The spacious field lab for the Oxon Hill Manor Project was located at 8043-B & C Penn-Randall Place, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772. This location was twenty minutes from the actual Oxon Hill Manor site. The lab had the advantage of being aligned with the runways of Andrews Airforce Base, and we could admire or disdain the various military aircraft whose engines halted all conversation.

The lab had an incredibly slow start due to the paucity of artifacts found in Area 1 at the beginning of excavations. The field solved this problem by later deluging the lab with artifact bags; and by 24 May 1985 over 4,200 bags had entered the lab.

**Personnel:** There were four people assigned permanently to the lab: Gina Cupstid, Susan Eigen, Eleanor Insley, and Elizabeth Jorgensen. Their primary responsibility was to catalogue artifacts. It was hoped that by training these four and having only these four catalogue, consistent artifact identification would be maintained.

Other employees were assigned the tasks of washing and labeling the artifacts. Originally six archaeologists from the field were rotated from the field for lab duty. After several months, these people were replaced with unskilled workers.
Two additional permanent people were added: Rozanna Pfieffer and Patty Wells. Their duties were to label artifacts and perform other duties as assigned.

**Receiving Bags:** At the beginning of the project the first step was to list the bags on the Bag List as they came in from the field. This list included the date received and dates for washing, labeling, and cataloguing. Eventually this system became too cumbersome and the data was placed directly onto the computer which was acquired several weeks after the project began. For a while the two systems overlapped because the computer insisted on eating our files. But once we persuaded it that it could indeed exist on electricity alone, we were able to abandon the hand-written Bag List. The computer files will be discussed below.

**Washing:** The next step was to wash the artifacts. The person having direct charge of washing varied from the Lab Director to any of the four permanent people. A record was maintained of who washed which bags. This record was not maintained on Hoarde Days (i.e., rain days when the field converged on the lab) as it was too cumbersome with forty people in the lab and there were often several people washing the same bag.

Towards the end of the project, a list of bag numbers and proveniences was made for those bags washed the previous day. The Lab Director decided not to put the information onto the computer for the well and cellar in Area 1 and for Area 6 due to time constraints. In these areas there were often many bags per provenience per day. The most extreme case was thirty-seven bags from one provenience.
coming in the same day. In such cases it became impossible to determine which bags were washed on what day, and the purpose for maintaining such records became meaningless and impossible.

**Labeling:** The labeling accession number took the general form of a fraction. The numerator was a seven-digit number representing the Oxon Hill Manor site. There were two variations of the denominator. In Area 1, including the well and cellar, the denominator was a four-digit number based on the Maryland Geological Survey's Lot Numbers. In the terminology of the lab these were termed "MGS numbers". We hoped to be able to label in a manner consistent with the previous excavations of the site. We began with MGS #1010.

**Example:** 18PR175

1010

In using this system, we wanted consecutive MGS numbers to reflect the consecutive levels within a unit or feature. For example, if Units A and B each had three levels, the first, second, and third levels of Unit A would be assigned MGS numbers 1010, 1011, and 1012 respectively; the levels for Unit B would be assigned 1013, 1014, and 1015 similarly. In order to do this we had to wait until a unit or feature were completely excavated before we could assign MGS numbers or begin labeling. This system became very time-consuming with individuals spending most of their time assigning MGS numbers.

With the agreement of the archaeologists of the Maryland Geological Survey, this system was replaced with a five-digit number for the
denominator of the accession number. This new system was used in Areas 2, 4, 5, and 6. (Backhoe trenches in Area 3 revealed no cultural materials and the area was not excavated.) The denominator was the bag number (only one bag number was used per provenience) prefixed with the number of the appropriate area.

Example: \[\text{18PR175} / \text{2-2098}\]

Originally bag information was written on the outside of the bag with indelible markers and also written on a piece of paper placed inside the bags. The information included site number, MGS number (if applicable), bag number, provenience, grid coordinates (if any), excavation date, and excavator's initials. In time the information was only written on the paper and placed inside the bags. This simplification was due to time constraints. Throughout the project the identifying fraction was also placed on ceramics, non-window glass, bone, and pipes.

The paper placed inside the bags was acid-free. At times when we had no acid-free paper, we used lined, yellow paper. As the non-acid free paper will be replaced sometime in the future, we felt that the yellow paper would be easier to identify. All white paper found inside the bags is acid-free.

Cataloguing: The next step after labeling was to catalogue the artifacts. As stated before only four people were allowed to catalogue in the hopes of maintaining consistent identification of artifacts. The artifacts were identified and assigned an appropriate
computer code based on South's Artifact Groups. As the cataloguers identified the artifacts, they filled out a form. Each line represented a unique artifact type within a single provenience. This line contained spaces for the computer code, quantity of artifacts, and description. At first each artifact was described, but in time the description was left blank unless the artifact was unusual. The information was eventually placed on the computer.

Soil Samples: The excavators took many soil samples (which actually turned out to be flotation samples, but by the time the lab realized it "Soils" terms were imprinted into our minds and catalogue system.) After the "soil samples" were floated, the remaining debris was inspected for artifacts. These artifacts were placed in a separate bag. Therefore, the lab received two bags: Soil Sample and Soil Sample Artifact (SSA). These artifacts were washed, labeled, and catalogued for those areas already catalogued. Those from Area 1 received the appropriate MGS number; the remainder were given their bag number. It was suggested that the artifacts from the soil samples be combined with the appropriate artifact bag. This was rejected because most of the catalogued information had already been placed on the "Data Entry Program" and additional information could not easily be added.

One of the problems that arose was that some of the SSAs from the well and cellar were inadvertently assigned MGS numbers before the levels of the well or cellar were assigned MGS numbers. Thus the MGS numbers assigned to the well and cellar are not in sequence.
There is a major break in the sequence of MGS numbers for the well based on a change of priorities. This break reflects the assignment of MGS numbers to many SSAs.

Bag Lists: There are many computer print-outs that comprise the Bag List. These are entitled Area 1a, Area 1b, Area 1a2, Area 1c, Area 2, Area 4, Area 5, Area 6, and Soil Samples. The print-outs for Area 1 files had columns for bag #, provenience, accession (MGS number), number of bags, date received, date washed, date labelled, and date catalogued. Those print-outs for other areas had similar columns except that the accession column was replaced with one for comments; the accession for these areas was put under bag number.

Area 1a contains a list of artifact bags from Area 1, bag numbers 1 through 1000. Area 1b contains artifacts from Area 1, bag numbers 1000+. Area 1a2 contains the SSAs from Area 1. Area 1c contains all bags from the well and cellar within Area 1. Files for Areas 2, 4, 5, and 6 also contain both the artifact and SSA bags. The Soil Samples file contains bags from all areas.

There are several general comments that can be made about these files. First, throughout the project there have been bags without artifacts. In our original hurry to quickly put information on the computer, "no artifacts" was indicated by a "No" under the wash column. Problems arose when logical people interpreted our "No" as "Not washed". Once it was interpreted as a mutinous
As a result "No" has been replaced with "No Artifacts", and it was moved to the accession column for those areas with MGS numbers or to the comments column in other files.

Secondly, artifacts did not always come into the lab in neat 8"x10" plastic bags; sometimes they came in buckets, boxes, wrapped in aluminum foil or simply with a piece of flagging tie to an artifact. This menagerie is reflected under the column "# Bags". The notations under this column are self-explanatory except for the following:

- **Buck** = bucket
- **Sikl** = sickle
- **Brck** = brick
- **Cbbl** = cobbled
- **Bttl** = bottle
- **Kttl** = kettle
- **Lthr** = leather

**Area 1a:** While the artifacts from Bags 449 and 432 were maintained separately, the cobbles, bricks, etc. were inadvertently combined. That was reflected on the print-out. Bag 801 was a contaminated type collection bag. This bag and any other bag without a provenience was labelled: 18PR175.

**Area 1b:** Bag 1304 was the interface between Features 143, 165, and 235. On the computer this bag was given three entries—one for each feature. But only the entry for Feature 143 was given the complete processing information.

**Area 1c:** For both the well and cellar, there were major changes
in provenience designations. A list of these changes is at the end of this report.

Area 4: Several levels from several units were accidently combined. These were identified as combined under the "Comments" column. The artifacts were labeled and catalogued as if they came from the first or most recent level. An asterisk has been placed behind those bags.

Area 6: This area produced a massive amount of artifacts. At times the buckets and boxes of artifacts came in such quantities that the amount was indicated as "X Boxes". This area also contained many whole bottles. Often bottles from several proveniences would come in the same box. Rather than identify them as "1 Box", we identified the items explicitly on the print-out, e.g., "3 Bttl". At the present time Bag 2350 is missing. The original provenience of this bag was K6A6001B34; it was changed to K6A6001C25. Under the comments, we made an entry "B34-Lost". If a bag with the old provenience is found, it is hoped that this comment might be useful.

Area 6 had major changes in provenience designations; these changes are listed at the end of this report. Much of Area 6 was considered too recent to have archaeological significance or to be processed fully through the lab. For this reason many of the artifacts were removed from the collection.

Conservation: Some artifacts were pulled as they were catalogued. A piece of paper was placed in the artifact bag stating that an artifact was removed for conservation; the item was also noted on
on master lists of things removed for conservation. If Kate Singley, the conservator, rejected the artifacts, they were immediately sent back; the items were crossed off the master list and the note removed from the bag. Artifacts accepted for conservation were treated and any pertinent comments by the conservator were added to the catalogue sheet. As the end of the field work approached and artifacts needed to be packed for shipment, conserved items (also rejected items and SSAs) could not be packed in their appropriate artifact bags. Therefore these items were boxed separately but according to area.

Some articles for conservation were identified in the field; as they came into the lab these were sent directly to the conservator. The paperwork involved was the same as that detailed above.

Also floral specimens were pulled for floral analysis.

Bag Changes: While lists of major changes to bags were kept, records of the small daily corrections that inevitably occur were not kept. It was assumed that field personnel would change the soil sample bags if needed. However, it became apparent that this did not always happen. Major changes have been made and recorded, but it is impossible for the lab to now catch and correct the small changes.

Data Entry Program: This program was a list of the catalogued entries completed by the cataloguers. This project was not completed in the lab. For Area 1, Units 1 - 399 were entered, printed, proofed, and corrected; most features were entered and printed but not proofed.
The remainder of the catalogue sheets were not entered. Nor were the field weights entered. Weights taken early in the project were listed in a yellow field notebook; weights taken later were on the screening sheets.

Personnel Notes: Susan Eigen has experience with the daily bag entries. She is aware of the kinds of problems that have appeared in the initial processing of the artifact bags, soil samples, SSAs, and in pulling items for conservation. She also has some experience with putting information on the computer.

Elizabeth Jorgensen has spent more time than anyone on assigning MGS numbers. She also almost single-handedly organized the mountains of artifacts from Area 6. As a result she has the best handle on the many problems associated with this area.

*SHERON*: only 2% of catalogue sheets had weighable items w/ field weights. These were not entered into computer. Almost all weights were lab weights i.e. wrong weights.