

## Water and Preservation

Archaeologists working on the Newman Street Site have encountered significant amounts of ground water, which has complicated the excavation process. The water appears perched on a layer of clay fill presumably deposited in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to create land. Given the site's location at the base of a slope and at a similar elevation as the City Dock, the water may represent ground and surface water running down to the bay. An advertisement for sale from 1787, however, mentions "a never failing spring" somewhere on the property that included the archaeology site (Maryland Gazette 1787:3). Maybe the spring is still active below the surface!

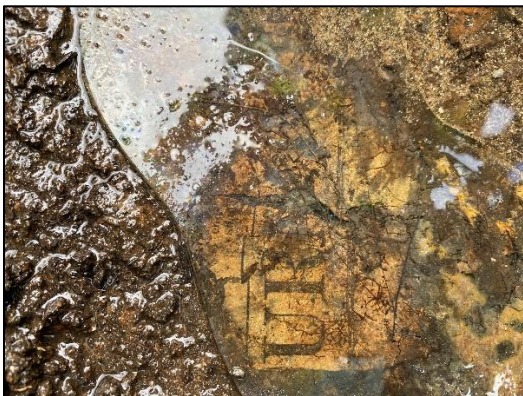
While the water has made excavation difficult, it has resulted in a high level of preservation. The constant wet conditions below ground kept out oxygen, reducing the rate of decay. While on most archaeology sites we find subtle soil stains to indicate the former location of wooden posts and other features, at the Newman Street Site we found actual wood posts and beams.



Above: Wood Posts and Beam

Left: Wooden Box Privy

In addition to preserving structural remains, the water resulted in preservation of some types of artifacts rarely found. These included paintbrushes with horsehair attached to wooden handles, numerous seeds, wooden tool handles, and a newspaper fragment.



Newspaper Fragment below a Piece of Window Glass



Seeds and Pits from one of the Privies

## References

Maryland Gazette, 1787, "Advertisement by William Logan." 20 September:3. Annapolis, Maryland.