Zone-Decorated Pots at the Hatch Site (44Pg51): a Late Woodland Manifestation of an Ancient Tradition

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Zone-Decorated Pots at the Hatch Site (44PG51): A Late Woodland Manifestation of an Ancient Tradition

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A Thesis Presented to the Graduate Faculty of The College of William & Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of Master of Arts

Department of Anthropology

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Master of Arts

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Excavated in the 1970s and 80s by Lefty Gregory, the Hatch site is arguably among the most significant precolonial archaeology sites in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Though the collection sat in storage for decades, it recently became accessible to researchers. The thorough excavation combined with abundant radiocarbon data allow the historical narrative of this magnificent site to come into focus. An unusual place, hidden in a remote location, the Hatch site witnessed at least 600 years of regularly occurring ritualized gatherings. These gatherings involved the sacrifice and internment of dogs as well as elaborate feasts on both estuarine and terrestrial resources. This study focuses on the ornate zone-decorated pottery found at the Hatch site. This unusual ceramic type originated in the Delaware River Valley during the second half of the Middle Woodland period. It appeared at the Hatch site during the Late Woodland period when Native people used it in the largest and most elaborate of these feasting rituals. This thesis presents the precolonial history of the Hatch site and discusses the place of zone-decorated pots within this narrative.
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Chapter One

Introduction

Native societies in the Mid-Atlantic have a deep history extending at least fifteen thousand years into the past (Dent 1995). Archaeological research into the Indigenous past in this region typically focuses on the Woodland Period (1200 BCE – 1500 CE) shift from foraging to farming (e.g. Custer 1986; Gallivan 2003; Potter 1993), and this study is no different. The early colonial accounts of the Powhatan chiefdom and other hierarchal polities in the broader area suggest to many scholars that a rise in social stratification accompanied the Woodland Period transformation of subsistence strategies (e.g. Binford 1964; Turner 1978).

This study explores the materiality of the ceremonial practices that catalyzed this transition. To ascertain this, I focus on the Hatch site (44PG51), a ceremonial center with its own deep history located in Virginia’s inner coastal plain (Figure 1.1). My research suggests this site records the annual return to a place of feasting and ceremony centered on the yearly arrival of anadromous fish. In an effort to draw ‘middle range’ linkages between the Hatch site’s archaeological record and social practices involving feasting and ritual, I focus my analysis on a type of ceramic with unusual decorative motifs, Abbott zone-decorated pottery. This finely-crafted ware with carefully placed decorative motifs appears on a handful of sites throughout the Mid-Atlantic coastal plain. Based on a contextual analysis of these ceramics, several researchers (e.g. Stewart 1998; Hantman and Gold 2002, Lattanzi et al 2015) have linked zone-decorated pottery
to places of gathering, feasting, and ritualized practices, broadly conceived.

Though foragers initially used these ritualized practices involving zone-decorated pots, new radiocarbon dates from Hatch generated by my research suggest these ceramics persisted long after the introduction of maize-based agriculture in the region. In this study, I offer a refined chronology of Abbott zone-decorated pottery in coastal Virginia and explore the ways in which Native people incorporated zone-decorated vessels in the ritualized events that occurred at the Hatch site. I do so with the hope of contributing to the broader discussion of the shifting cultural practices in the precolonial Mid-Atlantic during the centuries immediately before the colonial era.

![Figure 1.1: Hatch Site Location](image)
To establish that Hatch site archaeological deposits can be defined as ritualized, I turn to Lars Fogelin’s (2007) description of ritual, its relation to religion, and the ways it can be recognized archaeologically. Contemporary archaeologists studying ritual generally rely on practice theory or structuralist approaches (Fogelin 2007:58-61). For years anthropologists have applied practice theory as a means of emphasizing the role of actors and their agency in social processes while also accounting for the ways cultural structures constrain and enable actions (e.g. Bourdieu and Nice 1977, Giddens 1979, Sahlins 1981). With this approach, the focus shifts toward people’s activities as they enact, embody, and represent traditions in ways that continuously transform them. Likewise, archaeologists are interested in questions about practice, as people’s actions generate change and create social traditions that are manifested in the material record (Pauketat 2001:74). Practice theorists whose work focuses on ritual generally assume that religion arises from ritual practice. For example, in his study of witchcraft in the precolonial American Southwest, William H. Walker (1998:246) describes “ritual behavior and its attendant ritual objects as material processes comprised of people interacting with artifacts”. He argued that there is no division between utilitarian and non utilitarian artifacts. Rather, the ritual aspect of artifacts is a product of people choosing to use them in ceremonial contexts. Normal, everyday objects take on special ritual significance based on ritual use during the life of the artifact.
Structuralism is rooted in the early twentieth-century ideas of Ferdinand de Saussure (1983) and Marcel Mauss (1990), and subsequently elaborated by Claude Levi-Strauss (1963). As a method for understanding culture, structuralist approaches identify systems of meaning formed within structured sets of interrelated categories. Structuralists posit that pre-existing religious structures necessitate the creation of ritualized practices (e.g. Renfrew 1985). Archaeologists drawing from practice theory and those relying on structuralism both suggest that there are material characteristics of ritual practices that can be recognized archaeologically.

Practice theorists typically focus on what ritual does rather than what it means. More specifically people use rituals to construct and modify religious beliefs. For example, Fogelin (2007) argues that with ritual, people choose to remember, forget, or create certain practices. Through the creation and practice of rituals, people can transform and change underlying religious structures. When studying ritual, archaeologists employing practice theory emphasize how it creates, reaffirms, or challenges the social structure (e.g. Demaris et al 1996).

Catherine Bell (1997:138-164), a practice theorist, has suggested that most rituals exhibit six characteristics. These are formalism (restricted codes of speech and action), traditionalism (employing archaic or anachronistic elements), rule governance (a strict code that must be followed), sacral symbolism (reference to or employment of important symbols), and performance (public display of ritual actions). Because any practice can take on these qualities over
time, ritual is more of a process than an event. Practice theory focuses on the way people harness ritual symbolism to promote specific ends, thereby influencing the structure. Practice theorists acknowledge that archaeologists can never know the true meaning of symbols. Therefore, the manner in which the symbol is deployed should be the focus of their research (Fogelin 2007:58-59).

In contrast with practice theory, structuralists argue that all rituals are motivated by the overarching religious structure. Structuralism is often employed when considering ritualized contexts in the archaeological record. Using this approach, Colin Renfrew (1985) developed a list of material correlates which typically characterize rituals. His list included sacrificed plants or animals, a location in either special buildings or geographic locales, and distinct architectural elements. Renfrew (1985) acknowledged that archaeologists cannot observe beliefs. Rather, they must work with the material remains that are the consequences of those beliefs. These remains are the results of actions which archaeologists can plausibly interpret as arising from religious belief (Renfrew 1985:12). Renfrew’s approach is clearly structural though he espouses a separation of religion and the secular world that many structuralists would criticize.

More recent structuralists (e.g. Brück 1999; Insoll 2004) reject the dichotomy between religious and secular, instead seeing religion as permeating culture. To these theorists the religious structure extends into the secular. Recognizing religion’s impact on everyday lives, structuralists acknowledge
religion’s influence on daily activities, the breadth of which can vary across cultures (Fogelin 2007:59-60). These structuralists contrast with Renfrew’s argument in that they view ritual and religion as more expansive and less clearly definable.

Considering ritual in these terms, I focus my study of the Hatch site on feasting, a ritualized practice that is readily apparent in the material record. As a practice rooted in materiality, feasting leaves traces which can be detected archaeologically. Brian Hayden (2001:27-28) defines feasts as gatherings, large or small, in which food is shared amongst the participants. A larger group would therefore leave ample amounts in archaeological deposits. Focusing on foraging societies, Hayden (2001) argues for an ecologically grounded, materialist consideration of feasting. He contends that feasts may appear excessive but are actually quite practical. Taking a cultural ecology approach, he points out that feasts are expensive in terms of time, energy, and resources. Despite this, feasts have some benefits for reproduction and survival (Hayden 2001:24). Humans have the unique ability to transform food surpluses, such as plentiful Atlantic sturgeon in the spring, into other types of benefits, like political capital or social prestige.

Michael Dietler (2001) focuses on community building through ritual feasts. To Dietler (2001:88), feasts serve to define social boundaries while creating a sense of community. They mark and reify cultural values while simultaneously forging social relationships. Values such as power and
commensal political relations as they are defined in feasting rituals are of interest to Dietler. The highly stratified societies on which Dietler (2001) focuses use feasts to reify their existing social categories, but there is also some jockeying for status within and among these social groups.

With these definitions in place, I begin the discussion by summarizing the historic trajectory of ritualized practice in the Mid-Atlantic. In this thesis, I will argue that the activity at the Hatch site was part of an overarching religious structure that appears to have existed within Native Tidewater communities for centuries. At the same time, Hatch had its own unique set of rituals that resulted from people making agentive changes to ritual practices that altered the existing structure. I argue that this site was a place of regularly occurring ritualized feasting that affected not just the religious structure but the political structure as well.

Ritualized Practice in the Precolonial Middle Atlantic

Some of the earliest evidence of ritual in the Middle Atlantic is seen in the Late Archaic period (2500-1200 BCE). In this period, archaeologists see evidence of an increase in territoriality, sedentism, and social hierarchy. Michael Klein (1997) has argued persuasively that during these centuries rituals incorporated steatite bowls, a highly sought-after material that occurs in isolated pockets along the Mid-Atlantic piedmont, as well as extremely large bifaces and finely-crafted blades. Across the Southeast, such ‘hypertrophic’ objects occur in
places where groups of hunter-gatherers from distinct communities gathered for special events (Sassaman 2010). As time progressed, populations grew, and ritual gatherings intensified. Practices involving the ritualized use of vessels continued into the Woodland Period (1200 BCE-1500 CE), though steatite bowls were replaced with clay pots, a novel, new technology at the time. By the Middle Woodland Period (500 BCE-900 CE), decorations appeared on some ceramic vessels, many of these in special or ritualized contexts (Hantman and Gold 2002:207). One type in particular has intrigued several generations of researchers.

Zone-decorated pottery is distinctive for its ornate decorations (Figure 1.2). These motifs are bound within zones, often around the rim of the vessel. First described in detail by Dorothy Cross (1956), the ceramic type occurs in large numbers at the Abbott Farm National Historic Landmark located in the

Figure 1.2: Zone-Decorated Vessel from the Abbott Farm Site (Image Courtesy of Gregory Lattanzi)
Delaware Valley, the largest known Middle Woodland site of its type on the East Coast (Stewart 1982, 1998; Lattanzi et al 2015). The carefully crafted designs, etched in the clay so precisely, reveal the great care taken during the production of this pottery. Zone-decorated pottery is shell tempered with a smooth, burnished paste. There appear to be fewer natural inclusions, suggesting the use of finer clays or the tedious removal of impurities. Some research has already been conducted on the zone-decorated pottery from Abbott Farm (e.g. Pollack 1971; Stewart 1998, Steadman 2009; Lattanzi et al 2015). These studies have concluded that this pottery was used in seasonal gatherings of forager-fishers who participated in elaborate feasts held in the spring when the anadromous fish swim up the nearby Delaware River. Michael Stewart (1998:274) suggests the ware’s presence in Middle Woodland contexts from Virginia to Massachusetts implies direct contact or interaction among fisher-foragers across the coastal Mid-Atlantic. Stewart further postulates that the gatherings involving zone-decorated pots may have shifted locations within the region.

The Hatch site may have been one of these locations. Hatch appears to be a ritualized place that played an important role in the historical trajectory of the precolonial Mid-Atlantic. With an archaeological record of Archaic Period encampments and more intensive visitation stretching from 800 to 1400 CE, Hatch was a persistent place throughout the final centuries of the precolonial period, possibly much earlier. Excavations led by Lefty Gregory from 1975 to
1989 produced a wealth of data including 111 dog burials and 34 human interments. Evidence indicates that Native people used the site as a gathering place as early as the Late Archaic period (2500-1200 BCE). Most visible on Hatch are activities occurring in the Late Woodland period, beginning around 900 CE. Late Woodland features include the dog and human internments as well as massive pit features containing thousands of animal bones from large-scale feasting events. Around 1100 CE these events generally became larger and less frequent until around 1400 CE when most activity ceased.

Hatch site rituals incorporated zone-decorated pots from roughly 1000-1400 CE. This is much later than the 200-900 CE timeframe established at Abbott Farm (Cross 1956; Stewart 1998; Lattanzi et al 2015). The temporal and geographic spread of zone-decorated pottery in contexts that record feasting events raises the possibility that ritualized feasting has a long history in the Mid-Atlantic, playing a significant role in the region’s cultural development. Agrarian people living in permanent, socially stratified communities continued the ancient practices of their mobile, foraging ancestors. Even with the social reorganization that accompanied the transition to farming in the Mid-Atlantic region, practices involving large-scale meals served in zone-decorated pots persisted.

In subsequent chapters, this thesis will explore the zone-decorated pottery on the Hatch site and its role in the ritualized practices that occurred there. To do this, I first examine the cultural and historical context of the precolonial Mid-Atlantic integrating the Hatch site into this broad narrative. A summary of the
Hatch site data focusing on features that contained sherds of zone-decorated pottery, their place in the site’s overall chronology, and an interpretation will follow. I conclude with an analysis of zone-decorated pottery on Hatch and a discussion of the ways this interpretation relates to the current understanding of the precolonial Mid-Atlantic. In writing this thesis, I hope to begin the conversation about Hatch’s connection with the Delaware Valley and its role in the cultural trajectory of Mid-Atlantic Algonquian people.
Chapter Two

Cultural and Historical Context

The archaeological record at the Hatch site is part of a larger story of shifting social structures in the precolonial Mid-Atlantic. During the precolonial period, social groups gradually increased in both sedentism and social stratification (Stewart 1992; Gallivan 2003). This slow transition appears to have been facilitated by a ritualized practice that began roughly 4,000 years ago, during the Late Archaic period (Klein 1997). Evidence suggests this ritual continued, albeit in altered forms, throughout the subsequent Woodland Period (Hantman and Gold 2002). Archaeological evidence from the Hatch site suggests the activity that took place there was a late manifestation of this ancient ritualized practice. This chapter describes the historical trajectory of this ritual and its impact on the precolonial social structure in the Mid-Atlantic.

The oldest evidence of humans in the Mid-Atlantic comes from the end of the Pleistocene Epoch when bands of hunters and foragers followed wild game herds into the region. There is little evidence of hierarchy or territoriality during these early centuries (Gardner 1989). When the Archaic Period began around 8,000 BCE, scholars agree that foraging bands were still relatively egalitarian, though there is some evidence of increased territoriality as artifact types became more diverse (Custer 1990). The appearance of ceramic technology around 1,200 BCE marks the beginning of the Woodland Period (1,200 BCE-1500 CE) (McClearen 1991). During this period, social hierarchy dramatically increased,
culminating in the permanent, socially stratified villages described in the colonial accounts (Rountree 1989:3-16). These changes appear to have been supplemented by ceremonies that reinforced ideas of rank and social classification (e.g. Hantman and Gold 2002). The historical narrative described in this chapter commences at the end of the Archaic Period when evidence of ritualized practices involving rare or finely-crafted items first appears.

While Hatch is predominantly a Late Woodland site, the artifact assemblage suggests it has a deep history stretching back much further than this. Its apparent long occupation suggests Hatch is a site that many archaeologists would label a 'persistent place.' Sarah H. Schlanger (1992:92) defines persistent places as areas that are repeatedly used throughout the long-term occupation of a region. They are not strictly sites or features of a landscape. Rather, they represent the conjunction of particular human activities and a particular landscape. Schlanger (1992:97) further defines persistent places by insisting they must meet at one or more of three criteria.

Schlanger’s first criteria is that a site must have unique qualities that make it suited for certain practices. A place that meets this criterion could be stretches of farmland, open marshlands, riparian bottomlands, grazing lands for large mammals, good strands of timber, or outcrops of clay or stone. Places such as these encourage continued use by providing essential resources. The second criterion is the presence of certain cultural features that encourage reoccupation. Once built, hearths, shelters, storage pits, and other such constructions attract
reuse and reoccupation. Finally, a persistent place could be defined by a long process of occupation and revisitation that is independent of cultural features but dependent on cultural materials, the accumulation of which may serve as a structuring component of the cultural landscape and provide an exploitable resource for people in need of expedient or cached tools.

Archaeological evidence from the Hatch site indicates it meets all three of these criteria. Existing in a tidal, marshy area, in proximity to the James River, the location is ideal for harvesting the estuarine resources of the Chesapeake region. This includes turtles, mussels, starchy tubers, as well as anadromous fish in the spring, encouraging people to return to this location. Reusable cultural features evident in the archaeological record such as hearths and storage pits suggest the possibility of regular returns. Additionally, the accumulated presence of several millennia’s worth of artifacts suggests there was an abundant amount of cultural material that could be reused.

The presence of zone-decorated pottery at the Hatch site links it to the Abbott Farm National Historic Landmark, a known Middle Woodland aggregation site in New Jersey, an equally persistent place with similar environmental conditions (Cross 1956; Stewart 1998). Nearly identical motifs on the zoned-decorated pots from the two sites demonstrate a clear cultural connection (Figures 2.1 and 2.2). The archaeological evidence from both sites presents a narrative of regional hunter-forager social networks, rising inequality, the adoption of agriculture, and ritual practices that persisted throughout these
These cultural transitions began in the Late Archaic Period (3,000-1,200 BCE) when there is evidence of increased territoriality, sedentism, and ritual activity involving rare or prestigious items. In the Mid-Atlantic, researchers describe noticeable increases in site size and more intensive utilization of individual sites, producing what are typically labeled macro social unit camps (Stewart 1998:261). There is also evidence of growth in site size and in the total number of sites (Hantman and Gold 2002:205). Low-lying, marshy areas near the smaller tributaries of major rivers were the preferred location for these gatherings. Bones of anadromous fish, such as sturgeon, at these sites indicates they were occupied in the spring when these fish swam up river to spawn. Evidence suggests elaborate feasts were held (Stewart 1998:271; Latanzi et al 2015:36), possibly to commemorate the annual fish arrival. When foraging bands gathered for these feasts, it provided a venue for certain individuals to put their status on display. It is possible these individuals became associated with the bounteous fish that arrived each spring.

‘Big-Men’ of the Mid-Atlantic

Following other researchers, notably Hantman and Gold (2002), I will use the archaeological record to make the argument that the rise in inequality in the Middle Atlantic region was closely tied to ritual practices that occurred at sites like Hatch. Drawing upon Marshall Sahlins’ (1963) classic study of ‘big-men’ in
Figure 2.1: Zone-Decorated Pottery from the Hatch site. (Image adapted from Gallivan 2016:95)

Figure 2.2: Zone-decorated Motifs from the Abbott Farm Site (Image adapted from Cross 1956:138)
Melanesia, there are clear ethnographic examples of political leaders obtaining exotic or sacred items to display their access to finely crafted materials and their connections to the spiritual realm. In Sahlins’ (1963) study, ritual celebrations such as these played a role in transforming social structure.

Sahlins notes that ‘big-men’ are those that can create and use social relations in ways that give them leverage over the production of others. In order to command respect, ‘big-men’ must demonstrate that they possess a type of skill. This can include the ability to produce resources (Sahlins 1963:291). When the fish returned each spring to the Mid-Atlantic estuarine environments, elites or ‘big-men’ may have been viewed as having some control over the amount of fish the rivers produced. Like ‘big-men’ in Melanesia, they may have been celebrated as the providers of the bounteous fish harvests. Elites may have controlled any resources and redistributed them through large ritual feasts at these aggregation sites. Prestigious items, like large spear points in the Archaic Period and zoned-decorated pottery in the Woodland Period may have amplified their special status. Sahlins (1963:300) further states, “Palatial housing, ornamentation and luxury, finery and ceremony, in brief, conspicuous consumption, however much it seems mere self-interest always has a more decisive social significance.” In the Melanesian context, it is the display of prestige items that signals the distinction between elites and commoners. Something similar seems likely to be occurring at the Hatch site and other sites throughout the broader Mid-Atlantic.
When considering prestige, archaeologists often turn to artifacts that may be markers of high status. The limited production and distribution of certain commodities or specialized mortuary treatment are frequently seen as evidence of ranking in the precolonial Mid-Atlantic (Hantman and Gold 2002:213). Steatite bowls and large, finely crafted projectile points are common prestige items of the Late Archaic Period and are frequently found on ritualized aggregation sites. Michael Klein (1997) and Kenneth Sassaman (2010) have argued that steatite bowls and large blades fit this definition of prestigious items and may have been used as markers of status or identity.

Evidence of a steatite exchange system indicates the presence of an emerging elite class that controlled this rare, ritually important item. This pan-regional network not only included the Mid-Atlantic but parts of the Southeast and Great Lakes region as well (Klein 1997:149-151). Ethnographic observations of similar vessels as well as experiments with cooking techniques using steatite bowls indicate these vessels function best for boiling liquids over heated rocks. Use over an open flame causes breakage. This is due to their shallow, flat-bottomed, wide-mouthed, thick walled design which gave them low thermal resistance (Klein 1997:144). Klein (1997:147) further argues that baskets and wooden vessels served the same purpose as steatite bowls, are more mobile, and easily made from more readily available material. Nevertheless, steatite vessels were produced, and their widespread exchange suggests there was
some demand for these items. Since steatite vessels were impractical for
everyday use, it is possible they served a special, ritualized function.

The vastness of the steatite exchange system during the Late Archaic
period strongly suggests this material was of great social importance. While
these stone vessels are noted throughout the Mid-Atlantic, they do not occur on
all sites and access was most likely restricted to a small segment of the
population. The proximity of steatite quarries to sources of chert and rhyolite
linked these materials in the same exchange system (Klein 1997:146-147).

Fragments of steatite are found on ritualized sites in the coastal plain (Klein
1997) such as Abbott Farm (Cross 1956) and on the Hatch site. Those who lived
near the quarries likely controlled access to these resources. People living in the
coastal plain who acquired steatite could use it to mark their status in a ritualized
setting.

Kenneth Sassaman (2010:172-174) notes the appearance of large, well-
made bifaces in caches associated with Archaic Period shell mounds in the
Southeast. These bifaces are mostly made from nonlocal materials and show no
signs of being used, damaged, or resharpened (Sassaman 2010:173).

‘Hypertrophic’ blades such as these are found at both the Hatch site and Abbott
Farm (Cross 1956). Unusually large or exotic blades that exhibit fine artisanship
of high-quality lithic material appear to have been prized commodities during the
Archaic Period (Sassaman 2010:174). The Archaic shell mounds these bifaces
are often associated were likely important ceremonial locations. Sassaman
(2010:174) discusses theories that suggest these items were valuable commodities in a pan-regional exchange system that included the Mid-Atlantic (e.g. Walthall and Koldehoff 1998:266). This system served as a means for integrating groups into regional alliance networks for purposes of marriage, resource management, and information exchange, suggesting ‘hypertrophic’ bifaces were used in relational actions (Sassaman 2010:174-175). In this case, these items structured social interactions through acts in the context of group aggregations. Sassaman (2010:174) takes this a step further by arguing that these items served as markers of identity. An individual brandishing a particular style of ‘hypertrophic’ blade made it known to others that he was a member of a certain group. Sassaman’s (2010) theories concerning ‘hypertrophic’ artifacts as markers of identity help to explain the presence of large, finely crafted blades on the Hatch site and other ritualistic places. The exchange and display of prestige items such as these during the Archaic Period is among the earliest evidence of the ritualized establishment of an elite class, a trend that continued into the subsequent Woodland Period.

The Materiality of Prestige – Woodland Period

The Woodland Period is differentiated from the Archaic by the appearance of ceramic technology. An apparent collapse in the steatite exchange system led people to find new ways to mark status (Klein 1997). Steatite bowls were gradually replaced with ceramic vessels as people of the Early Woodland period
(1,200-500 BCE) adjusted to the changing socio-economic conditions. Early ceramic bowls were molded in a similar shape and size to their steatite predecessors. Like steatite bowls, these had limited distribution in ritualized contexts. Klein (1997) argues it was the collapse of the steatite exchange network that necessitated the production of imitations. Clay provided a readily accessible medium. If possible, these early ceramic wares were tempered with steatite, allowing the continued use of this marked material in ritual practices. Although clay vessels replaced steatite bowls as an important ritual item, the shape of the vessels and their crushed steatite temper permitted some continuity of tradition (Klein 1997:150). The ritualized practice persisted even when an essential material became scarce. As they had done in the previous Late Archaic period, elites displayed their access to new technologies.

By the Middle Woodland period (500 BCE-900 CE), when ceramics were more common (Stewart 1992:8), a new means of signaling sacred or high status may have been necessary. In the Middle Woodland I period (500 BCE-200 CE), ceramic technology changed. Rather than molded vessels shaped to look like their steatite predecessors, ropes of clay were coiled and shaped into a pot. The temper changed as well. Quartz and sand tempers replaced the steatite temper of the Early Woodland, indicating this material became less important. Cord-marked and net-impressed surface treatments became common. Surface treatments and tempers were highly localized during this period, suggesting small cultural groups with limited territorial ranges. This represents a clear
reduction in mobility from the previous millennia and is a sign that the ritualized consolidation of power started to take hold (Stewart 1992:8-9). These groups lived in seasonal campsites that increasingly appear along the rivers of the coastal plain. Occasional punctate or incised decorative motifs appear on some ceramic varieties, but the pots of this era largely went undecorated.

The Middle Woodland II Period (200-900 CE) is characterized by a major cultural shift. The population grew rapidly, and social stratification increased as well. Some of the earliest evidence of domestic horticulture comes from this time. Along with a larger population came increased specialization. People took on distinct roles within their societies. Stewart (1992:10) argues that this period is when ceramic technology became commonplace. Because of this, finely crafted, uniquely decorated pots, including Abbott zone-decorated types, may have been used to differentiate status and ritual significance, as steatite bowls had done in the previous Archaic Period.

The Middle Woodland II marks a time when ceramic types were no longer localized to small regions. Beginning around 200 CE, shell tempered Mockley pottery spread down from the Delaware Valley into the Chesapeake region. This ceramic type came to dominate the Mid-Atlantic coastal plain, suggesting the unification of previously disparate groups under a single ceramic tradition (Herbert 2008). Mockley settlements along the James River are situated around large shell middens or upriver near anadromous fish runs. These are often associated with feasting contexts at what may be aggregation sites. Linguistic
evidence suggests Algonquian people arrived in Virginia around this time, perhaps bringing Mockley with them and participating in elaborate feasts with the local foraging populations (Gallivan 2016:72-73).

During the Middle Woodland II, decorated pottery appears to have been an integral part of the ritual feasts held at aggregation sites. Decorated items are known to convey some sort of social message (Braun and Plog 1982). With decoration, a potter can signal a vessel’s special meaning. The messages presented in the decorations on zone-decorated pottery might have informed people that the person using them was important and connected to the power of the ceremonial center. This individual may have been viewed as the provider of the feast, and the use of elaborate vessels informed others of this. In the Late Archaic and Early Woodland periods, the vessel itself likely conveyed this message. No decoration was needed as it was the marked material that signaled the object’s special meaning (Klein 1997). By the Middle Woodland II, the materials may have been less important as signifiers of high status. If that is the case, then simply possessing a vessel was not enough. Decoration may have been essential to set objects apart from their more mundane counterparts and convey the appropriate message of power, letting others know that the possessor was the ‘big-man’ who provided the resources. Like steatite, decorated vessels may have come to symbolize the revered and become synonymous with elite authority and prestige. Those with access to finely crafted wares wielded influence over others. Large ritual gatherings at aggregation sites continued to
provide the ideal venue for elites to display exotic or finely crafted items, reinforcing their special status (Hantman and Gold 2002).

As the Middle Woodland period progressed, ritual activity at aggregation sites increased, and macro-bands remained at these places longer. The social mechanisms enacted by these ritual practices intensified. While establishing boundaries between elites and commoners, these rituals also established social bonds among groups. As foraging bands coalesced at these locations, social connections were made (Stewart 1998:270). Boundaries were recognized and any hierarchy that existed at the time was made known. Social interactions at aggregation sites spread concepts and values throughout the region. New ideas such as domesticated food sources possibly spread through these ritual gatherings as well. By the subsequent Late Woodland period (900-1500 CE), these ideas were well established.

The Late Woodland period is markedly different from the previous millennia. Archaeology indicates that ceramic surface treatments switched from cord-marked and net-impressed to fabric-impressed and later simple-stamped. Throughout the coastal plain, crushed oyster or mussel shell remained the dominant temper. Styles once again diversified, though not as diverse as they were in the pre-Mockley Middle Woodland I. Smaller stylistic areas accompanied the advent of permanent, agricultural villages (Gallivan 2003:51). During the Late Woodland, groups appear to have split into different communities, each with their own leader, like those described in the colonial accounts. Though foraging was
no longer the dominant subsistence strategy, aggregation sites continued to be
used as ceremonial centers. Decorated fabric-impressed pottery is common in
archaeological contexts on ritual sites in the region (Ogborne 2004). Evidence
from the Hatch site discussed in the following chapter suggests that although
people were segregated into agricultural villages along the rivers and streams of
the coastal plain and social hierarchy was well-established, ritualized aggregation
continued at certain ceremonial centers where feasting on anadromous fish and
other estuarine and terrestrial resources occurred. At this point, such rituals likely
took place to reify the existing social structure (e.g. Dietler 2001). Elites might
have used them to maintain their long-established special status. This is a
testament to the strong persistence of this ritualized practice. It was an ancient
rite that began thousands of years prior and culminated in the creation of the
socially stratified, agrarian villages observed by European invaders. While this
process began in the Late Archaic period, the rapid social changes of the Middle
Woodland period, including the use of zone-decorated pottery, mark the turning
point of this transition.
Arising in the Delaware Valley during the Middle Woodland Period, zone-decorated pottery appears to be an important, if rarely used, aspect of these ritual feasts. Zone-decorated pottery is an elaborately decorated ware associated with Middle and Late Woodland period ritual. First categorized by Dorothy Cross (1956) at the Abbott Farm National Historic Landmark in central New Jersey, just south of the city of Trenton (Figure 2.3), this classification of pottery is distinguished by its carefully placed decorative motifs that are bound within
zones across the body of the vessel (Figure 2.4). Cross (1956:144) describes the zone-decorated pottery at Abbott Farm:

“Designs are composed of elaborate combinations of horizontal, vertical, and oblique lines; triangles nested or filled with horizontal lines, cross-hatching or herringbone; parallelograms with cross-hatched fill; oblique, vertical or horizontal bands or crosshatching; herringbone; single, or double and multiple parallel zigzags; diamonds, plain or filled with vertical lines.”

Most zoned decorated pots do not have a surface treatment. Rather, the zoned decorations are etched on a plain, burnished surface. The ware is also known for its smooth, shell-tempered paste.

Cross (1956:144-147) identified three distinct types of zone-decorated pottery at Abbott Farm. The most common is Abbott Zoned Incised (AZI), distinguished by its zones of carefully incised geometric designs. On Abbott
Zoned Dentate (AZD) pottery, the zone-decorated motifs are similar to AZI but they are dentated rather than incised (Figure 2.5). A third type, called Abbott Zoned Net Impressed (AZN) is like AZI but with a net-pressed rather than a plain surface treatment. The net on AZN is much more tightly woven than that of the more common net-pressed vessels. Janet S. Pollack (1971) identified a single vessel that represented a fourth type of zone-decorated pottery at the Abbott Farm site: Abbott Zoned Punctate (AZP). This vessel featured a “series of large equilateral triangles filled with crescentic punctuations and bordered with double dentate lines” (Pollack 1971:42-43) (Figure 2.6). An “unusual punctate” motif, possibly AZP, was noted by Laura Steadman (2009) at Maycock’s Point, a site with a large Middle Woodland component, just downriver from Hatch. These sherds feature parallel lines of round punctations enclosed in an incised band (Steadman 2009:30).

The origins of zone-decorated pottery remain unclear. Pollack (1971) suggested it may be the result of interactions with Hopewellian people in the Ohio Valley. This hypothesis is based on similar decorations found in this region. Thurman (1978:75) refuted this since the motifs on the Ohio pottery are less angular and geometric, pointing out that Hopewellian designs appear more curvilinear. Lattanzi, et al (2015:36) postulate that the designs originally occurred on woven textiles before being incorporated into ceramic motifs. While its origins remain mysterious, production of zone-decorated pottery was centered at the Abbott Farm site.
Figure 2.5: Abbott Zoned Dentate Motifs from the Abbott Farm Site (Image adapted from Cross 1956:143)

Figure 2.6: Abbott Zoned Punctate from the Abbott Farm Site (Image adapted from Pollack 1971:42)
Abbott Farm is a complex of dozens of precolonial archaeology sites. Most have been excavated extensively, and many have given way to suburban sprawl. Most excavations were done in the 1930s and 1940s under the direction of Dorothy Cross with labor from the Work Projects Administration (Cross 1956). These sites contained a variety of contexts from the Archaic Period spanning into the colonial era. Relative and absolute dating of zone-decorated pottery contexts at Abbott Farm suggests the ware was in use at this place during the Middle Woodland period and possibly continuing into the early centuries of the Late Woodland period (Cross 1956; Pollack 1971; Stewart 1998, Lattanzi et al 2015).

The largest concentration of zone-decorated pottery was found at the base of a bluff in an area Cross (1956) designated as Excavation 14 (Stewart 1998:270) (Figure 2.7). This was a deeply stratified site in a low marshy area with

![Figure 2.7: Location of Excavation 14 (Courtesy of Gregory Lattanzi)](image-url)
streams that drain into the nearby Delaware River (Stewart 1982). Sturgeon swim up the Delaware into this area each spring. Cross uncovered three buried A horizons in between colluvial and alluvial deposits. She designated these as ‘humuses’ and labeled them in sequence beginning with the modern A horizon on the surface (Humus 1) (Cross 1956; Stewart 1998:142-143) (Figure 2.8). Middle Woodland pit features were identified in the second and third humuses. These layers are also associated with Middle Woodland type artifacts such as Mockley ceramics and Fox Creek projectile points. The second humus is also associated with Late Woodland ceramic types and triangle projectile points typical of this period. Humuses two and three at Excavation 14 produced the most zone-decorated pottery of any contexts at the Abbott Farm National Historic Landmark.

The zone-decorated pottery at Abbott Farm has a clear association with Middle Woodland, macro-band aggregation rituals that occurred on this site (Stewart 1998). Zone-decorated pottery and abundant faunal remains suggest Excavation 14 was likely a macro-band base camp where foraging people gathered each spring to exploit and feast on the plentiful estuarine resources such as the anadromous sturgeon. Stewart (1998:169) proposes that zone-decorated pottery “functioned in public ceremonies at the Abbott Farm (and elsewhere), perhaps feasting related to the gathering of groups during the intensive seasonal focus on fishing and shell fishing.” It is clear that Excavation 14 represents a place where communal feasts were held, likely when the
Figure 2.8: Excavation 14 Stratigraphy (Image adapted from Cross 1956:30)
anadromous fish swam up the Delaware River.

Zone-decorated is pottery also found in limited amounts on sites from Massachusetts to Virginia (Stewart 1998:272). The people who aggregated at Abbott Farm each spring during the Middle Woodland period were the ware’s main producers. The limited quantities on other sites demonstrate the wide influence the potters at Abbott Farm had during the Middle and Late Woodland periods. It further illustrates the complex web of cultural attributes that connected the Delaware Valley and the Chesapeake Bay regions. Analysis of zone-decorated sherds from Middle Woodland contexts at Maycock’s Point indicates they were made from local clay (Steadman 2009). This proves that it was the knowledge of the decoration that traveled into Virginia rather than the vessels themselves. Stewart (1998:274) postulates that some vessels may have traveled. He suggests the limited number of pots on other sites may have been taken as mementos from large gatherings that occurred at Abbott Farm.

While some vessels may have been taken as souvenirs, the special meaning attributed to a zone-decorated pot appears to have been short lived. In no contexts is zone-decorated pottery placed in a special way such as a cache or burial offering. Cross (1956:61-65) noted that very few burials at Excavation 14 had associated grave goods. This includes those with zone-decorated pottery. Most of the artifacts within burial pits were mixed in with the fill. Cross determined there to be no association between these artifacts and the burials, dismissing them as accidental inclusions. Evidence from ritualized contexts at the Hatch site
suggests that most artifacts in features are anything but accidental. Naturally, a few smaller sherds could be accidental inclusions, but larger sherds were more likely placed in the fill on purpose. Zone-decorated pottery and other ritually significant items were no longer useful once the ceremony concluded. Pots were broken and left in situ over the ritualized event as a way of closing the ceremony. This type of termination rite has been documented on other sites, including kivas and ritualized rooms at Chaco Canyon (Mills 2010). Many different cultures memorialize people, places, and events through the sacrifice and destruction of objects (Mills 2010:362). Zone-decorated pots appear to have been single use items. Once the ritual concluded, the pot was no longer needed. The event was memorialized through the sacrifice of the object which was shattered and left in place with any other items that were a part of the ritual. This is likely the case with the ritualized pits at Cross’ (1956) Excavation 14 and appears to be the case at the Hatch site.

Widespread and Lasting Influence of Abbott Farm Potters

While zone-decorated pots were a relative newcomer to what were exceedingly ancient ritual practices, they exhibit a great deal of longevity. The farmers who lived in socially stratified villages along the rivers met at the same places their foraging ancestors had for thousands of years prior. Though they were restrained by tighter social boundaries, the Late Woodland people at Hatch had not forgotten the ancient traditions of their ancestors. Zone-decorated pots
were still used in elaborate feasting rituals that occurred at a special aggregation site. At Hatch, Abbott Farm, and other sites zone-decorated pots conveyed a symbolic message to those in attendance at these public rituals (Stewart 1998:273). It was a message important enough to travel hundreds of miles through space and hundreds of years through time.

The rarity of zone-decorated pottery and the more frequent use of other decorated types suggest that it was not easily acquired in the broader Mid-Atlantic away from Abbott Farm, including the Virginia coastal plain. Steadman’s (2009) work confirmed that zone-decorated pottery production was not strictly limited to central New Jersey. A likely scenario is that the pottery is so finely made and specially crafted that a person skillful enough to construct it only came along every few generations.

The use of decorated pots in this sense is the culmination of several millennia of prior ritual practices. The presence of steatite vessels and ‘hypertrophic’ projectile points at sites like Hatch and Abbott Farm (Cross 1956) confirms the long ritualistic history of these places, stretching back much further than the zone-decorated pots. This strongly indicates that the ritual power is drawn from the place as much as, if not more than, the sacred items used. Archaeologists have noted other persistent places, with millennia long usage, associated with precolonial Algonquian people in Virginia’s coastal plain (e.g. Gallivan 2016). Not only were ceremonial places like Hatch and Abbott Farm persistently used, but the type of ceremony conducted there is arguably a
persistent practice. This practice that spans the Mid-Atlantic region began in the Late Archaic period and continued into the Middle and Late Woodland periods with the rise of decorated ceramic traditions. While the materials may have changed, the basic premise of the ritual remained intact well into the late precolonial era. This persistent ritual practice demonstrates the historical processes that shaped Virginia Algonquin people as well as Native Americans in the broader Mid-Atlantic region.

Evidence from the Hatch site suggests zone-decorated pottery was not incorporated into ritual practices there until after 1000 CE. The relatively late appearance of zoned-decorated pots compared to other places attests to the ware’s persistent usage. At Hatch, the zone-decorated pottery is interspersed with Rappahannock Incised, suggesting the vessel was just one of several decorated pots used in a single ritual. On other sites in the area, Late Woodland ritual contexts often include Rappahannock Incised sherds (e.g. Ogborne 2004; Gallivan, et al 2009). This suggests that the decorations conveyed a message that was relevant to ritual practice, and it did not necessarily have to be zoned. The following chapter examines the contexts where zoned-decorated sherds were found. Using data collected for this study, I attempt to place these contexts within the archaeological narrative of the site as well as the overarching historic trajectory of this long-standing ritualized practice in the precolonial Mid-Atlantic.
Chapter Three

The Hatch Site

The Hatch site in Prince George County, Virginia provides an unprecedented opportunity to study a late precolonial manifestation of the ritualized practice summarized in the previous chapter. Returning to the definitions of ritual outlined in Chapter One, I incorporate ideas from both sides of the structuralist/practice theory debate (Fogelin 2007:58-62). Archaeology suggests the activity that occurred at the Hatch site may have been part of an overarching religious structure that appears to have existed within Native Tidewater communities for centuries. This structure, outlined in Chapter Two, has ancient origins in the Archaic Period and contributed to the creation of the hierarchical societies of the Late Woodland period. At the same time, Hatch had its own unique set of rituals that resulted from people making agentive changes to ritual practices thereby altering the existing structure. I apply both Catherine Bell’s practice theory approach and Colin Renfrew’s structuralist approach to identifying ritual. Using their criteria, I demonstrate that practices that created the Hatch archaeology site were ritualized (Table 3.1). While archaeologists can more directly observe Renfrew’s criteria, Bell’s must be inferred based on available evidence. Each approach provides a means of interpreting the Hatch site.

Most of the pit features on Hatch contained large amounts of food remains in the form butchered animal bones and mussel shells, reminiscent of Brian
Table 3.1: Criteria of Ritual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sacrificed plants or animals</td>
<td>Formalism (i.e. restricted codes of speech and action)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location in either special buildings or geographic locales</td>
<td>Traditionalism (i.e. employing archaic or anachronistic elements)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinct architectural elements</td>
<td>Rule governance (i.e. a strict code that must be followed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sacral symbolism (i.e. reference to or employment of important symbols)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performance (i.e. public display of ritual actions)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hayden’s (2001:27-28) definition of a feast in which people gather together and share food. The presence of elaborately decorated Rappahannock Incised and some zone-decorated pottery in these pits suggests the presence of individuals with high-status displaying prestige. With massive pits full of faunal remains, a plenitude of artifacts often associated with ceremony, and an unusually large amount of dog and human burials, the Hatch site was undoubtedly a significant place in precolonial Virginia.

Of particular interest is the zone-decorated pottery found at the Hatch site. While the ware is not as plentiful as it is at Abbott Farm’s Excavation 14, discussed earlier in Chapter Two, it does occur in significant numbers. Within this vast archaeological collection are 206 sherds of zone-decorated pottery. While the excavators recovered most of these from disturbed, plow zone contexts, 41 came from intact features. On the Hatch site, seventeen excavated features contained at least one sherd of zone-decorated pottery. This chapter focuses on these features to understand zone-decorated pottery’s purpose on the Hatch site.
and its place in the broader narrative described in Chapter Two. The thorough excavation and abundant radiocarbon data allow a better understanding of the Hatch site compared to most other precolonial sites in the region. I will draw upon this evidence to argue that Native people used zone-decorated pots during these ritual practices but destroyed them once the event concluded.

Hatch is arguably among the richest precolonial archaeology sites in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Excavated in the 1970s and 80s by Lefty Gregory, the collection sat in storage for decades. During this time, few researchers were fortunate enough to access the collection. In 2016 the artifacts and records were donated to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) and greater research access was established. In the fall of that year, anthropology students at the College of William & Mary began compiling the long-neglected archaeological data. Under the direction of Professor Martin Gallivan, the students digitized all records, created a detailed artifact inventory, and created a digital map of the site’s archaeological features. Like the Abbott Farm site, Hatch appears to be a place with a deep history, spanning thousands of years. Artifacts from the Archaic Period are numerous, but the most prevalent objects on the site are the shell-tempered, fabric-impressed Townsend ceramic series and triangle projectile points. These Late Woodland artifact types (Egloff and Potter 1982) strongly suggest this era produced the most obvious archaeological traces on the Hatch site.

Hatch is unique among Late Woodland archaeology sites of eastern
Virginia. The site’s location along Powell Creek, just over a mile from its confluence with the James River, is reclusive. During the Late Woodland period, agricultural villages lined the rivers of Virginia’s coastal plain (Gallivan 2003). The rivers served as highways connecting these settlements to each other. Hatch’s location along a small tributary of the tidal James River suggests it was a hidden place kept secret from most people. The site was in a special location that separated it from the normal activity centers of Late Woodland Virginians. Congregations consisting of possibly hundreds of people came here on a regular basis, likely when the anadromous fish return each spring. The archaeological evidence suggests these events involved the sacrifice of dogs and large feasts.

Most features on the site display evidence of feasting. Dietler (2001) and Hayden (2001) broadly define feasting as the sharing of food amongst a group. They also argue it can involve special or unusual foods and containers. The massive pit features present on Hatch with hundreds, occasionally thousands, of grams of faunal remains are a testament to this. These pits include the remains of gar, sturgeon, and mussels as well as butchered deer, turtle, and large birds. Although they were not collected, the field notes indicate a burned layer that included a “heavy mussel shell” concentration capped most features. These layers contained the majority of each feature’s cultural material, including faunal remains. Each of these pits contained large sherds of pottery, often decorated, as well as the occasional tobacco pipe or gorget. A small number contained elaborate zone-decorated sherds.
The archaeological evidence suggests the Hatch site meets the criteria for identifying ritual listed in Table 3.1. The site is at a special geographic locale, there are sacrificed animals present in many features, and, while not architectural, the large pits were certainly distinct structures created for a special purpose (e.g. Renfrew 1985:12). I hypothesize that the Hatch site was a part of the ancient tradition outlined in chapter two. This practice involved a ‘big-man’ (e.g. Sahlins 1962) performing an act where he used special items and a bounteous feast to establish his prestige. A strict set of rules may have governed these events, evidenced in their relative continuity over the centuries. Sacral symbolism arguably lies in dog sacrifices and human burials and in the decorative motifs on ceramic sherds found at the Hatch site (e.g Bell 1997:138-164).

The massive amounts of animal bones are clear evidence of feasting. The presence of sturgeon bones suggests it occurred in the spring. Fish may have been a larger part of these feasts than the collection indicates. Field notes suggest excavators screened most features with quarter inch mesh. If they had used more precise methods, it is possible a greater amount of small fish bones would have been recovered. The abundant mussel shells indicated in the field notes strongly suggest estuarine resources were a major part of these feasting rituals. Regardless, the available evidence indicates Hatch served an important Late Woodland ceremonial function centered on feasting.

Both human and dog burials appear to be major aspects of these rituals.
In total, archaeologists excavated 111 dogs and 34 humans from the Hatch site. Most burial pits contained single humans or dogs, though some burials occurred in pairs or groups (Table 3.2). Native residents buried seventeen of the 34 humans individually. The same was true for 66 of the 111 dogs. There were six pits with one human and one dog each. There were 15 pits with multiple dogs. One of these contained a human and four dogs. There were only two pits with multiple humans. One contained two, and the other contained eight individuals. There were no incidents of multiple humans with any number of dogs. For the most part, burial contexts appear to be associated with feasting events. As with most pits on this site, field notes indicate a burned layer full of shells, bone, or both as well as many artifacts topped most burials.

### Table 3.2: Burial Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burial Type</th>
<th>One Dog</th>
<th>Two Dogs</th>
<th>Three Dogs</th>
<th>Four Dogs</th>
<th>Six Dogs</th>
<th>One Human</th>
<th>Two Humans</th>
<th>Eight Humans</th>
<th>One Human, One Dog</th>
<th>One Human, Four Dogs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Previous Research

Past research on Hatch site data focused on these burial contexts. Dane Magoon’s (2015) research on the human skeletal population revealed much about their ages and sexes. Of the 34 humans, 15 were subadults (including eight young subadults) and four were young adults. The remaining 16 were middle or older adults (Table 3.3). Among the adult population Magoon could assign sex, eight were female and nine were male. Many of these burials had
associated grave goods including projectile points, tobacco pipes, and one individual had large whelk shell beads. Berek Dore II's (2011) study of the dental caries on some human remains indicated Native people used the site throughout the transition to maize-based agriculture in the region.

Table 3.3: Ages of Human Burials (Magoon 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Young Subadult</th>
<th>Sub Adult</th>
<th>Older Subadult</th>
<th>Young Adult</th>
<th>Middle Adult</th>
<th>Older Adult</th>
<th>Adult of Undetermined Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A study of the canine remains by Jeff Blick et al (2013) suggests Native residents likely sacrificed dogs at the site. Some of the dogs exhibit blunt force trauma to the head and others have broken and twisted necks as if strangulation occurred. Field notes describe at least two dogs that were missing their heads. Pits with more than one dog suggest multiple sacrifices at a single event. Two separate occurrences of dogs buried with severed human arms suggests dog sacrifice was included in the capture and sacrifice of enemies (Blick et al 2013:122-123). There is another case of an older woman buried with an older dog at her knees. A burial Blick et al (2013) framed in stark contrast to the two severed arms due to its seemingly domestic imagery. These interpretations are of course debatable. Regardless of the symbolism, the goal of my thesis is to determine the purpose of zone-decorated pottery on this unusual site. I attempt to do so with the data presented below.
New Data

Radiocarbon dates were obtained on faunal remains from nine of the seventeen features that included zone-decorated pottery. Two additional AMS dates for features without zone-decorated pottery were obtained from a hearth found within a long house postmold pattern that included a ‘living surface’ (L. Gregory 1980: 244) and storage pit (Figure 3.1) as well as one of the parallel ditch features on the Northern edge of the site (Figure 3.2). I calibrated all radiocarbon dates, including ones from previous studies (Blick 2010; Magoon 2015) using OxCal version 4.3 (Bronk Ramsey 2009). In cases where features had multiple radiocarbon assays, I combined and calibrated the dates to produce a single date range. These data are displayed in Table 3.4.

Figure 3.1: House Floor (161), Hearth (163), and Storage Pit (164)
Hatch has more radiocarbon data than any other precolonial archaeology site in Virginia. In total, there are 51 AMS dates for 46 different features. This includes 36 dog dates from Jeffrey Blick (2010), one dog date and four human dates from Dane Magoon (2015), and eight faunal, one charcoal, and one dog date obtained for this study. While there is a very early outlier in Blick's study, one dog dating to around 340 CE, all radiocarbon dates from Hatch range from roughly 800 to 1400 CE. This evidence strongly suggests the site is primarily associated with Late Woodland period. The ceramic assemblage, which is overwhelmingly Townsend, confirms this hypothesis. These data permit a thorough understanding of the site’s chronology and zone-decorated pottery’s place within it. An analysis of these dates and the type, contents, and spatial arrangement of each feature suggests the Hatch site witnessed three distinct cultural phases over this 600-year period.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lab Code</th>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Dog Burial</th>
<th>Human Burial</th>
<th>Number of Dates</th>
<th>Sample Type</th>
<th>Radiocarbon Age (BP)</th>
<th>2 Sigma Low (CE)</th>
<th>Median (Rounded CE)</th>
<th>2 Sigma High (CE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>UGAMS-14093</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>1710±21</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>394</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-AMS 026290</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Faunal</td>
<td>1269±27</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>800</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-AMS 025464</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Charcoal</td>
<td>1191±20</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>887</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAIS-6700</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>1158±25</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>966</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UGAMS-11481</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>1146±23</td>
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Table 3.4: Combined and Calibrated Radiocarbon Dates

*Associated with zone-decorated pottery
Cultural Phases

*Phase I: Circa 800-900 CE*

While abundant Archaic Period artifacts indicate a much earlier occupation, the earliest recorded features on the site date to the final century of the Middle Woodland period (500 BCE -900 CE). The evidence suggests Hatch may have briefly been a small settlement at this time. In the northwestern corner of the excavation, there was a concentration of postmold stains and pits (Figure 3.2). Within the tightly packed postmolds several oval shapes are discernible that are suggestive of a settlement. Most of the pottery from features in this area is cord-marked or net-impressed, surface treatments typically associated with the Middle Woodland period (Egloff and Potter 1982). One feature was a large net-impressed Mockley vessel, evidently dropped and left in place. A particularly interesting feature in this section was the oval postmold pattern that contained a hearth (Feature 163), storage pit, and house floor within its bounds (Figure 3.1). Artifacts from the floor included a fair amount of the Late Woodland Townsend ceramic type but also a generous number of sherds with cord-marked and net-impressed surface treatments. The pit beneath the floor contained entirely net-impressed and cord marked ceramic types. The same is true of the few small sherds recovered from the hearth. An AMS date on charcoal from the hearth proved it to be from the ninth century with a median date of 830 CE. By association, the longhouse itself must date to this time.

Just northeast of this structure, are two parallel ditch features running east
to west (Features 285 and 415) (Figure 3.2). While their nature remains unclear, these are reminiscent of palisade ditches observed on other sites in the region (e.g. Gallivan 2016). They contained little cultural material, but a small bone fragment was radiocarbon dated to the eighth century. This fragment is most likely a secondary deposit, but it suggests that this possible palisade is associated with the ninth century domestic space. Except for one fabric-impressed sherd with sand temper, all pottery fragments recovered from the ditches were net-impressed. If this is indeed a palisade and the date is accurate, it is among the earliest in the region. A palisade suggests some degree of permanence. However, by 900 CE this domestic space was no longer in use.

The ceremonial gathering center that is so prominent in the archaeological record replaced it. I describe the two radiocarbon-dated features associated with Cultural Phase I in detail below.

Figure 3.2: Cultural Phase I. Terminal Middle Woodland Domestic Space (left) and Ditches (right) in the Northern Section of the Site
Feature 163 (Hearth)

Feature 163 is a hearth found beneath the house floor (feature 161) inside an oval shaped postmold pattern. Below the living surface within the postmold pattern, were 2 additional features: the hearth and feature 164, an apparent storage pit also associated with the structure. No zone-decorated pottery is associated with any of these features. The cultural material associated with feature 161 cast some doubt on the possibility that it is a house floor. Among other artifacts, it contained 1,021 grams of bone and 243 identifiable potsherds. Such items seem unlikely to occur on the floor of any living surface. However, the oval postmold pattern is clear and features 163 and 164 are associated with it. Features 163 and 164 contained entirely cord marked and net impressed ceramic with lithic temper. This confirms the feature’s median calibrated date of 830 CE. This is among the oldest of the dated features on the Hatch site. The radiocarbon date and the associated ceramic types strongly suggest this structure and possibly other oval shaped postmold patterns around it date to the transitional phase from foragers to farmers.

Feature 285 (Ditch)

Feature 285 is one of two parallel ditches in the northeastern corner of the site. These are long, thin ditches that resemble those on other Native sites in the coastal plain (e.g. Werowocomoco, Edge Hill) (Gallivan 2016). Feature 285 is the northern-most of the two ditches. The other is feature 415. Feature 285
measured approximately 65 feet in length and angled at an east-west trajectory. Feature 415 was parallel, about 40 feet long and contained no cultural material. In 285, the excavators recovered a small amount of lithic debitage, a few potsherds (mostly net impressed and cord marked), and two very small bone fragments the total weight of which was 1.4 grams. I sent one fragment to the lab for AMS dating. The testing produced a median date of roughly 730 CE. The small bones are likely redeposited material. Because this feature was nearly empty, it is safe to say that Native people did not intentionally place any of the material within the ditch, though this does provide a terminus post quem (TPQ).

Feature 285 and 415 appear to represent the double ditches that supported a palisade. The oval shaped house pattern that encloses features 161, 163, and 164 is amongst a cluster of many postmold house patterns in the northwest corner of the site (Figure 3.2). Much of the cord-marked and net-impressed pottery comes from this area. This includes features 163 and 164. This section of the site appears to be the most village-like. A few postmold house patterns appear in the northeast as well. The early radiocarbon date from features and the Middle Woodland ceramic types found in this area suggest that before Hatch was a Late Woodland ritual site, it was a terminal Middle Woodland domestic space. By the tenth century CE, this domestic space was no longer in use, and a strictly ceremonial center was in its place.

This phase is notably different from the rest of the Hatch site’s archaeology. The array of postmolds and cluster of oval shapes are reminiscent
of other village sites dating somewhat later in the early centuries of the Late Woodland period. The artifact types and radiocarbon dates suggest that the Hatch site’s Cultural Phase I occurred a bit earlier. These features run right to the edge of Powell Creek to the west, suggesting much of this phase has been lost to shoreline erosion. It is also evident that the subsequent cultural phase destroyed much of the evidence of Phase I. No zone-decorated pottery is associated with Cultural Phase I.

**Phase II: Circa 900-1100 CE**

The period from 900 to 1100 CE, stands in stark contrast to the previous century. Around 900 CE, the longhouse postmold patterns fade away. It appears the domestic space of the terminal Middle Woodland period gave way to space of a different sort around the start of the Late Woodland period. Most of the pit features meeting the criteria for ritualized contexts appeared during these centuries. There is little evidence of domestic activity at the site. Instead, the archaeology suggests intensive visitation involving the sacrifice of dogs and feasting along with the occasional human burial. Ritualized pits from this time were typically between five and ten feet wide and varied from two to four feet deep. Some contained dogs, some humans; others had no burials at all. Feature 275, the burial pit that contained eight articulated individuals, appeared during this phase (see table 3.4). Most pits produced evidence of ritualized feasting, including elaborately decorated pottery, abundant faunal remains and mussel
shells. Most included the burned layer containing abundant cultural material. These pits cover the northern section of the excavation area (Figure 3.3).

Based on the absence of evidence for domestic space, it appears no one lived year-round on the Hatch site during these centuries. The one structure with a confirmed date to this period was very different from the longhouses of the previous century. This structure is wider and rounder those of the previous phase (Figure 3.4). The pit below this structure contained a dog buried with a severed human arm (Feature 520). Two burials like this are contemporaneous. The other (Feature 537) is roughly 30 feet to the east and does not appear to be associated with a structure. The hundreds of pits associated with this 200-year period suggest these types of rituals occurred with some regularity. While most pits contain unusual items that might be associated with status (e.g. gorgets, pipes, and elaborately decorated Rappahannock Incised pottery), there is no zone-decorated pottery associated with this period. This changed around 1100 CE when Cultural Phase III began.
Figure 3.3: Cultural Phase II (ca. 900-1100): Frequently Occurring Ritual Activity (Burials are shaded. Dog=Purple, Human=Green, Dog/Human=Blue).
Phase III: Circa 1100-1400 CE

During Phase III activity generally moved south, and ritual events became less frequent but much larger. At least three large feasting events occurred. Wide, shallow pits that are over twenty feet across (features A126 and A175) represent these (Figure 3.5). Feature A103 appears to be one as well, though it is not nearly as wide. All three features are very shallow, ranging from about 0.4 to 2.5 feet. Like the pits from earlier centuries, these shallow lenses had burned layers with heavy shell and faunal concentrations mixed with abundant artifacts. While these large feasting events only appear in this late phase of the Hatch site, the smaller feasting and burial pits continue. The excavators evidently noticed this change in feature size as well. During fieldwork, excavators divided the site, with 44PG51 in the North, representing Cultural Phase II, and 44PG51A in the
south representing Cultural Phase III.

In many cases, the smaller pits appear to be associated with the wide, thin feasting events. They may have been auxiliary pits supplementing the main event. These pits have a similar structure to the earlier ones, including the burned layer cap. This suggests some aspects of second phase ritual activity continued. In both the north and the south, some smaller ritual pits appear arranged in clusters with scatters of fire-cracked rock amongst them. These clusters may represent single large events necessitating the creation of multiple pits.

After 1400 CE, there was little activity on Hatch until the mid-seventeenth century when a few English people settled there. Surprisingly, given the results from the Abbott Farm’s Excavation 14 (Cross 1956; Stewart 1998; Lattanzi et al 2015) the radiocarbon dates suggest Native people did not incorporate zone-decorated pottery into Hatch site ritual activity until the third and final phase of Late Woodland indigenous use. This is confirmed by the fact that all 206 zoned sherds recovered on Hatch, including those in the plow zone and on the surface, were found on 44PG51A where Cultural Phase III is most prevalent. While zone-decorated pottery is a Middle Woodland tradition that continued into the first half of the Late Woodland Period at the Abbott Farm site, it is clearly a tradition that manifested much later at the Hatch site after its usage waned in the Delaware Valley.
Figure 3.5: Cultural Phase III (Circa 1100-1400 CE): (Zone-decorated pottery features including those with burials=Orange) (Dog burials=purple, human burials=green, human/dog burials=blue)
Late Seventeenth Century Colonial Occupation

While the Hatch site saw very little indigenous use after 1400 CE, by the mid-17th century there was an evident English occupation of the site. Features from this time include postholes from three earthfast structures (e.g. Deetz 1996:20-22) and at least one pit. Excavators recovered most artifacts from this period from plow zone and humic contexts (L. Gregory 1980). Hand-wrought nails, English gunflints, and European tobacco pipes are common colonial artifacts in this collection. It is unclear how long these people lived on the site, who they were, or what they were doing there. A combination of archaeology and historic research uncovered a few names connected to the site. In 1637, Cheney Boyce purchased the land that includes the Hatch site (E. Gregory 1986:49). A wine bottle seal with a coat of arms belonging to the first or second Baron Hatton of Kirby (Brooke-Little 1988) and a copper alloy signet stamp with the initials ‘WS’ were amongst the seventeenth century artifacts.

Zone-Decorated Pottery

Over the course of my research, I identified seventeen features that contained at least one zone-decorated potsherd (Figure 3.5, Table 3.5). I then carefully analyzed the contents of these features to understand the ware’s function on the Hatch site and its relationship to the Delaware Valley and the Mid-Atlantic at large. Sixteen of the seventeen were what archaeologists traditionally describe as pit features. These all had varying size, shape, and
purpose. The seventeenth appears to be an ordinary vessel that was dropped and left in place. The few zone-decorated sherds are likely secondary inclusions. Six of the pit features were burials. Two of these contained one human and one dog each. Two contained one dog each. Another pit contained two dog burials. Three more were wide, thin lenses that appeared heavily burned. They contained vast amounts of faunal material and a high artifact density. One of these lenses had two associated dog burials beneath it (see Table 3.5). These features were most likely the results of singular, large scale, feasting events. The remaining nine were smaller, yet deeper pits, some of which contained little material. I selected faunal remains from nine of the zone-decorated pottery features for radiocarbon analysis. Unfortunately, two features did not contain any datable material, and students identified four others during the inventory process after I sent the initial samples to the lab. Blick (2010) provided two dates on a tenth zone-decorated pottery feature (A189). To increase the probability that the faunal samples used in this study were primary depositions, I selected the largest bone in the context.

As mentioned earlier, excavators recovered all zone-decorated sherds on the Hatch site in the southern area of excavation, 44PG51A. This part is most closely associated with Cultural Phase III. Evidently, Native people did not use zone-decorated pots on this site until the final centuries of indigenous occupation. The radiocarbon dates from features that contained zone-decorated
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<td>A126</td>
<td>Feasting event</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Townsend</td>
<td>2,130</td>
<td>484.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A108</td>
<td>Pit</td>
<td>1190</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Townsend</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A175</td>
<td>2 Dog Burials/Feasting Event</td>
<td>1230</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Townsend</td>
<td>3,072</td>
<td>430.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A103</td>
<td>Feasting Event</td>
<td>1250</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>Townsend</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A221</td>
<td>1 Dog/1 Human Burial</td>
<td>1290</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Townsend/Cashie</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>609.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A258</td>
<td>1 Dog/1 Human Burial</td>
<td>1360</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>Townsend</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>46.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>A125</td>
<td>Pit</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Not Recorded</td>
<td>Townsend</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>Pot shatter</td>
<td>Not Dated</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>Stoney Creek</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A215</td>
<td>Pit</td>
<td>Not Dated</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>Townsend</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>46.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>A109</td>
<td>1 Dog Burial</td>
<td>Not Dated</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Townsend</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>24.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>A222</td>
<td>Pit</td>
<td>Not dated</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Townsend</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>58.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A226</td>
<td>Pit</td>
<td>Not dated</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Townsend</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A143</td>
<td>Pit</td>
<td>Not Dated</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Townsend</td>
<td>1,265</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A173</td>
<td>Pit</td>
<td>Not Dated</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Townsend</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5: Zone-Decorated Pottery Features

59
roughly 200 to 600 CE AMS dates associated with zone-decorated pottery at Abbott Farm and other sites in New Jersey and Pennsylvania (Lattanzi et al 2015:39).

At the Hatch site, there is a much smaller variety of zone-decorated motifs than at Abbott Farm. At Hatch, motifs occur mostly as bands circumnavigating the vessel just a few centimeters below the rim or above the base. Vessels also include geometric designs such as triangles and parallelograms. An incised, crosshatched, ‘fishnet’ design frequently fills these bands and shapes. This is identical to the “crosshatched fill” described by Cross (1956) on zone-decorated sherds from Abbott Farm. At Hatch, the cross-hatching is either a fine mesh net or a wide mesh net. The fine mesh is composed of fine lines that cross each other, usually not more than a few millimeters apart (Figure 3.6).

There are a few AZI examples from the Hatch site where the bands and shapes contain a herringbone motif instead of a crosshatched one. This herringbone design also appears at Abbott Farm (Cross 1956). On Hatch, herringbone designs appear to have served as an occasional substitute for the crosshatched net. It does not occur in its own type of zone. Rather it is in bands just like the net. Excavators recovered few zone-decorated rims from the Hatch site. The majority have what Ogborne (2004:44-45) referred to as an incised lip. Most of these are parallel, though there was one with crosshatched incisions and another with very deep parallel incisions. Essentially, the zone-decorated pottery
at Hatch commonly features bands around the rims of vessels and angular geometric shapes (often parallelograms or triangles) around the body. Narrow mesh crosshatching, wide mesh crosshatching, or a herringbone motif often fill these decorative zones.

A jar shaped vessel recovered from the plow zone is among the most complete zone-decorated pots from Hatch (Figure 3.6). This jar captures all the common motifs seen on Hatch site AZI. It has a wide mesh net band circling the vessel 1.9cm below the slightly everted rim with an incised lip. The band itself is 2.4cm wide. 1.8cm below the band are at least two parallelograms. The parallelograms are composed of fine mesh net bands and are roughly 1.5cm thick. They are parallel to each other and 1.5cm apart. The center of the parallelogram (outside the band) is undecorated. One of the parallelograms has at least two net motif sides and at least one side with the herringbone motif. Excavators did not recover the fourth side of this parallelogram. These incised net and parallelogram motifs occur at the Abbott Farm site (Cross 1956). However, their exact shape and arrangement on the vessels are markedly different.

Another nearly complete vessel recovered from the plow zone features a unique motif (Figure 3.7). The zoned patterns on this bowl are incised lines that form a checkerboard pattern. Its small size and shape suggest it was a vessel meant for cupping in two hands. The motif is very different from other zone-decorated vessels on Hatch and unlike most recovered from Abbott Farm. Cross
(1956:138) recorded a similar motif at Abbott Farm, but the checker design is composed of rhombuses rather than perfect squares (Chapter 2, Figure 2.2). This vessel and an AZP vessel (Figure 3.8) recovered from a human and dog burial feature are the only zone-decorated pots on Hatch without a crosshatch or herringbone motif.
On the Hatch site, AZI was by far the most common type of zone-decorated pottery. There are no known examples of AZD or AZN. AZP appears to be exceedingly rare, even at Abbott Farm, but there was at least one vessel on the Hatch site. Excavators recovered a few sherds from a small bowl in a human/dog burial along with several sherds of AZI. Like Pollack’s (1971) AZP from the Abbott Farm site, this vessel featured a series of triangles in the upper portion of the vessel. However, these triangles were incised and isosceles unlike the dentate and equilateral ones described by Pollack on the vessel from Abbott Farm. On the Hatch vessel, each triangle contains densely packed, deep, perfectly round (rather than crescentic) punctations (Figure 3.8). Like Pollack’s AZP these triangles are confined to the upper two thirds of the vessel. Other than this one exception, all zone-decorated sherds from Hatch are AZI.

On Hatch, zone-decorated pottery is clearly associated with rituals such
as feasts and dog or human burials. While the field notes do not record the exact location of sherds within the features, it is very likely that they were in the upper burn layer with most other artifacts. While Native people at Hatch used the ware in ritualized settings, it does not appear to be essential. Most rituals that occurred during Cultural Phase III used the more common Rappahannock Incised vessels as had been done in the previous phase. It appears that while most events at Hatch called for decorated pottery, a select few required zone-decorated ceramics. In most of the seventeen zone-decorated pottery features, a few zone-decorated sherds are included with Rappahannock Incised sherds. In many cases, little separates a zone-decorated feature from other ritualized pits on the Hatch site. However, some features suggest Native people used the ware under unique or special circumstances. The following section describes each of the seventeen zone-decorated features.

**Features A182 (Dog Burial A30) and A189 (Dog Burials A31 and A32)**

A182 was a circular pit roughly four and a half feet in diameter and about three feet deep. Like most features on Hatch, it had the burn layer on top that contained most the cultural material. At the bottom was dog burial A30. This dog was one of at least two on the site that is missing its head. The pit contained 120 grams of bone, a relatively small amount compared to other features. Of the 82 potsherds, Townsend was the overwhelming majority, but there was some Cashie and a few sherds of the much older Mockley ware as well. There was one
AZI sherd, decorated with a herringbone motif as well as an incised rim. Aside from this, there was no decorated pottery in this feature. In addition to the faunal date obtained in this study, Blick (2010) dated the dog. With a median, combined date of 1000 CE, it is the oldest of the dated zone-pottery associated features.

Feature A189 had a similar width and depth to feature A182. Regrettfully, no profile drawing of this feature could be located but excavators recorded its depth as 2.5 feet. Though it is a similar size to feature A182, it contained two dog burials (A31 and A32). One was mature and the other was a puppy. This feature produced even fewer artifacts than feature A182. However, it had nearly four times the amount of faunal remains. Unlike many features, this one did not have the upper burn layer. Field notes describe the fill as homogenous. Blick (2010) obtained AMS dates for both dogs. With a median, combined date of 1010 CE, these dates suggest this feature is contemporaneous with A182, just a few feet to the west.

These two features were in a cluster of eleven separate dog burials (Figure 3.9). Including A182, six of these features contained a single dog. Including A189, four others contained two dogs each. With four dogs, feature A167 contained the most. These features are roughly the same size, aligned in an orderly fashion, and spaced evenly apart. Clusters of fire-cracked rock are scattered in between them. Radiocarbon assays on four of these features (including A182 and A189) place them all at around 1000 CE. In addition to the
eleven dog burials, a twelfth feature, A162, contained a single human burial. There is no radiocarbon date on this feature, but its placement hints at its association with the eleven dog-burial pits. This individual appears to be someone of high status whose death could warrant an elaborate ceremony. This burial included four large lightning whelk shell beads, a plausible marker of prestige.

These twelve features could represent an immense gathering that may have celebrated this person of great importance. This event included the sacrifice of fourteen dogs and a large feast involving AZI. The radiocarbon dates of roughly 1000 CE places this event in the middle of Cultural Phase II when smaller pits such as these were the norm. These are the earliest absolute dates of AZI contexts, ones that appear to mark a significant happening.

Figure 3.9: Burial Cluster that Included Features A182 and A189. Purple=Dogs. Green=Human

Features A117 and A143
Proceeding chronologically, feature A117 occurred roughly 100 years later. With a median calibrated date of 1100 CE, this feature is akin to the deep ritualized pits of the previous cultural phase. Though this pit did not include a burial, it exhibited the thin lens of dark soil full of cultural material that most of the pits had. There were 1,625 grams of faunal remains and 369 ceramic sherds. There were also 10 Late Woodland triangle points, a high amount for any feature. Two of the ceramic sherds were AZI, likely from the same vessel. The large amount of bone strongly indicates feasting activity. Additionally, many of the Townsend sherds displayed incised bands and chevron decorations, motifs known from other sites to be associated with ritual contexts (Ogborne 2004). The volume of cultural material recovered from it and its description in the field notes suggest this feature is the remains of a large feasting event, possibly one that necessitated the creation of multiple pits of this type.

Feature A143 is a slightly smaller pit located a few feet east of A117. Like A117, feature A143 contained a vast amount of faunal remains for its volume, clearly linking it to feasting. This feature also included the burn layer on top from which excavators recovered most of the cultural materials. The 46 sherds of pottery in this feature included a small AZI sherd as well as a large sherd of Rappahannock Incised with a similar decoration to a sherd found in A117; further suggesting these features might be results of the same event. Indeed, A117 and A143 do appear to be parts of a larger cluster of pits and hearths that may
represent a single large event (Figure 3.10).

![Feature Cluster that Includes A117 and A143](image)

**Figure 3.10: Feature Cluster that Includes A117 and A143**

### Feature A126

Contemporary with Feature A117, A126 is a pit feature that appears to be associated with a very large, single feasting event. This feature did not contain any dog or human burials, but it is an extremely wide, shallow pit with abundant faunal remains and decorated pottery, including AZI. The three AZI sherds recovered from this feature appear to be from the same vessel. Of the 388 sherds of pottery, 307 where from the Townsend series, many of these featured incised and punctated decorations. There were 2,130 grams of faunal material recovered from this feature. A small sample of this material produced a median date of 1100 CE. There were also 17 projectile points recovered. Most of these
were late Woodland triangles but there were four earlier types, likely secondary deposits. This feature's fill was composed of four distinct layers. This includes one that contained heavy mussel shells and ash, suggesting the roasting of mussels in addition to land animals at this feasting event. The presence of a few sturgeon remains hint at a springtime occurrence of this feast. There was also a hearth on the Western side of this pit. It was designated feature A165 by the excavators. The hearth was a cluster of twelve fire cracked quartz cobbles. There were no other artifacts and no staining associated with it.

**Features A108 and A109 (Dog Burial A8)**

Features A108 and A109 are unusual cases. Both features contained AZI. However, the excavators recorded A108 as intruding on A109. A109 contained dog burial A8 at the bottom. Like the dog in A182, this one is missing its head. A108 contained one small AZI sherd while A109 contained five large pieces. I propose that these two features are in fact one. I believe it was misinterpreted in the field. The field notes describe A108 as a shallow pit with homogenous dark brown sandy soil with heavy shell and faunal material. Like other ritual features, a dark brown sandy soil layer with a large amount of mussel shells capped A109. A109 contained no datable material. This excludes the dog burial, which is currently at the University of Georgia and not as readily accessible. A108 may have actually been part of A109’s burned layer that continued outside the
boundary of the main pit. Another possibility to explain the merging of these two features is that Native people deposited the feasting remains in an auxiliary pit after the initial burial pit was backfilled. The pottery in these two features is quite similar often appearing as though it came from the same vessel. This reinforces the hypotheses that they are in fact one feature. A108 contained 240 grams of animal bone, more than enough for dating. The AMS testing of this feature resulted in a median calibrated date of 1190 CE. A109 contained a single large, thick sherd of Roanoke Simple Stamped pottery, a somewhat early manifestation of this ceramic type typically associated with the final centuries of the precolonial era in the region (Egloff and Potter 1982).

**Feature A175 (Dog Burials A25 and A29)**

Feature A175 had the largest diameter of any feature on the Hatch site. It is a circular pit approximately 22 feet across. This one is undeniably the remains of a very large feasting event, resulting in a wide, thin lens like A126. This feature produced a very large artifact assemblage including fire cracked rock, 524 lithic flakes, the remains of at least two bone awls, 1,461 potsherds (many were Rappahannock Incised), and 24 triangle projectile points. The elaborately decorated pottery in this feature included two AZI sherds. Among the undecorated pottery was a nearly complete vessel that appears to be a type of serving platter. This flat-bottomed, shell-tempered, fabric-impressed vessel has a diameter of 159mm and is only 40mm tall from base to rim. The 3,072 grams of
faunal remains, representing multiple deer, turtles, raccoons, possums, and large birds further evidence the feasting that created this feature. This is the most faunal material of any feature context on this site. The field notes indicate the top layer of this feature was a dark loam with reddish fire staining. Beneath that was a layer of heavy mussel shell. Excavators saved few shells so it is unclear exactly how many were in this layer.

Beneath this wide, shallow pit were dog burials A25 and A29. A25 had a turtle shell placed beneath it. This feature must be the result of a large gathering of people that included feasting and sacrifice and burial of two dogs. The two AMS dates place feature A175 at roughly 1200 CE. This is one hundred years after A126 the most comparable dated feature on the site. These wide, shallow pits are characteristic of Cultural Phase III. It is evident from the wide temporal distance between the two dated wide, thin pits that these events were quite rare and may have necessitated zone-decorated pots due to their significance.

**Feature A103**

Feature A103 was a long oval shape approximately five feet by ten feet wide. It was extremely shallow, approximately four tenths of a foot. Because of this, the excavators did not make a profile drawing. A hearth was visible on the northeast side of the feature. The excavators noted the possibility that this feature was a house floor. Although no post molds surrounded this feature, its shape, relatively shallow depth, and the hearth suggest it is a house, albeit a very
small one. More likely, this feature is like A126 and A175 in that it is the result of a single large gathering. A103’s median radiocarbon date of 1250 CE suggests this event a few decades after A175. Though the feature was relatively shallow, the identifiable ceramic assemblage was quite large at 284 sherds. Two of these were AZI sherds. One sherd was undecorated; however, the consistency of the paste matches that of the decorated one. The other displayed the banded net motif prevalent on many sherds recovered on this site. This motif is much more crudely incised than other examples found on this site. Like most features on this site, the majority of the pottery was Townsend. There were 305 lithic flakes and 5 triangle projectile points. Excavators also found fragments of two awls made from the ulna of deer. Although A126 or A175 are much larger, the 805 grams of faunal remains recovered from this context along with the decorated pottery combined with the shallow depth suggest this was a similar, singular feasting event.

**Feature A221 (Human Burial A6, Dog Burial A42)**

Feature A221 is perhaps the most puzzling of the ten dated AZI features. Like many other features on the Hatch site, this one is the remains of a ceremonial event. Excavators located human burial A6 and dog burial A42 at the bottom of this circular pit. The human, buried in the center of the feature, was very young, likely an infant, and poorly preserved. They located the dog, evidently an adult, closer to the East side. A nearly complete Cashie vessel,
characterized by its crushed lithic temper and simple-stamped surface treatment (Egloff and Potter 1982), was uncovered next to the dog. Though this feature had a strong association with Cashie, the predominant ceramic type was the shell tempered Townsend series. Evidently, the seventeenth century English inhabitants of this site disturbed this feature. Historic artifacts recovered included lead shot pellets, two hand wrought nails, Chesapeake and kaolin pipe stems, a brass sewing pin, and pig bones. To ensure an accurate date for this feature, a phalange from DB A42 was tested. The date of 1290 CE confirms that this is a precolonial feature disturbed by the seventeenth century English inhabitants of the site.

Other aspects of this feature make it strikingly different from other burial pits on Hatch. This feature included the only example of AZP on Hatch (Figure 3.8). There were also a few small sherds of the more typical AZI with a banded net design. A221 is the second largest feature in terms of diameter, losing out to A175. In terms of volume it is the largest feature on the Hatch site. The placement of the Cashie vessel sets this feature apart from the others in this study. None of the other sixteen has a purposefully placed pot such as this. Normally they are shattered in the upper burn layer, as is the case with every other vessel from this feature. The Cashie vessel is undecorated and relatively unremarkable except for its position in the feature. It may have served as offering to the infant, dog, or both. The date of 1290 CE is quite early for simple-stamped pottery in Virginia. This feature may represent interactions with groups to the
south in what is now the Carolinas where simple-stamped, lithic-tempered pottery became prevalent much earlier. Like most features, a burned layer from which excavators recovered most cultural material capped A221.

**Feature A258 (Human Burial A8, Dog Burial A47)**

Feature A258 is an interesting pit that clearly demonstrates the rituals that occurred at Hatch. This feature contained Human Burial A6, the remains of a young adult or adolescent male, as well as Dog Burial A47, a poorly preserved puppy. Along with A221, this is the only other example of zone-decorated pottery with a human burial on Hatch. With a median date of 1360 CE, it appears to have occurred a few decades after A221. Like A221, excavators found the human in the center while the dog was off to the side. At roughly 39 grams, there was a much smaller amount of fauna than in other zone-decorated pottery features. Field notes do however indicate the typical burned layer on top that was full of mussel shells. It is possible terrestrial animals were a small part of this feast or the most of the waste was deposited elsewhere. Two AZI sherds were uncovered from this feature. They appear to be from a single vessel, decorated with the fine mesh banded net motif. There are also three small sherds of a sand tempered pottery with an incised decoration. These sherds are very thin and from a vessel that likely served a ceremonial function related to these burials, though it is not zone-decorated. There is no evidence to suggest that any of the pottery in this feature is an offering to either burial. The decorated pots were broken on top of
the burials along with more mundane vessels as they are in most cases. As with most contexts on this site, the Townsend ceramic type is dominant.

**Feature A125**

Feature A125 also was small compared to other pit features on Hatch. With a median date of 1400 CE, this is the most recent of the zone-decorated pottery features. This pit was roughly 4.5 feet by 2.5 feet. It was probably larger than this, but excavators do not appear to have mapped it entirely. The field notes say it extended into the test unit south of the one in which it they initially found it, but it does not appear in the plan drawing of that unit. There is also no mention of a profile or depth measurement. A125 contained 83 sherds of pottery. Aside from the single AZI sherd, none of the pottery in this feature included a decorative motif. There appears to be a greater variety of surface treatments and temper types. Shell-tempered, fabric-impressed is still the most abundant, but there is also simple-stamped, both the shell and lithic-tempered varieties. An unusually high amount of cord marked and net impressed sherds with lithic temper, typically associated with the much earlier Middle Woodland Period, were in this feature, though they are likely secondary deposits. Due to the missing records, this feature remains poorly understood.

**Feature A215, A222, and A226**

Excavators found these three smaller pits clustered together near feature
A221. It is possible that these are auxiliary pits associated with the larger A221. All three included the burned layer on top that was full of mussel shell. However, A222 and A226 contained very little faunal material. Aside from the small AZI sherds, A222 and A226 contained no decorated pottery. Neither of these features produced any projectile points and yielded very little lithic debitage. A215 contained most of the cultural material. There were 395 grams of bone. Two of these bone fragments appear to be the remains of at least one awl crafted from a deer ulna. Excavators recovered 100 debitage, five triangle projectile points, and 138 potsherds in this pit. Aside from the one AZI, these sherds were entirely Townsend. Two of the sherds had an undiscernible incised decorative motif.

Feature A173

This feature is a smaller yet deeper pit located just north of feature A175. Its close proximity suggests it may be an auxiliary pit associated with this large feasting event. Like most features, this one included the burned layer on top that was full of mussel shell, faunal, remains, and most of the artifacts. Excavators found six triangle projectile points in this feature. The 495 grams of faunal material recovered from this pit is a large amount. If this pit is indeed associated with feature A175, the event from which they resulted must have been quite large.
Feature A4

Feature A4 is arguably the least informative of the seventeen features examined in this study. It does not appear to be associated with a feasting or burial ritual. This pit contained only pottery and nine lithic flakes and thus no datable material. Two sherds of AZI were amongst what appears to be a single Stoney Creek vessel, characterized by its sand temper and net-impressed surface treatment (Egloff and Potter 1982). The AZI sherds look to be from a single vessel. There were also three sherds of cord marked Mockley ceramic. Stoney Creek and Mockley are typically associated with the Middle Woodland period.

Previous research dates some contexts containing AZI sherds found at the nearby Maycock’s point site to the Middle Woodland period (Opperman 1980:16). Therefore, it is possible that these AZI sherds date to this earlier period. Since this feature appears to be a ‘pot drop’, the AZI and Mockley are likely secondary inclusions. The dropped vessel is quite large and possibly served a function related to feasting such as cooking or storage, though no other evidence indicates such. Aside from the AZI, no pottery in this feature displayed a decorative motif. Assuming this is a Middle Woodland feature, it attests to the deep history of the Hatch site and the longevity of its ritual use.

Brief Analysis of Zone-decorated Pottery Contexts

Hatch is an unusual archaeological site. It is abundantly clear from most of
the features described above that Native people used zone-decorated pots in special situations. While some of the zone-decorated pottery features at Hatch were unremarkable by the site’s standards, many are the results of more unusual events. Zone-decorated pottery was associated with the largest and most elaborate of Hatch site features. Some of these even had distinct characteristics that set them apart from others. The excavators found zone-decorated sherds with two of only seven human/dog burials, one (A221) being the largest feature on the site in terms of volume. The ware also has a clear association with the largest feasting events that produced wide, thin lenses full of material (A103, A126, and A175). There was also the association with a large event involving the sacrifice of nearly a dozen dogs and the internment of an evidently high-status individual (A182 and A189). The fact that zone-decorated pots were present at the biggest and most unusual events indicates Native people used them only on rare or special occasions and not the more typical dog sacrifice or human burial. Under most circumstances, Rappahannock Incised vessels were sufficient.

Zone-decorated pottery’s usage in Hatch site ritual is surprisingly late. At Abbott Farm (Cross 1956) and other sites, including Maycock’s Point, zone-decorated pottery appears in Middle Woodland contexts. Both sites were evidently venues of feasting and celebration as Hatch was, but the archaeology suggests zone-decorated pots are from a much earlier time. The evidence indicates that Native people used zone-decorated pots in ritual activity performed by Late Woodland farmers rather than Middle Woodland foragers. The
ware’s strong association with fabric-impressed pottery, and in some cases simple-stamped, attests to this. The ten radiocarbon dated features associated with zone-decorated pottery place the ware’s usage in the later centuries of Hatch, roughly 1000 to 1400 CE, with most falling between 1200 and 1400. The fact that the ware only appears in the section of the site most strongly associated with these centuries further proves this. Zone-decorated pots appear to have been in use long after the discontinuance of foraging subsistence strategies in the Mid-Atlantic.

By Hatch’s cultural phase II, Native people had well established permanent, agricultural villages along Virginia’s rivers (Gallivan 2003). This is important as it demonstrates some cultural continuity in the precolonial Mid-Atlantic. The radiocarbon dates from Hatch indicate this influence lasted well into the Late Woodland Period, as people continued a ceramic tradition that began generations earlier in a different region. This builds on Pollack’s (1971:52) hypothesis that inter-marriage between groups that aggregated at Abbott Farm served as a mechanism for moving the designs across the landscape as far south as Virginia during the Middle Woodland period. These new data suggest the descendants of these foragers adopted agriculture while continuing the ancient feasting traditions of their ancestors. Though they did not always use zone-decorated pots, nearly all rituals on Hatch featured decorated wares of some sort. Previous research (e.g. Ogborne 2004) suggested a strong connection between ritual and Rappahannock Incised vessels.
Clark’s Old Neck- A Gathering Place Contemporary with Hatch

While excavators recovered zone-decorated pottery in the seventeen features described above, there were hundreds of similar features at Hatch without it. Though they did not contain zone-decorated pottery, these features did contain decorated pots of some sort, most often Rappahannock Incised. The incised and punctate designs on the Rappahannock Incised sherds at Hatch are almost identical to the motifs identified by Jennifer Ogborne (2004) at the Clark’s Old Neck site in Charles City County, Virginia along the Chickahominy River, only a few miles from the Hatch site (Figures 3.11 and 3.12).
Clark’s Old Neck appears to have been a ritualized place similar to Hatch. Features included large feasting pits that contained human and dog burials. Like Hatch, these pits had abundant faunal remains and shells, Rappahannock Incised pottery, and other ritualized items. Ogbourne (2004) notes: “Within the Chickahominy community the most frequent motif group, the banded group, was shown to be connected to several types of contexts. However, it was found to be specifically connected to specialized contexts associated with mortuary practice and other special activities.” On Hatch, the banded group is also abundant. While archaeologists found no zone-decorated pottery at Clark’s Old Neck, this well-documented site (Gallivan, et al 2009) demonstrates the association between ritual and decorated ceramics among precolonial Algonquians. The ceremonies that took place here are strikingly similar to those at Hatch, though without the zone-decorated pottery. AMS dates at Clark’s Old Neck range from roughly 1000 to 1400 CE (Gallivan, et al 2009:87). This is the exact period of zone-decorated pottery’s usage at Hatch. Clark’s Old Neck was clearly part of the same social network as Hatch. While the similarities between Hatch and Clark’s Old Neck are undeniable, one striking difference is the lack of zone-decorated pottery at the latter. In both places, Native people deposited ritual materials in a similar fashion.

**Ritualized Deposition**

Abundantly clear from the archaeology at Hatch, Clark’s Old Neck, and perhaps Abbott Farm is the distinctive burn layer that topped most features.
The broken pots, tobacco pipes, and gorgets found in these layers may have been intentionally destroyed by the ritual’s participants, perhaps as a memorialization to the sacrificed dog or person or to the event itself (Mills 2014:362). Cultures that do not see time as linear have no need to memorialize people or events with objects (Küchler 1999:64). A common practice is the use of what Forty (1999:4) refers to as “ephemeral monuments”. These objects have special, commemorative purposes but once used, people discard them immediately to decay and be forgotten (Forty 1999). Items such as these are temporary vehicles of social transmission. They exist in the moment but have no purpose once that moment has passed. Ritualistic items at Hatch, including zone-decorated pots, were ephemeral monuments specially made for these ceremonies.

Like at Abbott Farm, excavators did not find zone-decorated pottery in any purposeful placements, such as a cache or offering at the Hatch site. Zone-decorated pots conveyed an important message during ritual events, but once the ritual was complete, communication of this message was no longer necessary. To people with a non-linear concept of time, events such as large celebrations continue in an eternal present. In a worldview such as this, maintaining a physical reminder of events serves no purpose. By destroying a memorial object and leaving it to decay, Native people ensured it became a part of the collective memory of their culture. Once left in place and publicly forgotten, ritualized items at Hatch and Clark’s Old Neck formed the generative and
reproductive resource in which memories come not from objects, but the feelings left from the ritual experience (Küchler 1999:68). Essentially the Hatch site was a powerful landscape, charged with the accumulated energy of hundreds of ritualized moments left in place. Although these objects were then out of sight, the knowledge of their location on the Hatch site memorialized the events and reinforced the power of the landscape itself in the minds of precolonial people (Mills 2014:362-363). Evidently, this force had been building for several millennia.

Figure 3.13: Dog Burial including Burned Layer/Termination Rite at the Hatch Site
Interspersed amongst the strong Late Woodland presence on the Hatch site is the scattered evidence of Archaic Period people. Though there are no features from the Archaic Period, excavators recovered numerous artifacts. They often appeared in the plow zone or as secondary deposits in Woodland Period features. Most types of Archaic Period projectile points found in Virginia appear on the Hatch site. Kirks, LeCroys, Morrow Mountains, and many other types occur in limited numbers throughout the collection.

Particularly apparent in this assemblage is the Late Archaic period. Savannah River points and fragments of steatite vessels are common. While most of the Savannah River points are of the smaller, somewhat crudely made variety, a few are large and finely crafted (Figure 3.14). The artisans took great care when manufacturing these items from high quality cherts or fine-grained quartzite. Their large size makes them impractical for hunting or warfare. This is reminiscent of the hypertrophic blades discussed by (Sassaman 201:174) in the Southeast. The intention of these items was to make a statement of power and prestige, often in a ceremonial setting (Sassaman 2010:174).

As a rare material only occurring in a few pockets along the Virginia Piedmont, steatite was highly prized and sought-after. Like the hypertrophic Savannah River points, elites may have prominently displayed bowls fashioned from this material as status markers at large gatherings (Klein 1997). Artifacts such as these suggests the Hatch site was a ritual gathering place for thousands
of years. As early as the Late Archaic period people gathering here and elites put their prestige items on display.

Both steatite bowls and hypertrophic bifaces are associated with Archaic Period ritual or otherwise special contexts throughout the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic. Often, they are found at macro-band aggregation sites where ‘bigmen’ displayed these items in ceremonial settings to promote their own status (Sahlins 1963; Klein 1997; Hantman and Gold 2002). Their presence on Hatch is a strong indication that the site may have been a ritualized aggregation site as early as the Late Archaic period. Like the decorated pottery and tobacco pipes of the Woodland Period, steatite bowls and large broadspear may have been

![Figure 3.14: Hypertrophic Savannah River Projectile Point from the Hatch Site](image-url)
ritually disposed at the end of an event. This very early ritual activity attests to the persistent usage of Hatch as a gathering place. The material elements of ritualized moments accumulated here for thousands of years charging the landscape with immense power.

The archaeological record at other gathering places in coastal Virginia suggests Algonquian communities regularly returned to ancestral places where commemorative feasts may have been held (Gallivan 2016:187). This appears to be the case at Hatch. While the Late Woodland is most obvious, it is evident that Native people used this site throughout the precolonial era. Zone-decorated pottery began in the Delaware valley at another ritualized place with evidently ancient origins. By the beginning of the Late Woodland period, the tradition appears to have left the Delaware Valley and reemerged in the Chesapeake.

The Late Woodland dates for zone-decorated contexts was surprising but not outside the realm of possibility. Archaeologists have known for some time that there was a large migration from the Delaware Valley into the Chesapeake during the Middle Woodland period (e.g. Herbert 2008). These people brought shell tempered Mockley ware with them. Presumably, the knowledge of zone-decorated pottery came with them as well. Middle Woodland dates on zone-decorated pottery at other sites in Virginia suggest it was there during this earlier time. The differences in designs between Hatch and Abbott Farm are suggestive of an evolution in design techniques as fell out of use or forgotten about, necessitating the creation of others.
The Late Woodland farmers who came to Hatch may have seen it as a way of honoring their ancestors and remembering their foraging roots while enjoying the bounteous estuarine resources of the spring season. At the Hatch site, a persistent practice occurred at an equally persistent place for thousands of years. It reinforced people’s identities and helped their culture continue its historical trajectory. As a gathering place that lasted for millennia, Hatch undoubtedly was an important part of the Mid-Atlantic’s precolonial history.
Chapter 4

Conclusion

The evidence presented in the previous chapter links the Hatch site to ritualized feasting practices and the establishment of social ranking throughout the precolonial Mid-Atlantic (e.g. Hantman and Gold 2002; Klein 1997; Lattanzi et al 2015; Stewart 1998). When applying Bell (1997) and Renfrew’s (1985) criteria for identifying ritual to the archaeological data from the Hatch site, it becomes clear that the site was a place where such practices occurred. The ritual events, including those involving zone-decorated pots, appear to be part of an ancient tradition that spanned thousands of years. This tradition contributed to the rise of social inequality in the region by providing a suitable venue for elites to display their status and engage in self-promotion, resulting in the hierarchical societies that existed in the early seventeenth century. A key rite of this ritual appears to be the purposeful destruction of the materials used.

The evidence suggests Native people used zone-decorated pots at the Hatch site in a variation of the feasting rituals performed during the Middle Woodland period at Abbott Farm, where the ceramic tradition likely originated. While Native people did not use them during all ritual events at either site, zone-decorated pots are associated with a handful of large or unusual events at the Hatch site. The rather late radiocarbon dates for zone-decorated contexts at Hatch as compared with other sites are particularly significant. They suggest there was a migration from the upper Mid-Atlantic into Virginia around the Middle
to Late Woodland period transition. However, the similarity between the Archaic Period artifacts at both sites hints at the possibility of several millennia’s worth of regular migrations within the region. Both sites may have served as aggregation centers throughout the precolonial era.

The ritualized practice exhibited at the Hatch site has origins which previous researchers traced back to the Late Archaic period (e.g. Klein 1997; Hantman and Gold 2002). Artifacts recovered from Hatch, Abbott Farm (Cross 1956), and Clark’s Old Neck (Gallivan et al 2009) indicate Archaic people used these sites thousands of years prior to the Woodland Period rituals that are the focus of this thesis and the most prominent archaeological aspects of all three places. A commonality between the Archaic and Woodland Period usage of the Hatch site is the way Native people disposed of ritualized materials. The termination rites that concluded each ritual are evident in the profiles of the Woodland Period features at the Hatch site (see Chapter Three, Figure 3.13). The lack of Archaic Period features obscures the nature of any ritualized practices that might have taken place during this time. However, the abundance of Archaic Period artifacts linked to ritual by previous researchers (e.g. Klein 1997; Sassaman 2010) strongly suggests Archaic people purposefully left these items in place on the Hatch site. It is likely that the site witnessed multiple iterations of this ritual throughout its long usage as an aggregation center. While the ritualized materials may have changed, their deposition at the closing of each event continued throughout the precolonial era.
The evidence suggests termination rites were a common practice throughout the precolonial Mid-Atlantic. Examining some profile drawings from Clark’s Old Neck (Gallivan et al 2009) and descriptions of features at Abbott Farm’s Excavation 14 (Cross 1956) suggests this was a frequently used method of closing out such rituals throughout the region. While not directly related, Barbra Mills’ (2010) description of the sealing of ritualized rooms at Chaco Canyon provides an interesting comparison. This analogy alludes to the idea that the ceremonial structure studied in this thesis is Pan-American and has roots that are much older than the Late Archaic period. Indeed, such practices occur throughout the world (e.g. Argenti 1997; Küchler 1997), suggesting a much deeper origin.

The idea of destroying keepsakes seems strange to a Western audience, particularly archaeologists who have a keen interest in preserving the physical remains of the past. Arguably, this notion is based in European ideas of progress and the need for physical reminders of the people and moments that contributed to it, a concept rooted in colonialism and its need to assert Europe as the pinnacle of civilization. This is not to say that Mid-Atlantic Algonquian people did not memorialize events. As a place with thousands of years of regular ritualized events left in place, the Hatch site was a monumental landscape charged with the collective power and memories of those moments. While the idea of ephemeral monuments does not fit within the European memorial tradition, archaeologists studying non-Western societies would be wise to consider that not
all cultures link memory with material. This perspective can help to interpret archaeological deposits that may otherwise be inexplicable, (e.g. broken pots over a dog burial).

The short answer to my research question is that Native people used zone-decorated pots in ritualized practices at the Hatch site just as they did at Abbott Farm, though at a much later time. Even once incorporated into the rituals at the Hatch site, they appear to have used it rarely and only at extremely special or unusual events. One thing that is quite clear is that zone-decorated pottery is a very small portion of the Hatch site’s story. The ritual practices that took place there helped establish and maintain the chiefly societies present in Virginia when the English arrived in 1607. The Late Woodland dates for zone-decorated pots at the Hatch site open a new chapter in the story of that ceramic tradition as well as the current understanding of ritual practices in the precolonial Mid-Atlantic. Further analysis of the Hatch site’s incredible archaeological collection will undoubtedly reveal much more.
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