Native Americans in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

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A thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the College of William and Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts

Lyon G. Tyler Department of History

The College of William and Mary
August 2016

APPROVAL PAGE

This Thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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Approved by the Committee, May, 2016

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ABSTRACT

"Feminized Farmers: Native American Views of English Colonists in the Virginia Chesapeake 1607-1623"

This paper argues that Native Americans in the Chesapeake viewed the English men at Jamestown as feminine because of English male agriculture labor. The written records of the Jamestown settlers reveal what English colonists thought of the Native Americans. However, the Native Americans of the Virginia Chesapeake left no written record of their views of the English. This paper seeks to uncover the local Native American view of the English colonists who established Jamestown from 1607-1623. By using the English written accounts to track the actions of the English, we can understand what the local Native Americans saw the English doing. For example, the writings of John Smith or William Strachey reveal not only English opinions, but a record of English actions—actions local Native people observed and used to draw conclusions about their new English neighbors. Of particular importance was English men's agricultural labor. In many Native societies, including those around Jamestown, women performed agriculture labor. This labor and the food it produced was closely associated with women and femininity. Similarities in Native and English farming practices allowed Native Americans to draw direct parallels between Native women's and English men's labor. By examining how feminized the English colonists appeared and how Native Americans responded to the feminized Englishmen, this paper seeks to understand a Native view of the first permanent English North American colony and its inhabitants.

ABSTRACT

""Inconvenienced in the accustomed manner": Menstruation in the Eighteenth-Century Native Southeast"

The historiography of the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, and Creek nations states that during the eighteenth century, Native American women practiced menstrual seclusion. However, women traveled throughout the Southeast, removing themselves from the physical space of the menstrual seclusion house meaning they could not have practiced menstrual seclusion. Tracing these traveling, menstruating women reveals a new view of Southeastern Native American women's menstruation practices. In this paper menstruation is framed as a physical practice dictated by culture. Therefore the fact that not all women practiced menstrual seclusion reveals something about Native culture as well as about the actions of Native women.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This writer wishes to express her appreciation to Professor Karin Wulf, under whose guidance this investigation was conducted, for his patience, guidance and criticism throughout the investigation. The author is also indebted to Professors Guillaume Aubert and Leisa Meyer for their careful reading and criticism of the manuscript.

Intellectual Biography

The two papers that form my research portfolio arose out of my interests in early American Native Americans, gender, and women. These broad interests helped me write two very different papers. However, each paper helped me understand different aspects of the mechanics of writing and the topics I pursued.

The first paper was written for Dr. Aubert's Atlantic World research seminar. Entitled "Feminized Farmers: Native American Views of English Colonists in the Virginia Chesapeake 1607-1623" this paper focuses on uncovering Native American views of English colonists despite the fact that no written documents exist from the Native American's the paper studies. This paper served to introduce me to researching Native Americans and the common problems encountered when studying peoples who left few, if any, written documents. I chose to focus on Jamestown because it is a well known event with a fairly large secondary source literature and accessible, published primary sources. I did not go into this research with a thesis in mind, but after reading the primary sources I became interested in the Native American gendered labor that the seventeenth-century European colonists often commented upon. The Europeans interest in Native American labor norms, specifically the Native norm of female agriculture labor, made me wonder if Native Americans might have had the same commentary about English labor norms, specifically the English norm of male agriculture labor. After coming to this question of how Native Americans might have perceived English men who did the same labor of Native women, I began looking into secondary literature on how labor and gender operated in the Native societies of the Virginia Chesapeake. I found that Native Americans likely viewed the English as

feminized based on the English men's agriculture labor that mirrored the labor of Native women.

I view this paper as a learning experience, and while I do not intent to publish it, this paper did serve an important role in my education. Namely, it helped introduce me to graduate level work, the common primary sources used to understand Native American history, and some of the historiography of Native American gender. I was also able to present a version of this paper at the William and Mary Graduate Research Symposium, which gave me valuable experience speaking in front of people and answering questions about my research.

The second paper, ""Inconvenienced in the accustomed manner": Menstruation in the Eighteenth-Century Native Southeast" was written for Dr. Meyer's Modern Sexuality seminar. This paper is topically focused on women's bodies, specifically menstruation, a topic that I intend to pursue as I continue pursuing my doctorate. Based on readings I did in Dr. Piker's reading seminar over early Native American history, I knew the secondary sources described menstrual seclusion as the means eighteenth-century southeastern Native women used to handle menstruation. However, I was also aware that Native women traveled to formal diplomatic events, which caused me to question how these women dealt with their menses. I suspected that menstrual seclusion was not as strictly practiced as the secondary literature insinuated. So I began looking through primary sources for other women, who based on their physical removal from the menstrual house, could not practice menstrual seclusion. I found several examples of traveling Native women who became the basis of this paper. I framed menstruation as a physical event that was shaped by cultural expectations,

which allowed this paper to speak not only to the physical experiences of menstruating women but also to Native cultural understandings of blood, power, and purity more broadly.

In order to publish this paper, I intend to first read more secondary literature on Southeastern Native American societies in order to better understand the cultural views of blood, power, and purity that shaped how women handled menstruation. This will help me carry my argument further, showing how menstruation practices tell scholars something about how Native cultures understood things like power and purity. Secondary source reading will also help me to better situate this paper within scholarly discussions of cultural change or continuity, or emerging discussions of the viability of this binary. In the paper I found that cultural change or continuity was not a useful way to think about menstrual practices. Second, I will find more examples of traveling Native women. More examples will help create a more convincing argument by showing that women often traveled and did not practice menstrual seclusion.

In writing these two papers I used two different organization systems and wrote in different ways, and found a method that works best for me. The first paper I organized my notes into a single notebook where I kept all my primary and secondary source notes. While this method of organizing helped keep all my notes in one place I found that quickly finding the quotes or references was difficult and slowed down the writing process. For the second paper I decided to try using Zotero, a software designed to help historians keep track of primary and secondary sources and notes on these sources. I found Zotero to be an extremely useful tool that helped be quickly find

sources and quotes I needed. I plan on continuing to utilize Zotero as I continue my research.

These two papers are intellectually related through their focus on Native Americans, women, and gender. Writing each has helped increase my knowledge of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Native American societies, something that will help me as I continue my education.

Feminized Farmers
Native American Views of English Colonists in the Virginia Chesapeake
1607-1623

In 1607, according to John Smith, Powhatan, the powerful leader of many of the Algonquian people living in the Virginia Chesapeake, declared "with a lowd oration" John Smith a "Awerowances of Powhatans." Powhatan further specified "that all his subjects should so esteme" the Jamestown community, and "no man account" the English newcomers "strangers…but Powhatans, and that the Corne, weomen and Country, should be to" the Jamestown settlers "as to his owne people."[1] Powhatan's public statement attempted to bring the Jamestown community into a Native world and pointed to a future where Native residents and white settlers would live in the same way—as another tributary people in Powhatan's political confederacy. In many ways the English did live like the local Algonquians, in particular English land use norms were an area of striking similarity between the two groups. But one major difference did exist and persist, the Algonquian norm of female agriculture labor and the English norm of male agriculture labor. These gender based norms lead to an Algonquian view of the

[1] John Smith, *A True Relation, By Captain John Smith,* 1608 in 55 in ed. Lyon Gardiner Tyler, *Narratives of Early Virginia,* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1907) 55. Although the veracity of this story has been called into question the practice of appointing a werowance within a tributary community appears to have been a common practice during this time period. Smith certainly could have fabricated this story entirely, but it does fit into Native norms as historians currently understand them. See Karen Ordahl Kupperman *Indians and English: Facing Off in Early America* (Cornell University Press; Ithaca, 2000) 174-211; Martin D. Gallivan "Powhatan's Werowocomoco: Constructing Place, Polity, and Personhood in the Chesapeake, C.E. 1200-C.E.1609" *American Anthropologist* 109:1 (March 2007) 85-100; Karen Ordahl Kupperman *The Jamestown Project* (Belknap Press: Cambridge 2007) 228-230. The Native American peoples living in the Virginia Chesapeake during the seventeenth century have traditionally been called Powhatans, after their political leader. Yet it is likely that some, or all, of the tributary peoples living in the area did not consider themselves Powhatans. However, most of the Native people living in this area were Algonquians, sharing a similar language base and culture. Therefore, rather than assume, much like the English colonists did, that any Native person English accounts refer too was Powhatan, I have decided to use Algonquian-certainly a broader designation-but one that likely includes more of the Indian people who lived in the seventeenth century Virginia Chesapeake.

English men as feminized and weak which in turn effected how local Indians interacted with and understood the English newcomers.

Gender was more pivotal than culture, race, or religion in dictating how Natives reacted to English colonists. As historian Kathleen Brown states, "In both Indian and English societies, differences between men and women were critical to social order."[2] The historiography of the interactions between Native Americans and the English at Jamestown is extensive, yet often fails to look at the events of Jamestown from a Native American perspective. While authors acknowledge the local Algonquian understandings of gendered labor, they fail to carry this analysis further. For example Helen Rountree wrote that agriculture labor was "in Powhatan eyes…the "peaceful," and "feminine""[3] Rountree, among others, acknowledge the gendered nature of English men doing agriculture labor but fail to further analyze how Natives might have applied these understandings to the English colonists they interacted with on a regular basis. The few historians who do attempt to uncover a Native worldview do so in articles and books that focus on the English perspectives that fill the historiography, overshadowing their analysis of Native understandings of events.[4]

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[2] Kathleen M. Brown "The Anglo-Algonquian Gender Frontier" in Nancy Shoemaker ed. *Negotiators of Change Historical Perspectives on Native American Women* (Routledge: New York 1995) 27.
[3] Helen C. Rountree *Powhatan Indians of Virginia: Their Traditional Culture*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989) 87.
[4] Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Brown "Anglo-Algonquian Gender Frontier"; J. Frederick Fausz "The Invasion of Virginia: Indians, Colonialism, and the Conquest of Cant: A Review Essay on Anglo-Indian Relations in the Chesapeake" *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 95:2 (April 1987) 133-156. Karen Ordahl Kupperman *Indians and English Facing Off in Early America.* One article that does attempt to analyze a Native perspectives of Jamestown events is Jeffrey L. Hantman "Caliban's Own Voice: American Indian Views of the Other in Colonial Virginia" *New Literary History* 23:1 (Winter 1992) 69-81. However, this article is not critical of the European based primary sources used, and is therefore seriously flawed from a historical perspective. Similarly, Philip Barbour *Pocahontas and Her World* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), attempts a Native perspective

It may be that few historians have studied Native American views of the Jamestown encounter because of the paucity of sources. The perennial problem for historians of Native Americans is the lack of Native authored sources, this issue is particularly relevant for the Indians who lived in the Virginia Chesapeake during the early seventeenth century. No written sources exist for these people—a fact that might stop more traditional historians from pursuing the views local Algonquians had on the events that radically altered their lives, yet the establishment of the first successful English colony in North America is an undeniably important event and the lack of a Native perspective on it, is a major shortcoming in the historiography.

One way to overcome the paucity or non-existence of written sources is to think about what type of knowledge early Native Americans had of the English based upon what the English commentators said about their own actions. If we cannot know what Native Americans thought by examining written records, we can know what they saw and what their likely reactions were based upon our knowledge of local Algonquian culture. In the case of Jamestown, we know that the Native Americans often saw the English planting and hunting, and would have been aware of similarities between Native and English practices with the exception of gender. Local Indians would have also known that the English often struggled to produce enough crops and food for survival. We can also draw conclusions about how Native Americans might have understood the similarities and differences between their and colonial English lifestyles based upon ethnographic understandings and some, carefully used, seventeenth century English

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which a review in the *William and Mary Quarterly* characterized as "a failure." See Bernard G. Hoffman Review *William and Mary Quarterly* Third Series 29:2 (April 1972) 321-322.

written sources. Although problems certainly arise with using English written sources to understand Native American views of the English, it is not impossible to use them to uncover Native views of events.[5]

By uncovering the daily labor and activities of English colonists and local Algonquians, it is apparent that the gender norms of the two groups lead to an Indian understanding of English men as feminized. The basic fact of English male agriculture labor, in the face of completely female agriculture labor in Native communities, meant that the English men would always have, in Native eyes, a feminine character. That said, the Native view of feminized Englishmen certainly changed over time and was effected by the landscapes of interaction. Whether a Native American saw an English man working in a corn field, fishing on a river, or hunting in the woods certainly changed

[5] The sources this paper uses are predominantly written by early colonists who each had personal agendas in writing about the events they experienced in certain ways. Several historians have written about the difficulty of using European primary sources to write about Native Americans. Perhaps Brent Tarter said it best when he stated "Beginning with the original narratives of 1607 and for the next three centuries, the writers who interpreted Virginia's history were the same people who made the history." But the biases within primary sources is an issue all historians deal with. Although the differing cultures of English and Chesapeake Algonquians means there was certainly a great deal of misunderstanding in the things the English wrote about the Indians they saw, this does not mean we cannot use the sources at all. By carefully analyzing and understanding the means of production of the English texts, and the personal histories, biases, and motivations of the authors of the texts, historians can use their writtings, however biased and questionable, to glean information about the lives and actions of Native Americans. Brent Tarter "Making History in Virginia" *The Virginia Magazine of Histoyr and* Biography 115:1 (2007) quote 3, 2-55. See also, David Read "Colonialism and Coherence: The Case of Captain John Smith's "Generall Historie of Virginia" *Modern Philology* 91:4 (May 1994) 428-448; Forrest K. Lehman "Settled Place, Contested Past: Reconciling George Percy's "A Trewe Relacyon" with John Smith's "Generall Historie"" *Early American Literature* 42:2 (2007) 235-261; Mark Nicholls "George Percy's "Trewe Relacyon": A Primary Source for the Jamestown Settlement" *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 113:3 (2005) 212-275; Peter C. Mancall "Savagery in Jamestown: Review of "George Percy's 'Trewe Relacyon'": A Primary Source for the Jamestown Settlement" by Mark Nicholls; *A New World: England's First View of America* by Kim Sloan; *Writings, with Other Narratives of Roanoke, Jamestown, and the First English Settlement of America* by John Smith selected by James Horn; *The Journals of Captain John Smith: A Jamestown Biography* by John M. Thompson" *Huntington Library Quarterly* 70:4 (December 2007) 661-670; Jess Edwards "Between "Plain Wilderness" and "Goodly Corn Fields" Representing Land Use in Early Virginia" in *Envisioning an English Empire Jamestown and the Making of the North Atlantic World* eds. Robert Applebaum and John Wood Sweet (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 2005).

how feminized the English man appeared. And even though it is likely that all Natives shared the view of Englishmen as feminized, it does not mean they all reacted to this view is similar ways. The early years of interaction between Natives and Englishmen reveal the complexity of gendered understandings of the other. By tracing the early events and daily labor of Englishmen compared to that of Native Americans, an intricate and shifting story of how Native Americans understood and reacted in gendered ways to the English presence in North America is revealed.

In May of 1607 English colonists decided on a site for their settlement in North America. Their arrival between spring and summer, or what the local Algonquians knew as "*cattapeuk"* and "*cohattayough*," meant they missed the ideal time for planting the crucial corn crop.[6] The local Algonquian women might have just finished preparing and planting their fields for the harvest to come, perhaps some women still worked to finish the last hills of corn, beans, and squash. The women would continue working in the fields till harvest time began in *taquitock* or what the English knew as fall. The season itself was considered feminine because of the close association between the planting of corn and the women who performed this pivotal labor.[7]

It was during this season dictated by the labor of women that 104 English men and boys arrived in the Virginia Chesapeake. George Percy, one of the first colonists,

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[6] Stratchey *The Historie of Travaille Into Virginia Britannia: Expressing the Cosmographie and Comodities of the Country, Togither with the Manners and Customes of the People* (London: 1849) 122.
[7] Michael A. LaCombe, *Political Gastronomy: Food and Authority in the English Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012) 16; James D. Rice, *Nature & History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2009) 39-42 for "taquitock" see 42.

recorded, “we landed all our men, which were set to worke about the fortification.”[8] These first colonists had already interacted with local Native Americans as they sailed about the Chesapeake looking for a place to settle, the first night at the James Fort site was not different, Percy wrote “the first night of our landing, about midnight, there came some Savages sayling close to our quarter”[9] Percy’s account of the night reveals that local Algonquians watched the new colonists as they began building the Jamestown fort and the equally important work of planting crops. Smith wrote that in the first weeks of settlement Algonquian warriors entered James Fort while the English “men, were then busied in setting Corne.”[10] What might have these Indian warriors made of the English men working with hoes and seed?

For many Native American societies across North America, including the Chesapeake Algonquians, agriculture was closely associated with women. Native stories often linked female deities with crops like corn. Women also had prominent roles in cultural events and rituals that featured corn and other food crops. Conversely, many Indians associated men’s labor with hunting and war. Men showcased their desirability to women by, “presenting them with the fruiets of their labours, as by fowle, fish, or wild beasts, which by their huntings, their bowes and arrows…they obteyne, which they bring unto the young women…”[11] This close association between agriculture products and women, and the linkage between hunting and men was an

[8] Percy, *Observations gathered out of a Discourse of the Plantation of the Southerne Colonie in Virginia by the English 1606* in Lyon Gardiner Tyler ed., *Narratives of Early Virginia* 1606-1625 (Barnes & Noble: 1907) 15.
[9] Percy *Observations* 15.
[10] Smith, *True Relation,* 35
[11] Strachey, *The Historie of Travaile* 109.

integral part of Chesapeake Algonquian society and daily life. English colonists also noted the Algonquian norm of female agriculture labor. Smith stated, "the women and children…pound their corne…plant their corne, gather their corne."[12] Another English observer wrote, "women, as the weaker sort, be put to the easier works, to sow their corne, to weed and cleanse the same" of weeds.[13] But by stating that women were weaker than men, and therefore given the "easier works" of agriculture labor, the English author ignored the fact that English men did the same work ascribed to the "weaker" Native women.[14]

The Native norm of female agriculture labor was directly challenged by the English men's continued work of planting crops. By "the fifteenth of June" 1607 the fort was completed and the English had "sowne most of our Corne on two Mountaines. It sprang a mans height from the ground"[15] For the English men, planting corn was normal expected labor. Yet for local Algonquians, the opposite was true. These English men, by planting their crops, immediately began to create a connection in the minds of the local Indians between the colonists and the female labor they performed.

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[12] Smith *A Map of Virginia…,* in Lyon Gardiner Tyler ed., *Narratives of Early Virginia* 1606-1625 (Barnes & Noble: 1907) 101.
[13] Strachey, *The Historie of Travaile,* 112.
[14] For female agriculture in various Native American cultures see, Joan M. Jensen "Native American Women and Agriculture: A Seneca Case Study" *Sex Roles* 3:5 (1977) 423-440; Jean M. O'Brian "Divorced" from the Land: Resistance and Survival of Indian Women in Eighteenth-Century New England" in Rebecca Kugel and Lucy Eldersveld Murphy eds., *Native Women's History in Eastern North America before 1900: A Guide to Research and Writing* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007); William Cronon *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983). For gendered division of labor being important in Chesapeake Native societies see: LaCombe *Political Gastronomy* 16; Rice *Nature and History* 42-45, esp 43, "the sharp division between men's and women's work also shaped social relationships."; Roundtree, *The Powhatan Indians of Virginia* 88.
[15] Percy *Observations* 19.

Although many Indian societies had a greater degree of equality between the sexes than European societies, women still often held subordinate positions to men. Native women were excluded from war or fighting and could not belong to the priesthoods that guided community spiritual life. Chesapeake Algonquians probably associated women and by extension traditional female labor roles with, if not weakness, an absence of war-like capabilities. Records indicate that some eastern Indians used "women" as an insult. According to one Iroquois, the Catawba, a group who lived just south of the Chesapeake Algonquians, "sent us word that we were but Women; that they were men and double men for they had two P[enise]s; that they could make Women of Us, and would be always at War with us."[16] Though this example is not from the Chesapeake Algonquians, it is evocative of practices that are noted in several eastern Native cultures. One can image that Chesapeake Algonquians could have delivered a similar gendered insult to the English men as they performed the female work of planting corn. The gender norms of Chesapeake Algonquians created a strong, innate relationship between femininity, women, and the labor of planting and harvesting. This is the same labor English men performed in the early days of their settlement in Jamestown. Other similarities between the labor of English men and Algonquian women helped cement the association between English men and femininity in the eyes of local Indians.[17]

[16] Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, volume 4, (Harrisburg, 1851) 721.
[17] Gender relations and hierarchies in Native societies were often incredibly complex. Women often did hold a great deal of power in many areas. Shoemaker states "In Indian diplomacy *women* was shorthand for military incapacity or fear…women could be weak and cowardly or "woman" could be highly regarded as advocates of peace" Shoemaker *A Strange Likeness* 107- 114 quote 112; Nancy Shoemaker "An Alliance between Men: Gender Metaphors in Eighteenth-Century American Indian Diplomacy East of the Mississippi" Ethnohistory 46:2 (Spring 1999) 239-263.

Up until October 1608 the colonists consisted only of men, a fact that Native Americans would have been well aware of. The arrival of women was an event that must have again shifted the local Indian's view of feminized Englishmen. Over seventeen months after the establishment of Jamestown Fort, English women joined the colony. Colonists noted the momentous event writing, "The ship having disburdened her selfe of 70 persons, with the first gentlewoman and woman servant that arrived in our Colony"[18] By 1609 it is estimated that around one hundred female colonists arrived at Jamestown; English women were a continual presence after this date. The arrival of English women might have been a signal to local Native Americans that gender norms that conformed to Algonquian culture were about to ensue. To some extent, this was the case. Despite the English insistence that women not work in fields, historians have shown that the agriculture labor of women was essential to the survival of the colony and became a part of daily colonial life. The addition of women alongside men in the English fields could only highlight the feminine nature of the labor of English men.[19]

Living in the same region meant the environment dictated many of the similarities in land use between Native Americans and English colonists, environment was particularly important to the similarities in types of plants grown and eaten by the two societies. In Virginia, corn became the main agriculture crop for English colonists, just

[18] Various Authors, *Proceedings of the English Colony* in Lyon Gardiner Tyler ed., *Narratives of Early Virginia* 1606-1625 (Barnes & Noble: 1907) 155. Initially compiled from journals of several of the first colonists and published in 1612. For detailed explanation of authorship see page 119 of *Narratives.*
[19] William M. Kelso *Jamestown: The Buried Truth* (University of Virginia Press: Charlottesville, 2006) 39. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs* esp Chapter 2-3; Cynthia A. Kierner "Women, Gender, Families, and Households in the Southern Colonies" *The Journal of Southern History* 73:3 (August 2007) 643-658.

as it had been for the Algonquians for hundreds of years. Corn and other agricultural crops began to be grown by Native Americans in the Potomac Basin sometime between 900 and 1300. By the time the English arrived in 1607, Algonquian women had 300-700 years to develop techniques for growing large, healthy crops in the region. George Percy saw these Algonquian fields and said they were, "the goodliest Corne fields that ever was seene in any Countrey."[20] Colonists also knew corn would be a key crop for their survival. One letter written by a founder of the Virginia Company stated that one of the goals of the colonists was "To use all meanes for sustenance and providing foode By sowing of corne . beans. & pease . pompions"[21] Although the English brought some European plants to North America, these mainly consisted of garden plants rather than crops that were grown on a large scale. The English heavily relied on corn. Smith took some men and left the Jamestown area for a time, but noted that he left "the rest to defend the Fort and plant our Corne."[22] It was difficult for the English and Native Americans to overlook the similar crops both communities relied upon, however this similarity was generally overshadowed by the great difference in who was growing the crop.[23]

[20] George Percy *Observations* 14.
[21] Sir Edwin Sandys to Thomas, Lord Delaware, [Mar 1610/11] FP 29 Virginia Company Archives.
[22] Smith, *A True Relation,* 65.
[23] Timothy Silver *A new face on the countryside: Indians, colonists, and slaves in South Atlantic forests, 1500-1800* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1990) 140-142; Rice, *Nature & History,* 8, 113. Cary Carson, Joanne Bowen, Willie Graham, Martha McCartney, and Lorena Walsh "New World, Real World: Improvising English Culture in Seventeenth-Century Virginia" *The Journal of Southern History* 74:1 (Feb. 2008) 31-88, for archeological estimates on early colonial food and planting practices 37-49; Timothy Silver "Learning to Live with Nature: Colonial Historians and the Southern Environment" *The Journal of Southern History* 73:3 (August 2007) 539-552. For detailed account of women's agriculture labor see, Helen C. Rountree "Powhatan Indian Women: The People Captain John Smith Barely Saw" *Ethnohistory* 45:1 (Winter 1998) 1-29; Strachey, *Historie of Travaile* 30-31.

Native American women and English men grew many of the same crops, they also tended these crops using similar tools. Native American women's tools traditionally included hoes made from animal bone or of chipped or flaked stone. These hoes were physically similar to the metal hoes used by English colonists. Although the English idealized plow agriculture, in the early colonies agriculture was predominantly achieved through hoe based agriculture that mirrored Native women's practices. Indian women adopted English agriculture tools, creating another similarity between the two groups. Strachey describes women who "come downe unto us, or suffer us to come up into their howses, and demaund after…howes to pare their corne fields."[24] In the early years of English settlement in the Chesapeake both English men and Algonquian women altered the tools and methods of agriculture because of contact with another culture. Algonquian women made the smaller change, shifting from stone or bone hoes to European made metal hoes. English men changed agriculture practices a great deal by foregoing the plow and taking up the hoe based agriculture that Algonquian women practiced. [25]

Another similarity between colonists and Algonquian land use was a trend towards the communal use of land and resources. Although throughout the colonial process the English encouraged Natives to give up the communal practices of working the same fields and sharing resources, the English themselves created a fairly complex

[24] Strachey, *The Historie of Travaile,* 113.
[25] Hoe blade, AD 500-1600 Caroline County Virginia Catalog 3648 Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian http://nmai.si.edu/searchcollections/item.aspx?irn=3885&catids=2,1&objtypeid=Agricultural%20Tools/Equipment|Hoe%20blade&src=1-4; Agricultural Hoe, Early Seventeenth Century, James Fort. http://historicjamestowne.org/selected-artifacts/agricultural-hoe/
Rice, *Nature and History* 113; Rountree, *The Powhatan Indians* 32

system of resource sharing during the early years of the Jamestown settlement. Historian Alan Greer notes that "agriculture at Jamestown, Virginia, began as a fully communal enterprise."[26] This completely communal farming practice did not last long, but even after it ended colonists continued a modified practice of communal sharing of land and resources. Established colonists helped support newcomers by providing "Service or labor belonging to the Colony" lasting no more than, "one moneth in the yeere" or by "yearly to pay into the store two barrels and a halfe of Corne; there to be reserued to keep new men"[27] The English understood the usefulness of maintaining a communal store of food in order to sustain new settlers. Native Americans also shared resources although not to the degree that previous scholarship has suggested. Native American women farmed unmarked plots of land. Early scholarship and many European settlers assumed that this land was held in common with no regard to familial or individual claims. But more recent scholarship has indicated that although the land was kept undivided, families probably held claims to specific parts of the field. Both Algonquian Indians and English colonists practiced communal agriculture or resource sharing to some extent. [28]

One area of perceived difference the English often discussed was the amount of labor or time spent working. English authors and commentators presented the Native men as slothful because they did not regularly perform agriculture labor and instead hunted and fished, activities the English associated with elites. Yet the English colonial leadership also dealt with fellow colonists not performing adequate agriculture work.

[26] Greer, "Commons and Enclosure" 372.
[27] Ralph Hamor *A ture discourse of the present estate of Virginia* (1625) 17.
[28] Shoemaker *A Strange Likeness* Chapter 1 "Land" 13-34, more cites.

Some of the struggle to get early colonists to work had to do with the class of the men arriving in America. In 1608-09 John Smith instituted a work or starve policy in order to combat the poor work ethics that many of the early colonists displayed. Throughout the first decade the colony continued to struggle to produce enough food, partially due to a lack of English effort. One of the early laws (1619) of the Virginia colony was "Against Idlenes, Gamin, drunkenness and excesse in apparel" It was "in detestation of Idlenes" that the General Assembly declared, "if any man be founde to live as an Idler or renagate, though a freedman, it shalbe lawful for that Incorporation or Plantation to which he belongeth to appoint him a Mr [master] to serve for wages, till he shewe apparent signes of amendment."[29] Probably aimed at lower class men, this law shows that the issue of non-work was present and pressing in early colonial life. This law contradicts some of the letters sent between leaders in Virginia and politicians back home.[30]

Eager to create support for the colonies, governors like John Rolfe, cast the labor norms of the colonies in a positive light by saying things like, "All men cheerfully labor about their groundes, their hartes and hands not ceasing from worke"[31] Yet this view is contrasted by Ralph Hamor, another early (1607) Jamestown leader, who stated that, "the greatest, and many enemies and disturbers of our proceedings…Have been onley

[29] Proceedings of the Virginia Assembly, 1619 in Lyon Gardiner Tyler ed., *Narratives of Early Virginia* 1606-1625 (Barnes & Noble: 1907) 263.
[30] Kelso, *Jamestown The Buried Truth* 18-20; See also Rice *Nature and History* 29 Historian James Rice usefully distinguishes between agriculture societies and societies with agriculture, the Chesapeake Algonquians being the later and the English colonists idealized the former, but in reality lived much more like the Native Americans being a society with agriculture in the early years of settlement. The various paces of labor associated with these two different ways of living on the land certainly effected how Native Americans and English colonists saw one another's perceived idleness.
[31] John Rolf to Edwin Sandys, 1617: Jun 8, FP76 Virginia Company Archives

two; enmity with the *Naturalls,* and the bruit of famine:" He continued, attributing the problem of famine to "misgovernment, idlenesses and faction."[32] Another leader in Jamestown Thomas Dale stated that during, "seed tyme in setting of corne" the early colonists were "not able to how 30 foote square a daye, but w[i]th a great deal of gruginge although yt be for them selves." Although Dale attributes the unimpressive output of the English to "longe contynuance and lyttell other food then corne and watter," the behavior he describes fits with the dilatory attitude towards agriculture labor within the English North American colonies by men of all classes and ranks.[33] This inability to work effected the English colonists' production of essential food crops, creating an English dependency on trade for foodstuffs with Native Americans. Just as English men observed a perceived idleness on the part of Algonquian men, it is likely that local Indians observed colonists neglecting their fields and knew of the scarcity of colonial crop output—probably leading to a similar Native view of English colonists as at best incompetent, and at worst, lazy.[34]

The English characterized the Algonquian men as lazy both because they did not do agriculture labor and because all Native men hunted. But what did Native Americans think of English hunting practices? While English society traditionally associated hunting with elites, in the colonies this norm did not reflect reality. Although the English may have tried to reserve hunting for elites, it would have been difficult to control hunting in a land where forests outnumbered fields. Local Algonquin men likely knew a

[32] Hamor, *A ture discourse,* 16.
[33] Sir Thomas Dale, Letter 1613: Jun 10, FP 40 Virginia Company Archives.
[34] Edmond S. Morgan "The Labor Problem at Jamestown, 1607-18" *The American Historical Review* 76:3 (June 1971) 595-611.

great deal about the movements and activities of the English men who hunted in the woods surrounding Jamestown and Native communities. The published English accounts of early Virginia Native life often note the ranging of Native men and their great knowledge of the land surrounding their villages. Smith noted the Native men "knowe their severall lands, and habitations, and limits to fish, flowle, or hunt in." Strachey wondered at the Native men's knowledge of their hunting lands when he stated "yt maye seeme a marvele how they can so directly passe and wander in these desarts, sometimes three or fower dayes' journyes, meeting with no habitacions, and, by reason of the woods, not having sight of the sun, wherby to direct them how to coast yt."[35] These English published narratives reveal that Native men often traveled outside of the agriculture based villages and that Indian men knew how to navigate in the woods and understood the local environments. Given the knowledge Chesapeake Algonquian men had of the land, it seems likely that they also knew of English men hunting in the same area as they were. Native American's were aware that English men hunted much like Native men, perhaps using different tools, but hunting nonetheless. Indians also knew English men planted corn, a task Indians associated with female labor. The Natives must have perceived the English men's dual roles as hunters and agriculturalists with some degree of confusion. By doing both agriculture and hunting, the English contradicted Native gendered labor norms. [36]

[35] Strachey, *The historie of travaile into Virginia* 76.
[36] Rountree, *The Powhatan Indians* 42. On English hunting and arms in colonial communities see: Gary Denis Ralph "Provision of Arms to Maryland's Fist Settlers: Part One, Private Initiative" *Maryland Historical Magazine* 104:1 (Spring 2009) 6-30, page 9 for class aspects of English hunting/gun ownership. See also Kelso *Jamestown, The Buried Truth* 186.

The gender norms of English and Algonquian culture were more important than the many similarities between the two groups' daily labor in the Chesapeake. The Algonquians knew that the early colonists were male, and knew of their persistent agriculture labor. The fact that the women who later joined the colonist also performed agriculture work, adhering to Native norms, must only have made English men's regular agriculture and hunting labor more notable. Although both Natives and English grew similar crops, used similar planting methods and tools, communally shared resources and labor, had similar labor hours, and hunted, the differences in who was supposed to be doing the labor associated with these similarities was more important to the interactions and perceptions between Natives and English in the formative years of contact in the seventeenth-century Chesapeake.

The English men's female labor and subsequent association with femininity was certainly an impression shared by all the Algonquian communities in the Virginia Chesapeake who saw and knew of the Englishmen's daily labor. Yet it is difficult to know how communities or individuals chose to act on this information. Many different groups of Native Americans lived in the area, although they were all likely Algonquians and most were under Powhatan's rule, communities or groups of local Natives could have acted in different ways to the presence of he English colonists. English writers often do not distinguish between groups of Indians in their texts, usually referring to them in general and derogatory terms like "savalges" or "naturals."[37] The sometimes conflicting accounts of local Indians' actions found in English narratives could simply be

[37] For "naturals" see Hamor, *A ture discourse,* 16; For "salvages" see Strachey *The Historie of* Travaille; Kelso *Jamestown The Buried Truth* 34.

the varied reactions of different groups of Native people to the feminized Englishmen. These varied responses are seen in one account of the first months of settlement; this account was compiled from records of several first colonists (who arrived at Jamestown in May 1607) and published much later. In it two Native reactions to the English presence are described, one of peace and one of attack. In each instance it is clear that the Native actors knew of the agriculture labor English men performed.

Perhaps some Natives saw English men doing feminine work and believed these newcomers would be easily subdued. The English account records that after one attack where "17 men [were] hurt and a boy slaine" the colonists "contented the Fort should be pallisadoed, the ordinance mounted, his men armed and exercised, for many were the assaults and Ambuscadoes of the Salvages." The local Algonquains continued to pursue the English and the colonists struggled to protect themselves while they labored. The account continued stating that "what toile wee had, with so smal a power to guard our workmen adaies, watch al night, resist our enimies and effect our businesse, to relade the ships, cut downe trees, and prepare the ground to plant our corne."[38] It was during their labor, labor that included the female work of planting corn that the Algonquian men pursued the English. Is it a coincidence that local Native Americans decided to attack the English men while they were laboring in corn fields, doing what Natives considered female labor? Probably not. Given the similarities between how Indian women and English men performed agriculture labor, it seems probable that the

[38] *Proceedings of the English Colony* in Lyon Gardiner Tyler ed., *Narratives of Early Virginia* 1606-1625 (Barnes & Noble: 1907) 124.

Native Americans who attacked the colonists thought that they could easily subdue a weak cadre of men who performing female labor.

This time of conflict between the Algonquians and colonists likely happened during the first "six weeks" (mid May-late June 1607) of the colonists residence in the Chesapeake. Yet during this same time the same account records another reaction to the English agriculturalists, one of friendship and likely trade. The text states that "now falleth every man to worke," at various tasks including "make gardens, some nets, &c." Labor that included planting the corn fields Percy's account spoke of. During this time of agriculture labor "The Salvvages often visited us [colonists] kindley."[39] These two reactions to the English men reveal how varied Native responses to feminized English labor could be, throughout the first twenty years of contact Native Americans continued to have diverse responses to the English colonial presence. These events reveal two early Native reactions to the presence of English male agriculturalists.[40]

The similarities between English men and Algonquian women's labor was immediately apparent to observant Native Americans. English men openly and obviously labored like women, but they were also inept at much of the feminized labor they did. This inability of the colonists was only apparent after they had lived among the local Indians for some time. Natives could, and did, immediately see English men doing female labor, but it would take time for Indians, and the English, to realize just how poorly equipped the colonists were to survive in the local environment. By choosing ill-

[39] *Proceedings of the English Colony* 123.
[40] On the political control and relatively autonomous structure of some Native communities under Powhatan see Rountree *Powhatan Indians of Virginia* 140-141; April Lee Hatfield "Spanish Colonization Literature, Powhatan Geographies, and English Perceptions of Tesenacommacah/Virginia" *The Journal of Southern History* 69:2 (May 2003) 245-282, esp 250-251.

suited places for settlement, struggling to grow corn and other food crops, and being poor hunters, English men's subpar labor helped contribute to a possible Native view of English men as feminized.

George Percy was among the first English colonists to settle in Virginia, he published an account of an early interaction between Native Americans concerning the first settlement of English men at Jamestown that indicates local Algonquian views of Englishmen. Percy stated that "the Savages murmured at our planting in the Countrie." Given that Percy's observations were made at a time when no English women lived in the Chesapeake, it seems that the Native American's reaction could have been to the male agriculturalists as Percy specifies "planting in the Countrie" rather than simple arrival or settlement as the cause of the Indians reaction. After the discord among some Natives, "this Werowance made answere againe very wisely of a Savage, Why should you bee offended with them as long as they hurt you not, nor take any thing away by force. They take but a little waste ground, which doth you nor any of us any good…."[41] The alleged statement by the Algonquian leader points to the environmental reality of the initial settlement on Jamestown island. Part of the reason Jamestown was selected as a settlement was that no Native Americans lived there. This is probably because Jamestown was in many ways "a wasteland" just as the Algonquian werowance indicated. Jamestown had no access to freshwater and was surrounded by swampy land that bread mosquitoes. Unremarkably, the English men struggled to grow

[41] Percy, *Observations* 18. Even if this story and alleged statement by a Native American is fabricated (and it very well could be as English authors tended to justify their seizure of Native lands by calling the land "waste land") the fact remains that the Jamestown site was a poor place to settle and local Natives did not live there, likely for this very reason.

crops there. Not only is it likely that Natives wondered at English male agriculturalists as early as 1607, but they also saw that these man did not select an appropriate piece of land to farm on. [42]

The poor land of Jamestown was not conducive to plentiful crops, and early colonists were far from experienced agriculturalists, which contributed to the poor crop yields and colonists' dependence on Native American foodstuffs for survival. Native Americans, as the trading partners for the English, knew of the dire straights early colonists were often in. Historian Kathleen Brown states the English were "wholly dependent upon native corn stores during their first three years and partially dependent thereafter."[43] The English reliance on Native foodstuff was a signal to Native Americans that these men could not adequately perform the agriculture labor that Native men would have rejected as a part of their daily labor. The English described them as "scorning to be seene in any woman like exercise" which for Native American men included the agriculture labor that English men regularly performed.[44] Chesapeake Algonquians knew of the English men's poor abilities in fieldwork, work that was itself female labor. The dependence on Algonquian willingness to trade the Englishmen's inability to grow enough crops created only helped contribute to a probable contemptuous Native view of English men.[45]

[42] Frank E. Grizzard, Jr. and D. Boyd Smith *Jamestown Colony: A Political, Social, and Cultural History* (ABC CLIO: Santa Barbara, 2007) xxv.
[43] Brown, *Good Wives,* 66; See also Kupperman, *Indians and English Facing Off in Early America* 13-14.
[44] Smith, *The historie of travaile into Virginia* 101.
[45] Robert Appelbaum "Hunger in Early Virginia: Indians and English Facing Off over Excess, Want, and Need" in *Envisioning an English Empire Jamestown and the Making of the North Atlantic World* eds. Robert Applebaum and John Wood Sweet (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 2005).

The English men's involvement in agriculture labor meant they presented themselves in a way Native Americans understood as feminized. But the English also did work that Chesapeake Indians considered masculine, such as hunting and fishing. Despite the fact that the English did often do these masculine tasks, along with the feminized tasks of ag labor, their skills at hunting were far below those of local Native Americans. As one English explorer of the Chesapeake area stated, "We might see in some places where fallow Deere and Hares had beene, and by the rooting of ground we supposed wilde Hogs had ranged there, but we could deserie no beast, because our noise still chased them from us."[46] Though it is unclear whether this statement was made in reference to hunting explicitly, it certainly speaks to how the English men moved and worked in the woods—noisily. The English's hunting skills were far from those of local Natives, who "in their hunting and fishing they take extreame paines; yet it being their ordinary exercise from their infancy they esteeme it a pleasure and are very proud to be expert therein"[47] The English description of hunting as a "pleasure" is misleading, for hunting was a pivotal part of Native masculine identity. It was part of how Native men attracted a woman and established their standing in the community. From a Native perspective, the English's inability to hunt at a level comparable to that of local Algonquians was a clear sign of English men's weak masculinity.

The daily labor of English colonists dictated how Chesapeake Algonquians saw the newcomers. During the earliest years of the Virginia colony only English men worked the fields, for no English women had made the trans-Atlantic journey to live in

[46] James Rosier *A true relation of the most prosperous voyage made this present yeere 1605…*(London, 1605).
[47] Smith, *Description of Virginia* 103.

the new colony. The first impression local Algonquians had of the new men would have been heavily influenced by the knowledge that English men, despite all their technological tools, did women's work. Once English women arrived in America they also began laboring in the fields, adhering to Native norms alongside English men—how might Native Americans thought about and understood the persistence of English men's agricultural labor especially after the arrival of English women who became a part of the agricultural work force? The fact that English men continued to labor in the fields despite the arrival of English women could only have contributed to the Native perception of English men as feminized. The fact that the English men continually displayed a level of incompetence in both the feminized agriculture labor and in masculinized hunting, only promoted a Native view of local Englishmen as a weak, feminized, and unwarlike people.

Understanding just how noticeable the feminized behavior of the English colonists was allows a glimpse into the motivations of the local Algonquians who brought food to starving colonists sometime during the first two years of English settlement (1607-08). Several times the colonists came close to total destruction because of their inability to grow crops and find enough game to sustain them through the winter or through Native sieges. It may seem that these moments would have been ideal times for Native Americans to eradicate the English colonists altogether. Yet this view is only plausible when one looks back knowing the future fate of Native communities. In the early seventeenth century, Native Americans understood the English men as feminized as local Indians regularly observed English men doing agricultural labor, Natives communities and individuals had also begun to reap the

benefits of trade with the English. Therefore, when Smith recorded that "it pleased God (in our extremity) to move the Indians to bring us corne, ere it was halfe ripe, to refresh us, when we rather expected when they would destroy us," the Indian actions were more likely motivated by a desire to continue a trade relationship with the English who at the time were weak and feminized than any sort of divine intervention.[48]

From 1607-1612 Native Americans who looked at an English field would have noted English men wielding with hoes, using the same planting techniques as Native women, growing the same crops, sharing food and labor similarly to Natives, working similar hours to Natives. Local Algonquians would have been hard pressed to not see the feminized behavior of English men. The feminized English presence elicited various reactions from local Algonquians: fighting, peace, trade, and ambivalence. The Powhatan siege of Jamestown during the "starving time" winter of 1609-10 nearly killed all the colonists. But by 1613 the colonists were no longer quite so pressed for food, and their skill at growing crops, hunting, and fishing in their new environment was surely increasing. The year 1613 signaled another change in colonial English society, the growth of tobacco farming. John Rolfe perfected the tobacco plant that soon became the focus of colonists' labor and exported it to England in 1613. After the tobacco plant became a viable cash crop corn and other crops were still grown, but tobacco was the focus of colonial agriculture.[49]

Native Americans also grew tobacco but unlike corn, tobacco, as a spiritual and ceremonial plant, was likely associated with men. Percy noted one occasion where a

[48] Smith *True Relation* 36; Martin H. Quitt "Trade and Acculturation at Jamestown, 1607-1609: The Limits of Understanding" *The William and Mary Quarterly* Third Series 52:2 (April 1995) 227-258.
[49] Kelso *Jamestown The Buried Truth* 2, 38-39; Brown *Good Wives* 82-88

Native man "brought us on the way to the Wood side, where there was a Garden of Tobacco" the Native man the "gathered Tobacco, and distributed to every on of us."[50] In this case, the Algonquian norm was probably for men to grow and harvest tobacco, unlike corn and other food-based crops which were exclusively associated with and produced by women. Yet the English again did not adhere to Chesapeake Algonquian norms, because both English men and women worked the tobacco fields. This change in English agriculture practice might have meant two things for the Algonquian view of the English colonists. First, since English men now performed more labor that was for local Algonquians traditionally male the local Natives might have perceived the English men as slightly more masculine. This is especially likely since the English men were also improving their skill at other tasks, like hunting and fishing, that Natives associated with manliness. But because English men also still regularly planted food crops, as they had for the past six years, the local Algonquians probably still retained an association between English men and femininity, although the growth of tobacco planting may have somewhat tempered this view. Secondly, the rise of English tobacco cultivation by women, certainly would have effected how Natives viewed English women. Up until the widespread planting of tobacco English women had largely adhered to Algonquian labor norms. English women, like Native women, worked in fields harvesting and preparing crops, cared for children, and cooked food. But the new association of English women with tobacco would have made them, much like the English men, strange and foreign from the Native perspective.[51]

[50] Percy *Observations* 16.
[51] Little is known about Native tobacco cultivation in the seventeenth century. According historian Helen Rountree "no Virginia English source says specifically" that men cultivated tobacco. But Rountree does

The rise of tobacco planting corresponds with a period of relative peace between Native Americans and English colonists. In 1613 Pocahontas married John Rolfe, perhaps signaling a political alliance between the two peoples. Trade in Indian corn and English goods meant both groups needed the other to get things each needed and wanted. Along with trade and internal Native politics, it seems probable that the new association of English men with the tobacco growing probably associated with Native men and masculinity had something to do with this peace. Yet this time of relative peace between the English and local Algonquians did not and could not last. English population continued to grow, livestock multiplied and encroached on Native fields, and English continued desire for land was voracious, creating strains on the local environment and the English/Algonquian relationship. Historian James Rice states that "the similarities between Natives' and newcomers' subsistence cycles and farming techniques created a deadly competition for the habitats" both groups relied upon.[52]

The environmental strains and gendered perceptions both contributed to the shift from peace to war. In 1622, Opechancanough, Powhatan's successor, lead an attack that killed 347 colonists. This attack began a decade of conflict and violence between the English and Algonquians. The increasing presence of English colonists in the

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argue that is was generally married men who smoked tobacco and that tobacco may have been considered a medicinal and spiritual plant that men were responsible for gathering see Rountree *Powhatan Indians of Virginia* 47, quote 91. Unlike the strong association between women and corn, there is not evidence of a similar association between men and tobacco. Therefore, this analysis rests on rather more tenuous evidence than the above analysis of crop agriculture's association with women. However, tobacco was often used in male dominated diplomatic ceremonies, this fact, combined with Rountree's findings of married men being the predominate smokers of tobacco indicates that even if men did not grow tobacco it was likely a product associated with men. For primary source mentions of tobacco being associated with male controlled religious rituals see Smith *Description of Virginia* 111, 113.

[52] For Pocahontas see Camilla Townsend *Pocahontas and the Powhatan Dilemma* (Hill and Wang: New York 2004) 119. For livestock and land pressures English presence created see Virginia DeJohn Anderson *Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2006)

Virginia Chesapeake, land pressures, disease, and internal politics continued to effect Algonquian decisions throughout the seventeenth century. The 1622 attack also signaled a change in how colonists treated and interacted with local Native Americans. The changes that resulted from the 1622 attack signal a distinct change and separation of Native and colonist lives, the role of gender perceptions was likely subsumed by a cycle of violence that self perpetuated over the next decade.[53]

The lack of direct written evidence from Chesapeake Indians makes it easy to simply refuse to think and theorize about their thought worlds and ways of understanding the people around them. Attempting, however cached in 'maybes' and 'probablies' is better than ignoring the Native perspective of American history altogether. Although historians might not have documents from Chesapeake Algonquians, we can uncover what Natives saw the English doing on a daily basis, ethnohistorical understandings of Algonquian culture allows us to analyze how Indians might have understood the labor of English men and women since it often contradicted their own labor norms. Local Indians displayed a range of responses to the feminized English agriculturalists. Some of the local Algonquians reacted with violence, some with peace, some offered assistance when colonists were in need, while others may have looked on with apathy. Knowing the details of Native decision making processes in response to the English is impossible, historians can uncover likely reactions based on a variety of

[53] Alden T. Vaughan ""Expulsion of the Salvages": English Policy and the Virginia Massacre of 1622" *The William and Mary Quarterly* Third Series 35:1 (January 1978) 57-84; Grizzard *Jamestown Colony: A Political, Social, and Cultural History* I; Kelso *Jamestown the Buried Truth* 2; LaCombe *Political Gastronomy* 167 LaCombe states that "After 1622, relations with all Indian groups were colored by the news of the killings in Virginia, and even those English settlers used to peaceful relations with their neighbors might consider a preemptive strike justified."

evidencieray bases. The labor of English colonists was visible to Indians and by piecing together our knowledge of Native labor and gender norms a comparison between the two groups is possible. This comparison of land use, labor, and gender reveals a pattern of English men behaving in ways local Natives most likely understood as feminine. If Natives saw the English in a feminized light, certain actions, especially the decision to feed starving colonists on several occasions, are explained. With a community of feminized men who were inept at hunting, who farmed just as Native and English women did, but also provided valuable and desired trade goods, the Indians had motivation to keep the English around-there was apparently little threat and great reward.

The case for Native Americans seeing feminine attributes in English men is strong, but it cannot be all encompassing. English men committed violence against Native American communities and people during the same period that the English men acted in a way Natives might have understood as feminized. For example George Percy wrote of an incident occurring between 1609-1612 in which English colonists "Beate the Salvages outt of the Island burned their howses ransaked their Temples, Tooke downe the Corpes of their deade kings from of their Toambes and Caryed away their pearles Copp[er] and bracletts wherew[i]th they doe decore their kings funeralles."[54] What started out as a simple view of English male colonists as feminized laborer's quickly evolved into what must have been a nuanced gendered understanding of the English colonists, certainly influenced by the Algonquian association between

[54] George Percy "Trewe Relacyon" from ed. Mark Nicholls "George Percy's "Trewe Relacyon": A Primary Source for the Jamestown Settlement" *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 113:3 (2005) 244-245

agriculture labor and femininity, but also by Algonquian norms of war and masculinity. The Natives who observed English men doing female work also knew that the English could kill and destroy, therefore the masculine and feminine co-existed in a complex balance—the perception of which trait English men most displayed depended on the specific time, situation, and environment contact encounters happened in. Yet the regular, if not daily labor of English men allowed Native Americans to more often than not see the English in a feminized way.

"Inconvenienced in the accustomed manner":

Menstruation in the Eighteenth-Century Native Southeast

John Lawson, the English author of *A New Voyage to Carolina*, began the account of his travels throughout Southeastern North America with the statement, "ON *December* the 28th, 1700, I began my voyage (for *North Carolina*) from *Charles*-Town, being six *English*-men in Company, with three *Indian*-men, and one Woman, Wife to our *Indian*-Guide…" Alongside a Native woman, as well as Native and English men, John Lawson began, "…A *thousand Miles Travel among the Indians.*" The presence of this woman on a travel voyage allows a glimpse into southeastern Native American practices surrounding menstruation and menstrual seclusion. European observers of eighteenth-century Native American culture regularly noted the widespread norm of southeastern Native women practicing menstrual seclusion, where women separated themselves into specially designated houses or buildings during their menstrual cycle. Implicit in these European observers' statements was the assumption that Native women always handled menstruation by practicing menstrual seclusion. This supposition has been adopted in much of the scholarship about many Native American societies as well. However, the presence of a woman on Lawson's voyage speaks against the notion that eighteenth-century Native America women practiced menstrual seclusion every time they menstruated, or that menstrual seclusion was a strictly held Native American cultural norm.[55] When Native women, such as the woman on

[55] John Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina; Containing the Exact Description and Natural History of That Country: Together with the Present State Thereof. And a Journal of a Thousand Miles, Travel'd Thro' Several Nations of Indians. Giving a Particular Account of Their Customs, Manners, &c.* (London, 1709) 6. In this paper, southeastern Native peoples include the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Creek.

Lawson's voyage, traveled outside their communities they left the geographic space of the menstruation building which circumscribed their ability to practice menstrual seclusion. Menstruation, the approximately monthly discharge of blood and uterine lining materials by non-pregnant women between adolescence and menopause, was a distinctly female physical experience shaped by cultural ideas about women, gender, blood, cleanliness, power, and purity; traveling menstruating women not only re-adjust our understanding of physical practices, but also of Southeastern Indians' cultural ideas about the issues that shaped women's physical experience of menstruation.[56]

When traveling Native women appear in the sources, their menstruation is not mentioned. Most often, all we know about these traveling Native women is that they were Indian and that they were women. Despite the paucity and problems with primary sources that clearly discuss southeastern Native menstruation practices it is still possible to critically examine Native women's menstruation practices. Looking at women with the assumption they menstruate is a new way of thinking about and

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These groups shared many cultural norms and practices and each are noted in primary and secondary sources as practicing menstrual seclusion, see Michelle LeMaster *Brothers Born of One Mother: British-Native American Relations in the Colonial Southeast* (University of Virginia Press, 2012) 162-63; Theda Perdue *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835* Indians of the Southeast (University of Nebraska Press, 1998) 29-30, 34-39; Michelene E. Pesantubbee *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast* (University of New Mexico Press, 2005) 24; Charles M. Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians* (University of Tennessee Press, [1976] 1982) 319-320; Raymond D. Fogelson ed. *Handbook of North American Indians*. Vol. 14. (Smithsonian Institution, 2004) 344 Cherokee, 381 Creek, 487 Chickasaw, 506 Choctaw.

[56] "Menstrual Cycle" In *Mosby's Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing & Health Professions*, (Philadelphia: Elsevier Health Sciences, 2012); "Menstruation" In *Mosby's Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing & Health Professions*; Barbara Sommer "Menopause" In *Encyclopedia of Women and Gender: Sex Similarities and Differences and the Impact of Society on Gender*, edited by Judith Worell. (Oxford: Elsevier Science & Technology, 2001) states that the average age of menopause is 51.5 years for modern women. Discerning the ages of menstruation and menopause in the eighteenth century is difficult. The modern age for first menstruation is between 11-14. Eighteenth-century menstruation likely followed similar ages but historical evidence about exactly when menstruation began and ended during this time period is unclear.

examining menstruation among southeastern Native American peoples since current scholarship only utilizes primary sources that explicitly explain Native menstruation. However, this new way of looking at menstruation, through traveling Native women, comes with its own set of unique difficulties. Perhaps the biggest difficulty is that while menstruation can be predicted, the exact timing of the menses of these traveling Native women cannot be absolutely known. Other important details about these women are often missing, such as their age or pregnancy status. Uncertainty is a common theme throughout this paper, however ambiguity is far more common in historical writing than many historians might care to admit. The incertitude that might come from studying topics with little outright primary source discussion, like menstruation, does not mean historians cannot write in meaningful ways about these issues.[57]

Traveling, menstruating women complicate the existing narrative of southeastern Native menstruation practices from simple menstrual seclusion for every menstrual cycle, to showing that Native societies had a flexible cultural understanding of menstruation, blood, power and purity that allowed women to practice menstrual seclusion while in their communities and alternate methods of menses handling when traveling. Rather than support or disprove cultural change or cultural continuity, this flexibility highlights the diminishing utility of the cultural change or continuity binary that

[57] Other scholars have dealt with the lack of sources surrounding women's bodies, see Peter J. Kastor and Conevery Bolton Valenčius "Sacagawea's 'Cold': Pregnancy and the Written Record of the Lewis and Clark Expedition." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 82:2 (Summer 2008), 276–310. For menstruation in non-Native American cultures see Kathleen M. Brown *Foul Bodies: Cleanliness in Early America*. Society and the Sexes in the Modern World (Yale University Press, 2009); Andrew, Shail and Gillian Howie, eds. *Menstruation: A Cultural History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Etienne Van de Walle and Elisha P. Renne *Regulating Menstruation: Beliefs, Practices, Interpretations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

has been a major theme of Native American historiography. It points to the need for a more nuanced view of how eighteenth-century Native American cultures operated. The malleability of menstruation practices by Native women and their cultures emphasizes the mutability of cultural practices and ideas, especially those of southeastern Native Americans. Traveling Native women and their likely experience of menstruation while away from the geographic space of the menstrual house show that menstrual seclusion was not the only way Native women dealt with menstruation and allows for a new view of the culture that informed these menstrual practices.[58]

Generally, eighteenth-century European observers and modern historians note two things about menstrual seclusion: first, that it was practiced in a particular place or among a certain group of people and second, the cultural meaning Native women and their societies ascribed to it. Scholars have interrogated the eighteenth-century primary sources concerning the meaning Europeans assigned to Native views of menstruation, however both modern historians and eighteenth century voyeurs have not questioned whether Indian societies that practiced menstrual seclusion, practiced it exclusively.[59]

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[58] For current historiography on menstrual seclusion see LeMaster *Brothers Born of One Mother* 162-3; Perdue *Cherokee Women* 29-30, 34-39; Pesantubbee *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World* 24; Hudson *The Southeastern Indians* 319-320; Fogelson ed. *Handbook of North American Indians* Vol. 14, 344 Cherokee, 381 Creek, 487 Chickasaw, 506 Choctaw. For cultural change or continuity scholarship see, James Axtell *The Indians' New South: Cultural Change in the Colonial Southeast* (Louisiana State University Press, 1997); James Taylor Carson "Native Americans, the Market Revolution, and Culture Change: The Choctaw Cattle Economy, 1690-1830." *Agricultural History* 71, no. 1 (1997) 1–18; Clara Sue Kidwell "Indian Women as Cultural Mediators." *Ethnohistory* 39:2 (Spring 1992); Stephen W. Silliman "Change and Continuity, Practice and Memory: Native American Persistence in Colonial New England." *American Antiquity* 74:2 (2009), 211–30; Katy Simpson Smith "'I Look on You… As My Children': Persistence and Change in Cherokee Motherhood, 1750-1835." *North Carolina Historical Review* 87:4 (October 2010): 403–30.

[59] LeMaster *Brothers Born of One Mother* 162-3; Perdue *Cherokee Women* 29-30, 34-39; Pesantubbee *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World* 24; Hudson *The Southeastern Indians* 319-320; Fogelson ed. *Handbook of North American Indians* Vol. 14, 344 Cherokee, 381 Creek, 487 Chickasaw, 506 Choctaw.

The seventeenth and eighteenth-century primary source base for the historiography of Native women's menstruation predominantly comes from the published accounts of European men who traveled throughout southeastern North America. One of the earliest Englishmen to mention Native American menstrual seclusion was William Stratchy, who wrote in the early seventeenth century that Powhatan women, "goe apart, and keepe from the men in a severall roome, which they have for themselves as a kind of gynaeceum."[60] Similarly, an eighteenth-century French marine, Captain Bossu, noted that Choctaw "women leave the huts" or regular housing, during "their catamenia."[61] Native women's menstrual practices differed from European norms and the novelty of these practices ensured that they continued to be mentioned in many of the European descriptions of southeastern Native peoples.[62] James Adair is perhaps the most noted and detailed observer of Native American women's menstrual practices. In the mid to late-eighteenth century, Adair recorded that "the Indians…oblige their women in their *lunar retreats* to build small huts, at as considerable a distance from their dwelling-houses"[63] It was essential that menstrual houses be separate from areas frequented by men. An observer of the Choctaw related, "when a woman finds herself inconvenienced in the accustomed manner she immediately leaves" for the menstrual house because

[60] William Strachey, *The Historie of Travaile Into Virginia Britannia: Expressing the Cosmographie and Comodities of the Country, Togither with the Manners and Customes of the People...* (Hakluyt Society, 1849) 67-8.
[61] Bossu, *Travels through That Part of North America Formerly Called Louisiana...* (London, 1771) 308.
[62] Shail and Howie, eds. *Menstruation: A Cultural History*; Brown *Foul Bodies* esp 35-6*;* In early modern Europe women used rags to contain menstrual blood and it was considered important to hide evidence of menstruation, along with other bodily fluids or waste. Much like Native Americans, Europeans held beliefs about menstruating women harming household processes, for example menstruating woman could sour wine or blunt knives.
[63] James Adair *Adair's History of the American Indians,* Ed. Samuel Cole Williams, (The Watauga Press: Johnson City, Tenn., 1930) 129-130 (quote), 131. Although Adair's intent was to link Native American cultural practices to Jewish culture, his observations are some of the richest available see Charles Hudson and James Adair, "James Adair as Anthropologist." *Ethnohistory* 24:4 (1977) 311-328.

"men do not live with their wives" while women menstruated.[64] Bossu recorded that menstruating women "are obliged to prepare their own meat and drink, and they do not return among men, till they are thoroughly purified."[65] The purification Bossu refers to likely included washing in rivers or streams. The physical location of the menstrual seclusion house was pivotal because of the ritual significance of menstrual seclusion. While little archeological evidence points to the exact location of menstrual houses, it seems that these buildings were situated on the edges or outside of Native communities in order to avoid any contact with men or non-menstruating women and, if possible, near a source of water.[66]

Menstrual seclusion encompassed more than women simply removing themselves to a specific separate building, European observers wrote about other restrictions on menstruating women and also suggested reasons or beliefs that lead Native Americans to practice menstrual seclusion. Bossu wrote, "The Indians believe, that if they come near a woman in that state, they would fall sick, and that if they went to war after it, they would have bad luck."[67] Another European recorded that the Choctaw believed a menstruating woman "must use new fire, and if they took some of that of the house, the house would be polluted, and the woman would die from the strength of the sickness which would be increased."[68] Europeans recorded that Native Americans believed various negative

[64] James Swanton ed., "An Early Account of the Choctaw Indians." In *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association*, V, (1918) 53–72, 59 (quote).
[65] Bossu. *Travels through That Part of North America Formerly Called Louisiana* (London; 1771), 308.
[66] Patricia Galloway "Where Have All the Menstrual Huts Gone? The Invisibility of Menstrual Seclusion in the Late Prehistoric Southeast." In *Reader in Gender Archaeology*, edited by Kelley Hays-Gilpin and David S. Whitley. (Routledge, 1998).
[67] Bossu. *Travels through That Part of North America Formerly Called Louisiana* (London; 1771), 308.
[68] James Swanton ed., "An Early Account of the Choctaw Indians." In *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association*, V, (1918) 53–72, quote 59.

events would occur if menstruating women contacted non-menstruating persons. It appears that while in the menstruation house women did certain types of work, however, the sources are silent as to what type of work this might have been. Europeans recorded specific things menstruating women could not do, such as working in gardens or cooking food, however we do not know exactly what work, if any, women did while within the menstruation house.[69]

Eighteenth-century men attempted to record Native American cultural practices, however these authors were certainly biased by their own cultural conventions. As outsiders these men could not know everything about Native cultures. Both their sex and culture separated European men from the Native women most intimately acquainted with menstrual seclusion. The European authors were often unaware of certain practices, including the details and meanings of menstrual seclusion, leading to misunderstandings and mistakes within the eighteenth-century primary sources. One story told by a European observer reveals his own ignorance of Native menstruation customs and highlights the ignorance and misinterpretation of Native cultures Europeans could have even when they traveled extensively among Native communities. The unknown European author recounted that he spent the night in a Choctaw community and upon awaking could "not finding the woman of the house, and seeing a fire at a distance I went to find her." He admitted he "was then ignorant" of menstrual

[69]LeMaster *Brothers Born of One Mother* 162-3; Perdue *Cherokee Women* 29-30, 34-39; Pesantubbee *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World* 24; Hudson *The Southeastern Indians* 319-320; Fogelson ed. *Handbook of North American Indians* Vol. 14, 344 Cherokee, 381 Creek, 487 Chickasaw, 506 Choctaw; Galloway, "Where Have All the Menstrual Huts Gone?". The eighteenth-century European writers' belief that Native Americans saw menstruation as unclean probably stemmed from fact that Europeans saw menstrual blood in this way. Kathy Brown writes that within European worldview menstrual blood's "origins in female genitalia equated it with sexual sin, while theories describing it as the periodic discharge of impurities connoted harmful toxins" Brown *Foul Bodies* 36.

seclusion, and "begged" the woman to make him food. "It was only by means of entreaties" that the woman agreed. While the oblivious European ate his breakfast prepared by a menstruating woman, the woman's husband returned from hunting. The European, unaware of the Native taboo against eating food prepared by a menstruating woman, offered the Native man a bowl which was accepted. However, while eating the Native man "recognized the cause of his wife's absence through some articles which were missing from the house." The European man confirmed that his host's wife had prepared the food and the Indian "was at once seized with sickness." This narrative corroborates several details about menstrual seclusion already discussed, including the physical removal of menstruating women to a distant area, taboos against menstruating women preparing food, and the possibility of women working while secluded in menstruation houses. This story also illustrates the difficulty Europeans had in uncovering Indian cultural ideas. While the eighteenth-century European sources shed light on Native American menstruation practices, as many historians have noted, these sources are also particularly difficult to use because the European authors were never insiders to or direct participants in Native culture. The confusion of this European author over why his host's wife was in a different house and why his host reacted so violently to eating the food his menstruating wife prepared is indicative of other omissions, purposeful distortions, and misunderstandings scattered throughout the eighteenth-century European primary sources that speak about Native Americans.[70]

[70] Swanton ed., "An Early Account of the Choctaw Indians." 53–72, quotes 60.

Modern historians have not questioned the universality of menstrual seclusion in societies where eighteenth-century primary sources indicate its existence but have examined the meanings menstrual seclusion held within Native American societies. Historians have used methods such as up-streaming ethnographic and oral histories in order to challenge the views of menstruation eighteenth-century European men prescribed upon Native cultures. These primary sources often describe the practice as originating out of a negative Native view of menstruating women as unclean. Adair wrote that the Indians "recon it [menstruation] conveys a most horrid and dangerous pollution to those who touch, or go near them [menstruating women], or walk any where within the circle of their retreats [menstrual seclusion buildings]."[71] Historians have taken a closer look at the meanings Native Americans ascribed to menstrual seclusion, and found that seclusion was often associated with bloodshed in general, not specifically women's menstrual blood. These historians show that Native men also observed seclusion practices after bloodshed, Adair noted this fact when he claimed Native peoples, "build a small hut at a considerable distance from the houses…for every one of their warriors wounded in war, and confine them there."[72] Adair did not link the fact that both men and women secluded themselves when confronted with bloodshed to a broader southeastern Indian understanding of blood, not just women's menstrual blood. Seclusion after and during bloodshed was a part of Southeastern Native American cultures that applied to

[71] Adair, *Adair's History*130.
[72] Adair, *Adair's History* 131.

both men and women and was therefore without the negative 'unclean' connotations European observers ascribed to Native women's menstruation.[73]

Rather than propose a single Native American cultural meaning to menstruation, modern historians have suggested various ideas eighteenth-century Native societies may have had surrounding menstruation and bloodshed. Many write that menstrual seclusion was linked with a broader Native understanding of blood and power. Theda Perdue writes that "The seclusion and avoidance of women, which often has been cited as evidence for their subjugation and oppression, actually signified their power."[74] Association with blood was seen as polluting for both men and women, therefore seclusion was necessary to protect non-menstrauting persons. Michelene Pesantubbee writes that for Choctaw women menstrual seclusion was "considered a sacred time because the women went to the menstrual houses for ritual purification."[75] By utilizing a broader knowledge of southeastern Indian culture and later ethnographic and oral sources, modern historians have uncovered how Native Americans viewed menstrual seclusion; not as a negative sign of impurity that only applied to menstruating women, but as a part of wider system of seclusion practices associated with the power and ritual significance of blood and purity.

[73] Native women whose societies practiced menstrual seclusion often were secluded around childbirth since it also involved bleeding, see LeMaster *Brothers Born of One Mother* 162-3; Perdue *Cherokee Women* 29-30, 34-39; Pesantubbee *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World* 24; Hudson *The Southeastern Indians* 319-320; Fogelson ed. *Handbook of North American Indians* Vol. 14, 344 Cherokee, 381 Creek, 487 Chickasaw, 506 Choctaw.
[74] Perdue *Cherokee Women* 30.
[75] Pesuntubee *Choctaw Women* 24.

One oral history collected in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century by James Mooney is particularly telling of Cherokee views of menstruation as a time when women were particularly powerful because of their contact with blood. In this story a Cherokee hunter sees a "wicked cannibal monster" whose "whole body was covered with a skin of solid rock" making him impervious to the male hunters' weapons. However, this evil being "could not bear to look upon a menstrual woman." So the Cherokee "asked among all the women, and found seven" menstruating women who "the medicine-man" ordered to disrobe and stand along the path where the stone man walked. As the stone man passed each menstruating woman he got progressively weaker, by the time he passed the second woman "he was vomiting blood." He continued to pass the menstruating women but "grew weaker until he came to the last one." The last woman had just begun menstruating, and as the stone man passed her "blood poured" from his "mouth and he fell down on the trail." The menstruating women disabled the stone man, which allowed the medicine-man to drive "seven sourwood stakes" into the stone man's body and set fire to him. It was menstruating women, not male hunters or warriors, who protected the community from the stone cannibal. This story indicates the power Native Americans might have perceived as part of menstruation and contact with blood. Regardless of whether southeastern Indians saw blood, and therefore menstruation, as an issue of purity or power, menstruation was tied to deeply important cultural ideas that informed many aspects of life in these societies.[76]

[76] James Mooney *Myths of the Cherokee* Extract from the Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology (Government Printing Office; Washington, 1902).

Historians who study Native American nations, including Native women's menstruation practices, have questioned some aspects of the eighteenth century primary sources surrounding Native women and menstrual seclusion. By interrogating the eighteenth-century primary sources, historians have corrected the eighteenth-century perception that Native Americans viewed only menstruating women as unclean or impure. Many have written of the difficulty and need for careful analysis of these sources and have included later ethnographies and oral histories in order to create a more accurate understanding of how menstruation and menstrual seclusion was perceived by its practitioners. But despite the careful attention historians have given to properly and carefully using European authored primary sources to discuss Native American cultural practices, inaccuracies enter historical scholarship. One of these oversights is the implicit acceptance of the Europeans author's assertion that Native women practiced menstrual seclusion. The historiography is littered with overly-simplified factual statements, like "during their periods, Cherokee women retired to specially constructed menstrual houses" or "[Choctaw] women went to the menstrual houses for ritual purification during menstruation."[77] Ultimately, these historians are not wrong. Many native women did maintain menstrual seclusion long after the eighteenth century. However, these statements leave the impression that Native women only practiced menstrual seclusion. Traveling, menstruating women show that a more accurate statement might be that southeastern Native women *usually* went to menstrual houses during menstruation. These women demonstrate that even in communities and nations

[77] Theda Perdue *Cherokee Women* 29; Michelene E. Pesantubbee *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World* 24. For similar statements see, *Handbook of North American Indians,* 39, 345, 381, 487, 506.

where menstrual seclusion was an apparent norm, it was not an exclusively or strictly followed practice.

One way of supplementing the existing European sources that speak directly to Native women's menstruation practices is to look for Indian women who travel with the assumption that these women menstruate or risk the onset of menstruation while away from their communities and menstrual houses. Throughout the eighteenth century, many Native American women traveled for lengths of time that make it highly probable that they did not practice menstrual seclusion as exclusively as the primary sources and historiography that speak directly to Native women's menstrual practices indicate. Other times, women traveled but not necessarily long enough for menstruation to have occurred but still risked a travel delay that might mean the onset of menses while away from the menstrual house. Whether through outright menstruation or through the risk of menstruation while away from the menstrual house, these women show that Native nations who practiced menstrual seclusion did not exclusively utilize this practice.

The Native women whose menstruation practices are traced here often appear briefly in eighteenth-century primary sources. The sources that reveal traveling Native women never mention women's menstruation. However, women menstruate, so whenever the eighteenth-century European, male authors mentioned Indian women they left traces of Native American women's menstruation practices scattered throughout their writings. The presence of Indian Peggy in Charleston is perhaps the most detailed account of a traveling menstruating woman and speaks to many of the questions about Native women's menstruation habits. Yet the briefer appearances of a

"Chicasaw princess," the many unnamed Native women who attended diplomatic meetings alongside Native men, and the woman on Lawson's voyage all have something to say about the malleability of menstrual seclusion and the very real presence of menstruating, non-secluded, Native women throughout the colonial Southeast.[78]

On the "last Day of October" 1716, a Cherokee woman who the English called "Indian Peggy" entered Charleston with a French prisoner, "two Indian Men," her son, and Col. Hastings.[79] This unusually detailed account tells us several things about Peggy's apparent disregard for menstrual seclusion and also provides important details about how the Native men around Peggy might have played a role in how she handled her menses. Peggy journeyed to Charleston to see the Indian Trade Commissioners, a board of English leaders charged with monitoring affairs between colonists and local Native people. Peggy immediately left the geographic space of the menstrual seclusion hut when she began her journey to Charleston. The purpose of Peggy's trip to Charleston was, according to the journals of the Indian Trade Commission, "concerning the Purchase of the French Man, redeemed and delivered up by her to the Government." When Peggy appeared before the commission she stated through an interpreter that the French man "was bought by her Brother for a Gun, a white Duffield

[78] Another group of traveling or moving Native women who regularly appear in these sources are enslaved Native women. Especially when owned by Europeans, these women were likely not allowed the option of whether or not to practice menstrual seclusion. Their enslaved status meant their masters dictated their lives. It seems unlikely that a slave owner would allow an enslaved Native woman to forgo their normal labor in order to practice menstrual seclusion.

[79] William L., McDowell ed. *Journals of the Commissioners of the Indian Trade, September 20, 1710-August 29, 1718*. Colonial Records of South Carolina (South Carolina Archives Dept., 1955) 127, 128. LeMaster, *Brothers Born of one Mother* 131.

Match Coat, two broad Cloth Match Coats, a Cutlash and some Powder and Paint." She "desired" that the Commissioners give her "the Value of the Rest of the Goods" and return "the Gun."[80] The timing of Peggy's unusual journey is key to understanding how menstruation is a part of this story, even though the sources do not mention Peggy's menses at all. Peggy arrived in Charleston on October thirty-first but did not see the Commissioners until mid-November. The Commission decided to give Peggy several items in return for her "Services and Friendship…to the English"[81] which took the Commission several more days to procure. Peggy, her son, and their male companions were in Charleston until November twenty-sixth, for the commission paid for the "diet and Entertainment of the two Indian Men, the Indian Woman Peggy, and her Son" who resided at "Charles Town from the last day of October past, to the 26th of this Instant November."[82] From October 31 to November 26, twenty-seven days, Peggy was in an English community where menstrual seclusion houses did not exist.

One way to determine if Peggy could have menstruated while in Charleston is to identify her age, to ensure she was not too young or old to be menstruating. First, Peggy had a son, therefore we know she had experienced menses. The age of Peggy's son becomes important, if he were young Peggy could still be nursing and therefore unlikely to be menstruating, and if her son were old, it becomes more likely that Peggy was post-menopausal. In the primary sources, Peggy's son is distinguished from the "*Indian* men" which could be an indication that her son was younger, or of such

[80] Ibid 127
[81] Ibid 128
[82] Ibid 131

an age that the European source author would not consider him a man. Given this separation and the close association in the sources between Peggy and her son, it seems the son was young meaning Peggy was likely still of child bearing age, or a menstruating woman. Another consideration that might indicate Peggy's age as younger rather than older is the realities of eighteenth-century travel. Menstruating women are in their physical prime, and would have been best equipped to handle the realities of eighteenth-century travel. This fact could indicate that Peggy fell within this able bodied, menstruating age group that might have handled the realities of travel better than an older post-menopausal woman. While we cannot know Peggy's exact age, the presence of her son and the difficulties of eighteenth-century travel both signal that Peggy was of menstruating age.[83]

Peggy likely menstruated while in Charleston, however she was not the only one aware of this fact; her male companions' also knew of Peggy's menstruation. Menstrual seclusion was a highly visible way of physically handling menstruation. Unlike European societies, where women continued their normal labor during their menses, menstruating Native women physically removed themselves and their labor from their husbands, brothers, and sons. The removal of women and their regular labor during their menses meant Native men were probably very aware of menstruation as a regular and expected part of women's corporality. These men traveled with Peggy and lived with her in Charleston for the sources state that "Mrs. Elizabeth Gray," was paid

[83] For scholarship on how eighteenth century men might have perceived and written about age see, Holly Brewer *By Birth or Consent: Children, Law, and the Anglo-American Revolution in Authority* (University of North Carolina Press: 2007); Steven Mintz, *The Prime of Life : A History of Modern Adulthood* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2015).

"twenty-seven pounds" for the food and lodging of "the two Indian Men, the Indian Woman Peggy, and her Son."[84] It is likely that Peggy experienced menstruation at some point during her travel to Charleston, her stay there, or the journey back home with the goods she received in exchange for the French prisoner; it is also likely that the men traveling with Peggy were aware that Peggy menstruated without practicing menstrual seclusion.

If menstrual seclusion was a strictly held Cherokee norm, why was Peggy, a menstruating woman, selected to go to Charleston when men were also involved in obtaining the French prisoner? The story of Peggy found in the Journals of the Commissioners of Indian Trade make it clear that it was Peggy, not the two male Indians, who spoke and negotiated with the commissioners over the French prisoner's price. Peggy, a menstruating woman, was authorized by someone to be in charge of this exchange. The sources present two possible scenarios or sources of authority that might have selected Peggy as the person to travel to Charleston and negotiate with the English for the French prisoner: Peggy's brother and the Cherokee are on separate occasions listed as holding the French prisoner who Peggy controlled in Charleston. According to Peggy the French prisoner was first "bought by her Brother."[85] Before Peggy spoke, the English referred to the French prisoner "taken by the Charikees."[86] Whether she was authorized by the Cherokee community broadly or by her brother,

[84] McDowell ed. *Journals of the Commissioners of the Indian Trade* 131.
[85] ibid 127
[86] ibid 126; LeMaster suggests that Peggy was chosen to go to Charleston because of season (after the fall harvest) and previous ties to colonial leaders like Hastings see, LeMaster, *Brothers Born of one Mother* 131;

men were involved in Peggy being chosen to go to Charleston, and by extension, to not practice menstrual seclusion.

The presence of two Native men alongside Peggy who were clearly not authorized to negotiate over the French prisoner indicates that Peggy, rather than these man or an older non-menstruating woman, was specifically chosen for this task. It appears that some men, specifically the two Native men and Peggy's brother, condoned Peggy's journey and menstruation in a situation where menstrual seclusion was not a feasible option. If these men did not accept Peggy's presence and menstruation without menstrual seclusion, they could have allowed one of the two Native men to negotiate over the French prisoner and kept Peggy at home near the menstrual house. Peggy's presence and likely menstruation while in Charleston is a significant example of a Native American traveling, menstruating woman.[87]

The European sources that recorded Peggy's presence in Charleston are unusually rich, many other traveling Native women, like this Chickasaw woman, appear much more briefly in the sources. Thomas Nairne was an English Indian Agent of South Carolina who often traveled to various Native peoples, sending reports and letters back to English officials about his journeys and the Native people he encountered. In a 1708 letter Nairne noted that his traveling party included "a young Chicasaw princess who was carrying from the English settlement 2 young catts, to her country as a great

[87] While it seems likely that some men agreed that Peggy should go to Charleston despite her menstruation, it is also possible that not everyone who knew of Peggy's journey to Charleston and subsequent lack of menstrual seclusion would have been pleased or agreed with a woman not following menstrual seclusion practices. Knowing the feelings of the men around Peggy is as uncertain as knowing the feelings of Peggy herself about her own menstruation and viewed the various means she had of physically dealing with menstruation.

rarity." Nairne provides some indication of this traveling Chickasaw woman's age and possible menstruation status. The designator "young" is ambiguous, however, when one considers the danger of travel during the early eighteenth century (Nairne spends the same paragraph justifying his decision to travel a faster but more dangerous route and traveled with a strong contingent of Chickasaw men for protection) it seems more likely that this woman was not a child or a pre-menstrual female.[88]

The Chickasaw woman with her cats journeyed from "the English settlement" likely Charleston, back to the Chickasaw's peoples' main area of residence around the present day Alabama/Mississippi border. At a distance of approximately 560 miles, this journey would have taken around nineteen days if the woman walked and if there were no travel delays. However the trip likely took longer because Nairne recorded that during this journey he and the Chickasaw woman were "obliged to travel so slowly." It is also probable that the Chickasaw woman stayed several days at the English settlement, we know she stayed there long enough to procure her two cats. If not pregnant or nursing, during this span of time the Chickasaw woman menstruated. While it is impossible to know if this woman was pregnant, the most likely cause of non-menstruation in a woman of menstruating age, it is certainly plausible that this woman menstruated. If considered alongside the other menstruating women who appear throughout the eighteenth-century Southeast a menstruating "Chicasaw princess" is perhaps more likely than a pregnant one.[89]

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[88] Thomas Nairne, *Nairne's Muskhogean Journals: The 1708 Expedition to the Mississippi River* (University of Mississippi Press, 1988) vii, 51 (quote).
[89] Nairne, *Nairne's Muskogean Journals,* 4-5, 51 (quotes); Robbie Ethridge *From Chicaza to Chickasaw: The Euroepan Invasion and the Transformation of the Mississippian World, 1540-1715* (University of

Native women who attended formal treaty and diplomatic meetings between European colonists and Native peoples were another group of menstruating women who also traveled throughout the Southeast. An early Carolina colonial document noted that Indians often visited the English "in large Bodies, with whom Treaties…" were made. It appears that women accompanied men on these journeys to confer with Europeans. Historian Michelle LeMaster notes that throughout the eighteenth century "formal meetings" between southeastern Indians and English colonists "took up a disproportionate amount of time." Some of these meetings happened in Native communities where women could still practice menstrual seclusion, however most transpired in European settlements where women could not have practiced menstrual seclusion. It is likely that of the women who traveled to diplomatic meetings throughout the eighteenth century some, if not most, were of menstruating age. These unnamed women form another contingent of traveling menstruating women. Although we do no know their names or ages, we can safely assume that these women menstruated while away from their communities.[90]

The woman on Lawson's voyage exemplifies many of the problems with understanding the menstruation of Native women who appear in sources that do not explicitly speak about menstruation. Some of these issues have already been touched upon; for example, the difficulty of estimating the age of Peggy, or knowing whether the

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North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 2010). Distance estimate taken from google maps, further research will be undertaken to uncover more specific information on the likely route this woman took and the distance it was along with a more detailed accounting of eighteenth century travel realities.

[90] William L. McDowell ed. *Documents Relating to Indian Affairs* Vol. 1 (Colonial Records of South Carolina. Indian Books. South Carolina Archives Dept., 1958) 21; LeMaster *Brothers Born of One Mother* 15-16, 51 (quote); LeMaster states that "Formal diplomatic meetings, often held in the colonial capitals or less often in leading native villages (15)" and "women were present at diplomatic meetings (16)."

Chickasaw woman was pregnant. The Native woman who traveled alongside Lawson appears twice, once when Lawson notes her presence at the beginning of the voyage and again when she leaves the traveling party. Lawson did not provide what nation this woman belonged too, there is little to indicate whether she was of menstruating age, and even if she was of menstruating age pregnancy or nursing could have made her a temporarily non-menstruating woman. Lastly, even if this woman was menstruating regularly, she only stayed on Lawson's voyage for one week, lessening the chances of her actually menstruating while traveling. Lawson noted "we pass'd over a narrow, deep Swamp, having left the three *Indian* Men and one Woman, that had piloted the Canoe." After leaving Lawson and his companions the Indian woman and her male companions presumably traveled another week back to where they began their journey. This means that this woman was away from the geographic space of menstrual seclusion house for approximately two weeks. Yet despite all these missing details, and despite the fact that this woman only traveled for a short amount of time, her presence outside of her community and menstrual house is significant because this woman risked an unexpected travel delay or early, unpredicted menstruation. In case of each of the women discussed above, risk of menstruation while traveling tells us something about Native American menstruation practices even when we cannot know for certain whether these traveling women physically menstruated during their travels.[91]

[91] Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, 13. While there is no indication of this woman's age, logic perhaps points to the fact an old man or an old woman would not be desirable guides for Lawson and his men. Perhaps this woman was post-menopausal, or perhaps she was of menstruating age, either way her age is unknowable; we can only imagine that the realities of travel and the desire of English travelers might skew towards a younger and seemingly stronger husband and wife couple to help lead a journey into lands unknown to the English.

Even if we cannot know every detail necessary to prove traveling women were menstruating the woman on Lawson's voyage, Peggy, the Chickasaw woman, and the many women at diplomatic meetings risked the onset of menstruation even if they believed they would not menstruate while traveling. The main causes of non-menstruation in women of menstruating age is pregnancy and nursing. However, for each of the women discussed here there is no indication that a child of nursing age was present, making it unlikely they were nursing, and therefore not menstruating. Also, while nursing usually prevents menstruation, it is possible for nursing women to also menstruate. Pregnancy also causes women to stop menstruating however miscarriage would mean bleeding, much like menstruation, and the subsequent onset of regular menstruation. A traveling pregnant woman could not be sure that her pregnancy would remain viable throughout her journey, therefore even if one of the women discussed above were pregnant and non-menstruating, she risked the ending of pregnancy and subsequent menstruation while away from the menstrual house. Whether these traveling women physically menstruated or risked menstruating they show us that menstrual seclusion was not a strictly enforced norm in these societies.[92]

While it seems that Native Americans preferred menstrual seclusion when at home, hence the testimonies of European observers about this practice, menstrual seclusion was not the only way Native women handled menstruation. This new way of looking at women wherever they appear in the primary sources and thinking about their menstruation allows a new view of Native American norms surrounding menstruation;

[92] "Amenorrhea" In *New Harvard Guide to Women's Health,* Karen J. Carlson, Stephanie A. Eisenstat, and Terra Diane Ziporyn. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 2004).

not a firmly and deeply held practice, menstrual seclusion was a preferred practice for women living in Native communities but menstrual seclusion did not inextricably tie Native women to their homes. There is tension between the apparent cultural understandings of blood and purity associated with menstrual seclusion and the existence of menstruating Native women who did not practice menstrual seclusion. These non-secluded menstruating women defy the systems of belief and understanding scholars have suggested eighteenth-century Native peoples had about menstruation and the cultural ideas that shaped it.[93]

Native women often traveled, and menstruated, throughout the eighteenth-century Southeast, but was this a uniquely eighteenth century phenomenon? No archeological evidence points to pre-contact Native American menstruation norms. This is not unusual. Many cultural practices that were observed by Europeans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are impossible to trace pre-contact. It is tempting to look at the appearance of eighteenth-century menstruating women who did not practice menstrual seclusion and argue for Native cultural change because of contact with European cultures. However, with no evidence of pre-contact menstruation norms, these women could equally be indicators of cultural continuity. Without knowledge of pre-contact menstruation norms, scholars have no way of knowing whether the menstruation practices of the eighteenth century are indicative of cultural change or continuity. The impossibility of seeing cultural change or continuity in

[93] LeMaster *Brothers Born of One Mother* 162-3; Perdue *Cherokee Women* 29-30, 34-39; Pesantubbee *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World* 24; Hudson *The Southeastern Indians* 319-320; Fogelson ed. *Handbook of North American Indians* Vol. 14, 344 Cherokee, 381 Creek, 487 Chickasaw, 506 Choctaw.

menstruation practices highlights the weakness of this binary. Traveling menstruating women show that southeastern Native people did not have a firmly dictated, single understanding of menstruation conducive to cultural change or continuity but rather adjusted how menstruation was dealt with depending on the circumstances. This reality should push scholars to reframe how we think about Native menstruation but also Native culture more broadly.[94]

These menstruating women are more often than not shadowy historical figures whose marginal presence often elicits more questions than answers. These often unknowable questions surrounding traveling Native women include things like: what age were these women? Were they pregnant or nursing? Did they actually experience menstruation while traveling? What method did the traveling women use to handle their menstruation? Scholars should ask each of these questions about each of the women examined here, whether or not answers are possible, and often they are not. However, through the fragments about these women the sources allow us to see, it becomes apparent that women traveled, leaving behind menstrual seclusion houses. In doing so it appears that these women did not defy their own culture's expectations, but rather, defied the expectations European colonial men and modern scholars placed upon them. Not all southeastern Native women practiced menstrual seclusion, this was likely a normal part of life in the Southeast, it is a fact uncovered through the examination of

[94] Galloway, "Where have all the Menstrual Huts Gone?"; For examples and discussions of the cultural change or continuity debate in scholarship see, Axtell *The Indians' New South: Cultural Change in the Colonial Southeast*; Carson "Native Americans, the Market Revolution, and Culture Change: The Choctaw Cattle Economy, 1690-1830." *Agricultural History*; Kidwell "Indian Women as Cultural Mediators." *Ethnohistory*; Silliman "Change and Continuity, Practice and Memory: Native American Persistence in Colonial New England." *American Antiquity*; Smith "'I Look on You… As My Children': Persistence and Change in Cherokee Motherhood, 1750-1835." *North Carolina Historical Review*.

traveling Native women. And it seems more likely than not that traveling, menstruating Native women were not a unique eighteenth-century phenomenon. While we cannot know exactly what the traveling menstruating women examined here did to physically handle menstruation or how their societies formulated the intricate beliefs and practices surrounding menstruation, we can be certain that Native culture was, and is, a dynamic system that should defy simple explanations.