What of the other domestic pastimes: cards, games, and music? The inventories suggest that enjoyment of those activities was far more restricted than were the pleasures of reading. Only five households, all among the wealthiest, owned a piano, and just ten included even a fiddle among their possessions, although poorer households were among the owners of fiddles. Other instruments included harps, drums, lyres, guitars, flutes, horns, and bagpipes, but households having any musical capability numbered only seventeen, just 3 percent of the total. Thus, while more than 50 percent of households owned books, only 3 percent had musical instruments. Marylanders, then, were more likely to pass their evenings listening to someone reading aloud than they were to enjoy a musical performance. Thirty households owned card tables, while eleven could enjoy a game of backgammon. Smaller numbers yet could play games such as cribbage, checkers, or chess. Other amusements included shuffleboard, painting, billiards, and shuttlecocks, but less than 1 percent of families owned equipment for playing any of the games or for painting. Reading, then, was the leisure activity that enjoyed the most widespread participation within the family.

Games of chance, such as the backgammon games played by William Thornton and his friends, were more likely to take place in the setting of a tavern than they were to be played in the home. Drinking and the social activities that accompanied it—cards, billiards, backgammon, and gambling—were masculine entertainments that were commonly tavern-based. The account books of Jesse Richardson, a merchant of Easton, Maryland, record charges to his customers for pints of spirits served them in the billiard room of the tavern across the street, just as local tavernkeepers purchased most of the packs of cards that he sold.[4] Samuel Davidson, whose increasing deafness forced his retirement in 1790 from a successful career as a Georgetown merchant, passed part of his days playing whist and backgammon at Suter's tavern in Georgetown, and recorded his winnings and losses monthly in his ledger.[5] Betting was an activity in its own right; merchant John Morsell bet on the outcome of an election for director of a Georgetown bank and Samuel Davidson won four beaver hats from Thomas Beall in a wager on the inclusion of Georgetown within the Federal District.[6]

Another masculine activity, the fox hunt, was also based upon the tavern. Easton fox hunts assembled at Mr. Lowe's tavern, and the gentlemen attending were requested to leave their names at the bar so that dinner could be provided for them upon their return.[7] As an activity that required both ownership of a suitable horse and the leisure time to participate—the hunts were often scheduled on weekday mornings—fox hunting was clearly an activity of the gentry, not the common man. Horse races, however, apparently drew from all social classes and attracted women as well as men. The Reverend Cutler, who attended the meeting in November 1803, noted in his journal that the spectators numbered between "three and four thousand, black, white, and yellow; of

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