically but
how "real" the reality is, is impossible to tell.22

21 N. McKendrick, J. Brewer, and J.H. Plumb, The Birth of
a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth
Century England (Bloomington: Indiana University Press,
1982), pp. 15-20. Covers the switch from the debate on vanity
to the debate on luxury which arose in the eighteenth century.

22 L. Weatherill, L, Consumer Behavior and Material
8.
One of the obvious drawbacks, so far as this sample of prints is concerned, is that they are all English except for one which is French, while the aim of this thesis is to test the extent of changes in consumer behavior in Virginia.\footnote{23} For this reason the prints have been balanced by the use of a specifically Virginian source - probate inventories. Prints provide information related to British dressing behavior, which inventories may or may not show to be the same for Virginia. A second drawback in the use of these prints is that they are largely concerned with the post-1770 period. The concentration of prints into a limited time span, only tells us about dressing behavior for a tiny section of the entire period. Print-makers could not sell their works unless the meanings were understood by their audience. The large number of prints dealing with extremes of dressing behavior such as tight-lacing, indicates a widely apparent trend in society at a particular time. Since print-makers based their work on recognizable behavior and events, the ability of prints to show change over time is limited. Artists might, for example, laugh at the work which went into creating a macaroni hairstyle, but fail to comment on the simpler styles of a later period. Thirdly, the prints fail to produce evidence for a wide cross-section of society. They are largely concerned with the elite or those rich enough to

\footnote{23} "Le Strategeme Amoureux" c1760 (France). No. 5.
aspire to join them. Presumably this is what lampoonists and print-makers noticed and believed others would notice, to the extent that they could sell prints because of it. Only three prints are concerned with the less than wealthy (Nos. 10, 20, and 26). A fourth and final limitation of the print sources is that one cannot be sure whether one is looking at the interior of an urban or a rural home, although the former seems to be likely in most cases.

The most important use of the prints was their helpfulness in suggesting what the physical space and objects used for dressing looked like and how they were configured. The prints indicate that people dressed in one of four types of rooms: dressing rooms, bedchambers, kitchens, and public rooms such as barber shops or powdering rooms.\(^\text{24}\) The dressing scenes shown in the prints break down in the

\[\text{Powdering Rooms were where the wealthy went to have their hair and wigs arranged. There is a fine example of a surviving public powdering room in Queen Square, Bath. The room has several alcoves in the walls where customers sat, and the walls and floor are entirely covered with ceramic tiles; the tiles allowed the room to be swept free of dust. Although public, the decor and location of such rooms made them expensive and limited accessibility to the wealthy. Such rooms served a social role as well as a practical one. While powdering rooms indicate that public rooms were not the preserve of those too poor to own their own dressing and preparation spaces, it should be noted that this was a less costly means for a dresser than building a similar, private, room. Another point worth bearing in mind is that the room in Bath was in a resort situation; landlords were not open to building specialized rooms which would have had limited use, neither was it practical for tenants to do so; hence the demand for public dressing rooms.}\]
following way: in five, the action takes place in a bedchamber, in two it occurs in public rooms, and in one it occurs in the kitchen. In the remaining sixteen prints it is difficult to tell whether the scene is set in a bedchamber or a dressing room. The prints all focus on the action taking place rather than in giving a panoramic view of the room and its contents. If the action illustrated is, for example, tight-lacing, then a bed is usually included as it provides an anchor for the woman to cling to as her laces are pulled in. However, if the scene does not include an activity which requires a bed, then it is not shown; instead the artist concentrates on what the characters require for what they are actually doing. One exception to this is *A Hint To Married Men* in which a hairdresser rests his hand familiarly on the back of a lady's chair as she admires herself in a looking glass (No. 21). Not illustrated. The print is intended to alert husbands to the danger of allowing male hairdressers to spend time alone with their wives. The bed may well have been included to drive home the point that such intimacy could lead to the unfaithfulness of a wife. For this reason we cannot be sure if the bed is symbolic or if it would actually have appeared in the same room as a dressing table in wealthy homes. As far as print-makers were concerned, a bed was not an indispensable element of the dressing scene, indicating that dressing was
not confined to bedchambers. The idea that dressing occurred in places other than a bedchamber is supported by Virginia probate inventories which show more dramatic evidence of mobility in dressing behavior, and which will be discussed in the following chapter.

The prints seem to show that where people dressed was determined by their social and economic position. Although it is hard to give an accurate class break down of a set of prints so concentrated on the upper levels of society, dressing locations did differ, and an analysis begun with this sample could be extended to larger collections of prints for a fuller result. The shortcomings of assessing class-related dressing behavior in this thesis can be overcome with the inventories. If the prints suggest that richer people dressed in bedchambers and poorer people dressed in kitchens, we can look for evidence of dressing in those places from inventories. For this reason the creation of a rudimentary socio-economic break down of dressing behavior from the prints is not a pointless exercise. Judging by the level of decor and the appearance of costly hairdressers and servants, the prints suggest that the richest people dressed in dressing rooms or bedchambers, while the poor used whatever space they had access to. In none of the prints do we see someone of the servant class dressing in a bedchamber. Poorer subjects appear in High Life Below Stairs 1772 where a servant-girl is
being dressed in the kitchen in a parody of the "lady at her toilet" style of print (No. 10). The Village Barber 1778 (No. 20) also shows a woman of lower socio-economic status having her hair dressed in a village barber shop. It would appear that those who could afford large houses with many rooms dressed in areas which afforded privacy and convenience. Poorer people dressed wherever there was space and equipment, or went to public areas for certain procedures such as hairdressing, if they could afford it.

In addition to indicating the sorts of space available to eighteenth-century dressers of differing socio-economic levels, the prints provide a hint as to how those spaces were furnished and used. Fourteen of the rooms are being used for the dressing of hair. Of these, eleven depict hair being dressed by assistants, and one shows a lady dressing her own hair. The subjects of two of the prints are having their hair dressed in public rooms.

The next category of dressing activity illustrated is tight-lacing of stays, which is the subject of four of the pictures. Two of the prints show ladies making final adjustments to their attire. The maid in one is pinning her mistresses skirts straight (No. 11). In the other, a lady stands before a glass while pulling on evening gloves (No. 24). Other prints illustrate the application of makeup, a lady being measured for new stays and a gentleman being shaved.
by a "Female Shaver" (Nos. 9, 25, 26, 13). Two of the prints show dressing itself. In one an actress is pulling on mens' breeches, and in another a man is pulling on his boots (fig. 26). These scenes are all located in a variety of rooms. Eleven of the hairdressing scenes occur in rooms where the focus is so intent on the activity that it is difficult to tell whether the room is a bedchamber or a dressing room. In two other prints the scene is clearly set in a bedchamber. Of the remainder one scene is set in a macaroni dressing room while the other is set in a village barber shop. Three of the four prints illustrating tight-lacing are set in bedchambers. The women clearly needed their four-poster beds to hold on to. The fourth print is probably set in a dressing room (No. 22). The print which depicts a lady being measured for stays was probably intended to be set in a dressing room (No. 25). Several other scenes also seem to be set in dressing rooms; although dressing is taking place, a bed is not evident and the spaces seem too private to be reception rooms. Such prints include two of ladies finalizing their dress, one of a lady applying make-up and one of an actress dressing. Less clear is a print showing a beautiful woman seated before her glass and smiling approvingly at her reflection. Apart from the woman, the looking-glass and the top of the dressing table
the room is shrouded in darkness (No. 1). The type of room in which *The Female Shaver* is set is equally elusive; the only piece of furniture is the chair on which she and a gentleman are seated making guess-work difficult - the room could even be a study or a drawing room.

Important in showing the types of space in which people dressed and the sorts of activities necessary to being fashionable in the eighteenth century, the prints also show the kind of furniture and equipment which dressers would have considered necessary to preparation-of-self. Several items of furniture are frequently illustrated in dressing areas suggesting that there was a basic "kit" considered the ideal for dressing rituals. The objects which recur in large numbers and which will form the basis of the analysis of the inventories were a surface, usually a table of some sort, a looking glass, and a chair. Other items, such as carpets, fabric covers for dressing tables and swags for looking glasses, clocks, and heavy drapes indicate that the room in which self-preparation took place was regarded highly enough and used frequently enough to justify costly furnishings. Similarly the placement of the looking glass next to a window which provided light for dressing procedures, indicates the

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26 *Lady With A Glass* 1739 (No. 1). The sin of vanity could well be the theme of the print; if so the artist may well have concentrated on expressing the dressers preoccupation with herself, choosing not to include distracting detail of the room in which she sat.
importance attached to dressing. The prints suggest that dressing was, indeed, taken seriously. Seventeen prints show a dressing table cover and/or a swag over the looking-glass, twelve show dressing equipment located next to a window - eight of which have costly drapes.\textsuperscript{27} A good light source seems to have been indispensable to those who took their self preparations seriously. Even the servants shown in High Life Below Stairs have positioned themselves next to a window. Twelve of the rooms shown in the prints have carpets and two more have clocks, further indicating that much time was spent in the rooms where dressing took place and that they were held in high regard.

**THE BASIC KIT: DRESSING TABLE**

A table surface appears in twenty-three of the prints. In seventeen of those the surface is a dressing table complete with a decorative fabric cover. The dressing table was a specialized piece of furniture as opposed to a table which could be used for many activities in a multi-functional room.

\textsuperscript{27}In one of the prints, Four O'clock in the Country (No. 26) there is no dressing equipment next to the window; the window cannot be taken as evidence that the occupants of the house took dressing seriously. Similarly, in the Staymaker Taking a Pleasing Circumference (No. 25) the window does not seem to have been necessary to the action taking place; it should also be noted that instead of curtains, this fashionable room has striped blinds.
The dressing tables in the prints appear to be straightforward, if often costly tables with cloth covers. The dressing table covers were often elaborate; several of the prints show muslin cloths with a frill at the top and the bottom. Such covers made a clear statement that a particular table had a sole function related to dressing. A table could also be marked out as a dressing table by the positioning of a swing looking-glass on its surface. Often such glasses had built in drawers for the storage of dressing related items as illustrated by A Hint to Married Men (No. 21). Over the latter part of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, dressing tables with attached looking-glasses and compartments for make-up and hair items became more common. None of the prints in the Colonial Williamsburg collection depict such a piece of furniture. However, table covers and looking-glasses make the intended use of the tables illustrated apparent. The ownership of a dressing table made two statements about the dresser. Firstly, that they could afford different tables for different

28Lady's Toilette (Nos. 22, 23, 24) All three plates illustrate a frilled, muslin dressing table cover as do: The Preposterous Head Dress or the Feathered Lady (No. 15.), A Macaroni Dressing Room (No. 12), The Toilette (No. 2), Marriage A La Mode, Plate IV (No. 3), A New Fashion'd Head Dress for Misses of Three Score and Ten (No. 19) A Hint to the Husbands, Or the Dresser, Properly Dressed (No. 16) not illustrated) and The Old Beau in an Extasy (No. 14).

29Not illustrated.
functions. Secondly, that they considered self-preparation important enough to merit specialized furniture. Two of the prints show a second table alongside the dressing-table which was used for the over-flow of dressing related items. In one print from the set of three which cover the protracted and intricate dressing rituals of one Dublin lady, one dressing-table and two other tables are all covered in items related to self-preparation (No. 23). These prints indicate that from the 1740s the aristocracy and the wealthy were using a table kept specifically for the purpose of dressing.

BASIC DRESSING KIT: LOOKING GLASS

The second dressing item that frequently occurs in the prints suggesting that it was considered indispensable to dressing rituals, was a looking glass. Twenty-two of the prints include a looking glass. One print has two, another has four, and only two fail to show a glass at all. Of the looking glasses in the prints the overwhelming majority (fifteen) appear to measure between eighteen inches and two feet. Seven measure from two to three feet, and two are full length cheval glasses. On a smaller scale, two were under one foot, and there were two hand held glasses.\(^{30}\) Glasses were made in standard sizes, the usual being between one and two

\(^{30}\)The Village Barber 1778 (No. 20). High Life Below Stairs 1772 (No. 10) not illustrated.
feet. These were the most affordable glasses of a practical size. Larger glasses were much more expensive. Interestingly the cheval glasses in the prints appear in two of the most luxurious scenes. One, Le Strategeme Amoureux c1760 shows a beautiful French lady whose hugely elaborate hairstyle is being attended by servants and cherubs with the aid of a winch (No. 5). The whole scene is one of surreal excess and decadence. The other glass appears in the set of three Dublin prints concerned with the preparation of a lady for the evening. Judging by pictures on the walls, which change from "Morning" to "Noon" to "Evening" the process was a long and arduous one, requiring a great deal in the way of expensive accessories, cosmetics and jewelry all of which are reproduced in loving detail. The larger glasses appear towards the end of the period covered by this study and may be accounted for by technological advances of the eighteenth century which made the manufacture of larger looking glasses easier and less expensive.31 Large looking-glasses may have been in increasing demand as hairstyles reached new heights at the end

31 Le Strategeme Amoureux (No. 5) dates from around 1760; while the exact date of the print is unknown it is certainly earlier than the other print which includes a full length glass - Lady's Dress Complete 1800 (No. 24). However, from the dress of the subjects, it looks as though the print dates from the end of the 1760s. Also it is possible that the French Aristocracy would have had full length glasses much sooner and in greater numbers than the English.
of the 1760s; little would have been seen of a fashionable hairstyle in a glass measuring just one foot. Of the total of twenty-eight glasses illustrated, only six had a decorative purpose, the remainder had a practical role connected to dressing rituals.

**BASIC KIT: CHAIRS**

The final item the prints suggest as being part of a dressing "kit" was a chair. Eighteen of the principal subjects involved in dressing activities are shown seated before a glass. If this is not the case, then a vacant seat stands before a dressing table indicating that someone would usually sit there during preparation rituals. Unfortunately, the prints do not show chairs in quite such large numbers as probate inventories indicate were present in eighteenth-century rooms. Why so many chairs were present is a perplexing question, and it is a shame that the prints do not offer possible answers. However, what the prints do show is the virtual indispensability of chairs for dressing procedures. Of the twenty-four prints which show seating all but two have a maximum of two chairs and a footstool, or a chair and two footstools. *Marriage a La Mode* 1745 shows a

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32 The question as to why so many chairs were kept in eighteenth-century bedchambers arises out of analysis of the Virginian probate inventories, and will, therefore, be considered more fully in the next chapter.
fashionable levée at which eleven people are present, seven of
whom are seated (No. 3). The print shows five chairs and one
sofa in addition to the chair on which the lady is seated
before her glass. No other print comes as close to
illustrating that quantity of chairs, although no other scene
necessitates the seating of so many people. A Macaroni
Dressing Room 1772 has the next largest number of seats (No.
12). Although the room is large, it has only one chair, one
arm chair and a stool.

The type of chair which is most frequently illustrated is
a high-backed wooden chair without arm rests. Such a chair
appears in seventeen of the twenty-six prints. A carved
wooden chair with arms appears in two of the prints. In three
prints other types of seating serve as substitutes. In Lady's
Toilette: The Wig c1800 the lady is seated on a stool instead
of a chair (No. 23). One can see an elaborately carved chair
in Lady Betty Bustle and her Maid Lucy Preparing for the
Masquerade at the Pantheon 1772 (No. 11). However, a stool
stands even closer to the dressing table, suggesting this was
what the lady used when seated before it. The lady in Le
Strategeme Amoureux wears such an elaborate dress that a chair
will not do; instead she is seated on a two seater settee (No.
5). Only three prints fail to include a chair in the scene.
In Lady with a Glass the artist is so focused on the woman as
she considers her reflection that furniture other than the
glass and the table on which it rests is superfluous to his intention (No. 1). In *Four O'Clock in the Country* 1788 the focus also limits what the observer can see of the room (No. 26). The scene is of a tired man pulling on his boots before a day's work; his dressing was of a practical nature and not purely for show.\(^{33}\) *Tight Lacing* 1777, a simple line etching, illustrating an old woman holding a bed-post as her maid pulls on her stays, also fails to show a chair (No. 17). While the focus is on the activity which centers on the bed, we have no way of knowing if such a room would have had a table and chair in another corner, although it seems likely. The prints served to isolate the items basic to dressing procedures, which were a table surface, a glass, and a chair. Before moving to the inventories, it is necessary to deal with the issues of gender and consumerism which arose from the prints.

\(^{33}\)The dressing shown in *Four O'Clock In The Country* (No. 26) is another kind of preparation-of-self, for work, not entirely for show. Such dressing raises interesting and important questions. How did people dress for work? When and how did they express conformity by wearing uniforms and when did they express individuality? Unfortunately, such questions do not fall into the scope of this thesis which is largely concerned with preparation and presentation-of-self for purposes other than the purely practical. A good start to exploring the question of where the dividing line comes between dressing to express individuality and dressing to conform or for practical purposes would be with Alison Lurie's "Clothing as A Sign System" in *The Language of Clothes* (New York: Vintage, 1983). Grant McCracken, Clothing as Language: An Object Lesson in the Study of the Expressive Properties of Material Culture" in *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities* (Indiana University Press, 1990) should also prove helpful.
Once those questions have been tackled the inventories can be used to consider how, if at all, dressing procedures in Virginia may be compared to those of Britain. Did the dressing process reflect phenomena associated with the consumer revolution: specialization of rooms and furniture, moved towards greater privacy, and an increasing quantity of more affordable consumer items throughout society? Inventories may help shed light on the gaps that prints leave in our knowledge. Just one question serves to show the limited nature of the prints: where were clothes kept? Not one of the prints gives us a clue as to where, and how, some very elaborate clothes were stored.

Dressing Behavior: Change Over Time

Dressing behavior altered over time. During the eighteenth century people acquired more objects related to preparation-of-self. The prints provide valuable evidence to reinforce the suggestion that people became more interested in their appearance in the second half of the eighteenth century and that this affected the type and quantity of consumer goods found in rooms where dressing occurred. The British Museum Catalogue of Personal and Political Satires has a total of 7,252 prints for the years 1740-1800. Of these sixty-four have dressing themes; eighteen are for the years 1750-1770 while twenty-nine are for the 1771-1783 period. Thereafter
the numbers begin to decline. The increase suggests that people's dressing habits and interest in appearance had expanded. The themes the prints take up give some indication of how behavior had altered as well as how contemporary observers reacted to those changes. The decline in numbers of dressing-related prints may be explained by the decline in the novelty value of consumerism linked to self-preparation and presentation. For the period 1784-1792 there are fourteen such prints, while for the years 1793-1800 there are only three.

In addition to these themes the prints show developments which have been picked up by historians such as Rhys Isaac or Cary Carson. The prints illustrate an increase in consumer

34A Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires prints of the British Museum in seven volumes. The catalogue lists all the prints owned by the British Museum on these themes including all copies of the same print. The copies have been included in all the totals.

35Isaac, R., The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1820 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988). He considers changes in society and politics which affected people's mindsets leading them to alter their material worlds. While he discusses events in Virginia certain phenomena discussed by him bear a mention in the European context. Privatization, individualization and specialization can be observed in England.

Carson, C., "Why Demand? The Consumer Revolution in Colonial America" in Of Consuming Interests, the Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century eds Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter Albert (Charlottesville, 1994). Carson disputes that emulation of England is solely responsible for changes in Virginian consumer patterns. He isolated
objects related to dressing over the time period of this study. Even as late as the 1770s the rooms of elaborately dressed people seem quite bare and unadorned. *Tight Lacing* (1777), shows an old woman who is clearly well off (No. 17). Her hairstyle is fashionably high, and intricately decorated. She has a servant to attend her, and she sleeps on a bed with a valance and curtains. There are even two pictures in gilt frames on the wall. However, the room is sparsely furnished, the door frame is plain, and the floor bare. Similarly *A Hint to the Husbands, Or the Dresser, Properly Dressed* (1777) shows a woman with a costly gown and a hairdresser to attend her tall coiffure (No. 16). The floor is bare boards, the door is plain and the walls undecorated except for two family portraits. In these cases the status of the dresser is conveyed by the richness and fashionability of their dress. In later prints the process surrounding getting dressed has extended to the room itself. Consumerism has led to the creation of specialized pieces of furniture and a profusion of soft-furnishings and beauty aids.

The three Dublin prints showing the process of one young woman's preparations for the evening are a good example. The room is highly furnished and cluttered with dressing equipment of all sorts. There is one full-length glass and a table-top phenomena such as an increased interest in portable means of conveying status and individualization and seeks to find explanations which are specific to America.
swing glass. There is a dressing table and cover and two other tables, one for hairdressing equipment and another for ceramic objects and plants. The room is clearly intended to make the dressing process as comfortable as possible, for there is a hanging cupboard full of novels, a floral carpet on the floor, window curtains and blinds for privacy and a number of stools, footstools and chairs. Lacking a bed it would seem that this is a room specially intended for dressing for it offers all the equipment, comfort and privacy the lady could desire. Such a well-equipped and largely private room suggests that fashionable dressing was considered a necessity for the elite.36

Male and Female Dressing Spaces

The prints raise questions about how the dressing spaces of men and women may have differed. While it is dangerous to suggest that concrete conclusions may be drawn from a

36The Stay-maker Taking a Pleasing Circumference, 1784 (No. 25). Like Lady's Toilet this print suggests that dressing has become a highly complex and important process necessitating rooms solely devoted to it. Here the privacy required for a fitting for stays is afforded by what is probably a lady's private sitting or dressing room. Luxuriously fitted with the latest striped wallpaper, blinds and sofa, there is a carpet on the floor and an elaborate gilt mirror on the wall. While it could be claimed that the action occurs in the main drawing room, it seems unlikely. The sofa seems too comfortable for a late eighteenth-century drawing room; it is more suited to a boudoir setting. Furthermore, if the dresser is as wealthy as this room, and her dress indicate it seems unlikely that she would make a "best" room serve a double function, especially one as intimate as depicted.
collection of just twenty-six prints, questions which arise from them can be considered, and possible avenues of answers explored. These could provide a basis from which a larger selection of prints could be analyzed in the future.

The first question that arises is why are women the most frequent victims of the print-maker's critical eye? The Colonial Williamsburg collection of twenty-six prints is striking for its preponderance of female subjects. With only four prints of male dressers this is a telling statistic. It appears that print-makers had more interest in female dressing behavior than the male. The British Museum collection of sixty-four prints dealing with dressing behavior during the same period as that of Colonial Williamsburg, includes only fifteen with male subjects compared to forty-nine with female subjects.37 What is the reason behind this preponderance of female subjects in prints dealing with dressing behavior? A Veblenesque perspective would argue that women were the ultimate way in which a man could display his status and wealth through conspicuous consumption. Another explanation could be that given women's limited ability to become involved in spheres outside the home, they had greater time for protracted dressing rituals, domestic decisions, and duties.

37 The period covered by the twenty-six prints taken from the Colonial Williamsburg collection is 1740-1800. When the British Museum collection of prints was used as a comparison the same period was strictly adhered to - no prints before or after were included.
Their day could be scheduled to make time for preparation-of-self. However, it was probably the role of women as primary consumers for themselves, their households, and families that made their consumption more apparent than that of men.\textsuperscript{38} Women were quickly established in the popular consciousness as the key purchasers of the consumer society. When new and extreme fashions caught the public's attention, it was natural to blame women for succumbing to every foolish trend - even when men did the same. Consumer theorists, as well as print-makers, have perpetuated the stereotype which defines women as innately covetous; men are the producers, and women the parasitic consumers.\textsuperscript{39} Women are consistently derided for "petty materialism and love of ostentation"; no reason is given, only the assumption "that women are...congenitally wistful about the prospect of upward mobility."\textsuperscript{40} In addition women's consumption of material objects may be seen as their way to self-definition in a world which denied them access to


\textsuperscript{39}Ibid. Paraphrased pp. 1-5.

\textsuperscript{40}Ibid. p. 5.
the professions and investments.41 Amanda Vickery argues that "[A] gentlewoman's skills were characteristically embodied in that 'unskilled' arena, the household. Small wonder if, in consequence, she turned to personal and household artifacts to create a world of meanings and ultimately to transmit her history."42 The money print-makers could make from their work depended on whether the subjects they dealt with were recognized by people who would be prepared to purchase their prints. If women's consumption was more conspicuous than that of men, artists would make more of it. The research of Amanda Vickery helps to explain the concentration of the prints on women, and disproves their suggestion that women were more concerned with appearance than men. In fact, when men were the subject of the prints their dressing behavior was little different than that of the women.

To show that the distinctions between male and female dressing spaces are minimal, I have chosen to analyze two prints concerning male dressing and two of comparable female activity. The first pair show private, elite dressing rituals of older dressers desperately striving to hold onto their youth, they are: The Old Beau in an Extasy 1773 (No. 14) and

41Ibid. 12. Vickery shows how women were more likely to inherit personal property than real property "[A]s a result most women had only movable goods to bestow themselves". This meant that women had a high profile in consumerism and were easily criticized.

42Ibid. p 33.
A New Fashion'd Head Dress for Misses of Three Score and Ten 1777 (No. 19). The second pair show public rituals of the elite, they are: Marriage a la Mode, Plate IV 1745 (No. 3) and A Macaroni Dressing Room 1772 (No. 12).

The first pair to be considered concern the private rituals of an elderly pair of dressers each of whom refuse to grow old gracefully. Both are being dressed with the aid of others, and the activity shown in the print concerns the hairdressing part of the process. They each sit at elaborate and cluttered dressing tables near a window in luxuriously decorated rooms. The gentlemen has a shelf of fake books indicating that gentlemen realized that more than wealth was required to prove their fitness to govern, even if they did not care for the process of intellectual development itself. Apart from the books the only difference between the two prints is that the woman is being attended by two hairdressers while the man has one valet. However, the ridiculous extravagance of the hair of each is the same. The

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lady has an ornate wig while the gentleman has a collection of "bags and tails."\textsuperscript{44}

The furniture used by men and women in these prints differs no more than the dressing spaces they use or the activities they are involved in. Each sits on an 'armless' chair before a glass which measures between eighteen inches and two feet. This stands atop a covered dressing table with a cloth cover. The only difference is that the glass of the lady is decorated with a muslin swag and bow. These two prints suggest that in backstage preparation-of-self, men and women of high fashion followed the same rituals. They use the same sort of physical space for dressing, and owned the same basic kits. Both men and women show a weakness for fashions so extreme that assistance in dressing is a necessity.

The second pair of prints indicate striking similarities in the social dressing activity of men and women. The prints suggest that dressing was divided into preparation and presentation, and often the dividing line between the two was not clear. In some cases, dressing was private and only the final result of preparation would be presented to those the dresser wanted to impress. In other cases, some of the preparation was undertaken in a social situation. The preparation-of-self, in some circumstances, could signify

\textsuperscript{44}Bags and tails were additions which created large, heavy loops of false hair worn at the back of the head. The wearing of bags and tails was associated with Macaronis.
status as well as the presentation-of-self in others. There is not a male levee scene to compare with the one pictured in Hogarth's *Marriage a la Mode* (No. 3), but the *Macaroni Dressing Room* (No. 12) may be used in its stead. The two prints do not allow a direct comparison of male and female levees, but can be used to determine the dividing lines between the private and public dressing rituals of men and women. The prints show that dressing was not always a backstage activity. At times preparation and presentation were concurrent, and this was true of both genders. Both of the "stages" illustrated in the scenes shown by the artists contain the basic kit: looking glasses, chairs, and dressing tables. The Macaroni scene is set in a public powdering room upon which the clients cannot stamp their identity with consumer objects, as can the lady holding the levee. However, the use of the stages are striking in their similarity. The dressers in the two prints are not fully dressed, but their attire is enough to indicate status and wealth. The Macaronis are shown in dandified clothes complete with lace collars and elaborate powdered wigs. The Lady in *Marriage a la Mode* wears a low cut silk gown partially protected by a shoulder-cape. Only the final elements of dressing occurred in social situations. The line between private and public dressing divided the undressed from the dressed body. The dressers do not appear before guests in dressing gowns, or with their hair
in disarray. Washing or stay-lacing activities are kept private. While the guests are encouraged to believe they are seeing the dresser in an informal backstage mode, they are actually part of a scene where impressions have been carefully managed.45

None of the dressers appear until they have reached a level of dress which allows them to indicate their status. The lady is already dressed, presumably before her visitors were admitted to be entertained, as she finishes the details of her toilette. The Macaronis are also fully dressed before they arrive at the powdering room. In this way all the dressers are able to use their clothes as a means of self-definition: what they can afford to wear, how aware they are of the latest styles, and their ability to put all the elements together in an impressive manner. In the context of social dressing clothes have two values. Firstly, they cover the body for warmth and modesty. Secondly, they act as signifiers of social position in a situation where status could easily become ambiguous. The lady's guests can see the grandeur of her room, that she can afford maids, black servants, a hairdresser, and an art instructor. They are made aware that she can afford the time for such a protracted ritual of self-preparation and the plethora of objects

associated with it. Similarly, the Macaronis come to see, be seen, and presumably to talk of their acquaintances. Private preparation-of-self enables dressers to control the first impression people perceived of them. A public ritual of dressing, properly controlled, allows them to show elements of the process which could be used to further define their position in society. The prints show that social dressing was used by both sexes as a means of defining their social position, or one to which they aspired. There was however a line drawn in the dressing process which others could not cross. Although dressing appeared to have become a social event a backstage was still required. Only the servants necessary to help the dresser had access to the real backstage.

Because the print collection included more prints with female than male subjects, it is easier to see how women used dressing spaces. The Colonial Williamsburg prints and some of the prints of the British Museum collection make it possible to draw some conclusions regarding male use of dressing space. Men, like women who placed a premium on their appearance, used the basic dressing kit. The Old Beau in an Extasy print shows it located by a window conforming to the pattern of many of the prints with female subjects. As with women, fashionable dressing practices necessitated the aid of a servant. The valet in the picture is tying the beau's hair into an enormous
club. The room is probably a dressing room, or the corner of a private bedroom, and its comfortable furnishings hint at the long hours the owner spent there engaged in self-preparation rituals. But, as already noted, dressing did not always have to be a solitary and private process. Dressing space was used by men in a social way as indicated in the Macaroni Dressing Room. The room illustrated is interesting for its sparseness. If the characters were removed the room would be bare except for three chairs, a dressing table, and a wall mirror. Its bareness is a mystery, for clearly the dressers are wealthy—they wear extreme and costly fashions. The stance of the Macaronis portrayed suggests that space for presentation-of-self was more important than the clutter of furniture related to self preparation. As long as each had the time to wait his turn, it did not matter that only one could have his hair dressed at a time. The social role of the room was as important as its functional one. Certain male dressing rituals were such that they could occur in various areas of the house. The inventories show, for example, that shaving was not confined to rooms usually associated with dressing. While we cannot be sure that means the activity shown in The Female Shaver did not occur in a bedchamber or dressing room, it does explain the absence of dressing-related furniture. Shaving did not necessarily require the full dressing kit when a helper would undertake the shaving. The only other print of
the Colonial Williamsburg collection with a male dresser as the central subject is *Four O'Clock in the Country* (No. 26). Here the dressing area is a cluttered space suggesting that the dressing room and its elaborate kit were only for the aspiring middle-classes of the cities or the aristocratic elite who had time for complicated dressing procedures. The room appears to conform to the older practice of having "multi-functional" rooms, a practice which lingered in the country and in less fashionable homes. Here we see the interior of a chamber containing a bed, a cradle and a clutter of items including saddles and farm equipment. The print cannot be taken as evidence that men were less self-obsessed than women for clearly that was not the case. It can be taken as an indication that in some areas the role of appearance as a status indicator was less important than land ownership. The print itself shows that where self-preparation was not rooted in a desire for social improvement, dressing was simpler and more functional. Given the size of the room and the expensive bed, complete with a tester and curtains, the man and his wife were obviously not poor. However, the room lacks a dressing kit which suggests that for country people status was relayed by other means.

Finally, the prints imply that the dressing behavior of those who could afford to buy or rent an expensive property differed from that of those who could not. It seems that
those with money divided up the space within their houses to provide back and front-stage areas. The wealthy could, therefore, dress in bedchambers or dressing rooms which offered privacy. Nineteen of the twenty-six prints of wealthy lifestyles show such dressing areas. The less wealthy lacked the money to create such areas and dressed wherever they could. For this reason it is not surprising that the one scene of servants dressing, *High Life Below Stairs*, occurs in a kitchen No. 10). While servants might get cast-off clothing from their employers and so dress quite well in some cases, their dressing spaces were less likely to offer equipment and privacy. Employers would not have considered providing dressing equipment for their servants a worthwhile investment. The difference in dressing space and equipment, between the rich and the poor, seems to derive from the basic issue of who had the money to control the layout of public and private space in the home, as well as how that space was furnished. A fuller study of the differences and similarities in the dressing behavior of men and women, and of servants and homeowners, requires a larger number of prints in order to provide clearer results. However, even this relatively limited sample gives the strong impression that there is much potential for the further study of these topics.

\[46\]

\[46\] Not illustrated.
Conclusion

The prints showed that eighteenth-century British dressers used a basic dressing "kit." They also acted as an aid in creating a picture of how rooms may have looked. For example, study of the prints show how furniture was configured and placed including the apparently common positioning of a dressing table next to a window to maximize light.47

Pictorial sources also helped to indicate certain trends of the period, such as the increase in the level of comfort and the numbers of beauty-related objects. Also shown is a move to privacy and specialization of equipment and jobs. The analysis of domestic space and its use is common in the effort to reach an understanding of the accepted values and behavior of people of the past:

[0]ne way of interpreting behavior and responses to the environment is to take specific account of how people endeavored to present themselves to others in everyday situations, using ideas derived from the present day.48

47Twelve of the twenty-six prints show a dressing-table next to a window.

48Weatherill, Lorna Consumer Behavior and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760 (New York: Routledge 1988). The quotation is part of Weatherill's explanation of Goffman's ideas. Those ideas may be found in Goffman, E., The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (New York: Doubleday 1959).
The ideas of Goffman, particularly those explained in his *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, are important to any study concerned with the interest of people in their appearance. Goffman believed that if a person is in a public situation (s)he will, consciously or sub-consciously, behave in such a way as to cause others to see her/him as (s)he would wish to be seen. In private situations the behavior will, therefore, be very different:

Thus there are "front-stages" which are the settings of activities in which people present themselves to others and can be likened to a theatrical stage.... Likewise, the "backstage" is analogous to the backstage of a theater."^49_

If we look at dressing behavior in this light, we can say that since people dressed for a particular reason, to advance either in society as a whole, or within their own social or professional circles, they prepared themselves as if for a performance. If dressing came to be taken this seriously during the eighteenth century, it may be considered a backstage activity. Where money was too short to provide specialized backstage dressing areas, one might expect to find evidence of people taking elements of the process of self-

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^49Weatherill, L., p 9
Here Weatherill is paraphrasing the arguments of Goffman, see footnote 31 above.
preparation away from crowded areas, particularly areas where many people sleep.

The prints raise major questions surrounding the consumer revolution. What accounted for the steep rise in production and demand for consumer goods? What priorities did people make in their purchases? How did the goods they purchased reflect their needs and aspirations? The plethora of prints on topics related to preparation and presentation-of-self shows that eighteenth-century artists and print-makers noticed a change in people's dress and dressing behavior. Prints satirized fashionable excesses. Tight-lacing, hairstyles, and beauty aids such as cork-rumps and cheek plumpers were all mocked. There can be little doubt that an interest in clothes and appearance existed prior to the eighteenth century. Medieval ladies shaved the front of their hair and plucked their eyebrows in order to achieve the desired high forehead. Elizabethan ladies used belladonna to dilate the pupils of their eyes, and people of all ages have tended to conform to what their peers wore. But something new must have occurred in order to so excite the attention of artists. The prints show that over time both men and women acquired more consumer objects related to preparation-of-self for public presentation, but they do not provide a clear explanation for this change. In order to find out if the behavior and patterns apparent for British dressers also apply in Virginia,
it was necessary to compare the print evidence with specifically Virginian evidence.

Used alone the prints are too limited a source to produce meaningful conclusions regarding eighteenth-century Virginia dressing behavior. Not only are they all European but they allow us only to see one room. It is therefore not possible to compare the use and decor of all the rooms in a house. At this point it is necessary to turn to Virginia probate inventories. The inventories help to fill information gaps left by the prints as well as to build up a body of specifically Virginia dressing information.
CHAPTER THREE: WILLIAMSBURG INVENTORIES FROM THE YORK COUNTY RECORDS 1740-1800.

Few Virginians would have been able to afford the kind of lifestyles illustrated in the European prints, but this does not mean that they did not become increasingly interested in using self-preparation and presentation as a means to improve social status. Inventories show that Virginians owned many of the dressing-related items that the prints indicate were also used by wealthy dressers in Britain. In order to find out if European and Virginia dressing behavior was similar, the probate inventories had to be analyzed and the results compared to the information drawn from the prints. The main concern was to find out if ownership of the basic dressing "kit" was important to Virginians, and if so, why? Did Virginians become preoccupied with presentation-of-self for the same, or for different reasons than Europeans?

The method of analyzing the inventories began with the creation of a form designed to discover what dressing-related objects Virginians owned and where they kept them.\(^{50}\) When first designing the form, I assumed that dressing would have occurred in the areas in which people slept (much like the

\(^{50}\)An example of the Inventory analysis form may be seen in Appendix C.
pattern with which we are familiar today). However, the basic dressing "kit" frequently appeared in areas other than bedchambers or dressing-rooms, suggesting that the British pattern shown in the prints was not an accepted formula in eighteenth-century Virginia. A large proportion of inventories indicated sleeping areas which lacked evidence of dressing activity. The inventories also suggested that dressing occurred in locations as surprising as dining rooms or kitchens. For this reason it was necessary that the form take into account the location of items such as combs, razors and even silver buttons and shoe buckles. Small miscellaneous objects provided additional evidence to help indicate possible dressing areas. As forms were filled in for each inventory it rapidly became apparent that dressing patterns for well-to-do Virginians differed from those of Europeans; Virginians did not limit dressing to specific rooms, and only a few had private dressing rooms.

There are two types of inventories: room-by-room inventories and "regular" inventories. Room-by-room inventories are so called because the officials clearly labelled each room in the house before listing its contents. Such inventories are particularly helpful to a study such as this because they show where objects were kept. "Regular" inventories were more common than room-by-room inventories and less specific. The inventory-takers did their work in a systematic manner, but the rooms were not clearly delineated.
As a result the reader has to exercise his/her judgement about numbers, types, and contents of rooms. Because the maker of a "regular" inventory has recorded his way carefully around each room, decisions were fairly easy to make, but the room-by-room type of inventory is far less ambiguous. For this reason room-by-room inventories form the basis of this study, and the "regular" inventories are used only in a very limited manner.

The inventories used in this study are Williamsburg inventories recorded in the York County records between 1740-1800. The set consists of eighty-three "regular" and nine room-by-room inventories. Williamsburg was chosen for the study because it was probably the most urban area in eighteenth-century Virginia. Although it is impossible to know whether the rooms illustrated in the prints were located in urban or rural houses, for the majority the former seems most likely. Consequently a set of urban inventories was desirable.

Ann Smart Martin has argued that citizens of urban areas in Virginia showed their status through displays of wealth. Towns had social customs and ordered spaces in which consumer objects indicated the social and economic standing of the

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51The Williamsburg Inventories were drawn out of the York County Records and filed together by Colonial Williamsburg's research staff.
people. In contrast rural areas showed "no organic relationship between man and the material world." For the rural population "[T]opline goods were not part of daily life except for the very wealthy." Despite a depressed economy between 1760 and 1840 Williamsburg remained the town center for the region, supplying services and employment to rural areas, as well as providing a mercantile and political center. Basing her study on an ownership analysis of luxury goods, as indicated in an 1815 property tax, Ann Smart Martin shows that for its population Williamsburg residents owned a large quantity of high style goods - more so than those living in rural Virginia town centers farther to the West.

If it was true that "consumer goods were more common for more people in Williamsburg" than in other locations, the personal records of the city's residents should reflect it. Probate inventories provided information regarding consumerism and dressing behavior which can be used to work out how far the print information applies in an American context. The prints indicate that the wealthy of Britain used presentation-


53 Ibid.

54 Ibid. Ann Smart Martin explains the depressed economy of Williamsburg in terms of depleted soil, price fluctuations in tobacco, the opening of the Western territories causing depopulation, wheat being hit by hessian fly.
of-self as a means of proving position, or pursuing higher status. Did Williamsburg's increasingly affluent professionals and merchants do the same? Clothing alone could not raise a dresser's status, but if a lifestyle was centered around a concern for presenting the right appearance, it could play a considerable part in the process. In urban areas land was less of a status indicator than in the country, and so portable status indicators had a more important role to play.

ROOM-BY-ROOM INVENTORIES: WILLIAMSBURG INVENTORIES FROM THE YORK COUNTY RECORDS

Eight room-by-room inventories provided the basis for the analysis of what inventories can tell us of dressing behavior because they provide relatively solid evidence of room contents. The ninth room-by-room inventory is that of Lord Botetourt for the Governor's Palace, 1770 which was considered separately. Because the Governor's Palace inventory provides a strong link between British and Virginian dressing practices it has been used to draw a picture of dressing in Virginia at the highest level. The remaining eight inventories are well spaced over the 1740-1774 period. A study of this limited sample will help provide benchmarks against which the other inventories may be measured.
### Table 1  Wealth of Decedents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>TOTAL VALUE OF INVENTORY</th>
<th>SLAVES</th>
<th>ROOMS WITH BASIC KIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1740</td>
<td>Davidson</td>
<td>76.5.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1742</td>
<td>Hacker</td>
<td>539.18. 9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1744</td>
<td>Ripping*</td>
<td>407. 8. 6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1754</td>
<td>Wells</td>
<td>144.18</td>
<td>2**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1757</td>
<td>Green*</td>
<td>388.17. 2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1761</td>
<td>Hunter</td>
<td>mutilated</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1765</td>
<td>Prentis</td>
<td>7114.11. 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1773</td>
<td>Hornsby</td>
<td>1296.15. 4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Female decedents  
** Wells had two indentured servants worth £12.10

The inventories show a wide gap between the lowest inventory value and the highest. However, none of the decedents were "poor" in the sense that they would have lacked necessities. Indeed all were able to afford what would have been considered luxury goods. **55** Ownership of slaves by five of the eight decedents may have allowed for some leisure time for protracted dressing rituals.

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**55**John Davidson had the lowest valued inventory, but he was able to afford two walnut tables and one mahogany table in his hall. He also owned china chocolate cups and a china tea set. His walnut dressing table and glass was a specialized piece of equipment, and an expensive one at 45/. Other luxuries included a floor cloth, curtains, fine linen shirts and a bed worth £4.10.0. Most importantly he owned two slaves which meant that he may have had the luxury of some free time.
Did Virginians Own the Equipment for Preparation of Self?

In order to show what kind of equipment the dressing "kits" of Virginians included, it is necessary to take each component and see how it appeared in the dressing areas of each decedent.

Chairs

Chairs mostly appeared in multiples of six - twelve is the most frequent number. Rush bottom chairs were the cheapest type. Other varieties which appeared were russia leather, either high or low backed, and cane. Many of the inventories include rooms, particularly bedchambers, which have one or two arm chairs as the only chairs. All of the room-by-room inventories have at least one set of six chairs. The inventory of Thomas Hornsby has fewer chairs in the dressing areas. By the 1773 date of Hornsby's inventory wealthy Virginians were moving their dressing equipment into bedchambers and closets, and out of "multi-functional" rooms. Hornsby conformed to this trend. More chairs would have been required in a room where guests were received than in a private dressing area, and so Hornsby's large sets of chairs were kept in reception rooms. Inventories show that even in the homes of the well-to-do, furniture was frequently functional rather than luxurious. The least costly form of chair was rush bottomed. By the second half of the eighteenth-century russia leather chairs would have been
considered old-fashioned. Yet both types figured prominently in the Williamsburg inventories.

Looking Glasses

All of the dressing areas which appeared in the room-by-room inventories contained looking glasses. Some looking glasses were part of dressing tables, for example those of Davidson and Hacker. Dressing-glasses, as opposed to looking glasses, also appear in the inventories. It is hard to know exactly the use of a "dressing-glass." It could have been one of two things: a table-top looking glass or a full-length swing glass. Since full-length or cheval glasses were costly during the eighteenth century it is likely that the dressing-glasses referred to were the table-top variety. The inventories of Davidson, Prentis and Hornsby all refer to dressing-glasses. Glasses which are not referred to as dressing-glasses may well have been fixed to walls, and those which were described as "small" could have been hand-held. Two other types of looking glasses appear in the inventories. The first type is the sconce. Henry Hacker had a chimney glass with two sconces and two small sconce glasses which made for a well-lit hall. The second type of glass referred to is decorative such as Thomas Hornsby's chimney glass.
Dressing Tables

Dressing tables appear in the inventories in one of two ways: specifically as a "dressing table," or as a "table and toilette," or a "table and glass." The two descriptions could be due to the preference of the inventory maker or to a difference in appearance between a table and glass, and a dressing table. The table and toilette appears in the inventory of George Wells. The toilette could have been a toilet-box or a table cover. If it was a table cover, it is the only evidence of a cover in the inventories. The dressing table or table and glass was apparently indispensable to Virginian dressing procedures of the well-to-do, as all eight inventories include at least one.

The following table shows how many dressing "kits" each inventory included and in which spaces they were kept. Each household had at least one complete dressing kit. It was not unusual, at least at this economic level, for them to have two or more.

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56 The use of dressing table covers in Virginia is covered in further detail on p. 48 and p. 65.
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Spaces in House</th>
<th>Spaces with Kit</th>
<th>Bed with Kit</th>
<th>Bed No Kit</th>
<th>Chamber/Hall with Kit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Davidson</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hacker</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ripping</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wells</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prentis</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hornsby</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from the dressing "kit" Virginians owned other items for preparation-of-self. In Mary Ripping's Little Room there was a wig box. In a bedchamber of Davidson there was a wig. The inventory of William Hunter shows a wig puff and two barbers blocks and stands in the kitchen, while George Wells owned three wigs which were stored in a downstairs chamber. As in the prints the inventories do not show much washing equipment. However, Mary Ripping's Little Room and Robert Davidson's Chamber include washstands.  

57Cleanliness did not seem to concern dressers until the dandy appeared in the late eighteenth century. Colin Campbell explains the "dandy ethic" through the person of Beau Brummel who was famous for his "refinement and attention to detail." Brummel was concerned with the cut and quality of his clothes and was "...equally fastidious about his person...scrubbing himself until his skin was pink, for he took considerable pride in the fact that although he did not wear perfume neither did he smell."
In many respects the dressing "kit" of Virginians was similar to that which the prints revealed for the British. The eight inventories suggested that Virginians also used a table surface, a chair, and a looking-glass for preparation-of-self. As with the dressing tables in the prints, specialized pieces of furniture were in evidence in the houses of well-to-do Virginians.

However, the two sources suggest that there were also some differences in the dressing "kit" owned by Virginians and that owned by Europeans. In rooms where there is evidence that dressing activity took place far more chairs appear in Virginia inventories than in British prints. It could well be that British dressing areas included the same number of chairs as Virginian ones, but that artists chose not to include them all unless a particular scene called for a large number, as with the levee shown in Plate IV of Marriage a la Mode (No. 3). It is unfortunate that neither source suggests a reason for the discrepancy in the number of chairs. A second difference between the information yielded by the Virginia inventories and the British prints is that the former show a lack of "frothy" fabrics in the sort of yardage which the prints show were used as dressing table covers. The lack of fabric dressing table covers raises the question of whether Virginians used them at all; if not how did inventory makers

know whether a table was a dressing table or not? Since inventories frequently fail to give good records of linen or clothing, it is possible that fabric table covers were not included unless they were for large dining tables, and made of costly fabrics. Alternatively, it could well have been the case that Virginians did not use dressing table covers. Fabric cloths would have required frequent and time-consuming laundering. One could well imagine that many of the British people illustrated in the prints would have had servants to care for delicate fabrics. Since Virginia households were smaller than their English counterparts, it is unlikely the same could be said of the residents of Williamsburg. If Virginians did have cloths for their dressing tables, they were likely to be simple and made from cheaper domestic cotton which required less care than elaborate muslins. While it would be understandable if simple covers were overlooked this seems unlikely given the high incidence of very low value items listed in inventories. It is more likely that Virginians simply chose not spend money on dressing table covers.

However, this is not to say that the dressing areas in Virginian homes were spartan. In many respects they included the same items as British dressing areas. One of William Prentis' bedchambers had two Wilton carpets, one worth 35/ and the other £13. William Hunter has a carpet worth £1 in his
chamber and a carpet by the side of one of the beds upstairs.\textsuperscript{58} Henry Hacker's hall had two small sconce glasses and one chimney glass with two sconces. George Wells' chamber and Thomas Hornsby's hall included clocks worth £7 and £8 respectively.

In contrast to the prints the inventories are helpful in showing the type of furniture in which Virginians stored their clothing.\textsuperscript{59} Robert Davidson (1739/1740) had a trunk in the chamber. Henry Hacker (1742) kept four trunks in his 'Great Room.' Mary Ripping owned a clothes press worth 20/ which she kept in the chamber. George Wells (1754) had a chest of drawers worth 30/ in his chamber. Sarah Green (1757) owned an old black trunk which she kept in her hall, while William Hunter (1761) owned two trunks and two chests in which he kept his clothes. William Prentis (1765) had two chests of drawers worth 20/ each in different bedchambers, one worth 15/ in another, and a fourth worth £2.6 in another. Although the entry is damaged and it is impossible to be certain, it is likely that Prentis also owned a clothes press. Thomas Hornsby (1773) kept a trunk and a chest of drawers worth a total of £3 in his hall. Each of the eight inventories include at least one storage item in which clothes were likely

\textsuperscript{58}The symbol "/" denotes a shilling.

\textsuperscript{59}Lady's Toilette, The Wig (No. 23) is the only print to suggest where the dresser's clothes were stored. An opened trunk, which gives the appearance of having been rummaged through, may be seen in the left hand corner of the scene.
to have been stored. The ownership of clothes presses and chests of drawers indicates a desire to store clothes carefully and to access them easily. People who had few clothes would probably have hung them on pegs or chairs at the end of the day, and those who had little interest in appearances would have crammed them in trunks. The development of specialized furniture for clothes storage and the public's desire to purchase it suggests that more people cared about the impression their clothes made on others. Furniture was more costly than old fashioned chests or trunks, and those who paid for it must have felt it a worthwhile investment.

Public and Private Areas of the House

It is difficult to tell from the inventories which areas of the house would have been used for receiving guests, and which areas would have been confined to the family. In one or two room dwellings the division of the house into front-stage and back-stage regions would have been of the most rudimentary nature. However, the eight room-by-room inventories indicate that the houses had enough space for a meaningful division into front-stage and back-stage. The

60 Neither the prints or the inventories provide direct evidence of the way all people lived. It is, therefore, possible that some English people may have shared the Virginian's pattern for the distribution of dressing kits - Four O'Clock in the Country suggests this might well have been the case.
problem that remains for the twentieth-century analyst is to determine which rooms were private and which served public purposes.

For the purposes of this thesis a public area was defined as one to which visitors could have been admitted. The criteria for deciding whether or not a room was used for receiving guests was based on certain objects in the room. If, for example, a room had a desk, it is possible that the room was used for receiving callers on business matters. If tea equipment or large amounts of china and glass were found with tables and chairs it was possible that guests took tea or supper there. When the inventories were read with this criteria in mind, it became apparent that downstairs rooms including chambers, halls, and parlors which contained beds were also used for activities such as dining, tea-taking, and paperwork. In this thesis upstairs rooms with beds or rooms with no evidence of a public role have been referred to as bedchambers. Bedchambers seem to have offered more privacy

61 Of the rooms of the eight room-by-room inventories I have treated the following as "public rooms":

Robert Davidson's Chamber
Henry Hacker's Hall
Mary Ripping's Chamber in Front House, Hall and Back House Below.
George Well's Below stairs in left hand room
Sarah Green's Chamber
William Hunter's Chamber
Thomas Hornsby's Hall and In The Back House

62 I have treated the following rooms as bedchambers:

Robert Davidson's Upstairs
than chambers. Although some entertaining was carried out in bedchambers, particularly the taking of tea, this became less frequent after the middle of the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{63}

The presence of a bed in downstairs chambers was common in Virginia and continued into the nineteenth century. Beds were costly items, and in a country where even wealthy farmers and planters slept on straw bags or on bed rolls pulled out at night, the bed was a status symbol not to be hidden in private quarters. The presence of beds in downstairs chambers could also be explained by practical needs such as caring for the sick or being close to the kitchen. It is not surprising that a bed was present in all but one of the "multi-functional" rooms which showed evidence of dressing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Henry Hacker's</td>
<td>Little Room and Closet, Upstairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Little Room, and Upstairs Great Room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Ripping's</td>
<td>Porch Chamber, Other Room, Back House Below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Well's</td>
<td>Above Stairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Hunter's</td>
<td>Back room and Upstairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Hornsby's</td>
<td>Upstairs, In The Brick House.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All room names listed appear exactly as they appear in the inventories.

\textsuperscript{63}Leviner, B.C., and Gilliam, J.K., \textit{Furnishing Williamsburg's Historic Buildings} (Williamsburg: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1991). After the mid eighteenth century bedchambers began to lose their social function. The eight room-by-room inventories which form the basis of this study fit into this pattern, for the only one to show evidence that tea was taken in a bedchamber was the of Henry Hacker which is dated 1742.
activity. In many cases the functions related to presentation-of-self in public rooms are clear. The dressing equipment kept by Davidson in his chamber included a dressing table and glass, and a washstand. George Wells kept a dressing table and glass and shaving equipment in his chamber. Hunter had a dressing glass in his.

Presentation-of-Self: The Spatial Dimension

Virginian houses were much smaller than their British counterparts. The size of houses was taken into account when considering the implications of where people dressed. Before the eighteenth century most Virginians, even wealthy planters, lived in one-story structures. In a society where the death rate was high, emphasis was on ploughing all profits back into the soil rather than into the material display epitomized by the building of grand, brick structures. The houses of even the richest planters failed to compete with the grandeur

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64 The hall of Henry Hacker does not indicate the presence of a bed. Hacker was worth £539.18.9 on his death in 1742.

65 Had Hunter's glass been listed as a looking-glass, it could have served a decorative purpose only. For this reason one must be careful in assuming that the existence of the basic "kit" indicates dressing activity. For further discussion of this point see the conclusion to this chapter.

66 For a full account of the difficulties of settling in seventeenth-century Virginia or Maryland see Carr, L., Menard, R.R., and Walsh, L., *The Robert Cole's World* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991). The authors show how even the richest planters were forced to prioritize material comforts and investment in agriculture.
of European "power-houses." Well into the nineteenth century one-room, single story, wooden framed structures were common in Virginia. While it might be true to surmise that Williamsburg inhabitants still wanted to use their appearance as a means of making statements about themselves to the world at large, it would seem that their domestic environments did not make ideal back-stage areas for preparation of the performance they wished to put on. However, the evidence yielded by inventories suggests that private places were sought out or that public areas were utilized when others were not present. A desire for privacy might explain the prevalence of shaving equipment in "study" areas or in dining rooms. Over time many of the richer inventories showed evidence that more money was invested in the creation of increasingly private and self-contained dressing areas which in some cases included washstands in all bedrooms, curtains, and carpets.

The prints suggested that rooms where dressing occurred included a dressing kit. Locations in which the "kit" were found suggest that dressing most frequently occurred in


68This is most apparent in inventories of the last decade of the eighteenth century.
private areas such as bedchambers and dressing rooms. However, the inventories suggest that eighteenth century Virginians diverged slightly from this pattern. Bedchambers do not seem to have been the one and only place where people prepared themselves for presentation. A large proportion of the inventories indicate the existence of sleeping areas which lack evidence of dressing activity. All but one of the inventories had bedchambers for which there was no evidence of dressing. In contrast half of the room-by-room inventories had a dressing-kit in chambers or halls. In addition, the location of small items such as wigs, related equipment, shaving items, and clothes storage furniture suggest that dressing occurred in some unexpected spaces in houses including dining rooms or kitchens. Unlike the dressing patterns shown in the prints, it seems that Virginians did not limit dressing to specific rooms.
**In Which Rooms Did Virginians Keep Dressing Related Items?**

Table three shows where the basic kit and miscellaneous items were found in each inventory. The intention of the chart is to show the sorts of rooms in which Virginians dressed. Only rooms which showed evidence of dressing were included in the table.

**Table 3.**

**Location: Basic Kit and Miscellaneous Dressing Related Items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Room One</th>
<th>Room Two</th>
<th>Room Three</th>
<th>Room Four</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Davidson</strong></td>
<td>Chamber</td>
<td>Upstairs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£ 76.5.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D. Table</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chair</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beds</strong></td>
<td>W'stand</td>
<td>Clts brsh</td>
<td>Wig</td>
<td>Slvr Watch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Misc.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Hacker</strong></th>
<th>Hall</th>
<th>Little Rm Upstairs</th>
<th>Little Rm Upstairs</th>
<th>Great Rm Upstairs</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£ 539.18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D. Table</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Misc.** | Parlour |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clothes horse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Clothes brushes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ironing board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Room One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ripping Chamber</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beds</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wells Chamber Rt Hand</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wells Chamber Rt Hand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter Chamber</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notations:**
- * indicates a specific item
- **Table** indicates a table of items and their quantities in different rooms.
The table shows that Virginia dressing activity occurred in a wide variety of spaces including chambers, halls, kitchens, parlors, bedchambers, and nurseries. The selection of rooms was more varied than the prints indicate British dressers used.

Why were Virginians such "mobile" dressers?

It is possible that small houses and large families forced people to dress in areas other than those in which they slept. In some houses there were three or four beds to a room which would have meant that twelve or more people slept in one space making it difficult for so many to dress at the same time in the same room. Another solution to the question of mobile
dressing could be that Virginians in the eighteenth century actually liked, or were accustomed to, undifferentiated spaces in their houses. If most people at that time were living in one or two room structures, it is likely that even those with more rooms would not yet have developed the mentality that expected separate uses for separate rooms or the mania for privacy which houses exhibit today. The spread of dressing activity throughout Virginia homes could also have occurred because "public" access to most of the house was limited. This does not explain cases where downstairs halls and chambers show evidence of dressing and entertaining activities.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Rooms in Which Dressing Occurred</th>
<th>Inventory Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Davidson</td>
<td>1740</td>
<td>Chamber and Bedchamber</td>
<td>76. 5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hacker</td>
<td>1742</td>
<td>Hall and Three Bedchambers</td>
<td>539.18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ripping</td>
<td>1744</td>
<td>Chamber and Bedchamber</td>
<td>407. 8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wells</td>
<td>1754</td>
<td>Chamber</td>
<td>144.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>1757</td>
<td>Hall</td>
<td>338.17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter</td>
<td>1761</td>
<td>Chamber and Two Bedchambers</td>
<td>Mutilated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prentis</td>
<td>1765</td>
<td>4 Bedchambers only</td>
<td>7114.11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hornsby</td>
<td>1773</td>
<td>Chamber and Hall</td>
<td>1296.15.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table illustrates how frequently "public" rooms served dual functions for presentation and preparation rituals. Of the prints only one, shows a public room being
used for private preparation (No. 25).\textsuperscript{69} Even that room was likely to have been a lady's private dressing room. Care must be taken in assuming that the "kit" items found in public rooms were used for dressing procedures. They could easily have served decorative uses only. For this reason the additional evidence of small items such as shaving equipment is vital. Inventories show that such items were frequently located in chambers and halls. In other cases dressing activity in "public" rooms is more obvious, as many included clothes presses, chests of drawers, and dressing tables. Furniture made specifically for the purpose of making dressing procedures more convenient began to appear during the eighteenth century. The configuration of a table and glass had existed before, but it was only at this time that furniture-makers started to manufacture tables with drawers and compartments for dressing related items. Dressing "boxes" served similar purposes. Imported dressing-related furniture items would have been costly investments which owners would have wanted their guests to see. The residents of Williamsburg did not lag behind the British in purchasing such furniture. Graham Hood pointed out that English-made goods were "...imported in huge numbers and were as recognizable in Williamsburg, Charleston, and Annapolis as they were in London, Bristol, Edinburgh, and Dublin." Hood quotes Robert

\textsuperscript{69}

\textit{The Stay-maker Taking a Pleasing Circumference} England 1784 (No. 25).
Beverley, a Virginia planter who "...writing to England about furniture and fittings for his new house...admitted 'I would willingly consult the present Fashion, for you [see] that foolish Passion has made its Way, even into this remote Region.'" As increasingly large numbers of furniture imports arrived in the country, and as pattern books disseminated the latest styles for domestic manufacturers, more people had access to specialized dressing items. Over time house owners who could afford a kit in more than one space of the house introduced dressing items to "back-stage regions." Even where dressing obviously occurred in rooms which shared front-stage and back-stage functions, a desire for privacy of dressing seems more than likely. Small items such as buttons, shaving equipment, and wigs were kept in a variety of rooms, suggesting that people used space in a flexible manner. A possible scenario could be that if a bedroom lacked a dressing kit but the chamber had it, family members would go there to perform certain activities. Such behavior would make


71 The inventory of Peyton Randolph, a prominent Williamsburg citizen and a lawyer, dated 1776, provides a fine example of a high value inventory where all dressing seems to have been relegated to the backstage. Randolph was wealthy enough to hide away costly and prestigious items, and to fill front areas with items suitable for presentation, rather than preparation-of-self. Of the eight room-by-room inventories, Davidson's most closely follows pattern of Randolph.
dressing a little hurried and force activities into other areas of the house, but would explain the appearance of wigs in a kitchen/parlor area or combs in the dining room. The keeping of storage furniture for clothes in public rooms may well have been a convenience that allowed people to collect and store their clothes without disturbing others. If this is the case, the appearance of a clothes press in a dining room seems logical for a sleeper would not have been disturbed as people picked-up and deposited their clothes at the beginning and end of the day. Above all things the Virginia inventories show that there was no singular pattern to dressing activity in the eighteenth century, at least not one that emerges through the inventories. All that can be safely said is that Virginians were "mobile" dressers, seemingly using any spaces which offered privacy and convenience for preparation-of-self. Consequently some rooms served two functions related to the preparation-of-self - a private, preparatory one and a public presentation function.  

72William Graham of Colonial Williamsburg's Architectural Research Department has undertaken research into the use and development of space in rural taverns. He identifies three forces which influenced tavern architecture. First, the effect of the consumer revolution on changing notions of leisure time, fashion, and social emulation. Second, a link between the architectural organization of taverns and houses. "The notions of private, public, and neutral spaces and the underlying rules and boundaries within each sphere illustrate a shared ideology between the home and tavern...." Finally, [T]he third force involves an interplay between the other two.

Quotations from a paper written by William Graham as part of the requirements for a graduate course in the material culture
The Value of Dressing-Related Objects: How it Affected the Interpretation of the Importance of Presentation-of-self To Eighteenth-Century Virginians.

The value of dressing-related objects in relation to other items in a room indicates the importance of self-preparation to the owner. The eight room-by-room inventories recorded high values for many items which would have been used in preparation-of-self activities.

The costliest item from the two dressing "kits" owned by Robert Davidson (1740) was a walnut dressing table worth 45/ and kept in the downstairs chamber. Except for the bed it is the most valuable item in the room.73 Henry Hacker kept a dressing-table worth 25/ and a looking glass worth 50/ in his hall; they were most valuable items there. Hacker owned dressing-tables worth 45/ and 25/ in two other bedchambers. George Wells' inventory of 1754 totalled £144.18, and was one of the least wealthy of the eight. However, he owned a small table and toilet worth 10/ and two small looking glasses worth 1/3. While not as valuable as the dressing-tables of Hacker, neither is the rest of his furniture. His table and toilet may be seen as representing an effort to conform to a rising interest in owning specialized equipment for dressing. In 1761 William Hunter was recorded as owning two dressing tables worth £4.10.0 and £2.15. Hunter owned many costly items, but

73 If beds were part of the furniture of a room they were, almost without exception, the most valuable item.
the value of the two dressing tables amounts to 47% of the most valuable piece of furniture in his house, the £13 bed. Hunter's dressing tables represented a considerable investment. The inventories stand as evidence that Virginians were prepared to make a considerable investment in the objects they owned for preparation-of-self.

The location of a dressing "kit" in areas where guests may have been received suggests that owning the proper equipment for self-preparation had more than a practical purpose. The placement of costly objects related to preparation-of-self in parlors and halls indicates that Virginians wanted their visitors to know that their hosts could afford the time and equipment to dress in a fashionable manner. For Virginians bedchambers were not the obvious place for preparation-of-self. However, the eight inventories do show that in many cases dressing did occur in bedchambers, although it is interesting to note that the more expensive items relating to self-preparation tended to remain in public rooms. The kits in the bedchambers of the room-by-room inventories were often older or less expensive than those found in halls and chambers, and this is particularly true of the earlier inventories. Later inventories suggest that over time dressing became, at least for the wealthy, confined to increasingly well-equipped bedchambers. The four dressing kits owned by William Prentis were located in four of his six bedchamber's. This same pattern also seems to be the case for
William Hunter's house. However, one must not forget that there are, as previously noted, many examples of bedchambers which lacked the basic kit.\textsuperscript{74}

Given the evidence of presentation-of-self rituals in front-stage regions, it seems likely that decisions were made as to which spaces and items were most important to the owner of the house. Chambers and halls tended to have a greater incidence of luxuries than more private areas. Even important bedchambers such as that of Hacker which had a 45/ dressing table, while the dressing table in his chamber was worth 25/, were more spartan than public rooms. Davidson's chamber had a floor cloth, Hacker's hall had two small sconce glasses, and a chimney glass and sconces, Mary Ripping had a corner cupboard with glass doors worth 50/ in her Hall, Thomas Hornsby had fourteen pictures worth 20/, and William Hunter had books, five pictures, and a carpet worth £1 in his hall. Dressing in such areas could have been more comfortable than in less well furnished bedchambers. Advantage could have been taken of better lighting, of chairs and tables for eating and playing cards, and of decorative mirrors. There is also the possibility that such rooms would have been better heated than remote bedchambers.

\textsuperscript{74}The frequent appearance of dressing "kits" in front-stage areas of the early room-by-room inventories persisted in the less wealthy "regular" inventories until the end of the period covered by this study.
While the inventories show that Virginians did not dress solely in bedchambers or dressing-rooms in the manner prints illustrated for European dressers, they do show that they considered it important to own and use the same dressing "kit." The importance Virginians attached to self-presentation is revealed in the amount they were prepared to invest in the kit for self-preparation. If the owner could only afford, or chose to buy only one dressing kit, it was located in a room also used for presentation activities. Questions arise out of these findings. Did owners want to show guests that they had the time for leisurely dressing activities, or, did they want to show that they could afford furniture specifically for their dressing rituals? The prints suggest that having leisure time for intricate dressing practices and being able to afford properly equipped dressing areas were status indicators. The inventories concur that this may also have been the case for Virginians. There is no evidence to prove that levees were common practice for eighteenth-century Virginians, but the positioning of dressing equipment in public areas would have allowed visitors to see that their host had the time and the money for fashionable dressing activities.
The Botetourt Inventory: The Governor's Palace, October 1770

In the colony the governor functioned as the final authority in civil, judicial and fiscal matters, in many military and naval details, and in occasional religious issues, yet all of his decisions were subject to being overruled by the authorities in England...He adopted ceremony to reiterate the authority of the crown and set a personal standard and example in his role as cultural ambassador from the mother country. He was a key link in a complex bureaucratic chain that stretched throughout the Caribbean and the continent of North America.

Graham Hood neatly encapsulates Lord Botetourt's position as a political and cultural link between Virginia and England. Norborne Berkeley, Baron de Botetourt was part of an old West Country aristocratic family. He was ideally suited to heading the ceremonies which buttressed the Crown's authority in Virginia. Botetourt was required to make frequent visits to England and this ensured that he would bring back to Virginia prevailing European patterns of ceremony and the best in fashion - both in dress and household furnishing. Functions held at the Governor's Palace gave the elite of Virginia society a window on European high-style, but this is not to say that they copied everything they saw.

The colonists cultural absorption from the mother country and those of its polished representative with whom they interacted has been well noted by historians...Such a viewpoint, however, discounts the necessity for the colonists to adapt to local

conditions, downplays the impulse of some of them to rebel against the values of the mother country they no longer lived in and devalued the strength and ingenuity of the vernacular culture that resulted.\textsuperscript{76}

The Governor's Palace as revealed by the inventory of Lord Botetourt is the closest a Virginia house of the eighteenth century came to replicating the architecture, use of space, and furnishings of an English "power-house."\textsuperscript{77} By comparing the information on self-preparation supplied by the Botetourt inventory with those of other Williamsburg residents it is possible to isolate differences in dressing behavior.

A key ceremonial role was envisioned for the Middle Room on the upper floor of the south front of the Palace. Its central location, its elevation above ground level, and its grand size proclaimed its importance.\textsuperscript{78}

The inventory shows that it was in this grand room that Botetourt kept two clothes presses and a large collection of elegant clothes. "Botetourt also kept a '[W]ash Bason Mahog. stand compleat" in the middle room, "an intimate item in

\textsuperscript{76}Ibid. p35.

\textsuperscript{77}Girouard, M., Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978). The term "power-house" was coined by Girouard to explain the way in which English country houses were used to display the wealth and power of their owners in such a way as to ensure the loyalty of those below them on the social scale and as a means to acquire patronage in a post-feudal society.

\textsuperscript{78}Hood, op. cit., p. 98.
the midst of so much grandeur."\textsuperscript{79} Like many of the "public" rooms of Virginians, the Middle Room served two functions - the reception of visitors, and Botetourt's self-preparation. However, when Botetourt dressed in this room it may well have been a partially public ceremony and not private self-preparation. There is no evidence to prove that Botetourt held levées, but the grandeur of the room and the need to impress visitors with the power of the crown suggest that he might have received visitors as he put the finishing touches to his dress. It is, however, unlikely that Botetourt would have held full-scale levées which would have been impractical in the Colony, and which could have antagonized Virginians already straining against the power of the Crown.\textsuperscript{80} It would also be stretching the bounds of credibility to imagine that even the highest-quality Virginians would have copied even a scaled-down version of the levee practice. Yet it is possible that people may have furnished their rooms as if to suggest that they could have held a levée if they so chose, even if this was done unconsciously. The large number of chairs found in the dressing areas of Virginia inventories would be explained if people decorated their rooms in the manner suggested by the Governor's Palace, even if they did not have the lifestyles or desire for great ceremony.

\textsuperscript{79}Ibid. p. 108.

\textsuperscript{80}Botetourt became governor in the wake of the unrest stirred by the Stamp Acts and the Seven Year's war.
The Governor's Palace was an unusually elaborate and formal house for eighteenth-century Virginia. Funds for its furnishing and upkeep came from the Colony's coffers in amounts individual Virginians could not match. Virginians dispensed with the ceremonies and furnishings which did not serve their purposes or fit their finances. I have chosen to consider one example where objects for the Governor's Palace and those of other Virginia residences diverge, in order to show that the dressing behavior of Virginians was the result of something more complex than simple emulation of the home country. Dressing table covers or toilettes were objects related to British elite dressing furniture of the eighteenth century. Botetourt almost certainly had an elaborate cover on his dressing table:

The closet between the two east bedchambers contained a large deal (pine or fir wood) toilet table. The inexpensive wood indicates that the table was meant to be covered: in fact, Joseph Kidd billed Lord Botetourt for dressing a "toylet" table on two occasions.81

Further evidence is provided by Botetourt's predecessor Francis Fauquier who owned a pine dressing table and "1 Gauze," almost certainly a toilet. Since Botetourt and

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Fauquier seem to have used Palace rooms in the same manner, it is more than likely Botetourt also had such a cover. However, as discussed above, Virginians did not cover their dressing tables. This appears to be a clear example of their willingness to diverge from European dressing patterns when it suited their purposes to do so. Virginians adopted the dressing patterns which most suited their needs and jettisoned those which did not. The presence of beds in downstairs chambers at a time when wealthy Europeans were sleeping and dressing in upstairs rooms is another example showing that Virginians did not blindly emulate the "old country." Keeping a bed downstairs may have arisen from climatic considerations and shows that fashion did not always over-ride a desire for comfort.

THE "REGULAR" INVENTORIES: Do the patterns of the room-by-inventories appear in the regular inventories?

Eight inventories is a small number with which to work in seeking to demonstrate the dressing patterns of an entire colony. In order to demonstrate that such a small sample can indeed speak for a larger total of inventories it is necessary to look at the remaining eighty-three. The following section deals with seventy four of the eighty-three "regular" inventories. Where it was impossible to make educated guesses

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82Hood, op. cit., pp. 202-227. These pages provide additional information on bedchambers, closets and their role in English dressing behavior.
about the sorts of rooms present in a house the inventory was excluded. It should also be noted that because the inventories did not give room names I have supplied the ones that appear here.\footnote{It is impossible to be exact about rooms and their contents when dealing with inventories which are not broken down into clearly labelled rooms. Previous analysis of the room-by-room inventories and similar inventories for other Virginian counties helped to build a picture of houses and the layouts of their rooms in such a way as could be applied to the "regular" inventories. As a general rule houses with few contents recorded in inventories of one or two pages were treated as one or two room dwellings. Items found in such houses were largely said to have been located in a parlor, which seems a more suitable description than 'chamber' or 'hall.' The latter terms were reserved for inventories where the decedent had a great deal of furniture and other property, where the total values were high, and where more spaces were apparent. Where it was clear that decisions were going to be made on the basis of too much guess-work and little hard evidence the inventories were excluded from the table.}

Although the regular inventories include decedents far less wealthy than those of the room-by-room inventories, an overwhelming majority of the inventories include one or more dressing "kits." The following table shows the number of households and the number of dressing "kits," if any, which were owned by each.
The table shows that out of seventy-four inventories forty-six, 62%, had at least one dressing kit. The table does not account for those who either owned everything the kit required except a chair or who owned only a looking glass. Either scenario would indicate that the owner had some interest in self-preparation.

Included in the findings of the table are two taverns, those of Anthony Hay (1771) and of Henry Weatherburn (1761). It is not surprising that in such tavern cases dressing kits should be found in bedchambers as opposed to public rooms. Travellers would have expected the convenience of staying in the same room as their belongings. What is interesting is that tavern keepers were supplying dressing kits. Clearly by the 1760's the presence of a full dressing kit was considered
so usual in private houses that travellers expected them when travelling and staying at inns en-route.\textsuperscript{84}

As with the room-by-room inventories, "regular" inventories also show a wide variety of spaces in which miscellaneous dressing-related objects were found. The following table shows rooms in which evidence for self-preparation was found.\textsuperscript{85}

**Table 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Chamber</th>
<th>Hall</th>
<th>B/chamber</th>
<th>Dining</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Kitchen</th>
<th>P'lor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wash basin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes Brush</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaving equip.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buttons/Shoe Buckles</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair Equipment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes Press</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whatever the problems may be in trying to extract particular information from often unclear documents, the "regular" inventories do reflect patterns of the room-by-room inventories. Virginians did not confine their dressing to

\textsuperscript{84}The inventories' suggestion that private houses and taverns had much in common in terms of use of space once again reflects the work of William Graham, Colonial Williamsburg Architectural Research Department. See note 17.

\textsuperscript{85}Once again the names of the rooms are my own.
private parts of the house. When financially limited to one dressing "kit," they placed it where it could be seen by visitors. However, if able to afford more dressing equipment, they placed it in areas which allowed privacy for the preparation-of-self.

Conclusion

The eight room-by-room inventories suggest that dressing patterns in eighteenth-century Virginia had yet to solidify. Virginians used the same dressing "kit" as Europeans but did not limit preparation-of-self to the backstage. The front-stage regions used for presentation-of-self, often doubled as backstage regions for preparation-of-self. However, inventories for larger houses with many spaces show signs of an emerging pattern. Over time preparation-of-self was increasingly confined to backstage regions. This did not mean that dressing became less important, only that for those wealthy enough private areas for specific purposes became desirable. Bedchambers became more comfortable with dressing, storage, washing and sleeping furniture in one place. The key question that remains unanswered is what led to the development of a mentality which demanded privacy for dressing and rooms specific to that purpose? What was it that caused wealthy Virginians to move away from a pattern of undifferentiated space in their homes to one where each room
had a certain function? The availability of consumer objects facilitated these trends but did not account for them. A change in mentality was necessary to cause people to restructure their homes and their habits.
CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to use prints and inventories to test the applicability of theories on the consumer revolution to Virginia through eighteenth-century dressing behavior. British prints were analyzed in the place of absent prescriptive literature as a means to find out what spaces and furniture people used in rituals of self-preparation and the sorts of activity involved in creating a fashionable appearance. To see how far the results of analysis of British prints could be said to apply to Virginia, Williamsburg inventories were searched for evidence of similar trends. The print and inventory evidence indicated that eighteenth-century Virginia and British people showed interest in self-preparation and presentation. However, while the wealthy of Britain expected private and specialized spaces for preparation, even the richest Virginians frequently used "multi-purpose" rooms.

Williamsburg inventories show that a pattern of dressing behavior had yet to solidify in eighteenth-century Virginia. While Virginians used the same dressing "kit" as Europeans, their attitude to room use was more flexible. Until the
latter part of the seventeenth century most settlers to the colony were more concerned with survival than matters related to appearance. Even rich planters lived in simple one or two room structures which were unsuited to division into the backstage and front-stage areas necessary for rituals of preparation and presentation-of-self. Those Virginians who could afford houses with more spaces were still accustomed to the communality of smaller dwellings and only slowly began to develop a mentality which expected houses to be split into different rooms for different functions, and which demanded greater privacy. However, the inventories do show that among wealthier Williamsburg citizens a dressing pattern was emerging which, while similar to that which the prints show for European dressers, actually arose from motivating factors quite unique to Virginia. Examples of such factors are provided by the "Great Awakening" in religion, the American Revolution and high levels of immigration.

The quantity of prints on the subject of dressing indicates that there was something new in people's interest in appearance in eighteenth-century Britain. Fashion consciousness was apparent in social levels other than the top rung and so became more visible to the rest of society. Previously, only members of the elite court circle had the money and lifestyles which made costly dressing a part of everyday life. Few people dressed in a way which could be considered to follow the dictates of fashion, and those who
did were largely hidden at court or in their own castles. The prints suggest that by the mid-eighteenth century many more sections of society, aristocrats, the growing middle-class and even members of the poorer classes, particularly servants, wore stylish and costly clothes. Servants would have been able to see the latest styles and ceremonies in the homes of their employers. They received gifts of their mistress' or master's cast-off clothes. These new "fashionable" dressers were more visible to critics than courtiers of the past had been. Their dress could and did provoke comment. The work of satirists which is evident in the prints gives an idea of the extent of the spread of interest in appearance suggesting that it was used as a means to climb up the social ladder. Through their work the artists have provided valuable information on the sorts of equipment dressers found necessary for the production of the image they believed would impress those to whom it was presented.

It was not just artists, paid to notice and comment on social change, who expressed opinions on dressing behavior. Ordinary people were also aware of those who indulged in the extremes of fashion, and they often disapproved. The story of ostrich feathers offers an example of the disgust some ordinary people felt about outrageous fashions. It parallels the comments of the print-makers on the effect of conspicuous spending on the morality of those who indulged in it. Artists frequently included ostrich feathers in the elaborate
hairstyles of those they mocked. The Duchess of Devonshire was credited with bringing the fashion, originally French, to England when Lord Stormont brought her some feathers from Paris in 1774. A pamphlet denouncing her decadence was published.  

Lady Louisa Stuart, in old age, referred to the effect ostrich feathers worn as a headdress had on some people:

> the outrageous zeal manifested against the first introduction of ostrich feathers as a headdress. This fashion was not attached as fantastic, or unbecoming, or inconvenient, or expensive, but as seriously wrong, or immoral. The unfortunate feathers were insulted, mobbed, burned almost pelted

Both artists and ordinary people had noticed what they considered an immoral obsession with appearance, and both groups reacted against it.

That dressing was being used as a means to social progress is suggested by the number of prints which show a lady's husband as being greatly involved the progress of his wife's preparations. In The Ridiculous Taste or the Ladies Absurdity a hairdresser stands on a chair making final adjustments to a woman's tall hairstyle (No. 6). Her husband surveys the result of the labors with a sextant. If fashion was one means to prestige in a court and parliamentary society, then it was important that the whole family portray the right image. One mistake in appearance could have caused

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86 A Letter to the Duchess of Devonshire, 1777.

a jarring note and revealed an entire family as other than they claimed to be.88

The satirists also criticized on the basis of the length of time dressing took and the intimacy it engendered between the dressers and their assistants. The specialization of jobs related to dressing meant that male hairdressers took over some of the work previously the responsibility of lady's maids.89 Elaborate hairstyles meant that women spent long hours in close company with men. Satirists did not miss the implications of this, and they were quick to "warn" husbands of the perils of such relationships.90

The phenomenon of increasingly well-dressed servants was also noted by contemporaries, and McKendrick provides a wealth of observations to show that an interest in self-presentation was apparent throughout society. The Colonial Williamsburg print sample fits into the pattern described by McKendrick. In several prints the dress of servant girls does not seem of great practical value and is surprisingly elaborate.91 The


89 The Toilette c1745 England (No. 2) Lady's Toilette c1800 Ireland (Nos. 22, 23, 24). These prints provide examples of maids dressing the hair of their mistresses.

90 A Hint to the Husbands, Or The Dresser Well Dressed 1777 England (No. 16) and Hint to Married Men 1787 England (No. 17).

91 The Preposterous Headdress or the Feathered Lady 1776, England (No. 15). The servant is fashionably dressing in a stylish dress. Her hair is dressed in a pyramid style which
best example of servant dressing behavior in the collection is provided in *High Life Below Stairs* 1772 which shows a young female servant having her hair dressed by a valet (No. 10). The scene is intended to show the lower orders aping their superiors, and so it provides a means of testing the accuracy of the print version of the dressing behavior of the wealthy. The girl uses the basic kit that the other prints show as standard to eighteenth-century dressing procedures. She is seated at a table and holds a looking-glass in her hand. A shoulder protector has been placed over her shoulders in the manner of the wealthier dressers of the prints, and her feet rest on an upturned bucket which stands proxy for a footstool. The girl's posture mimics the lazy, reclining attitude apparent in pictures such as "The Levee" from plate IV of *Marriage a la Mode* (No. 3). Her pale yellow silk dress does not seem suited to domestic work. If the employers of servants used dress as a status signifier it is likely that the dress of their servants was important to them; their prestige might be enhanced by showing that they could afford

is covered by a ruched muslin cap with a large bow.

*Tight Lacing or Fashion Before Ease* 1770, England (No. 8). The servant sports high-dressed hair covered by a frilled muslin cap. Her dress has a white muslin shawl-style collar.

*Lady Betty Bustle and Her Maid Lucy Preparing For the Masquerade at the pantheon* 1772, England (No. 11). The maid is elaborately dressed in a low-cut dress with a white ruffle and wide lace sleeves, she wears a ruffled muslin cap on her head.

92 Not illustrated.
to pay their staff well enough for them to dress stylishly. Furthermore, if they were trying to keep up with rapidly changing styles their servants could benefit from the cast-offs. Therefore, while contemporaries criticized servant dressing behavior as presumptuous emulation, one must bear in mind that servants often had less control over their appearance than their employers. What servants wore may well have said much about their masters' use of consumer goods as a means of self-definition. However, the prints reflect a contemporary view that many servants dressed in good quality clothes and that this represented a challenge to the established social order.93

Many eighteenth-century prints refer to the spread of fashion practices from London to the provinces with the return home of visitors. The British Museum has several examples, including the The Farmer's Daughter's Return From London which suggest that people from the country emulated what they saw in towns. Unfortunately the group from Colonial Williamsburg only offers one such print, but because it does not exist in isolation, some conclusions can be drawn from it. The Village Barber 1778 suggests that fashion was no longer the preserve of the elite; village barbers copied the latest styles for

93Whether or not servants wore livery acted as an indicator of the degree of control an employer exercised over them. Livery acted as a badge of possession which was more easily imposed on those with few alternative work options. Therefore, in the nineteenth century free Northerners fought, increasingly successfully, against the wearing of livery, while it was successfully imposed on slaves in the south.
ordinary people to wear (No. 20). The print shows a bare room, with old fashioned small paned windows and basic furniture, a chair, a table and a hand-held glass. A young, coarse-boned country girl is having her hair dressed with a large heart-shaped pad and false hair. On a plank shelf sits a volume of sermons by "Rev'd Spintext," suggesting that the barber is also a preacher or clergyman. Many contemporary accounts describe the return of local aristocrats or professionals from London to the country and their appearance at Church sporting new fashions.\footnote{McKendrick, op.cit., pp. 92-93.} A preacher would be well situated to see new styles.

In summary, the prints show that an interest in fashionable dress and dressing rituals was no longer the preserve of the upper-crust; people from many walks of life were able to gather the consumer objects necessary to dress fashionably and to establish a favorable impression on others. In these respects changes in dressing behavior may be explained by the work of Neil McKendrick. McKendrick wrote that once constraints such as poverty, custom, and tradition were removed, consumerism took hold like a fever.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 36-41. McKendrick argues that if basic drives, such as the sex drive, could changed by factors like hunger, work or diet, then so too could the need to be dressed in fashion.} "Fashion was not just for the aspiring few...large numbers felt they must be in fashion." Prints add weight to the argument that
during the eighteenth century many people felt they had no choice but to conform to the latest trends no matter how unnecessary to their lifestyles they might be, or how unflattering and superfluous they were to their own age and appearance. One print shows an already thin lady being laced almost to non-existence in order to conform to the mania for tight lacing apparent in the 1770s (No. 18). Others prints show women who, even in advanced years, were determined to dress in the latest styles no matter how ridiculous they would look or how much they would really have appreciated some comfort (No.s 17 and 19).

Many of the prints poke fun at the antics of Macaroni's. These fops were shown as being so obsessed with appearance that they had no other purpose in life. Had the consumer revolution led to such a plethora of goods and such a spiralling of emulation that staying ahead of the pack was, for some, a full time job? The prints would have us believe so. The Macaroni Room 1771-2 (No. 12) shows a "gentleman's powder room" where several Macaronis have gathered to have their hair done. They strike poses and admire themselves in a manner which makes them appear clownish and emasculated. The act of having their hair dressed appears to have been a long social event for Macaronis. Coffee was taken and the discussion was probably of different styles and cuts of clothes. Criticism of Macaronis for viewing knowledge of fashion changes as a necessity and not a luxury was also
applied to older men. *An Old Beau in Extasy* 1773 is portrayed as foolish in his refusal to grow old gracefully (No. 12). He is pictured in the midst of his elaborate dressing process surrounded by a multitude of beauty aids. The artist drew a tassel to a window curtain in the shape of an extinguisher decorated with corn ears to hang above the old man's head in suggestion of a fools cap.\(^{96}\) A picture on the wall shows "Narcissus at the Stream," and tellingly, the bookcase to the rear contains "Classic Authors in Wood"; pieces of wood shaped like books, rather than real books. The man has no time for anything worthier than having his hair curled.\(^{97}\) Print-makers had noticed a new trend in society, that of extreme fashion and a desperation on the part of many people to keep abreast of it. Prints satirizing these extremes cluster around the 1770's, both in the Colonial Williamsburg collection and that of the British Museum. The sudden appearance of a large number of prints on the subject of dressing behavior suggests that more people had the money and the objects to allow them to compete in a fashion race. McKendrick suggests that closely packed social layers, a buoyant economy and the

\(^{96}\)A Catalogue of Personal and Political Satires. Prints of the British Museum in seven volumes.

\(^{97}\)British Museum Collection of Personal and Political Satires.
The section on "Old Beau in Extasy" is paraphrased from here.

The "Classic Authors in Wood" refers to the practice of having wood shaped to resemble books in order to give the appearance of learnedness without the trouble of reading or caring for books.
development of commercialization were the factors which lifted the barriers to demand for consumer objects in eighteenth-century England. The information the prints supply regarding eighteenth-century dressing behavior suggests that McKendrick's thesis works to explain changing patterns in English consumerism. However, does McKendrick's demand-driven explanation of the English consumer revolution also apply to Virginia? In order to answer this question I must turn to the information yielded and the questions raised by eighteenth-century Virginia probate inventories. Did the inventories suggest that Virginia dressing behavior was the same as that evident in Britain? If not, did it become so over time? Was this change motivated by the same reasons which McKendrick used to explain British consumer patterns?

The study of Williamsburg probate inventories shows that dressing behavior in urban Virginia had not developed a consistent pattern by the eighteenth century. However, Virginians used the same dressing kit as British dressers, and emerging trends in the value and location of the dressing "kit" suggests that the same desire for privacy and specialized self-preparation equipment was also becoming apparent. Divergence from European dressing behavior in eighteenth-century Virginia could have sprung from many sources: climate, house size and the sheer problem of survival. However, as time passed the richer elements of society began to adopt the habits which the prints show as
common for Britain. Availability of consumer objects might explain some of this change, but a change in mentality was required to cause people to adopt new modes of behavior. I believe that there is no evidence to make the arrogant assumption that simple emulation of European practices on the part of Virginians accounts for changes in dressing behavior. While Virginian patterns became more like British ones the motivating forces behind this convergence were uniquely Virginian.

There were no shortage of events in eighteenth-century Virginia which could have acted as catalysts in changing people's mentality from one of openness and communality to one which called for privacy and "specialization" in objects and room uses. Two scholars who have considered possible domestic motivating forces for changes in attitudes towards the material world on the part of Americans are Cary Carson and Rhys Isaac.

Carson poses the question of why "...material things became so essential to the conduct of social life" in America.⁹⁸ He turned to the colonial period as the possible source of consumer demand. Using inventories, he argues that prior to 1700 Americans showed little fashion consciousness, but by 1740 even the middle ranks purchased "elegances." Carson also points to an eighteenth-century development in the

creation of separate sets of equipment for each person, and matching items such as all the china having the same design. He argues that the density of settlement and agricultural diversity in the upper South after 1700 protected against shortages and insured against crop failures. Wealthy societies were more likely to spend on consumer goods than subsistence societies. Most relevant to this study is Carson's key argument that American consumerism was prompted by the mobility of the population, particularly after the opening of the Kentucky office in 1775. Elizabeth Perkins', study of consumption in early Kentucky claims that "[P]ioneers carried more than the bare essentials for survival, and women, in particular, brought household goods that helped re-create the homes they left behind." Many settlers were from established families of the East and deeply felt the loss of old status signifiers such as houses, plate and land. Carson believes that their desire for new ways to define themselves led to the rapid spread of new portable status signifiers.

Religious, political, and social events in Virginia affected people's attitudes regarding their personal appearance. However while the birth pangs of consumerism were apparent in changing dressing behavior, more time was required for them to have a visible effect on the material world. The eighteenth century was too early in American history to give

rise to patterns of consumption clearly enough defined to prove that people were using objects and behavior associated with preparation and presentation of self as a means of self-definition. Yet inventories show evidence of a new dressing pattern in the ascendant. One Williamsburg inventory provides a fine example of how emphasis on self-presentation led to a new interest in portable items.

The inventory of Henry Laughton dated 1777, shows how his spending seemed to center on clothing of such quality that if he travelled from his home, he could pass for a man of greater wealth. One of his suits alone was worth £7.00, and he had fourteen pairs of thread and raw silk stockings worth a total of £3.00. His clothes are worth £39.16, 62% of the total value of his inventory. Other items which indicate his developed awareness of the potential of self-presentation are shaving instruments and a toothbrush. Since other valuable items include riding tack it seems fair to surmise that Laughton invested in portable status signifiers. Laughton provides a marvelous example of Carson's belief that the boom in consumer objects during the eighteenth-century America was

\[102\] The idea that consumerism required a change in the way people thought also appeared in McKendrick's work in The Birth of a Consumer Society. The more developed argument that changes in national politics and religious thought affect people's behavior to the extent that it can make them inward or outward-looking and that this may affect their domestic environment is derived from Rhys Isaac's The Transformation of Virginia.

\[101\] Henry Laughton 17th December 1777. York County Wills and Inventories, No. 22, 1771-1783.
not purely the result of emulation of European trends, but the result of factors specific to America. This interest in portable status signifiers was intensified by the nature of American immigration which was increasingly marked by an inflow of those whose first language was not English. Clothes and appearance provided an international language by which the wealthy could recognize each other. In addition America was a land of opportunity. As traditional Anglican structures broke down, and links with England crumbled with the Revolution which witnessed the success of American Republicanism, the attendant focus on self over community was rapidly translated into the desire for self-enrichment and social improvement. The position of old elites was challenged.\footnote{Ideas derived from Rhys Isaac \textit{The Transformation of Virginia}} In this context Laughton's inventory illustrates how a well-dressed and ambitious person could take him/herself away from a the humble dwelling which served as a preparatory backstage and present him/herself in a more 'suitable' environment. Laughton is, however, an extreme case, most of the other inventories indicate that people used their homes as performance venues.

Rhys Isaac, like Carson, looks for developments within America, which could explain changes in consumption, rather than assuming emulation of the "old country" explained any changes related to ownership of consumer objects. Like
Carson, he looks at the demand side of the consumer revolution, arguing that demand was not implicit in people and must be examined as a historical phenomena. Isaac analyzes specific episodes in the history of the period 1740-1790, and he particularly questions how population movements challenged established systems of authority. He shows how the "Great Awakening" in religion and the upheaval in politics caused by the Revolution and federalism affected people's material lives. Evangelicalism and republicanism altered peoples' views and their social behavior changed accordingly. Isaac argues that because of these 'external' factors, pre- and post-revolutionary Virginia changed from a hierarchical and patriarchal society into a more individualistic and paternalistic one. These changes were reflected in a demand for greater privacy. Houses, for example, became less communal and open and more divided and inclusive of individual objects such as "kits" for personal dressing. If one accepts Isaac's argument, it is not surprising that the period 1740-1800 showed such a variety of dressing spaces. The particular religious and political events of which Isaac speaks were still in progress and people had little time to change their houses accordingly. Attitudes may have changed, but changing furniture was a costly process and not one to be undertaken in haste.

However, change was afoot and the inventories do show that eighteenth-century Virginians had an interest in self-
preparation and self-presentation as shown by the large numbers of dressing "kits" and miscellaneous dressing items in their houses. The location of items related to preparation-of-self indicates a flexible attitude towards the spaces in which people dressed themselves - it may also suggest a search for private areas although there is no evidence to prove it. Furthermore, when space was available, dressers put secondary dressing kits in private areas. The trends of "privatization" and "specialization" may have first occurred in Europe, but their appearance in America should not be attributed to simple emulation. American events provided a domestic motivation for new attitudes towards presentation-of-self as shown through increased ownership of dressing related consumer goods and their changing locations in the houses of eighteenth-century Williamsburg.
Appendix A

EXTRACTS OF THE TEN ROOM-BY-ROOM INVENTORIES
EVIDENCE OF DRESSING BEHAVIOR

The following extracts are taken from the eight room-by-room inventories. All the dressing "kits" and the miscellaneous items associated with preparation of self have been listed underneath the room in which they appeared in the inventory. The rooms which failed to indicate any evidence of dressing activity have been listed at the bottom of each entry; the intention is to give an indication of the size of the house and the relative distribution of dressing objects. The spellings and abbreviations used are those of the original documents.

ROBERT DAVIDSON 1739/1740

York County Wills and Inventories 18, 1732-1740, pp. 587-89.
Rooms in house: Hall, chamber, upstairs, Kitchen, Kitchen closet

Chamber

1  Walnut dressing table and glass 45/
1  Small walnut box* 2/6
1  Wash bason 20/

Linen including 7 holland shirts, 5 New holland ruffled shirts, 1 old do.

Room also contains:

2  Small walnut tables
1  Bed etc
1  Floor cloth
Davidson continued...

2 pair window curtains, 1 warming pan, 1 old trunk, 1 flute

Upstairs

1 Dressing Glass 30/
1 Square Table inlaid 7/6
6 rushia Leather chairs 48/
1 old Cain chair
1 old Leather do. 5/

Mens clothing: 1 suit, 1 coat and waistcoat, 2 cloth coats and west coats. Several pair of shoes. 1 wigg.

Clothes brush

Room also contains:

4 beds

* The box referred to was probably a toilet box used to store dressing related items, and kept on a dressing table.

HENRY HACKER 21st February, 1742.

York Co. Wills, Inventories, judgements and Orders #19, 1740-1746, pp 163-166

Rooms in house: Hall, Little Room, Little Room Closet, Upstairs Little Room, Upstairs Great Room, Parlor, Kitchen

Hall

1 Dressing table 25/
1 large looking glass 50/
6 high backed rushia leather chairs 3. 0.0
6 low backed Do. 36/

Room also contains:

2 small sconce glasses
1 Chimney glass and 2 sconces
Hacker cont...
1 clock
1 India cabinet
    China tea equipment and punch bowls

Little Room

1 old Looking glass 2/
1 oval oak table 15/
1 Elbow chair with close stool 15/
3 Rush chairs
1 bed etc

Upstairs Little Room

1 Dressing table 25/
1 looking glass 7/6
6 Russia Leather chairs 60/

Room also contains:

1 bed etc

Upstairs Great Room

1 Dressing Table and Glass 45/
1 Elbow cane chair 6/

Room also contains:

1 bed
4 trunks

Parlor

2 pine tables and 1 ironing board 10/
1 Cloaths basketts 4/
1 Cloath horse 2/6

Room also contains:

1 small bed etc.
MARY RIPPING  18th February, 1744

York Co. inventories, judgements, and Orders #19, 1740-1746, pp 352-354.

Rooms in house:  Hall, Porch Chamber, Above Stairs, Over the Chamber, Other Room, Back House Below, Middle, Room, Little Room, Above Stairs Vizt.

Chamber in Front House

a  Walnut looking glass  50/
    oval table  15/
a  Square table  7/6
l  Elbow and 6 old cane chairs and stool  1.7.6
l  Clothes press  20/

Hall

l  large Oak oval table  25/
l  walnut do.  15/
l  Marble Table
l  Looking Glass  30/

Room also contains:

l  corner cupboard, picture, cane couch and fire dogs

Back House Below

l  Walnut oval table  20/
l  Oak square do.  10/
l  Square looking glass  20/
5  old leather chairs  8/

Room also contains:

l  Feather bed etc., small square table, stand*.
11  brass candlesticks, 1 pair snuffers
   Tea, chocolate and coffee pots and cups.

* Stand - for wash basin.
GEORGE WELLS  20th May, 1754

York County Wills and Inventories 20, 1745-1759, pp 321-323.

Rooms in house:  Above Stairs, Below Stairs in the Left Hand Room, Second Left Hand Room, Right Hand Room, Kitchen

Below Stairs in left Hand Room

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 small Looking Glasses</td>
<td>1/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 small Table and Toilet</td>
<td>10/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Leather Chairs</td>
<td>24/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 High back Wooden bottom chairs</td>
<td>3/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Rush bottom Do.</td>
<td>1/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 large Looking Glass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuckles and Buttons at 5/ per oz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Razors}</td>
<td>5/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Straps}</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1 Hone }</td>
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Room also contains:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Bed etc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 8 day clock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Chest of Drawers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

In The Right Hand Room

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 mans Hat</td>
<td>12/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Wiggs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Cloth Coat Lined with Blue</td>
<td>30/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 pair Breeches</td>
<td>20/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 white Duffell Coat</td>
<td>15/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 blue coat and silk waistcoat and breeches</td>
<td>40/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Grey Coat and Scarlet Waistcoat and fustain Breeches</td>
<td>1.10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Black Waistcoat Strip'd Banyan and flanel Waistcoat</td>
<td>1. 0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SARAH GREEN  20th June, 1757

Rooms in house: Hall, Closet in hall, Chamber, Upper Chamber, Porch, Kitchen

Chamber

1  Looking Glass  7/6
1  Square table  10/9
1  old black Table  6d

Room also contains:

3  Beds etc

WILLIAM HUNTER  24th August, 1761

Rooms in house: Parlor, Chamber, Back Room, Upstairs.

Chamber

6  chairs with hair bottoms  3.18.0
1  dressing glass  15/
1  Writing table  10/
1  Mahogany Desk  7. 0.0

Room also contains:

1  Bed etc.
5  Pictures - framed
Books in closet

Back Room

1  Dressing table and G[torn] glass?  4.10.0
1  Wash Bason  3/
2  Chairs with Leather Bottoms  1. 0.0

Room also contains:

1  Bed etc
1  Night Chair
Glasses, china etc
Hunter cont...

**Upstairs**

1 dressing Table and Glass 2.15.0
1 Stand Bason and Mugg 20/
1 Large Elbow Chair 2.0.0
Waring Apparel Sword and 2 canes 65.0.0
...other Warables 35.0.0

Room also contains:

2 Night tables
1 Bed etc
1 side bed carpet
Linen

**Kitchen**

2 barbers blocks and stands 5/
4 Shoe brushes and blacking
1 Wigg Puff
1 Shoe Jack

**WILLIAM PRENTIS 21st October, 1765**

**York County Wills and Inventories, 21, 1760-1771, pp 252-263**

Rooms in house: Hall, John Prentis Room, Middle Room, Chamber, Daniel's Room, Dining, Nursery, Mr Prentis's Room, Little Closet, [torn] bedchamber, kitchen.

**John Prentis's Room**

1 Easy Chair 40/
1 Dressing glass 30/
1 Gilt Glass 5/
1 low Chair 5/

Room also contains:

2 Window Curtains, 3 rods
a bed etc.

**In The Middle Room**

1 Close Stool Chair and Pan
a Corner Cupboard
1 pr stilyards
Prentis cont...

In Daniel's Room

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chest Drawers</td>
<td>20/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Chairs</td>
<td>7/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 looking glass</td>
<td>7/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Chairs, 2 low do.</td>
<td>4. 0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 brushes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Room also contains:

1 Bed etc.
1 Oval Mahogany Table 1 do.

In The Nursery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Square Table</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a Fineered do. and Dressing Glass</td>
<td>3. 0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Chairs</td>
<td>25/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Room also contains:

2 Beds etc
3 Pictures
2 pr Candlesticks 2 pr do.
5 pr Snuffers, Extinguisher

In Mr Prentis's Room

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walnut square Table</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Chairs and 1 Elbow do.</td>
<td>30/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Room also contains:

3 beds etc.

In The Little Closet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chest of Drawers</td>
<td>0.15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a Dressing Glass</td>
<td>1.15.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In [torn] (bedchamber?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>old looking Glass</td>
<td>0. 7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a parcel odd Buttons and thread frogs</td>
<td>0. 5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Moth eaten Breeches Pattern</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Hatt</td>
<td>30/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Brushes</td>
<td>7/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>old Drawers</td>
<td>0. 2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prentis cont...

Room also contains:

2 Beds etc.
1 old Trunk
2 Pictures
1 Carpet 1 Wilton do.
1 Lantern

In The Dining Room

2 brushes [torn]

THOMAS HORNSBY 4th August, 1773.

York County Wills and Inventories 22, 1771-1783, pp107-112

Rooms in house: Chamber, Hall, Passage, Upstairs, Kitchen, Brick House, Red House.

Hall

2 Dressing Tables 1. 0.0
1 Dressing Glass 1. 0.0
1 Easy Chair 50/
2 old Ditto 10/
2 Brush 2/6
1 Mahogany Stand with Brass frame 1. 0.0

Room also contains:

1 clock
1 Chest Drawers
1 Bed etc.
1 Desk
14 Pictures

In The Back House (Chamber)

12 Walnut chairs 8.0.0
1 Table 7/6
1 Chair 1/3
1 Looking Glass 25/
Hornsby cont...

Also in room:

1 Desk and Book Case
1 Bed etc.
APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE: 18TH CENTURY PRINT SOURCES

Name of print: __________________________
Acquisition number: __________________________
Who is dressing?: M ( ) F ( ) Children ( )
Servant ( ) Owner/occupier ( )

Helpers: M Servants ( ) Maids ( )
Hairdresser ( ) Husband ( )
Peer/friend ( ) Dressmaker ( )
Alone ( )

Location: Bedchamber ( ) Dressing Room ( )
Kitchen ( ) Parlor ( )
Sitting Room ( ) Other ( )

Is there a satirical element: __________________________

LOOKING GLASSES: Total number of glasses ( )
Size ( ) Frame: gilt/wood oval/curved-
top/square/oblong
Prop ( ) Swing ( ) Wall ( ) Table top ( )
Cheval ( ) stand with drawers beneath ( )

Light source: Window ( ) Sconce glass ( )
Candles ( ) Unclear ( )

Is glass central to action yes/no
Is it being looked in? yes/no
What activity is taking place: __________________________

STORAGE: Closet ( ) Contents: __________________________
Boxes ( ) Trunks ( ) Chest of drawers ( )
Clothes press ( ) none ( ) Other: __________________________

Items related to self preparation:
Dressing Table ( ) Cosmetics ( ) Jars ( )
Bottles ( ) Jewelry ( ) Chair by table ( )
Jewelry box ( ) Pin cushion ( )

Labels on boxes?: Table cover ( ) swag & bow for glass ( )
Powder puff ( ) Wash-stand items:
Razor ( ) Corset ( ) Other ( )
Hairdressing equipment: Powder ( ) Comb ( )
Pins ( ) Wigs ( ) Brush ( ) scissors ( )

General Decor: Other chairs ( ) Footstools ( ) stools ( )
Tea-cup ( ) Rugs ( ) wall-paper ( ) Pictures ( )
Screen ( ) Table ( ) Clock ( ) curtains ( )
blinds ( ) Bed ( ) Bed-hangings ( )
Clothes: on pegs/floor
APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE: 18TH CENTURY INVENTORIES

NAME: ____________________________ DATE: ______
SOURCE: _________________________ Room: ______________

Room by room: Y/N Linen storage: Y/N
Clothing: Y/N Where?

No of rooms with beds but no evidence of dressing ( )
No of rooms with beds and dressing evidence ( )

Rooms with unexpected items denoting dressing activity ( )
Which rooms __________________________________________

ROOMS WITH EVIDENCE SUGGESTING DRESSING TOOK PLACE THERE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dressing Table &amp; Glass</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking Glass</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washstand Basin &amp; Bottle</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest of Drawers</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes Press</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linen Press</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trunk</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portmanteau</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cupboard</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed and Furniture</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairs</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arm/Easy Chairs</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stools</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Window Curtains</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clock</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea equipment</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are any items specifically mentioned as being in a closet? Y/N
Which items _______________________________________________

Where is closet located ____________________________________
### MISCELLANEOUS OBJECTS ASSOCIATED WITH DRESSING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clothes Brushes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knee/shoe buckles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Razors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaving Box</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaving Glass</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wig block</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair sieves</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scissors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curling tongs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinching tongs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brushes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trunks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portmanteau</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

DETAILS OF THE PRINT SOURCES

The following information matches the form in which it appears in the index file of the Print Library, The Department of Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. The numbers in parenthesis are the acquisition numbers of each print. Spellings, punctuation, and abbreviations are derived from the original prints and have not been altered.


No. 5 Le Stratageme Amoureux Line engraving, black and white. France c1760. (1962-215).


No. 8. Tight Lacing, or Fashion before Ease Mezzotint, hand colored. English, 1770. (1947-470)
No. 9. **An Actress at Her Toilette or Miss Brazen Just Breech't** English c1770. John Collett. Carington and Bowles. From Beggar's Opera. (1962-292)


No. 12. **A Macaroni Dressing Room** Hand colored etched and line engraving. England 26th June, 1772. Published according to Act by M. Darly 39 Strand. (1941-13)


No. 15. **The Preposterous Head Dress or the Feathered Lady** Hand colored line engraving. England 20th March, 1776. Published by M. Darly 39 Strand. (1941-12)


No. 17. **Tight Lacing** Black and white etched engraving. England 5th March, 1777. Scroll initials in corners as follows: left: R S; Right: F. H. Published by W. Humphrey Gerrard Street, Soho.

No. 18. **Tight Lacing or Hold Fast Behind** Black and white etched and line engraving. England 1st March, 1777. Published by M. Darly 39 Strand. (1969-110)

No. 19. **A New Fashioned Head Dress for Misses of Three Score and Ten** Mezzotint, hand colored. England 8th May, 1777. Philip Dawe. (54-455)


No. 22.  Lady's Toilette, Stays and Trousers  (1969-114,2).


No. 26.  Four O'Clock in the Country  English 1788.  (G1939-302).

All information about prints came from the files of the Print Library at the Department of Collections, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES


SECONDARY SOURCES

Books


Articles


Theses


Unpublished Articles, Papers and Reports


Graham, W., Furnishings for Households and Public Buildings: The Chesapeake and Related Back Country. 1993. The citations made regarding Willie's research into the use and development of space in rural taverns come from a paper and presentation required for the above course.

REFERENCE WORKS

A Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires Prints of the British Museum in seven volumes.

No. 4.
LE STRATAGEME AMOUREUX

Ou la Bedette a la mode

N° 5
Ridiculous Taste or the Ladies Absurdity

No. 6.
A Speedy & Effectual preparation for the WORLD.
TIGHT LACING, or FASHION before EASE.

From the Original Picture by John Collet, in the possession of the Proprietors.
LADY BETTY BUSTLE and her MAID LUCY preparing for the MASQUERADE at the PANTHEON.

Printed for Carrington Bowles, May访问者N/Paul's Church Yard London. Published at the Act Drops 25th May 1722

No.11.
The FEMALE SHAVER

A Hint to the Husband, or the Dresser, properly Dressed.
TIGHT LACING, or, BEHIND THE BEHIND

No. 18
A New fashion'd Head Dress for Young Misses of Three Score and Ten.
LADY'S TOILETTE.
Stay & Trousers.

Published by J. Le Petit, 20, Capel St, Dublin

No. 22.
Lady's Toilette
The New
No. 23.
LADY'S TOILETTE.
Dress Complete.

Published by J. Le Bon, 27 Copel St. Dublin

No. 24
VITA

Joanna Margaret Masters