

View From the Ridge: The Kashaya Pomo in a Russian-American Company Context

Antoinette Martinez

Department of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley

Introduction

In 1812 the Russian-American Company, a mercantile monopoly that represented Czarist Russia's interests in the north Pacific fur trade, established the colony of Ross as a staging area for sea otter and fur seal hunting along the coast of California, as an agricultural community to help supply the Company, and as a small shipyard. The company recruited laborers from across the north Pacific to work at Ross including Europeans, Native Siberians, Native Hawaiians, Native Alaskans, Creoles, and Native Californians.

Since 1988 the Fort Ross Archaeological Project, a collaborative effort by the University of California, Berkeley and the California Department of Parks and Recreation, has directed its research toward one main goal. The primary purpose is to consider how Pacific Coast hunter-gatherers responded to Russian colonialism in northern California and the establishment of a mercantile outpost with a multi-ethnic workforce (Lightfoot *et al.* 1991). A long-term study was initiated to examine the economies, gender relations, sociopolitical organizations, and religious practices of Native peoples before, during, and after the colonization of Fort Ross. Until recently efforts have been concentrated on the Native Alaskan Village Site (NAVS) which was the primary residential area for single Native Alaskan men, Native Alaskan families, and inter-ethnic households composed of Native Alaskan men and local Native Californian women (Lightfoot *et al.* in press).

While building on the previous work undertaken by the DPR and UC Berkeley archaeologists, I would like to shift the focus of research to the Native Californian component of the greater Fort Ross Project. I am redirecting the archaeological view to the Kashaya Pomo homeland on the ridges and terraces of the rugged Pacific coastline. The fur trade colony of Ross was not established in a void but in the territory of the Kashaya Pomo and Coast Miwok Indians of California. Current research suggests that the Kashaya Pomo sustained strong cultural continuity during and after this encounter as evidenced in archaeological data. These data include the remains and spatial distribution of structures, lithic technologies, discrete areas of trash deposition, and faunal resources. I also suggest that in this context Native women act as cultural mediators and play a critical role in maintaining cultural identity.

In this paper I discuss: 1) how archaeologists have dealt with culture contact studies; 2) how I intend to add a gendered perspective to the project; 3) recent excavations of a Kashaya Pomo village site; and 4) how the methodologies used for researching the written record, spatial patterning, and material remains are designed to complement current theoretical issues of concern.

Culture Contact Studies

Archaeological studies of culture contact are not without some problems in their approach to time, space and form. With respect to time, the characteristic units of many previous studies have tended to emphasize a strict division between prehistory and history that does not allow for a continuum of change or continuity. In the approach to space, two types of representation currently prevail. In one, nations, states or regions have become units of historical study or "geographical containers." In the other, space is represented as a formal set of structural relationships in which the spatial effects of particular units (as in core/periphery) become fixed as part of the scale of analysis due to their relationships to one another, as in World Systems (Agnew 1993). In form, expectations for the discovery of discrete spatial patterns of diagnostic material remains for determining boundaries have characterized archaeological studies. A colonialist perspective of territorial expansion, boundary maintenance and homogenous populations implies that tightly bounded social entities should be visible in the archaeological record (Lightfoot and Martinez 1995). Yet, in examining the spatial distribution of diagnostic material traits associated with specific groups, as in information exchange or sourcing studies, archaeologists have repeatedly found that these traits tend to merge or blur at the margins of social units (DeAtley and Findlow 1984:1, Ericson and Meighan 1984).

This colonialist perspective is also characterized by macro-scale analyses of World Systems, a focus on the organizational infrastructure of core/periphery linkages, and a common perception that territorial markers can delineate colonial territories from the outlying hinterlands of indigenous peoples (Lightfoot and Martinez 1995). Although indigenous populations are not ignored in World Systems studies, they are viewed primarily as subordinate laborers or producers who extract surplus for dominant colonial elites. In most cases they are viewed as passive recipients of the global economy who simply respond to conditions "impinged upon" them from above (Biersack 1991:232, Kardulias 1990:27, Kohl 1987:16, Pollack 1992:327-330, Rowlands 1987:3).

Consequently, most traditional studies of culture contact and frontiers have tended to perceive group boundaries as the result of a dichotomous relationship between colonial and indigenous populations. By reconceptualizing culture contact frontiers as zones of cross-cutting social networks, archaeologists can examine how factional competition and cooperation are played out in culture contact situations and why cultural transformations take place among some segments of the population and not others. Using this approach, we can attempt to understand segmentations within populations prior to contact, and how these divisions were activated and manifested during encounters with other peoples (Lightfoot and Martinez 1995). Axes of variation include kin, social relations, political affiliations, religion, class and gender.

Gender

Very few culture contact studies have actually focused on women (for exceptions see Brown 1980 and Van Kirk 1980). Colony Ross presents the opportunity to address gender because of the unique historical demographics. The California Indians comprised a significant portion of the Russian colony population, that was quite strikingly differentiated by gender. The 1821 census shows that 4 adult male Indians made up 3.3% of the adult male population at Ross, but thirty four California Indian women made up 63% of the adult female population at the same

time (Istomin 1992:10-11). Of these 34 women, 13 were "Bodegan" (Coast Miwok), 19 were "from the vicinity of Ross" (Kashaya), and 2 were "from the Slavianka River" (South Pomo or Kashaya) (Istomin 1992). Most of the Native Californian women were married to the indigenous Alaskans, Kodiaks or Chugach, while a relatively small number lived with Russians.

The ethnohistorical record suggests that ephemeral marriages characterized the relationships between the Kashaya Pomo women and the Native Alaskan men. Consequently, there was a great deal of movement back and forth between the actual fort and the Native villages by the Kashaya Pomo women giving them the opportunity to become the cultural innovators and mediators of their groups. Can culturally diagnostic materials and patterns in these materials be discerned? Can sociopolitical changes that may have caused shifts in power or gender relations be identified? Finally, do the ethnohistorical and ethnographic accounts accurately portray Kashaya women? Preliminary analysis of archaeological data suggests that these women maintained many traditional activities while negotiating the changing status of men and women within the Russian-American Company context. One observable consequence was variable access to resources.

For example, it has been documented that the Native Alaskan men who, unlike the Pomo men, were well known for their hunting skills and even "enjoyed" and gave great attention to gardening (Khlebnikov 1990:102) suggesting that the Native Californian women should have found the Alaskan men to be good providers. These women were characterized as frivolous when they left the resourceful Alaskan men on a whim. Further examination of the record, however, suggests that their actions were often motivated by a lack of resources at the Native Alaskan Village and the need to return to family and traditional resources. In the 1990 translation of Khlebnikov's travel notes, Schmidt, manager of Fort Ross, makes an interesting point.

When the Aleut hunting party was sent to the Port of San Francisco the second time, the men all asked me not to keep them for the hunt once the agreement had expired, because the last time they had been separated from their families, their wives and children had received no assistance and had gone hungry; therefore, they begged me to help them this time to feed their families. Notwithstanding the shortage of supplies at Ross, I tried to supply them with food as much as possible, but several of the women nevertheless ran away out of hunger, and the others endured terrible privation (Khlebnikov 1990:131).

As skilled and industrious as the Native Alaskan men were, life with them may not have been an improvement and would have required the reduction of risk to the women and their children. If the inhabitants could not rely on rations supplied or bought from the company store, then other potential resources would be necessary. These would include marine resources (mollusks, fish, birds, mammals) and terrestrial mammals. Even the changes imposed by such foreign encounters may have been overridden by issues of a more universal scale such as providing enough food for the family and thereby reinforcing continuity in some traditional activities.

As suggested by these examples, data drawn from ethnohistoric, ethnographic, and archaeological material remains can be used to make inferences about male and female activities before, during, and after contact. The focus here will be on three methodological components to

illustrate the progress being made on this research: 1) spatial organization; 2) European versus Native American artifacts; and 3) initial analysis of the faunal remains.

Methodology

1995 Field Season

"Tomato Patch," an archaeological site on the ridge near the Fort Ross State Historic Park has proven to be an excellent source of information regarding the issues of culture change in this particular contact situation. This was a Kashaya Pomo Village that had existed before the Russians arrived, was contemporaneous with the Russian occupation, and after being abandoned had remained relatively undisturbed through the ranching period. With the consent of the Soper-Wheeler Company we began work on the site which abuts the California State Park in Sonoma County. We were fortunate to have the support and cooperation of interested individuals from the Kashaya, and from local and academic communities.

Since the time a rancher made daily hikes to the top of the ridge to water his tomatoes and enjoy the expansive view of the coast, the location of the Kashaya Pomo village has been called "Tomato Patch." It is safe to assume that those who came before him, the people whose past lies just beneath the surface, also found this area productive and beautiful. The main component of the village is located near a year-round spring. The spatial structure of the site is as follows: northeast of the spring is a large depression approximately 10 m in diameter from berm to berm. This depression becomes particularly well defined in the spring when the grass is green and clipped close to the ground by the resident cattle. Directly east of the large depression are several smaller depressions that line up comfortably along the contour of the slope. To the south of the large depression the slope descends to the dark rich soils of a midden. Scattered between and sometimes overlapping these other features are areas dominated by obsidian and chert flakes and shatter. In the view south past the midden, the expansive horizon of the Pacific Ocean is broken only by impressive stands of redwoods and laurel bays.

The implementation of the research design in the field began with a detailed topographic map and a 10x10 m grid system. After geophysical surveys of the site, a surface test unit was placed in every 10x10 m grid unit. Finally, selected features and areas of the site were excavated. We divided excavation blocks into 50x50 cm units to facilitate the future replication of detailed spatial distributions.

Because there were virtually no artifacts on the surface, the plan was to "peel" back the surface sod in 1x1 m units and collect artifacts from the bottom of the sod and the top of the exposed ground. These test units were referred to as Surface Test Units or "STUs." Sixty of these 1x1 m units were placed at the southwest corner of every 10x10 m section of the site grid. These "STUs" averaged about 4-8 cm in depth from the surface. Remote sensing surveys, magnetometer and soil resistivity, were also done over a large portion of the site. These tests predicted the potential for isolating discrete "activity areas." The results of the remote sensing surveys correlated with the spatial patterning of the materials recovered from the subsurface/surface test units. These combined results were instrumental in determining subsequent excavation strategy.

Depression 1

The first excavation units to slice into the center of the large depression offered evidence of a relatively large structure that had burned down and collapsed into itself. It had settled relatively undisturbed until we arrived. A substantial center post (approximately 16 cm in diameter) almost a meter below the present surface had held up a framework of posts, branches and twigs daubed with clay. After we had exposed more of the cultural levels in a large excavation block we found that some of the wood had been carbonized. Some of the branches and twigs left only impressions in the orange fire-hardened clay. On occasion, a bead, bone or shell was found embedded in the clay. The dark, compact and greasy floor was easily discerned in profile and ended abruptly at the berm whose construction and composition was not as easily well defined. Nearly 200 glass trade beads were recovered on and above the floor comprising the dominant historical artifact class at this site.

House Depressions

Three small depressions evident on the surface were also tested. The small depression farthest east from the large depression had been excavated in 1994. Extensive testing of this four meter (in diameter) feature reached depths of almost 70 cm below datum. Until we began subsurface testing we were not positive these small depressions were cultural. However, a burnt shell lens surrounded by fire-cracked rock in the center at around 60 cm below datum assured us that they were. Slightly to the west, subsurface testing in the next depression revealed a larger concentration of burnt shell as well as bone associated with a relatively large amount of angular sandstone and cobbles. This faunal and charcoal lens was collected for flotation analysis. Finally, the hearth/oven in the small depression nearest the large depression was underlain by a pavement of close fitting rocks and appears to have been dug out of a previous living surface. Another possible post in this depression has been compromised by rodent disturbance. The association of schist fragments with this feature and the apparent cultural contexts of schist in other areas of the site raise many questions about the use of this material among the local Kashaya Pomo.

Midden

The remains of numerous meals of chiton, mussel, barnacle, abalone, fish, bird, and mammal were mixed in with discarded stone tools, debitage, broken glass, and pieces of ceramic in the midden. The use of 1/8 inch screen for the entire excavation allowed for the recovery of fish vertebrae, rodent teeth, sea urchin spines, finishing flakes, as well as tiny beads. Several 20x20 cm columns from the midden and all other excavation areas of the site were bagged for future flotation and other soil tests. While we had hoped to expand the midden excavation horizontally, depths of over a meter kept us restricted to six 50x50 cm units.

Initial sampling of obsidian for hydration rim thickness indicated the potential for a multi-component stratigraphy, both vertically and horizontally within the site.

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The midden contrasts sharply with the areas almost devoid of organic remains but sprinkled with chert and obsidian bifaces, projectile points, flakes and shatter. We tested one of

these areas to a depth of approximately 80 cm below surface and found a diverse range of lithic artifacts down to that depth.

Still to be integrated into the analysis are the data recovered from the survey and surface collection completed as part of a timber harvest survey carried out in 1993 as well as the results of previous fieldwork in the adjacent Fort Ross State Historic Park. Limited subsurface testing of another large ridge site near the fort also provides yet another database for comparative analysis.

Spatial Patterning

Current perspectives on space influence methodology and attitudes towards research. For example, current archaeological theory stresses the importance of multi-vocality (gender, age, class, and ethnicity) in the experience, perception, and engagement in "landscapes" (Moore 1986, 1988; Bender). These landscapes can be tensioned, contradictory, appropriated, and differentially experienced. Are the definitions of site, village' and activity areas used appropriately? Are these designations products of outdated and biased archaeological practice or do they reflect concepts of space that Native Americans may have experienced? Do they reflect our narrow concepts of the division of labor or are the categories open to a continuum of gender identities? Are these definitions static or do they change through time? The socio-ecological concepts developed by Breck Parkman (1994) are useful in addressing these issues. It has been documented ethnographically that the Pomo divided their world into two mutually exclusive spheres, the *Outside* and the *Inside*. The literal meaning for the latter was "inside the house" while the word for "house" usually connoted "village" (Halpern 1953: 151 cited by Parkman 1994:4). Parkman also suggests that *Inside* was associated with community and perceived as a woman's world and that the *Outside* was thought of as wilderness and the world of men. These divisions may have also determined where the symbols of these worlds were pecked into stone in the rock art and translated into other material arenas. If these divisions of space were perceived to influence ritual, danger, and contamination, then the sudden changes or inaccessibility of these spaces would cause perceived disruption and confusion.

Patterns in archaeological spatial contexts (both inter and intra-site) can also be used to infer changes in more evident or other kinds of economic, political, and social organization and their implications for production and relations of production. Increased complexity, specialization, and exchange networks could cause changes in social structure potentially observable in the archaeological record as changes in Native settlement size, number and patterns. Change and continuity in prehistoric settlement patterns must first be considered before gauging contact impacts. A prehistoric increase in complexity, specialization, or exchange networks may have necessitated moves to be near trade centers, resources, or to participate in community activities. Determining the seasonality of prehistoric sites would have implications for seasonal female activities when looking at socio-political change as evidenced in spatial patterning. After European contact, a shift of the population to settlements closer to Colony Ross, either for labor or to be closer to relatives, may have occurred. These shifts can be supported by attempting more refined chronological studies, such as the use of obsidian hydration analysis on the obsidian tools found at sites as well as other time specific artifacts such as historical ceramics. Also, consideration of the physical distance from European powers can help determine the scope

of colonial mercantile influences. I will consider encounters between the Kashaya Pomo and the Russians or Native Alaskans at different spatial scales including global, regional, and household. The emphasis, however, will be on a village/household level.

Contrast with NAVS

Initial results of the excavation at the village/household level appear to represent traditional Kashaya Pomo village patterning. The large depression dominates the immediate area. While it cannot be positively identified as a sweat house, it would have required the organization of labor to construct. The smaller structures resemble both ethnohistorical and ethnographic representations of traditional houses. Areas within and between structures are relatively clean and trash was evidently deliberately deposited away from the living area.

At NAVS there appears to be some trash within abandoned houses, then relatively clean areas around the houses with trash deposited off the bluff. There are no ceremonial buildings at NAVS, but there may be evidence for a central or communal area distinguished by the lack of architecture and trash.

The Material Record

What are the combinations of traditional versus introduced forms, functions, and materials of artifacts? What is the spatial patterning of these artifacts? Do the spatial patterns, forms, and materials of artifacts change over time? Most importantly, can this material be attributed to the actions and activities of particular people? The analysis of artifacts provides plenty of data and some interesting patterns.

Artifacts

"Historical artifacts" include general categories of beads, ceramics, metals, glass and, in this case, lithics. The presence of these artifacts does infer some contact between the Europeans and indigenous peoples. This contact may have been indirect or from hand to hand. What is really exchanged when material objects pass from one individual to another? Do decorated ceramics come with new ideologies or political maneuverings or do they merely represent the same ideologies in a different form? Are they shoved into the material *repertoire* of the Native women or are they freely and deliberately chosen by these same women? Do they create discrete borders between cultures and ethnicities or do they become markers of a new and unique culture and ethnicity?

If we are looking for process how do we measure the change of these identities within the assemblage of artifacts? Several different approaches to material culture studies have been employed to measure change through the types and direction of 'acculturation'. These approaches have been used in prehistoric California obsidian studies and in historical California Mission contexts (Hoover 1992:41).

When it comes to the association of culture groups with attributes, some have defined ethnicity in the archaeological record through the definition of linguistic or "cultural markers." Others have used modified lithics and the characteristics of those modifications to designate boundaries and group movement. Another approach involves the spatial analysis of sourced materials that have been transported or exchanged across regions. The basic assumption

underlying this approach is that differential fall-off patterns should be evident as materials are transported across boundaries between discrete social units (see Ericson and Meighan 1984; Findlow and Bolognese 1984; Hughes 1986).

"Significantly, there has been little success in duplicating ethnographically described "tribal" distributions in California using obsidian artifacts in either prehistoric or early historical contexts. Rather than clear-cut boundaries, obsidian distributions exhibit complex, overlapping patterns that tend to blend across historically defined ethnolinguistic borders" (Ericson and Meighan 1984:145). Ericson and Meighan go on to suggest that even if specific kinds of social networks could be differentiated and controlled, it is unclear whether the "haziness" of ethnolinguistic boundaries will be clarified (1984:145).

While these patterns are recognized through spatial distribution, they still tend to be at a regional or fairly large scale. An alternative to ethnolinguistic units of analysis, microscale analysis on the level of village, community, and household might prove to be more useful in group identification. This approach has proven to be more useful in obsidian studies (see Fredrickson 1989, 1993; Hughes 1984; Jackson 1989).

In a historical context, at Mission San Antonio, Hoover and Costello (1985) used a method based on a modified classification system for the study of museum collections (1951). The Quimby and Spoehr classification uses two "artifact states" (Indian and European) and four "attributes" (form, material, technique of manufacture, and manufacturer) (Cheek 1974:24). Cheek's modification of the system led Farnsworth to point out a major flaw in Cheek's understanding of acculturation processes. He feels that she makes the assumption that "Indians did not use European-made artifacts unless they were also of European form, material, and technique of manufacture" (Farnsworth 1992:22). In general, these models do not reflect the complexity of the possible combinations and sometimes they do not account for multi-directional change.

The attempt to define cultural boundaries with strict artifact categories may be squeezing the human or behavioral element out of the picture. While archaeologists deal with material culture what they are really interested in is behavior (Farnsworth 1992:25). For example, a European object that is used in precisely the same way as the traditional object by the Native group does not represent a change in behavior. I agree with Farnsworth (1992:24) in that if we are to consider a scale anything smaller than total site artifact inventories, the classifications cannot be too complex. The classification system should also be flexible for differing contexts. Attempts to quantify the degree of culture change may obscure the subtleties of the process. For example, a classification system with numerous categories containing one or two artifacts may be considered of little use because they are not appropriate for quantitative or statistical analysis (Farnsworth 1992:24).

In sum, besides not being mutually exclusive (Farnsworth 1992:24), Indian and European "states" are also not the only "states" to consider. Many of these methods are based on the assumptions that culture groups are homogeneous, static, and limited in the number of contact possibilities. Another area of potential variability would be gender.

For example, the number of artifacts of obsidian (flakes, shatter, bifaces, projectile points) overwhelms artifacts made of historical glass at Tomato Patch. If one was to use simply

the numbers as indices of change, the similarities and continuity in behavior (new materials used in traditional ways) might be overlooked. Many of the historical glass fragments are not modified, but those that do reflect the same techniques and resultant forms as the obsidian artifacts (i.e. flakes and projectile points). If hunting technologies are associated with men, then glass and obsidian projectile points may be evidence of continuity in these behaviors. The same continuity may be shown in the more utilitarian activities indicated by utilized flakes

On the other hand, historical ceramic fragments smoothed about the edges and drilled for possible ornamentation were not found at Tomato Patch. There is no evidence for this particular example of complementarity with smoothed and drilled abalone fragments (as is the case at Metini - see Ballard, this volume). If women were responsible for the production of certain decorative artifacts, why are they absent from Tomato Patch?

Faunal Patterns

The interaction of the Kashaya Pomo with the Russians and Native Alaskans may have brought about changes in the use of faunal resources due to resource depletion, short term environmental changes, and various eco-system changes recognized at different scales of analysis. But some of these changes could have also come from innovation, the introduction of foods as well as food technologies; the desire to gain power by limiting access to resources, or at least creating variable access to resources; and the inherent disadvantages of being at the farthest reaches of the trade network. All of these considerations belie the simplicity of "ethnic signatures" in food remains.

Documented in the ethnographic record is the use of fish, birds, mollusks, marine and terrestrial mammals by the Kashaya Pomo. Ultimately, many inferences can be made from the detailed analysis of the archaeological remains of these resources. For example, the abundance of bones of domestic animals such as cattle and sheep relative to the abundance of bones of wild animals may give us a clearer picture of the relationship between the Russian-American Company and its employees. Did the Native Alaskans have to rely on "wild" resources because they were not supplied enough food by the company? The abundance of marine resources relative to terrestrial may gauge the influence of one culture on the other. Did the Pomo learn to utilize marine resources? Did Pomo women become processors of sea lions and their skins? And what tools would have been necessary to do this?

As discussed earlier, artifacts such as hunting and processing tools, may be seen as representing similar prehistoric activities carried out "in modified form" or as indicative of actual changes in production or relations of production. Consequently, the raw materials of European origin may not necessarily translate to acceptance or adoption of European ideologies. Artifacts will have to be intimately associated with their spatial contexts through time for more insightful analysis.

Gender

For example, if Pomo women became sedentary in their new environment at Fort Ross they would not only lose access to their old foraging opportunities, they would also become reliant on the resources that their Native Alaskan husbands brought home. If the main staple was sea lion, the women may have found themselves shifting to a division of labor characteristic of northern cultures in which processing became the woman's major activity.

The division of labor and diet choice of one sex may be dependent on those of another as in hide processing or shellfish gathering when the hunt fails. "One possible response to such a situation is to subdivide tasks, not resources, with women emphasizing processing of food procured by men, which seems to be the case in northern latitudes" (Jochim 1988:133). Stevenson (1991:286) also notes that among ethnographically recorded modern hunter-gatherers differences between men and women in their roles and activities are pronounced. Men generally hunt large, mobile dispersed mammals away from camp. Women forage in the vicinity of camp and rear children, process food, manufacture clothing, and maintain shelters and other facilities. "Because task, role, and status differences between men and women in northern hunting societies are the most pronounced in the non-industrial world, their study may help to build a theory of gender relations that is applicable to all societies" (Stevenson 1991:292).

The emphasis on medium/large mammals derives from another assumption - that foragers will be selected to behave so as to maximize the net rate of energy return per unit foraging time (Smith 1983:62). These ideas are grounded in the assumption that human foraging behavior has been "designed" by natural selection to respond to changing conditions in a way that yields the greatest possible benefits for the individual forager's survival and reproductive success (Smith 1983). According to optimal foraging models "large meat packages" should be preferred. Lower ranking resources, such as mollusks, will not be included in the diet until it becomes necessary. But these assumptions are not taking into account the possible division of labor, complementary female and male strategies, and the differences that these may make on the ranking of low return but consistent resources.

However, the emphasis on efficiency models is still analytically useful and does not preclude other factors. If the suitability of energy as sole currency is reevaluated and other means such as nutrition, storability, technological maintenance costs, and risks are considered, the full range in variation in the utilization of resources can be acknowledged. Rather than maximizing energy efficiency, minimizing the risk of short term subsistence failure may characterize women's activities.

Mollusks

Because shell, in numbers and volume, overwhelmed bone in the midden, most of the analysis so far has been done on the "mollusk" category. These mollusk categories were dominated by snail, mussel, chiton, limpet and barnacle (in that order). Differences in relative amounts can be attributed to taphonomy, identifiability, and survivorship, as well as to ethnic or gender preferences.

What is more significant here is not the differences but the similarities amongst sites in midden constituents. Chiton, mussels, turban snails, as well as barnacles and limpets are all surface dwelling and rock perching taxa (Moss 1993:632) from the intertidal or mid littoral zone easily gathered by hand or removed with a pry.

Another similarity is the relatively small number of abalone, sea urchin, clam, and olivella at the three sites. Differences in abalone, olivella, and clam could indicate changes in the sociopolitics through patterns in decorative artifacts or clam disk bead manufacturing.

Contrasts

To discuss political or factional reasons for variable access to resources we can look at a few examples including domestic mammals, wild terrestrial mammals and sea mammals, as well as mollusks. Cattle (as well as sheep and pigs) dominate the animal foods of the Russians in the stockade. According to the historical accounts, Pomo men were not trusted to herd cattle and if they were caught stealing cattle they were severely punished. The Native California women living with Native Alaskan men at NAVS may have had access to beef, but beef was rationed and very limited, even to the employees of the RAC. The apparent lack of cattle at Tomato Patch, the Kashaya Pomo site, may not be due entirely to a preference for venison.

There is a relatively small amount of artiodactyls relative to mollusks at Tomato Patch. This could be due to seasonal utilization of the site or to increasing constraints on hunting by the Pomo men due to territorial circumscription by the Spanish, the Russians and the Native Alaskans and Creoles who also hunted deer, but with guns.

In this technological vein, simply being exposed to marine mammal hunting technology could not have made the Pomo competitive with the Native Alaskans who brought with them generations of specialized skill. These skills, however, did not guarantee food abundance. Much time was spent hunting sea lions for consumption (as evidenced in the faunal record at the NAVS) and when they were away the women and children left behind were often near starvation. Pursuit of the large mammal meat package, whether domestic or wild, marine or terrestrial, was undertaken by the men of all groups.

This brings us back to the common denominator at the three sites - mollusks, a critical resource during winter or times of resource stress. The other common denominator at the three sites was the Native American woman. Shellfish collecting has been associated with women; they were often the primary shellfish gatherers (Moss 1993).

In sum, neither environmental variables nor ethnic preferences fully explain patterns of food use in this particular context. I also recognize the different strategies of survival and success by factions of the population that cross-cut ethnicity and include gender and class.

Conclusion

As Lightfoot (this volume) points out, the systematic investigation of Russian colonialism is very important because the processes differed from other colonial contexts. The indigenous peoples they encountered also differed. Contact studies cannot approach people as homogeneous groups, but as dynamic assemblages of families and individuals. One way of narrowing the research focus is to consider some of the implications of gender. Were the women in inter-ethnic households interested in acquiring status or in maintaining traditions and cultural survival? In particular, did Native women act as cultural mediators within this ethnic milieu?

Methods used to begin addressing these questions included a field strategy similar to that employed at the Native Alaskan Village Site where some of these women once cohabited with Russian-American Company employees. This strategy was designed to define site structure and the spatial organization of households for inter-site comparisons. The field methods used included the mapping of surface features, the systematic collection of surface materials,

magnetometer and soil resistance surveys, as well as the excavation of several features and areas of the site.

These methods provided perspectives on the spatial organization and daily routines involving food acquisition and preparation, tool production, and trash disposal. Initial analysis provides strong evidence for continuity in traditional practices as well as village layout. At Tomato Patch, the prehistoric/historical Kashaya Pomo village site, we find the orderly deposition of trash as exemplified by clean floors and a deep midden. Within this midden we found the ash, fire cracked rock, cooking stones, and faunal remains that suggest continuity in subsistence practices. Marine resources such as pinnipeds, cetaceans, and pelagic fish exploited by the Native Alaskans did not play a significant role in the diet of the indigenous Californians a short distance from the fort stockade. Also we did not find anything to suggest the introduction of marine technologies involving bone harpoon points or seaworthy water craft. The limited amount of historical glass and ceramics was very fragmented and often modified in traditional Kashaya Pomo style.

If women were in fact acting as cultural mediators, they were not promoting large scale change within their communities. In fact, women may have been deliberately negotiating continuity in social identities within this contact setting. Many of the daily practices evident in the archaeological record emanate from the home and the mother-child core. The intimate and subtle interactions within this core may take generations to change and ultimately serve as the stronghold of cultural continuity.

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