

SECTION 5.0 DELMARVA ETHNOHISTORY

The following section presents a brief inventory and anthropological analysis of historic and ethnographic data bearing on past Native American populations of the Mid-Atlantic region. One of the main objectives of this section is to better understand geographic organization, settlement, subsistence, and exchange patterns of the peoples resident on the Delmarva Peninsula at the time of European contact (Contact). Another objective is to describe facets of the social, ceremonial, and symbolic systems and to generate a context for interpreting cultural processes and archaeological patterns at Hickory Bluff.

The specific types of data used to develop the inventory and description of groups present at Contact include primary sources such as colonial government documents, individual accounts, missionary accounts, and maps from the seventeenth century. Also utilized were later synthetic works aimed at identifying spatial organization of Native peoples of the Delmarva through the use of land records, wills, deeds, and other primary documents, particularly the work of William Marye (Marye 1936a, 1936b, 1937a, 1937b, 1938, 1939a, 1939b, 1940, 1944) and Leon DeValinger (De Valinger 1940, 1941, 1944). Narrative histories written during the twentieth century that utilized sound research of primary documents also were consulted. C.A. Weslager's histories of the Delaware and the Nanticoke provided narrative historical data (Weslager 1943, 1959, 1972, 1983). Additionally, several published ethnohistoric (or historical anthropological) works concerning Native Peninsular peoples were consulted, including the work of Herbert Kraft (Kraft 1986), Helen Rountree (Rountree 1989, 1993), and Thomas Davidson (Rountree and Davidson 1997). The ethnological symbolic analyses of Eastern Woodland culture by George Hamell (Hamell 1983, 1987) and the work of Kathleen Bragdon (Bragdon 1981, 1996) concerning southern New England Native peoples also provided important interpretive insights as well as information on material practices. Less systematic speculations about pre-Contact and Contact period Native culture contained in ethnographic accounts made in post-Contact times were not used.

In addition to historically focused work, ethnographic data were used to inform the sections on cosmology and symbolic behavior, and to provide analogs for building archaeologically testable hypotheses. Later eighteenth and nineteenth century missionary accounts from Delaware and Nanticoke peoples on and off the Peninsula provided information on ritual activities and their material correlates. These included works by professional anthropologists Mark R. Harrington on early twentieth century non-Peninsular Delaware (Harrington 1921); Frank G. Speck on the Delaware and Nanticoke (Speck 1915a, 1915b, 1919, 1931, 1937); and Gladys Tantaquidgeon on the Delaware (Tantaquidgeon 1972). Busby's historical and anthropological research on Chesapeake, particularly Delmarva, Native peoples also served in this inventory and analysis (Busby 1995, 2000a, 2000b).

GROUPS AT CONTACT

A sketch of Delmarva Native groups and their territories at the time of Contact is reviewed here. No attempt was made to trace movements and changes in tribal identities prior to or past the Contact period, rather the goal was to provide a context for understanding the historical and cultural landscapes of the Delmarva region at the time of Contact.

The majority of information on tribal settlement patterns and territorial boundaries for this period comes from John Smith's accounts, other Virginia explorers, and information from the Virginia colony records (Figure 5.1). The Accomac and the Occohannocks were the two dominant groups of the southern Delmarva and were allied with the Powhatan of the Virginia mainland for at least the early portion of the seventeenth century (Smith 1986a:150-151, 1986b:224-225). According to Smith, the Occohannocks (Acohanock) possessed forty men while the Accomac possessed at least eighty (Smith 1986a:150), an observation that provided a relative population size estimate.



Figure 5.1 Capt. John Smith's 1608 Map of the Chesapeake Region and the Delmarva

The Native groups near the present-day Maryland-Virginia boundary, especially those along the Atlantic Coast, were poorly identified in early seventeenth century accounts. However, the Gingoteague, affiliated in some manner with the mainland Powhatan, are known to have inhabited that area around the 1650s (Marye 1939a:21, 1940:24). North of this area, near present-day Assawoman Inlet, was the settlement of Kickotank, also occupied in the 1650s (Marye 1940:24). Land sale records from the early 1680s attest to the presence of the Assawomacks or Assawomen in the Assawoman Inlet area at this time; it is possible that they could be the same as the earlier referenced Kickotanks (Marye 1939a). In the early eighteenth century, a group of Assateague moved to the Assawoman Inlet location and temporarily occupied that area (Marye 1940).

On the Chesapeake Bay side of the Delmarva, Smith encountered the Wighcocomoco Indians who became known as the Pocomokes. The Pocomokes inhabited the present-day Pocomoke River drainage, called "Tants Wighcocomoco" in Smith's account (Smith 1986a:150). Their warrior count was estimated at 100 men (Smith 1986a:150). By the late seventeenth century, the Pocomokes had become an amalgamation of several tribes along the Pocomoke and Annamessex River drainages who lived predominantly at a place called Askiminikansen (Rountree and Davidson 1997:96). After the 1730s, references to the Pocomokes and their sometimes allies, the Assateague, become rare.

The Assateague appear for the first time in Maryland records in 1659 as residents on the Atlantic coast near the head of the Pocomoke River (Browne 1885:379-380). Around this time, the Assateague had several villages along the seaboard side of present-day Worcester County, Maryland between the Pocomoke River and the ocean bays and inlets (Marye 1939:20). Prior to the mid-seventeenth century, the Assateague could have been one of the groups resident along the Atlantic Coast (Rountree and Davidson 1997:96). By 1677, they were residing at the headwaters of the Pocomoke River at a settlement called Queponqua. Assateagues also were living at Askiminikansen along with, but separate from, the Pocomokes (Browne 1887:480). Portions of the Assateague moved east to the Assawoman Inlet area in the later seventeenth century and then north to Indian River where they established a settlement called Askecksy or Ashquesonne Town some time in the last quarter of the seventeenth century but at least by 1705 (Marye 1939:18). The settlement of Askecksy was considered reserved land. Around the 1680s, this group of Assateague become known as the Indian River Indians (Browne 1904:442-444, 1908:264-265; Marye 1939). Land sales and other records can trace the presence of Indian River Indians here through the 1740s (DeValinger 1940, 1941; Marye 1939a, 1940).

The Kuskarawaok, who became known as the Nanticoke Indians, inhabited the area along the "Kus flu" or Nanticoke River drainage, occupying between 5-10 villages contemporaneously during the seventeenth century (Browne 1905:256; Smith 1986a:150, 185, 189, 1986b:226). This group was the largest and strongest on the Delmarva with Smith estimating their warrior count at 200 (Smith 1986a:150). He described their language as different from the Powhatan, and acknowledged them as significant participants in the indigenous prestige goods trade through their manufacture of white shell beads. They also were known for their abundance of furs (Smith 1986a:150, 1986c:164-165, 168). The Nanticoke remained a strong presence on the Peninsula throughout the Contact period, maintaining possession of significant portions of their core territories (Busby 2000b; Porter 1979).

North of the Nanticoke, along the Choptank River drainage, were the Choptank Indians. Although Smith did not specifically mention these people in his description, the Maryland colonial government initiated interaction with them in the first half of the seventeenth century (Browne 1885:362-364; Marye 1936a:15). They were divided into three bands, each with a territorial base but resided predominantly within a definable, contiguous area in the vicinity of present-day Cambridge, Maryland (Browne 1896:260; Marye 1936a:15; McAllister 1962). This group also maintained possession of their core territories throughout the Contact period primarily by cooperating with the colonial Maryland government (Busby 2000b; Porter 1979).

The Siconesse were an Atlantic seaboard group associated with the large Lenape entity of the Delaware/New Jersey/Pennsylvania area (Figure 5.2). At the time of Contact, they inhabited the area around Cape Henlopen and Lewes, Delaware. The Siconesse were recognized as early as 1629 when Lindestrom referred to them as “a powerful nation rich in maize plantations” (Weslager 1972:35). The Dutch identified two divisions of this group: the Great Siconesse were

resident in Delaware and the Small Siconesse inhabited locations across Delaware Bay in New Jersey (Weslager 1972:36) (Figure 5.3). The Great Siconesse's territory stretched from Bombay Hook, near Duck Creek, south to Lewes (De Valinger 1940, 1941). A 1630s land transfer listed three Sackamackers or chiefs representing their village on the south hook of the South River Bay (presumably the Cape Henlopen) (De Valinger 1940, 1941; Fernow 1877:16-17; Hazzard 1850:23). Evidence suggests that this group ceased to exist as a separate Native entity after the Duke of York period and, that by 1671, most had moved over to New Jersey (Becker 1988; Kraft 1986; Weslager 1972:150). However, the Siconesse town of Checonnesseck, in the Lewes vicinity, was a viable entity until at least 1677 (Browne 1896:146).

The interactions of the Siconesse attest to the complex construction of group identity and alliances that took place prior to and during the colonial era. While their connection to other Lenape peoples is evident, the Siconesse often were allied with western Peninsula groups such as the Wicomiss and the Nanticoke. The Whorekill or Wicomiss Path was a frequently traveled artery linking the Siconesse settlements with the territories of the Wicomiss on the western side of the Delmarva. It has been postulated that subsequently displaced Wicomiss joined with the Siconesse at the settlement of Checonnesseck in the last half of the seventeenth century (Marye 1938:150).

The Wicomiss, originally termed the Ozines by Smith, were described as possessing 60 warriors (Marye 1938, 1939b; Smith 1986a:150). They resided along the Chester River and their territory extended from its headwaters southward along the mid-Peninsular drainage divide as far south as the Wicomico River (Marye 1938:151; Smith 1986a:150). The alliances, travails, and settlements of this group also reveal the malleability and creative actions taken by Native peoples in this period of great change. The Susquehannocks displaced this group southward after the 1630s (Marye 1939b). In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, Maryland pursued a war against the Wicomiss because of their alliance with the “Delaware Indians.” Many captives were sold into slavery in Barbados in 1669 (Browne 1883:196, 1887:136). In their southward displacement, they found refuge among the Nanticoke on the Bay side. In 1668, they inhabited a settlement near or within the Nanticoke village of Chicone (Steiner 1915:355). Their continued existence with a distinct identity is attested with a reference to Wicomiss people living at the Siconesse town of Checonnesseck in 1677 (Browne 1896:146).

The Tockwoghs resided along the Sassafra River, the next drainage north of the Chester River (Smith 1986a:150). Not much detail beyond what Smith recorded in 1608 is known of these people. They possessed a palisaded village, no doubt necessitated by the frequent onslaughts of the Susquehannocks and the Massawomecks (Smith 1986c:231). To the west were the Monoponsons, a group who resided on Kent Island during the early seventeenth century (Browne 1885:362-364; Marye 1938). The last references to a group called the Tockwoghs describe their participation in a 1659 treaty with the Maryland government along with the Choptanks; this treaty permitted colonial settlement of the upper portion of the western Peninsula area (Browne 1885:362-364).

In addition to the Siconesse, other Native groups associated with the larger Lenape group designation were resident on the extreme northern sections of the Delmarva. The larger group designation of Lenape can be divided along linguistic lines with a relatively homogenous dialect spoken north and east of the Raritan River and the Delaware Water Gap, and a more diverse group of dialects spoken south of this line (Goddard 1979). The northern people, inhabitants of northern New Jersey, Manhattan Island, and the area of the North River (Hudson River), are generally defined as Munsee. Unami speakers inhabited areas along the South River (Delaware River) encompassing central and southern New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania, and northern Delaware at the time of Contact (Kraft 1986:xv).

The 1608 map of John Smith depicted two groups, the Macocks and the Chickahokin, on the western side of the Delaware River within what appears to be present-day New Jersey (Figure 5.1) (Smith 1986a:189). Another group, the Atquanachuks, are depicted on Smith’s map to the north of the Macocks and Chickahokin. Smith recorded that Chief Powhatan described

these groups as being resident on the ocean; thus, they may possibly correlate with the Aquaachuques later recorded in middle New Jersey (Smith 1986a:172, 183, 1986c:107). Overall, Smith's accounts provide little information on the Lenape people, providing no detail of how these people interacted with the Kuskarawaoks (Nanticokes) of the more southern part of the Peninsula or how they interacted with the northwestern groups such as the Ozinies and Tockwoghs. Their relation to the Susquehannocks, the Massawomecks, and other more northern groups similarly was overlooked. Later in the seventeenth century, other Europeans recorded southern Unami inhabitants' names including: Armewamex, Big Siconese, Little Siconese, Brandywine, Mantaes, Naraticonck, Okehoking, Remkokes, Sankhikan, Schuykill, and Sewapois (Kraft 1986:xv).

The Native groups resident near present-day New Castle County, Delaware in the Brandywine River Valley included the Quenomysing and the Minguannan who were collectively referred to at times as the Brandywine Indians (Figure 5.3) (Weslager 1972:34, 38). The Brandywine Indians maintained a separate identity from other Unami-speaking Lenape to south and east and from Munsee speakers to the north through their patterns of settlement, land transactions, and within and cross-cultural associations (Weslager 1972:178-179). The Swedes made a series of land purchases in this area from 1638-1643 that apparently did not drastically affect the locations of settlements (Weslager 1972:119-120).

Quenomysing, situated at the Big Bend in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, was the largest village on the Brandywine River; smaller towns were located along the tributary streams (Weslager 1972:34). Minguannan village was located along White Clay Creek in Chester County, Pennsylvania. Colonial documents attest to the Quenomysing and Minguannan inhabiting these locations from earliest contact (Weslager 1972:119-120). In 1697, fifty people were reported living at Minguannan with the rest at Brandywine (Big Bend) and Upland Creeks (location not determined) (Browne 1899:520). At this time, the Brandywine were reported to be subject to the Susquehannocks and, sometime after 1729, moved to live with them along the Susquehanna River (Weslager 1972:187).

The Susquehannock Indians entered the Delmarva around 1608, making forays from their villages along the Susquehanna River in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. By the late 1650s, they expanded their fur trading territory to the north shore of the Choptank River (Jennings 1968; Myers 1912:38-42; Smith 1986a:149-150, 1986c:231). Their presence affected the form and substance of Lenape life and pushed other groups, such as the Monoponsons of Kent Island and Wicomiss of Maryland's side of the Peninsula, southward with sustained hostilities (Jennings 1968; Marye 1938:147, 150; Rountree and Davidson 1997:80).

The Massawomecks were another hostile presence who frequently attacked local groups at the upper reaches of the Peninsula during the early Contact period. Their movement into the area appears to also have been predicated on the fur trade. The origin of this group of people is subject to debate by anthropologists, but many believe them to have been Iroquian and related to the Five Nations living somewhere near the Niagara River in the early seventeenth century (Kent 1984:26; Pendergast 1991; Rountree 1989:142; Smith 1986c:119). The Tockwoghs suffered numerous onslaughts by the Massawomecks, but the Nanticokes were said to be awed by them (Smith 1986c:105-106, 119, 165).

POST-CONTACT PERIOD POPULATIONS

For the southern Unami-speaking Lenape, including those of the northern Peninsula, the 1640s saw the end of the profitable fur trade (Kraft 1986:224-225; Printz 1912:103). By the mid-1660s, significant movements of people occurred first into the interior of New Jersey and then into western Pennsylvania (Kraft 1986:224-225; Weslager 1972). While pockets of people remained in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, from the eighteenth century onward, groups of Lenape continued westward to Ontario as early as 1783 (Weslager 1972). Others went on more lengthy migrations punctuated with settlement and resettlement in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, Missouri, Kansas, Texas, and Oklahoma (Kraft 1986:233-235; Weslager 1972).

The Nanticoke and related groups of the southern Peninsula experienced the same land pressures and decline in the fur trade. Displaced peoples coalesced into smaller areas (Figure 5.4). Many resided within several reservations that were created by the Maryland and Virginia colonies in the later seventeenth century. Some of these survived into the late eighteenth century including: Chicone (Maryland State Archives 1785); Choptank/Locust Neck (McAllister 1962:109-11); and Askeksy (Marye 1940:25) (Figure 5.5). The Gingaskin (Accomac) reservation continued into the mid-nineteenth century (Rountree and Davidson 1997:166-202).

By the mid-eighteenth century, a large number of people had migrated to Pennsylvania to live among the Six Nations (Weslager 1983). Some Nanticoke people migrated with the Delawares attached to the Moravians going to Ohio and Ontario, while others found a home with the Delawares who moved to Oklahoma (Fliegal 1970; Harrington 1921; Weslager 1983).

Some of the people who chose to stay melded into the dominant society while others moved to lands in the mid-Peninsular drainage divide and other marginal areas and managed to survive (Porter 1979; Rountree and Davidson 1997). Numerous published accounts attest to a continual Indian presence on the Delmarva throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Anonymous 1948/9; Babcock 1899; Fisher 1929; Humphreys 1730:159-168; Perry 1878; Porter 1986:162-163; Scharff 1888; U. S. Census 1890:5-35, 231; Weslager 1943). Ethnographies and archival research in the twentieth century identify the continued presence of Native people of the Delmarva (Porter 1979; Speck 1915a; Weslager 1972, 1983; Heite and Blume 1995, 1999; Heite and Heite 1985).

SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS

Interpretation of historic accounts reveals at least two different types of settlement system organization for Peninsular groups. The differences resulted from both environmental as well as socio-political factors. Lenape populations of the extreme northern Delaware area were organized into bands whose settlement pattern included movement between aggregated villages and individual band settlements within a restricted territory. Individual bands, consisting of around 25 inhabitants, lived in settlements near or within the floodplain of small feeder streams. A distance of four to five miles separated these settlements (Becker 1988). Summer through fall, several bands aggregated into permanent stations at the mouths of main rivers. Populations of these villages may have included over a hundred inhabitants (Becker 1988; Newcomb 1956:77).

In the winter, they separated into individual or nuclear families, followed solitary deer, and gathered available foodstuffs. Temporary camps were established to accommodate this phase of the settlement cycle. The summer communal locations would be moved when the surrounding resources were exhausted (Becker 1988). Each band had a territory measuring approximately 40 miles in any direction and defined by environmental factors (Stewart 1998:7).

Prior to the eighteenth century, the Lenape had no identity as a “tribe” or “nation.” Local autonomy prevailed. Villages were “virtually autonomous settlements probably composed of lineages and clans” that “dealt effectively with most social problems, both economic and governmental...above the clan level there were but few poorly developed institutions” (Newcomb 1956:77). Some villages were loosely linked in transitory alliances formed to counter outside threat.

Lenape groups of the northern Peninsula are described as consisting of bands arrayed in loosely affiliated village settlements, moving between summer villages to dispersed winter camps. In contrast, groups to the south, such as the Nanticoke, Accomac, and Occohannock,

have been largely characterized as lineal tribes and chiefdom-level societies with a hierarchical arrangement of permanent settlements along river drainages (Custer 1986; Smith 1986a:140-141; Turner 1986). Manifestations of permanent settlement varied, however. Information about more clustered settlements dominates historic European descriptions because it was a pattern more familiar, and therefore recognizable, to them. Thus, groups such as the Nanticoke stand out because they practiced settlement in more clustered and easily definable villages. The settlement organization of other groups may have been less clustered yet still could be considered permanent.

An ecologically-based north/south gradient in subsistence practices is recognized for the early Contact period on the Peninsula (Rountree and Davidson 1997). However, the spatial organization of people in relation to food resources apparently had little affect on the settlement patterns as groups were arrayed in hierarchical settlement systems along river drainages across varied ecological settings. Most groups, such as the Nanticoke, Pocomoke, Accomac, and Occohannock, inhabited several contemporaneous permanent villages along river drainages. However, a single river drainage or portions of several drainages could form the territories of individual groups (Browne 1905:256; Rountree and Davidson 1997; Smith 1986a:140-141, 150-151, 1986b:226). The preferred placement of these clustered settlements was away from the mouths of major rivers on high bluffs adjacent to fresh water and near marshes (Potter 1993:28-29; Strachey 1953:77). When a group had more than one contemporaneous village, one served as the residence of the chief and possessed a more densely occupied core habitation area. This core area included labor-intensive architectural components such as a more elaborate chiefly dwelling and, with the case of the Nanticoke village of Chicone, a palisade as well (Browne 1896:360-361; Busby 2000a; Marye 1940). Analysis of John Smith's *Map of Virginia* suggests the linear arrangement of settlements along streams for multi-settlement groups (Potter 1993).

The range of settlement types included dispersed villages and individual hamlets or households. Hamlets containing several kin-related households and individual houses arrayed across some portion of the landscape, most likely bounded by natural features. The related hunting and gathering stations would be included as well. The Nanticoke village of Chicone and the settlement of the Choptank resembled this pattern (Busby 2000a; Marye 1937b). In contrast, the system individual habitation sites (households) or clusters of habitations (hamlet), was associated with a certain group, the Nanticoke for instance, but not with a distinct habitation area such as a village. Using historic accounts, Stephen Potter (1982, 1993:86, 88-89) modeled the settlement structure for activity areas within an early Contact period village on Virginia's mainland coastal plain. In the model, the chief's residence formed a "core settlement" within a larger, dispersed village. Other clusters of houses and hunting and gathering sites would be located over a 2-km distance from the core.

Villages or dispersed settlements on the Delmarva could span both sides of a stream and cover a range of sizes. Employing land patents and colonial surveys, the sizes and configuration of several lower Peninsula villages can be ascertained. Records indicate some encompassed three square miles whereas many covered upwards of 5,000 acres, with ones such as the Choptank settlement covering at least 16,000 acres (Busby 2000b; Davidson and Rountree 1997:113-114; McAllister 1962). The Choptank settlement included the territories of three separate sub-groups with an estimated population of about 130 persons at about 1722 (Rountree

and Davidson 1997:128). The Nanticoke Indian settlement of Nanticoke, called Chicone Village by the colonists, encompassed about 9,000 acres and spanned both sides of the Nanticoke River (Rountree and Davidson 1997:113-14). Based on John Smith's account, the Nanticoke population at the beginning of the seventeenth century could have consisted of at least 850 persons (Busby 1995). At the beginning of the eighteenth century, their population is estimated to have been at least 500 persons (Rountree and Davidson 1997:128-9). Based on that figure, the maximal population of the Chicone settlement probably ranged from 150-200 people during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries with periodic fluctuations. South of this, the Manokin Indian (related to the Pocomoke Indians) settlement of Tundotank encompassed about nine square miles and possessed a smaller number of residents than the other villages (Rountree and Davidson 1997:Figure 3.5).

Within the dispersed village of Chicone, textual evidence indicates distinct lineage-based territorial divisions (Busby 1995, 2000b). Employing cartographic and archaeological data, the locations of habitation clusters or individual habitations appear to follow streams in a linear fashion with spacing between clusters measuring approximately 250 feet (Busby 2000a). The pattern within the Choptank settlement reveals lineage-based territories organized around small drainages within the larger settlement area (Busby 2000b; Marye 1937b). Seasonal hunting and gathering camps consisted of more ephemeral habitation architecture and would have included at least a hearth and the physical residue of the particular activities undertaken at the site (Rountree 1989:34, 41, 62).

The question of the existence of family-based hunting territories has been raised for Delmarva Native peoples (Porter 1979; Speck 1915b; Speck and Eiseley 1939; Weslager 1941), although it also has been refuted (Wallace 1947; Weslager 1972:39). A pattern outlined for northern Lenape groups suggests a maximal group ownership of land that later shifted to individual land actions with the influence of sustained Contact (Grumet 1979:229). This pattern offers a more parsimonious explanation for the southern Lenape as well. The Delmarva land sales conducted by New Jersey Lenape most likely represent former group hunting territories (DeValinger 1940, 1941).

Eighteenth and nineteenth century data have been used to suggest that the Nanticoke had the concept of family hunting grounds in earlier times as well (Porter 1979; Speck 1915b; Speck and Eiseley 1939). However, no evidence exists for individual hunting grounds within the comparable socio-political organization of Powhatan chiefdom. Furthermore, areas not under cultivation were considered communal land rather than permanently divided by kin relations (Rountree 1989:40). The ownership or control of land involved its active use (Bragdon 1996:138). On the lower Peninsula, an integral part of land sales to Europeans included definitions of use-rights reserved for Native peoples and included the rights to hunting, fishing, and fowling. However, the sales involved corporate action rather than as individuals or families (Busby 2000b). Evidence concerning the Powhatan asserts that, "[e]very Weroance (chief) knows his owne Meers and lymitts to fish fowle or hunt" (Strachey 1953:87). This lends credence to communal land holding controlled at the chiefly level, not that of the individual, family, or lineage.

Intra-Site Organization

Historic accounts concerning settlement components deal mostly with those of dispersed villages with clustered cores. The well-known John White watercolors of coastal North Carolina Algonquians provide information about the configuration of the core settlements. White depicts both circular, palisaded clusters (Figure 5.6) as well as more dispersed clustered cores (Figure 5.7) (Hulton 1984). Within core settlements, the constituent elements included a chiefly residence consisting of more elaborate architecture, houses of his closest kin, and other houses. The number of houses in the core area could range from two to a hundred according to some accounts (Rountree 1989:60). In addition to residential structures, core structures would include a sweathouse, a menstrual hut, a temple, and perhaps a chiefly storage structure (Smith 1986a:169, 173, 176; Strachey 1953:74, 88-89). Other features of the settlement would include drying racks and cooking racks, potentially a palisade, and storage pits and aboveground storage features (Potter 1993:170-173).

Data gathered about Powhatan settlements describe residences within villages located adjacent to fields and gardens, and mixed in with groves of trees (Rountree 1989:58). The organization of the settlement was interwoven with the organization of subsistence practices (Rountree 1989:46). Fields were worked by individual women who located their houses near fields. Sizes of fields varied from 200 square feet to 20-200 acres. As local resources became exhausted (5-20 years), entire villages moved to new locations. Woods cleared of underbrush surrounded the village.

The cycles of village habitation also followed those of subsistence. Dispersal from the village occurred in winter months when smaller family or somewhat larger aggregate groups left to hunt. For groups practicing more intensive horticulture at or before Contact, dispersal would have occurred to gather subsistence items over the summer when crops were ripening. This latter pattern is postulated for the Accomac and Occohannock. Once the central Peninsular groups, such as the Nanticoke, began to include more agriculture in their subsistence regime, village dispersal is attested during the growing season (Steiner 1915:366-370).

Villages included communal areas such as dance grounds within which central fires were lit. Dance grounds also might be placed in fields (Smith 1986a:170). Large communal feasts took place within the central areas of villages (Rountree 1989). Paths and waterways connected settlements with paths crosscutting the territories of several different groups (Marye 1938:150). Supra-village ritual locations such as temples, mortuary temples, storehouses, and impromptu offering sites existed across the larger landscape.

SUBSISTENCE PRACTICES

The resources available to Native people of the Delmarva at the time of Contact varied along a north/south environmental continuum. The sandier soils of the Virginia portion allowed horticulture to be practiced to a larger degree and earlier than in other locales and this area supported abundant birds, fish, and shellfish. The middle portions of the Chesapeake side of the Peninsula were characterized by ample stream development within relatively broad valleys. Within these valleys, meanders of the fresh portions of streams allowed for abundant emergent plant growth, a dietary staple in this area. Hardwood forests were abundant here and were a

source of mast and large and small mammals. The northern portions of the Peninsula were rockier and characterized by fewer saltwater resources and fewer marshes, but the resources of the oak-hickory forests and some emergent plants were available (Rountree and Davidson 1997).



Figure 5.6 Palisaded Village of Pomeiooc (Hulton 1984: Plate 32)

Two different models of subsistence practices apply to the Delmarva groups. The northern Lenape aggregated in semi-permanent villages at the mouths of main rivers during the summer through fall (Becker 1988; Newcomb 1956:77). Here they practiced some horticulture, fished, hunted migratory fowl, collected shellfish, and used other local resources. In the winter, they dispersed into individual or nuclear families, hunted solitary deer and gathered available foodstuffs. Between the 1640s and 1660s, the Lenape cash-cropped maize to meet Swedish needs but did not alter their traditional collecting strategies and never stored their grain (Becker 1988:80). This need-based production overly influenced European descriptions of the Indians' reliance on maize.

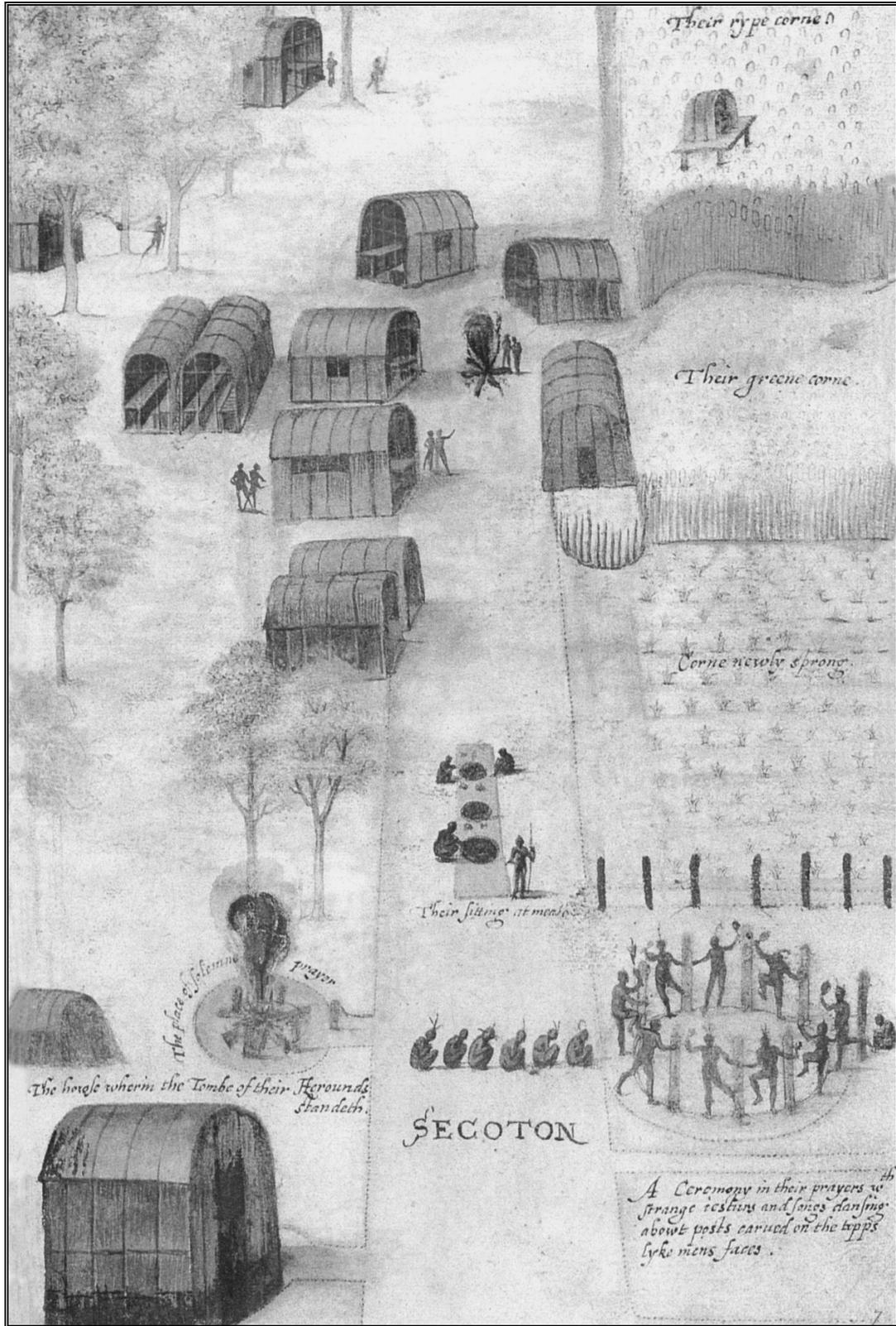


Figure 5.7 Dispersed Settlement of Secoton (Hulton 1984: Plate 36)

The sedentary villagers of the lower parts of the Peninsula followed a different subsistence regime that included varying amounts of horticulture. Based on Powhatan data, a bi-annual dispersal of village populations occurred. Inhabitants left to forage when the crops were ripening in the spring and again in the fall to hunt (Rountree 1989; Rountree and Davidson 1997). The subsistence regime for Peninsula groups who practiced little or no horticulture included, at least, the dispersal for fall hunting. The Virginia Coastal Plain information was used to construct a representative list of activities and resources by season that can serve as a model for Delmarva villages (Table 5.1) (Smith 1986a, 1986c; Rountree 1989; Rountree and Davidson 1997).

Table 5.1 Subsistence Model for Delmarva Native Groups

Months	Population Location	Wild Plants	Animals	Agricultural activities
March, April	Village	Tuckahoe	Fish, anadromous fish, turkey, squirrel, migratory ducks and geese	
May, June	Dispersed hunting	Tuckahoe, acorns, walnuts, chestnuts, chinquapins, strawberries, mulberries	Fish, anadromous fish, crabs, tortoise, oyster	Planting fields
June – August	Foraging while crops ripening	Tuckahoe, ground nuts	Fish, snake	Green corn ready
July-September	Village	Tuckahoe, berries, nuts		Crops ripe, squash ripening
August-October	Village	Tuckahoe, berries, nuts		Crops to eat, passion fruit ripening
August-November (Times of plenty)	Dispersed to hunt to store up for winter	Tuckahoe	Migratory ducks and geese	
November – January	In village, living off stored foods	Tuckahoe	Migratory ducks and geese	

Hunting consisted of trapping, stalking, and surrounding (Rountree 1989:39-41). Deer were hunted by the latter two methods whereas smaller mammals were trapped. Plentiful references to bone and stone tipped arrows used with bows are found in the literature concerning Chesapeake Bay groups (Rountree 1989:43). Traps and snares are referenced but little detail is provided on their construction. Fire was used as a tool in the deer surrounds which required a large number of people. Singular hunters stalked their prey. Fishing practices included angling and stabbing with spears. However, a larger number of fish could be caught using weirs in shallow water and this method predominated (Rountree and Davidson 1997:8). Information on shellfish collection is lacking in the literature of the Chesapeake. In southern New England, women were the main shellfish collectors. The activity was undertaken in singular and communal fashion but for individual household consumption (Bragdon 1996:110-111).

Men collected medicinal plants for the most part, whereas women collected the foodstuffs (Rountree 1989:88). Women produced basketry and other organic containers used in

collecting wild and domesticated food resources as well as containers used for storage (Rountree 1989:35). Men girdled trees to clear fields for planting but women took care of all other aspects of horticulture. Planting was accomplished with a stick used to create a small hole into which they placed corn kernels and beans. Four feet separated each hole. Ground-hugging squashes, melons, and passionflower were planted around these plants (Rountree 1989:47). When corn was harvested, it was gathered in hand baskets and stored in larger baskets in the house or in storage pits (Rountree 1989:49).

Information from the Powhatans of the Virginia Coastal Plain reveals that, in addition to walnut and bitter pecan, several unidentified species of hickory nut were eaten (Rountree 1989:53). A medicinal oil was derived from one kind of hickory nut while another kind was used to make *powhicora*, an important drink. In processing the nut for consumption in meals, the nuts were first dried and broken up with stones, after which they were dried again on a mat that was placed over a hurdle. This material was then beaten finer in a mortar. Water was added to make the shell sink to the bottom. The mixture was then boiled until thick and squash was sometimes added (Smith 1986a:152-153; Strachey 1953:121, 129).

An example of the use of mast in Native meals on the Delmarva comes from a 1650 encounter with southern Peninsula groups by the Virginian Colonel Henry Norwood. He described one meal as consisting of:

a sort of spoonmeat, in color and taste not unlike to almond-milk temper'd and mix'd with boiled rice. The ground (base) still was Indian corn boiled to a pap, which they call Homini, but the ingredient which performed the milky part, was nothing but dry pokickery nuts, beaten shells and all to powder, and they are like our walnuts, but thicker shell'd, and the kernel sweeter, but being beaten in mortar, and put in a tray, hollow'd in the middle to make a place for fair water (Weslager 1959:16-17).

TRADE AND EXCHANGE

The exchange practiced by Delmarva Native groups involved participation in wide-ranging prestige goods trade as well as non-politically oriented exchange (Figure 5.8). Symbolically charged substances formed an important part of the material exchanged and thus, involvement of otherworldly forces figured prominently. To better understand the exchange system of the Contact period Chesapeake, it serves to consider it as “gift-based” and predicated on the accrual of debt (Mallios 1996). Relationships between people took precedence over the item being exchanged. Status was lost in the failure to reciprocate, and each participant’s desire was to maximize the number of debts owed them. In this system, hierarchy was maintained by the ability to reciprocate and the value of goods exchanged. High rank people exchanged high rank goods whereas low rank people did not share this ability and thus, exchanged low-rank goods. The goods exchanged were not inalienable; transference of private property was not taking place. Rather, things were “loaned” with each exchange, with maintenance of the system requiring continual giving and works. The infinite transference created perpetually allied and interdependent groups (Mallios 1996). This pattern of conditional transference has been noted in seventeenth Massachusetts Indian land transfers in which sachems give land to other individuals of their own group based on their relationships with each other and under certain use conditions and temporal parameters (Bragdon 1981, 1996:137-138).

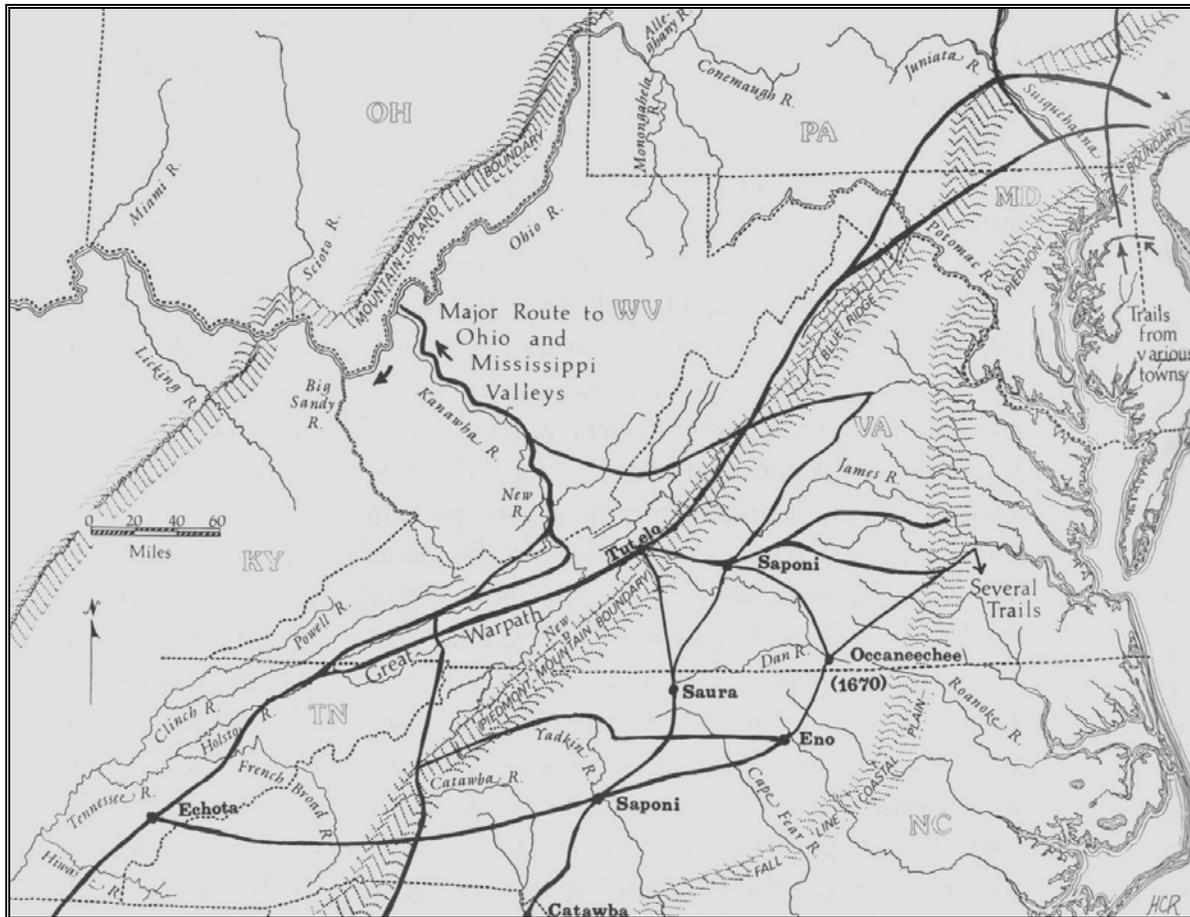


Figure 5.8 Major Trails out of the Chesapeake Region (Rountree 1993 Figure 1.3)

The organization of trade for the Nanticoke and related groups of the middle Peninsula prior to Contact highlights the importance of relationships between groups rather than the material exchanged. An affinity existed between the material culture of the middle Eastern Shore and the Potomac/Patuxent River drainages, particularly pottery styles and construction techniques. This and other similarities in material culture have been taken to suggest a principal partner trade relationship (Davidson 1993:147; Hughes 1980). A similar type of relationship most likely existed between the Powhatan and the Occohannock and Accomac of the southern Peninsula as well (Davidson 1993:147). Supporting this close connection between the two sides of the Bay is a speech delivered by the Piscataway of the western shore of Maryland. In it, they related that thirteen generations prior to the 1630s, an Eastern Shore king had controlled groups on both sides of the Bay and that the present lineage descended from him (Browne 1885:402-403). These geographically close, perpetually interdependent relationships involved a range of materials traded and types of exchange.

The flow of information and goods through kin relations formed another level of trade relations, particularly with the movement of women as wives (Rountree 1993:221-222). Women and men moving between tribes, sometimes between different linguistic groups, enabled peaceful and fruitful relationships. Knowledge of herbal remedies, the locations and dispositions

of other groups, and horticultural practices formed the basis of some types of esoteric trading. Small-scale trade conducted between regional individuals is well attested in colonial records and appears to have been nested within larger circuits of travel conducted to hunt, gather food stuffs, and visit friends and relatives (Busby 1995).

Larger scales of trade involved wide-ranging terrestrial and water communications systems that enabled the flow of goods and information (Figure 5.9). These networks spanned from the tip of Florida to the Great Lakes and west over the Mississippi (Tanner 1989). The Mid-Atlantic region, including the Delmarva, formed an important node in these networks (Rountree 1989).

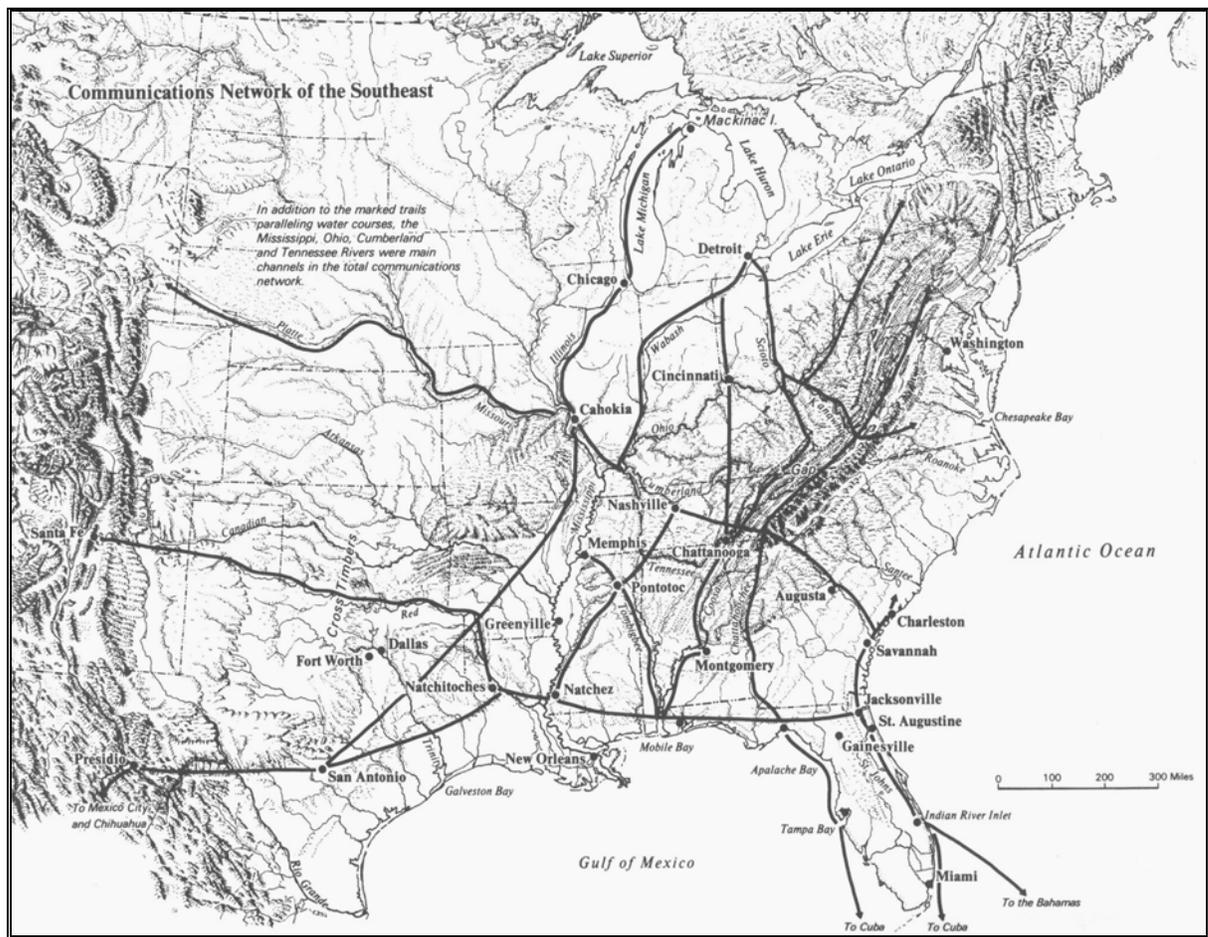


Figure 5.9 Large Scale Communications Network (Tanner 1989)

The prestige goods trade of the Mid-Atlantic consisted of the exchange of Atlantic Coast shell and freshwater pearls, southwestern Virginia puccoon root (a root used to make red dye), and Blue Ridge and Great Lakes copper (Figure 5.10). Delmarva groups were key participants in this network, particularly the Nanticoke, whose village of Kuskarawaok was described as the best place to trade for furs and the white shell beads called Roanoke (Smith 1986c:69). Roanoke served an important role in a variety of practices including burial ritual, rewards in battle, and alliance formations (Speck 1919).

In addition to serving in the connections created and sustained between elites, prestige goods figured prominently in regional tribute systems through a hierarchically-moving pattern (Potter 1989, 1993; Rountree 1989; Turner 1976). Regional models of rank-differentiated chiefdoms with hierarchical systems of tribute and chiefly trade monopolies draw extensively from the Polynesian Big Man model and descriptions of the Powhatan paramount chiefdom. These models concentrate on extraction from above. However, it is important to consider that the models need to be tempered with the understanding that the rigid tribute system described by

seventeenth century accounts may have been a “formally structured, mutually beneficial exchange mechanism” instead (Davidson 1993:147). It also is necessary to temper a regional view with the understanding that the socio-political organization of regional groups varied along a continuum. Delmarva Native societies were less hierarchically organized and models of Powhatan exchange apply in a restricted fashion.

Although Peninsular chiefs garnered disproportionate amounts of luxury items through some form of hierarchical exchange, evidence also shows their role in a mutually beneficial arrangement. A 1681 description of “Nanticocke ffort” at the Chicone settlement details that, “all the Indians except some weomen and Children were gone with their Corne skinns and matter and other truck (trade goods)” (Browne 1896:360). The fortification, demonstrably associated with the residence of the “emperor,” serves as a place of refuge for numerous people and a storage location for materials that appear to be held in common. Some of these items were used in trade. The chief thus can be seen as the embodiment of the community and his residence or its palisaded enclosure as a community storehouse (Busby 2000b).

The trade system for Lenape groups prior to their involvement in the fur trade must be deduced largely from the archaeological record and can be assumed to have taken place at a smaller scale than that of the ranked groups of the Peninsula. The types of exchanges must have been similar to that of other unranked Peninsular people. The Lenape’s skill in trade and their role as “women” in relation to the Iroquois in the post-Contact period Covenant Chain has been linked to their inability to conduct war (Wallace 1947). However, this role may have consisted more as middlemen or mediators with roots prior to Contact (Stewart 1998:6). Their participation in the European fur trade grew out of advantageous situations, although always overshadowed by the greater abilities of the Susquehannock and the Iroquois (Kraft 1986; Wallace 1947).

The important aspects of regional exchange involved skills in building relationships as much as the materials exchanged. The types of materials exchanged and their function in the cultural systems derives from the larger worldview. And the Algonquian world was animated with each part implicated in a morally bound partnership of reciprocity (Bragdon 1996:133). Thus, people were bound in a reciprocal relationship with others in addition to the land and its resources. Otherworldly beings figured prominently in these relations as well. People also implored intercedents in the form of *Manitous* with more power to help them meet their obligations (Bragdon 1996:133). Thus, trade in the Algonquian world cannot be seen as merely the exchange of materials and ideas, it implicates beings in this and other realms.

COSMOLOGY AND RITUAL BEHAVIOR

A regional Eastern Woodland cosmological system was shared by the post-European Contact period peoples of the Delmarva with groups across the Atlantic seaboard. This belief system was predicated largely on the underlying organizing concept of *Manitou*, a divine force embodied in all things of the cosmos, natural and supernatural (Figure 5.11). *Manitou* can be considered an animating force differentially distributed among people, places, things, and rituals. Generally, the expression of *Manitou* in creation ranged from harmful forms to those which were beneficial and wonderful, and the amounts with which things were charged varied. The investment of *Manitou* in things was not a permanent state either but varied according to human

interaction with divine beings (Bragdon 1996; Hallowell 1960:24-25; Harrington 1921:24, 50-51). *Manitou* also was embodied in deities with the name *Manitou* often used to denote a group of lesser deities or as a name for a specific lesser deity. *Manitou* was also a medium through which humans communicated with supernatural beings. Certain rituals, states of mind, places, and material objects enabled communication with these beings and enabled the transmission of the force *Manitou* into people and things (Tooker 1979:7-30).



Figure 5.11 An Eighteenth Century Depiction of a *Manitou* (Goddard 1978:Figure 16)

The remainder of this section centers on the local inflections of cosmological beliefs to suggest forms and meanings that may assist in hypothesis development for the archaeology of Hickory Bluff. Some salient categories include the manifestation of *Manitou* in creation accounts, otherworldly beings, rituals, places of this realm and others, the organization of time, substances, and activities in the everyday world.

Stories of Creation

Stories of the creation of the world and humankind embody conceptions of *Manitou* in varying forms. One Lenape account describes that the world was created by a pregnant woman fallen from the sky at the dawn of time after being pushed by her husband (Harrington 1921:24-25). Other regional accounts utilized animal symbolism. The Potomacs believed that a Great Hare who lived to the west created man and woman and protected them against lesser malevolent gods embodied by the four winds or four directions (Strachey 1953:102). Another seventeenth century Lenape account relayed that a tortoise carried on its back the island that humans would come to inhabit. The tortoise lifted the island out of the primeval waters that covered the universe. Man and woman sprang from the root of a tree in the middle of this island on the turtle's back (Danker and Sluyter 1867:150-151). These stories contain key regional symbols relating to the supernatural beings of the sky and the supernatural powers associated with water, particularly with the turtle as the embodiment of a creator being and as a mediator between the water world and the earth.

Otherworldly Beings

Local expressions of the cosmological system predicated on the concept of *Manitou* included beliefs in a creator being and lesser deities. The Powhatans believed in the great being *Ahone* as the creator of the world. There were also companion celestial bodies possessed of great powers. The name *Manitou* was not recorded among the Powhatan, rather those resembling *Okeus* were used in reference to the beneficial and harmful lesser beings (Rountree 1989:136). A belief in the lesser being *Okeus*, also known as *Oke*, *Quiocosock*, and *Kwiokos*, was shared among seventeenth century Algonquians of North Carolina and the Chesapeake (Harriot 1972:26; Lederer 1958:13; Rountree 1990:135n; Spelman 1910; White 1925:45). The use of the word *Manitou* is recorded for other Algonquian peoples to refer collectively and individually to these lesser beings (Smith 1986c:78n). The beneficent *Ahone* required no offerings whereas the lesser being *Okeus* directly interacted with people, affecting their daily lives in response to the offerings he received and his moods and judgments (Rountree 1989:135-136; Smith 1986a:169-170; 1986c:121-122; Strachey 1953:89, 102).

Similar examples from the Lenape include: a late nineteenth century reference to the original and perpetual great creator *Kickeron* (Danker and Sluyter 1867); accounts of beliefs in the creator living to the south where good souls traveled in the afterlife (Penn 1912); and belief in an omni-present supreme being and inferior *Mannittos* (Heckwelder 1819; Zeisberger 1910). Similarities in the concepts of *Manitou* and the persistence of those beliefs and the terminology used to express them are reflected in the term *mann!-itt* translated as the word 'god' in a late eighteenth century indigenous vocabulary from the Eastern Shore of Maryland (Murray 1792b). This persistence also is noted in the late nineteenth century Canadian Delaware reference to *Kacheh Munitto*, the great or benevolent spirit who created the Indians (Harrington 1921:22).

One part of the regional beliefs included *Okeus*' embodiment as a watchful deity in the *quiankeson* or charnel houses where the wealth and the remains of chiefs were kept. For Virginia Powhatans, deceased werowances and priests were said to take on the form of *Oke* in the afterlife (Rountree 1989:139). An early eighteenth century Virginia account details a figure made of a bundle with a wooden head that was kept inside the mortuary temple and which was animated by the priests during ceremonies (Berkeley and Berkeley 1968). These places had restricted access to priests and chiefs, and manifested the belief that the wealth of chiefs and their entrance the afterlife required tangling with *Okeus*.

Manitou and Human Beings

Sacred Knowledge, Powers, and Prerogatives

During the Contact period in the Chesapeake, the concept of *Manitou* as a pervading life force accessible to all operated simultaneously with beliefs regarding the hierarchical organization of supernatural beings. The hierarchical organization of deities was linked to the social organization of people with the hierarchical organization manifested in beliefs concerning the soul as well. Priests were people possessed of sacred knowledge recursively related to their connections to otherworldly beings and powers. Skills associated with priests included vast herbal knowledge, a special spoken language, a symbolic way of recording information about the past and the curation of this information, in addition to control over much ceremonial protocol

(Banister 1970:378; Beverley 1947:191; Purchas 1617:945-955). Their prominent place as keepers of the *quiankeson* houses is attested above. Priests also cured ailing people through intercessions to otherworldly powers and with their herbal skills (Rountree 1989:130). Vision quests were also a significant part of Powhatan priests' spiritual knowledge and powers with the interpretation of these visions directly influencing the actions of chiefs (Rountree 1989:121; Strachey 1953:97).

In addition to the differential possession of sacred knowledge and powers, for the Powhatan, the afterlife of chiefs and priests was also different from commoners. The souls of elite were believed to make special journeys to be with their ancestors in a place of abundance where they waited to be born again (Strachey 1953:100). Commoners' souls made no special journey.

Details recorded about key Delaware ceremonies dating to the eighteenth century reveal the importance of individual acquisition of visions and the special roles these individuals played in ceremonies through their recitation of their visions (Adams 1890:299; Zeisberger 1910:138). Among the nineteenth century Delaware people in Oklahoma, the directors of and participants in important parts of the Big House ceremony were people who had acquired visions from their *Manitous*. Because of their visions, these people were believed to possess special abilities (Harrington 1921:123-125).

Personal Encounters with Manitou

Physical places invested with *Manitou* enabled access to other realms. Dreaming or visions were a means of inter-realm communication through personal experience (Harrington 1921:60-67; Heckwelder 1819:238-240; Strachey 1953:97). Eighteenth and nineteenth century Lenape accounts detail young boys seeking initial visions of tutelary spirits. This was accomplished through fasting and being driven into the woods by their families (Heckwelder 1819:238-240). The spirits encountered through the initial vision then would provide certain powers and guidance throughout the recipient's life through subsequent dreams and visions. Subsequent vision quests were pursued through fasting and participation in sweathouse rites. Certain places were more conducive to attaining visions. Additionally, honoring the tutelary spirit through an item of personal adornment served to aid vision quests in addition to vocalization of the sound of the *Manitou* by its beneficiary during the sweathouse ceremony (Adams 1890:298; Harrington 1921:61-62, 66; Lindstrom 1925:207-8, 257-259). Men who were particularly gifted with visions could be considered shaman (Brinton 1884:135).

Eighteenth and nineteenth century accounts indicate that women also could attain visions throughout their lifetimes. There was a general belief in visions as useful in guiding daily life and in ritual practices. Recitation of visions and their associated *Manitou* served as essential elements in the later nineteenth and twentieth century Big House rite, a ritual that traced the larger lifecycle (Harrington 1921; Miller and Dean 1978). *Huskenaw* ceremonies observed by the mainland Powhatan and Maryland groups resemble male youth vision quests described for the Lenape. Powhatan practices entailed boys being driven in to the woods and ritually suffering in order to attain a vision and be made in to a man (Anonymous 1925:85; Smith 1986a:171).

Cosmography

The Metaphor of the Circle

The circle is a pervasive symbol in Eastern Woodland representations of the organization of people and the world (Bragdon 1996; Smith 1986a:149-150; Waselkov 1989). The Powhatan reportedly, “imagined the worlde to be flat and round, like a trencher, and they in the midst” (Smith 1986c:150). The centering of people within circles served to orient relations both in the quotidian world and in supernatural realms. Material constructions of circles and their ceremonial tracings in such kinetic expressions as dance patterns physically embodied and simultaneously constructed the lifecycle and the interconnection of all things.

Contact period indigenous maps from the southeast utilized circles to represent Native groups with that of the mapmaker depicted always in the middle. The closeness of relations with other peoples was shown through their relative distance to the center referent (Waselkov 1989). Powhatan’s mantle, for example, utilized circles of shell beads to represent the different petty chiefdoms controlled by the paramount, himself depicted by an anthropomorphic individual in the center (Waselkov 1989) (Figure 5.12). The chief of the Kickotank of the Virginia Eastern Shore drew circles in the sand to depict the locations of different Indian groups during conversations with the English Colonel Norwood (Weslager 1959:22-23). A 1607 Pamunkey conjuration ceremony included the laying out of concentric circles of important material items around a central fire to explicate the relation of the Powhatan to the surrounding world. Closest to the fire, corn meal represented the Powhatan, corn kernels surrounded this and represented the bounds of the sea. Sticks were laid in an outer circle to represent the English (Smith 1986b:170-171, 1986c:149-150; Strachey 1953:96-97).

Conceptions of circles and their centers played a significant role in effecting changes in the natural world. A late seventeenth century account described priests of the Nansemond (a chiefdom within the larger Powhatan paramount chiefdom of the Virginia mainland) as being able to cause storms by, “drawing circles, muttering words, by making a dreadful howling and using strange gestures and various rites, upon which the winde ariseth, etc.” (Pargellis 1959:232). Circles figured prominently in ritual practices throughout the region. One of the primary seventeenth century Lenape ceremonies involved a circular configuration of people dancing and singing with two men seated in the center drumming and leading the singing. An altar of twelve stones positioned in a central location played a prominent role in this ceremony as well (Harrington 1921:115; Penn 1912:234; Wolley 1973:45, 50, 54).

The importance of circles and the number “12” also is made apparent in descriptions of the eighteenth century Lenape sweathouse ceremony called *Machtuzin*. In this rite, twelve poles representing twelve important *Manitous* were driven into the ground in a circle within another ceremonial house. The poles were lashed together and covered with blankets. After an offering, a fire was made near the entrance and twelve large stones, each the size of a man’s head, were heated and placed in the sweathouse. Twelve people entered and twelve pipes full of tobacco were thrown into the fire. Some people walked around the stones singing and offering tobacco (Harrington 1921:125-126; Zeisberger 1910:138). Seventeenth century Powhatan and Piscataway ceremonies involved the laying out of circles of tobacco offerings to the sun (Barbour 1969:143, 188; Society of Jesus 1925:125).

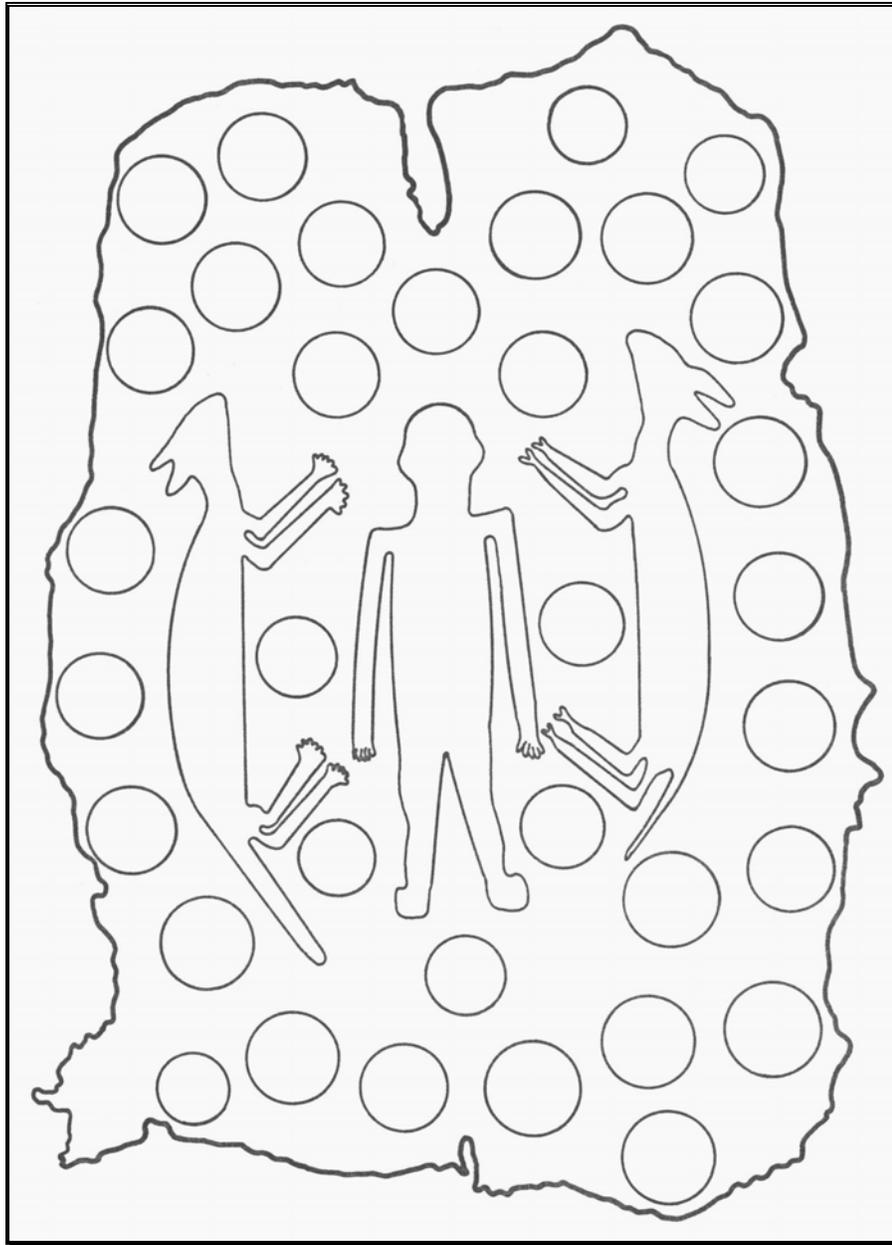


Figure 5.12 Powhatan's Mantle with Circles Depicting Sub-Chiefdoms under His Control, circa 1608 (Waselkov 1989:Figure 8)

The Big House rite known from nineteenth and early twentieth century practitioners appears to have incorporated the circular dancing ceremony and the sweathouse ceremony recorded during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Figure 5.13). Many aspects of the Big House rite involved the number twelve, representing the twelve levels of the other world. Accounts of this core rite through time reveal a focus on the center of the circle as symbolizing connection with the otherworldly realms. Participants revealed their visions in song as they danced counterclockwise around the circle that represented the spiral pathway of life (Harrington 1921; Miller and Dean 1978; Speck 1931).

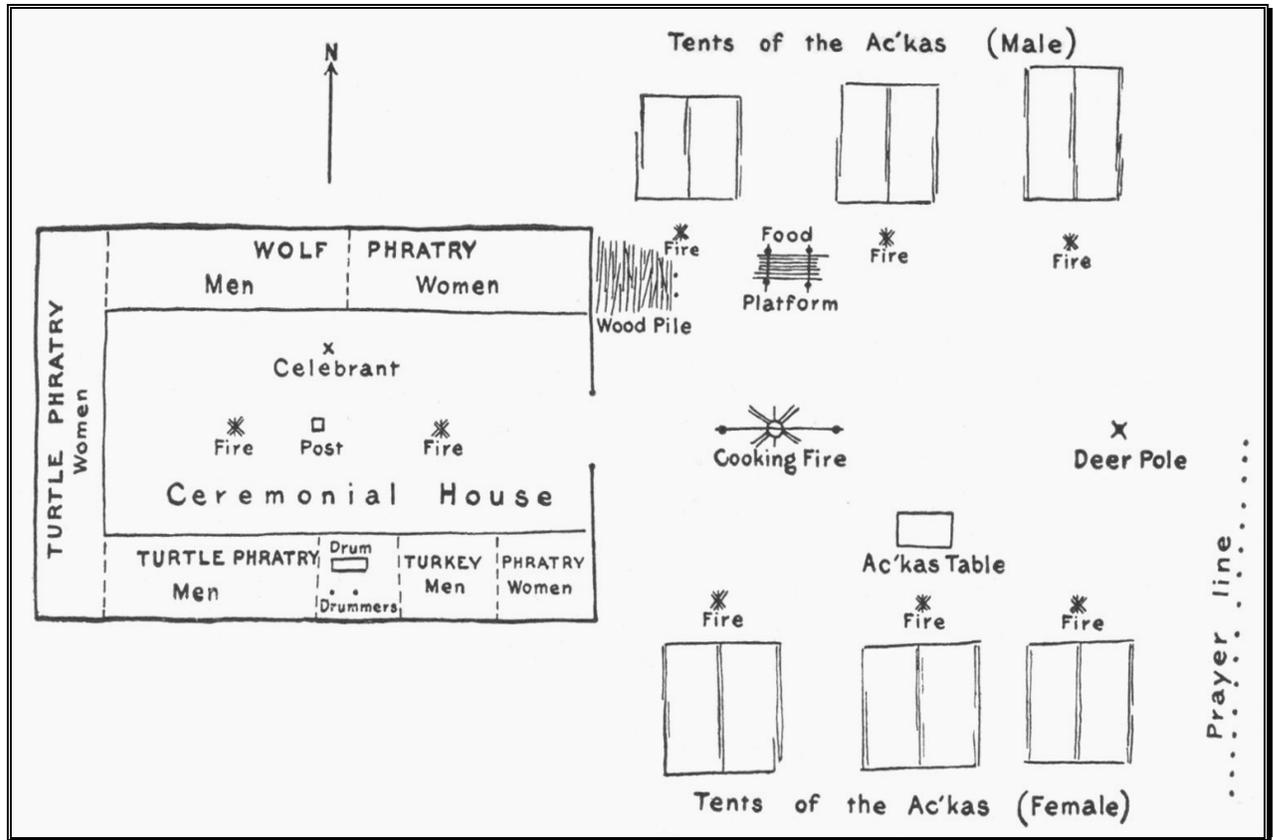


Figure 5.13 Layout of an Early Twentieth Century Delaware Big House Ceremony
(Harrington 1921:Plate VII)

Directionals

Most accounts from ranked Mid-Atlantic societies indicate the belief that major deities dwelled to the west and that souls of the deceased traveled in that direction (Hamell 1983; Rountree 1989). Across the northeastern Woodland, eastness, counterclockwiseness, and rightness are associated with life, light, and the social. Westness, clockwiseness, and leftness are associated with death (Hamell 1983:6-7). The everyday Powhatan rituals associated with the rising and setting sun mark the importance of these orientations through multiple levels of beliefs and practices. However, the significance of directions in Lenape cosmology has been demonstrated to vary (Kraft 1986:189). For example, the northern groups placed special significance on the heads of the deceased facing west or southwest where as the southern groups placed the heads facing east (Harrington 1921:56; Kraft 1986:189). An eighteenth century account taken among Lenape of Pennsylvania recorded the belief in a ruling creator deity resident in the south where the souls of the good traveled upon death (Penn 1912).

In the Big House ceremony as practiced by late nineteenth and early twentieth century Oklahoma Delaware, the directions east and west served important organizing principles. The long axis of the ceremonial structure was oriented east/west with the centerpost possessing two

carved human faces. One faced east and the other faced west. These directions also organized people and rituals within the structure (Harrington 1921:83).

Mortuary temples were oriented along an east/west axis in the seventeenth century Powhatan culture. One description recorded that the structures had:

Commonly the dore opening in the east, and at the west end a Spence or Chauncell separated from the body of the Temple with hollow windynges and pillars, whereon stand divers black Images fashioned to the Showlders, with their faces looking downe the Church, and where within their Weroances upon a kind of Beare or Reeds lye buried, and under them apart in a vault, low in the grownd (as a more secret thing) vayed with a Matt sits their Okeus an Image ill favouredly carved (Strachey 1953:88-89).

The Cycle of Life

The symbolic importance of directions and circles is predicated on the underlying belief of a cycle of death and rebirth. The importance of honoring this cycle was manifested in the timing and nature of rituals and particularly, in rituals concerning human birth, death, and concepts of the soul. Rituals were performed to ensure perpetuation of the cycle of life and observed natural timing. The return of the geese and a winter count served an important way of reckoning time for seventeenth and eighteenth century Chesapeake groups of the mainland and the Peninsula (Rountree 1989:50; Strachey 1953:72, 124). A mid-seventeenth century account from the southern Delmarva details time reckoning. The shipwrecked Colonel Henry Norwood observed that “[the sun] is all the clock they have for the day, as the coming and going of the Cahunks (the geese) is their almanac or prognostick for the winter and summer seasons” (Norwood cited in Weslager 1959:22). A seventeenth century Powhatan spring ritual involved the ceremonial drinking of the juice of the root called *wighsacan* (milkweed) which resulted in violent purgings (Smith 1986a:168).

Rituals involving the four directions were important for the Contact period Chesapeake groups and the Lenape, and involved daily and task specific kinds of offerings and rituals (Harrington 1921:26-27). For instance, offerings of tobacco to the sun played an important part of morning and evening rituals of the Powhatan (Strachey 1953:97-98). When gathering herbs and preparing curatives, the nineteenth century Delaware of Oklahoma made prayers and tobacco offerings to the *Manitowuk* of the four directions (Harrington 1921:26).

Rituals of thanksgiving were performed seasonally at harvest times and involved feasting and dancing (Smith 1986a:123; Strachey 1953:96). The ripening of corn, from August through October, called for such ceremonies (Rountree 1989:47). The Big House rite, conducted by the Oklahoma Delaware Indians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, was traditionally held in October (Harrington 1921; Miller and Dean 1978; Speck 1931).

Nature, intertwined with the *Manitous* that controlled its different forces, called for circumstantial rituals to be performed. Powhatan priests rushed to prominences and made supplications to quell storms (Strachey 1953:97). One late nineteenth and early twentieth century Delaware ritual involved making offerings to the Tornado *Manitou* when a cyclone was

seen. Tobacco was burned and the whirlwind was addressed as “Grandfather” in prayers for his abatement. Some people burned rubbish and old moccasins and threatened the *Manitou* with an axe trying to force the tornado to go away (Harrington 1921:47).

The linkage between the living and the dead was manifested in beliefs in the movement of the souls of higher status individuals (chiefs and priests) to the west with their eventual rebirth in the east. Where these beliefs existed, the bodies of chiefs received special treatment and were placed in special structures at locations considered thresholds into the other world. The elaborate mortuary treatment of chiefs, their curation in *quiankeson* houses, and the rituals associated with these places provided links across the different realms of existence. The continual presence of the *quiankeson* houses served as physical markers of this linkage. The information available attests to these beliefs and practices among the seventeenth and eighteenth century Nanticoke, Choptank, and Assateague Indians of the Peninsula, and the Powhatan groups of the mainland (Marye 1937a, 1944; Murray 1792a, 1792b; Rountree and Davidson 1997:139 citing Maryland Provincial Court Judgments PL I:242; Smith 1986c:122). Evidence of special chiefly treatment among the Lenape during this period has not been recorded.

Among the Powhatan, the practice consisted of leaving the chief’s body on a scaffold until the flesh rotted away. Some Powhatan groups then bundled the bones and placed them inside a mortuary temple (Smith 1986c:122). Other Powhatan left the bones fully articulated and placed them in the temple (Rountree 1989:113). The practice described by the Assateague in the 1680s consisted of filling the leather sack that contained the defleshed bones of the chief with Roanoke or white shell beads and storing it in a mortuary temple (Browne 1887:475, 480-482).

The cycle of life was also manifested in mortuary ritual associated with commoner burials during the Contact period. When a person died, they were wrapped in a mat by members of their kin group and placed on a three to four-foot high scaffold where other bodies had been placed. Then mourning rituals were performed. Kin groups removed the bones of their relatives from the scaffolds periodically, put them in new mats, and hung them in their houses where they stayed until the house collapsed, and the bones were buried amidst the ruin (Arbor 1910:cx). Another seventeenth century account of commoner burial rituals among the Powhatan involved mourning by women kin of the deceased who painted their faces black and wept in turns within houses for twenty-four hours (Smith 1986c:122).

A 1678 Piscataway account references “Great Men” collecting the bones of the community for a collective burial (Browne 1896:185). This practice may account for the archaeological ossuaries noted on both sides of the Bay (Curry 1999). Late eighteenth century missionary descriptions of the Nanticoke Feast of the Dead recounted that:

[A]bout three or four months after the funeral they open the grave, take out the bones, clean them of the flesh and dry them, wrap them up in new linen and inter them again. A feast is usually provided for the occasion, consisting of the best they can afford. Only the bones of the arms and legs of the corpse are thus treated. All the rest is buried or burned (Zeisberger 1910:90).

Other accounts from the eighteenth century reveal continual trips by the Nanticoke back to the Peninsula from Pennsylvania to carry out the bones of the deceased in addition to attempts

to bring out living kin (Fliegal 1970; Heckwelder 1819). The Feast of the Dead ritual, in a variety of forms, remained an identifying trait of Nanticoke Indians throughout their movements away from the Peninsula and was reportedly practiced as late as the 1860s in Kansas (Adams 1890:299; Speck 1937:145; Zeisberger 1910). Lenape burial practices included taking containers of food to the burial for a period of time until the soul reached its destination (Heckwelder 1876:275).

Lenape graves were revisited throughout the year and kept clear of debris with an annual first fruits feasting ceremony held at the grave (Harrington 1921; Zeisberger 1910:131). Secondary burial practiced by the Lenape involved removal of bodies from their primary interment in the ground or from special platforms and their reburial in bundles close by relatives' houses (Kraft 1986:189-190). These kinds of special treatments accorded commoner burials reinforced the link between the living and the dead and perpetuated the moral obligations of reciprocity that sustained their culture.

The Cosmos and Spatial Symbolics

For Algonquian-speaking people of the East, spiritual beliefs correlated with a spatial logic organizing the cosmos. Cardinal directions were associated with different deities, powers, and sacred locations (Harrington 1921:22, 24-33; Strachey 1953). The cosmos also was conceived of as multi-leveled consisting of an upper or sky world, the middle world or the earth, and the underwater world (Bragdon 1996:191-2; Harrington 1921:52-53; Hudson 1976, 1984; Lankford 1987). The Big House rite and the earlier related rituals recorded during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries embodied a majority of the cosmological beliefs shared across the Eastern Woodlands. Ritual use of the circle and the four cardinal directions served important functions in representing the cosmos. Marking the center of the ritual circle, using a post or other symbolic media, located the participants at the center of the cosmos and organized the path of communication and travel to other realms.

Thresholds

The tangible and animated world existed in a recursive relationship with other realms of the cosmos creating an inseparable symbolic and mundane landscape. However, a distinction between the quotidian, familiar, and domestic landscape, represented most often by the village or habitation area, and the supra-village landscape utilized for more specialized practices, serves the purposes of the present research (Bragdon 1996; Hamell 1987; Miller 1980; Rountree 1989). Supra-village sacred locations embodied the qualities of the other worlds—high spots, low marshy areas and areas close to water. Here, the three realms of the cosmos converged. The concept of 'thresholds' has been applied to such places where humans and other-than-humans communicated and crossed between the different worlds through physical, spiritual, and social transformations (Bragdon 1996; Hamell 1987). These places served as spatial correlates of *Manitou* where it mediated the connections between different levels of experience and between the different worlds (Bragdon 1996:192).

Some examples from regional groups illustrate the distinction between the location of village and supra-village ritual sites. A distinction in the domestic, known space of the settlement and the outside was observed in pan-regional "edge of the woods" ceremony. This

transformative ceremony took place just outside the village where visitors were welcomed and transformed into the “known” (Hamell 1983; White 1991). *Huskenaw* ceremonies observed by the groups on the Virginia and Maryland mainland and the vision quests of young Lenape men took place in wooded locations away from the village (Anonymous 1925:85; Harrington 1921; Rountree 1989).

Regional ossuaries and mortuary temples are known to have been located on bluffs with commanding viewsheds (Curry 1999). The Powhatan possessed supra-village temples, with one elaborate ritual complex consisting of three temples located, “[U]pon the top of certain redde sandy hils in the woods” at some distance from habitation areas (Smith 1986a:169). This place was considered so holy that only priests and chiefs could enter, with the commoners afraid to “go up the river in boats by it, but that they solemnly cast some peece of copper, white beads or Pocones into the river, fore feare their Oke should be offended” (Smith 1986a:169-170). As discussed above, priests also used promontories for vision quests and for ritual supplications, especially during storms in order to quell the uneasiness of the spiritual world (Smith 1986b:171, 1986c:124; Strachey 1953:97-98).

For both the Nanticoke and Assateague, *quiankeson* houses (mortuary temples), containing the remains of past chiefs and the wealth of the living chiefs were located away from villages or core habitation sites in low, swampy areas (Marye 1936b, 1937a, 1944). The differences between the locations of mortuary temples may be explainable partially due to variance in geography with much lower elevations characterizing the lower Peninsula.

Other examples of supra-village ritual activity in low, swampy sites undertaken by the Nanticoke and related lower Peninsula groups included curative and strengthening ceremonies, and those associated with the making of a chief. These took place on islands in marshy areas and involved the participation of several different groups (Browne 1908:266-269; Busby 2000b; Marye 1936b, 1937a, 1944).

In addition to the symbolic properties of fast land, water represented the underworld. It could be considered a liminal place where otherworldly beings could and must be addressed in ritual exchange (Hamell 1983:6). The Powhatan waterside temple offerings and the Peninsular use of marshes embody these beliefs. Otherworldly beings with the power to destroy were also associated with water. An early Contact period Powhatan priest’s vision foretold of such a force coming via the waters of the Chesapeake Bay immediately prior to the establishment of the Jamestown colony (Strachey 1953:108).

The Oklahoma Delaware of the nineteenth century possessed a story of the Cedar and the Stars that combines the concepts of sacred places, beings, and substances and transformations. In the story, seven prophets went out from their settlement and disappeared. A youth later encountered them in a vision but they had taken on the form of seven stones. The stones transformed into pine and cedar trees. The site became a place of pilgrimage for people seeking guidance. Later the priests ascended into the sky to become the seven stars of the Pleiades and continued their transformations through movement across the sky (Speck 1931:171-172).

Places of remarkable occurrences were recognized with rituals but of an impromptu nature. The use of altar stones (*pawcorances*) was recorded among the Powhatan where

offerings of blood, deer suet, and tobacco and other items were made at sites of important occurrences. Stories of the important events would be told to others with offerings continually made by each person passing by (Smith 1986a:123-124, 171). Similar rituals were performed by southern New England Native peoples but involved the use of holes dug at the site of an important event (Smith 1986c:462).

Color and Substance

The colors of red, black, and white served as major symbolic media of the Eastern Algonquian cosmological world. Light was associated with “‘Life,’ ‘Mind,’ ‘Knowledge,’ and the ‘Great Being’” (Hamell 1983:5). White was associated with the cognitive, and with the continuity of social and biological life. Red also was associated with light and life—representing its animate, emotive aspects. Darkness and blackness served the opposite, signaling the absence of life, well-being, harmony, cognition, and purposiveness (Hamell 1983:5; Rountree 1989:76-78). Darkness connoted asocial behaviors, inferior status, mourning, and confinement in the womb (Barwick 1999:16; Hamell 1983:7).

The substances of shell, pearls, crystal, galena, pyrite, and other reflective things, and the mists of sweatbaths were associated with white. Sky blue and the “upwards spiraling smoke of sacred tobacco” also were associated with light and life. Red was embodied by the light and heat emanating from fire, and also copper, red pigments, blood, some berries, and red cedar. Blackness was manifested in such substances as charcoal, dark stones, shell, fruits and berries, rattlesnakes, raccoons, and night (Hamell 1983:6-7).

The Colorful Animation of the World

White and red were related to the living world and its continuity, with red serving as the primary animating force. The water and sky (clear or white substances) are places where all worlds meet. The use of pigments on the body in a dichotomous play of colors linked the realms of the living and the dead. Red was a color associated with burials in early Contact times (Heckwelder 1876:271-72; Rountree 1989:73-78; Zeisberger 1910:88). The mourners wore black paint to associate themselves with the dead and the otherworld and to make a continuum while the deceased were associated with the color red, which animates (Hamell 1983; Rountree 1989). At another level, the placement of white shell beads within the leather bone cases of deceased chiefs served to perpetuate their travel in the lifecycle.

Certain substances served as mediators between different realms. Turtles, as beings who inhabited both the land and water and who laid eggs like beings of the sky, were mediators across all realms and were considered to sustain the earthly realm (Danker and Sluyter 1867:150-151; Hamell 1983). A key element in the recitation of visions involved holding the turtle shell rattle (Harrington 1921) (Figure 5.14). The long-standing importance of the turtle is seen in seventeenth and eighteenth descriptions of turtle rattles used by Lenape medicine men or those with special relationships with a *Manitou* (Brinton 1884:135). Red as an animator also could perform the role of translator between realms. In its embodiment in fire, it served to transform other substances. In its embodiment in red berries, it was believed to contribute to social and biological well-being and served an important role in the afterlife (Hamell 1983:8).

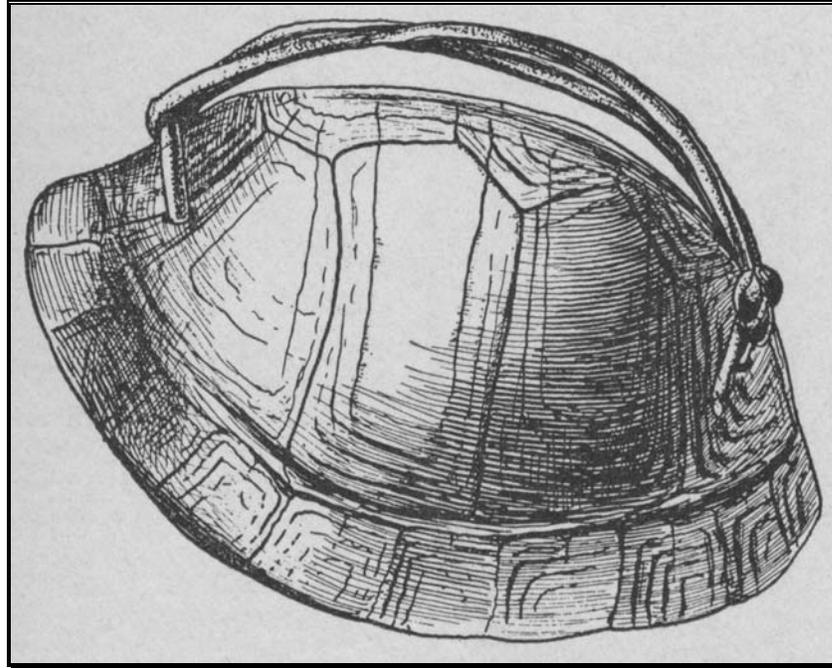


Figure 5.14 Drawing of Tortoise Shell Rattle Used in the Delaware Big House Ceremony
(Harrington 1921:Figure 9)

SUMMARY

This chapter presented an outline of the Native American populations present on the Delmarva at the time of Contact. The review provided information about geographic organization, settlement, subsistence, and exchange patterns, as well as information about social, ceremonial, and symbolic systems. The review generated a local and regional context for interpreting archaeological patterns at Hickory Bluff.