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To and from Places Beyond: Examining Low-Fired Coarse Earthenwares and Informal Trade Networks among Enslaved Bermudians in the 18th and 19th Centuries

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To and From Places Beyond:
Examining Low-fired Coarse Earthenwares and Informal Trade Networks Among
Enslaved Bermudians in the 18th and 19th 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
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APPROVAL PAGE


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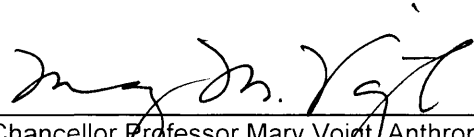


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ABSTRACT PAGE

Low-fired coarse earthenware, a type of handmade, locally produced pottery, is found on a variety of archaeological sites on the island of Bermuda dating between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The island, however, does not have a source of raw clay for local production. Handmade coarse earthenware was therefore imported, most likely by and for enslaved Africans. The presence of this pottery on Bermuda is especially interesting because it raises questions about procurement practices and pottery use among enslaved Africans. My research examines handmade coarse earthenware from six Bermudian sites spanning the east and west ends of the island. By the late seventeenth century, Bermuda's charter company dissolved and the economy shifted focus from agriculture to maritime trade. During this period, enslaved Africans as sailors on Bermudian vessels had access to markets throughout the Caribbean and eastern seaboard which gave them the opportunity and independence to buy or trade for goods. Recent studies have shown that enslaved Africans were active in purchasing desired items. Markets catering to enslaved communities were established on many British islands throughout the Caribbean and influenced the types of coarse earthenware that were in style over time. The presence of coarse earthenware on Bermuda is suggestive not only of the expansive networks enslaved Africans participated in abroad but also informal networks for trade goods on the island.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF FIGURES	ii
INTRODUCTION	1
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	5
BERMUDIAN SLAVERY	5
ENSLAVED AFRICANS IN THE MARKET ECONOMY	14
MARKET TASTES	17
LOW-FIRED COARSE EARTHENWARE IN THE AMERICAS	20
THE COLONOWARE DEBATE	21
CARIBBEAN LOW-FIRED COARSE EARTHENWARE	27
FUNCTIONAL ADVANTAGES OF LOW-FIRED COARSE EARTHENWARE	30
LOW-FIRED COARSE EARTHENWARE BEYOND FOODWAYS	35
BERMUDA CASE STUDY	38
EAST END SITES	40
<i>Tucker House, St. George's</i>	40
<i>The Globe Hotel, St. George's</i>	45
<i>Stewart Hall, St. George's</i>	48
<i>Bank of Bermuda Car Park, St. George's</i>	52
WEST END SITES	54
<i>Springfield, Somerset Village</i>	54
<i>Hog Bay, Sandys</i>	57
MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY SITES	60
<i>Dickinson Store</i>	61
<i>Kast/Bell Ruin</i>	63
DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS	66
BIBLIOGRAPHY	71

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Map of Bermuda showing the island's relation to the Eastern Seaboard of the United States.	3
Figure 2 An enslaved Bermudian Boy working as a boat pilot (Jones 2004: 67).	3
Figure 3 A Bermuda schooner and turtle catching (Jones 2004:57).	8
Figure 4 Map of archaeological sites in St. George's, Bermuda.	39
Figure 5 Photography of the Tucker House Exterior.	40
Figure 6 Tucker House coarse earthenware sherd (69AL 009 AE).	43
Figure 7 Photograph of the Globe Hotel exterior and back garden.	45
Figure 8 Globe Hotel coarse earthenware pipe bowl/stem (69 AK 018).	47
Figure 9 Globe Hotel coarse earthenware sherd (69 AK 028).	47
Figure 10 Photograph view of Stewart Hall from Queen Street.	48
Figure 11 Stewart Hall coarse earthenware pot interior and exterior.	50
Figure 12 Stewart Hall mended coarse earthenware pot sherds.	51
Figure 13 Bank of Bermuda Car Park coarse earthenware Rim Sherd.	52
Figure 14 Map of West End Archaeological Sites.	54
Figure 15 Springfield coarse earthenware sherd (69AG54 CF).	56
Figure 16 Springfield Caribbean ware sherd (69AG45 AS).	56
Figure 17 Hog Bay, Hill House coarse earthenware sherd (Area 4, TP3).	59
Figure 18 Map of Millersville University Archaeological Sites.	60
Figure 19 Dickinson Store possible Caribbean ware sherd ER 114 (PC 2829).	62
Figure 20 Dickinson Store coarse earthenware sherd ER 117(PC 4623).	62
Figure 21 Dickinson Store coarse earthenware sherd ER 118 interior and exterior (PC 4068).	62
Figure 22 Various coarse earthenware sherds from the Kast/Bell Ruin Site.	64

INTRODUCTION

The lives of enslaved people are the focus of much archaeological and anthropological work as researchers seek to obtain an understanding of their communities, identities, and daily practices within the confines of the slavery system. Archaeologists focus on how tangible material artifacts reflected the identity of enslaved people, their belief systems, and the “negotiation” of social relationships among other enslaved people as well as with masters (Heath & Bennett 2000: 38, Armstrong & Kelly 2000: 369). This negotiation can be viewed through studies of low-fired coarse earthenwares procured or produced within the system of slavery through formal and informal trade networks among enslaved people.

The trade in low-fired coarse earthenware pottery, often called “Colonoware” in the American Colonies and “Caribbean ware” in the Caribbean, is one domain in which archaeologists have looked to understand social and economic relations among the people of the African Diaspora. Mark Hauser and Douglas Armstrong’s work on low-fired coarse earthenwares in the Caribbean, specifically St. John’s, calls for analyses and discussions of this type of pottery within a broader social context, one that considers the complexity of experiences and degrees of self sufficiency that enslaved Africans had in within and between networks to produce, trade, and use low-fired coarse earthenware pottery.

Using Hauser and Armstrong’s “multiscalar” lens of social and economic relations, this paper focuses on the 20 square mile island of Bermuda, a former British colony and current British territory, lying roughly 640 miles to the east of North Carolina

(see Figure 1). During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries enslaved Bermudians had opportunities to accumulate goods, such as low-fired coarse earthenware pottery, from foreign ports as they worked as sailors on Bermudian merchant vessels. Upon returning to the island with their goods, an established network of enslaved Bermudians moved these goods throughout the island.

This paper considers archaeological evidence from six previously excavated sites on the island where sherds of Colonoware and Afro-Caribbean pottery were recovered. Although the sherds excavated to date form a small data set (n=17), the fact that the pottery is found on sites spanning the east and west ends of the island point to a geographically wide spread demand for these low-fired coarse earthenwares, the intensity of which is still to be determined through further excavation.

The economic history of Bermuda is essential to understanding the trading opportunities that were available to enslaved Bermudians abroad. In 1684 Bermuda, originally under the administrative control of the Somers Island Company, transitioned to an English crown colony amid tensions over trade regulation and control of land (Jarvis 2010: 59-61). The island's economy shifted from a focus on agriculture which up to that point had been in competition with the Virginia Colony to produce tobacco. This economic shift marked a turn to the maritime trade as Bermuda's location placed it at "the crossroads of the Atlantic": most vessels traveling between Europe and the Caribbean came within 50 miles of the island (Jarvis 2002: 587). Bermudians themselves had knowledge of the sea and ship building as well as trading partners though out the

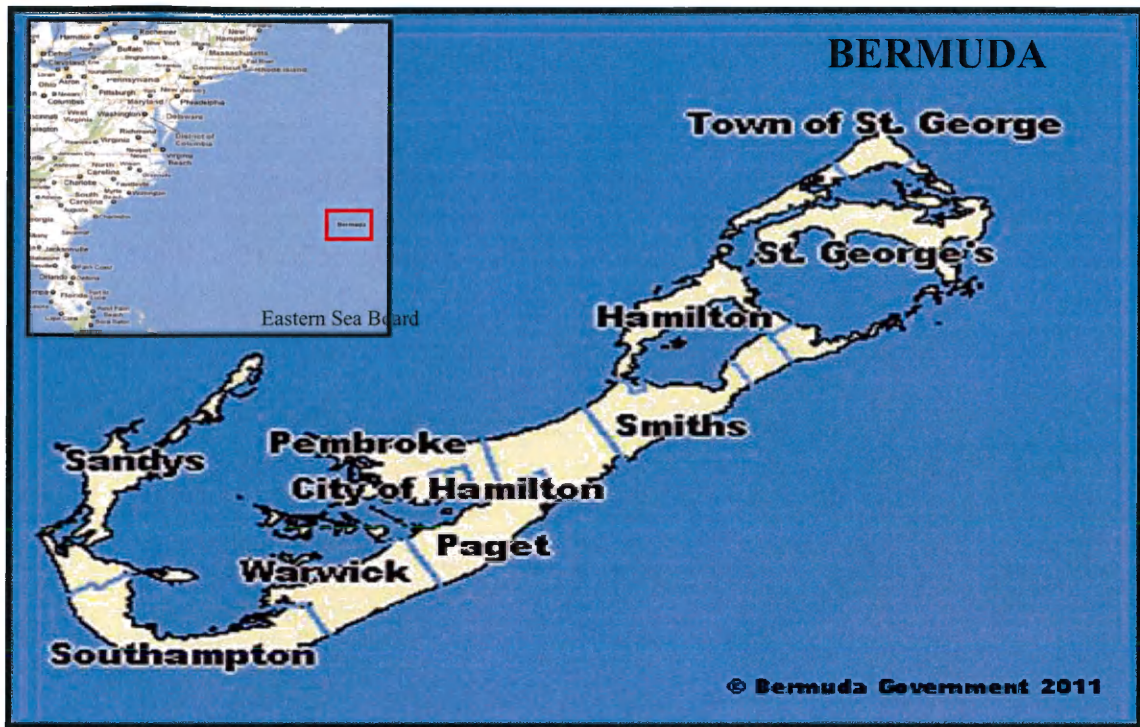


Figure 1 Map of Bermuda showing the island's relation to the Eastern Seaboard of the United States.



Figure 2 An enslaved Bermudian Boy working as a boat pilot (Jones 2004: 67).

Eastern Sea Board and the Caribbean. In this new merchant economy enslaved Bermudians often worked as crew members on Bermudian vessels (see Figure 2). Laboring aboard these ships provided enslaved Africans with a degree of freedom as they earned some wages for their hard work and had access to ports throughout the Caribbean and the Eastern seaboard of North America (Jarvis 2010: 107-109). Historical documents show items procured abroad along with other locally acquired goods were housed and re-sold or re-traded by black Bermudians operating in opposition to governmental laws, regulations, and monitoring that aimed to limit and suppress their economic activities (Maxwell 2009).

Through a combined consideration of archaeological assemblages, historical documents, and scholarly research on enslaved life in Bermuda, the presence of low-fired coarse earthenwares on Bermuda are analyzed here in terms of the social and economic relations of enslaved Bermudians on the island and abroad. In this analysis black Bermudians, both enslaved and free, are presented as active agents negotiating the condition of colonial slavery and racism. Similarly, they are also seen as active agents negotiating colonial society and its governmental laws and regulations through the creation and use of a variety of trade networks to acquire goods that were not otherwise available. This analysis will begin with an exploration of how low-fired coarse earthenware was brought to the island and then consider the importance of the pottery to the foodways practices of the enslaved people. This taste preference, or the accepting and most likely rejecting of objects (Stahl 2002), ultimately encouraged them to seek out low-fired coarse earthenwares from a great distance and with great effort.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Bermudian Slavery

Prior to permanent settlement, the island of Bermuda had a reputation among 16th and early 17th century mariners as being the treacherous “Isle of Devils” (Jones 2004: 10, Jarvis 2002: 587). Bermuda’s dangerous reefs and the woeful calls of wild roaming pigs caused many of ships to avoid the island on their journeys across the Atlantic. In 1603, however, a small fleet of Spanish ships were caught in a storm off Bermuda that caused one to run aground while the other three were destroyed (Packwood 1993: 1, Jones 2004: 10). The ship’s captain sent one “Black man of Spanish descent” to explore the unknown territory. This man, called Venturilla, was the first known black person to explore the island (Packwood 1993: 1). A few years later, as the island was being settled by the British, a great number of African-descended people began to arrive. This unique group of indentured and enslaved people was sought out for their expertise in industries which would prove to be essential to Bermuda’s growing economy.

Although the Spanish and others may have visited the island in the years before and after Venturilla set foot there, Bermuda was not permanently occupied until a massive storm wrecked the British ship *Sea Venture* off shore in 1609. These colonists were en route to Jamestown, Virginia, a struggling colony in desperate need of reinforcements and provisions. After spending some months on Bermuda prospering in the idyllic climate with plenty of wild food many of the *Sea Venture*’s passengers did not wish to leave. A few men chose to stay behind to establish a settlement as the others continued on to Jamestown on two newly constructed ships. Between 1612 and 1615 the

Virginia Company began to send more colonists to settle and fortify the island under the administrative control and organization of a “separate joint-stock venture”, the Somer Island Company (Jarvis 2002: 588).

The first groups of non-whites, including Africans and Native American people, were brought to Bermuda in 1616 for their pearl diving and tobacco curing skills.

Bermuda historians note that this group held the status of indentured servants and not slaves (Packwood 1993: 2, Jarvis 2002: 590). Around 1617 colony records begin to explicitly refer to persons sentenced to servitude as slaves. Packwood explains that at this time white laborers could even be forced into slavery for perceived bad behavior. Their position would change, however, when their behavior improved (Packwood 1993: 5). By the mid 1620's slavery was legalized by the company. At this time, the company turned to focus on economic success in the competitive world market and there was a great need for a stable, large workforce. To accomplish this, the Somer Island Company hired an agent solely in charge of purchasing and selling slaves for the company (Packwood 1993: 8). Africans in this initial group are may be considered African creoles following Ira Berlin's description of the same:

“They were multicultural, often multilingual, and substantially autonomous men and women drawn from various Atlantic coasts who were already well acquainted with European Culture. Although new to Bermuda, they were no strangers to the broad facets of the colonial society they joined there” (Jarvis 2010: 29).

Perhaps the type of knowledge and experience described by Jarvis provided enslaved Bermudians with a connection to other enslaved Africans they would later encounter on ocean voyages in Bermuda's young merchant economy.

Large scale plantations of the type found in the Caribbean and American Colonies could not be sustained in Bermuda. Attempts to grow sugar cane were undertaken in the early years of the Somer Island Company in hopes that the climate and fertile soil would yield competitive amounts of the crop (Packwood 1993:2). Packwood attributes the failure of sugar cane to frequent high winds on the island, small amount of suitable acreage, and a lack of specific agricultural knowledge on the part of the colonists (Packwood 1993: 2). By the late 17th century Bermuda's Somer Island Company dissolved as a result of failing agriculture and a wish for more independence in trading relationships. Michael Jarvis' work suggests that as a crown colony, Bermudians were finally able to act on the realization that merchant opportunities were far more profitable than agriculture (Jarvis 2002: 592). Bermudian merchants were now able to capitalize from "connecting emerging regional economies in North America with the wealthy sugar-producing islands of the Caribbean" (Jarvis 2002: 592). Their knowledge and use of raw materials throughout the "Atlantic Commons," which includes sites along the coasts of the Carolinas, Georgia and the Caribbean, allowed Bermudians to supplement island materials and expand their businesses (Jarvis 2010: 185-186). For example, Bermudians saw the potential of natural Bermuda cedar trees, which resist rot in sea water, in creating a new type of ship known as the Bermuda sloop (see Figure 3). The cedar gave the Bermuda sloop an exceptionally long life at sea while its design allowed for speed, easy maneuverability, and the ability to navigate shallow waters near sandbars and up rivers (Jarvis 2002: 594). The Bermuda sloop is the result of island shipwrights experimenting with Dutch and other ship designs to craft a boat that efficiently sailed at a



Figure 3 A Bermuda schooner and turtle catching (Jones 2004:57).

minimum angle relative to the wind (Jarvis 2010: 126). Development of the sloop along with newly established trade relationships and carrying ventures allowed Bermuda to quickly recover from its unsuccessful agricultural experiment.

As the turn to the sea expanded and Bermudian fleets increased in size and number, there was a new need for specialized labor. Bermudians turned to their enslaved workers who had previously been working in agricultural and domestic jobs to fill many of the specialized jobs within the developing merchant economy. “Blacks adapted to the economic shift quickly, learning to become whalers, pilots and sailors, who, with their white captains, would spend month or years at sea” (Jones 2004: 70). Jarvis adds that work as sawyers, joiners, caulkers, blacksmiths, and shipwrights were also undertaken by enslaved Bermudians (Jarvis 2002: 594). Many became crew members on Bermudian merchant ships, fisherman, pilots who had specialized knowledge needed to navigate the labyrinth of coral reefs surrounding the island, or dock and wharf workers loading and unloading ships (Packwood 1993: 19, 21).

Jarvis questions the risk white Bermudians took using an enslaved workforce aboard their sloops, as it seems that docking in many foreign ports would provide an opportunity for these men to run away to freedom (Jarvis 2002: 596). He focuses on understanding the relationships forged at home and the strength of the enslaved community, factors that ensured the return of enslaved sailors. Bermuda banned the importation of enslaved people in 1730 amid fears of an ever growing and possibly uncontrollable enslaved population (Jones 2004: 68). Although privateering ventures may have been accountable for a small number of enslaved arrivals after that time, the

enslaved population was mostly self-reproducing. Jarvis suggests the fall-off of new community members enabled the formation of a close knit community among the enslaved population fostered through kin ties (Jarvis 2002: 602). Strong family ties deterred enslaved sailors from fleeing the bonds of slavery once they set foot in a foreign port.

On the open sea enslaved Bermudians worked closely with white Bermudian sailors and captains in daily tasks aboard the ship. Again, Jarvis uses the layout and small size of the Bermudian sloop to argue that onboard whites and blacks were sleeping, eating, and working in close proximity to one another (Jarvis 2002: 604-605). For their work, enslaved Bermudian sailors earned partial wages that they used to clothe themselves. Wages were further used to trade for small items acquired abroad such as “brass, pewter, platt, bongraces, capes, etc.” (Jarvis 2002: 606). As will be discussed further below, these items were brought back to Bermuda and re-traded within the black community.

Close working and living conditions of white and black mariners extended beyond ship decks to the home island itself. “One would be hard-pressed to find a Bermudian sloop crew that did not share kinship, household, or neighborhood connections in the eighteenth century” (Jarvis 2002: 604). Being a small island, black and white Bermudians lived in close proximity to one another and interacted daily. Edward Chappell’s work on Bermuda architecture supports this fact. Chappell explains that the nature of work performed by enslaved Bermudians required them to live in their master’s homes, on call night and day for cooking, cleaning, and other domestic tasks (Chappell

2010:70). One result was that household slaves slept in passage ways, closets, and even within the private bedrooms of whites (Chappell 2010:70). It was not until the late eighteenth century that new Bermudian homes were constructed with separate kitchens that could also serve as living space for enslaved Africans. Wealth coming to the island during the American Revolutionary War, gave white Bermudians the means to not only greatly expand their living space but to refine it or separate it as far as possible from the production, service side of the home (Chappell 2010: 75-76). But even at this time, many homes still housed slaves in cellars underneath and separate from the main living space. As these spaces were often used for storage and housing the conditions were far from the comforts afforded those living above.

“Such rooms were poorly lighted and ventilated. Most were partially cut into the bedrock, so the floors were often uneven and walls too irregular to keep clean. Coarse plaster was sometimes ineffectively smeared onto the excavated face of stone and earth, and low ceilings with minimally hewn framing left exposed” (Chappell 2010: 72).

Furthermore, these cellars were unheated and lit by a small window usually barred from intruders and any would-be escapees. Enslaved Bermudians did, however, possibly alter the look of the cellar to suit their taste through brightly colored lime washed walls (Chappell 2010: 73).

Beyond the household, white and black Bermudians, enslaved and free, also formed connections on land through daily economic interactions around the island. These interactions, however, were not always equal and civil. Bermuda historians have uncovered detailed information on the economic activities of free and enslaved people of color on the island starting in the early company years of the seventeenth century through

a focus on colonial laws and court cases. Research by Cyril Outerbridge Packwood suggests that the colony's laws reflect a need to control and monitor any and all economic interactions undertaken by enslaved or free black Bermudians. These acts were renewed and extended time and again to limit the movement and economic success of these people. For example, in the early seventeenth century enslaved and free black Bermudians operated an informal business of rowing white customers across Bailey's Bay to St. George's when the Coney Island Ferry was closed on Sundays. According to Packwood this was a lucrative Sunday business for blacks who collected a small fee from their passengers for each crossing (Packwood 1993: 7). Masters and the colonial government, did not, however support the great economic success of these people and an act, "against the ill keeping of the ferry", was put into effect to restrict or end this black business. Packwood notes that any blacks continuing the service across the bay would be found guilty of extorting their passengers and severely whipped (Packwood 1993: 7). This ferry act was one of several brought against enslaved and free Bermudians in 1623.

Another such act, "An Act to restrayne the insolencies of Negroes", was the first law anywhere specifically targeting blacks, especially their movements and economic pursuits. After fears arose among white Bermudians regarding stolen food stuffs and the movement of blacks through the island with weapons, the Second Assembly decided that black Bermudians could not "buy or sell, barter or exchange tobacco or any other produce for goods, without the knowledge and consent of their master" (Packwood 1993: 7). Similar acts followed in 1708 aimed at restraining enslaved Bermudians from stealing fruit and selling it to public taverns and drinking houses (Packwood 1993: 13). If caught,

enslaved Bermudians were walked throughout the tract of land on which the crime was committed and whipped three times every forty paces (Packwood 1993: 13). White Bermudians guilty of the same crime would be fined. Lastly, an act of 1779 specifically targeted the trading or selling of any goods or merchandise by any free or enslaved black, Mustee, or Mulatto person (Packwood 1993: 119-120). Again, this was a continued attempt to dissuade the economic activities and any possible success and wealth that people of color might earn.

Clarence Maxwell uses texts documenting slave conspiracies, uprisings, and escape attempts to understand the structure of Bermuda slavery. Specifically, he considers how these events reflected the true condition and hardships imposed by the institution as well as how enslaved people were dealt with in the legal system. Maxwell describes one late eighteenth century court case in which an inventory was taken of the belongings of a woman named “Negro Bess” who was accused of stealing shirts from one Captain Anthony Atwood. Colonial authorities were permitted the right to forcibly enter and search any dwelling of an enslaved Bermudian suspected of theft. The extensive inventory taken of her property included items such as silver utensils, silk clothing, Damask napkins, Holland shirts, handkerchiefs, aprons, waist coats, pants, calico cloth, buttons, stockings, pillow cases, lace, and sewing thread (Maxwell 2009: 150-151). Interestingly, it was noted in the court records that the husband of “Negro Bess” was an enslaved sailor suggesting he likely supplied some of the items in her inventory. Maxwell concludes that this link to the outside world would have given “Negro Bess” an advantage if she was trading or selling her goods at the local market (Maxwell 2009:

151). While the court found “Negro Bess” innocent of stealing Captain Atwood’s shirts, they decided her property was likely stolen and perhaps confiscated it from her although this action is not explicitly stated in the record.

These laws show that enslaved Bermudians were actively participating in ventures that earned them money or goods with which they could trade for or buy desired items or perhaps over time, their freedom. Enslaved sailors were also a vital part of this trade network, seen especially in the case of “Negro Bess”, as they had the “opportunity of establish commercially valuable connections across the Atlantic world” which likely supported not only the spread of goods but also the spread of information and knowledge (Maxwell 2009).

Enslaved Africans in the Market Economy

Independent participation in markets and trade was one way that enslaved Africans in the colonies and Caribbean could share in “colonial wealth” (Beckles 1999: 140). Examples of economic participation speak to the complexity of the experiences of enslaved Africans in the colonies and the Caribbean. Enslaved Africans were self-sufficient and self-reliant in many ways in order to provide themselves and their families not only with staples such as food but items such as ceramic and finery. In Boston in 1745, for example, free and enslaved black sailors reported low wages could not cover the cost of “meat, drink and lodging ashore” (Bolster 1997: 86). It was this lack of sufficient payment as well as perhaps a desire for certain goods unattainable at home that led free and enslaved sailors, like those from Bermuda, into small scale trade within ports. Historian W. Jeffrey Bolster cites one famous example of former slave Olaudah

Equiano who, during a voyage in the 1760's, recorded the purchase of a glass tumbler in St. Eustatius which was later traded and re-traded for more tumblers as well as a bottle of gin at great profit (Bolster 1997: 86).

In the continental colonies enslaved Africans and Native Americans are known to have participated in the economy through market trading and store purchases (Fennell 2011). Ceramics may have even been manufactured with distinct characteristic for consumption at market that differed from Colonoware used on a plantation:

“Market bound colonoware may exhibit a greater tendency to mimic attributes of European pottery forms, and to have better burnishing of the surfaces to create a vessel that is more aesthetically engaging and easier to clean. Colonoware produced for market trade would more likely have uniform consistency in production quality and vessel attributes due to repetition of manufacturing efforts and market feed-back through valuation in trade” (Fennell 2011: 22-23).

Leland Ferguson's book *Uncommon Ground* he argues that the Virginia Colonoware manufactured by Native Americans for market sale was of exceptional quality (Ferguson 1992: 49). In fact, these wares were sold in town markets as well as directly to consumers on plantations (Fennell 2011, Joseph 2007). Although Ferguson notes Colonoware purchases by plantation owners, there is no indication that they were also the users of the pottery. It is plausible that the pottery was bought for use by enslaved Africans.

For those enslaved Africans living in urban areas or working aboard ships, the waterfront became their market. At many ports enslaved Africans had the opportunity to interact with many types of sailors including freemen and runaways. In “The Many-Headed Hydra,” Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker describe eighteenth century waterfront taverns in port cities like New York where this underground economy was

active. “The waterfront taverns were the linchpins of the waterfront economy, the places where soldiers, sailors, slaves, indentured servants, and apprentices met to sell illegally appropriated goods and pad their meager or nonexistent wages” (Linebaugh & Rediker 2000: 181). Enslaved Africans working on Bermudian ships would have encountered places like these waterfront taverns where small trades could be made and goods brought back to the island on board the ship.

In the Caribbean, especially on the British islands of Jamaica, Monserrat, and Antigua, a tradition of informal trade networks as well as regular Sunday markets had been established (Singleton 2006: 277). On Cuba, Singleton has used documentary records to construct lists of the items that were purchased by enslaved Africans at plantation stores or from traveling peddlers. Cloth, garments, crockery, beads, crosses, guano, palm fronds, and cooking pots were purchased by the enslaved Africans in Cuba (Singleton 2006: 278-279). Singleton’s work, however, does not assume that these items were what enslaved Africans truly desired. Instead, she suggests that the items available could represent what planters or peddlers thought enslaved Africans would prefer. Instead, these items were all that was available to them (Singleton 2006: 279).

In eighteenth century Jamaica local markets were important parts of the economic and social life of the island (Hauser 2008:41). In the case of low-fired coarse earthenware, known as Yabba ware on Jamaica, a plantation potter would sell batches of completed pots to a middle man who would carry the pieces to an urban market. These ceramics are “made by peoples who employed skills brought from Africa in combination with skills introduced by Europeans and Amerindians” (Hauser 2008: 108). As in

Bermuda, where coarse earthenware may differ greatly depending where it was obtained, Jamaican Yabba wares are also quite varied. Over time rim types and glazing changed according to popularity and market demands (Hauser 2008: 152). Closer study of the inclusions found in Yabba wares show that potters preferred a type of clay found on one area of the island (Hauser 2007: 299). The case of Yabba wares in Jamaica shows how low-fired coarse earthenwares were procured and changed depending on style popularity over time.

Market Tastes

Research in the American colonies has considered what kinds of taste enslaved Africans exhibited on plantations, as consumers at stores and markets. In Virginia a focus has been turned toward store purchases that enslaved Africans regularly made with money that was earned working extra hours or doing small jobs (Smart Martin 1996: 10, Smart Martin 2000: 201). Enslaved Africans may have been purchasing non-utilitarian items that were desired and not provided by the planters. Smart Martin argues that the purchases made from merchants at small Virginia stores did not change the social structure that enslaved Africans were cast into. Instead it “created new social performances in an economic setting” (Smart Martin 2000: 215). It is unknown whether formal stores accommodated enslaved Africans on Bermuda. The case of “Negro Bess”, discussed above, suggests informal distribution or storage of goods in personal space was typical on the island.

Items of personal adornment, such as those listed above, were important in the American Colonies and the Caribbean as material reflections of personal or community

identity. These small objects demonstrate how preference and style reflected personal taste and reveal information about the wearer to the wider enslaved community (Heath 1999: 50). Many of the examples described in this section reveal the importation and trade of adornment objects among enslaved Africans; a distinction must be made between these goods and low-fired coarse earthenwares. As will be discussed in the next section, this pottery was sought out and used in daily foodways practices likely due to their technomic properties.

However, the studies show the existence of taste preference among enslaved Africans. Taste, using Ann Stahl's work in the Banda area of West Africa, provides insights into the shaping and application of preference within the colonial market economy. Stahl looks to the past as well as the "colonial entanglements" of the period to understand the acceptance, rejection, and recontextualization of "exotic goods" (Stahl 2002: 827). She finds that Banda acceptance and rejection of certain European goods were based on earlier practices of taste (Stahl 2002: 841). However, this taste was not static. Europeans, upon initial failure in the area, changed their tactics for market success by adapting to Banda taste which in turn transformed them once again (Stahl 2002: 841).

This work is applicable to Smart Martin's work above and the use of low-fired coarse earthenwares within the slavery system as both types of goods, adornment and ceramic, were chosen over others following a taste genre that was established in the past, perhaps from African practices, as well as reformed and reapplied in the colonial present. Adornment objects and cloth were bought in rejection of plantation owner clothing

allotments. Low-fired coarse earthenware, especially on Bermuda, was imported as a direct rejection of metal or European ceramic vessels for foodways practices.

Many studies have shown that enslaved Africans had the opportunity and the desire to trade for goods they wanted or needed. Whether engaging in market trade using surplus food grown to supplement plantation rations or purchasing baskets and calabash from country peddlers, enslaved Africans were successful throughout the Caribbean and American colonies in “maintaining informal and social networks that facilitated exchange” (Hauser 2008: 7). This success was not always beneficial, however, for the masters and planters. Hilary Beckles argues that “since slave owners considered the slaves’ subordination critical to all systems of control, they sought to assert their dominance in all economic relations, no matter how petty” (Beckles 1999:140). Therefore, the best evidence that enslaved Africans engaged in trade and barter on Bermuda and other islands can be seen in the types of regulations that specifically forbid their economic activities as explained above.

LOW-FIRED COARSE EARTHENWARES IN THE AMERICAS

The presence of low-fired coarse earthenware pottery on Bermuda allows for continued discussions of the wares beyond earlier debates over the ethnicity of makers or markers of traditional survivals. Instead, the importation of the pottery to Bermuda through informal trade networks highlights the social and economic relationships that were created, maintained, and negotiated by enslaved Bermudians throughout the Atlantic Commons.

Low-fired coarse earthenwares have presented a challenge to archaeologists due to their highly varied attributes in manufacture, treatment, and decoration. In this way low-fired coarse earthenwares, although containing the term “ware” in name, do not share a specific “set of fundamental attributes” (Gifford 1960: 343). Practitioners of the type-variety system of ceramic analysis, for example, stress classification into four major categories (ware, group, type, and variety) in order to understand sequence and chronological development of a certain pottery (Sabloff and Smith 1969: 278-279). As will be discussed further below, low-fired coarse earthenwares vary in all categories of the type-variety system depending on geographic region, available local raw materials, and the unique social context from which they were produced. Hauser and DeCorse in their discussion of low-fired coarse earthenwares throughout the Atlantic world argue the unifying factor among this pottery is not “method of manufacture, design and decoration, or even form and function but the association or potential association with African diaspora populations (Hauser and DeCorse 2003: 67). For the purposes of this study I will use the term “low-fired coarse earthenwares” as an umbrella term for the pottery but

refer to “Colonoware”, from the American colonies, and “Caribbean low-fired earthenwares” to distinguish regional pottery. Furthermore, terms such as “Yabba”, “Afro-Caribbean ware” and “Criollo” may also be used within the specific context of a study that has defined regionally specific low-fired coarse earthenware as such.

Tracing the history of Colonoware in the field of historical archaeology since the early 1960’s, when it was first identified, and comparing its typology and study to that of other low-fired coarse earthenwares provides a understanding of how ideas regarding this pottery have changed within the field and how those ideas have shaped new research questions.

The Colonoware Debate

Before the late 1970’s historical archaeologists studying Colonoware from contexts within the American Colonies were divided on interpreting its origins. Colonoware was first named “Colono-Indian ware” by Ivor Noel Hume in 1962 who found archaeological evidence of handmade earthenware in eighteenth and nineteenth century contexts at sites on the Pamunkey, Chicahominy, and Mattaponi reservations in Virginia (Hume 1962, Mauer et al 1999: 84, Deetz 1996: 236). Colono-Indian ware was initially characterized by production from local clay together with the use of Native American pottery technology including burnishing and scraping surface treatments as well as wide range of surface colors from yellow to black suggesting “poorly controlled” firing environments. The ware also mimicked European body forms (Heath 1988: 15). From this evidence Hume argued that Colono-Indian ware was made by Native American potters to sell to enslaved Africans and English colonists (Heath 1988: 15, Deetz 1996:

236, Singleton & Bograd 2000: 5). James Deetz later clarified the characteristics of Chesapeake Colono-Indian wares by refining the description of paste color to a range from grey to brown, by specifying unglazed surfaces, and by listing common European vessel types mimicked, such as pipkins, milk pans, porringers, punch bowls, chamber pots, and teapots (Deetz 1996: 236).

Hume's work was closely followed by Lewis Binford's study of Native American pottery from Southeastern Virginia in 1965. Binford's research created an early typology for three distinct types of Virginian Colono-Indian wares from five sites linked to the Nottoway, Meherrin, and Weanock groups dating between 1670 and 1760 (Binford 1965: 78, 85). His typology stressed temper, common body forms, body color, and geographic distribution. He divided these ceramics into two main types, Courtland and Warekeck, depending on temper; other characteristics defined subtypes. Sherds from the Courtland series were marked by silt and sand temper with a gray to light cream/buff color while Warekeck sherds were constructed with shell temper and had a dark gray to white gray color (Binford 1965: 78, 83). Binford turns to pre-historical and contact era data to suggest that the Weanock group, producers of Warekeck ware, originated from near the James River where shell was readily available as a tempering material; reliance on shell temper was continued as the group spread out geographically (Binford 1965: 85). The Courtland series was further divided into burnished and plain wares. Additional statistical analysis determined that the three types were not only produced by different populations but also at distinct periods of time, suggesting a sequence that may be derived from the

data. In the ninety year period covered in Binford's study a shift from Courtland plain to Courtland burnished with scalloped lipped bowls over time.

Binford compared the Courtland sherds in his study to Colonoware from the Carolinas excavated by Stanley South to determine if similarities existed over greater distances or if types and styles were locally bound. His findings showed that although Virginia and Carolina Colonoware shared a fine silt temper they differed in vessel form and decoration suggesting distinct preferences in these two characteristics according to region (Binford 1965: 85). Further discussions on the social context of Colono-Indian ware brought up early questions linking the pottery to relationships between Native Americans and Europeans as well as to possible changes in Native American foodways. The presence of the ware on sites occupied by Europeans allows for consideration of its use by that group, as well as the trade relationship between the two groups in which the ware may have been produced in distinct forms for trade versus for use within Native American domestic contexts (Binford 1965: 86). Body forms may signal more than this trade connection, however; use of Colono-Indian cooking vessels with European body forms at Native American domestic sites suggests a shift in cooking technology from open fire to hearth (Binford 1965: 86).

Colonoware was considered exclusively in the context of Native American production until the late 1970's and 1980's when archaeologists, especially in South Carolina, began considering other makers of the ware (Deetz 1996: 238). Deetz's *In Small Things Forgotten* outlines the realization that the presence of enslaved people was the common link between sites where Colonoware was recovered (Deetz 1996: 238).

Specifically, he cites South and Polhemus' work in South Carolina and Tennessee, respectively, as the basis for conclusions of African American manufacture (Deetz 1996: 238-239). Deetz identifies three key elements of Colonoware supporting the idea of shared makers of the ware. First, the pottery was recovered from areas with close association with plantations slavery. Second, it was developed parallel to the establishment of enslaved populations in Virginia and South Carolina. Lastly, there is a similarity, especially among Colonoware from South Carolina, to Ghanaian and Nigerian vessels (Deetz 1996: 238-239).

Leland Ferguson's influential work also linked the ware to enslaved African producers and users in colonial South Carolina. These findings changed conversations within the field towards considerations of how this piece of material culture was linked to the sharing of knowledge, cultural influences, and cultural identity (Singleton 1999: 6). Ferguson, studying assemblages of Virginia Colonoware, set out to determine the place of production by considering the fragility of the sherds. He concluded that such pottery would not have survived transport from a Native American settlement to the plantation, so it was therefore plantation made. He concludes that if the pottery is plantation made it was made by enslaved Africans because they outnumbered Native Americans on plantations. Since Europeans did not have a "strong tradition of hand built, open-fired pottery" they were not active in its production (Ferguson 1992: 44, 46). These new conclusion did not exclude all Native American production but, rather, extended its manufacture to include enslaved Africans on plantations (Deetz 1996: 242).

By the 1990's, archaeologists began to agree that Colonoware likely reflected both Native American and traditional African pottery styles and was most likely made by both groups (Samford 1996:103, Singleton 1999: 9, Deetz 1999: 43). At the same time it was suggested that research focusing solely on typologies of the ware tended to focus on attempts to determine the ethnicity of its makers instead of addressing the artifact in its dynamic colonial context (Singleton & Bograd 2000: 4, 8-9). Today, the ware is considered a "syncretic" or an "intercultural" object that lends itself to studies that consider the cultural processes under which it was created where people and knowledge blended through communities, creating new pottery forms (Singleton & Bograd 2000: 4, Fennell 2010: 22).

From its first identification in 1962 archaeologists faced the task of defining and characterizing a highly variable ware. Early typologies from Virginia pointed towards locally specific types produced for local communities from locally available raw materials. Further research from South Carolina clouded the definition of the ware as enslaved Africans as well as Native Americans were involved in its production. At this point, the definition of Colonoware had to expand in order to encompass the multitude of producers, users, physical characteristics, and means of distribution all linked to it. Therefore, Ferguson and others consider Colonoware a "category" instead of a "type" distinguished by its hand built, low fired nature (Ferguson 1992: 19, Heath 1988: 21).

Recent work on South Carolina Colonoware is focused on reconsidering river deposits of intact Colonoware bowls marked with the Bakongo cosmogram symbol that were previously interpreted by Ferguson as evidence of the beginning threads of an

“early African American religion” (Ferguson 1992: 115-116). This early religion had a foundation in African religious ideas centering on the importance of water and the cyclical nature of the sun as well as of life. Reinterpretations of these ceramics question their actual role in ritual and instead posit a hypothesis regarding the large scale manufacture of Colonoware for market sale (Joseph 2007: 16). This hypothesis suggests that the river deposit of the pottery occurred when a canoe, carrying a large quantity of identical vessels, capsized in the river on the way to market in Charleston (Crane 1993). The hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that the marked Colonoware bowls were also found on terrestrial sites and from refuse deposits meaning their sole use for ritual is unsubstantiated (Joseph 2007: 16). Joseph proposes that Colonoware typology in the region should be reconsidered to include “Market Wares”, Colonoware made in plantation villages for sale at market, and “Village Wares”, Colonoware made in plantation villages for use on the plantation (Joseph 2007: 17). Research on urban Charleston domestic sites from the mid-eighteenth century has shown that Colonoware, examined through Neutron activation analysis, is derived from many clay sources instead of a single clay source from perhaps a family owned plantation. This suggests that Colonoware from multiple plantation sites was traded by enslaved Africans for their own use within the Charleston market (Joseph 2007: 18).

As will be discussed later, looking beyond categorizations of low-fired coarse earthenware and accepting its shared production by Native Americans and enslaved Africans is essential. Considerations of available local raw materials, non-European ceramic technology, and pottery distribution allow archaeologists to shift their focus to

the significance of this pottery in the lives of people as well as the social connections that made its trade and production possible.

Caribbean Low-fired Coarse Earthenwares

Pottery similar to low-fired coarse earthenware recovered from sites on the eastern seaboard of the United States is also found in the Caribbean. The Caribbean pottery classified as “non-European, coarse earthenware” is characterized by attributes similar to Colonoware such as hand building and “non-kiln” environment firing (Heath 1988: 146, 147). However, these Caribbean low-fired coarse earthenwares were also, at times, produced on a potting wheel and may have one or more painted, glazed or slipped surfaces (Hauser & Armstrong 1999: 84). This pottery is found throughout many of the Caribbean Islands such as Jamaica (Hauser 2008, Armstrong 1985), St. Eustatius (Heath 1988), St. John (Hauser & Armstrong 1999), and San Juan (Solis Magaña 1999) to name a few. As with Colonoware, archaeologists are moving past simple typologies to understand the social context of the pottery and how it can be used to answer research questions about enslaved life, inter-island networks, urban versus rural landscapes, and relationships between different ethnic groups.

In early research by Douglas Armstrong at the Jamaican plantation Drax Hall, the focus turns away from a search for African continuities in the pottery. Instead, Armstrong turns towards a greater understanding of the developing “distinct Afro-Jamaican cultural system marked by elements of continuity and systems of change” through study of foodways within the enslaved community (Armstrong 1985: 261). Armstrong describes the bowl and pot-shaped vessels, known as “Yabbas” on Jamaica, as coil-built, sand

tempered, smoothed, burnished, and glazed greenish before firing in a low heat environment that produced a banded cross-section within vessel walls (Armstrong 1985: 271). Yabba pots and bowls are compared with European flatware plates that were also available on the plantation during slavery and into the period of emancipation. It was found that during the nineteenth century when European bowls were beginning to be produced less frequently “in response to the use patterns of the dominant Euro-American populations” (Armstrong 1985: 279). During this period production of Yabba bowls increased suggesting enslaved Jamaicans may have been actively compensating for decreased availability of previously used bowl types and retaining preference for bowls to maintain established shared food ways (Armstrong 1985: 279, 280). Armstrong’s study considers Yabba ware in the context of an active, choice-driven enslaved life where the community sought out, through internal market exchange, specific ceramics to maintain an established foodways tradition.

Contemporaneous research by Barbara Heath also approached Caribbean low-fired earthenwares by focusing on potters rather than classification (Heath 1988: 31-32). Heath pays attention to enslaved African potters while acknowledging that Amerindian potters were also active during the colonial period. Heath states that (as in North America), some Caribbean research has focused on distinguishing Amerindian pottery from enslaved African pottery produced during similar periods but this research has not yielded any conclusive results (Heath 1988: 32). Instead, ethnographic and documentary evidence points towards a stronger tradition of enslaved Africans as the makers of Caribbean low-fired earthenwares. As mentioned above in the discussion of Colonoware,

Caribbean low-fired earthenwares also vary greatly by region. For example, Heath cites the work of David R. Watters in Montserrat which defined a type of “Afro-Caribbean ware” that is coil built, grey to brown in color, undecorated, fired in a reducing environment, and has a quartz composite paste. In contrast, pottery excavated in St. Croix is hand mold built and is black to brown in color (Heath 1988: 30-31). These research projects again show the ways in which Caribbean low-fired earthenwares, like Colonoware, often do not fit a single set of typological characteristics as their nature depends on locally available clays and variable potting knowledge. More relevant information about social life and economic systems can be gained by approaching these hand-built earthenwares in an anthropological fashion.

Hauser and Armstrong identify several problems with previous studies of low-fired coarse earthenwares. One of the most serious is the tendency to homogenize enslaved communities, the African ceramic traditions of which they likely have knowledge, and the way the pottery was produced and distributed (Hauser & Armstrong 1999: 72). Hauser and Armstrong argue that archaeologists need to look at the enslaved African experience in the Americas in a new way. The knowledge, technology, and foodways brought to plantations or other slave settings were varied as enslaved communities in the New World were heterogeneous mixes of people from distinct locations on the African continent whose histories were complex. Turning to Africa, the authors point out that many archaeologists have portrayed African cultures, especially those in West Africa, as static by not accurately describing and exploring the possibility for varied pottery traditions and technology within even a small geographic area (Hauser

& Armstrong 1999: 72). The ubiquity of low fired earthenwares on sites of the African Diaspora should be interpreted in relation to larger anthropological questions regarding social and economic relations among people on local levels and among distant communities that allow for or encourage the production and distribution of low-fired earthenwares. Merely searching for a “shared pottery tradition and heritage” distracts from important questions that seek to uncover the complexities of interaction among people and their many influences (Hauser & Armstrong 1999: 74).

It is important to note that low-fired coarse earthenware, in the case of Bermuda, could not have been produced locally as no useable clay is available for production. Geological studies suggest that any large deposits of clay soils on Bermuda are lithified in rock-like paleosols commonly 18 to 75 meters underground, making them inaccessible to potential potters (Herwitz et al 1996: 23,390). A few small pockets of clay do exist near the surface in certain areas of the island, such as around Spittal Pond on the south shore. These deposits, however, contain such small amounts of clay that contemporary potters on the island are only able to excavate enough for slip decorations, not an entire vessel (Faulkner 2012: Pers. Comm.).

Functional Advantages of Low-Fired Coarse Earthenwares

In addition to understanding the mechanisms that brought low-fired earthenwares to the island of Bermuda, this project seeks to gain some understanding as to why these ceramics were sought out, as its importance was significant enough to spark its small scale importation from distant ports. Did these low-fired coarse earthenwares fill a utilitarian function European vessels could not?

Physical attributes are important in understanding how the wares would have functioned as cook ware or storage ware. Colonoware storage vessels, being porous in nature and unglazed in manufacture, may have been desired for cooling effects—for example, as water evaporated from within a storage jar. Ferguson also argues that porosity of a vessel can be beneficial in cooking as well as cooling. He explains: “Because moisture seeps through the walls of earthenware pots and evaporates, such pots cook at lower temperatures than pots made of metal or more highly fired ceramics” (Ferguson 1992: 105). This allows the pot itself to heat differently, perhaps leaving rims cooler to the touch and therefore easier to remove by hand from a fire. Also, the low temperature allows for a long simmer instead of a boil, which Ferguson argues is a part of cooking techniques used within Native American and West African traditions (Ferguson 1992: 105). Furthermore, an historic account from 1841 of cooking with Catawba made Colonoware, states that this type of pottery was considered superior by many women (Ferguson 1992: 90). It appears that some dishes, especially soups such as okra soup, were considered to taste the most authentic and correct if cooked in an earthenware pot. Other cooking vessels would not provide the same complexity of flavor.

Other, more general studies, also investigate the link between attributes of ceramics and preferred function. One such study is concerned with how the selectivity of ceramic producers and consumers influences the technology used to create cooking wares (Tite et al 2001: 317). The authors examine vessel wall strength and efficient heat distribution to understand the trade offs of these characteristics. A thicker and therefore stronger pot, for example, may be preferred because it is able to withstand impact and

rapid changes in temperature during different cooking episodes (Tite et al 2001:302, 317). A vessel's "increased strength served 'to extend vessel use life, broaden vessel function, and facilitate the expansion of trade and exchange networks'" (Neupert 1994 in Tite et al 2001: 318). On the other hand, thinner vessel walls allow for even heat distribution which promotes better or perhaps faster cooking times (Tite et al 2001: 319). These thin walls, however, decrease the thermal shock resistance of the vessel making it susceptible to cracking during heating or cooling. While a strong vessel may be preferred this may be given up for the advantages of quick cooking.

As mentioned above, Colonoware is defined by and often characterized by its manufacture from locally available clay sources and tempers. The use of specific materials in the production of this pottery may, however, be more complex than a simple reliance on the most readily available raw materials. Temper choice, for example, may have had a technological significance. Tite et al refers to a study of Moundville area ceramics by Steponatis in which temper change over time from plant fiber to crushed shell aided in making the ceramics ideal for cooking (Tite et al 2001: 319). The "platy shell particles were more effective at stopping crack propagation than rounded or angular quartz sand or grog particles" which increased the higher thermal shock resistance of the ceramic (Tite et al 2001: 319). This study could be used to suggest that Colonoware from places like Virginia or South Carolina may have been constructed with shell temper instead of sand for technological reasons similar to those found in the Moundville area.

The emphasis on the function of low-fired coarse earthenwares for cooking raises questions pertaining to the identity of the people for whom the food was being prepared

and shared out of these vessels. As will be evident in the next major section of this paper, the use of this pottery solely by enslaved Bermudians is not always clear, but in a few cases is distinctly associated with them. Researchers of low-fired coarse earthenware must contend with the issue that enslaved Africans prepared food for themselves as well as for white plantation owners in these vessels, and that white plantation owners apparently also acquired and used the ware themselves. Elizabeth Scott's work at Nina Plantation in Louisiana, for example, addresses this through a comparison of a series of outbuildings that served as slave quarters for the manor house. Scott was able to show that there were similarities between the diets of the inhabitants of the slave quarter and manor house in terms of meats eaten during the antebellum period (Scott 2001: 674). Specifically, while both groups' diets centered on domestic species, the plantation owners ate mainly beef and chicken while enslaved Africans ate mainly pork (Scott 2001: 674). Scott also suggests that some dishes, more familiar to the enslaved community, may have also been served at the manor house to the planter family. Singleton and Bograd would agree with this conclusion as they argue that on smaller plantations owners and laborers may not have only worked and lived close to each other but also shared "one pot meals" (Singleton & Bograd 2000:14). Furthermore, Colonoware pots were chosen for a range of benefits:

"Clay vessels had many practical advantages over iron pots and other kinds of cookware. The clay vessels were inexpensive and easy to produce. Food cooked slowly in them, a necessity for soups, stews, spoon bread, and other popular dishes. This versatility may explain the presence of colonowares in the kitchens of planter families as well as in the cabins of slaves" (Singleton & Bograd 2000: 15).

In this case it appears that as with the production of low-fired coarse earthenware, use is also determined by specific case and likely varied by environment whether on a small or large plantation located in the Colonies or the Caribbean, or in urban and rural settings.

Although direct information on enslaved foodways in Bermuda is limited, two studies of enslaved domestic sites do exist. These site studies consider subsistence strategies, food consumption, and vessel patterns among enslaved Bermudians. In the first, an assemblage from a late eighteenth, early nineteenth century slave cottage at Orange Valley near the capital, Hamilton, was studied in an attempt to understand the “quality of life” of enslaved Bermudians on the site (Bellhorn 1992: 26). While the presence of low-fired coarse earthenware is not confirmed in the study, the ceramic analysis shows a higher proportion of fine quality wares than might be expected for enslaved people (Bellhorn 1992: 55). Using George Miller’s system for determining cost value of nineteenth century ceramics, Bellhorn finds a greater amount of fine quality plates and teawares instead of bowls (Bellhorn 1992: 55). Within the faunal assemblage, Bellhorn shows that half of the assemblage is comprised of fish while the other half contains livestock. Although nearly no wild game was found, recovered firearm parts suggest the enslaved Bermudians at Orange Valley may have been hunting (Bellhorn 1992: 59).

As at Orange Valley, the faunal remains from Hill House, a slave dwelling near Hog Bay in the west end discussed below, also reflect a dependence on fish by enslaved Bermudians. Sondra Jarvis’ analysis, however, shows a higher amount of fish (73.5%) in the assemblage followed by livestock and birds (Jarvis 1997: 38). To account for this she

suggests that the turn to the maritime economy freed up time for those enslaved Bermudians not working on ships or in shipbuilding industries to fish (Jarvis 1997: 65). Fishing is a dependable subsistence strategy because of migration patterns and currents around the island bringing a varied amount of species close to shore (Jarvis 1997: 66). Comparing the finds to the Tucker House assemblage in St. George's, Jarvis shows that sea bass was a consistent type of fish that both gentry and enslaved people were eating (Jarvis 1997: 70).

Although these two studies do not speak directly to the preparation of food types, they do establish that dishes among enslaved Bermudians most likely contained fish. Perhaps this fish could be part of a soup or stew prepared in a coarse earthenware pot for both white and black Bermudian consumption as fish consumption is likely widespread across the island. At Orange Valley, however, plates occur more frequently than bowls suggesting another type of preparation for fish.

Low-Fired Coarse Earthenwares Beyond Foodways

The most recent discussion of low-fired coarse earthenwares in South Carolina, by Ferguson, goes beyond foodways to understand the role and importance of low-fired earthenwares in enslaved African medicine. Ferguson's ethnographic work in Sierra Leone links the continued use of similar ceramic vessels with the preparation and administration of "traditional medicines" in the colonial period (Ferguson 2007:5). In Sierra Leone small low-fired coarse earthenware jars and bowls have continually been chosen and used over metal, plastic, and other "high-fired ceramic" vessels due to their "efficacy in traditional medicine" (Ferguson 2007: 5). Ferguson continues that the makers

of this low-fired coarse earthenware are seen, within their communities, to have a unique ability to transform clay, an element coming from the earth, into a cultural artifact that “reinforced group solidarity” (Ferguson 2007: 5, 7). This community cohesion and the practice of traditional religious elements established the foundation for Gullah ideology and identity in the South Carolina low country region (Ferguson 2007: 7).

Information from Bermuda regarding enslaved African medicine and medicinal knowledge is scarce. One historical case, however, the poisoning plot of enslaved Bermudian Sarah Bassett in 1727 has been explored by Clarence Maxwell. Maxwell, using court documents and laws regarding poisoning from the period, links Bassett’s knowledge and possible association with Obeah, the practice of West African medicine and person possession, to her conviction and execution for poisoning a white Bermudian family (Maxwell 2000). The details of the plot reveal that Bassett used a white substance, perhaps from a gland of a white toad, as the toxin (Maxwell 2000: 65). Interestingly, Maxwell establishes that the particular toad used by Bassett was not brought to the island officially until 1875 and was, therefore, unavailable naturally on Bermuda during the 1730’s (Maxwell 2000: 66). Maxwell concludes that it was likely enslaved mariners, traveling between Saint Domingue or another island, who brought a single toad to Bermuda for the singular use as a toxin (Maxwell 2000: 66). Unfortunately, the court documents do not speak to the specific nature of the preparation of this poison and whether any earthenware vessels were used. However, it is established that the practice and knowledge of medicine, similar to that from Ferguson’s study, is present on the island from the 1730’s on. The case also opens the possibility for use of low-fired

coarse earthenware for medicinal preparation or administration and also highlights the informal trade networks used by enslaved people to import small quantities of goods not available on Bermuda.

Drawing on the work of Singleton and Bograd (2000), Ferguson in South Carolina (2007, 1992), Armstrong in Jamaica (1985), as well as studies on the functional uses of ceramic raw materials we see that the attributes of low-fired coarse earthenwares for storage and cooking established the pottery in the foodways traditions of enslaved Africans. As will be discussed below, Bermudian assemblages of low-fired coarse earthenware, while small in size, also reflect its use in kitchen and other domestic contexts where enslaved Africans were living and working.

BERMUDA CASE STUDY

Sherds analyzed in this study were previously excavated by various researchers on Bermuda and are currently housed at the Bermuda National Trust Archaeology Lab, Reeve Court and the Bermuda Maritime Museum. These low-fired coarse earthenwares from various sites on the island are examined to determine the extent of informal trade to the larger social and economic structures of Bermudian society and establish the likely use of the pottery in the foodways of enslaved Africans. The first four sites—the Globe Hotel, Stewart Hall, Bank of Bermuda Car Park, and Tucker House—are located on the east end of the island in the former capital of St. George’s, and have produced some of the most interesting sherds in this study (see Figure 4).

All sherds were re-recorded using the Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery (DAACS) Manual created by Jennifer Aultman, Kate Grillo, Nick Bon-Harper, and Jillian Galle in 2003. This cataloging system provides archaeologists with a standardized set of questions and measurements to be recorded for each sherd being entered. The categories “facilitate sherd-level analysis of vessel form, manufacturing technique, decoration, and other information about the condition and size of ceramic sherds” (Aultman et al 2003: 5). As part of this research, European ceramics from each stratigraphic context that contained the low-fired coarse earthenwares was re-analyzed to obtain a *terminus post quem* (TPQ) date for the context. This TPQ date is based on the notion that following the earliest manufacture date of a ceramic, a context would be deposited on or after that first production.

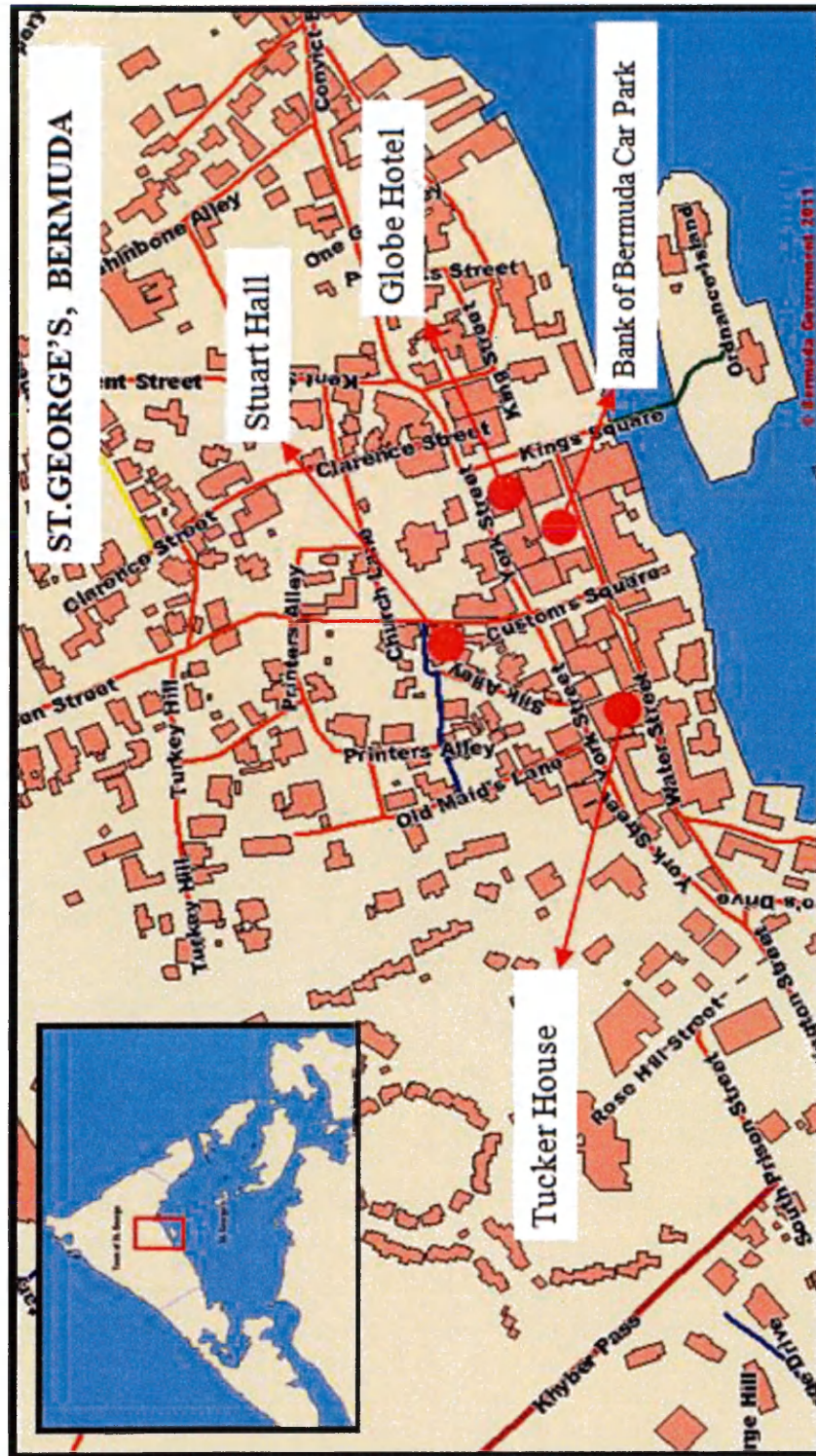


Figure 4 Map of archaeological sites in St. George's, Bermuda.

East End Sites

Tucker House, St. George's

The Tucker House is also located close to the harbor in St. George's on Water Street and is the former home of Henry Tucker, President of the Governor's Council from 1775-1809 (see Figure 5). Originally, the lot on which the Tucker House stands began as a joint land and water lot property developed by Sarah Hubbard who likely built a structure as required by Bermuda law in order to retain rights to the land (Pickett and Brown 1998: 110). The street lot, up from the water's edge, was later sold separately to Captain Thomas Smith in 1752 when the core of the house is thought to have been built (Pickett and Brown 1998: 110).



Figure 5 Photograph of the Tucker House Exterior.

The first archaeological investigation of the Tucker House was undertaken by David Fleming, a Bermudian archaeologist, in 1973 (Brown 1994: 168). These investigations focused on the basement and lower entry way of the house. Fleming sought to understand the major construction episodes in the building of the main house, and confirmed the intact presence of materials from the Henry Tucker period. Fleming suggested, for the first time, that the basement, having one window and a sand floor, could have served as a slave quarter (Brown 1994: 173). Fleming could not, however, produce documentary or archaeological evidence confirming the use of the basement to house enslaved Africans or to serve as a storeroom (Brown 1994: 174).

Further excavations occurred under Marley Brown in the late 1980's and early 1990's through a joint project between Colonial Williamsburg's Department of Archaeology and the Bermuda Maritime Museum. A re-examination of the construction phases identified by Fleming was one focus of this work. Archaeologists also turned to new excavations that proved structural changes were made to the house after the Tucker Family bought the residence in 1775. These changes consisted of a change in the entry way and the raising of some floor levels to equal changes to Water Street (Brown 1994: 177). Brown's work also aimed to expand on the work of Fleming by analyzing artifacts and faunal remains in order to understand the Tucker family in terms of Bermuda history as well as their place within the broader Atlantic world. Brown compared the finds at the Tucker House with those from the houses of families of similar social status in other cities such as Williamsburg and Charleston. The Tucker House assemblage, especially

the fine imported ceramics and fine table glass, while similar to those in other urban cities of the time was also markedly different. Comparing fine ceramic plates versus tea cups and bowls, the Tucker's were found to have the highest valued hollow wares and the lowest valued plates (Brown 1994: 183-185). It therefore follows that the Tucker Family, as Bermudians, had unique access to European imports. Again, Bermuda's location in the Atlantic provided a constant presence of ships traveling between the Caribbean and Europe. This vibrant trade likely gave the islanders early access to prized goods (Brown 1994: 185).

During excavations in 1997, Pickett collaborated with Brown and the Bermuda Maritime Museum. This study focused on the kitchen outbuilding of the main structure, thought to be built after 1800 and renovated in the nineteenth century (Pickett and Brown 1998:108). Again, the team hoped to add additional information on the architectural development of the lot and its earliest structures. Some knowledge of the added out buildings came from a nineteenth century advertisement in the *Bermuda Gazette*, by the house's sixth owner John Till. Till refers to the lot by the water as well as the house as having nine rooms, two kitchens (one detached), outhouses, servants' rooms and cellars (Pickett and Brown 1998: 111). Five major occupational layers were identified in the excavations: Pre-1752 Phase, Thomas Smith Phase (1752-1775), The Tucker Phase (1775-1807), John Till Phase (1807-1812), and the 19th Century Phase (Brown 1998: 112-117).

It was within excavation context 009 that one low-fired coarse earthenware sherd was found (see Figure 6). The *terminus post quem* date for the context from which this

sherd comes is 1775, meaning it was deposited during or after the Tucker Phase. Interestingly, this sherd is much greyer in color than the other sherds in this study. It also appears to have a slightly burnished surface with clear diagonal lines, possibly from use. The challenge with other excavated materials in Bermuda is presented by the mixed use of these domestic contexts. The kitchen cannot be strictly in the domain of enslaved Bermudians or whites, as it is suggested by Pickett and Brown that during the Henry Tucker Phase of the site the kitchen building may have been used to house slaves. The presence of another kitchen on the property during the Tucker Phase and the lack of artifacts from this phase throws question on the exact use of this kitchen (Pickett and Brown 1998: 116).



Figure 6 Tucker House Coarse Earthenware (69AL 009 AE).

Historical documents, however, do, at least, confirm the presence of enslaved people on the site during some occupation phases. First, historian Michael Jarvis' early documentary work on the house's owners revealed a list of slaves owned by Henry Tucker in 1800 from the St. George's Parish Rate Assessments. Although this document was made at least eight years before Tucker's death, it shows that he owned three men, two women, two girls, and one boy ranging in price from £15 to £80 (Jarvis 1994: Appendix I). Also, the Slave Registers, starting in 1827 mention the slaves belonging to Benjamin Dickinson Harvey, the ninth owner of the house from 1825-1849. These registers, collected by the government through newspaper advertisements, list between 14 and 16 individuals owned by Harvey between 1827 and 1834, on the eve of emancipation. To complicate this, Jarvis reports that during his ownership of the house, Harvey lived in Hamilton, the new capital of Bermuda, yet allowed his daughters to reside in St. George's (Jarvis 1992: 22). It is likely that not all of the enslaved Bermudians present on the registers lived at the Tucker House. Harvey may have sent some of the domestic laborers to work for his daughters. Although none of the people listed work as pilots, mariners, or boatmen, one is a skilled caulker and jobber in the carpentry industry.

The Globe Hotel, St. George's



Figure 7 Photograph of the Globe Hotel exterior and back garden.

The Globe Hotel site occupies a lot directly off the main town square in St. George's (see Figure 7). It was originally the garden area for the first governor's house, located directly to the north. Between 1620 and 1699 this lot was home to 24 field slaves living in cabins (Jarvis 1996). In 1699, Governor Day constructed the building still occupying the lot through illegal use of crown funds. In his absence the house was sold to Captain Henry Tucker, a wealthy merchant and ship-owner. The property stayed in the Tucker family until the mid 19th century when it became a hotel.

The 1996 excavations at the Globe Hotel Garden were the collaborative effort of the Bermuda National Trust, the Bermuda Maritime Museum, and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. The project aimed at understanding the seventeenth century

layout of the garden area including evidence of the Governor's slaves living on the lot. Focus paid to any garden features or paths that might suggest a link between the Governor's mansion and St. Peter's Church up the hill (Jarvis 1996). This field season yielded two interesting finds to my study of low-fired coarse earthenwares. First, from the garden section of the lot came a possible pipe stem and bowl fragment with a burned bore hold (see Figure 8). The level in which these finds occur is interpreted as the ground surface of a nineteenth century sable yard with a *terminus post quem* date of 1850. The sherd has much finer paste inclusions when compared to other sherds from the island and is of lighter brown to grey color.

A second significant sherd, which by its orange paste color is likely an example of low-fired coarse earthenware from the Caribbean as defined by Barbara Heath, was also found at the site (Heath 2010, email message to author September 27, 2010). The *terminus post quem* date for this sherd is 1809 (see Figure 9). The curvature of the sherd suggests it may have come from a hollow vessel. Interestingly, the black core of the sherd's fabric suggests it was fired in a reduced environment, meaning the organic matter found in the clay was not able to burn out due to a lack of oxygen, or that the firing time was cut short (Orton et al 1993: 133). The findings at the Globe Hotel are significant for two reasons: first, they suggest that there was continued use of low-fired coarse earthenwares on the island into even the mid nineteenth century, after emancipation; and second, that there is a wide range of these types of ceramics coming onto the island from the Caribbean as well as the eastern sea board.



Figure 8 Globe Hotel Coarse Earthenware pipe bowl/stem (69 AK 018).



Figure 9 Globe Hotel Coarse Earthenware (69 AK 028).

Stewart Hall, St. George's



Figure 10 View of Stewart Hall from Queen Street.

Stewart Hall, another well-known historical home in St. George's, was built in 1706 after the Queen Street lot was granted to Walter Mitchell (Thelen & D'Agostino 1990) (see Figure 10). Mitchell, a merchant who owned a wharf and store house on the harbor front in the 1710's and 20's, owned seven enslaved Africans at the time of his death in 1731. Mitchell was also active in contracting poor Bermudians and enslaved Africans to weave platt, a palm frond mat which was then sold to England and South Carolina. Mitchell's heirs sold the house to George Tucker, Secretary to the Colony, in 1751. Tucker brought eleven enslaved Africans to the property, who probably lived in a detached structure in the rear of the house. Stewart Hall passed through many Bermudian

owners until 1949 when it became part of the Historic Monuments Trust. It is now home to the Bermuda Perfumery.

The Stewart Hall site produced the most complete example of hand built earthenware from the island (see Figure 11). Nearly half of a small globular cooking pot was recovered in 1993 by Mary Ellin D'Agostino working on behalf of the Bermuda National Trust. As with Tucker House, archaeology at this domestic site aimed to explore the existence and extent of intact stratification that might answer questions regarding the sequence of construction on the site (D'Agostino 1989). In addition to the larger intact portion of the pot, three smaller sherds mended together to form another section of the vessel (see Figure 12). The stratum from which the pot was recovered was in the front yard area of the site and was likely an eighteenth century fill layer with a *terminus post quem* date of 1750. Similar to the Tucker House sherd, this pot with its dark grey paste color, resemble Colonoware from the eastern sea board.

Again, historical documents place slaves on the site at roughly the same time as the 1750 *terminus post quem* date. The 1766 will of Colonel George Tucker, owner of the house until 1795, notes the passing a few of his eleven slaves to his son Thomas Tucker and daughter Mary. John Trott Cox buys the house in 1819 and lives there until his death when his daughter Ann and her husband Stephen Roberts become owners. During the Cox period, two outbuildings are added: "Mrs. Brown's" outbuilding and a silversmith workshop (Jarvis 1993). The Slave Registers from 1827-1830 list only one female enslaved domestic servant, sixteen year old Frances, who was Bermudian born. Even if the Stewart Hall pot does not come from an intact deposit it still holds value in showing



Figure 11 Stewart Hall Coarse Earthenware Pot Interior and Exterior.

that low-fired coarse earthenware is found on sites where enslaved Africans are documented as living and working. Furthermore, the pot is suggestive of what types of vessels were used or desired on the island by those that imported and traded for them, and by extension, the kinds of meals prepared. Patricia Samford's work, for example, suggests that cooking stews, which would require pots, could stretch meager portions among enslaved Africans and enhance the taste of poor cuts of meat (Samford 1996: 99).

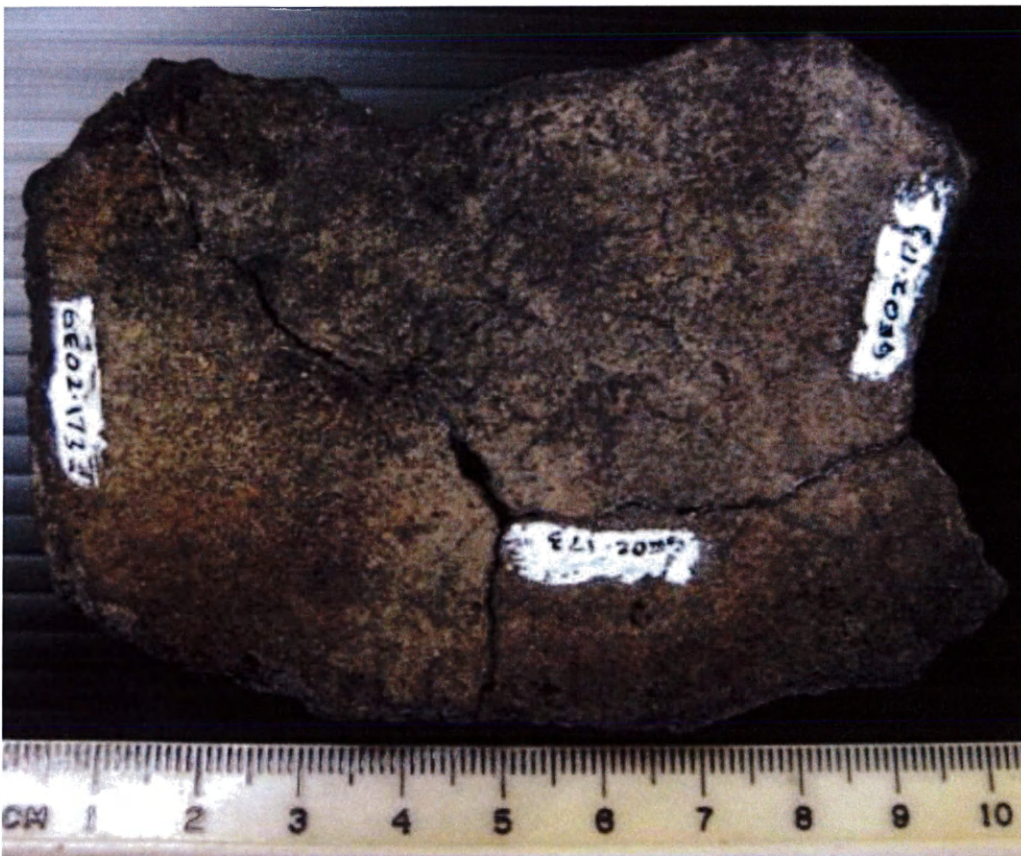


Figure 12 Stewart Hall Mended Coarse Earthenware Pot Sherds.

Bank of Bermuda Car Park, St. George's

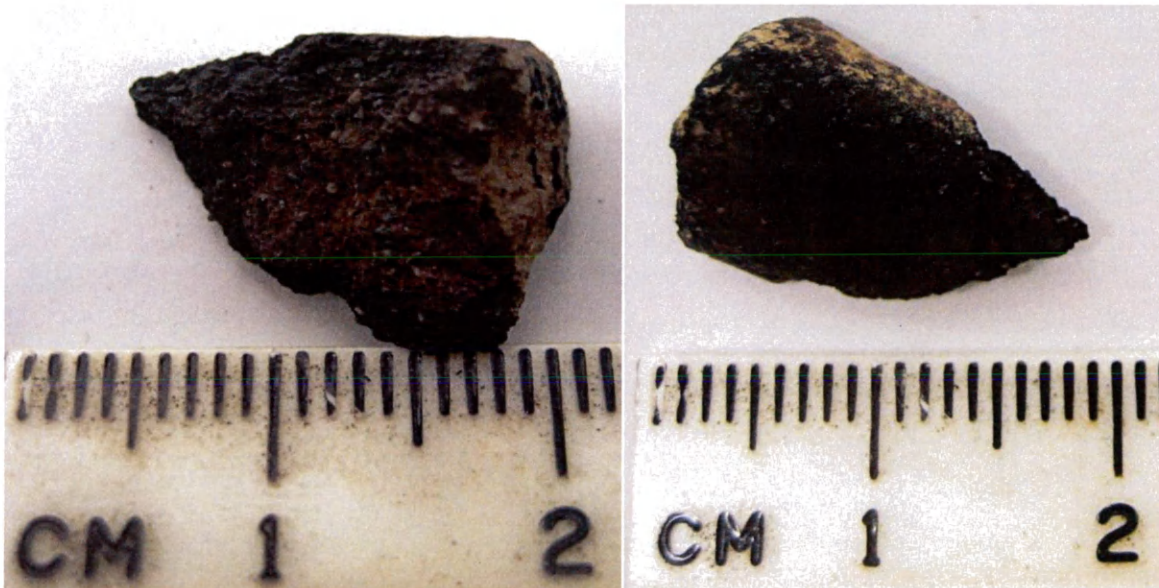


Figure 13 Bank of Bermuda Car Park Coarse Earthenware Rim Sherd.

In St. George's, off the main square, a small rim sherd of low-fired coarse earthenware was excavated at the Bank of Bermuda Car Park site. This site is located behind the Globe Hotel on the corner of York Street and Market Square. On this location the first governor's house was built in 1612 by Governor Richard Moore. After passing through the control of multiple owners the lot was sold to the Tucker Family and may for some time have been combined with the land now occupied by the Globe Hotel. The site was excavated in July of 2002 by the Department of Archaeology at the University of Bristol in conjunction with the Bermuda National Trust. Project objectives include understanding the development of St. George's and through this, the larger history of Bermuda (Hicks 2002: 3).

The first of three trenches dug at the site yielded the low-fired coarse earthenware sherd (see Figure 13), from a level interpreted to be an 18th century garden layer (Hicks 2002: 14, 24). The *terminus post quem* date for this level is 1762. Further research would be needed to determine whether the sitting governor had slaves working as domestic servants on the site.

West End Sites

Springfield, Somerset Village

Archaeology at domestic sites undertaken on the west end of the island has also yielded a wide range of low-fired coarse earthenwares that may suggest a connection to low-fired coarse earthenwares coming from the Caribbean versus those coming from the American colonies (see Figure 14). Bermuda's west end is well known, historically, as an area that loosely followed the importation laws imposed by the government. Specifically, ships coming into the capital of St. George's, on the east end, were strictly regulated and taxed. Those ships docking at homes and warehouses on the west end, far from the government's eye, could unload illegal cargo at night or simply not report their activities to avoid taxes and fees (Trussell 2006: 173, 176). In this way the merchants and mariners of the west end could participate in a wider variety of trade.

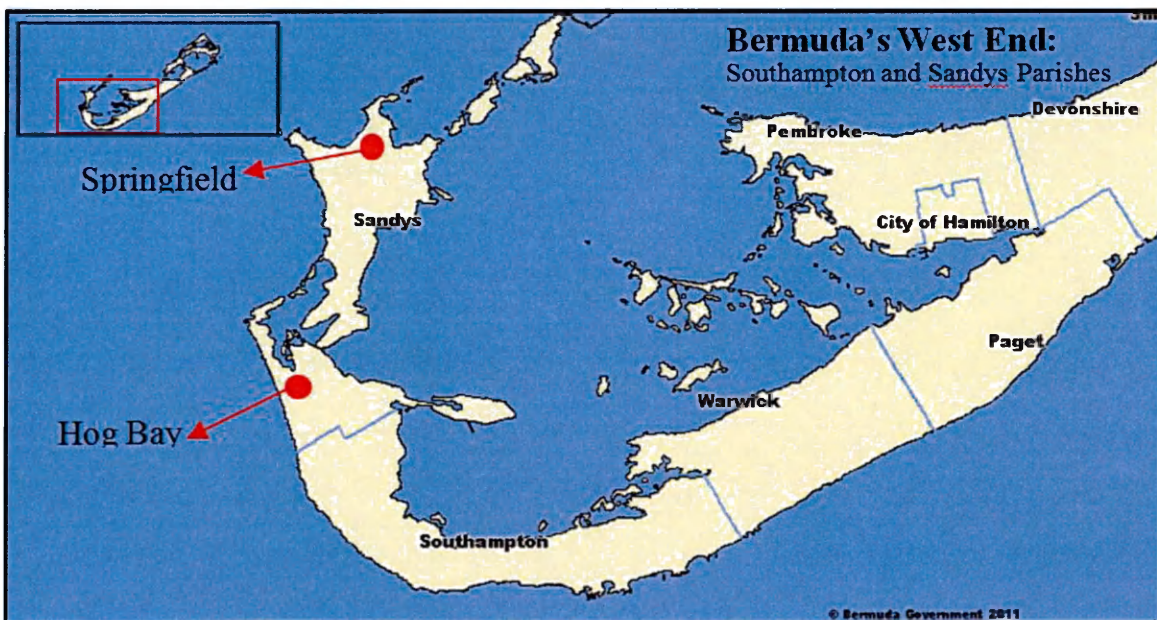


Figure 14 Map of West End Archaeological Sites.

The first of domestic site explored here is Springfield Mansion, located in Sandy's Parish, Somerset Village. Springfield was built by Ephraim Gilbert in the late 1740's or early 1750's as a gentry house with five main rooms and 25 acres of wooded land (Brown et al 1994: 5-7). A later courtyard, constructed around 1820, includes an "L" shaped slave quarter and buttery (Chappell and Graham 1996: 41). Gilbert, a Bermudian mariner and merchant sloop owner, passed the property down through another six Gilbert owners.

Excavations were carried out in 1994 and 1995 by John Metz for the Bermuda National Trust and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (Metz et al 2002). A unit in the west end of the East Yard yielded a grayish low-fired coarse earthenware sherd similar to Colonoware of colonial North America, but relatively thick, it has a mean ceramic date, established by Metz through ceramic sequences, of 1778 (see Figure 15). Another unit, which turned out to be a large pit filled with domestic debris removed from the courtyard area yielded a low-fired coarse earthenware sherd, likely from the Caribbean, with a *terminus post quem* date of 1820. This sherd also has a distinct dark core similar to the sherd at the Globe Hotel (see Figure 16). The presence of a banded color core suggests firing in a reduced environment.

As at Stewart Hall, there is documented evidence of enslaved Africans living on the site. Slave registers from the 1820's and 30's all list Burrows Gilbert, the third owner of Springfield after Ephraim, as having between eight and 15 enslaved Africans working a range of jobs including house servant, carpenter, mason, boatman and pilot. This last

fact is interesting because it provides a possible link, through the presence of enslaved mariners, to the outside Atlantic World. Enslaved Africans working in these trades may



Figure 15 Springfield Colonoware sherd (69AG54 CF).



Figure 16 Springfield Caribbean Ware sherd (69AG45 AS).

have had access to low-fired coarse earthenwares at other ports or were instrumental in unloading and distributing any incoming wares to the wider community.

Again, the presence of low-fired coarse earthenwares at this site show that these ceramics, which likely came from the American colonies and the Caribbean, were used on sites spanning the whole island of Bermuda well into the nineteenth century.

Hog Bay, Sandys

Hog Bay, in Sandys Parish, was first excavated in 1992 as a collaborative project between the Bermuda Maritime Museum, the Department of Anthropology at the College of William and Mary, and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Parks, Bermuda. The Hog Bay site is the location of a small structure, four by six meters, known as Hill House. Similar to the concurrent archaeology project that took place at Tucker House or Springfield, the aim of archaeologist Anna Agbe-Davies at Hog Bay was to understand the life-ways of colonial Bermudians and how they were connected to the larger Atlantic world. In this case, Hog Bay and the Hill House site which stood on it represented a rural setting that could be compared to contemporary sites in the capital as a means of learning how farmers were making their living within the larger maritime economy.

Interestingly, the Hog Bay tract has gone through many owners, many of whom were absentees, as in they lived in St. George's or in England instead of on the west end land. The land was worked instead by tenant farmers or other renters over the years. Archaeologist Anna Agbe-Davies considers how the lives and work of these farmers would have been affected by the dropping tobacco prices of the mid seventeenth that forced many to switch crops, or by the rise of the maritime economy in the first half of

the eighteenth century (Agbe-Davies 1994: 130-131). Early structures on the tract include the first structure noted on Richard Norwood's Survey of 1633, a tenement for tenant farmer William Burch. Later documents describe a home called "The Hermitage" occupied by Colonel Henry Tucker who moved his family to the west end around 1779 in the hopes of a quiet life as a farmer (Agbe-Davies 1994: 131-132). It is also during this period that enslaved Bermudians appear in Hog Bay. According to Agbe-Davies, Tucker owned a range of workers including those working in the fields, servants, cooks, sailors, and children (Agbe-Davies 1994: 133).

Using maps, in preparing for the 1992 excavations, the archaeologists established that the structure that is the standing Hill House had been built by 1898 or 1899. Their focus then turned to an effort to understand when exactly Hill House was built and if any evidence pointed to the site as the place for Burch's original tenement dwelling.

Excavations showed four main phases of activity at the Hill House site. The earliest occupation at the site dated to the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, the Jones or Parsons periods, now known to be the first developers of the site. Above this earliest layer was a level of construction or demolition dating to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. At this time the lot had been divided into four lots, each with a separate dwelling. Foundation dimensions suggest that this dwelling was not a main house but likely served as a home for Tucker's farm overseer for enslaved Bermudians working in the fields (Agbe-Davies 1994: 137). The next layer dated to the early nineteenth century through the mid twentieth century and reflects the continued occupation of tenants or enslaved Bermudians on the site. Again, Agbe-Davies

referenced architectural research from a neighboring estate, noting that the size of the slave house is consistent with Hill House and the two plans are mirror images of each other (Agbe-Davies 1994: 138).



Figure 17 Hog Bay, Hill House Coarse Earthenware (Area 4, TP3).

Further archaeological testing also supports the presence of enslaved Africans at the Hill House site, as Agbe-Davies notes that several Colonoware sherds were found. I was only able to locate one of these sherds in the ceramic assemblage. It appears as that sherd was found in 1993 during testing that focused on the yard around Hill House (see Figure 17). Specifically, this sherd was excavated 50 feet south of the south west corner of the structure. Its context was defined as a late nineteenth or early twentieth century fill episode. As with the other sherds analyzed here, the Hog Bay sherd has large, visible sandy inclusions throughout the paste. The body color, a reddish/orange brown color, also shows evidence of exterior burning. While the sherd is quite small, a slight flare near the burned section may be indicative of an inverted rim.

Millersville University Sites

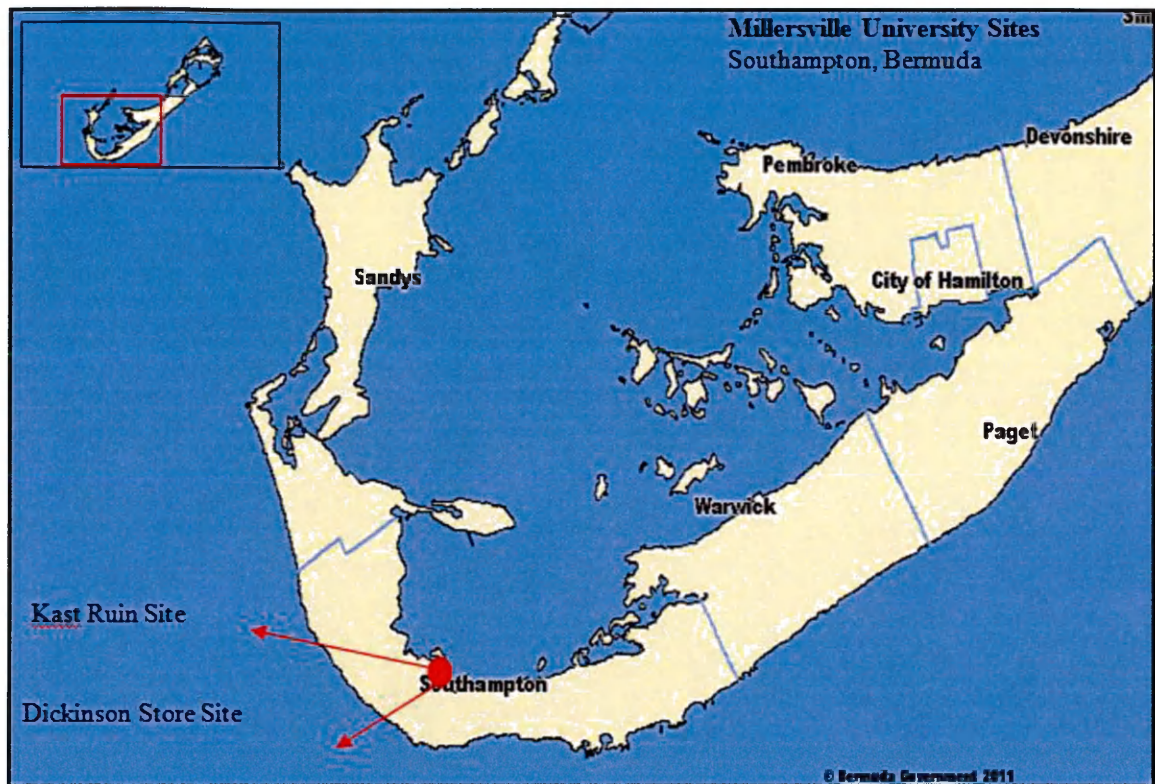


Figure 18 Map of Millersville University Archaeological Sites.

Timothy Trussell of Millersville University began excavating in Bermuda in 2007, after Stiegel iron products, from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, were found in a shipwreck off Bermuda. Trussell suggests that Bermudian merchants were active in illegal trade through which they carried these iron products aboard their sloops with the intention of exchanging them for cheaper items, such as sugar, from the French or Dutch, and reselling them disguised as a legal English product (Trussell 2006: 168, 170). Trussell isolated several west end sites that had been occupied by smuggling families (see Figure 18). Excavations at these sites focused on identifying French or Dutch materials as well as any artifacts related to Stiegel glass or iron to better understand the connection

between Pennsylvania and Bermuda within the smuggling trade. Three of the sites excavated produced low-fired coarse earthenwares reflecting Colonoware and Caribbean ware attributes.

Dickinson Store

Trussell's first site, is known as the Dickinson Store, is located on Frank's Bay in Southampton Parish. The Dickinson Family, for which the site is named, has documented connections to the Stedman Family in Philadelphia (Trussell 2006). The focal point of the site is a two-story eighteenth century warehouse structure with close proximity to the Great Sound for easy unloading of cargo. Brief excavations in 2007 revealed the French connection, through ceramics which allowed him to return to the site in 2009. During this second field season, three units produced low-fired coarse earthenwares. The first sherd came from context ER 114, a unit to the south side of the structure dated to the twentieth century (Figure 19). This sherd is very similar, in exterior color and core, to the Caribbean ware identified at the Globe Hotel. Again, the sherd has a dark grey core suggesting it was fired in a reducing environment. A second sherd came from ER 117, a unit to the eastern side of the warehouse structure, had a *terminus post quem* date of 1850 (Figure 20). This very small sherd has a uniform core with large sandy paste similar to many of the other sherds in this study. Lastly, ER 118, a unit also placed along the south side of the structure produced a sherd which was one of the most unusual in this study (Figure 21). The level also has a *terminus post quem* date of 1850. This larger rim sherd has clearly been wheel thrown as the lines from the spinning wheel are visible along the exterior of the body. As discussed above, wheel throwing is a characteristic only of some

Caribbean wares. Again, the exterior appears to have some burning perhaps suggesting that this piece was part of a larger hollow ware vessel that was placed in a fire for cooking.



Figure 19 Dickinson Store possible Caribbean ware ER 114 (PC 2829).



Figure 20 Dickinson Store Coarse Earthenware ER 117(PC 4623).

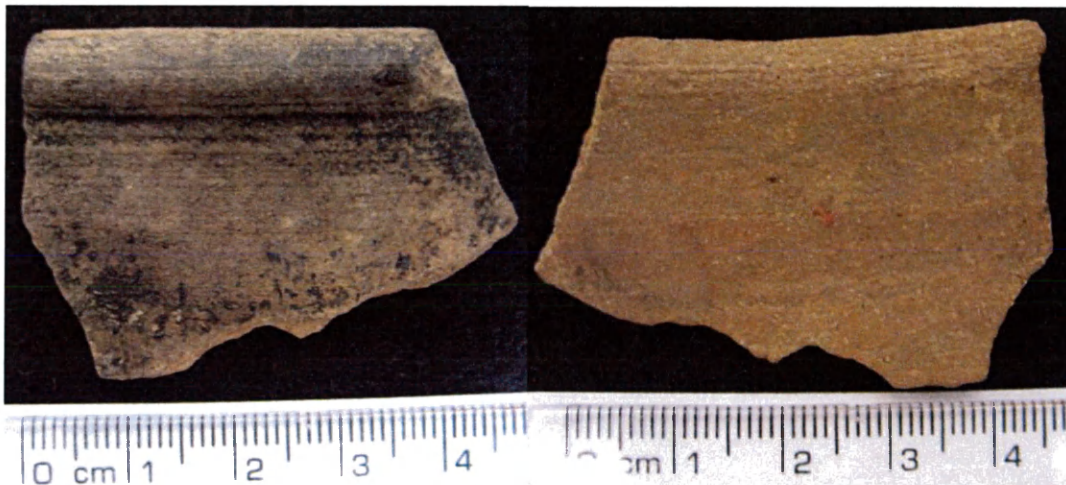


Figure 21 Dickinson Store Coarse Earthenware ER 118 interior and exterior (PC 4068).

Kast/Bell Ruin

From an historic photograph, Trussell was able to identify another potentially rich site near the water. The Kast/Bell Ruin is a series of structures with a core building built in the eighteenth century, and associated outbuildings. Again, the excavations produced illegally imported materials such as French ceramics and Dutch glass bottles (Trussell 2009: 10). Three units, ER 107, 116, and 117 produced five low-fired coarse earthenware sherds.

The paste colors exhibited by these sherds vary from yellow to red and brown tones (see Figure 22). Again, all have sand temper that varies in crystal size. Although two of the four contexts from which the sherds come were either from baulk, the section of unexcavated earth between units, or dated to the mid twentieth century, these finds along with those from the Dickinson Store site support the idea that Caribbean wares were more prevalent on the west end of Bermuda because maritime trade and especially smuggling were common among families in this area of the island. Enslaved Bermudians, who likely worked and lived among these Bermuda merchants, and privateers as ship crew, had a greater opportunity to access ports not only on the eastern sea board of the American colonies but also possibly French and Dutch islands in the Caribbean. Although more sherds are needed to make this connection, it could be one reason for the great variety in pastes found here.



Kast/Bell Ruin
ER 117E
ID#: 6961



Kast/Bell Ruin
ER 107A
ID#: 9737



Kast/Bell Ruin
ER 117G
ID#: 7101

Figure 22 Various Coarse earthenwares from the Kast/Bell Ruin Site.

These examples along with similar findings at other sites throughout the island illustrate how widely distributed low-fired coarse earthenwares were. In considering these low-fired coarse earthenware sherds from the east and west ends of Bermuda we find that there are some commonalities present. All sherds were unglazed with sandy temper and were constructed by the coil and slab method, except for one wheel thrown sherd. Decorations included burnishing and smoothing. Although there were only 19 sherds available for study, there was a wide range of paste colors present from yellowish brown to reddish brown and shades of grey with thicknesses ranging from five to twelve millimeters. Many also had distinctive dark cores suggesting firing in a bonfire kiln. It has been shown that these wares were used from the mid-eighteenth century into the nineteenth century. The wares are found on sites in direct association with enslaved Bermudians through historic documentation. These enslaved people were often known to be sailors aboard merchant ships, giving them the opportunity to bring small amounts of low-fired coarse earthenwares back to the island. Most importantly, many of the sherds from the collection, especially the pot from Stewart Hall and various rim sherds, reflect the use of the pottery for foodways within enslaved African contexts.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

The first aim of this research has been to understand the methods and opportunities that allowed for low-fired coarse earthenware pottery to be brought to the Bermuda by enslaved mariners. Bermudian history and its place within the Atlantic Common sets the stage for the examination of low-fired coarse earthenwares and the ways in which enslaved mariners and enslaved Bermudian communities negotiated a life of bondage. Investigating assemblages from domestic archaeological sites on the island has established the presence, although rare, of low-fired coarse earthenware pottery. The rise of a maritime economy coupled with the entrepreneurial drive of enslaved Bermudians creates a setting in which opportunities of freedom to trade are seized and specific, preferred goods are acquired.

Bermuda historians have been crucial to understand enslaved Bermudians. Jarvis describes the knowledge and skill of enslaved Bermudians, few of whom came to the island directly from the African continent. Instead, they are well versed in colonial economies, industry, and a variety of languages (Jarvis 2010: 29). Furthermore, these enslaved Bermudians are considered in terms of the wider Bermudian economy and their position and labor within this successful system. Again, working aboard merchant vessels afforded enslaved Bermudians with opportunities to trade for a small number of items in the major waterfront ports serving as markets to all those in the maritime trade (Linebaugh & Rediker 2000). Here, many types of sailor, including enslaved Bermudians, bought and sold a wide range of objects to supplement wages and the goods available to them on the island.

Back on Bermuda members within networks established by the enslaved community allowed for goods to be stored and re-traded or re-sold on the island as the account of Negro Bess shows (Maxwell 2009). It is within this re-trading or re-selling activity that Maxwell and Packwood show that economic interactions and relationships did occur, on a regular basis, around the island. These trading and other business ventures did not, however, go unnoticed by the colonial government as an array of sumptuary laws were put in place to restrict or quell the activities and movements of enslaved Bermudians.

Enslaved Bermudians were a cosmopolitan group frequenting busy ports and living on an island that served as a major stop for all trade between England, Europe and the Caribbean and American colonies. It is clear that Bermuda's residents, both white and black, had first pick of new, fashionable ceramic styles (Brown 1994). Therefore, it is interesting that enslaved Bermudians continued to covet this distinctive pottery. Although explicit reference to low-fired coarse earthenware in an historical context has yet to be found, it is clear that this pottery was in use for a long period of time perhaps extending past 1834, the year of emancipation throughout the English colonies. This fact is one of the most interesting discoveries to come out this research because it raises questions regarding the meaning of the pottery as it is present in a small amount over a large span of time.

It has been suggested that many factors, including taste preference or technological benefits, may have drawn enslaved Africans to use this type of ware in their foodways practices. Leland Ferguson's work specifically addresses the porous

nature of low-fired coarse earthenwares in terms of food preparation. Moisture evaporation allowed for cooking at lower temperatures to maintain long simmers ideal for soups and stews. Other historic accounts suggest earthenware pots produced an authentic taste which was unachievable with metal cooking vessels (Ferguson 1992: 90, 105).

Ann Stahl's work on taste in Banda, Africa, also helps illuminate the preference of enslaved Africans for low-fired coarse earthenware for foodways uses. For Stahl "preferences are not fixed but are, rather, locked in a dance of supply and demand, production and consumption, shaped by past choices and dispositions, but continually reframed by social tensions both within and outside the local setting" (Stahl 2002: 833). In this way, low-fired coarse earthenwares can be examined as a good that was chosen in rejection of European goods because of its past use for food preparation and consumption on Bermuda, in the American colonies, and the Caribbean tying back to foodways and ceramic traditions in Africa.

A link can also be made between African medicinal knowledge and its application in the Americas and Caribbean. Ethnographic work by Ferguson establishes the use of low-fired coarse earthenware pots, of similar style and construction to pottery in this study, with the making of traditional medicines in Sierra Leone (Ferguson 2007). Other research on medicine, charms, and the power of nature in Africa refer to the harnessing of the power within raw natural materials, including clay, to make effective medicine (Schildkrout 1989: 24, 58). In this way pots are used as "receptacles for potent medicines" throughout central Africa since they are familiar cultural objects constructed with materials directly from nature's power (Schildkrout 1989: 60).

Maxwell theorizes that similar medicinal and spiritual knowledge derived from the West African practice of Obeah influenced enslaved Bermudians in actively resisting slavery. The poisoning plot of Sarah Bassett and specifically the knowledge of toxins employed to carry it out suggest, again, that black Bermudians had created a network of trade between important places where specific goods, in this case medicinal materials, like the toxic toad, would be available. If Bassett was following West African medicine practices it also follows that the power of nature may also be tied to this knowledge causing her to seek out other containers or materials that reflect the harnessing of nature.

Enslaved Bermudians likely sought out low-fired coarse earthenware for its usefulness in cooking or storage or as a container for African derived medicine. Its presence on the island for at least a 100 year period, however, reflects the great lengths that were taken to acquire the vessels. It also suggests coarse earthenware had an importance beyond easy availability or economic cost value. To more thoroughly understand the role and use of the pottery in the lives of enslaved Bermudians, however, a larger sample size is needed. If sherds can be added to this body of material the better the chance to advance our understanding of common vessel shapes, vessel types, vessel counts, place of manufacture, and usage over time. Significant questions regarding the foodways of enslaved Bermudians may also be the focus of further studies at Bermudian sites such as Hill House, which are likely detached slave dwellings. Research is now able to focus on a foodways portrait that includes cooking and consumption patterns based on ceramic or even surviving faunal data.

Secondly, a larger set of materials can aid in identifying where different vessels were constructed. Elemental testing, such as x-ray fluorescence (XRF) and scanning electron microscopy (SEM), using comparable sherds in the Caribbean and former American colonies will identify the exact trade partners, perhaps to the plantation level, that enslaved Bermudians connected with and utilized. In addition, more historical research on surviving documents is needed to consider instances and accounts of the market places on the island and possibility of peddlers or higglers selling goods.

In 1993, following excavations at Hill House, Ana Agbe-Davies specifically addressed the state of low-fired coarse earthenware and their potential for adding to the understanding of enslaved life on Bermuda:

“Colonoware is a distinctive kind of pottery found in association with Native Americans and African Americans primarily in the South-eastern United States and the Caribbean. A significant number of these sherds could be considered evidence of a slave presence on the site. Future analyses of materials drawn from this site should keep this in mind, thus adding to our somewhat limited understanding of slave life in Bermuda. Additionally, the origin and significance of colonoware are subjects of intense debate in the archaeological community at this time. If we can demonstrate the presence of colonoware in Bermuda, we will have expanded the database from which to draw evidence to deal with these intriguing problems” (Agbe-Davies 1993: 138).

This conclusion, along with the research in this study, demonstrates a need for continued research and specifically developed research plans that aim to add to the known low-fired coarse earthenware examples on the island. The continued study of Bermudian low-fired coarse earthenwares will be a rich field for future research because it suggests that slave relations and slave networks played a much more active and potentially disruptive role in colonial society than we may have thought possible.

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