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Michael Chodoronek
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Colonoware and Culture: The Changing Interpretation of 17th Century Ceramic Traditions in the South Eastern United States: An Overview of Current Thought and History

Michael Chodoronek

Abstract: Colonoware is a low fired pottery tradition concentrated in the southeastern United States. It has been associated with native populations, enslaved populations and low-income populations in the American colonies of the seventeenth through to the nineteenth century. This paper is concerned with the history, development and current conceptions of colonoware in the southeastern United States, namely Virginia and South Carolina coastal regions. This paper will look at the possible future use of colonoware as diagnostic material culture beyond its current state.

Introduction

The study of colonoware has, in the past, often been overlooked in its importance. It was not until fairly recently that colonoware was identified as a historic ceramic technology. Colonoware is a low-fired often undecorated, earthenware that has as a long standing tradition of being developed and used by enslaved peoples. Colonoware is geographically distributed in the southernmost colonies of the eastern United States most notably in Virginia and South Carolina which will be the focus of this paper. Current prevailing theory also contends that the often muted decorative traditions and technologies of manufacture are more closely related to those found in Native American eastern woodland (Ferguson 1989) and West Africa traditions (Deetz 1996) more so than European ceramics, though colonoware often mimics the utilitarian forms reminiscent of European vessels of the time.
This continued under-appreciation of colonoware as a valuable asset for the study of material culture at the dawn of the historic period in North America, may correspond to archaeology’s general lack of focus on minority populations in the historic record. Now, with the increased attention given under-documented and under-represented populations in the historic records, the need to understand and gather more knowledge about the material culture associated with these populations. With the study of colonoware a new aspect of early colonial life in America will open up, one of classes and slavery, of colonialism and capitalism and with the study of colonoware we may be able to understand the dynamics of everyday life for a vast majority of people living in at the dawn of the system has come to shape our world.

It is important to research and explore the relationship of this unique material culture in everyday life and what it may tell us of early American lifeways. The current interpretation that colonoware is strictly a slave associated material culture, lacking class transcendence and being uniquely west African in origin should be reexamined to shed new light on the growth of colonoware and its status as a reflection of the new American society.

This paper will explore the origins of colonoware, the relationship to the culture that produced it and the complexities in the development of this new form of material culture on the American colonial hinterlands from the seventeenth century to the middle nineteenth century. It will also offer possible focus for future research.

Environmental Setting

The Chesapeake Bay is a shallow, narrow estuary (the largest in the U.S.) containing roughly 13,000 kilometers of coast line. The Chesapeake Bay contains brackish waters (a mixture of fresh and salt waters) that support a large variety of estuarine life including both blue crab and Virginia oysters. The bay itself lies on a geologic feature known as the Coastal Plain. The Coastal Plain covers an area from the Atlantic Ocean in the east to the Fall Line in the west. The Coastal Plain parallels the Atlantic Ocean from Virginia south wards to Florida. The Coastal Plain is fairly uniform and is characterized by its flat landscape and loosely consolidated sedimentary soils (Gardner 1986; Miller 2004/2005).

The Fall Line is a rapid decrease of elevation from west to east and marks the boundary between the Coastal Plain and the Piedmont regions as well as the extent of sedimentary beds and the beginning of more durable igneous and metamorphic based dolomitic rock beds.
characteristic of the Piedmont’s rolling topography. Again, the Piedmont region extends up and down the coast paralleling both the Coastal Plain and the Atlantic Ocean. This boundary of the Fall Line runs down the entirety of the eastern seaboard. The Fall Line was a historical boundary that was not easily crossed by Europeans until the seventeenth century. At the time of first contact the Chesapeake Bay region would have been heavily forested with large, mature deciduous and coniferous trees. It would have had no pronounced dry season, a moderate climate, fertile soils good for agriculture and protected harbors making it an excellent site for colonization (Gardner 1986; Miller 2004/2005).

**Historical Background**

The rich habitat of the Chesapeake Bay area has been documented as being inhabited for at least 10,000 years, beginning just after the end of the Younger-Dryas event. This long occupation allowed for a growing population along the shores of the Chesapeake and with it flourishing cultures and trade between cultural groups already in place well before European colonization. At the time of European exploration of the Chesapeake Bay, a majority of the west coast of the Chesapeake Bay south of the present day Potomac River being controlled by the Powhatan Chiefdom, with the Piscataway (Conoy) tribe controlling the territory to the north and east (Miller 2004/2005: 236). The Powhatan Chiefdom at contact was made up of many tribes and had centralized leadership in Chief Powhatan. The Powhatan confederacy controlled most of the lands in the Coastal Plain of Virginia to the Fall Line. The best estimates for population of the Bay in the early part of the seventeenth century would 45,000 (Gardner 1986; Miller 2004/2005).

The Chesapeake Bay was initially colonized by the English at the Mouth of the James River with the founding of Jamestown in 1607. The Spanish had previous attempted but failed to colonize the Chesapeake Bay region in 1570. The Jesuit run Ajacan Mission is the first European attempt to colonize the Chesapeake Bay region and lasted less than two years. Jamestown, like the previous Spanish attempt, was initially a failure because the colony experienced severe famine during a period from 1609-1610 known as “the starving time.” With the arrival of new leadership and supplies, the colony became well established and secure by 1612. With the introduction of a sweeter strain of Caribbean tobacco, introduced by John Rolfe, allowed the Virginia colony to continue to become exceedingly profitable beginning after 1614. The colony continued to expand, forcefully
taking up much of the lands formally under occupation by the Powhatan Chiefdom. The continued prosperity of the Virginia colony and its tobacco crops attracted more colonists from Europe and allowed for the rapid expansion of English settlers onto the North American Continent through the seventeenth century and continuing through the eighteenth century as well (Miller 2004/2005).

This expansion of English colonies continued south to the Carolina colonies (formerly under land grant to the Virginia Colony 1607-1663) beginning with the founding of Charles Town (later known as Charleston) in 1670. The new colony had a similar geography as Virginia, but with a wetter sub-tropical climate. The rich soils allowed for the cultivation of rice, indigo and cotton. Carolina was originally founded by charter from King Charles II of England to several aristocratic families. Control of the colony of Carolina was taken by the colonists in 1719. By 1729 the Carolina Colony formally split into two colonies, forming North and South Carolina respectively (Coleman 1972; Edgar 1998).

People from the Virginia colony were the primary settlers of North Carolina. They established a similar economy of tobacco, tar and lumber production. Having a similar cultural affiliation to Virginia, North Carolina colonoware will not be examined in this paper. Immigrants from the British West Indies settled South Carolina. It may be theorized that this migration of people from the Caribbean to South Carolina may have helped stimulate the development of colonoware.

Colonoware Description and Distribution

The first descriptions of colonoware came with its initial documentation into the archaeological record in 1962 when Ivor Noel Hume first coined and described the term “Colono-Indian wares” in relation to a low fired, slip tempered ceramics found along the Chesapeake Bay area of Virginia including excavations conducted at Colonial Williamsburg and surrounding areas. It was initially described and associated with the Native American pottery traditions documented along the Chesapeake Bay and attributed to the tribes of the Powhatan Chiefdom and their allies, namely the Pamunky (Ferguson 1989, 1992). Colonoware is typically gray to brown with red or yellow undertones. It is made of local clays and fired in open fires, at low temperatures compared to contemporary European ceramics. It is unglazed, and may have sand, silt, grit or shell tempering. It is non-uniform in thickness usually thin cross sections of 2-5mm. It is noted as being made by slab or coil method with no use of a potter’s wheel or molds in the manufacturing process. The most common vessel type is a shallow
bowl though more elaborate bowls, and "...skilled copies of European vessels—three legged pipkins, milk pans, porringer, punch bowls, chamber pots and even teapots," (Deetz 1996: 236) have also been noted at the Limerick Plantation in South Carolina (Lees 1979). The exteriors were often smoothed or burnished in appearance. On rare occasions, decorated exteriors have been found often with rudimentary incised patterns (Deetz 1996; Ferguson 1978, 1989, 1992; Galke 2009).

Colonoware has been documented as occurring south of the Potomac River from Virginia to Florida. The geographic distribution of colonoware appears where plantation economies traditionally flourished. Colonoware had commonly been associated with local distribution, often at plantation sites and is thought to be made for immediate area consumption and utilitarian use rather than for long distance transport like European wares (Espenshade 2007; Ferguson 1989). It is documented as being prevalent from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries reaching the height of frequency between 1750 and 1800 (Deetz 1996: 239). Colonoware has been noted to be present through the antebellum period of the 1840's to 1860's in the Brownsville Quarter, Spring Hill Farms and the Porticie Plantation field houses centered near Manassas, Virginia (Galke 2009).

**Colonoware Origins**

There are three main hypotheses for the origins for colonoware. The first hypothesis deals with the notion of a Native American origin for colonoware. This argument states that the technology and manufacturers were native populations exploiting a market need for cheap pottery in the development of capitalist interactions (Hume 1962; Lee 1979). The second hypothesis is that colonoware was produced by enslaved Africans for their own immediate need and the needs of the plantation as a whole. This is a popular hypothesis and has been explored in depth (Deetz 1996; Ferguson 1989, 1992). The research for this hypothesis links traditional African pottery traditions to Native American clay materials to European vessel shapes. The third hypothesis is an argument for a European origin, stating that Europeans shared the technology of pottery with Native and African populations in the colonies of North America and is a representation of style imitation. The European link to colonoware is the least explored but still probable explanation (Heite 2002). These notions all have their merits and drawbacks to the main question of "where culturally and technologically did colonoware come from?"
Native American Origins

The Native American origins of colonoware have been documented since colonoware's first description in 1962. Due to its outward appearance and modest technology of production, colonoware is easily deduced as being of purely local origins. The local materials and means of manufacture closely related to indigenous prehistoric pottery traditions such as Keyser, Townsend in the Chesapeake and other late woodland pottery traditions using a variety of tempering materials up and down the southeast coast of the United States (Gardner 1986; Lees 1979), already in place at the time of European colonization in the Chesapeake Bay. The extensive trade routes and the ease of manufacture meant that colonoware could easily and cheaply take the place of the more expensive and difficult to obtain European wares form England, Germany and France. It has therefore been theorized by Hume 1962, Lee 1979, that colonoware was manufactured by Native populations for sale to Europeans; hence the European patterns of the wares as documented by Deetz, Lee and Ferguson. Many archaeologists have argued that depending on the temporal affiliation of the site in question, that native population may have been producing the larger amount of colonowares.

In Virginia the Native origins to colonoware are primarily attributed to the Pamunky and the Nottoway. In South Carolina much of the colonoware was attributed to the Catawba. The Catawba had a traditionally friendly relationship with the settlers in South Carolina and were close allies during the French and Indian War (1754-1763) and were pivotal in the capture of Montreal in 1759 (UNC 2001). Much like the Pamunky, who Hume (1962), Ferguson (1980) and Fewkes (1944) all noted as still making pots in Virginia well into the 20th century, the Catawba of South Carolina had been documented in making and selling their wares in historic times. Many first-hand accounts of encounters with Catawba potters selling wares have been compiled during the Archaeology in the Old Catawba Nation: The Catawba Project research, conducted by the Research Laboratories of Archaeology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. One such account was documented in 1841 from William Gilmore Simms "... it was the custom of the Catawba Indians ... to come down, at certain seasons, from their far homes in the interior, to the seaboard, bringing to Charleston a little stock of earthen pots and pans ... which they bartered in the city ... They did not, however, bring their pots and pans from the nation, but descending to the lowcountry empty handed, in groups or families, they squatted down on the rich clay lands along the Edisto, ... there established themselves in a temporary abiding
place, until their simple potteries had yielded them a sufficient supply of wares with which to throw themselves into the market” (Riggs et al. 2006; UNC 2001).

The historic documentation has allowed for some classifications of colonoware. Leland Ferguson in his paper “Low country Plantations, The Catawba Nation, and River Burnished Pottery,” describes how a specific type of colonoware may have a strictly native origin and was produced on plantations by free native populations living on or near the Plantation (Ferguson 1989). This would coincide with the historic first-hand accounts of witnesses seeing and buying Catawba pottery (Riggs et al. 2006; UNC 2001).

It should be noted that there are some points of contention that may negate this hypothesis. Despite originally supporting the notion of a native origin for colonoware, Leland Ferguson (1978) began to see discrepancies in the theory’s explanatory ability. The theory did not explain the prevalence of colonoware in plantations far removed from Native settlements. It did not explain the multitude of domestic European vessel shapes as explained by Deetz (1996), with which native populations would have had minimal contact with including chamber pots. Traditionally most native populations on the east coast of North America (including the Pamunky and Catawba) produced conically based pottery (allowing for greater ease for placement in the soft ash or between the wood of an open cooking fire) opposed to the flat bottom European vessels (Deetz 1996; Ferguson 1978, 1989, 1992; Riggs et al. 2006; UNC 2001).

Chris Espenshade (1999) arguments against a purely Native American Origin to colonoware are perhaps the most persuasive. He argues that spalling (damages incurred during the heating process of ceramics that result from differences in moisture content within the material being fired and creating sections that blow out from the body of the vessel due to thermal expansion of the crystalline matrixes at different rates) makes no sense and should not be an issue if Native populations were manufacturing colonoware. If Native Americans were manufacturing colonoware there should be minimal spalling since they would be familiar with the material in use (native clays) and be able to adjust the heating of the pottery accordingly. Ferguson (1992) reports that nine of the sixty-seven or 13.4%, of whole colonoware vessels recovered from South Carolina sites are spalled severely enough to render the pot useless. The presence of spalling in many samples of colonoware recovered Vaughn and Curribbo Plantations (Ferguson 1989) is indicative of non-familiarity with the material being used. That coupled with the choice of burnishing (rubbing with a stone to smooth out the texture) the exterior (the worst possible finish for a ceramic
since it inhibits moisture and gas escape from the vessel being heated) of most examples of South Carolina colonoware demonstrates a lack of knowledge of the local materials and the means to process them properly and must therefore have been learned elsewhere and transplanted to South Carolina. Unfortunately there are no correlating studies performed in the Chesapeake. These arguments make a compelling case that while there may be some Native involvement in the production of colonoware, it cannot be the sole source of the product.

_African Origins_

The African or enslaved African origin of colonoware is the most widely accepted argument for colonoware's origins. It has the largest research base since it encompasses much of the global historical archaeology field and with it the archaeology of colonialism (Jordan 2009; Leone 2009; Lightfoot 2006). This multifaceted approach appeals to researchers as it works to incorporate a truly global perspective. As has been stated the first origins of the idea for an African origin in the manufacture of colonoware was by Deetz and his work at the Flowerdew Hundred property on the James River in Virginia. Leland Ferguson's first description of the possibilities of an African origin through colonoware symbolism with his excavations at the Vaughan and Carrilbo plantations in South Carolina in the 1970s and 80s furthered the popularity of Deetz's original hypothesis. The work on the African origins of colonoware continues, tracing the development of similar patterns in Western Africa, chiefly Senegal and Gambia, and showing the connection of those pottery traditions and techniques as well as those displaced enslaved people who carried that knowledge to the colonies in the Caribbean—namely Barbados and Jamaica, and then to the mainland colonies in Virginia and the Carolinas (Hauser and Decorse 2003). The pathways associated with colonoware are much the same as those of the transatlantic slave trade. The time period and locations are the same, and the methodology of tracing the diaspora of people and technology is also the same. The West African influence coincides a great deal with what has been stated about the Native American influence in that in West Africa pottery is typically low fired, thin walled, made of unrefined local materials and usually has a burnished exterior. The similarities stop there. In a study of pottery in Senegal and The Gambia it was noted that before heavy trade with Europeans, Senegal and The Gambia had a rich pottery tradition found in huge caches of grave goods circa 1410-1650 A.D. The pottery was typically burnished smooth, even in
thickness and highly ornate. This tradition began to decline in the beginning of the 17th century as pottery manufacture generally decreased (McIntosh 2001).

Susan Keech McIntosh described the pottery traditions beginning after the turn of the 17th century as such: “Pottery was crudely finished, with time no longer expended on smoothing the exterior surface, which remained ragged and uneven. Decoration largely disappeared. Slip, if applied, was slapped on haphazardly and allowed to dribble across the surface. Firing time was so brief that only a thin surface layer of clay was oxidized. The rest remained dark gray or black, due to the consumption of the available oxygen during firing by the large quantities of organic temper that also characterized this period” (McIntosh 2001:26). This general decline in pottery sophistication is attributed to the Jihad from Northern Africa and the resulting drastic population movements and warfare following contact with both North African populations and from European populations. Exact dates are only speculation at this time since more research is needed into the exact sequence of events leading to the disintegration of pottery technology in Senegal and Gambia’s is still unknown (McIntosh 2001).

Moving from Western Africa to the Caribbean, a low fired earthenware resembling pottery found in Africa and the colonial American south, is only noted after 1658 in Barbados after two potters (Ambrose Bissicke in 1658 and Thomas Braughing in 1660) are known to have immigrated to the island (Handler 1963:133). Before 1658 it was known that the plantations had no bricks of quality due to lack of a proper tempering agent (Handler 1963: 131) and most house wares and sugar molds were in fact made of wood (Handler 1963). This change in technology from wooden trays and buckets would follow with Deetz’s proposed major cultural shift from communal eating habits to more individual eating habits in the latter half of the seventeenth century, but taking it beyond Deetz’s description and linking that shift to a broader pattern of cultural change and to a location well beyond Virginia and encompassing a larger range of questions in relation to global patterns of consumption and cultural identities in a colonial context.

While this documentation of European potters distinctly bringing the techniques and technologies required to make durable bricks and wares to Barbados seems to disprove the Africa origin of colonoware in Barbados, it does show that pottery was only manufactured locally after 1658 and that local clay sources were used to produce the wares, much like Marco Meniketti’s work using XRF analysis of Jamaican sherds to see source locations of clays, this information establishes a timeline and strengthens the connection
between the Caribbean colonies and the North American colonies by way of the slave trade. Deetz makes note of this (1996:239) that in Virginia colony, slaves were present from the first quarter of the seventeenth century, but colonoware does not appear until the last quarter, or fifty years after slavery's appearance. This date would easily correlate to the introduction of the Scottish potters in Barbados and the movement of Barbados slaves and indentured servants to the southern colonies at the time when colonoware was gaining popularity. The slave trade offers documented movements of populations from Africa to the Caribbean to North America and with that displaced population a possible origin, not distinctly African, but manufactured by enslaved Africans, to the colonoware argument in favor of enslaved African origin.

In the words of Hauser and Decorse, "What unifies this disparate group of ceramics is not method of manufacture, design and decoration, or even form and function but the association or potential association with African diaspora populations" (Hauser and Decorse 2003: 67). This definition of what exactly is understood about the African contribution to colonoware and perhaps, a better theoretical framework to understand colonoware in general.

**European Origins**

The European affiliation with colonoware is a little less obvious and less well documented than the connections between Native American and African pottery traditions. Although less well documented or thoroughly researched as the Native and African traditions, this lack of research does not mean that it is any less valid of an argument for the basis of what is termed colonoware. The basis of the European argument begins with Ivor Noel Hume's own descriptions of a few vessels in a 1966. Hume was noted as describing a pitcher with a plugged handle. Plugged handles are associated with a medieval European pottery tradition and have no paralleling technique in Native or West African pottery (Heite 2002).

The notion that Europeans had steady and easy access to the commercial wheel spun, glazed, kiln fired wares of Europe ignores the fact that there has been a long tradition of homemade pottery vessels as well. This tradition of open fired, handmade vessels in Europe continued to the early twentieth century with locations such as north Ireland and Jutland in Denmark both producing what was known as "everted-rim wares." These homemade earthenwares which had characteristics similar to colonoware being low fired handmade and not glazed, (and if found in an American site may easily be mistaken for...
colonoware) were primarily produced to take financial pressure off of the family in terms of expenditures on ceramics (Heite 2002).

The argument for a European origin to colonoware really centers on a critique of methodology and lack of research from archaeologists into both the nature of colonoware and the role of poor whites both free and indentured servants with its use. It would seem that with the emphasis of giving a voice to the voiceless, the indentured servants of the 17th and 18th centuries remain silent in their abilities and contributions to the larger economy of the Colonial periods. The argument for a European origin requires a great deal more research that will need to be conducted on the level of what has been done for the Native American and West African links to colonowares. At this time that body of research does not exist (Heite 2002).

Conclusions on Possible Origins

One problem with the current study of colonoware is that until recently colonoware has been an ambiguous term used to describe any low fired earthenware in the southeastern United States. This ignores all subtle variation based on ethnic, regional and temporal affiliation and assumes that all colonoware derives from a single parent tradition instead of multiple points of origin depending on the ethnic affiliation, the location and the time period of a specific site being described (Ferguson 1992; Hauser and Decorse 2003; Heite 2002).

The origins of colonoware are still ethereal and much research is still needed to find and adequate description for colonoware. It would seem that Ferguson, Heite and Veech have given the best direction for future study pertaining to the origins and importance of colonoware to date. Colonoware may not be a single representation of a single colonial tradition, but coalescence, a creole of many traditions and may have multiple origins and each origin needs to be identified and typed to a cultural, temporal and regional typology. As Ferguson described, he believed that colonoware near the coast of South Carolina was of Catawba origin but work further inland on the coastal plain showed that there were samples of colonoware that were distinctly African in origin. This would explain the symbols sometimes associated with colonowares discovered in parts of South Carolina, as well as the high percentage of spalling noted at the Yaughan and Carribbo Plantation sites (Wheaton and Garrow 1985). This example of variation of origin explanation does not demonstrate the most probable explanation: that there are multiple origins to any low fired earthenware that is ambiguously called “colonoware,” but also that there are distinct
regional variances and traditions associated with each incarnation of “colonoware.”

Yaughan and Carribbo Plantation

Leland Ferguson consistently cites the work done by Thomas R. Wheaton and Patrick H. Garrow at Yaughan and Carribbo Plantations (1985) as being indicative of the popular conception of colonoware’s association and origins in enslaved African populations. Wheaton and Garrow began excavations at the Yaughan and Carribbo Plantation sites in Berkeley County, South Carolina at in 1979. Initially the goal was exploring the lifeways of the enslaved Africans on the sites. Both Yaughan and Carribbo Plantations were founded in the 1740’s by the descendants of French Huguenots escaping persecution. The plantations operated until 1800 and occupation of the sites terminated shortly after in the 1820s. These sites were both well suited for study due to the fact that the historical records showed that both had: relatively stable slave populations, of which those slave populations were almost exclusively enslaved Africans, that these individuals stayed within these plantations, and that there was no great influx of new slaves at any time during the occupational history of the sites. There also seemed to be little interaction between the owners and the enslaved people prior to the American Revolution which is suggested to have kept traditional African and Caribbean life styles and traditions (including pottery) alive at both Yaughan and Carribbo, and that the slaves were mostly imported from Barbados (again linking the slave trade, colonoware and Scottish pottery to the American Colonies) (Wheaton and Garrow 1985).

In one slave quarter, thirteen slave related dwellings and out buildings dating from 1740-1790 were excavated with one additional structure being identified as an overseer’s house. The original plantation main houses at both Yaughan and Carribbo Plantations were destroyed before the survey was conducted. It is estimated by the dimensions of the structures that the number of slaves in the 1750s was roughly 20-30. A second later slave quarter dating to the 1780s when the slave population reached 80 persons was partially excavated. The earlier buildings were of wall trench construction while the later were of posthole construction (Wheaton and Garrow 1985).

Low-fired earthenwares are the most common artifact found within the slave quarters of both Yaughan and Carribbo Plantations making up approximately 50% of all artifacts found at both site with slightly higher percentages (67.4% at Yaughan and 56.9% at Carribbo) at the earlier occupations. At Carribbo two unfired clay sherd were
discovered in the slave quarters, while at Yaughan one fired lump of clay with finger marks and three fired clay lumps with colonoware paste were found within the slave quarter excavations. These sites help to prove that colonoware (at least in this instance) was being produced locally and by enslaved populations and distinguished from the local Catawba pottery. There was also documented Yaughan and Carribbo an increased use of British ceramics and Euro-American materials in general, at the slave quarters over time, especially after the American Revolution (Wheaton and Garrow 1985).

This noticeable change in ceramics and material culture demonstrated at Yaughan and Carribbo Plantations that Deetz’s (1996) characterization of cultural change occurring in the American Colonies through in three distinct stages has been identified through a single artifact type. It was documented in Barbados with the move from wooden to locally made ceramics signify to Deetz a change in eating habits. This same transition pattern was demonstrated through colonoware at Yaughan and Carribbo (Wheaton and Garrow 1985). This distinction showing the patterns Deetz wished to convey about broad cultural change over time as documented through change in material culture are important since it can be used with one type of artifact, specifically colonoware, and can demonstrate two out of three distinct change events Deetz described. This shows why it is important to study colonoware, it is the most durable material of the most voiceless and disenfranchised of populations within our shared history, that of the enslaved peoples and of indentured servants and the immigrants, the people who have been traditionally forgotten in the material record and in the history books.

Summary Conclusion

Perhaps, a fitting final comment about the future study of colonoware is a broader question facing historical archaeology as a whole. This question was original posed by Theresa A. Singleton in her discussions on the future of plantation archaeology. The future study of colonoware and historical archaeology in general needs to decide if it is as a discipline particularistic (historical), scientific (generalizing), or humanistic (an aesthetic appreciation of the human condition) (Deagan 1982:157). This question makes particular sense to the study of colonoware due to the fact that the possibility of multiple origins and a pattern of being more associated with those of the lower classes as a whole instead of particular portions. Stretching across several continents, ethnicities and time, colonoware has shown that its study is useful in seeing broader changes in social structure (historical) (Deetz
1996). Perhaps after some further exploration we will be able to distinguish with more certainty if colonoware refers to one distinct pottery type or if it is a broader term used to describe a multitude of low fired earthenwares originating in the Southeastern United States (generalizing). Only after this question is answered will the study of colonoware be able to move forward and with its study a greater understanding of material cultures place in a complex tapestry of ethnic, spatial and temporal relationships (humanistic) of the early historic period in North America.

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