"Dieting" the Prisoners: Ceramic Evidence from Old Gaol Excavations

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The gaol keepers of York County belonged to a system that combined law, politics, and religion to form a strict code of justice for local residents. While court documents and gaolers' records from the York County Gaol reveal much about the legal aspects of York gaolers' lives in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there are few documents which provide information about the daily existence of gaolers and their families during this period. In an attempt to recreate the living patterns of the gaol keepers in York County between 1719 and 1860, the archaeological records from three Gaol excavations in 1977, 1988 and 1989 have been analyzed. It is possible that these artifacts will allow us to peer into the households of these York deputies, and make some discoveries about their daily routines.

The York Gaol, the earliest extant public building in the Piscataqua region, allows a look at the institutions of crime and punishment in colonial York. The third gaol in York county, its stone cells were built in 1719, with subsequent additions throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. York's first gaol was established when a 1653 Massachusetts law mandated that all shire towns have a jail for the keeping of prisoners. A second was built in 1707. These early "prysons" fell into disrepair, and their successor, a stone building 24 by 16 feet (interior dimensions), was built on the hill overlooking Lindsey Road in York Village.

The stone gaol building was expanded in several campaigns. A wooden gaol house which consisted of a parlor and kitchen was built in 1729 to provide a place for the gaoler to feed and to monitor the prisoners. The central cell wall was added in 1737 and an additional wing was built on the southeast corner.

Renovation of the Gaol was needed by 1753, when an April court order called for "Gaol House to be New Cilled and the cills to be laid one foot higher and new floor’d, lapboarded and shingled...." Construction did not begin until 1763, when the stone cell and the gaol house were
adjoined to form a single structure, and a second story was added. Structural analysis of the gaol floor shows that the two buildings may have been separated by some distance, and had to be moved to accommodate the new construction. As a result of the 1763 contract, two cells were added to the upper level, as well as two other spaces, possibly used as bedrooms. The new cells were larger and brighter than the original rooms in the 1719 gaol and allowed separation of debtors from felons. The combined work amounted to just over 300 pounds.

After the Revolutionary War, York fell into economic recession; the number of debtors increased as individuals could not meet their financial obligations. In 1792, after complaints by Ichabod Goodwin, Sheriff of York County, the Massachusetts court approved expansion of the Gaol to include a cell separating debtors from “Felons and other Criminals.” A 1799 addition provided a debtor’s cell on the second floor and a large parlor on the ground level. One final addition was completed in 1806 as the gaoler’s parlor was added on the south end.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE OLD GAOL

Scheduled renovations of the early cells in 1974 precipitated the need for the initial archaeological investigations. As preparations were made to repair the sagging floor of the old cells, it was discovered that multiple layers of wooden flooring provided the support for the existing level; each contained significant archaeological remains (Figure 1). With assistance from the Society for Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA), the Old York Improvement Society developed a plan to restore the flooring of the 1719 gaol cell. This plan included the archaeological examination of materials located within the existing floor structures. Dr. Robert Bradley conducted these project excavations in 1977, under a federal grant obtained through the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC).

When SPNEA and Dr. Bradley undertook the excavation of the Gaol floor, they found it stratigraphically complex. The site consisted of four layers of underflooring below the surface level. While the original strata may have been chronologically intact, the subsequent use of the cells by humans and rodents resulted in mixed stratigraphy. Evidence of modern debris falling between floorboards accounts for some of the disturbance, while another portion can be explained by the discovery of a rodent’s nest between floors II and III, in which cloth, paper, and other articles spanning forty years were found in a single collection.
Figure 1 Drawing of archaeological remains found in the 1977 excavation under the Old Gaol floor. Drawing by Robert Bradley, MHPC. Archival Collections of Old York Historical Society.

The area between floors II and III accounted for the majority of the artifacts, including shoe leather, wooden spools, eating utensils, a musket, and pipe stem fragments. It is suspected that when each layer of flooring was added, refuse from the house was thrown into the flooring as a way of disposal. Ceramics whose dates ranged between c. 1750 and c. 1850 were extracted, including stoneware, lead-glazed earthenware, pearlware, creamware, and porcelain. A list of ceramics found in excavations is available at Old York Historical Society.

The next major excavation of the York Gaol began in 1985, when Emerson W. Baker undertook a systematic study of York sites, resulting in standardized site numbers for each of the historic sites in York Village and surrounds. Roughly forty sites were located in the field, only four of which were eighteenth century. The 1719 Gaol site, including the Gaol, its outbuildings, the Gaol yard, and an adjacent store, was designated ME 497-118 (Maine, York County, Old Gaol site). A report provided to Old York included detailed results of the survey, along with recommendations for subsequent research into the archaeological heritage of York Village.

Within two years of this initial survey, Dr. Kathleen Wheeler undertook archaeological analysis of the fourth study area designated by Baker, which was the York Village and York Harbor unit. The original survey documented three archaeological sites in York Village, one of which was the Old Gaol. As follow-up studies in 1988 and 1989, Dr. Wheeler completed two intensified excavations on the Gaol and Gaol Yard.

In the 1988 survey, coring was completed on the area surrounding the gaol. Archaeologists found substantial build-up on the northeast corner of the yard, despite the predominance of exposed ledge on the rest of the lot. A test pit (TP1) was dug at the base of the hill, where the core
samples indicated a thick layer of coal ash (Figure 2). According to the 1913 Sanborn Insurance map, this area housed a barber shop, the latest in a series of businesses on the site. Test Pit 1 has been excluded because of its questionable link to Gaol activities.

A second test pit (TP2) was excavated on the eastern ridge of the Old Gaol hill in an area of heavy surface artifact concentration. While Level 1 (surface level) did not exhibit specific date range, Dr. Wheeler confirms a tightly-dated second level in her 1988 report of the archaeological excavations on the Old Gaol site. The top level contained artifacts

Figure 2 Location of features and test units, Old Gaol Site Map. Archival Collections of Old York Historical Society.
ranging from modern plastic to plain creamwares. The second level was more tightly dated, containing redwares (65%), creamwares (16%), and two small rim sherds of delft. The mean ceramic date for this pit based upon Dr. Wheeler's analysis is 1760.17

Excavations in the 1989 season were concentrated near the Old Gaol building. Dr. Wheeler identified eight features and five shovel tests sites during the initial reconnaissance survey.18 The results from this report, outlined below, reveal varying degrees of modern disturbance across the Old Gaol site, making identification of chronological levels difficult. Only those test pits with strata lying directly above the bedrock (Shovel Test Pits 1 and 3) appear to be undisturbed. Data from the 1989 excavation season has been analyzed taking this disturbance into account.

Shovel Test Pit 1 (STP1) was a trench opened on the southeast corner of the building, just south of the second doorway. While the upper strata were primarily late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century artifacts, the two lowest levels were comprised of redwares, creamwares, delftware and slip-decorated wares, indicating an early eighteenth century occupation.

The second shovel test (STP2) was a 60 by 60 cm square east of the patio at the second doorway. The data recovered from this test pit were extracted in five strata, each of which demonstrated some demolition debris, and a range of ceramics including pearlwares, creamwares, and hard white ceramics.

Three other shovel test pits were opened. STP3, a 75 by 50 cm square, was located midway along the flagstone walk. Strata II was primarily early nineteenth century ceramics, including annular and plain pearlwares, and coarse redwares. Strata III contained mostly creamware and pipe fragments. The lowest level, strata IV, revealed a collection of early eighteenth century artifacts, including clear-glazed and slip-decorated lead glazed redwares, and one sherd of tin glazed ceramic ware.

STP4, a 50 by 50 cm square on the north side of the building, 1.0 m east of the front doorway, contained ceramics from slip-decorated redware to transfer-printed hard white types. STP5 was opened 3.3 m north of the southwest corner, a 50 by 50 cm square similar to STP4. It revealed eighteenth and nineteenth century deposits, including creamware, redware, and English porcelain.

Artifacts from the 1988 and 1989 excavations reveal an eighteenth century building which has undergone multiple building campaigns. Disturbance of the upper strata is appropriate for the amount of renovation conducted on this site. Lower strata, particularly those closer to the
underlying bedrock, have remained intact, revealing a tightly-dated early
eighteenth century occupation, where gaolers left evidence of coarse red
earthenwares and delftwares behind.

The excavations of the Old Gaol, and the discovery of high status
ceramics in the archaeological remains, have raised questions about the
daily life of gaolers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as
well as their social and economic status. A closer look at the culture sur­
rounding York gaolers and their families might provide some answers
about working, eating, and entertaining in the Old Gaol.

**LIFE IN “PRYSON”**

In eighteenth century York, the gaol keeper was a deputy sheriff appoint­
ed to guard prisoners either incarcerated for debt or waiting trial. The York
Gaol averaged fourteen prisoners per year; the inmate count could
increase dramatically just before the Quarterly Session of the
Massachusetts Court. 19 The majority of prisoners stayed an average of 42
days, though some prisoners stayed longer. Anna Card, a widow, stayed in
the York Gaol for nearly a year while paying off debts. A Native American
slave woman named Patience Boston was retained in the Gaol from at
least November 1734 until July 1735, when she was hanged for the mur­
der of her master’s grandchild. 20 These women were just two of the 1053
prisoners recorded in the York Gaol records between 1788 and 1860.
They were all housed and “dieted” by the assigned gaoler and his family,
who may have lived in the gaol house after it was completed in 1763. 21
Table 1 is a partial list of the York gaolers, identified through court docu­
ments, probate inventories, or business and government directories.

The gaoler’s numerous duties as the deputy sheriff may have left
some of the gaoler’s responsibilities to his spouse, including feeding and
maintenance of the prisoners. In one instance, William Emerson’s wife
Eunice continued to “diet” the prisoners after his death in 1790. Her new
husband, John Sewall, Jr. was appointed deputy sheriff and gaoler in
1793. 29

Feeding of families and prisoners was costly and tedious work, and
the gaoler and his spouse probably worked hard to keep a balance
between the rising costs of caring for prisoners and family. It seems logi­
cal that the gaoler’s wife would cook the same food for her family as for
the prisoners; yet no records from the period have been found which
detail the dieting of prisoners. Studies of foodways and eating habits in
eighteenth century New England indicate that the diet experienced by
Table 1 List of Gaolers in York 1719–1860

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gaoler</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1723</td>
<td>Benjamin Stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1736</td>
<td>Joseph Young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1783</td>
<td>Robert Rose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1784-1790</td>
<td>William Emerson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>John Sewall appointed gaoler by Sheriff Goodwin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799-1809</td>
<td>Simon Fernald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1809-?</td>
<td>John Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>Oliver Bragdon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823</td>
<td>James Bragdon III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>Jeremiah Brooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>Edgar McIntire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>Henry Abbott</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gaolers and their families would have included fresh vegetables, meat, fish, chicken, and grain products (breads, cereals, etc.). Vegetables were served fresh, boiled, baked, or preserved as pickles or sauces. Fish could be found fresh, corned, dried, or salted. Meats, including pork, veal and beef, were often preserved, except during the seasonal slaughtering. Archaeological evidence, as well as cooking guides for the period, indicate that most of the animal was utilized, with little opportunity for waste products. Hanna Glasse's *Art of Cookery*, originally published in 1804, detailed recipes for such delicacies as "Calf's Head Surprise, Pigeon Transmogrified, Roasted Ox-Cheek, and Beef Tongue Fricasay." Preservation of food was important, and numerous recipes were listed for pickling, drying, and salting. One recipe, designed for sea captains, provided instructions for making a catsup which would last for 20 years. Root vegetables, peas and beans, squash and pumpkins were stored for use in wintertime. Luxury items such as coffee, tea, and chocolate were also used in some quantity, as we see in York merchant Edward Emerson's advertisements for coffee and Dr. Job Lyman's periodic delivery of Bohia Tea and several pounds of chocolate.

The archaeological remains from the Old Gaol help to confirm the diet patterns of the gaolers and their families, revealing deposits of corn cobs and seeds, and the bones of cow, chicken and sheep. Remnants of coarse earthenware milk pans and crockery found in Gaol excavations point to dairying activities in the gaol kitchen. Likewise, the presence of tea accoutrements confirms the use of tea or coffee in the gaol household. It seems likely that the gaoler and his family attended to the necessary social requirements of a merchant class household, providing distin-
istinguished guests with an afternoon refreshment as the occasion warranted. A closer look at the ceramics found within the archaeological context can assist in confirming their use in the daily activities of the Gaol.

CERAMICS AND THE GAOL HOUSE

Household inventories and contemporary diary accounts provide some insight into the possible use of ceramics by the gaoler and his spouse. Probate inventories from Massachusetts and Connecticut (1725–1774) indicate a disproportionate use of coarse earthenwares compared to fine earthenware use for the same period. Approximately 70% of New England families were able to purchase coarse earthenwares, while only 14% could afford the fine earthenwares.\(^3\) One 1791 diary account mentions the unsettling effects of a local earthquake on the pewter and earthenware housed in a nearby cupboard.\(^3\) From these contemporary accounts, it seems evident that the majority of dinnerwares in use were pewter or coarse earthenwares. Yet the 1790 probate inventory of York gaoler William Emerson includes “chinaware,” as well as earthenware and pewter.\(^3\) Archaeological remains from the entire period of occupation at the Old Gaol site also include a substantial number of fine earthenwares in their inventory. It seems that at least some of our gaolers were able to maintain a higher economic status than the New England average.

Ceramics found within each layer of the excavation help to identify the earliest and latest time period of occupation. Most ceramics can be identified by style or production techniques, and can be dated in the same way. The following section is a review of the technical and stylistic characteristics used to date the Gaol ceramics, along with their approximate periods of production.

CERAMIC TYPES

COARSE EARTHENWARE. The oldest form of ceramics found in the Gaol excavations is the group of coarse earthenwares, also known as redwares. Spanish and French settlers introduced these ceramic types to the Atlantic coast, where archaeologists have discovered sherds from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.\(^4\) In the New England colonies, potters began making redwares around 1650, providing a ready source of utilitarian forms to the immediate area.\(^4\) These early potters rarely marked their wares; it is only when decoration was introduced, or a special combination of glazes was utilized, that these wares became identifiable by artist or region.\(^4\) Earthenwares were used throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth cen-
Dieting the Prisoners: Ceramic Evidence from Old Goal Excavations

turies, and remained a staple of household ceramics well into the 19th century, as indicated by the inventory of merchant Edward Emerson, Jr. which still carried coarse earthenwares for sale in his shop in 1803. Of the forms excavated at the Old Gaol site, the most prevalent seems to be the flat, glazed plate or pan, such as the milk pan, which was used in production of dairy products. The glazes on these wares range from pale green to slip-decorated redwares. The amount of earthenwares found in the deposits changed between excavation seasons, but varied appropriately with the distribution of other ceramic types within the same season. While redwares are not particularly diagnostic when considered alone, their presence is useful in dating a site when used in combination with other datable wares. For example, in strata representing nineteenth century periods, the percentage of redwares decreased, whereas the eighteenth century occupants left a higher number of redware artifacts.

By 1740, earthenwares became more refined. Potters produced wares made with a finely turned red clay body, covered with a brown or black glaze. Those wares with the black glaze were called "Jackfield" wares, so named for the pottery of origin. Potters in Shropshire and Staffordshire, England, including Wedgwood and Whieldon, produced the Jackfield-type wares. In York, the Gaol excavations contained remnants of a Jackfield-type teapot, which may have been used to accompany tea cups made of stoneware, earthenware, or porcelain.

TIN-GLAZED WARES. The term "delft ware" described tin-ash glazed ceramics being imported from Europe during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The name originally referred to the tin-glazed wares from Holland, but spread to include other western European countries. The tin ash produced an opaque glaze that made the buff-colored body appear white or gray. The surface could then be decorated with blue and white designs that mimicked Chinese porcelain or with bright polychrome overglazes with popular motifs and sayings. Other countries produced these wares, also known as majolica in Spain or faience in France, as early as the ninth century; tin-glazed ceramics have been found in French and Spanish colonial sites dating to the sixteenth century. In New England, however, navigation acts deterred imports from Holland, France, and Spain to English colonies until the Revolution.

Gaoler Joseph Young in 1736 would have been familiar with the tin-glazed ceramics being shipped into York during the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Ceramic inventories from 1989 excavations contain large deposits of coarse earthenwares with one or two sherds of tin-glazed
wares, usually rim sherds. Gaoler Young’s home may have had delftware plates or bowls, kept for special occasions such as visits by the Magistrate or other dignitaries. Tin-glazed pieces with local provenances in the Old York collections, including imports from England and Spain, date from this period.

STONEWARES. Imported stonewares provide the first datable ceramics in York. Examples of cobalt or manganese-decorated Rhenish stonewares (1714–1730) from Germany have been found at the York Gaol site. Brown salt-glazed wares from Fulham (1690–1775) and Nottingham-type stonewares were also familiar to York residents.

Stonewares originally became popular as the durable utility ware. Crocks and churns, bottles, mugs and platters were turned from stoneware clays, producing heavy, durable containers. Stoneware potters also began to produce fine white salt-glazed stonewares, creating a new market of fine dinnerwares and tea sets. Wares from Staffordshire, produced by manufacturers trying to emulate Oriental porcelains, began to arrive in the colonies by the 1740s. These white stonewares were considered the perfect pottery, because they had the necessary qualities of the costly and highly-desired Chinese imports. White salt-glazed wares were being used at the York Gaol, as evidenced by stoneware sherds found in the Gaol floor, and a single sherd found in the surface level of Test Pit 2 of the 1988 excavations. The popularity of white salt-glazed stonewares waxed until the middle of the eighteenth century, when a new technique brought earthenwares back to the forefront of consumer interests.

FINE LEAD-GLAZED EARTHENWARES. Production of fine lead-glazed ceramics began in Europe in the early eighteenth century. A cream-colored, clear lead-glazed ware began to appear in ceramics trade, first refined by Thomas Astbury of Heath, c.1720–1740. Creamwares were manufactured by Thomas Greatbatch, and Staffordshire potters like Thomas Whieldon and Josiah Wedgwood. This new type of ware included cream colored pieces, as well as molded wares with copper and manganese underglazes. These creamwares exploded onto the market, providing a fine dinnerware which could be painted, enameled, colored with a variety of metallic oxides, and fired at a lower temperature - thus increasing its versatility in color and form.

Gaolers from York were using plain creamware and dishes with feather-edged designs. A sherd from a teapot lid found in the Gaol floor resembles the lid on a pot now in the Old York collections (Figure 3).
Figure 3 Polychrome decorated cream colored ware, c.1760. Collections of Old York Historical Society.

From the Gaol excavations, we also have examples of creamware cups, dinner plates, saucers and teapots, as well as pitchers and mugs. Decorated wares, similar to those attributed to the Liverpool area, were found between floors II and III in the 1977 Old Gaol excavation. A pitcher or mug, overglaze enameled, late 18th c., is inscribed as follows:

"The Ale is good
So pray Pour out.
The Glafs is Full
Come Drink about"

Likewise, a larger pitcher with overglaze enameling and a rust colored enameled ring around the rim was uncovered, inscribed:

"Behave to all men kind and true
As you'd have them behave to you
And neither say nor do to them
Whate'er you wou'd not take aga(in)"

The Liverpool potters produced pitchers of this type, whose shape could be easily distinguished from the baluster-shaped wares from other regional potteries. The red trim is not particularly unusual for wares of
this type, but the green overglaze decoration seen on both pieces presents an anomaly which may provide a clue as to the specific potter or decorator. The unique green trim has been found on a Liverpool-type pitcher described by J. Jefferson Miller at Winterthur, and on Liverpool-type jugs seen on display at the Peabody-Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts; but none of this variety currently exists in the collections of the Old York Historical Society. The inventory of gaoler William Emerson's brother, York merchant Edward Emerson, Jr. lists "Liverpule ware plates, dishes, mugs, &c.," indicating that wares from the Liverpool factories were being imported into York in the 1790s, but no distinction is made as to the variety of Liverpool wares being used.

By 1779, the Staffordshire potters had refined the yellowish lead glaze by including a hint of cobalt, giving it a "pearl white" color. Pearlwares quickly joined creamwares as earthenwares of choice by the middle of the eighteenth century. The two glazes were produced simultaneously until the early 1800s. In the excavations of the Old Gaol, some interesting variations in the distribution of creamwares and pearlwares occurs across seasons and test sites. The 1977 excavations of the Gaol floor revealed a balanced collection of pearlwares and creamwares, dating the site between 1750 and 1820. At least 12 major types of lead-glazed ceramics are represented, including plain creamwares, blue shell-edged pearl-wares, transfer-printed wares, annular wares and Liverpool vessels. Examples of blue transfer-printed pearlwares were also found. They represent the wide range of Staffordshire and Liverpool wares which have been uncovered in the Portsmouth region. Portsmouth ceramics historian Louise Richardson suggests that a large percentage of blue transfer-printed wares in the area may have originated in the Herculaneum factories, based upon decorative styles and business ledgers from local businesses.

These lead-glazed earthenwares revealed in Gaol excavations may have belonged to gaolers Robert Rose (c.1783), William Emerson (1782–1790), John Sewall (1793–1796), or Simon Fernald (c. 1799–1810). If we compare the ceramic remains with our list of known gaolers, we may have found creamwares in the Gaol house of Robert Rose or William Emerson, pearlwares in the parlor of John Sewall, or Liverpool jugs being used by Simon Fernald in 1805.

When we compare the ceramic archaeological record from the Gaol with the probate inventory of gaoler William Emerson in 1790, we might find Mr. Emerson using the following types in his home:
### Table 2 Emerson’s Probate Inventory vs. Archaeological Record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Probate Inventory</th>
<th>Excavations (1977)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinaware 7 sh.</td>
<td>Chinese export porcelain teapot creamware teapot creamware plates plain and polychrome-painted pearlware plates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>earthenware 9.2 sh</td>
<td>coarse earthenware mug with manganese (brown) glaze yellow glazed plate or milk pans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone jugs 3 sh</td>
<td>brown salt-glazed crock</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though the inventory lists “chinaware” worth 7 shillings, it is unknown whether this indicates Chinese export porcelain or creamware, which is occasionally called “Chinaware” in potters’ inventories of the eighteenth century. The 1803 probate inventory from William’s brother, Edward, Jr., lists “Jappan” and “Chaney” (china) wares separately, while a contemporary inventory from Dr. Job Lyman’s estate (1791) lists “china bowls” and “cream coloured plates.” It is interesting to note that the chinaware, along with glassware and punch ladles, were listed with materials from the parlor, indicating that these pieces would have been stored there for use with “best company.”

Creamwares began to slip in popularity by the 1780s, as evidenced by shipping requests for “fine white [and not Cream-Coloured]” wares. The pearl white, or “blue glaz’d china” wares continued to be manufactured by Wedgwood until 1865, with variety of decorative styles, including the geometric annular wares, transfer-printed and luster wares, tooled forms, and a rainbow of colors from rose to teal.

**Porcelains**. While Europeans refined their stonewares and lead-glazed earthenwares, a high-fired, translucent porcelain infiltrated the West from China, Japan, and Korea. Except for a brief hiatus in the late 17th century because of trade restrictions, Chinese export porcelain enjoyed favor throughout upper class homes in Europe and the colonies. Blue-and-white and polychrome-painted designs found their way into York, followed by the enameled or “burnt” china wares. The few examples of Chinese porcelains that exist from the Gaol site are primarily blue and white export porcelain. Perhaps the most noteworthy is the 18th century Chinese porcelain cup rim, a red cloud pattern on the rim surrounding blue and white design with gilt highlights. This design was typical of tra-
ditional three-color and five-color porcelains which displayed convention-
alized cloud patterns separate from the central design.\textsuperscript{63} The red ochre
colored decoration was prevalent in porcelains being exported to the
colonies in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, as well as
the gilt overglaze.\textsuperscript{64} In the York collections, examples of three and five-
color Chinese porcelain exist in punch bowls, teacups, and saucers
(Figure 4). Chinese porcelain of this style would have been utilized for
special occasions, such as formal teas, etc.; the tea sets may have been
used in conjunction with silver tea sets.\textsuperscript{65}

European porcelains were also being shipped into the colonies during
this period. Approximately 8\% of the 1977 and 6\% of the 1989 site is
European porcelain. These high-fired wares began to be produced in the
1720s, but were not as initially successful as their competitors. The qual-
ity of the wares may be a factor, as early English porcelains did not have
the pale blue translucence of Oriental porcelains, nor the richness of
designs. Most of our Gaol artifacts are plain white or bone china, though
some contain polychrome overglaze designs.

The last major group of ceramics found in Gaol excavations is the
ironstone or "Stone China," first produced by Spode in 1805. These high-
fired, durable tablewares, also called whitewares, replaced many pearl-
ware types by the middle of the 1800s, and along with porcelains, domi-

\textbf{Figure 4 Two color Chinese porcelain bowl, c.1750. Collections of Old
York Historical Society.}
nated the ceramics industry into the twentieth century. In the gaol excavations, whitewares make up a portion of the finds, particularly in 19th century contexts. In many cases, these diagnostic white sherds are the telltale signs of strata disturbance. It is no accident that the durability of these wares in the household resulted in their frequency within the archaeological context.

Many of the stone china wares would have been familiar to gaolers Jeremiah Brooks (1841) and Edgar McIntire (1843). Along with their white dinnerware, they might have had access to a wide range of English and Chinese porcelains, bright polychrome pearlwares (popular until 1835), and a predominance of blue transfer ware, popular during the early 1800s.

It is important to remember that when a new product was manufactured and imported into the colonies, it was simply added to the complex ceramics market. Older wares may have continued to be used in households long after their novelty had worn off. Likewise, the advent of ceramics technology into the industrial market meant that new designs were being produced at a rapid rate, and keeping up with the market would have been costly for even the most economically savvy gaoler. By the middle of the 1800s, ceramics purchases were almost entirely a function of personal taste as numerous variations sprung up.

**SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS**

In conclusion, the range of ceramic types found at the Old Gaol, as well as the wide chronology, reveal a procession of gaolers and their families who were financially capable of purchasing high end goods, such as porcelains and fine earthenwares, but who also utilized the more practical coarse earthenwares for utilitarian purposes. Artifacts recovered from the Gaol excavations appear to be the result of breakage and/or disposal of ceramic goods. The lack of pewter and other metal wares does not indicate that it did not exist on the site, but because of durability, may not have been part of the refuse from the site.

The diet pattern of the gaolers, their families, and their prisoners mirror those of other eighteenth and early nineteenth century homes, including their use of locally produced meats, vegetables, and dairy products. Archaeological remains suggest that gaolers and their families were preparing food utilizing stonewares and coarse earthenwares, typical of 18th century practices. The use of high end ceramics such as creamwares, pearlwares, and Chinese export porcelains may have been
limited to teas, formal dinners, or parties, rather than used in daily routines, as indicated by their use in parlor or “best” rooms. Comparative analysis of archaeological remains from other York homes may extend our understanding of the gaoler’s social position within York County, and provide us with further knowledge of the private lives of 18th century gaolers as they dieted and cared for their charges.

ENDNOTES

2 Charles E. Banks, History of York, Maine, Volume II (Boston: Murray Printing Co., 1961), 228-244; Court of General Sessions, State of Massachusetts, York, Maine, April 1707. OYHS.
3 George Ernst, New England Miniature (Freeport, ME: Bond Wheelwright, Co. 1951), 158.
5 Clerk of Courts, Records of the Court of General Sessions, York County Courthouse, Vol. 7, 10.
6 Hecker, 6.
7 Ernst, 153.
9 Ernst, 154.
10 Hecker, 10.
12 According to Bradley’s report, the Old York Improvement Society was overseeing this project; it is possible that the Old Gaol Museum was actually responsible.
13 Bradley, 1.
14 Ibid., 3.
15 Emerson W. Baker, “York’s Historical Archaeological Resources,” September 1, 1986, OYHS.
20 “A Faithful Narrative of the Wicked Life and Remarkable Conversion of Patience Boston, Alias Samson,” (Boston:1738) Transcript, OYHS.
22 Ibid.
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23 Ernst, 151.
24 Gaolers Robert Rose, William Emerson, Simon Fernald, John Low, Oliver Bragdon, and James Bragdon III are listed as gaolers or gaol keepers in the State of Massachusetts, Court of General Sessions, York County, 1783–1790, 1799–1809, and 1821–1823, OYHS.
25 Commission by Ichabod Goodwin, County of York, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, OYHS.
26 Samuel L. Harris, Maine Register and National Calendar for the Year 1841 (Portland: William Hyde, 1841), 125.
27 Samuel L. Harris, Maine Register and National Calendar for the Year 1843 (Augusta: Daniel C. Stanwood, 1843), 13.
28 George Adams, Maine Register and Business Directory for the Year 1856 (South Berwick, ME: Edward C. Parks, 1856), 71.
29 Commission by Ichabod Goodwin, OYHS.
30 Frances Lord, "Foodstuffs and Furnishings in 18th Century New England," (Manuscript, OYHS), 7-10.
31 Ibid., 4.
33 Hanna Glasse, The Art of Cookery Made Plain & Easy (Boston, 1843), 49, 62, 93.
34 Ibid., 257.
35 Inventory of Edward Emerson, Jr., MSS Probate Records, York County Records of Probate (YCRP), Alfred, Me, 5174.
36 Lord, 6.
38 Nylander, Fireside, 190.
43 Edward Emerson, Jr. Inventory, YCRP, 5174.
44 Hume, 123.
45 Stanley South, Doorway to the Past (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1991).
46 Hume, 55–57, 276–279.
47 Ibid., 112-114.
49 Hume, 116.
50 Blaszczyk, 11.
51 Donald Towner, Cream Coloured Earthenwares (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), 1–2.
52 Hume, 123–125.
53 Bradley, 7.
55 “Inventory of Edward Emerson, Jr.,” 5174.
58 Towner, 18.
59 Lord, 12.
60 Schwind, 33.
61 Hume, 131–132.
62 Schwind, 24.
64 Clare Le Corbeiller, China Trade Porcelain: Pattern of Exchange (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art), 38, 44.
65 Nylander, 243.