

Pamunkey Pottery and Cultural Persistence

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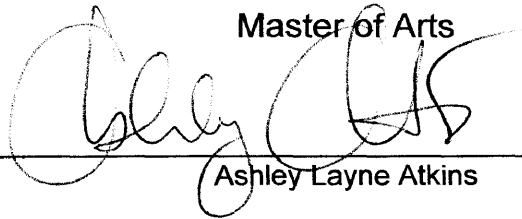
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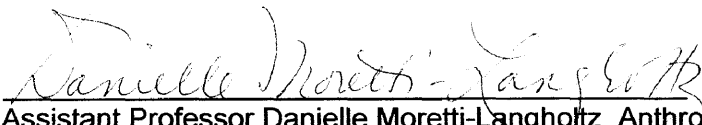
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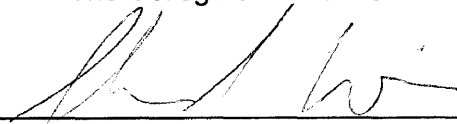


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ABSTRACT PAGE

Native potters living in and around the Pamunkey Indian Reservation in King William County, Virginia have produced earthenware ceramics for centuries. Pottery production on the Reservation has waxed and waned since the seventeenth century from the “Colono” wares traded by Virginia Indians during the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries, to the state-sponsored Pottery School tradition of the early twentieth century, to today’s “black ware” produced for the tourist trade. After reviewing the history of Pamunkey pottery production and its characterization by ethnographers and archaeologists, I summarize new lines of evidence drawn from the interviews and from the documents covering the last century of pottery production on the Pamunkey Indian Reservation. These materials indicate that the social contexts in which the Pamunkey produced and sold pottery changed dramatically as they responded to economic necessity, outside influences, the growth of tourism, and efforts within Virginia’s Native communities to revitalize traditions practiced prior to European contact. Contributing to a shift toward Native-centered viewpoints I emphasize Pamunkey subjectivity while considering Pamunkey ideas regarding how one category of material culture-pottery-has become charged with significance. As a valued tradition, continuity, economic necessity and identity, are the three themes in which the Pamunkey frame the value of pottery production. But, why do the Pamunkey continue to produce pottery, and why is pottery production valued by the Pamunkey? To address these questions I focus on Pamunkeys’ conception of tradition and draw from contemporary anthropological ideas regarding tradition and value to explore the specific terms through which pottery is valued among the Pamunkey.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Reflecting on pottery production in his community, the Pamunkey tribe's former Assistant Chief Warren Cook noted, "Pottery is valuable as a tradition because of how long it has been going on, and because it is a part of our identity" (personal communication with Warren Cook, 2007)¹. While seemingly straightforward, Cook's statement provides a useful point of departure for considering links between contemporary Pamunkey pottery and the community members' ideas regarding authenticity, identity, tradition, change, negotiation, and representation. Today, members of the Pamunkey Tribe return to these themes and their long-term implications when discussing the relationship between the past, present, and future. The contemporary Pamunkey sense of pottery is deeply entangled with notions of continuity, economic necessity, and survival.

My goal in this paper is to contribute to the wider efforts in anthropological discourse to frame historicity, agency, and meaning in Native terms and to contribute to a shift toward Native-centered viewpoints (i.e. Hantman 2000; Sider 2003; Watkins 2000; Waugaman and Moretti-Langholtz 2000). I seek to do so by emphasizing Pamunkey subjectivity while considering Pamunkey ideas regarding how one category of material culture—pottery—has become charged with significance. I attempt to understand the value and the meaning of pottery for the

¹ Permission to use full names was granted from the tribal members I interviewed.

Pamunkey by exploring ways that they, as a community and as individuals, define pottery production as an enduring tradition connecting the community's past, present, and future.

Why do the Pamunkey continue to produce pottery? How is pottery production valued by the Pamunkey? To address these questions I focus on Pamunkeys' conception of tradition and draw from contemporary anthropological ideas regarding tradition (e.g., Handler and Linnekin 1984; Sahlins 1993, 1999) and value (e.g., Appadurai 1986; Myers 2001; Weiner 1992) to explore the specific terms through which pottery is valued among the Pamunkey.

To understand how the Pamunkey define pottery production as a "valued tradition" in the present and how they interpret the value of this tradition's past, I researched archival records at the Library of Virginia, analyzed and interpreted primary documents associated with pottery production of the early twentieth century, and conducted oral history interviews with Pamunkey potters, contemporary artists, and tribal members. After reviewing the history of Pamunkey pottery production and its characterization by ethnographers and archaeologists, I summarize new lines of evidence drawn from the interviews and from the documents covering the last century of pottery production on the Pamunkey Indian Reservation. These materials indicate that the social contexts in which the Pamunkey produced and sold pottery changed dramatically as they responded to economic necessity, outside influences, the growth of tourism, and efforts within Virginia's Native communities to revitalize traditions practiced prior to European contact.

To unpack the significance and value the Pamunkey attribute to pottery production, the term “Pamunkey” needs to be examined and defined. There is not a uniform set of criteria defining who the Pamunkey are, and how one identifies as Pamunkey. Rather, the term itself holds multiple layers of significance, meaning different things to different people at different times. The contemporary Pamunkey, as a group, are a Virginia Indian community whose members identify with, and are connected through shared experiences, a shared past, and a shared place. Considered an object of traditional importance and cultural persistence, pottery is significant because it embodies and personifies the shared past, place, and experiences.

The Pamunkey Indian reservation, established in the mid-seventeenth century, is a place where the Pamunkey have produced earthenware ceramics for centuries. The Pamunkey reservation of today was once a larger tract of land allotted to the Indians in the 1646 treaty between the Powhatan Indians and the colony of Virginia. However, it should be noted that the provisions stipulated in this treaty which included peace, land cession, and the return of captives (Washburn 1988:190), were most likely geared towards establishing reserved land tracts for the white colonists given the population demographics of the time favoring the majority Indian population (Woodard 2008).

Pottery production on the reservation has waxed and waned considerably since the early colonial era as the Pamunkey responded to outside forces. This process is evident in the ways pottery production has changed during the past four centuries, from European-influenced “Colonoware”, to the Southwestern

motifs of the state-sponsored pottery school, to today's tourist trade in "black ware". A fundamental characteristic of these shifts was the transformation from utilitarian production to the production of pottery as "art" for a tourist market. In general, these transformations from utilitarian production to art, incorporated insider/outsider relations that "came from both without and within, according to the tastes of the buyers and the efforts of the producers" (Graburn 1976:14). Each of these developments has been absorbed by the community as part of a tradition defined by the Pamunkey. Previous studies of this tradition during the early twentieth century emphasized Virginia Indian pottery as a dying art form (Holmes 1903; Pollard 1894; Speck 1928; Stern 1951), and by the mid-twentieth century, contemporary Pamunkey potters were largely forgotten by scholars. However, the modifications introduced by outsiders that have influenced Pamunkey pottery production for the past four centuries may be viewed not as submissive adaption, but rather as active responses by the community to changing circumstances.

Most pertinent to the changes Pamunkey pottery production has endured is the shift from utilitarian pottery to non-utilitarian tourist art. This shift was a major force in bringing about another era of change to Pamunkey pottery production in which pottery, although still marketed, was no longer a utilitarian form of pottery like that of colonoware. Many scholars including Nelson Graburn (1976), Valene Smith (1977), and Ruth Phillips (1998;1999) discuss both the negative and positive effects the tourist market has on the transformation, construction, revival, and retention of Indigenous utilitarian objects into objects of

art. For example, Phillips claims that “producing art for a tourist based market is in actuality an example of cultural continuity and adaptation” (Phillips and Steiner 1999:29). Moreover, in reference to the ethnic tourist market among the San Blas Indians of Panama, Swain (1971:71) argues that tourism “is a paradoxical agent of change and continuity... in that acceptance of tourism simultaneously encourages the maintenance of traditions and provides stimuli for change.” While many Pamunkey view the shift to tourist art as positive one that aided in the continuation of pottery production, the pottery they create is negotiated to satisfy both the producer and consumer as well as “project an image that is ethnically relevant or suitably exotic” (Graburn 1976:21).

The central concerns of my argument are the ways in which Pamunkey pottery plays a role in expressing and shaping Pamunkey traditions, values, and the importance of endurance (continuity). Each of these three terms has a complex anthropological significance, and I will spell out some of the relevant issues they entail below.

As I will discuss in greater detail in chapter three, Pamunkey pottery may be viewed as a means of concretizing “traditional” values in a physical object. Concepts from anthropological theorists including Marshall Sahlins (1993; 1999), Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin (1984), and Fred Myers (2001) are useful in interpreting the cultural and historical significance of Pamunkey pottery. Sahlins, Handler and Linnekin foreground the importance of the “inventiveness” of tradition, tradition as a symbolic process and a creative reinterpretation, and change through continuity.

For the purpose of this study continuity may be viewed in terms of both a constant and successive practice such as the Pamunkey pottery tradition, as well as the endurance and survival of a community. For the Pamunkey, pottery production is an example of continuity because the community has continued to make pottery from precontact times to the present day; and therefore, signifies to both the Pamunkey and non-Pamunkey that “we are still here.” When the Pamunkey speak of pottery in terms of continuity, they understand there are discontinuities. But changes in Pamunkey pottery production, from European influenced colonoware to the revitalization of precontact ceramic making, are not viewed in terms of discontinuity. Rather, these changes and improvisations allowed the Pamunkey to continue the pottery tradition, and because pottery production has persisted from precontact, to today, it is considered a continuous tradition. In terms of survival and endurance, continuity can exist amongst discontinuity in which particular traditions and values such as pottery and community heritage, continued to persist due to change and improvisation introduced through outside influences.

In addition, Handler and Linnekin and Sahlins frame their understandings of tradition in terms of the ways different communities negotiate the past in the present. Thus, tradition, as associated with Pamunkey pottery production, may be conceived of as both “a core of teachings handed down from the past” (Handler and Linnekin 1984:275), and a continuous symbolic process that is an expression and reflection of the past.

Myers' ideas regarding the social construction of value are also useful in understanding Pamunkey attitudes toward pottery. His interpretive framework is built on theories of value first proposed by Appadurai (1986) and Weiner (1992).

Borrowing from Appadurai's theory of value, and Weiner's concept of inalienable objects, Myers (2001) discusses the existence of multiple, and variously related "regimes of value". By highlighting "convergence between the values of different regimes" (2001:56), Myers reexamines the way objects, specifically those defined as "art", illustrate human distinction, difference and value. Value can be conceived of as the significance, worth, or meaning ascribed to and/or associated with an object. Thus, we may think of an object's value in terms of the ways it comes to play a role in constituting social relationships.

A consideration of the history and current status of Pamunkey pottery indicates that anthropological ideas regarding tradition and value complement the Pamunkeys' perspectives on tradition and value in that they focus attention on the ways material objects serve as links to the past and contribute to the contemporary negotiation of identity. Of course such themes loom large in the broader contemporary world. By considering contemporary Virginia Native perspectives on these issues I hope to contribute to ongoing dialogues in anthropology and beyond regarding tradition, value, identity, and material culture and their significance to contemporary indigenous communities.

Pamunkey history is difficult and poorly understood because Virginia history has been characterized by a lack of focus and understanding of the role Virginia Indians played in shaping the state's history. Unfortunately this deficient

understanding has led to a lack of available resources that could aid in a better understanding of Virginia Indians' role in the shaping of Virginia's history.

Therefore, Pamunkey history is often overshadowed by louder public conversations regarding Jamestown, Yorktown, Williamsburg, and the region's colonial past (Gallivan and Moretti-Langholtz 2007). A Native-centered narrative focused on Pamunkey pottery production and how this tradition is valued among the Pamunkey is, I suggest, a useful counter point to these predominant conversations.

Pulling from the ways in which the Pamunkey discuss pottery as a valued tradition I argue that as a specific form of material culture, pottery is interconnected with issues centering on continuity, economic necessity, and community survival. "Pamunkeyness" is wrapped up in ideas that emphasize tradition, value and survival that surround the object of pottery. Pottery materializes the Pamunkeys' interpretations and expressions of the past in the present, the ways in how they identify themselves as belonging to a community that has endured, and the ways in which potters obtain financial security. Pottery is loaded with significance because it expresses relationships between past, present and future for the Pamunkey community. More importantly, pottery illustrates that the Pamunkey as a community, "are still here," and have managed to persist in the face of prejudice, and misunderstandings. The statement made by many Pamunkey, "we are still here" is a claim that speaks to survival, endurance, and persistence. It is an assertion about belonging to a place where the Pamunkey get to determine for themselves how they can change, how they

can draw on their past, and how they can shape their future in the face of opposition. Pottery production is a vehicle for the assertion that the Pamunkey “are still here” because, as a valued tradition, it concretizes a particular set of themes centering on continuity, economic necessity, and survival.

Chapter 2

Historical Context of Pamunkey Pottery Production: Precontact to Contemporary Pottery Production

Pamunkey pottery production has been a topic of scholarly discussion since the nineteenth century. These discussions have ranged from J.G. Pollard's analysis of the Pamunkey in 1894, to Frank Speck's examination of Pamunkey colonoware during his visit in the 1920s, to Theodore Stern's (1951) research on Pamunkey pottery making as characterized by the Pamunkey Pottery School era. Historical narratives of Pamunkey pottery production coupled with these scholarly assessments strongly influence the ways the Pamunkey value pottery today. These conversations about pottery held by both the scholars and the Pamunkey cover a multi-century trajectory of pottery production from late prehistoric era to contemporary practices. The historical context of this tradition illustrates the ways that past patterns in pottery production influence Pamunkey definitions of the value of pottery in the present in terms of continuity, economic necessity and the survival of a community that "is still here."

Precontact Ceramics

Pottery production for Virginia's indigenous peoples began roughly three millennia prior to contact with Europeans. The ceramic technology of Virginia's coastal plains from its beginning to approximately five decades after European contact consisted of small to large wide-mouthed jars with conoidal bodies and rounded bases (Egloff and Potter 1982:107). Surface treatments consisted of

incised, corded, fabric and net impressed, simple-stamp and punctuate decorations. Ceramics were apparently produced and used on a household basis for a multitude of purposes including subsistence-related activities such as cooking and storage. There is little evidence to suggest that precontact pottery was produced for exchange in coastal Virginia (Klein 1994), in marked contrast to the historic era. During the third century A.D. a new tradition of pottery is apparent in the archaeological record of coastal areas throughout the Middle Atlantic with the appearance of shell-tempered, cord-marked Mockley ware. These ceramics have been linked by some researchers (e.g., Potter 1993) to the migration of groups ancestral to the Pamunkey and other Algonquin-speaking communities into the region.

Ceramic types dating to the Late Woodland period (AD 900 – 1600) associated with Pamunkey forebears include Townsend shell-tempered wares with incised and fabric impressed surfaces (Rountree and Turner 2002:23). The frequency of these ceramics increased abruptly during the thirteenth century A.D. on riverine settlements along the York River and its principal tributaries, the Mattaponi and Pamunkey (Gallivan 2003). Townsend ceramics continued in wide use along the York into the early seventeenth century Contact period (Egloff and Potter 1982:107).

Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Colonoware

The period of initial European contact resulted in the first marked shift in European influence on Pamunkey pottery production in which pottery shifted from production for consumption to production for exchange. Colonoware is

evidence of this transition because it is characteristic of both indigenous and European pottery, and was sold or traded at population centers such as Williamsburg. Noel Hume (1962) designated the term "Colono-Indian ware" to describe and define smoothed/burnished earthenware vessels excavated at Jamestown, Williamsburg and on plantations located along the York and James Rivers in the tidewater region of Virginia. Like prehistoric pottery, colonoware is constructed from local clays, fired at low temperatures in an oxidizing atmosphere, and is tempered with crushed calcined shell (Mouer et al 1999:85). Even though the technological aspects of colonoware and late prehistoric pottery are almost identical, colonoware vessel forms were influenced by European pottery forms.

Hodges (1993:20) identifies a documented change during the transitional Protohistoric period toward an increase in plain surfaces on Townsend and Rappahannock wares. She suggests that the increase in plain-surfaced wares is directly linked to the three types of colonoware documented on sites beginning in the middle seventeenth century. Drawing on such continuities, Hodges and Mouer et al. argue convincingly that the colonoware found in Virginia was produced by Native Americans and links the shell-tempered Colono-Indian Ware to the mid-nineteenth century and early twentieth century ceramic production of the Pamunkey for the market. Therefore, it appears likely that the Pamunkey may have created a market in ceramic sales as early as the eighteenth century.

Evidence of this possible eighteenth century trade in ceramics was identified during archaeological excavations held on the Pamunkey Indian

Reservation. In 1979 Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) conducted an archaeological survey on the Pamunkey Indian Reservation at the request of the Pamunkey. Eight of the fifteen identified sites contained colonoware ceramics, and an excavated trash pit held an extensive amount of colonoware in association with pearlware and other Euro-American artifacts dating the pit to the first half of the nineteenth century (Mouer et al 1999:91). As shown in Figures 1 and 2, the wares found in this feature included flat-bottomed jars, plates and a bottle or small jug as well as unfired shell tempered clay (Ibid). Hodges and Mouer argue that this material provides clear evidence linking the Pamunkey to the production of colonoware. Other authors, though, contend that colonoware was produced by African American slaves (e.g. Deetz 1988). The amount of colonoware found at seventeenth and eighteenth century sites, Deetz and others argue, exceeded the production capability of Virginia's Native American population during this period (Hodges 1993:32). Additional support for the argument that enslaved Africans produced colonoware may be seen in the timing of its appearance and the contemporary increase in the number of enslaved Africans imported to America (Ibid). Hodges and Mouer suggest there is sufficient evidence to indicate that Indians produced colonoware in the Chesapeake. They point to parallels between colonoware manufacturing techniques and those of late prehistoric Indian communities. Indeed, ethnographic work conducted by Pollard and by Holmes and Speck supports the contention that Pamunkey were using and producing colonoware on the reservation.



Figure 1: Flat bottom jar from site 44KW29.
Courtesy of Virginia Department of Historic
Resources

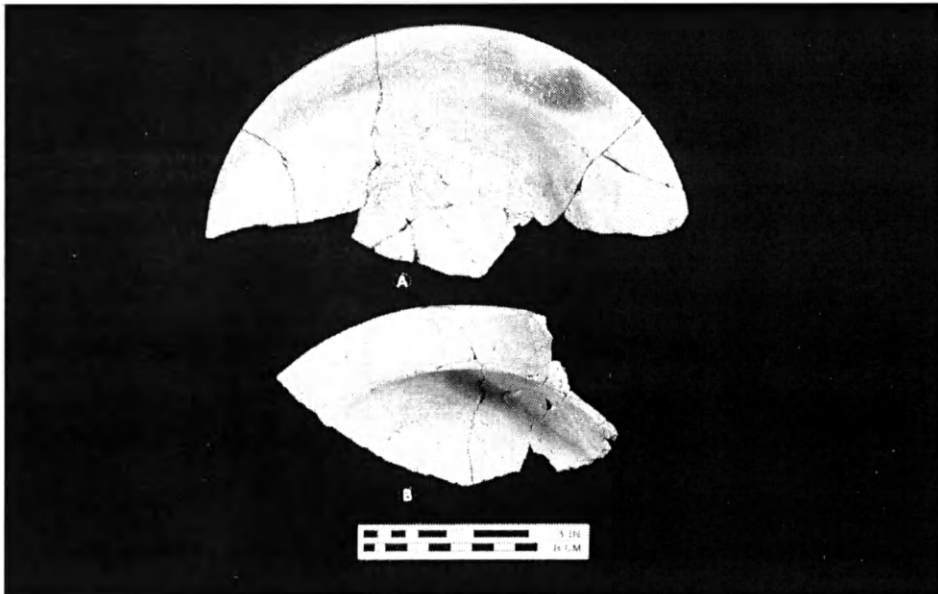


Figure 2: Colonoware plate from site 44KW29.
Courtesy of the Virginia Department of Historic
Resources

Although disagreements persist regarding the nature and extent of eighteenth-century ceramic production and trade among the Pamunkey, ethnographic evidence provided by numerous anthropologists who visited the reservation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century suggests the Pamunkey continued to produce and trade colonoware ceramics well into the early twentieth century. Prior to the construction of the York and Richmond Railroad in 1854 (currently known as the Southern Railway) there was extensive ceramic production for sale to the non-Native residents of King William County (Pollard 1894:17).

To my knowledge there is no current material which offers an explanation as to why a large number of King William residents chose to trade for and purchase Pamunkey ceramics during the early to mid-nineteenth century. West Point was possibly the largest carrier of utilitarian wares in the area during this period, but prior to the construction of the railroad these wares were more expensive than Pamunkey ceramics (personal communication with Warren Cook, 2006). The construction of the York and Richmond Railroad, which travels through the reservation, is thought to have been the main factor in ending the Pamunkey's extensive ceramic market (Pollard 1894:17; Speck 1928:409). The railroad connected Richmond and West Point allowing cheap tin and crockery ware to become readily available to the countryside residents of King William (Speck 1928:409). By the late nineteenth century anthropologist J.G. Pollard reported only a small number of tribal members retained knowledge of pottery production. This decline in traditional knowledge can be attributed to the

availability of cheap wares in West Point (1894:18). Although the production practices were only retained by the older members of the tribe, Pollard observed there was still a meager trade between the Natives and King William residents during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Ibid).

Pamunkey potters continued to produce utilitarian wares for sporadic sale during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. During his visit to the Pamunkey Indian Reservation in the 1920s, anthropologist Frank Speck observed and documented pottery production among the Pamunkey as well as the characteristics of the ceramics. Pamunkey women who resided on the reservation constructed a variety of clay pots such as milk pans and stewing jars that were exchanged throughout King William County for groceries and cash (1928:409). The documented characteristics of the pottery Speck observed included curved handles, legs, knobbed lids, and flat bottoms which he defined as indicatives of European influence (1928:404). Figures 3 and 4 are examples of the colonoware vessels Speck documented.

State Intervention and the Pamunkey Pottery School

By the 1930s, during the Great Depression, the majority of Pamunkey were dependent on non-salaried labor that included fishing, hunting, and farming (personal communication with Warren Cook, 2006). As illustrated in the 1930 census on the Indian population of the United States, 150 out of the 230 Indians residing in King William County were categorized as “rural-farm” populations (The Fifteenth Census of the United States 1930:174-175). Furthermore, only a



Figure 3: Pamunkey Bean pot. Courtesy of the National Museum of the American Indian



Figure 4: Pamunkey Bowl. Courtesy of the National Museum of the American Indian

total of 50 Indians as “gainful workers” or cash earners resided in Virginia demonstrates that the majority of Indians were of non-salaried occupations. Therefore, a decline in one of the only cash-producing endeavors – the ceramic trade - contributed to economic impoverishment among the Pamunkey community (Stern 1951:59). In 1932 the state of Virginia intervened, under the direction of Dr. B. N. VanOot, supervisor of the Trade and Industrial Education on the Virginia State Board of Education. Dr. VanOot proposed the establishment of a state funded pottery school to be located on the reservation. Establishing the pottery school, VanOot suggested, would aid the Pamunkey in increasing revenue for its people through the creation of a tourist-based market in pottery production (Ibid).

Similar situations were experienced through out Native communities along the East Coast. For example, Phillips (1998:14) discusses a correlation between the worsening economic conditions among East Coast natives during the last half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century and the adoption of touristic production as a means of subsistence in which the adoption of commoditization and tourism were strategies for economic and cultural survival.

Anthropologist Theodore Stern (1951) addressed this period of Pamunkey pottery production, focusing on changes in production techniques and market organization. Included in the state sponsorship were hired Euro-American instructors who introduced simplified pottery-making techniques and marketing strategies focused on the mass production of non-utilitarian, souvenir, tourist art. As a result of the newly introduced tourist market, changes were made in terms

of simplification of form and decoration because “the fewer steps that are involved, the more the artisan will be able to produce, and the lower the price unit” (Graburn 1976:15). These changes included the use of the pottery wheel, squeeze molds and kiln firing as well as painted pictographs (Figures 5 and 6) and southwestern motifs (Stern 1951:61). Stern noted, “the tourist [could] now buy pots bearing upon them the records of such incidents in tribal history as the story of John Smith and Pocahontas, derived largely from school text books”(Ibid). As shown in Figure 5, the Southwestern motifs were also applied due to their association with “Indianess.” The Southwestern motifs had come to be considered “Indian, hence suitable for Pamunkey; it is attractive and also should sell well; and it is the ware identified by the tourist... with the Indian” (Ibid:62).

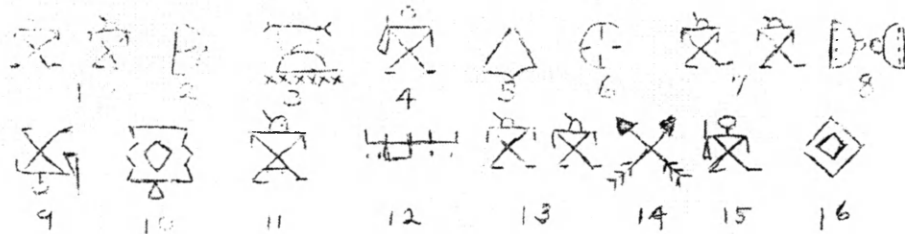
This particular project contributed to the formation and concretization of static, one-dimensional images of the “Indian.” For the white, state-hired instructors the image of the “Indian” they invoked was associated with Indians of the Southwest. These images in turn, contributed to the classical, “traditional” ideas about “Indian arts,” also associated with the geometric designs characteristic of Southwestern Indian pottery. These illustrations of “Indianess” demonstrate that tourist art is a minimal system that makes meaning accessible across visual boundary lines with a reduction in traditional forms and an expansion of neo-traditional secular motifs (Graburn 1976:17). In addition, Phillips argues that the marketability of native art objects depends on these objects conveying a concept of recognizable and acceptable differences. To



Figure 5. Pamunkey School Tradition plate depicting the Southwestern motifs and pictographs. Courtesy of <http://www.pamunkey.org/>

PAMUNKEY INDIAN POTTERY

Can you read Indian writing? Try to read the story written below. It is the story of Pocahontas and Captain John Smith. What a thrill your school children would get if they could read a simple story in Indian writing. (hieroglyphics.)



Translated, the above reads: (1) Indians (2) while hunting (3) discover (4) white man (5) standing (6) in shallow water (7) Indians (8) agree (9) to kill white man (10) at chief's seat (11) Indian maiden (12) disagrees with (13) Indian men (14) (and) makes no harm for (15) white man (16) but good wishes.

Figure 6 Pictographs used as a decoration: the story of Pocahontas and John Smith. Courtesy of the Department of Education Indian School Files 1936-1967, Library of Virginia.

successfully convey these differences “aboriginal makers have to re-imagine themselves in terms of the conventions of Indianess current among the consumer group, an exercise that profoundly destabilized indigenous concepts of identity” (1998:9). However, in discussing the Southwestern Pueblo pottery market Brody (1976:76) observes that while negative social effects occurred with the introduction of the market, “in a very real way, the survival of the craft symbolizes the survival of the people.”

As a major force of transformation, the tourist market leads to changes in size, simplification, standardization, and novelty in which the objects created for the mass market are expected to be cheap, portable and understandable (Graburn 1976:15). The introduction of the tourist market with the establishment of the Pamunkey Pottery School as a major force of change brought with it a new tourist clientele, in which colonoware ceramics were no longer produced. Where the colonoware vessel types produced by the Pamunkey had catered to local demand for inexpensive pots, these were replaced with wares formed and decorated to fit tourists’ tastes and preferences centering on the aesthetics Graburn suggested above. These vessel types included bowls, plates, ashtrays, vases, Southwestern ‘wedding jars,’ canoes, and effigy pipes as well as miniatures of these vessel types. One of the only remaining attributes of past Pamunkey pottery production was the use of local clays from deposits along the Pamunkey River (personal communication with Joyce Krigsvold, 2006). However, the choices that Pamunkey potters made in the commoditization of touristic art were not completely dominated by Euro American culture. Instead

the Native artists utilized images and forms that “continued to make sense within both indigenous and Euro-North American signifying systems” (Phillips 1998:20).

A Tradition Revitalized

The pottery production techniques and marketing strategies introduced by Virginia officials are still a part of pottery-making practiced by Pamunkey potters today. By the late 1970s, though, a movement for the revival of pre-Columbian, Native American traditions in arts and crafts began among the Pamunkey. This movement signified a break in the state-influenced methods of pottery making for the Pamunkey, and marked an effort to understand the precontact aspect of their culture. The movement toward reproducing ancient techniques in pottery, bead and leather work was initiated by the Powhatan Artisan’s Project sponsored by the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) Native American Grant. This grant was funded by the Federal government for two years, and was aimed at providing funding for classes and teachers to introduce traditional Native American techniques in craft production (CETAgram 1979:1).

The project was initiated and implemented by Virginia Indians. Virginia Indians including the project’s leader, Warren Cook, were actively involved in its execution. In the classroom, Native American students of numerous tribal affiliations that resided in Virginia, studied archaeological ceramics to understand the forms and decorative treatments implemented by Natives before European influence (CETAgram 1979:5). These archaeological pieces were reproduced in the classroom incorporating the use of traditional techniques such as coiling to build the vessel, smoothing with mussel shells, stone polishing and open firing.

Surface treatments included the use of net and cord wrapped paddles as well as stamping and incising. The type of pottery decoration that became the most popular and has become one of the main methods of decoration used among contemporary Pamunkey pottery is defined as “Black Ware.” As shown in Figures 7 and 8, Black Ware is highly burnished and fired at high temperatures to obtain a polished black sheen.

The CETA grant also provided instruction for the Pamunkey on museum construction, maintenance, interpretation and management. This training was fundamental to the establishment of the Pamunkey Indian Museum that officially opened to the public in 1980 (Norrisey 1980:27). The combination of CETA funding for ceramic production and the establishment of the museum introduced a new method and medium for marketing and promoting Pamunkey ceramics. The marketing techniques implemented by the Pamunkey Indian Museum included the publication and creation of brochures, and films discussing the history of ceramic production and the Pottery School (personal communication with Warren Cook, 2006). In addition, these marketing approaches signaled a shift from tourist-focused pottery production to a focus on educating the public about Pamunkey culture and their centuries-old ceramic tradition.

Today, the Pamunkey practice what they consider to be two ceramic traditions. One technique includes the methods of pottery making and decoration introduced by the state in 1932. The second method includes the revitalized technique in the traditional methods of pottery making. Currently there are only two traditional potters, Joyce Krigsvold and Mildred Moore, who continue to make



Figure 7. Contemporary Black Ware Jar. Photograph by Ashley Atkins



Figure 8. Contemporary Pamunkey Black Ware Pottery at the Pamunkey Indian Museum. Photograph by Ashley Atkins

both ceramic traditions. However, there are a few tribal members who have begun to learn the tradition, and sell their work at the museum.

Today, buyers of Pamunkey pottery are mostly non-Native tourists who visit from all over the United States. Interestingly, though, the majority of tourists are purchasing the School tradition pottery (personal communication with Joyce Krigsvold, 2008; and Isabelle Brown, 2008). Traditional potter, Joyce Krigsvold, attributes this pattern to the separate price ranges that are set for the two different wares. The Pottery School tradition prices are the cheaper of the two ranging from five dollar canoes to twenty dollar plates decorated with pictographs relaying the story of Pocahontas and John Smith (personal communication with, Joyce Krigsvold 2007). The traditional “black ware” pots are more expensive ranging from forty dollars for a small vessel to one hundred dollars, plus for larger vessels. The difference in price range for the two wares is derived from the amount of labor involved in creating the two distinct wares. The Pottery School tradition utilizes the same methods introduced in the 1930s with the use of molds and kiln firing. The traditional method is a longer, multi-week process using the labor-intensive techniques of coiling and open firing and the large amount of work and time put into making these vessels determines the price. Vessels from both of these traditions are sold and displayed at the Pamunkey Indian Museum, the National Museum of the American Indian, local powwows, and Virginia heritage sites such as Jamestown and Yorktown.

In echoing a theme stressed by contemporary potters on the reservation, this brief history of Pamunkey pottery emphasizes the continuity of a living

tradition. Clearly the Pamunkey pottery tradition has incorporated numerous changes in production techniques and marketing practices. For Pamunkey potters and tribal members today, though, these changes do not devalue pottery as a continuous tradition, but rather aided in the tradition's persistence.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework

An understanding of both historical and contemporary Pamunkey pottery can benefit from a consideration of the importance of value, tradition, and survival in broader anthropological discourse. To explore these three aspects of Pamunkey pottery production I draw from anthropological theories on value and tradition posed by Handler and Linnekin, Sahlins, and Myers. These theorists were particularly useful in this study due to the ways in which they discussed the issues of tradition, value, and continuity and material culture. Moreover, these theories parallel the ways in which the Pamunkey perceive pottery production, making them particularly relevant to understanding the patterned themes of continuity, economic necessity and persistence surrounding the object of pottery.

Although pottery was an invented technology, as are all traditions, it was a technology with a deep history starting some three thousand years ago. The Pamunkey produce pottery today in reference to community endurance, to adopted changes, and to efforts in revitalizing traditions practiced prior to European contact. Some anthropologists (i.e. Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) characterize these attempts by communities to construct and reconstitute their identities from traditions of the past as “invented” traditions. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) attempt to understand how “invented” traditions and emerging identities become stabilized, institutionalized, and associated with historical

traditions that contradict their recent formation. Their argument regarding “invented” traditions is not particularly useful with regard to Pamunkey pottery tradition. I suggest that a more meaningful understanding of tradition can be found in analyses that focus on how a particular tradition was formed and how it has persisted and continued through time even though outside influences have altered its context.

Marshall Sahlins focuses on the continuous and persistent aspects of tradition in his discussions of continuity through change (1993) and the “inventiveness” of tradition (1999). Sahlins argues against the dismissal of peoples’ claims of cultural distinctiveness and shifts the focus toward the continued relevance of such difference or the “inventiveness” of tradition (1999:399). Sahlins argues against the ideas of Hobsbawm and Ranger, who discuss “invented” traditions as nothing more than a serviceable mechanism used for a present political purpose (Ibid:402). Sahlins directs his focus towards the discussion of living traditions that have persisted through time. Cultural traditions are, of course, changed and modified according to the historical contexts of which they are a part, and this process of modification is a meaningful one. Colonialism brought about new modes of cultural practice, and these were neither blindly adopted nor did they subsume indigenous cultures, but rather aided in their preservation (Sahlins 1993:18). In Sahlins’ words, “cultural continuity thus appears in and as the mode of cultural change [in which] the innovations follow logically ... from the people’s own principles of existence” (Ibid: 19). Cultural continuity, Sahlins notes, can be seen in cultural change in which the fusion of different belief systems allows

cultural traditions to be preserved rather than erased. Further, he writes, “people are not usually resisting the technologies and ‘conveniences’ of modernization, nor are they particularly shy of the capitalist relations needed to acquire them. Rather, what they are after is the indigenization of modernity, their own cultural space in the global scheme of things” (1999:410). In other words, external practices and relationships are brought or adopted into value-determining associations with Native categories.

In a parallel argument, Handler and Linnekin (1984) argue against anthropologists Kroeber (1948) and Shils (1981) and their “naturalistic” and common sense conception of tradition. Both scholarly and common sense understandings of tradition have presumed that a society is identified by its traditions or by a core of teachings handed down from the past (1984:275). This view of tradition assumes the past leaves some objectively definable inheritance and it tends to posit a differentiation between a “real” and “fictitious tradition.” The authors claim this dichotomous approach and conception of tradition as scientific or naturalistic fails because it cannot be detached from the Western common sense that defines tradition as an unchanging core of ideas and customs handed down to the present from the past. Moreover, the “opposition between a[n]... inherited tradition and one that is consciously shaped is a false dichotomy.” The crucial point the authors make is that a tradition’s value does not exclusively depend upon an objective relation to the past. Instead, the authors posit that tradition resembles a thought process and is an ongoing interpretation of the past (Ibid: 274). Tradition should be understood as a “symbolic process that both

presupposes past symbolisms and creatively reinterprets them... [in which] tradition is not a bounded entity made up of bounded constituent parts, but a process of interpretation, attributing meaning in the present though making reference to the past" (Ibid:287).

Pamunkey pottery production as a tradition has also changed and modified to particular historical contexts from the European introduced colonial market economy to the Great Depression. However, these modifications did not subsume pottery production as a tradition among the Pamunkey, but rather aided in its preservation. For example, many tribal members believe that without the economic/market incentive to make pottery for the past three hundred and fifty years, the tradition would have ceased to exist.

As a tradition pottery making among the Pamunkey is a symbolic process. For the Pamunkey, creating pottery is connected to potters of the past who were both ancestors and relatives that have passed. The Pamunkey understand that the pottery created today is not an exact replica of pottery made four hundred years ago, but rather is created in reference to contemporary interpretations of pottery making techniques of the past, and decorations associated with both Pamunkey history and culture. The techniques used to construct and fire vessels are similar to those practiced over four hundred years ago such as coil building and open firing of the pots. However, the process of creating pottery has incorporated modern technology including kilns that are used for pre-firing. In terms of decoration, there is a wide variety of motifs from the pictographs, to riverine images associated with Pamunkey culture including rivers, water, turtles

and fish. From vessel construction, to decoration, to the introduction of market production there are more nuances characterizing Pamunkey pottery than what are considered to be traditional characteristics. Even though these changes have been modified to contemporary technological and market influences, they are implemented through reference to the past and Pamunkey history.

There is a large and growing body of literature discussing materiality and the association between material culture and social relationships (e.g. Graeber 2001; Miller 2005; Myers 2001). However, I see Fred Myers' (2001:4, 19, 49, 168) theory of value as particularly useful because he goes beyond an economic explanation and focuses on the links between identity, heritage and history and the value communities associate with specific objects. As I noted in my introduction, Myers' interpretive frame uses concepts of value proposed by Appadurai(1986) and Wiener (1992). Appadurai's and Wiener's ideas about value provide useful building blocks for the ways in which Myers has come to interpret the concept of value. In order to understand Myer's concepts we need to look to how he understands Appadurai's "regimes of value" and Weiner's "inalienable objects".

Appadurai explores the "conditions under which economic objects circulate in different *regimes of value* in space and time" (Ibid:14). These "regimes of value" determine and define value for a particular object in a given context.

By regimes of value Appadurai refers to "the degree of value... that is variable from situation to situation and from commodity to commodity" (1986: 15).

Because objects circulate from situation to situation, commodities, like people,

have social lives. To understand the historical circulation of things, anthropologists must look to the “social life of things” because an object’s meaning is apparent in their forms, uses and trajectories (Ibid: 5).

In discussing and defining objects as “inalienable possessions,” Weiner suggests that anthropologists should focus on the ways individuals or groups create value in objects that fortify or reconstruct their cultural identities. She examines the “symbolic density” of cultural meaning associated with objects. Symbolic density accumulates through an object’s association with ancestral histories, aesthetics, and economics. Highly valuable objects are defined as inalienable possessions because they acquire unique value through the importance they have to a particular individual or community of people (Weiner quoted in Myers 2001:9).

Building on Appadurai’s and Weiner’s concepts of value, Myers explores “the existence of multiple, coexisting and variously related ‘regimes of value’” (2000:6) to examine the way objects are used to construct social identities and communicate cultural differences. He focuses on the objects defined as art, and the ways art objects are used to construct or deny identity and cultural difference. The category of ‘art’ is viewed as a “historically specific cultural classification, a distinct category whose historical meanings... are vital to the contexts it establishes for objects and activities” (Ibid:29). Art as a specific materiality and its associated meanings are productive in constituting human difference and value through expressions of identity in reference to a multitude of issues including community, religious beliefs, or involvement in globalization that sometimes

creates a need to articulate cultural distinctiveness. Furthermore, art as a form of material culture can act as defensive strategy against marginalization, commoditization, markets, money and mass culture or as a mechanism of self-definition and is integral in cultural production as well as boundary maintenance.

Furthering his discussion of value regimes that are related and multiple, Myers (2001:56) discusses what he defines as the “convergence between the values of different regimes”. Myers notes that the act of convergence, or movement between different regimes of value and between contexts reorganizes the value of each regime. Objects associated with culture-making performances such as Native American pottery may, for example, shift into new contexts and connect multiple regimes of value. Unfortunately, objects associated with Australian Aboriginal products are often not viewed in terms of movement, but rather in terms of static, unchanging categories. Therefore, Myers calls for a “framework of recontextualization” which focuses on circulation (or movement), on institutions, and on culture making rather than on static cultural categories (Ibid:55). His appeal for recontextualization derives from how “Aboriginal products are circulating through new spaces and institutional linkages, building new audiences as well as meanings, argues against the imposition of boundaries and in favor of *a framework of recontextualization*”(Ibid:56). Discussing objects and their associated meanings in terms of static categories is insufficient. Rather, objects are circulating, moving from context to context, are being redefined in their movements allowing objects to be a part of multiple contexts or regimes of value at any given time.

Much of indigenous peoples' material cultures, particularly art, have been commoditized, and Myers indicates that consumer choice, utility, and the commodity aspect of the object cannot explain its value. This is so since some objects are valued because of their link to identity, to the past and for representing alternate regimes of value (Ibid:57). The market regime that has become associated with the commoditization of indigenous objects does not replace other regimes of value so much as it reorganizes them because "other systems of value may coexist, and their meaning may be reconstructed in relation to the presence of market practices" (Ibid:59). In addition, Myers demonstrates that the value of certain classes of objects is deeply implicated in their relationship to the market and the money earned from this relationship. However, this value is not only quantitatively defined. Instead, Myers emphasizes "the attempts to make qualitative value commensurate with monetary value represent an effort to mediate these value regimes, one in which some participants can imagine that monetary value will reinforce (rather than destroy) indigenous distinctions" (Ibid:19).

Finally, Myers discusses the dilemma of how to translate value associated with heritage, memory, and tradition of objects created by ethnic peoples such as Native Americans into an exchangeable and marketable value. There is an antagonistic relationship that characterizes Native objects that are also commodities because there is a desire to explain their value in strictly economic terms. But these objects created and made by Natives are associated with multiple regimes of value that do not circulate solely within any single value

regime determined by economics. In contrast, these objects and their associated values are moving, converging, being reconstituted within new contexts, and are characterized by indigenous peoples as links to their past, heritage and identity.

Pamunkey pottery is an example of an art form that is associated with values surrounding themes of community distinction and community survival. For the Pamunkey, pottery as an art form, is an object that illustrates the survival of their community due to the continuous production of pottery on the reservation for over three hundred years. Furthermore, pottery and its associated meanings are not defined as a commodity and by an economic value alone. While the market value of pottery is important, it is only one regime of multiple values that have come to define the meaning of Pamunkey pottery. Pottery as an art form, as a commodity, and as a tangible piece of Pamunkey history is a fluid object carrying with it multiple and converging regimes of value surrounding economic necessity, continuity, and persistence. Furthermore, as a fluid object, Pamunkey pottery has circulated through multiple contexts over three centuries causing it to build and accumulate meaning and value that shifts with the historical contexts and changes of which this object has been a part.

Chapter 4

Pamunkey Theories of Value and Tradition

Conversations with tribal members and artisans revealed particular patterns in how the Pamunkey understand tradition, value, and community survival. These particular issues are intertwined in ways the Pamunkey relate to their past. Pamunkey tribal members have their own definitions and ideas about what constitutes tradition and why pottery production is defined as a valued tradition. By interviewing Pamunkey potters, artists and tribal members, I was able to determine that pottery is valued for multiple reasons that tend to center around three specific themes: continuity, economic necessity and survival. However, when individual tribal members discussed the importance of Pamunkey pottery tradition, several invoked what might be thought of as three particular “regimes of value” (Appadurai 1986:4) associated with pottery-making.

Also important to Pamunkey artisans today are ways that these regimes of value join and converge (Myers 2001:57). We can draw on Myers’ concept of “converging regimes of value” to illustrate how the issues of continuity, economic necessity and survival are connected. For Pamunkey potters today, continuity, survival, and economic necessity converge and coalesce in complicated ways. When they talk about these concepts, the Pamunkey often discuss them in reference to one another.

The Pamunkey Define Tradition

Tradition among the Pamunkey is viewed in two distinct ways. First, it is a static, bounded entity derived from the distant past, while also being a dynamic process that is passed from generation to generation. Second, tradition is a continuous, atemporal process constructed through reflections on and expressions of the past. Furthermore, Pamunkey tradition in general is often viewed in relation to themes tied to survival and subsistence. The activities associated with aspects of survival (literally and culturally) are traditions such as fishing, hunting, trapping, the ability to maintain a reservation for over three hundred years signifying the Pamunkey community is still here, producing pottery as a cash commodity, and the annual tax tribute to the Governor. The annual tax tribute is a tradition that was established in 1677 with the Treaty of Middle Plantation in which the various Virginia Indian signatories were required to pay an annual tax to the governor in the form of game, skins, and various other goods. This tradition is not evidence of continual domination, but rather an expression of continuity, persistence, and sovereignty. Furthermore, the idea of tradition understood among the Pamunkey is not about a “pristine,” unchanging tradition, but is rather a tradition practiced or made *by the Pamunkey* whether or not change has occurred among the existing tradition or developed as a new method of expressing the tradition.

For example, tribal member Layne Cook stated, “there is always the possibility of making a new tradition and passing that down” (personal communication with Layne Cook, 2007). For the Pamunkey, changing tradition,

changing ways of life or “loss” of tradition does not make them any less authentic as Native Americans. The group or the person does not lose their culture, as my grandfather stated, it changes because change in itself is a way of life. “Damn it! we’re still here!” to quote my mother, Layne Cook, sums up the views of numerous tribal members that pottery is a signifier to not only them as Pamunkey Indians, but to non-Pamunkey as well that they are a vibrant community that has survived centuries of marginalization, prejudice and racism as well as a community continuing to practice a tradition that is thousands of years old. Again, this returns to the association of tradition with survival. Pottery was not only produced to provide a supplemental income, but its production is viewed by the Pamunkey as symbol or representation that “we are still here.”

The statement “we are still here” is a complicated claim and it brings to light the issues associated with the importance of endurance and survival of the Pamunkey community. “We are still here” speaks to survival; survival of a community who has been threatened for centuries with the loss of their claim to an Indian identity, denial of their right to live as sovereign peoples, and the loss of their land. “We are still here” is about asserting their presence in world that rarely acknowledged their existence. Despite these attempts by the dominate society to literally wipe Indians from Virginia’s records, the Pamunkey have held onto their reservated land, and their claims to an indigenous identity. And this is what the statement “We are still here” means; the Pamunkey people, the community, the continuity of traditions including hunting, fishing and making pottery; and the connectedness to a place that has been in the hands of the

Pamunkey before European contact, are all intact, they have survived, and they are still here.

The Value of Pamunkey Pottery Production: Continuity, Economic Necessity and Survival

By reconsidering Pamunkey pottery production as a dynamic and inventive tradition, we can begin to see how it plays a role in converging regimes of value. These regimes are linked to notions of continuity, economic necessity and persistence. Continuity is an appropriate term to illustrate one reason why pottery is valued. Pottery production is defined as a tradition due to its association with historical continuity. Pottery is valued because it is an example of continuity. It is a material object that was created and formed by their ancestors centuries ago and that same object is made today, through similar techniques and through the use of the same clay employed by their ancestors. As a material thing, pottery offers material links between the past, the present, and the future associated with Pamunkey tradition as a whole. For example, it has been continuously practiced by the Pamunkey for centuries despite both imposed and adopted changes.

Tribal member Daryl Hepler commented that pottery is valuable because it “is a tangible piece of our history, it’s something you can hold in your hands, literally” (personal communication with Daryl Hepler, 2008). She goes on to say that she collects pieces of Pamunkey pottery because of their relationship to the Pamunkey past. “I will continue to collect them as something to pass down to Larissa [her daughter] so she can hold onto a piece of our culture, our tradition”

(Ibid). Daryl Hepler's collection of Pamunkey pottery is comprised of many pieces that were made by her family members including her grandmother and her aunts. Her collection has a range of different periods of which she does not differentiate between because she believes they are all a part of Pamunkey history and heritage. Tribal member Kim Taylor believes pottery is meaningful because there is a connection to the past and "it is one of the only things that we as Pamunkey Indians have kept through all these years" (personal communication with Kim Taylor, 2008). It is clear that continuity holds an emotionally-charged connection to the past for some Pamunkey. Continuity is integral in the Pamunkey understanding of the value of tradition in general whether it be the pottery tradition, the annual tax tribute or the tradition of fishing the Pamunkey River.

The emphasis on continuity in such reflections among the Pamunkey raises questions about the ways Pamunkey understand the very real changes in pottery production during the recent centuries. Can the Pamunkey still claim continuity of tradition even though the practices associated with pottery production have been influenced by outsiders for centuries? The Pamunkey still attest to the continuity of the pottery making tradition despite almost four hundred years of adopted and imposed change. Pottery styles were modified and made more commercial, but these alterations and adoptions were beneficial in the long run because people continue to visit the reservation to buy pottery (personal communication with Kevin Brown, 2008).

Regardless of centuries of adopted and imposed change, the Pamunkey proudly mention the one aspect of pottery production among their community that

has never been altered. This unaltered characteristic refers to the usage of clay retrieved from the banks of the Pamunkey River that surrounds the peninsula on which the reservation is located. The Pamunkey recognize change as a way of life, as inevitable, and constant. For example, Daryl Hepler commented that “even though we haven’t held onto what some people consider to be Indian, we are still here; we have blended our lives with the American lifestyle and there is nothing wrong with that. I think unfortunately to survive in this world you have to either get left behind or change with the times” (personal communication with Daryl Hepler, 2008).

For the Pamunkey, change is not viewed in a negative light, though many recognize that non-Natives view change among Native peoples as a negative process. Furthermore, the multiple outside changes pottery production has witnessed over the centuries do not make pottery today any less of a valued tradition. To community members, the adopted changes in pottery are “Pamunkey” because the Pamunkey are making the pottery. “You can’t say it’s not Pamunkey because it was introduced by non-Pamunkey” (personal communication with Warren Cook, 2007). The fact that pottery was altered over the centuries “speaks to our ability to still exist and what we have to do in order to still be here today” (personal communication with Layne Cook, 2007). These adopted outside influences were a means of cultural survival; and therefore, have *become* part of Pamunkey culture.

Continuity and change within the tradition of pottery making are also viewed as contributions to a process of survival that is directly related to the

economic value of pottery production. The economic value attributed to this tradition is characteristic of both past and present pottery making. Beginning early in the colonial era, pottery was made for cash, and this cash was in turn used to buy necessities such as food and supplies. Families relied on pottery for supplemental income, because there was little to no work for Indians off the reservation (personal communication with Warren Cook, 2007). In other words, the value of Pamunkey pottery production in the past was driven by economic necessity and survival. However, Warren Cook commented the Pamunkey “did pottery for so long, it can’t just be about money; they had to have loved and really enjoyed it” (Ibid).

Bill Miles, the former chief that led the Pamunkey from 1990 through 2008, noted the Pamunkey women were “making pottery for economic reasons and it was fortunate that while it was providing something economic for them, they were still able to preserve our heritage” (personal communication with Bill Miles, 2008). Today pottery is still economically valuable and traditional potters such as Joyce Krigsvold attest to pottery’s ability to provide a supplemental income which aids in the payment for everyday expenses such as gas and monthly bills. Joyce Krigsvold, Warren Cook and Kevin Brown, all Pamunkey artists, explain the process of having to negotiate their work in terms of what they want to create as artists as opposed to what they know will sell. For example, the current Chief, Kevin Brown, mentions that he always spends too much time on creating his artwork. Time is money, so the more time he spends on a piece the

more he charges, but these expensive pieces do not sell as well. Therefore, he has to negotiate the time, effort and creativity he wishes to spend on creating his artwork to make pieces that take less time to construct in order to generate a piece that costs less, and will therefore sell (personal communication with Kevin Brown, 2008). Although pottery is made for the purpose of sale, it has a unique value that is defined by its connections to the past, and its ability to signify that the Pamunkey “are still here.” Also, in general, while commercial objects are created for the sale to outsiders, they carry a message that “we exist; we are different; we can do something we are proud of; and we have something that is uniquely ours” (Graburn 1976:26).

In many ways it is impossible to separate the economic value from the value of cultural survival. As stated by contemporary artist Kevin Brown pottery for sale was “a way of carrying tradition on, if it wasn’t for sale it would have stopped somewhere along the line.” Similarly, Warren Cook claimed pottery has “always been about making money, today it is for money, but we also want to keep tradition alive” (personal communication with Warren Cook, 2007). Presently there is more awareness that “pottery is a part of our culture and it’s not just for the tourists, but it’s for ourselves” (personal communication with Layne Cook, 2007). Although pottery is still considered to be economically valuable, Chief Miles commented “pottery is valued because it is something that preserves our heritage [and the] preservation of our heritage is more important because a lot of people think we’re still not here” (personal communication with Bill Miles, 2008).

Pottery is valuable because it is considered to be a part of Pamunkey survival and endurance. It is valued by Pamunkey because it is tradition that exhibits continuity between the past and present. Pottery is also viewed as a method of keeping Pamunkey community and culture alive. It is an important signifier in alerting non-Pamunkey the Pamunkey are still here. Layne Cook claims this is important because “there are a lot of people who have no clue there are two Indian reservations in King William and that there are even Indian people still around” (personal communication with Layne Cook, 2007). Chief Brown believes pottery has been associated with the Pamunkey for so long it has come to define them and it is “almost a name brand because so much pottery has been produced and sold here [that] Pamunkey pottery is a trade mark and we’re defined by it” (personal communication with Kevin Brown, 2008). It identifies the Pamunkey as a Native American community that has managed to maintain cultural distinctiveness through centuries of adopted and imposed change.

In addition, pottery as an art form also constitutes value through the identity of individual Pamunkey artists. Pottery is valuable and significant as an art form because it is utilized by Pamunkey, particularly artists, to constitute and express cultural distinctiveness. Pottery is viewed as an art that is “an expression of the Native people [and] it’s a reflection of our culture” (personal communication with Cam Fox, 2007).

Contemporary artist, Warren Cook when speaking about his work claimed “what I am doing now doesn’t matter if it is tradition or not. I am expressing myself as a Native person [and] Native people express themselves through

pottery and other art forms” (personal communication with Warren Cook, 2007). In terms of self expression through art, Warren Cook is referring to an expression of an individual self as influenced by cultural and community affiliations. When making a pot, traditional potter Joyce Krigsvold explains that “it’s a part of you when you’re doing it [and] you can make it the way you want to [through] the way you feel” (personal communication with Joyce Krigsvold, 2008). Novice potter, Kim Taylor believes that making pottery is “one way I can express myself... because I made it with my hands [and] you express yourself through art... I mean that’s what art is pretty much all about” (personal communication with Kim Taylor, 2008). Clay collected from the river banks is worked, formed and molded into something beautiful and “to take something out of the earth and be able to mold it and turn it into something beautiful, is art” (personal communication, Layne Cook 2007). The value of pottery as an expressive, material form, is determined by those who are making the art object and contributes to collective ideas about the Pamunkey presence in Virginia of which the artists are a part.

I have discussed how the Pamunkey view pottery as a valued tradition which has resonated over time from the community’s long history of pottery-making to the present context of pottery production. However, we must ask how the Pamunkey expect this past/present relationship to influence the future of pottery production. In his discussion of the Lumbee Indians of North Carolina, Sider describes antagonism in the relationship between past, present, and future. Past and present rub “against the foreseen future, [and] are often the loci both of terror and of hope, of bitter struggles over meaning and over meaninglessness”

(2003:10). The Pamunkey also look back to the past, live a present that is constituted by the past, and plan for the future. But for many the future of pottery making is characterized by both fear and hope. Fear, that pottery production will cease to exist, and become a meaningless vestigial product of the past.

For example, Bill Miles thinks the future of pottery “is not promising, which is unfortunate because it’s a piece of our heritage that might be lost, and I hate to see that happen” (personal communication Bill Miles, 2008). This is a legitimate fear expressed by many Pamunkey. On the other hand, hope becomes a beacon in which the Pamunkey believe pottery will continue as a valued tradition because it has endured for too long for the Pamunkey to let it to be forgotten. Warren Cook commented that “unless we get more people interested, [pottery making] is going to fade out. We’ve got the people, got the material and got the facility, we just need interested people” (personal communication, 2007). He believes one of the main problems is children are not interested and that many Pamunkey do not care about learning pottery until they are older, when it might be too late.

The Pamunkey reflect a great deal about the future of the pottery tradition; calling into question the vitality and endurance of this tradition. Will pottery production even continue as a tradition in the future? If it does, will it warrant the same value as tradition ten, twenty, etc. years from now? Chief Brown commented that pottery production is already headed towards a path of disappearance because Mildred Moore and Joyce Krigsvold are the only two traditional potters left. However, Kevin sees a solution in these two women and

proposes establishing an afterschool program where Mildred and Joyce will teach children how to make pottery (personal communication with Kevin Brown, 2008). It is clear that discussions among the Pamunkey about the tradition's future range from optimistic views of its continuation to fear of pottery becoming a lost tradition. Discussions on the future fate of Pamunkey pottery are also directly associated with continuity in which the Pamunkey believe pottery will continue as a valuable tradition and will continue to be associated with the Pamunkey community well into the future.

There appears to be a consensus among the community members that a solution exists among the Pamunkey youth. Every tribal member that I interviewed expressed an opinion that the future of pottery production is dependent on the future generations. The continuation of pottery-making rests on the shoulders of the children who will be the Pamunkey culture bearers of the future. Cam Fox expressed that "the future of pottery is in the young people" (personal communication, 2008), and Isabelle Brown believes the pottery tradition "is going to be lost unless the children pick up on it" (personal communication, 2008). In addition Kim Taylor believes the only way the pottery tradition will be able to continue is through the children. The current older generation, including the potters, recognizes their responsibility to teach the tradition and its values in order for future generations to continue the tradition. Traditional potter Joyce Krigsvold, believes the whole tribe needs to "work together to get things done; it's mainly only older people here and we need to get the younger people involved" (personal communication, 2008). Layne Cook

argues that “we need to convince the next generation this [pottery making] is something they need to learn. The only way it can get done is through families teaching their children” (personal communication, 2007).

Even though the future of pottery production is characterized by both fear and hope, the Pamunkey look to the past and their present situation for a solution. They see how pottery has always been practiced by community members, passed from elders to the children. Despite their fears, many Pamunkey believe there is only room for hope in the future of their centuries-old tradition. Hope that because the tradition has survived for so long, it will always survive among the future generations to come.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Pamunkey pottery production from past to present ranges a three thousand year period from utilitarian precontact ceramics, to European - market influenced colonoware, to tourist art. This trajectory of pottery production illustrates how the Pamunkey have responded to economic necessity, outside influences, the growth of tourism, and revitalization. To understand and analyze the significance the Pamunkey attribute pottery, I examined the trajectory of Pamunkey pottery production that included a wide-range of perspectives from anthropologists, to archaeologists, to the Pamunkey themselves.

As we have moved through the historical and contextual understanding of Pamunkey pottery production to anthropological theories discussing value and tradition, to the theories the Pamunkey themselves have of these two concepts, we can observe that the Pamunkey have a complex understanding and interpretation of their past. Pottery as a valuable tradition, demonstrates the obvious links between Pamunkey pottery and issues of continuity, economic necessity and cultural persistence. The multiple and converging regimes of value attached to this particular tradition, can be further analyzed through current anthropological discourse on tradition and value posed by anthropologists Sahlins, Handler and Linnekin, Appadurai, Myers and Weiner. Through coalescing the Pamunkey and anthropological views on tradition and value we

can better demonstrate that pottery's value is framed by themes of continuity, economic necessity and survival.

Most importantly, as expressed by the Pamunkey, pottery serves as a symbolic representation that "we are still here." This statement is at the core of the value the Pamunkey ascribe to pottery. Through this material, the Pamunkey define themselves as Native peoples and a Native community that is connected through shared experiences as well as a shared past and place. However, the relationship between the past, the present, and the future is particularly fraught for the Pamunkey, as expressed in the hopes and fears associated with the pottery-making of tomorrow.

Related to the statement "we are still here" and to the multiple transformations that have influenced Pamunkey pottery production is the Pamunkey exhibit at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). This exhibit marks the beginnings of the next transformation that places Pamunkey pottery on a national scale. The exhibit on the Pamunkey Indian Tribe was part of the original NMAI opening in which the Pamunkey were accorded an impressive space despite the lack of recognition by the Federal Government. The curators from the Pamunkey community that were responsible for the exhibit's presentation chose to foreground this representation in Pamunkey material life of the past and present that centers around pottery, the river (fishing and the Pamunkey Fish Hatchery), and the 1677 Treaty of Middle Plantation. While pottery production among the Pamunkey has been a local phenomenon and endeavor, the NMAI exhibit has placed Pamunkey and their pottery on a national level through the display of both

the School and Black Ware traditions. The exhibit is a tribute and honor to the Pamunkey potters of past and present and to the Pamunkey people in general. For many Pamunkey, the exhibit is an honor because it displays and aids in the maintenance of their heritage, and because they were chosen to represent Native people in Virginia. This next transformation on the national level provides the chance for people from all over the world to see that the Pamunkey “are still here” despite the lack of awareness in their own state of Virginia that Native people still exist.

I began this discussion with a Pamunkey tribal member’s voice, “Pottery is valuable as a tradition because of how long it has been going on, and because it is a part of our identity.” Warren Cook’s statement highlights how and why many Pamunkey define pottery production as a valuable tradition in terms of a complex convergence of values surrounding notions of continuity, economic necessity, and community survival. Drawing from Warren’s comment I would like to also end this discussion with a tribal member’s voice that stresses the continuity of a community’s valued tradition, “Pottery is a tangible piece of Pamunkey history and of our ancestors’ history. It is a representation of the continuity that exists in our community, it is a symbol that we have always been here, that we are still here, and that we will continue to be here.”

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